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THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS “INCOMPETENT, CARELESS, AND INDIFFERENT” TO OFFICER SAFETY

Kenneth Spencer, the Chairman of the United States Park Police Fraternal Order of Police, issued the following statement after reviewing the Department of Interior’s Inspector General’s Report on “Safety Concerns and Other Deficiencies at the U.S. Park Police’s Dispatch Operations Center in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area.”

“If the findings in this report were captured in a Hollywood movie, the audience wouldn’t believe that the National Park Service could be so incompetent, careless, and indifferent to the health and safety of their employees.

“The Inspector General’s findings speak for themselves:

--A dilapidated workspace with holes in the roof. These holes have allowed birds to enter and leave droppings on the computer equipment and office furniture ... which has damaged the carpet.

--A black substance throughout the workspace, including on the ceiling and around the air vents, which employees suspect is black mold.

--Outdated and deficient equipment that lacks critical safety features. These items include telephone equipment that does not have enhanced caller ID or other features to allow the USPP to determine the location of callers or return calls if a caller is disconnected.

“At some point this scandalous neglect becomes purposeful and criminal. Our officers understand that risk and danger come with the job – but they certainly do not expect our employer, the National Park Service, to be so reckless in putting us in harm’s way. It’s no wonder why the Park Service has a terrible time recruiting new officers, and an even harder time retaining them.

“If the National Park Service and the Department of Interior are not ashamed and concerned about the findings in this report, they should be. The IG Dispatch Operations findings are a mere indication of what would be uncovered if the scope of the IG investigation was expanded to look at the entirety of the US Park Police’s three jurisdictional territories. Our officers in San Francisco, New York City, and in Washington are working in facilities that are dilapidated and dangerous.

“Our officers call on Congress to act immediately by enacting H.R. 3924, the US Park Police Modernization Act which will solve the Officer recruitment and retention crisis. If the Park Service is going to ask our officers to endure such dreadful conditions, the least the government can do is provide officers with fair and equitable terms of employment.”