Vera Institute - North Carolina
Toplines

YouGov Blue

Sample	Online sample of 820 NC Registered voters fielded from April 21 to April 29, 2026.
Margin of Error	±3.8%

1. If the election for US Senate were held today, would you vote for ...

Roy Cooper (Democrat)	48%
Michael Whatley (Republican)	38%
Shannon Bray (Libertarian)	1%
Brian McGinnis (Green)	1%
Not sure	10%
Would not vote	2%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

2. If the election for North Carolina Supreme Court were held today, would you vote for ...

Anita Earls (Democrat)	39%
Sarah Stevens (Republican)	39%
Not sure	18%
Would not vote	3%
Totals	99%
N	**820**

3. Of the following, which two would you say are most important to you when making a decision about how to vote?

Crime/Public safety	22%
Immigrants' rights	7%
Border control	13%
Healthcare access and costs	33%
Economy/Jobs	30%
Education	8%
Environment	5%
Affordability/Cost of living/Inflation	67%
N	**820**

4. What is your biggest crime concern today?

Gun violence	32%
Random street crime (i.e., robbery, assault)	15%
Opioids and fentanyl	13%

Domestic violence	6%
Theft	3%
Homelessness	10%
Migrant crime	14%
Other	6%
Totals	99%
N	**820**

5. For each of the following issues, please say if you view that issue to be [a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not too serious problem, not really a problem at all, or if you are unsure].

	Very serious problem	Somewhat serious problem	Not too serious problem	Not really a problem at all	Unsure
Crime in the United States	54%	35%	8%	2%	1%
Crime in North Carolina	35%	42%	18%	2%	2%
Crime in big cities in North Carolina	45%	38%	12%	2%	4%
Crime in your community	19%	31%	37%	10%	2%
The fentanyl and overdose crisis in the United States	60%	29%	6%	2%	4%
The fentanyl and overdose crisis in North Carolina	42%	35%	12%	2%	8%
The fentanyl and overdose crisis in your community	29%	30%	21%	9%	11%

6. Next, you will see a short list of issues. On each issue, do you: [trust Republicans more, trust Democrats more, trust both equally, trust neither, not sure].

	Trust Republicans more	Trust Democrats more	Trust both equally	Trust neither	Not sure
Reducing gun violence	31%	37%	10%	18%	5%
Being tough on crime	44%	24%	13%	14%	5%
Making communities safer	38%	32%	11%	14%	5%
Addressing the opioid and fentanyl crisis	33%	28%	16%	16%	7%
Ensuring nobody is above the law	32%	34%	9%	21%	4%
Investing in crime prevention	39%	30%	12%	13%	5%
Holding people who commit crimes accountable	40%	29%	12%	17%	3%

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7. Next, you will see a list of policies that some people say could reduce crime and make communities safer. For each policy, say whether you think it [would improve public safety a lot, a little, or not at all]. Also say whether you think it would improve public safety immediately, in the long term, or not at all.

	Improve a lot, and would show results immediately	Improve a lot, but would take a while to show results	Improve a little, and would show results immediately	Improve a little, but would take a while to show results	Would not really improve things	Not sure
Increasing access to mental health care	34%	36%	9%	13%	5%	3%
Building trust between police and the communities they serve	28%	37%	12%	14%	5%	4%
Expanding addiction treatment and recovery programs	27%	35%	10%	16%	7%	5%
Getting illegal guns off the streets	34%	29%	10%	12%	11%	4%
Sending a trained crisis specialist to mental health 9-1-1 calls	32%	23%	12%	11%	13%	8%
Making sure safety, not wealth, determines who stays in jail pending trial	42%	25%	10%	10%	7%	7%
Improving schools and programs for young people	31%	37%	10%	13%	5%	4%
Deploying the National Guard in cities like Charlotte to patrol streets and respond to crime	28%	15%	12%	5%	34%	6%
Allowing ICE to conduct more raids and deportations	27%	13%	8%	7%	39%	6%
Mandating longer sentences for people who commit crimes	32%	23%	11%	11%	15%	7%
Increasing funding for police	28%	25%	11%	11%	18%	7%

8. Below is a list of public safety and crime prevention policies. For each one, please indicate whether you would be [more likely to vote for a candidate who supported that policy, less likely to vote for a candidate who supported that policy, or if it would make no difference at all to your vote if a candidate championed this policy].

	More likely to vote	Less likely to vote	Would not impact my vote	Not sure
Enacting new bail laws so that public safety, not wealth, determines who is released while awaiting trial	74%	5%	15%	7%
Passing stricter penalties for organized crime by gangs	74%	3%	17%	6%
Combatting online child exploitation and sex trafficking	83%	3%	10%	4%
Launching violence prevention programs to reduce gun crime and shootings	67%	5%	22%	6%
Expanding reentry services to keep people from returning to jail or prison	55%	10%	23%	12%
Supporting police officer recruitment, retention, and wellness	60%	8%	25%	7%
Strengthening gun background checks and safe gun storage	65%	9%	21%	4%
Improving accountability with independent data collection and investigation of police misconduct	62%	6%	23%	9%
Sealing criminal records for people who have turned their lives around to have a better chance of employment	48%	13%	28%	12%

9. Which do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

We should do more to get tough on crime - like having tougher sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people in jail, and providing police with more support and resources	45%
We should fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities, like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing; support police to solve serious cases; get illegal guns off the street; and prevent crime by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction	55%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

10. Next, consider different statements by hypothetical [Republican or Democratic candidates] running for office here in North Carolina. Which candidate's statement do you prefer, even if neither exactly matches your opinion?

The Republican says... "I am tough on crime. That means having longer sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people behind bars, and providing police with more support and resources."	48%

The Democrat says... "I am serious about safety. We should fully fund things that are proven to create safe communities, like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing; support police to solve serious cases; get illegal guns off the street; and prevent crime by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction."	52%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

11. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to Cooper Attack Split A

Roy Cooper's failed tenure as governor put all North Carolinians at risk and created an environment where violent criminals roamed freely while innocent bystanders paid the price. As Iryna Zarutska's tragic murder on the Charlotte light rail showed, we can't go back to Cooper's lenient, soft-on-crime policies. In the Senate, Michael Whatley will make sure career criminals are behind bars and restore peace of mind to law-abiding Americans.	36%
These Republican attacks are false — Roy Cooper is the only candidate who spent his career prosecuting violent criminals and keeping thousands of them behind bars. He passed tough-on-crime laws as attorney general and signed stricter bail policies as governor. The murder of Iryna Zarutska was a horrible tragedy, and we must do everything we can to keep North Carolinians safe and prevent the next tragedy. DC insider lobbyist Michael Whatley is desperate to distract from his support for cuts to law enforcement that make North Carolinians less safe.	48%
Not sure	16%
Totals	100%
N	**397**

12. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to Cooper Attack Split B

Roy Cooper's failed tenure as governor put all North Carolinians at risk and created an environment where violent criminals roamed freely while innocent bystanders paid the price. As Iryna Zarutska's tragic murder on the Charlotte light rail showed, we can't go back to Cooper's lenient, soft-on-crime policies. In the Senate, Michael Whatley will make sure career criminals are behind bars and restore peace of mind to law-abiding Americans.	38%
All of us deserve to feel safe and secure in our homes, our schools, and our communities. Instead of providing real solutions to prevent crime, break its cycle, and make life more affordable for all North Carolinians, Michael Whatley and the GOP are using a woman's tragic murder to score political points. Roy Cooper is the only candidate who supported law enforcement to solve serious crime, and invested in jobs, mental health and drug treatment to prevent the next tragedy. As a US Senator, Roy Cooper will be laser-focused on keeping North Carolina a safe and secure place to raise your family.	54%
Not sure	8%
Totals	100%
N	**423**

13. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Across this country, reckless Democratic policies have made our streets and cities more dangerous for law-abiding people – and now they're coming for North Carolina. These radical Democratic projects to defund our police and open our borders have failed everywhere they have been tried, and showed they just can't be trusted on basic questions of public safety. We deserve leaders we can trust not to put political correctness or woke ideology above the safety of our town and communities.	44%
While Democrats are working to make sure North Carolina families feel safe and secure in our communities, Republicans are resorting to false and desperate smears, exploiting a woman's horrific murder to score political points. In reality, Republicans in Washington have made drastic and devastating cuts to successful programs that aim to prevent violence, support victims and their families, help people access drug addiction and mental health treatment, and protect children. Democrats believe we should strengthen efforts that make North Carolina a safer and stronger state — not cut them.	44%
Not sure	12%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

14. Even if it isn't exactly right, which of the following is closest to your personal view? The best way to improve public safety in our communities would be to...

Support the police who put their lives on the line for us and hold them accountable when they use excessive force or abuse their power	35%
Build strong bonds and trust between police and the community	22%
Take the burden off police officers to solve every social problem so they can focus on serious crime	18%
Put more police on the streets	7%
Increase funding for police	9%
Support officer recruitment, retention, and wellness	9%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

15. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to ICE Split A

Democrats' reckless open border policies have allowed violent criminals and drug traffickers to pour into the country, while taxpayers already struggling to make ends meet are forced to house and feed them. It's time to put North Carolina first by keeping ICE and the National Guard in cities like Charlotte, closing the border, and deporting dangerous migrant criminals who are fueling crime.	43%

In Operation Charlotte's Web, North Carolinians saw what these crackdowns entail: US citizens caught up in arrests, families terrified, businesses shut down, and tens of thousands of students missing school. The federal government should be deporting violent criminals, but instead they killed innocent American citizens and disrupted everyone's lives. Americans deserve answers, and any additional funding for ICE operations must come with immediate reforms that stop this chaos and keep people safe.	57%
Totals	100%
N	**415**

16. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to ICE Split B

Democrats' reckless open border policies have allowed violent criminals and drug traffickers to pour into the country, while taxpayers already struggling to make ends meet are forced to house and feed them. It's time to put North Carolina first by keeping ICE and the National Guard in cities like Charlotte, closing the border, and deporting dangerous migrant criminals who are fueling crime.	46%
ICE has gone too far. In Operation Charlotte's Web, North Carolinians saw what these crackdowns entail: US citizens caught up in arrests, families terrified, businesses shut down, and tens of thousands of students missing school. Our immigration system is broken, and we need to make sure ICE is held accountable when they abuse their power. It's time to invest in real solutions that make life safer for everyone, like removing illegal guns, expanding addiction treatment, and investing in housing and mental health care.	54%
Totals	100%
N	**405**

17. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

The opioid and fentanyl crisis has devastated North Carolina communities, and for many families who have lost a loved one or watched someone they love struggle with addiction, it's deeply personal. We need to expand access to treatment and mental health care to prevent overdoses and save lives. Democrats held the pharmaceutical companies accountable for profiting off people's suffering and made them pay billions that will go towards expanding treatment and care.	44%
The opioid and fentanyl crisis is out of control. Deadly drugs are flooding our streets, and North Carolina families are paying the price. We need to confront this crisis head-on by cracking down on drug dealers, shutting down trafficking networks, and imposing tough prison sentences for criminals fueling North Carolina's opioid epidemic. Republicans are working to hold perpetrators and traffickers accountable to the fullest extent of the law.	56%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

18. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Democrats' failed policies are sending costs skyrocketing while allowing crime and immigration to spiral out of control. Working families are being squeezed from every direction and left to deal with higher costs and less safe neighborhoods. People can't afford to live in the places they call home and don't feel secure in their own communities. While weak and woke Democrats repeatedly opposed tax cuts for the middle class and imposed soft-on-crime policies, Republicans are focused on cutting taxes, reducing wasteful spending, and preserving law and order so that hardworking North Carolinians can get ahead.	46%
While families struggle with rising costs, Trump and Republicans are making North Carolina less safe and less secure by gutting jobs, cutting Medicaid and food stamps, pulling funding for addiction treatment, and rolling back gun safety laws. Democrats know that safety and affordability go hand in hand. The best way to help hardworking North Carolinians get ahead and stay safe is to lower costs and invest in the things that improve everyone's safety and quality of life, like schools, good-paying jobs, affordable housing, and preventing crime before it happens.	54%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

19. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to Defund Split A

Crime is out of control, and Democrats' reckless policies that coddle criminals are to blame. While Democrats try to defund the police, Republicans will back the blue, lock up violent offenders, and demand tougher sentences for lawbreakers. We must reverse the failed "soft-on-crime" policies that have driven up crime and let police officers do their jobs.	34%
We should not defund the police, and we must take tough action against hardened criminals and gang members. That means swift and certain consequences for people who commit crimes to deter future lawbreaking. And we need additional well-trained police officers and the latest in effective policing strategies to stop crime before it happens and make North Carolina safe.	66%
Totals	100%
N	**414**

20. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right in your opinion?

Asked of Those Assigned to Defund Split B

Crime is out of control, and Democrats' reckless policies that coddle criminals are to blame. While Democrats try to defund the police, Republicans will back the blue, lock up violent offenders, and demand tougher sentences for lawbreakers. We must reverse the failed "soft-on-crime" policies that have driven up crime and let police officers do their jobs.	43%
We can support police who put their lives on the line for us every day and help police to focus on investigating and solving serious crime. We also need to build trust between police and the communities they serve by holding those who use excessive force or abuse their power accountable. Shielding bad officers only undermines the credibility of good ones.	57%
Totals	100%
N	**406**

21. Harvey West is a convicted child sex offender who later became active in North Carolina Republican politics. Despite West's record being well-known, State Supreme Court candidate Sarah Stevens accepted his support and attended his fundraiser. Some critics say those ties raise serious questions about judgment and whether Republican leaders in the state are living up to the standards they claim to hold on protecting children and public safety.How important, if at all, would this be in your vote for the North Carolina Supreme Court?

Very important	59%
Somewhat important	21%
Not too important	6%
Not too important at all	3%
Not sure	10%
Totals	99%
N	**820**

22. Which statement do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?

Roy Cooper's failed tenure as governor put all North Carolinians at risk and created an environment where violent criminals roamed freely while innocent bystanders paid the price. As Iryna Zarutska's tragic murder on the Charlotte light rail showed, we can't go back to Cooper's lenient, soft-on-crime policies. In the Senate, Michael Whatley will make sure career criminals are behind bars and restore peace of mind to law-abiding Americans.	43%
Unlike many national Democrats, Roy Cooper is not afraid to talk about crime. He is serious about safety. He knows North Carolinians deserve to be safe, and that people who commit violent crimes must be held accountable. But fearmongering and political attacks do not make anyone safer. Roy Cooper's approach is to support police to focus on serious crime, reduce gun violence, expand treatment for addiction and mental health, and invest in the things that prevent crime in the first place.	57%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

23. Based on the following statements, which candidate for office would you trust more?

Asked of Those Assigned to Candidate Split A

The Republican says... "I stand on the side of law and order. That means having longer sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people behind bars, and providing police with more support and resources."	56%
The Democrat says... "I am tough on crime. That means more cops on the beat and tough action against hardened criminals and gang members. I believe we should increase police funding and invest in new technologies like predictive policing, not defunding the police."	44%
Totals	100%
N	**410**

24. Based on the following statements, which candidate for office would you trust more?

Asked of Those Assigned to Candidate Split B

The Republican says... "I stand on the side of law and order. That means having longer sentences for people convicted of violent crimes, maintaining strong bail laws to keep dangerous people behind bars, and providing police with more support and resources."	46%
The Democrat says... "I am serious about safety. That means fully funding things that are proven to create safe communities, like good schools, jobs, and affordable housing; supporting police to solve serious cases; getting illegal guns off the street; and preventing crime by increasing treatment for mental health and drug addiction."	54%
Totals	100%
N	**410**

25. After hearing those messages, if the election for US Senate were held today, would you vote for...

Roy Cooper (Democrat)	48%
Michael Whatley (Republican)	38%
Shannon Bray (Libertarian)	2%
Brian McGinnis (Green)	1%
Not sure	11%
Would not vote	1%
Totals	101%
N	**820**

26. After hearing those messages, if the election for North Carolina Supreme Court were held today, would you vote for...

Anita Earls (Democrat)	42%
Sarah Stevens (Republican)	33%
Not sure	22%
Would not vote	3%
Totals	100%
N	**820**

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This survey is based on 820 interviews conducted by YouGov on the internet of North Carolina registered voters. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and U.S. Census region based on voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote and approximate 2024 Presidential vote based on available results, and party identification estimates based on Pew Research Center's National Public Opinion Reference Survey. Respondents were selected from YouGov to be representative of North Carolina registered voters. The weights range from 0.23 to 4.24 with a mean of 1 and a standard deviation of 0.49.

The margin of error (a 95% confidence interval) for a sample percentage p based upon the subsetted sample is approximately 3.8%. It is calculated using the formula:

$$\hat{p} \pm 100 \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + \text{CV}^2}{n}}$$

where CV is the coefficient of variation of the sample weights and n is the sample size used to compute the proportion. This is a measure of sampling error (the average of all estimates obtained using the same sample selection and weighting procedures repeatedly). The sample estimate should differ from its expected value by less than margin of error in 95 percent of all samples. It does not reflect non-sampling errors, including potential selection bias in panel participation or in response to a particular survey.