

**LOOKING AHEAD SERIES: HOUSE SERGEANT AT
ARMS' STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE 118TH CON-
GRESS**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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LOOKING AHEAD SERIES: HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS' STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:15 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Bryan Steil [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Steil, Loudermilk, Griffith, Murphy, Lee of Florida, Morelle, Sewell, Torres, and Kilmer.

Staff present: Hillary Lassiter, Majority Chief Clerk; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Elliot Smith, Deputy Director of Oversight; Elliott Tomlinson, Deputy Parliamentarian; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director, Chief Counsel; Enumale Agada, Minority Oversight Counsel; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Andrew Garcia, Minority Special Assistant; and Matthew Schlesinger, Minority Oversight Counsel.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on House Administration will come to order.

I note that a quorum is present. Without objection, the chair may declare a recess at any time.

Thank you, Ranking Member Morelle, members of the committee, Acting Sergeant at Arms Bill McFarland, for participating in today's hearing.

I look forward to hearing from you, Mr. McFarland, about how we can further restore trust in the House Sergeant at Arms office.

Last congress, under previous leadership, the House Sergeant at Arms office developed misguided practices that damaged the office mission and capabilities. This led to severe morale and retention issues within the office.

This is not unique to the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms. Capitol security at large has had issues with political interference, going back to 2020 and the start of the pandemic. Following the January 6 attack at the Capitol, these issues became even more pervasive.

The House Sergeant at Arms is one of three voting members of the United States Capitol Police Board, which provides oversight of the United States Capitol Police.

Following COVID and January 6, deeply politicized directives ultimately bred mistrust and eroded confidence among many of the

Capitol Hill community in both the House Sergeant at Arms office and the Capitol Police Board.

Let me share some examples of these directives.

The inconsistent criteria when to put up fencing around the Capitol.

The enforcement of different health policies on the House side and the Senate side.

The different practices when dealing with threats against members of congress depending on party affiliation.

The placement of metal detectors outside the House floor and then selectively enforcing who goes through those and inconsistently issuing fines.

This politicization of Capitol security is, in part, why Speaker McCarthy named you, Mr. McFarland, the Acting House Sergeant at Arms at the start of the 118th Congress.

With new leadership in the office and on the Capitol Police Board, you have an opportunity to restore trust in the House Sergeant at Arms office and return the Capitol Police Board to its original mission of oversight of Capitol Police, rather than direct management.

I look forward to hearing how you plan to lead these much-needed reforms and the actions you will take as a member of the Board to empower the United States Capitol Police to run its own department while still holding them accountable to their strategic goals.

In the first quarter of this year, you've already worked hard to reinstate professionalism, bipartisanship, and regular order to the office of Capitol security more broadly. This includes implementing standard, nonpartisan operating procedures and establishing clear structure and internal operations that have led to improvements in morale and culture.

I also look forward to hearing from you on what efforts are underway to plan for the long-term future of the institution's security.

Today's hearing is another step we are taking to restore faith in the office and professionalize the House. Our goal today is to help provide accountability and transparency while further looking for ways we can work together to make the House Sergeant at Arms' 118th Strategic Plan a reality.

I also want to thank the men and women who serve in the Sergeant at Arms office for the work they do every day to keep this institution—members, staff, and visitors—safe.

I'll now recognize Ranking Member Mr. Morelle for 5 minutes for the purpose of providing an opening statement.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Chairman Steil, and thank you for convening this morning's hearing on the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms and its Strategic Plan for the 118th Congress.

I want to thank our witness, Acting House Sergeant at Arms Bill McFarland, for being with us today and for the work of his staff on behalf of the House of Representatives.

As we continue to improve security at the Capitol and deal with an unprecedented threat environment for members, it is safe to say that the House Sergeant at Arms has never been more important.

It has now been a little over 2 years since the January 6, 2021, attack, which included assaults on 140 police officers and resulted in more than 1,000 arrests, including nearly 100 arrests on charges

involving use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or causing serious bodily injury to an officer.

Unfortunately, January 6 was not an isolated incident. Members of Congress have recently been subject to more threats than ever before. The Capitol Police Threat Assessment Section investigated more than 7,500 cases in 2022 alone.

Last year, a man broke into the home of then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and viciously assaulted her husband, Paul Pelosi, with a hammer. The assailant told police that he broke in to break the Speaker's kneecaps, hold her hostage, and, quote, "show other Members of Congress there were consequences to actions," end quote.

It is with this backdrop that I'm eager to learn more about the newly released Sergeant at Arms Strategic Plan and how implementation of the Strategic Plan will ensure members' security here in Washington, DC, at home in our districts, and traveling in between.

I'm particularly interested in knowing how the Strategic Plan is tied to important initiatives like the Residential Security Program, the District Security Service Center, and implementation of the Emergency Supplemental Security appropriations bill.

I'm also interested in hearing how you intend to ensure that you make decisions based on diverse viewpoints and how you'll replace the expertise lost from your dismissal of several senior leaders within the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms at the beginning of the 118th Congress.

Again, I do want to thank you and your staff for your service to the House.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Without objection, all other members' opening statements will be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Committee clerk by 5 p.m. today.

Pursuant to paragraph b of Committee Rule 6, the witness will please stand and raise your right hand.

[Witness sworn.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let the record show the witness answered in the affirmative and may be seated.

I'll now introduce our witness.

Mr. McFarland began his career on Capitol Hill in 1991 as a security aide for the United States Capitol Police. He has since served in several capacities, spending over a decade as the director of security at the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and as director of the Office of House Security, where he remained until 2021.

After a brief stint in the private sector, Mr. William McFarland was sworn in as Acting Sergeant at Arms for the U.S. House of Representatives on January 7, 2023.

Mr. McFarland, we appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony.

As a reminder, we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record.

Under Committee Rule 9, you are to limit your oral presentation to a brief summary of your written record unless I extend the time in consultation with Ranking Member Morelle.

Please remember to press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on and Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your 5 minutes will have expired, and we will ask you to please wrap up.

I now recognize you, Mr. McFarland, for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM MCFARLAND, ACTING
SERGEANT AT ARMS, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. MCFARLAND. Good morning, Chair Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the committee. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today and present the Office of the Sergeant at Arms' Strategic Plan for the 118th Congress, a topic I happen to be very passionate about. It's truly an honor to sit in front of you today.

As this is my first time testifying before this committee, I feel compelled to share my journey to this seat and, at the same time, highlight how lessons from my journey are reflected in the Strategic Plan our office has put in front of you.

I began my career on Capitol Hill 32 years ago, starting as a security aide for the U.S. Capitol Police. As many of us have experienced, my first days on the Hill were filled with excitement and apprehension. Throughout those 32 years, I worked my way up, gaining experience, learning new skills, and taking on increasingly challenging roles.

Throughout that time, I met and learned from many great colleagues and mentors. I also learned some hard lessons along the way, but I was, ultimately, able to learn from my mistakes and grow from each of those experiences.

Today I'm proud to be seated here representing our office, and I believe that my journey from being a staffer to sitting in this seat as the Acting House Sergeant at Arms is a testament to the values that we hold dear and are represented in our Strategic Plan.

I also believe that my story is not unique and that there are many others within our organization who have similar journeys to share, all of which are ongoing. In fact, I know some of the members of this very committee have similar stories as well, having started their Capitol Hill journey as an intern for a member office and, ultimately, working their way up to become a member of congress.

I say this not to compare myself to the members of this committee, but rather to show you how journeys that start in humble beginnings, with the right mentoring, training, and support, can grow into roles with greater responsibility. I am committed to providing my team with those same opportunities.

In the development of our Strategic Plan, we recognized that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional patron experiences and achieving our organizational goals. As a mentor of mine once stated, I can fail on my own, but success requires the commitment and the skills of the full team working together to fulfill our mis-

sion. I remain available to my team to listen and assist in any way possible.

As I have said before, the employees of the Sergeant at Arms are the most valuable resource, and they deserve the strategic direction, mission, goals, and shared values to help guide them.

To shape the future of our organization and refocus our energies on the critical mission the Sergeant at Arms provides, I asked our team to initiate a strategic planning effort in February 2023 to help guide our long-term and short-term efforts to produce the best results for the House community.

While the core planning team consisted of leaders from our immediate office and each of our divisions, we made it a priority to incorporate ideas and inputs from more than 170 team members. Rather than producing a vision that is printed and sits on a shelf, this is a vision that has been created with an open door and input from across the team.

Throughout the development process, we conducted brainstorming sessions, walked around and talked with staff, and conducted organization-wide surveys. As I noted, we recognize the people of the Sergeant at Arms are at the core of our ability to serve the congressional community and made sure that their voice was included.

I am proud of the contributions our staff made to help develop the Strategic Plan, and I am pleased with the quality and thought-provoking contributions they brought to this table.

Three of those contributors are Mr. Torey McNeil, Mr. Bob Sensenbrenner, and Ms. Davita Jones, who are sitting behind me today. I invited Torey, Bob, and Davita as recognition for their contributions and work. I appreciate the overwhelming support from staff on our team and thank them for their work.

I would also like to especially thank the other members of my leadership team for their tireless efforts and highlight Mr. Torey McNeil, Mr. Bob Sensenbrenner, and Ms. Davita Jones, as well as Mr. Kevin Grubbs and Ms. Maria Lohmeyer, for going above and beyond.

In addition to ensuring our personnel's voice was incorporated, I would like to highlight some of the major changes to our new Strategic Plan.

The revised plan acknowledges the need for our organization to remain agile and adapt to the changing needs of the Congress. Subsequently, we have shifted from a 5-year strategic plan model to a plan that aligns with the current congressional calendar and carries us through the 118th Congress.

We defined a guiding principle for the SAA leadership team to hold leaders within the organization to a higher standard. That principle states that we believe in investing in our people through training, development, and empowerment, as we recognize that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional patron experiences and achieving our organizational goals.

We are equally patron-centric and strive to understand and serve the needs of our patrons through high-quality services and support.

We also redefined our mission, vision, and organization values to emphasize the importance of the Sergeant at Arms' personnel,

service to the congressional community, accountability, transparency, and to incorporate the office's security oversight mission.

To share more about the plan, I would like to start by presenting the values that the employees of the Sergeant at Arms will embody. These values include absolute integrity, deep collaboration, vigilant reliability and agility, and thoughtful transparency.

The goals within our Strategic Plan reflect our pursuit of the vision. We identified goals aligned with these four themes: our people goal centered on the employees of the Sergeant at Arms; our patron goal highlighting the people that our organization serves, which includes members, staff, visitors, and other stakeholders; our ingenuity goal, which highlights initiatives on modernization; and our accountability and oversight goal, which highlights our focus on accountability and refocusing our security and safety governance and oversight efforts.

We have also identified key objectives to structure our pursuit of these four goals.

In closing, I would like to share my commitment to collaboration. We believe that dialog and collaboration are not just about sharing information, but also about actively seeking input and feedback from all stakeholders, including this committee.

We also believe that collaboration requires a willingness to listen and learn from others. We recognize that this committee brings unique knowledge and expertise to the table, and we are eager to learn from your insights and experiences.

By working together in a spirit of collaboration, we believe that we can achieve better outcomes for our patrons, our partners, and our visitors.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss our Strategic Plan and the future of our organization. I'm happy to answer any questions you have at this time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McFarland follows:]

**Office of the Sergeant at Arms
Statement of Mr. William P. McFarland
Acting Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Before
Committee on House Administration
Looking Ahead Series: House Sergeant at Arms Strategic Plan for the 118th Congress**

Good morning Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of this Committee. I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today and present the Office of the Sergeant at Arms Strategic Plan for the 118th Congress, a topic I happen to be very passionate about. It's truly an honor to sit in front of you today.

