

# OVERDUE OVERSIGHT OF THE CAPITAL CITY: PART II

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## HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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*Opening statements and the prepared statements for the witnesses are available in the U.S. House of Representatives Repository at: docs.house.gov.*

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- \* Article, *Washington Post*, “D.C. Math, Reading Test Scores Fall to Lowest Level in More Than Five Years”; submitted by Rep. Grothman.
- \* Washington, D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Social Studies Standards Draft for Public Comment; submitted by Rep. Grothman.
- \* Questions for the Record: to Mayor Bowser; submitted by Rep. Gosar.
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*The documents are available at: docs.house.gov.*



## OVERDUE OVERSIGHT OF THE CAPITAL CITY: PART II

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**Tuesday, May 16, 2023**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*Washington, D.C.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the full Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Gosar, Grothman, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Donalds, Armstrong, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, McClain, Boebert, Luna, Edwards, Burlison, Raskin, Norton, Connolly, Krishnamoorthi, Mfume, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Balint, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Goldman, and Moskowitz.

Also present: Representative Andrew Clyde, GA.

Chairman COMER. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here today.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

The Committee welcomes the public to this very important meeting. While you are here, I want to point out to the Members and the audience today that House Rule XI provides that the Chairman of the Committee may punish breaches of order and decorum, including exclusion from the hearing. All participants will be required to avoid unruly behavior and inappropriate language. Expressions of support or opposition are not in order, and that includes holding up signs. I expect all parties to these proceedings to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects properly on the U.S. House of Representatives.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Under Article I of the Constitution, Congress has jurisdiction over the Nation's capital, and the House rules charged this Committee with a duty to oversee the municipal affairs of the District of Columbia. We want our Nation's capital to be safe and prosperous, a city for its residents and visitors alike. But our Nation's capital is declining by several metrics. Crime has gone through the roof; education levels are on the floor. According to the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, motor vehicle thefts in the District have increased by over 100 percent compared to this time last year.

Fifty-seven percent of these carjackings are committed by juveniles. Total property crime is up 30 percent. Homicides are on track to the highest rate since 2003. This year alone, we have already seen over 1,500 violent crimes committed with the total crime up 27 percent from last year.

Washington, DC. clearly has a crime crisis. At this committee's March 29 hearing, members of the D.C. Council refused to acknowledge this reality. D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson went as far as saying there is not a crime crisis in Washington, DC, but the numbers speak for themselves. The residents of D.C. and Americans who come to visit their Nation's capital deserve to be safe. I am concerned about a lack of resources and funding for the Metropolitan Police Department as well as officer retention and recruitment challenges. And I am concerned that the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, which prosecutes local crimes in D.C., declined to prosecute 67 percent of cases last year.

The D.C. Council's continued attempts to push soft-on-crime legislation and policies are emboldening criminals. Mayor Bowser thankfully opposed many of D.C. Council's reckless actions and rhetoric. This Republican-led House has passed two joint resolutions to halt these soft-on-crime proposals from the council. Both of these joint resolutions passed with bipartisan support. However, many of my Democratic colleagues on this Committee have actively cheered on the Council's reckless actions and criticized congressional action to restore order. I hope this Committee will come together for substantive discussions on how to address our capital city's most pressing issues, especially crime.

Today's hearing will also address the crucial role that the Mayor plays in ensuring the best possible education for the District's children. Pandemic policies and prolonged closures have led to huge drops in math and language scores for students across all grades. These policies have also resulted in record-level truancy. In 2022, 48 percent of D.C. students qualified as chronically absent from school—48 percent. Something needs to be done to turn the situation around. I look forward to hearing some solutions today.

Finally, maximum Federal telework has created huge financial strains on the District. Downtown D.C. has become a shadow of its former self. Mayor Bowser has been vocal about the need for Federal employees to return to office, yet bustling streets and full office buildings have been replaced by maximum telework, leading to businesses leaving the District and have resulted in substantial loss of revenue. It is time in the post-pandemic world to have our Federal Government workers return to their offices, especially D.C. offices, to continue to serve the American people.

I thank the Mayor and U.S. Attorney for appearing today as well as Chief Contee and Administrator Donahue. This week is also National Police Week, so I would like to send an additional thank you to the men and women who police the streets of D.C. to keep us safe and to all officers across the country who serve their communities. I look forward to working with my colleagues and District leaders here today to achieve meaningful progress on the critical issues facing our Nation's capital.

I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his opening remarks.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and forgive me, but I think we are at a point when we have to ask why we are doing this again. I wonder if second guessing the elected leadership of Washington, DC. is really the most urgent priority for the U.S. Congress today. I can think of dozens of things more urgently important to the American people, starting with the out-of-control gun violence that is taking thousands of lives and causing millions of people to live in fear and terror.

From Kentucky to Tennessee, from Georgia to California, we have had more mass shootings in 2023 than we have had days in the year so far. In other words, there is a gun massacre, not always with an AR-15, but often with an AR-15, every single day. And yet assault weapons account for only one percent to two percent overall of firearm fatalities in America. The vast hole from gun violence in our Swiss-cheese-like gun laws make America an absolute outlier among the industrialized nations in the world.

Did you know that there are countries whose foreign ministries have issued travel warnings to their citizens about the dangers of coming to America because of gun violence? Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children under 18, surpassing car accidents, pediatric cancer, and contagious diseases. And yet, the Oversight Committee has not seen fit to call a single hearing on why these massacres are increasing in our country or how we can work together effectively across party lines to stop this bloodbath. Nor have we held a hearing on the threat of a default, which could plunge America into a deep recession, crash the stock market, and cost our people millions of jobs.

The Constitution does not allow any of this because Section 4 of Article IV says that the validity of the public debt shall not be questioned, and yet our colleagues, who were content to raise the debt limit three times under President Trump, a President who created 25 percent of all the debt accumulated between George Washington and Joe Biden, seek to play a dangerous political game with the full faith and credit of the United States Nation, which has, up until this point, never stiffed its creditors or defaulted on its obligations. No hearings on that.

And we have called no hearings on the war on freedom in America, the shocking new efforts to ban textbooks, censor and intimidate teachers, silence scientists, humiliate and cancel LGBTQ students, and rewrite our Nation's history textbooks to conform to the White nationalist ideology that a Republican senator publicly embraced just a few days ago. Nor have we held a hearing on how the Dobbs decision and the relentless attack on reproductive freedom is dramatically undermining the healthcare that millions of American women receive on everything from common miscarriages to ectopic pregnancies to postpartum hemorrhage to endometrial biopsy, all of whose treatments can involve misoprostol and mifepristone, which are suddenly being treated like criminal contraband across the country. Doesn't women's health warrant even a single hearing under these crisis conditions?

And nor have we had a hearing on the assault on voting rights taking place. Instead, we have gathered today to hold a second hearing to micromanage the local affairs of Washington, DC. And I fully expect some of our colleagues to announce their candidacies

for D.C. City Council from Ward 6 where we sit, or mayor of the District of Columbia when this is all over, or maybe Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner. At least the people of Washington would have some role in this performance art.

But I was watching President Trump's town hall meeting on CNN last week, and I saw two remarkable things that clarified in my mind what is happening here. First, I saw Donald Trump blame Vice President Pence for failing to steal the election for him on January 6. As Trump emphasized on January 6, he believed, and he continues to believe, that Pence did not have "the courage to do what needed to be done." Moreover, Trump assured his cult followers that Pence was never in any danger from the invading mob chanting, "Hang Mike Pence." And all the violence was Pence's own fault for not succumbing to Trump and becoming the first Vice President in our history to step outside of his constitutional role and declare the President the winner against the actual Electoral College vote. You see, that is what Pence gets for not doing what he was told by Donald Trump.

But we also saw Trump castigate and blame Jean Carroll, the woman he sexually abused in a department store and later lied about and defamed. Trump called her a whack job and asked what kind of woman meets somebody and brings them up, and within minutes you are playing hanky-panky in a dressing room. You see, he thinks it is her fault that he sexually abused her. And watching these two glaring cases of the GOP frontrunner for the Presidential nomination in 2024 blaming the victim for his crime made me see what is happening with these hearings on Washington. They are part of an effort to deny Americans who live in Washington the right to participate in representative government, and then to blame them for their own disenfranchisement and their own lack of representation in Congress.

Nearly 700,000 U.S. citizens live in D.C. They pay more taxes per capita than the residents of each of the 50 states. They fought in every U.S. war, they are draftable, they are subject to all the laws of the country, and against all odds, without the power to select their own judges or prosecutors or make their own budgets without outside interference. They have made real progress in their community over the decades, and they have non-violently petitioned for statehood, the way 37 states have done it in our history, but they still have no voting representation in the House or the Senate. They are locked out of the normal processes of congressional representation.

And yet, when violent insurrectionists attacked this body on January 6, 2021, a "beautiful day" according to President Trump, the people of Washington as Capitol Police officers, and Metropolitan Police Department officers, and staffers, and citizens, and local officials, like Mayor Bowser and Chief Contee, rallied to the defense of the Congress and the republic and the very institutions that locked them out. Local residents and leaders stood up to defend us and to defend the Vice President against the rampaging mob that stormed the seat of government in the name of the Big Lie with the explicit goal of toppling and stealing a Presidential election.

Now, for their service and their sacrifice for the country, Washingtonians must endure lectures about their unfitness for democ-

racy from other people's representatives who confuse the act of seditious conspiracy with tourism, and called the convicted assailants of American police officers, political prisoners. If our colleagues choose to ignore the statehood petition of the people of Washington, there is not much we can do about that kind of moral indifference and contempt for other Americans' rights. But at least spare everyone the Trumpian spectacle of blaming the victims for their own disenfranchisement and lack of fully comprehensive government. It is an insult to Washington, it is an embarrassment to Congress, and it is a shocking waste of time.

I want to thank the Mayor and the U.S. Attorney for appearing here today, and I want to thank the people of Washington for not violently attacking Congress, even though you have a legitimate political grievance as opposed to an imaginary one. You have exercised your rights under the First Amendment and the Ninth Amendment to petition for statehood admission, and we salute your patriotic defense of the Constitution and this body, and your embrace of nonviolent change. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I must admit, when you kept referencing the election interference, I thought you were going to refer to the Durham report, but you never did.

I am pleased to introduce our witnesses today. First, we have Mayor Muriel Bowser, who has been mayor of Washington, DC, since 2015 and was reelected last year to serve a third term in office. Mayor Bowser serves as the chief executive of the government of the District of Columbia, overseeing city life and government operations, District economic development, and the D.C. police, among other critical matters. She is joined by two D.C. officials to assist with questions.

Robert J. Contee, III, has served as Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, MPD, since early 2021. Chief Contee is a native of the District and has spent his career serving the MPD. Thank you for your service, sir. Kevin Donahue was appointed to serve as City Administrator for the District of Columbia by Mayor Bowser in January 2021. In this role, Mr. Donahue helps oversee D.C.'s day-to-day government operations. And finally, Matthew Graves serves as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. Mr. Graves has served as U.S. attorney since he was confirmed in November 2021. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses regarding the District of Columbia and their efforts to ensure our Nation's capital is a safe and well-managed place for all.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hands.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. Let the record show that the witnesses all answered in the affirmative.

We appreciate all of you being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statements, and they will appear in full in the hearing record. Please limit your oral statements to five minutes. As a reminder, press the button on the microphone in front of you so that

it is on, and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After four minutes the light will turn yellow. When the red light comes on, your five minutes have expired, and we would ask that you please wrap up.

I recognize Mayor Bowser for her opening statements. Thank you, Mayor.

**STATEMENT OF MURIEL BOWSER**  
**MAYOR**  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Ranking Member Raskin. I want to recognize my Congresswoman, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and all Members of the Committee.

I am Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, DC. I am joined today by the Chief of Police, Robert Contee, and the City Administrator, Kevin Donahue. A lot has been said about Washington, DC. over the past weeks and months, and as someone who was born and raised here and served in elected office since 2005, I dare say I know more than most. So, I would like to start by sharing a little bit of my story and also setting the record straight.

I am older than D.C. home rule by one year. The D.C. I was born into did not have an elected mayor or an elected council. The residents of D.C. had no elected representation except for school board. The D.C. my parents were born into, they could not even vote for President, despite my father serving more than 20 years in the U.S. Army Reserves, committed to protecting America's democracy. My father is just one example of the indignities that D.C. residents have suffered, but he is not alone.

When I was just one years old, in 1973, Congress passed the D.C. Home Rule Act, creating a local government while retaining Congress' power to overrule local legislation. Today, we have an elected mayor, 13-member council, and attorney general, but we still lack any voting representation in Congress. But you have the power to fix this through D.C. Statehood.

Since achieving home rule, we have made significant strides in moving D.C. forward. I am proud to say with confidence that the state of our finances are strong, and the state of the District is strong. We are currently in the process of passing our 28th balanced budget. I sent the D.C. Council a budget with no new taxes or fees, and one that reflects the sober reality of our time: declining revenue due to increases in remote work and increased costs due to inflation.

Still, we are a donor state and give more to the Federal Government than we get back, and our finances continue to be the envy of jurisdictions around our Nation. We got here through a long history of balanced budgets and clean audits. In fact, in January 2020, we achieved 60 days' cash on hand. In just over 20 years, D.C. went from junk-bond status to having a triple-A bond rating. We did all of this with one hand tied behind our back, a Congresswoman with no vote in the House, and no representation in the Senate at all.

You see, we are not actually a city, not quite a state. We are not a colony or territory. We are 700,000 disenfranchised Americans living in the shadow of the Capitol with all the responsibilities of

citizenship. And like every big-city mayor in America, I tackle big-city challenges all day, every day. I use every tool in our toolbox to address the most vexing among social problems troubling America, American cities and towns alike, gun violence being top among them.

No one can be satisfied with increasing crime trends in any category. I certainly am not. In D.C., like what is happening around our country, we have experienced some concerning increases in crime. We see more illegal guns on our streets and more repeat violent offenders using them. Those guns are being used in violent crimes like homicides and carjackings, and we have also seen an increase in car theft. For me, these trends are unacceptable, and we do not accept this as a new normal.

To understand our response, you also have to understand our criminal justice system, which is unique. MPD makes arrests. Most adult cases are prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney for D.C., who is, of course, part of the U.S. DOJ. Our youth offenders are prosecuted by our locally elected attorney general and committed to our local youth and rehabilitation services, but our youth and adult offenders are supervised by the court and Federal agencies. D.C. jail is local, but a majority of our residents who are serving time are at Federal facilities across the country. Our judges are also appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

So, I will not be making any excuses here. I am the Mayor, and I am responsible for making this very complicated, unique system work for my residents, businesses, and all Americans. That is why I have authorized the Chief to use any overtime that he deems necessary for MPD. We have launched regional and Federal partnerships. I created the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement. Just yesterday, I announced the package of legislation that will enhance penalties for violent crime, provide greater discretion for the courts to determine who should be held pretrial, and to modify early release laws to assure that the voices of victims and the judgments of the courts are not thrown by the wayside. This legislation, coupled with my 2024 budget investments, will help fill gaps in our whole-of-government approach.

Wrapping up, Mr. Chairman, we know that the police in our system and all of local officials and mayors across the country could also use your help. We know that access to firearms is a national problem, and we need commonsense gun reform. We also need this Congress to give the Mayor control of the D.C. National Guard. We welcome your partnerships for non-public safety initiatives as well and working with our Congresswoman to help give more D.C. residents a fair shot by doubling the D.C. TAG scholarship to \$20,000 and making UDC TAG eligible. You can help us with Washington Union Station, help us celebrate the plan to get Federal workers back downtown, and deliver a plan for repurposing underutilized Federal spaces. We can work together to re-imagine RFK. The RFK campus can help us shape our future for both sport and a mix of uses, including housing and jobs.

So let me end by saying this: I know that all of us here today will not see eye-to-eye on every issue, but we can all agree on the promise of America that our government should be for the people, by the people. And I can assure you that there was no one here

that cares more about public safety than we do. My family is five generations D.C., and the next one is growing. Today is my daughter's birthday, and I am raising her to be a lifelong Washingtonian, too. It is my No. 1 priority to ensure that Washington, DC. is a place where all of our children can grow up safely, enjoy their full rights as American citizens, and where they can live up to their God-given potential. I hope that any actions taken by this Committee will advance that vision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Thank you very much, Mayor. And let me make this point. There will be two opening statements. All four witnesses will be available to answer questions, but now, the Chair recognizes the Honorable Mr. Graves.

**STATEMENT OF MATTHEW M. GRAVES**  
**U.S. ATTORNEY**  
**U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Mr. GRAVES. Thank you, and good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Raskin, my representative, Congresswoman Norton, and the rest of the Members of the Committee. I am honored to be here today to discuss the public safety mission of the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, and to represent the dedicated men and women who work tirelessly to prosecute crime in that office.

Our office is unique among the 94 United States Attorney's offices because we prosecute both Federal crime and most local crime committed by adults in the District of Columbia. We have a dedicated and talented team of prosecutors, victim advocates, and support staff who have a deep commitment to seeking justice, and they have worked diligently through a series of unprecedented crises since March 2020. Despite these crises, they have been able to secure more than 1,300 felony indictments for violations of District of Columbia law and more than 3,100 guilty pleas in felony cases for violations of District law during that timeframe. I am deeply proud of them and feel privileged to rejoin their ranks.

Our Superior Court Division is responsible for the prosecution of violations of District of Columbia criminal laws. It has roughly 170 Assistant United States Attorneys and approximately 60 professional staff. Since being sworn into office, I have increased the number of prosecutors in the Superior Court Division by approximately 10 percent. These prosecutors are in court and the grand jury almost every day, and the division takes hundreds of cases to trial each year.

Unfortunately, the District has not been immune from what many parts of the country are experiencing: a devastating proliferation of illegal firearms and increases in certain types of violent crime. While most violent felonies remain at historically low levels in the District, the number of shootings and homicides in the District began increasing in 2018. Carjackings more than doubled during the course of the pandemic. While we understand that dealing with these issues requires a whole-of-government response, we recognize that prosecution is an important part of that response. Our office is focused on partnering with law enforcement and the community to combat the surge in shootings and homicides. We know that a relatively small percentage of individuals are driving

a substantial portion of the violence in our community, and that much of the community-based gun violence is focused on a relatively few discrete areas of the District.

