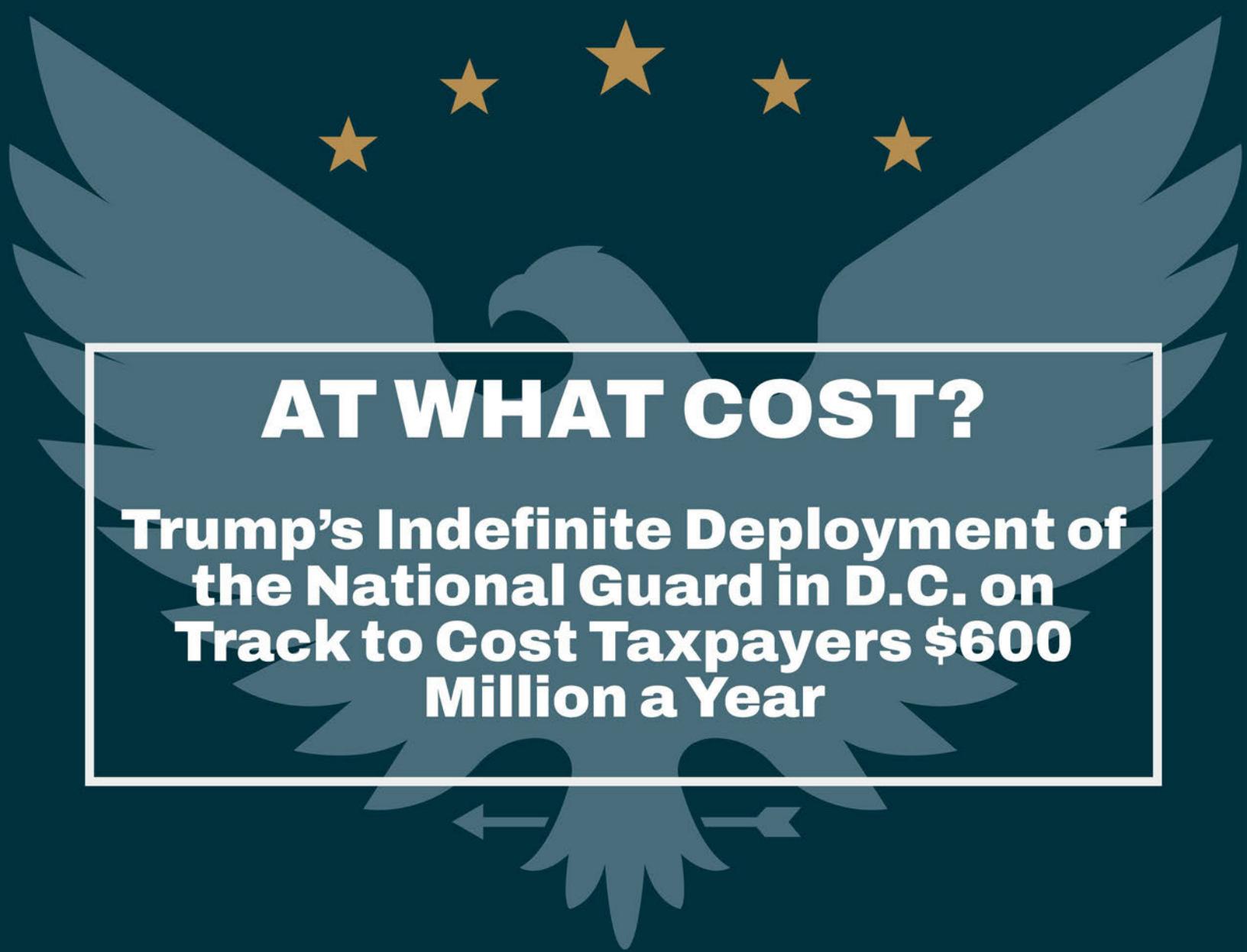


United States Senate Committee On

# **HOMELAND SECURITY & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Ranking Member Gary Peters  
Ranking Member Andy Kim



## **AT WHAT COST?**

**Trump's Indefinite Deployment of  
the National Guard in D.C. on  
Track to Cost Taxpayers \$600  
Million a Year**

HSGAC Minority Staff Report

February 2026

***At What Cost? Trump’s Indefinite Deployment of the National Guard in D.C. on Track to Cost Taxpayers \$600 Million a Year***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the direction of President Trump, the National Guard will spend an estimated \$332 million by February 28, 2026 to feed, house, and deploy Guard troops in Washington, D.C. streets and neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> This figure is substantial, but it will likely amount to just a fraction of the total cost of the full operation. Recent press reports indicate the deployment of National Guard troops to D.C. has been extended until the end of 2026.<sup>2</sup> However, the leadership of the D.C. National Guard were unable to give staff an end date and told staff that they are planning for an extended deployment. When asked what metrics would demonstrate success for the deployment, National Guard leadership deferred to the Administration, but stated that they are “driving toward zero” crime and overdoses in D.C. – an unrealistic or unachievable outcome that would leave them in D.C. indefinitely.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. Senators Gary Peters, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC), and Andy Kim, Ranking Member of the HSGAC Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia, and Census, directed Minority Committee staff (hereinafter “staff”) to conduct oversight visits to the D.C. National Guard headquarters in September 2025, October 2025, and January 2026, after the Department of Defense (DoD) failed to respond to questions about the deployment. This report identifies information received by staff and Members during multiple visits and through follow-up conversations and written questions. This report finds that, at a significant cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, President Trump’s orders to deploy Guard troops in D.C. have resulted in no directly attributable impact on crime, risks diverting law enforcement resources away from cities, lacks clearly defined goals and metrics, and is contributing to rising concern that the Administration is militarizing U.S. cities for political purposes.

In early August 2025, President Trump announced he was activating the National Guard in D.C. to address “the epidemic of crime.”<sup>4</sup> However, months into the mission, the National Guard cannot point to tangible crime reduction successes specifically tied to their efforts.<sup>5</sup> In fact, as this report identified, more than three dozen police with the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) at various times have been forced to go on leave from MPD while deployed with the Guard, decreasing the actual number of D.C. police able to fight crime during a policing shortage. Additionally, this deployment has raised questions regarding military readiness in the event of a foreign conflict because regular National Guard trainings have languished. This is particularly true as the D.C. Guard is deployed indefinitely and is expected to manage this current deployment in addition to more significant Guard and federal law enforcement deployment needs anticipated in association with the America 250 commemoration in July 2026, which has been designated as a National Security Special Event.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, as this report’s findings show, the Administration’s militarization of the nation’s capital is costing American taxpayers about \$1.65 million per day and is normalizing the deployment of military

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<sup>1</sup> District of Columbia National Guard, Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia and Census (Jan. 7, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Associated Press, National Guard troops to stay on Washington, DC, streets through 2026 (Jan. 16, 2026) ([apnews.com/article/national-guard-washington-dc-trump-db4e232d38ae5978975191edd496b94c](http://apnews.com/article/national-guard-washington-dc-trump-db4e232d38ae5978975191edd496b94c)).

<sup>3</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Presidential Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, *Restoring Law and Order in the District of Columbia* (Aug. 11, 2025) ([www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/declaring-a-crime-emergency-in-the-district-of-columbia/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/declaring-a-crime-emergency-in-the-district-of-columbia/)).

<sup>5</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

personnel in an American city.<sup>7</sup> In the span of seven months, President Trump’s deployment of the National Guard in D.C. will cost taxpayers \$332 million. This equates to more than half of the budget for D.C.’s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) for the entire 2025 fiscal year.<sup>8</sup> Tragically, two servicemembers have died in this deployment while another was gravely injured. West Virginia (WV) National Guard Specialist Sarah Beckstrom was killed in the line of duty in a targeted attack on November 26 and her colleague WV National Guard Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe was critically injured. Additionally, Alabama National Guard Staff Sgt. Jacob Hill died suffering a medical emergency while off duty at his unit’s hotel.

Finally, as described in this report, the D.C. National Guard is using several software and social media analytics tools – including Maven Smart System (a DOD platform supported by Palantir software), Dataminr First Alert, Meltwater and Cision – to support its deployment in Washington, D.C. While staff did not identify clear indication that individuals’ constitutional rights were being compromised, the Guard’s use of these social media monitoring tools raises potential privacy and civil liberties concerns which call for specialized First Amendment safeguards and training more traditionally undertaken by law enforcement officers. This further underscores how the National Guard’s deployment in an American city to serve a law enforcement related function stretches the Guard in ways that detract from its primary missions and raises additional questions about what is appropriate for the military to be doing within America’s borders.

While combating crime must be a priority at all levels of government, it is not clear that the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on deploying the National Guard, purportedly to support this effort, is effective in making the nation’s capital any safer. Instead, this report finds that the Trump Administration’s stated mission has blurred the line between military and civilian law enforcement, jeopardized the National Guard’s readiness, taken MPD officers and high-level civil servants away from their day jobs where they can directly intercept crime, introduced privacy and civil liberties concerns with the Guard’s use of information monitoring tools on Americans, and has eroded Americans’ trust in these important institutions.

## I. Claimed Authorities

In an unprecedented move, in August 2025, President Trump took control of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (MPD) pursuant to the *Home Rule Act*, which allows the President to use MPD officers for federal purposes during an emergency for up to 30 days.<sup>9</sup> Under the law, use of MPD personnel beyond 30 days requires Congressional authorization. President Trump cited a “crime emergency” as his rationale for taking control of MPD despite reports that crime levels are at a 30-year low in the District of Columbia at the time of the declaration.<sup>10</sup> President Trump’s action sidestepped democratically elected D.C. leadership and stripped them of the ability to make their own decisions about law enforcement in the city.

Following his declaration of a crime emergency in D.C., President Trump began to leverage his command of the D.C. National Guard. The D.C. Guard is currently deployed pursuant to Executive Order 14333, “Declaring a Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia,” and Executive Order 14339, “Additional Measures to Address the Crime Emergency in the District of Columbia.”<sup>11</sup> In addition to mobilizing the D.C.

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<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>8</sup> District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, *Metropolitan Police Department* (2026) ([cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/fa0\\_mpd\\_chapter\\_2026m.pdf](http://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/fa0_mpd_chapter_2026m.pdf)).

<sup>9</sup> District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act, Pub. L. No. 93-198.

<sup>10</sup> *How long can Trump’s D.C. takeover last? Here’s what to know*, NPR (Aug. 20, 2025) ([www.npr.org/2025/08/20/1005505987/trump-dc-takeover-timing-national-guard-police](http://www.npr.org/2025/08/20/1005505987/trump-dc-takeover-timing-national-guard-police)).

<sup>11</sup> Exec. Order No. 14333, 90 Fed. Reg. 39301 (Aug. 11, 2025); Exec. Order No. 14339, 90 Fed. Reg. 42121 (Aug. 25, 2025).

Guard, the National Guard of several states have also been deployed to D.C. These units are operating under Title 32 status.

When the National Guard is deployed under Title 32 status, those members are considered to be operating in “hybrid” status, which provides the President with authority to organize and deliver orders to the Guard.<sup>12</sup> This means that the National Guard remains under the command of its respective state or territory governor but is permitted to perform federal missions, paid with federal funds and benefits. While most Title 32 activations are for training for federal missions, Section 502(f) of Title 32 allows the National Guard to be deployed in “support of operations or missions undertaken by the member’s unit at the request of the President or Secretary of Defense.”<sup>13</sup>

When the National Guard is operating under state control, meaning it has not been called into federal service, it may participate in some law enforcement activities pursuant to state laws.<sup>14</sup> The federal government has long held the view that servicemembers operating under Title 32 are not subject to the *Posse Comitatus Act* which prohibits federal military from participating in civilian law enforcement.<sup>15</sup> The D.C. National Guard is unique because it is the only National Guard of a state or territory that is directly under the President's control. Whereas the Governor of a state serves as the Commander in Chief for its National Guard, the President serves as the Commander in Chief for the D.C. National Guard. Other National Guard units that are deployed to D.C., however, remain under their own state governor's authorities.

Members of both the D.C. National Guard and the other state units deployed to D.C. have been deputized by the U.S. Marshal Service.<sup>16</sup> While the D.C. National Guard informed staff that they are not engaged in law enforcement activities, this deputization does allow them to carry their service-issued weapon.<sup>17</sup>

## **II. Ongoing Litigation and National Deployments**

There is ongoing litigation regarding the legality of the Trump Administration’s deployments of National Guard servicemembers from one state to another without the consent of states where those servicemembers are deployed. In what is unavoidably a political act, the Trump Administration has deployed National Guard from Republican “red” states into Democratic “blue” states or cities throughout the country. President Trump has provided crime or immigration enforcement as the justification for the needed deployments. The Trump Administration claims that it is sending federalized National Guard units to these states and cities in support of federal law enforcement and to protect federal buildings.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> 32 U.S.C. § 502(f).

<sup>13</sup> 32 U.S.C. § 502.

<sup>14</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 12406; Title 10 of the United States Code allows for the President to call members in the National Guard into federal service in certain circumstances.

<sup>15</sup> Congressional Research Service, *The President’s Authority to Use the National Guard or the Armed Forces to Secure the Border* (LSB10121) (June 15, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> Document from the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Follow-up RFI Response* (Nov. 18, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> District of Columbia National Guard, Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia and Census (Sept. 24, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> Presidential Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Security for the Protection of Department of Homeland Security Functions* (June 7, 2025) ([www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/06/department-of-defense-security-for-the-protection-of-department-of-homeland-security-functions/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/06/department-of-defense-security-for-the-protection-of-department-of-homeland-security-functions/)).

California, Oregon, and Illinois have all separately sued the Trump administration for deploying servicemembers under Title 10 without the consent of their governors. Federal courts have repeatedly rejected the Administration's arguments, finding that the circumstances on the ground do not warrant the deployment of military servicemembers on U.S. soil.<sup>19</sup> A federal appeals court ordered troops out of Los Angeles in December, and a federal judge previously blocked deployment in Portland.<sup>20</sup> Most recently, the Supreme Court sided with Illinois in an "emergency docket" interim decision.<sup>21</sup> The President later said he would abandon efforts to deploy the National Guard in these three cities.<sup>22</sup> The U.S. Northern Command website, which provides federal protection mission updates, says that as of January 6, 2025, all "Title 10 troops in Portland, Los Angeles, and Chicago are conducting demobilization activities" and clarifies that they will return to their home units once complete.<sup>23</sup>

In Washington, D.C., the Attorney General of the District of Columbia sued to end the National Guard deployment on the grounds that it is unconstitutional and violates federal law on three principles: (1) illegal use of the military for law enforcement purposes, (2) presidential authorization of the National Guard to police D.C. without the District's consent, and (3) illegal assertion of federal command and control of National Guard troops in state militia status.<sup>24</sup> In November, U.S. District Judge Jia M. Cobb sided with the D.C. Attorney General, ordering the Administration to halt deployment in D.C. by December 11.<sup>25</sup> In response, the Administration filed a motion for stay pending appeal, asking the D.C. Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals to allow the deployment to continue while litigation is pending. The U.S. Court of Appeals has not ruled on that request yet, but on December 4, a panel of judges with the D.C. Circuit granted an administrative stay to allow the deployment to continue while they consider the request.<sup>26</sup>

At the time of this report President Trump has threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act in Minneapolis in another potential effort to politicize the National Guard and its deployments.<sup>27</sup>

### **III. Safe and Beautiful Task Force Organization**

As of January 7, 2026, the operation in D.C. includes 2,476 servicemembers from nine different states and Washington, D.C.<sup>28</sup> Servicemembers are assigned to six different task forces based on their state of

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<sup>19</sup> *Supreme Court rules against Trump in National Guard case*, NPR (Dec. 23, 2025) ([www.npr.org/2025/12/23/nx-s1-5641959/supreme-court-chicago-national-guard](http://www.npr.org/2025/12/23/nx-s1-5641959/supreme-court-chicago-national-guard)).

<sup>20</sup> *Newsom v. Trump*, No. 25-7781, Slip Op., at 1 (9th Cir. Dec. 12, 2025); *Oregon v. Trump*, No. 3:25-cv-175-IM, Slip Op., at 1 (D. Or. Oct. 4, 2025).

<sup>21</sup> *Trump v. Illinois*, 607 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2025).

<sup>22</sup> *Trump Abandons Efforts to Deploy National Guard to 3 Major Cities*, New York Times (Dec. 31, 2025) ([www.nytimes.com/2025/12/31/us/politics/trump-national-guard.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/31/us/politics/trump-national-guard.html)).

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Northern Command, Federal Protection Mission Updates ([www.northcom.mil/Missions/Homeland-Defense/Federal-Protection-Mission/](http://www.northcom.mil/Missions/Homeland-Defense/Federal-Protection-Mission/)) (accessed Jan. 15, 2026).

<sup>24</sup> *District of Columbia v. Donald J. Trump et al.*, 1:25-cv-03005, Complaint, at § 3 - 6 (D.D.C. Sep. 8, 2025).

<sup>25</sup> *District of Columbia v. Donald J. Trump et al.*, 1:25-cv-03005, slip op. at 1 (D.D.C. Nov. 20, 2025) (order granting preliminary injunction).

<sup>26</sup> *District of Columbia v. Donald J. Trump et al.*, 1:25-cv-03005, slip op., at 1. (D.D.C. Dec. 4, 2025) (administrative stay).

<sup>27</sup> *Pentagon readies 1,500 soldiers to possibly deploy to Minnesota, officials say*, The Washington Post (Jan. 18, 2026) ([www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/01/18/trump-minnesota-insurrection-act/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/01/18/trump-minnesota-insurrection-act/)).

<sup>28</sup> Document from the U.S. Army Senate Liaison Division to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Make D.C. Safe and Beautiful Frequently Asked Questions* (Oct. 28, 2025).

origin.<sup>29</sup> For operational planning, the Guard has divided the city into quadrants (north, east, south and the National Mall) centered around the “high trafficked” areas. No Guard units are currently deployed southeast of the Anacostia River, however, the D.C. Guard indicated they are looking to extend operations there, primarily in one or two metro stations. Staff asked the Guard why they focused on crime suppression in central D.C. but not in locations in Southeast D.C. such as Ward 8, which had the most incidences of violent crime in 2025 of any ward.<sup>30</sup> The Guard noted that the major crime issue in southeast D.C. is gun crime and the Guard is “a lousy tool for fixing gun crime.”<sup>31</sup> In central D.C. the Guard told staff that it aims to be an extra set of eyes and ears that allow police to carry out their responsibilities while the Guard deters petty crime like minor scuffles and theft with their presence.”<sup>32</sup>

In the course of an August weekend, the Guard set up a parking lot at a local military installation to serve as the mission support center for operations. The parking lot is full of tents, trailers, and shipping containers to support their daily logistics, which the Guard recently outfitted for winter. With the indefinite nature of the deployment, the Guard has not been able to secure more permanent, indoor space. Weapons and ammunition are stored in a large tent where 1,300 Guardsmen are armed daily. The Guard noted that moving from the D.C. Armory to the local installation allows them to limit disturbances to their activities from threats and protests. Besides the 2025 inauguration, this is the National Guard’s first time using this space as an operations center.<sup>33</sup>

#### **IV. Lack of Clear Metrics of Success**

The D.C. National Guard says that their estimated total budget for the Safe and Beautiful mission from August 11 through February 28, 2026 is **\$332 million**, which translates to approximately \$1.65 million per day.<sup>34</sup> This includes \$125 million for operations and maintenance costs, like food and nightly hotel rates but is primarily related to personnel costs. Because the mission has no known end date, only ongoing multi-month extensions, the D.C. Guard is unable to take sensible actions to mitigate costs, for example buying instead of renting certain equipment, or signing longer-term contracts for hotel stays to avoid market rates that are likely to spike as the America 250 celebrations commence this year.

D.C. National Guard Commanding General Leland Blanchard told staff that while their direction ultimately comes from the President, he sees their mission as driving certain metrics related to restoring law and order, such as violent crimes and overdoses, to **zero**.<sup>35</sup> This suggests that the Administration has not conveyed a mission end date or goals for success to the D.C. Guard. The D.C. National Guard have cited MPD statistics

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<sup>29</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

<sup>30</sup> Washington D.C. Crime Cards System ([crimecards.dc.gov](http://crimecards.dc.gov)).

<sup>31</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

<sup>32</sup> Washington D.C. Crime Cards System, *supra* note 31.

<sup>33</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

<sup>34</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1. Subsequent to the January 7 site visit, the Department of Defense verbally told staff that the D.C. National Guard will be encamped until December 31, 2026, which could allow them to enter into longer-term and more cost-efficient contracts for certain goods and services. With this new timeline and updated troop numbers, their updated cost estimate may be updated to \$288 million. However, the Guard did not provide substantiation or any documentation for this change as they have for prior cost projections.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

showing that violent crime has decreased following their deployment, but violent crime was *already decreasing* when they were called to duty on August 11. When the D.C. mission began on August 11, violent crime was already down 26 percent compared to the prior year, 2024.<sup>36</sup> Since the President's D.C. National Guard deployment began, the violent crime rate has decreased to 29 percent, however the National Guard is unable to demonstrate whether any decline in crime statistics was due to their deployment, increased presence of federal law enforcement, increased cooperation between MPD and the federal government, or is just the natural result of these ongoing trends.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, neither the National Guard nor the Trump Administration has provided any analysis demonstrating how investing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in this deployment would compare to instead investing this money in community policing through federal grant programs or investing these resources directly in MPD instead. The D.C. National Guard is on track to spend over \$602 million on an annual basis on President Trump's D.C. deployment.<sup>38</sup> By comparison, the approved fiscal year 2026 operating budget for MPD, in its entirety, is \$599 million.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the Trump administration could *more than double* the MPD annual operating budget with the amount it is projected to spend on the National Guard operation in D.C. The MPD budget is also more efficient from a personnel standpoint, supporting nearly double the amount of personnel (4,904 full-time equivalents in their fiscal year 2026 approved budget as compared to the 2,476 servicemembers currently deployed).<sup>40</sup> If the Administration instead invested this money directly into local law enforcement, D.C. would have ample resources to address crime and public safety more efficiently – directing resources where it is most concentrated – in high crime areas.

When pressed further on measurable metrics, the D.C. National Guard claims that their presence in places like the National Mall has suppressed petty crime and scuffles or fights, especially between groups of teenagers, that they have broken up or prevented from escalating.<sup>41</sup> They also described how they can serve as a support element focused on crowd control while MPD focuses on its specific law enforcement efforts. Within the last several months, servicemembers began carrying Narcan and have deployed it in 44 instances.<sup>42</sup> Servicemembers have also helped deliver a baby and prevent a stabbing.<sup>43</sup>

The D.C. National Guard has clearer metrics on their beautification effort and provided a handout to staff during the site visit (see appendix).<sup>44</sup> The D.C. Guard temporarily halted their beautification work for the winter in early November (due to weather) and will resume in the spring. However, as of September 24, 2025,

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<sup>36</sup> D.C. Metropolitan Police, 2025 Year-to-Date Crime Comparison (web.archive.org/web/20250811190949/https://mpdc.dc.gov/dailycrime).

<sup>37</sup> D.C. Metropolitan Police, 2026 Year-to-Date Crime Comparison (mpdc.dc.gov/dailycrime).

<sup>38</sup> \$332 million cost between the August 11, 2025 and February 28, 2026 period prorated to a full calendar year translates to \$602.9 million estimated annual cost.

<sup>39</sup> Government of the District of Columbia, FY 2026 Approved Budget and Financial Plan (Oct. 3, 2025) (app.box.com/s/jgirf8axcbxaknn2uucy7otk6hukx9t8).

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

<sup>41</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

<sup>42</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1; Narcan refers to naloxone, a life-saving medication that can block and reverse the effects of opioids, including heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone, and morphine.

<sup>43</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1.

<sup>44</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

the D.C. Guard had packed 6,030 pounds of food, painted 270 feet of fence, and pruned 65 trees, for example.<sup>45</sup> As a unit of comparison, the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation is budgeted \$83.6 million for all of Fiscal Year 2026.<sup>46</sup> The D.C. National Guard has already significantly outspent this total just on operational and maintenance expenses like food and housing. The Department of Defense has not done a comparative analysis to examine whether their beautification efforts could be achieved at a lower cost by other federal or local partners.<sup>47</sup> The Department of Defense also did not respond to an August 28 letter from Ranking Members Peters and Kim that included questions regarding mission cost.<sup>48</sup>

## **V. D.C. Deployment Jeopardizes Readiness**

During staff's September 24 and January 7 visits to the D.C. Armory, D.C. National Guard leadership shared that they had significant concerns that the domestic deployment of the National Guard to the District of Columbia has and will continue to decrease readiness, particularly as the Trump Administration has provided no end date for the recently extended mission.<sup>49</sup> Numerous historians and experts, as well as current and former Guardsmen have echoed these concerns.<sup>50</sup>

The two primary functions of the National Guard are to defend the American people against overseas threats and from disasters that strike at home.<sup>51</sup> To be able to sufficiently execute these vital functions requires frequent training that members of the Guard are forced to forego on extended domestic deployments like the ongoing one in the District of Columbia. D.C. National Guard have been mobilized since August, while other states' Guard members have cycled in and out of the District on much shorter voluntary deployments, allowing for their trainings to continue with fewer interruptions.

The D.C. Army National Guard includes roughly 1,200 people, the majority of which have been supporting the Safe and Beautiful Task Force at any given time. The D.C. Army National Guard is also preparing to staff up the America 250 Task Force to support this National Security Special Event and expect to

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<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation FY26 Budget ([cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/ha\\_dpr\\_chapter\\_2026o.pdf](http://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/ha_dpr_chapter_2026o.pdf)).

<sup>47</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from HSGAC Ranking Member Gary Peters and Senator Andy Kim to Attorney General Pamela Bondi, Department of Justice, Secretary Doug Burgum, Department of the Interior, Secretary Pete Hegseth, Department of Defense, and Kristi Noem, Department of Homeland Security (Aug. 22, 2025).

<sup>49</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 18, at 3; Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Trump's use of Guard may have lasting impact on cities and troops*, The Washington Post (Oct. 6, 2025) ([www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/10/06/national-guard-deployment-chicago-portland-trump/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/10/06/national-guard-deployment-chicago-portland-trump/)); *Former National Guard vice chief calls deployment to D.C. and "intimidation" tactic*, NPR (Aug. 20, 2025) ([www.npr.org/2025/08/20/nx-s1-5507032/more-national-guard-deployed-to-washington-dc](http://www.npr.org/2025/08/20/nx-s1-5507032/more-national-guard-deployed-to-washington-dc)); *Retired major general calls Trump's National Guard plans "unneeded and dangerous,"* PBS News (Aug. 26, 2025) ([www.pbs.org/newshour/show/retired-major-general-calls-trumps-national-guard-plans-unneeded-and-dangerous](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/retired-major-general-calls-trumps-national-guard-plans-unneeded-and-dangerous)); *Expanding National Guard Policing Powers Threatens U.S. Democracy and Security*, National Security Leaders for America (Aug. 27, 2025) ([www.nsl4a.org/nsl4a-announcements/expanding-guard-powers-threatens-democracy-and-security](http://www.nsl4a.org/nsl4a-announcements/expanding-guard-powers-threatens-democracy-and-security)); *National Guard may run out of money because of Trump's repeated deployments*, The Independent (Aug. 22, 2025) ([www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/national-guard-cost-donald-trump-deployments-b2812780.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/national-guard-cost-donald-trump-deployments-b2812780.html)).

<sup>51</sup> National Guard, *About the Guard* ([www.nationalguard.mil/About-the-Guard/#:~:text=The%20National%20Guard%20is%20the,our%20partnerships%2C%20we%20write%20it.](http://www.nationalguard.mil/About-the-Guard/#:~:text=The%20National%20Guard%20is%20the,our%20partnerships%2C%20we%20write%20it.)) (accessed Nov. 5, 2025).

mobilize a significant chunk of the available Guard to support this effort, much as it has done with the Task Force.<sup>52</sup> While the Guard is taking readiness and the impact to Guard members' lives into account with its staffing decisions, it is hard to see how these simultaneous massive deployments would not have a harmful impact on individual and unit preparation and wellbeing. Undoubtedly, it will also require many more Guard members from across the country to support one of the two missions.

In the context of an increasingly diverse and sophisticated threat environment, it is crucial that the D.C. National Guard completes its regularly scheduled trainings to optimize readiness and responsiveness to a wide array of threat vectors that are unique to a capital city. Like other National Guard units, the D.C. Guard relies on drills every month and for two weeks a year, as well as individual assignments, to provide both individualized classroom instruction and collective training. Currently, the D.C. National Guard is missing out on classroom instruction on topics ranging from the basics of military police practice and policy to intelligence gathering and weapons trainings, including courses servicemembers need for promotion.<sup>53</sup> This means at least some D.C. Guard members are likely experiencing delays in their career advancement and the accompanying opportunities and compensation. Additionally, the D.C. Guard is missing out on collective training exercises to prepare their units for general combat readiness, as well as for upcoming activities in D.C., including America 250 festivities.<sup>54</sup> As Retired Major General Randy Manner put it: "the D.C. National Guard's readiness for combat is dropping precipitously, threatening their ability to carry out their core functions."<sup>55</sup>

The National Guard, overall, also has a finite set of resources appropriated to Title 32 activities of both its Army and Air Force components. This money must serve all of the National Guard across the country for both personnel and operations and maintenance purposes, including training and base maintenance. An ongoing and seemingly unending deployment of Guard units from across the country was not contemplated when funds were originally appropriated for the National Guard. This suggests that the resources being used to fund this deployment are being pulled from other pots that were intended to support Guard units across the country. Staff asked about where the funding was coming from and were told to refer back to the National Guard Bureau and Departments of Army and Air Force.<sup>56</sup> This request is currently pending with the Department of Defense.

## **VI. Guard Deployments are Pulling Local Law Enforcement Officers and Critical Security Professionals Away from their Jobs**

Most National Guard servicemembers have full-time civilian jobs and are pulled away from those jobs when called in to support a state or federal mission. Notably, the D.C. National Guard says that 38 of their servicemembers are also MPD officers, and 10 were on mission supporting the D.C. Safe and Beautiful Task Force at the end of October.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, MPD ranks have reached half-century lows standing at 4,904

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<sup>52</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1.

<sup>53</sup> Major General Randy E. Manner, Discussion with Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Staff (Nov. 24, 2025).

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1.

<sup>57</sup> Production from District of Columbia National Guard to Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (Oct. 31, 2025).

officers.<sup>58</sup> Mayor Bowser, the local police union, and other city officials have taken steps to boost retention and ramp up recruitment efforts, aiming to hire an additional 800 officers.<sup>59</sup> As MPD ranks are already stretched thin, President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have pulled MPD officers away from their duties and into a D.C. mission where they do not have arrest authority and are not acting in a law enforcement capacity.

At the national level, some National Guard servicemembers currently deployed in D.C. include high-level federal civil servants who normally work in the counterterrorism and national security space.<sup>60</sup> While security experts have warned of increased threats to the homeland, this deployment decision raises serious concerns about the effective use of limited government resources.

If the objective, as outlined in the President’s August 11 memorandum, is to address the “epidemic of crime” and restore “law and order” in D.C., it remains unclear how pulling senior DOJ staff and MPD officers away from their full-time law enforcement jobs advances that objective.

## **VII. The National Guard’s Use of Software and AI Tools to Monitor Narratives on Social Media Raises Privacy and Civil Liberties Concerns**

The National Guard is using multiple software and AI tools to support the D.C. operation. At the D.C. Armory headquarters, the D.C. National Guard uses Maven Smart System, a DOD platform supported by Palantir software that provides a large map displaying the locations of National Guard personnel, “for maintaining our common operating picture.”<sup>61</sup> The product is provided through the Joint Task Force – National Capitol Region (JTF-NCR) and efforts to tailor it to the needs of the task force are coordinated through the National Guard Bureau.<sup>62</sup> According to the D.C. National Guard, its use of Maven Smart System does not include analyzing U.S. persons’ data.

The D.C. National Guard also uses Dataminr First Alert, a commercially available tool widely used across government agencies to provide tailored alerts from publicly available information sources ranging from social media to the dark web, to “maintain situational awareness of potential social media threats, pop-up demonstrations, and other activities of interest.”<sup>63</sup> The National Guard is using Dataminr through an Air Force five-year fixed price contract that appears to be focused on force protection.<sup>64</sup> On staff visits, the Dataminr tool appeared as a dashboard with relevant alerts automatically updating in a live feed.

In addition, the D.C. Joint Task Force uses widely available commercial sentiment analysis tools, such as Meltwater and Cision, to “assess public sentiment, identify emerging narratives and track verified public

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<sup>58</sup> *U.S. Park Police seeks hundreds more officers amid Trump’s crime crackdown*, The Washington Post (Oct. 31, 2025) ([www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/10/31/park-police-expansion-dc/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/10/31/park-police-expansion-dc/)); Government of the District of Columbia, *Supra* note 40, at 6.

<sup>59</sup> *U.S. Park Police seeks hundreds more officers amid Trump’s crime crackdown*, The Washington Post (Oct. 31, 2025) ([www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/10/31/park-police-expansion-dc/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/10/31/park-police-expansion-dc/)).

<sup>60</sup> Site visit with the Minority Staff of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Subcommittee on Disaster Management, *supra* note 1, at 1.

<sup>61</sup> *Production from District of Columbia National Guard to Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs* (Oct. 31, 2025).

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*

discussions relevant to ongoing missions.”<sup>65</sup> During a staff visit, National Guard staff described using these tools to create daily updates for leadership describing public perception and narratives related to the mission.<sup>66</sup> The National Guard indicated that it also uses these tools “as part of a broader effort across the National Guard enterprise to ensure timely awareness of public perception and to strengthen transparency between the military and the citizens we serve.”<sup>67</sup> National Guard staff stated that these tools only use publicly available data, such as public posts made by users on social media platforms.

U.S. government and law enforcement agencies’ use of commercially available analytics tools and openly available information for surveillance and monitoring has long raised questions about Americans’ privacy and civil liberties. Potential risks to Americans’ privacy and civil liberties are even more significant in this instance because these tools were acquired by the Department of Defense, ostensibly for national defense use in primarily overseas settings, not for use domestically by the National Guard to analyze data that includes First Amendment protected speech and activities. In the case of Maven Smart System, for example, there are questions about the authority and contract under which it is being used. According to Palantir, whose software backs the DOD’s Maven platform, Maven was acquired and configured for Title 10 federal activities, including those under Northern Command. It was not contracted for use in Title 32 activities, such as those currently taking place in D.C. Northern Command Title 10 activities include protecting federal law enforcement carrying out immigration enforcement operations. The National Guard’s Title 32 mission in D.C., as described in this report, however, is not immigration enforcement focused, and therefore its use of the Maven Smart System appears to be focused on tracking National Guard members in D.C.

The use of all of these tools present heightened risk to constitutional rights that demand correspondingly enhanced formal policies and safeguards. Yet, in response to follow-up questions regarding policies for the use of analytics tools that assess data from or about U.S. persons, the National Guard referred only to Department of Defense Directive 5200.27, a policy first promulgated in 1980 for how to deal with the personal information of individuals and organizations who do not work for or are otherwise associated with DoD.<sup>68</sup> Given advances in technology since 1980, and the need for the DoD to be particularly mindful of how they protect rights when deployed in the United States, one would expect more specifically updated and tailored policies. Although staff did not identify any clear violations of rights from the use of these software and AI tools during staff visits, there is little to prevent them from being used in ways that violate Americans’ rights in the future, particularly if there are additional or expanded National Guard deployments in American cities.

### **VIII. The Trump Administration’s Guard Deployment Blurs the Distinction between the Military and Civilian Law Enforcement**

President Trump ordered the D.C. National Guard to be activated to conduct its ongoing mission throughout the District of Columbia on August 11. Deploying the National Guard – now more than 6 months and counting – occurred with minimal buy-in from the city’s local government, which operates with limited autonomy under the *Home Rule Act*. The activation of the D.C. National Guard via executive order against the wishes of the mayor has only occurred in one previous instance: in June 2020 during the first Trump Administration against the backdrop of nationwide protests over George Floyd’s death. Approximately 79 percent of D.C. residents oppose President Trump’s August 2020 federalization of MPD and deployment of the

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<sup>65</sup> *Id.*

<sup>66</sup> *Id.*

<sup>67</sup> *District of Columbia National Guard*, *supra* Note 58, at 8.

<sup>68</sup> *District of Columbia National Guard*, *supra* Note 58, at 8.

