

1999-2000 Public Opinion of the Courts Study

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Summary of Overall Findings

This section of the report presents the findings from both the statewide respondents and the minority respondents. Please note that the minority sample includes the 100 minority respondents specifically interviewed for this sample as well as any minority respondents that were interviewed for the statewide sample.

Some statistically significant differences are reported within this section under the heading "Other Findings;" other differences based on demographic factors (gender, income, education level, and age) are reported in the section entitled "Demographically Stratified Findings," starting on page 55. Some significant findings based on race are also found in this section.

FIGURE 1

- ◆ As may be seen in Figure 1, nearly one in five (19%) **statewide respondents** have served on a jury, and almost the same percentage (17%) of **minority respondents** have served on a jury.

Whether Respondents Have Ever Served on a Jury

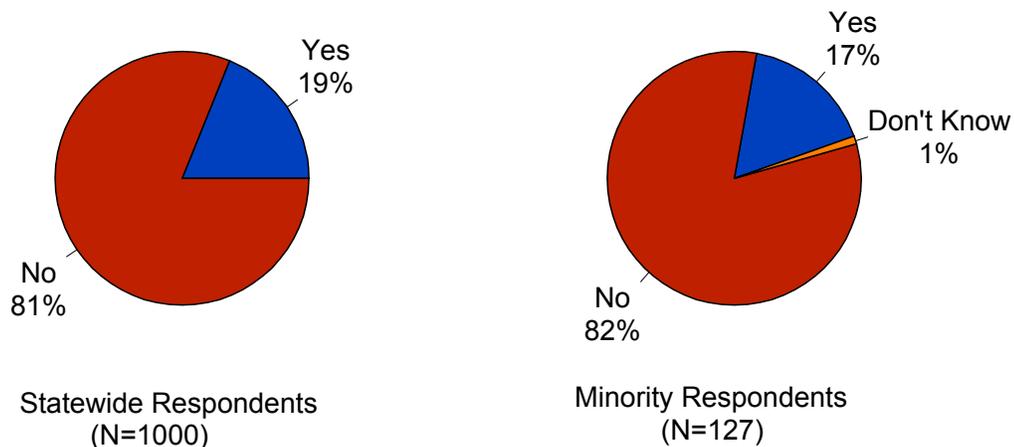
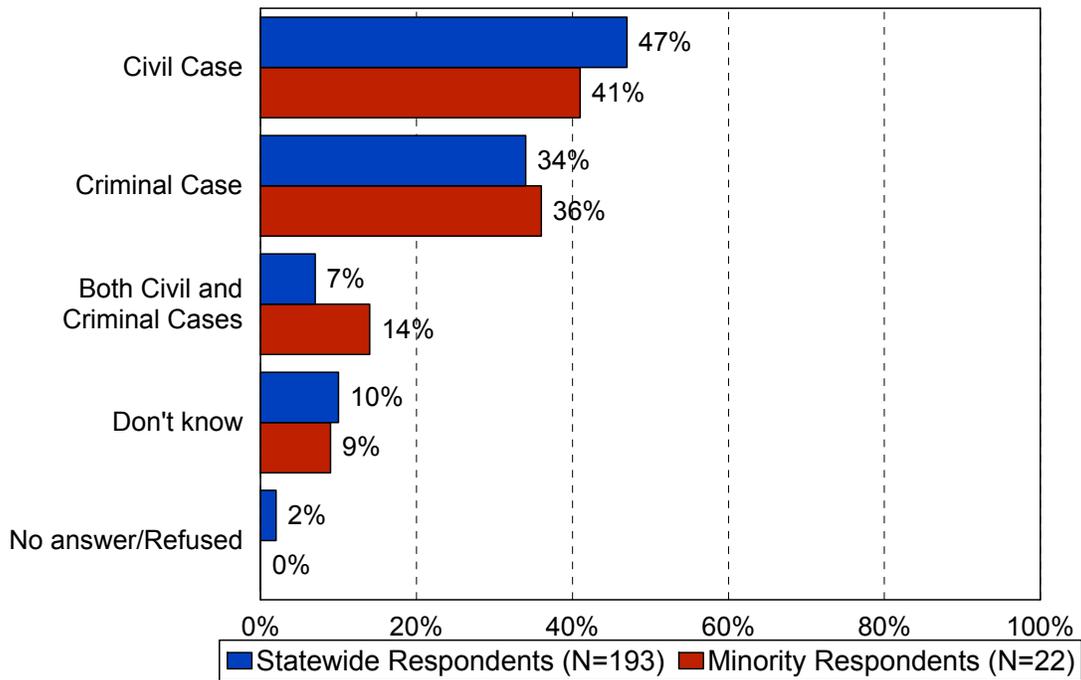


FIGURE 2

Types of Cases on Which Respondents Have Served as a Jury Member*



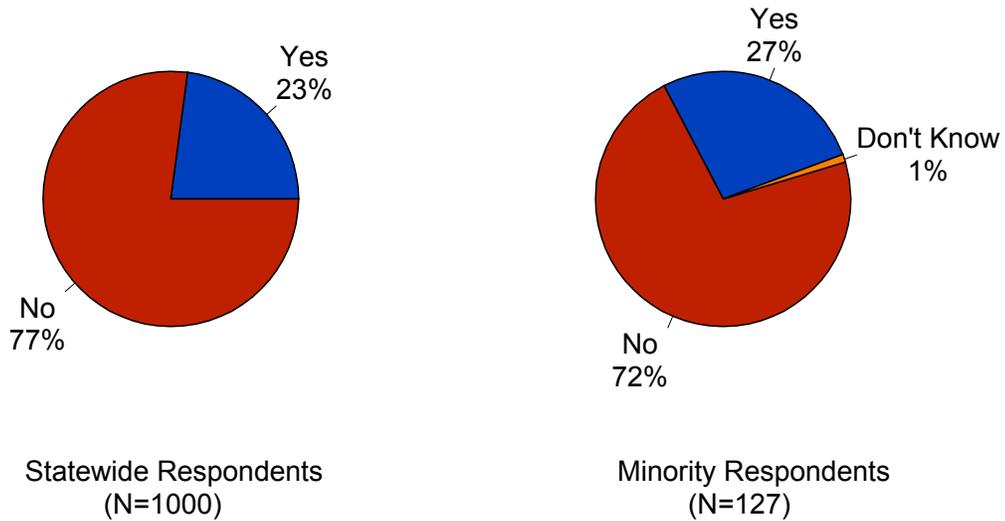
*Asked only of those respondents who have served as a jury member

- ◆ Figure 2 shows that almost half (47%) of those **statewide respondents** who have served on a jury have done so on a *civil case*, and slightly more than one-third (34%) have done so for a *criminal case*. Seven percent of the respondents have served on both a civil and a criminal case.
- ◆ Forty-one percent of the **minority respondents** who have served on a jury have served on a *civil case* and more than one-third (36%) have served as a jury member on a *criminal case*. Fourteen percent have served on both types of cases.

FIGURE 3

- ◆ Slightly less than one-quarter (23%) of **statewide respondents** have been a *plaintiff* or a *defendant* in a court case (Figure 3).

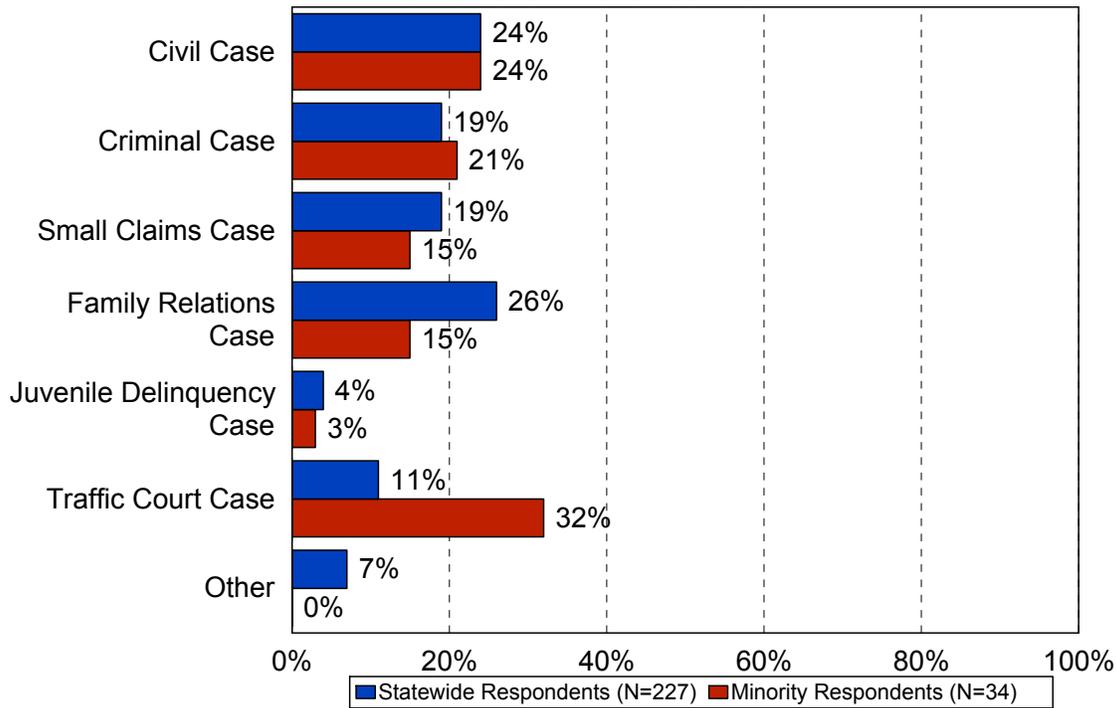
Whether Respondents Have Ever Been a Plaintiff or a Defendant in a Court Case



- ◆ Slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of **minority respondents** have been a *plaintiff* or a *defendant* in a court case.

FIGURE 4

Types of Cases in Which Respondents Have Been Plaintiffs or Defendants*



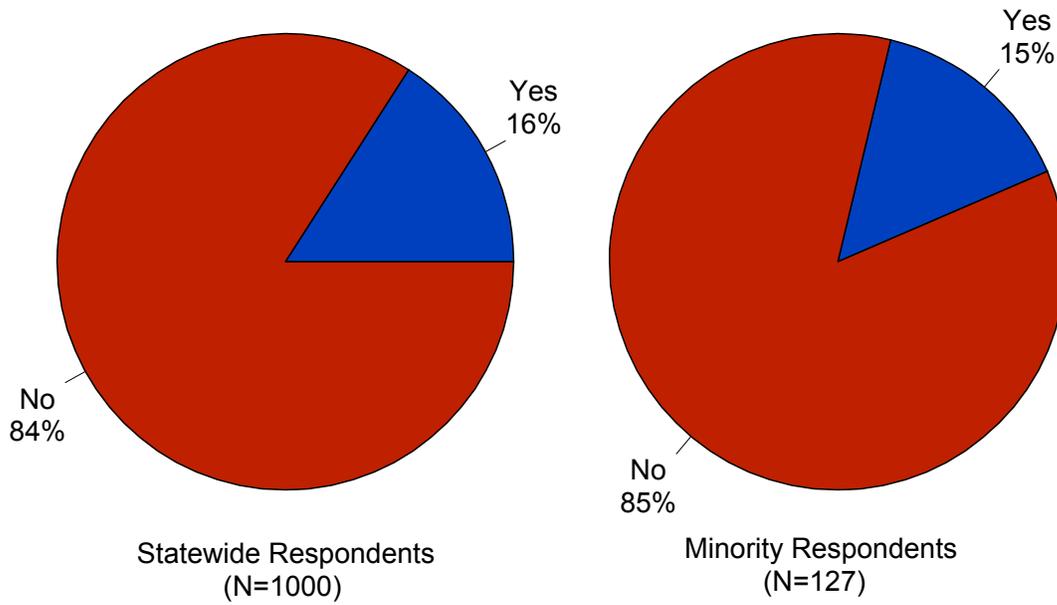
*Asked only of those respondents who have been a plaintiff or a defendant (Respondents could give more than one response)

- ◆ Of those **statewide respondents** who have been a plaintiff or a defendant in a court case, approximately one-quarter have been involved in a *family relations case* (26%) or a *civil case* (24%) (Figure 4). Nineteen percent each of the statewide respondents have been involved in a *criminal case* or a *small claims case*.
- ◆ Almost one-third of the **minority respondents** who have been a plaintiff or a defendant in a court case have been so in a *traffic court case*. Approximately one-quarter (24%) have been involved in a *civil case* and 21 percent have been involved in a *criminal case*.

FIGURE 4a

Other Types of Cases in Which Statewide Respondents have been a Defendant or Plaintiff	Number of Responses (N=2)
District, Regional and Supreme court cases	1
Worker's Compensation	1

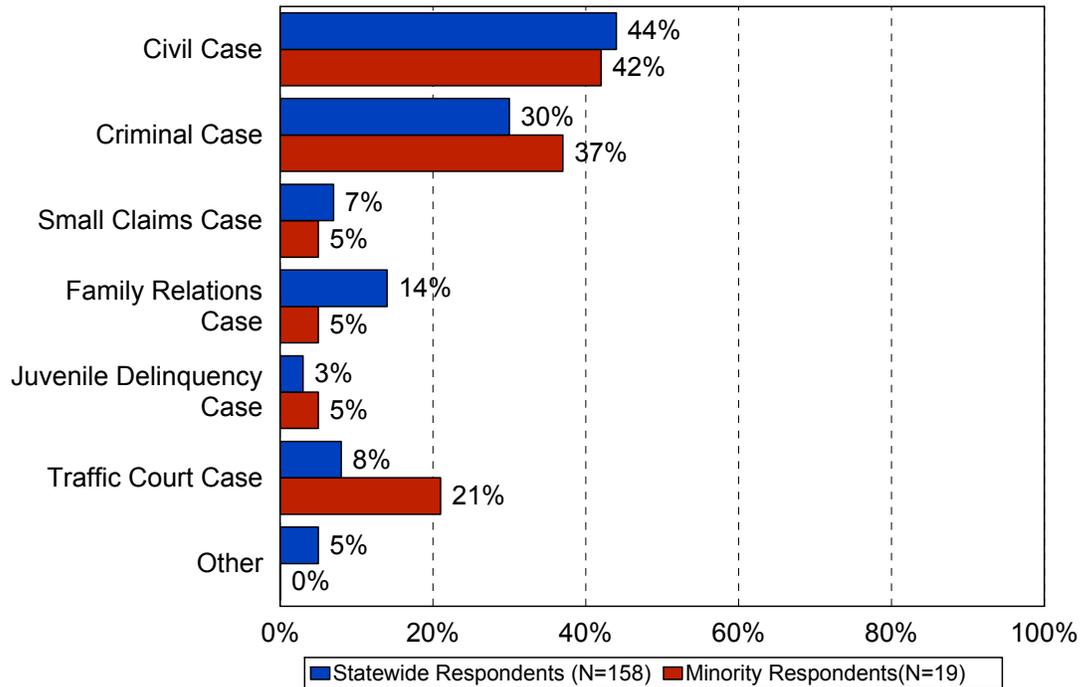
FIGURE 5
Whether Respondents Have Testified as a Witness
in a Court Proceeding



- ◆ Fewer than one in five (16%) **statewide respondents** indicated that they *have testified as a witness in a court proceeding* (Figure 5). A similar percentage (15%) of **minority respondents** have also *testified as a witness in a court proceeding*.

FIGURE 6

Types of Cases in Which Respondents Have Testified as Witnesses*



*Asked only of those respondents who have testified as a witness in a court proceeding (Respondents could give more than one response)

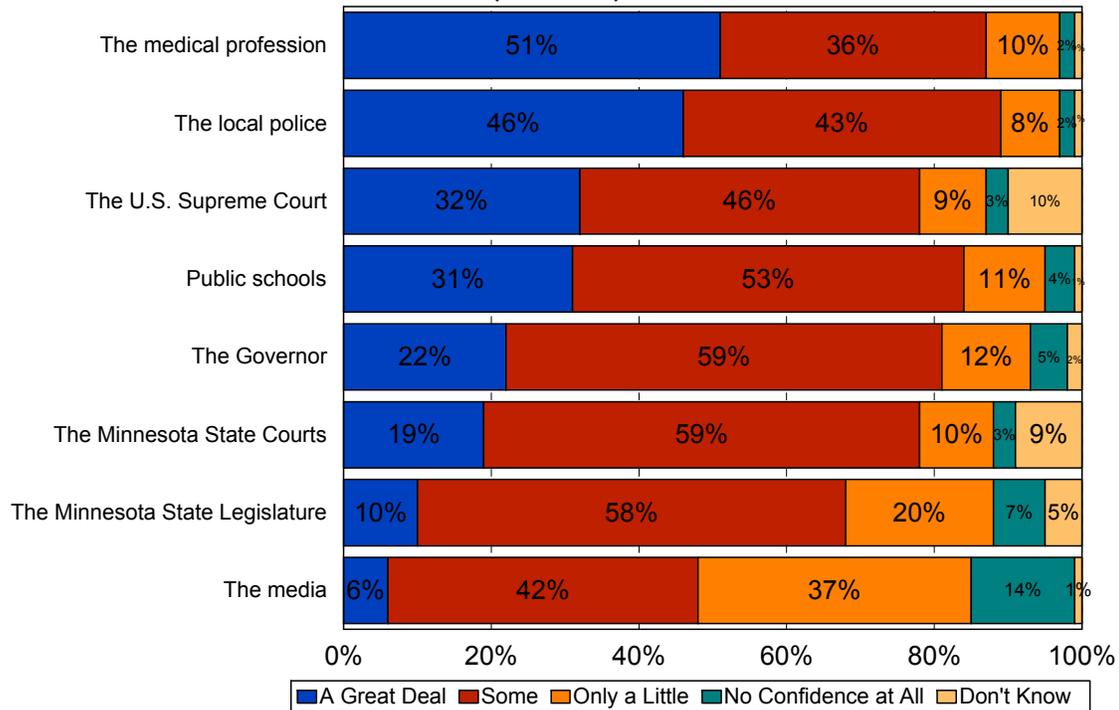
- ◆ Of the **statewide respondents** who have testified as a witness in a court case, 44 percent have testified in a *civil case*, 30 percent have testified in a *criminal case*, and another 14 percent have testified in a *family relations case* (Figure 6).
- ◆ Forty-two percent of the **minority respondents** who have testified as a witness, have done so in a *civil case*. Slightly more than one-third (37%) have testified in a *criminal case*, and 21 percent have testified as a witness in a *traffic court case*.

FIGURE 6a

Other Types of Cases in Which Statewide Respondent Have Been a Witness	Number of Statewide Respondents (N=4)
Character witness	1
Military hearing	1
Fight	1
Worker's Compensation	1

Please note that approximately 60 percent of the respondents were asked a series of questions about the **confidence** they have in American institutions and 40 percent were asked about the **trust** they have in American institutions (Figures 7 – 10).

FIGURE 7
Confidence Statewide Respondents Have
in American Institutions
 (N=357)



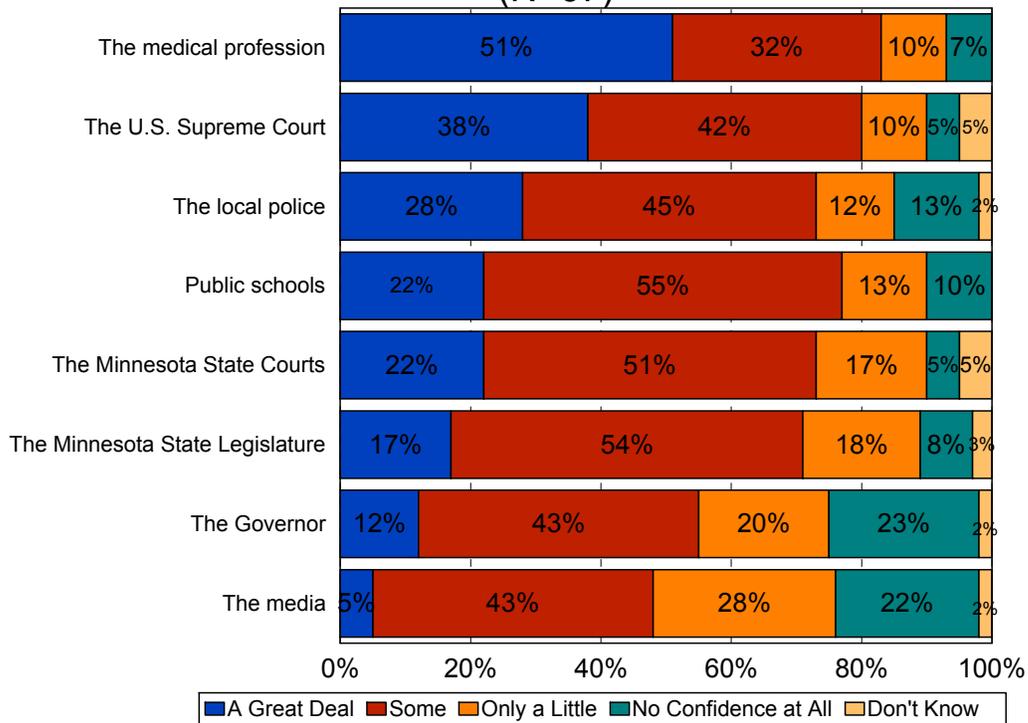
- ◆ When asked how much confidence they have in different American institutions, about half (51%) of **statewide respondents** have a *great deal of confidence* in the medical profession (Figure 7). Statewide respondents also have a *great deal of confidence* in their local police (46%).
- ◆ Approximately three-quarters (78%) of statewide respondents have a *great deal* or *some confidence* in the Minnesota State Courts. Slightly more than one in ten statewide respondents have *only a little* or *no confidence at all* in the Minnesota State Courts (13%) and the U.S. Supreme Court (12%).
- ◆ About half (51%) of statewide respondents have *only a little* or *no confidence at all* in the media. Over one-quarter (27%) have *only a little* or *no confidence at all* in the Minnesota State Legislature.

Other Findings

- ◆ Respondents from out-state urban areas have more confidence in the **governor** than do metro or rural respondents (91% a *great deal/some* confidence compared to 84% and 81%, respectively).

FIGURE 8

**Confidence Minority Respondents Have
in American Institutions
(N=67)**



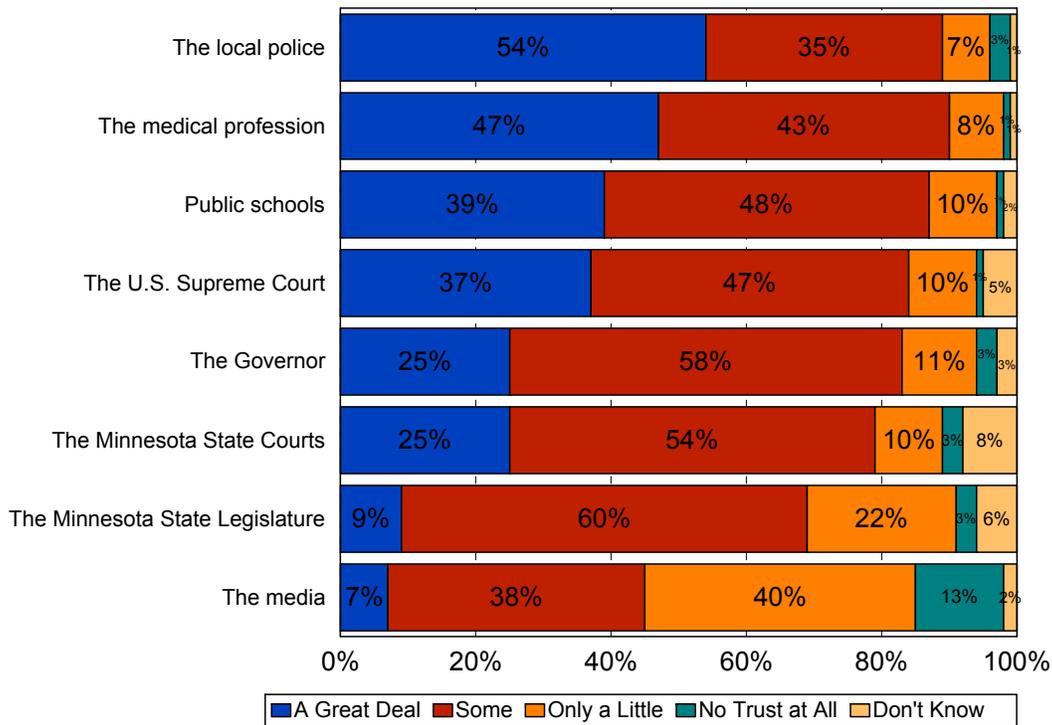
- ◆ Over half (51%) of **minority respondents** have a *great deal of confidence* in the medical profession and more than one-third (38%) have a *great deal of confidence* in the U.S. Supreme Court (Figure 8).
- ◆ Almost three-quarters (73%) of minority respondents have a *great deal or some confidence* in the Minnesota State Courts; however, 22 percent have *only a little or no confidence at all* in the Minnesota State Courts.
- ◆ Half (50%) of minority respondents have *only a little or no confidence at all* in the media and 43 percent have *only a little or no confidence at all* in the governor (43%).

Other Findings

- ◆ Significant differences based on race for questions related to confidence in American Institutions are found on page 59.

FIGURE 9

**Trust Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
(N=643)**



- ◆ When asked how much trust they have in different American institutions, slightly more than half (54%) of **statewide respondents** have a *great deal* of trust in their local police (Figure 9). Slightly less than half (47%) have a *great deal* of trust in the medical profession. Some statewide respondents also have a *great deal* of trust in the public schools (39%) and the U.S. Supreme Court (37%).
- ◆ One-quarter (25%) of the statewide respondents have a *great deal* of trust in both the governor and the Minnesota State Courts.
- ◆ Over half (53%) of statewide respondents have *only a little* or *no trust at all* in the media and one-quarter (25%) have *only a little* or *no trust at all* in the Minnesota State Legislature.

Other Findings

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ When asked how much trust they have in different American institutions, respondents with jury experience (46%) are more likely than those with no court experience (38%) to have a *great deal* of trust in the **U.S. Supreme Court**.

Respondents with Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ More respondents with no court experiences (58%) than respondents with court experience (49%) have a *great deal* of confidence in the **local police**.
- ◆ Respondents with no court experiences are also more likely than those with court experiences to have *some* trust in the **Minnesota State Legislature** (69% vs. 58%, respectively) and in the **Minnesota State Courts** (63% vs. 53%, respectively).

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with Any Other Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents with any court experience are less likely than respondents with jury experience and respondents with no court experience to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **local police** (45% vs. 59% vs. 58%, respectively) and the **medical profession** (40% vs. 52% vs. 51%, respectively).

- ◆ Respondents with jury experience or no court experience are more likely than respondents with any other court experience to have a *great deal* or *some* confidence in the following institutions:

⇒ *Minnesota State Courts (91%, 91%, and 76%, respectively)*

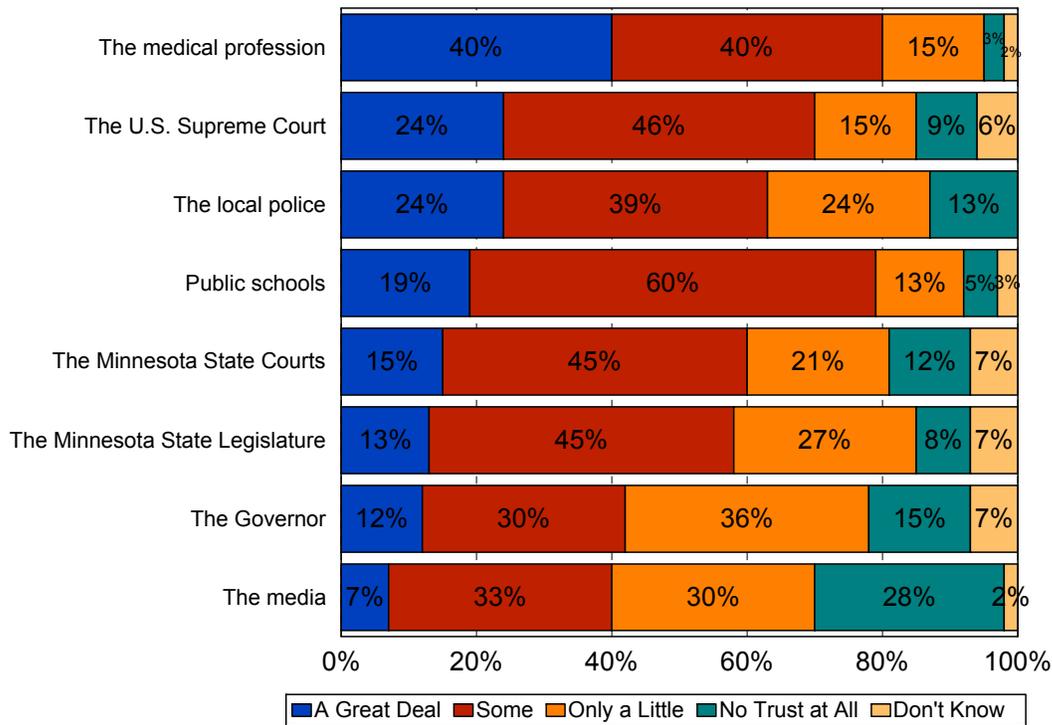
⇒ *Public Schools (96%, 86%, and 76%)*

⇒ *Minnesota State Legislature (82%, 79%, and 63%)*



FIGURE 10

**Trust Minority Respondents Have in American Institutions
(N=67)**



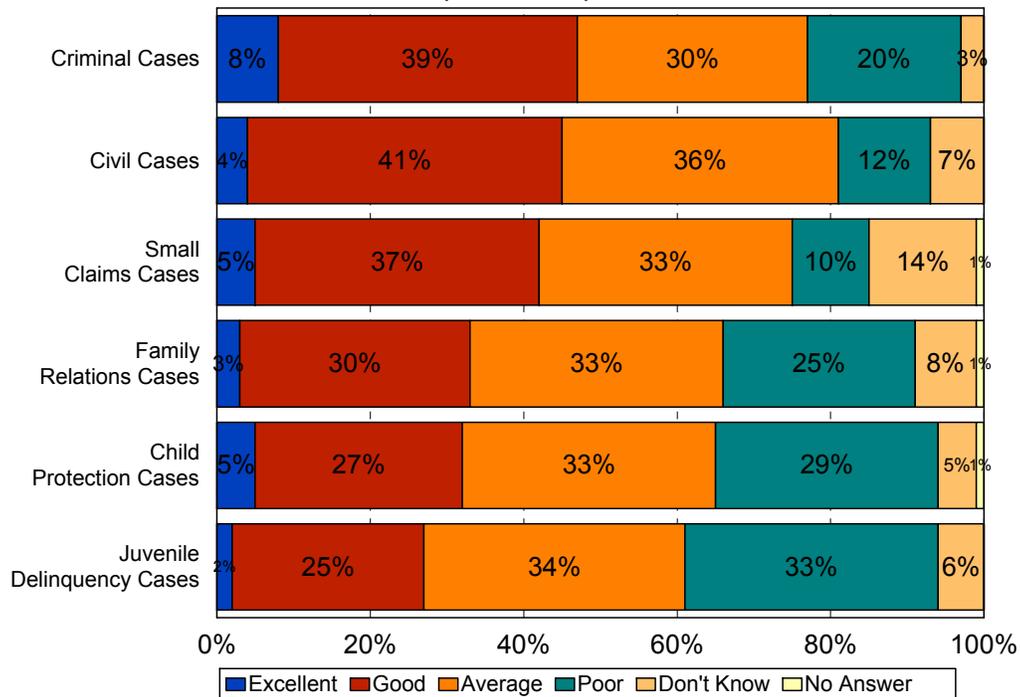
- ◆ Figure 10 shows that highest level of trust **minority respondents** have is in the medical profession; 40 percent have a *great deal* of trust in this institution.
- ◆ Slightly less than one-quarter (24%) each of minority respondents have a *great a deal* of trust in both the U.S. Supreme Court and the local police.
- ◆ While the percentage of minority respondents who have a *great deal* of trust in the public schools is only 19 percent, another 60 percent have *some* confidence in the schools.
- ◆ More than one-quarter (28%) of minority respondents have *no trust at all* in the media. More than one in ten minority respondents also indicated that they have *no trust at all* in the governor (15%), the local police (13%), and the Minnesota State Courts (12%).

Other Findings

- ◆ Significant differences based on race for questions related to trust in American institutions are found on page 64.

FIGURE 11

Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability to Handle Different Types of Cases (N=1000)



- ◆ Figure 11 shows that when asked to rate the court's ability to handle different types of cases, **statewide respondents** gave their highest ratings to the following:
 - ⇒ *Criminal cases (47% excellent/good)*
 - ⇒ *Civil cases (45%)*
 - ⇒ *Small claims cases (42%)*

- ◆ The type of cases for which statewide respondents gave their lowest rating are:
 - ⇒ *Juvenile delinquency cases (33% poor)*
 - ⇒ *Child protection cases (29%)*
 - ⇒ *Family relations cases (25%)*

- ◆ Overall, approximately one-third of statewide respondents rated the court's ability to handle all of the different types of cases as *average*.

Respondents with Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ When asked about the court's ability to handle **small claims cases**, respondents with no court experiences (16%) are more likely than those with court experiences (11%) to say they *don't know*.
- ◆ Respondents with court experience are more likely than those respondents with no court experience (24%) to rate the court's ability to handle **family relations cases** (33% vs. 24%, respectively) and **juvenile delinquency cases** as *poor* (39% vs. 31%, respectively).

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with Any Other Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

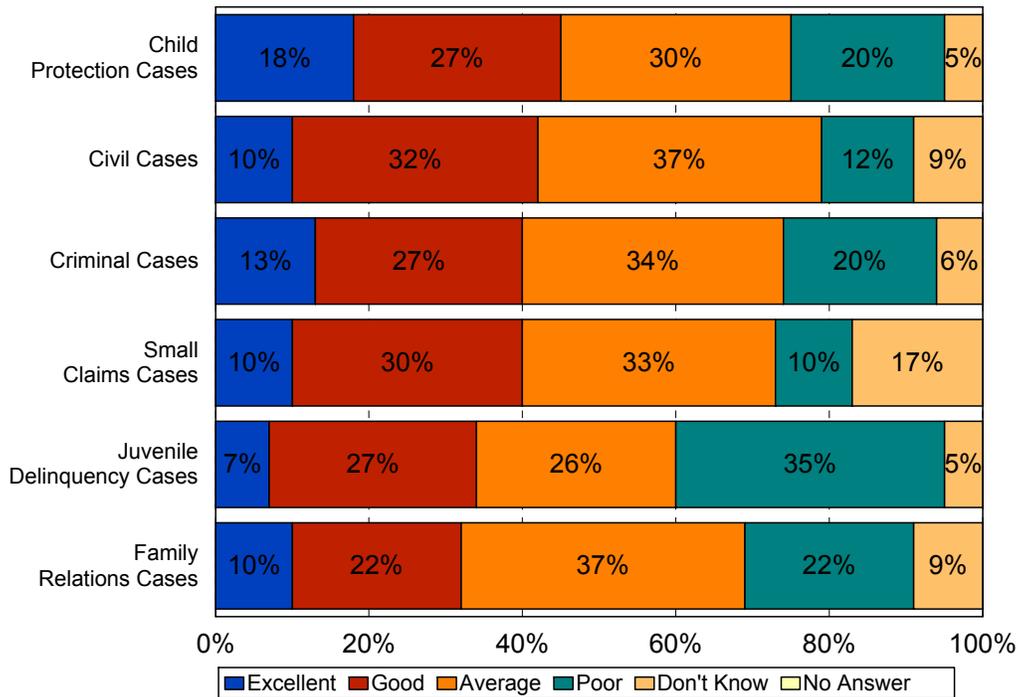
- ◆ Respondents with any other court experience (35%) are more likely than respondents with jury experience (27%) or no court experience (24%) to rate the court's ability to handle **family relations cases** as *poor*.
- ◆ Respondents with some court room experience (49%) gave higher *excellent/good* ratings for the court's ability to handle **small claims cases** than did those with jury experience (34%) and no court experience (42%). Those with some experience are least likely to say they *don't know* how to rate the court's ability with regard to these types of cases (8% vs. 18% with jury experience and 16% with no court experience).
- ◆ Respondents with some court room experience (42%) are more likely than respondents with jury experience (33%) or no court experience (31%) to rate the court's ability to handle **juvenile delinquency cases** as *poor*.

Metro Respondents vs. Rural Respondents vs. Out-State Urban Respondents

- ◆ Respondents from out-state urban areas gave a higher rating (63% *excellent/good*) to the court for their ability to handle **criminal cases** than did metro (47%) or rural (48%) respondents.
- ◆ Metro (29%) and rural respondents (29%) are more likely than out-state urban respondents (13%) to rate the court's ability to **handle family relations cases** as *poor*.



FIGURE 12
Minority Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability
to Handle Different Types of Cases
 (N=127)

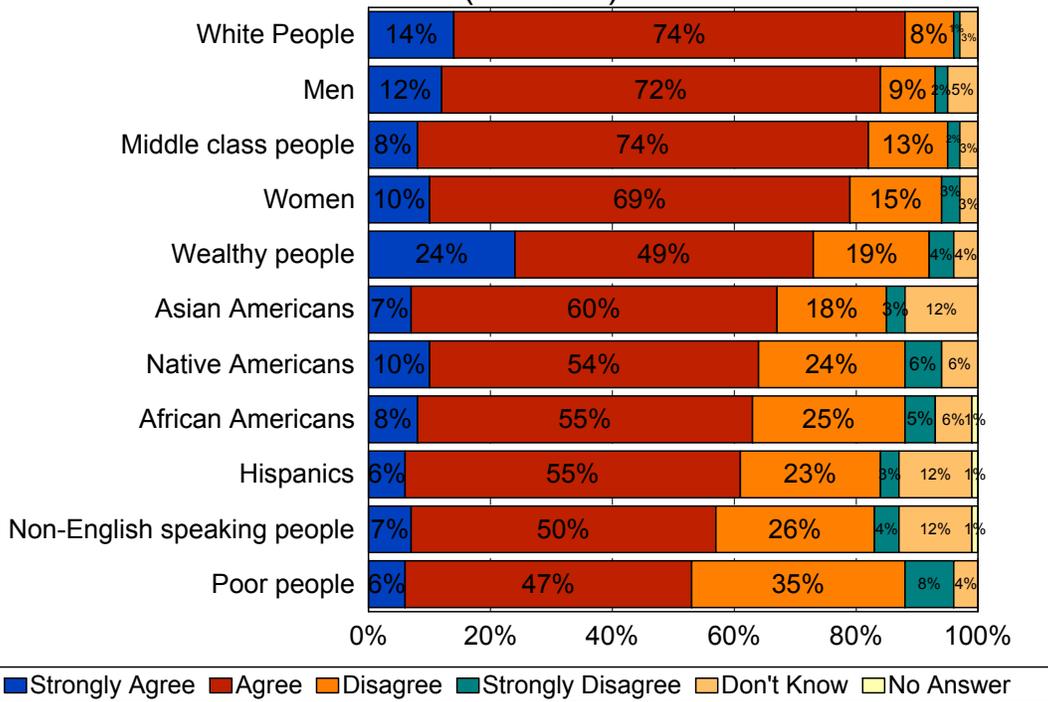


- ◆ Figure 12 shows that 45 percent of **minority respondents** rated the court's ability to handle child protection cases as *excellent* or *good*. Forty-percent or more minority respondents rated their ability to handle civil cases (42%), criminal cases (40%), and small claims cases (40%) as *excellent* or *good*.
- ◆ Although 40 percent or more minority respondents rated child protection cases and criminal cases as *excellent* or *good*, 20 percent rated the court's ability to handle these types of cases as *poor*.
- ◆ The court's ability to handle juvenile delinquency cases was given a low rating by minority respondents; over one-third (35%) rated their ability to handle these types of cases as *poor*. Another 22 percent gave a *poor* rating to the court in its ability to handle family relations cases.

Other Findings

- ◆ Significant differences based on race for questions related to the court's ability to handle different types of cases are found on page 69.

FIGURE 13
Statewide Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat
Different Groups of People Fairly
(N=1000)



- ◆ Overall, more than half of **statewide respondents** *strongly agree* or *agree* that the court treats all of the different groups of people mentioned fairly (Figure 13).
- ◆ More than four out of five statewide respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* that the courts treat white people (88%), men (84%), and middle class people (82%) fairly.
- ◆ Almost one-quarter (24%) of the statewide respondents *strongly agree* that the court treats wealthy people fairly.
- ◆ Nearly one-third or more statewide respondents *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that the following groups are treated fairly:
 - ⇒ *Poor people* (43%)
 - ⇒ *Non-English speaking people* (30%)
 - ⇒ *African Americans* (30%)
 - ⇒ *Native Americans* (30%)

Other Findings

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ More (87%) respondents who have had experiences as a jury member than respondents with no court experiences (75%) *agree* that the court treats **white people** fairly.

Respondents with Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents with no court experience are more likely than respondents with court experience to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the following groups are treated fairly by the courts, :
 - ⇒ *Women (84% vs. 79%, respectively)*
 - ⇒ *Middle class people (88% vs. 81%)*
 - ⇒ *Asian Americans (70% vs. 64%)*
 - ⇒ *Poor people (60% vs. 50%)*
- ◆ Respondents with court experience (30%) are more likely than those respondents with no court experiences (21%) to *strongly agree* that **wealthy people** are treated fairly by the courts.

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with Any Other Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents with jury experience (97%) are more likely than those with no court experience (91%) or those with non-jury court experience (90%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the courts treat **white people** fairly.
- ◆ Respondents with non-jury court experience are less likely than respondents with no experience or respondents with jury experience to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the following types of people are treated fairly:
 - ⇒ *Men (83% vs. 91% and 91%)*
 - ⇒ *Women (77% vs. 84% and 82%)*
 - ⇒ *Middle class people (77% vs. 88% and 90%)*
 - ⇒ *Native Americans (64% vs. 70% and 69%)*
- ◆ Respondents with no court experience (60%) are more likely than those with jury experience (50%) or some other court experience (50%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the court treats **poor people** fairly.
- ◆ Respondents with some court experience (34%) are more likely than respondents with no court experience (21%) or jury experience (21%) to *strongly agree* that **wealthy people** are treated fairly.

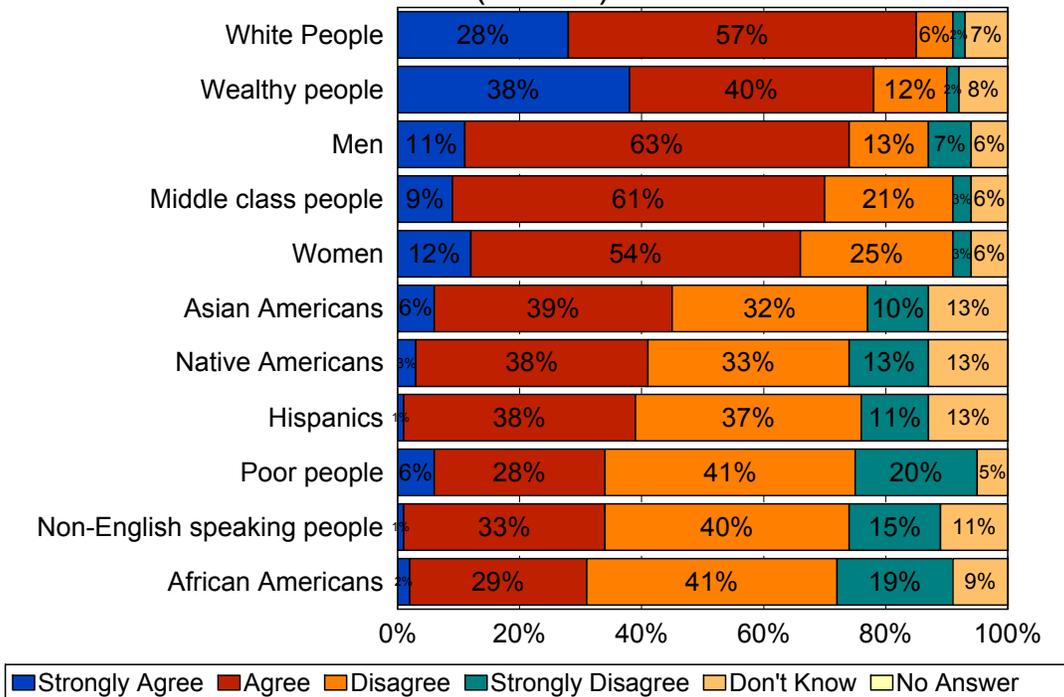
Metro Respondents vs. Rural Respondents vs. Out-state Urban Respondents

- ◆ Out-state urban respondents (77%) are more likely than both the metro (62%) and rural respondents (72%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the court treats **African Americans** fairly.



FIGURE 14

Minority Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat Different Groups of People Fairly
(N=127)



- ◆ Most **minority respondents** (85%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that the court treats white people fairly and over three-quarters (78%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that wealthy people are treated fairly (Figure 14).
- ◆ Seventy percent or more of minority respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* that the court treats men (74%) and middle class people fairly (70%). Two-thirds (66%) of minority respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* that women are treated fairly.
- ◆ More than half of minority respondents *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that the following groups of people are treated fairly:
 - ⇒ *Poor people* (61%)
 - ⇒ *African Americans* (60%)
 - ⇒ *Non-English speaking people* (55%)
- ◆ A large percentage of minority respondents also *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that the court treats Hispanic people (48%), Native Americans (46%), and Asian Americans (42%) fairly.

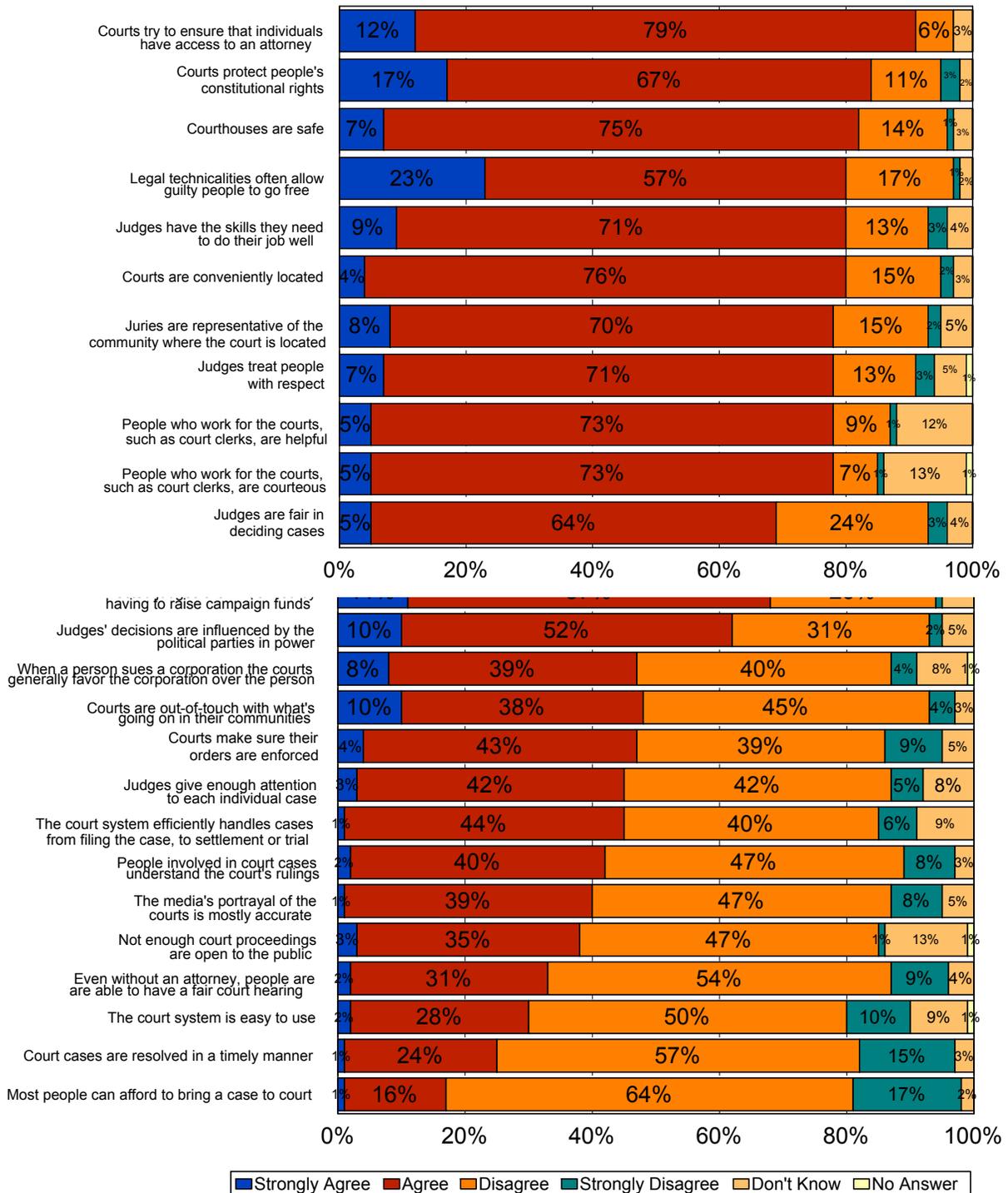
Other Findings

- ◆ Significant differences based on race for questions related to whether the court treats different groups of people fairly are found on page 76.

FIGURE 15

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

(N=1000)



◆ Almost all (91%) of statewide respondents strongly agree or agree that the

courts try to ensure individuals have access to an attorney (Figure 15).

- ◆ Approximately four out of five statewide respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* with the following statements:
 - ⇒ *Courts protect people's constitutional rights (84% strongly agree/agree),*
 - ⇒ *Courthouses are safe (82%)*
 - ⇒ *Legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free (80%)*
 - ⇒ *Judges have the skills they need to do their job well (80%)*
 - ⇒ *Courts are conveniently located (80%)*

- ◆ Seventy-eight percent of statewide respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* that:
 - ⇒ *Juries are representative of the community where the court is located*
 - ⇒ *Judges treat people with respect*
 - ⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful*
 - ⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous*

- ◆ Most statewide respondents *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that most people can afford to bring a case to court; approximately four out of five respondents disagree with this statement.

- ◆ More than half of statewide respondents also *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the following:
 - ⇒ *Court cases are resolved in a timely manner (72% disagree/strongly disagree)*
 - ⇒ *Even without an attorney, people are able to have a fair court hearing (63%)*
 - ⇒ *The court system is easy to use (60%),*
 - ⇒ *People involved in court cases understand the court's rulings (55%)*
 - ⇒ *The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate (55%).*

Other Findings

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents who have been jury members are significantly more likely than respondents with no court experience to *disagree* with the following aspects of the courts in their community:
 - ⇒ *Courts make sure their orders are enforced (50% disagree vs. 37% disagree, respectively)*
 - ⇒ *When a person sues a corporation, the courts generally favor the corporation over the person (53% vs. 41%)*

- ◆ Respondents with jury experience (87%) are also more likely than respondents with no court experience (80%) to *agree* that **courts try to ensure that individuals have access to an attorney** and that **people who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous** (82% vs. 71%, respectively).

- ◆ Respondents with jury experience are less likely than those without court experience to say they *don't know* if there are **enough court proceedings open to the public** (8% vs. 17%, respectively).

Respondents with Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents without court experience are more likely than respondents with court experience to *agree* with the following statements:
 - ⇒ *Courts protect people's constitutional rights (71% vs. 64%, respectively)*
 - ⇒ *People involved in court cases understand the court's rulings (45% vs. 37%)*
 - ⇒ *Courts make sure their orders are enforced (50% vs. 38%)*
 - ⇒ *Judges are fair in deciding cases (72% vs. 62%)*
 - ⇒ *Judges give enough attention to each individual case (51% vs. 40%)*
 - ⇒ *Legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free (62% vs. 54%)*

- ◆ Respondents with court experience are more likely than those respondents with no court experiences to *strongly disagree* that:
 - ⇒ *Judges treat people with respect (6% vs. 1%, respectively)*
 - ⇒ *The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate (12% vs. 6%)*
 - ⇒ *Even without an attorney, people are able to have a fair court hearing (12% vs. 7%)*
 - ⇒ *The court system is easy to use (17% vs. 7%)*
 - ⇒ *The court system efficiently handles cases from filing the case, to settlement or trial (9% vs. 3%)*

- ◆ Respondents with no court experience are also more likely than those with court experience to respond *don't know* when asked their agreement with the following statements:
 - ⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful (16% vs. 8% , respectively)*
 - ⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous (17% vs. 8%)*
 - ⇒ *Not enough court proceedings are open to the public (17% vs. 8%)*

- ◆ More respondents with no court experience (14%) than respondents with court experience (11%) are likely to *strongly agree* that **courts try to ensure that individuals have access to an attorney.**

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with Other Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ Respondents who have had jury experience are more likely than those with no court experience or other court experience to *strongly agree* or *agree* with the following statements:
 - ⇒ *Courts protect people's constitutional rights (90% vs. 88% and 79%, respectively)*
 - ⇒ *People involved in court cases understand the court's rulings (53% vs. 47% and 33%)*
 - ⇒ *Judges are fair in deciding cases (80% vs. 77% and 62%)*
 - ⇒ *The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate (50% vs. 42% and 38%)*
 - ⇒ *Legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free (91% vs. 82% and 78%)*
 - ⇒ *Even without an attorney, people are able to have a fair court hearing (38% vs. 35% and 31%)*
 - ⇒ *The court system is easy to use (40% vs. 36% and 26%)*
 - ⇒ *The court system efficiently handles cases from filing the case to settlement or*



trial (58% vs. 52% and 44%)

- ◆ Respondents with non-jury court experience (57%) are more likely than respondents with no court experience (46%) or jury experience (46%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the **courts are out-of-touch with what's going on in their communities**.
- ◆ Respondents with no court experience (55%) are more likely than respondents with jury experience (48%) or other court experience (40%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **courts make sure their orders are enforced**.
- ◆ Respondents with jury experience (49%) and no court experience (50%) are significantly more likely than respondents with other court experience (38%) to *disagree* that **courts are out-of-touch with what's going on in their communities**.
- ◆ Respondents with other court experience (78%) are less likely than respondents with jury experience (84%) and respondents with no court experience (85%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **judges treat people with respect**.
- ◆ Respondents with other court experience (61%) are more likely than respondents with jury experience (48%) and respondents with no court experience (46%) to *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that **judges give enough attention to each individual case**.
- ◆ Respondents with other court experience (17%) are more likely than respondents with jury experience (7%) and respondents with no court experience (10%) to *strongly agree* that **elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds**.
- ◆ Respondents with no court experience are least likely to be able to rate their agreement with the statement, "**Not enough court proceedings are open to the public;**" 17 percent *don't know* how to rate this compared to only 10 percent of those with jury experience and eight percent of those with some other court experience.
- ◆ The same trend is true for the statements: "**People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful**" (16% vs. 11% and 7%) and "**People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous**" (17% vs. 14% and 5%).

Metro Respondents vs. Rural Respondents vs. Out-state urban Respondents

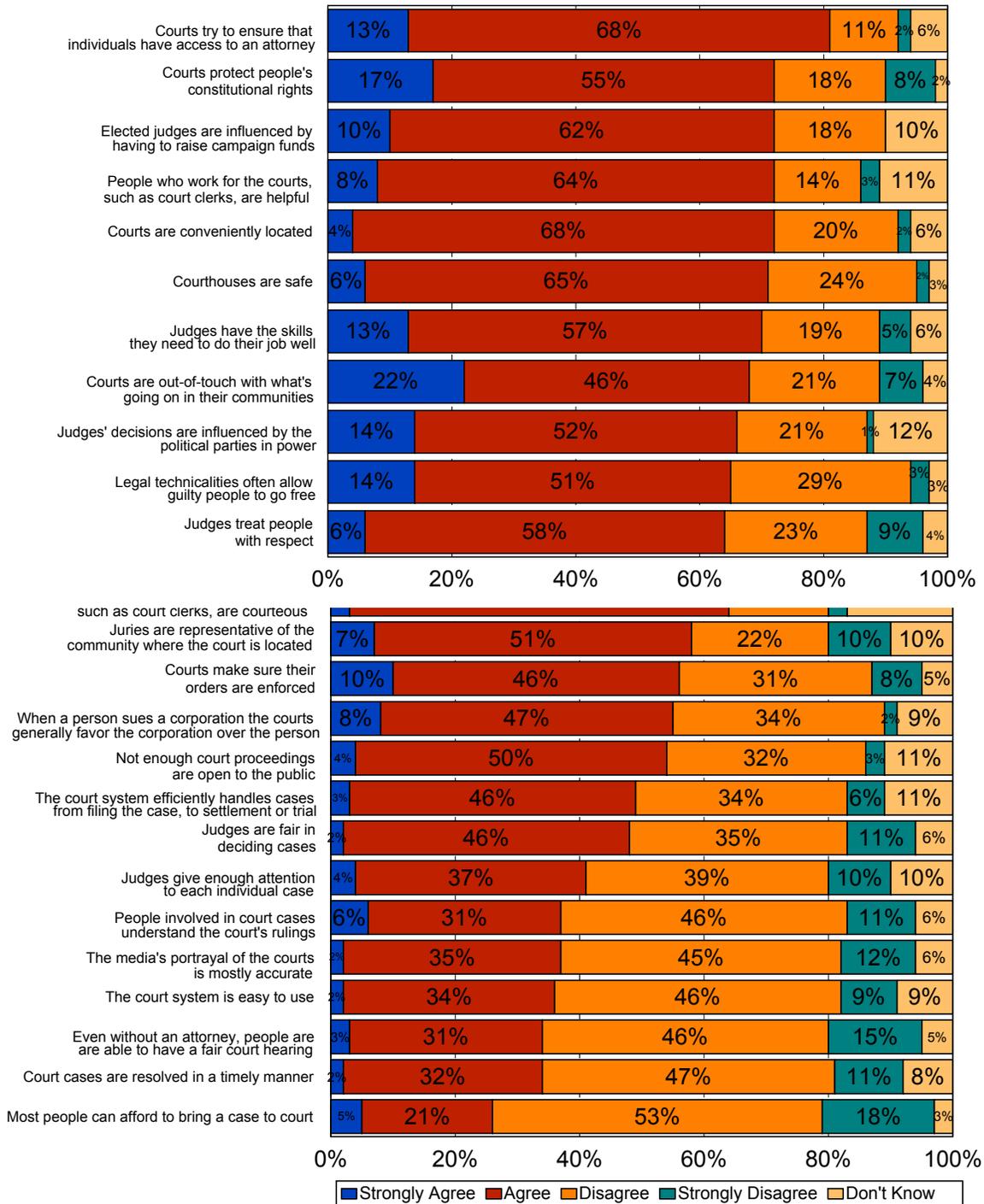
- ◆ Metro respondents (48%) and rural respondents (53%) are more likely than out-state urban respondents (33%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that the **courts are out of touch with what is going on in their communities**.
- ◆ Rural respondents (88%) and out-state urban respondents (84%) are more likely than metro respondents (76%) to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **juries are representative of the community where the court is located**.
- ◆ Out-state urban respondents (82%) are more likely to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **judges are fair in deciding cases** than metro (74%) or rural respondents (70%).



- ◆ Slightly more rural respondents (68%) than metro (63%) and out-state urban respondents (64%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that **judges decisions are influenced by the political parties in power**.
- ◆ Both out-state urban (90%) and rural respondents (87%) are more likely to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **courts are conveniently located** than are metro respondents (78%).
- ◆ Rural respondents (44%) are more likely to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **not enough court proceedings are open to the public** than are metro (34%) and out-state urban respondents (35%).



FIGURE 16
Minority Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community
 (N=127)



◆ Most **minority respondents** *strongly agree* or *agree* that the courts try to ensure that people have access to an attorney; approximately four out of five (81%) respondents agree with this statement (Figure 16).

◆ Slightly less than three-quarters (72%) of minority respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* with the following:

⇒ *Courts protect people's constitutional rights*

⇒ *Elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds*

⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful*

⇒ *Courts are conveniently located*

◆ Minority respondents also *strongly agree* or *agree* that courthouses are safe (71%) and judges have the skills they need to do their job well (70%).

◆ Approximately two-thirds of minority respondents *strongly agree* or *agree* that:

⇒ *Courts are out-of-touch with what's going on in their communities (68% strongly agree/agree)*

⇒ *Judges' decisions are influenced by the political parties in power (66%)*

⇒ *Legal technicalities often let guilty people go free (65%)*

⇒ *Judges treat people with respect (64%)*

⇒ *People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous (64%)*

◆ Seventy-one percent of minority respondents *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that most people can afford to bring a case to court, and 61 percent *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that even without an attorney, people are able to have a fair court hearing.

◆ More than half of minority respondents also *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the following statements:

⇒ *Court cases are resolved in a timely manner (58% disagree/strongly disagree)*

⇒ *People involved in court cases understand the court's rulings (57%)*

⇒ *The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate (57%)*

⇒ *The court system is easy to use (55%)*

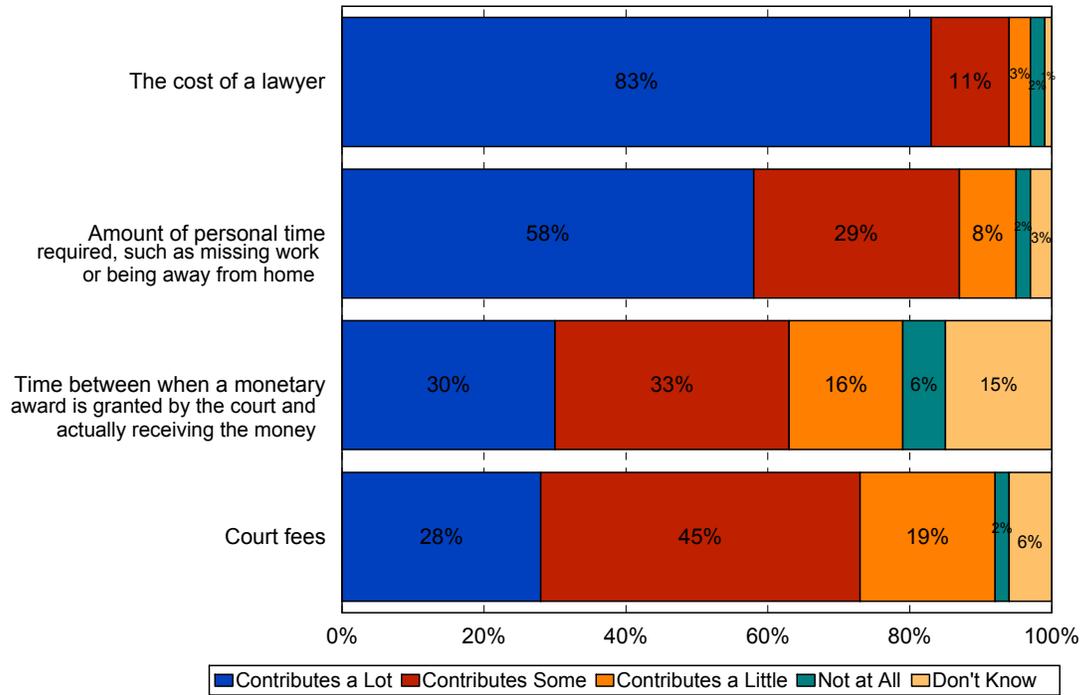
Other Findings

◆ Significant differences based on race for questions regarding agreement with issues related to community courts are found on page 96.



FIGURE 17

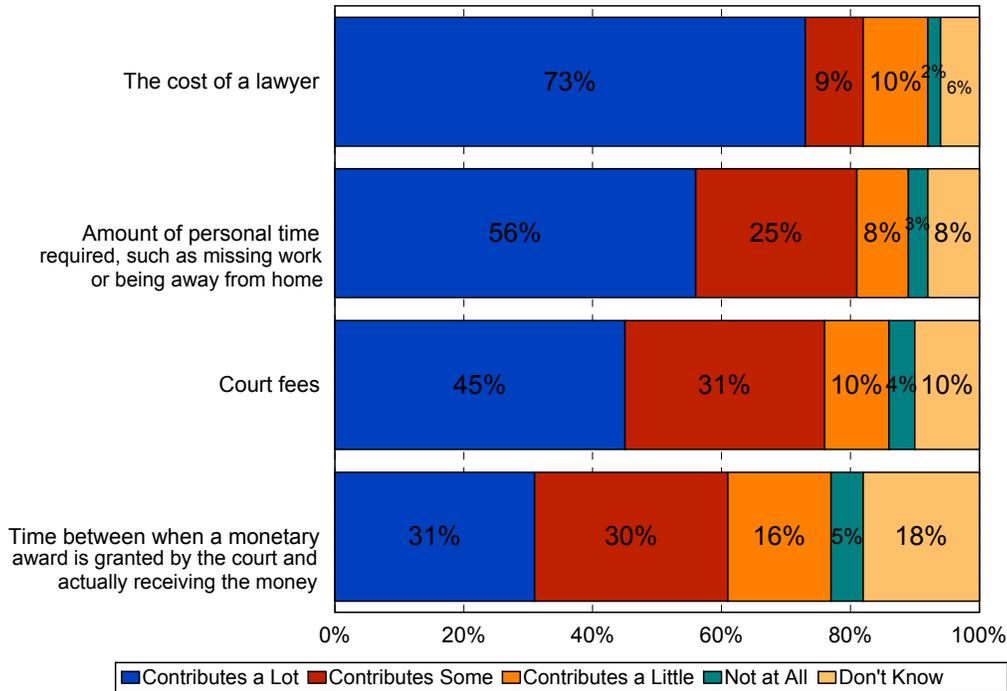
How Much Statewide Respondents Believe Different Factors Contribute to the Cost of Going to Court
(N=1000)



◆ Figure 17 shows that 83 percent of **statewide respondents** feel that the cost of a lawyer *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court. More than half (58%) feel that the amount of personal time required, such as missing work or being away from home, also *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court.

FIGURE 18

How Much Minority Respondents Believe Different Factors Contribute to the Cost of Going to Court (N=127)



- ◆ Almost three-quarters (73%) of **minority respondents** feel that the cost of a lawyer *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court (Figure 18). Over half (56%) indicated that the amount of personal time required, such as missing work or being away from home, also *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court.

Other Findings

- ◆ Caucasian respondents are more likely than respondents of all other races to indicate that the cost of a **lawyer** *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court.
- ◆ More respondents of all other races than Caucasian respondents think that the cost of **court fees** *contributes a lot* to the cost of going to court.

FIGURE 19

Statewide Respondents' Suggestions for Improving the Courts*	Percent of Statewide Respondents (N=1000)
Efficiency of Justice System	21
Time/ Faster process	21
They are too overloaded with cases	**
Better scheduling of cases/ Not as many cases in the one day	**
Streamline process between counties	**
Lack of Protection for Society	10
Harsher punishment/ Stricter laws/ Stricter sentencing	3
Carrying out full sentence/ No parole/ Follow through with punishment	2
Consequences for repeat offenders	1
Fair punishment for the crime	1
People getting off on technicalities	1
Plea bargaining	1
The drug problem/ reduce crime	1
Better state prosecutors	**
Catching the criminals and prosecuting them	**
DWI laws are to make money, not protect people	**
Keep the hoods off the streets	**
Leniency towards first time offenders	**
Small time offenders	**
Stricter guidelines for sentencing	**
Integrity of the Judicial Process	9
More judges	2
Treat each case individually	2
Consistency in rulings/ Explain rulings	1
Don't elect judges/ Improve judge appointment/ Election	1
Fair impartial judges/ Honest judges/ Improve judges	1
Too much political power/ Too much legislating	1
Uphold the law/ Justice	1
Appointment of judges is too political	**
Have all the facts before making a decision	**
Improve quality and professionalism	**
Investigate cases better	**
Mandatory retirement of judges	**
Police statements/ Honest witnesses	**
Education/ Information	6
Provide information on bringing a case to court/ Information on the trial procedures	2

Provide an opportunity for the public to voice an opinion/ Listen to the public/ Understand the community	1
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(Cont'd)

FIGURE 19 (Cont'd)

Statewide Respondents' Suggestions for Improving the Courts*	
Education/ Information (Cont'd)	
Do away with legal jargon/ Legal culture	1
Provide information on the court systems/ Public relations	1
Provide updates on trials and rulings/ Use internet	1
Explain the law in court	**
Provide legal information/ Provide legal advice	**
Bias in the System	5
Fairness/ Less bias	3
Discrimination/ Fairness based on race or ethnicity	2
Fair trial for everybody	**
Barriers to the Justice System	4
Free attorneys/ Sliding scales/ Court access for lower income people/ Reduce cost	2
Less forms/ Paperwork/ More user-friendly	1
More accessible/ Extended hours/ Distance/ Directions	1
Help people with English as their second language	**
Better parking	**
Family Issues	4
Child custody disputes	1
Family issues/ Divorces/ Support	1
Improve the child abuse system	1
More rights to men during family issues	1
Court appointed attorneys for children	**
Juveniles	2
Juvenile offenders/ Prosecuting/ Stricter	2
Courtesy and Respect	1
Courteous court employees/ Retention of court employees	1
Be sensitive to the stress of being in court	**
Respect for juveniles	**
Treat people with more respect	**
Victims rights	**
Juries	1
Jury service/ Selection/ Getting paid for jury duty	1
Lawyers	1
Quality of lawyers and attorneys/ Cost of lawyers and attorneys	1
Resources for attorneys to gather evidence	**
Media	**
Accuracy in media reporting	**

(Cont'd)



FIGURE 19 (Cont'd)

Statewide Respondents' Suggestions for Improving the Courts	
Miscellaneous	**
Better communication skills	**
Encourage alternative dispute resolution	**
Enforce a user/Loser pays system for lawsuits	**
Honoring the treaties with Native Americans	**
If in the year 2000 computers crashed and they were out of a job, there may be hope	**
More courtrooms	**
More funding	**
Security	**
Too many laws/ Change the laws/ Relax the laws	**
Don't know	34
Nothing/No Improvement needed	2
Not applicable	**
Refused/ No comment	1
Everything	**

* Respondents could give more than one answer

**Less than one percent

- ◆ As shown in Figure 19, when asked what the courts can do to improve, 21 percent of **statewide respondents** mentioned some aspect of efficiency. Ten percent would like to see the courts improve their protective function in society and another nine percent would like to see some aspect of the integrity of the judicial system improved.



FIGURE 20

Minority Respondents' Suggestions for Improving the Courts*	Percent of Minority Respondents (N=127)
Efficiency of Justice System	13
Time/ Faster process	10
Better scheduling of cases/ Not as many cases in the one day	2
Streamline process between counties	1
Bias in the System	12
Discrimination/ Fairness based on race or ethnicity	9
Fairness/ Less bias	3
Integrity of the Judicial Process	12
Have all the facts before making a decision	2
Consistency in rulings/ Explain rulings	2
Fair impartial judges/ Honest judges/ Improve judges	1
Investigate cases better	1
Mandatory retirement of judges	1
Police statements/ Honest witnesses	1
Too much political power/ Too much legislating	1
Treat each case individually	2
Uphold the law/ Justice	1
Education/ Information	10
Provide information on the court systems/ Public relations	5
Provide an opportunity for the public to voice an opinion/ Listen to the public/ Understand the community	2
Do away with legal jargon/ Legal culture	1
Provide information on bringing a case to court/ Information on the trial procedures	1
Provide updates on trials and rulings/ Use internet	1
Lack of Protection for Society	7
The drug problem/ Reduce crime	4
Harsher punishment/ Stricter laws/ Stricter sentencing	3
Barriers to the Justice System	8
Free attorneys/ Sliding scales/ Court access for lower income people/ Reduce cost	3
More accessible/ Extended hours/ Distance/ Directions	2
Better parking	1
Help people with English as their second language	1
Less forms/ Paperwork/ More user-friendly	1
Miscellaneous	5
Security	2
Don't let people throw stuff on other peoples property	1
Hire court employees from different ethnic backgrounds	1

Incorporate other culture's idea into the court system	1
--	---

(Cont'd)



FIGURE 20 (Cont'd)

Minority Respondents' Suggestions for Improving the Courts	
Juveniles	4
Juvenile offenders/ Prosecuting/ Stricter	3
Spend time with Juveniles/ Talk to them	1
Family Issues	4
Family issues/ Divorces/ Support	2
Improve the child abuse system	2
Juries	3
Juries should be more representative of the population	2
Jury service/ Selection/ Getting paid for jury duty	1
Courtesy and Respect	3
Police should be more respectful	2
Courteous court employees/ Retention of court employees	1
Lawyers	1
Quality of lawyers and attorneys/ Cost of lawyers and attorneys	1
Don't know	31
Not applicable	2
Nothing	1

* Respondents could give more than one answer

- ◆ Figure 20 shows that 13 percent of **minority respondents** would like improvement in some aspect of efficiency. More than one in ten (12%) each of minority respondents would like to see improvement in areas of bias and the integrity of the judicial process.



FIGURE 21

Statewide Respondents' Comments Regarding Things the Courts are Doing Well*	Percent of Statewide Respondents (N=1000)
Efficiency of Justice System	12
Cases tried in a timely manner/ Efficient process	7
Good at handling cases/ Resolving cases	5
Keeping the costs down to the taxpayer	**
Keep you informed of your court date/ Timely in sending papers	**
Record keeping	**
Settling cases before they go to court	**
Protection for Society	10
Effective system to catch the criminals and prosecute them	5
Dealing with drug problem/ Controlling crime	2
Effective DWI laws	2
Severing the community	1
Crime prevention programs	**
Enforce punishment	**
Fair punishment for the crime	**
Handling plea bargaining	**
Harsh punishment/ Strict laws/ Strict sentencing	**
Bias in the System	8
Fair decisions/ Fair trial/ No bias/ Treating people fairly	7
Fair trials based on race or ethnicity	1
Fair trial for everybody regardless of wealth/ gender	**
Integrity of the Judicial Process	4
Uphold the law/ Justice/ Enforce the law	2
Fair impartial judges/ Honest judges/ Good judges	1
Good investigation of cases/ Know facts before judgement	1
Good state prosecutors	**
Keeping up their status in the community	**
Listening	**
Make sure the accused knows their rights	**
Miscellaneous	4
Spending tax payers money	1
Taking citizens money/ Collecting fines	1
Traffic violations/ Traffic court	1
Police forces/ Police forces works well with the courts	1
Alternative dispute resolution	**
Beautiful court houses	**
Security	**
Community service	**



Decisions on internet usage and restrictions	**
--	----

(Cont'd)

FIGURE 21 (Cont'd)

Statewide Respondents' Comments Regarding Things the Courts are Doing Well*	
Miscellaneous (Cont'd)	
Making lawyers wealthy	**
Take good care of prisoners	**
Juveniles	3
Juvenile offenders/ Prosecuting/ Stricter	2
Talking to juveniles/ Understanding, not just punishment/ Counseling	1
Good juvenile court judges	**
Education/ Information	3
Updates on trials and rulings provided/ Internet	2
Legal information available/ Legal advice/ Questions answered	1
The law is explained in court	**
Information available on bringing a case to court/ Information on the trial procedures	**
Information available on the court systems/ Public relations	**
Public can voice an opinion/ Public is listened to	**
Access to the Justice System	2
Available/ Accessible hours/ Locations	1
Easily accessible public defenders	1
Easy to file a case	**
Help people with English as their second language	**
Family Issues	2
Child protection system	1
Family issues/ Divorces/ Support	1
Child custody disputes	**
Courtesy and Respect	1
Courteous court employees/ Helpful staff	1
Feel comfortable going there/ No fears	**
Respectful to people in court	**
Juries	1
Jury service/ Jury selection	1
Juries are representative of the population/ Jury system is fair	**
Media	1
Accurate media reporting/ Good use of the media	1
Lawyers	**
Ethical attorneys/ Good lawyers	**
Don't know	38
No experience with the courts/ Not familiar with the courts/Not applicable	5
Nothing/Negative Comments	5
Everything	4
Refused/ No comment	1

* Respondents could give more than one response



** Less than one percent

- ◆ When asked what the court system is doing well, 12 percent of **statewide respondents** mentioned some aspect of efficiency. Specifically, respondents feel that cases are tried and resolved in a timely manner.
- ◆ Another 10 percent of statewide respondents feel the court is doing well in protecting society and eight percent feel that the system treats people fairly.



FIGURE 22

Minority Respondents' Comments Regarding Things the Courts are Doing Well*	Percent of Respondents (N=127)
Protection for Society	17
Dealing with drug problem/ Controlling crime	6
Effective system to catch the criminals and prosecute them	6
Fair punishment for the crime	2
Crime prevention programs	1
Harsh punishment/ Strict laws/ Strict sentencing	1
Serving the community	1
Efficiency of Justice System	8
Cases tried in a timely manner/ Efficient process	6
Good at handling cases/ Resolving cases	1
Keep you informed of your court date/ Timely in sending papers	1
Bias in the System	5
Fair decisions/ Fair trial/ No bias/ Treating people fairly	5
Family Issues	5
Family issues/ Divorces/ Support	3
Child custody disputes	1
Child protection system	1
Everything	6
Juveniles	5
Talking to juveniles/ Understanding, not just punishment/ Counseling	2
Alternative schools for teenagers	1
Juvenile offenders/ Prosecuting/ Stricter	1
Keeping kids off the streets	1
Miscellaneous	4
Police forces/ Police forces works well with the courts	2
Community service	1
Traffic violations/ Traffic court	1
Integrity of the Judicial Process	3
Keeping up their status in the community	1
Public hearings	1
Uphold the law/ Justice/ Enforce the law	1
Courtesy and Respect	2
Respectful to people in court	2
Juries	2
Juries are representative of the population/ Jury system is fair	1
Jury service/ Jury selection	1
Access to the Justice System	1
Easily accessible public defenders	1

(Cont'd)

FIGURE 22 (Cont'd)

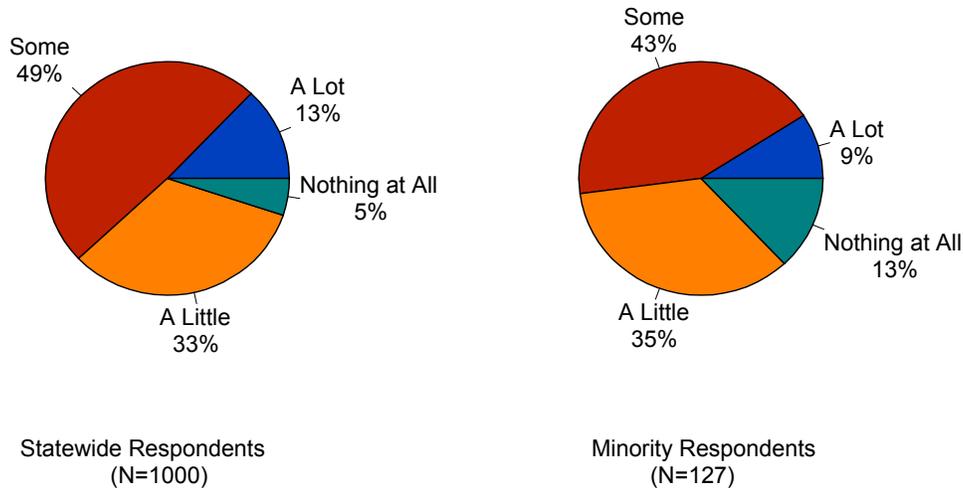
Minority Respondents' Comments Regarding Things the Courts are Doing Well*	
Education/ Information	1
Information available on the court systems/ Public relations	1
Don't know	40
Nothing	6
No experience with the courts/ Not familiar with the courts	2
Negative Comments	1

* Respondents could give more than one answer

- ◆ When asked what the court system is doing well, 17 percent of **minority respondents** mentioned some aspect of the protection the courts provide to society (Figure 22). Eight percent mentioned the efficiency of the court system.



FIGURE 23
Respondents' Level of Knowledge
About the Court System



When asked how much they know about the court system, almost two-thirds (62%) of **statewide respondents** indicated that they know *a lot* or have *some* knowledge of the court system (Figure 23). Thirty-eight percent of statewide respondents feel they know *a little* or *nothing at all* about the court system.

- ◆ Slightly more than half (52%) of **minority respondents** feel they have *a lot* or *some* knowledge of the court system, while slightly less than half (48%) feel they know *a little* or *nothing at all* about the courts.

Other Findings

Caucasian Respondents vs. Respondents of all other races

- ◆ Respondents from all other races are significantly more likely than Caucasian respondents to indicate that they know *nothing at all* about the courts.

Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ More respondents with jury experience (67%) than respondents with no experience (54%) stated they know *a lot* or have *some* knowledge about the court system.

Respondents with Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ More respondents with court experience (72%) than respondents with no court experience (54%) stated that they have *a lot* or *some* knowledge about the court system.

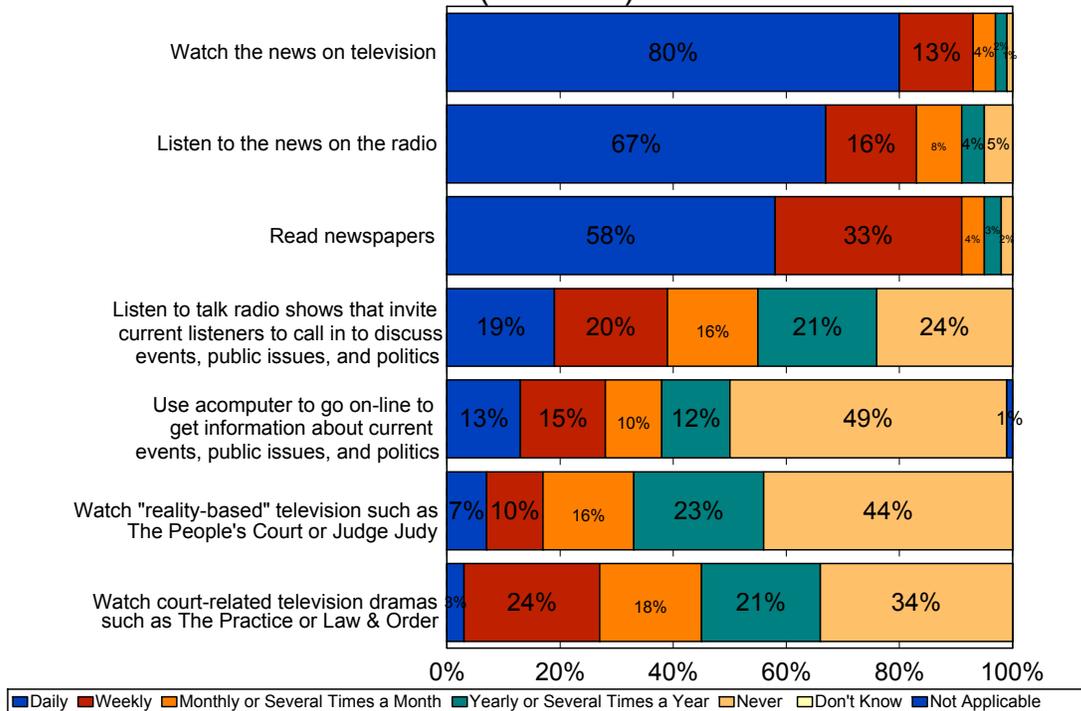
Respondents with Jury Experience vs. Respondents with Any Other Court Experience vs. Respondents with No Court Experience

- ◆ When asked how much they know about the court system, respondents with other court experience (76%) are most likely to rate their level of knowledge about the court system as *a lot* or *some*; followed by respondents with jury experience (63%) and those with no court experience (54%).



FIGURE 24

How Often Statewide Respondents Receive Information From Different Sources
(N=1000)



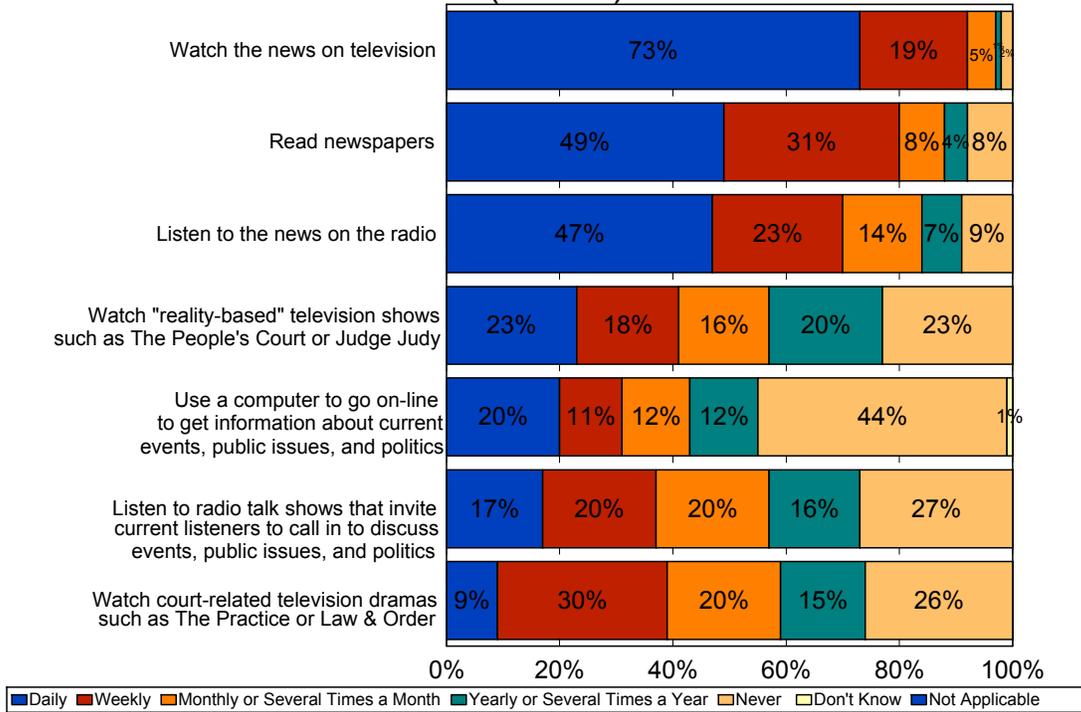
- ◆ When asked how often they receive information from different sources, more than nine in ten **statewide respondents** watch the news on television (93%) and read newspapers (91%) *daily* or *weekly* (Figure 24). Most (83%) listen to the news on the radio *daily* or *weekly*.
- ◆ Approximately one-quarter of the statewide respondents use a computer to get information about current events, public issues, and politics on-line (28%) or watch court-related television dramas (27%) on a *daily* or *weekly* basis.
- ◆ Slightly less than one out of five (17%) statewide respondents watch “reality-based” television shows, such as The People’s Court or Judge Judy *daily* or *weekly*; however, 44 percent never watch these types of television shows.

Other Findings

- ◆ Rural respondents are least likely to have **used a computer to go online to get information about current events, public issues, and politics**; 58 percent never have. This compares with 42 percent of metro and 52 percent of out-state urban respondents who have *never* gone on-line for this type of information.
- ◆ Metro (6%) respondents are less likely than out-state urban (13%) and rural respondents (14%) to watch “**reality-based**” **television productions** on a *weekly* basis.

FIGURE 25

How Often Minority Respondents Receive Information From Different Sources (N=127)



- ◆ Nearly three-quarters (73%) of **minority respondents** watch the news on the television *daily* and an additional 19 percent watch the news *weekly* (Figure 25).
- ◆ Four in five (80%) minority respondents read the newspaper *daily* or *weekly*, and 70 percent listen to the news on the radio on a *daily* or *weekly* basis.
- ◆ Almost one-quarter (23%) of minority respondents watch “reality-based” television, such as The People’s Court and Judge Judy, on a *daily* basis.
- ◆ More than one-quarter of the minority respondents *never* use a computer to go on-line to get information about current events, public issues, and politics (44%), listen to talk radio shows (27%), or watch court-related television dramas (26%).

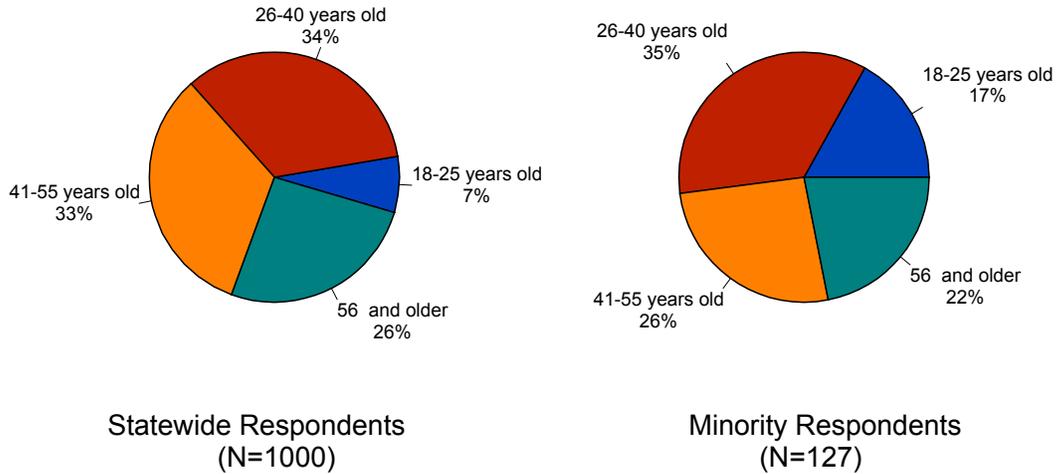
Other Findings

- ◆ More Caucasian respondents than all other races **read the newspaper** and **listen to the news on the radio** on a *daily* basis.
- ◆ Respondents of all other races are more likely than Caucasian respondents to watch “**reality-based**” television productions and **court-related television dramas** on a *daily* or *weekly* basis.

FIGURE 26

- ◆ While more than half (59%) are over the age of 40, only seven percent are between the ages of 18 and 25 (Figure 26). Approximately one-third (34%) of **statewide respondents** are between 26 and 40 years old.

Age of Respondents



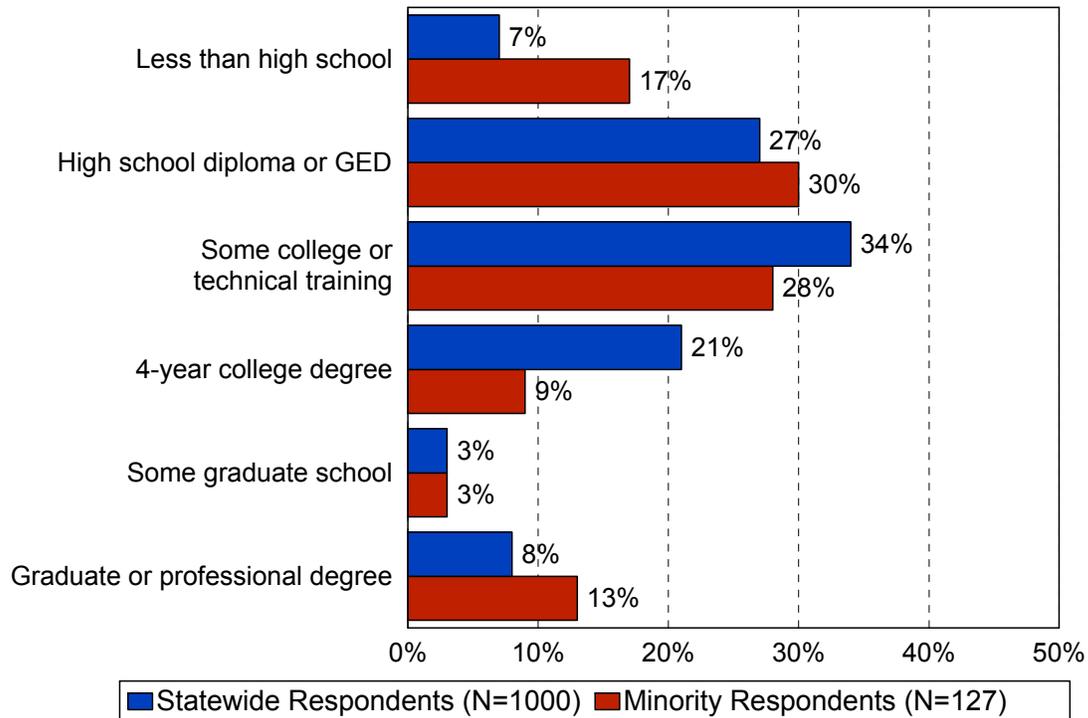
- ◆ While 17 percent of **minority respondents** are 18 to 25 years old, about half (48%) are over 40 years old.

Other Findings

- ◆ More respondents from all other races than Caucasian respondents are between the ages of 18 and 25.

FIGURE 27

Respondents' Education Level



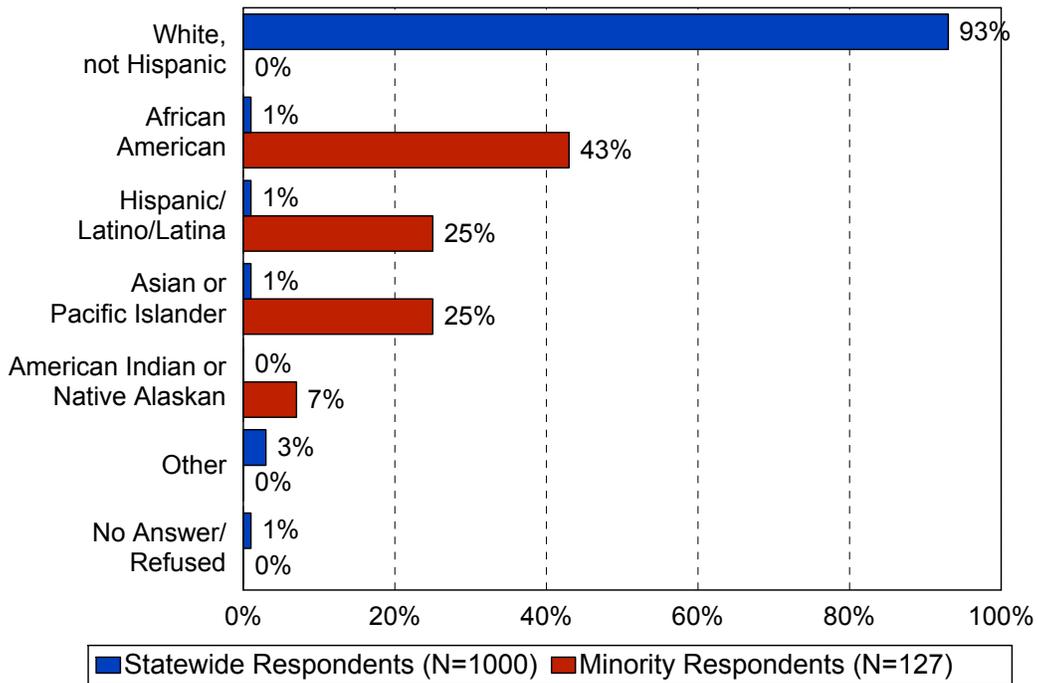
- ◆ While slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of **statewide respondents** have their high school diploma or G.E.D, two-thirds (66%) have at least some education at the college or technical college level (Figure 27).
- ◆ Thirty percent of **minority respondents** have graduated from high school or have their G.E.D. About half (53%) have had at least some education at the college or technical college level.

Other Findings

- ◆ Significantly more Caucasian respondents than respondents from all other races have **some college or technical training** or a **four-year degree**.



FIGURE 28
Respondents' Racial or Ethnic Identity



- ◆ Almost all (93%) **statewide respondents** are *white* (Figure 28). Three percent of the statewide respondents indicated their racial or ethnic background as *other*.
- ◆ Of the four statewide respondents who classify their racial identity as *American Indian or Native Alaskan*, only one respondent lives on a reservation.
- ◆ Forty-three percent of **minority respondents** are *African American* and one-quarter each are *Hispanic* or *Asian or Pacific Islander*. Seven percent classified their racial or ethnic identity as *American Indian or Native Alaskan*.



FIGURE 28a

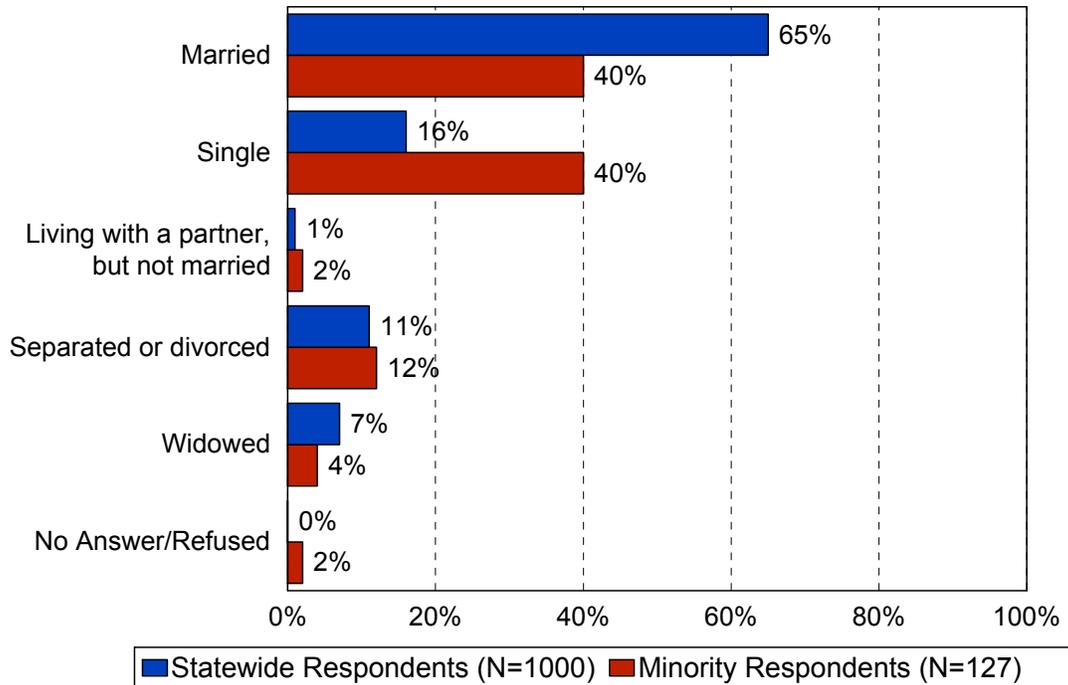
Statewide Respondents Race or Ethnic Identity (Other)	Number of Responses (N=27)
American	5
German	5
Scandinavian	3
Czech	2
English/ Scottish/ Irish	2
Variety	2
German and Indian	1
Irish/ American	1
Italian	1
Mulatto/ Bi-racial	1
Native American and French Canadian	1
Native American and White	1
Polish	1
Don't know	1

- ◆ Figure 28a shows the variety of 'other' ethnicities mentioned by **statewide respondents**, including German, American, and Scandinavian. Respondents also identified themselves as bi-racial or multi-ethnic.



FIGURE 29

Respondents' Marital Status



◆ Figure 29 shows that almost two-thirds (65%) of **statewide respondents** are *married*. Slightly more than one in ten (11%) are *separated or divorced* and 16 percent are *single*.

◆ Two in five (40%) **minority respondents** are *married*, another 40 percent are single; 12 percent are *separated or divorced*.

Other Findings

◆ Respondents from all other races are more likely than Caucasian respondents to be **single**.



FIGURE 30

- ◆ As may be seen in Figure 30, three-quarters of **statewide respondents** are *currently employed*. Of those respondents who are currently employed, most (87%) work *more than 20 hours per week outside of the home*.

Statewide Respondents' Current Employment

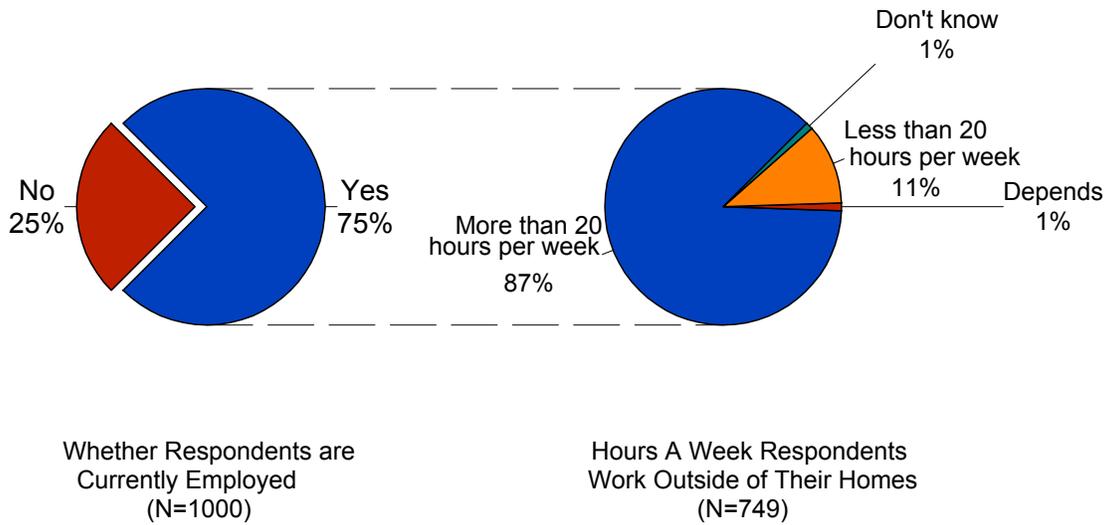
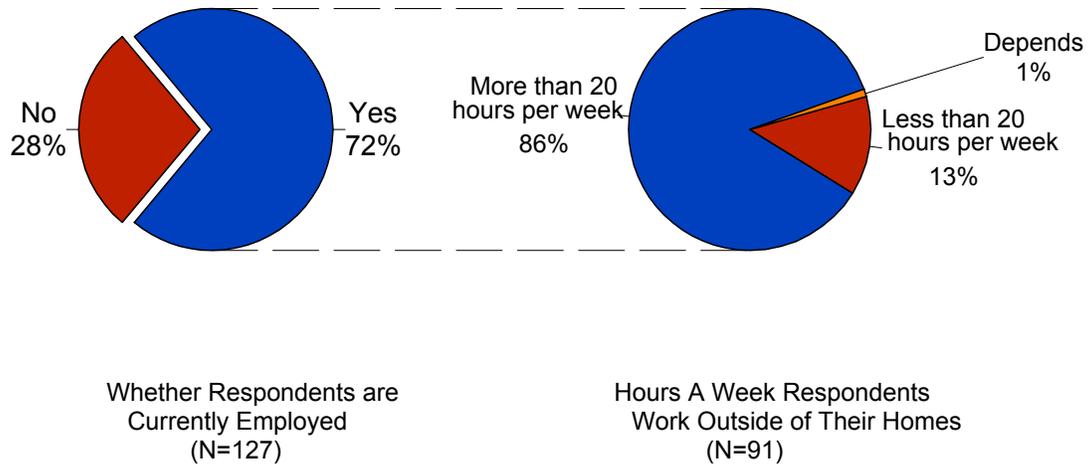


FIGURE 31

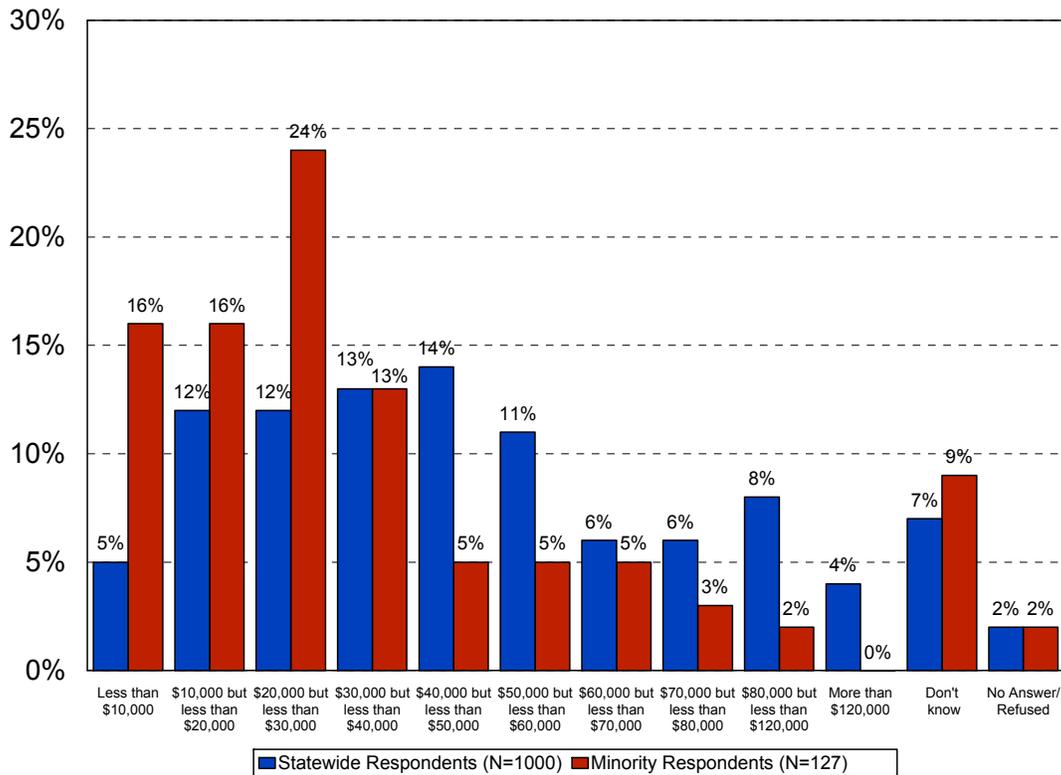
Minority Respondents' Current Employment



- ◆ Almost three-quarters (72%) of **minority respondents** are *currently employed* (Figure 31). Of those respondents who are currently employed, most (86%) *more than 20 hours per week outside of the home*.

FIGURE 32

Respondents' Annual Household Income Before Taxes



- ◆ Forty-two percent of **statewide respondents** had an annual household income less than \$40,000 before taxes in 1998 (Figure 33). One-quarter earned between \$40,000 and \$59,999 and almost one-quarter (24%) earned more than \$60,000.
- ◆ More than two-thirds (69%) of **minority respondents** had an annual household income less than \$40,000 before taxes in 1998; only 10 percent earned more than \$60,000.

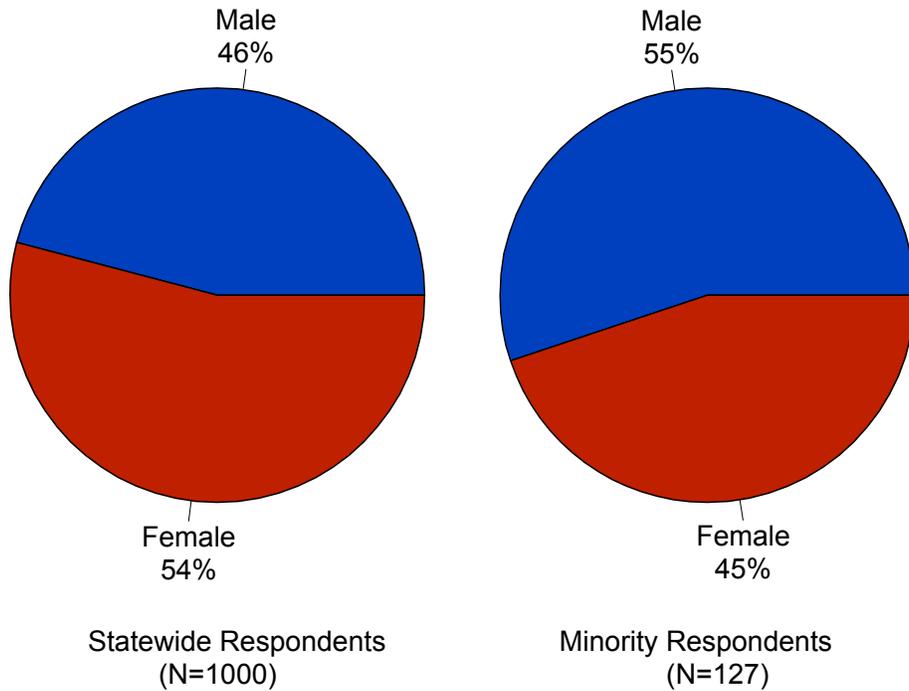
Other Findings

- ◆ Respondents from all other races are more likely than Caucasian respondents to have had annual household incomes before taxes in 1998 of *less than \$30,000*.

FIGURE 33

- ◆ There was an almost even distribution of male and female respondents in both the statewide and minority samples (Figure 33). Over half (54%) of the **statewide respondents** are women, as are slightly less than half (45%) of the **minority respondents**.

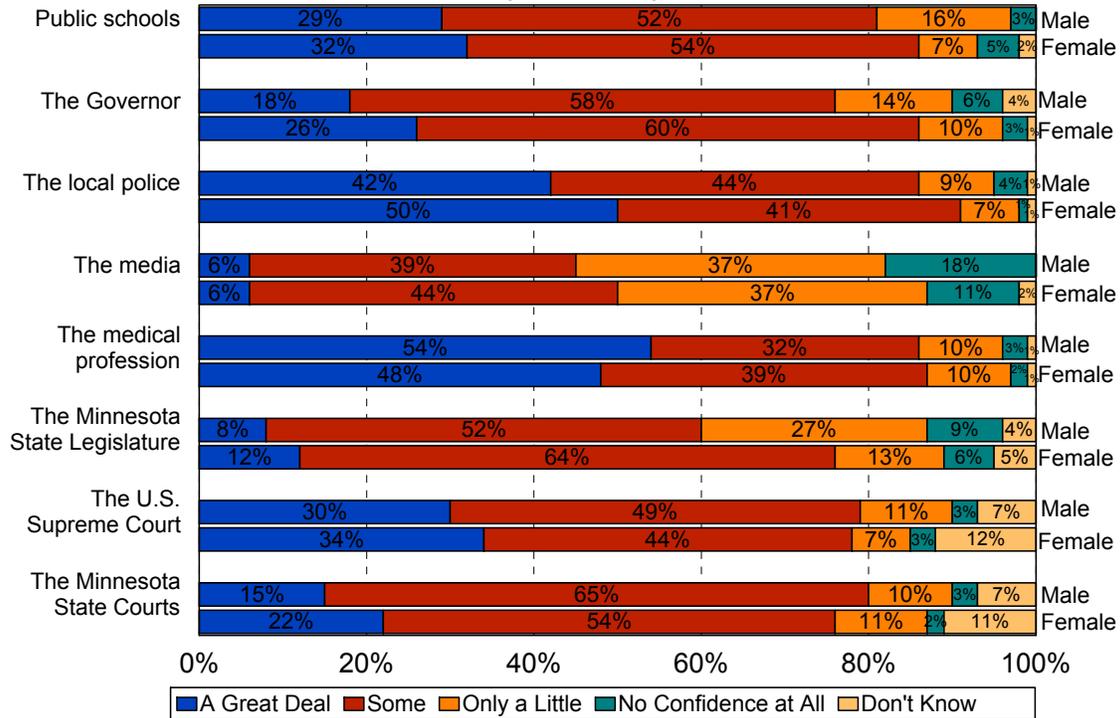
Respondents' Gender



DEMOGRAPHICALLY STRATIFIED FINDINGS

CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

FIGURE 34
Confidence Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Gender
(N=1000)



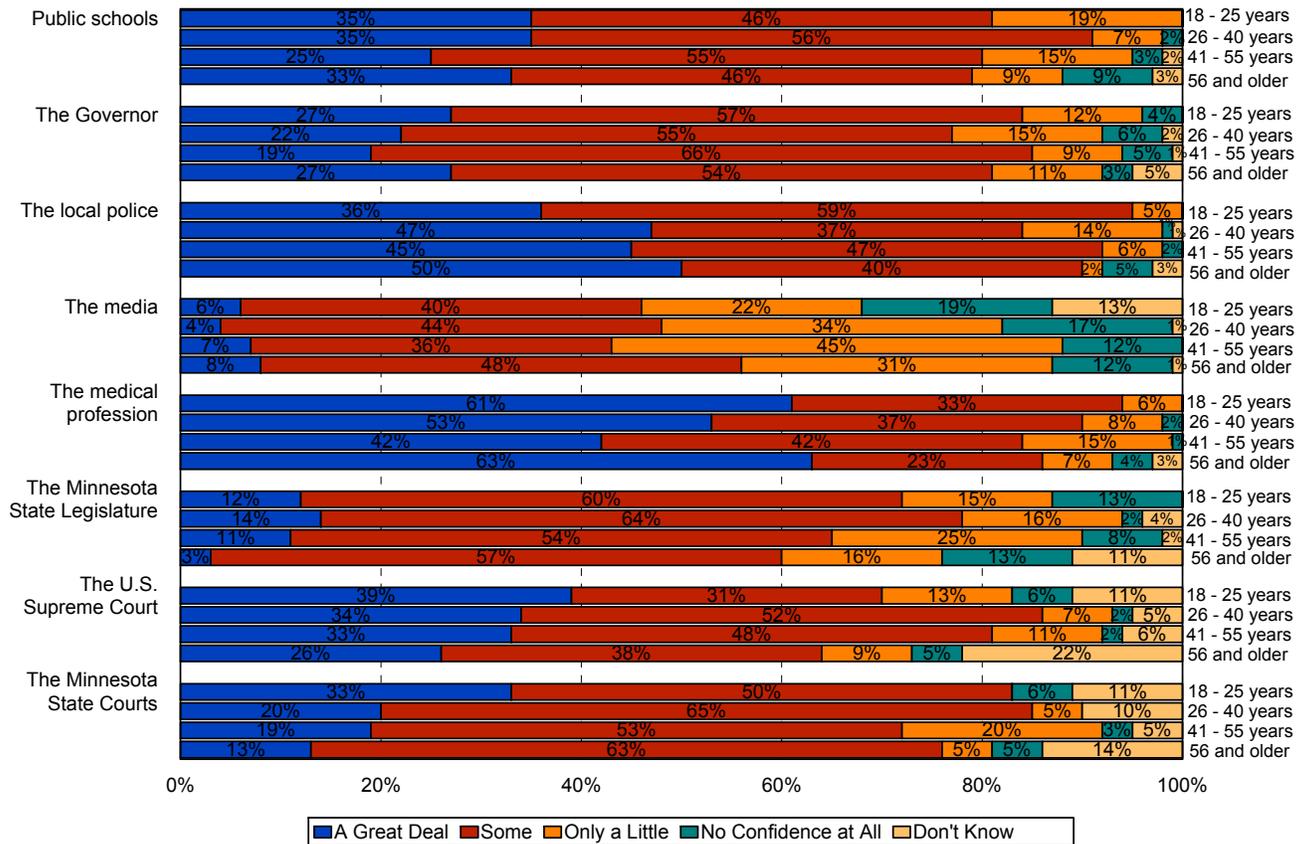
Other Findings

- ◆ Male respondents are more likely than female respondents to have *only a little* confidence in the **public schools**.

- ◆ Females are more likely than males to have a *great deal* or *some* confidence in the **Minnesota State Legislature**; males have *only a little* confidence in the Legislature.



FIGURE 35
Confidence Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Age (N=1000)

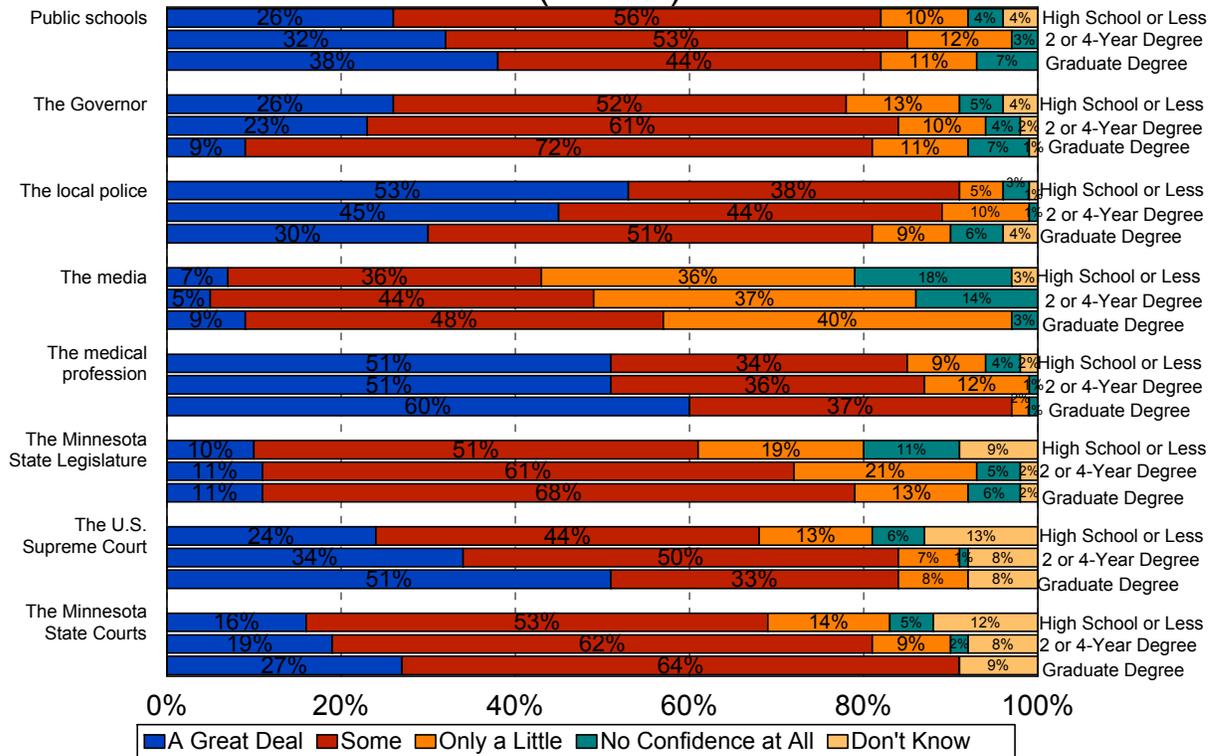


Other Findings

- ◆ Respondents 56 and older are more likely than those of any other age to say they have *no confidence at all* in the **public schools**.
- ◆ Respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 are significantly less likely to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **local police** than are respondents from all other age groups. However, they are more likely to have *some* confidence.
- ◆ Twenty-six to 40 year-olds are more likely than respondents of all other age groups to have *only a little* confidence in the **local police**.
- ◆ Respondents 56 and older are less likely than all others to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **Minnesota State Legislature**.
- ◆ Eighteen to 25 years olds most often reported having a *great deal* of confidence in the **Minnesota State Courts**, while those who are 41 to 55 have *only a little confidence* in this institution.

