

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Special Committee on December 21 events:

I submit this written testimony to voice my unequivocal support of HR 3. Representative Nearman's actions on December 21 were clearly premeditated, subjecting every single person working in the state capitol on that day to unnecessary danger. Rep. Nearman's actions to destabilize democracy have no place in Oregon (or elsewhere). This is not a partisan issue and we want to extend a thank you to all legislators from both parties for calling on Rep. Nearman to resign or be expelled for his actions.

As revealed by security footage, media investigations, and his own words, Rep. Nearman planned and executed what he named "Operation Hall Pass." This was a coordinated action that allowed armed, violent attackers through the doors of the state capitol when it was closed due to COVID transmission risk. Calling his action "Operation Hall Pass," is a chilling reminder of the "Hall Security" (*Saal-Schutz*), a small volunteer guard and forerunner of the S.S. created in 1923 by the Nazi party in Germany to provide security for party meetings in Munich. As Hitler rose to power, he would go on to rely on two criminal organizations, the Brownshirts of the S.A. Stormtroopers and the Blackshirts of the S.S.. Using violent street politics they engaged in brutal actions against Jewish people, trade unionists and others.

Just to be clear the above is not meant as an analogy to the ideology of Nazism, but rather to certain actions that suggest concerning parallels. Representative Nearman's actions at the state capitol on December 21 violent far-right extremists – brandishing long guns, pitchforks, and bear mace – attacked law enforcement officers who were attempting to protect legislators, staff and the Capitol itself. The attack resulted in injuries to police and the terrorizing of capitol employees and other lawmakers. That same day, this same group attacked journalists on the scene and attempted to illegally break into the building. But for the efforts of the Oregon State Police, the situation could have been even worse.

Expulsion from the House of Representatives is not only the right consequence of his dangerous and disorderly conduct, but it also protects the safety of everyone who works in the capitol, especially BIPOC Oregonians in public service and public office who are most vulnerable to attack. The groups Rep. Nearman let in have a long history of espousing racist, xenophobic and misogynistic views. The legislature must take strong action against and send a strong message to those who would violate laws and collude with armed extremists.

The actions you take today will set a standard for the future. Expelling a lawmaker is unprecedented but it is your only option. Rep. Nearman's dangerous and disorderly conduct must have consequences. We have never had a lawmaker blatantly violate the law and collude with armed extremists.

Passage of HR 3 is not a partisan issue. Any lawmaker – regardless of party – who colludes with those who violate their oath of office, break our laws and puts the safety of people at risk are unfit to serve and must be expelled.

Respectfully submitted,



Judy Margles, Director  
Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education