

STATEMENT OF CHIEF MATTHEW R. VERDEROSA
UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

Committee on House Administration
United States House of Representatives
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Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration to discuss the United States Capitol Police (USCP). It is an honor to appear before the Committee. I am joined here today by the Department's Chief Administrative Officer, Richard Braddock; the Acting Chief of Operations, Deputy Chief Chad Thomas; the Department's General Counsel, Gretchen DeMar; and the Department's Inspector General, Fay Ropella; as well as some of the members of my Executive Management Team. Also attending today is USCP Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Chairman James Konczos and representation from the USCP Teamsters.

First, I would like to thank the Committee for its steadfast support of the United States Capitol Police. The regular discussions that we have with you and your staff about our programs and the management of our mission are greatly valued, as they allow us the opportunity to provide the Committee with important updates about our activities, challenges, and areas of focus. More importantly, I am grateful for the Committee's engagement and feedback so that the Department can continuously meet the needs of the Congress.

Second, I would like to recognize the men and women of the United States Capitol Police. On a daily basis, they publically demonstrate how the American freedoms that we all

hold dear are carried out in the nation's Capital. They work tirelessly to ensure that the Congress is able to conduct its legislative responsibilities without disruption, all the while exhibiting the utmost respect for the Constitution and protection of First Amendment liberties. I am thoroughly impressed with their performance, of which is both seen and unseen by the community, and I am thankful for their desire to constantly rise to the occasion and handle whatever comes our way.

I have been in federal law enforcement for over 30 years, serving in a number of roles, and now, as the Chief of Police for the United States Capitol Police, I have a responsibility to you, the Members, the Capitol Police Board, the Congressional staff, the visitors, and to my employees to do everything possible to protect and safeguard everyone each day in an open and unique environment. The threats and risks we face today are dynamic and sophisticated, creating a greater need to focus on national security. Coordinating with the Capitol Police Board and consulting our committees of jurisdiction, including the Committee on House Administration, the USCP has developed a four year strategy that provides for growth of the Department to fulfill three new mission sets, in an effort to further enhance the successful long-term protection of the Capitol Complex. These mission sets are the result of constant threat analyses, including intelligence gathered by our partners globally, and consist of the following initiatives:

1. Enhancement of House Garage Security;
2. Pre-screener and additional over-watch personnel at various building access points;
and
3. Enhanced Portal Scanners Use

Members and staff will see several enhancements as a result of these three initiatives. There will be visible security screening at House Garage entry points and a more significant presence outside Capitol Complex entry points, including an integration of a greater presence of canine teams. For visitors, those wishing to enter the House Chamber during major events will undergo additional screening through enhanced portal scanners, further keeping potential threats away from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

There has been much discussion regarding resources for the Department and the long-term viability of these major enhancement initiatives. As the Chief of Police and being a steward of public tax dollars, it is my fiduciary responsibility to look at every possibility within the Department to accomplish our mission before asking for additional resources. The Congress has been very generous to the Department, and I will do my due diligence first, looking within, and not request something unless it is truly needed. While it is clear that the new mission sets are necessary, and again, the Congress has been very generous in terms of resources, I am painfully aware as all the public is, these are difficult fiscal times and often we must make tough decisions on how best to use personnel and when there is a need to make internal sacrifices for the greater good of the institution. Therefore, one of the tough decisions I have had to make has been to devise a way to meet the new mission sets within our current resources. To do this, after discussing my concept with the FOP Labor Committee Chairman, I have decided to move forward with modifying off-post rotations in the Uniformed Services Bureau from the current standard of a 1:4 rotation to a 1:5 rotation, during the shifts when the majority of officers are working, Monday through Friday. This ensures that emergency response will be least impacted and the changes can be absorbed with the least overall impact per person. Further, this will result

in the availability of additional manpower for the new mission sets and equates to approximately 10 minutes less off-post (stand-by) time for the employees. With the enhancements I discussed previously, come opportunities. The modification of off-post rotations will result in more specialty job opportunities being available to employees throughout the Department, specifically in the areas of K-9 and subject interdiction. These officers will serve to provide police coverage in zones outside access points across the Capitol Complex. I should note that this change does not alter the long-standing contractual obligations with the FOP, and the off-post time remains well above the minimum required in our Collective Bargaining Agreement. This time is used for conducting necessary computer based in-service training, provides for time to conduct additional readiness drills, and also serves to allow for relief time for officers who routinely remain focused on security equipment.

