



DEMAND PROGRESS

EDUCATION FUND

Questions for the U.S. Capitol Police

July 17, 2019

The Demand Progress Education Fund has been evaluating the operations and transparency of the U.S. Capitol Police over the last six months. Our investigation has resulted in unanswered questions in the following six areas: (1) access to information generally, (2) the USCP Inspector General, (3) arrest information, (4) USCP jurisdiction, (5) staffing and disciplinary information, and (6) substantive issues.

Access to Information Generally

- Generally speaking, we find it very hard to interact with USCP. Their public information office is slow to respond, difficult to work with, and is not forthcoming with information. What is the appropriate role of the Public Information Officer?
- What kinds of information does the USCP disclose to the public and what does it withhold? To use their terminology, what is a "public document"? Is there a list? How does one obtain that list? How do you request the documents?
- Should USCP emulate best practices from other agencies and create an online reading room for all documents it has disclosed to the public?
- Are all press releases published on USCP's website?
- Other legislative branch agencies, such as the Library of Congress and GAO, follow a FOIA-like process even though they are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Generally speaking, police departments are subject to FOIA. Would the USCP be willing to implement and adhere to a process that closely resembles FOIA?

USCP Inspector General

- Why doesn't the USCP IG automatically disclose their reports? The IG said they are not required to disclose their reports and will do so only when directed by Congress. Shouldn't the presumption favor disclosure? Generally speaking, federal IGs disclose their reports online.

- Why doesn't the USCP IG automatically disclose a list of all their reports? This is a best practice, and even the GAO publishes a list of its reports that are classified and cannot be fully released to the public.

Arrest information

- What information is the USCP disclosing and withholding from its weekly arrest summaries? According to USCP, the only information published relates to "event/incident reports and traffic collisions?" What types of arrest information is USCP not disclosing in its weekly arrest reports? Arrests are public information, why not disclose them all?
- Why isn't the USCP publishing its weekly arrest report information as part of a spreadsheet/database? Publication should at least be as a spreadsheet so that it is possible to analyze the data without having to retype it.
- Why doesn't the USCP release demographic information on those who it arrests?
- What does it mean that a public arrest report will be released for "official business only"? What are the limitations? And why does USCP cut out pages from a response to a request instead of blacking out/redacting the information?

USCP's Jurisdiction

- Why doesn't the USCP publish its primary and secondary jurisdiction map on its website? In other words, what is the extent of the USCP's regular jurisdiction? We've requested the map on June 19th and weekly thereafter, but still have not received a response.
- Would the USCP provide to the committee and make available online its MOU with the DC Police Department about who has primary responsible for arrests and how they coordinate?

Staffing and Disciplinary Information

- Why does the USCP not automatically disclose online their annual report on internal affairs investigations conducted by the USCP entitled "Annual Statistical Summary Report." We've published them online [here](#). There's no reason that these summaries should automatically be published, and it makes sense to describe the contents as well. The summaries do not provide much information and perhaps should be expanded.
- The USCP should release demographic data on rank and file versus leadership positions. We have heard that diversity markedly decreases as one goes up the ranks.

Substantive Issues

- The USCP is unusual in that it is not a police department in the usual sense: its focus is on protecting Congress while allowing the people to communicate with their government. Arrests that focus on unrelated matters, such as drug arrests or arrests that are not on or right next to congressional buildings, suggest resources are being deployed away from protecting the Capitol, which could create security vulnerabilities. Non-Capitol related policing could be provided by DCPD, which is their traditional mission.
- The USCP is very expensive. The number of staff has tripled, as has its funding, since 2000. It's \$450m budget is 1/10 of the entire legislative branch and it has grown faster than any other legislative branch service. Some of the costs associated with the USCP, such as millions in overtime, seem like they could be addressed through better planning. Is Congress getting a significant increase in security commensurate with the tremendous increase in costs? Are resources being deployed most effectively and efficiently for the mission?
- Transparency is a means, not an ends, but the USCP has a reputation for a lack of transparency and accountability. What is it planning to do next to improve its transparency to the public and accountability to Congress?