



## PRESS RELEASE

### **DC Police Union Statement on DC Council's Override of the Mayor's Veto of Criminal Code Reform**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the D.C. Council voted to override the Mayor's veto of the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2021; a bill that completely overhauls the city's criminal laws and significantly reduces sentencing guidelines, including for violent crimes.

DC Police Union Chairman Gregory Pemberton stated, "The Mayor is the only elected official listening to District residents on crime and violence. This law, once enacted, will lead to violent crime rates exploding even more than they already have. It's reprehensible that the Council would smugly continue to support failed policies at the expense of the lives of our most vulnerable residents."

While there were several issues in the rewrite that everyone agreed with, there are a number of provisions that police, prosecutors and public safety experts say will dangerously decrease penalties.

- The penalties for many offenses have been significantly reduced, from robbery and burglary to carjacking and illegal possession of a handgun. Even the penalties for sexual assault and rape have been reduced.
- The bill removes mandatory minimums in the few categories that still had them. This will allow lenient judges to issue "slap-on-the-wrist" penalties, even for repeat offenders.
- The right to petition to judge to reduce a sentence has been expanded to all defendants (Currently, it's limited to those who committed a crime before they turned 25 – the bill expands it to all defendants). With many of these petitions being granted, many defendants will serve a lesser sentence than what was issued.

- The right to request a jury trial has been expanded to nearly all offenses. This will overburden the already overwhelmed court system.
- The fiscal impact for this bill is over \$50,000,000, largely for the retraining of police and prosecutors; money better spent on public safety measures.

Over the past two years, DC has had a skyrocketing crime rate. Homicides are now regularly over 200 per year. There are nearly 500 carjackings, 2,000 robberies, and 800 shootings per year. These numbers are almost double what they were two and three years ago. Only a decade ago the homicide rate was below 100.

Washington, D.C. suffered 203 homicides in 2022. This marks the first time since 2002-2003 that D.C. has suffered back-to-back years with 200-plus homicides.

Noteworthy, too, is that the annual homicide rate was less than 90 in 2012; 104 and 105 in 2013 and '14 respectively. Changes thereafter to policing policies, enforcement of laws and other public safety measures all proven to reduce crime and save lives coincide with the doubling of the homicide rate.

This exponential increase in crime can be directly attributed to Charles Allen and the City Council's efforts to coddle criminals and reduce the effectiveness of the police department. This override of the Mayor's veto is just another failure by the Council to protect this city from violence.

Chairman Pemberton further stated, "Every resident should be outraged that the Council has weakened the criminal justice system in a way that makes every neighborhood less safe. Their actions today are shameful."

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