

# The John Birch Society

Author: [Wendy](#)

Date: April 29, 2026



## Edward Varso

Ed Varso's path to a career in law enforcement began as a teenager with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 1993, when he became a sheriff explorer. Ed was later hired by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department as a custody assistant and then as a deputy sheriff.

In 2001, Ed was hired as a police officer by the Escondido Police Department in Southern California. Ed rose through the ranks, serving as a police officer and police K-9 handler until he was promoted to sergeant in 2011. In January 2015, he was promoted to lieutenant. Ed was promoted to captain in 2018, then to the position of assistant chief of police in October 2019, followed by his promotion to chief of police in December 2019.

Ed worked in every division within the Escondido Police Department, including managing the Special Investigations Division, Traffic Division, and Emergency Negotiations Team, as well as serving as the department's public information officer. As a captain and assistant chief of police, Ed managed the Services Bureau, with oversight of the police and fire communications center, the Backgrounds and Training Unit, Property and Evidence, the Records Division, and the Business Division.

Ed's reputation as a leader with strong strategic-management abilities led to temporary assignments within the

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Escondido City Manager's Office, where he helped develop and strengthen underperforming teams.

In 2022, Chief Varso became the second chief of police for the newly established Menifee Police Department. Ed successfully implemented many effective strategies in Menifee before ultimately returning to once again lead the Escondido Police Department.

Ed's commitment to the community — particularly to at-risk youth — is demonstrated through his volunteer work as a mentor. Additionally, he has chaired numerous community boards focused on reducing gang activity and drug use in the community.

Ed holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration and a master's degree in public administration. He is also a graduate of the 267th Session of the FBI National Academy and the POST Supervisory Leadership Institute.

Chief Varso retired from law enforcement in December 2024 after more than 27 years of service. However, Ed's commitment to the law-enforcement profession continues as the executive director of the Law Enforcement Charitable Foundation, where he helps local law-enforcement agencies obtain funding for critical safety and training needs. In addition, he teaches community members how to ensure their police departments remain local and independent.

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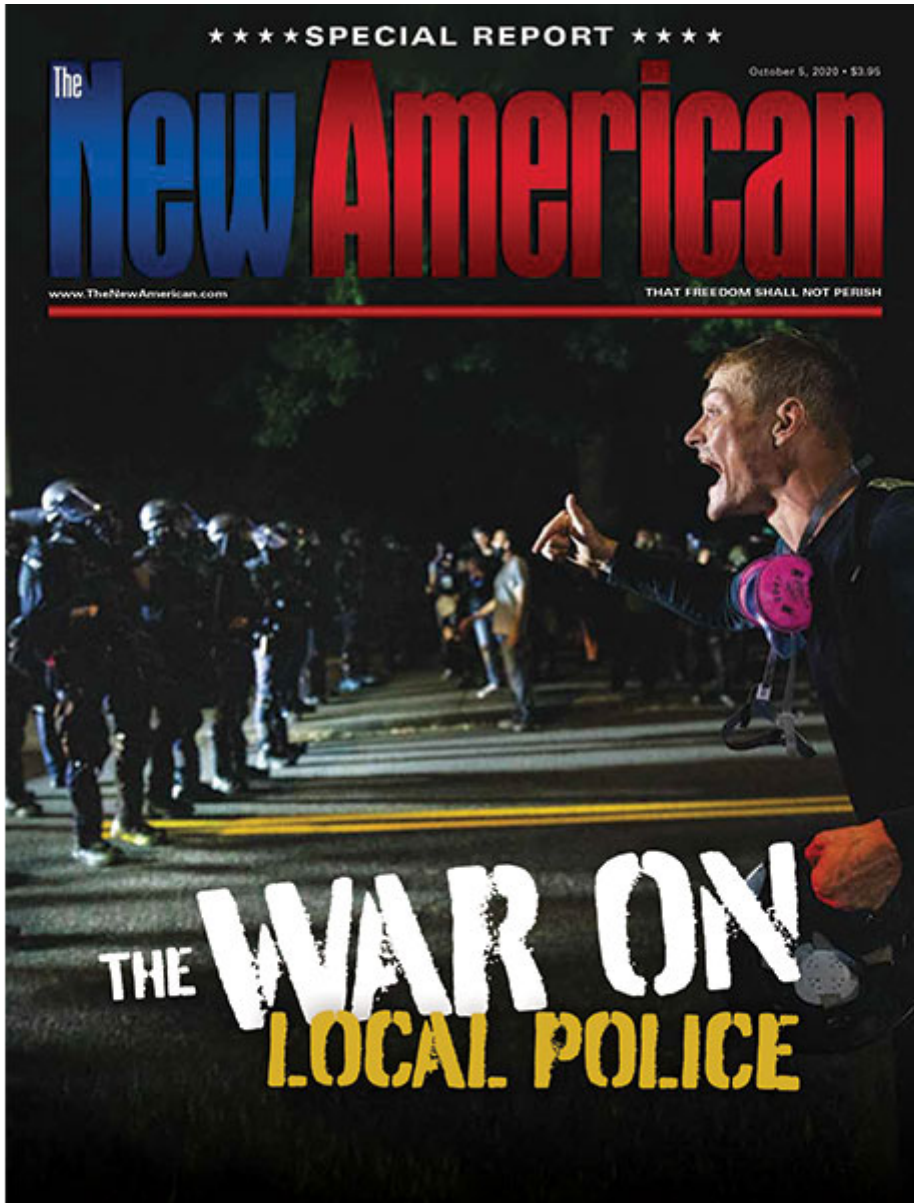
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The New American magazine - October 5, 2020

