

The emergencies of climate and democracy are linked | Columbia Journalism Review

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January 6, 2022

A year ago today, Mitch McConnell and Kevin McCarthy were fleeing for their lives as a violent mob swarmed the halls of the US Capitol. With their personal safety at risk, the two most powerful Republicans on Capitol Hill at last stood up to Donald Trump. In a heated phone call, McCarthy, the House minority leader, fruitlessly implored the president to [call off the mob](#). Senate majority leader McConnell later called the rioters “[terrorists](#)” and said Trump was “morally responsible” for the violence.

But McConnell and McCarthy soon slunk back to enabling Trump’s assaults on democracy. They were quiet while Trump insisted the 2020 election was stolen and that anyone who disagreed must be purged from public office. They stayed mute as Trump supporters threatened violence against election officials and Republican-dominated state legislatures rewrote laws and procedures to prevent fair voting.

McConnell and McCarthy have shamelessly put party ahead of country and ambition ahead of duty, setting up alarming ramifications for the future. Scientists have [said for years](#) that humanity faces a climate emergency and only rapid, far-reaching action can preserve a livable planet. On the first anniversary of the 6 January attack, it’s clear the United States also faces a democracy emergency as well. Only rapid, far-reaching action can preserve a government that is of, by, and for the people.

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