

Testimony of William J. Walker

Sergeant at Arms

U.S. House of Representatives

**Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and
Members of the Committee on House Administration,**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on reforming
the Capitol Police and improving the accountability for the
Capitol Police Board.**

**Twenty-three days ago, I was blessed to be sworn in as the
Sergeant at Arms for the House of Representatives. Prior to
that, I was the Commanding General for the District of
Columbia National Guard. The seal of the District of
Columbia National Guard, which appears on our uniforms,
bears the image of our citadel of democracy and serves as a
reminder that they are “Capital Guardians.” So, I have
some experience in protecting the Capitol.**

**In my time as Sergeant at Arms and also through my
experience as the Commanding General of the D.C. National
Guard, I have been able to make some observations. I saw
on January 6th the commitment of the United States Capitol
Police officers who fought alongside partner law
enforcement agencies and the Guardsmen I commanded. I
also saw how the USCP was not appropriately equipped and
prepared for the events that transpired that day. All the
officers risked their life and limb, and they all deserve to be
trained and outfitted for what they face. The USCP needs to**

transform to meet this commitment. We cannot let down the line officers, this institution, its Members or staff again.

The USCP is at an inflection point. The USCP needs to transform into a hybrid proactive protective law enforcement agency that protects the Congress and the symbols of our democracy. The increase in threats to Members shows no sign of lessening. The USCP needs to be in a position where it can protect individual Members at a moment's notice. This will require more dignitary protection agents specially trained to protect Members from threats throughout the country and the ongoing regionalization effort is just one step in this transformation. There will be growing pains. But the transformation is necessary. The Capitol Police Board will hold the USCP accountable for making this transformation.

The Capitol Police must be trained to the highest law enforcement and protect standards and equipped with the latest technology. We are reexamining the appropriate roles and responsibilities for police officers to include the better allocation of sworn officers. We must leverage non-sworn individuals and technology to put officers to their best and highest use. We must reassess the standards for the entire Capitol Police to make sure they are held to the same standards as other law enforcement agencies. And we must create a culture of leadership, accountability, and ownership within the USCP.

We meet in Washington, D.C., surrounded by many of the best trained, equipped, and organized law enforcement

agencies for their particular missions. We can learn from them and we will learn from them. I trust that the witnesses on the other panel can provide perspective on the necessary transformation.

In my fourth week here, and based on my 30 years of law enforcement experience, it is clear that Capitol Police senior leaders must be held accountable for the breach on January 6th. There were failures in equipment; failures in training; failures in intelligence; failures in command and control and communication; poor planning, preparation, and execution. This Committee has had multiple hearings on the challenges of January 6th. These are useful starting points for examination into how the systems, structures, and organizations of the USCP did not perform as intended on that day and what changes need to occur. Further examination going forward is necessary to ensure that the USCP improves.

There have been many questions about who is accountable for the events of January 6. To move forward, I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to work together as the USCP Board, as Authorizers and as Appropriators to build the USCP into a more formidable proactive protective law enforcement agency that can protect Congress against all who seek to harm our institution.

My pledge to this Committee, the Members of the House of Representatives, and the Capitol community is to provide my best security advice on any matter affecting the safety and security of the Capitol complex. I have spent a lifetime

in law enforcement, security, intelligence, and counter-intelligence and I will provide my judgement and guidance based on my training and experience.

I have been a Member of the Capitol Police Board for 23 days. In collaboration with the Senate Sergeant at Arms, General Karen Gibson, and the Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Brett Blanton, I am committed to improving Board processes, accountability, and efficiencies. General Gibson and I are new Members of the Capitol Police Board. This is an example of accountability in leadership. I would urge the Members of this Committee to be careful and thoughtful in striking the delicate balance between appropriate authorities for the Chief of Police and an appropriate system of accountability for the USCP and the Board.

As some have noted, it is hard to find another law enforcement entity that reports to an organization like the Capitol Police Board. There is also no other law enforcement agency tasked with protecting two distinct bodies of Congress and the elected representatives from all states, the District and territories across the country. I certainly agree that we must do better, and I will continue to work with my counterparts to identify and pursue improvements in the current policies and procedures of the board.

Currently, the Capitol Police Board has submitted regulations pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 1974 for approval by the Speaker in consultation with the Republican Leader and the President Pro Tempore in consultation with the Senate Minority Leader to allow the Chief of Police to call upon the

D.C. National Guard if the “Chief of Police notifies the Capitol Police Board [assistance] as necessary to prevent the loss of life or wanton destruction of property, and to restore governmental functions and public order.” I am hopeful that the regulation will be approved so, if necessary, the USCP can receive assistance in an emergency. It is my understanding that the Speaker consulted with the Minority Leader and approved this regulation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to take your questions.