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## ***CALIFORNIANS BELIEVE THEIR COMMUNITY IS SAFE AND WANT INCREASED SAFETY NET***

*New statewide polling shows voters of color, young voters, and NPP voters heavily favor economic stability policies.*

**Sacramento, Calif.** – Courage California Institute partnered with Data for Social Good Foundation to conduct polls of 968 registered voters across California in October and November of 2023 to learn how Californians view public safety. The poll was administered in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, and intentionally oversampled from the demographic communities that have seen higher growth rates in the last decade, including voters of color.

**The majority of California voters believe their community is a safe place to live, report feeling safe, and believe that crime is about the same or going down in their community in the last 12 months.**

By a nearly three-to-one margin (64% to 22%), California voters agree their community is a safe place to live, and this majority agreement spans all racial and ethnic groups, age groups, and parties.

When asked about their beliefs about crime in their community in the last 12 months, **35% reported feeling relatively safe**, 18% that crime is about the same, 3% that crime is going down, and 32% believed there was an increase in crime. Democrats (42%), No Party Preference (NPP, 40%), and older voters ( $\geq 66$  years old, 44%) feel most safe in their communities. **Only Republicans (46%) and 56-65-year-olds (37%) believe more that crime has increased.**

Voters define public safety most as being able to walk down the street by themselves at night comfortably (37%), the ability to park on the street and not worry about things being stolen (14%), seeing police cars patrolling their neighborhood (10%), and having access to comprehensive support services (10%).

Californians consider police/sheriff and elected representatives (mayors, supervisors, legislators) most responsible for public safety (35% each), followed by themselves and their community (22%). Notably, only 3% hold district attorneys most responsible.

Voters hear about public safety most from the news (41%), then social media (24%), and community forums (NextDoor, Ring.com, etc., 17%). Social media was highest among Latinos (31%), and also high among younger voters (18-35 and 36-55-year olds, 39% and 28%, respectively).

**An overwhelming majority of voters support policies and investments in safety nets and other economic justice programs as public safety solutions instead of policing and prisons.**

**A third of Californians identified various social services** (33% total for homeless, mental health, drug rehabilitation, and youth programs) **as their top need to feel safe** in their community, with 30% an increased police presence and 22% a lower cost of living / higher pay.

**Nearly all groups of voters are most supportive of social services to feel safe**, especially Democratic (39%), No Party Preference (NPP, 38%), and Black voters (38%). Latinos (25%), younger voters (18-35 and 36-55-year-olds, 35% and 26%), and Democrats (25%) are more likely to want a lower cost of living/higher pay than other voters. Republican voters (44%), Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs, 34%), and 56-65-year-olds (42%) are more likely to support increased police presence.

As public safety policies, **voters overwhelmingly support increasing the role of social service providers in matters of social and mental well-being** (78% to 12%) and support ensuring economic stability for all members of the community (73% to 14%). Democratic (86%), NPP (83%), and Black (84%) voters most strongly support increasing the role of social service providers. Voters of color (Latino, 86%; API, 82%; and Black, 75%), young voters (18-35-year-olds, 82%), and Democratic (86%), NPP (74%), and American Independent (74%) voters also heavily favor economic stability policies, with Republicans the only group with a slight majority (54%) in favor.

When asked how they would spend a limited budget to improve public safety, 65% chose social services (mental health, crime prevention, homeless support) over prisons, then infrastructure (streetlights, sidewalks, parks), job training, and schools (each 10%).

There is a split on reducing police responsibilities around homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse – 43% disagree, 41% agree, and 16% neither agree nor disagree. API (46%), Latino (42%), young (18-35-year-olds, 49%), and Democratic (49%) voters are more in favor of reducing police responsibilities with these populations and issues. White respondents most disagree among all racial groups (47%), and Republicans (61%) were the only group with a majority against a reduction of police responsibilities.

Of voters who agree with a reduction, 65% also believe that a portion of police funding should be redirected to increasing social services for the impacted populations. Support for funding redirection is especially strong among API (76%), Black (76%), young (18-35-year-olds, 76%), Democratic (74%), and NPP (67%) voters. Republicans (48%) are the only voters more likely to disagree.

### **About this poll**

Data for Social Good Foundation conducted the poll for Courage California Institute from October 19 - November 27, 2023. The poll was administered online in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. We polled 968 registered voters, intentionally oversampling from demographic communities that have seen higher growth rates in the last decade, including voters of color.

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[Courage California Institute](#) defends and extends economic justice, human rights, and corporate and political accountability through public education, strategic research, and innovative leadership-development training. We empower Californians by providing the resources needed to courageously participate in the democratic process and create change for the betterment of their families and communities.