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Violence Against Members of Congress and Their Staff: Selected Examples and Congressional Responses

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Summary

Questions about the personal security and safety of Members of Congress and their staffs are of enduring concern for the House, Senate, and the United States Capitol Police (USCP). Broader interest in the media and among the public arises in the aftermath of incidents such as the June 14, 2017, attack on at least 17 Members of Congress, several staff, USCP officers, and members of the public in Alexandria, Virginia. In that incident, a Member was critically wounded, and others were injured during a shooting that occurred as Members were practicing for an annual congressional baseball game.

Official records, supplemented from available news accounts, suggest that there have been at least 20 instances of attacks against Members since 1789. In 10 instances, the attacks failed, were thwarted, or resulted in no serious injuries to Members. Another five incidents resulted in the wounding of at least nine Members. Finally, five instances each resulted in the death of a Member. In these examples, it appears that individual Members were targeted on 17 occasions. There have been three incidents in which more than one Member was targeted, including the Alexandria attack.

In some of the incidents of attacks on Members or in the Capitol, including the Alexandria incident, some congressional staff were also affected. Two incidents resulted in fatalities, including a 1998 incident in which a gunman entered the Capitol and killed two USCP officers, and a 2011 shooting at a congressional event in Tucson, Arizona, which resulted in the death of a congressional staff member.

On a number of occasions, incidents of violence involving Members of Congress or congressional staff have led to congressional legislative or administrative responses changing policy and practice. These include a ban on dueling or challenging to duel within the District of Columbia; the enactment of law making it a federal offense to assassinate, kidnap, or assault a Member of Congress or Member-elect; and the initiation of congressional mail screening.

In the 115th Congress (2017-2018), several legislative proposals have been introduced related to potential response to violence against Members of Congress or their staffs.

Citing concerns about Member security in the House and in district offices, the House on June 27, 2017, adopted H.Res. 411 to increase the 2017 Member Representational Allowance for each House Member office by $25,000.

H.R. 3298, the Wounded Officers Recovery Act of 2017, was enacted into law on August, 4, 2017, as P.L. 117-45. The law authorizes the payments from the United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund to USCP employees who sustain serious injuries in the line-of-duty.

Other related measures have also been introduced, including H.R. 2940, the Congressional Self-Defense Act; H.R. 2945, the Congressional Personal Safety Act; and H.R. 2951, to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the United States, with exceptions. If enacted, the measures would allow Members of Congress to carry concealed weapons subject to different qualifications and limitations.

In addition to legislative proposals, various administrative efforts were undertaken in response to the Alexandria shooting, including an advisory opinion from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) regarding the use of campaign funds by Members of the House for residential security systems, and an update to the Members' Congressional Handbook to provide additional guidance for updating security equipment and measures.

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Questions about the personal security and safety of Members of Congress and their staffs are of enduring concern for the House, Senate, and the United States Capitol Police (USCP). Broader interest in the media and among the public arises in the aftermath of incidents such as the June 14, 2017, attack on at least 17 Members of Congress,[1] several staff, USCP officers, and members of the public in Alexandria, Virginia. In that incident, a Member was critically wounded, and others, including other Members,[2] a congressional staffer, USCP officers, and a member of the public were injured during a shooting that occurred as Members were practicing for an annual congressional baseball game.

There is concern about the level and extent of threats against Members.[3] In a mid-June, 2017 letter to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), House Sergeant at Arms (HSAA) Paul D. Irving stated that USCP had investigated approximately 950 threatening communications against Members of Congress since January 1, 2017, and compared that total to what he stated were 902 similar investigations occurring in all of 2016.[4] Since consistent, more detailed threat information is not publicly available, however, it cannot be determined whether the number of threats against Members and congressional staff has increased, decreased, or remained the same over longer periods of time.

Violence Against Members of Congress

Since 1789, 12,244 individuals have served in Congress.[5] Official records, supplemented from available news accounts,[6] suggest that there have been at least 20 instances of attacks against

[1] Media accounts of how many Members and staff were present during the attack vary, and in some instances contradict statements of Members subsequently stating their whereabouts during the incident. Based on an assessment of various sources, it appears that at least 17, and no more than 20, Members were present on the field at the time of the shooting.

[2] Among those who sustained minor injuries, one Member was treated for an ankle injury, while others reportedly sustained bruises and abrasions seeking shelter during the shooting. See Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Joint Statement on Shooting in Alexandria, Virginia," press release, June 14, 2017, https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/washingtondc/news/press-releases/joint-statement-on-shooting-in-alexandria-virginia; and Kyle Cheney, Heather Caygle, and Elana Schor, "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me," *Politico Magazine*, June 17, 2017, at http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/06/17/shooting-scalise-congressional-baseball-game-practice-oral-history-215269.

[3] Matthew Daly, "Increasing Threats unnerve lawmakers rattled by shooting," *Washington Post*, June 17, 2017, at http://wapo.st/2sbLr1u?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.a56ec8f51e28; Harriet Sinclair, "Scalise Shooting Prompts Lawmakers to fight for better security as politicians admit they face threats," *Newsweek*, June 15, 2017, at http://www.newsweek.com/scalise-shooting-security-guns-hodgkinson-trump-baseball-cedric-richmond-626397; and Lisa Mascaro, "Members of Congress say they have faced death threats, want more security," *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 2017, at http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-members-of-congress-face-death-threats-1497471038-htmlstory.html.

[4] Letter from Paul D. Irving, Sergeant at Arms, House of Representatives, to Steven T. Walther, Chairman, Federal Election Commission, June 21, 2017, https://www.fec.gov/files/legal/aos/83377.pdf. HSAA is the chief law enforcement official for the House, but USCP exercises law enforcement, security, and investigative duties for both the House and Senate. It is unclear whether the number of investigations of threatening communications described in the letter targeted Members of the House alone, or included Senators.

[5] These numbers do not include the 177 nonvoting Delegates and Resident Commissioners who have served in the House. Information about all individuals who have served in Congress is available in the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, a website maintained by the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate at http://bioguide.congress.gov. Also, see Total Members of the House & State Representation, at http://history.house.gov/Institution/Seniority/Total-Members/Total-Members/, and a chronological list of Senators, at http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/chronlist.pdf.

[6] Official records and news accounts may not identify all instances in which a Member of Congress was involved in violent circumstances.

Members, summarized in **Table 1**.[7] In 10 instances, the attacks failed, were thwarted, or resulted in no serious injuries to Members. Another five incidents resulted in the wounding of at least nine Members. Finally, five instances each resulted in the death of a Member.

In these examples, it appears that individual Members were targeted on 17 occasions. There have been three incidents in which more than one Member was targeted. These include the Alexandria attack, in which at least 17 Members were present, a 2001 biologic attack directed at two Senators, but affecting numerous other Members and staff in the Hart and Dirksen Senate Office Buildings, and a 1954 shooting in the House chamber where a quorum call had registered the presence of 243 Representatives just prior to the incident.[8]

Identifying examples of violence against Members of Congress can be a complicated, complex undertaking. As political figures and national leaders, part of the role of Members is to participate in public discussion about a wide range of topics, including war, peace, and policies affecting the future of the nation and its citizens. Some of those issues might incite violent responses between Members, or between Members and the general public. In other circumstances, Members may be involved in violent activities that are unrelated to their official duties, due to personal circumstances,[9] or because they were the random target of criminal activity.[10] The focus of this report is on identified incidents in which Members appear to have been the target of an attack by someone outside of Congress, presumably due to their role as a Member of Congress, or, in one instance, while seeking other office while serving in Congress. This report excludes incidents in which Members voluntarily participated in violent activities, such as war service as a combatant,

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[7] There are also several examples of unsuccessful attempted attacks, including the escape of Representative Charles Pelham of North Carolina, who in the late summer of 1874 was reportedly compelled to escape his district after learning that a group of citizens who disagreed with some of his policy positions had assembled, allegedly to attempt to kill him. See "Terrorism in the South," *New York Times*, September 1, 1874, p. 1. In another example, Martin R. Kemmerer, on December 13, 1932, brandished a hand gun in the House gallery, and without appearing to target anyone, demanded the opportunity to speak. Kemmerer obeyed the demand of Representative Melvin Joseph Maas of Minnesota to drop his weapon to the floor, and was subdued by two visitors and Representative Fiorello La Guardia, of New York, who entered the gallery behind the gunman while Representative Maas, who caught the loaded weapon, and Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts assured other Members that the gunman would not hurt anyone. "Youth With Pistol Terrorizes House," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1932, p. 44; Robert C. Albright, "Gunman Demands Floor to Plead for Relief," *Washington Post*, December 14, 1932, p. 1; and "House Gunman to be Tried," *Washington Post*, December 16, 1932, p. 8.

[8] "Recess," House debate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 100 (March 1, 1954), p. 2434.

[9] Representative Cornelius Hamilton of Ohio was killed on March 4, 1867, by his son, who had exhibited signs of mental illness. See http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000106.

