

To: Interested Parties
 From: Joshua Ulibarri and Meryl O’Bryan, LRP
 Re: Allegheny County District Attorney Issue Priorities: Prevention over Punishmentⁱ
 Date: May 2023

Results from a recent survey conducted by LRP among modeled likely 2023 Democratic primary voters Allegheny County show that voters want a District Attorney who will prioritize prevention over punishment.

Here are some of the key findings:

When asked to choose between two candidates – one with a more preventative approach to crime and public safety and one with a more punitive approach – voters overwhelmingly choose prevention over punishment. Some of the items tested included:

	Candidate B	Candidate A	Net
[SPLIT A only] Invest in schools, homes vs. Max jail time	17	73	+56
[SPLIT B only] Diversion programs vs. Max jail time	20	71	+51
Health issue vs. Double down on war on drugs	20	69	+49
[SPLIT A only] More prevention than punishment vs. Zero tolerance	20	67	+47

- Seventy-three percent of voters prefer **a candidate who believes public safety requires prioritizing investments in schools, mental health and drug treatment, and affordable housing – rather than spending more money on jails and prisons** over **a candidate who believes to keep our community safe from criminals, we must keep people who have committed crimes in jail or prison for the maximum time possible so there’s no chance they can reoffend** (only 17% choose the latter).
- Seventy-one percent of voters prefer **a candidate who will direct more resources towards preventing crime, increasing diversion programs, and working with state and local leaders to invest in mental health and drug treatment services** over **a candidate who believes to keep our community safe from criminals, we must keep people who have committed crimes in jail or prison for the maximum time possible so there’s no chance they can reoffend** (20%).

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- Sixty-nine percent of voters prefer ***a candidate who believes prosecuting low-level drug crimes does little to improve the safety of our community and we should treat drug use as a health issue, not a criminal problem over a candidate who believes punishment and criminalization are a critical component of our response to drug use, and we should double down on the war on drugs*** (20%).
- Sixty-seven percent of voters prefer ***a candidate who believes the DA's office should play an important role in crime prevention and devote more resources to prevention than punishment over a candidate who believes the DA's office should be tough on crime and have zero tolerance for criminals who break the law*** (20%).

When voters are asked about pledges a candidate for District Attorney has made, the data further prove that voters want a candidate who prioritizes prevention:

- Thirty-seven percent of voters think ***a candidate who pledges to expand the use of diversion programs to address mental health and substance use, giving people treatment over prosecuting them***, is a very convincing reason to support that candidate for District Attorney (79% total convincing).

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ⁱ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey. It was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers as well as text-to-online April 3 – 9, 2023. The survey reached a total of 500 modeled likely 2023 Democratic primary voters in Allegheny County voters and included an oversample of Black voters. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 4.4% and larger for sub-groups.