Statement by the Gerald R. Ford Family and Foundation Trustees Regarding the Tragic Events in Washington, DC, on January 6, 2021

All of us at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation are deeply disturbed by the tragic events that unfolded last Wednesday, January 6, 2021, in our nation’s capital. Those who attacked our Capitol and did violence to fellow Americans need to be fully accountable to the law. We mourn the loss of life and pray for those who were injured. We are dismayed by the harm done to our democracy and by the damage done to our Capitol building.

In these troubled times, we are inspired by the example of President Gerald R. Ford. He held the rule of law to be sacrosanct. When confronting the crises that challenged the U.S., he leaned into the Constitution, declaring, “our great Republic is a Government of laws and not of men.” His words are as wise today as they were in 1974, when he uttered them amid a difficult presidential transition prompted by the resignation of President Richard Nixon.

Almost three years later, President Ford (a Republican) found himself in a close race with then-Governor Jimmy Carter (a Democrat). Once the votes indicated that Carter had won, our 38th President accepted the result with grace and humility. Both leaders insisted on a dignified transfer of power. Their spirit of bipartisan comity remains a high point among modern presidential transitions. Indeed, they helped bring about much-needed healing to our nation. We hope for similar healing in the days ahead.

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*The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation fosters increased awareness of the life, career, values, and legacy of America’s 38th President. It does so through activities designed to promote the high ideals of integrity, honesty, and candor that defined President Ford’s extraordinary career of public service. Visit geraldrfordfoundation.org.*