

**Office of the Sergeant at Arms
Oversight of the United States Capitol Police**

**Statement of the Honorable Paul D. Irving
Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Before
The Committee on House Administration
July 16, 2019**

Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police. It is an honor and a privilege to serve this institution, and I look forward to continuing to partner with the Committee on the oversight of the Capitol Police priorities and execution as this year progresses. As the House Sergeant at Arms, I serve as a member of three-person Capitol Police Board, which also includes the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and the Architect of the Capitol.

By law, the Board is charged with the appointment of the new Chief of Police. I'm proud to testify here with the recently appointed Chief of Police, Steven Sund. I know he's familiar to many of the Committee Members, having previously served as the Assistant Chief of Police.

I also want to welcome Michael Bolton, who was appointed Inspector General of the Capitol Police this year. The Inspector General serves as a key partner in collaborations to make the USCP a better and more efficient institution.

Finally, I am glad to be here with Gus Papathanasiou, Chairman of the US Capitol Police Labor Committee. A strong and effective partnership between the Labor Committee and the U.S. Capitol Police is necessary to accomplish the USCP's mission.

The USCP's mission is broad and challenging designed to both protect the buildings and people of our democracy. In the past several years, the challenges have become greater. For example, this year the USCP has responded and investigated an immense number of threats and directions of interest against House Members. Many Members receive threats and direction of interest communications that raise concerns for the Members, their families, and staff. The number of threatening communications has increased three-fold over the past few years. In light of this

increase, my office interfaces with Members' offices seeking security coordination for off-campus events in the Washington, DC area or elsewhere across the country.

Upon receiving a request for law enforcement support, the Sergeant at Arms will request the Capitol Police conduct a security survey and/or risk assessment to determine what protective services are needed and if those services will be provided by Capitol Police and/or cooperating federal, state and local law enforcement partners. Furthermore, I have requested the USCP to provide a level of protective support that is based on a proactive set of criteria which forms the basis of an enhanced level of support, such as an increased public profile on social media platforms. Protective services can range from a notification to local law enforcement, to additional assistance to the Member's District Office staff, to a Capitol Police deployment. The USCP is on the front line of this effort and I commend their transition to this new protective paradigm.

Commensurate with our continued dialogue, effective and robust oversight of the Capitol Police is critical because of the importance of their mission. The Capitol Police Board meets, at a minimum, monthly, serving as a governance structure of the Capitol Police. The Board works with the USCP to develop its future strategy, melding the best law enforcement practices with the business processes of the institution that we serve. In addition to the development of law enforcement strategies, the Capitol Police Board also focuses on good governance of the resources that the USCP receives. I also interact daily with the Chief and members of his executive management team ensuring proper coverage of member events, the progress of USCP initiatives impacting Members, staff and visitors, and the day-to-day security issues impacting the campus.

With regards to continued oversight, I continually request that the IG examine DPD staffing and career track options for the agents. I have also asked the IG to examine cybersecurity for the Department and the operations and structure of the USPC intelligence division.

The Capitol Police Board also takes focus on budget oversight. The USCP has received significantly increased resources to respond to increased demand for their services. The Board has concentrated on how these increased resources can both accomplish key projects and be integrated into the USCP in a sustainable manner. Several key initiatives, for example, the House Garage Security program, and the staffing of the O'Neill building, require that resources are

carefully used to ensure that we have appropriate FTEs to launch a project, and to continue the necessary added staffing in future years. Integration with the Department's strategic planning, human capital planning, and other planning tools can also help ensure that key initiatives are executed correctly. I would like to thank this Committee for its support of these services and the USCP's mission.

Integrated with budget oversight is the important monitoring of the implementation of key initiatives and programs. On August 5, we will launch the Garage Security program for the House of Representatives. This project has been a result of years of consistent support and planning by this Committee, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, the Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol and it will bring the entire Capitol complex closer to 100% screening by bringing the House Office Buildings into the secure perimeter and in line with the Senate Office Buildings and the Capitol. The addition of the garage screening will allow Members and staff to move from the House Office Buildings to the Capitol without additional interior magnetometer screening in the Rayburn and Cannon tunnels. Other key initiatives, such as the Joint Audible Warning System (or JAWS) system, as well as the planning and construction of the new North and South Screening Kiosks, are also closely monitored by the Capitol Police Board. As with any project, there may be required adjustments along the way, but often these result in better outcomes.

The USCP Inspector General also serves as a vital partner in the Capitol Police Board's governance review of the USCP. The Inspector General provides valuable insights into how the Department may become a better version of itself. The Capitol Police Board relies on weekly reports we receive from the USCP Inspector General on the closure of audit findings to ensure the Capitol Police are effectively improving their own governance. One of the aspects of the IG's approach that I appreciate is that they recognize certain findings are more difficult to close – sometimes because they require changes that would have a significant impact on interests of the USCP Labor Committee. Recognizing that the department and the Labor Committee need to negotiate and come to an agreement on some of these issues shows a holistic view of the department that is not necessarily seen in all Inspectors General.

Finally, the USCP serves as a vital partner for the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms. Day-to-day, my office is working with the department to help deliver better security outcomes to

Members, staff, and visitors. I wanted to take this moment to note some of the collaboration between my office and the United States Capitol police because I believe it illustrates some of the effective interactions between my office and the USCP. Since the beginning of this year, my office has worked with the Capitol Police to conduct 426 law enforcement coordinations. This is almost the same amount of law enforcement coordinations that my office assisted with for the entirety of last calendar year. The coordinations include USCP support at D.C. events, field hearings, D.C. Committee hearings, district public events, and district town halls. In each case, the USCP has worked with the appropriate local, county, state and other federal law enforcement entities to ensure appropriate coverage for the event.

My office has also partnered with the Capitol Police's dignitary protection division to provide coverage to hearings, including the field hearings or listening sessions held by this Committee. My office is also working to provide briefings and visits to Members. To date, my office, in conjunction with the Capitol Police has completed 61 Security Awareness Briefings and district office visits.

I believe these day-to-day interactions help illustrate the close interaction between my office and the USCP from which I can analyze the effectiveness and customer focus of the USCP.

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. In addition, the Committee's partnership is vital to an effective outreach to Member district offices so that we are able to provide and educate on the range of security measures available to them. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.