

**Testimony of J. Thomas Manger,
Chief, U.S. Capitol Police
before the
Committee On Rules and Administration
of the
United States Senate
December 11, 2024
HEARING:
*Oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police***

Chairwoman Klobuchar, Ranking Member Fischer and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the comprehensive security improvements the Department has implemented, from an enhanced planning and preparation posture to a completely revamped Intelligence Bureau, as well as the work that still lies ahead. The Department greatly appreciates the Committee's continued support of the women and men of the U.S. Capitol Police, who courageously carry out their duties of protecting the Members of Congress, staff, visitors, the Capitol Complex, and the legislative process each day. Congress' support has been invaluable as we continue to meet the dramatic workload increases in an increasingly volatile threat environment. The Department also appreciates the support of our oversight Committees and the Capitol Police Board in assisting the Department's resolution of the various post-January 6 recommendations as the Department transitions to a more protective model of policing.

The United States Capitol Police is unique among federal law enforcement agencies. We patrol a campus that is completely open. The public has a constitutional right to visit, protest, and petition their government on Capitol Grounds. Our officers work 24/7 to keep you safe, whether here on Capitol Hill, or when you travel to your home states and districts. We staff the doors, corridors, plazas, garages, and street corners—in sum, every square foot of the Capitol Grounds. In addition, in this heightened threat environment, with lawmakers and their families being confronted by bomb threats and swatting incidents, the Department's mission is evolving to provide increased protection for Members of Congress and their families nation-wide requiring the Department to strategically evolve to remain ahead of the next law enforcement challenge.

In the last four years, the Department confronted two transformative events: the coronavirus pandemic and January 6. The pandemic represented a historic and unprecedented event that required the USCP to quickly recalibrate and move to an entirely new operational and administrative model.

The Department had to manage delayed recruitment efforts due to the closure of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), a move that affected the hiring and deployment of new sworn officers--essentially bringing our sworn hiring to a halt. Low officer morale, and the public's declining confidence in law enforcement, put a further strain on the organization. Hiring within law enforcement remains challenging in the post-pandemic environment. However, with the assistance of the Committees, the Department has implemented a recruitment and retention strategy to get ahead of officer attrition. The Department has put in place several strategies to retain officers and civilian employees, such as bolstering salaries to be more competitive with competing agencies, offering retention bonuses, the student loan repayment program, and specialty pay to attract and retain officers. The strategies are working. Currently, the Department has over 350 more sworn officers than it had immediately before January 6.

This ability to retain experienced officers and grow the Department has allowed us to evolve our security posture to better respond to incidents around the Capitol Complex. As demonstration activity has increased around campus, the Department has implemented rapid response teams, led by our Bicycle Response Unit, to respond to issues and demonstrations around campus in a swift and efficient manner to limit the impact of disruptions. We now have dedicated civil

disturbance units, with state-of-the-art equipment, that you have seen deployed for large campus demonstrations and to increase our protective functions both at and around the Capitol. This was in direct response to CDU failures on January 6. The Department also has in place numerous measures to assist Members while they are on travel or in their districts. We have dedicated air operations agents at the local airports to assist Members in navigating the airports. The Department has directed patrols to addresses where many Members reside, and we are seeking legislative authority to expand our law enforcement authority within the District of Columbia to better protect Members who reside here. The Department will also work with your local law enforcement agencies to provide similar services in your home state. The Department, in conjunction with the Sergeant at Arms office, will conduct law enforcement coordinations for events that you have here and in your state where we look at the threat profile of the event and work to provide the necessary law enforcement presence at the event. I would like to thank Congress for its assistance and support in these endeavors.

January 6 exposed weaknesses throughout the organization. The more than a dozen after-action reviews and resulting recommendations shifted the Department's priorities and accelerated the timeline for resolving the findings of those recommendations, thus beginning the Department's transformation. These audit and oversight reviews were pivotal. The Department dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to the implementation of recommendations issued by the various stakeholders and oversight entities, including the USCP Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Senate Homeland Security Committee, the Government Accountability Office, and other third-party reviewers. Our OIG alone issued 103 recommendations in the post-January 6 flash reports.

