

# 2026 Public Safety Agenda for the Federal Government



## INTRODUCTION

● This will be a defining year for American criminal justice policy.

As America turns 250, it is time to return to our roots and make decisions at the local level instead of in Washington, D.C. This agenda outlines a comprehensive strategy to secure our communities without compromising the ideals that make us Americans. By pivoting from heavy-handed federal overreach to locally driven, technology-enabled policing, we can build a better criminal justice system grounded in the U.S. Constitution.

## AGENDA

### SOLVE MORE CRIMES

● — ? Why:

Case clearance rates—the percentage of crimes that law enforcement solves—have been **falling for decades**. In the mid-1960s, the clearance rate for murder exceeded **90 percent** nationally. By 2023, that rate had dropped to just over **50 percent**, and the numbers are even worse for **non-fatal shootings** and **property crimes**. This decline leaves dangerous individuals on the street and is one of the **primary drivers** behind spiking crime rates.

✔ **Benefit:**

Reversing this trend requires precision policing. Investing in **special investigative units** can help identify the small number of individuals responsible for a **disproportionate amount of violence**. Research consistently shows that the certainty of being caught is a **far more effective deterrent** than the severity of the punishment. Thus, swift and certain consequences help prevent crime before it happens.

□ **Keep in Mind:**

Cases are won or lost based on community cooperation. When police fail to solve serious crimes (particularly homicides), communities lose faith in the

system's ability to protect them. And when people do not trust the police, [they stop talking](#)—creating a [feedback loop](#) in which clearance rates drop as witness testimony dries up. The longer the state fails to deliver justice, the more motivated individuals become to [seek it themselves](#). To move the needle on clearance rates, we must treat community engagement and victim services as core police functions.

#### 📍 **Where We Stand:**

A dual-track legislative approach can turn the tide on unsolved cases. First, passing the [Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods \(VICTIM\) Act](#) would support hiring detectives, improving forensics, and reducing evidence backlogs. Second, the [Combating Organized Retail Crime Act](#) would provide a long overdue federal response to the sophisticated theft rings that often fund broader criminal enterprises. Passing both bills in 2026 would signal a comprehensive commitment to solving the violent crimes of today while dismantling the organized networks of tomorrow.

#### ❓ **Why:**

Civil society requires a distinction between the military, whose mission is to defeat enemies, and the police, whose mission is to enforce the law. This division is now under siege, threatened by a [drift toward](#) a paramilitary police force. But the Supreme Court's recent decision is clear: Military police [do not belong](#) on American streets. Expensive security theater that erodes state sovereignty and fails to address the [root causes of crime](#) does not make us safer.

#### ✅ **Benefit:**

True federalism requires cooperation, not coercion. Bypassing local officials severs trust between law enforcement and the community, ultimately undermining the very safety the administration seeks to protect. Congress should update the [Posse Comitatus Act](#) to ensure police remain accountable to the communities they serve. When federal assistance is necessary, it must be in conjunction with local agencies whose understanding of their own streets offers a security advantage that out-of-state troops cannot match.

#### 📌 **Keep in Mind:**

The militarization of domestic policing is only one facet of a broader federal campaign to hollow out state authority. Recently, the federal government has [weaponized federal grants](#) to coerce states into [abandoning bail reform](#). By threatening to [pull essential public safety funding](#) from “cashless bail” jurisdictions, Washington is effectively attempting to dictate local courtroom procedures from a thousand miles away.

#### 📍 **Where We Stand:**

The end of [National Guard deployment](#) to Chicago, Los Angeles, and Portland (Oregon) on Dec. 31, 2025, marks a pivotal moment. While the administration has backed down for now, deploying the Guard for routine security (e.g., inspecting bags in the [New York City subway](#)) has become the new normal. If we do not insist on a [bright line](#) between military operations and domestic policing, then we risk allowing the exception to become the rule—which would permanently alter the character of American civil life.

## EVALUATE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

### — ? Why:

AI is rapidly reshaping the criminal justice system, shifting from passive analysis to “[agentic](#)” systems that can actively monitor real-time video and transcribe complex police-citizen interactions. These tools offer [immense potential](#) to identify emerging threats and improve law enforcement efficiency; however, the line between legitimate public safety and intrusive state surveillance will begin to blur without regulatory clarity.

### ✓ Benefit:

When implemented with proper safeguards, AI is a powerful force multiplier that can predict crime, expedite response, and streamline routine work. One of its most promising applications is in [body camera programs](#), where it transforms vast, unmanageable archives of video footage into sources of active insight. Automating data entry and administrative functions frees up officers to patrol the neighborhoods where they are needed most.

### ⚠ Keep in Mind:

Technology that can track anyone, anywhere, anytime fundamentally shifts the balance of power between government and citizens. This is particularly true in the case of police body cameras, which have functioned as passive recording devices until now. By coupling cameras with [real-time facial recognition](#) and online connectivity, we risk creating a biometric surveillance dragnet that treats every citizen interaction as a criminal investigation.

### 📍 Where We Stand:

President Donald J. Trump’s [December 2025 executive order](#) seeks to preempt states from regulating private AI development. Importantly, the order includes an exception explicitly preserving state authority over government procurement and “use of AI,” which will allow companies to develop AI unimpeded while enabling lawmakers to limit how it is applied within the criminal justice system. By putting guardrails around the government instead of the free market, we can support innovation and civil liberties concurrently.

## FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

● If you need help with further research around these issues, information on implementing these types of initiatives, or anything else, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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