



PRESS RELEASE

Washington State Man Sentenced to Over Seven Years in Prison for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of
Columbia

WASHINGTON – A Washington state man was sentenced to over seven years in prison today after he was previously convicted of assaulting law enforcement and other felony and misdemeanor charges stemming from his conduct during the Jan. 6, 2021, breach of the U.S. Capitol. His actions and the actions of others disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress convened to ascertain and count the electoral votes related to the 2020 presidential election.

Taylor James Johnatakis, 40, of Kingston, Washington, was sentenced to 87 months' imprisonment and ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution by U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth.

On Nov. 21, 2023, a federal jury in the District of Columbia found Johnatakis guilty of seven charges, including three felonies. Johnatakis was convicted of obstruction of an official proceeding, civil disorder, and assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers, all felony offenses. In addition to the felonies, Johnatakis was convicted of four misdemeanor charges, including entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds; disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds; engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds; and engaging in an act of physical violence in the grounds of any of the Capitol building.

According to court documents, prior to the events of Jan. 6, 2021, Johnatakis posted numerous messages to social media revealing his intent to obstruct the election certification. In one instance, on Jan. 5, 2021, Johnatakis posted: “...and that’s why I am going to DC, to CHANGE the course of HISTORY #stopthesteal.” That same day, he posted: “[B]urn the city down. What the British did to DC will be nothing...”

Johnatakis traveled from Washington state to Washington, D.C., and attended the “Stop the Steal” rally at the Ellipse on Jan. 6, 2021. After the rally, Johnatakis marched to the U.S. Capitol and posted a video to social media where he said, in part, “Anyways, we’re walking over to the Capitol right now, and I don’t know, maybe we’ll break down the doors.” He then made his way onto the restricted Capitol grounds that were closed to the public, carrying a megaphone. By approximately 2:30 p.m., he had made his way through the crowd on the West Front, where the Inaugural stage was under construction. By then, rioters had flooded the area and were actively overpowering the police line.

Johnatakis made his way to the front of the mob of rioters while yelling into his megaphone. As the crowd grew and tension rose, the police officers on the line were overwhelmed by the rioters and ultimately forced to retreat up the Southwest stairs under the scaffolding of the inaugural stage. Court documents say that Johnatakis led the charge under the scaffolding, up the stairs toward the retreating police officers and the Capitol building.

Police officers retreated and formed another police line to protect the Capitol building and the members of Congress inside at the top of the stairs. Johnatakis was among the first rioters to march up the Southwest stairs to confront them.

Johnatakis then organized and coordinated other rioters to assault the police line at the top of the staircase. Specifically, using his megaphone, Johnatakis directed rioters to move up to the police line and yelled at the rioters to “pack it in! pack it in!” Johnatakis then instructed the crowd through the megaphone that they were going to push the bike racks “one foot” at a time and counted, “one, two, three, GO!!” Johnatakis and his fellow rioters — including co-defendants Isaac Steve Sturgeon and Craig Michael Bingert — grabbed the bike racks in front of them and pushed them forcibly into the line of police officers. Numerous police officers ran to reinforce the line as the rioters pushed the metal bike racks into the officers. As a result of this attack, at least one police officer was injured.

The FBI arrested Johnatakis on Feb. 11, 2021, in Washington state. Sturgeon and Bingert were both previously sentenced for their roles in the January 6th Capitol Breach.

This case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington.

This case is being investigated by the FBI’s Seattle and Washington Field Offices, which identified Johnatakis as BOLO (Be on the Lookout) #103 on its seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 38 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,358 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 486 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement, a felony. The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov.

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VIOLENT CRIME

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