

US House passes January 6 commission bill with minimal Republican support

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More than four and a half months after a mob of Trump supporters, fascistic militia members and neo-Nazis stormed the US Capitol in an attempt to block certification of the election of President Joe Biden and install Donald Trump as de facto dictator, the House of Representatives on Wednesday passed HR 3233 to establish an “independent bipartisan” commission to investigate the January 6 coup attempt.

The legislation passed by a vote of 252 to 175, with only 35 Republicans, drawn primarily from the Problem Solvers Caucus, voting in favor. The bill has little chance of passage in the evenly divided Senate, under conditions where the entire Republican congressional leadership has come out against it and the party as a whole continues to back Trump and promote his lying narrative of a “stolen election.”

In the floor debate before the vote, the majority of Republicans denounced the commission proposal as part of a partisan witch hunt, denied that the seizure of the Capitol by insurrectionists directed by Trump was a significant event, and demanded instead that Congress investigate left-wing protesters who marched in cities across the US last summer to protest police killings.

Texas lawmaker Louie Gohmert, who last week claimed there was no “armed insurrection” on January 6, rose to denounce the commission proposal as part of a radical left takeover of the Democratic Party. One of the chief Republican congressional conspirators in the plot to overthrow the election, Gohmert gave an interview on Newsmax five days before the January 6 coup attempt in which he argued that a federal court’s rejection of a lawsuit empowering then-Vice President Mike Pence to overturn the election meant that Trump supporters had no choice but to take to the streets and use violence to block Biden’s certification.

Pro-Trump attorney Lin Wood responded to the court

ruling by saying Pence would “face execution by firing squad” if he refused to overturn the election.

Sitting directly behind Gohmert in the House chamber on Wednesday was Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, who smiled approvingly as Gohmert delivered his fascistic rant. Last week, Greene accosted New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and accused Muslim members of the Democratic House caucus as well as Vice President Kamala Harris of supporting “terrorists.”

While the Republicans overwhelmingly rejected the Democrats’ pleas for “bipartisanship,” Democratic speakers sought to sell the commission proposal to their “Republican colleagues” largely on the right-wing basis of defending the police, uniting the nation to take on and defeat the challenge from China and countering growing public distrust in US state institutions.

Toward the end of the floor debate, Ohio Democrat Tim Ryan, a rabid economic nationalist and close ally of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, angrily declared: “We have people scaling the Capitol, hitting the Capitol Police officers with lead pipes across the head, and we can’t get bipartisanship! What else has to happen in this country? Cops. This is a slap in the face to every rank-and-file cop in the United States. If we’re going to take on China, rebuild the country, if we are going to reverse climate change, we need two political parties in this country that are both living in reality.”

The legislation, agreed to last week by House Homeland Security Chair Bennie Thompson (Mississippi) and Ranking Member John Katko (New York), would create a 10-person commission divided equally between Democrats and Republicans along the lines of the 9/11 Commission established after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The earlier commission is being held up by the

Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans as a model of objective and non-partisan truth-telling. In fact, the 9/11 Commission carried out an official cover-up of the attacks on New York and Washington D.C., leaving unanswered the failure of the US national intelligence apparatus to block the attacks despite multiple warnings from foreign governments and their own agents, and largely ignoring the close ties between the Al Qaeda operatives and US-allied intelligence agencies in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Similarly, the January 6 commission is being promoted not to reveal the true extent of the fascistic plot to keep Trump in office, for fear of the explosive political and social consequences, but to politically rehabilitate the Republican Party and prop up the two-party political system through which the corporate-financial oligarchy rules. Both before and after January 6, the Democrats have promoted the false narrative that Trump alone is the source of the attack on bourgeois-democratic forms of rule, rather than the embodiment of the protracted decline and putrefaction of American capitalism and its entire ruling elite.

The Democrats, who control both houses of Congress and the White House, have done their best to conceal the extensive involvement of top echelons of the police, military and intelligence apparatus in the conspiracy, as well as fascistic elements within the financial oligarchy.

Commissioners serving on the cover-up committee would be drawn from the security apparatus, with the *New York Times* previously suggesting a list of potential members including former spymasters, generals and security officials whose hands are stained blood-red after decades of serving US imperialist interests. The commissioners would have the power to issue subpoenas if approved by both the Democratic chair and Republican vice chair of the commission, in practice giving Republicans veto power over the calling of witnesses. The legislation also requires that the commission issue a final report by the end of the year.

Democrats had initially proposed that the commission be tilted in their favor, given the fact that their party received a majority of votes in the 2020 election and controls both houses of Congress and the presidency. Negotiations over the formation of the commission stalled after Republicans demanded equal seating with the power to issue subpoenas. However once the *New*

York Times, the leading mouthpiece of the Democratic Party, demanded House Speaker Nancy Pelosi accept Republican conditions, the Democrats quickly agreed to major concessions.

On Tuesday night, Trump issued a statement calling on the Republicans to not “approve the Democrat trap of the January 6 Commission.” He characterized the commission, which initially was negotiated with the approval of House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, as “more partisan unfairness.”

Trump demanded that “unless the murderers, riots, and fire bombings in Portland, Minneapolis, Seattle, Chicago, and New York are also going to be studied, this discussion should be ended immediately.”

McCarthy, a likely subpoena candidate should the commission ever become law, announced his opposition to the agreement on Tuesday, deriding the legislation’s “shortsighted scope that does not examine interrelated forms of political violence in America.”

Backing Trump and McCarthy was House Republican Whip Steve Scalise. Scalise sent a letter to House Republicans Wednesday morning urging them to vote against the commission, repeating Trump and McCarthy’s complaints about the “scope” of the investigation. This was followed on Wednesday by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who announced his opposition to the commission, calling the proposal “slanted and unbalanced.”



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