

Penta Policy Insiders

New York Insights Review

Crime and Public Safety

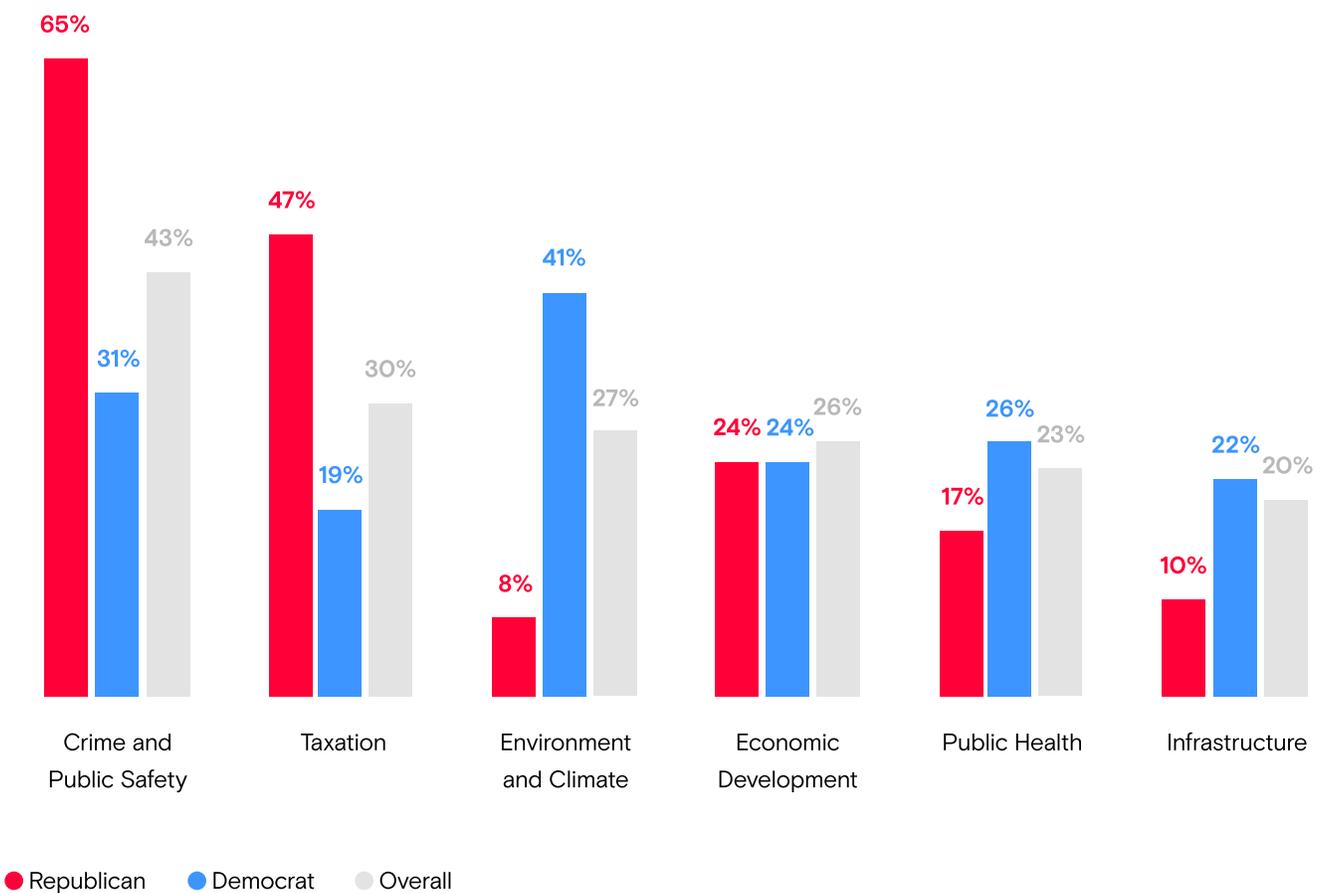
Executive summary

We are delighted to share our findings from this year's New York Insights Review. From September to December 2022, we surveyed and spoke with over 230 state and local policymakers in New York to understand their main policy priorities and key concerns.

Public safety rose to the top of New York policy leader priorities, with nearly half ranking it as a top issue. In 2022, crime in the state was up by 22 percent. While trends show a decline in percentage of major crimes this year, policy staff say public safety is nevertheless a top issue for the communities they serve.¹ Policymakers also cite environmental and climate issues as key priorities for the state, with more than a quarter selecting it as at top challenge. Our research also finds that economic development is a primary concern for policymakers, with policy staff citing taxation and inflation as hurdles to growth for the state.

This report is the second in a series that examines three of New York policymakers' top policy priorities, which include (i) Crime and Public Safety (ii) Environment and Climate (iii) and (iv) Economic Development.

Top policy priorities in New York



New York deep dive

Crime and public safety concerns

Almost half of policymakers we spoke to in New York – 43 percent – say that crime and public safety are top challenges. In 2022, overall crime in New York City was up by 22 percent, and despite the overall trends showing a decline in crime this year compared to 2021, policy staff are concerned. Policy leaders on both sides of the aisle say that the issue is affecting New Yorkers throughout the state, with some attributing the increased crime to the influx of guns coming in from out-of-state.

An uptick in crime: New Yorkers don't feel safe

Democrat and Republican policymakers in New York express concerns over the rise in crime throughout the state. Policy staff say their constituents are being directly impacted by the issue, with some saying the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated public safety concerns while the city was the epicenter of multiple waves of the virus – making it harder for communities to receive access to social services they needed to stay healthy.²



Clearly public safety [is a top policy priority]. Far and away, the most concerning thing that my constituents talk to me about is public safety... I live in a suburb. My constituents are in two of the suburbs... and that's the thing I hear most.

Legislator, Municipal, R



Certainly, in New York, people are feeling uneasy about public safety and are concerned about increases in crime and dealing with that issue.

Assembly Member, New York State Legislature, D



You see a lot of news reporting on TV that makes it sound like there are people being shot in every corner of New York State, which is definitely not true. But **the bottom line is, because of the pandemic, because of the fact that people that have drug problems, addiction problems, alcohol – they were not able to get services provided to them in person.**

Assembly Member, New York State Legislature, D



Policymakers are concerned about gun violence in the state

Some policymakers believe that a possible reason for New Yorker's high crime rate could be the increasing number of guns coming into the state. And while the number of gun-related crimes has trended downward compared to 2021, some policy leaders are still concerned with the implications of firearms coming into the state from other regions in the country.³



One of the main reasons [for increased crime] is everybody has a gun all of a sudden. When the pandemic hit in 2020, almost twice as many guns were sold in the United States as in 2019. 2021 was another record year, just slightly below 2020. It seems that, when the pandemic hit, everybody felt insecure and lots of people went out and bought guns. **Guns are everywhere, and while we have very stringent laws in New York State, the iron pipeline from the south continues to bring guns here to New York State.**

Assembly Member, New York State Legislature, D

Conclusion

New York policymakers see crime as a primary challenge for the state, even as the crime rate continues to go down. Some policy staff call out the issue of gun violence as an urgent concern that is contributing to the overarching unease when it comes to public safety across the state. Policy leaders also point to lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that continue to make it more difficult for some residents to receive access to a variety of social services as another reason crime and public safety continue to be top-of-mind priorities.

About Penta Policy Insiders

Penta Policy Insiders provides direct feedback from policymakers to government relations professionals, improving advocates' ability to understand, validate, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their engagement.

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Citations

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2. https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/vital_signs/gun-violence-in-new-york-city-the-data
3. <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/nyc-stats-show-shootings-are-up-from-pre-pandemic-levels-lower-than-2021/3804155/>

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