



To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: April 2026
Re: NEW POLL RESULTS: Messaging Guidance around Crime & Public Safety

Research from Global Strategy Group, conducted on behalf of the ACLU, shows that **candidates stand to benefit electorally from embracing pro-civil liberties positions on crime & public safety.**

The following analysis is based on a survey of 1,006 likely 2026 general election voters in battleground House districts conducted between March 17-23, 2026. Additional information about the poll can be found at the end of this memo.

Candidates who focus on addressing the root causes of crime and endorse prevention strategies are viewed more positively on key attributes and overperform on the ballot compared with candidates who favor a “tough on crime” approach. This is not an issue candidates need to shy away from. And in fact, a majority of battleground voters preferred the candidate – regardless of party – who offered a “solutions-oriented” vision on crime & safety over a candidate who offered a punitive one. When both candidates offered a solutions-oriented message, voters roughly split between the parties.

Thinking about the November election for Congress, which kind of candidate would you prefer?	
Crime & Public Safety	% Prefer
[SOLUTIONS DEM] A Democrat who says we all deserve to feel safe—and the safest communities are the ones with the most support. Affordable housing, mental health care, addiction treatment, and good jobs prevent crime before it happens.	56
[PUNITIVE REP] A Republican who says our country is in a state of chaos, crime is skyrocketing, and we've become a lawless society. We need to support our police and put criminals where they belong—behind bars.	44
[SOLUTIONS REP] A Republican who says we all deserve to feel safe—and the safest communities are the ones with the most support. Affordable housing, mental health care, addiction treatment, and good jobs prevent crime before it happens.	53
[PUNITIVE DEM] A Democrat who says they will crack down on crime and hold people who break the law accountable. They support putting more officers on our streets and giving prosecutors the tools to prosecute violent crimes. They back strict penalties for drug dealers and will stop the revolving door of crime.	47
[SOLUTIONS DEM] A Democrat who says we all deserve to feel safe—and the safest communities are the ones with the most support. Affordable housing, mental health care, addiction treatment, and good jobs prevent crime before it happens.	51
[SOLUTIONS REP] A Republican who says we all deserve to feel safe—and the safest communities are the ones with the most support. Affordable housing, mental health care, addiction treatment, and good jobs prevent crime before it happens.	49

In addition, candidates who embraced the solutions-oriented approach scored higher on key character attributes. Voters were more likely to rate a **Democratic** candidate who offered a solutions message on crime & safety as **authentic (+10 points)**, **trustworthy (+4)**, **principled (+4)** and **less willing to say whatever it takes to win (-14)** compared to a Democrat who proposed a “punitive” approach. Similarly, a pro-civil liberties **Republican** candidate was more likely to be seen as **thoughtful (+18)** and **principled (+8)**, and less likely to be seen as **weak (-12)** or **willing to say whatever it takes to win (-6)** compared to a “punitive” one.

Democratic Candidate Attributes			
NET Describes Well	Read Solutions Description	Read Punitive Description	Diff.
Authentic	+14	+4	+10
Trustworthy	+8	+4	+4
Principled	+20	+16	+4
Will say whatever it takes to win	+18	+32	-14

Republican Candidate Attributes			
NET Describes Well	Read Solutions Description	Read Punitive Description	Diff.
Thoughtful	+8	-10	+18
Principled	+16	+8	+8
Weak	-28	-16	-12
Will say whatever it takes to win	+20	+26	-6

Candidates who attempt to “out tough” their opponents on crime miss what really matters to voters. Soft versus tough is a false choice for voters who just want to feel safe in their communities. What matters most is showing voters that you are not going to compromise on keeping them safe – and, in fact, they favor candidates who take on an approach that focuses on prevention and addressing the root causes of crime.

- Indeed, **71% of battleground state voters would be more likely (including 37% who would be much more likely) to vote for a candidate who says “True public safety means preventing crime before it happens. We should be creating community stability through investments in mental health services, addiction treatment, and programs that help communities thrive.”**

When it comes to **crime and public safety**, successful messaging should:

- Show voters you understand their safety concerns:** “Feeling safe in our communities is a fundamental right.”
- Lean into proven safety solutions:** “...investing in prevention, rehabilitation, and community safety programs that actually reduce crime over time.”
- Acknowledge a role for accountability:** “We need real solutions that prevent crime and hold people accountable when they harm others..”
- ... AND acknowledge the need to hold law enforcement to a higher standard:** “...ensuring law enforcement follows the law and respects our constitutional rights.”

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1006 likely voters in House battleground districts between March 17-23, 2026. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.4%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are properly represented.

The House battleground districts we sampled included:

AK-AL	CA-22	FL-07	IN-01	MN-02	NH-02	NV-04	OH-09	PA-10	TX-35	WI-03
AZ-01	CA-45	FL-13	ME-02	MT-01	NJ-07	NY-03	OH-13	TN-05	VA-01	
AZ-02	CA-48	FL-23	MI-04	NC-01	NJ-09	NY-04	OR-05	TX-15	VA-02	
AZ-06	CO-03	IA-01	MI-07	NC-11	NM-02	NY-17	PA-01	TX-23	VA-07	
CA-13	CO-05	IA-02	MI-08	NE-02	NV-01	NY-19	PA-07	TX-28	WA-03	
CA-21	CO-08	IA-03	MI-10	NH-01	NV-03	OH-01	PA-08	TX-34	WI-01	

In addition to the survey, Global Strategy Group conducted six focus groups with swing voters in House battleground states between February 26 to March 3, 2026.