

February 29, 2024

Mayor Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 406
Washington, D.C. 20004

Chairman Phil Mendelson
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Chair Pro Tempore Kenyan McDuffie
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 506
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Anita Bonds
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 404
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 107
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Christina Henderson
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 402
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Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 108
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Councilmember Brooke Pinto
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 106
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Councilmember Matthew Frumin
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 408
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Janeese Lewis George
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 105
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Councilmember Zachary Parker
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 102
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Charles Allen
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 110
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Vincent Gray
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 406
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser, Council Chairman Mendelson, and Members of the City Council of the District of Columbia,

We, the undersigned members of Washington, D.C.'s vibrant business trade association community, are writing to express our deep concern about the alarming increase in violent crime across our city. As job creators, taxpayers, and dedicated contributors to the economic and social well-being of our nation's capital, we urge the Mayor and City Council to address this pressing issue that threatens the safety and prosperity of not only our community but also our employees and their families.

Washington, D.C., is quickly becoming a national outlier in rising crime, and the trends are alarming. The national homicide rate [decreased](#) by 15 percent from 2022 to 2023, and the homicide rate in major cities including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Phoenix all [declined](#) more than 10 percent. In Washington, D.C., [homicides rose by 35 percent](#), while overall [violent crime increased by 39 percent](#) in 2023. Armed robberies were up 70 percent, and carjackings more than doubled to 950 from [2022 to 2023](#).

Our organizations are primarily based in the downtown business district, where there have been horrifying acts of violence over the past several months. [Mike Gill](#), a father of three and a leader in Washington's business and political community, recently passed away after he was shot in a violent carjacking in the middle of the K Street area. Later that night, a young man and father of two, Alberto "AJ" Vasquez, was senselessly

murdered by the same man who conducted an 11-hour [carjacking](#) spree. Police are still [searching](#) for a suspect in the recent murder of Dynamo Technologies CEO Vivek Teneja, which occurred just blocks from the White House. Dynamo Technologies had recently won a contract to provide “mission-critical cybersecurity operations support” for the Department of Agriculture. Late last year, Congressman Henry Cueller (D-TX) was [carjacked](#) less than a mile from the Capitol building. The potential departure of the Capitals and Wizards from the arena in Chinatown threatens to further accelerate a rapid decline for downtown D.C. that will only exacerbate violent crime.

Innocent people in neighborhoods across the city have been targeted in robberies, carjackings, and seemingly random acts of violence. [Nasrat Ahmad Yar](#) was a father of four, a Lyft driver, and former translator for the U.S. armed forces in Afghanistan who fled death threats from the Taliban only to become the victim of gun violence on Capitol Hill. [Arianna Davis](#) was only ten years old when she was struck by a stray bullet while riding in a car with her family on Mother’s Day. On Valentine’s Day, police had to [escort](#) children to school after a suspect wounded three police officers in Southeast D.C.

The City Council should take immediate action to target the small group of organized and repeat criminals responsible for most of these violent offenses. A [recent study](#) from the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform and the District of Columbia’s Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) found as little as 200 individuals are driving the surge in repeat gun violence. Armed carjacking rings, including one broken up late last year by the Department of Justice, are [responsible](#) for many of the 950 car thefts in 2023. One man was recently arrested after committing armed robbery at the same Chinatown Walgreens location [six times over the past six months](#).

After two decades of steady economic growth, Washington D.C. was able to cast aside its reputation as “America’s murder capital” in the 1980s and 90s. We want to ensure the city does not reprise that reputation because we are unable to contain the recent wave of violent crime. As the council considers crime legislation on March 5, we encourage you to address these issues in a way that is consistent with the crime crisis in our city.

We are committed to Washington D.C., and we are ready to collaborate with the City Council to ensure the implementation of effective measures to reduce crime and enhance the overall safety of our city. Our organizations are committed to bringing our employees back to work in our physical office locations downtown and across the District, which will contribute to the city’s tax base and give a boost to the local economy. Together, we can create an environment that fosters economic growth, prosperity, and security for all.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and we look forward to seeing Washington D.C. become a safer and more prosperous community for everyone.

Signed,

Airlines for America
American Apparel & Footwear Association
American Bankers Association
American Bus Association
American Chemistry Council
American Coatings Association
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Council of Life Insurers
American Exploration and Production Council

American Financial Services Association
American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers
American Gaming Association
American Gas Association
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Investment Council
American Land Title Association
American Petroleum Institute
American Public Transportation Association

American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
American Society for Association Executives
Associated Builders and Contractors
Bank Policy Institute
Beer Institute
Building Owners and Managers Association International
CTIA – The Wireless Association
Consumer Bankers Association
Consumer Healthcare Products Association
Corn Refiners Association
Destinations International
Edison Electric Institute
Electric Power Supply Association
Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance
Essential Minerals Association
Federation of American Hospitals
FIA
Financial Services Forum
Financial Services Institute
Finseca
Household and Commercial Products Association
Housing Policy Council
Independent Petroleum Association of America
Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)
Institute of International Bankers
Institute of International Finance
International Agribusiness Council (IAC)
International Franchise Association
International Fresh Produce Association
Investment Company Institute
ISRI
Liquid Energy Pipeline Association
Mortgage Bankers Association
National Association of Broadcasters
National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors
National Association of Investment Companies
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Security Companies
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Grocers Association
National Mining Association
National Music Publishers' Association
National Propane Gas Association
National Retail Federation
National Venture Capital Association
Plastics Industry Association

Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association
Small Business Investor Alliance
The Business Council
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Travel Association
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America