



United States Capitol Police Labor Committee

1320 G Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

Telephone: 202-544-4813

www.uscp-fop.com



PRESS RELEASE

January 3, 2023

Capitol Police: “We Need Answers”

Two years after an attack on the U.S. Capitol sought to overturn the outcome of the 2020 Presidential election, front line U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) Officers say they’ve been unable to get the answers needed to prevent a similar attack in the future.

On January 6, 2021, according to previous reports more than 1,200 USCP officers were on duty as thousands of supporters of former President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol and attempted to stop the certification of the 2020 Presidential election.

In defending the Capitol, more than 140 USCP and Metropolitan Police officers were seriously injured. USCP Officer Brian Sicknick, age 42, died after being injured and four officers who defended the Capitol subsequently took their own lives.

Chairman of the Capitol Police Officers’ Union, Gus Papathanasiou says officers have two crucial questions yet to be answered, “First, how could we have been so unprepared given the intelligence USCP had weeks ahead of the attack? Second, why hasn’t anyone at the top of USCP’s leadership responsible for these intelligence failures been held accountable?”

In his book published and released this week, former USCP Chief Steven Sund reveals, the “biggest intelligence failure was within my department”, and warns it could easily happen again, with many of the factors that left the Capitol vulnerable still unfixed.

It's been reported as early as the first week December 2020, the USCP began receiving intelligence reports of online groups openly discussing coordinated attacks on the Capitol. The intelligence picture worsened as January 6th approached.

Chairman Papathanasiou says, "What infuriates me, is knowing our leaders had intelligence that should have driven a massive security response. If then Assistant Chief Pittman, who was in charge of intelligence, had shared that information, it would have allowed us to prepare properly, coordinate with partner agencies and the National Guard as the proper show of force would have been on display, and January 6th possibly would have turned out differently."

"First and foremost, the global fence that was already waiting to be erected for the coming Biden inauguration could have been in place before January 6th. It's our belief, the Capitol **would not have been breached** had the global fence been up and law enforcement been prepared."

"Without that fencing, it was the courage and bravery of our officers who were able to hold the line long enough that day to safely evacuate the Vice President, the Congressional leadership, Members of Congress, and their staffs."

"Most USCP officers battled without the protection of riot gear. There is no excuse for USCP management to not have issued riot gear given the intelligence they possessed."

Chairman Papathanasiou says many USCP officers feel they are still unprepared to meet a similar attack with some leaders still in place where they failed us miserably two years ago, although the Union is working with the Congress, Chief Manger, and his team to fix these deficiencies.

"My biggest concern right now continues to be manpower. In his security review just months after the attack, retired General Russel Honoré called for hiring nearly 900 new officers above our authorized level."

"24 months later, we are still 200 officers **below** our authorized level as reported by the USCP. Although we currently have classes in the academy that will bring some relief, we are not properly staffed to meet the threats we're facing along with the constant daily mission requirements."

“More than 500 officers can retire in the next year or so and many younger officers are on the fence about staying with this department. It’s not rocket science - we need to retain the officers we have and recruit new officers.”

“Some progress was made last year, in giving USCP officers pay parity with other federal law enforcement agencies. That is a good first step. However, we still do not have retirement parity with other federal law enforcement agencies. Until Congress fixes this, we will not be able to retain our officers. We must all work together to support law enforcement throughout this country and provide the necessary tools and resources for officers to do their jobs and safely go home to their loved ones at the end of every shift. I just hope that we are not still talking about this on the third anniversary.”