

## EDITORIAL

### American carnage

#### **Republicans should not be surprised that a dangerous monster was unleashed on the Capitol. They created it.**

By The Editorial Board Updated January 6, 2021, 6:45 p.m

People protesting the presidential election results inside the Capitol in Washington on Wednesday. The Capitol building was placed on lockdown, with senators and members of the House locked inside their chambers, as Congress began debating President-elect Joe Biden's victory. President Trump addressed supporters near the White House before protesters marched to Capitol

"Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust?" That's what the reviled monster asks Dr. Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's classic novel, but it's also what the angry mob of thousands who stormed the US Capitol in an insurrection on Wednesday could well ask soon-to-be-former Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell and other congressional Republicans who fled the House chamber.

It should have come as no surprise to those members of Congress (or to the Capitol Police, for that matter) when, following the cues of the president himself, thugs who brandished symbols of the Confederacy and Trump's presidential campaigns breached the barricades protecting the Capitol to stop Congress from voting to certify the results of the November election, forcing an evacuation of elected officials

Once a beacon to democracies around the world, the United States is now a country whose president has triggered an attempted coup, broadcast for the world to watch. One member of the mob was fatally shot in the fracas. The Republicans who stood by silently or, worse, who supported Trump's delusions vocally, must once and for all be declared the co-inventors of the chaos that has rained down on the Capitol and be forced to pay the political price.

By the time the mob descended, of course, McConnell and Vice President Mike Pence had decided to no longer stand in the way of acknowledging Joe Biden's victory. But it was too little, too late. For the eight weeks that the outcome of this election has been clear, they and hundreds of other Republicans in Congress and across the country have been complicit in allowing the president to spread conspiracy theories about a stolen election like wildfire and to stoke the egregious act of extremists interrupting the proceedings of the US government in an effort to help him illegally and illegitimately cling to power.

More than [140 GOP representatives](#) and [at least 14 senators](#) came to what should have been a ceremonial blessing of the Electoral College's official tally from December ready to voice objections to swing states' legitimate electoral counts, a direct affront to the will of voters in those states. Their disputes with state elections and accusations of fraud had no basis in fact, amounting to little more than a craven coddling of the Trump supporters who constitute their political base.

But it's the coddling of Trump himself by Republicans, dating back more than four years, that truly created this monster. They looked the other way as Trump courted white supremacists and [encouraged vigilante violence in the streets](#), even as he threatened to [send in the military to quell peaceful protests](#). They stayed silent for months as he lied about mail-in ballots, made baseless accusations of election fraud, and discredited the most basic function of our democracy. They failed to remove him from office after his abuses of power were substantiated in the House impeachment trial. It is little wonder that countless Americans do not accept the results of a legitimate election because Trump says it wasn't one.

As congressional actions were suspended, the chambers evacuated, and law enforcement dispatched

to forcibly remove the mob, the tide turned in the US Senate, with the victories of Jon Ossoff and the Rev. Raphael Warnock in their Senate runoff races in Georgia shifting the party balance in the upper chamber to 50-50, deposing Mitch McConnell from his capricious and antidemocratic reign. It is fitting that voters delivered the Republican leadership this blow, given that what the GOP has done is nothing short of trying to invalidate votes and prevent people's voices from being heard. The best route to justice and to restoration of our democracy would be if every elected official who has enabled Trump in his campaign to disenfranchise voters and cling to power were punished with haste at the ballot box.