FIGURE 36

Confidence Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions Education Level (N=997)

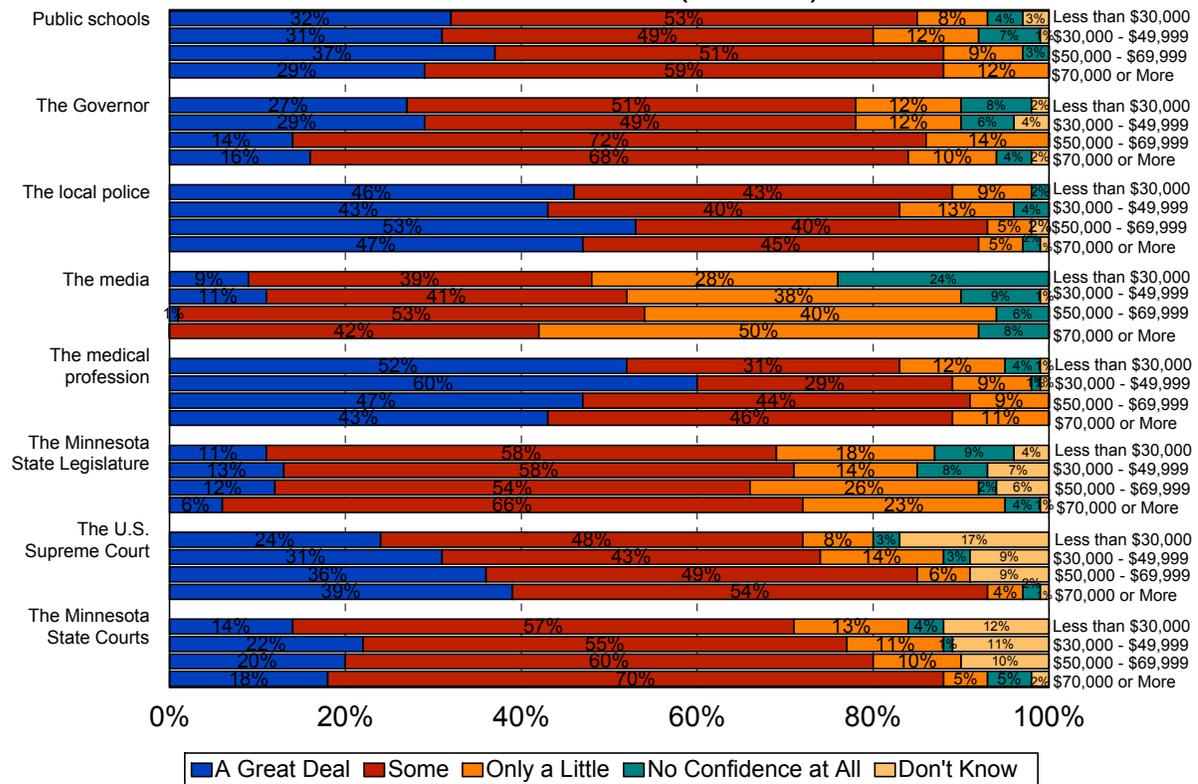


Other Findings

- ◆ As level of education increases, confidence in the court system also increases. Respondents with graduate school experience are more likely than all others to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **U.S. Supreme Court** and the **Minnesota State Courts**, and those with a high school diploma or less are more likely to *have no confidence at all*.

FIGURE 37

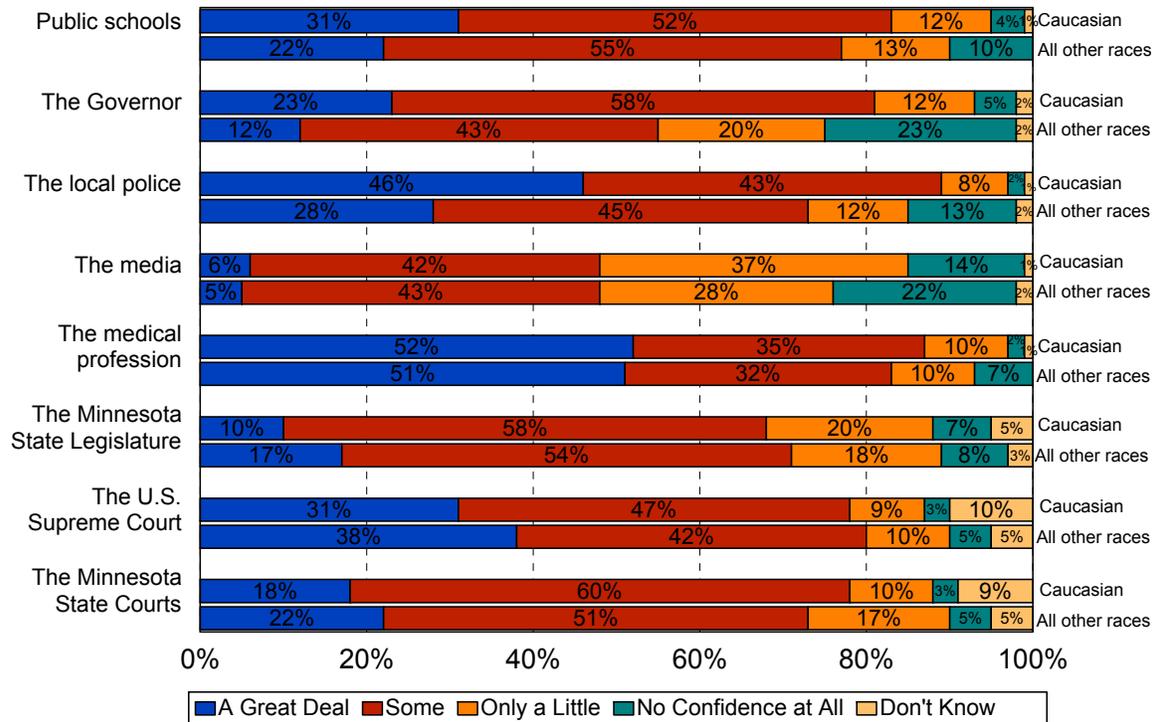
Confidence Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions Annual Income (N=913)



Other Findings

- ◆ Although respondents with an annual household income of less than \$50,000 are more likely to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **governor**, those earning \$50,000 or more are more likely have *some* confidence in him.
- ◆ Respondents with an annual household income of \$50,000 or more are less likely to have a *great deal* of trust in the **media** than those earning less than \$50,000. However, respondents with an annual income of less than \$30,000 are significantly more likely than respondents in all other income groups to have *no confidence at all* in the **media**.

FIGURE 38
Confidence Respondents Have in American Institutions
Race
(N=413)



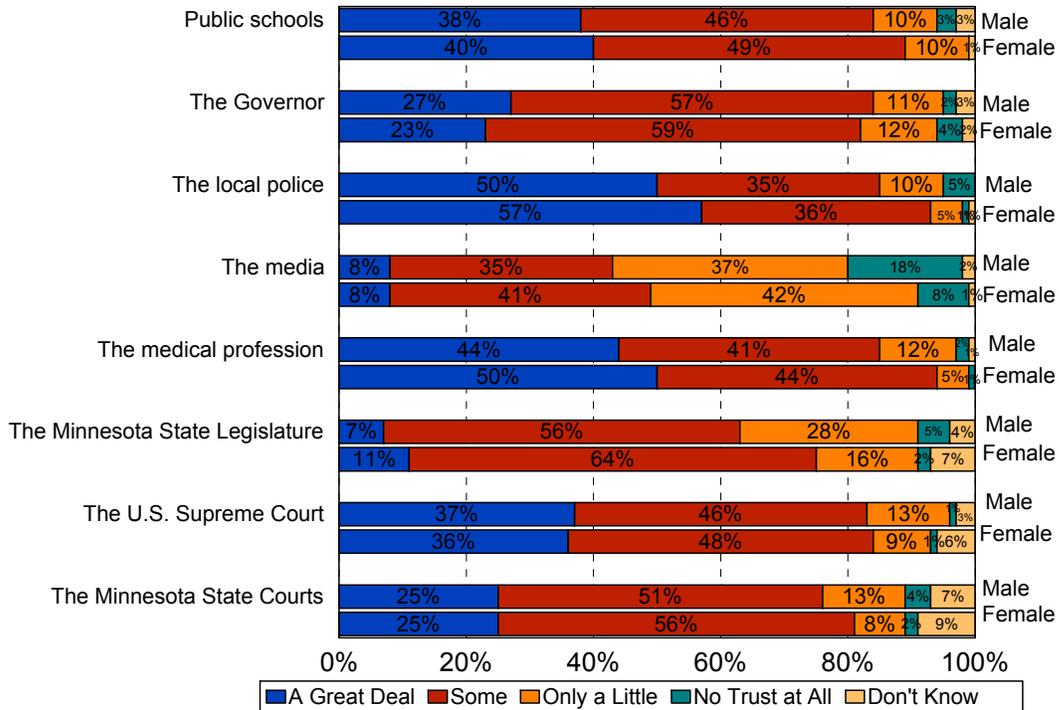
Other Findings

- ◆ When asked about their confidence in American Institutions, more Caucasian respondents than respondents of all other races have a *great deal* or *some* confidence in the **governor**.

- ◆ Caucasian respondents are also more likely than respondents of all other races to have a *great deal* of confidence in the **local police**.

FIGURE 39

Trust Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Gender
(N=1000)

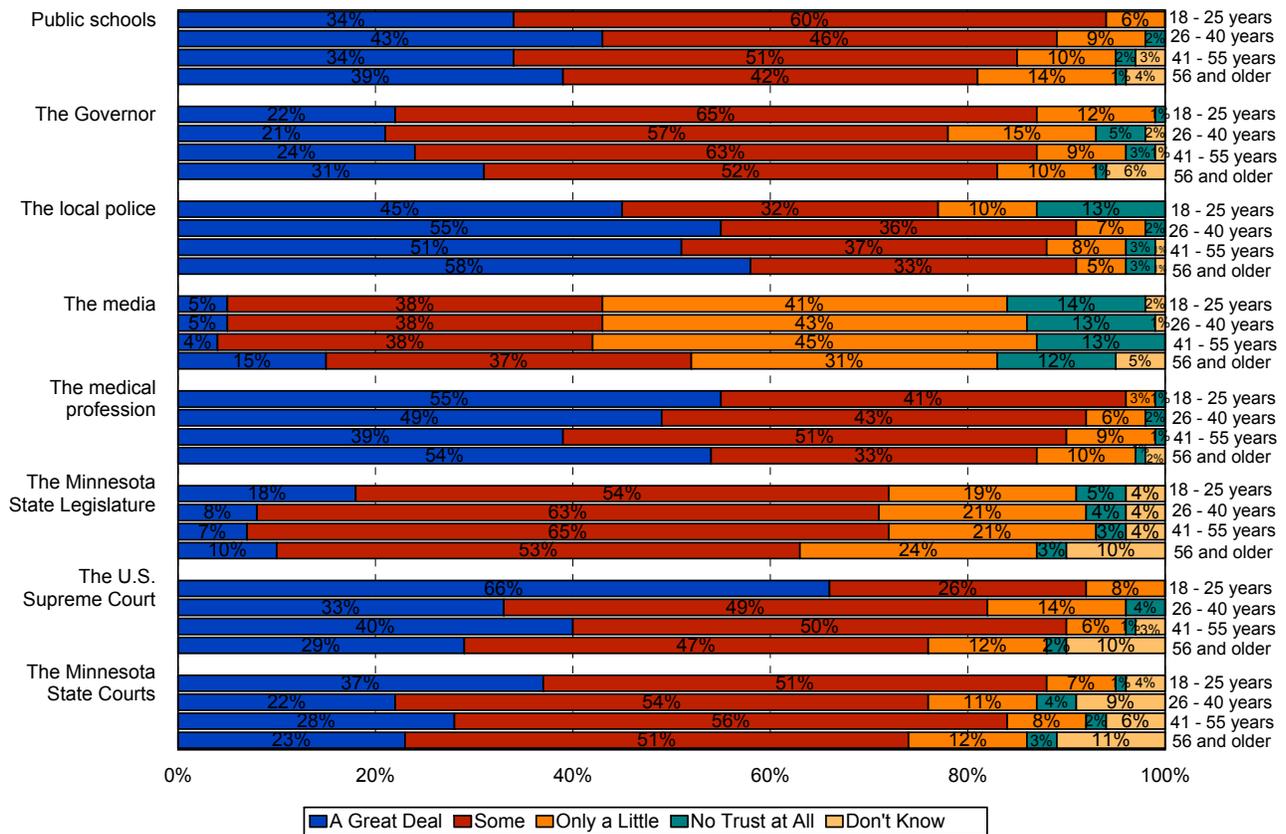


Other Findings

- ◆ When asked about their trust in a number of different American institutions, female respondents are significantly more likely than male respondents to have a *great deal* of trust in the **local police**.
- ◆ Males are more likely than females to have *no trust at all* in the **media**.
- ◆ Males are also more likely than females to report having *only a little trust* in the **medical profession** and the **Minnesota State Legislature**.



FIGURE 40
Trust Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Age (N=1000)



Other Findings

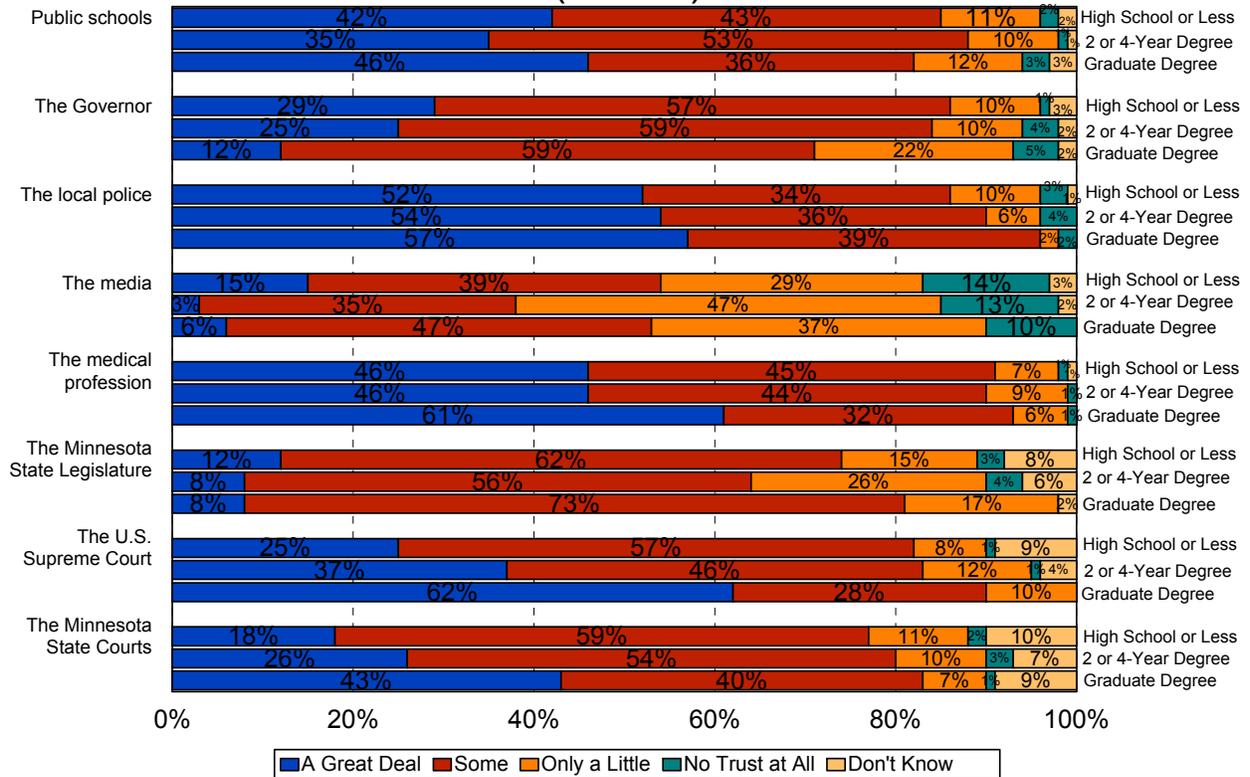
- ◆ Eighteen to 25 year olds are less likely than respondents in all other age groups to have a *great deal* of trust in the **local police**, and the most likely to have *no trust at all* in them.
- ◆ Respondents 56 and older are more likely than all others to have a *great deal* of trust

in the **media**.

- ◆ Respondents between 41 and 55 years old are the least likely to have a *great deal* of trust in the **medical profession**.
- ◆ Eighteen to 25 year olds are more likely than others to have a *great deal* of trust in the **U.S. Supreme Court**.



FIGURE 41
Trust Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Education Level
(N=997)



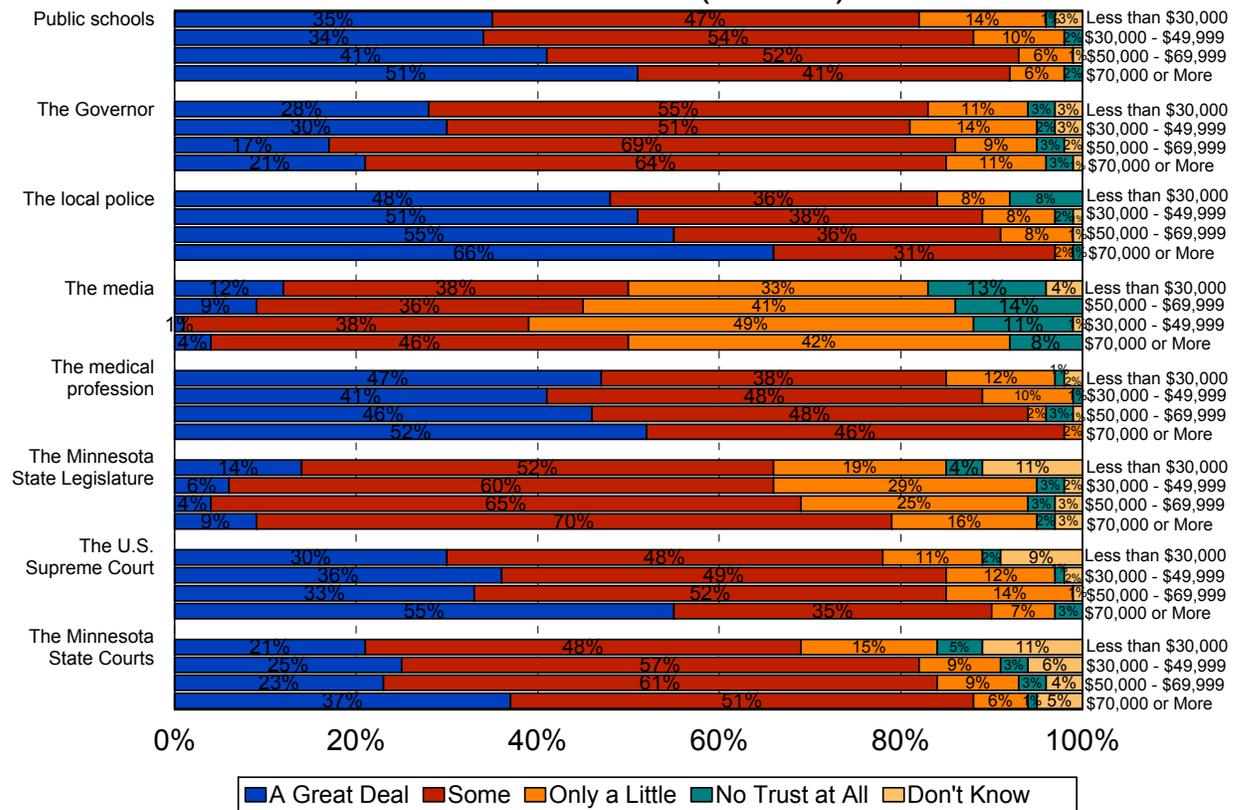
Other Findings

- ◆ Respondents with graduate school experience are less likely than all others to have a *great deal* of trust in the **governor**.
- ◆ Those with a two or four-year college degree are more likely than respondents in the other education groups to have *only a little* trust in the **media**. People who have a high school diploma or less are most likely to report a *great deal* of trust in the **media**

- . Similar responses were given when asked about the **Minnesota State Legislature**
- .
♦ Respondents who have attended graduate school are more likely than others to have a *great deal* of trust in the **U.S. Supreme Court** and the **Minnesota State Courts**.



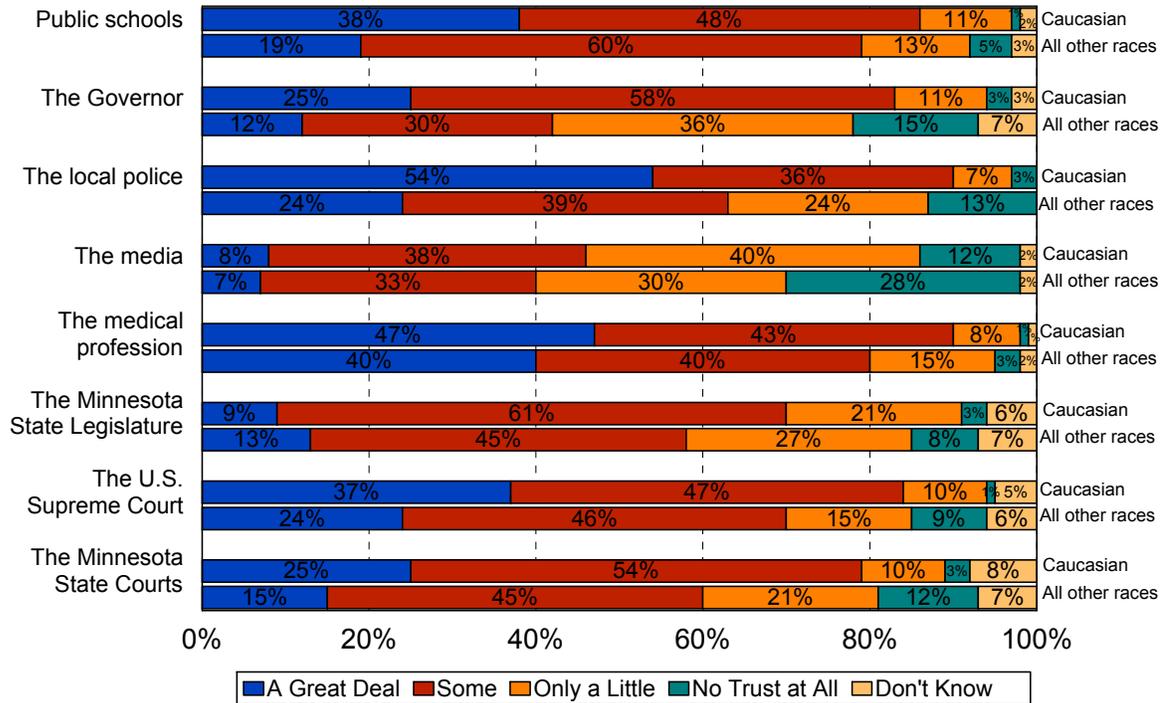
FIGURE 42
Trust Statewide Respondents Have in American Institutions
Annual Income (N=913)



Other Findings

- ◆ As income increases, so does trust in the **local police**. Respondents with an income of \$70,000 or more are the most likely to have a *great deal* of trust in the **local police**.
- ◆ Respondents with an income of \$49,999 or less are more likely to have a *great deal* of trust in the **media** than those earning more than this amount. The highest income group (\$70,000 or more) report having *some* trust.
- ◆ Respondents with an income of \$49,999 or less are significantly more likely to have *only a little* trust in the **medical profession**, while those earning \$70,000 or more most often reported a *great deal* of trust here.
- ◆ Respondents with an annual household income of \$70,000 or more are more likely than all others to report having *some* trust in the **Minnesota State Legislature**.
- ◆ Those earning \$70,000 or more each year are more likely than other respondents to report a *great deal* of trust with regard to the **U.S. Supreme Court** and the **Minnesota State Courts**.

FIGURE 43
Trust Respondents Have in American Institutions
Race
(N=693)



Other Findings

- ◆ More Caucasian respondents than respondents of all other races have a *great deal* of trust in the following:

- ⇒ *Public schools*
- ⇒ *Governor*
- ⇒ *Local police*
- ⇒ *U.S. Supreme Court*
- ⇒ *Minnesota State Courts*

- ◆ Caucasian respondents are more likely than all other races to have *some* trust in the **Minnesota State Legislature**.
- ◆ Respondents of all other races are more likely than Caucasian respondents to have *no trust at all* in the **media**.



PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURTS ABILITY TO HANDLE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CASES

Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability to Handle Different Types of Cases

Gender (N=1000)

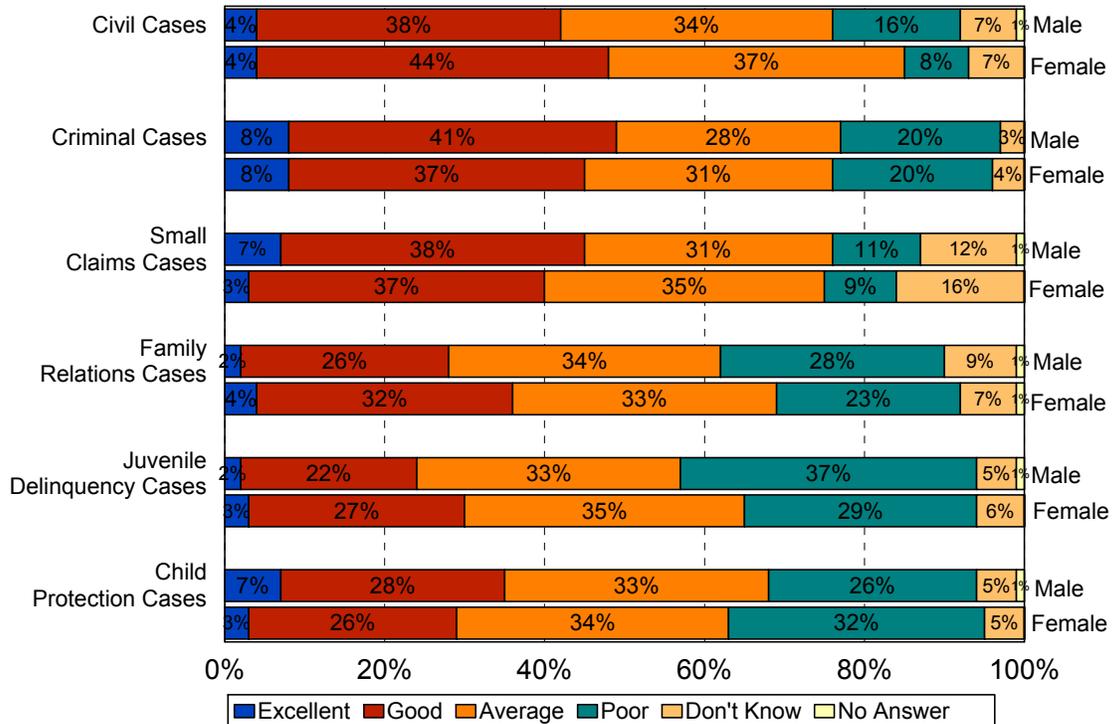


FIGURE 44

Other Findings

◆ Male respondents are more likely than females to rate the court's ability to handle **civil** and **juvenile delinquency cases** as *poor*. Females gave a *good* rating for each of these.

◆ With regard to **small claims cases**, males believe the courts do an *excellent* job,

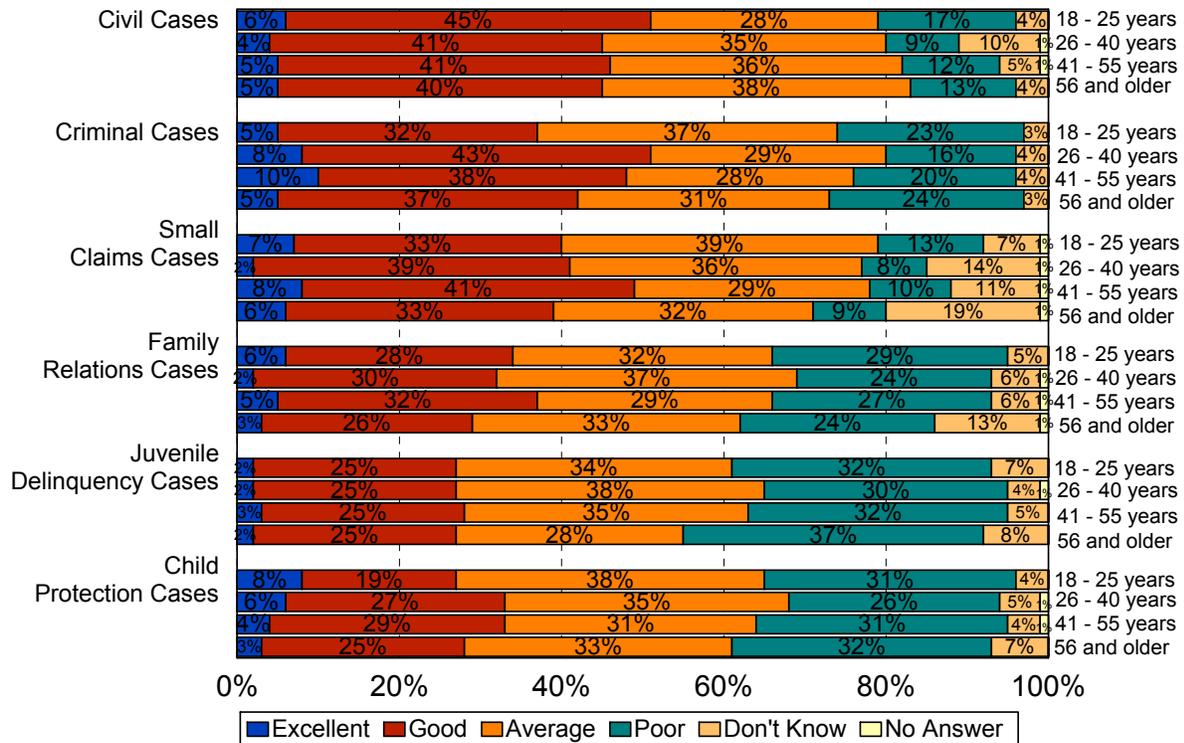


while females more often gave an *average* rating.

- ◆ Female respondents are more likely than males to rate the court's ability to handle **child protection cases** as *poor*. Males think the courts do a *good* job in these cases.



