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**Testimony of DC Police Union for the Committee on House Administration
on “Safety on Capitol Hill: DC Crime’s Impact on Congressional Operations and Visitors.”**

Good morning, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. As the Chairman of the D.C. Police Union, I speak on behalf of approximately 3,000 sworn police officers, detectives and sergeants who serve the District of Columbia as members of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). I am a Detective Grade 1, and I have worked for the MPD for nineteen years. I take great pride in serving this city.

My testimony here today will be an effort to inform the Committee on issues related to crime in the District of Columbia. I will try to answer three questions that hear most often here in the District. “Why is crime so bad?” – “How did it get like this?” – and “What can we do to fix it?” My testimony will focus on how numerous actions by the D.C. Council, to include their rhetoric, has resulted in a mass exodus of sworn law enforcement officers and an exponential increase in violent crime.

Beginning in June of 2020, the D.C. Council began introducing anti-police legislation designed, in their own words, to “act accordingly to bend the arc of justice.”

I’d like to provide a list of just *some* of the legislation the D.C. Council would introduce over the course of the next two years:

- Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2020
- Strengthening Oversight and Accountability of Police Amendment Act of 2021
- Revised Criminal Code Amendment Act of 2021
- Reducing Law Enforcement Presence in Schools Act of 2021
- Law Enforcement Qualified Immunity Cessation Act of 2021
- Law Enforcement Present Sense Impression Act of 2021
- Law Enforcement Vehicular Pursuit Reform Act of 2021
- School Police Incident Oversight and Accountability Amendment Act of 2021
- White Supremacy in Policing Prevention Act of 2021

The rhetoric that Councilmembers use when speaking publicly about law enforcement amounts to nothing short of virulent attacks on all police officers in the District. One

Councilmember stated in a public hearing, “I know for a fact there are police in the District who are bad actors and who have been going on without the proper penance.” and he felt the need for Metropolitan police officers to receive “some kind of retribution.”

Other Councilmembers bragged about “defunding” the department or making “the biggest reduction to MPD” he had ever seen. In a hearing that took place *just two weeks ago*, many Councilmembers became apoplectic when there were proposals to roll back some of the legislation I mentioned earlier.

Without delving into the granular details of how terrible these bills are, or how blatantly awful the Council’s rhetoric is, I can assure the members of this Committee that the direct result has been a mass exodus of police officers from the department.

Since the beginning of 2020, the MPD has lost 1,426 officers, more than one-third of the department. 540 of these separations, nearly 40%, were resignations; employees who just walked away from a career with MPD. The MPD currently has over 500 vacancies for the position of sworn officer, and our Chief of Police has testified that it will take over a decade to fill them.

These dangerously low police officer staffing levels take away valuable resources from our ability to respond to, and investigate crime. Losing patrol officers and detectives impedes the department's ability to close cases and to engage and speak with victims in a timely manner.

Crime stats in the District closing out 2023 are absolutely staggering. Homicides have reached 274, a 35% increase, carjackings reached 958, a 105% increase, robberies were up 67%, violent crime overall went up 39%, and all crimes went up 26%.

These statistics I have mentioned are citywide. If one parses out the data to the neighborhood level, some of these communities have grown to look like warzones. The District’s Ward 6, which encompasses the Capitol, Downtown, Navy Yard, Eastern Market, Barrack’s Row, and Capitol Hill, experienced a 188% increase in homicides, a 66% increase in robberies, a 42% increase in sex assaults, a 57% increase in carjackings, and a 44% increase in violent crime.

Over the past three-and-a-half years, our Union has been sounding the alarm about this problem to anyone within earshot, including the D.C. Council. We tried to inform our elected leaders of the unintended consequences of these policies. Unfortunately, we have been ignored.

D.C. residents and business owners are under siege. Members of Congress are being assaulted and carjacked. Your Congressional Staff members are being robbed and stabbed. Tourists and visitors, your constituents, are being targeted and attacked. Yet, the D.C. Council fails to admit that their policies have played a significant role in this outcome.

Now, almost four years later, we have all seen the results of the D.C. Council’s experiment. The empirical data is in, and we know for certain that their efforts have been an abject failure, resulting in thousands more victims of crime in this city. The lasting impacts of these horrible policies will not be fully realized for some time, and the efforts to repair the damage done could take decades without swift and thoughtful actions. If we do not undo the failing policies set in

place by the D.C. Council that are pushing our police officers to leave MPD, crime will continue to rise, and thousands more victims will be subjected to crime and violence.

The purpose of my testimony here today is to inform the Committee on this ongoing crisis that exists in the District and to publicly state that we are prepared to assist in any way we can.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify and I welcome any questions the Committee may have.



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Chairman
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