



To: Interested Parties

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: November 21, 2022

Re: New Survey Shows Gun Safety Was Key to Democrats Keeping the Senate in 2022

[History suggests Democrats should have been soundly defeated](#) in last week's midterm elections — after all, the party in power has only gained seats in one midterm since FDR's presidency. But this midterm cycle, Democrats became the exception to the rule, expanding their Senate majority thanks to big wins from gun safety advocates in battleground states. New polling of 2022 voters nationwide shows how Giffords' work and candidates' own commitment to gun violence prevention played an important role in these victories.

In this election, voters rewarded elected officials who voted to pass the first major piece of gun legislation in nearly three decades and rejected Republicans who opposed gun safety. The politics of gun safety have dramatically changed since 1994, when voters rejected politicians who passed the assault weapons ban. In fact, this survey shows gun violence has become a winning issue for Democrats.

Of course, our work isn't done. The Senate map is tougher in 2024, and with a presidential election looming, last week's results and this survey show making gun violence prevention a core part of Democrats' messaging will help them win.

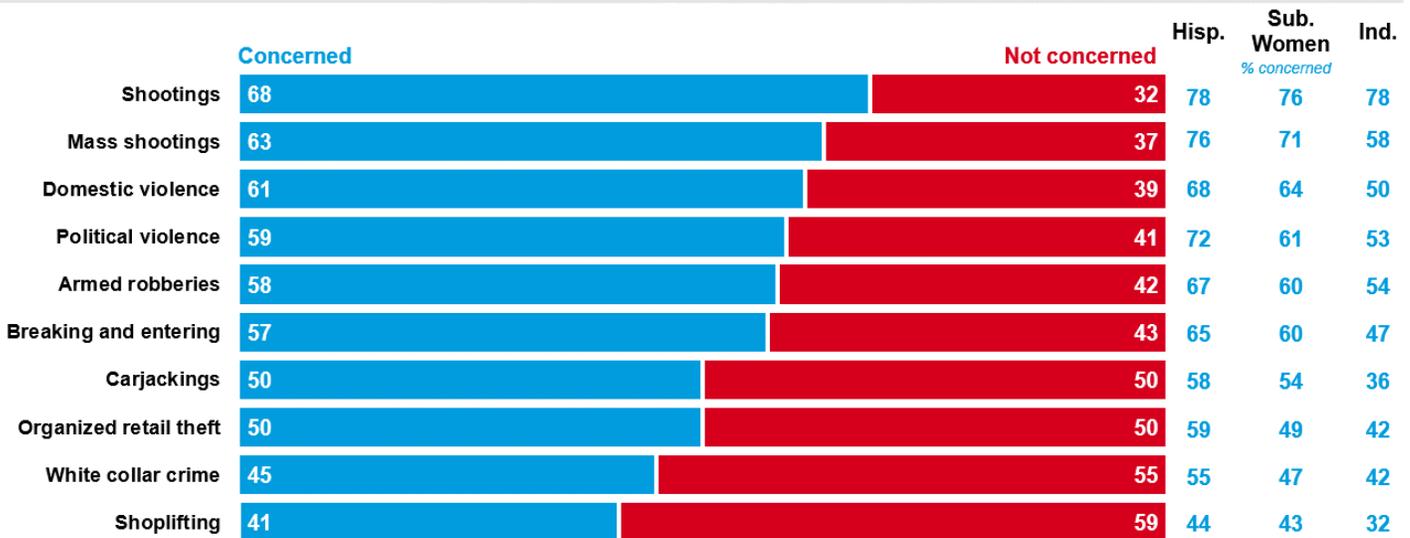
[Gun safety was a priority for voters nationwide in this election](#)

Gun violence prevention was top of mind when voters went to the polls. Gun violence (78% important) is one of only a handful of issues tested that three-quarters of voters deemed important in this election, alongside inflation (90% important), jobs and the economy (90% important), and Social Security and Medicare (83% important). Gun violence was particularly important among key blocs of voters Democrats need to hold onto in their coalition: independents (74% important), Hispanic voters (79% important), and suburban women (87% important).

This comes as voters are deeply concerned about shootings in their communities. Crime has consistently been a top issue for voters this cycle, with nearly two-thirds believing crime was up in their state as early as April.¹ Now, 83 percent of voters, including 87 percent of suburban women, 80 percent of Hispanic voters, and 76 percent of independents, say crime — specifically, violent crime, was an important issue to them when voting.

¹ See Giffords' research from the spring: <https://giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Giffords-Press-Memo-F04.18.22.pdf>

Please indicate how concerned you are about each...



