

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 7, 2021

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

We write to you today with grave urgency over the acts of insurrection that occurred yesterday at the United States Capitol complex and the unprecedented incitement and security failures that directly led to the overrun of government offices by terrorists.

In the months leading up to January 6, 2021, there was an online movement¹ to organize a large gathering of protestors to descend on Washington, D.C. to dispute the outcome of the election, consistent with the President's baseless claims of fraud and at his urging^{2 3}. Among those that may have had peaceful intentions, there is robust reporting that indicated detailed preparations for seditious or violent confrontation were being made on social media^{4 5}. In the past several days, as supporters of the President traveled to Washington, there were numerous documented antagonistic confrontations of public officials^{6 7}, instances of intimidation⁸, and seizure of

¹ "Pro-Trump forums erupt with violent threats ahead of Wednesday's rally against the 2020 election", Washington Post, January 5, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/05/parler-telegram-violence-dc-protests/>

² "Be There. Will Be Wild!": Trump All but Circled the Date", New York Times, January 6 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/capitol-mob-trump-supporters.html>

³ Trump Told Crowd 'You Will Never Take Back Our Country With Weakness' New York Times January 6, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/trump-speech-capitol.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>

⁴ "Pro-Trump forums erupt with violent threats ahead of Wednesday's rally against the 2020 election", Washington Post, January 5, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/05/parler-telegram-violence-dc-protests/>

⁵ "Capitol Rioters Planned for Weeks in Plain Sight. The Police Weren't Ready", PBS Frontline, January 7, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/capitol-rioters-planned-for-weeks-in-plain-sight-the-police-werent-ready/>

⁶ "Senator Mitt Romney Is Heckled While Traveling to D.C.", New York Times, January 6, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/romney-trump-supporters-flight.html>

⁷ GOP senator confronted by Trump supporters over electoral challenge: 'The law matters' The Hill 6 January 2021 <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/532903-gop-senator-confronted-by-trump-supporters-over-electoral-challenge-the-law>

⁸ "Flight attendant union wants pro-Trump rioters barred from flights", CNBC, January 6, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/07/flight-attendant-unions-raise-alarms-about-disruptive-travelers-after-pro-trump-riots-at-capitol.html>

weaponry⁹ ¹⁰ that forebode conflict. On the morning of January 6, 2021, the planned large gathering began with an event in front of the White House where numerous individuals, including the President of the United States and his associates, spoke in clear and deliberate fashion about confrontation at the Capitol¹¹, the illegitimacy of the electoral process¹², and “trial by combat”¹³. In doing so, the President created the tinder box of conditions for uncontrollable confrontation, added accelerant with his rhetoric, and lit the match.

Immediately following the President’s remarks, the newly-incited mob outside of the White House moved to the Capitol Complex and joined with protestors outside of the Capitol. Shortly thereafter, the mob moved on the Capitol building and the congressional office buildings and, despite valiant efforts from some law enforcement personnel, swiftly broke through barricades and overran the Capitol. The terrorists broke windows and doors, ransacked offices, threatened the safety of Members and staff, and ultimately gained unfettered control of the Senate floor. After seizing control of the Capitol, the terrorists were able to maintain control for hours before exiting at their own accord and without arrest.

In addition to the destruction at the Capitol, Members and staff located in the office complex were forced to shelter in place - many forced to use furniture to reinforce office doors. Nearby residences and offices were forced to evacuate due to the uncontrolled security situation and a number of improvised explosive device threats - both confirmed and reported. Public safety became so compromised that many felt compelled to call loved ones¹⁴ in the event that the mob broke through the remaining barricades.

Finally, and most seriously for the continuity of government operations, the chaos compromised our national security at the highest levels by endangering the presidential line of succession beginning with the Vice President of the United States and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. With hundreds of thousands of American servicemembers, diplomats, and aid workers deployed overseas, many in dangerous locations, any threat that calls into question the continuity of the United States government to respond to threats jeopardizes the security of all Americans.

In light of the unprecedented attack on the U.S. Capitol and surrounding area, the threat posed to Congress, and the grave risk posed to our national security, we ask that you conduct an urgent investigation into the events leading up to and on January 6, 2021 including, but not limited to, the following:

⁹ “Proud Boys leader barred from District by judge following his arrest”, Washington Post, January 5, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/proud-boys-arrest-church-black-lives-matter/2021/01/05/18c58640-4f6a-11eb-83e3-322644d82356_story.html

¹⁰ Trump supporters pour into Washington to begin demonstrating against election Washington Post January 5, 2021 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/01/05/dc-protest-trump-supporters-election/>

¹¹ “Trump Told Crowd ‘You Will Never Take Back Our Country With Weakness’”, New York Times, January 6, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/trump-speech-capitol.html>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Watch Giuliani Demand ‘Trial by Combat’ to Settle the Election”, New York Magazine, January 6, 2021, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/01/watch-giuliani-demand-trial-by-combat-to-settle-election.html>

¹⁴ “‘Is This Really Happening?’: The Siege of Congress, Seen From the Inside”, Politico, January 7, 2021, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/01/07/capitol-storming-siege-congress-inside-first-person-oral-history-455715>

- 1) Scale and adequacy of security preparations by relevant law enforcement and defense entities, including the U.S. Capitol Police, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Secret Service.
- 2) Extent of coordination between federal and local entities for security and emergency support.
- 3) Impact of rhetoric by government and elected officials that contributed to or led to the insurrection.
- 4) Effectiveness of the federal response and coordination with local authorities throughout the course of events.
- 5) Inappropriate conduct by law enforcement to include taking pictures and opening security barriers.
- 6) Difference in preparation, coordination, and response compared to other large gatherings in Washington, D.C. in the past four years.
- 7) Efforts by government and/or elected officials to limit preparation, coordination, or response, particularly regarding the use of force and arrests.
- 8) Impact on national security-critical operations, including command and control.

We also ask that you provide thorough support to any commissions, or similar entities, established by Congress to investigate the failed insurrection on January 6, 2021.

In the aftermath of one of the darkest days in our nation's history, we are forced to reconcile with difficult truths about failures of leadership and preparation. The failures of security are far more easily corrected than the failure to lead and the abuse of the public trust. Now we must seek the facts and follow them to their clear conclusion, regardless of how difficult that end may be. Your comprehensive and independent investigation into these matters is essential to ensuring that the events of yesterday will never again be allowed to occur in America.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this request and for your service to the country.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Caroyln Bourdeaux
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Haley Stevens
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

Kai Kahele
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress