

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 17, 2022

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW #406
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

On October 1, 2021, we wrote to you requesting a staff briefing on crime and homelessness in the District of Columbia (District).¹ You or your staff failed to provide any briefing. Further, since our last letter, the circumstances in the District have worsened. As the committee of jurisdiction for all matters involving D.C., we reiterate our request for information about how you plan to address the rampant violent crime in the nation's capital city.

Police unions, parents, and neighborhood associations are raising the red flag as crime continues to increase.² In early February 2022, a Maryland woman and her 11-month-old infant were carjacked and kidnapped at knifepoint in northeast D.C.³ On March 3, a father, carrying a 6-month-old infant while walking with a 5-year-old girl, was shot and killed in northeast D.C. at 8:30 a.m.⁴ Less than one week later, a local doctor was killed when he was carjacked in Adams Morgan.⁵ In the wake of the slaying of the D.C. doctor, you stated that the perpetrator is a "person [who] probably didn't intend to kill anybody, but did."⁶ A string of violent attacks targeting homeless individuals in D.C. and New York City have led to two deaths in two weeks.⁷

¹ Letter from Hon. James Comer, et. al., Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, to Hon. Muriel Bowser, Mayor, District of Columbia (Oct. 1, 2021).

² Press Release, DC Police Union, New survey shows DC residents concerned about crime, skeptical about police reform initiatives (Aug. 3, 2021).

³ Kyle Cooper, *Md. mother, baby abducted at knifepoint in DC carjacking*, WTOP NEWS (Feb. 4, 2022).

⁴ Patrick Reilly, *DC man fatally shot in street while carrying baby, holding hand of another child*, NEW YORK POST (Mar. 5, 2022).

⁵ Peter Hermann & Emily Davies, *MedStar doctor hit by his own car and killed after a thief jumped in and sped off*, THE WASH. POST (Mar. 9, 2022).

⁶ Stephanie Ramirez (@RamirezReports), Twitter (Mar. 10, 2022, 12:59 PM), available at <https://twitter.com/RamirezReports/status/1501981181293772800>.

⁷ Peter Hermann, et. al., *D.C. and N.Y. police seek gunman in shootings of five homeless people*, THE WASH. POST (Mar. 13, 2022).

These recent incidents are only a few examples of the brazen crimes endangering children and families in the District.⁸

According to the DC Police Union, since last year alone—which itself set records for crime—robbery has increased nearly 50 percent, burglary has increased by nearly 40 percent, and violent crime has increased by over 20 percent.⁹ A recently released *Washington Post* poll found 30 percent of District residents felt unsafe in their neighborhoods, the highest level in more than two decades.¹⁰ Residents ranked crime as the biggest problem facing the District that they wanted their Mayor to solve and said more police presence would reduce crime.¹¹ Democrat-led efforts to defund or “reimagine” the police are contributing to the rise in crime and public distrust, but the District Council’s DC Police Reform Commission has advocated Democrats’ anti-law enforcement agenda.¹²

In November 2021, the District hit an ominous milestone—its first time since 2003 reaching 200 homicides in one year.¹³ The District is experiencing dramatic increases in robberies, burglaries, violent crime, and property crime while the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is “short 100s of cops[.]”¹⁴ These troubling statistics raise questions about whether your office is committed to maintaining an adequate police force. The District’s FY 2022 budget cut the MPD budget by nearly 6 percent.¹⁵ MPD Police Chief Robert Contee has expressed his concerns that these budget cuts will lead to a “net loss of more than 200 sworn members” and will cause the District to have the smallest police force in two decades by the end of FY 2022.¹⁶ A recent audit revealed the District’s 911 dispatch fell behind national standards for response times to callers.¹⁷ MPD officers allegedly engaged in improper behavior will need to be replaced and your office needs a plan to augment the ranks.¹⁸ Likewise, retiring officers need to be replaced. Despite continued calls from the DC Police Union for more support from the District, MPD lacks the resources to conduct sufficient policing.¹⁹ In fact, your new FY 2023

⁸ Peter Hermann, *Man fatally shot while walking with infant, 5-year-old in Northeast D.C., police say*, THE WASH. POST (Mar. 4, 2022).

