

# HR 132 – The “Anti-Chris Miller” Resolution

*Introduced by Illinois State Representative Bob Morgan (D-Highwood)*

**Mr. Speaker:**

On supplemental calendar number one, there appears House Resolution 132, offered by Representative Morgan. Representative Morgan.

**Bob Morgan:**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for everyone’s indulgence. It has been a long day, so I appreciate your attention.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of House Resolution 132, something I don’t do lightly. It’s condemning the actions of Illinois State Representative Chris Miller.

This resolution raises a very simple question for this body. What is conduct unbecoming of a legislator? What is conduct unbecoming of a legislator? The 118 of us all come to this General Assembly from each and every corner of the State of Illinois; and our constituents expect us not just to fight for our own hometowns, but to work with other legislators to make this a better state for everyone. Our districts demand fierce advocacy, but also decency in getting the job done.

We can and often do make mistakes. We all made mistakes even today; but at the end of the day, a legislator must, above all, be true to his or her oath of office, which is the point of this resolution.

Some of my colleagues will dismiss this resolution. Some think the resolution goes too far. Frankly, some think it doesn’t go far enough, that Representative Miller is entitled to his opinion, or he didn’t mean to cause any harm to anyone, or that this was simply a mistake. However, I am here today standing on behalf of this resolution to argue that, no, this was not a mistake. This was a pattern of behavior from our colleague, Representative Chris Miller.

Here are the facts. Representative Miller and his spouse, his wife Congresswoman Mary Miller, were both at the Save America Rally on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in our Capitol. We know what happened after that in the press; but specifically Representative Miller posted on his campaign account a Facebook live post at 12:35 PM, just minutes, just minutes after former President Trump had given his remarks and concluded. During that Facebook live post, he said, “We are engaged in a great cultural war to see which worldview will survive, whether we will remain a free people under free market capitalism, or whether they will put us under the tyranny of socialism and communism under the dangerous Democrat terrorists that are trying to destroy our country.” 12:35 PM.

Just minutes earlier at 12:30, hundreds of those who’d been at the rally had already reached the Capitol and their security barrier. By 12:53, the Proud Boys and others from the rally breached the security gates. By 1:00, the Capitol had been stormed and overtaken. Less than 20 minutes, less than 20 minutes after Representative Miller posted and ended his Facebook live, the insurrection was in full swing just a few blocks away. The attempted coup, as we know, took several lives, including the death of Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick.

I do not know what Representative Miller did before or after that video. I would argue it’s not as relevant, except for the fact that he was there. We know his truck was parked at the Capitol, not surprising. But then when we see photos later of his truck in the parking lot of the Capitol with protesters of the insurrection still in the parking lot, we see a sticker on the back of his truck with the Roman numeral three. The Roman numeral three represents the Three Percenters.

For those of you who don’t know, the Three Percenters is a paramilitary hate group identified by the Anti-Defamation League as having the goal of overthrowing the United States government through violent revolutionary tactics. That’s what they stand for. Representative Miller admits it was his truck. He admits the sticker was on his car, has given different explanations as to why it was on his car. But we know it was there. We know it was on his truck.

I don't think any of us will ever forget January 6<sup>th</sup> and the images and the video of the Capitol being overrun, the near misses of unspeakable harm to our former Vice President Pence, Speaker Pelosi, other representatives and senators. But on that day, that day, Representative Miller stood with the insurrectionists. That's indisputable. But if Representative Miller regretted his words, was remorseful for his actions, he hasn't shown it, which again, I think is really the most critical element of all of this.

How do we know? One month later on February 8<sup>th</sup> at a town hall meeting, he again referred to his colleagues of the other political party as the enemy that's attacking our freedoms. The enemy.

The time has come, my colleagues, for Democrats and Republicans to make a choice about what it means to be a member of the General Assembly. We owe the 13 million people in the State of Illinois a bright line that shows where we stand when we have to choose between upholding elections and the ideals of the Republic regardless of our political persuasion or choosing insurrection, insurrection when our favorite candidate loses, like some chose on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Can't we agree here today in a bipartisan way that Representative Miller's behavior has so greatly crossed the line that we can say, "Enough! No more! This has to stop. This has to stop before someone gets hurt." We can disagree all day long on politics and on policy, and we will and we shall, but this is not about that. This is about right and wrong. It's about the oath of office that we all took to serve in the General Assembly. Deep down, I know each and every one of you know that. You know that the behavior of Representative Miller crossed the line. He betrayed the oath that we all took to the General Assembly, to the State of Illinois, and that the behavior was unbecoming of a legislator. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:**

This resolution shall be on the order of standard debate. That is three members on either side, including the sponsor. The first speaker from the Republican side is Leader Durkin.

**Leader Jim Durkin** (R-Burr Ridge):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the resolution. Let me first start off and say that that date in January, it's one of the saddest days that I've witnessed as an American and as the leader of the House Republican Caucus. We reject and denounce anybody who was involved with taking over our US Capitol and injuring our men and women who were defending the Capitol.

