



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: ROBERT BLIZZARD – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
DATE: JANUARY 25, 2018
RE: NATIONAL POLL RESULTS

On behalf of the Justice Action Network, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national survey of 800 registered voters (moe \pm 3.5%), January 11-14, 2018. Fully 40% of interviews were conducted via cell phone. This memo is to review the key findings from the survey.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Fully three-quarters of Americans believe the country's criminal justice system needs significant improvements.**
 - By a 76%-21% margin, voters believe the country's criminal justice system needs significant improvements versus it's working pretty well as it is. Fully two-thirds of Republicans (68%), and substantial majorities of both Independents (78%) and Democrats (80%) believe the system needs significant improvements. An overwhelming number of women (80%) want changes to the system.
 - And, 87% of Americans agree that some of the money we are spending on locking up nonviolent offenders should be shifted to alternatives like electronic monitoring, community service, and probation. Agreement on this issue extends across party lines, as 80% of Republicans, 90% of Independents and 90% of Democrats agree with this reform. Further, 87% of Women voters agree that some of the money should be shifted to alternatives.
- **Americans strongly support prison reforms that rehabilitate incarcerated individuals, and agree we should break down barriers for the formerly incarcerated through policies such as fair chance hiring and expungement.**
 - By an 85%-13% margin, voters agree that the main goal of our criminal justice system should be rehabilitating people to become productive, law-abiding citizens. Significant majorities of Republicans (79%), Independents (83%), and Democrats (92%) agree with this approach.
 - Fully 90% of Americans agree that we should break down barriers for people coming out of prison so they can get jobs, support their families, and stop being so dependent on government services – including 91% of Republicans, 90% of Independents and 89% of Democrats.

- Fully two-thirds of voters (65%-33%) support fair chance hiring -- allowing job applicants to explain their qualifications for a job before they are asked about their criminal histories.
- And, by a 79%-18% margin, Americans strongly support providing first-time, low-level, nonviolent offenders under the age of twenty-five the ability to expunge that conviction after successful completion of court-imposed probation. Voters across party lines support this proposal, including 71% of Republicans, 80% of Independents and 84% of Democrats.
- ***Mandatory Minimums for non-violent offenders are toxic with voters across the political spectrum.***
 - An overwhelming majority of voters (87%-11%) strongly support replacing mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent offenders with a system that allows judges more discretion. Support is strong from the right to the left among Republicans (83%-16%), Independents (88%-10%) and Democrats (89%-10%).
- ***It's nearly unanimous that voters support reforms specific to incarcerated women, the fastest growing segment of the prison population.***
 - By a 90%-9% margin, voters support providing basic feminine hygiene products free of charge to women serving time in prison. Support is strong across party lines, as Republicans (85%-15%), Independents (91%-8%), and Democrats (94%-6%) favor this change.
 - And, fully 86% of Americans believe that pregnant women serving time behind bars should NOT be shackled or handcuffed while they are in labor and in the process of delivering their baby.

BOTTOM LINE

This data is crystal clear – voters strongly believe the country's criminal justice system needs significant improvements and are very supportive of these reforms. Importantly, criminal justice reform is NOT a partisan issue, as significant majorities of both Republicans and Democrats favor these reforms.

Further, key 2018 target constituencies like Independent voters and Women voters are especially supportive, suggesting legislators in Washington can be helped at the ballot box in November by voting to pass legislation incorporating these changes to the criminal justice system.