While some additional resources will be necessary in out-years to complete these initiatives and to provide stationary posts, I am confident in the Department's ability to meet these new mission sets and we will continue to examine all areas for additional savings and potential reapportionment of personnel. Making tough, sometimes unpopular decisions, is one of the necessary tasks Chiefs of Police have to perform and this decision is, in my opinion, the most appropriate way to meet the mission and provides the least amount of impact on the institution.

In the months ahead, the Department has a number of high-profile protective events both on and off the Capitol Complex that require much attention and manpower resources. Later this month, the annual Memorial Day rehearsal and concert will take place, followed by the Fourth of July celebration on the West Front of the Capitol. In July, the Department will also be focusing

its attention to the two National Conventions in Cleveland, Ohio and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where we will be protecting Members of Congress at both venues. Working in close collaboration with the United States Secret Service, and the local law enforcement agencies in the respective jurisdictions, the planning for both conventions is on schedule and I am very pleased with the work conducted by the USCP. In addition to convention planning, the USCP has officially begun the planning process for the 58th Inauguration of the President of the United States scheduled for January 20, 2017. While this National Special Security Event takes place on Capitol Grounds every four years, it is prudent and necessary to begin planning and preparing for this effort early on to ensure absolute success in the execution of our significant mission.

As the former commander of the Department's policy and planning operations, I fully understand the importance of setting meaningful performance metrics focused on outcomes, rather than outputs. The USCP implemented a Strategic Plan in FY2015, which emphasizes employing a results-oriented, data-driven approach to meet current and future threats and challenges. We are currently in the process of building the foundations to better collect, analyze, and share data Department-wide, with the ultimate goal of having information that allows my staff to be better informed in making management and security decisions. Concurrently, we are in the middle of conducting our annual Force Development Budget Process which is instrumental in creating critical components of our draft FY 2018 budget request. This process allows us to identify threats and risks both internal and external; examines our programs and resources; determines which new initiatives, if any, to focus on; validates resource utilization; and identifies potential new initiatives necessary to address risks, threats, and gaps. The Department's Strategic Plan is playing a significant role in the Force Development Process, and I

am confident that our FY 2018 budget request will be solidly focused on addressing identified risks, threats, and gaps.

The Department is also actively engaged and focused on addressing and resolving recommendations made by the USCP Office of Inspector General (OIG). Since its creation in 2006, the USCP OIG has made 310 recommendations to the Department and the Department has closed 255 of those by fully implementing the recommendations. The USCP has a designated Audit Liaison that is continuing to work on the actions necessary for the closure of the 55 remaining open recommendations, as well as facilitate the review of evidence for closure considerations by OIG staff. I actively participate in this process, and value the recommendations proposed by Inspector General Ropella. As a matter of fact, annually, I will propose key areas for the Inspector General to examine so that she and her team can assist me in making needed changes that will make us a better department.

As the Department did with the implementation of its new radio system, I am actively overseeing, with my Chief Administrative Officer, the work necessary to reopen the new firing range in the near future, so that we may benefit from its full capabilities. The Department remains grateful to the Congress for providing us with this beneficial resource for the accomplishment of our mission. I would be remiss if I did not also recognize our partnership with the Architect of the Capitol on this important effort, as the AOC's collaboration and expertise has been instrumental throughout this process.

Before I close my prepared remarks, I just want to share with you where I will be focusing my attention in the near-term. Transitions between Chiefs or leaders do not necessarily need to be traumatic. I have always believed that the Department's mission is simple yet extremely critical. Since taking over the position of Chief, I have tried to ensure that there is continuity by focusing on the Department's law enforcement and administrative operations and ensuring that we are prepared to handle the basics. To date, my focus has been on the day-to-day operations, as this is what I believe is the most important factor in building both internal and external confidence in the USCP. To that end, I want to ensure that the troops and civilians are prepared for their jobs and areas of responsibilities. I especially place great emphasis on ensuring the officers use every precious hour of training that we provide. I will be building upon our current in-service training programs in the months ahead, after officers complete this current series of training, by bringing the next generation of courses to them that will be concentrated on helping our workforce remain focused and to fight complacency.

