

DEATH PENALTY

Americans Support Punishing Murder with the Death Penalty

Four-in-five respondents believe innocent people have been executed in the United States.

[NEW YORK – Nov. 9, 2010] – Most Americans support the death penalty in murder cases, but are divided on whether it acts as a deterrent for potential criminals, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative sample of 1,006 American adults also finds that a high proportion of respondents believe that innocent people have been executed in the United States.

Across the country, 83 per cent of respondents support punishing homicide with the death penalty, while 13 per cent are opposed. A majority of Americans would also rely on capital punishment to punish rape (62%) and kidnapping (51%), but not armed robbery (40%).

Respondents are evenly split on the overall effect of the death penalty. While 39 per cent of Americans think capital punishment acts as a deterrent, 35 per cent disagree. Republicans (52%) are more likely to believe that the death penalty deters potential criminals than Independents (40%) and Democrats (34%).

Four-in-five respondents (81%) believe innocent people have been executed in the United States, while only six per cent think that this has never happened.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **83% support punishing murder with the death penalty**
- **39% think the death penalty acts as a deterrent; 35% disagree**
- **81% believe innocent people have been executed in the United States**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From October 28 to October 29, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,006 American adults who are Springboard America panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the United States.

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Death Penalty

Do you support or oppose punishing each of the following crimes with the death penalty? – *Total U.S.*

	Homicide (Murder)	Rape	Kidnapping	Armed robbery
Support	83%	62%	51%	40%
Oppose	13%	33%	41%	53%
Not sure	4%	5%	8%	7%

Death Penalty

Do you support or oppose punishing each of the following crimes with the death penalty? –
Homicide (Murder)

	Region					Political Allegiance		
	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Support	83%	85%	86%	79%	83%	83%	88%	78%
Oppose	13%	15%	8%	16%	12%	15%	9%	15%
Not sure	4%	1%	5%	5%	5%	2%	3%	7%

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Death Penalty

Do you think the death penalty acts as a deterrent for potential criminals?

	Region					Political Allegiance		
	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Yes, it does act as a deterrent	39%	43%	37%	37%	42%	34%	52%	40%
No, it does not act as a deterrent	35%	38%	32%	37%	34%	40%	27%	37%
Not sure	25%	19%	32%	26%	24%	25%	21%	23%

Death Penalty

All things considered, do you believe innocent people have been executed in the United States?

	Region					Political Allegiance		
	Total	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Yes, I believe this has happened	81%	83%	79%	84%	83%	85%	76%	84%
No, I do not believe this happened	6%	9%	6%	4%	7%	5%	9%	4%
Not sure	13%	8%	15%	11%	9%	10%	14%	11%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record in Canada and the United States can be found at:

<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/record-of-accuracy/>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angus-reid.com/about/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.angus-reid.com>**

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