

Table 2.47

Attitudes toward severity of courts in own area

By demographic characteristics, United States, selected years 1985-2002

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

	1985			1986			1987			1988			1989			1990		
	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly enough	About right
National	3%	84%	9%	3%	85%	8%	3%	79%	12%	4%	82%	10%	3%	84%	9%	3%	83%	9%
Sex																		
Male	4	84	10	4	84	8	4	78	14	5	79	13	4	79	12	3	82	11
Female	3	85	8	3	86	8	3	80	11	3	84	8	1	87	6	4	83	8
Race																		
White	3	85	9	2	87	8	2	81	12	3	83	10	2	83	10	3	84	9
Black/other	5	80	8	9	77	9	7	70	14	8	73	11	4	87	3	8	77	8
Age																		
18 to 20 years	6	78	14	8	79	8	0	76	17	8	84	8	10	83	8	10	80	5
21 to 29 years	6	79	10	5	81	9	4	78	9	8	77	10	2	86	8	5	80	9
30 to 49 years	3	85	9	3	86	8	4	78	13	3	82	11	3	83	9	4	81	10
50 years and older	2	87	8	2	88	7	2	82	12	2	83	9	2	84	9	2	86	8
Education^a																		
College	3	83	11	2	84	9	3	77	14	3	78	13	2	81	10	4	82	10
High school graduate	4	86	7	3	88	7	3	84	9	4	85	7	3	86	8	4	83	9
Less than high school graduate	4	81	10	4	81	9	5	71	18	3	82	8	3	82	8	3	86	6
Income																		
\$50,000 and over	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
\$30,000 to \$49,999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
\$20,000 to \$29,999	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Under \$20,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Occupation																		
Professional/business	2	84	11	1	88	8	2	80	13	3	83	10	2	82	11	3	82	11
Clerical/support	2	90	6	4	88	7	2	81	12	3	84	9	1	87	7	4	84	8
Manual/service	5	83	8	4	83	9	5	78	11	4	81	10	4	84	8	3	84	8
Farming/agriculture	3	89	5	3	83	6	2	82	12	8	79	8	0	86	9	0	85	15
Region																		
Northeast	2	86	8	3	88	6	3	82	10	6	83	9	2	86	5	4	83	10
Midwest	3	85	9	3	87	7	4	80	10	4	80	11	3	81	12	4	80	10
South	4	82	11	4	82	10	4	78	14	3	83	10	3	86	8	3	85	8
West	4	84	8	3	85	8	3	79	12	5	80	8	3	80	11	4	82	9
Religion																		
Protestant	3	84	10	3	85	8	3	80	12	4	83	9	2	85	9	3	85	8
Catholic	3	87	8	2	88	6	2	81	12	3	86	9	3	83	9	4	84	8
Jewish	3	78	6	8	90	3	0	80	20	3	73	17	0	96	0	0	82	15
None	6	76	10	4	72	14	7	70	7	11	64	18	7	72	9	1	74	16
Politics																		
Republican	2	88	8	2	87	8	2	86	10	2	85	9	1	91	6	2	87	8
Democrat	3	84	10	3	88	6	4	78	13	5	80	10	3	83	10	4	82	9
Independent	5	82	8	3	82	10	4	76	12	4	80	11	4	77	10	5	80	10

Note: See Note, table 2.15. The "don't know" category has been omitted; therefore percents may not sum to 100. The "about right" response was volunteered. 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 5.

Source: National Opinion Research Center, "General Social Surveys, 1972-2002," Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. (Machine-readable data files.) Table constructed by SOURCEBOOK staff.

^aBeginning in 1996, education categories were revised slightly and therefore are not directly comparable to data presented for prior years.

1991			1993			1994			1996			1998			2000			2002		
Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right	Too harshly enough	Not harshly right	About right
4%	80%	11%	3%	81%	10%	3%	85%	8%	5%	78%	11%	6%	74%	13%	8%	68%	16%	9%	67%	18%
5	78	12	5	81	10	3	83	9	5	78	11	7	72	15	8	67	18	12	64	19
3	81	11	2	82	10	2	87	6	4	78	10	6	76	12	7	70	14	7	70	16
3	80	12	2	82	10	2	86	8	3	79	11	4	75	13	6	70	16	8	69	18
10	76	8	9	76	11	5	82	8	11	72	10	12	71	12	14	64	14	16	60	16
3	70	20	16	74	7	7	70	14	11	75	5	12	65	14	15	60	14	14	48	34
8	77	9	2	86	8	4	81	9	6	76	10	10	71	11	10	65	14	12	68	15
4	80	11	4	81	9	2	87	7	5	79	11	7	75	12	8	68	16	9	70	16
3	81	12	2	81	11	2	86	7	3	78	11	4	76	15	5	70	16	8	66	19
4	78	12	3	80	11	2	84	10	5	76	12	6	72	15	8	66	17	9	65	20
5	82	9	4	84	8	4	87	6	3	82	9	5	78	12	7	73	13	8	72	16
2	78	17	5	78	9	3	86	6	6	77	9	9	74	11	9	69	14	12	67	15
NA	NA	NA	3	81	10	2	84	9	4	78	12	3	78	13	6	70	16	9	70	17
NA	NA	NA	2	85	10	2	87	8	4	82	10	5	76	13	6	72	14	8	70	18
NA	NA	NA	4	86	7	2	87	7	4	76	13	6	77	11	7	72	14	8	63	20
NA	NA	NA	5	78	11	4	84	7	6	76	10	10	70	13	11	64	14	13	66	16
3	78	11	2	80	12	2	83	10	3	78	11	5	74	14	8	66	18	8	66	18
3	80	12	3	83	8	2	88	6	5	81	9	5	78	11	5	71	16	7	72	15
5	82	11	5	82	9	3	86	6	5	77	11	7	75	13	9	71	13	10	67	18
0	89	8	3	94	3	5	81	10	4	81	8	7	76	16	4	70	15	20	52	16
4	83	8	2	82	11	3	86	6	6	76	12	5	76	13	8	63	18	6	70	16
3	78	12	4	79	11	2	84	8	5	75	13	6	74	13	6	74	13	8	67	19
5	82	10	4	84	8	2	86	8	4	81	9	7	76	11	7	70	16	9	70	17
4	73	16	4	80	10	3	84	9	4	77	11	6	69	17	9	65	16	14	60	19
4	81	10	3	82	9	2	87	7	4	80	10	6	76	12	6	72	14	8	69	19
2	80	13	3	82	9	3	85	7	5	79	11	5	77	12	7	70	15	9	74	12
0	81	9	0	81	12	2	79	10	3	76	9	0	72	18	13	57	18	12	60	16
8	72	14	3	77	14	3	76	12	8	70	10	10	62	20	12	56	21	13	58	17
2	82	11	3	85	8	2	88	7	4	84	10	3	81	12	4	78	12	2	77	18
5	79	12	4	79	12	3	85	8	5	75	13	7	75	13	10	66	17	11	65	18
5	79	10	4	81	9	3	84	8	5	76	9	8	71	14	8	66	16	11	64	17