

Trump's D.C. police takeover ends today. But don't expect much change.

Date: Sept. 10, 2025

From: Washingtonpost.com

Publisher: The Washington Post

Document Type: Article

Length: 1,492 words

Content Level: 5

Lexile Measure: 1330L

Full Text:

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Good morning, Early Birds. Can someone please get us a box of Exploremores? Send tips to earlytips@washpost.com. Thanks for waking up with us.

In today's edition ... what's next for the federalization of D.C. law enforcement ... an intergenerational fight is brewing in Maine ... and more ...

Trump's D.C. police takeover ends today. But don't expect much change.

President Donald Trump's 30-day takeover of D.C.'s police force is set to expire today. But don't expect much to change on the ground.

Let's rewind and catch up to what the president has done in the capital. (Olivia George and Joy Sung have a full timeline of the crackdown here.) Trump took control of the city's police force last month and sent in the National Guard to assist it, vowing to stop violent crime and beautify the city.

The president has the right to take over the city's law enforcement for 30 days without the approval of Congress under the law that grants D.C. its own government; any longer takeover requires an okay from Congress. The president is also the top commander of the city's National Guard.

Trump's 30 days expire today, and congressional Republicans have not indicated a desire to extend the authorization.

But the close collaboration of between the White House and Washington's law enforcement is likely to continue. Mayor Muriel Bowser signed an executive order last week for city police to assist federal efforts indefinitely. Trump is also likely to continue deployment of the National Guard in the city, and he is not backing off on Immigration and Customs Enforcement efforts -- neither of which need congressional approval.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said yesterday that Bowser's "indefinite welcome mat" for troops and federal agents in the city meant there was no need to extend Trump's takeover.

House Republicans are still planning moves to codify major changes to D.C.'s criminal justice system today. The House Oversight Committee will vote on several bills impacting the district's autonomy from Congress, including the creation of a 60-day review period for the city council's legislation (up from 30 days for most bills) and the codification of Trump's urban beautification effort.

"The House Oversight Committee stands ready to back the President's swift action by advancing comprehensive legislative reforms that empower District law enforcement and tackle the escalating juvenile crime crisis head-on," Rep. James Comer (R-Kentucky), chair of the Oversight Committee, said in a statement. "Every resident and visitor deserve to feel safe in our capital, and together with President Trump, the Committee will fulfill its constitutional duty to oversee District affairs and make D.C. safe again."

But despite the mayor's cooperation, many city residents and officials were furious that the federal partnership was thrust on them. D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb sued Trump, saying his use of the National Guard in policing the city was illegal.

Bowser's acquiescence hasn't been without controversy, as our colleagues Paul Schwartzman, Meagan Flynn and Jenny Gathright chronicled earlier this week. She's in a tough spot. On the one hand, she is determined to defend the district's autonomy. On the other, antagonizing the Trump White House could backfire as Republicans regularly muse about repealing some of the city's limited self-government powers.

So how effective has the president's law enforcement effort been?

It's hard to assess, said Thomas Abt, director of the Center for the Study and Practice of Violence Reduction at the University of Maryland. Crime had been steadily decreasing for months before Trump's takeover of the police force, coming down from highs that peaked in 2023. Violent crime is down 27 percent from this time last year, with homicide down 17 percent and robbery down 32 percent, according to data published by D.C.'s police department. Abt said it would be difficult to determine how much of that can be credited to the White House.

Abt added partnerships between federal and local law enforcement are nothing new and are often highly productive. But those partnerships have historically been tightly focused on specific dangerous individuals or groups.

"But that's not really the collaboration that we're seeing here. What we're seeing here is a lot of relatively unfocused efforts that are not focused on the highest-risk people and places," Abt said. "Some of that may be happening but that is clearly not the main focus."

That isn't stopping Republicans from declaring victory and urging other cities to follow D.C.'s model.

The White House and congressional Republicans have feted the law enforcement takeover as a success story. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said yesterday that 2,177 arrests have been made since the initiative kicked off on Aug. 11.

