

Testimony Submitted for the Record
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Hearing on Oversight of the District of Columbia
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Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the federal takeover of D.C. local law enforcement.

I write on behalf of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a non-partisan non-profit organization that has fought for ethics, transparency and the rule of law in our government for more than two decades. Prior to joining CREW, I served as a law clerk at the D.C. Superior Court and as Chief Oversight Counsel on this Committee under the late Congressman Elijah Cummings. Both my professional experience and 25 years as a D.C. resident inform my view that President Trump's extraordinary and unprecedented actions in the District of Columbia are a reckless, harmful attack not only on D.C. itself but on constitutional principles and the rule of law nationwide.

The D.C. takeover has unfolded in several steps, each of which raises alarm. On August 11, President Trump issued an Executive Order declaring an emergency in D.C. pursuant to Section 740 of the Home Rule Act¹ and announced that he would attempt to take control of D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and deploy the D.C. National Guard to assist in local law enforcement.² On August 14 and 15, Attorney General Bondi issued orders attempting to install an Emergency Police Commissioner at the head of MPD, prohibiting sitting MPD officials from exercising independent authority and requiring MPD to assist in federal immigration enforcement.³ On August 25, President Trump issued another Executive Order aiming to circumvent, and force a change in, D.C.'s pretrial detention policy.⁴ And as of

¹ Exec. Order No. 14333, 90 F.R. 39301 (Aug. 11, 2025), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/declaring-a-crime-emergency-in-the-district-of-columbia>.

² Trevor Hunnicutt and Nandita Bose, *Trump takes over DC police in extraordinary move, deploys National Guard in capital*, Reuters (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-takes-over-dc-police-extraordinary-move-deploys-national-guard-capital-2025-08-11>.

³ Att'y Gen. Order No. 6370-2025, Restoring Safety and Security to the District of Columbia (2025), available at <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1411281/dl?inline>; Att'y Gen. Order No. 6372-2025, Restoring Safety and Security to the District of Columbia (2025), available at <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1411361/dl?inline>.

⁴ Exec. Order No. 14340, 90 F.R. 42125 (Aug. 25, 2025), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/measures-to-end-cashless-bail-and-enforce-the-law-in-the-district-of-columbia>.

September 9, eight states have sent National Guard troops to D.C. at the behest of the Trump administration to support law enforcement efforts.⁵

President Trump's D.C. law enforcement takeover raises several areas of concern. CREW is focused on three of those issues, in particular: the danger of domestic military deployment, interference with D.C. home rule and the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding these deployments.

Danger of Domestic Military Deployment

Our nation's Founders were consistently opposed to the deployment of the military to perform local law enforcement functions. As University of Maryland historian Mark Graber recently wrote, "America's founders widely shared the belief that the military, including the state militias, should not engage in domestic law enforcement except under extreme conditions that rendered civil law inoperative. To the founding generation, the military was an instrument of war, whose purpose was to confront or deter rival armed forces."⁶ That belief was shaped in part by the Boston Massacre, a formative precursor to the American Revolution, which saw armed British soldiers stationed among American civilians overreact to protests and fire into a crowd of civilians, killing five.⁷ In 1772, in a speech commemorating the second anniversary of the Massacre, Revolutionary leader General Joseph Warren argued that the massacre demonstrated the "ruinous consequences" and "baneful influence" of "standing armies...in populous cities" for the purpose of "the enforcement of obedience."⁸ The Second Continental Congress made clear its disapproval of military deployment for local law and civil enforcement purposes, listing among its grievances in the Declaration of Independence that King George III had "kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures" and "affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power."⁹

⁵ Jeff Amy, *Georgia sends troops to DC in sign that Trump's policing push will continue*, AP (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/trump-dc-crime-kemp-georgia-national-guard-6bf884bbc8c323cc64bb00379e054fd3>; Shania Shelton and Kaanita Iyer, *Six GOP-led states to send hundreds of National Guard troops to DC as White House escalates police takeover*, CNN (Aug. 19, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/16/politics/west-virginia-national-guard-being-sent-to-dc>.

⁶ Brief of Amicus Curiae Historian Mark A. Graber In Support of Plaintiffs-Appellees at 5-6, *Newsom v. Trump*, No. 25-3727 (9th Cir. Sept. 9, 2025), <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.ca9.4e2731d4-cbd8-4803-a59f-a1d0c6023daf/go.v.uscourts.ca9.4e2731d4-cbd8-4803-a59f-a1d0c6023daf.76.0.pdf>.

⁷ History.com Editors, *The Boston Massacre*, History (updated July 22, 2025), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/march-5/the-boston-massacre>.

⁸ Dr. Joseph Warren, An oration delivered March 5th, 1772. At the request of the inhabitants of the town of Boston; to commemorate the bloody tragedy of the fifth of March, 1770 (Mar. 5, 1772), available at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=evans;cc=evans;rgn=main;view=text;idno=N09905.0001.001>; National Park Service, *Dr Joseph Warren*, <https://www.nps.gov/people/dr-joseph-warren.htm>.

⁹ The Declaration of Independence (U.S. 1776).

The Founders understood, with clarity forged in the fire of revolution, the danger of tyranny inherent in deploying the military among the domestic civilian population for law enforcement purposes.

President Trump's deployment of armed National Guard troops in D.C. defies this founding principle. It is also not an isolated occurrence. In June, the Trump administration activated the California National Guard without gubernatorial consent to quell largely peaceful protests in Los Angeles in response to the administration's immigration policy and actions.¹⁰ A federal judge recently found that deployment violated the Posse Comitatus Act, which generally prohibits the use of the military to "execute the laws."¹¹ Despite that ruling and negative national polling,¹² the president appears poised to replicate his Los Angeles and D.C. National Guard deployment in cities across the country, recently authorizing the deployment of National Guard troops in Memphis.¹³ Additionally, the Pentagon is reportedly making preparations to deploy the National Guard in Chicago,¹⁴ and President Trump has also discussed sending the Guard to Baltimore, New York, New Orleans and Oakland.¹⁵

The Trump administration's actual and threatened National Guard intervention is part of a pattern and practice of weaponizing the federal government and law enforcement against the president's perceived political opponents. Since President Trump's return to office, the FBI raided the home and office of Trump aide-turned-critic John Bolton,¹⁶ U.S. marshals

¹⁰ Justin Jouvenal and Alex Horton, Trump charts new territory in bypassing Newsom to deploy National Guard, Washington Post (June 8, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/06/08/trump-national-guard-la-protests-law/>.

¹¹ *Newsom v. Trump*, No. 25-cv-04870-CRB 2025, WL 2501619 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 2, 2025); 18 U.S.C. § 1385.

¹² Josh Meyer, *Voters split on Trump's DC police takeover, National Guard deployment, new poll*, USA Today (Aug. 20, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/08/20/trump-takeover-national-guard-washington-dc-voters-split/85739056007>.

¹³ Luke Broadwater and Emily Cochrane, *Trump Signs Off on Sending the National Guard to Memphis*, New York Times (Sept. 15, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/15/us/politics/trump-memphis-national-guard-crime.html>.

¹⁴ Dan Lamothe, *Pentagon plans military deployment in Chicago as Trump eyes crackdown*, Washington Post (Aug. 23, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/08/23/trump-chicago-military-national-guard/>.

¹⁵ Aaron Pellish, *Trump says he may send National Guard to Chicago*, New York, Politico (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/22/trump-national-guard-chicago-new-york-00519849>; Rachel Treisman, *How Chicago, Baltimore and New Orleans are reacting to Trump's National Guard threats*, NPR (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/05/nx-s1-5530051/trump-national-guard-chicago-baltimore-new-orleans>; Anser Hassan, *Pres. Trump threatens to send National Guard to Oakland: Here's how city leaders are responding*, ABC7 News (Aug. 12, 2025), <https://abc7news.com/post/president-donald-trump-threatens-send-national-guard-oakland-heres-how-city-leaders-are-responding/17514407>.

¹⁶ Dan Mangan, *FBI raids home, office of John Bolton, former Trump national security advisor*, CNBC (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/22/fbi-raid-john-bolton-trump-patel.html>.

were sent to the house of former Department of Justice (DOJ) pardon attorney Liz Oyer to presumably intimidate her¹⁷ and the DOJ brought charges against Rep. LaMonica McIver after an altercation during a visit to a New Jersey immigration detention facility.¹⁸ The Trump administration has also purged the DOJ, including the D.C. U.S. Attorney's office and the FBI, of officials who worked on investigations into the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, President Trump's handling of classified documents or other cases involving President Trump.¹⁹

Even against that troubling backdrop, President Trump's deployment of the National Guard in D.C. is a startling escalation. The Trump administration's prior weaponization of government entities targeted current and former government officials and a discrete protest in Los Angeles. Those moves were alarming in their own right, but pale in comparison to the apparent weaponization of the U.S. military apparatus against the general public through the deployment of the National Guard in Washington, D.C., and the threatened deployments in cities across the country. The apparent, if not actual, intent of this escalation appears to be to intimidate ordinary Americans and simultaneously normalize the presence of the military in our streets.

This mobilization has been made possible in large part by the unique status of the D.C. National Guard, which is the only guard controlled exclusively by the president.²⁰ The National Guard in each state is controlled by the governor of the state in which they reside and can only be brought under the president's control if it is federalized.²¹ Similarly, in other non-states, like Guam and Puerto Rico, the National Guard is controlled by the Governor of Guam and the Governor of Puerto Rico respectively, and, similarly, only come under the

¹⁷ Sarah N. Lynch, *US marshals were mobilized to warn fired DOJ lawyer over congressional testimony, attorney says*, Reuters (Apr. 7, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-dept-mobilized-armed-marshals-warn-ex-lawyer-over-congressional-2025-04-07>.

¹⁸ Bill Chappell, *Rep. McIver is indicted on federal charges related to tussle at immigration facility*, NPR (June 11, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/06/11/g-s1-72175/mciver-indicted-federal-charges-immigration-new-jersey>.

¹⁹ Brajesh Upadhyay, *Trump administration fires justice department lawyers who investigated him*, BBC (Jan. 27, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy48j7yxl08o>; Spencer S. Hsu and Tom Jackman, *D.C. U.S. attorney fires Jan. 6 prosecutors, launches new probes*, Washington Post (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/01/31/jan6-prosecutors-fired-dc-martin>; Perry Stein and Amy B. Wang, *Bondi fires 20 Justice Dept. employees involved in Trump prosecutions*, Washington Post (July 12, 2025), [washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/07/12/bondi-trump-justice-fbi-firings/?itid=lk_inline_manual_10](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/07/12/bondi-trump-justice-fbi-firings/?itid=lk_inline_manual_10); Carrie Johnson, *Fired FBI agents allege retribution, incompetence at top security agency*, NPR (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/10/g-s1-87947/fbi-lawsuit-firing-retribution>.

²⁰ District of Columbia National Guard, *About Us*, <https://dc.ng.mil/About-Us>.

²¹ Joseph Nunn and Spencer Reynolds, *One Week of Trump's DC Takeover Attempt*, Brennan Center for Justice (Aug. 19, 2025), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/one-week-trumps-dc-takeover-attempt>.

president's control if federalized.²² The president's exclusive control over the D.C. National Guard therefore stands out as an anomaly. As Sen. Van Hollen and Del. Holmes Norton have acknowledged,²³ reform is desperately needed to bring the D.C. National Guard in line with all of the other National Guards—state and nonstate alike.

Our Founders were clear eyed about the threat posed by a chief executive using the military to police the American homeland. The risk is even greater with regard to a president who sought to overturn the results of the 2020 election and has taken steps to unconstitutionally assert increased federal authority over election administration and regulation in advance of the 2026 and 2028 elections.

At the end of his first term, President Trump tried to overturn the results of an election he lost through a barrage of failed legal challenges²⁴ and by inciting an insurrection²⁵ at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, as Congress attempted to certify the results of the election.²⁶ During the insurrection, President Trump failed to promptly activate the D.C. National Guard as a group of his supporters violently stormed the Capitol and attacked law enforcement, despite urgent bipartisan congressional requests for security assistance.²⁷

Now back in office, the Trump administration is attempting to intrude on the election administration and regulation responsibilities that the Constitution entrusts to the states

²² Joseph Nunn and Spencer Reynolds, One Week of Trump's DC Takeover Attempt, Brennan Center for Justice (Aug. 19, 2025),

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/one-week-trumps-dc-takeover-attempt>.

²³ Press Release, Office of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Norton, Van Hollen Introduce Bills to Grant D.C. Full Control Over D.C. National Guard and Police (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://norton.house.gov/media/press-releases/norton-van-hollen-introduce-bills-grant-dc-full-control-over-dc-national-guard>.

²⁴ William Cummings, Joey Garrison and Jim Sargent, *By the numbers: President Donald Trump's failed efforts to overturn the election*, USA Today (Jan. 6, 2021), <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/politics/elections/2021/01/06/trumps-failed-efforts-overturn-election-numbers/4130307001>.

²⁵ *Anderson v. Griswold*, 543 P.3d 283, 336 (Colo. 2023) (finding that “President Trump engaged in insurrection” on January 6, 2021), rev'd sub nom. on other grounds, *Trump v. Anderson*, 601 U.S. 100 (2024).

²⁶ Deirdre Walsh and Barbara Sprunt, Under the shadow of the Jan. 6, 2021 riot, Congress certifies the 2024 election, NPR (Jan. 6, 2025),

<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/06/nx-s1-5250029/january-6-congress-election-certification>.

²⁷ Luke Broadwater, Maggie Haberman, Catie Edmondson, and Stephanie Lai, *Jan. 6 Transcripts Detail Failures in Surveillance and National Guard Response*, New York Times (Dec. 29, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/29/us/politics/jan-6-transcripts-national-guard-trump.html>; Luke Broadwater, *Sidelined on Jan. 6, Walker Has Top Job Securing Capitol Against a Repeat*, New York Times (Sep. 17, 2021),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/us/politics/william-walker-capitol-riot-security.html>; Michael S. Schmidt and Luke Broadwater, *Officers' Injuries, Including Concussions, Show Scope of Violence at Capitol Riot*, New York Times (Feb. 11, 2021),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/us/politics/capitol-riot-police-officer-injuries.html>.

and to Congress, not to the executive branch.²⁸ President Trump has issued an executive order on voting²⁹ which a bipartisan group of former state secretaries of states called an “existential threat” to states’ role in election administration,³⁰ and his administration has requested access to state voter rolls, a move which is “cause for concern and poses risks to voters and election officials.”³¹

In the context of President Trump’s election-sabotage efforts during his first term, his current administration’s attempted intrusion into election administration and his notable failure to activate the National Guard on January 6, 2021, President Trump’s current activation of the D.C. National Guard now should be understood as an attempt to normalize the deployment and presence of military personnel in our streets for potential future antidemocratic or election-sabotage maneuvers.

Congress must take seriously the threat that President Trump will deploy the National Guard in a future effort to overturn lawful election results, possibly on election day to intimidate voters from going to the polls, or on January 6, 2029, to once again prevent election certification and interfere with the peaceful transfer of power should he not like the outcome. If Congress does not stand up to this authoritarian power grab now, the president’s next attack on our democracy might succeed where January 6, 2021 failed.

Interference with D.C. Home Rule

In 1973, Congress passed the Home Rule Act, creating D.C.’s current municipal government—an elected mayor and council who govern the city, including the Metropolitan Police Department, on a day-to-day basis.³² At issue here is Section 740 of the Home Rule Act, which provides that if the president “determines that special conditions of an emergency nature exist which require the use of the Metropolitan Police force for Federal purposes, he may direct the Mayor to provide him, and the Mayor shall provide, such services of the

²⁸ See, e.g., *State v. Meadows*, 88 F.4th 1331, 1346 (11th Cir. 2023), cert. denied, 145 S. Ct. 545 (2024) (quoting *Roudebush v. Hartke*, 405 U.S. 15, 24 (1972)) (“The Constitution empowers *only* the states and Congress to ‘regulate the conduct of [federal] elections.’”) (emphasis added).

²⁹ Exec. Order No. 14248, 90 F.R. 14005 (March. 25, 2025), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/preserving-and-protecting-the-integrity-of-american-elections>.

³⁰ Brief of Bipartisan Former State Secretaries of State as Amici Curiae in Support of League and LULAC Plaintiffs’ Joint Motion for Preliminary Injunction, *League of United Latin Am. Citizens v. Exec. Off. of the President*, No. 1:25-cv-00946-CKK (D.D.C. Apr. 24, 2025), <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.dcd.279032/gov.uscourts.dcd.279032.105.0.pdf>.

³¹ Eileen O’Connor, *Justice Department has Demanded Voter Files from at Least 22 States*, Brennan Center for Justice. (Sept. 9, 2025), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/justice-department-has-demanded-voter-files-least-21-states>.

³² District of Columbia Home Rule Act, Pub. L. 93-198 (1973).

Metropolitan Police force as the President may deem necessary and appropriate” for a period of no more than 30 days unless Congress authorizes an extension.³³

The Trump administration’s attempted takeover of MPD exceeds the narrow authority over MPD that Congress granted the president under Section 740, which Congress conditioned on the presence of emergency circumstances and limited to “Federal purposes.” Those conditions are not met here. President Trump’s claimed basis for the August 11 emergency declaration—“out of control” crime³⁴—is belied by the fact that violent crime in D.C. is at a 30-year low.³⁵ More importantly, addressing local crime, even in the nation’s capitol, is hardly a federal purpose within the meaning of Section 740. Even if those conditions were met, no part of Section 740 allows the federal government to install its own police commissioner or limit the authority of sitting MPD officials.

Combatting crime and promoting public safety are laudable goals. But if President Trump genuinely cared about crime and public safety in D.C., he wouldn’t have taken so many actions that make the District and its residents less safe. He would not have sat idly by on January 6, 2021, and failed to promptly activate the D.C. National Guard as a mob that he summoned to D.C. attacked the Capitol, resulting in the death of one Capitol Police officer, injuries to approximately 140 other officers and millions of dollars in property damage.³⁶ He wouldn’t have pardoned the more than 1,500 individuals who participated in the attack, some of whom have already been charged with committing new crimes, in one of his first official acts upon returning to the White House this past January.³⁷ He wouldn’t have moved

³³ *Id.* sec. 740.

³⁴ Exec. Order No. 14333, 90 F.R. 39301 (Aug. 11, 2025), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/declaring-a-crime-emergency-in-the-district-of-columbia>.

³⁵ Press Release, U.S. Attorney’s Office, District of Columbia, Violent Crime in D.C. Hits 30 Year Low (Jan. 3, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/violent-crime-dc-hits-30-year-low>.

³⁶ Luke Broadwater, Maggie Haberman, Catie Edmondson, and Stephanie Lai, *Jan. 6 Transcripts Detail Failures in Surveillance and National Guard Response*, New York Times (Dec. 29, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/29/us/politics/jan-6-transcripts-national-guard-trump.html>; Luke Broadwater, *Sidelined on Jan. 6, Walker Has Top Job Securing Capitol Against a Repeat*, New York Times (Sep. 17, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/17/us/politics/william-walker-capitol-riot-security.html>; Michael S. Schmidt and Luke Broadwater, *Officers’ Injuries, Including Concussions, Show Scope of Violence at Capitol Riot*, New York Times (Feb. 11, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/us/politics/capitol-riot-police-officer-injuries.html>; Scott MacFarlane, *Jan. 6 offenders have paid only a fraction of restitution owed for damage to U.S. Capitol during riot*, CBS News (June 13, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jan-6-restitution-capitol-damage>.

³⁷ Max Matza, *Proud Boys and Oath Keepers among over 1,500 Capitol riot defendants pardoned by Trump*, BBC (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5y7l47xrpko>; Linnaea Honl-Stuenkel, *At least 10 pardoned insurrectionists face other criminal charges*, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (June 4, 2025), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-investigations/at-least-10-pardoned-insurrectionists-face-other-criminal-charges>.

to slash public security funding in D.C. by nearly \$20 million.³⁸ He wouldn't have fired long-tenured criminal prosecutors at the D.C. U.S. Attorney's office³⁹ and replaced them with military prosecutors unfamiliar with civil or D.C. courts,⁴⁰ and he would have prioritized filling D.C. Superior Court vacancies, which have delayed some prosecutions for years.⁴¹

Instead, President Trump has used the pretext of public safety to once again target and intimidate the residents of D.C.⁴² As a result, children are walking to school past armed National Guard troops,⁴³ street traffic is halted for indiscriminate federal checkpoints,⁴⁴ many residents are scared to go to work;⁴⁵ and restaurant reservations are plummeting as businesses suffer.⁴⁶ D.C. residents overwhelmingly oppose this takeover of their city,⁴⁷ but

³⁸ Courtney Rozen, *Washington, DC, Facing \$20 Million Security Funding Cut Despite Trump Complaints of Crime*, Reuters (Aug. 8, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/washington-dc-facing-20-million-security-funding-cut-despite-trump-complaints-2025-08-08>.

³⁹ Glenn Thrush et al., *More Than a Dozen Prosecutors at Washington U.S. Attorney's Office Are Dismissed*, New York Times (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/31/us/politics/prosecutors-us-attorneys-office-trump-firings.html>.

⁴⁰ Rebecca Beitsch, *Military Lawyers to Handle Civilian Crimes in DC*, The Hill (Aug. 21, 2025), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5463383-military-lawyers-civilian-crimes-dc-takeover>.

⁴¹ Fox 5 Washington DC, *DC Court Vacancies Stall Some Criminal Trials Until 2027* (YouTube, Aug. 13, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8E3Byzrpis>.

⁴² Donald Sherman, *DC is a Frequent Target of Trump's Strongman Actions. Our Democracy Could be Collateral Damage*, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (Aug. 18, 2025), <https://www.citizensforethics.org/news/analysis/dc-is-a-frequent-target-of-trumps-strongman-actions-our-democracy-could-be-collateral-damage>.

⁴³ Mark Sherman, Ashraf Khalil & Sophia Tareen, *Schools Reopen in DC with Parents Anxious Over Trump's Armed Patrols*, AP News (Aug. 25, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/capital-intervention-trump-national-guard-school-d39c34d3e6a2ec367682f13926b3e0b8>; Julie Carey, *National Guard Troops in DC Begin Carrying Firearms*, NBC Washington (Aug. 25, 2025), <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/national-guard-troops-in-dc-begin-carrying-firearms/3979438/>.

⁴⁴ Brian Todd et al., *Crowd in DC Outraged by Federal Law Enforcement Presence as Cars Stopped on Busy Street*, CNN (Aug. 14, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/13/politics/national-guard-washington-dc-police>.

⁴⁵ Jessica Sidman & Franziska Wild, *Many DC Restaurant Workers Fear Going to Work Amid Trump's Immigration Crackdown*, Washingtonian (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2025/08/26/many-dc-restaurant-workers-fear-going-to-work-amid-trumps-immigration-crackdown/>; Kira Lerner, *'It's Not Safe in DC as an Immigrant': Racial Profiling Surged During Trump's Washington Takeover*, The Guardian (Sep. 10, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/10/trump-washington-dc-takeover>.

⁴⁶ Tim Carman & Warren Rojas, *'The City is Dead': D.C. Restaurant Reservations Drop Amid Federal Crackdown*, Wash. Post (Aug. 19, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/food/2025/08/19/dc-restaurants-business-down-police-crackdown>.

⁴⁷ Nicole Markus, *Supermajority of Washington Residents Oppose Trump's Police Takeover, Poll Finds*, Politico (Aug. 20, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/20/dc-trump-police-poll-00515947>.

without representation in Congress and under the thumb of federal control, Washingtonians have limited political power to push back.

This Committee is currently considering a series of bills that would restrict D.C. home rule and give Congress more day-to-day responsibility over the city. That is not the answer. D.C. needs more democracy and more independence, not less. Roughly 700,000 people live in this city, and like all other Americans, they deserve full political freedom and representation in local and national affairs.

Transparency and Accountability

In addition to the threat to democracy and local autonomy that President Trump's incursion on the District presents, the Trump Administration has been predictably secretive about the monetary and other costs of its actions. Public reporting estimates the cost of the National Guard deployment in D.C. to be approximately \$1 million per day.⁴⁸ President Trump and Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine recently extended deployment of the D.C. and Ohio National Guards, respectively, through November, and other states could follow suit, further increasing the costs taxpayers will incur due to the D.C. takeover.⁴⁹

Third-party estimates, while useful, are not a sufficient replacement for the first-hand accounting by the government that American taxpayers deserve. Unsurprisingly, the Trump administration is not being forthcoming about the real costs or even the alleged benefits of its actions. The Trump administration has yet to produce documents CREW requested last month under the Freedom of Information Act seeking information about how much federal agencies are spending and what law enforcement assets they are diverting from core national security functions as a result of the takeover.⁵⁰ It is also unclear, as Sen. Richard Blumenthal has noted, whether D.C. National Guard troops will experience a delay in payment for their service. Absent these documents, the public is left to wonder how much taxpayer money the government is truly spending on this political stunt, and whether the troops who are faithfully executing their mission will receive the pay they deserve at the time they deserve it.

⁴⁸ Haley Britzky, *Experts Estimate National Guard Deployment in DC is Costing Roughly \$1 Million a Day*, CNN (Aug. 28, 2025),

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/28/politics/cost-national-guard-deployment-washington-dc>.

⁴⁹ Anne Flaherty & Chris Boccia, *Army Extends Orders for DC National Guards Through Nov. 30: Officials*, ABC News (Sep. 4, 2025),

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/army-extends-orders-dc-national-guard-nov-30/story?id=125266247>; Shahid Meighan, *DeWine Announces When Ohio National Guard Troops will End Mission in Washington, DC*, Columbus Dispatch (Sep. 11, 2025),

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/local/2025/09/10/dewine-ohio-national-guard-dc-deployment-will-end-nov-30/86084437007>.

⁵⁰ Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, *CREW Requests Records on Trump's DC Takeover* (Aug. 20, 2025),

<https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/foia-requests/crew-requests-records-on-trumps-dc-takeover>.

Moreover, the costs associated with the National Guard deployment are not limited to government expenditures. National Guard servicemembers are generally part-time troops who train one weekend per month and an additional two weeks per year, and only enter active duty service as needed.⁵¹ Many National Guard members work full-time civilian jobs in their communities.⁵² During a prolonged deployment like this one, National Guard troops are taken away from their jobs, communities and families for extended periods of time, causing a loss in economic productivity and tax revenue in their home states, in addition to the hardship the families of National Guard troops undoubtedly experience while their loved ones are deployed. In addition, when states send their National Guard troops to D.C., they deplete their capacity to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies, such as natural disasters, within their borders—an issue of particular concern in Gulf and Atlantic Coast states during hurricane season.⁵³ This concern was highlighted by at least one governor, South Carolina's Henry McMaster, who in a press release warned that his state's "guardsmen are subject to immediate recall if a hurricane or other natural disaster requires their return to South Carolina."⁵⁴ Perhaps these out-of-state deployments would be more justifiable if National Guard troops were performing actual military functions rather than merely picking up trash and maintaining parks in D.C.—tasks that would have ordinarily been performed by the National Park Service had the Trump administration not reduced the agency's D.C. custodial and maintenance staff from 200 employees to 20.⁵⁵ The bravery and selflessness of individuals who serve in the National Guard and perform their duty, as with any other servicemembers, is commendable, but President Trump's use of the National Guard in D.C. is misguided and does more harm than good.

It is understandable that governors would accede to the president's request to send their states' National Guard troops to D.C. But President Trump should never have put those governors or servicemembers in that position in the first place. Now, the American people, and particularly residents of the states whose National Guardsmen and women are in D.C., will face the impacts of this deployment. The public deserves to know the true costs and consequences of the D.C. takeover.

⁵¹ Army National Guard, *Guard FAQs* (accessed Sept. 15, 2025), <https://nationalguard.com/guard-faqs>.

⁵² Anshu Siripurapu, Noah Berman, & Diana Roy, *What Does the U.S. National Guard Do?*, Council on Foreign Rels. (Sep. 3, 2025), <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-does-us-national-guard-do>.

⁵³ Joseph Clark, *National Guard Prepared to Support Local Communities as Hurricane, Wildfire Seasons Approach*, DoD News (May 28, 2024), <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3789165/national-guard-prepared-to-support-local-communities-as-hurricane-wildfire-seas/>.

⁵⁴ Press Release, South Carolina Office of the Governor, Gov. Henry McMaster Authorizes Deployment of National Guard to Washington, D.C. (Aug. 16, 2025), <https://governor.sc.gov/news/2025-08/gov-henry-mcmaster-authorizes-deployment-national-guard-washington-dc>.

⁵⁵ Tara Copp, *National Guard Troops Deployed in D.C. Add Sanitation, Landscaping Duties*, Wash. Post (Aug. 27, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/08/27/dc-national-guard-trash-removal-trump-takeover>.

Conclusion

The Trump administration's D.C. takeover threatens the principles that form the core of our nation: representative, accountable government, freedom from tyranny and the preservation of individual liberty among them. Six years ago, the former chairman of this committee, the late Elijah Cummings, challenged all of us: "When we're dancing with the angels, the question will be asked...what did we do to make sure we kept our democracy intact?"⁵⁶ At this critical inflection point in the history of our nation, I encourage every member of this committee, every member of Congress and every American to ask themselves that question today.

⁵⁶ *Hearing with Michael Cohen, Former Attorney to President Donald Trump before the H. Comm. on Oversight & Reform*, 116 Cong. 181 (2019) (statement of Chairman Elijah Cummings).