

**Testimony of J. Thomas Manger,  
Chief, U.S. Capitol Police  
before the  
Committee On Appropriations  
of the  
United States House of Representatives  
March 25, 2025  
HEARING:  
*Capitol Complex Public Safety and Security***

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espaillat and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the comprehensive steps the Department has taken in the light of some recent security incidents. The security of the U.S. Capitol, the Capitol campus, Members of Congress and their staff and our visitors are the highest priority of the United States Capitol Police. Any security failure, even when it does not lead to anyone or anything being harmed, is of grave concern to both me and my officers. The recent incidents involving failures of security screening are particularly troubling to me given that performing security screening at our entrances is one the most essential features of our security plan for the buildings and the campus. These failures will not be tolerated and any officer found to have violated our Rules of Conduct during their duties will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

That said, it is important to remember that the vast majority of our officers do an outstanding job every day. Each year our Department safely and effectively screens over 8 million staff and visitors who wish to enter any of our buildings including the Capitol and the CVC. In addition, to the Department handles other security situations every year including demonstrations, and National Special Security Events, of which we have had four this year. Even with all these activities, the Capitol Campus is and remains one of the safest places in the United States, and our officers are to be commended for that.

In light of the recent security incidents, the Department is implementing new measures to ensure security screening is as effective as possible, employing both human interactions and technology and the careful use of artificial intelligence. The efforts that the Department is undertaking are being made to ensure that security failings that we have experienced this year do not happen again.

### **Training and Procedures**

After the first security screening incident all officers assigned to our Uniformed Services Bureau (known as USB), the main section that conducts security screenings at the entrances, have had mandatory briefings related to security screening, and all officers have viewed the video of the CVC screening failure to reinforce the importance of and emphasis on always complying with training and policy, related to security screening. Additionally, our Training Services Bureau (known as TSB) completed on-site Security Screening Refresher Training for all officers assigned to USB. All of these measures were completed by February 7<sup>th</sup>.

Also, the Department began a new effort in February of this year. Sergeants from USB now have new Post Certification Sheets. Sergeants are now responsible for checking all the posts under their supervision three times per shift and documenting these checks on the certification sheet. This ensures that our officials are getting out from behind their desks to observe their officers performing their screening functions. These same officials completed their post-by-post review of all the screening sites to remove any potential distractions from each post. The Department has removed all distractions from posts.

It is our plan to implement a new Security Screening Virtual Audit via our USCP cameras. The goal of this program is to have officials randomly select a security screening post that would be monitored virtually during certain random times each day for one week. Officials will maintain

a log of what post and what officers were assigned for the selected audit. In the beginning, corrective actions will take place via counseling, documentation, and training but as time goes on, officers may be subject to discipline for security screening failures noted during the audit. We are currently in discussions with the Union regarding this quality control strategy.

To further enhance Department discipline, we are also implementing uniform line inspections to ensure officers have on the approved uniform and look sharp. The first round of uniform inspections took place the week of March 17th.

Finally, of our completed enhancements, the Department has assigned a lieutenant as the Security Screening Program Manager and they are dedicated to ensuring the success of our Security Screening Program initiatives.

The Department is also in the process of taking further steps to improve its security screening process. These are efforts we are moving forward on now. Starting in the summer, all our USB officers will have to take an updated Security Screening Refresher Training with an associated test that all officers will take every six months. All USB Officers will have to pass the test twice per year to be certified to do security screening.

The Department is in the process of restructuring some of our USB post rotations so that the maximum amount of time an officer is assigned to a post task between 30 to 45 minutes before they will rotate. This will ensure that officers are moving and not stagnant at the same machines for long periods of time leading to complacency. We expect to complete this effort by March 28th.

Additionally, an updated Security Screening Directive is in the final stages of approval and incorporates a new prohibited items list. Additional training on this new list will take place upon the final approval of this directive. We estimate approval of the directive by April 30<sup>th</sup> with the new training immediately to follow.

Lastly, the Department has a team that is working on a best practices review of similar mission agencies, such as the U.S. Secret Service, TSA and the Federal Protective Service, that conduct security screening so that we can benchmark our training, equipment, testing procedures and other items as a baseline to identify any additional opportunities to improve. We anticipate the completion of this assessment by April 4th.

