



Preparing for Crime Narratives in Future Elections.

INSIGHTS FROM SURVEY RESEARCH
CONDUCTED FOR VERA ACTION

January 20, 2023



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Research goals:

Step 1:

Analyze the impact of the crime narratives
in the 2022 elections (reported elsewhere)

Step 2:

Inform future electoral messaging on the topic



Research questions:

1

What are Democrats' strengths on crime and safety?

2

What are Republicans' weaknesses on crime and safety?

3

What do voters want to hear from Democrats on the topic?

4

What solutions are seen as most effective?



Methods:

- Survey of n = 2,100 midterm voters
- N = 300 each in: AZ, FL, GA, MI, NC, PA, WI
- Conducted November 11 - 22, 2022
- Using YouGov's online panel

Recap of Part 1 analysis.

DATA SUGGEST:

- Crime was not a driving issue among swing state voters (including among Republicans).
- Ads / narrative did not elevate the issue as a priority for voters.
- Instead, a changing America (particularly on race), the economy, climate, and abortion were driving forces in vote choice.
- How safe someone feels in their own community has no correlation with vote choice, and very little impact on prioritizing crime as an issue priority.

- Voters heard more from Republicans on crime than Democrats (58%; 13% say they heard more from Democrats; 14% say equally)
- While crime was not a driving force in vote choice, analysis suggests that conservative attacks on crime did have an impact on voters. Conservative attacks broke through to a majority of respondents, especially “crime being out of control in cities” (which is also correlated with beliefs about race)
- The top three most damaging conservative attacks may have been:
 - Crime is out of control in big cities
 - Letting criminals go free / releasing criminals
 - Defunding police

Then:

- Getting rid of cash bail

- Hearing from Democrats on crime likely had a positive impact on voters in these particular ways:
 - + Neutralizing negative aspects of Democrats’ brand (disliking police, soft on crime)
 - + Eroding the perception that Republicans would do a better job than Democrats on crime
 - + Eroding Republicans’ brand strengths (e.g., tough on crime)
 - + Increasing Republicans’ weaknesses (passive on Jan. 6th, using scare tactics, in the pockets of gun lobby, passive on police brutality)
 - + Increasing positive brand of Democrats, such as wanting everyone to be safe, wanting real solutions, caring about preventing crime
 - + Feeling less negative toward Democratic candidates



Summary of Part 2 analysis.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM MAY BE MISLEADING (OR FLAT OUT WRONG)

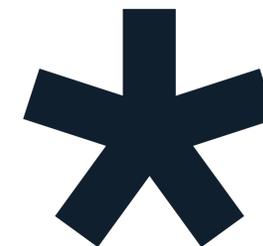
In a general polling question, 44% of respondents say Republicans would do a better job than Democrats at reducing crime and creating safer communities – six points higher than the proportion who say Democrats (38%) would do better. 19% say both or either.

That's where the Republican advantage ends in our data.



DEMOCRATS' ADVANTAGE:

- + A majority of voters generally prefer a more wholistic, progressive approach to safety v. a tough on crime approach (58% to 42%) – as we've seen in other data
- + Three Democratic responses on crime beat a strong Republican attack by +11 to +15 points
- + Every progressive policy idea we tested outperforms “harsher prison sentences and mandatory minimums” in perceived efficacy
- + Majorities are interested in hearing Democrats' ideas on crime
- + Voters are just as worried about mass shootings and gun violence as they are about street crimes
- + Democrats have a very strong response to defunding the police
- + As we found in Part 1, data suggest that Democrats talking about crime was helpful in several ways in '22
- + The dominant Republican narrative on crime had a limited impact on the election



CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ON POLICING MAY BE PARTICULARLY OFF BASE.

Data suggest that Democrats would do better to talk about police accountability than simply adopt a conservative message in support of police.

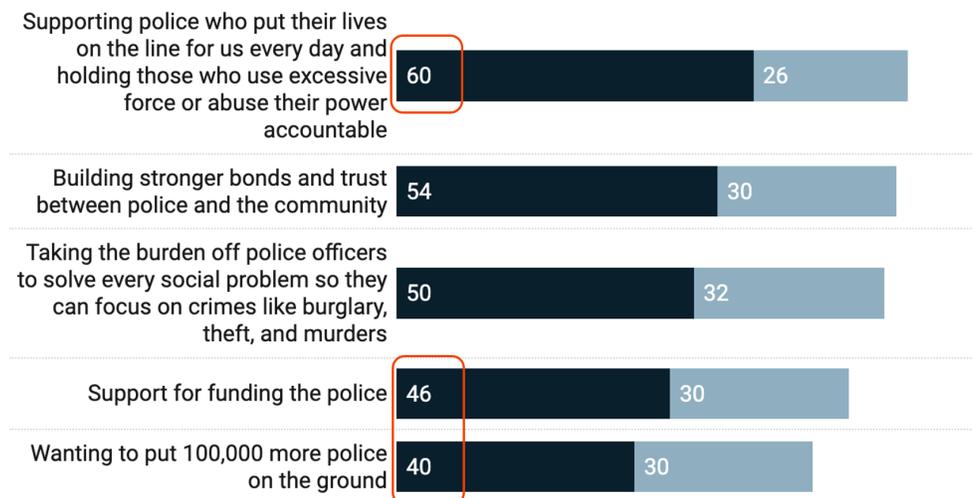
For example, respondents are +20 points more interested in hearing Democrats talk about supporting police and police accountability than the idea of putting 100,000 more police on the ground.

Respondents are +14 points more interested in hearing about supporting police and police accountability versus just support for police funding alone. This is true across party ID.

When it comes to police, how interested would you have been in hearing Democrats talk about...

RANDOMIZE

Very interested Somewhat interested



THESE ARE BRAND STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ON CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND SAFETY.

| | Democrats | Republicans |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Brand strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want gun control • Want reform • Want fair and equal justice for all • Want everyone to be safe • Want rehabilitation • Want solutions, prevention (among Democrats) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports police • Want to keep criminals in jail • Law and order society • Tough on sentences / consequences • Tough on crime • Doesn't get caught up in wokeness |
| Brand weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft on crime • For criminals' rights • Want to defund police • Too lenient on criminals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the pockets of gun lobby • Passive on school shootings • Passive on gun violence • Passive on justice system treating rich people differently • Passive on Jan. 6th • Old ideas, haven't worked • Less open to new, more effective ideas |

LARGE MAJORITIES WANT TO HEAR FROM DEMOCRATS ON CRIME AND SAFETY.

More than eight in ten respondents say they'd be interested in hearing from Democrats in their state talk about solutions to crime.

Respondents are most interested in hearing about solutions and collaboration.

Majorities are interested in hearing Democrats talk about:

- Their plan to make communities safer (86%)
- How to prevent crime, not just respond to it after it happens (86%)
- How they'll listen and work across the community (84%)
- Working with Republicans toward a common goal (83%)
- How to solve root causes / what drives crime (82%)
- New promising breakthroughs in crime (82%)



Here's what's most correlated with respondents saying they would've felt more positive toward Democratic candidates had they talked about these ideas.

HEARING DEMOCRATS TALK ABOUT:

- #1: Supporting police who put their lives on the line for us every day and holding those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable
- Building stronger bonds between police and the community
- Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked
- How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens
- How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime

DEMOCRATS' SOLUTIONS ARE SEEN AS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN TOUGH ON CRIME POLICIES.

Importantly, a message related to cash bail performs surprisingly well (“public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial.”)

MOST LIKELY TO BE SEEN AS EFFECTIVE:

- Working across party lines toward a common goal of safe communities (63% say would help “a lot” to improve safety)
- Increasing access to mental health care (61%)
- Building trust between police and the community (61%)
- Making sure public safety, not wealth, determines who stays in jail pending trial (57%)
- Addressing underlying economic conditions (56%)

For comparison: 38% say that having harsher sentences and things like mandatory minimums to keep people in prison would help a lot. Fewer than half (43%) says putting 100,000 more police on the ground would help a lot to improve safety.

Considerations for the future.

1

Challenge conventional wisdom among reporters, pundits, electeds, candidates, and in polling. While the narrative didn't have a big impact on election results, it is likely very damaging for policy reform.

2

Engage proactively / preemptively on crime, safety, and policing.

3

Reinforce Republicans' weaknesses.

4

Respond to strongest attacks.



Here are some detailed considerations for communications.

| CONSIDERATIONS | |
|--|--|
| Overall tone / driving concepts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forward-thinking• The need for new, more effective ideas• Collaboration• Sense of community (not fear) |
| Tap into brand strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Real solutions• Open to new, more effective ideas to reduce crime• Everyone should be safe• Fair and equal justice for all |
| Proactively preempt messaging on policing | <p>These are top <u>Democratic</u> messages, and they chip away at Republican brand strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We should support police who put their lives on the line for us every day and hold those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable• Let's build stronger bonds between police and the community |



Cont.

| CONSIDERATIONS | |
|--|--|
| Talk about collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens• Will build stronger bonds between police and the community |
| Solutions / ideas might include | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elected officials working together across party lines toward a common goal of safe communities• Increasing access to mental health care• Addressing poverty, economic despair, and lack of opportunities, which all breed a cycle of crime• Building trust between the police and community• Illegal guns / gun violence• Making sure public safety, not wealth, determines who stays in jail waiting for trial |



Cont.

CONSIDERATIONS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>This sample package is likely to increase appeal</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support police who put their lives on the line for us every day and hold those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable• Build stronger bonds between police and the community• Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked• How candidate will listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens• How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime |
| <p>Highlight Republicans' weakness</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scare tactics, spread fear• Say whatever to get elected• Passive on wealthy criminals<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Test: they want wealth, not fairness or public safety, to determine who gets justice• In the pockets of gun lobby• Old ideas that haven't worked |

Respond to most harmful attacks.

| Most harmful attack | Sample response |
|--|---|
| Crime is out of control in big cities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Among Black audiences and those most impacted, consider connecting to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Economic conditions○ Gun violence○ Systemic solutions• Among white voters, ignore. This is more related to racial ideology / racism than views on crime or safety. Use space for more promising messaging. |
| Letting criminals go free / cash bail | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial• Reassert belief in consequences |
| Defunding police | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's support police who put their lives on the line for us every day and hold those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable• Let's build stronger bonds between police and the community |



Detailed findings.



SECTIONS

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- 53 Testing three responses to a Republican attack
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Brand strengths + weaknesses.

Data suggest these are the brand strengths and weaknesses of each party.

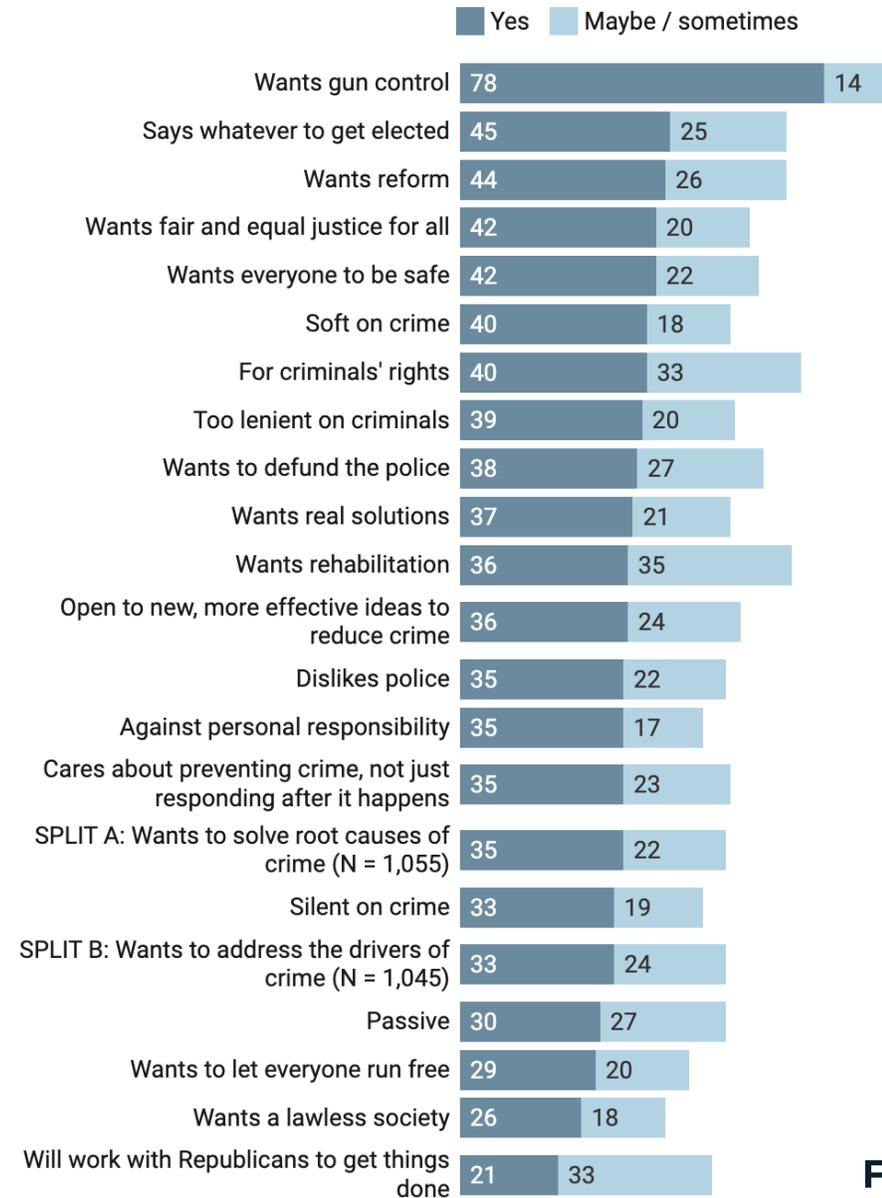
| | Democrats | Republicans |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Brand strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants gun control • Wants reform • Wants fair and equal justice for all • Wants everyone to be safe • Wants rehabilitation • Wants solutions, prevention (among Democrats) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports police • Wants to keep criminals in jail • Law and order society • Tough on sentences / consequences • Tough on crime • Doesn't get caught up in wokeness |
| Brand weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft on crime • For criminals' rights • Wants to defund police • Too lenient on criminals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the pockets of gun lobby • Passive on school shootings • Passive on gun violence • Passive on justice system treating rich people differently • Passive on Jan. 6th • Old ideas, haven't worked • Less open to new, more effective ideas |

In your own view, does this describe Democrats when it comes to crime, violence, and safety?

RANDOMIZE

Voters overwhelmingly associate Democrats with gun control.

Top strengths include wanting reform, equal justice, everyone to be safe, and rehabilitation.



In your own view, does this describe Republicans when it comes to crime, violence, and safety?

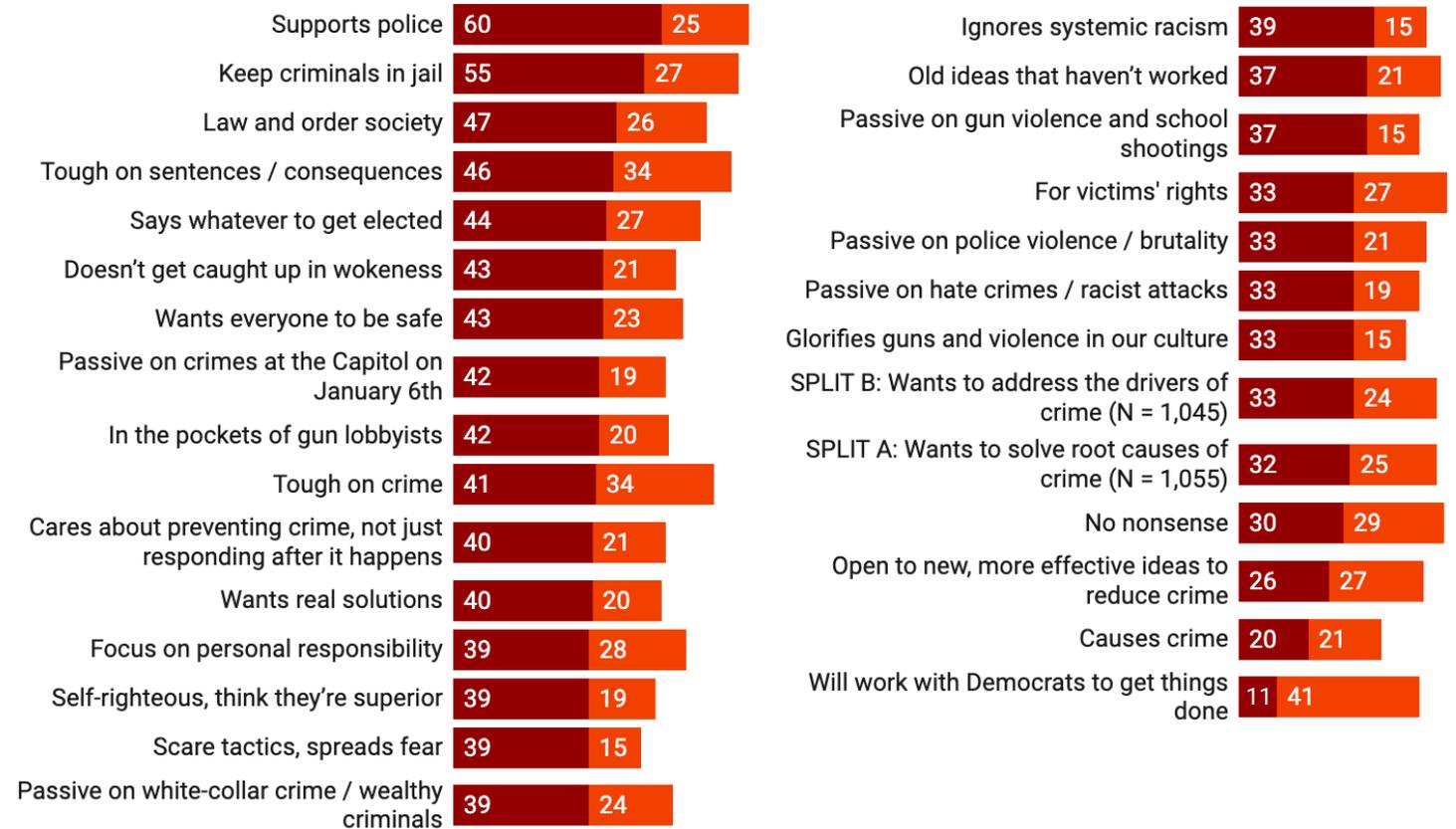
RANDOMIZE

■ Yes ■ Maybe / sometimes

Supporting police and being tough on crime are top Republican strengths.

Brand weaknesses include passivity on white collar crimes, school shootings, openness to new, more effective ideas to reduce crime.

See appendix for brand attributes by party ID.





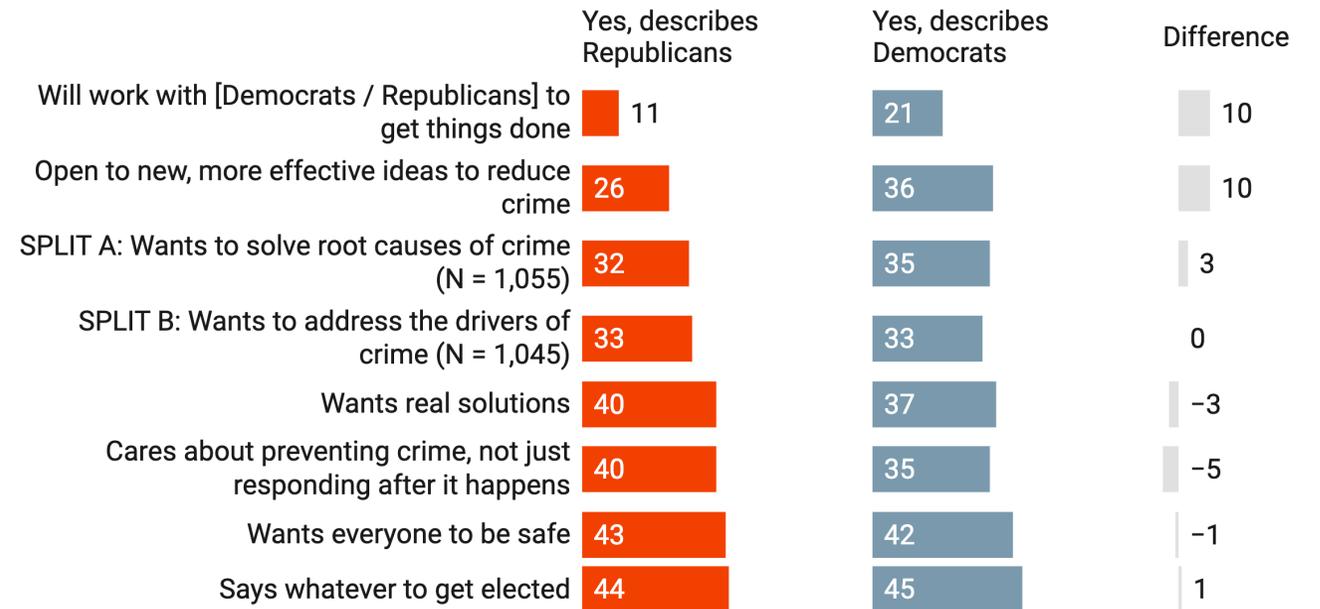
Which of these do you most wish Republicans would address: Select up to 3.

Income inequality in the justice system is a Republican brand weakness among independents, as is school shootings for independent women.

| | Total | Democrats | Ind women | Ind men | Republicans |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| School shootings | 39 | 40 | 37 | 27 | 44 |
| Income inequality in justice system | 38 | 38 | 42 | 45 | 34 |
| Gun violence | 34 | 48 | 30 | 25 | 26 |
| January 6th crimes | 28 | 47 | 27 | 27 | 7 |
| Hate crime | 27 | 34 | 24 | 19 | 25 |
| Police violence | 22 | 26 | 22 | 21 | 19 |
| Prison sentences for marijuana | 22 | 17 | 26 | 30 | 22 |
| White-collar crime | 22 | 19 | 18 | 28 | 23 |

Voters are more likely to say Democrats can be bipartisan and be open to new, effective ideas than Republicans.

On other attributes, voters feel similarly toward Republicans and Democrats.





Among independent respondents

These attributes are most correlated with independents' feelings on whether parties are in step with their views.

| | Democrat brand attributes | Republicans brand attributes |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| In step with my views | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants real solutions• Open to new, more effective ideas to reduce crime• Wants everyone to be safe | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports police• Keeps criminals in jail• No nonsense |
| Out of step with my views | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wants to defund the police• Says whatever just to get elected• Passive | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses care tactics, spreads fear• Ignores systemic racism• Causes crime |



Preferred approach to safety.



As we've seen in other data, a majority of respondents prefer a more wholistic approach to safety over a tough on crime approach.

Overall, which one of the following approaches to creating safe communities would you be more likely to support?

ROTATE

58%

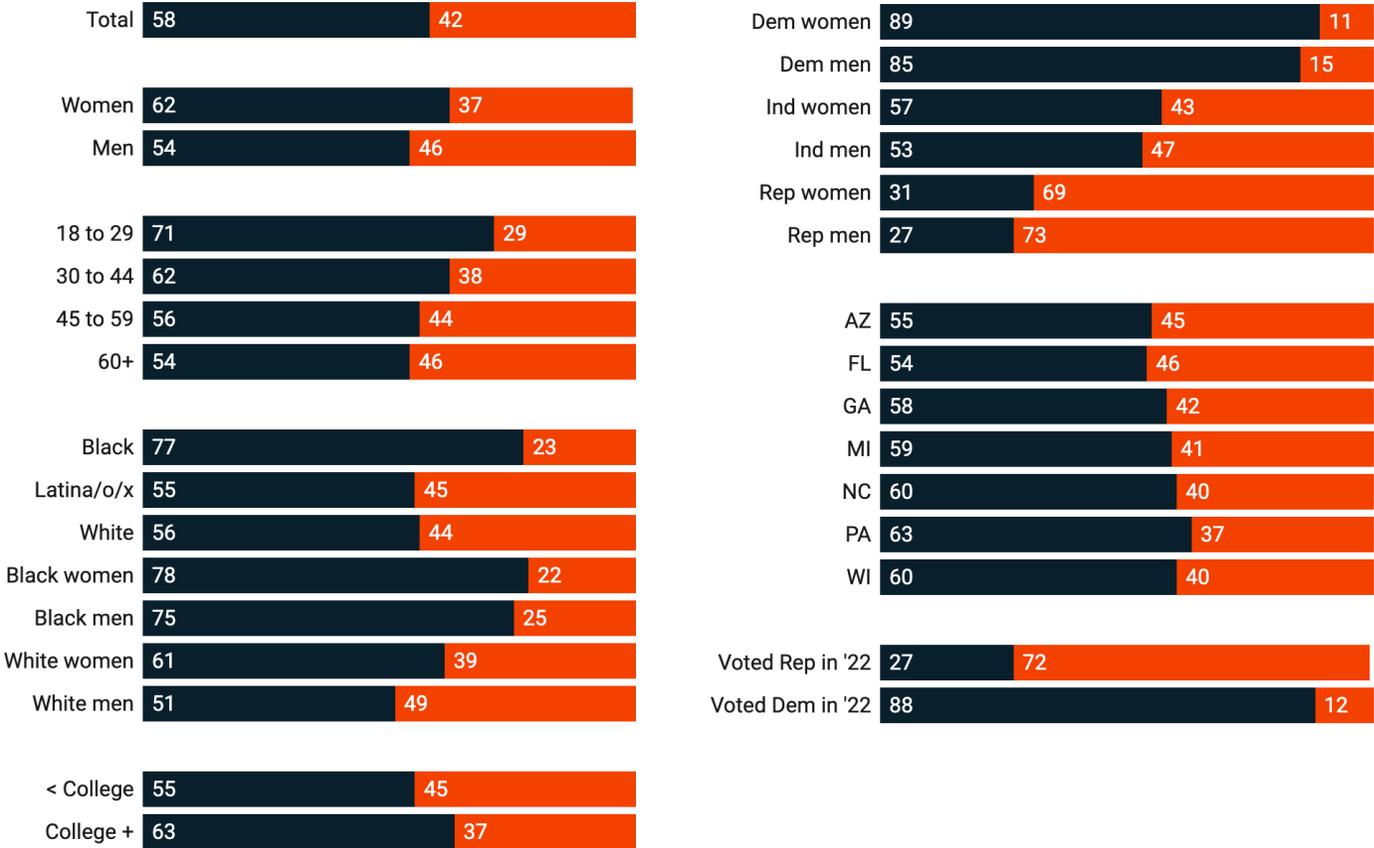
Fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities and improve people's quality of life, like good schools, living wage jobs, and affordable housing

42%

Increase funding for police and get tougher on crime, like having stricter sentencing laws and not letting people out on bail

Preferred approach to creating safe communities

■ Fully fund ■ Tough on crime



With the exception of Republicans, majorities across demographic segments prefer the more wholistic approach to safety.

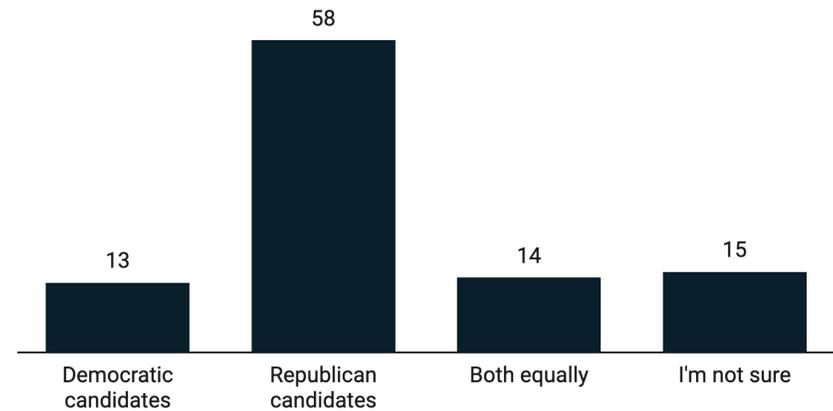


What voters want to hear from Democrats.

**During the '22 cycle,
respondents heard more
from Republicans on crime.**

In the campaigns this year, who did you hear from more on the issue of crime?

ROTATE FIRST TWO





However, large majorities say they would've been interested in hearing from Democrats.

We explored several issues and ideas that voters may want to hear Democratic candidates discuss.

Solutions-oriented ideas and a willingness to work with others top the list.

Among Black and Latina/o/x voters, hearing how reforming the criminal justice system can make communities safer is another top interest. Younger voters, particularly those ages 18 to 29, also want to hear Democrats speak to the impact of putting non-violent drug offenders in prison.

See next few pages.

In some states, Democrats weren't talking about crime, they were talking about other issues. How interested would you have been in hearing Democrats in your state talk about...

| | % Interested | % Very |
|---|--------------|--------|
| Being part of the solution, not just attacking the other side (N = 1,070) | 85 | 58 |
| What their plan is to make communities safer | 86 | 55 |
| How to prevent crime, not just respond to it after it happens | 86 | 55 |
| How to solve the root causes of crime (N = 1,030) | 83 | 52 |
| How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens | 84 | 51 |
| Working with Republicans toward a common goal (N = 1,030) | 83 | 49 |
| New, promising breakthroughs in preventing violent crime | 82 | 49 |
| What drives crime and how to do address those things (N = 1,070) | 81 | 49 |
| Why they think a system where public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial | 79 | 48 |
| Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked | 79 | 47 |
| How reforming the criminal justice system can make communities more safe (N = 716) | 76 | 46 |
| How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime | 75 | 45 |
| Why putting non-violent offenders, like marijuana users, in prison ruins lives, families, and makes all of us less safe (N = 690) | 74 | 42 |
| How they don't want criminals to run free | 71 | 41 |
| Why our jail and prison conditions are making communities less safe (N = 694) | 72 | 36 |

% Very interested

| | Women | Men | 18 to 29 | 30 to 44 | 45 to 59 | 60+ | Black | Latinx | White |
|---|-------|-----|----------|----------|----------|-----|-------|--------|-------|
| Being part of the solution, not just attacking the other side | 64 | 53 | 51 | 50 | 54 | 67 | 67 | 45 | 58 |
| How to prevent crime, not just respond to it after it happens | 59 | 51 | 43 | 52 | 53 | 62 | 67 | 55 | 54 |
| What their plan is to make communities safer | 60 | 50 | 45 | 46 | 50 | 66 | 67 | 48 | 54 |
| How to solve the root causes of crime | 55 | 49 | 43 | 46 | 51 | 57 | 66 | 47 | 50 |
| How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens | 56 | 46 | 42 | 42 | 51 | 59 | 62 | 51 | 50 |
| What drives crime and how to do address those things | 52 | 46 | 46 | 48 | 48 | 52 | 55 | 56 | 48 |
| Working with Republicans toward a common goal | 52 | 46 | 39 | 40 | 52 | 55 | 59 | 41 | 49 |
| New, promising breakthroughs in preventing violent crime | 53 | 44 | 39 | 41 | 47 | 56 | 62 | 44 | 47 |
| Why they think a system where public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial | 52 | 43 | 44 | 44 | 43 | 53 | 59 | 39 | 46 |
| Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked | 51 | 42 | 47 | 41 | 44 | 51 | 67 | 48 | 44 |
| How reforming the criminal justice system can make communities more safe | 51 | 41 | 43 | 39 | 48 | 50 | 70 | 54 | 43 |
| How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime | 47 | 42 | 31 | 33 | 46 | 54 | 46 | 39 | 46 |
| Why putting non-violent offenders, like marijuana users, in prison ruins lives, families, and makes all of us less safe | 43 | 41 | 52 | 48 | 34 | 40 | 52 | 51 | 40 |
| How they don't want criminals to run free | 43 | 39 | 28 | 31 | 40 | 51 | 47 | 40 | 40 |
| Why our jail and prison conditions are making communities less safe | 40 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 33 | 36 | 50 | 31 | 35 |

% Very interested

| | < College | College + | Dem women | Dem men | Ind women | Ind men | Rep women | Rep men |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Being part of the solution, not just attacking the other side | 58 | 59 | 70 | 57 | 57 | 55 | 61 | 48 |
| How to prevent crime, not just respond to it after it happens | 55 | 57 | 69 | 60 | 52 | 51 | 52 | 44 |
| What their plan is to make communities safer | 54 | 56 | 64 | 55 | 55 | 51 | 57 | 45 |
| How to solve the root causes of crime | 50 | 55 | 64 | 61 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 35 |
| How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens | 49 | 54 | 63 | 58 | 51 | 42 | 51 | 39 |
| What drives crime and how to do address those things | 49 | 50 | 62 | 53 | 49 | 52 | 42 | 35 |
| Working with Republicans toward a common goal | 50 | 48 | 48 | 42 | 52 | 46 | 59 | 50 |
| New, promising breakthroughs in preventing violent crime | 48 | 50 | 62 | 54 | 46 | 42 | 46 | 36 |
| Why they think a system where public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial | 47 | 48 | 64 | 53 | 48 | 46 | 39 | 31 |
| Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked | 47 | 47 | 63 | 56 | 47 | 42 | 39 | 29 |
| How reforming the criminal justice system can make communities more safe | 44 | 50 | 67 | 48 | 41 | 43 | 39 | 32 |
| How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime | 47 | 41 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 59 | 42 |
| Why putting non-violent offenders, like marijuana users, in prison ruins lives, families, and makes all of us less safe | 39 | 47 | 60 | 60 | 40 | 40 | 23 | 27 |
| How they don't want criminals to run free | 44 | 37 | 41 | 36 | 37 | 40 | 50 | 41 |
| Why our jail and prison conditions are making communities less safe | 36 | 36 | 47 | 45 | 27 | 29 | 42 | 22 |

% Very interested

| | AZ | FL | GA | MI | NC | PA | WI |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Being part of the solution, not just attacking the other side | 62 | 55 | 57 | 63 | 53 | 63 | 57 |
| How to prevent crime, not just respond to it after it happens | 56 | 55 | 56 | 52 | 58 | 58 | 52 |
| What their plan is to make communities safer | 56 | 55 | 61 | 49 | 56 | 55 | 54 |
| How to solve the root causes of crime | 51 | 51 | 56 | 44 | 56 | 55 | 50 |
| How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens | 52 | 51 | 54 | 46 | 48 | 55 | 52 |
| What drives crime and how to do address those things | 49 | 50 | 49 | 49 | 48 | 52 | 49 |
| Working with Republicans toward a common goal | 52 | 49 | 60 | 40 | 51 | 42 | 51 |
| New, promising breakthroughs in preventing violent crime | 46 | 51 | 53 | 43 | 51 | 50 | 46 |
| Why they think a system where public safety, not wealth, should determine who stays in jail waiting for trial | 47 | 48 | 48 | 46 | 48 | 49 | 47 |
| Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked | 44 | 47 | 51 | 43 | 49 | 47 | 47 |
| How reforming the criminal justice system can make communities more safe | 37 | 46 | 54 | 34 | 53 | 57 | 45 |
| How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime | 45 | 50 | 51 | 40 | 42 | 44 | 42 |
| Why putting non-violent offenders, like marijuana users, in prison ruins lives, families, and makes all of us less safe | 43 | 43 | 41 | 41 | 40 | 40 | 46 |
| How they don't want criminals to run free | 42 | 47 | 44 | 34 | 39 | 40 | 41 |
| Why our jail and prison conditions are making communities less safe | 35 | 38 | 33 | 34 | 40 | 38 | 33 |



Myth buster: Voters want to hear Democrats talk about supporting police and holding them accountable for violence.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, data suggest that Democrats would do better to talk about police accountability than simply adopt a conservative message in support of police.

For example, respondents are +20 points more interested in hearing Democrats talk about supporting police and police accountability than the idea of putting 100,000 more police on the ground.

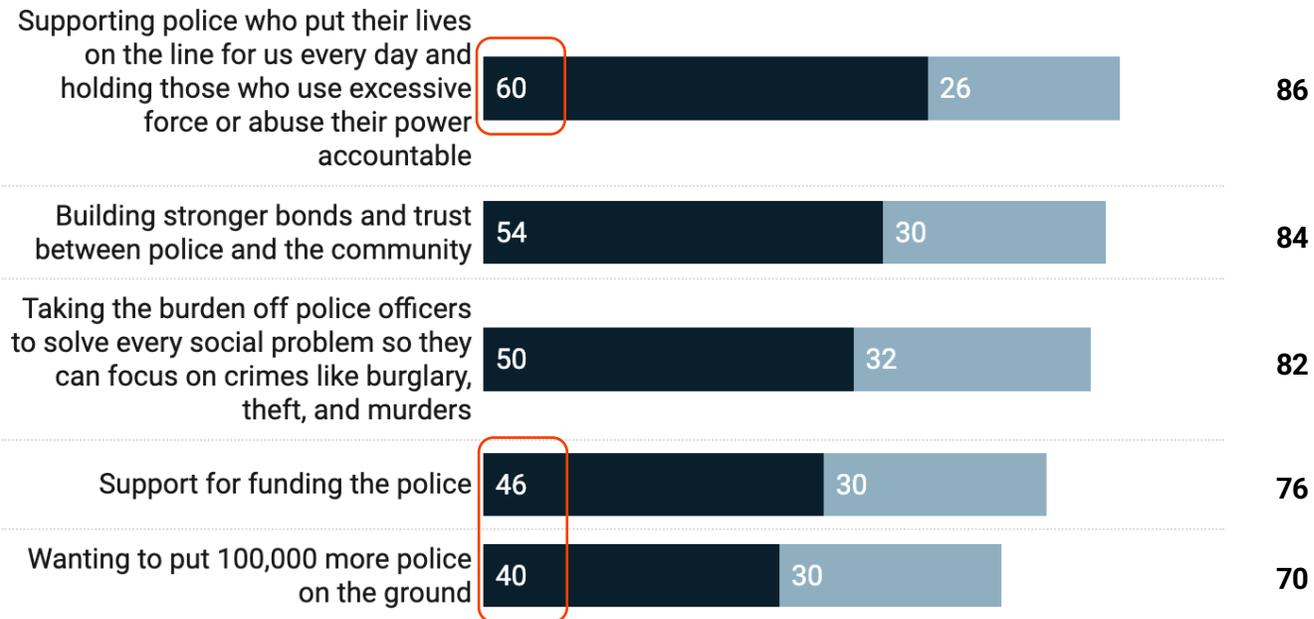
Respondents are +14 points more interested in hearing about supporting police and police accountability versus just support for police funding alone. This is true across party ID.

See next two pages.

When it comes to police, how interested would you have been in hearing Democrats talk about...

RANDOMIZE

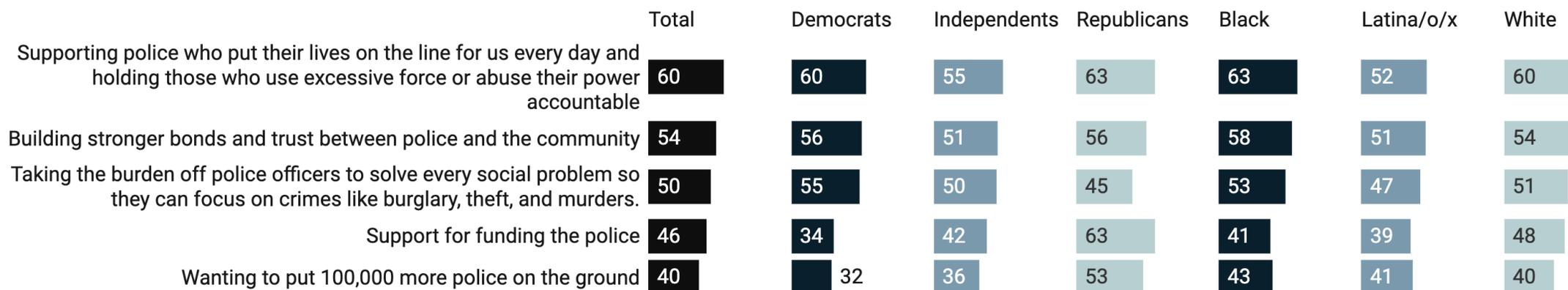
Very interested Somewhat interested



When it comes to police, how interested would you have been in hearing Democrats talk about...

RANDOMIZE

% Very interested

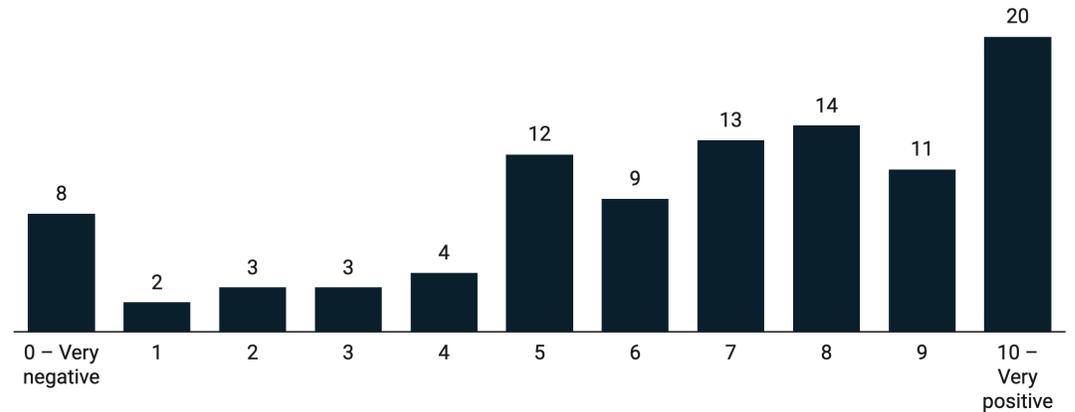




Let's say you had heard Democratic candidates talking about these types of things. How do you think you'd have felt about them?

ROTATE FIRST TWO

Most respondents say they would've felt more positive toward Democratic candidates had they talked about these ideas.





Of all the things Democrats could talk about, here's what's most correlated with feeling more positive toward them.

HEARING DEMOCRATS TALK ABOUT:

- #1: Police who put their lives on the line for us every day and holding those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable
- Building stronger bonds between police and the community
- Why we need new ideas to keep communities safe – and why old ideas haven't worked
- How they'll listen and work across the community – with law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, and engaged citizens
- How they believe in law, order, and consequences for crime



Solutions.



We gauged the perceived efficacy of 15 policy solutions.

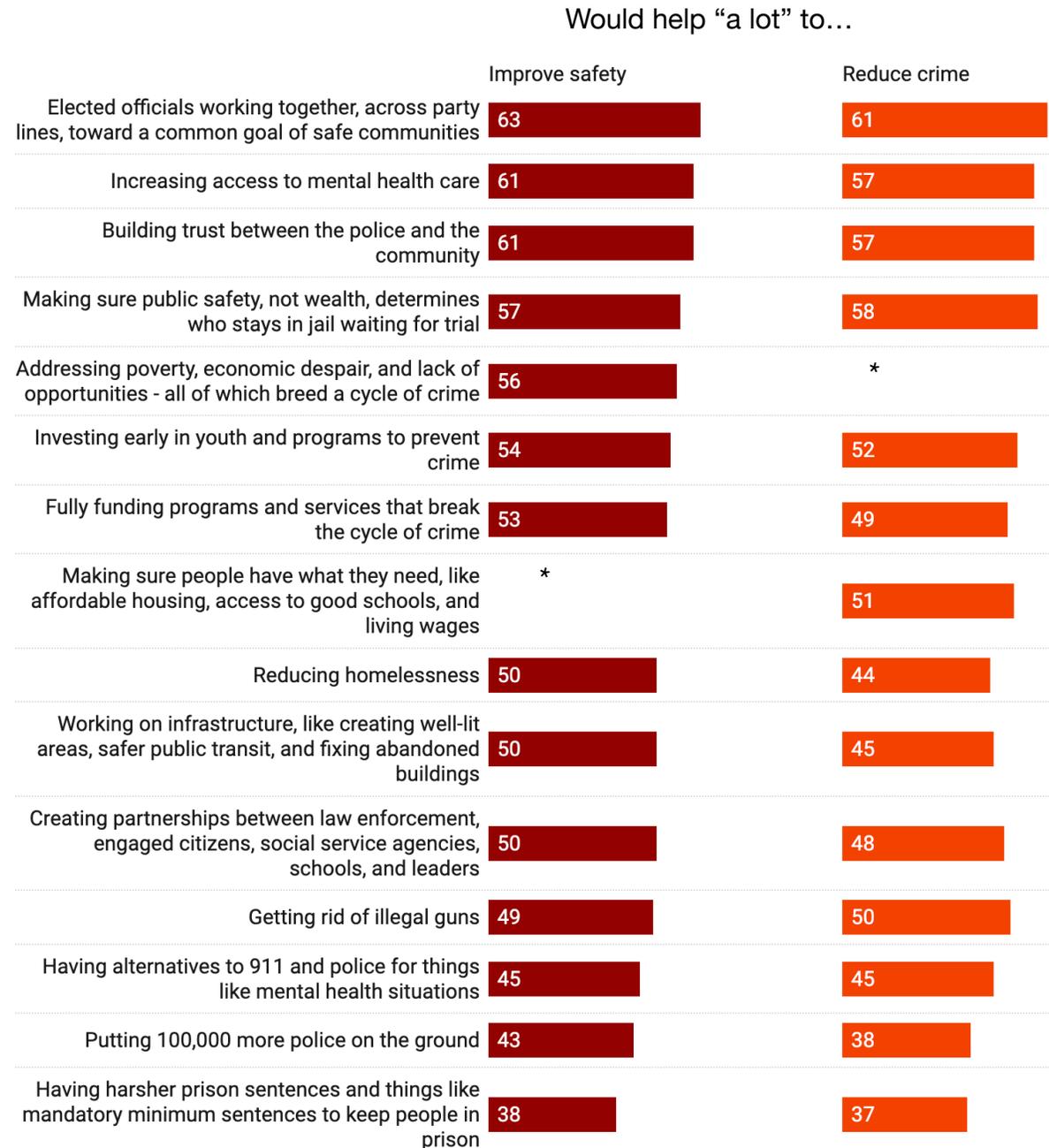
MOST LIKELY TO BE SEEN AS EFFECTIVE

- Working across party lines toward a common goal
- Increasing access to mental health care
- Building trust between police and the community
- Making sure public safety, not wealth, determines who stays in jail pending trial
- Addressing underlying economic conditions

Democratic voters also say fully funding programs to break the cycle of crime and getting rid of illegal guns is likely to help reduce crime and improve safety. Republicans consider more police and harsher prison sentences among the most effective solutions.

See few pages.

Let's turn to the future. Let's say we want to [SPLIT A: improve safety in communities (N = 1,069) / SPLIT B: decrease crime and violence in communities (N = 1,031)]. Do you think each of these things would help a lot, some, a little, or would not help?



* Data missing above because of YouGov coding error



Which of these things would you most want to see our leaders doing?
Choose up to 4.

**Here's what they say
when asked what
they'd most want our
leaders to work on.**



Which of these things would you most want to see our leaders doing?
Choose up to 4.

Top solutions by
demographic segment.

| | Total | Women | Men | 18 to 29 | 30 to 44 | 45 to 59 | 60+ | < College | College + |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|----------|----------|----------|-----|-----------|-----------|
| Address poverty, economics | 35 | 37 | 34 | 37 | 39 | 37 | 32 | 32 | 40 |
| Increase access to mental health care | 35 | 38 | 32 | 34 | 38 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 37 |
| Provide basic needs | 34 | 39 | 28 | 49 | 33 | 35 | 29 | 31 | 38 |
| Elected officials working together | 34 | 36 | 33 | 23 | 23 | 38 | 42 | 34 | 36 |
| Get rid of illegal guns | 28 | 32 | 24 | 19 | 23 | 30 | 32 | 27 | 29 |
| More police | 26 | 22 | 30 | 17 | 19 | 26 | 32 | 30 | 20 |
| Build trust with police | 25 | 21 | 29 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 27 | 26 | 22 |
| Harsher prison sentences | 25 | 21 | 28 | 15 | 20 | 24 | 30 | 28 | 19 |
| Reduce homelessness | 22 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 25 | 21 | 21 | 24 | 20 |
| Invest in youth | 21 | 22 | 21 | 24 | 24 | 18 | 22 | 21 | 22 |
| Fully funding programs to break cycle | 21 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 24 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 27 |
| Public safety determining jail time | 21 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 17 |
| Alternatives to 911 and police | 19 | 21 | 16 | 30 | 20 | 17 | 16 | 17 | 23 |
| Work on infrastructure | 19 | 18 | 20 | 26 | 18 | 20 | 17 | 18 | 20 |
| Community partnerships | 19 | 19 | 19 | 20 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 17 | 22 |

Which of these things would you most want to see our leaders doing?
Choose up to 4.

Top solutions by
demographic segment.

| | Black | Latina/o/x | White | Black women | Black men | White women | White men | Biden voter | Trump voter |
|---------------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Address poverty, economics | 38 | 45 | 34 | * | * | 36 | 32 | 54 | 17 |
| Increase access to mental health care | 31 | 30 | 36 | 33 | 28 | 39 | 33 | 38 | 32 |
| Provide basic needs | 34 | 36 | 34 | * | * | 40 | 27 | 53 | 14 |
| Elected officials working together | 36 | 34 | 34 | 45 | 24 | 35 | 33 | 34 | 36 |
| Get rid of illegal guns | 47 | 25 | 25 | 50 | 43 | 30 | 21 | 42 | 14 |
| More police | 19 | 26 | 28 | 18 | 20 | 24 | 32 | 9 | 44 |
| Build trust with police | 21 | 18 | 26 | 16 | 28 | 22 | 30 | 17 | 33 |
| Harsher prison sentences | 16 | 19 | 27 | 15 | 17 | 23 | 31 | 8 | 42 |
| Reduce homelessness | 29 | 22 | 21 | 33 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 25 | 20 |
| Invest in youth | 18 | 18 | 22 | 14 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 19 |
| Fully funding programs to break cycle | 26 | 18 | 21 | 25 | 26 | 22 | 19 | 31 | 11 |
| Public safety determining jail time | 22 | 24 | 20 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 18 | 22 | 20 |
| Alternatives to 911 and police | 17 | 21 | 19 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 16 | 26 | 11 |
| Work on infrastructure | 21 | 21 | 18 | 23 | 19 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 18 |
| Community partnerships | 18 | 12 | 19 | 13 | 23 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 19 |

* Insufficient sample size

Which of these things would you most want to see our leaders doing?
Choose up to 4.

Top solutions by
demographic segment.

| | Dem women | Dem men | Ind women | Ind men | Rep women | Rep men | Lib Dems | Other Dems | Lib inds. | Mod. inds. | Cons. inds. |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Address poverty, economics | 48 | 49 | 37 | 35 | 19 | 19 | 56 | 38 | * | 33 | * |
| Increase access to mental health care | 42 | 31 | 35 | 36 | 34 | 28 | 44 | 27 | 41 | 34 | 29 |
| Provide basic needs | 56 | 44 | 28 | 27 | 25 | 15 | 61 | 32 | * | 23 | * |
| Elected officials working together | 34 | 26 | 37 | 37 | 37 | 35 | 26 | 39 | 30 | 48 | 37 |
| Get rid of illegal guns | 46 | 37 | 30 | 23 | 13 | 13 | 44 | 40 | 36 | 32 | 20 |
| More police | 9 | 13 | 22 | 29 | 41 | 47 | 7 | 17 | 4 | 25 | 49 |
| Build trust with police | 14 | 23 | 18 | 28 | 32 | 36 | 14 | 23 | 12 | 23 | 33 |
| Harsher prison sentences | 8 | 11 | 25 | 27 | 37 | 45 | 6 | 14 | 5 | 20 | 53 |
| Reduce homelessness | 25 | 24 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 18 | 25 | 25 | 32 | 21 | 19 |
| Invest in youth | 23 | 23 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 18 | 25 | 18 | 27 | 22 | 14 |
| Fully funding programs to break cycle | 31 | 32 | 18 | 18 | 12 | 12 | 36 | 24 | 35 | 17 | 11 |
| Public safety determining jail time | 23 | 22 | 19 | 18 | 21 | 20 | 23 | 21 | 22 | 18 | 16 |
| Alternatives to 911 and police | 28 | 21 | 24 | 17 | 11 | 11 | 28 | 19 | 31 | 20 | 9 |
| Work on infrastructure | 17 | 22 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 19 | 20 | 18 | 24 | 13 | 18 |
| Community partnerships | 18 | 17 | 19 | 23 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 22 | 15 | 27 | 18 |

* Insufficient sample size

Which of these things would you most want to see our leaders doing?
Choose up to 4.

Top solutions by
demographic segment.

| | AZ | FL | GA | MI | NC | PA | WI |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Address poverty, economics | 41 | 31 | 25 | 38 | 38 | 34 | 38 |
| Increase access to mental health care | 35 | 30 | 33 | 39 | 34 | 32 | 41 |
| Provide basic needs | 31 | 35 | 38 | 31 | 30 | 39 | 34 |
| Elected officials working together | 29 | 37 | 38 | 32 | 38 | 33 | 34 |
| Get rid of illegal guns | 21 | 28 | 28 | 25 | 27 | 40 | 27 |
| More police | 29 | 27 | 22 | 30 | 26 | 23 | 26 |
| Build trust with police | 24 | 23 | 29 | 27 | 22 | 24 | 24 |
| Harsher prison sentences | 24 | 30 | 21 | 20 | 29 | 23 | 25 |
| Reduce homelessness | 31 | 22 | 21 | 23 | 21 | 19 | 19 |
| Invest in youth | 20 | 21 | 19 | 24 | 21 | 21 | 24 |
| Fully funding programs to break cycle | 23 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 27 | 23 | 21 |
| Public safety determining jail time | 19 | 19 | 26 | 21 | 22 | 19 | 18 |
| Alternatives to 911 and police | 20 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 16 |
| Work on infrastructure | 20 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 14 | 19 | 19 |
| Community partnerships | 19 | 15 | 22 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 22 |



Note: Black women respondents who prioritized crime as an issue in the elections say these types of crime concern them most.

MOST CONCERNING

(From an open-ended question)

- Gun violence
- Mass shootings / school shootings
- Violent crime
- Murders / killings
- Theft / robbery
- Racism / hate crimes
- White collar crime



Testing three responses to a
Republican attack.



We tested three Democratic responses to a Republican attack on crime.

All three Democratic responses outperform the Republican message.

Which do you agree with more, even if neither is quite right in your view?

Statement A

Democrats' pro-criminal, anti-police agenda has created prosecutors who would rather let a dangerous criminal walk out of jail than enforce the law. And their insistence on eliminating cash bail has led to a revolving-door criminal justice system where offenders—even violent offenders—are released back to the streets where police officers are discouraged from making arrests. Democrats want to defund police and create chaos across the U.S. and we need to vote them out to keep us safe

Statement B

Split sampled

A safe walk home at night. A bus ride free of fear. A safer state for every child. That's what I'm working for. I want to pass a comprehensive crime plan to make it happen.

My plan goes after illegal guns to make our neighborhoods safer, increases street lighting, partners with law enforcement to build trust with the community, and gets help for the homeless and those suffering with mental illness. You deserve to feel safe, and I won't stop working until you do. *Base n = 680*

Most of us are practical and just want our leaders to do their jobs. I'm not interested in the blame game. I don't care what political party you are, I want to work with you to create safe communities. I want to rebuild bonds, trust, and mutual respect in our communities. I want to bring together law enforcement, social service agencies, community leaders, engaged citizens, schools, and experts. I want solutions that work, not just sound bites or scare tactics to get elected. *Base n = 710*

Too many in my party thought it was okay not to talk about the growing violent crime problem in our community. They focused only on defunding the police. From day one, we needed to rush in more police. Get criminals into jail. There are less than 5 members in the U.S. House who are for defunding the police. They are extreme and aren't listening to the voters. But, the rest of us are. Our plan will add 100,000 more police on the ground. *Base n = 710*

Based on
Hochul's ad

All three Democratic messages outperform the Republican message by a similar margin.

The third message may be less successful with a few audiences (see next page).

A safe walk home at night. A bus ride free of fear. A safer state for every child. That's what I'm working for. I want to pass a comprehensive crime plan to make it happen. My plan goes after illegal guns to make our neighborhoods safer, increases street lighting, partners with law enforcement to build trust with the community, and gets help for the homeless and those suffering with mental illness. You deserve to feel safe, and I won't stop working until you do. *Base n = 680*

Most of us are practical and just want our leaders to do their jobs. I'm not interested in the blame game. I don't care what political party you are. I want to work with you to create safe communities. I want to rebuild bonds, trust, and mutual respect in our communities. I want to bring together law enforcement, social service agencies, community leaders, engaged citizens, schools, and experts. I want solutions that work, not just sound bites or scare tactics to get elected. *Base n = 710*

Too many in my party thought it was okay not to talk about the growing violent crime problem in our community. They focused only on defunding the police. From day one, we needed to rush in more police. Get criminals into jail. There are less than 5 members in the U.S. House who are for defunding the police. They are extreme and aren't listening to the voters. But, the rest of us are. Our plan will add 100,000 more police on the ground. *Base n = 710*

% Agree with more

Statement A Statement B

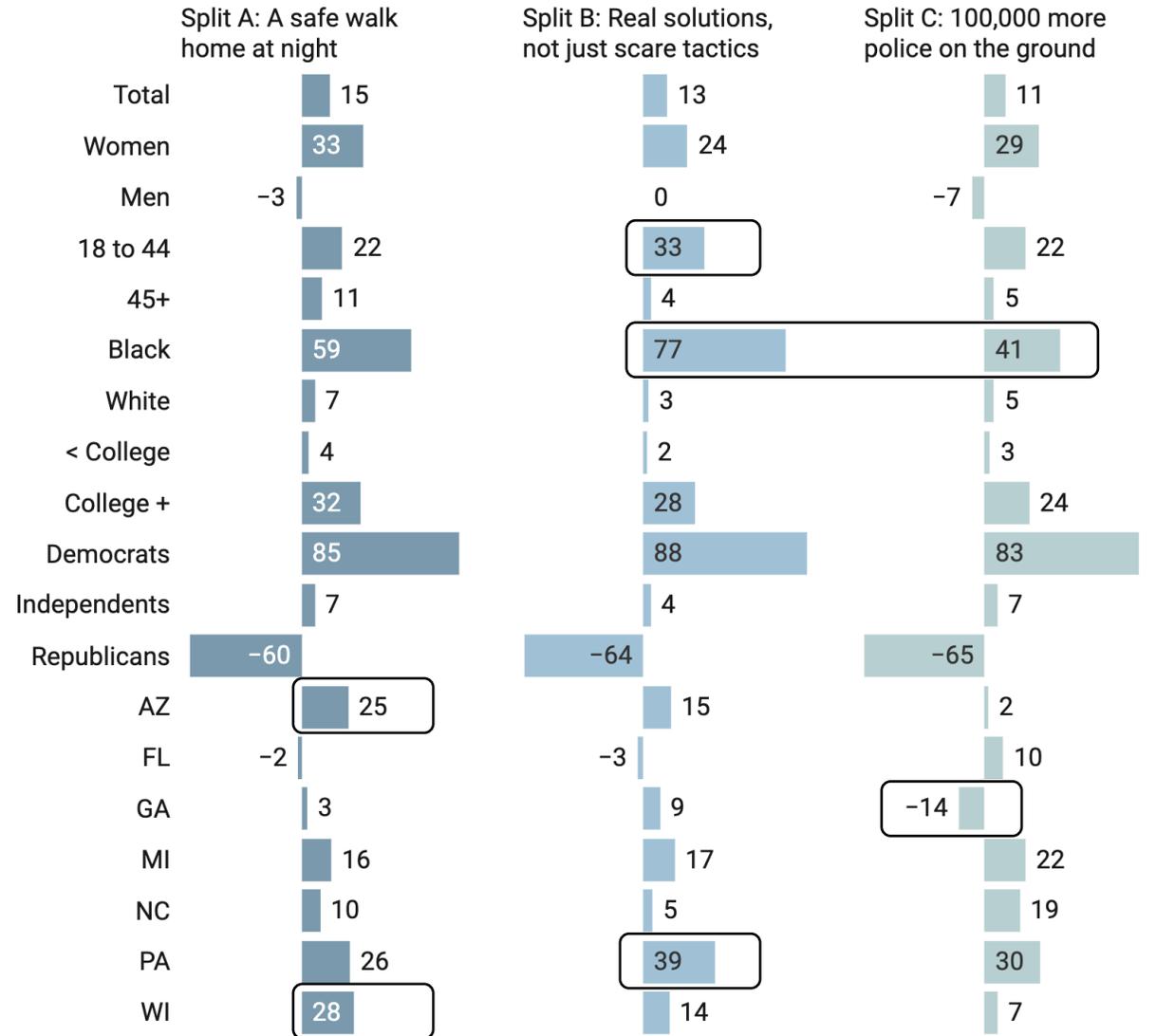


Democratic message beats Republican by...

“100,000 more police on the ground” performs worst among Black voters and fails to beat the Republican message among Georgia respondents.

Real solutions performs best among Black voters, younger voters (18 to 44), and Pennsylvania respondents.

A safe walk performs best among Arizona and Wisconsin respondents.





In the survey, half of respondents viewed this Hochul ad.

In an open-ended question, we asked what stood out most in the ad. Here are the main themes.

STOOD OUT MOST

- She's working to make people feel safe / won't stop until you feel safe / emphasis on everyone feeling safe
- Speaks to specific ideas and concrete plans (illegal guns, bail reform, homelessness, and mental health care)
- She references track record / bills she's already passed
- A few Democrats push back on stricter bail reform



Results from a DIY ad exercise.



In our pre-election QualBoard, we asked participants to design an ad.

Here are the instructions we gave them.

I'd like you to design an ad or video about your vision and what you want when it comes to safe communities. Think about an ad tailored specifically for you. Don't worry, you don't have to be an artist or a writer. Be creative, have fun with it, and don't worry about how it's written.

Think about an ad you might see on TV, on social media, or elsewhere.

Remember, this ad is only for you. Here are some questions to help you think about it:

- If you pause, close your eyes, and get quiet for a minute, what bubbles up around making communities safer?
- What would make you feel safer?
- Are there any people or objects in the ad?
- What is being said to you?
- Is someone saying it, or is it text? Who's saying it?
- What's the tone or feeling of the ad? How does it make you feel?
- What's getting in the way of your vision coming true?



What they came up with.

MAIN THEMES

- Real solutions / plans around addressing safety / how to address the problem
- Imagery of close-knit, diverse communities / images of people coming together
- Imagery of safe spaces (kids playing in the neighborhood until dark, people walking freely outside, leaving cars unlocked, people interacting together in public)
- Police interacting with the community / children / “officers helping the elderly, small businesses, and coaching teens” (particularly among Republican-leaning independents)
- Despite differences we all want to feel safe
- Tone: upbeat, optimistic, bright, contrast with doom and gloom crime ads

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



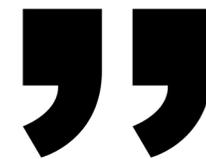
An ad that would be a dream would be an ad that united us all - showcasing all different kinds of people, places and cultures that we have either across the nation or across the state. There would either be a written or spoken message in the ad about celebrating diversity and becoming one as humans and as residents. The general tone of the ad would feel peaceful and inclusive. – *Black Wisconsin woman, 30 to 49, Democrat*

I would be in the middle of the neighborhood surrounded by our parents and local councilmen and we would be talking about the measures that we can take as moms, dads, teachers, and leaders to encourage our youth to go on a different path. To care about our youth, put them on the right path... it's our youth that grow up to be adults and those adults are the ones that commit crimes. – *Latina Georgia woman, 30 to 49, Democrat-leaning independent*

My video would be showing different cultures and communities in the same state. Showing the richness of diversity and people working together to build. I would show laughter and communication. It would show politicians working together to solve problems. – *Black Georgia man, 30 to 49, Democrat*

It's a lot of people outside being together - doing things (planting a community garden, summer basketball leagues, porch-sitting, neighborhood patrols, taking back the streets from the criminals). – *White Pennsylvania man, 50+, Democrat*

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



An ad where people can walk freely without fear of crime happening in all areas. An ad featuring suburbs and urban areas alike - where citizens and police collaborate and build a better community. People are walking outside, leaving cars unlocked, police and citizens of all races are friendly and collaborating.
– *White Pennsylvania woman, 50+, Democrat-leaning independent*

We should feel free to walk safely in our communities, hand in hand with our children, without fearing that we will be attacked or mugged on the sidewalk. We should be able to stroll in our neighborhood without fear of being assaulted. Let's restore peace and tranquility to our towns and cities! – *White Wisconsin woman, 30 to 49, Republican-leaning independent*

An ad that would make me believe in a safe community would be about people enjoying life. They would be willing to help each other, greeting each other on the street. Kids playing in the neighborhood until dark without worrying about attackers or predators. Basically, living a life that you don't have to worry about who is out to get you or looking over your back. – *AAPI North Carolina man, 30 to 49, Democrat-leaning independent*

People who know each other help keep each other safe. The police interact with the children and local businesses. Good lighting, public areas to gather as a melting pot. Stricter gun laws are important, including waiting periods and accountability if someone's weapon is used by someone else, or is found in the hands of a minor. The homeless and those with mental illness are treated with compassion and are seen as people, not nuisances. Green spaces abound with diversity of people, nature, and recreation. The goal is not to instill fear, but to instill a sense of community. – *Latina North Carolina woman, 30 to 49, Democrat-leaning independent*



IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Neighborhood of homes with grass, trees, flower beds, shrubs, streetlights, children running & playing with 2 puppies... Two mothers are walking together and pushing baby carriages in the background. A clearly visible, 'Neighborhood Watch' sign is attached to one of the poles... In the scene I am talking about items such as:

- Where there is unity there is strength
- Let's create safe neighborhoods together as no one person can do it alone
- Together let's make a difference
- Babies in carriages today will one day walk the streets of your neighborhoods so let's make them safe now
- Implementing programs for neighborhoods to partner with area police officers and fire stations
- Neighborhood watch committees and volunteer teams
- Emphasizing us, we, banning together, taking our neighborhoods back, working in unity, being part of the change, we want to see
- Guns alone don't solve problems but people along with implemented laws and realistic programs, accountability, social responsibility, civil efforts, concern and working together do

The tone/feeling of the advertisement is that of WE, together, must make the difference in creating safe environments and communities for not only ourselves, but for our children who are our future. No one person bears the full burden of change, but 'can' start the pivotal process... Additionally, the ad... subliminally plants seeds of civil responsibility and accountability for the viewer. For each person to play 'some' positive part in making their individual neighborhood safe so, collectively, our communities win together!

- *Black Georgia woman, 30 to 49, Democrat*

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



The tone of my ad is 'feel good,' not the angry attack ads that they run. Music would be upbeat and speak of change, it would be a happy and relieved feeling that maybe we can be safe.

– *White North Carolina woman, 50+, Republican-leaning independent*

The ad makes me feel hopeful. What gets in the way is my well-earned cynicism and my belief that far too many people are open to / see a possibility of any significant change.

– *White Pennsylvania man, 50+, Democrat*

The ad would start with a person walking around with families and children. There would be NO negativity in the ad (no bashing of other candidates). They are explaining their plans to keep communities safe. The tone is hopeful and positive. I picture bright sunny pictures and scenes. Families with children playing. – *White Pennsylvania woman, 30 to 49, Democrat-leaning independent*

If you pause, close your eyes, and get quiet for a minute, what bubbles up around making communities safer?

- Investment in schools and youth as well as support for families

What would make you feel safer?

- Knowing people have good jobs that pay them well so they do not feel they need to resort to crime.

- Maybe focus on any workforce development efforts the candidate has contributed to?

- Community policing; police officers that safeguard the communities they serve

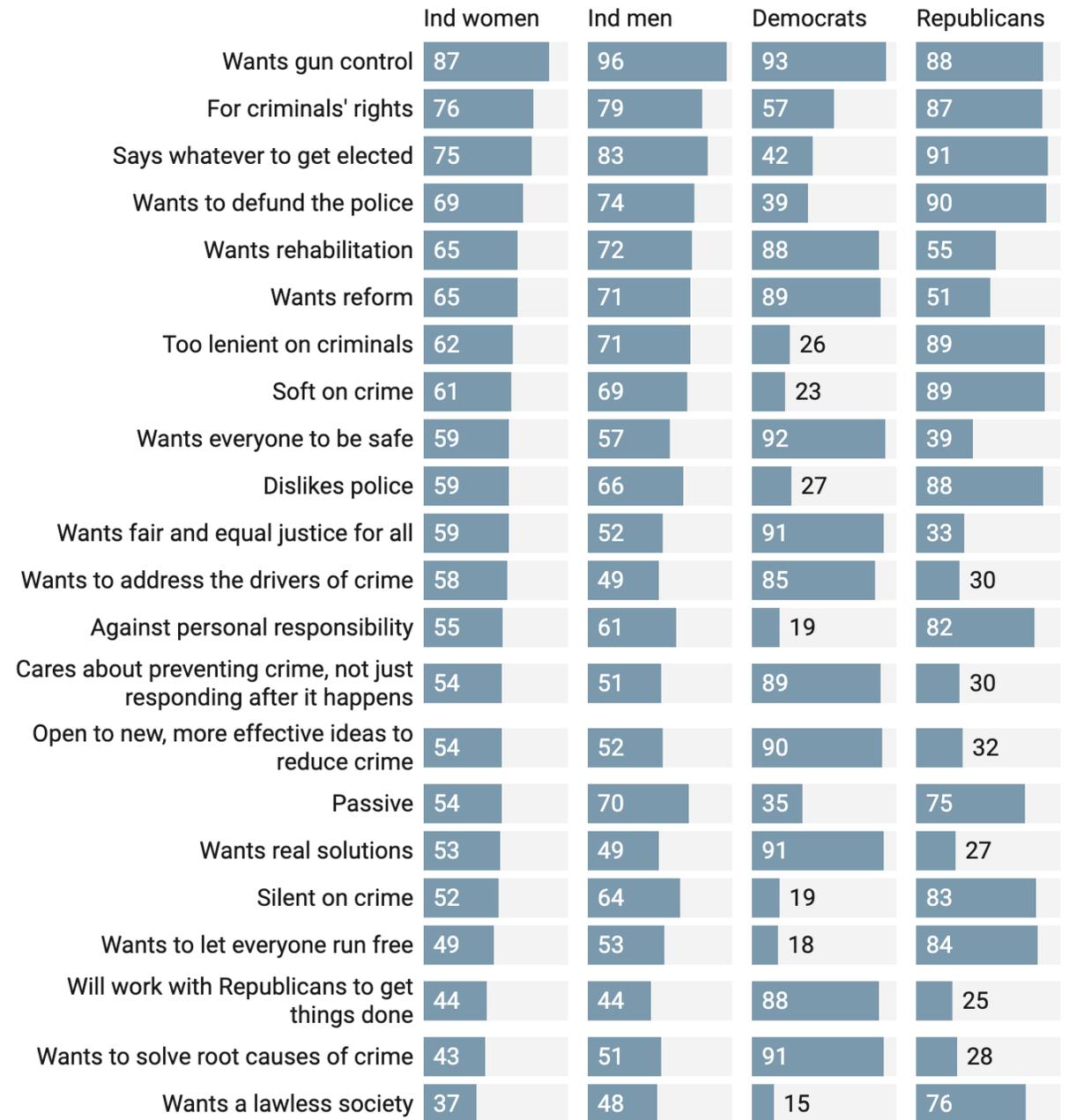
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training for police and law enforcement

– *Latina Pennsylvania woman, 30 to 49, Democrat*

I would like the candidate to talk about what plans they want to help promote if I were to vote for them. Don't just tell me that you support safer communities. Need substance to address the concept. Don't use politician jargon or corporate jargon. Tell me why you feel your plan will work. I want the talking to be from the candidate. – *White Wisconsin woman, 30 to 49, Republican-leaning independent*



Appendix.



In your own view, does this describe Democrats when it comes to crime, violence, and safety?

% Yes or maybe / sometimes

In your own view, does this describe
Republicans when it comes to crime,
violence, and safety?

% Yes or maybe / sometimes

| | Ind women | Ind men | Democrats | Republicans |
|--|-----------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| Supports police | 82 | 87 | 74 | 95 |
| Keep criminals in jail | 77 | 85 | 74 | 92 |
| Tough on sentences / consequences | 77 | 86 | 69 | 89 |
| Says whatever to get elected | 73 | 73 | 91 | 46 |
| Tough on crime | 71 | 82 | 58 | 93 |
| Law and order society | 70 | 77 | 58 | 92 |
| Passive on white-collar crime / wealthy criminals | 65 | 63 | 88 | 35 |
| Wants everyone to be safe | 64 | 71 | 41 | 93 |
| Doesn't get caught up in wokeness | 62 | 71 | 50 | 79 |
| In the pockets of gun lobbyists | 59 | 64 | 89 | 31 |
| Focus on personal responsibility | 59 | 74 | 47 | 89 |
| Cares about preventing crime, not just responding after it happens | 57 | 65 | 33 | 90 |
| Wants real solutions | 57 | 62 | 32 | 93 |
| Old ideas that haven't worked | 55 | 57 | 83 | 32 |
| Passive on crimes at the Capitol on Jan. 6th | 55 | 58 | 88 | 34 |
| Wants to address the drivers of crime | 53 | 62 | 32 | 86 |
| Will work with Democrats to get things done | 52 | 50 | 28 | 78 |
| For victims' rights | 51 | 69 | 36 | 87 |
| Wants to solve root causes of crime | 51 | 52 | 33 | 91 |
| Ignores systemic racism | 50 | 51 | 87 | 22 |
| No nonsense | 50 | 64 | 38 | 82 |
| Scare tactics, spreads fear | 50 | 54 | 87 | 19 |
| Self-righteous, think they're superior | 49 | 57 | 90 | 25 |
| Passive on police violence / brutality | 49 | 51 | 83 | 24 |
| Passive on gun violence and school shootings | 48 | 50 | 84 | 18 |
| Open to new, more effective ideas to reduce crime | 48 | 54 | 25 | 87 |
| Passive on hate crimes / racist attacks | 47 | 47 | 84 | 21 |
| Glorifies guns and violence in our culture | 42 | 41 | 84 | 14 |
| Causes crime | 34 | 33 | 70 | 14 |