

WASHINGTON (AP) — Text of President Joe Biden's speech Thursday marking the one-year anniversary of the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, as provided by the White House:

Madam Vice President, my fellow Americans: To state the obvious, one year ago today, in this sacred place, democracy was attacked — simply attacked. The will of the people was under assault. The Constitution — our Constitution — faced the gravest of threats.

Outnumbered and in the face of a brutal attack, the Capitol Police, the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, the National Guard, and other brave law enforcement officials saved the rule of law.

Our democracy held. We the people endured. And we the people prevailed.

For the first time in our history, a president had not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol.

But they failed. They failed.

And on this day of remembrance, we must make sure that such an attack never, never happens again.

I'm speaking to you today from Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol. This is where the House of Representatives met for 50 years in the decades leading up to the Civil War. This is — on this floor is where a young congressman of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, sat at desk 191.

Above him — above us, over that door leading into the Rotunda — is a sculpture depicting Clio, the muse of history. In her hands, an open book in which she records the events taking place in this chamber below.

Clio stood watch over this hall one year ago today, as she has for more than 200 years. She recorded what took place. The real history. The real facts. The real truth. The facts and the truth that Vice President Harris just shared and that you and I and the whole world saw with our own eyes.

The Bible tells us that we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. We shall know the truth.

Well, here is the God's truth about January 6th, 2021:

Close your eyes. Go back to that day. What do you see? Rioters rampaging, waving for the first time inside this Capitol a Confederate flag that symbolized the cause to destroy America, to rip us apart.

Even during the Civil War, that never, ever happened. But it happened here in 2021.

What else do you see? A mob breaking windows, kicking in doors, breaching the Capitol. American flags on poles being used as weapons, as spears. Fire extinguishers being thrown at the heads of police officers.

A crowd that professes their love for law enforcement assaulted those police officers, dragged them, sprayed them, stomped on them.

Over 140 police officers were injured.

We've all heard the police officers who were there that day testify to what happened. One officer called it, quote, a "medieval" battle, and that he was more afraid that day than he was fighting the war in Iraq.

They've repeatedly asked since that day: How dare anyone — anyone — diminish, belittle, or deny the hell they were put through?

We saw it with our own eyes. Rioters menaced these halls, threatening the life of the Speaker of the House, literally erecting gallows to hang the vice president of the United States of America.

But what did we not see?

We didn't see a former president, who had just rallied the mob to attack — sitting in the private dining room off the Oval Office in the White House, watching it all on television and doing nothing for hours as police were assaulted, lives at risk, and the nation's capital under siege.

This wasn't a group of tourists. This was an armed insurrection.

They weren't looking to uphold the will of the people. They were looking to deny the will of the people.

They were looking to uphold — they weren't looking to uphold a free and fair election. They were looking to overturn one.

They weren't looking to save the cause of America. They were looking to subvert the Constitution.

This isn't about being bogged down in the past. This is about making sure the past isn't buried.

That's the only way forward. That's what great nations do. They don't bury the truth, they face up to it. Sounds like hyperbole, but that's the truth: They face up to it.

We are a great nation. My fellow Americans, in life, there's truth and, tragically, there are lies — lies conceived and spread for profit and power. We must be absolutely clear about what is true and what is a lie.

And here is the truth: The former president of the United States of America has created and spread a web of lies about the 2020 election. He's done so because he values power over principle, because he sees his own interests as more important than his country's interests and

America's interests, and because his bruised ego matters more to him than our democracy or our Constitution.

He can't accept he lost, even though that's what 93 United States senators, his own attorney general, his own vice president, governors and state officials in every battleground state have all said: He lost.

That's what 81 million of you did as you voted for a new way forward.

He has done what no president in American history — the history of this country — has ever, ever done: He refused to accept the results of an election and the will of the American people.

While some courageous men and women in the Republican Party are standing against it, trying to uphold the principles of that party, too many others are transforming that party into something else. They seem no longer to want to be the party — the party of Lincoln, Eisenhower, Reagan, the Bushes.

But whatever my other disagreements are with Republicans who support the rule of law and not the rule of a single man, I will always seek to work together with them to find shared solutions where possible. Because if we have a shared belief in democracy, then anything is possible — anything.

