



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

Testimony of

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“Examining the Assassination Attempt of July 13”

before the House Committee on Homeland Security

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Representative Thompson, and distinguished Members of the House Committee on Homeland Security. My name is Patrick Yoes, and I am the National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, the nation's oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the more than 373,000 members of the FOP as the committee examines the attempted assassination of former President Donald J. Trump just ten days ago in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Before I begin my testimony, I want to express my thanks and admiration for the Secret Service agents and officers who leapt into action to protect the former President. Rarely does the public get the opportunity to see just how selfless these agents and officers are—placing themselves between flying bullets and their protectee. They, along with the State and local officers on the scene, demonstrated extraordinary heroism.

I also want to extend my condolences to the family of Corey Comperatore, the retired fire chief who was killed while protecting his family, and to the others who were seriously injured by this would-be assassin.

My testimony today will not be specific to the attempted assassination of former President Trump. Instead, I hope to provide the perspective of the role played by State and local law enforcement when we provide support and assistance to the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) at an event or appearance of one of their protectees. As I have stated publicly after the incident in Butler, we must remember that the law enforcement mission is a shared mission and law enforcement at every level routinely cooperates and collaborates with one another. Law enforcement in our country is highly decentralized—more than 90% of U.S. law enforcement are State and local officers in more than 18,000 different jurisdictions. They would not be as effective at their jobs without the support of the Federal colleagues, and our Federal partners would be unable to perform their functions without the assistance of State and local agencies. Those in the media who suggest that USSS should not rely so heavily on State and local agencies at events like the one in Butler simply do not know what they are talking about.

Working events like a rally featuring a former President or major presidential candidate, requires a robust and coordinated security effort among Federal, State, and local agencies. The USSS is tasked with leading these efforts, but the success of these operations relies heavily on the seamless integration and cooperation of local law enforcement agencies. The partnership between the USSS and local law enforcement is founded on mutual respect, trust, and a shared commitment to protecting our nation and its leaders.

Prior to an event like the one in Butler, USSS advance teams meet with local agencies and develop the logistical and security plans for the event. Local law enforcement agencies can provide local knowledge and support. This may include coordinating with local emergency services, managing traffic, and ensuring the security of motorcade

routes. This collaborative planning process ensures that all potential risks are identified and mitigated. Clear and constant communication between participating local agencies and the USSS advance teams is crucial to ensure the security of the protectee and everyone at the event. Local law enforcement agencies have a long history of cooperating with the USSS on events like this and the Secret Service also works well and often with their local partners—the event in Butler was no exception.

Before, during and after these events, local law enforcement works under and at the direction of the USSS, which must ensure that all agencies involved in the event have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The local agencies contribute resources, such as personnel and support, to augment the capabilities of the USSS to ensure that the event is adequately staffed and that all contingencies are covered. Our presence is a vital part of the security matrix, but the USSS is ultimately responsible and the final arbiter on any and all security matters affecting their protectee and the public.

During these events, local law enforcement officers should—when possible—be part of the command posts and communication centers to facilitate real-time information sharing and rapid response to emerging situations. It also ensures that local officers are fully integrated into the overall security operation as the event unfolds to ensure a coordinated response.

I want to digress for a moment here to flag another issue that often creates unnecessary obstacles for agencies working together in real-time—interoperable communications. Congress addressed this issue in part after 9/11 by securing additional spectrum resources for public safety by providing a fully operable and dedicated, nationwide network, the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network—also known as FirstNet. Congress and the Federal Communications Commission should do everything in their power to ensure FirstNet continues to be a success.

In conclusion, the partnership between local law enforcement and the U.S. Secret Service is critical to keeping everyone safe at these events. Close collaboration between USSS advance teams and protective details with local law enforcement agencies provide indispensable support that ensures the safety and security of our nation's leaders and the public. These collaborative joint efforts should exemplify the best of interagency cooperation and underscore our collective commitment to national security.

All of this said, there was a critical failure of security at the event in Butler. An armed man was able to access an ideal shooting perch with a clear line of sight of the protectee—former President Trump. The would-be assassin killed one man, seriously injured two others, and very nearly assassinated the former President. It is important that we learn how and why this security failure occurred to ensure that future events better provide for the safety and security for our leaders and the public attending these events. From a law enforcement and security standpoint, the coming election will be an extraordinary challenge for the Secret Service. They will be advancing and planning

security for the candidates at sites all across the nation for the next four and a half months. In making and executing these plans to protect the candidates and event attendees, they will need to rely on State and local law enforcement to ensure the protective mission is successful. I am confident that our State and local agencies are well-prepared to assist the USSS in their mission by establishing and maintaining mutual respect and trust among the agencies, their leaders, and the men and women on the front line.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.