

OPINION

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Making a bipartisan commitment to respect this year's election results

BY REPS. BRIAN FITZPATRICK (R-PA.), JARED GOLDEN (D-MAINE), DON BACON (R-NEB.), AND MARIE GLUESENKAMP PEREZ (D-WASH.), OPINION CONTRIBUTORS - 06/28/24 2:30 PM ET

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At the start of every Congress, members of the House of Representatives gather in the House chamber and, in unison, are sworn in for two-year terms. We all swear that we will “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

It is a rare moment of unity in a body that often breaks down along party lines. But the reason we can engage in those fiery debates about how to govern is that we have all agreed at the outset to operate by the same set of rules in service to the Constitution and the American people.

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Our worry is that after this year’s election, not every official coming to Washington for the 119th Congress will, in fact, take that oath seriously — that some people seeking office will put their allegiance to the Constitution second to partisan loyalty or some other radical agenda. That should concern every American who believes in the rule of law and preserving our constitutional republic.

denounce any attempt to intimidate, harass, threaten or incite violence around elections; restore trust and faith in our democracy by rejecting lies and misinformation about elections; and accept the ultimate outcome of the election, certify the result and support the peaceful transfer of power.

This is the “democracyFIRST Promise,” named for the cross-partisan pro-democracy organization that launched this effort last year and is now expanding ahead of the November election.

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These aren't extreme ideas. They should be the absolute minimum expected of anyone seeking a position of public trust in the U.S. Yet we're at a moment in American politics where it's necessary for us to say plainly that words and actions that run counter to our democratic principles are out of bounds, and that candidates for office who refuse to uphold the rule of law have disqualified themselves for office.

We are fully aware that an election year isn't typically the time for the bipartisan linking of arms, and that our cross-party commitment is likely to ruffle some feathers with our colleagues in our respective parties. But if we can't come back to Washington next year in agreement on the fundamental ideas that must guide our service to the country, we'll be in real danger of no longer having a country to serve. So we call on our colleagues of both parties to join us in making the democracyFIRST Promise.

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In the months ahead, we hope to see this cross-partisan coalition grow in order to help preserve our democracy, the republic and rule of law. Regardless of party, it's essential that anti-democracy candidates and elected officials attempting to subvert free and fair elections and threaten the future of our democratic republic are identified, isolated and defeated in November.

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Although we can never fully predict the outcomes of our elections, we are hopeful and look forward to returning to serve in the House next year. Together, we plan to continue leading meaningful policy debates, seeking areas of bipartisan consensus and developing commonsense solutions to deliver real results for our communities and country. But to achieve this, the oath we take must hold genuine significance. We must ensure every individual swearing this oath is as committed to it as we are. So, we invite our colleagues in the House, from both parties, to join us in this endeavor and make the democracyFIRST Promise. Together, we can make a difference.

Brian Fitzpatrick represents the 1st District of Pennsylvania, Jared Golden represents the 2nd District of Maine, Don Bacon represents the 2nd District of Nebraska and Marie Gluesenkamp Perez represents the 3rd District of Washington.