

**Statement of William P. McFarland**  
**Acting Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives**

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, Senator Klobuchar, Senator Fischer, and distinguished Members of the Committees on House Administration and Senate Rules and Administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at the first joint oversight hearing on the Capitol Police Board. My testimony focuses on my objectives for the Capitol Police Board: Oversight and Accountability, Innovation and Transparency. Not coincidentally, these values align with the objectives and strategic plan I have established for my own team at the House Sergeant at Arms. I believe that when the Capitol Police Board embodies these values, it functions at its best.

Since starting as the House Sergeant at Arms in January, my first goal has been to increase oversight and accountability on the Capitol Police Board and working with my counterparts to reform the way we operate. At its core, the Capitol Police Board serves as an oversight body to the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP). The Board focuses on strategic decisions and makes sure the USCP identifies and takes appropriate operational measures to implement those decisions. Accordingly, the Chief serves as the operational head of the USCP force. In accordance with this approach, the board is currently working on the Chief's yearly review and establishing the goals for the upcoming year. In my role on the Board, I will hold him accountable for fulfilling those goals and will support his team however I can.

The Board has also reformed the way it works with the USCP Inspector General (IG) to increase oversight and accountability of the department. We have closely partnered with the USCP IG to close IG recommendations with a particular emphasis on those that were included in the flash reports after January 6<sup>th</sup>. As a part of this effort, I'm proud that the House Sergeant at Arms chairs the Capitol Police Board IG Working Group, and I am happy to report that 28 recommendations have been closed this year. While I am excited to tout our success, it is not lost on me that we have more recommendations to

tackle. In the spirit of transparency and as part of my office's leadership in the Capitol Police Board IG Working Group, the Capitol Police Board has approved the public release (with appropriate redactions) of IG reports concerning the Capitol Police. We are actively working through additional reports and are excited to share more information about the department and its activities. It is always hard to strike the balance between publicly releasing information and maintaining security, but, consistent with the instructions received from the Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee "to make reports publicly available whenever practicable and to begin publishing reports on its website", four IG reports have been released over the past few months, and a number of others are pending. The public release of four reports this year is a new approach for the Board but one I am happy to be a part of. As we iron out the processes associated with public release, I am confident we can increase the speed in which reports are released.

Continuing on the theme of reforming the way the Board operates, I am also pleased to report that the GAO recommendation concerning the Board adopting corporate best practices about accountability, transparency and communication was closed earlier this year. There is still work to be done to improve the way we operate as an oversight board. One area of focus going forward is the timely closure of GAO recommendations that were issued after their January 6 review. I have met with the GAO Comptroller earlier this year to better understand their views and I am holding myself and my partners on the Board accountable for timely completion of these recommendations.

Additionally, I believe significant improvement is needed in the timely completion of security projects around the campus. While the inception of many of these projects pre-date my time on the Board, it is an accountability focus of mine to ensure that the Capitol, our beacon of democracy and Capitol of the free world, receives much needed enhancements for which Congress has provided generous support. I am invested in identifying ways in which we can reform our approach to physical security projects so that we can remain agile and ahead of

threats to our institution. I look forward to working closely with my counterparts on the Board and the Committees of jurisdiction on my side as we continue to reform the way we operate.

During my tenure on the Board, I have also focused on fostering a spirit of innovation within the Capitol Police and Capitol Police Board. One important accomplishment on this front is the recent reorganization proposal of the United States Capitol Police. I understand and value the input that the Committees have in this process and appreciate your support in moving this forward, and I believe the reorganization will result in a stronger and more agile organization.

Prospectively, I believe a significant innovation reform will be the use of manpower. The Capitol Police have a significant number of officers spread across a wide range of missions. I think there are significant improvements that can be made to ensure that officers are used for their best and highest use and I look forward to challenging the Chief and the department to evaluate this area. For example, further training and creativity on the scheduling of officers will allow manpower to be better used and ensure officers have much needed rest. Another area of focus, which works in tandem with scheduling, is filling the civilian vacancies within the department to reach the allocated civilian staffing levels. Doing so, can help free up sworn personnel to perform duties that only sworn officers can perform. This in turn can allow officers to take much needed time off and allow greater access to take vital training. I would also like to see the department move forward with promotions to fill many of the acting positions officials are serving today while instilling an accountable leadership culture.

I also firmly believe that the Capitol Police Board and Capitol Police must continue to focus on operating transparently with our stakeholders. The Capitol Police Board and Capitol Police must be transparent with stakeholders about the processes and inputs that go into its decision-making. We must feel comfortable, in the appropriate forum, explaining why we made the decisions we did. The Capitol Police Board will not always agree. We are different people with different approaches and we support two sides of the Hill that do not always

agree with one another and I am comfortable acknowledging that. Constructive dialog around opposing views can lead to new discoveries and improve the way we operate. Nevertheless, part of building confidence, relationships, and rapport is having discussions that we may not want to have, but need to have in order to ensure we are addressing the challenging balance between security and open access for the public.

In closing, my tenure as the Sergeant at Arms and my actions on the Capitol Police Board have focused on three goals: oversight and accountability, innovation, and transparency. These goals have guided my past actions and will continue to help guide my service on the Board in the future and in continuing to reform the way we operate. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.