



MARKET RESEARCH

***The Harris Poll***<sup>®</sup> PEOPLE

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# Jury Service: Is Fulfilling Your Civic Duty a Trial?

*Prepared for:*

*The American Bar Association*



July 2004



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## Background and Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted an omnibus study on behalf of the American Bar Association. A nationally representative sample of 1,029 adult Americans ages 18 or older were interviewed by telephone using an unrestricted Random Digit Dialing (RDD) technique that significantly reduces serial bias and ensures that respondents with both listed and unlisted numbers are reached. Only one interview was conducted per household.

Interviews were conducted from July 15 through July 18, 2004.

To ensure a reliable and accurate representation of the total national adult population, completed interviews were weighted to known proportions for age, gender, geographic region, and race. The margin of error for the total sample is plus or minus 3.1%. The margin of error for those who have been called for jury service is 3.7%.

Please note that questions may not add up to 100% due to rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses.



# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

## *Attitudes Toward Jury Service*

- **Americans view jury service as an important civic duty, and maintain a positive attitude about the responsibility.**
  - More than four in five (84%) agree that jury duty is an important civic duty that should be fulfilled, even if it happens to be inconvenient.
  - Three in four (75%) adults do not believe that jury duty is a burden to be avoided.
  - Nearly six in ten (58%) look forward to having the opportunity to participate in jury duty.
  - Just over half (53%) feel that jurors are treated well by the court system.
  
- **Given their positive outlook, Americans have little concerns about jury duty.**
  - Seven in ten (71%) believe they know enough to be able to serve as an effective juror.
  - Three in four (75%) are not concerned about publicity they could receive by serving on a jury.
  - Just over six in ten (63%) do not believe that jury duty would negatively impact their income.
  - About six in ten (61%) are comfortable with the fact that serving on a jury means being in a position to judge others.
  
- **If they themselves were on trial, the majority of Americans (75%) would want their case to be decided by a jury, rather than a judge.**



# Executive Summary

## *Experience with Jury Service*

- **The majority of Americans have been called for jury service, of which about half have actually served as a juror.**
  - More than three in five (62%) have been called for jury service.
  - Of those who have been called for service, nearly half (47%) served as part of a jury. On average, those who have served participated on about 3 juries.
  
- **Those who have served on a jury feel the experience met their expectations and the majority would even serve again if requested.**
  - More than two in five (45%) who have participated on a jury say their most recent experience was exactly as they expected and many (63%) feel the same as they did about the legal system prior to serving.
  - Just over six in ten (63%) who have served say they would participate again.
  
- **Those who have been called to service view the experience even more positively than those who have not.**
  - 87% of those who have been called feel that jury duty is an important civic duty even if it's inconvenient – compared to 80% who have not been called.
  - 79% of those who have been called are not concerned about the publicity they might receive as a juror – compared to 70% who have not been called.
  - 78% of those who have been called do not feel that jury duty is a burden to avoid – compared to 70% who have not been called.
  - 58% of those who have been called believe that jurors are treated well by the courts – compared to 45% who have not been called.

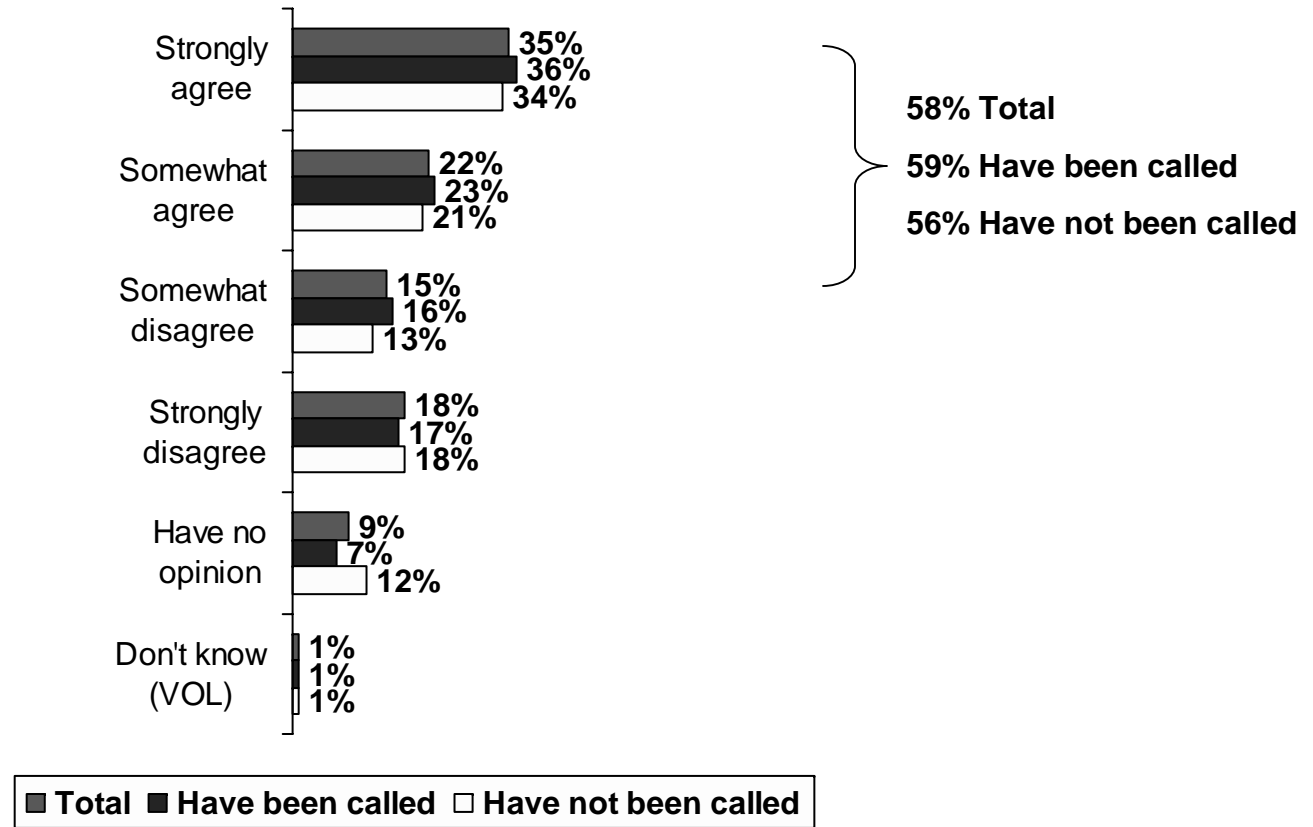


## Detailed Findings



# Jury duty is viewed as a privilege that adults look forward to fulfilling.

“Jury duty is a privilege I look forward to fulfilling”

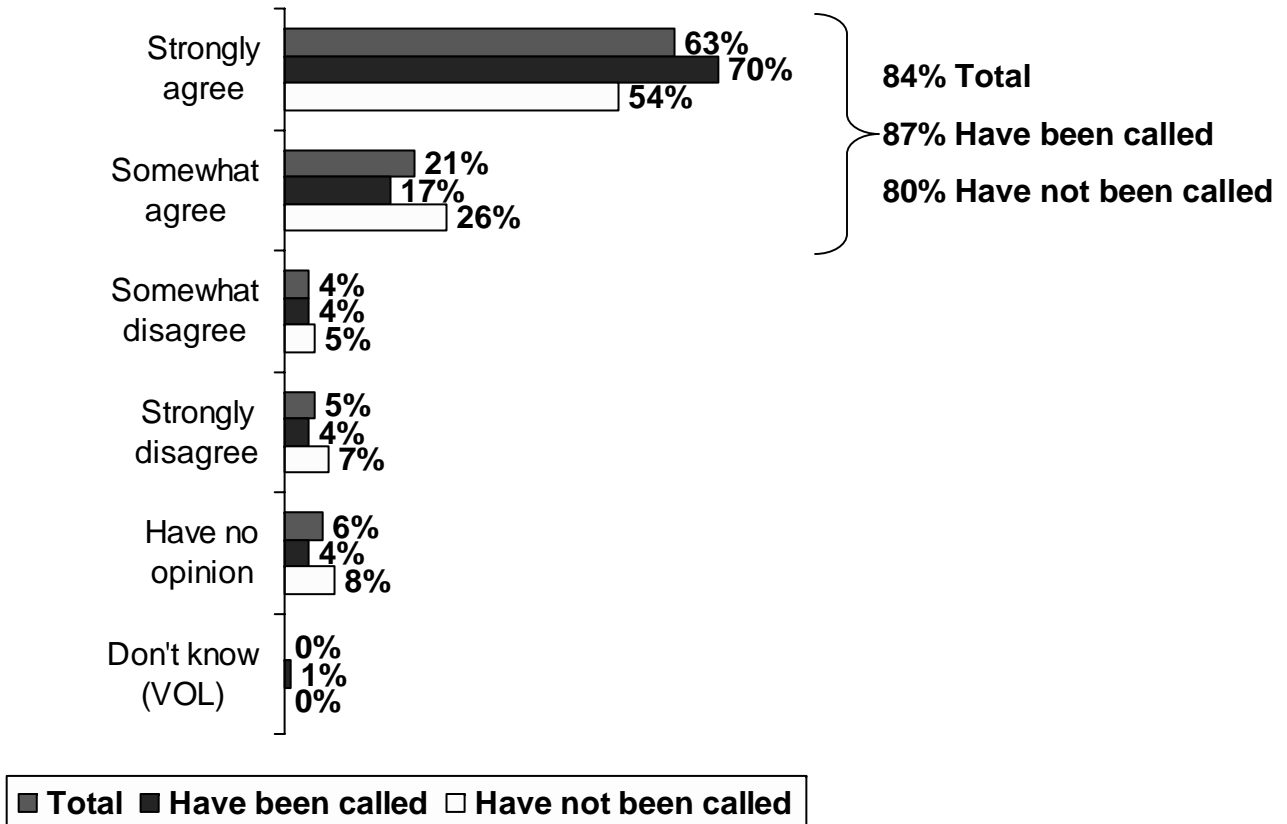






**Americans strongly believe that jury service is important even if it seems inconvenient – this is especially true for those who have been called for jury duty.**