As this is my first time testifying before this Committee, I feel compelled to share my journey to this seat and at the same time, highlight how lessons from my journey are reflected in the Strategic Plan our office has put in front of you. I began my career on Capitol Hill 32 years ago, starting as a security aide for the U.S. Capitol Police. As many of us have experienced, my first days on the Hill were filled with excitement and apprehension. Throughout those 32 years, I worked my way up, gaining experience, learning new skills and taking on increasingly challenging roles. Throughout that time, I met and learned from many great colleagues and mentors. I also learned some hard lessons along the way, but I was ultimately able to learn from my mistakes and grow from each of those experiences.

Today, I am proud to be seated here, representing our office, and I believe that my journey from being a staffer to sitting in this seat as the Acting Sergeant at Arms is a testament to the values that we hold dear and are represented in our Strategic Plan. I also believe that my story is not unique, and that there are many others within our organization who have similar journeys to share, all of which are ongoing. In fact, I know some of the Members of this very Committee have similar stories as well, having started their Capitol Hill journey as an intern for a Member office and ultimately working their way up to become a Member of Congress. I say this not to compare myself to the Members of the Committee, but rather to show how journeys that start in humble beginnings, with the right mentoring, training, and support, can grow into roles with greater responsibility. I am committed to providing my team with those same opportunities.

In the development of our Strategic Plan, we recognized that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional patron experiences and achieving our organizational goals. As a mentor of mine once stated, I can fail on my own, but success requires the commitment and skills of the full team working together to fulfill our mission. I remain available to my team to listen and assist in any way possible.

As I have said before, the employees of the Sergeant at Arms are its most valuable resource. And they deserve the strategic direction, mission, goals, and shared values to help guide them.

Upon my swearing in as Acting Sergeant at Arms on January 7, I have focused the efforts of my office on the mission of providing high quality, patron-serving, nonpartisan services to improve the safety of Members and their families wherever they may be, and that the Capitol Complex and district offices are safe and secure to Members, spouses, staff, and visitors from across the country.

To shape the future of our organization and refocus our energies on the critical mission the Office of the Sergeant at Arms provides, I asked our team to initiate a strategic planning effort in February 2023 to help guide our long-term and short-term efforts to produce the best results for the House community.

While the core planning team consisted of leaders from our Immediate office and each of our divisions, we made it a priority to incorporate ideas and inputs from our more than 170 team members. Rather than producing a vision that is printed and sits on a shelf, this is a vision that has been created with an open door and input from across the team. Throughout the development process we conducted brainstorming sessions, walked around and talked with staff and conducted organization-wide surveys. As I noted, we recognize that the people of the Sergeant at Arms are at the core of our ability to serve the Congressional Community and made sure their voice was included. I am proud of the contributions our staff made to help develop this Strategic Plan and I am pleased with the quality and thought-provoking contributions they brought to the table. One of those contributors is Mr. Torey McNeil who's sitting behind me today. I invited Torey as recognition for his contribution and work. I appreciate the overwhelming support from staff on our team and thank them all for their work. I would like to especially say thanks to my Leadership team for their tireless efforts and highlight Mr. Torey McNeil as well as Mr. Kevin Grubbs, Ms. Maria Lohmeyer and Ms. Davita Jones for going above and beyond.

In addition to ensuring our personnel's voice was incorporated, I would like to highlight some of the major changes to our new Strategic Plan:

- The revised plan acknowledges the need for our organization to remain agile and adapt to the changing needs of Congress. Subsequently, we have shifted from a five-year strategic plan model to a plan that aligns with the current Congressional calendar and carries us through the 118th Congress.
- We defined a Guiding Principle for the SAA Leadership Team to hold leaders within the organization to a higher standard. That principle states that we believe in investing in our people through training, development, and empowerment, as we recognize that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional patron experiences and achieving our organizational goals. We are equally patron-centric and strive to understand and serve the needs of our patrons through high-quality services and support.
- We also redefined our mission, vision and organization values to emphasize the importance of Sergeant at Arms personnel, service to the Congressional Community, accountability, transparency and to incorporate the office's security oversight mission.

To share more about the plan, I would like to start by presenting the values that the employees of the Sergeant at Arms will embody:

- **Absolute Integrity:** Commit to always doing the right thing, demonstrate unwavering honesty, and hold yourself and each other accountable.
- **Deep Collaboration:** Work together, value diverse perspectives and expertise to drive meaningful change and create innovative solutions.
- **Vigilant Reliability and Agility:** Consistently deliver high-quality services while remaining vigilant, adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances.
- **Thoughtful Transparency:** Value openness and honesty in communication with thoughtfulness to appropriate confidentiality.

As we move forward, I've asked each Sergeant at Arms team member to intentionally live out our values daily as we pursue our vision of being a top-quality organization respected by Congressional leadership, staff, and our patron community for high standards of excellence in

delivering a safe and secure environment; an informed and dignified patron experience; and a dedicated, well-trained, and engaging staff.

The goals within our Strategic Plan reflect our pursuit of this vision. We've identified goals aligned to four themes; our People goal centered on the employees of the SAA; our Patron goal highlighting the people our organization serves, including Members, staff, visitors and other stakeholders; our Ingenuity goal which highlights initiatives on modernization; and our Accountability and Oversight goal which highlights our focus on accountability and refocusing our security and safety governance and oversight efforts. We have also identified key objectives to structure our pursuit of these four goals.

- **People Goal:** Create a people first culture that fosters trust, inspires ownership, improves retention and invests in a professional, skilled, respected, and diverse workforce.
 - Employee Engagement: Implement an employee engagement program, centered on providing employees with a voice, improving transparency and increasing recognition.
 - Development & Investment: Establish, invest in, and socialize an intentional employee development and performance management program, to support personal and professional growth.
 - Evaluate Employee Expectations & Standards: Evaluate, update, and socialize employee expectations and standards of conduct to ensure Sergeant at Arms staff are positioned to provide the highest level of service.
 - Career Path Transparency: Clarify division organizational charts and develop written expectations for career path development.
- **Patron Goal:** Implement initiatives to build strong relationships, foster trust and create a safe, secure and positive patron experience through exceptional service.
 - Survey: Implement regular customer feedback surveys to identify opportunities to increase customer service, improve quality, and availability for Members and staff and measure progress.
 - Continue Enhancing Security & Safety: Evaluate, refine, and provide a list of priorities to relevant oversight committees to enhance the security and emergency preparedness of the Capitol campus, District offices, and Member residences for the House community, Members, staff, and visitors.

- Customer Engagement: Develop an initiative to identify new (i.e. Sergeant at Arms Services Center in LHOB) and increase use of existing (i.e. Sergeant at Arms website) methods to communicate and engage with the Congressional Community in a transparent and non-partisan manner.
- Customer Service Expectations: Conduct a needs analysis, develop, and socialize customer service expectations, measurement criteria and associated training for each Sergeant at Arms division.
- **Ingenuity Goal**: Explore opportunities to leverage technology and implement streamlined, innovative, modern and adaptive operational processes for Sergeant at Arms employees, Members, congressional staff and visitors.
 - Visitor Experience: Evaluate the visitor experience and identify opportunities to modernize processes including the badging system and increasing awareness of building densities while ensuring Americans can safely and securely engage with Congress.
 - Leverage Best Practices: Evaluate Sergeant at Arms operations against House Officers, Senate counterparts, other public, private and industry partners to identify key, cost effective priorities for enhancement and opportunities to leverage technology.
 - Recruitment: Assess and implement enhancements to the Sergeant at Arms recruitment process to streamline and improve the organization's ability to attract and retain top talent.
- **Accountability & Oversight Goal**: Implement intentional initiatives to strengthen the culture of accountability and refocus on oversight of safety and security operations.
 - Organization Values: Revise organizational values and vision to emphasize accountability and the office's oversight mission, educate staff on revised values and incorporate value alignment in employee evaluations.
 - Semi-Annual Report: Assess and update the semi-annual report and other committee report criteria and measures to ensure alignment with the strategic plan, transparency, and accountability in the reporting of Sergeant at Arms actions, responsibilities, and closure of security recommendations.

In closing, I would also like to share my commitment to collaboration. We believe that dialogue and collaboration is not just about sharing information, but also about actively seeking input and feedback from all stakeholders, including this Committee. We also believe that collaboration requires a willingness to listen and learn from others. We recognize that this Committee brings unique knowledge and expertise to the table, and we are eager to learn from your insights and experiences.

By working together in a spirit of collaboration, we believe that we can achieve better outcomes for our patrons, our partners, and our visitors. Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss our strategic plan and the future of our organization. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. McFarland, and thank you for being here today.

I'll begin our questions today, followed by the ranking member. We'll then alternate between sides.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of asking questions.

Mr. McFarland, we all know the Capitol Police Board has three voting members with an enormous amount of authority over the United States Capitol Police. The Board now consists of entirely new membership since January 6, which presents us with a unique opportunity to reconsider or to consider reforms or structural changes.

You previously worked for the House Sergeant at Arms, and you've now returned as the Acting House Sergeant at Arms. In 3 months since assuming or since returning to the office and building on your previous experience working in the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms, are there specific structural changes that you would recommend to the Capitol Police Board to make it more accountable and transparent?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Chairman Steil, I can only talk about my experience on the Capitol Police Board for the last 3 months, but I can say that there is need for, room for improvement for a lot of these changes.

Some of the things have already taken place. We did close out a GAO recommendation on governance for the Capitol Police Board. We actually are still in the midst of actually closing out Capitol Police IG findings. Since I was sworn in, we have canceled—we have closed out at least 20 of those recommendations. We still have 49 more to go, but we're working diligently to improve it.

Then we also have our stakeholder forum, which I think members of this committee attend, that could actually lend a voice as well to see about restructuring and how the Capitol Police Board is doing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

On a different note, during the preparations for the State of the Union this year the Secret Service requested the Capitol Police Board to put up a fence around the Capitol. The request went to the Capitol Police Board for a vote, and I believe you're the lone member to vote against it.

One of our goals in the Committee on House Administration is to have a more professionalized security posture here on the Hill, and part of that is minimizing the impact of political considerations on security decisions. This, to me, includes making threat-based decisions for our security posture.

In your opinion, was there a threat-based request for the fence for the State of the Union this year?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, what I can tell you is I'm not against the idea of a fence. I'm against the idea that is the end-all, be-all solution.

I've asked the Capitol Police, as well as the Secret Service, to come up with alternatives to try to figure out exactly what would be the best course of action to take instead of the fence. I was provided no real guidance along what those alternatives are.

What I can tell you is I think that, taking a look, we need to take a look at the threat-based intel that is before us and actually marry it with the security posture of what we should be doing.

The CHAIRMAN. Specifically as it relates then to that decision to put up the fence as it relates to this year's State of the Union, was there a threat-based request for the fence?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Not as far as I know.

The CHAIRMAN. Not presented to the Capitol Police where there's no threat-based reason that the fence was put up?

Mr. MCFARLAND. No, sir, not at the time that we made the vote. There was no threat-based information.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me shift gears but staying on the fence.

The rapid response fence, it's a relatively new addition to the Capitol security. You noted that it's not an end-all, be-all. But is there even a standardized policy for when to put up the fence?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, there is no standard policy for putting up the fence. I think we should have a process of determining whether a fence is needed, not necessarily a policy.

I think it would take some time to draft a process that's specific enough to be useful and broad enough to allow our circumstances to work on what we're able to predict.

At this time we're looking at anything that we possibly can to help with this situation, but right now there is none.

The CHAIRMAN. Would that process provide us an ability to depoliticize the security decisions?

Mr. MCFARLAND. I think, sir, that if we were to do that it would depoliticize, and we just based it off of threat intelligence alone, I think we could.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that because I think it's really important that we work to depoliticize the security framework here on Capitol Hill. I'm concerned when we have, for example, the fence going up prior to the State of the Union without a threat-based analysis. As you noted, no threat-based information was provided to the Capitol Police Board.

The concern is that decisions, such as a fence, are being put up for political purposes.