[10] Senator John Cornelius Stennis of Mississippi was shot twice in 1973 during a successful robbery that occurred near his Washington, DC home, reportedly by a group of assailants who had allegedly perpetrated similar crimes against others, and who were unaware of who the Senator was. Martin Weil, "Sen. Stennis is shot in robbery near home: Sen. Stennis badly wounded in robbery near his NW home," *Washington Post*, January 31, 1973, p. A1; "Sen. Stennis shot, robbed," *Chicago Tribune*, January 31, 1973, p. A1. News reports at the time identified three other attempted robberies of Members in the Washington, DC area, including separate 1969 incidents against Senator Leonard Beck (Len) Jordan of Idaho, and Senator Harrison Arlington Williams Jr., of New Jersey, and a 1972 hold up in which Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin reportedly avoided serious injury by telling his assailants a false story that he was about to die of cancer. Barkdoll, R, "Stennis shooting fuels debate on gun curbs, capital crime," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1973, p. A1.

Other examples include a Member who was mugged, apparently at random; another incident during which a Member had a gun pointed at him; and the death of Representative Lawrence Patton McDonald of Georgia, who was killed in the mid-flight destruction of Korean Air Lines flight 007 by the Soviet military over the Sea of Japan on September 1, 1983. See Donald P. Baker and Alfred E. Lewis, "Rep. Michel, Minority Whip, Is Assaulted on Capitol Hill," *Washington Post*, July 22, 1978, p. A1; Martin Weil, "2 Kidnapped, Gun Pointed at Rep Long," July 23, 1974, p. C1; and http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000413.

or other instances, in which some Members voluntarily initiated violent activities, including duels, fistfights, beatings, and other individualized conflicts,[11] sometimes with other Members.[12] Also excluded are incidents in which the Capitol was attacked, but no Members or staff were reported as injured. Examples include the burning of the Capitol during the War of 1812; the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in which the Capitol and Congress may have been a target; and bombings in the Capitol in 1915, 1971, and 1983.[13]

Violence Against Congressional Staff

In some of the incidents of attacks on Members or in the Capitol, including the Alexandria incident, some congressional staff were also affected. Two incidents resulted in fatalities. In 1998, a gunman entered the Capitol, and made his way to the Majority Whip's office, although it is unknown whether the Whip was a target. Two USCP officers, Private First Class Jacob Chestnut, and Detective John Gibson, were killed while responding to the incident. A 2011 shooting at a congressional event in Tucson, Arizona, resulted in the death of a congressional staff member, Gabriel Matthew Zimmerman.

Other violent but non-lethal incidents involving staff have also occurred. In 1905, "Doc" Thompkins, private secretary to Representative John M. Pinckney of Texas, was wounded in a riot in which Representative Pinckney was killed. In 1935, Earle Christenberry, secretary to Senator Huey Pierce Long of Louisiana, opened a package containing a bomb, which did not explode. In the 1954 House chamber shooting, two House doorkeepers suffered injuries. Matthew Fardella was struck in the jaw while subduing the shooters. William Belcher suffered a heart attack following the attack. In a 1978 incident, Jackie Speier, then a staff member working for Representative Leo Joseph Ryan of California, who now serves as a Representative, was critically wounded by gunfire in an attack in Guyana. Representative Ryan was killed in the attack.

Identifying instances of violence against congressional staff poses significant challenges. Because they are private citizens who do not receive extensive, sustained public attention, there is no assurance that all instances of violence against them can be identified. Violence against staff that is reported here happened in the course of their official duties. Identifying all who have served Congress in a staff capacity, and then identifying whether they have suffered violence during that service, presents all but insurmountable obstacles to compiling an exhaustive and authoritative inventory of violent incidents. A consequence of these challenges is that the material presented

[11] See Donald C. Bacon, "Violence in Congress," in *Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, ed. Donald C. Bacon, Roger H. Davidson, and Morton Keller (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), pp. 2062-2066. Specific examples of gun use by Members before and during their congressional service is available in "Gun-Fighters in Congress," *Washington Post*, April 26, 1908, p. M4.

[12] For example, an assault on Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts on the Senate floor on May 22, 1856. Two days before, Senator Sumner delivered a floor speech denouncing the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Representative Preston Smith Brooks of South Carolina saw the speech as a libel on his state and on Senator Andrew Pickens Butler of South Carolina, to whom Mr. Brooks was related. Representative Brooks beat Senator Sumner with a cane, causing injuries from which it took the Senator three years to recover and return to Congress.

[13] The three bombings occurred when Congress was in recess or had adjourned for the day, and the Capitol was largely vacant. See Donald C. Bacon, "Violence Against Congress," in *Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, ed. Donald C. Bacon, Roger H. Davidson, and Morton Keller (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), pp. 2060-2061; "Set Bomb in Capitol, Waited for Explosion," *Boston Daily Globe*, July 4, 1915, p. 1; "July 2, 1915:Bomb Rocks Capitol," United States Senate, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Bomb_Rocks_Capitol.htm; "November 7, 1983: Bomb Explodes in Capitol," United States Senate, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/bomb_explodes_in_capitol.htm.

here cannot with authority be said to comprise all of the attacks on Members of Congress or staff that have ever occurred.

An example of the difficulties presented in chronicling violence against staff is the death of Harold W. "Hal" Rosenthal, a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff member. As noted in **Table 1**, Mr. Rosenthal was killed during an August 11, 1976, terrorist attack at an airport in Istanbul, Turkey. It cannot be determined if the attackers were aware of Mr. Rosenthal's status as a congressional employee. Although contemporary news reports and congressional statements state that Mr. Rosenthal was overseas on official congressional business to Israel,[14] the lack of official records of staff activity render it virtually impossible to determine if Mr. Rosenthal died in Istanbul while in the course of his official duties.

Table 1 summarizes incidents of violence directed against Members or congressional staff. This material should be interpreted with care. Although they have high profiles, and any incident of violence against them is likely to engender considerable attention in contemporary times, it is possible that some incidents of violence involving Members have not been captured. It is also possible that available sources, whether official or non-official, provide limited[15] or conflicting accounts of a Member's involvement in violent activities.[16]

Responses to Violence Against Congress; Policy Changes, Prior Initiatives, and Current Legislation

In the aftermath of some violent incidents against Members and staff, policy proposals and legislation have been considered. On a number of occasions, incidents of violence involving Members of Congress or congressional staff have led to congressional legislative or administrative responses changing policy and practice. These include the following:

- A prohibition of the giving or accepting, within the District of Columbia, of challenges to a duel,[17] following the death of Representative Jonathan Cilley of Maine. Representative Cilley was killed in a duel with Representative William J. Graves of Kentucky on February 24, 1838, in Prince George's County, Maryland.

[14] See "Javits Condemns Terrorists in Death of Aide in Istanbul," *Washington Post,* August 13, 1976, p. A7; Senator Jacob Javits, "Senate Resolution 524—Submission of a resolution regarding the recent terrorist attack at Istanbul Airport," Remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, August 26, 1976, Vol. 122, p. 27924; "Sen. Javits Aide Among 4 Killed in Hijack Attempt," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 1976, p. 2; U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Terrorist Attack At Istanbul Airport,* report to accompany S. Res. 524, 94th Congress, 1st sess., September 16, 1976, S. Report 94-1235 (Washington: GPO, 1976). Rosenthal is listed in the Report of the Secretary of the Senate as a paid employee. Congressional international travel records, if available, are of limited use, since they only reflect travel in which foreign currency provided by the United States is used. It cannot be determined from those records whether Rosenthal's travel was paid for with public or private funds, or whether he was acting in his official capacity during his time in Istanbul.

[15] For example, the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress states that Representative Cornelius Springer Hamilton was "killed by an insane son," but provides no other detail. See http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000106.

[16] For example, some sources suggest that Delegate Henry Wharton Conway of Arkansas Territory, who served in the 18th-20th Congresses (1823-1829) was killed in a duel. See the Political Graveyard website, http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/conrey-coogan.html#RCG0VFR8E. By contrast, the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, which identifies violence visited upon some other Members, states only that Delegate Conway served in the House "until his death near Arkansas Post, Ark., then the Territorial seat of government, November 9, 1827." See http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=C000712.

[17] Chap. XXX (*United States Statutes at Large*), February 20, 1839, 5 Stat. 318.

- Enactment of law in the 91st Congress (1969-1970) making it a federal offense to assassinate, kidnap, or assault a Member of Congress or Member-elect, or to endeavor or conspire to commit such offenses[18] following the assassination of Senator Robert Francis Kennedy of New York on June 6, 1968.[19]
- Initiation of congressional mail screening following the delivery in the fall of 2001 of letters containing anthrax spores to the offices of Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota.[20]

Some violent incidents in which Members may not have been the direct target have also led in part to congressional action. The 1971 and 1983 Capitol bombings were reportedly some of the reasons for the introduction of visitor screening around the chamber galleries, and Capitol entrances, respectively. The attacks of September 11, 2001, were a contributing factor in increases to the number of USCP officers and staff, expedited deployment of a security perimeter planned prior to the attacks, and appropriations funding construction of the Capitol Visitor Center. [21]

Initiatives Considered Following Other Violent Incidents

Other instances of violence against Members and staff have resulted in discussions of various policy proposals. The focus of the proposals have varied, but include attempts to enhance security in the House chamber, expand the criminal penalties for committing violence against Members and staff, or restrict the number of firearms in proximity to Members as they conduct their official and electoral activities.

Following a 1932 incident noted at footnote 7 in which a gunman in the House gallery demanded the opportunity to address the House before surrendering his weapon without incident, Representative Thomas Lindsay Blanton of Texas stated that "…in order to protect the orderly procedure in…" the House, "no one … should be admitted to the gallery of this [c]hamber unless he comes properly vouched for and with a proper purpose...," and that "all this countenancing of cranks and crooks ought to stop. An anarchist has no business in a gallery of this Capitol of the people."[22] No change to rules governing access to House galleries was identified.

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[18] 18 U.S.C. 351. In Senate debate of S. 642, 91st Congress, Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd of West Virginia stated that he "first introduced this bill shortly after the untimely assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy." Senator Byrd stated that the measure was modeled on previously enacted legislation making it a federal offense to assassinate the President or Vice President. Senator Robert Carlyle Byrd, "Congressional Assassination, Kidnapping and Assault," *Congressional Record*, vol. 116 (October 8, 1970), p. 35655.

[19] Senator Kennedy was killed in Los Angeles while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination. http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000114.

[20] Jocelyn Jones Evans, *One Nation Under Siege: Congress, Terrorism, and the Fate of American Democracy* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), pp. 79-108.

[21] See "Arva Marie Johnson Interview – March 1, 2007," Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/interviewee.html?name=johnson-marie&view=docs; "November 7, 1983: Bomb Explodes in Capitol," United States Senate, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/bomb_explodes_in_capitol.htm; United States Senate, Secretary, Historical Office, Oral History, Leonard Ballard, United States Capitol Police, October 20, 1983, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Ballard_interview_7.pdf; and Evans, *One Nation Under Siege*, pp. 26-51, 138-177.

[22] Rep. Thomas Lindsay Blanton, House debate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 76, part 1 (December 14, 1932), p. 432; and "Blanton Demands House Protection," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1932, p. 2.

In the aftermath of shootings in the House in 1954, in which gunmen fired from the galleries into the floor, wounding five Members and two staff, proposals to install transparent shields between visitors' galleries and the House floor were discussed,[23] but no legislative action was taken.

A half century after the 1954 incident, in response to House gallery disturbances and a 2004 incident in the United Kingdom Parliament in which a visitor to their galleries threw a powdery substance at the Prime Minister,[24] in the 108th (2003-2004) and 110th (2007-2008) Congresses, Representative Dan Burton of Indiana introduced H.Res. 665 and H.Res. 432, respectively. The measures would have provided for enclosing the visitors' galleries of the House of Representatives with a transparent and substantial material. The measures were referred to the Committee on House Administration, and no further action was taken.

Following the 2011 Tucson shooting, a number of legislative proposals were introduced in the 112th Congress (2011-2012). Representative Robert A. Brady of Pennsylvania introduced H.R. 318 to amend title 18, United States Code, to punish threats to commit violent crimes against Members of Congress. According to a Dear Colleague letter issued by Representative Brady, the measure would have extended prohibitions of threats against the President, Vice President, Presidents-elect, and Vice Presidents-elect to Members of Congress and Members-elect of Congress.[25] Representative Laura Richardson of California introduced H.R. 367, the Freedom to Serve Without Fear Act of 2011. The measure would have prohibited the knowing possession of a firearm near a venue at which a Member of Congress was performing an official, representational duty, or campaigning for public office. The measure would also have encouraged states to adopt prohibitions similar to federal law to protect state and local elected and appointed officials. Representative Jim Gerlach of Pennsylvania introduced H.R. 815, the Justice for Public Servants Act of 2011. The measure would have amended the federal criminal code to make the killing of a Member of Congress or congressional employee, or the killing or attempted killing of a law enforcement officer or other first responder, an aggravating factor in death penalty determinations. Representative Dan Burton introduced H.Res. 50, which would have provided for enclosing the visitors' galleries of the House with a clear and bomb-proof material; the measure would have provided for the installation of equipment to allow floor proceedings to be audible in the galleries. The measures were referred to various committees and subcommittees for consideration; no further action was taken.

No proposals related to violence against Members and their staffs were introduced in the 113th or 114th Congresses.

Legislative Proposals, 115th Congress

In the 115th Congress (2017-2018) several legislative proposals have been introduced related to potential response to violence against Members of Congress or their staff.

[23] Richard L. Lyons, "Bulletproof Glass Urged for Congress," *Washington Post*, March 4, 1954, p. 3.

[24] "Blair hit during Commons protest," *BBC News*, May 19, 2004, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_politics/3728617.stm. The powdery substance was determined to be blue corn flour, and no Members of Parliament or staff were injured.

[25] Robert A. Brady, "Help Prevent Violent Threats Against Members of Congress," Dear Colleague Letter, January 20, 2011, http://e-dearcolleague.house.gov/details.aspx?49890.

H.Res. 411

On June 27, 2017, Representative Gregg Harper of Mississippi, chair of the Committee on House Administration, introduced H.Res. 411, adjusting the amount of the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA). Citing concerns about Member security in the House and in district offices, the measure increased the 2017 MRA for each House Member office by $25,000.[26] H.Res. 411 was agreed to without objection on June 27, 2017.

H.R. 2940

On June 20, 2017, Representative Mo Brooks of Alabama introduced H.R. 2940, the Congressional Self-Defense Act. As introduced, the measure would authorize a Member of Congress carrying appropriate identification, and who is not otherwise prohibited, to carry a concealed firearm in the U.S. Capitol subject to the regulations of the U.S. Capitol Police Board (USCP Board),[27] and anywhere else in the United States, except where the U.S. Secret Service is protecting the President or Vice President and prohibits the possession of a firearm.

H.R. 2940 was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, which referred the measure to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations on July 10, 2017. No further action has been taken at the time of this writing.

H.R. 2945

On June 20, 2017, Representative Jody Hice of Georgia introduced H.R. 2945, the Congressional Personal Safety Act. As introduced, the measure would authorize a Member of Congress carrying appropriate identification to carry a firearm for any lawful purpose in any state, or in the Capitol buildings other than the U.S. Capitol.[28]

H.R. 2945 was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, which referred the measure to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations on July 10, 2017. No further action has been taken at the time of this writing.

H.R. 2951

One June 20, 2017, Representative Brian Babin of Texas introduced H.R. 2951, to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the United States, with exceptions. As introduced, the measure would authorize a Member of Congress carrying appropriate identification, to whom a state or USCP has issued a license or permit to carry a concealed handgun, and who is not otherwise prohibited, to carry a concealed firearm anywhere in the United States, except the White House, or wherever the U.S. Secret Service prohibits the possession of a firearm. The measure would authorize the USCP chief to issue a license or permit to carry a concealed handgun to a Member of Congress in accordance with such terms, conditions, and criteria the chief establishes.

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[26] For more information on the MRA, see CRS Report R40962, *Members' Representational Allowance: History and Usage*, by Ida A. Brudnick.

[27] The USCP Board, composed of HSAA, the Senate Sergeant at Arms (SSAA), and the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), oversees USCP.

[28] As used in H.R. 2945, Capitol buildings include House or Senate office buildings, the Capitol Power Plant, Library of Congress buildings, and Capitol grounds.

Additionally, H.R. 2951 would restrict Members from carrying firearms on an air carrier unless they complete the Federal Flight Deck Officers (FFDO) program established by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).[29] The measure would authorize the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to make FFDO training available at the request of a Member.

H.R. 2951 would authorize Members of House to use official funds from the Member Representational Allowance (MRA), and Senators to use official funds from the Senators' Official Personnel and Office Expense Account, to pay for firearms training programs.

H.R. 2951 was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary and, in addition, to the Committees on House Administration, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned. The Committee on Homeland Security referred the measure to the Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security on June 28, 2017, and the Committee on the Judiciary referred it to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations on July 10, 2017. No further action has been taken at the time of this writing.

H.R. 3298

On July 19, 2017, Representative Joe Linus Barton of Texas introduced H.R. 3298, the Wounded Officers Recovery Act of 2017. The measure would authorize the USCP Board to make payments from the U.S. Capitol Police Memorial Fund[30] to USCP employees who sustain serious injuries in the line-of-duty, including USCP officers injured in the Alexandria shooting, subject to conditions established by the USCP Board by regulation. The measure was passed by the House under suspension of the rules by voice vote on July 24, 2017. The Senate passed H.R. 3298 with an amendment by unanimous consent on July 27, 2017, which the House agreed to without objection on the same day. H.R. 3298 was enacted into law on August 4, 2017, as P.L. 117-45.[31]

S. 1608

On July 20, 2017, Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona introduced S. 1608, the Wounded Officers Recovery Act of 2017. An apparent companion bill to H.R. 3298, the measure would authorize the USCP Board to make payments from the U.S. Capitol Police Memorial Fund to USCP employees who sustain serious injuries in the line-of-duty, including USCP officers injured in the Alexandria shooting, subject to conditions established by the USCP Board by regulation. S. 1608 was read twice and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration. No further action has been taken at the time of this writing.

