

Resolution # 70-19

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association
(GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University**



of the 70th Assembly
February 3, 2021

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,

Response to Insurrection on January 6th, 2021

(Decided: [Y / N / A])

1 Nature of the Situation:

2 In considering our responsibility to grapple with the meaning and effects of the January
3 6th insurrection, it is also important to keep in mind Penn State’s identity as Pennsylvania’s
4 land-grant institution—particularly since debate over the certification of the state’s
5 electors became a key tension leading up to and following the Capitol invasion. Eight
6 Pennsylvania Representatives—including a number who are Penn State alumni (Perry,
7 Joyce, Reschenthaler, and Thompson) and/or represent districts home to PSU
8 campuses—ultimately voted to reject the certification of the presidential electors¹, fanning
9 the flames of the insurrection and seeking to disrupt a peaceful transition of power. The
10 State Representative for the 33rd district (home to Penn State’s York campus), Doug
11 Mastriano, helped to organize and partially fund a bus trip for constituents to join the “Stop
12 the Steal” rally², some of whom have been identified as having breached the Capitol. In
13 recent weeks, news has also emerged that Penn State alum Scott Perry (US House
14 Representative for the 10th District, home to the Penn State Dickinson Law campus)

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/us/politics/republicans-against-certification.html>

² <https://www.inquirer.com/politics/pennsylvania/spl/doug-mastriano-trump-capitol-attack-resignation-investigation-20210108.html>

1 played a significant role in persuading ex-President Trump to contest the results of the
2 2020 election and may be facing calls for removal³.

3 In addition to the events of January 6th, we must also consider the implications of efforts
4 by State Senator Jake Corman (34th District, home to Penn State's University Park
5 campus) and other state representatives a day earlier. On January 5th, Corman, a Penn
6 State graduate and active member of the Alumni Association, led a coalition of
7 Republican senators to remove Lt. Governor John Fetterman from his position as
8 President of the Pennsylvania Senate, which resulted in Corman stepping into leadership
9 as the President pro tempore. Corman then used this power to refuse to seat a
10 democratically elected congressman from Allegheny County, despite the fact that the
11 election had been certified and was in accordance with rulings from the PA Supreme
12 Court⁴. On the evening of January 5th, Corman co-authored a letter with Republican
13 colleagues alleging that there were inconsistencies in the PA electoral process and
14 requesting that Congress delay the certification of electors⁵. Former President Trump
15 widely circulated this letter on social media and referenced it twice in his remarks prior to
16 the storming of the Capitol.

17 At an even more local level, we are also aware of at least a small number of current Penn
18 State students, faculty, and staff who attended the "rally" in D.C. on January 6th, and may
19 indeed have participated in the storming of the Capitol. At least one State College resident
20 has been charged with entering a restricted building, engaging in disorderly conduct on
21 Capitol grounds to impede government business, disorderly conduct in the Capitol and
22 demonstrating in the Capitol buildings. He was arrested and then returned to the
23 community.⁶ Given the sheer size of the Penn State community (and the hotly contested
24 nature of the Pennsylvania electoral process in 2020) it is likely that the actual number of
25 university-affiliated attendees and supporters is both significant and unknowable. Naming
26 this reality forces us to recognize that not all members of the Penn State community
27 "witnessed and watched this event unfold with intense sorrow, anger and fear" (from
28 President Barron's 1.6.2021 response statement⁷) but rather hoped for its success and
29 even participated in its undertaking. Recognizing this reality means grappling with
30 implications about the safety and security of community members and recognizing that
31 calls for 'healing,' 'reconciliation' and 'civil discourse' are empty gestures if not supported
32 by accountability.

33 The Pennsylvania State University prides itself in providing safe learning spaces for ALL
34 of its students. The sad reality is that we are not safe, and will not be safe until the
35 administration commits to rooting out hate, white supremacy and the active spread of
36 misinformation on all its campuses. If the allegations are true, the individuals mentioned

³ <https://www.witf.org/2021/01/25/rep-scott-perry-confirms-election-fraud-talks-with-trump-doj-lawyer-amid-presidents-effort-to-overturn-georgia-results/>

⁴ <https://www.inquirer.com/politics/pennsylvania/spl/john-fetterman-pennsylvania-senate-removed-republicans-jim-brewster-20210105.html>

⁵ <https://www.spotlightpa.org/news/2021/01/pennsylvania-senate-electoral-college-objection-donald-trump-joe-biden-2020-election/>

⁶ <https://www.statecollege.com/state-college-man-charged-in-u-s-capitol-riot/>

⁷ <https://news.psu.edu/story/622178/2020/06/03/president/message-penn-state-president-eric-j-barron>

1 above are a stain upon our institution. Our school's continued employment of
2 insurrectionists poses a threat to all students, especially students belonging to
3 marginalized communities.

4 **Recommended Course of Action:**

- 5 ● We, the 70th Assembly of the Graduate and Professional Students Association,
6 call on the University to leverage its institutional power in the fight for the
7 preservation of our democratic institutions in the face of the following threats:
 - 8 ○ Active spread of misinformation including but not limited to the safety of
9 our electoral system.
 - 10 ○ White supremacy.
 - 11 ○ Fascism.
- 12 ● Specifically, we demand an investigation is immediately opened into any Penn
13 State faculty, staff, or students that may have participated in the insurrection on
14 January 6th.
- 15 ● For the safety and betterment of our students, as well as for the continued good
16 reputation of PSU, the University must take any and all adverse action possible
17 against proven insurrectionists in its employ, and have this information be made
18 public to the university community.
- 19 ● We recommend the creation of an anonymous tip line where reports of alleged
20 participation in the insurrection on January 6th can be made.
- 21 ● We recommend the University work with local and federal agencies to make a
22 good faith effort in accurately and appropriately holding accountable any current
23 student, faculty or staff who participated in the events of January 6th.
- 24 ● We recommend that all information regarding participation of any current student,
25 faculty or staff, in the events on January 6th, be made public to the university
26 community.
- 27 ● The University should immediately begin a thorough assessment of threat, risk,
28 and safety protocols as it relates to possible attacks on behalf of white
29 supremacy groups.
- 30 ● We demand the University immediately provide a detailed accounting of any and
31 all past relationships, terminate all ongoing relationships, and justify any
32 continuing relationships with State Senator Jake Corman and US Representative
33 Scott Perry, and that administrators at the highest levels make a public statement
34 condemning their behavior and acknowledging their vicious disinformation
35 campaigns across the commonwealth. We question the ability of these
36 individuals to teach and evaluate all students in a fair and unbiased manner. We
37 question the critical thinking skills and intellectual acumen of conspiracy
38 theorists. We question the values of an institution that employs accused
39 insurrectionists without any inquiry into the matter.

40
41
42 Respectfully submitted,

Diego A. Hernandez
Advocacy and Diversity Committee Chair

Delegate, College of Liberal Arts

Ali Watts

Delegate, College of Education

Eli Fields

Delegate, Penn State Law

President _____
Veto

Affirm

The Graduate and Professional Student Association