**“Jury duty is an important civic duty I should meet even if it is inconvenient.”**

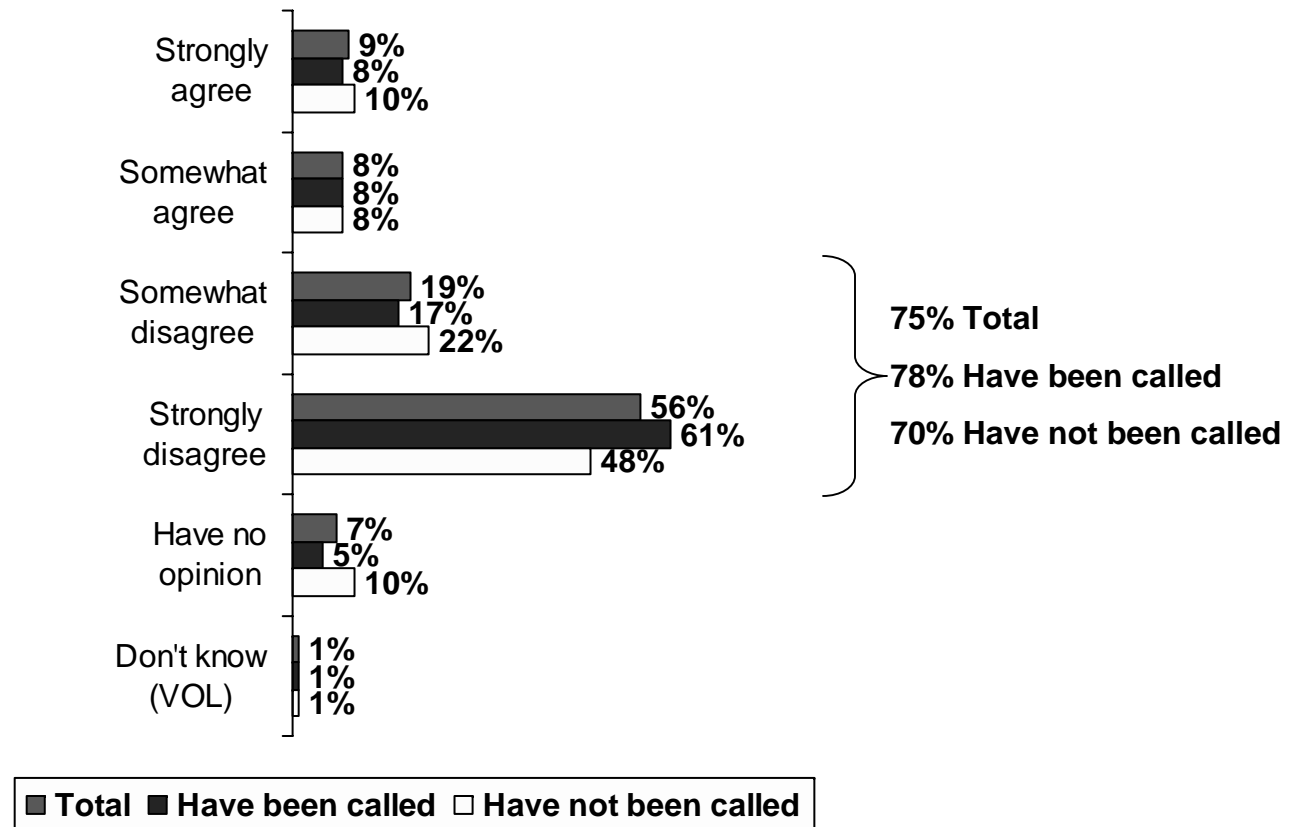


For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. **Jury duty is an important civic duty I should meet even if it is inconvenient.**  
Base: All respondents (n=1,029); Those who have been called (n=693)/Those who haven't been called (n=331)



**Americans believe that jury duty is not something to avoid – a view also more likely held by adults who have been called to service than those those who have not.**

**“Jury duty is a burden to be avoided.”**



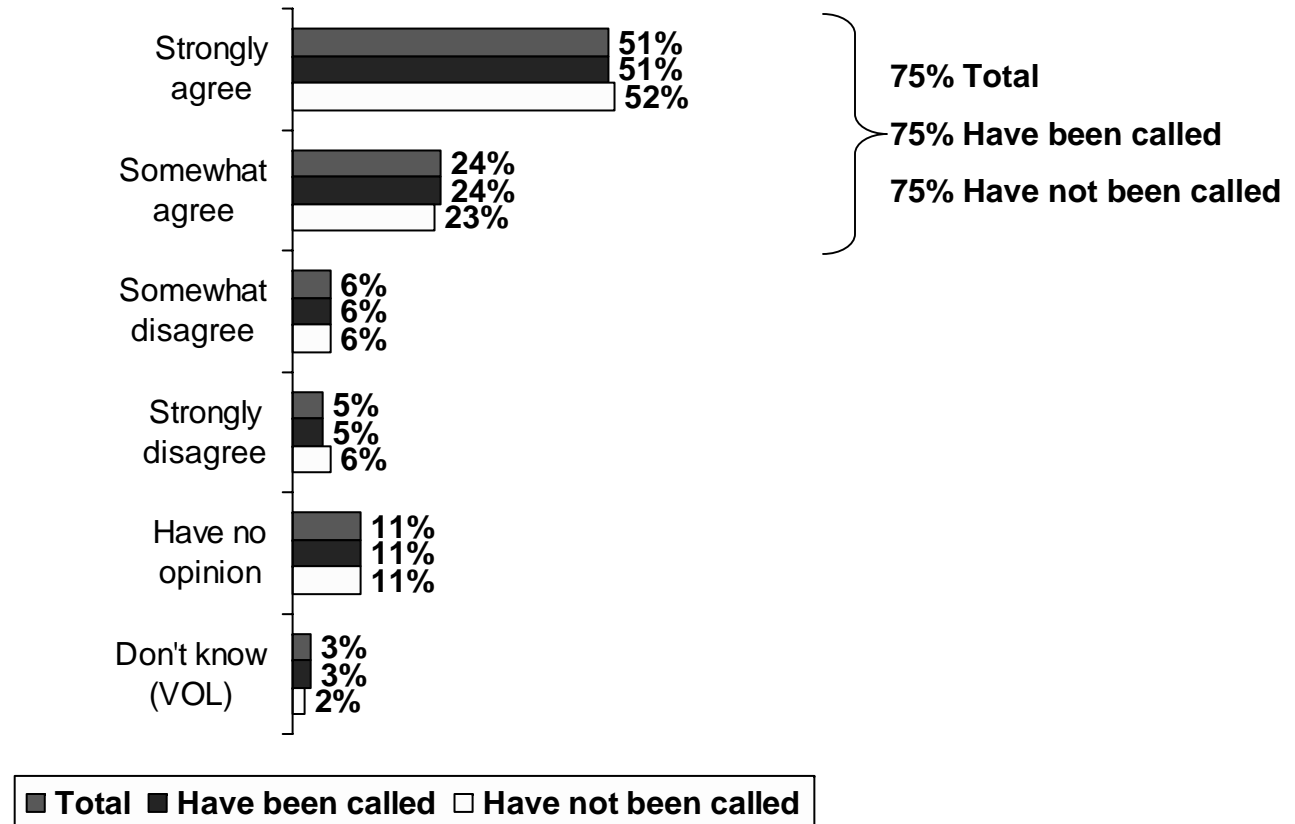
For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. **Jury duty is a burden to be avoided.**

Base: All respondents (n=1,029); Those who have been called (n=693)/Those who haven't been called (n=331)



Moreover, the majority of Americans would want a jury to decide their case if they were on trial.

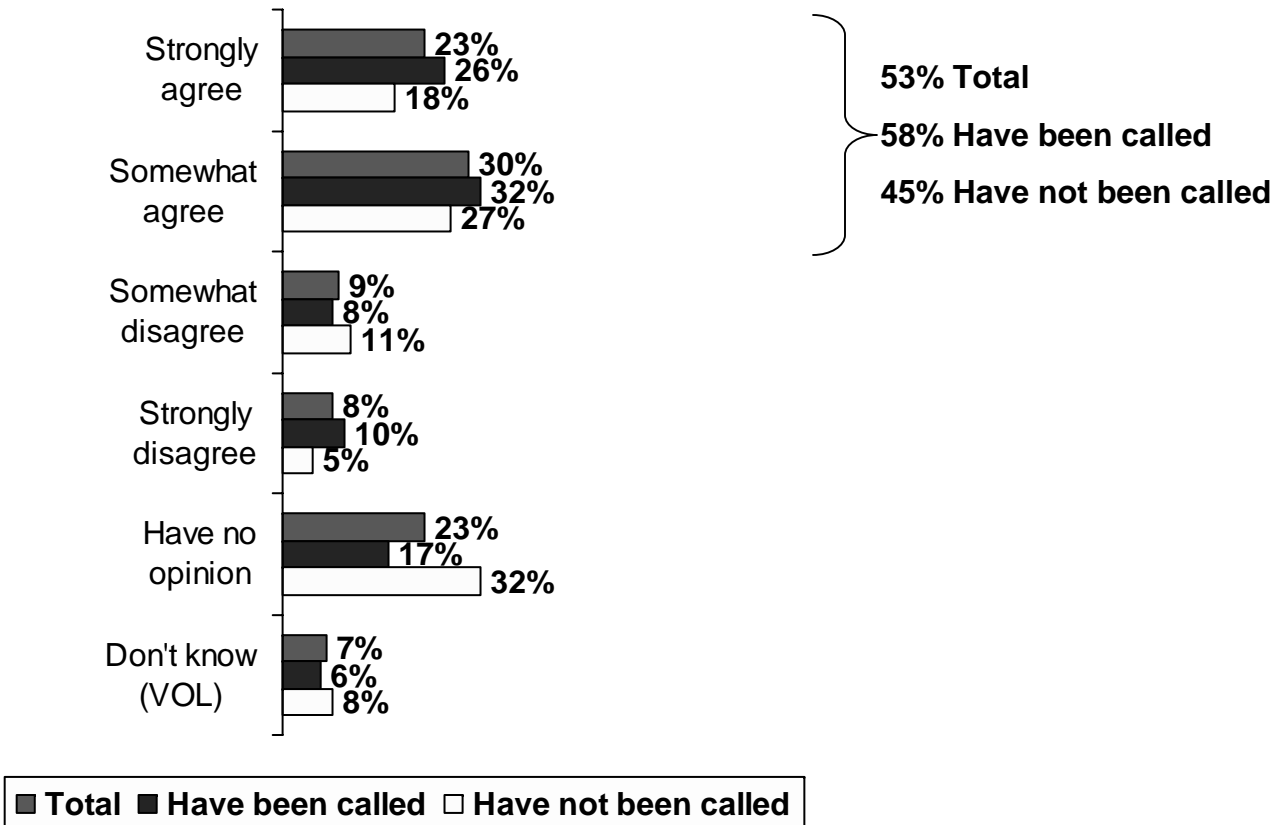
“If I were a participant in a trial I would want a jury to decide my case, rather than a judge”





**More than half of Americans believe that jurors are treated well by the court system – a view held even more strongly by adults who have been called for jury duty than those who have not.**

**“Jurors are treated well by the court system”**



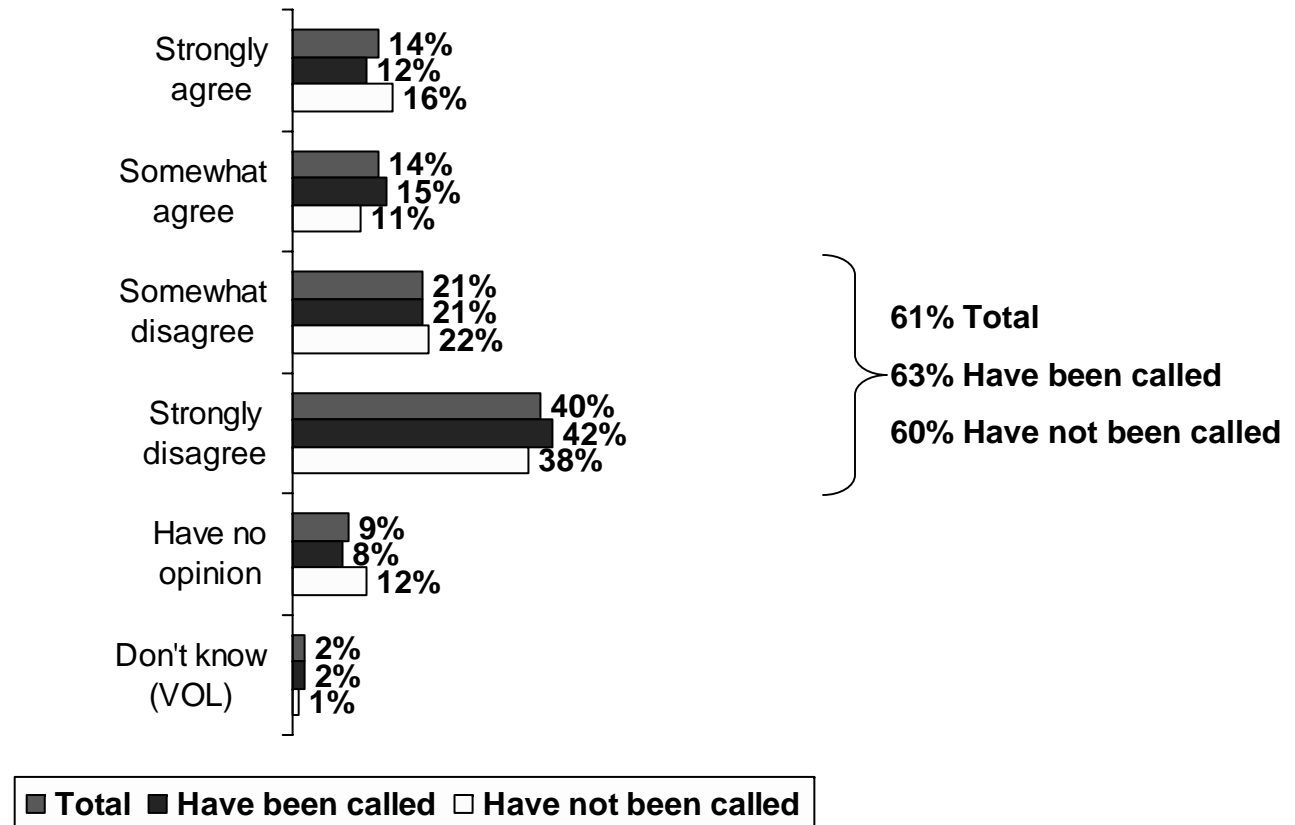
For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. ***Jurors are treated well by the court system.***

