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Facing Violent Threats and Abuse, State and Local Officials Are Calling It Quits.

It's fueling concerns that qualified people may abandon or avoid public service. "That's a big price to pay," warns one expert.

A growing cadre of government officials and potential candidates for office is leaving public service—or are thinking about it—as threats of violence and physical and verbal attacks affect their safety and that of their children and homes.

The National League of Cities [revealed](#) in November that 81% of local officials have been subjected to personal attacks, physical assaults or cyberbullying. A March [poll](#) by the Brennan Center for Justice found that one in six election officials has experienced threats and one in five is unlikely to serve out the current term.

"The price that we're going to pay is that getting good people to run for public office will be the most challenging thing we will face," Clarence Anthony, CEO and executive director of the National League of Cities, said. "And that's a big price to pay in a democratic system."

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Route Fifty

By Sharon O'Malley

APRIL 15, 2022