Let me shift gears for a final question here.

Recently, your office put together a new Strategic Plan for the House Sergeant at Arms in the 118th Congress. You referenced that in your opening remarks. Can you detail how these goals further increase the safety of the House and its Members?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I think that when you take a look at our Strategic Plan and the four areas that we highlight, which is our people goal, our patron goal, our ingenuity goal, and our accountability and oversight goal, I think when we do all four of these together, I think it makes not only the Sergeant at Arms a better place to work, but it also makes the Capitol Hill community a safer place to operate.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Thank you for being here and your service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning the witness.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. McFarland, for being here and for being accessible. I appreciated our opportunities to have conversations in the past and look forward to working with you.

This may not be so much as a question. It's an observation, though, since we spent a fair amount of time talking about the fence around the State of the Union address.

My understanding was it was requested by the United States Secret Service in regard to their assessment of threats. Without alternatives to the fence, which you had talked about the idea of, perhaps, coming up with alternatives, I guess I would just assume it would make sense to err on the side of safety.

You may want to comment on that.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, the Secret Service predicted that this was—or stated that this is a National Special Security Event and that the fence was recommended and required to facilitate.

When we take a look at the—

Mr. MORELLE. Did you disagree with that assessment?

Mr. MCFARLAND. I did at the time because of the fact that I don't want to just put up the fence because it's an NSSE. I want to know what the threat was, what the intel was saying about why we need to put up the fence. I thought there was other alternatives than putting up the fence.

Mr. MORELLE. Such as?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Such as we could do enhanced operations, which means we can add more personnel on the west front, the east front. We could put bike racks up. We could have done a lot of other things than putting up the fence. I just wanted to come up with different alternatives instead of putting up a million-dollar fence for 1 day and then taking it down the next.

Mr. MORELLE. Although I know that there's some constraints on Capitol Police just in terms of personnel and vacancies that they have, and I don't want to spend too much time on the question of the fence, I think we would all want to make sure that, particularly given January 6 and concerns about safety, that we would, as I said, err on the side of caution.

I would love to talk to you further. I think when the Secret Service makes a request, it seems to me appropriate to consider that.

I want to talk about the Strategic Plan as well, and appreciate the work you've done. I'm just curious. You talked about that you wanted to make it a priority and incorporate ideas and input from 170 employees, which is commendable.

I'm just curious. Were there any things that surprised you in terms of those conversations, things that you hadn't considered or things that came up as trends that you hadn't anticipated?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, as a former House staffer under the Sergeant at Arms, I got to see how my journey was with the Sergeant at Arms. I've actually served under three different Sergeant at Arms. I wanted to take a little bit—incorporate a little bit from every single one of them of what they did right, what they did wrong, and see what we can do to make it a better place.

One thing that I wanted to do was reach out to all 170 people of the Sergeant at Arms office to get their valued input. I think a lot of times, from my experience, that if you're not above the grade of Director or Assistant Sergeant at Arms, people aren't really look-

ing at you and not knowing how you really felt about how the organization was run.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes. No, I think it's a good idea. I'm just curious. Did you find anything that you thought was just interesting that you hadn't heard or things that have guided you here?

Mr. MCFARLAND. No. To be honest, I mean, some of the things that are the same problems that I saw as a Director within the House Sergeant at Arms office.

Mr. MORELLE. I'm sort of interested. You talked, and I think this makes a great deal of sense, about investing in the staff, making sure people know that there are opportunities, for them to be given opportunities for growth within the organization.

Can you talk a little bit about training and professional development opportunities you're intending to provide for staff?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure, sir.

One thing that we've noticed was as a staffer within the Sergeant at Arms office a lot of times you're just given that position and you're kind of left alone. I didn't want that for my employees. What I wanted to do was I wanted to make sure that we give them a career path going forward.

What we started to look at was, how can we make this better for the congressional staff? So what we did was we started taking a look on what the individuals liked, what they needed to do.

One of the things that we've done is an open-door policy where people come in and talk to me. I'm proud to say that we've had a couple staff that they wanted to know about my journey and how they can make themselves better.

I think it's really resonating. So one thing that we started doing was let's start thinking of a plan of going forward. So if you work in ID services or parking security right now and you want to move up the chain, these are the things that you're going to have to incorporate in order to make sure you can move up the chain. Let's talk about your performance evaluations. Let's make sure that we get you proper training within the CAO and other institutions that can actually give you the training, and then give you a career path going forward.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Loudermilk is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McFarland, thank you for being here today.

I also want to thank you for sending some of your staff to our staff retreat, our policy conference last week.

Security is extremely important, especially during this tenuous time that we live in. And had a member from your office, as well as Capitol Police, come and specifically talk to security with our D.C. and district staff. I appreciate that. It was very valuable.

I also want to thank you for taking on this role in such a tenuous time and for your vision. I mean, only 3 months after you were brought in as the Acting Sergeant at Arms, you've already brought out a strategic plan.

For people who may be watching outside of Washington, DC, that is light speed in Congress for anybody to do something within 3 months. And so I think it's very commendable.

You begin your report by laying out the values of the House Sergeant at Arms, and as you've mentioned, you've listed them as absolute integrity, which is absolutely important; deep collaboration; thoughtful transparency; and vigilant reliability and agility. And I think those values are of the utmost importance, especially in a place where politics kind of overrides those values a lot of times.

For the record, can you state why it is so important to have a value-driven strategic plan, and if you can, elaborate on why these values in particular matter to you?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Mr. Loudermilk, the way I look at it is the values define the baseline behavior of how our people should be operating. It defines who we are. It defines a culture. I'm trying to change that culture, being a former House staffer within the Sergeant at Arms office, and how I can make it better for everybody else.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. I think it's important because you're bringing experience, as well as vision to something. Way too often, especially in government, whether it's in the Department of Defense, as I served, or in any element of the federal government, we get to a place that we get comfortable. Comfort is often exploited by people who want to do bad things. I think it's very important that we do not always just rest on our laurels, that we are staying ahead of those.

Part of your job, you also sit on the Capitol Police Board. Can you express how these values can benefit both the Capitol Police Board and the U.S. Capitol Police?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, the way I look at it is right now my main focus is to get the Sergeant at Arms to buy into the culture of what we're doing here.

I think with this format, I think it would be beneficial to the Capitol Police to actually incorporate some of the strategies as well.

I have known of certain officers that are here that really like the whole idea of people first, putting the people—talking to the rank-and-file officers. I think that's something that the Capitol Police could learn from, and I'm hoping that us sharing this with them, they might be able to take some of these as well and put forth for their own strategic plan.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. There's something that you've said repeatedly, and I want to commend you on that, is the culture.

Culture is usually the baseline of everything. Regardless of what policy you have, if you don't change the culture, then nothing ever changes. I think that is extremely important, is addressing the culture, because once the culture of an agency takes a downward turn, it doesn't matter what policy you put in.

You've got to change the culture, and you have to have buy-in with the people who work within your division, the people who work in the Sergeant at Arms office. I feel like you're heading in the right direction there.

One thing Republicans have demanded is greater accountability, transparency, and professionalism from the U.S. Capitol Police. I hear it all around. I've got good relationships with a lot of the frontline officers, and I think they want some of this as well.

Do you think that the Board, the Capitol Police Board or its structure, are a hindrance to these goals?

Mr. MCFARLAND. No, sir, I do not. I don't think they're a hindrance. I do think that some individuals on the Capitol Police Board might have a different view of how they see the Capitol Police should be run, or they have their own opinion on how to best run the police department, which is fine.

My observations, though, from where I sit and where I've sat for 32 years on Capitol Hill, is the fact that I think that there are some things that need to change, and change in the right way, to change the culture.

I think that if we were to take some of these goals, like I mentioned, and the Capitol Police Board was to put forth some of these goals, I think it could change and make it a better place, not a hindrance.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Well, I appreciate that. I mean, I've got more questions, but I want to be sensitive of time.

I appreciate your honesty in these answers. We're not trying to get to an end. We're trying to find what is the best solution to ensure the safety of the people that are in the Capitol, the security of the Capitol, and that our constitutional Republic is safe, secure, free, and transparent.

I thank you for the work you're doing. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Ms. Sewell for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know that we're now about 2 years removed from January 6, the attacks of January 6. I know no other committee did more hearings around that than this Committee, and we asked the Sergeant at Arms Inspector General to actually do an analysis of the Capitol Police, the Inspector General to do an analysis and prioritize what went wrong. I think that what flowed from that was about a hundred different recommendations.

From your standpoint, where are we in the process of implementing some of those recommendations?

Mr. MCFARLAND. You might not have been here, ma'am, but as I stated earlier, when I first started out there was approximately 61—or actually there was actually 61 recommendations—I think it was 61 recommendations. I want to take that back. It was 69 recommendations that were open when I first got here.

We've closed out 20 of them since January 7, when I was sworn in. We have 49 more to go.

I think there is a lot of work to do, but I'm at the task of trying to close those out as soon as I possibly can.

Ms. SEWELL. What resources do you need to expedite that from this committee?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Nothing really from this committee to do. It mostly falls on the Capitol Police Board to make sure that we're holding the Capitol Police accountable. We want to make sure that we're getting the information to them that they need to do their job.

Ms. SEWELL. I know that your Strategic Plan has a lot of lofty goals, one of which is to—the people goal is to both foster, inspire, and invest in our staff.

Diversity in law enforcement and security leads to better policing. Lots of studies have shown that. I assume there's a commitment by you to make sure that you have the best and brightest and most capable folks doing the job and that you're also cognizant of and promoting, retaining people of color as a part of your staff.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, ma'am. One thing that I've done is when I first took my—I was sworn in, was I took a look on how the hiring process for the Sergeant at Arms office was.

I saw some things that needed a lot of improvement. The very first thing that we did was we decided to put diverse panels together for competitive hiring. We wanted to make sure that the right candidates were getting into the job.

We've actually—

Ms. SEWELL. I know. I'm kind of short of time.

Mr. MCFARLAND. I'm sorry.

Ms. SEWELL. I do understand that several Black, highly experienced senior officers within the Office of the Sergeant at Arms were terminated when you became the Acting Sergeant at Arms.

For example, an Assistant Deputy Sergeant at Arms who previously served as Deputy Chief of the U.S. Secret Service Special Operations was terminated, as was an Assistant Sergeant at Arms who had previously served as a supervisory special agent with the U.S. Secret Service.

How do you plan to ensure that perspectives from individuals from diverse backgrounds are taken into account when making decisions?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Ma'am, as we talk about the people I had to let go on day one, I had to do it for several reasons. But these are not a proper forum to discuss those reasons. I'd be more than happy to talk to you offline about some of—

Ms. SEWELL. I just want you to be cognizant of the fact that—

Mr. MCFARLAND. I am, ma'am.

Ms. SEWELL [continuing]. the Capitol Police has had lawsuits pending with respect to discrimination, and there is a history of it. We all have to be very cognizant of it and making sure that we're doing everything that we can to make sure that people feel comfortable, as well as people are competent and efficient in their jobs.

I just wanted to make sure that commitment is there from you.

Mr. MCFARLAND. It is.

Ms. SEWELL. And wanted to hear a little bit more about how you plan on creating an atmosphere and a culture that's more accommodating and more accepting of diversity.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Ma'am, so as I was saying about how we do our hiring practices now, and I think it speaks to where we're going with everything, I think a lot of times when we've taken a look at exactly the hiring practices of people being brought in just because of who they are but not being vetted properly with their resume, or just by a friend saying, "Hey, I think this person needs a job," I'm not about that.

I'm about having a competitive hiring practice to hire the best candidate for the job. It doesn't matter exactly what race you are. I just want to make sure you're capable of doing the job. So one thing that we—

Ms. SEWELL. To be clear, nobody wants you to hire incompetent people.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Well—

Ms. SEWELL. It's a fact that there could be better hiring practices and promotion practices within the Capitol Police. I just want to make sure that you understand that that's also a part—should be a part of the Strategic Plan. I see reference to people goals but no reference specifically to making sure that that's accommodated for.

