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

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January 8, 2021

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

On Wednesday, January 6, 2021, during the Joint Session of Congress to count the electoral votes of the 2020 presidential election, America witnessed the carnage and destruction of the United States Capitol—a direct violation of law and order and the principles that make America the greatest country on Earth.

Due to the efforts of the majority of law enforcement officers on the ground, the agitators and insurgents that attempted to prevent Congress from opening, certifying, and counting the 2020 presidential election electoral votes were not successful. Congress fulfilled its duty to the United States Constitution, and the American people and declared Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Kamala D. Harris as the next President and Vice-President of the United States of America. I applaud all those involved who worked to allow Congress to reconvene and ensure a peaceful transition of power on January 20, 2021.

Congress showed the world that violent attacks on a bedrock of the American republic will not and cannot deter us from completing our Constitutional obligations. However, like many of my colleagues and our constituents, I am extremely concerned with and question the strategy implemented by both the House and Senate Sergeant at Arms and Chief of the United States Capitol Police to ensure the safety of frontline officers, the Capitol building and surrounding complex, and all those inside. I commend the attempts of officers on the ground who, despite insufficient resources and direction from their leadership, largely attempted to fulfill their duties to protect the Capitol and its inhabitants. Unfortunately, violent extremists sieged the Capitol building and were able to freely roam the hallowed halls of Congress for several hours, successfully disrupting the Joint Session of Congress and posing an ongoing threat to our national security.

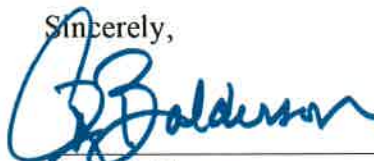
The videos and pictures disseminated and shown on national television and across social media accurately show law enforcement officers being abused, harassed, and assaulted. They also show law enforcement officers taking selfies, opening barricades and standing aside to let rioters pass. I pass no judgement here, but demand an explanation. While we await an official after action report from the United States Capitol Police, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms on the full carnage of January 6, 2021, we know five lives have been lost – including United States Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick – and many more injured.

In order to better understand how the Capitol was breached, and to prevent it from ever happening in the future, I respectfully make two requests:

- A full security briefing from the United States Capitol Police, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms for all Members of Congress detailing:
a) the initial strategy to protect the Capitol on January 6, 2021 during the Joint Session of Congress, b) how the insurgents were able to penetrate the structures and barricades, and c) how insurgents were able to take control of the Capitol building and a full assessment of the loss of life, injuries, materials, and damage to the Capitol that resulted from this siege.
- That you hold the top leadership of the United States Capitol Police, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms fully responsible for their roles in failing to adequately protect the Capitol. I was relieved to see all three have submitted their resignations, but insist that you continue to hold them accountable until we have answers for all outstanding questions. I also request that you hold other high-level leaders in the respective departments accountable. It is important to note that all law enforcement officers risk their lives day in and day out to protect us. Unfortunately, the rank and file officers were not put in a position to succeed by their leadership to fulfill their mission to protect the Capitol. As noted by Gus Papathanasiou, Chairman of the Capitol Police Officers' Union, "Our officers did their jobs. Our leadership did not. Our Law Enforcement Partners that assisted us were remarkable... This lack of planning led to the greatest breach of the U.S. Capitol since the War of 1812. This is a failure of leadership at the very top."

Thank you for your consideration of this request; members and staff cannot go back to our important work without these serious concerns being answered. May God Bless the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress