

REPORT [Crime And Justice](#)

The Blue City Murder Problem

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SUMMARY

Beginning in 2015 with the election of Kim Foxx, first of the George Soros–promoted rogue prosecutors, as Cook County (Chicago) State’s Attorney, cities with rogue prosecutors have imposed policies that all—each and every one of them—inure to the benefit of criminals. Such policies have contributed to the lawlessness across so-called blue cities and the steep rise in crime rates across America. To suggest now that Republican elected officials who have followed different policies have contributed to crime increases is at best laughable.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The Left’s claim that America has a “red state murder problem” is misleading and deflects from “progressive” soft-on-crime policies that have wreaked havoc.
- 2 New analysis of crime data shows that high-crime counties are governed largely by Democrats, driving up the crime rates in their otherwise red states.
- 3 Lowering America’s rising crime rates requires that localities repudiate their pro-criminal, anti-victim policies that contribute to lawlessness in blue counties.



true, are at best meaningless when taken out of context and at worst misleading and downright dangerous when used as the basis for public policy decisions.

Enter the “Red State Murder Problem.” It sounds ominous, but it’s not. It is also highly misleading.

Those on the Left know that their soft-on-crime policies have wreaked havoc in the cities where they have implemented those policies. It is not hard to understand why “reforms” such as ending cash bail, defunding the police, refusing to prosecute entire categories of crimes, letting thousands of convicted felons out of prison early, significantly cutting the prison population, and other “progressive” ideas have led to massive spikes in crime—particularly violent crime, including murder—in the communities where those on the Left have implemented them.

Left-wing politicians and their backers recognize that rising crime rates and the lack of a general sense of safety that follows are a problem for them and their chances for reelection. In fact, recent polls show that voters care a lot about rising crime—an issue that is second only to rising, rampant inflation and the lackluster economy. So the Left is engaging in political traditions as old as time: obfuscation, finger pointing, and blame shifting.

One liberal organization—The Third Way—even went so far as to publish a “study” arguing that Republicans are actually to blame for the spike in murders across the country. The not-so-subtle suggestion the study pushes is that those on the Left are not responsible for rising crime rates because crime is rising everywhere—especially in Republican-led states. Fighting for their political survival, Left-wing politicians such as Gavin Newsom and Larry Krasner have recently started to parrot the “results” of this study.^[1]

But crime tends to be a hyper-localized phenomenon. State-level data are generally meaningless—except as a tool with which to score political points. More to the point, when the crime statistics from the deep-blue big cities within these otherwise deep-red states are removed, what happens? The state-level crime rates fall—in some cases, dramatically.

Crime Trends

Until recently, crime, including violent crime, has been declining across the United States since the peak of the last crime wave in 1992.^[2] Not surprisingly, since incarceration trails

Unfortunately, however, the 25-plus year drop in crime since 1992 has ended for many cities across the United States. The rise in crime, especially violent crime, started taking place around 2015 after the confluence of a series of events that took place over the course of a few years.

Those events include police-involved shootings of black community members,^[4] the defund the police movement,^[5] the election of rogue prosecutors funded or inspired by George Soros and other elitist billionaires,^[6] and the “Ferguson/Minneapolis Effect”^[7] by which unwarranted public scrutiny of police resulted in police drastically reducing proactive policing. Crime was rising in select cities across the country before the global COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, but it rose even more significantly after the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

The cumulative effect of these events contributed to and in large part set the conditions for increased crime across much of the country, especially in cities where the toxic trio of rogue prosecutors, defund the police zealotry, and demonization/demoralization of the police existed. In those cities and others with some mixture of this toxic trio crime has exploded across most categories, including but not limited to murder.

As the old saying goes, the best defense is a good offense. So instead of defending their calls to defund the police, the elections of pro-criminal rogue prosecutors, or their pattern and practice of demonizing police, some on the Left have decided to flip the narrative and argue that it is the Republican states that have the real crime rate problem, especially when it comes to murder.

The Red State Murder Herring

On March 15, 2022, a left-wing advocacy organization called The Third Way published a 15-page study with the provocative title “The Red State Murder Problem.”^[8] Written by Jim Kessler, a long-time Democratic policy director to Representative/Senator Charles “Chuck” Schumer, and Kylie Murdock, a former intern for Congresswoman Barbara Lee and volunteer for Elizabeth Warren for President, the study states that “murder rates are far higher in Trump-voting red states than Biden-voting blue states.”^[9] So that the reader won’t miss the political drift, the authors add, “And sometimes, murder rates are highest in cities with Republican mayors.”^[10]

reported crimes by the total population. The result is then multiplied by 100,000.

Not surprisingly, dozens of media outlets, including The Washington Post,^[11] The Hill,^[12] Inside Edition,^[13] Politifact,^[14] The Daily Beast,^[15] Los Angeles Magazine,^[16] the San Francisco Examiner,^[17] NBC News^[18] and others, picked up the “study” and breathlessly reported on its “findings.”^[19] Even Paul Krugman, New York Times opinion columnist and economist, has joined the echo chamber, albeit with an unconvincing and divorced-from-reality opinion piece wherein he opines that “nobody knows for sure what caused the surge.”^[20]

We have a pretty good idea, and many voters apparently are starting to figure it out as well.

The study’s authors and those reporting its results took advantage of the fact that the average reader does not know much about crime trends, how crime rates are calculated, and at what level (city/county/state, etc.) these statistics should be reviewed. Because of that, The Third Way’s study sounds important and shocking to most readers who visit these “news” websites.

As noted earlier, however, most crime is hyperlocalized, so the fundamental flaw with the study and the reason it does not deserve any serious consideration is that the “murder rate” in each state is largely a function of the large number of murders in a state’s biggest city or cities.^[21] A super majority of those cities, even in otherwise red states, are deep blue and run by left-wing ideologues.


When you remove the crime-infested, homicide-riddled cities from the state murder rate featured in the Third Way study, you dramatically lower the murder rate for that state, upending their conclusions and exposing the piece for what it really is: a straightforward attempt at political projection dressed up as a “study.”

Said another way, Kessler and Murdock did their level best as political operatives to blame their political opponents for the very thing—rising crime—that leftist policies at the city and county levels have caused.

While a state’s murder rate is perhaps politically interesting, a more accurate reflection of what is actually happening on the ground is gained by reviewing localized murder rates, such as murder rates in a city or county. What does this review show?

City	Number of Homicides	Homicide Rate per 100,000 Population
New Orleans, LA	145	36.8
Baltimore, MD	174	29.1
Birmingham, AL	59	28.0
St Louis, MO	83	27.8
Milwaukee, WI	112	19.0
Cleveland, OH	64	16.9
Rochester, NY	34	16.6
Philadelphia, PA	240	15.1
Atlanta, GA	74	14.9
Kansas City, MO	73	14.6
Washington DC	104	14.6
Richmond, VA	31	13.3
Oakland, CA	54	12.3
Cincinnati, OH	36	11.8
Chicago, IL	304	11.2
Louisville, KY	73	10.8
Albuquerque, NM	56	10
Minneapolis, MN	43	9.9
Dallas, TX	122	9.0
Nashville, TN	55	8.0
Durham, NC	22	7.7
Lexington, KY	23	7.1
Jacksonville, FL	63	6.8
Greensboro, NC	19	6.3
Los Angeles, CA	176	4.4
Colorado Springs, CO	19	3.9
Las Vegas, NV	63	3.7
Virginia Beach, VA	13	2.9
San Francisco, CA	23	2.6
New York, NY	197	2.4

comparison, (accessed November 3, 2022), <https://twitter.com/Crimeanalytics/status/1542842217261408259?s=20&t=nqf7AzYJUIXufGX3UYj1BA> (accessed November 3, 2022); Cameron McWhirter, "New Orleans Has America's No. 1 Murder Rate. 'We're in a Crisis,'" The Wall Street Journal, September 16, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-orleans-murder-rate-crime-11663338008> (accessed November 3, 2022).

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Not surprisingly, of those 30 cities, 27 have Democratic mayors, the exceptions being Lexington and Jacksonville, which have Republican mayors, and Las Vegas, whose mayor is an Independent. And within those 30 cities there are at least 14 Soros-backed or Soros-inspired rogue prosecutors. Those Soros bought-and-paid-for or inspired rogue prosecutors include:

- Jason Williams, New Orleans Parish District Attorney;
- Marilyn Mosby, Baltimore City State's Attorney;^[22]
- Kim Gardner, St. Louis Circuit Attorney;
- John T. Chisholm, Milwaukee County District Attorney;
- Larry Krasner, Philadelphia District Attorney;
- Kim Foxx, Cook County (Chicago) State's Attorney;
- Raul Torrez, Bernalillo County (Albuquerque) District Attorney;
- Mike Freeman, Hennepin County (Minneapolis) Attorney;
- John Creuzot, Dallas County District Attorney;
- Glenn R. Funk, Nashville District Attorney General;
- Santana Deberry, Durham District Attorney;
- George Gascon, Los Angeles County District Attorney;
- Chesa Boudin, San Francisco District Attorney;^[23] and
- Alvin Bragg, Manhattan District Attorney.

There were 2,554 homicides in those 30 cities through June 2022. In the 14 cities with Soros-backed rogue prosecutors, there were 1,752 homicides, representing 68 percent of homicides in the 30 top homicide cities in the United States.

Every Soros rogue prosecutor listed above is a Democrat.

A More Detailed Analysis

authors of the “The Red State Murder Problem” provide the state-by-state data used in their study, they do not directly provide the county-level data necessary to answer this question.^[24] County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R), a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, however, does provide these comprehensive data.^[25] Specifically, CHR&R provides detailed data on health care, education, economic, and demographic variables, including homicide rates and overall state populations on a county-by-county basis all across the country.

Table 2 provides homicide rate rankings across all 50 states based on homicide data from 2014–2020.^[26]

Rank	State	Homicide Rate per 100,000 Population
1	District of Columbia	19.846
2	Louisiana	13.390
3	Mississippi	12.303
4	Alabama	10.728
5	Missouri	9.363
6	South Carolina	9.237
7	Maryland	8.835
8	New Mexico	8.403
9	Tennessee	7.783
10	Illinois	7.746
11	Arkansas	7.688
12	Oklahoma	7.411
13	Georgia	7.264
14	Alaska	7.112
15	Nevada	6.564
16	Delaware	6.486
17	North Carolina	6.396
18	Indiana	6.321
19	Ohio	6.157
20	Florida	6.064
21	Michigan	5.980
22	Arizona	5.808
23	Pennsylvania	5.781
24	Texas	5.565
25	California	4.971
26	Kentucky	4.936

Rank	State	Homicide Rate per 100,000 Population
27	Virginia	4.447
28	Kansas	4.324
29	West Virginia	4.202
30	Colorado	3.943
31	New Jersey	3.828
32	Wisconsin	3.515
33	Washington	3.223
34	New York	3.206
35	Connecticut	3.064
36	Montana	2.869
37	Oregon	2.758
38	Hawaii	2.559
39	South Dakota	2.464
40	Nebraska	2.323
41	Wyoming	2.232
42	Massachusetts	2.190
43	Utah	2.092
44	Minnesota	1.962
45	Iowa	1.928
46	Rhode Island	1.892
47	Idaho	1.642
48	Vermont	1.444
49	North Dakota	1.437
50	New Hampshire	1.244
51	Maine	0.741

NOTES: Homicide rate in Washington, DC, differs from rate in Table 1 because homicide rates for Washington, DC, in Table 1 are based on data through June 2022. See Appendix for full methodology. Homicide rate data cover homicides from 2014–2020.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on most recent data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> (accessed November 3, 2022).

