

PROMOTE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Police officers, along with the military, small businesses, and the church, have always been highly respected institutions in the U.S. A poll from February of this year shows that 80% of Americans see police officers as “good people doing a difficult job.” The public’s positive sentiment towards police officers has stayed strong despite a public messaging campaign that promoted disrespect toward the police and popularized the mantra, “Defund the Police.” Most of our citizens respect their law enforcement officers and always have — so too should their government.

When our Nation’s police officers—and the institution of law enforcement itself—are not respected, crime naturally ensues. But when the public respects our police officers and the important work they do to protect our communities, our Nation is stronger and more secure.

Policing that is safe and effective both for police officers and their communities relies on mutual respect. Without this, assailants are more likely to use aggression when dealing with police officers, putting their own lives and the lives of officers at risk.

Heightened tensions between the police and the communities they serve have happened before. Throughout U.S. history, popular perceptions of the police have ebbed and flowed following high-profile incidents such as the 1993 Rodney King case in Los Angeles or the 2014 attack on Officer Darren Wilson that led to the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The sensationalized news stories that resulted from these incidents enflamed communities and led to policies that slashed police budgets, hampering their ability to adequately perform their duties.

Law enforcement officials must be equipped with the proper tools to successfully investigate and bring to justice the violent criminals plaguing society. Americans

understand that freedom can only exist when they feel that their everyday lives will not be interrupted by threats of violence and lawlessness. Sadly, this assurance of security does not exist in many communities today.

The mainstream media has been quick to characterize as incidents of “police brutality” events where the facts on the ground prove otherwise. In many cases, the fallout from this irresponsible coverage has been months of devastating riots, arson, and mass looting.

We must increase penalties for assaulting police officers, incentivize police retention and recruitment, resist federalizing law enforcement through consent decrees and other civil oversight, support rural law enforcement, and stand with law enforcement officers so they can effectively do their jobs.

THE FACTS

- ★ 12 major cities broke annual homicide rates in 2021.
- ★ Washington, D.C., cut \$15 million from the budget for its police department in 2020.
- ★ Washington, D.C., experienced a 15% increase in homicides from 2020 to 2021.
- ★ Ambush attacks on police increased by 115% in 2021.
- ★ 67% of United States adults want the police presence in their communities to stay the same.
- ★ 20% of Black Americans and 24% of Hispanic Americans want a greater police presence in their communities.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Oppose federal consent decrees that are aimed at taking accountability away from elected officials and limiting the flexibility of state and local law enforcement.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Prioritize community outreach and develop “strong and positive” relationships between community members and their police departments.
- ★ Launch education and transparency initiatives regarding police policies, particularly regarding the use of force.
- ★ Support enhanced penalties for assaults on law enforcement officers, especially assaults on officers when they are performing their duties.
- ★ Support increases in pay for law enforcement officers.
- ★ Prioritize access to training and career advancement opportunities.
- ★ Prioritize supplemental funding for small and rural law enforcement agencies that are often under-resourced.

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