

Title: No Troops in Our Nation's Capital

September 3, 2026

Dear Americans,

For more than a year, District of Columbia residents have lived with military presence on our streets—not just at federal buildings or at large events, but in front of our homes, outside schools, and on the sidewalks of local businesses. Today, the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia (ACLU-D.C.), joined by ACLU National and every affiliate across the country, is joining together to underscore the need for all National Guard troops to be withdrawn from our nation's capital.



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Deborah N. Archer
President

Anthony D. Romero
Executive Director

President Trump requested National Guard assistance pursuant to 32 U.S.C. § 502(f), a provision pursuant to which governors may make their Guard forces available for certain federal missions at the request of the President or Secretary of Defense. However, when governors receive such requests, they are free to decline them, and many have done so repeatedly over the past year. Unless there is an immediate emergency that local first responders cannot handle, the National Guard should not be called in. No such emergency exists in Washington, D.C. On the other hand, the presence of the National Guard in D.C. has negatively impacted the lives of D.C. residents.

We thank the governors who have held firm and resisted the call to send their state's National Guard to D.C. We also thank the governors who have withdrawn their state's National Guard. But the National Guard troops that remain in our nation's capital must leave now.

Notwithstanding the ACLU-D.C.'s efforts to educate our community regarding their rights during this time, to represent those who have been harmed, and to advocate for an end to National Guard deployment in our city, the residents of D.C. cannot address this situation on our own: we need your help. Americans in D.C. deserve to feel secure in our homes, just as Americans in states do.

The harms of the National Guard deployment are being felt not just in D.C. The damages resulting from this deployment are impacting all Americans. The taxpayer costs of having National Guard troops patrol the streets of D.C. are astronomical. Estimates in early 2026 found costs to be at well over a quarter of a billion dollars.

There are also hidden costs not counted in this number. Typically, National Guard members work one weekend per month and two weeks per year in their military capacity; the rest of the time, National Guard members are



employed in the civilian economy or are in school. This year-long deployment has pulled people away from their regular work, imposing productivity losses on their employers, disruption to their families and households, and in some cases, genuine economic hardship. These costs are real and meaningful, and they are being felt in homes across the country. Additionally, deployed National Guard troops in D.C. diminish their readiness for other important needs, including natural disaster response.

These costs to all Americans continue to accrue despite mounting evidence that there is no benefit to the deployment in D.C. Independent research shows that D.C. already experienced a reduction in violent crime rates from 2022 to 2025, the period preceding National Guard deployment in D.C., with a smaller police force; this was accomplished by deploying officers to the right places at the right times, where they could actually prevent crime. The President's emergency is manufactured.

Lastly, but possibly most worrisome, the presence of thousands of National Guard troops in D.C. threatens to normalize this administration's misuse of the country's military against its own people. Residents of our nation's capital have always been proud to welcome visitors from all over with a smile, not an armed military force. D.C. is a symbol of our country's ideals of freedom and democracy and this is marred by having National Guard troops marching in our streets. The National Guard must leave D.C. now.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
ACLU of Alabama
ACLU of Alaska
ACLU of Arizona
ACLU of Arkansas
ACLU California Action
ACLU of Colorado
ACLU of Connecticut
ACLU of Delaware
ACLU of the District of Columbia
ACLU of Florida
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ACLU of New Mexico
New York Civil Liberties Union
ACLU of North Carolina
ACLU of North Dakota
ACLU of Ohio
ACLU of Oklahoma
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ACLU of Pennsylvania
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