Mr. MCFARLAND. I'll take it under consideration, ma'am. And hopefully—

Ms. SEWELL. You need to do more than take it under consideration.

Mr. MCFARLAND. I will take it under consideration.

Ms. SEWELL. It should be a part of the culture that you're developing.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman yields back.

Dr. Murphy is now recognized for 5 minutes for the purpose of asking questions.

Dr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for coming today. I appreciate just the visit in the office the other day to just discuss things.

You have a hard job. Your first and primary goal is to keep us safe. I appreciate the fact that you're going to hire people who are qualified, regardless of any other type of extraneous factors, to keep us safe. I know it's a hard job, and you have to keep morale up and all those other things. So thank you for doing that.

Speaking of morale, how was morale when you came in to assume your position?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Congressman Murphy, it's been a long couple, 3 years, I want to say, with COVID and January 6, and I felt that the morale at the time when I came in on board was at an all-time low.

Dr. MURPHY. Can you speak to that? Do you think it—can you speak to it specifically? I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Mr. MCFARLAND. I just think, sir, that—I think a lot of people saw some changes that they weren't comfortable with, and I think they wanted to see some change. That highlights what we're trying to do with our Strategic Plan of making our people first. I felt, even when I was with the Sergeant at Arms office as the Director of House Security, that we needed to put people first, and I just said this is what we need to do and how we need to do it.

Dr. MURPHY. So you had to come in and make some changes, and that makes some people uncomfortable. I understand that.

Mr. MCFARLAND. It did.

Dr. MURPHY. That's part of leadership.

Mr. MCFARLAND. It did make some people very uncomfortable. Yet I think the people right now are looking at what we're trying to do. The fact that people are first, I think they're buying into that culture, and that's what we wanted them to do.

Dr. MURPHY. Great. That's a plan for success.

Let me ask you just something a little bit about security.

Last election cycle, congressional campaigns spent over seven and a half million on digital and physical security. The bulk of the dollars were spent on security services at campaign events, residential security for candidates. Sadly enough, we are sometimes on the wrong side of people's opinions, and that's just a fact of life.

Currently, the FEC authorizes incumbent campaigns to spend campaign funds on security guards. Per the FEC rule, incumbent congressmen may hire only bona fide security guards. Is that your understanding?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I'm not aware of this at all.

Dr. MURPHY. Is that not under your purview, personal security?

Mr. MCFARLAND. That's FEC, sir.

Dr. MURPHY. Okay. Alright. Alright. Well, then I'm going to move to a different line of questioning then.

Let me ask you this then. Given the strategic planning that you're doing and the fact that you have moved forward with your recommendations of what you're trying to implement, what are your biggest hurdles, other than the Capitol Police, in getting those done?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I think the challenge right now is for people to buy in to the culture. I think some of the Sergeant at Arms staffers are some of the longest serving staff on Capitol Hill. They've been here for a long time. They've seen many changes with every Sergeant at Arms that's come forth.

I really think that putting this plan in place and for people to actually take a look at it and to have buy-in to it, I think that's our biggest challenge right now.

I think it's working, but I think there's a lot more to improve on.

Dr. MURPHY. Okay. So do you guys have any—I'm just going to go back to the security part—do you guys have any relationship with the hiring of security for us offsite? Any purview? Any supervisory role?

Mr. MCFARLAND. We have our—you do have law enforcement coordinators in your office that we coordinate with on a routine basis when you ever have an event that is in your district. We do have individuals that coordinate with your law enforcement coordinators about that.

I think it's up to the law enforcement coordinators. Sometimes they get local police. Sometimes we—

Dr. MURPHY. I'm sorry. Say that again.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sometimes we get local police to help out or State police. We do coordinate a lot with your district security.

Dr. MURPHY. Okay.

You have a tremendous job in front of you, and I have great confidence that you're going to change the culture and put us back one that's apolitical. Sadly enough, it turned political and that's just wrong. Safety doesn't know any political party.

We're in a different time now where safety is not secured, and sometimes the folks on the other side of the law are actually given more of the benefit than victims itself.

I encourage you in your job. I wouldn't want it. Thank you for your service.

With that, I'll yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yield backs.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. D'Esposito for 5 minutes.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning.

First of all, thank you for your service.

I've spent probably most of my adult life as a member of the New York City Police Department, proudly retiring as a detective, and I want to thank you for your service. I want to thank all the members of the Capitol Police for their service.

One of the things that I think it's important to realize is that from the hundreds or thousands of 911 calls of issues that police officers respond to, one question that is never asked is: Are you a Democrat or are you a Republican?

The fact that we've seen over the years an administration who have allowed or utilized the Capitol Police to further their agenda I believe needs to stop. We'll talk about the Capitol Police Board in a second.

Upon taking your position, I have to ask: What has the impact been? The politicization of the Capitol Police, what has that impact been on the rank and file?

Now, I've spoken to them, and I've heard it from their mouths, but I want to hear what has been the impact to them, and what has been a result of their training, of the resources that they need or perhaps don't have because of dealing with politics here on Capitol Hill?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I really can't speak about the past of what the rank and file think. I know I have talked to the rank and file as I walked around to different posts and see how the culture is going for them. There is a lot of issues right now that we're trying to straighten out. Some of it is through our Capitol Police Board; some of it I'm trying to fix on my own.

That said, I'm trying to do everything I can to make it right for everybody within the Capitol Police. I think there are some issues that stem from staffing right now, and I think we need to try to address those issues first and foremost.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. You mean lack of staff or—

Mr. MCFARLAND. Lack of staff.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Okay. What about training? How has training been?

Mr. MCFARLAND. I think the training has improved dramatically. What I mean by that is I think after we take a look at what happened on January 6, some police officers were not trained properly.

I think now the training is very—it's very well-rounded. I think that they're trying to do everything they can with CDU training, with active shooter training. They are having multiple exercises occurring. At least since I've been here, two active shooter trainings and one CDU training. I think it's good.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. But is it adequate training? That's, I think, the most important. One of the questions that we need to ask ourselves as a Member of this Committee is to make sure that the Capitol Police are trained and have every resource that they have available to them to protect everybody here, not only to protect Members, protect visitors to the nation's Capitol, and probably one of the most important, protect themselves.

Is the training that we're offering, is the training that's being implemented, is it adequate? Is there enough time in a day, is there enough time in a week, is there enough tours of duty for them to get the adequate training that they need to keep us all safe?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I think there is adequate training. I do.

I think when we talk about staffing, though, it also—a lot of people don't have a lot of days off or in between. Trying to get the training might be a little bit of problemsome.

I really think that the training is very adequate, yes.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Now, I think we all agree that the Capitol Police needs effective oversight. I think one of the issues that we are dealing with is the Capitol Police Board.

During your time on that Board, what have you learned about the Board as a whole and their role in oversight and accountability of the members of service to the Capitol Police?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I feel that what I've learned the most in 3 months is just to sit and listen for a while and understand exactly how the Board operates.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Sometimes that's the hardest thing to do.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, it is, but that said, it's learning exactly what the problems are and how we can achieve those, how we can achieve the Chief to accomplish the goals that he needs to do. That's my concern right now, is just making sure that the Chief has the proper resources to do his job.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. At this point, after your 3 months in this position, do you truly feel that the Capitol Police Board is working together for the best interests of the men and women who serve Capitol Hill?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, sir, I do. I do. I think there's much more improvement to come. One I'm focusing in on right now, and I met with Chairman Steil when I first came on board, and one of the things that we talked about was Capitol Police reform, and I was all about it.

After spending 3 months—or 3—yes, 3 months in the position and learning what the Capitol Police Board does, my focus right now is on governance. It's on transparency and accountability.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Well, thank you. Thank you for your service. I mean this sincerely, and I've made it clear to the chairman and the ranking member, I hope that I can do everything with the history that I've had in law enforcement to assist you in any way possible and keep everyone safe. So thank you.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Thank you, sir.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Ms. Lee is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. McFarland, for being here today.

I'd like to refer back to your Strategic Plan and just ask a few follow up questions there.

In particular, in the patron goal section, I'd like to start with the item here that you list about improving communication with congressional Members. I'm interested in what you may have discovered that may be a deficit in communication or ways you've identi-

fied that, perhaps, we could improve that communication with members of congress.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sure, ma'am.

Some of the things that I saw when I was Director of House Security, we really didn't have—we had a good website where we would send a lot of the information to, but we thought that it needed to have some improvement, so we've updated our website.

One of the things that we're trying to do is we're trying to put together a Member Service Center together in the Longworth building with the other House officers. That would be somewhere where people can go and learn information about exactly what the Sergeant at Arms office provides. I think there's a lot of misconceptions that a lot of people don't know what the Sergeant at Arms provides.

I think this Member Service Center that we're creating is actually going to be very good, that they can actually have a lot of customer engagement with the Hill staff and get the services they need.

Ms. LEE. That raises another interesting point right out of your strategic plan that has to do with marrying up customer service expectations with the services that your office actually does provide.

Are there particular places where you've noticed that those expectations don't match up with the services you have or, conversely, perhaps Members don't realize some of the things that you do have to offer for us?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, ma'am.

I think some of the things that we have questions on are basically, you provide a service to somebody, they want to know exactly how fast you can turn it around. I think this is something that we'll be able to do is by giving a better service for all Members to take a look at.

I think we're also measuring our performance to how to hold ourselves accountable as well.

I think those are the two things that we're looking at to make it better for customer expectations.

Ms. LEE. Excellent.

In the next section, your ingenuity goals, one of the things you've identified is the experience for visitors to the Capitol complex and how you all might enhance or improve the visitor experience for those who come here.

Have you identified any areas where you think those improvements could be made?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Well, just to let everybody—I think you know. Just starting Monday, we started a staff-only door for three areas in the House office buildings. We've taken a lot of feedback from Members' offices about how they can improve the lines of people coming into the building. I think that's one thing that we looked at, and we said we can make it a little bit better.

We're taking a look at other ways that we can accommodate the visitors that come into the Capitol Police—I mean, sorry, to the Capitol Visitor Center.

Everything is on the table right now. There's nothing that we're not going to leave unattended. We want to make sure we're doing

everything we can for a greater experience for the people that come to the Hill.

Ms. LEE. You mentioned earlier the creation of a website where we might identify some of the roles for your office and how Members of Congress can utilize your office.

Are there other areas specifically related to technology where you think you might be able to enhance either the operations of your office or the security of the complex by using technology?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, ma'am.

One of the things that we started looking at was a floor mapping system to help with our emergency procedures evacuations.

We've also taken a look at a member portal. This portal will be kind of utilized as kind of like the CAO has where you submit a request, and it doesn't matter what the request is within the Sergeant at Arms office. You'll be able to track it. I think that's something that we're really looking at.

We're also looking for a member duress alert app that we can utilize for people that are on the Hill or off the Hill, that if they're in a situation, they'll be able to hit a button and let the people know where they are, the police know where they are.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman yields back.

Mrs. Torres is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, again, for being here today. We had an opportunity to speak candidly yesterday, and I appreciate you taking the time to do that with me.

As you know, I continue to be concerned about the processes and relationships between the leadership that is in charge of our overall security and campus experience here, not just for our offices but also for the Capitol.

The role that you play in security and the role that the Architect of the Capitol plays on that Board, can you describe the collaboration between—and I know that the AOC is currently—there's a vacancy there. Hopefully for not much longer.

How would you describe a relationship between the three leaders that are tasked with the security of this campus?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Mrs. Torres, from what I can—what I've examined or what I've looked at for the last 3 months, is a very positive working relationship with the Senate and the Architect of the Capitol. I haven't really had any issues. If I ever needed to reach out to the Senate Sergeant at Arms or to the Architect of the Capitol, we have great collaboration with what we do. I don't really see an issue right now.

