HITstrategies

District Voters Overwhelmingly Support Revised Criminal Code Act

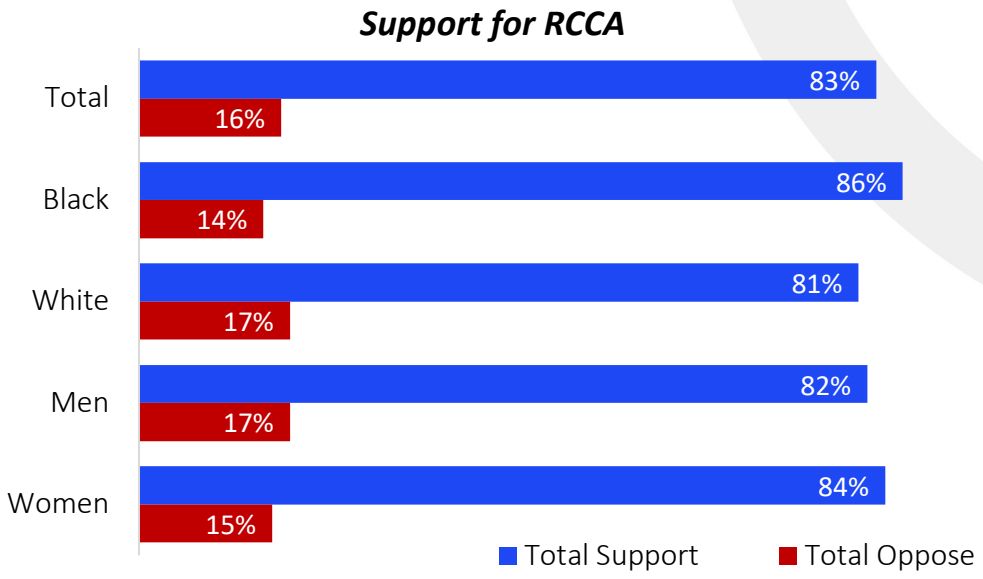
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: HIT Strategies – Terrance Woodbury, Jake Rubinstein, & Courtney Jemison, Pollsters
DATE: 6/6/2022
RE: District Voters Overwhelmingly Support Revised Criminal Code Act

The DC Justice Lab and FWD.us recently commissioned HIT Strategies to conduct a poll of voters registered in the District of Columbia on the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2021 (RCCA). This legislation moving through the D.C. Council would modernize the District's criminal code and adopt criminal justice reforms supported by the vast majority of voters.

After being given a three-sentence description of the legislation, 83% of District voters strongly or somewhat support the bill. Eight in 10 voters (79%) also say they would be more likely to support a candidate who would vote for the RCCA. Overwhelming majorities of voters across all races, ages, and genders spanning all Wards in the District support this legislation and its individual provisions.

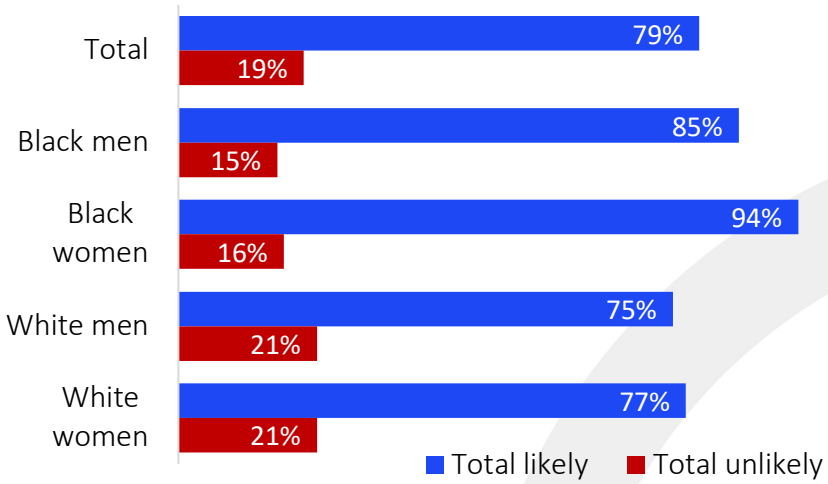
The Revised Criminal Code Act of 2021 (RCCA) creates a uniform classification system for all criminal offenses and redefines the legal elements that determine criminal liability. The legislation creates nine classes of felony offenses and five classes of misdemeanor offenses with minimum and maximum sentencing ranges proportionate to the severity of the crime.

Simply put, the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA) would revise the District's criminal laws to create a clearer and more uniform system for classifying offenses based on the severity of the offense.



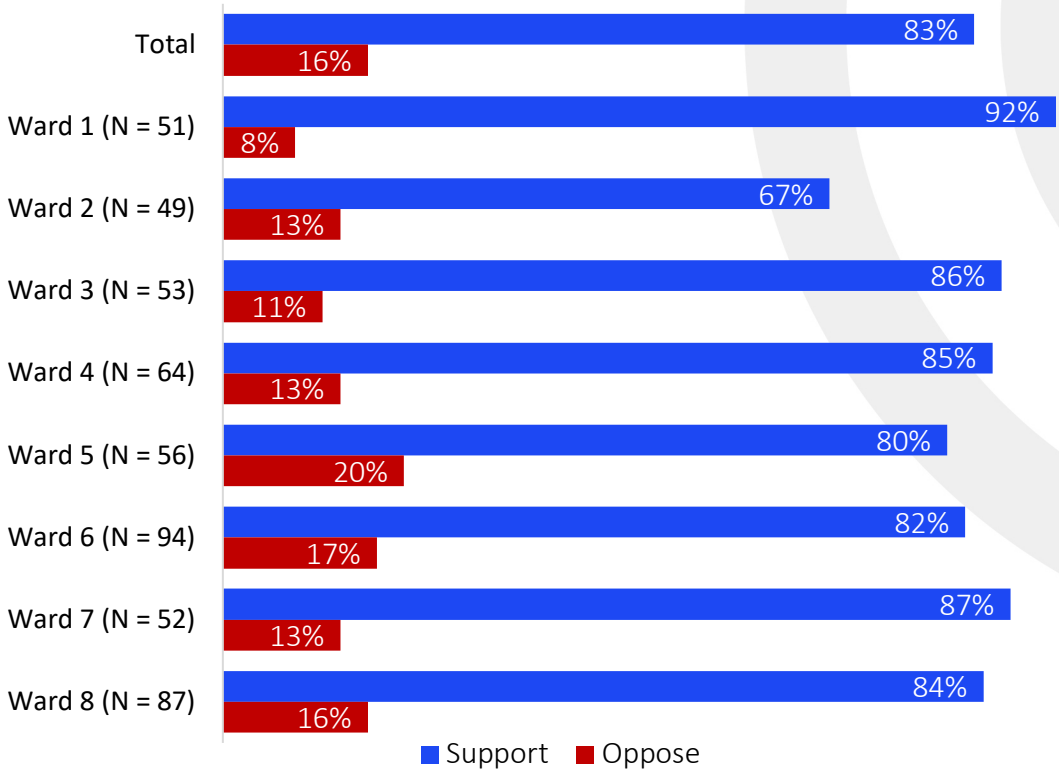
Voters in the district also want their elected representatives to support the RCCA. 79% of District voters are more likely to support a candidate who would be in favor of the RCCA, with overwhelming likelihood by race, age, and gender.

How likely are you to support a candidate who would vote in favor of the Revised Criminal Code Act?



There is also consistent majority support across the city's Wards for the RCCA with total support at 83%. Ward 1 shows the greatest support for the RCCA at 92%. Ward 2 has the least amount of RCCA support at 67%, but this data point shows that 2 in 3 voters support the RCCA.

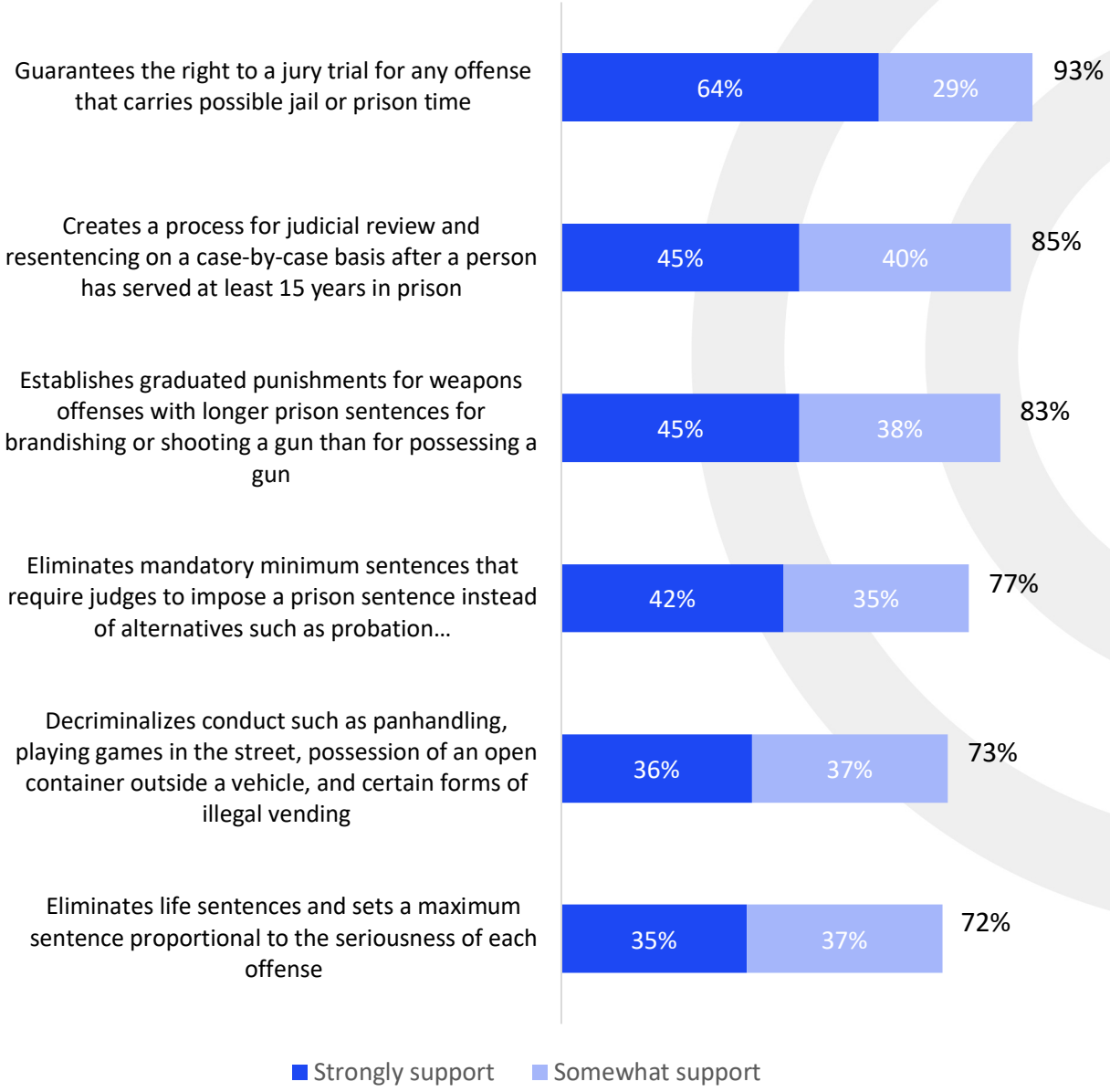
Given this description of the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA), do you support or oppose this legislation? - By Ward



In addition to broad support for the RCCA as a package, individual provisions are also overwhelmingly popular. The most popular policy within RCCA was guaranteeing the right to jury trial for offenses that carry jail or prison time, which garnered 93% support. Every policy tested in the RCCA was supported by at least 7 in 10 voters including Second Look resentencing (85%), eliminating mandatory minimums (77%), and eliminating life sentences (72% support).

The RCCA and the policies it contains have broad support across the city and voters want their elected officials to adopt criminal justice reforms to reduce incarceration and invest in crime prevention. While 58% of voters ranked crime as one of the three most important issues facing the District, 59% are dissatisfied with the direction the D.C. criminal justice system is heading and an overwhelming majority (81%) believe it is important to reduce the jail and prison population.

Support for policies contained in the RCCA



RESEARCH CONTENT CONTACT

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Survey Methodology:

These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by HIT Strategies on behalf of DC Justice Lab. This survey consisted of N=500 voters registered in the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted via phone dialing (utilizing both landline and cellphone numbers) and text-to-web using the voter file. The survey fielded from April 20th – April 25th, 2022. The margin of error is +/- 4.4%, with the margin of error higher among subgroups.