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February 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

I write to request a classified briefing for Members of Congress on the ongoing threats to the Capitol complex, Members of Congress, and staff. In addition, Members of Congress deserve a full accounting of what was known leading up to the events on January 6<sup>th</sup>, what security measures were taken, and whether effective agency coordination occurred.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, over 6,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen from 26 states and two territories remained in the National Capitol region in support of civil disturbance operations; this is down from a total of 15,000 guard members deployed to the Capitol in January. In addition, extensive barbed wire topped fencing surrounds the Capitol complex and several blocks beyond and is guarded by soldiers and airmen carrying deadly weapons. Our national Capitol, the city and the building, now more closely resemble a foreign war zone rather than the seat of democracy.

Let me be clear, the events of January 6<sup>th</sup> were horrific, undemocratic, and unacceptable. The United States Capitol Police (USCP) was clearly unprepared for what it faced. This does not diminish the brave actions by many officers that day, and they continue to need and deserve our support. Sadly, several USCP lives were lost as a result of this event, and we will never forget their courage and sacrifice. However, due to the significant security failures, Members of Congress deserve to know what Congressional, Capitol Police, and other federal agency leadership knew leading up to this day.

I am pleased that Lieutenant General Russel Honoré began a review of the Capitol security posture immediately following January 6<sup>th</sup>. Lt. Gen. Honoré ably led the military relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina. I knew and worked with him throughout the response to Hurricane Katrina and greatly respect his opinion on matters of such magnitude. I would welcome the opportunity to hear his assessment of the Capitol security posture and the need for ongoing fencing and National Guard deployment to the Capitol region.

If Members of Congress have access to the same information as Congressional and Capitol Police leadership, we may make different decisions. Rather than keep us divided and in the dark, we

should be offered the opportunity to unify behind the protection of this great institution. Absent an imminent threat, it is imperative that we reopen this symbol of democracy as it stands for the American people.

Allow Members of Congress the ability to receive the same information available to you so that we can make more informed decisions for ourselves, our staff, and our constituents. To that end, I request an immediate classified briefing with Lt. Gen. Honoré or other appropriate officials on the current threats to the Capitol complex, the ongoing security posture, and a full accounting of what was known leading up to January 6<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael C. Burgess", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress