

September 10, 2024

**To: Interested Parties**

**Fr: Impact Research**

**Re: Messaging Recommendations on Public Safety and Immigration Based on Recent Polling in Pennsylvania**

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Recent polling in Pennsylvania shows that voters in the state are concerned about crime and public safety and immigration. Pennsylvanians currently trust Republicans significantly more than Democrats on these two issues.

It is imperative that candidates in Pennsylvania engage on crime and public safety and immigration to help build trust with voters on the issues that they're concerned about.

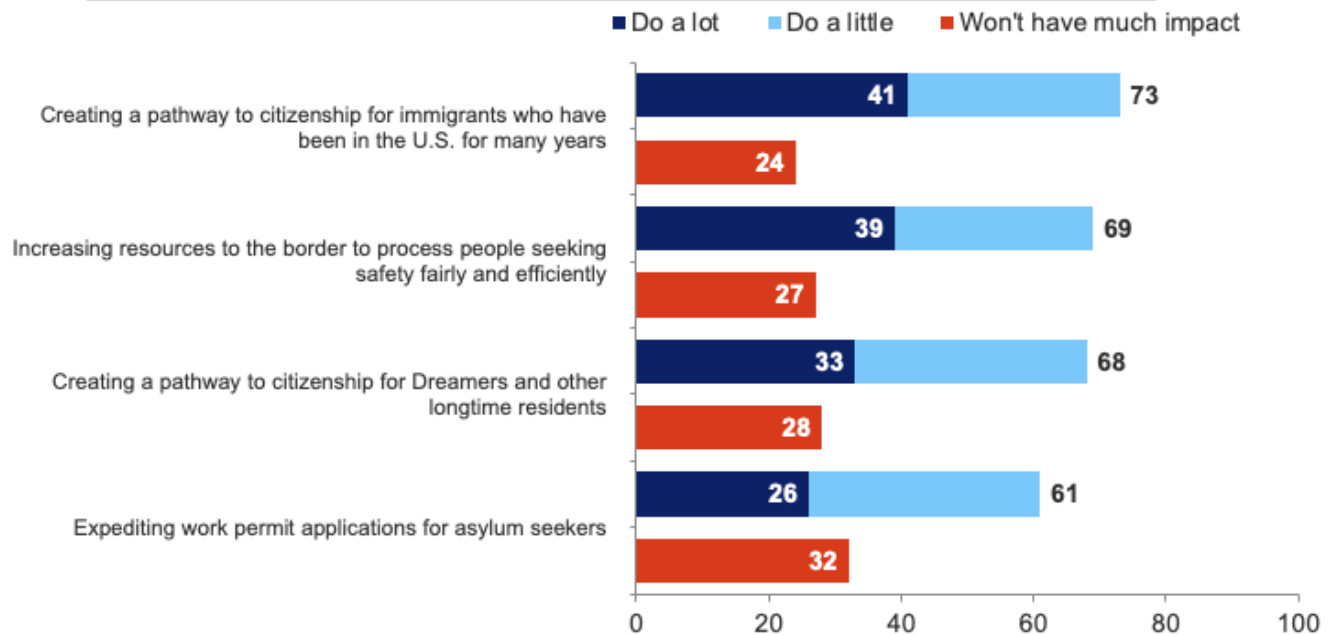
- **Crime and public safety and immigration are listed among voters' top concerns.** While inflation is the top concern that Pennsylvania voters want the Governor and State Legislature to prioritize (60%), crime and public safety (23%) and immigration (22%) are also priorities. Concerns about immigration are driven by Republicans (39%), but almost a quarter (23%) of Independents would also like the Governor and State Legislature to prioritize immigration. Crime / public safety is a concern among Democrats (18%), Republicans (26%), and Independents (25%).
- **Republicans start with double-digit trust advantages on the issues of immigration and public safety.** Republicans have a 22-point trust advantage on the issue of immigration overall and a 43-point advantage among voters who are persuadable on the generic ballot. Pennsylvania voters are also significantly more likely to trust Republicans when it comes to crime and public safety (+15 GOP).
- **Candidates who want to win in Pennsylvania need to engage on these issues – especially immigration.** There is a bigger trust gap on immigration than on crime and public safety, however, messaging on immigration helps consolidate trust and narrow that gap.

These findings are based on an online and text-to-web survey conducted by Impact Research among N=600 likely voters in Pennsylvania with additional N=100 oversamples each in CD-07 and CD-08, and N=50 oversamples each among Black and Latino voters. The poll was conducted June 13-19, 2024. The margin of error is  $\pm 4.0\%$  for the full sample and higher among subgroups.

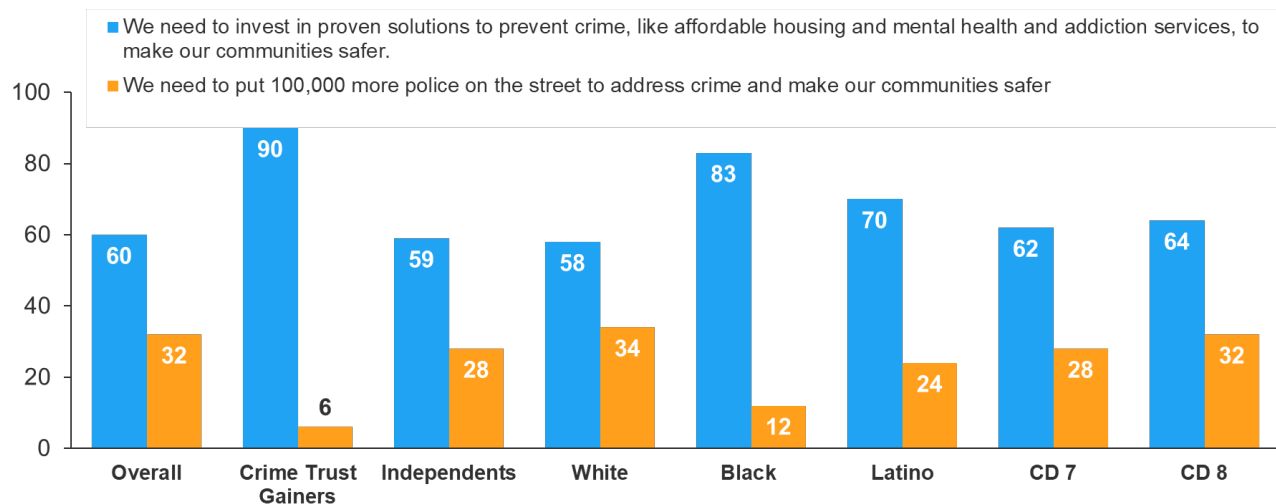
## Messaging Recommendations

- **The solutions voters think will do the most to fix our immigration system include a pathway to citizenship and investing more in a better system to process asylum seekers.** Voters aren't really tuned into the nuances of policy on immigration – a majority will support just about any policy proposal. But the strongest-testing solutions for our immigration system involve creating a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who have been in the USA for many years, and for Dreamers.

### HOW MUCH WOULD THESE PROPOSALS DO TO FIX OUR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM?



- **The best-testing messaging on immigration acknowledges that our current system is broken, and that we need a new, balanced approach.** Messaging emphasizing the contributions immigrants make to communities also tests well, but with less intensity than top-testing messages. Messaging on the financial cost of immigration enforcement was especially popular among voters who can be persuaded that Democrats are better on immigration and among those who are persuadable on the generic ballot.
  - “Billions” messaging: *“We are currently spending \$451 billion a year on immigration enforcement and the system is more broken than ever. We need a smarter approach that balances border security with a pathway to citizenship for longtime residents.”*
  - “Balanced” messaging: *“We need a balanced approach to immigration including an orderly and humane processing of children and families at the border and a path to citizenship for long term residents and dreamers.”*



- **Investing in proven solutions to prevent crime is more appealing than increasing the number of police officers in communities.** When asked to choose between two approaches to address crime in their area, Pennsylvania voters choose investing in proven solutions over more police by an almost 2:1 margin. An approach focused on investing in proven solutions is especially appealing to Black voters, Latino voters, and voters in Congressional Districts 7 and 8.
- **The best-testing messaging for crime and public safety emphasizes that we should not be overly reliant on police and should instead invest in proven solutions that address the root causes of crime.** A message emphasizing the need to invest in solutions that address the root causes of crime – rather than choosing to “arrest our way out of homelessness” – is especially popular among Independents and voters who can be persuaded that Democrats are better on crime and public safety.
  - “Answer” messaging: *“Police are not the answer to every problem – they are not social workers or counselors. We shouldn’t ask them to fix problems that shouldn’t be their job to handle in the first place. We can reduce the burden on police by funding more appropriate first responders for certain emergencies.”*
  - “Invest” messaging: *“We cannot arrest our way out of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Investing in services that will treat the root causes of these problems, like affordable housing and job training, is a more effective solution than relying on punishment and incarceration.”*
  - “Resources” messaging: *“The safest communities usually have the most resources. We need to invest in proven solutions to prevent crime, like affordable housing and mental health and addiction services. By addressing poverty and lack of opportunities, we can stop the cycle of crime.”*