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Another Voice: Moral, democratic values must not be discarded

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Editor's note: *The Another Voice* printed on Sunday, written by some of these authors, had been previously published.

We are horrified and dismayed with the assault on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6 while both houses of Congress were in session in the midst of verifying the results of our presidential election.

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While freedom of religion and expression are at the heart of all religious communities and our Constitution, these violent attacks were brought on by misuse of that very freedom, in the shape of repeated lies about the integrity of the voting process.

The attacks on our democracy came not from a foreign power, but from Americans who disagreed with the results of the presidential election. As per FBI reports, the attacks on the citadel of our democracy were not spontaneous but premeditated and well planned. Our faith in democracy should not be shaken by such hooliganism. That is un-American and against the very fabric of our values and our Constitution.

It is our moral obligation to tell the truth. Though we come from many faiths, we all share a commitment to truthfulness, integrity in our speech

and compassion for all. What was demonstrated in Washington was a blatant disregard for truth, common decency and integrity.

“The Nov. 3 election was the most secure in American history,” said Christopher Krebs, director of the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

We are witnessing the dangers of lies that are repeated over and over again, existing alongside inflammatory speech, dividing Americans into “us” vs. “them,” with respect and dignity being denied to “them.” We should not accept this misuse of authority and ask all Americans to rededicate to the principles of justice and fairness, democracy and the rule of law.

Peaceful transition of government, integrity in our speech and compassion for our fellow citizens is part of our

national ethos. We need it today, as we have previously during hours of trial and tribulations.

Over the centuries, persons of all persuasions fled their homelands, coming to the shores of America seeking the right to freely practice their religion and share their beliefs and views without fear of persecution. Today, many recent refugees and immigrants remind us of those essentials that we take for granted in our country. Freedom of religion and speech are not eternal guarantees; they must be nurtured and protected. In the days to come there will be plenty of blame to go around and likely retribution. However, before those stories consume us, we implore our fellow-citizens to reflect on what has led us to this point. It is critical to understand that by focusing exclusively upon our own freedoms and rights, at

the expense of others, we do damage to the freedoms and rights of all we hold so dear.

Whenever we dehumanize those with whom we disagree, we diminish the humanity of all. We speak with one voice when we say, “Our commitment to democracy is unwavering and unmoved.” We hope and pray for a future where integrity, compassion, truthfulness, love for democracy and respect for the rule of law are strengthened and cherished by all our fellow citizens.

In the days to come let us celebrate the freedom of religion, freedom to express our political views and all the other freedoms we fought for and, now, take for granted. Let us celebrate these freedoms with those whose views and beliefs may be different than our own. That is the power that will sustain us even in the darkest of days. That is the greatness of America.

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