

LOUDOUN'S COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY DECLINES TO PROSECUTE CERTAIN CRIMES: ARE SMASH-AND-GRABS FAR BEHIND?

LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, JANUARY 17, 2023 - On December 30, 2022, the Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney, Buta Biberaj, notified district judges that her office would no longer prosecute the following crimes: **hit and run with property damage; eluding police; petty larceny (including goods up to \$1,000); possession of certain controlled substances; failure to appear in court; and others.** Instead, these cases will be sent to district courts with only law enforcement representing the County. This is a startling turnaround for Biberaj, who in 2021 took the unusual step of *personally* prosecuting a Loudoun father for misdemeanor charges.

Ms. Biberaj argued that her office needs to focus its resources on violent crimes and felonies. This is in contrast to the statistics indicating that **violent crimes have declined** in the past two years. In 2020, arrests for more egregious crimes (known as "Group A Offenses") totaled 1,815; by 2021, this number dropped to 1,306. The first half of 2022 experienced an uptick in certain crime categories, but an even further decline in others.

A more telling statistic is the ratio of Loudoun County citizens to law enforcement employees. In 2020, Loudoun County employed 210 law enforcement officers per 100,000 citizens. By 2021 **a 5.5 per cent drop in Loudoun County law enforcement personnel**, combined with an increase in population, resulted in only 195 law enforcement officers per 100,000 Loudoun County residents. The same personnel are now expected to pick up the slack on crimes the Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney declines to prosecute.

It's time for a new prosecutor who can effectively use the generous resources provided to the office, and place the needs of Loudoun County residents first.

The Loudoun County Republican Committee (LCRC) of Virginia is a grassroots organization in which its members take action to promote issues of importance to Loudoun County residents as well as the Republican Party platform and its candidates, both locally and nationally.

(All statistics provided by [Crime in Virginia Annual Reports](#))