

Crime

Year	Pres.	House	Senate	Democrats	Republicans	
1900	R	R	R			
1904	R	R	R			
1908	R	R	R			
1912	R	D	R			
1916	D	D	D	We demand that the modern principles of prison reform be applied in our Federal Penal System.		
1920	D	R	R			
1924	R	R	R	We favor the extension of the probation principle to the courts of the United States.		
1928	R	R	R			
1932	R	R	R		We favor the enactment of rigid penal laws that will aid the States in stamping out the activities of gangsters, racketeers and kidnapers.	
1936	D	D	D	We have begun and shall continue the successful drive to rid our land of kidnapers and bandits. We shall continue to use the powers of government to end the activities of the malefactors of great wealth who defraud and exploit the people.		
1940	D	D	D			
1944	D	D	D			
1948	D	R	R			
1952	D	D	D			
1956	R	D	D	We pledge ourselves to the fair and impartial administration of justice.		
1960	R	D	D	In recent years, we have been faced with a shocking increase in crimes of all kinds. Organized criminals have even infiltrated into legitimate business enterprises and labor unions.		
1964	D	D	D			
1968	D	D	D	We pledge a vigorous and sustained campaign against lawlessness in all its forms—organized crime, white collar crime, rioting, and other violations of the rights and liberties of others. We will further this campaign by attack on the root causes of crime and disorder.	Lawlessness is crumbling the foundations of American society.	LBJ joins for War on Crime
1971	R	D	D			Nixon declares War on Drugs

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1972 R	D	D	<p>The problem of crime in America is real, immediate and fundamental; its costs to the nation are staggering; nearly three-quarters of a million victims of violent crime in one year alone; more than 15,000 murders, billions of dollars of property loss. . . We can protect all people without undermining fundamental liberties by ceasing to use "law and order" as justification for repression and political persecution, and by ceasing to use stop-gap measures as preventive detention, "no-knock" entry, surveillance, promiscuous and unauthorized use of wire taps, harassment, and secret dossiers; and The problems of crime and drug abuse cannot be isolated from the social and economic conditions that give rise to them. . . Against white-collar crime, we pledge to enforce the maximum penalties provided by law. Justice cannot survive when, as too often is the case, a boy who steals a television set is sentenced to a long jail term, while a stock manipulator who steals millions is only commanded to sin no more.</p>	<p>We pledge a tireless campaign against crime—to restore safety to our streets, and security to law-abiding citizens who have a right to enjoy their homes and communities free from fear.</p>	
1976 R	D	D	<p>We must restore confidence in the criminal justice system by insuring that detection, conviction and punishment of lawbreakers is swift and sure; that the criminal justice system is just and efficient; that jobs, decent housing and educational opportunities provide a real alternative to crime to those who suffer enforced poverty and injustice . . . Toward these ends, we support a major reform of the criminal justice system, but we oppose any legislative effort to introduce repressive and anti-civil libertarian measures in the guise of reform of the criminal code. . . Citizen confidence in law enforcement can be enhanced through increased citizen participation, by informing citizens of police and prosecutor policies, assuring that police departments reflect a cross-section of the communities they serve, establishing neighborhood forums to settle simple disputes, restoring the grand jury to fair and vigorous independence, establishing adequate victim compensation programs, and reaffirming our respect for the individual's right to privacy.</p>	<p>Every American has a right to be protected from criminals. Violence has no place in our land. . . The federal criminal code should include automatic and mandatory minimum sentences for persons committing offenses under federal jurisdiction that involve the use of a dangerous weapon; that involve exceptionally serious crimes, such as trafficking in hard drugs, kidnapping and aircraft hijacking; and that involve injuries committed by repeat offenders. . . we urge state and local governments to assume a major role in limiting the distribution and availability of obscene materials.</p>	
1980 D	D	D	<p>As we work toward improved law enforcement, we must not permit or sanction excessive or illegal police force. . . Minorities in some areas have been discriminated against by such police actions, and we must take every action at the federal, state, and local level to prevent that from happening in the future, including a renewed commitment to affirmative action in the hiring of law enforcement personnel, establishment of civil rights units at appropriate U.S. Attorneys' offices, and swift investigation and prosecution of suspected civil rights violations.</p>	<p>We believe that the death penalty serves as an effective deterrent to capital crime and should be applied by the federal government and by states which approve it as an appropriate penalty for certain major crimes.</p>	

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1984 R	D	R	<p>The Republicans profess to stand for "law and order." But this is the same Administration that voted the bipartisan anti-crime bill in 1982. And when it comes to laws they do not like—whether they concern toxic wastes, pure food and drugs, or worker health and safety—this Administration simply makes believe they do not exist. . . No problem has worried Americas more persistently over the past 20 years than the problem of crime. Crime and the fear of crime affect us all, but the impact is greatest on poor Americans who live in our cities. . . To spur local law enforcement efforts, establishment of an independent criminal justice corporation should be considered. This corporation could serve as a means of encouraging community-based efforts, such as neighborhood citizen watches, alternative deployment patterns for police, and community service sentencing programs, which have proven effectiveness.</p>	<p>Republicans believe that individuals are responsible for their actions. Those who commit crimes should be held strictly accountable by our system of justice. The primary objective of the criminal law is public safety; and those convicted of serious offenses must be jailed swiftly, surely, and long enough to assure public safety. . . The Republican Party has deep concern about gratuitous sex and violence in the entertainment media, both of which contribute to the problem of crime against children and women. . . We concur with the American people's approval of capital punishment where appropriate and will ensure that it is carried out humanely.</p>	<p>Sentencing Reform Act prescribes mandatory minimums and eliminates judicial discretion. Goetz shooting on NYC subway</p>
1988 R	D	D	<p>WE BELIEVE that the federal government should provide increased assistance to local criminal justice agencies, enforce a ban on "cop killer" bullets that have no purpose other than the killing and maiming of law enforcement officers, reinforce our commitment to help crime victims, and assume a leadership role in securing the safety of our neighborhoods and homes.</p>	<p>Republicans stand with the men and women who put their lives on the line every day, in State and local police forces and in federal law enforcement agencies. We are determined to reestablish safety in the streets of those Communities where the poor, the hard-working, and the elderly now live in fear. Despite opposition from liberal Democrats, we've made a start . . . We pushed a historic reform of toughened sentencing procedures for federal courts to make the punishment fit the crime.</p>	<p>Reagan signs bill for death penalty for drug traffickers</p>
1992 R	D	D	<p>To empower America's communities, Democrats pledge to restore government as the upholder of basic law and order for crime-ravaged communities. The simplest and most direct way to restore order in our cities is to put more police on the streets. . . Neighborhoods and police should be partners in the war on crime. Democrats support more community policing, which uses foot patrols and storefront offices to make police officers visible fixtures in urban neighborhoods.</p>	<p>One of the first duties of government is to protect the public security—to maintain law and order so that citizens are free to pursue the fruits of life and liberty. The Democrats have forsaken this solemn pledge. Instead of protecting society from hardened criminals, they blame society and refuse to hold accountable for their actions individuals who have chosen to engage in violent and criminal conduct. . . For twelve years, two Republican Presidents have fought to reverse this trend, along with Republican officials in the States. They have named tough law-and-order judges, pushed for minimum mandatory sentences, expanded federal assistance to States and localities, sought to help States redress court orders on prison overcrowding, and devoted record resources that are turning the tide against drugs. They have repeatedly proposed legislation, consistently rejected by congressional Democrats, to restore the severest penalties for the most heinous crimes, to ensure swift and certain punishment, and to end the legal loopholes that let criminals go free.</p>	

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1994 D	D	D			Clinton signs Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. 100,000 new cops, Violence Against Women part of act
1996 D	R	R	<p>Today's Democratic Party believes the first responsibility of government is law and order. Four years ago, crime in America seemed intractable. . . After a long hard fight, President Clinton beat back fierce Republican opposition, led by Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich, to answer the call of America's police officers and pass the toughest Crime Bill in history. The Democratic Party under President Clinton is putting more police on the streets and tougher penalties on the books; we are taking guns off the streets and working to steer young people away from crime and gangs and drugs in the first place. And it is making a difference. In city after city and town after town, crime rates are finally coming down. . . Nothing is more effective in the fight against crime than police officers on the beat, engaged in community policing. The Crime Bill is putting 100,000 new police officers on the street. . . We believe that people who break the law should be punished, and people who commit violent crimes should be punished severely. President Clinton made three-strikes-you're-out the law of the land, to ensure that the most dangerous criminals go to jail for life, with no chance of parole. We established the death penalty for nearly 60 violent crimes, including murder of a law enforcement officer, and we signed a law to limit appeals. . . We provided almost \$8 billion in new funding to help states build new prison cells so violent offenders serve their full sentences. We call on the states to meet the President's challenge and guarantee that serious violent criminals serve at least 85 percent of their sentence. The American people deserve a criminal justice system in which criminals are caught, the guilty are convicted, and the convicted serve their time. . . We required every state in the country to compile a registry of sex offenders. The President signed Megan's Law to require that states tell a community whenever a dangerous sexual predator enters its midst. We support the President's directive to the Attorney General, calling on her to work with the states and Congress to develop a national sex offender registry.</p>	<p>This is, in part the legacy of liberalism - in the old Democrat Congress, in the Clinton Department of Justice, and in the courts, where judges appointed by Democrat presidents continue their assault against the rights of law-abiding Americans. For too long government policy has been controlled by criminals and their defense lawyers. Democrat Congresses cared more about rights of criminals than safety for Americans. Bill Clinton arbitrarily closed off Pennsylvania Avenue, the nation's Main Street, for his protection, while his policies left the public unprotected against vicious criminals. As a symbol of our determination to restore the rule of law - in the White House as well as in our streets - we will reopen Pennsylvania Avenue.</p>	