Base: All respondents (n=1,029); Those who have been called (n=693)/Those who haven't been called (n=331)



## Adults feel fairly comfortable with the fact that as a juror, they would be in a position of judging others.

“I don’t want to stand in judgment of others as a juror”

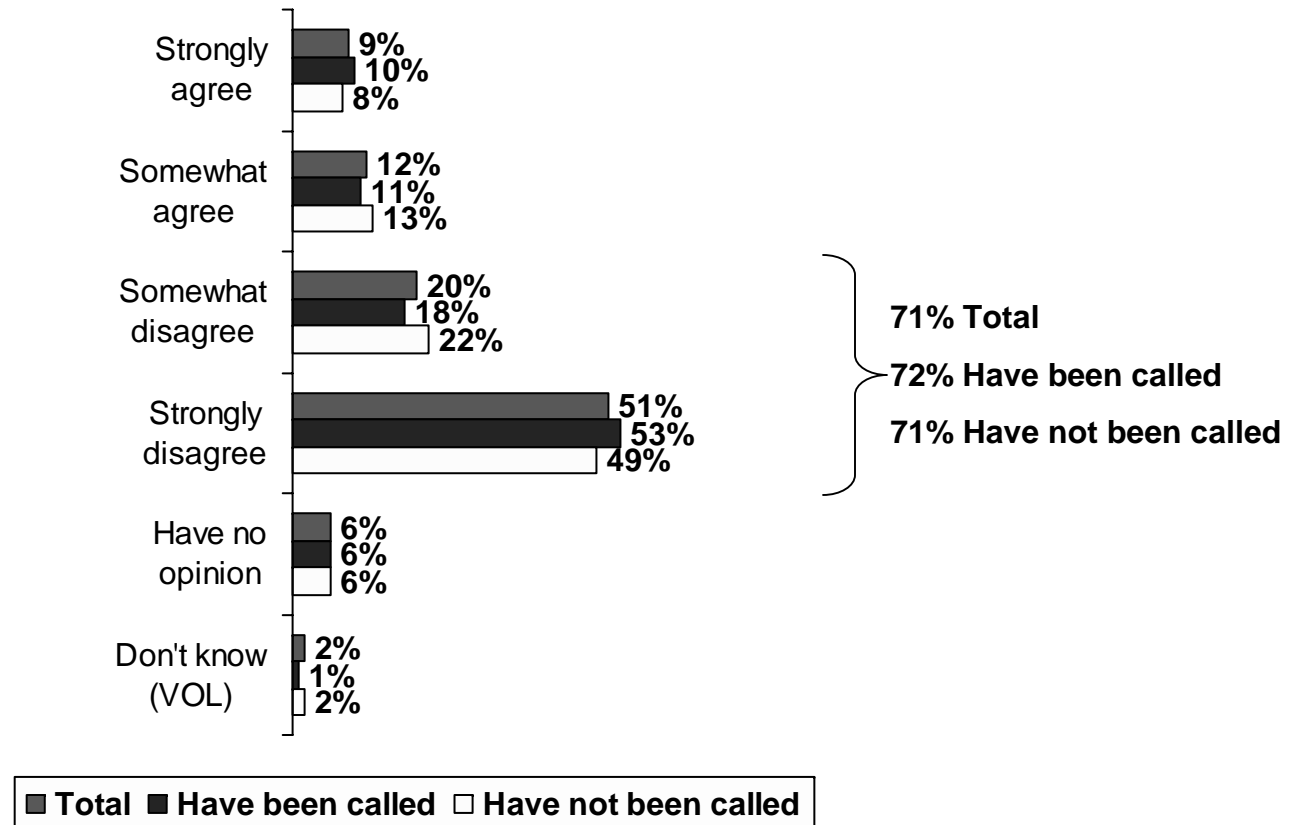


For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. ***I don't want to stand in judgment of others as a juror.***  
Base: All respondents (n=1,029)



## Americans feel confident in their abilities to serve as an effective juror.

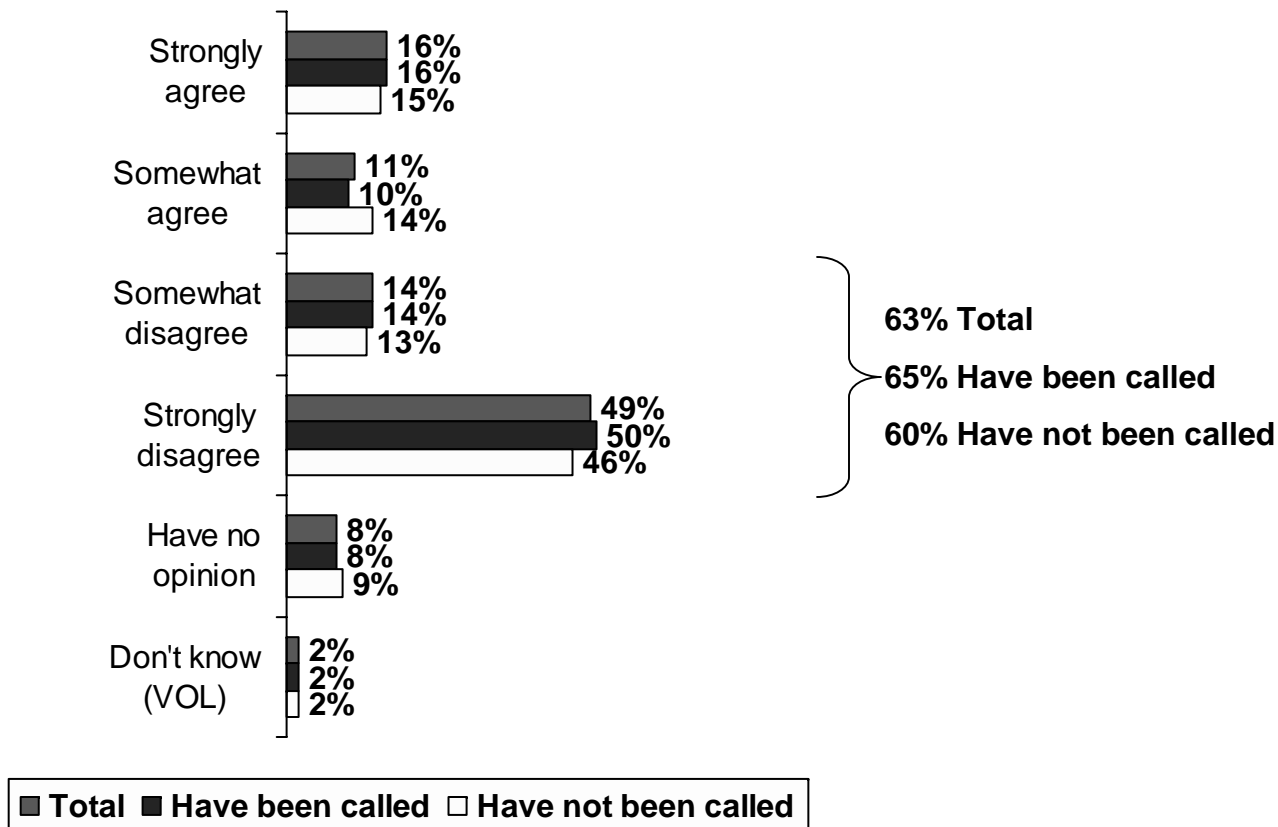
“I don’t know enough about the law or the legal system to be a good juror”





# The majority of Americans do not feel that jury service would have a negative impact on their income.

## “Serving on a jury would hurt my income”

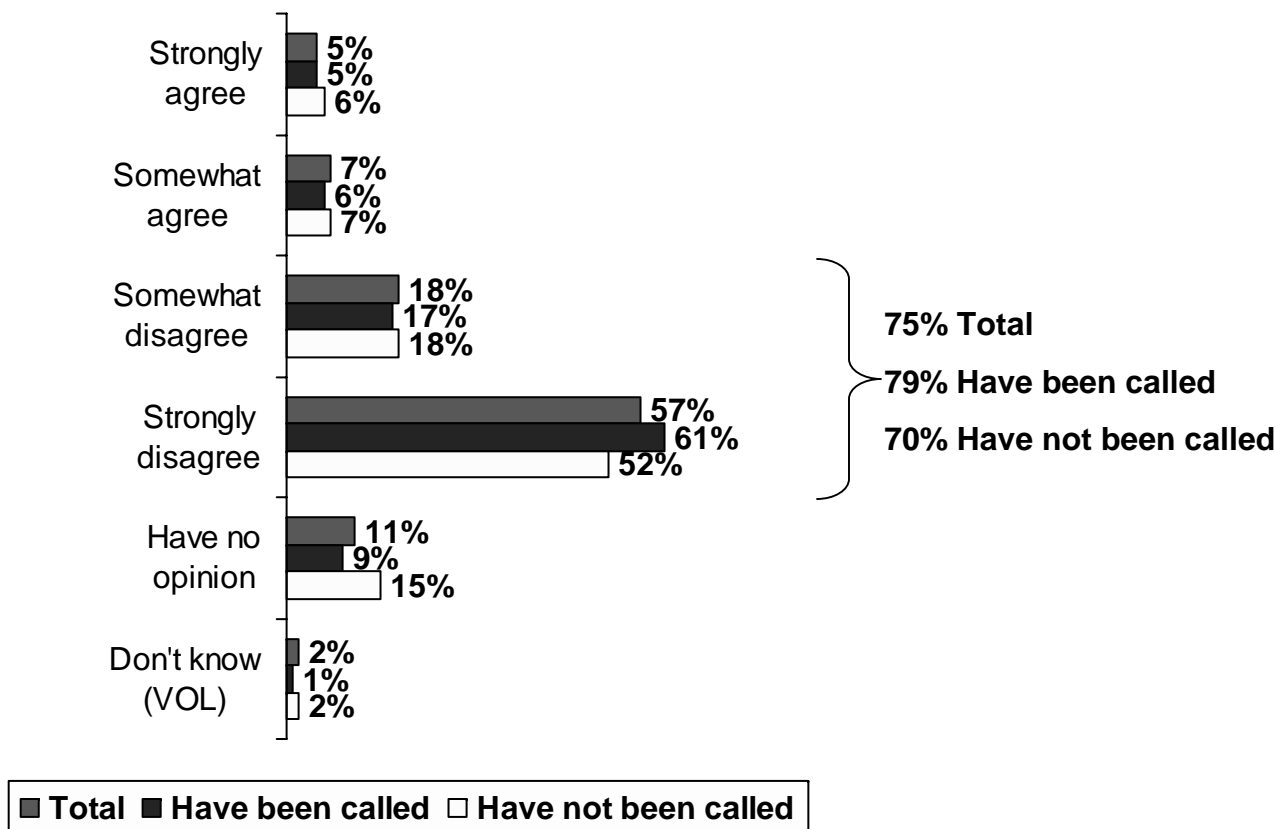


For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. **Serving on a jury would hurt my income.**  
Base: All respondents (n=1,029)



Further, Americans are not concerned about the publicity they might receive if they served on a jury. Adults who have been called to service are less worried about this than those who have not been called.

