



United States Capitol Police Labor Committee



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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Capitol Police Officers Urge Law Enforcement Exemption to Cuts

The U.S. Capitol Police Officers' Union is urging the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to exempt all federal law enforcement officers from looming federal employee pension cuts, set to come in the budget reconciliation process.

Union Chairman Gus Papathanasiou says the pension cuts would be the final straw for many officers who are eligible for retirement and who have faced extraordinary challenges in an increasingly high-risk security environment.

Chairman Papathanasiou says, “If these cuts go ahead, many of our officers will resign or retire at a time when we are already understaffed. There is no doubt that will undermine our force readiness and will increase the risk to our remaining officers and to all those they protect in Congress and in the Capitol complex.”

He says officers have faced a grueling work schedule since January 6th, 2021, and the fallout has been the ongoing struggle to keep, and recruit, officers.

“We simply do not have the officers needed to meet the current threat level. The department’s response has been to require officers to work excessive amounts of forced overtime, a burden that has impacted officer morale and mission readiness.”

“Now, the Oversight Committee will consider measures this week that will result in a pay cut of 3.6%, by requiring more senior officers to make higher contributions from their wages to the Federal Employee Retirement System. In addition, their retirement calculations would change and this would cost some officers tens of thousands in retirement income.”

He says, “A quarter of our entire force is now eligible for retirement. I’ve had officers calling me all weekend, to say they *will* resign if these measures are passed, and they’ll leave before the changes are implemented.”

The union is calling for an exemption for federal law enforcement officers from the pension cuts. Of the 2.4 million non-postal federal employees affected, only 137,000 are federal law enforcement officers. Law enforcement officers have a mandatory retirement age of 57. Unlike other federal employees who could offset retirement losses by working longer, that is not an option for federal law enforcement officers.

Chairman Papathanasiou says, “Many members of Congress have proudly told us they ‘back the blue’ and as we head into Police Week in May, we appreciate that sentiment. We are asking them now to demonstrate that support for law enforcement. Our officers have been working toward the promise of a retirement package that is now being pulled out from under them.”

“We cannot afford to lose up to a quarter of our force and continue to meet the threats we face and officers deserve the retirement benefits they were promised.”