



FACT CHECK: Viral Image Claims Obama Signed The Law Authorizing Federal Agents To ‘Snatch’ Protesters Off The Streets In Portland

Elias Atienza

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An image shared on Facebook over 1,300 times claims the law the Trump administration is using to authorize federal agents to “snatch” protesters off the streets in Portland, Oregon, was signed by former President Barack Obama.

Verdict: False

The White House has cited 40 U.S. Code 1315 under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 as grounds for sending federal agents to Portland. It was signed into law under former President George W. Bush, not Obama.

Fact Check:

The claim started circulating after the Trump administration authorized the deployment of federal agents to help quell protests in Portland. There have been demonstrations in the city for weeks, with some centered around Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse, according to The New York Times.

The meme being shared claims the Trump administration is using a law signed by Obama to authorize federal agents to “snatch protesters off the streets in Portland.” It includes a photo of Obama smiling. **(RELATED: Viral Image Claims To Show US Protesters Throwing A Statue Into The Water)**

When asked about the legality of sending federal agents to cities like Portland, White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany cited 40 U.S. Code 1315 under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which was signed under Bush. She said it “gives DHS the ability to deputize officers in any department or agency, like ICE, Customs and Border Patrol and Secret Service as quote ‘officers and agents’” to defend property owned by the federal government.

University of Texas School of Law professor Stephen Vladeck told The Associated Press that the meme is inaccurately attempting to reference the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (NDAA) signed under Obama. The NDAA included controversial provisions that critics argued would allow indefinite military detention of suspected terrorists without trial, according to the Washington Post.

Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, also said in an email to the Daily Caller that the connection the meme makes to the NDAA was “completely wrong.”

“There is no connection between the law Obama signed and what is going on in Portland,” he said. “The 2012 NDAA provisions apply to certain suspects believed to be associated with international terrorism against the United States, in particular Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. No one in the Portland unrest has been charged with any offenses like that. The 2012 law does not have anything to do with either the sending of federal law enforcement officers to Portland, or with the arrests or other actions taken by those law enforcement officers.”

Vanderbilt University law professor Christopher Slobogin told PolitiFact that federal agents “cannot snatch any protester off the streets, only those threatening federal property or personnel, or who are also committing some other federal crime such as drug trafficking or national security laws.”