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Statement of
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Before the
Committee on House Administration
Subcommittee on Capitol Security
United States 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 United States Capitol Police proposal for a new radio system. I am pleased to be joined here by my Assistant Chief of Police, Daniel Nichols, and my Chief Administrative Officer, Gloria Jarmon.

I would also like to thank the Committee for its continued support for the men and women of the United States Capitol Police. Your support, as well as the support from our other oversight committees, is crucial to the successful execution of our mission.

It has been nearly 2 years since I was selected to be the Chief of the United States Capitol Police. I have served the department for the past 23 years. During this time the Department has made tremendous improvements in a number of areas, both operationally and administratively. One area still needing improvement is our current radio communication system. Radios serve as a lifeline for every law enforcement officer. Officers depend on their radios as much as they do their weapons. It is often considered

an officer safety issue when an officer is unable to effectively communicate with his or her fellow officers and dispatchers. Critical information can be delayed or missed all together when you do not have reliable and secure radio communications.

The Department is routinely challenged everyday with keeping our current radio system up and running. The system is over 20 years old and we are experiencing failures on a regular basis. These failures are the direct result of aging equipment and infrastructure that have significantly exceeded their life expectancy. Equipment manufacturers no longer make many of the critical parts used in the U.S. Capitol Police radio system, which substantially increases the risk that we will not be able to respond appropriately in an emergency or even during normal operating conditions. A web of very well constructed buildings with numerous underground tunnels and subways adds a tremendous amount of complexity to the radio system. It is the mission of the U.S. Capitol Police to patrol these areas on a routine basis, though the penetration of radio signals into these areas make that job more challenging. Unlike many other law enforcement agencies whose mission is to patrol primarily outdoors, the majority of the U.S. Capitol Police patrol area is within buildings and in underground areas. While my staff has done a tremendous job of providing as much radio coverage as possible throughout this web of buildings, tunnels, garages and subways there are many gaps that exist today. The age of the current radio system is a major concern since nearly 90% of the system infrastructure is 25 years old and desperately needs to be replaced. Our current system is analog with a very limiting 5 channel capability. While the size of the U.S. Capitol Police workforce has increased, our radio system has not. We have very

limited interoperability with other organizations, including Metropolitan Police with whom we communicate by having their radios installed in our vehicles and talking directly to their dispatchers. U.S. Park Police and WMATA (Metro) have their frequencies plugged into our radios to permit limited interoperability capabilities. Our current level of radio security does not meet appropriate Federal standards and there are numerous other issues involving our current system that I am unable to discuss publicly, but would be happy to discuss further with the committee in a closed session.

In 2005 the U.S. Capitol Police partnered with NavAir to perform an assessment of the current radio system. NavAir produced a very comprehensive report that included an RF propagation study as well as many recommendations for making improvements to our radio system and infrastructure. Based upon the NavAir findings, the U.S. Capitol Police tasked NavAir with providing a high-level recommendation for the future direction of radio communications supporting our operations. The NavAir report outlined the need for a new digital, trunked radio system.

In 2006 the U.S. Capitol Police hired a consultant, Concepts To Operations, to assist the department in moving forward with a new radio system. Concepts To Operations was selected based upon their extensive knowledge, vendor independence, strong reputation and experience designing and building radio communications systems for public safety organizations. In 2007 the U.S. Capitol Police hired a fulltime radio project manager from Global Tech. Global Tech was selected based upon their excellent background managing large projects. Together, the U.S. Capitol Police, Concepts To

Operations and Global Tech have worked very effectively to develop a very detailed project plan for the design, acquisition and implementation of a new radio system.

Our project plan for the new radio system consists of a seven phase approach, which is outlined in the U.S. Capitol Police System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) Policy document. The first phase of our SDLC is the definition of the project, which includes the purpose of the project, associated benefits, and so on. Our second project phase involves the gathering of system requirements. This stage defines how the system is to operate and what characteristics it will have. Phase three of our life cycle takes the information gathered in the requirements phase and constructs a design based on those requirements. We are currently at the beginning of the fourth phase of the project, which is the Acquisition Phase. At this time, we are completing the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the new radio system. Once a new system is acquired, we will enter phase five, which is the actual implementation of the new system, followed by a sixth phase which is period of testing and final acceptance of the new system. Finally, our seventh phase is the operation of the new environment.

The radio project, defined by the aforementioned stages, has five important features and functional attributes that make up the core of this project. These attributes are Interoperability, Security, Coverage, Capacity and Voice Quality. We have reached out to a number of other jurisdictions to acquire lessons learned from their recent radio system implementations.

The new radio system will require considerable facility-related work in order to host the system in a primary and secondary, or mirrored, location. Having a redundant radio system, in a second location, will substantially reduce the potential for outages resulting from environmental or terrorist-related events. For this project, one main facility will be located close to our Command and Control environment while a second site will be located an appropriate distance away from Capitol Hill. Finally, many small closet locations within the area of Capitol Hill will be required to host radio transmitting and receiving equipment.

We at the Capitol Police look forward to working collaboratively with the Congress to continue to safeguard the legislative process, Members, staff and visitors to the Capitol Complex. Through this collaborative partnership, I believe we will realize our collective goal of transforming the United States Capitol Police into a premiere law enforcement organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and the Committee's continued support of the men and women of the United States Capitol Police.

My colleagues and I are ready to address any questions you may have.