



**TESTIMONY OF**

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**For a hearing on**

*“Examining the Effectiveness of the Federal Protective Service: Are  
Federal Buildings Secure”*

**Before**

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Titus, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Protective Service (FPS) regarding FPS's critical mission to protect and secure federal government employees and the facilities in which they work.

My name is Kris Cline, and I was appointed as the Director of FPS in January 2023. As Director, I am the Senior Law Enforcement Officer responsible for the protection of a nationwide portfolio of buildings, grounds, and properties that are owned, occupied, or secured by the Federal Government, as well as the persons on those properties. FPS is a recognized, award-winning leader in law enforcement and facility protection. It is my immense honor to lead the agency's great men and women, and I am inspired by their dedication, innovation, and achievements every day.

Security of federal facilities is an important subject, and I am pleased to join the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and General Services Administration (GSA) for today's hearing. GAO's continued efforts to review our programs and identify recommendations that improve the security we provide are invaluable. Similarly, GSA is a critical partner in our shared vision of a safe and secure federal workforce. No matter how many times we get things right, it only takes one successful attempt by our adversaries to negate our efforts, which is why FPS relies on our federal law enforcement officers, armed contract security guards we call Protective Security Officers (PSOs), technology, training, and partnerships to detect and deter crime and keep people safe.

## **FPS History**

In 1790, six "night watchmen" were hired to protect government buildings in our newly designated nation's capital. Over time, a network of security guards evolved and was known as the U.S. Special Police. In 1971, the "Federal Protective Service" was established within GSA. FPS was transferred to DHS on March 1, 2003, pursuant to the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (6 U.S.C. §§ 101 et. seq) in recognition of its role in securing the homeland. FPS now resides under the Management Directorate within DHS Headquarters. FPS is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and it is organized across the nation into three zones and 11 regions for command and control and mission execution.

FPS has a presence in every U.S. state and territory and is charged to protect more than 8,500 federal, non-military facilities and more than 1.4 million people who daily work, visit, or conduct business at these facilities. Our mission serves 66 federal agencies, ensuring safe work environments for federal employees performing essential duties that impact day-to-day lives of Americans. FPS continually adapts to meet threats, working with our federal, state, and local partners to ensure complete security coverage and efficient communication to protect people and property.

## **FPS Authorities**

FPS has broad law enforcement authorities and jurisdiction to prevent, investigate, mitigate, and protect against threats to federal property and people on federal grounds. Section 1706 of the *Homeland Security Act*, 40 U.S. Code § 1315, grants FPS traditional police powers, including the authority to enforce federal laws and make arrests. In certain circumstances, FPS enters into agreements and utilizes other federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities and laws to protect federal property more fully.

The Preventing Emerging Threats Act of 2018 authorized the Secretary of Homeland Security with the statutory authority to counter credible threats from unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). Within DHS, this authority was granted to FPS, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Secret Service. Authorized actions include detecting, identifying, monitoring, and tracking UAS; disrupting control of UAS; seizing or exercising control of UAS; or confiscating UAS. DHS's current Countering UAS (C-UAS) authority is set to expire on October 1, 2024. Any lapse in DHS's current C-UAS authority would entail serious risks for our homeland security and FPS's missions. Specifically, FPS would have to cease existing C-UAS operations. Congressional action is required to prevent any lapse in C-UAS authority on October 1, 2024.

### **FPS Workforce**

FPS is allocated 1,642 positions to execute our expansive mission. Of these, 1,140 are sworn federal law enforcement officers who perform vital functions, including enforcement of federal laws and regulations, conducting investigations into crimes and threats, conducting comprehensive security assessments to identify vulnerabilities at federal facilities, developing and implementing protective countermeasures, leading explosives detection canine teams, and providing uniformed police presence and response in support of the DHS and FPS missions. Our law enforcement officers risk their lives every day. Notably, amid the February 21, 2024, mass shooting during the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl parade, FPS law enforcement officers, assigned to protect nearby federal buildings, selflessly ran toward the gunshots, and detained two armed suspects to protect the public.

