LGBTQ Trump supporters tiptoe away from president after U.S. Capitol attack

LGBTQ Trump supporters are minimizing their previous support for him.

In the aftermath of the assault on the U.S. Capitol instigated by President Trump, his one-time LGBTQ supporters are now distancing themselves from him without outright renouncing their previous support.

Many LGBTQ Trump supporters didn’t respond to the Washington Blade’s request for comment. Others condemned the violence at the U.S. Capitol, but sought to artfully distance themselves from Trump while minimizing their previous support for him as an incumbent president running for re-election in 2020.

One-time Trump supporters — amid talk of Trump being forced to resign, impeached and removed from office or being stripped of the presidency through never-before invoked powers of executive officers under the 25th Amendment — wouldn’t commit to supporting any of those outcomes.

Charles Moran, managing director of Log Cabin Republicans, condemned the assault on the U.S. Capitol as “a dark day in the current chapter of American history,” but compared it to racial unrest of 2020 and said “it brought into the new year the anger and violence that we experienced only recently in the summer of 2020.”

“That said, the violence and un-American acts committed yesterday by those who stormed the Capitol building were completely unacceptable and those who took part in trying to forcefully stop our democracy from working should be identified, arrested, tried and punished to the fullest extent of the law,” Moran said, “Full stop, no exceptions.”

Moran said Log Cabin Republicans, which endorsed Trump in the 2020 election, learned from the success it enjoyed in increasing the LGBTQ vote for the Republican presidential nominee (according to exit polls) but said those efforts were never about Trump himself.

“While the gay left has had a deranged obsession with Donald Trump, our movement has never been about one man,” Moran said. “We can and will achieve continued success, with or without Donald Trump.”

Moran also side-stepped the issue of what should happen with Trump amid talk of removing him from office before end of his presidential term.

“President Trump’s last day in office will be January 20, when Vice President Biden will be sworn into office,” Moran said. “I don’t know what President Trump will do next. The Republican Party today, however, is transformed, and I think for the better.”

Chad Felix Greene, who wrote a self-published book “Without Context,” disputing each of the LGBTQ media watchdog GLAAD’s accounts of anti-LGBTQ attacks by Trump, told the Blade the assault on the Capitol was “an act of domestic terrorism and should not be tolerated.”

“The right has attracted a population of people that think anarchy and obscenity are political activism,” Greene added. “White supremacists, antisemites and other assorted idiots latched onto the MAGA movement because it was rebellious and counter culture and controversial.”

Greene said he lost his respect for Trump “when he began behaving as a conspiratorial voice leading his followers into madness,” and is now looking to Mike Pence for leadership, despite the vice president’s long anti-LGBTQ record.
“While I appreciated [Trump’s] policies as a leader, he proved himself to be a threat to everything we built over the last four years over his ego,” Greene added. “Pence is the perfect mirror image of this. Consistent. Calm. Trustworthy and a man of integrity. He’s not the face of what MAGA became as an aggressive and passionate movement. He reminded us of what good Republican and conservative leadership can be.”

Greene said he expects Trump to “leave office” and “won’t support” him in future political efforts, but at the same time doesn’t back efforts to forcibly remove the president from office before the end of his term.

“I honestly it’s in two weeks,” Greene said. “He reluctantly gave a statement on an orderly exit. I think current efforts at removing him are political and short-sighted. We’ve completely forgotten the stimulus and vaccine rollout that needs attention. Trump is done. Further political theater seems petty and unnecessary to me.”

Dan Innis, a Republican former New Hampshire state senator who supported Trump and after the 2020 election said on Twitter he wouldn’t accept the results, told the Blade the assault on the U.S. Capitol was “very sad,” but wouldn’t give up his previous position.

“My concerns about the validity of the election remain,” Innis said. “If the election was fair, and I hope it was, show us. Why the secrecy? If there is nothing to hide, don’t hide it. However, given yesterday’s events, we will never know the truth about the election. As a result, millions of Americans, me included, will forever doubt the integrity of the American election process.”

