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Survey Finds Oregonians Feel Less Safe

Survey highlights Oregonian's concern with their safety and proposed reform legislation.

A survey commissioned by the Oregon District Attorneys Association found that 55% of Oregonians feel less safe in their communities than they did two years ago and 58% feel the State is headed in the wrong direction when it comes to the issues of public safety and protecting the public from crime.

The survey explores decisions from Oregon's leadership that directly affect public safety. Specifically Oregonians' shared strong opinions on pending and recent proposals before the Legislature including pre-trial release, early release of violent offenders, mandatory minimum sentencing and victim notification.

"The survey data reflects exactly what our elected District Attorneys hear in our communities across the State every day, from Oregon City to Salem to Medford and Pendleton. The general public is concerned about their safety and the policies coming out of the State Legislature and from the Governor," said ODAA President and Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson.

The survey found that 61.8% of Oregonians believe that Oregon's political leadership, including the Governor and Legislature has been "too soft" on crime and overwhelmingly support increased resources for police and prosecutors.

On specific policy proposals, the survey found 64% of Oregonians oppose releasing people the same day when arrested for property crimes and almost 89% oppose same day release for those arrested for domestic violence and assault crimes. 56% of Oregonians oppose the Governor granting early release for prisoners serving sentences for murder and other violent crimes they committed as teenagers and 68% support mandatory minimum prison sentences for adults convicted of murder and violent crimes.

The survey also found that Oregonians overwhelmingly support protecting the rights of crime victims with 82% backing investments in victim notification and 71% supporting taxpayer dollars to ensure victims have notice and opportunity to provide input before offenders are released pre-trial.

The statewide survey, conducted by Nelson Research, was commissioned January 4, 2022 and included 500 likely voters with a margin of error of 4.38%. The complete survey data is attached.

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Statewide Survey
Public Safety Issues
1/4/22
Likely Voters, N=500
Margin of Error 4.38%
FINAL

Hello, my name is _____. I'm with *Nelson Research*, a public opinion research firm. We are conducting a brief survey today in your area and would like to include your household's opinions. May I please take a few minutes of your time? I promise I'm not selling anything.

First of all, are you registered to vote in the state of Oregon? **(INTERVIEWER: IF NO, POLITELY TERMINATE)**

GENERAL PERCEPTION SERIES

1. In your opinion, with respect to issues of public safety and protecting the public from crime, is Oregon headed in the RIGHT DIRECTION or is Oregon off on the WRONG TRACK?

1. Right direction	18.2
2. Wrong track	58.0
3. Not sure/refuse	23.8

2. Over the past two years, has your city or county become MORE SAFE or LESS SAFE than it was two years ago?

1. More Safe	11.6
2. Less Safe	55.0
3. About the same (Do not offer, but record response)	24.2
4. Not sure/refuse	9.2

3. Over the past two years, have community safety and crime concerns become MORE IMPORTANT to you or LESS IMPORTANT?

1. More Important	65.0
2. Less Important	7.6
3. About the same (Do not offer, but record response)	23.4
4. Not sure/refuse	4.0

4. In your opinion, has Oregon's political leadership, including the Governor and legislature, been TOO TOUGH on crime, JUST RIGHT, or TOO SOFT on crime?

1. Too tough	3.2
2. Just right	17.0
3. Too soft	61.8
4. Not sure/refuse	18.0

SUPPORT/OPPOSE SERIES

5. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE defunding your local police department and Sheriff's office? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support	13.8
2. Somewhat support	6.0
(Total Support)	19.8
3. Somewhat oppose	9.8
4. Strongly oppose	62.8
(Total Oppose)	72.6
5. Not sure/refuse	7.6

6. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE defunding your local District Attorney's office? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support	8.6
2. Somewhat support	5.8
(Total Support)	14.4
3. Somewhat oppose	15.8
4. Strongly oppose	49.2
(Total Oppose)	65.0
5. Not sure/refuse	20.6

7. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE hiring more police officers in your city or county to patrol communities and investigate crime? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support	60.4
2. Somewhat support	12.6
(Total Support)	73.0
3. Somewhat oppose	6.6
4. Strongly oppose	11.2
(Total Oppose)	17.8
5. Not sure/refuse	9.2

8. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE increasing funding for your local district attorney so they can prosecute crimes in your community? **(STONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		41.4
2. Somewhat support		20.2
(Total Support)	61.6	
3. Somewhat oppose		7.4
4. Strongly oppose		11.2
(Total Oppose)	18.6	
5. Not sure/refuse		19.8

Some Oregonians argue that jails and prisons are no longer effective at protecting the public and preventing crime....

9. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE the use of jails and prisons as the best method to protect the safety of the general public from those who commit crimes? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		47.2
2. Somewhat support		14.6
(Total Support)	61.8	
3. Somewhat oppose		13.6
4. Strongly oppose		10.4
(Total Oppose)	24.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		14.2

10. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE policies that allow for same-day catch and release for people arrested for property crimes such as car break-ins, car theft, and shoplifting? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		9.8
2. Somewhat support		12.8
(Total Support)	22.6	
3. Somewhat oppose		13.6
4. Strongly oppose		50.4
(Total Oppose)	64.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		13.4

11. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE policies that allow for same-day catch and release for people arrested for crimes of domestic violence such as assault, harassment and stalking? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support		2.8
2. Somewhat support		1.6
(Total Support)	4.4	
3. Somewhat oppose		7.6
4. Strongly oppose		81.2
(Total Oppose)	88.8	
5. Not sure/refuse		6.8

12. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE expanding local jail capacity to allow the police to arrest and hold more criminals who commit crimes, rather than issuing them a citation to appear in court? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support		42.0
2. Somewhat support		13.8
(Total Support)	55.8	
3. Somewhat oppose		9.8
4. Strongly oppose		17.2
(Total Oppose)	27.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		17.2

Governor Kate Brown recently announced that she will use her power as Governor to allow the early release of prisoners that were serving mandatory minimum prison sentences for murder and other physically and sexually violent crimes committed as teenagers so long as they had served at least 50% of their sentence.

13. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE Governor Brown granting early release for prisoners who were serving mandatory minimum sentences for murder and other violent crimes committed as teenagers who had served at least 50% of their sentence? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support		13.4
2. Somewhat support		14.4
(Total Support)	27.8	
3. Somewhat oppose		9.2
4. Strongly oppose		46.8
(Total Oppose)	56.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		16.2

A mandatory minimum prison sentence is a punishment required by law that a judge must impose when sentencing a convicted criminal for violent crimes. In Oregon, voters have approved mandatory minimum sentences of 25 years for murder, 8 years for forcible rape, and 7 and one-half years for crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping. Mandatory minimum sentences do not allow judges to be more lenient.

14. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE mandatory minimum prison sentences for adults convicted of crimes such as murder and other physically and sexually violent crimes?
(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support		57.6
2. Somewhat support		10.4
(Total Support)	68.0	
3. Somewhat oppose		6.2
4. Strongly oppose		15.2
(Total Oppose)	21.4	
5. Not sure/refuse		10.6

Thinking more about mandatory minimum sentences...

15. Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE getting rid of all voter-approved mandatory minimum prison sentences for adults who commit physically and sexually violent crimes and instead replacing them with suggested ranges of prison sentences that a judge may choose to follow or disregard? (STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

1. Strongly support		22.2
2. Somewhat support		13.4
(Total Support)	35.6	
3. Somewhat oppose		9.6
4. Strongly oppose		37.4
(Total Oppose)	47.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		17.4

Moving to the issue of bail reform. The Oregon legislature is considering several proposals to reform Oregon's cash bail laws.

(ROTATE Q's 16 -18)

16. The legislature is considering a proposal that would require a local sheriff to hold in jail all offenders arrested for violent felonies, including violent sex crimes and all domestic violence crimes, until a Judge makes a decision if they should be released before their trial. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE this proposal? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		62.8
2. Somewhat support		13.2
(Total Support)	76.0	
3. Somewhat oppose		3.6
4. Strongly oppose		6.6
(Total Oppose)	10.2	
5. Not sure/refuse		13.8

17. The legislature is considering a proposal that would allow offenders arrested for crimes such as theft, driving under the influence and misdemeanor assault to be released by their local jail without having to post bail or without having a Judge make a decision if they should be released before trial. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE this proposal? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		16.4
2. Somewhat support		15.0
(Total Support)	31.4	
3. Somewhat oppose		11.4
4. Strongly oppose		40.6
(Total Oppose)	52.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		16.6

18. The legislature is considering a proposal that would require a crime victim to be notified prior to their offender's pre-trial release and give the victim the ability to provide input on their offender's pre-trial release. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE this proposal? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		69.2
2. Somewhat support		12.8
(Total Support)	82.0	
3. Somewhat oppose		1.8
4. Strongly oppose		3.8
(Total Oppose)	5.6	
5. Not sure/refuse		12.4

19. Would you SUPPORT or OPPOSE a taxpayer funded program that would ensure crime victims have notice and an opportunity to provide input to a Judge prior to any decision about their offender's pre-trial release? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		53.4
2. Somewhat support		17.6
(Total Support)	71.0	
3. Somewhat oppose		5.6
4. Strongly oppose		7.4
(Total Oppose)	13.0	
5. Not sure/refuse		16.0

20. Do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE legalizing prostitution and other kinds of sex work in Oregon? **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

1. Strongly support		21.0
2. Somewhat support		13.0
(Total Support)	34.0	
3. Somewhat oppose		8.0
4. Strongly oppose		41.2
(Total Oppose)	49.2	
5. Not sure/refuse		16.8

21. Which statement comes closest to your view of legalizing prostitution and other kinds of sex work in Oregon: **(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?**

(a) Legalizing prostitution and sex work will protect sex workers from violence, decrease health risks and help protect vulnerable communities; or

(b) Legalizing prostitution and sex work will increase sex trafficking in Oregon and make it harder to protect victims of sex trafficking.

1. Strongly (a) protect sex workers		25.4
2. Somewhat (a) protect sex workers		13.0
(Total a)	38.4	
3. Somewhat (b) increase sex trafficking		9.2
4. Strongly (b) increase sex trafficking		27.0
(Total b)	36.2	
5. Neither (record response, but do not offer)		6.2
6. Not sure/refuse		19.2

AGREE/DISAGREE SERIES

For each statement, please let me know when you AGREE or DISAGREE with that statement.
(STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)?

22. Law enforcement needs more resources and funding, not less.

1. Strongly agree		57.6
2. Somewhat agree		10.8
(Total Agree)	68.4	
3. Somewhat disagree		6.0
4. Strongly disagree		12.4
(Total Disagree)	18.4	
5. Not sure/refuse		13.2

23. Oregon's criminal justice system unfairly targets people based on their race and economic status.

1. Strongly agree		31.0
2. Somewhat agree		13.8
(Total Agree)	44.8	
3. Somewhat disagree		10.4
4. Strongly disagree		24.8
(Total Disagree)	35.2	
5. Not sure/refuse		20.0

24. The vast majority of those in Oregon's prison system received a fair trial and deserve their sentence.

1. Strongly agree		30.0
2. Somewhat agree		18.2
(Total Agree)	48.2	
3. Somewhat disagree		9.6
4. Strongly disagree		9.0
(Total Disagree)	18.6	
5. Not sure/refuse		33.2

25. Our state is becoming too soft on crime and putting our communities at risk.

1. Strongly agree		46.4
2. Somewhat agree		11.6
(Total Agree)	58.0	
3. Somewhat disagree		11.2
4. Strongly disagree		15.6
(Total Disagree)	26.8	
5. Not sure/refuse		15.2

DEMOGRAPHICS

26. GENDER

1. Male	47.0
2. Female	53.0

27. AGE

1. 18-34	15.0
2. 35-59	39.0
3. 60+	46.0
4. Not sure/refuse	

28. EDUCATION: What is the last year of schooling that you have completed?

1. Some high school	1.4
2. High school graduate	10.4
3. Some college	29.4
4. College graduate	30.2
5. Post-graduate	15.6
6. Not sure/refuse	13.0

29. **INCOME LEVEL:** Which of the following best describes your current household income?

1. Under \$50,000	23.4
2. \$50,000-\$100,000	23.4
3. Over \$100,000	20.4
4. Not sure/refuse	32.8

30. RELATIONSHIP STATUS: Are you married or single?

1. Married	56.6
2. Single	29.2
3. Not sure/refuse	14.2

31. VOTER HISTORY: (INTERVIEWERS; PLEASE RECORD FROM THE PHONE LIST – SEE INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR PROCEDURE)

1. Voted in 1 Out Of 4 Elections	13.4
2. Voted in 2 Out Of 4 Elections	26.4
3. Voted in 3 Out Of 4 Elections	24.4
4. Voted in 4 Out Of 4 Elections	34.4
5. New Voters	1.4

32. POLITICAL PARTY:

1. Democrat	40.0
2. Republican	30.0
3. Independent/NAV	30.0

33. GEOGRAPHIC AREA:

1. Tri-County	43.0
2. Mid-Willamette	25.0
3. Coast	7.0
4. Southern	12.0
5. Eastern	13.0

34. GEOGRAPHIC AREA 2:

1. Multnomah County	19.2
2. Washington County	13.6
3. Clackamas County	10.2
4. Other	