



Criminal justice poll findings

Overview and key findings

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The project was sponsored by MassINC

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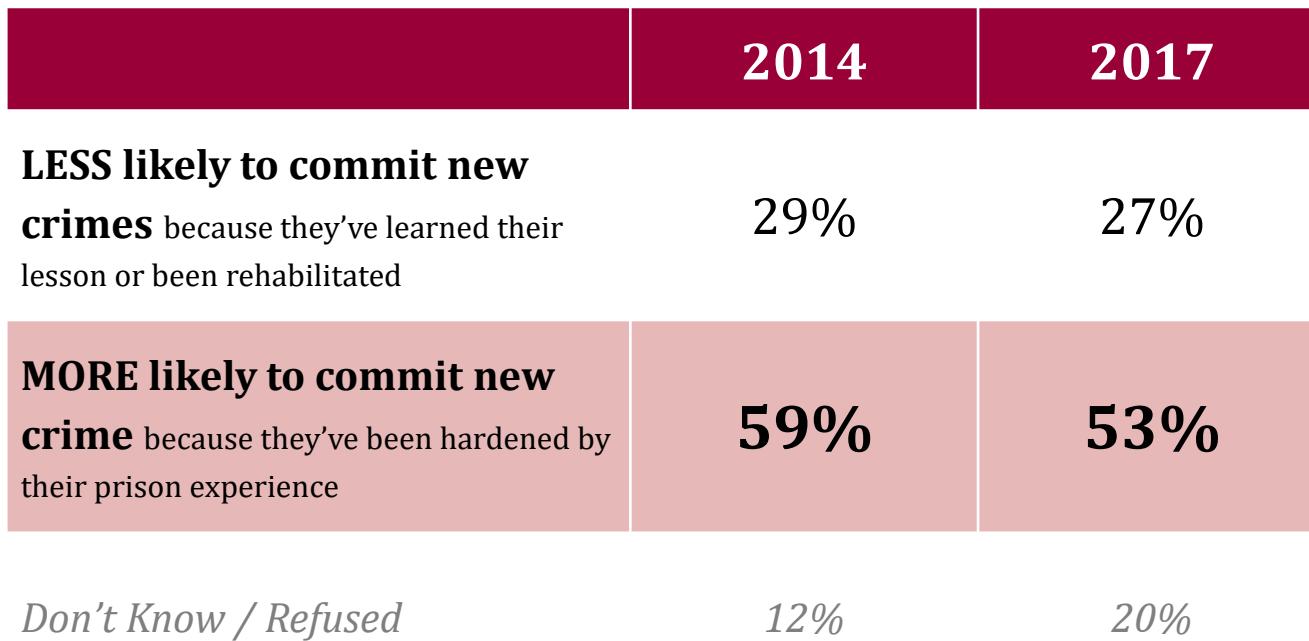
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Voters see prison as counterproductive

- Voters believe inmates are more likely to commit more crimes due to their time in prison

When inmates get out of prison, voters think they are...



Voters say too many in prison

- A plurality of voters continue to believe there are too many people in prison in Massachusetts

