

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Statement from the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies

Washington, DC -- The 56th Inaugural Swearing-in Ceremony was the largest event in Washington, DC history. Months of planning by the staffs of the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, the U.S. Capitol Police, and the United States Secret Service resulted in an extraordinarily successful and peaceful event that was enjoyed by well more than a million people.

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies deeply regrets that some ticket holders to the ceremonies were not able to get to their ticketed sections, primarily in the purple and blue zones. The number of tickets issued for these sections was based on historic precedent, and calculations of the number of guests that could safely be accommodated in each area.

Many of the problems appear to have been due to the unprecedented crowds, and a huge flow of unticketed people toward the U.S. Capitol and into the 3rd Street Tunnel from the National Mall, after it had reached capacity very early that morning and was closed to additional unticketed entries.

The JCCIC, U.S. Capitol Police and our federal and local partners will thoroughly examine every aspect of our planning including ticketing, screening, pedestrian flows, gate numbers and placement, to provide a foundation of lessons learned to future inaugural planners, so that they have the information they need to prevent similar problems.

We realize how important this inauguration was to so many people and the difficulties they endured to get here, so once again we deeply apologize to those guests who were not admitted.

###