

To: Interested Parties

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Recent Polling Finds Strong Majority of San Francisco Voters Opposes Expanding the SFPD's Surveillance Powers

A recent Tulchin Research poll of voters in San Francisco reveals strong opposition to a proposal by the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) to expand police surveillance powers. The poll was conducted on behalf of the ACLU of Northern California and shows that a robust majority of voters oppose giving police authority to obtain live access to surveillance cameras on private businesses and residences.

Furthermore, the poll also shows that voters overwhelmingly support alternatives to police surveillance and would rather have the city invest more resources in mental health and drug addiction services, violence prevention programs, and improved lighting. We present findings from the poll below.

Strong Opposition Against SFPD Proposal to Expand Surveillance Powers

Our poll finds that 6 in 10 (60%) San Francisco voters oppose a recent proposal from the SFPD which would allow the police to obtain live real-time access to surveillance cameras located at private businesses, public areas, and private residences, including 42% who say they “*strongly*” oppose the proposal. Conversely, only 34% of voters say they support the SFPD’s proposal, including just 19% who support it “*strongly*” while few voters are undecided (6%).

Strong Opposition to SFPD’s Proposal to Expand Surveillance

Here is a summary of a proposal by San Francisco police to expand surveillance powers.

“San Francisco police want the power to obtain live real-time access to watch and monitor surveillance cameras at private businesses and organizations, cameras put up in public streets and spaces, and cameras at people’s homes. They would be able to access any surveillance recordings from these cameras.”

Having heard this, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this proposal?

Total Oppose	60%
Total Support	34%
Strongly oppose	42%
Somewhat oppose	18%
Somewhat support	15%
Strongly support	19%
Undecided	6%

In addition to strong levels of opposition to the SFPD’s proposal overall, opposition to the proposal is also consistent across major demographic and partisan lines, including a majority of men and women (59% and 62%) as well as white (66%), Asian (58%) and Latino (50%) voters. Importantly, the poll shows majority opposition among Democrats (66%) and independents (50%).

Voters Strongly Support Alternatives to Expanded Surveillance

While voters strongly oppose expanding the SFPD’s surveillance powers, our poll does show that they overwhelmingly support alternative approaches to public safety that do not rely on surveillance or police. Specifically, voters strongly support proposals to devote more resources to drug and mental health services and violence prevention programs, increase lighting on streets, and hire more mental health professionals and social workers. Support for each of these proposals is both wide and deep as each attracts support from more than 8 in 10 San Francisco voters and the “strong” support of a solid majority.

Support for Alternative Public Safety Policies

Here is a list of proposals that some have discussed using. Please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each one.			
	Total Support	Strongly Support	Total Oppose
<i>“Focus more resources on drug and mental health services and violence prevention programs in high crime areas”</i>	92%	72%	8%
<i>“Hire more mental health care providers and social workers to help with substance misuse, mental illness, and other issues that are not addressed by police officers”</i>	86%	70%	13%
<i>“Add more lighting on streets to deter and reduce criminal activity”</i>	84%	62%	13%

Conclusion

This poll finds that San Francisco voters strongly oppose granting the SFPD expanded camera surveillance powers. Instead, San Franciscans across political and demographic lines want the city to pursue public safety policies that do not center around police surveillance. The programs they support include improving street lighting and placing more of a focus on mental health, drug addiction, and violence prevention programs, among other services.

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Survey Methodology: From April 12th - 19th, 2022, Tulchin Research conducted an online statewide survey among 372 likely November 2022 voters in San Francisco County California. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 5.08 percentage points.