

## 2004 VOTERS SURVEY FACT SHEET

### Voters want state funding for youth violence prevention programs

*Eight in 10 say youth safety is as important as law enforcement and prisons*

#### KEY FINDINGS:

More than 90% of voters throughout the state—including Republicans and Democrats, Whites, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and African-Americans—say violence involving youth is a problem today in California.

So serious is the perceived problem that eight in 10 voters, including 70% of Republicans and 85% of Democrats, say state spending on violence prevention and youth safety programs is as important to them as spending for law enforcement and prisons.

Voters overwhelmingly support state funding for programs that reduce youth violence. Republicans and Democrats alike believe in these programs and want to preserve them, even if it means cutbacks in other vital services.

When asked to compare ways to spend state funds to help keep youth safe from violence, California voters support job training first, followed by after-school programs, mental health counseling and then drug treatment, with the lowest priority assigned to law enforcement.

Six in 10 voters, including 47% of Republicans and 72% of Democrats, say they would be willing to pay higher state taxes if they were needed to maintain funding for violence prevention and youth safety programs.

65% of voters say they would vote for a 1/2-cent local sales tax increase to fund violence prevention and youth safety programs.

To receive a copy of the complete polling report or for more information, please go to: [www.preventviolence.org](http://www.preventviolence.org) or contact i.e. communications at (415) 616-3930.

This 2004 voter poll was conducted by i.e. communications for The California Wellness Foundation.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The Survey & Policy Research Institute completed 815 interviews with California voters from a random sample of working California residential phone numbers, each with an equal chance of being surveyed. Results were weighted to correspond to the regional distribution of voters according to the California Secretary of State's statement of voter registration and to the gender distribution of the October 2003 Los Angeles Times exit poll of California voters. The resulting sample yielded 426 women (51%) and 399 men (49%); 371 whites (46%), 257 Latinos (32%), 71 African Americans (9%) and 51 Asians or Pacific Islanders (6%). Regionally, 22% of the sample came from the Bay Area, 25% from Los Angeles, 27% from Southern California outside of Los Angeles, 16% from the Central Valley, 7% from the Central Coast and 3% from rural California.

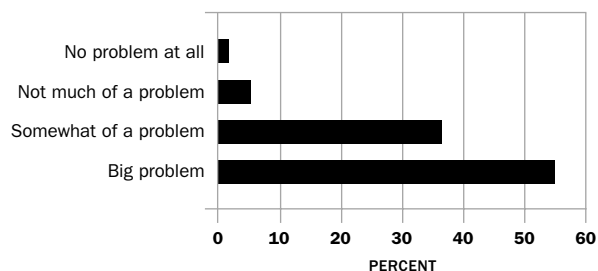
#### HIGHLIGHTS:

##### Is Violence Against Youth a Problem?

Nine in 10 California voters (91%) say violence involving youth is a problem statewide and more than half (54%) say it's a big problem. When informed about the number of youth whose lives are lost to gun violence (1,000 each year), voters responded more intensely, with two-thirds of voters indicating that violence involving youth is indeed a big problem.

Over half of state voters feel that violence involving youth is a problem in their own communities, with one in five saying it is a big problem. And in schools, where most parents expect their children to be safe, 44% say violence is a problem and 13% say it is a big problem. Clearly, California voters are concerned about the level of violence involving youth throughout society.

- **Would you say that violence involving youth is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, not much of a problem or no problem at all in California today?**

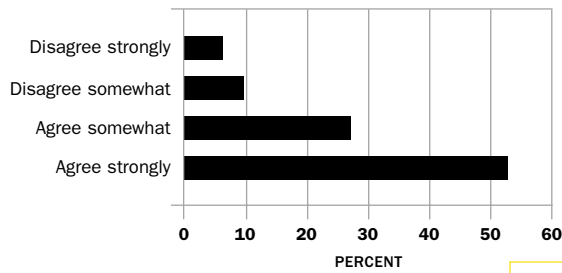


**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Should the state invest in violence prevention?**

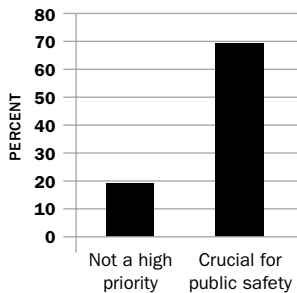
Similar to the past two years, eight in 10 California voters say state spending on violence prevention and youth safety programs is as important to them as spending for law enforcement and prisons. Agreement that violence prevention programs and law enforcement are equal partners varies little across ethnicity, political party, and region, with the least agreement registered among Republican voters at 76% and the most among African American voters at 85%.

- *Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "After-school programs and other crime prevention and youth safety programs save money in the long run by reducing law enforcement and prison costs."*



About seven in 10 voters, including 76% of Democrats and 60% of Republicans, say "state spending for violence prevention and youth safety programs is a crucial part of public safety spending that California cannot afford to cut back, even in tough budget times."

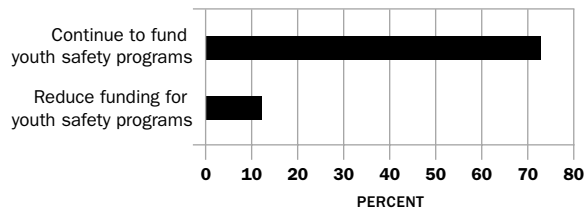
- *Some people say that state spending for violence prevention and youth safety programs is not a high priority compared to other vital needs in tough budget times. Others say it's a crucial part of public safety spending that California cannot afford to cut back, even in tough budget times. Which view is closer to your own?*



When given the explicit choice of building more prisons versus investing in violence prevention and safety programs, more than eight in 10 voters (82%), including 69% of Republicans and 90% of Democrats prefer to invest in prevention. The preference for investing versus building prisons is overwhelming in every region of the state, including among 76% of the voters in Southern California outside of Los Angeles.

Even when reminded of the state's massive budget deficit and the difficult choices to be made, three out of four California voters are in favor of continuing funding for youth violence prevention and safety programs.

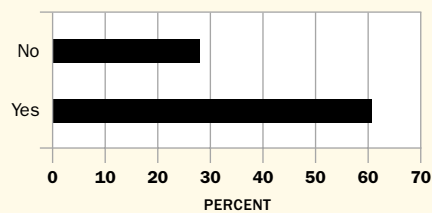
- *As you probably know, California is facing a budget crisis with an ongoing deficit estimated at five to seven billion dollars. The Governor and Legislature have already made deep cuts in schools, health services, public safety, transportation and other programs. As they decide where to make future cutbacks, should they: Reduce funding for youth safety programs to make more funds available for other state programs? OR Continue to fund youth safety programs at the current level, even if it means less is available for other state programs?*



**Are they willing to pay?**

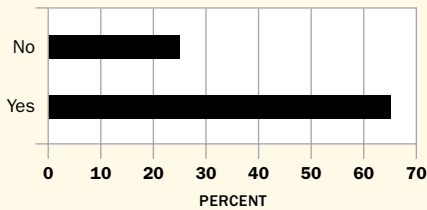
Voters not only believe that spending on prevention programs is crucial, but they are also willing to pay more in taxes to ensure they are funded. Six in 10 voters, including 47% of Republicans and 72% of Democrats, say they would be willing to pay higher state taxes if it were needed to maintain funding for violence prevention and youth safety programs. 65% would be willing to pay higher sales tax and 57% would be willing to pay higher property taxes.

- *What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for violence prevention and youth safety programs. Would you be willing to pay higher state taxes for this purpose?*

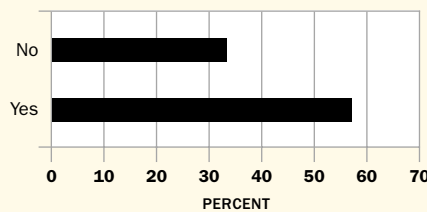


**Are they willing to pay? (continued)**

- *What if there were a measure on the county ballot to increase the local sales tax by one half-cent for programs for violence prevention and youth safety programs. Would you vote yes or no?*



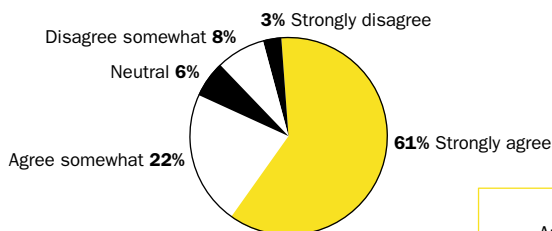
- *How about providing funds for violence prevention and youth safety programs through additional taxes on commercial and residential property that produces income? Would you vote yes or no?*



**Do violence prevention programs work?**

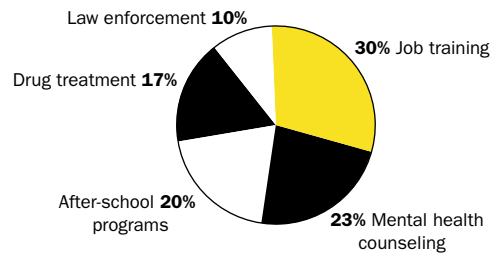
Eight in 10 voters, 84% of Democrats and 73% of Republicans, agree that “the best way to reduce youth violence is to help young people get and hold onto a job.” Yet, nearly half of all California voters say youth violence is hurting the ability of youth to obtain or keep a job. One out of five voters say violence is hurting a great deal.

