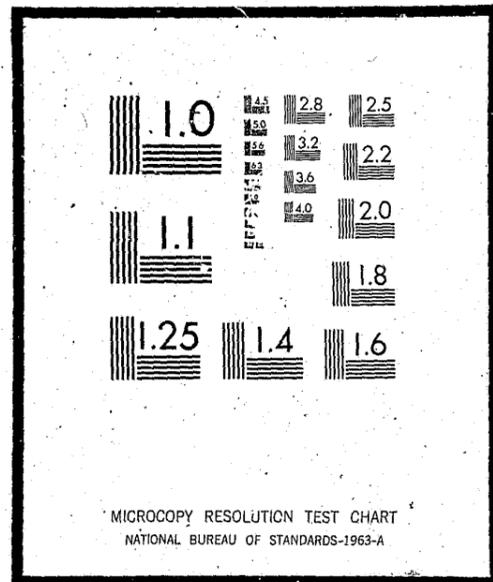


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed

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REPORT OF FINDINGS

(with synopsis)

Virginia

A Survey of Public Attitudes

Toward Crime And The Criminal Justice System

In The State Of Virginia

Conducted for:

Division of Justice and Crime Prevention
Office of the Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia

June, 1975

Quayle, Plessner & Company, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research project was to measure public attitudes toward crime and the criminal justice problems in Virginia. The ultimate purpose was to provide the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention with information to help it deal more effectively with the state's crime and criminal justice problems, both actual and perceived, and to help it win public support for existing and anticipated programs.

In meeting this objective, the study focused on five specific areas of interest:

1. The relative priority Virginians assign to other problems facing them such as unemployment, inflation, pollution, education, and the energy crisis.
2. Virginians' familiarity with all levels of the Commonwealth's criminal justice system--- its structure, operations, and problems--- and how this relates to their attitudes toward the system and to their appraisal of state and local government efforts to stem crime and improve court and correction systems.

3. The priorities state residents assign in terms of tax dollars in order to improve the state's criminal justice system and specific anti-crime, court, and penal reform programs.
4. The relative importance the public assigns to reducing or eliminating different types of crime.
5. Appraisal of existing and prospective state and local anti-crime, court, and penal system programs, and the relation of this appraisal to knowledge of present programs and experience as victims of crime.

In line with these objectives, Quayle, Plesser & Company completed 1000 personal interviews with a scientifically selected cross section of the Virginia population aged 16 or older. All interviewing was conducted from May 3 through May 27, 1975.

The Sample

The population sample used for this study was drawn on a modified area probability basis from 1970 census data. Under this methodology, the number of sampling points is controlled by the cluster size, the number of interviews taken at each point. For this project, a cluster size of five was used at 200 sample points.

Sample points were assigned to each area of the state in proportion to each region's share of the 16 and older population, as determined by 1970 census data. Sampling points were selected at random and designated by census tract and, where available, by census block.

Interviewing

All interviews were conducted in the homes of respondents by trained, experienced interviewers, working under the direct control of local field supervisors and the overall supervision of our National Field Director. All interviewers were thoroughly briefed prior to the commencement of interviewing, and a minimum of 10 percent of each interviewer's work was validated during the field period to insure work was correctly carried out.

Interviewers followed detailed instructions in completing their work, as confirmed by continuous supervision and validation. Those instructions called for up to three call-backs (a maximum of four visits) to households where an eligible respondent was known to reside but was not available for interviewing on initial visits. This system of call-backs prevented a possible sample bias in favor of Virginia residents who spend a disproportionate amount of time at home.

Interviewers were prohibited from interviewing more than one person in any household and from interviewing personal acquaintances. All interviews with men, except in the case of shift workers who were off during the day, were conducted after 5 p.m. or on weekends, thus preventing an oversampling of unemployed and retired men.

Most interviews with white respondents were conducted by white interviewers and most blacks were interviewed by black interviewers. No respondent was given any idea as to the identity of the client. Indeed, to avoid any possible interviewer bias, no member of the field staff was told who the client was. Every respondent was assured of his or her personal anonymity. Each interview required an average of 60 minutes to administer.

The Questionnaire

An extensive questionnaire schedule was specifically designed for this survey in consultation with the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention. The questionnaire was thoroughly pretested prior to finalization. That pretesting consisted of 20 interviews conducted in several areas of the state, among blacks, whites, different economic level respondents, and among urban, suburban, and small-town residents.

The final questionnaire, as approved by the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention, included 181 closed-end questions (those in which respondents select from among multiple choices offered them) and 6 open-ended questions (those which respondents answer in their own words, without prompting or guidance).

Coding And Tabulation

Completed interviews were returned to our office for coding. A minimum of 330 take-offs were required prior to structuring of a code and actual coding. Interviews were then converted to data punch cards and computer tabulated.

Statistical Reliability

A sample size of 1000 insures a high degree of statistical reliability. Its margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for the entire sample on questions which divide the universe 60/40. Reliability is greater (margin of error smaller) when the universe divides more decisively (such as 75/25).

The margin of error increases slightly as the number of respondents falls, as when the views of a particular subgroup of the population are examined. The margin of error with 500 respondents (half the total sample universe) is plus or minus 4.4 points at the 95 percent confidence level on a question which divides the subgroup universe 60/40, and rises to plus or minus 6.2 points with 250 respondents.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I. Relative Change In Area Living Conditions

FINDING: On balance, Virginia residents report no change in the area they live in (48%)---with about equal proportions perceiving deterioration (25%) or improvement (21%) over the past few years.

Perceived area deterioration shows some correlation with experience with crime---those who have been victimized by serious crime during the past few years are more likely than average to report worsening conditions, while those who know no victim of serious crime are most likely to see little change.

Area satisfaction tends to be highest in the large urban counties and western Virginia, while dissatisfaction is highest in large independent cities and the southeast. There are few significant variations in area appraisal within other demographic groups, although upper-income residents and those between the ages of 25 to 34 are somewhat more likely to report improvement.

DISCUSSION:

1. Statewide, perceptions of area change over the past few years is summarized:

	<u>Among All Virginia Residents</u> %
<u>Area Lived In Has:</u>	
Changed for the better	21
Changed for the worse	25
Stayed about the same	48
Not sure	6

2. Almost a third of those who have themselves been victims of a serious crime within the past few years perceive their area of residence as having changed for the worse, though a majority still report either improvement or no change. Those who do not know any victim of serious crime are much more likely than average to perceive little change:

	<u>Among All Virginia Residents Who:</u>	
	<u>Have Been Victims Of Serious Crime</u> %	<u>Don't Know Any Victim Of Serious Crime</u> %
<u>Area Lived In Has:</u>		
Changed for the better	21	16
Changed for the worse	32	20
Stayed about the same	40	57
Not sure	7	7

3. Perceived area improvement is highest in large urban counties, and Planning Districts 1 through 6 (western Virginia); perceived deterioration is most prevalent in Planning Districts 10 and 15 through 22 (the southeast):

Among:	Virginia Residents Say Area Has:		
	Changed For The Better %	Changed For The Worse %	Stayed About The Same %
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>			
<u>Residents Of:</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>48</u>
Large Independent Cities	19	27	47
Large Urban Counties	26	21	47
Non-Urban Counties	17	22	57
<u>Residents Of Planning Districts:</u>			
1-6	29	15	49
7-9	20	22	49
11-14	14	21	58
10, 15-19	20	29	46
20-22	19	29	47



11. Most Important Volunteered Problems

FINDING: Concerns about crime/law enforcement and the economy tended to dominate the thinking of Virginia residents during May, 1975, with roughly half of all respondents mentioning each. These two issues clearly outweigh concerns about any other problems.

Those who have been victimized by serious crime and those who perceive a deterioration in the area in which they live tend to emphasize concern about crime, with correspondingly lower than average expression of concern about the economy. Just the reverse is true of those who perceive area improvement and those who do not know any victim of serious crime.

Volunteered concern about crime is at generally uniform levels among most demographic groups with the exception of residents of non-urban counties, those age 25 to 34, blacks, and blue-collar households which show below average concern.

DISCUSSION:

1. Asked to describe in their own words, without prompting and before any specific issues were raised, the "two or three most important problems facing your community these days," 55 percent specifically cited concerns in the area of crime and law enforcement, with the most frequently volunteered mentions concerning the high crime rate, drugs and narcotics, and vandalism. Almost as many, exactly 50 percent, cited economic concerns, with other problems each volunteered by about 15 percent or fewer respondents:

<u>All Virginia Residents **</u>	
	<u>%</u>
<u>Total Crime/Law Enforcement Answers</u>	<u>55</u>
High crime rate/crime	19
Drugs and narcotics	16
Destruction of private property/ vandalism	9
Juvenile delinquency	6
House burglaries	6
Robbery	4
Laws, judges too lenient/better enforcement of laws needed	4
Reckless driving/speeding/drunk driving/ serious traffic accidents	3
Lack of, inadequate police protection	3
Murders	2
Rape/indecent exposure/sexual crimes	2
Unsafe streets/danger to the individual on the street	2
Attacks on individuals/muggings/assaults/ robbery	2
Burglary	2
Theft	1
Bank robberies	1
Car thefts	1
Robberies in retail stores	*
Organized crime	*
<u>Total Economy/Inflation/Cost of Living Answers</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Total Public Services Answers (Roads, Sewers, Street Lighting, Mass Transit, Traffic Congestion)</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Total Taxes Answers</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Total Recreational Facilities Answers</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Total Schools and Education Answers</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Total Pollution Answers</u>	<u>5</u>

* Less than 0.5 percent.

** Answers within crime category add to more than 55 percent because multiple answers given. Similarly, total answers add to more than 100 percent.

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2. There is a correlation between victimization by serious crime and concern about crime, as there is between concern about crime and the feeling that the area has changed for the worse over the past few years:

	<u>Virginia Residents Volunteering Concern About:</u>	
	<u>Crime/Law Enforcement</u>	<u>The Economy</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Among:</u>		
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>Virginia Residents Who:</u>		
Have been victimized by serious crime in the past few years	60	43
Know no victim of serious crime	52	57
<u>Virginia Residents Who Say The Area In Which They Live Has:</u>		
Changed for the better	49	57
Changed for the worse	62	42

3. Residents of non-urban counties, those age 25 to 34, blacks, and members of blue-collar households are somewhat less concerned about crime than average, with other demographic groups showing average levels of concern.

	<u>Virginia Residents Volunteering Concern About:</u>	
	<u>Crime/Law Enforcement</u>	<u>The Economy</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>50</u>
Non-urban counties	44	61
Age 25-34	50	47
Blacks	43	59
Blue-collar households	48	53

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III. Most Important Selected Problems

FINDING: On an aided basis, law enforcement (crime/the sale and use of hard drugs) and economic problems (inflation and unemployment) continue to dominate Virginia residents' thinking as far as the two or three most important problems are concerned. Concern with high taxes is at a similarly high level, a phenomenon not observed in the more sensitive spontaneous measurements reported earlier. Also, the highest proportion of residents perceive law enforcement and economic issues to have become more serious over the past few years---to a greater extent than high taxes and other problems evaluated.

Concern with crime is directly correlated with type of area that the Virginia public lives in, with large independent city residents placing a significantly greater emphasis on problems of crime than those in large urban counties and particularly non-urban counties. However, this is not observed with regard to the sale and use of hard drugs, where residents of large independent cities, large urban counties and non-urban counties demonstrate similar and relatively high levels of concern.

A correlation with crime as a problem thought to be getting worse is observed with perceptions of neighborhoods getting worse. This correlation is not observed for other crime related categories such as poverty, juvenile delinquency or the sale and use of hard drugs.

DISCUSSION:

1. When asked to select the two or three most important problems from a list of 12, the problems of crime and the sale and use of hard drugs placed third and fourth, just behind inflation and unemployment. The law enforcement problem of juvenile delinquency was selected as important by considerably fewer, ranking eighth in priority.

All Virginia Residents

	8
Inflation	46
Unemployment	45
Crime	41
The sale and use of hard drugs	36
High taxes	36
Schools and education	22
Low- and middle-income housing	18
Juvenile delinquency	18
The energy shortage	16
Air and water pollution	14
Mass transportation	13
Poverty	9

2. Similarly, crime and the sale and use of hard drugs rank among the top four problems when residents were asked which have become more serious in the past few years.

All Virginia Residents

	8
Inflation	41
Crime	40
Unemployment	39
The sale and use of hard drugs	32
High taxes	24
The energy shortage	18
Juvenile delinquency	17
Schools and education	13
Air and water pollution	10
Low- and middle-income housing	10
Poverty	6
Mass transportation	6

3. Concern about crime is highest in the large independent cities (where it outranks concern about inflation and unemployment) and lowest in non-urban counties.

	Crime	
	Most Important %	Becoming More Serious %
<u>Among:</u>		
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	41	40
Large independent city residents	50	46
Large urban county residents	41	38
Non-urban county residents	28	30

4. On the other hand, concern with drugs is at about equal levels in each of these three areas:

	The Sale And Use Of Hard Drugs	
	Most Important %	Becoming More Serious %
<u>Among:</u>		
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	36	32
Large independent city residents	36	33
Large urban county residents	33	30
Non-urban county residents	37	35

5. Perception of neighborhood deterioration is closely correlated with perception of crime becoming more serious during the past few years:

Problems Becoming More Serious During Past Few Years	Area Changed For	
	Better %	Worse %
Crime	34	43
Unemployment	37	35
The sale and use of hard drugs	33	33
Inflation	44	37
High taxes	24	24
Juvenile delinquency	18	18
Schools and education	15	18
Energy shortage	19	16
Air and water pollution	13	14
Low- and middle-income housing	10	11
Poverty	9	8
Mass transportation	5	3

6. Crime concern is highest in Planning Districts 20 through 22 (the southeast). Residents of Planning Districts 11 through 14 (south-central Virginia) and blacks are more concerned about drugs than about crime.

	Virginia Residents Selecting As Most Important	
	Crime %	Drugs %
<u>Among:</u>		
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	41	36
<u>Residents of Planning Districts:</u>		
1-6	40	37
7-9	37	34
11-14	30	46
10, 15-19	44	34
20-22	47	37
<u>Blacks</u>	36	44

IV. Reaction To Programs And Services Provided In Virginia

FINDING: The state of Virginia receives relatively low job rating scores in such areas as mass transportation, poverty programs, low/middle-income housing and environmental protection---all areas of relatively low concern to residents statewide. Only in the area of schools and education do residents give high marks to the state. As far as law enforcement/criminal justice is concerned, the population here is evenly divided in their job ratings, ranking it second only to education/schools of the seven programs and services evaluated.

Those who perceive area deterioration and residents of Planning Districts 1 through 6 and 10, 15-19 are most critical of the state's performance of law enforcement.

DISCUSSION:

1. The State of Virginia is rated favorably on balance on only one out of seven programs and services tested---schools and education. Reaction to law enforcement/criminal justice programs and services are equally divided, while the other five programs evaluated here are rated favorable:

Virginia Residents Rating The State:

<u>Virginia Residents Rating The State On:</u>	<u>Total Favorable %</u>	<u>Excellent %</u>	<u>Above Average %</u>	<u>Total Unfavorable %</u>	<u>Below Average %</u>	<u>Very Poor %</u>
Schools and education	<u>52</u>	6	46	<u>42</u>	29	13
Law enforcement/criminal justice	<u>47</u>	5	42	<u>48</u>	32	16
Pollution/environmental projection	<u>41</u>	2	39	<u>47</u>	30	17
Attracting new industry/jobs	<u>42</u>	5	37	<u>48</u>	28	19
Poverty	<u>33</u>	2	31	<u>53</u>	35	18
Middle and low-income housing	<u>33</u>	3	30	<u>53</u>	32	21
Mass transportation	<u>27</u>	2	25	<u>59</u>	33	27

2. Residents of Planning Districts 1 through 6 are most critical of the state's law enforcement/criminal justice programs, while the state receives its highest marks in this area among residents of Planning Districts 11 through 14 and 20 through 22.

Virginia Residents Rating
The State on Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice:

	Total Favorable %	Total Unfavorable %
<u>Among All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>Planning Districts:</u>		
1-6	44	54
7-9	45	50
11-14	52	42
10,15-19	43	51
20-22	54	44

3. Those who feel the area in which they live has deteriorated give the state below average marks on almost all of the programs tested, but are particularly critical of law enforcement/criminal justice.

Virginia Residents Rating
The State on Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice:

	Total Favorable %	Total Unfavorable %
<u>Among All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>Virginia Residents Who Say The Area In Which They Live Has:</u>		
Changed for <i>the better</i>	53	43
Changed for the worse	36	60

V. Financial Commitment For Selected Programs and Services

FINDING: Asked to evaluate each of seven state programs and services in terms of tax dollar commitment, two out of five respondents indicated a willingness to pay more in state taxes in order to improve state law enforcement/criminal justice programs, second only to the support given schools and education.

Thus, even though schools and education programs receive higher ratings than other programs/services evaluated, the commitment to maintaining or improving education standards is clear. Similarly, though law enforcement ranks second on overall ratings by Virginia residents, criminal justice programs also receive strong financial commitments.

Willingness to pay more for law enforcement correlates to some extent with victimization, is highest in large independent cities and Planning Districts 20 through 22, but is largely related to ability to pay. Lower income groups, blacks, those with less than a high school education, blue collar workers, home renters, and the elderly are least willing to pay more in taxes.

It is interesting to note, that while high taxes is an issue of real concern to residents statewide, fewer than 11% are willing to cut any programs in order to cut taxes.

DISCUSSION:

1. Respondents were shown a card listing five statements:

"This is very important and should be improved a lot. I would be willing to pay \$20 more a year in state taxes to help improve it."

"This is quite important and should be improved somewhat. I would be willing to pay \$10 more a year in state taxes to help improve it."

"While this is not important enough to warrant the present level of expenditure. I think expenditures should be cut back so that state taxes can be reduced by \$10 per year."

"This is not important enough to warrant the present level of expenditure. I think expenditures should be cut back so that state taxes can be reduced by \$20 per year."

They were then asked which of the five statements came closest to their own opinion in regard to seven specific state programs and services. Of the seven, schools and education elicited the highest, though minority, support for increased tax commitment. Law enforcement/criminal justice ranked second, with a total of 39 percent willing to pay as much as \$20

(16%) or \$10 (23%) more a year in state taxes to improve efforts. The other programs elicited lower levels of tax support, but in no case was more than 11% willing to cut back on a program in order to reduce taxes.

Virginia Residents Who Say For Each Program:

	<u>Will- ing To Pay \$20 More %</u>	<u>Will- ing To Pay \$10 More %</u>	<u>Pay- ing Enough Now %</u>	<u>Enough To Cut Taxes \$10 %</u>	<u>Enough To Cut Taxes \$20 %</u>
Schools and education	21	23	48	3	4
Law enforcement/criminal justice	16	23	53	4	3
Poverty	11	19	55	5	5
Pollution/environmental protection	11	18	58	5	5
Attracting new industry/jobs	8	18	62	4	4
Middle- and low-income housing	7	17	64	4	6
Mass transportation	7	14	62	6	5

2. Willingness to pay more in taxes to improve Virginia's law enforcement/criminal justice efforts varies considerably by demography, with the highest tax commitment demonstrated by residents of large independent cities, those in Planning Districts 20 through 22, those who have been victimized by serious crime, higher income respondents, younger respondents, and those with at least some college education. Those least willing to pay more in taxes tend to be those who can least afford to.

Virginia Residents Who
Are Willing To Pay \$10
or \$20 More A Year In
State Taxes To Improve
Law Enforcement/Criminal
Justice In Virginia

	%
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>39</u>
Large independent cities	44
Large urban counties	35
Non-urban counties	26
 <u>Planning Districts:</u>	
1-6	35
7-9	32
11-14	35
10,15-19	40
20-22	44
Victimized by serious crime	44
Don't know any victim of serious crime	30
Under \$7,500	20
\$7,500 to \$9,999	40
\$10,000 to \$14,999	45
\$15,000 to \$19,999	42
\$20,000 and over	56
Under 25	43
25-34	46
35-49	38
50 and over	29
Non high school graduate	24
Some college or more	50
Black	30
Home renter	34
Blue-collar	32

VI. Financial Commitment For Selected Law Enforcement Programs

FINDING: Asked to indicate their tax commitment to specific law enforcement and criminal justice programs, Virginia residents in general and those most concerned with crime in particular tend to give priority to direct control and enforcement efforts (narcotics control, control of juvenile delinquency, police patrols and investigation) rather than to court reform, prison reform, or corruption in government.

Again, willingness to pay more in taxes tends to be highest in the large independent cities and among crime victims, and correlates with education and ability to pay.

DISCUSSION:

1. Narcotics control ranks highest in priority in terms of willingness to commit additional tax dollars, followed closely by control of juvenile delinquency and police patrols and investigation. Only about a quarter of Virginia's residents are willing to pay more in taxes to improve efforts in the areas of prison reform/improving prison conditions, court reform/improving and expanding courts, and corruption in government.

Virginia Residents Who Say For Each Program:

	<u>Will- ing To Pay \$20 More</u>	<u>Will- ing To Pay \$10 More</u>	<u>Pay- ing Enough Now</u>	<u>Cut Enough To Cut Taxes \$10</u>	<u>Cut Enough To Cut Taxes \$20</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Narcotics control	16	25	51	3	2
Control of juvenile delinquency	14	24	54	2	2
Police patrols and investigation	12	23	58	3	2
Prison reform/improving prison conditions	11	17	59	5	5
Corruption in government	14	11	62	4	5
Court reform/improving and expanding courts	8	15	65	4	4

2. Willingness to pay more in taxes tends to follow a pattern: It is highest in large independent cities, lowest in non-urban counties; tends to be higher than average in Planning Districts 10 and 15 to 19, and particularly in Districts 20 through 22; is higher among crime victims than among those who know no victim of crime; increases with income and education and decreases with age.

VII. Factors Which Are Perceived To Encourage People To Commit Crimes In Virginia

FINDING: Virginia residents clearly regard drug use/addiction as the single most important factor leading to crime in Virginia. After that, they are more likely to focus on basic social problems such as broken homes, permissive parents, and loss of religion/morals, as well as poverty and economic conditions, than on law enforcement problems such as weak laws/ or too lenient court sentences.

Relatively few blame corrupt politicians or corrupt or inefficient police, and even less of a correlation is attributed to pornography, liberal media, or political extremism.

There are some variations within specific demographic groups, but drugs hold the top position among all groups, and all tend to emphasize social more than law enforcement problems.

DISCUSSION:

Handed a list of 20 factors and asked to select those that are important in encouraging people to commit crimes in Virginia, respondents tend to zero in first on drug use/addiction -- 69 percent call it an important factor, and 47 percent call it one of the two or three most important factors. Similarly, respondents tend to agree on a second-level set of factors: poverty, economic conditions, loss of religion/morals, broken homes, permissive parents, and, to a certain extent, alcohol use/ drunkenness.

Virginia Residents Selecting Factors As:

	<u>Important</u>	<u>Among Two or Three Most Important</u>
	%	%
Drug use/addiction	69	47
Broken homes	46	20
Permissive parents	44	22
Poverty	44	24
Alcohol use/drunkenness	40	16
Economic conditions	37	20
Loss of religion/morals	36	23
Mental/emotional problems	32	11
Poor education	31	12
Courts in Virginia/sentences too lenient	31	18
Laws too weak	30	16
Poor housing/living conditions	25	9
Public apathy/tolerance	18	6
Racism/prejudice	16	5
Corrupt politicians	15	4
Corrupt police	14	5
Ineffective/inefficient police	13	5
Pornography	8	1
Liberal media	7	1
Political extremism	4	*

*Less than 0.5 percent

VIII. Personal Experience With Police/Crime

FINDING: About half of Virginia's residents report contact with local police during the past year.

One third report that they personally have been the victim of a crime in the past few years, with most experiences involving vandalism or burglary. Relatively few report personal experience with larceny, robbery, assault, car theft or rape.

Of those who have been victimized by vandalism or burglary, very few report use of a firearm in commission of the crime.

A quarter of the burglary victims and almost four out of ten vandalism victims say the crime was not reported to police, with most attributing that to either the fact that the crime was not very serious or to the feeling that reporting it would accomplish nothing.

A majority of 58% claim to know someone who has been the victim of a crime, with particular emphasis on burglary (32%) or vandalism (26%). There is a lower level of knowledge of victims of car theft, robbery, or assault (about 15% each), and minimal knowledge of victims of larceny, rape, or murder/manslaughter.

Exposure to crime, whether through direct experience or knowledge of someone else's experience, tends to correlate with urbanization, high income, and high education, and is reportedly more common among whites than among blacks. Those who feel their area of residence has deteriorated are also more likely than average to have been exposed to crime.

Concern with crime is not correlated with experience with crime.

DISCUSSION:

1. Almost half of Virginia residents report that they have had personal contact with local police during the past year. Such contact is most common among those who have been victims within the past few years (69%), naturally enough. Otherwise, this direct exposure is most likely among men, and among higher income, better educated, and younger respondents. Blacks and residents of non-urban counties and Planning Districts 1 through 6 are less likely than average to have been in contact with local police:

Virginia Residents Who
Have Had Personal Con-
tact With Local Police
During The Past Year

	%
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>48</u>
Non-urban counties	39
Planning Districts 1-6	40
Victimized by serious crime	69
Don't know any victim of serious crime	32
Male	54
Female	41
Under \$7,500	36
\$7,500 to \$9,999	44
\$10,000 to \$14,999	50
\$15,000 to \$19,999	55
\$20,000 and over	61
Under 25	58
25-34	55
35-49	47
50 and over	34
Non high school graduate	35
Some college or more	59
Blacks	33

2. Exactly one third of Virginia's residents report having been victimized by some crime during the past few years. Most common experience is with vandalism and, secondly, burglary. Relatively few report being victims of assault, larceny, robbery, car theft, or rape:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	%
<u>Victimized in Past Few Years</u>	<u>33</u>
Vandalism	17
Burglary	12
Larceny	5
Robbery	5
Assault	4
Car Theft	3
Rape	1

3. Victimization is most common in large independent cities, Planning Districts 20 through 22, men, higher income respondents, and the best educated. Blacks and blue-collar workers report lower than average personal experience with crime. Close to half of those who have had contact with local police recently report being victimized, and those who feel their area of

residence has deteriorated have above average personal experience. Those with maximum concern with crime report no higher direct experience with it than average:

Virginia Residents Who Report Being Victimized Within Past Few Years

	%
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>33</u>
Large independent cities	40
Large urban counties	35
Non-urban counties	18
Planning Districts 1-6	23
Planning Districts 20-22	40
Area changed for the better	33
Area changed for the worse	43
Contact with police in past year	47
Maximum concern with crime	35
Male	38
Female	28
Under \$7,500	25
\$7,500 to \$9,999	28
\$10,000 to \$14,999	29
\$15,000 to \$19,999	39
\$20,000 and over	51
Non high school graduate	22
Some college or more	42
Black	18
Blue-collar	26

4. Approximately 6% of all crime victims report use of a firearm in commission of the crime, and 27% say the crime was not reported to the police:

Virginia Residents Who Report Being Victims Of:

	<u>Total Serious Crimes</u>	<u>Burglary</u>	<u>Vandalism</u>
	%	%	%
A firearm was used	6	3	6
The crime was not reported	27	24	37

5. Those respondents who reported being victimized by a crime within the past few years but did not report it to the police tended to attribute that failure to two factors, that the crime was not a serious one (44%) or that reporting it would not do any good (36%).

NOTE: Our sample includes too few victims of serious crimes other than burglary and vandalism to allow statistical reliability in evaluation of use of firearms.

Virginia Residents Who Report Being Victimized But Did Not Report The Crime To Police

	%
<u>Did Not Report The Crime Because:</u>	
Wasn't important, didn't matter enough, was not serious	44
Didn't think it would do any good, would not help, would not catch/convict the one responsible	36
Didn't get around to it	5
Fear, afraid of revenge, criminal would get even	3
Didn't want to become involved	1

6. A majority of 58 per cent claim to know someone who has been a victim of crime in the past few years. Almost a third report knowledge of a burglary victim, while a quarter report knowledge of a victim of vandalism:

<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	
	%
<u>Someone I Know Has Been A Victim</u>	<u>58</u>
Burglary	32
Vandalism	26
Robbery	15
Car Theft	15
Assault	14
Larceny	9
Rape	7
Murder/manslaughter	5

IX. Fear of General Crime

FINDING: Majorities of Virginia residents are only slightly or not at all fearful of each of eight general crimes tested, although from one third to almost half are at least somewhat fearful of all of them. Levels of fear are highest for vandalism, burglary, and robbery, somewhat lower for assault and rape, and lowest for larceny, murder/manslaughter, and car theft.

Fear of crime correlates with maximum concern about crime as a problem in Virginia, past experience as a victim, and a perceived deterioration in area living conditions, while those who perceive improvement in area conditions and those who know no victim of crime are less fearful than average.

Women, residents of large independent cities, and residents of Planning Districts 20 through 22 are especially fearful of almost every crime, while men and residents of non-urban counties and Planning Districts 1 through 6 and 11 through 14 show relatively low levels of fear.

DISCUSSION:

1. Close to half of Virginia's residents are at least somewhat fearful that they or members of their families will become victims of vandalism, burglary, or robbery. Somewhat fewer, but still substantial minorities, fear assault, larceny, murder/manslaughter, and car theft:

Virginia Residents Who Say They Are:

	<u>Very Fearful</u>	<u>Somewhat Fearful</u>	<u>Slightly Fearful</u>	<u>Not At All Fearful</u>
	%	%	%	%
<u>Total Respondents</u>				
Vandalism	22	27	27	24
Burglary	22	26	30	22
Robbery	21	26	28	25
Assault	20	21	29	29
Rape	20	16	23	40
Larceny	12	19	31	36
Murder/manslaughter	17	13	26	43
Car theft	10	20	31	38

2. In general, concern about each of these crimes tends to be highest among: those with maximum concern about crime as a problem in Virginia; those who perceive deterioration in the area in which they live; those who have themselves been victims in recent years; and women. Those who know no victim of crime show below average fearfulness:

Virginia Residents Who:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Show Maximum Concern About Crime</u>	<u>Have Been Victim of Crime</u>	<u>Know No Victim of Crime</u>	<u>Perceive Their Area To Have Change For:</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	<u>The Better</u>	<u>The Worse</u>
<u>Report Being Very Or Somewhat Fearful Of:</u>							
Vandalism	49	53	55	58	41	49	55
Burglary	48	55	56	55	42	43	60
Robbery	47	54	55	53	41	45	55
Assault	41	50	52	43	36	35	53
Rape	36	47	43	38	33	31	42
Larceny	31	35	37	40	25	29	39
Murder/Manslaughter	30	37	36	31	31	28	35
Car Theft	30	31	34	35	24	28	35

3. In general, fear of these crimes is highest in large independent cities and lowest in non-urban counties; highest in Planning Districts 20 through 22 and lowest in Districts 1 through 6 and 11 through 14; and higher among women than among men.

X. Fear Of Walking Around Local Neighborhood,
Nearby Shopping Center, And Nearest Down-
town Area In Virginia

FINDING: While eight out of ten Virginians feel at least fairly safe walking around their own neighborhoods, and three out of four have little fear of walking around the shopping area or center they visit most frequently, a majority express at least some trepidation about walking the streets of the downtown area of the Virginia city nearest their home.

As with fear of specific kinds of crime, it tends to be residents of large independent cities rather than non-urban counties and residents of Planning Districts 20 through 22 rather than Districts 1 through 6, 7 through 9, or 11 through 14 who feel least secure. Women tend to express concern more than men.

DISCUSSION:

1. Respondents were presented with a card showing four statements and asked to select the one which comes closest to describing how they feel about walking around on the streets within their own neighborhood, walking around in the shopping area or center they visit most frequently, and walking around the downtown area of the Virginia city closest to where they live:

"Very safe. I would walk around alone without worrying about it."

"Fairly safe. I would walk around alone but would be cautious, especially at night."

"Fairly unsafe. I might walk around alone if I had to, at least during the day, but I would be very cautious, and I would not walk around alone at night."

"Very unsafe. I would not walk around alone, even during the day, and I might not walk around even with somebody else."

About a fifth reported feeling fairly or very unsafe walking around in their own neighborhood, about a quarter indicated some fear of walking around in the shopping center they visit most often, and a majority indicated feeling unsafe in the downtown area of the nearest Virginia city:

All Virginia Residents
Describing Walking Around In:

	Their Own Neighborhood	The Shopping Center Visited Most Often	The Downtown Area of the Nearest Virginia City
	%	%	%
Very safe	40	29	16
Fairly safe	41	48	31
Fairly unsafe	13	17	24
Very unsafe	6	6	27
Not sure	*	*	2

* Less than 0.5 percent

2. Again, it is residents of large independent cities and Planning Districts 20 through 22, those who feel their area has deteriorated over the past few years, and women who are most likely to feel unsafe:

Virginia Residents Who Say They Feel Unsafe Walking Around

	Their Own Neighborhood	The Shopping Center Visited Most Often	The Downtown Area Of The Nearest Virginia City
	%	%	%
<u>Among All Virginia Residents</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>51</u>
Large independent cities	24	31	64
Large urban counties	15	17	51
Non-urban counties	13	20	37
<u>Planning Districts</u>			
1-6	16	13	30
7-9	12	14	34
11-14	15	16	23
10, 15-19	21	25	63
20-22	24	32	68
Area changed for the better	13	19	61
Area changed for the worse	30	31	60
Female	25	29	54

It is important to note that perceived deterioration of neighborhood is a direct correlate of fear of crime in that neighborhood.

XI. Degree of Concern About Selected Crimes

FINDING: When Virginia residents were asked to indicate their degree of concern about each of 14 selected crimes, the highest ranked is the sale and use of hard drugs by strong majorities. Sale or use of marijuana, offering or accepting bribes, embezzlement, and public drunkenness all arouse majority concern, and more concern than that inspired by shoplifting or tax evasion.

Virginians are least worried about pornography, prostitution, illegal gambling, or homosexual acts between consenting adults, with majorities rating them of little or no concern.

Residents of different areas of the state, and various demographic groups, tend to offer comparable assessments of each crime, though there are individual variations. Interestingly, one group of crimes--prostitution, sale or use of marijuana, public drunkenness, sale or showing of pornography, and, to a lesser extent, illegal gambling--tend to be of greater concern to women than to men, to older rather than younger residents, and are of particular concern to residents of Planning Districts 1 to 6 and 20 to 22. This pattern does not show up with regard to homosexual acts between consenting adults, use of hard drugs, or the other crimes tested.

DISCUSSION:

Almost nine out of ten residents report being at least somewhat concerned about both the use and sale of heroin and other hard drugs, with seven out of ten expressing strong concern. Bribery, marijuana, embezzlement, and public drunkenness rank next in priority with roughly two out of three expressing concern. Majorities also are concerned about shoplifting (58%) and tax evasion (53%), though significant minorities indicate little or no concern. At the bottom of the list come pornography, prostitution, illegal gambling, and homosexual acts between consenting adults, all of which arouse little or no concern for majorities:

	<u>Virginia Residents Who Say They Are:</u>			
	<u>Very Concerned</u> %	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u> %	<u>Slightly Concerned</u> %	<u>Not At All Concerned</u> %
Use of heroin and hard drugs	72	15	7	6
Sale of heroin and hard drugs	71	16	9	4
Acceptance of bribes by public officials	49	22	15	13
Sale of marijuana	47	21	16	16
Offering of bribes to public officials	44	24	18	13
Use of marijuana	45	20	15	18
Embezzlement	42	24	19	14
Public drunkenness	38	25	22	15
Shoplifting	29	29	25	17
Tax evasion	24	29	25	21
Sale or showing of pornography	28	19	21	29
Prostitution	21	19	22	35
Illegal gambling	17	22	25	35
Homosexual acts between consenting adults	20	12	18	47

XII. Degree Of Familiarity With Specific Elements
In The Criminal Justice System

FINDING: As might be expected, Virginians are most familiar with locally-based and high visibility elements of the criminal justice system--county, town, municipal, and state police, and at somewhat lower levels, county sheriffs, Commonwealth's attorneys, and local jails.

Majorities express little or no familiarity with most court and corrections functions, with about a third to less than four out of ten indicating at least some familiarity.

The non-existent Citizen's Committee to Reduce Crime (included as a benchmark to evaluate overstatement of familiarity) registers as near the bottom in familiarity, but at a level comparable to that for the little known Division of Justice and Crime Prevention, Council on Criminal Justice, and Criminal Justice Officers Training Standards Commission.

DISCUSSION:

1. More than seven out of ten Virginia residents are at least somewhat familiar with local county/town/municipal police, and six out of ten with the state police. County sheriffs, local Commonwealth's attorneys, and local jails, all community based, are somewhat less familiar, though a substantial minority is at least somewhat familiar with each. Most of the court major corrections functions are familiar to from about a third to less than four out of ten, while some of the corrections functions and various commissions, including the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention and the mythical "Citizen's Committee to Reduce Crime", register low levels of familiarity.

Virginia Residents Describing
Their Degree of Familiarity As:

	Extremely Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Slightly Familiar	Never Heard Of/Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Local County/Town Municipal Police	30	41	25	4
State Police	21	40	36	3
County Sheriff	15	31	43	11
Local Commonwealth's Attorneys	14	29	45	12
Local Jails	12	31	48	9
The Supreme Court of Virginia	9	29	52	10
State Circuit Courts	9	28	48	15
State General District Courts	10	26	49	15
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts	10	26	46	18
Public Defenders	9	26	47	18
Probation and Parole Services	8	26	48	18
Local Magistrates	8	25	48	19
Juvenile Institutions	8	23	49	20
State Penitentiary	7	22	58	13
Community Youth Homes	6	20	42	32
Adult Correctional Centers	4	16	49	31
Virginia State Crime Commission	4	15	48	33
Adult Correctional Field Units	4	14	43	39
Adult Pre-Release Activities Center	4	13	38	45
Division of Justice and Crime Prevention	3	12	37	48
Citizen's Committee To Reduce Crime	2	9	33	56
Council on Criminal Justice	2	8	30	60
Criminal Justice Officers Training Standards Commission	2	8	23	67

2. In general, the highest familiarity with most of these elements in Virginia's criminal justice system appears in non-urban counties and Planning Districts 1 through 6, while knowledge is lowest in the large independent cities and Planning Districts 11 through 14. Familiarity tends to rise with income and education, to peak with those age 25 to 34 and fall off with age, and is below average among black Virginians.

XIII. Job Performance Ratings For Specific Elements In The Criminal Justice System

FINDING: Police elements in the criminal justice system are rated quite well in Virginia, with state police holding the highest score. Most court functions are rated at least moderately well, while unfavorable scores are given all corrections elements, with the state penitentiary receiving the lowest rating.

DISCUSSION:

More than three out of four residents give the state police favorable marks, with other police functions, and all of the court functions except Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts rated favorably. Unfavorable marks are reserved for all of the corrections functions and various commissions.

Ratings are particularly "bouncy" within planning districts. Police functions receive above average scores among Planning Districts 11-14 residents, while disproportionately favorable scores for court and corrections functions are observed in Planning Districts 1-6.

All Virginia Residents Rating Each:

	Excellent, Pretty Good %	Only Fair, Poor %	Not Sure, Never Heard Of It %
State Police	77	17	6
County Sheriff	54	25	21
Local County/Town/ Municipal Police	61	31	8
Local Commonwealth's Attorneys	50	27	23
The Supreme Court of Virginia	50	27	23
Public Defenders	40	27	33
Local Magistrates	39	26	35
State General District Courts	40	31	29
State Circuit Courts	40	32	28
Criminal Justice Officers Training Standards Commission	13	14	73
Community Youth Homes Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts	26	29	45
Probation and Parole Services	30	39	31
Division of Justice and Crime Prevention	28	38	34
Citizen's Committee to Reduce Crime	18	24	58
Local Jails	16	21	63
Virginia State Crime Commission	33	47	20
Adult Pre-Release Activities Center	21	30	49
Adult Correctional Field Units	18	26	56
Juvenile Institutions	19	28	53
Adult Correctional Centers	25	39	36
Council On Criminal Justice	21	32	47
State Penitentiary	12	20	68
	25	47	58

XIV. Rating Of State Performance On Juvenile Delinquency

FINDING: Virginia is given uniformly two-to-one unfavorable ratings on preventing and controlling juvenile delinquency, and on rehabilitation of delinquents.

DISCUSSION:

1. The state of Virginia receives relatively low marks in preventing and controlling juvenile delinquency, as well as in the area of rehabilitating delinquents:

Virginians Rating The State's Performance On:

	<u>Preventing Delinquency</u> %	<u>Controlling Delinquency</u> %	<u>Rehabilitating Delinquents</u> %
Excellent	3	2	4
Pretty good	26	28	27
Only fair	39	40	35
Poor	24	22	21
Not sure	8	8	13

2. Residents with a college education are particularly displeased with the states performance in this area as are residents of Planning Districts 7-9.

XV. Rating of State Performance on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

FINDING: Virginia is rated about as badly on preventing, controlling, and treating alcoholism and drug abuse as on juvenile delinquency. State residents are most critical with regard to prevention efforts and least critical of treatment efforts.

DISCUSSION:

1. Only a quarter rate the state well on preventing alcoholism and drug abuse, compared to two-thirds who assign negative marks. The state fares somewhat better, but still badly on control efforts, and least critically on treatment programs.

Virginia Residents Rating The State's Performance On:

	<u>Preventing Alcoholism And Drug Abuse</u>	<u>Controlling Alcoholism And Drug Abuse</u>	<u>Treating Alcoholism And Drug Abuse</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Excellent	3	5	4
Pretty good	22	27	27
Only fair	36	37	36
Poor	30	23	19
Not sure	9	8	14

2. Residents age 16-24 assign particularly low scores to the state's performance on preventing alcoholism/drug abuse (41% poor rating).

XVI. Perceived Training Requirements for Specific Law Enforcement/Correction System Occupations

FINDING: Roughly half of Virginia's residents feel police officers, adult corrections officers, juvenile officers, and probation and parole officers should all have more training. Only judges are generally perceived as having enough training now.

On balance, the perceived need for additional training tends to rise with urbanization, education, and income, falls as age rises, and is somewhat above average among blacks.

DISCUSSION:

Exactly half of Virginia's residents say police officers and adult corrections officers require more training. Almost as many say the same about juvenile officers and probation and parole officers. By a two-to-one margin, judges are regarded as having enough training now.

Virginia Residents Who Say Each Element
Of The Criminal Justice System:

	Need More Training %	Have Enough How %	Overtrained (Vol.) %	Not Sure %
Police officers	50	42	1	7
Adult corrections officers	50	30	1	19
Juvenile officers	47	37	1	15
Probation and parole officers	45	39	1	15
Judges	30	60	1	9

A somewhat higher than average proportion of residents who have had contact with the police indicate that additional training for police officers is appropriate (56%).

XVII Familiarity With And Attitude Toward the High
Incidence Target Program

FINDING: Less than a quarter of Virginia's residents are even slightly familiar with the High Incidence Target Program statewide, though a slim majority in Planning Districts 20 through 22 and a near majority in the large independent cities claim some familiarity.

Those that are at least somewhat familiar with the program give it favorable marks, on balance.

DISCUSSION:

1. Only 3 percent report high familiarity with HIT, also known as PACE in the Richmond area; 8 percent claim moderate familiarity; and 12 percent say they are slightly familiar with it.

All Virginia Residents

	%
Extremely familiar	3
Somewhat familiar	8
Only slightly familiar	12
Not at all familiar	75
Not sure	2

2. Familiarity is close to or better than majority levels in large independent cities and Planning Districts 20 through 22, but only a fifth or less elsewhere.

Virginia Residents Who Report They Are:

	<u>Extremely Familiar With HIT</u>	<u>Somewhat Familiar With HIT</u>	<u>Only Slightly Familiar With HIT</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	3	8	12
Large independent cities	5	17	23
Large urban counties	2	5	5
Non-urban counties	1	2	5
<u>Planning Districts:</u>			
1-6	2	7	4
7-9	1	3	6
11-14	-	-	-
10, 15-19	2	9	7
20-22	5	17	29

3. Of those 23 percent of all Virginia residents who are at least slightly familiar with HIT or PACE, 53 percent rate the program favorable, while 30 percent rate it only fair or poor.

All Residents Who Are At
Least Slightly Familiar
With HIT or PACE

	<u>%</u>
Excellent	14
Pretty good	39
Only fair	24
Poor	6
Not sure	17

XVIII. Importance and Effectiveness of Organized Efforts
of Community Residents To Prevent Crime

FINDING: Strong majorities, especially in large independent cities, in Planning Districts 20 to 22, and among blacks, feel that community organizations comprised of local citizens and aimed at preventing crime are quite important and can accomplish something, but very few know of any such group.

DISCUSSION:

1. Almost eight out of ten Virginia residents feel it is quite or extremely important for local community residents to join in organized efforts to help prevent crime:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	<u>%</u>
Extremely important	36
Quite important	43
Not too important	15
Not at all important	5
Not sure	1

2. Almost as many feel such organized community groups can do at least a fair amount to prevent crime:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	<u>%</u>
A great deal	34
A fair amount	38
Only a little	20
Nothing at all	5
Not sure	3

3. The strongest support for community organization exists in the large independent cities, in Planning Districts 20 through 22, and among blacks.

	Virginia Residents Who Feel Community Organization:	
	Is At Least Quite Important	Can Do At Least A Fair Amount
	%	%
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	79	72
Large independent cities	85	79
Large urban counties	78	69
Non-urban counties	67	63
<u>Planning Districts</u>		
1 to 6	73	63
7 to 9	76	65
11 to 14	73	77
10, 15-19	78	74
20 to 22	87	81
Blacks	84	77

4. Only 17 percent know of any citizen or community groups:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	%
Know of such a group	17
Don't know of any group	81
Not sure	2

XIX. The Role of the Individual In Preventing Crime

FINDING: Virginians also feel that an individual can do at least a fair amount to prevent crime, particularly residents of Planning Districts 1 through 6, and those in higher income households. The oldest residents, blacks, those with the lowest incomes, and residents of Planning Districts 7 through 9 are least convinced of the efficacy of individual efforts.

Most Virginia residents have taken specific steps to protect themselves against crime within the past few years. The most common involve increased alertness/caution (37%), not going out alone at night (21%), avoiding dangerous areas (26%), and, in the area of home protection, adding/changing locks (32%) and leaving lights and/or a radio on when nobody is home (31%).

DISCUSSION:

1. More than a quarter of Virginia's residents think individuals can do a great deal to protect themselves and their families from crime, and seven out of ten think they can do at least a fair amount.

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	%
A great deal	27
A fair amount	43
Only a little	25
Nothing at all	5

2. Most Virginians have taken some step to protect themselves, particularly in terms of greater caution and increasing security in the home. Approximately 11% volunteered that they have purchased a firearm.

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	%
Increased alertness/caution	37
Added/changed locks	32
Leave lights/radio on in home when not there	31
Don't go to dangerous areas	26
Don't go out alone at night	21
Gotten a dog	13
Bought a firearm for home/car/person	11
Marked possessions with ID	5
Learned self-defense	4
Put in alarm system	4
Joined a community/citizen group	2
Carry a whistle/means of summoning help	2

XX. Attitudes Toward Specific Court Related Issues

FINDING: Of the court related issues raised here, only one---"judges handing down sentences that are too harsh"---is not considered serious by a majority of residents statewide. Conversely, one of the most serious problems identified by the public in Virginia is that "judges hand down sentences that are too lenient".

Other problems perceived by significant majorities of Virginians to be "quite" or "extremely" serious include: "a backlog of cases waiting to be heard", "citizens fear of testifying in criminal cases" and "cases drag out too long".

Somewhat less serious in the minds of Virginia residents is the "system favoring the rich over the poor"---though a majority consider that problem at least "quite" serious. While lower income families in general seem no more sensitive to this problem than those in higher brackets, black residents demonstrate significantly higher than average levels of concern for this problem.

While a majority regards four problems---reluctance of people to testify because of personal inconvenience, the inability of jurors to understand what is going on and therefore to make fair decisions, a shortage of good defense lawyers for the needy, and reluctance of people to serve on juries---as only moderately serious or not at all serious problems, a significant minority perceive these problems to be quite or extremely serious.

DISCUSSION:

1. The degree of perceived seriousness of ten selected court related problems is summarized:

	All Virginia Residents Who Say The Problem Is:			
	Extremely Serious	Quite Serious	Moderately Serious	Not Serious
	%	%	%	%
Cases drag out too long	32	31	24	7
Citizens are afraid to testify in criminal cases	33	29	25	9
There is a large backlog of cases waiting to be heard	30	31	19	7
Judges handing down sentences that are too lenient	34	24	20	15
The system favors the rich over the poor	32	22	22	18
People are reluctant to testify because of personal inconvenience	19	23	32	17
Too many juries can't understand what is going on and therefore cannot make a fair decision	19	22	24	26
There are not enough good defense lawyers for the needy	19	21	23	25
Too many people are reluctant to serve on juries	13	23	30	23
Judges handing down sentences that are too harsh	8	8	20	56

XXI. Familiarity With/Attitude Toward The Change From An Independent To A Unified Court System

FINDING: Only a fifth of Virginia's residents are at all familiar with the change from an independent to a unified court system a few years ago. Of those who are at least slightly familiar with the change, very few are critical of it, with about a third regarding it as an improvement and a plurality feeling that it makes no difference.

DISCUSSION:

1. Three out of four Virginians are not at all familiar with the recent change, while 20 percent indicate some, though mostly slight, familiarity.

	All Virginia Residents
	%
Extremely familiar	2
Somewhat familiar	6
Only slightly familiar	12
Not at all familiar	77
Not sure	3

2. Those who have at least slight familiarity with the change tend to feel it is an improvement (35%) or represents no significant difference (45%). Only 3 percent are critical.

	Virginia Residents Who Are At Least Slightly Familiar With The Change To A Unified Court System
	%
An Improvement over the old system	35
Worse than the old system	3
No difference	45
Not sure	17

XXII. Attitude Toward Public Defenders vs. Court Appointed Lawyers

FINDING: Virginians favor public defenders over court appointed lawyers by a three-to-one margin.

Those who feel public defenders are better argue that they care more about the defendants, can concentrate more time on cases, can carry out more thorough investigations, and are less likely to be involved in conflicts of interests.

Proponents of court appointed lawyers argue primarily that they are likely to be more capable, qualified attorneys, and to a lesser extent that they will care more about defendants than public defenders would.

DISCUSSION:

1. A majority of 55 percent favors public defenders, compared to 18 percent who prefer court appointed lawyers.

	All Virginia Residents
	%
Public defenders	55
Court appointed lawyers	18
Both the same	12
Not sure	15

2. Proponents of each system tend to offer slightly different supporting arguments, those backing court appointed lawyers concentrating on qualifications while those favoring public defenders offering a wider range of arguments.

	Virginia Residents Who Prefer:	
	Public Defenders	Court Appointed Lawyers
	%	%
Care more about the defendants, really want to help	34	19
Can concentrate more time for the defendant, don't postpone cases for personal convenience	26	6
Can carry out better/more thorough investigations	26	12
Less conflict of interest	23	8
More capable, qualified attorneys	13	33
Have investigators	13	1
More experienced, mature attorneys	6	14
Costs less	4	8

XXIII. Attitude Toward A Special Administrative Procedure For Traffic Violations

FINDING: Virginians are overwhelmingly in favor of establishment of a special administrative procedure to speed up dealing with traffic violations.

DISCUSSION:

Some four out of ten respondents call the idea an excellent one, and more than eight out of ten feel it is at least pretty good.

	All Virginia Residents
	%
Excellent	40
Pretty good	41
Only fair	10
Poor	3
Not sure	6

XXIV. Attitude Toward Plea Bargaining

FINDING: State residents oppose plea bargaining by better than a two-to-one margin. Opposition holds at about that level or higher among all demographic groups and in every part of the state.

DISCUSSION:

1. Plea bargaining was defined for respondents as "a system under which a prosecutor lets a person charged with a crime plead guilty to a lesser charge, especially when the prosecutor is not sure he can get a conviction on the more serious charge. By letting the defendant plead guilty to a lesser charge, a lengthy trial is avoided and judges can concentrate on trying other cases." Almost six out of ten indicated opposition while only 28 percent registered support for the system.

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
Favor	28
Oppose	59
Not sure	13

2. Opposition to plea bargaining is observed among all demographic and attitudinal groups identified here, and is particularly strong in Planning Districts 11-14 (Favor 14%/Oppose 64%).

XXV. Goals of the Correction System

FINDING: A plurality just short of a majority feels rehabilitation is the most important purpose of the corrections system, with second preference going to protection of society against future crimes an individual might commit.

Punishing the individual convicted of a crime is regarded as the least important function of a corrections system.

In actual practice, Virginians feel the system in operation gives priority to punishment, with rehabilitation ranking second.

While there are variations within specific subgroups, the same general priorities are consistent.

DISCUSSION:

1. To a certain extent, at least, Virginians perceive that the corrections system in operation tends to emphasize what they regard as the least important of three goals -- punishment:

	<u>All Virginia Residents Who Say The Correction System's:</u>		
	<u>Most Important Purpose Is</u>	<u>Least Important Purpose Is</u>	<u>Perceived Major Goal of Virginia's Correction System Is</u>
	%	%	%
Punishing the individual convicted of a crime	20	41	35
Protecting society against future crimes an individual might commit	29	17	18
Rehabilitating the individual so that he might become a productive citizen	47	20	30
Not sure	4	22	17

XXVI.

Reaction to Correction System Proposal:

FINDING: Virginians strongly endorse the concept of work and study release programs for prisoners who have not committed serious crimes.

Virginians show even less opposition to small residential facilities such as group homes where all but the most hard-core juvenile delinquents could receive localized community rehabilitation treatment than they do to work and study release programs for adult prisoners. Again, this is true in all parts of the state and among all subgroups of the population.

It should be pointed out that this finding does not necessarily mean that Virginians will necessarily welcome such facilities within their own communities or neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION:

1. Fully three out of four (75%) endorse the part-time prisoner concept--where adult prisoners who have not committed serious crimes would be held in jail or prison to participate in work or study programs, and they would come back to prison for the night--with only 21% objecting. This pattern of support applies in all areas of the state and among all demographic groups.

All Virginia Residents

	%
Favor	75
Oppose	21
Not sure	4

2. Three out of four (75%) are in favor of small residential facilities such as group homes for localized community rehabilitation treatment of all but hard-core juvenile delinquents, and only 12 percent are opposed.

All Virginia Residents

	%
Favor	75
Oppose	12
Depends (Vol.)	9
Not sure	4

XXVII.

Attitudes Toward The Corrections System

FINDING: Residents strongly feel that persons convicted of minor crimes should not be sent to centralized prisons where they will come in contact with hardened criminals.

Similarly, majorities, though smaller ones, feel Virginia should turn to smaller community facilities rather than large prisons, and more people convicted of crimes should be sent to community rehabilitation centers rather than to prison.

On the other hand, a majority feel prisoners should serve out their full terms rather than be paroled as soon as possible, and a plurality feel prisoners should serve longer terms than they do now.

DISCUSSION:

1. Almost nine out of ten respondents oppose sending persons convicted of minor crimes to centralized prisons where they can come in contact with hardened criminals. All demographic groups agree.

All Virginia Residents

	%
Under no circumstances should people convicted of minor crimes be sent to centralized prisons where they come in contact with hardened criminals	88
It doesn't really matter what type of crime you commit -- all people convicted of crimes should be sent to a centralized prison	8
Not sure	4

2. Most Virginians, with the exception of blacks and residents of Planning Districts 11 through 14, favor smaller community prisons wherever possible.

	All Virginia Residents %	Blacks %	Planning Districts 11-14 %
We should use large prisons as much as possible	33	46	44
We should turn to smaller community prisons and facilities wherever possible	56	42	43
Not sure	11	12	13

3. Similarly, most Virginians favor community rehabilitation centers over prisons. Residents of non-urban counties, Planning Districts 11 through 14, those indicating a maximum concern about crime, and those age 50 or older are most likely to disagree.

	All Virginia Residents %	Residents of: Non-Urban Counties %	Planning District 11-14 %	Maximum Concern About Crime %	50 And Older %
More people convicted of crimes should be sent to prison than are now	37	43	46	44	44
More people convicted of crimes should be sent to community rehabilitation centers rather than to prison	51	43	40	43	40
Not sure	12	14	14	13	16

4. Pluralities statewide, in every part of the state, and in every subgroup, feel prisoners should serve longer rather than shorter terms.

<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	
	%
Prisoners should serve longer terms than they do now	45
Prisoners should serve shorter terms than they do now	21
Not sure	34

5. Support for prisoners serving full terms outweighs support for early parole statewide and in every subgroup.

<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	
	%
Prisoners should be paroled as soon as possible	32
Prisoners should serve out their full terms	54
Not sure	14

XXVIII. Reaction to Hiring a Former Offender

FINDING: Virginians are hesitant about hiring a former offender as a sales clerk/cashier or a production worker regardless of the crime for which the former offender was imprisoned. Reluctance to fill the sales clerk/cashier position is particularly pronounced---vis a vis the production worker position---for such crimes as shoplifting, passing bad checks and car theft, where a production worker job applicant who is a former offender would not be at as much of a disadvantage as the sales clerk/cashier applicant.

DISCUSSION:

1. Majorities would hesitate to hire any of seven former offenders tested to be a sales clerk/cashier, with three out of four indicating such hesitation for all but car theft. The latter causes hesitation in less than a majority if the position is to be production worker, but most are concerned about hiring the other offenders even for that job. There is considerably more variation in degree of concern about hiring somebody as a production worker than as a clerk/cashier, with mugging and possession of heroin causing the most hesitation.

<u>Former Offender Who Served A Prison Sentence For:</u>	<u>Virginia Residents Who Say They Would Hesitate To Hire Each Former Offender To Be:</u>	
	<u>A Production Worker</u>	<u>A Sales Clerk/Cashier</u>
	%	%
Mugging someone on the street	74	76
Possession of heroin	73	76
Shooting someone in a robbery	69	76
Breaking into a home and stealing something	66	75
Shoplifting	56	74
Passing bad checks	54	73
Car theft	47	62

2. Hesitation about hiring a former offender as a clerk/cashier is at majority levels among virtually all demographic groups. Within that context, and in the case of a potential production worker, hesitation tends to be most prevalent in non-urban counties, and among those who indicated maximum concern about crime. It tends to rise with age and decrease as income rises.

XXIX. Attitudes Toward Gun Control

FINDING: Virginians indicate strong support for both registration of firearms and licensing of owners, though less for the latter than for the former---and they favor such controls for both handguns and rifles.

DISCUSSION:

1. Almost eight out of ten favor registration of handguns, and two out of three favor registration of rifles. No demographic group disagrees.

Virginia Residents Who Say Registration Of:

	<u>Handguns</u>	<u>Rifles</u>
	%	%
Should be required	78	67
Should not be required	20	31
Not sure	2	2

2. Support for licensing of firearm owners is not quite as solid, but still high.

Virginia Residents Who Say Licensing of Owners Of:

	<u>Handguns</u>	<u>Rifles</u>
	%	%
Should be required	73	61
Should not be required	24	35
Not sure	3	4

3. Sizeable majorities in every part of the state and in every subgroup support licensing of handgun owners, but residents of non-urban counties and Planning Districts 1 to 6 are less convinced about those who own rifles.

	All Virginia Residents	Residents Of:	
		Non-Urban Counties	Planning Districts 1-6
	%	%	%
<u>Licensing of Rifle Owners:</u>			
Should be required	61	45	47
Should not be required	35	51	47
Not sure	4	4	4

XXX. Firearm Ownership

FINDING: Exactly half of all Virginia residents age 16 or older admit that there is a firearm in their household -- at least one handgun in 33 percent of the households and at least one rifle in 38 percent.

DISCUSSION:

1. When it was explained to respondents that it is at present legal for Virginians to own handguns and rifles without obtaining licenses or registering the weapons, 50 percent acknowledge that there is a firearm in their household. Few respondents refused to answer these questions, but -- if anything -- firearm ownership is probably under- rather than overstated. Rifles are slightly more common in Virginia households than handguns.

All Virginia Residents

	%
<u>Households Owning:</u>	
<u>A Firearm</u>	<u>50</u>
A Handgun	33
A Rifle	38

2. Some 12 percent of all Virginia households own a handgun only, 17 percent own only a rifle, and 21 percent own both a handgun and a rifle.

All Virginia Residents

Households Owning:

	%
Handgun only	12
Rifle only	17
Both handgun and rifle	21
Neither handgun nor rifle	50

3. Firearm ownership, in general, is higher in non-urban than in urban areas, and is particularly high in Planning Districts 1 through 6 and 10, 15 through 19. It tends to rise with income. It peaks in the 25 to 34 age group, falling off somewhat with age, particularly with regard to rifle ownership. Those who rent their homes are least likely to own a firearm, while blacks are less likely to own rifles, though not handguns. Blue-collar households are more likely than average to own some firearm, particularly a rifle.

Virginia Residents in Households Owning

	<u>A Firearm</u>	<u>A Handgun</u>	<u>A Rifle</u>
	%	%	%
<u>All Virginia Residents</u>	50	33	38
Large independent cities	43	31	27
Large urban counties	55	34	46
Non-urban counties	60	40	49
<u>Planning Districts:</u>			
1-6	54	36	44
7-9	47	25	32
11-14	47	33	42
10, 15-19	62	42	47
20-22	46	31	30
Under \$7,500	37	21	27
\$7,500 to \$9,999	47	29	31
\$10,000 to \$14,999	55	36	43
\$15,000 to \$19,999	64	42	51
\$20,000 or over	55	41	40
Under 25	52	32	41
25-34	56	34	48
35-49	46	34	34
50 or over	47	33	30
Black	47	32	25
Home renter	37	23	28
Blue-collar	58	34	46

7/21. Organized Crime In Virginia

FINDING: Most Virginians, and majorities of every demographic group examined, believe that organized crime does exist in the state and that it is a serious problem. They tend to associate organized crime with narcotics and, to a lesser extent, gambling, gangland murders, bribery, and prostitution, in that order, though few think of an organized crime involvement in business, loan sharking, labor unions, or night clubs.

DISCUSSION:

1. Fully two-thirds of Virginia's residents, a majority of every demographic group examined, believe that organized crime does exist in Virginia:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
	%
Organized crime does exist in Virginia	66
Does not exist in Virginia	16
Not sure	18

2. Though only 16 percent of those who believe organized crime exists in Virginia call it an extremely serious problem, a slight majority considers it at least quite serious:

Virginia Residents Who Believe Organized Crime Does Exist In Virginia

Organized Crime In Virginia Is:

	%
Extremely serious	16
Quite serious	35
Only moderately serious	40
Not serious at all	4
Not sure	5

3. Asked to volunteer the types of crime or areas in which organized crime in Virginia is involved, narcotics comes most quickly to mind, with a majority of 64 percent mentioning it. Substantial minorities also mention gambling, gangland murders; bribery, and prostitution. Relatively few associate organized crime with business, labor unions, loan sharking, or night clubs:

Virginia Residents Who Believe Organized Crime Exists In Virginia

Organized Crime In Virginia Is Involved In:

	%
Narcotics	64
Gambling	42
Gangland murder/killings	34
Bribery/payoffs	28
Prostitution	26
Business	14
Loan sharking	11
Labor unions	6
Night clubs	6



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Division of Justice and Crime Prevention

8501 MAYLAND DRIVE
RICHMOND 23229
(804) 770-7421

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SYNOPSIS OF PUBLIC ATTITUDE SURVEY

RICHARD H. HARRIS
Director

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RICHMOND - The results of a statewide public attitude survey on crime and the criminal justice system were presented today to the Governor's Council on Criminal Justice, meeting at the State Capitol.

The survey findings are the result of 1000 personal interviews conducted with a representative sample of Virginians during May, 1975. The survey was conducted by Quayle, Plesser and Co., a nationally recognized opinion research organization, under contract to the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention. The Division is the Council's administrative agency.

The purpose of the survey was to provide those agencies involved with the criminal justice system with information on the level of citizens' concern about crime and their understanding of the criminal justice system and the issues facing it: Mr. Frank Goldsmith, Vice President of Quayle, Plesser and Co. presented the major findings of the survey to the Council on Criminal Justice.

The survey shows that crime and law enforcement, as well as the economy, are the issues of most concern to Virginians. Asked to describe in their own words "the two or three most important problems facing your community these days," 55% specifically cited concerns in the area of crime and law enforcement, with the most frequent mentions concerning the high crime rate, drugs and narcotics, and vandalism. Fifty percent mentioned economic concerns; and 16% or fewer cited concerns with public services (roads, sewers, etc.), taxes, and pollution.

This concern with crime and law enforcement was also evident when respondents were asked to select two or three most important problems from a list of 12. Here, crime and drug problems ranked

in the top four, behind inflation and unemployment, as the most important problems:

	<u>All Virginia Residents</u>
Inflation	46%
Unemployment	45%
Crime	41%
Sale and use of hard drugs	36%
High taxes	36%
Schools and Education	22%
Low and middle-income housing	18%
Juvenile delinquency	18%
Energy shortage	16%
Air and water pollution	14%
Mass transportation	13%
Poverty	9%

Virginians' concern with crime correlates directly with where they live, the survey showed. Residents of the state's large independent cities place a significantly greater emphasis on problems of crime than other Virginians. The correlation between place of residence and level of concern does not hold, however, on the issue of drug traffic and abuse. The level of concern on this issue stays constant in cities, urban counties and non-urban counties.

Asked to rate the state government's performance in seven areas of government services, Virginians gave a favorable rating to only one - schools and education. Law enforcement and criminal justice programs received nearly equal favorable and unfavorable ratings:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Total Favorable Ratings</u>	<u>Total Unfavorable Ratings</u>
Schools and Education	52%	42%
Law Enforcement Criminal Justice	47%	48%
Pollution/Environmental Protection	41%	47%
Attracting New Industry/Jobs	42%	48%
Poverty	33%	53%
Middle and Low Income Housing	33%	53%
Mass Transit	27%	59%

The survey found that those citizens who feel their neighborhoods have changed for the worse in recent years tend to give the state low marks on all the program areas tested; but they are particularly critical in the law enforcement/criminal justice area; 60% giving an unfavorable rating to 36% favorable.

Asked about paying additional taxes for these same seven program areas, most Virginians felt they are paying enough now. In no case, however, did more than 11% of the respondents express a willingness to cut back on any of the programs to reduce taxes.

The respondents were also asked to indicate their tax commitment to specific law enforcement and criminal justice programs. They tend to give priority to direct control and enforcement efforts, such as narcotics control, juvenile delinquency control, police patrols, and investigation, rather than to court reform, prison reform, or corruption in government. But in all cases, the majority feel they are paying enough taxes in these areas now:

	Pay \$20 More	\$10 More	Paying Enough Now	Cut Taxes \$10	Cut \$20
Narcotics Control	16%	25%	51%	3%	2%
Control of Juvenile Delinquency	14%	24%	54%	2%	2%
Police Patrol & Investigations	12%	23%	58%	3%	2%
Prison Reform/Improving Conditions	11%	17%	59%	5%	5%
Corruption in Government	14%	11%	62%	4%	5%
Court Reform & Improvement	8%	15%	65%	4%	4%

The willingness to pay higher taxes is highest in large cities, and increases with income and education. It is lowest in rural counties and decreases with age.

As to the causes of crime, the survey indicated that Virginians feel drug use and addiction is the single most important factor leading to crime in the state. Beyond that they focus on basic social problems. Following are some of the factors Virginians see as causing crime:

	Virginians Selecting Factors as Important
Drug use/addiction	69%
Broken Homes	46%
Permissive Parents	44%
Poverty	44%
Alcohol Use/Drunkenness	40%
Economic Conditions	37%
Mental/Emotional Problems	32%
Poor Education	31%

Few blame such factors as corrupt politicians, corrupt or inefficient police, pornography, or political extremism.

The survey found that about half (48%) of Virginia's residents have had some kind of contact with police during the past year; and one-third report that they personally have been victims of crime in the past few years. Most of their experiences involved vandalism or burglary.

Concerning citizens' general fear of crime, majorities of Virginia residents are only slightly or not at all fearful of each of eight general crimes on which they were questioned. However, between 30% and 49% of the respondents were at least somewhat fearful that they or members of their families might become victims of vandalism (49%), burglary (48%), robbery (47%), assault (41%), rape (36%), larceny (31%), murder/manslaughter (30%), or car theft (30%).

Concern about each of these crimes tends to be highest in the large cities, and higher among women than among men.

The report shows that eight out of ten Virginia residents (81%) feel safe walking around their own neighborhoods, and three out of four have little fear of walking around the shopping area they visit most frequently. But a majority (51%) express at least some fear of walking around the downtown area of the Virginia city nearest their homes.

Again, those who feel least secure tend to be residents of the state's large independent cities.

When asked their degree of concern about some specific crimes, nearly nine out of ten (87%) expressed at least some concern over the sale and use of heroin and hard drugs. Bribery of public

officials, marijuana, embezzlement, and public drunkenness rank next in priority, with roughly two out of three expressing concern. Majorities were also concerned about shoplifting and tax evasion.

Generating the least concern were the so-called victimless crimes dealing with pornography (47%), prostitution (40%), illegal gambling (39%), and homosexual acts between consenting adults (32%).

The survey attempted to measure the degree of familiarity Virginians have with specific elements of the criminal justice system. Generally, they are most familiar with the locally-based, high visibility agencies such as local police or sheriffs' departments and the state police. Seven out of ten residents are at least somewhat familiar with their local police, and six out of ten with the state police. However, majorities of residents express little familiarity with most courts and corrections agencies.

At the same time, Virginians were asked to rate the job performance of these specific elements of the criminal justice system. The state police got the most favorable ratings (77%), with County Sheriffs (54%) and local police departments (61%) also getting favorable ratings from a majority of citizens.

Court and prosecution elements received generally favorable ratings; and corrections functions received the lowest ratings.

The degree of the public's familiarity with each of these elements seems to influence how their performance is rated; so that those elements least known received the lowest ratings.

Virginians feel very strongly that local community organizations are important to crime prevention. Nearly eight of ten feel it is important for residents to participate in organized crime prevention efforts; and 72% feel such groups can play a role in actually preventing crime. However, only 17% know of any such crime prevention groups.

In examining attitudes toward court-related issues, majorities ranging from 54% to 63% saw the following problems as at least quite serious: cases drag out too long (63%); citizens afraid to testify in criminal cases (62%); large backlog of cases (61%); sentences too lenient (58%); system favors the rich over the poor (54%).

By better than two to one (59% to 28%), state residents oppose the use of plea bargaining.

The survey indicates that a near majority of Virginians (47%) feel that rehabilitation is the most important purpose of the corrections system, with second preference (29%) going to protection of society from future crimes a person might commit. Punishment is regarded as the least important function of a correctional system. At the same time, the largest group (35%) perceives punishment to be the major goal of Virginia's correctional system.

Respondents were asked their opinions of work and study release programs for prisoners who have not committed serious crimes. They favor such programs by 75% to 21%. They also endorse by 75% to 12%, the use of small residential facilities for all but the most hard core juvenile offenders.

Nearly nine out of ten (88%) oppose sending those convicted of minor crimes to centralized prisons where they might come in contact with hardened criminals, and a majority favors the use of community rehabilitation centers instead of prisons. However, Virginians also feel, by a majority of 54%, that prisoners should serve their full sentences; and indicated they would hesitate to hire ex-offenders.

The survey revealed that 78% of the state's residents favor registration of handguns, and 67% support registration of rifles. There is also considerable support for licensing firearm owners: 73% support licensing handgun owners; 61% favor licensing rifle owners.

Two thirds of the state's residents believe that organized crime exists in this state; and 51% feel it is at least quite serious. Asked about the areas in which organized crime is active, 64% indicated narcotics. Substantial minorities also mentioned gambling, gangland murders, bribery and payoffs, and prostitution.

END