

NATIONAL SURVEY ON COMMUNITY LIFE

Courts and the Government

The following questions concern the court system and government in the United States.

1. Below is a list of four public institutions. Please mark one of the ovals provided to tell us how you would rate the average quality of the decisions each one makes.

- | | Very Low | Low | Neutral | High | Very High |
|---------------------------|----------|-----|---------|------|-----------|
| a. U.S. Congress | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| b. U.S. Supreme Court | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| c. State and local judges | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| d. The jury system | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |

Fill-in the response that shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

2. The criminal jury system is the fairest way to determine guilt or innocence of a person accused of a crime.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

3. The civil jury system is a good way to settle many civil lawsuits.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4. I would report to jury duty if asked to do so in the future.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Politics and Public Life

Below are a few statements about politics and public life in your community and the nation as a whole. Fill-in the response that shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Please read and answer each question

5. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing this country.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

6. I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics and community affairs.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

7. I think I am better informed about politics and government than most people.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

8. I often fail to do my part to make my local community a good place to live.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

9. I take seriously my responsibilities as a citizen.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

10. People like me play an important role in the life of my community.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

11. People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

12. Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in office.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

13. There are many legal ways for citizens to successfully influence what government does.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

14. Americans always do their part to try to make their local community a better place to live.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

15. Few Americans consider voting in elections to be an important civic duty.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

16. When asked to do their part, most American citizens will make sacrifices on behalf of the nation.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Involvement in Politics and Public Affairs

Below are a few statements about your involvement in your neighborhood, your local community, and local, state, and national politics during the past six months.

17. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

- ① Most of the time
- ② Some of the time
- ③ Only now and then
- ④ Hardly at all

18. During the past six months, how often did you learn about politics and public affairs by watching television news?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a week
- ③ Once or twice a week
- ④ Nearly every day
- ⑤ Every day
- ⑥ Don't know

19. During the past six months, how often did you learn about politics and public affairs by reading news in magazines, in newspapers, or on Internet websites?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a week
- ③ Once or twice a week
- ④ Nearly every day
- ⑤ Every day
- ⑥ Don't know

20. During the past six months, how often did you learn about politics and public affairs listening to the news on the radio?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a week
- ③ Once or twice a week
- ④ Nearly every day
- ⑤ Every day
- ⑥ Don't know

21. During the past six months, how active have you been in political groups (e.g., political parties or interest groups promoting a particular cause or point of view on an issue), including attending meetings, doing volunteer work, or participating in other activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer, officer, or other important member of this group.

22. During the past six months, how often have you talked to people to change their mind about a political issue, a candidate, or a ballot initiative?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a month
- ③ Monthly
- ④ Weekly
- ⑤ More than once a week
- ⑥ Don't know

23. During the past six months, how often have you talked to people to learn more about a political issue, a candidate, or a ballot initiative?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a month
- ③ Monthly
- ④ Weekly
- ⑤ More than once a week
- ⑥ Don't know

24. During the past six months, how often did you attend political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate, ballot initiative, or political cause?

- ① Never
- ② Once or twice
- ③ Three or four times
- ④ Five or more
- ⑤ Don't know

25. During the past six months, how often did you do an hour or more of volunteer work for a political cause, a political party, a candidate, or an initiative campaign?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a month
- ③ Monthly
- ④ Weekly
- ⑤ Daily
- ⑥ Don't know

26. Sometimes people feel strongly enough about a local or national issue that they contact a public official to express their views or discuss that issue. In the past six months, have you contacted a public official, agency, or board?

- Ⓨ Yes
- Ⓝ No

Participation in the Local Community

The following questions are about your voluntary participation in the life of your local community.

27. Thinking about your local community, how interested are you in community politics and local affairs?

- ① Not Interested
- ② Somewhat Interested
- ③ Very Interested
- ④ Don't know

28. During the past six months, how often have you discussed local community affairs with other members of your community?

- ① Never
- ② Less than once a month
- ③ Monthly
- ④ Weekly
- ⑤ More than once a week
- ⑥ Don't know

Below is a list of different kinds of voluntary organizations in your community. For each one, please fill-in the circle that best represents your level of volunteer involvement during the past six months.

29. During the past six months, how active have you been in cultural organizations (e.g., museum, symphony, public radio or television), including attending meetings, doing volunteer work, or participating in other unpaid activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

30. During the past six months, how active have you been in educational institutions (e.g., school, college, PTA, alumni organization), including attending meetings, doing volunteer work, or participating in other unpaid activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

31. During the past six months, how active have you been in neighborhood groups and associations (e.g., homeowner or condo association, block club, neighborhood council), including attending meetings, doing volunteer work, or participating in other unpaid activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

32. During the past six months, how active have you been in charitable or service organizations (e.g., service club, fraternal organization, relief agency), doing volunteer work, or participating in other unpaid activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

33. During the past six months, how active have you been in non-partisan or civic organizations (e.g., the League of Women Voters, or better-government associations)?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

34. During the past six months, how active have you been in a religious congregation (church, synagogue, mosque, or other group), including attending services and meetings, doing volunteer work, or participating in other unpaid activities?

- ① I have NOT been involved at all in such groups.
- ② I have occasionally participated in group activities.
- ③ I have often participated in group activities.
- ④ I have become so active that I am now an organizer officer or other important member of this group.

35. These days, how active are your adult friends in politics or community affairs?

- ① Not active at all
- ② Somewhat active
- ③ Very active
- ④ Don't know

36. These days, how active are your adult family members and relatives in politics and community affairs?

- ① Not active at all
- ② Somewhat active
- ③ Very active
- ④ Don't know
- ⑤ I have no immediate family

If you have NOT been called for jury service in the past year, please skip to Question 39a at the top of page 4.

Reflections on Jury Service

These next two questions, ask about your experience at jury service.

37. After a trial is over, jurors sometimes discuss their experience with other people. Since the end of your most recent jury service, how many times did you talk about your jury experience with other people living in your household?

- ① Never
- ② Once or twice
- ③ A few times
- ④ Many times
- ⑤ Don't know
- ⑥ Does not apply-there are no other people in my household.
- ⑦ Decline to answer

38. Since the end of your most recent experience at jury service, how many times did you talk about your jury experience with friends, coworkers, or family members living outside your household?

- ① Never
- ② Once or twice
- ③ A few times
- ④ Many times
- ⑤ Don't know
- ⑥ Decline to answer

Political Views

This brief set of questions ask about your basic point of view on politics and publics affairs.~~statement.~~

39a. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?

- ① Republican
- ② Democrat
- ③ Independent
- ④ Other (please specify _____)
- ⑤ Decline to answer

If you identified yourself as a Republican or Democrat in the previous question, please answer the following question. Otherwise, skip to Question 40.

39b. Do you slightly, strongly, or very strongly support the party you named in the previous question?

- ① Slightly support
- ② Stronly support
- ③ Very strongly support
- ④ Don't know
- ⑤ Decline to answer

40. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, which of the following do you usually think of yourself as?

- ① Extremely liberal
- ② Liberal
- ③ Slightly liberal
- ④ Moderate or middle of the road
- ⑤ Slightly conservative
- ⑥ Conservative
- ⑦ Extremely conservative
- ⑧ Don't know
- ⑨ Decline to answer

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please mail it back in the stamped envelope provided. When the results are compiled, we will make a report available to you so that you may see the results.

If there is anything else you would like to add, please feel free to write your comments in the space below.