And so, at this moment, we must decide: What kind of nation are we going to be? Are we going to be a nation that accepts political violence as a norm? Are we going to be a nation where we allow partisan election officials to overturn the legally expressed will of the people?

Are we going to be a nation that lives not by the light of the truth but in the shadow of lies?

We cannot allow ourselves to be that kind of nation. The way forward is to recognize the truth and to live by it.

The “big lie” being told by the former president and many Republicans who fear his wrath is that the insurrection in this country actually took place on Election Day — November 3rd, 2020.

Think about that. Is that what you thought? Is that what you thought when you voted that day? Taking part in an insurrection? Is that what you thought you were doing? Or did you think you were carrying out your highest duty as a citizen and voting?

The former president and his supporters are trying to rewrite history. They want you to see Election Day as the day of insurrection and the riot that took place here on January 6th as the true expression of the will of the people.

Can you think of a more twisted way to look at this country — to look at America? I cannot.

Here's the truth: The election of 2020 was the greatest demonstration of democracy in the history of this country.

More of you voted in that election than have ever voted in all of American history. Over 150 million Americans went to the polls and voted that day in a pandemic — some at great risk to their lives. They should be applauded, not attacked.

Right now, in state after state, new laws are being written — not to protect the vote, but to deny it; not only to suppress the vote, but to subvert it; not to strengthen or protect our democracy, but because the former president lost.

Instead of looking at the election results from 2020 and saying they need new ideas or better ideas to win more votes, the former president and his supporters have decided the only way for them to win is to suppress your vote and subvert our elections.

It's wrong. It's undemocratic. And frankly, it's un-American.

The second big lie being told by the former president and his supporters is that the results of the election of 2020 can't be trusted.

The truth is that no election — no election in American history has been more closely scrutinized or more carefully counted. Every legal challenge questioning the results in every court in this country that could have been made was made and was rejected — often rejected by Republican-appointed judges, including judges appointed by the former president himself, from state courts to the United States Supreme Court.

Recounts were undertaken in state after state. Georgia — Georgia counted its results three times, with one recount by hand. Phony partisan audits were undertaken long after the election in several states. None changed the results. And in some of them, the irony is the margin of victory actually grew slightly.

So, let's speak plainly about what happened in 2020. Even before the first ballot was cast, the former president was preemptively sowing doubt about the election results. He built his lie over months. It wasn't based on any facts. He was just looking for an excuse — a pretext — to cover for the truth.

He's not just a former president. He's a defeated former president — defeated by a margin of over 7 million of your votes in a full and free and fair election.

There is simply zero proof the election results were inaccurate. In fact, in every venue where evidence had to be produced and an oath to tell the truth had to be taken, the former president failed to make his case.

Just think about this: The former president and his supporters have never been able to explain how they accept as accurate the other election results that took place on November 3rd — the elections for governor, United States Senate, the House of Representatives — elections in which they closed the gap in the House.

They challenge none of that. The president's name was first, then we went down the line — governors, senators, House of Representatives. Somehow, those results were accurate on the same ballot, but the presidential race was flawed?

And on the same ballot, the same day, cast by the same voters. The only difference: The former president didn't lose those races; he just lost the one that was his own.

Finally, the third big lie being told by a former president and his supporters is that the mob who sought to impose their will through violence are the nation's true patriots.

Is that what you thought when you looked at the mob ransacking the Capitol, destroying property, literally defecating in the hallways, rifling through desks of senators and representatives, hunting down members of congress? Patriots? Not in my view.

To me, the true patriots were the more than 150 (million) Americans who peacefully expressed their vote at the ballot box, the election workers who protected the integrity of the vote, and the heroes who defended this Capitol.

You can't love your country only when you win. You can't obey the law only when it's convenient. You can't be patriotic when you embrace and enable lies.

Those who stormed this Capitol and those who instigated and incited and those who called on them to do so held a dagger at the throat of America — at American democracy.

They didn't come here out of patriotism or principle. They came here in rage — not in service of America, but rather in service of one man.

Those who incited the mob — the real plotters — who were desperate to deny the certification of the election and defy the will of the voters.

But their plot was foiled. Congressmen — Democrats and Republicans — stayed. Senators, representatives, staff — they finished their work the Constitution demanded. They honored their oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Look, folks, now it's up to all of us — to “We the People” — to stand for the rule of law, to preserve the flame of democracy, to keep the promise of America alive.

