



*****EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY*****

**Ranking Member Roy Blunt Opening Statement
Joint Full Committee Hearing Examining the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol
February 23, 2021**

Today marks the beginning of the Senate's efforts to ensure that there will never be another attack like the one that occurred on January 6th, that anyone wishing to stop our nation's democratic institutions and processes by physical violence will not succeed. I am glad to join Chairman Peters, Chairwoman Klobuchar, and Senator Portman in today's hearing into the events that occurred at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

The outrageous, deadly, and destructive attack marks a sad day in the history of our country. The officers who defended the Capitol that day deserve to be recognized and praised for their valiant efforts.

I offer my deepest thanks to the officers of the United States Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department, and their families who may have been watching this attack on the Capitol in real time. Unfortunately, the failures of that day were of the most serious kind: the death of USCP Officer Brian Sicknick. The subsequent suicides of USCP Officer Howard Liebengood and MPD Officer Jeffrey Smith were just the first and most tragic results from the psychological trauma that untold numbers of people experienced.

Three of today's witnesses, former House Sergeant at Arms Irving; former Senate Sergeant at Arms Stenger; and former Chief of the United States Capitol Police Sund were all charged with the protection of the Capitol on January 6th. We need to hear from them about the failure to imagine what could happen, the failure of intelligence gathering and dissemination, and the failure of preparation that led ultimately to the failure of leadership the Capitol experienced nearly seven weeks ago.

I also look forward to hearing from Chief Contee of the Metropolitan Police Department to learn more about his department's role on the 6th. I do know that MPD officers arrived within minutes of being requested and fought bravely alongside USCP officers.

I believe it is important for everyone to note that the attacks of January 6th did not prevent Congress from fulfilling its responsibilities: both chambers reconvened that evening and finished the certification of the results of the electoral college.

And on the 20th, we held the 59th Presidential Inauguration on the same platform that had been stormed three weeks earlier and we carried out one of the most defining features of our democracy: the peaceful transfer of power. Our institutions are durable, but I hope they will never again be tested in this way.

Again, I thank my colleagues from both the Homeland Security and Rules Committees for today's hearing.

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