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Maya Wiley

August 14, 2025

The Honorable James Comer  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government  
Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rand Paul  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Garcia  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government  
Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gary Peters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, Chairman Paul, and Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 149 additional undersigned organizations, we write to express our profound concerns with the recent decision by President Trump to assert control over the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and to deploy the National Guard throughout the city. This hostile and needless takeover of a local government's law enforcement mechanisms poses a dire threat to public safety as well as to civil rights, not only of the people who live in D.C., but ultimately throughout the entire country. It is no accident that this drastic overreach has been aimed at a city where the majority of residents are Black or Latino or Asian people, displacing Black, democratically elected leadership chosen by D.C. residents. This administration has proven that it will push every boundary to test for exploitable weakness in Congress and the courts. Given the role of your respective committees in matters affecting our nation's capital, we urge you to promptly call for hearings into this decision, and to engage in vigorous oversight moving forward.

While President Trump has pointed to several high-profile instances of crime in the District of Columbia, the fact remains that there simply is no "crime emergency." Violent crime in D.C. fell by 35 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year, and it is now at a 30-year low.<sup>1</sup> One of the key drivers of this decrease has been widespread investments in community-based violence intervention and crisis response, including through COVID recovery dollars and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. Until recently, when Congress inexplicably forced D.C. to slash its budget by more than \$1 billion, D.C. was also able to utilize its own local tax revenue to address the issue.

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In the place of proven strategies aimed at reducing and preventing crime, President Trump's decision to commandeer the police and fill the streets with National Guard servicemembers – who are not trained to act as police officers – is not simply a matter of political theater and distraction. It also drives fear among D.C. residents, especially in light of President Trump's claim that he would allow the police under his command to “do whatever the hell they want,” raising concerns that the civil rights of D.C. residents may be sacrificed in the process.

President Trump has once again declared a false emergency to access executive powers that were not meant to be used as political tools to amass power. It is a terrible precedent that could harm cities, communities, and people well beyond D.C. What he is able to achieve in D.C., he will try to do elsewhere. He has already threatened to do the same in other major cities around the country.<sup>1</sup>

The simple fact is that President Trump is not seriously interested in reducing crime. He is interested in lying about crime to justify abhorrent practices, including rapid expansion of criminalization, unprecedented abuses by federal law enforcement agents, and dangerous executive power grabs. Time and time again, he has shown that his real goal is to create a police state, as he has repeatedly weaponized law enforcement to quash dissent and to serve his own personal and political ends. For example, since taking office, his administration has:

- Defied court orders;
- Unlawfully punished law firms, private charities, and universities perceived as being hostile to him or his agenda;
- Locked up and tried to deport students simply because they criticized U.S. foreign policy;
- Filed criminal charges against a sitting U.S. Representative for trying to engage in oversight of an immigrant detention center;
- Arrested and charged the president of a state chapter of a major labor union while peacefully engaging in protected First Amendment activity;
- Warned that protestors in D.C. were “going to be met with very big force”; and
- Violently handcuffed a sitting U.S. senator for merely trying to ask a question at a press conference.
- Carried out senseless and unlawful immigration raids that have terrorized communities, instilled fear in families, and eroded trust in public institutions; and
- Threatened homeless populations in D.C. and elsewhere with arrest, exile, and involuntary commitment.

The federal government should respect the laws and policies of D.C. enacted via its democratically elected government. Instead, D.C. is an easy testing ground for President Trump, because while its residents pay federal taxes and comply with all the other duties of residents, they have no vote in Congress and limited control over their own local governance. Given his record to date, it would be naïve to think that President Trump will stop there. We urge you to ensure that our rights under the Constitution and under our federal laws are being fully protected and enforced.

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<sup>1</sup> Brakkton Booker, ‘*He’s been explicit’: Black leaders say Trump is going after blue cities for a reason*, Politico, August 12, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/12/black-cities-mayors-trump-dc-takeover-00505773>

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If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel, at [randhava@civilrights.org](mailto:randhava@civilrights.org).  
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

A Philip Randolph Institute  
ACLU-DC  
Advancement Project  
AFT  
All Voting is Local Action  
Alliance for Justice  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Atheists  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Constitution Society  
American Humanist Association  
Americans for Tax Fairness  
Amnesty International USA  
Andrew Goodman Foundation  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC  
Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action  
Black Voters Matter Fund  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Care in Action  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Public Representation  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Collective Power for Reproductive Justice  
Color Of Change  
Common Cause  
Common Cause  
Community Change Action  
Constitutional Accountability Center  
Courts Matter Illinois  
DC Vote  
Declaration for American Democracy  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Democracy Defenders Action  
Demos Action  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund  
End Citizens United  
Endangered Species Coalition

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Equal Justice Society  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equality California  
Fair and Just Prosecution  
Fair Fight  
Families for Freedom  
Feminist Majority  
Free Speech For People  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
General Board of Church and Society - The United Methodist Church  
Get Free  
Greenpeace USA  
Hispanic Federation  
Human Rights Campaign  
Human Rights First  
Human Services Council of NY  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)  
Indivisible Plus Washington  
Indivisible Tacoma  
Indivisible Washington's 8th District  
Interfaith Alliance  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jews for a Secular Democracy  
Just Solutions  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Lambda Legal  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Legal Action Center  
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
Mi Familia Vota  
MomsRising  
MoveOn  
MPower Change Action Fund  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslims for Just Futures  
NAACP  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)  
NAKASEC  
National Action Network  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Bar Association

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National CAPACD  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Homelessness Law Center  
National Housing Law Project  
National Immigration Project  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center Action Fund  
National Workrights Institute  
NCNW  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Oxfam America  
Partnership for Civil Justice Fund  
PEN America  
People For the American Way  
People Power United  
PFLAG National  
Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)  
Prevention at the Intersections  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Project On Government Oversight  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice  
Refugees International  
Reproductive Freedom for All  
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights  
RootsAction  
Secular Coalition for America  
Seed the Vote Action  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Shomeret Shalom  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sojourners  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Stand Up America

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The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania

The Workers Circle

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

UnidosUS

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

Utopian Visions

Vera Institute of Justice

Voices for Progress

Voto Latino

Western States Center

Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network, Inc.