

# DC Police Union

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## **Testimony of DC Police Union for House Judiciary Committee on “Victims of Violent Crime in the District of Columbia”**

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 eighteen years. I take great pride in serving this city.

Much of my testimony here today will be a reiteration of testimony I provided to the House Oversight Committee seven months ago. Unfortunately, since that hearing, crime rates in the District of Columbia have only continued to skyrocket. This testimony will focus on issues related to public safety, crime, and law enforcement. More specifically, 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 used when speaking publicly about law enforcement amounted 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.

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

To put a finer point on the issue of attrition, when I took office as head of the Police Union in April of 2020, membership reports showed that we had 3,626 members of the rank-and-file, which is, all officers, detectives, and sergeants. Our most recent membership report from October 5, 2023, states that we are down to 3,021. This is a net loss of 605 union members.

Since the beginning of 2020, the MPD has lost 1,329 officers, more than one-third of the department. 501 of these separations, nearly 40%, were resignations; employees who just walked away from a career with MPD.

These dangerously low police officer staffing levels, take away valuable resources from our assignments like detectives and investigative personnel and impede the department's ability engage and speak with victims in a timely manner.

While there is much rhetoric around the concept of the number of police and the amount of crime, the following facts are indisputable. Crime stats in the District year-to-date are absolutely staggering. Homicides have reached 218, a 38% increase, carjackings have reached almost 800, a 110% increase, robberies are up 70%, violent crime overall is up 40%, and all crimes are up 28%.

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.

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 were 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, over three 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 fix 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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Greggory Pemberton  
Chairman  
D.C. Police Union