

February 2, 2021

Washington, DC

Conservatives oppose the permanent fixture of a wall surrounding the United States Capitol.

Access to and interaction with those we elect is central to our representative self-government. One of the qualities that makes America exceptional is our citizen legislature – that those we elect do not sit higher than us, but equal to us.

Placing higher and higher burdens on entry to the U.S. Capitol – the seat of our democracy – as well as access to those who represent us strikes at the heart of that relationship, and a central feature of republican government. It changes the detachment of our representatives from their constituencies from merely a rhetorical formulation into a literal one.

The safety and security of those we elect, as well as their staff, remains paramount. Those who seek to threaten them, or engage in political violence of any kind, should be prosecuted. But safety concerns must be balanced with the right of Americans to access the seat of their government. It must not be used as a proxy to further remove America's representatives from the accountability and petitioning of those who elect them.

U.S. Capitol Police protocols are no doubt undergoing a reassessment after the events of January 6. Such action is warranted and necessary. But we oppose efforts to make Capitol Hill a fortress, and entrench such measures that are more about “security theater” than actual security.

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