

2. Communication received from Chet Falkowski regarding political violence



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AGENDA ACTION REQUEST

**DATE:** June 10, 2025

**TO:** Mark Washington, City Manager

**COMMITTEE:** City Commission Meeting  
**LIAISON:** N/A

**FROM:** Joel H. Hondorp, City Clerk  
City Clerk's Office

**SUBJECT:** Communication received from Chet Falkowski regarding political violence

# Political Violence and the Fracturing of American Ideals

Sources:

*u.s.senate.gov/history*

*u.s.history.org*

*history.com*

*Google AI*

This is not an attack against differing political opinion. It is about openly disavowing all political violence. I placed the sources before my commentary because some feathers are likely to get riled, even though the commentary is true and accurate. It is of great import that we understand this dire problem if we are to ensure our way of life for our youth and upcoming generations; indeed, we must make corrections if our great nation is to continue at all.

In March, 1854, the Republican Party was founded in Ripon, WI, by the antislavery wing of the Whig party with the goal of ending slavery. In July of the same year, the first ever Republican rally took place outside of Jackson, MI, attracting more than 10,000 people. The following year saw the Republican party show major gains in the 1855 non-presidential elections. Republicans made major advances in many states and took majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives. Americans who wanted to end slavery and ensure freedom for all were finally able to make a difference.

The next year saw the vicious attack by a Democrat representative against a Republican senator after he gave an anti-slavery speech on the senate floor. Senator Sumner sustained significant injuries in the ambush and was not able to return to the Senate for four years. Political violence and violent rhetoric from the Democrats were increasing.

In 1860, Republicans elected Abraham Lincoln president with the aim of ending slavery. As Southern Democrats could not accept that premise, they started the civil war when South Carolina militia fired on Fort Sumpter. That war ended slavery, but caused over 700,000 deaths.

That most tragic and unnecessary war ended in 1865, 5 days later Republican President Lincoln was assassinated by an avowed slaver. Southern Democrats founded

the Ku Klux Klan that same year, launching a campaign of intimidation and violence against former slaves, the Republicans who freed them, and other groups including Jews and Catholics.

Jim Crow laws, enacted by Southern Democrat legislatures between the 1870s and 1960s, were a manifestation of authoritarian rule targeting African Americans in the former Confederate states. Also, 12 Democrat governors actively opposed the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, using the KKK and police, often with dogs, to harass, beat and imprison peaceful protesters.

The late 1960s saw a resurgence of leftist violence including rioting and bombings on college campuses and city centers. Recently, we have seen more leftist violent rioting and rampant antisemitism causing injury and destruction of property. Now, a Rutgers University affiliated poll shows among self-identified left-of-center respondents, 55% support assassinating President Trump, and 48% feel the same about Elon Musk, with many on the Left openly and publicly calling for assassination.

Violence is not the answer to our problems, and diversity is not strength. Unity is strength. Our national motto states it clearly, E Pluribus Unum. Out of Many, One. We should all be invested in that lofty goal by encouraging assimilation of American values by all. Our elected and appointed leaders should be at the forefront of that investment in knowledge, tolerance, peace and security.

Thank you.

Chet Falkowski, Grand Rapids