National Guard and personnel from various federal law enforcement agencies to patrol the District, and 65 percent of D.C. residents believe these actions will not reduce violent crime in the city.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, activating the National Guard in this way risks politicizing the armed forces, jeopardizing the long-held non-partisan role the U.S. military has maintained throughout American history, and eroding trust in the U.S. military. The National Guard has acknowledged this risk in their own internal documents measuring public sentiment about the D.C. deployment, wherein they assess their “mission is perceived as ‘leveraging fear,’ driving a ‘wedge between citizens and the military,’ and promoting a sense of ‘shame’ among some troops and veterans[.]”<sup>70</sup>

Unsurprisingly, a majority of Americans have consistently expressed their opposition to President Trump’s politically charged National Guard deployments to D.C. and other major American cities.<sup>71</sup> Involving the military in civilian affairs risks corroding trust in the armed forces and violating the *Posse Comitatus Act*. The *Posse Comitatus Act* states that “Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or the Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.”<sup>72</sup> These restrictions apply to servicemembers outside the Army and Air Force, as other service branches, such as the Navy and Marines, have adopted the *Posse Comitatus Act*’s provisions proscribing their personnel from participating in civilian law enforcement activities.<sup>73</sup>

More action is needed to reduce crime in D.C., which has a juvenile arrest rate nearly double the national average, according to the D.C. Policy Center.<sup>74</sup> However, the Trump Administration’s federal overreach may ultimately hinder crime suppression efforts in the long term by fraying relations between community members and law enforcement, who rely on the public for help in solving crimes. For example, in the first two weeks of the National Guard’s deployment, 80 percent of the cases filed in D.C. Superior Court were for misdemeanors, warrants, traffic offenses, or were dropped by the prosecutor handling the case.<sup>75</sup> President Trump’s deployment of the National Guard and personnel from numerous federal law enforcement agencies could cause lasting harm to crime prevention efforts in the District of Columbia and to military readiness. With no clear plan or end in sight, President Trump’s politicization of the National Guard in D.C. and across the country has put the credibility of that institution and the whole military at risk.

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<sup>69</sup> *We asked 604 D.C. residents about Trump’s takeover. Here’s what they said.*, The Washington Post (Aug. 20, 2025) ([www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/08/20/dc-poll-trump-crime-police/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/08/20/dc-poll-trump-crime-police/)).

<sup>70</sup> *National Guard documents show public ‘fear,’ veterans’ ‘shame’ over D.C. presence*, Washington Post (Sep. 10, 2025) ([www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/09/10/national-guard-trump-dc/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/09/10/national-guard-trump-dc/)).

<sup>71</sup> *Most Americans don’t want troops deployed without an external threat*, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds, Reuters (Oct. 8, 2025) ([www.reuters.com/world/us/most-americans-dont-want-troops-deployed-without-an-external-threat-reutersipsos-2025-10-08/](http://www.reuters.com/world/us/most-americans-dont-want-troops-deployed-without-an-external-threat-reutersipsos-2025-10-08/)); *News poll finds few feel shutdown is worth it, low marks for Republicans, Democrats and Trump’s handling*, CBS News (Oct. 5, 2025) ([www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-shutdown-trump-democrats-republicans/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-shutdown-trump-democrats-republicans/)); *NPR-Ipsos poll: Americans don’t broadly support Trump’s National Guard deployments*, NPR (Sep. 27, 2025) ([www.npr.org/2025/09/27/nx-s1-5553536/npr-ipsos-law-enforcement-poll-national-guard](http://www.npr.org/2025/09/27/nx-s1-5553536/npr-ipsos-law-enforcement-poll-national-guard)).

<sup>72</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 1835.

<sup>73</sup> Congressional Research Service, *The Posse Comitatus Act and Related Matters: A Sketch* (Nov. 6, 2018) ([www.congress.gov/crs-product/R42669](http://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R42669)).

<sup>74</sup> *‘Not addressing the issues’: DC residents wary of Trump’s national guard deployment even amid youth crime*, The Guardian (Sep. 6, 2025) ([www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/06/dc-national-guard-youth-crime](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/06/dc-national-guard-youth-crime)).

<sup>75</sup> *Trump’s D.C. takeover has led to more arrests. NPR looks at cases of those swept up*, NPR (Sep. 5, 2025) ([www.npr.org/2025/09/05/g-s1-86991/trump-dc-national-guard-police-federal-crime-stats](http://www.npr.org/2025/09/05/g-s1-86991/trump-dc-national-guard-police-federal-crime-stats)).

## **IX. Conclusion**

President Trump's deployment of the National Guard to D.C. raises additional questions about the appropriate roles, responsibilities, and practical authorities of the Guard. As the National Guard made clear to committee staff during multiple visits, they are not law enforcement. However, Guard leadership on multiple occasions emphasized that they were planning for their mission to continue "until crime does not exist." This improbable objective points to a failure by the Administration to clearly define goals for this deployment and may lead to an indefinite presence of the National Guard in the nation's capital and the normalization of the use of the military for day-to-day law enforcement goals in American cities. Yet it remains unclear, for the price of \$332 million (and counting), whether the National Guard has actually made D.C.'s streets safer, or whether National Guard resources would not be better spent on their normal missions and priorities serving not only as a reserve component for our national defense but also front-line response personnel for disasters affecting communities across the country.

## APPENDIX

D.C. National Guard handout presented to staff on September 24, 2025.

