



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 1, 2022

Harvard Study Obliterates Claims of January 6 “Insurrection”

Three scholars from the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School [sought answers](#) to why protesters participated in the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021. If they were looking for proof that there was an organized insurrection — defined as “the act or an instance of open revolt against civil authority ... specifically, the armed resistance of a number of persons to the power of the state” — they were greatly disappointed.

The best they could come up with was that most protesters were there to support their president, Donald Trump, and his claims of election fraud. Insurrection was a distant third on the list, at less than eight percent.

According to the authors:

We [quantified] the most frequently cited reasons for participating in the breach of the Capitol Building....

We coded the contents of 469 charging and sentencing documents representing 417 defendants....

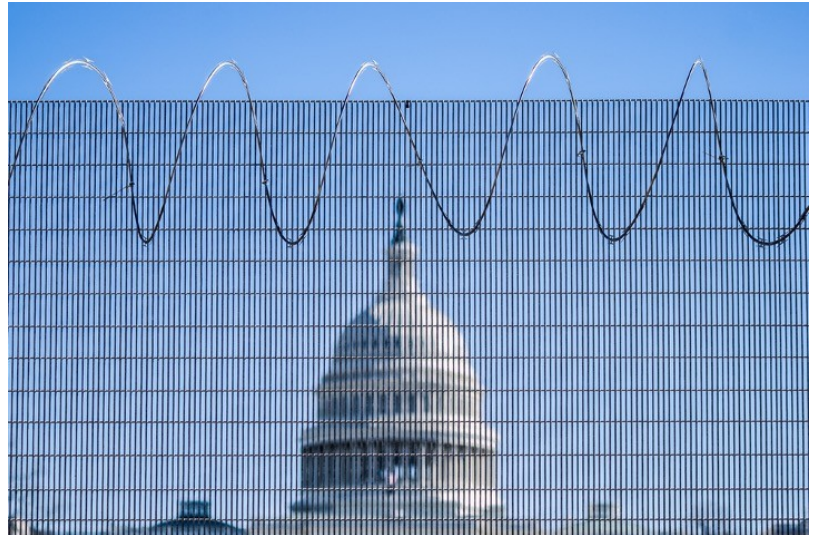
We find that the largest fraction of defendants were motivated to come to Washington DC on January 6 by either their desire to support President Trump, their concerns about the integrity of the 2020 election, or some combination of both.

They expected to find a very large percentage bent on insurrection. After all, on January 13, just one week after the breach, the Democrat-controlled House (with the compliance of 10 Republicans) voted to impeach the president for “incitement of insurrection.”

And that’s what the January 6 Committee claimed occurred:

In the first of a series of hearings beginning in June 2022, Committee Vice Chair Elizabeth Cheney laid out a case suggesting that Trump had knowingly subverted the election results, in part by strategically spreading various accusations of voter fraud and unfounded conspiracy theories about the election that he knew to be false — a campaign that has since been dubbed “The Big Lie.”

Cheney said, “President Trump summoned the mob, assembled the mob and lit the flame of this attack.”



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But did the members of the mob see it that way? Did they see themselves as Trump's personal volunteer army, or as dedicated (albeit frustrated) countrymen, trying to defend democracy?

Relatedly, did they even believe Trump's claims, or were they simply protesting the outcome of the election, rather than the process by which it was decided?

The authors charted the results of their study:

MOTIVATIONS OF JANUARY 6TH DEFENDANTS

Support Trump 20.62%
2020 Election Rigged 20.62%
Revolution / Civil War / Secession 7.91%
Pursuit of "Historical" Significance 7.43%
Peaceful Protest 6.95%
General Interest in Violence 6.24%
Protect the country or "Take back the country" 5.76%
Distrust of Government 5.76%
Marxism, Socialism, Communism 5.76%
QAnon 4.08%
Resisting Tyranny 2.88%
Religiosity 2.40%
Coronavirus 2.16%
Exercise 1st Amendment Rights / Make Voice Heard 1.20%
Curiosity 0.48%

In other words, far from planning to be part of an insurrection, an uprising, an open revolt, or an armed resistance to authority, less than eight percent — 7.91 percent, to be exact — were motivated by "revolution/civil war/secession."

The authors were disappointed and surprised by their results:

Far and away, we find that the two most commonly cited reasons for breaching the US Capitol were a desire to support Trump on January 6 in DC and concerns about election integrity.

They were, to be clear, motivated to *support* the Republic, not to destroy it!

Wrote the authors:

The documents show that Trump and his allies convinced an unquantifiable number of Americans that representative democracy in the United States was not only in decline, but



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in imminent, existential danger.

This belief translated into a widespread fear of democratic and societal breakdown, which, in turn, motivated hundreds of Americans to travel to DC from far corners of the country in what they were convinced was the nation's most desperate hour.

But the narrative from the prostitute press remains unchanged. On Friday CNN published its "[minute-by-minute horrors of the January 6 insurrection](#), and then-President Donald Trump's role in fomenting the violence."

That, it turns out (as confirmed by the Harvard study), is the real Big Lie.

Related article:

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