

**Statement of Brian L. Schwalb**  
**Attorney General for the District of Columbia**

**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**Hearing on “Oversight of the District of Columbia”**  
**September 18, 2025**

Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, Congresswoman Norton, and members of the Committee. I am Brian Schwalb, Attorney General for the District of Columbia. I am pleased to testify about the work the D.C. Attorney General’s Office does to advance the District’s interests and to make Washington, D.C. safer and more affordable for everyone.

I am a third-generation Washingtonian. My wife and I raised our three daughters here. I love this city. Just like your home districts, D.C. is made up of vibrant neighborhoods and hard-working, talented people who are the backbone of our culture and economy. We are small business owners. Veterans. Teachers, nurses, and police officers. Committed civil servants. We are Americans who deserve the same freedom to govern ourselves that your constituents enjoy. But unlike your constituents, who benefit from having sent you here to protect their interests, the more than 700,000 residents who call D.C. home have no vote in Congress.

We do, however, have elected local leaders, including an elected Attorney General. As Attorney General, I am committed to ensuring that Washingtonians have a first-rate public law office enforcing their laws, protecting their taxpayer dollars, and advancing the public interest. My office handles thousands of matters across an array of issues, from enforcing child support orders and protecting domestic violence victims, to holding companies accountable for fueling the opioid crisis. We protect seniors and consumers from scams, go after slumlords, and defend District agencies, including our police department, from legal liability—securing and saving hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

Nothing is more important than our work to make the District safer for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

D.C.’s criminal justice system is unique and its structure is often a source of confusion. Unlike anywhere else, the responsibility for prosecuting local crime in D.C. is divided between the federal government—the United States Attorney’s Office—which handles all adult felonies and most adult misdemeanors, and my office, which prosecutes juvenile delinquency offenses and certain adult misdemeanors. Because the vast majority of crime in the District is committed by adults, not juveniles, the US Attorney’s Office handles the vast majority of prosecutions.

Despite our more limited jurisdiction, we take our responsibility over juvenile prosecution seriously. Our attorneys aggressively prosecute violent juvenile offenses whenever there is sufficient evidence to meet the burden of proof. Kids must face swift and certain consequences when they break the law, and our prosecutors work every day to hold them accountable and ensure victims get justice. Last year we prosecuted 84% of all violent juvenile cases including:

- Over 90% of homicides and attempted homicides;
- 87% of carjackings; and

- 86% of gun cases.

Crime rates last year reached 30-year lows, and have continued to decline this year, but there is more work to be done. We must continue to pursue a comprehensive public safety strategy. Effective policing and prosecution are critical. So too are preventive efforts designed to stop crime before it happens. Keeping people safe is not a choice between law enforcement or prevention. We must do both.

As the Nation's Capital, public safety in the District has always required a strong working partnership with federal law enforcement, regardless of who is in the White House. We have worked and will continue to work with federal law enforcement agencies every day. But declarations of emergency and unilateral federal actions, taken without coordination or advance warning, do not promote long-term public safety. Sending masked agents in unmarked cars to pick people up off the streets; flooding our neighborhoods with armed National Guardsmen untrained in local policing; attempting a federal takeover of our police force—none of these are durable, lasting solutions for driving down crime. In fact, this threatens to destroy critical trust between local communities and police, which is essential to effective, efficient policing and prosecution.

There are constructive ways the federal government can work with us to continue driving crime down. For example, Congress can help combat the flood of illegal guns pouring into our city. Ninety-five percent of illegal guns that end up on our streets come from outside the District. We also need help filling longstanding judicial vacancies by confirming our highly qualified nominees. The vacancy crisis has led to severe case backlogs—with felony cases being scheduled into 2027—resulting in delayed justice for crime victims and the community alike. Finally, Congress could invest in desperately needed services and facilities, like a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for youth with serious mental and behavioral health issues that often contribute to juvenile crime.

All of us—D.C.'s elected officials and members of Congress—have a shared goal of ensuring continued and durable improvements to public safety in the District of Columbia. My office and I are ready to have serious discussions about how best to do that with anyone who is willing, in good faith and in the spirit of partnership, to have them with us.