



- QUESTIONNAIRE -

**Sample Provided by:** Nielsen Scarborough  
**Sample Size:** 2,607 Registered Voters

**Field Dates:** June 13-29, 2022  
**Margin of Error:** +/- 1.9%

**[Q.1 – Q.23 released separately]**

There is a proposal that addresses how to best respond to people who are behaving strangely or committing a minor non-violent offense due to their having a mental illness, a mental disability, or a mental health crisis.

For example, people will often call 911 because they are concerned that a person:

- might pose a danger to themselves, such as self-harm or suicide
- might pose a danger to others
- is acting suspiciously or disturbing the peace, or
- is committing a minor nonviolent offense like trespassing or loitering

In nearly all cities, the 911 operator sends law enforcement to the scene.

Many police officers, however, are not trained to deal with people with mental health issues. Thus, when officers encounter such people, they sometimes do not understand what is occurring and may act in ways that provoke a reaction in the person. Police officers may then try to arrest the person, which has led to escalation resulting in injury or even death.<sup>1</sup>

Studies have shown that people with mental health issues are much more likely to die in encounters with police than people without mental health issues.<sup>2</sup> People with mental health issues also end up in jail or prison for actions related to their mental health issues—such as not complying with a police command—rather than a treatment center.<sup>3</sup>

A few cities (including in Texas, Oregon and other states) have established programs that deal with people having mental health issues by using professionals trained to deal with them rather than police officers. More specifically the programs:

- hire mental health professionals and social workers trained to deal with mental health issues.<sup>4</sup>
- train 911 operators on how to determine if an emergency is a mental health issue or not and allow them to send mental health professionals and social workers to the scene, rather than police officers.

The goal of these programs is to use as little force as possible and to get the person having a mental health issue back home or into a hospital, and into a mental health treatment program if they are not already in one, rather than have them arrested and put in jail. In some cases, these professionals can bring a law enforcement officer if they feel it is needed or call one if the situation does escalate.

Evaluation of these programs have found that they have resulted in reductions in the use of force, injuries, arrests, and incarcerations. They have also resulted in reductions of costs related to imprisonment and lawsuits over the use of excessive force.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> TAC. (2015) [Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters](#)

<sup>2</sup> Washington Post. (2020) [Police shootings database](#)

<sup>3</sup> American Psychological Association. (2019) [Improving mental health for inmates](#)

<sup>4</sup> Vera Institute. [Diversion programs, explained](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Social Workers Cooperate with Police Forces](#), National Association of Social Worker in the Wall Street Journal (2020); Vera Institute. (2021) [What Happens When We Send Mental Health Providers Instead of Police](#); Denver Government. (2021) [STAR Program Evaluation](#); U.S. News & World

There is a proposal to provide funds to cities and states that want to set up such programs or want to expand existing programs.<sup>6</sup>

First, here is an argument favor of this proposal:

Q24. These mental health issues generally involve people who are not committing a crime but are behaving unusually or are committing just a minor offense like disturbing the peace. Nonetheless, they end up imprisoned, seriously injured, or even dead. People with mental health issues and their families should not have to endure this unnecessary suffering. They are best dealt with by mental health workers.

	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	49.4%	35.6%	<b>85.0%</b>	9.1%	5.4%	<b>14.5%</b>	0.5%
Republicans	31.8%	43.9%	<b>75.7%</b>	14.7%	9.1%	<b>23.8%</b>	0.5%
Democrats	67.4%	26.8%	<b>94.2%</b>	4.0%	1.5%	<b>5.5%</b>	0.3%
Independents	46.8%	37.5%	<b>84.3%</b>	8.4%	6.5%	<b>14.9%</b>	0.8%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	42.9%	38.8%	<b>81.7%</b>	13.3%	5.0%	<b>18.3%</b>	0.0%
Somewhat red	43.3%	40.8%	<b>84.1%</b>	8.3%	7.0%	<b>15.3%</b>	0.6%
Lean red	51.7%	33.4%	<b>85.1%</b>	9.2%	4.3%	<b>13.5%</b>	1.4%
Lean blue	48.6%	36.8%	<b>85.4%</b>	9.3%	5.0%	<b>14.3%</b>	0.3%
Somewhat blue	54.5%	30.9%	<b>85.4%</b>	8.4%	6.2%	<b>14.6%</b>	0.0%
Very blue	54.9%	32.6%	<b>87.5%</b>	7.1%	5.1%	<b>12.2%</b>	0.4%

Here is an argument against the proposal:

Q25. Even with some training, 911 operators won't always know how dangerous the scene really is. We don't want to find ourselves in a situation where the social worker and other civilians get attacked or killed because a law enforcement officer wasn't there, and could not get there in time if the social worker does call them. It's too risky to replace police with social workers.<sup>7</sup>

