



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

PATRICK YOES NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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The Honorable Kevin O. McCarthy
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem S. Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Speaker, Representative Jeffries and Senators Schumer and McConnell,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to urge Congress to override President Biden's veto of H.J. Res. 42, a resolution disapproving the adoption of the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act (CPJRAA) by the Washington, D.C. City Council. The resolution was passed by a bipartisan majority in both chambers, and we are calling on both the House and Senate to override the Presidential veto and sustain the will of the Congress on this matter.

The Fraternal Order of Police is the union that represents the men and women of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). These officers—the ones that keep the streets and neighborhoods of the District safe—have made it clear that the legislation would make the city less safe. Those who live, work, and visit the nation's capital would pay the price—especially in the areas of the city that are hit the hardest by the current increase in violent crime. If Congress does not override the President's veto, there will undoubtedly be more crimes, more victims, and less officers to protect and serve.

Irresponsible legislative actions like this have contributed to the recruitment and retention crisis in the District. In the last three years, the MPD has lost 1,236 officers—nearly one-third of the department. Of these, 40% were resignations—men and women who just walked away from their law enforcement careers in the District of Columbia. In fact, overall staffing at MPD is at its lowest level in 50 years. We believe that this type of attrition is directly attributable to the appalling way these officers have been treated by the City Council and the total indifference the Council has toward law enforcement and public safety. The only winners in this scenario are the criminals and the council members who are enabling them.

The CPJRAA would also strip MPD officers of their right to bargain collectively with the city over disciplinary procedures—a right which all other public employees have. It is completely unfair to treat public employees differently under the law simply because they are police officers. They

have rights as well and to treat them with such mistrust and disrespect will further contribute to the District's inability to keep good officers and hire the next generation of officers.

In fact, it must be clearly acknowledged that the impetus of the legislation—a vague notion of policing reform—is interwoven with inaccuracies and outright falsehoods. Chokeholds have been banned in the District of Columbia since 1985, but to acknowledge this fact counters the false narrative that the D.C. Council has constructed. The real goal of this legislation is to deprive law enforcement officers of their constitutionally protected rights to due process when facing internal discipline. Any true civil libertarian or supporter of basic worker rights will see this legislation for exactly what it is—a tapestry of misstatements, half-truths, and falsehoods aimed at depriving the officers of the MPD, who are among the last remaining heroes in D.C., of their due process protections. The D.C. City Council is seeking not to defund its police, but to drive them away, which, as mentioned above, has led to an unprecedented level of attrition among active officers.

Congress and the President previously blocked legislation that would have opened the flood gates to criminals and criminal behavior. With this latest salvo, it seems like the government of the District of Columbia is doubling down on its incompetency. According to a recent national study, Washington, D.C. is the worst-run city in America—and the D.C. Council seems to be doing everything it can to make sure they hang on to that title.

This veto unequivocally invites mayhem and lawlessness to the District of Columbia, jeopardizing the safety of everyone who lives, works, and visits here. It also sets a terrible precedent for our country. If employee rights and public safety are sacrificed to satisfy the whims of irresponsible politicians, what kind of message does that send to other cities across the nation? Police officers will see their voices in the workplace silenced and their hands tied in our neighborhoods. If the President will not support basic worker rights and if the Congress will not act to protect worker rights, then no working man or woman is safe from injustice. Congress has a responsibility to override the President's veto and send a strong message that this is not how we protect the rights of all public employees or the citizens of our communities.

On behalf of the more than 367,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge in the strongest possible terms that the House and Senate act swiftly to override this ill-considered veto and protect the safety of the public in Washington, D.C. and the rights of the officers that keep the District safe. If I can provide any additional information in support of this resolution, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in our Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes
National President