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Statement: Governor JB Pritzker's Reckless Words Are an Invitation to Violence

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker has crossed a dangerous line — and elected officials and media should not stay silent about the words he chose to use this past weekend.

In an unhinged political rant, Pritzker recently declared that Republicans "cannot know a moment of peace." It is not the first time he has engaged in grossly irresponsible rhetoric. Over the past several years, Pritzker has routinely accused Republicans of being "Nazis," "fascists," and "enemies of democracy." His record of using the most inflammatory language possible to vilify millions of Americans is extensive and undeniable.

This is not ordinary political hyperbole — it looks to legitimize hostility, lawlessness, and violence against millions of law-abiding Americans who simply happen to disagree with him politically. It is the language that triggers violence.

We've already seen where this kind of dangerous rhetoric has led: assassination attempts on presidential candidates, brutal assaults on elected officials and businesspeople, mass shootings at churches, schools, and public gatherings — fueling unstable individuals who absorb this constant drumbeat of hatred. When political leaders demonize half the country, they give the green light to unstable extremists looking for justification to act.

Governor Pritzker's words will do exactly that. They normalize hatred. They suggest violence is acceptable — even inevitable — against political opponents. They rip apart the fragile fabric of civil society that allows Americans to resolve differences without bloodshed.

He should be ashamed. But he isn't. His comments were deliberate, premeditated, and calculated to fire up his base without a single thought given to the consequences for public safety, public discourse, or the lives that could be lost.

Where is the outrage from the media? Where are the so-called "defenders of democracy" who lecture Americans daily about political norms? Their silence is deafening — and it is dangerously hypocritical.

Every responsible leader — Democrat, Republican, or Independent — should immediately and unequivocally condemn Pritzker's reckless dehumanizing rhetoric. If they don't, they are complicit in the environment of escalating political violence that threatens our nation.

The truth is simple: you cannot claim to defend democracy while using the language of dictators and thugs.

Political disagreement is a hallmark of a free society. America's greatness lies in its ability to debate fiercely but live peacefully. Governor Pritzker's words betray that greatness. Political demonization is the first step toward tyranny.

Governor Pritzker owes the people of Illinois — and the nation — an apology. More importantly, he owes it to the country to stop using the kind of toxic, inflammatory rhetoric that endangers lives.

If he will not hold himself accountable, then it is up to voters to do it for him at the voting booth.

Commissioner Sean M. Morrison
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