Crime and criminal justice were not the dominant issues in the 2026 midterms, but they played a visible role in a number of federal, state, and local campaigns. Debates over policing, immigration enforcement, sentencing, drug policy, and public disorder appeared prominently in several state and local races, where candidates drew sharp contrasts over crime and accountability.

The Council on Criminal Justice's Centering Justice initiative and a bipartisan panel of experts discussed how crime and justice issues surfaced in the 2026 elections, where they appeared to matter most, and what the results may reveal about the place of crime and justice in today's political landscape.

Panelists

- Tim Head, President and CEO, Unify.US
- Kyle Kondik, Managing Editor, Sabato's Crystal Ball, University of Virginia Center for Politics
- Insha Rahman, President and Director, Vera Institute of Justice
- Khalil Cumberbatch, Director of Engagement and Partnerships, Council on Criminal Justice
- Marc Levin, Chief Policy Counsel, Council on Criminal Justice