

COVER PAGE

NAME: Lynda R. Williams

Position: National President, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Professor of the Practice, Criminal Justice Administration, Middle Tennessee State University, and Former Deputy Assistant Director, U.S. Secret Service.

DATE: May 19, 2021

TITLE: “Oversight of the January 6th Attack: Reforming the Capitol Police and Improving Accountability for the Capitol Police Board”
(Oral Presentation)

Verbal Testimony

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)

Before Committee on House Administration

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Committee Chairperson, Representative Zoe Lofgren, and Ranking Member, Representative Rodney Davis, and members of the United States House Committee on House Administration, I bring you greetings on behalf of the Executive Board, members, and constituents of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives – NOBLE.

My name is Lynda R. Williams, and I am the National President of NOBLE, Professor of the Practice, Criminal Justice Administration, Middle Tennessee State University, and retired Deputy Assistant Director, U.S. Secret Service.

I have served more than 30 years in the law enforcement profession.

It is an honor for NOBLE to provide written testimony on the topic of “Oversight of the January 6th: Reforming the Capitol Police and Improving Accountability for the Capitol Police Board”

and I am humbled to participate in this ongoing, important work of root cause analysis and remedies to strengthen the leadership and tactical posture of the U.S. Capitol Police force, to ensure the safety and security of our democracy, the safety of the stewards of our democracy embodied in our congressional representatives, and the safety and security of the many visitors, staff, and facilities.

Like you, I watched in horror as the events of January 6, 2021 unfolded and devolved into what has been appropriately described as a domestic terrorism attack on our country's democratic process and, more directly, an all-out assault on the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police force and U.S. Congress.

The aftermath of January 6 brought many questions and direct scrutiny regarding the department's processes, protocols, and methodology around intelligence gathering and dissemination, their operational and tactical procedures, their capacity and compliance to training, as well as leadership oversight and accountability.

Subsequent to the events of January 6, the United States Capitol Police Department's Office of Inspector General produced two "flash report" assessments which identified a myriad of lapses in foundational situational awareness and threat assessment protocols, tactical emergency response capabilities, a lack of baseline standardization of training, and an inappropriate alignment of manpower adequate for their mission.

Continuing, the two reports yielded no less than 34 recommendations mainly related to refining the operational readiness for the Capitol Police Department's Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) or its intelligence gathering and dissemination apparatus. Understanding that the lack of operational readiness and tactical breakdowns were the most glaring deficiencies on display on January 6, and therefore have received the brunt of what is being highlighted first, a priority **must be** placed on the responsibility, oversight, and governance of leadership's role in the manifestation of these deficiencies.

Often when there is a breakdown or a mishap in operations the first casualty is the lack of funding for a program; lack of funding begets misaligned resources, begets scaled down procedures, begets noncompliance of SOP and on and on

until the weakened process becomes the problem, rather than the decisions that created the weakened process. The continuation of the root-cause analysis that is to take place in this and future hearings **must** end this cycle of attempting to just fix “process” without fixing accountability of leadership and governance oversight.

In redefining the role of the U.S. Capitol Police force, a shift in the paradigm in operations of a law enforcement agency versus a federal protective service must be holistically evaluated. The morale and sentiments of those who battled arduously on January 6, should be considered in this assessment as this agency moves forward.

Upon my reflection, I am empathetic to the mindset of those officers who must report to duty after such a horrendous and unfathomable day in our country’s history. I pray daily for each individual traumatized and permanently scarred by those events that as time massages the pain, the physical scars are less visible and the mental anguish diminishes.

George Santayana is credited with the famous quote, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” The Congressional leadership and others with oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police force owe these officers the structural foundation, funding, training, resources and continued support to redefine the core values of their beliefs and behaviors of how they conduct themselves in work and interactions with professionalism, pride and effectiveness.

Thank you

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Like you, I watched in horror as the events of January 6, 2021 unfolded and devolved into what has been appropriately described as a domestic terrorism attack on our country's democratic process and, more directly, an all-out assault on the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police force and U.S. Congress.