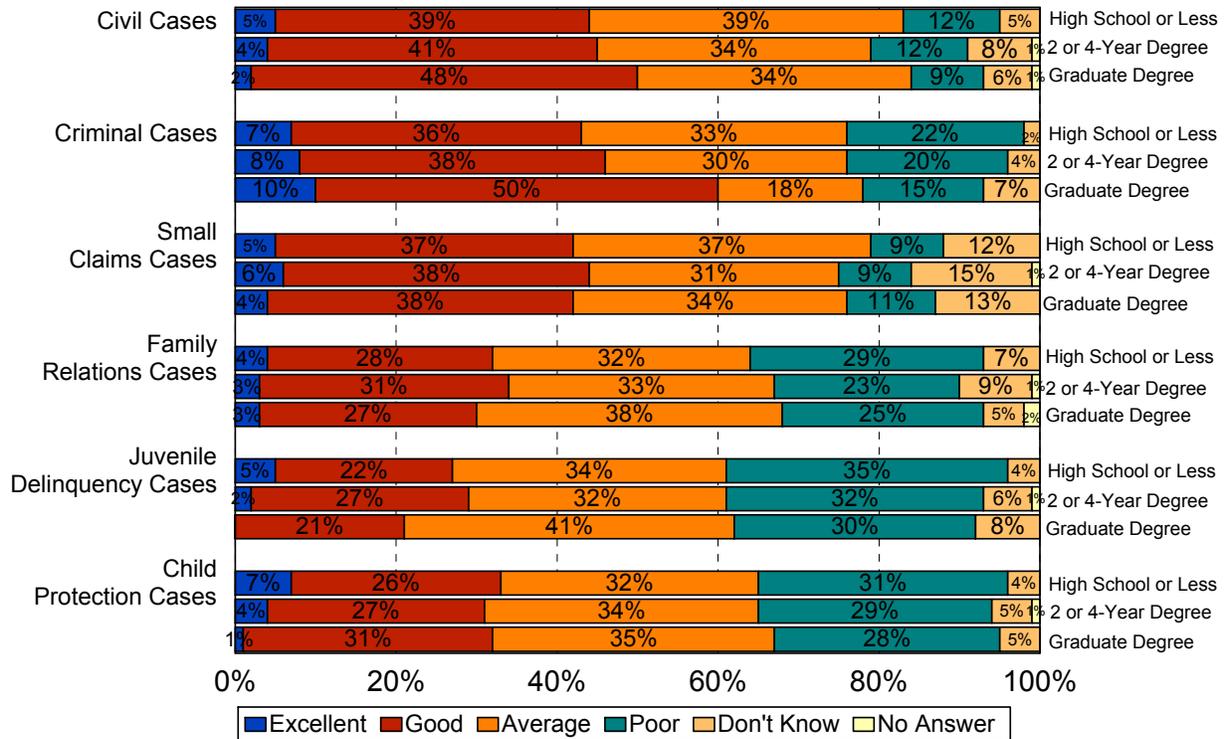
FIGURE 45
Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability
to Handle Different Types of Cases
Age (N=1000)



Other Findings

- ◆ Responses were varied among age groups regarding the court's ability to handle **small claims cases**. The oldest respondents, those 56 and older, are the most likely to be unable to give a rating.

FIGURE 46
Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability
to Handle Different Types of Cases
Education (N=997)



Other Findings

- ◆ As education increases, so does opinion regarding the court's ability to handle **criminal cases**. Those respondents with graduate school experience are more likely than the rest to give a rating of *excellent* or *good*.
- ◆ Respondents who attended graduate school are more likely than those with less education to rate the court's ability to handle **juvenile delinquency** cases as *average*.

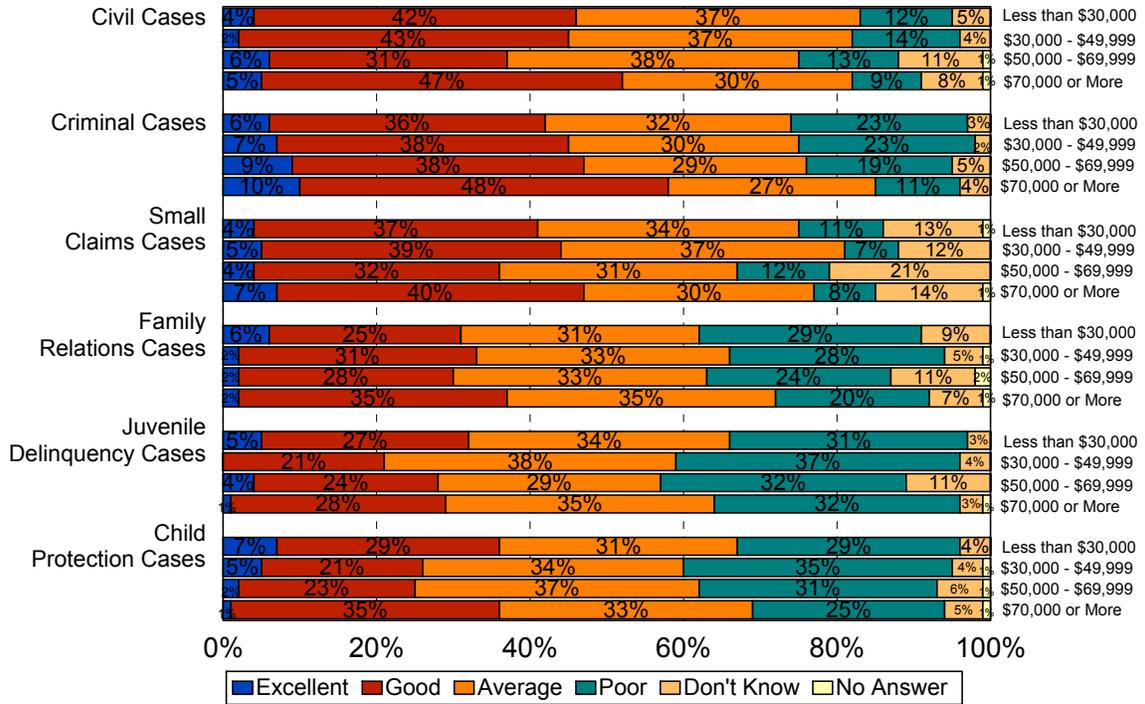


FIGURE 47

Other Findings

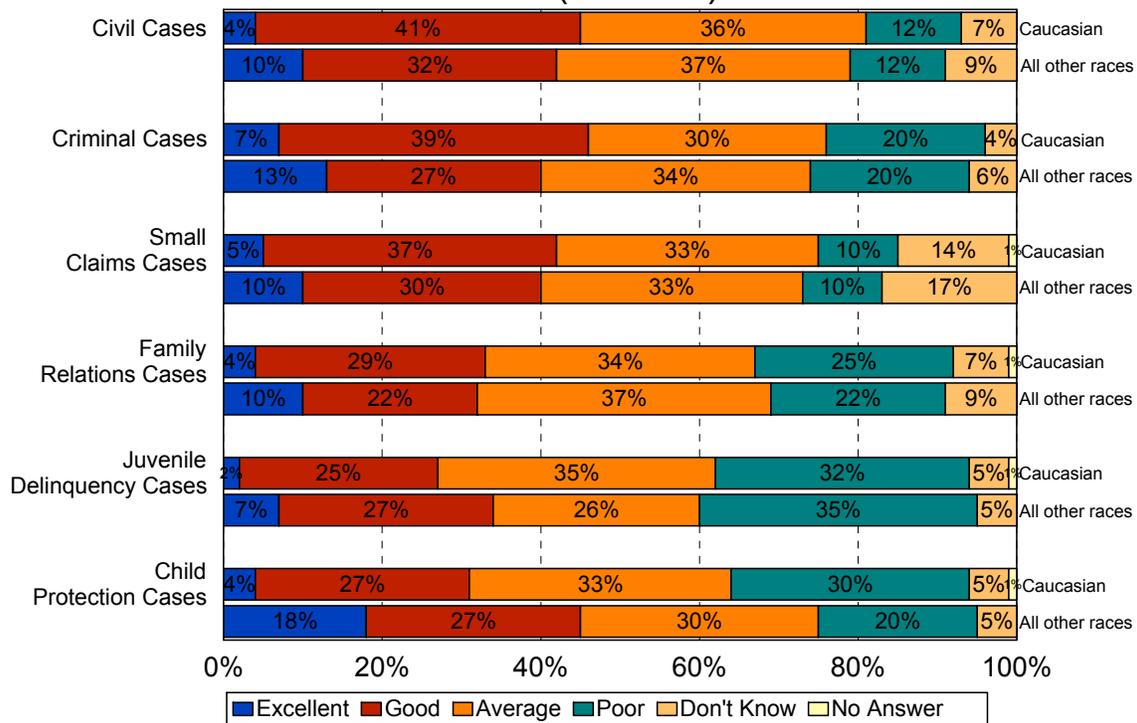
Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability to Handle Different Types of Cases

Annual Income (N=913)



- ◆ Ratings of *excellent* and *good* increase with income level with regard to how the courts handle **criminal cases**. Respondents with an annual income of at least \$70,000 are more likely to offer higher ratings.
- ◆ Respondents with an annual income of less than \$30,000 are more likely than respondents in all other income groups to rate the court's ability to handle **family relations cases** as excellent. *Poor* ratings decline as income levels increase.
- ◆ With regard to **juvenile delinquency cases**, those respondents in the \$30,000 to \$49,999 income range are the least likely to say the courts do a *good* job, and the most likely to rate the court's ability as *average* or *poor*.
- ◆ Those in the highest income category, \$70,000 or more, are the respondents most likely to believe the courts do a *good* job of handling **child protection cases**.

FIGURE 48
Statewide Respondents' Perceptions of the Court's Ability
to Handle Different Types of Cases
Race (N=1099)



Other Findings

- ◆ Caucasian respondents are more likely than respondents of all other races to rate the court's ability to handle the following types of cases as *good*:
 - ⇒ *Civil cases*
 - ⇒ *Criminal cases*
 - ⇒ *Family relations cases*

- ◆ Caucasian respondents are also more likely than all other races to give an *average* rating to the court's ability to handle **juvenile delinquency cases**.

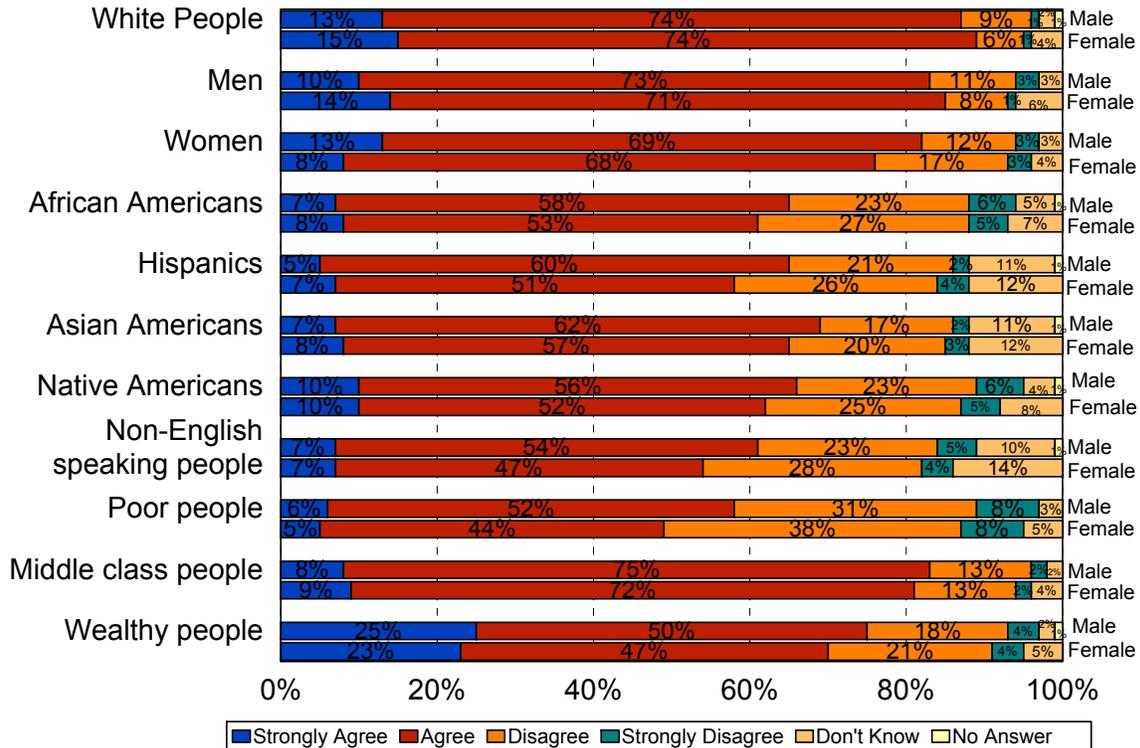
- ◆ More respondents of all other races than Caucasian respondents rate the court's ability to handle **child protection cases** as *excellent*; Caucasian respondents are more likely to rate the court's ability to handle this type of case as *poor*.



PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURT'S TREATMENT OF
DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE

FIGURE 49

Statewide Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat
Different Groups of People Fairly
Gender (N=1000)



Other Findings

- ◆ Female respondents are significantly more likely than male respondents to *strongly agree* that the court treats **men** fairly.

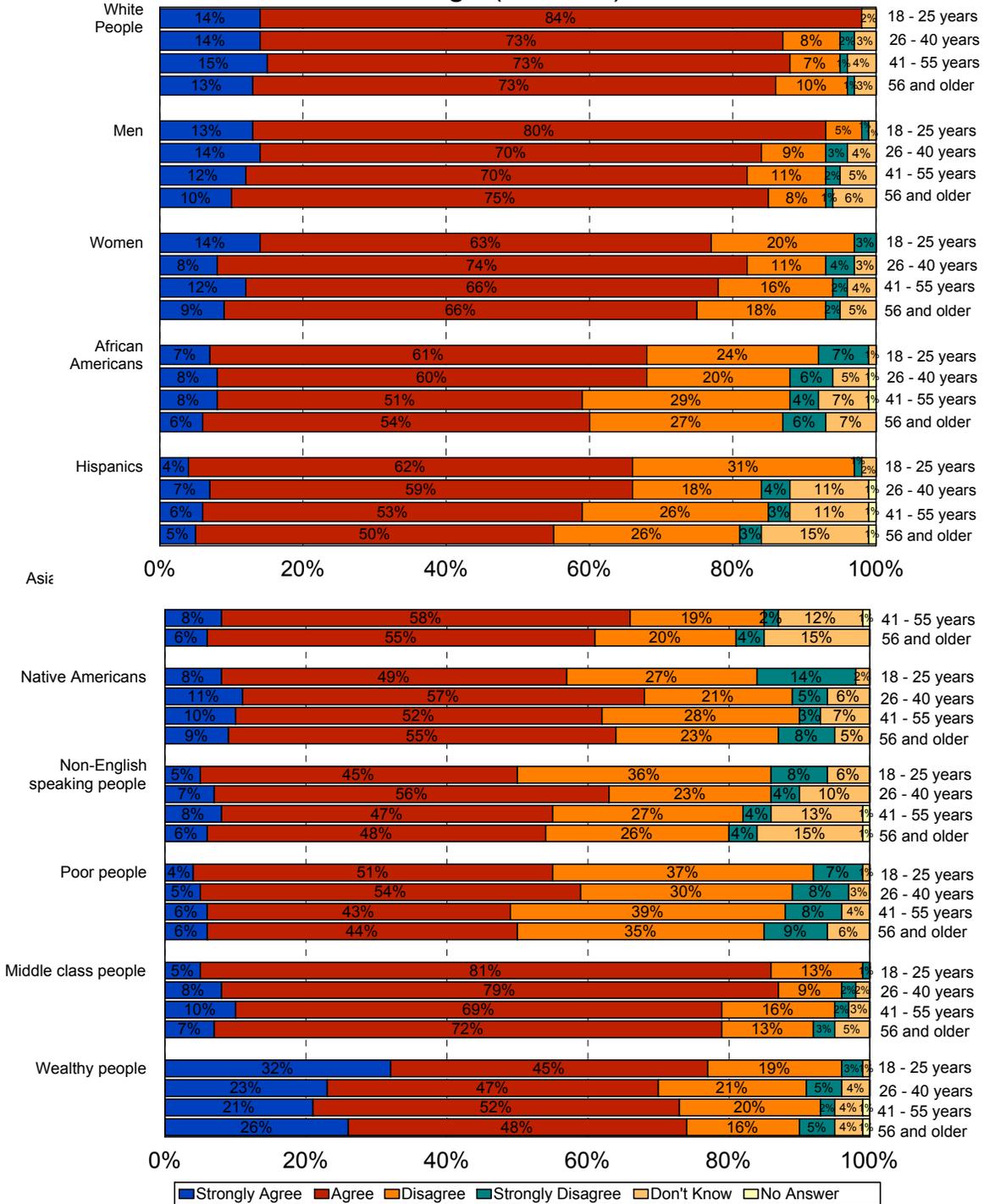
- ◆ Males *strongly agree* and females *disagree* that **women** are treated fairly by the courts.
- ◆ Males are more likely than females to *agree* that the court treats **Hispanics** fairly.



FIGURE 50

Other Findings

Statewide Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat Different Groups of People Fairly Age (N=1000)



◆ As age increases, the tendency to agree that **Hispanics** are treated fairly by the

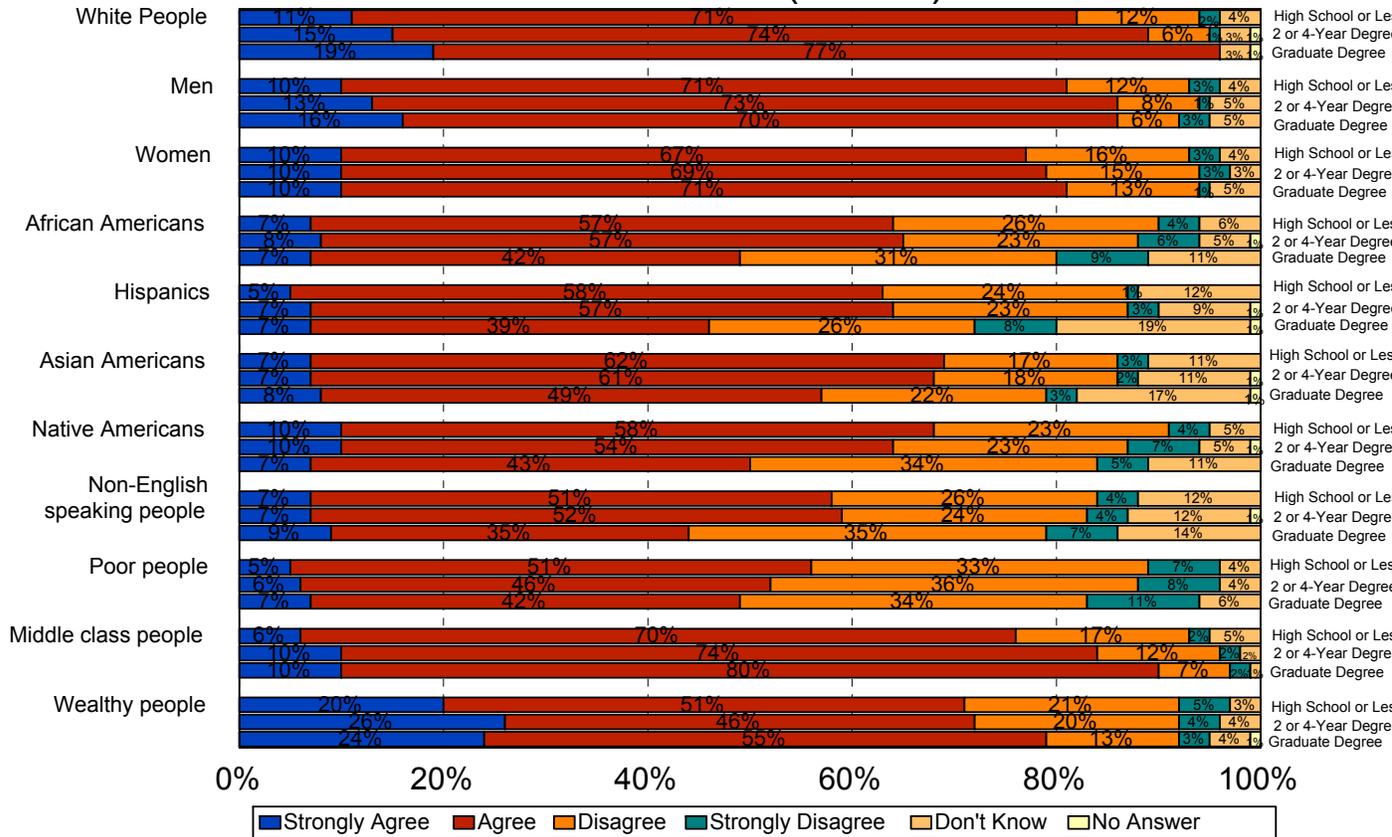
courts decreases. The oldest respondents, those over 55, are also the most likely to be unable to offer any rating at all.

- ◆ Respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 are more likely than older respondents to *strongly disagree* that the courts treat **Native Americans** fairly.



FIGURE 51

Statewide Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat Different Groups of People Fairly Education Level (N=997)



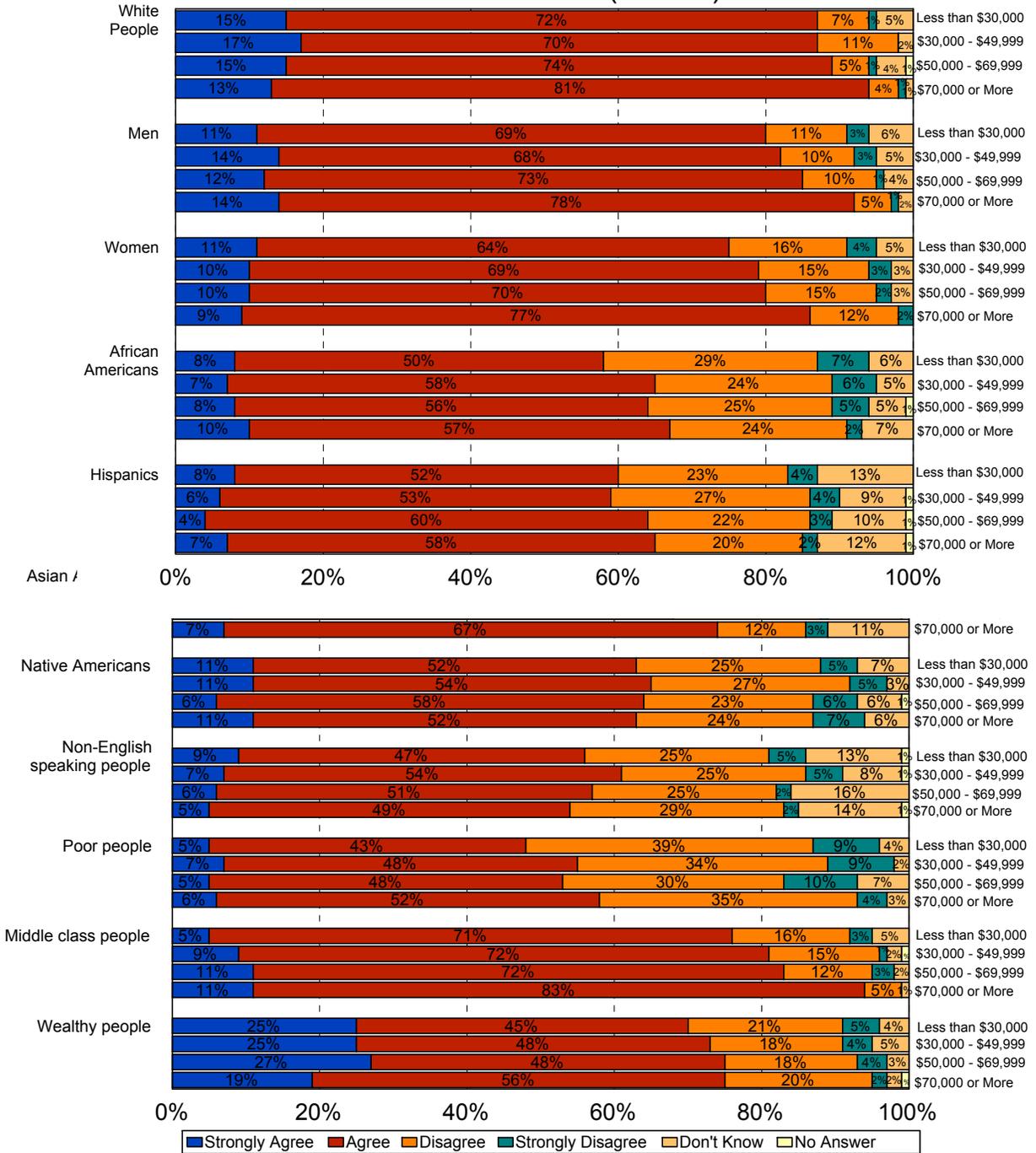
Other Findings

- ◆ As education level increases so does the likelihood of offering a *strongly agree* or *agree* response when asked if the courts treat **white people** fairly.
- ◆ Respondents with graduate school experiences are the least likely to *agree* and the most likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that the courts treat **Hispanic and Native American** people fairly.
- ◆ Agreement increases along with education regarding the fair treatment of **middle class** people by the courts.

FIGURE 52

Other Findings

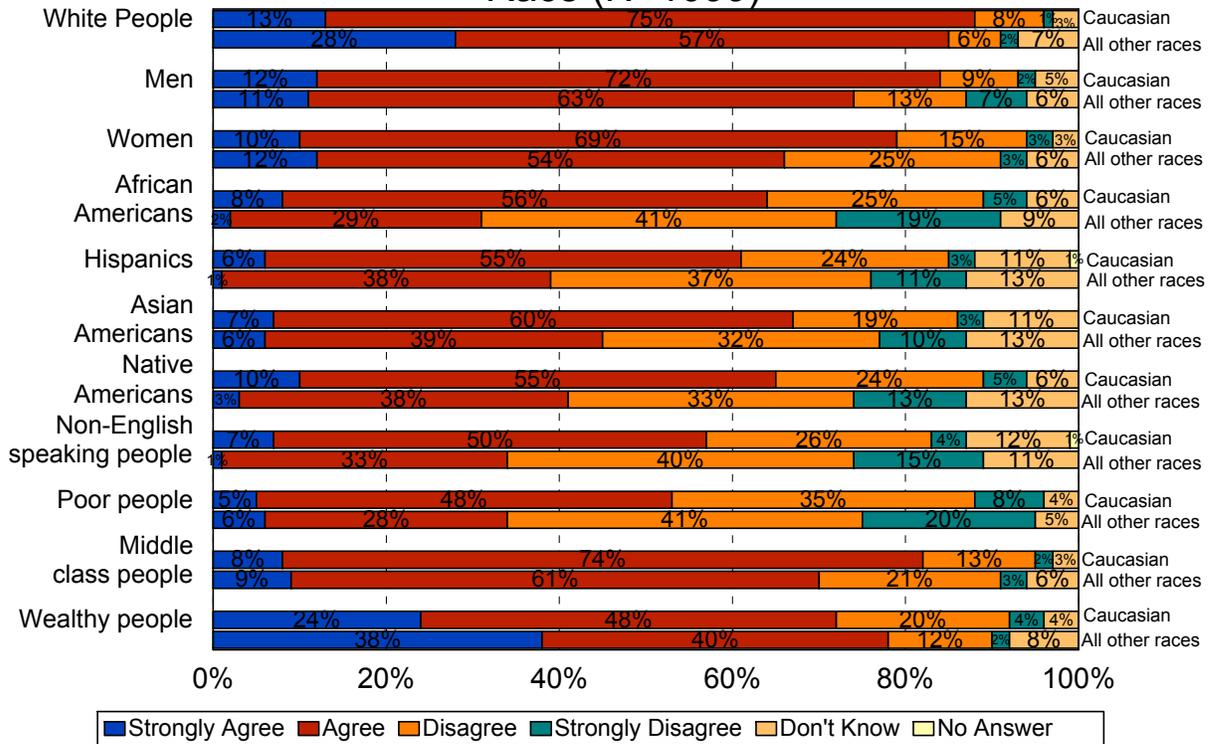
Statewide Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat Different Groups of People Fairly Annual Income (N=913)



◆ Respondents with an annual income of \$70,000 or more are the most likely to agree and the least likely to disagree that the court treats middle class people fairly.

