

Mayor Bowser Announces the Addressing Crime Trends Now Act (ACT Now)

Mayor Bowser has announced the Addressing Crime Trends Now Act (ACT Now) to address recent public safety challenges by giving law enforcement more tools to hold criminals accountable and keep neighborhoods safe. The proposed legislation also clarifies and updates several existing policies to better align with the day-to-day realities of safe and effective policing.

Supporting Safe and Effective Policing

- Clarifying the distinction between a serious use of force and incidental contact with the neck.
- Ensuring officers can review their body worn camera footage prior to writing their initial police report in certain circumstances.
- Making permanent clarification of vehicular pursuit.
- Defining what information will be posted publicly related to officer discipline.

While the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) continues to be a leader in fair and constitutional policing and continuously works to build community trust, the department is currently dealing with the consequences of the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Amendment Act which have made it more difficult for police to keep the community safe and hold criminals accountable for their actions.

By adding more tools while also amending provisions of the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Amendment Act, the legislation will also help create an environment that better supports communities and victims as well as the MPD's ability to hire and retain highly qualified officers. At a time when MPD is dealing with historically low staffing levels, these amendments seek to make some commonsense changes, recognizing the operational concerns officers see every day, while also supporting police accountability and public safety.

Addressing Recent Crime Trends

Combatting Organized Retail Theft

- Creating criminal penalties for organized retail theft.
- Establishing a new crime for "directing organized retail theft" which makes it illegal for any person to act as the organizer of a theft for profit scheme by recruiting or directing individuals to commit organized retail theft.

Addressing Loitering Around Open-Air Drug Markets

- Limiting loitering by reinstating the ability of the MPD Chief to declare drug-free zones. The establishment of temporary drug free zones can interrupt this activity and allow neighborhoods to clean up and reclaim public space.

Making it Unlawful to Use Masks for Committing Criminal Acts

- Reinstating the law that makes it unlawful to wear a mask for the purpose of committing criminal acts, intimidating and threatening other people, or causing fear.