



PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

Americans view increases in violent crime as a national issue rather than a local one.

New Axios/Ipsos poll finds majority believe violent crime has increased this year but are largely divided on why and how to turn things around.

Topline Findings

Washington, DC, October 23, 2021 – A new Axios-Ipsos poll finds that Americans' concern about crime is high, but for most it is a more abstract than immediate concern. For instance, three-quarters of Americans say they feel mostly or very safe when out in their communities, and among that one-quarter who report feeling less safe, only half cite crime as a major reason why (or about one in eight Americans). However, a majority of Americans feel violent crime is on the rise since last year – which is broadly accurate – but also feel it is higher than observed 30 years ago – which is incorrect. Potentially because concerns about crime are more abstract for most people, opinions about what to do about crime tend to fall along lines of national politics. Democrats broadly support gun control and investment in social services while Republicans support a more armed populace and more spending on police.

Detailed Findings

1. Majorities of Americans believe (correctly) that violent crime has increased this year compared to last year and (incorrectly) compared to the early 1990s. Fewer feel this impact locally, particularly those in suburban and rural areas, and largely feel safe when in their community.
 - More than six in ten Americans (61%) believe violent crime is up since last year and more than half (58%) believe violent crime is up compared to the early 1990s.
 - Fewer (31%), believe crime is up in their community and nearly three quarters (72%) feel safe when they are out — up from 56% in September of 2020.
 - The picture is slightly different for urban residents, where crime has increased the most. Four in ten urbanites believe crime is up in their community, compared to about a quarter of those that live in suburban (27%) or rural areas (27%). Similarly, Americans in urban areas are less likely to feel safe in their community (65%) than those in suburban (75%) and rural (79%) areas.
2. Among the minority of Americans who do not feel safe in their community, crime surpasses COVID-19 as the primary source, leading some Americans to purchase or consider purchasing a gun.
 - More than half (55%) of Americans who do not feel safe in their community cite crime as a cause, up from 45% in September 2020, while half blame COVID-19, compared to 63% last year.
 - Roughly one in ten (9%) Americans purchased a gun in the past year. This share is larger among those who already owned a gun, with 23% saying they bought another.
 - Concerns over violent crime have caused the highest share (39%) of Americans to purchase or consider purchasing a gun in the past year. However, partisan differences exist:
 - Republicans are more likely to cite the election of Joe Biden (45%) and concerns over Black Lives Matter (32%) than Democrats (8% and 15%, respectively) and Independents (19% and 22%, respectively).





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- Democrats, on the other hand, are more likely to cite concerns over racism and white nationalism (24%) than Republicans (16%) — led by drastically different perceptions among Black (41%) and Hispanic (25%) Americans compared to white Americans (15%).
3. There is some consensus on what steps could reduce gun violence and violent crime in the U.S.
 - Just over six in ten (61%) Americans believe tighter gun laws would have an impact.
 - A large majority believe increased funding to police (70%) would curb gun violence and violent crime, while nearly as many (63%) also believe diverting police budget to community policing and social services would do this.
 - Over two thirds (68%) believe increased funding to social safety net programs would have an impact on combatting violent crime.
 4. However, partisanship is central to what and who Americans believe is the cause of increased violent crime and which solutions would be most impactful.
 - Majorities of Republicans say Democrats in Congress (59%), reduced police funding (58%), and President Joe Biden (54%) are most responsible for increases in violent crime.
 - Meanwhile, majorities of Democrats blame loose gun laws (54%) and rising gun sales (52%).
 - When it comes to solutions, a majority of Republicans believe increased police funding (59%) would have a major impact on reducing violent crime compared to roughly a third of Democrats (31%).
 - Conversely, a majority of Democrats (63%) think tighter gun control regulations and increased funding to social programs that combat poverty (54%) would have a major impact on reducing violent crime — compared to 16% and 18% of Republicans, respectively.
 - When asked which statement Americans agree with more: spending more on police and letting police officers do their job as they see fit or shifting some funding to social services, getting guns off the street, and de-militarizing policing, 77% of Republicans agree with the former while 71% of Democrats agree with the latter. Independents are roughly divided at 39% and 40%, respectively.

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between October 14-20, 2021 on behalf of Axios. For this survey, a nationally representative probability sample of 1,246 general population adults age 18 or older was interviewed online in English and Spanish. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.0 percentage points for all respondents.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:





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Full Annotated Questionnaire

1. Which three of the following topics do you find the most worrying?

	Total (N=1,246)	Republican (N=310)	Democrat (N=407)	Independent (N=425)
Political extremism or polarization	32	33	28	37
COVID-19/coronavirus	31	19	44	28
Climate change	26	7	43	28
Crime or gun violence	24	18	33	20
Healthcare	24	18	28	26
Government budget and debt	23	42	9	23
Immigration	21	44	7	19
Racial injustice	15	4	27	13
Taxes	15	21	8	15
Terrorism	13	20	8	14
Education	10	11	9	9
Unemployment	8	10	7	7
Social inequality	8	1	14	8
Opioid or drug addiction	8	7	5	11
Natural disasters	6	5	4	8
Foreign conflicts	4	7	2	4
Nuclear conflict	3	5	3	3
Other	4	4	3	5
None of these	3	2	3	2
Skipped	*	-	-	-

2. How safe, if at all, do you feel when you are out in your community?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Very safe	27	36	24	25
Mostly safe	45	47	45	47
Somewhat safe	21	13	24	20
Not very safe	5	3	5	6
Not at all safe	1	0	1	1
Skipped	*	-	*	-
Total safe (net)	72	83	69	72
Total not safe (net)	27	17	31	28



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2a. What makes you not feel safe when out in your community?

Base: Somewhat, Not very, or Not at all safe	Total (N=333)	Republican (N=51)	Democrat (N=123)	Independent (N=111)
Crime	55	60	54	59
The coronavirus pandemic	50	34	63	45
The possibility of gun violence	42	35	55	36
Potential for accidents or injury	24	24	30	24
Street harassment	23	23	21	25
Racial injustice	19	11	30	16
Something else	6	8	4	6
None of these	5	4	2	5
Skipped	-	-	-	-

3. To the best of your knowledge, compared to last year, is there more, less, or about the same amount of violent crime in the United States?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
More this year	61	65	61	61
Less this year	3	1	6	2
About the same	26	27	25	26
Don't know	10	7	8	11
Skipped	1	-	-	*

4. To the best of your knowledge, compared to last year, is there more, less, or about the same amount of violent crime in your local community?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
More this year	31	32	33	31
Less this year	7	5	9	6
About the same	46	52	43	47
Don't know	15	11	15	16
Skipped	*	-	*	*

4a. To the best of your knowledge, compared to thirty years ago (the early 1990s), is there more, less, or about the same amount of violent crime in the United States?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
More this year	58	67	54	58
Less this year	13	6	18	14
About the same	11	12	11	10
Don't know	18	15	17	18
Skipped	1	*	*	*

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5. Which of the following do you believe to be most responsible for the increased level of violent crime over the past year?

Base: Respondents who said gun violence has increased in their community or the U.S.	Total (N=818)	Republican (N=215)	Democrat (N=261)	Independent (N=279)
Increased social isolation/social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	41	36	48	40
Rising unemployment/economic issues	40	31	45	41
Reduced police funding	36	58	14	41
The mental health system	36	21	43	40
Loose gun laws	29	8	54	24
Democrats in Congress	28	59	4	27
Rising gun sales/People owning more guns	27	7	52	22
President Joe Biden	25	54	3	22
Police not controlling crime	19	19	20	22
Republicans in Congress	16	3	32	13
Other	15	17	11	17
None of these	2	1	4	2
Skipped	*	1	1	-

6. How much of an impact, if any, do you believe each of the following would have on reducing gun violence and violent crime in the U.S.?

Tighter gun control regulations	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	39	16	63	37
Minor impact	22	21	22	24
No impact at all	28	53	9	30
Don't know	9	10	7	9
Skipped	1	-	*	1

More relaxed gun control regulations	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	24	24	27	24
Minor impact	18	27	10	19
No impact at all	40	31	45	40
Don't know	17	18	17	15
Skipped	1	-	*	1



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6. How much of an impact, if any, do you believe each of the following would have on reducing gun violence and violent crime in the U.S.?

More citizens owning guns	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	29	40	23	29
Minor impact	21	25	19	21
No impact at all	33	20	44	33
Don't know	16	15	14	16
Skipped	1	*	*	1

Increased police funding	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	41	59	31	39
Minor impact	29	28	29	29
No impact at all	18	6	28	20
Don't know	12	7	13	12
Skipped	1	-	-	*

Diverting some police budget to community policing and social services (e.g. mental health counselors, community mediators)	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	32	16	47	32
Minor impact	31	30	30	33
No impact at all	22	42	9	21
Don't know	14	12	14	14
Skipped	1	-	-	1

Increased funding to social programs that combat poverty (food assistance, welfare, child tax credit, etc.)	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	35	18	54	33
Minor impact	33	36	28	35
No impact at all	21	37	9	22
Don't know	10	9	9	9
Skipped	1	-	*	*

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6. How much of an impact, if any, do you believe each of the following would have on reducing gun violence and violent crime in the U.S.?

Remove restrictions on government-funded gun violence research	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	19	10	31	16
Minor impact	24	19	28	25
No impact at all	27	40	15	30
Don't know	28	30	25	28
Skipped	1	1	*	1

Teach firearm safety in schools	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Major impact	30	36	28	28
Minor impact	32	31	32	36
No impact at all	20	20	22	19
Don't know	17	13	18	17
Skipped	1	-	-	*

7. Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?

When it comes to crime and public safety in the U.S...

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
We should spend more on police and let police officers do their job as they see fit	41	77	17	39
We should shift some funding to social services, get guns off the street, and de-militarize policing	41	9	71	40
Don't know	17	14	12	20
Skipped	1	*	*	*

8. At any time in your life, have you, or someone in your immediate family been the victim of a violent crime like assault or robbery?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Yes	30	25	29	34
No	69	75	71	65
Skipped	1	-	-	*



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9. How concerned are you, if at all, that you or someone you know could be a victim of violent crime?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Very concerned	23	17	29	22
Somewhat concerned	44	41	44	48
Not too concerned	27	35	24	27
Not concerned at all	5	8	3	3
Skipped	1	-	-	-
Total concerned (net)	68	58	73	70
Total not concerned (net)	32	42	27	30

10. How many guns, if any, does your household currently own? (Select one)

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
None – 0	55	36	71	56
1	9	11	11	7
2	8	8	6	11
3	3	4	4	3
4	4	6	2	3
5+	10	19	4	10
Don't know	8	12	3	7
Skipped	2	3	-	2

11. In the past 12 months, have you or someone in your household purchased any of the below?

	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
First gun (Base: Own 1 or more guns)	9 (N=437)	6 (N=150)	13 (N=109)	9 (N=154)
An additional gun (Base: Own 2 or more guns)	23 (N=316)	28 (N=116)	17 (N=63)	22 (N=120)
Improved lighting outside your residence	21	24	19	21
A home security system (alarm, cameras, etc.)	20	21	20	18
Self-defense tools (pepper spray, mace, taser)	12	10	14	12
None of the above	58	56	59	60
Skipped	1	-	*	1



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12. How much do you agree or disagree that the following have led you to purchase, or consider purchasing, a gun within the last year?

