

WI Dem Likely Primary Voters: Key Takeaways

- **The fentanyl and overdose crisis in the U.S. and crime in Milwaukee top the list of public safety concerns for likely Democratic voters.** Notably, these voters are highly concentrated in the Milwaukee area.
- **Likely Democratic primary voters overwhelmingly support “serious about safety” solutions.** Among all Democratic respondents, the highest scoring safety policy was improving schools and programs for young people, with 95% support. Increasing access to mental health care had the highest support among all Madison respondents (90%). For Milwaukee respondents, making sure that safety and not wealth determines who stays in jail pending trial was the top performing policy (96%). By contrast, 95% of Dems said a stronger ICE presence would *not* make life safer.
- **A “serious about safety” message not only beats a “tough-on-crime” approach among all voters, but wins handily among likely Democratic primary voters.** 88% of Democrats and 55% of Independents in our survey agreed with a serious about safety approach over a “tough-on-crime” alternative:

We should fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities—like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing—and help prevent crime by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction and by getting illegal guns off the street.

This message also won majorities with Madison (63%) and Milwaukee (69%) respondents. These include all Madison and Milwaukee respondents, not just likely primary voters.

- **Concern around the opioid crisis does *not* translate to support for “tougher” policies.** A message on prevention and rehabilitation wins statewide and with key Democratic primary voters. 93% of Democrats and 54% of Independents preferred this approach over one focused on “imposing tough prison sentences”:

The opioid and fentanyl crisis is devastating communities across Wisconsin, and for many families who have lost or experienced a loved one struggle with addiction, it’s deeply personal. We need real solutions. Preventing overdoses and saving lives requires expanding access to treatment, Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and proven services to help people recover and rebuild their lives.

This message also won majorities with all Madison (62%) and Milwaukee (61%) respondents.