

Republican state senators call on Trump to declare martial law to overturn Biden election victory

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Within the last 48 hours, two Republican state senators, Bob Steinburg of North Carolina and Amanda F. Chase of Virginia, through public Facebook posts and in subsequent interviews, have declared that President Donald Trump should suspend civil liberties and declare martial law in order to stay in power. Both state senators have repeated Trump's baseless claims of widespread election fraud and various other right-wing conspiracies. Steinburg was reelected to the statehouse this past year, while Chase is running for governor of Virginia.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, Steinburg reiterated comments made earlier this month by retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, suggesting Trump invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807, deploy soldiers and suspend habeas corpus. In an interview with WRAL Tuesday night, Steinburg alleged he was just "putting out there options that others say still remain on the table," although he later added that he would welcome a coup, insinuating a vast conspiracy was working against Trump.

"There's something going on here bigger than what anybody is willing to talk about," Steinburg told WRAL. "I'm not nuts. ... I'm not a conspiracy theory person ... but something is going on here that's bigger than meets the eye." Steinburg, unprompted, offered to take a psychiatric evaluation, alleging that the CIA and the FBI both knew of the coup against Trump but were unwilling to do anything about it.

Steinburg was not able to articulate what habeas corpus was, stating that he was just "repeating what the general said." However, when WRAL reporters explained that suspending habeas corpus would allow the state to detain people indefinitely without a trial Steinburg replied, "If that's what needs to be done, if there are people who have been identified as folks who are suspected of high crimes and misdemeanors, who are threatening the very security and foundation of our nation ... for whatever period of time it takes to round them up, then yes."

These remarks from elected officials come as Trump continues to defy Monday's electoral college certification and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's recognition of President elect Joe Biden's victory, pushing forward with his efforts to subvert the election results, claiming his loss was fraudulent and inciting his supporters against those who claim otherwise.

In an early Wednesday morning Twitter post, Trump warned McConnell that people were "angry" after he congratulated Biden on his victory from the Senate floor on Tuesday. Trump urged the Republican Party to "finally learn to fight."

Trump was joined in his incitements by his fascistic allies in and around the Republican Party. Incoming Republican freshman Georgia Congresswoman and QAnon conspiracy theorist, Majorie Taylor Greene, tweeted Tuesday: "Every 'Republican' that isn't fighting for [Trump's] 2020 landslide victory is supporting the Chinese Communist Party takeover of America."

Attorney L. Lin Wood, who represents Trump, as well as fascist Illinois shooter Kyle Rittenhouse, also incited fascistic violence against McConnell writing a racist and xenophobic threat against the senator's Chinese-American wife and current transportation secretary, Elaine Chao, tweeting that "Mitch McConnell is not a patriot. Ask his wife. She knows."

Wood added, "McConnell is a traitor to American Patriots. His day of judgement is coming."

Threats of violence during the certification of Monday's electoral college results prompted election officials in Arizona to hold the vote in an "undisclosed location," while in Lansing, Michigan, police barred entry to the statehouse, and the legislature was not in session due to numerous targeted threats.

The fascistic demands made by Republicans across the country refute President-elect Biden's claims on Monday that American democracy is "resilient, true and strong."

Biden did not respond to the latest violent threats, instead offering empty platitudes on Twitter, claiming that “democracy prevailed” and that “nothing is beyond America’s capacity if we work together.”

Trump’s repeated claims of election fraud before and after November 3 have already resulted in real world violence against people who had nothing to do with the election.

In Houston, Texas, former police captain Mark Anthony Aguirre, 63, was charged Tuesday with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon for running an air conditioner repairman off the road and holding him at gunpoint based on suspicions that the man was transporting 750,000 fraudulent ballots.

The incident took place two weeks before the election on October 19. Aguirre had spoken with a lieutenant at Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s office three days prior to the incident requesting the police conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle. When his request was refused, Aguirre took it upon himself to conduct a “citizen’s arrest” based on the affidavit.

Prosecutors allege that Aguirre was not working alone and in fact had been paid more than \$260,000 by a private group called the Liberty Center for God and Country. The affidavit states Aguirre received about \$211,400 from the group following the incident. Speaking to CNN, Jared Woodfill, the president of the group, said the organization and Texas Republican power broker Steve Hotze of Houston hired a private firm which included Aguirre and a “former FBI investigator” to dig into claims of voter fraud.

Hotze had previously filed a petition prior to the election seeking to invalidate 127,000 ballots that were cast in Harris County via drive-through voting. Earlier this summer the *Texas Tribune* obtained a voicemail Hotze had left Texas Governor Greg Abbott’s chief of staff, Luis Saenz.

In the voicemail Hotze demanded the mass murder of protesters who were marching against police violence following the police murder of George Floyd on May 25. He demanded that Abbott get the “National Guard down here and they have the order to shoot to kill if any of these son-of-a-bitch people start rioting like they have in Dallas, start tearing down businesses—shoot to kill the son of a bitches. That’s the only way you restore order. Kill ‘em. Thank you.”

Hotze has also campaigned against the limited measures taken by government and health officials in Texas to stem the spread of the coronavirus, challenging mask mandates in courts and propagating conspiracy theories surrounding the virus. A frequent donor to the Republican Party, Hotze filed a lawsuit against Abbott in April for issuing a stay-at-home order. In May he asked the Texas Supreme Court to strike down a law that gives the governor broad executive powers

to respond to disasters, and in July he sued the state over their contact tracing program and a statewide mask mandate.

The subordination of all aspects of society to the profit-making interests the ruling class has not only resulted in the US leading the world in coronavirus fatalities, with over 314,000 as of this writing. It has also seen the further erosion of the already dilapidated and crumbling public health system through mass retirements, firings and resignations of health officials, under siege from violent, right-wing elements, abetted by powerful class interests.

In Kansas, public health administrators and even mayors are being forced to resign after months of dealing with harassment and violent threats from right-wing zealots. On Tuesday, Dodge City Mayor Joyce Warshaw announced her resignation after receiving a barrage of death threats following a recent *USA Today* article detailing the suffering and death in small towns, such as Dodge City, as a result of the ruling class’ criminal “herd immunity” policy.

Speaking to the *Washington Post*, Warshaw said the threats were “loud ... aggressive, and they frightened me and my family. There’s a strong part of me that wants to say they are only words. But people are angry right now, and I don’t know that for sure.”

Danielle Swanson, a public health administrator in Republic County, Kansas, told the Associated Press (AP) that she was planning on resigning as soon as enough of her COVID-19-positive staff emerged from isolation. Swanson recounted receiving hand-delivered hate mail and death threats. “It’s very stressful. It’s hard on me; it’s hard on my family that I do not see.”

In Michigan, Linda Vail, health officer for Ingham County, said she has received emails and letters at her home warning her that she would be “taken down like the governor,” a reference to the fascist kidnapping and assassination plot against Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer which was exposed earlier this year.

Overall, at least 181 state and local public health leaders in 38 states have either resigned, retired or been fired since the beginning of the pandemic, according to an investigation by the AP and Kaiser Health News. The AP notes that this would be “the largest exodus of public health leaders in US history.”



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