

# Public Attitudes on Crime and Punishment in Georgia

Georgia voters want a public safety system that holds criminals accountable and keeps communities safe. They believe such a system is possible while reducing the size and scope of the prison system, and they strongly support

reinvesting prison savings into alternatives. Georgia voters, across party lines, support specific policies that would divert offenders from prison, shorten prison terms, and strengthen community supervision.

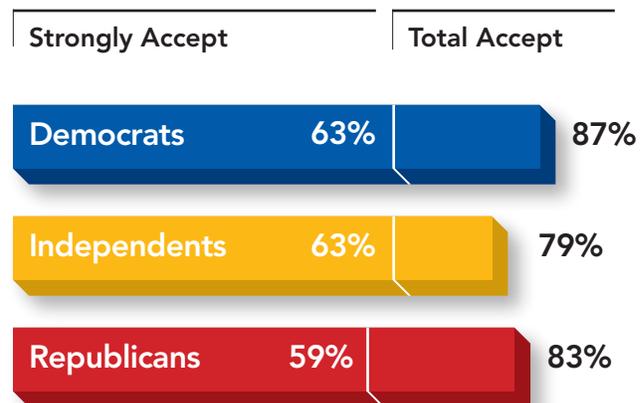
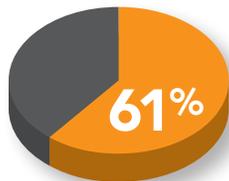
## REVISE SENTENCING FOR DRUG OFFENDERS

“Reduce sentences for those convicted of drug possession and invest the savings into programs that require offenders to participate in substance abuse treatment and pass regular drug tests or face penalties.”

% Total Accept



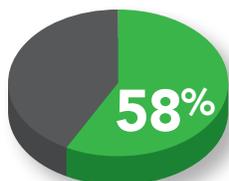
% Strongly Accept



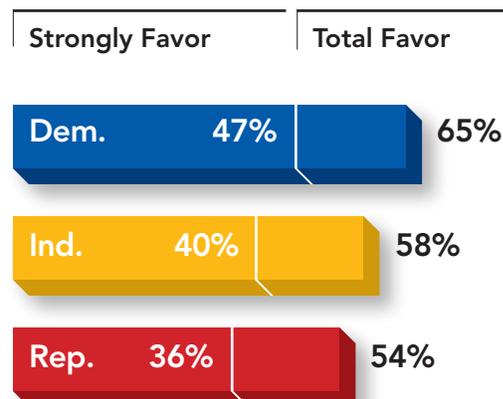
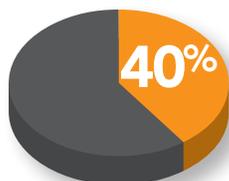
## RAISE THE FELONY THEFT THRESHOLD FROM \$500 TO \$1,500

“Georgia has a law that stealing property valued over 500 dollars is a felony crime, and offenders face at least one year in prison. Some neighboring states have recently raised this felony threshold. Do you favor or oppose raising Georgia’s felony threshold to 1,500 dollars?”

% Total Favor



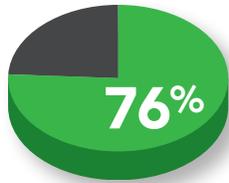
% Strongly Favor



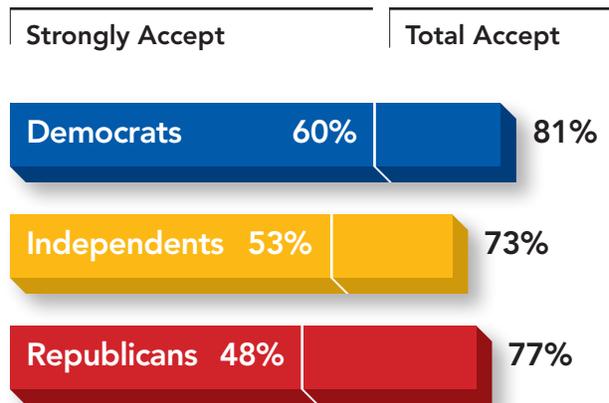
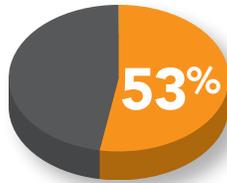
## ALLOW INMATES TO EARN TIME OFF FOR COMPLETING PROGRAMS

“Allow all but serious violent offenders to earn more time off their prison terms for completing programs like literacy and substance abuse treatment that are designed to increase their chances for success when they are released.”

% Total Accept



% Strongly Accept



## MANDATE SUPERVISION FOR ALL OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM PRISON

Voters strongly prefer that inmates be released before serving out their full sentences so they can be subject to a period of mandatory supervision, rather than be held until their sentences expire and released without any supervision.

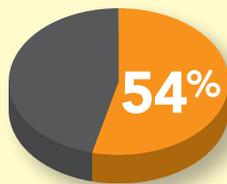
### Violent Offenders

When given a choice between violent offenders serving a full 5-year prison sentence or 4.5 years of a 5-year sentence plus 6 months of mandatory supervision, voters prefer the mandatory supervision option.

