

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROB PORTMAN
RANKING MEMBER
U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
& GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

*“Examining the January 6 Attack on the U.S. Capitol – Part II”
JOINT HEARING WITH THE COMMITTEE ON RULES & ADMINISTRATION
MARCH 3, 2021*

(as prepared for delivery)

Thank you, Chairman Peters, Chairwoman Klobuchar, and Ranking Member Blunt for your continued leadership on this critical, bipartisan review. I appreciate that our review continues to set the politics aside and focus on the facts in this critical investigation of exactly what happened on January 6 and why.

I want to begin again by expressing my gratitude for the men and women of the many law enforcement agencies who put their safety on the line to safeguard democracy on January 6 and in the days since. We cannot thank them enough and we will never forget the sacrifices they have made.

We owe it to them, and to all Americans, to take a hard look at the security failures—both the preparation and response efforts—that allowed the Capitol to be breached and overrun.

We started to get some answers last week at our first joint hearing on the Capitol attack.

- During that hearing, we heard from the Acting Chief of the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, the former Chief of Capitol Police, and former Sergeants at Arms of the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- Together, these officials were responsible for securing the U.S. Capitol before and on January 6.

At last week's hearing, we learned:

- Capitol Police officers were not prepared to respond to an attack like we experienced on January 6—they were not given the appropriate training or equipment necessary to protect not only the Capitol complex, but also themselves.
- Also, there were breakdowns in communications on January 6 and the days leading up to it.
 - The most concerning breakdown in communication concerned the significant discrepancies between the recollections of the former Chief of Capitol Police and the former Senate and House Sergeants at Arms about requests for National Guard assistance.
 - Each testified, under oath, to a different version of events.
- The witnesses also pointed to lapses in intelligence as a key reason law enforcement was not better prepared for January 6.
 - They all claimed no intelligence warned of a coordinated, violent assault on the U.S. Capitol.
 - However, at least one report from the FBI's Norfolk field office warning of a violent attack was received by the U.S. Capitol Police, but never reached the former Chief, the former Sergeants at Arms, or the incident commanders on the ground.

But many questions still remain unanswered.

- Despite the stated lack of intelligence, there were warning signs.
 - Numerous online posts called for attacking the Capitol. And the previously mentioned FBI Norfolk field office report warned of violence and “war.”

- We need to know what information the Intelligence Community reviewed prior to January 6, how it assessed that intelligence, how it characterized the potential for violence, and when it shared that intelligence with law enforcement partners.
- Second, although last week’s witnesses disagreed about *when* the U.S. Capitol Police first requested National Guard assistance, *all* agreed that, once requested, it took far too long for the National Guard to arrive. We will dig further into this today.
 - Based on the Defense Department’s public timeline, once requested, it took the National Guard over three hours to arrive at the Capitol. The request came in from Capitol Police Chief Sund at 1:49pm and Capitol Hill deployment did not arrive until after 5pm.
 - It’s unclear when senior Defense officials authorized the National Guard to deploy to the Capitol.
 - The Defense Department’s public timeline states that Army Secretary McCarthy directed the D.C. National Guard to mobilize at 3:04pm.
 - But according to the timeline the National Guard provided to the Committees—and a briefing from Major General Walker, Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard—the instruction to deploy didn’t come until 5:08pm.
 - We need to know why did the Pentagon took so long to deploy the National Guard.
 - According to the former Chief of Capitol Police and Acting Chief of D.C. Police and Major General Walker, the delay

was due, in part, to concerns about the “optics” of the National Guard at the Capitol.

- We need to know what role, if any, optics played in the delay to provide much needed assistance to U.S. Capitol Police and the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department.

By hearing from representatives of the federal agencies responsible for the intelligence and the National Guard, we expect to get clear answers to these open questions.

Answering these questions is critical to our understanding of where breakdowns occurred on and before January 6. And only by understanding *where* those breakdowns occurred can we make the changes necessary to ensure events like January 6 never happen again.

Again, I appreciate the non-partisan nature of our oversight. Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.