In fact, voters are as concerned about kids in their community returning home safely from school (57% concerned) as they are about being able to pay the bills (58%). It's an even more serious concern than being able to access health care (55% concerned), especially among Hispanic voters (71% concerned about kids returning safely/68% concerned about accessing health care) and suburban women (64% concerned/60% concerned).

Emphasizing gun violence prevention as a solution to rising crime helped Democrats

Voters want stronger gun laws and prioritize candidates who support them. Voters nationwide want stronger gun laws by a two-to-one margin (68% stronger/24% less strong), including 73 percent of suburban women and 70 percent of independents. And they trust Democrats more than Republicans to combat gun violence (55% Democrats/45% Republicans), with half of voters nationwide saying they would never vote for a candidate who opposes commonsense gun safety reforms like background checks on all gun sales (50%).

Voters who were concerned about gun violence delivered for Democrats. The 48 percent of voters who said gun violence was extremely important to their vote overwhelmingly supported their Democratic candidate in the election for U.S. House of Representatives (62% Democrat/37% Republican). To put it simply, intensity was on the side of gun safety advocates, a marked shift from the years when the gun lobby was much more successful in turning out voters.

Democrats have to stay focused on gun safety ahead of 2024

Democrats can't take this election's victories for granted. In two years, Democrats will face a presidential election, a tougher Senate map, and an opportunity to regain control of the House. They need to remain focused on attracting the most persuadable voters in 2024 — the nine percent of 2022 voters who are not planning to vote for the same party they voted for in this year's congressional race.

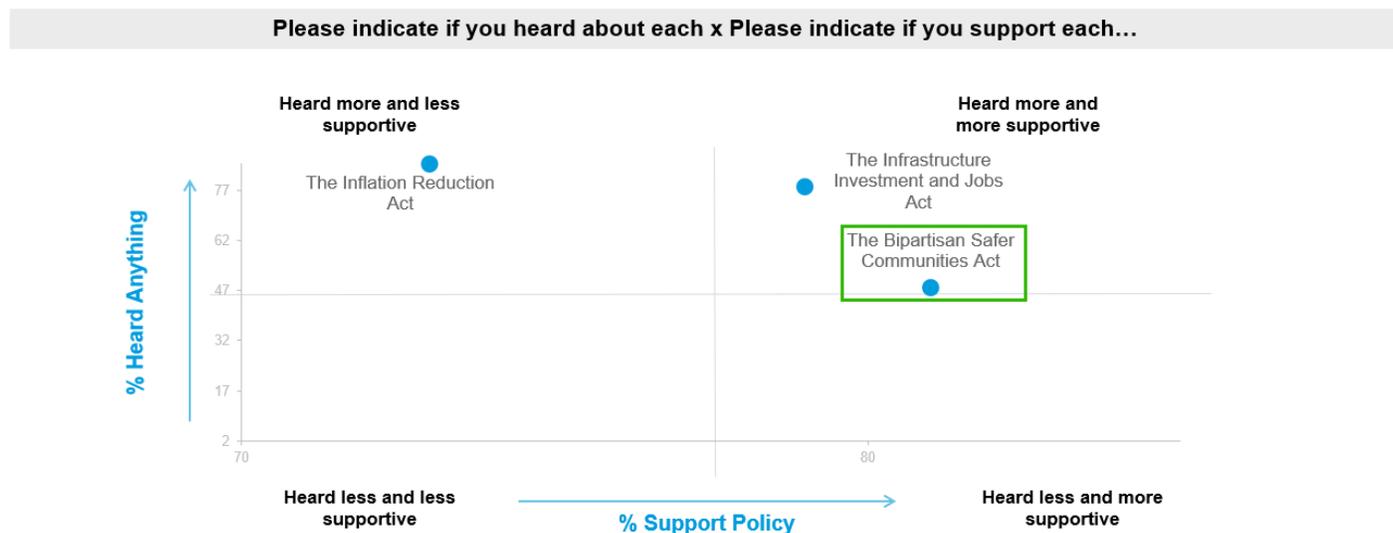
Crime is likely to remain a potent attack against Democrats. After decades of branding, voters tend to believe Republicans will do a better job keeping them safe (47% Democrats/53% Republicans) and combatting crime than Democrats (42% Democrats/58% Republicans). Suburban women (43% Democrats/57% Republicans), persuadable voters (35% Democrats/65% Republicans), and independents (28% Democrats/72% independents) all trust Republicans more on crime than Democrats.

Guns help rebut these attacks and demonstrate Democrats have a plan to reduce crime. [As Giffords' research in the spring showed](#), compared to a range of other solutions, background checks is the #1 priority for addressing crime (64% top priority) – even more than imposing stricter sentences for convicted criminals (53% top priority), increasing the presence of law enforcement (43% top priority), and increasing funding for law enforcement (42% top priority). This is especially true of Hispanic voters (65% background checks top priority, 44% increasing law enforcement presence top priority) and suburban women (73% background checks top priority, 36% increasing law enforcement presence top priority), who Democrats need to convince they know how to reduce crime.

And nationally, a generic Democrat who is committed to stronger gun laws has an 11-point advantage over a Republican who opposes new gun restrictions and a 39-point advantage among Hispanic voters – a key voting bloc that Democrats must focus on and win in 2024.

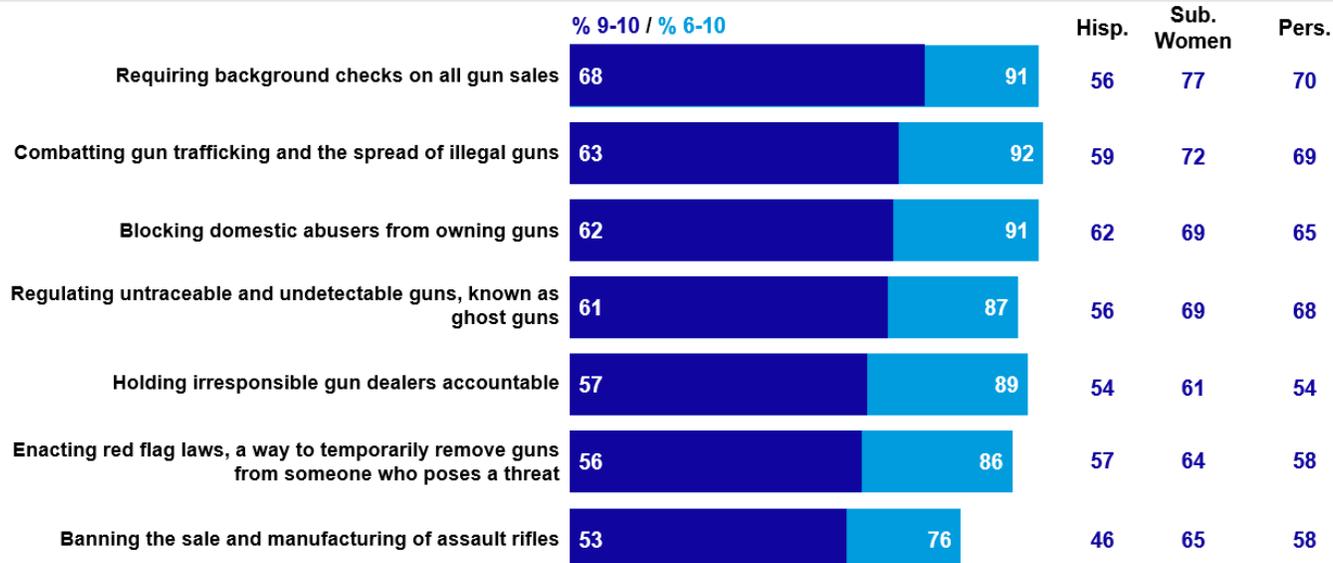
Vote	Overall	Persuadable	Independents	Suburban Women
	Net Democrat Advantage (Dem – GOP)			
Generic ballot (Democrat v. Republican)	-3	+16	+10	0
Gun-infused generic ballot (Democrat who supports stronger gun laws vs. Republican who opposes new gun restrictions)	+11	+39	+26	+20
Net Shift (Generic vs. Gun-infused ballot)	+14	+23	+16	+20

Voters have not heard enough about Democrats' achievements on gun safety and crime. Voters support the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act more than Democrats' other major accomplishments this year: the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. However, voters heard the least about the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. By bringing this into communications, Democrats have the chance to proactively set the record straight on their stances on crime and assure voters they support commonsense gun safety policies that reduce crime and protect their families.



Voters are calling on Congress to pass several commonsense gun safety policies. Majorities of voters are urging Congress to prioritize a host of gun violence prevention policies over the next two years, namely background checks on all gun sales (68% top priority), combatting gun trafficking and the spread of illegal guns (63% top priority), blocking domestic abusers from owning guns (62% top priority), and regulating ghost guns (61% top priority). While this will be a challenge in a divided Congress, Democrats can't give up. The key voting blocs Democrats need to focus on in 2024 are prioritizing gun safety, and they expect their elected officials to heed their calls.

Please rate each on a scale of 1 to 10 – where 10 means it should be a top priority for Congress and 1 means it should not be a priority at all.



ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,302 2022 voters nationwide, including 201 Hispanic voters between November 3-10, 2022. The survey had a confidence interval of +/-2.7%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of voters are properly represented.