

RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN HIGH-CRIME U.S. CITIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS
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RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN HIGH-CRIME U.S. CITIES

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Jefferson Van Drew [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Van Drew, Jordan, Moore, Onder, Schmidt, Gill, Crockett, Raskin, Moskowitz, and Johnson.

Mr. VAN DREW. The Subcommittee will come to order, although I have to admit you are a pretty orderly crowd, this is very quiet, everybody is tired out from a long day yesterday, even Mr. Raskin maybe. That is the quietest I have seen you for a few minutes. We are going to get you fired up. Thank you for being here. Without objection the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

We welcome everyone to today's hearing on "Restoring Law and Order in High-Crime U.S. Cities."

I now recognize the gentleman from Alabama to lead us in the pledge of allegiance. Then I ask that we remain standing, that we remain standing for a moment of silence.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. VAN DREW. I will now recognize myself for an opening statement. Again, I want to welcome everyone here today to another meeting of the Subcommittee on Oversight. Today we are going to focus on one very simple truth. We need to restore the rule of law in America's high-crime cities. Let us be honest about something from the very start, crime just didn't rise and come about on its own.

It happened because leaders chose so, leaders in the democratic run cities have made political choices. Choices that put radical ideology before safety, politics before people, and criminals before the safety of the good people in our communities. For years these cities have embraced soft on crime prosecutors, eliminated cash bail, reduced penalties for repeat offenders.

They empower criminals, they undermine law enforcement, they weaken the very fabric that keeps our families safe. Here is the truth, the simple truth, it is not complicated, it is just reality. When you reward criminal behavior, you get more of it, it is that simple. When you take away consequences, you get chaos. When you weaken the rule of law, you hurt the very people that you claim to protect.

In Charlotte, a community that this Committee, many of us on this Committee, we went to Charlotte, and we saw firsthand in a field hearing, they tried to quote, "Re-imagine criminal justice." Do you know what happened when the re-imagining delivered? Repeat offenders walking the streets over and over, and over again. Charlotte was quite an experience.

Now, we have gone as a Full Committee to New York City, we have gone to Philadelphia, and this Committee actually went to Charlotte, and we saw the work of the Left-wing magistrates, of the Left-wing judges, of the Left-wing attorney general, and of the Left-wing prosecutors, the results, the death, the mayhem, and the chaos, it is real, it is not funny.

When we talked to the people in Charlotte, I will never forget the father of the one young lady, and I believe, and I don't even have this in front of me, I am digressing for a minute. This woman was pulled out of her bed, stripped naked, had to get down on her knees, God knows why, and then the perpetrator took a shotgun, put it to her chest, and took her life.

The father was there, man, I wish each and every one of you could have seen that father. He was so upset, he was shaking, he was crying, he was a grown man. Any of us that are parents, any of us that love anybody in our lives, you can't imagine. I said at the time, "I wish I could say to you I know how you feel, I don't." Nobody here, unless you have lost somebody, and we do have somebody who has, nobody knows how you feel.

We don't, but you can see it. The guy who did it, the perpetrator, was charged over forty times and released over, over, over, and over. I won't do it forty-some times again, it is sick. People are living with fear instead of freedom. We remember another case, the murder of Iryna Zarutska, that is why we went to Charlotte, a murder that should have never happened.

A murder committed by a criminal who obviously had deep seated problems, and was released not one, two, or three times, but 14 times. Iryna loved America, she sat down in the train, and he came up behind her, she never met him, never saw him, didn't even look at him. He violently stabbed her in her neck, and murdered her in front of everybody on that train.

She loved America, her family actually had her—she loved America so much, her family, she was Ukrainian, had her buried in America because she had such hopes, and such desires, and such ambitions. The city of Memphis continues to lead the Nation in violent crime, and not in spite of policy decisions, but because of them. The district attorney in Shelby County, backed by George Soros, fact.

You may not like it, but it is true, it turned cash bail into a last resort. When you make accountability a last resort, you make public danger the first result. Again and again criminals are released,

again and again they commit crimes. Again and again innocent people pay the price over and over. It isn't justice ladies and gentlemen, it is not compassion, it is the literal definition of insanity.

It is failure, it is cruel, it is unfair to law abiding citizens plain and simple. Los Angeles, another town, you can name almost every city in America, almost. Career criminals, rapists, cop killers are given leniency through special directives that prioritize ideology over good public safety.

The result is predictable, gangs have been emboldened, communities have been terrorized, and a once great American city has been hollowed out again by lawlessness. The city of Chicago, everybody knows about Chicago, still the murder capital of America, still drowning in violence and still doubling down on the same bad ideas as eliminating cash bail, and making pretrial release a default.

Just last week a Chicago man known for serially punching women, who just walks right up to a woman, and it is women always, walks right up to her, big guy too by the way, big guy, and just punches her in the face. I don't have any words. He was arrested and released for the twentieth time. God help you if you are a woman and you are walking down that street.

Maybe after he is done you are not even recognizable anymore. It is nice for you, isn't it nice for your family, because of the policies we have. If he wasn't released it wouldn't happen. Twenty times, 20 times back on the street. In what world are these politicians living in when they design laws that make it easier for someone like that to be released over, and over, instead of designing laws that protect the women that are continually assaulted?

These are dangerous policies, they are bad policies, and they have a predictable outcome. They hamper law enforcement, and they let dangerous people walk our streets. It is that simple, it really isn't that complicated. In fact, I have spoken with law enforcement, true story, not only in Charlotte, but in other areas where we have gone on the road, this Committee, who have told me that often times before they are even done writing up the arrest report and somebody has looked at it.

Before that even happens, they are watching the person being released. They are not even done with the report, and they are already out. It is an upside-down world, it is a bizarro world, it is a sick world that we live in, and it has to stop. For four long years the past administration, the Biden-Harris Administration encouraged this mentality, encouraged soft on crime policies, encouraged the unraveling of law and order in what was our beautiful, sparkling cities.

That changed earlier this year, and I know not everybody is going to agree with me on this, but it did. Since President Trump was sworn back into office, he has done what he always said he would do, there was no surprise here, restore common sense, restore law and order, restore accountability. In August, President Trump deployed the National Guard and Federal agents to support local police right here in Washington, DC.

People tell me they exaggerate it in Washington, nothing happens. I just think of the people that I know. I think of the gentleman from Kansas whose intern was murdered in Washington, DC. How does his family feel? This young intern comes to D.C. to

learn, and he never leaves because he is killed, he is murdered. In my office alone, where we have had, just in my office, numerous people that have been attacked on the streets in the Nation's capital, in Washington, DC.

The stories go on and on, we have other Members, Members that were car jacked, I can go through the list, but I am not going to do it, it is wrong. You know what? It is not funny when it happens to you, it is really serious. In August, President Trump deployed all these folks, and what happens when you enforce the law? Crimes went down and safety went up.

Over four thousand arrests, and an 11 percent drop in crime city wide; 11 percent drop in just a few months. Words don't do that, ideology doesn't do that, press conferences don't do that. Action does that, real action, tough action, and necessary action. Because it worked, because results speak louder than slogans, other cities, many of them are asking for the same help.

In September, National Guard units were deployed to Memphis and Portland. Plans are underway for Chicago as well, and of course in many of these cities Democrat officials are fighting it every step of the way. Fighting safety, fighting accountability, and fighting success. In some areas where they are deployed, people who live in the neighborhoods, who live in the areas, we had some folks even in D.C. said it was the first time in years that they had walked up and down their streets in safety.

In years, they were so happy. We are here today because the American people do deserve better. They deserve leaders who are going to protect them and take care of them. They deserve prosecutors who enforce the law. They deserve cities where criminals fear consequences, and families feel safe. To our witnesses, I want to thank you for being here, I know it is your precious time.

I thank you for speaking on behalf of communities living through the nightmare of bad policy and failed leadership. I even thank the folks that are going to disagree with me. We look forward to your testimony, thank you.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Ms. Crockett.

MS. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and thank you for calling this hearing. Since January, Donald Trump has used the full power of the Federal Government to attack Americans in cities across the country. In Donald Trump's America you are at increased risk of experiencing militaristic operations in your home.

Increased risk of being subject to detainment by masked thugs and wannabe vigilantes. Increased risk of suffering injuries due to reckless and illegal acts by rogue Federal agents. Increased risk of being deported to foreign nations, even if you are an American citizen. You are at an increased risk of being targeted by Federal Government for criticizing the President and his friends.

Congressional Republicans have completely abandoned their Article 1 powers and have exchanged their responsibility to their constituents with fealty to the President. They have allowed the President to morph Federal agencies into instruments of autocracy. As a result, the President has been able to ignore Federal law, disregard court orders, and implement the largest pay-for-play scheme in American history.

The White House, well what is left of it anyway, is literally up for sale. The Federal courts have characterized this presidency as quote “lawless.” In fact, when ruling against illegal acts committed by the administration, a Republican appointed Federal judge stated quote,

The Court cannot imagine how the public interest might be served by permitting Federal officials to flaunt the very laws they have sworn to enforce.

In a separate case, where the administration was sued for unlawful acts, the judge, also a Republican appointee, stated quote,

Allowing constitutional rights to be dependent upon the grace of the Executive Branch would be a dereliction of duty by this third and independent branch of government, and would be against the public interest.

In another case, the court summed it up perfectly by declaring quote,

As is becoming far too common, we are confronted again with the efforts of the Executive Branch to set aside the rule of law in pursuit of its own goals.

Judiciary Committee Republicans have been completely complicit in this corruption. Since they are so interested in restoring law and order, I have a couple of suggestions on where they can start.

First, this is the President of the United States standing beside his best friend Jeffrey Epstein. As we all know, Mr. Epstein is one of the most notorious sexual predators in American history. For eight weeks the Republicans on this Committee have chosen to protect these two men instead of providing justice to Mr. Epstein’s victims. Now, the administration is panicking.

Second, they campaigned on releasing the Epstein files, then AG Bondi and associates did a photo op with the files, and she said, and I quote, “The Epstein list is on my desk.” Then, somehow the Epstein list didn’t exist. The Epstein files became a Democratic hoax. Now, the President is supposedly supportive of releasing the files, even though he is currently ignoring a Congressional Subpoena to do so.

Now, the President is simply crashing out, and it is because he can’t seem to explain his special decades long relationship with one of the most prominent sexual predators in American history. It is already public that he is in the Epstein files, but his administration is hiding the context of his involvement, if any, with Mr. Epstein’s horrific crimes.

Now, this is Ms. Ghislaine Maxwell. Ms. Maxwell, who obviously helped Jeffrey Epstein traffic more than a thousand women and girls, well Donald Trump is now giving her special treatment while she is serving out her prison sentence. He won’t even rule out giving her a pardon or commuting her sentence. I don’t need to explain why partnering with sex traffickers wouldn’t be restoring law and order.

Now, this is Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem. Not only has Secretary Noem been busy filming propaganda ads, but she has also been busy cashing in on millions of taxpayer dollars. In fact, Secretary Noem has funneled millions of dollars to a company called the Strategy Group. The Strategy Group helped Secretary Noem win her campaign to become the Governor of South Dakota.

Corey Lewandowski, her top policy advisor, has worked with the firm. The company's CEO is married to Secretary Noem's Chief spokesperson, Ms. Tricia McLaughlin. This is what corruption looks like. They are stealing money from the American people's pockets and depositing it into their bank accounts. Now, we move on to yet somebody else. This is the so-called border czar, Tom Homan.

Mr. Homan is on tape accepting fifty thousand dollars in cash bribes stuffed in a brown paper bag from an undercover FBI agent. Apparently, Mr. Homan accepted these bribes in exchange for awarding Federal contracts to his friends. Trump's Department of Justice killed the investigation into Mr. Homan's crimes, and Congressional Republicans didn't say a mumbling word.

Last, this is insurrectionist and Nazi sympathizer Ed Martin. It appears that Mr. Martin is functioning as the Associate Deputy Attorney General Pardon Attorney, Director of the Fake Weaponization Working Group, and Special Attorney for mortgage fraud. All that means is that Mr. Martin is Trump's lapdog, whom the President sends to initiate lawsuits against the President's perceived political opponents.

This is what we call organized crime. They are breaking the law, often by stealing taxpayer dollars, covering up their crimes by ending and obstructing investigations, then prosecuting people who call out for their unlawful behavior. While the Republicans are encouraging this corruption, they are abandoning actual victims of violent crime, and ignoring the Republican led State's 21st Century murder crisis.

In September's appropriation markup, Congressional Republicans proposed reducing the FBI staff by thousands of positions and underfunding the agency by more than \$1 billion. They have proposed slashing resources from the ATF, they have proposed cutting grants for juvenile justice programs and hate crimes and eliminating the community violence intervention and prevention grants.

They are literally de-funding the police. No matter what they say at today's hearing, Congressional Republicans have proven that they are not investing in keeping American communities safe from violent crime.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the Ranking Member. We are fortunate to have with us the Chair of the Committee of the whole today, Mr. Jordan, and the Ranking Member, Mr. Raskin. I believe Mr. Jordan is not going to do an opening at this time.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for this important hearing, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. Mr. Raskin?

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much. I will take mine now, I am going to try to stay for as much of the hearing as I can, but I won't be able to do it toward the end. Mr. Chair, thank you very much, I wanted to just begin by underscoring three things that you said that I hope people will keep in mind as you hear my remarks:

- (1) When you reward criminal behavior, you get a lot more of it.
- (2) It is not funny when it happens to you, and alas, I have a personal story to tell.
- (3) Letting criminals off the hook is not compassion, and it is not justice.

I want to agree very strongly with those three points that you just made, Chair Van Drew.

I want to thank the witnesses for being with us today. Just before the shutdown this Subcommittee convened a field hearing in Charlotte to advance the tired, I would say, utterly exhausted Republican claim that Democrats are somehow soft on crime. This is an odd proposition to me given that Democratic led cities today are now driving a historic nationwide decrease in crime.

Especially homicide and violent crime following a dramatic spike in those categories under the first Trump Administration. One of the North Carolina local news outlet, *The News&Observer*, captured the very paradoxical nature of that hearing in an article titled, "Republicans are in charge in NC, but somehow Democrats are to blame for violent crime | Opinion"

Well, *The News&Observer* is correct. Republicans from the White House, to Congress, to the State houses are systematically undermining public safety in communities across America with what I would call gangster State policies while claiming that Democrats are to blame. What is really going on? Let us start with the administration's first day in office, how about that?

On the first day Donald Trump pardoned nearly 1,600 January 6th insurrectionists, people who either pled guilty or were convicted beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of their peers for hundreds and hundreds of crimes, including hundreds who violently attacked Capitol police officers, Metropolitan Police Department officers, Montgomery County, Maryland police officers, police officers from Virginia, and so on.

With baseball bats, steel pipes, Trump flags, confederate battle flags, broken furniture, and bear mace into people's eyes. In the months since, the Department of Justice proceeded to fire dozens of FBI agents and Federal prosecutors, the most experienced Federal prosecutors we had, career civil servants appointed under Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents simply because they had worked in the January 6th investigation.

Nothing like that has ever happened before in the history of the Department of Justice, and I hope nothing like that will ever happen again. These were career civil servants, expert criminal prosecutors fired because they had prosecuted people for violently attacking police officers, storming the Capitol saying they were going to hang Mike Pence to overthrow a Presidential election, and they got fired because of it.

A massive violation of civil service, constitutional rights, and the principles of public safety. One hundred and forty of our officers were injured, wounded, disfigured, disabled, hospitalized on that day; one hundred and forty of them. I wish I could take one hundred and forty minutes and tell you about each one, but I will tell you about one of them, I will tell you about Sergeant Gonell.

Now, Sergeant Gonell has written a book about his experience, which I recommend highly to all of you. His family were immigrants to America, he became a citizen as a kid, and he fell in love with police work. His family took a trip to Washington, and they visited the Capitol, and he met police officers here, and he had a dream that he would become a Capitol police officer one day.

What do you know, he became a Capitol police officer after he served in the Army, he went to Iraq, and he went to Afghanistan. Then he was here on January 6th. He said he faced violence which he described as medieval in nature, that was far worse than anything he had seen in combat in Iraq or in Afghanistan. He fought for hours and hours.

He was so wounded, they destroyed a rotator cuff, his left foot was smashed, and destroyed, he couldn't lift his shoulder, he was beaten in the face and the head. He did everything he could to try to get back to work, and the force told him he was no longer physically fit to do it. Forced to retire by the insurrection Donald Trump incited according to a bipartisan vote of the House of Representatives.

Which 57 of the 100 Senators voted to convict him on, the most widespread bipartisan vote in the history of Presidential impeachments. He was that wounded, that disfigured, that incapacitated, he could no longer serve. He had to leave his dream job and is now living on what a fraction of what his income was before because of that violence that took place.

That is just one story. I wish you could know all the stories. Maybe you know the story of Michael Fanone, he was a D.C. cop, he wasn't even on duty here, he heard about it, that the Capitol was under attack on the radio. He immediately drove to the Capitol, got off several blocks away, ran to the scene to join the police officers, and he got pulled into the crowd after fighting for hours, and he had a heart attack.

He was afraid that he was going to die, and he begged them, he said, "I have four daughters, spare my life," and his life was just barely spared. There is supposed to be a plaque up in the House of Representatives to the officers because of their indomitable valor and courage that day, but the speaker won't put that up. They won't give a dollar to the families of any of these police officers whose lives have been so fundamentally altered.

They did sneak a little provision in to give a million dollars to each Republican Senator who were inconvenienced because they were treated like other American citizens, and their phone records were subpoenaed because they were involved in the conspirators of that attack. That is where the sympathies run, each of those guys was going to get a million dollars pay out.

At least I heard Lindsay Graham say he wanted tens of millions for what happened to him. What happened to him? Did he get sprayed in the face with bear mace? Did he have to fight for hours to protect American democracy? No, his phone records were subpoenaed, the same way any American's phone records can be subpoenaed if they are involved in a criminal conspiracy, or if their name comes up in a criminal investigation.

If you don't like that, you should support the bill that Chair Jordan brought before us in markup yesterday, which we passed unanimously, numerous times, that would save all Americans from abuse of that process. We have been trying to do that for nearly a decade I believe. From this Committee, and the Senate has consistently rejected it, they are not interested in protecting anybody else's civil liberties.

They just want their million-dollar jackpot payout. Well, in any event, so that was the story on January 6th, and this administration has done everything in its power now to reward the people who participated in it. Meantime they are firing the officers, the FBI agents, the prosecutors who tried to prosecute it. I want to tell you though, a lot of people would want to sweep the whole thing under the rug, and they think it is over.

Crime doesn't really work like that, and criminals don't work like that. As the good Chair said when he kicked this off, "if you forgive crime, if you pardon it, if you let it go, you are going to see more of it." Well, let me tell you a little story about that, because we have got lots of cases of these pardoned criminals going out and committing other crimes.

Let me tell you the ones that we have found that have been committed by people that Donald Trump pardoned on his first day in office. They have gone on to do terroristic threats, home invasion, burglary, vandalism, theft, felony assault with a deadly weapon, discharge of a firearm, manslaughter, drunk driving, grand theft, aggravated kidnaping, reckless driving, and reckless homicide.

Invasion of privacy, conspiracy to commit murder as a hate crime, possession of child pornography, violation of protective order, assault, violation of antistalking order, DUI, battery, felony, malicious bodily injury, rape, forgery, sexual assault, illegal gun possession, drug possession, and conspiracy to murder. Who is responsible for all that? These people were pardoned by Donald Trump, sentences commuted.

Out on the streets, now these people are doing all that. Let me tell you about one of them. I told you I was going to get a little bit personal here, because I take the subject raised today personally. This guy's name is Taylor Taranto, he was pardoned after being convicted of multiple crimes on January 6th, multiple crimes on January 6th. He was rearrested in 2023 for illegal possession of hundreds of rounds of ammunition, two guns, and a machete.

After he was live streaming from the woods near former President Barack Obama's house. He went there with all the ammunition and guns, and he threatened to set off a car bomb. Well, on the way there he showed up at the elementary school two blocks away from my house, where all three of my kids went to elementary school. He told listeners that he was at the elementary school near my house on his live stream.

He said he was near my house, that is where he was headed next, and he didn't want to tell anybody where I lived, because he said I want Raskin all to myself. Fortunately, my wife and I, and my kids were not at home when he stopped there on his way down to Barack Obama's house. This is a January 6th insurrectionist who has been pardoned by Donald Trump.

You may have read about him recently in the newspaper because at the sentencing for other crimes too, Department of Justice lawyers mentioned that he participated in the riots on January 6th, and his superior officers at the Department of Justice objected to the fact that these DOJ lawyers had referred to the January 6th riots and suspended them. Somebody correct me if I am wrong, were they suspended?

These lawyers were reprimanded for what they had done, and they were suspended simply for mentioning the reality that January 6th had taken place. It is not just January 6th, Trump recently pardoned crypto executive Changpeng Zhao who had been sentenced to four months in prison, and ordered to pay one of the largest corporate penalties in history after pleading guilty to enabling money laundering through his crypto exchange.

According to prosecutors, he aided Hamas, he aided Al Qaeda, and other terrorist networks, but Donald Trump pardoned him. He also pardoned Ross Ulbricht, the creator of Silk Road, an online black market that allowed thousands of drug dealers to distribute hundreds of kilos of illegal drugs, including heroin, cocaine, and opioids.

Take Ghislaine Maxwell, who was transferred from a real prison to a prison camp after the No. 2 at DOJ went to see her. On July 22nd, the Democrats on the Oversight Committee moved to subpoena her, they got Republicans to come over and agree. The next day she was sent her subpoena, and the next day after that, July 24th, that is when Todd Blanche went to see her.

Not to ask about more coconspirators, not to investigate whether other crimes had been committed. No, he was trying to find out exactly what she might say about Donald Trump when she came to Congress. Satisfied with her answers, President Trump, the great champion of law and order, apparently authorized and approved her transfer to a prison camp where no sex offender had ever been sent before, because they are not allowed.

Because sex offenders like Ghislaine Maxwell are considered violent offenders. That wasn't it, it wasn't just enough that she got to cut the line and get there in one or two days when people are waiting six months, eight months, two years to transfer after proving they have a compelling reason to do so. No, she was transferred overnight, she gets there, and then she gets the superstar Trump Hotel treatment.

She gets room service in her cell. Ever heard of that before? Well, she gets meals brought to her, she gets special exercise privileges there, she gets special visitors that come whenever she wants them to come, and they are allowed to bring their computers. They don't even deny that, they just say they want the people who brought that as whistleblowers to the Members of this Committee, they want those people punished.

Her lawyer was bragging about the fact that they were punished. In other words that they suffered retaliation for speaking out, when this Committee has always stood up for the rights of whistleblowers to tell the truth about abuse of law in America. Well, they have taken a wrecking ball to the Federal Government's ability to investigate and prosecute criminals.

The DOJ is hemorrhaging thousands of lawyers, they are having a very difficult time recruiting people to this absurd environment, where the President has taken over all prosecutorial functions. Now, they are wasting resources just to follow the political program of Donald Trump. You have seen how he fired his own U.S. Attorney Mr. Siebert in Virginia, because he wouldn't bring charges against James Comey.

That is what Donald Trump wanted. He sacks him, he puts in another attorney who has never been a prosecutor before, never been an Assistant U.S. Attorney or anything, she is so incompetent the judge in the *Comey* case now says that they are going to have to throw it out likely, because she messed up the entire grand jury indictment process. Yet, he continues to go after his political opponents.

What a radical distortion of justice that is, and what a waste of our resources. They are draining resources away from human sex trafficking, away from child sex exploitation, and away from drug trafficking to go and either participate in their anti-immigration campaign, or just to do whatever Donald Trump wants them to do.

My friends, this is the record that they want to brag about? When we have got real Democratic mayors across America who are, and some Republican mayors, but mostly Democratic mayors who are actually reducing crime, and fighting crime, what an outrage this is. One of the other things they did when they first got in was, they got rid of hundreds of grants that were being given to local law enforcement, to the police.

Talk about defunding the police, well they defunded the police, certainly anything having to do with human sex trafficking, anything having to do with child-sex exploitation, they just got rid of it all. Mr. Chair, I am glad you said exactly what you did when you kicked this off. It is not funny when it happens to you, and it is not when you have got a pardoned January 6th person coming to your house with weapons on his way down to Barack Obama's house with a machete.

Now, that is not funny. Also, when you reward criminal behavior, as this administration has done from day one, you are going to get a lot more of it. They are headed to turn us into a gangster State. I thank you, and I look forward to hearing the testimony of the witnesses.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the Ranking Member, and later on I am going to reply to a good number of those issues. I will say one thing; threats are horrible for all of us. My wife has been threatened, I have been threatened, my kids, and my grandkids, it is really awful, it is terrible. Just so you know, I can relate to what you are saying there.

My wife was threatened that she would be beaten, they would throw her on the hood of a car, rape her, murder her, burn the house down, and kill my children and my grandchildren. That is not a uniquely Democrat, Republican, conservative, or liberal issue. The other issue, and I will ask the Committee if we can, and then we will move on here, the issue at hand is what is happening on our streets.

Those subjects you brought up are worthy of debate, and we can have a separate Committee on all of it, all the things you spoke about, but I am talking about the average Joe on the street in their city where they want to live their life with their children, and their grandchildren as well. It is a little bit different than where we went with that, which was highly political.

Worthy of discussion, but not really what this hearing is about.

Mr. RASKIN. Those are all average crimes that happen every day on our streets, including my street.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK, I am not going to do this because I don't want to—even mine, with the threatening—

Mr. RASKIN. You cannot separate one crime from another.

Mr. VAN DREW. There are people that are in prison because of some of the things they were going to do and got caught, to me, but nevertheless, it is not an average crime. I am a Member of Congress, it is different. I am talking about just the guy that comes home from work and is walking on the street, and he stops by the grocery store, and he gets killed.

It is a different thing, just the average day to day thing. We will talk about it more, I appreciate you, Mr. Raskin. With that being said, all other opening statements will be included in the record, and we are going to introduce today's witnesses, finally your time.

We will start with Mr. Rafael Mangual. Mr. Mangual is a Fellow at the Manhattan Institute where his research focuses on criminal justice and policing. He is the author of Criminal Injustice and serves on the New York State Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Mr. Paul C. Mauro is a former law enforcement officer having served for 23 years with the New York Police Department. During his tenure he served as the Commanding Officer of the NYPD's legal bureau, and as the Executive Officer for operations and analysis in NYPD's intelligence bureau. Thank you for your service and thank you for being here.

Ms. Tina McKinney, this is the hardest one, these are always hard, is the mother of Officer Joseph McKinney, who was a Memphis Police Officer killed in the line of duty on April 12, 2024. The suspect was out on bond, and I want everybody to listen to this one paragraph. The suspect was out on bond from an arrest the previous month on charges of possession of modified semi-automatic weapons and grand larceny.

Everybody heard that. I am sorry, I have got no words, I am sure everybody tells you the same thing. Thank you, thank you for being here, and trying to help other people in the future.

Nancy La Vigne, did I pronounce it correctly? Good. Dr. LaVigne is the Dean of the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, where her work focuses on applying data and research to criminal justice policy.

She previously served in the Department of Justice during the Biden Administration. We thank you for being here, I am a Rutgers grad, I went in pre-dental, pre-medical, so I went to Rutgers, we may disagree on issues, but Rutgers is a good school. We are going to begin by swearing you in. Would you please rise and raise your right hand?

Do you swear under penalty of perjury the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief so help you God? Let the record reflect that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative, and thank you, and please be seated. Please know that your written testimony will be entered into the record in its entirety.

Accordingly, we do ask that you do summarize and complete your summary of your testimony in five minutes. Mr. Mangual, we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF RAFAEL A. MANGUAL

Mr. MANGUAL. Well, thank you all so much for the opportunity to offer remarks on the all-important topic of public safety in America's cities, which is an issue that I have spent the last decade working on. I would like to begin by suggesting that in public debates over questions of safety, far too much weight is put on aggregate crime measures that often fail to fully capture or accurately describe the risk of criminal victimization faced by America's urban residents.

We often talk about crime in national, statewide, or citywide terms. It is an understandable colloquialism that I am sure I have been guilty of too. Whether a city's crime levels are up or down, while important, can mask some important realities. In my home city of New York for example, data from 2010, 2015, and 2020 illustrate that approximately 50 percent of the city's reported crime occurs on just four percent of the city's street segments.

The experiences of residents living on block clusters where so much of a given city's crime concentrates are radically different from those living in the neighborhoods with very little crime. To paint the picture a little more vividly, consider that year residents of Chicago's 19th District, which I used to call home, experienced a homicide rate of just 2.3 per 100,000.

In the 6th District by contrast, the homicide rate was 73.4 per 100,000, almost 32 times greater. I make this point for a couple of reasons, but one is to just illustrate that even in cities that have experienced recent declines in serious crime, there remain micro-geographic pockets where serious violence continues to occur at levels that we should all find unacceptable.

Should therefore be working to alleviate with urgency irrespective of aggregate crime declines at the citywide level. The fact remains that in too many city neighborhoods criminal violence is a serious problem. That problem is one that is too often characterized by a particular type of failure.

Which is the failure to incapacitate violent criminal offenders who have thoroughly demonstrated through repeated criminal conduct that they have no desire to play by society's rules. A few numbers to consider, in Chicago on average a shooting or homicide suspect is arrested nearly 12 times. In Oakland, homicide victims and suspects alike have an average of ten prior arrests.

In Baltimore the number is nine. Right here in Washington, DC, it is eleven. These numbers are bad enough in the abstract, but they take on a more urgent character when they are illustrated by specific cases. Because of the work I do, I am often sent stories of heinous and tragic crimes committed by offenders who had no business being out on the street.

We already heard about one such case in the case of Iryna Zarutka in Charlotte, North Carolina, but I want you all to consider another case out of Charlotte, which has not gotten nearly enough attention, which is the shooting death of Jayce Edwards, who was just four years old. According to news reports, one of the four men arrested in that case had previously been charged in nearly a dozen car thefts.

He was arrested again just days before the shooting with a firearm. Unbelievably to the uninitiated, he was allowed to post bond

and was released yet again. A second suspect in that case had racked up 38 charges, and had multiple prior incarcerations for serious felonies including firearms and other violent charges. These examples all elicit the same question, why?

Why were these offenders out? The answer in many cases is that somewhere down the line policymakers made a choice. They made a choice to pursue decarceration for its own sake because they were convinced that doing so was the best way to serve justice. The good news is that none of those decisions are written in stone. Our leaders can and must make different choices.

In recent years, we have seen some encouraging examples of Federal, State, and local leaders doing just that. In the State of Tennessee for example, law makers have, thanks to the leadership of Tennessee House Speaker Cameron Sexton, passed legislation to amend their State's constitution so that judges there can have the right to detain dangerous criminal defendants in all cases.

They also passed a truth in sentencing law to ensure offenders serve the majority of their sentences before they can be released. Last year, lawmakers in Louisiana took a similar step with their own truth in sentencing measure, much to the chagrin of criminal justice reform advocates, in addition to an effort to eliminate discretionary parole.

Of course, President Trump's Administration through Executive Orders and actions related to policing, and enforcement initiatives like the Memphis Safe Task Force, and Project Safe Neighborhoods in Chicago, the latter of which has led to a nearly 300 percent increase in Federal gun prosecutions just through the end of October.

Now, there remains a lot of work to be done. I would like to close with the suggestion that I hope many of you will reach out to discuss further at a future date. Which is that Congress should consider an omnibus crime bill along the lines of what was done in 1994.

This time with a particular focus on police recruitment and retention, funding the acquisition of force multiplying technology, incentivizing better data collection, and incentivizing the adoption of stronger penalties for habitual offenders. Thank you once again for the invitation to address this body and contribute to these important discussions. I look forward to answering any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mangual follows:]

Statement of Rafael A. Mangual

Statement to the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight

Hearing On: “Restoring Law and Order in High-Crime U.S. Cities.”

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025

Washington, DC

An Overview of the Problem and Policy Solutions

Submitted by:

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Statement of Rafael A. Mangual

About the Author

Rafael A. Mangual is the Nick Ohnell fellow and head of research for the Policing and Public Safety Initiative at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research** and a contributing editor of *City Journal*. He is also the author of *Criminal (In)Justice: What the push for decarceration and depolicing gets wrong and who it hurts most*.

Through the Manhattan Institute, and in other outlets, Mr. Mangual has authored and coauthored numerous policy papers, as well as more than one hundred essays and columns on topics related to policing, crime, and incarceration, among others. His work has been featured in a wide array of publications, including the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. He has testified on many prior occasions before committees of both houses of Congress, state legislatures, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Rafael holds a B.A. from the City University of New York's Baruch College and a J.D. from DePaul University's College of Law in Chicago, IL. In 2022, he was elected a member of the Council on Criminal Justice, and is currently serving his second term on the New York State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

**The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research does not take institutional positions on federal, state, or local legislation, rules, or regulations. Although my comments draw upon my research and writing about criminal justice issues as an Institute fellow, my statement to the Subcommittee is solely my own, and should not be construed as my employer's.

Statement of Rafael A. Mangual

Statement

Chairman Van Drew, Ranking Member Crockett, and all other members of this distinguished body: Thank you for the opportunity to offer remarks on the all-important topic of public safety in America's cities—an issue I have spent the last decade working on. It is always an honor and a privilege to be called upon to contribute to Congress's deliberations about such matters.

I'd like to begin by suggesting that in public debates over questions of public safety, far too much weight is put on aggregate crime measures that often fail to fully capture or accurately describe the risk of criminal victimization faced by America's urban residents.

We often talk about crime in national, statewide, or citywide terms. It's an understandable colloquialism that I'm sure I've been guilty of. But whether a city's crime levels are up or down, while important, can mask some important realities.

The truth about urban crime is that it's never been anywhere close to being evenly distributed in any city in America. To the contrary, crime—especially violent crime—tends to be geographically and demographically hyper-concentrated.¹ In my home city of New York, for example, data from 2010, '15, and '20 illustrate that approximately 50% of the city's reported violent crime occurs on just 4% of the city's street segments (one segment would be corner-to-corner, and would include both sidewalks), while just over 1% of the street segments see approximately 25% of reported criminal violence.² At the same time, more than 40% of the city's street segments don't see even a single crime in a given year. This is a pattern—known in the criminology field as the Law of Crime Concentration, coined by David Weisburd—that holds in every jurisdiction that's been studied.³

As you can imagine, the experiences of residents living on block clusters where so much of a given city's crime concentrates are radically different from those living in the neighborhoods with very little crime. To paint the picture a little more vividly, consider that last year, residents of Chicago's 19th District (which is 71% white, and home to the neighborhood I was fortunate enough to call home during my law school years)—experienced a homicide rate of just 2.3 per 100,000. Residents of Chicago's 6th District (which is 95% black), by contrast, experienced a district-wide homicide rate of **73.4 per 100,000**—almost **32 times** higher.⁴

I make this point for a couple of reasons: One is to remind everyone that failing on public safety will always have the biggest impact on communities that can least afford any more crime than they are already burdened with. Another is to make clear that, even in cities that have experienced recent declines in serious crime, there remain micro-geographic pockets where serious violence continues to occur at levels that we should all find unacceptable, and should therefore be working to alleviate with urgency irrespective of aggregate crime declines at the

¹ See, e.g., <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1745-9125.12070> and https://media4.manhattan-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/Mangual_Written-Statement_USCCR_November-2023.pdf.

² <https://manhattan.institute/article/crime-hot-spots-a-study-of-new-york-city-streets-in-2010-2015-and-2020>.

³ See Weisburd *supra* note 1.

⁴ See, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-CPD-Annual-Report-Final-For-Publishing.pdf> (at appendix for district-level homicide data and district-level population counts)

Statement of Rafael A. Mangual

citywide level. After all, we don't experience crime in the aggregate. No one lives in an entire city all at once. Our experience as to public safety depends very heavily on where we live and work. So, while the city of Chicago reported another homicide decline in 2024, the fact remains that in too many of that city's neighborhoods, criminal violence remains a serious problem worthy of our utmost care and attention. The same can be said of almost every city in America.

That problem—of serious criminal violence—is one that is too often characterized by a particular type of failure: The failure to incapacitate violent criminal offenders who have thoroughly demonstrated through repeated criminal conduct that they have no desire to play by society's rules.

A few data points to consider: In Chicago, a study of gun violence done by the University of Chicago's Crime Lab found that, *on average, a Chicago shooting or homicide suspect arrested in 2015 and '16 "had nearly 12 prior arrests*, with almost 45 percent having had more than 10 prior arrests, and almost 20 percent having had more than 20 prior arrests."⁵ A 2014 problem analysis of gun violence *in Oakland, CA* done by The California Partnership for Safe Communities found that *"homicide victims and suspects in Oakland were arrested an average of 10 times prior to a killing,"* and that "approximately 84% had been previously incarcerated at some point."⁶ In 2018, the *Baltimore* Police Department reported that the city's *2017 homicide suspects had 9 prior arrests on average*, and that *more than a third were on parole or probation*.⁷ And right here in Washington, former D.C. Metro Police Chief Robert Contee told reporters that *"the average homicide suspect has been arrested 11 times* prior to them committing a homicide."⁸

These numbers are bad enough in the abstract; but they rightfully take on a more urgent character when they're illustrated by specific cases. Because of the work I do, I am often sent stories of heinous and tragic crimes committed by offenders who had no business being out on the street.

One such case was the brutal murder of Iryna Zarutka in Charlotte, North Carolina, which drew national attention over the summer. Her alleged killer, who had an open case at the time of the murder, had racked up more than a dozen prior arrests. Despite a lengthy and troubling criminal history and a documented history of serious mental illness, he was released pretrial and allowed to roam the streets and public transit system of Charlotte.

Consider also another case out of Charlotte, which has not gotten nearly enough attention: the shooting death of Jayce Edwards during a car theft in a residential parking lot. He was just *four*

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<https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/attachments/c5b0b0b86b6b6a9309ed88a9f5bbe5bd892d4077/store/82f93d3e7c7cc4c5a29abca0d8bf5892b3a35c0c3253d1d24b3b9d1fa7b8/UChicagoCrimeLab+Gun+Violence+in+Chicago+2016.pdf>

⁶ <https://files.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Giffords-Law-Center-A-Case-Study-in-Hope.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-md-ci-2017-homicide-data-breakdown-20180103-story.html>

⁸ <https://www.police1.com/chiefs-sheriffs/articles/dc-police-chief-average-homicide-suspect-has-11-prior-arrests-before-committing-murder-scVSpY0ER0WQuAiA/>

Statement of Rafael A. Mangual

years old. I had only heard about it because an old professor I know shared the story on *X* and tagged me in his post.

According to news reports⁹, one of the four men arrested in that case had been previously charged in nearly a dozen car thefts. In February of this year, at the age of 17 he was given probation for leading police on a high-speed chase while impaired. By April, he had racked up two more arrests involving at least seven counts of car theft, yet was released after posting a \$5,000 bond. He was arrested again just days before the shooting of Jayce Edwards for driving on a suspended license, possessing marijuana, and unlawfully possessing a firearm. Unbelievably (to the uninitiated), he was allowed to post bond and was released *yet again*.

A second suspect in that case had racked up 38 charges for breaking into fuel tanks and grand larceny. He was convicted of several such charges in 2024 in South Carolina. Yet he was on the street the very next year, *despite* prior felony convictions in 2019 (for armed robbery, breaking and entering, and larceny) and in 2021 (for being a felon in possession of firearm, resisting, breaking and entering, fraud, and fleeing police).

These are just two of countless examples that all elicit the same question: *Why? Why were these offenders out?*

The answer in many cases is that somewhere down the line policymakers made a choice—to pursue decarceration for its own sake because they were convinced that doing so was the best way to serve justice. These choices take many forms:

- legislative and administrative bail reforms that take pretrial detention off the table (or make it less likely);
- misguided sentencing reforms and decriminalization efforts;
- so-called “progressive” prosecutors who take it upon themselves to abrogate duly enacted statutes proscribing certain criminal behaviors and reduce the severity of otherwise applicable criminal punishments;
- judges who irresponsibly release dangerous defendants to await trial, or inappropriately apply far too lenient sentences; and
- misguided parole boards who continue to display poor judgement by granting parole to offenders who obviously can’t handle life on the outside.

To be sure, these are not new problems. But in many places, policy has moved in the wrong direction thanks to the mainstreaming of false narratives about so-called “mass-incarceration,” and “over-policing.” Over the last decade, I’ve watched as politicians in so many of America’s cities systematically elevated the interests of criminal offenders with far too little regard for what such a policy program would mean for their past and future victims.

⁹ <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/crime/article312516318.html>

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The good news is that none of those decisions are written in stone. Our leaders can, and *must*, make different choices. They can take affirmative steps to fix their mistakes, to fill the gaps, and to reprioritize public safety.

In recent years, we have seen some encouraging examples of federal, state, and local leaders doing just that.

In the state of Tennessee, for example, lawmakers have, thanks to the leadership of Tennessee House Speaker Cameron Sexton, passed legislation to amend their state constitution so that judges can have the right to detain dangerous criminal defendants in all cases.¹⁰ They also passed a truth-in-sentencing law to ensure offenders serve the majority of their sentences before they can be released.¹¹ Last year, lawmakers in Louisiana took a similar step with their own truth-in-sentencing measure—much to the chagrin of criminal justice reform advocates—in addition to eliminating discretionary parole.¹²

In North Carolina, lawmakers swiftly responded to the murder of Iryna Zarutka by enacting Iryna’s Law, which, among other things, created rebuttable presumptions of pretrial detention for certain offenders.¹³

And, of course, President Trump’s administration, through executive orders and actions related to policing¹⁴, as well as enforcement initiatives like the Memphis Safe Task Force¹⁵, and the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative in Chicago¹⁶—the latter of which has led to a nearly 300% increase in federal gun prosecutions through the end of October.

Many of these initiatives have been led by Republicans and, sadly, in my view, resisted by too many Democrats. It does not have to be this way. The urban crime declines of the 1990s and early aughts should be regarded as some of the greatest achievements in urban-American history. Those victories were the result of *bipartisan* efforts—at the federal, state, and local levels—that saw Republicans and Democrats coming together on public safety issues. That is a history we very much need to re-read as a nation.

While there has been some progress on the criminal justice policy front, there remains much more to be done.¹⁷ I’d like to close with a few suggestions that I hope many of you will reach out to discuss further at some future date.

¹⁰ <https://sos.tn.gov/announcements/2026-proposed-constitutional-amendments>

¹¹ <https://www.wvlt.tv/2022/06/16/tennessee-soon-have-toughest-penalties-us-violent-criminals/>

¹² https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2024/08/21/louisiana_parole_reform/

¹³ <https://www.wunc.org/politics/2025-10-03/stein-signs-irynas-law>

¹⁴ See, e.g., <https://www.city-journal.org/article/trump-executive-order-policing-crime-law-enforcement> and <https://www.city-journal.org/article/doj-disparate-impact-theory-biden-civil-rights-law-enforcement-policing>.

