

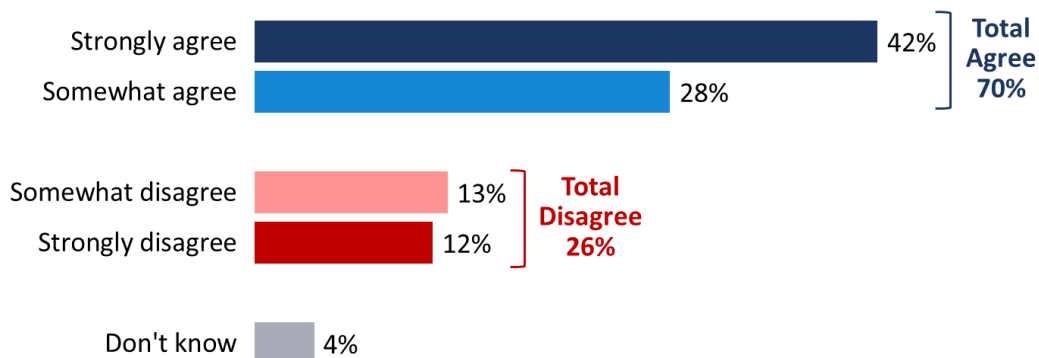
<b>TO</b>	Interested Parties
<b>FROM</b>	Dave Metz and Miranda Everitt FM3 Research
<b>RE:</b>	American Voter Views of Fee Elimination Proposals
<b>DATE</b>	September 27, 2022

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of American voters to assess their views of proposals to eliminate fees in the criminal justice system.<sup>1</sup> **The study found that voters support eliminating these fees by a two-to-one margin and that support is broad across nearly every major demographic subgroup.** Broad majorities also see specific fees as unfair — such as fees added onto traffic tickets, as well as fees for public defense, prosecution, and "room and board" in jail. Key findings include:

- **Seven in ten American voters agree that everyone should pay for the justice system.** As shown in Figure 1 below, voters agree by a 44-point margin that everyone should pay for the justice system, which is intended to keep communities safe, resolve disputes, and enforce rights and responsibilities.

**Figure 1: Funding the Justice System**

*My next questions are about the justice system – including courts, jails and prisons, and criminal, civil and traffic cases. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The justice system serves everyone by keeping the community safe, resolving disputes, and enforcing rights and responsibilities. It should be paid for by everyone.*



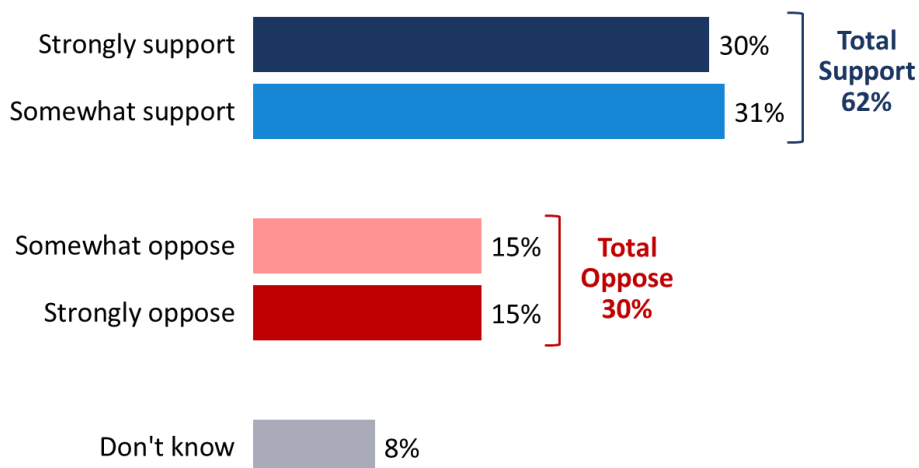
<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From Sept. 6-12, 2022, FM3 completed 716 interviews online with randomly selected likely November 2022 voters in the United States. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.7% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for subsamples will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

Agreement with this statement cuts across demographics, including:

- 66% of Democrats, 71% of independents and 74% of Republicans;
  - 75% of men and 67% of women;
  - Majorities of voters across every age category;
  - Majorities in each of seven Census regions of the country, including support as high as 77% in South Central US and no lower than 63% in the West, and
  - 73% of white voters, 64% of Latino voters, and 54% of African American voters.
- **More than three in five voters support eliminating fees within the justice system.**

**Figure 2: Support for Elimination of Fees**

*The next questions are about fees in the justice system. The government charges fees to people throughout the justice system. These fees can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars, and can include prosecution fees, jail room and board fees, phone call fees, drug-testing fees, and public defender fees. Many of these fees can be charged whether or not someone is found guilty. If someone cannot pay these fees, they often face late fees, interest charges, suspension of their driver's license, and even jail time. Some people have proposed that we eliminate fees within the criminal justice system. Does this sound like something you would support or oppose?*



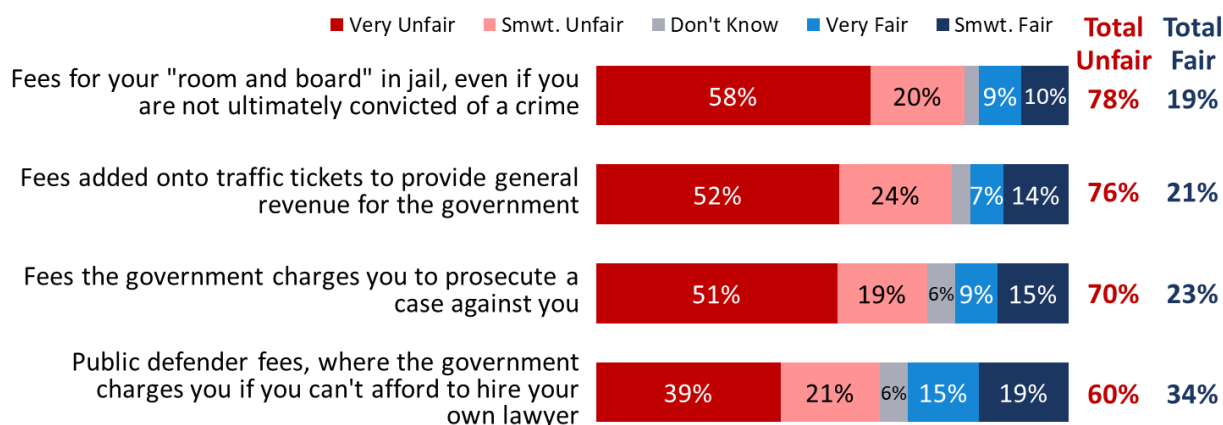
This support cuts across demographics, including:

- 74% of Democrats, 64% of independents and a plurality of Republicans (47%);
- 63% of men and 61% of women;
- Majorities of voters across every age category;
- Majorities in each of seven Census regions of the country, including support as high as 76% in South Central US and no lower than 55% in the South, and
- 60% of white voters, 69% of Latino voters, and 68% of African American voters.

- Voters also believe many specific fees currently charged are unfair.** As shown in Figure 3 on the next page, majorities of American voters say that "room and board" fees for jail, fees added onto traffic tickets, and fees for prosecution of the case against you are "very unfair" — and at least seven in ten call each of these at least somewhat unfair. By nearly a two-to-one margin, voters believe that public defender fees are unfair as well.

**Figure 3: Fairness of Specific Fee Types**

*Here is a list of fees. Is it very fair, somewhat fair, somewhat unfair, or very unfair to you to require people to pay fees for that purpose?*



In sum, American voters believe the criminal justice system provides a broad set of benefits that should be funded by everyone — and they object to criminal justice system fees specifically and generally.