Other Actions, 115th Congress

In addition to legislative proposals, various administrative efforts were undertaken in response to the Alexandria shooting, including the following.

[29] See Transportation Security Administration, "Federal flight deck officer training," at https://www.tsa.gov/news/releases/2015/12/14/federal-flight-deck-officer-training.

[30] The United States Capitol Police Memorial Fund was originally established to collect and disburse donated funds to the families of two USCP officers, Private First Class Jacob Chestnut, and Detective John Gibson, who were killed in the line of duty on July 24, 1998 (2 U.S.C. 1951).

[31] P.L. 115-45, Wounded Officers Recovery Act of 2017, 131 Stat. 956.

- On June 21, 2017, HSAA Paul D. Irving requested an advisory opinion from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) regarding the use of campaign funds by Members of the House for residential security systems.[32] The FEC approved the request on July 13, 2017.[33]
- On June 29, 2017, the Committee on House Administration approved an update to the Members' Congressional Handbook to provide additional guidance for updating security equipment and measures.[34] Some of the changes included guidance on MRA reimbursement for capital and non-capital improvements to district offices, as well as security items, training, and personnel support.[35]

Table 1. Violence Against Members of Congress and Congressional Staff: Selected Examples

Incident Type, Date	Members or Congressional Staff Affected	Circumstances
Shooting June 14, 2017	Representative Steve Scalise, Louisiana Representative Joe Linus Barton, Texas Representative John (Jack) Bergman, Michigan Representative Michael Dean Bishop, Michigan Representative Mo Brooks, Alabama Representative K. Michael Conaway, Texas Representative Rodney Davis, Illinois Senator Jeff Flake, Arizona Representative Chuck Fleischmann, Tennessee Representative Trent Kelly, Mississippi Representative Barry D. Loudermilk, Georgia Representative John Moolenaar, Michigan Representative Gary James Palmer, Alabama Senator Rand Paul, Kentucky Representative Stevan Pearce, New Mexico Representative Brad Wenstrup, Ohio Representative Roger Williams, Texas Zachary W. (Zach) Barth, congressional staff Ryan Thompson, congressional staff Special Agent David Bailey, USCP Special Agent Crystal Griner, USCP	Armed with a rifle and sidearm, a gunman opened fire in Alexandria, Virginia at a number of Republican Members and staff practicing for the annual Congressional Baseball Game. Representative Scalise and a member of the public sustained gunshot wounds and were gravely injured; Mr. Barth was shot and wounded. Special Agent Griner was shot and seriously injured while responding to the shooter; Special Agent Bailey sustained shrapnel wounds. Other Members and staff sustained minor injuries.

[32] Letter from Paul D. Irving, Sergeant at Arms, House of Representatives, to Steven T. Walther, Chairman, Federal Election Commission, June 21, 2017, https://www.fec.gov/files/legal/aos/83377.pdf.

[33] Federal Election Commission, AO 2017-07, Sergeant at Arms, July 13, 2017, https://www.fec.gov/files/legal/aos/83386.pdf.

[34] Representative Gregg Harper and Representative Robert A. Brady, "Update to the Members' Congressional Handbook," e-dear colleague letter, June 29, 2017, https://e-dearcolleague.house.gov/SendWorkspace/Preview?DCID=215387.

[35] Committee on House Administration, *Members' Congressional Handbook*, https://cha.house.gov/handbooks/members-congressional-handbook.

Incident Type, Date	Members or Congressional Staff Affected	Circumstances
Shooting January 8, 2011	Representative Gabrielle Giffords, Arizona Gabriel Matthew Zimmerman, congressional staff Ron Barber, congressional staff Pamela Simon, congressional staff	A gunman opened fire at a congressional event in Tucson. Mr. Zimmerman and five others were killed. Representative Giffords, Mr. Barber, Ms. Simon, and at least nine others were wounded. Subsequently, Representative Giffords resigned from the House on January 25, 2012, to continue recovery from her injuries.
Biologic Attack October, 2001	Senator Patrick Leahy, Vermont Senator Tom Daschle, South Dakota	The offices of the two Senators received letters that contained anthrax spores. The Office of Attending Physician instituted extensive testing of Members, staff, and visitors in the affected buildings, and administered prophylactic antibiotics. No Members or staff were sickened.
Shooting July 24, 1998	Private First Class Jacob Chestnut, USCP Detective John Gibson, USCP	Russell Eugene Weston Jr., entered the Capitol carrying a pistol and opened fire. While he eventually made his way to the House Majority Whip's office, it is not clear that he was targeting any specific Member, staffer, or member of the public. Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson were killed, and a Capitol visitor was injured.
Assault October 25, 1989	Senator John Herschel Glenn Jr., Ohio	Punched on the chin during a television interview, but not seriously injured.
Knife Wielding Assailant November 28, 1979	Senator Edward Moore Kennedy, Massachusetts	A woman brandishing a knife entered Senator Kennedy's office on Capitol Hill. She was seized by agents of the United States Secret Service after a brief struggle in which one agent was slightly wounded.
Grenade Attack August 11, 1976	Harold W. "Hal" Rosenthal, congressional staff	Mr. Rosenthal and others were killed during a failed hijacking attempt at an airport in Istanbul, Turkey.
Shooting November 18, 1978	Representative Leo Joseph Ryan, California Jackie Speier, congressional staff	Representative Ryan and four others were killed in Guyana by members of a religious cult. Ms. Speier, who currently serves as a Member of the House, was shot five times, and critically wounded.
Assault January 2, 1975	Senator Charles McCurdy Mathias Jr., Maryland James B. Young, congressional staff	Mr. Young was briefly held at knifepoint by an individual seeking casework assistance. He escaped without injury and the individual was arrested.
Shooting June 5, 1968	Senator Robert Francis Kennedy, New York	Shot in Los Angeles while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, and died the next day.

