INTRODUCTORY AUDIO PASSAGE

Less than four years after George Floyd's murder sparked a mass awakening to the inequities of the criminal justice system, [political leaders across the country](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/03/01/undocumented-immigrant-crime-rate-not-higher/72788637007/) are returning to a [tough-on-crime](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnist/2023/12/20/crime-murder-violence-down-biden-fox-news/71974355007/) approach. In some cases, voters and lawmakers are opting to reverse reforms passed years ago.

San Francisco voted Tuesday [in support of two propositions](https://apnews.com/article/san-francisco-crime-drugs-police-election-485b6f3a143f4441266251783d778489) that give more power to police and require addiction treatment as a condition for welfare assistance. [D.C. Council](https://mayor.dc.gov/release/statement-mayor-bowser-passage-secure-dc) members also passed a package of public safety measures Tuesday, including bringing back "drug-free zones."

The Tuesday votes follow movements to roll back reforms in Louisiana and Oregon.

"It's a stunning turnabout, especially so soon after the wave of national protests against the system for being too harsh," says Adam Gelb, President and CEO of the nonpartisan think tank [Council on Criminal Justice.](https://counciloncj.org/)

Though the 50-year-pattern of reform and restrictions for may seem like we are headed back to highly punitive policies, Gelb said that isn't the full picture.

"I think there's very little chance that we return fully to the notion that we can arrest and punish our way to safety."