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Memphis Shelby Crime Commission Issues Key Findings in Public Opinion Survey

MEMPHIS, TN – March 2, 2026)- On behalf of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a public opinion survey February 7-11 of 400 registered voters in Shelby County, with 61% of respondents from Memphis and 39% of respondents in parts of the county outside of Memphis. From the city of Memphis, 61% of respondents were African American, and 35% were white. For the entire county, 47% were African American and 48% were white.

Go to the Crime Commission website at <https://memphiscrime.org> for a detailed report on survey results, including comparisons to results from previous surveys where similar questions were asked.

Memphis Shelby Crime Commission President Bill Gibbons stated, “We will use the results of the survey to help identify priorities in the new five-year Safe Community Plan we are developing this year.”

The following is a summary of key findings.

MAJOR CONCERNS

Crime remains the top concern.

- Crime is the top priority with 32% of the voters surveyed.
- Jobs and the economy ranked high at 28%.
- For African Americans jobs and the economy were the number one concern at 38% compared to crime at 24%.
- White respondents ranked crime at 42% compared to jobs and the economy at 16%.

Among crime concerns, gun violence continues to be the overwhelming concern in every major subgroup (45% of respondents), with juvenile crime second (11%).

Feelings About Law Enforcement

Across the board, respondents respect local law enforcement (86%) and would like to see an increased law enforcement presence in their neighborhoods (68%). Sentiment for hiring more police officers remains very high among all subgroups at 86%. Respondents feel favorable toward local law enforcement, with 63% feeling local officers do an excellent or good job. (African Americans are split evenly on this question.)

By a two to one margin, respondents feel the Memphis Safe Task Force has been a success.

- 62% of those surveyed feel the Memphis Safe Task Force has been effective.
- 30% feel like the task force has not been effective.
- 47% would like to see the current number of state troopers remain and 29% want more in the area.
- However, 58% surveyed feel the recent crackdown on undocumented immigrants has not made the community safer and 42% feel like it has made the community safer.

Feelings About the Local Criminal Justice System

While there is clear support for law enforcement in the community, frustrations with our criminal justice system are more about what’s happening – or not happening – in the office buildings than what’s happening on the streets.

As in previous surveys, across all subgroups, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the local criminal justice system.

- 62% feel the DA’s office is too lenient in prosecuting those charged with serious crimes, 34% about right, and only 4% too harsh.
- 80% say the state court system is too slow.
- Compared to previous surveys, faith in the system’s support for victims has plummeted, with just 16% believing victims receive a lot or some support.
- 64% say there is little or not much support for victims.
- Most respondents feel the local justice system is too lenient toward both adult offenders at 63% and juvenile offenders at 64%.
- 70% feel the system does only a fair or poor job of sharing information about the status of cases with the public.
- Those surveyed see truancy (skipping school) as a serious problem at 78%.

The system receives a failing grade in other categories as well. When it comes to rehabilitating violent offenders, 74% feel the system does a fair or poor job, with only 7% saying it does an excellent or good job. 71% feel the system does a fair or poor job making public safety the major factor in setting bail, with only 12% feeling it does an excellent or good job.

“While the public is feeling better about public safety with meaningful crime reductions, respondents continue to be dissatisfied with our local criminal justice system believing that the D.A.’s office is too lenient, the court system is too slow, crime victims get little support, the bail system inadequately considers public safety and rehabilitation and re-entry services are weak,” stated Ben Adams, Chairman of the Board, Memphis Shelby Crime Commission .

Respondents were asked how the system rates in offering employment opportunities and assistance to those who completed their sentences.

- Only 8% say the system does an excellent or good job.
- 62% say it does a fair or poor job.

Some Other Key Findings

Support for a new jail is overwhelming, with 77% in support. When asked to rank possible new construction projects, a new jail came in first, followed by new schools and a new Regional One in third place. Among African Americans, new schools ranked first.

“This survey provides insight into slight shifts in priorities, with crime continuing to be a major concern, with jobs and the economy making a major gain in the minds of those surveyed. A significant finding is the overwhelming support for a new jail,” said Deidre Malone, President/CEO, The Carter Malone Group and a consultant to the Crime Commission on the survey.

Almost one in four respondents report being a victim of a violent crime, and more than two-thirds say they have been a victim of a property crime.

At the same time, 62% of respondents feel safe in their own neighborhood, with 18% always feeling safe and 44% mostly feeling safe. That feeling is higher in the suburban areas, with 77% feeling safe compared to 53% in Memphis.

In an erosion from previous surveys conducted for the Crime Commission, 48% perceive neighborhood watch groups as effective while 37% feel they are not effective. (In Memphis, respondents were evenly split on this question.)

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A Report from Memphis Safe Task Force

ALERT: Ongoing manhunt for MPD shooting suspect

MEMPHIS, Tenn., February 27, 2026 – A manhunt is underway following the Thursday (Feb. 27) night shooting of a Memphis police officer during a traffic stop.

Danell Maxwell, 40, of Memphis, is wanted on an attempted first-degree murder arrest warrant issued on Feb. 27. Maxwell has been added to the Tennessee Most Wanted list, and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is offering a reward up to \$2,500 for information leading to his capture. Anyone with information is asked to call the MPD at 901-528-2274 or the TBI at 1-800-TBI-FIND.

The Memphis Safe Task Force on Thursday executed 34 criminal arrests and recovered six illegal firearms.

Of note: **Tatyana Taylor, 26**, was arrested in the 4200 block of Macon Road on a warrant for reckless homicide, stemming from the accidental shooting death of a 2-year-old boy in 2022 in Memphis.

Arnel Holmes, 23, was arrested in the 10300 block of Macon Road in Cordova on a warrant for first-degree murder, aggravated robbery, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment with a deadly weapon, and employing a firearm with intent to commit a felony. Holmes was wanted for the Dec. 2, 2023, murder of Emmijal Bevill.

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Nacarious Temple, 24, was arrested in the 7000 block of Brady Hill Drive in Cordova for marijuana distribution and possession of prohibited firearms. This arrest resulted in the seizure of two 9 mm handguns, two semi-automatic rifles, a .40-caliber handgun, and 4.5 pounds of marijuana.

Since the launch of the Memphis Safe Task Force initiative, officers have made 6,577 arrests, including 37 for homicide, 723 for controlled substances, 568 for firearms violations, and 91 for sex offenses. Of those arrested, 189 have been juveniles. The task

force has seized 1,068 illegal firearms. These enforcement actions reflect a sustained commitment to reducing violent crime and removing dangerous weapons from Memphis neighborhoods.

Begun in September 2025, the Memphis Safe Task Force is a multi-agency initiative to combat violent crime in Memphis. Composed of federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as the Tennessee National Guard, the task force is focused on arresting violent criminals, clearing warrants, seizing firearms, and locating missing children. Since the operation began, the MSTF has located 148 missing children. This operation reflects the Memphis Safe Task Force’s commitment to coordinated enforcement efforts and its mission to identify, apprehend, and hold accountable those who pose a threat to public safety.

Anyone with information about wanted fugitives is encouraged to submit it via the USMS Tips app. For more information about the U.S. Marshals please visit www.usmarshals.gov.

are hopeful that our petition for rehearing inspires some additional reflection and research and either the panel, or the entire bench, is willing to step in and set things straight.”

As noted in the petition, “This appeal challenges the New Jersey Attorney General’s long-running censorship of Second Amendment speech. It implicates fundamental speech rights protected in parallel by both the

First and Second Amendments and exposes ‘the abusive manipulation of federal court procedures’ designed to evade merits review, bringing ‘issues that implicate not only the parties’ interests but those of the judicial system itself.’”

“This case has languished in the system since 2018 and it’s entirely unacceptable how the Third Circuit panel found every reason it could to avoid facing the issues

we’ve presented head on,” said SAF founder and Executive Vice President Alan M. Gottlieb. “This case has been plagued by complicated legal gamesmanship and a tortured procedural history, all aimed at undercutting protections guaranteed by the Constitution that the court may find distasteful.”

For more information visit SAF.org.

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