“I’m worried about the publicity I might receive if I served on a jury”



For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion. ***I’m worried about the publicity I might receive if I served on a jury.***

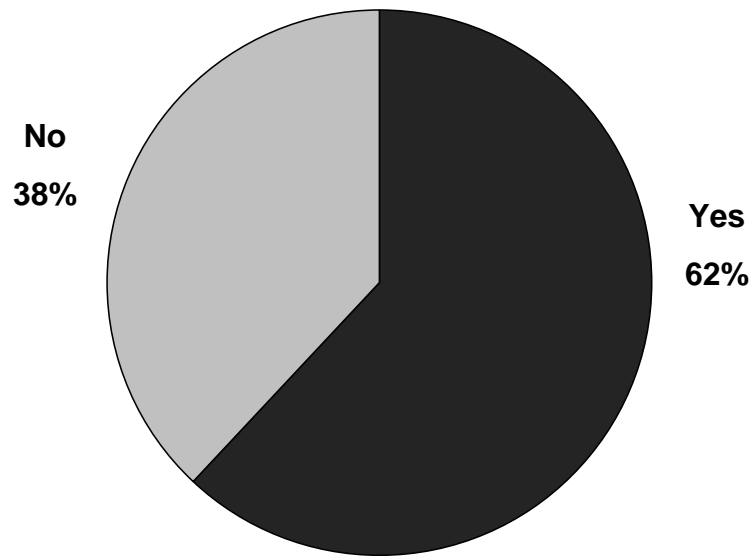
Base: All respondents (n=1,029); Those who have been called (n=693)/Those who haven’t been called (n=331)



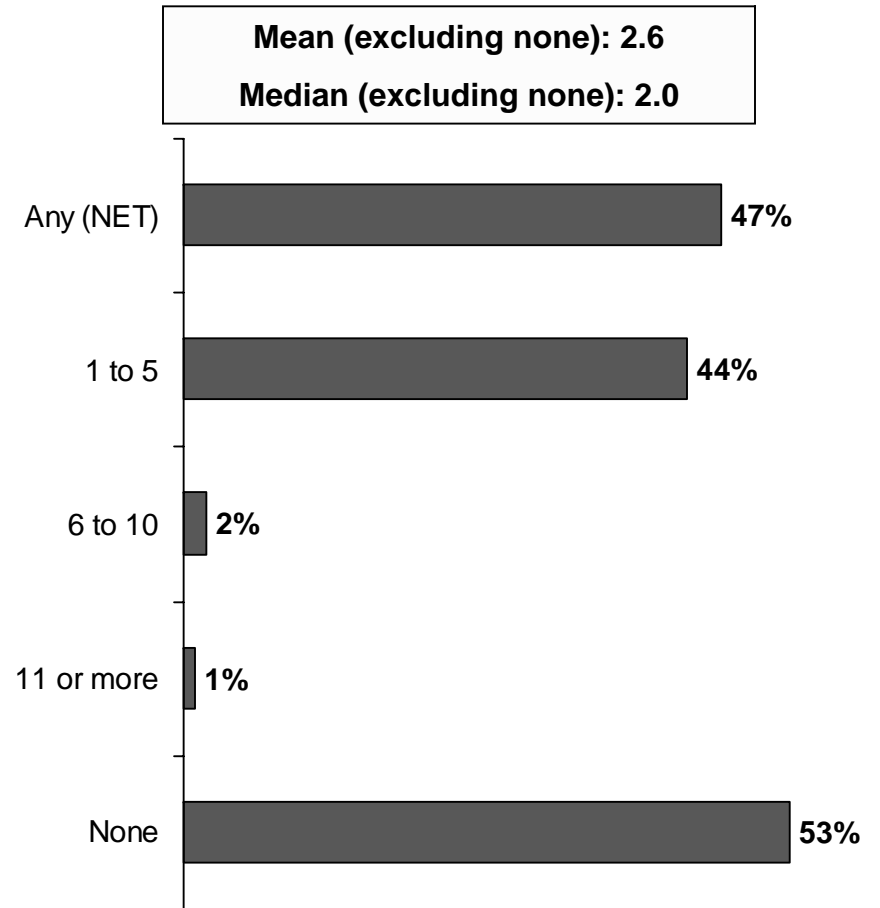


Nearly two-thirds of Americans have been called for jury service – of which nearly half have actually *served* on a jury.