Thanks to the Department's sustained efforts, the support of the Capitol Police Board, and the Congress, I am pleased to let you know that the Department has closed all 103 recommendations of the Inspector General.

The Department's improvements extend beyond those mentioned above. Other significant enhancements include increasing staffing levels for the Intelligence Services Bureau. This has enabled the USCP to stand up an Intelligence Bureau capable of collecting, analyzing, sharing, operationalizing, and disseminating intelligence; the implementation of additional wellness programs and services, including the onboarding of trauma-informed employee assistance counselors and wellness specialists; procuring and distributing additional state of the art civil disturbance equipment to our sworn officers and insuring these officers have received updated CDU training; obtaining funding for our Dignitary Protection Division to travel and protect Members of Congress here and around the country; updating Department technology to enhance investigative capabilities; installing physical barriers at vulnerable vehicular access points on Capitol Grounds; re-engineered training capabilities to meet recruit officer, in-service, physical skills, professional and leadership development training needs and requirements; and we have adopted industry best practices with the use of virtual scenario training, and active shooter training in the very buildings we need to protect. I would particularly like to thank the Committee for their support of our active shooter training.

Congress has also provided the Department with two key tools to address large scale demonstrations and the protection of Members: mutual aid reimbursement and the Chief's authority to request the National Guard.

One of the deficiencies of January 6 was the lack of on-site mutual aid at the beginning. Congress appropriated funding to allow the Department to reimburse our mutual aid partners for assisting in large scale events on campus. The Department has utilized mutual aid for, among other activities, the demonstration on September 18, 2021, the trucker convoy and most recently at the demonstration surrounding the visit by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. The ability to reimburse our mutual aid partners has made it much easier to obtain needed aid for big demonstrations which acts as a force multiplier to USCP officers. In fact, the operational planning that was done for the Prime Minister of Israel's visit has set the template for how the Department will plan and execute the operational planning for large, potentially contentious demonstrations. Mutual aid reimbursement is one of those tools that is critical to keep the campus safe.

The ability to reimburse mutual aid partners also allows the Department to conduct large scale training exercises with our partners. These training exercises allow our partners to learn the tactics that will be utilized during demonstrations prior to the day of the event. Recently, in preparation for January 6 and the Inauguration, the Department held a large-scale Civil Disturbance Unit exercise at the Secret Service Training Center. The October 29th exercise involved 16 law enforcement agencies and approximately 1,000 law enforcement officers for a groundbreaking multi-faceted training exercise. It was the largest such exercise in the region.

The joint exercise had six drill stations and three scenario-based exercises. The stations involved Health and Human Services TACMED, Motorcade Security, Building Breach Prevention, Less Than Lethal tactics, Extrication, and "Defend the Fence" evolutions. The exercise was successful because of the eight months of preparation by hundreds of USCP personnel who engaged in countless hours of planning, coordination, and training. We must be ready for a wide range of scenarios in the coming months.

A second training session occurred on December 8th at our Cheltenham training facility. We had 8 law enforcement agencies and approximately 650 officers involved in this exercise.

The ability of the Chief of Police to request National Guard assistance is another tool that contributes to the success of the USCP mission. While not used as extensively as mutual aid, the Department has utilized National Guard support for past events. In preparation for January 6 and the Inauguration, the Department has been meeting and working with the National Guard to put in place the necessary RFAs so that there is as little delay in the National Guard responding as possible as well as setting forth the skill sets that the Department will need. In addition, the Department has exercised with the Department of Defense the necessary protocols for requesting the assistance of the National Guard.

While the Department has made great strides in increasing security to Members, staff and visitors, and planning for dealing with large-scale events, there is still more work to do, particularly in our Protective Services Bureau. The Department recognizes that new and evolving challenges will continue to emerge, rendering it imperative that the USCP be positioned, equipped, and resourced to meet and defeat threats to Members of Congress and the Capitol Complex. Strategic planning, forward thinking, proactive versus reactive policing is the new operational model that is best suited to confront the operational challenges facing the Department today and in the future. The USCP's traditional model of law enforcement no longer applies to the current context. The old approach of Member protection has been replaced by the need to protect a Member's environment, as well as a Member's family. Keeping you and your families safe is my paramount objective.

