

**D.C.**

## **We asked 604 D.C. residents about Trump's takeover. Here's what they said.**

Though crime continues to be a concern, most residents strongly oppose Trump's actions and don't think they'll make D.C. safer, a Washington Post-Schar School poll found.

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Washington, D.C., residents overwhelmingly oppose President Donald Trump's decision last week to take over the D.C. police and order federal law enforcement and the National Guard onto District streets, and 65 percent don't think his actions will make the city safer from violent crime, according to a Washington Post-Schar School poll.

Thirty-one percent of District residents say crime is an "extremely" or "very" serious problem in the city, down from 50 percent in May and 65 percent in spring 2024. While the latest poll finds strong opposition to several tactics Trump has employed, residents show some agreement on one view: Just under half think increasing punishments for convicted teenagers would reduce violent crime.

The vast majority of residents, though, don't want Trump controlling law enforcement efforts in the city. About 8 in 10 D.C. residents oppose Trump's executive order to federalize law enforcement in the city, with about 7 in 10 opposing it "strongly."

### **About 8 in 10 Washingtonians oppose Trump taking control of D.C.'s police and federal troops patrolling the streets**

Q: Do you support or oppose Trump ordering the federal government to take control of Washington, D.C.'s police department and ordering the National Guard and FBI to patrol D.C.?

Strongly support    Somewhat support    No opinion    Somewhat oppose    Strongly oppose

9%    8    4    10    69

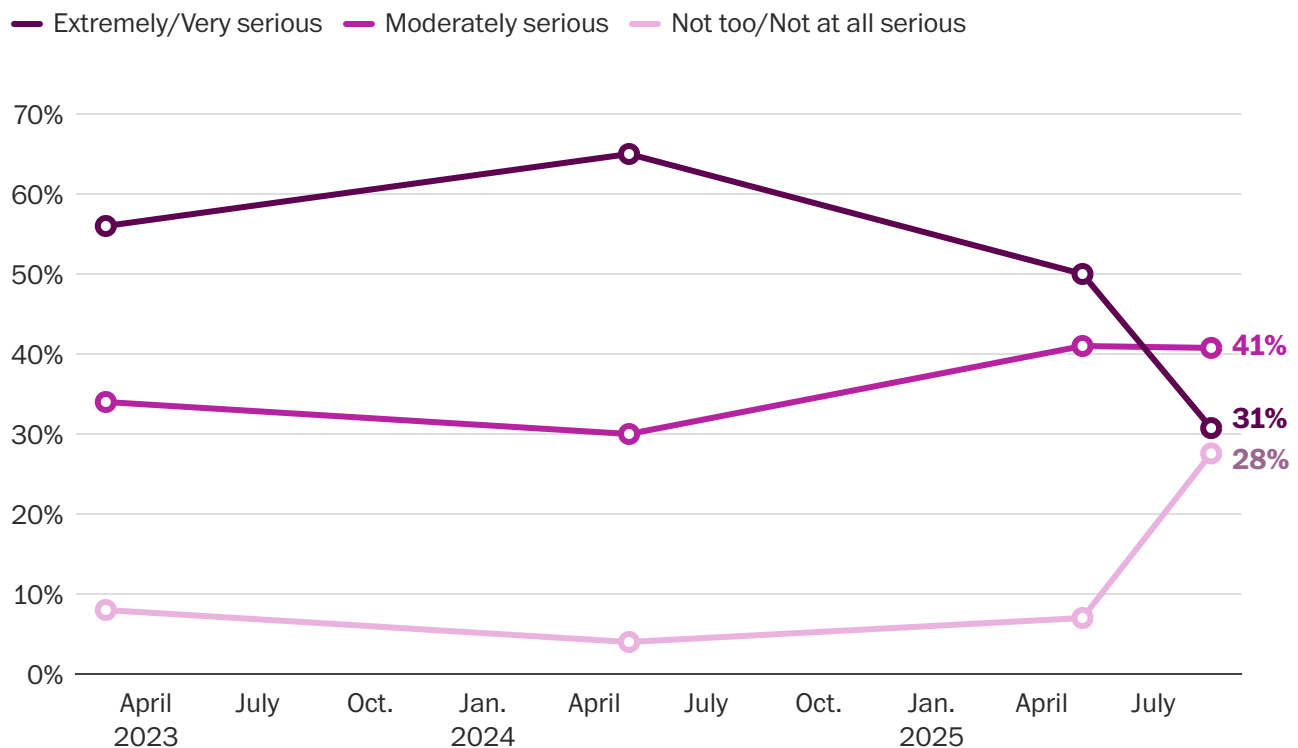
Source: Aug. 14-17, 2025, Washington Post-Schar School poll of 604 D.C. residents with an error margin of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

EMILY GUSKIN / THE WASHINGTON POST

Residents of the District, where Trump won just 6 percent of the vote in the 2024 election, disagree with the president's many characterizations of the city as overrun by crime. On Monday, Trump said Washington had been "the most unsafe place anywhere," but 78 percent of residents say they feel very or somewhat safe in their neighborhoods. This is similar to 76 percent in May, but the percentage who feel "very safe" is up from 26 percent then to 39 percent now.

## Share of Washingtonians saying crime is at least a "very serious" problem is down sharply from spring 2025 and 2024

Q: Overall, how would you describe the problem of crime in Washington, D.C. – is it extremely serious, very serious, moderately serious, not too serious, or not serious at all?



Note: "No opinion" not shown.

Source: Aug. 14-17, 2025, Washington Post-Schar School poll of 604 D.C. residents with an error margin of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

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"Trump's overheated rhetoric about D.C. crime has evoked strong feelings among many residents offended by such characterizations of their city," said Mark Rozell, dean of George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government, which co-sponsored the poll.

"A federalized takeover of any aspect of a city's operations will naturally create a backlash, and that is clearly happening here," he said. "Residents are saying it is not as bad as the president claims, and they want to reclaim the image of their city against a presidential narrative that is tarnishing D.C.'s reputation."

The poll of 604 D.C. residents was conducted over four days starting Thursday, in a week that began with Trump signing an executive order declaring an emergency for the District of Columbia citing “out of control” crime.

But in response to an open-ended question about what they see as the biggest problem facing the District, residents are about as likely to say Trump as they are to answer crime. Twenty-four percent name Trump, his takeover of D.C. police or federal overreach as the biggest problem facing the city (double the percentage who named the president or a related issue in May), while 22 percent cite crime as the city’s top problem (compared to 21 percent in May).

Trump’s actions also appear to have spurred support for statehood among residents, with 72 percent saying the District should become a state — more than in any of the dozen polls since 1993 when The Post first asked that question. Relatedly, 55 percent say it’s “extremely important” for the District to govern itself without oversight from the federal government.

Joseph Clay, 89, a Navy veteran who has lived in his Northeast Washington home since 1966, says he strongly opposes the president’s takeover of law enforcement in the District. “We’re becoming a police state. I’m afraid of that, I really am,” Clay, who is Black, said in an interview Tuesday. “I wonder if they’re looking at Blacks and Browns and if I myself could be stopped and asked for my credentials.”

Clay described his neighborhood as excellent and said he hasn't been a victim of crime since the early 1990s. "The only crime I hear about is what I read in The Washington Post," he said.

Nearly 9 in 10 Washingtonians say their neighborhood is an excellent or good place to live, including 46 percent who say it's "excellent." Those numbers have risen consistently across seven Post polls since 1988, when 56 percent rated their neighborhood positively, including 18 percent who called it excellent.

Residents' responses in this month's poll are at odds with the picture painted by Trump, Attorney General Pam Bondi and U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro of a dirty and lawless city overrun by thugs and drugs. D.C. residents say they are concerned about crime, but they believe the situation is improving.

Fifty-four percent say D.C.'s crime problems are getting better, up from 29 percent who said this in May. Compared with last year, significantly fewer D.C. residents say now that they worry about being a victim of carjacking, theft, home burglary or assault.

Violent crime in D.C. has been declining since 2023, part of a nationwide drop over the past two years that in 2024 brought homicide rates to their lowest level in decades.

For Courtney Priebe, who is White and has lived in Northwest Washington for three years, Trump's decision to take over law enforcement in the District has made her more fearful, not less. It "is honestly striking more fear into residents than making them feel safe," said Priebe, 29. "It feels like a show of force to distract from other things."

