



My Dear Friends,

An attack on the Capitol is an attack on our core American and Jewish principles of freedom, humanity and equality. A disruption to the democratic process and peaceful transition of power is a threat to the fabric of our nation. I was both heartbroken and outraged to see the senseless violence that transpired this week, and I join with all people of good conscience from across the political spectrum who stand together against hate and hostility.

This Shabbat, Jews throughout the world open the Book of Exodus which as a story of slavery and redemption reminds us of both the preciousness and fragility of freedom. Time and time again, we witness the lesson taught to us by the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks that “freedom is not a gift, it is a moral achievement.” And we need to tend to it and protect it, lest it fragments and dissolves.

But I believe in America and its core principles and I believe in the truth spoken by American patriot Thomas Paine that “An army of principles can penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot.” And it is our collective commitment to these core principles that will enable our fellow citizens to rise above our differences to seek the common good. We could hold different political views without viewing the political other as different. We can take this pain and transmute it into a repudiation of hate; this moment of turmoil and re-channel it into a moment of healing.

For all of us who love and live in America, the fate of our nation is in our hands. This Shabbat weekend, let us resolve to come together as a nation in hope, prayer and action to restore civility and strengthen the bonds that unite us.

Shabbat Shalom
Dr. Ari Berman

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