



While the scene in Washington D.C. yesterday was alarming, it should not be surprising after the months of lying that the election was fraudulent and the encouragement of violence by the president. It should be no surprise that white supremacists heeded his call and mounted an armed insurrection. What we saw yesterday was a vile attack on our democracy and a serious threat to the safety and security of thousands of elected leaders, their staff, and the people of Washington D.C., as well as the people of multiple state capitols, including our own in Olympia.

The groups involved in this armed insurrection have been identified as white supremacist, domestic terrorist groups. The Nazi flag flown from the Capitol's porch and the Confederate battle flag carried through the Capitol amply demonstrate their racist, anti-Semitic, anti-democratic agenda. It was deeply disturbing to see their white privilege on display when they broke into the Capitol building, encountering little resistance by police. It is particularly galling when contrasted with the peaceful demonstrations for Black lives across the country that have been so frequently responded to with police violence. Systemic racism is deeply entrenched in our country and we must continue the fight to ensure that Black Lives do, in fact, Matter.

The coming weeks present an opportunity to the people of the United States but if the president remains in office, the country is directly in harm's way. Elected leaders, including Governor Inslee, and the AFT have called for his removal by any legal means possible. We have four years of damage and divisiveness to repair, and 400 hundred years of white supremacy to dismantle. We also have, with the election of Reverend Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, Democratic control of the House, Senate, and Presidency. We can, and we must, rise to the demands of this time and continue to build up, rather than tear down, the people of these United States and the institutions needed for a thriving democracy.