- *Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “The best way to reduce youth violence is to help young people get and hold onto a job.”*



When asked to prioritize five state programs—job-training, mental health counseling, drug treatment, after-school programs and law enforcement—voters, by sizable margins, place all the other listed programs as a higher priority than law enforcement.

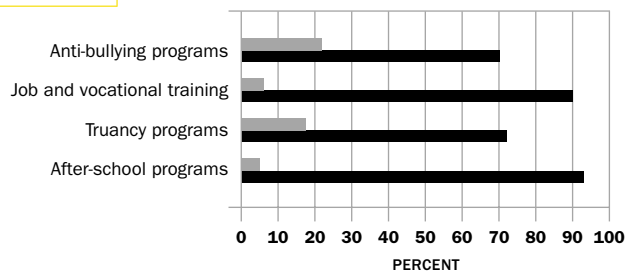
- *There are a number of ways that state funds could be spent to help keep youth safe from violence. Please consider the following list and rank them 1 through 5, with 1 as your top priority.* Program Chosen as First or Second Priority:



More than 90% of California voters think that after-school programs and youth job and vocational training programs are particularly effective in helping to prevent crime and ensure the safety of young people. Reflecting growing public concern, this year’s poll questioned voters on programs that target truancy, drop-out rates and bullying and found that more than 70% of voters believe programs that work to reduce these rates would be effective in reducing crime and violence.

- *Tell me whether you think the following types of programs are effective or not effective in helping to prevent crime and ensure the safety of young people:*

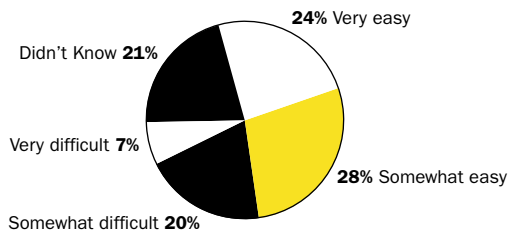
- *After-school programs that provide organized activities, including leadership training, tutoring, recreation, arts and sports.*
- *Programs that work to reduce the rate of truancy and the number of high-school dropouts.*
- *Youth job and vocational training to improve educational abilities and provide basic job skills and work experience.*
- *Programs that educated youth about how to deal with the harmful effects of bullying on those who bully and those who are bullied.*



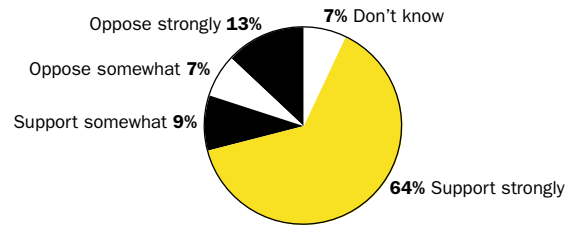
## SPECIAL FOCUS: GUNS

A majority of voters statewide (52%) say it is somewhat or very easy for a young person to obtain a gun in their community. Given this belief, it is no surprise that nearly two-thirds of voters are concerned about young people in their community and schools becoming a victim of gun violence. To protect youth from gun violence, 70% of California voters support laws preventing the sale of guns within 1,000 feet of a school, playground or daycare center.

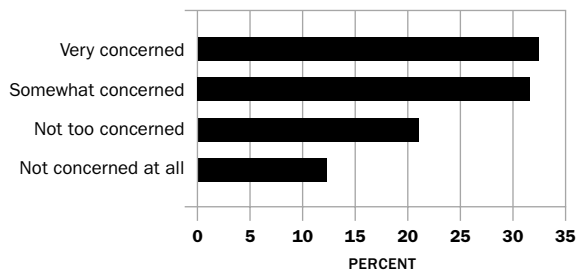
- *How easy do you think it is for youth in your city or community to get a gun? Would you say it's very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult or very difficult?*



- *Do you support or oppose laws and policies that prevent businesses from selling guns within 1,000 feet of any school, day care center or playground?*



- *Are you concerned about young people in your community or local schools becoming the victim of gun violence?*



## 2004 VOTERS SURVEY FACT SHEET

To receive a copy of the complete polling report or for more information, please go to: [www.preventviolence.org](http://www.preventviolence.org) or contact i.e. communications at (415) 616-3930.

This 2004 voter poll was conducted by i.e. communications for The California Wellness Foundation.