



## Children's Justice & Advocacy Report

To promote community responsibility so every Pennsylvania child is protected from child abuse, including sexual abuse.

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## **President Trump Vows his Administration is 'going to be very tough on crime'**

*Trump signs three executive orders on crime and public safety*

**February 10<sup>th</sup>** - Thursday, [President Donald Trump](#) set forth three executive orders (EO) related to crime and public safety.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier this week the President met with some of this country's sheriffs vowing that his administration was "going to be very tough on crime." He continued, "So we're going to be very tough on the drugs pouring in, and that's a big part of the crime."<sup>2</sup>

The EO's were signed within hours of former United States Senator [Jeff Sessions](#) being sworn in as the 84<sup>th</sup> Attorney General of the United States.

By a vote of 52 to 47, Sessions was confirmed by the United States Senate on Wednesday evening.<sup>3</sup> All Republicans senators, including Pennsylvania's Pat Toomey, voted for Sessions' confirmation, all but one Democrat voted against his confirmation. The lone Democrat offering support for Sessions was West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin.

Sessions stood with Trump as the EO's were signed. Sessions declared, "I wish the rise that we're seeing in crime in America today was some sort of aberration or blip." Instead he suggested it is part of "a dangerous, permanent trend."

Sessions' staff offered a further report of his first day as Attorney General indicating that he had spoken with "top leadership of the National Urban League and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to build positive relationships and outline his priorities for the department of justice, including his commitment to maintain sound policies for civil rights and voting rights."<sup>4</sup> He also was said to have had conversations with the Fraternal Order of Police and the National Sheriffs and Major City Sheriffs "to reaffirm his commitment to strengthening relationships with law enforcement communities."

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/07/remarks-president-trump-roundtable-county-sheriffs>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=115&session=1&vote=00059](https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=115&session=1&vote=00059)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/readout-first-day-events-attorney-general-sessions>

The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) assured that the EO's have "total support" from the FOP.<sup>5</sup> FOP President Chuck Canterbury said that as a candidate Trump had made it clear that "law enforcement was a priority for him." With the EO's, Canterbury stressed "was further evidence" that the President's word "was good" and he "will deliver on his promises."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) saw it differently releasing a statement raising concerns that Trump is looking to respond to "trends that don't exist." The ACLU statement continued, "There are some cities that have had recent rises in violent crime, and they deserve help. And every locality in America wants to further reduce crime and violence. But task forces premised on misinformation, and looking in the wrong places for the wrong problems, are not the answer."<sup>6</sup>

The Juvenile Law Center responded on twitter that the EO's are "vague but concerning" given their "tough on crime" messaging.<sup>7</sup> JLC also stressed, "False facts about rising crime divert focus from smart on crime to just tough on crime, with no benefit for public safety."

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#### ***Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety***

The President's EO creating a Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety (Task Force) stipulated that it "shall be the policy of the executive branch to reduce crime in America" noting that many communities across the United States "are suffering from high rates of violent crime."<sup>8</sup>

The President stressed that "a focus on law and order" as well as the "safety and security" of Americans "requires a commitment to enforcing the law and developing policies that comprehensively address illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and violent crime."

The President then directed the Attorney General to chair such a Task Force and to provide "administrative support and funding" for it.

It will be up to Attorney General Sessions to determine the "characteristics" of and individuals appointed to

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#### ***Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement***

This EO sets forth that it is the policy of the executive branch to<sup>9</sup>:

- Enforce all federal laws "in order to enhance the protection and safety of Federal, State, tribal and local, law enforcement officers."
- "Develop strategies" under the leadership of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and "within the boundaries of the Constitution and existing Federal laws" in order "to further enhance the protection and safety" of law enforcement; and
- "Pursue appropriate legislation" that is "consistent with the Constitution's regime of limited and enumerated Federal powers" toward defining any new Federal crimes, increasing penalties for such crimes.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.fop.net/NewsArticle.aspx?news\\_article\\_id=6357](http://www.fop.net/NewsArticle.aspx?news_article_id=6357)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/news/aclu-response-executive-orders-crime-task-forces>

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/JuvLaw1975>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/09/presidential-executive-order-task-force-crime-reduction-and-public>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/09/presidential-executive-order-preventing-violence-against-federal-state>

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### ***Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking***

Trump's final EO spotlighted concerns and necessary action related to "transnational criminal organizations and subsidiary organizations" and how they have "spread throughout the Nation."

The EO stipulates that such organizations, including drug cartels, "derive revenue through widespread illegal conduct, including acts of violence and abuse that exhibit a wanton disregard for human life." The EO continued, "They, for example, have been known to commit brutal murders, rapes, and other barbaric acts."

The groups "are drivers of crime, corruption, violence and misery." Of particular concern is the trafficking of controlled substances that has "triggered a resurgence in deadly drug abuse and a corresponding rise in

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