I know the AOC is currently going through some major changes, and we're here to help support them as best we can.

Mrs. TORRES. That vacancy has not negatively impacted the projects that you currently are undertaking?

Mr. MCFARLAND. No, ma'am. The people that are working on those projects are still working on those projects.

Mrs. TORRES. Generally speaking, what is your view of the role of the Architect, the role that they play in security?

Mr. MCFARLAND. I think their role is basically to look at the physical security standards of how we can best protect the Capitol Building and the surrounding buildings and things like windows or hardening doors.

Mrs. TORRES. Or providing keys?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Or providing keys.

Those are certain things that I think that they really focus in on, and we have great collaboration with them. We are engaged with them, if not on a daily basis, and our doors are always open to help them out.

Mrs. TORRES. Part of the conversation that we had yesterday included the role of the Sergeant at Arms, the role that they play in the Capitol, along with Capitol Police, and should it continue to be a standalone, independent group or should it be a subagency of the Capitol Police.

As I explained to you yesterday, my concern is to have so many people deciding on when do we call for backup when we need that support at the U.S. Capitol. I'm very concerned of the interference or the lack of attention and competition in between those roles.

Can you reassure me today, as you did yesterday, specifically how you define your role in that space, not a role of blocking progress but a supportive role?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Ma'am, as a member of the Capitol Police Board, I make up one-third of the Police Board that is here for the security of the campus.

We work directly with the Chief of Police. The Capitol Police Board has given the Chief powers that he doesn't have to go through the Police Board to get approval for extra resources if he needed them.

I think the process is working fine. I think our mission on the way that we handle things is working. I think there are some needs for improvements, but I think right now it's working and it's working well.

Mrs. TORRES. I hope that you feel confident that you can come to us as you need resources so that we can support you and back you up during your time of need.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Thank you, ma'am.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Kilmer for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you for being with us. I'm not going to take anywhere near 5 minutes.

Last year the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress had a hearing where we looked at the continuity of operations of the institution and with a just recognition that if congress or its members can't function then our constituents lose their voice in our government.

One of the recommendations that we made, working with your office, was that each member should have a continuity plan, including sort of minimum safety requirements and emergency communications plan that's made available to staff so that offices can keep functioning even if there's something catastrophic that happens.

Last Congress the Sergeant at Arms office actually did send out some guidance to our offices about how to develop those continuity of operations plans. My sense is most offices haven't done this, though.

I just want to get your sense of, how do we make sure that offices are doing this? Can we, can this committee, can the Modernization Subcommittee work with your office to make sure that we're pushing out that guidance and that offices are using it?

Mr. MCFARLAND. Yes, sir. I'll take any help I can get at this time. If there's something that you guys could do, that would be wonderful.

At the same time, as I spoke to Ms. Lee just a few minutes ago, we created a member service center that's going to be in the Longworth House Office Building.

That's going to be able to provide our services as well. It will provide training. It's going to provide guidance. It's going to actually provide specialists that are going to be in there that are going to be able to help with individuals that if they have a certain need, whether it's emergency management planning or if it's getting a security clearance or a parking tag, we'll be able to do that from that Member Service Center.

Mr. KILMER. The other thing I wanted to ask about was the new residential security program for members. I'm just curious how you feel like that's working and whether your office, whether the resources are adequate to make sure that that's successful.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, we've looked at this. Since I've started, I can say that it is a very robust member participation job right now with everything going on.

I think there is some room for improvement. I think the funding and what we're doing is spot on.

Mr. KILMER. In your testimony in front of the Appropriations Committee, I know you mentioned that part of your budget request was to support security issues in large-scale, off-campus events where members may be participating.

I appreciate you raising this, because I think that there's recognition by members that there are legitimate security concerns. I don't know if you want to speak to that briefly.

Mr. MCFARLAND. Sir, I think our lead core jobs that we do as far as coordination with members of the police community that are back in your districts I think is working very well.

I wish that we could do more by providing more services. We take every single situation seriously. I think that when we do this, I've seen great response back from a lot of police departments that will provide the services to the members as they are back home in their districts or even in their residences.

Mr. KILMER. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. McFarland, thanks for being here today. Your testimony was very helpful as we work together to make sure that we're protecting members, visitors, and staff here on Capitol Hill.

Members of the committee may have some additional questions for you, and we ask that you please respond to those questions in writing.

Without objection, each member will have 5 legislative days to insert additional materials into the record or to revise and extend their remarks.

If there's no further business, I thank the members for their participation.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Office of the Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6634

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee Members of the Committee on House Administration

FROM: William P. McFarland *WPM*
Acting Sergeant at Arms

DATE: May 11, 2023

RE: **Answers to Questions Related to my Recent Testimony Regarding the
Sergeant at Arms' Strategic Plan**

Thank you for your follow-up questions to my recent appearance before your committee to discuss the Sergeant at Arms' Strategic Plan for the 118th Congress. Following are my answers to your questions.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with each of you and your staff as the implementation phase of the Strategic Plan develops.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY

**William P. McFarland, Acting Sergeant-at-Arms of the U. S. House
of Representatives**

Committee on House Administration

*Looking Ahead Series: House Sergeant at Arms Strategic Plan for the
118th Congress*

April 18, 2023

Majority Questions for the Record: Series #1

One of your four main goals in your strategic plan is the “Ingenuity Goal.” One of our focuses in the 118th Congress has been on spending taxpayers’ money efficiently and effectively.

Question #1:

How can the Committee partner with the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms to be an innovation leader and, as you say, “a top-quality organization” regarding innovation and ingenuity?

Answer:

The development of our Strategic Plan was the first step in reshaping our organization. The opportunity to openly present our plan to the Committee serves as an early step in the collaboration with the Committee. We look forward to future opportunities to present our progress with Committee staff and build on the future of the organization. As the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) evaluates our services and identifies creative opportunities to implement new services and/or improve current services, we’ll need this Committee’s support. The Committee on House Administration (CHA) maintains a primary role in shaping House Operations, and, in this capacity, often has a more holistic awareness of the House’s needs. As noted in the hearing, we seek collaboration with the Committee and other House stakeholders to ensure our operations are not only forward-thinking, but that they appropriately address the needs of the House.

We will seek the Committee’s support to bring external experts in to help implement innovative and cost-effective initiatives. We believe many of the challenges we seek to solve have been tackled by others, and we will seek to leverage that knowledge and experience to bring to the House. We look forward to a partnership with CHA as we pursue these initiatives.

Question #2:

More broadly, how can the Committee partner with the House Sergeant at Arms to encourage Capitol security leadership to think more innovatively?

Answer:

I believe this starts with a shift in culture and approach within our own organization initially, which is a key reason we're implementing the new Strategic Plan. As we pursue innovation, transparency and accountability within the SAA, we believe this mindset can be carried into our governance role with the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP).

We're challenging our personnel to evaluate not only our services, but the services of the USCP, with the focus of identifying novel approaches and to challenge restrictive, inside-the-box thinking. Our vote against the temporary fencing earlier this year is an example of this. We requested a list of alternatives to erecting a fence, rather than simply accepting a fence as the end-all-be-all solution. We will continue to ask the USCP to identify and present multiple courses of action when they present initiatives to the Board to help foster innovation from within the department.

We look to partner with the Committee in this approach. We believe our commitment to transparency with the Committee will further our efforts to collectively hold ourselves and USCP accountable for innovative approaches. As we adapt our culture and the ways in which we engage in governance of the USCP, we ask the Committee for their support and partnership.

Question #3:

As part of your ingenuity goal, you say the office will include efforts for developing career paths for the office. In addition to this HR goal, what are additional ways the House can invest in the employees in the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms?

Answer:

In addition to internal efforts underway within the SAA, the House's continued investments in benefits, training opportunities, House Center for Well-Being services, LifeCare and Office of Employee Assistance (OEA) services can support our organization. As we further define internal SAA human resource (HR) initiatives that align with our Strategic Plan, we will seek the Committee's support to enhance recruitment capabilities to attract a larger pool of qualified candidates, to align our organizational structure in ways to better serve our patrons. We're continuing to evaluate opportunities, and are partnering with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to take advantage of parallel efforts in their office. We look forward to engaging with the Committee on this further as new initiatives are identified.

Question #4:

How can your office better leverage technology to assist with your important security mission on the Hill?

Answer:

Our office is actively pursuing opportunities to leverage technology. One initiative we are moving forward with is a mobile Member duress capability that will enable Members to discreetly notify law enforcement and security officials when they are in need of assistance. Additionally, we're actively pursuing the implementation of a Member portal that will allow Member offices to submit service requests (i.e., travel security requests or event security requests) to SAA via a secure, centralized portal with the ability to view the status and details of such request.

We will continue to evaluate technology solutions to enhance our current services and will collaborate with the Committee as new opportunities arise.

Question #5:

Have you identified any technologies or procedures that could be implemented in your office to improve efficiency or reduce costs? What is your process for identifying technological needs and pursuing solutions?

Answer:

As previously noted, one initiative we are moving forward with is a Member portal that will allow Member offices to submit service requests (i.e., travel security requests or event security requests) to SAA via a secure, centralized portal with the ability to view the status and details of such requests.

This implementation will be a significant efficiency improvement compared to the current email and MyServiceRequest process which requires considerable manual intervention by our personnel to process and report information back to Member offices. As a part of this initiative, the SAA is evaluating a low-code platform to provide a reliable, cost-effective solution that reduces customization and implementation related expenses. In pursuit of our Patron Goal, our teams will be tasked with identifying priorities to enhance services which includes investigating the use of technology.

We will continue to evaluate technology solutions to enhance our current services and will collaborate with the Committee as new opportunities arise.

Question #6:

Your testimony outlines an approach of looking to the private sector for inspiration. Please elaborate on how looking toward the private sector benefits campus security and better prepares our security services to address the new arising threats facing Congress today and moving forward?

Answer:

While Capitol Hill is unique in its security needs and the challenging balance that exists between National Security interests and access to petition elected officials. We believe that some of the challenges we face on the Hill have been solved by the private sector. In the near term, this includes use of cost-efficient, low-code platforms to enhance the way Member offices request security related services from the SAA or the use of mobile duress capabilities already employed at other organizations. By working with private sector entities who have solved similar challenges for other organizations, we can leverage their intellectual capital to improve our offerings.

This also goes beyond direct security related matters and extends to the way we develop and lead our employees in the SAA. Shaping the right culture and improving engagement through HR initiatives that the private sector has developed to stay competitive in the hiring and retention market will help the SAA attract and retain strong talent. In the long term, this translates to helping improve the quality of services our organization provides.

Questions for the Record: Series #2

As part of your “People Goal,” you say you plan on implementing “an employee engagement program, centered on providing employees with a voice, improving transparency, and increasing recognition.”

Question #1:

Can you provide more details on how your office plans to improve transparency, recognition, and input from the House Sergeant at Arms staff and why these objectives are important?

Answer:

I firmly believe that improving employee recognition, increasing transparency and providing our staff with a voice are pillars of employee engagement and employee engagement is foundational to our success as an organization. We want our colleagues to enjoy their job as we know that engaged employees are more innovative, productive, and less likely to leave. Highly engaged team members are also more likely to go above and beyond expectations.

We’ve already launched this initiative with our Strategic Plan Champions which consists of volunteer, non-director level staff within the SAA who are tasked with implementing our Strategic Plan. They have worked with their colleagues from across the organization to identify specific initiatives. The ideas they’re currently exploring include the below, some of which are being launched later this month while others will be considered and evaluated over the next few months. Please note, this is not a full list as the team is still exploring opportunities.