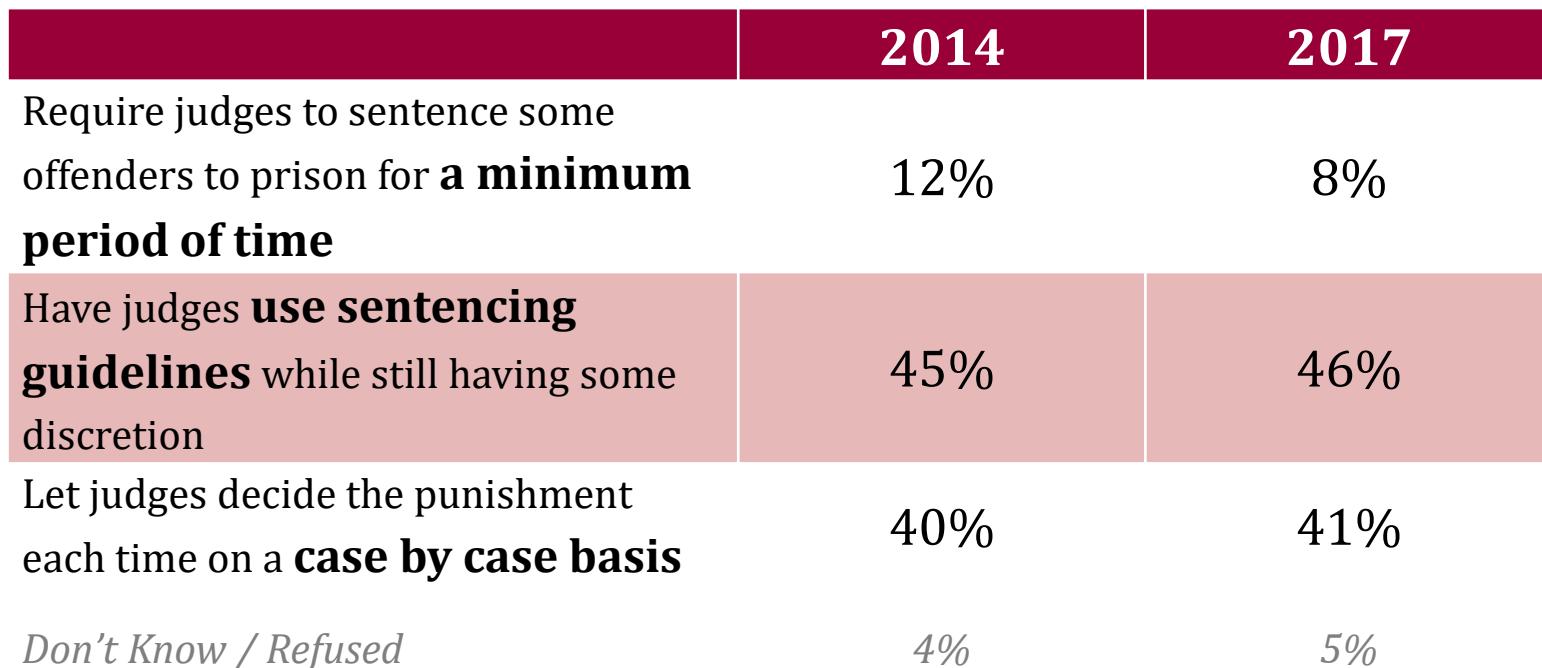
Voters views of the number of people in prison in Massachusetts

	2014	2017
Too many	40%	42%
Not enough	17%	10%
About the right amount	27%	23%
<i>Don't Know / Refused</i>	15%	25%

Changing sentencing practices

- Here, as elsewhere, voters would like to see sentencing practices change, with more focus on discretion

Voters say the best way to sentence convicted offenders...

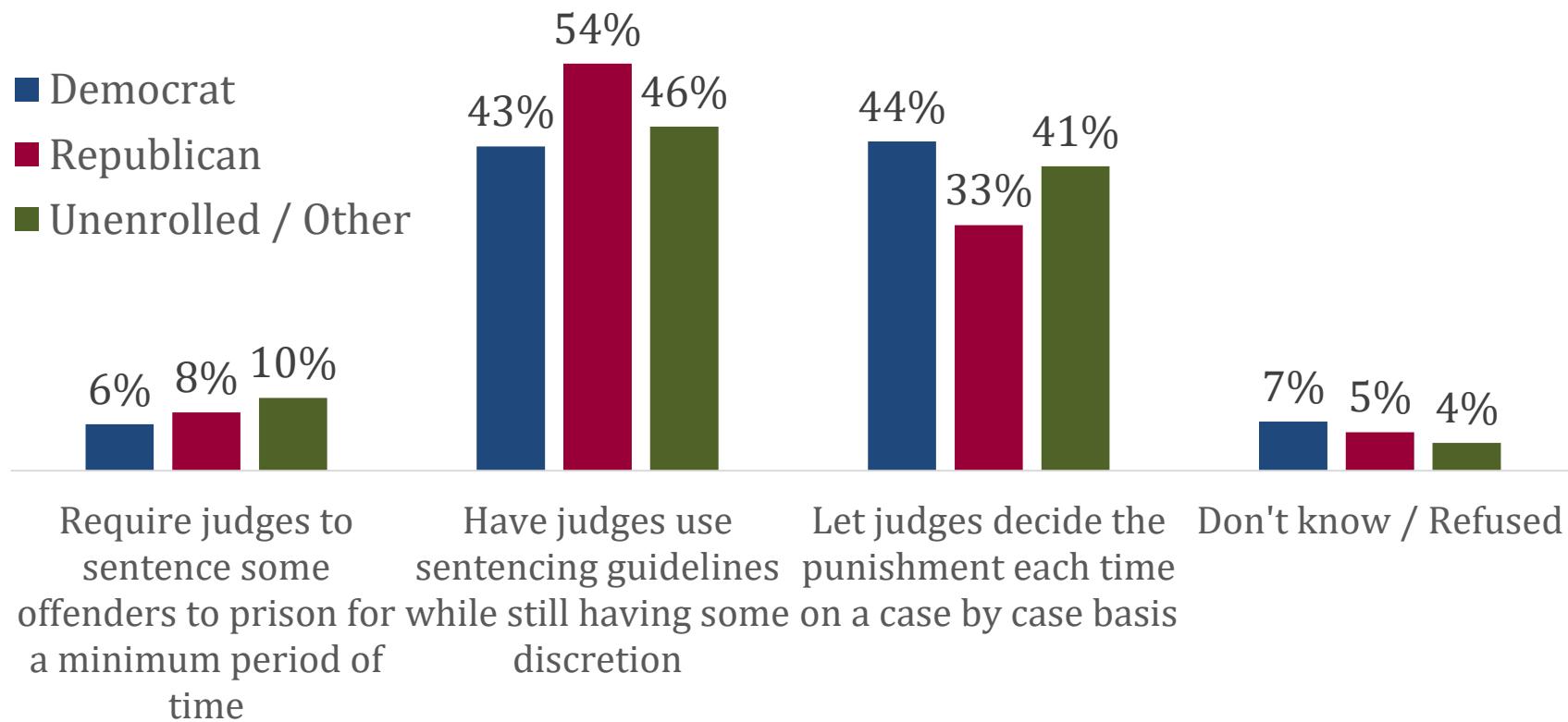


*Here are three options. Which is the best way for judges to sentence convicted offenders?
READ AND ROTATE.*

Changing sentencing practices

- Cross-party agreement on sentencing

Voters say the best way to sentence convicted offenders...



Changing the focus of the system

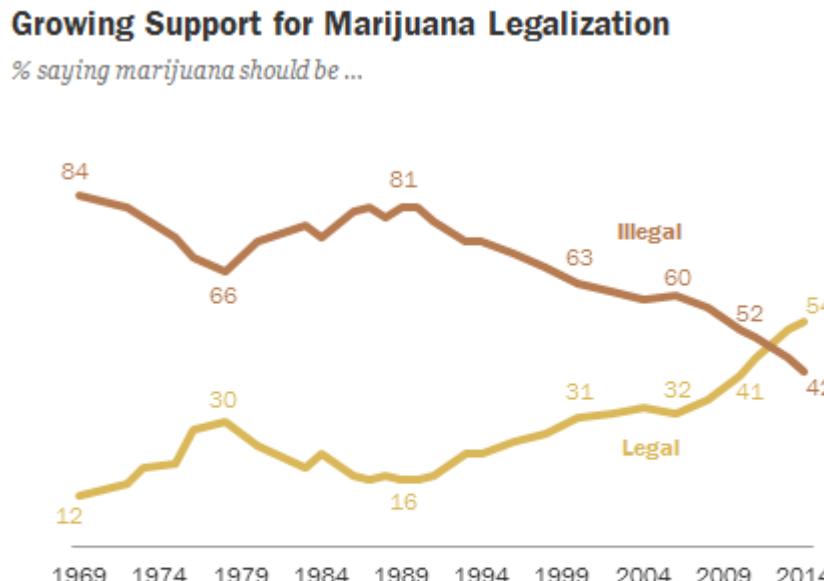
- Voter preference for more focus on prevention and rehabilitation has not changed since 2014

Top priorities for dealing with crime should be...

	2014	2017
Prevention , such as education and youth programs	43%	41%
Rehabilitation , such as education and job training for prisoners	22%	25%
Punishment , such as longer sentences and more prisons	14%	8%
Enforcement , such as putting more police officers on the streets	19%	22%
<i>Don't Know / Refused</i>	2%	4%

National opinion is shifting

- Data from Pew national polling



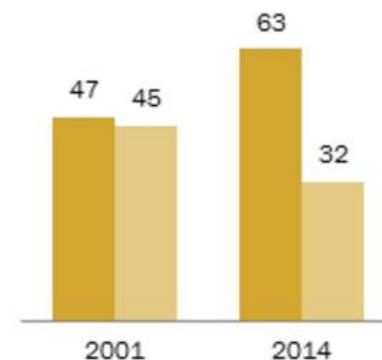
Survey conducted Feb. 12-26, 2014. 1973-2008 data from General Social Survey; 1969 and 1972 data from Gallup

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Support for Move Away from Set Drug Terms

Some states have moved away from mandatory prison sentences for non-violent drug crimes. Is this a ...

■ Good thing ■ Bad thing



Survey conducted Feb. 14-23, 2014.

