



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands Republican Members  
**From:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands Staff: Aniela Butler ([Aniela@mail.house.gov](mailto:Aniela@mail.house.gov)), Hannah Devereaux ([Hannah.Devereaux@mail.house.gov](mailto:Hannah.Devereaux@mail.house.gov)), and Brandon Miller ([Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov](mailto:Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov)); x6-7736  
**Date:** Monday, December 1, 2025  
**Subject:** Legislative Hearing on 5 Bills

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The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a legislative hearing on five bills: H.R. 4671 (Rep. Harder), “*Ensuring Casualty Assistance for our Firefighters Act*”; H.R. 4931 (Rep. Murphy), “*National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act*”; H.R. 5063 (Rep. Kiggans), “*Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act*”; H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire), “*Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act*”; and H.R. 5254 (Rep. Bell), “*Gateway Partnership Act of 2025*”.

The hearing will take place on **Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 10:15 a.m. in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Will Rodriguez ([Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov](mailto:Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 2025, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

## **I. KEY MESSAGES**

- Radical, soft-on-crime policies in the District of Columbia (D.C.) have turned our nation’s capital into a safe haven for violent criminals, who commit homicides, assaults, robberies, and carjackings.
- D.C.’s criminal violence not only imperils innocent residents; it also afflicts the parks, monuments, and open spaces managed by the National Park Service. In recent years, rioters have desecrated and vandalized beautiful monuments meant to honor our nation’s democratic values and rich history.
- This rise in violent crime is the direct result of left-wing policies, which have allowed dangerous felons to be released early or even go unprosecuted. Such policies, imposed by the reckless D.C. Council, have also prompted recruitment and retention issues within the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Fortunately, under President Trump’s leadership, violent crime has dropped precipitously and federal and local police have been empowered to do their jobs and clean up our nation’s capital. H.R. 5103 builds on President Trump’s executive order titled, “*Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful*”, by codifying and expanding core provisions of this initiative to restore law and order, reestablish public safety, and revive the beauty of our nation’s capital.

## II. WITNESSES

### Panel I (Members of Congress):

- *To Be Announced*

### Panel II (Administration Witnesses):

- **Mr. Robert D. MacLean**, Director, Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Office of Law Enforcement and Security, Washington, D.C.

### Panel III (Outside Experts)

- **Mr. Kenneth H. Spencer III**, Chief of Staff, United States Park Police Fraternal Order of Police, Washington, D.C.
- **Mr. Gregg Pemberton**, Chairman, D.C. Police Union, Washington, D.C.
- **Ms. Forlesia Cook**, Grandmother of Marty William McMillan Jr., Hyattsville, MD
- **Mr. Bob Woodard**, Chairman, Dare County Board of Commissioners, Manteo, NC [H.R. 4931]
- **Ms. Denise Bowden**, Mayor, Chincoteague VA, Chincoteague Island, VA [H.R. 5063]
- **Mr. Matt Rahn, PhD, MS, JD**, Research Director, Wildfire Conservancy, Temecula, CA [H.R. 4671] [*Minority Witness*]
- **Mr. Ryan McClure**, Executive Director, Gateway Arch Park Foundation, St. Louis, MO [H.R. 5254] [*Minority Witness*]

## III. BACKGROUND

### H.R. 4671 (Rep. Harder), “Ensuring Casualty Assistance for our Firefighters Act”

In 2024, the Department of the Interior (DOI) employed 5,780 wildland firefighters.<sup>1</sup> As of 2025, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) employs 11,364 firefighters, creating an overall federal wildland firefighting workforce of approximately 17,000 people.<sup>2</sup> As wildfire seasons grow longer and more severe, the job of wildland firefighters has become increasingly demanding and dangerous. These brave men and women perform physically demanding work in remote, rugged terrain to protect communities from worsening wildfire threats.<sup>3</sup> Between 2013 and 2022, there were 96 wildland firefighter fatalities.<sup>4</sup> During the 1990s, there were only 25 such fatalities.<sup>5</sup> USFS’s Casualty Assistance Program provides coordinated support and resources to USFS wildland firefighters and their families in the event of a serious injury, illness, or fatality, ensuring proper assistance during times of crisis.<sup>6</sup> However, no such program exists for DOI firefighters, creating a significant disparity in the federal wildland firefighting workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Interior, “Workforce”, <https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/workforce>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Forest Service, “Wildland Firefighting Workforce,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/workforce>.

<sup>3</sup> The Institute for Science and Policy, “United by Fire: Bonus Episode – The Highs and Lows of Being a Wildland Firefighter”, <https://institute.dmn.org/perspectives/posts/united-by-fire-bonus-episode-the-highs-and-lows-of-being-a-wildland-firefighter/>.

<sup>4</sup> Kelsey G. Glover, Steven A. Kahn, and Rohit Mittal, “104 Wildland Firefighters Suffer Increasing Risk of Job-Related Death”, Journal of Burn Care & Research, April 17, 2024, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11023474/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

H.R. 4671, the “Ensuring Casualty Assistance for our Firefighters Act,” would require the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to develop a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program to support the families of firefighters and wildland fire support personnel who suffer illness, critical injury, or death in the line of duty. This bill requires the Secretary to set up standardized processes for notifying next-of-kin, reimbursing travel expenses, providing casualty assistance officers, and supplying centralized case management, benefit, and financial assistance information. This legislation will put DOI wildland firefighters on equal footing with their USFS counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Earlier this year, this language passed the House of Representatives as part of the strongly bipartisan H.R. 471, the “Fix Our Forest Act.”<sup>8</sup>

### H.R. 4931 (Rep. Murphy), “National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act”

The National Park Service (NPS) manages more than 400 units across the country, many of which rely on public-private partnerships, often through leases, to enhance visitor services and conserve historic structures.<sup>9</sup> In notable instances, leases have successfully revitalized park units, attracted new tourism, and shifted maintenance burdens away from the taxpayer.<sup>10</sup> Arkansas’s Hot Springs National Park is the site of a model historic leasing program, as the park has successfully leased historic bathhouses to serve as spas, breweries, cultural centers, and visitor facilities.<sup>11</sup> These leases reduced NPS’s maintenance burden, conserved historic architecture, and generated significant local economic benefits.<sup>12</sup>



Caneel Bay in the U.S. Virgin Islands National Park, which requires significant capital investment to repair previous hurricane damage. **Source:** New York Times, 2020.

By contrast, at sites where NPS has failed to attract public-private partnerships, public facilities and the overall visitor experience have significantly deteriorated. For example, Caneel Bay in Virgin Islands National Park used to draw more than 15,000 visitors annually, but has remained

<sup>7</sup> US Forest Service, “Casualty Assistance Program”, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/contact-us/national-programs-offices/cap>.

<sup>8</sup> H.R. 471, Fix Our Forests Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/471>.

<sup>9</sup> National Park Service, “About Us”, <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/national-park-system.htm#:~:text=The%20National%20Park%20Service%20manages%20433%20individual%20units,these%20units%20are%20commonly%20referred%20to%20as%20%22parks.%22>.

<sup>10</sup> National Park Service, “Success Stories,” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/leasing/success-stories.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Beth Reed, “Lawmakers say Hot Springs leasing program can work across US”, Associated Press News, October 8, 2018, <https://apnews.com/general-news-161d32a13ae440c281de366eaa6a48ef>.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

closed since sustaining significant damage during Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.<sup>13</sup> This protracted closure eliminated approximately 7 percent of the U.S. Virgin Islands’ total hotel and restaurant employment, while leaving NPS responsible for cleanup and long-term planning.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, NPS’s proposed terms for a future lease have not included “long, flexible lease terms that would encourage serious private investment.”<sup>15</sup> This lack of financial certainty has deterred private investment, leaving Caneel Bay in limbo while the national park continues to lose out on tourism revenue and economic development opportunities.

Without addressing shortcomings in NPS’s leasing regulations, the agency will continue to face challenges in attracting new public-private partnerships. For example, NPS’s regulations limit lease terms to no longer than 60 years.<sup>16</sup> This restriction can deter investment in large properties, such as Caneel Bay, that require significant capital and longer amortization periods. Further, when an NPS lease expires, the leased property must generally be offered for public bidding to ensure fair competition.<sup>17</sup> This stipulation can create uncertainty for long-term tenants who invest heavily in rehabilitation projects. Without a lease renewal option, lessees may be reluctant to undertake costly improvements, which can lead to deferred maintenance and leave NPS responsible for facility costs. NPS’s stringent regulations have deterred investment in properties that would otherwise be attractive to private investors.

To address these challenges, H.R. 4931, the “National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act,” authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to extend certain existing leases without requiring competitive rebidding. To qualify, the lease must have been in place for at least five years, the lessee must be in full compliance with all lease terms, and the NPS Director must determine that the extension is in the best interests of park administration. The bill also directs the Secretary to incorporate this authority into the formal regulations within 90 days of enactment. By allowing a single entity to hold a lease for a longer duration, the legislation encourages continued private investment, supports visitor services, and reduces unnecessary administrative burdens.

### H.R. 5063 (Rep. Kiggans), “Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act”

According to federal data, more than 4,000 people drown in the United States each year, making drowning the leading cause of unintentional injury death for children between the ages of one to four.<sup>18</sup> Lifeguards are therefore key, as they are estimated to reduce the risk of drowning to less than one in 18 million.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Emily Palmer, “Famed Caneel Bay yet to recover from Hurricane Damage”, The Independent, January 29, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/americas/caneel-bay-closed-hurricane-labor-dispute-a9299291.html>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Letter from USVI Governor Albert Bryan Jr. to Secretary Burgum, September 10, 2025, on file with the Committee.

<sup>16</sup> Section 18.10 of Part 18 of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-36/chapter-I/part-18>.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* Sections 18.7 and 18.8.

<sup>18</sup> Tessa Clemens, “Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates, Self-Reported Swimming Skill, Swimming Lesson Participation, and Recreational Water Expose—United States, 2019-2023”, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 23, 2024, [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7320e1.htm?s\\_cid=mm7320e1\\_w#contribAff](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7320e1.htm?s_cid=mm7320e1_w#contribAff).

<sup>19</sup> “American Lifeguard Rescue and Drowning Statistics For Beaches”, United States Lifesaving Association, 2024, <https://www.usla.org/page/Statistics>.

Unfortunately, the nationwide shortage of lifeguards has raised safety concerns at swimming areas across the country.<sup>20</sup> As a result, approximately one-third of the country’s 309,000 public swimming pools remained closed or operated on limited schedules last year due to lifeguard staffing shortfalls.<sup>21</sup>

This shortage extends beyond community pools to federally managed beaches, where lifeguard presence remains critical. Federal beaches and swimming areas managed by the NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) welcome millions of visitors each year.<sup>22</sup> These sites are typically staffed by federal lifeguards, who play a critical role in preventing drownings, performing rescues, and ensuring safe recreation. In recent years, however, staffing shortages have weakened lifeguard coverage at some designated federal swimming locations. Gaps in coverage heighten risks for swimmers and can strain local public safety resources.<sup>23</sup> At Assateague Island National Seashore, for example, popular beaches recently lacked lifeguards at the start of the high season, leaving both the Virginia and Maryland areas unprotected.<sup>24</sup> Similar concerns have arisen at Gateway National Recreation Area’s Sandy Hook, a heavily visited barrier beach in New Jersey.<sup>25</sup>

H.R. 5063, the “Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act,” gives DOI a flexible tool to address these shortages by partnering with local governments to provide qualified lifeguards at federal swimming locations. The bill ensures that local agencies are fully reimbursed for their costs, including for existing agreements, so lifesaving services can be maintained without creating new financial burdens for local partners. By strengthening collaboration between federal and local governments, this legislation helps visitors safely enjoy federal beaches, while also protecting the tourism-driven economies of gateway communities. Reliable lifeguard staffing reduces the risk of preventable accidents, sustains public confidence in federal recreation sites, and underscores the federal commitment to keeping these destinations safe and accessible.

### **H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire), “Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act”**

Pierre Charles L’Enfant’s renowned vision for D.C. centered on creating a grand capital that would reflect the democratic values of the new republic and feature inspiring buildings, a National Mall, wide avenues, and public squares.<sup>26</sup> D.C. was created to be both the permanent

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<sup>20</sup> Stephanie Armour, “At some federal beaches, the lifeguard chair is empty”, The Washington Post, June 26, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/06/26/national-park-beach-lifeguard-shortages/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> WTVR CBS 6 Web Staff, “National parks face critical staffing shortage as summer visitors flock to beaches”, CBS 6, July 4, 2025, <https://www.wtvr.com/news/national-news/national-parks-critical-staffing-shortage-july-4-2025#:~:text=But%20while%20more%20Americans%20are%20visiting%20parks%2C%20there,no%20lifeguards%20are%20on%20duty%2C%20CBS%20News%20reported.>

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> “Noted as one of the most influential architects and city planners in American history, Pierre “Peter” Charles L’Enfant is most famous for designing the nation’s capital, Washington, D.C.” Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association, Pierre L’Enfant. In George Washington’s Mount Vernon: Digital Encyclopedia, <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/pierre-lenfant>. Kenneth R. Fletcher, “A Brief History of Pierre L’Enfant and Washington D.C.”, Smithsonian Magazine, April 30, 2008, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/a-brief-history-of-pierre-lenfant-and-washington-dc-39487784/>.



seat of our federal government and to serve as a powerful symbol of national pride and strength. For more than 230 years, D.C. has been our nation's capital, home to iconic landmarks and monuments that commemorate national triumphs, promote foundational ideals, and portray serious challenges and struggles overcome. It is a place that should make all Americans proud and in which every citizen should feel safe.

Sadly, D.C.'s crime rate has skyrocketed in recent years, making it one of the most dangerous and deadly cities in America. In 2023, under unified Democratic local leadership, D.C. experienced 274 homicides, its deadliest year in two decades.<sup>27</sup> In fact, D.C.'s murder rate rose more than 35 percent from 2022 to 2023, while the national homicide rate decreased by 15 percent over the same period.<sup>28</sup> With the fifth-highest murder rate among the nation's large cities, D.C. is more than ten times deadlier than New York City, despite having less than a tenth of New York City's population.<sup>29</sup> The D.C. homicide rate is more than just a statistic; it represents an omnipresent threat to all the city's residents:

"The 274 confirmed victims ranged from infants to octogenarians. They were killed in homes, in Metro stations and in motor vehicles; they were killed in alleys, in school zones and in public parks. They were slain on streets by acquaintances and strangers and in the crossfire of warring neighborhood crews, in double shootings and triple shootings. They died in the dark and the dawn and under the midday sun in all parts of Washington, from its poorest precincts to its busiest commercial and nightlife areas."<sup>30</sup>

The increasing murder rate is only part of a broader and disturbing trend of rising violent crime in the nation's capital. In 2024, there were 29,348 crimes reported in D.C., including 5,139 vehicle thefts, 3,469 violent offenses, 2,113 robberies, and 1,026 assaults with a deadly weapon.<sup>31</sup> Juvenile arrests have also steadily risen each year since 2020, and the nearly 200 juveniles that were arrested in 2024 "had prior violent crime arrests."<sup>32</sup> As concerning as these crime statistics are, the true incidence of crime in D.C. is likely even worse. In fact, the D.C. Police suspended a high-ranking official in July 2025 for falsifying crime data "to make it appear [that] violent crime ha[d] fallen considerably compared to last year."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Emma Davies, Jasmine Hilton, and Peter Hermann, "2023 Was District's Deadliest Year in More Than Two Decades: The City Recorded 40 Homicides per 100,000 Residents, with Victims in Every Ward, from Babies to the Elderly," The Washington Post, January 1, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/interactive/2024/dc-crime-homicide-victims-shooting-violence/>.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Levenson & Mark Morales, "Homicides dropped by over 10% in America's biggest cities in 2023," CNN, January 5, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/04/us/homicide-crime-declines-cities-2023/index.html>.

<sup>29</sup> "NYPD Announces Citywide Crime Statistics for December 2023," New York City Police Department, January 4, 2024, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/news/p00098/nypd-december-2023-end-of-year-citywide-crime-statistics>. "NYC Remains Largest U.S. City, Census Data Shows," Fox 5 New York, 27 May 2024, <https://www.fox5ny.com/news/nyc-largest-us-cities-ranked-census-data>. "New Census Data Shows DC's Population Surpasses 700,000 for the First Time in Five Years," Government of the District of Columbia, Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser, December 19, 2024, [https://mayor.dc.gov/release/new-census-data-shows-dc%E2%80%99s-population-surpasses-700000-first-time-five-years?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com#:~:text=\(Washington%2C%20DC\)%20%E2%80%93%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Census,bringing%20the%20city's%20population%20to%20702%2C250%20residents](https://mayor.dc.gov/release/new-census-data-shows-dc%E2%80%99s-population-surpasses-700000-first-time-five-years?utm_source=chatgpt.com#:~:text=(Washington%2C%20DC)%20%E2%80%93%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Census,bringing%20the%20city's%20population%20to%20702%2C250%20residents).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> "District Crime Data at a Glance," Metropolitan Police, <https://mpdc.dc.gov/dailycrime>.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Segreaves, "DC police unit to focus on stopping juvenile crimes before they happen," NBC Washington, April 3, 2025, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/dc-police-unit-to-focus-on-stopping-juvenile-crimes-before-they-happen/3883054/>.

<sup>33</sup> NBC Washington, "DC police commander suspended, accused of changing crime statistics", July 18, 2025, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/dc-police-commander-suspended-crime-statistics/3959566/>.

Rising crime has included increased desecration of D.C.'s public spaces, a development that disproportionately affects federal lands. Almost a quarter of D.C. consists of parks or open space, with NPS managing approximately 90 percent, or roughly 6,700 acres, of that area.<sup>34</sup> Homeless encampments in D.C. have increasingly overrun NPS-managed parks and green spaces.<sup>35</sup> These locations—dedicated for public enjoyment and recreation—have become havens for drug abuse, mental illness, vandalism, and violent incidents.<sup>36</sup> Unsanitary conditions and waste accumulation also pose public health risks, including the spread of disease. NPS has even had to clear these encampments to “ensure the safety” of nearby elementary school students and residents.<sup>37</sup>



Graffiti on the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain and the American Legion Freedom Bell following destructive rioting new Union Station in 2024. **Source:** Politico, 2024.

NPS-managed land and monuments have also suffered from violent and destructive rioting. In recent years, NPS has been forced to remove explicit, derogatory, and offensive graffiti from the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, World War II Memorial, and D.C. War Memorial.<sup>38</sup> In 2024, D.C. witnessed a series of pro-Hamas

riots that prompted widespread graffiti and other acts of vandalism at federal buildings, monuments, and statues.<sup>39</sup> The most destructive actions occurred in Columbus Circle, outside

<sup>34</sup> National Capital Planning Commission, “About Washington’s Parks and Open Space”, [https://www.npcpc.gov/docs/CapitalSpace\\_Washingtons\\_Parks\\_and\\_Open\\_Space.pdf](https://www.npcpc.gov/docs/CapitalSpace_Washingtons_Parks_and_Open_Space.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Kriston Capps, “In Trump’s DC Crackdown, National Park Service Leads Homeless Sweeps”, Bloomberg, August 22, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-08-22/dc-crime-crackdown-deputizes-national-park-service-in-homeless-sweeps>.

<sup>36</sup> Nick Iannelli, “Homeless encampments being cleared from Northwest DC parks due to reports of drugs, violence,” WTOP News, August 17, 2021, <https://wtop.com/dc/2021/08/dc-homeless-encampments-being-cleared-due-to-reports-of-drugs-violence/>.

<sup>37</sup> Statement of Councilmember Brooke Pinto, <https://x.com/CMBrookePinto/status/1426550804371083265>. Councilmember Pinto is a Democrat and the Chairwoman of the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety of the D.C. Council.

<sup>38</sup> “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Lincoln Memorial,” National Park Service, August 15, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/news/lincoln-vandalism.htm>. “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Four Memorials Along the National Mall,” National Park Service, February 21, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/news/graffiti-on-national-mall.htm>. “National Park Service Removing Graffiti at Four Memorials Along the National Mall,” ABCNews7, September 20, 2022, <https://wjla.com/news/local/washington-monument-red-paint-defaced-with-graphic-message-vandalized-vandalism-graffiti-spray-national-mall-dc-park-police-crime-district-lincoln-washington>. NationalMallNPS X Account, May 31, 2020, <https://x.com/NationalMallNPS/status/1267124873085804544>.

<sup>39</sup> Andrea Swalec, “‘What happened at Union Station was vile’: DC protest vandalism, flag burning condemned”, NBC Washington, July 25, 2024, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/after-dc-pro-palestinian-protests-crews-clean-spray-paint-and-replace-american-flag/3674796/>.

Union Station, which NPS manages.<sup>40</sup> During these riots, the Christopher Columbus Memorial Fountain and the American Legion Freedom Bell were heavily vandalized with pro-Hamas and other derogatory graffiti.<sup>41</sup> American flags were also torn down, burned, and replaced by Palestinian flags, and violent protestors assaulted several U.S. Park Police officers.<sup>42</sup>

The spike in unsafe and unsanitary conditions in D.C. is directly attributable to the radical, soft-on-crime policies that have been championed under unified Democratic control.<sup>43</sup> In fiscal year 2022, one year before D.C.'s major spike in homicides, the D.C. Council cut the Metropolitan Police Department's budget by \$34.3 million.<sup>44</sup> Under the Biden administration, federal prosecutors declined to prosecute two-thirds of criminals arrested in D.C., a fact that even the left-leaning Washington Post labeled "a startling statistic."<sup>45</sup> Federal prosecutors from both political parties have blamed increased crime on the D.C. Council's soft-on-crime policies, which, among other things, allow offenders to have their criminal records sealed and reduce sentences for crimes committed by perpetrators under the age of 25.<sup>46</sup> According to these prosecutors, "people released under [D.C.'s] laws have reoffended, sometimes with deadly consequences."<sup>47</sup> The D.C. Council was so radical in its attempts to turn D.C. into a safe haven for violent criminals that Congress overwhelmingly overturned the council's weakening of the criminal code in 2023.<sup>48</sup> Among other flaws, those proposed revisions sought to reduce maximum sentences for many violent crimes and eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for all crimes, except first-degree murder.<sup>49</sup> Although a portion of these misguided measures have been overturned, many soft-on-crime policies persist, leaving "[i]nnocent people in neighborhoods across the city" vulnerable to "robberies, carjackings, and seemingly random acts of violence."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For more information about the Committee's investigation into these riots, please see:

[https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing\\_memo -- sub on oi ov hrg on hamas protest 12.10.24.pdf](https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hearing_memo_-_sub_on_oi_ov_hrg_on_hamas_protest_12.10.24.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.*

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* Josh Christenson "‘Badly understaffed’ Park Police assaulted by ‘mob of thousands,’ pelted with poop at pro-Hamas riot in DC: union chief," New York Post, July 25, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/07/25/us-news/park-police-badly-understaffed-officers-pelted-with-feces-at-pro-hamas-riot-in-dc-union-chief-says/>.

<sup>43</sup> Zack Smith, "A Week without Murder: Trump's Crackdown Restores Safety to Washington, D.C." The Heritage Foundation, August 28, 2025, <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/week-without-murder-trumps-crackdown-restores-safety-washington-dc>.

<sup>44</sup> "DC Fiscal Policy Institute: Visualizing the DC Police Budget," D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, <https://www.tableau.com/foundation/data-equity/equitable-justice/DC-police-budget#:~:text=On%20August%2010%2C%202021%2C%20the,policing%20and%20to%20other%20needs..>

<sup>45</sup> See Keith L. Alexander, "D.C. U.S. attorney declined to prosecute 67% of those arrested. Here's why.," March 29, 2023, <https://www.congress.gov/118/meeting/house/115608/documents/HHRG-118-GO00-20230329-SD006.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> Jenny Gathright & Meagan Flynn, "Pirro takes aim at D.C.'s crime laws, calls them 'absurd'," The Washington Post, August 7, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/08/07/pirro-dc-crime-laws/>.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> Rose Horowitz, "Biden signs measure to repeal controversial D.C. crime bill", NBC News, March 21, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/joe-biden/biden-signs-measure-repeal-controversial-dc-crime-bill-rcna75875>.

<sup>49</sup> Zack Smith & Charles Stimson, , "The D.C. City Council Failed at Criminal Justice Reform-Congress Must Fix It", The Heritage Foundation, July 12, 2023, <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/report/the-dc-city-council-failed-criminal-justice-reform-congress-must-fix-it>.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from D.C. Trade Associations to Mayor Bowser and the D.C. Council, February 29, 2024, <https://www.investmentcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/DC-Trade-Association-Letter-to-Mayor-and-City-Council-02.29.2024-.pdf>.



To fix the dire situation in our nation’s capital, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14252, “Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful” on March 27, 2025.<sup>51</sup> This EO launched a coordinated effort to restore safety, dignity, and aesthetic appeal to our nation’s capital. Through EO 14252, the Trump administration is working to restore law and order in D.C. and to restore beauty and national pride in our nation’s capital. Furthering these efforts, President Trump also issued EO 14333, “Declaring a Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia,” on August 11, 2025, which deployed 800 National Guard members to crime hotspots throughout the city.<sup>52</sup>

President Trump’s decisive actions have had clear success in cracking down on crime in D.C. Just one week after the president issued EO 14333, violent crime dropped 58 percent, carjackings were down 60 percent, and there were 56 percent fewer robberies.<sup>53</sup> In one 12-day stretch, D.C. did not record a single homicide, an unfortunately rare streak.<sup>54</sup> EO 14333 also mobilized U.S. Park Police officers to support public safety,<sup>55</sup> which helped alleviate an ongoing police shortage in D.C. of roughly 800 officers.<sup>56</sup> Park Police officers have led the federal effort to clear homeless encampments, carrying out over 75 removals since EO 14252 was issued.<sup>57</sup> Park Police have also arrested dangerous criminals with prior felony convictions, seized hundreds of illegal firearms, and confiscated dangerous drugs like fentanyl and crack cocaine while implementing the President’s EO this year.<sup>58</sup>

H.R. 5103 builds on President Trump’s EO 14252 by codifying and expanding its key provisions to create a lasting framework for federal and local cooperation in D.C. This legislation tasks DOI with the development and implementation of a program to beautify D.C. through the removal of graffiti, as well as the restoration of monuments, fountains, memorials and public areas. H.R. 5103 also establishes a D.C. Safe and Beautiful Commission to coordinate across federal agencies and D.C., Virginia, and Maryland to identify actions needed to ensure full enforcement of federal, local, immigration, and criminal laws within D.C. The U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which also received a referral on this bill, favorably reported

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<sup>51</sup> Executive Office of the President, Executive Order 14252, March 27, 2025, “Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful” <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/03/2025-05837/making-the-district-of-columbia-safe-and-beautiful>.

<sup>52</sup> Executive Office of the President, Executive Order 14333. August 11, 2025, “Declaring a Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia”, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/14/2025-15550/declaring-a-crime-emergency-in-the-district-of-columbia>.

<sup>53</sup> Melanie Alnwick & Sam Kosmas, “Violent crime down 58% in DC amid federal crackdown, JTF-DC says”, Fox 5 Washington DC, August 28, 2025, <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/violent-crime-down-58-dc-amid-federal-crackdown-jtf-dc-says>.

<sup>54</sup> Sophie Rosenthal, “Man killed in Southeast DC, ending 12-day stretch with no homicides amid federal surge”, WUSA 9, August 26, 2025, <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/crime/homicide-free-streak-ends-dc-anacostia-road-southeast-shooting-death/65-edcb21b7-b91c-49e7-9516-3f7cd22c139b>.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> Homa Bash, “Police Union president raises concerns about MPD staffing crisis”, Fox 5 Washington DC, May 27, 2025, <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/police-union-president-says-mpd-is-facing-staffing-crisis>.

<sup>57</sup> Diana Nerozzi & David Propper, “75 homeless camps in DC cleared by US Park Police since Trump’s ‘Safe and Beautiful’ executive order”, New York Post, August 15, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/08/15/us-news/75-homeless-camps-in-dc-cleared-by-us-park-police-since-trumps-safe-and-beautiful-executive-order/>.

<sup>58</sup> Christenson, Josh, “Feds in DC arrest eight, seize stolen guns and drugs as Trump’s law enforcement crackdown takes shape, NY Post, August 8, 2025, <https://nypost.com/2025/08/08/us-news/feds-in-dc-arrest-eight-seize-stolen-guns-and-drugs-trumps-law-enforcement-crackdown-takes-aim-at-nations-capitol/>. U.S. Park Police, <https://www.facebook.com/USParkPolice/posts/last-night-uspp-officers-took-another-illegal-firearm-off-the-streets-of-washing/1215071967333888/>.

the legislation out of committee on September 10, 2025.<sup>59</sup> This legislation will restore law and order, enhance public safety, and revive the beauty of our nation’s capital, thus recapturing L’Enfant’s original vision.

