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## **Statement on the Capitol Hill Insurrection and the Days Ahead**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Last week, on January 6th 2021, a group of terrorists breached the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. during a joint session of Congress to certify President-elect Joe Biden's win in the 2020 Presidential Election. The University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board – in the strongest terms possible – condemns the actions that took place on this day. This fatal attack was done to undermine the results of a free and fair election under the guidance of the President of the United States and fellow lawmakers, all while putting elected officials and their staff in danger.

Compare this tragic event to the peaceful protests in Aurora, Colorado, where protestors were met with pepper spray by police in riot gear at a violin vigil for Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man killed by Aurora Police, or a peaceful protest along Pittsburgh's Forbes Avenue that ended with a protester being abducted by plain-clothed Pittsburgh Police officers in an unmarked van. Our summer months were filled with stories of unprovoked tear gas and rubber bullets in response to peaceful protests for the Black lives taken by police brutality. The clear difference in the response of law enforcement between these peaceful Black Lives Matter protests and the recent insurrection exposed a hard truth about the double standards in our rights to protest.

January 6th, 2021, will go down as a dark day in this country's history, but it certainly is not the only dark day we have seen. There are reports of more activity in the coming days leading up to the presidential inauguration. We ask the Pitt community to be safe and to be attentive of your surroundings over the next week.

Healing from this event will require accountability from our leaders in Washington. We must not underestimate the influence of the words that come from those in power on people across the country. Still, even deeper and broader than this, we must all reflect on how fragile democracy is and the hard work and respect that is required for us to continue to live in a society free of violence and hate. Simply saying "this is not America" ignores the history of words and actions that made the events of this day possible. Much like the work needed to be done to get through this pandemic, reestablishing trust and truth in our civic institutions will require all of us. For the sake of our country, and for the sake of our futures, we must do better.

In Solidarity,

*Eric Macadangdang*  
**2020-2021 Student Government Board President**

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**2020-2021 Student Government Board**