Dear Mr. Blanton, Ms. Hemingway, Dr. Hayden, and Chief Pittman:

We write to thank you for the work you have done following the attack on the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, and strongly urge you to provide additional support and resources to the Senate Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the House of Representatives Office of Employee Assistance (OEA), and other efforts to help the broader Capitol community cope with the attack. We additionally express our concerns regarding the procedures and policies in place to protect and support Members of Congress, their staff, and other essential workers, like contract staff, members of the press corps, and the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) in the United States Capitol both during and after the traumatic event.

On January 6, 2021, the Capitol was overwhelmed by violent insurrectionists while the Senate and House were in session. We are grateful for the heroic actions taken by U.S. Capitol staff, including the USCP, congressional and non-congressional staff, and other supporting entities like the Secret Service, D.C. Metropolitan Police, and the soldiers of the National Guard. Many put themselves in harm’s way to protect us, our colleagues, and our staff. Following the attacks, non-congressional workers like contract janitorial staff had to return to work to clean up the disturbing aftermath of the incident. As we work toward accountability and governing after the attack, Congress must ensure that support services, including emotional and behavioral health services, and resources are available to and appropriate for all who work in the Capitol to help promote healing.

The United States Senate and the House of Representatives, through the EAP and OEA, respectively, assist Members, congressional staff, USCP, and their family members for personal and work-related problems, including emotional and behavioral support services. We thank EAP and OEA for responding to this crisis by rapidly scaling up their services and working relentlessly to ensure that Senate and House staff is aware of and understands the resources available to them. Nonetheless, needs are increasing, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and we should expand these services to include all Capitol personnel, including
contract workers and their families, who may be affected and need help. This would warrant further investment in the services and resources these offices provide.

Many of the Capitol’s essential workers and support staff are contract employees and many do not currently have access to support services through EAP. In some cases, access to these vital programs is tied to Title V, Sec. 2107, which does not classify contract workers as “congressional employees”. This stipulation is not mandatory and we would ask you to ensure that all workers in the U.S. Capitol, regardless of class or classification, and their families have access to these services, especially trauma counseling.

As Members of Congress, we strongly urge you to work with us, the Senate Rules Committee, the House Administration Committee, and the Senate and House Appropriation Committees to expand the services and resources you provide. This should include ensuring the following:

- Better information and protection for all U.S. Capitol workers in the event of future emergencies, including training, emergency planning, and coordination procedures;
- Sufficient staff and funding to respond to current and projected needs;
- Resources necessary to help non-congressional employees who may be affected such as members of the press-corps, food service contractors, military liaisons, and other contractors;
- Enhanced mental, emotional, and behavioral health resources, including crisis services, for USCP officers to address and cope with trauma;
- Availability of culturally competent services and resources for all employees, including those for whom English is a second language; and
- Additional reforms to make the OEA and EAP more accessible and available to all employees, contractors, support staff and their families.

Capitol workers and journalists investigate and ensure the health of the U.S. Capitol, the very heart of our democracy. Everyone must feel safe, supported and protected while fulfilling their duty within the halls of the United States Congress.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator
/s/
_____________________
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

/s/
_____________________
Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

/s/
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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

/s/
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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

/s/
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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

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Tina Smith  
United States Senator

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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

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Cory Booker  
United States Senator

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

/s/
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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator