

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Statehouses, U.S. Capitol Brace for Potentially Violent Week

Source: David A. Lieb and Adam Geller, APNews.com, January 17, 2021

Police and National Guard troops stood sentry at newly fortified statehouses Sunday ahead of demonstrations planned for the leadup to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, as authorities worked to deter a repeat of the recent riot that overran the U.S. Capitol. A few protesters were starting to gather in some cities, but streets in many others remained empty.

About two dozen people, several carrying long guns, protested outside the Ohio Statehouse, observed by several of the dozens of state troopers positioned around the building. Several dozen people — some carrying American flags — gathered at South Carolina's Statehouse. And at Michigan's Capitol, a small group of demonstrators, some armed, stood near a chain-link fence surrounding the building as state police walked the grounds and National Guard vehicles were parked nearby.

Tall fencing also now surrounds the U.S. Capitol, the National Mall is closed to the general public, and the District of Columbia's mayor asked people not to visit. Some 25,000 National Guard troops from around the country were due in the city in the coming days.

The stepped-up security measures were intended to safeguard seats of government from the type of violence that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when supporters of President Donald Trump swarmed the building while Congress was certifying the Electoral College vote.

The FBI has warned of the potential for armed protests at the nation's Capitol and all 50 state capitol buildings beginning this weekend. Some social media messages had targeted Sunday for demonstrations, though it remained unclear how many people might show up.

Authorities in some states said they had no specific indication that demonstrations would occur, much less turn violent. Yet many state officials vowed to be prepared, just in case. They said they did not want a repeat of the mob's assault, which left a Capitol Police officer and four others dead. In recent days, more than 125 people have been arrested on charges related to the insurrection.

In some locations, a small number of people showed up intending to counter protests, even in places where they had not yet materialized.

One counter-protester came early to greet any demonstrators at the Pennsylvania Capitol, saying he had heard about the possibility of a meet-up of a far-right militant group. But no one else was there.

"I'm fundamentally against the potential protesters coming here to delegitimize the election, and I don't want to be passive in expressing my disapproval of them coming into this city," Stephen Rzonca said.

Wisconsin National Guard troops armed with rifles, shields and body armor arrived near the state Capitol on Sunday morning. A man who drove a vehicle up the steps of the Capitol building was arrested overnight for driving while intoxicated.

More than a third of governors had called out the National Guard to help protect their state capitols and aid local law enforcement officers. Several governors issued states of emergency, and others closed their capitols to the public until after Biden's inauguration day.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said in a statement Sunday that law enforcement officers "will protect the rights of peaceful demonstrators but will also vigorously resist any violence."

Some state legislatures also canceled sessions or pared back their work for the coming week, citing security precautions.

Even before the violence at the U.S. Capitol, some statehouses had been the target of vandals and angry protesters during the past year.

Last spring, armed protesters entered the Michigan Capitol to object to coronavirus-related lockdowns and were confronted by police. People angered over the death of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee into his neck for several minutes, vandalized capitols in several states, including Colorado, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin.

And just last month, crowds in Oregon forced their way into the state Capitol in Salem to protest its closure to the public during a special legislative session on coronavirus measures.

Anticipating the potential for violence in the coming week, the building's first floor windows were boarded up and the National Guard has been deployed. The Legislature was scheduled to begin its 2021 session on Tuesday, but much of its initial work has been delayed for at least two days because of warnings about potential violence.

'The state Capitol has become a fortress,' said Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney, a Democrat. "I never thought I'd see that; it breaks my heart."

Possible Response Questions:

- What are your thoughts about state capitols bracing for possible violence? Explain.
- Pick a word/line/passage from the article and respond to it.
- Discuss a "move" made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting. Explain.