

Table 2.63

**Attitudes toward mandatory prison sentences**

By demographic characteristics, United States, 1995

Question: "In recent years, some legislatures have made imprisonment mandatory for convictions for some types of crimes. Do you think these mandatory sentences are a good idea, or should judges be able to decide who goes to prison and who doesn't?"

	Mandatory sentences are a good idea	Judges should decide	Both	Neither
National	52.9%	36.4%	6.0%	1.3%
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	52.2	38.3	5.8	1.0
Female	53.6	34.5	6.1	1.5
<b>Race</b>				
White	55.0	33.9	6.3	1.1
Black	45.7	48.6	3.8	1.9
Hispanic	43.2	44.6	2.7	2.7
<b>Age</b>				
18 to 29 years	47.7	44.6	5.4	0.5
30 to 39 years	53.4	35.4	9.0	0.4
40 to 59 years	55.3	35.5	2.8	1.9
60 years and older	55.2	28.7	6.9	2.9
<b>Education</b>				
College graduate	52.7	39.8	5.4	1.1
Some college	56.6	31.5	6.6	0.3
High school graduate	53.5	36.0	6.5	1.5
Less than high school graduate	39.6	44.6	5.0	4.0
<b>Income</b>				
Over \$60,000	57.0	37.1	5.9	0.0
Between \$30,000 and \$60,000	53.7	35.7	6.1	1.4
Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	56.1	33.1	5.9	2.1
Less than \$15,000	45.4	43.7	2.5	2.5
<b>Community</b>				
Urban	43.9	43.3	5.1	1.9
Suburban	57.8	33.1	5.3	0.0
Small city	46.3	41.5	6.9	2.1
Rural/small town	56.4	33.1	6.6	1.3
<b>Region</b>				
Northeast	47.5	39.0	8.5	1.7
Midwest	50.0	38.7	6.7	1.3
South	59.7	28.9	5.7	1.1
West	49.6	43.0	3.7	1.2
<b>Politics</b>				
Republican	59.7	31.4	6.1	0.7
Democrat	49.3	39.6	5.7	2.1
Independent/other	51.6	37.6	5.3	1.3

Note: See Note, table 2.22. The "don't know" category has been omitted; therefore percents may not sum to 100.

Source: Table constructed by SOURCEBOOK staff from data provided by the Survey Research Program, College of Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University.