

— TOP TAKEAWAYS —

Stopping the Epidemic of Violence in American Cities

THE HISTORIC MURDER SPIKE OF 2020 HAS CONTINUED IN 2021

- In 2020, America suffered its largest single-year murder increase in modern history. The total number of homicides jumped by **nearly 30%**, more than doubling the previous record of **12.7%**, set in 1968.
- High levels of violence have continued in 2021. Through the first half of the year, total homicides were up by a combined **21%** in 66 of America's largest police jurisdictions, compared with the same period in 2020, according to the Major Cities Chiefs Association. Shootings in Portland **skyrocketed** from 388 in 2019 to 891 in 2020. By mid-October, there had already been **more than 1,000** in 2021.

THE MURDER SPIKE CORRESPONDED WITH A REDUCTION IN PROACTIVE POLICING

- The most dramatic increase in murders began after the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. Cities across America went through the same cycle: Rioting and anti-cop agitation precipitated a police pullback, which precipitated a sharp uptick in homicides and shootings.
- We have witnessed a more intense and far-reaching version of what happened in **many U.S. cities** after the 2014 death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., or what happened in **Baltimore** after the 2015 death of Freddie Gray: a reduction in proactive policing, followed by an explosion of violence.

URBAN POLICE FORCES ARE FACING A SEVERE OFFICER SHORTAGE

- The events of 2020 took a heavy toll on officer morale. The New York Police Department saw more than 5,300 uniformed officers—about 15 percent of its total force—either **resign or file for retirement**.
- **Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Portland, Louisville, Baltimore, Raleigh, Minneapolis**, and other cities are dealing with similar problems.
- Agency size alone is no substitute for proactive policing. Still, putting more cops on the street **helped reduce crime** during the 1990s, and we clearly need more on the street today.

Click [here](#) to read the full policy focus and learn more about the how we can stop the epidemic of violence in American cities.