

Crime, Personal Safety, and Police Resources in Alabama:

- **Forty percent of Alabamians agree that there is more serious crime in their community compared to a year or two ago; and 15% claim that they were a victim of a serious crime in Alabama or closely connected to a victim. Among minorities, the percentage of those closely connected to a serious crime rises to 21%.**
- **Eighty-seven percent of respondents feel *somewhat safe* or *very safe* from serious property crime, while 89% feel *somewhat safe* or *very safe* from violent crime. The percentage of minorities who feel *very safe* from serious property or violent crime is half that reported by non-minorities.**
- **More than 75% of Alabamians agree that their local law enforcement officials are doing what they can to find and arrest lawbreakers, and that these officials are professionally trained and educated. Over two thirds (67%) agree that their law enforcement officers need additional resources.**
- **More than a majority of Alabamians believe that State elected officials are not giving sufficient attention to reducing crime in the State.**

(Auburn, March 3) The *Ask-Alabama* statewide public opinion survey on the perceptions and attitudes of Alabamians regarding the prevalence of serious crime, personal security from crime, and the performance of their law enforcement officials underscores the importance and concern which most Alabamians feel about crime in their community and the effectiveness of their law enforcement efforts¹. The poll, conducted by Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services also indicates that most Alabamians believe that more resources need to be given to fighting crime and strengthening their local police and sheriff departments.

Although crime is perceived by many Alabamians to occur more frequently than in the past, most Alabamians still feel reasonably safe from serious crime. Alabama's minorities, however, feel less secure and are more likely to have a personal connection to a serious crime than non-minorities. A majority of Alabamians feel that their local police and sheriff's departments are effective, committed, and professional organizations, and 88% agree that their communities should provide these departments with additional tax resources. Over a third of respondents (36%) felt that local elected officials need to give more attention to reducing crime in the community. Over half

¹ The survey of a random telephone sample of 629 Alabamians was conducted from January 24 – February 3 of 2005. The average estimated margin of error is +/- 4%.

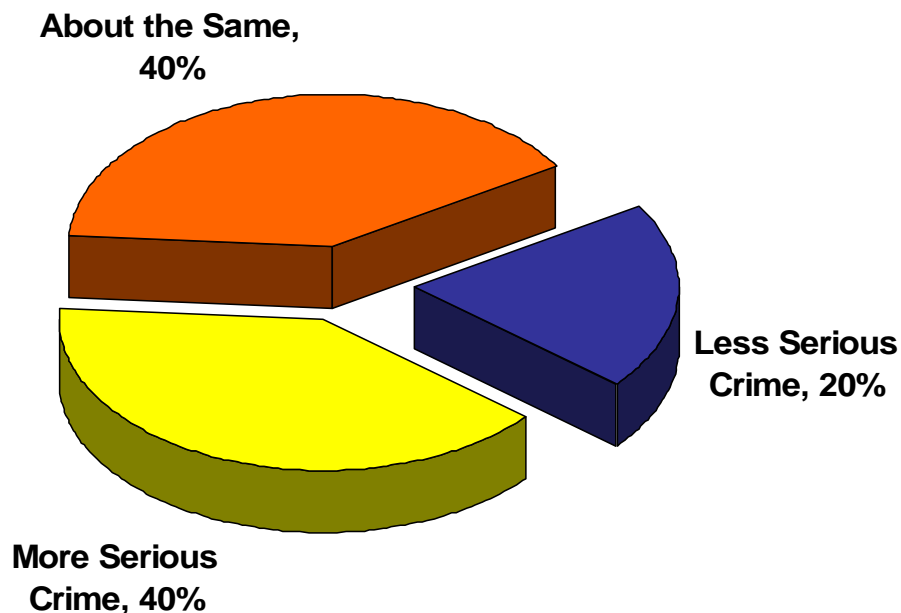
(53%) feel that State level elected officials should pay more attention to reducing crime in the State.

Prevalence of Crime

Relatively few Alabamians (20%) believe that there is *less serious crime* today in their community than a year or two ago. Forty percent perceive that the incidence of serious crime is on the rise, while a similar percentage believe that there has not been a noticeable change over the past two years.

Approximately 15% of all respondents state that they have been a victim or have been closely connected to a victim of a serious crime in Alabama during the last two years. Among minorities, this percentage climbs to 21%, but among non-minorities the percentage drops to 13%.

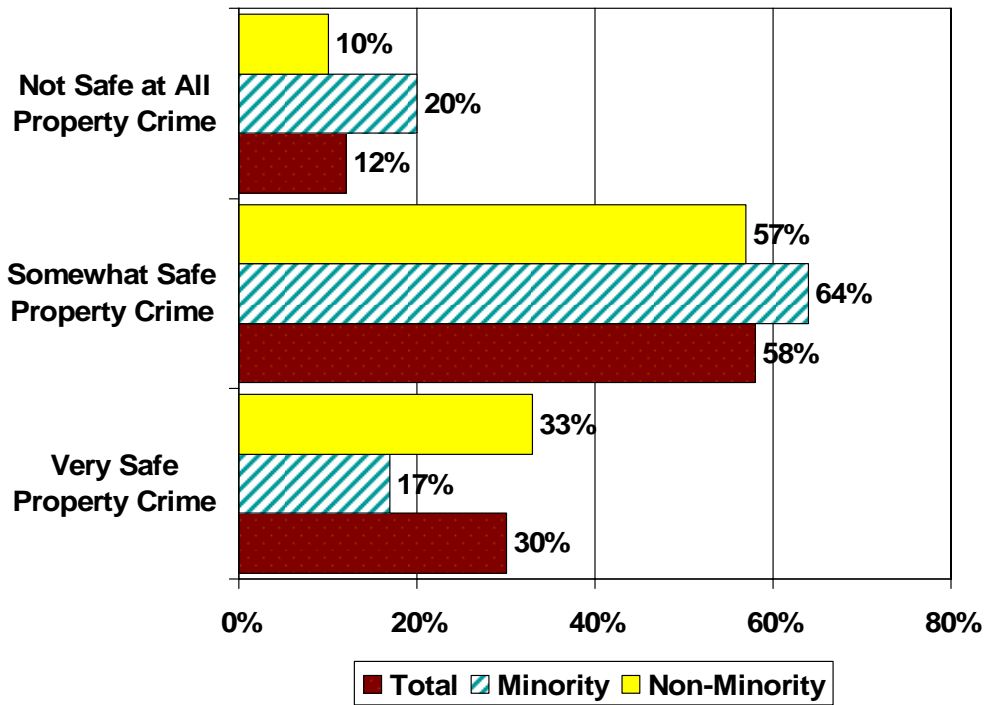
Perceived Change in the Prevalence of Serious Crime in Your Alabama Community Over the Past Two Years (Winter 2005)



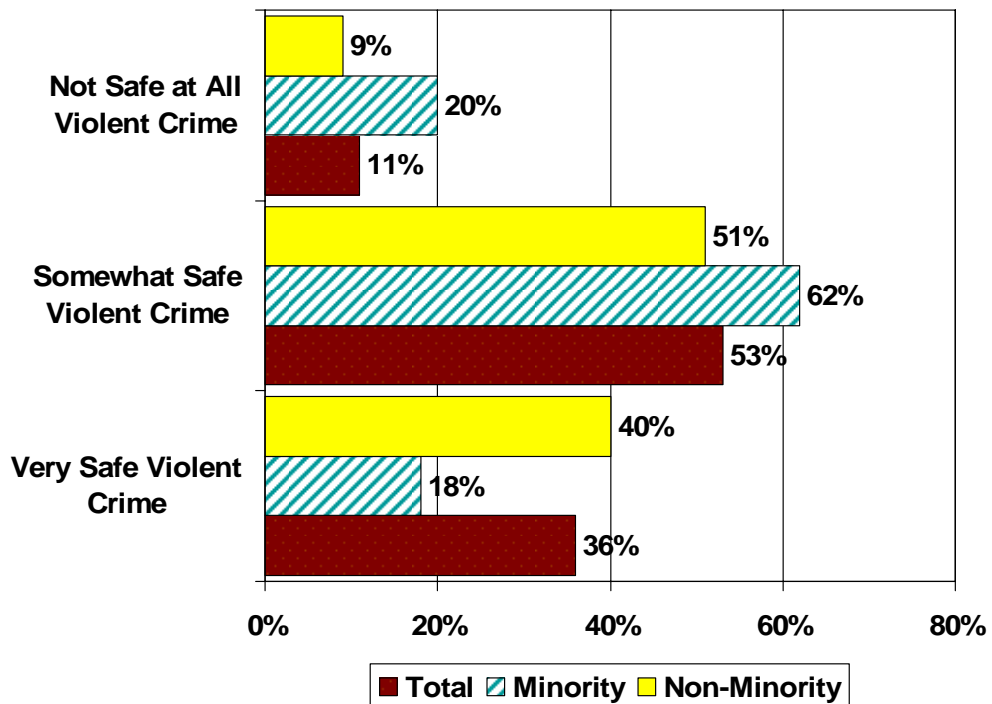
Public Perception of Personal Security

Alabamians generally feel secure from becoming victims of a serious property or violent crime. Thirteen percent of respondents do not feel at all safe from serious property crimes, and 11% do not feel safe at all from the possibility of being a victim of a violent crime. Among minority respondents, however, 20% do not feel at all safe from serious property crime or serious violent crime.

**Perceived Personal Safety of Alabamians Regarding Serious Property Crime
(Winter 2005)**



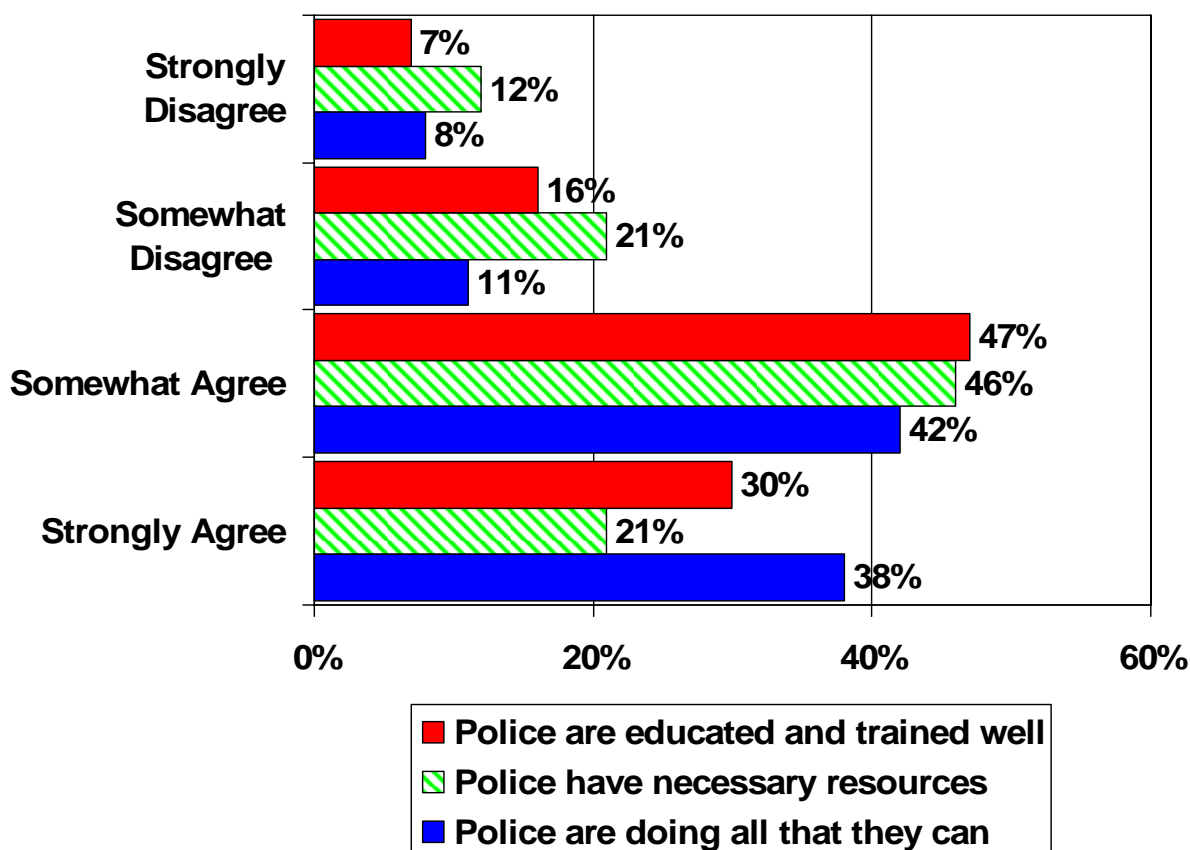
**Perceived Personal Safety of Alabamians Regarding Serious Violent Crime
(Winter 2005)**



Confidence in Local Law Enforcement

Over 80% of the public perceives that their police officers and sheriffs deputies are doing all they can to find and arrest lawbreakers. Sixty-seven percent *agree* or *strongly agree* that their local law enforcement agency has the resources needed to find and arrest lawbreakers, and 78% *agree* or *strongly agree* that their local law enforcement officers have the training and education they need to carry out their job. In general, Alabamians have confidence in the skill, dedication, and professionalism of their local law enforcement officers.

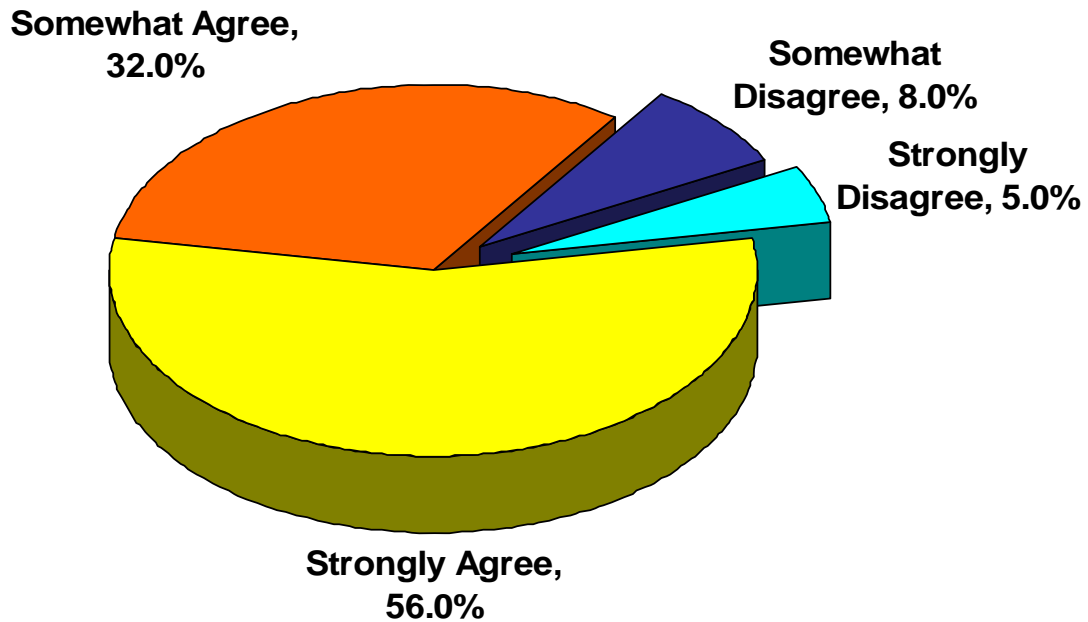
Public Perception of Alabamians Regarding Local Law Enforcement Capacity, Skills, and Behavior (Winter 2005)



Additional Support for Local Law Enforcement Efforts

Complementing the strong support of Alabamians for their local police officers and sheriff deputies is a willingness among the public to provide additional tax resources to recruit and keep qualified police officers or sheriff deputies in the community. Fifty-six percent of respondents *strongly agreed* that additional public funds should be spent on this effort and an additional 32% *somewhat agreed*. Only 5% *strongly disagreed* with spending additional public funds, and 8% *somewhat disagreed*.

Public Willingness to Allocate Additional Tax Revenue to Recruit and Retain Police Officers and Sheriff Deputies (Winter 2005)

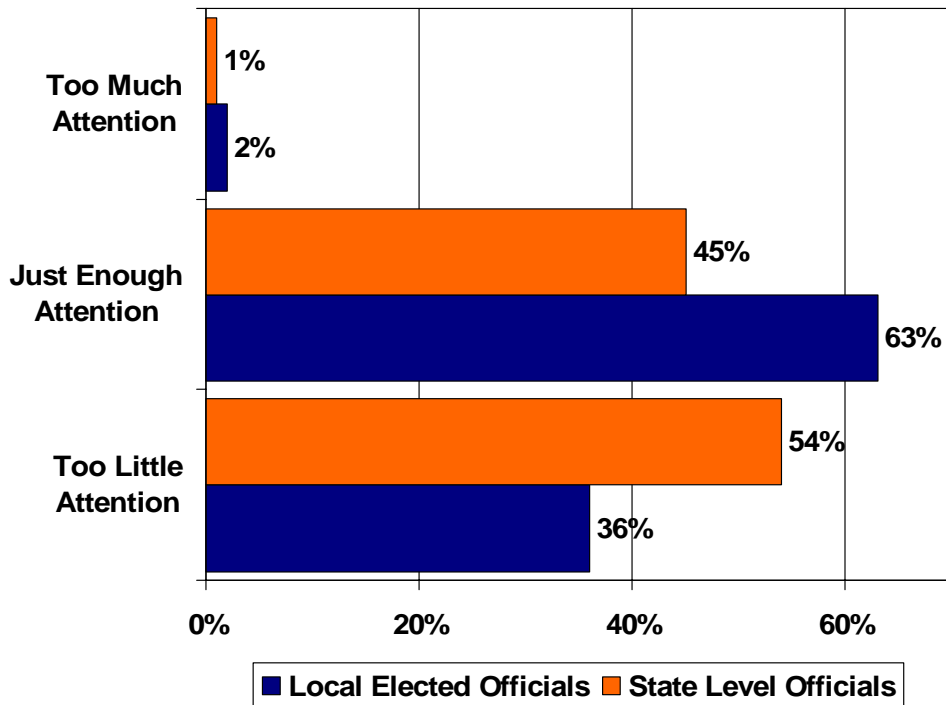


Setting Priorities

Most Alabamians are reasonably satisfied with the level of attention given by local elected officials to reduce crime in the community, and to train and educate their law enforcement officers. Sixty-three percent feel that *just enough attention* is given by local officials to reducing crime, and 59% believe that *just enough attention* is given to the training and education of police and sheriffs deputies.

There is more concern, however, about the efforts of State level elected officials. Fifty-three percent of the public believe that *too little attention* has been paid to reducing crime in Alabama by State officials, and 52% believe that *too little attention* has been paid by State elected officials to the training and education of law enforcement officers in the State.

Are State and Local Elected Officials Giving Sufficient Attention to Reducing Crime (Winter 2005)



Are State and Local Elected Officials Giving Sufficient Attention to the Training and Education of Law Enforcement Officers (Winter 2005)