¹⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/11/12/memphis-crime-trump-task-force/>

¹⁶ <https://cwbchicago.com/2025/11/federal-gun-cases-surge-nearly-300-in-chicago-under-project-safe-neighborhoods-officials-say.html>

¹⁷ I have laid out model legislation for three common-sense measures aimed at reducing violent crime by directly addressing the repeat offender problem, with an overview of the case for each measure in a report you can find

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In addition to the Executive Branch scaling up its street-level enforcement operations—particularly in jurisdictions where local leaders have failed to take corrective action—with a focus on criminal offenses over which federal authorities have concurrent jurisdiction, Congress should consider an omnibus crime bill along the lines of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994—this time with particular focuses on:

- funding the hiring and retention of police officers nationwide, but with priority given to jurisdictions facing the most acute shortages;
- funding state and local law enforcement acquisitions of force-multiplying technologies like license plate readers, CCTV camera networks, drones, and facial recognition software;
- incentivizing better data-collection with regard to repeat offending so that the citizenry can have more systematic data on, for example, the share of serious offenses committed by offenders on parole, probation, and pretrial release, as well as measures relating to the criminal history of certain categories of offenders; and
- incentivizing the adoption of stronger penalties for habitual offenders.

Thank you, once again, for the invitation to address this body and contribute to these important discussions. I very much look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Thank you.

here: <https://manhattan.institute/article/hardening-the-system-three-commonsense-measures-to-help-keep-crime-at-bay>

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Mangual. Mr. Mauro, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF PAUL C. MAURO

Mr. MAURO. Chair, Ranking Members, and the Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Paul Mauro, I served 26 years with the NYPD, including many years in counterterrorism following 9/11. I retired four years ago; I am now a practicing attorney. My perspective is shaped by decades on the street, and doing investigations, and by my concern for the city that I still call home.

New York's recent criminal justice system and its history is one of collapse, renewal, and now sadly decline. The city's recovery from the dark days of the 1970s and 1980s and began in the 1990s under mayors who prioritized policing and accountability, and was aided by the bipartisan 1994 Crime Bill, co-authored by then Senator Joe Biden, and signed by President Clinton.

The broken windows policing complemented that effort by addressing a low-level disorder before it grew into something worse. Enforcement was often limited to summonses, not jail, and was responsive to community complaints. Neighborhoods revived, and the entire city became a model of recovery. After the new challenges of 9/11, the NYPD created a world class counter-terrorism apparatus without sacrificing safety.

Despite expectations post 9/11, crime continued to fall under Mayor Bloomberg, and Commissioner Ray Kelly. Later, during Commissioner William Bratton's tenure of 2014–2016, indexed crime fell another nine percent, while the jail population dropped 18 percent. Proof that safety and reduced incarceration can exist.

In fact, over 20 years at that point, crime had fallen 76 percent, while the jail population was cut in half. We had hit the sweet spot. Over the ensuing years however, that success has eroded. Reforms such as no cash bail, and other changes have coincided with visible disorder. Disorderly conduct summonses for instance, the linchpin of quality-of-life enforcement fell 91 percent after 2015.

Recruitment and retention are in crisis, though murders and shootings are down this year, major felonies are up 16 percent 2010 in New York, and low-level recidivism is universal. Behind those figures lies a deeper problem, the Federal National Crime Victimization Survey shows that the vast majority of crime now goes unreported nationwide. Street conditions, and my own experience in New York bear this out.

For instance, homeless encampments are referred to agencies with no enforcement power. Shops close after repeated harassment and burglaries go unreported. Officers are not lazy, they are overwhelmed. A small fraction of offenders and chronically mentally ill drive much of this disorder. Research suggests that incarcerating or housing just a small fraction of the worst offenders would visibly improve conditions.

An uncomfortable truth is that women are disproportionately targeted by the mentally ill. Likewise, *The New York Times* found that 327 repeat offenders account for roughly one-third of all New York shoplifting arrests. Stores write off these losses as shrinkage and

pass the cost onto consumers. In New York we now lock up our toothpaste, not our perpetrators.

At the same time, and most alarmingly, the city is closing the Ryker's Island Jail, and replacing it with four dispersed jails that cut the prisoner bed count by a full two-thirds. This is a guaranteed recipe for failure. Our newly elected Mayor Zohran Momdani has famously pledged to lean into all these reforms, reducing police head count, replacing officers with social workers, and eliminating key police units.

Nationwide the role of the National Guard remains widely misunderstood. In New York since 9/11 the Guard has manned New York City transit hubs without incident. Governor Kathy Hochul's deployment of 1,000 troops to the subways has been touted by her for providing a 42 percent drop in subway crime. Note that the Guard does not answer 911 calls, they provide deterrence through visibility.

New York has long been a testing ground for criminal justice police, we know what works if we are allowed to do it. Federal Government can help with funding, certainly, it can even condition funding on best practices by local agencies. Most importantly, Federal leaders can help change the narrative. When leaders support police, that message is felt on the street.

When they vilify police, that message is felt even more. Is it any wonder that since 2019 assaults on NYPD officers are up 63 percent? The first duty of government is to protect its citizens; public safety should never be subordinated to politics. Every community, whatever its politics, wants the same thing, to live safely, and with dignity.

Those who secure that safety deserve our support, not our scorn. I thank you all for allowing me the privilege of speaking with you here today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mauro follows:]

STATEMENT OF PAUL C. MAURO, FORMER NYPD INSPECTOR AND ATTORNEY
HEARING ON RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN HIGH-CRIME U.S. CITIES
BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025

pcm@demarcolaw.com

Chairman, Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

My name is Paul Mauro. I served twenty-six years with the New York City Police Department, including a number of years dedicated to the counterterrorism mission that defined the post-9/11 era. I retired four years ago, after a career spent in the city where I was born and still live. I am now a practicing attorney. My perspective is shaped by decades on the ground — from street patrols in the 1990s to terrorism investigations across the globe — and by my continued concern for public safety in the city I call home.

Through a criminal-justice lens, New York's modern history is a story of collapse, renewal, and now, regrettably, decline. From the 1970s into the early 1990s, it was widely known as "the ungovernable city." Businesses and families fled, revenues evaporated, and New York teetered on bankruptcy. Violent crime in America rose [270 percent](#) between 1960 and 1980, peaking nationally in 1991 at 758 violent crimes per 100,000 people. At that moment, nearly half of Americans told pollsters they were [afraid to walk alone](#) at night near their homes.

New York's revival began in the 1990s, late in the Mayor David Dinkins administration, when he increased police strength and appointed Police Commissioner Ray Kelly. It accelerated under Mayor Giuliani and the "broken-windows" approach — a policy that paired visible enforcement of low-level offenses with the capacity to respond in numbers, engendering a sense of order throughout the city. That capacity was augmented by the bipartisan 1994 Crime Bill, championed by then-Senator Joe Biden and signed by President Clinton. It was the largest criminal-justice overhaul in U.S. history, providing funding for more officers, better equipment, and improved coordination with federal authorities, including enforcement against criminal aliens wanted on felonies.

It worked. Crime dropped in New York— year after year, record after record. Under broken-windows policing, quality-of-life offenses, always in response to community complaints, were now addressed. Enforcement often meant a summons, not a jail cell. Officers could move loiterers, ticket open-air marijuana use, and intervene before disorder escalated. Specialized units handled homeless encampments and cold-weather rescues. The result was a transformation:

neighborhoods reopened, commerce returned, and the entire city became a global model of urban recovery.

Then came September 11th. The NYPD suddenly had a new mission: counterterrorism. Well over a thousand NYPD officers were detailed to this new mandate. Yet, contrary to expectations, crime continued to fall under Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Kelly, who had returned as Police Commissioner. Additionally, the NYPD built one of the most sophisticated counterterrorism programs in the world while maintaining historic safety.

The next major inflection came with the election of Mayor Bill de Blasio. Despite fears of regression, crime at first continued to decline because de Blasio appointed Commissioner William Bratton, a highly skilled and experienced law enforcement executive. From 2014 through 2016, index crime fell another [nine percent](#), while the city's jail population actually dropped [eighteen percent](#) – a phenomenon which Bratton referred to as “a peace dividend.” Over the prior twenty years, at that point, crime had fallen [76 percent while the jail population was cut in half](#) — the long-sought “sweet spot” where public safety increased and incarceration decreased simultaneously.

Since that time, however, we have watched a steady unraveling. Criminal-justice “reforms” — no-cash bail, discovery rule changes, Raise-the-Age legislation, among others — have coincided with visible deterioration in street conditions. Disorderly-conduct summonses, for instance, once the linchpin of street enforcement, fell [ninety-one percent](#) after 2015. Recruitment has plummeted, leaving patrol cars short-staffed and officers working at over-capacity, with forced overtime driving up the budget and pension costs. Standards have been loosened, risking scandal later. Although shootings and murders have recently dropped, major felonies over the past fifteen years are up more than [sixteen percent](#). Low-level recidivism is universal. New Yorkers have lost faith in the NYPD's ability to solve the problems that affect them most.

Behind those numbers lies an even grimmer truth: most crime simply isn't reported. [National Crime Victimization Survey](#) data show that only about 38 percent of urban violent crimes and 25 percent of property crimes are reported at all. The gap between reality and statistics is enormous. The *New York Times* once estimated that [ninety thousand packages](#) a day are stolen in New York City; yet NYPD larceny totals for that year captured less than [two-days worth](#) of those larcenies.

On the streets, police no longer respond to many quality-of-life calls. Complaints about homeless encampments are referred to social-service agencies that lack authority to act. Restaurants close because patrons are harassed and burglaries go unreported. In truth, everyone in uniform is simply overwhelmed.

The streets and subways reek of disorder. Research suggests that forcibly housing or committing just [1,000](#) to [2,000](#) of the city's most severely mentally ill homeless individuals — a small fraction of the total — would produce a visible improvement in street conditions. Likewise, the *New York Times* found that roughly 327 repeat offenders account for about [one-third](#) of all

shoplifting arrests, yet prosecution remains rare. Chain stores absorb the losses as “shrinkage,” passing the cost to consumers. As we say in New York, we lock up our toothpaste here, not our perpetrators.

Meanwhile, in perhaps the most ominous sign for the future, the city is closing the Rikers Island jail — a functional if aging facility — and replacing it with four new jails dispersed throughout New York. These new jails will only have about [3,500 prisoner beds, down from roughly 11,300](#) today. At a moment when revolving-door justice already undermines deterrence, New York is preparing to literally *eliminate* two-thirds of its jail capacity.

Our newly elected mayor, Zohran Mamdani, has pledged to reduce police headcount and replace officers with social workers. He has publicly called the NYPD “[racist, anti-queer, and a major threat to public safety](#).” Recall that the NYPD is majority minority, and has been for decades. Mamdani has vowed to shut down the NYPD’s Gang Database, a vital tool for detectives working to suppress gang violence. He has also vowed to disband the unit trained to handle demonstrations — the same unit that safely managed the recent takeover at Columbia University. He has said, “[When the boot of the NYPD is on your neck, it’s been laced by the IDF](#).” In fifteen years of counterterrorism work, I never made a single case with the Israeli Defense Forces; what I saw instead were American cops protecting American lives. And yes, a great number of my bosses and detectives were proud Muslims officers.

Matters that were once routine now trigger confrontation due to the incessant public vilification of law enforcement. A small ICE operation this year that arrested [nine criminal aliens](#) — wanted for robbery, burglary, and assault, and other charges — sparked a near-riot. Federal officers acted lawfully; city police were uninvolved in the operation, and merely responded to maintain order. Where they then became targets themselves.

To that point, there has been great outcry regarding the use of the National Guard in a law enforcement capacity. It’s important to note that visible, uniformed presence still works. Since 9/11, the National Guard has manned [New York’s transit hubs](#) without controversy. Separately, Governor Kathy Hochul recently expanded that presence to 1,000 troops in the subways; she then touted a [42 percent drop](#) in subway crime since 2021. In Memphis, homicides and robberies fell [46 percent](#) within two months. In Washington, D.C., violent crime dropped by half during the federal surge there, earning Mayor Bowser’s publicly [expressed gratitude](#). Note that the National Guard is not answering 9-1-1 calls; they are simply a visible presence, extra eyes and ears and deterrence. The formula is simple: when law enforcement is visible, crime falls.

New York has long been a laboratory for criminal-justice policy. It has the nation’s largest police department, with a long record of innovation. We know what works: adequate resources, active enforcement, and respect for those who keep order. We also know what fails: demoralizing the police, shrinking jail capacity, and glorifying disorder in the name of reform.

The federal government can help with funding, sure. It could make federal funding contingent on good police practices. But it can also help by changing the national narrative — by standing with law enforcement rather than vilifying it. Please believe me when I tell you: when politicians support police, it is felt, down to the street level. When they vilify police, it is felt that much more. Is it any wonder that since 2019, [assaults on NYPD officers are up sixty-three percent](#)?

The prime directive of any nation, the reason nations form, is to protect its citizens. How is it good policy, or even logical, to abdicate that responsibility for political reasons? While our political differences are certainly real and abiding, how can it be good practice for mayors and governors today to make public safety decisions based purely on political calculation?

Every community, whatever its politics, wants the same thing: to live safely and with dignity. Those who secure that right deserve not scorn, but support. Please consider helping to change that narrative.

Thank you very much for allowing me the privilege of speaking here today.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Mauro. Ms. McKinney, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF TINA MCKINNEY

Ms. MCKINNEY. Chair and the Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Tina McKinney, and I am the mother of Memphis police officer Joseph McKinney, lovingly known as Rusty. Rusty died in the line of duty on April 12, 2024, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was just 26 years old. He was a devoted father who had just purchased wedding rings and was eager to build a life with his fiancée.

Rusty lived a lifetime only few get to have. He had a large family who adored him, and he loved to travel. If you said you wanted to go anywhere, he was there with you, he wanted to go, and his eagerness was undeniable. He was a good kid, the kind every parent hoped for. He lived a full life with an eagerness to help, and it lasted his entire short life, way too short.

Rusty was an Eagle Scout, a distinction that takes years of dedication and discipline in service. From camping in every kind of Memphis Mid-South weather to countless hours of community service. He lived the values of scouting every day, and it shaped the man he became. Deep down he always wanted to be a police officer. When he was five or six, he would dress up as an officer for Halloween, and ride on his electric police motorcycle all through the yard.

