

**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

*Please complete the following:*

*Your Name:* Sergeant C.T., U.S. Capitol Police

*Defendant's Name:* Joshua Pruitt

*Case #:* U.S. v. Pruitt, 21-cr-23

*Relationship:* NONE

*Sentencing Date:* August 26, 2022

**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

*You can use this form as a guide or write your statement in letter form to the Judge. Please include the identifying information listed above. Consider the following:*

*How has this crime affected you and those close to you?*

The insurrection of January 6, 2021 has negatively impacted my way of life both emotionally and psychologically and affected my family life in the following ways:

1. I don't sleep well. I find myself waking up tired most days even though I go to bed at a reasonable time. If I have the ability to do so on days off I often take naps during the day to catch up on the rest I missed the night prior. I know that I wake up multiple times a night sometimes after having unusual dreams and other times due to being restless. I also have been told by my wife that I toss and turn more at night which impacts her sleep as well. As a law enforcement officer it is essential that I am well rested to be able to do my job to the best of my ability as described by my department for the community I serve.
2. I have become withdrawn and now secluded myself more from both my immediate /extended family and friends as a result of the events of January 6, 2021. Many family members would describe me, prior to the insurrection, as very outgoing. Although some of that persona is shown at times; I mainly keep to myself. At various times after I arrive home from work I sit alone in my office in an attempt to unwind, and multiple times during the evening I "disappear" as well. I try and avoid large crowds to include family and friends. When I hear of individuals talking about January 6, and the actions or inactions of law enforcement on that day it makes me want to leave the room. It is as if suddenly everyone in the room is suddenly an expert in law enforcement and has served honorably within this profession for many years. I have become more irritable as a result of what occurred on January 6. My tone of voice when speaking, mannerisms are just some of the outcomes.
3. I find that I cannot share parts of my daily life with my wife or children as a result of what I witnessed during the insurrection. My family and I are aware of the risk of my profession and we are aware of the risks associated with it. My primary job as a husband, father and officer is

to protect them. Yet, the anxiety that is spread throughout my household is overwhelming. Especially when they hear there is a demonstration or other event that extends beyond a typical shift. What I experienced on January 6 has caused my wife to have anxiety anytime Washington, DC or the US Capitol is mentioned in the news. As the spouse of a law enforcement officer she knows there is a certain amount of risk that comes with my chosen profession but the insurrection which occurred on January 6<sup>th</sup> changed her perspective on what could happen.

4. I find that since the attack on the US Capitol I have difficulty concentrating on daily tasks. While my work has not suffered; the tasks to which I am assigned take longer to complete with an evident struggle to remain focused in completing assignments. When I am home trying to relax I miss conversations between myself and family members and even zone out when watching television programs alone or with family. This lack of concentration in collaboration with my social withdrawal has changed the way I interact with people. I am more skeptical of anyone not in my immediate circle. I live with the fear of another attack happening due to the rhetoric that is currently discussed ad nauseum on social media, radio, and the news. It is exhausting to the point where I don't watch/follow any form of media anymore since I seem to live the news daily.

*If you wish, you may use this space to tell the Judge whatever you would like him/her to know about the experience of being a victim of violent crime; or any other information you would like to share. {e.g. the stigma of being a victim, media coverage, family reaction, the loss of control.}*

Your Honor, as you are aware, under Federal law, "domestic terrorism" is defined as "activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States." The events of January 6, 2021 were an incident of domestic terrorism that were given a path to succeed by a bold lie (where many legal challenges to affirm there was fraud, to include a Supreme Court ruling, have been concluded as false), and the continued inaction of those who spread the lie of "Stop the Steal". It is imperative that the defendant and others with similar mindsets who choose to disobey established laws, law enforcement officers and seek to enact change through violent means be punished for their crimes to the letter of the law to the fullest extent of the law.

Right-wing citizens and militia groups such as the Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, and Proud Boys (the latter of which the defendant is a member) sought to undermine our democratic process of the peaceful transfer of power because they believed a lie told by someone who encouraged their behavior. A man gave these men and women an outlet for their extremist ideologies as well as permission to feel empowered by their beliefs to act out because they didn't get their way. A man told these militia groups, "To stand back and stand by" which then served as a rallying cry and encouraged them to continue their extremist ways, to prepare to fight "the injustice" and the "fraudulent election". The Right wing ideology that these groups and individuals hold dear is in fact a cancer within our society. As

we enter into midterm elections/primaries we have seen several candidates who lost by overwhelming majorities call their loss a fraudulent election as a result of January 6. This has become the new narrative when things don't go their way. And if we "stand back and stand by" as a democratic country then we have become complicit and will allow the cancer to spread exponentially and the downfall of our democracy will fail in vain. Their tactics include but are not limited to slogans such as, "fraudulent election", "fake news" and disinformation campaigns against subject matter experts who go against the grain of their ideology. My encounter with the defendant I would refer to him as an agitator, someone who would poke the bear continuously. The defendant would emerge from the crowd and get into the personal space of law enforcement officers in the hope of getting a reaction out of them so that reaction would justify the acts of violence by those who illegally entered the US Capitol. When the defendant found his efforts to be unsuccessful he would then retreat into the larger crowd of protestors looking for another target in uniform to provoke. The defendant did this repeatedly throughout my interaction to include telling me that, "You better stop eyeballing me." While his provocation was not effective, we all knew what his aim was.

*Reactions and/or feelings towards the criminal justice system:*

*{e.g. How the process impacted on you, how you/your family were treated; victim/witness intervention; information on court proceedings and case status; any feelings of abandonment by the system, defense attorney's insinuations, how it felt enduring the trial process, seeing the offender face to face (plea bargaining).}*

I feel that the criminal justice system is handling the cases before it as best as they can. While I would like to see the insurrectionists charged with at least 366 days in prison versus individuals getting a plea deal, I know that it would just serve to cause a strain on the judicial system if they were all prosecuted as felons.

*What is your recommendation for sentencing? ( mandatory/maximum):*

As stated previously it is my humble request that the defendant be punished to the fullest extent of the law. The defendant and others, traversed to the US Capitol in the hope of overturning a fair and democratic election through violent means, should be dealt with swiftly and harshly by receiving maximum sentences according to the law. Examples of this are the chants to kidnap or kill sitting members of Congress and the Vice President and going to the offices of Congressional Leadership to do the same. These individuals through violence, and intimidation, in the effort to coerce a civilian population (Senators and Congressmen), and to use these tactics to affect the conduct of a government (overturning the 2020 election) by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping to influence the policy of a government should all have the maximum sentences imposed. The United States legal system must not tolerate any form of insurrection or coup due to a lie. To not hold these individuals accountable for their actions will only encourage this horrific behavior again and again when they do not get their way. As a parent I liken this to a toddlers temper tantrum. If it isn't addressed immediately the tantrums become worse and worse. As we have just entered a voting primary season we are seeing candidates echo the "fraudulent election claims" due to their loss. As a result of the legally obtained search warrant there are increase call for violence against law enforcement officers by the same groups/individuals who participated in the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection.