

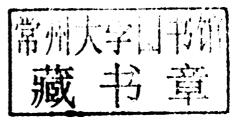
Nancy E. Marion





# FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Nancy E. Marion







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## INTRODUCTION

In 1992 A RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO THE national political scene, William Jefferson Clinton, received the Democratic nomination for the presidency and proceeded to run a successful campaign for the office of the president of the United States. Along the way he made many promises about his plans to reduce crime, one of which was an idea to put 100,000 new police officers on the streets of American cities who would focus on community-oriented policing techniques. This policing style was based on the idea that if police officers spent more time with citizens, then they would get to know them and their businesses, making the police not only more likely to notice irregularities but also able to build more trusting relationships within the community. This meant that when a crime occurred, the police would be more likely to notice it. Further, the citizens would be more willing to approach the police to report the incident and to provide evidence. In the long run Clinton hoped that his program would reduce crime and violence in the streets.

His ideas were passed into law by Congress in the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which not only created a federal grant program to state and local police to enable them to hire more officers to focus on community policing but also provided money for technology to support community policing such as bikes and radios. Clinton went so far as to create an Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) within the Department of Justice that would be responsible for administering the community-policing grants. Although some would argue that Clinton's program never reached the ultimate goal of hiring 100,000 new police, the program nonetheless added new officers in many cities and changed the way policing was carried out.

After two terms as president, Clinton left office and was replaced with another relatively new political actor, Republican Governor George W. Bush from Texas. His ideas for reducing crime were much different from Clinton's. Bush wanted to replace the community-policing idea with faith-based reintegration programs that would help inmates turn away from crime and reintegrate into society much more smoothly and in the long run reduce recidivism among ex-offenders.

Looking at the bigger picture, it is clear that when Clinton was in office, the community-policing style was made popular and credited for reducing crime. Many departments were able to hire new officers who were active in the community. However, that policy changed when Bush took office. Local communities were no longer encouraged to support community-policing practices, and funds for community-policing officers were slashed, leaving many local police departments short on funds.

Many departments that expanded their personnel under Clinton's COPS program were forced to cut back. Those departments that had modified how they patrolled their communities returned to their old ways of policing, or the traditional methods of policing, returning officers to their cars for a faster response time. Other departments were forced to fire their community-policing officers altogether because of a lack of funds.

In recent months, the American voters chose yet another relative newcomer to serve as president, Democratic Senator Barack Obama from Illinois. As a senator and presidential candidate, Obama supported reinstating the community-policing program and increasing funding for the "cops on the beat" program initiated under Clinton. As president, Obama has promised to return to the community-oriented police approach by increasing funding to local departments for that purpose. Once again, departments may be able to hire more officers to work in the community with citizens.

From this example it is obvious that local police were impacted by the policies made at the federal level. But it was not only the police who were impacted by the changes in policies of the two administrations. Businesses and communities were impacted as well. When Bush decreased funding for the COPS program, there may have been fewer officers entering stores and businesses to make pleasant conversation with the employees and keep an eye on activities. Communities no longer saw police walking the streets as often and as consistently. Schools may have lost safety officers and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officers who were assigned to work the schools. Thus, there were many people impacted by decisions made by the president.

This example demonstrates the role that politics plays in creating public policy about crime and how the federal political system (i.e., the president and Congress) can have serious implications on how state and local officials function on a day-to-day basis. In other words, the decisions made by the elected officials in the federal government about crime can have a substantial impact on how local police departments and communities function. It is clear that the political system helps shape and form the public policy of crime, even at the local level.<sup>2</sup> It is also clear that there are multiple ways to solve or address problems in the criminal justice system, and the chosen method has both long-term and short-term impacts on many agencies and people across the nation.

#### THE FEDERALIZATION OF CRIME

Until the 1960s, crime control, for the most part, was a state concern. The federal government (i.e., president and Congress) took a hands-off approach and let states decide their crime policies. However, that changed, and through a process called the federalization of crime, policies aimed at limiting criminal behavior were increasingly created by the federal government. Today, crime control is a legitimate policy concern for Congress and the president. The federal government has passed an increasing number of laws and carried out policies to limit criminal behavior.

