

United States Capitol Police



## Labor Committee

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**PRESS RELEASE**

April 21, 2026

### **U.S. Capitol Police Union: Front Line Officers Skeptical of New Promotions**

On April 13, 2026, U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) Chief Michael Sullivan announced 6 promotions and 6 transfers of senior USCP officials within the department. Several of these moves by Chief Sullivan have been met with skepticism by the front-line officers who are questioning Chief Sullivan's judgement.

For example, John Erickson has just been promoted to Assistant Chief for Uniformed Operations despite a history of serious infractions. In June of 1997 [Erickson was arrested in San Antonio, Texas while doing an advance trip for then House Speaker Newt Gingrich for drunk driving.](#) He was found passed out on the side of a road in a government-rented vehicle at 3:25am and refused to take a breathalyzer. In January of 2002 [Erickson was arrested again after his personal vehicle slammed into an unmarked Maryland State Police cruiser that stopped on the side of the road with its emergency lights on.](#) Trooper Damon McFarland was seriously injured in the accident. Erickson was subsequently suspended by the USCP for 30 days without pay but was not terminated even though this was his second alcohol related incident.

In 2014 [Erickson was also implicated in an overtime scheme with recently retired Assistant Chief Sean Gallagher and a former USCP Lieutenant who is employed by the Senate Sergeant of Arms office.](#) The scheme allowed Erickson, and his co-conspirators, to collect overtime they were not entitled to, which is a serious offense. Instead, Erickson was suspended for 20 days and ordered to repay the overtime he illegally garnered.

Union Chairman Gus Papathanasiou stated " I am all for second chances but in the case of Erickson three strikes ought to mean you are out. Had a front-line officer

been arrested twice for drunk driving and injuring a fellow law enforcement officer they would probably have been terminated. In the case of the overtime scheme, they would have been referred to the U.S. Attorney's office for possible criminal prosecution."

Papathanasiou continued "Chief Sullivan has been in command for nearly one year. The fact that he was not with the USCP when these incidents occurred is not an excuse. These incidents are well known within the USCP and Chief Sullivan has full access to Erickson's employee record. In addition, these incidents were all reported in the press. Had he just Googled John Erickson's name, he could have seen his history of malfeasance."

Chairman Papathanasiou added, "if front line officers are held to a high standard, then our Supervisors should be held to an even higher standard. During the last two years we've had dozens of proposed termination cases against front line officers for far less severe infractions."

"We need leaders who lead by example and John Erickson is a prime example of what is wrong with this Department. I sincerely hope that Chief Sullivan and the U.S. Capitol Police Board revisit this decision because the message it sends to front line officers is horrible and quite embarrassing."

### **Further Reading:**

Washington Post – [U.S. Capitol Office Loses Police Powers](#)

Blaze Media – [Favoritism, cover-ups reveal culture of corruption in US Capitol Police leadership](#)

Deseret News – [Gingrich driver arrested on drunken-driving charges](#)