



House of Representatives

DAVID RALSTON
SPEAKER

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March 25, 2021

The Honorable Keisha Lance Bottoms
Mayor of Atlanta
55 Trinity Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mayor Bottoms:

I write today out of concern for the safety of Atlanta's residents and visitors. As you know, Atlanta has seen a marked increase in crime, particularly violent crime, in recent weeks and months.

As the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported, "homicides surged 58 percent in 2020" from 99 in 2019 to 157 in 2020 – "the most in more than two decades."¹ The Editorial Board of the AJC noted, "...the public believes the city is losing the battle when it comes to protecting its citizens. That's unacceptable for a city as important and influential as Atlanta."² Unfortunately, I have to agree with that assessment.

I feel a particular sense of obligation to the General Assembly members who call this city home during the legislative session for three or more months each year. Over the past two years, there has been an alarming increase in their reports of auto theft, auto break-ins and other property crimes.

More recent news articles report that "From Jan. 1 to Feb. 20, there were 18 homicides in Atlanta, up 80% compared with the same period last year,"³ showing this problem is far from under control. Just yesterday, a headline reported, "Atlanta police investigate 3 separate shootings within 2 hours."⁴ In light of this, I have also been disturbed that 192 Atlanta Police officers quit or were terminated last year.⁵

Given this dramatic increase in crime and the on-going difficulty the city is having in addressing this issue, I have asked Representative J. Collins, Chairman of the House Committee on Public Safety & Homeland Security, to hold hearings on crime in Atlanta to determine if state intervention may be necessary. I would request that the City of Atlanta cooperate with the Committee's proceedings. I know that we share a desire to see Atlanta remain a place that families and businesses wish to call home.

I thank you for your cooperation in this matter and your service to the City of Atlanta.

Sincerely,

David Ralston
Speaker

Copy: Governor Brian Kemp, Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, Attorney General Chris Carr, Chairman J. Collins

¹ <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlatnas-deadliest-year-in-decades-has-city-on-edge-and-demanding-change/WAF3MV7AVBD2BO2RZVANXDI6E4/>

² <https://www.ajc.com/opinion/opinion-do-more-to-curb-homicides-in-city/FRAQHANAMFHCHORLQ2KTPESGBI/>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/atlatnas-crime-wave-makes-some-residents-look-to-the-suburbs-11615467182>

⁴ <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta-police-investigate-3-separate-shootings-within-2-hours/Z3ZGW724RZGGFCTYMW6M7VW3EM/>

⁵ <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/2-investigates-nearly-200-apd-officers-retired-resigned-or-were-terminated-last-year/RMUOGBOPFED3NBLPK3ONJA2WQ/>