

pccd researcher



Penn State Public Opinion Poll: Juvenile Justice

Overview

The Penn State Center for Survey Research conducted the annual omnibus survey. This year's poll, conducted from April 26 through June 2, 2010, included questions on identity theft, victim services, and justice policy issues.

Sample/Methodology

A total of 803 telephone interviews were conducted with respondents aged 18 years or older. The sample was collected based on a random-digit-dialing (RDD) sampling technique, which ensures every landline telephone in Pennsylvania has an equal likelihood of being selected. The technique also ensures that every adult within the sampled households has an equal probability of being selected.

Data Collection

Data were collected by 25 telephone interviewers utilizing computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. The CATI software permits twenty concurrent sessions and permits quality control reviews by supervisors who oversee the interviews for content and uniformity of delivery.

Interviews were held from Monday through Thursday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Callbacks were also scheduled to accommodate respondent schedules. Interviewers tried a maximum of ten contacts with an average of 3.6 calls per number.

Project Statistics

The dataset included valid responses from 803 Pennsylvanians, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level associated with a sample of this size.

The survey cooperation rate was 71.2 percent, using the American Association of Public Opinion Research's Cooperation Rate 3 formula. The average length of a complete interview was 14.5 minutes (see Table 1 for remaining project statistics).

Table 1: Project Statistics

Survey Measure	Hrs/Min/Sec
Total connection time of all calls	707:52:53
Average length of one single completed interview	00:14:31
Average phone time per actual complete (time total/completes)	00:52:30
Total calls placed	25,255
Number of different phone numbers dialed	7,018
AAPOR Cooperation Rate 3 (COOP3)	71.2%

Questions

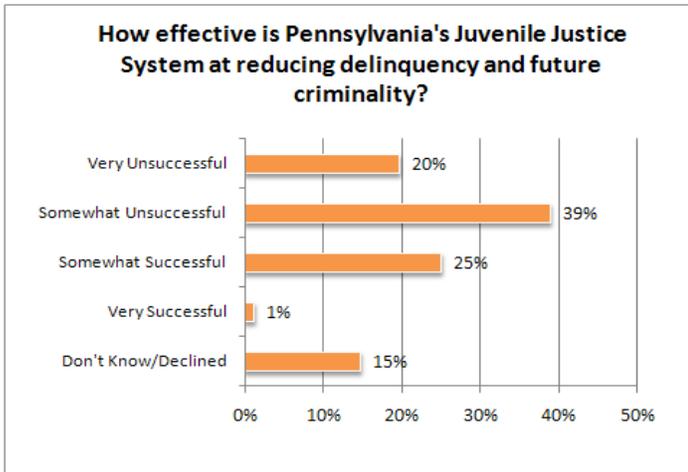
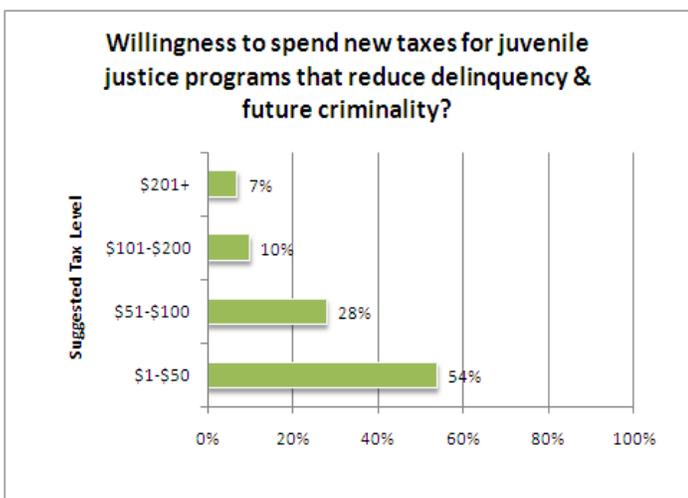
The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency included three different sets of polling questions: one relating to identity theft, one relating to victims services, and one relating to justice policy questions.

Public Policy Questions

The public policy questions were designed to gauge Pennsylvanians' opinions about the effectiveness of the state's adult and juvenile justice systems. This PCCD Researcher focuses on the responses to the juvenile justice system survey questions.

Respondents believed the juvenile justice system is unsuccessful at reducing juvenile delinquency and/or future criminality. 59 percent said the system is somewhat or very unsuccessful at reducing delinquency and future criminality. Only 26 percent found the system to be effective (see Figure 1).

While critical of the current system, respondents remained hopeful that the system still had merit. In fact, 73 percent indicated that they would be willing to pay additional taxes to cover the costs of juvenile treatment programs shown to avert future criminality. 53 percent would support a tax increase of \$1-\$50; 28 percent would support an increase of \$51-\$100; and 17 percent would support an increase of \$100-\$200 (see Figure 2).

Figure 1.**Figure 2.**

Juvenile Justice in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania's juvenile justice program continues to be recognized as a national model. The reasons often cited for this distinction include structural and statutory strengths, clear vision, mission and goals for juvenile justice, and a commitment to research-based practices and programs.

First, structurally, Pennsylvania is unique. Juvenile courts and probation departments have responsibility for young offenders from the time they enter the county's juvenile justice system until their cases are closed from juvenile court jurisdiction. Local juvenile justice systems benefit from the leadership and partnerships of state-level agencies that provide funding, training, guidance and a unifying vision. State leadership and vision, with local autonomy and innovation, is the strength of Pennsylvania's system.

Second, Pennsylvania has made the greatest strides in building its juvenile justice system on a solid foundation, starting with a firm

philosophical base in balanced and restorative justice philosophies and principles. Its goals are established by statute, and its outcomes are clearly defined. Juvenile courts and probation departments are mandated to ensure that interventions and decisions, from diversion to aftercare, are aimed at achieving the goals of community protection, offender accountability and competency development, and ensuring fairness at each point of contact with the system. Interventions are designed so youth leave the system more likely to be law-abiding and productive citizens and having made amends for the harm they caused to their victims.

Third, to advance these goals and secure these outcomes, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee (JJJPC) has aggressively pursued a common vision for juvenile justice system enhancement that is set within a framework that ties the goals to evidence-based practices and documented outcomes. This framework serves as a guide for action at all levels. At the administrative level, it influences policy development, planning and budgeting, resource allocation, and training requirements. At the supervisory level, it helps to identify what activities or practices are required to achieve system goals. At the case management level, it sets goals for decision-making, from intake to aftercare, and dictates what information is needed to inform decisions. This is mission-driven, performance-based and outcome-focused juvenile justice.

Conclusion

The results of the juvenile justice polling are quite compelling. First, the findings reveal that there is currently a disconnect between the general public's perception about the state of affairs in Pennsylvania's Juvenile Justice System and the perception held by those in justice leadership positions.

The disconnect provides PCCD with an opportunity to educate the public on the quality of Pennsylvania's justice programs and to relate the details about those individuals who have benefitted from these programs.

Second, the survey also demonstrates that, when faced with the fiscal choices, taxpayers are willing to make the tough policy decisions about programming and services, even with systems that they believe to have poor efficacy.

The Commission, generally, and PCCD's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, specifically, will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its programs and to adjust policies accordingly to ensure that those juveniles in the system have the best opportunity to succeed upon release and to prevent juveniles from entering the system in the first place. They will also look for opportunities to promote system programs and positive outcomes as warranted.