

*Opening Statement of Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency*

**Joint Hearing:
“Examining Ongoing Challenges at the U.S. Secret Service and the
Government Wide Implications”**

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

I also want to thank the men and women of the Secret Service for their diligence and hard work during the recent Papal Visit and the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly. As a Member of the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am well aware of the gravity of the Secret Service’s mission, particularly regarding its duty to protect the President along with foreign dignitaries, and to oversee security at major events domestically and abroad.

While I am confident that the overwhelming majority of the men and women of the Secret Service both take their jobs seriously and express the highest grade of professionalism, I am appalled by the recent reports of operational lapses and poor judgment by senior level management.

It is obvious that there is a widespread lack of consistent leadership and management within the Secret Service. However, this did not just begin under Director Clancy’s leadership. These issues have plagued the Secret Service for a number of years. Last year, Secretary Johnson commissioned an independent panel to evaluate the Secret Service.

According to the Panel’s report, the Secret Service needed to undergo a cultural change, and that included having leadership that was capable of fostering greater accountability among all staff, of modernizing administrative functions, including adjusting the hours Special Agents and Uniformed Division personnel must work, and improving their training.

After the Panel dismantled, the Inspector General continued to corroborate their findings. In 2015 alone, the Inspector General has issued two memoranda regarding misconduct among senior Secret Service personnel and two management advisories.

The most recent management advisory was issued on October 21, when personnel were found sleeping on the job. The Inspector General found that staffing and scheduling practices of the Secret Service contributes to officer fatigue and this could pose immediate danger to protectees. Instead of addressing the root of the problem of having overworked agents, the Secret Service considered the findings an isolated incident.

Furthermore, the Inspector General’s most recent management advisory on Improper Database Access at the Secret Service shows that the agency has a deeply rooted cultural problem that is not being addressed. The Inspector General found that over 40 agents improperly accessed the personnel records of a Member of Congress, through an antiquated database.

According to the Inspector General’s findings, Secret Service leadership including the Director and the Deputy Director did not recognize the severity of the situation and dismissed the data breach as a rumor. The Inspector General found that instead of dealing with the situation, the Director of the Secret Service discussed the improper database access with former directors at a luncheon.

What is even far more glaring is the Inspector General found that the Assistant Director of Training—appointed by Director Clancy to manage and direct all aspects of personnel career development and operational capacity training for the agency—suggested that the information contained in this database be leaked to embarrass the Congressman.

Mr. Chairman, while this incident is reprehensible, it is not beneficial for us to be here today to speak about it in isolation. We must have a broader, productive discussion about the Secret Service's management and culture.

Finally, I know the Secret Service cannot improve without help from Congress. Therefore, I need to know to from the Director what he needs from us to not only make the adequate changes for staffing but also the technological advancements for personnel databases, but I also need to know from the Director what his plans for the agency are, when he has top level management that turns a blind eye instead of addressing issues.