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Most Americans Favor the Death Penalty Despite Concerns About Its Administration

78% say there is some risk of innocent people being put to death

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to better understand Americans' views about the death penalty. For this analysis, we surveyed 5,109 U.S. adults from April 5 to 11, 2021. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

Here are [the questions used for the report](#), along with responses, and [its methodology](#).

Most Americans Favor the Death Penalty Despite Concerns About Its Administration

78% say there is some risk of innocent people being put to death

The use of the death penalty is gradually disappearing in the United States. Last year, in part because of the coronavirus outbreak, fewer people were executed than in any year in [nearly three decades](#).

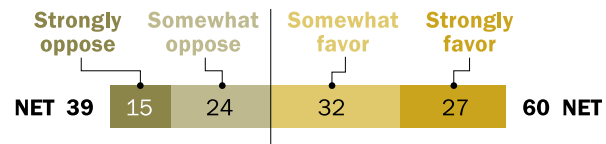
Yet the death penalty for people convicted of murder continues to draw support from a majority of Americans despite widespread doubts about its administration, fairness and whether it deters serious crimes.

More Americans favor than oppose the death penalty: 60% of U.S. adults favor the death penalty for people convicted of murder, including 27% who strongly favor it. About four-in-ten (39%) oppose the death penalty, with 15% strongly opposed, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

The survey, conducted April 5-11 among 5,109 U.S. adults on the Center's American Trends Panel, finds that support for the death penalty is 5 percentage points lower than it was in August 2020, when 65% said they favored the death

Majority of Americans favor death penalty, but nearly eight-in-ten see 'some risk' of executing the innocent

% who ___ the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



% who say ...

The death penalty is morally wrong, even when someone commits a crime like murder

33

When someone commits a crime like murder, the death penalty is morally justified

64

Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes

56

White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes

41

The death penalty DOES NOT deter people from committing serious crimes

63

The death penalty DOES deter people from committing serious crimes

35

There is some risk that an innocent person will be put to death

78

There are adequate safeguards to ensure that no innocent person will be put to death

21

Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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penalty for people convicted of murder.

While public support for the death penalty has changed only modestly in recent years, support for the death penalty declined substantially between the late 1990s and the 2010s. (See [“Death penalty draws more Americans’ support online than in telephone surveys”](#) for more on long-term measures and the challenge of comparing views across different survey modes.)

Large shares of Americans express concerns over how the death penalty is administered and are skeptical about whether it deters people from committing serious crimes.

Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) say there is some risk that an innocent person will be put to death, while only 21% think there are adequate safeguards in place to prevent that from happening. Only 30% of death penalty supporters – and just 6% of opponents – say adequate safeguards exist to prevent innocent people from being executed.

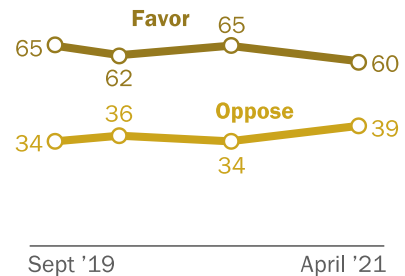
A majority of Americans (56%) say Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to the death penalty for being convicted of serious crimes. This view is particularly widespread among Black adults: 85% of Black adults say Black people are more likely than Whites to receive the death penalty for being convicted of similar crimes (61% of Hispanic adults and 49% of White adults say this).

Moreover, more than six-in-ten Americans (63%), including about half of death penalty supporters (48%), say the death penalty does not deter people from committing serious crimes.

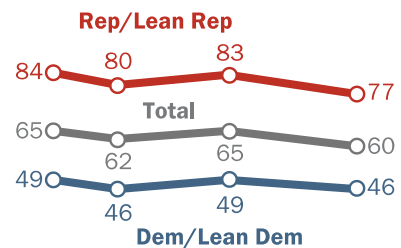
Yet support for the death penalty is strongly associated with a belief that when someone commits murder, the death penalty is morally justified. Among the public overall, 64% say the death penalty is morally justified in cases of murder, while 33% say it is not justified. An overwhelming share of death penalty supporters (90%) say it is morally justified under such circumstances, compared with 25% of death penalty opponents.

Since 2019, modest changes in views of the death penalty

% who ___ the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



% who favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



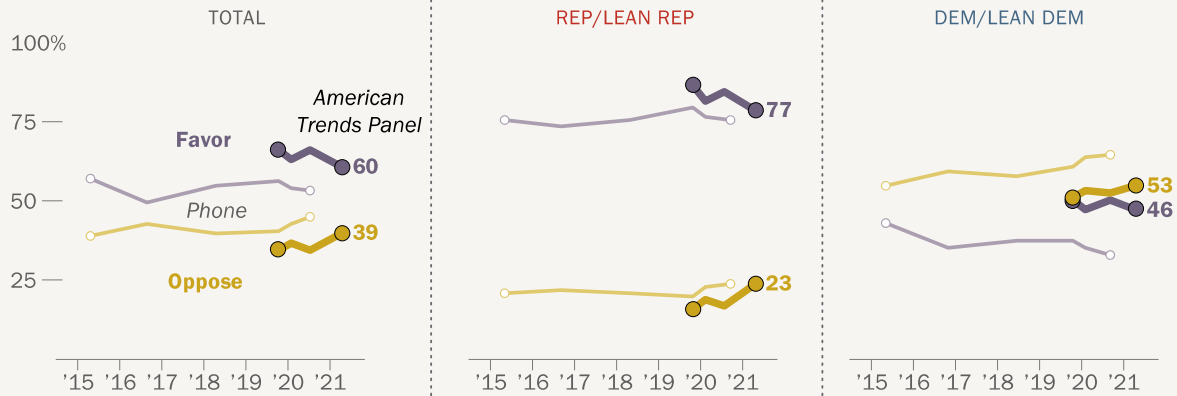
Sept '19 April '21

Note: No answer responses not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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Greater support for death penalty in online panel surveys than telephone surveys

% who ___ the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

The data in the most recent survey, collected from Pew Research Center's online [American Trends Panel \(ATP\)](#), finds that 60% of Americans favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Over four ATP surveys conducted since September 2019, there have been relatively modest shifts in these views – from a low of 60% seen in the most recent survey to a high of 65% seen in September 2019 and August 2020.

In Pew Research Center phone surveys conducted between September 2019 and August 2020 (with field periods nearly identical to the online surveys), support for the death penalty was significantly lower: 55% favored the death penalty in September 2019, 53% in January 2020 and 52% in August 2020. The consistency of this difference points to substantial [mode effects](#) on this question. As a result, survey results from recent online surveys are *not* directly comparable with past years' telephone survey trends. A [post accompanying this report](#) provides further detail and analysis of the mode differences seen on this question. And for more on mode effects and the transition from telephone surveys to online panel surveys, see ["What our transition to online polling means for decades of phone survey trends"](#) and ["Trends are a cornerstone of public opinion research. How do we continue to track changes in public opinion when there's a shift in survey mode?"](#)

Partisanship continues to be a major factor in support for the death penalty and opinions about its administration. Just over three-quarters of Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party (77%) say they favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder, including 40% who *strongly* favor it.

Democrats and Democratic leaners are more divided on this issue: 46% favor the death penalty, while 53% are opposed. About a quarter of Democrats (23%) strongly oppose the death penalty, compared with 17% who strongly favor it.

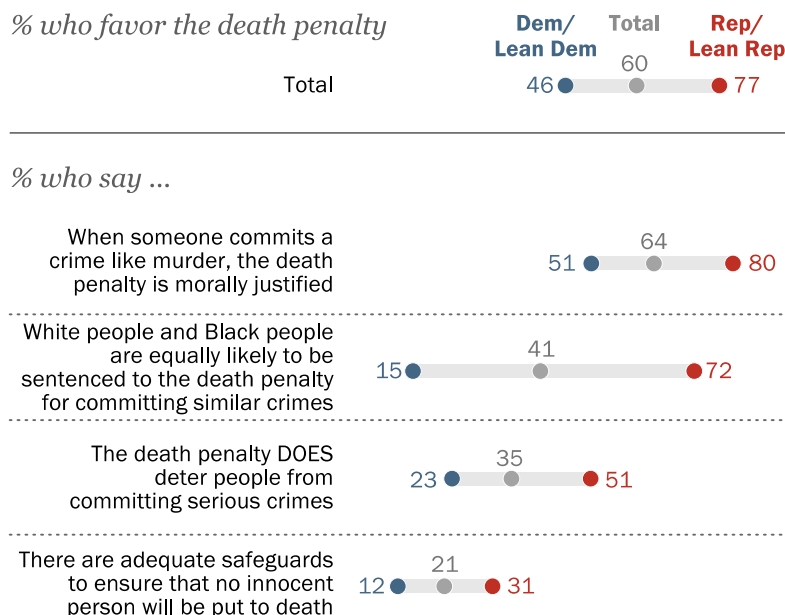
Over the past two years, the share of Republicans who say they favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder has decreased slightly – by 7 percentage points – while the share of Democrats who say this is essentially unchanged (46% today vs. 49% in 2019).

Republicans and Democrats also differ over whether the death penalty is morally justified, whether it acts as a deterrent to serious crime and whether adequate safeguards exist to ensure that no innocent person is put to death. Republicans are 29 percentage points more likely than Democrats to say the death penalty is morally justified, 28 points more likely to say it deters serious crimes, and 19 points more likely to say that adequate safeguards exist.

But the widest partisan divide – wider than differences in opinions about the death penalty itself – is over whether White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes.

About seven-in-ten Republicans (72%) say that White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to death for the same types of crimes. Only 15% of Democrats say this. More than eight-in-ten Democrats (83%)

Partisan differences in views of the death penalty – especially on racial disparities in sentencing



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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instead say that Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing similar crimes.

Differing views of death penalty by race and ethnicity, education, ideology

There are wide ideological differences within both parties on this issue. Among Democrats, a 55% majority of conservatives and moderates favor the death penalty, a position held by just 36% of liberal Democrats (64% of liberal Democrats oppose the death penalty). A third of liberal Democrats strongly oppose the death penalty, compared with just 14% of conservatives and moderates.

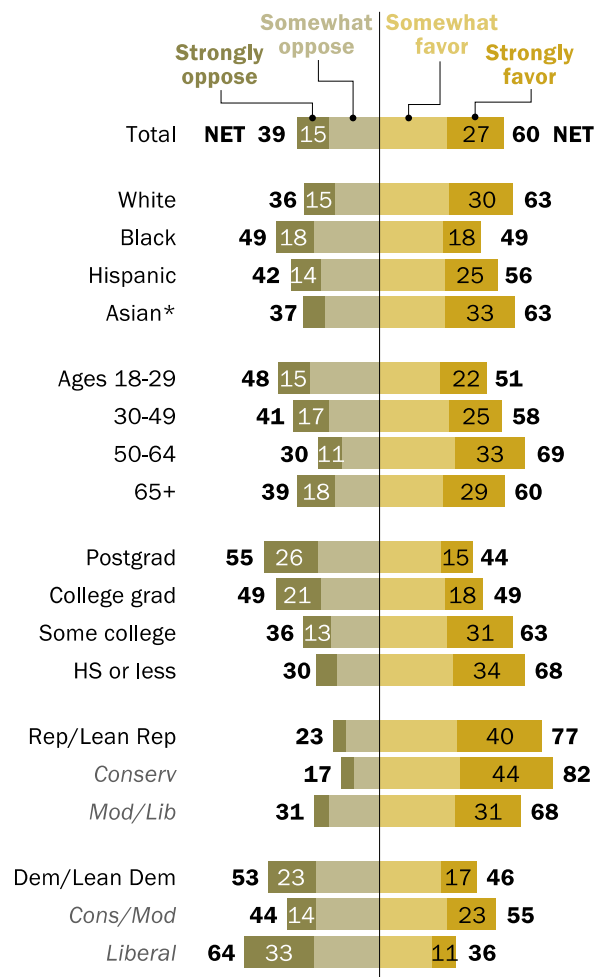
While conservative Republicans are more likely to express support for the death penalty than moderate and liberal Republicans, clear majorities of both groups favor the death penalty (82% of conservative Republicans and 68% of moderate and liberal Republicans).

As in the past, support for the death penalty differs across racial and ethnic groups. Majorities of White (63%), Asian (63%) and Hispanic adults (56%) favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. Black adults are evenly divided: 49% favor the death penalty, while an identical share oppose it.

Support for the death penalty also varies across age groups. About half of those ages 18 to 29 (51%) favor the death penalty, compared with about six-in-ten adults ages 30 to 49 (58%) and those 65 and older (60%). Adults ages 50 to 64 are most supportive of the death penalty, with 69% in favor.

