



**Study finds San Francisco thefts and assaults declined in weeks following recent increase in police foot patrols**

*New research by the California Policy Lab show 19% decline in assault and 17% decline in theft*

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The more visible presence of uniformed police appears to have substantially reduced thefts and assaults in the two months following a recent police redeployment, according to [new research](#) released today by the California Policy Lab and researchers at UC Berkeley.

In September 2017, the San Francisco Police redeployed almost 70 officers from mostly “plainclothes” assignments to more visible uniformed foot patrols. The change was made in response to a rise in theft, especially car break-ins, throughout the city.

Because of the immediate nature of the redeployment, researchers at the [California Policy Lab](#) and UC Berkeley were able to estimate the impact of the redeployment by comparing the periods two months before and after the change. They found that the redeployment seems to have caused significant declines in theft and assault throughout the city and especially in certain neighborhoods.

“The study suggests that a greater visible police presence helped reduce certain crimes in San Francisco in the two months following redeployment,” said Evan White, Executive Director of the California Policy Lab. “These improvements in public safety are distinct from trends in prior years, and suggest the Police’s redeployment made a difference.”

The California Policy Lab study specifically found:

- Larceny thefts citywide declined by 22 incidents per day, or 17 percent
- Assaults citywide declined by 8 incidents per day, or 19 percent
- The greatest reductions in larceny theft were in the Ingleside, Mission, Northern, and Richmond police districts
- The greatest reductions in assault were in the Bayview, Central, and Mission police districts

“Our foot patrol strategy is based upon deterrence and engagement with the community and would-be criminals,” said San Francisco Police Chief William Scott. “The data from this study supports our approach and shows that the greater number of visible, uniformed officers we are able to bring to our public spaces, the greater the benefit to public safety.”

SFPD last month expanded foot patrols in the Mid-Market area by nearly 50 percent, or 43

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personnel. This change is intended to increase public safety in the heavily trafficked corridor.

The California Policy Lab, launched in early 2017, uses data and research to solve the state's urgent social problems. The Lab works statewide on issues like crime, poverty, and homelessness, and in San Francisco works to improve the justice system with several other partners, including the Sheriff, the Public Defender, and the District Attorney.

The Policy Lab intends to further investigate whether the impact of the redeployment was lasting and whether there was displacement of crime from areas where the foot patrols were concentrated.

This study was supported by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, who helped seed state policy labs in California and other states. Read the study: <https://www.capolicylab.org/sfpd-foot-patrols/>.

### About the California Policy Lab

The California Policy Lab is a new initiative at UC Berkeley and UCLA designed to create data-driven insights for the public good. CPL's mission is to partner with California's state and local governments to generate scientific evidence that solves California's most urgent problems, including homelessness, poverty, crime, and education inequality. CPL facilitates close working partnerships between policymakers and researchers at UCLA and UC Berkeley to help evaluate and improve public programs through empirical research and technical assistance.

Learn more at: <http://www.capolicylab.org/>

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