



# United States Capitol Police Labor Committee

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\*\*\*\*\* **PRESS RELEASE** \*\*\*\*\*

On March 20, 2020, the United States Capitol Police indefinitely suspended the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the employer and the labor union representing its rank and file sworn officers, FOP/U.S. Capitol Police Labor Committee, in its entirety, citing the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the weeks before this action, the FOP repeatedly attempted to discuss USCP's COVID-19 response to ensure that the department continues to serve the Congressional community while protecting the health and safety of its members. Unfortunately, the employer refused to provide the FOP with any details of its planned response or to answer any of the Union's questions about how it planned to keep employees and the public safe.

Instead of working in good faith with the Union to ensure that the Congressional community – including the rank and file sworn officers – remain safe and healthy, USCP has elected to bypass the Union by suspending the contract, affecting issues entirely unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic. The employer's decision suspends the Union's right to represent members if they are interrogated by management, prevents the Union from filing grievances, and strips the Union of its voice in labor-management relations. The parties' collective bargaining agreement (CBA) contains provisions relating to, for example, the cleanliness of employee break and locker rooms, employee rest periods, and others which are designed to protect employee safety and health. The employer has now suspended those protections.

USCP has repeatedly refused to provide a substantive explanation to the Union for its actions, or to explain how suspending the parties' contract and stripping the employees of their voice is necessary to accomplish its mission of protecting the Congressional community. The Union objected to the suspension of the entire CBA and respectfully asked the Chiefs in a formal meeting to reconsider. The only provision of the CBA the Chief agreed to allow was for the parties to continue with CBA negotiations. Union Chairman, Gus Papathanasiou decided to cancel CBA negotiations until the CBA was re-instated. "I just felt it was wrong to allow CBA talks to continue knowing the rest of the CBA was suspended without any protections for our Officers", stated Papathanasiou. This unfavorable decision by the Chief of Police has once again negatively impacted the relationship between the Union and the United States Capitol Police. Finally, Union Chairman inquired from the Chief of Police if the Department was planning on testing all USCP for COVID-19. The Chief replied in an email to the Union Chairman that

no USCP officers were identified as high risk and no testing was required. "That's unacceptable for the Department to take that position and not test every officer officer if they're required to be at work protecting the congressional community in uniform," said Chairman Papathanasiou.

**Gus Papathanasiou**

**Chairman**

**FOP/USCP Labor Committee**

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