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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0535

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January 7, 2021

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairwoman
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lofgren,

The assault on the Capitol of the United States of America on January 6, 2020 will go down as one of the darkest days in the history of our nation. The ability of a violent mob to breach what is supposed to be one of the most secure buildings in the world is both concerning and unacceptable. Today, I write to you to join in calling for an investigation into the United States Capitol Police (USCP) and the actions they took or failed to take that led up to the breach.

This situation could have been prevented. During a recent Democratic Caucus meeting, knowing that the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and other right-wing extremist groups were either already present in or expected to arrive in the nation's capital to attempt to overturn the will of the people, and cognizant of the increased chatter among these groups to try and sneak weapons into the District of Columbia, I raised my grave concerns about the types of security protocols that were being put in place by Chief of Police Steven Sund and the USCP force. In that meeting, I was told that Chief Sund would reach out to me to discuss the safety measures he had put in place.

On December 31, 2020, I spoke with Chief Sund for over an hour. In this call, I raised several questions about the security of the Capitol grounds, including the plaza, the chambers, and the house office buildings. In this call, Chief Sund assured me time and time again that the plaza would be absolutely secured, and that any assembly of people would be confined to the grassy area of the Capitol. I also asked him what would happen if there were opposing protestors and he assured me there would be police to deal with the situation. In our conversation, I made it a point to inquire whether he knew which groups were coming and his response to me was that he did not know, and that permits for "protests" were handled by the Office of Special Events.

When I inquired about the safety measures in place for the house office buildings in which Members of Congress and staff conduct their work, he told me that the roads would not be blocked off and that there would not be any protection on Independence Avenue SE because it was considered “public,” and instead encouraged Members and staff to avoid going outside and use underground tunnels. In addition, Chief Sund strongly assured me that these people would not be able to get inside or on top of the Capitol building.

As yesterday’s events have clearly shown us, there was no coordinated plan and no streamlined way to establish communication to ensure the safety of Members of Congress, their staffs, and all other employees on the Capitol complex. In the complete pandemonium that ensued, numerous Members and staff were left to defend themselves against a violent and angry mob, and other Members of Congress were unaccounted for due to the poor communication and relocation strategies.

The insurrection that transpired due to the lack of preparation by the USCP is without a doubt beneath the level of security that is required to protect the seat of government, our democracy, and all those who serve in it and fight so fiercely for it. We must ensure that nothing like this ever happens again. In addition to joining Speaker Pelosi in calling for the resignation of Chief Sund, I reiterate my strong call for an investigation into the actions of the USCP and demand safety protocols be updated immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maxine Waters". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M".

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress