District Voters Overwhelmingly Support Revised Criminal Code Act
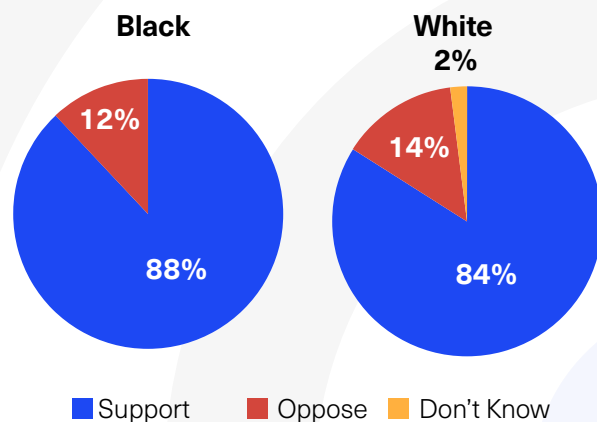
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The Revised Criminal Code Act of 2021 (RCCA), legislation that would update nearly all the District's criminal code provisions, is making its way through the DC Council. The bill establishes proportionality and consistency in sentencing while modernizing outdated parts of our code. DC Justice Lab and FWD.us commissioned HIT Strategies to conduct a poll on the subject, finding that 83% of District voters support the bill after being given a three-sentence description. 79% are more likely to support a candidate who would vote for the RCCA. An overwhelming majority of voters—across races and ages, genders, and Wards in the District—support this legislation and its individual provisions.

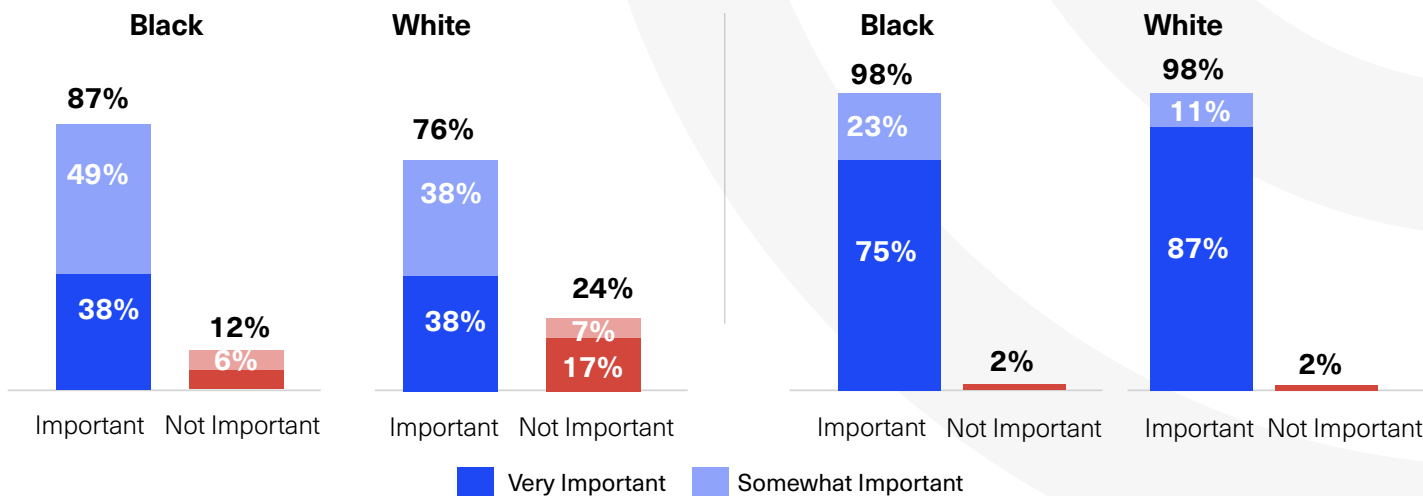◉ **Washingtonians overwhelmingly support criminal justice reform.**

Generally speaking, do you support criminal justice reform in the District of Columbia?

Black

12%

88%

White
2%

14%

84%

■ Support   ■ Oppose   ■ Don't Know

◉ **Black and White Washingtonians overwhelmingly believe in reducing incarceration rates and increasing fairness in sentencing.**

How important do you believe it is to reduce the number of people in jail or prison from the District of Columbia?

Black

87%
49%
38%

12%
6%

White

76%
38%
38%

24%
7%
17%

Important   Not Important   Important   Not Important

How important do you believe it is to ensure fairness and consistency in the District's criminal laws?

Black

98%
23%
75%

2%

White

98%
11%
87%

2%

Important   Not Important   Important   Not Important

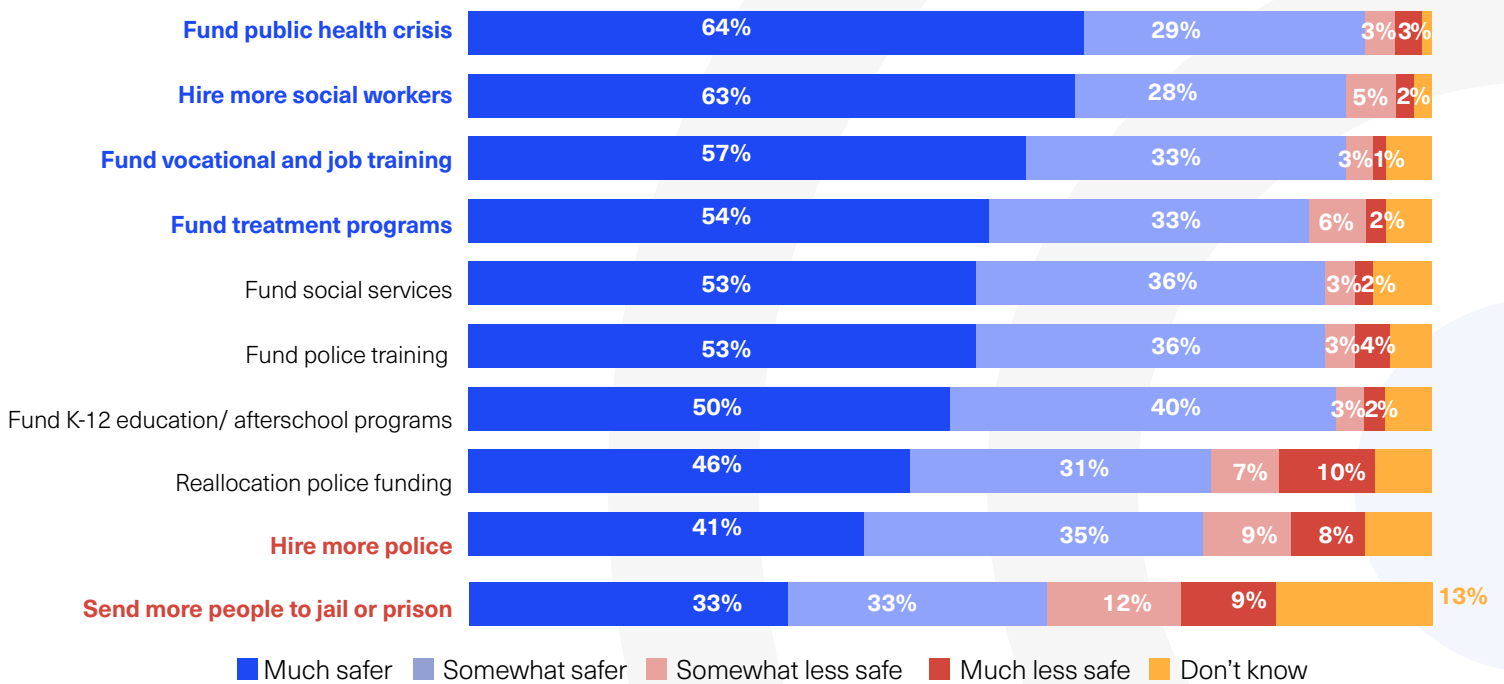■ Very Important   ■ Somewhat Important

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DC voters strongly prefer investments in social services and treatment programs to tough on crime policies.
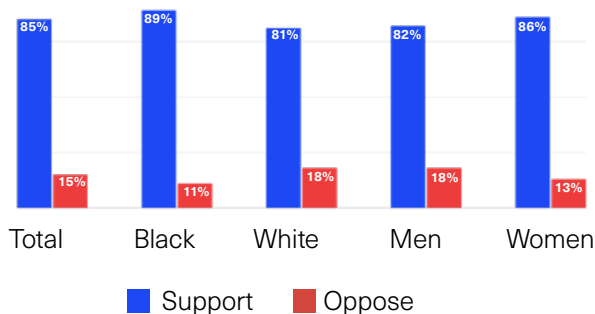
Please state whether the following would make you feel much safer, somewhat safer, somewhat less safe, or much less safe.

	Much safer	Somewhat safer	Somewhat less safe	Much less safe	Don't know
Fund public health crisis	64%	29%	3%	3%	
Hire more social workers	63%	28%	5%	2%	
Fund vocational and job training	57%	33%	3%	1%	
Fund treatment programs	54%	33%	6%	2%	
Fund social services	53%	36%	3%	2%	
Fund police training	53%	36%	3%	4%	
Fund K-12 education/ afterschool programs	50%	40%	3%	2%	
Reallocation police funding	46%	31%	7%	10%	
Hire more police	41%	35%	9%	8%	
Send more people to jail or prison	33%	33%	12%	9%	13%

■ Much safer ■ Somewhat safer ■ Somewhat less safe ■ Much less safe ■ Don't know
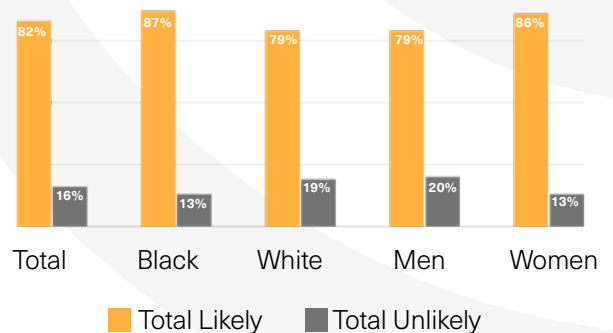
Support for RCCA remained high after exposure to both pro- and anti-RCCA messages.

Now that you've heard a bit more about the RCCA, do you support or oppose this legislation?

	Total	Black	White	Men	Women
Support	85%	89%	81%	82%	86%
Oppose	15%	11%	18%	18%	13%

■ Support ■ Oppose

After exposure to messages, Washingtonians remained very likely to support pro-RCCA candidates.

How likely are you to support a candidate who would vote in favor of the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA)?
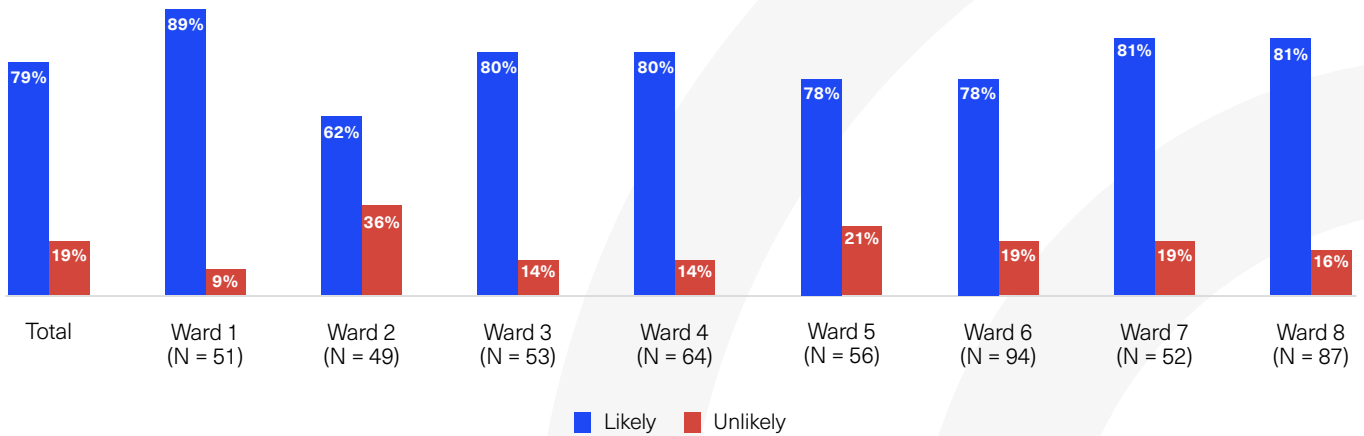
	Total	Black	White	Men	Women
Total Likely	82%	87%	79%	79%	86%
Total Unlikely	16%	13%	19%	20%	13%

■ Total Likely ■ Total Unlikely

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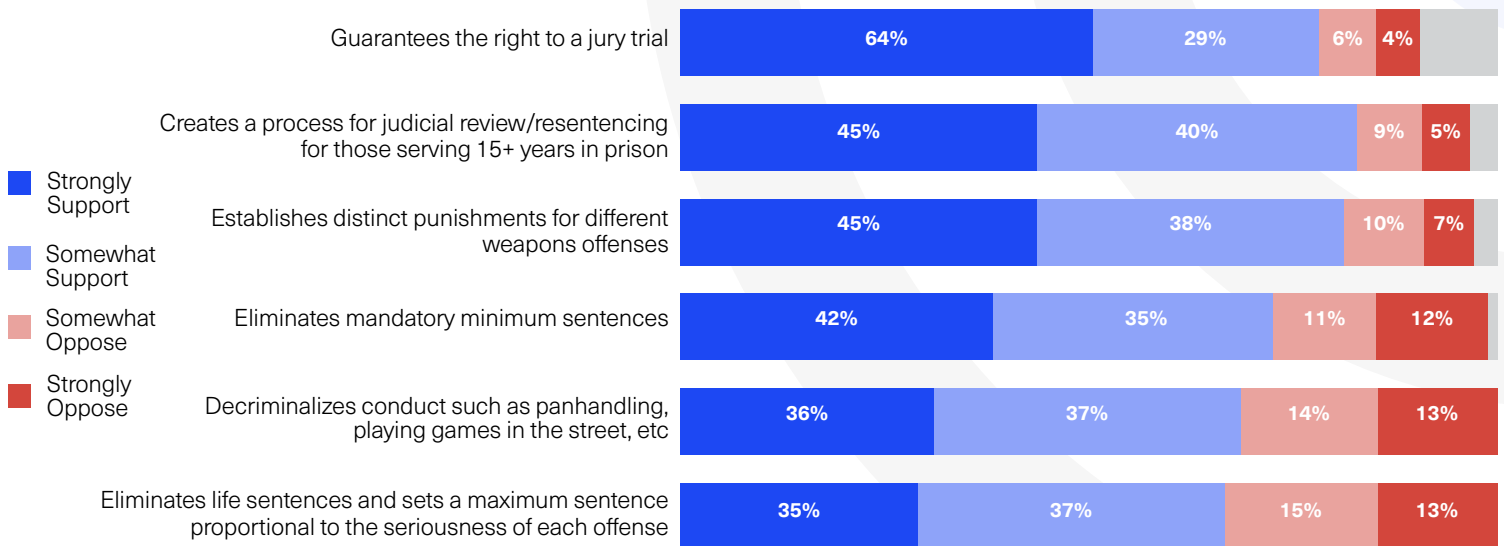
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◎ **Washingtonians' support for pro-RCCA candidates is high across Wards.**

How likely are you to support a candidate who would vote in favor of the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA)?

	Total	Ward 1 (N = 51)	Ward 2 (N = 49)	Ward 3 (N = 53)	Ward 4 (N = 64)	Ward 5 (N = 56)	Ward 6 (N = 94)	Ward 7 (N = 52)	Ward 8 (N = 87)
Likely	79%	89%	62%	80%	80%	78%	78%	81%	81%
Unlikely	19%	9%	36%	14%	14%	21%	19%	19%	16%

■ Likely   ■ Unlikely

◎ **Individual RCCA policies are incredibly popular, especially right to a jury trial**

In addition to creating uniform sentencing laws, the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA) includes other policy changes that were recommended by the D.C. Criminal Code Reform Commission. After each policy change, please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each priority.
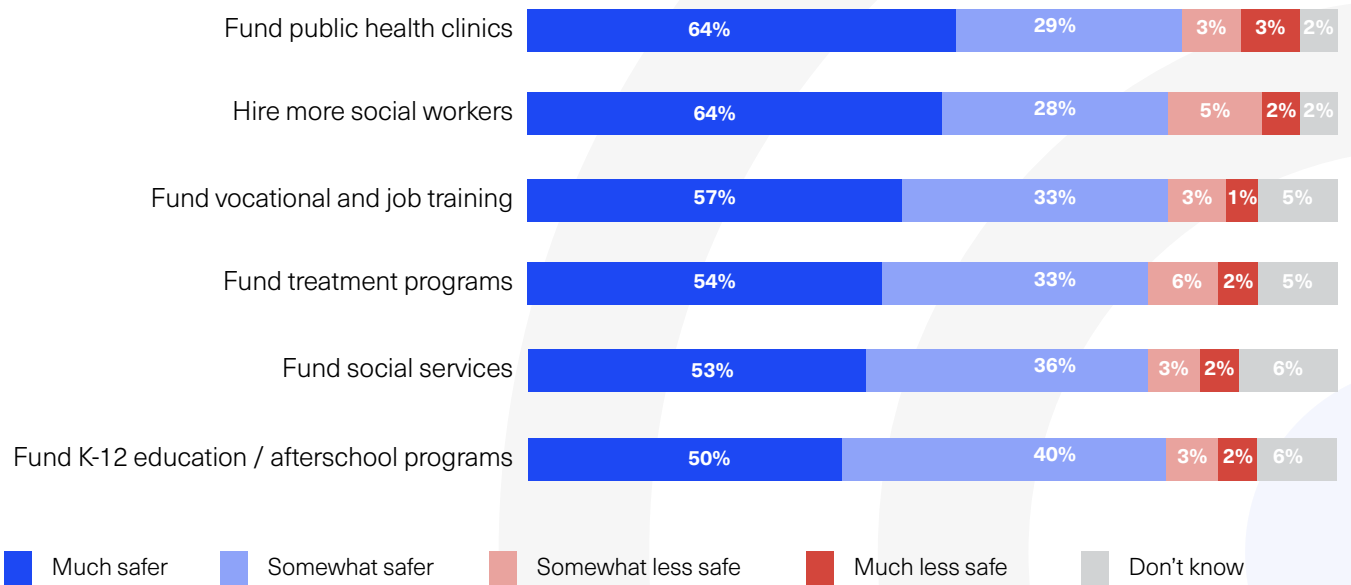
Policy	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Guarantees the right to a jury trial	64%	29%	6%	4%
Creates a process for judicial review/resentencing for those serving 15+ years in prison	45%	40%	9%	5%
Establishes distinct punishments for different weapons offenses	45%	38%	10%	7%
Eliminates mandatory minimum sentences	42%	35%	11%	12%
Decriminalizes conduct such as panhandling, playing games in the street, etc	36%	37%	14%	13%
Eliminates life sentences and sets a maximum sentence proportional to the seriousness of each offense	35%	37%	15%	13%

■ Strongly Support
■ Somewhat Support
■ Somewhat Oppose
■ Strongly Oppose

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◉ DC voters support smart on crime solutions that address the causes of crimes of desperation.

Please state whether the following would make you feel much safer, somewhat safer, somewhat less safe, or much less safe.

	Much safer	Somewhat safer	Somewhat less safe	Much less safe	Don't know
Fund public health clinics	64%	29%	3%	3%	2%
Hire more social workers	64%	28%	5%	2%	2%
Fund vocational and job training	57%	33%	3%	1%	5%
Fund treatment programs	54%	33%	6%	2%	5%
Fund social services	53%	36%	3%	2%	6%
Fund K-12 education / afterschool programs	50%	40%	3%	2%	6%

■ Much safer   ■ Somewhat safer   ■ Somewhat less safe   ■ Much less safe   ■ Don't know

DC Justice Lab is a team of law and policy experts researching, organizing, and advocating for large-scale changes to the District's criminal legal system. We develop smarter safety solutions that are evidence-driven, community-rooted, and racially just. We aim to fully transform the District's approach to public safety and make it a national leader in justice reform.

FWD.us is a bipartisan political organization that believes America's families, communities, and economy thrive when more individuals are able to achieve their full potential. For too long, our harmful immigration and criminal justice systems have locked too many people out from the American dream.