

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0506

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

As you consider the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations, we write to request that the accompanying committee report include language directing the National Park Service to provide dedicated funding to the U.S. Park Police (USPP) Aviation Unit to support its critical medevac mission in the National Capital Region. The USPP Aviation Unit is the only unit capable of field-to-hospital medical missions in the District of Columbia, and provides air ambulance services to the broader National Capital Region, including Maryland and Virginia. It is a mission that saved a life on November 26, 2025, when West Virginia National Guard members were ambushed in a shooting near the White House. The USPP Aviation Unit's Eagle One transported Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, who had sustained a critical gunshot wound to the head, directly to MedStar Washington Hospital Center. This rapid airlift is credited with saving his life. Staff Sgt. Wolfe has since made a remarkable recovery and was awarded the Purple Heart at the 2026 State of the Union address.

The USPP Aviation Unit has served the National Capital Region with distinction for more than five decades. Founded in April 1973 by Vietnam veterans, the Unit has grown from a single helicopter and a small crew to an extensive operation providing medevac, search and rescue, and dignitary security missions, among others. On September 11, 2001, the Unit activated both of its helicopters and conducted medevac operations at the Pentagon in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Beyond the District of Columbia, Eagle One routinely supports Maryland and Virginia, and provides critical medevac coverage for Shenandoah National Park and Great Falls National Park, responding to injured swimmers, hikers, and other visitors in terrain and conditions that ground units cannot reach. The Unit also supports Presidential motorcade operations and has assisted with airspace management at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport when the control tower was out of commission. Eagle One is further capable of administering blood transfusions in the field, a capability that requires advanced life support (ALS) rescue technicians on board and that research has shown can improve 30-day survival rates by up to 60 percent in hemorrhagic shock patients.

Accordingly, we request that the committee report include the following language:

“U.S. Park Police Aviation Unit Medevac Mission.—Within amounts provided for the National Park Service, the Committee directs that adequate funding be made available to support the U.S. Park Police Aviation Unit's medevac mission in the National Capital Region, including for the following purposes: (1) procurement of an FAA-approved helicopter Advanced Aviation Training Device to replace the Unit's existing simulator; (2) training of rescue technicians credentialed with Advanced Life Support (ALS) licenses at a level sufficient to maintain continuous medevac capability; (3) maintenance and resupply of Advanced Life Support medical equipment necessary to maintain continuous medevac capability; and (4) procurement of a replacement aircraft tug. The Committee is aware that ALS-credentialed rescue technicians are drawn from within the U.S. Park Police's existing workforce and do not represent new full-time equivalent positions. The Committee is further aware that the U.S. Park Police Aviation Unit is uniquely positioned to sustain its medevac mission at a fraction of the cost of a standalone program because medevac costs are defrayed across the Unit's broader operational commitments.”

While the Unit currently operates a flight simulator, it is approximately 20 years old and falls well short of modern standards. It lacks FAA certification, meaning pilots cannot log official training hours on the device. This is particularly consequential given that Aviation Unit pilots operate within the Washington DC flight restricted zone (FRZ), one of the most complex and tightly regulated airspaces in the world. Replacing the existing device with an FAA-certified simulator would enable pilots to log approved flight training hours in a controlled environment, maintaining and sharpening core proficiencies, supporting instrument rating requirements, and building emergency procedure readiness—all without the operational risks of live flight in the FRZ. Additionally, by reducing the number of actual aircraft hours required for training, a certified simulator would provide direct cost savings to the federal government. For example, the Aviation Unit's Eagle One is a Bell 412EP. Commercial estimates place operational costs for that aircraft at a minimum of approximately \$5,000 per flight hour—an estimate that does not include the cost of Eagle One's specialized modifications to support its full mission portfolio, including the operational security requirements of presidential motorcade support. A certified simulator gives the Unit the tools to ensure pilots meet the FAA standards required to execute its medevac mission in one of the most restricted airspaces in the world when lives depend on it.

In addition, ALS-licensed rescue technicians are paramedics credentialed with Advanced Life Support licenses and are essential to sustaining a continuous medevac capability. They are also the personnel who make the Aviation Unit's field blood transfusion capability possible. Aviation Unit personnel are drawn from within USPP's existing workforce, with officers transitioning to Aviation Unit duties and undergoing the training required to become credentialed rescue technicians. These are not new FTE slots. As personnel retire or rotate, failure to train qualified replacements creates dangerous gaps in coverage. Sustained investment in rescue technician training ensures the Aviation Unit can maintain an adequate number of ALS-certified personnel to staff its medevac operations reliably.

Finally, maintaining proficiency and administering quality care during medevac missions requires adequate equipment, including training manikins, cardiac monitors and defibrillators, ventilators, and other Advanced Life Support equipment. The USPP Aviation Unit responds to

time-critical medical emergencies across the National Capital Region, and the quality of onboard care directly affects patient outcomes. Aging and insufficient equipment compromises the training pipeline and degrades mission effectiveness. Additionally, the Unit's aircraft tug—the ground vehicle used to move helicopters in and out of the hangar—is a 40-year-old hand-me-down that is increasingly unreliable. In emergency medical response, every minute between dispatch and wheels-up matters. Delays on the ground cut directly into the time available to reach a patient within the clinical window where intervention saves lives. A mechanical failure or slow repositioning during a scramble can mean the difference between life and death.

The USPP Aviation Unit provides an irreplaceable lifesaving service to residents, visitors, and service members in the National Capital Region and beyond. The Unit is uniquely positioned to conduct otherwise cost-prohibitive medevac missions because those costs are defrayed across its broader operational commitments, sustaining its medevac capability at a fraction of what a dedicated standalone program would require. Each investment is modest in isolation and together they represent a reasonable commitment to a mission of outsized public safety value. We urge you to include the requested report language in the FY 2027 appropriations package.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress