



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on July 14, 2021

Biden Asks States to Use COVID Relief Money to “Re-fund” Police

In June, President Joe Biden laid out his so-called [crime-prevention strategy](#) amid a nationwide uptick in violent crime. Biden emphasized in his [report](#) that cities can use \$350 billion in COVID-19 relief funding to hire more law-enforcement personnel, even if it raises the total number beyond pre-pandemic levels, and pay for overtime.

The Biden administration is actively urging crime-ridden cities to take advantage of the funds. According to a White House [memo](#) sent to state and local officials on Monday, the administration’s strategy to combat crime “uses the American Rescue Plan’s \$350 billion in financial support and clear guidance to provide state, local, territorial, and tribal governments the money they need to put more police officers on the beat — including hiring above pre-pandemic levels in communities experiencing an increase in gun violence.” The uptick in crime is said to be “associated with the pandemic.” The memo detailed some of the practices from the cities that already use the funds.



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The same day, President Biden voiced the plea during a meeting with a number of administration officials, including Attorney General Merrick Garland, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, White House counsel Dana Remus and domestic policy adviser Susan Rice, as well as mayors from Washington, D.C., and San Jose, California, and police chiefs from Memphis; Chicago; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Newark, New Jersey — all cities that saw “Defund the Police” protests in 2020 and cut, or considered cutting, their police [budgets](#), and are now seeing an [increase](#) in violent crime.

“We recognize that we have to come together to fulfill the first responsibility of democracy, to keep each other safe. And that’s what the American people are looking for when it comes to reducing violent crime and gun violence,” Biden [said](#), when announcing, among other steps, federal support of the local law enforcement.

More Americans said violent crime was a “very big problem” in the United States than said the same of COVID-19, according to a [Yahoo News/YouGov poll](#) released late last month. [Polls](#) in New York City’s mayoral race have shown those surveyed ranking public safety as a top concern in recent weeks, as the candidacy of Eric Adams, a former police officer who opposes the “Defund the Police” movement, has gained momentum.



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The Biden administration officials and many House Democrats facing reelection next year have now seemingly come to the realization that defunding the police is not the best strategy to address rising crime. Their constituencies see a direct connection between the two, and they, the Democrats, are on the wrong side of the issue. Democratic Whip James Clyburn [admitted](#) recently that “defund the police” is a “chokehold around the Democratic Party” and a “non-starter, even with black people.”

In a desperate attempt to distance themselves from the unpopular movement, some Democrats have even tried to turn the tables and pin the blame on Republicans by accusing them of being anti-police, starting with failing to back a January 6 independent commission and opposing \$1.9 billion to boost [Capitol security](#).

Recently at the White House, Biden advisor [Cedric Richmond](#) and White House Press Secretary [Jen Psaki](#) accused Republicans of defunding the police because they voted against Biden’s \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, because it included \$350 billion for state and local governments that could be used for local police — among many other things.

The attempt to avoid responsibility for the criminal mayhem that now plagues Democrat-run cities even more than ever as the result of the “Defund the Police” movement, will unlikely bear any fruit. Aside from the call to hire more police, which is a good idea, the White House seems to have no working solutions to really address the issue, which is indeed complex, and would require a strong and working economy, and a society that is not divided into various factions that see each other as a threat, for starters.

In addition to that, the Democrat establishment has grown and nourished an ultra-radical Left that now may dictate its own rules that go against the party’s strategy. For example, [Oakland](#), beset by a murderous crime spike, got \$190 million in federal funds, and presumably could use them to fix the situation, yet still voted to cut \$18 million from its police budget less than three weeks ago. Biden may try to strike a balance between common sense and appeasing his party’s radicals, but such a trick is likely too complicated even for a clear-witted politician.

Using pandemic relief money to hire more police officers will likely be seen as a betrayal of Biden’s campaign promise to “[reimagine policing](#)” — code for “defunding/abolishing the police” — by left-wing Democrats and “social justice” groups that almost unanimously supported Biden’s bid. Democrats and the “Defund the Police” movement have backed efforts to reduce the size and scope of police departments since the death of George Floyd in police custody in 2020. They also have pushed to shift law-enforcement resources to social programs — moves both [Joe Biden](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) strongly supported less than a year ago.

Predictably, “racial justice” advocates are already [dissatisfied](#) with Biden’s plan to divert pandemic relief funding away from communities and into the police departments that “terrorize them.” Moreover, they say, the plan does little to reverse decades of “racist policies that both target and abandon people of color,” and will make them “even more vulnerable.”



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