

Senate Republicans block bill to establish bipartisan January 6 commission

Kevin Reed
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On Friday, Senate Republicans blocked the establishment of a commission to investigate the assault on the US Capitol on January 6 by a fascist mob instigated by former President Donald Trump.

In a 54–35 vote, supporters of the bill to establish the commission fell short of the 60 senators needed to overturn a Republican filibuster and bring the measure to the floor for an up-or-down vote. Given that the Democrats control the evenly divided chamber, with Vice President Kamala Harris able to cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie, the bill would have passed even with no Republican support had the filibuster been broken.

In the event, six Republicans voted along with all voting Democrats to establish a bipartisan, “National Commission to Investigate the January 6 Attack on the United States Capitol Complex.” The six Republicans were senators Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Ben Sasse of Nebraska, Mitt Romney of Utah and Rob Portman of Ohio.

The defeat of the measure in the Senate was already a foregone conclusion following the passage of the bill by the House of Representatives in a 252 to 175 vote on May 19. The day before the House vote, ex-President Trump issued a statement denouncing the commission and demanding that congressional Republicans put a stop to it. Trump named both House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California, who had voted against the House measure, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who had said he was undecided, as among the “ineffective and weak” Republicans.

The next morning, McConnell came out firmly against the commission. He reiterated his opposition two days ago, saying, “I do not believe the additional, extraneous ‘commission’ that Democratic leaders want would uncover crucial new facts or promote healing. Frankly, I do not believe it is even designed to do that.”

Eleven senators, including Democrats Patty Murray of Washington and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, did not participate in Friday’s vote to overturn the Republican filibuster.

Speaking from the floor following the Democrats’ failure to invoke cloture, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer of New York made a characteristically hand-wringing statement: “Shame on the Republican Party for trying to sweep the horrors of that day under the rug because they are afraid of Donald Trump.”

The defeated January 6 commission bill already included major concessions ceded by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to earlier Republican demands, including an equal five-to-five split on the ten-member panel and effective veto power for the Republican appointees over the issuing of subpoenas and the overall operation of the panel. This was despite the fact that the Democrats won the presidential election by a wide margin and controlled both houses of Congress.

Moreover, the claim of Democratic congressional leaders and the Biden administration that only a bipartisan panel could carry out an objective investigation and present the American people with a true account of the seizure of the Capitol building by a fascist mob, incited and backed by Trump, for the purpose of blocking congressional certification of the electoral vote and maintaining Trump in power, was absurd on its face. Virtually the whole of the Republican Party and its top leadership in both houses of Congress, including McCarthy and McConnell, were complicit in the conspiracy to overturn the election. They sought to legitimize Trump’s baseless claims of a “stolen election” and downplayed his repeated refusals to agree to a peaceful transition of power.

A “bipartisan” panel meant a joint investigation with the co-conspirators and accomplices to the crime to be investigated.

Moreover, once Biden made clear that there would be no consequences for Trump's accomplices within the Republican Party as well as the military, police and intelligence establishment—by repeatedly pleading for “unity” and declaring his commitment to a “strong Republican Party”—McConnell and company lined up in defense of the former president and his openly fascistic allies both within and outside the Republican Party. This has enabled Trump to emerge as the de facto leader of a party that is increasingly assuming a fascistic character.

The model cited by the Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans for a bipartisan investigation into the January 6 insurrection is the 9/11 Commission. As explained here on the *World Socialist Web Site* on May 20, holding up as a model the bipartisan commission that delivered the official narrative of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 exposes the fact that the neither party intends to present the truth about the violent coup attempt that came within seconds of succeeding on January 6.

The 9/11 Commission was an official coverup of the connections between American intelligence and the Al Qaeda hijackers, who were known to the CIA and FBI but were permitted to enter the US, train as pilots, coordinate their terrorist assault, hijack four jetliners and turn them into flying bombs, resulting in the death of 2,977 people. That terror attack was then utilized by the ruling class as a *casus belli* to implement a previously developed plan for neo-colonial wars to seize control of oil-rich Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries, in the name of the “war on terror.”

In promoting their failed January 6 commission proposal, the Democrats repeatedly sought to attack the Republicans from the right, denouncing them for failing to defend the US Capitol police who were attacked, wounded and in some cases killed by Trump's fascist insurrectionists. Prominent Democratic House members also attacked the Republicans for dividing the nation instead of uniting against China.

The feckless and two-faced position of the Democrats is rooted in the fact that the Democratic Party is a party of the American corporate-financial oligarchy. As Biden's rush to reopen the economy and the schools, putting corporate profits before the health and the very lives of the working population, has clearly shown, he is continuing the same homicidal “herd immunity” policy that was pursued by Trump. This is fueling a growing mood of anger and opposition in the working class. The Democrats are desperate to cover up the reality of January 6 and preserve the political monopoly of two right-wing

capitalist parties for fear of an uncontrolled eruption of class struggle that could take a conscious socialist and revolutionary form.

Significantly, on Thursday, even as Senate Democrats were appealing to the “conscience” of their “Republican colleagues” in relation to the January 6 commission bill, Republican Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, an outright fascist, anti-Semite and QAnon conspiracy adherent, was holding a joint “America First” rally with fellow far-right Trump acolyte Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida in Greene's home district of Dalton, Georgia.

As reported previously here, the charge by Greene that Democratic New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a supporter of “terrorism” amounts to a death threat aimed at mobilizing the same fascistic forces involved in the January 6 assault against targeted Democrats.

At the Dalton, Georgia rally, Greene and Gaetz declared they were waging a “civil war” within the Republican Party in behalf of Trump. Greene doubled down on her remarks of last week, when she equated the requirement that people wear masks during the pandemic, including in the chamber of the House of Representatives, with the Nazis' requirement that Jews wear a gold Star of David to mark them for persecution and death in Hitler's gas chambers.

At the Dalton rally, she equated the “National Socialist” Nazi Party in Germany with what she called the “National Socialist” Democratic Party in the US. This is precisely the type of incitement used by far-right militia members in 2020 to target Democratic governors in Michigan and Virginia who had imposed social distancing measures to be kidnapped and executed. Those plots proved to be the precursors for the attack on the US Capitol on January 6.



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