

Punchbowl News

HOUSE INVESTIGATIONS

Secret Service director in hot seat as House GOP readies task force

The House Oversight Committee will hold a high-profile hearing today with Secret Service Director **Kimberly Cheatle** about the assassination attempt against former President **Donald Trump**, which has quickly become a top investigative target for the GOP.

The Secret Service is facing its biggest crisis in decades as the security failures surrounding the Trump campaign rally have started to come to light. And it's about to get even tougher for the embattled agency, which will have a lot to answer to from lawmakers in both parties over the coming days and weeks.

Cheatle's testimony comes in the wake of an [explosive report](#) from the Washington Post over the weekend that the Secret Service denied repeated requests from Trump's detail for more protection at events in the two years leading up to last weekend's rally, contrary to the agency's initial denials.

During today's hearing, House Oversight Committee Chair **James Comer** (R-Ky.) will reiterate his calls for Cheatle to resign, according to excerpts of his opening statement Punchbowl News obtained. Here's Comer:

"While we give overwhelming thanks to the individual Secret Service agents who did their jobs under immense pressure, this tragedy was preventable. The Secret Service has a zero fail mission, but it failed on July 13 and in the days leading up to the rally. The Secret Service has thousands of employees and a significant budget, but it has now become the face of incompetence.

"Americans demand answers, but they have not been getting them from the Secret Service. We are instead learning about new facts about the events surrounding the attempted assassination every day from whistleblowers and leaks. Americans demand accountability, but no one has yet to be fired for this historic failure."

House Democrats also have said they have their own questions that need to be answered, and party leaders have privately signaled they're not going to defend the Secret Service leadership here. At least one Democrat, Rep. **Brendan Boyle** (Pa.), has so far called on Cheatle to step down.

Cheatle, for her part, will frankly acknowledge during her opening statement that the Secret Service "failed" on July 13 in its "solemn mission is to protect our nation's leaders."

“As the director of the United States Secret Service, I take full responsibility for any security lapse,” Cheatle will say. “We will cooperate with the pending external review and the DHS Office of the Inspector General.”

A **bipartisan group** of House Homeland Security Committee members, led by chair **Mark Green** (R-Tenn.), will visit the site of the Trump rally shooting in Butler, Pa., today. The group includes ranking member Rep. **Bennie Thompson** (D-Miss.).

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas also [named a bipartisan panel](#) to undertake its own 45-day, independent review of the Secret Service’s and local authorities’ actions. This panel includes former DHS Secretary **Janet Napolitano**; **Frances Townsend**, former Homeland Security Adviser to President **George W. Bush**; **Mark Filip**, a former federal judge and deputy AG under Bush; and **David Mitchell**, former head of the Maryland State Police. Mayorkas could add more picks to the panel, DHS said.

Task force news: House Republicans have added a vote this week to create a task force to investigate the Trump assassination attempt. [Here’s the resolution](#), which mandates a 6-5 split between Republicans and Democrats on the panel. Rep. **Mike Kelly** (R-Pa.) is the lead author on the resolution.

We expect this resolution to pick up some bipartisan support.

-Melanie.Zanona?Jake.Sherman.and.John.Bresnahan