National Survey
July 29-August 3, 2022

Prepared by: Robert Blizzard, Partner
On behalf of Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), Robert Blizzard of Public Opinion Strategies completed a national survey of 1000 registered voters via online.

The survey was conducted July 29-August 3, 2022 and has a credibility interval of +3.53%.
The Criminal Justice System
There’s a strong sense among voters the nation’s criminal justice system “needs significant improvements.”

As you may know, the system of police, courts, jails, and prisons is sometimes called the criminal justice system...Generally speaking, do you think the criminal justice system...Needs significant improvements...or...Is working pretty well as it is?
Nearly three-quarters of Americans support reforming the nation’s criminal justice system.
And, generally speaking, do you think of “criminal justice reform” as primarily a Republican Party issue, primarily a Democratic Party issue, or as a bipartisan issue?
Prison Oversight
As can be expected, very few voters have seen, read, or heard much about prison oversight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Groups % A Lot/Some</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Incarceration-Yes, self &amp; family/friend</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White Men</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men 18-54</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP Men</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Conservatives</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Incarceration-Yes, friend</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND/College +</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voters believe the country’s prisons should be inspected “more than once a year.”

And, in your opinion, how often do you think the country's prisons should be inspected?

- More than once a year
- Once a year
- Once every three years
- ...or...
- Only when problems arise?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>GOP (42%)</th>
<th>IND (12%)</th>
<th>DEM (46%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a year</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every three years</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only when problems arise</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When it comes to who should oversee, voters have a strong preference for professional inspectors independent of the prison system.

And, in your opinion, which ONE of the following should inspect the country’s prisons?

- Professional inspectors who are independent of the prison system that they are inspecting
- People who work in the same prison system that they are inspecting
- People who used to be incarcerated and/or their family members in the local community
- ...or...
- Non-profit groups in the local community?

73% Total

72% GOP (42%)
9% 5% 3%

67% IND (12%)
6% 10% 8%

74% DEM (46%)
5% 6% 6%
The best reason to inspect prisons: making sure the public and policymakers know about problems that exist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Most Important Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>GOP (42%)</th>
<th>IND (12%)</th>
<th>DEM (46%)</th>
<th>White (72%)</th>
<th>Black (12%)</th>
<th>Hispanic (10%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making sure the public and leaders know about the problems in our prisons so they can fix them</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure our tax dollars are spent effectively</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving public safety by reducing the risk that someone in prison will commit another crime when released</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping people in prisons safe while they are incarcerated</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping those who work in prisons like corrections officers and guards safe</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And, which ONE of the following is the most important reason to inspect the country's prisons?
Voters really aren’t sure about the primary reason NOT to inspect the country’s prisons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Most Important Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>GOP  (42%)</th>
<th>IND  (12%)</th>
<th>DEM  (46%)</th>
<th>White (72%)</th>
<th>Black (12%)</th>
<th>Hispanic (10%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prison oversight, meaning the inspection of the country's prisons, is just more big government bureaucracy</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison oversight, meaning the inspection of the country's prisons, costs too much taxpayer money</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminals who break the law deserve whatever they get while they are in prison</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons already take care of their own problems, and there is no need for independent oversight</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And, which ONE of the following is the most important reason to NOT inspect the country's prisons?
By an overwhelming margin, Americans believe states and the federal government should have a system of independent oversight.

Generally speaking, do you believe that states and the federal government should have a system of independent oversight for their prisons?
And, even after voters hear from both sides...

Now, please read some more information about this...

Some people say that prisons have their own staff who can conduct prison oversight through internal investigations and inspections, and that they can be trusted to honestly report problems to the public and lawmakers without additional oversight.

...while...

Other people say that prison oversight must be done by people who are independent of the prison system in order for the public and lawmakers to truly understand what is really happening in prisons.

And, now that you have some more information, do you believe that states and the federal government should have a system of independent oversight for their prisons?
Support for independent oversight of prisons remains significant.

And, now that you have some more information, do you believe that states and the federal government should have a system of independent oversight for their prisons?
Nearly 80% agree “prison oversight is independent if the inspections are performed by people who do not work in the prisons system.”

And, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Prison oversight is independent if the inspections are performed by people who do not work in the prison system.
There’s a strong sense government agencies are NOT able to investigate their own problems and that voters don’t trust agencies to honestly report on problems.

Do you believe government agencies are generally able to investigate their own problems and honestly report on them to the public and lawmakers?

- Yes: 28%
- No: 63%

Do you trust government agencies to investigate their own problems and honestly report on them to the public and lawmakers?

- Yes: 23%
- No: 68%

*N=500 Registered voters*
The most convincing reasons for independent oversight include rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse; safety; saving money; and, fostering transparency.

An independent oversight system is important to help root out waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption in the federal or state prison system. 49% Very Convincing Total 86%

An independent oversight system is important for prison safety, including both those people who are incarcerated and those who work in prisons like guards and other personnel like correctional officers. 43% Very Convincing Total 87%

An independent oversight system costs only about 1% of the prison system’s budget and saves the prison and taxpayers money by finding potential issues before they become bigger and more costly problems. 43% Very Convincing Total 81%

An independent oversight system is more transparent to taxpayers and elected leaders so they will know more about what is going on inside our country’s prisons and can address issues if necessary. 42% Very Convincing Total 82%
These messages are effective, but lack the intensity of the others:

An independent oversight system is more accountable to taxpayers who are the ones paying for prisons and should be informed if the prison system is doing the right thing.

- %Very Convincing: 39%
- Total: 82%
- GOP: 36%
- IND: 33%
- DEM: 43%

An independent oversight system would mean people in prison, including prison staff like guards and correctional officers as well as prisoners, would be safer and healthier.

- %Very Convincing: 38%
- Total: 83%
- GOP: 34%
- IND: 36%
- DEM: 42%

An independent oversight system would mean that fewer women in prison would be sexually assaulted.

- %Very Convincing: 32%
- Total: 68%
- GOP: 28%
- IND: 27%
- DEM: 36%

An independent oversight system would help make sure families know about the problems in our prisons so they know their loved ones in prisons are safe.

- %Very Convincing: 31%
- Total: 75%
- GOP: 29%
- IND: 27%
- DEM: 35%

Now, for each of the following, please indicate whether it is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not a convincing reason for states and the federal government to have a system of independent oversight for their prisons...
These messages aren’t as convincing:

An independent oversight system would mean fewer people would be victims of violent assault in prison.

- %Very Convincing: 29%
- Total: 72%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOP</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>DEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
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An independent oversight system is important for public safety because people who are treated better in prison will be less likely to commit another crime when released.

- %Very Convincing: 26%
- Total: 60%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>IND</th>
<th>DEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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</table>

An independent oversight system would mean people in prison would be less likely to commit new crimes upon release.

- %Very Convincing: 21%
- Total: 54%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>IND</th>
<th>DEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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</table>

Now, for each of the following, please indicate whether it is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not a convincing reason for states and the federal government to have a system of independent oversight for their prisons...
After voters hear the messages, support grows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82% - 8%</td>
<td>81% - 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% - 9%</td>
<td>76% - 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79% - 5%</td>
<td>83% - 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85% - 7%</td>
<td>84% - 9%</td>
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</table>

And, now that you have some more information, do you believe that states and the federal government should have a system of independent oversight for their prisons?
Voters believe it is very important a system of independent oversight has each of the following:

- That the oversight body has enough staff to carry out its mission: 91% very important, 4% not important.
- That the oversight body has the ability to investigate complaints from prison staff and prisoners: 91% very important, 4% not important.
- That the oversight body has full access to the prison system's documents and facilities: 90% very important, 5% not important.
- That the oversight body has the ability to talk to prison staff and prisoners freely and confidentially: 90% very important, 5% not important.
- That the oversight body has enough funding to carry out its mission: 89% very important, 5% not important.

Now, assuming states and the federal government have a system of independent oversight for their prisons, please indicate whether each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all...
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