



To the Clerk of the Committee.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing as a four time Democratic Nominee for Congress (Kentucky KY-02) regarding the Senedd's commitment to ban political deception. We are the home of Fort Knox, the Corvette, Bluegrass and Bourbon, and Abraham Lincoln's birthplace. This district is a deep Republican district, Kentucky was the first state to be called for Trump in the recent election. I am unlikely to be elected, my purpose is less about winning a seat and more about reconnecting with working class and rural voters, and to hopefully influence my party to do the same.

As a federal candidate since 2018 I have experienced the repercussions of political deception. So firstly, congratulations and thank you for your work. Reform of this kind is not easy and I'll continue watching with admiration.

I hope some of my observations will be helpful.

Political deception is not limited to one party or news organization. We Democrats are very aware of and concerned about the deception of Republicans and Fox News, but we seem to sail over deceptions committed by our own party and MSNBC. The Hunter Biden laptop story is an example of this - for months we were told it was a fake, a Russian plant - by the time the truth came to the surface we had moved on.

The costs are high, the effects are widespread and difficult to counter. For example, after this election it is Democrats who are concerned about the validity of the voting process. Deception encourages ever deeper divisions,

it justifies our team's abuses by pointing out how much worse the other team's actions are.

And lies ultimately lead to violence and social breakdown. The events of January 6th and the recent riots in the UK are visible examples, but there are many other examples at the grassroots level. Here in my district, political signs were routinely stolen from private property, this is a federal offense although none were prosecuted. So, there is much at stake.

I support the idea that politicians should be held to their words, that intentionally deceiving the public should be punishable, adjudicated by an independent judiciary.

In the US I suspect a public pledge would be a good first step. That is, sign up politicians willing to publicly say, I will aim to disagree accurately, I will not intentionally deceive, I will back up my statements when needed, I will retract my statements when I am mistaken. One appeal of this approach is that it is positive rather than punitive, and it encourages discourse. I am part of Braver Angels, the largest organization in the US dedicated to healing division between liberals and conservatives, I will discuss the idea with them.

Public trust in government, candidates and office holders is indeed at an all time low, I agree that candidates and officeholders should be held responsible for their words - giving an accused politician the choice to clarify, correct or retract or defend in court will re-build public trust.

Again, congratulations on your pioneering path.

Best...H

Hank Linderman
