

Rising Crime Rates and the Defunding Movement

Most of our cities saw a dramatic rise in crime last year that appears unabated this year. Is the “defund the police” movement to blame? After all, some of the cities with the worst spikes have adopted that philosophy and made cuts to their police departments. The answer is more complicated than that, but that doesn’t let ridiculousness of defunding the police off the hook entirely.

At its core, the idea of defunding the police was aimed at either punishing the police—all of the police—for what happened to George Floyd, or abolishing the police completely. The former is emotionally driven and found mostly in already anti-cop circles, but the latter is anarchist in nature. If either of their visions are ever brought to fruition, the result on crime rates would be both immediate and apocalyptic. Fortunately, neither have been fully implemented, and even where defunding has occurred it has often been more of a shell game than actual substantive cuts. In other cases, moves to reverse the mistake are already in progress.

The very best mechanism for improving policing is and always has been through training. Not the kind of training that tells recruits that they’re racists (implicitly) and “teaches” them how not to be. Instead, we should focus on communications, de-escalation, fitness, prioritization of the sanctity of life, constitutional policing, ethics, and, yes, use of force.

It is important to understand that a fit and skilled police officer has more options when it comes to force and is likely to perceive a threat differently than an unskilled, out-of-shape officer. The latter will justifiably escalate their force response to a threat. Society has a vested interest in having fit, competent, and confident officers, because their force decisions are almost always better.

Defunding the police forces departments to cut everywhere—including training. That means less capable officers will be patrolling our streets and it increases the likelihood of a bad use-of-force decision. The resulting viral videos will set more cities on fire. Defunding will have a tragic downstream affect on police and community interactions and will guarantee more, not fewer incidents like the

ones that have caused protests and riots. This seems to be the exact opposite of what those in favor of defunding claim to want.

But that result is in the future and its effect on crime rates is less clear. What then should we consider in the current crime crisis? I believe we can look to the anti-police environment created by a combination of false narratives fueled by an agenda-driven media and politicians who engage in anti-police rhetoric, for starters. When a police officer feels that anything they do will be wrong, or at least painted that way in the media, and that the governing unit he or she works for will use them as a political pawn, there is no incentive to engage in proactive policing.

Police officers are not paid by commission. They make the same amount of money whether they make 10 arrests in a day or none at. Same goes for writing traffic tickets. What would motivate them to engage in anything confrontational when they can instead simply respond to calls they receive?

Proactive policing is done because officers are passionate about protecting their communities, and they actively seek out criminal activity. How much of that is going to happen in the environment we find ourselves in now? The answer is obvious, and crime rates reflect that. When there is little-to-no law enforcement pressure on criminals and gangs, they do what they do.

Defunding the police is a dangerously bad idea, but as with our teachers abandoning the classrooms, it might take some time to realize just how bad the consequences are. The immediate danger can be found in the thinking behind the defunding movement. Anti-police rhetoric and actions, false narratives, and the resulting de-policing of our cities will have a more immediate negative impact on crime, it likely already has.

Source:

<https://www.texaspolicy.com/rising-crime-rates-and-the-defunding-movement/>

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