So, we have focused, in turn, our investigative resources on those areas. We have seen that the strategy markedly reduces various violent crime metrics, including calls for sounds of gunshots and instances of violent crime. We have complete buy-in on the strategy. MPD, our Federal law enforcement partners, and our office have all dedicated officers, agents, and prosecutors in support of these efforts.

With respect to violent crime in Fiscal Year 2022, our office charged roughly 90 percent of all arrests for the most serious violent crimes. These numbers reflect that we will aggressively prosecute every violent crime that we believe we can prove beyond a reasonable doubt at trial. That has been and will continue to be the policy and the priority of the office. Despite consistently charging roughly 90 percent of arrests for the most serious violent crimes, the number and percentage of cases charged at arrest began decreasing year over year in Fiscal Year 2018. The decrease accelerated as the office simultaneously managed the COVID-19 pandemic and the D.C. Department of Forensic Science's loss of accreditation.

We are past the worst of these challenges. Indeed, we already see the calendar year 2023 charging rates are higher than Fiscal Year 2022 rates. The decrease in number of cases we charged was largely driven by our treatment of non-violent misdemeanor offenses, such as unlawful entry and drug possession. Because these crimes greatly impact the quality of life of our fellow community members, we are committed to prosecuting these crimes in a way that both reduces their negative impact on the community and tries to address the underlying mental health and substance abuse issues that typically drive these crimes. But no one should confuse addressing these public safety issues with a strategy for addressing gun violence and carjackings.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to be here today. We have no shortage of important work in our office, including prosecuting acts of international terrorism and disrupting malign foreign influence schemes. But nothing is more important to our fellow community members than the work we do to address violent crime. And I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman COMER. I want to thank the witnesses for their opening statement. We will proceed with the question-and-answer portion of our testimony, and I will begin. And let me say publicly, the Mayor and I met last week and had a very positive meeting where I pledged that this Committee would work with her to try to do anything we could to advance Washington, DC. And I know from talking to Mayor Bowser that she agrees that tackling the issue of crime is a priority for her residents. And I know that she filed proposed legislation that she mentioned in her opening statement called the Safer Stronger Amendment Act, which would amend several provisions of the D.C. criminal law.

And, Mayor, you have often had differences of opinion with the D.C. Council when it comes to reducing crime. What would you say

are the biggest differences between your approach and your council's?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will say, and I am proud that I have been elected three times now as mayor. I served on the Council of the District of Columbia prior to that for almost eight years, and I very much respect the role that each branch of our government plays. My job is to let the people of the District of Columbia and the council know what we need. I rely on professionals in public safety or education or human services who do their jobs day in and day out to advance the things that we need.

And so, our approach, and I think their similarities with the Council, is to make sure that we have a comprehensive approach to crime that addresses enforcement, opportunity, and prevention, and we continue to do that. And when we differ, and we will, I will make sure that D.C. residents and members know what the professionals say we need.

Chairman COMER. Do you agree that, especially in the case of violent criminals, it is important that there be consequences after an arrest, to include prosecution and jail time where appropriate?

MAYOR BOWSER. I do.

Chairman COMER. Are you concerned about a high number of decline in prosecutions for individuals by the Metropolitan Police Department?

MAYOR BOWSER. Oh, I know that the Metropolitan Police Department, as our entire criminal justice system as I described, is kind of a complicated soup: some local that report directly to me, like the Chief of Police, some elected, like the Attorney General for the District of Columbia and the members of the Council, and then the courts. And so, it is our job to make sure that we are all working together to make the District safer.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Graves, you are the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia and the chief prosecutor overseeing the office responsible for prosecuting both Federal and local crimes for the District, correct? Do you also believe it is important that there be consequences after an arrest, to include prosecution and jail time where appropriate, especially for violent offenses?

Mr. GRAVES. I am the career prosecutor. Protecting the safety of the community is our No. 1 mission. I absolutely agree with that statement.

Chairman COMER. It has been reported that the U.S. Attorney's Office for D.C., that you oversee, declined to prosecute 67 percent of individuals arrested for D.C. crimes in 2022. Is that accurate?

Mr. GRAVES. So, thank you for the question. A little bit of context. As I said in my opening statement, in Fiscal Year 2022, we prosecuted over 90 percent of the arrests for most serious violent crimes. Fiscal year 2022, which was a snapshot in time, was a very unique year with a lot going on, the complicated soup that the Mayor refers to, but I can report that our charging rates this year are already higher and trending upwards.

Chairman COMER. Well, the 67 percent is nearly double the 35 percent declination rate from 2015, and it is much higher than the rate for many metropolitan areas. I am sure you would point to many reasons for this discrepancy, but what I want to know is,

what do you plan to do to ensure your office can accept more cases for prosecution after an arrest is made for D.C. offenses?

Mr. GRAVES. That is a great question, and we are focused on where we are now and how we move forward as opposed to what happened in the past. With respect to what happened in the past, the declination rate, the cases that we were not charging, you see it increasing from Fiscal Year 2016 through Fiscal Year 2022, year over year. There are lots of complicated reasons for why that is occurring. I am focused on what we can do to address that and driving down rates.

Chairman COMER. Mayor Bowser, this January, I, along with 17 of my colleagues on this Committee, introduced the SHOW UP Act, which passed the House in February. The SHOW UP Act will require Federal Agencies to return to their pre-pandemic levels with respect to telework. Do you support the idea that Federal workers should once again return to work?

MAYOR BOWSER. I absolutely support that, and I think that we can look at the District Government as a guide. We, of course, all experienced the pandemic and the necessary changes to work life and personal life that went along with it.

In addition to answering your questions here, part of my day-to-day job as Mayor of Washington, DC. is managing 37,000 employees. And while we had modified operations, 40 percent of our employees were never eligible for telework: the minimum of the Metropolitan Police Department, fire and EMS, our public-school teachers who went into classrooms every day of the pandemic or soon after we reopened. I reopened D.C. Government in June 2021, following the previous March where COVID really changed our lives around the world. We have made some allowances, of course. We have more telework than we did before the pandemic, but I require the agencies that report to me to show up three days a week.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Mayor. Hopefully, that bill will get a vote in the Senate. Now the Chair recognizes Ms. Norton for five minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thirty-seven states have been admitted to the Union since the adoption of the Constitution. All have been admitted by simple legislation. None were admitted by constitutional amendment. Congress has previously altered the boundaries of the Federal District, also known as D.C., including reducing its size by 30 percent in 1846.

When Democrats last controlled the House of Representatives, the House twice passed the D.C. Statehood bill which would have admitted the state of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth and reduce the size of the Federal District. The state would have consisted of 66 of the 68 square miles of the current Federal District, and the Federal District, which would have remained under Congress' control, would have consisted of the other two miles.

The Constitution's admissions clause commits to Congress the power to admit new states. The Constitution's District clause gives Congress plenary authority over the Federal District. Last Congress, during consideration of the D.C. Statehood bill, dozens of leading constitutional scholars, including Laurence Tribe, the pre-eminent constitutional scholar of the last 50 years, said in a letter

to Congress that, "There is no constitutional barrier to admitting the state of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth."

The text of the Constitution is clear that Congress has the authority to admit the state of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth. Republicans, therefore, have turned to spurious objections. They say that D.C. does not have the right types of retail establishments, like car dealerships, or the right types of industry, like mining or logging, or that D.C. elects too many Democrats. We have even heard dog whistles. One Republican senator infamously said the state, a majority of whose residents would be Black and Brown, would not be "a well-rounded working-class state."

We have seen many such unprincipled and extra-constitutional arguments in opposition to the admission of new states before. Each future state eventually overcame them. In 2016, 86 percent of D.C. voters voted in favor of D.C. Statehood. Mayor Bowser, why do you think the referendum received such overwhelming support?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, that is a great question Congresswoman. We worked very hard, and you have worked very hard over the years to demonstrate to the people of Washington, DC. why we do everything we are asked to as American citizens, how we function as a state in most regards, how we run a city government and financial structure that would make most jurisdictions proud, yet we are here. We look at the Capitol, we see Congress people, we are involved in national discussions, yet we have no vote here and it is unconscionable.

I think D.C. residents also recognize not only do we lack representation, but we lack full autonomy. We see, for example, that laws that have been passed, duly, by our elected officials. Admittedly, I have not agreed with all of them, but I do agree with the right of an elected legislature to make the laws that it chooses. I think people have also seen now the Federal Government trample on us, take over our streets, send troops with aircraft to hover over us. And so, that full lack of autonomy can only be addressed by statehood.

You rightly point out that a simple legislation approved by this Congress could make us a state, just like 37 other states that have been admitted to this great Union. You also rightly point out that the Constitution does not preclude it. You also rightly point out that the arguments that have been made have been exposed as partisan arguments. And for us, statehood is not a red state or blue state question. It is a question about how do we perfect our democracy by ensuring that 700,000 people, who are Americans just like you, enjoy full citizenship in our country.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mayor Bowser.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Gosar of Arizona for five minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mayor for your attitude. The buck stops with you. Kudos. That is a great attitude. Now, a question for you. Are you keeping track of the number of children in Washington, DC. who have contracted myocarditis as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine?

MAYOR BOWSER. I know we track a lot of information, Congressman. I am not sure of that specifically.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I think the reason I take that is myocarditis is a very debilitating condition, and I would love to know what steps you have taken and how you have ascertained those individuals, so we can get special help.

MAYOR BOWSER. Sure. We have a very sophisticated system of reporting to D.C. Health. And if you do not mind, I will take a moment to acknowledge just the heroic efforts of D.C. Health to keep Washingtonians and children safe.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you. Now, in the days preceding January 6, 2021, did the intelligence that you had access to indicate that a large amount of violence would occur that day?

MAYOR BOWSER. We have reported all of the information that we have been asked for to this Congress related to January 6, including any and all intelligence that we were aware of.

Mr. GOSAR. So, did you or your staff had contact with the offices of Speaker, the Sergeant at Arms, or any Federal enforcement agency about the intelligence indicating potential violence on January 6, 2021?

MAYOR BOWSER. Sure. I am going to ask Chief Contee to jump in. Chief Contee is our lead official and working with Federal partners on First Amendment activities in the District.

Chief CONTEE. Thank you for the question, sir. Yes. So, there were several conversations with law enforcement officials from the United States, Capitol Police, House and Senate Sergeant at Arms prior to January 6.

Mr. GOSAR. Anything with the Speaker's Office?

Chief CONTEE. I had no personal conversations with the Speaker's Office. I do know that, and I believe the Architect of the Capitol was also involved in those conversations, but I do not recall specifically the Speaker's Office being part of that conversation, sir.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you, Chief. Mr. Graves, over 1,000 people from January 6, 2021, had been charged with Federal crimes. Attorney Graves has said publicly he wants to charge 1,200 more. Attorney Graves, how many rioters from the summer of 2020 are you investigating and prosecuting for criminal offenses?

Mr. GRAVES. Thank you for the question. So, our office prosecutes all acts of violence regardless of political motivation. The same, we are prosecuting a number of individuals in connections with the incidents of the summer of 2020.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, let us go through that. So, going back to Chief Contee, how many total people were arrested during the riots of 2020 in Washington, DC, Chief Contee?

MAYOR BOWSER. What are you referring to?

Mr. GOSAR. I want to know how many people were arrested during the riots of 2020 here in Washington, DC.

MAYOR BOWSER. I am not sure what incidents that you are referring to exactly. Are you referring to the instances in front of Lafayette Square?

Mr. GOSAR. Well, for example, on June 1, there were 316 people arrested in just one day. There were 29 for felony riot charges on August 1. On August 13 and 14, 2020, 41 people were arrested in Washington, DC, for felonies that included rioting, arson, and assaults on police officers. That is what I am after.

MAYOR BOWSER. Got it. Chief, do you have that information?

Chief CONTEE. Yes, ma'am. So, between May and June 2020, 449 people were arrested. Between July and August 2020, 92 people were arrested. As you indicated, between September and October 2020, 41 people were arrested at that time, and then between November and December 2020, 73 people were arrested.

Mr. GOSAR. So, Attorney Graves, according to *The Washington Post*, prosecutors dismissed charges on, I guess, almost all of those except for a handful of rioters on August 2020. Attorney Graves, can you confirm that most of those charges against rioters in the summer of 2020 were dropped?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I understand the question. The complication, of course, is that I was not U.S. Attorney at that time.

Mr. GOSAR. It does not matter. I mean, as the Mayor said, she accepts full responsibility. So, I mean, you carry the purse, you have to accept the responsibility.

Mr. GRAVES. Oh, I accept full responsibility for everything that the office does under my tenure. My point is only that I lack personal knowledge. But my understanding is, yes, the office declined a number of the arrests that were presented to it under the leadership of the prior administration.

Mr. GOSAR. Well, I am running out of time. So, I will just yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlemen yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Mfume from Maryland for five minutes.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser, thank you for your testimony. It was succinct and yet very, very comprehensive. And although you probably have said much of that many times over, it is important for this committee and for others who are watching this to hear it. People have this twisted idea about what the District of Columbia is, and so any time we can set the record straight, I appreciate it, and I appreciate your words today. Mr. Graves, thank you also for your testimony.

You know, on December 16, 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place. It was by and large a protest against taxation without representation 250 years ago based on a concept and a principle that I think many people still believe in and hopefully will follow in the day and the age that we live in. It was not a Democratic protest or response. It was not a Republican protest or response. It was an American response to an injustice, an injustice that 250 years later still plagues our Nation, is still a part of the fabric that we are trying to tear away from so that everybody's vote counts, every vote will be counted, and everybody that lives and pays taxes will have some form of representation. The gentlewoman here from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton, has carried that torch and waved that banner for many, many years, and continues to do so, because an injustice then obviously is still one now.

I think, in fact, I know that I am the only Member of this Committee that voted for D.C. Statehood in 1993, and 28 years later, having been returned to Congress, voted for again in 2021. It was because we believed in it. Congressman Fauntroy, who was serving many, many years ago, led these protests that so many of us participated in. So, it pains my heart, Madam Mayor, that here we go again, as we did a month or so ago, trying to, as best we can, make

people understand the essence of your testimony and the essence of why taxation without representation is absolutely wrong.

Now, in a 2016 referendum, 86 percent of the residents of Washington, DC. voted in favor of D.C. Statehood. Collectively, as has been noted many, many times, residents here in the District of Columbia pay more Federal taxes than 22 other states. That is not to be lost or laughed at: more taxes in this District than 22 other states. The District of Columbia, as a matter of fact, is financially healthy, more than we can say about some other cities throughout our Nation.

Three-quarters of the revenue generated here is generated locally. And the District has maintained 24 years of consecutive clean audits, which I would challenge anybody to find me cities all over the country that are doing that and doing it repeatedly. The leadership here, as evidenced by the Mayor and others, is competent. People elect who they want. That is how we all got here mystically. People elected us. They wanted us for a particular time, and when they do not, they will get rid of us. So, the leadership here is competent, and as we all know, on the January 6 insurrection, it was the leadership here that promptly dispatched the Metropolitan Police Department to help calm and to restore the order of our Nation's capital, even arriving ahead of the National Guard.

So, I just believe it is very important that whenever we can set the record straight, we do it. The undemocratic meddling by some Members of this Committee on D.C. matters, and their particular interest to try to find a twist or newsworthy item or a soundbite does not advance the representation of the people here, who live here and who love the District of Columbia, and who work, day in and day out, to make it better because it is, in fact, the capital of the United States. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would yield back any remaining time I might have.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Mr. Mfume. The Chair recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin for five minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. The first question does not mean to be insulting. I appreciate, Mayor Bowser, that sometimes you had to take on your city council as we deal with the problem of crime. And I have often repeated a story in which—I do not go abroad much, but about 20 years ago, I was in Taipei, Taiwan. And I asked my tour guide, with a friend of mine, if there is anywhere in Taipei that we could not go, and to my surprise, they said no, everywhere in Taipei is safe. Taipei is bigger than Chicago. And I felt kind of a little bit ashamed for a second because I knew that if a visitor from Taiwan came to the United States, and saw Washington, DC, and asked me if there is anywhere that they could not go, I would have had said, yes, quite a few places you cannot go in town.

I appreciate that you have taken on your city council on some issues related to crime, which means that given the huge crime problem you have, a lot of members of the city council keep getting elected but do not agree with you that certain action has to be taken. Could you explain why people got elected to the Washington, DC. Council? At least on the face of it, it does not seem that they are electing people for whom preventing crime is a top priority, which I cannot figure out.

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, I have learned over the years not to question the voters. As Congresswoman and Mfume just said, they elect who they want, and my job is to work with who do people send, and that is how I have approached my work as Mayor and as a member of the council. I do use my position to make sure I am educating the public about what we need and what is not working.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Thanks. That is OK. They only give me five minutes. I want to talk a little bit about your schools. You are spending \$22,000 per pupil, which is one of the highest in the country. If you go down the test scores, only 31 percent of your students read at or above grade level. Nineteen percent of your students pass grade level in math. If we look at high school students alone, only 11 percent are at grade level for math.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record this *Washington Post* article entitled, “D.C. Math, Reading, and Test Scores Fall to Lowest Level in More Than Five Years.”

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Now, I understand COVID played a role here, but all that has passed. Our focus has to be going forward. Mayor Bowser, do you believe the D.C. Public Schools is properly focused on ensuring kids reach grade-level achievement?

MAYOR BOWSER. I could not be prouder of the progress that we have made in D.C. public schools. In my submitted testimony, I include the more than 15-year investment we have made in transforming public schools, and we continue—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Given the test scores, are you really satisfied with that?

MAYOR BOWSER. I know that as an urban school district, we have excelled faster than most in the investments that we continue to make. For example, free pre-K for all three-and four-year-olds in the District of Columbia is paying dividends. The investments that we are making in reimagining high school and connecting our high school graduates to advance technical training is also paying off.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Sorry to cut you off. They give us five minutes. I guess my concern when I see record lows in math and reading, it concerns me. Nevertheless, under new standards, we see your second graders will analyze the history of same sex relationships and gender fluidity in civilizations. In third grade, students will be taught the importance of affirming spaces. In sixth grade, they are going to be dealing with racism. All this type of thing at a time when reading and math seems to be a big problem.

I have a copy of the curriculum here, by the way, I would like to submit it for the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thanks.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mayor Bowser, does having third grade students learn about the importance of affirming spaces improve the ability to read at grade level?

MAYOR BOWSER. What I know as a D.C. public school parent is that I want my child to grow up as an informed world citizen; of course, knowing how to read and write, knowing how to enjoy all the people of the world and the cultures of the world and being able to actively participate in our government. So, I am very confident that in our—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Do you feel that focusing on these, what most people call, peripheral issues is good at a time we cannot read or do math?

MAYOR BOWSER. I think our system of public education where we have an elected state board of education that advises on policy and curriculum and a public education team that has been innovative, and that is why we have seen the results that we have seen growing. And certainly, none of us across the country were happy to see our kids fall back across the country during the COVID years, but we know how stressful they are. But with very significant investments from the American Rescue Plan, we have been able to focus on high-dose tutoring, improvement strategies that will improve our test scores.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Hopefully things will be better off if my friends from Taiwan ever visit me here. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member, Mr. Raskin from Maryland, for five minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Mayor Bowser, I want to thank you for immediately deploying the Metropolitan Police Department on January 6, 2021, to come and defend us against the violent insurrection that took place. You sent hundreds of officers who stood shoulder to shoulder with the Capitol Police, and we know many of them were injured in the process, suffering terrible injuries and were hospitalized because of it. And some D.C. police officers came who were not even on duty, like Michael Fanone, famously, who came just because he heard about it on the news and was nearly killed that day. He had to beg for his life. So, thanks to you and, Chief, to you and your officers for everything you did to defend democracy on that day.

Now, Mayor Bowser, you did not hesitate to voluntarily deploy the Metropolitan Police Department to help us out. And you did not hesitate to do it, even though there are people who are determined to keep D.C. from achieving its political equality within the Union by being admitted to statehood. Why did you do that?

MAYOR BOWSER. Listen, Congressman, we are proud as to support all manners of Federal operations in the District of Columbia. We sometimes get reimbursed for it. We sometimes do not. And we have seen over the years, those security dollars that are available go down and down. There are First Amendment activities, and I will ask the Chief to chime in here, almost every day where MPD is working hand in hand with Federal partners, to include the Park Police and the U.S. Capitol Police less because there tend to be fewer demonstrations. But they work hand in hand every day to make the city safe, and we are going to be there to be supportive of the Federal Government whenever called upon.

Mr. RASKIN. Good. Let me pursue this for a second with you. Unlike the Metropolitan Police Department, the D.C. National Guard was not deployed for several hours after the riots at the Capitol began, despite the fact that they were armed and ready and just a few blocks away. Why didn't you just deploy the D.C. National Guard?

MAYOR BOWSER. We requested the D.C. National Guard to support our activities in and around the city. And in a somewhat un-

usual response, the Department of the Army limited the movements of the Guard to where they could go and required us to request through the Army, the Secretary of the Army, any changes to their deployment. The D.C. National Guard is somewhat of a misnomer because when you are from the states and you have the Maryland National Guard, they report to the Governor of Maryland or in Florida. They report to the government of Florida. The D.C. National Guard may more accurately be called the President's guard. The President through his designee, the Secretary of the Army, deploys the D.C. National Guard.

Mr. RASKIN. Right, and we know that President Trump was indifferent and passive for at least three hours before the National Guard were finally released. If D.C. were to become a state, the Governor, the new executive of the state, would have control over the National Guard. But the House of Representatives in the last session actually voted not just for D.C. Statehood, but also separately in different legislation to give the mayor a control over the D.C. National Guard after we were just taught this object lesson in what it means to have a President who does not have the best interest of the country at heart controlling the National Guard. It was blocked in the Senate by Republicans. Would you have deployed the Guard immediately to the Capitol?

MAYOR BOWSER. We certainly would have moved the Guard that were already in the District, we think. And I will ask the Chief to remind me of the number of guardsmen and women who are already deployed who could have gotten here in minutes. Because that was not happening, we have facilitated conversations with the Department of the Army to make sure that the plea of the U.S. Capitol Police Chief was being met.

Mr. RASKIN. Good. I have got one other question for you. There has been an effort, I think, to drive a wedge between you and the D.C. Council. I cannot think of a mayor in America who does not have differences, policy disagreements with his or her council, just like Governors and state legislatures and so on. Does the Mayor of D.C. and the D.C. Council, do they stand united in defense of democratic self-government in D.C. and also for the statehood petition?

MAYOR BOWSER. Absolutely 100 percent. Members of the Council have been supportive of our efforts, the Congresswoman's efforts, and, you know, countless, dozens of local groups who have advanced D.C. Statehood.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins from Louisiana for five minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser, you have just testified regarding your specific role, your personal role in the days leading up to January 6 and the D.C. National Guard. Is your counsel present, ma'am?

MAYOR BOWSER. No.

Mr. HIGGINS. Do you wish to amend your testimony in any way regarding what you stated today?

MAYOR BOWSER. I do not.

Mr. HIGGINS. Well, Mayor Bowser, you are the Mayor of Washington, DC, correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. I am.

Mr. HIGGINS. And Washington, DC. is the capital of the United States of America, correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. It is.

Mr. HIGGINS. The capital is the home of the entire seat of our government, the executive branch, the legislative branch, the judicial branch. The President is here. The Vice President is here, 435 congressional offices, 100 Senate offices. The Supreme Court, all departments of the government are headquartered here. All agencies are headquartered here. In your knowledge—you are a very intelligent American, you have a clear understanding of history—in your knowledge, ma'am, is there any other municipality in the United States that has access to our seat of government as the citizens of Washington, DC.?

MAYOR BOWSER. Actually, they all have more access because they have voting Members of Congress and senators.

Mr. HIGGINS. I will ask you to give straightforward answers to my questions. So, let us go there, you and I. Are you familiar with the conversations, debates, and discussions that our founders engaged in regarding what significant role the Nation's capital would play once developed and populated, and their personal access to the seat of government? Is there any other citizen anywhere across the country that can communicate with every Congressman, every senator, the President, the Vice President, the entire seat of government, by having a sign in their yard or by just inhabiting that city? Is there any other city in the country where you are going to just bump into potentially hundreds of Congressmen and a hundred senators at any given restaurant or grocery store? Is there any municipality in the country that offers that level of personal access to the seat of government of these United States?

MAYOR BOWSER. Congressman, I have already explained that I am born and raised here, and I have spent most of my life here. I have been serving in elective office for 15 years—

Mr. HIGGINS. When you were going up, did you bump into government officials?

MAYOR BOWSER. Let me just finish, Congressman.

Mr. HIGGINS. I am reclaiming my time, young lady.

MAYOR BOWSER. I have never been to an event where I happened to bump into a hundred senators.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Chairman COMER. And I will remind the crowd that clapping is a disruption, so the Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins for five minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Congratulations for not having bumped into hundred senators at one time. That would be horrific. But in the course of your life growing up here—

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. You had opportunity to have personal interactions with the entire seat of the U.S. Government as a resident of D.C., that a resident of, say, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, or Phoenix, or any other municipality did not have. Now, the founders did discuss this heavily. And I ask you, very respectfully, are you are you familiar with those discussions and the significance with which the founders placed the status of our Nation's capital?

MAYOR BOWSER. I know that the founders were very concerned about being surrounded by jurisdictions that might overtake the seat of the government.

Mr. HIGGINS. Do you share that concern?

MAYOR BOWSER. Absolutely not because what we have seen is the Federal Government grow in size and scope that threatens to overtake us, and we saw it. We witnessed the Federal Government trample—

Mr. HIGGINS. I will ask one final question.

MAYOR BOWSER.[continuing] Our autonomy and our safety.

Mr. HIGGINS. I will ask one final question, ma'am. Is it OK with you that the United States of America has a capital city?

MAYOR BOWSER. Absolutely. And if you are familiar, sir, and I am happy to share with your office the bill that our Congresswoman advanced to admit Washington, DC. as the 51st state—

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, ma'am. I voted no and shall vote no again. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired, and I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Brown from Ohio for five minutes.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mayor Bowser, and all our witnesses for appearing today. And I apologize, Mayor Bowser, that you have to sit through one more attempt by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to undermine the democratic rights of the District of Columbia and its citizens. As I said in our last hearing on D.C. Congressional interference in D.C.'s local affairs is not an obligation or a legal requirement. It is a choice by the Majority, and it remains a bad one. Instead of working toward solutions on behalf of the American people, like combating poverty, addressing out-of-control gun violence, and lowering the cost of healthcare, Republicans are spending our precious time critiquing every local decision of the D.C. government, which happens to represent a majority Black and Brown city.

So, Mayor Bowser, what are the ramifications for American democracy if statehood for D.C. is not implemented?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, I think we continue, quite frankly, to look like hypocrites around the world. We are the only, you know, free Nation that does not allow the citizens of its capital to be represented in its capital. I think what we continue to see happen is not all of the viewpoints of American citizens fully represented in this body. And I think, sadly, we also run the risk of parts of the Federal apparatus really imposing, in negative ways, on free, tax-paying Americans in Washington, DC.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. And, Mayor Bowser, why does congressional review of local D.C. policies not make sense in your view?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, it does not make sense because I am kind of looking around the room and I count two people who are elected to represent us: me and Congresswoman Norton. So, we are the ones who are out on blocks and community meetings and church basements talking to people about what they want to see happen in their city. And the last time I checked, most people here think that government closest to the people is the best government for the people. And so that is why it does not make sense for anybody from around the country to purport to care more about our issues than we do.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. And last, if you could answer briefly, Mayor Bowser, how is D.C. held back by its inability to self-govern like any other state?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, one thing, and the Chairman mentioned that, I know he mentioned in his conversation with the council members concerned about District finances. And I have had the privilege of presiding over the District achieving a triple-A bond rating. And when I have those meetings with rating agencies, they see a risk to the District, not of my leadership or my policies or even those of the D.C. Council, but they see as a risk is what the Congress might on a whim do to us that would affect our finances.

Ms. BROWN. Well, thank you for that, and you should be applauded for the work that you have done. This country has never fully lived up to its founding principles of democracy, freedom, and equality for all. Today, in so many ways, represents that, and we are seeing yet another instance of that failure. D.C. residents are no different than residents of any other place in this country. They pay taxes, they go to school, and they work. And yet, unlike those living outside the District lines, this pocket of over 700,000 people, a plurality of whom are Black, are not given full democratic rights under the law. They do not have one person, one vote. They do not have a full say in their own future or the choices and policy of their government.

In 2023, that is not just a shame, it is a total disgrace. In 2023, it is not just a shame, it is a total disgrace. The United States is the only democracy, as stated by Mayor Bowser, that denies the residents of its capital voting representation in the national legislature. We, in Congress, have the obligation to finally extend statehood to the residents of D.C., not the obligation to question every decision of the local D.C. government. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona for five minutes.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for holding the hearing and I thank our witnesses for being here today. And, Mayor Bowser, you and I may disagree on a lot of things, but I agree with you at least on one thing that you said so eloquently, when you said that you have watched the Federal Government grow and just threaten to take over you. As a resident of Arizona, I feel the same way. As I watch the Federal Government grow, I feel it encroaches on almost every aspect of every American's life. And so, with that, I got to tell you I agree with that sentiment entirely.

And I also agree that the government closest to the people is the best government. And I also would tell you that I think that the founders intended for the Federal Government to be very small. That is why they enumerated the powers and said this is your powers. You are limited to this, this is all you can do, and everything else is supposed to go back to the states.

I did want to ask you this, though. I think on August 4 and August 11 of last year, you requested that the National Guard help with the migrant crisis in Washington, DC, and that the Pentagon denied those requests saying that that would diminish readiness,

or something to that effect. Is that accurate? I mean, that is what I remember reading, and I am just wondering if that was accurate.

MAYOR BOWSER. We were not granted use of the National Guard to assist us with logistics related to buses being sent from Arizona and from Texas to Washington, DC. You will know that we are not a border city, so we do not have an infrastructure to support those types of movements. It does, however, raise the question of how, if we had control of our own National Guard, we can ensure the readiness of those guard troops in facilities, in training, and recruitment.

Mr. BIGGS. So, I just want to make clear. You did make the request, and it was denied?

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. Thank you so much. And now I want to go to you, Mr. Graves, and we have talked about this, that your office has declined to prosecute 67 percent of arrests last year, and you have given us the rationale in some respect. *The Washington Post* reported that you have one the highest, if not the highest, declination rates in the country, that that rate last year was double the declination rate of the same office in 2015. And in that article, it was two things that you focused on, is the crime lab had remained unaccredited, and I understand that, and you said the police—well, ostensibly, I do not know—they do not have a direct quote. But they said that the police body camera footage was subjecting arrests to more scrutiny, which implies that somehow the police are responsible for mishandling evidence or something like that, which was one of the rationales for your declinations. Do you stand by that?

Mr. GRAVES. So, thank you for the question and the opportunity to clarify the quotation or provide context for it. We have no greater partner than the Metropolitan Police Department. My comment was in no way critical of them. They, and particularly the Chief, have been an amazing ally.

Mr. BIGGS. The Department of Forensic Sciences, is that the only crime lab available to you, to the U.S. Attorney's Office?

Mr. GRAVES. So that is a very good question. There are, of course, other options, other both private and public labs out there that can provide the services that the Department of Forensic Sciences was providing. The way, going back to the Mayor's term, the complicated soup was set up when it lost accreditation in May 2021, was the system was built on everything going to the Department of Forensic Science—

Mr. BIGGS. So, I guess that is the long way of admitting that there are other labs that you can go to. So, thank you for that. I want to ask about a specific January 6 defendant, a guy named Thomas Caldwell, a decorated disabled Navy veteran. No criminal history. Seventy years old. Not charged with any violent crime on January 6. In fact, he never entered the Capitol Building. But you added a seditious conspiracy charge to his case after you took office, enhancing the charges that had already been filed against him. He was convicted ultimately of one obstruction count and one with tampering with evidence. He is 70 years old. You are seeking 14 years in prison. I guess my question is, does not it seem like

a death sentence to Mr. Caldwell who did not commit a crime of violence that day?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I understand the desire to know more about the case. That is obviously an active ongoing investigation, and my ethical rules and department guidance precluding——

Mr. BIGGS. He was convicted. You are getting ready for sentencing. You can answer the question with regard to why you wanted to go to sentencing. It is not an investigation. It is not ongoing. He has been convicted of two crimes. I need to know why.

Mr. GRAVES. So, I understand your desire to know. As you said in the predicate to your question, he is pending sentencing. It would be wholly inappropriate for me in a public forum to weigh in on why I think that is an appropriate sentence.

Mr. BIGGS. My time has expired. Thanks.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Frost from Florida for five minutes.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. In a true democracy, the people hold the power, and it is up to the people and their local communities to come together and make laws that fit their everyday reality. And what I am describing is local control, and local control is the bedrock of liberty. And naturally, when I see outright attacks on local governments for implementing policies that their constituents want, need, and voted for, I see that as an attack not just on the elected officials, but on the constituents of that area.

And so there are Republican lawmakers in this chamber on this Committee that are determined to undermine local government when the policies do not serve them. This is very true and something that I recognize all the time in my district of Central Florida that is constantly under attack by the Florida state legislature and Governor Ron DeSantis. And so, I know all about Republican lawmakers that have the same agenda, using fear, intimidation, and ultimately trying to use their action to stifle local government and to stifle democracy. Republican lawmakers want to talk about public safety with a straight face while refusing to do anything about gun violence in this country. Republicans want to talk with a straight face about protecting students in schools without doing anything to change the fact that the leading cause of death in this country for a kid is to be shot to death. Ron DeSantis then failed to secure funds to implement laws that Floridians want like red flag laws, extreme risk protection orders, because of a complete disregard of what local communities want and because of sheer incompetence.

The intent of the D.C. Home Rule Act was to “grant the inhabitants of the District of Columbia powers of self-government.” Not only that, but D.C. has an elected chief executive, the Mayor; and an elected legislature, the D.C. City Council. And if D.C. residents do not like how their elected representatives govern, guess what? They can vote them out of office. Mayor Bowser, you have served on both the D.C. Council and as a Mayor. How many times were you elected to the council, and how many times have you been elected as Mayor?

MAYOR BOWSER. I was elected three times. I served almost eight years as a council member, and I am starting my ninth year as Mayor. Three times.

Mr. FROST. The U.S. Congress has 535 voting members. D.C. residents cannot vote for a single one of those voting members out of office. In 1995, then Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich said the following about D.C.: "We should not interfere directly with home rule. Those of us who visit and who come here only for the purpose of representing our communities do not have the knowledge and do not have the right to micromanage the daily lives of the people of this city." It is interesting and wild how times can change for a party. Mayor Bowser, do congressional Republicans have more knowledge about D.C. than you and the members of the D.C. City Council?

MAYOR BOWSER. No.

Mr. FROST. Mayor Bowser, have any Republicans on this Committee gone out and knocked doors with you in the community to learn about Washington, DC.?

MAYOR BOWSER. No.

Mr. FROST. Are you aware of any Republicans on this Committee that have gone to knock doors with any members of the city council to learn more about Washington, DC.?

MAYOR BOWSER. I am not aware.

Mr. FROST. Are you aware of any Republicans on this Committee that have gone to any town halls with you or any roundtables to learn about the District of Columbia?

MAYOR BOWSER. No.

Mr. FROST. The fact that they pretend that they know how to govern D.C. better than you all is patronizing. And as I have said before, I do not agree with every local policy out there, but I respect certain decisions made under home rule. And that Republicans are so preoccupied with trying to govern D.C., it makes you wonder who they are really trying to represent. I urge my colleagues to support statehood for the nearly 700,000 D.C. residents. I thank you all for your time. And I apologize that you have to waste your time at a hearing like this, especially on your daughter's birthday. We say happy birthday to your daughter, and I yield back.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would you yield to me, Mr. Frost?

Mr. FROST. Yes, I yield to Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend. You know, I have been in office 29 years. I have won 15 elections, and I have always run on D.C. voting rights—

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. And now D.C. Statehood. And I can tell you that at least in my district in Northern Virginia, we fully support the autonomy of D.C., and we fully oppose undue intervention by this Congress in the affairs of D.C. It is not a matter of whether I agree with you or not. That is none of my business. I get to have that opinion, but I do not get to interfere in your right to self-jurisdiction and self-governance. By the way, Ms. Bowser, you were asked by the gentleman from Louisiana were you familiar with the founders when they were writing the Constitution. Did D.C. exist when the Constitution was written?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, as you know—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Real quick. You got to be quick. Yes or no? No?

MAYOR BOWSER. No, it did not.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Had they even decided on where the capital ought to be?

MAYOR BOWSER. No.

Mr. CONNOLLY. No. So, they had no way of knowing when they wrote the Constitution or even fantasizing about what the ultimate national capital might look like, and I think we have to take that into account in the 21st century. You know, the Constitution was a living document. The founders could not see infinitely in the future. And I think most of them, starting with James Madison, would be horrified at the current state of relations between this Congress and the American people in the District of Columbia. I thank my friend for yielding.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. LaTurner from Kansas for five minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here today. This hearing comes as our Nation celebrates National Police Week, a chance to thank and honor the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to protect us and our communities despite increasingly dangerous conditions and surging crime rates in cities across America. According to FBI crime statistics, amongst the 20 cities with the highest incident rates of violent crime per capita, 17 are led by Democrat mayors. My colleagues may not like it, but Democrat policies regarding law and order inevitably lead to lawlessness and social discord. I said this at our last hearing on our capital, but it is worth repeating.

Maintaining public order and safety are a fundamental responsibility of government. Establishing justice and ensuring domestic tranquility are mandates our founding fathers wrote into the first line of our Constitution. Recidivism rates in America are amongst the highest in the world. Almost 44 percent of criminals released from prison return within a year, which is why I was mortified to learn Mr. Graves declined to prosecute 67 percent of arrests in Washington, DC. last year. That is an astronomically high figure. Just seven years ago, that number was 35 percent. And for context, Chicago, which is grappling with a well-documented crime wave of their own, declined only 14 percent of cases last year. We simply cannot combat hardened criminals with prosecutorial pacifism.

Madam Mayor, juvenile arrests for carjacking rose precipitously beginning in 2020 when COVID lockdowns closed schools. Would you agree that the D.C. Government's decision to keep youth out of schools for a prolonged period of time led to an increase in juvenile crime?

MAYOR BOWSER. I cannot directly link closing schools to juvenile crime. I do suspect that a whole ecosystem of disrupted services affected youth in the—

Mr. LATURNER. Do you think closing the schools contributed to the increase in juvenile crime?

MAYOR BOWSER. I think a lot contributes to crime, and we do not always know what causes crime to go up. But our approach has always been to throw all of our resources at an issue, including having our kids to be the first in the region back in their public schools with their teachers in the facilities that are best able to serve them.

Mr. LATURNER. Please describe, Madam Mayor, the state of police morale in D.C. over the past few years. How have Councilman Allen and others contributed to the state of the police morale? Would you say that the council's emergency police reform is contributing to the growing violence in D.C.?

MAYOR BOWSER. I have the police chief here, and I work every day to make sure that our police know that they are supported. You are not going to find a bigger supporter of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC. than me. I also know that policing is a tough profession, and making sure that we have the right policy environment to support our police is also one of my big jobs. Part of that will be introducing legislation that when police make arrests, they can have some certainty. That work is going to be respected throughout our public safety ecosystem. It is also going to let us get back on track to get to 4,000 officers, and it is also going to make it possible for me to recruit the next great police chief of the Metropolitan Police Department.

Mr. LATURNER. So, I take it from your statement that you were very critical of Mr. Graves' decision to decline the prosecution of 67 percent of arrests. Is that accurate?

MAYOR BOWSER. I want to make sure that all of the work of our Metropolitan Police, all of the bravery of people who come forward as witnesses, is carefully considered as cases move through the criminal justice system.

Mr. LATURNER. Mr. Graves, you heard it. That sounds like very carefully worded criticism, but criticism, nonetheless. For you, Mr. Graves. Chief Contee postulates that the average homicide suspect has been arrested 11 times prior to committing homicide. We are 136 days into 2023, and there have already been 80 homicides in D.C. this year. That is five more than all of 2022 and on pace for approximately 215 homicides in 2023. Mr. Graves, your policies are directly endangering the public. In how many instances have you declined to prosecute someone who was eventually charged with homicide?

Mr. GRAVES. So, thank you for the question. As a career prosecutor, nothing is of greater concern to me than community safety.

Mr. LATURNER. Mr. Graves, I appreciate that, and I appreciate you thanking me for the question. I would love to thank you for a direct answer. How many have ended in a homicide that you did not prosecute?

Mr. GRAVES. So, the statistic you cite of 67 percent is a snapshot in time of what the office looked like when I came into the role. From day one, actually, before day one, I sat down with Chief Contee—

Mr. LATURNER. Mr. Graves, do not quibble with that statistic. Just answer this direct question. In how many instances have you declined to prosecute someone who was eventually charged with homicide?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I would have to check with my team to get back to you, but sitting here today, I am not aware of an instance.

Mr. LATURNER. You do not know that for a fact? That is not something that you would—

Mr. GRAVES. Of the 15,000 arrests that occurred last year, I would like to check before confirming on the record.

Mr. LATURNER. Well, I am talking about those that commit homicide. I would assume that you would keep some sort of record of what their interaction with the police have been and what your interaction with your office has been with those individuals.

Mr. GRAVES. So, what I can tell you is we are tracking the recidivism rates of individuals that we charged versus individuals that we did not charge in 2022. And what we have actually seen is that the recidivism rate is actually slightly higher for the individuals we charged than the individuals we did not charge.

Mr. LATURNER. I am out of time. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Balint from Vermont for five minutes.

Ms. BALINT. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here. Before I get started with my line of questioning, I just want to say, a lot has been made about the drop in achievement of D.C. students. And I just want to tether us back to some context and reality, which is the pandemic and the ongoing trauma from the pandemic caused scores to drop for every single racial, economic, and demographic student subgroup across the Nation. This is not particular to the District of Columbia.

Now, Madam Mayor, thank you for being here. I am sorry you have to be here, but I appreciate your time. Now, congressional interference in D.C.'s local affairs and the denial of statehood have very real consequences for D.C. residents. Already this year, as you know, Congress has exercised its ability to overrule laws enacted by the D.C. Council, which is democratically elected by D.C.'s over 700,000 residents.

Now D.C.'s lack of statehood has real financial consequences as well. In the early days of the coronavirus pandemic when Congress passed the CARES Act and gave each state a minimum of \$1.25 billion in fiscal relief, D.C. received only \$495 million even though it pays full Federal taxes and has a larger population than two states, including the state that I am proud to represent, Vermont. It took a full year for D.C. to finally receive its fair share, and that only occurred after Democrats took control of Congress and retroactively secured the \$755 million for D.C. in the American Rescue Plan, obviously completely and totally unfair, and tied your hands behind your back in terms of giving your residents the support that they needed.

Now, as part of congressional Republicans' efforts to enact a nationwide abortion ban, Congress has long prohibited D.C. from spending funds raised from D.C. taxpayers on abortion. The prohibition was lifted in 2009. But the day the ban was re-imposed in 2011, at least 28 women on Medicaid who were scheduled to have abortions were told their health insurance no longer covered the procedure. To this day, women in D.C. who are covered by Medicare are denied coverage for abortion. Mayor Bowser, 90 percent of the D.C. residents enrolled in Medicaid are people of color. What impact does this have on the women of D.C. who would like to have full healthcare options available to them?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, you outlined just another glaring indignity that we suffer, that our locally raised moneys from our tax dollars, our residents who pay income taxes and property taxes, our businesses who pay income taxes and property taxes that support our

local budget, we are denied how we use that budget. And we know that that can have tremendous impacts on people along the economic income band.

So, why is it that a person of means has greater access to healthcare choices than a person who is on Medicaid? It is not fair, and it is something that should change. It is not the only thing, however. Currently, we cannot tax and regulate cannabis, for example, which we do think has a public safety impact. The men and women of the police department are battling gray market on cannabis sales daily, that, if we had a tax and regulate system, we could implement a more safe system.

Ms. BALINT. And Mayor Bowser, what do you think would happen if Republicans continue to push their national abortion ban and continue to push their interference in the District of Columbia? What do you think that would do on rights of your citizens that you represent here in terms of them getting the healthcare that they need and deserve?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, I hope what it will do is wake up women around our country, especially women in the suburbs. I think we have already seen evidence of this in suburbs around American cities, who may be conservative, but they do not like the idea of their daughter having less rights than they have. And so, they are going to elect people that respect the bodily autonomy of American women, and I actually think this is the link to D.C. residents. When that happens, we will advance the cause of statehood.

Ms. BALINT. I agree. Congress has no business getting in between women and their doctors and no business wasting your time. Thank you for being here. I yield back.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina for five minutes.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Chairman. I went to undergrad at GW. I lived at 15th and I, McPherson Square, 2003 to 2007. I lived in Chinatown from 2010 to 2011, and I have been in D.C., mostly the Navy Yard, Capitol Hill area, since 2018. This is the least safe it has ever been. Law enforcement seems to have the lowest morale judging by a number of factors. And I want to help solve this problem. I want this city to be the beacon that it should be for the world. I want people to come here and be impressed and think that the best days are ahead for the United States. I do not feel that they feel that way when they come here now. And when my constituents come to D.C., I warn them of things that they should and should not do, and that should not be the case. So, we need to do something, and I want to help.

After our last hearing that we had, Councilman Allen was kind enough to come and sit with me and Congressman Armstrong in my office just last week. We had a great conversation. I have identified four areas that I think that we need to address as a group. Congress has two of them, D.C. has two of them. I am going to address the D.C. components, and Congressman Armstrong is going to follow up later with the structural reforms and the financial support that Congress can offer.

So, the two D.C. components are, one, criminal code and bail reform, and two, anti-vagrancy laws, so let us start with anti-va-

grancy laws. There are 5,000 people that are currently homeless in D.C., experiencing homelessness, and we need to help them. We need to help them get back on their feet. We need to find a way to get them food, shelter, mental health services, job opportunities so they are not living under 395. They are not living in Georgetown under the Whitehurst Freeway. I mean, I realize that steps have been taken, but they have been insufficient, in my view, and we need to make sure that there are no homeless people in D.C. and that they transition to opportunities as quickly as possible, and I am going to send this to the Mayor shortly.

The next thing is the criminal code and bail reform. We need to send a message to the people that live and visit Washington, DC. that the criminal code is fair, but if you are a repeat offender, it is harsh because we need to have a deterrent threat. And bail reform. We cannot have repeat offenders that continue to commit crimes, get out, and then commit worse crimes, and I am not going to go through all the different things. I think that there needs to be a tiered structure that would allow fairness. If somebody does something, makes a mistake, we need to help them get back on their feet. But there are bad people in the world, and we need to separate them from society, so I think that the criminal code and bail reform is a part of this.

So, I guess let us start with the homelessness issue. Mayor Bowser, do you agree that we can do more? And if Congress comes to the table to help change some structural issues and give some financial support, can we address this in a more meaningful way?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, thank you for your concern about our residents who are experiencing homelessness. Some of them are native to Washington, DC. Some of them come to Washington, DC. because we are the capital and the seat of government. I have been proud over my eight years as mayor to have a comprehensive approach to doing that. You will see that we have driven down family homelessness by more than 70 percent.

Mr. TIMMONS. Do you agree that we have a major, major problem in Washington, DC. as it relates to homelessness?

MAYOR BOWSER. We have 221 people as of today's count who are living on the street. Those are the people that you were referring to.

Mr. TIMMONS. Councilman Allen gave me the 5,000 number. He sent me a report that—

MAYOR BOWSER. There are not 5,000 people living on the streets, sir. Those may be people that are—

Mr. TIMMONS. There are 221 people living under 395. We can go right now. It is 300 yards away. What are you talking about?

MAYOR BOWSER. I am talking about facts, and there are not 300 people under 295 or 395. We have outreach teams that are out and across all eight wards, and we actually know—

Mr. TIMMONS. All right. Let us move on to the criminal code. Do you think that we can—

MAYOR BOWSER. I mean, those are the facts.

Mr. TIMMONS. Your own councilman sent me a report saying 5,000 people were homeless in D.C. OK. Look, we are going to move on. Criminal code, bail reform. If Congress comes to the table and gives you all additional accountability and additional jurisdic-

tion as well as additional resources, whether it is a new prison, whether it is a homeless rehabilitation center, increased funding for law enforcement, prosecution, whatever you need to fix this problem, can council come to the table in a more serious manner, address the criminal code and bail, to make sure that the people feel that they cannot commit crimes and get off and not be prosecuted?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, we understand that the council's Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary will take up the criminal code revision in the coming months, and we stand ready to assist them with that work. You may have heard—

Mr. TIMMONS. I am running out of time. I am sorry. Congressman Armstrong is going to follow up, but we are here to help. We are willing to provide additional jurisdiction, accountability, structural reforms, perhaps some financial support to address some of your challenges. I just hope that we can find a way to make this place the city that we all know it should be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

MAYOR BOWSER. We will take you up on your offer to assist. While we have a plan to replace our D.C. jail, we expect our capital dollars to be more constrained in the coming years, and we would happily work with you on an appropriation.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania for five minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our country's founders believed that taxation without representation was tyrannical. It has been stated the United States is the only democratic country that denies voting representation on the national level to the residents of the capital. I am sure it is no coincidence that those residents that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are seeking to oversee without representation are over 45 percent Black. This tenet of no taxation without representation helped launch the American Revolution as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. Yet, Congress requires that nearly 700,000 D.C. residents to pay all Federal taxes but denies them a vote of representation in Congress.

Mayor Bowser, do you think not having two senators to represent D.C. has impacted Federal funding and policies?

MAYOR BOWSER. Absolutely. Your colleague just mentioned one very specific thing that happened during our response to COVID where we were unexplainably grouped in as a territory for the purposes of the CARES Act, which none of us know how that happened or if it has ever happened previously. So that is one such way.

I also think not having two senators for the District impacts this region—Maryland, D.C., and Virginia—over 4 million people making up this DMV region with two senators when we should have six senators. And we know how important that will be in regional discussions, for example, like, how we are going to fund Washington Union Station. It is going to be a spectacular renovation. It costs \$8 billion. How we deal with the fiscal cliff that we know is coming toward our Transit Authority, which serves the District, Maryland, and Virginia. And by the way, other transit authorities around the country are going to be coming to the Congress, too.

That is almost a billion dollars. So, we know having six senators represent this more than 4-million-person region is representative democracy.

Ms. LEE. Absolutely. Thank you so much for those examples. D.C. pays more Federal taxes per capita than any state, and overall, D.C. pays more Federal taxes than 19 states. The last two states to enter the Union, Alaska and Hawaii, combined pay half the Federal taxes D.C. pays. Alabama, Kansas, and North Dakota, which are all represented by Republicans on this Committee, each pays less in Federal taxes than D.C. On a per capita basis, D.C. pays five times the Federal taxes of Chairman Comer's home state of Kentucky.

Mayor Bowser, as a fifth generation Washingtonian yourself and the elected Mayor of the nearly 700,000 D.C. residents, what do you hear from your constituents about being taxed without voting representation in Congress?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, I will tell you, Congresswoman, it is changing. I mean, we have always been proud to pay our fair share. You just outlined how we actually pay more. We give more to the Federal Government than we get back. Frequently, some people think we are an agency of the Federal Government. Some people think that everything that we have has been paid by Federal tax dollars, and that could not be worse than the truth. People have started to say to me, Mayor, why are we paying taxes? Why do not we withhold our taxes and see what happens?

And so, I think that we are proud Americans. We are proud to host the Federal Government and to pay our fair share, but enough is enough. Our Congresswoman should be able to vote for us. Just look at all of the things that she has been able to accomplish for the District: taking advantage of Federal lands, creating jobs, turning underutilized park space into active spaces. And we know that we could do so much more with the votes that our American citizenship should guarantee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. D.C. residents have been petitioning for voting representation in Congress for over 200 years. But instead of acting on that, this Republican-led Congress has taken every chance to strike down the will of the people and encroach on their ability to self-govern. The people and the residents of D.C. do not want to be able to sightsee Congress people and senators in restaurants and bars. They do not want to see you all driving by and blocking traffic in your black Suburbans. They want their own representation.

Taxation without representation is as wrong today as it was in 1776, yet this shameful practice is alive and well in our Nation's capital. Since day one, the heart of this issue had been impeding Black political power. Let us just say it. When D.C. becomes a state, it will have the highest proportion of Black residents of any state. We need to affirm their right to self-determination. Admitting D.C. into the Union will right this wrong. I yield back.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Mr. Armstrong from North Dakota for five minutes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. D.C. is unique. The U.S. Attorney's Office here is unique. With the exception of some

Indian reservations that exist across the country, this is one of the only places where you have primary prosecutorial authority. I appreciate what Mayor Bowser said about the jail. I think we should look at some different things. I am going to get to BOP here in a second. But just for Mr. Graves, what structural disadvantages do you have in dealing with the primary prosecutorial aspect of the U.S. Attorney's Office that we can work on?

Mr. GRAVES. This is a really important point, and I appreciate the question, and I think the Mayor very eloquently laid out the complicated soup that she referenced. I mean, some of the services provided in the criminal justice ecosystem come from the Federal Government, some come from the state side, and we have to interact together and make it work because we have no choice but to make it work because that is the current system.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I mean, if it is a resource issue, if we need more prosecutors, I mean, we need those types of issues set up, we are willing to do that. I will go to the BOP for a second, because I think it is unique and I think it is important.

Anybody who gets sentenced to a year in D.C. goes into the Bureau of Prisons. Mayor Bowser, in your opening statement, you said you are seeing a rise in repeat offenders. One of the things we have learned, it does not matter if it is a conservative state like North Dakota, a Democratic state like New Jersey. I am the co-chair of the Second Chance Task Force. It is very unique when you get out of prison and you get out of the Bureau of Prisons because once you go into the Bureau of Prisons, you are sent anywhere.

We have learned how to do this in other places. The last six months of your sentence, it could be a seven-year sentence, it could be an 18-month sentence, it could be a 10-year sentence, if we do it right and deal with services and transition and dealing with those issues, you can put people coming out of custody in the best chance to succeed and the least chance of recidivism. We know we need a new jail here. Anybody who thinks we do not, should go—outside of everything else. But I think we should also take this opportunity to start looking at some things that, quite honestly, states do better than the Federal Government. Particularly for non-violent felony offenses, the data will show the closer you are to your family and your community, the better chance you have of not having recidivism, and I think we should address some of those things.

But I do think we should start having conversations if we are going to resource the jail, if we are going to rebuild it. We should also start talking about potentially putting in a program where wherever they are at—they can be at the work farm in Duluth—but if they are getting back out, the current model of BOP prisons where you just put them on a bus and send them loose, is not fair to the victims if it is a victim crime, is not fair to the community where they are coming back from, and it is set up for failure instead of success. So, I think we have opportunities here to do some things in a different way. And I am thinking, just outside of all the differences and disconnects that we have between Democrats and Republicans, maybe even sitting on this table, that we have an opportunity to do some things because we know what works. We know what works.

