

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2021

The Honorable Catherine Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives
HB-28, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chief Administrative Officer Szpindor:

We write to request that you provide additional support and resources to the Office of Employee Assistance to help the broader Capitol community cope with the January 6 attack.

As you know, the U.S. Capitol is both a symbol of U.S. democracy and a workplace for Members of Congress, their staff, support staff, and U.S. Capitol Police. Like any community after a traumatic attack, the U.S. Capitol community is processing these events and the associated trauma. As we work towards accountability and governing after the attack, Congress must ensure that support services and resources are available to and appropriate for all who work in the Capitol to help promote healing.

The House of Representatives, through the Office of Employee Assistance (OEA), assists Members, U.S. Capitol Police, employees, and their family members for personal and work-related problems, including emotional and behavioral support services. It is our understanding that the OEA has rapidly scaled their services and are working around the clock to ensure that staff understands the resources available to them. Nonetheless, needs are increasing and we should expand these services to include all Capitol personnel who may be affected. This would warrant further investment in the services and resources these offices provide.

In the aftermath of this attack, there were harrowing reports of what Members, staff, and law enforcement experienced on that day. Members in the House and Senate chambers heard gunfire and feared for their safety. U.S. Capitol Police officers were physically assaulted and endured verbal abuse, and we sadly lost two U.S. Capitol Police officers, Officers Brian Sicknick and Howard Liebengood, in the days after the attack. Capitol staff barricaded their offices with furniture, and journalists were assaulted while covering the events. Rioters brandished Confederate flags, clothing with anti-Semitic messages, and other hateful symbols in the halls of the Capitol building, erected gallows on the Capitol campus, and carried zip ties and firearms. Pipe bombs and other deadly weapons were also discovered in the vicinity of the Capitol. Custodial and support staff endured this attack and still had to complete their work, cleaning and repairing the damage just hours later.

Feeling anxiety, fear, anger, numbness, and other emotions are common after an event like this. We are grateful for the work you have done up to this point to provide support and resources to Congressional staff, support staff, and U.S. Capitol Police. Much more can be done, however, to ensure that personnel feel safe and have their emotional needs addressed.

As Members of Congress, it is our responsibility to ensure resources are in place to help our community heal. To that end, we ask you to continue providing critical services and resources to the extent possible. Additionally, we strongly urge you to work with us, the House Administration Committee, and House Appropriations Committee to expand the services and resources you provide. This should include ensuring the following:

- Having the staff and funding necessary to respond to the current and projected needs;
- Having resources necessary to help non-Congressional employees who may be affected, such as food service contractors, military liaisons, press, and other contractors;
- Having culturally competent services and resources for all employees, including those for whom English is a second language; and
- Any other reforms to make the OEA more accessible and available to all employees.

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working with you on these issues.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



French Hill
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Jesús “Chuy” García
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
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Rashida Tlaib
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David Trone
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Lauren Underwood
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Juan Vargas
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Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress