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To: Interested Parties

From: NARAL Pro-Choice America Research Team

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Marking One Year Since the January 6, 2021 Insurrection, Pulling Back the Curtain on the Anti-Choice Movement's Role in Attacking Our Democracy

Overview

The January 6, 2021 attack on our country and our democracy put the right-wing's violent extremism on full display, as armed MAGA insurrectionists attempted to stop the certification of Joe Biden's election to the presidency. The attack also highlighted the clear overlap between the anti-choice movement and anti-democracy groups working to preserve white supremacist, misogynistic control in the United States. Anti-choice extremists were [openly complicit](#) in Trump's efforts to desecrate democracy and played an important role in the disinformation networks that fueled this tragic incident.

When it comes to inciting right-wing violence, the anti-choice movement [wrote the playbook](#). Today, the movement continues to support efforts to erode U.S. democracy and block our freedom to vote in service of its radical and unpopular agenda.

Anti-Choice Leaders Amplified Electoral Disinformation and Joined the Attack

In the leadup to the violent attack on January 6th, anti-choice [leaders](#) and [news outlets](#) amplified disinformation and [conspiracy theories](#) about the results of the 2020 presidential election. Abortion providers from across the country watched footage from the attack in horror, [recognizing many anti-choice clinic protesters](#) who regularly harassed patients outside of their clinics.

Additional research and reporting after the insurrection revealed numerous anti-choice leaders participated in the attack, many of whom continue to espouse extreme anti-choice rhetoric and expose their ties to other extremist ideologies and white supremacist groups. Examples include:

- **Abby Johnson**, a prominent anti-choice leader who [represented the movement](#) during the 2020 Republican National Convention, [promoted "Stop the Steal" events](#) and confirmed she was [on the steps of the Capitol](#) during the insurrection.
- **Mark Lee Dickson**, one of the [main figures](#) behind Texas' extreme vigilante-enforced ban on abortion (SB 8), posted photos [documenting his participation](#) in the attack.
- **Taylor Hansen**, the founder of "Baby Lives Matter" and a well-known [clinic protester](#), continues to [brag about his participation](#) in the insurrection and [amplify conspiracy theories](#) from [white supremacist hate groups](#) about the attack.
- **Derrick Evans**, a former member of the West Virginia House of Delegates who [livestreamed](#) the violence at the Capitol, has a history of harassing clinic workers, even [violating a restraining order filed against him](#) to stalk a clinic worker and post videos taken without her consent to his Facebook page, inspiring death threats against her.

- **Elijah Schaffer**, one of the insurrectionists who [broke into](#) Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office, [amplified anti-choice disinformation](#) leading up to the attack and stated the movement for racial justice was "[a threat to our existence.](#)"
- **John Brockhoeft**, who was convicted of [firebombing an abortion clinic](#) in Ohio and planning attacks on others, [livestreamed himself](#) at the Capitol.
- **Jason Storms**, the national director of [extreme anti-choice, anti-vax, Christian fundamentalist group](#) Operation Save America, [filmed the attack](#) while on scaffolding outside of the Capitol.
- **Sarah Cleveland**, a director at Abolish Human Abortion, was present at the Capitol and has reportedly attempted to [form alliances with white supremacist-linked groups](#), encouraging them to harass patients outside of abortion clinics.
- **Dave Daubenmire**, a clinic protester and leader of anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ group Salt and Light Brigade, was filmed alongside other members of his group [on the steps of the Capitol](#).

That so many anti-choice extremists joined the attack on our country is no surprise. What occurred at the Capitol on January 6th was no new monster—it has [clear roots](#) in the many, [many instances](#) of anti-choice violence inspired by carefully crafted disinformation and extreme rhetoric.

The Anti-Choice Movement Continues to Attack Democracy Today

Anti-choice groups were quick to [distance themselves](#) from the overtly white supremacist violence that occurred with [superficial condemnations](#) of the January 6th attack. Even then, many [promoted conspiracy theories](#) about the attack and [falsely equated the violent insurrection](#) at the Capitol with Movement for Black Lives protests in an attempt to normalize the unprecedented actions that occurred.

Notably, leading anti-choice groups have openly stated their [intent to focus on anti-democratic efforts](#) to disenfranchise voters and lock in anti-choice, anti-democracy control at the state level. Susan B. Anthony List, a prominent anti-choice group, has [pledged millions of dollars](#) to support voter suppression efforts and oppose federal legislation to protect voting rights.

The movement's anti-democratic agenda comes as no surprise given the reality that 8 in 10 Americans support the legal right to abortion. Anti-choice activists know they can't win on the merits of their unpopular policies, so they're attacking the right to vote itself by creating barriers to accessing the ballot box instead.