Providing Employees with a Voice:

- **Regular staff meetings** for staff to connect, check-in, have meaningful conversation, and/or highlight employees who have done something special.
- **Staff Council** which will be comprised of employees in non-director level roles who will meet regularly to discuss the direction of the organization, discuss issues, gather collective feedback from colleagues, discuss new employee initiatives and present their key topics to SAA leadership team.
- **Staff survey** to measure current employee engagement, assess effectiveness of newly implemented program(s), and identify additional opportunities to improve.
- **Standing feedback outlet** (‘suggestions box’) for staff to ask questions, or to provide ideas for new initiatives.

Improving Transparency:

- **SAA staff townhalls** to provide a recurring opportunity for staff to engage directly with the organization’s leadership.
- **Brown bags** to facilitate information sharing on ongoing initiatives, or review policies/procedures.

- **Newsletters** to inform staff of notable upcoming items and highlight staff accomplishments.
- **Organizational charts** to provide all staff with a common understanding of the organization.

Increasing Recognition:

- **Peer-to-peer recognition program.**
- **Incentives** to encourage and recognize outstanding accomplishments
 - **Non-monetary:** Time-off awards, flexible scheduling, lunches
 - **Monetary:** Spot bonuses, merit increases
- **1:1 time or small group settings** with SAA Leadership.
- **Employee of the month/year.**

Other:

- Organized office outings/gatherings.
- Staff volunteer opportunities.
- Continue the first-day welcome/introductions.

Question #2:

What efforts are you undertaking to improve morale in the office?

Answer:

A change and improvement in our organizational culture is currently underway. In addition to having a clear vision and mission for our employees, we believe that many of the above initiatives targeting employee engagement will directly correlate to an improvement in employee morale. Additionally, as a part of the Strategic Plan initiative we sought input and witnessed some immediate changes to morale as we walked around, engaged with staff and gave them a platform to speak their thoughts and be heard. We intend to continue listening to the feedback from staff, allow them to help shape the future of our organization, give them opportunities to grow within the SAA through professional development, and provide constructive and intentional performance and growth-related feedback.

Question # 3:

How have you sought to address retention issues in the House Sergeant at Arms office?

Answer:

Similar to the response in question number two above, we believe that many of the above initiatives targeting employee engagement will directly correlate to an improvement in employee morale and subsequently an improvement in retention.

We're striving to build our employees up through professional development, encouraging supervisors to engage in career discussions with their workforce, clarifying division organizational charts and developing written expectations for career path development so employees can grow within the organization without departing. While it's a sign of healthy organizations to have employees leave for bigger opportunities, our intention is to make it tough for good employees to decide to pursue opportunities outside the organization.

Question #4:

The first goal you list in your recently released strategic plan is the “People Goal,” which you say is intended to “Create a people first culture that fosters trust, inspires ownership, improves retention and invests in a professional, skilled, respected, and diverse workforce.” Please elaborate on the importance of putting your staff first and how you plan to meet this goal?

Answer:

Our staff are at the core of everything we do as an organization. As I noted in my opening testimony, I can fail on my own, but success requires the commitment and skills of the full team working together to fulfill our mission. I believe that putting our staff first and investing in our people is simply the right thing to do. It also leads to better employee engagement and job happiness, which should translate to a workforce that is willing to go above and beyond expectations. To meet the People Goal, we’ve identified four key objectives centered around implementing an employee engagement program, creating an intentional employee development program, evaluating expectations of our employees and clarifying career path opportunities.

While our leadership team outlined the initial goal and vision, I’ve given our employees ownership in each of the supporting objectives so they can contribute to developing the blueprint for us to reach that goal. Our Strategic Plan champions, which is a working group that consists of non-director level personnel, have been hard at work over the past few weeks crafting the initiatives that support this effort and I look forward to presenting more details to the Committee in the future.

Questions for the Record: Series #3

Question #1:

How does your office plan to decrease political tensions in campus security?

Answer:

Our office is a nonpartisan organization and I expect our staff to carry out our services to Members in a nonpartisan fashion. As noted in our Strategic Plan, we're focused on increasing transparency with the full Committee and we're actively pursuing intentional initiatives to strengthen the culture of accountability to increase trust with our stakeholder community.

I feel that consistent dialog with both the Majority and Minority parties are key to our organization's success. While we may not always agree on the best path forward, I will openly listen to feedback and respond in a constructive way with respect and will hold my teams accountable to do the same. Disagreement can often lead to healthy dialog and an awareness of new perspectives, but it doesn't have to be contentious.

Question #2:

What is your office doing to ensure campus security is being handled in a bipartisan or nonpartisan way?

Answer:

As noted above, our office is a nonpartisan organization and I expect our staff carry out our services to Members in a nonpartisan fashion. We seek opportunities to have open dialog and accept feedback from both the Majority and Minority parties. We will continue to deliver security briefings to the Republican Conference and Democratic Caucus in an open and transparent manner. Our duty to provide security and safety services to Congress is not limited by one's party affiliation and that is a standard our team will continue to enforce.

Question #3:

As part of this strategic plan, what is your office doing to ensure greater professionalism and bipartisanship in your work?

Answer:

First and foremost, we've revised our organizational values to emphasize accountability. Our staff worked together to identify absolute integrity as a key value and, we're committed to always doing the right thing, demonstrating unwavering honesty, and holding ourselves and each other accountable.

Within our Patron Goal, we've also identified some key objectives to help ensure greater professionalism and nonpartisanship in our work. This includes conducting a needs analysis, developing and socializing customer service expectations, measurement criteria and associated training for each SAA Division. This also includes the implementation of regular patron feedback surveys to identify opportunities to increase customer service, improve quality, and availability for Members and staff and measure progress. We look forward to continuing these efforts and collaborating with the Committee as we make progress on these initiatives.

Minority Questions for the Record:

Question #1:

Prior to the State of the Union Address earlier this year, the Capitol Police Board, at the request of the United States Secret Service, voted 2 to 1 to erect a temporary fence around the Capitol in anticipation of that National Special Security Event. The Senate Sergeant at Arms and Architect of the Capitol voted to accommodate the Secret Service's request. You voted against doing so.

Please provide a specific and detailed answer as to how you reached your decision that the security judgments of the United States Secret Service, Senate Sergeant at Arms and Architect of the Capitol were incorrect.

Answer:

I voted against erecting a temporary fence around the Capitol in anticipation of the National Special Security Event (NSSE) because I had not been provided any specific and credible intelligence concerning a threat to the State of the Union or the Capitol Complex. As part of my planning process, I requested frequent intelligence briefings regarding the State of the Union and no derogatory intelligence was mentioned. Due to the lack of a credible threat to the event, I asked for alternative options to the fence being erected.

My office is not against a fence being erected, when necessary. It is my belief that such measures should be based on intelligence and considered through consistent repeatable standards or guidelines. I will continue to push my staff and the USCP to be innovative and think outside the box to solve our unique security challenges.

Question #2:

Were you, directly or indirectly, asked, instructed, or otherwise pressured by the Speaker of the House or any other elected official (or their staff) to vote against erection of the temporary fence, as requested by the United States Secret Service?

Answer:

I was not influenced by any Member, Staff or elected official in my decision regarding the fence. My decision was based on intelligence and the desire to evaluate all potential security measures. It is always my goal to challenge the USCP to identify innovative best security practices and not settle for accepting past security measures as the only option.

Question #3:

Speaker Kevin McCarthy said, in reference to the erection of the temporary fence for the State of the Union, “I just don't think it's the right look.”¹ What role did the “look” of a temporary fence play in reaching your decision to vote against its use?

Answer:

As noted in the previous question, my decision regarding the fence was based on intelligence briefings and my desire to push the department to be innovative in addressing the challenging harmony between security and access to the Capitol.

As I mentioned in the hearing, I am not against the erection of a fence. The “look” of the fence did not play a role in my decision.

¹ Misty Severi, *State of the Union 2023: MTG trolls Biden ahead of president's address*, The Washington Examiner (Feb. 7, 2023), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/campaigns/mtg-democrats-border-wall-fencing-capitol-state-of-union>.

Question #4:

Earlier this year, Speaker Kevin McCarthy provided “unfettered access”² to tens of thousands of hours of Capitol security footage to Tucker Carlson, a Fox News entertainer who regularly uses his platform to peddle in conspiracy theories and who has referred to the January 6, 2021, attack as a false flag operation. The Speaker claimed that he “worked with the Capitol Police to identify any security-sensitive footage and made sure it wasn’t released.”³ However, according to the Capitol Police, only one video out of the approximately 40 provided to Tucker Carlson was given to the Capitol Police to review.⁴ The Capitol Police General Counsel stated, under penalty of perjury, “At no time was I nor anyone else from the Capitol Police informed that anyone other than personnel from [the House Administration Committee] would be reviewing the camera footage.”⁵

Are there security risks associated with publishing security footage that has not been vetted by appropriately credentialed Congressional security professionals? What are those risks?

Answer:

In accordance with 2 U.S.C. § 1979(c), the USCP turns over information to Committees when requested by Committees. There is no language in the law that requires security review prior to this footage being turned over to a committee.

From a security purist standpoint, any release of footage into the public domain presents risks; however, since January 6, thousands of hours of footage has already been released in different manners. My office continues a forward focus on mitigating vulnerabilities and protecting the Capitol.

² Rebecca Shabad, *Tucker Carlson says he has access to 44,000 hours of Jan. 6 video*, NBC News (February 21, 2023), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/tucker-carlson-says-access-44000-hours-jan-6-video-footage-rcna71642>.

³ Emily Brooks and Dominick Mastrangelo, *Capitol Police says it reviewed just one Jan. 6 clip Tucker Carlson showed*, The Hill (March 7, 2023), <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/3888104-capitol-police-says-it-reviewed-just-one-jan-6-clip-tucker-carlson-showed/>.

⁴ Declaration of Thomas A. DiBiase, U.S. v. Pope (D.D.C. Mar. 17, 2023) (No. 88-1 1:21:cr-00128).

⁵ *Id.* The DiBiase declaration also states that the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6 Attack provided the Capitol Police with all video footage it intended to air during public hearings prior to doing so. In all cases, the Capitol Police approved the clip shown. (“...this was the same process followed by the Select Committee and the prosecutors in in all of the criminal cases: that we were shown and had to approve of every clip before it was made public. This was followed in all cases by both the Select Committee and the prosecutors.”).

Question #5:

Are such risks elevated by the fact that, in this case, access was provided to an individual that repeatedly lied about the events of January 6, 2021, and who even Fox News has acknowledged in federal court should not be considered an objective source of information?

Answer:

TV personalities and others may choose to argue over past events and reality, but today and in the future, my team and I are dutifully focused on improving security so events like this are far less likely. From a security purist standpoint, any release of footage security footage into the public domain presents risks; however, since January 6, thousands of hours of footage has already been released in different forums.

Question #6:

During a March 6, 2023, telecast, Mr. Carlson reiterated his claims that the 2020 election was stolen and aired carefully selected clips of Capitol security footage in an attempt to rewrite history, claiming, “The footage does not show an insurrection or a riot in progress,” and that the rioters “obviously revered the Capitol.”⁶ These unpatriotic hours of propaganda and hate were characterized by United States Capitol Police Chief Thomas Manger as “filled with offensive and misleading conclusions about the January 6 attack.”⁷

Do you agree with Chief Manger’s assessment?

Answer:

The Chief’s internal message to the Capitol Police force reflects his thoughts and messages to the officers. Commenting or parsing out his statement could detract from important efforts with respect to the Capitol Police force. I support the focus and efforts from the Chief on raising morale, addressing officer concerns, and honoring fallen Capitol Police officers. I am focused on providing the best security possible for Members, their families, staff, and visitors to the Capitol and ensuring the Capitol Police has the appropriate resources, training, and staffing to respond to whatever situations they may encounter.

⁶ Azi Paybarah, *White House criticizes Tucker Carlson for depiction of Jan. 6 attack*, The Washington Post, (March 8, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/03/08/tucker-white-house-attack/>.

