

LAY OF THE LAND & BASELINE ATTITUDES

Q1. In your opinion, how important is it to reduce the number of people who are in prison in Connecticut today? Is it...

Very important	25
Somewhat important	39
Not very important	23
Not at all important	11
Don't know	3
IMPORTANT	63
NOT IMPORTANT	34

Asked of ½ sample

Q2. Which statement do you agree with more?

People who have been convicted of a crime are unlikely to change and will almost always be a danger to society.	22
People who have been convicted of a crime can turn their lives around and become productive members of our community if they can get the right kind of help.	77
Don't know	1

Asked of other ½ sample

Q3. Which statement do you agree with more?

People who have been convicted of a violent crime are unlikely to change and will almost always be a danger to society.	32
People who have been convicted of a violent crime can turn their lives around and become productive members of our community if they can get the right kind of help.	65
Don't know	3

Q4. Which of the following comes closer to your view?

It's just too risky for landlords, insurance companies and business owners to rent, provide services to or hire someone with a criminal record and they should be allowed to turn those people down without question.	15
Everyone deserves a second chance and a person's record of arrest or conviction alone does not tell you whether they will be a good employee, neighbor, or insurance policy holder.	82
Don't know	2

Q5. Which of the following comes closer to your view?

The purpose of our criminal justice system is to punish people.	14
The purpose of our criminal justice system is to deter people from committing crime.	43
The purpose of our criminal justice system is to get offenders back on a path to being good, law-abiding people.	42
Don't know	1

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ATTITUDES

Now I'm going to read you a list of statements that someone could make. After each one, please tell me if you agree or disagree with that statement.

	Strongly agree	Smwt agree	Smwt disagree	Strongly disagree	DK	TOTAL AGREE	TOTAL DISAGREE
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q13. People who have been convicted of a crime and have served their sentence should have a fair shot at getting their lives back on track without having their prison sentence held against them. Everyone deserves a second chance, even those who have been convicted of a crime.	40	45	7	8	0	85	15
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q6. The main purpose of prison should be to rehabilitate people so they can successfully reenter society and not commit crimes again in the future.	43	40	9	7	0	84	16
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q8. The main purpose of prison should be to act as a deterrent so that people know that if they commit a crime, there will be a price to pay.	46	34	12	8	0	80	20
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q9. We send too many people to prison for minor offenses and when they finally get released, they struggle to get steady jobs and housing because having served time suggests they've done something much worse than they have.	42	33	17	8	1	74	25
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q10. Once someone has been imprisoned and earned their chance to reenter society, we should be setting them up for success, no matter what crime they were arrested for or convicted of.	30	44	17	8	1	74	25
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q7. The main purpose of prison should be to punish those who have been convicted of a crime.	27	36	25	11	0	63	36
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q11. People who have committed crimes should be able to get a job like everyone else and we shouldn't let employers discriminate against them, but for landlords, it's just too much of a risk to rent a property to someone with a criminal record.	10	35	36	19	1	45	55
<i>Asked of ½ sample</i>							
Q12. It's just too much of a risk for landlords to rent a property to someone with a criminal record.	5	23	47	24	0	28	71

POLICY SUPPORT – CLEAN SLATE / ERASURE

Switching gears slightly...

Q20. To the best of your knowledge, please tell me which of the following best describes what it means when someone who once had a criminal record has been granted a clean slate?

The person's criminal conviction is removed from a criminal record electronic database and will not show up if an employer conducts a background check, and the person can say they have no criminal record.	51
The person's criminal record is hidden from public view, but any employer who conducts professional background checks can still access this information.	46
Don't know	3

Q21. In general, do you support or oppose laws that allow people who have been convicted of crimes to have their criminal records automatically erased by authorities after five years? A person would only be granted this clean slate if they have not engaged in any new criminal activity.

