



Methodology

Marquette Law School Poll

Public Views of the U.S. Supreme Court

July 16-26, 2021

The Marquette Law School Poll survey of public views of the U.S. Supreme Court was conducted July 16-26, 2021. A total of 1010 adults were interviewed by SSRS of Glen Mills PA, using the SSRS Opinion Panel, a representative probability-based panel of adults ages 18 and over living in the United States, recruited using the SSRS Omnibus poll and through address-based sampling (ABS). The margin of error is ± 3.9 percentage points for the full sample. Two items concerning Supreme Court retirements were each asked of a random half sample and have a margin of error of ± 5.6 percentage points.

The survey is a general population sample of U.S. adults age 18 and over living in the 50 states.

As described below SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based on nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design (including Hawaii and Alaska). ABS respondents are randomly sampled by Marketing Systems Group (MSG) through the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS), a regularly-updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S. For the SSRS Opinion Panel, known business addresses are excluded from the sample frame. Additionally, the SSRS Opinion Panel recruit hard-to-reach demographic groups via the SSRS Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus survey is a nationally representative (including Hawaii and Alaska) bilingual telephone survey.

AAPOR Transparency Initiative Information

The Marquette Law School Poll Supreme Court Survey follows the guidelines for disclosure of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative. For more information on the initiative see: <http://www.aapor.org/AAPORKentico/transparency.aspx>

1. The poll is sponsored by Marquette Law School.

2. The Marquette Law School Poll, under the direction of Prof. Charles Franklin, designed the survey instrument and performed all statistical analysis. The data collection was administered by SSRS of Glen Mills PA, using the SSRS Opinion Panel, a representative probability-based panel of adults ages 18 and over living in the United States.
3. Funding for this study was provided by the Marquette Law School Alumni Annual Fund. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.
4. The full survey instrument for this study is available online at <https://law.marquette.edu/poll/category/results-and-data/>
5. The population surveyed consists of the general population of U.S. adults age 18 and over living in the 50 states.
6. The sample frame is a nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design (including Hawaii and Alaska). ABS respondents are randomly sampled by MSG through the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS), a regularly-updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S.. Additionally, the SSRS Opinion Panel recruits hard-to-reach demographic groups via the SSRS Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus survey is a nationally representative (including Hawaii and Alaska) bilingual telephone survey.
7. The sample uses the SSRS Opinion Panel and is based on address and telephone samples supplied by Marketing Systems Group (MSG). Details of design and response rate are given below.
8. The sample was designed to be representative of the adult population of the United States. The sample size is 1010. The margin of error, including design effects due to post-stratification is ± 3.9 percentage points for the full sample. Two items concerning Supreme Court retirements were each asked of a random half sample and have a margin of error of ± 5.6 percentage points.
9. The design effect for this survey is 1.62 which has been incorporated in the calculation of all reported margins of error.
10. The survey was administered in English only and was administered on the web. The data were collected July 16-26, 2021.
11. Results for all items in the survey, including the full instrument, topline results, crosstabs and this methodological report are be available online. <https://law.marquette.edu/poll/category/results-and-data/>
For further information contact the survey director, Prof. Charles Franklin at Charles.franklin@marquette.edu
12. Further methodological details, including weighting methodology, is included in the following report from SSRS.

JULY 28, 2021

OVERVIEW

Marquette University Law School (MULaw) engaged SSRS to conduct the July Court Survey. The goal of this survey was to gauge awareness and reaction to public figures, the branches of government, and in particular the Supreme Court and cases adjudicated. The July Court Survey was conducted online via the SSRS Opinion Panel and invited U.S. adults age 18 and older to participate. Data collection was conducted from July 16 to July 26, 2021 among a sample of 1,010 respondents. Data were weighted to represent the target U.S. adult population.

This report provides information about the sampling procedures and the methods used to collect, process, and weight data for the July Court Survey.

SSRS PROFILE

SSRS is a full-service survey and market research firm managed by a core of dedicated professionals with advanced degrees in the social sciences. SSRS designs and implements research solutions for complex strategic, tactical, public opinion, and policy issues in the U.S. and in more than 40 countries worldwide. The SSRS team specializes in creative problem-solving and informed analysis to meet its clients' research goals. SSRS provides the complete set of analytical, administrative and management capabilities needed for successful project execution. We partner with clients interested in conducting high-quality research. In the industry, SSRS is renowned for its sophisticated sample designs and its experience with all facets of data collection, including those involving multimodal formats.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was developed by MULaw in consultation with the SSRS project team. Prior to the field period, SSRS programmed the study into its Conformat platform that allows data to be collected. Extensive checking of the program was conducted to ensure that skip patterns and sample splits followed the design of the questionnaire. The July Court Survey is conducted in English.

SAMPLE DESIGN: THE SSRS OPINION PANEL

SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based on nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design (including Hawaii and Alaska). ABS respondents are randomly sampled by MSG through the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence (CDS), a regularly-updated listing of all known addresses in the U.S. For the SSRS Opinion Panel, known business addresses are excluded from the sample frame.

Additionally, the SSRS Opinion Panel recruit hard-to-reach demographic groups via the SSRS Omnibus survey platform.¹ The SSRS Omnibus survey is a nationally representative (including Hawaii and Alaska) bilingual telephone survey designed to meet standards of quality associated with custom research studies. The SSRS Omnibus completes more than 50,000 surveys annually with 80% cell allocation.

DATA COLLECTION

Survey Sampling

Sample drawn for the July Court Survey was stratified by Gender, Age, Race, Education, Region, and Political Party to ensure adequate representation of each.

Survey Administration Procedures

The administration schedule was as follows:

Table 1: Study Schedule:

Touchpoint	Start	End
Soft launch	07/16/2021	07/19/2021
Full launch	07/19/2021	7/26/2021

A “soft launch” inviting a limited number of panelists to participate was conducted on July 16-19, 2021. After checking soft launch data to ensure that all questionnaire content and skip patterns were correct, additional sample was released to ensure the final sample met the study goals.

Sampled panelists were emailed an invitation to complete the survey online. The email for each respondent included a unique passcode-embedded link. All respondents not responding to their first invitation received up to 3 reminder emails.

In appreciation for their participation, panelists received a \$5 incentive in the form of an electronic gift card.

Mean survey length was 8.4 minutes.

COMPLETION RATE

Table 2 details the completion rate for this study.

¹ Prior to July 2019, the SSRS Opinion Panel was recruited entirely from the SSRS Omnibus.

Table 2: Completion Rate

Touchpoint	
Invited to Participate/Total Sample	2,516
Completed	1,010
Survey Completion Rate	40.1%

DATA PROCESSING AND INTEGRATION

SSRS implemented several quality assurance procedures in data file preparation and processing. In addition to extensive testing of the online survey prior to the launching data collection, soft launch survey data were carefully checked for accuracy, completeness, and non-response to specific questions so that any issues could be identified and resolved prior to the full launch.

The data file programmer implemented a “data cleaning” procedure in which web survey skip patterns were created in order to ensure that all questions had the appropriate numbers of cases. This procedure involved a check of raw data by a program that consisted of instructions derived from the skip patterns designated on the questionnaire. The program confirmed that data were consistent with the definitions of codes and ranges and matched the appropriate bases of all questions.

WEIGHTING

Data were weighted to represent adults 18+ using the SSRS Opinion Probability Panel. The data were weighted by first applying a base weight then balancing the demographic profile of the sample to target population parameters.

Base weight (BW)

The base weight for the SSRS Prob Panel was computed differently depending on whether the panelist was recruited from the Omnibus or from Address Based Sample (ABS).

Omnibus Recruits

The base weight for the Omnibus recruits (OMNI_BW) was their original base weight. This base weight accounted for selection probability of telephone numbers along with the overlapping landline and cell frames. And for panelists recruited via landline sample, it also adjusted for different selection probabilities based on the number of adults in the household.

ABS Recruits

The base weight for ABS recruits (ABS_BW) was the product of a sampling weight (ABS_SAMPWT) and a household size adjustment (ADULTS). The sampling weight corrected for the disproportionate sample design by adjusting the distribution of ABS completes across the 16 ABS strata to match the distribution of the ABS frame across strata.

The sampling weight for the ABS recruits was expressed as $ABS_SAMPWT_i = P_i/p_i$ where P_i is the proportion of the sample frame from in stratum i and p_i is the proportion of completed interviews from in stratum i .

The household size adjustment (ADULTS) is simply the number of adults in the household, capped at 3.

The base weight for the ABS recruits were the product of the sampling weight and the household size adjustment.

$$ABS_BW = ABS_SAMPWT \times ADULTS$$

The unadjusted base weight (UBW) was

$$UBW = \begin{cases} OMNI_BW, & \text{cases recruited from SSRS Omnibus} \\ ABS_BW, & \text{cases recruited from ABS sample} \end{cases}$$

The base weights were standardized by recruitment source to produce the standardized base weight (SBW).

$$SBW = \begin{cases} UBW \times n_{OMNI} / \sum_{i \in OMNI} UBW_i, & \text{cases recruited from SSRS Omnibus} \\ UBW \times n_{ABS} / \sum_{i \in ABS} UBW_i, & \text{cases recruited from ABS sample} \end{cases}$$

Raking

With the base weight applied, the data were weighted to balance the demographic profile of the sample to the target population parameters.