I mean, this is very different than a historical drug conspiracy, where you are getting 17 years in the Federal penitentiary. You guys are in charge of primary enforcement. And if it is sourcing the crime lab, although I would argue the crime lab, you recognize a little bit what a lot of states all over the country go through. There is a reason we are trying to get historical rape test tested again all across the country and those things.

But I think instead of demonizing all of this stuff all the time, we have an opportunity to do this. And I agree with Mr. Timmons, in that if it is a resource issue, we are willing to look at the resource issue, but I also think it is an issue of how we deliver these services, whether it is coming in or coming out.

If you need more prosecutors to deal with first-time offenders, we need to know that. If you need more ability to communicate with the local police department so the enforcement and the prosecutorial missions are more copacetic, we need to do that. But I do think we have an ability to do some of this, and there are some smart things we can do here as we are moving through it because we are willing to spend the money if the money is spent appropriately and if we are doing it. Mayor Bowser, you look like you want to say something.

MAYOR BOWSER. I do want to say something because——

Mr. ARMSTRONG. That was not supposed to be a four-minute rant, but I get fired up on this stuff.

MAYOR BOWSER. We do need more prosecutors. We do. They do not work for me. They work for the U.S. attorney, but we need more prosecutors. I have heard the U.S. attorney say they are not prosecuting a lot of misdemeanors, but this is my way of thinking, and this is how my police officers think. They have been saying for years that we are going to arrest them, then they are going to be right back out because they know that they are not going to be prosecuted even if it is a misdemeanor.

But misdemeanors indicate, in my view, a sense of lawlessness, and that sense of lawlessness grows. And I know they have to be efficient with their resources and we can appreciate that, but let us make sure they have enough prosecutors, and the U.S. attorney can tell you what he thinks, to prosecute our homicides. But also to prosecute our gun offenses, because a felon in possession of a gun should be prosecuted.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. OK. I agree completely, and we are 20 seconds over the line. I will say it is unique in that this is the one space where U.S. Attorney's Office actually deals with misdemeanors as a primary offense. But I will say, one of the biggest mistakes that has been made is catch and release on misdemeanors because if you are doing catch and release on misdemeanors and it is a 19-year-old offender, by 22, they are going to be a felon. That is just the reality.

Chairman COMER. I am sorry, Congressman. You want to respond?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I am way out of time, but I will take any extra if anybody has got it. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. A very good discussion. The Chair recognizes Mr. Casar of Texas for five minutes.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Graves, just because it seemed like you were going to chime in, can you talk a little bit about recidivism and how it is you all take actions to make sure that folks are not re-committing crimes? What are you all finding?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity. So, in response to the resource question, every prosecutor will tell you, every head of a prosecuting organization will tell you, I will take more prosecutors and I can do more with more, so yes. And we are incredibly appreciative of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget that was passed that provided additional resources for prosecutors. We received additional prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia because of that. We would ask that the President's Fiscal Year 2024 budget be fully funded because that would allow for additional prosecutors. And of course, if you want to go above the budget request, we will take more prosecutors.

I want to be clear. With respect to misdemeanors, I view them as a public safety issue. There is no category of misdemeanors that our office is refusing or declining to prosecute. I share in the sentiment that has been expressed that misdemeanors have a tremendous impact on the community. That is why when we have sufficient evidence, we move forward with misdemeanors. And I want to increase the rates, and our office, along with the Mayor, have taken steps in the wake of DFS' loss of accreditation to get us the testing that we need in order to prosecute these misdemeanors.

A large percentage of the misdemeanor cases that we are prosecuting are drug possession offenses. We want to prosecute those drug possession offenses so that we can get those individuals under court supervision into treatment programs and, hopefully, address the root cause that is driving the criminal conduct.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you, Mr. Graves. In my district, in the 35th District of Texas, I am proud that 60,000 of my constituents are veterans and active military. They have a voice and a vote in Congress. But here in D.C. there are over 30,000 veterans, who, while they have a powerful voice here in Congress with Ms. Holmes Norton, they are not given an equal vote. When the citizens enlisted, they knew that there was a chance that they might never see their friends or family ever again. They signed up knowing that they could hold their representative in Congress accountable for our votes that put their lives on the line, but service members from D.C. do not have that same right.

D.C. residents also have no vote in the Senate, where military leadership is confirmed. D.C. residents pay taxes to fund wars but have no say in whether or not our country goes to war. D.C. residents have served bravely in our military for the entire history of our country, and some have paid the ultimate price with their lives for a country that denies them voting representation in Congress and full local government. Mayor Bowser, what message does it send to D.C. military families and veterans when the country they have risked their lives for refuses to afford them basic democratic rights?

MAYOR BOWSER. Well, obviously, it sends the wrong message, Congressman, and we often find that our service members have more need. And they have to call on the government from everything from how they access their VA benefits to sometimes needing

housing supports and services, and they want to make sure that they are fully represented. They also have grievances, and they want to be able to have those grievances heard by voting Members of the Congress that can make changes. They know how the system works, and they probably best know how to make it work better for themselves and their families.

Mr. CASAR. Thank you for that. My experience representing Military USA in San Antonio and then veterans and military families throughout Central Texas is that, indeed, so many of our veterans and active service members are great participants in our democracy and help us make this system work better. And I believe that with D.C. Statehood, those active military members and veterans would be best served here in D.C.

We are continuing to see this trend of picking on cities that are trying to do their jobs spread across the country. Today in Texas, the Senate is considering voting on a bill to wipe out water breaks rules for construction workers in Dallas, eviction protections for renters in Austin. They are picking on the city of San Antonio for a variety of things, including, I think, a paid sick day's ordinance. I think that it is incumbent on us as Congress to try to support D.C.—

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Mr. CASAR [continuing]. Both give you statehood and try to support you rather than getting in the way. Thank you so much, and I yield back.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Luna from Florida for five minutes.

Mrs. LUNA. Pretty appalling to hear some of these crime stats from some of my colleagues, but in reading some of your testimony, Mayor, and then also just hearing the back and forth, I realize that you have actually been more pro law enforcement than your city council. And I think there is no clear really example of what happened recently with the D.C. Council's decision to rewrite the city's criminal code, which thank goodness, was overturned. But obviously, what Americans want is effective leadership in their Nation's capital. And understanding the experience of residents and visitors, it is incredibly important, not just leaders that are apparently out of touch with the issues plaguing the city. Mayor Bowser, I wanted to ask you why it is that you think your city council is working so hard against you to ensure the safety of residents and visitors.

MAYOR BOWSER. I think our city council is concerned about safety of residents and visitors. It will not surprise anybody that we have philosophical differences. My views on how to make the city safer are well known, and I believe that they were confirmed by voters last year in bringing me back for a third term. But I also think that Americans are having these discussions in cities and towns all across our country. And what I hear them telling me when I go to visit places, they are not really concerned about my city council or me, but they do want to make sure that Washington is working, and when I say that, I am talking about Federal Washington. I think—

Mrs. LUNA. But my question is more so focusing right now in that I have constituents that come up, like some of my colleagues had mentioned, and they do not feel safe walking around. I do not feel safe walking around. And when you had a fellow Member of Congress that was brutally attacked by someone that had a criminal record, that was obviously showing that this person was disturbed, and then you had the failure of prosecution for that. That, to me, does not signify a safe city. In fact, we are looking, and we are seeing that sexual abuse offenses have increased over 48 percent in just one year's timeframe from 2022 to 2023. My next question would be for you, Mr. Graves. Just as a personal understanding, I understand you are married. Yes?

Mr. GRAVES. I am sorry. I missed—

Mrs. LUNA. I understand that you are married?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mrs. LUNA. OK. And you have children?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mrs. LUNA. So, I would assume that you are against violence against women?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, of course.

Mrs. LUNA. So, my question for you is, there has been many concerns brought up by my colleagues that you have actively chosen to ignore certain cases, and as a result of that, it is impacting people that ultimately are relying on you to do your job in order to make them feel safe. In the instance of my colleague that was attacked, I mean, my goodness. She is coming downstairs from her apartment. You have a crazy man that goes in, has a criminal history, should have been locked up prior and yet he was not. And I just want to know why because I understand that if that was your wife or that was your child, I assume that you would have pressed charges, would you have not?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I understand the concern for the community in keeping all of our fellow community members safe. We are prosecuting the individual you are referencing—

Mrs. LUNA. But he had a track record, and he was allowed back on the streets, and those actions that were taken against him were clearly not done in a way that caused him to understand that he can no longer do that. This person was a disturbed individual. He should have been given a more harsher sentence. My question is, is would you have allowed that to happen if that was your wife or your child. Yes or no?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I—

Mrs. LUNA. It is a yes or no.

Mr. GRAVES. So, it is not a yes or no question.

Mrs. LUNA. It is a yes or no because you have people that are directly being impacted and hurt by these people, and you are failing to do your job, just like Representative Biggs had asked you for your perspective on a case where someone was obviously being charged with a more harsher sentence than they deserved. And yet you are sitting here trying to argue that when people clearly do not feel safe. People are arguing about statehood. Statehood is fine, if the city can actually manage cases, but the city cannot even prosecute adolescent cases, and that is your responsibility. So, I am not trying to be a jerk here, but what I am asking is for you to do your

job and make people feel safe, especially those that are depending on you to do it. When you see cases of, you know, 48-percent-increase in sexual assault cases, my goodness.

Mr. GRAVES. So, my—

Mrs. LUNA. That is it. I have heard enough. Chairman, I yield my time.

MAYOR BOWSER. Congresswoman—

Mrs. LUNA. Thank you.

MAYOR BOWSER. Congresswoman, may I address your question about sexual abuse? I know that he wants to talk about our—

Mrs. LUNA. We only have 26 seconds left.

MAYOR BOWSER. We do have a lot to say about that when time allows.

Mrs. LUNA. I will contact your office.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. OK. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Crockett from Texas for five minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you. I do not know that I can get through all that I need to say in five minutes, but I am going to do my best. We are going to start off with sexual abuse. I am so excited that my colleagues across the aisle care about sexual abuse considering that the frontrunner right now for, like, presidency has kind of just been found liable of sexual abuse. So, I am excited because this may mean that finally some folks will back off from supporting him because we do not support sexual abusers in this chamber. So, I am happy about this, but let us talk about facts versus fiction.

My Republican colleagues want to talk about being tough on crime and keeping criminals off the streets. Let us talk about what is criminal. We have got Members of Congress elected in other states, other cities trying to subvert democracy and the role of the people of D.C. by dictating that the city act in a way the Republicans want because they think they know what is best. Republicans want to subvert the people's power, and it is not just for D.C. It is all over. We see this in states like Texas and North Carolina with gerrymandering. In fact, we still have Members here who still think that Trump won in 2020.

Republicans want to talk about crime and violence, but they do not want to admit their role in this crisis. The fact is that they still allow assault weapons in the hands of radical right extremists, which will force families visiting a mall in my state of Texas to leave a mall with nothing more than trauma, hurt, and despair as a neo-Nazi terrorized them. What did they have in their hand? Another AR-15, but we do not want to have a conversation about that.

So, if we are going to talk about crime and the reasons for the increase in them, then we have got to talk about these root causes. No. 1, the fact that we have elected legislators that will not do their job and protect people by keeping these weapons off the streets. That is No. 1. No. 2, we are still reeling from a financial crisis, and guess what? They do not want to make it better. I am sure they all campaigned and said, oh, we are going to help out the economy post-COVID, but right now, we are on a cliff over the debt ceiling, the debt ceiling that was raised three times under Trump. And 25 percent of this credit card bill that they do not want to pay

was accrued under Trump, and he only had one term, and hopefully, he won't have no more.

Nevertheless, I digressed. Let me move on. So, let us also talk about the fact that just recently—I think it was yesterday or two days ago—we received reports that there is a staff member who is working for a Republican on this Committee who has ties with and supports a White nationalist who has proclaimed himself to be just like Hitler. I do not really know what to say, except for the fact that this is a farce, alright? Because the fact is we have got an increase in crime all over. If we really want to be real about it, let us talk about it. We are talking about D.C. right now, but the murder rates in red states like Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama have statistically exceeded those in blue states like Illinois, New Mexico, and Michigan every year since 2000.

But since my colleagues feel the need to meddle in local affairs of D.C., then let us look at where there might be issues. To be clear, D.C. does not control most of its own post-arrest criminal justice system. Instead, the Federal Government administers most of it. So, I have a few questions, yes or no, for you, Mayor Bowser. The Federal Government, not D.C., has the authority to prosecute nearly all crimes committed by adults under D.C. law?

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. The Federal Government appoints judges to the local D.C. courts?

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. The Federal Government has jurisdiction over community supervision and adults charged or convicted of D.C. crimes?

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. The Federal Government has jurisdiction over the incarceration of adults convicted of felonies under D.C. law?

MAYOR BOWSER. Correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. Last, Mayor Bowser, isn't the Federal Government responsible for parole and supervised release of people convicted of felonies under D.C. law?

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you. The fact is, my Republican colleagues want to talk about keeping D.C. streets crime-free. They cannot even keep the halls of Congress crime-free. We are going to talk about this, because I got 24 seconds. My freshman colleague has just been indicted on 13 counts, 13 felony counts, right? But have they exhibited any courage to say, you know what, we will disallow this in our body, we will make sure that we expel this individual? They have not. So, what I do not want to hear is that they care about crime because if they did, they would start by cleaning up our own house and mind our own business instead of coming after D.C. So, thank you so much for your time.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mrs. McClain from Michigan for five minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all for being here today. I appreciate it.

I am going to turn the focus a little bit over to the law-abiding citizens. I am going to try and make it a non-partisan and make

it more about the law-abiding citizens because I think, you know, we just got done with Mother's Day, and I think I have one of the best moms that has ever walked the face of the earth. So Happy Mother's Day again, Mom. But I look back to all the lessons that my mom taught me was, for every action there is a reaction. And if you do an action and that is a bad action, you got to pay the consequences, Lisa. So, you can make your own decisions, but when your decisions or when your actions hurt someone else, then you have to pay the consequences. And there are some things Mom can help you with, and some things other, but she cannot, but you have to be responsible, and more importantly, accountable for your actions. And I hear her on my shoulder chirping in my ear constantly, so I think Mom has done her job.

But let me just start. As of May 9 of this year, total crime—I know you have heard the stats, but I think they bear repeating—total crime up 27 percent in D.C. from the same time last year. Motor vehicles theft up 110 percent. Homicides up 12 percent. Sexual abuse is up 53 percent, and property crime is up 30 percent. That is not a good position for the law-abiding citizens to be in, and I think we need to really take a good long look at why. And I think it goes back, and I hear my mom on my shoulder, consequence to the action. What is the consequence to your action? Because if my curfew was at 10 and I came home at 10:05, there was a consequence to my action. And sometimes it was a little harsher than I thought, but I responded to that consequence, and the next time I came home at 9:50. I was not late.

But despite a sharp increase in crime, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia declined to prosecute 67 percent of individuals arrested in D.C. in 2022. Sixty-seven percent of the people that committed an action did not have a consequence to their action. I wonder what behavior that led to. I wonder if anyone can connect those dots. According to Police Chief Robert Contee, the average homicide suspect had been arrested 11 times prior to them committing the homicide. I wonder if we would have had a consequence to that action a little bit sooner if we would have had the same result, right?

My mom has zero time in law enforcement, but I think her concepts really make sense. So, Mayor Bowser, do you think violent and repeat offenders should be kept in jail?

MAYOR BOWSER. I believe in consequences as well, Congress-women.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you.

MAYOR BOWSER. But I also believe that it is complicated.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Life is complicated, and life is complicated for the law-abiding citizen, too. I am sorry. It is really quick. Do you believe that violent repeat, repeat, repeat offenders should be kept in jail, and if the answer is "I do not know" or "it depends?"

MAYOR BOWSER. I will say that I advanced a piece of legislation that addresses the issue that you are raising.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. So yes?

MAYOR BOWSER. For a person who has been convicted of a violent crime and is arrested for another violent crime, I am suggesting that we close what I see as a gap in our law, and—

Mrs. McCRAIN. I agree with you, but I think you are missing the point.

MAYOR BOWSER.—give the courts the validity to detain them while they await trial.

Mrs. McCRAIN. So, is that a yes?

MAYOR BOWSER. It is a yes in some cases.

Mrs. McCRAIN. And therein lies the problem.

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes, I believe firmly. This is what I believe firmly, Congresswoman, and we have been focused on taking guns off our streets.

Mrs. McCRAIN. Let me stop you because I have another question.

MAYOR BOWSER. OK.

Mrs. McCRAIN. Do you have any concerns that the average homicide suspect has been arrested 11 times prior to committing the murder, Mr. Graves? I mean, 11 times.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, we have concerns with anybody who is arrested. I do want to clarify that same study, which was talking about a point in time, almost all those people had been prosecuted for some of their conduct. Seventy-five percent of them were under court supervision at some point in time in their lives, and 25 percent—

Mrs. McCRAIN. But it did not work, right? It did not work, right?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes. Twenty-five percent of them were under court supervision at the time of the offense.

Mrs. McCRAIN. Right. OK. So, can you explain to the Committee why your office is declining to prosecute so many people? I mean, 67 percent. I am already down. Thank you all for your time, and thank you again to my mom for talking about consequences. Actions have consequences.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Garcia for five minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Mayor Bowser, Mr. Graves for being here today, particularly Mayor Bowser. Before I came to Congress, I was mayor of Long Beach for eight years. I know it is a very tough job.

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes.

Mr. GARCIA. And I am certainly no stranger to criminal justice reform and the work that all of you do every single day. Just to your entire team and from the police leadership, everyone else, just thank you for your work. I have also always said that we need to get more mayors and local officials elected to Congress, but certainly today and some of the questions we have heard is not exactly what I had in mind. This is already our second Committee hearing on this topic, and I feel oftentimes like I am back at my city council meetings.

If Members of this Committee wanted to focus on crime, they should run for office in D.C. Clearly, they are very interested in what you all do as it relates to crime here at the local jurisdiction, yet they are not as interested in discussing crime and gun violence in their own districts and states. Instead of having a meaningful discussion about public safety, which we can always have, we continue to show as a Committee, unfortunately through the Majority, our contempt for the people of Washington, DC.

D.C. residents are Americans who deserve the same rights to Federal representation that each of our constituents have across the country. Republicans are hauling in our district's duly elected leaders or appointed officials before this Committee, for the high crime of supporting measures to support and to change our criminal justice system. Obviously, this is personally, I believe, embarrassing to this Committee. This is not the format. We should not be bringing you in to discuss these issues. Instead, we should be uplifting and supporting statehood for all of you.

It is also telling that Republicans are choosing to target Washington, DC, even though many places across the country are dealing with much higher crime than the District, in crime rates. In fact, I think, you know, we have said this before the last year, and it has been said multiple times, I have read this personally as well, violent crime in Washington, DC. has actually dropped in the last year overall. And yes, there are serious challenges around crime and public safety in all big cities. We know this to be true. But crime overall in Washington, DC. has dropped 45 percent in the last 10 years. If you look at the last few decades, D.C. is actually a safer place, and we should not forget that. Yes, there are still challenges, but the progress is going in the right direction.

And if we want to talk about violent crime, we should be talking about issues around guns. The rate of gun deaths in Mississippi is over 30 percent higher than it is in D.C. Rates are also higher in Louisiana, in Missouri, and Alabama, in Alaska, in Arkansas, and South Carolina, all higher than the rates here in D.C. Yet we are not bringing in the Governors of these other states in front of our Committee and not asking them probing questions. I am not really sure why, but it is clear that my Republican colleagues really do not care about the violence that are facing American communities. They want to make political points.

I have only been here for five months, but I have seen House Democrats sponsor numerous gun reform and gun violence legislation, whether it has been trying to ban assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, bump stocks, universal background checks, all things that could actually help reduce violent crime. And if Republicans really wanted to reduce violent crime, they could reach across the aisle and bring forward some of this legislation. Now instead, we are going to debate whether 700,000 American citizens in our Nation's capital deserve the right to self-determination.

And, Mayor Bowser, especially to you as a former mayor, I am sorry you have to be here today when you should be at City Hall doing the people's work. And the people, of course, have you here as their mayor, and I thank you for being here. But since you are here, and our Republicans are so interested in dropping crime, I was wondering if you have any advice for the Governors of Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, and South Carolina, all of whom have higher rates of gun deaths and violence than the District? Do you have any advice for them about what those states could possibly do to really bring forward some criminal justice reform in their states? I am sure my colleagues will take that information and pass it along to their Governors.

**MAYOR BOWSER.** The advice I would give them is what I give to all of the Members of the Congress as well. That is we need com-

monsense gun reform, Congressman. We need to keep kids safe in schools, Congressman. And we need to do the things that most Americans agree with: background checks. And much has been said about disagreements I have had with our council. We agree wholeheartedly on a piece of legislation that I know will make the District safer, it will decrease instances of domestic violence as well, and that is red flag laws. Governors and state houses all over our country should be focused on commonsense reforms that will keep our kids and families safe.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mayor, for that good advice, and I definitely encourage our Governors to take that advice as well. And with that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Burchett from Tennessee for five minutes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members, thank you. Ma'am, I used to be a county mayor myself, so it is the best job I ever had. So, thank you for being here, ma'am.

MAYOR BOWSER. I agree.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Graves, besides the juvenile crime, your office also handles all the criminal prosecutions for the District of Columbia. Is that correct?

Mr. GRAVES. I am sorry. I just want to make sure I understood the question. Outside of juvenile crime, we handle adult crime, but juvenile crime is handled by the D.C. office.

Mr. BURCHETT. Yes, that was my point.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. In 2015, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia declined to prosecute 35 percent of the cases. Is that correct?

Mr. GRAVES. That is consistent with my recollection, roughly.

Mr. BURCHETT. And yes or no, you were sworn in as U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia in November 2021. Is that correct?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. I think you testified earlier that the percentage of criminal cases your office declined to prosecute in 2022 was 67 percent. Does that sound correct?

Mr. GRAVES. That is not correct. That is Fiscal Year 2022, so it both pre-dates when I was sworn in and post-dates.

Mr. BURCHETT. The total crime, though, is up 27 percent from the same time last year, so I do not think it is a lack of criminals. Why does your office decline to prosecute so many of these cases?

Mr. GRAVES. So, thank you for the question, and I welcome the opportunity to explain. And Congresswoman McClain actually had a great chart that answered a lot of your question. The one thing not reflected on the chart is throughout the period—

Mr. BURCHETT. Congresswoman McClain tends to confuse me. So, I just asked—

Mr. GRAVES. And I wish I had her chart to help me explain. But the one thing not reflected on the chart is that every year we charge roughly 90 percent of the most serious, violent felonies. What changed, and you can see the change start in Fiscal Year 2017 and kind of incrementally step down each year, was our handling of misdemeanors, and there are complicated reasons. Obviously, we are talking about going across three administrations and

five U.S. attorneys. We are working on some of the issues that led to these declinations with misdemeanors, and the numbers are going up.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. In an interview in *The Washington Post*, you said your office is continuing to prosecute most of the violent felonies but were declining less serious cases. Is that correct? That sound within your recollection?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. And in the same interview you said the cases you decline mostly came after arrest, in cases like gun possession, drug possession, and other misdemeanors. Does that sound right?

Mr. GRAVES. So that generally sounds correct for Fiscal Year 2022. I would like to clarify the quote in light of a prior exchange, though.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Are you aware that your predecessor, Channing Phillips, who wrote an op-ed for *The Washington Post* titled, "D.C. Should Not Disregard Misdemeanor Crimes But Should Keep Focusing on Rehabilitation Programs?"

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, I am aware. That was in response to an op-ed that ran in *The Washington Post* encouraging the U.S. Attorney's Office to stop prosecuting misdemeanor offenses at all.

Mr. BURCHETT. Right. The only people that did not really read those op-eds, are the ones that they were written about. So, are you aware that the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, which includes Detroit, only declined to prosecute 33 percent of the cases in 2022?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, I have seen figures reported from other jurisdictions. It is important to note when you are comparing to other jurisdictions, it is often apples-to-oranges comparisons. Some jurisdictions, for instance, the police can automatically file charges. There are no prosecutorial reviews, and then there are subsequent dismissals by the prosecutors after charges are filed.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. But do you know that Chicago only declined 14 percent of their cases?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, and that is an automatic file jurisdiction.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. And in Philadelphia, only four percent?

Mr. GRAVES. I have seen that figure reported, yes.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Mr. Contee, is that correct? I say that name. Is it Contee?

Chief CONTEE. It is Contee, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. Chief Contee?

Chief CONTEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. My name gets massacred pretty regular too, so.

Chief CONTEE. No worries.

Mr. BURCHETT. All right. Thank you. Didn't you say the average homicide suspect has been arrested 11 times prior to them committing a homicide?

Chief CONTEE. I did.

Mr. BURCHETT. And so, you can see how Mr. Graves' apparent soft-on-crime policies could actually make residents and visitors feel less safe?

Chief CONTEE. I do not think it is Mr. Graves's policies necessarily. I think it is a combination of things, sir.

Mr. BURCHETT. OK. Mr. Graves, my office gives four to five constituents tours a week for groups. Hundreds of families from East Tennessee come to visit the capital every year. All the Members before you come to D.C. every session every week. We all have staff living in D.C. I think your decision to decline 67 percent of the cases, regardless of the reasons, put our offices at risk, but most importantly, it puts my constituents and the constituents and every member here up at risk. I think it is unacceptable, and, frankly, I think in some cases is disgraceful. Thank you all for being here. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Chair recognizes Mr. Moskowitz from Florida for five minutes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Mayor for being here and your approach to this issue over the last several months, and, quite frankly, the last several years. I want to remind, you know, my colleagues across the aisle that six out of the top 10 high-crime states are red states, so I assume at some point, since we are now the crime committee, I assume at some point, we are going to have the attorney generals from those states to talk about what we can do in those red states on crime.

You know, it is interesting that I guess we want to be the D.C. Council. And here we are yet another hearing on crime, and yet we have not heard the other side talk about gun violence. Again, I want to remind them gun violence is crime. Mass shootings are crime.

We heard that Taiwan has really low crime. Well, Taiwan does not allow mentally ill people to buy AR-15s, unlimited ammunition, and body armor, possibly one reason why Taiwan has slightly lower crime than us. You know, a Member of this Committee had someone burst into their office and injure staff members. We should be thankful that that person did not have a gun because instead of two injured staff members, we would have two dead staff members. And yet we are not doing anything to stop mentally ill people from being able to buy AR-15s and unlimited ammunition in this country.

Gun trafficking. Gun trafficking in D.C. is a huge issue. My friends across the aisle like to talk about illegal people all the time, but they do not want to talk about illegal guns. They do not want to talk about all the illegal guns that are being trafficked in D.C. They do not want to say the word "gun" at all. D.C. went from being a single-digit ghost gun area to now having 461 ghost guns recovered in 2022. In fact, semi-automatic weapons are being converted to automatic weapons. We have seen an increase in that by 340 percent. We do not hear that at all from the other side, even though they are so focused on crime.

We heard a question about myocarditis, serious. It is a fair question, but also not the leading cause of school-age children dying. That is guns. And so, we cannot continue to take these hearings serious when we are talking about crime if we are not going to talk about gun violence. You are not in denial. I know you know this. You just do not want to talk about it because it is politically expedient.

We heard another member talking about books, you know, books in school. Look, I am sure there are a couple of books that, you

know, we could take out of the classroom, but books are not killing kids, and dead kids cannot read, to remind you again. And so, we even passed a D.C. disapproval in Congress. I voted for it, by the way, Mr. Chairman. The President signed it, OK?

And so, you know, what I do not understand is why are we wasting this Committee's time, the United States Oversight Committee's time for the second time on just Washington, DC, just a district? No other state? No other issue? And why, again, are we talking about crime when we are not talking about gun violence? I just came from a hearing on fentanyl. And I had to listen to parents testify and talk about how they are losing their kids to fentanyl, serious issue. I support the Chairman of that Committee's bill. The data is clear on fentanyl, but you know what else? The data is clear on gun violence. The numbers do not lie, and yet, we are ignoring it. Perhaps we can maybe de-politicize the issue one day like we are doing with fentanyl because it is important. Watching parents continue to bury their children because they sent them to school, or they sent them to a movie theater, or they went to a grocery store, or they were in a church, or they were in a synagogue is despicable.

And so, look, I know you guys are busy. I know you got stuff going on. You are trying to find, you know, the fake informant that now has gone missing. I know you are busy with that, you know, but I am hoping that perhaps the Oversight Committee, if they are so worried about Federal overreach, perhaps they can start, you know, being focused on real government oversight. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Gentleman yields back. Before I recognize Mrs. Boebert, with respect to the missing informant, just so you know, just to clarify, the Grassley whistleblower is alive and well. The Chair recognizes Ms. Boebert.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser, is the District of Columbia more dangerous during your tenure?

MAYOR BOWSER. Congresswoman, as you have heard, we have experienced over the last 10 years decreases in violent crime, all categories of crime. You also heard me talk about in my testimony, especially in the last three years, being very concerned—

Mrs. BOEBERT. What about since last year, Mayor?

MAYOR BOWSER. What about it?

Mrs. BOEBERT. Is it more dangerous this year than it was last year?

MAYOR BOWSER. I am going to ask the Chief to give you the data.

Mrs. BOEBERT. I am asking, Mayor, because I see that crime is up 27 percent. That does not sound like a decrease to me. Violent crime is up 13 percent, and in 2020 and 2021, the city recorded more than 200 homicides in consecutive years for the first time in 20 years. So is Washington, DC, more dangerous now that you are in office?

MAYOR BOWSER. The Nation is more dangerous with more guns and more violent crime.

Mrs. BOEBERT. We are talking about Washington, DC, here, and we have also seen that the police budget has been cut \$15 million in 2020, Mayor. Do you think that this contributes to an increase in crime?

MAYOR BOWSER. I think a lot of things have contributed to increases in crime across the country.

Mrs. BOEBERT. What about in Washington, DC.? Do you think that the \$15 million budget cut to MPD in 2020 caused an increase in crime here in the District of Columbia?

MAYOR BOWSER. I think that we need to have 4,000 police officers over the course of the last several years.

Mrs. BOEBERT. So, you want more police officers?

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Well, in the past, you have hired on average 300 new police officers each year, but in 2022, you hired 103. That is 200 less, and now you are advocating for more police officers after cutting their budget and hiring 200 less police officers?

MAYOR BOWSER. I have advocated for more police every day as Mayor of the District of Columbia. When I became Mayor, we were facing a retirement bubble, and we set a course at that time for hiring and retention—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Do you believe that Washington, DC. would be safer and more secure if you hired more police officers rather than decreasing the number of recruitment by 200?

MAYOR BOWSER. We are not decreasing recruitment, but we are facing, as cities and police departments around the country, less interest in joining police.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Why do you think that is? Do you think our police officers have been demonized because of the rhetoric that is flowing from this city and many other cities across our Nation?

MAYOR BOWSER. I think that policing is a tough job.

Mrs. BOEBERT. I would agree.

MAYOR BOWSER. And it is a job that has grown tougher over the years, and I think—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Particularly when do you think it became more tough? Maybe when they were attacked for doing their jobs of protecting citizens? When they lost their funding?

MAYOR BOWSER. Congresswoman, if I am allowed to speak, I will answer you.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Yes, ma'am.

MAYOR BOWSER. But I am not going to talk over you. It has been my experience in the last eight years that we have had to use more incentives, and we have investigated and researched what is going to take to attract young people to come into policing. One thing that we have done in the District, for example, is to create a police academy that we are very proud of. Chief Contee, in fact, joined the police academy when he was 17 years old and rose through the ranks to be Chief of Police.

Mrs. BOEBERT. I do not need to worry about childhood issues here.

MAYOR BOWSER. This is how we get—

Mrs. BOEBERT. No, no. Do you think that defund the police signs around the District of Columbia, and advocating for this is incentivizing—

MAYOR BOWSER. I did not advocate to defund the police.

Mrs. BOEBERT. But you did defund them. Fifteen million dollar budget cut in 2020—

MAYOR BOWSER. I did not defund the police.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Mayor, what would you say to the law-abiding citizens here in Washington, DC, who, because of policies you have supported, are unable to defend themselves with this rise in crime, crime going up 27 percent?

MAYOR BOWSER. Congresswoman, I do not have to come here to talk to you to talk to the residents of the District of Columbia. I talk to them daily. I have press conferences—

Mrs. BOEBERT. And what do you say to these law-abiding citizens?

MAYOR BOWSER. What I tell them is that, as their Mayor, regardless of what is happening nationally, regardless of what is happening in our very complicated criminal justice system, as their Mayor, I am charged with making it work, and if that means—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Is it working?

MAYOR BOWSER. I am charged with making it work, and what I have to—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Do you think that you are doing a good job with that because I am seeing that crime is up? Violent crime is up. Homicides are up. Police funding is down. Police recruitment is down. So, is it working?

MAYOR BOWSER. Every day, we approach any vexing issue in our city, crime being among them, police recruitment—

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Mayor, my time is up, but you know exactly what you need to make Washington, DC, safer. You know that you need more police officers. You know that you need more funding—

MAYOR BOWSER. You heard me say that.

Mrs. BOEBERT. You know that you need policies that allow law-abiding citizens—

MAYOR BOWSER. And you heard me say that.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Thank you, ma'am. It is my time. Law-abiding citizens to be able to protect themselves in their own home and defend them.

MAYOR BOWSER. Mrs. Boebert, it sounds like you heard my opening statement.

Mrs. BOEBERT. You know it, and you wanted to be a part of the culture war of BLM 2020 riots rather than protecting and defending the police and the citizens in Washington, DC.

MAYOR BOWSER. And you are repeating it.

Mrs. BOEBERT. And my time has expired. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

MAYOR BOWSER. And I am happy to repeat it as well. And what we have said—Mr. Chairman, if you would permit me in that I was over talked much of that five minutes—is that we have been very focused on how to make sure we have a policy environment that supports the safe city, but also that we approach it not just with law enforcement, but with opportunities and with prevention measures.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Your policies are clearly making your city more dangerous, not safer.

Chairman COMER. The lady's time has expired. The Chair recognizes Mr. Goldman for five minutes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser and Chief Contee, if you would like to answer, is it helpful or hurtful

to police recruitment when police officers are randomly shot and killed around the country?

MAYOR BOWSER. Chief?

Chief CONTEE. I do not think that that is necessarily helpful to police recruiting.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I did not think also. You know, this is National Police Week this week and, in that vein, I would like to recognize Chief Contee for your many years of service at the MPD, and good luck in your new role with the FBI. And we also owe you a huge debt of gratitude, as well as Mayor Bowser, but for the heroic efforts that you and your officers played in defending this Capitol on January 6.

It is particularly odd to me to hear my Republican colleagues talk so much this week about backing the blue when they also defend so many of the January 6 defendants who violently attacked the Capitol Police and MPD and injured nearly 150 officers, including causing five to die. And it is particularly rich hearing accusations from my Republican colleagues that anyone is soft on crime, considering the fact that a number of them have been to the D.C. jail to defend those violent criminals.

We are now five months into this Congress. This is the ninth full hearing of this Committee. This is the second of nine on Washington, DC. That is nearly a quarter of this Committee's time has been spent on a city of approximately 700,000 people, and I get it. Maybe it is because the Chairman is actually able to find witnesses from the Washington, DC. Government, but this is a waste of time.

Chief Contee, Mr. Timmons earlier said that he believes that the morale of the MPD is down. Is it helpful or harmful to the morale of the MPD for politicians to go to the D.C. jail to defend defendants charged with committing acts of violence against the MPD?

Chief CONTEE. I think politicizing policing in any way is not helpful. You know, I will not specifically address the issue, go to a jail and not go to jail, but any time politics is injected into law enforcement, I think that that is harmful to what our mission is.

Mr. GOLDMAN. There has been a lot of discussion about violent crime in the city. What percentage of the violent crime in the city, in your estimate, Chief Contee, involves guns?

Chief CONTEE. So, there is a significant percentage of it that involves firearms. We see that. But I think, again, when you talk about crime in the city, I mean, I have heard a lot of numbers, you know, kind of thrown around in the city. I do not think there is anybody in this room that has been on more crime scenes than I have. So, you know, when we look at it, gun crime is certainly an issue with the guns in the hands of individuals who should not have them in our city. That certainly is something that we have seen that has increased over the years.

Mr. GOLDMAN. To your knowledge, are any guns manufactured in Washington, DC.?

Chief CONTEE. There are some personally manufactured firearms, ghost guns that people are able to assemble, but aside from that, there are no manufacturing places in Washington, DC. for firearms.

Mr. GOLDMAN. So, that means that all the firearms that are used in crimes in Washington, DC. come from other states where they are permitted to be manufactured and sold?

Chief CONTEE. So, the majority of the firearms that come into the District of Columbia—we are a consumer state, much like New York City and other states. But Washington, DC, the majority of the guns come from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, from the South up to Washington, DC.

Mr. GOLDMAN. States with much more lax gun laws than Washington, DC, right?

Chief CONTEE. Whatever the gun laws are there, those firearms show up in Washington, DC.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Mr. Graves, I am going to turn to you because you have been attacked repeatedly during this hearing about this number of 67 percent, and no one has given you a chance to respond. So, with the rest of my time, I would like for you to give whatever response you think appropriate.

Mr. GRAVES. Thank you. I appreciate that. So, again, I cannot stress enough throughout the whole time period that we have been looking at, the chart that was put up, 90 percent of serious violent felonies were charged at the time of arrest. And I would note, just because a case is not charged at the time of arrest does not mean that it is not ultimately charged, because there is often, particularly with our violent crimes, continued investigation that gets us in a position where we can charge the case.

What we are seeing reflected in the data, which is an accurate snapshot of what the office was doing around the time I came into the office, was a five-year trend that spans three administrations and five U.S. attorneys, primarily around the issue of misdemeanors and complications with prosecuting misdemeanors that we are trying to address, and we have started to address. And our papering rates, our charging rates, in this year are much higher than what we saw last year.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Palmer from Alabama for five minutes.

Mr. PALMER. Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you holding this hearing and trying to address a very serious issue. It has turned into another partisan debate, which is disappointing, but I do want to respond to a point that was made earlier about taxes paid by the District of Columbia relative to Alabama and your state of Kentucky. I just want to point out that the median household income in the District of Columbia, 74 percent higher than it is in Alabama, Kentucky. Yet the household poverty rate is higher in the District of Columbia than it is in Alabama and Kentucky. So, things need to be put in perspective.

Chief Contee, you have made the point repeatedly that most of the gun violence in the District of Columbia is committed with illegally possessed firearms. Is that correct?

Chief CONTEE. That is correct, sir.

Mr. PALMER. So, the District of Columbia has very strict gun control laws. Is that correct?

Chief CONTEE. Yes, sir. That is correct.

Mr. PALMER. Short of banning all firearms in every state and Mexico and Canada, can you explain to me how passing another law will reduce gun violence? And I really do not believe in gun violence. I think my colleague, Mr. Higgins from Louisiana, addressed that very intelligently and forthrightly that there is no such thing as gun violence, it is only human violence, but most of the guns are already illegal. Is that correct?

Chief CONTEE. That is correct. We have a number of legal firearms actually registered to District residents, over 34,000 legally registered firearms here in the District of Columbia. The ones that I see, the ones that show up generally on crime scenes are handguns that are illegal firearms in possession of people who should not have them.

Mr. PALMER. And law-abiding residents of the District of Columbia find it very, very difficult to get a concealed carry permit?

Chief CONTEE. I would not agree with that. Like I said, I mean, we have issued over 34,000—

Mr. PALMER. Out of a population of—

Chief CONTEE. Of those who want to have concealed carry permits, we process them. We have a timeframe that we are allotted by law to do that, and generally, that turnaround is roughly within—

Mr. PALMER. But most of the crime committed in the District of Columbia is not committed by those people with concealed carry?

Chief CONTEE. Most of it. No, sir.

Mr. PALMER. Yes, sir. Thank you for that response.

Chief CONTEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. PALMER. Was the knife that was used to attack the Senator Rand Paul staffer, a legally possessed weapon?

Chief CONTEE. You said was it a legal or illegal? I am sorry.

Mr. PALMER. Was it an illegal weapon?

Chief CONTEE. If the blade was longer than three inches, then yes, it would have been an illegal weapon.

Mr. PALMER. But we do not have the same concern about those type weapons. And the fact of the matter is, and I have not looked at FBI's homicides statistics in a while, but there are more people killed with a bladed instrument or a blunt instrument or a personal weapons, like hands and feet, by a significant number than are killed with a rifle of any type. Are you familiar with those statistics?

Chief CONTEE. That is not the case of the District of Columbia, sir.

Mr. PALMER. With rifles or handguns?

Chief CONTEE. With handguns primarily, and now we are also seeing the weapons that have been converted to fully automatic. We are also seeing those show up a significant amount that are showing on the streets.

Mr. PALMER. Are those handguns that have been converted to fully automatic or they are—

Chief CONTEE. Some of them are. Some of them are the ghost guns, AR-15 type, but we see all different types, primarily firearms in the District of Columbia is the leading weapon.

Mr. PALMER. And all of those are already illegal. Is that correct?

Chief CONTEE. That is correct, sir.

Mr. PALMER. So again, Mr. Chairman, I think my earlier point is, these hearings become partisan crap shows. I hate to say that. And we are not helping the District of Columbia, we are not helping our own states by not having a rational discussion behind what is really driving crime in our country, and we have got to get serious about this. We make guns a political issue. We make income. I mean, we just come up with ways to really excuse ourselves from the real issue of what is driving crime in the country. I think we need to get more serious about it, and just gun control laws by themselves are not going to accomplish that. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding the hearing. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Very good point. I agree completely. The Chair recognizes Ms. Stansbury from New Mexico for five minutes.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to just start out by thanking Madam Mayor, Chief Contee, and others who are serving on the panel, and to just acknowledge your service on behalf of our capital city, and also I see a lot of very proud staff sitting behind you. Thank you for serving the people of D.C. Thank you for serving our Nation's capital.

And I want to say that, for one, I am deeply proud to be able to spend part of my time in the city. I lived here for seven years when I was a staffer at OMB and in the Senate, and I know the work that you guys put in every single day to make sure that our city is well represented, that we are caring for its citizens. And I find it ironic, which I think many of my colleagues have already touched on, that my colleagues across the aisle feel comfortable hauling all of these amazing public servants into our Nation's capital to lecture you on your jobs, but they do not feel comfortable actually supporting the citizens of D.C. to actually have a right in this voting body.

But I also find it ironic, and I want to also echo and give snaps to my colleague, Jasmine Crockett, who pointed this out, that we are here talking about crime, while one of our colleagues from across the aisle, who has been indicted on 13 criminal counts, is not only at large after being bailed out of a New York jail, he is walking around this Capitol voting, and the people of D.C. do not have representation in these halls. It is outrageous. It is absolutely outrageous.

I also find it ironic that we have seen such a dystopian view painted of this city over the last several hours. As somebody who has lived in this city, I came here when I was a kid. Today I was walking past the Capitol steps, and I saw a bunch of kids on their eighth-grade trips, and I was thinking about how much this city has transformed over the last several decades. And that is because of the policies, Madam Mayor, that you and others who are sitting here today put into place, the social programs, universal pre-K, investments in infrastructure. This city has literally been transformed under your leadership for good.

People have come back to the city. Young people want to live in this city. So, I am proud of the work that you all are doing, and I want to provide the opportunity because I have heard a lot of outrageous lecturing, a lot of misinformation, and, you know, the kind of usual partisan chaos that we hear in these hearings, to give you some time to talk about the things that you care about, things that

you feel Congress can do to help support the city and to address any issues that you feel need to be addressed this morning.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you so much for that Congresswoman, and I was kind of having the same reaction. While as Mayor, you do not want to see any crime in your city. You definitely do not want to see increasing crime. I know that we have the tools that we need to drive it down, and while, at the same time we are doing that, we have not given up on the agenda that advances our city.

Earlier in this year, we released our five-year economic development strategy that is focused on our comeback and how we do that. We focus on our downtown for sure, but also on all of the wonderful neighborhood corridors all around our city that are thriving. Thank you for mentioning our children and the investments that we have made over the last 15 years in our schools, which actually are attracting and keeping families in Washington, DC. We are equally proud to have the No. 1 park system in the country in that people in Washington, everyone lives less than one mile from a recreation center or park. Those are the things that we continue to invest in, in Washington, DC.

The Congress can be our partner in that we are unique and that there is a lot of Federal presence in our city, untaxable Federal presence in our city. And the landscape of some of the Federal leases and buildings is also changing. We have a great example of a partnership right in the center of Washington. And, Congresswoman, of course it has helped advance the discussions around Franklin Park, where we use local dollars to invest in an underutilized park that is now the center of our downtown. We have done that at The Wharf. We are doing it now at Walter Reed, St. Elizabeth's, and we know that we can focus on underutilized parcels elsewhere.

Ms. STANSBURY. Thank you, Madam Mayor. And I just want to add quickly on universal early childhood education, we actually are fortunate in New Mexico, in my home state, to have taken the advisor from the District to help to create the first universal childcare program in the country at the state level based on D.C.'s model because it has been so successful.

MAYOR BOWSER. Amazing. Thank you.

Ms. STANSBURY. So, I want to thank you for your service, and I want to thank all of you who are here today for everything you do for our city.

MAYOR BOWSER. Thank you.

Ms. STANSBURY. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Ms. Greene from Georgia for five minutes.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we should all refresh our memories today and remember history and who has caused the political violence here in Washington, DC. by remembering how many times D.C. Metro Police were deployed for dangerous riots, in 2020, where Antifa and BLM rioters violently raged continuously, even nearly burning down the city, hundreds of police officers were injured, and rioters destroyed millions of dollars in property. Riots went to such extreme levels in Lafayette Park, that Secret Service forced President Trump into the White House bunker. But all of the extreme left-wing violence did not just start in

2020. No, it started in 2017 on President Trump's inauguration day. But all you hear about is a three-hour riot on one single day, January 6, 2021. So, let us talk about violent criminals and justice.

Chief Contee, you have said what we have got to do if we really want to see homicides go down is keep bad guys with guns in jail. When they are in jail, they cannot be in communities shooting people. Keep violent people in jail. Is that right? Yes or no.

Chief CONTEE. Yes.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you. Mayor Bowser, do you agree with Chief Contee? Yes or no?

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes, until people serve their sentence.

Ms. GREENE. Yes. You agree they should stay in jail. Thank you very much, Mayor. Mr. Graves, you are the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia. You have the unique ability to prosecute both local and Federal cases. However, Mr. Graves, your office has declined to prosecute 67 percent of those arrested in 2022, which means they cannot stay in jail like Chief Contee is demanding after his police officers do the hard work of arresting these criminals. Instead, you are solely focused on prosecuting January 6 cases from one single day in our history.

Meanwhile, D.C. crime is up. Total crime is up 27 percent from last year. Carjacking up 114 percent. Murders up 11 percent. Sexual abuse is up 45 percent. Property crime is up 30 percent. And just yesterday morning, a little innocent 12-year-old girl was shot while sleeping in her own bed by another rampant violent criminal who has probably been previously arrested and not prosecuted. What do you think a resident in Anacostia is more afraid of, their child catching a stray bullet on Monday or a grandma walking through the Capitol more than two years ago?

Mr. Graves, your decision to not prosecute 67 percent of the crimes in D.C. is absolutely criminal itself. People who were charged with murder had been arrested on average 11 times before because you refused to keep them in jail like Chief Contee is demanding. You have already abused your position by maliciously prosecuting at least 1,000 people from January 6, but you recently announced that you are going to arrest at least 1,000 more.

Let me remind everyone the manner in which you go about your January 6 prosecutions. A man named Matthew Perna, who had no criminal record, peacefully entered the Capitol through an open door on January 6. He stayed inside roughly 20 minutes. He did not assault anyone, not a police officer, anyone. He did not damage any property. He fully cooperated with the FBI and eventually pled guilty to all charges. But right before his sentencing, you, Mr. Graves, asked the judge for more time to object to the presentence report, by the way, while you were not prosecuting many of the crimes in D.C. This was so that you could ask for at least a few more years in prison for the guy that walked around in the Capitol for 20 minutes not assaulting anyone. And this is what you have done repeatedly over and over for those who have pled or have been convicted on January 6. Well, two weeks later, Matthew Perna hung himself in his garage. Mr. Graves, he was 37 years old. On March 9, 2022, you dropped the case against Matthew Perna because he was dead.

The time for weaponizing the Department of Justice needs to come to an end. And because you refuse to prosecute real criminals that are violating all the crimes here in Washington, DC. and you want to talk about D.C. residents, they are victims of your abuse of power. And because of that, I am introducing articles of impeachment on you, Mr. Graves, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Before we recognize Ms. Mace for five minutes, I request unanimous consent for the Representative from Georgia, Mr. Clyde, to be waived onto the Committee for purpose of questioning. Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace for five minutes.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank our witnesses for being with us today, and crime is rampant in our Nation's capital. It is rampant and out of control like many other cities in the United States during COVID, and now after, crime is up significantly. In D.C., I read that homicides are up by nine percent since last year. In fact, there have been more homicides in the first 120 days of 2023 than in the same period of any year in the past decade. We are starting summer, so tourism is going to be up. Violent crime consistently peaks from around the country this time of year as well. At the same time, the D.C. police force has lost a net of 450 officers over the last three years or almost 15 percent of the workforce.

Mayor Bowser, I do want to recognize what you have done to get bonuses and try to hire police officers to the force. I, myself, have been a victim of some crime here in D.C., not once, but twice now since I have come up here. And, you know, we see this kind of thing around the country, and it is very important that we address it. And we can only leave to the imagination the kind of impression that the rampant crime that is up here in D.C. leaves on the country to folks who come here from around the country and around the world to see the United States' capital. We have foreign dignitaries, we have tourists, and we want to project strength and peace and safety for folks who are out here. D.C.'s out-of-control crime must be taken seriously and must be addressed as swiftly as we can.

My first question today goes to Mr. Graves, and I have a few yes or no questions. Mr. Graves, do you think the D.C. Council's crime bill that I voted to override in this chamber would have led to an increased officer retention and hiring? Yes or no.

Mr. GRAVES. Increased officer retention or hiring was the question?

Ms. MACE. Yes. Would it have led to better officer retention and hiring? Yes or no.

Mr. GRAVES. I am not sure it would have impacted one way or another. I do not know.

Ms. MACE. Yes or no, do you think the public should be aware of the crime happening around their neighborhoods and take it seriously?

Mr. GRAVES. So, we are very much focused on community safety. Part of our community safety—

Ms. MACE. Yes or no, the question was, the public should be aware of crime happening in their neighborhoods.

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Ms. MACE. OK. So, you agree. It is a good thing when a citizen reports something they saw, like see something, say something?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Ms. MACE. Yes.

Mr. GRAVES. We generally want our community members to report crime of which they are aware.

Ms. MACE. Right. So, a couple of days ago at the D.C. Safety Summit, you said just going out there and kind of fear-mongering and making broad claims that are not borne out of data is not helpful, and I think we unfortunately see that from non-traditional media sometimes. So yes or no, do you think having this hearing today is fearmongering in D.C.?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I—

Ms. MACE. Yes or no, do you think that this hearing is fearmongering in D.C. based on your comments from a few days ago?

Mr. GRAVES. So, it is not a yes or no.

Ms. MACE. Yes or no. Is this an, "I do not know?"

Mr. GRAVES. I can answer your question, Congresswoman, but it is not a yes or no question.

Ms. MACE. It is. I asked it. Yes or no, do you believe it is the job of a prosecutor to represent the government and to prosecute crimes on its behalf?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes.

Ms. MACE. Interesting. So, then why are you bringing only a third of the cases brought to you? Why is the D.C. police, Chief Contee, literally calling bullshit on your excuses for not prosecuting 67 percent of arrests? Was he fearmongering?

Mr. GRAVES. So—

Ms. MACE. Is your Chief of Police fearmongering when he calls B.S. on your prosecutors?

Mr. GRAVES. Of course, our Chief of Police is not fearmongering, but I think you are making quotes out of context, and if I could provide the context—

Ms. MACE. No, I am not interested, and I am using your words directly verbatim from you. I want to finish with this, this afternoon. D.C. is a lot like Charleston. It is a city that has a lot of charm. It is a city by which many Americans judge our country. We have high rate of tourism in Charleston, South Carolina, and Charleston takes its crime seriously and has built a community that many want to visit, many want to join, just like Washington, DC. But the same cannot be said of D.C., which saddens many of us here today. And I want to recognize the Mayor, again, for your efforts with your police force. To add more police, more needs to be done, and I am sure that you recognize that as well. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back.

MAYOR BOWSER. Mr. Chairman, is it possible for me to respond to tourism issues?

Chairman COMER. Go ahead, briefly.

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes. So, it has been mentioned by a few Members concern about tourists, and tourism is not about fun and games in D.C. It is a real part of our bottom line, and welcoming

visitors to our city allows us to make the types of investments that we are proud of. We are very proud that we are rebounding from a pre-COVID in the number of people visiting the District of Columbia from around our region, from around the country. And increasingly, international travel is up, and we know with better visa management, we will see even more travelers coming from around the world. So, people should not be concerned about our tourism numbers. They are on the rise. We remain concerned about business travel, so we want everybody who wants to come and call on the Congress about this issue or that to visit Washington, DC. to do that as well.

Chairman COMER. Good to hear. The Chair recognizes Mr. Donalds from Florida.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser, good to see you. Chief Contee, it has been a while. You have not been back for two years or so. It is good to see you. Mr. Donahue first time. Mr. Graves, bro, you need to do your job. I mean, let us just be very clear. You know, obviously, you have a responsibility to the residents of the District, and in a myriad of ways I think, you know, my colleague talked about that in some heavy detail there. But if you are not going to do the job of actually standing behind Chief Contee and the work that his men and women do with the Metropolitan Police Department, and you are selling them down a river and with them, the residents of D.C. and even the tourists that come to D.C. But, you know, they are the ones that live here. They ride the bus, they get on the metro, they are going to school, they are going to work and, well, everybody wants to just to be safe, and you are not holding up your end of the bargain. I have seen MPD all over D.C. They are all here every single day. It is not—they are here. It is very clear when they are on a scene, but you are not doing your job, so I just find it to be disgusting, frankly. Just uphold the law, enforce the law, and that actually will make the job easier for the Chief and for the Mayor to do their jobs.

