



# **American Bridge**

## **Trump Policy Brief: Crime Reduction And Public Safety**

**2/9/17**

## CRIME REDUCTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE

Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the Justice Department to create a “Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety,” with a particular focus on illegal immigration, drug trafficking and violent crime.

- ✓ Trump has called for a task force to investigate and stop a national trend that doesn’t exist, as the country’s crime rate is at historic lows.

### Trump Signed An Executive Order Creating A “Task Force On Crime Reduction And Public Safety”

#### TRUMP DIRECTED THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO CREATE A CRIME TASK FORCE WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, DRUG TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENT CRIME

**Trump Issued An Executive Order Directing The Attorney General To Establish A “Task Force On Crime Reduction And Public Safety.”** According to the Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, “In furtherance of the policy described in section 1 of this order, I hereby direct the Attorney General to establish, and to appoint or designate an individual or individuals to chair, a Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety (Task Force). The Attorney General shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide administrative support and funding for the Task Force.” [Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, [2/9/17](#)]

- **The Order Called For A Particular Focus On “Illegal Immigration, Drug Trafficking, And Violent Crime,” And Directed The Justice Department To “Identify Deficiencies In Existing Laws” And “Propose Legislation That Could [...] Improve Public Safety And Reduce Crime.”** According to the Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, “The Task Force shall: (i) exchange information and ideas among its members that will be useful in developing strategies to reduce crime, including, in particular, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and violent crime; (ii) based on that exchange of information and ideas, develop strategies to reduce crime; (iii) identify deficiencies in existing laws that have made them less effective in reducing crime and propose new legislation that could be enacted to improve public safety and reduce crime; (iv) evaluate the availability and adequacy of crime-related data and identify measures that could improve data collection in a manner that will aid in the understanding of crime trends and in the reduction of crime; and (v) conduct any other studies and develop any other recommendations as directed by the Attorney General.” [Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, [2/9/17](#)]

**The Executive Order Directed The Task Force To Submit At Least One Annual Report To The President.** According to the Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, “The Task Force shall submit at least one report to the President within 1 year from the date of this order, and a subsequent report at least once per year thereafter while the Task Force remains in existence. The structure of the report is left to the discretion of the Attorney General. In its first report to the President and in any subsequent reports, the Task Force shall summarize its findings and recommendations under subsections (c)(ii) through (c)(v) of this section.” [Executive Order: Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety, [2/9/17](#)]

## **TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER IGNORED THE FACTS AND LOOKED IN THE WRONG PLACES FOR THE WRONG PROBLEMS**

### **Federal Statistics Show That Crime Rates Are At Their Lowest Point Since The 1960s**

**The Hill: “Trump Has Repeatedly Said That Crime Is Rising In The United States, Though Federal Statistics Indicate Crime Rates Are At The Lowest Point Since The 1960s.”** According to the Hill, “‘We have a crime problem,’ Sessions said at his swearing-in. ‘I wish the rise that we’re seeing in crime in America today were some sort of aberration or blip,’ he continued, calling it a ‘dangerous permanent trend that places the health and safety of the American people at risk.’ Trump has repeatedly said that crime is rising in the United States, though federal statistics indicate crime rates are at the lowest point since the 1960s.” [The Hill, [2/9/17](#)]

### **Federal Statistics Show That Crime Rates Have Fallen Steadily Since The 1990s**

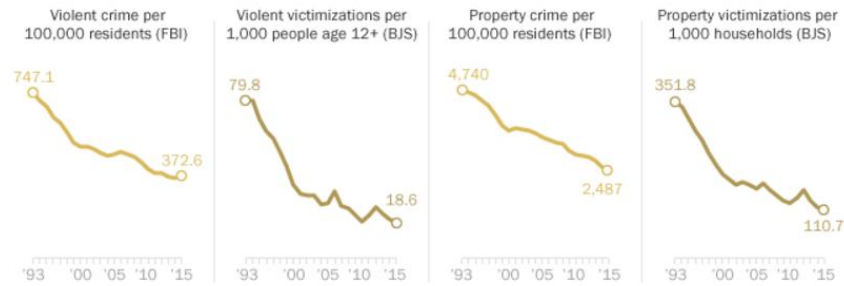
**Since 1993, The Violent Crime Rate Has Fallen 50% - 77% According To Measurements From The FBI And Bureau of Justice Statistics.** According to the Pew Research Center, “There are two commonly cited measures of the nation’s crime rate. One is an annual report by the FBI of serious crimes reported to police in approximately 18,000 jurisdictions around the country. The other is an annual survey of more than 90,000 households conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which asks Americans ages 12 and older whether they were the victims of crime in the past six months (regardless of whether they reported those crimes to the police or not). Both the FBI and BJS data show a substantial decline in the violent crime rate since its peak in the early 1990s. Using the FBI numbers, the rate fell 50% between 1993 and 2015, the most recent full year available. Using the BJS data, the rate fell by 77% during that span.” [Pew Research Center, [2/21/17](#)]

- **The Murder Rate Declined By 42 Percent Between 1993 And 2014, Even As The U.S. Population Rose By 25 Percent Over The Same Period.** According to the Miami Herald, “Trump said in remarks at a White House meeting with sheriffs earlier this week that the murder rate is the highest it has been in ‘45 to 47 years.’ Politifact has rated that statement false, pointing out statistics show the murder rate in the U.S. is considerably lower than it was in the early 1990s. ‘Specifically, the number of murders declined by 42 percent between 1993 and 2014, even as the U.S. population rose by 25 percent over the same period,’ Louis Jacobson wrote. ‘So while homicides have recently risen — a legitimate concern, experts say — they are far below their high levels of the early 1990s, when the nation’s population was much smaller.’” [Miami Herald, [2/9/17](#)]

**Since 1993, The Property Crime Rate Has Fallen 48% - 69% According To Measurements From The FBI And Bureau of Justice Statistics.** According to the Pew Research Center, “Property crime has declined significantly over the long term. Like the violent crime rate, the U.S. property crime rate today is far below its peak level. FBI data show that the rate fell 48% between 1993 and 2015, while BJS reports a decline of 69% during that span. Both the FBI and BJS reported a decline in the property crime rate between 2014 and 2015, even as the violent crime rate went up in the FBI’s data. Property crime includes offenses such as burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft and is generally far more common than violent crime.” [Pew Research Center, [2/21/17](#)]

## Crime rates have fallen since the early 1990s

Trends in violent crime and property crime, 1993-2015



Note: FBI figures include reported crimes only. BJS figures include unreported and reported crimes. 2006 BJS estimates are not comparable with other years due to methodological changes.

Source: FBI, Bureau of Justice Statistics

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[Pew Research Center, [2/21/17](#)]

## Trump Has Called To Stop A Trend That Doesn't Exist...

**ACLU Deputy Legal Director Jeffery Robinson: “President Trump Intends To Build Task Forces To Investigate And Stop A National Trend That Doesn't Exist,” As The Country's Crime Rate Is At Historic Lows.** According to the ACLU, “Jeffery Robinson, Deputy Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union and Director of the Trone Center for Justice and Equality, had this response: ‘President Trump intends to build task forces to investigate and stop national trends that don't exist. We have seen historic lows in the country's crime rate and a downward trend in killings against police officers since the 1980s.’ [ACLU, [2/9/17](#)]

- **Robinson: “Task Forces Premised On Misinformation, And Looking In The Wrong Places For The Wrong Problems, Are Not The Answer.”** According to the ACLU, “‘There are some cities that have had recent rises in violent crime, and they deserve help. And every locality in America wants to further reduce crime and violence. But task forces premised on misinformation, and looking in the wrong places for the wrong problems, are not the answer.’” [ACLU, [2/9/17](#)]
- **University Of South Carolina School Of Law Associate Professor Seth Stoughton: “I Find It Rather Ironic That The Administration Is Emphasizing The Need For Reliable Data Given Both The Relatively Robust Crime Data That We Already Have.”** According to Vice News, “‘I find it rather ironic that the administration is emphasizing the need for reliable data given both the relatively robust crime data that we already have and the president's unwillingness to accept the validity of data that doesn't confirm his positions,’ Stoughton said. [Vice News, [2/9/17](#)]

