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EXPERT INSIGHT | Center for Law & Justice

BIPARTISAN “POLICE FUNDING” BILL WILL DO LITTLE TO REDUCE CRIME

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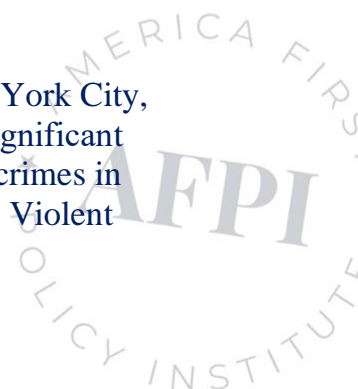
TOPLINE POINTS

- ★ Recently passed H.R. 6448 will be touted as a pro-police/crime-reduction funding measure, but it will have next to no impact on rising crime rates across the Nation.
- ★ The bill limits grant funding to police departments of fewer than 125 officers even though most of the crime and violence is occurring in much larger communities.
- ★ The bill further prioritizes funding for certain training measures, such as de-escalation and domestic violence training, over the actual recruitment and retention of police officers.

Last month’s passage of the [Invest to Protect Act of 2022](#), sponsored by Representative Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ-05), may provide politicians on Capitol Hill with a constituent-friendly talking point to emphasize their commitment to supporting the police, but it will do little to reduce the rising crime rates afflicting communities across the Nation.

For starters, the bill restricts any potential grant funds to only police departments with 125 officers or fewer. Understandably, smaller police departments often have more limited resources than larger departments, but they may also face fewer challenges if they are in low-crime areas. Prioritizing funding toward smaller departments to fill those resource gaps is perfectly acceptable, but not to the absolute exclusion of larger and more diverse law enforcement agencies, many of which are dealing with unprecedented levels of rising crime and violence.

Communities that will not benefit from the Invest to Protect Act include New York City, home to the Nation’s largest urban police department. New York has seen a significant uptick in crime over the past few years, including a whopping 44% rise in all crimes in the [first quarter](#) of 2022 compared to the same time period from a year before. Violent



crime has been particularly concerning, with homicides [jumping](#) over 30% in the summer of 2022 over 2021.

With some of the worst crime and violence in the country, Philadelphia will not benefit one cent from the Invest to Protect Act. The City of Brotherly Love is coming off of its highest murder rates ever—with 499 [killed](#) in 2021—and is on pace to approach that dubious distinction again this year.

Any piece of legislation purporting to improve public safety would have to address the challenges facing cities like New York and Philadelphia. This bill does nothing of the sort. In fact, none of the top 15 cities with the highest [murder rates](#) in the country, per capita, will benefit from the Invest to Protect Act.

Even as the bill narrowly defined which departments could pursue grant funding, it also restricted the manner in which those funds could be used, focusing on de-escalation, mental health, and domestic violence training. These are all worthwhile endeavors, but they do not meet the acute needs of communities beset by rising crime and violence.

Rather than pursuing policies that may have, at best, a marginal impact on crime, violence, and recruiting and retention deficits in the law enforcement community, policies that aggressively tackle these issues head-on should be the priority of legislators.

Restoring full staffing capacity at all major law enforcement agencies, regardless of size, and a restoration of the sanctity of the rule of law—as manifest by holding perpetrators accountable—will go much further in restoring peace and stability to communities than the narrowly scoped Invest to Protect Act of 2022.



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