



UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

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**Testimony of
Chief Phillip D. Morse, Sr.
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Before the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the potential impact of proposed legislation regarding the District of Columbia's gun laws.

The mission of the United States Capitol Police is "to protect the Congress, its legislative processes, Members, employees, visitors and facilities from crime, disruption or terrorism. We protect and secure Congress so it can fulfill its constitutional responsibilities."

Our history is full of incidents where USCP officers have encountered armed individuals during the course of their duties. Whether the confrontation occurred as a result of a street crime or from an individual attempting to enter one of our buildings, every encounter poses a danger to both the officer and the armed individual. We all remember the sacrifice of Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson at the Capitol in 1998. Just this year, our officers confronted two individuals in our jurisdiction who were armed with heavy weapons; one carrying a loaded shotgun and the other who was arrested just last Friday had a loaded AK-47 in his vehicle.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, providing security, protection and law enforcement services to the United States Congress within the Capitol Complex in a post 9/11 threat environment is a challenging task. My officers must be able to quickly identify individuals who pose a threat. To do this, we rely on the provisions of 40 USC 5104, which states, "except as authorized by regulations prescribed by the Capitol Police Board, persons may not carry on or have readily accessible to any individual on the Grounds or in any of the Capitol Buildings a firearm, a dangerous weapon, explosives, or an incendiary device."

As the nation's capital, Washington D.C. is unlike any other city in the country. The presence of all three branches of government, our nation's leaders, foreign dignitaries, our national icons, as well as the good residents of the city, requires the combined efforts of multiple law enforcement agencies. I believe

that the level of coordination among the local and federal law enforcement agencies and the retraining of our personnel that will be necessitated by the passage of H.R. 6691 will be substantial.

Therefore, I would encourage the formation of a task force of representatives of the law enforcement agencies represented here today be established to fully consider the impacts of the proposed provisions contained in H.R. 6691 and to address the issues of implementation and coordination throughout the District of Columbia.

I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.