



D.C. Mayor Urges City Council to Re-fund the Police

As the violent criminals continue to take lives in the nation’s capital, local leadership is pushing for formal measures to bulk up police department funding again, after last year cutting that budget to appease “racial justice” activists.

In an [announcement](#) on Wednesday from the Washington, D.C., mayor’s office, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser revealed her proposal for an additional 170 officers to staff the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) through 2022:



Right now, I have directed MPD to use any overtime necessary to meet our public safety demands. But we know that is not a complete solution or the right long-term solution. We also know we need all of our officers to be fresh, rested, and in the best position to make good decisions — and that requires having a full force to meet all of our community’s needs. The department is in a good position to make additional hires and move swiftly to close the gap between attrition and hiring, and that’s what this plan is going to help us do.

AP Images
Muriel Bowser

Bowser’s turnabout on crime came after a year of advocacy on behalf of groups such as Black Lives Matter, which have [openly called](#) for “defunding the police” and described policing itself as intrinsically racist. Mayor Bowser [actively participated](#) in last year’s anti-police protests in the wake of George Floyd’s death in police custody. The mayor ordered a “Black Lives Matter” [mural](#) painted from curbside to curbside on 16th Street NW that leads to the White House, and which stretches for over three city blocks. She also renamed the section of 16th Street in front of the White House into Black Lives Matter Plaza. “We want to call attention today to making sure our nation is more fair and more just and that black lives and that black humanity matter in our nation,” Bowser said, according to [NBC Washington](#).

And today, the mayor explicitly says that last year’s “defunding” movement has negatively affected D.C.’s police, and accuses the D.C. Council of slashing the MPD’s budget by \$15 million. As a result, Bowser complains, the department “was left with a near empty hiring pipeline, which had an immediate and significant impact on recruiting new police officers.” Bowser called on the City Council to urgently approve \$11 million of the supplemental budget to hire and train 20 more officers in the current fiscal



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on July 29, 2021

year, and 150 in 2022. The mayor's press release ended with the website address for the residents who may be interested in joining the police.

The D.C. council members are unlikely to listen to Bowser's plea; Council Chairman Phil Mendelson [indicated](#) he didn't believe his colleagues would approve the funds.

Bowser and Chief Robert Contee of the Metropolitan Police Department also [complained](#) that federal prosecutors — who have jurisdiction in the capital — still haven't pressed charges in more than 2,000 cases, and the courts, closed due to the pandemic, still haven't fully reopened. "No matter how you look at it, the system is not working at full capacity, and that means justice is delayed," Bowser said.

Earlier this month, Bowser sent a [letter](#) to council members, calling for "a strong, sustained police presence," amid "a sustained increase in gun violence" over the past year. In a dramatic drift from the official narrative of the White House that blames guns and gun traffickers for rising crime, Bowser actually mentioned "brazen shooters in our neighborhoods."

Similarly, contrasting the Biden administration's [strategy](#) of focusing on gun dealers instead of individual criminals, Chief Contee said he wants to crack down on those who actually put the trigger. "The real issue is we have a vicious cycle of bad actors who do things, no accountability, and they end up back in [the] community.... Why is it that a guy who murdered somebody is out in [the] community after having been arrested two or three months prior with a firearm? What did we think he was going to do?" Contee [said](#) as he visited the site of a [shooting](#) in a popular D.C. area, located one mile north of the White House.

Former Detroit Police Chief James Craig praised Contee's statement and [called out](#) city leaders nationwide for playing a large role in the crime waves rocking Washington, D.C., Chicago, and other major cities. "I got to applaud the chief out of D.C. He's saying what so many chiefs are saying around the country. Some are afraid to say it. It's bigger than just him," Craig said.

Following a [deadly shooting](#) outside of Nationals Park on July 17, the Washington, D.C., police union also stressed that "elected officials" are to blame for the spike in violent crime.

"Welcome to Washington, D.C. Where violent crime permeates everything," the DC Police Union [tweeted](#). "It is a tragedy that elected officials won't let us do our jobs." [In response](#), the city's chapter of BLM called the head of the union "a raging right wing extremist leading a campaign to fight for cops to keep brutalizing and killing black people and then blaming it those black people while being unable to stop the violence they fuel."

Struggling to keep crime under control, Bowser, among other mayors, has recently [asked](#) President Biden for help and financial support in combating gun violence.



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