

SENATOR JOE BIDEN: FIGHTING CRIME IN OUR COMMUNITIES

“Fighting crime is like cutting grass. In the summer I cut my grass on a Saturday and it looks great. I let it go for a week, it looks a little shaggy. Let it go for two weeks, I notice it. Let it go for a month, I have the weeds back.”

– Senator Joe Biden

HOMETOWN AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Nothing is of greater value to Americans than our security. Senator Biden has made fighting crime a top priority. He has worked to restore billions of dollars in funding cuts President Bush made to local law enforcement officials. And he has his own plan – to invest \$10 billion a year for five years – to make America safer. Here’s what he wants to do:

Hire 50,000 Cops and 1,000 FBI Agents: In the 1990s, the Biden Crime Bill added 100,000 cops to America’s streets, helping to bring down murder and violent crime rates eight years in a row. But after President Bush made cuts to the program, crime is on the rise again, as are threats of terrorism, so the Senator wants to put an additional 50,000 cops on America’s streets and add 1,000 FBI agents. His legislation is now working its way through Congress.

Bring Dangerous Fugitives to Justice: State and local law enforcement need more resources to enter felony warrants into the national fugitive database. U.S. Marshals task forces need more funds to work with state and local law enforcement to extradite fugitives to face trial. An officer should never perform a traffic stop unaware that he’s dealing with a dangerous fugitive and a sheriff should never have to release a violent fugitive into his community because there is no money to extradite him. Senator Biden’s bill will help ensure that dangerous fugitives are found, captured, tried, and convicted by making state warrant systems compatible and interoperable with the national fugitive database and by providing Marshals’ task forces with the money to extradite fugitives to face justice.

Scan 100 Percent of Cargo Containers Entering Our Ports: Today, only 5 percent of cargo entering our seaports is scanned, even though our ports are among America’s most vulnerable targets. If there is a terrorist attack and we have to suspend operations at every port, as we did after 9/11 at every airport, it would cost this economy \$58 billion in 12 days. Senator Biden would scan 100 percent of containers to prevent radiological and other dangerous materials from being smuggled into America.

Implement the 9/11 Commission Recommendations: After the tragedy of 9/11, a bi-partisan Commission looked at where America is most vulnerable and recommended how to make our ports, chemical plants, railways, and other critical infrastructure more secure. Senator Biden would implement their recommendations.

Help First Responders Communicate: America’s first responders still cannot easily communicate with each other in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. Why? The communications equipment between a unit of the National Guard, the local fire fighter or cop, or other first responders is not interoperable. Senator Biden wants to give first responders the equipment they need, so if there is another Katrina or a 9/11, the dedicated professionals or volunteers can communicate.

Reduce the Number of Repeat Offenders: Two-thirds of people released from state prisons are re-arrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years of release. These offenders are re-entering our communities with insufficient monitoring, little or no job skills, inadequate drug treatment, insufficient housing, limited health services, and few positive influences. Senator Biden’s Second Chance Act, which provides ex-offenders with housing, drug and alcohol treatment, job training and other life skills they need to rejoin their families and communities as productive, law-abiding citizens, became law on April 9, 2008.

A HISTORY OF MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER

Stopping Violence Against Women: Senator Biden often says the Biden Violence Against Women Act is his proudest accomplishment. It set up a system of national shelters so that victims of abuse have a place to go. It also established a national hotline that 1.5 million victims have called. As a result, domestic violence is down by 50 percent and rape by 60 percent. Senator Biden's National Domestic Violence Volunteer Attorney Network Act will create a national system to recruit and train volunteer lawyers and infuse 100,000 new volunteer lawyers into the justice system to represent victims.

Passing the Biden Crime Law: The landmark law the Senator wrote in 1994 put 100,000 cops on the street; reduced crime eight years in a row; built drug courts, where non-violent offenders are forced into mandatory drug treatment and testing; and helped communities establish safe havens to keep children off the streets, through programs like Boys and Girls Clubs and the Police Athletic Leagues.

Protecting America's Kids: A series of laws the Senator authored in the last two decades have increasingly protected kids against sexual predators. In 1994, he required every state to establish a registry for convicted sexual offenders; in 1996, he helped create the national registry of sexual predators, so these criminals could not move from state to state to avoid being tracked. In 2003, he authored the Victims of Child Abuse Act, increasing funding for Child Advocacy Centers. And in 2006, he authored the Adam Walsh Act that establishes registration requirements to ensure convicted sex offenders can't slip through the cracks and harm our children. Most recently, Senator Biden's Combating Child Exploitation Act would develop a national strategy to combat child exploitation, fund Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces, and hire additional federal law enforcement officers dedicated to child exploitation cases. The Child Protection Improvements Act will expand and make permanent a pilot program established by the Protect Act to allow youth-serving organizations to run background checks on prospective volunteers and protect our children from those with a history of violence or sexual abuse of minors.

Curbing Drug Use: Senator Biden is well known for his work to curb drug use in America. He created the Drug Czar's office in the White House to coordinate federal programs in the war against drugs. He wrote the Biden Drug Free Schools Zone law, imposing special penalties for dealing drugs within 1,000 feet of a school, and enabling schools to provide drug education and prevention programs, like DARE. In addition, he was instrumental in classifying steroids as a drug and funding programs to deter steroid use by students. Senator Biden's Drug Enforcement Special Agent Restoration Act would help hire 500 DEA special agents and support personnel.

Restoring Corporate Integrity: In light of high-profile crimes by CEOs of corporations like Enron, Senator Biden sponsored legislation requiring top executives of public companies to certify the accuracy of their financial statements, and penalize those who make false statements.

Keeping Criminals Behind Bars: Legislation the Senator wrote provides funds so states can build prisons, if they agree to keep their violent offenders behind bars for at least 85 percent of their sentence. Previously, state prisoners averaged only 40 percent of their sentence behind bars.

Honoring Law Enforcement for Exceptional Acts of Bravery: Senator Biden's Law Enforcement Badge of Bravery Act, passed by the House and Senate, will establish an award to honor local, state and federal law enforcement officers who have taken extraordinary risks in the line of duty.