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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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January 21, 2021

Mr. Timothy P. Blodgett
Acting Sergeant at Arms
U.S. Capitol
Room H-124
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Blodgett:

I am writing to gather information regarding the security planning and the level of security provided for the January 6, 2021 Joint Session of Congress (hereinafter “Joint Session”). According to a recent press report, when Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund suggested activating the National Guard two days prior to the Joint Session, former House Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving said that he were not “comfortable with the ‘optics’ of formally declaring an emergency ahead of the demonstration.”¹ In another report, former Senate Sergeant at Arms Bill Pickle, speaking on Mr. Irving’s behalf, told a news outlet that Mr. Irving “did not consult first with his boss, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but thought he was reflecting her likely response.”² Mr. Irving resigned following the Joint Session and, to date, has declined to comment publicly.³

In light of the significance of these events, I hope that you will be cooperative and fully transparent regarding your office’s involvement and knowledge of the Capitol breach and all the relevant events and information leading up to it. I also sincerely hope that a completely independent investigation, as Senator Lindsey Graham and I have called for, will be established and will take sworn testimony. What happened on January 6th is totally unacceptable, and the American public has the right to know exactly what happened, what actions were and were not taken, and what planning and discussions occurred prior to the breach. With this in mind, please provide the following information:

¹ Carol Leonning et al., *Outgoing Capitol Police chief: House, Senate security officials hamstrung efforts to call in National Guard*, Wash. Post, Jan. 10, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/sund-riot-national-guard/2021/01/10/fc2ce7d4-5384-11eb-a817-e5e7f8a406d6_story.html.

² Rosalind Helderman et al., *House security chief said lawmaker wariness of military at Capitol drove his resistance to early request for National Guard*, Wash. Post, Jan. 18, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/paul-irving-capitol-attack/2021/01/18/59fb4aac-567d-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d_story.html.

³ *Id.*

1. Did your office receive any reports or intelligence on security threats or planned attacks against the Capitol or Congress on or about January 6? If so, please provide those records and explain:
 - a. the source(s) of that information;
 - b. what, if any, action your office took to examine those security threats;
 - c. who in your office discussed and assessed these threats; and
 - d. who, if anyone, your office shared with them.
2. Please explain the extent to which your office was involved in developing and implementing the security plans for the Joint Session.
 - a. How did the planned level of security for the Joint Session compare to the security for other events at the Capitol (for example, the State of the Union)?
 - b. Are there standard levels of security pre-planned for different situations at the Capitol? If so, how many are there and for what types of events?
 - c. Was a pre-planned security level in effect for the Joint Session? If so, which level was chosen and what was the criteria on which that decision was based?
3. Who has the authority to approve additional security personnel, like the National Guard, to send to the Capitol grounds?
4. Was your office aware of Mr. Irving's reported concerns about the "optics" of activating the National Guard?
5. Prior to the Joint Session, did your office consult with anyone in the House or Senate offices of the Sergeant at Arms or the office of the Capitol Police regarding whether the National Guard should be activated? If so, when did those conversations occur and with whom?
6. Prior to the Joint Session, did your office discuss security matters relating to the Joint Session with Speaker Pelosi, House or Senate leadership, or their staff? If so, when did those conversations occur, what was discussed, and who attended?
7. Did your office discuss activating the National Guard with Speaker Pelosi, House or Senate leadership, their staff, or the Capitol Police? If so:
 - a. Please explain what was discussed, who was involved in those discussions, and when those conversations occurred?
 - b. Specifically, did your office request activating the National Guard or express support to activate the National Guard or increase security personnel prior to the Joint Session? If so, how did Speaker Pelosi, House or Senate leadership, their staff, or Capitol Police react to this request?

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Please provide this information as soon as possible but no later than January 28, 2021. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Ron Johnson
Chairman