### H.R. 5254 (Rep. Bell), “Gateway Partnership Act of 2025”

Gateway Arch National Park is Missouri’s most visited landmark, drawing over 2.4 million visitors annually.<sup>60</sup> The Gateway Arch Park Foundation (Foundation) plays a central role in maintaining and enhancing the park’s grounds and surrounding areas in St. Louis. Recently, the Foundation completed a \$380 million public-private partnership, known as the CityArchRiver Project, which reconnected downtown St. Louis to its riverfront, modernized park facilities, and restored historic buildings.<sup>61</sup> This project generated nearly \$600 million in economic impact and supported 4,400 jobs.<sup>62</sup> Building on that success, the Foundation continued to expand programming and enhance public engagement at the Arch.<sup>63</sup> Since the completion of the CityArchRiver project, the Foundation has managed nearly 30 private events in park spaces, doubling the number of events held prior to the project’s completion.<sup>64</sup> With further renovations scheduled for completion in 2025, additional space will be available to accommodate social gatherings, weddings, corporate functions, and other events that showcase St. Louis.<sup>65</sup>

Currently, NPS may issue permits for special events at the Arch, but lacks clear statutory authority to enter into a formal agreement with the Foundation for recurring private use of park facilities.<sup>66</sup> This limitation creates uncertainty about the terms and conditions under which private events can be held and how the park can recover costs associated with them. H.R. 5254, the “Gateway Partnership Act of 2025,” addresses this gap by authorizing NPS to enter into a formal agreement with the Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, including the Arch Visitor Center and the Old Courthouse. Projections show that private events hosted under a formalized partnership could generate up to \$780,000 annually in new revenue for Gateway Arch National Park.<sup>67</sup> The legislation requires that agreements include terms to protect park resources and ensure consistency with NPS programs, prevent disruptions to public access, and provide liability protections for the federal government. The bill also grants NPS the authority to recover all costs associated with private events, including wear and tear on facilities, administrative expenses, and personnel costs. By establishing a clear framework for

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<sup>59</sup> “Markup Wrap Up: Oversight Committee Advances Legislation to Codify President Trump’s Efforts to Make D.C. Safe and Beautiful,” House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, September 11, 2025, [www.oversight.house.gov/release/markup-wrap-up-oversight-committee-advances-legislation-to-codify-president-trumps-efforts-to-make-d-c-safe-and-beautiful](https://www.oversight.house.gov/release/markup-wrap-up-oversight-committee-advances-legislation-to-codify-president-trumps-efforts-to-make-d-c-safe-and-beautiful).

<sup>60</sup> “Gateway Arch National Park sees 2.4 million visitors in 2023”, National Park Service, February 29, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/learn/news/gateway-arch-national-park-sees-2-4-million-visitors-in-2023.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> “Legacy”, Gateway Arch Park Foundation, <https://www.archpark.org/foundation/legacy>. Sarah Fenske, “CityArchRiver project made \$572M economic impact in 2024, report says”, St. Louis Magazine, June 23, 2025, <https://www.stlmag.com/news/cityarchriver-economic-impact/>.

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> “Bell, Colleagues Lead Bipartisan Gateway Partnership Act”, The Office of Congressman Wesley Bell, September 11, 2025, <https://bell.house.gov/media/press-releases/bell-colleagues-lead-bipartisan-gateway-partnership-act>.

<sup>64</sup> “Senator Schmitt Introduced the Gateway Partnership Act to Spur Economic Opportunities in St. Louis”, The Office of Senator Eric Schmitt, September 11, 2025, <https://www.schmitt.senate.gov/media/press-releases/senator-schmitt-introduces-the-gateway-partnership-act-to-spur-economic-opportunities-in-st-louis/>.

<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

<sup>66</sup> 36 CFR 2.50, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-36/chapter-I/part-2/section-2.50>.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.*

collaboration, this legislation enables the Foundation to take a formal role in event management and marketing on behalf of the park, expanding opportunities for cultural and civic engagement while ensuring resources remain protected.

#### **IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & SECTION-BY-SECTION**

##### **H.R. 4671 (Rep. Harder), “Ensuring Casualty Assistance for our Firefighters Act”**

###### **Section 2. Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program.**

- Directs the Secretary to establish a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program within six months of the bill’s enactment to aid next-of-kin of firefighters and support personnel who suffer illness, injury, or are killed in the line of duty.
- Requires the program to cover:
  - notification of next-of-kin;
  - reimbursement of travel expenses for family members to visit firefighters;
  - standards for casualty assistance officers (including qualifications, training, and duties);
  - short- and long-term case management, including access to case managers and counselors;
  - a free digital resource outlining survivor benefits and assistance;
  - coordination with DOI, the Department of Justice, and Social Security Administration to ensure timely benefit delivery; and
  - data collection, in consultation with the United States Fire Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, on the quality of casualty assistance provided.
- Clarifies that the program shall not interfere with existing authorities for Line of Duty Death benefits.
- Defines “next-of-kin” as, in descending order of priority: a surviving spouse; adult children (by descending age); parents; siblings; grandparents; and other relatives.