Ideological divides in views of the death penalty, particularly among Democrats

% who ___ the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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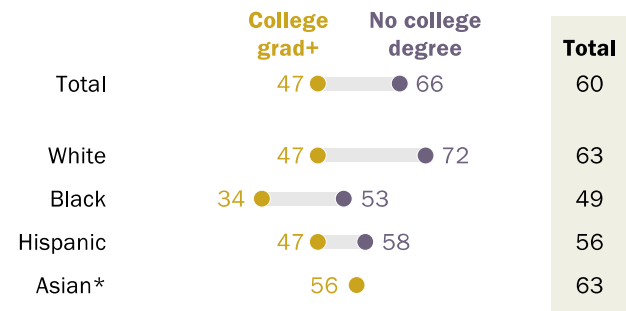
There are differences in attitudes by education, as well. Nearly seven-in-ten adults (68%) who have not attended college favor the death penalty, as do 63% of those who have some college experience but no degree.

About half of those with four-year undergraduate degrees but no postgraduate experience (49%) support the death penalty. Among those with postgraduate degrees, a larger share say they oppose (55%) than favor (44%) the death penalty.

The divide in support for the death penalty between those with and without college degrees is seen across racial and ethnic groups, though the size of this gap varies. A large majority of White adults without college degrees (72%) favor the death penalty, compared with about half (47%) of White adults who have degrees. Among Black adults, 53% of those without college degrees favor the death penalty, compared with 34% of those with college degrees. And while a majority of Hispanic adults without college degrees (58%) say they favor the death penalty, a smaller share (47%) of those with college degrees say this.

Non-college White, Black and Hispanic adults more supportive of death penalty

% who favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Asian adults without college degrees not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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Intraparty differences in support for the death penalty

Republicans are consistently more likely than Democrats to favor the death penalty, though there are divisions within each party by age as well as by race and ethnicity.

Republicans ages 18 to 34 are less likely than other Republicans to say they favor the death penalty. Just over six-in-ten Republicans in this age group (64%) say this, compared with about eight-in-ten Republicans ages 35 and older.

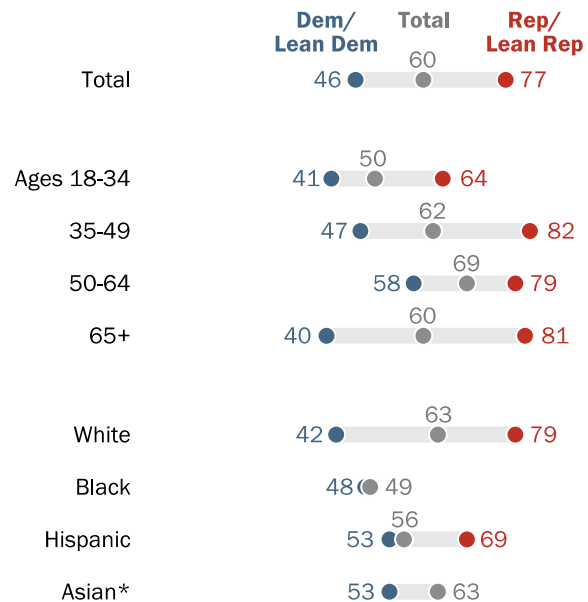
Among Democrats, adults ages 50 to 64 are much more likely than adults in other age groups to favor the death penalty. A 58% majority of 50- to 64-year-old Democrats favor the death penalty, compared with 47% of those ages 35 to 49 and about four-in-ten Democrats who are 18 to 34 or 65 and older.

Overall, White adults are more likely to favor the death penalty than Black or Hispanic adults, while White and Asian American adults are equally likely to favor the death penalty. However, White Democrats are less likely to favor the death penalty than Black, Hispanic or Asian Democrats. About half of Hispanic (53%), Asian (53%) and Black (48%) Democrats favor the death penalty, compared with 42% of White Democrats.

About eight-in-ten White Republicans favor the death penalty, as do about seven-in-ten Hispanic Republicans (69%).

