

**Office of the Sergeant at Arms  
Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Submission**

**Statement of Mr. William P. McFarland  
Acting Sergeant at Arms  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Before  
The Subcommittee on Legislative Branch  
Committee on Appropriations**

Good morning Chair Amodei, Ranking Member Espaillat, and Members of this Committee. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today and present the Office of the Sergeant at Arms fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget request which totals \$33,628,000. This request is a 13% reduction from the FY23 enacted level. It is an honor and privilege to serve this institution and to collaborate with the Committee to provide the necessary resources to serve the Congressional community and to help keep Members, staff, visitors and facilitates safe and open to the public.

Since I was sworn in as Acting Sergeant at Arms on January 7, I have focused the efforts of my office on the mission of providing high quality, customer-serving, nonpartisan services to improve the safety of Members and their families wherever they may be, and that the Capitol Complex and district offices are safe and secure to Members, staff, and visitors from across the country. I'm deeply engaged with building our team up to provide you with the best security and safety services our office can offer. We're here to serve you and my first priority is making sure my team is appropriately resourced, trained and aligned to provide you with the services you need to safely represent your constituents.

While you will hear references to security throughout my discussion today, I must also point out that I recognize the challenging harmony that must be struck to improve security while maintaining the right for Americans to petition their elected officials. It is in this spirit that I want to take the opportunity to highlight a few initiatives in the Sergeant at Arms budget that will help achieve this goal.

This appropriations request focuses on 1) investing in Sergeant at Arms employees; 2) modernizing the Sergeant at Arms; and 3) continuing and building security and safety programs.

With respect to continuing and existing security programs, included in the Sergeant at Arms budget request is funding for the Residential Security Program. Based on the threat landscape, Member security concerns are not limited to the Capitol complex. To respond to this threat, and with the support of this Subcommittee, last year our office was able to repurpose existing funds to start a program that provides for equipment installation and the monitoring and maintenance of security systems at a Member's residence. This program has seen significant interest from Members and I can report that we have robust bipartisan participation in the program.

In addition, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms is continuing its District Office Security Program. Launched in 2017, this has been an incredibly popular program with Members. The program is designed to ensure that district offices are provided security systems to enhance the safety and security of offices all around the country. With the influx of new Members and Members moving district offices due to redistricting, the vital funding provided helps to increase the safety of Members and staff in their districts and maintain existing systems. Recently, the Sergeant at Arms has added new features, such as a digital keypad to Members offices to reflect common security practices.

Also included in the budget request is funding for the Sergeant at Arms Police Services Division to provide in-person Security Awareness Briefings in Members' districts. In conjunction with the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), Security Awareness Briefings provide a security overview for Members and staff on how to respond to typical security issues that an office encounters, and includes best practices for district office security, residential security and for hosting and attending events in their district.

The Office of the Sergeant at Arms also operates a travel security program. This program, operated in conjunction with the Transportation Security Administration and airports, notifies local airports when a Member will be traversing through the airport and provides an escort when appropriate. The program assists Members in safely traveling to, from and across the country as part of their official and representational duties.

The Sergeant at Arms is continuing and expanding services offered by the House Security Office. The budget includes a request for the purchase of GSA approved safes for classified documents, a successful program that is ensuring safes across the House of Representatives are up-to-date. Our House Security Office also offers foreign travel briefings to

Members and staff so that they may be aware of the circumstances and potential risks in countries they're visiting. The budget includes funding for an additional FTE dedicated to providing these services.

With respect to campus projects, the Sergeant at Arms has been partnering with the USCP and the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) on a significant number of projects contained within their budgets, and I want to highlight an ongoing initiative, the Joint Audible Warning System or JAWS program. The budget requests funding to continue the JAWS initiative, which will replace the current annunciator system with a clearer and more easily used system. The current system has reached the end of its useful life and I appreciate the support this Committee has provided to this program over the past few years. I'm committed to pursuing immediate, concrete progress on this project and seeing this project through during the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The appropriations request also includes funding for other existing initiatives, including travel in support of large scale off-campus events attended by Members of Congress, to include the 2024 Presidential Nominating Conventions, funding for Member and spouse identification pins and plates for use in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, and new signage to enhance wayfinding across the campus in the parking garages.

The Sergeant at Arms is committed to modernizing and providing its services in a more customer-friendly and accessible way. This initiative includes a new outreach center located in the Longworth Building, and is designed to make our trainings and services more accessible to the House community. Furthermore, we are delivering more of our services in a digital format and intend to continue to leverage technology to improve our services. Our office has launched eight (8) digital training courses so Members and staff can receive important training on security best practices, and emergency procedures anytime, anywhere, and we intend to expand these offerings. Included in the FY 24 budget request are certain digital tools to allow Members and offices to more easily access our services. One initiative included is a mobile duress capability that will allow Members to request emergency assistance or communicate with USCP. There are a number of technologies available in the marketplace, and we hope to find an appropriate technology with the right controls and features to provide to the House community.

Additionally, I would like to emphasize that the employees of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms are our most valuable resource. I want to thank them for their hard work and dedication to Congress. I am investing in our employees for their professional development so that they may

better serve Members, staff and visitors. My office is currently allocated 182 FTE. Included in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms budget for FY24 is a request for an additional 13 FTE. I would also like to acknowledge the timing of budget submission occurred before I was sworn in, so my team is assessing our programs to streamline our work and ensure we are making the best use of our staffing. My team will continue to work closely with your staff to adjust our forecasted staffing needs.

Funding for other services permits critical job-specific training for Sergeant at Arms staff in the areas of leadership and management, physical protection systems, emergency preparedness, project management, and customer service. As business practices of the House change, our employees need to be equipped to be adaptable and agile. As new technology and approaches are introduced, employees need training to continue to operate and master the new technologies. The Sergeant at Arms, for example, has already partnered with the Chief Administrative Officer to develop and provide a customer service training curriculum for the House Parking Security Division. I intend to leverage existing internal and external opportunities to ensure that Sergeant at Arms staff are equipped with best practices, training, and clear career paths so each individual can grow within our team and better contribute to our organization.

Non-personnel funding requested in FY24 will continue to support travel, telecommunications, printing, and contracted services, supplies and equipment. Funding for telecommunications will allow for the continued use of mobile devices and desktop phones for all Sergeant at Arms divisions. Funding for contracted services will allow for the consultant services for subject matter experts who support legal, security, and communications efforts.

The FY24 Sergeant at Arms budget request has been prepared in the spirit of zero-based budgeting, remaining fiscally responsible without jeopardizing mission-critical services provided to the House community. For FY24, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms requests a total of \$33,628,000. This includes \$18,893,000 for personnel expenses to fund the 182 current FTE plus 13 new FTE, as well as \$14,735,000 for non-personnel items. I'm very pleased to sit in front of you today and report that we are able to decrease our funding needs in FY24 by 13% overall.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. I am deeply appreciative for the Committee's support and partnership as we strive to maintain the

challenging harmony between strong security measures and free and open access to the Capitol complex. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.