



CRIME SURVIVORS FOR
SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice presents

HEAL THE VOTE
SANE EL VOTO

Non-Partisan **Voter Guide**

#HealTheVote Non-Partisan Voter Guide

Survivor-Centered Assessment and Candidate Questionnaire

Voters this November will have a chance to weigh in on issues of federal policy, (and in some cases, state and local policy questions) that affect whether a crime survivor has access to the treatment, services, and support they need to heal and whether the most effective crime prevention policies are being used.

While you will want to adapt these suggestions to what is happening in your state, city, or county, **here is a candidate assessment for crime survivors and a candidate question form you might use to ask your candidates for higher office** about what they will do to ensure that survivors have everything they need to heal.

» For all voter information in your state visit cssj.org/vote.



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Survivor-Centered Assessment of Candidates

» **Victims Compensation/Services:** About 63 million people were victims of a crime in the U.S. in the last 10 years, and half of those were victims of a violent crime. Yet, only about 1 in 10 survivors of a violent crime report receiving any services from a victim services agency.

Question: *Which candidate do you believe will make increasing access to victim compensation and victim services a top priority?*

» **Prioritizing Funding for Most Harmed:**

While there are some government, state, and local community organizations that address the needs of victims, those who live in communities most harmed by violence are the least helped. Organizations and advocates working on the front-line of violence are underfunded and under-resourced.

Question: *Which candidate do you believe will take the necessary steps to expand funding support to help organizations address community violence at the level that is needed?*

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Survivor-Centered Assessment of Candidates

» **Mental Health/Trauma Recovery Services:**

One of the biggest barriers to healing crime survivors face is lack of access to mental health services to address the trauma caused by the crime, and especially in communities of color, a lack of culturally competent mental health and trauma services. Among all Americans, more than half of those who have a mental health issue did not receive treatment in the past year.

Question: *Which candidate do you believe will invest in the infrastructure needed to ensure more crime survivors can receive the trauma recovery and mental health treatment they need that is critical to their healing journey?*

» **Restorative Justice:** For many crime survivors, there is a point in their healing journeys when they may want to confront the person that caused them or their family harm. Restorative justice practices are an effective alternative to the traditional criminal justice process.

Question: *Which candidate's values do you believe would encourage federal, state and local jurisdictions to strongly consider restorative justice as a key function of the criminal justice system?*

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» **Less Incarceration, More Rehabilitation:**

Every state in the nation has seen an increase in incarceration rates, lengthy sentences, and prison spending. These things do not lead to safety. Crime survivors support public safety investments into effective rehabilitation and treatment as more likely to address the causes of crime and stop the cycle of violence.

Question: *Which candidate do you believe will be most committed to helping reduce incarceration, increase rehabilitative programs in prison, and shorten the length of parole or probation for individuals that have proven to be a low risk to public safety?*

» **Survivors at the Center:** Crime survivors of color have traditionally been left out of the policy-making debates, which have centered reforms around mostly white crime survivors.

Question: *Which candidate do you believe will better support survivors of color having a voice at the center of policy-making decisions?*

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Candidate Questionnaire

» About 63 million people were victims of a crime in the U.S. in the last 10 years, and half of those were victims of a violent crime. Yet, only about 1 in 9 survivors of a violent crime report receiving any services from a victim services agency.

Question: *What steps will you take to change this picture so that many more crime survivors are able to access victims compensation?*

» - While there are some nonprofit networks that address the needs of some victims of specific crimes (for example, domestic violence victims), people who are victims of gun violence have very few organizations and very little dedicated funding to address their healing needs.

Question: *What steps would you take to expand funding so that gun and street violence can be addressed at the scale that is needed?*

» The most effective way to meet the needs of a crime survivor is by delivering treatment, services, and support through an organization from the victim's own community. Grassroots community-based organizations are more effective at addressing survivor needs because they know the neighborhoods and resources available to help victims heal. These organizations face significant challenges in getting sufficient funding to operate at the scale needed.

Question: *What steps would you take to make funding available to these neighborhood-based organizations to help meet the needs of more crime survivors?*

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Candidate Questionnaire

» One of the biggest barriers to healing that crime survivors face is the lack of access to mental health services to address the trauma caused by the crime. Among all Americans, more than half of those who have a mental health issue did not receive treatment in the past year.

Question: *What steps would you take to ensure more crime survivors can receive the mental health treatment they need that is critical to their healing journey?*

» As a crime survivor, it's very important to me that what happened to me doesn't happen to anyone else. I believe people who cause harm may once have been harmed themselves, and they need meaningful treatment and rehabilitation, not purposeless punishment that warehouses them without making them better.

Question: *How would you work to make sure people have access to treatment and rehabilitation that will make it safe for them to be back in the community?*

» The nation spends about \$90 billion dollars on prisons, jails and corrections, even though more effective crime prevention programs exist that do not receive this level of funding.

Question: *What steps would you take to reallocate resources from prison and jail spending to more effective crime prevention programs? Do you support reducing prison and jail spending and reallocating that money to help people arrested for crimes by:*

- *Expanding local treatment programs?*
- *Expanding housing programs?*
- *Expanding job training and helping businesses hire more people with past convictions?*

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- » Crime survivors suffer in silence long after the actual crime. We need access to services that help address our trauma and the consequences of it, like trauma recovery centers that provide culturally competent wraparound services.

Question: *Would you support a trauma recovery center in this community?*

- » Crime survivors of color have traditionally been left out of the policymaking debates, which have centered reforms around mostly white crime survivors.

Question: *What will you do to be sure that all crime victims' voices are considered in policy-making decisions?*

We hope you use this voter guide to help you make a survivor-centered decision at the ballot box.



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