

Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on "The Domestic Terrorism Threat One Year After January 6"
Tuesday, January 11, 2022

A year ago, I gave a speech on the Senate floor. I asked my colleagues to join me in condemning all political violence. This includes the terrible assault on the Capitol on January 6, as well as the nearly 600 riots that came before it.

Those anti-police riots rocked our nation for seven full months. The riots caused terrible damages: nearly 2 billion dollars' worth.

Hundreds of people were charged federally.

The FBI opened over 500 domestic terrorism investigations.

Over 14,000 were arrested by the states in just the first few weeks.

At least 25 died.

Two thousand police officers were injured. This included well over a hundred officers defending the federal courthouse in Portland. It included sixty Secret Service officers defending the White House.

The Judicial Conference reports that 50 federal courthouses were damaged during this time.

Throughout a time that was incredibly difficult for our police officers, Democrats piled on. They called police things like stormtroopers.

To this day, attacks continue on the good names of the police who dealt with an impossible situation in a 100-night siege of the Portland courthouse. Is it any wonder then, that when it came time to secure the Capitol on January 6, some were too concerned about optics, or about the image of National Guardsmen at the Capitol? Mayor Muriel Bowser of DC even said that federal police forces like those that came to defend the Portland courthouse were not welcome.

From the time anti-police riots broke out over 18 months ago, the police have retreated from our streets. And the results have been predictable. Beginning in June of 2020, our country has experienced an unprecedented 30% spike in murders. That spike has continued all the way to the present day.

In 2021, more than a dozen cities set all-time homicide records. Street crimes, from assaults to carjackings to large, flash mob-style smash and grab robberies have become a way of life in many cities.

New York mayor Eric Adams has announced he will revive a plainclothes anti-crime unit to combat the violence. San Francisco mayor London Breed has declared a state of emergency over crime in her city. Mayor Lori Lightfoot has asked for federal resources to help fight crime in Chicago.

Sadly, anti-police sentiments extend to a rise in murders of police. Dozens were killed in 2021. FBI analysis showed that many of them were targeted because they were police, not because of any prior contact with the attacker. Fraternal Order of Police data shows that ambush attacks on officers have more than doubled.

The police aren't heroes just on January 6, when they defended us here in the Capitol. They're heroes all the time. If we don't treat them that way, I fear that violent crime and attacks on police officers will only get worse, not better.

I started by saying I gave a speech asking my colleagues to join me in condemning all political violence. I'm sorry to say that the situation has gotten worse since I gave that speech, not better.

Last summer, President Biden released a domestic terrorism strategy that made no mention of the 2020 riots, though they comprise about a fifth to a quarter of the FBI's current domestic terrorism cases. There was almost no mention of leftwing terrorism at all. Further, the President's strategy suggested that partisan policies of gun control and teaching critical race theory were part of the solution.

Using violent attacks to try to advance unrelated policy goals is a shameful tactic. It undermines what our law enforcement officers are trying to do to stem the violence in this country. It undermines the universal, nonpartisan indictment we should all bring to bear against extremist violence. There can't be exceptions.

That means we have to deal with the 2020 riots and January 6 when we look over the FBI domestic terrorism program. We in Congress have an oversight role to perform. And there is room for improvement.

Director Wray, over 10 months ago, testified to us that there were weaknesses in the leftwing domestic terrorism program that had prevented the FBI from getting the visibility they needed into the 2020 riots. From that time to now, we have received next to no information in response to our inquiries about how the FBI intends to cure those deficiencies.

The time has come to change that.

