

Matthew R. Verderosa  
Chief of Police, U.S. Capitol Police  
19 D Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20510

February 14, 2019

Dear Police Chief Verderosa:

We write to draw your attention to our concerns with how the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) handles matters of public access to public documents. Specifically, we urge the U.S. Capitol Police to publish its guidelines and procedures for the public and news media access to “public documents” managed by the USCP Reports Processing Section. These guidelines should address what kinds of documents may be obtained through requests to the USCP Reports Processing Section, the types of individuals/organizations that can request each kind of document, the time required for processing, and what procedures must be followed to obtain access to documents.

This request follows multiple failed attempts to obtain public records from the USCP Reports Processing Section and the absence of a response from the USCP Public Information Office (PIO), whose weekly arrest summaries refers requesters to the Report Processing Section.

We contacted the USCP Reports Processing Section, the General Counsel, and the Public Information Office a combined total of eight times between January 14, 2019 and February 6, 2019, to request specific reports related the weekly arrest summaries and the USCP “public documents” access policy. At various times, the Reports Processing Section referred us to the General Counsel, who did not respond, and the PIO, who generally was unresponsive.

On one occasion we requested three reports and were informed that they either were not ready or needed to be “corrected.” We were also informed the processing time for a report exceeded two weeks from the time of an arrest and to try back later. On another occasion, when we requested a tranche of reports, we were informed we must have a direct tie to the case before the responsive report would be provided to us. When we asked for this policy in writing, we were referred to the Public Information Officer.

We contacted the PIO on January 29 and February 6 to request a copy of the policy on public access to public records, but did not receive a response. This is consistent with prior practices, where the PIO, on multiple occasions last year over several weeks, did not respond to emails or phone calls requesting basic arrest statistics. When we first inquired, the USCP had not begun publishing the weekly arrest summaries. We finally received a terse response that largely did not address our questions.

We believe there should be clear and consistent guidelines dictating which documents are designated “public documents” and how they may be accessed.

We do not in any way minimize the importance of the role the U.S. Capitol Police plays in protecting the Capitol campus and those who work there. We also believe that such a large organization, with 2,200 employees and a \$450 million annual budget, should adhere to basic

norms around transparency and accountability. Managing public requests for information is a common practice in police departments around the U.S., and a standard we are sure you could meet. We are sending you this letter by postal mail to ensure that you receive it.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further. Please contact Amelia Strauss, policy associate, Demand Progress Education Fund, at [Amelia@Demandprogress.org](mailto:Amelia@Demandprogress.org) or 202-922-6832.

Sincerely yours,

Amelia Strauss  
Policy Associate  
Demand Progress

Cc: Eva Malecki, USCP Communications Director  
The Honorable Tim Ryan  
The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler  
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
The Honorable Rodney Davis  
The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith  
The Honorable Christopher Murphy  
The Honorable Roy Blunt  
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar