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**HOYER: PARK POLICE ACTIONS AGAINST CHIEF
UNACCEPTABLE, EVEN DANGEROUS**

WASHINGTON – House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (MD) made the following statement today in response to recent news reports that U.S. Park Police Chief Teresa Chambers has been placed on administrative leave because she answered questions posed to her by a Washington Post reporter regarding the force under her command:

“It is unacceptable that the U.S. Park Police has placed their Chief on Administrative leave for speaking honestly of her concerns with new responsibilities in a post-September 11th world placing strains on the force.

“This action could even set a dangerous precedent by preventing other federal employees from speaking out when they see public safety put at risk or taxpayers’ money spent wrongly or inefficiently because they fear they too will lose their jobs. It is in the country’s best interests that federal employees are assured of protection if they properly speak out.

“The Bush Administration should disavow a culture of fear and retribution in the federal government that could prevent federal employees from speaking out and potentially put our nation’s security at home and abroad at risk. And, it should direct the National Park Service to re-instate Chief Chambers to her position.”

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