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assessments which identified a myriad of lapses in foundational situational awareness and threat assessment protocols, tactical emergency response capabilities, a lack of baseline standardization of training with repetition and accountability in that training, and an inappropriate alignment of manpower adequate for their mission.

Continuing, the two reports yielded no less than 34 recommendations mainly related to refining the operational readiness for the Capitol Police Department's Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) or its intelligence gathering and dissemination apparatus. Understanding that the lack of operational readiness and tactical breakdowns were the most glaring deficiencies on display on January 6, and therefore have received the brunt of what is being highlighted first, a priority **must be** placed on the responsibility, oversight, and governance of leadership's role in the manifestation of these deficiencies.

Often when there is a breakdown or a mishap in operations the first casualty is the lack of funding for a program; lack of funding begets misaligned resources, begets scaled down procedures, begets noncompliance of SOP and on and on until the weakened process becomes the problem and rather than the decisions

that created the weakened process. The continuation of the root-cause analysis that is to take place in this and future hearings **must** end this cycle of attempting to just fix “process” without fixing accountability of leadership and governance oversight.

Let me be clear when I say the reality is no agency or organization operates with perfection, but one cannot operate with any efficiency or success when the tools, policies, oversight and internal controls do not keep pace with today's challenges and threats; this is reflected in the rank-and-file expressing little confidence in its leadership because of a perceived or real void of communicating values, ideas, strategy or shared affinity for its mission.

I recognize the need to hit the reset button, to pause and take stock in whether the organization is operating at its most efficient and highest level, and the hard truths that need to be confronted when the response is that it is not. In my experience as an executive with the U.S. Secret Service at various times between 2012 through 2015, my agency experienced the most comprehensive, but also very public, overhaul for improvements in its recruitment, hiring, training, and merit promotion in the agency's history. As a law enforcement executive, I am

very versed and experienced in “reading the room”, that is, in seeing the challenges within the mission, of evaluating and applying the necessary resources to champion those challenges, as well as provide constant assessment in preparation for societal trends and changes within law enforcement and threat influencers to forecast possible countermeasures, and responding accordingly. Comparative to the U.S. Secret Service, the “wins” and successes of the USSS can be attributed to the reevaluation of our SOP for accountability in training, hiring based on workforce planning strategy and attrition, and leadership development and knowledge transfer based on attrition.

In redefining the role of the U.S. Capitol Police force, a shift in the paradigm in operations of a law enforcement agency versus a federal protective service **must** be holistically evaluated. The morale and sentiments of those who battled arduously on January 6, should be considered in this assessment as this agency moves forward.

Over 30 years ago, I began my federal career as a recruit for the U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division. The training class consisted of members from Uniformed Division, as well as the U.S. Capitol Police. I am sure that training has

evolved greatly since 1988. However, it is apparent that the training provided by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), as well as any subsequent in-service training, was insufficient to mitigate the surge of the violent insurrectionists that day. I cannot imagine the helplessness, the shock and fear of those officers that gallantly reported to duty on January 6th, confident of their skills, duties and responsibilities to safeguard all that they had been entrusted to protect. Even more, I am sure they felt emboldened that they possessed the resources to execute their mission to protect and serve the democracy of this nation and all that it was thought to represent. I am certain that they believed that in a time of need, one would only have to express such and, without hesitation, that backup and reinforcement would expeditiously appear.

Upon my reflection, I am empathetic to the mindset of those officers who must report to duty after such a horrendous and unfathomable day in our country's history. I pray daily for each individual traumatized and permanently scarred by those events that as time massages the pain, the physical scars are less visible and the mental anguish diminishes, the future of this distinguished police agency will one day again be the beacon of pride and respect of each officer. As FLETC

graduates future classes, the structural foundation must be reinforced by the lessons and sacrifices that the men and women paid in serving their country. George Santayana is credited with the famous quote, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." The Congressional leadership and others with oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police force owe these officers the structural foundation, funding, training, resources and continued support to redefine their core values of their common beliefs and behaviors of how they conduct themselves in work and interactions with professionalism, pride and effectiveness.

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