



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 6, 2020

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## Nationalizing the Police Is Not the Answer

**Because of supposed police injustice against blacks and cities burning from riots, some are calling to nationalize local police forces, but that just takes away local control.**

Using George Floyd's death as a rationale, some Americans want to transfer more police authority away from local and state government, and into the hands of the federal government. This supposed solution to any problems of local law enforcement is as dangerous as it is nonsensical, and it would lead to less, not more, respect for the rights of individuals — of all ethnicities — in our country.



Exacerbated racial tensions have caused the diversion of attention away from the fundamental question as to what level of government has the primary constitutional responsibility for law enforcement in our federal system of government. Those who favor increased power for government at the federal level, at the expense of state and local government, use accusations of racism and “police brutality” to argue for transferring law-enforcement responsibility to government officials in Washington, D.C.

First of all, there are real cases of police misconduct. Anytime a person is handed governmental power, whether federal, state, or local official, citizens must be aware that there is potential for abuse of that power. But checks on the police do exist, which can keep police wrongs reduced to a minimum.

What is *not* the answer is abolishing local control of police. Neither is placing all police power in the hands of federal officials.

Yet, in response to the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots, many in Congress are seeking federal legislation to give greater federal control over local law enforcement. Among the measures being considered are changes to laws that protect the police and creating a database of police use-of-force incidents. Congress is also looking at federal training requirements for local police.

The point is not whether such requirements are good or bad per se, but whether the regulation of police powers should be federalized.

One might note, too, that no such training is proposed to rein in *federal* law-enforcement agencies, such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF); the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA); or the Federal Bureau of Investigation — all of which have been involved in egregious violations of the rights of American citizens and gross abuses of power.

## The United States Does Not Need a Gestapo

Neither history nor logic supports the position that police misbehavior would be reduced if the badge an officer wore said “U.S. Police” rather than “Minneapolis Police.” In fact, it should be self-evident that



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centralization of police power and removing that power from the local level to the control of distant politicians would automatically lead to more politicization, corruption, and oppression, as there would then be almost no influence of the public on their local police. Fully aware of that principle, America's Founders wisely placed policing powers in the hands of state and local governments.

In many countries with nationalized police forces, the liberties of the people are regularly ignored. When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, he made every effort to reduce the power of state governments, including their historic and constitutional control over law enforcement. Hermann Göring first suggested to Hitler that he transfer all law-enforcement authority to the national secret police — the infamous Gestapo.

On June 17, 1936, Hitler unified all police forces under the control of Heinrich Himmler. The Gestapo (shorthand for *Geheime Staatspolizei* — literally, Secret State Police) operated without judicial review and had the power to place individuals in "protective custody." Under such custody, the person being held actually signed a request to be jailed, supposedly to be protected from bodily harm. Of course, failure to sign the request form led to such harm — from the nationalized police force.

In an article at [jbs.org](#), John Birch Society CEO Art Thompson argued that it is important that we support the continued independence of local police. "Actually, the United States is one of the last countries, if not the last, to have widespread local police power instead of the types of national systems that exist elsewhere."

Of course, some readers would protest that America is not Nazi Germany. But human nature is no different in our country than in totalitarian regimes such as Hitler's National Socialist dictatorship, or Joseph Stalin's dictatorial communist government. That is why our Founders wisely placed checks and balances on the federal government they created with the Constitution.

We could cite multiple examples of how *federal* law enforcement has abused American citizens. The "war" on drugs is an example of how federal law-enforcement officials can abuse their power every bit as much as a local police officer. If someone objects to abuse in this "war" on drugs, he is often accused of being "for drugs." Numerous drug raids have gone wrong and innocent people have been killed, which should caution any person who wants to transfer such authority to federal officials.

In Manchester, New Hampshire, for example, 49-year-old grandmother Lillian Alonzo was shot by an agent of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency during a raid on her home to locate "drug money." DEA agent Michael Connolly said his foot got caught in her bedroom door after he kicked it in, causing him to lose his balance, whereupon his Glock 9 mm fired, and Alonzo was hit. Regardless of the questions surrounding Connolly's story, the point is that the DEA had risked the lives of three agents, children inside the home, and an innocent woman, simply to retrieve "drug money." No drug money was ever found.

Many other instances of abuse of American citizens by federal law enforcement can be cited, but two illustrate the dangers especially well — Ruby Ridge and Waco. Randy Weaver moved to Ruby Ridge in northern Idaho to live as a recluse with his family. After losing a lawsuit to Weaver, his neighbor Terry Kinson told federal authorities that Weaver wanted to kill the pope, the president, and the governor. Federal agents interviewed Weaver, but made no arrest.

Unfortunately, those allegations brought Weaver to the attention of federal law enforcement. An informant with the ATF made the claim that Weaver sold him two sawed-off shotguns. Weaver had no



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criminal record, and claimed the informant sawed off the barrels himself, after the sale. Federal agents raided Weaver's property, killing his teenage son, his pregnant wife, and his dog. Weaver's wife was shot while standing in the doorway, holding their youngest, still-nursing child in her arms. Weaver was never found guilty of any crime.