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ACTION PACK - SYLP



As federal funding for local law enforcement increases, so does federal control. Americans must stand up to this stealth assault on freedom — before it's too late.

*by Peter Rykowski*

Local police departments across the United States face a wide range of opposition. Most apparent is from the criminals they seek to deter and bring to justice — police officers not only devote much of their time to stopping such individuals, but risk their lives to do so. Police departments also face opposition from certain segments of society and government institutions. For example, the Defund the Police movement has led to multiple big-city departments facing budget cuts and low morale. Meanwhile, local prosecutors and judges across the country have ignored the law and released criminals onto the streets — threatening the safety of police officers and civilians alike.

However, another threat exists — one often overlooked. Although it's not at the forefront of people's minds, it is just as dangerous in the long run as the others, if not more so. This threat is the federal government, specifically its increasing strangulation of, and control over, local police departments through grants and

other programs. If not stopped, it will extinguish local control and decimate protection of our God-given, individual rights.

The federal assault on local police can be stopped — but it requires education and action on the part of citizens. In addition to informing themselves and others about the proper scope of government under the U.S. Constitution, concerned Americans must actively pressure their elected officials to govern in accordance with the founding document. By understanding the problem and taking action to promote the solution, we can protect our local police and God-given rights.

#### Loss of Independence

The federal government's tightening stranglehold on local police did not happen overnight. It has taken decades to get to where we are now. Although it now seems normal — even expected — for the federal government to provide funding for local police departments and other state and local agencies, this scheme is alien to the U.S. Constitution.

The Founding Fathers designed a federal government with limited powers, and intended for the states to retain the vast majority of power. In *The Federalist*, No. 45, James Madison noted that, under the Constitution, the federal government's powers are "few

Peter Rykowski is a research associate for The John Birch Society, managing JBS's legislative alerts, and is editor of the JBS Bulletin.

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Strings Attached: Federal Takeover of Local Police Via Grants reprint



**CRIME**

Policy matters: An ambulance carries the body of NYPD Officer Jonathan Diller, who was murdered while conducting a traffic stop on March 25, 2024. Diller's murder is just one recent example of police officers being assaulted or killed by repeat offenders out on the streets because of leftist crime policies.

## COP KILLERS

Long Criminal Records; Lax Treatment by DA's, Judges

As leftist-run states and localities impose radical crime policies, police officers are paying the price — some with their lives.

by Peter Rylkowski

On the evening of March 25, 2024, New York Police Department (NYPD) Officer Jonathan Diller and another officer noticed a vehicle idling in front of a bus stop in Queens. After seeing an individual suspiciously enter the vehicle, they decided to approach it. The officers questioned the individual, Guy Rivera, and his companion, and asked Rivera to exit the vehicle. When Rivera refused, the officers tried to remove him from his seat. At that point, Rivera pulled out a gun and shot Officer Diller in the stomach, just below his bulletproof vest. Although he had just been shot, Diller successfully disarmed Rivera, who was also trying to shoot Diller's partner. In critical condition, Diller was rushed to Jamaica Hospital, where he died.

Rivera, the accused killer, had a lengthy criminal record prior to this tragedy. Ar-

rested 21 previous times, mostly for drug and assault offenses, he had served two stints in prison, most recently being released in 2021. His companion, Lindy Jones, had 14 prior arrests and had served 10 years in prison, from 2003 to 2013. At the time of the shooting, he was out on bail for an April 2023 arrest for criminal possession of a firearm. New York City Mayor Eric Adams — whose own record on crime is spotty — expressed outrage that Rivera and Jones were on the streets. "April 2023. Less than a year, gun charge, he's back on the streets," Adams said at a press conference at Jamaica Hospital. "This is what you call not a crime problem, but a recidivist problem: same bad people doing bad things to good people. Less than a year. He's back on the streets with another guy."

