

Bad News Piles Up To Discourage The Most Ardent Activists - But This Is No Time To Give Up

(by Bill Woods for StreetVibes)

Bad news continues to pile up! For the citizen activist who works to bring about a more equitable and just society, this daily dose of dismal stories concerning our public affairs can be both depressing and discouraging. New activism can seem doomed from the start.

The big shock that occurred last week was the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe versus Wade*. Five of the nine Justices voted to end a right of U.S. women that had existed for fifty years. With the Court's refusal to uphold the right of women to determine whether to continue their pregnancies, the religious right won its crusade against abortion. This decision left most women in this country shocked and dismayed, and it revealed how politically polarized the Court has become. Trump's appointment of three ant-abortion Justices brought about this dramatic reversal of the Court.

Since the Court left the future of abortion rights up to the states, many states have already eliminated that right for their female residents or greatly reduced it. For instance, Ohio's "heart beat law" essentially makes abortions illegal after six weeks of pregnancy. Some states had laws banning abortions that preceded *Roe v. Wade*, but with the Court's recent reversal, these laws are once again in effect. After half a century of protection, U.S. women and their many male supporters face a long struggle to regain their right to choose.

Other scary news of late concerns the revelations about the January 6th insurrection uncovered by the January 6th Congressional Committee. After five public hearings, the Committee has shown a lot of evidence that Trump and his allies were working on multiple aspects of a plan to utilize "the big lie" as a way to overturn the election of Biden and to keep Trump in the Oval Office. One plot involved getting Republican legislators in Georgia, Arizona, Michigan, and Pennsylvania to create electoral slates for Trump to compete with the valid Biden slates from those states. People who regularly listen to the news have heard Trump's telephone conversation in which he tells Georgia's Secretary of State to find him 11,000 -plus votes in order to reverse that State's fair election count with Biden on top. Testimony has also shown how election officials and vote counters in various states were harassed and threatened with violence by Trump sycophants seeking to scare them into changing vote counts.

Another hearing focused on Trump's involvement in the planning of the January 6th assault on the Capitol to prevent Congress from approving the Electoral College slates from the states. One White House aide testified about Trump's knowledge that many of his supporters were armed with weapons on the morning of the 6th, and that he wanted them to be able to attend the rally prior to the march on the Capitol. Further, he apparently wanted to go to the Capitol with the mob, and he was quite angry when the Secret Service professionals assigned to him refused to drive him there.

At this point there appears to be an abundance of evidence to prove that Trump and numerous aides and supporters were involved in many illegal and often treasonous actions that merit criminal indictments. In fact, if actions are not taken to discourage this ant-democratic behavior,

many Republican leaders seem prepared to launch round two of this movement toward despotism in 2024. This upcoming midterm election looms as a critical event in the battle to save representative democracy in this country. Activists must get past their discouragement in order to gear up for this political test, as the prospect of a Republican sweep of both the House and Senate is too potentially damaging to our public institutions.

The midterms also involve state elections, and they are as important as the Congressional races. For instance, the abortion issue currently rests in state capitals. The Republican Party has also endorsed many state candidates who are committed to suppressing the vote and to politicizing the counting and administration of elections.

With all this scary stuff going on, activists can't afford to be depressed and discouraged. This critical moment in the life of our democracy calls for coalition building and grassroots campaigning at the highest scale. So - get off your couch, and call a few friends today!