



Response Statement on President Trump's Decision to Take Over Washington, D.C.'s Local Metropolitan Police Department

In this critical hour, we must heed the warning bells sounding from the corridors of our democracy, as President Trump has chosen to infringe upon the sacred ground of local governance by attempting to take over Washington, D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department. Let us not be passive observers, but prophetic voices calling forth justice and truth in the face of encroaching tyranny.

We, as active citizens and advocates for a fair and just society, must robustly address President Trump's recent decision to exert federal control over Washington, D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department. This decision raises significant concerns across multiple dimensions that threaten the foundations of our democracy.

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****1. Jurisdictional Integrity and Local Governance:****

The presidential office was never intended to govern local municipalities. This violation undermines the principles of local governance and community autonomy. Each municipality has unique needs and challenges that require tailored, local solutions. By overriding local authority, this action not only disrespects the will of the D.C. residents but sets a dangerous precedent for federal overreach into local matters.

****2. A Path Toward Authoritarianism:****

Let us recognize this act for what it truly is: a sinister step toward authoritarianism. When the executive branch seeks control over local law enforcement, we witness the unsettling beginnings of a dictatorship. Such moves erode our democracy, compromising the checks and balances that are vital for a functioning government. A government that disregards jurisdictional boundaries risks the establishment of an authoritarian regime reminiscent of history's darkest moments, where the control of police forces became the first step toward tyranny.

****3. Flaws in Our Justice System:****

Our nation's law enforcement and justice system are profoundly flawed, often targeting marginalized communities, particularly Black Americans. Rather than perpetuating a cycle of oppression through a top-down control of police forces, we need to address the root causes of injustice and inequality. Enhancing community policing, promoting equitable practices, and fostering trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve are essential steps toward genuine reform. Our communities demand leaders who speak of hope and healing, not of 'us' versus 'them.' We must raise our voices to build bridges instead of walls.

****4. The Misuse of Rhetoric and Bias:****

The rhetoric surrounding crime and policing must be grounded in objective data and facts. Trump's assertions, often steeped in racial bias and overarching stereotypes, fuel division and perpetuate systemic racism. By promoting a narrative that vilifies entire communities rather than recognizing the complexities of crime and public safety, we move further away from the goal of collective safety for all citizens.

We call for Clergy, Community, Cops, and Country!!!

Guided by the spirit of "Clergy, Community, Cops, and Country," we are called to unite in a prophetic movement that elevates moral authority over political ambition. We must forge alliances with faith leaders, local organizations, and justice advocates to address these pressing issues; we must unify our voices through the theme of "Clergy, Community, Cops, and Country." By collaborating with faith leaders, community organizations, youth, seniors, and law enforcement agencies, we can advocate for justice that respects both jurisdictional integrity and the dignity of all individuals.

Historical lessons from the Holocaust and the origins of slave patrols teach us that the control and misuse of police powers lead to oppressive regimes. We must be vigilant against any action that threatens our democratic institutions, especially one that undermines the balance of power in favor of executive dominance.

In the spirit of accountability and collaboration, we urge all citizens, civic leaders, and responsible media voices to join us in advocating for a justice system that is just, equitable, and rooted in community engagement. Together, we can work towards a future that honors the values of our nation, protects our democracy, and uplifts every voice in our diverse society. This is not merely a local issue; it is a threat to our nation's system of government as we know it, and we must respond with unwavering resolve.

In Solidarity,

Reverend George C. Gilbert, Jr.

Assistant Director General, PNBC Social Justice Commission