In addition to all of the above efforts focused on the officers performing screening functions, the Department is revamping its pre-screener officer training. At most entrances to the buildings, the Department has an assigned Pre-Screener Officer who is outside of the building doing open visual surveillance of everyone who enters the buildings. Our Training Services Bureau has developed a new training program for our Pre-Screener Officers. This training is centered around detecting abnormal behaviors and will include challenge/validate items as well as an attempt to reduce complacency. This will be a mandatory 2-hour class that began yesterday.

## Technology

The Department's Security Services Bureau (SSB) is responsible for security equipment and infrastructure. It is important to note that none of the screening failures that occurred this year were the result of technological failures but were from human error. In each case, our technology correctly identified the prohibited item that was being brought through the screening process.

Starting in 2024, the Department installed artificial intelligence or AI software on all our x-ray machines. The Department implemented this initiative as part of its comprehensive security strategy on the Capitol Complex. This AI software assists officers with identifying prohibited items and weapons. This effort was completed in 2024 as a proactive measure to identify another way of assisting the officers who, of course, are visually looking at the x-ray machines. This was installed and went live campus wide on August 20, 2024. However, it is still the officers' responsibility to properly identify and mitigate potential threats.

SSB is working with the AI software vendor to incorporate functionality that will provide a more dramatic visual alert and automatically stop the x-ray belt when a prohibited item is identified. The development of an additional enhancement called "Image Projection" is also being planned. This will add non-threatening images onto the x-ray screen that Officers will have to acknowledge. This will allow the Department to collect data on how many times these images are detected so that the Department can assess how well Officers are paying attention to the x-ray screens. This enhancement may be incorporated for use in future training initiatives. The Department anticipates completion and implementation of these enhancements to the AI technology by May 2025.

SSB is conducting an overall assessment on the use of all of our screening equipment including enhanced screening portals at the CVC screening entrances. This assessment will be incorporated into a larger review of additional technologies which could be adopted to further enhance the Department's security screening capabilities.

As you know, I have announced my resignation from the Department. It was a difficult decision to make but I am confident the Department will remain on a steady path upwards even after I am gone. Before concluding my testimony then, I wanted to briefly highlight some of the major changes the Department has undergone since that awful day in January of 2021. I highlight these improvements not because I am leaving but to demonstrate the work of the entire Department, all the sworn and civilian staff that have gotten us to where we are today, as well as to thank the Committee for all of its support.

Over the last four years we have:

- Coordinated one of the largest civil disturbance exercises, with 1,000 participants from 16 agencies;
- Started conducting dozens of active shooter drills on Capitol Grounds, virtual training simulators, and established a new agent training program;

- Implemented an aggressive recruitment and retention strategy to get ahead of attrition. We now have an additional 350 more officers than we had four years ago;
- Built a new Intelligence Bureau to properly collect, analyze, share, operationalize, and disseminate intelligence;
- Started a Protective Intelligence Operations Center – a command center focused on protective operations, as threat assessment cases continue to reach historic levels;
- Enhanced our civil disturbance capabilities, created a new Rapid Response Team, expanded the medical program, and made one of the biggest Bicycle Response Units in the country. All are highly trained & well equipped;
- Since the Congress gave the USCP Chief of Police the authority to request the National Guard without pre-approval, the Department has strengthened its partnership and coordination with the National Guard, and
- Established ironclad relationships with partner agencies to ensure trained and equipped civil disturbance support is already on site for major events.

The mission of the Capitol Police has been expanding and will continue to expand. While addressing the failings of the past is necessary and has been addressed, the job does not end there. The Department needs to evolve and think outside of the box to be prepared for future mission requirements. The Department is actively implementing initiatives that advance our operational mission through strategic workforce planning, investment in our workforce, and the modernization of our technology and tools. At the end of the day the security lapses were not an equipment failure, a training failure or a policy failure but of the hardest failure to address, the human failure. In this threat environment we do not get to have a bad day or a mistake at our screening. I can assure you that I believe these efforts will substantially reduce both human and technological errors that can cause these failures in the first place. With the continued support and assistance of Congress, we will meet our mission as we have worked to prevent a repeat of the past.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.