Partisan gap in views of death penalty is widest among adults 65 and older

% who favor the death penalty for persons convicted of murder



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Black and Asian Republicans not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

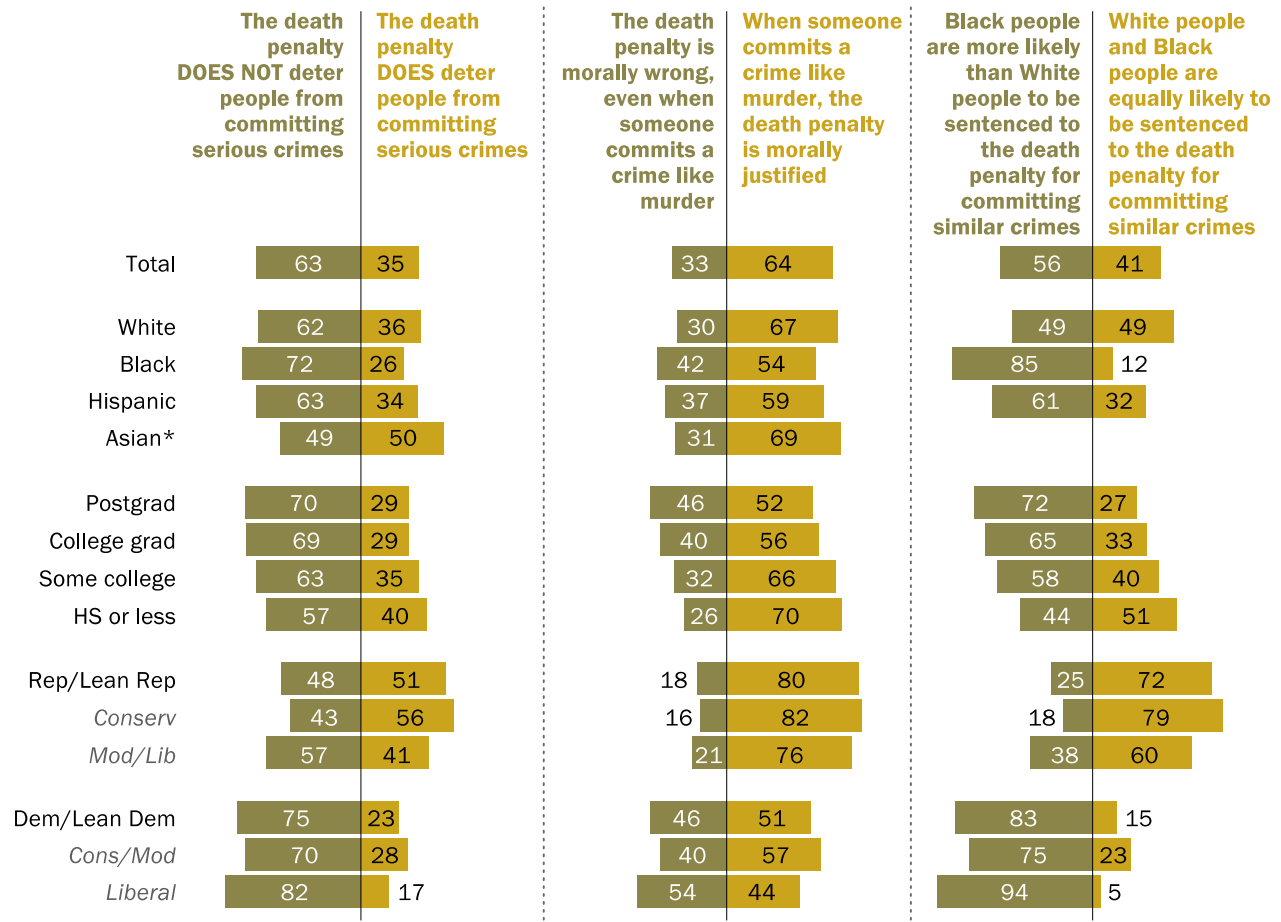
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Differences by race and ethnicity, education over whether there are racial disparities in death penalty sentencing

There are substantial demographic differences in views of whether death sentencing is applied fairly across racial groups. While 85% of Black adults say Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to death for committing similar crimes, a narrower majority of Hispanic adults (61%) and about half of White adults (49%) say the same. People with four-year college

Overwhelming majority of Black adults see racial disparities in death penalty sentencing, as do a smaller majority of Hispanic adults; White adults are divided

% who say ...



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Asian adults not shown for all questions due to form splitting. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

degrees (68%) also are more likely than those who have not completed college (50%) to say that Black people and White people are treated differently when it comes to the death penalty.