Innis also sought to minimize Trump as a leader of the conservative movement, adding “vanquishing” him “will not change my views, or the views of those millions” who don’t trust the nation’s leaders and institutions.

“Trump was nothing but a figurehead of a larger movement, and that movement is not going to just go away just because Trump goes away,” Innis said. “If the Democrats, including Joe Biden, think that is going to happen, I think they will be surprised.”

The distancing from Trump corresponds to the growing list of administration aides resigning in the aftermath of the assault on the U.S. Capitol.

Among them was Tyler Goodspeed, who’s gay and was acting chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, who resigned Thursday. “The events of yesterday made my position no longer tenable,” Goodspeed was quoted as saying to the New York Times.

But several other LGBTQ officials with ties to Trump had little to say for themselves and didn’t respond to the Blade’s request for comment. Among them was Richard Grenell, who was the face of LGBTQ outreach for Trump’s re-election. Although Grenell condemned the assault on the U.S. Capitol on Twitter as it was unfolding, by the next day his focus shifted to California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Iran, Big Tech and the media, but not Trump.

Brandon Straka, the gay conservative who founded the “Walk Away” movement and was among the speakers at the “Stop the Steal” rally that led to the assault on the U.S. Capitol also didn’t respond to the Blade’s request for comment.

After the assault, Straka posted on Twitter a one-hour video skirting the violence and expressing outrage at the rioters and issued a call to “completely gut the conservative movement and start again.” On Friday, Straka indignantly tweeted about Facebook disabling the “Walk Away” campaign on the social media platform.
Also not responding to the Blade was Gregory Angelo, who cheered Trump on after stepping down as head of the Log Cabin Republicans and later took a job at the Trump White House; and Rob Smith, a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” activist who later became a chief spokesperson for the pro-Trump student group Turning Point USA.

Other LGBTQ conservatives who spoke to the Blade, but didn’t support Trump for re-election in 2020, weren’t shy about saying the assault on the U.S. Capitol confirmed their fears about him.

Brad Polumbo, a D.C.-based conservative journalist and host of the podcast “Breaking Brad,” said the Trump administration yielded good policy — including for LGBTQ people, despite Trump’s anti-LGBTQ reputation — but the recent events proved him right.

“The crazed mob attack on the Capitol and President Trump’s denial of the election results that fomented it, for me, vindicate the decision to never get on board the Trump train,” Polumbo said. “From tax cuts to deregulation to the confirmation of several excellent Supreme Court justices to Middle East peace deals and an unprecedented openness to gay Americans, there are many successes gay conservatives like me can take away from the Trump presidency. But recent events have also served as a painful reminder to LGBT conservatives, and all conservatives, really, that policy aside, our leaders’ character matters.”

Jennifer Williams, a New Jersey-based Republican transgender advocate who challenged Trump over his supporters using anti-trans campaign tactics that ended up failing in the 2020 election, denounced the assault on the U.S. Capitol.

“The people who stormed and violently entered the Capitol to disrupt yesterday’s election certification acted not as Americans, but as vandals to democracy,” Williams said. “Every single one of the perpetrators should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. These people did not act as Republicans, because what they did is not in the spirit of what Republicans stand for or how we conduct ourselves. However, that is the least of my worries. I fear our children seeing our country as they saw it yesterday.”

Williams, who said the results of the 2020 election are clear, issued a clarion call that the time has come for Trump to step down before the end of his term, or that officials should do the job for him.

“President Trump should consider stepping down and/or ceding his day-to-day authority to Vice President Pence for these last few days in order to restore a sense of peace to our country,” Williams said. “The president and his son — after using strong anti-transgender and vulgar language in his own speech — encouraged the protesters to march on our Capitol building. That is unconscionable and every American, liberal or conservative and LGBTQ or not, must recognize this. We are a country of laws and freedom, not anarchy and mob rule.”

https://www.washingtonblade.com/2021/01/08/lgbtq-trump-supporters-tiptoe-away-from-president-after-u-s-capitol-attack/