

Office of the Sergeant at Arms
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6634

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

TO: All Members of Congress

FROM: Paul D. Irving
Sergeant at Arms

DATE: September 11, 2015

SUBJECT: **Joint Meeting of Congress on September 24, 2015**

On **Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 10:00 AM**, Pope Francis of the Holy See will deliver an address before a Joint Meeting of Congress. Members and staff are advised that security for this event will be exceptionally high, as we also anticipate a large number of visitors for events held outside the Capitol. Therefore, to help you and your office plan accordingly, the following information summarizes access and security matters regarding the Joint Meeting of Congress and events held within the Capitol Complex.

Please keep in mind that plans, logistics, and security needs involving the Papal visit to Washington, DC continue to be refined by security agencies throughout the region and this information will be provided to you as soon as it becomes available. In addition, the Office of Personnel Management has issued guidance to federal workers in the Washington, DC region regarding the Papal visit: <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/impact-2015-visit-his-holiness-pope-francis-washington-dc-commuters>

STREET CLOSURES AROUND THE CAPITOL COMPLEX

All streets within a three-block radius of the Capitol will be closed to unauthorized traffic beginning at 12:00 AM on Thursday, September 24 (see attached map). Streets will be closed from 12:00 AM until 12:00 PM. ***It is strongly recommended that Members, staff and guests avoid driving and use alternate means of transportation if possible.*** If you must drive, please plan travel routes carefully and monitor traffic reports allowing additional time to reach your destination. Suggested route information will be available on the Sergeant at Arms web site: <http://speaker.gov/pope>

PARKING RESTRICTIONS AND VEHICLE ACCESS POINTS

Until approximately 12:00 PM on September 24 vehicular access within the Capitol Grounds will be restricted to Members and staff with a valid House Parking Permit and valid Congressional ID. To gain access to the House Garages and Lots on Thursday, September 24, there will be five vehicle access points on the House side of the Capitol Complex. You must have a valid Congressional ID and valid House Parking Permit to access these points:

- Second and C Street, S.E.
- First and D Street, S.E.
- New Jersey Avenue and D Street, S.E.
- South Capitol and E Street, S.E.

- Washington Avenue and C Street, S.W.

No other vehicle access points will be available on September 24, and Members and staff must enter House access points from the House side of the Capitol Complex. Vehicles will not be able to cross from the Senate to the House and vice versa on the morning of September 24.

Please expect a separate memo from the Parking Office with parking restrictions.

CAPITOL PLAZA ACCESS

So that we may allow for the arrival and departure of the Papal motorcade via the Capitol Plaza, vehicular access and parking will be unavailable on the Plaza and Drives on September 24. Members must park in the House Office Building garages or on New Jersey or South Capitol Streets adjacent to the office buildings until the conclusion of the event at 12:00 PM. The South Drive will re-open for parking at 12:00 PM on September 24.

ACCESS TO THE CAPITOL

At 5:00 AM on September 24, access to the House wing of the Capitol will be restricted; only Members and staff who have an office in the Capitol will be allowed into this area. Members and staff with offices in the Capitol should plan to enter the Capitol via the House Office Buildings and the Cannon and/or Rayburn Tunnels if arriving after 5:00 AM. Please note that access via the South Door and the House Carriage Entrance will be restricted to current Members of Congress of the 114th Congress only until 1:00 PM. Former Members are advised to contact Ted.Daniel@mail.house.gov with my office for further information on how best to attend this event.

Members and staff should be advised that no events or meetings (public or private) will be permitted in the U.S. Capitol and Capitol Visitor Center on Wednesday, September 23 and Thursday, September 24 until 1:00 PM. This is to enable U.S. Capitol Police to conduct security sweeps of every room in the Capitol complex.

GALLERY TICKETS AND ACCESS TO THE HOUSE GALLERY

Each Member receives one Gallery ticket which may be used by your spouse, immediate family member, Congressional staff, or another guest. To gain access to the House Gallery on September 24, you must have a ticket to the Joint Meeting AND a valid Congressional ID (or Spouse Pin). If your guest will not have a valid Congressional ID or Spouse Pin on September 24, you must submit a Guest Information Form online via the Sergeant at Arms Intranet site: <http://saa.house.gov>

Guest Information must be submitted electronically no later than Thursday, September 17.