Mayor Bowser, real quick. You know, when the Oversight Committee was investigating January 6, you were not here. I do not know what was going on, so no need to go down that road. But I really had a question about—you requested the National Guard troops on December 31, 2020. Is that correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. That sounds right, but I would want to confirm the date.

Mr. DONALDS. That is fine. That is fine. Based upon any recollection that you have, what was the rationale for requesting National Guard troops?

MAYOR BOWSER. We wanted to make sure that our city blocks were protected. We were in that transition week, so the chiefs decided that we wanted to create a traffic box around certain parts of our downtown, and the best use of resources would be National Guard on instead of MPD so that MPD could be available for law enforcement. So, that was our request.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. So, a quick follow-up to that because, you know, I remember it, having gone through orientation here, before I got sworn in as a Member of Congress, that during that time period, you know, to the pandemic and everything else, there was no

traffic in D.C., not like it is today. Like, nobody was driving through the streets of D.C. during that time period, and this is a legitimate question. Was the concerns purely traffic corridors in the District for the date of January 6?

MAYOR BOWSER. Let me ask the Chief to talk about how we used to wait for—

Mr. DONALDS. Sure, Chief Contee, if you can. That would be great.

Chief CONTEE. Yes. So, the traffic is part of the concern. You know, certainly when we create traffic boxes, and, you know, we expected a lot of people in our city, we do not want to mix people and cars. So, creating that space where for people who are expressing their First Amendment rights to peacefully be in the street, on the sidewalk or whatever, and not have or not be hindered by cars and buses moving about—

Mr. DONALDS. Well, Chief, I just want to reclaim my time.

Chief CONTEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. DONALDS. There is no disrespect to what you are saying, and my coughing, no disrespect either.

Chief CONTEE. No worries.

Mr. DONALDS. So, real quick. Now, in a letter that was sent on January 5, Mayor Bowser, you stated that the National Guard that you “are accepting the support,” but you wanted them to be in an unarmed capacity. Is that correct, or, Chief Contee, can you corroborate that? Is that correct?

Chief CONTEE. Yes.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. All right, and I thank you for that. It is some of the things that we just want to clarify, and I think here is the overarching point. And to be frank, honestly, Mayor Bowser, just really got nothing to do with you. I think this is just a general point of what happened, when, and why. Actually, last question for you. When your requests for National Guard troops were, obviously, they were answered, and you were given whatever you needed. Is that correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. We were given, I believe, some of what we requested.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. Were there any limits that came from the Secretary of the Army?

MAYOR BOWSER. Yes.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. Can anybody stipulate what that was?

Chief CONTEE. Yes, a couple of things. Well, first of all, the limitation was we could not move—we could not change their assignments without first receiving approval from the Secretary of the Army. We could not move National Guard members anywhere East of 9th Street, Northwest. We could not move them there. And then another thing we wanted was a quick reaction force members of the National Guard to be able to respond. I do not think we received that resource either.

Mr. DONALDS. OK.

Chief CONTEE. Yes, sir.

Mr. DONALDS. All right. Last point I will make, Mr. Chairman, and I know I am slightly over my time. One thing it was clear in previous testimony in this Committee, corroborated by this testimony today, is that, you know, troops from National Guard were

authorized by the President at the time, Donald Trump, on January 4. They were authorized. It was testified in this Committee they were authorized. D.C. was able to take advantage of them in the capacity that D.C. wanted to, save for the couple of requests that you also wanted.

One thing it is important to indicate, Mr. Chairman, is that for National Guard troops to be deployed to the capital, it requires a Capitol Police board to actually issue a state of emergency for troops to come on capital grounds. And the police board is made up of the Architect of the Capitol, the head of Senate security, the head of House security, and the Chief of the Capitol Police. And by my understanding, three of those four people report to the Speaker of the House, and the Speaker of the House at that time was Nancy Pelosi.

So, when we want to talk about National Guard being here and the timetable of them getting here, it is important to understand that there were National Guard in the District of Columbia, and their limitation of coming to the Capitol was not due to anybody else because the President is not authorized to deploy troops to the Capitol, separation of powers. It is at the hands of the Speaker of the House, and with that, I yield, and I apologize for being a minute and 24 over.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Sessions from Texas for five minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And Chairman Comer, I want to thank you for your not only meeting with at least Republicans before this hearing, but expressing your confidence that you believe that we could have a thoughtful meeting today with the Representatives that would be here, and that the words of confidence that you spoke with the Mayor about her job and how this Committee could thoughtfully have a conversation today. It is my hope we will continue to have that conversation.

I recognize you have been here a number of hours, each of you, and thank you. Some of the points that we have heard is that people on our side, we are Republicans, do not care about Washington, DC, that we do not take time to come and walk the streets and talk to people. Well, perhaps there could be some evidence of that, but also, my parents for over 20 years lived here. And my mother and my father both engaged Washington, DC. elected officials and I believe tried to provide feedback, and they did to my parents, and I was a part of those conversations. And I would like to say that there is great confidence that we want to have in working with you, and I think that is evidenced by you being here today.

Mayor, I serve as the Subcommittee Chairman for Government Operations. And we have been in discussions and intend to have conversations with the Federal Government about bringing people back to work. I do not need to go through the facts of the case today, but the bottom line is the Federal Government is lagging, in our opinion, of getting people back to work. Back to work is, I think, not just healthy, but we have so many problems with passports, and government, the IRS, a lot of other agencies in performance of their duties that are necessary to the American people, so we will be doing that.

I want to just perhaps provide some context. We have just come off being in the Minority for four years. We had an opportunity when we were in the Minority to help work and craft. Our colleagues sometimes let us and sometimes shared and sometimes did not share so well. But the agenda was definitely on the side of the Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, and those who would be chairmen of committees. Their agenda is virtually our agenda today. That is, that we are trying to make sure that the city of Washington, DC. has a relationship with us whereby we provide feedback, and we try and look at the things that are done together.

We do recognize running this city is hard. We do recognize, however, or believe that just like the bipartisan piece of legislation that we did, where we disagreed with the D.C. City Council, could not have come at a worse time based upon the assault on one of our Members, and that created an era of lawlessness in this city. Please know this: we would like to work with you. However, we would like for you to have an equal knowledge that marijuana in its simplest form is an addictive problem. And your Members, D.C. Members, and your people who are in your police force, and others should recognize that there are things being mixed in marijuana. There are hallucinogens, there are problems that we have, and you are going to keep having violent crime if you keep having the positions that you take on allowing marijuana to be openly smoked because it is easily infiltrated so to speak.

It can be changed, but it, all by itself, is an addictive, dangerous product, and there is more than enough national information now here. It creates a psychosis. It creates a lot of real problems. Who are the losers in this? Women and children. Women and children get the brunt of this problem, and I would like to just face all four of you and say, you need to tell the truth. You need to tell people the truth because they know it, and you will keep being that drug haven, a crime haven, and a gun haven if you continue how you approach drugs in the city of Washington, DC. I am very open to allowing you—you do not have to at this forum—but that engagement and expect it to come from the Government Operations Subcommittee, the engagement on public safety, and the safety of women and children.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for the time. I know I am over. My special thanks to all four of you for taking time to respectfully, thoughtfully take time to articulate your ideas with a group of people who care about you. I yield back my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Clyde for five minutes.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you, Chairman Comer, for letting me participate today. I greatly appreciate this opportunity. Mayor Bowser, you vetoed the Revised Criminal Code Act passed by the D.C. City Council, correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. Correct.

Mr. CLYDE. All right. And I assume it was because you disagreed with several of the soft-on-crime provisions that the D.C. Council included in the legislation. Is that correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. I outlined my objections.

Mr. CLYDE. OK.

MAYOR BOWSER. And I also submitted an amendment that would address my objection to the D.C. Council.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. Thank you. As I recall, you stated that the Revised Criminal Code Act “does not make us safer,” and I have to say that I agree with you. And I am pleased that Congress passed my resolution, H.J. Res. 26, to nullify that misguided bill, and I am grateful that with President Biden’s signature, we prevented the radical RCCA from becoming law. Mayor Bowser, I noticed that you did not veto the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Emergency Amendment Act, but you did not sign it either, correct?

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Mr. CLYDE. All right. So, as I understand it, the police reform, and let us call it that, legislation moved forward without your signature.

MAYOR BOWSER. That is correct.

Mr. CLYDE. All right. So, why did you not sign it or veto it?

MAYOR BOWSER. I did not sign it because I knew that we would have to revisit some of the provisions with the council. I have been Mayor eight years; I think I vetoed eight bills. So, there may be in all of the legislation that has gone through, and I have signed or not signed in those years, things that I agree with or things that I do not. I sometimes will leave my signature off if I know that I am going to have to revisit a provision with the council.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. Well, thank you. Well, you know, I think that maybe the folks of the city and those of us who actually do vote, do not find it acceptable that you do not take a stand on what a piece of legislation says. You do not approve it. You do not disapprove it.

MAYOR BOWSER. No, actually—

Mr. CLYDE. No, let me finish. Let me finish. So, earlier in this hearing, Mayor Bowser, you said that there is no greater supporter of the Metro Police Department than you. And so, by not signing this bill or not vetoing it, you consider yourself the greatest supporter of the Metro Police Department. Chief Contee, would you agree with that statement, that the Mayor is the greatest supporter or no greater supporter in the city—

Chief CONTEE. I have been dealing with this mayor for the last eight years that she has been Mayor, and she is a great supporter of our law enforcement officers.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. I think that is a pretty low bar, Chief. Now, Attorney Graves, United States Attorney Graves, question for you, sir. Representative Mace said earlier, she asked the question, should communities be made aware of the crime in their neighborhood, and you said yes, affirmatively. Am I correct?

Mr. GRAVES. Yes, we believe in transparency.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. Great. I agree with you. All right. In 2016, the Department of Justice provided Senator Grassley with criminal prosecution data from 2010 to 2015. This is the actual letter right here. And it says in response to your request for the data regarding arrests for offenses of homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson, “we have provided the data for the D.C. Code offenses that best corresponds to your request.” So, will you commit here today to providing the pros-

ecution statistics, exactly as you did to Senator Grassley, to this Committee for the last seven years, 2016 through 2020?

Mr. GRAVES. So, I am generally familiar with the letter, but it actually was issued at a time when I was not in the office.

Mr. CLYDE. That is fine.

Mr. GRAVES. I can tell you what we are planning on doing.

Mr. CLYDE. Well, just, I mean, you can do this, right? I mean, you have the statistics to do it. Are you willing to do it? I want to see the criminal statistics, the prosecution statistics from 2016 to 2022. Will you provide it?

Mr. GRAVES. I understand the question. I would explain what we are planning on doing. So, the challenge that our office has historically faced is a lot of this data is not readily available because of our antiquated systems, so we have had to manually pull the information. I have hired a data scientist so that we can more effectively do it. We are going to start monthly publishing of our prosecutorial statistics.

Mr. CLYDE. OK. So, you will go back to 2016 through 2022 and provide it to this Committee?

Mr. GRAVES. So, we are going to do it real time going forward.

Mr. CLYDE. Right. Fantastic. But will you do it for 2016 through 2022? That is my question to you.

Mr. GRAVES. So—

Mr. CLYDE. Yes or no would suffice.

Mr. GRAVES. I want to see the data, and look, these are tradeoffs. If we are going to go back and do this historical analysis that we have to do by hand, I have to take people away from current prosecutions in order to do a historical analysis. I am focused on where the numbers are because that informs me on prosecutorial strategy.

Mr. CLYDE. It also tells us where you are and how successful you have been, or what you decide to do or not to do when it comes to prosecutions. Will you provide this information to the Committee?

Mr. GRAVES. So, of course, we are happy to look into the request if we can review the letter and see what we can pull together.

Mr. CLYDE. Happy to provide you a copy of the letter, and you will provide us the statistics.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlemen's time has expired, and feel free to answer the question.

Mr. GRAVES. So, we of course want to provide any information to the Committee that would be helpful to in its oversight exercises.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. That concludes our questioning portion. Now, I yield to the Ranking Member for brief closing remarks.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, kindly, Mr. Chairman. Mayor Bowser, thank you; and Chief Contee, U.S. Attorney Graves, and Mr. Donahue. And I want to thank so many residents of Washington, D.C., who have turned out today. And I thank them for their democratic patience as they await approval of their petition for statehood. And I see that one of the statehood senators for the District of Columbia is here, Paul Strauss, and I want to thank him for being here.

Mr. Chairman, this hearing was about governance, then everything that I heard from the witnesses argues for statehood, which is how we put people on a plane of equality and political self-government in America. And so, statehood is an imperative of basic democratic values, but also of governmental efficiency. And we have heard a lot of criticism today of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office, I have not heard much about the D.C. government.

The people of Washington, DC. do not control their own judges, they do not elect judges, the way lots of people do in different states and jurisdictions, they do not elect the prosecutors who prosecute felony crimes. So, much of the questioning was about that. That is going to a Federal official. And without regard to the merits of those particular complaints, they just do not relate to the people of D.C.

But if D.C. became a state, as they are seeking to do, like 37 other states have done, have been admitted since the founding of the Republic, then they will be completely responsible for the crime situation, the prisons, prosecution, and so on, except for those things—that minority of crimes that are prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney. But if this was a hearing about crime, then what I have heard from multiple people is that it should not just focus on one city, it should focus on all the cities and towns in all of the states of America.

And that means that we have to confront gun violence, which is in fact, a crime. Yes, if you want to be tough on crime, then you have got to be tough on gun violence. If you want to be soft on gun violence, then you are soft on crime. Because we are losing thousands of our people every year to the nightmare of gun violence, which is now causing foreign governments to issue travel advisory warnings for people to come to the United States, saying that we have a gun violence problem that is dangerous.

The statehood petition, which Congresswoman Norton has introduced, makes all the sense in the world. It has Congress using our power under Article I, Section 8, Clause 17, the District Clause Power, to modify the boundaries of the Federal District.

Congress did that in 1846, right before the Civil War, apparently, according to historians, at the behest of slave masters in Virginia, who were nervous that slavery was going to be abolished in the District of Columbia, the slave traffic and, in fact, they were right about that. And you know who the person was pushing for the abolition of the slave traffic in the District of Columbia, was the founder of the Chairman's party, Abraham Lincoln, in his single term in the House of Representatives, that was the main thing he was doing, trying to abolish slavery in the Nation's capital. But the slave masters of Virginia, they feared it, and they got Congress to retrocede all of the land in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County back to the Commonwealth of Virginia, which established precisely the precedent that is being invoked here, which is Congress has the power to modify the boundaries of the Federal District.

And if we had the power to do it in the 19th century, to protect the slave masters, certainly, we have the power to do it in the 21st century, to vindicate the democratic rights of the people of Wash-

ington, DC. That is the real historical imperative here, and we should work on crime as a national problem. I want to thank the Mayor and the Chief for everything that they are doing in Washington and the U.S. attorney, for everything they are doing in D.C. There are things that the other states can learn from D.C. and certainly things that D.C. can learn from the other states. But crime should never be an opportunity to demonize and vilify a whole population of American citizens and their leadership.

But I think the mayor, you have led a very distinguished team of officials here and acquitted yourself beautifully in explaining all of the great progress that has been happening in Washington, not just in terms of crime, but in terms of other public policies too.

So, thank you for coming in. And thank you once again, for rising to the defense of the Union and the Republic on January 6, and we absolutely need to give the District of Columbia power over its National Guard. We would have been a lot safer, had you been deploying the National Guard when you deployed the Metropolitan Police Department three hours before the President of the United States did.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

And, again, I want to thank the witnesses for being here. I think this was a very substantive Committee hearing. Mayor, as I said in our earlier meeting, I pledge to work with you. The Majority on this Committee wants to work with you. We want to see Washington, DC. grow, prosper, and be one of the safest cities on the planet.

This Committee has a history of Republican Chairs, working with democrat mayors for the betterment of Washington, DC. You go back to Tom Davis, when he was Chairman of this Committee, Jason Chaffetz, even Mark Meadows, worked closely with democrat mayors, because, as I stated in our opener, this Committee is tasked with jurisdiction over Washington, DC.

We all spend, I guess, now a majority of our time in Washington, DC, for our jobs. So, obviously, we have a vested interest in seeing the Washington city grow and prosper and be safe. Chief, we want to thank you for your service. We appreciate the service of you and your colleagues. And we pledge to do whatever we can to help you be successful.

And, Mr. Graves, as you have heard criticism from this side of the aisle, crime is a priority for this Committee. Crime is one of the issues that we campaigned on, to flip the House, to take the House from Democrat Majority to Republican Majority. We are not satisfied with your job performance in Washington, DC. We have seen the statistics. We have seen the data. It is just not—one of the problems with the crime in America is we have prosecutors who are behind or sympathetic or liberal or lazy or whatever, maybe even do not have the resources to effectively keep up with prosecutions.

We have played the video before, the Chief issuing a statement with a gaggle of reporters, someone had been arrested over 10 times, I believe, and let out and they are still on the street committing crimes. This is unacceptable. It is unacceptable in Washington, DC. It is unacceptable in Louisville, Kentucky. It is unacceptable

anywhere in America. So, we hope that if there is something this Committee can do to help increase the prosecutions in Washington, DC, please let us know. We want to see that happen.

And Mayor, just from listening to the Committee, listening to your testimony, I know you said several things that caught my attention. The taxing of marijuana, for example, I did not know what the law was on that. We are researching that, know that you have a lot of big issues coming forward, opportunities in Washington, DC, a new arena. I know that would require some type of legislative assistance.

That is something that we would pledge to work with you and your office on, something that I think would be beneficial to the city. Certainly, legislation to help keep criminals in jail. We want to hold criminals accountable for wrongdoing. That is going to be a priority for this House Majority, not just in Washington, DC, as I said, but all over America.

And last, the SHOW UP Act which we supported. I was the primary sponsor, we had Democrat opposition to this bill. But I think, Mr. Donahue, this would help the whole city of Washington, DC.—you have a ripple effect of businesses that are suffering. I understand commercial real estate occupancy is down. It all pertains to the business model in downtown Washington, built around a bunch of Federal employees showing up for work every day. We want to see those Federal employees go back to work, Mayor. That is why we passed the SHOW UP Act and would welcome your active support with Senator Schumer in the Senate.

So, I think there is a great opportunity to work together, this Committee and the Mayor's office, the Chief, the U.S. Attorney, City Administrator. We want to see that happen. And I look forward to that relationship moving forward.

With that and without objection, all Members will have five legislative days within which to submit materials and to submit additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:33 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

