



# WESTERN STATES SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

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## 15 January 2021

In pondering the events that occurred at the United States Capitol on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021, it is quite evident that prior to the breaching of the Capitol building, thousands of people attended a rally where several people spoke, including President Trump. At some point near the conclusion of that rally, a small portion of the group initiated a march that eventually culminated in an aggressive and unlawful attack on the Capitol.

The facts of what happened and who was involved continue to surface and most likely will for weeks and months to come. What cannot be ignored is the fact that many American citizens are responsible for the criminal conduct that occurred and because of that, I fully support holding them accountable.

This type of aggressive and criminal behavior elicits fear. I do not wish to minimize how congressional members felt in the height of the event but I think it is important to point out that the fear they experienced can be likened to the same fear and anxiety that hundreds of thousands of Americans felt throughout this past year. The riots and criminal protests that desecrated our major cities across the country these past several months were similarly destructive to lives, property and peace of mind.

I do not feel this should be viewed as anything other than what it was, a riot. I also feel that everyone who participated, did so on their own accord. They made a choice to commit criminal acts and our justice system is adequately prepared to address those responsible. Likewise, this level of accountability should be applied across the nation to all persons who hold our community's captive through fear and oppressive criminal acts that exceed the constitutional right to assemble.

The path for the redress of grievances cannot, and should not, assume that violation of the law is appropriate. Yet, in our country today, by all appearances, it seems to be the norm. What we witnessed on January 6, 2021 exceeded the realm of decency for any American who believes we are a nation of laws.

It is my hope that many of you, like me, experienced sadness and an overwhelming sense of disbelief in what we saw. If you did, it gives me hope that you still believe in the rule of law that this country has held so dear.

Sheriff Fred A. Lamphere  
President, Western States Sheriffs Association