

January 6th Five-Year Anniversary
Hearing of the House Democratic Caucus
Statement of Skye Perryman, President & CEO, Democracy Forward Foundation
January 6, 2026

Thank you Rep. Aguilar and Leader Jeffries and Rep. Thompson for convening this hearing today.

I am here today as a lawyer and as the President and CEO of Democracy Forward Foundation. We are a non-partisan, national legal organization that is committed to achieving a nation and a democracy that enables all people living in America to thrive.

We have heard from prior speakers today about the horrific events of January 6, 2021. Today, I will focus on its aftermath.

In the months following January 6, 2021, the United States was added to a list of global backsliding democracies by the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. The nation has remained on that list ever since.

The already concerning backslide has accelerated further over the past 11 months as the president and his allies in Congress have governed in a way that is on a collision course with the Constitution.

- The president has sought to usurp the power of this Congress through impounding funds, removing a foreign head of state without notification or authorization by Congress, and blatantly decimating agencies Congress created to serve people.
- The Department of Justice has become politicized, being used to attack and punish the president's opponents and any institutions that stand up to him. There are also reports of more than 35 cases where the government has provided false or incorrect information to the federal courts.
- The president is seeking to enrich himself and his friends while leaving people across the nation without health care and resources to make ends meet.
- The president and his allies in this Congress are engaged in attempts to undermine the ability of people in this nation to vote.
- All of this while the president and his administration are engaged in daily infringements of Constitutional rights such as due process, the First Amendment, and equal protection under the law.

The threat to the American people and our democracy that many of you experienced first hand on January 6th is now playing out on national and global stages – with the president seeking to assert king-like authority over the American people, even as the nation celebrates its 250th anniversary of winning its freedom from an arbitrary king.

And, yet, there is another part of what is happening in America that provides a pathway for the future. As some powerful institutions have given in to the President's intimidation tactics – while others have opted to sit on the sidelines – **the people have stepped forward.**

- As the president and his allies tried to intimidate people who were using their voices in peaceful protest, the people weren't deterred. We saw the largest peaceful mobilization of people in U.S. history – all united in declaring the centuries-old American commitment: No Kings. It is a stroke of dark irony that the president who pardoned violent rioters and insurrectionists from January 6th has called peaceful No-Kings protesters anti-American.
- Over the past 11 months, there have been more than 500 federal court cases filed by people and communities challenging incursions on their rights – and the people are winning in court before judges appointed by Democratic presidents, Republican presidents, and President Trump himself. Even as the president has intimidated lawyers and targeted judges, the nation is currently seeing the largest and most successful affirmative litigation effort to stop executive overreach – powered by people.
- Civil servants – the people who have served this nation in our federal government regardless of who is in power - have been targeted by the president, who has sought to indiscriminately fire or undermine them. But they haven't given up working for the American people. Through our DemocracyWorks250 program, at Democracy Forward a number of former civil servants are putting their expertise to work to build plans for a government that listens to people and delivers better for all of us.
- And, across the nation, people of all ideological and personal backgrounds are affirming their commitment to the non-negotiable principles of American democracy as part of the We Hold These Truths initiative. Today, we are launching a pledge campaign to show support among people of all backgrounds in our nation for the non-negotiable principles of our democracy: voting and elections, equality, due process, personal freedom, and the rule of law.

As we reflect on the five years since January 6th, our democracy is in peril but there is a path forward. Congress must do its part – to assert its check on the president's excesses,

to defend the American people from the autocratic steps we are seeing, and to protect the right of the people to vote. The people must keep showing up too, as we will in courts and communities across the nation. We must fight and overcome those threats to our democracy that we saw in all their ugliness five years ago today in this very building.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.