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SURVEY REPORT

Americans' Views on the Civil Justice System

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October 17, 2022



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In the midst of increasing societal and cultural shifts in our country, Americans' views on the civil justice system are rapidly changing. In conjunction, how we consume news, form opinions about certain industries or groups, and make decisions is evolving as well. These developments, which may seem small and relatively unrelated to the trial bar, ultimately lead to tremendous consequences for how attorneys represent clients, how juries respond to certain allegations and facts, and ultimately weigh heavily on the future of practicing law.

To that end, RebuttalPR developed this research to take the temperature of the environment in which we and our clients operate. We wanted to better understand, in definitive terms, how the general public (or for attorneys, potential jurors) perceive the courts, how they seek out legal counsel, and what types of cases and fact patterns resonate most with them, particularly through the filter of mainstream media, social media, and their interpersonal networks. From our findings, here are a few key takeaways:

- **A solid majority believe the civil justice system largely gets it right on assigning fault and awarding damages.** The perception that people think juries are out of control may be an outdated one, as 56% of respondents believe the court system gets it right "all the time" or "over half the time". That being said, as our research shows, the specifics of each case and layering of facts quickly move potential jurors in different directions.
- **People not taking enough responsibility for their own actions is seen as a large or very large problem (71% of respondents).** This is a headwind faced by plaintiffs attorneys, but they can counteract it by showing how their clients are getting the short end of the stick even while taking responsibility for their own actions.
- **Typical attorney advertising tactics no longer have the same impact.** 70% of people who decide to file a lawsuit do not know which attorney they would call. Additionally, ads and billboards are the least important factor when people decide on an attorney; referrals, personal research, and online review sites are the priority.
- **Broadcast TV is still king when it comes to how people get their news, but social media is just as important.** For all the talk of the death of TV, the majority of people still rely on broadcast TV for their news, with social media coming in as the second most popular news source.
- **Knowing how to reach your target audience is key.** While just fewer than half of Americans get their news from national sources, the audience making up that group are often important stakeholders with the power to make decisions affecting the lives of millions of people. And these outlets drive the decisions of



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local TV producers and dominate the social media conversation that has greater viewership.

We hope you find this report as useful and informative as we have, and our team would welcome any feedback or further discussion on the ever-evolving perception of the civil justice system.

Ray DeLorenzi,
Rebuttal Founder

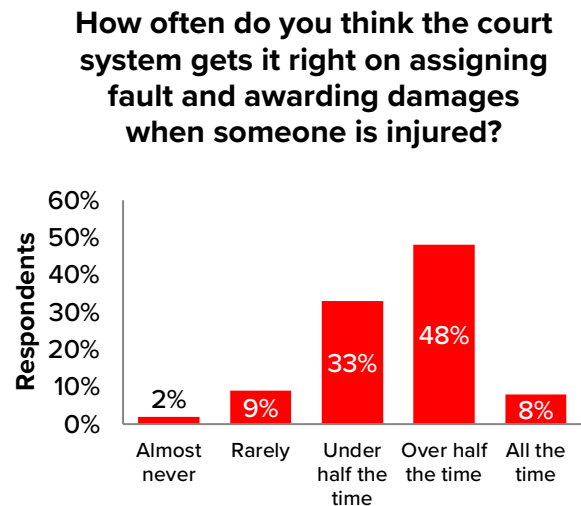
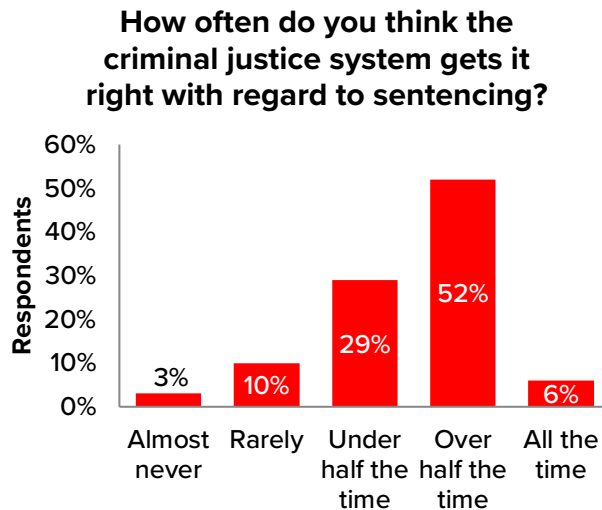
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Views toward the legal system and lawyers

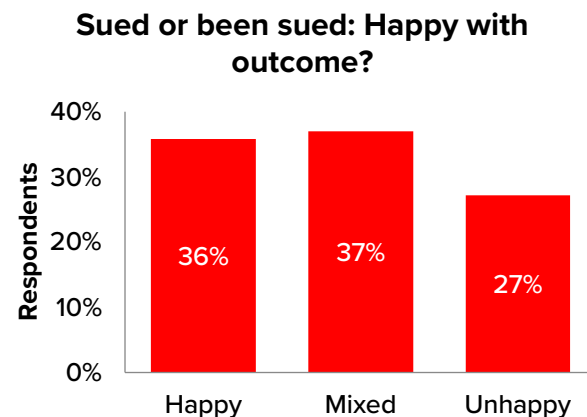
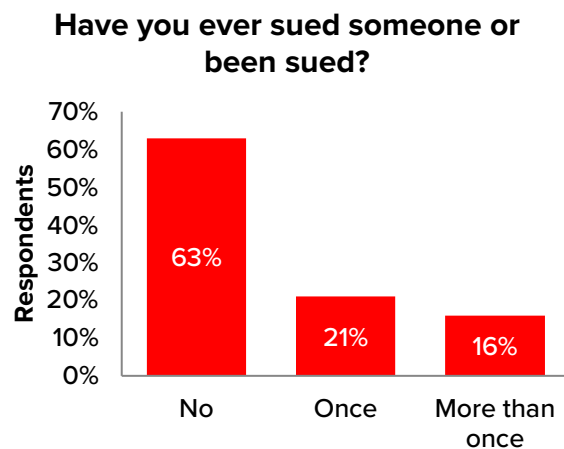
How often does the court system get it right?

- A slight majority of people feel that both the criminal and civil justice systems get it right over half the time.



How many people have been involved in lawsuits and how did they feel about them?

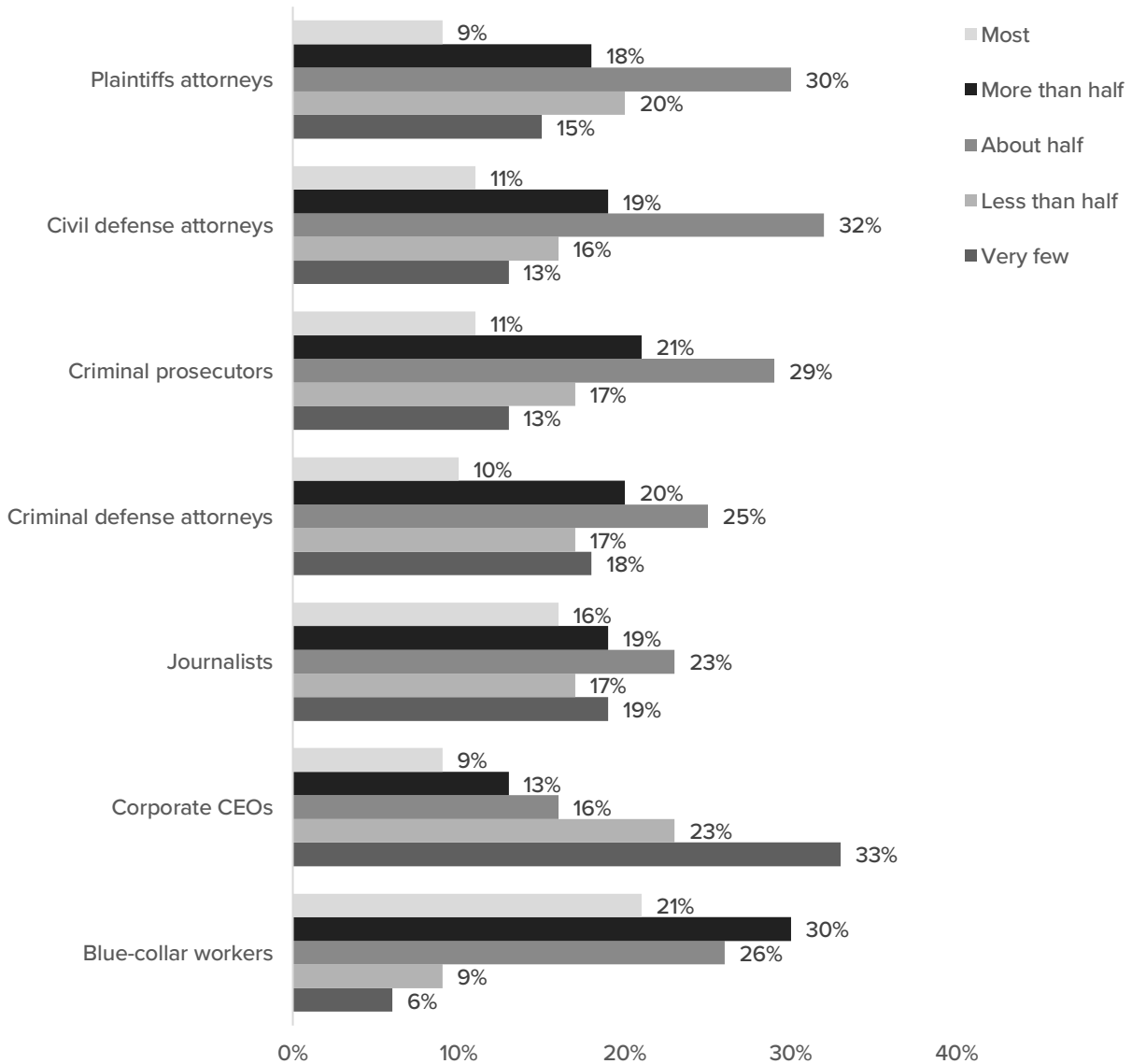
- 37% of respondents have been involved in a lawsuit, with 16% of respondents having been in more than one.
- Of those, roughly 1/3 were happy with the outcome, while 27% were unhappy.



Which groups do people think value fairness the most?

- Respondents felt that slightly more civil defense attorneys value fairness than plaintiffs attorneys.
- Respondents felt that more criminal prosecutors value fairness than criminal defense attorneys.

How many value fairness over getting ahead?

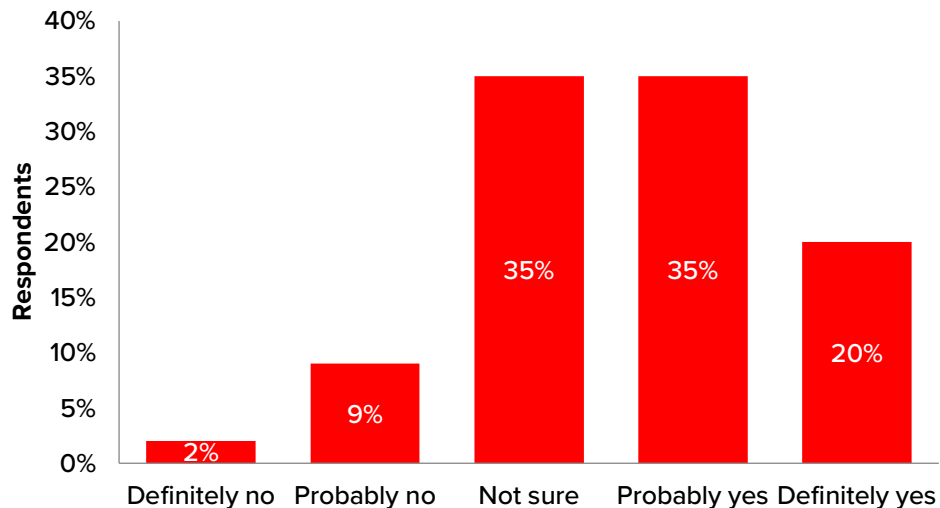


Choosing a lawyer

Are most people willing to sue over an injury?

- People are somewhat ambivalent about bringing a lawsuit themselves. Only 55% said they would “probably” or “definitely” consider suing, with 35% not sure.

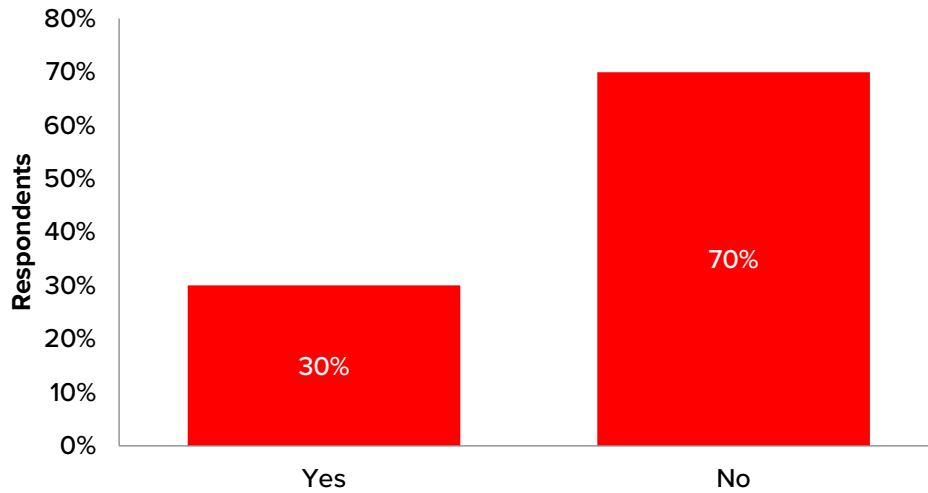
If you were injured tomorrow by a faulty product, would you consider suing?



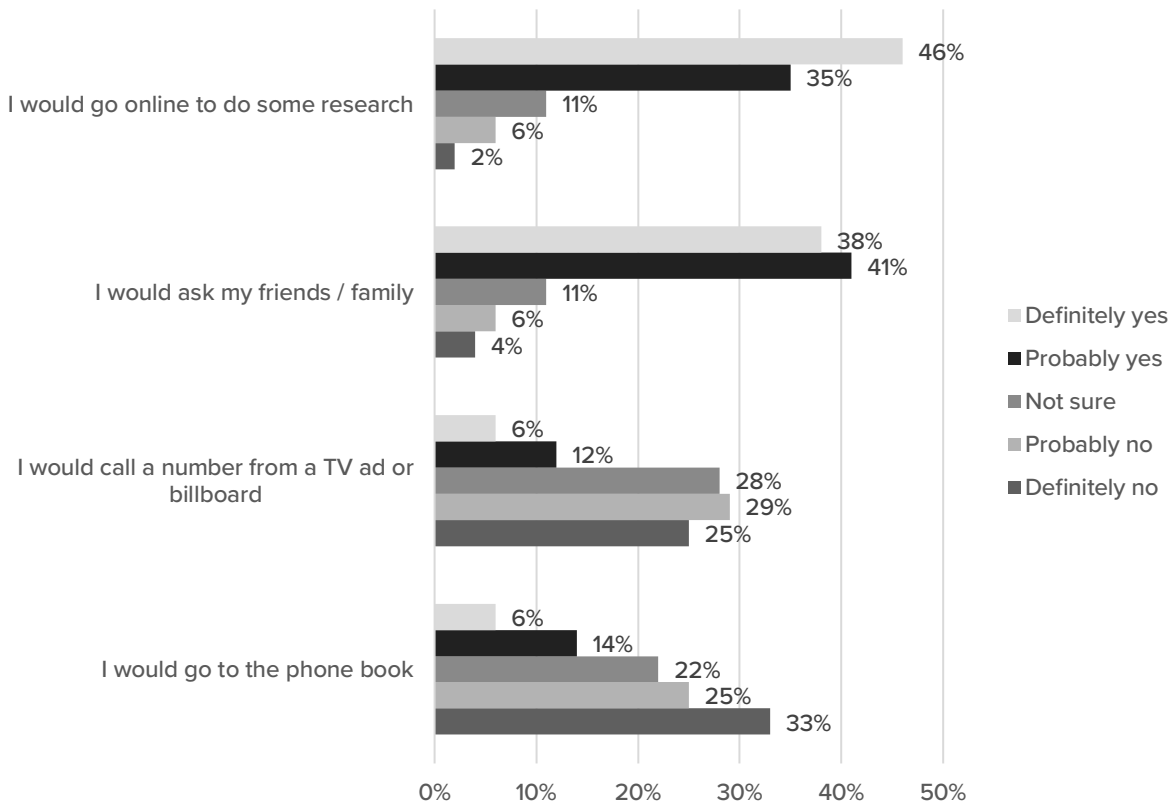
How people choose an attorney

- 70% of people don't know which attorney they would call if they decided to sue
- Most people, when researching an attorney, would go online as well as ask friends / family
- 35% of people would most value an attorney with relevant experience, while 34% would value a referral most (having someone they know having used that attorney and had a good experience). 24% would primarily rely on online lawyer rating sites.
- Most people didn't have a go-to website for research. Nearly half of all respondents said they'd go to Google or another search engine. The next most common answer was the ABA, state bar websites, or other government websites like “Attorney General's office” or “California courts website”.
- The most commonly cited lawyer review website, Avvo, was only mentioned by 1.5% of respondents. Yelp was mentioned slightly more frequently than Avvo.

If you decided to sue due to a personal injury, do you already know which attorney you would call?

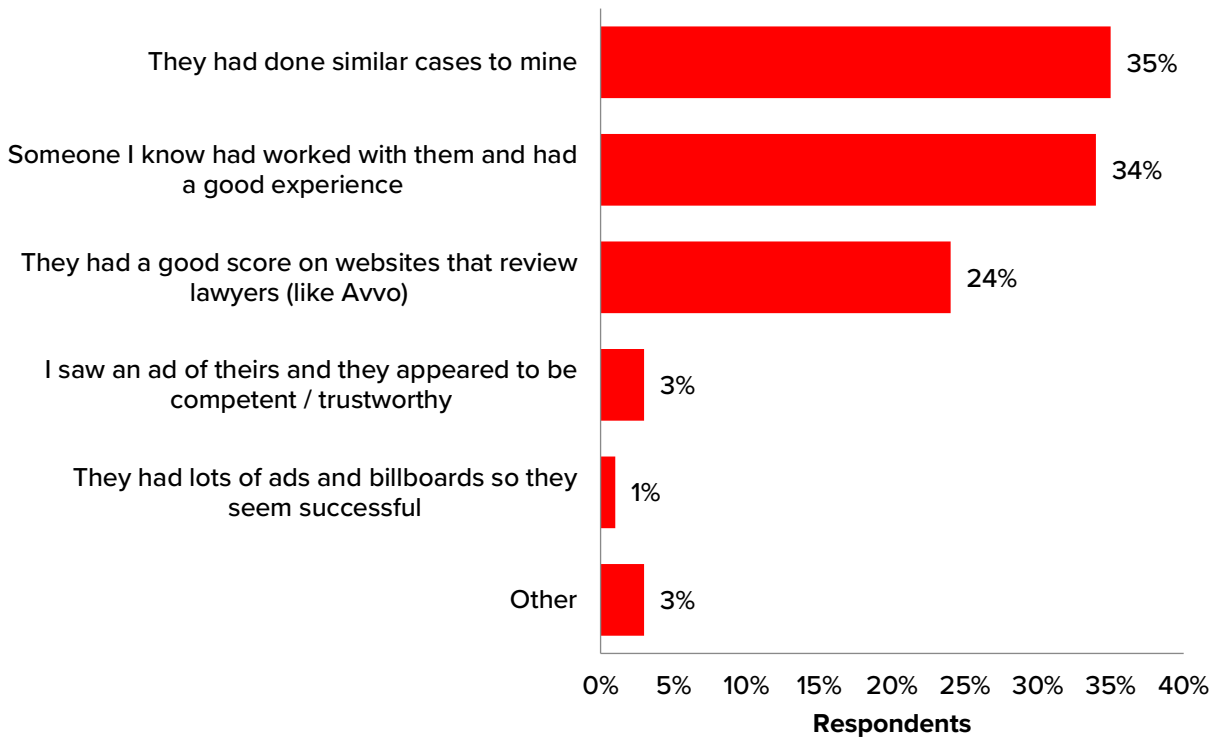


If you were hiring a lawyer for an injury, which of the following steps would you take?



What website or websites would you use to find a lawyer?	
Website	# of respondents (out of total)
Google	463/1067
"Not sure"	106/1067
ABA or state bar association	53/1067
Yelp	25/1067
Avvo	17/1067
"I'd ask friends instead"	16/1067
Lawyers.com	12/1067
BBB	10/1067
Duckduckgo	8/1067
Facebook	7/1067
LinkedIn	7/1067
Reddit	7/1067

What would be most important to you in selecting an attorney?

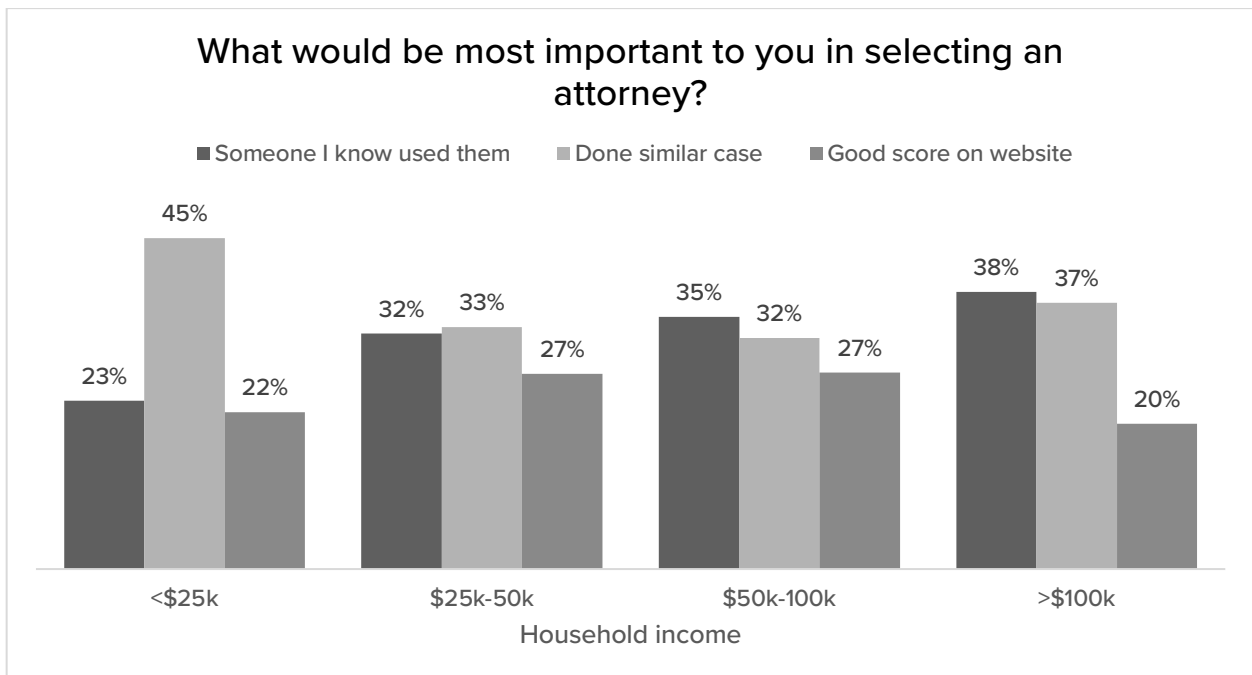


Quotes from “Other”:

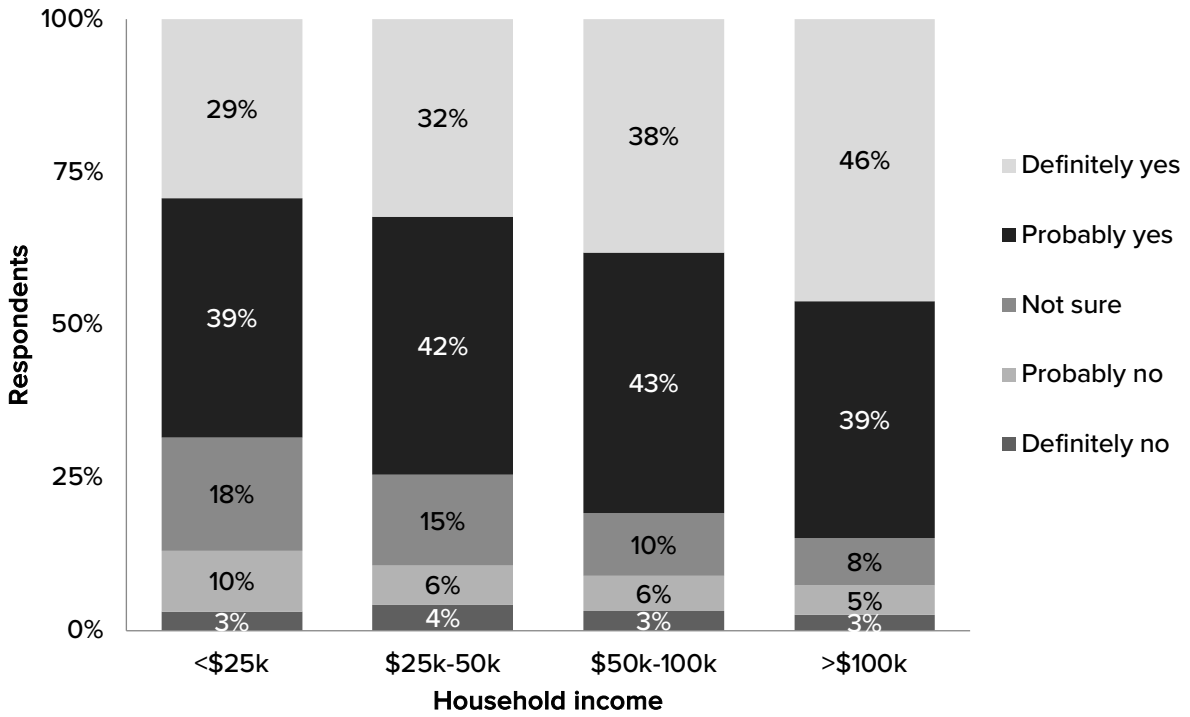
- “I would use a lawyer from my union.”
- “Reputation among lawyers I know through church and civic organizations: especially for ethics”
- “No sanctions from the court”
- “They have history of victories.”
- “Reasonable fees and good track record of WINNING!”
- “There first consultation is free and I look at there review online to see there eating [rating?]”
- “Good reputation and honest”
- “I personally know quite a few attorneys. I’d ask them.”

Deeper look: How does income affect how people select an attorney?

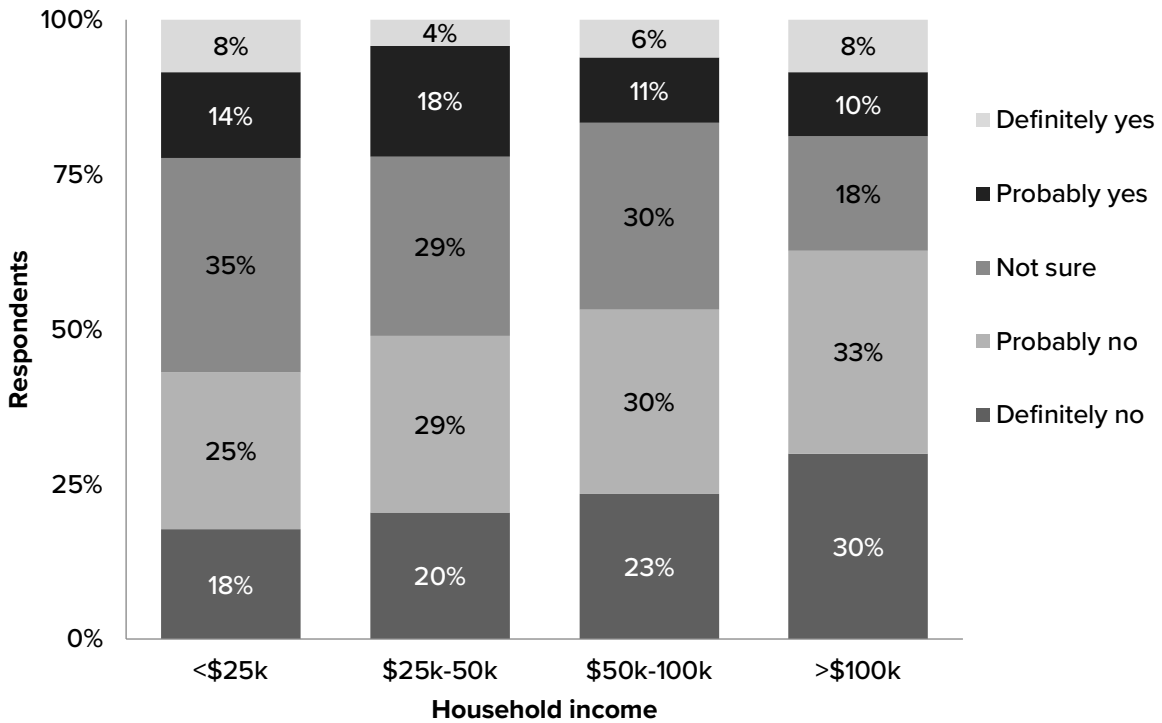
- Those with higher household incomes (above \$100k) are more likely to prioritize a lawyer who has worked with someone they know.
- At the lowest household incomes (below \$25k), people are much less likely to look for a lawyer who has worked with someone they know. They instead prioritize a lawyer who has done similar cases.
- When asked what steps they would take when hiring a lawyer, those with the lowest household incomes were least sure about asking friends / family and most receptive to calling a number from a TV ad or billboard.



Hiring lawyer: I would ask my friends / family



Hiring lawyer: I would call a number from a TV ad or billboard

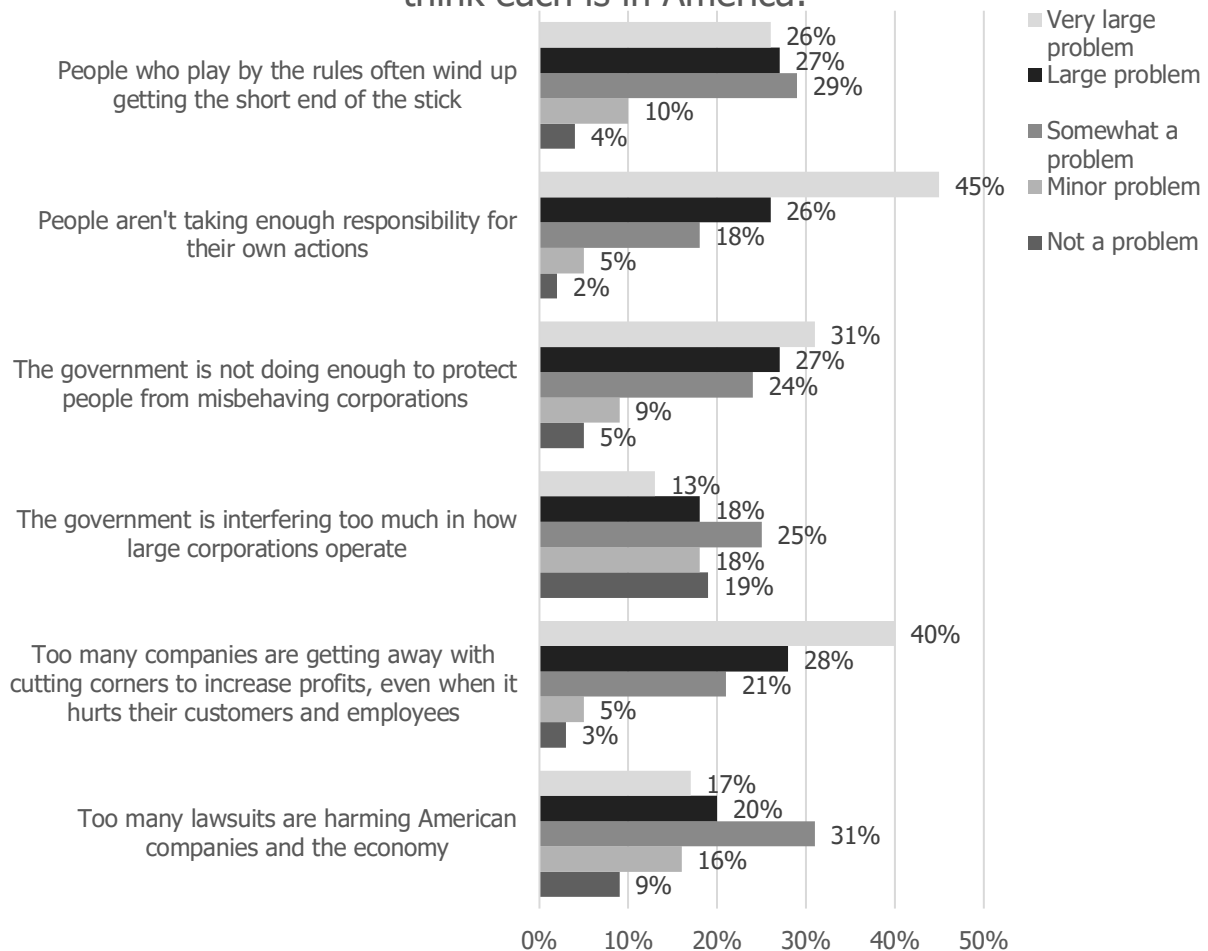


Views toward corporations

What do people see as the biggest problems with individuals, corporations and government?

- Personal responsibility (people not taking enough responsibility for their own actions) is seen as a large or very large problem by 71% of people. This is a headwind faced by plaintiffs' attorneys.
- On the other hand, 68% of respondents say that “companies getting away with cutting corners to increase profits” is a large or very large problem
- Respondents see “companies cutting corners” as a significantly bigger problem than “too many lawsuits harming companies”.
- Respondents also are much more likely to say the government is not doing enough to protect people from misbehaving corporations than that the government is interfering too much.

For the following issues, please rate how big a problem you think each is in America:



Are respondents more worried about honest people being victims or about people not taking enough responsibility for their own actions?

- Most people are worried about both. While 71% agree that people not taking enough responsibility is a large or very large problem, a full 45% **also** believe it is a large or very large problem that people who play by the rules often get the “short end of the stick”.
- This means that plaintiff attorneys should try to paint their clients as getting the short end of the stick while also showing that they take responsibility for their own actions.

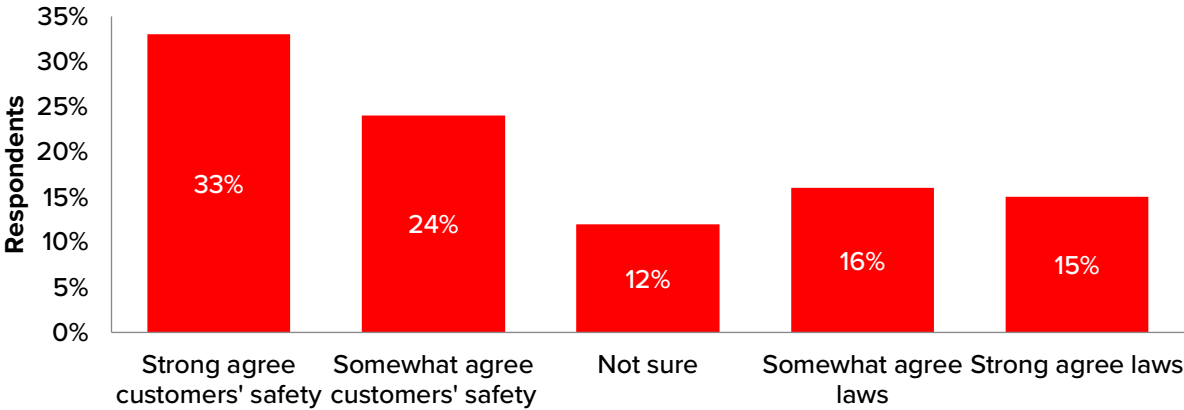
People who play by the rules often wind up getting the short end of the stick

		Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Large / very large problem
People aren't taking enough responsibility for their own actions	Not a problem	3%	2%	3%
	Somewhat of a problem	3%	8%	7%
	Large / very large problem	9%	20%	45%

What do people expect of companies when it comes to customers' safety?

- When asked if companies' only responsibility is to follow safety laws or if they have a responsibility to look out for their customers' safety, 57% said companies must consider customers' safety while only 31% felt their only responsibility is to follow the laws.

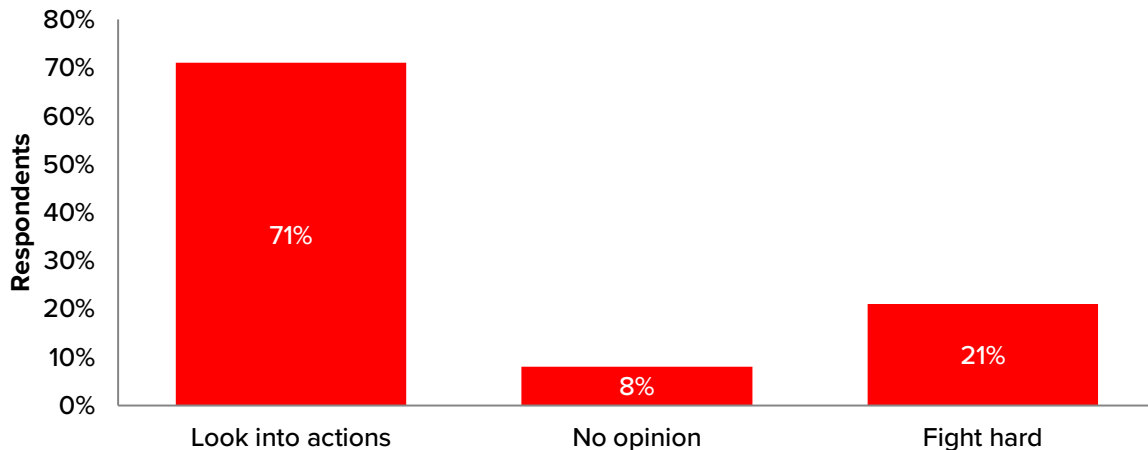
Some people say that companies' only responsibility is to follow the laws with regards to safety. Other people say that companies have a responsibility to look out for their customers' safety, even if it costs more. Which is closer to your view?



Do people like to see a company fighting charges or taking responsibility?

- When a company is accused of creating a hostile or dangerous work environment, 71% say they'd prefer to see a company publicly looking into their own actions, while only 21% prefer to see that company fighting hard against any allegations and letting the courts decide.

Imagine a situation where a company is accused of creating a hostile or dangerous work environment. From what you've heard, you don't know if they did something wrong. Which is closer to your view?



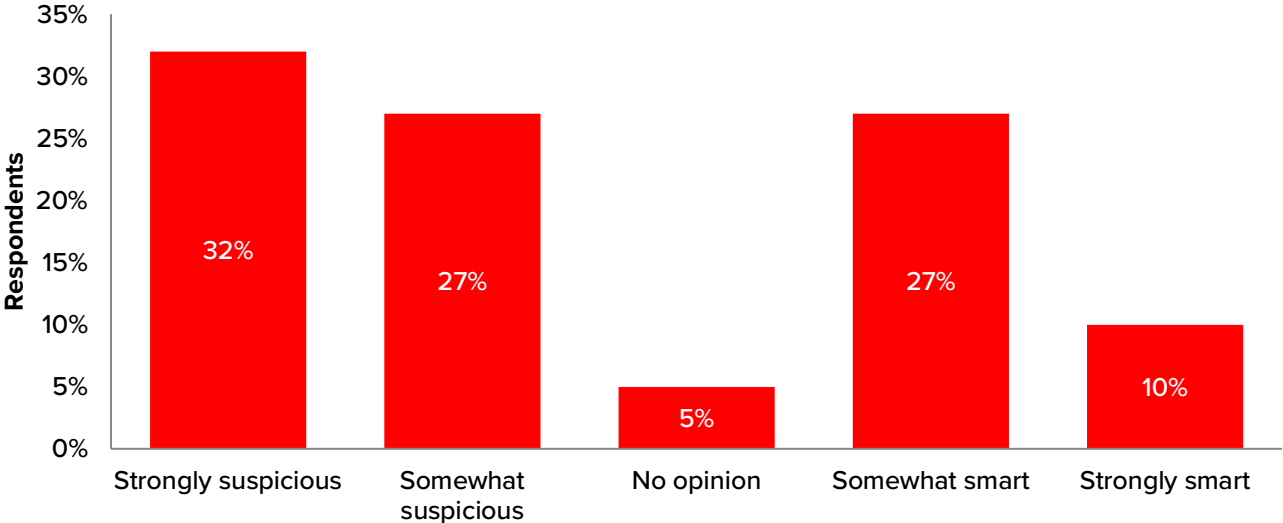
[Look into actions] I like to see companies publicly looking into their actions and policies to see if they did something wrong, and trying to find a compromise or solution that will satisfy them and the person who is accusing them

[Fight hard] I like to see companies fighting hard against any allegations. It is up to the courts and a jury to decide who is right or wrong

What do people think of a company accused of wrongdoing saying “no comment”?

- 59% of respondents felt that it is somewhat or strongly suspicious for a company accused of wrongdoing to say “no comment”, while 37% say it is somewhat or very smart / practical.

When a company is accused of doing something wrong, and that company says they have “no comment” when asked about it by the media, which is closer to your view?



[Strongly suspicious] It strongly makes me suspicious they did something wrong

[Somewhat suspicious] It somewhat makes me suspicious they did something wrong

[Somewhat smart] It somewhat makes me think they are just being smart / practical to not answer questions

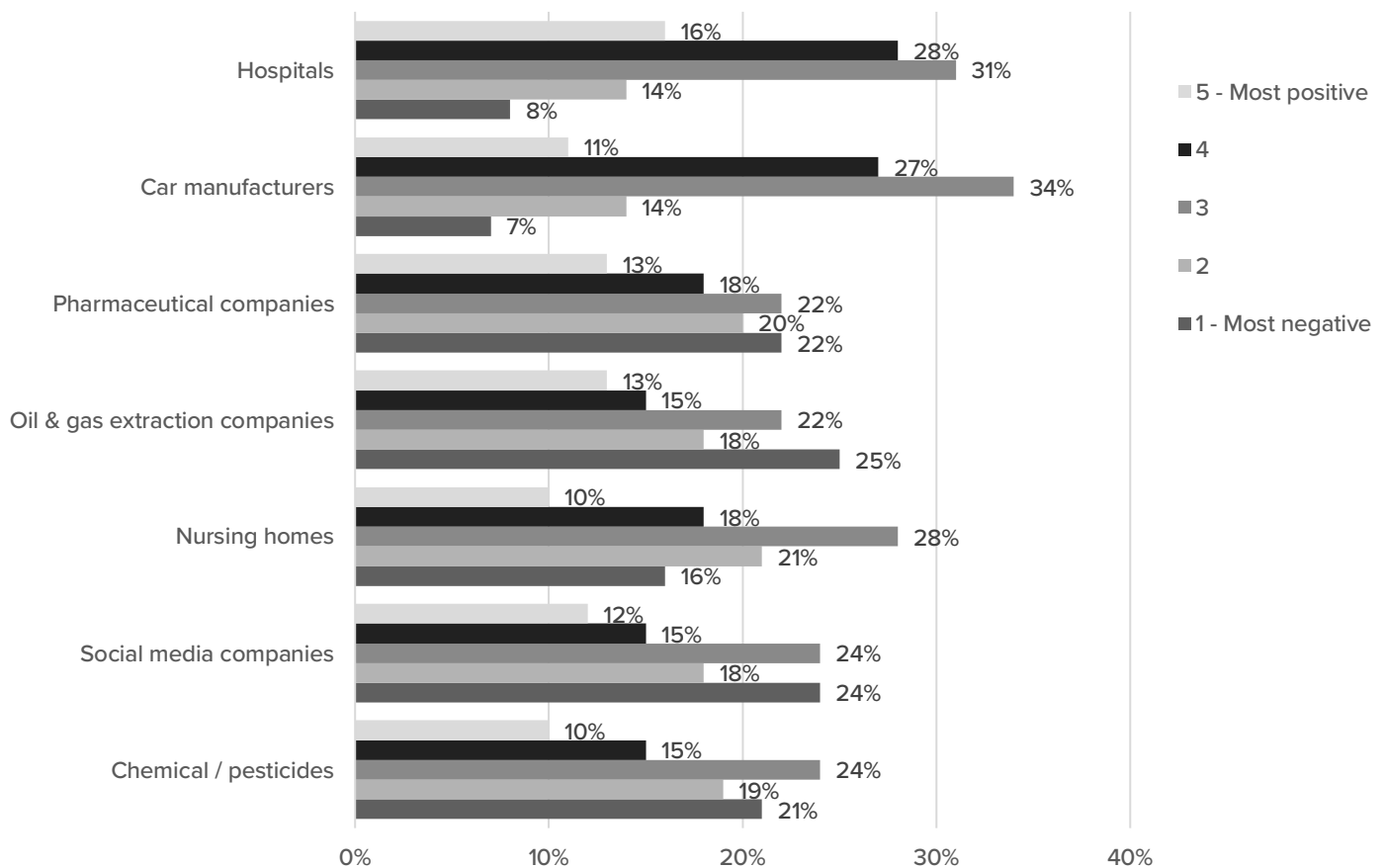
[Strongly smart] It strongly makes me think they are just being smart / practical to not answer questions

Views toward specific industries

Findings:

- Of the industries tested, hospitals were seen as acting the most appropriately, with only 22% rating them a 1 or 2 out of 5.
- Social media companies were viewed more negatively than chemical / pesticide companies, and almost the same as oil & gas companies.
- Car manufacturers were viewed largely positively, with 38% rating them 4 or 5 out of 5, and only 21% rating them a 1 or 2.

For each of the following industries, please answer whether you think they generally act appropriately on a scale of 1 to 5.



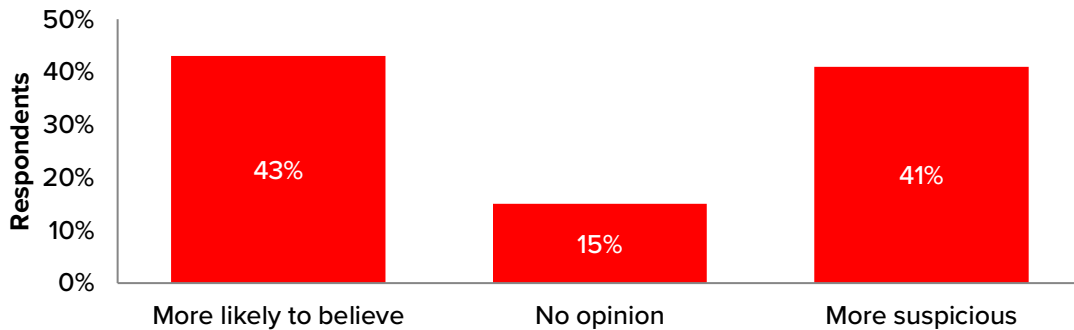
Litigation scenarios

Sexual abuse allegations against a famous actor

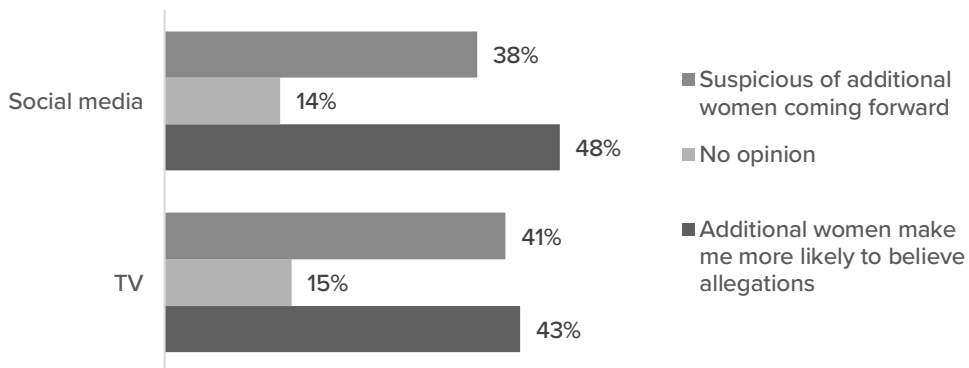
Findings:

- In a scenario of multiple alleged victims coming forward in a sexual abuse case, people are evenly split on whether that makes them more suspicious or more likely to believe the allegations.
- We were curious if how a person gets their news affects their views on this case. It does appear that those who get their news from social media are somewhat more likely to believe the allegations of the additional women. This may be mostly explained by age differences between these two audiences, which is explored in the next section.

A famous actor is accused of sexual abuse by an actress who worked with him 15 years ago. After the story breaks, 5 additional women come forward and say they were also abused. Without evaluating each of their claims, which was your first instinct?



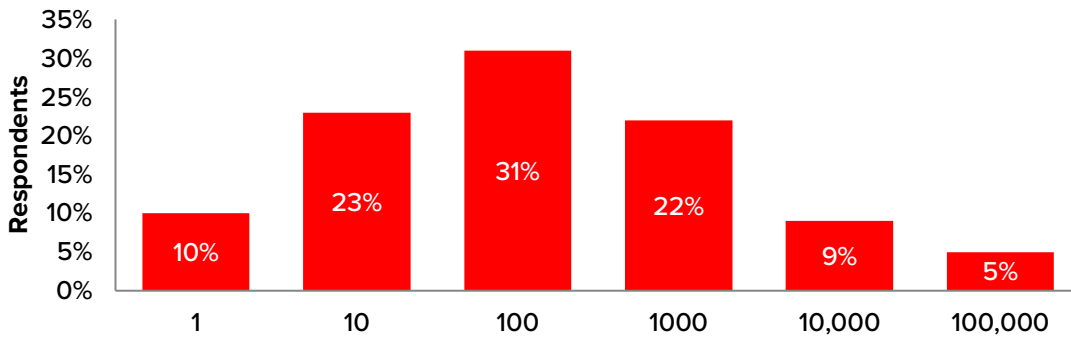
Actor is accused of sexual abuse. 5 additional women come forward. What is your first instinct?
Comparing those who get their news from social media and those who get their news from TV



Defective washing machine causes a house fire

- In a product defect scenario where a washing machine caused a house fire, the most common response was that 100 units would have to be shown to be defective for them to think there is likely a manufacturing problem (31% agreed). This aligns with other research we have done that shows that people like to see a large number of similar cases before blaming a manufacturing defect.

A washing machine has an electrical fault and causes a house fire. 100,000 of these exact machines were made. The owner of the washing machine is suing the manufacturer, claiming the product was defective.

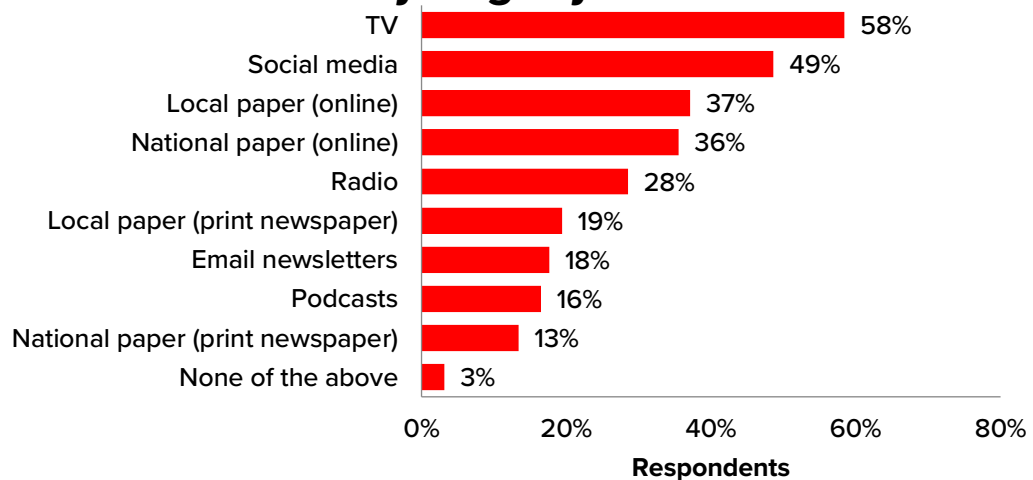


Social media and news

Where do people get their news?

- The most common news source is still TV, though social media follows closely.

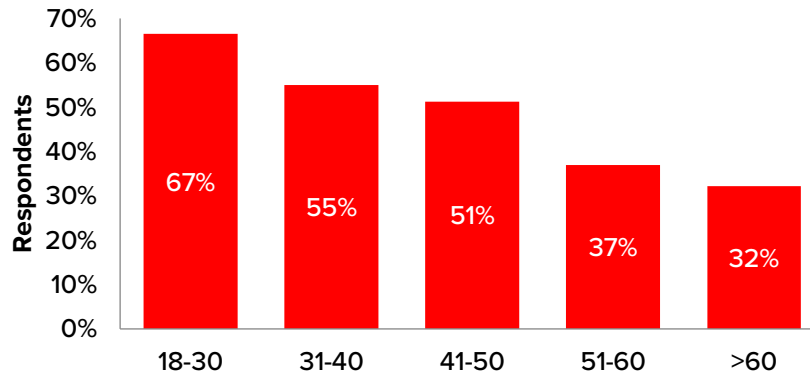
Where do you get your news?



