

TO: The Public Safety Performance Project Of The Pew Charitable Trusts
FROM: The Mellman Group & Public Opinion Strategies
RE: Kansas Survey Key Findings On Juvenile Corrections Issues
DATE: February 23, 2016

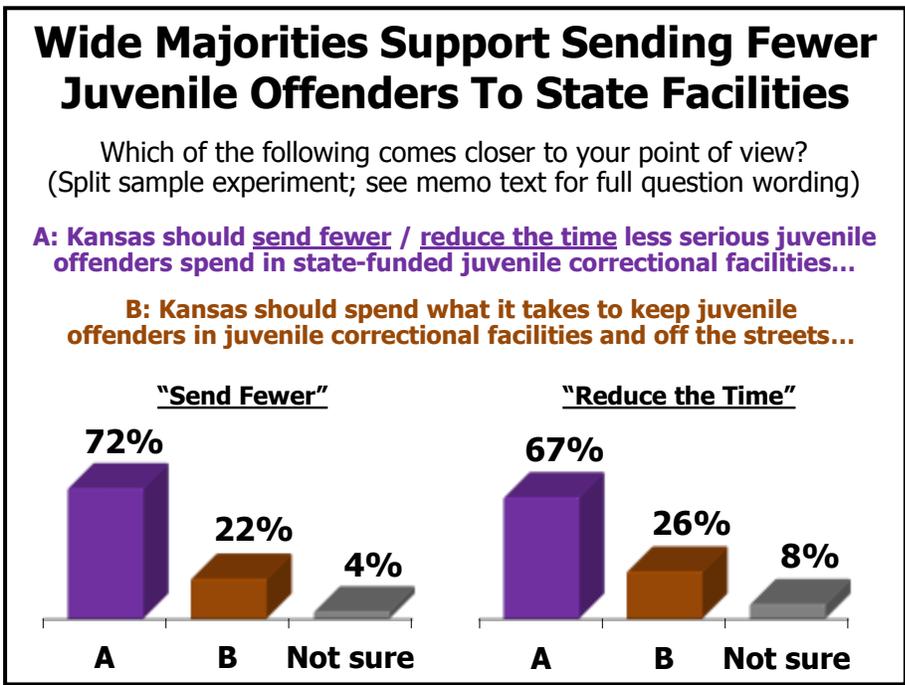
This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 600 voters representing the likely November 2016 Kansas electorate based on participation in past elections conducted by The Mellman Group and Public Opinion Strategies. Interviews were conducted by telephone February 10-14, 2016, and included both cell phones and landlines randomly selected from official voter lists. The margin of error is +/-4.0% at the 95% level of confidence. When design effects are accounted for, the overall margin of error is +/-4.4 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups (see final page).

Kansas voters support a variety of reforms to the state’s juvenile justice system, driven by the belief that rehabilitation, not punishment, should be the state’s top priority when dealing with juvenile offenders. To that end, they reject the idea that treatment, counseling and supervision programs represent a slap on the wrist, endorse treatment and counseling instead, and believe less serious offenders should be dealt with in the community in ways that will save the state money and improve outcomes.

KANSANS STRONGLY SUPPORT SENDING FEWER JUVENILE OFFENDERS TO STATE FACILITIES FOR LESS TIME & REINVESTING THE SAVINGS IN PROBATION & TREATMENT

Our analysis suggests that a strong majority of Kansas voters believes too many juvenile offenders are spending too much time in state-funded facilities.

Respondents heard arguments on both sides of the debate. One, indicated by the brown text and bar in the chart at right, was a strongly worded statement arguing that “Kansas should spend what it takes to keep juvenile offenders in juvenile



correctional facilities and off the streets where they are a danger to others. These kids need to be taught a lesson, instead of thinking that crime doesn't get punished in a serious way."

On the other side voters heard one of two versions of an opposing statement. Half the sample heard an argument that "Kansas should send fewer less serious juvenile offenders to state-funded juvenile correctional facilities and use some of the money saved to create a stronger probation system that holds juvenile offenders accountable for their crimes, strengthens families, and provides treatment for substance abuse, mental illness and behavioral problems." The other half of the sample heard an identical statement that replaced "*send fewer* less serious juvenile offenders to state-funded juvenile correctional facilities" with "*reduce the time* less serious juvenile offenders spend" in those facilities.

Regardless of the precise formulation, voters strongly side with the argument proposing a reduction in the use of state-funded facilities for less serious juvenile offenders. More than seven in ten (72%) believe the state should *send fewer* of these offenders to state-funded facilities, while only 22% endorse the statement arguing the opposite. Similarly, two-thirds (67%) agree with the former statement when it proposes *reducing the time* these offenders spend in state-funded facilities, more than double the 26% who think the state should spend what it takes to keep those offenders in correctional facilities.

Combining the results of the two questions to allow for closer examination of demographic subgroups demonstrates broad agreement, with Democrats (79%-17%), independents (66%-25%), Republicans (66%-27%), violent crime victims (64%-29%) and law enforcement households (78%-22%) all saying the state should be sending fewer juveniles to state facilities.

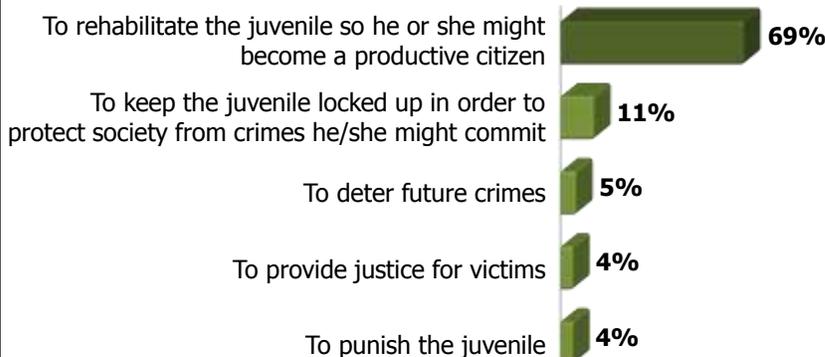
KANSAS VOTERS SEE JUVENILE REHABILITATION AS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT GOAL FOR THE SYSTEM

Voters believe that rehabilitation represents the main purpose of sending a juvenile offender to a state-funded facility – and it's not even close.

Seven in ten (69%) think the main purpose of placing a juvenile in a facility away from family should be to rehabilitate the juvenile so he or she might become a productive citizen, far outpacing keeping them locked up in order to protect society

Kansans Believe Rehabilitation Is The Clear Top Priority For Juvenile Offenders

As you may know, in Kansas juvenile offenders can be placed in a variety of state-funded juvenile correctional facilities where they are not living with family members. These facilities range from foster or group homes to psychiatric facilities or secure correctional facilities similar to an adult prison. In your opinion, what should be the main purpose of placing a juvenile offender in these facilities?



from crimes he or she might commit (11%), deterring future crimes (5%), providing justice for victims (4%), or punishment (4%).

Again, there is agreement across groups, as 75% of Democrats, 70% of independents, 65% of Republicans, 69% of violent crime victim households, and 78% of law enforcement households view rehabilitation as the most important goal in sending a juvenile to a state-funded facility.

KANSANS PRIORITIZE TREATMENT OVER PUNISHMENT

Some commentators have argued that the most important consideration for juvenile offenders should be making sure they get a real punishment, which often means spending time in a correctional facility. Kansas voters disagree.

Two-thirds (67%) place a higher priority on getting juvenile offenders the treatment, counseling and supervision they need to make it less likely they will re-offend in the future, even

if it means not spending time in a correctional facility, while barely a quarter believe it's more important that they receive a strict punishment (see question wording in chart above).

Again, Democrats (78%-19%) and independents (67%-24%) join Republicans (61%-33%), violent crime victim households (71%-25%), and law enforcement households (73%-25%) in prioritizing treatment and supervision over ensuring punishment in a correctional facility.

VOTERS SUPPORT A NUMBER OF OTHER REFORMS TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN KANSAS

- 68% support raising the eligibility age for adult prosecution from 12 to 14
- 69% support enhancing data collection about offenders on probation
- 77% support having schools, families and social service agencies deal with fighting in schools rather than the juvenile justice system



APPENDIX

<u>Subgroup (with n-size)</u>	<u>Margin of Error at 95% Confidence</u>	<u>Margin of Error at 80% Confidence</u>
Democrats (n=154)	+/- 7.9%	+/- 5.2%
Independents (n=196)	+/- 7.0%	+/- 4.6%
Republicans (n=250)	+/- 6.2%	+/- 4.1%
Violent crime victim households (n=78)	+/- 11.1%	+/- 7.3%
Law enforcement households (n=44)	+/- 14.8%	+/- 9.7%