Whether Have Ever Been Called for Jury Service



Frequency Jury Service – By Those Who Have Served

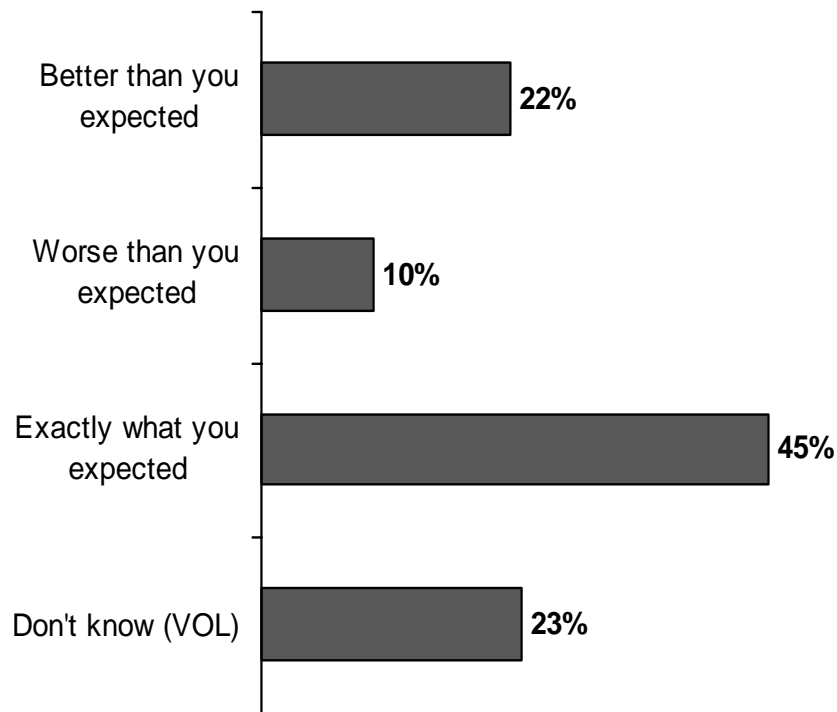


Have you ever been called for jury service?/How many times have you served on a jury?  
Base: All respondents (n=1,021)/Have ever been called for jury service (n=693)

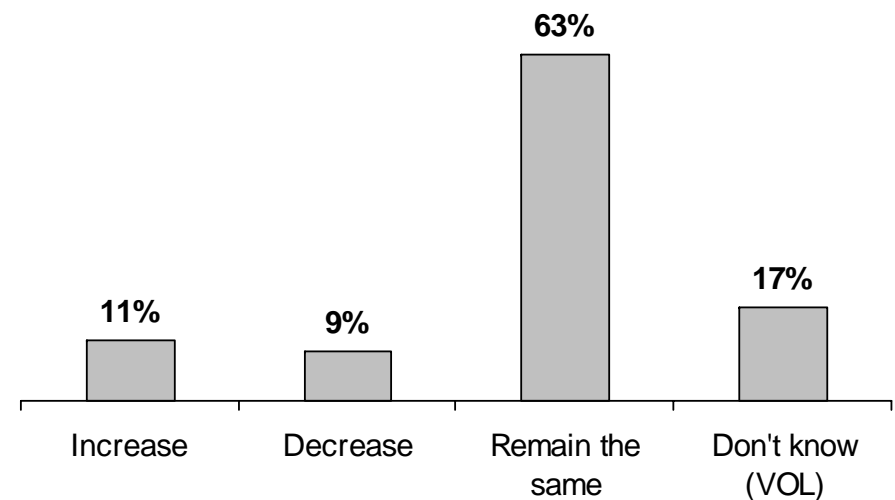


**In general, those who have served as a juror feel their experience was in line with what they expected and feel as confident in the justice system as they did before they served.**

### Expectations of Jury Service



### Level of Confidence in Justice System



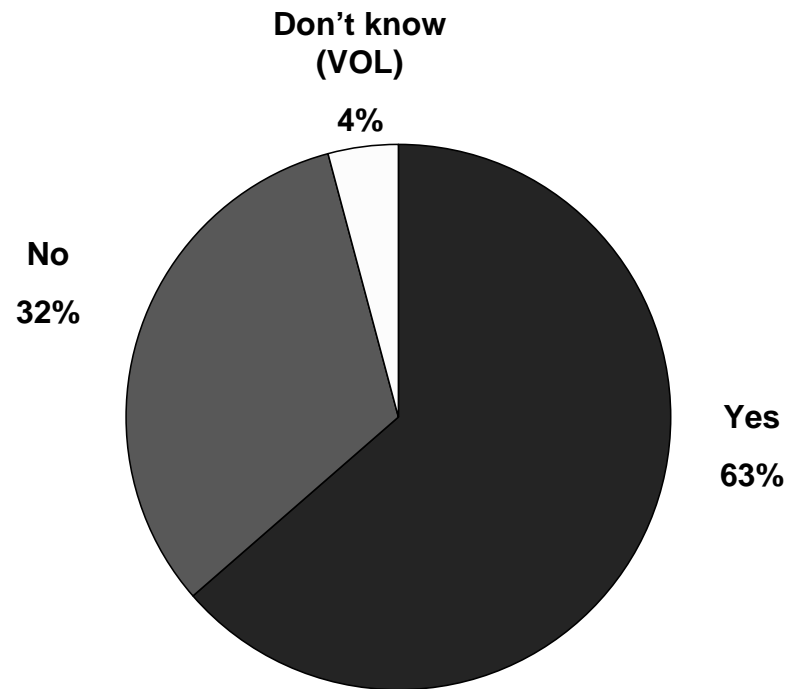
Considering your most recent jury experience, overall, would you say it was...?/Thinking about your most recent jury experience, did your level of confidence in the justice system...?

Base: Have ever been called for jury service (n=693)



The majority of those who have served on a jury would like to serve again.

Whether Would Like to Serve Again



If you have served on a jury, would you like to serve again?

Base: Have ever been called for jury service and served on a jury at least once (n=354)



## Respondent Profile



# Respondent Profile

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Male	48
Female	52

<u>Age</u>	<u>Total</u> %
18 – 34	30
35 – 44	21
45 – 54	18
55+	29
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>44.9</b>

<u>Race</u>	<u>Total</u> %
White	82
Black/African American	12
Asian/Asian American	1
Other	5
Decline to answer	1

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Yes, of Hispanic origin	6
No, not of Hispanic origin	94

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Married	53
Single, never married	24
Divorced	11
Separated	1
Widowed	7
Living with partner	3

<u>Children &lt;18 in Household</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Yes	38
No	44



## Respondent Profile (continued)

<u>Education</u>	<u>Total</u> %
High school graduate or less	34
Completed some college, but no degree	24
Associate's degree	8
College graduate or more	33

<u>Employment Status</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Employed full-time	50
Employed part-time	12
Retired	21
Not employed	16

<u>Household Income</u>	<u>Total</u> %
Less than \$25,000	17
\$25,000 - \$49,999	29
\$50,000 - \$74,999	20
\$75,000 or more	19
Decline to answer	11