About eight-in-ten Democrats (83%), including fully 94% of liberal Democrats and three-quarters of conservative and moderate Democrats, say Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to death for committing the same type of crime – a view shared by just 25% of Republicans (18% of conservative Republicans and 38% of moderate and liberal Republicans).

Across educational and racial or ethnic groups, majorities say that the death penalty does not deter serious crimes, although there are differences in how widely this view is held. About seven-in-ten (69%) of those with college degrees say this, as do about six-in-ten (59%) of those without college degrees. About seven-in-ten Black adults (72%) and narrower majorities of White (62%) and Hispanic (63%) adults say the same. Asian American adults are more divided, with half saying the death penalty deters serious crimes and a similar share (49%) saying it does not.

Among Republicans, a narrow majority of conservative Republicans (56%) say the death penalty does deter serious crimes, while a similar share of moderate and liberal Republicans (57%) say it does not.

A large majority of liberal Democrats (82%) and a smaller, though still substantial, majority of conservative and moderate Democrats (70%) say the death penalty does not deter serious crimes. But Democrats are divided over whether the death penalty is morally justified. A majority of conservative and moderate Democrats (57%) say that a death sentence is morally justified when someone commits a crime like murder, compared with fewer than half of liberal Democrats (44%).

There is widespread agreement on one topic related to the death penalty: Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) say that there is some risk an innocent person will be put to death, including large majorities among various racial or ethnic, educational, and even ideological groups. For example, about two-thirds of conservative Republicans (65%) say this – compared with 34% who say there are adequate safeguards to ensure that no innocent person will be executed – despite conservative Republicans expressing quite favorable attitudes toward the death penalty on other questions.

Overwhelming share of death penalty supporters say it is morally justified

Those who favor the death penalty consistently express more favorable attitudes regarding specific aspects of the death penalty than those who oppose it.

For instance, nine-in-ten of those who favor the death penalty also say that the death penalty is morally justified when someone commits a crime like murder. Just 25% of those who oppose the death penalty say it is morally justified.

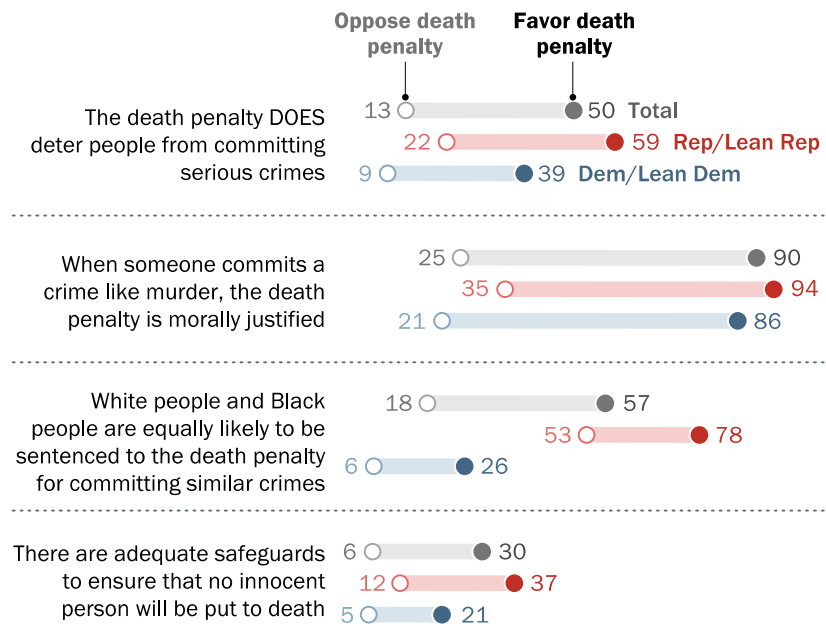
This relationship holds among members of each party. Among Republicans and Republican leaners who favor the death penalty, 94% say it is morally justified; 86% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who favor the death penalty also say this.

By comparison, just 35% of Republicans and 21% of Democrats who oppose the death penalty say it is morally justified.

Similarly, those who favor the death penalty are more likely to say it deters people from committing serious crimes. Half of those who favor the death penalty say this, compared with 13% of those who oppose it. And even though large majorities of both groups say there is some risk an innocent person will be put to death, members of the public who favor the death penalty are 24 percentage points more likely to say that there are adequate safeguards to prevent this than Americans who oppose the death penalty.

