

## IVAT Statement on the Attack on the U.S. Capitol

**13 January 2021**

For over 35 years, our Institute has been working towards the elimination of interpersonal violence, abuse and trauma across the lifespan. As we continue to process the horror of the domestic terrorist attack on our capitol and democracy itself on January 6<sup>th</sup>, we add our voices to all who condemn the violence, loss of life, injuries, threats, and vandalism. We support those who call for **everyone** involved in the criminal acts and political violence to be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. Perpetrators of such attacks at all levels must be held accountable so there are consequences for their actions. We took the same position toward those during the spring and summer last year who committed violence toward Black men and women and those who committed violence toward police officers and destroyed property in riots. Extremism at both ends that promotes violence is problematic.

White supremacy, prejudice, racial inequity, and growing extremism are not new issues and we have a deeply painful history of these in our country. The FBI has noted the increased activity of hate groups and those classified as promoting domestic terrorism. The vocal increase in discrimination, hatred, intergenerational trauma and oppression sets a dangerous atmosphere. We must learn from our own history, and other lessons of dehumanization, divisiveness, violence and extremism around the world, and take immediate steps to activate the critically needed systemic reforms to dismantle them all.

Without acknowledging these hard truths, demanding justice and resolving to comprehensively activate the necessary changes to achieve it, action towards healing and unity will be hollow and woefully insufficient. This assault on our congressional leadership, security forces, and other governmental officials (in the process of the ceremonial certification of the election of the President Elect) attempted to undermine the foundation of our democracy. This will not succeed! It is now time to prosecute those violating our laws and our constitution.

Truth matters. Facts matter. Words matter. Science matters. Critical thinking matters. Diversity and peaceful expression of difference of opinion are hallmarks of what is core to America's foundation. The work done to elect the first female, Black and Indian American as Vice President, and the elections of Georgia's first Black Senator and first Jewish Senator, as well as many other notable firsts for elected officials from many marginalized communities in both political parties, are the path forward to representation of all people in these United States of

America. It is now time to identify additional ways to work towards moving forward in ways to unite the country, reduce polarization, find common ground, open dialogues, treat all people with respect and dignity, and promote peace, empathy, and compassion for those who may be different, disagree with us, or who have been oppressed. This will not be easy, it will take hard work, but it is necessary.

Sincerely,



Sandi Capuano Morrison, MA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute,  
dba Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma



Robert Geffner, PhD, ABPP, ABN  
Founder/President,  
Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute  
dba Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma