

For immediate release:

Trump didn't come from nowhere. If we're going to stop him and what he stands for we need someone who will fight back against the lies and fear-mongering that currently pass as politics in our country. Trump is not the first politician to exploit a vision of the world where everyone who is not American and is not white is a terrorist or a criminal or simply does not belong here. When the War on Terror began, the United States made Muslim registries and put hundreds of thousands with no evidence against them on "watch lists." We started scanning every single foreigner arriving on international flights for dirty bomb material. We created ICE to aggressively hunt down immigrants in the name of "homeland security." We began to spy on everyone in the name of "patriotism."

Today the War on Terror has expanded to 76 countries. This war has not made us safer. It has led to atrocities committed against civilians at the hands of our military, encouraged the spread of terrorism around the world bringing us to an era of unprecedented global instability. And here at home, what it has done is create an epidemic of fear that put an adolescent gangster in the White House.

We can condemn Trump and his supporters for spreading hate and we should. But if we do so at the expense of articulating a thorough analysis of where this racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia have come from, we lose the ability to hold Democrats accountable for abiding by this discourse when it has been politically expedient to do so. At every turn, Democrats have supported these policies, either through their vote or through their silence. This needs to stop now.

***And that is the reason that I, Pat Fontes, entered the race to be the next U.S. Senator from Rhode Island.*** Rhode Island needs a voice in Washington who will speak up for the most vulnerable. Rhode Island needs someone who will fight for immigrants and fight against the forces in Washington that have sown disorder in the countries they come from. Many of the refugees attempting to cross our border come from Honduras, where in 2009 the U.S. recognized a military coup of a democratically elected president and then sent the military hundreds of millions of dollars for years. Throughout Central America the United States has intervened, often violently, in the affairs of democratically elected governments for many decades, and these efforts have consistently been a bipartisan affair. The United States has a debt to pay to the world. Accepting refugees and immigrants without hesitation, ending the militarization of our border, critically examining the purpose and activities of ICE, and stamping out xenophobia and racism is the least we can do.

The incumbent, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, prides himself on being a child of the foreign service. His father and grandfather were both ambassadors. More than anyone, he should know the role the United States has played on the world stage for years and years. He should know better than to vote down a referendum against the U.S. involvement in Yemen, where the U.S. military is directly implicated in atrocities committed against innocents by the Saudi coalition.

He should know better than to have voted for Mike Pompeo, a bigoted Islamophobe and an advocate of torture, to become CIA Director. He should know better than to stay silent when our closest ally Israel murders medics, journalists and unarmed protestors. Rhode Islanders know better.