Support for death penalty is strongly associated with belief that it is morally justified for crimes like murder

Among those who oppose/favor the death penalty, % who say ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

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On the question of whether Black people and White people are equally likely to be sentenced to death for committing similar crimes, partisanship is more strongly associated with these views than one's overall support for the death penalty: Republicans who *oppose* the death penalty are more likely than Democrats who *favor* it to say White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to death.

Among Republicans who favor the death penalty, 78% say that Black and White people are equally likely to receive this sentence. Among Republicans who oppose the death penalty, about half (53%) say this. However, just 26% of Democrats who favor the death penalty say that Black and White people are equally likely to receive this sentence, and only 6% of Democrats who oppose the death penalty say this.

CORRECTION (Jul 13, 2021): The following sentence was updated to reflect the correct timespan: "Last year, in part because of the coronavirus outbreak, fewer people were executed than in any year in nearly three decades." The changes did not affect the report's substantive findings.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted April 5 to 11, 2021, and included oversamples of Asian, Black and Hispanic Americans. A total of 5,109 panelists responded out of 5,970 who were sampled, for a response rate of 86%. This does not include two panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 2%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,109 respondents is plus or minus 2.1 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish.

Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,183
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,243
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	620
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	5,895
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	2,327
June 1 to July 19, 2020	ABS/web	1,865	1,636	1,269
	Total	36,879	25,076	13,537

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Across these three address-based recruitments, a total of 17,161 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 15,134 (88%) agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 25,076 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,537 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.¹ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older, living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii.

This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sample was allocated according to the following strata, in order: Asian Americans (including those who identify as Asian in combination with another race), Black Americans (including those who identify as Black in combination with another race), U.S.-born Hispanics, foreign-born Hispanics, tablet households, high school education or less, not registered to vote, people ages 18 to 34, uses internet weekly or less, nonvolunteers, and all other categories not already falling into any of the above.

The Asian, Black, U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanic strata were oversampled relative to their share of the U.S. adult population. The remaining strata were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

test data which was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was April 5 to 11, 2021. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on April 5, 2021.

On April 5 and April 6, invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on April 5, 2021. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on April 6, 2021.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	April 5, 2021	April 6, 2021
First reminder	April 8, 2021	April 8, 2021
Final reminder	April 10, 2021	April 10, 2021

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of

this checking, two ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey (and the probability of being invited to participate in the panel in cases where only a subsample of respondents were invited). The base

weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort. To correct for nonresponse to the initial recruitment surveys and gradual panel attrition, the base weights for all active panelists are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table to create a full-panel weight.

For ATP waves in which only a subsample of panelists are invited to participate, a wave-specific base weight is created by adjusting the full-panel weights for subsampled panelists to account for any differential probabilities of selection for the particular panel wave. For waves in which all active panelists are invited to participate, the wave-specific base weight is identical to the full-panel weight.

In the final weighting step, the wave-specific base weights for panelists who completed the survey are again calibrated to match the population benchmarks specified above. These weights are trimmed (typically at about the 1st and 99th percentiles) to reduce the loss in precision stemming

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2019 American Community Survey
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2020 National Public Opinion Reference Survey
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. The 2016 CPS was used for voter registration targets for this wave in order to obtain voter registration numbers from a presidential election year. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population. The 2020 National Public Opinion Reference Survey featured 1,862 online completions and 2,247 mail survey completions.

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from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,109		2.1 percentage points
Half sample	At least 2,545		3.0 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,706	43	3.4 percentage points
Half sample	At least 824		4.8 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	3,253	52	2.8 percentage points
Half sample	At least 1,612		3.9 percentage points
White	1,886	62	2.8 percentage points
Black	938	12	5.3 percentage points
Hispanic	1,668	17	5.1 percentage points
Asian*	352	6	8.9 percentage points

*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. This survey includes oversamples of Asian, Black and Hispanic respondents. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,109
Logged onto survey; broke-off	2.12	85
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	38
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	736
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		2
Screened out		0
Total panelists in the survey		5,970
Completed interviews	I	5,109
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	859
Non-contact	NC	2
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		5,970
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		86%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	72%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 87	57%
Response rate to Wave 87 survey	86%
Cumulative response rate	4%

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**2021 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 87 APRIL 2021
APRIL 5-11, 2021
N=5,109**

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

DTHPNLTY

Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

	-----FAVOR-----			-----OPPOSE-----			No answer
	NET	<i>Strongly favor</i>	<i>Somewhat favor</i>	NET	<i>Strongly oppose</i>	<i>Somewhat oppose</i>	
Apr 5-11, 2021	60	27	32	39	15	24	1
July 27-Aug 2, 2020	65	30	35	34	14	20	1
Jan 6-19, 2020	62	30	32	36	15	21	2
Sep 3-15, 2019	65	32	33	34	19	15	1

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

	-----FAVOR-----			-----OPPOSE-----			(VOL.) DK/Ref
	<u>Total</u>	<i>Strongly favor</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<u>Total</u>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	
July 23-Aug 4, 2020	52	20	31	44	19	25	5
Jan 8-13, 2020	53	28	25	42	19	24	5
Sep 5-16, 2019	55	27	28	40	16	24	5
Apr 25-May 1, 2018	54	23	30	39	13	26	7
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	49	21	27	42	14	28	9
Mar 25-29, 2015	56	23	34	38	13	24	6
Nov 9-14, 2011	62	28	34	31	11	20	7
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011 ²	58	--	--	36	--	--	6
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	62	30	32	30	10	20	8
August, 2007	62	29	33	32	11	21	6
Early January, 2007	64	30	34	29	11	18	7
March, 2006	65	27	38	27	8	19	8
December, 2005	62	--	--	30	--	--	8
Mid-July, 2003	64	28	36	30	10	20	6
March, 2002	67	33	34	26	9	17	7
March, 2001	66	30	36	27	10	17	7
September, 1999	74	41	33	22	7	15	4
June, 1996	78	43	35	18	7	11	4

² In all surveys October 2011 and before, the question was asked as part of a list, except in November-December 2005.

ASK ALL; SHOW INTRO TEXT AND DTHPNLYA-DTHPNLYD ON SAME SCREEN USING VISUAL DIVIDER BETWEEN EACH VARIABLE:

Next are a few pairs of statements about the death penalty in the U.S. Please choose the statement that comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right. **[RANDOMIZE THE ORDER OF PAIRS AND RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS WITHIN PAIRS].**

[Please select one item from each pair]

ASK ALL:

DTHPNLYA

	The death penalty deters people from committing <u>serious crimes</u>	The death penalty does NOT deter people from committing <u>serious crimes</u>	No answer	
Apr 5-11, 2021	35	63	2	
Jan 6-19, 2020	36	62	2	
<i>Phone trend for comparison:</i>			(VOL.) <u>Depends</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jan 8-13, 2020	38	59	1	2
Mar 25-29, 2015	35	61	1	3

ASK ALL:

DTHPNLYB

	When someone commits a crime like murder, the death penalty is <u>morally justified</u>	The death penalty is morally wrong, even when someone commits <u>a crime like murder</u>	No answer	
Apr 5-11, 2021	64	33	3	
Jan 6-19, 2020	66	31	3	
<i>Phone trend for comparison:</i>			(VOL.) <u>Depends</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jan 8-13, 2020	61	32	3	3
Mar 25-29, 2015	63	31	3	3

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,545]:

DTHPNLYC

	Minorities are more likely than whites to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing <u>similar crimes</u>	Whites and minorities are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing <u>similar crimes</u>	No answer	
Apr 5-11, 2021	58	39	3	
Jan 6-19, 2020	54	44	3	
<i>Phone trend for comparison:</i>			(VOL.) <u>Depends</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jan 8-13, 2020	58	35	2	5
Mar 25-29, 2015	52	41	1	6

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=2,564]:

DTHPNLYCMOD	Black people are more likely than White people to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing <u>similar crimes</u>	White people and Black people are equally likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for committing <u>similar crimes</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Apr 5-11, 2021	56	41	3

ASK ALL:

DTHPNLYTD	There is some risk that an innocent person will <u>be put to death</u>	There are adequate safeguards to ensure that no innocent person will <u>be put to death</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Apr 5-11, 2021	78	21	2
Jan 6-19, 2020	79	19	1

<i>Phone trend for comparison:</i>			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
Jan 8-13, 2020	70	27	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 25-29, 2015	71	26	*	2

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4) OR MISSING [N=2,016]:

PARTYLN	As of today do you lean more to... ³						
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
	24	32	27	16	1	19	20

³ Party and PartyIn asked in a prior survey.