Strongly support	20
Somewhat support	40
Somewhat oppose	25
Strongly oppose	13
Don't know	2
SUPPORT	60
OPPOSE	38

Q22. Currently, the state of Connecticut has no automatic erasure “clean slate” law. Instead, it allows for people to apply for a pardon, but the process is very difficult, regardless of how big or small the crime committed was.

In your view, how important is it for the state legislature to pass a law that would automatically erase criminal records and prevent discrimination against former offenders when they seek out things like housing, insurance, education and employment? Is it...

Very important	22
Somewhat important	42
Not very important	21
Not at all important	14
Don't know	1
IMPORTANT	64
NOT IMPORTANT	35

Now I'm going to read you a list of a few different proposals that have been put forward to prevent discrimination against people who have a criminal record when they seek out things like housing, insurance, education and employment. After each one, I'll ask whether you support or oppose the proposal.

Asked of 1/2 sample

Q23. Do you support or oppose the following proposal?

Pass a law that prohibits discrimination based on a person's record of arrest or conviction in employment, housing, public education, insurance, credit, and other public programs and also penalizes those who have discriminated against them.

Strongly support	20
Somewhat support	37
Somewhat oppose	27
Strongly oppose	14
Don't know	2
SUPPORT	57
OPPOSE	40

CLEAN SLATE POLICY ARGUMENTATION

Asked of ½ sample

Q30. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Clean slate laws are dangerous. Having a criminal conviction tells you something important about a person and that information should be available to employers, businesses and landlords so they can protect themselves. Many people go on to commit other crimes after they have been released from jail. Ordinary citizens have a right to know if they are at risk. Having a criminal record is just the price you pay for breaking the law.	44
Many people are unable to escape the stigma of a criminal conviction even for small offenses, but people who have done their time deserve a second chance. Clearing people's past convictions after a certain number of years without recommitting a crime helps reduce crime by helping them become contributing members of society and making it less likely that they will reoffend.	55
Don't know	2

Asked of other ½ sample

Q31. Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Clean slate laws are dangerous. A criminal conviction is something that should stay with an offender for life. After all, victims of crimes and their loved ones have to live with the trauma of the crime for their whole lives. Their memories shouldn't be erased and neither should the record of someone's actions. If you break the law you pay a price, and offenders must live with the consequences of their own actions.	32
Many people are unable to escape the stigma of a criminal conviction even for small offenses, but people who have done their time deserve a second chance. Clearing people's convictions if they abide by the law for five years helps reduce crime by helping them become contributing members of society, getting them back on their feet financially and making it less likely that they will reoffend.	66
Don't know	1

MESSAGING / PROOF POINTS FOR CLEAN SLATE

Next I'm going to read you a few statements someone could make about the criminal justice system in Connecticut. After each one, please tell me how convincing of a reason it is to **support** a law that would prevent discrimination against people who have been previously convicted of a crime when they seek out things like housing, insurance, education and employment.

	Very Conv	Smwt Conv	Not Very Conv	Not at All Conv	DK	Total Conv	Total Not Conv
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q34. Nationwide, 95% of people who are incarcerated will return to society. For too many, there are simply no options for the necessities of life, such as housing and employment, if they have a criminal conviction on their record. We need to give them a fair chance to support themselves and their families by protecting them against discrimination because of their past.	35	46	11	8	1	81	19
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q32. Some of America's biggest companies, including Coca Cola, CVS and Ben and Jerry's have signed pledges to give those with criminal records a fair chance at employment because they recognize the important contributions these workers can make. The US military has found that those with felony records who have enlisted have a greater likelihood of being promoted to sergeant than others.	31	48	17	4	0	79	21
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q33. Parents who have served their time deserve a fair chance at being able to support their family and create a better life for themselves. But too often, a criminal record means moms and dads are unable to get the work or housing they need to support their kids, or are unable to return to their family homes because of restrictions. These kids have been through enough and we shouldn't be punishing them further by refusing to give their parents a fair shot.	28	51	16	5	0	79	21
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q36. Giving formerly incarcerated people the chance to have a clean slate helps to reduce crime by enabling them to get jobs, support themselves and their families, and become contributing members of society, which also makes it less likely that they will reoffend.	29	43	20	8	0	72	28
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q35. Because of legal barriers to employment and stereotypes, the unemployment rate among formerly incarcerated people is 27%. That's six times the general unemployment rate in Connecticut and higher than levels of unemployment during the Great Depression.	25	46	20	7	2	71	27
<i>Asked of 1/2 sample</i>							
Q37. California, Utah and Pennsylvania have all passed a version of clean slate laws that allow a person to either have their criminal conviction removed from a criminal record database or hidden from public view if they meet certain criteria, such as going for a number of years without committing another crime. Connecticut should join these states in being leaders in criminal justice reform.	26	43	18	11	1	69	30

DEMOGRAPHICS

Thank you for your time so far. The following questions are for statistical purposes only.

- D1.** Have you, personally, ever been the victim of a crime? [IF YES: Were you physically harmed, or threatened with physical harm?]

Yes, victim of a crime but NOT threatened with physical harm	18
Yes, victim of a crime and threatened with physical harm	15
No	66
Don't know/Refused	2
TOTAL YES	32

- D2.** Do you personally know anyone who has been sent to jail, prison, or another type of correctional facility? [IF YES: Is this person an immediate family member, a friend, or an acquaintance who you only distantly know?]

Yes, family member	25
Yes, friend	17
Yes, acquaintance	24
Yes, prefer not to answer	6
No	42
Don't know/ Refused	0
TOTAL YES	58

- Y2.** What is the last grade or level of school you have completed?

Less than high school diploma	1
High school graduate	11
Some college - but less than two years of college	15
Some college - two years or more/A.A. degree	17
College graduate/bachelor's degree/B.A./B.S.	29
Postgraduate courses	7
Postgraduate Degree (JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D, etc.)	19
Don't know/None specified	0
NON-COLLEGE	44
COLLEGE+	55

Y3. Do you have children age 18 or under living with you at home?

Yes	27
No	72
Don't know/None specified	0

QS20. Do you live in a city, a suburb just outside a city, or a less developed or rural area that is not near a city?

City	22
Suburb	61
More rural, less developed	16
Don't know/Refused	1

Y5. Do you generally consider yourself...?

Very liberal	13
Somewhat liberal	17
Moderate	36
Somewhat conservative	21
Very conservative	11
Don't know/None specified	2
LIBERAL	30
MODERATE	36
CONSERVATIVE	32

QS7. What is your current age?

18-34	20
35-49	24
50-64	29
65+	27

QS19. For statistical purposes only, which of the following ethnic groups describes you?

White	80
Non-white	20

QS5. GENDER:

Male	46
Female	54
Non-binary / Other	0

CA1. Party Registration

Democrat	40
Independent	35
Republican	25

SCREENERS

QS8A. Regardless of how you are registered, do you consider yourself a strong Democrat, a weak Democrat, a strong Republican, a weak Republican, or an Independent?

Strong Democrat	25
Weak Democrat	11
Strong Republican	18
Weak Republican	7
Independent	38
Other	1
Don't know	0
DEM	37
REP	25
IND	38

Among Independents

QS8B. Which of the following statements would you say best describes you?

You almost always vote for Democratic candidates	13
You vote for Democrats more often than you vote for Republicans	25
You vote for Republicans more often than you vote for Democrats	21
You almost always vote for Republican candidates	14
You vote equally for Democrats and Republicans	25
Don't know	3
LEAN DEM	37
LEAN REP	34
TRUE IND	28

QS12. I know it's a long way off, but in November of 2020 there will be an election for President, Congress, and other offices. How likely are you to vote in the 2020 election? Are you:

Absolutely certain	87
Very likely	10
Possibly will vote	3
Absolutely will not vote	0
Don't know	0