In the state of the overall homicide rate is ...	If you were to remove the recalculated homicide rate would be which is a homicide rate reduction of ...
Louisiana	13.390	Orleans Parish	11.302	-15.59%
Mississippi	12.303	Hinds County (encompassing Jackson)	10.735	-12.75%
Alabama	10.728	Jefferson County	9.001	-16.10%
		Montgomery County	10.220	-4.74%
		Both Jefferson and Montgomery Counties	8.314	-22.51%
Missouri	9.363	St. Louis City	7.482	-20.09%
		St. Louis County	8.395	-10.34%
		Both St. Louis City and St. Louis County	6.070	-35.17%
South Carolina	9.237	Richland and Lexington Counties (encompassing Columbia)	9.210	-0.29%
New Mexico	8.403	Bernalillo County	7.511	-10.62%
Tennessee	7.783	Shelby County	5.327	-31.56%
		Davidson County	7.299	-6.22%
		Both Shelby and Davidson Counties	4.432	-43.05%
Illinois	7.746	Cook County	3.476	-55.12%
Arkansas	7.688	Pulaski County	6.256	-18.63%
Georgia	7.264	Fulton and DeKalb counties (encompassing Atlanta)	6.009	-17.28%

NOTE: See Appendix for methodology.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on most recent data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> (accessed November 3, 2022).

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A closer examination of the local officials in the counties and cities listed above reveals that the vast majority of them are Democrats.

- In Orleans Parish, Louisiana (which encompasses New Orleans), District Attorney Jason Williams, Mayor LaToya Cantrell, and all seven members of the City Council are Democrats.^[27]
- In Hinds County, Mississippi, District Attorney Jody E. Owens and all five members of the Board of Supervisors are Democrats.^[28] In Jackson County, Mississippi, District Attorney Angel Myers McIlrath is a Republican, as are four of the five members of the Board of Supervisors,^[29] but the City of Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba is a Democrat.
- In Jefferson County, Alabama, the Board of Commissions consists of three Republicans and two Democrats.^[30] District Attorney Danny Carr is a Democrat, as is Birmingham

Republicans and two Democrats.^[31] District Attorney Daryl Bailey is a Democrat, as is Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed.

- The elected officials in the City of Saint Louis, Missouri, are all Democrats. The 28 members of the Board of Alderman are all Democrats, as are Circuit Attorney (the equivalent of a local district attorney) Kim Gardner and Mayor Tishaura Jones.
- Saint Louis County is equally lopsided with elected Democrats, including five of the seven members of the County Council and District Attorney Wesley Bell.^[32]
- The City of Columbia, South Carolina, is unique in that it straddles two counties, Richland and Lexington. Richland County Solicitor (the equivalent of the local district attorney) Byron E. Gipson is a Democrat, as are nine of the 11 members of the Richland County Council.^[33] Lexington County Solicitor Rick Hubbard is a Republican, as are all nine members of the Lexington County Council.^[34]
- In Bernalillo County, New Mexico (which includes Albuquerque), four of the five members of the Board of Commissioners are Democrats, as are Mayor Tim Keller and District Attorney Raul Torrez.^[35]
- In Shelby County, Tennessee, nine of the 13 members of the Board of Commissioners are Democrats, as are Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland and Shelby County District Attorney Steve Mulroy.^[36]
- In Davidson County, Tennessee, members of the Metropolitan Nashville Council are all listed as nonpartisan. However, both District Attorney Glenn Funk and Mayor John Cooper are Democrats.
- Fifteen of the 17 members of the Cook County, Illinois (which encompasses Chicago) Board of Commissioners are Democrats,^[37] as are Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, the first Soros rogue prosecutor, and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot.
- Nine of the 14 members of the Pulaski County, Arkansas, Quorum Court (the county government's legislative body) are Democrats,^[38] as are Mayor Frank Scott Jr. and Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley of Pulaski County, which encompasses Little Rock.
- In Georgia, all seven members of the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners are Democrats, as are District Attorney Sherry Boston and Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens.^[39] DeKalb County encompasses the eastern section of the City of Atlanta.
- Four of the seven members of the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, Georgia, which encompasses the rest of Atlanta, are Democrats,^[40] as is District Attorney Fani Willis.

The authors of the Third Way “study” either intentionally neglected or simply don’t understand that the “criminal justice system” within the 50 states is not a homogeneous

approaches to the enforcement of state law. There are, for example, 3,143 counties in this country. Violations of state law are prosecuted largely at the county or city level.

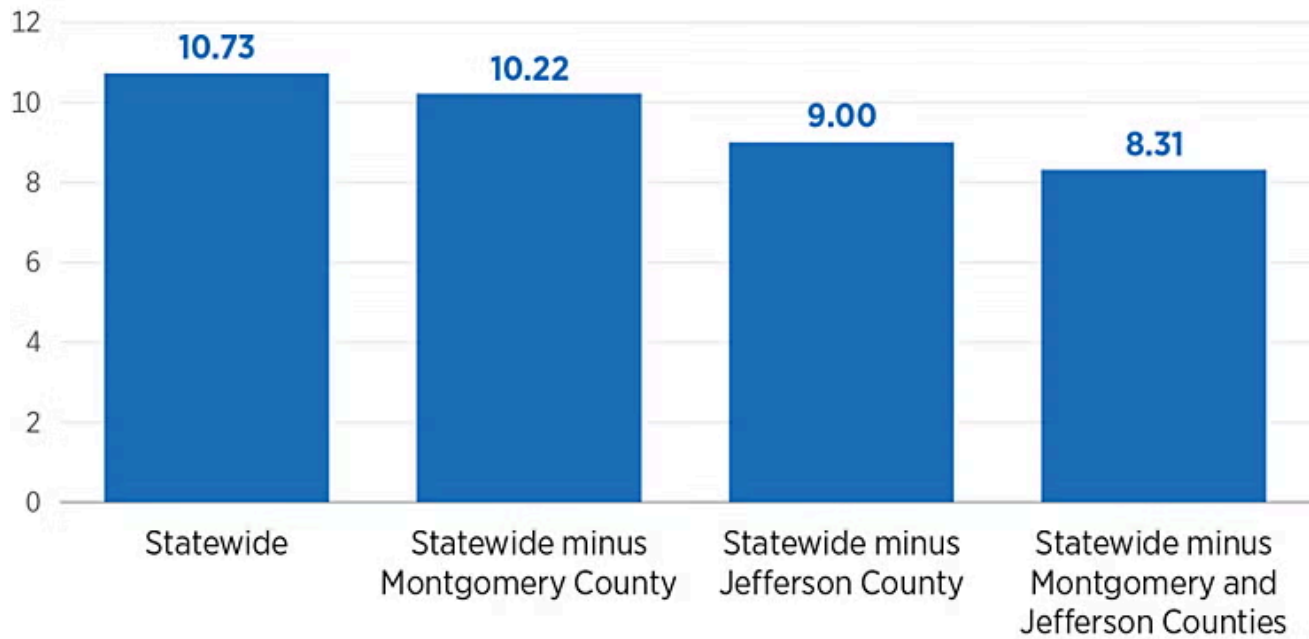
Your public safety as a resident is dramatically impacted by your district attorney and whether he or she is a Soros rogue prosecutor or a law-and-order prosecutor, by your police department, and by whether the local politicians support and adequately fund the police and prosecutor's offices.

This is why the Soros rogue prosecutor movement has concentrated its fire at identifying, recruiting, and funding candidates for local district attorney races. By elevating pro-criminal, anti-victim zealots into office, the rogue prosecutor movement destabilizes the safety of the community, treats criminals as victims and the police as the criminals, and ignores real victims.

Whether a state as a whole voted for Donald Trump or Joe Biden has nothing whatever to do with the homicide rates within its constituent parts. The authors of the Third Way "study" are either oblivious to this fact or, as we suspect, aware of this but nonetheless determined to flip the political narrative. As we demonstrate, however, the high murder rate is almost exclusively cabined in cities run by Democrats and with Democrat district attorneys, many of whom are Soros bought-and-paid-for rogue prosecutors or inspired by Soros, groups like the egregiously misnamed Fair and Just Prosecution, and other battering rams of the movement.

Montgomery and Jefferson Counties

HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION

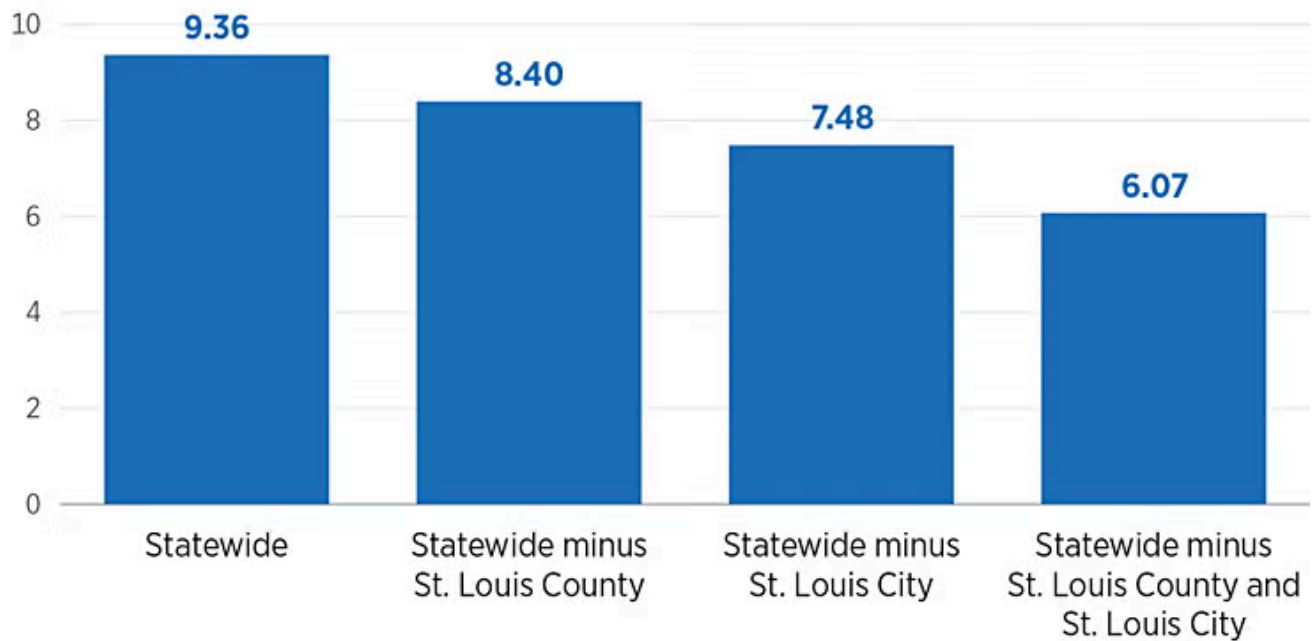


NOTE: See Appendix for methodology.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on most recent data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> (accessed November 3, 2022).

St. Louis City and St. Louis County

HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION

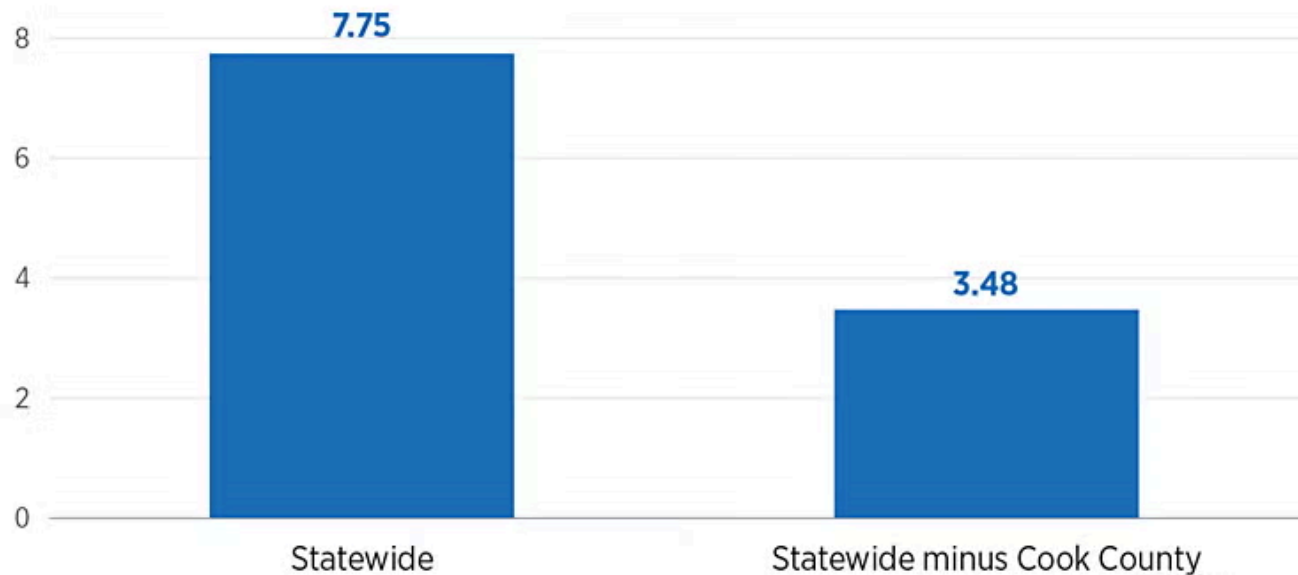


NOTE: See appendix for methodology.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on most recent data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> (accessed November 3, 2022).


Cook County

HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POPULATION



NOTE: See Appendix for methodology.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on most recent data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/> (accessed November 3, 2022).

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As Table 2 illustrates, Washington, DC, has the nation's highest homicide rate at 19.846 homicides per 100,000 residents yet is completely neglected in "The Red State Murder Problem." Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi are also highly ranked with homicide rates ranging from 13.390 to 10.728 per 100,000 residents).^[41]

Louisiana's homicide rate is heavily dependent on Orleans Parish, which has a homicide rate of 36.126 homicides per 100,000 residents. Removing this locality drops the state's homicide rate from 13.390 to 11.302, a 15.59 percent reduction.

Alabama's overall homicide rate is also heavily influenced by a few localities. For example, removing Jefferson County drops the state's homicide rate from 10.728 to 9.001, a 16.10 percent reduction, and removing Montgomery County drops the homicide rate to 10.220, a 4.74 percent reduction. Dropping both lowers the homicide rate to 8.314, a 22.51

Missouri's overall homicide rate is marked by similar behavior. St. Louis City and St. Louis County heavily influence the state's homicide rate, having 46.235 and 14.387 homicides per 100,000 residents, respectively. Removing St. Louis City lowers the state's homicide rate from 9.363 to 7.482 per 100,000 residents, a 20.09 percent reduction. Removing St. Louis County lowers the homicide rate to 8.395 per 100,000 residents, a 10.34 percent reduction, while dropping both counties reduces the state's homicide rate by 35.17 percent to 6.070 homicides per 100,000 residents. These reductions are apparent in Chart 2. Looking at Table 2, removing both counties drops Missouri's homicide ranking from fifth to 20th in the nation.

New Mexico's homicide rate is heavily dependent on Bernalillo County, encompassing the City of Albuquerque. Bernalillo County is the state's most populous county and has a homicide rate of 10.241 homicides per 100,000 residents. Removing this county lowers the state's homicide rate from 8.403 to 7.511 per 100,000 residents, a 10.62 percent reduction, and lowers the county's homicide rate from eighth to 11th in the nation.

Georgia's homicide rate is heavily influenced by crime in Atlanta, encompassing Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Dropping these two counties (which have homicide rates of 13.407 and 13.272 per 100,000 residents, respectively) causes the state's homicide rate to fall from 7.264 to 5.999, a 17.3 percent reduction, and the state's ranking in Table 2 to fall from 13th to 21st in the nation.

Arkansas' homicide rate is impacted by Pulaski County, which has 17.199 homicides per 100,000 residents. Removing this county drops the state's overall homicide rate from 7.688 to 6.256, a 18.63 percent reduction.

Tennessee is heavily influenced by crime in Memphis and Nashville. Removing Shelby County (with a homicide rate of 23.424 per 100,000 residents) surrounding Memphis results in a reduction from 7.783 to 5.327 (per 100,000 residents), a 31.56 percent change. Dropping Davidson County (with a homicide rate of 12.074 per 100,000) surrounding Nashville results in a reduction from 7.783 to 7.299 (per 100,000 residents), a 6.22 percent change. Dropping both counties brings down the state's homicide rate to 4.432 per 100,000 residents, a 43.05 percent reduction, and lowers the state's national ranking in Table 2 from ninth to 27th.

Finally, Cook County, Illinois, is another highly influential county. Home to Chicago, Cook County boasts a homicide rate of 13.99 homicides per 100,000 residents, and dropping it

Table 1 to plummet from 10th to 32nd in the nation.

It is apparent that some states' homicide rates are determined heavily by crime in certain counties. It is thus naïve and nonsensical to make partisan claims about states' overall crime rates while completely neglecting how various localities contribute to these rates.

Policies, Not COVID

One of the Left's talking points is that the COVID-19 caused or at least contributed to the general rise in crime and that the rise in crime started during the pandemic. There are no reputable studies that prove that crime increased as a direct result of COVID lockdowns—which makes sense. Many people across the country were locked down, including in the inner cities where most crime takes place. What the data do show is that crime, including violent crime, was rising in cities with the toxic trio prior to^[42] the onset of the pandemic and that the death of George Floyd, which happened in May 2020, led to a rise in murders and auto theft in key cities.^[43]

But numbers themselves do not begin to tell the whole story of why crime rates in these homicide hellholes have risen. Starting in 2016, with the election of the first Soros rogue prosecutor, Kim Foxx, in Chicago, cities with rogue prosecutors have imposed policies that all—each and every one of them—inure to the benefit of criminals, as we have detailed in our scholarship for the past two years.

Those policies include but are not limited to:

- Refusing to prosecute entire categories of misdemeanor crimes, including theft, drug possession, shoplifting, receiving stolen property, breaking and entering, destruction of property, disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and more.
- Forbidding prosecutors from including sentencing enhancements or allegations of prior convictions or special circumstances for egregious crimes or actions.
- Forbidding prosecutors from seeking the death penalty in any case.
- Forbidding prosecutors from seeking life without parole sentences for any crime.
- Refusing to prosecute violent teenagers in adult court for such crimes as murder, child abuse, and rape.
- Requiring prosecutors to ask for the release of duly convicted violent felons, whose appeals have been denied, after these felons have served as least 15 years of a longer sentence.

prior criminal record.

Conclusion

The foregoing policies—and dozens of other pro-criminal, anti-victim policies—have contributed to the lawlessness across blue cities and the steep rise in crime rates. To suggest now that Republican elected officials who have followed different policies have contributed to crime increases is at best laughable.

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Appendix

We utilized 2021 homicide data from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R), a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. CHR&R provides point and interval estimates for county-level and state-level homicide rates from 2014–2020 and population estimates from 2020.

We took point estimates of these rates and county-level population statistics to compute the raw number of homicides in each county. These estimates were rounded to the nearest integer to avoid fractional homicides and subsequently summed to generate an overall pooled estimate of the state’s raw number of homicides from 2014–2020, which were then divided by the state’s population to determine an overall state-level homicide rate.

These state-level homicide rates differ slightly from the overall state homicide rates reported in CHR&R, likely because the authors of the dataset used a population figure that is different from what is available in the dataset. Nevertheless, the alternative state rankings presented in Table 1 do not differ appreciably from these rankings using the dataset’s original homicide rates. Furthermore, these alternative rankings are necessary for an understanding of particular counties’ impact on overall state-level homicide rates as examined in this report.

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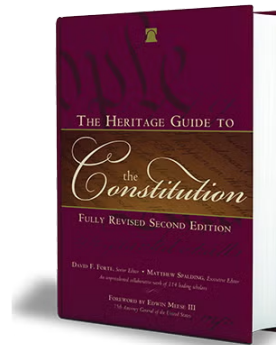
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