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**STATEMENT FROM THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF 100 LEADERSHIP
CONDEMNING ANTI-DEMOCRACY RIOT AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL BUILDING**

“Americans have had a proud history of peaceful Presidential transitions—one of the great hallmarks of our democracy. Unfortunately, what we saw from the protests yesterday diminished and tarnished that historic and noble record.

“We have been greatly blessed that our forefathers entrusted to us a system of government that is embraced in a Constitution so carefully crafted that we avoid the disruptive and violent history of political change seen elsewhere in the world. At the core of our nation’s values are the principles of free speech, peaceful assembly, and the right to have a voice in the running of our government through a lawfully elected representative democracy.

“All Americans have the right for their voice to be heard, but once yesterday’s demonstrators pushed their way across police barriers and into our nation’s capitol, they became unlawful, anti-democracy rioters. Their actions were shameful and unpatriotic.

“Our democracy has not been a fragile one, but it depends on having no tolerance for this type of violent behavior. As Americans, we must reject this type of reaction and come together as a nation to heal and to return to our historic place as a world respected democracy that serves as a beacon of freedom to be emulated. We must also expect and demand more from our elected “leaders.” Words matter, leadership matters and those who are entrusted to represent us have a solemn obligation, a duty, to put the country and our democracy over all else.

“We firmly believe in the character and goodness of the American people who, as a majority, are good natured and tolerant of their neighbor’s beliefs, regardless of their differences. The actions yesterday do not represent a majority of Americans, and we are hopeful that through careful reflection our nation will heal and return stronger than before.

“For our part, our mission over the last sixty-years has been to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of our citizens by bringing people together. We affirm that the actions yesterday have no part in our democratic process and ask for all Americans to embrace the peaceful values our forefathers both intended and demonstrated.”

Syd Kitson, Chair, Florida Council of 100

Eric Silagy, Vice Chair, Florida Council of 100

Bob Ward, President, Florida Council of 100