



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 7, 2022

With Crime Rising & Elections Near, Dems Walk Back “Defund the Police”

Is the “defund the police” movement dead?

Black mayors in crime-ridden cities across the U.S. are admitting so with a series of tough actions [meant to curb the epidemic](#) of lawlessness.

Only two years after the George Floyd riots led Democrats to declare war on the police, politicians in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., are increasing police budgets ahead of the November midterms.

“People are still against crime and people want to be safe,” said former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter in an interview with NBC News.

“You’re seeing in communities all across the country that when folks actually came to grips with the conflict of rising crime rates and an effort to quote unquote take away from policing, the public, being way ahead of the politicians as usual, figured out ‘no no no, that’s not a good idea, we want to be safe.’”

On Thursday, Joe Biden traveled to New York City for a meeting with the city’s new Democratic mayor, Eric Adams, a former police officer who said he will clean up the streets. Adams’ victory in the Democratic primary last year was taken as a sign that New York voters have had enough of the anti-police rhetoric.

Adams is far from alone in being a Democrat walking back on the party’s “defund the police” agenda.

Nutter, who is black, has publicly gone against Philadelphia’s reformist district attorney, Larry Krassner, who is white, after the top prosecutor said in a news conference that “We don’t have a crisis of lawlessness, we don’t have a crisis of crime, we don’t have a crisis of violence.”

In an [op-ed](#), Nutter wrote that “it takes a certain audacity of ignorance and white privilege to say that right now,” noting that people of color living in struggling parts of the city are often the ones most victimized by crime.

“We have to disabuse people of this flawed premise that Black and brown people are against the police. Black and brown people are against police abuse,” Nutter said. “As Democrats we have to do two complicated things at the same time. We have to ensure public safety and reform the abuses of the criminal justice system.”

Democrats are notably falling behind the public on the crime issue. Just [46 percent of Americans](#) approved of Biden’s handling of crime in December, according to an ABC News/Ipsos poll. Meanwhile, 56 percent of voters in a January [Fox News survey](#) said Republicans would do a better job on the issue.

James Carville, the veteran Democratic strategist who in the 1990s helped Bill Clinton smooth over



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concerns that Democrats were “soft on crime,” said the party should follow the lead of its black mayors who are now taking a tough-on-crime stance.

“If you cede something that your voters in particular encounter every day, then you’ve given up,” he said. “You’ve got to own this or this is going to own you.”

“The spike we had in crime took place in the fourth year of a Republican presidency, not a Democratic one,” he said, referring to the Trump era.

NBC News noted:

But the public’s confidence in police has recovered from the low it hit after George Floyd’s murder at the hands of police officers in 2020, and a growing share of Americans want to increase spending on law enforcement. A December CNN poll found 76 percent of Americans said the federal government was not doing enough to address violent crime....

Rep. Tom Suozzi, a centrist Democrat, sees an opening in New York’s crowded gubernatorial primary for a candidate focused on crime and is running a TV ad criticizing the incumbent Democratic governor and Manhattan’s progressive district attorney for being too soft on the issue.

“Fear of rising crime is a real life issue and Democrats need to focus on real life issues,” said Suozzi.

The change in rhetoric comes as looting and violent crimes have swept the nation, often directly in response to Democratic policies, such as a California law under which shoplifting merchandise worth \$950 or less is only a misdemeanor—which has caused delinquents to freely grab goods in the light of day without fear of security guards or police doing anything to stop them.

Carville suggested Democrats tout the 1994 crime bill that was drafted by Joe Biden and signed into law by Bill Clinton.

“You can say whatever you want about the crime bill, but from the time the crime bill was passed until 2019, there was a significant drop in crime,” he said. “Now, you can argue causation, but you can’t argue correlation.”



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