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Raising the felony threshold

- A majority supports raising the felony threshold to \$1,500 from it's current \$250 amount

Voter views of raising the dollar threshold for felony

Favor / oppose raising felony threshold

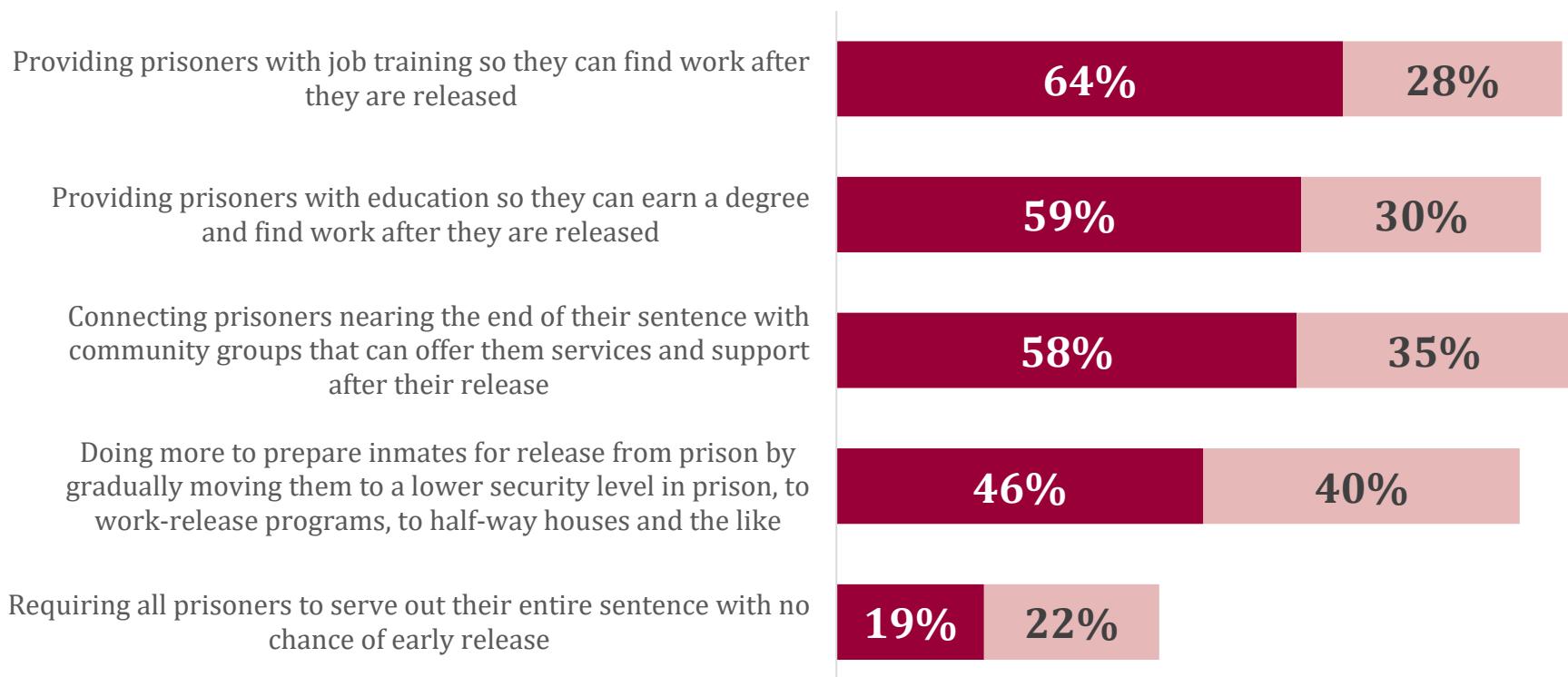
Strongly favor	35%
Somewhat favor	25%
Total favor	60%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	23%
Total oppose	36%
<i>Don't Know / Refused</i>	4%

In Massachusetts stealing property valued over \$250 is a felony crime, and thus the offender faces time in prison. Most states have raised this felony threshold to a higher amount so fewer crimes are counted as felonies. Do you favor or oppose a proposal to raise the felony threshold in Massachusetts to \$1,500? And is that strongly (favor / oppose) or just somewhat?

Changing prison policies

- For those sent to prison, voter envision a much different experience

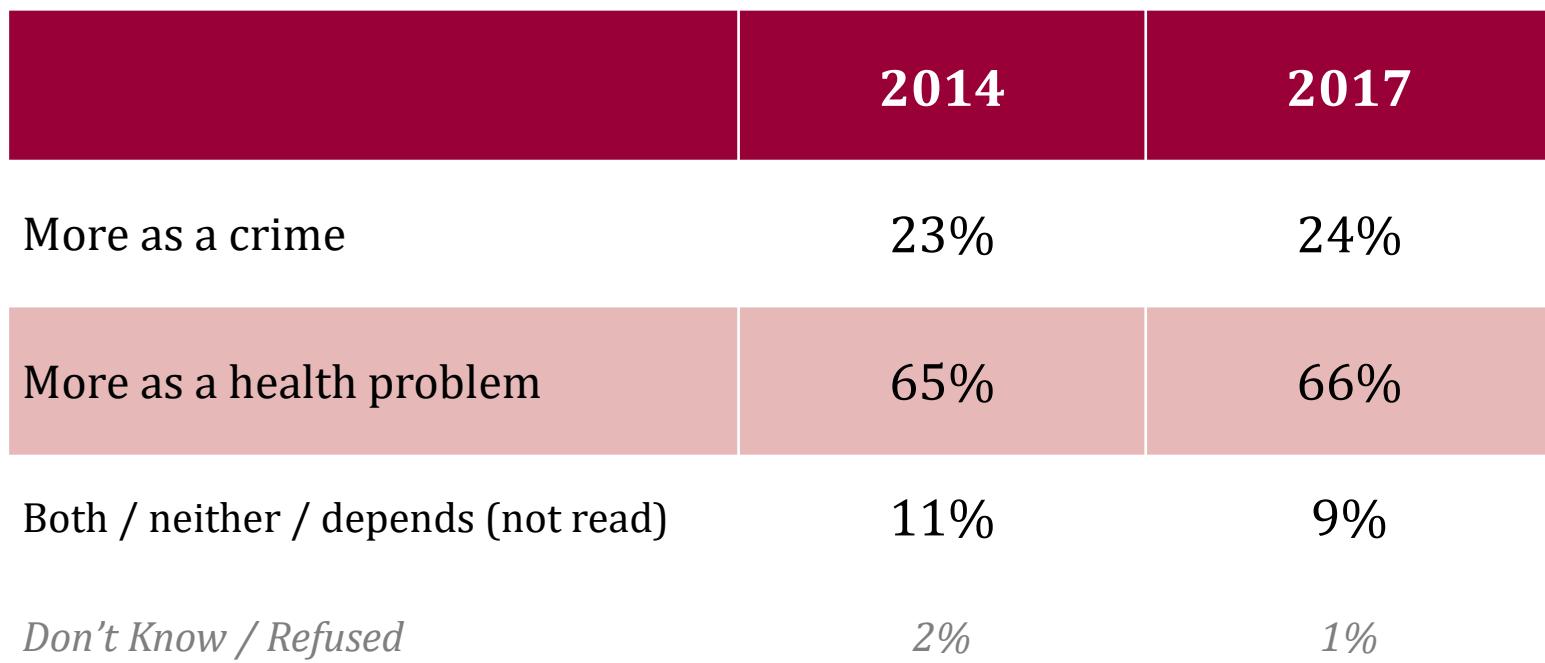
Voter views of how effective each policy would be at reducing crime...



Drugs as a health problem

- Opinions on how to approach drugs have not moved since the last MassINC poll in 2014

Voters say drugs should be treated more as a...



Views on prison vs treatment

- Voters still favor prison for people addicted to drugs who commit other crimes, though the prison experience they envision is much different than what exists today

Voter views on what to do if a person addicted to drugs were to,..

	Prison	Treatment	Both / neither / depends (not read)	Don't Know / Refused
Sell drugs to other users.	51%	37%	10%	2%
Break into a car on the street to commit theft.	48%	40%	10%	2%
Break into a home to commit burglary	64%	24%	11%	1%
Sell drugs to other users while carrying a knife or a gun.	71%	18%	9%	2%

CORI reform draws support

- Majorities favor allowing records to be sealed more quickly than current state law allows

Voter views of reducing the time to seal records as follows...

	Misdemeanor 5 to 3 years	Felony 10 to 7 years
Support	62%	65%
Oppose	35%	32%
<i>Don't Know / Refused</i>	3%	3%

Views of victims and high crime areas

- Proximity to crime did not bring major changes in opinion

	Prefer mandatory minimums	Prison leaves inmates more/less likely to commit more crimes	Too many / not enough in prison	Raise felony threshold to \$1,500
All registered voters	8%	53% / 27%	42% / 10%	60%
Self or family have been victims of a crime	9%	53% / 22%	46% / 10%	60%
Residents of high crime areas (2014 poll)	9%	56% / 32%	45% / 16%	<i>Not asked in 2014 poll</i>



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