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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Breaching of the Capitol

## *Press release*

Washington, D.C., January 11, 2021 — On Wednesday, Jan. 6, hundreds of domestic terrorists stormed and occupied the U.S. Capitol after encouragement from Donald Trump and his administration during a rally and on social media, costing the lives of five Americans and causing incalculable damage to the integrity of our country's democracy. The insurrection was an extreme attempt to prevent Congress' certification of Joseph Biden as the President-elect and Kamala Harris as the Vice President-elect of the United States, which Congress made official hours later despite the objections of 167 Republican members of Congress, calling votes from many key states fraudulent. Several members of President Trump's cabinet have resigned in protest of his role in inciting the mob which stormed the Capitol Wednesday, including now former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who cited how "impressionable children are watching" and that government officials "have a moral obligation to exercise good judgment and model" appropriate behavior in her letter of resignation. DeVos' controversial term as Secretary was cut short by her abrupt resignation before she could be asked to support a possible invocation of the 25th Amendment against the President before his term officially ends on January 20th. Miguel Cardona, the former Connecticut commissioner of education and Biden's pick to lead the Education Department, will be DeVos's successor as Secretary of Education.

GENup condemns in the strongest possible terms all actors who took part in inciting and perpetrating violence against our nation's democratic processes. In disputing Biden's electoral college win in November, supporters of President Trump encouraged the disenfranchisement and silencing of BIPOC voters who turned out in record numbers to support a new administration in the White House. When discussing this event, we cannot isolate it from its historical context. White privilege has always been a dominant force shaping American politics, and this far-reaching influence has long blighted history curricula by whitewashing the United States' racist past and present. Although Wednesday might have seen the nation's first domestic insurgency at the Capitol, this event is by no means unprecedented in the attempt to enforce the tyranny of a white majority upon the American populace. Education has an integral role in shaping the political identities of Americans, and affording every student a comprehensive, anti-racist, fact-forward civic education to every student is vital to ensuring our democracy functions as intended.

As future participants and facilitators in the democratic process, it is of paramount importance that students are fully informed about how the undercurrents of U.S. history shape the political landscape of today and how to critically analyze current events to separate fact from fiction through information spread on the web. We have seen how deliberately misinformed individuals can capitalize upon their white privilege to commit violent acts against our country. The impetus for action is now upon all education stakeholders: we must reform school curricula to provide culturally relevant educational experiences that prepare students to combat racism and deception on all fronts.