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**LDF Issues Statement on President Biden's Proposed
Additional Funding for Law Enforcement**

On Thursday, President Biden revealed the Safer America Plan, which includes important support for community-led crime prevention and intervention, increased law enforcement accountability, sentencing reform, and gun violence abatement. The plan also includes support for hiring and training an additional 100,000 law enforcement officers. While the goal of enhancing safety is laudable and urgent, the increased funding for and hiring of more police officers does not advance that goal and should not be the priority of the Biden Administration. Instead, we urge President Biden to continue to focus on appropriate alternatives to policing and on creating a public safety system that centers the protection of civil and human rights.

Black Americans – especially young Black men – are at a disproportionately high risk of dying from gun violence. Black people are also disproportionately harmed by policing and incarceration – leading to devastating and destabilizing consequences for Black families and communities. While Black people make up only 13% of the U.S. population, they comprise 38% of people in prison or jail. It is critical that we identify new methods to keep Black communities safe without continuing the failed strategies that have made the United States the largest incarcerator per capita in the world with a prison population disproportionately comprised of Black and Latinx persons.

“We are disappointed that President Biden’s Safer America Plan embraces the failed concept that we can achieve safety by increasing police presence in our communities,” said Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson. “History and research have repeatedly shown that more police and harsher penalties do not reduce crime, and in fact are counterproductive to public safety because of the harmful effects of discriminatory policing and incarceration.

“As Congress considers these and other proposals, it should not appropriate additional funding to hire more police officers. Increased encounters with law enforcement and incarceration are destabilizing and counterproductive to a restorative system of safety that respects the dignity of Black people. Rather than enacting legislation that continues to support increased investments in punitive and harmful law enforcement systems, Congress should act swiftly to consider proposals – including some of those in the Safer America Plan – that invest in under-resourced communities, address the root causes of violence, and utilize evidence-based and community-led programs for violence intervention and health-based crisis response. It is essential that public funds be used to help Black communities thrive, rather than to subject them to increased encounters with law enforcement.

“We also call on Congress to move swiftly to eliminate the crack-powder sentencing disparity and lift the lifetime ban on critical federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for people with past felony drug convictions – important pieces of the Safer America Plan that require legislative action.”

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.