Statement of
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Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the public safety and consequence management capabilities of the United States Capitol Police.

The U.S. Capitol Police accomplishes its mission through a variety of functions to provide comprehensive, around the clock protection for the Congress, the legislative process, the Capitol Complex, and the millions of visitors from across the globe that come to see democracy at work. In an effort to maximize our ability to prepare for and respond to incidents affecting public safety, the U.S. Capitol Police specifically focuses on key internal capabilities which, when necessary, can be augmented by specialized resources from our partners in the National Capital Region.

The U.S. Capitol Police officers receive high-quality law enforcement training from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, and U.S. Capitol Police's training facility in Cheltenham, Maryland. We combine this training with a

range of technical systems to provide enhanced physical security for the Capitol Complex's buildings and grounds, counter surveillance, detection and response for explosive devices and hazardous materials, and a state-of-the-art command center which provides global situational awareness and sustained operations of our incident management and emergency notification and response systems. Our current internal capabilities show the rewards of several years of investment in training, robust command and control systems, and physical security improvements.

As the host law enforcement agency for many events of national significance, we understand that working with our many partners in the National Capital Region and sharing our resources is imperative. In recent years, we have worked hard to improve our interoperability with local agencies such as D.C. Fire Department and Metropolitan Police Department as well as our federal partners in the National Capital Region including FBI, US Secret Service, FEMA, HHS, and the Department of Defense.

The U.S. Capitol Police has adopted a standardized process for planning major events and managing incidents that provides for ongoing engagement with our external partners through functional area committees, specific liaison assignments, and frequent joint training among specialty units. The improvement in these relationships in the past decade has increased our ability to seamlessly integrate outside assets into major operations that are beyond the scope of any single agency, such as Presidential Inaugurations, State Funerals or State of the Union Addresses. As our working relationships have continued to mature, we have seen joint plans for specific events, joint

exercises to test and validate our crisis response plans, improved understanding of long term consequence management, and joint responses to actual events. We are much stronger as a united National Capitol Region than as any single resource or agency.

The U.S. Capitol Police is honored to have the opportunity to protect multiple high-profile events throughout the year. We take the planning and preparation for these events very seriously, and specifically focus on the safety of the individuals who choose to attend events that allow US citizens and visitors to celebrate democracy and America's history at our nation's capitol. We continually make improvements in our processes and crisis and consequence management plans based on domestic and international events, and recent threat and intelligence streams. We face the challenge of large crowds on a daily basis; however, our concern for public safety is especially high during our special events. To face this challenge, our emergency plans are continually evolving based on lessons learned for our own events and the study of emergency preparedness and response around the world. Our capabilities continue to improve with the integration of new technologies into the security of the Capitol Complex.

There are numerous events on Capitol Hill each year that draw crowds including the Labor Day Concert, the Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony, and the National Peace Officer's Memorial, but perhaps the most visible is the Capitol Fourth Celebration. U.S. Capitol Police has safely and successfully facilitated 28 years of award winning July 4th concerts, allowing safe and secure celebrations of America's birthday, by crowds estimated at nearly ½ million people.

The planning for such events involves an all-hazards approach, an appropriate risk analysis, an event specific threat assessment, and a comprehensive crisis management plan to ensure we are prepared to implement appropriate protective measures with little or no notice. As an example, the U.S. Capitol Police successfully implemented a mass notification and evacuation of more than 8,000 people at two consecutive July 4th concerts in 2006 and 2007, demonstrating our ability to move large amounts of people to safety, while maintaining the security and integrity of all Legislative facilities. These evacuations were based on the imminent threat of severe weather creating unsafe conditions for our visitors. On both occasions, the storms passed through the Capitol Complex leaving downed tree limbs and other evidence that people would have been seriously injured if we had not enacted the evacuation procedures. The decision to disrupt events and move large quantities of people is not taken lightly, as the movement itself involves risks. However, real-time monitoring of detection and warning systems, communication amongst the Department's senior leaders, and coordination with multiple partners ensures that the public safety benefits outweigh the risks involved with the protective action. In this case, a large scale evacuation.

The U.S. Capitol Police does acknowledge that all procedures can be improved, and takes training for emergencies very seriously. We also recognize the difference between a training scenario and an actual event. In an effort to continuously improve our procedures and ensure updated crisis management plans, an after-action reporting and corrective action tracking system has been implemented. This process allows for an

unbiased evaluation of each event that includes input from our external partners, and encourages each Department element involved to improve its processes, to improve communications between agencies, to track actions, and to increase our capabilities to better serve the Capitol Hill Community.

I would also like to acknowledge the relationship we enjoy between the United States Capitol Police and the Capitol Police Board. The support, guidance, and oversight provided by this entity, allow the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the U.S. Capitol Police planning to maintain a direct path and ensures consistent messages are provided across Capitol Hill. Consistent communication with this body ensures that we will be able to elicit additional resources if they are required. This process has been utilized effectively in the past, allowing U.S. Capitol Police to supplement its resources and/or extend the abilities of the resources we have on hand every day.