



Survey of Attitudes toward crime in Miami Beach

e.pluribus.US conducted a survey in October 2021 of Miami Beach residents' attitudes toward crime. Official results are maintained at <https://e.pluribus.us/viewpoints-miami-beach-crime>. Following is a printed summary thereof:

1. Introduction
2. Results
3. Methodology details
4. Appendix: respondents' written comments

ABOUT e.pluribus.US

e.pluribus.US is a non-profit initiative working to overcome divisiveness preventing the nation from getting things done.

This survey is a component of Project LISTEN, which is one program within e.pluribus.US. Project LISTEN pro-actively engages diverse viewpoints to better understand them.

This survey was conducted as part of ongoing development of a system to rapidly, efficiently and scalably gather a deeper understanding of why communities hold various viewpoints. The intent is to use it to explore, measure and understand “viewpoint distributions” across geographically arbitrary populations (eg: *specifically why* people in Manchester, New Hampshire believe “A”, while people in Tempe, Arizona believe “B”).

The first two tests of this system were within Miami Beach, first on the issue of the closure of Ocean Drive, and second on this issue of crime in Miami Beach. The third test, on an issue of national relevance, will launch shortly.



INTRODUCTION

1. Survey participants were first asked where in Miami Beach they resided, if at all.
2. Next they were asked if they considered crime in Miami Beach to be a serious problem
3. If they responded “Yes,” they were asked to select from the following multiple-choice list of reasons they believed to be most responsible for causing a crime problem (randomly sorted each time).
 - ✓ Tourist quality: we are attracting the wrong type of visitor.
 - ✓ Failed leadership: either the Mayor, Commissioners and/or City Manager are to blame.
 - ✓ Policing execution: either too few cops, wrong tactics, poorly located, too tolerant, officer inaction, or similar.
 - ✓ Policing politics -- political correctness and lack of support ties police hands.
 - ✓ Courts leniency: prosecutors or judges not sufficiently convicting or punishing.
 - ✓ Specific policies: Ocean Dr. closure, timing of “Last Call”, etc.
 - ✓ Homelessness: failing to address the homeless/mentally ill in the community.
 - ✓ National problem: this is part of a worsening issue across the nation, not just in Miami.
 - ✓ Other (you may elaborate in next response)
4. If they responded “No,” they were asked to select from a multiple-choice list of how they would alternately characterize the current crime situation (randomly sorted each time).
 - ✓ Nothing's Changed: factually speaking, crime has not meaningfully increased in Miami Beach.
 - ✓ Only Temporary: the increase is temporary, related to pandemic impact on income and travel.
 - ✓ It's Relative: crime may be worse, but Miami Beach remains safe; don't overreact.
 - ✓ Worse Problems: crime may be worse, but other local problems are more serious.
 - ✓ Social Media: online sharing makes crime appear worse than it is.
 - ✓ Media exaggeration: the media need sensationalism to get people's attention.
 - ✓ Other (you may elaborate in next response)
5. They were then offered the opportunity to provide free-form comments to expand upon their selections, or add new causes that were not already captured in the multiple choices.

DISCLAIMER: This was not a “scientific” survey; we consider results to be directional, not conclusive and that they should be considered in the context of broader data sources. We make no representations about its accuracy nor fitness for any purpose.

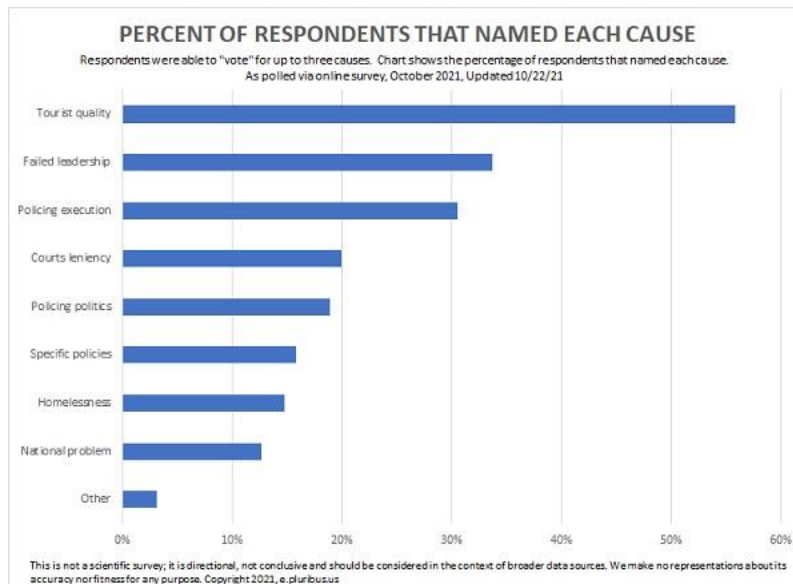


RESULTS

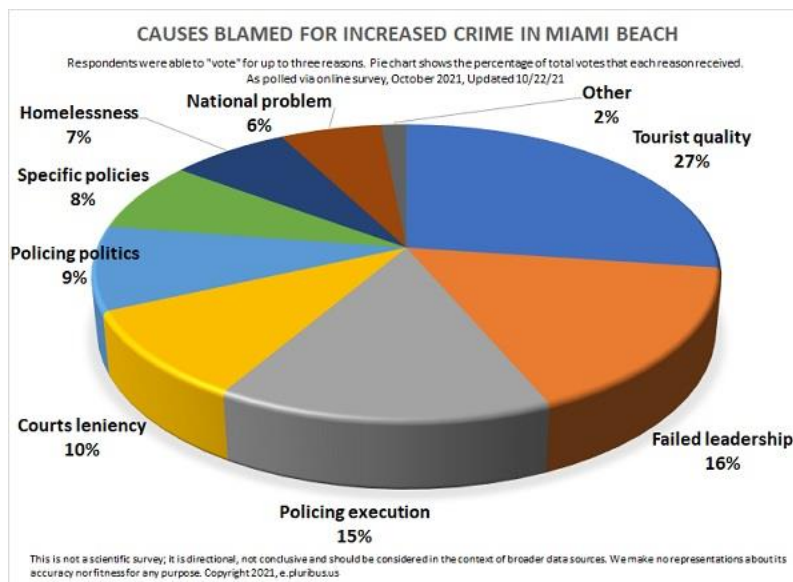
Following are results from only those respondents indicating they resided in Miami Beach.

79.4% indicated crime was a serious problem. 20.6% indicated it was not.

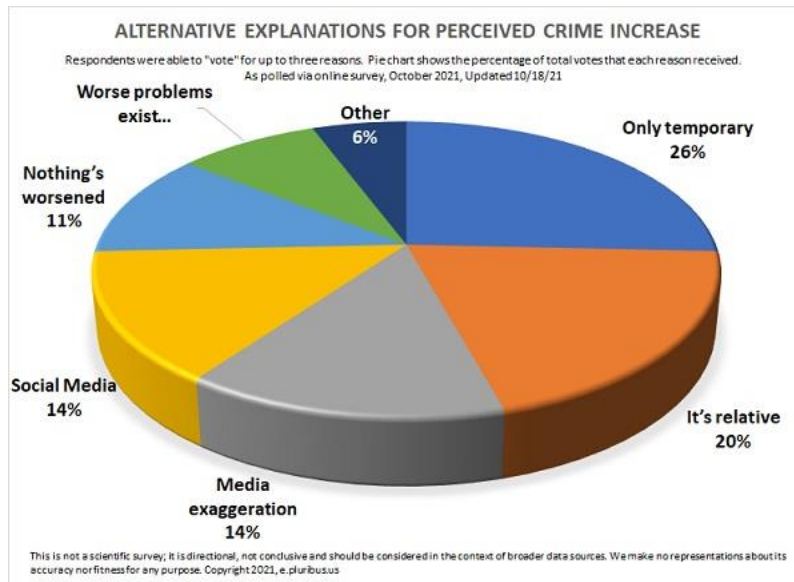
Of those **respondents indicating crime was a serious problem**, the following chart shows what percent of respondents then named each of the following as “most responsible for causing the crime problem.”



As a slightly different way to view this data: Because respondents could vote for up to three causes, the following chart shows what percent of the total votes each cause received:



Of those respondents indicating **crime was not a serious problem**, the following chart shows what percent of the total votes each cause received:



METHODOLOGY DETAILS

The survey was conducted October 13 – 21, 2021 within Miami-focused online communities on NextDoor, Reddit and Facebook using surveybots executed through Surveybot.io/Facebook Messenger and SurveyMonkey. At the close of the survey, 151 respondents participated, 97 of them from Miami Beach. First they were asked if they lived or worked in Miami Beach and if so, where (they were told they could participate in the survey no matter where they lived). The survey then inquired whether they believed crime was a serious current problem in Miami Beach. Based upon that answer, they were presented a list of alternative rationales supporting the position they chose and asked to indicate which among the list most closely aligned with their own views (the list of rationales was randomly sorted each time). They were then allowed to elaborate with free-form comments, and were informed said comments would be published with attribution to them, or they could request anonymity. If they conveyed causes that were not already included in the list earlier presented, those were then to be added to said list for future respondents to select from (In fact no such additional rationales were conveyed).

From a statistical standpoint, the final sample size of 97 Miami Beach participants is “spot on” for achieving results with 10% margin of error. Within a community of 82,890 residents (most recent census, April 2020), for a 95% confidence level one would want 96 responses (see Qualtrics: <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/calculating-sample-size>).

For context, a standard national Gallup poll typically uses 1,000 participants, within a population of roughly 323,000,000 Americans. That represents 0.0003% of the population. By contrast, this poll represents 0.12% of the Miami Beach population, or a 378x larger portion of the underlying population than a standard Gallup poll.

All of this said, we do not represent that these results are conclusive, only that the sample size is not a problem.

Notable limitations of the survey:

- We needed to use multiple-choice in order for results to be reasonably measurable, but did not want this to skew responses into narrow buckets that did not accurately represent all possible sentiment. Therefore, in our research prior to creating the survey, we were diligent to ensure we gathered a comprehensive list of all causes commonly cited, so that the multiple choices available did not omit any. Second, we encouraged respondents to expand upon their selections in comments to provide greater context, and reproduced those publicly (see Appendix or the web site). Finally, we allowed respondents to specify “other” as a choice of causes and then elaborate on any reasons not already offered, which we would then add into the survey choices. In the end, no meaningful additional causes were proposed.
- We also needed to keep the number of multiple-choice options within the survey manageable in order to not overwhelm a typically short attention-span online user. The categories are broad for this reason. However, the participants’ free-form comments



provide a wealth of more granular detail within each category, and those comments are reproduced online and within the Appendix herein.

- We didn't gather as many written comments from the segment that believed crime has not worsened, simply because there were very few respondents who felt that way.
- There are demo- and psycho-graphic skews associated with the survey pool being online-only. This may be the largest contributor of any error to the survey's ability to accurately represent sentiment of the larger Miami Beach population. That said, the communities that we surveyed (the sample pools) are actually quite large proportions of the greater population. In sum, the seven communities comprise roughly 12-15,000 members (after filtering out the non-Miami Beach members and overlap among groups), which represents about 15% of the entire population of Miami Beach. So there is self-selection and skew in this population – undoubtedly -- but it is unlikely to be so severe as to render the results invalid.



APPENDIX – Respondents’ written comments

After completing a multiple-choice survey, respondents were offered the ability to expand upon their selections with written responses. They were told their comments would be published with attribution, or they could request anonymity.

Attributed comments, including those labeled “resident” are Miami Beach residents unless otherwise indicated. If a name is not provided, that respondent requested anonymity or otherwise did not provide a name.

Some comments were not reproduced in full (in the interest of brevity and relevance) and a very small number were edited for typos, if said typo interfered with the understanding of the comment.

Note that our reporting of these opinions does not imply our support for any of them.

For those respondents indicating that crime was a serious problem, following are selected written comments.

▽ Tourist quality: we are attracting the wrong type of visitor.

“When I first moved to Miami we used to have a lot of tourists from Germany, Brazilians and Canadians come here to have fun and enjoy the weather and the entertainment. They no longer come here because they’re scared of the crime and what’s happened to South Beach. We are constantly on the news, the world sees what’s happening and they want no part of it..” — South Beach resident [Sandra Otero](#)

“The quality of tourist have changed If prices of airlines and hotels and Airbnb are very low, it will also not help [t]he situation.” — South Beach resident [Eddi Maxwell](#)

“We make it too easy for people all over south florida to come party on our streets for the night. We should attract tourists that stay in our hotels and vacation rentals and not build more cheap parking for all of south florida to party here on nights and weekends.” — South Beach resident [Charles Christian](#)

“I don’t go to South Beach- too honky tonk to keep [sic] and dangerous. Cheap hotel rooms no policy on how many people in a room, bar owners have far too much political capital. Now our reputation for being a party town attracts parties.” — mid beach resident [Donna Ruff](#)

“The absolute craziness even on Washington in the last 2 years. Don’t go there often but don’t want to go at all now. Naked people hanging out of car windows swearing at people etc. This happened even before 10:00!” — South Beach resident [Miles Cherkasky](#)

“Disrespectful and inappropriate behavior on behalf of tourists; a Wild West mentality where anything goes at other people’s expense. Lack of care and sensitivity towards permanent residents.” South Beach resident [Silvia Acosta](#)



"We have been telling the world that our city is a lawless, all-night, do-as-you-please party mecca." [Former Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine](#)

"The crowd coming to south beach has changed." — **South Beach resident**

"attracting nothing but party types will only yield party type tourists." — **North Beach resident**

"We have a dirty looking city with horrible traffic routes and empty storefronts along with cheap retail and liquor stores on every corner. We don't have enough nightlife diversity or cultural attractions which bring quality tourists. The low hotel rental rates and short term rentals encourage too many people per room and at inexpensive rates and with nothing to do, they drink and do drugs all day and night, raising hell with no consequences. People know that they can come here, and anywhere across the USA, and can act with impunity and no consequences for lawlessness" — **North Beach resident**

"We don't need this type of tourism to have a vibrant city. Our brand will take a decade to repair...." — **Isles resident**

"The fact is the current debauchery allowed attracts people that want to go wild for a little bit, and they don't know the residential Miami Beach a lot of us live every day. That said it's the only Miami Beach I know (lived in the area for 7 years) and I'm not even sure Miami Beach without the clubs and bars is much safer, or just creates less foot traffic and potential witnesses." — **South Beach resident**

"Ever since 1999, when the city started to host Urban Beach Weekend, there is a major decline and a rise in crime. Then memorial weekend flourished into an Urban Beach Week. Now it's ... all the time Quality events will attract quality crowd." — **South Beach Resident**

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Failed leadership: either the Mayor, Commissioners and/or City Manager are to blame.](#)

"It's all starts with strong leadership that supports and defends the police, proper policing and convicting rather than dismissing breaking the law. If those issues are tackled, we solve the crime issue, get tourists that will respect our city and what it had to offer and magnifies the residents quality of life. When we moved her in the early 2000s I felt very safe on Ocean and Washington until the wee hours of the morning. People didn't act the way they do today because it wasn't tolerated." — **North Beach resident [Sam Latone](#)**

"I've been living in Miami Beach for over 20 years I am an owner of a condominium. I've seen the changes that started with hip-hop and the mayor not taking control of the crime that occurred during these events." — **South Beach resident [Sandra Otero](#)**



“The closure of Ocean Drive, allowing short-term rentals (AirBnB), favoring developers over residents, and most important, the absolute failure of leadership and policies by Mayor Gelber.”
— **mid Beach resident [Carmel Ophir](#)**

“And now that the ‘party’ that our city invited is in full guns out swing, every effort is being made to put the blame on businesses that have been operating safely for decades so that politicians supported financially by developers can push the 2am agenda yet again in hopes that businesses will sell their buildings to them for pennies on the dollar In this city, ALWAYS Follow The Money” — **mid Beach resident [Cynthia Golub](#)**

“City Hall is focused on pleasing developers versus the concerns of the residents City hall is always on the defense versus solving the problems.” — **South Beach resident**

“Leadership is not pushing for consistent police presence in the areas where most crimes happen” — **South Beach resident**

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Policing execution: either too few cops, wrong tactics, poorly located, too tolerant, officer inaction, or similar.](#)

“We need more police presence, not just at night but during the morning and day.” — **South Beach resident [Eddi Maxwell](#)**

“There is no police presence on Ocean Drive and when there is trouble, the response is after all chaos already broke loose. Tactics much be switched to prevention.” — **South Beach resident [Daniel Ventura](#)**

“There is a lack of police presence ABNB and SRO’s in residential neighborhoods where there is no one to oversee what goes on” — **South Beach resident [Ed Garces](#)**

“too few cops actually patrolling, too busy closing street for resident during big events” — **North Beach resident**

“Thugs everywhere causing trouble everywhere but no cops can be found. I saw an ... attack ... under a camera in front of the POLICE station. Not one cop was around or came out. Disgraceful!!!” — **South Beach resident**

“Despite what we hear about extra police, or borrowed police from the city of Miami or county, they never seem to be around. Too often I see officers sitting in their cars or carts rather than walking around. Or, I see a dozen cars respond to an incident just to sit there and watch.” — **Miami Beach resident**



“Police need to walk the beat” — South Beach resident

“More police and more strict with “partying people” to make them uncomfortable would maybe change their will to come here. Prohibition of carrying guns AT ALL!!” — South Beach resident

“We are attracting wrong people because everyone is allowed to come to Miami Beach with guns, rent expensive cars and drive drunk and under substance , and all the tourists tha come here know that that can destroy cars, people and the peace of the residents without any punishment!!” — South Beach resident

“Personally seen police too tolerant and not taking action to stop drug deals going diwn on Ocean Drive in the middle of the day” — Isles resident

“We need police that are constantly enforcing laws, move last calls to 1am” — Isles resident

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Policing politics -- political correctness and lack of support ties police hands.](#)

“Police are not allowed to do their job due to political correctness.” — mid Beach resident

“Too much leniency toward criminals. Police officers aren’t allowed to do their jobs efficiently due to fear of repercussions brought by political correctness.” — South Beach resident

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Courts leniency: prosecutors or judges not sufficiently convicting or punishing.](#)

“90% dismissal rate of offenders is unacceptable” — North Beach resident [Lisa Lugan](#)

“Politics have entered policing and it’s detrimental to a civilized society.” — North Beach resident

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Specific policies: Ocean Dr. closure, timing of “Last Call”, etc.](#)



“Closing Ocean Drive is a big mistake it only caused large crowds together which brought on fights, people being intoxicated, increased in drug and increase in crime.” — South Beach resident [Sandra Otero](#)

“The City essentially pulled a street party permit with the county so they could shut Ocean Drive down to traffic and essentially ‘have a street party’; making it impossible for the police to patrol the area or respond to incidents in a timely manner. You want to rid Ocean Drive of crime? Open it up to one way traffic as the police chief has been begging the city to do.” — mid Beach resident [Cynthia Golub](#)

“...the decline has excellerated [sic] the last 5 years. Short term rentals are bringing in a different crowd We need more code enforcement and holding bad property owners accountable.” — South Beach resident

“... get rid of cheap hostels in residential neighborhoods on the beach and enforce Airbnb restrictions.” — South Beach Resident

“I am a resident of the west end of South Beach. I have pictures and videos of the party buses disguised as a fire engine truck dropping off over 30 people with drinks in their hands at 3-4 AM being loud and disrespectful to the local residents. I think that a designated “party” area may need to be revisited.” — South Beach resident

“[I] support last call to be 2AM.” — South Beach resident

“What a surprise, our City creates a 24-hour hard party destination, and that area creates a mountain of crime and disorder.” Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber, email to residents, 29 September 2021.

“It’s not that all the crime happens during those wee hours of the morning. It is not fair that a few special interests that make generous campaign donations are allowed to damage the Miami Beach brand.” [Former Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine](#)

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Homelessness: failing to address the homeless/mentally ill in the community.](#)

“There is more homelessness and they are more aggressive.” — South Beach resident

“Many arrests indicate people on drugs and/or mentally ill.” — South Beach resident

“How is it no one addresses the homeless issue??? Some verbal and potentially violent altercations have occurred unprovoked by these seeming harmless non tax paying citizens of Miami Beach” — South Beach resident



<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ National problem: this is part of a worsening issue across the nation, not just in Miami.](#)

“There is more drugs and guns on the street and this problem is national.” — South Beach resident [Eddi Maxwell](#)

“Economic inequality” — **North Beach resident**

<end of comments on this cause>

Continues next page ...



For those respondents indicating that crime was NOT a serious problem, following are selected written comments.

[▽ Only Temporary: the increase is temporary, related to pandemic impact on income and travel.](#)

<No comments submitted on this cause>

[▽ It's Relative: crime may be worse, but Miami Beach remains safe; don't overreact.](#)

“Did we forget the 80’s and 90’s? South beach and Miami Beach have never been better.” — **South Beach resident**

“Miami Beach needs smart solutions to complex problems. I moved here because the night life on Ocean Drive was one of a kind. While we need to get a handle on crime, particularly violent crime, there are smarter ways to do it than an earlier last call. We had curfews and people were still rowdy. The man that was shot a while back was shot in broad daylight. Smarter policing and cooperation from local clubs and security could have a huge impact” — **North Beach resident**

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Social Media: online sharing makes crime appear worse than it is.](#)

“People are negative and post inaccurate things.” — **South Beach resident** [Amanda K](#)

<end of comments on this cause>

[▽ Nothing's Changed: factually speaking, crime has not meaningfully increased in Miami Beach.](#)

“I think crime is the same. I’ve lived here for 10 years I walk at night alone and have never felt unsafe.” — **South Beach resident** [Amanda K](#)

“I work near South Beach & it doesn’t feel more unsafe to me.” — **North Beach resident**

“Statistically the numbers don’t add up. Citywide crime has not gone up. It has at times gone down. However, the perception is that we are in a dangerous place. And people don’t feel safe.” — [City Commission Group 1 candidate](#) **Raquel Pacheco** (who, for clarity, does support taking action to reduce crime.)



"I think that our concerns are valid even if the actual crime rate has flat-lined or has been going down in some categories [though] It doesn't change that it doesn't feel safe." — [Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber](#) (who, for clarity, has advanced proposals to reduce crime.)

<end of comments on this cause>

▽ [Media exaggeration: the media need sensationalism to get people's attention.](#)

<No comments submitted on this cause>

▽ [Worse Problems: crime may be worse, but other local problems are more serious.](#)

<No comments submitted on this cause>