Whether protecting U.S. Courthouses, Social Security Administration customer service centers, and all types of federal facilities in between, the level of dedication to our country's security comes with great sacrifice. Seven sworn FPS officers have died in the performance of their duties since FPS's formation. These tragedies serve as a stark reminder that the men and women who wear the FPS uniform are prepared to sacrifice all in service to our country and government, and we must ensure they are supported in every way possible to respond to and prevent threats against our nation's people, property, and institutions. FPS also employs more than 500 professional staff who provide essential mission functions, such as: intelligence analysis; human capital, financial, contractual and information technology management; security training; and additional disciplines.

### **Responding to the Current Threat Environment**

Over the past year, we saw increased incidents at federal properties involving arson, burglary, robbery, larceny, motor vehicle theft, assault on government employees, and threats to harm government employees. Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 saw a 138 percent increase over FY 2022 in demonstrations at federal properties, a 19 percent increase in alarm response incidents, a 29 percent increase in disorderly conduct incidents, an 84 percent increase in violations of building rules and regulations, a 24 percent increase in assault on government employees, and a 13 percent increase in the number of inappropriate communications directed towards government employees.

We remain focused on harnessing efforts to counter these ever-evolving threats to federal facilities and keeping people safe. In FY 2023, FPS investigated 362 threats that led to seven convictions, 25 arrests, and 10 citations for federal, state, and municipal penal code violations, U.S. District Court Notices of Violations, and criminal charges under Title 18 of the U.S. Code. To effectively operate in the current

environment and moving into the future, FPS is emphasizing innovation and reinforcing our standards of excellence. We elevated our criminal intelligence capabilities by providing real-time operational intelligence and are sharing law enforcement intelligence with our officers and PSOs as well as with federal, state, and local partners to create an added layer of operational protection and insight.

### **Securing Federal Facilities**

FPS utilizes a layered approach to protect and secure federal facilities across the Nation, including our territories.

Facility Security Assessments (FSAs) represent a cornerstone of our layered approach to comprehensive security. Our inspectors are rigorously trained to identify and mitigate potential facility vulnerabilities. Working with security specialists, countermeasure experts, and FPS leadership, our inspectors provide detailed reports to Facility Security Committees (FSC) and facility tenants as our expert recommendations for adequate building security and coverage. FPS designed and implemented the Modified Infrastructure Security Tool, or MIST, which is a certified and industry recognized, award-winning assessment program, to support evaluation and identification of potential threats at FPS-secured locations. Using both our inspectors' institutional knowledge and MIST's high-performance capabilities ensures our assessments are a trusted resource for providing our customers with the best possible security enhancement recommendations. In FY 2023, FPS made 4,102 recommendations to add or upgrade countermeasures at FPS-protected federal facilities. FPS also assisted the U.S. Marshals at Federal Courthouses nationwide during many high-profile judicial proceedings.

As with our relationship with GSA, FPS works closely with DHS's Interagency Security Committee (ISC), the organization that creates standards for security measures at federal facilities. Having a membership role on the ISC gives FPS access to and support from other leaders in the government security industry. In fact, Executive Order 14111 names the FPS Director as a permanent voting member of the ISC.

While FPS's recommendations address security enhancements, the ISC Risk Management Process requires the agency or agencies to accept and implement received FPS recommendations. GAO issued a report in May 2023, examining FPS customer agencies' perspective on why they do not consistently implement recommended security measures to improve security at FPS-protected facilities. FPS continues to look for new strategies to support customer agencies and various FSCs responsible for making security countermeasure decisions that take into account risks associated with not implementing FPS security recommendations. One example of our approach is through evolving the FSA processes and associated training to enable our staff to develop more detailed cost estimates for recommended security measure improvements.

We are also working with GSA and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to implement the April 2024 GSA order requiring occupant agencies in GSA's federally owned facilities to provide funding to maintain and update Visual Surveillance Systems (VSS) and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS), and to correct deficiencies identified by FPS of these two systems. The GSA order also requires all agencies that are part of an FSC in a multi-occupant facility, and the occupant agency in a single-occupant facility, to fund their portion of the purchase, installation, and replacement of VSS and IDS through a security work authorization agreement with FPS. In consultation with GSA, FPS identified

and prioritized GSA-controlled federally owned facilities for FPS to implement VSS and IDS updates or new installation projects. We believe the order will enhance the security of the buildings we protect and those who work at and visit those facilities. Working with GSA, FPS developed a five-year plan to conduct these installation projects at 467 facilities, and work is underway now to start procurement actions on 43 projects during first quarter of FY 2025.

