**Anger and incredulity at police failure to defend the Capitol from Trump mob**

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Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, is demanding that the chief of the Capitol police stand down, the day after pro-Trump rioters [easily invaded](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/us-capitol-breach) the US Capitol in Washington, disrupting and endangering members of Congress. On Thursday, Pelosi said she was seeking the resignation of the chief, Steven Sund.

And the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, said he will fire the Senate sergeant-at-arms, Mike Stenger, if he has not stepped down by the time the Democrats take control of government with Joe Biden’s inauguration on 20 January and Schumer becomes the Senate majority leader.

The storming of the US Capitol by a pro-Donald Trump mob on Wednesday has provoked incredulity among US politicians and former law enforcement officials over how police allowed the stunning invasion to occur.

As members of Congress and Mike Pence sought to certify the votes of the presidential election inside, a large group of pro-Trump rioters, encouraged by the president, marched on the Capitol. But moments later, many scaled flimsy fences, brushed past police and made their way into the seat of American legislative democracy as the vice-president, political leaders and staff fled to secure rooms, some wearing gas masks and some elderly members of Congress needing assistance while evacuating. The mob then ransacked offices and posed for pictures on the Senate dais. Four people died amid the chaos, including a woman who was shot by a law enforcement officer, police said.

The incredible breach has drawn sharp criticism of the US Capitol police, a 2,000-officer force dedicated to the protection of the domed building. Videos showed officers standing by as rioters rushed past them, with one officer even posing for pictures with the invaders inside the building. The mob was later allowed to leave the Capitol largely unhindered, with one elderly Trump supporter helped down the steps by a police officer.

Such scenes were a vivid contrast with anti-racism protests across the US last summer, where largely peaceful protesters were subjected to teargas, rubber bullets, beatings with batons and mass arrests. Mondaire Jones, a newly elected congressman, called for a full investigation of the security breach on Wednesday and said that if the rioters “had been Black, they would have been gunned down before they got inside the Capitol”.

“My feelings about this are bolstered by the footage of law enforcement agents taking selfies with these domestic terrorists who had breached security, and of security removing metal barricades in order to allow the mob to get closer to the Capitol,” Jones, a New York Democrat, said on Thursday. Tim Ryan, a fellow Democrat who chairs a committee that oversees the Capitol police’s $460m annual budget, said he was dismayed that the mob even got close to the building’s exterior, let alone inside and into the very heart of the seat of power. “Those were illegal acts, and those people should have been immediately arrested,” Ryan said.

This surprise was shared by former law enforcement officials familiar with the Capitol. “It’s like watching a real-life horror movie. I mean, we train and plan and budget every day, basically, to have this not happen,” Kim Dine, who was chief of the Capitol police from 2012 to 2016, told the Washington Post. “How it happened, I can’t figure that out.” Dine said he was surprised that the mob was allowed to gather near the Capitol and then allowed to enter without large numbers of arrests.

The Capitol police were apparently not prepared for the attack, with the force outnumbered and not wearing any sort of riot gear. Assistance was provided by the Metropolitan police department, Washington DC’s city force, but it was not until an hour after the hordes roared through the perimeter that national guard troops were called upon by Washington’s mayor.

“I truly had to suspend my disbelief because I didn’t think you could breach the Capitol,” said Gainer, the former Capitol police chief. “I have great confidence in the men and women who protect Congress, but there will need to be a full accounting. We’re going to have to have a deep dive into what went wrong.”

The US Capitol police is responsible for the protection of the Capitol and members of Congress. Such protection usually involves intelligence work on specific threats but the police appear to have been caught shorthanded, despite weeks-long planning of the invasion by rightwing extremists on social media platforms such as Parler.

The mob was incited further by Trump, who in a rally shortly near the White House before the riot repeated false claims that the election was stolen from him, calling for his supporters to “take back our country”.