



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: CARLY COOPERMAN

DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2023

RE: 2023 POST-ELECTION VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY POLLING FINDINGS

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## 2023 Post-Election Virginia General Assembly Polling Findings

Between November 4-8, 2023, Schoen Cooperman Research conducted 900 interviews with 2023 general election voters in battleground districts across Virginia. Our total sample consists of 300 interviews per region in Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads.

In particular, our polling was designed to measure the impact and importance of gun policy and gun safety in the General Assembly elections.

### Executive Summary

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For overwhelming majorities of voters in battleground districts, gun safety policies and gun violence prevention issues, which were featured prominently and distinctively in Everytown's paid media campaign, were important to their vote.

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Moreover, Gun Policy Voters in the battleground districts – those who said a candidate's position on guns is important to their vote – overwhelmingly supported Democrats for Virginia Senate (55% to 43%) and House of Delegates (55% to 44%).

- Additionally, 48% of battleground voters said Democrats addressed their concerns about public safety and violent crime better than Republicans (44%).
  - This is a significant development for Democrats in countering their perceived weakness on public safety and overcoming some setbacks with these issues in recent competitive races nationwide.
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**Alongside abortion rights and the economy, gun violence prevention was a top issue in battleground districts and highly important to voters' decisions, especially based on specific policy proposals promoted by Virginia Democrats.**

**3** In fact, Everytown's paid media campaign, which emphasized a **combination of Virginia Republicans' opposition to common-sense gun safety laws AND their efforts to pass a 15-week abortion ban**, effectively made a large majority of battleground voters less likely to vote Republican.

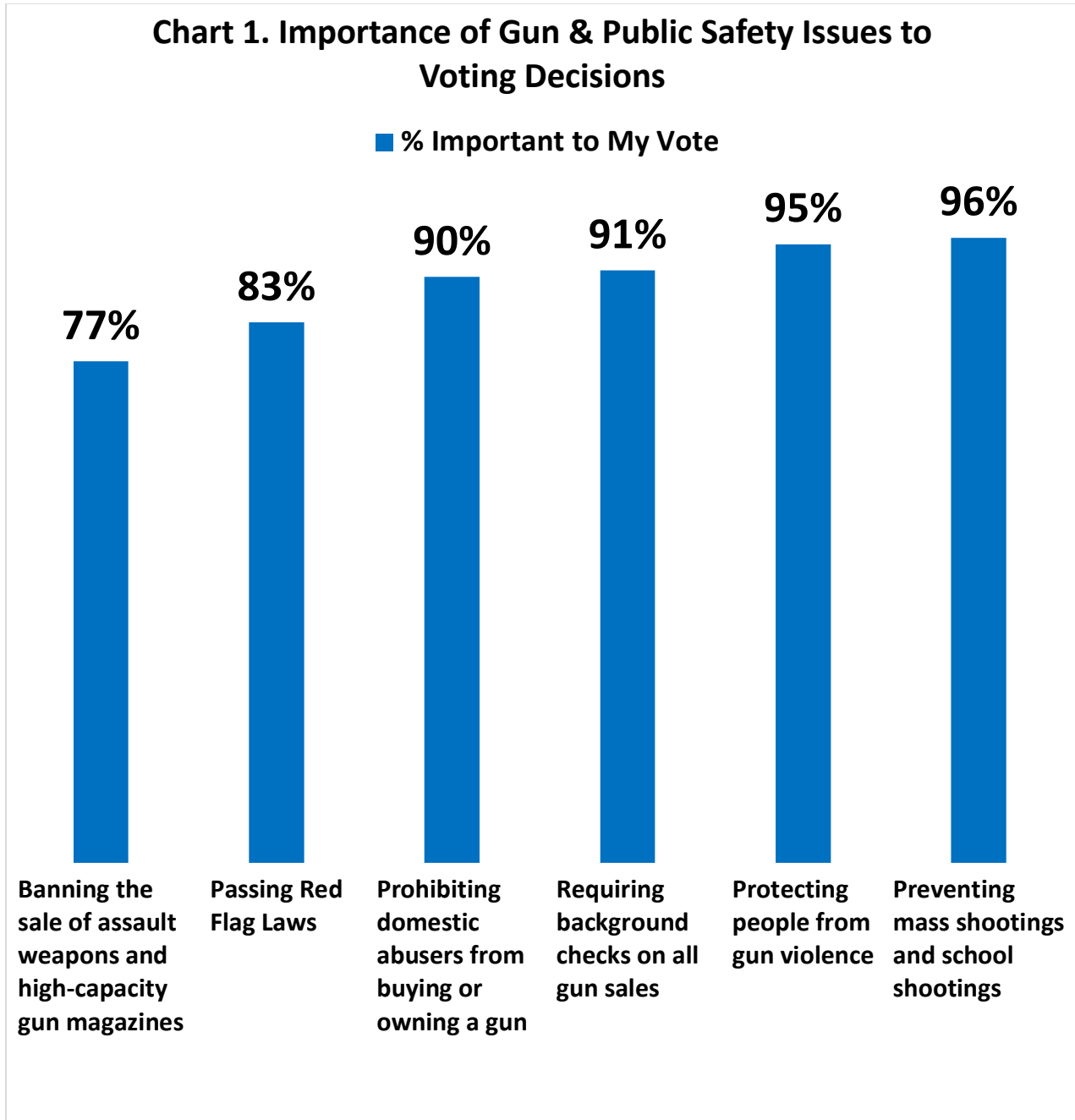
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**Further, the salience of Democrats' gun safety positions allowed the party to win the issues of public safety and violent crime.**

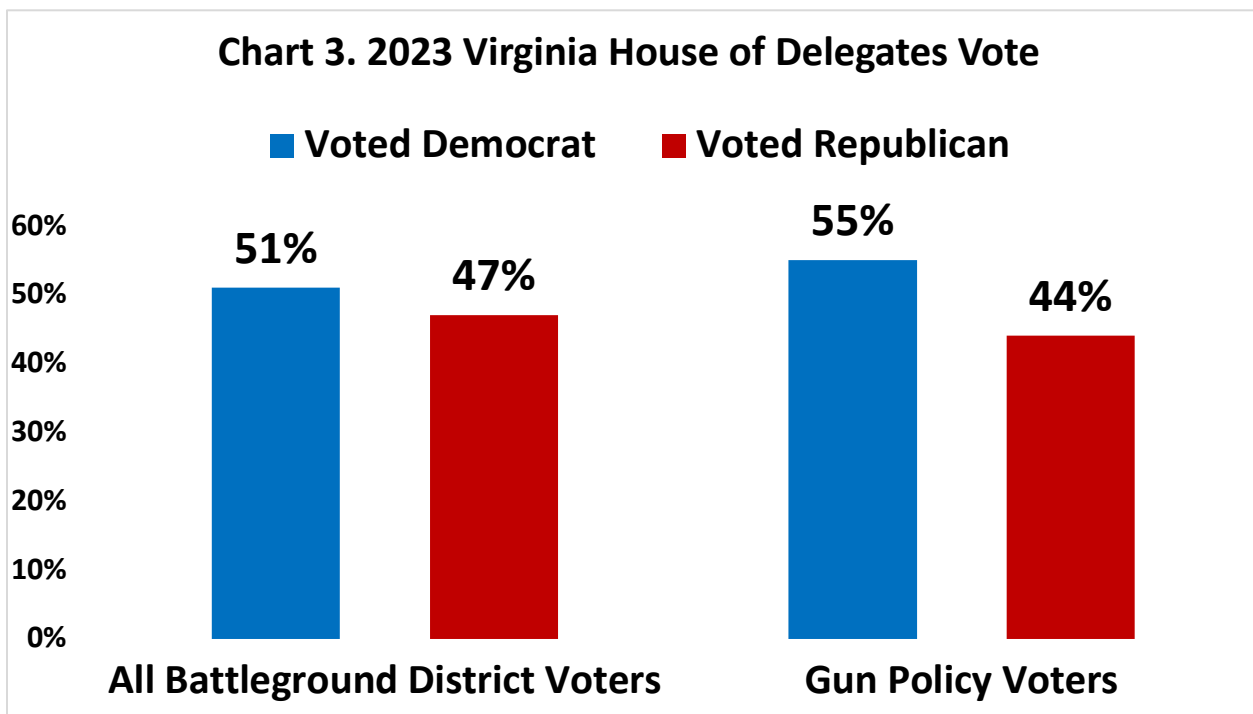
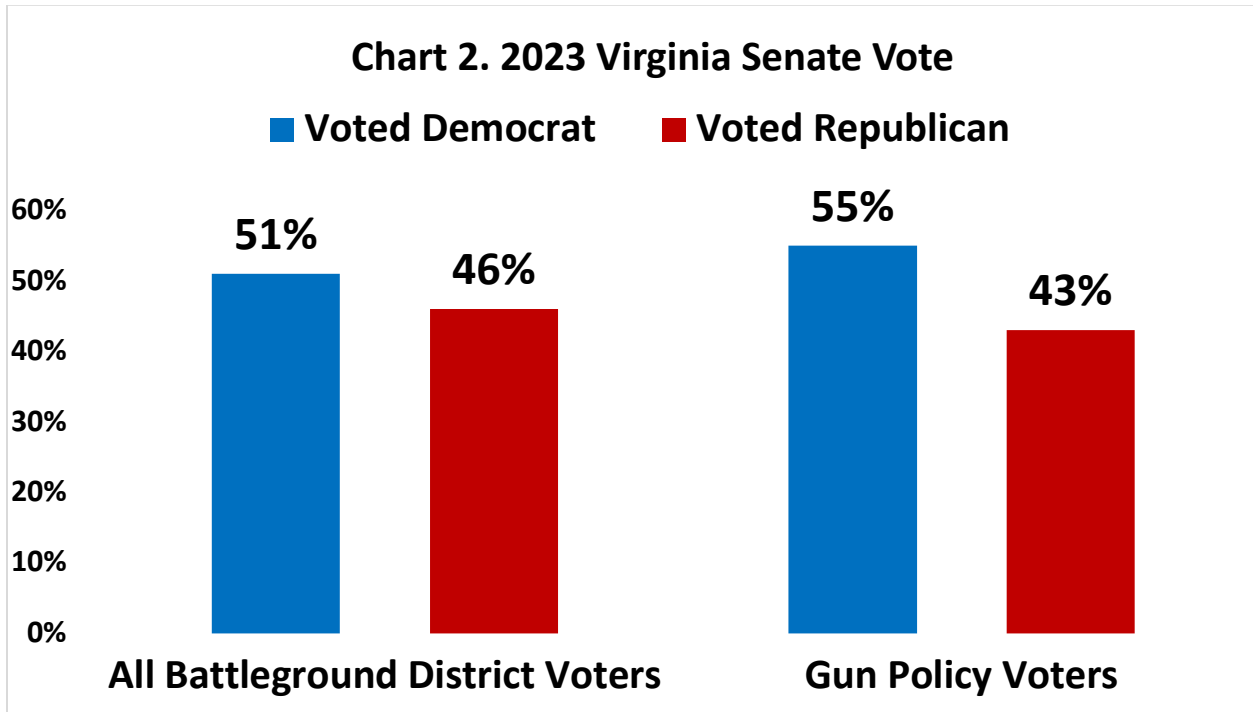
**4** ➤ A full 83% of gun policy voters and 81% of battleground district voters would like Virginia's gun laws to be made stronger or kept as they are now, rather than weakened as many Republicans proposed, underscoring the growing consensus in favor of gun violence prevention while the "guns everywhere" agenda fails to resonate.

## Importance of Gun Safety & Gun Violence Prevention to Vote

For overwhelming majorities of voters in battleground districts, gun safety policies and gun violence prevention issues, which were featured prominently and distinctively in Everytown's paid media campaign, were important to their vote.



Further, among Gun Policy Voters (those who said a candidate’s position on guns is important to their vote regardless of whether it was for or against new gun laws), Democrats won overwhelmingly.



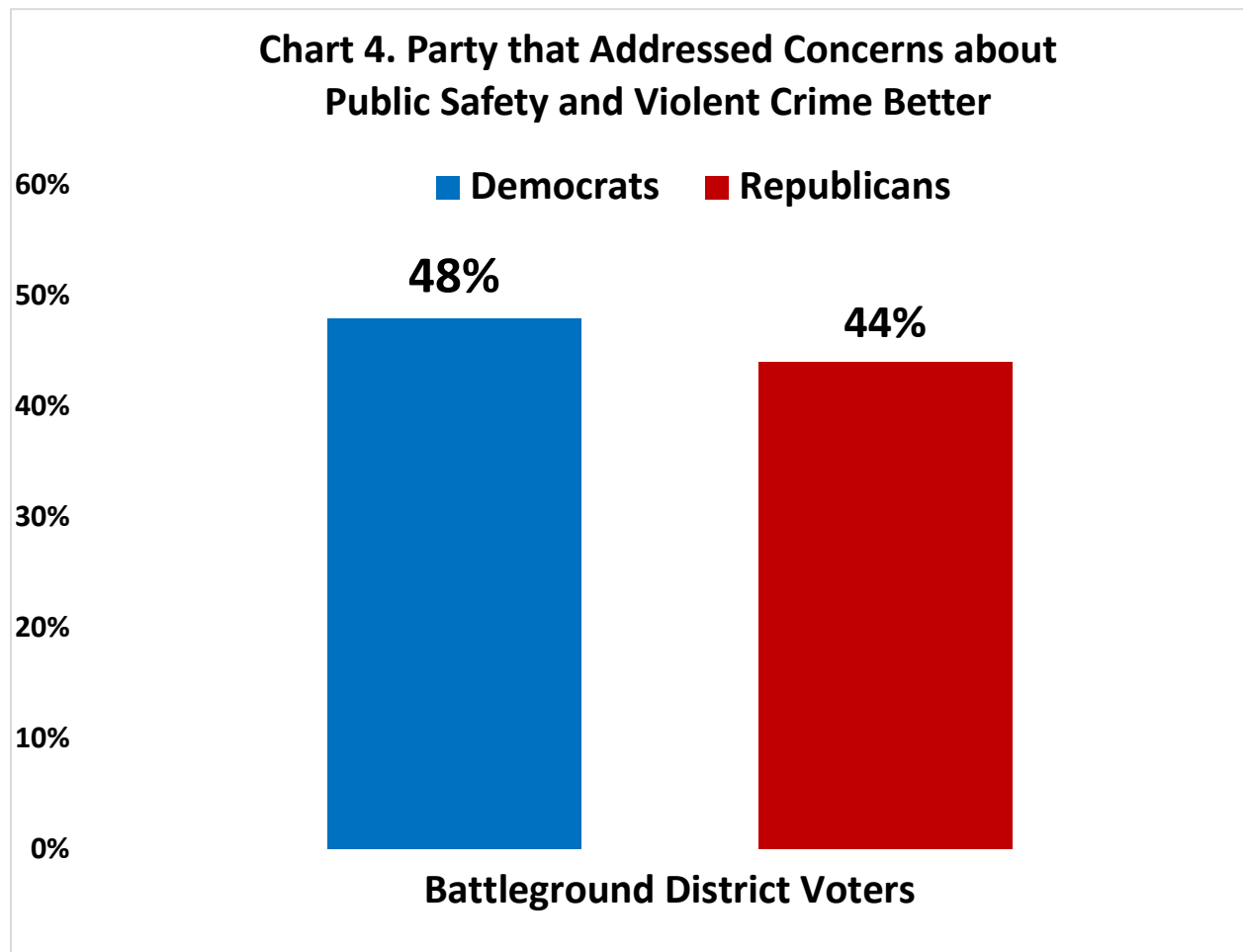
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## Democrats Winning on Public Safety

**The salience of Democrats' gun safety positions has allowed the party to tally a notable victory on the issues of public safety and violent crime in battleground districts.**

48% of battleground voters said Democrats addressed their concerns about public safety and violent crime better, compared to 44% saying Republicans.

Put another way, the persuasiveness and distinctiveness of Everytown's public safety messaging through its paid media campaign fully neutralized the right-wing accusation that Democrats are "soft on crime."



## Persuasiveness of Everytown’s Messaging

**Clear majorities of battleground district voters were less likely to vote Republican based on the messaging in Everytown’s paid media campaign,** especially the messaging that combined Virginia Republicans’ opposition to common-sense gun safety laws AND efforts to pass an extreme abortion ban.

**Table 1. Persuasiveness of Everytown’s Messaging**

Message	% Less Likely to Vote Republican
<b>[GUNS &amp; ABORTION]</b> Virginia Republican politicians are pushing an extreme agenda that threatens the health and safety of Virginians. Abortion is a protected right in Virginia, yet Republican politicians want to roll back those rights and ban abortion. They also opposed common-sense gun safety measures like background checks on all gun sales and supported making it easier for criminals to carry guns in public with no questions asked. Republican politicians are pushing a reckless and extreme agenda that denies women lifesaving care, while also making our communities less safe.	<b>59%</b>
<b>[SCHOOL SAFETY]</b> With school shootings and mass shootings on the rise, guns are now the leading cause of death for children and teens in America. Yet Virginia Republican politicians continue to push an extreme, guns-everywhere agenda, opposing background checks on all gun sales and an assault weapons ban—making it easier for dangerous people and violent criminals to get guns.	<b>56%</b>
<b>[MAGA EXTREMISM CATCHALL]</b> MAGA Republican politicians are conspiracy theorists who continue to support Donald Trump and all of his lies. These MAGA extremists want to ban abortions even in the cases of rape or incest and make it easier for dangerous people and violent criminals to get guns. MAGA Republican politicians are putting the health and safety of our families and communities at risk.	<b>56%</b>
<b>[GUNS FOR CRIMINALS]</b> Virginia Republican politicians are endorsed and funded by the gun lobby that wants to make it easier for domestic abusers and violent criminals to get guns, even over the objections of law enforcement. They also voted against common sense solutions like background checks on all gun sales and an assault weapons ban.	<b>48%</b>

Gun violence was also a top issue to voters right alongside abortion rights and the economy.

<b>Table 2. Most Important Issues to Voting Decision in 2023 Election</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Battleground District Voters</b>
<b>Protecting abortion rights</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Rising costs and inflation</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Gun violence</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>The economy; creating jobs</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Immigration</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Taxes</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Health care</b>	<b>14%</b>

**A full 83% of Gun Policy Voters would also like Virginia’s gun laws to be made stronger or kept as they are now, rather than weakened as many Republican candidates proposed**, underscoring the growing consensus in favor of gun violence prevention while the “guns everywhere” agenda fails to resonate.

<b>Table 3. Position on Virginia’s Current Gun Laws</b>		
<b>Position</b>	<b>Battleground District Voters</b>	<b>Gun Policy Voters</b>
<b>TOTAL STRONGER OR UPHELD</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Virginia’s gun laws should be made stronger	53%	57%
Virginia’s gun laws should be kept as they are now	28%	26%
Virginia’s gun laws should be made weaker	11%	11%
Not sure	8%	6%