But it's really unfortunate that we are here to take up this resolution. It's really unfortunate on many levels. Now, Representative Morgan, you and your colleagues may disagree with Representative Miller and his views on many issues. I understand that, and that's fine. The same could be said about myself and Representative Miller because we certainly don't agree on a lot of things either. I guess that's how this building works.

Now, I've witnessed over the past few years a lot of statements about the Republican Party, which you've sought to attribute to us, and many times we pass it off. Some of them are very damaging, but we know that that's what happens in this building. That's part of the world we live in.

Let me just say that I've read your resolution many times; but over reading through it so many times, I believe that this resolution goes beyond those disagreements that we often have during the many times where we are having debates, things get heated. But that's what we do. That happens, and that's part of this process. But let me also say that within your resolution, you make very bold, broad claims and conclusions, which you are asking us to assume as factual.

Let me just state that there is another place for us to take this, and it currently is happening. I will recommend that the proper place for this issue to be resolved is currently with the Legislative Inspector General. The Legislative Inspector General received the complaint from the Democrat County chairman and is making a determination of whether or not what happened on that date regarding Representative Miller. We know that. It's been much publicized. I think a prudent person would say, "Why don't we wait to find out what the conclusions are?" Because there is a chance that the IG could determine that this is an unfounded complaint, and then we'll have a resolution which is completely opposite, one that did not have the benefit of an investigation into the allegations.

But I also want to just remind us here of what we're doing. What we are doing is that we're setting a new precedent, a new standard of how the men and women in this chamber are to be judged in their private lives with this resolution. This will open a Pandora's box. That's reality.

I will just state that there is a place for someone to lodge their objections, their complaints, and that's with the Legislative Inspector General. I know that the IG will do her job. She'll do a thorough job as she always does. But let me also remind you that it was only about a year ago last May when there were protesters outside of the Bank of Springfield Center that were

signs, terrible signs that were comparing Governor Pritzker with Adolf Hitler.

I confronted one of them. I was very, very disgusted by that. I had to explain to that person what exactly she is doing with that image. Republicans on this side of the aisle, we won't stand for that type of behavior, and we've proven it. But I will just say, we are human beings, we are emotional; but we also need to be very careful about precedent that we set with our actions. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:**

Representative Ammons.

**Rep. Carol Ammons** (D-Urbana):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of my colleague, Representative Morgan, and this resolution here today.

Someone wrote me after this incident took place and suggested that this is an issue of free speech. We're here today to discuss free speech, something every one of us is a proponent of. It is quite literally our job here at the Capitol to protect free speech. But today's topic, which is Representative Chris Miller's participation in an insurrection on January 6 that led to the death of multiple citizens as well as the injury of countless others.

Now, it's been reported that Representative Miller said he attended because he supported Trump, which is perfectly fine. He just wanted to be patriotic. He wasn't aware that the very large decal on his truck is a logo of a far right militia group, the Three Percenters. Representative Miller was just, "exercising his freedom of speech."

But let's take a moment and delve into what Representative Miller said on January 6<sup>th</sup> and some of the ideology that this Three Percenter group actually promotes. Representative Chris Miller said, and it was repeated here already on his Facebook live, not a video, live on January 6, "Trump supporters engaged in a great cultural war to see which worldview will survive, whether we will remain a free people under free market capitalism or whether they will put us under the tyranny of socialism and communism and dangerous Democrat terrorists."

In order for us to fully understand the situation before us, we must know what the Three Percenters are. A quick Google search will bring you to the Anti-Defamation League's website, where it says the following. "The Three Percenters are the anti-government extremists who are part of the militia movement. They compare their hostility to the federal government with the opposition of American patriots to the British during the American Revolution. The term itself is a reference to a false belief that the number of Americans who fought against the British during the Revolutionary War amounted to only 3% of the population at the time. Historians said, of course, that is incorrect. Three Percenters believe that just as a small revolutionary vanguard overthrew the tyrannical British rule in America, a dedicated group of modern patriots could rid the United States of today's alleged tyranny."

When we consider these beliefs and hold them up next to what Representative Miller's Facebook live comments were, we find very similar messages, very dangerous messages, messages saturated with misinformation and anti-American rhetoric, which we believe led to the murder of several in Georgia just the other day. It was no accident that Representative Miller was on the Capitol on January 6. His own wife praised Hitler in a speech at a rally that very morning. It's clear to me that Representative Miller knew exactly why he was there, and he got caught. So now he's backpedaling.

To reiterate, I'm no opponent of free speech. Fighting for your Constitutional rights is something I and everyone here really takes seriously and have dedicated our lives to.