Concerns over COVID-19	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	6	5	8	4
Somewhat agree	8	8	6	8
Neither agree nor disagree	13	15	10	15
Somewhat disagree	4	3	4	4
Strongly disagree	11	13	8	13
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	57	54	63	54
Skipped	2	1	1	1
Total agree (net)	13	13	14	12
Total disagree (net)	15	16	12	18

Concerns over violent crime in your community	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	10	11	9	10
Somewhat agree	17	20	12	18
Neither agree nor disagree	15	16	12	16
Somewhat disagree	4	5	5	4
Strongly disagree	6	6	8	6
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	46	41	54	44
Skipped	2	1	*	2
Total agree (net)	27	31	22	28
Total disagree (net)	11	11	12	11

Concerns over violent crime in the U.S.	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	17	22	12	17
Somewhat agree	22	28	17	22
Neither agree nor disagree	12	13	9	12
Somewhat disagree	3	3	3	3
Strongly disagree	4	3	6	5
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	41	31	51	40
Skipped	2	1	1	1
Total agree (net)	39	50	29	39
Total disagree (net)	7	6	9	8



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12. How much do you agree or disagree that the following have led you to purchase, or consider purchasing, a gun within the last year?

The election of President Joe Biden	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	14	30	6	11
Somewhat agree	8	15	2	9
Neither agree nor disagree	13	11	12	14
Somewhat disagree	3	2	2	5
Strongly disagree	10	6	14	9
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	51	36	63	52
Skipped	1	1	1	1
Total agree (net)	22	45	8	19
Total disagree (net)	13	8	16	14

Concerns over racism and white nationalism	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	8	7	10	7
Somewhat agree	13	10	13	14
Neither agree nor disagree	14	16	12	14
Somewhat disagree	3	4	2	2
Strongly disagree	10	11	6	12
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	52	51	56	49
Skipped	1	1	*	1
Total agree (net)	20	16	24	21
Total disagree (net)	13	15	8	15

Concerns over Black Lives Matter	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent
Strongly agree	11	17	8	10
Somewhat agree	11	16	7	12
Neither agree nor disagree	14	13	13	16
Somewhat disagree	3	3	3	3
Strongly disagree	8	6	8	9
I have not considered purchasing a gun for this reason	52	45	59	50
Skipped	1	1	1	1
Total agree (net)	22	32	15	22
Total disagree (net)	11	9	12	12



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About the Study

This Axios/Ipsos poll was conducted October 14th to October 20nd, 2021 by Ipsos using our KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,246 general population adults age 18 or older. The sample includes 310 Republicans, 407 Democrats, and 425 Independents.

The survey was conducted using KnowledgePanel, the largest and most well-established online probability-based panel that is representative of the adult US population. Our recruitment process employs a scientifically developed addressed-based sampling methodology using the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS – a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the US. Households are randomly sampled from all available households in the U.S. All persons in selected households are invited to join and participate in KnowledgePanel. Ipsos provides selected households that do not already have internet access a tablet and internet connection at no cost to them. Those who join the panel and who are selected to participate in a survey are sent a unique password-protected log-in used to complete surveys online. As a result of our recruitment and sampling methods, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their phone or internet status and findings can be reported with a margin of sampling error and projected to the general population.

The study was conducted in English and Spanish. The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status and household income. The demographic benchmarks came from 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) from the US Census Bureau. The weighting categories were as follows:

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–29, 30–44, 45–59, and 60+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Other or 2+ Races Non-Hispanic, Hispanic)
- Education (High School graduate or less, Some College, Bachelor and beyond)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan status (Metro, non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under \$25,000, \$25,000-\$49,999, \$50,000-\$74,999, \$75,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$149,999, \$150,000+)

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, for results based on the entire sample of adults. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 5.9 percentage points for Republicans, 5.2 percentage points for Democrats, and 5.0 percentage points for Independents at the 95% confidence level. The margin of sampling error takes into account the design effect, which was 1.13 for all adults, 1.11 for Republicans, 1.16 for Democrats, and 1.12 for Independents. The margin of sampling error is higher and varies for results based on sub-samples. In our reporting of the findings, percentage points are rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, percentages in a given table column may total slightly higher or lower than 100%. In questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total substantially more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent.



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