

**STATEMENT OF SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PATRICK LEAHY (D-Vt.)  
ON INTRODUCTION OF THE SENATE SECURITY SUPPLEMENTAL  
MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021**

I rise on the Senate Floor yet again to urge that the Senate take up and pass an emergency supplemental to deal with the fallout from the violent insurrection that took place at the seat of our Democracy on January 6th. I have been making this call for two months now and am sad to say that I am beginning to feel like a broken record. Just days before this chamber left for the July 4th recess I sounded the alarm that time was running out. This remains true today. The Senate only has a few weeks to act.

If Congress does nothing, the Capitol Police will deplete salaries funding sometime in August. This means that the men and women who protect the seat of Democracy, members of Congress and their staff, and the support staff who keep this building running, may face furloughs and significant impacts to the Department's programs and mission asset support, including the hiring of new sworn officers. These are the same women and men who fought, bled, and died for everything this hallowed building stands for on January 6.

And we owe them more than just a paycheck. As a result of this budget crunch, purchases of critical equipment, like respirators, ballistic helmets, protective gear, and training have been delayed. Efforts to implement the Department's wellness program to address mental health concerns following January 6 have been put on the back burner. We must stand with them now, as they stood with us then, and pass an emergency appropriations to address these shortfalls.

And it is not only the Capitol Police that we owe. In the days after January 6, tens of thousands of men and women from the National Guard – from around the country – came to secure our nation's Capital ahead of the inauguration and beyond. Like many of you I thanked them for their service. But unless Congress acts, the National Guard will be forced to cut training they need to prepare for overseas deployments and response at home to make up for costs incurred as a result of January 6.

We did not budget for an insurrection. But it has been 187 days since a violent mob stormed the very chamber we are standing in now. My memory of the growing roar of that mob echoing down the hallway as the Capitol Police whisked us to safety has not faded, nor has it faded from the consciousness of the American public.

It has been 53 days since the House passed its own security supplemental – without a single Republican vote. I provided my Republican colleagues with a proposal to address these pressing needs and many others over a month ago and urged that we begin negotiations in earnest. Only now have they come to the table with a proposal. Unfortunately, it is a proposal that does not provide the appropriate resources to secure the Capitol or address the urgent needs that have arisen since that day.

The images of the mob breaking through windows and forcing their way through doors exposed a truth. The Capitol and its office buildings are not an impenetrable fortress. The windows can

be broken, and the doors can be breached. This complex is no longer shrouded with the protection of belief that it is not possible to storm these halls. Much like the windows, that protection was shattered and broadcast to the world on January 6. The emperor has no clothes, and the Republican proposal would not adequately address our vulnerabilities.

I have been clear that I do not want to militarize our Capitol in the wake of January 6<sup>th</sup>. It is important that the Capitol campus remain open for citizens from all walks of life to come and enjoy. It is their democracy, after all. But we can, and we must, invest in securing the Capitol in a way that will address our vulnerabilities, protect members and staff, and still keep us open to the public. I am confident we can strike that balance.

We also have a responsibility to pay for the unforeseen costs of investigating and prosecuting these violent insurgents. The FBI, U.S. Marshals, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, and numerous other law enforcement agencies hurried to defend the Capitol at the urgent call, and we are thankful for it. Federal prosecutors have charged more than 500 people in more than 40 states with participating in the attack, and arrests continue almost daily. We have a responsibility to support these agencies in dealing with January 6 and its aftermath, but this is not addressed in the Republican proposal.

And it should not be lost on us that we were not the ones to sweep up the shattered glass and scrub the floors and walls of this Building on that day and throughout that night. We cannot turn our backs on the dedicated public servants who had to process the trauma of that day as they boarded up shattered windows and broken doors. A trauma that came on the heels of a yearlong pandemic.

It should not be lost on us that during the darkest hours of the pandemic these are the same public servants who came to work to clean our offices, ensuring our safety and the safety of our staff. We have a responsibility to pay for these and other costs that were incurred as a result of the pandemic on the Capitol complex and its staff. Just as we did not budget for an insurrection, we did not budget for a global pandemic and we have been forced to rob Peter to pay Paul to keep our Congressional community safe and healthy. The scars of COVID have not healed in our own Capitol community and have not been addressed in the Republican proposal.

Finally, we cannot ignore the world around us. We have another emergency brewing, this one in Afghanistan, and we have a moral responsibility to address it. We must ensure that the brave Afghans who stood with America are not abandoned as we conclude our mission in that country, and there is bipartisan support for this effort. We made a promise to the Afghans who risked their own lives to support and protect our troops and our country. As a country, our word is our bond, and we all agree, Republicans and Democrats, that bond will not be broken on our watch. If we do not address this now, then when? The bill I am introducing today includes funds to care for the inevitable flood of Afghan refugees to neighboring countries, and an increase in the number of Afghan Special Immigrant Visas. They must be included in this package, because the crisis is unfolding now.

There is no dispute about the urgency and importance of standing with our Afghan allies, but regrettably the Republican proposal fails to address this matter.

A violent insurrection happened. A pandemic happened. And the President announced the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan. These events created urgent needs that must be met.

My Republican colleagues are proposing that we deal with these problems piecemeal, addressing some problems now and others at an undefined later date. But a piecemeal approach that jumps from one problem to the next is no way to govern. I have been here long enough to know that a promise to do it “later” is no promise at all.

It has been 53 days since the House passed a security supplemental, and only now are my Republican colleagues coming to the negotiating table. I will not wait another 53 more before we address these other pressing matters. We cannot govern by crisis, and we cannot legislate at the convenience of one party.

This is why I am introducing my comprehensive proposal today. I shared this proposal with my Republican colleagues more than a month ago and I am sharing it with the full Senate today. It addresses all of the needs arising from the tragic events of January 6<sup>th</sup> and the global pandemic. This is the best way forward. We owe it to our members, our staff, the Capitol Police, the National Guard, and numerous others. We must act. And we must act in a comprehensive way. We only have one shot at this, and we have a responsibility to get it right.

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