⁷ Melissa Quinn, *Capitol Police chief says Tucker Carlson's Jan. 6 broadcast “filled with offensive and misleading conclusions”*, CBS News (Mar. 7, 2023), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tucker-carlson-january-6-fox-news-capitol-police-chief-thomas-manger/>.

Question #7:

In addition to providing sensitive Capitol security footage to Mr. Carlson, Speaker McCarthy empowered the Committee on House Administration Majority to also provide January 6 criminal defendants with thousands of hours of Capitol security footage, even though they already had access to all relevant footage through the normal discovery process, and even though a federal court issued a protective order covering the footage.

In issuing the protective order, the Court quoted the Capitol Police's General Counsel, who said, in a sworn declaration, "Providing unfettered access to hours of extremely sensitive information to defendants who have already shown a desire to interfere with the democratic process will result in the layout, vulnerabilities and security weaknesses of the U.S. Capitol being collected, exposed and passed on to those who might wish to attack the Capitol again."⁸ The Court concluded, "[M]aintaining the confidentiality of USCP's footage is vital to protecting the Capitol—especially as to those who have sought to attack it."⁹

Do you agree with the Capitol Police General Counsel that confidentiality of Capitol security footage is vital to protecting the Capitol?

Answer:

From a security purist standpoint, any release of footage into the public domain presents risks; however, since January 6, thousands of hours of footage has already been released in different manners. My office continues a forward focus on mitigating vulnerabilities and protecting the Capitol.

⁸ Memorandum Opinion, *U.S. v. McCaughey & Stevens* (D.D.C. April 21, 2021) (No. 39 1:21-cr-0040) (quoting Declaration of Thomas A. DiBiase [No. 26 1:21-cr-0040]).

⁹ *Id.*

Question #8:

In addition, the Acting Assistant Chief of the Capitol Police said, in a sworn court filing, “USCP continues to consider any interior footage of the U.S. Capitol to be highly sensitive information, and any access to it should be strictly limited.”¹⁰

Do you agree with the Acting Assistant Chief of the Capitol Police that interior footage of the Capitol is highly sensitive and that access to it should be strictly limited?

Answer:

From a security purist standpoint, any release of footage into the public domain presents risks; however, since January 6, thousands of hours of footage has already been released in different manners. My office continues a forward focus on mitigating vulnerabilities and protecting the Capitol.

¹⁰ Declaration of Sean P. Gallagher, U.S. v. Egtvedt, (D.D.C. Jul. 5, 2022) (No. 87-1 1:21-cr-00177).

Question #9:

The Committee was pleased to learn that one of the objectives in the strategic plan is to clarify division organizational charts and develop written expectations for career path development.

By what process are you developing these career paths and expectations?

Answer:

We're still in the early stages with this initiative but we've met with the CAO to learn from their experience regarding building out career paths. We're continuing to evaluate this initiative further and plan for its launch, but it's possible we may seek the Committee's support to bring in an outside vendor to assist us with this important and complex endeavor. We look forward to discussing this with the Committee further as we pursue an implementation plan.

Question #10:

Do you plan to collaborate at all with your colleagues in the CAO, which has developed a robust career path program for their employees?

Answer:

We absolutely do and are happy to report we've already started working with the CAO. As articulated in our Ingenuity Goal, we are actively evaluating SAA operations against House Officers, Senate counterparts, other public, private and industry partners to identify key, cost-effective priorities for enhancement. During our collaboration with the Committee on our Strategic Plan, we were pleased to learn that our partners in CAO had already implemented a similar initiative.

To learn from their experience, we met with CAO personnel in April and have additional meetings scheduled to continue dialog and identify components of CAO's program that we can leverage for the SAA. We thank the Committee for helping to identify this parallel initiative within the CAO. We have also scheduled a similar discussion with the Clerk to learn about their Performance Management Program and will continue to expand our awareness of the lessons learned by our fellow House Officers.

Question #11:

How do you plan to operationalize the various elements of your strategic plan? Do you have a specific plan and evaluation metrics for each goal and objective?

Answer:

In keeping with our theme of letting our employees lead the way for the Strategic Plan, we've identified non-director level volunteers from across the organization to serve as Strategic Plan champions. This group has been meeting on a weekly basis and is tasked with developing a framework for implementation of our key initiatives, helping to develop a timeline for launching each initiative and identifying key metrics where applicable. While this effort is still in its early stages, the group is making progress and we look forward to sharing more specific details with the Committee over the coming weeks and months.

Question #12:

Your office will be occupying space in the O'Neil House Office Building that until, the last Congress, was occupied by the Department of Health and Human Services. How will this new space help you to both execute your strategic plan and keep Members of Congress, staff, and visitors safe?

Answer:

We're always grateful when our space and resource needs are considered, and we appreciate any role the Committee played in acquiring this space. Adequate workspace and the ability to co-locate many of our personnel in one space helps to create collision points which increases collaboration, and thus serves as a catalyst for innovation and creativity fulfilling our "Ingenuity" goal. Being able to foster a collaborative environment helps accomplish our "People First" goal.

In addition to desk space, the space has allowed us to host the USCP for events and training, and has served as an orientation location for all new employees. We will continue to identify opportunities to best use the space in support of our office's mission.

Question #13:

What role does technology play in your strategic plan? How do you plan to leverage cutting edge technologies to improve security for Members of Congress?

Answer:

We believe that some of the challenges we face on the Hill have been solved by other organizations through the use of technology. In the near term, we're exploring the use of cost-efficient, low-code platforms to enhance the way Member offices request security related services from the SAA. We are also pursuing the use of mobile duress capabilities to leverage technology and improve security and safety for Members. Furthermore, my office will continue to work closely with the USCP and the Capitol Police Board to identify technology that can support and enhance USCP services.

Question #14:

What is your office's role in the implementation of the 2021 emergency security supplemental appropriations bill?

Answer:

The SAA is a stakeholder in the oversight of the funding provided to the USCP and is a stakeholder in the oversight of the security construction projects funded via the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). As a member of the Capitol Police Board, I work closely with the other Capitol Police Board members to oversee the Capitol Police's use of the emergency security supplemental. My office also works closely with the AOC to represent the House's interest in security infrastructure projects.

Question #15:

Are you satisfied with the progress that has been made in using the funds from the 2021 emergency security supplemental appropriations bill to better secure the Capitol Complex and provide additional security for Members of Congress?

Answer:

No. Since taking office in January, I have noticed there are many physical security projects that need to be completed. My team and I are committed to working closely with the AOC to provide the necessary support to get these projects to closure.

Question #16:

What percentage of Members have utilized the Residential Security Program?

Answer:

For security reasons, the Office of the SAA is providing this information in a separate letter to the Committee Chairman and Ranking Member.

Question #17:

How does your office advertise the Residential Security Program to Members?

Answer:

Our office uses a range of outreach initiatives to advertise the Residential Security Program. This includes presentations to Members' spouses, four e-Dear Colleagues in the summer and fall of 2022, briefings during New Member Orientation, Law Enforcement Coordinator (LEC) quarterly outreach in February 2023, each of our district office visits, and during Security Awareness Briefings (SABs). As we launch the Strategic Plan, one of our initiatives is to expand the ways in which we engage with our customers to enhance awareness of our services. Our soon-to-be-launched SAA Service Center in Longworth will also provide resources for Members to learn more about Residential Security. While we continue to expand awareness of the services we offer, we seek the Committee's input for perspective and gaps we may not have identified.

Question #18:

Have you explored including cybersecurity tools as part of the equipment/services eligible for the Residential Security Program?

Answer:

Yes. The SAA is partnering with the CAO in developing a proposal to make cybersecurity services as part of the Residential Security Program. We look forward to working with this Committee on this important initiative.

Question #19:

Are there any recurring challenges you have when interacting with local law enforcement to facilitate Member security needs when they are in the district?

Answer:

SAA works closely with USCP to coordinate activities with local law enforcement. These relationships are being strengthened by the USCP field offices and Special U.S. Attorney's Offices stationed in Florida and California. That program will continue to grow and be beneficial to the security of Members and their families while in the district.

Many law enforcement agencies across the country are dealing with staffing issues, but my office along with the USCP have been able to navigate those challenges and receive support from our partners.

Question #20:

What role does your office play in security for Presidential Nominating Conventions? Have you started planning for the 2024 conventions?

Answer:

Planning for the 2024 Presidential Nominating Conventions in Milwaukee, WI and Chicago, IL are already underway. Our office works closely with the USCP to ensure the safety, security and interests of House Members are carried out during the Conventions.

SAA staff is on site during the conventions to liaise and ensure off-site events have the appropriate security coverage. Our staff also assists with Member recognition and ensuring our Members have the appropriate expedited access into the Convention sites.

Our Emergency Management Division (EMD) assists in the emergency action planning for the Conventions. EMD staff help coordinate transportation and accountability for large Member movements and staff the joint command post to coordinate with USCP and other partners.

Question #21:

You are one of three voting members of the Capitol Police Board. One of the other three members is the Architect of the Capitol. That agency is currently in a period of transition and does not currently have a permanent Architect.

Has the upheaval at the top of the AOC had a negative impact on the Board's activities?

Answer:

Whenever an organization has significant leadership turnover, it can lead to a disruption of activities and priorities. I am hopeful that the Acting Architect can refocus the priorities of the Architect's staff to ensure the successful and timely completion of security projects, and serve as an active partner in Police Board matters. I look forward to working with her in our respective roles.

Question #22:

Has the change in AOC leadership impacted the various campus projects you undertake in partnership with the AOC (e.g., the Joint Audible Warning System)?

Answer:

I have not seen any new delays in various campus projects that my organization undertakes in partnership with the AOC. I am hopeful the Acting Architect can instill a culture that values transparency, accountability, and is able to quickly complete necessary projects. The SAA will continue to partner with the AOC and advocate for the timely completion of security infrastructure projects.

Question #23:

What is your view on the role the Architect plays in security matters?

Answer:

Physical security projects are important and necessary to support Capitol campus security. The Architect is partner in these and other security matters. Under law, the Architect has various statutory mandates with respect to security.

Question #24:

Do you believe the Capitol Police Board needs reform? If so, how do you think it should be reformed?

Answer:

The Capitol Police Board operates best when it focuses on governance and accountability rather than tactical operations. Any potential reforms should define the Capitol Police Board's authority; to make clear that the Board operates best when guaranteeing the USCP is making the appropriate strategic decisions, and has the right short and long term mindsets and structures to produce the best security outcomes for Congress. I look forward to continued discussions with stakeholders via the Capitol Police Board fora and any other way to engage in constructive dialogue.

Question #25:

Please describe the efforts you've made to increase diversity within the Office of the House Sergeant at Arms, including within senior management.

Answer:

When taking office in January, I could find no policies or issued Strategic Plan of the SAA that addressed diversity, recruitment, talent development, or retention. Since taking office, I have instituted competitive hiring practices for the SAA to broaden our applicant pool and make sure that the SAA's openings reach applicants or groups who have traditionally not been aware of our openings. Furthermore, with the help of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, we have used LinkedIn to advertise our positions and reach non-traditional groups. Subsequent to receiving applicants, a diverse panel with different backgrounds and perspectives, competitively interviews individuals to determine the best qualified candidate.

The SAA is also consciously and deliberately focusing on development of individuals within the organization as represented in the strategic plan. Providing career path transparency can help employees prepare for more senior positions by having clear qualifications and competencies for the next level of advancement. Investing in the entire SAA staff through a "People First" culture also helps our valued workforce develop the right skills and culture competencies to engage new challenges.

These practices align with best practices provided by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion provided in 2021. I look forward to partnering with this Committee to find ways to continue to recruit, retain and develop an exceptional, diverse, and talented workforce.

Question #26:

More than twenty years ago, a group of Black Capitol Police officers sued the Capitol Police Board, alleging racial discrimination. What is the status of this litigation and why has it been pending for such an extended period?

