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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

62% v 19% of Winnipeggers Say Spend More Money on Poverty than Police

Results from a recent poll of Winnipeggers challenge the notion that we should address concerns about safety by spending more on police. September 2022 polling feedback confirms that the majority of Winnipeggers understand that creating a safer community means spending more to address poverty as opposed to policing.

“We have been monitoring a variety of polling information on policing and crime reduction. While they seemed to indicate people do understand that the over-investment in policing and jail is not getting us a safer community for all, no one had asked a straightforward, binary question, on where we should invest to reduce crime and so we did. The results are clear.”
Abdikheir Ahmed, PAC Co-Chair

Through Probe Research, PAC asked: “There are many causes of crime and many potential solutions. In your view, though, what’s the single best way to reduce crime in Winnipeg?” Winnipeggers are three times as likely to favour spending more on poverty reduction than on investing in additional police services. More than 6 in 10 say poverty reduction is the best way to reduce crime.

“We hope that any candidates in this municipal election and the upcoming provincial election who are or are considering beating the ‘tough on crime’ drum for votes, will look at this information and rethink. It is clear that they are speaking both for and to the minority.” Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, PAC Member

“At the very least, candidates who insist we have to spend more on policing at the moment, had also better be proposing substantial poverty reduction measures as well. This includes building rent-geared-to-income housing and making transit more affordable.” Desiree McIvor, Spokesperson, Make Poverty History Manitoba, PAC Member.

Women, younger adults, those with higher levels of education as well as Indigenous and racialized Winnipeggers are most likely to favour a poverty reduction approach to addressing crime. Conversely, older people (those aged 55+) and those with lower levels of formal education are more likely to favour additional police spending.

These polling results suggest strong public support for PAC's and Make Poverty History Manitoba's call to make poverty reduction a priority. Our recommendations to municipal election candidates include redirecting at least 10% of police funding to community organizations providing community-based mental health supports to address the root causes of crime and expand support for 24-hour safe spaces.

PAC is a contributor to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba's Alternative Municipal Budget 2022: Winnipeg at a Crossroads:

<https://policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/updates/winnipegs-alternative-municipal-budget-2022-winnipeg-crossroads>.

Probe Research Backgrounder Attached

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