



January 7, 2021

To the Richmond Law Community,

This week I had planned to send a casual happy new year/welcome back message, but in light of the violent assault on our Capitol yesterday, that no longer feels appropriate. Our constitutional democracy is literally under siege and I must add my voice to the chorus of those condemning this attack and calling for a peaceful transition of power. Protest plays an important role in our democracy. Violent attacks on our government do not.

As lawyers, we have a unique relationship with the rule of law. We take an oath to support the Constitution and our entire profession is built on the premise of fidelity to the rule of law rather than violence as the solution to conflicts. Fidelity to the rule of law does not mean that the law is always just. It is not. We all have work to do in making it better. And in a pluralistic society, we will continue to have disagreements – including profound ones – about the proper path to justice. But we cannot allow these disagreements to give rise to violent insurrection.

Yesterday, Senator-elect Reverend Raphael Warnock offered this wise counsel: “We must remember the words of Dr. King, ‘Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.’ Let each of us try to be a light to see our country out of this dark moment.”

My hope is that each of us can be such a light.

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