



United States Capitol Police

Labor Committee

1320 G Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003
Telephone: 202-544-4813 Fax: 202-544-5918
www.uscp-fop.com



PRESS RELEASE

February 23, 2021

Capitol Police Officers: “Leadership failures worse than we thought”

Today former U.S. Capitol Police Chief Sund, former Senate Sergeant of Arms Stenger, former House Sergeant of Arms Irving, and Metropolitan Police Chief Contee all testified before a joint Senate Rules and Homeland Security Committee hearing into the insurrection on January 6th.

Union Chairman Gus Papathanasiou says “The root cause of the USCP’s failure on January 6th was a failure of leadership. I think the Senators saw that dysfunction on display today.”

Chairman Papathanasiou says, “Former Chief Sund admits that he did not see critical intelligence leading up to the insurrection. That intelligence should have been driving a more robust force posture.”

“Instead of cohesive leadership, we heard Stenger, Irving and former Chief Sund give contradicting accounts about the department’s handling of requests for backup from the National Guard. It’s maddening.”

“Even after this hearing, we still don’t know why rank-and-file officers were not fully briefed on the threats that our leadership already knew were looming.”

“The USCP officers who responded to the insurrection paid a horrible price for our leadership’s failures. We lost Officer Sicknick and one Capitol Police officer and one Metropolitan Police (MPD) officer have tragically taken their own lives. Around 140 officers were injured during the insurrection including officers with crushed spinal discs, broken kneecaps, and traumatic brain injuries. Some of these officers may never return to duty. Many more are experiencing signs of PTSD.”

“We credit Stenger, Irving and Sund for having the decency to resign. However, Acting Chief Pittman and her entire leadership team must also be replaced.”

The union recently held a vote of no confidence on the current leadership and our officers voted overwhelmingly that the USCP needs new leaders. In the case of Acting Chief Pittman, 92 percent of the officers voted against her continuing to be Acting Chief or Chief.

Chairman Papathanasiou says, “The current leadership has lost the trust of the front-line officers. We know what these individuals failed to do prior to the insurrection, and we know what they failed to do during the insurrection. The trust they have lost, cannot be regained. If we are going to address the systemic failures that led to the security breach, we need new leaders. New leaders that will ensure we have the proper training and equipment needed.”

Chairman Papathanasiou concluded, “We deeply appreciate Senators Klobuchar, Blunt, Peters and Portman for having this joint hearing. We hope this is the first of many. Congress must find out the entirety of what went wrong and establish the steps needed to secure the Capitol complex. The number of threats continues to rise, not decline. Members of Congress must be able to safely carry out the duties entrusted to them by the American people, no matter what threats they face.”