When he was older looking for a career, he would chat with officers, who encouraged him to join the police department. It is hard to write about him, I feel cheated, and I feel robbed of all the what-could-have-beens, and the life he could have had. He was loved by so many, and after the news of his death stories poured in from friends, coworkers, and strangers.

A young man shared how Rusty made him feel welcome when he had started his first job. He was nervous, but Rusty took him in and made him feel a part of the team. That kindness Rusty showed him, stayed with him. A coworker of mine told me her daughter had received a ticket from Rusty when he was on the force and shared how she remembered him as kind and respectful.

The one thing everyone said from the hundreds who attended his service was that Rusty and our family did not deserve this tragedy. They were right, this wasn't just a tragedy, it was a failure of leadership, and a failure of accountability. My son was a police officer, but he was also a victim. A victim of repeat offenders, one who was a juvenile, and a victim of failed policies, and failed leaders.

God gives us a life, but he doesn't promise how long it will last, or how good it will be. Instead, he gives us choices, choices that shape the life we live, and Rusty chose service, compassion, and integrity. Those two criminals repeatedly chose violence and a life of crime. Those young men were out on bond despite being arrested just weeks earlier for serious crimes, and they are responsible for my son's death through their actions and by their choices they made.

Dangerous repeat offenders are not isolated incidents for the city of Memphis. It is a result of years of political neglect, soft on crime policies, and a justice system that has prioritized leniency over ac-

countability, and judges who release high-risk offenders, and district attorneys who start pilot programs to identify cases to downgrade to misdemeanors.

Management and long delays with issuing car tags made it impossible for officers to enforce basic traffic laws, contributing to a breakdown in public safety. Memphis has also been losing officers, not just to violence, but to attrition. They have faced reduced pay, loss of benefits, and lack of support from city leaders. The Memphis Police Department has struggled to retain talent while crime surged.

While our leaders debate referendums and engage in political optics, family like mine pay the ultimate price. Public officials entrusted with leadership who have repeatedly failed to uphold the standards of their position, raising serious concerns about judgment and accountability, some propose defunding law enforcement, and introduce proposals to cut police budgets.

Those proposals were widely criticized and widely rejected. The school board has mismanaged children's futures in Memphis. Former Shelby County school superintendent Dr. Marie Faegins stated many members of the board chose chaos over children, and I believe this statement to be true. Student's poor performance is beyond poor; our school system ranks in the bottom 50 percent statewide.

Students lack basic math skills and reading skills, despite spending exorbitant amounts of money per student, the district has failed to deliver results. Millions in State and Federal funds have been spent, yet proficiency in some areas has dropped as low as five percent. Instead of investing in proven solutions, the board has spent millions on studies and administrative overhead.

Educational failures are not separate from the rising crime. They are deeply connected. A weak education system feeds weak communities, and weak communities suffer the consequences of crime and strain police.

Accountability must be more than a word. It must be standard. It must apply to individuals who commit violent acts and to those leaders whose decisions enable those acts.

Without accountability, justice is incomplete and safety is compromised. Police officers take the job knowing the worst may happen, but it is up to those in the position of power to protect them.

They ensure they have the best environment to work in, and to know that the system will work together to make a safe place for all to call home.

My son went to work, as do all officers, with a sense of hope and optimism that they can make a difference, and a hope of coming home to the families who love them.

I urge you to listen to the voices of grieving families like mine. Rusty deserved better. Memphis deserves better. Rusty had a job with MPD, but he was so much more to everyone in his personal life.

We all lost so much when he was taken for us. My son died. He gave his last breath saving a fellow officer and pushing her to the ground when the bullets started to fly.

He gave his life serving a city that tragically did not protect him in return. By continually allowing repeat offenders to be released and to commit more crimes, crime has taken a toll on me.

I would not travel to Memphis unless it was necessary and many individuals felt the same. With the increased State troopers and Federal agencies embedded in Memphis after the death of my son, Memphis is beginning to change.

People are venturing out, and people are trying to enjoy the city again. They are thanking city officials for allowing those agencies to come in.

Rusty died a hero. He protected others as he died. He gave his life. It is time for our leaders to protect those who remain.

Bring the National Guard and keep the Federal agencies who are involved in the city until criminals realize crime doesn't pay any more in Memphis and playtime is over.

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of my son, and the family, and our community in Memphis.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McKinney follows:]

Testimony of Tina McKinney**November 19, 2025**

Chairman and Members of the Committee thank you for allowing me to speak today,

My name is Tina McKinney, and I am the mother of Memphis Police Officer Joseph McKinney — lovingly known as Rusty. Rusty died in the line of duty on April 12, 2024, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was just 26 years old. He was a devoted father who had just purchased wedding rings and was eager to build a life with his fiancé.

Rusty lived a lifetime that only few get. He had a large family who adored him and loved to travel. If you said you wanted to go somewhere, Rusty was ready — his eagerness was undeniable.

He was a good kid — the kind of child every parent hoped for. He lived a full life filled with an eagerness to help others that lasted his entire, far-too-short life.

Rusty was an Eagle Scout — a distinction that takes years of dedication, discipline, and service. From camping in every kind of Mid-South weather to countless hours of community service He lived the values of scouting every day, and it shaped the man he became.

Deep down he always wanted to be a police officer. When he was five or six he would dress up as an officer for Halloween and ride on his electric police motorcycle all through the yard. When he was older and looking for a career, he would chat with officers who encouraged him to join the Police Department.

It is hard to write about him..... I feel cheated and robbed of all the "what could have beens." Rusty was loved by so many. After the news of his death, stories poured in from friends, coworkers, and strangers.

A young man shared how Rusty made him feel welcome when he started his first job, he was nervous — but Rusty took him in and made him feel part of the team, and that kindness Rusty showed him stayed with him. A coworker of mine told me her daughter received a ticket from Rusty and shared how she remembered him as kind and respectful. But the one thing everyone said — from the hundreds who attended his services — was that Rusty and our family did not deserve this tragedy.

And they were right. This wasn't just a tragedy — it was a failure of leadership and a failure of accountability.

My son was a police officer, but he was also a victim — a victim of repeat offenders (one who was a juvenile) and a victim of failed policies and failed leaders.

God gives us life, but He doesn't promise how long it will last or how good it will be. Instead, He gives each of us choices — choices that shape the life we live. Rusty chose service, compassion, and integrity. Those two criminals repeatedly chose violence and a life of crime.

Those young men were out on bond despite being arrested just weeks earlier for serious crimes. They are responsible for my son's death through their actions and by the choices they made.

Dangerous repeat offenders are not isolated incidents for The City of Memphis. It is the result of years of political neglect, soft-on-crime policies, and a justice system that has prioritizes leniency over accountability. Judges release high-risk offenders and District Attorneys start pilot programs to identify cases to downgrade to misdemeanors.

Mismanagement and long delays with issuing car tags made it impossible for officers to enforce basic traffic laws, contributing to a breakdown in public safety.

Memphis has been losing officers — not just to violence, but to attrition. They've faced reduced pay, loss of benefits, and a lack of support from city leadership. The Memphis Police Department has struggled to retain talent while crime surged. And while our leaders debate referendums and engage in political optics, families like mine pay the ultimate price.

Public officials entrusted with leadership have repeatedly failed to uphold the standards of their positions, raising serious concerns about judgment and accountability. Some proposed defunding law enforcement and introduced proposals to cut the police budgets. Those proposals were widely criticized and rightly rejected.

The School Board has mismanaged children's futures in Memphis! Former Memphis-Shelby County school superintendent Dr. Feagins stated, "Many members of the board chose chaos over children." And I believe this statement to be true.

Student performance is beyond poor! Our school system ranks in the bottom 50% statewide. Students lack basic math and reading skills. Despite spending exorbitant amounts of money per student, the district has failed to deliver results. Millions in state and federal funds have been spent, yet proficiency in some areas has dropped to as low as 5%. Instead of investing in proven solutions, the board has spent millions on studies and administrative overhead.

Educational failures are not separate from the rise in crime — they are deeply connected. A weak education system feeds weak communities, and weak communities suffer the consequences of crime and strain police.

Accountability must be more than a word — it must be a standard. It must apply to individuals who commit violent acts, and to the leaders whose decisions enable those acts. Without accountability, justice is incomplete, and safety is compromised.

Police officers take the job knowing that the worst may happen, but it is up to those in the position of power to protect them — to ensure they have the best environment to work in, and to know that the system will work together to make a safe place for **all to call home**.

My son went to work, as do all officers, with a sense of hope and optimism that they can make a difference and the hope of coming home to the families who love them.

I urge you to listen to the voices of grieving families like mine. Rusty deserved better! Memphis deserves better!

Rusty's had a job with M.P.D. but he was so much more to everyone in his personal life. We all lost so much when he was taken from us....

My son died. He gave his life serving a city that, tragically, did not protect him in return - by continually allowing repeat offenders to be released to commit more crimes.

Crime has taken a toll on me. I would not travel to Memphis unless it was necessary, and many individuals felt the same. But with the increased State Troopers and Federal agencies embedded in Memphis after the death of my son, Memphis is beginning to change. People are venturing out and trying to enjoy the city again.

Rusty died a hero. He protected others even as he died. He gave his life! It is time for our leaders to protect those who remain.

Bring the National Guard and keep the federal agencies who are there involved with the City Of Memphis until criminals realize Crime doesn't pay anymore in Memphis and playtime is over!

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of my son, my family, and the community.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you for your courage. You represent many, many other people. I see his handsome face there. It is unfortunately now the story of most major American cities.

Dr. La Vigne, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF DR. NANCY LA VIGNE

Dr. LA VIGNE. Chair Van Drew, Ranking Member Crockett, Mr. Raskin, the Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. Let's start with some facts.

Violent crime is down to prepandemic levels or even lower in most every U.S. city. That started around 2022, not when Mr. Trump started office in January of this year.

Nationwide, violent crime is down 50 percent from its peak in 1991. Despite these gains, I am not going to sit here and say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

That is because every bit of violent crime is unacceptable. Every life lost is a tragedy. We can do more, and we should do more.

With that said, the reductions in the violent crime rate that I just quoted to you; those are real statistics. We are clearly doing something right.

To that I say, if it is working, don't break it. That is precisely what this Administration is doing. It is breaking it by deploying armed guards to cities uninvited by local leaders, by canceling grants that support violent crime interventions, by cutting support for crime victims services, and by reducing investments in research on what works to promote safety.

Now, to be clear, I am certain that sending in the Guard will suppress crime in the short run. The research is strong that increasing police presence can reduce crime.

Much depends on how they are trained, how they are deployed, and how they interact with community members. Sending in a surge of National Guards and other Federal officers into cities can keep residents away for fear. It can curb tourism. It can hurt local economies.

The Guard lacks local expertise. They don't know the stakeholders, the players. They don't know how to resolve issues peacefully because of that lack of local knowledge.

That can erode trust even after they pull out, because residents don't distinguish between one type of law enforcement officer and another. Guards aren't trained for civilian policing and things like deescalation and crisis intervention, a type of training matters.

Is there a better role for law enforcement, Federal law enforcement in dealing with local crime issues? Absolutely.

One example is DOJ's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). It has been in operation since 2001. It has been going strong across various Administrations.

It is a partnership between U.S. Attorneys' offices and the local police. It is a proven success. It has been rigorously evaluated. It can result in reduced violence.

This Administration is breaking that too. Advising U.S. Attorneys to divert resources away from PSN to, you guessed it, immigration prosecutions.

Aside from Federal law enforcement presence or partnership, what are other ways to reduce violence? I will lift up one example from my home city of Newark, New Jersey.

The Newark Community Street Team is a community-based violence intervention effort. It was launched in 2015. Since then, homicides have been down 65 percent in the city of Newark.

Federal funding for the Newark Community Street Team was cut this year, along with dozens of other grants for community violence intervention programs.

Whatever we do to address issues of violent crime, we should make sure that it is a wise use of taxpayer dollars. Research and evaluation can help us to discern that return on investment, what works, what doesn't, what should be continued, and what should be disbanded.

The Department of Justice canceled dozens of grants to evaluate crime reduction programs. It also canceled translational efforts like crime *solutions.gov*, which helps make findings from research accessible to local leaders, practitioners, police chiefs, so that they can implement evidence-based practices.

What about the victims? Services can help them heal, but they are also essential in preventing revictimization.

If Congress truly cares about violent crime, they care about victims. Right? This Administration terminated hundreds of millions of dollars in victim service grants.

In closing, safer communities come from evidence. They come from partnership. They come from respect for local expertise.

Instead of letting this Administration break strategies that work, Congress should restore and invest in them. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. La Vigne follows:]

Testimony of Nancy La Vigne, PhD
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Committee on Judiciary
 Subcommittee on Oversight
 Hearing on “Restoring Law and Order to High-Crime U.S. Cities”
 November 19, 2025

Chairman Van Drew, Ranking Member Crockett, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Let me begin by acknowledging the profound pain of those who have lost loved ones to violence, including the mother of the fallen officer who will speak today. Every life lost is a tragedy. Public safety is paramount, and despite what divides us, I believe we all share a common goal: safer communities for everyone.

Violent crime rates remain higher than any of us would like. But it’s also true that in most cities, violent crime has declined dramatically over the past three years after spiking during the pandemic. According to the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice analysis of a sample of three dozen cities that post their incident-level data online in a timely manner, homicides were 14% lower in the first half of 2025 compared to the first half of 2019, the year before the COVID pandemic. Reported carjacking and motor vehicle theft, which spiked from 2020 to 2023 have also fallen back below or near pre-pandemic levels. Reported incidents of shoplifting—another offense that has captured attention in Congress—increased during the pandemic but then fell in the first half of 2025 below the 2019 level.ⁱ

These declines build on historic drops nationwide in both violent crime and homicide. The violent crime rate as reported to law enforcement was 53% lower in 2024 than at its peak in 1991, and the reported property crime rate was 67% lower than its peak in 1980.ⁱⁱ Are there cities that buck this downward trend? Absolutely. And even among those with a positive trajectory there is more we could and should be doing.

I speak to you as someone who has spent more than three decades studying crime and evaluating criminal justice interventions, including as Director of the National Institute of Justice. I’ve worked in close partnership with dozens of law enforcement agencies and corrections departments to evaluate technologies and programs designed to prevent crime and improve safety. My guiding principle has always been simple: invest in what works - and avoid or discontinue what doesn’t.

