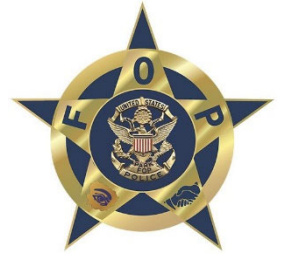


# United States Capitol Police United States Park Police Labor Committees



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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## **Capitol Police Officers: 3 years On, U.S. Capitol Still at Risk**

Three years after the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, the Union for front line Capitol Police officers says the Capitol complex is still vulnerable to attack, yet all of the reports after January 6<sup>th</sup> pointed to the failures of USCP's leadership at the top without any accountability. In fact, several of these leaders have been promoted.

The Capitol Police union says the Department has not kept pace with the changes needed to meet the growing number of threats to Members of Congress, their staff, and visitors to the Capitol.

Union Chairman, Gus Papathanasiou says, “The facts on the increasing threat level are undeniable. In 2016, there were 902 threat investigations recorded and while we’re still waiting on final numbers for 2023, we recorded over 7,500 threats in 2022 against Members of Congress.”

“In late 2022, there was a violent assault on then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband at their San Francisco home, while here in DC, Members of Congress have been attacked in their own building and have been car-jacked. Around them, crime has surged in the city.”

Chairman Papathanasiou says, “We’ve never seen a threat environment like this. Given the profound divisions in this country and this year’s elections, people ask me if I’m concerned and I tell them I am worried - *very* worried. There may be another contested election and we still haven’t addressed the manpower and security vulnerabilities that have been identified.”

“My two biggest concerns right now are a lack of manpower and the failure to put in place some of the security improvements identified by the Architect of the Capitol, after the January 6<sup>th</sup> attack. For security reasons, I can’t publicly identify specific physical improvements that are needed. However, it’s unacceptable that three years after the

attack, some of these improvements haven't even been *started* by the Architect of the Capitol."

"USCP's manpower issues are well documented. On January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021, the USCP was 233 officers below our recommended level of 2,072 officers. When former Lt. General Russel Honoré conducted a security analysis after the attack, he urged Congress to hire 884 more officers above that baseline."

"Putting aside the need to increase hiring, we urgently need to address the pending loss of officers who are due for retirement - over 500 officers are eligible to retire at any time. Many of the younger officers who were hired post-January 6<sup>th</sup> have resigned due to the conditions and hours we're asked to work. We lack the manpower to fill mission requirements, so officers are forced to work enormous amounts of overtime. Working 6 days a week, doing double shifts is routine, and it's been made harder with leave restrictions the Department has put on officers. The balance between work and family life is getting worse."

"To add insult to injury, USCP and the U.S Park Police are federal law enforcement agencies where none, not one cent, of our overtime or differential pay is allowed to count towards our retirement. How are we going to keep our people when we have an outdated retirement system that's older than most of the officers. In the case of USCP, Congress has tried twice, and failed, to fix this in the annual Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill. I sincerely hope the Congress does not fail the officers a third time."

Chairman Papathanasiou says, "Together, these shortfalls leave our Capitol less safe than it should be and as every American now knows, this is not the time to lower our defenses."

The Chairman of the U.S. Park Police Fraternal Order of Police, Kenneth Spencer, echoed Papathanasiou's dire forecast: "The government's neglect of, and disregard for, urban federal law enforcement is shocking and irresponsible given the reality of our recent election cycles. No matter who wins, there will be massive protests throughout the District and I'm very concerned about our readiness due to the officer staffing crisis. If you think we were outmanned on January 6th just wait to see what happens come the inauguration early next year," Spencer concluded.

As we come upon the 3 year anniversary of the January 6th attack on the Capitol, we want to take this time to recognize all of those Law Enforcement officers who came here to assist us, from New Jersey down to Virginia, from local, state and federal agencies to include our colleagues from U.S. Park Police and the Metropolitan Police,

THANK YOU!!! We stand with all Law Enforcement throughout this great nation of ours and support for Law Enforcement should never, ever be a political issue. God Bless all of the front line police officers throughout the United States. Be Safe!

*All members of the USCP and USPP Labor Committees are frontline Police Officers.*