

Table 2.50

Attitudes toward severity of courts in own area

By demographic characteristics, United States, selected years 1982-96

Question: "In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?"

	1982			1983			1984			1985			1986			1987		
	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right
National	3%	86%	8%	4%	86%	6%	3%	82%	11%	3%	84%	9%	3%	85%	8%	3%	79%	12%
<b>Sex</b>																		
Male	2	84	9	4	84	8	5	80	12	4	84	10	4	84	8	4	78	14
Female	3	88	6	3	86	6	2	83	10	3	85	8	3	86	8	3	80	11
<b>Race</b>																		
White	2	87	7	3	87	6	3	84	10	3	85	9	2	87	8	2	81	12
Black/other	10	79	9	10	74	8	6	71	16	5	80	8	9	77	9	7	70	14
<b>Age</b>																		
18 to 20 years	0	90	5	4	87	7	7	73	11	6	78	14	8	79	8	0	76	17
21 to 29 years	0	81	12	4	85	6	6	78	12	6	79	10	5	81	9	4	78	9
30 to 49 years	3	85	8	3	86	8	3	83	11	3	85	9	3	86	8	4	78	13
50 years and older	2	89	5	3	86	6	6	84	11	2	87	8	2	88	7	2	82	12
<b>Education<sup>a</sup></b>																		
College	3	83	11	4	82	8	2	82	11	3	83	11	2	84	9	3	77	14
High school graduate	2	89	5	4	89	5	4	82	10	4	86	7	3	88	7	3	84	9
Less than high school graduate	4	84	6	3	81	7	2	79	14	4	81	10	4	81	9	5	71	18
<b>Income</b>																		
\$50,000 and over	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
\$30,000 to \$49,999	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
\$20,000 to \$29,999	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Under \$20,000	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Occupation</b>																		
Professional/business	1	85	12	2	84	7	2	83	11	2	84	11	1	88	8	2	80	13
Clerical	3	92	2	2	92	4	2	86	9	2	90	6	4	88	7	2	81	12
Manual	3	84	7	6	83	8	4	80	11	5	83	8	4	83	9	5	78	11
Farmer	5	79	16	3	87	5	3	87	10	3	89	5	3	83	6	2	82	12
<b>Region</b>																		
Northeast	1	85	6	2	88	7	3	82	11	2	86	8	3	88	6	3	82	10
Midwest	1	90	7	2	87	5	4	82	11	3	85	9	3	87	7	4	80	10
South	5	83	9	2	85	6	3	80	11	4	82	11	4	82	10	4	78	14
West	3	87	7	4	81	9	2	83	11	4	84	8	3	85	8	3	79	12
<b>Religion</b>																		
Protestant	3	87	7	3	86	6	2	82	12	3	84	10	3	85	8	3	80	12
Catholic	2	88	6	3	87	6	4	82	10	3	87	8	2	88	6	2	81	12
Jewish	0	91	9	2	86	9	0	89	0	3	78	6	8	90	3	0	80	20
None	2	72	14	5	74	12	7	72	13	6	76	10	4	72	14	7	70	7
<b>Politics</b>																		
Republican	1	89	7	2	90	5	2	88	9	2	88	8	2	87	8	2	86	10
Democrat	4	87	7	4	84	7	4	80	11	3	84	10	3	88	6	4	78	13
Independent	2	84	9	4	84	7	3	80	12	5	82	8	3	82	10	4	76	12

Note: The "don't know" category has been omitted; therefore percents may not sum to 100. Readers interested in responses to this question for previous years should consult previous editions of SOURCEBOOK. For a discussion of public opinion survey sampling procedures, see Appendix 6.

Source: National Opinion Research Center, "General Social Surveys, 1972-94," "General Social Surveys, 1996," Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. (Machine-readable data files.) Table constructed by SOURCEBOOK staff.

<sup>a</sup>In 1996, education categories were revised slightly and therefore are not directly comparable to data presented for prior years.

1988			1989			1990			1991			1993			1994			1996		
Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly	Not harshly enough	About right
4%	82%	10%	3%	84%	9%	3%	83%	9%	4%	80%	11%	3%	81%	10%	3%	85%	8%	5%	78%	11%
5	79	13	4	79	12	3	82	11	5	78	12	5	81	10	3	83	9	5	78	11
3	84	8	1	87	6	4	83	8	3	81	11	2	82	10	2	87	6	4	78	10
3	83	10	2	83	10	3	84	9	3	80	12	2	82	10	2	86	8	3	79	11
8	73	11	4	87	3	8	77	8	10	76	8	9	76	11	5	82	8	11	72	10
8	84	8	10	83	8	10	80	5	3	70	20	16	74	7	7	70	14	11	75	5
8	77	10	2	86	8	5	80	9	8	77	9	2	86	8	4	81	9	6	76	10
3	82	11	3	83	9	4	81	10	4	80	11	4	81	9	2	87	7	5	79	11
2	83	9	2	84	9	2	86	8	3	81	12	2	81	11	2	86	7	3	78	11
3	78	13	2	81	10	4	82	10	4	78	12	3	80	11	2	84	10	5	76	12
4	85	7	3	86	8	4	83	9	5	82	9	4	84	8	4	87	6	3	82	9
3	82	8	3	82	8	3	86	6	2	78	17	5	78	9	3	86	6	6	77	9
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	81	10	2	84	9	4	78	12
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	85	10	2	87	8	4	82	10
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	4	86	7	2	87	7	4	76	13
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5	78	11	4	84	7	6	76	10
3	83	10	2	82	11	3	82	11	3	78	11	2	80	12	2	83	10	3	78	11
3	84	9	1	87	7	4	84	8	3	80	12	3	83	8	2	88	6	5	81	9
4	81	10	4	84	8	3	84	8	5	82	11	5	82	9	3	86	6	5	77	11
8	79	8	0	86	9	0	85	15	0	89	8	3	94	3	5	81	10	4	81	8
6	83	9	2	86	5	4	83	10	4	83	8	2	82	11	3	86	6	6	76	12
4	80	11	3	81	12	4	80	10	3	78	12	4	79	11	2	84	8	5	75	13
3	83	10	3	86	8	3	85	8	5	82	10	4	84	8	2	86	8	4	81	9
5	80	8	3	80	11	4	82	9	4	73	16	4	80	10	3	84	9	4	77	11
4	83	9	2	85	9	3	85	8	4	81	10	3	82	9	2	87	7	4	80	10
3	86	9	3	83	9	4	84	8	2	80	13	3	82	9	3	85	7	5	79	11
3	73	17	0	96	0	0	82	15	0	81	9	0	81	12	2	79	10	3	76	9
11	64	18	7	72	9	1	74	16	8	72	14	3	77	14	3	76	12	8	70	10
2	85	9	1	91	6	2	87	8	2	82	11	3	85	8	2	88	7	4	84	10
5	80	10	3	83	10	4	82	9	5	79	12	4	79	12	3	85	8	5	75	13
4	80	11	4	77	10	5	80	10	5	79	10	4	81	9	3	84	8	5	76	9