

January 6th Panel – Opening Statement

The Hon. Adam Kinzinger

January 6, 2026

Thank you, Leader Jeffries and my old friend, Congressman Thompson, for convening us on this grave anniversary and having me back at the Capitol today.

Five years ago today, a President of this country decided that America's legacy of a peaceful transfer of power was beneath him. He shamelessly directed a violent mob to the Capitol to disrupt the certification of his successor and rob the American people of our votes. He aimed to destroy Americans' self-determination and replace it with his own corrupt will.

By now, you have seen the videos. You know how vicious it was. No rational person can look at the violence that occurred on January 6th and think that it is not wrong. But even more concerning is that threats to our democracy have continued beyond what we witnessed five years ago today.

The persisting threat to our nation lies in how Donald Trump and his allies have manufactured an alternate reality of conspiracies to *support* their violent siege of our democracy; it's simple, they want to rewrite history.

These conspiracies started even before the January 6th attack. The moment Donald Trump realized he could lose to Joe Biden, he began touting the "big lie" to undercut the public's trust in the election – Trump wanted us to believe the lie that the election was stolen from Trump due to widespread voter fraud.

This has been unequivocally disproven. It's been debunked by a series of independent agencies, Trump's own advisors, and more than 60 courts did not rule in Trump's favor. And yet, Donald Trump continues to spin. Trump even lied a few weeks ago, when he told a little girl calling the White House on Christmas Eve that he had "won Pennsylvania" in 2020. [*"I won Pennsylvania three times."*]

And his supporters follow suit, either knowingly pushing debunked conspiracy theories or still duped by the MAGA cult, to spread ridiculous, widely disproven narratives whitewashing Trump's role and minimizing the attack.

For example, his followers claim that Capitol Police opened the doors to the rioters, even though we have the footage of these officers being attacked and run down – with rioters literally stepping over injured officers to get inside.

They claim that the January 6th attack was a sudden, unpredictable event. In reality, Trump sent rioters to the Capitol on January 6, and we have the receipts showing that extremist right-wing groups planned the attack for weeks beforehand.

They also like to claim that the left-wing group Antifa – not Trump's supporters – secretly orchestrated all the violence on January 6th. We know it was groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers that started the violence on January 6. DOJ's and FBI's investigation also debunked this wild theory.

Many of my fellow Republicans even want to pretend that Donald Trump wasn't responsible for, and that he did not condone, the violence on January 6th, even though we all can plainly see that it was Donald Trump who called on his supporters to "March down Pennsylvania Avenue" and "fight like hell." It was Donald Trump who sat in the White

House for 187 minutes watching the attack unfold, throwing gasoline on the flames with his 2:24 pm tweet targeting Vice President Pence. And since then, he has called January 6th defendants “political prisoners” and “hostages,” as if they were innocent of any crimes.

Then, in one of his first acts of President this term, Donald Trump immediately pardoned *every single person* who took up arms for his wicked cause that day.

I hear often, “Well, Adam, Trump only pardoned the innocent ones. He’d never pardon cop beaters or real criminals.” This is *another* false narrative.

Donald Trump didn’t just pardon the non-violent or non-dangerous people. He pardoned *every single criminal* who beat, kicked, punched, and pepper-sprayed over 140 of our law enforcement officers. He pardoned *every single criminal* who helped drag a screaming officer into a crowd and said to shoot him with his own gun.

I get asked frequently: “Why are you still going on about January 6th? Can’t you just let it go?” If our country had achieved real accountability and deterrence, we could move on. But we have not, a fact made clear by Donald Trump still spinning his conspiracies and his base continuing to promote them.

Donald Trump knows that these lies and stories only strengthen his power over the American people. How can I allow this without sharing what I know to be true – that on January 6th, he tried to overthrow our government – and call myself a patriot?

How can we ever ensure that our votes matter if we bow to the narrative of a President who incites an insurrection, denies doing it, then pardons the insurrectionists?

The rewriting of January 6th is un-American. That is why we are here on this important day, to safeguard our democracy and call out corruption without fear of Donald Trump's persecution, so that a day like this may never stain our country again.

I thank you, and I yield back.