The federalization of crime refers to the increased activity of the federal government in passing crime control legislation. The federal government has also provided financial assistance to states to help fund crime programs on the local level. More directly, the federal government has widened federal criminal jurisdiction and engaged federal law enforcement agencies in different operational roles that deal directly with

violent street crime.<sup>3</sup> In short, the government has defined two roles for themselves in crime control: (1) direct operations and (2) financial assistance.<sup>4</sup>

Presidents and Congress have increased their activity in crime control for many reasons. Some point to the federal government's role in creating and maintaining a society that is crime free and where citizens are safe. In part, elected officials may also be using the issue to increase their support in the public and with voters. When they pass laws to fight crime, politicians appear concerned about the public's safety and can then appeal to the fears that voters may have about becoming a victim of crime. At the same time, politicians may be using the crime issue to send a message to the voters that they are concerned about citizen safety and that they are trying to protect them.

Another reason for increased federal involvement in crime control is that some state criminal justice systems are substantially ineffective, as compared to the potential of the federal government, in the detection, prosecution, or punishment of a particular behavior.<sup>5</sup> In some cases the national government has a distinct advantage, as compared to state criminal justice systems, in controlling some criminal actions such as drug trafficking. These offenses are outside the ability of state law enforcement because of a lack of funds and expertise. It is necessary for the federal government to get involved in these cases.

Yet another reason for more federal involvement in crime was the realization that organized crime groups were active in most major cities across the nation. When the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce, or the Kefauver Committee, traveled across the nation to investigate the activities of organized criminal groups during the early 1950s, the nation began to understand the true impact of underground criminal groups. Hundreds of people testified, including top mobsters, law enforcement agents, and politicians about the actions of organized crime. The hearings demonstrated the violence involved in organized crime and the extent of political corruption. Because the hearings were televised, the American public saw these once-mythical figures as real people who committed serious crime and violence. When it was over, many citizens called on Congress for action to punish the members and abolish it. They realized that states were not capable of an attack on organized crime by themselves, as organized crime did not respect state boundaries. Furthermore, states simply did not have the resources. Instead, federal involvement was needed.

A reported increase in drug use during the 1960s was another reason for the increase in federal activity in crime control. Drugs were being used openly by young, middle-class Caucasians. Many people saw the dangers of illicit drug use and blamed the influx of drugs from other nations. Again, this was not a problem that states could fight on their own. Drug traffickers and users did not respect state boundaries, and states simply did not have the resources to implement an effective fight against major international drug traffickers. Thus there was a need for federal involvement.

Not only was drug use increasing but so was crime. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports indicated that crime and violence were increasing. Violent crime rates reached a peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, there was violence and social unrest due to the Vietnam War protests and civil rights movement.<sup>7</sup> Much of that violence was, for the first time, brought into people's homes through television. This made them fearful of becoming a victim, even if crime in their hometown was minimal. Not only was crime increasing but so was the perception of an increase in crime.

The increased mobility and wider communications that enabled criminal offenders to easily escape the boundaries of local jurisdictions led to more federal action in crime control. In the past bank robbers and bootleggers could escape capture by crossing state lines.<sup>8</sup> Horse racing results could be transmitted easily through telegraph wires before betting was closed, enabling some to place guaranteed bets. Local law enforcement was finding it difficult to enforce some statutes under these circumstances.

As a result political candidates began to recognize the importance of crime for their campaigns. For the first time they began to successfully use the issues related to crime to help reach out to the public for support. Presidential candidates used the issues in their campaigns surrounding violence as a way to get votes and get elected to office.

Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater was one of the first to do this. In the 1964 campaign between him and Democratic candidate Lyndon Johnson, crime became an important issue. Goldwater blamed the increase in crime on the liberal Democratic policies that were soft on crime. He argued that his Conservative approach to crime, which included more immediate and harsher punishments, would be more effective in reducing crime in our country than the policies supported by the Democratic candidates. Even though Johnson won the election that year, it made people aware of the problem. Goldwater successfully raised the issue of crime to a national campaign concern. The issues of crime and violence have become a staple for presidential candidates since that campaign. In every campaign since 1964, crime has been discussed by candidates to some extent.

That campaign not only made crime a political issue for candidates but for the first time also made it a presidential concern. When Johnson's crime policies were attacked in the campaign, he made promises about what he would do to fight crime if elected president. When he was elected, Johnson had to follow through with his promises during his presidency. He created the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in 1967 to study crime in the United States. The commission's final report was called The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. The committee members found that crime and criminals do not respect state boundaries and that many states were unable to fight crime by themselves. They also discovered that many communities were not able to keep their law enforcement technologically current and needed federal assistance to provide better technology. Based on that finding, Johnson created a grant program called the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to give federal assistance to states to help them develop their criminal justice systems. 9 With all these actions on crime, Johnson was defining the issue as a legitimate presidential concern. Since then every president has addressed crime issues, though in different ways and to different extents. Crime is now a legitimate policy issue for candidates and presidents alike.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF FEDERALIZATION

In more recent years Congress has been very active in passing anticrime legislation. In some cases Congress is able to raise a typical criminal act from a state to a federal offense by including the provision of crossing state lines as a necessary factor or showing that something affects interstate commerce. For example, kidnapping remains a state offense until the offender takes the victim across state lines or otherwise travels from one state to another to commit the offense.

There are many examples of congressional action into what many would assume to be traditionally state offenses. For example, in 1984, Congress attached some anticrime proposals to the Fiscal 1985 Continuing Appropriations Resolution that made murder for hire a federal crime when interstate commerce was involved. The new law also made violent crimes such as murder, kidnapping, and assaults federal offenses if they were associated with racketeering activities. The law prohibited "solicitation" to commit a crime of violence, meaning that if a person tried to persuade another to commit a crime of violence, it would be a federal crime (PL 98-473).<sup>10</sup>

In most cases drunk driving is a crime that would be punishable under state law. However, in 1985, the Senate passed S. 850 that made it a federal crime for anyone to operate a train, plane, bus, or ship while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The attached penalty for violating the proposed law would be a fine of up to \$10,000, imprisonment of up to five years, or both. The Senate argued that law was needed because even though there were state laws prohibiting drunk driving and operating a vehicle while under the influence of drugs, there was no federal law covering this area.<sup>11</sup>

In 1992 after a rash of carjackings across the country, the Congress passed a law (H.R. 4542/PL 102-519) that made carjacking, a typical state offense, a new federal offense. The bill also required that major car parts be marked with identification numbers to be registered with the FBI. If the carjacking resulted in a death, the offender could be given a life sentence in prison.

In that same congressional session, members considered many bills that would impose stricter penalties on noncustodial parents who failed to pay their child support obligations. The bill that eventually passed, S. 1002 (PL 102-521), made it a federal crime for parents who lived in another state to avoid paying child support. It limited criminal liability to those who willfully avoided payments. Those parents who could not afford child support payments were not covered by the bill. According to the new law, parents who intentionally avoided making child support payments for six months and owed at least \$2,500 could face up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000. Repeat offenders could be sentenced to up to two years in prison and fined as much as \$250,000.

In 1994 the Congress passed a major crime bill, part of which included a section on motor vehicle theft, a typical state crime. In the crime bill the Justice Department was given six months to establish a voluntary car theft prevention program. Under the program car owners could agree to use a decal indicating how they used their car—for instance, only for daytime commuting. The police would be authorized to stop the car if it was being used in a matter inconsistent with the decal, on the presumption that it had been stolen. The law also made it a federal crime to alter or remove motor vehicle identification numbers or the new decals. Offenders were subject to fines and up to five years in jail.<sup>13</sup>

Motor vehicle theft was again the topic of new federal legislation in 1996, when Congress cleared legislation directing the Justice Department to set up an electronic information system to allow state motor vehicle departments to check instantly whether a vehicle had been stolen before issuing a title for it (H.R. 2803/PL 104-152). Supporters of the proposal said 140,000 cars were stolen each year in one state and issued titles in another state. The new law transferred responsibility for establishing the data base to the Justice Department. The 1992 Anti–Car Theft Act had directed the Transportation Department to set up the system, but the department

had failed to meet the deadline specified under the act. The new bill gave the Justice Department until October 1, 1997, to set up the titling database.

This book will present the policy choices made by the presidents and Congress when it comes to solving crime-related problems in the United States. Each chapter will examine different approaches supported by presidents and Congresses to solve a specific crime-related problem. It will show the policies that were only debated by Congress, as well as those that had enough support to be passed and signed into law by the president. Of course the president and Congress are not the only actors in the policy process, and the other actors will be included as well. In Part I, the focus is on elements of the criminal justice system and the policies the presidents and Congress have made concerning police, courts, and prisons. The focus of Part II is federal policies toward drug offenses and drinking and driving. Violent personal crimes, including domestic violence, hate crimes, and victims, are the topics of the chapters in Part III. Federal legislation concerning juveniles, both as offenders and as victims, is the focus of Part IV. Part V examines presidential and congressional activities to reduce gun violence across the nation. Another policy concern to presidents and Congress is organized crime, including pornography and wiretaps, and Part VI comprises this topic. Finally, the last unit of the book, Part VII, examines regulatory policies made by Congress and the president concerning crimes committed with the use of the Internet. Overall, the book presents an analysis of federal action regarding crime issues to determine the role of the federal government in making crime policy.

The information in the following chapters was collected from a variety of sources, most prominently from *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, and *Congressional Quarterly Almanacs*. The topics for each chapter more or less came naturally as the bills and laws were organized into categories. Thus it became clear that Congress has either considered or passed laws on a wide variety of crime topics—but with some consistency over the years. Congressional action on terrorism and homeland security were not included in the text as they are not the typical street crimes that one immediately conjures up when thinking of crime. Instead the focus is on criminal offenses domestically that occur with frequency across the nation.

It is clear that Congress and the president have acted to pass many crime-related bills. In the early years of the study, the 1940s and the 1950s, and even through the 1960s, the number of crime bills was more limited, and a description of them was manageable. However, in the more recent decades, the number of crime bills introduced into the House and Senate has become almost overwhelming. It is virtually impossible to list and describe each one in a text such as this. Because of that, not all bills related to the different crimes are included. Instead, particularly in the later years, a sample of the bills is described to give the reader an idea of the types of bill that were introduced and their outcomes. Overall, the chapters provide a comprehensive analysis of what Congress and the president have done to reduce crime and violence in the United States.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Criminal Justice System, comprised of Law enforcement, courts, and correctional systems, have each been the topic of federal activity. In Chapter 4, presidential and Congressional responses to issues affecting the police are presented. This includes things like the relationship between the federal, state, and local police, police brutality, and different methods of policing (i.e., traditional policing versus community policing). Each president had a different approach to increasing the effectiveness of the police, and Congress has supported those ideas to different degrees.

The second component of the criminal justice system, the courts, has also seen Congressional and presidential action. Policies have been made regarding equal access to the courts, overcrowding, and court efficiency. Presidents have proposed many policies, and Congress has debated them as well. These actions are the subject of Chapter 5.

The final chapter in this part, Chapter 6, focuses on prisons. This involves federal legislation on the quality of the institutions and how prison inmates are treated. Federal policy has also been made on capital punishment, and this is also described in this chapter.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

Over the years presidents and Congress have passed legislation concerning law enforcement issues and have assisted state and local law enforcement in many ways. The assistance has grown over time, which clearly demonstrates the federalization of crime—the federal government getting involved in a typically state issue. These policy debates are discussed in the following sections.

#### PRESIDENT TRUMAN

In 1945, Harry Truman vetoed H.R. 2856, which was intended to "provide for better enforcement of law within the District of Columbia" because it transferred jurisdiction over felonies committed within the park areas in the District of Columbia from the US Park Police to the Metropolitan Police of the District of Columbia. Truman believed the policy would impair rather than improve law enforcement in these park areas.<sup>1</sup>

#### **PRESIDENT JOHNSON**

Lyndon Johnson wanted to improve the quality of local law enforcement throughout the country because police are the frontline in the war on crime. He stated that all Americans wanted and deserved better law enforcement, and he intended to give it to them.<sup>2</sup> One way he saw to do that was to provide higher police salaries since many police departments had been encountering "great difficulties" in recruiting qualified candidates.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in March 1996, he recommended "a substantial increase in police salaries to attract and retain the best qualified officers in the District of Columbia."<sup>4</sup>

Another way Johnson attempted to improve the quality of law enforcement was to provide money for training and education. In 1965 President Johnson proposed and the Congress enacted the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, a grant program for the states to help professionalize police to increase training and technology to fight crime. Johnson hoped that under that program, federal, state, local, and private institutions would work together to improve training of law enforcement personnel.<sup>5</sup> Later he asked Congress "to increase appropriations for the Law Enforcement Assistance Act from \$7.2 to \$13.7 million." When he signed the Safe Streets Act, Johnson said it established "a pioneering aid-to-education program of forgivable college loans and tuition grants to attract better law enforcement officers and give them better

education and preparation." It also provided "greatly expanded training for State and local police officers at the National Academy of the FBI."

In addition, he told the attorney general to make grants available to states, cities, colleges, and university police to intensify their training and effectiveness. He said, "I recommend legislation to establish a program to send selected police officers to approved colleges and universities for a year of intensive professional study. I recommend a loan forgiveness program under the National Defense Education Act for students who wish to enter the law enforcement profession."

President Johnson tried to help the police in other ways. He recommended legislation to extend the authority of police to arrest without a warrant in certain serious offenses, such as assault, unlawful entry, and attempted housebreaking. <sup>10</sup> In the District of Columbia, Johnson wanted to increase the number of civilian employees, expand the Police Cadet Corps, and create a force of seven hundred reserve police officers, to whom he wanted to give certain crime-fighting tools. <sup>11</sup> He wanted the police to have better information and deeper and broader research into the causes, prevention, and control of crime. <sup>12</sup>

#### 1965-66: 89TH CONGRESS

In response to President Johnson's requests, the Congress in 1965 passed H.R. 8027 (PL 89-197), the Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA). This new law provided federal assistance for states to upgrade the quality of local law enforcement. Previously, federal assistance to local law enforcement officers was largely limited to training sessions sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Under the new law, the attorney general was authorized to make grants for studies of new police procedures and for demonstration projects of such new techniques. The aim was to determine the efficacy of new methods of crime control and to make those methods available to local law officers.<sup>13</sup>

#### 1967-68: 90th Congress

This session, Congress did not pass H.R. 11816 or S. 798, which were bills to provide disability and death benefits for state and local police officers injured or killed while enforcing federal laws.

#### PRESIDENT NIXON

Richard Nixon did not like cases of police brutality and asked the attorney general to make all appropriate investigative resources available to work jointly with state or local police in any case involving an assault upon a police officer. If Instead, he wanted to focus on strengthening local law enforcement through the special revenue sharing fund. Nixon wanted to expand the massive funding for local law enforcement assistance and wanted to have law enforcement special revenue sharing. He sent Congress a proposal for special revenue sharing in the field of law enforcement assistance for \$500 million. In the following year, he wanted to increase assistance to local law enforcement to over \$1.2 million.

#### 1969-70: 91st Congress

During this session, Congress acted on Nixon's proposals for funding of state law enforcement and authorized an increase in federal aid to state and local agencies. The bill (H.R. 17825/PL 91-644) authorized \$3.55 billion for the LEAA, which would channel funds to such agencies.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Internal Security held hearings on bills dealing with assaults on police, but no final action was taken on them. The bills included the following:

- S. 4325: to enable the FBI to join the search for killers of a policeman or fireman within 24 hours of the crime. If an offender crossed state lines to avoid prosecution for such a crime, it would be a federal offense. If no one was apprehended for the crime within 24 hours, it would be assumed that the suspect had fled across state lines.
- 2. S. 4348: to make it a federal crime to assault, injure, or kill a state or local law enforcement officer, judge, or fireman because of his position.
- 3. S. 4403 (the Urban Terrorism Prevention Act): to ban the advocacy of urban terrorism, to license all manufacturers and distributors of explosives, and to provide greatly increased penalties for terrorist activities.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1975-76: 94TH CONGRESS