The House Gallery will open for ticket holders on September 24, 2015, at 8:30 AM and ticket holders must access the House Gallery via the Cannon or Rayburn Tunnels. Your Gallery guest name will appear on an access list maintained by the U.S. Capitol Police, and they will also be required to present a valid photo ID. In addition to all normally prohibited items in the Gallery, guests should refrain from bringing electronic devices with them to the Joint Meeting. A complete list of Gallery prohibited items is found on the Sergeant at Arms website (<http://saa.house.gov/chamber/house-gallery-admission-rules.shtml#prohibited>). For identification purposes we request Congressional spouses wear their Spouse pins and have a photo identification card.

Congressional Staff will not be permitted to escort a Member's Gallery guest to the Capitol. Gallery ticket holders who have accessibility needs should contact the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services at 224-4048.

TICKET PICKUP

Your Gallery ticket should be collected as part of your overall Papal ticket allotment package on **Monday, September 21, 2015**, between the hours of **10:00 AM and 4:00 PM** in the South Congressional Meeting Room (CVC-217). A letter designating a member of your staff to receive the tickets on your behalf, a printed copy of the Guest Information Form confirmation page (from the Sergeant at Arms website), and a valid permanent Congressional staff photo ID will be required to pick up your Gallery ticket.

FLOOR ACCESS

Due to the large attendance expected for the address by Pope Francis, rules regarding the privilege of the Floor will be strictly enforced. Staff authorized for Floor access during Legislative Business will not be admitted to the Floor without a separate credential. Member’s guests, family, and children are not permitted on the Floor.

ACCESS TO THE EAST FRONT GRASSY AREAS (THE “EGGS”)

Congressional staff with a valid Congressional ID will be able to view the arrival and the departure of the Pope on the East Front of the Capitol on September 24. Tickets will not be needed for access to these areas. Access to the East Front grassy areas will be accessible via U.S. Capitol Police screening locations: First Street, NE and First Street, SE (see attached map). Both locations will be open for staff screening at 5:00 AM. You must have a valid Congressional ID on your person at all times during this event.

ACCESS TO THE WEST FRONT TICKETED SECTIONS

A limited number of jumbotrons for viewing will be placed on the West Front, and while it does not guarantee a line-of-sight to the telecast, the space provides an opportunity for guests to be part of the overall experience. Please see the attached map for an overview of all screening locations for the Lower West Terrace (seated) and West Lawn (standing room only):

- **Lower West Terrace** (one ticket per Member) – Entry for ticketed guests to the Lower West Terrace will be via/through screening locations on the Southwest and Northwest Drives. Screening sites will be open at 5:00 AM.
- **West Lawn** (50 tickets per Member) – Entry for ticketed guests to the West Lawn will be accessible by screening locations on Third Street. Screening sites will be open at 5:00 AM.

Please note that because of security and crowd management; every person, including infants and children, will need to have a ticket to access the telecast in the West Front ticketed sections.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Additional security measures will be put in place to ensure the safety and security of those in attendance on the Lower West Terrace, West Lawn, and East Front. Everyone attending events on the exterior of the U.S. Capitol must adhere to security screening procedures before entering the event site. This will include an administrative search of all bags, and closed containers. In addition to any other items determined to be prohibited at the discretion of the U.S. Capitol Police, the following items are prohibited:

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|---|--|
| <i>Aerosols</i> | <i>Thermoses</i> |
| <i>Air Horns</i> | <i>Knives, blades and/or sharp objects (of any length)</i> |
| <i>Alcohol</i> | <i>Laser pointers</i> |
| <i>Ammunition</i> | <i>Mace and/or Pepper Spray</i> |
| <i>Animals (other than service animals)</i> | <i>Packages</i> |

Backpacks and bags exceeded size restrictions (18"x14"x 8 ½")

Balloons

Bicycles

Chairs (non-ADA)

Coolers

Drones and other unmanned aircraft systems

Explosives of any kind (including fireworks)

Glass and Metal Containers

Firearms and replica Firearms

Pocket or Hand Tools (such as "Leatherman")

Selfie Sticks

Strollers

Structures

Supports for signs/placards

Toy guns

Umbrellas

Weapons of any kind

other items that may pose a threat to the security of the event as determined by and at the discretion of the security screeners

ACCESS TO THE HOUSE OFFICE BUILDINGS

On September 24, 2015, all pedestrian entrances to the House Office Buildings will be open no later than 5:00 AM to Members, staff, and general public.

CAPITOL TOURS

Because of security preparations for this event, public and staff-led tours will be suspended and the CVC will close at 4:30 PM on September 22, 2015. Tours will resume with a normal operational schedule on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at approximately 1:00 PM. For further information regarding tours, please contact the Office of Visitor Services at 593-1762.

RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS

While it is expected that streets around the Capitol complex can re-open shortly after the departure of the Pope, the dispersal of the large number of attendees to this event will take time. In addition, the U.S. Capitol Police and other support offices need adequate time to restage and prepare for opening the Capitol for official business and for the House of Representatives to reconvene. We anticipate this will occur no later than 1:00 PM.

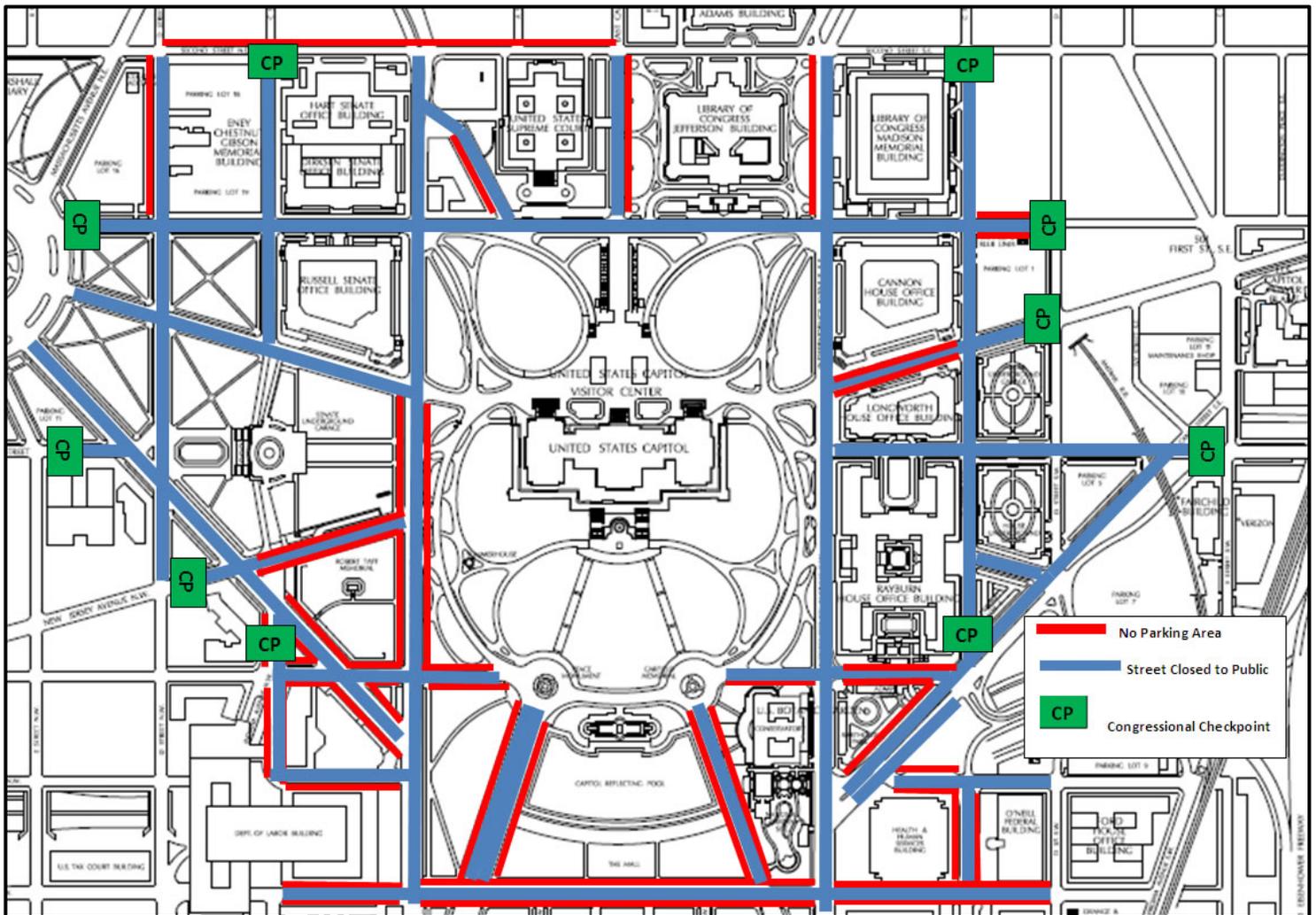
Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have further questions, please contact my office at 225-2456.

CAPITOL COMPLEX TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Joint Meeting Address

September 24, 2015

In Effect 12:00 Midnight through 12:00 Noon



Please note that **traffic restrictions** begin at 12:00 midnight – **parking restrictions** on many streets (marked in red above) will begin to take place as early as Wednesday, September 23 at 5:00 PM. Congressional staff who will be affected by these parking restrictions will be notified.

