

Violent threats hit Obama allies over health vote
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 25, 2010

Top Democratic US lawmakers called in police and the FBI after House members who voted for historic health care reform received violent threats and obscene, abusive messages.

Democratic House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said more than 10 Democratic lawmakers had reported incidents since Sunday's vote, some of which he described as "very serious" without giving details.

NONE Lawmakers stepped up their security, as one senior Democrat reported bricks had been thrown through the windows of her home district office.

Democratic Representative Bart Stupak, who brokered a deal clearing the way for some fellow anti-abortion lawmakers to vote for the legislation, received a fax with a noose and the caption "all Baby Killers come to unseemly ends Either by the hand of man or by the Hand of God."

The abusive tone of some of the threats as well as incidents of violence have clearly shaken lawmakers as they prepare to head home this weekend for a spring recess.

Stupak's office received a voicemail in which an irate man declares: "You baby-killing mother(expletive). You turncoat son of a (expletive) piece of (expletive). I hope you bleed out your (expletive), get cancer and die."

Worried representatives

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was investigating a reported incident of a gas line being cut at the home of one lawmaker's brother, and the US Capitol Police was briefing worried representatives on how to keep themselves and their families safe.

NONE "We received information that the congressman may have been threatened and that was the reason for us going to his brother's house, because it was related to us that he may have been targeted," the FBI said.

"Any member who feels himself at risk is getting attention from the proper authorities," said Hoyer. "That activity ought to be unacceptable in our democracy."

House Rules Committee chairman Louise Slaughter said in a statement that someone threw a brick through the window of her district office and "a voicemail referencing snipers" was left on her campaign office phone system.

"'Assassinate' is the word they used... toward the children of lawmakers who voted yes," reported a Rochester television news outlet of the message left for the New York lawmaker.

"The US Capitol Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and local police departments are all aware of these incidents and are still investigating," she said in a statement.

The incidents occurred after demonstrators demanding lawmakers "kill the bill" reportedly spat on one black representative and called others racial slurs just outside the Capitol over the weekend.

'Not the American way'

Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner said many Americans were "angry" about the health law, but underlined that "violence and threats are unacceptable. That's not the American way."

"We need to take that anger and channel it into positive change. Call your congressman, go out and register people to vote, go volunteer on a political campaign, make your voice heard -- but let's do it the right way," he said.

Democratic Representative James Clyburn said it was up to lawmakers from all political stripes to send a unified message that such threats from constituents were unacceptable.

"We in this Congress have got to come together in a bipartisan way and tamp this foolishness down. It doesn't make sense. That's not what a democracy is all about," Clyburn told CNN.

Ahead of the health care vote, conservative blogger "Solly" Forell was already reportedly being investigated by the US Secret Service for threatening posts toward Obama that he made on the website Twitter.

"ASSASSINATION America, we survived the assassinations of Lincoln and Kennedy. We'll surely get over a bullet 2 #BarackObama's head," he wrote in a posting.

Forell later deleted the post and backtracked, writing: "Let us all renounce the harsh rhetoric about the (president). Several, including myself, (have) used inappropriate language. Let's remain civil!"

-AFP

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/127439>