In terms of the administration’s tactic to deploy the National Guard and other federal law enforcement in select U.S. cities, it’s very likely that it will suppress crime in the short term. In fact, the research is clear that increasing the number of officers on the street can deter crime. But much depends on who the officers are, how they are trained, how they are deployed and used in each city, how they interact with community members. And let’s be honest about why crime drops owing to a massive influx of armed officers. When cities are portrayed as “under siege,” residents stay home, businesses close, and visitors stay away. Fewer people on the streets means fewer opportunities for crime. The creation of what is essentially a police state in targeted cities

is not a sustainable solution, undermines the credibility of local law enforcement, and it comes with grave unintended consequences for traditional American values and freedoms.

First, imported officers lack local knowledge: who the key players are, which community leaders can help, and what partnerships already exist – all essential ingredients for successful community policing. Second, bringing in outsiders who don't know community norms erodes trust. When trust breaks down, law-abiding residents are less likely to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or collaborate on crime prevention.ⁱⁱⁱ This can be particularly harmful for local police-community relations, as residents don't distinguish between local law enforcement and those who have parachuted in. Third, with all due respect to the National Guard, they are not trained for civilian policing. Police in most U.S. cities are trained in how to interact with people who are behaving disruptively and how to safely subdue uncooperative subjects, including identifying and de-escalating those who may appear threatening because they are experiencing a mental health crisis. This includes training programs like the Police Executive Research Forum's Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) training, which is designed to help officers de-escalate volatile situations. Evaluators found that ICAT reduced use-of-force incidents by 28%, citizen complaints by 26%, and officer injuries by 36%. That kind of specialized training matters.^{iv}

To be clear, there are many ways that federal law enforcement can help partner with cities to reduce crime. Federal partnerships between DEA, FBI, ATF and local law enforcement are essential. They can aid in disrupting the trafficking of firearms, drugs, and humans; support the investigation and prosecution of those committing federal offenses; support the tracing of weapons; and partner on anti-terrorism task forces. These are all important partnerships that should be valued and supported by local leadership in cities throughout the country.

One example of a federal-local crime reduction partnership is [Project Safe Neighborhoods](#), which was established by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2001 and supports U.S. Attorneys Offices to work in partnership with local law enforcement and other community partners to reduce violent crime. PSN has three pillars: (1) community engagement; (2) prevention and intervention; and (3) focused and strategic enforcement to hold perpetrators accountable. A systematic review of twelve independent PSN evaluations found that all but two detected meaningful reductions in violent crime.^v PSN is a prime example of federal prosecutors working with local law enforcement and stakeholders to assess problems and work together on solutions. Sadly, this administration has directed US Attorneys to divert from this evidence-based program to fund immigration-based prosecutions.^{vi}

We should ask ourselves: do we want taxpayer dollars spent on strategies that research shows are counterproductive? Or do we want to invest in approaches proven to work? During my tenure at NIJ, we learned that the most effective interventions are those developed and implemented in partnership with local stakeholders: law enforcement, business owners, service providers, and community members. This same strategy is embodied in the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice's Violent Crime Working Group's *Ten Essential Actions to Reduce Violence*, developed by a mix of law enforcement, community leaders, and researchers.^{vii} The strategy prescribes a collaborative approach focused on high-risk people in high-crime neighborhoods with a comprehensive blend of accountability, enforcement and prevention. Such "focused deterrence" efforts are well established as effective means of violence reduction.^{viii}

In my own city of Newark, initiatives like the Newark Community Street Team (NCST) have helped drive violent crime down dramatically by disrupting relationship-based disputes from turning violent through coordination with community partners, city agencies, service providers, and policy organizations in partnership with law enforcement. From the launch of NCST activities in 2015 to the present, homicides in Newark have plummeted from 106 to 37 in 2024, a 65% decrease.^{ix} Unfortunately, in April of this year, this administration cut federal funding for the Newark Community Street Team, along with funding for dozens of similar community violence interrupter programs throughout the country.

Federal partnerships and funding can go a long way to reducing violence in America's communities. And here's something equally important: we can't know what works without research—and we can't scale what works without sharing that knowledge with practitioners. Federal investments in research and evaluation are critical. Platforms like CrimeSolutions.gov, which rates the effectiveness of programs based on rigorous evidence, give police chiefs, mayors, and community leaders the tools they need to make informed decisions. DOJ has ceased funding for this valuable resource, hanging state and local law enforcement out to dry. Cutting research funding means flying blind - and potentially wasting taxpayer dollars when interventions fail.

Finally, if we truly care about victims, we must fund programs that support them and prevent re-victimization. Yet this administration has terminated grants for victim services and prevention programs, canceling over 550 grants worth at least about \$820 million, including close to \$72 million specifically for victim support.^x These grant terminations have stunned the victim services field and have created widespread concern about the future of victim services. Programs that were eliminated include hospital-based victim services where victim advocates are embedded in emergency rooms so they can be there for victims of gun violence and connect them with resources for support and healing. Another program that was canceled funded community organizations struggling to meet the most basic needs of survivors, including food, shelter, safety, and transportation. These cuts undermine decades of bipartisan progress and leave survivors without critical resources.

In closing, let me return to where I began: we all want safer communities. Even one victim is too many. But the path forward is not through fear or federal takeovers. It is through evidence, partnership, and respect for local expertise. If this Congress truly cares about public safety, it will invest in strategies that work, in support for victims and their families, and in the research that tells us what works.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

ⁱ <https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-mid-year-2025-update/>

ⁱⁱ <https://counciloncj.foleon.com/the-footprint-trends-in-crime-arrests-and-the-total-correctional-population/the-footprint/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kruger, D. J., Crichlow, V. J., McGarrell, E., Hollis, M., Jefferson, B. M., Reischl, T. M., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2016). Perceptions of Procedural Justice Mediate the Relationship Between Local Violent Crime Density and Crime Reporting Intentions. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 44(6), 807–812; Tyler, Tom R., with Jeffrey Fagan. 2008. "Legitimacy and Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities?" *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6: 231–75; Tyler, Tom R., and Jonathan Jackson. 2014. "Popular Legitimacy and the Exercise of Legal Authority: Motivating Compliance, Cooperation, and Engagement." *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 20 (1): 78–95.

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- ^{iv} Engel, Robin S., Nicholas Corsaro, Hannah D. McManus, and Gabrielle T. Isaza. 2020. "Examining the Impact of Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) De-escalation Training for the Louisville Metro Police Department: Initial Findings." Report. International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) / University of Cincinnati (UC) Center for Police Research and Policy.
- ^v Shelfer, D., Gullion, C. L., Guerra, C., Zhang, Y., & Ingram, J. R. (2022). A Systematic Review of Project Safe Neighborhoods Effects. *Justice Evaluation Journal*, 6(1), 32–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2022.2109190>
- ^{vi} <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25501043-memorandum-from-the-acting-deputy-attorney-general-01/>
- ^{vii} <https://counciloncj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/VCWG-Final-Report.pdf>
- ^{viii} Braga, Anthony A., David Weisburd, and Brandon Turchan. "Focused deterrence strategies and crime control: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis of the empirical evidence." *Criminology & Public Policy* 17.1 (2018): 205-250.
- ^{ix} Newark Police Division data analyzed by the Newark Public Safety Collaborative, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice.
- ^x <https://counciloncj.org/doj-funding-update-a-deeper-look-at-the-cuts/>

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you for your testimony. We will now begin with questions. We will proceed under the five-minute rule.

I am going to recognize the gentleman from the great State of Alabama.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have seen crime rise in Democrat ran cities, including in my home State of Alabama in the two largest Democrat ran cities, that would be Birmingham and Montgomery.

Senator Tuberville has noted that he would be supportive of the National Guard coming in to help local police departments in Alabama with rising crime.

Mr. Mangual, have we seen an improvement enough that would warrant the National Guard coming to Alabama, from these other cities where we have, obviously like D.C., where we have deployed the Guard?

Mr. MANGUAL. Yes. I do think that there is some pretty significant evidence that the deployment of the National Guard, whether it is in Washington, DC, or in some of the other places where it has been deployed, has had a beneficial deterrent effect through the presence, right? The problem to the extent that there is one is that those benefits are going to be limited.

It is best that those kinds of efforts are coupled with other Federal agency deployments and prioritizations of things like 922(g) cases, which are gun prosecutions, gang prosecutions, et cetera.

Mr. MOORE. Yes. So far, since the operation started in D.C., we have had nearly 3,100 arrests and 300 firearms seized.

What does that tell you about the depth of unchecked criminal activity prior to the National Guard being here?

Mr. MANGUAL. It tells you that Washington, DC, like many other American cities, has been for a long time under policed, right?

When you have additional resources coming in, and they are able to make significant numbers of arrests, that tells you that the city did not have what it needed beforehand. That should be a lesson to the leaders to add to the foresight.

Mr. MOORE. If the resources for policing are there, Mr. Mauro, you may want to touch on this too as well, these soft on crime DAs, when they just turn the folks back out, doesn't that go against just certainly the morale in the police departments?

If we have politicians criticizing police officers when we are soft on them after they go through the trouble to make an arrest, to try to get somebody, to put them behind the bars, and then we turn them right back out. In the case of Ms. McKinney, we have officers and individuals attacked again.

Does it, Mr. Mauro, doesn't that hurt the morale? Even if we have the policing resources, if we turn the people right back out, isn't that going to create a problem for society?

Mr. MAURO. Well, of course it does, sir. The result can be, in some instances, therefore a lack of enforcement.

If you make, let's say, an arrest for a low-level offense that should go downtown, so to speak, and when you get there, it is DP'ed, as they call it, declined prosecution. When that happens regularly, you begin to understand that it is not what the system you work for wants.

I am very cognizantly choosing that example, because it is one of the things that led to the beginning of the disorder in our subways.

The lifeblood of New York City is the subway system. That is the city's circulatory system. Jumping fares, as they call it, fair beating, is one of the ways that the entire policing revolution that we had in the 1990s, it was really founded on that as one of the principal enforcement mechanisms.

Not everybody who jumps the turnstile is a member of a robbery crew, certainly. If you are a member of a robbery crew, you are not paying the fare.

When somebody jumps the turnstile and you give them just a summons, and it turns out that they have two robbery warrants on them, well now you have the ability to take them off the street.

That has a cascading effect on the safety in the system. That was really one of the broken windows linchpins.

Ultimately what happens, is when that is no longer enforced, and I should mention that the District Attorneys in New York, we have five, at least four, literally don't enforce that crime. It is on, right in the Day One, the infamous Day One memo of Alvin Bragg, saying, we are not going to enforce that anymore.

Now, I would argue that this is not even within his power. That is the legislature that has to repeal an entire statute. Nobody has challenged that and so on it goes.

Consequently, people who would have been kept off that system, now feel with impunity to jump the turnstile, go in through the out door, they don't pay, and now they have easy access to a place that they can commit crimes, get out of there quickly, et cetera.

In addition to morale, it leads to a lack of enforcement.

Mr. MOORE. They basically just lose concern about it. It is that broken window principle, if you don't stop them there, then the crime just escalates in certainly, individuals who are jumping the turnstiles.

You said Governor Hochul, Kathy Hochul, right, had moved the Guard into the subways. They were just there as a presence to deter, right? That is kind of, they are not really arresting people?

Mr. MAURO. No, no. They don't follow the 9/11 system. It is not like they are getting deployed to go on "particular police jobs."

They are there for what is called their omnipresence. You see it all over New York, it has been underway, as I mentioned, since 9/11.

That is 25 years without incident. You see them in the omnibus, the Oculus, excuse me, downtown, which is a big transportation hub. You will see them in Penn Station, in Grand Central. They just stand there.

Because they are there, it takes weight off of the police, and it sends the message that this area is observed. Very often, perpetrators will move on.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you. I am out of time. I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chair, I have a couple of UCs before we move on.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK.

Ms. CROCKETT. First, I have a unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a report written by Chandler Hall, titled, "Cities in Blue States Experiencing Larger Declines in Gun Violence in 2023."

Then, I have another one. It is by Chandler Hall again, titled, "The Highest Rates of Gun Homicides Are in Rural Counties."

My next one is titled, written by Jeff Asher, titled, "Trump Doesn't Have the Data to Back Up His Claims About Washington, DC."

My final one is written by Kiley Murdock and Jim Kessler, titled, "The 21st Century Red State Murder Crisis."

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. VAN DREW. I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am deeply disappointed about this hearing. It was billed as an exploration of the Trump-Vance Administration restoring law and order through the deployment of the military onto the streets of America.

That is what we were here to talk about, and I haven't heard one Republican witness talk about that. How the military, the National Guard, has decreased crime on the streets of America. That is what this is supposed to be about.

Somebody has lied, just like Trump lied. He lied about releasing the Epstein files. He lied about putting America first. He lied about lowering costs on day one.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Johnson, if I can just interrupt for a minute. All our witnesses are kind enough to be here. They are not here as a Republican or Democrat.

Their own views are them on all, I will say for all of them. Not one of them is intentionally lying and they swore an oath.

I appreciate your comments. Please move on.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, no, no. I am not casting aspersions at the witnesses. I am saying that this hearing was billed as something that it has not turned out to be.

We are supposed to be talking about how the deployment of the military onto the streets of America, has lessened crime.

Mr. VAN DREW. This is your chance, sir. This is your chance.

Mr. JOHNSON. It is a fair argument for me to make that we have misled the public, just like Donald Trump has misled the public.

The public, the American Joe, or the average Joe on the street, is feeling like a sucker now, because Trump is telling them that, look, don't believe your lying eyes.

Prices are down. They know that price of groceries is up. The price of energy is up. The price of their healthcare is up. Donald Trump is telling them, believe what I say. They are getting tired of that.

They looked at this drama with the Epstein files, they saw him go from doing everything he could to prevent the release, into flipping at the last minute, so to save the little face that he still has, because he knew he was going to lose that vote and he lost it.

Every single Member of Congress, except for one, voted to release the Epstein files. The American people are really confused at this point.

They see MAGA Republicans in the House carrying President Trump's water. They are not happy about that. Fortunately, they have a shining light to look at. Her name is Marjorie Taylor Green.

She has started to move away from the deception, the lies, deceit, and the violence. Because of that, she is now being subjected to violence.

Let me ask you a question, Mr. Mangual, although you have been to law school, your training has been as a corporate communications guy with the International Trademark Association.

You are here to talk about how the military has made our streets more safe. I will ask you this question. Law enforcement is a noble profession, isn't it?

Mr. MANGUAL. It is.

