

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2021

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

The rioting and violence experienced at our U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, will never be forgotten. Five lives were lost that day following the horrific violence, and while Members of Congress and their staff sheltered in place to stay safe from the mobs, the brave men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police ran towards danger to keep us safe. We owe them our daily gratitude for the sacrifice they make in the service of our great nation.

In the days following, ahead of President Biden's inauguration, more than 26,000 National Guard troops were deployed to join those same Capitol Police officers to keep our nation's capital and our leaders safe from potential threats and any continued violence. This includes 24 troops from California, who are still stationed in Washington, D.C. as the need for blockades, fencing, and security measures are reevaluated following the inaugural event. For the last week, photos of the National Guard troops sleeping throughout the Capitol and the Capitol Visitor Center have gone viral, contributing to the outpouring of food and provisions for these men and women. Cots were also finally provided, so these troops did not have to continue sleeping on the cold marble floors of the Capitol Visitor Center, the Capitol, and the congressional office buildings during their rest breaks. These men and women are patriots and deserve our support.

But on January 21, 2021, numerous media reports and photos were published showing these same National Guard troops sleeping on the floor of the Capitol complex garages. It was reported that these men and women, without explanation, were told to "vacate the Capitol and nearby congressional buildings," and were told to "take their rest breaks during their 12-hour shifts outside and in parking garages." On January 21, the temperature at night was in the low 30s, and many of these spaces are not well heated. It was also reported that one bathroom with only two stalls was made available for 5,000 troops. In addition to the violence we witnessed as a nation on January 6th, together we are still fighting back against a once-in-a-generation pandemic. It was reported that more than 100 National Guard troops have tested positive for COVID-19, and these unacceptably unsanitary, cold, and tight quarters are a major concern as these men and women try to not only keep us safe, but to stay safe from this deadly virus. This, without question, is totally unacceptable.

Simply put, the men and women who protect us also deserve our protection. They deserve our support, and I am writing to you today to know why our troops were treated this way. I would

like to know who made the decision to move these men and women outside, with limited safe and sanitary rest areas, and what type of health and security consultations were made before making this decision.

It's estimated that 7,000 National Guard troops will be stationed in Washington, D.C. through the end of January, and these men and women who traveled from coast-to-coast to keep us safe, deserve answers. America is the greatest country on earth, and I expect us to treat our heroes with the respect they deserve.

Thank you in advance for your response and your timely attention to this matter,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Steel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Steel".

Michelle Park Steel
Member of Congress

Cc: Timothy P. Blodgett, Acting Sergeant at Arms for the U.S. House of Representatives
Yogananda Pittman, Acting Chief of the United States Capitol Police