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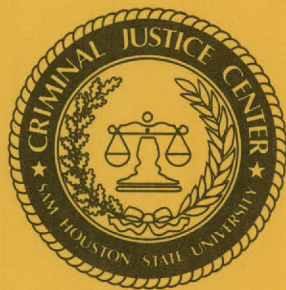
TEXAS CRIME POLL

Spring, 1979 SURVEY

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TEXAS CRIME POLL

Spring, 1979 Survey

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PURPOSE OF THE TEXAS CRIME POLL

The Texas Crime Poll was established under the guidelines of the mandate which established the Institute of Contemporary Corrections and the Behavioral Sciences. According to the mandate the Institute is to serve the needs of the people of Texas in the area of Criminal Justice, including "...surveys of pertinent problems in the field of crime, delinquency and corrections. Specifically, then, the Texas Crime Poll is designed to collect, analyze, and disseminate public opinion about topics in the area of Criminal Justice which are of concern and interest to the people of Texas.

The Texas Crime Poll is conducted semi-annually. The format remains the same each time and many of the questions are replicated on a regular basis in order to allow for measurement of changes in public opinion. Other items are topical and are included only once. Also, certain items are selected for in-depth analysis.

SURVEY RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Texas Crime Poll is administered by the Survey Research Program, Criminal Justice Center, Sam Houston State University. The Survey Research Program was established under the guidelines of the Legislative mandate which established the Institute of Contemporary Corrections and the Behavioral Sciences. The purpose of the Survey Research Program is threefold: (1) to collect, analyze, and disseminate information regarding public opinions and attitudes in the area of Criminal Justice; (2) to assist criminal justice agencies in the State of Texas in the area of survey research; and (3) to inform the public of Texas, as well as criminal justice officials, regarding current developments in the area of criminal justice.

THE FOURTH TEXAS CRIME POLL

Development

This report presents the results of the fourth Texas Crime Poll. A number of the items were selected at the time the first Texas Crime Poll was developed and have been included in each of the four surveys. These items, focusing primarily on issues concerning punishment and fear of crime, are included in each survey in order to follow trends in public attitudes and opinions. Moreover, each time these items are reported, the results from previous surveys are included and noticeable changes are delineated. In previous surveys, items have been selected for more in-depth analysis. (For example, the report on the second Texas Crime Poll presented a breakdown of items related to "Punishment" by race and sex. Also, the third Texas Crime Poll presented an in-depth analysis of items related to "Fear of Crime.")

The fourth Texas Crime Poll addressed a series of questions related to two current issues which appear to be of particular interest to the Texas Criminal Justice Sys-

tem. Specifically, one set of questions focused on the issue of inmates being required to work, payment to inmates, and so forth. Also, a question regarding the function of prisons was included. The second set of questions addressed current issues in law enforcement, including restrictions by the courts and the use of deadly force.

The procedures used to develop the questionnaire were the same as those employed in developing the three previous questionnaires. After developing the first draft of the questionnaire, the instrument was pretested. The pretesting includes all items, even if they have been pretested for previous questionnaires. Also, it should be noted that a review of the previous survey results may lead to modification of a question if it is apparent that the respondents either had difficulty with the question, or if they tended to qualify their responses with comments.

A purposive sample of individuals was selected for the pretesting, including persons representing various educational, ethnic, racial, and rural/urban backgrounds. Interviewers stayed with the individuals while they completed the questionnaire and noted any difficulties with phrasing or comprehension, as well as any ambiguities in the questionnaire. After debriefing each of the interviewers the research team then corrected those areas of the questionnaire which were found to be unclear or ambiguous.

After the final draft of the questionnaire was prepared in English, a Spanish-language version was prepared. A doctoral student in the Criminal Justice program at Sam Houston State University assisted with the translation. The Spanish-language version was carefully designed to allow for cultural variations in the Spanish language in Texas. This version of the instrument was also pretested among a purposive sample of Spanish-speaking persons. It should be noted that a faculty member in the Spanish Department at Sam Houston State University had helped with the translation of the first two questionnaires. Since many of the same questions were replicated in the third and fourth Texas Crime Polls, the earlier translation was used when feasible. At the same time, both the English and Spanish versions are pretested in their entirety prior to each survey.

Sampling Procedures

A systematic random sample of names was drawn from the list of persons holding valid drivers licenses in the State of Texas—age 17 and over. Every *n*th name was taken in order to provide the size sample required. Over 90% of Texas residents age 17 and over are listed in this file. This does, of course, present a problem regarding those who do not hold drivers licenses, but the procedure does provide a very systematic and reliable way of acquiring a truly random sample. The procedure was initially developed by the Statistical Analysis Center of the Texas Department of Public Safety for their Crime Trend Surveys. Since that time it has been used several times by the Survey Research Program at the Texas Criminal Justice

Center and has proven to be a very reliable procedure.

As with the third Texas Crime Poll, a sample size of 2000 was selected for this survey. A sample size of 1000 had been used for each of the first two Texas Crime Poll surveys. However, it was assumed that by increasing the sample size that responses could be acquired from more counties across the state and that this would enhance the representativeness of the findings. Results of the third Texas Crime Poll survey supported this assumption.

Research Format

The first set of questionnaires was mailed on May 3, 1979. One week prior to this date, each person in the sample was sent a postcard informing him/her that a questionnaire would arrive within a week and explaining the purpose of the study. Subsequently, each person in the sample was sent a large envelope, by first-class mail, containing the following: (1) a personalized letter explaining the purpose of the Texas Crime Poll; (2) a copy of the Survey instrument; (3) a stamped, return-addressed envelope; and, (4) a pencil to be used in completing the questionnaire. At the end of two weeks 62.88% of the questionnaires had been completed and returned. In addition, a number of the questionnaire packets had been returned as undeliverable. At the end of two weeks, all non-respondents were sent a postcard asking them to complete and return the questionnaire. At the end of three weeks, 69.81% had been completed and returned. At this time, all non-respondents were sent a second packet, including a letter asking them to reconsider if they had not already returned a completed questionnaire. Finally, at the end of five weeks, all non-respondents were sent one more reminder postcard. The cut-off date for the last questionnaire was July 23, 1979 (see Table 1).

Prior to the first mailing all Spanish-surname persons in the sample were identified. A Spanish-language version of the questionnaire, along with an explanatory letter in Spanish, was included with both the first and second mailings.

Each of the questionnaires was coded with an assigned number and the same number was placed on both the English and Spanish followup questionnaires. This procedure allowed the researchers to check for duplicate questionnaires which might have been received from the same respondent. Respondents were assured that the code numbers would be used only for this purpose and that their responses would remain confidential.

Returns

A total of 1530 individuals—representing 180 counties—returned completed, useable questionnaires, twenty-nine of which were in Spanish (see Figure 1). This represented a return rate of 76.5% of the original sample of 2000. Among those not responding, the researchers were able to ascertain that two were deceased and 88 had

no forwarding address. Fourteen either stated that they refused or were unable to answer the questionnaire.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Males accounted for 53.7% of the respondents and females for 46.3% (see Table 2). The median age was 35.5 years, with a range of 17 to 85 years of age. As in each of the previous surveys, the median family income was between \$15,001 and \$25,000 per year (see Table 3). At the same time, the family income of respondents was distributed across all categories, with only 30% falling into the median range. Almost one-half (49%) of the respondents had either attended or completed college. At the same time one-fifth (21%) had less than a high school degree (see Table 4). Based on the educational and income levels of the respondents it seems prudent to suggest that the questionnaires are being returned by Texas residents representing a cross-section of the population. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated that they lived in a house, and 7% indicated that they lived in a farm house (see Table 5). Another 19% lived in an apartment and 6% lived in a mobile home.

TABLE 1

WEEKLY SURVEY RETURNS

Week of Return	Weekly		Cumulative Percent
	Total	Percent	
1	643	42.03	42.03
2	319	20.85	62.88
3	106	6.93	69.81
4	141	9.21	79.02
5	192	12.55	91.57
6	75	4.90	96.47
7	35	2.29	98.76
8	9	.59	99.35
9	2	.13	99.48
10	4	.26	99.74
11	4	.26	100.00
Total	1530	100.00	100.00

TABLE 2

SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Respondents		Total Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	822	53.7	1105	55.3
Female	708	46.3	895	44.7
Total	1530	100.0	2000	100.0

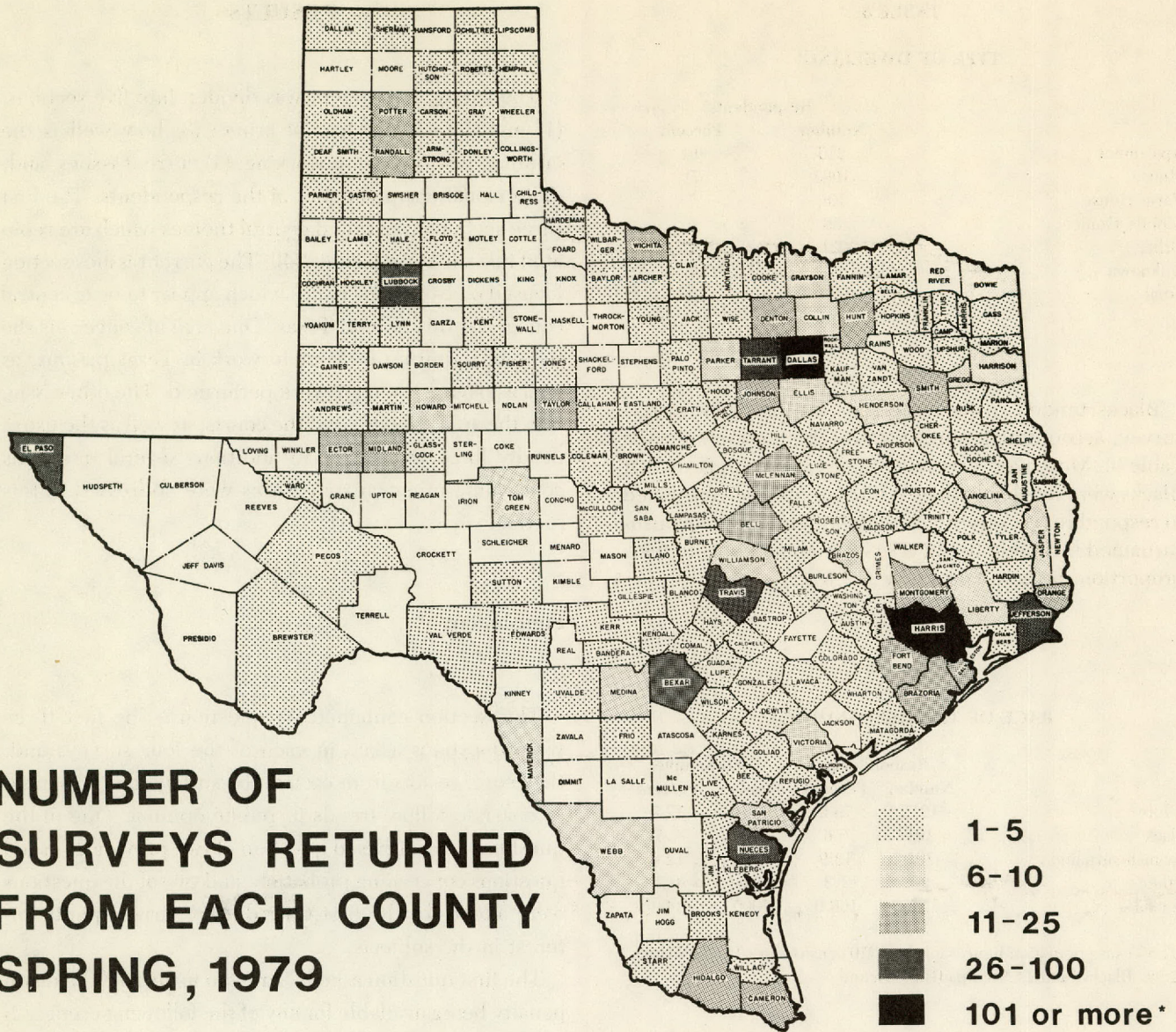


FIGURE 1

TABLE 3

INCOME LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

QUESTION: What is your yearly family income?

	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Less than \$3000	64	4
\$3,001 to \$6,000	136	9
\$6,001 to \$10,000	207	13
\$10,001 to \$15,000	261	17
\$15,001 to \$25,000	453	30
\$25,001 to \$50,000	292	19
Over \$50,000	56	4
No Response	61	4
Total	1530	100

TABLE 4

EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Less than high school	327	21
Completed high school	428	28
Some college	430	28
College degree	316	21
Unknown	29	2
Total	1530	100

TABLE 5

TYPE OF DWELLING

	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Apartment	215	14
House	1083	71
Farm House	102	7
Mobile Home	86	6
Other	20	1
Unknown	24	1
Total	1530	100

Blacks tended to be underrepresented again in this survey, accounting for only 6.6% of the respondents (see Table 6). Moreover, examination of Table 6 suggests that Blacks were less likely than Whites or Spanish-surnamed to respond to the survey. At the same time, the Spanish-surnamed respondents (12.9%) were about equal to their proportion in the total sample (12.6%).

TABLE 6

RACE OF THE RESPONDENTS*

	Respondents		Total Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	1212	79.2	1554	77.7
Black	101	6.6	189	9.5
Spanish-surname	197	12.9	253	12.6
Other	20	1.3	4	0.2
Total	1530	100.0	2000	100.0

*The Texas population figures for the 1970 census were 71.9% Whites, 12.5% Blacks, and 14.9% Spanish-surname.

Finally, the size of the community where respondents live appears to be distributed across all size communities, including 17% who indicated that they lived in a rural area, and 44% who indicated that they live in a community of 100,000 or more population (see Table 7).

TABLE 7

SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE

	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Rural	257	17
Less than 2,500	72	5
2,501 to 10,000	143	9
10,001 to 25,000	142	9
25,001 to 50,000	113	7
50,001 to 100,000	135	9
100,001 to 250,000	163	11
250,001 to 500,000	132	9
Over 500,000	373	24
Total	1530	100

RESULTS

The survey instrument was divided into five sections: (1) punishment; (2) fear of crime; (3) how well is the criminal justice system working; (4) current issues; and, (5) personal characteristics of the respondents. The first three sections concerned central themes which are repeated in each Texas Crime Poll. The current issues section focused on two major issues which appear to be of central concern at this time in Texas. One area of concern is the issue of requiring inmates to work in Texas prisons, as well as paying them for work performed. The other issue is in the area of police and the courts, as well as the use of deadly force by police. In addition, several questions concerning other current issues were addressed in this section.

Punishment

This section contained six questions. The first three were questions asked in each of the four surveys and, therefore, results from each of the surveys are presented in order to follow trends in public opinion. One of the questions was a revised question of two previously asked questions concerning probation, and two of the questions were added for the first time due to current public interest in the subjects.

The first question asked: "Are you in favor of the death penalty being available for any of the following crimes? If so, please check which one." Respondents were presented with six crimes, a place to write in "other" types of crimes, and the statement, "I am not in favor of the death penalty for any crime" (see Table 8). Approximately four-fifths (79%) of the respondents selected at least one crime for which they believe the death penalty should be available. This finding is very similar to the findings in each of the three previous surveys in which 84% (Fall, 1977), 80% (Spring, 1978), and 82% (Fall, 1978) said that the death penalty should be available for at least one type of crime. The slight difference between the findings in each of the four surveys suggests that there has been no change in attitudes over the two year period. The findings are also similar regarding the types of crimes selected. In the current survey 77% said that the death penalty should be available for persons convicted of murder. This was followed by rape (39%), kidnapping (31%), treason (25%), armed robbery (14%), arson (9%), and other (7%). Other usually included child abuse and terrorism.

TABLE 8

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

QUESTION: Are you in favor of the death penalty being available for any of the following crimes?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 1463)	Percent	Number (N = 1530)	Percent
Total number of respondents in favor of the death penalty for at least one crime category	539	84	516	80	1197	82	1207	79
Respondents in favor of the death penalty for specific crimes:								
Murder	511	80	495	77	1158	79	1173	77
Rape	240	37	238	37	543	37	593	39
Treason	187	29	187	29	352	24	384	25
Armed Robbery	80	12	104	17	199	14	217	14
Arson	44	7	58	9	154	11	138	9
Kidnapping	*	*	*	*	437	30	474	31
Other**	41		56	9	110	8	103	7
Not in favor of the death penalty for any crime	98	15	122	19	242	16	294	19
No Response	5	1	4	1	24	2	29	2

*Kidnapping was not included in the first two surveys, but was written in as "other" by many respondents.

**In all four surveys, the most common "other" crimes written in were child abuse and terrorism.

TABLE 9

MANDATORY SUPERVISION

Question: Do you think that everyone released from prison should be supervised for a certain period of time after their release?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	547	85	526	82	1248	85	1301	85
No	86	14	103	16	204	14	221	14
No Response	9	1	13	2	11	1	8	1
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	100	1530	100

The second question in this section asked: "Do you think that everyone released from prison should be supervised for a certain period of time after their release?" Only 19% of the respondents replied **no** and 85% replied **yes** (see Table 9). The findings are almost identical to the findings from the three previous surveys in which 85% (Fall, 1977), 82% (Spring, 1978), and 85% (Fall, 1978) agreed that everyone released from prison should be supervised for a certain period of time.

The next question in this section was also included in the original survey in order to follow trends in public opinion. The issue of whether or not an inmate should be required to serve his/her full sentence still remains quite

controversial both among criminal justice professionals and the public in general. And, according to the findings from all four surveys to date, the public in Texas is almost evenly divided. Specifically, respondents were asked: "In regards to an inmate's release from prison, should he/she: (a) serve the full sentence; or, (b) be released early depending on his/her behavior in prison?" Again, slightly more than one-half (52%) of the respondents said that they should be required to serve the full sentence (see Table 10). This compares to 56% in the Fall, 1977 survey, 51% in the Spring, 1978 survey, and 52% in the Fall, 1978 survey. Again, no change in attitudes over the two year period is evident.

TABLE 10

EARLY RELEASE FROM PRISON

QUESTION: In regards to an inmate's release from prison, should he/she:

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Serve the full sentence	360	56	327	51	762	52	795	52
Be released early depending on his/her behavior in prison	259	40	293	46	657	45	699	46
No Response	23	4	22	3	44	3	36	2
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	100	1530	100

The first two surveys had included a question regarding probation for persons convicted of a violent crime. Because of the growing public concern with violent crime the question seemed appropriate and it was intended that it would be retained in all future surveys as a trend question. Specifically, respondents were asked: "Do you think that persons convicted of violent crimes should be allowed to receive probation?" The responses were definitely skewed with 86% (Fall, 1977) of the respondents in the first survey replying **no**, and 85% (Spring, 1978) in the second survey replying **no**. However, a number of inquiries were made by scholars, criminal justice professionals, and others regarding the public's attitude toward probation for nonviolent crimes. Therefore, in the third survey the same question was asked twice, substituting **nonviolent crimes** for **violent crimes** in the second question. Although 90% indicated that persons convicted of violent crimes should not be allowed to receive probation, 85% indicated that persons convicted of nonviolent crimes should be allowed to receive probation (see the third Texas Crime Poll report).

The findings from the first three surveys regarding probation were informative, but they still did not address the question of what specific types of violent and nonviolent crimes the public were considering when they expressed opinions about probation. Therefore, a list of specific types of crimes was developed, including the seven index crimes (now eight with arson) from the **Uniform Crime Reports**, plus a range of other types of offenses. Where necessary, a nontechnical definition was provided to illustrate the type of crime in question. The question was preceded by the following statement explaining the concept of probation. "People are sometimes allowed to serve their prison sentences by staying in their own communities instead of actually going to prison. If the person breaks the rule of this 'probation' he may then have to serve the sentence in prison." The question was then asked: "Do you think that persons convicted of the following crimes **should be considered** for probation? If so, please check which ones." This was then followed by a list of fourteen specific offenses. The list of offenses were listed alphabetically so as not to give the appearance of a hierarchy of severity. (For an example of specific offenses provided the respondents, see Table 11.)

TABLE 11

PROBATION CONSIDERATION BY CRIME TYPES

Question: Do you think that persons convicted of the following crimes should be considered for probation?

	Number	Percent
(N = 1530)		
Total number of respondents in favor of probation being considered for at least one crime category	1225	80
Respondents in favor of probation being considered for specific crimes		
Aggravated Assault (intentionally causing serious bodily injury to another)	246	16
Arson	173	11
Auto theft	599	39
Burglary (breaking into a house or business with intent to commit a crime)	311	20
Driving while intoxicated	924	60
Murder	79	5
Rape	86	6
Robbery (using force, or threat of force, to take someone's money or property from them)	137	9
Sale of Illegal Drugs (other than marijuana)	185	12
Sale of Marijuana	483	32
Shoplifting	996	65
Theft	495	32
Use of Illegal Drugs (other than marijuana)	360	24
Use of Marijuana	808	53
Not in favor of probation being considered for anyone convicted of one of these crimes	279	18
No Response	26	2

It is interesting to note that 18% of the respondents did indicate that they were "not in favor of probation being considered for anyone convicted of one of these crimes." At the same time, the ordering of offense by the remainder of the respondents did follow a general continuum from most violent to least violent. The crime selected by

the smallest proportion of the respondents was murder (5%), followed by rape (6%), robbery (9%), arson (11%), sale of illegal drugs, other than marijuana (12%), aggravated assault (16%), burglary (20%), use of illegal drugs, other than marijuana (24%), theft (32%), sale of marijuana (32%), use of marijuana (53%), driving while intoxicated (60%), and shoplifting (65%).

Another new survey question in this section also focused on a subject of increasing interest, that is, the rights of convicted felons. The question was asked: "Which of the following rights and privileges do you believe should be reinstated when a convicted felon has completed his/her sentence?" Four specific rights and privileges were listed as well as a place to write in other responses, and 80% of the respondents selected at least one right or privilege. The one selected most often was "full and equal employment opportunities" (82%) (see Table 12). This was followed by "the right to vote" (70%), "the right to hold public office" (20%), "the right to purchase firearms" (12%), and "other" (3%).

TABLE 12

REINSTATING PRIVILEGES OF CONVICTED FELONS

QUESTION: Which of the following rights and privileges do you believe should be reinstated when a convicted felon has completed his/her sentence?

	Number	Percent
(N = 1530)		
Total number of respondents selecting at least one privilege to be reinstated	1363	89
Specific privileges selected by respondents		
The right to vote	1072	70
The right to hold public office	312	20
Full and equal employment opportunities	1258	82
The right to purchase firearms	187	12
Other	38	3
None of the privileges listed above should be reinstated.	119	8
No Response	48	3

The final question in this section focused on the perceived importance of selected prison functions. Previously, respondents had been asked to select the function which they thought was most important and they were provided with three to choose from: rehabilitation, punishment, and deterrence. However, no definitive position could be ascertained. Moreover, many of the respondents would select more than one, or would write in that one is just as important as the other. Therefore, the question was rephrased so that the relative importance of each function could be assessed. Moreover, the concept of incapacitation was added since this had been previously raised by some respondents. The question asked, then,

was: "Prisons may serve a number of different functions. How important a function should each of the following be for Texas prisons?" The functions listed were rehabilitation, punishment, deterrence (to serve as an example to keep people from committing crime), and incapacitation (isolation from society). Three choices were provided for each of the four functions: very important, somewhat important, and not important.

Relative to the other three functions, Texans appear to ascribe the most weight to rehabilitation. Eighty-four percent indicated that rehabilitation should be a **very important** function of Texas prisons (see Table 13). In addition, 11% indicated that rehabilitation is **somewhat important**, and only 2% indicated **not important**. Deterrence ranked next, with 77% indicating that it should be a **very important** function and 15% indicating it should be **somewhat important**. Only 4% said **not important**. Regarding punishment, 70% indicated that it should be very important and 22% indicated that it should be **somewhat important**. Again, only 4% said **not important**. Incapacitation did not appear to carry the same weight as the other three functions. Only 43% indicated that incapacitation should be a **very important** function of Texas prisons and 37% indicated **somewhat important**. Unlike the other functions, 15% said **not important**. However, the concept incapacitation may carry various connotations and it is possible that this biased the responses. Additional research may be required before the validity of the responses regarding incapacitation can be ascertained.

TABLE 13

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT PRISON FUNCTIONS

QUESTION: Prisons may serve a number of different functions. How important a function should each of the following be for Texas prisons?

	Number	Percent
Rehabilitation		
very important	1289	84
somewhat important	163	11
not important	29	2
no response	49	3
Punishment		
very important	1068	70
somewhat important	344	22
not important	56	4
no response	62	4
Deterrence (to serve as an example to keep people from committing crime)		
very important	1183	77
somewhat important	232	15
not important	53	4
no response	62	4
Incapacitation (isolation from society)		
very important	654	43
somewhat important	572	37
not important	226	15
no response	78	5

In summary, the responses to the first three questions have remained consistent across all three surveys. There appears to be a solid commitment on the part of Texas residents to having the death penalty available, particularly for murder. Also, Texas residents definitely support the concept of mandatory supervision, and appear to support the idea of inmates serving their full sentence. However, the latter position is tenuous as the respondents are almost equally divided. The primary support for this conclusion is that the responses have remained consistent over four surveys. The people of Texas do not appear to be alienated by the concept of probation; however, based on the findings in this survey, they are definitely selective in the types of crimes for which they believe probation should be considered. The more violent crimes, as well as sale of drugs, rank very low, while the less violent crimes tend to rank somewhat higher. Respondents are not opposed to convicted felons having the right to full and equal employment opportunities, nor do they oppose them having the right to vote. However, they most definitely would deny convicted felons the right to purchase firearms, a position which continues to reinforce findings in this and previous surveys that the public is particularly concerned about crimes of violence. Also, the Texas residents do not appear to support the concept of convicted felons having the right to hold public office. Finally, the findings from this survey support the position that the residents of Texas view rehabilitation as a very important function for Texas prisons. At the same time, they also believe that punishment and deterrence should be important functions as well. However, even though incapacitation is definitely not rejected as an important function, its relative position appears to be somewhat lower than the other three functions.

Fear of Crime

Each of the five questions in this section had been included in previous surveys and were designed to measure the concern of Texans about crime, as well as the steps they are taking to protect themselves.

The first question asked: "Do you feel that you may be the victim of any of the following crimes within the next year? If so, please check which ones." Fifty-six percent of the respondents indicated at least one crime of which

they felt they may be a victim (see Table 14). This compares to 53% in the Fall, 1977 survey, 57% in the Spring, 1978 survey, and 57% in the Fall, 1978 survey. The crime selected most often was vandalism (35%), followed by burglary (34%), theft (34%), vehicle theft (22%), robbery (17%), assault with body (8%), assault with weapon (8%), rape (6%), and other (2%). These results are very similar to the results of the previous three surveys. In other words, there has been no significant change over the two year period in the types of crimes about which the respondents feel they may be a victim during the next year.

The next question addressed steps taken by respondents to protect themselves or their property. The question was asked: "Which, if any, of the following devices have you placed in your home for reasons of security?" Seventy-six percent of the respondents had placed at least one type of security device in their home (see Table 15). These results are almost identical to those of the previous three surveys in which 72% (Fall, 1977), 77% (Spring, 1978), and 76% (Fall, 1978) indicated that they had placed at least one device in their home for reasons of security. In the current survey, the most common device was door bolts (36%); followed by guns (39%), extra door locks (33%), outside security lights (33%), guard dogs (17%), window guards (14%), police department I.D. stickers (8%), burglar alarms (3%), and other (2%).

Two questions focused on fear of being outside at night. The first question asked: "Is there any area within one mile of your home where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" Fifty-four percent of the respondents indicated **yes** (see Table 16). This finding compares to 56% (Fall, 1977), 53% (Spring, 1978), and 59% (Fall, 1978) in the other surveys. The second question asked: "Would you be afraid to walk alone within one block of your home at night?" Almost one-fourth (23%) answered **yes** (see Table 17). This finding is almost identical with the findings in previous surveys in which 23% (Fall, 1977), 23% (Spring, 1978) and 26% (Fall, 1978) indicated that they would be afraid to walk alone within one block of their home at night.

The last question in this section asked: "Are you afraid to be in your home **alone** at night?" This was only the second time that this question was included in one of these surveys and the results were very similar. One-half (50%) of the respondents indicated **never** (see Table 18). At the same time, 4% said **always**, 4% said **most of the time**, and 39% said **sometimes**.

TABLE 14

FEAR OF BEING A VICTIM OF CRIME

QUESTION: Do you feel that you may be the victim of any of the following crimes within the next year? If so, please check which ones.

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 1463)	Percent	Number (N = 1530)	Percent
Total number of respondents who feel they may be the victim of a crime during the next year	337	53	365	57	838	57	861	56
Respondents who feel they may be the victim of a specific type of crime during the next year								
Rape	43	7	50	8	103	7	91	6
Robbery	115	18	146	23	282	19	252	17
Assault with Body	37	6	63	10	108	7	125	8
Assault with Weapon	49	8	62	10	114	8	124	8
Burglary	194	30	225	35	491	34	525	34
Theft	206	32	220	34	505	35	462	30
Vehicle Theft	113	18	140	22	276	19	336	22
Vandalism	*	*	219	34	486	33	540	35
Other	12	2	24	4	32	2	28	2

*Vandalism was added as a category after the first survey since a number of respondents wrote it in "other."

TABLE 15

DEVICES PLACED IN THE HOME FOR SECURITY

QUESTION: Which, if any, of the following devices have you placed in your home for reasons of security?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 642)	Percent	Number (N = 1463)	Percent	Number (N = 1530)	Percent
Total number of respondents who have placed some type of device in their home for reasons of security	460	72	496	77	1107	76	1158	76
Specific types of devices placed in the home								
Burglar Alarms	24	4	23	4	60	4	51	3
Door Bolts	201	31	255	40	509	35	554	36
Extra Door Locks	214	33	224	35	440	30	502	33
Window Guards	75	12	96	15	177	12	215	14
Guns	224	35	229	36	506	35	513	34
Police Department I.D. Stickers	59	9	71	11	121	8	120	8
Guard Dogs	109	17	102	16	243	17	265	17
Outside Security Lights	*	*	196	31	438	30	505	33
Other	35	5	21	3	59	4	37	2

*Outside security lights were not listed in the Fall, 1977 survey. However, almost all explanations listed as "other" were outside security lights. Consequently, the category was added to subsequent surveys.

TABLE 16

FEAR OF WALKING NEAR HOME AT NIGHT: WITHIN ONE MILE

QUESTION: Is there any area within one mile of your home where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	358	56	343	53	796	54	827	54
No	282	44	290	45	634	43	661	43
No Response	2	*	9	2	33	2	42	3
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	99	1530	100

*Less than 1%

TABLE 17

FEAR OF WALKING NEAR HOME AT NIGHT: WITHIN ONE BLOCK

QUESTION: Would you be afraid to walk alone within one block of your home at night?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	144	23	150	23	374	26	348	23
No	496	77	490	76	1067	73	1140	74
No Response	2	*	2	1	22	1	42	3
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	99	1530	100

*Less than 1%

TABLE 18

FEAR OF BEING ALONE AT NIGHT

QUESTION: Are you afraid to be in your home alone at night?

	Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Always	52	3	54	4
Most of the time	52	3	69	4
Sometimes	582	40	596	39
Never	755	52	768	50
No Response	22	2	43	3
Total	1463	100	1530	100

In summary, the findings from the questions in this section continue to reinforce the proposition that residents of Texas are very concerned that they may be the victim of a crime. Moreover, a significant proportion are afraid to be outside alone at night and, even though it is a small proportion, it is still noteworthy that at least 8% of the respondents are afraid to be home alone all of the time or most of the time. Also, the data reveal that at least three-fourths of the respondents are taking some steps to protect themselves and their property.

TABLE 19

BOND FOR PERSONS ACCUSED OF SECOND SERIOUS OFFENSE

QUESTION: If a person is out of jail on bond for a serious (felony) offense and that person is arrested for another serious offense, should he/she be allowed to bond out of jail for the second offense?

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	20	3	23	3	34	2	60	4
No	617	96	614	96	1411	96	1431	94
No Response	5	1	4	1	18	1	39	2
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	99	1530	100

s the Criminal Justice System Working?

Questions asked in this section are intended to identify the public evaluation of how effectively various aspects of the criminal justice system are working. Some are trend questions and some are included because of their topical nature.

The first question in this section asked: "If a person is

out of jail on bond for a serious (felony) offense and that person is arrested for another serious offense, should he/she be allowed to bond out of jail for the second offense?" The overwhelming majority (94%) again responded no (see Table 19). This finding is very consistent with the three previous surveys in which 96% responded no each time.

Respondents to the next question also remained consistent across all four surveys. Respondents were asked: "In general, when dealing with convicted criminals, do you feel the courts are: (a) doing a good job; (b) too easy; or, (c) too harsh. Seventy-one percent said that the courts are **too easy** (see Table 20). In previous surveys 73% (Fall,

1977), 75% (Spring, 1978), and 73% (Fall, 1978) said that the courts are **too easy**. At the same time, 22% said that the courts are **doing a good job**, compared to 20% (Fall, 1977), 18% (Spring, 1978), and 19% (Fall, 1978) in the previous surveys. Only 2% said that the courts are **too harsh**.

TABLE 20

THE COURTS AND CONVICTED CRIMINALS

QUESTION: In general, when dealing with convicted criminals, do you feel the courts are:

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Doing a good job	130	20	119	18	279	19	332	22
Too easy	468	73	480	75	1075	73	1090	71
Too harsh	8	1	11	2	22	2	36	2
No Response	36	6	32	5	87	6	72	5
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	100	1530	100

The next question was included for the first time in the last survey (Fall, 1978) and focuses on an issue of growing interest in the criminal justice system. More specifically, it falls within the broader question of just how informed juries should be before setting a sentence. The question was asked: "Before sentencing a defendant, should a jury be informed about the parole laws and how soon a defendant may be eligible for parole if he/she is sent to prison?" Almost nine-tenths (89%) of the respondents indicated that they should be informed (see Table 21). In the previous survey 87% agreed that they should be informed.

"Who do you believe gives **easier** sentences to convicted felons?" Slightly more than one-third (37%) indicated that they "do not believe that there is any difference in the sentences given" (see Table 22). Approximately one-third (34%) said that judges are easier and approximately one-fourth (23%) said that juries give easier sentences. Overall, it would appear that the opinions of Texans regarding this issue are not significantly skewed in one direction or the other.

TABLE 21

INFORMING JURY ABOUT PAROLE LAWS

QUESTION: Before sentencing a defendant, should a jury be informed about the parole laws and how soon a defendant may be eligible for parole if he/she is sent to prison?

	Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	1277	87	1363	89
No	165	11	155	10
No Response	21	1	12	1
Total	1463	99	1530	100

TABLE 22

SENTENCING OF FELONS

QUESTION: Who do you believe gives **easier** sentences to convicted felons?

	Number	Percent
Judges	523	34
Juries	348	23
I do not believe that there is any difference in the sentences given.	566	37
No Response	93	6
Total	1530	100

The next question was designed to address an increasingly controversial issue concerning who assesses easier sentencing, judges or juries. In the previous surveys respondents had been asked who should set the sentence, the judge or the jury. The majority of the respondents consistently indicated that the jury should set the sentence (56%, Fall, 1977; 63%, Spring, 1978; 62%, Fall, 1978). And as indicated previously in the responses to the question concerning the courts and convicted criminals, the respondents believe that the courts are too easy. Therefore, the question asked in this survey was designed to ascertain whether Texans believe that judges or the juries give easier sentences. The question was asked:

The question of the effectiveness of the Texas prison system in preparing people to return to society was included for the first time in the previous survey. The findings in this survey are almost identical. Specifically, the respondents were asked: "In preparing people to return to society, do you think that the Texas prison system is: (a) doing an excellent job; (b) doing a good job; (c) doing a fair job; or, (d) doing a poor job. Only 18% indicated that the prison system is **doing a poor job** (see Table 23). One-half (50%) indicated that the system is **doing a fair job**, 21% indicated that they are **doing a good job**, and 4% indicated that they are **doing an excellent job**.

TABLE 23

EFFECTIVENESS OF PRISON SYSTEM

QUESTION: In preparing people to return to society, do you think that the Texas prison system is:

	Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Doing an excellent job	56	4	59	4
Doing a good job	261	18	325	21
Doing a fair job	744	51	764	50
Doing a poor job	292	20	275	18
No Response	110	7	107	7
Total	1463	100	1530	100

The last question in this section should be one of the more revealing trend questions as additional surveys are conducted in the future. It is designed to examine the public's perception of changes in the crime problem in their own community. Specifically, the question is asked:

"Over the past three years, do you feel that the crime problem in your community is: (a) getting better; (b) about the same; or, (c) getting worse?" Over one-half (55%) indicated that it is **getting worse** (see Table 24). Only 5% indicated that it is **getting better** and 38% indicated that it is about the same. A comparison of these findings with findings from the previous Texas Crime Poll surveys suggests that there may be a change in the respondents' perceptions of the crime problem. The first survey (Fall, 1977) revealed 46% who believed that the crime problem in their community was getting worse. The next two surveys (Spring, 1978; Fall, 1978) found that in each case 50% of the respondents believed that it was getting worse. In the current survey, 55% indicated that it is **getting worse**. The 9% change over two years suggests that a trend may be developing. However, additional surveys over the next several years will be necessary before a definitive conclusion can be reached.

TABLE 24

STATE OF THE CRIME PROBLEM

QUESTION: Over the past three years, do you feel the crime problem in your community is:

	Fall, 1977		Spring, 1978		Fall, 1978		Spring, 1979	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Getting Better	34	5	36	5	93	6	73	5
About the same	305	47	281	44	611	42	586	38
Getting Worse	293	46	320	50	729	50	847	55
No Response	10	2	5	1	30	2	24	2
Total	642	100	642	100	1463	100	1530	100

Current Issues: Inmates Working

The Current Issues section in this survey focused on two specific topics, as well as several general questions. Therefore, the findings are reported in three separate sections according to subject.

The first area focused on the issue of inmates being required to work in Texas prisons. This issue has gained much attention recently in criminal justice circles, as well as in the media, and it seemed plausible that the attitudes of Texans in general would be worth documenting.

The first question asked: "Do you **object** to requiring inmates in Texas prisons to do any of the following? (Check as many as you **object** to)." Respondents were presented with five categories and could indicate that they objected to one or more of the types of work listed (see Table 25). The first category was: "work in prison maintenance jobs (for example, preparing food, sweeping floors)." Only 3% of the respondents indicated that they object to inmates being required to perform this type of

work. The next category was: "work in the prison fields performing agricultural tasks." This type of work was objected to by 3% of the respondents. This was followed by: "work in prison industries producing products which are used by the prison (for example, sewing clothes for inmates, making mattresses)." This was objected to by 2% of the respondents. The next category was: "work in prison industries producing products not used by the prison (for example, license plates, repairing school buses)." Three percent of the respondents objected to requiring inmates to perform this type of work. The final category was: "work in prison industries producing products which are sold to other states (for example, license plates)." This type of work was objected to by 4% of the respondents. A total of 6% of the respondents selected one or more types of work which they would object to requiring inmates to perform. Finally, respondents were presented with the following statement: "I have **no objection** to inmates being required to do any type of work in prison for which they are physically able." Eighty-nine percent of the respondents selected this category.

TABLE 25

REQUIRING INMATES TO WORK IN TEXAS PRISONS

QUESTION: Do you object to requiring inmates in Texas prisons to do any of the following?

	Number	Percent
	(N = 1530)	
Total number of respondents objecting to inmates being required to do one or more types of work	97	6
Specific types of work which respondents object to inmates bring required to do		
Work in prison maintenance jobs (for example, preparing food, sweeping floors)	47	3
Work in the prison fields performing agricultural tasks	40	3
Work in prison industries producing products which are used by the prison (for example, sewing clothes for inmates, making mattresses)	32	2
Work in prison industries producing products not used by the prison (for example, license plates, repairing school buses)	47	3
Work in prison industries producing products which are sold to other states (for example, license plates)	55	4
No objection to inmates being required to do any type of work for which they are physically able	1362	89
No Response	71	5

The next question asked: "Are you in favor of inmates in Texas prisons being paid cash wages for work which they do while in prison? If so, please check which types of work." Four specific types of work categories were presented and 39% of the respondents selected at least one for which they favored inmates being paid cash wages (see Table 26). The first category listed was prison maintenance (for example, preparing food, sweeping floors) and 20% of the respondents indicated that they favor inmates being paid cash wages for this type of work. Similarly, 23% indicated that they favor inmates being paid cash wages for "producing products which are used by the prison (for example, farm products)." "Producing products not used by the prison (for example, making license plates, repairing school buses)" was favored by 34% of the respondents and "producing products for other states (for example, license plates)" was also favored by 34% of the respondents. Respondents were also presented with the statement: "I do not believe that inmates should be paid cash wages for any type of work which they do in prison." This statement was selected by 57% of the respondents.

TABLE 26

PAYING INMATES CASH WAGES

QUESTION: Are you in favor of inmates in Texas prisons being paid cash wages for work which they do while in prison? If so, please check which types of work.

	Number	Percent
	(N = 1530)	
Total number of respondents in favor of paying inmates for at least one type of work	599	39
Specific types of work for which respondents are in favor of paying inmates		
Prison maintenance (for example, preparing food, sweeping floors)	306	20
Producing products which are used by the prison (for example, farm products)	347	23
Producing products not used by the prison (for example, making license plates, repairing school buses)	519	34
Producing products for other states (for example, license plates)	521	34
Do not believe that inmates should be paid cash wages for any type of work they do in prison	879	57
No Response	52	3

NOTE: total equals 99% due to rounding.

The third question in this series concerned a hypothetical situation presented to the respondents. Respondents were presented with six questions regarding different types of work inmates perform. The respondents could select none, one, or more of the categories (see Table 27). The types of work were preceded by the question: "If inmates in Texas were paid cash wages for work which they do, should the inmate be required to...?" The first choice was "pay for their room and board," and was selected by 35% of the respondents. Thirty-five percent selected "pay for their clothing" and 31% selected "pay for recreational services in prison." Similarly, only 28% indicated that they should "pay for educational programs in prison." At the same time over two-thirds (68%) believe that if inmates are paid that they should be required to "pay victims for their losses" and over one-half (52%) indicated that they should be required to "pay for court expenses." Respondents were also given the option of selecting the following statement: "I do not believe that inmates should be required to pay for any of the above." However, only 18% selected this response.

TABLE 27

REQUIRING INMATES TO PAY FOR SERVICES

QUESTION: If inmates in Texas were paid cash wages for work which they do, should the inmate be required to:*

	Number	Percent
(N = 1530)		
Total number of respondents who believe that inmates should pay for one or more services (if they are paid cash wages)	1211	79
Specific types of services for which respondents believe inmates should pay		
Pay for their room and board	530	35
Pay for their clothing	516	34
Pay victims for their losses	1032	68
Pay for court expenses	802	52
Pay for recreational services in prison	472	31
Pay for educational programs in prison	423	28
Do not believe that inmates should be required to pay for any of the above	270	18
No Response	49	3

*NOTE: Respondents could select as many categories as they agreed with.

In summary, then, the findings suggest that only a very small proportion of Texans object to inmates being required to work. Moreover, the majority of Texans do not want inmates to be paid, even if they work in prison industries producing products sold outside of the prison. However, if inmates were to be paid, the majority of Texans want the inmates to pay victims for their losses, as well as for court expenses, but not for basic services provided by the prison.

Current Issues: The Police

Six questions focused on current issues related to the police. Three of these focused specifically on controversial issues concerning the police and the courts. The first of these questions addressed the issue of allowable evidence in a criminal trial. Respondents were asked the following question: "Sometimes in a criminal trial the police are alleged to have obtained the evidence unlawfully, even though the policeman thought that he was acting within the law. If such allegations are found to be true, what do you think should be done?" Respondents were presented with four mutually exclusive choices. It is evident from the findings that approximately two-thirds (62%) of the respondents would like for the evidence to still be used (see Table 28). More specifically 40% said "allow the evidence to be used and discipline the policeman," and 22% said "allow the evidence to be used and do not discipline the policeman. Approximately one-third (34%) did not want the evidence to be used, with 17% specifically selecting this choice and another 17% selecting the choice "do not allow the evidence to be used and discipline the policeman." It is also noteworthy that over one-half (57%) of the respondents think that the policeman should be disciplined regardless of whether or not the evidence is used.

TABLE 28

THE USE OF QUESTIONABLE EVIDENCE

QUESTION: Sometimes in a criminal trial the police are alleged to have obtained the evidence unlawfully, even though the policeman thought that he was acting within the law. If such allegations are found to be true, what do you think should be done?

	Number	Percent
Do not allow the evidence to be used.	256	17
Do not allow the evidence to be used and discipline the policeman.	255	17
Allow the evidence to be used and discipline the policeman.	620	40
Allow the evidence to be used and do not discipline the policeman	339	22
Multiple Response	3	*
No Response	57	4
Total	1530	100

*Less than 1%

The next question addressed the issue of policemen having to inform suspects of their rights. The question was asked: "Policemen are required by Supreme Court decision to inform persons they have arrested of their rights before questioning them. Do you believe that policemen should have to do this?" The response was rather definitive with 82% indicating yes and only 16% indicating no (see Table 29).

TABLE 29

INFORMING ARRESTED PERSONS OF THEIR RIGHTS

QUESTION: Policemen are required by a Supreme Court decision to inform persons they have arrested of their rights before questioning them. Do you believe that policemen should have to do this?

	Number	Percent
Yes	1248	82
No	252	16
No Response	30	2
Total	1530	100

Respondents were also asked their opinion regarding the effect of court rulings on law enforcement. The question asked was: "Do you think that rulings by courts in the area of law enforcement...?" Three choices were provided with 45% selecting the statement "have somewhat hindered police in their efforts to control crime" (see Table 30). Approximately one-third (34%) selected the statement "have severely hindered police in their efforts to control crime" and only 16% selected "have not hindered police in their efforts to control crime."

TABLE 30

EFFECT OF COURT RULINGS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

QUESTION: Do you think that rulings by courts in the area of law enforcement:

	Number	Percent
Have severely hindered police in their efforts to control crime	525	34
Have somewhat hindered police in their efforts to control crime	693	45
Have not hindered police in their efforts to control crime	242	16
No Response	70	5
Total	1530	100

The use of deadly force by the police has become an increasingly controversial issue in recent years. Consequently, a question was designed to identify public attitudes regarding when the police should be allowed to use deadly force. Eight different situations were presented preceded by the question: "As a policy should police be allowed to use **deadly force**...?" Almost all of the respondents (92%) indicated that police should be allowed to use deadly force "to **protect** themselves from serious injury or death" (see Table 31). Moreover, almost three-fourths (74%) indicated that they should be allowed to use deadly force "to **stop** someone who is running away from a violent crime" and 69% said "to prevent crimes of violence." Forty-one percent indicated that they should be allowed to use deadly force "to **stop** someone who is running away from a major crime against property" and approximately one-third (34%) indicated that its use should be allowed "to **prevent** major crimes against property (for example, burglary or auto theft)." Only 3% said that deadly force should be allowed "to **prevent** minor crimes against property (for example, shoplifting)" and 6% would allow the use of deadly force "to **stop** someone who is running away from a minor crime against property." The remaining category was "to **stop** someone who is fleeing from a traffic violation" and was selected by 6% of the respondents. Only 3% of the respondents indicated that "the police should **never** be allowed to use deadly force."

The remaining two questions in this section were concerned with the excessive use of force by the police. One of the questions asked: "In general, do you believe that the police in Texas use too much force in dealing with criminals?" Eighty-one percent indicated **no** and 14% indicated **yes** (see Table 32). The second question was similar and asked: "In general, do you believe that the police in Texas use too much force in dealing with citizens?" A larger percentage (36%) answered **yes** to this question and only 58% said that they do not use too much force in dealing with citizens (see Table 33).

TABLE 31

QUESTION: As a policy should police be allowed to use deadly force:

	Number	Percent
	(N = 1530)	
Total number of respondents who selected at least one situation in which police should be allowed to use deadly force	1449	95
Specific situations in which respondents said police should be allowed to use deadly force		
To prevent minor crimes against property (for example, shoplifting)	50	3
To prevent major crimes against property (for example, burglary or auto theft)	522	34
To prevent crimes of violence	1054	69
To stop someone who is running away from a minor crime against property (for example, shoplifting)	89	6
To stop someone who is running away from a major crime against property	629	41
To stop someone who is running away from a violent crime	1129	74
To stop someone who is fleeing from a traffic violation	90	6
To protect themselves from serious injury or death	1403	92
The police should never be allowed to use deadly force	44	3
No Response	37	2

TABLE 32

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE BY THE POLICE: WITH CRIMINALS

QUESTION: In general, do you believe that the police in Texas use too much force in dealing with criminals?

	Number	Percent
Yes	221	14
No	1234	81
No Response	75	5
Total	1530	100

TABLE 33

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE BY THE POLICE: WITH CITIZENS

QUESTION: In general, do you believe that the police in Texas use too much force in dealing with citizens?

	Number	Percent
Yes	547	36
No	886	58
No Response	97	6
Total	1530	100

In summary, almost two-thirds of the respondents would like to provide for some means of using evidence obtained unlawfully by the police, provided the police did not intend to obtain it unlawfully. Informing arrested persons of their rights is strongly supported by Texans; however, over three-fourths of the respondents believe that rulings by the courts have at least somewhat hindered the police in their efforts to control crime. Support for allowing police to use deadly force seems to follow a logical progression with almost all respondents supporting its use for self-protection, followed by crimes related to violence, then major property crimes, and, finally, minor property crimes. The people of Texas do not believe that the police are using too much force in dealing with criminals; however, even though only one-third believe that the police use too much deadly force in dealing with citizens, it is noteworthy that even this many Texans believe this.

Current Issues: General

Five general questions were asked focusing on topics of current interest. The first question had been included in the previous crime poll. The question was: "Would you be willing to have your taxes increased to support any of the following? If so, please check which ones." Five criminal justice services or functions were listed. The one selected most often by the respondents was **improved police services**. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to have their taxes increased in order to provide for improved police services (see Table 34). In the previous survey (Fall, 1978) 42% of the respondents had selected this response. This was followed by **improved court system** (35%), **more prison facilities** (26%), **improved probation services** (21%), **more judges** (15%), and **other** (4%). The hierarchy of the responses was the same as those in the Fall, 1977 survey; however, in each case, the proportion of the respondents willing to have their taxes increased to provide for each of the types of criminal justice services was somewhat greater.

TABLE 34

INCREASED TAXES TO SUPPORT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

QUESTION: Would you be willing to have your taxes increased to support any of the following? If so, please check which ones.

	Fall, 1978 (N = 1463)		Spring, 1979 (N = 1430)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Improved police services	617	42	711	47
Improved court system	487	33	540	35
More judges	158	11	229	15
More prison facilities	325	22	403	26
Improved probation services	174	12	318	21
Other	71	5	65	4
I would not be willing to have my taxes increased to support any of the above	493	34	468	31

The second general question was also included in the previous survey and addressed the problem of a growing prison population. The question was very general in nature and only provided the respondents with two choices. In order to adequately address the problem, a series of logically related questions would need to be asked. However, from a very general perspective the results do support the position that the public is not opposed to the idea of keeping less dangerous criminals under supervision in their own community. Specifically, respondents were asked: "The prisons in Texas are currently overcrowded. At the current rate of growth, additional facilities will have to be built each year to house 2000 more inmates. Which of the following solutions would you prefer?" "Build the additional facilities as needed" was selected by 43% of the respondents (see Table 35). The other choice presented, "find a way to keep less dangerous criminals under supervision in their own community," was selected by 40% of the respondents. An additional 10% wrote in other choices, including 12 respondents who selected both choices.

TABLE 35

ATTITUDES TOWARD SOLVING PRISON POPULATION PROBLEM

QUESTION: The prisons in Texas are currently overcrowded. At the current rate of growth, additional facilities will have to be built each year to house 2000 more inmates. Which of the following solutions would you prefer?

Build the additional facilities as needed	617	42	657	43
Find a way to keep less dangerous criminals under supervision in their own community	581	40	616	40
Other*	140	10	148	10
No Response	125	8	109	7
Total	1463	100	1530	100

*Includes 12 respondents who selected both choices.

The third general question was included for the first time in this survey and asked: "Do you believe that it is ever necessary for federal courts to intervene in the operation of state prison systems?" It should be noted that the question was very general in nature and the respondents were not provided with specific examples. Nevertheless, 64% of the respondents answered yes and 32% answered no (see Table 36).

TABLE 36

FEDERAL COURTS AND STATE PRISONS

QUESTION: Do you believe that it is ever necessary for Federal courts to intervene in the operation of state prison systems?

	Respondents	
Yes	978	64
No	496	32
No Response	56	4
Total	1530	100

The last two questions were included primarily for heuristic purposes. Now that Texans have had several years to adjust to the 55 miles per hour speed limit it seemed appropriate to ask them what they believe the speed limit should be. Moreover, the survey provided an opportunity to ask respondents to report the average speed at which they drive, especially since the sample is drawn from the list of licensed drivers in Texas. However, when interpreting the data, it should be remembered that the data were collected between May 3, 1979 and July 23, 1979. Obviously, such factors as availability of gasoline, time of the year, and other factors might affect responses to the questions.

The one question asked: "The speed limit on highways in Texas is 55 miles per hour. What do you believe the speed limit should be?" Responses were open-ended and the respondents could write in any figure. Because of this, the full range of answers is presented in Table 37. The most common response was 55 miles per hour (32.1%). Two other salient modes were evident with 25.8% indicating 60 miles per hour and 23.0% indicating 65 miles per hour. These three speeds accounted for 79.9% of the responses. An additional 14.3% did indicate that they believe that the speed limit should be 70 miles per hour. Further analysis revealed that if 31 respondents who did not answer the question were eliminated, the average speed indicated was 61.09 miles per hour. The median or mid-point, was between 55 and 60 miles per hour.

TABLE 37

SPEED LIMIT ON TEXAS HIGHWAYS

QUESTION: The speed limit on highways in Texas is 55 miles per hour. What do you believe the speed limit should be?

Responses	Number	Percent
25	1	.1
35	1	.1
45	1	.1
50	14	.9
55	491	32.1
58	1	.1
60	395	25.8
62	2	.1
65	352	23.0
66	1	.1
70	219	14.3
75	17	1.1
80	3	.2
98	1	.1
No Response	31	2.0
Total	1530	100.0

NOTE: If the respondents who did not answer the question are eliminated, this leaves 1499 responses to this question. The average speed entered by these respondents was 61.09 miles per hour. The median, or mid-point, lies between 55 and 60 miles per hour.

Respondents were then asked: "When driving on highways in Texas what is the average speed at which you drive?" The speed listed most frequently was 60 miles per

hour. (40.1%) followed by 55 miles per hour (28.1%) (see Table 38). In addition, 11.5% indicated that they drive an average of 65 miles per hour. These three speeds accounted for 79.7% of the answers to this question. If all of the speeds listed between 55 and 65 are included, 88.2% of the respondents indicated that their average speed falls within this range. Only 4.6% indicated that they drive at an average speed in excess of 65 miles per hour. Moreover, if the 31 respondents who did not answer the questions are eliminated, the average speed listed was 58.9 miles per hour and the median, or mid-point, was 60 miles per hour.

TABLE 38

AVERAGE SPEED DRIVEN IN TEXAS

QUESTION: When driving on highways in Texas what is the average speed at which you drive?

Average Speed	Number	Percent
40	9	.6
42	1	.1
45	10	.7
48	1	.1
50	82	5.4
53	1	.1
54	2	.1
55	430	28.1
56	4	.3
57	29	1.9
58	56	3.7
59	3	.2
60	613	40.1
61	1	.1
62	26	1.7
63	7	.5
64	1	.1
65	176	11.5
66	1	.1
68	2	.1
70	42	2.7
75	2	.1
No Response	31	2.0
Total	1530	100.0

NOTE: If the respondents who did not answer this question are eliminated, this leaves 1499 responses to this question. The average speed entered by these respondents was 58.93 miles per hour. The median, or midpoint, is 60 miles per hour.

SUMMARY

The findings presented in this report are based on the responses of 1530 Texans who returned completed, useable copies of the fourth Texas Crime Poll questionnaire. Responses were received from individuals residing in 180 counties. The rural/urban and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents reflect the general makeup of the residents of Texas. Males appear to be slightly overrepresented. Blacks are somewhat underrepresented and this should be noted when generalizing from the results. A number of key questions were analyzed by racial characteristics of the respondents in the previous two surveys and some definite differences were evident. At the same

time, the proportion of Spanish-surname respondents approximated the adult population of Spanish-surname residents in Texas.

There is no way of estimating how the individuals who do not respond to these surveys would answer the questions. However, the fact that the respondents are similar in makeup to the general population—with the exception of the Black respondents—should strengthen the reliability of the findings. Moreso, responses to the questions which have been replicated in four surveys have remained constant, thereby lending credibility to the position that the responses are reliable. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that the responses to the questions in this survey are, **in general**, representative of the people of Texas. Therefore, the following generalizations are proffered based on the findings in this survey, and it is contended that these generalizations are indicative of the opinions and attitudes of the residents of Texas.

1. The majority of Texans (over three-fourths) continue to support having the death penalty available for selected crimes, particularly murder and rape.
2. Texans continue to be concerned about the violent criminal. This concern has been reflected in previous surveys in which the overwhelming majority would not allow probation for persons convicted of a violent crime, and in the current survey in which specific types of crimes were listed. The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents believe that probation should not be allowed for persons convicted of violent crimes such as aggravated assault, rape, arson, murder, or robbery.
3. Texans continue to be very concerned that they will be the victim of a crime. Again, over one-half feel that they may be the victim of a crime during the next year. This fear of crime is reflected in the fact that over one-half are afraid to walk alone within one mile of their home at night, and approximately one-fourth are afraid to walk alone within one block of their home at night.
4. Residents of Texas are continuing to take steps to protect both themselves and their property. Over three-fourths of the respondents have placed at least one device in their home for reasons of security.
5. Concern with adequacy of the criminal justice system continues to remain strong. All four surveys show a definite belief on the part of Texans that the courts are too easy on convicted criminals. This is reflected in the fact that in each survey the majority indicated that they want inmates to serve their full sentence. Also, they support mandatory supervision for everyone released from prison. Texans also would like to see juries informed about parole laws and how soon a defendant may be eligible for parole prior to setting sentence.
6. There appears to be a slight increase over the four surveys in the proportion of respondents who feel that the crime problem in their community has become worse in the last three years.
7. Texans definitely do not object to inmates in Texas prisons working. Nor do they object to any specific types of work, including performing agricultural tasks. Also, the majority of Texans do not want inmates paid cash wages for work performed in prison. However, if inmates were paid cash wages, Texans are primarily interested in requiring that they pay victims for their losses, and that the inmates then use the wages to pay for court expenses.
8. The majority of Texans apparently would like to see evidence presented in court used even if it were obtained unlawfully, providing the policeman thought that he was acting within the law. Also, residents of Texas appear to strongly support the requirement that a person be informed of his rights prior to questioning. At the same time, Texans do believe that rulings by the courts have hindered the police in their efforts to control crime.
9. Texans apparently do not object to the use of deadly force by the police to protect themselves from serious injury or death. Also, they do not object to the use of deadly force, depending on the seriousness of crime. Moreover, they do not believe that the police in Texas use too much force in dealing with criminals. At the same time, a greater percentage of Texas residents, although still a minority (one-third), are more inclined to believe that the police use too much force in dealing with citizens.

1965 LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

House Resolution No. 469

WHEREAS, Sam Houston State College and the headquarters of the Texas Department of Corrections are located in Huntsville, Texas: and

WHEREAS, The proximity of these institutions appear to place Sam Houston State College in a uniquely favorable position to utilize the resources of the Texas Department of Corrections in developing outstanding programs of training and study in the exploration of crime as a social phenomenon, rehabilitation of criminals, and related subjects: and

WHEREAS, The development of such a program would be of benefit to the people of this state and nation; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, By the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, that the administrative staffs of these institutions be directed to explore cooperatively the feasibility of developing a continuing program of statistical research training and study in criminology, penology, juvenile delinquency, and related fields, and in particular to explore the feasibility of instituting a broad program to include:

- (1) training for graduate and undergraduate students interested in preparing for careers in the various correctional areas of crime control and in correctional administration;
- (2) workshops and training institutes for the continued professional training of those already employed in specialized correctional programs and in the management of correctional institutions;
- (3) consultation and technical assistance to correctional agencies in program development, personnel training and institutional management;
- (4) promotion of research, demonstration projects, and surveys of pertinent problems in the field of delinquency, crime and corrections.

