

Editorials are the institutional voice of The Free Press and independent of the newsroom reporting staff

OUR VIEW

Blind partisanship in opposing impeachment

Thumbs down to Minnesota's four Republican members of Congress, none of whom dared stand up for the Constitution on Wednesday.



All four — including Jim Hagedorn and Michelle Fischbach, whose districts include The Free Press coverage area — voted against the article of impeachment.

The notion that holding Donald Trump accountable for the damage he has done to constitutional processes and for the

damage and fear his followers inflicted on the Capitol and its inhabitants is somehow damaging to national unity is nonsense.

He cannot be given a free pass. There can be no unity if one party excuses an attempt to violently overthrow election results.

Hagedorn, Fischbach, Tom Emmer and Pete Stauber failed Wednesday to defend the Constitution from a domestic enemy. It is, as with Hagedorn and Fischbach's votes a week earlier to reject some Electoral College ballots, shameful.

Munson, splinter group wrong

Thumbs down to Rep. Jeremy Munson, R-Lake Crystal, for the dodge he and his so-called New Republican Caucus made by slippery word play in not condemning violent talk at a rally they attended Jan. 6 in St. Paul.

According to The Associated Press, one of the speakers at the St. Paul rally — Alley Waterbury of Woodbury — asked Gov. Tim Walz: "Please take time to meet with us one-on-one, because if you don't, you're going to make us do things we don't want to do. We're going to come for you, but we want to talk to you first."

She also said, "There's going to be casualties." Another speaker said the group was beyond protests and rallies and was at the point of "war."

New Republican Caucus members who participated in the rally, including Munson, did not condemn these words because they apparently didn't hear them, as some left early. But that doesn't let them off the hook.

Some 59 members of the regular Republican House Caucus strongly condemned the threats against Walz and others, which prompted security to evacuate Walz' son from the governor's residence.

The Munson caucus issued a statement that didn't explicitly condemn the Walz threats because they said: "while we were present, there was no 'violent rhetoric' and no 'threats of violence.'"

That see-no-evil answer is disappointing.

Improving the Guard

Thumbs up to Minnesota National Guard soldier Joshua Preston, of Minneapolis, for calling out superiors for not doing enough to weed out right-wing extremism within its ranks.



Preston was upset that Guard leadership sent out a vague statement after the violent takeover of the U.S. Capitol that said service members "must remain apolitical" and referred to the takeover as "the timely events occurring on the national stage."

He posted messages saying that Boogaloo Bois and other anti-government types are known to be in the Guard's ranks and need to be dismissed.

With white supremacist groups emboldened in recent years, extremists will need to be met head on for some time to come. The military and law enforcement agencies need to take the lead in ensuring no extremists are in their own ranks.

Dedicated student

Thumbs up to the Cleveland High School student who spearheaded a fundraising campaign to buy his teacher a new wheelchair.



Since launching a GoFundMe page this week, Ryan Reineke has raised thousands of dollars for Joel Boehlke, the teacher who had done so much for him. Reineke has his sights on a durable wheelchair that also includes upgrades that can help his teacher more easily get into vehicles. The chair costs an estimated \$20,000.

The fundraising page asks classmates, alumni and others who have been touched by Boehlke to help him get the new wheelchair. Reineke has some learning disabilities and two of his teachers at Cleveland High School helped him write his fundraising appeal.

The effort is an admirable endeavor that gives a student an opportunity to help his mentor as well as show the rest of us how gratitude looks in action.

To donate go to: gf.me/u/zfsqxr.

FOUNDED IN 1887

The Free Press

1st Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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VIEWPOINTS FROM THE CARTOONIST'S PEN



A weekly sampling of what editorial cartoonists are revealing about the world around us



YOUR VIEWS

Akland's critics are sore losers

Minnesota Democrats, including some here in the immediate Free Press area, are showing their true levels of hypocrisy.

There have been ridiculous calls from former DFL legislators and party activists that Rep. Susan Akland resign because of comments she made about mask wearing. Rep. Akland has stated that these comments were taken out of context.

Yet in mid-August, DFL Rep. John Thompson, then candidate Thompson, used the most profane of profane language at a protest/rally in Hugo. Thompson also wore a "KKKroll" T-shirt, in reference to Police Officer's Federation of Minneapolis President Lt. Bob Kroll, beat an effigy of Kroll's wife and mentioned burning down the city!

In response to a letter from the Minnesota Police and Peace Officer's Association, DFL Speaker Melissa Hortman wrote in a letter dated Sept. 7, 2020, that Thompson had apologized and that it was highly likely he would be elected. No mention of not supporting his candidacy.

A simple apology is all it takes as a DFLer to clear them self of screaming profanities, beating an effigy of a police officer's wife and talking of burning down a city?

Yet a comment about mask wearing, taken out of context, is worthy of resignation? Seems to me that the DFL, who are quick to label Republi-

cans as sore losers, are really the sore losers here.

As the legislative session moves along, I believe all residents of 19A, along with the entire state will benefit from the work of Rep. Akland.

Akland's conservative, Christian leadership is a welcome, much needed and refreshing change.

Peter J. Trocke
St. Peter

Expel Hagedorn as an enemy of democracy

A representative who spreads lies about the electoral process, and who attempts to disenfranchise millions of voters based on rumor, innuendo, and lies — that representative is an enemy of democracy.

There is no place for that person in the government of a democratic nation.

Rep. Jim Hagedorn must be expelled from the House of Representatives.

Jonathan Henke
St. Peter

Akland should own up to her part in insurrection

In a recent letter to the editor, new Rep. Susan Akland called for peace and unity as we transition to Joe Biden's presidency next week, writ-

ing that our "thoughts and actions matter."

While this call is commendable, it avoids accountability for her own role in fueling insurrection. On Jan. 6, Akland spoke at the "Storm the Capitol" rally in St. Paul. The name of the rally echoed the slogan used for weeks by those intending to assault the U.S. Capitol on the same date.

Notably, Akland also avoided challenging Trump's lie that he won the election. It was Trump's lie, and the collusion of so many GOP legislators in broadcasting it, that prompted the violence in the first place.

In her letter, Akland undercuts her message about a peaceful transition and implicitly validates "those who choose to protest" by leaving out the reason they are protesting — to spread lies about the election and challenge its outcome.

She cannot support both the inauguration and the protest. No call for unity will succeed until the rotten lie at the core of the insurrection is addressed.

I call on Rep. Akland to examine her own behavior against the standard she sets in her letter: To recognize that her own "thoughts and actions matter." What better signal for peace and unity can she send than to publicly own up to her role in the insurrection and step down?

Marian Broida
St. Peter