

**CJCC**

East Baton Rouge Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

# East Baton Rouge Parish Community Safety & Justice Survey

August 2020

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## Methods

On August 4-9, 2020, a random survey of 450 adults in East Baton Rouge Parish, LA was conducted via landline and cellphone to assess public perception of the East Baton Rouge justice system, neighborhood safety and rank priorities for the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

## Subgroup Key

The following definitions describe less than obvious subgroups of the sample:

- **REGION** *City* (44%) includes respondents who live in zip codes 70801, 70802, 70804, 70805, 70806, 70807, 70808, 70811, 70812, 70814, 70815, 70821, 70879, 70891, and 70898. *North/NE* (19%) includes respondents who live in zip codes 70714, 70739, 70748, 70770, 70777, 70791, 70818, 70819, 70722, and 70875. *South/SE* (37%) includes respondents who live in zip codes 70776, 70769, 70809, 70810, 70816, 70817, 70820, 70826, and 70836.
- **UNDERSERVED ZIPS** (32%) includes zip codes 70801, 70802, 70805, 70806, 70807, 70811, and 70812.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY** *Safe* (80%) includes respondents who say their neighborhood is very safe or safe. *Unsafe* (16%) includes respondents who say their neighborhood is unsafe or very unsafe. *Other/DK* (4%) includes respondents who offered another response or are not sure how to rate the safety of their neighborhood (Q.11).
- **CRIME VICTIM HH** *Yes* (32%) includes respondents who have been a victim of a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish or who have someone in their immediate household who has. *No* (61%) includes respondents from households where no one has been a victim of a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish (Q.34).
- **ACCUSED/ARREST HH** *Yes* (18%) includes respondents who have been accused or arrested of a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish or who have someone in their immediate household who has. *No* (76%) includes respondents from households where no one has been accused or arrested of a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish (Q.35).

## Key Findings

On a scale of very safe, safe, unsafe, or very unsafe, most respondents say their neighborhood is very safe or safe. Additionally, on a scale of too much, about right, or not enough, most respondents say the police presence in their neighborhood is about right. One-third call for a greater police presence and only 3% say it is too much.

About one-third of the respondents report someone in their household has been a victim of a crime in EBR Parish and about one-fifth live in a household where someone has been accused of or arrested for a crime in Baton Rouge.

None of the justice system entities in Baton Rouge garner much negative sentiment at all. Entities like the Sheriff's Office and Police Departments are well known, while there is less familiarity with others (i.e., CJCC, Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Capital Area Human Services were the lowest ranked in terms of familiarity, with CJCC having the lowest recognition).

Respondents offer mixed reactions when questioned about changing bail/pre-court appearance practices, but there is a universal agreement that the justice system should be designed to meet the needs of everyone.

Statements that relate fairness to socio-economic status are better received than those focused on racial/ethnic background.

Majority of respondents responded favorably to the description of CJCC and there is a strong willingness among community members to work with the justice system to improve neighborhood safety.

Top priorities for CJCC are:

- Creating partnerships between justice agencies and the community
- Improving law enforcement engagement with the community
- Breaking the cycle of repeat arrests/convictions
- Shortening the time it takes to bring a case to justice.

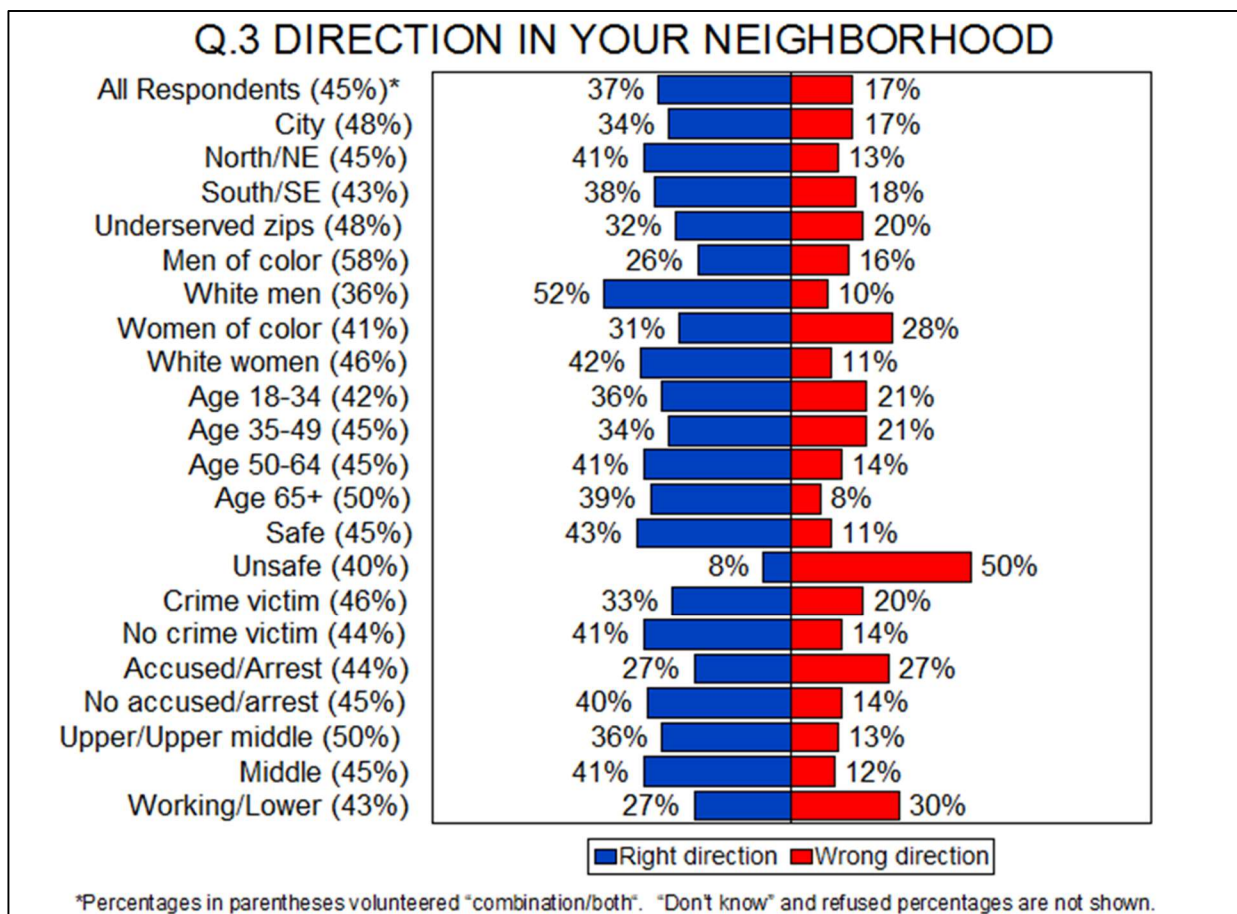
## General Outlook

Most adults in Baton Rouge express an optimistic to mixed outlook for their neighborhood. Overall, 37% say their neighborhood is moving in the right direction, 45% volunteer that things are mixed, and only 17% say their neighborhood is going in the wrong direction.

Groups who are the most upbeat about the trajectory of their neighborhood are North/NE, white men, white women, and middle class.

Groups who are the most concerned about the direction of their neighborhood are women of color, respondents from a household where someone has been accused/arrested for a crime and working/lower class.

Among those who say their neighborhood is safe, 43% say things are going in the right direction, 45% say things are mixed, and 11% say things are going in the wrong direction; among those who say their neighborhood is unsafe, only 8% say right direction, 40% say mixed, and 50% say wrong direction.



## Safety

A closer look at neighborhood safety shows that 80% of adults say their neighborhood is either very safe or safe, and 15% say their neighborhood is either unsafe or very unsafe. 4% do not know. 90% of white men, 87% of white women, 79% of men of color, and 68% of women of color believe their neighborhood is safe. There is also variation by socio-economic status, with 86% of upper/upper middle, 84% of middle, and 71% of working/lower class respondents indicating their neighborhood is safe.

Interestingly, 78% of crime victim households say their neighborhood is safe, compared to 84% of no crime victim households. 74% of accused/arrest households say their neighborhood is safe, while 84% of those from a no accused/arrest household say the same. There is only slight variation by region and age.

### Q.11 NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

	<i>Very safe</i>	<i>Safe</i>	<b>Total safe</b>	<i>Unsafe</i>	<i>Very unsafe</i>	<b>Total unsafe</b>	<b>Other/DK/Ref.</b>
All Respondents	14%	66%	<b>80%</b>	13%	2%	<b>15%</b>	<b>4%</b>
City	14	64	<b>78</b>	13	4	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>
North/NE	16	64	<b>80</b>	16	1	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>
South/SE	13	71	<b>84</b>	11	1	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>
Underserved zips	13	60	<b>73</b>	15	5	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>
Men of color	10	69	<b>79</b>	16	2	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>
White men	18	72	<b>90</b>	6	1	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
Women of color	12	56	<b>68</b>	23	5	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>
White women	16	71	<b>87</b>	8	1	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>
Men	15	70	<b>85</b>	11	1	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
Women	14	63	<b>77</b>	15	3	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>
Age 18-34	10	69	<b>79</b>	17	2	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>
Age 35-49	10	68	<b>78</b>	13	3	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>
Age 50-64	20	65	<b>85</b>	11	2	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>
Age 65+	18	62	<b>80</b>	12	3	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
Crime victim	16	62	<b>78</b>	14	4	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>
No crime victim	14	70	<b>84</b>	12	2	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>
Accused/Arrest	13	61	<b>74</b>	12	6	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>
No accused/arrest	14	70	<b>84</b>	12	2	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>
Upper/Upper middle	14	72	<b>86</b>	12	0	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>
Middle	16	68	<b>84</b>	13	1	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>
Working/Lower	9	62	<b>71</b>	16	7	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>

## Police Presence

Among all respondents, 3% say there is too much police presence in their neighborhood, 57% say it is about right, 33% say there is not enough, and 6% do not know.

Not surprisingly, 68% of respondents who say their neighborhood is not safe, also say there is not enough of a police presence. 38% of women of color and 39% of working/lower class respondents say there is not enough police presence in their neighborhood. Interestingly, these are also the only three groups to offer any indication that there is too much police presence in their neighborhood.

Groups most likely to say the police presence is about right are white men, white women, those in safe neighborhoods, and middle class.

10% or more of women of color, age 35-49, and unsafe neighborhood residents are unable to weigh in on this question.

### Q.12 POLICE PRESENCE IN NEIGHBORHOOD

	Too much	About right	Not enough	DK/ Ref.
All Respondents	3%	57%	33%	6%
City	5	55	35	5
North/NE	1	60	36	2
South/SE	3	59	30	9
Underserved zips	5	56	34	6
Men of color	4	51	38	7
White men	0	70	28	2
Women of color	9	43	38	10
White women	0	67	28	5
Age 18-34	6	62	29	2
Age 35-49	2	50	37	11
Age 50-64	4	62	30	4
Age 65+	3	56	37	4
Safe	2	67	27	3
Unsafe	8	7	68	17
Crime victim	6	58	32	4
No crime victim	3	58	35	4
Accused/Arrest	7	56	30	6
No accused/arrest	3	58	35	3
Upper/Upper middle	2	58	33	7
Middle	2	63	31	5
Working/Lower	7	46	39	8

## Personal Experience

Overall, 32% of respondents report they or someone in their immediate household have been a victim of a crime.

Higher than average subgroups are City residents (38%), underserved zips (37%), white women (37%), those who have lived in Baton Rouge for over 25 years (42%), those in unsafe neighborhoods (37%), and a stunning 73% of those from an accused/arrest household.

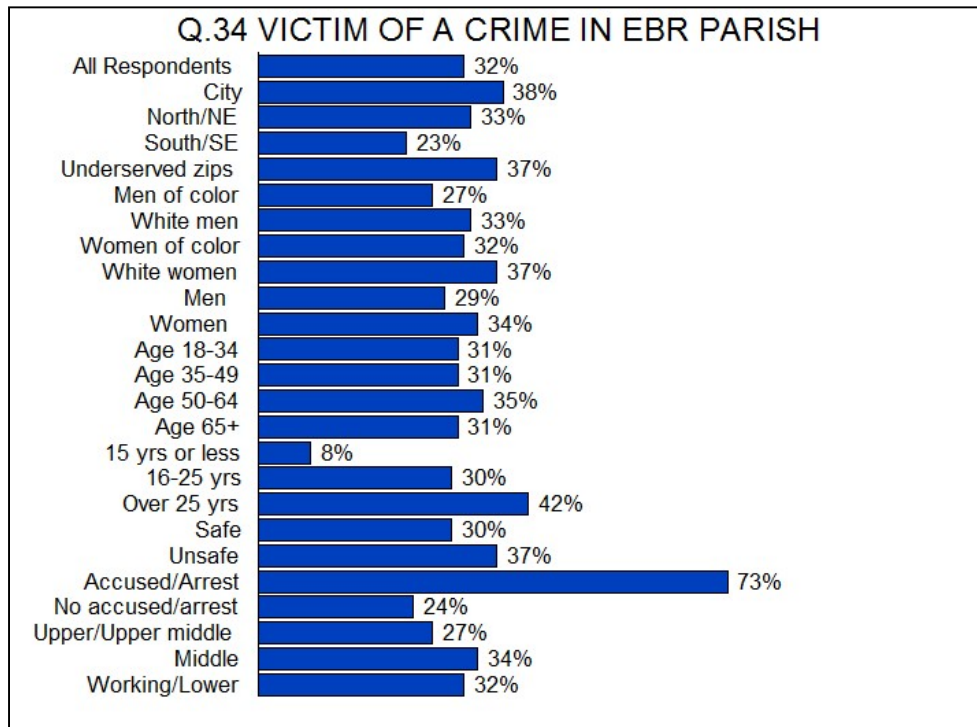
Lower than average subgroups are South/SE (23%), men of color (27%), 15 years or less residents (8%), respondents from no accused/arrest households (24%), and upper/upper middle class (27%).

18% of respondents report that they or a household member have been accused of or arrested for a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Among those who come from a household where someone has been accused and or arrested of a crime, 52% indicate that mental health and/or substance abuse issues directly attributed to that person's accusation or arrest.

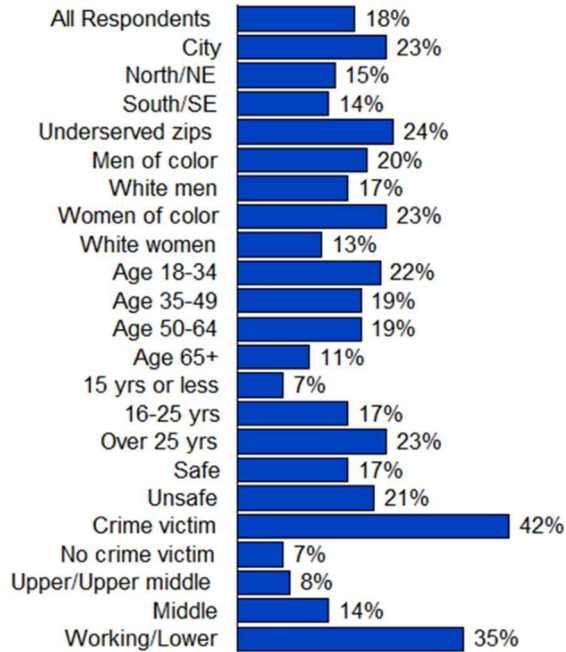
Groups with a higher propensity of accusations/arrests include City (23%), underserved zips (24%), women of color (23%), over 25 years (23%), crime victims (42%), and working/lower class (35%).

White women, age 65+, 15 years or less residents, no crime victim households, and upper/upper middle class are the least likely to be from an accused/arrest household.

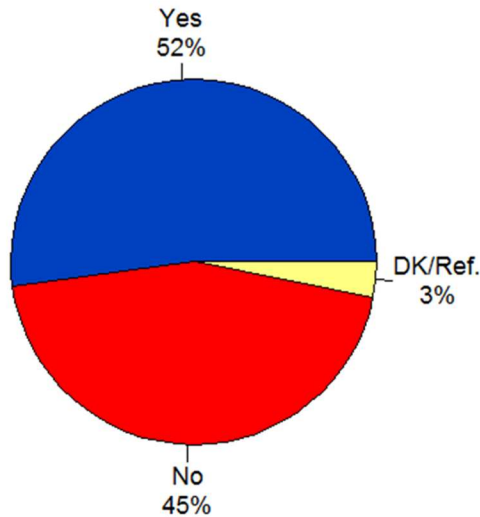




**Q.35 ACCUSED/ARRESTED OF CRIME IN EBR PARISH**



**Q.36 WHETHER MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE PLAYED A ROLE IN ACCUSATION/ARREST\***

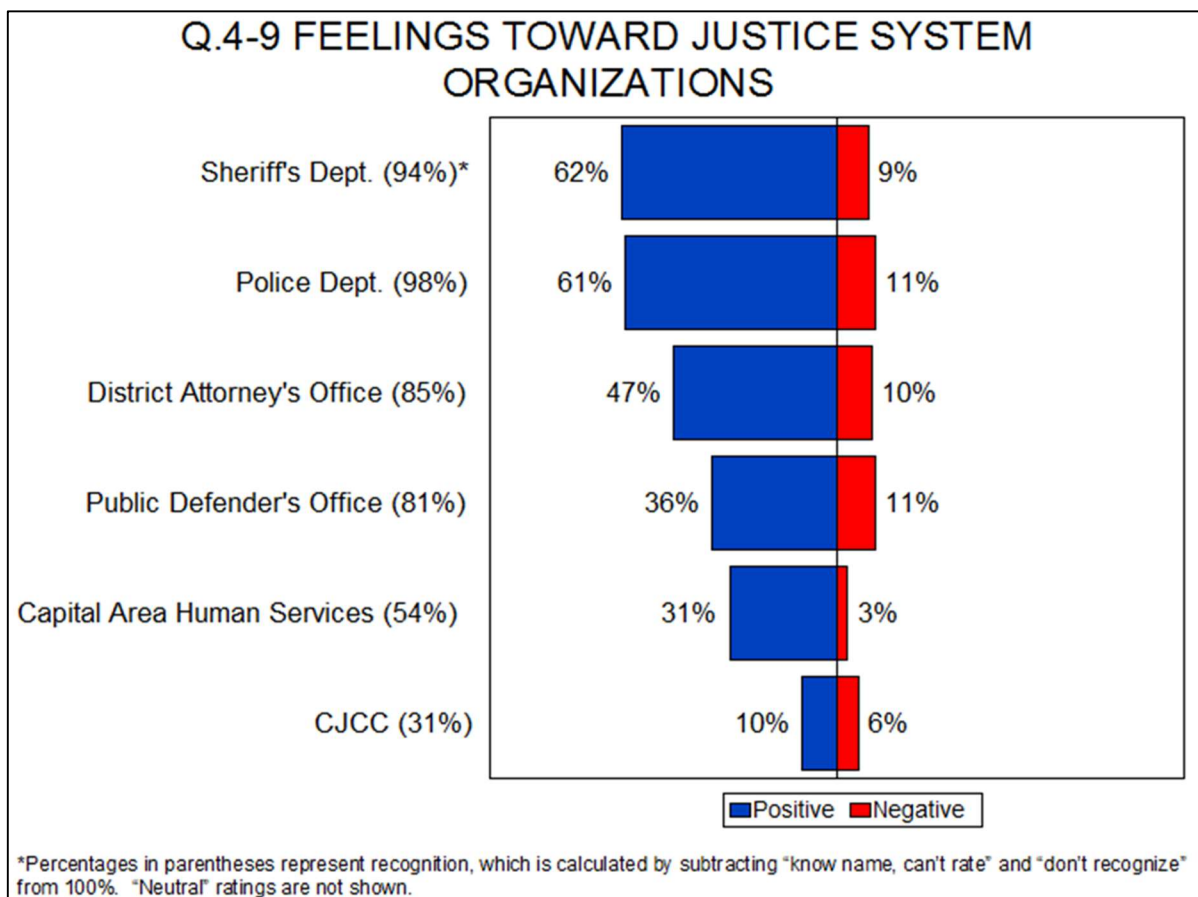


\*Asked only of respondents who have or who have a household member who has been accused or arrested in EBR Parish. N=81.

## Organizations

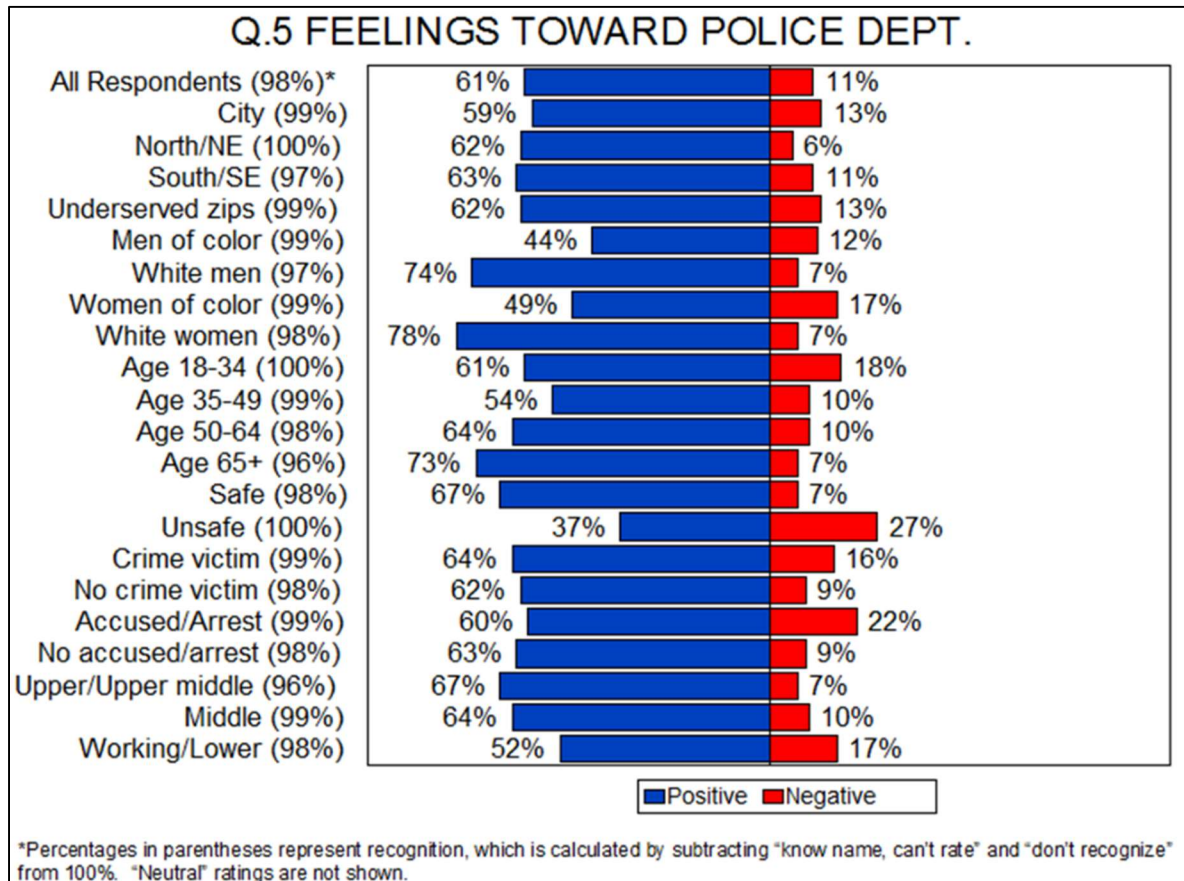
Overall, respondents report few negative feelings toward any members of the Justice System in Baton Rouge. Both the Sheriff's Department and the Police Department are universally known and highly rated in Baton Rouge. The Sheriff's Department's rating is 26% very positive, 35% somewhat positive, 23% neutral, 5% somewhat negative, and 4% very negative.

The Police Department receives a 21% very positive, 40% somewhat positive, 26% neutral, 6% somewhat negative, 5% very negative rating. The District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office are less well known, with lower positives and higher neutral ratings, but still not negative ratings of note. Only about one-half (54%) of respondents are familiar with Capital Area Human Services. As expected, few respondents currently know much about CJCC.



## Baton Rouge Police Department

A closer look at the ratings for the Police Department shows some strong variation. Positive ratings among white men and white women are about 30-points higher than among men and women of color. Interestingly, however, there is little variation on negative ratings. Adults of color are more neutral toward BRPD. Respondents in unsafe neighborhoods appear to hold the police somewhat accountable, offering a 37% positive – 27% negative score. Among those from accused/arrest households, however, the police receive a 60% positive – 22% negative rating. Working/lower class respondents rate the police 52% positive – 17% negative.



## Bail Practices

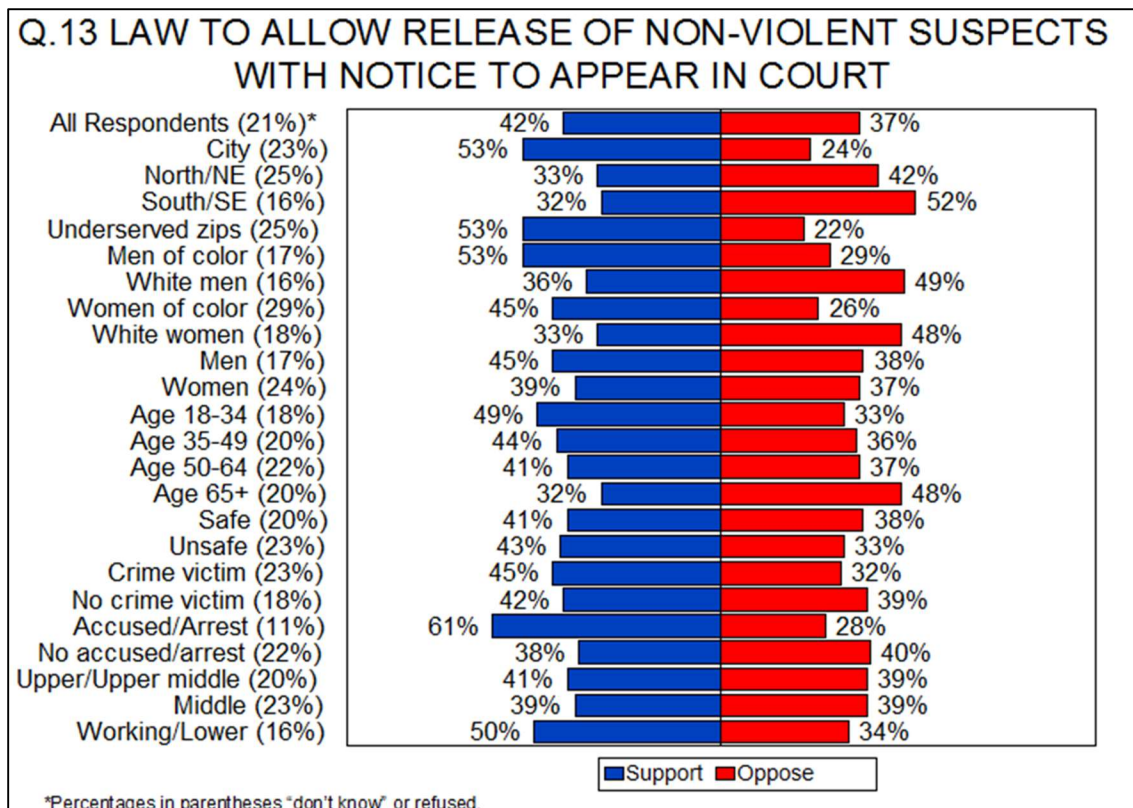
As we will see throughout the data, knowledge of and interest in reforming bond and bail practices are of low priority to adults in East Baton Rouge.

As such, reaction to Q.13 is mixed with 42% supporting a law to allow the release of a non-violent suspect with a notice to appear in court and 37% opposing it. 21% are undecided.

- Majorities of City residents, men of color, accused/arrest households, and working/lower class support the law.
- Strong opposition comes from South/SE, white men, white women, and age 65+.

Q.14 and Q.15 were each asked of one-half of the sample.

- In Q.14, 36% of respondents say they believe one's inability to pay bail is a valid reason for them to remain in jail and 43% do not.
- In Q.15, 26% believe one's ability to pay bail is a valid reason for them to be released and 54% do not.
- While the language in Q.15 is more compelling, the data reflect ample confusion around bail practices currently.



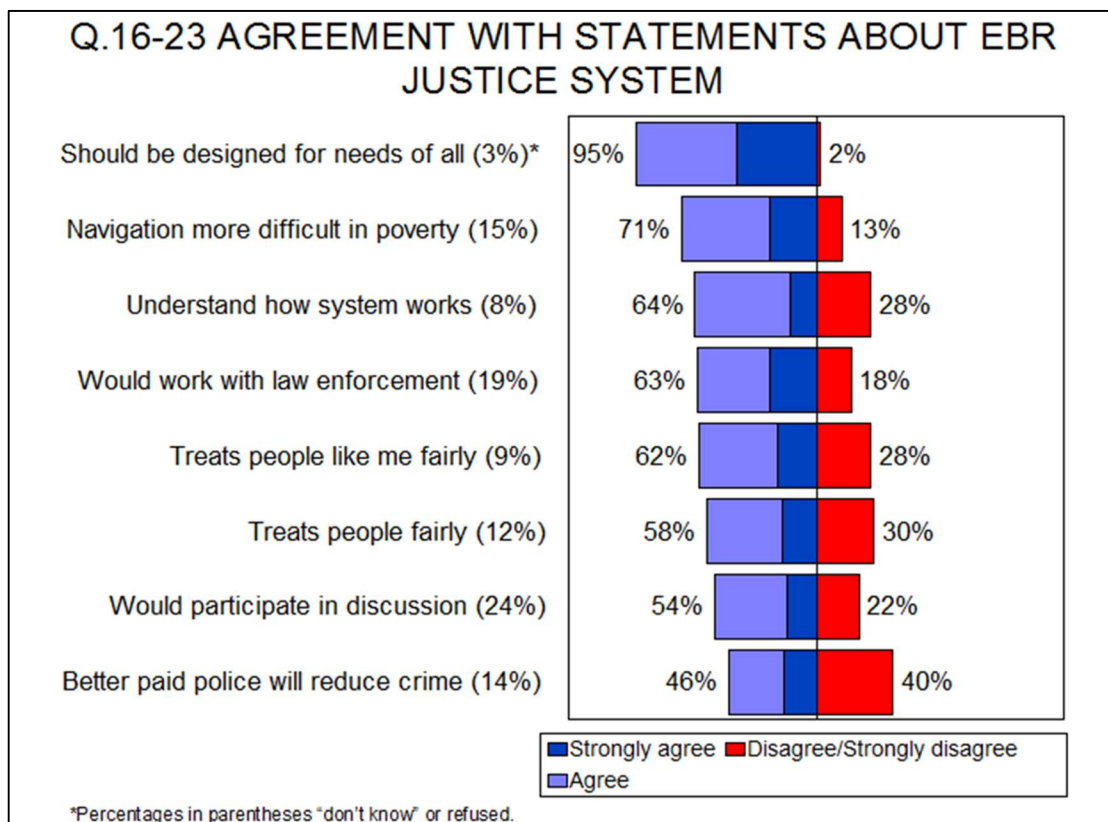
## Statements About Justice System

There is universal agreement that the justice system should be designed to meet the needs of all people, regardless of their socio-economic status. 42% strongly agree and 53% agree.

Although there is slight variation between strongly agree vs. agree, Chart 12 indicates that adults agree wholeheartedly with this statement regardless of where they live, their race/ethnic background, gender, age, socio-economic status, or connection with the justice system. From a statistical standpoint, no respondents disagree with this statement.

A substantial 71% of respondents agree that it is more difficult for people in poverty to navigate the justice system.

Groups most likely to agree with this statement are white men, newer residents, and those who live in the City region and underserved zips. Residents of the other two regions, white women, and those who consider their neighborhood unsafe are the least likely to agree.



64% of respondents say they understand how the East Baton Rouge justice system works and 28% disagree.

White people, upper/upper middle-class respondents, age 50-64, and those whose immediate family have connected with the justice system are most likely to agree. People of color and residents who consider their neighborhood unsafe are the least likely to say they understand the justice system.

In terms of working with the justice system, respondents are more likely to agree they would work with law enforcement to make their neighborhood safer (63% agree) than participate in a community discussion about crime in their neighborhood with local justice leaders (54%).

Crime victim households, City residents, underserved zips, white people, accused/arrest households, and longer-term residents are the most likely to work to make their neighborhood safer. Discussions about neighborhood crime are appealing to age 18-34, crime victim and accused/arrest household, City residents, underserved zips, women of color, working/lower class, and over 25 years residents.

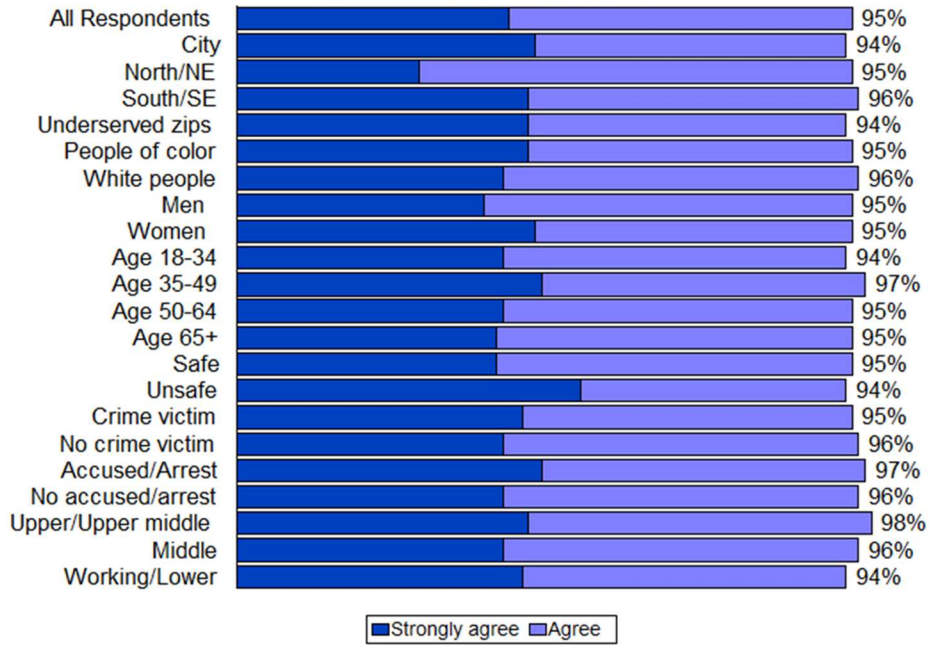
Respondents are nearly split on whether better paid police will help reduce crime

Groups that express concern about working with law enforcement include age 35-49, people of color, no crime victim households, newer residents, South/SE. Ironically, the lowest level of agreement (40%) is from those who believe their neighborhood is unsafe. Discussions about neighborhood crime are least appealing to white women, newer residents, seniors, South/SE, and those who believe their neighborhood is unsafe.

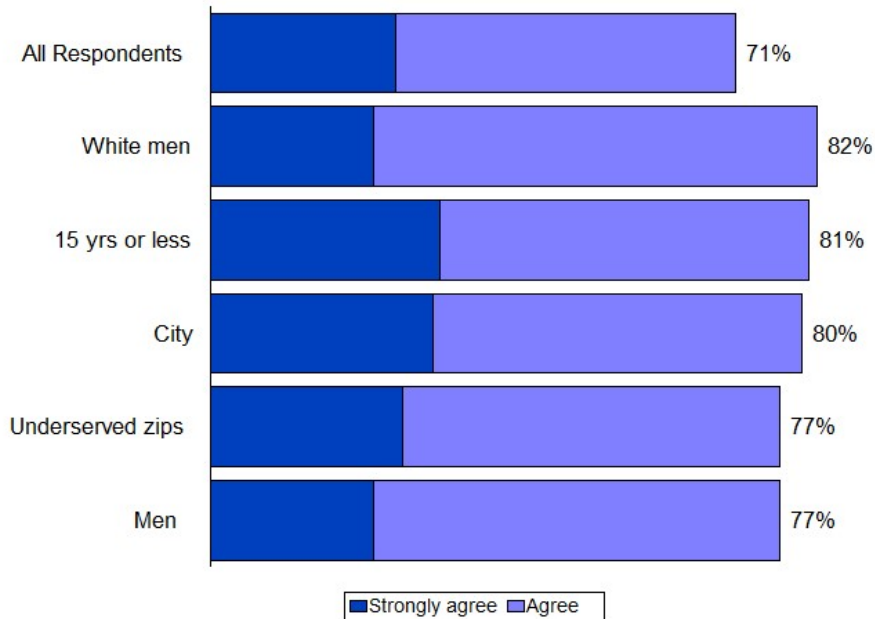
There is little difference in agreement between the statements the EBR justice system treats people like me fairly (62% agree – 28% disagree) and the EBR justice system treats people fairly (58% - 30%). In both cases, the strongest agreement comes from white people, older residents, North/NE and upper/upper middle class.

Underserved zips, people of color, working/lower class, younger residents, those from accused/arrest households, and those in unsafe neighborhoods are less likely to believe the system treats people fairly.

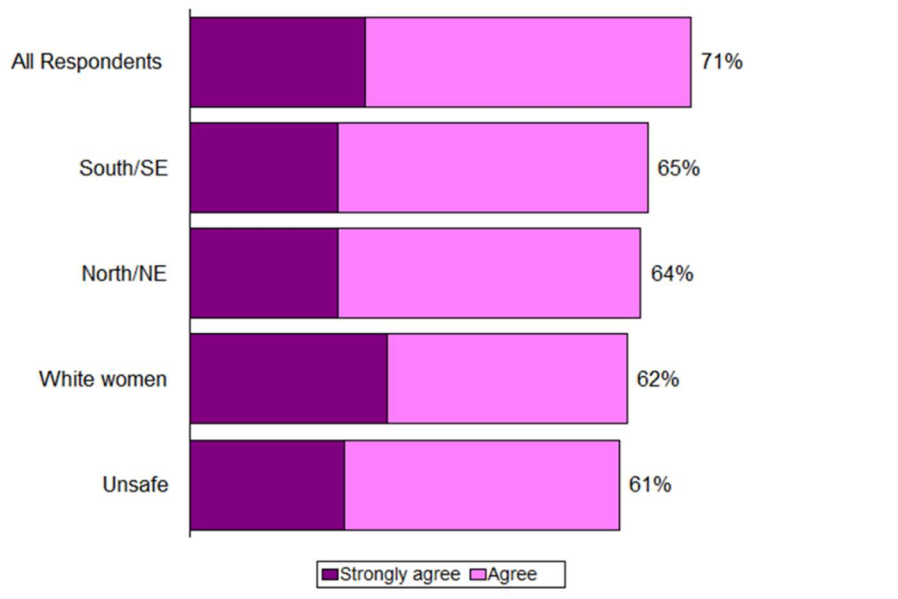
**Q.23 THE JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MEET NEEDS OF ALL**



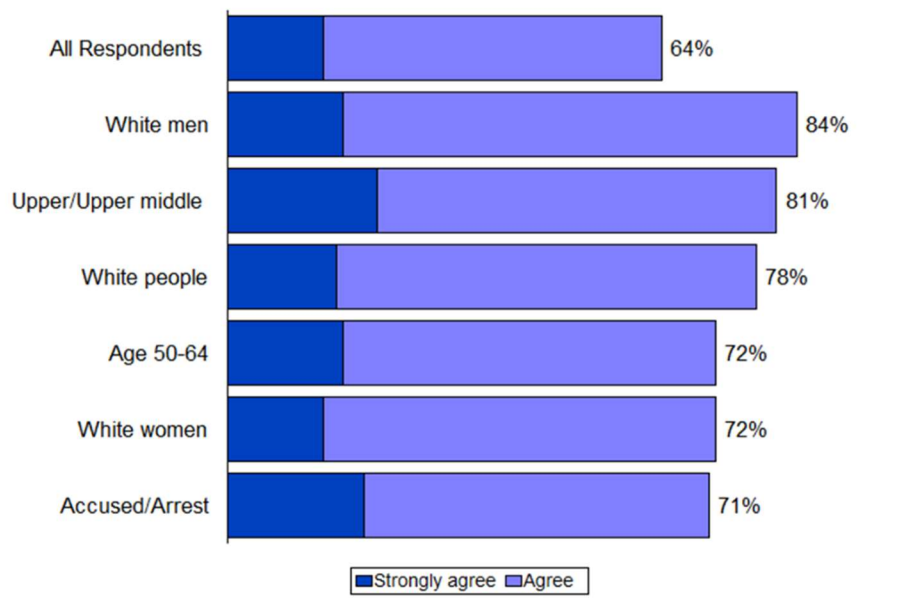
**Q.17 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO SAY IT IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE IN POVERTY TO NAVIGATE JUSTICE SYSTEM**



**Q.17 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO SAY IT IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE IN POVERTY TO NAVIGATE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

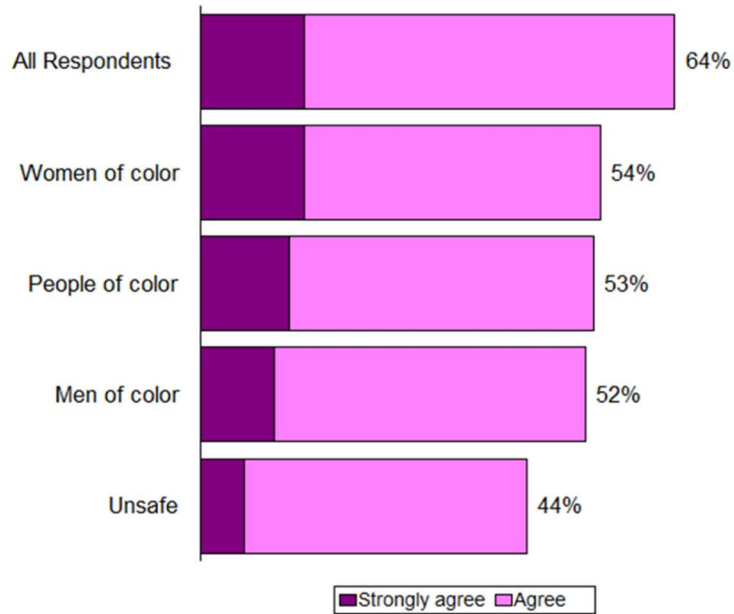


**Q.16 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO AGREE THEY UNDERSTAND HOW THE EBR JUSTICE SYSTEM WORKS**

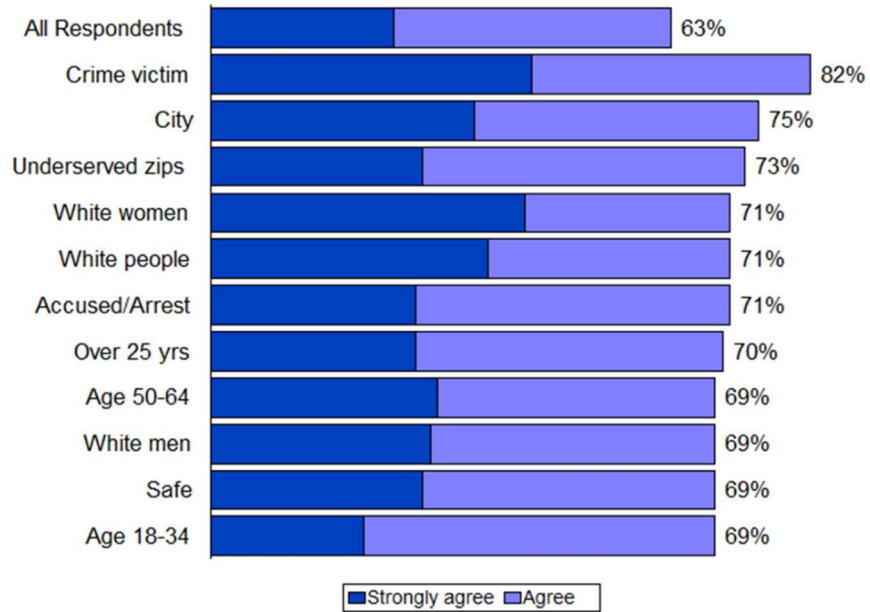




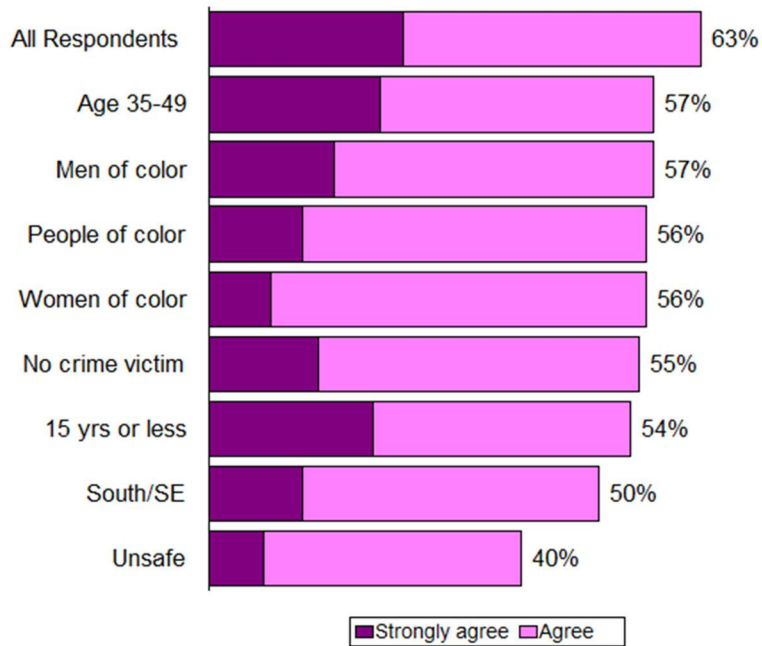
**Q.16 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO AGREE THEY UNDERSTAND HOW THE EBR JUSTICE SYSTEM WORKS**



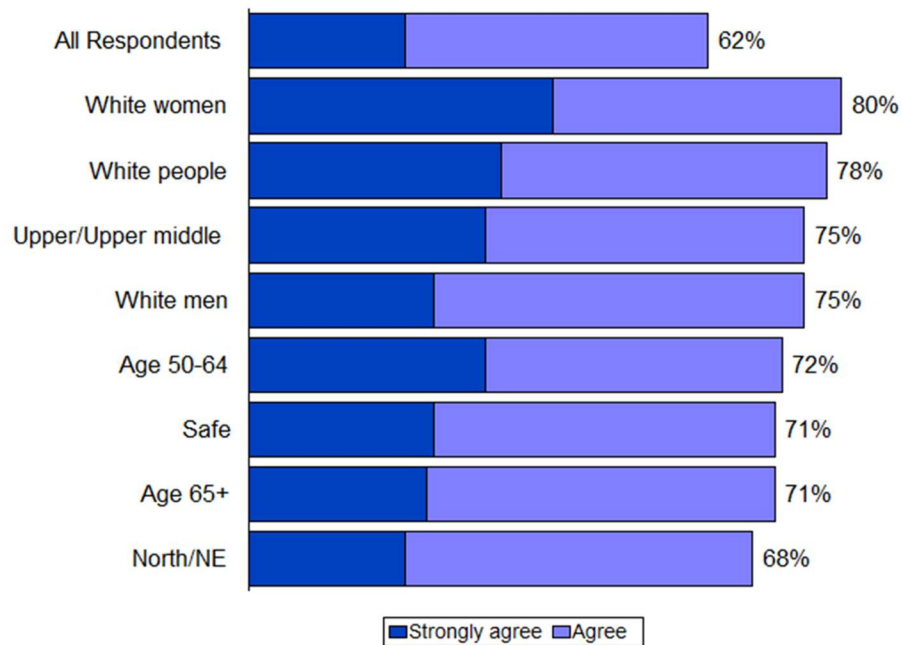
**Q.22 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO WORK WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT TO MAKE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFER**

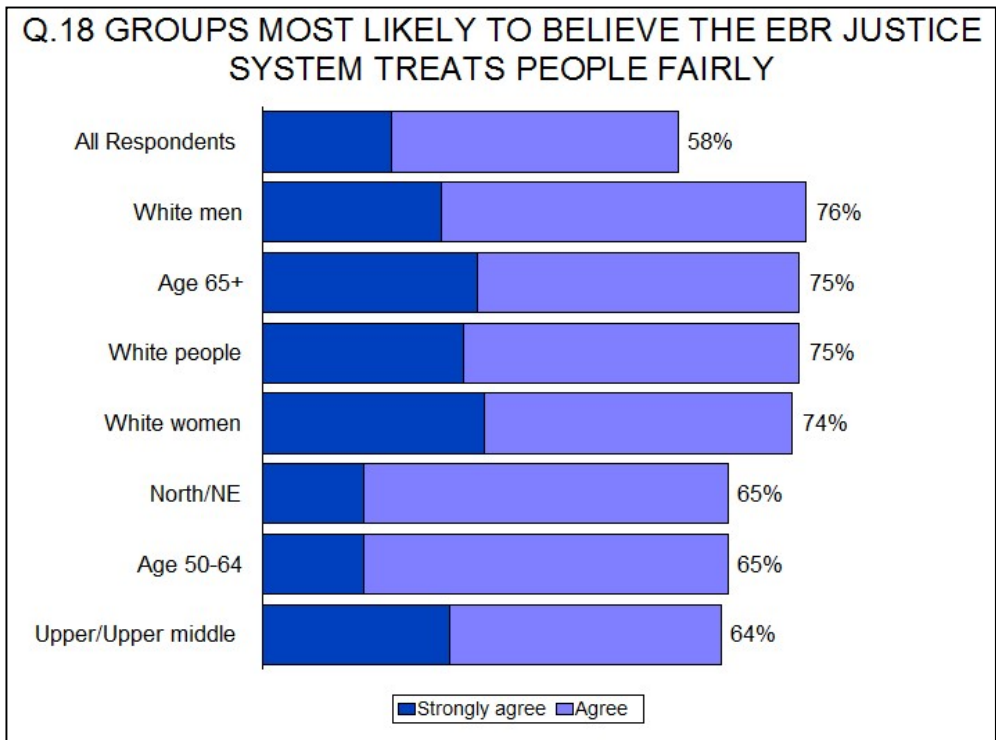
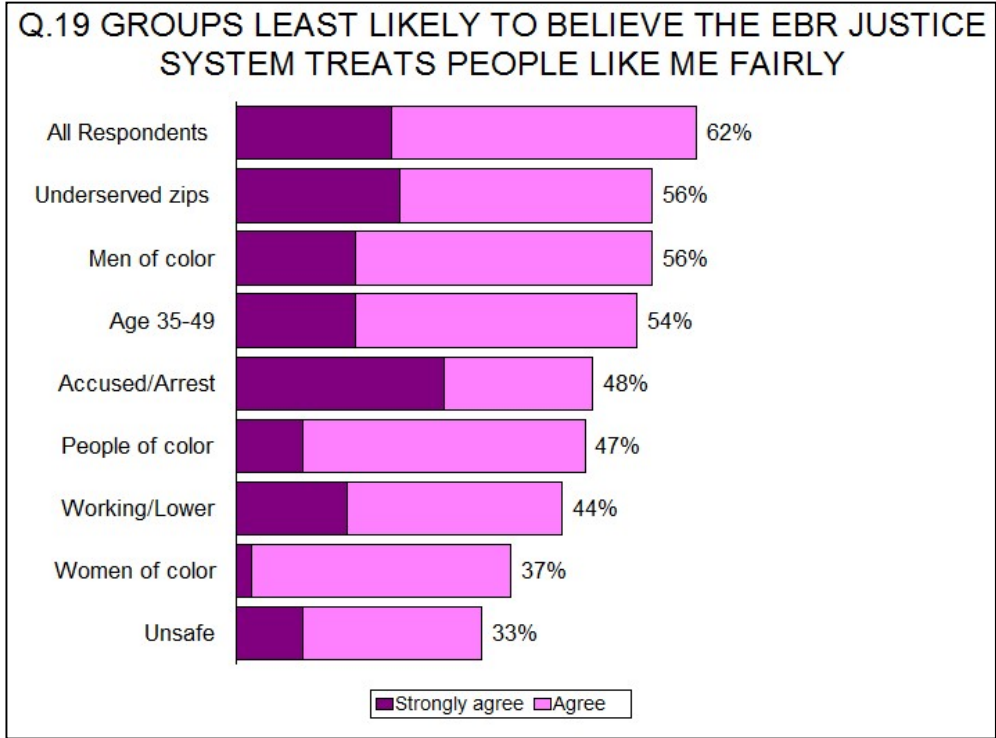


**Q.22 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO WORK WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT TO MAKE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFER**

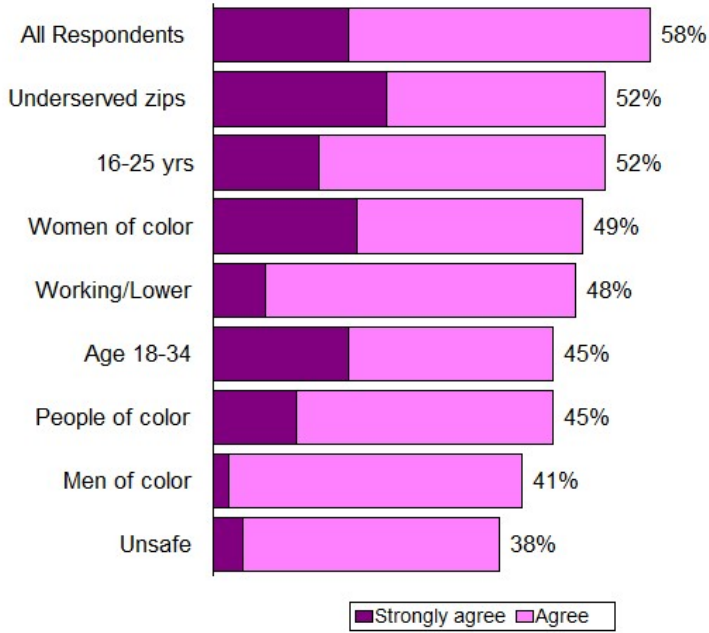


**Q.19 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE THE EBR JUSTICE SYSTEM TREATS PEOPLE LIKE ME FAIRLY**

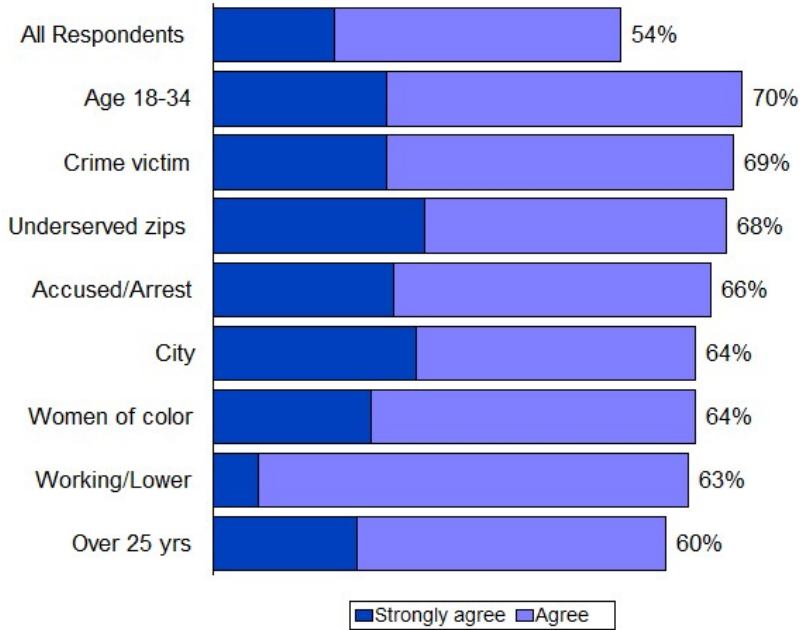




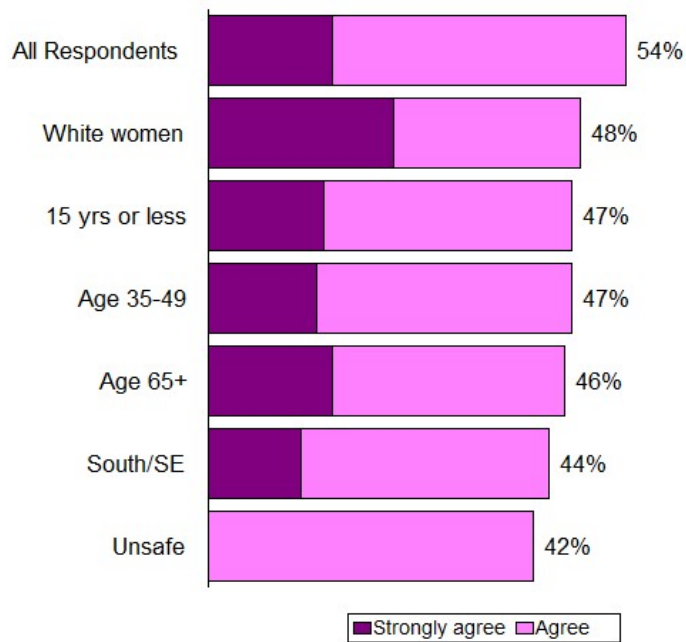
**Q.18 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO BELIEVE THE EBR JUSTICE SYSTEM TREATS PEOPLE FAIRLY**



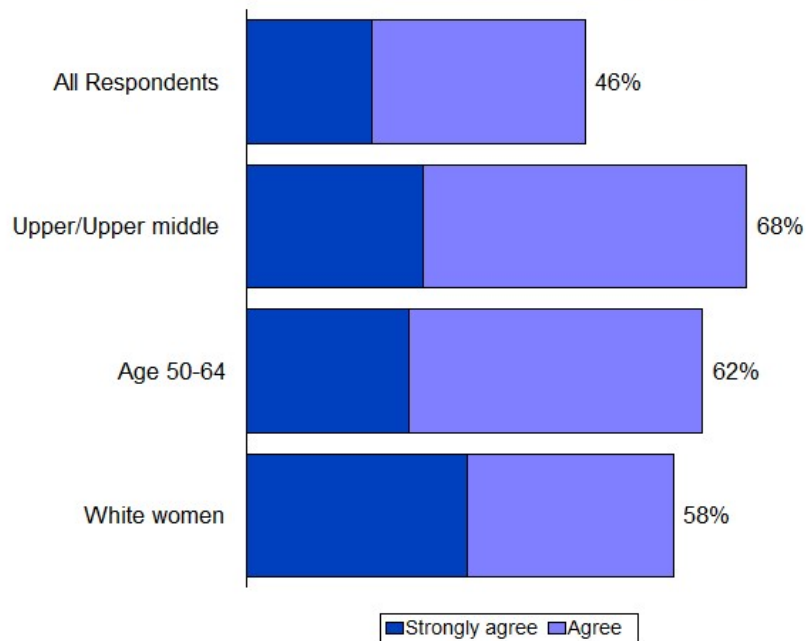
**Q.21 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME**



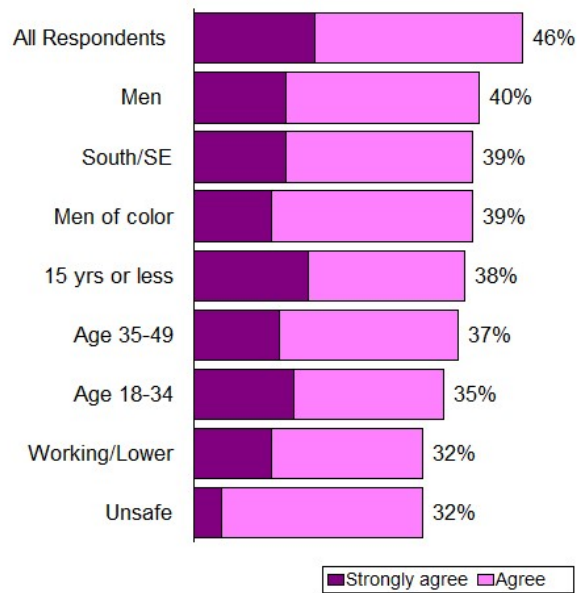
**Q.21 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME**



**Q.20 GROUPS MOST LIKELY TO SAY BETTER PAID POLICE WILL HELP REDUCE CRIME**



**Q.20 GROUPS LEAST LIKELY TO SAY BETTER PAID POLICE  
WILL HELP REDUCE CRIME**



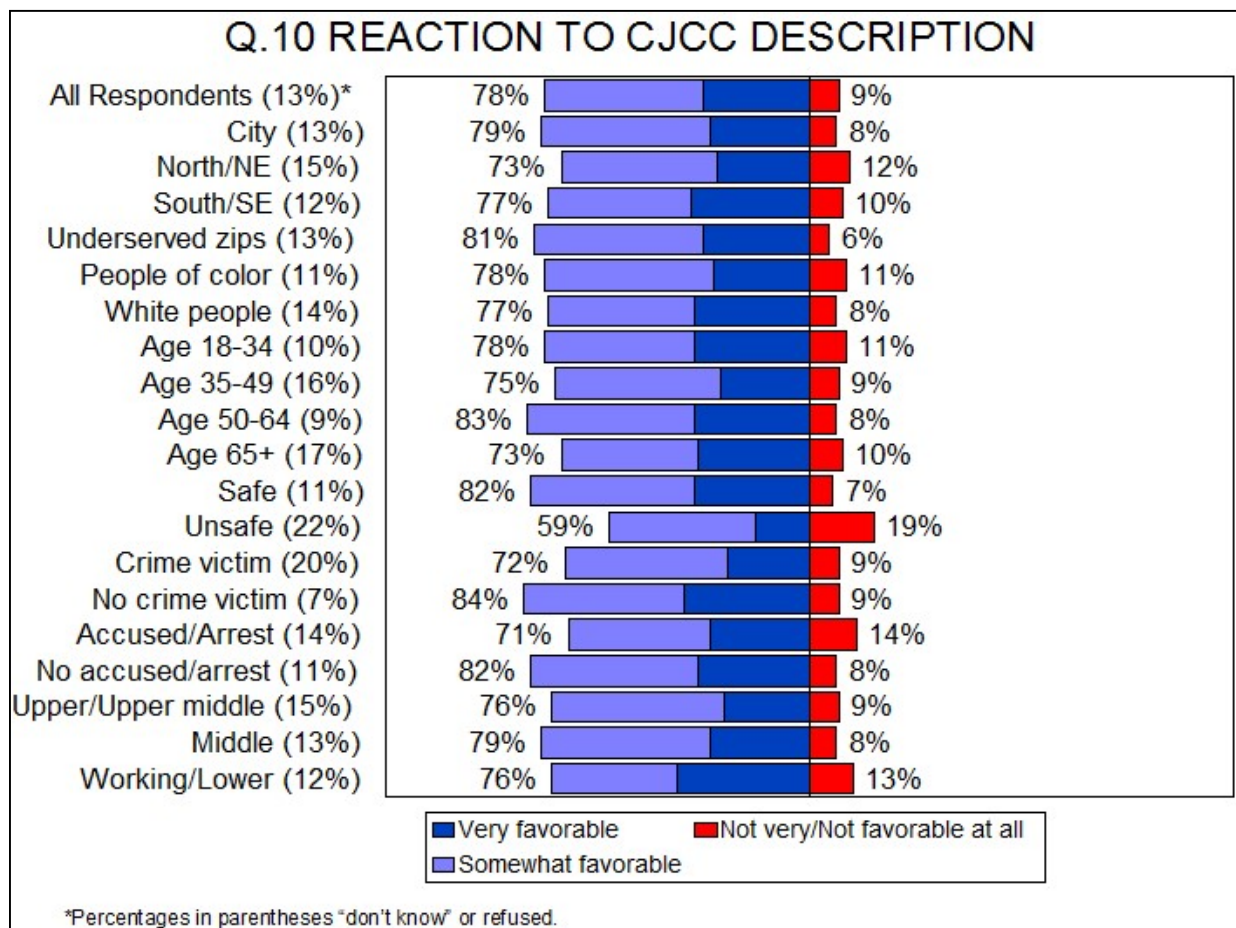
## Reaction to CJCC Description

Reaction to the full description of CJCC offered in the survey is favorable. Overall, 31% say their reaction is very favorable, 47% say it is somewhat favorable, 5% say not very favorable, and only 4% find it not favorable at all. 13% do not know.

Most favorable groups include underserved zips, age 50-64, residents of safe neighborhoods, respondents from households with no crime victims and no accusations or arrests.

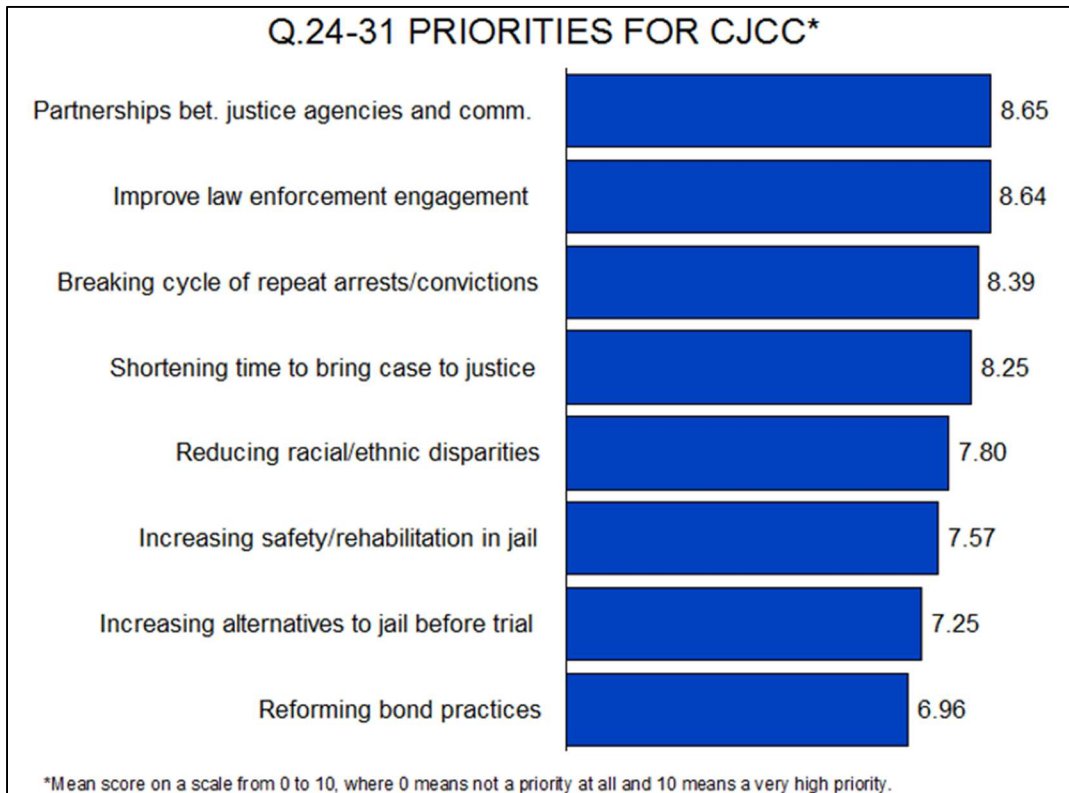
Groups who are less favorable than average include North/NE, age 65+, residents of unsafe neighborhoods, crime victim households, and accused/arrest households.

Given CJCC's low recognition, the data taken from question 10 is promising, but there is work to do to raise the organization's profile and make more residents very favorable toward CJCC.



## CJCC Priorities

Respondents were asked to weigh in on potential priorities for CJCC, using a scale of 0-10, where 0 means not a priority at all and 10 means a very high priority. The means for four items top 8.0 and should be where CJCC first focuses its efforts.



First, building a meaningful partnership between justice agencies and community members has a mean of 8.65. Chart 22 lists the subgroups placing the highest priority on partnerships and includes residents of unsafe neighborhoods, men of color, South/SE, newer residents, and no crime victim households.

Working to improve the way law enforcement engages with the community is next on the list at 8.64. Residents of unsafe neighborhoods, people of color, newer residents, younger residents, working/lower class, and no crime victim households rank this as a high priority.

Breaking the cycle of repeat arrests and convictions follows at 8.39. Those with a direct connection to the justice system prioritize breaking the cycle, as do white women and working/lower class residents.

The fourth highest priority is shortening the time it takes to bring a case to justice (8.25). This is a high priority for working/lower class, age 18-34 and age 65+, white men, accused/arrest households, 15 years or less residents, crime victim households, City residents, and underserved zips.

It is important to note that this statement is a notably higher priority than increasing alternatives to jail before trial (7.25) and reforming bond practices (6.96).

The mean priority for reducing racial/ethnic disparities in the justice system is 7.8.

Increasing safety and rehabilitation for people in jail has a mean of 7.57.



**Q.30 GROUPS PLACING HIGHEST PRIORITY ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN JUSTICE AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY\***

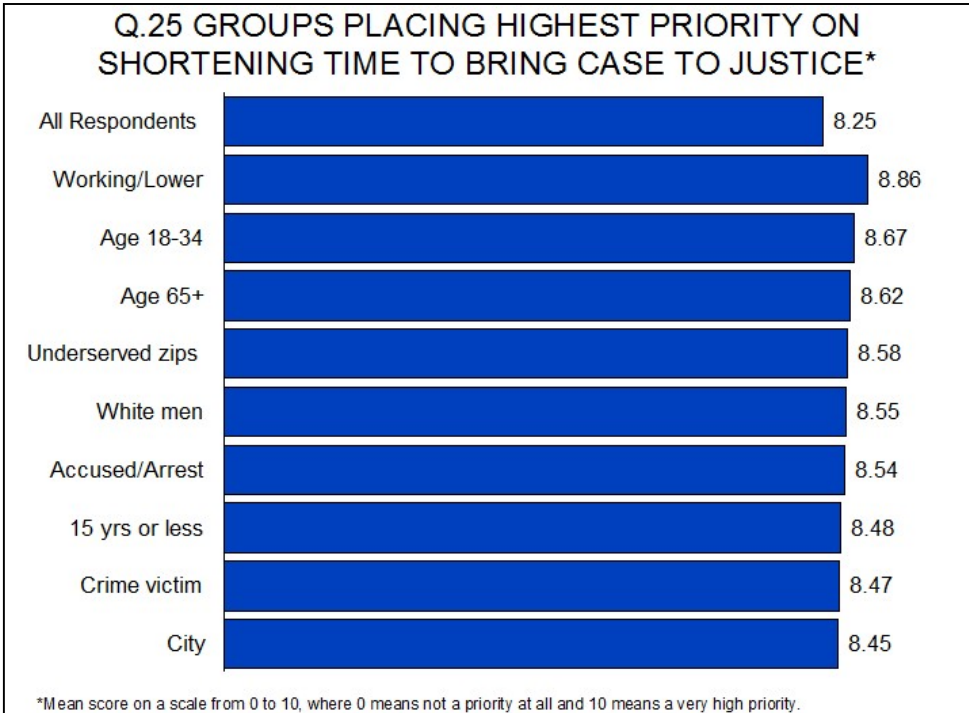
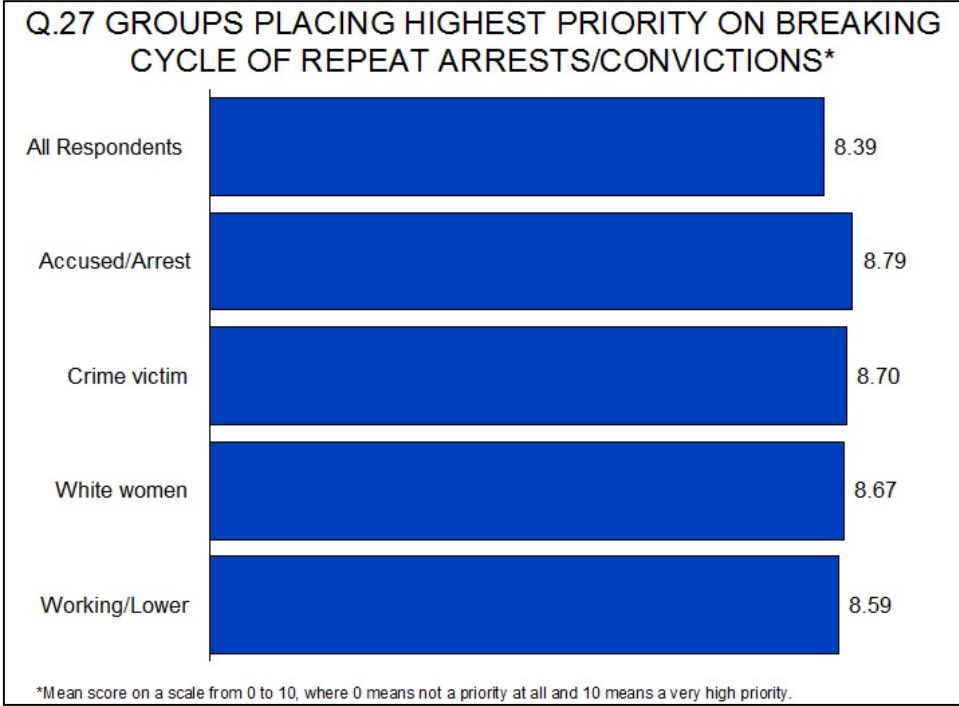


\*Mean score on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means not a priority at all and 10 means a very high priority.

**Q.31 GROUPS PLACING HIGHEST PRIORITY ON IMPROVING THE WAY LAW ENFORCEMENT ENGAGES WITH THE COMMUNITY\***



\*Mean score on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means not a priority at all and 10 means a very high priority.



**Q.26 GROUPS PLACING HIGHEST PRIORITY ON REDUCING RACIAL/ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN JUSTICE SYSTEM\***

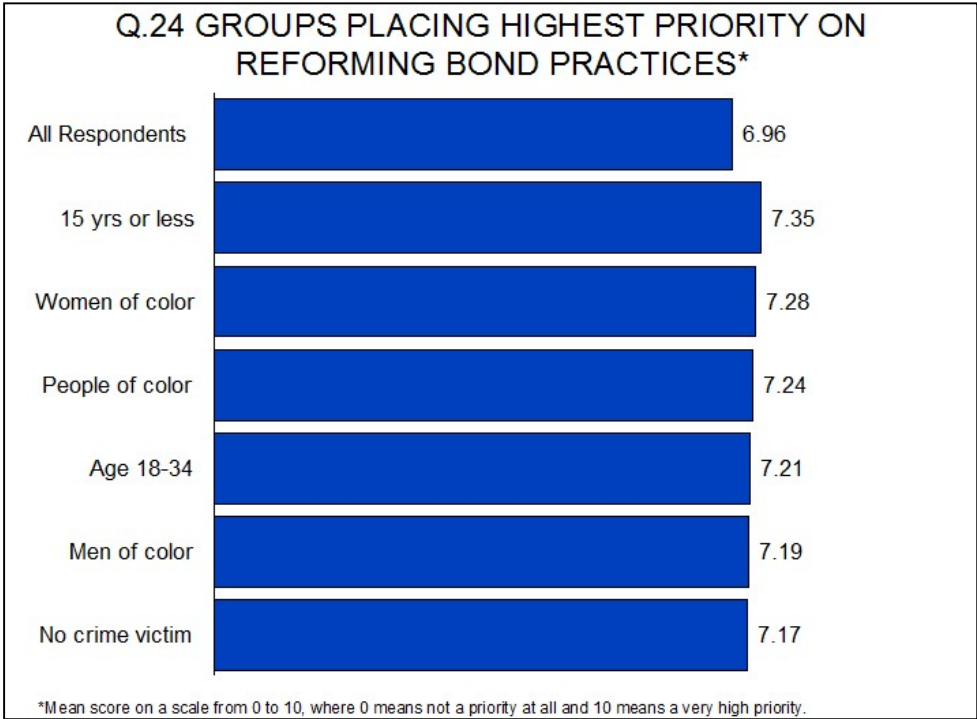
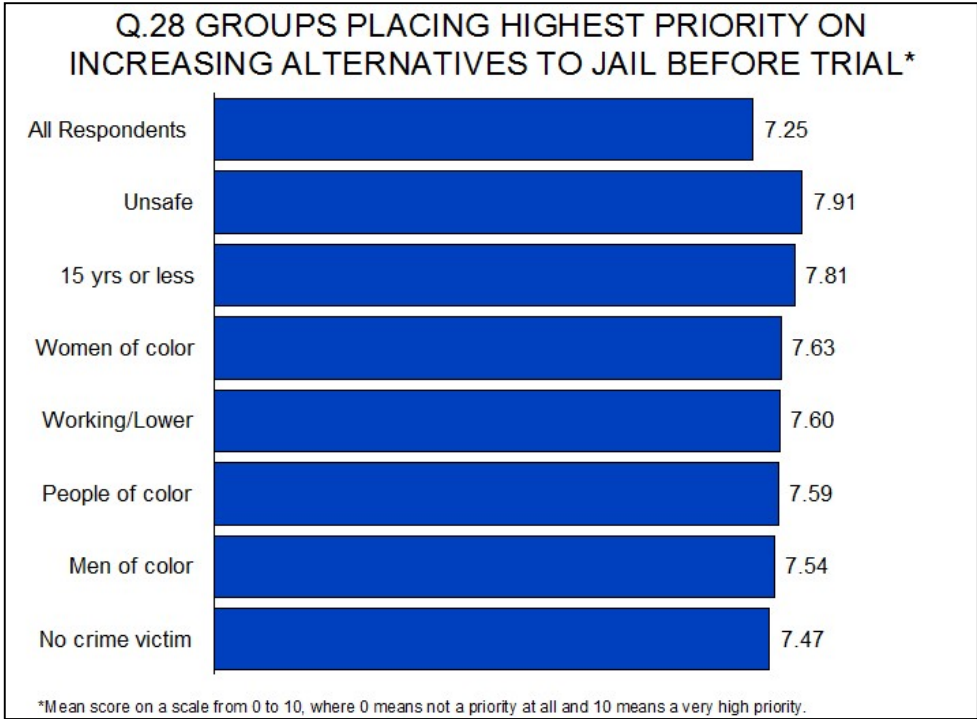


\*Mean score on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means not a priority at all and 10 means a very high priority.

**Q.29 GROUPS PLACING HIGHEST PRIORITY ON INCREASING SAFETY/REHABILITATION IN JAIL\***



\*Mean score on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means not a priority at all and 10 means a very high priority.



## Strategic Recommendations

- Build connections with community members, starting in the City region/underserved zips. Understand that most consider their neighborhood safe and want to hear how CJCC can help them to keep it that way.
- Identify smaller pockets of unsafe neighborhoods and those seeking a greater police presence and partner with them to seek change.
- Work to grow CJCC's profile through community outreach and by highlighting its work with the very well-known Sheriff and Police Departments.
- Educate residents on less well-known justice system entities.
- Weave the overwhelmingly well received language about designing a justice system that meets the needs of all people, regardless of socio-economic status into CJCC's description.
- Because reaction to changing bond/bail practices is murky, look at framing the work in this area as an effort to shorten the length of time it takes to bring a case to justice.



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