To handle missing data among some of the demographic variables we employ a technique called hot decking. Hot deck imputation replaces the missing values of a respondent randomly with another similar respondent without missing data. These are further determined by variables predictive of non-response that are present in the entire file. We use an SPSS macro detailed in 'Goodbye, Listwise Deletion: Presenting Hot Deck Imputation as an Easy and Effective Tool for Handling Missing Data' (Myers, 2011).

Weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure.

Data were weighted to distributions of the following: sex by age, sex by education, age by education, race/ethnicity, census region, civic engagement, population density, and party ID. The main demographic

benchmarks were obtained from the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS)². The civic engagement benchmark was derived from September 2017 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement data³. The population density came from Census Planning Database 2020⁴. The party ID, party lean, and religion benchmarks came from NPORS annual dataset released by Pew Research⁵.

Table 3: Weighting Summary

Category	Values	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
Sex by age	Male 18-24	5.8%	3.0%	5.3%
	Male 25-34	9.0%	8.5%	9.1%
	Male 35-44	8.1%	8.2%	7.8%
	Male 45-54	7.6%	7.2%	7.7%
	Male 55-64	8.0%	7.7%	8.0%
	Male 65+	9.9%	12.9%	10.1%
	Female 18-24	5.7%	3.2%	5.6%
	Female 25-34	8.9%	11.9%	9.1%
	Female 35-44	8.3%	8.8%	8.3%
	Female 45-54	8.1%	7.1%	8.1%
	Female 55-64	8.7%	10.3%	8.9%
	Female 65+	11.8%	11.2%	11.9%
Sex by education	Male HS grad or less	19.3%	12.9%	18.8%
	Male Some college	12.8%	11.1%	12.6%
	Male College grad +	16.3%	23.6%	16.7%
	Female HS grad or less	18.3%	16.6%	18.4%
	Female Some college	14.8%	15.3%	15.0%
	Female College grad +	18.5%	20.5%	18.6%
Age by education	18-34 HS grad or less	10.9%	7.6%	10.7%
	18-34 Some college	9.6%	7.4%	9.4%
	18-34 College grad +	9.0%	11.5%	9.0%
	35-54 HS grad or less	10.9%	8.1%	10.6%
	35-54 Some college	8.0%	7.9%	8.1%
	35-54 College grad +	13.2%	15.3%	13.3%
	55+ HS grad or less	15.8%	13.8%	15.8%
	55+ Some college	9.9%	11.1%	10.1%
55+ College grad +	12.6%	17.2%	13.0%	
Race/ethnicity		62.8%	65.0%	63.1%

² Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles and J. Robert Warren. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 8.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V8.0>.

³ Civically engaged respondents are defined as those who have volunteered in the past 12 months or who talk to their neighbors daily. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/about/supplemental-surveys.html>

⁴ <https://www.census.gov/topics/research/guidance/planning-databases/2020.html>

⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/fact-sheet/national-public-opinion-reference-survey-npors/>

Category	Values	Parameter	Unweighted	Weighted
	White non-Hisp			
	Black non-Hisp	11.9%	12.1%	12.1%
	Hispanic	16.7%	16.3%	16.6%
	Other non-Hisp	8.6%	6.6%	8.2%
Census region	Northeast	17.3%	20.4%	17.5%
	Midwest	20.7%	21.4%	21.1%
	South	38.0%	35.0%	37.5%
	West	23.9%	23.3%	24.0%
Civic engagement	Not engaged	65.5%	61.1%	65.3%
	Civically engaged	34.5%	38.9%	34.7%
Population density	1 Lowest 20%	20.0%	16.6%	20.0%
	2	20.0%	17.9%	19.7%
	3	20.0%	23.1%	20.3%
	4	20.0%	21.0%	20.0%
	5 Highest 20%	20.0%	21.4%	20.0%
Party ID	Rep / Lean Rep	46.6%	42.9%	46.2%
	Dem / Lean Dem	52.8%	56.5%	53.2%
	Refused to Lean	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%

Trimming

Weights were trimmed at the 3rd and 97th percentiles to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence.

Effects of Sample Design on Statistical Inference

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. SSRS calculates the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.62.

SSRS calculates the composite design effect for a sample of size n , with each case having a weight, w , as:⁶

$$deff = \frac{n \sum w^2}{(\sum w)^2}$$

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% confidence interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample — the one around 50%. For example, the margin of error for the entire sample is ± 3.9 percentage points. This means that in 95 out of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.9 percentage points away from their true values in the population. Margins of error for subgroups will be larger. It is important to remember that sampling fluctuations are only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Other sources, such as respondent selection bias, questionnaire wording, and reporting inaccuracy, may contribute additional error of greater or lesser magnitude.

⁶ Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for Unequal Pi. *Journal of Official Statistics*, Vol. 8, No.2, 1992, pp. 183-200.