

# 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.

### The Political Process

The following are multiple-choice questions about the political process. Answer to the best of your knowledge, and feel free to guess even if you aren't completely sure of your answer.

35. Which party had the most members in the U.S. Senate as of January 1st, 2004?

- ① Democrats
- ② Republicans
- ③ Neither party had a majority
- ④ Don't know

36. What public office is now held by Colin Powell?

- ① Secretary of Defense
- ② Speaker of the House
- ③ Secretary of State
- ④ Supreme Court Justice
- ⑤ Don't know

37. How long is the term of office for a United States Senator?

- ① Two years
- ② Four years
- ③ Five years
- ④ Six years
- ⑤ Don't know

38. In the State of Washington, how are State Supreme Court justices chosen?

- ① They are appointed by the state House of representatives
- ② They are appointed by the state senate
- ③ They are chosen by the other Justices
- ④ They are elected by the general public
- ⑤ Don't know

39. Who is currently the King County Executive?

- ① Ron Sims
- ② Mark Sidran
- ③ Greg Nickels
- ④ Norm Rice
- ⑤ Christine Gregoire
- ⑥ Don't know

## General Background Questions

40. Roughly how many years have you lived in your present city or town?

Write your answer in the box, then fill-in the ovals corresponding to the numbers that you wrote.

0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

41. Where you live now, do you or your family own your own home or rent?

- 1 Own home
- 2 Rent
- 3 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Decline to answer

42. Are you male or female?  M  F

43. In what year were you born?

Write your answer in the box, then fill-in the ovals corresponding to the numbers that you wrote.

1	9		
0	0		
1	1		
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5	5		
6	6		
7	7		
8	8		
9	9		

44. In addition to being an American, which of the following do you consider yourself to be? (Mark all that apply.)

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian or Asian-American
- Hispanic/Latino or Latina
- Native American or Alaskan
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Decline to answer

45. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- A Elementary or some high school
- B High school graduate/GED
- C Trade or vocational certification
- D Some college, or an associate degree
- E Bachelor's degree (for example, BA, AB, BS)
- F Some graduate school
- G Master's degree (e.g., MA, MSW, MBA)
- H Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, DDS)
- I Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)
- J Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- K Decline to answer

46. Which of the following do you consider your current employment situation. (Mark all that apply.)

- Working full-time
- Temporarily laid off
- Working part-time
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Permanently disabled
- Homemaker
- Student
- Decline to answer

47. 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

48. 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

## Jury Service

**49a.** Over the course of your adult life, approximately how many times in the past have you been summoned for jury duty? (If you are completing this survey at a courthouse, do not include your current service.)

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more

*If you have been summoned for jury duty in the past, please answer the following questions. Otherwise, skip to Question 50a.*

**49b.** How many of those times did you actually report for jury service (e.g., make yourself available or show up at

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more

**49c.** How many times have you served on a criminal jury?

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more

**49d.** How many times have you served on a civil jury?

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more

**49e.** How many times have you served on a jury that returned a final verdict to a judge?

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more

## Political Views

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

**50a.** 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 51.*

**50b.** Do you slightly, strongly, or very strongly support the party you named in the previous question?

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

**51.** 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.