

CASC President's Response on the Events of January 6, 2021

by Josh Godinez

At the time of the writing of this article, I was planning on taking a hiatus for a few weeks from writing. Like you, I am a busy high school counselor, and the semester began this Monday with all the duties and responsibilities that are involved in second-semester registration. However, the national turmoil from last week was so patently disturbing, a timely response to all of you was necessary. I am struck by the hideous racial overtones so prevalent these days and the denial of the inequalities that have been fueled by individuals at the highest levels of our government. I am furious at the rise in race-based rhetoric and false accusations of voter fraud levied by national leaders, and I am truly worried about the country I love.

Prior to school counseling, I was a government and US History teacher who taught that the very foundation of our democracy rests upon the will of the majority, while respecting the rights of the minority. As a nation, we have the right to vote, then celebrate or be disappointed when our political candidates win or lose an election. We also have the right to peaceful protests for any grievance, but what we witnessed on January 6, 2021, was an abhorrently dark day for American democracy that devolved into a riotous mob attempting to thwart the very foundations of democracy. To make matters worse, it was yet another painful example of how we continue to live in a society that treats and reacts to people differently based on the color of their skin.

People have one of three responses to any traumatic event: fight, flight, or freeze. Many of our students and communities do not know how to begin unpacking the conversations with respects to history, liberty, democracy, and social justice. We must start by unpacking our own feelings related to all that has happened. Then, we must embrace our role as the effectively trained facilitator and communicator on our school campus to support students and the school community with processing their thoughts and feelings. If you aren't sure where to start, here are two reputable sources that help provide a launching pad:

[Education Week- "Caring for Students in the Wake of a Traumatic News Event," by Evie Blad](#)

[Teaching Tolerance- "Leading Conversations After Crisis," by Teaching Tolerance Staff](#)

The CASC Board and staff met last weekend to talk about the current events and will continue to meet throughout the week to formalize a response from the organization. CASC's Social Justice, Equity, and Anti-Racism Committee, chaired by Dr. Rebecca Pianta, met Monday to offer recommendations to the CASC Board so that we include the collective voice of our members in all that we do. While I am looking forward to the work of the CASC Board and staff, I felt it was my duty, as your CASC President, to have a candid conversation with you ahead of it. As always, should there be anything you wish for me to contribute to the conversation on your behalf, do not hesitate to email me at josh.godinez@schoolcounselor-ca.org.

Please know that you are in my thoughts as you continue to lead, collaborate, and consult with addressing the needs of California's students.

All my best.

