

Republicans claim Capitol riot was legitimate political discourse



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The RNC voted to censure Cheney and Kinzinger, two anti-Trump Republicans who are sitting alongside seven Democrats on the House Select Committee on the January 6 attack. The resolution passed by the RNC accused Cheney and Kinzinger of supporting “Democrat efforts to destroy President Trump more than they support winning back a Republican majority in 2022.”

Cheney and Kinzinger, the resolution continued, “are participating in a Democrat-led persecution of ordinary citizens engaged in legitimate political discourse.”

The riot on January 6, 2021, has been described by Democrats in scathing terms, with President Joe Biden calling participants “domestic terrorists” and Vice President Kamala Harris likening January 6 to the Pearl Harbor and 9/11 attacks.

Republicans, many of whom initially condemned the actions of the rioters, have since turned their anger on Democrats, accusing them of playing up the violence on the day for political gain. Some in the GOP are now claiming that elements within the federal government egged on the rioters, while others have expressed concern at the conditions some of the suspected rioters are being held in.

Few within the GOP have downplayed the severity of the riot to the extent of the party’s latest resolution. Yet the shift in tone has not just come from the RNC. Speaking at a rally in Texas late last month, Trump himself promised that, if re-elected in 2024, he would “give [the rioters] pardons, because they are being treated so unfairly” compared to ‘Black Lives Matter’ protesters who rioted in major cities in 2020.

Trump’s pledge to his jailed supporters was significant, as he had refrained from commenting on their situation throughout 2021. The new, harder line of both Trump and the RNC hasn’t pleased everyone within the party. Utah Senator Mitt Romney, one of Trump’s most prominent Republican critics, declared on Friday that “shame falls on a party that would censure persons of conscience, who seek truth in the face of vitriol.”

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