⁹ DC Police Union (@DCPoliceUnion), Twitter (Mar. 2, 2022, 8:24 AM), available at <https://twitter.com/DCPoliceUnion/status/1499012708154458116?s=20&t=up0jJziu3wsUmwUWrnbZA>.

¹⁰ Peter Hermann, Emily Davies, Scott Clement and Emily Guskin, *3 in 10 District residents do not feel safe in their neighborhoods, Post poll finds*, THE WASH. POST (Feb. 25, 2022).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² D.C. Police Reform Comm’n, *Decentering Police to Improve Public Safety: A Report of the DC Police Reform Commission* (Apr. 1, 2021).

¹³ Peter Hermann, *D.C. records 200th homicide of the year, a mark not seen since 2003*, THE WASH. POST (Nov. 23, 2021).

¹⁴ DC Police Union (@DCPoliceUnion), Twitter (Oct. 25, 2021, 8:57 AM), available at <https://twitter.com/DCPoliceUnion/status/1452620334658727953>.

¹⁵ Amanda Michelle Gomez, *What happened to defunding the police?*, WASH. CITY PAPER (June 17, 2021).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Neal Augenstein, *Audit finds DC 911 system falls short of national standards; ‘bullying’ culture in call center*, WTOP NEWS (Oct. 19, 2021).

¹⁸ Scott Taylor, *DC Police Commander out after 7News exposes he used patrol cars to get to and from a bar*, ABC 7 NEWS (Mar. 10, 2022).

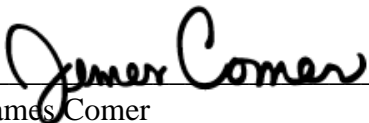
¹⁹ Ida Domingo, *DC Police Union call on city leaders to expand resources to officers after 200th homicide*, ABC 7 NEWS (Nov. 23, 2021).

budget recognizes that past MPD budget cuts have hurt the MPD's ability to protect our capital's citizens by allocating funding for 500 additional sworn officers.²⁰

We again request that you provide the Committee staff a briefing to explain your plans to address the alarming rates of crime and the lack of sufficient MPD support in the District of Columbia. Please make arrangements to schedule this briefing by March 24, 2022. To schedule the briefing or to ask any follow-up or related questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5704.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform has primary legislative jurisdiction over “[m]unicipal affairs of the District of Columbia in general” pursuant to House Rule X. Additionally, the Committee is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” also under House Rule X.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform



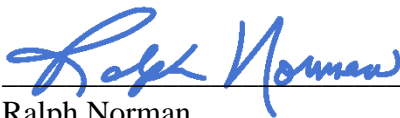
Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



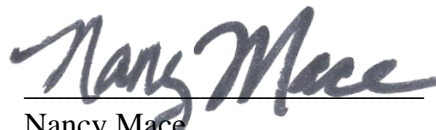
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Ranking Member
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Michael Clouthier
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy

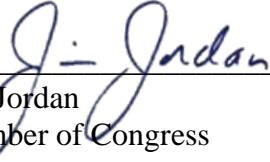


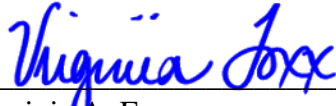
Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment




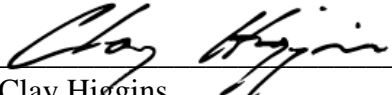
Nancy Mace
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties

²⁰ Gov't of D.C., *FY 2023 Proposed Budget and Fin. Plan: Vol. 1 Exec. Summary* (Mar. 16, 2022).



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress

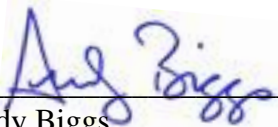

Virginia A. Foxx
Member of Congress

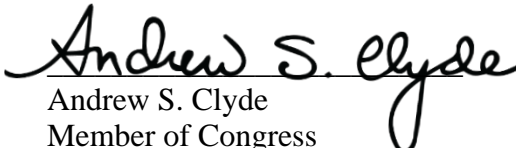

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

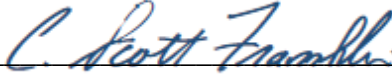

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Byron Donalds
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The Honorable Muriel Bowser

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cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties