Fast Facts on the Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem
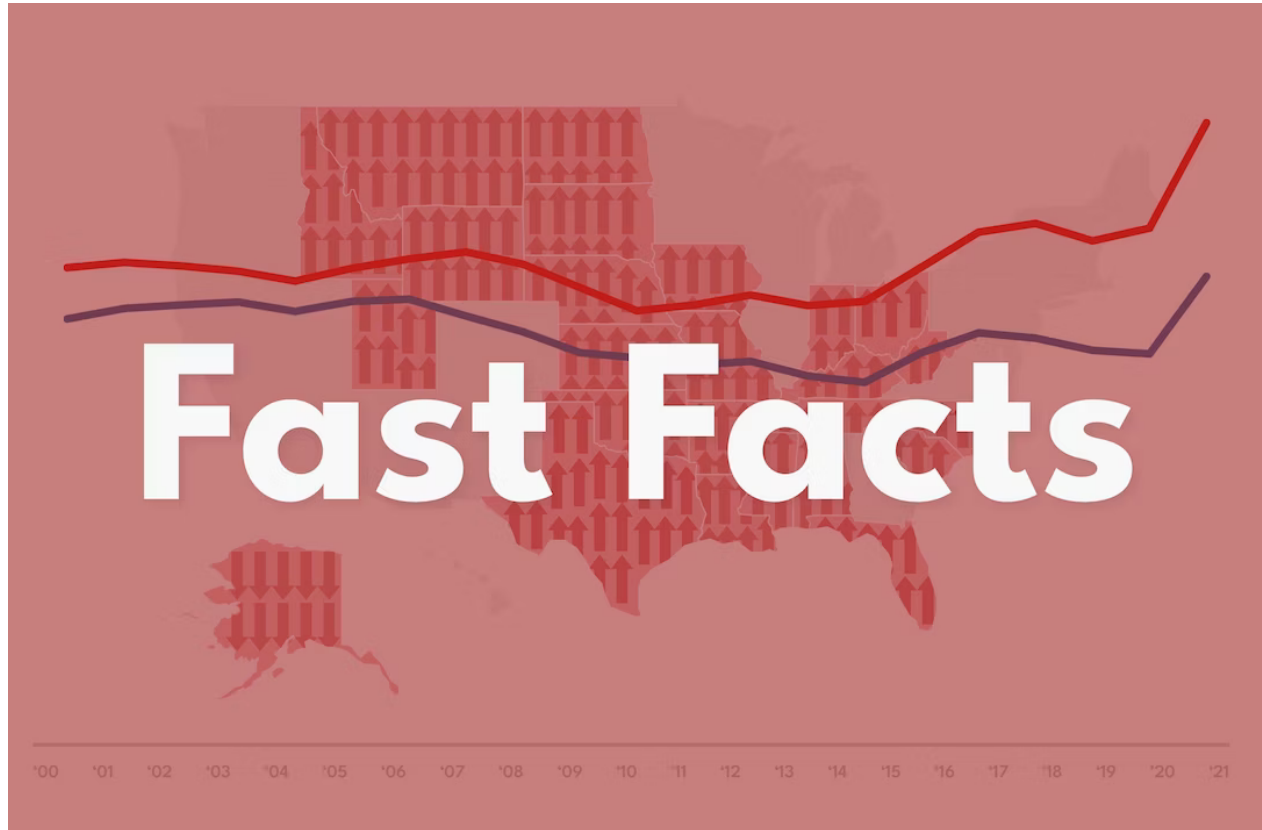
Kylie Murdock
Special Advisor to Programs
🐦 @kyliemmurdock

Jim Kessler
Executive Vice President for Policy
🐦 @ThirdWayKessler

In March of 2022, we released a report that found murder rates in 2020 were 40% higher in Trump-voting states than Biden-voting states. In our follow-up report, we studied homicide data going back to 2000 to see if this one-year Red State murder epidemic was an anomaly. It was not. Despite a media narrative to the contrary, a wide and widening Red State murder gap has spanned the past two decades.

This fact sheet highlights some of the most illuminating takeaways from our analysis.

The Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem

- The murder rate in the 25 states that voted for Donald Trump has exceeded the murder rate in the 25 states that voted for Joe Biden in every year from 2000 to 2020.

- For the past 21 years, the top 10 murder rate states have been dominated by reliably red states, namely Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Missouri.

- From 2000-2020, the per capita Red State murder rate was 23% higher than the Blue State murder rate.

- If Biden states had the same murder rate as Trump states, they would have seen 5,000 more murders in 2020 alone. Between 2000 and 2020, they would have suffered an additional 45,400 murders.

- Between 2000 and 2020, the Red State murder gap has steadily widened from a low of 9% more per capita red state murders in 2003 and 2004 to 44% more per capita red state murders in 2019, before settling back to 43% in 2020.

- Since 2000, murder rates have increased 39.4% in red states and just 13.4% in blue states.

- Even when murders in the largest cities in red states are removed, overall murder rates in Trump-voting states were 12% higher than Biden-voting states across this 21-year period and were higher in 18 of the 21 years observed.

Source: Author's calculations based on CDC data