

Statement of the Honorable Paul D. Irving
Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Before
The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Mr. Cummings, and members of the Committee. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the incident which recently took place on the West Front grounds of the U.S. Capitol. As Sergeant at Arms and chief law enforcement officer of the House of Representatives, I am fully dedicated to ensuring the safety of the entire Capitol Complex, a mission performed in close partnership and cooperation with the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police.

Before I begin though, I would like to extend my thanks to all of the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police for their capable and professional response to the incident on April 15. U.S. Capitol Police officers and officials promptly responded to the West Front and arrested the individual, and ensured that the craft was harmless. While we will always learn lessons from each event – positive and negative – I am reminded very strongly that twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the U.S. Capitol Police are our ears and our eyes, guardians of both a monument and an institution.

We are currently working closely with our partners in Federal law enforcement, the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, as well as the Federal Aviation Administration, to maintain robust airspace security within the challenging confines of the urban environment of the National Capitol Region. In particular:

- Working with our partners to ensure the most efficient and robust early detection and warning systems.

- Taking steps to ensure there is consistent and constant interagency communication and that early warnings are communicated in real-time.
- Improving and ensuring immediate and ongoing communications/alerts to Members and staff during a security incident.
- Honing the countermeasures and the policies consistent with those countermeasures.

Since the event, I have ordered the Chief of U.S. Capitol Police to utilize the House Notification System to alert Members, staff – and to the extent possible, visitors – of events that could potentially be a threat. The Capitol Police sent notifications only to the Senate-community. This included failing to notify the House community of an albeit short Capitol lockdown. I have ordered the Chief never to allow this to happen again.

The incident on April 15, reminds us all that the greatest asset of the Capitol – its very openness and accessibility – can at times be its greatest liability. However, every incident allows us to refine our capabilities, enhance our training, and be better prepared for every eventuality.

I will be happy to answer your questions.



PAUL D. IRVING
SERGEANT AT ARMS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Honorable Paul D. Irving was sworn in as Sergeant at Arms of the U.S. House of Representatives on January 17, 2012, during the 2nd session of the 112th Congress. He is the thirty-sixth person to hold this post since the House of Representatives first met in New York City in 1789. Prior to this, Mr. Irving was an Assistant Director of the U.S. Secret Service from 2001 to 2008, serving as a Special Agent with the Secret Service for 25 years.

As an elected officer of the House of Representatives, the Sergeant at Arms is the chief law enforcement and protocol officer of the House of Representatives, and is responsible for maintaining order on the House side of the United States Capitol complex. The Sergeant at Arms reviews and implements all issues relating to the safety and security of Members of Congress and the Capitol complex. Duties include emergency management and continuity of government operations for the House, the issuance, administration and verification of House staff security clearances and proper handling of classified materials, as well as overseeing the House floor and galleries, the House Appointments Desk, the House garages and parking lots, and administering all staff identification badges. Mr. Irving serves as a member of the U.S. Capitol Police Board, responsible for policy oversight over the Capitol Police Force, and is the chairman of this Board in alternating years. He also serves as a member of the Congressional Accessibility Services Board.

Paul Irving was born August 21, 1957, in Tampa, Florida. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice from American University in Washington, D.C. in 1979, and a Juris Doctorate from Whittier Law School in Los Angeles, California in 1981.

Mr. Irving began his law enforcement career in 1980 as a clerk for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Los Angeles, California, and was appointed a Special Agent at the Secret Service's Los Angeles Field Office in 1983. After assignments in the forgery, counterfeit and protective intelligence squads, he was transferred to Washington, D.C., where he served as the head legal instructor for constitutional law, statutory authority and criminal procedure at the Secret Service Training Academy. He was then assigned to the Presidential Protective Division at the White House during the administrations of George H.W. Bush and William Jefferson Clinton, where he rose to a supervisory position.

Subsequent to his White House duty, Mr. Irving served as Deputy Assistant Director for Congressional Affairs, Assistant Director for Government and Public Affairs, Assistant Director for Homeland Security, and Assistant Director for Administration. During his tenure as Assistant Director for Government and Public Affairs in 2002, Mr. Irving was detailed in a core leadership role to the Office of Management and Budget Transition Planning Office, which created the Department of Homeland Security, the largest government reorganization since the Department of Defense in 1947. As Assistant Director for Government and Public Affairs, he was responsible for all interaction between the Secret Service and Members of Congress, as well as all statutory authorization and budget appropriation requests to Congress. As Assistant Director for Administration, Mr. Irving was responsible for the Secret Service strategic plan, all financial and administrative functions of the \$1.6 billion Secret Service budget, 6,800 personnel and 130 field offices worldwide.

Mr. Irving is the recipient of numerous awards and commendations during his distinguished Secret Service career, among them the Senior Executive Service Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service, and the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service in the Senior Executive Service. He has been a member of the California State Bar since 1982, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the District of Columbia Bar and the Supreme Court Bar.