



Rep. Tom Emmer on House Committee Hearing

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HOST:

recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Emmer, for five minutes for an opening statement.

REP. TOM EMMER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses for coming to speak with us today. I look forward to hearing your testimony. Cities and communities across the country are dealing with a surge in violence. In fact, over the past two years, the United States has seen an increased rate of all types of violence and crime. In 2021, 68 out of 70 of the largest United States police jurisdictions saw increases in violent crime, which includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. More specifically, we're seeing this rise in crime in cities, where large-scale theft, looting, and robbery are plaguing communities. We frequently hear stories of businesses in cities like Chicago or San Francisco who are forced to relocate, shut down, or limit their hours to protect their employees and manage the extra costs of security just to operate every day. Many businesses, particularly the smallest businesses, are faced with the wrenching decision whether to close and abandon the community or stay and deal with the risks of remaining open. Those decisions aren't just based on dollars and cents. Business owners must consider the safety of their employees and their customers. When a business closes its doors, the entire community feels the effect. Jobs are lost. Customers must find somewhere else to get the things they need. A vacant storefront invites more criminal activity. The value of homes in the area goes down, and a community begins to deteriorate. In the face of such rampant crime, law enforcement unfortunately does not often have the resources necessary to protect communities. From staffing issues to an ability to enforce the laws, Democrats were the party of defund the police, and these political attacks against law and order have depleted law enforcement morale and resources. Even though our committee does not have jurisdiction over crime, I welcome the opportunity to discuss how violent crime affects a community's economy. Our witnesses can help us understand how violent crime affects local economies and limits the services that are available to communities across the country. For many communities, addressing crime and violence starts with state and local leadership. Soft on crime policies have made matters worse in jurisdictions where crime rates are highest. The absence of the threat of meaningful prosecution affects the safety of residents and businesses. Today, we invited a business owner who has dealt with these challenges in Minnesota for several years now. Brian Ingram has managed to keep his restaurant doors open to the community of ST Paul, despite an unbelievable series of crimes against his business, his employees and his customers. I think we'll all benefit from hearing his story. So again, Mr Chair, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today because Americans should never, never feel this level of unsafety in their own communities. We must return to a society of law and order. I yield back.



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