

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 04, 2023

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As you may be aware, between 2014 and 2018, your Department’s spokesperson, Tyler Cherry, posted a number of offensive and derogatory statements towards law enforcement officers online. We are appalled by these statements, which have come to light amid near-record low staffing at the U.S. Park Police (USPP)—a federal law enforcement agency housed within your Department.

The staffing crisis at USPP is a public safety issue that merits Congressional oversight.

We are deeply concerned that the following statements made by Cherry have had a negative impact on the morale of USPP officers and, in turn, contributed to the staffing issues within your Department:

- “the modern police system is a direct evolution of slave patrols and lynch mobs”;
- “[it’s time to] abolish ICE”;
- “police often don’t respond to violence, but rather incite it”; and
- “police brutality is state-sanctioned.”

Making hateful and divisive public statements towards law enforcement officers is directly counter to the goal of improving police-community relations, increasing officer morale, and recruiting and retaining a high-quality police force.

Cherry’s conduct is unbecoming of a senior Department of the Interior (DOI) official. Accordingly, we urge you and your Department to immediately condemn these repugnant statements and take appropriate remedial action.

Additionally, so that Congress can determine the efficacy of DOI’s efforts to address morale and staffing levels at USPP, we respectfully request the following information no later than December 18, 2023:

1. Please provide the number of active, sworn USPP officers by year dating back to 2010.
2. What is the minimum number of active, sworn USPP officers needed to meet the agency’s critical public safety mission? Please share the data used to support DOI’s minimum staffing estimates.
3. Please provide the number of USPP officer job vacancies from 2020 – 2023 (YTD).

4. Please describe actions that DOI has taken to improve morale, recruitment, and retention at USPP.
5. Please describe programs in place at DOI to recruit and retain law enforcement officers.
6. Was any official at DOI, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), or the White House Presidential Personnel Office (PPO) aware of Cherry's public anti-law enforcement statements prior to his onboarding at DOI?
7. On what date did you become aware of Cherry's anti-law enforcement statements?
8. Do you believe that Cherry's statements have had a positive or negative effect on USPP morale?
9. Does your department support, endorse, or agree with Cherry's comments?
  - o Does your department plan to issue a public statement indicating such position?

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



John Barrasso  
United States Senator



Mike Braun  
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



Ted Budd  
United States Senator



Michael S. Lee  
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator