

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence Response to January 6, 2021

As an organization working to support survivors of gender violence and to engage all people in efforts to end the social and political systems that perpetuate violence, we are deeply pained by the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol and similar efforts in state capitols across the country. We are pained by the violence and by the permission and encouragement from many elected officials for this shameless attempt to subvert and overthrow the legitimate outcome of a democratic election. This harms our democracy.

Importantly, we are pained that the assault, once again, cast a worldwide spotlight on the egregious racial disparities in our country that allowed and enabled a mob to invade the U.S. Capitol. This mob of racist white vigilantes terrorized those inside, causing loss of life, inflicting lasting trauma on our nation and the individuals and communities we represent as we watched, and then were allowed to exit the scene with near-impunity. We stand in solidarity with those who have observed and decried the stark contrast in images from the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol, with the overwhelming force and violence inflicted on those demonstrating for racial justice in cities and communities across America.

We represent the collective experience of people who dedicate their lives to serving victims of violent crime, specifically victims of domestic and sexual violence. This is what coercive, abusive control and white supremacy look like. But instead of focusing on words to divide us- please- join us in committing to do and be better. We need all of us to commit to dismantling systems that are rooted in violence and oppression.

We won't agree on how to get there but we urge policymakers to no longer deny the reality of individuals and communities in the United States persistently and disproportionately devastated by violence in all its forms. This assault also took place at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic which claimed 4,000 lives in a single day last week and has also inflicted devastating and disproportionate harm on communities of color. This is not chance or bad luck.

We simply cannot ignore that racism and many other 'isms' are alive and well in this country. Domestic violence is not a single-issue problem – inequality is a root cause as well as a barrier to safety and self-determination that disproportionately harms communities of color and other marginalized survivors. If we want to end and prevent gender violence instead of only treating it, we must prioritize advancing equality, i.e., racial, economic, and social justice as fundamental to that work.

We will continue to uphold the truths, needs, challenges and dreams of individuals harmed by domestic, sexual and community violence. As fundamental to that work, we stand with everyone working to end

systemic and structural racism – and the devastating harms caused by inequities in our justice, healthcare, education, economic and other systems. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we use our collective strength to create a safe and peaceful world for all of us to thrive – and ensure equal access to everything that makes that possible.