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One Hundred Seventeenth
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

January 3, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

The events of January 6, 2021 exposed serious security vulnerabilities at the Capitol Complex. Unfortunately, over the past twelve months, House Democrats have been more interested in exploiting the events of January 6th for political purposes than in conducting basic oversight of the security vulnerabilities exposed that day. Republicans have sought to conduct this oversight ourselves, including understanding House officials' preparedness for and response to the violence on January 6th. However, these House officials, who are appointed by and answer only to you, have blocked our access to key records necessary for this oversight. Accordingly, we write to demand that you instruct all House officers to immediately cease obstructing our oversight of the Capitol complex's security vulnerabilities.

In the immediate aftermath of January 6th, Republicans began an examination of the Capitol's security vulnerabilities. On January 13, 2021, as the Ranking Republican Member of the House Administration Committee, I sent letters to the Acting House Sergeant-at-Arms, the House Chief Administrative Officer, and the Acting Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) asking them to preserve all records relating to January 6th.¹ Although the USCP immediately complied with my request to preserve and produce relevant documents, the House Sergeant-at-Arms and Chief Administrative Officer—the two House officers who report directly to you—responded jointly that they were “unable to comply with the request at this time.”² Now, nearly a year after this request, the House Sergeant-at-Arms and Chief Administrative Officer have yet to comply with my request.

These records are necessary for our oversight, especially considering key assertions made by former USCP Chief Steven Sund that he communicated with then-House Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Irving about preparations for January 6th. In a letter to you, Chief Sund wrote that he approached Mr. Irving in advance of January 6th to “request the assistance of the National

¹ Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., to Timothy P. Blodgett, Acting Sergeant at Arms (Jan. 13, 2021); Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., to Yogananda Pittman, U.S. Capitol Police (Jan. 13, 2021); Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., to Catherine L. Szpindor, Chief Administrative Officer (Jan. 13, 2021).

² Letter from Catherine L. Szpindor, Chief Administrative Officer, & Timothy P. Blodgett, Acting Sergeant at Arms, to Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin. (Feb. 1, 2021).

Guard.”³ Chief Sund recounted how Mr. Irving “stated that he was concerned about the ‘optics’” of National Guard troops being present at the Capitol.⁴ Chief Sund detailed other briefings and communications with senior officials in advance of and during the violence, including a conversation with Mr. Irving during the violence about authorizing the National Guard in which Mr. Irving stated that “he needed to run it up the chain of command.”⁵ Chief Sund’s assertions highlight the importance of understanding what direction, if any, Mr. Irving received with respect to the preparations and response to the January 6th violence.

Conflicting testimony from Mr. Irving makes these records even more essential. In testimony before the Senate in February 2021, Mr. Irving denied Chief Sund’s assertions. When two senators asked that Mr. Irving produce records to substantiate his denials, Mr. Irving’s attorneys later offered only a summary of his communications, which excluded any communications with your office.⁶ Mr. Irving’s attorneys informed the Senate that “the relevant records are the property of the U.S. House of Representatives, and we have therefore referred the Senators’ request for records to the House Office of General Counsel for transmission to the appropriate House officials.”⁷ I subsequently wrote to Douglas Letter, the House General Counsel appointed by and responsible to you, to request that he produce Mr. Irving’s communications.⁸ However, like the other two House officers who report directly to you, Mr. Letter has not complied—or even responded—to my request for Mr. Irving’s records.

Republicans again sought relevant records from House Sergeant-at-Arms and the House Chief Administrative Officer in March 2021 and, once again, the House officers who report to you ignored our requests. At that time, as various federal entities began to produce January 6 material to several House committees, Republicans made requests—including to the House Sergeant-at-Arms and the House Chief Administrative Officer—that all such material be shared equally with Democrats and Republicans.⁹ Both the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Chief Administrative Officer failed to produce any documents to Republicans pursuant to our requests, suggesting that these House officers may be providing documents only to Democrats on a partisan basis.

As Speaker of the House, you are the most senior elected official in the House of Representatives and therefore ultimately responsible for all House operations, not just those of your party. You appoint all House officers, who serve at your pleasure. You yield enormous institutional power over how Congress operates, including the security posture of the Capitol complex. Recognizing your unique role and responsibilities, Republicans wrote to you directly in February 2021 asking five straightforward questions about January 6th:

³ Letter from Steven Sund to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Reps. (Feb. 1, 2021).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.* The “chain of command” for the House Sergeant-at-Arms is undeniably the Speaker of the House. *See* Rules of the House of Representatives 117th Congress, Rule II clause 3.

⁶ Letter from Rob Lehman & Aaron Zebley, WilmerHale, to Gary C. Peters, Chairman, S. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Gov’t Affairs, et al. (Mar. 29, 2021).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., to Douglas N. Letter, General Counsel, U.S. House of Reps. (June 15, 2021).

⁹ *See, e.g.*, Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., et al. to Catherine L. Szpindor, Chief Administrative Officer (Mar. 29, 2021).

- When then-Chief of Capitol Police Steve Sund made a request for National Guard support on January 4, why was that request denied?
- Did then-Sergeant at Arms Paul Irving get permission or instruction from your office on January 4 prior to denying Chief Sund's request for the National Guard?
- What conversations and what guidance did you and your staff give the Sergeant at Arms leading up to January 6 specific to the security posture of the Capitol?
- What conversations did you have during the attack on the Capitol and what response did you give security officials on January 6 when Chief Sund requested National Guard support that required your approval?
- Why are your House Officers refusing to comply with preservation and production request to turn over requested materials relevant to the events of January 6?¹⁰

Again, like our requests to the House Sergeant-at-Arms, the House Chief Administrative Officer, and the House General Counsel—all of whom report directly to you—you have refused to respond. These records and communications are material to understanding the decision making by law enforcement officials before and during the violence of January 6th. Without these records, we cannot complete a thorough and comprehensive review.

For the past year, Democrats have displayed, at best, only a superficial interest in examining the security vulnerabilities highlighted by January 6. Instead of working cooperatively with Republicans to understand and address the vulnerabilities, you unilaterally acted to remove Mr. Irving and Chief Sund. You instead hired retired General Russel Honoré—a partisan public figure who had made several statements about USCP officers and Republican Members of Congress that suggest political bias¹¹—to conduct a brief security review. In addition, the select committee you established to examine January 6th, and from which you prevented from service Republican members duly appointed by Leader McCarthy, will exclude a review of your role in ensuring the proper House security preparations.¹²

There is irony in the fact that at the same time House Democrats are holding witnesses in criminal contempt of Congress for raising genuine questions of legal privilege, you continue to obstruct Republican access to House records relating to the security preparedness of the Capitol complex on January 6th, 2021. This double standard only adds to the evidence that Democrats are weaponizing events of January 6th against their political adversaries. If you are truly interested in working with Republicans to improve the Capitol security posture, I demand that you direct all House officers immediately to stop obstructing our oversight. In particular, I demand that you

¹⁰ Letter from Rodney Davis, H. Comm. on House Admin., et al. to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Reps. (Feb. 15, 2021).

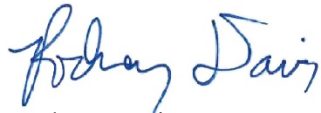
¹¹ See, e.g., Brooke Singman, *Russel Honore, Pelosi's pick for Capitol security review, claimed police were 'complicit' in riot*, Fox News, Feb. 19, 2021.

¹² See Lauren Fox et al., *House Republicans sharpen plan of attack on Democrats' January 6 probe*, CNN, July 21, 2021.

direct the House General Counsel to produce immediately all records from former Sergeant-at-Arms Irving that are in the possession of the House of Representatives.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this request. I look forward to hearing from you promptly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rodney Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration