

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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December 9, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, and Ranking Member Lowey:

Please find enclosed a copy of the Committee's report on the Secret Service (USSS). The Committee adopted the report this morning in a unanimous vote. This report—which is the product of a year-long, bipartisan investigation—identifies vulnerabilities that must be addressed in order for the Secret Service to successfully fulfill its critical mission.

The Secret Service's mission is of primary importance to our national security. Many of the problems the report identified have plagued the agency for a long time and need to be corrected. The security of the President and other protectees is too important for these problems to persist.

The report includes twenty-seven recommendations for the Executive Branch. We have requested regular updates on the status of implementing those recommendations. For example, the report finds that the Secret Service is experiencing a staffing crisis that threatens to jeopardize its critical mission. The report includes several recommendations to expedite hiring, improve morale, and decrease attrition.

Additionally, the report finds that Congressional funding for USSS has been inconsistent over the past decade, including several years of cuts followed by more recent efforts to reverse this trend. The current staffing crisis began after 2011, when the number of full-time employees began to decline sharply. This crisis has three primary causes: (1) significant cuts imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011; (2) systemic mismanagement at USSS that has been unable to correct these shortfalls; and (3) declining employee morale leading to attrition.

Recognizing that USSS has had challenges recently in increasing its staffing levels, the report recommends that Congress fully support the President's Fiscal Year 2016 request for

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USSS—particularly in light of the increased demand of the presidential election year—provided that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that the funds are used to address ongoing hiring challenges.

We recognize that funding issues are only one part of the problem and that budget increases alone cannot be the entire solution. The Secret Service also should begin tracking spending in a more informed manner by developing and implementing a zero-based budget methodology that is validated by third-party experts.

The Committee is sending similar letters to White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson.

Our report is intended to be a constructive tool for reform. We look forward to working together with you, the White House, Secretary Johnson, and Director Clancy to ensure that USSS is able to restore its position as the nation's preeminent law enforcement agency.



Sincerely,

Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

Enclosure

cc: Denis McDonough
White House Chief of Staff

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Senate Committee on Appropriations

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The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives