Arizona Voter Survey
Summary Memo
Re: Voter Preferences on Candidate Criminal Justice Positions

David Binder Research

Methodology: David Binder Research conducted a statewide survey of 400 likely voters in Arizona between August 23rd and August 26th, 2018. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and English, with respondents choosing their language of preference. About half of interviews were completed by cell phone and half by landline, and the margin of error is ±4.9%.

Vote Select: Interviews were conducted with likely November 2018 voters, based on previous vote history and self-reported likelihood to vote.

Key Findings

Likely November 2018 midterm voters are much more likely to support candidates who take strong positions to reform the criminal justice system, with support from across the political spectrum. For many positions, support comes from unexpected groups, such as Republicans and voters who approve of President Donald Trump or reside in more conservative regions of the country.

Further, when given a choice between two candidates with starkly different views on criminal justice reform, 54% of voters would choose a "smart justice" candidate who believes that our criminal justice system can be made fairer, safer and cheaper through decarceration and reducing racial disparities, whereas only about 40% would choose a candidate espousing traditional "tough-on-crime" criminal justice views.

1. **Large majorities of voters are more likely to support a candidate who broadly supports criminal justice reform and who backs that up with strong stances on reducing racial disparities in the criminal justice system, ending the war on drugs, police reform, and reducing incarceration.** Only 10% of likely voters statewide would oppose a candidate that backs policies to ensure all police officers treat people of all races fairly and are held accountable for misconduct.

I'm going to read you a few statements to describe candidates. For each, please tell me if you would be more likely to support or oppose this person as your local representative.			
SUMMARY TABLE: Statement	**Total Support**	**Total Oppose**	**Net Support**
A candidate who supports policies to ensure that all police officers respect the constitution and treat people of all races fairly, and ensuring that police officers are held accountable for misconduct.	**86**	**10**	**+76**
A candidate who supports criminal justice reform.	**81**	**9**	**+72**
A candidate who supports making it easier for people released from prison to find a job and housing.	**79**	**12**	**+67**
A candidate who supports reducing racial disparities in the criminal justice system and speaks out against such inequalities.	**67**	**19**	**+48**
A candidate who supports ending the war on drugs.	**64**	**29**	**+35**
A candidate who supports reducing the number of people in jails and prisons.	**55**	**31**	**+24**
A candidate who supports restoring the right to vote for any person who has served their prison sentence.	**56**	**33**	**+23**

2. **Candidates supporting criminal justice reform receive very high support from growing voter blocks (such as millennials) and strong support from segments of voters that conventional political wisdom would say oppose criminal justice reform:**

✓ A candidate who supports criminal justice reform
  o Whites: 81% more likely to support
  o Maricopa County: 80%
  o Approve of President Trump's job performance: 77%

✓ A candidate who supports reducing racial disparities in the criminal justice system and speaks out against such inequalities.
  o Millennials: 86%
  o Independents: 68%
  o White Republicans: 60%

✓ A candidate who supports reducing the number of people in jails and prisons.
  o Crime victim*: 58% (*Someone who says, in the last 10 years, they or a friend or family member have been a victim of a crime)
  o Whites: 56%

✓ A candidate who supports ending the war on drugs.
  o Republicans: 58%
  o Approve of President Trump's job performance: 58%

✓ A candidate who supports policies to ensure that all police officers respect the constitution and treat people of all races fairly, and ensuring that police officers are held accountable for misconduct.
  o Approve of President Trump's job performance: 81%
  o Republicans: 80%

✓ A candidate who supports making it easier for people released from prison to find a job and housing.
  o Voters 65+: 78%
  o Republicans: 77%
  o Approve of President Trump's job performance: 74%

✓ A candidate who supports restoring the right to vote for any person who has served their prison sentence.
  o Millennials: 82%
  o Republican women: 56%
  o Voters 65+: 52%

3. **A majority of voters choose a reform-focused, or "smart justice", candidate over a traditional candidate**. Importantly, the candidate statement for the traditional candidate was purposely made very strong, using language currently being used by candidates statewide (and provided in the text box to the right). 54% would choose a candidate that believes our criminal justice system can be made fairer, safer, and cheaper by reducing the number of people in jails and prisons and reducing racial disparities. Only 40% choose a candidate with tough-on-crime beliefs.

   ✓ The intensity in those *strongly* preferring the Smart Justice candidate (35% strongly) is higher than those preferring a Tough on Crime candidate (25% strongly).

   ✓ Majorities across many groups chose the Smart Justice candidate, including 53% among White voters and 51% of Independents.

   ✓ There is a strikingly strong preference for the Smart Justice candidate from women under 45 of all parties (73%) and Latino Democrats (71%).

   ✓ Among victims of crime, 56% support a Smart Justice candidate, with only 38% preferring a Tough on Crime candidate.

> The poll posed the following question to likely voters:
>
> If you had to choose between two candidates, which would you choose…
>
> A candidate who believes our current criminal justice system is unnecessarily ruining lives and wasting money by locking up too many people in prison for too long, with little benefit for public safety. This candidate believes that our criminal justice system can be made fairer, safer and cheaper by reducing the number of people in jails and prisons and reducing racial disparities.
>
> A candidate who believes the current number of people locked up in jails and prisons is fine and that, if anything, we need to spend more money on jails and prisons to ensure that all criminals do time behind bars. This candidate believes that reducing the use of incarceration would be dangerous, and that racial disparities in the criminal justice system, if they exist, are simply a result of where crime is occurring and not a problem that can or should be fixed.