

A Penta White Paper

Penta Policy Insiders

New York Insights Review Series

Top Issues

January 2024
policyinsiders.pentagroup.co

Top Issues

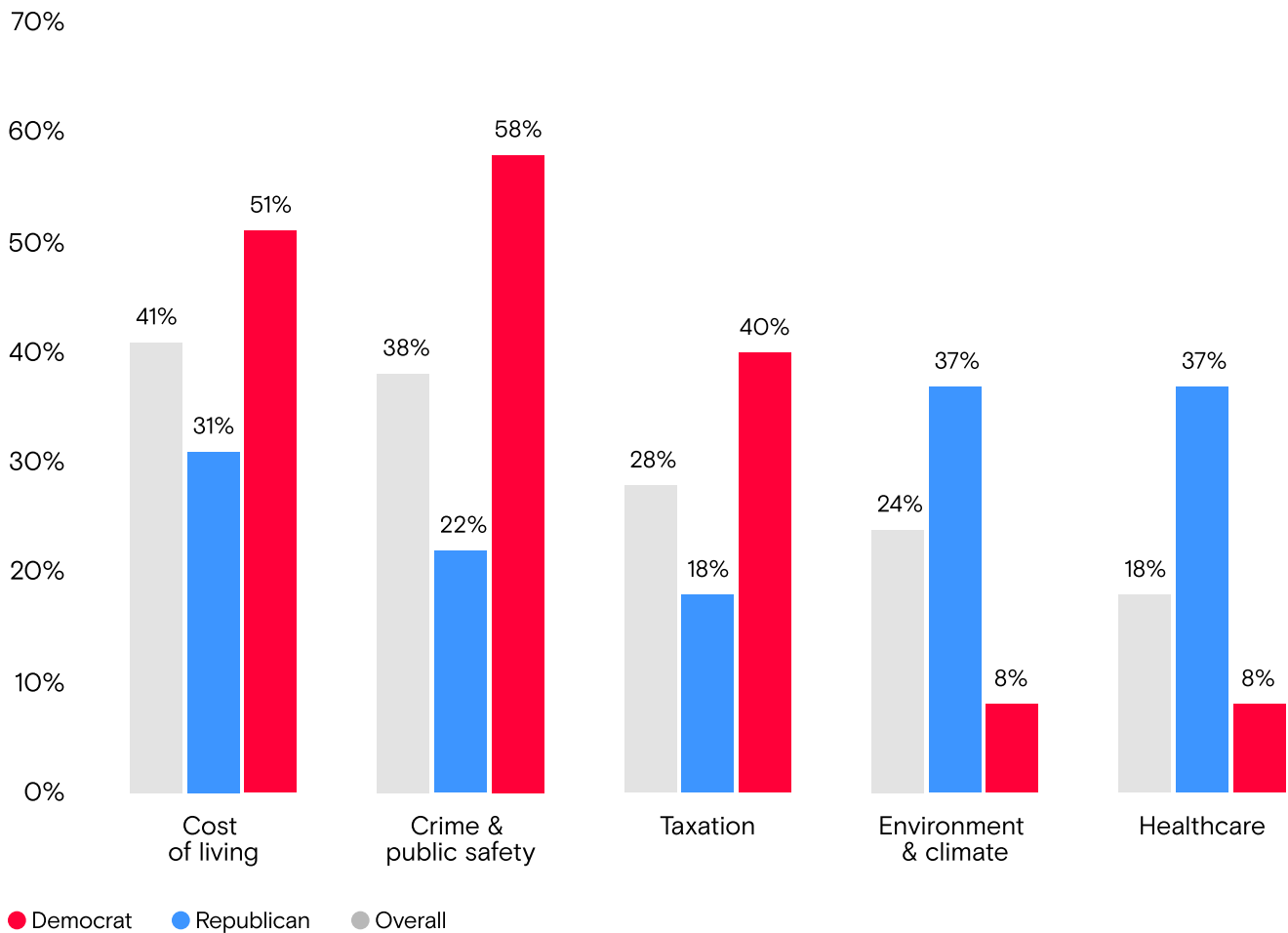
We are pleased to share our findings in this year's New York Insights Review. From May to August 2023, we spoke to over 270 policymakers in the state about their policy priorities and the top issues facing their communities.

Cost of living is the top priority for New York policymakers this year, who have placed particular focus on addressing the lack of affordable housing options throughout the state. Policymakers also note the state's high tax rates as another issue they would like to spend time on. Crime and public safety, environment and climate, and healthcare are all also at the top of policymaker priorities this year.

This report is the first in a series that examines five of New York policymakers' top priorities, which include (i) cost of living (ii) crime and public safety (iii) taxation (iv) environment and climate and (v) healthcare.

Top policy priorities in New York

Multiple selections permitted



Source: Penta Policy Insiders

Cost of living

What is referred to as New York's "affordability crisis" only worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic,¹ and remains a persistent issue for policymakers in the state and a top concern for New York residents. Policy staff on both sides of the aisle rank cost of living as their most pressing issue for the state, particularly when it comes to New York City.



I think, at least here in New York City, [the priority is] **the rising cost of living** and [its connection to] housing, to tenant protection, to freeing the MTA, **making sure that public goods are still available.**

Legislative Director, New York State Senate, D



The ability to move to New York and **the ability to... raise a family in New York is paramount to the city's ongoing success...** and the lack of that resource is creating some of the visible circumstances that are turning people off of New York... **for the New Yorkers who can't afford to live in New York, it is literally impacting their well-being** because they are becoming homeless or having home insecurity.

Senior Vice President, New York State Municipality, D



Crime and public safety

Policy staff highlight crime and public safety in New York as a top priority. Republicans are notably more concerned about the issue than Democrats, with almost 60 percent of Republican policy staff reporting crime and public safety as a priority this year compared to 22 percent of Democrats. Policymakers note that while crime numbers (particularly violent crime numbers) are lower than they have been in recent years for both New York City and the state as a whole,² public safety remains a focal point.



I think **the number one thing that needs to be addressed is public safety**. Many of the policy changes that have been made by the New York State legislature the past five years have been pro-criminal as opposed to pro-public safety.

Legislator, New York State Municipality, R



Public safety also is important - even though crime is still lower than it was years ago, it is been on a bit of an upswing so [we're] trying to address that.

Director, New York Executive Branch, D



The crime numbers aren't that dramatic compared to the past, it's definitely declined since [the 1980s]. And yet, because we see it all the time on TV or the 24-hour news channel and social media, **it seems like it's there's the boogeyman behind every corner**.

Deputy Director, New York Executive Branch, I

Taxation

Policy leaders, particularly Republicans, express concerns over the tax systems in New York. Staff on both sides of the aisle acknowledge the need for tax reform, and cite high property taxes as a particular challenge to resolve.



One of the top priorities, policy wise, going into next year [is] tax reform. New York is consistently rated as one of the highest tax [states]... taxes are an issue, especially for small businesses [and] property owners... They've always talked about reform, but nobody's ever achieved it. So that's one major issue.

Senior Vice President, Private, R



Taxation overall is a real problem here. We have pretty high income taxes, we have high property taxes. Businesses will tell you that the business taxes, particularly unemployment insurance, which effectively is a tax, is out of control... the property tax - particularly around the New York City suburbs - again ranks in the top three in the country on a consistent basis... and it makes the housing that much less affordable.

Executive Director, New York County Tax Commission, D



Tax policy has to be another... **The state government has to stop passing laws that pass additional tax burdens on the counties.**

Legislator, New York State Municipality, R

Environment and climate

Habitat preservation, natural resources, and climate change are among the top environmental focus areas for New York policymakers, particularly Democrats, this year.



[The most important policy priorities in NY are] probably preservation of habitat, wildlife diversity - basically, **protection of habitat for natural resources.**

Officer, New York Executive Branch, D



I think right now **what we focus on is steps that we need to take to slow down the process of global warming**, to slow down the process of energy dependent on fossil fuels as we move forward.

Commissioner, New York State Municipality, R



Healthcare

Healthcare is also top of mind for policymakers in the state. The issue is particularly important to Democrats, with almost a quarter highlighting healthcare as a concern, but policy staff on both sides of the aisle acknowledge the need for better resources as a foundational step in the right direction.



Trying various policy initiatives or other types of implementation of public health initiatives here to **improve public health, public mental health – that’s one of our top priorities.**

Director, New York Executive Branch, D



We need some kind of solution to **having someone who is trained for those kinds of situations when they get into the field and they are dealing with people who have mental health issues.**

Regional Office Director, New York State Legislature, R



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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Citation

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/nyregion/you-need-100000-a-year-just-to-get-by-here.html>
2. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-details-first-comprehensive-overview-crime-trends-across-new-york-state-2023>

Qualitative n: 20 | Quantitative n: 274

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