

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C.

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland:

As you are likely aware, violence against law enforcement has become a troubling pattern across the United States, culminating most recently in violent shooting deaths of officers in New York City and Houston.

On Friday, January 21st, while responding to reports of a domestic disturbance, New York Police Department (NYPD) Officers Rivera (22) and Mora (27) were violently attacked by a gunman, killing Officer Rivera and mortally wounding Officer Mora, who succumbed to his injuries on January 25th.¹

Shortly following the attack on these NYPD officers, on Sunday, January 23rd, Harris County Texas Deputy Charles Galloway (47) was “brutally murdered” during a traffic stop.² Houston has since been rocked, yet again, by the shooting of three additional officers who were injured responding to a disturbance call.³

Sadly, this violence is part of an upward national trend. According to the National Fraternal Order of Police, in 2021 there were 346 officers shot in the line of duty, including 63 deaths. Of these, 103 were “ambush style attacks,” which increased 115% over the prior year.⁴ Data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also showed a 48.7% increase in 2021 of officer killings, totaling 73 deaths from “firearms, vehicles, knives, and other personal weapons.”⁵ These grim statistics represent the highest number of law enforcement who were intentionally killed since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.⁶

As the Attorney General, it is incumbent upon you to leverage the resources of the Department of Justice (DOJ) to help promote and protect the safety and wellbeing of your federal, state, and local law enforcement partners across the United States. The above data is contextualized by a nationwide crisis of surging violence against law enforcement officers and the public they serve.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/nyregion/wilbert-mora-dead-nypd-shooting.html>

² <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/23/us/texas-deputy-killed-traffic-stop/index.html>

³ <https://abc13.com/houston-crime-police-officer-shot-hpd-shooting-mcgowen/11515200/>

⁴ <https://files.fop.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/report-20220103-shot-killed-monthly-report.pdf>

⁵ <https://katv.com/news/nation-world/fact-check-team-violence-against-police-on-the-rise>

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/13/us/police-officers-line-of-duty-deaths/index.html>

American communities are under assault by violent criminals, and the police departments sworn to protect them are under assault, as well. Simply put: Violence against law enforcement is an assault on justice.

As Members of the Committee on Homeland Security and the American Security Task Force, we stand ready and eager to support our brave men and women in law enforcement however we can. We recognize that more must be done to improve the safety of the law enforcement profession and mitigate the violence plaguing the American public. To that end, we request answers to the following questions no later than February 15, 2022:

1. How is DOJ responding, specifically, to increasing rates of violence against law enforcement officers in the United States?
2. What steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that individuals who violently assault law enforcement are held accountable by federal, state, and local prosecutors?
3. What programs, if any, does the DOJ have in place to support the safety and wellbeing of law enforcement officers at the federal, state, and local levels?
4. What funding mechanisms, if any, does your Department have available as tools to directly support partner law enforcement organizations in their efforts to protect their officers?
5. What, if any, trend analysis is done by the DOJ to understand safety and security challenges facing law enforcement across the United States?
 - a. What does DOJ do in response to compiled data related to violence against law enforcement?
 - b. How does DOJ disseminate data and critical information related to threats to officer safety to partner organizations?
 - c. How does DOJ receive feedback from frontline law enforcement on threats to their safety?
6. What, if any, data collection or trend analysis does DOJ conduct on state and local policies that may contribute to increased violence against law enforcement?
7. What, if any, mental health resources does DOJ facilitate for law enforcement partners?
 - a. Does DOJ track, analyze, or respond to the psychological and emotional toll facing frontline law enforcement by anti-police sentiments, media, or policies? If so, how?
 - b. What efforts, if any, does DOJ make to promote the mental and physical health, safety, and wellbeing of law enforcement families, who face unique challenges posed by their loved ones' professions?
8. How can Congress better enhance the safety, wellbeing, and general welfare of law enforcement?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical issue. Should you or your staff have any questions, please reach out to Adrienne Spero on the Committee on Homeland Security Staff at (202) 226-8417.

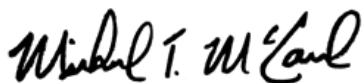
Sincerely,



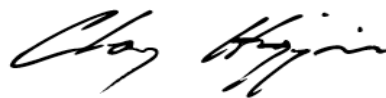
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