

From: Peter Starzynski, Executive Director of Accountable Northwest
To: Chair Holvey and members of the House Special Committee on December 21
Re: Support for HR 3 and expulsion of Representative Nearman



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We strongly support HR 3 and urge you to move to expel Rep. Nearman from the legislature. Rep. Nearman plotted and carried out an attack on the Oregon Capitol by literally opening the door for armed, violent rioters to attack police and terrorize people in the building. His premeditated actions were dangerous, shameful and clearly meet the definition of “disorderly behavior” as outlined in Article IV, Section 15 of the Oregon Constitution.

Accountable Northwest is a watchdog organization that tracks extremist groups and elected officials in the Northwest. The dangerous behavior Rep. Nearman exhibited on December 21, 2020 was a dark foreshadowing of the deadly insurrection in Washington DC on January 6. Violence like this is unfortunately becoming too commonplace in our society and it needs to stop. Inaction on Nearman is a tacit endorsement of this violence.

On April 30, the Marion County DA charged Rep. Nearman for “unlawfully and knowingly” carrying out the attack. Later in May, the legislature’s own independent investigator wrote that Nearman intentionally committed these acts. Then the video surfaced of Rep. Nearman plotting the attack five days earlier from the offices of the far-right “Freedom” Foundation, an anti-government group and Nearman’s employer at the time. This group has their own track record of nefarious activities.

Between the criminal charges, the Oregon State Police’s investigation, the independent investigator hired by the legislature and Nearman’s own admission, your decision could not be more clear: support HR 3 and expel Rep. Nearman from office.

To this point, Rep. Nearman has shown no remorse for the lives he put in danger, he even joked about the event on Facebook the following day. Instead, he has lashed out at people holding him accountable and blamed others for his actions. A few days after the planning video was released, Nearman went on the Lars Laron show and blamed Oregon State Police for not doing more to stop the violence. Let me repeat that: he blamed Oregon State Police for not doing more to stop the violence. It’s absolutely shameful.

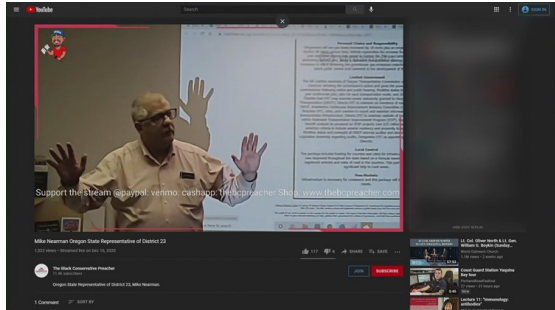
I want to thank members of both parties for calling on Rep. Nearman to resign or be expelled. But the fact is, he’s still in office. Rep. Nearman is a disgrace to the State of Oregon, to his constituents and to democracy itself. He should be removed from the legislature one way or another.

On the next two pages of my testimony, please find a visual timeline of Rep. Nearman's premeditated assault on Oregon's Capitol.

A Timeline of Rep. Nearman's Premeditated Assault on Oregon's Capitol



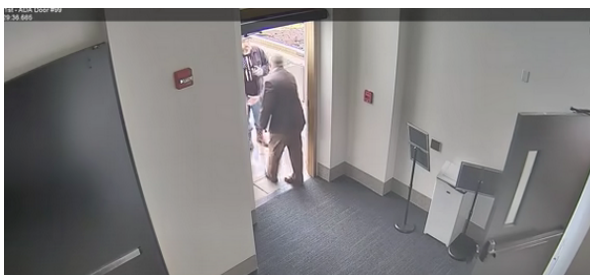
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1. December 16, 2020. Rep. Nearman **plans his breach** of the Oregon Capitol, instructing activists how and when to contact him to gain access inside. The meeting took place at the **Salem office of the “Freedom” Foundation**, Nearman’s employer at the time.



2. December 21, 2020. Far-right protesters with flags and guns converge at the Capitol building in Salem. Inside, state legislators are meeting about pandemic-related issues. Some of the protesters become violent, **smashing doors of the Capitol building and assaulting journalists**.



3. At a different entrance, **video footage reveals Rep. Mike Nearman opening the door for two men to enter the Capitol just before 8:30am**.



4. The men allowed inside almost immediately attack police as the group swells. The police attempt to push the rioters outside, but several fight back. The camera catches the moment when someone outside **shoots bear spray at the police officers**.

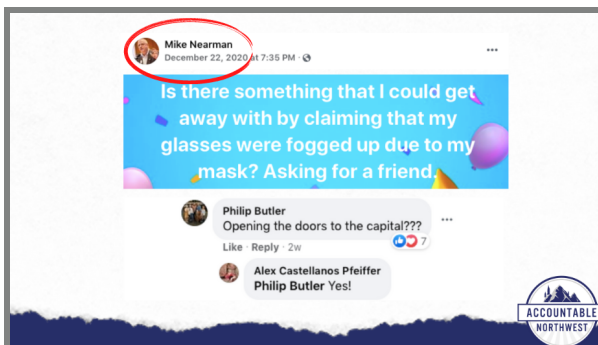
A Timeline of Rep. Nearman's Premeditated Assault on Oregon's Capitol



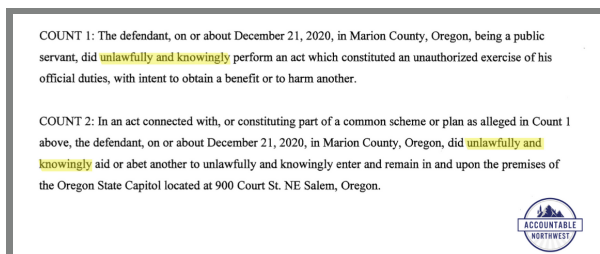
5. Meanwhile, a different camera shows Nearman walking around the corner to where another group of protesters is gathered at the west entrance. **Nearman is seen interacting with several of the group.**



6. Then, Nearman walks around the corner and in **less than five minutes** after he opened the first door, **he unlocks a different door at the south entrance** where he re-enters the building alone.



7. The next day, December 22, Rep. Nearman joked about his actions on Facebook and **seemed to implicate himself by admitting intent.**



8. On April 30, 2021 Nearman was **criminally charged** by the Marion County District Attorney after a four-month investigation by Oregon State Police. The DA accused Nearman of **“unlawfully and knowingly” opening the door to the rioters.** Nearman is facing up to a year in jail and thousands of dollars in fines.



9. An independent investigation launched by the Legislature reports on June 3, 2021 that **Nearman intentionally allowed rioters into the building.**

Politics

Oregon lawmaker ‘more likely than not’ intentionally let violent demonstrators into the Capitol, report finds

Updated Jun 03, 2021; Posted Jun 03, 2021