##### **H.R. 4931 (Rep. Murphy), “National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act”**

###### **Section 2. Authorization to Extend Certain Leases.**

- Authorizes the NPS Director to extend an existing lease without complying with requirements under Sections 18.7 and 18.8 or Part 18 of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, which require competitive requests for bids and the issuance of a public Request for Proposals.
- Permits the NPS Director to extend a lease under this bill only if the lease has been in effect for at least 5 years, the lessee is following lease terms, and the NPS Director determines that the extension serves the best interests of the park unit.
- Requires the Secretary to revise NPS’s leasing regulations within 90 days of the bill’s enactment to reflect this new authority.

## H.R. 5063 (Rep. Kiggans), “Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act”

### **Section 2. Adequate Lifeguard Staffing at Federal Swimming Areas and Beaches.**

- Authorizes the Secretary, upon determining that there is a staffing shortage at federal swim locations, to enter into agreements with local governments to provide lifeguards to staff such locations adequately. This covers swim locations managed by NPS, USFWS, BLM, or BOR.
- Requires the Secretary to reimburse local agencies for all costs incurred and to amend any existing agreements predating the bill’s enactment to ensure full reimbursement, regardless of prior cost-sharing terms.

## H.R. 5103 (Rep. McGuire), “Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act”

### **Section 2. Program to Beautify District of Columbia.**

- Requires the Secretary to develop a beautification program for the District of Columbia in consultation with the Attorney General, Secretary of Transportation, D.C. Mayor, U.S. Attorney for D.C., the Administrator of General Services, and others determined by the Secretary.
- Establishes that the purpose of the program is to:
  - coordinate and maintain the cleanliness of (including by removing graffiti from) facilities, monuments, land, public spaces, sidewalks, parks, highways, roads, and transit systems in D.C.;
  - restore monuments, memorials, statues, or markers damaged, defaced, or improperly removed; and
  - encourage private sector participation in cleaning up D.C.
- Creates reporting requirements to the House Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Natural Resources and the Senate Committees on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Energy and Natural Resources, starting one year after enactment of the bill.
- Sunsets the program on January 2, 2029.

### **Section 3. District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission.**

- Establishes the “District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission in the executive branch, comprised of the:
  - Departments of the Interior, Transportation, and Homeland Security;
  - Federal Bureau of Investigation;
  - United States Marshals Service;
  - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and
  - U.S. Attorney’s Offices for D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.
- Provides for the designation of members to the Commission and of a Chair of the Commission.
- Requires the Commission to take the following actions:
  - develop and encourage the implementation of policies to enforce federal immigration law;
  - monitor D.C.’s sanctuary-city status and ensure compliance with federal immigration law;



- facilitate the accreditation of D.C.’s forensic crime laboratory;
- assist with the recruitment and retention of officers of the Metropolitan Police Department, in coordination with the Department’s union;
- collaborate with local entities to ensure the timely processing of concealed carry license requests;
- review and recommend revisions to prosecutorial policies regarding pretrial detention of criminal defendants to protect public safety;
- address fare evasion and other crimes associated with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority system; and
- facilitate a robust law enforcement presence within D.C., including prominent locations like the National Mall, Lafayette Park, Union Station, and Rock Creek Park.
- Allows the Commission to coordinate with the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Park Police, and Amtrak Police.
- Establishes reporting requirements to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, starting one year after the bill’s enactment.
- Sunsets the Commission on January 2, 2029.

### H.R. 5254 (Rep. Bell), “Gateway Partnership Act of 2025”

#### **Section 3. Gateway Arch National Park Agreement.**

- Authorizes the Secretary to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events at Gateway Arch National Park, including the use of park buildings.
- Requires the agreement to include terms on event scheduling, limits on the number of events per week, appropriate NPS staffing, liability insurance naming the United States as additionally insured, a waiver of federal liability, and any other conditions the Secretary deems appropriate.
- Provides that private events must be consistent with the purposes of the park and compatible with NPS programs, and may not degrade park resources, alter its appearance, or disrupt public access.
- Mandates the Secretary charge a fee to cover wear and tear from private events and authorizes recovery of all associated costs, including administrative and personnel expenses.
- Clarifies that nothing in the bill restricts NPS from hosting its own events or issuing permits to other individuals or groups for special events in the park or park buildings.

## **V. COST**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that H.R. 5103, the “Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act of 2025,” would have an insignificant cost over the fiscal year 2026-2030 period.<sup>68</sup> A formal cost estimate from CBO is not yet available for the remaining bills.

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<sup>68</sup> CBO, “District of Columbia Legislation,” October 3, 2025. [www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-10/hr5103-HOGR.pdf](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-10/hr5103-HOGR.pdf).

## **VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION**

The Trump administration's position is unknown at this time.

## **VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW**

None of the bills would change existing law.