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2000	R	R	R	<p>Democrats believe government's most basic duty is to establish law, order, and freedom and keep citizens safe from crime. . . Bill Clinton and Al Gore took office determined to turn the tide in the battle against crime, drugs, and disorder in our communities. They put in place a tougher more comprehensive strategy than anything tried before, a strategy to fight crime on every single front: more police on the streets to thicken the thin blue line between order and disorder, tougher punishments - including the death penalty - for those that dare to terrorize the innocent, and smarter prevention to stop crime before it even starts. . . Good policing demands mutual trust and respect between the community and the police. We shouldn't let the acts of a few rogue officers undermine that trust or the reputation of the outstanding work of the vast majority of our dedicated men and women in blue. That is why we need to end the unjust practice of racial profiling in America - because it's not only unfair, it is inconsistent with America's community policing success, it is a violation of the basic American principle of innocent until proven guilty, it views Americans as members of groups instead of as individuals, and it is just plain shoddy policing.</p>	<p>Most Americans over the age of fifty remember a time when streets and schoolyards were safe, doors unlocked, windows unbarred. The elderly did not live in fear and the young did not die in gunfire. That world is gone, swept away in the social upheaval provoked by the welfare, drug, and crime policies of the 1960s and later. . . Our Republican governors, legislators, and local leaders have taken a zero tolerance approach to crime that has led to the lowest crime and murder rates in a generation. . . pushed states to make sure violent felons actually do time. . . We will reopen Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House as a symbolic expression of our confidence in the restoration of the rule of law. . . We affirm the right of public schools, courthouses, and other public buildings to post copies of the Ten Commandments.</p>	
2004	R	R	R	<p>To keep our streets safe for our families, we support tough punishment of violent crime and smart efforts to reintegrate former prisoners into our communities as productive citizens.</p>		
2006	R	R	R			<p>Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act increases penalties and restrictions on sex offenders</p>
2008	R	D	D	<p>As Democrats, we are committed to being smart on crime. That means being tough on violent crime, funding strategic, and effective community policing, and holding offenders accountable, and it means getting tough on the root causes of crime by investing in successful crime prevention, including proven initiatives that get youth and nonviolent offenders back on track. . . We will continue to fight inequalities in our criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Criminals behind bars cannot harm the general public. To that end: . . We support mandatory sentencing provisions for gang conspiracy crimes, violent or sexual offenses against children, rape, and assaults resulting in serious bodily injury.</p>	
2010	D	D	D			<p>Federal Fair Sentencing Act reduces crack disparities</p>
2012	D	R	D	<p>We will end the dangerous cycle of violence, especially youth violence, by continuing to invest in proven community-based law enforcement programs such as the Community Oriented Policing Services program. . . We understand the disproportionate effects of crime, violence, and incarceration on communities of color and are committed to working with those communities to find solutions.</p>	<p>Liberals do not understand this simple axiom: criminals behind bars cannot harm the general public. To that end, we support mandatory prison sentencing for gang crimes, violent or sexual offenses against children, repeat drug dealers, rape, robbery and murder. . . We endorse State and local initiatives that are trying new approaches, often called accountability courts.</p>	

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2016 D	R	R	<p>Democrats are committed to reforming our criminal justice system and ending mass incarceration. Something is profoundly wrong when almost a quarter of the world's prison population is in the United States, even though our country has less than five percent of the world's population. We will reform mandatory minimum sentences and close private prisons and detention centers. . . We will work with police chiefs to invest in training for officers on issues such as de-escalation and the creation of national guidelines for the appropriate use of force.</p>	<p>The current Administration's lack of respect for them, from White House intervention in local arrests to the Attorney General's present campaign of harassment against police forces around the country, has been unprecedented. . . The next president must restore the public's trust in law enforcement and civil order by first adhering to the rule of law himself. . . The Republican Party, a party of law and order, must make clear in words and action that every human life matters. . . The over-federalization of criminal justice is one of many ways in which the government in Washington has intruded beyond its proper jurisdiction. . . We applaud the Republican Governors and legislators who have been implementing criminal justice reforms like those proposed by our 2012 platform.</p>	
2020 R	D	R	<p>Democrats believe we need to overhaul the criminal justice system from top to bottom. . . This is the moment to root out structural and systemic racism in our criminal justice system and our society, and reimagine public safety for the benefit of our people and the character of our country. . . Democrats believe we must break the school-to-prison pipeline that too often relies on arrests and law enforcement to address misbehavior that ought to be handled and deescalated within the school. . . Democrats will establish strict national standards governing the use of force, including banning the use of chokeholds and carotid holds and permitting deadly force only when necessary and a last resort to prevent an imminent threat to life. . . Democrats will reinvigorate community policing approaches, so officers on the beat better serve the neighborhoods they work in, and make smart investments to incentivize departments to build effective partnerships with social workers and mental health and substance use counselors to help respond to public health challenges. . . Democrats support allowing judges to determine appropriate sentences, which is why we will fight to repeal federal mandatory minimums, incentivize states to do the same, and make all sentencing reductions retroactive so judges can reconsider past cases where their hands were tied. We believe it is long past time to end the federal sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine, which has contributed to the disproportionate imprisonment of people of color. And Democrats continue to support abolishing the death penalty.</p>		