I cannot overstate how great our resource needs are for the Protective Services Bureau. The sheer increase in the number of threats against Members of Congress over the past 7 years—requires new and innovative techniques to identify, deter, and mitigate threats before they materialize. Over the course of the last year, the world has continuously changed, becoming more violent and uncertain. The Capitol Police need to transform to a more protective agency, one that concentrates on protecting Members, their families and staff throughout the country, not merely in Washington, D.C.

Due to the increased threat environment, our protective responsibilities have increased, requiring additional protection details, increased coverage of CODELs and field hearings, as well as other enhancements to our current protective details. The current staffing level is unsustainable for DPD. Agents are averaging nearly 50 hours of overtime a pay-period, more than double the average of uniformed officers. We are on pace again this year to receive approximately 8,000 to 9,000 threat assessment cases. Threat Assessment agents are similarly stretched to capacity. They carry an average annual case load of nearly 500 cases. Notwithstanding these crushing caseloads, our DPD and Threat Assessment agents work tirelessly and with the utmost professionalism and dedication. However, this pace cannot be maintained, and it is imperative that the Department maintain the ability to continue our hiring efforts in this critical area. To properly staff our Dignitary Protection Division and to be able to provide the bandwidth to staff our permanent details and threat details that may arise, we will need to have over 500 dignitary protection special agents. This will take time and resources to accomplish but is necessary to ensure the protection of Members and provide the necessary relief to the agents.

To address our staffing issues in the short term, we have increased DPD with approximately 80 officers, and when possible, we work with other law enforcement agencies in a Member's district for protective detail support through the Memorandum of Understanding process. The Capitol Police Board amended the pay regulations, which will facilitate hiring for positions within DPD and Investigations Division. This would also not have been possible without the Committees' approval of those regulations, and for that, I thank you for your continued support.

Also, to assist the Department in handling threat cases, the Department is standing up the Protective Intelligence Operations Center (PIOC). The PIOC, which is still a work in progress and evolving, will be the command center for the Dignitary Protective Division and will support USCP's Residential Security Program via CCTV monitoring and incident response. The PIOC

has taken shape through careful planning with stakeholders and leadership from across the Department to define requirements, integrate disparate systems involved in the Department's protective operations, and add new capabilities to fulfill the Department's mission of protecting Members on and off the Hill.

The PIOC receives and processes reports regarding the security of the Members of Congress. This includes threats of violence, unusual communications, approaches, suspicious activity, suspicious packages, financial crimes, demonstration activity, cybercrimes, and adverse employee separations among other activities. PIOC specialists will check USCP records management system to see if case has previously been started or no record, create a new case. The specialist will follow up with staff to acknowledge receipt of info and ask any follow up questions, if needed. Cases will be assigned an investigation section element based on the type of reporting. A USCP sworn supervisor will review the case package and the case will be sent to the appropriate section for further or assessed with disposition in the PIOC. Information is gathered from a variety of sources, using multiple investigative tactics based on the circumstances and context of the reporting and the case as it develops. Investigators note factors that could enhance and/or mitigate concerns in the case, as well as potential triggering events in the context of the case that could influence the behavior of the person(s) being assessed. A coordinated threat management strategy can be put in place. This is a coordinated plan of active and/or passive interventions and can include multiple levels of intervention from documenting and monitoring, third party monitoring/intervention, LE contact/interviews, administrative actions, civil actions, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, legal action, and confinement.

The PIOC will also be a source of information and provide basic information to the Congressional Community, USCP Protective Services units, USCP management, and other law enforcement partners. It will receive daily schedules and operational plans for the respective sections within the Protective Services Bureau, and it will review bulletins and notifications from USCP sections, as well as external agencies.

Working with the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, the PIOC will also house the USCP Residential Security program monitoring security systems in Senator's residences.

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 recently published the Concept of Operations Strategic Plan, which defines the goals and objectives that unite our collective efforts. As illustrated in our strategy, we are investing in our people, processes, and technology to ensure the Department is prepared to meet the demands of the future. 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. With the continued assistance of Congress, we will meet our mission as we have worked to prevent a repeat of the past.