That promise is at risk, targeted by the forces that value brute strength over the sanctity of democracy, fear over hope, personal gain over public good. Make no mistake about it: We're living at an inflection point in history.

Both at home and abroad, we're engaged anew in a struggle between democracy and autocracy, between the aspirations of the many and the greed of the few, between the people's right of self-determination and self- — the self-seeking autocrat.

From China to Russia and beyond, they're betting that democracy's days are numbered. They've actually told me democracy is too slow, too bogged down by division to succeed in today's rapidly changing, complicated world.

And they're betting — they're betting America will become more like them and less like us. They're betting that America is a place for the autocrat, the dictator, the strongman.

I do not believe that. That is not who we are. That is not who we have ever been. And that is not who we should ever, ever be.

Our Founding Fathers, as imperfect as they were, set in motion an experiment that changed the world — literally changed the world. Here in America, the people would rule, power would be transferred peacefully — never at the tip of a spear or the barrel of a gun. And they committed to paper an idea that couldn't live up to — they couldn't live up to but an idea that couldn't be constrained: Yes, in America all people are created equal.

We reject the view that if you succeed, I fail; if you get ahead, I fall behind; if I hold you down, I somehow lift myself up.

The former president, who lies about this election, and the mob that attacked this Capitol could not be further away from the core American values.

They want to rule or they will ruin — ruin what our country fought for at Lexington and Concord; at Gettysburg; at Omaha Beach; Seneca Falls; Selma, Alabama. And what we were fighting for: the right to vote, the right to govern ourselves, the right to determine our own destiny.

And with rights come responsibilities: the responsibility to see each other as neighbors — maybe we disagree with that neighbor, but they're not an adversary; the responsibility to accept defeat then get back in the arena and try again the next time to make your case; the responsibility to see that America is an idea — an idea that requires vigilant stewardship.

As we stand here today — one year since January 6th, 2021 — the lies that drove the anger and madness we saw in this place, they have not abated.

So, we have to be firm, resolute, and unyielding in our defense of the right to vote and to have that vote counted. Some have already made the ultimate sacrifice in this sacred effort.

Jill and I have mourned police officers in this Capitol Rotunda not once but twice in the wake of January 6th: once to honor Officer Brian Sicknick, who lost his life the day after the attack, and a second time to honor Officer Billy Evans, who lost his life defending this Capitol as well.

We think about the others who lost their lives and were injured and everyone living with the trauma of that day — from those defending this Capitol to members of Congress in both parties and their staffs, to reporters, cafeteria workers, custodial workers, and their families. Don't kid yourself: The pain and scars from that day run deep.

I said it many times and it's no more true or real than when we think about the events of January 6th: We are in a battle for the soul of America. A battle that, by the grace of God and the goodness and gracious — and greatness of this nation, we will win. Believe me, I know how

difficult democracy is. And I'm crystal clear about the threats America faces. But I also know that our darkest days can lead to light and hope.

From the death and destruction, as the vice president referenced, in Pearl Harbor came the triumph over the forces of fascism. From the brutality of Bloody Sunday on the Edmund Pettus Bridge came historic voting rights legislation.

So, now let us step up, write the next chapter in American history where January 6th marks not the end of democracy, but the beginning of a renaissance of liberty and fair play.

I did not seek this fight brought to this Capitol one year ago today, but I will not shrink from it either. I will stand in this breach. I will defend this nation. And I will allow no one to place a dagger at the throat of our democracy.

We will make sure the will of the people is heard; that the ballot prevails, not violence; that authority in this nation will always be peacefully transferred.

I believe the power of the presidency and the purpose is to unite this nation, not divide it; to lift us up, not tear us apart; to be about us — about us, not about “me.” Deep in the heart of America burns a flame lit almost 250 years ago — of liberty, freedom, and equality.

This is not a land of kings or dictators or autocrats. We're a nation of laws; of order, not chaos; of peace, not violence.

Here in America, the people rule through the ballot, and their will prevails. So, let us remember: Together, we're one nation, under God, indivisible; that today, tomorrow, and forever, at our best, we are the United States of America.

God bless you all. May God protect our troops. And may God bless those who stand watch over our democracy.