

Subj: New Message Testing on Trump's DC Police Force Takeover
 Date: August 15, 2025

From August 12th - August 13th, we tested 21 Democratic and Republican messages on the unprecedented recent takeover of the D.C. police force by the Trump Administration. These messages were tested to measure their effect on Trump's approval via web panel with 7,751 respondents and are ranked as relative to more than 700+ messages on a wide variety of topics (tariffs, Medicaid cuts, education, you name it) that we have tested since the start of the second Trump presidency.

Percentile ranking is relative to 700 other messages tested since Inauguration Day tested on a variety of topics, like inflation, abortion, the economy, and more. The higher the percentile, the more effective that talking point is at driving down Trump's disapproval. **We recommend utilizing above-average talking points, i.e. those above the 50th percentile.*

Democratic Messages Tested

Message Source	Message Content	Percentile
Pivot to tariffs	Donald Trump's takeover of D.C.'s police is a stunt to distract from the pain his tariffs are causing families. Trump's tariffs are driving up prices on groceries, cars, and everyday goods, hitting working people hardest. Instead of fixing the economy he's hurting, he's picking political fights to change the subject. Americans deserve lower costs, not more chaos.	52%
Pivot to Medicaid cuts	While Donald Trump is sending troops into D.C. in the name of "safety," he just cut Medicaid for millions of Americans. Trump is creating fear to distract from his agenda that makes it harder for people to see a doctor, get medicine, or care for a sick child – all while claiming he's protecting communities.	51%
Silencing dissent in Black communities	Donald Trump is sending the military into D.C. streets, a move that recalls times when federal force was used to silence dissent in Black communities. This isn't about safety – crime is at a 30-year low. It's about Trump using fear to grab power, trample rights, and turn our nation's capital into his personal police state.	30%
Sen. Tim Kaine	Donald Trump is placing the D.C. police department under federal control and deploying the national guard in Washington D.C. If President Trump really cared about safety in D.C., he would have immediately deployed the National Guard on January 6, 2021, and wouldn't have pardoned hundreds of rioters who broke into the Capitol that day, including individuals convicted of assaulting police officers.	26%

Trump is boosting his own image

The law only lets a president take over D.C.'s police in rare emergencies, with Congress involved. Trump is ignoring these rules, seizing local control to boost his own image. If he can sidestep the law in D.C., he can do it anywhere – putting your community's safety and democracy at risk.

25%

DC Councilmember Charles Allen

The President taking over local control of the Washington D.C. police department and putting the US military onto the streets of DC under the guise of public safety is wrong. National Guard soldiers are trained for warfare and natural disasters, not for community policing. Every American should be deeply concerned with what they're witnessing today.

22%

Setting up delays for future elections

Donald Trump's federal takeover of D.C. police and National Guard could be a setup to delay future elections. It's not about safety – it's about power. Once local control is gone, it's easier for him to push off voting and rule by decree. We can't let fear be a cover for shutting down democracy.

20%

Rep. Mark Pocan

Democrats say you should oppose Donald Trump because violent crime in DC fell 35% last year, the lowest in 30 years. Trump's move to take federal control over DC isn't about safety. It's about a wannabe dictator trying to grab more power. This affects EVERYONE in America. If he can take DC's police, he can take yours.

20%

Defend America Action:
Weaponizing law enforcement

Donald Trump is misusing FBI personnel for this dictatorial show of force, pulling agents off of counterintelligence and public corruption cases so they can make traffic stops in Washington D.C. Trump is proving he's willing to weaponize federal law enforcement to turn DC into a police state that serves his personal interests instead of protecting national security.

16%

Sen. Patty Murray

A rambling and incoherent Trump wants to turn Washington DC into his personal police state despite a 30-year low in crime. He's a pathetic wannabe dictator who wants to distract you from his connection to the Epstein files, skyrocketing costs, and his weak job numbers. Don't let him.

14%

Democrats take crime seriously

Donald Trump's D.C. police takeover is a political stunt, not a real plan to fight crime. Democrats, meanwhile, take crime seriously by investing in more trained officers, solving cases, and funding community programs proven to keep people safe. Trump's team is only wasting resources and distracts from real solutions that protect families and reduce violence for the long term.

13%

Sen. Van Hollen

Donald Trump's raw authoritarian power grab in DC is part of a growing national crisis. He's playing dictator in our nation's capital as a dress rehearsal as he pushes democracy to the brink. This assault on freedom is exactly why we've fought for DC statehood & to give DC control of its National Guard.

13%

Distraction from
Epstein and Tariffs

Democrats are taking crime seriously – funding more officers, improving investigations, and backing proven community programs. Trump isn't making anyone safer. He's using a federal takeover of D.C. police as a stunt to distract from skyrocketing costs caused by his tariffs and from his own connection to the Jeffrey Epstein files. Real safety comes from real solutions, not political theater.

12%

Pete Buttigieg

Donald Trump is directing the federal government to take over policing of a major American city, Washington D.C. The president is doing this not in order to make the city safer, but to solve his own political problems he needs to get his base talking and thinking about something besides his refusal to open up the Epstein files, because he's mixed up in them.

8%

Defend America
Action:
Manufactured
crime crisis

Donald Trump is manufacturing a D.C. crime crisis and improperly using D.C. police. Amid mounting scandals and collapsing approval ratings thanks to his price-hiking policies, Trump is using the specter of crime to distract from his historic unpopularity and toxic agenda, even though violent crime in DC hit a 30-year low last year.

8%

Rep. Eleanor
Norton

President Trump's decision to federalize MPD and activate the D.C. National Guard to address crime is an historic assault on D.C. home rule and is more evidence of the urgent need to pass a D.C. statehood bill. Crime in D.C. reached a 30-year low in 2024 and is down 26% this year compared to the same time period last year.

3%

Republican Messages Tested

Message Source	Message Content	Percentile
-----------------------	------------------------	-------------------

<p>“Trump is restoring order”</p>	<p>Donald Trump is setting a national example: when crime threatens any community, leaders must act fast. In D.C., violent gangs, open drug markets, and lawless streets made local leaders fail. Trump is restoring order, showing he'll take action anywhere in America when politicians won't – keeping our families safe no matter where we live.</p>	<p>87%</p>
<p><u>GOP Rep. James Comer</u></p>	<p>Donald Trump is rightly using executive power to take bold and necessary action to crack down on crime and restore law and order in Washington. For years, D.C.'s radical, soft-on-crime agenda has emboldened criminals and put public safety at risk. Protecting all Americans and tackling crime are core conservative policy priorities, and Trump's efforts to restore law and order in D.C. mark another promise kept.</p>	<p>54%</p>
<p>“Trump is protecting families”</p>	<p>Donald Trump is making Washington, D.C. safe and clean again. For too long, our capital has been overrun by crime, tents, and trash under Democrat control. By bringing in the National Guard and taking charge of the police, Trump is protecting families, businesses, and America's image to the world.</p>	<p>54%</p>
<p><u>Trump White House</u></p>	<p>Donald Trump took bold executive action to liberate Washington, D.C., from the cesspool of crime and homelessness that it has become after decades of unilateral Democrat leadership. During the campaign, President Trump promised to make our capital city “safe and beautiful” for all Americans – and he is delivering.</p>	<p>41%</p>
<p><u>Donald Trump</u></p>	<p>Donald Trump declared a public safety emergency in Washington D.C. and directed the Attorney General to take over the D.C. police department. Our capital city has been overtaken by violent gangs, bloodthirsty criminals, roving mobs of wild youth, drugged out maniacs and homeless people, and we're not going to let it happen anymore.</p>	<p>16%</p>