

Statement of the Honorable Paul D. Irving
Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration
February 7, 2017

Good morning Chairman Harper, Mr. Brady, and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Sergeant at Arms priorities for 2017 and beyond. Before beginning, I would like to say that it is truly an honor to have an opportunity to serve this institution, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

As you know, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms provides security, safety and protocol services to Members, Committees and the staff who serve them. To accomplish our mission, we have an extremely dedicated team whose diverse strengths provide the highest level of professionalism and expertise in each of our divisions: Police Services and Law Enforcement, Protocol and Chamber Operations, Parking Security, House Security, Information and Identification Services, and Emergency Management. These offices collectively and collaboratively ensure solid management and governance over House operations, especially in matters related to security.

As Sergeant at Arms, I am responsible for the oversight of these divisions and all security matters which relate to the House of Representatives. I also serve as a member of the Capitol Police Board, which establishes policies and guidelines to protect the Capitol complex and its occupants. The Capitol Police Board is a statutorily created, bicameral, non-partisan board of directors comprised of the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), and the Chief of Police. The Board is statutorily charged with oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), and I work with the Board to support the USCP in its mission to protect and serve the Capitol community. The Board proactively seeks to implement new security initiatives to stay ahead of new and emerging threats.

As the Committee is aware, in March of last year the Board selected Matthew Verderosa, a 30-year veteran of the department, as the 9th Chief of the Capitol Police. I have worked closely with Chief Verderosa over the past several years, and his long tenure with the USCP has been a tremendous asset both to this institution and also to my office in managing the security of the House.

Along with the Board and the Chief, I receive real-time intelligence information providing an overview of local, national, and international events which may have an impact on the safety and security of the House of Representatives. These events include identified criminal activities, threats to Members of Congress, families, and staff, as well as those events and information that might be more closely associated with terrorism and other potentially disruptive activities.

All of this information is gleaned from a variety of sources and through partnerships with federal, state, and local intelligence and law enforcement agencies. These resources and efforts in intelligence-gathering assist me in evaluating security countermeasures, providing a more secure environment for the House to conduct its business, and allowing visitors to safely view and participate in the legislative process. I want to assure the Committee that I carefully evaluate and balance the security posture of the House of Representatives with the effects that any new security protocol may have on the business process of this institution.

Thanks to the support of this Committee, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms is involved in a number of important new and ongoing projects which I would like to highlight. I have been taking active measures to address the security of the House garages. The goal of the House Garage Security Enhancement Project is to protect Members, staff and visitors in the HOBs by adding nine new USCP screening access points inside the House garages. This project is designed to move the entire Capitol complex closer to 100% screening by bringing the HOBs into the secure perimeter and in line with the Senate Office Buildings and the Capitol. My office continues to work in conjunction with the AOC and the USCP to implement this important initiative. With the Committee's help, the AOC and the USCP have already commenced the phased-in approach to all the House garages, beginning with the Ford garage and the Cannon and Longworth Underground garages. This phase included the implementation of standard security screening equipment (x-ray machines and magnetometers) at the established access checkpoints from those garages into the HOBs.

The next portion of this initiative will incorporate the Rayburn garage into the screening protocol and will be completed in coordination with the Rayburn garage renovation project. This will entail the build-out of selected elevator lobbies to accommodate the screening equipment in the Rayburn Garage, dedicating certain elevators to access the screening areas into the building, and repurposing other areas of the garage as support office and storage space. The objective of this phase is to maintain an organized garage with ease of traffic flow and a smooth transition from unscreened to screened areas. The Cannon Garage screening checkpoint will likewise be developed simultaneously with the Cannon Renewal project.

With regard to security issues associated with the Cannon Renewal project, the demolition and reconstruction of the building will involve the closure of the Cannon Rotunda at the basement level, which required the Appointments Desks, as well as the Capitol Guide Service desks, to be relocated to a place convenient to the screening site into the Capitol. Furthermore, as the screening site will be accessible from Cannon through a single tunnel to be constructed through the Rotunda, we have been working with the AOC and USCP to develop measures which will help alleviate potential pedestrian points of congestion. We will also be working with the Committee to keep the House community notified of security-related and other issues which

invariably occur with a construction project of this magnitude.

In addition to these initiatives, I have been prioritizing various security enhancements to further augment our external security posture. A number of projects, coordinated with House and Senate Leadership, Appropriations Committees, and the AOC, will help enhance the security coverage of the Capitol, while maintaining the openness and park-like setting of the grounds. Our current planned projects include the installation of an underground alarm around the perimeter of the Capitol building; bolstering the physical structure of the outer planters and the Olmsted wall; and financing a study to upgrade the lighting on the Capitol East Plaza. The additional alarm will further enhance the USCP coverage of individuals approaching the base of the Capitol, as well as provide full integration with the existing cameras. Bolstering the planters and the Olmsted wall will complete the outer perimeter security and help prevent breaches onto the Capitol Square. Upgrading the lighting systems will provide illumination levels necessary to meet current security and safety standards and would ideally have the capability of adjustable lighting levels to be utilized after dark during votes or in emergency situations.

Along with these exterior enhancements, I have been working closely with the Board and the USCP to increase manpower to the House and Senate Office Buildings to tactically address security concerns at key exterior points of entry in order to identify and mitigate threats before they reach the interior security screening checkpoints. The USCP has put forth a plan to staff the most heavily used entrances throughout the Capitol Complex and House and Senate Office Buildings in order to increase presence for pre-screening. A core component of this pre-screening initiative is the use of additional highly specialized K-9 teams and other assets to patrol exterior zones to pre-screen visitors and enhance our presence.

