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18<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, TEXAS  
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**CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS**

**RANKING MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL  
GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE**

**HEARING ON “OVERSIGHT OF THE UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE”  
OPENING STATEMENT**

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**FEBRUARY 14, 2024**

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
- I am pleased to welcome my good friend, Director Ronald Davis, back to the Judiciary Committee. He is certainly no stranger to the Committee, having appeared here on several occasions. Director Davis has dedicated his career not simply to enforcing the law, but to the advancement of community policing, inspiring public trust, and enhancing accountability while improving public safety.

- This leads me to another pressing issue the Marshals Service is currently facing, which cannot go unaddressed today.
- Above all else, the Marshals Service plays a critical role in protecting the federal judiciary, which is foundational to our democracy. The agency's commitment to safeguarding the judicial process is indispensable in maintaining the integrity of our court system, particularly during this politically charged time.
- Let us focus on making sure the Marshals have the tools they need to protect the nearly 3,000 federal judges and more than 30,000 federal prosecutors and court personnel serving in federal districts from the District of Columbia to the Districts of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Judges and court personnel are enduring threats and personal attacks with increased regularity in states across the country, including in my home state of Texas.

- But this problem is not new. Threats against judges have increased steadily over the last several years.
- The Texas Office of Court Administration found that, in Texas alone, there have been 522 judicial security threats since 2018, along with 29 assaults and 68 bomb threats.
- And while many of these threats were not acted on, we can never forget the brazen attack on New Jersey District Judge Ester Salas (pronounced Sah-lahs) that resulted in her son lying dead in her home and her husband critically injured.
- Today, the crescendo of threats precipitated by political divisiveness and malicious instigators on social media is more than concerning. Serious threats against federal judges – those that require an investigation by the Marshals – rose from 224 in fiscal year 2021 to 457 in fiscal year 2023. And yet it does not stop there. Serious threats against federal prosecutors more than doubled during the same two-year period.

- It is up to us to support the Marshals in their efforts to protect these individuals. The agency is vital to upholding the rule of law and safeguarding our judicial system – ultimately protecting our communities and our democracy. As we fulfill our oversight duties today, let us focus our energies on supporting their efforts. Thank you.