## ...While Ignoring Real Issues Of Police Brutality And Racial Profiling

**Robinson: “The President Not Only Doesn't Acknowledge These Facts About Our Nation's Safety, He Persists In Ignoring The All-Too-Real Deaths Of Black And Brown People At The Hands Of Law Enforcement.** According to the ACLU, “The president not only doesn't acknowledge these facts about our nation's safety, he persists in ignoring the all-too-real deaths of Black and brown people at the hands of law enforcement.” [ACLU, [2/9/17](#)]

**Washington Post: “Black Americans Are 2.5 Times As Likely As White Americans To Be Shot And Killed By Police Officers.”** According to the Washington Post, “According to the most recent census data, there are nearly 160 million more white people in America than there are black people. White people make up

roughly 62 percent of the U.S. population but only about 49 percent of those who are killed by police officers. African Americans, however, account for 24 percent of those fatally shot and killed by the police despite being just 13 percent of the U.S. population. As The Post noted in a new analysis published last week, that means black Americans are 2.5 times as likely as white Americans to be shot and killed by police officers.” [Washington Post, [7/11/16](#)]

- **From January 2015 – July 2016, Police Shot And Killed 175 Young Black Men (Ages 18 To 29) Compared To 172 White Men Despite Black Men Make Up Just 6% Of The Nation’s Population.** According to the Washington Post, “Police have shot and killed a young black man (ages 18 to 29) — such as Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo. —175 times since January 2015; 24 of them were unarmed. Over that same period, police have shot and killed 172 young white men, 18 of whom were unarmed. Once again, while in raw numbers there were similar totals of white and black victims, blacks were killed at rates disproportionate to their percentage of the U.S. population. Of all of the unarmed people shot and killed by police in 2015, 40 percent of them were black men, even though black men make up just 6 percent of the nation’s population.” [Washington Post, [7/11/16](#)]
- **Washington Post: In 2016, A Black Person Shot And Killed By Police Was Nearly Twice As Likely To Have Been Unarmed Than A White Person.** According to the Washington Post, “And, when considering shootings confined within a single race, a black person shot and killed by police is more likely to have been unarmed than a white person. About 13 percent of all black people who have been fatally shot by police since January 2015 were unarmed, compared with 7 percent of all white people.” [Washington Post, [7/11/16](#)]
- **Washington Post: In 2016 “Unarmed Black Americans Were Five Times As Likely As Unarmed White Americans To Be Shot And Killed By A Police Officer.”** According to the Washington Post, “U.S. police officers have shot and killed the exact same number of unarmed white people as they have unarmed black people: 50 each. But because the white population is approximately five times larger than the black population, that means unarmed black Americans were five times as likely as unarmed white Americans to be shot and killed by a police officer.” [Washington Post, [7/11/16](#)]
- **Washington Post: In 2015, “Black Men Were Seven Times More Likely Than White Men To Die By Police Gunfire While Unarmed.”** According to the Washington Post, “Those 24 cases constitute a surprisingly small fraction of the 585 people shot and killed by police through Friday evening, according to The Post database. Most of those killed were white or Hispanic, and the vast majority of victims of all races were armed. However, black men accounted for 40 percent of the 60 unarmed deaths, even though they make up just 6 percent of the U.S. population. The Post’s analysis shows that black men were seven times more likely than white men to die by police gunfire while unarmed.” [Washington Post, [8/8/15](#)]

### **Trump’s Order Is “Nothing More Than Symbolic Crime Control Rhetoric”**

**Bowling Green State University Associate Professor Of Criminology Philip Stinson: Trump’s Executive Order “Is Nothing More Than Symbolic Crime Control Rhetoric.”** According to Vice News, “Trump’s orders aim to stop crime, prevent violence against law enforcement, and crack down on drug cartels. But none of the orders implement immediate changes, and it’s not clear what their ultimate impact will be. In addition, criminologists with whom VICE News spoke expressed a fair amount of skepticism. ‘It sounds good, and no one wants to be against promoting public safety and reducing crime,’ said Philip Stinson, associate professor of criminology at Bowling Green State University. ‘But it is nothing more than symbolic crime control rhetoric.’” [Vice News, [2/9/17](#)]