

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**Full Committee Hearing: Pennsylvania Shooting Investigation**  
**July 25, 2024**

The Committees will come to order.

Just over two weeks ago, a gunman fired shots at former president Donald Trump. This assassination attempt wounded the former president and caused the death of Corey Comperatore – a husband, father of two, and former fire chief who was attending the rally with his family. David Dutch and James Copenhaver – who were also attending the rally – were injured in the attack.

Let me be clear – this was an attack on our democracy. Americans should be able to attend a political rally and express their political beliefs without fear of violence. And political candidates for our nation’s highest office should be confident that their safety will never be compromised for their service. Although we are still learning about the shooter’s motive, this attack was a shocking reminder that the threat of political violence is alive and well in our country.

By all accounts, this was an inexcusable security and planning failure – and we need to get all of the facts about what happened that day and how we can ensure an attack like this is never allowed to happen again.

Today’s panel of witnesses lead the men and women who protect our top leaders and are investigating this crime. I want to thank them for being here today, as well as the Secret Service and FBI for a very productive and informative briefing last week.

Today, our witnesses will help us begin to answer critical questions and get the information we need to implement reforms that are clearly needed to strengthen security protocols for the U.S. Secret Service and the people who receive their protection.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has already begun that work. This discussion comes in the midst of a bipartisan investigation that Senator Paul and I launched shortly after the assassination attempt took place. Our teams are still collecting critical information, speaking to law enforcement, and piecing together the details of this event.

This past weekend, a bipartisan team of our investigators – along with key staff from Senator Blumenthal and Senator Johnson’s offices – travelled to Pennsylvania to speak with local law enforcement officials, review critical information from security officials who were working alongside the Secret Service, and see the site of the shooting firsthand.

I want to thank the incredibly brave local law enforcement officers in and around Butler County who responded that afternoon and who met with my staff this past weekend. They have helped to answer tough questions and discuss in detail how this event unfolded. I also want to thank the owners of the Butler County Farm Show and American Glass Research for allowing my staff and law enforcement to walk the grounds and examine the roof of the building the gunman was able to access. We greatly appreciate your assistance.

I have also requested documents – along with Senators Paul, Blumenthal and Johnson – related to security preparations, intelligence gathering on potential violence prior to the attack, and detailed explanations of the security response from federal, state and local agencies. As part of our ongoing investigation, we also seek to speak with additional federal law enforcement personnel – including Secret Service agents who were responsible for securing this event.

Today’s hearing is an important opportunity to ask critical questions and begin to give the American people the transparency and the answers they deserve. There are still many unanswered questions. We need additional information about the Secret Service’s advanced planning efforts, and decisions surrounding sniper and counter-sniper team use, placement, and coordination. We also need answers about what appears to be a problematic communications system that limited efforts to relay information and respond as events unfolded.

And while today is focused on asking difficult questions about what went wrong, I also want to thank the men and women of the Secret Service, who in an instant will lay their lives on the line to protect our nation’s leaders. They have incredibly challenging jobs – and they must continue their mission no matter what our hearing and investigation reveals.

I am grateful to our Senate Judiciary Committee colleagues for joining us in this important discussion given their key role in oversight of both of the agencies represented before us today. It’s very clear that the U.S. Senate is focused on productive conversations that will generate real answers and real reforms. I appreciate all of the work from members of both of our committees to help achieve that essential goal.