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New Poll: DC Residents Overwhelmingly Support Revised Criminal Code Act of 2021, A Groundbreaking Criminal Justice Reform Measure

- ***New Poll Finds 83% of Voters Support RCCA***
- ***79% of Voters More Likely to Vote for Candidates Who Support RCCA***
- ***All 8 Wards Support Measure***

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 14, 2022 - As Washington, D.C. voters prepare to elect candidates for mayor and the D.C. Council, the results of a new HIT Strategies poll released today indicate that an overwhelming majority of voters across key demographics (race, gender, age, and voting history) and city Ward residency support the Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA) of 2021 and are more likely to vote for candidates who also support the RCCA.

[Among the poll's findings](#), 83 percent of voters support the RCCA, 79 percent are more likely to vote for candidates who support the RCCA, and 81 percent believe it is important to reduce the jail and prison population. Support for the RCCA cuts across all eight District wards, including 92% of Ward 1, 87% of Ward 7, and 86% of Ward 3 voters.

“The results of this survey are clear: D.C. voters are ready to replace outdated statutes that are failing to keep us safe with new laws that are carefully crafted and reflect the shared values of District residents,” said Patrice Sulton, founder and Executive Director of DC Justice Lab and former Senior Attorney Advisor for DC’s Criminal Code Reform Commission. “The current D.C. Criminal Code is failing people who are survivors of crime and people who stand accused. It includes many statutes that are unconstitutional, unenforceable, overlapping, and incomplete. It references steamboats and outhouses but leaves out some of our most ubiquitous modern vehicles and technologies.”

The RCCA was introduced in October 2021 and is currently under consideration by the D.C. Council. The legislation aims to enact the [Criminal Code Reform Commission](#) (CCRC)’s recommendations, marking the first attempt to reform the District’s criminal code since it was first adopted by Congress in 1901. The common-sense legislation would create new sentencing ranges more proportionate to the severity of the crime and modernize the criminal code to make it clearer and fairer. [A diverse expert advisory group](#) that included prosecutors, defenders, and scholars met monthly from November 2016 to March 2021 to study the issue, develop recommendations, and then unanimously voted to forward the RCCA to the D.C. Council in 2021.

“It’s quite rare to find such overwhelming support for a criminal justice reform measure so far reaching as RCAA,” said Terrance Woodbury of HIT Strategies. “The poll findings are pretty clear, District voters across all eight wards support RCCA as a package and individual provisions that comprise it.”

Among the reforms in the RCCA,

- **93 percent** of voters support guaranteeing the right to a jury trial for any offense that carries possible jail or prison time and
- **85 percent** support adopting Second Look resentencing for anyone who has served 15 years in prison.
- **By a 3 to 1 margin**, voters also support eliminating mandatory minimums, decriminalizing minor offenses such as panhandling, and eliminating life sentences and replacing them with a maximum sentence proportionate to the offense.

“Washingtonians strongly support criminal justice reform and expect policymakers to advance policies that will safely reduce harm for all District residents,” said Zoë Towns, Vice President for Criminal Justice Reform at FWD.us. “The Revised Criminal Code Act (RCCA) proposes long overdue progress to promote fairness, consistency, and racial justice in the District’s sentencing laws.”

The poll of 500 registered voters residing in the District of Columbia was conducted by HIT Strategies and commissioned by DC Justice Lab and FWD.us.

ABOUT DC JUSTICE LAB

[DC Justice Lab](#) is a team of law and policy experts researching, organizing, and advocating for community-rooted reforms to the District’s criminal legal system. We develop smarter safety solutions that are evidence-driven, community-rooted, and racially just. We aim to fully transform the District’s approach to punishment and public safety and make it a national leader in justice reform.

ABOUT FWD.us

[FWD.us](#) is a bipartisan political organization that believes America’s families, communities, and economy thrive when everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. For too long, our broken immigration and criminal justice systems have locked too many people out from the American dream. Founded by leaders in the technology and business communities, we seek to grow and galvanize political support to break through partisan gridlock and achieve meaningful reforms.

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