

# Alabamians Perspectives on Crime and Law Enforcement Media Release Points Volume 2, No. 3

**Ask-Alabama Poll, Winter 2005**  
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## Significant Findings

- 1. 40% of Alabamians believe that there is more serious crime in their community than existed a year or two ago. In addition, 15% claim to be a recent victim or to be closely connected to a victim of a serious crime in Alabama. Among minorities, the percentage of those who are recent crime victims or closely connected to a crime victim rises to 21%.**
  - 40% believe that their community has more serious crime than was true a year or two ago.
  - 40% believe that crime in their community has not changed from a year or two ago.
  - 20% believe that crime in their community is reduced from a year or two ago.

*Perceptions, rather than facts or statistics, may determine how people feel about crime and their personal security. While crime rates in much of the State have stabilized or gone down significantly, the public still respond to their emotions and feelings on this important policy issue. The fact that nearly half of Alabamians think that crime has become worse in their community is an issue to which local law enforcement officers and elected officials must respond.*

- 2. 87% of respondents feel somewhat safe or very safe from serious property crime, while 89% feel somewhat safe or very safe from violent crime. Minorities are twice as likely as non-minorities to not feel safe at all regarding both serious property and violent crime.**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-Minority</b>
Property Crime Very Safe	30%	17%	33%
Property Crime Not Safe at All	12%	20%	10%
Violent Crime Very Safe	36%	18%	40%
Violent Crime Not Safe at All	11%	20%	9%

*As indicated by the much higher rate of victimization, Alabama's minorities justifiably feel more threatened by serious crime in their communities. A member*

*of Alabama's minority community today is twice as likely as a non-minority to feel completely vulnerable to serious property crime or crime of violence.*

- 3. More than 75% of Alabamians agree that their local law enforcement officials are doing what they can to find and arrest lawbreakers; that these officials are professionally trained and educated; and that they need additional resources. 56% of Alabamians strongly agree that additional tax revenues should be used to recruit and retain law enforcement officers in their community.**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. Police are doing all they can to find and arrest lawbreakers.	38%	42%	11%	8%
b. Police have the resources they need to do their job .	21%	46%	21%	12%
c. Police have the training and education they need.	30%	47%	16%	7%
d. We should spend more taxes to recruit and keep our law enforcement officers	56%	32%	8%	5%

*Alabamians are proud of their police officers and sheriff deputies. They believe they are doing the best they can in a very tough environment, and that the police chiefs and sheriffs have trained and equipped their personnel professionally and competently. In our research, this is the only local public service in which the community so solidly backs spending additional tax revenue.*

## **Poll Facts**

Dates of Survey: January 24 – February 3, 2005  
 Sample Size: 624 Alabama residents  
 Estimated Margin of Error: +/- 4%  
 Type of Survey: Random telephone survey of Alabamians 19 or older