

THE DIMINISHABLE RETURNS OF MAGAT MOBS

Thom Tillis has made a lukewarm announcement making it clear he would not vote to confirm Eagle Ed Martin to be US Attorney for DC.

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-North Carolina) said he informed the White House that he opposed naming Trump's interim appointee to a full four-year term.

"If Mr. Martin were being put forth as a U.S. attorney for any district except the district where Jan. 6 happened, the protest happened, I'd probably support him," Tillis, who is up for reelection next year, told reporters. "But not in this district."

[snip]

"We have to be very, very clear that what happened on January the 6th was wrong. It was not prompted or created by other people to put those people in trouble. They made a stupid decision, and they disgraced the United States by absolutely destroying the Capitol," Tillis told reporters. "There were some people that were over-prosecuted, but there were some two or three hundred of them that should have never gotten a pardon, and he [Martin] agreed with that."

There's wiggle room here. Tillis suggested he would vote for Martin in some other district – perhaps his native Missouri (where Trump nominated a slate of nutjob judicial appointees yesterday). One of Martin's little hobbies has been to pester medical journals at RFK Jr's behest to suggest science is an impermissible bias, and there is no more jurisdiction in DC

for such things than in Missouri.

And while Chuck Grassley has made it clear he won't call Martin up for a vote unless he knows it'll pass, he has also suggested the nomination might not be dead (Lisa Murkowski is a likely no vote; it's unclear if there are four no votes if the full Senate got the nomination).

In response the MAGAt mob has done what the MAGAt mob does best: froth and threaten. Some have started conspiracy theories suggesting that Tillis' opposition stems from something other than the insurrection, such as corrupt real estate deals. Others have called to replace Tillis on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Perhaps the most interesting response is a call to have Lara Trump, who is originally from North Carolina, primary Tillis next year.

It's never a good idea to underestimate the cowardice of elected Republicans. If Tillis holds out until May 20, thought, Trump either needs to replace Martin (some have suggested he should simply replace Martin with Matt Gaetz, which honestly wouldn't be a horrible trade – that's how shitty Martin is), or the judges in the DC District will name someone to serve in the interim.

But if Tillis *does* hold out, particularly if he holds out in the face of primary threats, it will neutralize a lot of the power of these mobs (some of which, led by Laura Loomer, are increasingly focused on internecine fights).

The MAGAt mob only has power so long as Trump can offer the target something of value. If the response here is to make reelection impossible (or to give Tillis the kind of distance from Trump that might be useful in a swing state), then the target in question would be liberated to act on conscience. For example, Tillis could start to honor the needs of the many service members in North Carolina rather than carry water for Trump's disastrous Secretary of Defense.

It's still far too early to declare Martin's nomination to be dead. But one way or another, Tillis' public opposition to Martin may create space in the Senate that thus far doesn't exist.