What I am opposed to is when that speech incites violence that led to the lynching of thousands African-Americans from 1882 to 1968. Black men and women were murdered just by hearsay, similar views that were espoused on January 6. If someone cried wolf, they'd be lynched that very night. These are not words of rhetoric. This is historical fact. Words absolutely matter. As public servants, we must take extra responsibility for the words we share with our constituents. We must realize that our words have ripple effects. It was irresponsible and unconscionable for Representative Miller to spread hateful misinformation and un-American rhetoric, and we must hold him accountable to the office he holds.

I will be voting yes on this resolution today because it is not just about the words, but those words translate into hurt and harm and, in some cases, even death of our citizens. We must stand against this rhetoric because it is spreading like a vile disease in this land to an era that we had thought was once past gone, but obviously have not.

I stand in support of Representative Morgan's resolution, and I encourage our colleagues to do the same.

**Mr. Speaker:**

Representative Miller.

**Rep. Chris Miller** (R-Robinson):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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In early January, I drove my farm truck to Washington DC for my wife, Congresswoman Mary Miller's inauguration and to move into her apartment. Having been granted a security credentials to park at the US Capitol parking lot, I drove my wife to the Capitol steps for her freshmen picture on January 4<sup>th</sup>. I parked my truck there on Monday morning, and my truck remained at that location until Friday afternoon.

On Wednesday, January the 6<sup>th</sup>, I went to the Save America Rally at Ellipse Park just south of the White House. After attending the peaceful rally, I listened to all the speeches, I met with groups of constituents on the Capitol Mall for photos, and then I walked back to my wife's office.

Upon arriving at the Longworth Building, the building was put on lockdown; and I was not allowed to leave the premises till after 8:00 PM that evening. I had no part in the violent events at the Capitol that day, and I condemn any and all violence. I can assure you that my dedication to the safety and security of our state and our country's citizens is second to none. We may disagree on policy; but at the end of the day, all of our commitments to our constituents is making Illinois a better place, and all these ideals are one and the same.

I am hopeful that we can focus on our shared priorities for Illinois and work towards those goals this spring in Springfield. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:**

Representative Didech.

**Rep. Daniel Didech** (D-Buffalo Grove):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the resolution. On January 6, we witnessed something in America that we had not seen in 160 years. What we witnessed in Washington was not a peaceful transfer of power, it was a violent transfer of power. President Trump summoned his violent followers. He urged them to storm the Capitol, and he whipped up a murderous mob directed at the Vice President of the United States, members of Congress, and the staff and police officers present on that tragic day.

There are some who will say that Representative Miller is not responsible for these evil acts because he merely attended the pro-insurrection rally, and he never could have known that they would actually follow through with it, just like he thought that the racist anti-American symbol that he put on his own vehicle was just a cool decal. How many times do we have to hear Representative Miller call Democrats terrorists or the enemy before we can start taking his word seriously? How many times does Representative Miller have to accidentally find himself supporting the overthrow of the United States government before we can stop pretending we don't see what's going on here?

We've all heard the unconvincing defenses of Representative Miller's conduct, but bad-faith hairsplitting and half apologies are untenable on the fundamental question of American democracy. There is nothing admirable about cleverly toeing the line between politics and incitement. Everyone must stop tacitly accepting such dangerous behavior.

There are always some people who in the aftermath of heinous and tragic event want to quickly forget and want to just move forward. It's a natural instinct. Good people don't want to think about awful things.

But the 24-hour news cycle is not the only way to understand America. The memory of history is much longer. Today's resolution is a part of writing that history. Supporting this resolution means that decades and centuries from now, you stood with democracy and against violence, that actions have consequences, that killing police officers is not an acceptable response to losing an election. Until we take a bipartisan stance against violence and the politicians who incite it, I fear it will not end. So I urge an aye vote today. Thank you,

**Mr. Speaker:**

Representative Batinick.

**Rep. Mark Batinick** (R-Plainfield):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of inquiries to the chair. This is in front of the Legislative Ethics Commission, and it's our understanding that we probably shouldn't prejudge that. Should people who are members or could be members of the Legislative Ethics Commission, should they refrain from voting on this particular resolution?

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Okay. I was not going to speak on this resolution. I guess I'm more speaking towards the debate. Words matter, and one of the things in this particular role that I have is you have to be extremely careful when you're talking off the cuff constantly. But words do matter. Regarding the events of January 6, I do believe I have some credibility in terms of how deplorable I think the actions were and the lack of action by the President on that particular day and said so at the time.

But I heard somebody say on the floor during this debate that words matter. I believe that individual, that was the same individual that accused our entire caucus during lame duck session of reading The Turner Diaries, which I didn't know what The Turner Diaries were. Words matter. So if words matter, please don't accuse me of being a racist and reading something as a playbook that I've never heard of before in my life. Thank you,

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**Mr. Speaker:**

Thank you, Representative. We've had three speakers on each side. All in favor, vote aye. All opposed, vote nay. The voting is open. (silence).

Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish?

Mr. Clerk, please take the record. With 57 voting yes, 36 voting no, 5 voting present, this resolution is adopted.