



Providing Real Oversight and Transparency to Effectively Counter Threats Act
(PROTECT Act)

Introduced by Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.)

BILL PROVISIONS

- The United States Secret Service (USSS) shall be led by a Director, who shall be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.
- The USSS Director shall be limited to a single, 10-year term, similar to the role of FBI Director.
- The bill's provisions shall go into effect at the next USSS Director vacancy; these provisions do not impact the current Secret Service Director.

RATIONALE

The Grassley-Cortez Masto *PROTECT Act* would provide increased oversight of the USSS by allowing Members of Congress to recommend nominees for USSS Director to the President, probe candidates and their qualifications, and raise relevant agency issues with the Director.

Notably, the Senate already confirms the heads of many other federal law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Marshals Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF), U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs & Border Protection (CBP). The USSS employs more staff than the U.S. Marshals Service and the ATF.

The USSS, due to its protective mission, is a non-partisan agency. To avoid politicization of this position, the *PROTECT Act* sets the USSS Director's term to 10 years, stretching beyond the length of a president's potential two terms.

BACKGROUND

USSS, a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agency, has two missions: protection and criminal investigations. USSS's criminal investigation activities encompass financial crimes, identity theft, counterfeiting, computer fraud and attacks on telecommunications infrastructure. Its protective mission covers the President, Vice President, their families, former Presidents and foreign missions, such as embassies, consulates and foreign dignitary residences. The USSS is also responsible for certain security activities, including presidential inaugurations, major party national conventions, international conferences and major events like the Olympics and World Cup.

The USSS employs over 3,802 special agents, 1,574 Uniformed Division officers and more than 2,680 technical professional and administrative support personnel who help carry out these two primary objectives. However, public reports for more than a decade have noted USSS staffing shortages that may impact the agency's protective mission.

The USSS has experienced several security and personnel incidents, including the Omar Gonzalez fence jumper incident, the Atlanta elevator incident, the Oscar Ortega-Hernandez incident, the Hay-Adams Hotel bullet incident and the Cartagena prostitution scandal, among others. On July 13, 2024, a troubled 20-year-old assailant opened fire on former President Donald Trump. While President Trump's courageous security detail quickly formed a human shield around him, one individual tragically lost his life, and two others suffered serious injuries.