

Wisconsin Public Radio & St. Norbert College Survey Center

THE WISCONSIN SURVEY

Death Penalty

Spring 2005

Survey Information:

Number of Adult Wisconsin Resident Respondents: 400

Interview Period: April 25 – May 4, 2005

Margin of Error: +/- 5% at the 95% confidence level.

Contact:

Wendy Scattergood

Assistant Professor of Political Science, St. Norbert College Survey Center

DePere, WI 54115

(920) 403-3491

wendy.scattergood@snc.edu

- **The Majority (51%) Support the Death Penalty in Wisconsin**
- **52% Feel the Death Penalty is Morally Acceptable**

As a series of questions on the morality/immorality of different policies regarding life and death, respondents were asked about the death penalty.

- ◆ *52% said the death penalty was morally acceptable*
- ◆ *37% said it was morally wrong*
- ◆ *8% said it depended on the situation*
- ◆ *1% said it was not a moral issue*
- ◆ *2% were not sure.*

Later in the survey, they were asked,

“Currently, the state of Wisconsin does not have the death penalty. Do you think we should have the death penalty in Wisconsin for persons convicted of premeditated murder?”

<i>Yes</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>Depends on Situation (vol.)</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Refused</i>	<i>2%</i>

For those who answered “depends”, they were asked, “on what would it depend?”

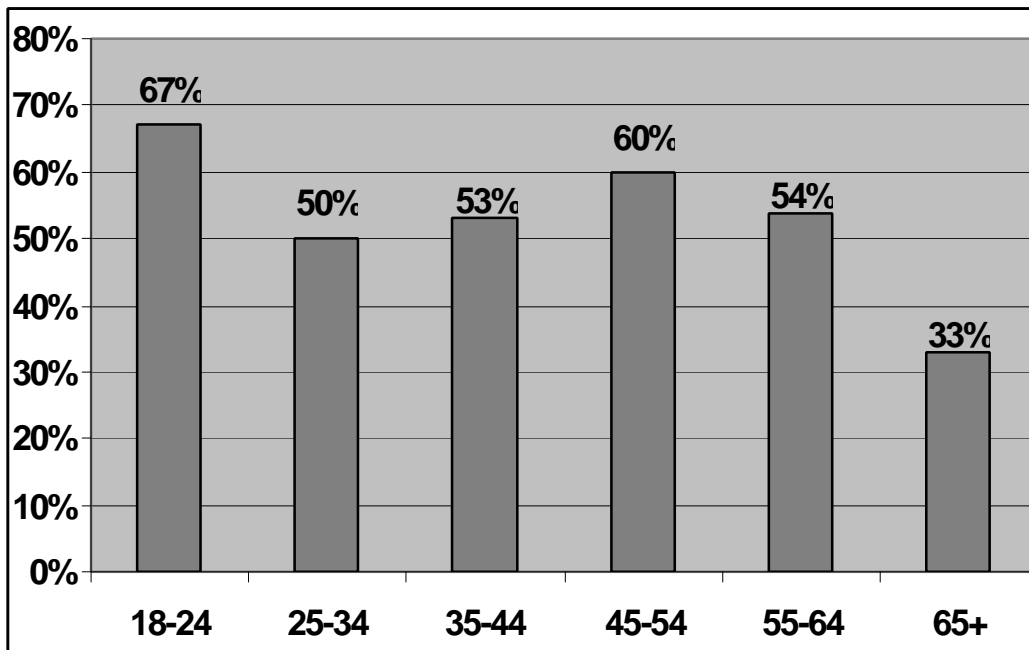
<i>Depends on the type of crime and/or circumstances</i>	36%
<i>Rape or Murder of Child</i>	20%
<i>No possibility of innocence / DNA testing</i>	16%
<i>Criminal background, other crimes committed</i>	12%
<i>Exhaust all appeals</i>	4%
<i>Carefully regulated</i>	4%
<i>No possibility of rehabilitation</i>	4%
<i>Terrorists</i>	4%

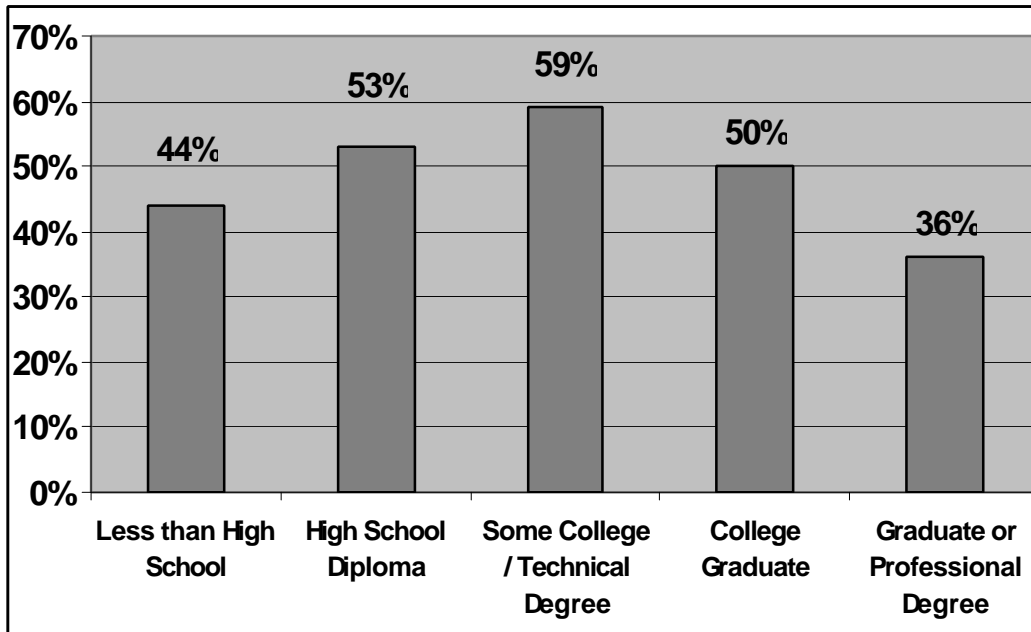
Republicans and Independents are much more likely to support the death penalty in Wisconsin than Democrats and those of other political parties. See table below.

*Percentage Within Political Party
Who Support the Death Penalty*

Republicans	63%
Independents	56%
Democrats	39%
Other	33%

Age and education were also significant, though the support for the death penalty does not follow a linear pattern. See charts below.





There was no statistically significant difference between men and women and their support for the death penalty, 52% of men support the death penalty as do 50% of women.

Religion and church attendance were also related to support for the death penalty in Wisconsin. Catholics were the least likely to support it, while those with no religious affiliation were the most likely to support the death penalty.

Those who attend church more than weekly were the least supportive, while those who never go and those who go monthly were the most supportive. See tables below.

Percentage of Each Religious Affiliation Supporting the Death Penalty

Lutheran	Other Protestant	Catholic	Other	None
53%	52%	43%	55%	70%

More than Weekly	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times Per year	Never
32%	50%	60%	46%	64%

The table below should be read for example, 22% of Lutherans who attend church more than weekly said they support the death penalty.

Lutheran	
More than Weekly	22%
Weekly	54%
Monthly	65%
A Few Times Per Year	52%
Never	63%
Other Protestant	
More than Weekly	56%
Weekly	58%
Monthly	50%
A Few Times Per Year	44%
Never	40%
Catholic	
More than Weekly	0%
Weekly	39%
Monthly	52%
A Few Times Per Year	49%
Never	63%
Other	
More than Weekly	50%
Weekly	62%
Monthly	86%
A Few Times Per Year	29%
Never	78%
None	
More than Weekly	NA
Weekly	NA
Monthly	NA
A Few Times Per Year	100%
Never	67%

Demographics of Religious Affiliation and Church Attendance of Respondents

Which of the following best describes your religious preference?

Lutheran	.....	30%
Other Protestant	.....	18%
Catholic	.....	33%
Jewish	.....	<1%
Other	.....	13%
None	.....	6%
Not Sure	.....	0%
Refused	.....	0%

On average, how often would you say you currently go to church?

More than Weekly	.....	8%
Weekly	.....	39%
Monthly	.....	16%
A Few Times per Year	.....	24%
Never	.....	13%
Not Sure	.....	1%
Refused	.....	0%