

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 91

*Expressing the censure of the Senate.*

Agreed to by the Senate, January 27, 2021

WHEREAS, Senator Amanda F. Chase, a member of the Senate of Virginia since 2016, has exhibited conduct unbecoming of a Senator during her terms in office by displaying a disregard for civility in discourse with colleagues, making false and misleading statements both in committee and on the Senate floor, and displaying a disregard for the significance of her duty to the citizens of the Commonwealth as an elected representative in the Senate of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Senator Amanda F. Chase's pattern of unacceptable conduct has been publicly displayed in a series of incendiary incidents during her tenure, including the following:

1. On March 22, 2019, Senator Chase berated a Capitol Police officer on duty when the Senator was not given access to a restricted parking area in front of the Capitol, reportedly stating, "Do you know who I am? . . . I'm Senator Chase . . . Don't you see it on my license plate? . . . But I guess you don't care." The report of the incident indicates that Senator Chase addressed the officer profanely and made offensive remarks regarding the Clerk of the Senate. Following the incident, Senator Chase suggested that the officer's actions, which were in the normal course of duty, had been racially motivated in reaction to the Senator's "white privilege"; and

2. Senator Chase used her social media page to recklessly identify the names and office contact information of colleagues, Democratic and Republican, whose legislation and votes she disagreed with. Expressing outrage, and in an attempt to intimidate fellow legislators over policy differences, Senator Chase urged her social media followers to voice their dissent directly, resulting in several legislators and aides receiving threats; and

3. In discussing on social media her personal choice to carry a weapon, Senator Chase blamed victims of sexual assault for not fending off their attackers, making the damaging and indefensible claim that "It's those who are naive and unprepared that end [up] raped"; and

4. After another Senator announced her candidacy for Governor of Virginia, Senator Chase decried "identity politics" in the gubernatorial race and suggested that, because her fellow Senator is vice-chair of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus, she is "not for all Virginians"; and

5. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Senator Chase undermined the seriousness of the pandemic by stating, "I don't do COVID"; and

6. Following the 2020 presidential election, Senator Chase implicated both major political parties in baseless claims of a "stolen" election, asserting, "Make no mistake. We are at war. The Democratic Party hijacked our 2020 Presidential Election and [has] committed treason. Where the hell are the Republicans?"; and

7. Senator Chase claimed that "The Virginia Democratic Party is racist to its core," after Democratic officials asked a white local registrar to step down over issues relating to management of the 2020 election; and

8. In the aftermath of the unfortunate events and riots at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, Senator Chase voiced support for those who participated in storming the United States Capitol, calling them "[p]atriots who love their country" and propagating unfounded claims regarding the nature of the events, the identities of those who took part, and the validity of the presidential election. When given the opportunity to specifically denounce and repudiate those individuals at the January 6 riot who (i) were proponents of white supremacy; (ii) wore T-shirts and other attire emblazoned with anti-Semitic messaging; and (iii) breached the United States Capitol grounds barricades, broke into the Capitol when the United States Congress was in session, and disturbed and defaced the Capitol, Senator Chase declined to do so. The destruction and violence at the United States Capitol was the first occasion that the defenses of the United States Capitol have been breached since the War of 1812; led to multiple deaths, including that of a United States Capitol Police officer; injured numerous others; desecrated the United States Capitol; resulted in property destruction; threatened the lives and safety of those who are entrusted with carrying out the will of the American people; and required an emergency response from 200 Virginia State Troopers and 1,300 members of the Virginia National Guard, who were put in harm's way to quell the violence and restore order; and

WHEREAS, Article IV, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia provides that each house of the General Assembly may "punish [its members] for disorderly behavior"; and

WHEREAS, Rules 18 (h) and 53 (b) of the Senate provide that the Senate may, by a majority vote, censure one of its members and place the member last in seniority; and

WHEREAS, the inflammatory statements and actions of Senator Amanda F. Chase during her tenure

in the Senate of Virginia have created and aggravated tensions, misled constituents and citizens, and obstructed the Senate's business in service of the Commonwealth, and such behavior constitutes a failure to uphold her oath of office, misuse of office, and conduct unbecoming of a Senator and, collectively, has caused a material effect upon the conduct of her office; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, That the Senate of Virginia does censure Senator Amanda F. Chase and place Senator Amanda F. Chase last in seniority for failure to uphold her oath of office, misuse of office, and conduct unbecoming of a Senator.