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League - JACL
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Rights Under Law
League of United Latin
American Citizens (LULAC)
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NAACP Legal Defense &
Educational Fund, Inc (LDF)
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Indians (NCAI)
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National Education Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for
Women & Families
National Urban League
People for the American Way
Religious Action Center of
Reform Judaism
Service Employees International Union
Sikh Coalition
UnidosUS

President and CEO

Maya Wiley

August 14, 2025

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government
Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rand Paul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government
Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, Chairman Paul, and Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 126 undersigned organizations, we write to express our profound concerns with the recent decision by President Trump to assert control over the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and to deploy the National Guard throughout the city. This unprecedented and needless takeover of a local government's law enforcement mechanisms poses a dire threat to public safety as well as to civil and human rights, not only of the people who live in D.C., but ultimately throughout the entire country.

This administration has proven that it will push every boundary to test for exploitable weakness in Congress and the courts. Given the role of your respective committees in matters affecting our nation's capital, we urge you to promptly call for hearings into this decision, and to engage in vigorous oversight moving forward.

While President Trump has pointed to several high-profile instances of crime in the District of Columbia, the fact remains that there simply is no "crime emergency." Violent crime in D.C. fell by 35 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year, and it is now at a 30-year low.¹ One of the key drivers of this decrease has been widespread investments in community-based violence intervention and crisis response, including through COVID

¹ U.S. Attorney's Office, Press Release: Violent Crime in DC Hits 30 Year Low, January 3, 2025, at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/violent-crime-dc-hits-30-year-low>.

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recovery dollars and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. Until recently, when Congress inexplicably forced D.C. to slash its budget by more than \$1 billion, D.C. was also able to utilize its own local tax revenue to address the issue.

In the place of proven strategies aimed at reducing and preventing crime, President Trump's decision to commandeer the police and fill the streets with National Guard servicemembers – who are not trained to act as police officers – is not simply a matter of political theater and distraction. It also poses a dire threat to longstanding efforts to foster trust between the police and the communities they serve, especially in light of President Trump's claim that he would allow the police under his command to “do whatever the hell they want,” raising concerns that the civil rights of D.C. residents may be sacrificed in the process.

President Trump has once again declared a false emergency to access executive powers that were not meant to be used as political tools to amass power. It is a terrible precedent that could harm cities, communities, and people well beyond D.C. What he is able to achieve in D.C., he will try to do elsewhere. He has already threatened to do the same in other major cities around the country.

The simple fact is that President Trump is not seriously interested in reducing crime. He is interested in misleading about crime to justify abhorrent practices, including rapid expansion of criminalization, unprecedented abuses by federal law enforcement agents, and dangerous executive power grabs. Time and time again, he has shown that his real goal is to create a police state, as he has repeatedly weaponized law enforcement to quash dissent and to serve his own personal and political ends. For example, since taking office, his administration has:

- Defied court orders;
- Unlawfully punished law firms, private charities, and universities perceived as being hostile to him or his agenda;
- Locked up and tried to deport students simply because they criticized U.S. foreign policy;
- Filed criminal charges against a sitting U.S. representative for trying to engage in oversight of an immigrant detention center;
- Arrested and charged the president of a state chapter of a major labor union while peacefully engaging in protected First Amendment activity;
- Warned that protestors in D.C. were “going to be met with very big force”;
- Violently handcuffed a sitting U.S. senator for merely trying to ask a question at a press conference;
- Carried out senseless and unlawful immigration raids that have terrorized communities, instilled fear in families, and eroded trust in public institutions; and
- Threatened homeless populations in D.C. and elsewhere with arrest, exile, and involuntary commitment.

The federal government should respect the laws and policies of D.C. enacted via its democratically elected government. Instead, D.C. is an easy testing ground for President Trump, because while its residents pay federal taxes and comply with all the other duties of citizenship, they have no vote in Congress and limited control over their own local governance. Given his record to date, it would be naïve

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to think that President Trump will stop there. We urge you to ensure that our rights under the Constitution and under our federal laws are being fully protected and enforced.

If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, Senior Counsel, at randhava@civilrights.org.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

ACLU-DC
Advancement Project
AFT
Alliance for Justice
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Civil Liberties Union
American Constitution Society
American Humanist Association
Americans for Tax Fairness
Amnesty International USA
Andrew Goodman Foundation
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Public Representation
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition on Human Needs
Collective Power for Reproductive Justice
Common Cause
Community Change Action
Constitutional Accountability Center
Courts Matter Illinois
DC Vote
Defending Rights & Dissent
Democracy Defenders Action
Demos Action
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
End Citizens United
Equal Justice Society
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Fair Fight
Fair and Just Prosecution
Families for Freedom

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Feminist Majority
Free Speech For People
Freedom From Religion Foundation
General Board of Church and Society - The United Methodist Church
Get Free
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Indivisible Tacoma
Indivisible Plus Washington
Indivisible Washington's 8th District
Interfaith Alliance
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jews for a Secular Democracy
Just Solutions
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lambda Legal
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Action Center
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
Matthew Shepard Foundation
Mi Familia Vota
MomsRising
MoveOn
MPower Change Action Fund
Muslim Advocates
Muslims for Just Futures
NAACP
National Action Network
National Association of Social Workers
National Bar Association
National CAPACD
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Homelessness Law Center
National Housing Law Project
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League

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National Women's Law Center Action Fund
National Workrights Institute
NCNW
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
North Carolina Council of Churches
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
Oxfam America
Partnership for Civil Justice Fund
PEN America
People For the American Way
People Power United
PFLAG National
Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)
Prevention at the Intersections
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
Public Justice
Reproductive Freedom for All
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
RootsAction
Secular Coalition for America
Seed the Vote Action
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Sojourners
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Stand Up America
The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania
The Southern Poverty Law Center
The Workers Circle
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
UnidosUS
Utopian Visions
Vera Institute of Justice
Voices for Progress
Voto Latino
Western States Center
Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network, Inc.