WASHINGTON, D.C. - On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama will be sworn in as the 44th President of the United States in an inaugural ceremony held on the west front of the U.S. Capitol.

The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies provides a relatively small number of tickets to Members of Congress for distribution to their constituents. By the time two week had passed from Election Day, my offices had received so many requests for tickets to the inaugural ceremony that I had over 2,500 more requests than tickets to distribute. The National Mall west of 4th Street has been designated a viewing area for non-ticketed spectators. There will be some video screens and loudspeakers available.

The interest in being present for this inauguration is unprecedented. As a result, the number of visitors to the Mall area on January 20 is also expected to be unprecedented and could eclipse the number that the modes of transportation into and around Washington and the space available to view the inauguration can easily handle. All spectators are advised to expect very large crowds.