

Republicans must sideline the extremists among them

January 12, 2021

Thank goodness for the real American heroes in D.C.: the Capitol Police, members of the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Guards. With the attack on the U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump supporters, we see exactly where the misinformation, taunts, and lies of the past four years are leading. If the GOP wishes to be anything other than an accomplice to domestic terrorism, the elected members of that party must stand up and be counted. Either they are with us and the U.S. or they are with the radical right.

Moreover, they must not simply spout simplicities, as Vice President Mike Pence did in claiming that this behavior will not be tolerated. They must immediately put the fomenting of extremism to an end by calling out the false allegations of Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley and others. Further, our elected leaders must once again be willing to lead rather than remaining silent; and to lead not toward insurrection and conspiracy but toward reality and fact.

For the longer term they must also utterly unwind support of the industrial lobby system, which is funded to no small extent by billionaires like Charles and David Koch and Robert Mercer pushing our politics to the far right. Koch, Mercer and others like them also support supposed think tanks like the Cato Institute, Heritage Foundation, and American Enterprise Institute, which generate further justification for extremism. If the leaders of the GOP, including Sen. Chuck Grassley and Sen. Joni Ernst, are not willing to stand up immediately, loudly, and clearly for the America that we want, they should be charged with the terrorism and treason they have been facilitating.

- *Steve Libbey, Ames*