



CRIME SURVIVORS FOR
SAFETY AND JUSTICE

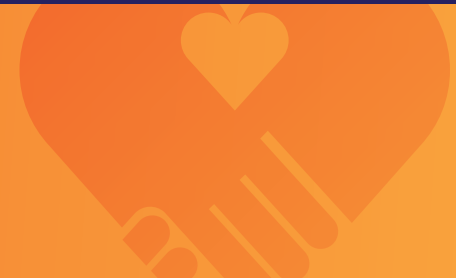
Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice presents

HEAL THE VOTE

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Non-Partisan **Campaign Toolkit**

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Introduction

Crime victims know what can make our communities safer.

Crime survivors across the country are uniting to **#HealTheVote** by getting thousands of survivors to vote in this election and demanding that public officials commit to a new, effective approach to public safety. We are elevating our voices to advance leadership and policies that advance safety.

For too long, the voices of survivors have been left out of conversations about public safety policies. The current system that overspends on the criminal justice system and underinvests in the health, healing and safety of survivors and our communities has failed to keep us safe. We know that the power to set public safety policies, at all levels of government, is held by those we elect. In the 2020 election, survivors of crime are saying



our voices will no longer go unheard or ignored, and we are standing up to demonstrate the strength of our voices at the polls and beyond to pave a clear pathway to safety for all.

About Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice

Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice (CSSJ) is a national network of crime survivors joining together to create healing communities and shape public policy.

We are a flagship project of Alliance for Safety and Justice. With over 42,000 members and growing, including chapters and leaders across the country, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice is building a movement to heal together and promote policies that help the people and communities most harmed by crime and violence. CSSJ currently has active state and local chapters in California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Texas.

Since the founding of Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice seven years ago, we have made



tremendous progress in our collective efforts to shape our justice system. Together, we have helped increase the number of trauma recovery centers across the country, removed barriers to the victims' compensation program in key states, increased access to victim services, and passed historic laws that prioritize the needs of survivors and change our criminal justice system.

About Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice

Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice Key Principles:



Survivors are the key constituency that should be driving public safety policy.



Civic engagement and organizing is part of the healing journey—healing for ourselves through connection and empowerment and healing for our communities by taking action and winning change.



Survivors deserve to heal and must have a seat at the policy-making table.



Together, survivors can build a new safety movement—a movement for Shared Safety rooted in survivor needs and real solutions to stop the cycle of crime.

Crime survivors, service providers, advocates and community organizations are essential to our work. Your participation will strengthen local, state and national organizing efforts, rally supporters, and enrich the ongoing conversation about what a Shared Safety approach looks like when crime survivors are at the center.

About #HealTheVote Campaign

America is a nation built on trauma. In a time when black, brown, and indigenous communities' lives are at stake, crime victims and survivors must be at the table.

That's why Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice is coming together to organize our constituency to get to the polls and #HealTheVote. The survivor-led #HealTheVote campaign is a civic engagement and voter education campaign to elevate the voices of those in this country who are most harmed by violence and least helped.

#HealTheVote Campaign Goal:

Mobilize crime survivors to #HealTheVote through:

- » Voter education
- » Civic engagement
- » Storytelling

Through the #HealTheVote campaign crime survivors will elevate these key statements.

Through the #HealTheVote campaign, crime survivors will elevate these key statements.

#HealTheVote Key Statements:

- » America is a nation built on trauma.
- » Voter participation is critical this year.
- » Listen to survivors.
- » #HealTheVote
- » #SurvivorsSpeak



About #HealTheVote Campaign

Supporting Talking Points

- » **America is one of the most traumatized nations in the world because of the violence experienced in communities.** The trauma continues to go unaddressed, fueling cycles of harm and violence. We can't fully address this trauma when the people who are the most harmed by violence and receive the least help in its aftermath don't have a seat at the policy-making table. It's time to #HealTheVote by getting crime survivors to the polls and showing that listening to crime survivors isn't just the right thing to do—it's good politics.
- » **If our current system were effective, our communities would be safe.** Instead, we're a nation full of trauma, often passed from one generation to the next. It's time to elect



lawmakers who will listen to survivors of violence and act with our needs in mind.

- » **We need to turn out the vote like our lives depend on it,** because they do—for us and for so many in our communities.

About #HealTheVote Campaign

Supporting Talking Points

- » **Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice has more than 42,000 members in chapters across the nation**, and we're committed to making sure that our members, their families and communities all vote this November. This is the most consequential election in a generation, and the voices of those often under-represented in American politics and in public safety policymaking must be centered this year.
- » **This fall, we will register and mobilize thousands of survivors to vote**, helping them register, vote by mail or cast their ballot in person this fall.
- » **By showing our power at the polls, we will demand the attention of our leaders, calling**



upon them to fund the safety solutions we want: victim services, trauma recovery, prevention and rehabilitation, mental health treatment, restorative justice, and other safety programs proven to be more effective than the current approach, focused on the criminal justice system.

#HealTheVote Pledge

As a crime survivor, I pledge to #HealTheVote by casting a ballot in the 2020 General Election on Tuesday, November 3 or earlier through early voting or vote by mail.

Crime survivors know what can make us all safer.

Our voices and votes are critical to advance the leadership and policies that provide the safety solutions that heal and protect our communities.

For too long, survivors have been left out of conversations about public safety policies, while the current approach that overspends on the criminal justice system and underinvests in our health, healing and safety has failed to keep us safe. Instead, it has left a nation full of trauma that goes unaddressed and fuels cycles of harm and violence in our communities.

The power to set public safety policies is held by officials from the federal government to local governments—all those we have the power to elect.

In the 2020 election, survivors of crime must raise our voices, so they no longer go unheard or ignored. We must stand up to demonstrate our strength at the polls and beyond to pave a clear pathway to safety.

Take the pledge to #HealTheVote and join thousands of survivors across the country to tell our stories, center our experiences, and demonstrate our power through voting and communicating to public officials and other voters through social media and other channels.



**Sign the pledge to join us
and #HealTheVote**

#HealTheVote Engagement Activities



Virtual Meetings: CSSJ chapters will incorporate campaign activities and voter education into chapter meetings.

Voter Education and Registration: We will identify members who need to register to vote, connect them to voter registration resources to help them update their registration or learn more about their state’s vote-by-mail opportunities, requirements, and rules, to ensure our members know how to, and are prepared to vote by mail.

[Visit the CSSJ voter website.](#)

Voter Pledge: We are asking crime survivors to take the voter pledge: *“As a crime survivor, I pledge to #HealTheVote by casting a ballot in the 2020 General Election on Tuesday, November 3 or earlier through early voting or vote by mail.”* [Take the pledge.](#)



Issue Education and Outreach:

Through SMS, social media, phone banking, digital events, and training, we will provide issue education to members to encourage survivors to get to the polls and #HealTheVote.



#HealTheVote Engagement Activities



In-State Heal the Vote Town Halls:

We will bring together members and legislative champions in key states (CA, FL, IL, MI, OH, PA, TX) to dialogue on the issues our members care about most.



Storytelling: We are gathering and sharing member stories via user-generated content to showcase the diversity of survivor experience and increase engagement with the campaign across social channels.

[Submit a campaign video.](#)



Sign up as a Volunteer: As a campaign volunteer you'll serve as a **source of connection and support** for our members and will **play an active role in the campaign.** [Sign up as a volunteer.](#)



#HealTheVote Survivor 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.

- » Download the **[State by State Voter Guide](#)** for Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.
- » For all other voter information in your state visit **cssj.org/vote**.



#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide



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?*

#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide



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?*

#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide



Survivor-Centered Assessment of Candidates

» **Less Incarceration, More Rehabilitation:**

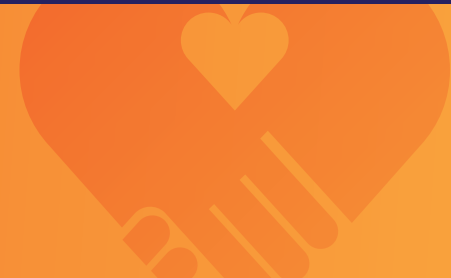
Every state in the nation has seen an increase in incarceration rates, lengthy sentences, and prison spending. These things do not lead to safety. Crime survivors support public safety investments into effective rehabilitation and treatment as more likely to address the causes of crime and stop the cycle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

#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide



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?*

#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide

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?*

#HealTheVote Survivor Voter Guide

Candidate Questionnaire

- » 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.

Resources

- » [Download key statistics on the challenges crime survivors face getting support](#)
- » [Download the Social Media Toolkit](#)





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