Incident Type, Date	Members or Congressional Staff Affected	Circumstances
Shooting March 1, 1954	Representative Clifford Davis, Tennessee Representative Alvin Morell Bentley, Michigan Representative Benton Franklin Jensen, Iowa Representative George Hyde Fallon, Maryland Representative Kenneth Allison Roberts, Alabama Representative Leslie Cornelius Arends, Illinois William Belcher, congressional staff Matthew Fardella, congressional staff	Three armed assailants who advocated for the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party opened fire on the House floor from the visitors' gallery. Five Members were shot, another wounded by shrapnel; all subsequently recovered from their wounds. It was reported that Mr. Fardella, a House doorkeeper, was struck in the jaw while helping to subdue the shooters. Mr. Belcher sustained a heart attack soon after the event. Both men recovered.
Shooting July 12, 1947	Senator John William Bricker, Ohio	Two rounds were fired at, and missed, Senator Bricker in the Senate Office Building by a former officer in the United States Capitol Police.
Shooting September 8, 1935	Senator Huey Pierce Long, Louisiana	Shot in the State Capitol Building in Baton Rouge. Died September 10.
Attempted Bombing February 19, 1935	Senator Huey Pierce Long, Louisiana Earle Christenberry, secretary	A bomb was mailed to Senator Long's Washington office. Damaged in the mail, it did not explode when opened by Mr. Christenberry.
Attempted Bombing June 22, 1933	Representative Charles A. Eaton, New Jersey	A device containing dynamite and nitroglycerin was placed in the vehicle of Representative Eaton at his home. An employee discovered the bomb and neutralized it.
Bombing March 26, 1928	Senator Charles Samuel Deneen, Illinois	The home of Senator Deneen was damaged by a bootlegger, but no one was hurt.
Attempted Bombing April-May, 1919[a]	Representative John L. Burnett, Alabama	Part of a larger effort against local state and federal officials in which bombs were sent through the mail. The device intended for Representative Burnett was held by the Post Office for insufficient postage.
Assault April 2, 1919	Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Massachusetts	Struck by a pacifist leading a group that was upset that Senator Lodge did not support the United States staying out of armed conflict. The Senator was not injured.
Shooting/assault April 24, 1905	Representative John M. Pinckney, Texas "Doc" Thompkins, private secretary	At a mass meeting in Hempstead, Texas, to petition the governor to enforce state liquor laws, several participants opened fire. Representative Pinckney was killed, and Mr. Thompkins severely wounded.
Assault April 7, 1905	Representative Robert Young Thomas Jr., Kentucky	Assaulted by a political opponent angered by his remarks.
Shooting August 5, 1869	Representative Thomas Haughey, Alabama	Killed while making a political speech in Courtland, Alabama.

Incident Type, Date	Members or Congressional Staff Affected	Circumstances
Shooting October 22, 1868	Representative James Hinds, Arkansas	Reportedly shot by a drunken party committee member.

Source: Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp; *American National Biography*, http://www.anb.org/articles/index.html; *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *To Make it a Federal Offense to Assassinate, Kidnap, or Assault a Member of Congress or a Member-of-Congress-Elect*, S. 642, 91st Cong., 2nd sess., September 29, 1970, 91-1249 (Washington: GPO, 1970); H.Res. 32, 112th Congress; and news and historical accounts of the incidents.

a. Numerous packages were sent as part of a larger plot. It could not be determined with accuracy when the package was sent to Representative Burnett, or when it was stopped at the Post Office.

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