

REP. CORY BUSH, H Res 95, 4 February 2021

Thank you for being such a leader at this time.

Madame Speaker, St. Louis and I rise to reflect on how our office experienced the white supremacist attack on our nation's Capital on January the Sixth. Everybody's experiences are different; and everybody's experiences must be validated. Everybody's experiences.

I remember sitting up in the Gallery, listening to floor speeches, knowing that there was supposed to be a protest happening outside, seeing people outside, and thinking that this is just part of the day.

Until something happened.

And I just felt the need to stand up and walk out. I walked out, and I went over to the steps and I went down a flight, and I went to the steps, and I went to look, to see what's happening outside, and I saw the tip-tops of flags. And then I saw more of the flags, and I could read words. And then after I could read words I could see people. And then I realized that people were approaching.

So I hopped on the nearest elevator and left and made it back to my office safely. And we came back in to our office. We walked in and we started to see on our televisions people breaching doors. And I remember thinking, "is this actually what's happening?"

The more I watched -- and people were calling this a protest -- let me say this: That was not a protest. I've been to hundreds of protests in my life. I've co-organized, co-led, led, and organized protests, not only in Ferguson, Missouri alongside the amazing Ferguson front line that most people don't even acknowledge, they don't even know their names, they don't even know who died, they don't even acknowledge the amazing people that put their lives and livelihoods on the line for our safety, believing that black lives matter, because they actually do.

And we shouldn't have to say it, it should just be true.

But it's not evident in our society, where we have to continue to say, "my life matters."

And then they hit us with things like this, and so I remember sitting in the office with my team and just thinking to myself, I feel like I'm back; at this very minute I feel like I'm back. I feel like this was one of the days out there on the streets when the white supremacists would show

up and start shooting at us. This is one of the days when the police would ambush us from behind trees and from behind buildings and all of a sudden now we're on the ground being brutalized. It felt like one of those days. And I just remember taking a second, thinking, if they touch these doors, if they hit these doors the way they hit that door, if they hit these doors and come anywhere near my staff – and I'm just going to be real honest about it – my thought process was, we're banging to the end. I'm not letting them take out my people, and you're not taking me out. We've come too far.

So, Madame Speaker, St. Louis and I rise with a message for our Republican colleagues: On January 6th, I thought about January 3rd, and I thought about how we all raised our right hands up and took an oath, each and every one of us on this very floor we swore, that we would support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. Even though that that Constitution wasn't written for people who look like me; even that Constitution wasn't written by people who look like me; and even though that Constitution cemented an unjust nation for people like me. My team and I got to working, we unveiled legislation to investigate and expel those who were responsible for inciting this attack, so that we could defend it, because we have a duty to fight for a more perfect union. Because if we cannot stand up to white supremacy in this moment as representatives, then why did you run for office in the first place?

No matter what district you represent, no matter where you live, no matter Democrat or Republican, you represent a district that is, on average, about seven hundred thousand people. Meaning, you have to represent those who love you; those who despise you; those who voted for you; those who swear they'll never cast a vote for you; people who talk like you; and people who don't look like you.

Building better communities, building better lives, building a better society is not a Democratic or Republican issue. We can't build a better society if members are too scared to stand up and act to reject the white supremacist attack that happened right before our eyes. How can we trust that you will address the suffering that white supremacy causes on a day to day basis in the shadows, if you can't even address the white supremacy that happens right in front of you in your House?

Does your silence speak to your agreement, is the question.

In St. Louis, the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately hospitalizing and killing black and brown people. Well, I've lived that. We have people dying from gun violence, a crisis that stems from decades of economic dis-investment and disruption, from an over-reliance on policing, that this very chamber has continually voted to endorse. I've cried those tears, you don't know what that's like. So I ask you today, take a moment to think about what it's like to live what we've lived through. If you cannot do what's right in the face of [a] blatant, heinous, vile white supremacist attack like the one we just saw, how will you do right by the black and brown people you represent, who just want to know that our children will have safety, that our children will have life and death, they will have shelter? Because you represent us, too.

So, on January 3rd, we stood together to swear our oath to office to the Constitution; we swore to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic. Well, it was attacked by a domestic enemy called white supremacy, and we must stand together now, today, to uphold that oath and hold every single person who helped incite it accountable.

Thank you, and I yield back.