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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2024

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As you know, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, is visiting the nation's capital and gave a joint address to Congress this afternoon. As part of the security protocol for the joint address, the U.S. Capitol Police, in conjunction with the House Sergeant at Arms and other security and law enforcement officials, significantly increased security at the U.S. Capitol, including, but not limited to, enhanced screenings, temporarily limiting visitation, and bringing in additional officers in anticipation of security threats and protests.

The United States Park Police (USPP) maintains jurisdiction over all national park units in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, including several sites located close to the Capitol¹, the National Mall, Columbus Circle, and other national park units at high risk of attracting large numbers of potentially dangerous protestors.

It has come to my attention that, despite specific requests by the USPP for additional resources, the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the National Park Service (NPS) failed to provide adequate additional support for the USPP, such as providing additional law enforcement units from within DOI to enhance USPP's presence within the National Capital Region.

USPP officers are currently working overtime, for potentially days on end, to support Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to the United States while being subject to violent attacks from Hamas-sympathetic protesters. USPP Officers are risking their very lives working with the

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/uspp/index.htm>

Secret Service to protect high-level government officials and de-escalate tensions at large protest sites scattered around the city.

While USPP and other law enforcement officers protect our nation's historical monuments and most treasured spaces around the National Capital Region, protestors have run wild, destroying federal property, burning American flags, and raising Palestinian flags.²

These actions can be directly correlated to the failure of DOI leadership to provide adequate staffing and support to the USPP.

I call on you to immediately address the USPP's requests and provide additional officers and support for the USPP in the Washington, D.C. area.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources

cc: Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service

² <https://nypost.com/2024/07/24/us-news/anti-israel-protesters-rip-down-burn-american-flag-in-dc-after-netanyahu-speech/>