Over half of D.C. residents (55 percent) say they've noticed more federal law enforcement officers in D.C. since Trump issued his order. Among those who have noticed more federal agents, 61 percent say this made them feel "less safe," while 18 percent feel safer and 20 percent say it hasn't made a difference.

Specific steps taken by the administration are also unpopular with people living in the city. About 7 in 10 residents say D.C. police should not help with federal deportation efforts.

Also, more than 6 in 10 Washingtonians oppose the city shutting down homeless tent encampments and requiring people to move elsewhere (64 percent), while 25 percent support this. Opposition is up from May, when 55 percent of D.C. residents opposed it and 33 percent were in support.

Christopher Brosman, 45, who works for the federal government and has lived in Northwest Washington for six years, says he doesn't want D.C. police assisting in deportation efforts and called the administration's removal of homeless encampments "the wrong approach to fixing the problem." He also opposes the federal takeover of D.C. police. "I feel like it's against American principles and D.C. self rule," said Brosman, who is White.

Overall, about two-thirds of D.C. residents (65 percent) say Trump's recent actions will not help combat violent crime. There are some steps that they believe could help, though.

Majorities of District residents think crime would drop in response to increasing economic opportunities in poor neighborhoods (77 percent), stricter national gun laws (70 percent), increasing the number of D.C. police officers on patrol (63 percent) and violence interruption strategies (57 percent). Almost half (47 percent) think the same about increasing punishments for teenagers convicted of crimes.

The poll finds that about 4 in 10 D.C. residents support treating 14-year-olds accused of assault and carjacking like adults, and nearly 6 in 10 say the same for young murder suspects.

Brenden Clark, who lives with his husband in the NoMa neighborhood near North Capitol Street, says he voted for Kamala Harris in 2024 but he supports the takeover of the police and the National Guard presence. “My day-to-day experience living in D.C. proper over the past three years honestly has been the worst experience of my life,” Clark, who is White, said in an interview.

Clark, 37, said his husband once had to hide when a man in a wheelchair outside their apartment building pointed a gun at someone walking behind him. The couple paid \$3,700 a month for a two-bedroom apartment, but Clark says they were both afraid to walk in their neighborhood because “there are lots of gangs and people walking around smashing windows.”

Thirty-five percent of city residents say they, a family member or a close friend have been victims of crime in the past five years. Support for Trump’s actions rises to 34 percent among D.C. residents who know a recent violent crime victim, but 60 percent in that category still oppose his actions. Among those who don’t know a crime victim, just 8 percent support Trump’s actions.

Clark says he doesn’t agree with everything Trump does and “obviously [I] don’t think he’s very presidential,” but he supports the law enforcement push and thinks the president is “making things happen that in my view benefit people like me, younger people who don’t have generational wealth.”



Though he says he has felt safer in the few days since Trump took over law enforcement in the city, he doesn't think he'll stay. "I'm actually working on plans with my husband to move back to Oklahoma, where I'm from," he said.

Support for D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) is unchanged since May. A small majority (53 percent) of Washingtonians approve of how Bowser is handling her job, while 41 percent disapprove. About half of Washingtonians say she should do more to oppose Trump (48 percent), 3 in 10 say she's "handling this about right" (30 percent) and 12 percent say she should do more to support Trump, a figure that is up from 5 percent in May.

D.C. police maintain similar approval ratings: 54 percent of residents say they're doing an excellent or good job, while 39 percent rate them "not so good" or "poor." Those ratings are nearly identical to 2024, but down from 74 percent positive in 2017.

"I find that the city is a peace-loving city," says Michelle Jones, 70, a lifelong District resident who lives in Southeast Washington. She thinks D.C. police "could do a better job and be more proactive in areas where there is high crime." But Jones, who is Black, strongly opposes the president taking control of the police and ordering National Guard troops into the city.

"He has shown he is an authoritarian and he has demonstrated this is an authoritarian regime across the country," Jones said. "To make these grandiose statements that the city is filthy and filled with gangs, I don't understand it."

The poll was conducted by The Post and the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University by telephone Aug. 14-17, among a random sample of 604 adult residents in Washington, D.C., with 70 percent interviewed by live callers, including 51 percent on cellphones and 19 percent on landlines; 30 percent completed the survey online via a cellphone text invitation. Results have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. Sampling, field work and data processing is by Braun Research of Princeton, New Jersey.

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(The Washington Post)

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