Joint Statement by Law Enforcement Leaders on Protecting Voters

As law enforcement leaders, elected prosecutors, and chief legal officers of our jurisdictions, we know that the right to vote is fundamental to our democracy and our identity as Americans, regardless of political affiliation. It is a constitutional right and, ultimately, a public trust and safety issue.

Public trust in democracy, the rule of law, and the integrity of our government is integral to public safety. When one system is attacked and fails, it compromises the ability of all systems to function, including our criminal justice system. And when communities do not trust us, we cannot effectively keep them safe.

Efforts to interfere with the United States Postal Service imperil the democratic process and erode confidence in the integrity of all government systems. Within the context of a pandemic, we should already be deeply concerned that crowds at polling places will endanger our residents. And now, recent threats and intimidation tactics, including deploying law enforcement to police the polls, raises the prospect of voter intimidation, damaging bonds of trust between law enforcement and communities they serve. This is playing out at a time when the number of Americans expressing confidence in law enforcement has fallen to an all-time low. That is why, as leaders charged with protecting public safety, we call for free and fair elections and condemn efforts to interfere with the Postal Service and undermine the voting process.

It is more important than ever that we protect the integrity of our democracy, and, in the era of COVID-19, the ability to vote by mail is essential to protecting our cherished democratic process. As law enforcement and government leaders, we have been involved in ongoing efforts to protect our communities from the novel coronavirus. This is a time when all public leaders are being tested and we must come together in protecting the American people from this devastating disease. The ability to vote by mail is inextricably tied to our efforts to protect our communities – and the rights of those who reside there. Our communities must not be asked to choose between health and exercising their fundamental rights. Nor are we willing to shirk our responsibility to protect those in our community from exercising their constitutional rights free of interference and intrusion.

It is imperative to our prosperity as a nation that the American people have faith that they are able to elect the local and national leaders of their choice. Every day, we are working to earn the trust of our communities – and that trust is our greatest tool in identifying and addressing crime and keeping our neighborhoods safe. An election in which countless citizens are unable to vote would irreparably damage that trust. For the sake of our common safety, we call for an election process that ensures that the voice of the American people will be heard.

To that end, we condemn the threat to deploy law enforcement to the polls. The President lacks the jurisdictional authority to give orders to state and local law enforcement. Moreover, there is
no legitimate purpose in sending law enforcement to the polls – voter fraud is extraordinarily rare. And federal officials are legally prohibited from interfering in elections, including through the use of armed forces. These prohibitions are embodied in criminal statutes, carrying potential jail time – an indication of how seriously our government has historically taken election interference.

Disturbingly, the threat to police the polls evokes the darkest chapters of American history, a shameful and devastating part of our past that still haunts us today. Law enforcement in the Jim Crow South blocked Black citizens from accessing the polls. Voter intimidation came in the form of implicit and explicit threats, violence, and lynchings. After Reconstruction, white politicians stuffed ballot boxes to favor their preferred candidate, threatened Black voters into voting for that candidate, and, when all else failed, overthrew Black elected officials by force. As leaders committed to justice and fairness, we are unwilling to resurrect an intolerable and inhumane playbook that recreates some of our nation’s ugliest behaviors. Fair elections must be free from even the hint of voter intimidation.

The 15th Amendment states, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” As elected prosecutors and law enforcement officials sworn to uphold the law, we are steadfastly committed to preserving the rights set forth in our Constitution and all of the political freedoms it represents. The American people must be able to safely vote and they must have faith those votes will be counted. We strongly condemn all efforts to interfere with and undermine the democratic process. And we call on all leaders around the nation to join us in combating these disheartening and destructive efforts. That is a responsibility we owe our community, as public servants, and as Americans.

**List of Signatories**

**Amy Ashworth**
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Prince William County, Virginia

**Aramis Ayala**
State Attorney, Ninth Judicial Circuit, Florida

**Hector Balderas**
Attorney General, State of New Mexico

**Diana Becton**
District Attorney, Contra Costa County, California

**Wesley Bell**
Prosecuting Attorney, St. Louis County, Missouri

**Buta Biberaj**
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Loudoun County, Virginia
Richard Biehl
Chief, Dayton Police Department, Ohio

Sherry Boston
District Attorney, DeKalb County, Georgia

Chesa Boudin
District Attorney, City and County of San Francisco, California

RaShall M. Brackney
Chief, Charlottesville Police Department, Virginia

Aisha Braveboy
State’s Attorney, Prince George’s County, Maryland

Patrick J. Cahillane
Sheriff, Hampshire County, Massachusetts

Danny Carr
District Attorney, Jefferson County, Birmingham Division, Alabama

John T. Chisholm
District Attorney, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

John Choi
County Attorney, Ramsey County, Minnesota

Darcel Clark
District Attorney, Bronx County, New York

Jerry L. Clayton
Sheriff, Washtenaw County, Michigan

Dave Clegg
District Attorney, Ulster County, New York

Shameca Collins
District Attorney, Sixth Judicial District, Mississippi

Scott Colom
District Attorney, Sixteenth Judicial District, Mississippi

John Creuzot
District Attorney, Dallas County, Texas
Paula Dance  
Sheriff, Pitt County, North Carolina

Satana Deberry  
District Attorney, Durham County, North Carolina

Parisa Dehghani-Tafti  
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Arlington County and the City of Falls Church, Virginia

Steve Descano  
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Fairfax County, Virginia

Thomas J. Donovan, Jr.  
Attorney General, State of Vermont

Michael Dougherty  
District Attorney, Twentieth Judicial District, Colorado

Mark A. Dupree, Sr.  
District Attorney, Wyandotte County, Kansas

Keith Ellison  
Attorney General, State of Minnesota

Aaron Ford  
Attorney General, State of Nevada

Kimberly M. Foxx  
State’s Attorney, Cook County, Illinois

Kimberly Gardner  
Circuit Attorney, City of St. Louis, Missouri

Sarah F. George  
State’s Attorney, Chittenden County, Vermont

Sim Gill  
District Attorney, Salt Lake County, Utah

Joe Gonzales  
District Attorney, Bexar County, Texas

Eric Gonzalez  
District Attorney, Kings County, New York
Mark Gonzalez
District Attorney, Nueces County, Texas

Andrea Harrington
District Attorney, Berkshire County, Massachusetts

Maura Healey
Attorney General, State of Massachusetts

Mark R. Herring
Attorney General, State of Virginia

Jim Hingeley
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Albemarle County, Virginia

Art Howell
Chief, Racine Police Department, Wisconsin

John Hummel
District Attorney, Deschutes County, Oregon

Natasha Irving
District Attorney, Sixth Prosecutorial District, Maine

Kathleen Jennings
Attorney General, State of Delaware

Melinda Katz
District Attorney, Queens County, New York

Zach Klein
City Attorney, Columbus, Ohio

Justin F. Kollar
Prosecuting Attorney, Kauai County, Hawaii

Lawrence S. Krasner
District Attorney, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Chris Magnus
Chief, Tucson Police Department, Arizona

Beth McCann
District Attorney, Second Judicial District, Colorado
Garry McFadden
Sheriff, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Ryan Mears
Prosecuting Attorney, Marion County, Indiana

Spencer Merriweather
District Attorney, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Brian Middleton
District Attorney, Fort Bend County, Texas

Quentin Miller
Sheriff, Buncombe County, North Carolina

Tom Miller
Attorney General, State of Iowa

Stephanie Morales
Commonwealth’s Attorney, City of Portsmouth, Virginia

Marilyn J. Mosby
State’s Attorney, Baltimore City, Maryland

Jody Owens
District Attorney, Hinds County, Mississippi

Bryan Porter
Commonwealth’s Attorney, City of Alexandria, Virginia

Abdul Pridgen
Chief, Seaside Police Department, California

Karl Racine
Attorney General, District of Columbia

Rachael Rollins
District Attorney, Suffolk County, Massachusetts

Jeff Rosen
District Attorney, Santa Clara County, California

Ellen Rosenblum
Attorney General, State of Oregon
Marian Ryan
District Attorney, Middlesex County, Massachusetts

Javier Salazar
Sheriff, Bexar County, Texas

Tori Verber Salazar
District Attorney, San Joaquin County, California

Daniel Satterberg
Prosecuting Attorney, King County, Washington

Daniella M. Shorter
District Attorney, Twenty-Second Judicial District, Mississippi

Carol Siemon
Prosecuting Attorney, Ingham County, Michigan

David E. Sullivan
District Attorney, Northwestern District, Massachusetts

Shannon Taylor
Commonwealth’s Attorney, Henrico County, Virginia

William Tong
Attorney General, State of Connecticut

Raúl Torrez
District Attorney, Bernalillo County, New Mexico

Gregory Underwood
Commonwealth’s Attorney, City of Norfolk, Virginia

Andrew Warren
State Attorney, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Florida

Todd M. Williams
District Attorney, Buncombe County, North Carolina