Ipsos Poll Conducted with Coalition for Public Safety Incarceration Topline 06.11.2015

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted with the Coalition for Public Safety June 9-11, 2015. For the survey, a sample of 1,005 adults, including 382 Democrats, 295 Republicans, 327 Independents, 453 males, 552 females, 828 whites, and 177 minorities, ages 18+ were interviewed online. The precision of the Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all adults, 5.7 percentage points for Democrats, 6.5 percentage points for Republicans, 6.2 percentage points for Independents, 5.2 percentage points for males, 4.8 percentage points for females, 3.9 percentage points for whites, and 8.4 for minorities. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of one per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

Incarceration

Q1. Do you personally know someone in your close circle of family or friends who has...

(Percent "Yes")	All Adults	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Men	Women	White	Minority
Been a victim of a non-violent crime?	41%	45%	39%	38%	37%	44%	41%	38%
Been a victim of a violent crime?	27%	29%	28%	24%	28%	27%	26%	32%
Committed a non-violent crime?	29%	31%	30%	27%	27%	31%	29%	29%
Committed a violent crime?	13%	14%	14%	12%	13%	13%	13%	16%
Been sent to prison?	28%	30%	28%	25%	28%	27%	26%	36%

Q2. Do you think punishments for the following crimes are generally fair, too harsh or too lenient?

All Adults	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	28%	43%	29%
Violent crimes	35%	6%	60%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	29%	9%	62%
Online fraud and ID theft	28%	7%	65%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	46%	17%	37%

Democrats	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	26%	55%	20%
Violent crimes	41%	8%	51%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	28%	8%	64%
Online fraud and ID theft	32%	9%	59%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	48%	24%	28%

Q2. Do you think punishments for the following crimes are generally fair, too harsh or too lenient?

Independents	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	27%	42%	31%
Violent crimes	33%	6%	61%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	28%	11%	61%
Online fraud and ID theft	28%	7%	65%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	44%	14%	42%

Republicans	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	33%	29%	38%
Violent crimes	28%	3%	69%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	31%	9%	60%
Online fraud and ID theft	22%	6%	72%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	47%	10%	43%

Men	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	29%	46%	25%
Violent crimes	37%	7%	56%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	26%	11%	63%
Online fraud and ID theft	25%	11%	64%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	47%	18%	35%

Women	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	28%	40%	32%
Violent crimes	33%	4%	63%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	32%	8%	60%
Online fraud and ID theft	30%	4%	66%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	46%	15%	39%

Q2 (Continued). Do you think punishments for the following crimes are generally fair, too harsh or too lenient?

White	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	28%	43%	29%
Violent crimes	33%	5%	62%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	29%	9%	63%
Online fraud and ID theft	27%	6%	67%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	47%	16%	37%

Minority	Fair	Too harsh	Too lenient
Possession of drugs	30%	41%	29%
Violent crimes	42%	9%	49%
White collar (i.e. financial) crimes	30%	12%	58%
Online fraud and ID theft	31%	13%	56%
Non-Violent theft or burglary	41%	22%	37%

Q3. Do you think the main aim of prisons is rehabilitation or punishment?

(Percent "Yes")	All Adults	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Men	Women	White	Minority
Rehabilitation	17%	19%	17%	15%	20%	14%	17%	16%
Punishment	57%	60%	54%	58%	55%	59%	58%	53%
Neither/Other	13%	12%	14%	14%	14%	13%	12%	18%
Don't Know	12%	10%	15%	13%	11%	14%	12%	13%

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ\, i.e., Y|θ~Bin(n,θ), where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of "yes", or "1", observed in the sample, so that the sample mean ($\bar{y}$) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian [1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution (π(θ/y)~β(y+a,n-y+b)), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on π(θ/y). Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that a=1 and b=1 and y=$n/2$. Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below. Ipsos does not publish data for base sizes (sample sizes) below 100.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2

[1] *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

[2] *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi . Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*