

2007 Annenberg Public Policy Center Judicial Survey

Exact Question Wording, By Category

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates International
for the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands

n = 1514 adults 18 and older
Field Dates: 8.8.2007 – 9.2.2007
Margin of Error = $\pm 3\%$ for results based on full sample

I. Knowledge

If a person disagrees with a ruling by the US Supreme Court can he or she APPEAL the ruling to the Federal Court of Appeals or not, or are you not sure?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Yes, can appeal	32%
No, cannot appeal to the Federal Court of Appeals/Supreme Court ruling is final	31%
Not sure/Don't know	38%
Refused	*

If the Supreme Court rules on a case 5 to 4, does this mean the decision is the law and needs to be followed, the decision is sent back to Congress for reconsideration, OR the decision is sent back to the lower courts to be decided there?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
The decision is the law and needs to be followed	45%
The decision is sent back to Congress for reconsideration OR	14%
The decision is sent back to the lower courts to be decided there	7%
Don't know	34%
Refused	*

Does the Constitution permit the president to ignore a Supreme Court ruling if he believes that doing so will protect the country from harm?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Yes	40%
No	32%
Don't know	27%
Refused	*

Do you happen to know who the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court is?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Justice Samuel Alito	1%
Justice Stephen Breyer	*
Justice Ruth Ginsburg	*
Justice Anthony Kennedy	*
Justice Sandra Day O'Connor	*
Justice William Rehnquist	2%
Justice John Roberts	15%
Justice Antonin Scalia	*
Justice David Souter	*
Justice John Paul Stevens	*
Justice Clarence Thomas	*
Someone else	2%
Don't know	78%
Refused	1%

Do you happen to know any of the judges on the show American Idol?

Based on multiple mentions

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Simon Cowell	24%
Randy Jackson	14%
Paula Abdul	28%
Ryan Seacrest	*
Brian Dunkleman	-
Someone else	1%
Don't know	34%
Refused	1%

To what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE JUDGES to **represent the views of the people of their state**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	53%
Moderate extent	24%
Small extent	9%
Not at all	12%
Don't know	1%
Refused	*

And to what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE LEGISLATORS to **represent the views of the people of their state**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	76%
Moderate extent	18%
Small extent	3%
Not at all	2%
Don't know	1%
Refused	-

To what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE JUDGES to **interpret the laws and state constitution**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	73%
Moderate extent	18%
Small extent	3%
Not at all	3%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

And to what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE LEGISLATORS to **interpret the laws and state constitution**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	63%
Moderate extent	24%
Small extent	6%
Not at all	6%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

To what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE JUDGES to **express their views on controversial issues**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	23%
Moderate extent	33%
Small extent	15%
Not at all	27%
Don't know	2%
Refused	1%

And to what extent is it the responsibility and duty of STATE LEGISLATORS to **express their views on controversial issues**—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	38%
Moderate extent	37%
Small extent	13%
Not at all	10%
Don't know	1%
Refused	*

II. Trust

Generally speaking, how much do you trust **the Supreme Court** to operate in the best interests of the American people—a great deal, a fair amount, not too much or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
A great deal	16%
A fair amount	50%
Not too much	21%
Not at all	10%
Don't know	3%
Refused	*

Generally speaking, how much do you trust **the courts in [state respondent lives in]** to operate in the best interests of the American people—a great deal, a fair amount, not too much or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
A great deal	10%
A fair amount	50%
Not too much	20%
Not at all	14%
Don't know	6%
Refused	*

Which of the following do you think would be better for your state?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Governors nominate judges from a list of names prepared by an independent committee made up of Democrats, Republicans and Independents OR	31%
Judges run for election and the people vote on the candidates	64%
It doesn't matter (VOLUNTEERED)	*
Both/It depends (VOLUNTEERED)	1%
Don't know	4%
Refused	1%

Do you think judges who are APPOINTED to office are more likely, less likely or just as likely to be fair and impartial as judges who are ELECTED?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
More likely	24%
Less likely	33%
Just as likely	36%
Don't know	5%
Refused	1%

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: **Judges are just politicians in robes.**

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Strongly agree	21%
Somewhat agree	27%
Somewhat disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	26%
Don't know	2%
Refused	1%

III. Perceptions of the Judiciary

In your opinion, to what extent do you think a state judge's ruling is influenced by his or her personal political views—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent, or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	30%
Moderate extent	45%
Small extent	17%
Not at all	5%
Don't know	2%
Refused	1%

And how appropriate is it for a state judge's personal political views to influence his or her rulings—very appropriate, somewhat appropriate, not too appropriate or not appropriate at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Very appropriate	7%
Somewhat appropriate	26%
Not too appropriate	17%
Not appropriate at all	48%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

Turning to the court system in [state respondent lives in], please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: **The courts favor the poor over the wealthy.**

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	14%
Somewhat disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	45%
Don't know	4%
Refused	1%

In general, to what extent do you think a fear of not being reappointed or reelected would hurt a judge's ability to be fair and impartial when deciding a case—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent, or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	33%
Moderate extent	40%
Small extent	17%
Not at all	7%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

When judges run for office they usually have to raise money for their election campaign. To what extent do you think this affects a judge's rulings once in office—to a great extent, moderate extent, small extent, or not at all?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Great extent	28%
Moderate extent	41%
Small extent	20%
Not at all	8%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

If the Supreme Court issues a ruling that the president disagrees with, should the president do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country or should the president follow the Supreme Court's ruling?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country	32%
Follow the Supreme Court's ruling	60%
Don't know	8%
Refused	1%

Suppose that the Supreme Court issues a ruling that the president disagrees with because he believes that the ruling would prevent him from protecting the country against terrorist attacks. Should the president do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country or should the president follow the Supreme Court's ruling?

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country	49%
Follow the Supreme Court's ruling	44%
Don't know	7%
Refused	1%

Thinking about the Supreme Court, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: **If the Supreme Court started making a lot of rulings that most Americans disagreed with, it might be better to do away with the Court altogether.**

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	9%
Somewhat disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	61%
Don't know	2%
Refused	*

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: **Congress or the state legislature should be able to impeach or remove a judge from office if the judge makes an unpopular ruling.**

UNWEIGHTED BASE	1514
WEIGHTED BASE	1514
Strongly agree	22%
Somewhat agree	20%
Somewhat disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	34%
Don't know	3%
Refused	*