



United States Capitol Police

Labor Committee

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Capitol Police Officers “Leadership Betrayed Our Mission”

Acting Chief Pittman testified yesterday before the House Appropriations Committee regarding the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) response to the insurrection on January 6th. In her testimony Acting Chief Pittman stated:

“By January 4th, the Department knew that the January 6th event would not be like any of the previous protests held in 2020. We knew that militia groups and white supremacists organizations would be attending. We also knew that some of these participants were intending to bring firearms and other weapons to the event. We knew that there was a strong potential for violence and that Congress was the target.”

The Capitol Police Officers’ Union has responded, saying “This is a startling admission by Acting Chief Pittman, and a disclosure that has angered and shocked the rank-and-file officers of the Capitol Police.”

Union Chairman, Gus Papathanasiou says, “We have one officer who lost his life as a direct result of the insurrection. Another officer has tragically taken his own life. Between USCP and our colleagues at the Metropolitan Police Department, we have almost 140 officers injured. I have officers who were not issued helmets prior to the attack who have sustained brain injuries. One officer has two cracked ribs and two smashed spinal discs. One officer is going to lose his eye, and another was stabbed with a metal fence stake.”

He says, “The disclosure that the entire executive team (former Chief Sund, now Acting Chief Pittman, and Assistant Chief Thomas) knew what was coming but did not better prepare us for potential violence, including the possible use of firearms against us, is unconscionable.”

“The fact they did not relay this information to the officers on duty prior to the insurrection is inexcusable.

Acting Chief Pittman also testified, “The U.S. Capitol Police’s sole mission is to protect Congress to ensure that Congress may fulfill its legislative obligations under the Constitution of the United States. The Department understands the gravity of this important objective and holds itself to the highest standards in ensuring mission fulfillment.”

The Union says, by those very standards the leadership of the U.S. Capitol Police has betrayed that mission and failed the officers who serve with the Capitol Police.

"Acting Chief Pittman stated that she ordered the lockdown. To be clear, it was actually Inspector Loyd who initially ordered the Capitol lockdown approximately 1 hour prior to Chief Pittman’s order. That was the only time that day I heard Acting Chief Pittman on the radio,” says Chairman Papathanasiou.

“Acting Chief Pittman cites radio communications as a problem during the riots, but the real communications breakdown was the silence from our leadership, before the insurrection and while it was underway. They failed to share key intelligence with officers in advance, they failed to prepare adequately, they failed to equip our officers with a plan and on that very day, they failed to lead. This was not a ‘whole Department’ failure, but a leadership failure.”

Says the Union Chairman, “The officers are angry, and I don’t blame them. The entire executive team failed us, and they must be held accountable. Their inaction cost lives.”

“Our Union has long advocated for more training, more staff and better equipment, only to be repeatedly ignored by our leadership. Yet, Acting Chief Pittman now blames these glaring inadequacies for contributing to the failure to protect the Capitol on January 6th.”

“We have leaders in this department who have the support of the front-line officers. They can implement the changes we need to make, but those leaders are not at the Chief or Assistant Chief level, nor possibly the Deputy Chief level.”

“We hope Congress recognizes these leaders exist; some of whom battled side by side with the officers during the insurrection. Any decision to recruit the next Chief from outside the department would be a significant mistake in our opinion. Our next leader needs to be shovel ready on day one and have the confidence of the officers. There is no time for on-the-job training given the ongoing threats we are facing. Our officers need leadership they can trust.”