



Written by [Peter Rykowski](#) on August 9, 2023

FY24 Appropriations Bills an Opportunity to Stop Federalized Law Enforcement

The federal government is increasingly meddling in and taking control over local law enforcement, threatening the autonomy of local police and leading to a federalized police force. The fiscal 2024 appropriations bills are a great, near-term opportunity for Congress to defund and abolish every federal agency that threatens the independence of local police.

Congress is currently [working](#) to draft and pass its fiscal 2024 appropriations bills, which must be passed before September 30 to avoid a partial government shutdown. On the House side, one appropriations bill — funding the Department of Veterans Affairs — has been [passed](#) so far. The conservative House Freedom Caucus is warning that the remaining bills do not cut federal spending enough, but the GOP House appropriations subcommittee chairs are pushing back, [claiming](#) “there’s not a lot of wiggle room left” for further cuts.

However, federal spending can be cut significantly more than the House appropriations bills would provide — and one of the most important areas in which to end all spending is federal law enforcement.

One of the many ways America is exceptional is that it is the [only country](#) whose law enforcement is traditionally completely locally controlled. Every other country has at least some national control over law enforcement.

However, this important feature is [under attack](#) in the United States. Initiated and [led by communists and Marxists](#), there is an active push to destroy locally controlled police and replace them with a nationalized police force. Even many “conservatives” have been led to [support](#) greater federal involvement in law enforcement.

Federal agencies are increasingly meddling in law-enforcement matters and usurping the role of local police — even though this is unconstitutional under the [10th Amendment](#). The primary agencies involved in this subversive effort include:

- *Department of Justice*: The DOJ has a major role in the federalization of local police. For example, it runs the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, which has seen its funding [more than triple](#) between fiscal years 2015 and 2023, with its funding now at \$663 million annually. (More on the COPS program below.) Additionally, the DOJ runs an “[Equitable Sharing](#)” program and has forced many cities into [consent decrees](#), both of which severely reduce the



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autonomy of local police departments. Furthermore, the DOJ is actively involved in [persecuting](#) political opponents of the Biden administration.

- *Federal Bureau of Investigation*: The FBI, an [unconstitutional](#) federal agency within the DOJ, is increasingly [violating](#) Americans' rights and [engaging](#) in [unconstitutional](#) domestic law-enforcement activities.
- *Department of Homeland Security*: The DHS is increasingly [meddling](#) in local-law-enforcement activities and [taking control](#) over [local](#) police departments. For example, DHS "[fusion centers](#)" are converting local police departments into subdivisions of the federal surveillance state, and it is engaging in [other](#) unconstitutional surveillance [activities](#).

The article "[Police: National or Local?](#)" in the October 31, 2022 issue of *The New American* magazine outlines and expounds on these examples and lists additional examples of federal meddling in local law enforcement:

- *COPS*: The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in the Department of Justice was established by Clinton Attorney General Janet Reno, with plans to implement a six-year, \$8.8 billion grant program that would enable state and local law-enforcement agencies to hire or redeploy 100,000 additional police officers. Since 1994, *COPS* has invested more than \$14 billion to help advance federally directed "community policing."
- *Buffer Zone Protection Program (BZPP)*: Under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the BZPP is flooding local jurisdictions with Big Brother surveillance technology such as night-vision cameras, facial-recognition technology, license-plate readers, traffic light camera video feeds, etc.
- *FLETC*: Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), according to the FLETC website, "provide tuition-free and low cost training to state, local, campus, tribal and territorial law enforcement agencies. Programs are conducted across the United States and are normally hosted by a local law enforcement agency. Training is also conducted at FLETC facilities located in Glynco (Brunswick), GA; Artesia, NM; Charleston, SC; and Cheltenham, MD."
- *Fusion centers*: According to DHS, "Fusion centers conduct analysis and facilitate information sharing, assisting law enforcement and homeland security partners in preventing, protecting against, and responding to crime and terrorism." By the end of 2012, the DHS had marked 1,849 locations scattered throughout the 50 states that would serve as regional surveillance collection centers. The DHS has spent many millions of dollars establishing these federal-local "collaborative" efforts. They have not exhibited a single terrorist caught during the program, though thwarting terrorism served as justification for the program.
- *1033 Program*: Section 1033 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 gave the secretary of defense permanent authority to militarize local law enforcement by transferring war-fighting equipment — tanks, Humvees, MRAPs, Bearcats, Stingrays (for cellphone monitoring), full-auto rifles, grenade launchers, and more — to police, ostensibly to fight the "war on drugs" and "war on terrorism." This juicy carrot comes with the stick of federal training and monitoring. The same "progressives" who supported this militarization of the police now denounce this militarization of the police.



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Finally, basically every federal agency has its own law-enforcement branch, giving them the ability to enforce their unconstitutional edicts. Examples of such agencies include (but are not limited to) the ATF, IRS, TSA, EPA, FDA, the Education Department, and the Treasury Department.

If Congress is to follow the U.S. Constitution, particularly Article I, Section 8 and the 10th Amendment, it must defund and abolish federal law enforcement, including the DOJ's COPS program, the FBI, and the DHS. Under the U.S. Constitution, the federal government has no role in domestic law enforcement; such activities are reserved to the states and, by extension, localities. This is for good reason: Local police and county sheriffs are key to protecting citizens against government overreach, and they are directly accountable to the local citizens they serve. But in countries with federalized police, which are accountable to the central government, nothing is stopping the government from violating its citizens' God-given rights.

National police are the hallmark of dictatorships and oppression around the world. The autonomy of local police is paramount to the survival of our Republic. If Congress desires to defend the U.S. Constitution and support independent local police, it must defund and abolish the growing number of federal law-enforcement agencies and programs.

To urge your U.S. representative and senators to support independent local police by defunding and abolishing federal law-enforcement agencies and programs, visit The John Birch Society's legislative alert [here](#).



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