

## Abigail's Scholarship Essay

Passed by Congress in 1866 and ratified in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution begins with Section 1 and the umbrella term, “. . . All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside (Constitution Annotated, Para. 1). The purpose of this amendment was to grant citizenship and equal rights to freed slaves after the American Civil War. The amendment goes on to describe things like equal protection and apportionment. Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment is the section that most applies to the essay prompt, “What are the main provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and how are they relevant to today’s discussion of the January 6th Capitol attack and the protection of free and fair federal elections in the United States?”

Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says, “No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.” (Constitution Annotated, Para. 3). Essentially, this means that any person who has aided enemies of the country cannot be on a ballot or hold an office in the United States government.

Donald Trump, holding the office of president and having taken an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, “. . . engaged in insurrection or rebellion. . .” with enemies of the country (BBC News, Para. 4). At his “Save America” insurrection, Trump gave a speech--proving the exact point of the sentence prior--to rally his supporters. He spouted falsehoods about a “rigged” and “stolen” election, declared a need to take back the country, and encouraged violence in order to accomplish his goals.

Three minutes into his seventy-minute rally speech, Trump claimed, “We won this election, and we won it by a landslide.” (BBC News, Para. 15). However, it was a false assertion of his that Democrats had “rigged” the election in favor of Biden, and that Republicans had truly won the presidential seat. In fact, Donald Trump and many others filed at least 63 lawsuits arguing the election process, and only one ruling was initially in Trump’s favor. It affected very few votes and the ruling was later overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (Wikipedia, Para. 2). “We will stop the steal,” Trump said during his speech on January 6th. Some steal it was--Trump appointed the U.S. election security officials who are quoted as saying the election was “the most secure in American history.” (Staff, Para. 3).

Not only did Trump spread untruths such as these during his rallying speech, he also seriously encouraged his supporters to pursue violence in order to complete their goals. He is quoted as having said, “If you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore.” (BBC News, Para. 23). He talked about all the injustices that Republicans have had to deal with, he mentioned the success of his wall and the prevention of immigration (although barely more than a dozen miles of new primary barrier were built, and secondary barriers were replaced on

less than 400 miles). But ultimately, as shown by the statement above, he did encourage his supporters to engage in violence (Albertus, Para.2). The message he sent was taken quite seriously. In the days and weeks after the riot, five police officers who served at the Capitol died. “Roughly 114 US Capitol Police officers reported injuries as a result of the attack on the Capitol . . .” (Wild, Para. 1). Trump’s so-called “peace rally” was an outlet for violence. Lives were lost during the attempted coup that the former president himself assisted, incited, and encouraged, in direct conflict with the oath he had taken and the Constitution he had sworn to uphold. As an officer of the United States, he opposed the Fourteenth Amendment, gave aid to the enemies of the U.S., and insurrected a rebellion against the country he had sworn to protect.

Trump is guilty of violating the Fourteenth Amendment on January 6th, 2021, due to encouraging violence in enemies of the United States. Trump was impeached and the Senate held a trial but he was acquitted. However, with what he did, he should have been severely punished and fined for his criminal acts, and prevented from ever being able to hold office in the U.S. Government again. Former President Trump is guilty of insurrection and should be barred from all future elections based on the Fourteenth Amendment.

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