I intend to promote several sergeants and lieutenants based on the results of the recently completed promotion processes and am formulating processes for the vacancies at the ranks of Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief. I am also looking at ways to better train our supervisors. We have an emerging cadre of supervisors who are of a different generation than before. We need to make sure that they are prepared to supervise and manage adequately, better understanding the employees so that we can ensure optimum performance and achievement of our mission. To me, the most effective leaders and supervisors are the ones who can relate to a person on a human level; those who explain expectations in simple terms and who gain compliance through that relationship rather than with the hammer. This is all part of effectively communicating. I plan to

make this a central focus of my administration and accordingly, I intend to have a personal conversation with every supervisor so that this proven leadership philosophy can be implemented across the Department and we have a more enlightened and informed workforce.

I also want to instill a sense of getting “back to the basics” of what we do, not overcomplicating policing, with an emphasis on ensuring the daily stops or contacts our officers have with the public are documented and evaluated from an intelligence gathering perspective. The Protective Services Bureau will be exploring ways to improve our suspicious activity reporting processes so that we can use the data most effectively. We also need to leverage processes and make innovative changes which are advantageous to the Department in order to become smarter and more efficient. A good example of such a process is the use of a field arrest form to cite and release large numbers of compliant demonstrators engaging in civil disobedience. We recently had over 10 days of daily demonstrations which resulted in approximately 1,300 arrests. On the first and last days of the demonstration activity, the Department arrested and processed 429 arrests and 300 arrests, respectively. These were record numbers of arrests in our modern-era USCP history. Had our staff not used field arrest forms to accomplish these arrests, we may have overwhelmed our processes and ability to ensure safe processing of arrestees. Leveraging a tool that I believed was available to us, coordinating with the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General, and gaining insight from our longtime partners at the Metropolitan Police Department and the United States Park Police, we reviewed and modified their policies, forms, and procedures for applicability to the Capitol Complex and were able to arrest, process, and release a very large number of offenders in a very short period of time. Using the old method of arresting demonstrators, we may still be processing those

arrestees. While it is difficult to quantify the savings in terms of costs, suffice it to say that to process the over 400 arrests on day one, we would have had to process prisoners around the clock for at least 4 days to accomplish a task we completed in 10 hours. By the end of the week of demonstrations, we processed 300 arrests in approximately 3 hours. I applaud the initiative of commanders who took a concept, put it into practice, took lessons learned each day over the period of a week and refined the process to a point that we were able to efficiently process the group without incident. I would also like to thank the District of Columbia Office of Attorney General, working with our Office of the General Counsel, for its support in ensuring that this process was successfully implemented for use by the Department. And of course, the real credit goes to the officers who professionally carried out their duties, made changes to the process while in the field to immediately realize greater efficiencies, stood on the perimeters, skillfully handled the arrests on a personal level with the arrestees, and made the process work. I'm very proud to represent them and to be able to sit here and boast about their accomplishments as they deserve the credit, along with their onsite leaders who helped coordinate and direct the action.

Finally, I think it is important to discuss the March 28, 2016 shooting incident at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. From all practical perspectives, I want to say that the screening process indeed works. As much as we want to rely on technology day in and day out, we at some point have to deal with visitors when they enter our facilities. On that day, we had an individual intent on wreaking havoc. He was detected to be carrying a weapon during the process we employ each day to screen people visiting the Capitol Complex. He was challenged and he was stopped, as the process is designed to do. There were minimal injuries to innocent bystanders and no USCP officer was hurt. It is unfortunate that the situation occurred but, as everyone knows simply by

watching the news each day, these events happen all too often. We were prepared, we responded appropriately, and it should serve as a lesson to others who may want to do harm at the Capitol Complex – our highly trained officers will use their training to stop those who wish to do harm. I'm extremely proud of the officers involved in this incident, and I am extremely satisfied in how the design of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center has provided us with an ability to quickly handle these types of incidents.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to talk about the United States Capitol Police. I would be pleased to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.