Another exterior security initiative entails the lifecycle replacement of post-9/11 physical security infrastructure requirements (e.g. barriers and kiosks). Many security barriers installed over a decade ago are reaching the end of their lifecycle and must be replaced. Therefore, I have been working with the Board and the Appropriations Committee to acquire the funding to begin the lifecycle replacement of the barriers. Additionally, with regard to security kiosks, the AOC is developing a strategy to gradually replace system components, thus extending the kiosk lifecycle and defraying the cost of the project.

Finally, the installation of new, reinforced windows is a vital part of the initiative to upgrade and strengthen the exterior facades of the House Office Buildings (HOBs). The Architect is currently reviewing the design of these windows, and installation is already underway with the Longworth Building. This is a multi-part project, as noted, beginning with the Longworth and continuing with the Rayburn and the Cannon HOBs. The Cannon windows will be replaced in coordination with the current Cannon renovation project.

This year also begins the transition of the O'Neill Federal Office Building from the GSA to the jurisdiction of the House. As you may be aware, my office serves as the Designated Official for O'Neill, taking the lead in emergency planning and preparedness. Because the building is an Executive Branch building (with space leased to the House), there is no permanent USCP presence, but instead contracted security provided by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Protective Service (FPS). This contract will expire by the end of the fiscal year, and the USCP is working to acquire the manpower necessary to take over all physical screening operations. In addition to screening, my office is collaborating with both FPS and USCP in maintaining, upgrading, and unifying the security systems of the building (cameras, prox cards, alarms, etc.). The USCP's Security Services Bureau (SSB) was involved in the initial design of the building, which will significantly help smooth the transition of the security systems to the USCP.

Within the Capitol, in addition to existing magnetometers, continued implementation of Enhanced Screening Portals (ESPs) in the House Gallery check-in area in the Capitol Visitor Center will provide an additional layer of security to the galleries of the House of Representatives. Visitors are now able to be screened for powders, liquids and other non-metallic objects prior to entering the House galleries. While this additional specialized equipment is currently utilized only for Joint Meetings and in circumstances of heightened threat intelligence on the House side, the ultimate objective is to implement their operation whenever the House is in session. I and the Board will continue to engage in ongoing briefings with the Committees of jurisdiction with the details of this law enforcement sensitive program as the project progresses. I would like to thank the Committee for its support of this project.

Additionally, one of my newest initiatives is to increase Chamber Security to staff the House Gallery, in order to redirect more costly USCP manpower to more security-critical initiatives. Similar to the Doorkeeper posts on the Senate side, the additional House Chamber Security staff would coordinate logistics with the USCP for the movement of visitors to the third floor, assist Members and their staff with seating of Gallery guests, enforce Chamber decorum, and provide enhanced Gallery visitor services coordination. Staffing of the Galleries would be provided to the public Galleries in proportion with the volume of visitors, as well as to the House Press Gallery, a dedicated Staff Gallery, and the Member and Family Gallery. USCP would maintain a uniformed presence on the third floor and would be readily accessible for quick response to protests or disruptions in the Galleries.

One of our more recent House-wide projects is the transition of GSA-approved safes from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to the Sergeant at Arms. This transition and subsequent program will encompass the secure management, storage, training, and record keeping for all GSA-approved safes being utilized within the House. My office will ensure protocols to track the location and identifiable information of every GSA-approved safe in the House and

consolidate all unused safes into a single secure storage facility. We will also provide training for proper safe procedures to cleared individuals who remain in possession of a GSA-approved safe. The goal of this project is to secure classified information and to provide accountability within Member and Committee offices.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee staff who worked with our Division of Parking Security to implement the new parking software system. This system will allow the Committee to receive requested information in a more efficient manner. It was a valuable tool for planning out parking rosters for the Rayburn garage renovation.

Finally, in partnership with the USCP, my office maintains a strong, effective outreach program with Member offices regarding District Office security. We offer guidance on best practices, providing information on how to obtain a thorough security review and how to coordinate security surveys when requested. One of our most successful District security initiatives is the mail hood program. The mail hood is designed to protect the operator from exposure to dangerous material that may be mailed to a District Office. This is accomplished by containing the materials within the device and filtering particles through a HEPA filtration system. To date, every Member who has requested a mail hood has received and implemented them successfully in their District Offices.

I want to assure the Committee that I remain conscious of and sensitive to working within the parameters of given resources. The USCP has already made numerous internal efficiencies so that several of these projects will have the requisite manpower to be executed as soon as possible. I will continue to work with the USCP, with Leadership, and with the Committees of jurisdiction to prioritize our security posture as we continually re-evaluate the threats to the Capitol complex and our multi-layered security plan.

As always, I am grateful for the unyielding support from the Committee as we strive to maintain the delicate balance between implementing strong security measures while simultaneously allowing free and open access to the Capitol complex. My top priority is providing the highest level of security for the House of Representatives, while maintaining the safest and most secure environment possible. I remain vigilant and focused on security and preparedness, striving to adhere to the strict level of fiscal responsibility entrusted to us by the Congress.

I will continue to keep the Committee informed of my activities and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.