



United States Capitol Police

Labor Committee

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.PRESS RELEASE

Jan 7th 2021

Capitol Police Officers “Leadership Failed Us”

The rank and file of the United States Capitol Police (USCP) are frustrated and demoralized by the lack of leadership that undermined the response of law enforcement to the violent events at the U.S. Capitol on January 6th.

The Capitol Police Officers’ Union, is calling for leadership change at the highest level, including the Chief of Police of USCP Steven Sund and his senior Command staff to include his Assistant Chiefs of Police.

Union Chairman, Gus Papathanasiou says, “I am incredibly proud of the individual officers whose actions protected the lives of hundreds of Members of Congress and their staff.”

“Once the breach of the Capitol building was inevitable, we prioritized lives over property, leading people to safety. Not one Member of Congress or their staff was injured. Our officers did their jobs. Our leadership did not. Our Law Enforcement partners that assisted us were remarkable.”

The Union Chairman cited the June protest planning which saw the coordinated response of U.S. Capitol Police, The D.C. National Guard, The Metropolitan Police and others, which successfully safeguarded the entire Capitol complex.

Chairman Papathanasiou, says his officers are sickened by the tragic and avoidable events that occurred during the attack on the Capitol.

“We have several protesters dead, multiple officers injured and the symbol of our Democracy, the U.S. Capitol, desecrated. This never should have happened.”

“This lack of planning led to the greatest breach of the U.S. Capitol since the War of 1812. This is a failure of leadership at the very top.”

Chairman Papathanasiou says he witnessed events he thought he would never see in his lifetime.

“Our officers are experienced and they are dedicated, but they lacked the immediate backup and equipment needed to control the surging crowd as events quickly spiraled out of control. He described the events as a wake-up call.

“We were lucky that more of those who breached the Capitol did not have firearms or explosives and did not have a more malign intent. Tragic as the deaths are that resulted from the attack, we are fortunate the casualty toll was not higher.”

“Today, our members are back on duty. Our immediate priority is safeguarding the Capitol during the next two weeks and through the safe staging of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.”

Chairman Papathanasiou says there should be an immediate plan drawn up, to coordinate a better round-the-clock law enforcement presence on Capitol Hill.

“Beyond the inauguration, it is the view of rank-and-file Capitol Police Officers that events demand a change of leadership of the U.S. Capitol Police.”

“Without a change at the top, we may see more events unfold like those we saw on January 6th. We cannot leave our officers and the Capitol Hill community they protect, to the mercy of further attacks amid a vacuum of leadership.

“Congress will undoubtedly have hearings to determine what went wrong on January 6th. As a front-line officer, I look forward to participating in that process. I want to highlight that the lack of communication with the officers on January 6th was not an anomaly. It is part of pattern we have seen from the current USCP leadership. Until we have a leadership team at USCP that is willing to work hand in hand with the Union and our Officers as one team, we will continue to have systemic failures.”

Gus Papathanasiou; FOP Chairman, USCP Labor Committee