FIGURE 53

Respondents' Agreement that the Courts Treat Different Groups of People Fairly Race (N=1099)



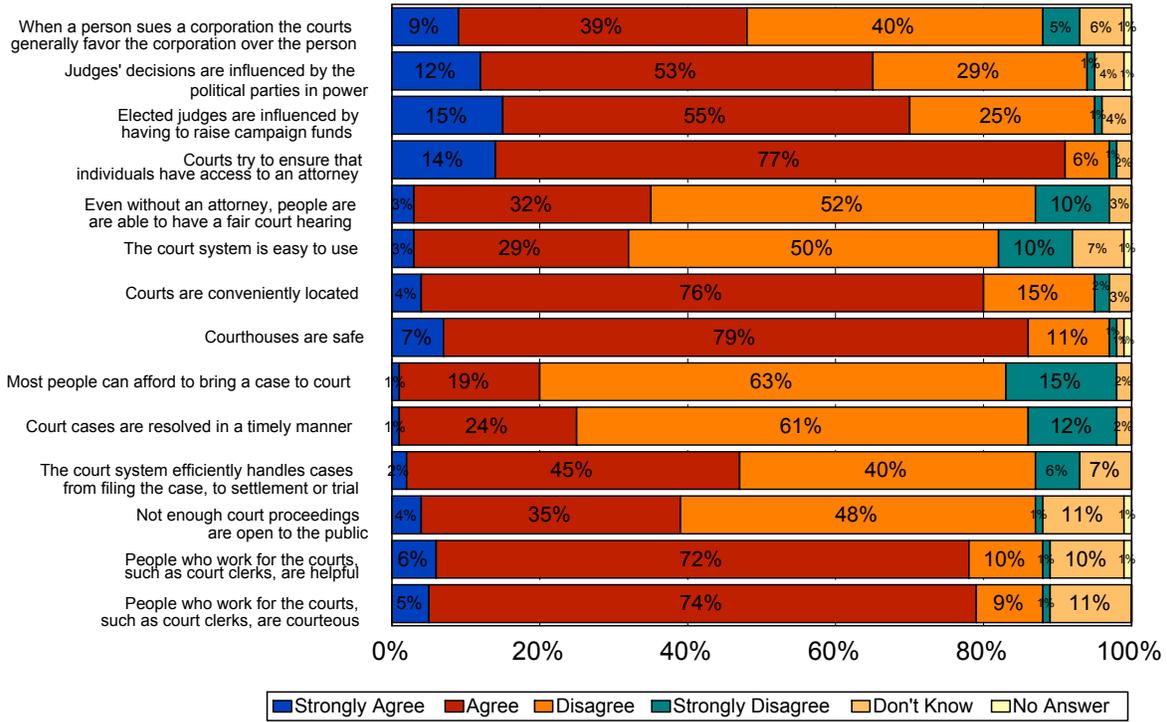
Other Findings

- ◆ When asked their agreement that the court treats different groups of people fairly, Caucasian respondents are more likely than respondents of other races to *agree* that the following groups of people are treated fairly:
 - ⇒ *Men*
 - ⇒ *Women*
 - ⇒ *African Americans*
 - ⇒ *Hispanics*
 - ⇒ *Asian Americans*
 - ⇒ *Native Americans*
 - ⇒ *Non-English speaking people*
 - ⇒ *Poor people*
 - ⇒ *Middle class people.*

- ◆ More respondents of all other races than Caucasian respondents *strongly agree* that **white people** and **wealthy people** are treated fairly by the courts.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE COURTS IN RESPONDENTS' COMMUNITIES

FIGURE 54



Male Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

(N=464)

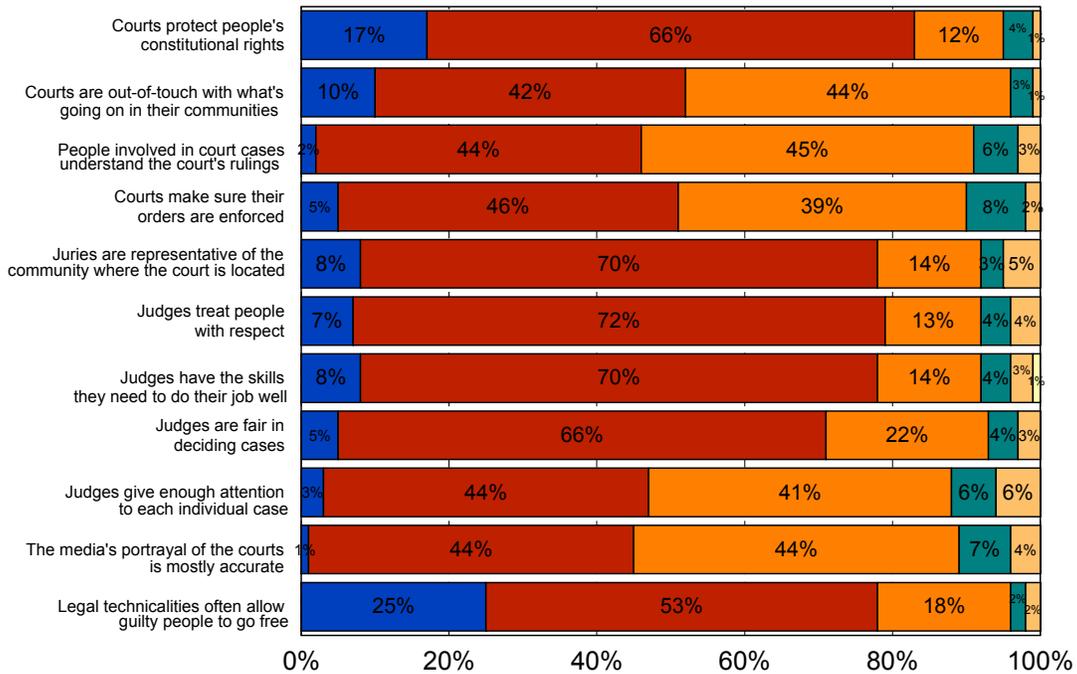
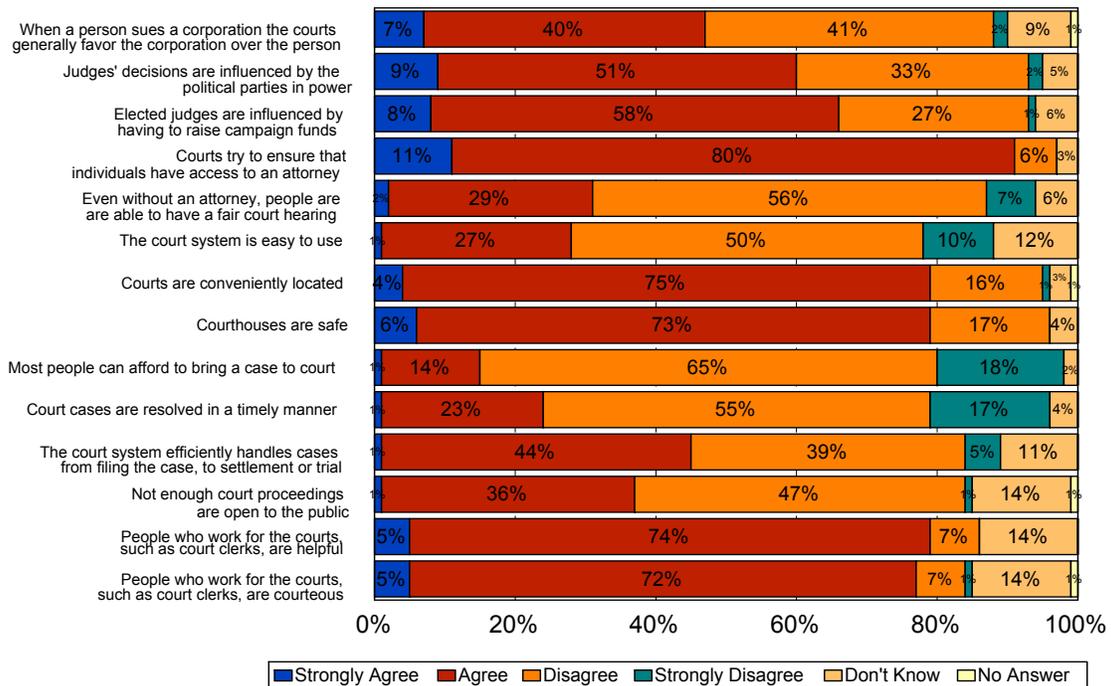


FIGURE 55



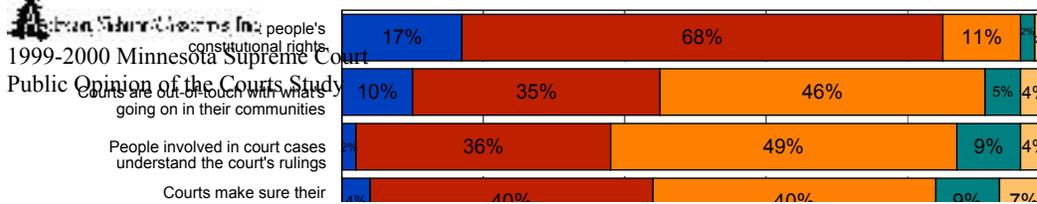
Female Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

(N=536)

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Minnesota State Bar Association
1999-2000 Minnesota Supreme Court
Public Opinion of the Courts Study



Other Findings

- ◆ Females are more likely than males to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **judges have the skills they need to do their job well**.
- ◆ Males *agree* and females *disagree* that the **media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate**.
- ◆ Male respondents are more likely than female respondents to *strongly agree* that **elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds**.
- ◆ Regarding whether **courthouses are safe**, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to *disagree*.
- ◆ Males *strongly agree* with the statement that **not enough court proceedings open to the public**. More females were unable to offer a response.



FIGURE 56

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents Between 18 and 25 Years Old (N=67)

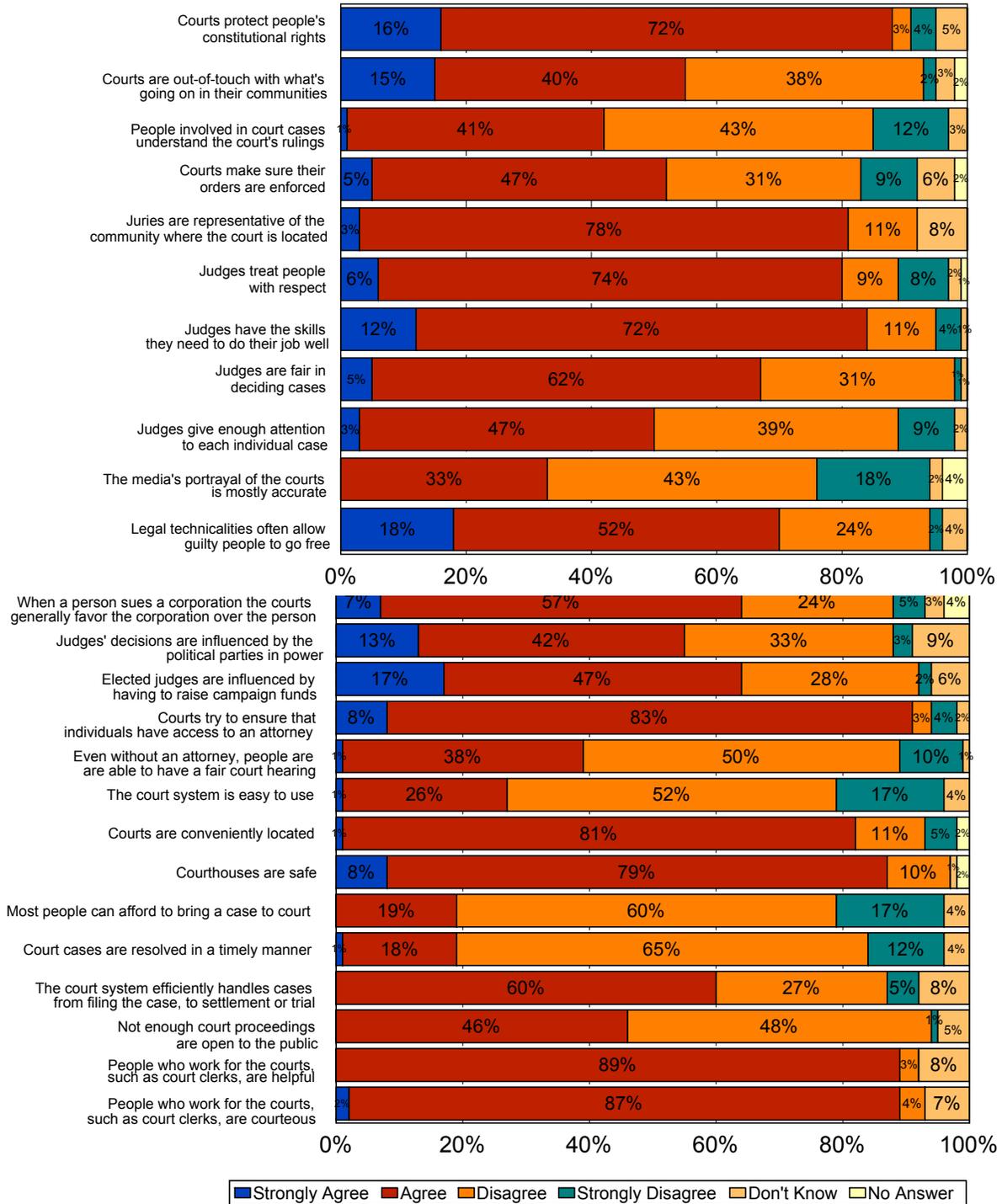


FIGURE 57

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents Between 26 and 40 Years Old (N=339)

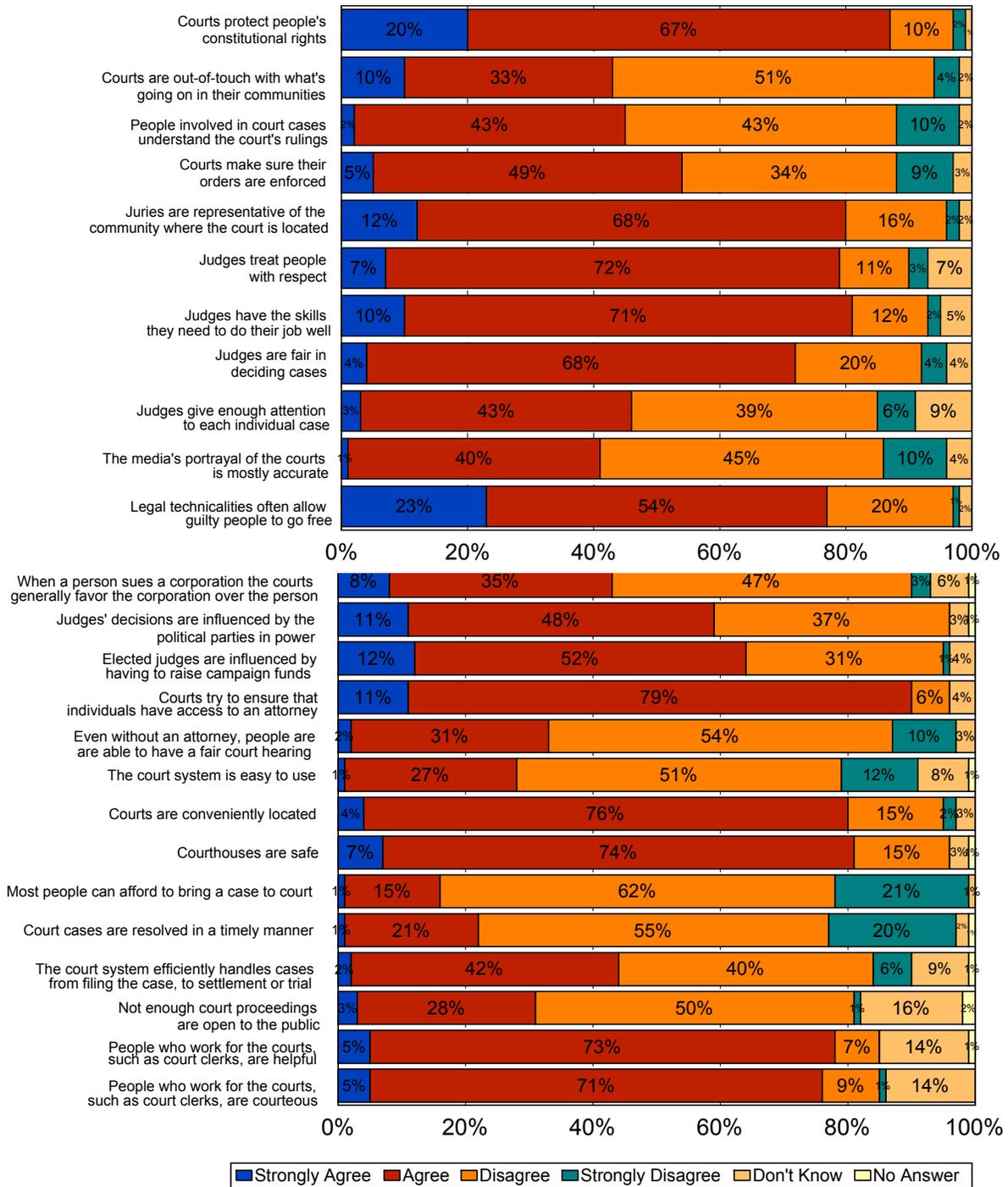


FIGURE 58

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents Between 41 and 55 Years Old (N=336)

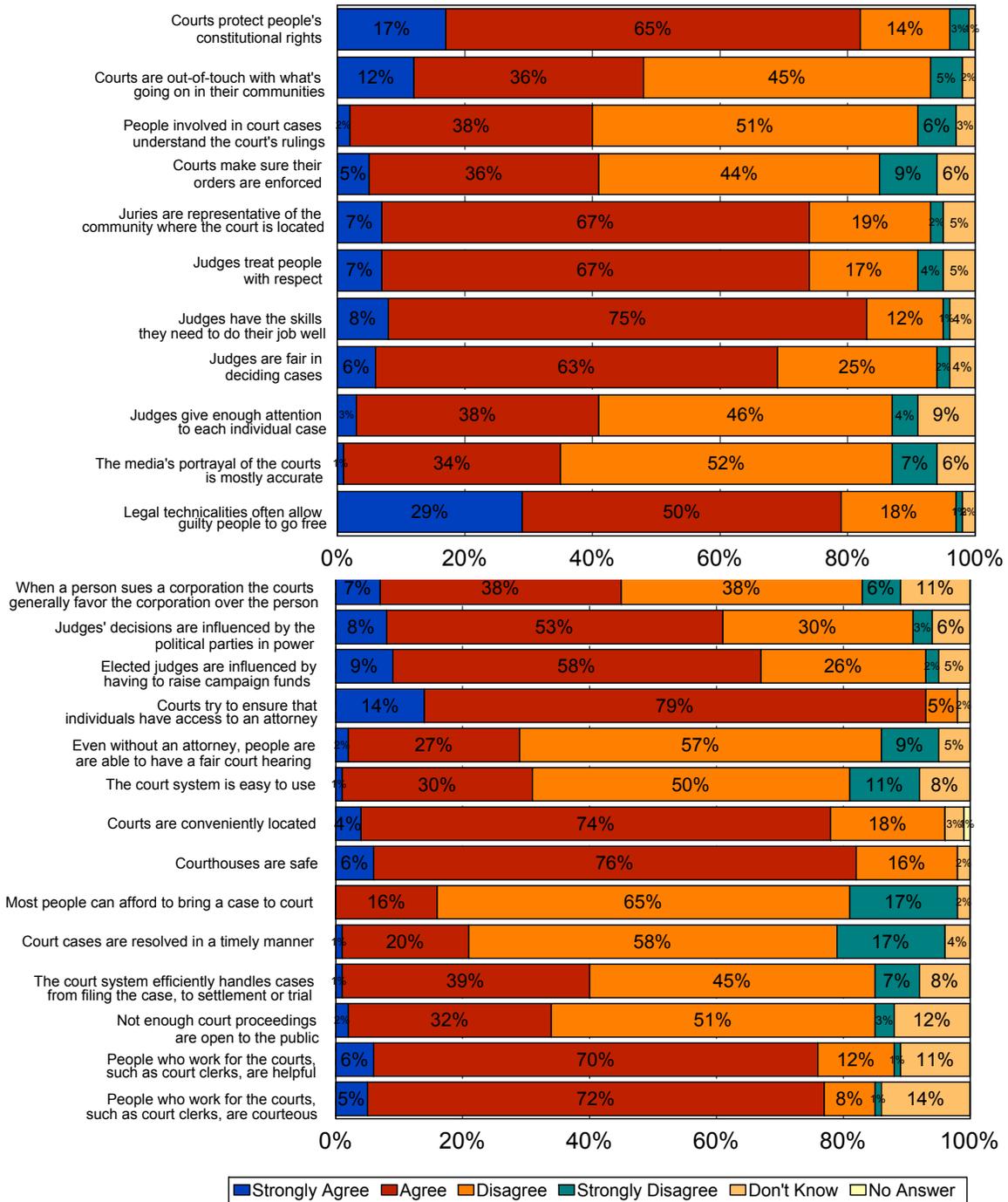
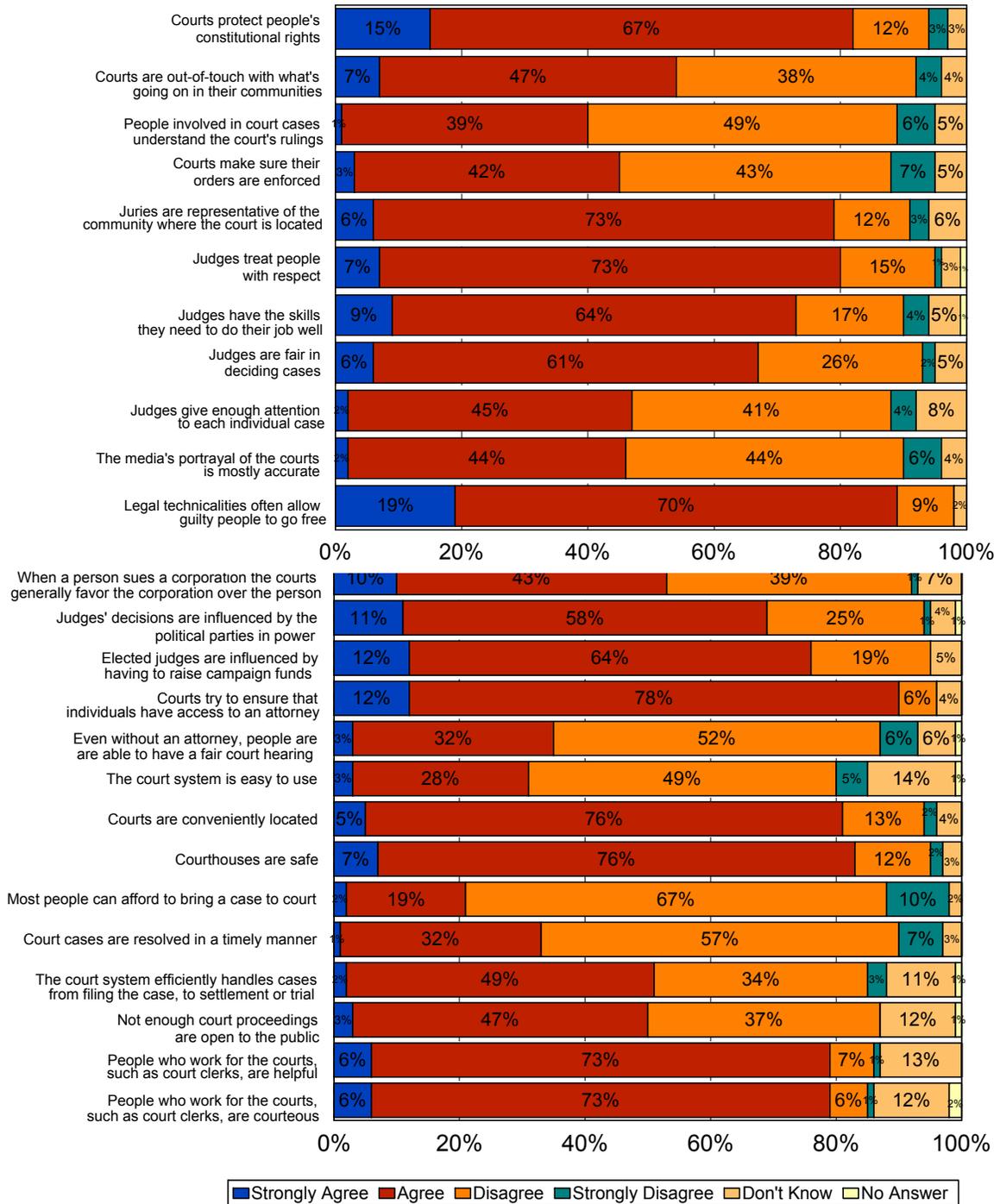


FIGURE 59

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents 56 Years and Older (N=258)



Other Findings

- ◆ Respondents 18 to 25 years old are significantly more likely than older respondents to agree with the following statements:

The court system efficiently handles cases from filing the case to settlement or trial

Juries are representative of the community where the court is located

When a person sues a corporation, the courts generally favor the corporation over the person

People who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful

- ◆ Respondents between 18 and 25 years old are significantly more likely than the other age groups to *strongly disagree* that **the media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate** and that **the court system is easy to use**.

- ◆ Respondents 56 and older are more likely than others to agree with the following statements:

Legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free

Court cases are resolved in a timely manner

Judges are influenced by the political parties in power

Elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds

- ◆ Respondents between 26 and 40 years old are more likely than those younger and older to *strongly disagree* that **most people can afford to bring a case to court**.

- ◆ The oldest respondents most often *disagree* that **not enough court proceedings are open to the public**.

- ◆ The youngest and oldest respondents are the ones most likely to *strongly agree* or agree that the **courts are out-of-touch with what's going on in their communities**.



FIGURE 60

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with a High School Diploma or Less (N=339)

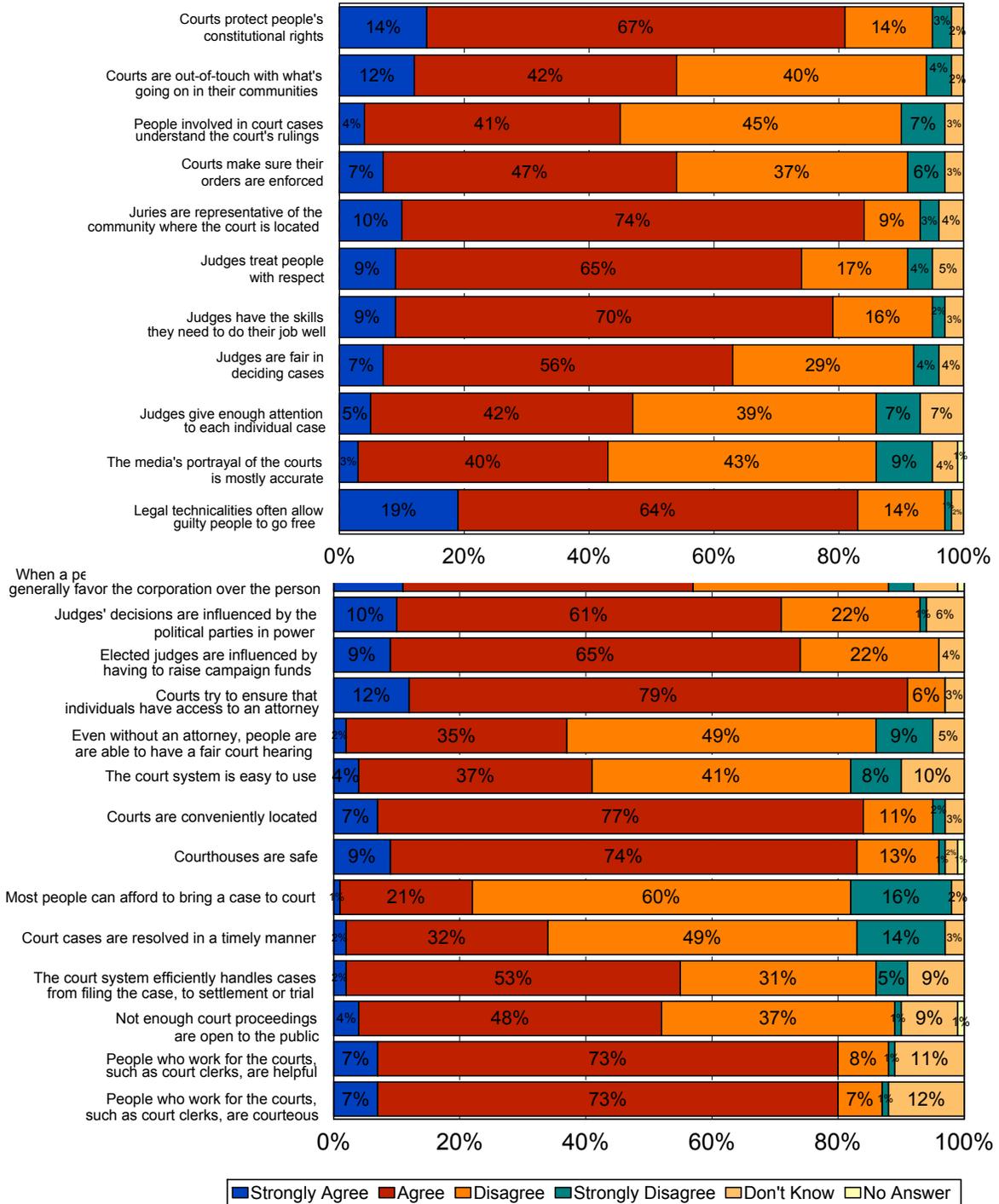


FIGURE 61



Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with a Two or Four-Year Degree (N=542)

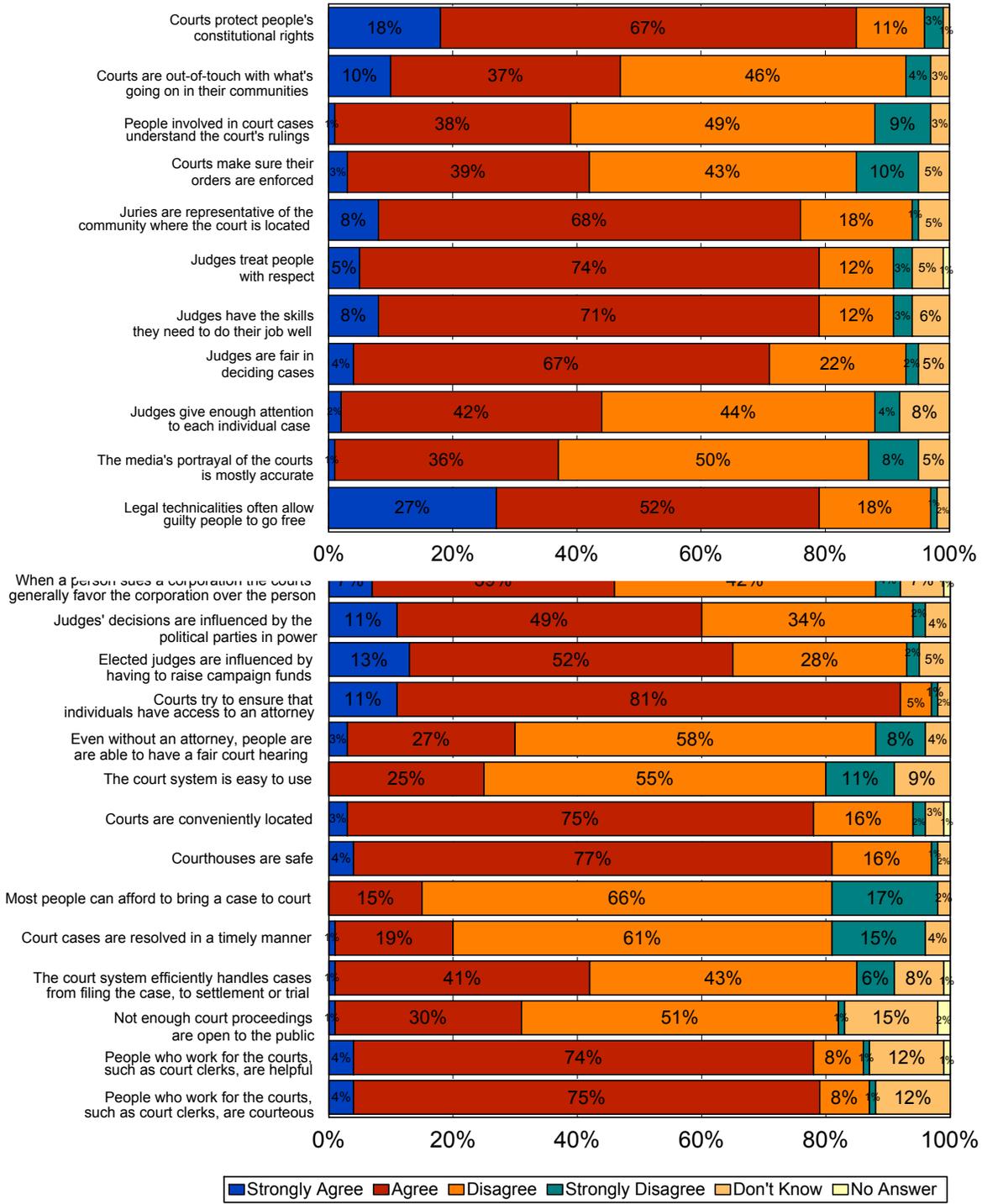
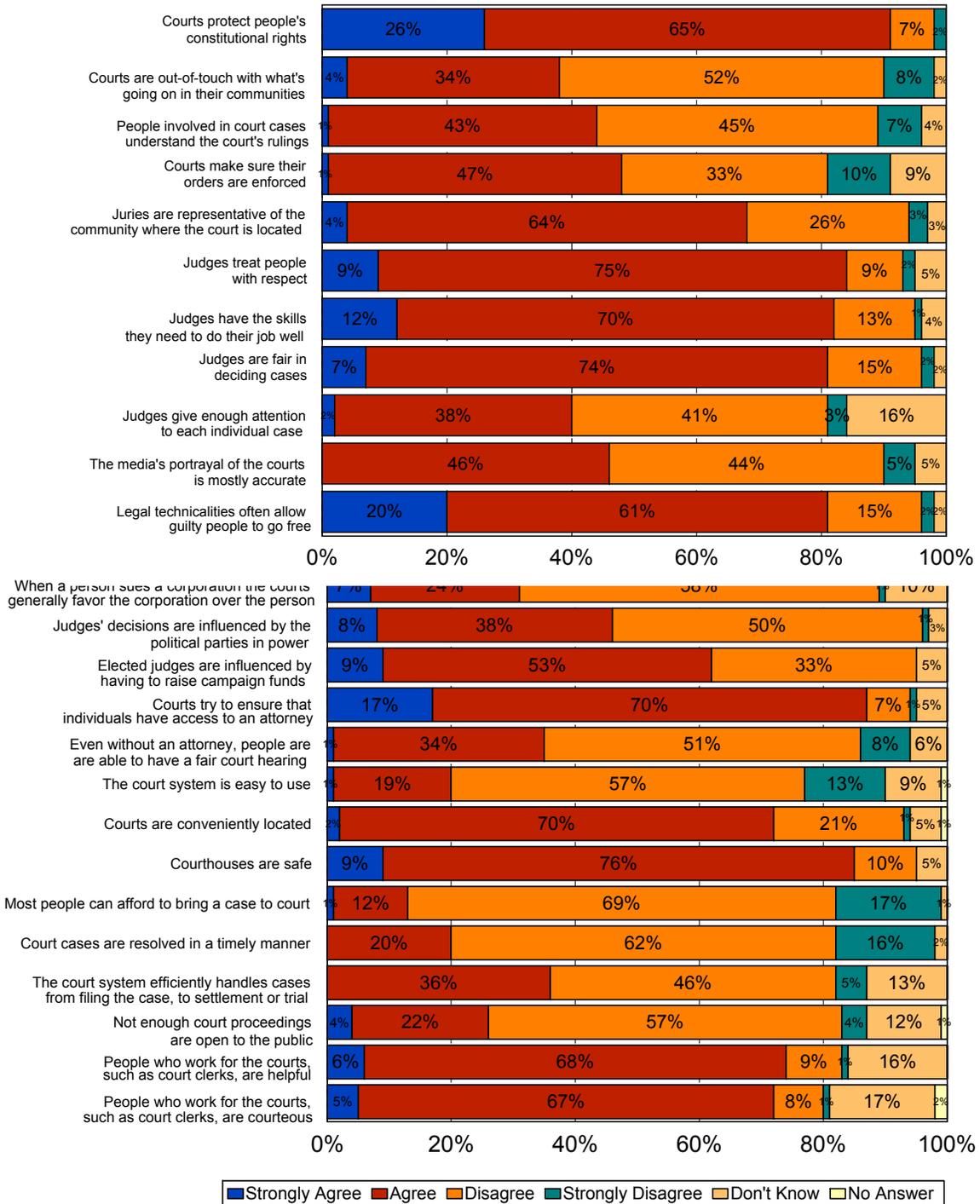


FIGURE 62

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with a Graduate Degree (N=116)



Other Findings

- ◆ The tendency to *strongly agree* or *agree* declines as level of education increases

with regard to the following statements:

- ⇒ Courts are out of touch with what's going on in their communities
- ⇒ Juries are representative of the community where the court is located
- ⇒ When a person sues a corporation, the court generally favors the corporation over the person
- ⇒ Judges are influenced by the political parties in power
- ⇒ Elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds
- ⇒ The court system is easy to use
- ⇒ Courts are conveniently located
- ⇒ Court cases are resolved in a timely manner
- ⇒ The court system efficiently handles cases from filing the case to settlement or trial
- ⇒ Not enough court proceedings are open to the public

- ◆ Respondents with a two- or four-year degree are more likely than others to *strongly disagree* or *disagree* that **courts make sure their orders are enforced** and that **the media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate**.
- ◆ Respondents with a high school diploma are less likely than those respondents a higher education to *agree* that **judges treat people with respect** and that **judges are fair in deciding cases**.
- ◆ Respondents with a high school diploma are more likely than those with more education to *strongly agree* that **judges treat give enough attention to each individual case**.
- ◆ Respondents with a two- or four-year degree are less likely than the others to *agree* that **legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free**.



FIGURE 63

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with an Annual Income Less than \$30,000 (N=297)

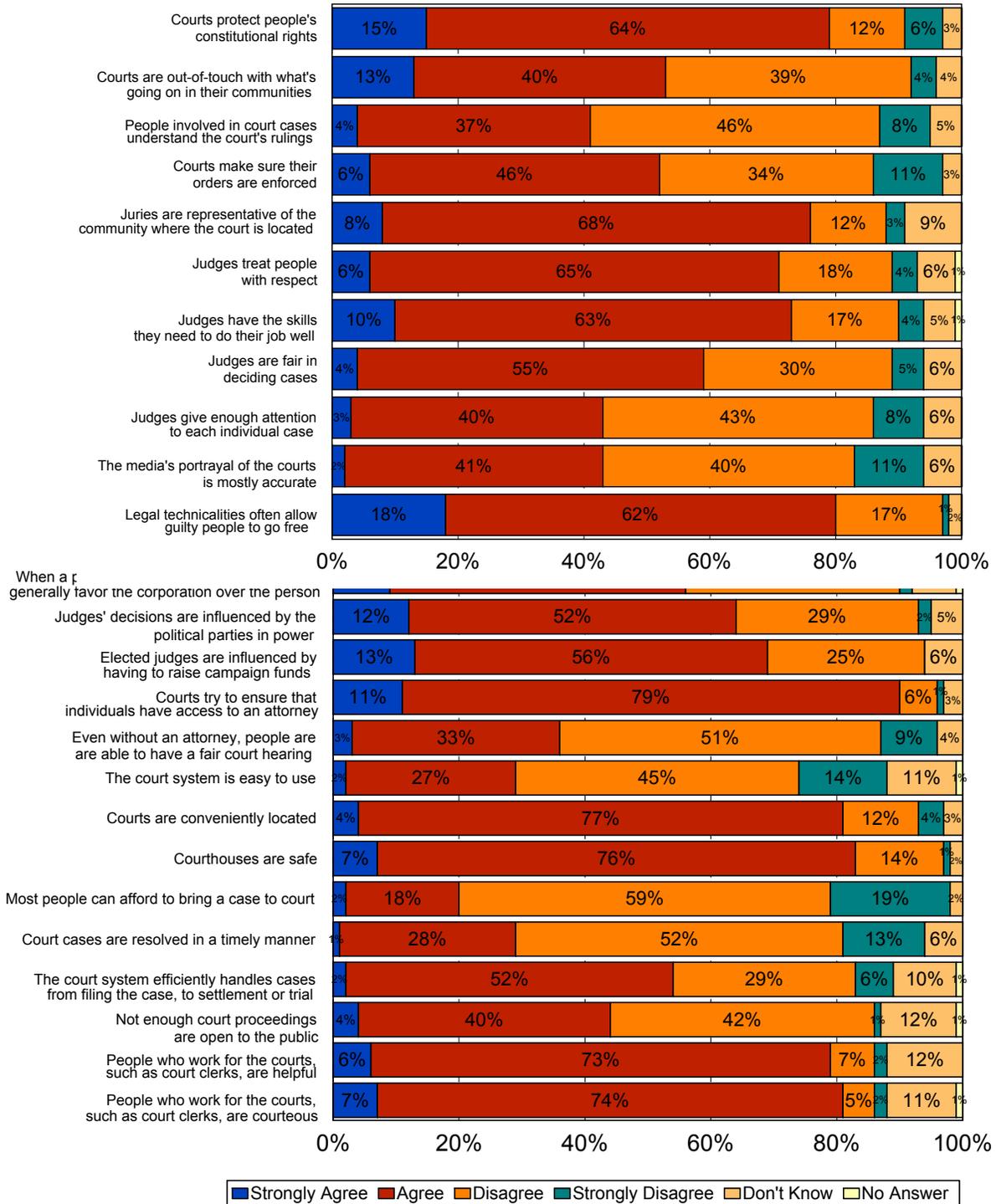


FIGURE 64

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with an Annual Income Between \$30,000 and \$49,999 (N=271)

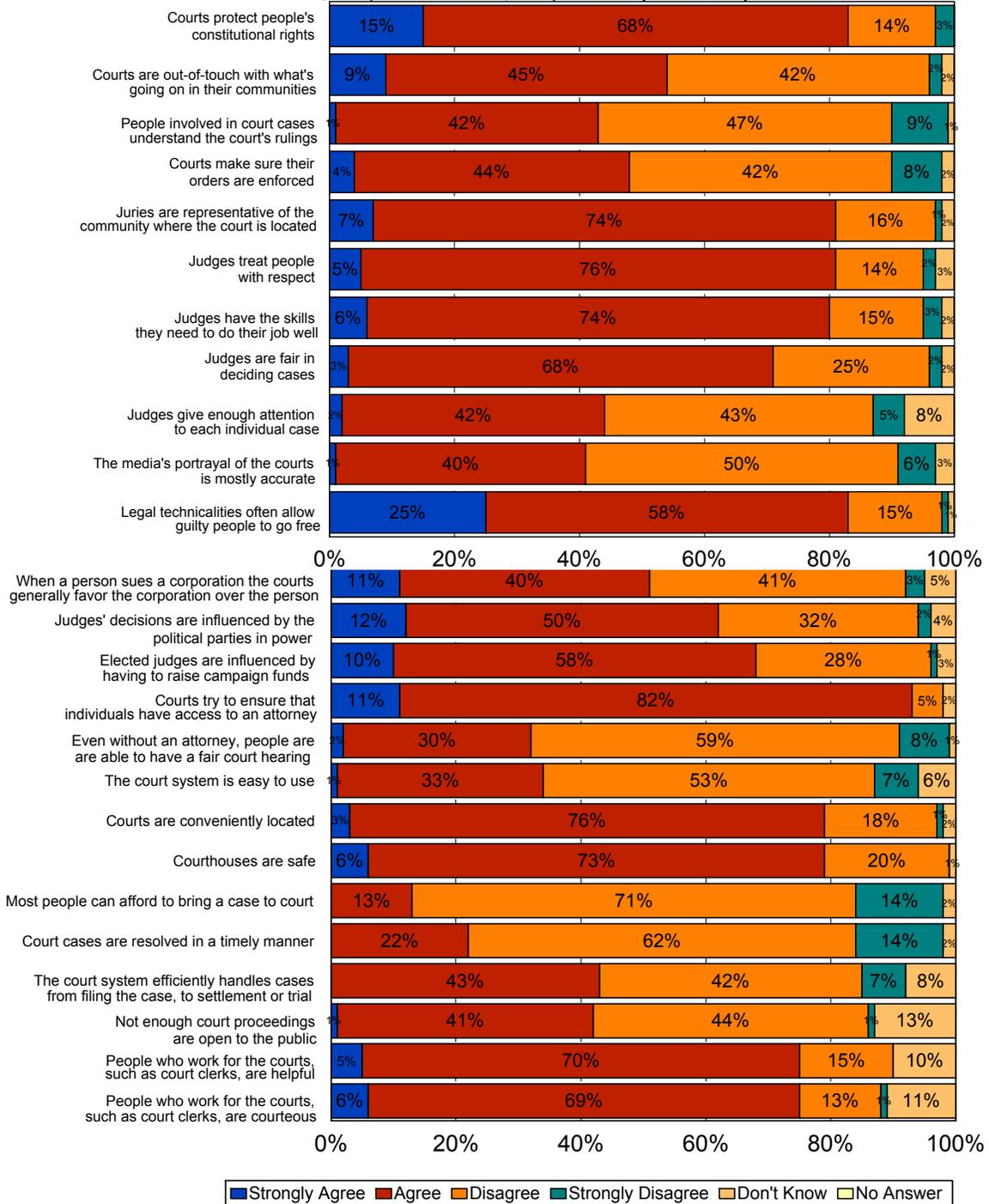


FIGURE 65

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with an Annual Income Between \$50,000 and \$69,000 (N=167)

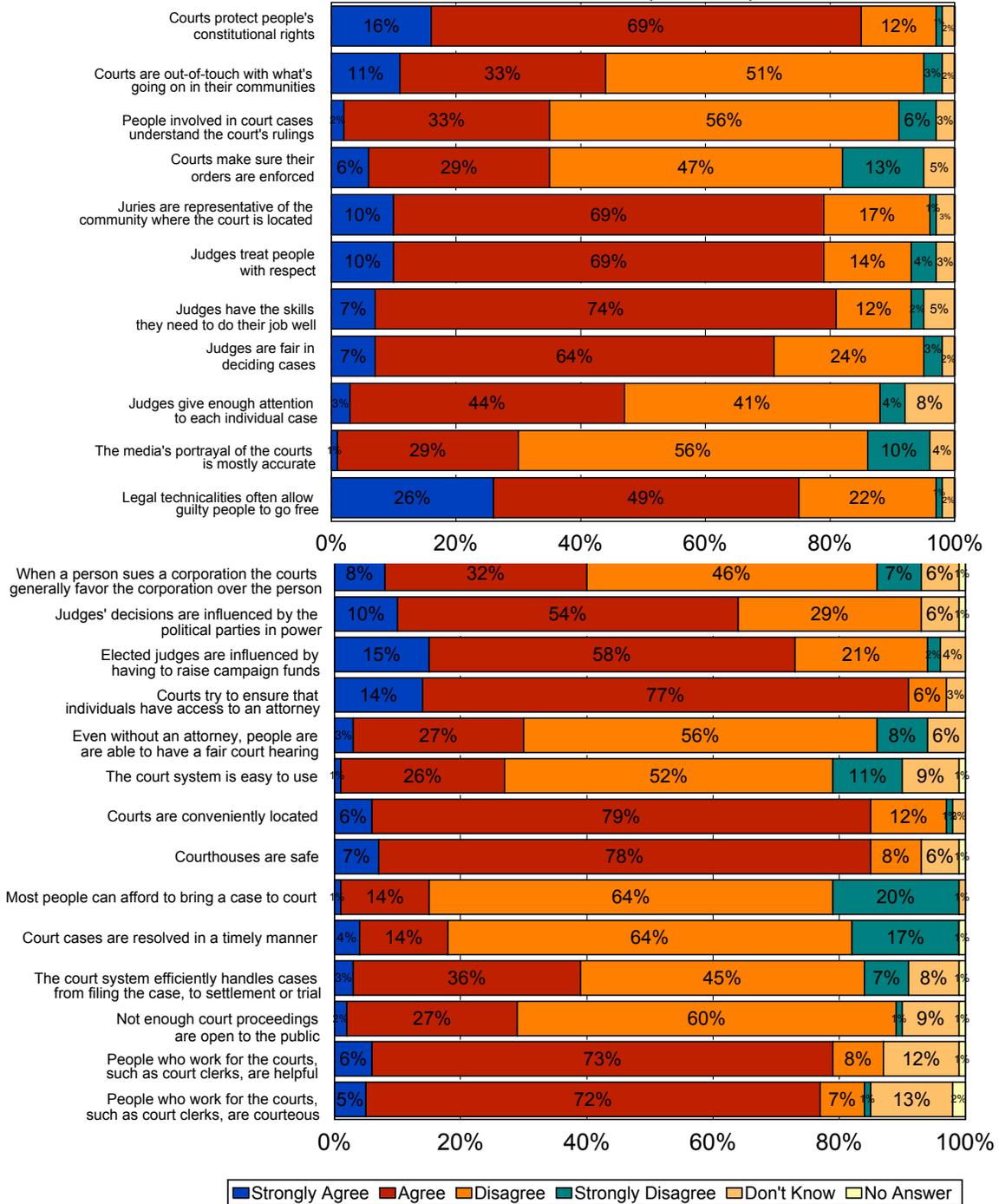
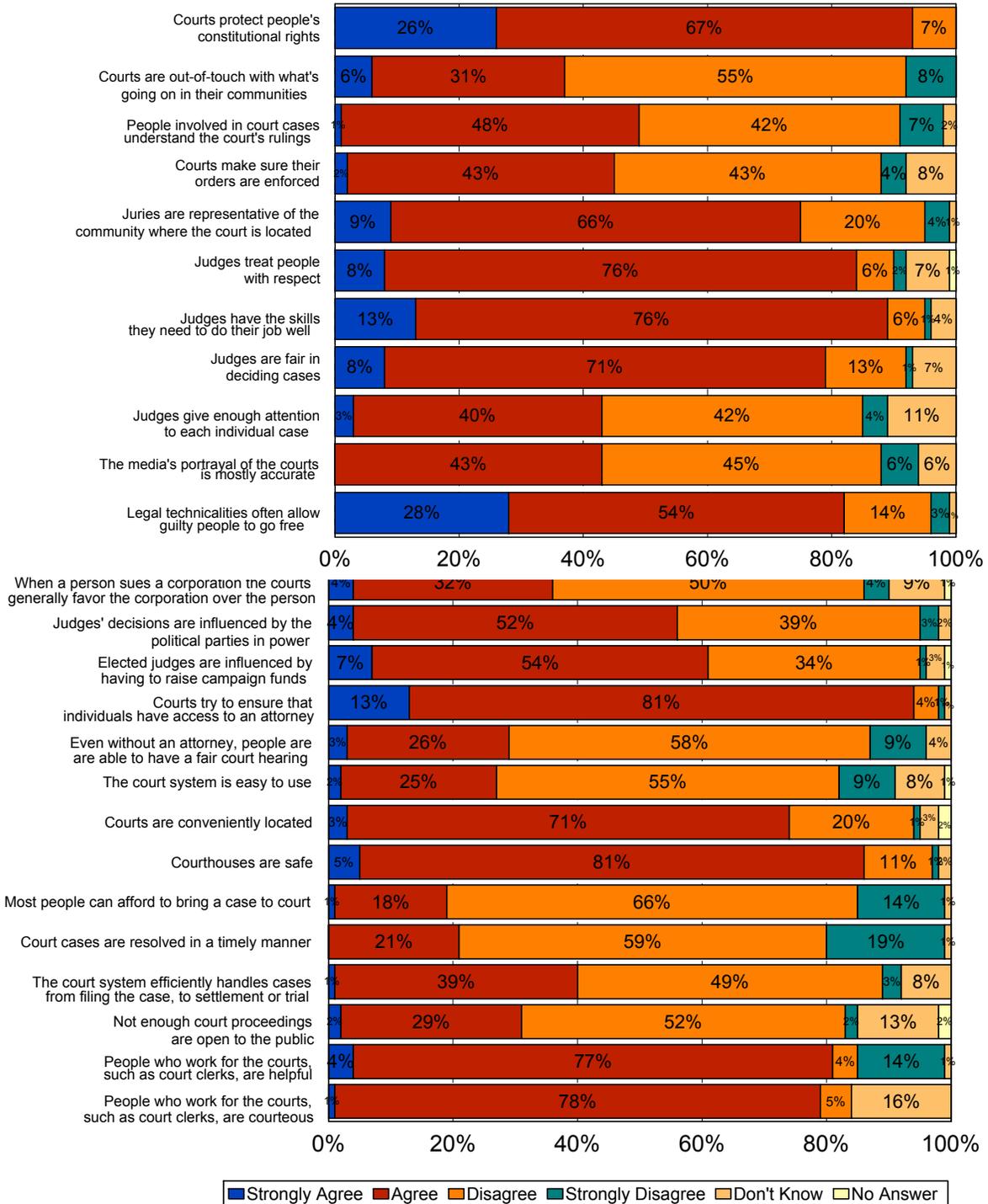


FIGURE 66

Statewide Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents with an Annual Income of \$70,000 or More (N=178)



Other Findings

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Minnesota Judicial Branch

1999-2000 Minnesota Supreme Court
Public Opinion of the Courts Study

- ◆ As income increases, respondents' agreement with the following statements also increases:

Courts protect people's constitutional rights

Judges treat people with respect

Judges have the skills they need to do their job well

Judges are fair in deciding cases

- ◆ As income increases, respondents' agreement with the following statements decreases:

Courts are out-of-touch with what's going on in their communities

When a person sues a corporation, the courts generally favor the corporation over the person

- ◆ Respondents with an annual income of \$70,000 or more are more likely than other income groups to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **people involved in court cases understand the court's rulings**.

- ◆ Those respondents who earn between \$50,000 and \$69,999 are more likely than others to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the following statements:

Courts make sure their orders are enforced

The media's portrayal of the courts is mostly accurate

Legal technicalities often allow guilty people to go free

Not enough court proceedings are open to the public

- ◆ Respondents with an annual income between \$50,000 and \$69,999 are more likely than others to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **courts are conveniently located**.

- ◆ Respondents earning between \$30,000 and \$49,999 annually are most likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that **courthouses are safe** and **people who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are helpful**.

- ◆ Respondents who earn between \$30,000 and \$69,000 are more likely to *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that **people who work for the courts, such as court clerks, are courteous**.

- ◆ Respondents earning less than \$30,000 are the most likely income group to *strongly agree* or *agree* that **court cases are resolved in a timely manner** and that **the court system efficiently handles cases from the filing of the case to settlement or trial**.



FIGURE 67

Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Caucasian Respondents (N=972)

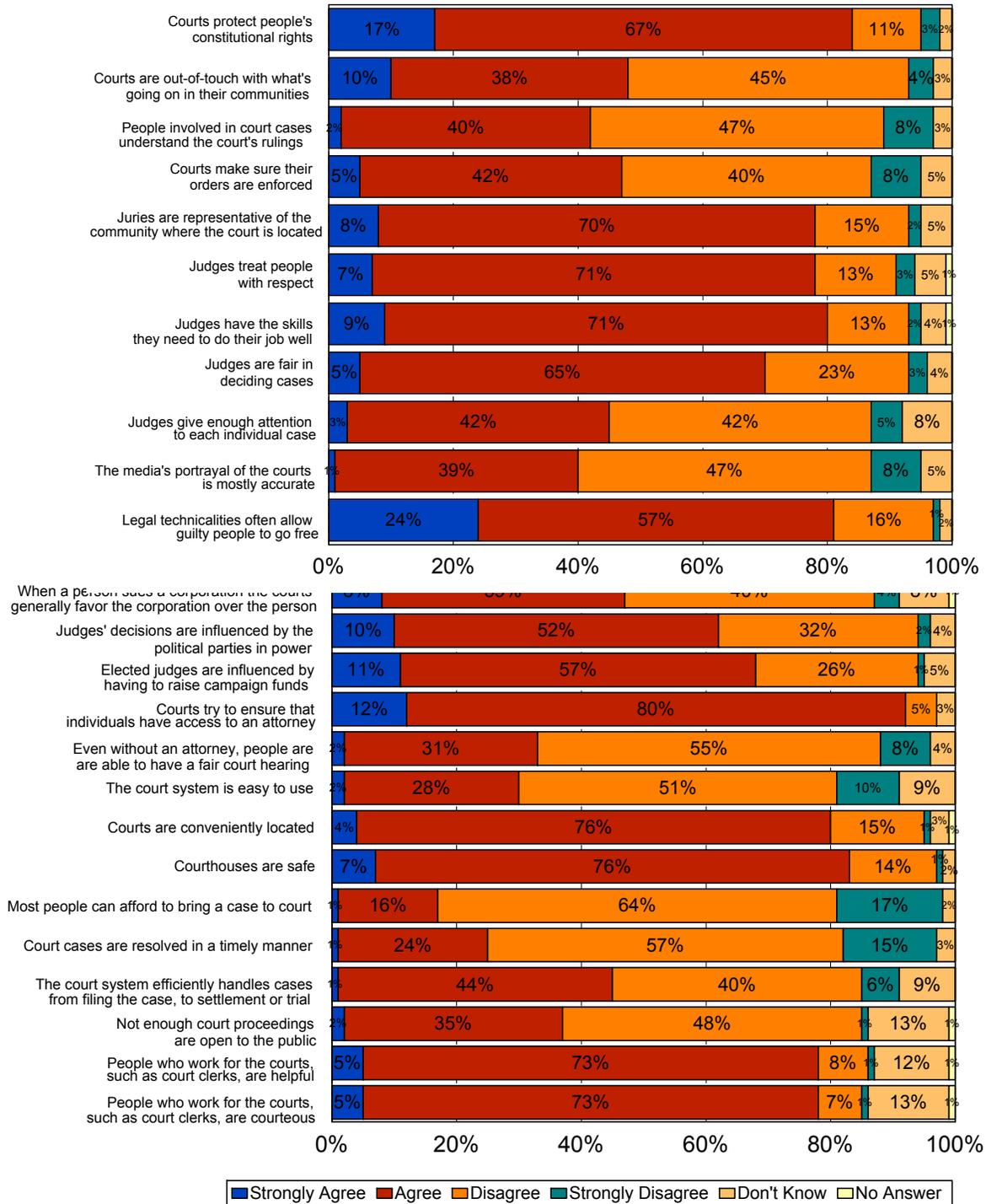
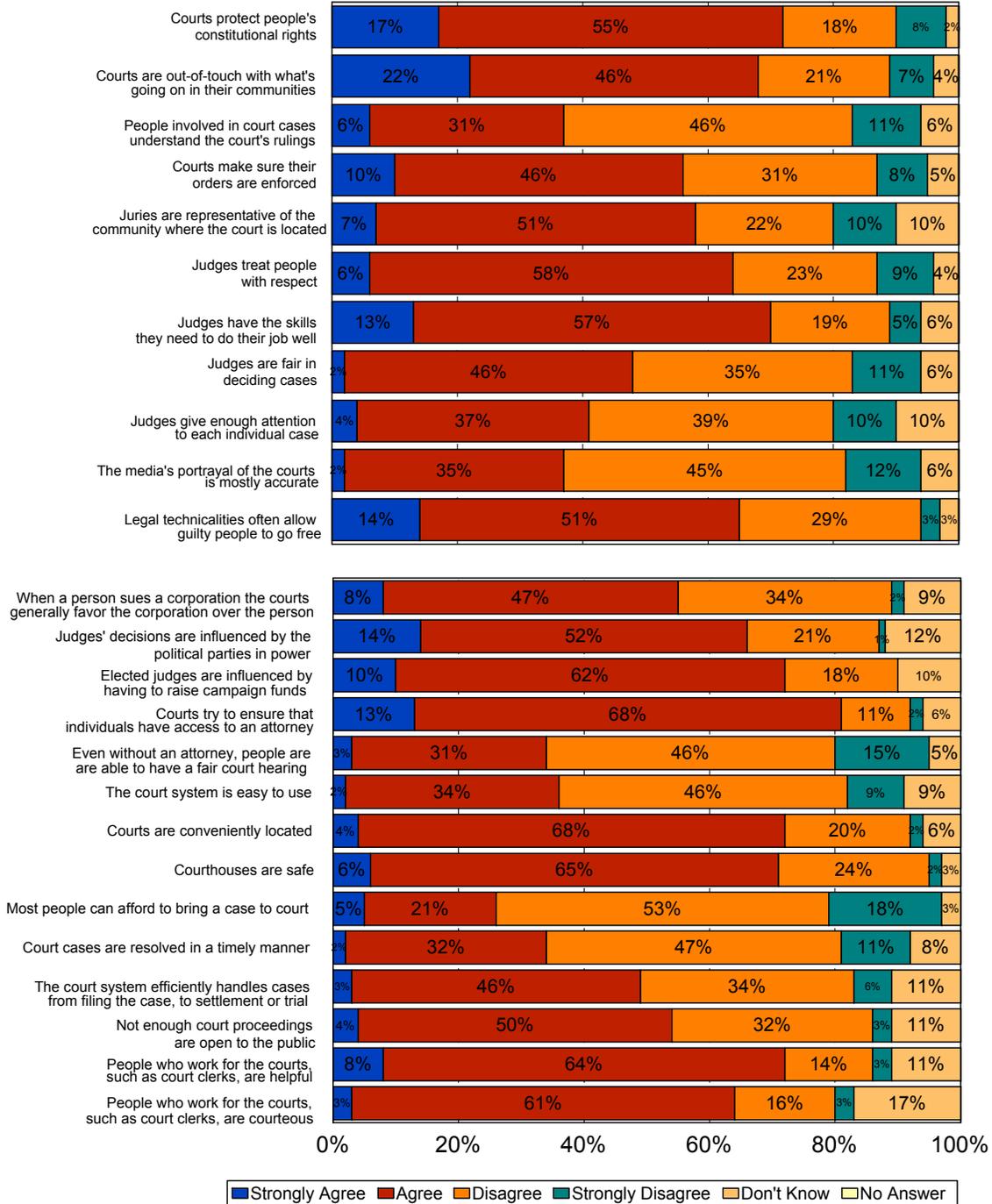


FIGURE 68

Respondents' Agreement with Issues Related to the Courts in Their Community

Respondents of All Other Races (N=127)



Other Findings

- ◆ When asked their level of agreement with a series of questions related to the courts in their communities, more Caucasian respondents than respondents of all other

