



Opening Statement of Senator Brent Taylor
before the
US Senate Judiciary Committee

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I'm here to discuss the urgent crime crisis in Memphis and my efforts to **Make Memphis Matter by Making Memphis Safer.**

Memphis consistently ranks among America's most dangerous cities. In 2024, Memphis reported 111,000 crimes but only 19,000 arrests with 56% of cases dismissed. Violent crime is rampant: in 2022, Ezekiel Kelly went on a mass shooting spree all over Memphis, and Cleotha Henderson abducted, raped, and murdered Eliza Fletcher. In 2023, a St. Jude researcher, Dr. Alexander Bulakhav, and Dr. Ben Mauck were killed in separate incidents. In 2024, Detwan Gunn, a mass shooter was released without bail, and Jaylen Loble, while out on bail, was involved in a fire-fight that killed Officer Joseph McKinney. In fact, crime is so bad that last year Shelby County, the county Memphis is in, saw the largest population loss of any county in the country. Without action, Memphis risks losing its middle class, leaving only the extremely poor and the wealthy who can afford private security.

The root of this crisis, in my view, lies partly with our Soros-backed District Attorney Steve Mulroy. Elected in 2022, Mulroy's policies have included proposing diversion for felons with firearms while also **not** opposing parole for first-degree murderers. These type policies undermine justice. He operates his own inhouse Innocence Project that moved a twice-convicted murderer off death row to life in prison. This made him eligible for parole. Allegations of race-based prosecutions and illegal commutations have led to pending ouster resolutions, now under Tennessee Supreme Court review, and a recent report shows our Restorative Justice Scheming District Attorney is partnering with progressive non-profits that encourage failed policies like cashless bail, decarceration, and manipulating data in a way that misleads the public into believing these failed policies are effective.

To counter this, I've championed legislation in Tennessee like the **DA Donor Transparency Act** and the **DA Second Opinion Act**. We've banned "**Ability to Pay**" calculators for bail, elevated public safety when setting bail, and passed **Blended Sentencing** for serious juvenile offenders. I even passed a law prohibiting the Memphis City Council from banning routine traffic stops by police—an absolutely insane policy which was supported by our local DA.

Federal and state efforts are making a difference. In May 2025, I joined Senator Marsha Blackburn for an FBI briefing on Operation Viper which identified 100 gangs, led to 500 arrests, and secured over 100 federal indictments. Just this one operation alone has reduced certain violent crimes by 25%. Memphis is immensely grateful, but there is more work to be done.

I am confident President Trump's recently announced Memphis Safe Task Force, which includes over a dozen federal agencies including the Tennessee National Guard will succeed in doing the hard work to infiltrate gangs and arrest more routine criminals. However, the local DA remains the weak link for those arrested who will need to be prosecuted under state charges. To make sure the Memphis Safe Task Force is successful, I'm sponsoring state legislation to require public certification of any reduced charges or non-prosecuted cases for these initiatives.

To maximize these efforts, I am hopeful US Attorney-nominee Mike Dunavant will be soon be confirmed by this body. His proven tough-on-crime leadership will strengthen federal prosecutions in Memphis ensuring criminals face consequences when District Attorney Steve Mulroy fails.

Lastly, I would recommend the Trump Department of Justice enter into consent decrees requiring the Shelby County District Attorney and Juvenile Court Judge to enforce tough-on-crime policies so Memphians can maintain the right to be safe in their homes, enjoy their property, and move about the city we all love.

To **Make Memphis Matter**, we have to **Make Memphis Safe**. But, let's also **Make Memphis the Model**—the model of how to turn around a great America City. Thank you.