Our most visible countermeasure are our armed contracted PSOs, who are in daily contact with our federal facility customers and visitors and are the front line of security in federal facilities. As such, PSOs put their lives at risk to accomplish FPS's mission. In recent years, FPS contracted PSOs were instrumental in thwarting attacks at several facilities, notably the FBI Cincinnati Field Office in Cincinnati, Ohio, in August 2022; the Edmund S. Muskie Federal Building in Augusta, Maine, in April 2022; and a Social Security Administration office in Norfolk, Virginia, in February 2021. Sadly, FPS has lost three PSOs in the line of duty since 2015, all of whom were tragically killed protecting federal facilities and employees.

FPS oversees a PSO program that utilizes more than 90 contracts and is valued at \$1.4 billion. Through this program, FPS works closely with commercial security vendors across the country to staff and train approximately 15,000 PSOs at 6,600 security posts. PSO vendors, as with many other industries, experience challenges in fully staffing their contracts resulting in open posts. Our manning analysis indicates FPS PSOs are on-post and available approximately 99.7 percent of scheduled post hours; however, we are sensitive to the concerns of all unstaffed requirements particularly when a service agency cannot open due to security gaps. In these instances, FPS is assessing the impact and alternative solutions, including having an FPS Officer take on those responsibilities.

In addition to manpower availability, FPS must also verify and validate the quality of PSO services being delivered. To achieve this, FPS conducts a variety of compliance checks to provide oversight of the PSO program and individual contracts. Post visits and inspections provide an opportunity for FPS law enforcement officers to provide on-the-job training to PSOs in various aspects of their duties. Post inspections are formal inspections of PSOs and PSO posts to ensure contractual compliance. FPS continues to implement the Post Tracking System to automate and create efficiency for FPS and PSO vendor personnel.

FPS manages a National Weapons Detection Program to teach PSOs how to utilize technical countermeasures to screen personnel and packages for dangerous weapons and explosives. Since January 2024, FPS PSOs have prevented more than 346,000 dangerous and prohibited items (e.g., firearms, bladed items, club-like items, flammable items, and disabling chemicals) from entering federal facilities, but it is equally important to determine where prohibited items may not be detected by a PSO. To validate a PSO's capability to detect weapons and explosives, FPS employees operate a Covert Security Testing (CST) Program. These tests are conducted randomly and examine the ability of the PSOs to detect prohibited items from entering the buildings. Test results are shared with PSO vendors who are required to take appropriate steps to retrain personnel when necessary. FPS also reviews the CST data to look for trends to improve the program nationally. Further, as new threats are identified, updated guidance and requirements are built into the program to drive continuous improvement.

**FPS Funding**

FPS does not receive a direct appropriation – the agency is entirely funded by the fees charged to the federal departments and agencies we protect to conduct our mission. There are three components to the fees charged to our customers: 1) a Basic Security Fee, which is the primary source of funding for FPS operations, and provides funding for statutory and regulatory service requirements from activities associated with law enforcement, threat management and information sharing, protective and criminal investigations, and risk management; 2) agency-specific fees for security services performed for an individual customer through Security Work Authorization (SWA) agreements, as well as other reimbursable activities; and 3) building-specific fees for security services to implement and maintain security requirements specifically designed for a particular facility.

**Conclusion**

FPS continues to demonstrate its capabilities to deter and respond to threats directed toward federal employees, visitors, and facilities. As the law enforcement agency responsible for securing these sacred governmental institutions, FPS personnel must maintain constant vigilance to ensure the continuity of the U.S. Government and our great country. I am very proud of all that FPS has accomplished in its rich 53-year history, and while there are ways to improve what we are doing, I know our talented and committed workforce will always ensure we are ready to meet our mission.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the distinguished members of this Subcommittee for allowing me the opportunity to testify today, and I am pleased to answer your questions.