

**Office of the Sergeant at Arms
Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Submission
Statement of Timothy P. Blodgett
Acting Sergeant at Arms**

Good morning Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to present the Office of the Sergeant at Arms budget request for fiscal year 2022. It is an honor and a privilege to serve this institution, and I look forward to continuing to partner with the Committee as this year progresses.

I first want to thank the employees of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms. I have been serving as Acting Sergeant at Arms for two months. During that time, I have learned that my success depends on the success of my employees. I can fail on my own, but success requires the commitment and skills of multiple employees working together to fulfill our mission. My success is dependent on them.

These hearings serve as a useful time to both look back and look forward. Since the Office of the Sergeant at Arm's last budget hearing, the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically altered how my office and Congress has done its business. Longstanding processes have had to change in order to keep us safe. My staff have had to shift their mission in all areas, from changing how the floor operates to coordinating Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution.

In addition, the needs of the Office of Sergeant at Arms has changed considerably since January 6th. We are focusing on realigning our work force to better serve Members, staff, and visitors.

This includes structuring ourselves in a way that allows us to hold both our organization and our law enforcement partners more accountable for the security resources we provide you, your fellow Members, your staff and our visitors. Unfortunately, because of the budget submission cycle, the identified needs for the Sergeant at Arms — including more needs identified by the report produced by General Honoré this past week— will grow from what was originally

submitted. My staff and I will continue to work with Subcommittee staff on investments that the Subcommittee can make that would help better secure Members, staff, and visitors.

During this past year, our District Security Service Center partnered with our Emergency Management Division, the Office of the Attending Physician and the CAO to serve as the primary conduit for coordinating COVID-19 outreach and support. This is on top of their primary responsibilities of upgrading security systems and providing security guidance and support to district staff. Their work incorporated ongoing surveys with district staff to monitor operating status during COVID, meeting with each freshman Member office to educate them on the security resources available, coordinating security system deactivations with outgoing Members and documenting nearly 5,500 unique security related interactions with district staff over the past year. Additionally, this past year, the team contracted with an additional national vendor to provide Member offices with better resources and options for district office security upgrades. Although the program itself is just shy of four years old, as you'll see in our requests, we believe there is more we can provide to support Member security in their home district.

I am very proud of the work that has gone into these initiatives and the services my team provides to the House community.

With that background in mind, I would like to present the Sergeant at Arms FY22 requests.

For FY22, I am requesting further funding for the Joint Audible Warning System, or JAWS project. This is a shared effort with the Senate Sergeant at Arms, Architect of the Capitol, and Capitol Police to replace the aging wireless emergency annunciator system. One of the items I have testified to this Subcommittee about is how communications in times of crisis needs to improve. The existing wireless annunciator system was introduced as a temporary measure following the events of 9/11. The system components of these pager-like devices (which are located in all DC offices) are beyond their end-of-life dates, the technology is old, battery

components are no longer produced, and system support by the vendor is limited. Eighteen years after implementation, the requested funding will help procure a new joint system, with encrypted transmission capabilities and new devices for all offices in the House. It is critical for us to replace the system components.

With the new JAWS system, emergency voice notifications will be sent via secure radio frequency to all offices and meeting spaces throughout the campus. This radio frequency system will not rely on cell towers or IP-based networks and will provide a separate and critical system that will work in parallel with the other notification systems in place, to provide critical life-safety information to everyone in the House. Importantly, the encryption capability will help ensure messages are sent from trusted, authorized officials to verified devices.

The JAWS effort, in conjunction with other existing notification capabilities – the Joint Emergency Mass Notification System (or House Alert currently available on desktops and cellphones) and the Public Address System (the loudspeaker system in office hallways) – will provide notification resiliency. Collectively, they will use multiple delivery methods, including email systems, cell towers, network systems, and radio frequencies, to send emergency messages to Members and staff. The requested amount for FY22 is \$3,080,000 (which includes funding for the annunciator annual license and maintenance agreement) and represents a portion of the Sergeant at Arms requested budget increase.

I am also requesting funding to continue providing security services to Member district offices through the Sergeant at Arms District Office Security Program. The district office security systems form the backbone of the support that my office provides to district offices. Today, we are only responsible for providing a security system for one district office per Member. I have spoken to Committee staff, and General Honoré has identified that the District Office Security program should be expanded to allow security systems to be provided by the Sergeant at Arms to

all appropriate district offices. When the district security program began just over three and a half years ago, we were aware of roughly 150 offices that had some type of security system. I'm happy to report today, with the support that this Committee and the Committee on House Administration, we have more than 450 active systems with new systems coming online each month. While this measurable improvement has raised the bar and is a positive sign, our work isn't done, and I believe we can provide more for the district staff who play a critical role in the functioning of Congress. Therefore, I view the District Office security system program as a necessary and basic investment in ensuring security for Members, staff and constituents when they are visiting a Member's district office.

Employees of the Sergeant at Arms Office are our strongest asset. For FY22, I am requesting funding for two new FTE.

Within the Division of Police Services and Law Enforcement, an additional FTE will work on coordinating security installation and providing administrative support for the District Office Security Center. As the program has matured, and more vendors are brought online, it is helpful to have a centralized point of contact for coordinating installs. In addition, it is more responsible for these projects to be managed by a federal government, rather than contracted employee, because of the different vendors and cost.

Also, within the Division of Police Services and Law Enforcement, an additional FTE will provide the staffing needed for the increasing requirements to coordinate and support event planning efforts with our law enforcement partners. This includes working with our partners to develop written plans for large events like Inaugurations, joint sessions of Congress, other National Special Security Events (NSSEs) and smaller scale events like committee field hearings, Congressional retreats or demonstrations here on the Hill. While this FTE request was provided in late fall, January 6th demonstrated a clear need for this role to both assist our office

and to hold our law enforcement partners accountable for meaningful, documented planning efforts.

Non-personnel expenses for FY22 will continue to support travel, including Sergeant at Arms approved Capitol Police advance and support of overseas Leadership CODELs, and other large scale off-campus events attended by Members of Congress. Funding will continue to provide critical job-specific training for Sergeant at Arms staff in the areas of project management, physical protection systems, leadership and management, information technology and customer service. Telecommunications funding will support cell phone, air cards and wireless service for all divisions of the Sergeant at Arms. Printing funding will support general printing needs and the preparation of emergency, security and District Office training materials. Supplies and materials funding will be utilized for the purchase of office supplies, ID supplies, the lifecycle replacement of parking security uniforms, and the biannual purchase of Member and spouse identification pins, plates, and parking permits. Finally, general equipment funding is requested for the lifecycle replacement of PCs, software systems, laptops, wireless devices, cellphones, and desktop phones.

The FY22 Sergeant at Arms budget request has been prepared in the spirit of zero-based budgeting, without jeopardizing mission-critical services provided to the House community. To fund ongoing efforts, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms requests \$24,309,000 for fiscal year 2022. This includes \$14,693,000 for personnel to fund 166 FTE plus 2 new FTE and \$9,616,000 for non-personnel items.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. I am so appreciative for the Committee's unyielding support and partnership as we strive to maintain the delicate balance between strong security measures and free and open access to the Capitol complex. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.