



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on February 24, 2025

## DOJ Deletes Police Misconduct Database

The federal government, operating a law enforcement system never intended by the Constitution, has now made it even less transparent. The already murky oversight process has grown darker still.

According to a [Washington Post](#) report, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has officially shut down the [National Law Enforcement Accountability Database](#) (NLEAD). That was a central repository of federal police misconduct records, a resource intended to prevent bad officers from transferring between agencies undetected.



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### Rationale for the Deletion

According to the *WaPo* report, President Donald Trump's decision to shut down the database was part of a broader effort to scale back federal spending and reduce government oversight on law enforcement.

In a statement to the outlet, the White House dismissed the database as part of President Joe Biden's "woke, anti-police" executive order:

"President Trump believes in an appropriate balance of accountability without compromising law enforcement's ability to do its job of fighting crime and keeping communities safe. ... But the Biden executive order creating this database was full of woke, anti-police concepts that make communities less safe like a call for 'equitable' policing and addressing 'systemic racism in our criminal justice system'."

The White House added that President Trump revoked the order establishing the database on his first day in office, emphasizing his commitment to equipping law enforcement with the necessary tools to combat crime.

Trump's executive order [revoked](#) multiple policing "reforms" initiated under Biden.

### The Database

NLEAD was designed as a centralized tracking system to document both disciplinary actions and commendations for over 148,000 federal law enforcement officers.

Launched on December 18, 2023, it quickly became a key tool for hiring, assignments, and promotions across 90 federal law enforcement agencies.

According to its [latest update](#), as of September 2024, NLEAD held 4,790 misconduct records for 4,011 officers dating back to 2018, with 63 percent involving serious disciplinary actions. Those encompassed criminal convictions, suspensions, terminations, civil judgments, and resignations under investigation. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the DOJ, the largest in terms of personnel, accounted for 88 percent of reported misconduct (4,206 cases). Meanwhile, 69 percent of the 13 departments with



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multiple agencies had fewer than 100 recorded incidents.

Federal agencies were actively using it to flag potential hires and prevent “wandering officers” from gaming the system. Nearly 10,000 searches were conducted in just the first eight months of 2024.

The database wasn’t just about misconduct. It also tracked commendations and awards, providing a fuller picture of an officer’s history.

### **The Two Orders**

In June 2020, amid nationwide protests over [George Floyd’s death](#) while in police custody, President Trump signed [an executive order](#) focused on police reform. It called for improved police certification, crisis training, and a national database to track excessive use-of-force incidents.

The order strengthened use-of-force policies and prohibited chokeholds. It also tied federal funding to state and local departments that met specific policing standards. Additionally, it promoted initiatives to “better serve” Americans, with a particular focus on African-American communities.

Yet, the proposal never materialized, likely due to a lack of enforcement mechanisms and congressional support.

When Biden took office, he attempted to pass the [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act](#), which would have codified a misconduct database into law. But when Congress failed to pass the bill in 2021, Biden took executive action instead. On May 25, 2022, he signed [Executive Order 14074](#), which largely mirrored Trump’s directive.

Not only did the order create NLEAD, but it also introduced tougher use-of-force policies, required body-worn cameras, prohibited chokeholds except in life-threatening situations, and limited no-knock entries. However, it also included diversity recruitment mandates and “diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)”-based training. Evidently, the measures were more ideological than practical when it came to crime prevention and improved public safety.

### **Police Organizations and NLEAD**

The *WaPo* report quotes the concerns about NLEAD raised by the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO). That is a large coalition of police unions and associations representing over 241,000 law enforcement officers across the United States.

Notably, NAPO didn’t oppose tracking police misconduct; it opposed the specific flaws of the system.

In a January 2025 [letter](#) to outgoing Attorney General Merrick Garland, NAPO criticized NLEAD for going far beyond serious misconduct cases. The database included low-level administrative violations, such as missed training sessions, alongside records of criminal convictions and terminations. The group warned that this overreach could unfairly damage officers’ reputations.

Another major concern was due process — or the lack of it. Officers had no clear way to challenge or correct records before they were entered into the system, argued the group.

They maintained that the DOJ routinely ignored these pressing concerns.

### **The Police State?**

The dismantling of NLEAD isn’t just about transparency or taking on the DEI initiatives. It exposes a deeper contradiction in federal law enforcement. The Constitution never intended Washington to have its own police force. Yet over the decades, federal agencies have expanded their reach, policing everything from tax enforcement to railway fraud. Now, those same agencies will continue operating



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with even less oversight.

The Tenth Amendment is clear: Law enforcement is a state and local responsibility. But instead of asking whether the federal police state should exist at all, the debate has fixated on whether Washington should police itself.

Former Congressman Ron Paul of Texas warned of this long ago. He [highlighted the massive](#), unaccountable force of federal enforcers operating under the guise of “security.” Paul pointed out that hundreds of thousands of armed federal agents across agencies like the FBI, the IRS, the Transportation Security Administration, and Homeland Security don’t answer to local communities. These bureaucracies, he argued, exist not to protect Americans but to control them.

This rapidly expanding police state was never supposed to exist. And now, it operates with even fewer accountability measures in place.

As Ron Paul also put it, “When one gets in bed with government, one must expect the diseases it spreads.” That’s the real irony here. In the name of shrinking government, Trump wiped out an oversight tool — but not the federal law enforcement machine itself.

For a man who built his brand on “law and order,” Trump’s decision here is oddly out of sync. Law without accountability is not order — it’s just unchecked power. The government, which was never meant to police the nation, has chosen secrecy over accountability yet again.





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