

Hello, I'm _____ of Decision Resources, Ltd., a national survey research firm located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We are conducting a survey of residents in your area and would like to ask you a few questions about several issues facing both your area and the State. Before we begin, I want to assure you all of your responses will be held strictly confidential; only summaries of the entire sample will be reported.

I would like to ask you some questions about your personal experiences with the court system....

1. Have you ever served on a jury?
2. Have you ever been a defendant or a plaintiff in a court case?
3. Have you ever testified as a witness in a court proceeding?

Now, I am going to read a list of public institutions here in Minnesota. Please tell me how much confidence you have in each of these institutions. Tell me if you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, only a little confidence, or no confidence at all. (ROTATE LIST)

4. The public schools?
5. The media?
6. The Minnesota State Legislature?
7. The medical profession?
8. The Minnesota State Courts?
9. The Governor?
10. The Minnesota Supreme Court?
11. Overall, how much do you know about the court system -- would you say you know a lot, some, a little, or nothing at all?

Two quick questions. Do you happen to know....

12. Are judges in Minnesota elected?
13. Do Minnesota judges serve for life once they are on the bench, or must they periodically seek election?

14. Thinking of the courts in your community, what is your opinion of their overall performance -- would you say their overall performance is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

I would like to read you a short list of groups of people. For each, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that the court treats that group fairly.

(ROTATE LIST)

15. White people?

16. People of color?

17. Non-English speaking people?

18. Poor people?

19. Middle class people?

20. Wealthy people?

Changing topics....

Now, I'd like to ask you how you feel about some other issues related to the courts in your community. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of these statements? Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? (ROTATE LIST)

21. Minnesota courts are free from political influence.

22. Courts protect people's constitutional rights?

23. People involved in court cases understand the court's rulings?

24. Judges treat people with respect?

25. Judges are fair in deciding cases?

26. Judges give enough attention to each case?

27. Judges decisions are influenced by the political parties in power?

28. A. Judges, who must run for election in Minnesota, are influenced by having to raise campaign funds?

B. The decisions of judges, who must run for election in Minnesota, are influenced by having to raise campaign funds?

29. Most people can afford to bring a case to court?

30. A. Courts are out of touch with what's going on in their communities?

B. Courts are in-touch with what's going on in their communities?

31. Court cases are resolved in a timely manner?

32. The court system efficiently handles cases from filing the case, to settlement or trial?

33. People who work for the court, such as court clerks, are helpful?

34. People who work for the court, such as court clerks, are courteous?

35. The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate?

Moving on....

If your case came before the court, what qualities would be most important to you that the judge possesses? (TAKE TWO)

36. _____

37. _____

I am going to read you a list of words and phrases some people use to describe judges in Minnesota courts. For each word or phrase, please tell me whether it describes Minnesota judges very well, well, not too well, or not well at all. (ROTATE LIST)

38. Impartial?

39. Qualified?

40. Responsive to public opinion?

41. Controlled by special interests?

42. Share your values?
43. Fair?
44. Political?
45. Honest and trustworthy?
46. Favor campaign donors?
47. Dedicated to facts and law?
48. What is your main source of information source about the Minnesota State Courts?

Let me read you some short statements about the Minnesota Courts and judges. For each pair of statements, please tell me which statement comes CLOSEST to your own view, even if neither one completely reflects your view.

49. A. Minnesota judges make decisions based more on facts and law.

B. Minnesota judges make decisions based more on politics and pressure from special interests.

50. A. Minnesota judges are fair and impartial.

B. Minnesota judges are not fair and impartial.

51. A. The courts are supposed to play a unique roll in our democratic system and should be free of political pressures.

B. The Minnesota State Courts are just like the Executive and Legislative branches of government and should not be free of political pressures.

52. A. Individuals or groups who give money to judicial candidates get favorable treatment.

B. Individuals and groups who give money to judicial candidates are treated the same as everyone else.

53. A. Like other elective offices, Minnesota judicial candidates should be identified on the ballot by party affiliation.

B. Since Minnesota judges are expected to be fair and impartial, judicial candidates should not be identified on the ballot by party affiliation.

The election of judges is being discussed across the nation. I would like to ask you about a concern some people have about

courts and judges. Please tell me whether it would concern you a lot, concern you a little, doesn't concern you too much, or doesn't concern you at all.

54. In some states, many Supreme Court cases involve a party who has given money to one or more of the judges hearing the case.

Moving on....

I'd like your opinion of how well some groups in the criminal justice system are doing in serving the public. For each one, tell me if they are doing an excellent job, good, only fair, or poor job in serving the public?

- 56. Elected officials who write laws?
- 57. Police and law enforcement?
- 58. Prosecutors, defense and county attorneys?
- 59. Corrections and probation authorities?
- 60. Judges?

IF "ONLY FAIR" OR "POOR," ASK:

61. What is the MAIN reason you think judges are not doing a good job?

62. Which of the following four options do you think should be the criminal justice system's top priority for dealing with crime? (ROTATE AND READ)

PREVENTION, SUCH AS YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS
REHABILITATION, SUCH AS JOB TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR OFFENDERS
PUNISHMENT, SUCH AS LONGER SENTENCES AND MORE PRISON
ENFORCEMENT, SUCH AS PUTTING MORE POLICE OFFICERS ON THE STREETS

63. Which of the following two options would you most want your tax dollars spent on: (ROTATE)

- A. Building more prisons so that more criminals can be locked up for longer periods of time?
- B. Funding programs that try to prevent crime by helping offenders find jobs or get treatment for their problems?

64. Which of the following two statements best describes your view about efforts to rehabilitate offenders: (ROTATE)

- A. Once someone turns to crime, very little can be done to turn them into productive, law-abiding citizens?

B. Given the right conditions, many offenders can turn their lives around and become law-abiding citizens?

Some states have laws requiring a prison sentence for all who are convicted of certain crimes.

65. Do you think these mandatory sentences are a good idea, or that judges should have more leeway in deciding what the punishment should be?

Some people feel current sentencing policies need to be changed. For each of the following, please tell me how important you think it is for Minnesota to make that change -- very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?
(ROTATE)

- 66. Keep those convicted of VIOLENT crimes in prison longer.
- 67. Put more NON-VIOLENT offenders into drug treatment and job and education programs instead of prison?
- 68. Reduce the size of the overall prison population?
- 69. Do more to make sure the punishment fits the crime?
- 70. Do more to ensure fairness and equality in sentencing for all groups of offenders?

The judiciary has often been called the least understood branch of government.

71. Should a greater emphasis be placed on the courts and the judicial system in elementary and secondary grades civics education in Minnesota? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?

Now, just a few more questions for statistical purposes only....

72. Did you vote in the Presidential election in 2004?	YES.....1
	NO.....2
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3

73. Which of the following categories contains your present age? (READ CATEGORIES)	18-34.....1
	35-54.....2
	55 AND OLDER.....3
	REFUSED.....4

74. In politics, do you consider your- VERY CONSERVATIVE.....1

84.	Gender [BY OBSERVATION]	MALE.....1
		FEMALE.....2
85.	Area of State [FROM LIST]	
86.	Growth Area [FROM LIST]	YES.....1
		NO.....2