After attending Officer Diller's wake a few days later, former President Donald Trump also pointed out the danger of soft-on-crime policies, stating, "We have to get back to law and order. We have to do a lot of things differently because this is not working. This is happening too often."

Unfortunately, Trump is correct. Officer Diller's murder is only one of multiple recent instances of law-enforcement officers being assaulted or killed by repeat offenders — people who shouldn't have been out on the streets in the first place.

**NYC Crime Surge**

Two years earlier, New York City was rocked by another murder of a police officer. On the night of January 21, 2022, two NYPD officers were shot — one fatally — when responding to a domestic incident in Harlem. Officer Jason Rivera was killed in the shooting, while his partner, Officer Wilbert Mora, was badly injured. The perpetrator, Lashawn McNeil, who also died in the incident, had already been arrested five times for charges such as assaulting a police officer and illegal possession of a weapon. At the time of the shooting, he was on probation for a felony drug charge.

Other instances of violence against police officers exist. On January 27, 2024, a gang of illegal aliens — who, from a legal standpoint, shouldn't be in the United States to begin with — vio-

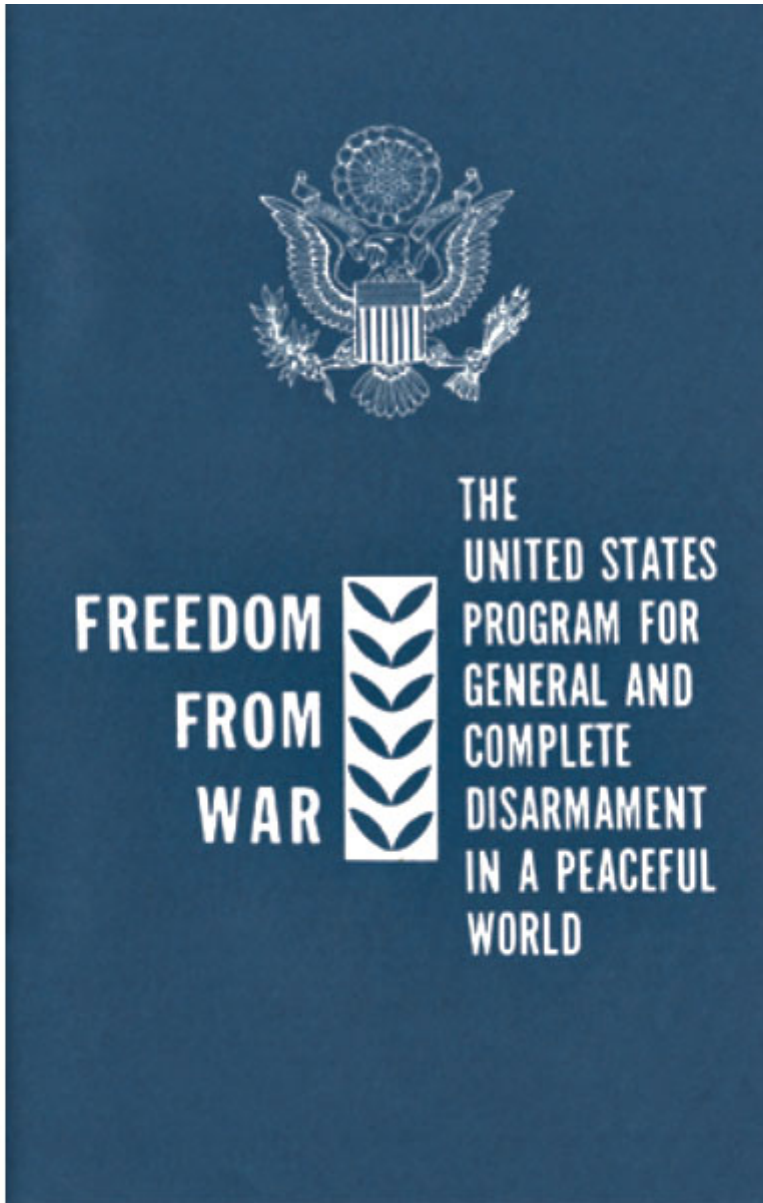
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COP KILLERS: Long Criminal Records; Lax Treatment by DA's, Judges reprint

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Freedom From War - State Dept. Publication 7277

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SYLP Yard Sign

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Who Are Your Local Police? pamphlet



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