Mr. JOHNSON. It has special education and certification. Isn't that correct?

Mr. MANGUAL. It does.

Mr. JOHNSON. Specialized skills that you get from learning to become a police officer, like Ms. McKinney's son, and I am so saddened by your loss. My condolences to you, Ms. McKinney.

Law enforcement officers, isn't it true, Mr. Mauro, are trained professionals?

Mr. MAURO. Yes, sir.

Mr. JOHNSON. They take a different oath than does the military. Isn't that correct?

Mr. MAURO. Well, I am not familiar with the military oath, but, I know—

Mr. JOHNSON. That is because you never served in the military. The military is trained to combat, to be in combat situations. Whereas, law enforcement officers are trained to enforce the law.

Isn't it a fact, Dr. La Vigne, that if we have people who are trained in combat, deployed to the streets of America, that we are doing law enforcement a disservice, because law enforcement depends on the respect and support of the people who they serve?

Isn't it true that by deploying the military to the streets we are hurting law enforcement?

Dr. LA VIGNE. It can be demoralizing to local law enforcement to have the National Guard come in, as if they aren't capable of doing their jobs.

You are right, they are trained specifically to be policing in a civilian context.

Mr. JOHNSON. They come in and break things up and kill people. That is what the military does, right?

Dr. LA VIGNE. I don't know about that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, that is not what police officers are trained to do.

Dr. LA VIGNE. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. With that, I will yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. JOHNSON. Before I do though, let me offer, for unanimous consent, an article entitled, "Portland Police Chief Reveals Troops Tear Gassed Protest by Accident." That is in *The New Republic* on October 29th. Without objection.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentleman. I now recognize Dr. Onder from the great State of Missouri.

Mr. ONDER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, I am all too familiar with high crime cities. A part of my district is on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri, a city that has consistently had one of the highest homicide rates in the country.

In fact, I myself, all the way back in 2005, was a victim of a violent crime. I was robbed at gunpoint. Unfortunately, the crime rate in that region has only gotten worse.

Just this last year, Missouri's Attorney General testified before this Committee that the State had to remove a St. Louis prosecutor for prioritizing politically motivated cases over violent offenders, including murderers.

The families hardest hit are in these neighborhoods, these inner city neighborhoods, are the ones that pay the price. For years, failed leadership in neglected public safety of left entire communities trapped in fear.

In St. Louis, Democrat policies have worsened a crisis that was undermining law enforcement and refusing to hold violent criminals accountable.

The primary responsibility of government has always been to protect citizens by upholding law and order. When local officials abandon that duty, communities crumble. When prosecutors refuse to prosecute, crime grows.

When politics outweigh public cities, the results are the experience of St. Louis, Chicago, New York City, Charlotte, and others. Record violence, collapsing trust in institutions, and violent neighborhoods.

These policies trap generations, they crush hope, and we have to break that pattern. Real compassion means telling young people that we believe that we can do better, and that choices have consequences.

Accountability is not punishment for its own sake. It is a path to safer streets, stronger families, and communities that can thrive.

Mr. MANGUAL, is there a way that Congress can hold local officials accountable for refusing to enforce the law and refusing Federal assistance during periods of sustained violent crime?

Mr. MANGUAL. The best thing that Congress can do in this way, to hold these local officials accountable, is to condition more of the funds that so many American cities depend on best practices with respect to law enforcement and prosecution.

Mr. ONDER. Yes. That makes sense. Not only in New York City do you lock up the toothpaste, not the perpetrators, but that my staff tells me that in the Navy Yard area of Washington, DC, they lock up the toothpaste at the CVS.

Ms. McKINNEY, just a quick question for you. I am so sorry for the loss of your brave and heroic son. You mentioned one of the murders was out on a bond.

Do you know, was he out on a cash bond, or was he just released without, essentially without any financial incentive to return?

Ms. MCKINNEY. Sir, I am really not sure.

Mr. ONDER. OK. That is a no. That is all right.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Yes.

Mr. ONDER. It is very common these days. One of these soft-on-crime policies that so many times is instituted in some of these soft-on-crime cities and States, has been the end of what is called cash bail.

Which is to say no bail at all. Just letting the suspects, letting them go free.

Mr. Mauro, you are with the Manhattan or Mangual, you are with Manhattan Institute.

Mr. MANGUAL. Yes.

Mr. ONDER. Shortly after I was elected to the Missouri Senate in August 2014, of course, very famously, the Michael Brown death and the subsequent riots, led to just some very unfortunate, the very unfortunate phenomenon, which Heather MacDonald at Manhattan Institute—

Mr. MANGUAL. The Ferguson Effect, yes.

Mr. ONDER. Kind of popularized the Ferguson Effect. Explain that, and what, how can we turn things around?

It is the opposite of what Mr. Mauro describes with broken windows policing, enforcing fairs, and so on.

Mr. MANGUAL. That is exactly right. The Ferguson Effect basically describes a phenomenon in which, in the wake of a viral police incident that was controversial, so much public scrutiny and vitriol was lobbed at the institutions of law enforcement that it basically discouraged line officers from being proactive.

One of the best sort of academic demonstrations of this was done in a study by Roland Fryer and Tanaya Devi out of Harvard, where they looked at five American cities over a two-year period, and looked at which ones were targeted by the Federal Government under either President Barack Obama, most of them under President Barack Obama, for civil rights enforcement actions in the wake of viral police use of force incidents.

What they found was a massive increase in felony offenses, homicide offenses specifically. The mechanism that they believe most explained that increase in crime was a pullback on the part of line officers with respect to proactiveness.

Mr. ONDER. Every law enforcement fears being the next Darren Wilson. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chair, before—

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentleman. Yes?

Ms. CROCKETT. Sorry, before you go on, I have two UC requests. First, from the *Council on Criminal Justice*, which states, examining trends over a longer period, St. Louis has had a far larger reduction in some violent and property crimes than other large American cities.

The homicide rate in St. Louis was 40 percent lower in the first half of this year than it wasn't the first half of the first year of the pandemic.

Second, I ask unanimous consent for an article that was written by Stephanie Wylie, titled, "How Profit Shapes the Bail Bond System," published by the *Brennan Center*."

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you.

Mr. VAN DREW. I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Raskin, from the great State of Maryland.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. McKinney, I want to extend to you my sympathy for your horrible loss. As a father who lost a son who was a year younger than your son, I cannot know your pain or your experience, but I know you live with it every day. My heart goes out to you.

Ms. McKinney and Mr. Mauro, in fact, all the witnesses have underscored the importance, as Mr. Mauro put it, of voicing support for the police.

We voted to create a plaque. It wasn't a memorial fund for anyone. It wasn't money to go to families. At least it was a plaque to honor the work of the officers who defended us with their lives.

It reads, on behalf of a grateful Congress, this plaque honors the extraordinary individuals who bravely protected and defended this symbol of democracy on January 6, 2021. Their heroism will never be forgotten.

It was supposed to have been put up in the Capitol two years ago. It has still not been put up. I thought I would start with an easy one, just a yes or no question.

Would you agree that Speaker Johnson should put this plaque up as provided for in Federal law? Dr. La Vigne, I can start with you.

Dr. LA VIGNE. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Ms. McKinney?

Ms. MCKINNEY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Mauro?

Mr. MAURO. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Mangual?

Mr. MANGUAL. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much. I want to go to, just quickly back to the question of the pardons, because it seems like our soft on crime President is so beholden to the MAGA militia that he has actually pardoned some of the people he already pardoned, because they have gotten back in trouble.

As I was reading the long list of crimes they have already engaged in, he recently pardoned a woman who was separately convicted of threatening to shoot FBI agents who were investigating a tip that she may have been at the Capitol, and she threatened to shoot them.

Then, he pardoned another insurrectionist from Kentucky, who had been arrested for illegally possessing six firearms and 4,800 rounds of ammunition.

Just a question to you, Dr. La Vigne, what message is sent by these repeated pardons for people who just participated in the insurrection surrounding the attempted overthrow of the 2020 Presidential Election?

Dr. LA VIGNE. I think the best way to answer that is to quote Chair Van Drew who said in his opening remarks, "when you take away consequences, you get chaos."

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Mr. Mauro, let me come back to you, because you invoked the broken windows thesis by James Q. Wilson. It piqued my ears. He was my professor when I was in school.

I was always—I wrote a paper about it. I was always fascinated by it. Also, we had a lot of broken windows here on January 6, 2021, in addition to a lot of broken bones.

I wonder, I read that long list, I won't go through the whole thing again, but of crimes that have been committed since the pardons took place by people who were pardoned, including terroristic threats, home invasion, burglary, vandalism, and theft. Not offenses directed at politicians.

I am afraid the Chair misunderstood my point. He seemed to think that I was talking about these crimes being directed just at politicians.

I am talking about these common crimes that were committed by people who were pardoned. People going out and robbing other people's houses, having nothing to do with politics.

My question for you on broken windows, are you surprised that people who were given the remarkable, extraordinary, almost unheard of privilege of a Presidential Pardon, quickly going back out on the road and doing things like burglary, vandalism, theft, home invasion, and terroristic threats?

What does that say in the context of broken windows?

Mr. MAURO. All I would say relative to January 6th, is that if we are going to speak about the conditions in our cities, I am hearing a great deal about January 6th, I'm hearing a tremendous amount about Donald Trump.

That is not what you feel on the street. January 6th, nobody supports. Certainly, I don't. Nobody wants to see people in Viking horns walking around inside our Capitol, behaving that way. I can't.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. I am reclaiming my time.

Mr. MAURO. I am not making excuse—

Mr. RASKIN. I am sorry.

Mr. MAURO. You said—

Mr. RASKIN. I am sorry, sir. Did you read James Q. Wilson about the broken windows hypothesis, which is that to apply it—

Mr. MAURO. Well, we have got to apply it—

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair, will you direct him to respond and stop talking.

Mr. MAURO. I am trying to tell my—

Mr. RASKIN. I have reclaimed my time. You might not understand the rules.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Mauro, Mr. Mauro. Actually, your thought was one of the better thoughts I have heard all day today. I appreciate it, but it's the gentleman's time, the Ranking Member's time. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. Please restore my time if you would. Let me come to you, Dr. La Vigne.

Mr. VAN DREW. We will restore your time.

Mr. RASKIN. The broken windows hypothesis is that if you allow people to get away with a crime at a certain level, and you send them the message, it is OK, then they will go out and commit other crimes and more serious crimes.

That is what we are seeing here. What do you think, and I know you haven't written a paper on this, because I looked at your extensive scholarship.

What do you think about the proposition, well, that there are political crimes and we can forgive all those, and those people will not

take it as a permission slip to go out and commit other crimes. Does that seem right?

Dr. LA VIGNE. No, sir. It doesn't. Although I am so tempted to geek out on what broken windows really was, according to George Kelling and James Q. Wilson.

George Kelling was on the faculty at the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice for years. It wasn't about enforcement.

It was really about how visible signs of disarray and disorder can send a signal that places are vulnerable to crime. Fixing those broken windows. It wasn't about a vast—

Mr. RASKIN. Which is why I was pointing out, we had millions of dollars of broken windows here, in addition to all the bloodshed—

Dr. LA VIGNE. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. The people.

Mr. VAN DREW. Time has expired.

Mr. RASKIN. I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentleman. I will yield myself five minutes.

Just a few quick questions and a couple thoughts. Just, I agree with you, by the way, Mr. Mauro. Right now, we can have another hearing on Epstein. We can have another hearing on January 6th.

We are really trying to talk to people about the people on the street and what they are going through when they live in many of these areas throughout the country. That is what we are supposed to be here for.

With that, I am sorry, I have to just digress a tiny second. The Epstein files, just so we all know, Epstein was indicted under President Trump's Administration. He was arrested during Trump's Administration.

Maxwell was indicted during the Trump Administration. Was arrested during the Trump Administration. Let's set the facts straight.

Mr. Mauro, I have a question for you, and if you can answer briefly. The Democratic party has changed. Again, I don't want to get political here.

You are right. If I understood what you were saying, there used to be a bipartisan agreement, probably back around the 1990s, I don't know the exact years.

President Clinton, other noted Democrats that really cared, that as Democrats, they might have differed in vision with Republicans on some issues, fiscal and otherwise, but keeping our streets safe for the men and women who live in the country, especially in urban areas, wasn't that a bipartisan effort?

Wasn't that a different kind of Democrat than what we are seeing now?

Mr. MAURO. The tremendous success in New York City relative to driving down crime that began in the 1990s began post-Giuliani.

Everybody thought it was going to go away under a Democrat mayor, a police commissioner serving under a Democratic mayor, in fact two, Raymond Kelly and William Bratton.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Mauro, thank you for that. My point is, this is a whole new deal now going on with Democrats. This is a different world.

This isn't those Democrats back then. This is Mamdani is not Bill Clinton, is not that type of a Democrat at all. Mamdani, in fact, wants to take, I am sure you heard about it, I am sure you are upset about it, all misdemeanors, there will be no more misdemeanors. It is unbelievable.

The second issue I wanted to talk about is, really quickly, this sounds like a stupid question. Why are we locking up our toothpaste, our mouthwash, our just common things, and cough medicine? What is going on?

Mr. MAURO. This is a salient question. Three hundred twenty-seven career perpetrators identified by *The New York Times* now, account for a full one-third of all the shoplifting in New York City. That is driving these numbers.

The point that I tried to make in my opening statement was that we are not talking about locking up vast numbers of people now to change the dynamic on the street.

We had learned from broken windows and where we are right now, is if there was some surgical enforcement on people who are identified, and we just took those steps, conditions would be greatly improved.

These are the kinds of real things that I was hoping we could talk about today.

Mr. VAN DREW. The stuff that affects people because they are paying more for their goods and services because of it. That makes them feel nervous. They don't like it. It shouldn't be that way.

Next question, isn't part of this, you can cook the books in statistics. We keep hearing about the statistics. Go out in the street.

I know Newark well, Doctor, I know it well. I spent plenty of time there going to continuing education courses at Rutgers University.

I am going to say that if you went to Newark and North Jersey, or Irvington, or many of the other cities up there, and if you go to the cities in my area, Pleasantville, Atlantic City, there is a lot of concern for safety. Particularly, people of color, because they live there and they have that concern.

With that said, isn't part of the statistics, there is low morale, there is less staffing, there is less prosecution, there is less arrests, if you just let it go by.

Of course, with less prosecution and less arrest, you are going to have lower numbers. Is there any accuracy to what I say?