"The president would love to do this in every Democrat-run city in the country and he hopes that more Democrats will call the White House to help them," Leavitt said. "We are very grateful for the mayor's cooperation in this effort and we look forward to continuing to work with her and the Metropolitan Police Department."

Is the signature Trump's? Epstein birthday book feeds speculation, from Matt Viser

Israeli strike targeting Hamas in Qatar 'does not advance Israel or America's goals,' Trump says, from our colleagues on the international desk

Supreme Court to weigh legality of Trump's tariffs in key economic case, from Justin Jouvenal

U.S. employers added 911,000 fewer jobs than first reported, new BLS data shows, from Lauren Kaori Gurley

Judge throws out charges against GOP would-be electors in Michigan, from Patrick Marley

What we're watching

Democrats really want to defeat Sen. Susan Collins (Maine).

Before they can try to oust her, however, Democrats have to get through their primary. And that contest is becoming a key battleground in a larger intraparty fight over imbuing the party with younger, fresher faces and backing well-known, older, established figures. That is the takeaway from a piece we worked on with Patrick Svitek, one that delved into how national Democrats, led by Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, are eager for Maine Gov. Janet Mills to run, while the base in Maine has been invigorated by Graham Platner, a 41-year-old political newcomer and oyster farmer.

The question before Maine Democrats is what profile will best position them to unseat Collins, a mainstay in Maine politics. The Republican has defeated many elected Democrats in her three-decade career in the Senate, leading some in Maine to wonder if it is time to challenge her with something unknown as Democrats look to regain power after their disappointing 2024 election.

There is clear anxiety around the state of vaccines among our readers, primarily the way that Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy is upending the United States' vaccine infrastructure. The primary concern appears to be whether Americans will be able to access key vaccines, like the coronavirus shot, this fall.

"As a polio survivor, I know the value of vaccines. To condemn your children to death or a life of disability because of unscientific and dubious claims is just plain stupid," said Beth Lareau from Minnesota.

Bill Cullen was particularly concerned about Florida ending all school vaccine mandates, becoming the first state to do so, saying it showed an "utter disregard for the well being of children to satisfy a vocal minority of skeptics."

Steffen W. Schmidt wrote that he has friends who "cancelled their Christmas vacation to Disney because they don't want to expose their grandkids to diseases" in Florida.

And Jill Warren, a pediatrician, wrote simply that ending vaccine mandates "will drop vaccination rates and there is ample evidence that preventable diseases will re-emerge."

"Our public health system is being dismantled by fear, fear mongering, and a dismaying lack of critical thinking skills," Warren wrote. "As a pediatrician, I wonder how many children will need to suffer and die before reality is once again recognized and we do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons to care for our children."

Q City Metro (Charlotte): The Department of Homeland Security in August asked the North Carolina State Board of Elections to take an invitation-only chance to share their voter rolls with the federal department. The board passed on the offer, rebuffing the feds' attempt to prevent noncitizens from voting.

Gothamist (New York): NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch told reporters that she was "revolted" by the prospect of New York City welcoming a National Guard deployment to the city, highlighting how different large cities are grappling with Trump's threats.

Boston Globe: After Massachusetts legalized sports betting, a growing number of people are saying they've become pathological gamblers, according to a new survey.

The anniversary of 9/11 is coming up tomorrow. We'd love to hear from you about what that day means to you. Do you remember where you were when it happened? Were you too young? How do you feel it should be remembered today? Let us and your fellow Early Brief readers know at earlytips@washpost.com.

Thanks for reading. You can follow Dan and Matthew on X: @merica and @matthewichoi.

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Source Citation (MLA 9th Edition)

"Trump's D.C. police takeover ends today. But don't expect much change." *Washingtonpost.com*, 10 Sept. 2025. *Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A855256126/OVIC?u=umd_um&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=5479ba14. Accessed 12 Jan. 2026.

Gale Document Number: GALEIA855256126