Answer:

The current status of this litigation is awaiting a reply to a motion to dismiss by certain plaintiffs who have been granted an extension to file a response by the Court until 5/28/2023. The case has involved novel questions of law that relate to the Congressional Accountability Act, numerous changes in counsel representing the plaintiffs, numerous referrals to magistrates, and other sundry issues. For the Committee's convenience, a docket sheet of the case is appended.

Question #27:

What kind of training opportunities do you provide to SAA staff? Does anyone from HSAA play a role in responding to threats when there is a security breach from outside the Capitol like what we saw on January 6, 2021?

Answer:

Similar to many House offices, we strongly encourage our personnel to participate in the wide range of trainings offered through the CAO. Additionally, we support continuing education opportunities through Universities, Colleges and professional organizations. These trainings often include topics on Leadership, Project Management, IT and specialty training for areas in emergency management and security. As a part of our Strategic Plan launch, we're also assessing specific training expectations for staff to seek to clarify professional development expectations for staff as they grow within the organization.

While USCP serves as the first responders for security incidents on the Hill, the SAA serves on the USCP Board and our personnel often provide a wide range of ancillary services to support law enforcement and emergency preparedness (i.e., security project management, chamber security, parking security, evacuation planning). To support this work, relevant SAA staff are trained in emergency procedures related to their work roles. Additionally, we send appropriate personnel to Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and Federal Emergency Management Agency's Institute (FEMA) to take civilian related law enforcement and emergency management training and we intend to expand these opportunities. While we continue to assess our trainings as a part of our Strategic Plan, we welcome dialogue with the Committee if there are any additional perspectives or gaps that they feel our office should address.

Question #28:

Does your staff train with the Capitol Police? If not, are there plans to train with the Capitol Police?

Answer:

While USCP serves as the first responders for security incidents on the Hill, our personnel often provide a wide range of ancillary services to support law enforcement and emergency preparedness (i.e., security project management, chamber security, parking security, evacuation planning). Accordingly, our staff often conduct trainings alongside USCP (i.e., Active Shooter training, Chamber Emergency Protective Actions).

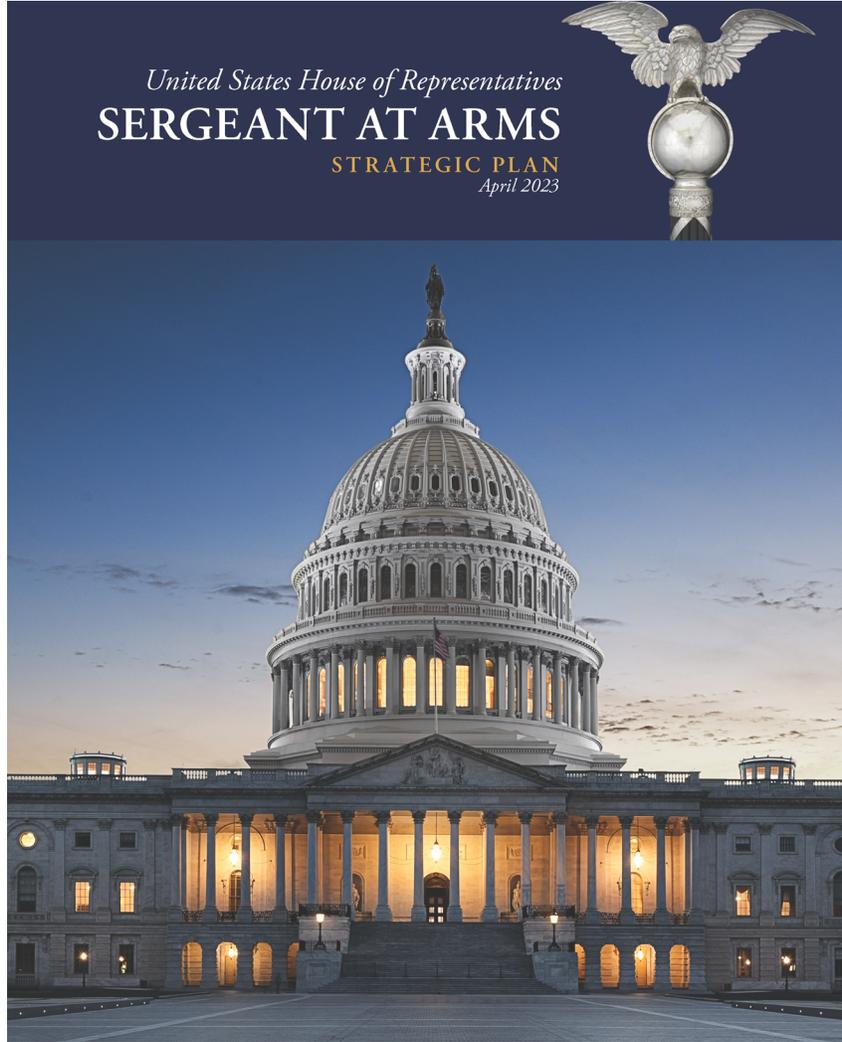
Additionally, we send appropriate personnel to Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and FEMA's Emergency Management Institute to take civilian related law enforcement and emergency management training, and we intend to expand these opportunities. As noted above, while we continue to assess our trainings as a part of our Strategic Plan, we welcome dialog with the Committee if there are any additional perspectives or gaps that they feel our office should address.

Question #29:

Does your office partner with the CAO or play any role in protecting the House from cyberthreats? If yes, can you comment on how we can best ensure that any decisions regarding mobile device security are based on the highest appropriate cybersecurity standards? If yes, what should the cybersecurity priorities and minimum requirements be for mobile device security capabilities deployed on Member and staff devices?

Answer:

The SAA partners with the CAO and the USCP with respect to cybersecurity threats and are looking for ways to further partner as referenced in relation to the Residential Security Program. The SAA defers to the CAO on the best preventative cybersecurity practices, as they retain the expertise on staff to balance necessary capabilities and cybersecurity practices.



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MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING SAA



The Sergeant at Arms (SAA) serves as an elected officer of the House of Representatives, whose history extends back to the First Congress (1789). The SAA is the chamber's principal law enforcement official, charged with maintaining security in the House Chamber, and on the House side of the Capitol complex. The modern SAA serves on the Capitol Police Board and the Capitol Guide Board along with the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Architect of the Capitol. Renewed each Congress by the current House Rule II, the SAA enforces protocol and ensures decorum during floor proceedings, and also maintains the Mace, which symbolizes the authority of the House.

Over time, our office has also been relied on by the House to provide a myriad of services delivered by our seven divisions. These services range from day-to-day security oversight of House facilities and official business visitor management, to district and residential security, to cross-organizational special event coordination, and serving on numerous boards and teams to ensure safety and continuity of House operations.

To shape the future of our organization and refocus our energies on the critical mission the SAA provides, I asked our team to initiate a revised strategic planning effort in February 2023. While the core team consisted of leaders from our Immediate office and each of our divisions, we made it a priority to incorporate ideas and inputs from our more than 170 team members. Throughout the revision process we conducted brainstorming sessions, walked around and spoke with staff and conducted organization-wide surveys. Recognizing that the people of SAA are at the core of our ability to serve the Congressional Community, we made sure their voice was included.

In addition to ensuring our personnel's voice was incorporated, I would like to highlight some of the major changes to our new Strategic Plan:

- The plan acknowledges the need for our organization to remain agile and adapt to the changing needs of Congress. Subsequently, we have shifted from a five-year strategic plan model to a plan that aligns with the current Congressional calendar and carries us through the 118th Congress.
- We defined a Guiding Principle for the SAA Leadership Team to hold leaders within the organization to a higher standard; we believe in investing in our people through training, development, and empowerment, as we recognize that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional patron experiences and achieving our organizational goals. We are equally patron-centric and strive to understand and serve the needs of our patrons through high-quality services and support.
- We redefined our mission, vision, and organization values to emphasize the importance of SAA personnel, service to the Congressional Community, accountability, and to incorporate the office's security oversight mission.

As we move forward, I ask each SAA team member to intentionally live out our values daily as we pursue our vision of being a top-quality organization respected by Congressional leadership, staff, and our patron community for high standards of excellence in delivering a safe and secure environment; an informed and dignified patron experience; and a dedicated, well-trained, and engaging staff.

Sincerely,

William P. McFarland
Acting Sergeant at Arms

SAA MISSION & VISION

Mission: Our Purpose

Maintain a safe environment for the U.S. House of Representatives that fosters order and decorum and enables open, accessible facilities while also exercising robust security oversight.

Vision: Our Destination

A top-quality organization respected by Congressional leadership, staff, and our patron community for high standards of excellence in delivering a safe and secure environment; an informed and dignified patron experience; a dedicated, well-trained, and engaging staff.



SAA VALUES

Values: Our Backbone and Guiding Principals



SAA LEADERSHIP GUIDING PRINCIPLE

We believe in investing in our **people** through training, development, and empowerment, as we recognize that our employees are the key to delivering exceptional customer experiences and achieving our organizational goals. We are equally **patron-centric** and strive to understand and serve the needs of our patrons through high-quality services and support.



PEOPLE GOAL

Foster, Inspire, and Invest in Our Staff

Create a people-first culture that fosters trust, inspires ownership, improves retention and invests in a professional, skilled, respected, and diverse workforce.

Objectives:

- 1. Employee Engagement:**
Implement an employee engagement program, centered on providing employees with a voice, improving transparency, and increasing recognition.
- 2. Development & Investment:**
Establish, invest in, and socialize an intentional employee development and performance management program, to support personal and professional growth.
- 3. Evaluate Employee Expectations & Standards:**
Evaluate, update, and socialize employee expectations and standards of conduct to ensure SAA staff are positioned to provide the highest level of service.
- 4. Career Path Transparency:**
Clarify division organizational charts and develop written expectations for career path development.



PATRON GOAL

Create a Safe, Secure, and Positive Experience

Implement initiatives to build strong relationships, foster trust and create a safe, secure, and positive patron experience through exceptional service.

Objectives:

1. Survey:

Implement regular feedback surveys to identify opportunities to increase customer service, improve quality, and availability for Members and staff and measure progress.

2. Continue Enhancing Security & Safety:

Evaluate, refine, and provide a list of priorities to relevant oversight committees to enhance the security and emergency preparedness of the Capitol campus, District offices, and Member residences for the House community, Members, staff, and visitors.

3. Customer Engagement:

Develop an initiative to identify new (i.e. SAA Services Center in LHOB) and increase use of existing (i.e. SAA website) methods to communicate and engage with the Congressional Community in a transparent and non-partisan manner.

4. Customer Service Expectations:

Conduct a needs analysis, develop, and socialize customer service expectations, measurement criteria and associated training for each SAA Division.



INGENUITY GOAL

Streamline Processes with Technology

Explore opportunities to leverage technology and implement streamlined, innovative, modern and adaptive operational processes for SAA employees, Members, congressional staff and visitors.

Objectives:

1. Visitor Experience:

Evaluate the visitor experience and identify opportunities to modernize processes including the badging system and increasing awareness of building densities while ensuring Americans can safely and securely engage with Congress.

2. Leverage Best Practices:

Evaluate SAA operations against House Officers, Senate counterparts, other public, private and industry partners to identify key, cost effective priorities for enhancement and opportunities to leverage technology.

3. Recruitment:

Assess and implement enhancements to the SAA recruitment process to streamline and improve the organization's ability to attract and retain top talent.



ACCOUNTABILITY & OVERSIGHT GOAL

Refocus on Safety and Security

Implement intentional initiatives to strengthen the culture of accountability and refocus on oversight of safety and security operations.

Objectives:

1. Organization Values:

Revise organizational values and vision to emphasize accountability and the office's oversight mission, educate staff on revised values and incorporate value alignment in employee evaluations.

2. Semi-Annual Report:

Assess and update the semi-annual report and other committee report criteria and measures to ensure alignment with the strategic plan, transparency, and accountability in the reporting of SAA actions, responsibilities, and closure of security recommendations.



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