

**Oversight and Government Reform Full Committee Hearing 02/12/15**  
***U.S. Secret Service: Identifying Steps to Restore the Protective Agency***

**Chairman Jason Chaffetz Statement (as prepared)**

I am pleased to be holding this hearing today with Ranking Member Cummings. Reforming and restoring the United States Secret Service is not a partisan issue. I firmly believe the united front Mr. Cummings and I have presented has driven change within the agency. Together we have sent letters, attended closed door meetings and briefings with the Secret Service, and asked for change.

Today the senior leadership at the Secret Service looks much different than it did when we began examining the agency. In fact, we originally planned to have both the Acting Director and the Deputy Director appear before us today on a second panel, but with the recent announcement of the Deputy Director's departure from the agency, we agreed to postpone the agency's appearance before our Committee for another day.

We want to thank Acting Director Clancy and Secretary Jeh Johnson for being consistently available to us. We also applaud Secretary Jeh Johnson for assembling a panel, which we will hear from today, to examine the Secret Service.

The Panel's report did not mince words, did not skirt the issues, and provided serious recommendations. According to the Panel's findings, the Secret Service is "starved for leadership" and lacks a "culture of accountability." The Panel recommended the next Secret Service Director appointed by the President come from outside of the agency.

The Panel's report states, and I agree, that "...at this time in the agency's history, the need for Service experience is outweighed by what the Service needs today: dynamic leadership that can move the Service forward into a new era and drive change in the organization."

The report goes on to say, "Only a director from outside the Service, removed from organizational traditions and personal relationships, will be able to do the honest top-to-bottom reassessment" necessary inside of the agency.

Alarming, the Panel found that no one inside the Secret Service has ever taken the time to sit down and figure out how much it would cost to protect the President. In fact, the Panel found "no one has really looked at how much the mission, done right, actually costs."

This is simply unacceptable.

Combined with other limitations like insufficient training, antiquated technology, and an insular attitude – these factors have all contributed to recent security breaches. The fact the Panel made these findings is not surprising.

Over the past several years, a series of security breaches have raised a number of questions about the effectiveness of the agency.

- In 2011, a man fired a high power rifle at the White House while President Obama's daughter was in the residence.
  - The Secret Service was unable to confirm that shots had been fired at the White House until a housekeeper found broken glass four days later.
  - The shooter eluded capture for five days, traveling all the way to Pennsylvania where he was eventually apprehended by State Police.
- On September 19th of last year a man – with a partially amputated foot and a limp – was able to jump the White House fence.
  - Contrary to initial reports this man made it all the way to the Green Room, armed with a three-and-a-half inch serrated knife.
- The same month an armed security contractor was allowed on an elevator with the President, unbeknownst to the Secret Service and in violation of protocol.
  - We still don't know where the breakdown was that enabled this to happen.
- Last month a gunman fired shots near the Vice President's residence in Delaware. Security cameras were unable to capture the gunman.
  - To this day we don't know who fired those shots.
- Just two weeks ago, a drone crashed into a tree on the White House lawn, highlighting a security vulnerability that we must shore up immediately.

By examining these security breaches, we can find out what went wrong, and then we can fix it. Together with Ranking Member Cummings this Committee has and will continue to examine issues surrounding leadership, culture, budget, training, technology, and protocol.

Congress needs to know why the Secret Service has one of the lowest levels of employee morale in the federal government.

We have to get this right, and we have to get it right, right now.

The Panel made a number of recommendations, but the main priority was clear. The first step to success within the Secret Service is new leadership from outside the agency. I look forward to discussing the Panel's good work today and hearing how the recommendations were developed.