

**Statement on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia  
before the  
D.C. Council Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
by  
Alicia Yass  
December 4, 2025**

Chairwoman Pinto:

Good morning. My name is Alicia Yass, and I am Supervising Policy Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia (ACLU-D.C.). Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of our over 14,000 members and supporters in all 8 wards, about the Juvenile Curfew Amendment Act of 2025 and public safety in D.C. generally.

The ACLU-D.C. is committed to working to dismantle systemic racism, safeguard fundamental liberties, and advocate for sensible, evidence-based reforms, and this should be reflected in both the District's policies and conduct.

**Juvenile Curfew Amendment Act of 2025**

We are in agreement; D.C. residents deserve to be safe, and that includes the youth in our community. So, we are disappointed that legislation like the Juvenile Curfew Amendment Act of 2025 continues to rely on police rather than creating holistic opportunities for youth in the District—like jobs, programming, and safe places to be at night—that recognize their full humanity. We cannot keep turning to policing as the solution to every issue. The truth is that an 8pm curfew puts kids at risk. From past stop and frisk data, we already know that Black residents make up just 44% of D.C.'s population, yet they account for 70% of those stopped by MPD.<sup>1</sup> This inequity extends to Black youth as well, and the curfew expansion would only exacerbate it.

Further, there is little to no evidence that curfews are effective at meeting the stated goal of reducing youth related crime and victimization. A 2023 systematic review of twelve quantitative evaluations of the effects of curfews found the “evidence suggests that juvenile curfews are ineffective at reducing crime and victimization.”<sup>2</sup> This study was the basis for a 2023

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<sup>1</sup> Bias at the Core?: Enduring Racial Disparities in D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Stop-and-Frisk Practices (2022-2023), <https://www.aclu dc.org/publications/bias-core-enduring-racial-disparities-dc-metropolitan-police-department-stop-and-frisk/>.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenile Curfew Effects on Criminal Behavior and Victimization: A Systematic Review, <https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2016.3>.

change in Texas state law to repeal the authority of local governments to adopt or enforce juvenile curfews.<sup>3</sup> The bill analysis cited this study and said that “juvenile curfew ordinances are an ineffective way to reduce crime and often lead to negative outcomes for youth in school and future interactions with the justice system.”<sup>4</sup>

A previous study examined D.C.’s juvenile curfew and the seasonal shift from a midnight curfew to an 11 p.m. curfew.<sup>5</sup> This study found that “after the curfew switches from midnight to 11:00 p.m., the number of gunshot incidents increases by 150 percent during the 11:00 p.m. hour.” The authors found that “juvenile curfews change the number of witnesses out on the streets as well as how police are spending their time.”<sup>6</sup> While this analysis seemed counter to previous studies that looked at a decrease in arrest rates after enactment of a juvenile curfew, the authors posited “it is possible that arrest [rates] go down because police are forced to devote valuable time to enforcing the curfew, instead of investigating crimes.”

In addition, any interaction youth have with police can be traumatic. “Youth report feeling helpless and dehumanized when the police stop... them or other people. These negative effects are magnified for children and youth of color due to the extensive and disproportionate use of law enforcement powers in communities of Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous people.”<sup>7</sup> However, the curfew legislation will undoubtable lead to an increase in youth interactions with police, and even those youth who lawfully have an exception to the curfew will not be protected from being stopped by the police for questioning and then need to explain or prove their exception.

Since juvenile curfews are ineffective and potentially harmful to both youth and the community at large, the District would be better served by a greater investment in supporting our youth. In our recent report, *Building Safety Through Resources: A Better Path to Public Safety in D.C.*, we explored several programs worthy of D.C. investment to help our youth.<sup>8</sup> This included the DCPL Teen Council, DCPS Persists, and Black Swan Academy. In addition, there are several proposed bills in the Prosper D.C. plan that would uplift youth, rather than over-police them, including the Teen Center Establishment Amendment Act, the Youth Links App Act, and the Youth Villages Grant Establishment Amendment Act.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the C.A.R.E. for Youth Plan

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<sup>3</sup> Texas H.B. 1819, <https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB1819/2023>.

<sup>4</sup> H.B. 1819 Bill Analysis, <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/analysis/html/HB01819H.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Keep the Kids Inside? Juvenile Curfews and Urban Gun Violence, [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2486903](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2486903).

<sup>6</sup> Repealing juvenile curfew laws could make cities safer, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/repealing-juvenile-curfew-laws-could-make-cities-safer/>.

<sup>7</sup> Reducing Adverse Police Contact Would Heal Wounds for Children and Their Communities, <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/reducing-adverse-police-contact-would-heal-wounds-for-children-and-their-communities>.

<sup>8</sup> Building Safety Through Resources: A Better Path to Public Safety in D.C., <https://www.aclu dc.org/publications/building-safety-through-resources/>.