Congress passed H.R. 366 (PL 94-430), a measure to provide federal death benefits to the families of public safety officers killed in the line of duty. The bill authorized federal payments of \$50,000 to the survivors of fire fighters, police, and other law enforcement officers killed performing their jobs. The eligibility standards allowed for both accidental and criminal causes of death. Similar proposals failed during the 92nd and 93rd Congresses.<sup>21</sup>

#### PRESIDENT REAGAN

Ronald Reagan wanted to increase resources to federal law enforcement agencies for apprehension, conviction, and incarceration purposes.<sup>22</sup> In 1984, he introduced legislation to ban the manufacture and importation of bullets designed to penetrate the soft-body armor worn by law enforcement officers, called "cop-killer" bullets.<sup>23</sup> He signed a bill to regulate armor-piercing ammunition (H.R. 3132) that would ban the production or importation of these bullets.<sup>24</sup>

#### 1989-90: 101st Congress

An omnibus crime bill was passed (S. 1970, H.R. 5269; S. 3266; PL 101-647) that, among other things, included provisions relating to police. The law authorized up to \$900 in new federal aid for local law enforcement and called for an increase in federal agents, including 1,000 new agents for the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agents.<sup>25</sup>

1991-92: 102ND CONGRESS

After the televised beating of Rodney King, the House proposed and passed, as part of the crime bill (H.R. 3371), provisions of another measure (H.R. 2972) that would have given the attorney general additional authority to sue a police department in an effort to stop practices of police misconduct. The intent was to give the Justice Department much greater latitude in the war against police brutality. The bill would have also required the Justice Department to collect and publish statistical information on the use of excessive force by police. But the crime bill was stalled and neither chamber took up H.R. 2972 as a freestanding bill.<sup>26</sup>

#### PRESIDENT CLINTON

As a candidate for president, William Clinton promised to provide funding to allow local departments to hire add an additional 100,000 officers that would focus on community policing. He argued that this style of policing helped prevent crime and lower the crime rate, as well as establish better relationships between law enforcement and the citizens in the community. Furthermore, he argued that community policing reduces the chances of abusive action by police officers and increases the chances of harmony and safe streets. In 1993, he proposed a crime initiative to help meet that goal, including grants to states and localities to recruit officers and a police corps program to provide assistance for education in exchange for a commitment to work as a police officer. In 1998, he reported that the Department of Justice would fund over seven hundred new community police officers who would be on the beat specifically to fight crime in troubled areas, including Chicago, Baltimore, and Miami.

In 1995, Clinton announced support for legislation to ban armor-piercing bullets. He said that "if a bullet can rip through a bullet-proof vest like a knife through hot butter, then it ought to be history. We should ban it."<sup>31</sup> He also provided grants to provide bulletproof vests to police.<sup>32</sup>

#### CONGRESS

1993-94: 103RD CONGRESS

In H.R. 3398, restrictions of a particularly dangerous new bullet, known as "Black Talon" bullets, passed the Judiciary Crime Subcommittee. The bullets opened on impact to reveal spikes that tore flesh.<sup>33</sup> Congress did not pass this bill.

A major crime bill (H.R. 3355/H.R. 4092/S. 1607; PL 103-322) was passed in 1994, which included many new provisions concerning law enforcement. One proposed program was called "Cops on the Beat," a new grant program intended to boost community policing. The aim was to send more police into neighborhoods where they would be more visible and could develop closer ties to the community. When passed, the law provided \$8.8 billion to help communities hire 100,000 new community policing officers. <sup>34</sup> If a local government received the money, a portion of the grant money could be used for training or equipment to enhance community policing programs, but the bulk of the money had to be used to put more officers on the street.

Additionally, the bill created a police corps program, administered by the Justice Department, to grant college or graduate scholarships for students who agreed to serve as state or local police officers for at least four years. Participants who did not