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Over 100 Criminal Justice Leaders Call on the Biden Administration to Establish a Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Prosecution

Fair and Just Prosecution releases new proposal highlighting why a high-level national body is essential to transforming the criminal legal system and how it can build on the innovations and success of a new generation of elected local prosecutors

Today, 107 criminal justice leaders – including a high-level bipartisan group of current and former elected prosecutors, Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, and former Department of Justice officials – sent a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden urging him to establish a Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Prosecution that would build on the work of the reform-minded prosecutor movement, catalyze innovation in the criminal legal system nationwide and chart a path to greater justice and equity in *all* communities. The letter coincided with the release of Fair and Just Prosecution's new white paper, "[The Case for a Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Prosecution](#)," which outlines why this effort is urgent at a time of waning trust in the criminal legal system and how this long overdue national support for reforming the criminal justice system through the power and clout of elected prosecutors – a group that in the past has failed to garner national attention or support – can respond to community voices, as well as bipartisan agreement, coalescing around the need to embrace smarter strategies for promoting public safety.

"I am proud to be one of the signatories on this important message and I am grateful for the work being done by Fair and Just Prosecution as we strive together to improve our justice system on a national and local level," said **Tompkins County District Attorney Matt Van Houten**.

The FJP white paper recommends that the task force be modeled on President Obama's Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Policing and include elected state and local prosecutors, defense and civil rights attorneys, community law enforcement leaders, people with lived experience with the criminal legal system, survivors of crime, researchers, DOJ leaders and other federal experts, and others with a stake in a more fair and just criminal legal system.

In the letter to the President calling for action on this proposal, the signatories emphasize the need for federal leadership to support and expand the reach of the reform-minded prosecutor movement: “Every day, we fight for fairness and justice in our jurisdictions. We work in our jurisdictions to advance a new vision of justice, one in which all Americans are safe from harm and oppression, and empowered to collectively build a better future. We need allies and support in that fight. And we need national engagement.”

“For too long, prosecutors have used their vast discretion to pursue convictions and extreme sentences as part of a false promise of public safety; a new generation of prosecutors is changing this paradigm and prioritizing equity and justice while also improving the safety and well-being of our communities. It is time for the Biden Administration to propel this movement forward and act to create lasting and sustainable change to the criminal legal system,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of Fair and Just Prosecution** and a signatory on the letter. “A Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Prosecution will engage a variety of stakeholders in reimagining prosecution and therefore the entire criminal legal system. There is no time to wait to begin this essential work.”

The over 100 criminal justice leaders who joined on to the letter to the President include **Attorneys General Leevin Camacho** (Guam), **Thomas J. Donovan, Jr.** (Vermont), **Keith Ellison** (Minnesota), **Karl Racine** (District of Columbia) and **Kwame Raoul** (Illinois); local elected prosecutors such as **Parisa Dehghani-Tafti** (Arlington County and the City of Falls Church, Va.), **Michael Dougherty** (20th Judicial District, Colo.), **Kim Foxx** (Cook County, Ill.), **Sim Gill** (Salt Lake County, Utah), **Eric Gonzalez** (Kings County, N.Y.), **Rachael Rollins** (Suffolk County, Mass.), **Dan Satterberg** (King County, Wash.), **Mimi Rocah** (Westchester County, N.Y.) and **Cyrus R. Vance** (New York County, N.Y.); and former DOJ officials and U.S. Attorneys such as **Roy Austin, Shay Bilchik, W. Thomas Dillard, Barry Grissom, Robert L. Listenbee, Carter Stewart** and **Joyce Vance**. Law enforcement leaders who signed onto the letter calling for the Task Force’s creation include **Police Chiefs RaShall M. Brackney** (Charlottesville, Va.), **Abdul Pridgen** (Seaside, Calif.) and **Tom Synan** (Newton, Ohio), **Sheriffs Jerry L. Clayton** (Washtenaw County, Mich.) and **Garry McFadden** (Mecklenburg County, N.C.), and former law enforcement heads **Jim Buerman, Chris Burbank, Ronal Serpas, Darrel Stephens** and **Scott Thomson**, among others.

Read the letter and see the full list of signatories [here](#) and read the white paper [here](#).

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