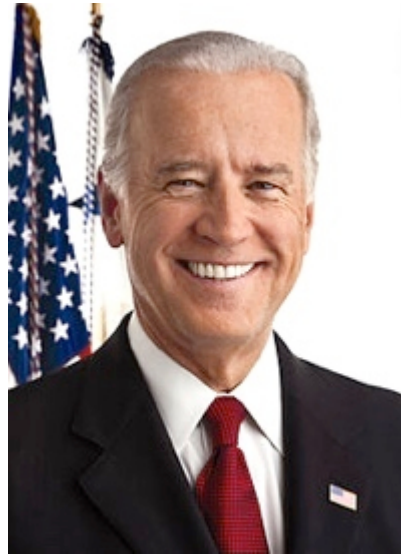




Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 24, 2011

## Debunking Bidens Obama Jobs Bill Claims

If Congress fails to pass President Barack Obama's American Jobs Act, "murder will continue to rise, rape will continue to rise, all crimes will continue to rise," Vice President Joe Biden (left) told a reporter from Human Events on October 19. This was in keeping with a theme that Biden has been using lately: Because the bill would help keep state and local governments from laying off police officers, and because fewer cops on the beat mean increased crime, to oppose the bill is to favor more crime.



To those who doubt whether there's a direct correlation between the reduction in cops and firefighters and the rise in concerns in public safety, Biden said during an [October 18](#) appearance in Flint, Michigan, they need look no further than your city. He continued:

Lets look at the facts: in 2008, when Flint had 265 sworn officers on their police force, there were 35 murders and 91 rapes in this city. In 2010, when Flint had only 144 police officers, the murder rate climbed to 65 and rapes just to pick two categories climbed to 229. In 2011, you now only have 125 shields.

The next day Biden asserted that in Flint murder rates have doubled in the last year and rape was up, three times. Then he challenged scoffers to go look at the numbers.

[Glenn Kessler](#), the *Washington Posts* Fact Checker, has done precisely that; and the numbers he found just don't add up to the soaring totals that the Vice President cited.

Biden got his crime statistics directly from the city of Flint. FBI statistics, however, paint a somewhat different picture. Between 2008 and 2010, according to the bureau, the murder rate increased by 61 percent, considerably lower than Bidens assertion that the rate had doubled in the last year. (In fact, from 2009 to 2010 the rate increased only 34 percent.) Contrary to Bidens claim that the rape rate had tripled, the FBI shows the rate actually declined by three percent from 2008 to 2010, which Kessler says is consistent with local news accounts, including a May 24 *Flint Journal* report stating that the number of rapes had declined in the city from 2009 to 2010.

After Kessler inquired about the discrepancy between Flint's statistics and the FBI's, city officials dug in their heels. Alvern Lock, Public Safety Director and Police Chief, issued a statement saying: The City of Flint stands behind the crime statistics provided to the Office of The Vice President. This information is the most accurate data and demonstrates the rise in crime associated with the economic crisis and the reduced staffing levels.

As should be obvious from that statement, the city has a clear interest in helping Biden make the case for funneling more federal dollars to local governments. Therefore, there is good reason to question the



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statistics they supplied to Biden since they differ significantly from the data the city gave the FBI. (The numbers seldom match exactly because of different reporting requirements, but they are generally about the same.)

As it turns out, the FBI statistic for murder in 2010 is somewhat low owing to a clerical error in Flint. The revised number is closer to the one cited by Biden but still somewhat less than his comments would suggest.

The statement, however, was strangely silent on the massive discrepancy in the rape statistics, Kessler remarks. A city spokeswoman was not particularly helpful in sorting out the cause of the discrepancy. Kessler's working assumption is that these numbers are apples and oranges, which is to say that Biden seems to be comparing FBI rape statistics for 2008 with the city's internal rape statistics for 2010. Concludes Kessler: The proper comparison with Flint's 2008 figure appears to be the FBI's figure for 2010 showing a decline in rapes. The higher figure for 2010 cited by Biden is simply a different data set.

When it comes to the data from Flint, then, the Vice President seems simply to have accepted what he received from the city at face value, having no reason to question it. His misstatements are most likely the result of the garbage in, garbage out phenomenon rather than a genuine attempt to deceive.

However, his assertion that fewer policemen translate into more crime, while plausible, is not supported by the evidence. Kessler cites studies which have tried and failed to establish a link between the size of a city's police force and the city's crime rate. One study even found that the crime rate in New York City actually *fell* as the number of officers declined.

Biden, it turns out, is a repeat offender in correlating the number of police officers to the crime rate. Back in 2007, when Democrats again sought to spend federal dollars to hire local police under the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, Biden said murder and violent crime rates went down eight years in a row after COPS had first been enacted in 1994.

But as columnist [Steve Chapman](#) pointed out at the time, crime rates had begun declining years before COPS was enacted; and while violent crime did rise slightly right after the program expired, the overall crime rate continued to fall. Moreover, he noted, both academic and government studies showed that the introduction of new officers under COPS had little to no effect on the crime rate.

Perhaps the most damning indictment of Biden's position, however, has come from none other than Chief Lock, who has, according to Kessler, repeatedly argued that crime rates have little connection to the size of the police force:

As the *Flint Journal* reported in May: Officials said the fact that 46 police officers were laid off last year had little to do with the escalating crime. Most of the crimes were between people that knew each other. No matter how many officers we have, we can't stop disputes between two people in their own homes, Lock said.

Lock made a similar assertion in September, 2010, when FBI statistics were released showing violent crime in Flint had decreased in 2009. The *Flint Journal* reported: A smaller police force doesn't automatically mean more crime, said Flint police chief Alven [sic] Lock. There's been years when we had 300 officers and we still had more homicides, he said, referring to 1986, when he was in the homicide division and homicides hit an all-time high of 61.

Of course, Lock didn't have his hand out for money from Washington when he made those comments.



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Today, however, Lock is helping Biden use misleading statistics and the false assertion that fewer cops mean more crime in hopes of bilking taxpayers across the country to keep the Flint police department from having to come to grips with economic reality.



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