



January 18, 2021

Chief Edward A. Dunne, President  
Chief Mark K. Leahy (Ret.), Executive Director  
Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association  
353 Providence Road  
South Grafton, MA 01590

Commissioner William Gross  
Boston Police Department  
One Schroeder Plaza  
Boston, MA 02120

**Re: Threat to Democracy From Within Law Enforcement**

Dear Chiefs Dunne, Leahy, and Gross:

As you know, a group of armed criminals from across the country violently attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. In the days that followed, elected officials and police officers have been unmasked as active participants in this violent insurgency that injured more than 50 police officers and resulted in one officer's death. To help uncover these criminals, Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) calls upon all Massachusetts law enforcement agencies to take swift and affirmative steps to determine whether any of their officers or employees participated in the January 6 insurgency in any manner and, if so, to take immediate disciplinary action, including termination.

LCR is committed to protecting the civil, social, and economic rights of people of color. The failure of any law enforcement agency to forcefully and publicly condemn white supremacist actions emboldens bigots within their ranks and within the communities they serve. This exacerbates violence and hate.

News reports have indicated involvement from Massachusetts law enforcement. See "Boston Police Investigate Whether Officer Attended Capitol Siege, Posted Threats on Social Media," *Boston Globe* (Jan. 14, 2021). The City of Boston is investigating the conduct of a Boston Police Department (BPD) officer who made violent online threats, including threats directly against Vice President Mike Pence. However, despite being informed of this officer's involvement with the January 6 violence, BPD has been slow to act, giving the appearance of complicity with white supremacist and insurrectionist tendencies.

Swift and decisive action is imperative to ensure the safety and trust between law enforcement and civilian communities. We call on every law enforcement agency and department in the Commonwealth to do the following:

- Investigate whether any of its officers or employees participated in the January 6 events in any manner. This must include expressly and directly asking each officer or employee whether they attended any events in Washington, D.C. on January 6, or whether they know of any other officer or employee who did. This must also include expressly or directly asking each officer or employee whether they supported the January 6 insurrection in any manner, including through social media commentary, or whether they know of any other officer or employee who did.
- Identify if law enforcement equipment or property was used or was present at the January 6 insurrection, such as department issued body armor, batons, guns, tasers, weapons, or uniforms. If such equipment or property was used on January 6, it must be formally investigated to determine who authorized it, and to hold responsible individuals accountable.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action, including termination, against any officer or employee who is found to have participated in the January 6 insurrection in any manner.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action, including termination, against any employee who is found to have been untruthful in the investigation about their direct or indirect participation in the January 6 insurrection, or about their knowledge of any other individual's participation in the January 6 insurrection.
- Conduct an internal audit and formal re-evaluation of all complaints filed by civilians or officers within the last four years raising discrimination allegations against officers or employees. These complaints must be reviewed to identify trends and patterns, and to root out individuals who represent a dangerous liability.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has warned of similar violence in every state, and with such a possibility on the horizon in connection with the presidential inauguration, these action steps cannot be delayed. It is, therefore, critical to immediately root out officers with white supremacist and insurrectionist tendencies.

Without swift action, these vile actors will be emboldened and communities of color will lose further trust in the law enforcement agencies tasked with ensuring their safety. At LCR, we are ready, willing, and able to support this effort to help build more trust between law enforcement and communities of color.

Sincerely,

Arielle Sharma, Esq.  
Oren Sellstrom, Esq.  
Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Esq.  
Lawyers for Civil Right