% Total Prefer



% Strongly Prefer



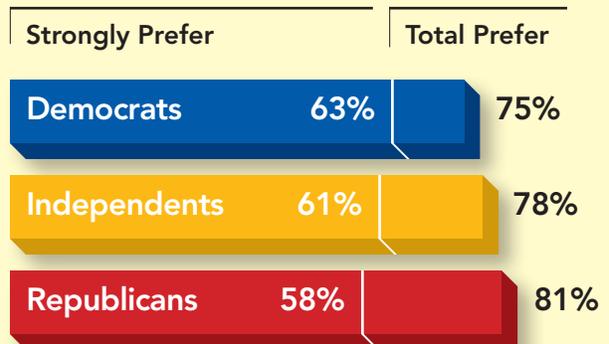
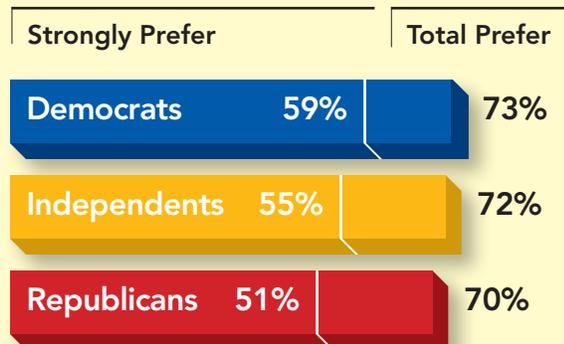
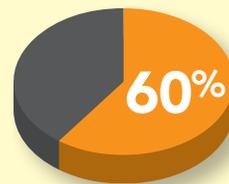
### Non-Violent Offenders

When given a choice between non-violent offenders serving a full 3-year prison sentence or 2.5 years of a 3-year sentence plus 6 months of mandatory supervision, voters prefer the mandatory supervision option.

% Total Prefer



% Strongly Prefer



## BROAD SUPPORT ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM FOR THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

|   |                |             |      |      |      |
|---|----------------|-------------|------|------|------|
| <p>“Prisons are a government program, and just like any other government program they need to be put to the cost-benefit test to make sure taxpayers are getting the best bang for their buck.”</p> | Strongly Agree | Total Agree | Dem. | Ind. | Rep. |
|   | 64%            | 87%         | 88%  | 84%  | 90%  |

|   |                |             |      |      |      |
|---|----------------|-------------|------|------|------|
| <p>“It does not matter whether a non-violent offender is in prison for 18 or 24 or 30 months. What really matters is that the system does a better job of making sure that when an offender does get out, he is less likely to commit another crime.”</p> | Strongly Agree | Total Agree | Dem. | Ind. | Rep. |
|   | 61%            | 85%         | 83%  | 86%  | 89%  |

|  |                |             |      |      |      |
|--|----------------|-------------|------|------|------|
| <p>“There are about 200,000 offenders in Georgia who are out of prison and under community supervision. If we are serious about public safety, we need a better system to supervise and track these people.”</p> | Strongly Agree | Total Agree | Dem. | Ind. | Rep. |
|  | 63%            | 87%         | 88%  | 86%  | 89%  |

|   |                |             |      |      |      |
|---|----------------|-------------|------|------|------|
| <p>“We have too many low-risk, non-violent offenders in prison. We need alternatives to incarceration that cost less and save our expensive prison space for violent and career criminals.”</p> | Strongly Agree | Total Agree | Dem. | Ind. | Rep. |
|   | 64%            | 83%         | 92%  | 88%  | 74%  |

|   |                |             |      |      |      |
|---|----------------|-------------|------|------|------|
| <p>“Reduce prison time for low-risk, non-violent offenders and re-invest some of the savings to create a stronger probation and parole system that holds offenders accountable for their crimes.”</p> | Strongly Favor | Total Favor | Dem. | Ind. | Rep. |
|   | 53%            | 83%         | 79%  | 86%  | 84%  |

## METHODOLOGY

On behalf of the Pew Center on the States, Public Opinion Strategies and The Mellman Group conducted phone interviews with 600 likely Georgia voters on January 19-23, 2012. The survey has a margin of error of +4.0%. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

The full survey is available at [www.pewcenteronthestates.org/publicsafety](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/publicsafety).

### Poll Respondent Demographics

- 19% victim or immediate family member a victim of a violent crime
- 52% victim or immediate family member a victim of a nonviolent crime
- 17% law enforcement households
- 55% self-identified as politically conservative
- 24% self-identified as liberal



Public Opinion Strategies is a leading national political, public policy, and public affairs research firm. Public Opinion Strategies is widely recognized as the nation's leading Republican polling firm, listing 17 U.S. Senators, 7 Governors, and over 40 Members of Congress as clients. Public Opinion Strategies also works for some of America's largest corporations and associations in the public affairs realm.



The Mellman Group has provided sophisticated opinion research and strategic advice to political leaders, public interest organizations, Fortune 500 companies, and government agencies for over thirty years. Current clients include the majority leader of the U.S. Senate and the Democratic whip in the U.S. House.