

Table 2.50

Attitudes toward the death penalty for persons convicted of murder

By demographic characteristics, United States, selected years 1980-2002

Question: "Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?"

	1980		1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987		1988	
	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose
National	67%	27%	74%	20%	73%	22%	70%	24%	76%	19%	71%	23%	70%	24%	71%	22%
Sex																
Male	75	21	80	16	80	16	77	19	80	17	79	17	73	22	77	18
Female	61	32	69	24	68	27	66	27	72	22	66	28	67	26	66	26
Race																
White	70	24	77	18	76	19	75	20	79	17	75	20	74	21	76	18
Black/other	40	51	51	42	49	44	46	46	53	35	49	43	46	43	46	44
Age																
18 to 20 years	70	27	68	26	64	29	68	27	69	29	68	24	64	36	61	35
21 to 29 years	66	31	74	20	74	22	76	19	75	20	72	23	69	27	73	24
30 to 49 years	69	26	74	21	76	19	70	24	76	18	70	27	74	21	72	21
50 years and older	66	25	74	20	71	25	67	26	76	20	74	20	66	26	70	22
Education^a																
College	67	30	71	21	75	22	73	22	73	22	72	23	70	26	71	23
High school graduate	71	23	78	17	75	20	71	23	78	17	73	23	73	20	73	20
Less than high school graduate	56	33	64	26	61	29	59	33	72	21	64	26	54	38	59	27
Income																
\$50,000 and over	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
\$20,000 to \$29,999	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
Occupation																
Professional/business	68	28	72	23	73	23	75	20	76	19	76	21	72	25	72	21
Clerical/support	69	26	79	17	78	18	71	23	76	19	70	25	74	19	72	21
Manual/service	68	26	73	21	71	23	69	25	76	19	69	25	68	24	71	24
Farming/agriculture	71	15	77	15	85	10	61	39	76	22	83	17	65	28	67	29
Region																
Northeast	68	26	74	22	70	25	74	20	74	21	70	26	72	23	66	26
Midwest	66	26	72	21	75	21	65	28	73	20	69	26	67	26	70	24
South	66	28	74	21	70	25	68	27	76	19	67	26	67	26	72	21
West	70	25	76	18	79	16	78	16	79	17	83	13	76	19	76	17
Religion																
Protestant	67	26	73	21	74	22	70	24	76	19	72	23	70	24	72	22
Catholic	71	23	76	20	72	22	72	23	78	19	69	26	70	24	73	21
Jewish	75	22	73	19	67	26	85	4	62	31	79	16	80	10	63	23
None	54	39	73	16	72	26	68	26	75	20	73	24	65	28	67	26
Politics																
Republican	77	18	79	16	85	13	80	16	83	13	80	15	83	14	81	12
Democrat	63	31	71	24	67	28	64	30	70	24	66	30	61	32	62	32
Independent	66	28	73	20	72	22	70	23	75	19	72	23	69	24	72	20

Note: See Note, table 2.15. 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 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.

1989		1990		1991		1993		1994		1996		1998		2000		2002	
Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose	Favor	Oppose
74%	20%	74%	19%	72%	22%	72%	21%	74%	20%	71%	22%	68%	25%	63%	29%	66%	30%
81	16	79	18	77	19	78	16	79	17	79	17	74	20	71	23	73	24
69	24	71	21	67	25	67	24	71	22	65	25	63	28	57	33	59	35
77	18	78	16	75	19	75	18	78	16	75	18	72	20	69	24	70	26
57	36	58	36	53	37	54	38	56	34	54	35	49	42	42	48	50	45
69	25	66	34	60	33	70	23	73	21	70	22	60	37	53	38	55	41
71	24	79	16	74	23	69	26	72	21	72	22	69	25	66	28	68	30
76	20	74	21	71	22	73	20	75	20	71	22	69	24	64	29	68	27
74	19	74	18	71	21	73	20	75	18	71	21	66	25	62	28	63	32
72	22	73	21	69	25	69	24	73	21	69	24	67	26	63	29	65	31
77	18	77	18	74	20	75	18	77	17	76	17	71	21	65	28	69	28
69	24	70	21	72	21	71	18	67	25	68	23	63	27	61	28	62	32
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	73	22	77	18	75	20	72	21	69	25	70	27
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	74	18	76	18	74	18	70	22	67	25	67	31
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	81	14	75	19	72	24	68	24	66	28	62	35
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	67	25	71	22	64	25	60	31	55	36	62	35
75	19	72	20	67	25	70	23	75	20	70	22	68	25	63	30	65	31
73	21	81	14	73	22	72	21	74	19	73	20	68	24	63	28	60	36
74	21	74	22	75	20	74	19	75	19	72	21	68	24	65	27	70	26
91	4	78	7	81	11	74	21	74	18	72	20	71	20	72	22	72	24
72	19	75	20	71	23	65	26	70	24	66	26	62	28	55	35	58	37
72	22	76	20	70	24	72	18	72	20	72	22	70	24	65	27	68	28
75	21	72	20	71	22	75	19	76	19	72	20	69	23	64	27	69	26
76	19	76	16	76	20	72	24	78	16	74	19	68	24	66	28	66	31
75	20	75	19	72	22	74	20	75	18	72	20	68	24	64	27	67	28
73	20	76	18	75	21	68	22	75	19	70	23	68	25	66	27	68	28
87	13	74	15	53	34	70	21	72	26	63	28	72	20	57	36	48	52
71	24	72	24	65	28	72	23	73	20	69	22	64	26	60	32	61	36
82	14	83	12	84	13	81	13	84	12	85	12	77	17	75	19	79	17
68	26	68	24	63	29	64	30	65	28	61	30	62	31	57	34	56	41
73	21	74	21	69	23	71	20	76	17	70	21	67	23	62	30	66	28