Even more infamous was the raid staged by the ATF and FBI on the Branch Davidian compound a dozen miles northeast of Waco, Texas, in 1993. The Davidian leader, David Koresh, had been accused of physical abuse of children, statutory rape, and polygamy, but Texas officials found no evidence with which to charge him after an investigation.

Despite this, supposed concern for "the children" inside the ranch complex known as Mount Carmel was cited as a reason for an ATF raid on February 28, 1993. Of course, federal authorities lacked any jurisdiction over any such alleged crimes, and Texas officials had already concluded their own investigation and had taken no action.

When Koresh was informed that the ATF had heard he was dealing in illegal automatic weapons at Mount Carmel, he offered to let the ATF come out and inspect both his weapons and his paperwork. Koresh did make money at gun shows, and always kept the required paperwork. One Davidian, Paul Fatta, was a licensed federal firearms dealer.

Despite all of this, the ATF staged a military-style raid on the compound rather than simply walking up to the front door and serving the warrant. It was a raid almost certain to lead to the deaths of some Davidians and some agents, and it did. After the raid's failure, the *Federal* Bureau of Investigation took over, and after a 51-day siege, during which time the FBI shot flammable CS tear gas into the compound, they brought in tanks and began knocking down the walls of the compound. Americans looked on in horror on TV as a gigantic fireball engulfed the buildings, taking the lives of 76 people, including multiple young children, on April 19, 1993.

Later, the jury foreman hearing the case against some of the few survivors of the FBI assault said that it was the people who conducted the raid who should be on trial.

The DEA drug raids "gone wrong." The Weaver raid "gone wrong." The Davidian raid "gone wrong." All ended in disaster, and all are examples of failures of federal law enforcement, not local police work. To these could be added many more recent, notorious examples of criminal abuses by federal law-enforcement agencies, including "Operation Fast and Furious," the ATF's infamous "gunwalking" scandal trafficking guns to Mexico, and the FBI's "Crossfire Hurricane" coup effort to overthrow President Donald Trump.

## **The Push for a Federalized Police Force Continues**

Following the 2014 Ferguson, Missouri, riots, Al Sharpton, the perpetual race hustler, called on the federal government to "take over policing in this country." The "Reverend" Sharpton has been a key instigator of racial turmoil for decades, mobilizing mobs to create pressure from below, while the globalists funding him, along with the globalist-controlled media and radical Democratic politicians, provide pressure from above. His National Action Network has received millions of dollars from establishment foundations and corporations, even as the "protests" he promotes destroy thousands of black-owned businesses. Similarly, Black Lives Matter has received over \$30 million from globalist billionaire George Soros, and pledges of \$100 million from other foundations and corporate elites. Do



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Sharpton and the BLM leaders who are demanding that local police departments be defunded (or even abolished) really intend to do away with police altogether? Or do they intend to create a state of anarchy, knowing that anarchy is never a permanent state, but serves as a transition to a form of totalitarian rule?

During the Obama administration, Sharpton served as a high-level “confidant” and was a frontline cheerleader for President Obama’s efforts to federalize our police, as a means of addressing the “systemic racism” that allegedly permeates our society.

This drive to nationalize all law enforcement continues. One suggestion — or typically, a “demand” — by anti-police groups is for the creation of civilian review boards. Not surprisingly, local anti-police leftists who wish to undermine legitimate police work dominate these boards. And, when these “review boards” predictably find real or supposed examples of local police misconduct, the cry for a federal take-over will become even louder.

Sometimes the method used to control local law enforcement is through bullying, with proclamations from the U.S. attorney general or statements from presidents such as Barack Obama, who once declared that local police “acted stupidly.” Other methods are more subtle. The federal government uses funding, training, and outfitting of local police departments, even handing over military equipment to local police departments (blurring the lines between law enforcement and the military).

Local officials, always hungry for the “free” money coming from the federal government, should beware. As has been seen in highway and education funding across the country, with “federal” money comes increased federal control. If we are not vigilant, the day might soon come in which local police departments exist in name only — any real power will be in the hands of federal authorities.

It should be remembered that tens of million interactions occur each year between local police and members of the public — of all ethnicities — which end peacefully, tens of millions of times. Times when a police officer behaves in a manner that results in the death of an unfortunate citizen such as George Floyd comprise a tiny minority of those cases. When it does happen, it is tragic. We can strive to reduce such incidents, but we can never eliminate all injustice, because we must continue to recruit police officers from the human race.

But turning over law enforcement to the federal government would mean turning over control of our lives to officials who are also flawed human beings. Ask yourself this: Is there any solid basis for believing that transferring police power to politicians and bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., will make police more accountable, more responsible, less abusive, and less corrupt?



The “Support Your Local Police” effort was among the most successful campaigns ever of The John





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Birch Society (JBS), dedicated to less government, more responsibility — and with God's help, a better world. A popular movie starring actor, James Garner, even did a take-off in a comedic western, *Support Your Local Sheriff*. The Law Enforcement Assistance Agency (LEAA), a federal agency that dealt directly with local police, was eventually abolished, largely as a result of the tireless efforts of the JBS. Many of the local review boards across the country were terminated as well, as the campaign proved highly successful.

Certainly, there should be opposition against any abuse of power by local police, but turning over control to a federalized police force would be a cure worse than the disease.



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