

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 2, 2020

Gregory T. Monahan  
Acting Chief  
U.S. Park Police  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, Room 3325  
Washington, DC 20240

We require further information about alarming reports indicating that U.S. Park Police were among the law enforcement officers who launched a violent attack on peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park to clear the way for President Trump's photo opportunity at St. John's Episcopal Church. Officers are credibly accused of launching flash bangs, tear gas, and shooting rubber pellets at unarmed, nonviolent protesters.

This grossly irresponsible action put bystanders, unarmed protesters, clergy, and other law enforcement agents in danger. The Arlington County Board and Police Chief immediately withdrew their officers from the District out of concern for their officers' "health and safety, and that of the people around them, for a purpose not worthy of our mutual aid obligations."<sup>1</sup>

Our national parks are public spaces intended to provide all Americans with places for respite, reflection, and civic discourse. Unfortunately, the Trump administration has used U.S. Park Police to advance the president's agenda of oppression, injustice, and crass political opportunism, including sending them to the southern border to help build a racist, wasteful, and ineffective wall. This most recent example of violence committed against unarmed civilians follows the fatal shooting of Bijan Ghaisar, an unarmed motorist on the G.W. Parkway.

The men and women of the U.S. Park Police are public servants charged to protect and serve, and they are accountable to Congress and the American people. They must not be used as a tool to perpetuate institutional racism or commit violence against the American people.

Please have your staff contact Brandon Bragato or Vic Edgerton of the House Natural Resources Committee staff to arrange a briefing, to be conducted remotely, for members of the committee to examine the role of the U.S. Park Police during the June 1 incident.

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<sup>1</sup> Dibble, M. (2020, June 2). 'A purpose not worthy of our mutual aid': Arlington officials call back police officers assisting in DC. *The Washington Examiner*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/a-purpose-not-worthy-of-our-mutual-aid-arlington-officials-call-back-police-officers-assisting-in-dc>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chair  
House Committee on Natural Resources

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra Haaland". The signature is very fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Debra Haaland  
Chair  
House Subcommittee on National Parks,  
Forests, and Public Lands