Mr. MAURO. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. Exactly. Let's do the real deal. Let's talk about what's really happening.

We made it so damn hard for a cop to be a cop, and just so disgusted and demoralized with it, they just don't bother, unless it is the most serious of situations. I had cops in D.C. last year, tell me that when I actually witnessed something.

Let me ask this, Ms. McKinney, again, sorry to ask questions to you, because I know you have gone through a lot. Thank you for being here.

I know condolences and the sorrow means a lot. Would it maybe mean more to you if we enacted policies so that what happened to your son never happened to somebody else again?

Ms. MCKINNEY. Definitely.

Mr. VAN DREW. That means more than the condolences, doesn't it?

Ms. MCKINNEY. It would. Especially in Memphis.

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. That is why I have, with the National Guard there, I know some people are against having the National Guard in big cities or anywhere on U.S. territory.

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. I feel that the National Guard in Memphis, just their presence alone, has made a difference. They don't do police work.

Mr. VAN DREW. May I ask a question related to that. Really quick for all of you, and then I am done.

Do you believe that the National Guard, the men and women in the Guard, are capable of being on those city streets and doing good and not doing harm?

That they are not just going to be warriors that are going out shooting people and beating them up? Mr. Mangual, yes or no answer?

Mr. MANGUAL. Yes, I do.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Mauro?

Mr. MAURO. Yes.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Yes.

Dr. LA VIGNE. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. That puts that away. I thank you and I thank all of you. With that—

Ms. CROCKETT. I have UCs.

Mr. VAN DREW. I bet you do.

Ms. CROCKETT. I mean, you asked different questions. I got answers.

My first UC, I asked unanimous consent to enter into the record an article titled, "DOJ Cancels \$500 Million in Public Safety Grants, Cuts Officer Safety and Crime Prevention Programs," published by *Police1* on August 18, 2025.

I also have one where, it is entitled, "Public Safety Groups Face an Uncertain Future Months After Federal Grant Cuts," published by the *National Public Radio*.

I also have one that says, "Justice Department Slashes Essential Services for Crime Victims," published by the *Brennan Center*.

I have one that says, let's see, this is by *The Guardian*. It is published March 27, 2025. "Trump Cut 69 Global Programs Tackling Child Labor and Human Trafficking."

I have another one that says, this is written by Michael Waldman, titled, "Trump Defunds Effective Crime Prevention Policies, published by the Brennan Center," July 2025.

I have another one that says, it is by Nicole, I can't pronounce Nicole's last name. "Crime Prevention Efforts Face Setbacks After Federal Cuts."

I have another one that says, "Federal Cuts to Behavioral Health Will Harm Public Safety," from September 23, 2025.

My final one on this issue, so we can put this to rest. I asked unanimous consent, this is written by Nick Wilson, titled, "The Trump Administration's Budget Will Undermine ATF's Efforts to

Prevent Violent Crime.” This was published by the Center for American Progress on July 9, 2025.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection. I would remind everyone that those are, in sincerity, mostly Left-wing publications. I could come and put a lot of UCs in for publications that would disagree with that totally.

Ms. CROCKETT. I have—OK.

Mr. VAN DREW. My point being, let me just finish my point. It is not going to put anything to rest and you know that.

Ms. CROCKETT. Well, but Mr. Chair, I will ask, if you do have any UCs that say the opposite about these Federal cuts as if they didn’t happen, please enter them into the record, so that we can have it in the Congressional Record that these cuts were not made. I just would like it to be, I want us to have an accurate record.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair?

Mr. VAN DREW. Not necessarily the cuts, but the results of the cuts are two different things. Where you are spending money, and if you are spending money that is effective.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair, if I could, I just have four, not seven, I think I just counted.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. This is in *Reuters*, “Federal Drug Prosecutions Fall the Lowest Level in Decades as Trump Shifts Focus to Deportations.”

This one is the *Washington Post*, November 10, 2025, no longer a liberal publication, by the way. “Justice Department Struggles as Thousands Exit and Few Replaced.”

This one is from *ProPublica*, “How Trump Has Exploited Pardons and Clemency to Reward Political Allies and Supporters.”

Finally, this one from the *Cato Institute*, “ICE Has Diverted Over 25,000 Officers in Their Jobs at the FBI.”

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

Mr. VAN DREW. You are next?

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. I now recognize the Ranking Member, I am sorry, I don’t, yes, the Ranking Member of this Committee, I do, Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. If we have learned anything this year, is that Congressional Republicans are more interested in serving Donald Trump than they are in serving their constituents.

Over the past 10 months, they have given away permanent tax cuts to the wealthiest people on earth, demolished half of the White House, pardoned violent insurrectionists, significantly driven up cost of living across the country, and then given themselves a taxpayer-funded eight-week vacation.

Also, they could delay, as long as possible, Congress voting to release the Epstein files. Now, they are trying to gaslight you into believing that you should trust them on crime policy.

They want you to believe that living in a Police State is a good or normal thing. They want you to be OK with having armed soldiers and Federal agents monitor you as you shop for groceries or take your children to school.

They want you to think that you won't be affected. We have already seen Americans detained, arrested, injured, and some nearly killed because of this Administration's reckless approach to handling crime.

They are doing all this without acknowledging the fact that Republican led States are experiencing a murder and crime and violent crime crisis. Have so, and they have, for the last two decades.

The Republicans murder State rates were 33 percent higher than Democratic State murder rates in both 2021–2022. In fact, over the past 22 years, the Republican State murder rates were nearly a quarter higher compared to States that are led by Democrats.

Even when you remove Democratic cities and counties from the Republican State's data, their murder rate is still nearly a quarter higher than States run by Democrats.

Ms. La Vigne, how long have you studied crime?

Dr. LA VIGNE. You are going to have me show my age. Is that nice?

Ms. CROCKETT. It doesn't show in your face, honey. That is all that matters.

Dr. LA VIGNE. Let's just say about three decades.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK, very good. Would you agree that factors like poverty, lax gun laws, and a lack of public services, can lead to higher crime rates?

Dr. LA VIGNE. Yes. I agree with that.

Ms. CROCKETT. According to the Census Bureau States with the highest poverty rates are disproportionately Republican governed and often have laxer gun laws and less public services.

Wouldn't you agree that these factors are likely why Republican led States have higher murder rates than Democratic States?

Dr. LA VIGNE. I would. In fact, I would like to lift up some research from one of our faculty members, Dr. Robert Apel.

He recently conducted a study looking at the relationship between levels and quality of public assistance and crime. Found that there is the relationship in the expected direction. That is, lower public assistance, more crime, and more recidivism.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much for that. Not only are you likely to be a victim of violent crime in a Republican led State, you are now less likely to receive victim assistance, because of Republican cutting resources for food, shelter, and transportation.

This is what Donald Trump's America looks like. Never let a wannabe tyrant convince you that the only way for you to be safe is to live under a Police State where he controls your day-to-day activities by means of military or armed Federal agents.

That is what we call a dictatorship. I just want to be clear, because I appreciate what you just brought up, because I did serve as a public defender and a court-appointed attorney.

As we sat here, I remembered that one of the witnesses' opening statements, they mentioned the word why. As Michael Jackson used to sing, why, why, why, we have not dealt with the why. We have not dealt with why crime happens.

If you understand the why, then maybe you can come to a conclusion. As someone who has sat there with people that were too poor to be able to afford their own attorneys, I can tell you some whys.

What I am going to do, is talk to you about why the idea that incarceration is the only thing that can fix anything. The fact that we have two witnesses that are telling us that we need to go back to the 1994 Crime Bill, when we learned that all that did was drive up incarceration.

It didn't drive down addiction, because addiction is actually an illness. That is a whole other issue. You can't incarcerate your way out of an illness just like you can't incarcerate somebody that has cancer and believe that somehow they now will be cured.

I digress. What I will tell you, is that we also know that the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate of any independent democracy on earth.

Worse, every single State incarcerates more people per capita than most Nations in the global context. Even progressive U.S. States like New York and Massachusetts appear to be extreme just like Louisiana and Mississippi.

In addition to that, the United States has the highest incarceration rate, the highest average firearms per 100 people. Highest homicides per 100,000 people. The lowest safety and security rate of 12 countries in comparison.

I had a 17-year-old that was charged with stealing food out of the concession stand at his high school. Unfortunately, in the State of Texas at the age of 17, you are considered an adult. So, what did they do?

They decided to charge him with burglary of a habitation. He had an attorney that was not me when he went through this. They put him on felony probation.

Ultimately, they revoked his probation because he was too poor to show up to his actual probation officer, as his mom was the one who was required to take off work so that she could take him in.

I am going to wrap up. This is really important for people to understand. At the end of the day, they ended up giving my kid the maximum punishment for less than \$20 worth of candy that he stole out of the concession stand.

Ultimately, I told them that it was a mistake to send him to prison. When he went to prison, he learned how to be a criminal. That is where he learned how to cook meth.

The next time that I saw him, it was because he had committed a real crime. Ultimately, all that did was harm our communities.

I will be clear, this was a poor young man, but he was not Black. This was in rural Texas. This was East Texas.

Mr. VAN DREW. Time has expired.

Ms. CROCKETT. I want to be smart about what we do with crime. I want to make sure that we are putting our money in smart places.

Mr. VAN DREW. Time has expired.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much for being kind.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank the gentlewoman. With that, I recognize the former Attorney General and from the great State of Kansas, Robert Onder.

I am sorry. It is mistaken, I am sorry. Derek Schmidt. I got to get my people straight here, right?

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You are promoted.

Mr. VAN DREW. I made you an attorney. I made a doctor an Attorney General. I guess that makes you a doctor? I don't know.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Oh yes, just don't put me in Missouri and we will be OK.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK.

Mr. SCHMIDT. No, it is all good.

Mr. VAN DREW. That is the deal.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank our witnesses for their time. It has been nearly two hours.

I spent 12 years as the, what our law calls the chief law enforcement official of my State, and got to work with a lot of prosecutions directly. We ran our victim support programs for the States.

I worked with a lot of crime victims. I have been sitting here over the course of this hearing, and I have made a list of a few terms that in 12 years interacting with literally hundreds of crime victims and their families.

In fact, this time of the year, we always hosted around the holidays, a series of holiday remembrance receptions for crime victims' families. Because we understand that the unique experience of going through the loss of a loved one or being victimized yourself, sometimes just being together with others at the holidays who have had a similar experience, can be powerful.

So, hundreds. This is a list of terms I never heard once for many of them. I never heard the term Trump. I never heard the term Biden. I served during the Biden years.

I never heard the term Obama. I served during the Obama years. I never heard the phrase unanimous consent. I never had one of them quote crime statistics or theory to me.

I never heard one of them say Republican. I never heard one of them say Democrat. I heard a lot of them cry. I heard a lot of them tell me stories about their loved one who was lost or about what happened to them.

Some were police officers. Ma'am, we lost, I believe it was 13 on my watch. It might have been 14. I would have to go back and count name by name.

We have lost four police officers to homicide on duty this year in Kansas. I had four others shot, by the grace of God, none are dead, just this last week in my district.

This is real. It is sad that this conversation has gone off in many different directions. I want to thank our witnesses for wanting to talk about what we can do about all of this.

For me, the measure is how do we have fewer Kansans killed, raped or robbed? That is what this ought to be about.

With that, I want to turn to the testimony from Mr. Mangual. You recommend a crime bill. You gave us four elements that you think ought to be in there. Some of which, by the way, sounds remarkably like, I heard Bill Clinton's voice in my head when you said a hundred thousand more cops on the street, hire and retain more police officers.

You added a fifth one that wasn't in your written testimony. You said condition grants on best practices. I want to ask our other witnesses, just start with Mr. Mauro and go down the line, do you think it is a good idea that we ought to look at some type of broad or comprehensive crime bill in this Congress?

If so, what else or what would you put in it?

Mr. MAURO. I do think it is a good idea. It worked once. Frankly, if we don't learn from history as the saying goes, we are doomed to repeat it.

It may surprise the Committee to hear me say that I agree with Ms. Crockett. Low-level offenses, if you incarcerate people, actually among the perps, among the perpetrators, they call prison school.

That goes back to the mafia. They go to prison; they are all in jail together. They have nothing but time. That is how they learn to do other crimes and develop criminal schemes.

The point I was trying to make in my opening remarks, and it is where we should be looking at anything like a crime bill, is that if it is surgical, data-driven, and intelligent.

If you have somebody who has committed, as I was saying earlier, the rest, the 327 perpetrators of the shoplifting I was talking about, they have committed over 9,000 at the last check—shop-liftings.

That is not sending somebody to school. That is getting somebody off the streets that is going to continue to do it. That is why we lock up the toothpaste.

I would argue, and as I said, the sweet spot for me was in the 2014–2015 era there, where under a Democratic mayor and Democratic administration in New York, we drove down not only crime, but incarceration rates. That can be done if it is done intelligently.

My hope had been that we could speak about that in a bipartisan way, because both sides have, in my opinion, good points to make. You don't want to lock everybody.

You don't want to incarcerate your way out of these things. If it is done intelligently, surgically, you can make progress. We have done that before.

I don't think, to answer your question, we need to reinvent the wheel. We should just look at what worked in the past.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Mauro. Ms. McKinney, do you have any thoughts on whether there is anything, in particular, we ought to do that could be helpful?

Ms. MCKINNEY. As far as policing goes, that just the local leaders and also government leaders should definitely have a hard stance on crime. Come forward and just denounce and stop being soft.

Just this repeat offender stuff, telling the criminals that it is OK with what they can do and releasing them. Give them a three strikes and you are out.

We used to have that in Memphis years ago, and it did deter crime. It showed the younger people that they were not allowed to go back out and do it again. That there would be consequences for what they were going to do.

A lot of the problems that we have in Memphis is through leadership. They are very neglectful in their duties.

They don't prioritize education for the children. A lot of the children in Memphis don't know how to read. They don't know how to do basic math. That is an issue.

Parent accountability is an issue. Parents just let their kids run wild. They don't know where their kids are at.

I don't know what you can do about that. I don't agree with having parents be held accountable for their children's decisions in some instances, because parents can only do so much.

The children do what they do because that was their choice. They—

Ms. Van Drew. The lady's time has expired.

Ms. MCKINNEY. Thank you.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you. I thank the gentleman. That concludes today's hearing. We thank our witnesses for appearing before this Subcommittee.

Without objection, all Members will have five legislative days to submit additional writing in question form for the witnesses, or additional materials for the record.

Without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:03 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Oversight can be found at: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=118671>.

