

Mike Gallagher's Vote Against January 6th Commission Exposes Political Cowardice

Written by WisDems Press

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Gallagher voted against the bipartisan commission solely for the sake of politics, say Dems.

MADISON, Wis. -- Last week, John Nichols, associate editor of the Cap Times, wrote a scathing op-ed on Rep. Mike Gallagher's cowardly decision to vote against a bipartisan commission to investigate the deadly January 6th insurrection.

No matter how he tries to spin it, Gallagher voted against the bipartisan commission solely for the sake of politics. Republicans fear the commission will draw more attention to their role in instigating the violence and spreading lies about democracy, as well as [anger Donald Trump and his base](#). And as Gallagher is rumored to be seeking higher office, he's abandoned all sense of political courage in the hopes of cozying up to GOP leaders and donors - and avoiding the same fate as Liz Cheney.

Read Nichols' op-ed below.

The Nation: [Amid All the GOP's Profiles in Political Cowardice, None Is More Stark Than That of Mike Gallagher](#)

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When House impeachment managers made the case for convicting former president Donald Trump on charges of inciting the January 6 insurrection, some of the most compelling arguments came from Republicans.

[...]

The star of the montage, and of a presentation by another manager, Texas Representative Joaquin Castro, was Wisconsin Representative Mike Gallagher, an ambitious young Republican who on January 6 used social media and a dramatic cable news appearance to speak directly to Trump. "Mr. President. You have got to stop this. You are the only person who can call this off. Call it off," the congressman declared, in a video posted from his Capitol Hill office. "The election is over. Call it off. This is bigger than you. It is bigger than any member of Congress. It is about the United States of America, which is more important than any politician." Later, Gallagher appeared on CNN, called the rioting "insane," compared it to violence he'd seen in Iraq, and announced that "the President needs to call it off."

Gallagher's profile rose in the aftermath of the January 6 attack, as he told of how he had barricaded his House office and taken a Marine sword from the wall because "it seemed the most practical weapon with which I could defend myself, if it came to that." Editorials hailed him for what was seen as a politically courageous rebuke to his own party's president. Talk about Gallagher as a gubernatorial prospect, or a possible successor to US Senator Ron Johnson—should the conspiracy-theory peddling Republican choose to stand down in 2022—amplified in Wisconsin and nationally.

Here, it seemed, was a strong, sensible Republican with the political courage to stand up to Trump and steer the Republican Party away from the Big Lie.

Yet, four months after the attack, as the time nears for decisions about seeking higher office, Gallagher's political courage has failed him.

On Wednesday, when the House voted on setting up a national commission to investigate the January 6 violence, dozens of Republicans joined Democrats in supporting the move.

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[...]

Yet Gallagher opposed creating the commission, in a failure of political nerve that led “Never Trump” conservative commentator Charlie Sykes, a fellow Wisconsinite, to observe, “One-time rising stars continue to debase themselves.... Cowardice is contagious.”

For Gallagher, the vote for the commission should have been easy. He rejected the Big Lie on January 6 when, after calling out Trump, he voted to certify Electoral College results that made Joe Biden the nation's 46th president. In the days that followed, as he was accepting accolades for his statements on the day of the attack, Gallagher supported calls for censuring Trump. “Let's be candid,” he declared. “President Donald Trump bears responsibility for the tragic events of Jan. 6.” Gallagher did not support impeachment, arguing in a long and somewhat tortured statement that “it will simply feed a cycle of enmity and polarization, which is already spiraling further out of control, chilling speech and silencing debate. We must break that cycle, whatever the cost to our own careers and however unsatisfying to our own sense of anger and outrage.”

To address that enmity, Gallagher argued in that January statement, members of Congress needed to stop playing “fruitless games” and recognize, “It is a time for honesty.”

[...]

In January, Gallagher acknowledged that truth-seeking was necessary.

By May, things had changed. After the dismissal of Cheney made it clear that Trump and the Big Liars retained influence over who might rise or fall in the GOP, the politically ambitious representative voted to block a bipartisan inquiry.

If Mike Gallagher wants to know why the American people do not trust members of Congress, he need look no further than his own mirror.

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