



## PRESS RELEASE

# New Survey Shows DC Residents Concerned About Crime, Skeptical About Police Reform Initiatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2021

Contact: Gregg Pemberton, Chairman

We have an epidemic of violence in this city and instead of giving us the resources, tools and support we need to tackle it - the City Council led by Charles Allen, has tied our hands in an effort to defund the police. Homicides are up 6% this year, even after last year's 20% spike. We are on pace to break 200 murders in 2021.

In June of 2020, the City Council began demonizing police officers and passing misguided legislation under the guise of "police reform." These bills have had the unintended consequences of increasing crime in our most vulnerable communities, and negatively impacting police service.

Since the passage of these bills, **the MPD has lost over 400 police officers** to either retirement or resignation. The total strength of the police department is below 3,500, the lowest number in decades.

This increase in crime can only be attributed to the DC Council's implementation of several police reform bills and their chilling effect on professional and responsible policing. Other major cities that have passed similar legislation have also experienced mass exits and crime surges. Police officers are unable to do the impactful and necessary tasks needed to apprehend violent criminals and protect communities.

Because our members interact with citizens of the District every day, we know they appreciate police and understand their importance in the community.

In order to quantify that fact, the DC Police Union conducted a survey in July to measure the attitudes of district voters regarding crime, public safety and policing issues facing the city. This is the second scientific survey conducted by an independent research group the Union has commissioned in recent years to gather representative feedback from voters across the District.

The study was conducted by telephone using live interviewers<sup>1</sup>. Voters were randomly selected from the latest updated list of registered voters in Washington, D.C. The survey was written and administered by Gotham Research Group, an independent research firm based in New York City.

"This survey makes it clear that DC residents want our elected leadership to do more to stop crime and an overwhelming majority are opposed to 'reform' efforts that shrink the police force and defund it." said Gregory Pemberton, Chairman of the DC Police Union, "We've been warning about the negative repercussions of these misguided efforts over the past year, and now that we've all seen the tragic results of this legislation, it's time to change course and roll back these provisions that prevent officers from doing the responsible work needed to protect our communities."

Key takeaways from this year's survey include:

- Residents cited public safety and crime as their **number one concern**.
- 74% of residents have a favorable opinion of MPD in general and 75% have a favorable opinion of the police officers in their individual neighborhood.
- 72% of residents say the DC council isn't consulting police officers enough as they consider and implement police reform measures. And only 45% support police reform efforts that have come out of the city council thus far.
- On the specific reform proposals being floated:
  - **91% want more or the same number of police officers in their neighborhood**
  - **71% oppose cuts to police funding**
  - **75% oppose reducing the size of the police force**
  - **69% oppose the "Defund the Police" movement**
  - **A majority, 54%, saying they want to increase funding for police**
  - **68% oppose removing police officers from schools, a policy idea recently championed by members of the DC Council.**

As this survey makes clear, leaders in the City Council need to listen to the concerns of all residents, not just the vocal minority that comes to council meetings. We are all fed up with violence and crime. The Union is in full support of reform measures that hold police officers accountable for misconduct and improve the police department; however, these bills do nothing other than prevent and dissuade officers from doing the professional and responsible work that needs to be done to keep violent criminals from terrorizing our neighborhoods.

There are many things we can agree on. We all want to stop violence, we all want to get guns out of the hands of criminals, and we all want to improve the quality of service the MPD provides to our communities. *We must* find a way to work together to both address the changes in policing that citizens want to make, while also protecting neighborhoods from crime and violence.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this memo are based on a survey conducted July 20th through 26th, 2021 among a representative sample of 600 registered voters likely to vote in the November 2022 election for local offices in Washington, D.C. The margin of error for the full survey sample of 600 is +/- 4.0% and higher among subgroups or questions not asked of the full sample.