	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	22.7%	38.1%	<b>60.8%</b>	21.7%	17.2%	<b>38.9%</b>	0.3%
Republicans	35.7%	42.3%	<b>78.0%</b>	14.9%	7.0%	<b>21.9%</b>	0.1%
Democrats	10.7%	33.7%	<b>44.4%</b>	28.8%	26.4%	<b>55.2%</b>	0.3%
Independents	22.2%	38.7%	<b>60.9%</b>	20.4%	18.0%	<b>38.4%</b>	0.7%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	32.9%	36.9%	<b>69.8%</b>	17.3%	12.3%	<b>29.6%</b>	0.6%
Somewhat red	21.5%	40.7%	<b>62.2%</b>	23.1%	14.0%	<b>37.1%</b>	0.6%
Lean red	20.8%	40.2%	<b>61.0%</b>	24.3%	14.3%	<b>38.6%</b>	0.4%
Lean blue	23.4%	38.4%	<b>61.8%</b>	21.2%	17.0%	<b>38.2%</b>	0.0%
Somewhat blue	20.0%	35.2%	<b>55.2%</b>	21.1%	23.7%	<b>44.8%</b>	0.0%
Very blue	20.4%	35.7%	<b>56.1%</b>	20.7%	22.6%	<b>43.3%</b>	0.5%

Report. (2020) [One City's 30-Year Experiment with Reimagining Public Safety; Congressional testimony](#) by Chris Richardson, Associate Director of Criminal Justice Services. (2021);

<sup>6</sup> [Mental Health Justice and Parity Act](#) by Rep. Katie Porter (D) ([H.R. 7254](#)). A similar proposal called the [Mental Health Justice Act of 2021](#) was introduced by Sen Warren (D) ([S. 515](#)). Neither bill has left committee. (The bill does not exclude grant recipients from directing a portion of the funds towards law enforcement, as long as it is in service of the grant's mission.)

<sup>7</sup> National Police Association. [Left to Replace Cops with Social Workers. Anyone Else See a Problem with This?](#); Maurice Richards, "The New Leftist Scheme to Destroy American Policing," Former Chief of Police Martinsburg, WV in the Daily Caller (2021); National Police Association. [Who are Social Workers Going to Call?](#); National Police Association. [The social workers conducting police work ideology lacks one significant requisite](#) National Police Association. [The Challenge of Diagnosing Mental Health Issues](#)"

Here is another argument in favor:

Q26. Cities that have put in place such programs have found they worked very well. It is extremely rare that the police are needed. They have seen big reductions in arrests, injuries, and deaths of people with mental health issues, and major cost savings, especially from reductions in lawsuits.<sup>8</sup> The police in these cities approve of these programs, because police are already stretched thin, and this program takes this burden off them and allows them to work on more serious crimes.<sup>9</sup>

	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	47.1%	39.1%	<b>86.2%</b>	8.3%	4.8%	<b>13.1%</b>	0.7%
Republicans	29.7%	48.4%	<b>78.1%</b>	13.5%	7.8%	<b>21.3%</b>	0.6%
Democrats	65.7%	28.7%	<b>94.4%</b>	3.6%	1.3%	<b>4.9%</b>	0.7%
Independents	42.7%	42.1%	<b>84.8%</b>	7.7%	6.4%	<b>14.1%</b>	1.2%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	39.4%	44.1%	<b>83.5%</b>	10.5%	5.3%	<b>15.8%</b>	0.7%
Somewhat red	41.5%	41.5%	<b>83.0%</b>	10.4%	5.4%	<b>15.8%</b>	1.2%
Lean red	46.7%	40.7%	<b>87.4%</b>	7.2%	3.9%	<b>11.1%</b>	1.4%
Lean blue	47.9%	38.5%	<b>86.4%</b>	8.9%	4.6%	<b>13.5%</b>	0.1%
Somewhat blue	50.5%	37.0%	<b>87.5%</b>	6.6%	5.8%	<b>12.4%</b>	0.2%
Very blue	54.8%	33.5%	<b>88.3%</b>	6.5%	4.2%	<b>10.7%</b>	1.0%

Here is another argument against:

Q27. The police should always be on the scene from the beginning, upholding the law. If mental health workers are the first or only ones there, they may not report it if a crime is being committed, because that is not their job. If police feel they need mental health workers to better handle situations, they can always partner with local agencies. Let's not undermine the police's ability to do their job.<sup>10</sup>

	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total Convincing	Somewhat Unconvincing	Very Unconvincing	Total Unconvincing	Refused / DK
<b>National</b>	20.7%	32.2%	<b>52.9%</b>	23.4%	23.4%	<b>46.8%</b>	0.3%
Republicans	31.2%	39.7%	<b>70.9%</b>	19.8%	9.3%	<b>29.1%</b>	0.0%
Democrats	10.3%	24.0%	<b>34.3%</b>	28.1%	37.2%	<b>65.3%</b>	0.3%
Independents	21.8%	34.2%	<b>56.0%</b>	20.9%	22.2%	<b>43.1%</b>	0.8%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	26.0%	36.8%	<b>62.8%</b>	20.0%	16.7%	<b>36.7%</b>	0.5%
Somewhat red	19.5%	35.3%	<b>54.8%</b>	23.9%	20.3%	<b>44.2%</b>	0.9%
Lean red	22.0%	34.3%	<b>56.3%</b>	23.5%	19.9%	<b>43.4%</b>	0.3%
Lean blue	19.5%	31.2%	<b>50.7%</b>	27.9%	21.4%	<b>49.3%</b>	0.0%
Somewhat blue	19.2%	28.7%	<b>47.9%</b>	19.2%	32.7%	<b>51.9%</b>	0.1%
Very blue	19.8%	27.8%	<b>47.6%</b>	23.1%	29.3%	<b>52.4%</b>	0.1%

<sup>8</sup> [Social Workers Cooperate with Police Forces](#), National Association of Social Worker in the Wall Street Journal (2020); Vera Institute. (2021) ["What Happens When We Send Mental Health Providers Instead of Police"](#); Denver Government. (2021) [STAR Program Evaluation](#); U.S. News & World Report. (2020) [One City's 30-Year Experiment with Reimagining Public Safety](#); [Congressional testimony](#) by Chris Richardson, Associate Director of Criminal Justice Services. (2021)

<sup>9</sup> Denverite. [In the first six months of health care professionals replacing police officers, no one they encountered was arrested](#), citing Denver Police Department Chief; The Atlantic. (2020) [An Alternative to Policing that Police Can Get Behind](#), citing Eugene, OR Chief of Police; Washington Post. (2020) ["Amid calls to defund police, Albuquerque creates an alternative department"](#) citing Albuquerque, NM police chief; NIH. (2012) [The Crisis Intervention Team Model of Police Response to Mental Health Crises: A Primer for Mental Health Practitioners](#)

<sup>10</sup> National Police Association. [Left to Replace Cops with Social Workers. Anyone Else See a Problem with This?](#); Maurice Richards, ["The New Leftist Scheme to Destroy American Policing"](#), Former Chief of Police Martinsburg, WV in the Daily Caller (2021); National Police Association. ["Who are Social Workers Going to Call?"](#); National Police Association. ["The social workers conducting police work ideology lacks one significant requisite"](#); National Police Association. ["The Challenge of Diagnosing Mental Health Issues"](#)

So, here again is the proposal:

Q28. Provide funds to cities and states that want to set up or expand programs that:

- hire mental health professionals and social workers trained to deal with mental health issues.<sup>11</sup>
- train 911 operators on how to determine if an emergency is a mental health issue or not and allows them to send mental health professionals and social workers to the scene, rather than police officers.

	Unacceptable (0-4)	Just Tolerable (5)	Acceptable (6-10)	At Least Tolerable (5 – 10)	Refused / Don't Know
<b>National</b>	21.8%	12.4%	65.4%	77.8%	0.3%
Republicans	35.0%	17.3%	47.6%	64.9%	0.1%
Democrats	9.8%	6.6%	83.5%	90.1%	0.2%
Independents	20.9%	14.9%	63.1%	78.0%	1.1%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>					
Very red	25.3%	16.3%	58.4%	74.7%	0.0%
Somewhat red	26.6%	13.5%	59.4%	72.9%	0.5%
Lean red	20.1%	15.1%	64.7%	79.8%	0.1%
Lean blue	22.5%	9.3%	67.6%	76.9%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	19.6%	11.6%	68.3%	79.9%	0.4%
Very blue	17.2%	10.8%	71.9%	82.7%	0.2%

Q29. Finally, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Favor	Oppose	Refused / Don't Know
<b>National</b>	75.6%	23.8%	0.7%
Republicans	59.0%	40.1%	0.9%
Democrats	91.5%	8.1%	0.4%
Independents	75.3%	24.0%	0.7%
<b>Cooks PVI (D-R)</b>			
Very red	71.0%	28.2%	0.8%
Somewhat red	68.5%	30.9%	0.6%
Lean red	76.3%	22.7%	1.0%
Lean blue	78.9%	20.7%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	76.0%	23.8%	0.2%
Very blue	81.2%	17.6%	1.2%

###

<sup>11</sup> Vera Institute. [Diversion programs, explained](#)