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## **Police and Prosecutors Urge Trump and Sessions to Join Bipartisan Movement for Criminal Justice Reform**

*Law enforcement group gathers in Washington to present alternative agenda on crime.*

Washington, D.C.—More than 80 of the nation’s leading police chiefs, prosecutors, and sheriffs will gather today in the nation’s capital for the National Law Enforcement Summit on Crime in 2017.

The Group hosting the summit, [Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration](#), released an [open letter](#) and [five-point policy plan](#) this morning to President Trump and Attorney General Sessions, urging them to shift away from a “tough on crime” agenda. They urge them to, instead, join the current bipartisan movement for criminal justice reform that’s reemerging as a Congressional priority.

The Summit comes on the same morning Attorney General Sessions testifies at his first oversight hearing before Congress. U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC), former Attorney General Eric Holder, and former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates are headlining the event.

“We are grateful to the Trump Administration for prioritizing the cause of fighting crime and violence. They have consistently supported our mission, and acknowledged the difficulties and dangers of our profession. We stand ready to work with the White House and Justice Department on constructive policies to advance public safety,” said **Ronal Serpas, Founding Chairman of Law Enforcement Leaders and former Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department**. “As members of law enforcement, we do not believe that public safety is served by a return to tactics that punish without strong purpose. From decades of experience on the front lines, we have learned first-hand that these responses are ineffective to reduce crime. There is an alternative to these counterproductive policies. That’s what we are here to discuss today.”

At the Summit, prominent law enforcement will discuss their views on why overly punitive policies are counterproductive to public safety, and will profile the work they have done in their localities to advance more modern strategies.

Speakers at the Summit include the following (see the full program [here](#)):

- **Eric Holder**, former U.S. Attorney General (D)
- **Sally Yates**, former Acting U.S. Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General (D)

- **Thom Tillis**, U.S. Senator, North Carolina (R)
- **Doug Collins**, Congressman, Georgia (R)
- **Ronal Serpas**, Founding Chairman, Law Enforcement Leaders; former Police Superintendent, New Orleans, Louisiana and Nashville, Tennessee
- **Peter Newsham**, Police Chief, Washington, D.C.
- **Art Acevedo**, Police Chief, Houston, Texas
- **James Craig**, Police Chief, Detroit, Michigan
- **Bill Scott**, Police Chief, San Francisco, California
- **Darrel Stephens**, Executive Director, Major Cities Chiefs Association
- **Richard Stanek**, Vice President for Homeland Security, Major Counties Sheriffs Association; Sherriff, Hennepin County, Minnesota
- **Cyrus Vance**, District Attorney, New York County, New York; Steering Committee Member, Law Enforcement Leaders
- **Michael Freeman**, President, National District Attorney's Association; County Attorney, Hennepin County, Minnesota
- **Hal Hardin**, President, National Association of Former U.S. Attorneys
- **David LaBahn**, President and CEO, Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

The [letter](#) and [accompanying report](#) lays out five defining recommendations that participating law enforcement believe are key in the fight to keep our country safe:

- Prioritize federal resources to fight violent crime
- Urge Congress to enact federal sentencing reform
- Increase resources for mental health and drug treatment
- Increase support for local community policing, and
- Expand reentry programs to reduce recidivism.

Watch a livestream of the Summit [here](#), starting at 9:00am.

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Law Enforcement Leaders' calls for criminal justice reform are being welcomed by reform advocates [across the political spectrum](#).

"Few voices are more vital to the criminal justice debate than those of the men and women we entrust to protect our communities," said **Mark Holden, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Koch Industries**. "Today, the nation's most respected law enforcement leaders laid out tactics that their decades of experience have shown will best reduce crime and unnecessary incarceration. The Administration and Congress should heed their valuable advice. Koch Industries views bipartisan criminal justice reform as a moral, fiscal, and conservative issue, and remains committed to advocating for comprehensive reform."

"The most respected names in law enforcement are uniting with leaders on both sides of the aisle to say we cannot repeat the mistakes of the war on drugs when it comes to dealing with today's public safety challenges," said **Clark Neily, Vice President for Criminal Justice at the Cato Institute**. "Criminal justice reform is necessary to stop the waste of taxpayer dollars and ensure that law enforcement can concentrate on what matters."

"Law enforcement officials who are on the frontlines can offer valuable insight about how to prevent and respond to crime," said **Marc Levin, policy director for Right on Crime**. "We are pleased that so many law enforcement leaders have come together to support reforms that are working in states from Texas to South Carolina to hold offenders accountable and enhance public safety. We urge lawmakers across the country to listen to the commonsense voices of those who risk their lives to keep this country safe and have identified solutions that reduce both crime and costs to taxpayers."

"Law enforcement, along with leading conservatives and progressives, agree that doubling down on old, ineffective criminal justice policies has not benefited our country," said **Holly Harris, executive director of the U.S. Justice Action Network**. "Smarter policies are being implemented on the state level. The Administration and Congress need to realize that reform is already happening, and succeeding, in their backyards. We urge the Administration to stop clinging to failed policies and join law enforcement and conservative leaders in building a stronger, more effective system."

"Whether in city halls, state capitals, or Washington, D.C., we hope lawmakers will listen to law enforcement's advice to help reform our criminal justice system," said **Doug Deason, President of Deason Capital Services and Deason Foundation President**. "We need a system that is based on equal treatment for all, prioritizes redemption and rehabilitation over punishment, and enables law enforcement to best serve their communities."

"The Administration continues to fall back on retrograde policies that prioritize punishment above all else, despite evidence that such strategies are counterproductive to public safety," said **Inimai Chettiar, Director of the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law**. "Today's Summit demonstrates that many leaders in the law enforcement community understand that the best way to ensure public safety is to seek innovative solutions that reduce crime and incarceration together. We hope the Administration and Congress will take their voices seriously."

"As someone who served time in prison, I know that a diverse group of stakeholders is necessary to build a safer and more just criminal justice system," said **Glenn E. Martin, President and Founder of JustLeadershipUSA**. "Having a brother who serves as a US Marshall reminds me that for reform to be effective, law enforcement must play an active and engaged role. Today's summit confirms that many law enforcement leaders understand this responsibility and are ready to act. Moving forward, we must get new policies right and work collaboratively to achieve meaningful reform."

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### **About Law Enforcement Leaders**

[Law Enforcement Leaders](#) unites more than 200 police chiefs, sheriffs, district and county attorneys, attorneys general, and U.S. attorneys from all 50 states. For a full members list visit our [website](#).

For more information on Law Enforcement Leaders, visit [www.lawenforcementleaders.org](http://www.lawenforcementleaders.org).