



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
How Can the United States Secret Service Evolve to Meet the Challenges Ahead

Subcommittee on Transportation & Protective Security

June 8, 2017

Director Alles, we appreciate your background, including your tenure at the Customs and Border Protection. The Secret Service shares some of the same challenges as the CBP. I hope that your CBP experience will translate to improvements at the Secret Service. Similar to CBP, the staff of the Secret Service is overworked, often forced to work overtime in positions where getting it right is essential to keeping Americans safe.

One of the recommendations of the Secret Service Protective Mission Panel was to find leadership from outside of the Service so that top level leadership would have a fresh perspective on how the agency should be run. I am pleased that that recommendation was fulfilled. I hope today's conversation will highlight other recommendations from the Protective Mission Panel and their status.

The dedication of the men and women of the Secret Service is indisputable; however, the law enforcement agency has been plagued with cultural problems and management challenges that often overshadow the Secret Service's accomplishments.

Earlier this year, the Moore v. Johnson legal settlement was an important step in the Secret Service rejecting historic routine and unfair promotion practices. While the settlement was agreed to in January, there are many milestones that will need to be achieved under the terms of the settlement. I look forward to discussing the steps that the Secret Service has taken to address the terms of the Moore settlement.

In addition to cultural and management issues, there have been media accounts of resource shortfalls. I have heard reports of personnel constraints for the USSS. Most concerning are the reports that the USSS may have an insufficient number of agents to handle its increased protectee responsibilities.

Since Donald Trump became the President, the USSS is covering considerably more protectees but is down 250 special agents and 350 administrative and technical staff members compared to its peak at the beginning of the Obama administration.

Further, reports have indicated that personnel shortages have prompted field offices around the country to reassign personnel to activities unrelated to their usual criminal investigations duties.

Reportedly, the New York field office has had to reassign nearly a third of the staff from their criminal investigation duties to protective assignments. I hope to hear today how the adjustments that have been made for the benefit of the protectees has impacted the Secret Service's mission.

With all the challenges of the Secret Service, one thing very clear and that is without the support of Congress, the Secret Service will not be able to improve. I look forward to hearing today about ways Congress can be a better partner in helping the agency complete its mission.

#

Media contact: Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