<sup>9</sup> Press Release: Councilmember Brooke Pinto Introduces Her "Prosper DC Plan" to Catalyze Economic Opportunities in the District, <https://www.brookepintodc.com/newsroom/press-release-councilmember-brooke-pinto-introduces-her-prosper-dc-plan-to-catalyze-economic-opportunities-in-the-district>.

offers legislation to help the District's youth.<sup>10</sup> The Council should be spending more time and energy on building up these programs, to make lasting changes for the District's youth.

The safest communities are the ones with the most resources, not the most police. To keep people in D.C. safe, our local leaders need to invest in reaching people with the resources they need when they need them most and stop turning to policing as a solution.

## Public Safety in D.C.

Two issues related to public safety in D.C. generally that we would like to touch upon are community concerns about MPD cooperating with federal immigration enforcement, and MPD involved shootings.

### *MPD Cooperation with Federal Immigration Enforcement*

A recent lawsuit, filed by the ACLU-D.C., ACLU, Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, CASA, National Immigration Project, the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, and the law firm of Covington & Burling LLP, *Escobar Molina et al. v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security et al.*, the residents challenge the administration's policy of arresting people without a warrant and without probable cause of both unlawful immigration status and flight risk, as required by immigration law. Agents can arrest someone without a warrant only when they've established probable cause both that the person is in the United States in violation of the law and that they are a flight risk. The filing alleges that federal agents have systematically arrested people for immigration purposes in Washington, D.C., without a warrant and without probable cause. Each person who is a plaintiff in the lawsuit was indiscriminately arrested without a warrant, detained, and ultimately released.<sup>11</sup>

This policy and practice disregard important limits Congress has established for immigration arrests and have sown terror among immigrant communities and neighborhoods in D.C. Federal agents, like the rest of us, must follow the law.

On December 2, 2025, a federal court judge issued a ruling in *Escobar Molina et al. v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security et al.*, temporarily blocking the Trump administration from continuing to carry out unlawful civil immigration arrests in Washington, D.C.<sup>12</sup>

While this case involves federal law enforcement action, there is significant public reporting that MPD is working alongside federal agencies. This includes a statement made by

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<sup>10</sup> Press Release: Introduction of the C.A.R.E for Youth Plan, [PRESS RELEASE: Introduction of the C.A.R.E. for Youth Plan – Official Website of Ward 5 Councilmember Zachary Parker](#).

<sup>11</sup> Press Release: Community Members and Immigrants' Rights Organizations Take Trump Administration to Court to Stop Illegal Arrests of Immigrants, <https://www.aclu dc.org/press-releases/community-members-and-immigrants-rights-organizations-take-trump-administration-to-court-to-stop-illegal-arrests-of-immigrants/>.

<sup>12</sup> Press Release: Federal Judge Blocks Unlawful Immigration Arrests in Washington, D.C., <https://www.aclu dc.org/press-releases/federal-judge-blocks-unlawful-immigration-arrests-in-washington-d-c/>.

MPD Lt. Kerron Roberts at a recent ANC meeting, where he said “the D.C. Safe initiative, in which we have the crime suppression team, which is a marked MPD unit. We're in full uniform. Marked MPD cruisers along with federal partners to include, but not limited to Homeland Security, ATS, DEA, FBI. We work with ICE, all different federal partners.”<sup>13</sup> This statement seems to run counter to previous statements from the Mayor and Police Chief that MPD was not working with ICE.

The Council needs to use its oversight authority of MPD to examine how they are cooperating with federal law enforcement and the implications of that work for both federal and District law. The D.C. community deserves real answers, and not continual denials of the cooperation we are seeing around the District.

#### *MPD officer-involved shootings*

Interactions between the police and communities of color have long been more frequent, more dangerous, and more deadly for civilians than interactions between the police and white residents. “About one in every 1,000 Black men can expect to be killed by police—a rate 2.5 times higher than for white men. Black people killed by police are more than twice as likely to be unarmed as white people. And even when the results are not fatal, police use force on Black people nearly four times more often than on white people.”<sup>14</sup>

By enacting the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act, the District’s elected officials unanimously embraced accountability and transparency in the District, with a history of police abuses and chronic failures to hold officers responsible for their misconduct. The D.C. Council must take the next step and use the information gained from this to make changes to prevent officer-involved shootings in our community. If we don’t learn from the transparency created around officer misconduct, then more Black men will continue to be killed by police.

We share a common goal of living in a community that is safe for all and provides opportunities for all. We will continue to work with the Council to achieve these goals.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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<sup>13</sup> Video shows immigration arrest in Southeast amid questions about DC police cooperation, <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/video-shows-apparent-immigration-detention-in-dc/4014686/>.

<sup>14</sup> Amicus Brief, <https://lawyerscommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Brief-of-Amici-Curiae-filed-no-stamp.pdf>.