



Office of the Commissioner

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www.dps.mn.gov

January 7, 2021

Dear Legislator –

On January 6, 2021 our nation saw an unprecedented insurrection at the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. I am grateful order was restored swiftly and I am confident those who participated in that action will be held accountable. I'm writing to you today to inform you about the actions we have taken to ensure similar activity does not occur at the Minnesota State Capitol.

While there were protestors present on the State Capitol grounds yesterday, with many yelling that they wanted to storm the Capitol there were no active attempts to breach our Capitol. The Minnesota State Patrol had in preparation increased staffing as a preventative measure to handle planned protest activity at our State Capitol. State Troopers and Capitol Security Officers were visibly on duty to help discourage and prevent individual from breaching the Capitol or other buildings. The St. Paul Police and Ramsey County Sheriffs worked with us to maintain order and keep the peace.

Staffing plans for the immediate future include a continued increase in the presence of State Troopers, with assistance provided by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers. These plans are preventative in nature, as there are few known active threats to the State Capitol at this time. The State Patrol will continue in this posture as needed, based upon what we learn about upcoming protests, rallies and events at the Capitol Complex and surrounding area.

Within the Capitol and connected buildings, you will also notice an increase in security staffing and some additional adjustments to Capitol security processes. Command staff from the State Patrol have met with the House and Senate sergeant at arms along with staff from the Department of Administration to jointly develop these plans. We know these changes may have an impact on the daily movement of legislators, staff, members of the media, and others who have business to conduct on the Capitol complex.

The State Capitol and surrounding complex remains a safe place in which to work and visit. As we saw yesterday, words do matter. The calls to action by elected leaders can and have had substantial consequences and can change that safe environment in an instant. As King once said "In the end, we will remember not just the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." We all play a critical role in ensuring the continuation of safety at the Capitol and I encourage you to carefully

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consider the effect of our rhetoric. As leaders in our state, I think it is up to all of us to call out language or activity that endorses or encourages illegal or destructive behavior. We simply cannot stand by—and certainly not participate--while some choose to instigate violence or ignore law and order in our state and nation.

We are also aware of protests targeting elected officials and state agency commissioners over the past months. Last weekend, we saw demonstrators appear at the homes of state representatives in different parts of the state. Some of these protesters were seen carrying handguns and long guns as they stood outside the residences. Groups have also communicated they plan to begin protesting local judges as well as state constitutional officers and state legislators. We have communicated with all chief law enforcement officers in the state to ensure they are aware of the increasing likelihood of this kind of activity and to let them know that the Department of Public Safety is tracking this activity.

I am grateful for the positive working relationship the department has with all of you as well as with the sergeant at arms in the House and Senate. Thank you for your service, the role you play continues to be critically important to democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Harrington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

John M. Harrington
Commissioner