What age groups get their news from social media?

- Younger people are much more likely to get their news from social media, with 67% doing so whereas only 32% of those over 60 do.
- While we didn't ask in this survey, we expect that different social media networks are favored by different age groups.

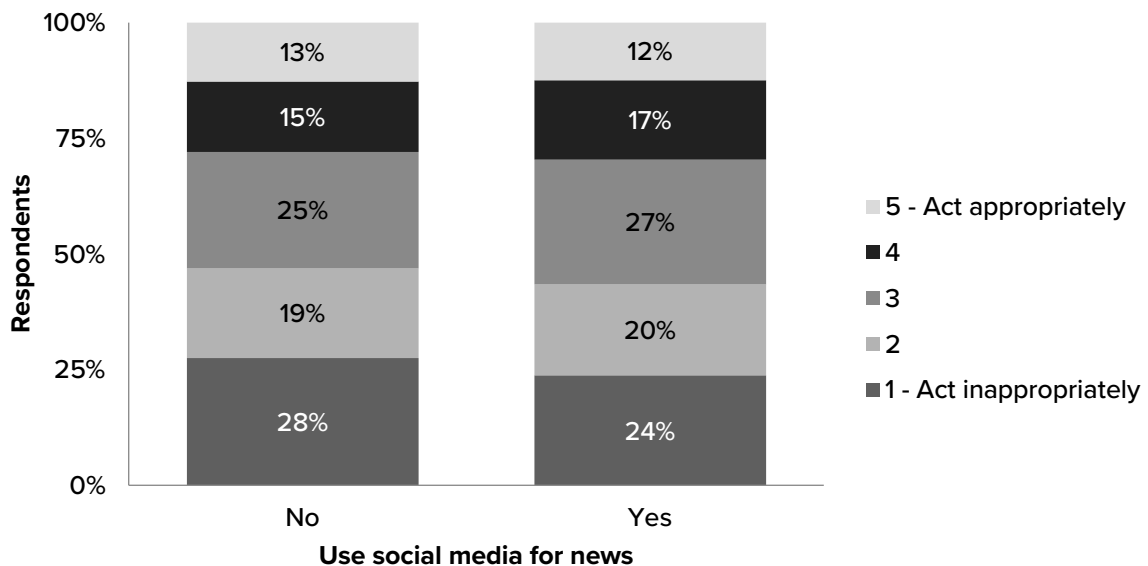
Percentage who get news from social media by age group



Are people who get their news from social media more likely to say social media companies act appropriately?

- Interestingly, not really. Those who use social media for news are about as likely as those who don't to say that social media companies "act appropriately".

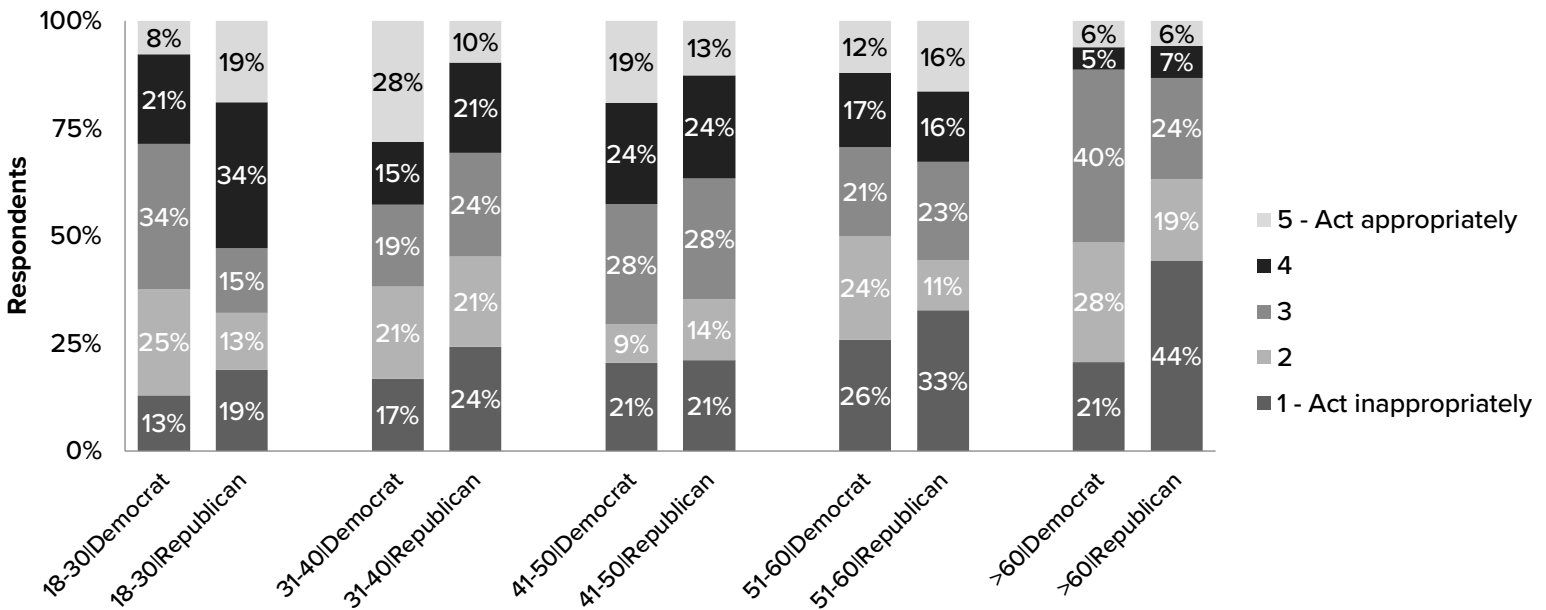
Whether social media companies "act appropriately" by whether or not respondents get their news from social media



Do views toward social media companies differ by age and political party?

- Among respondents over 60 years old, almost none felt that social media companies acted appropriately, but Republicans were significantly more likely than Democrats to rate their actions a 1 out of 5 (acting very inappropriately).
- This party difference disappears for younger respondents, and for the youngest group (18-30), Republicans are actually more likely to say that social media companies act appropriately.

Whether social media companies "act appropriately" by age and political party preference

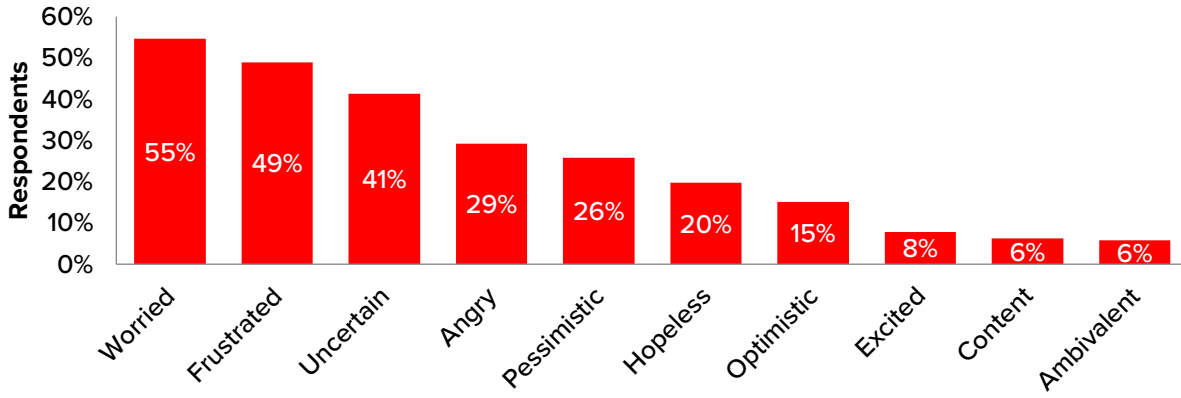


How jurors feel about the state of the country today

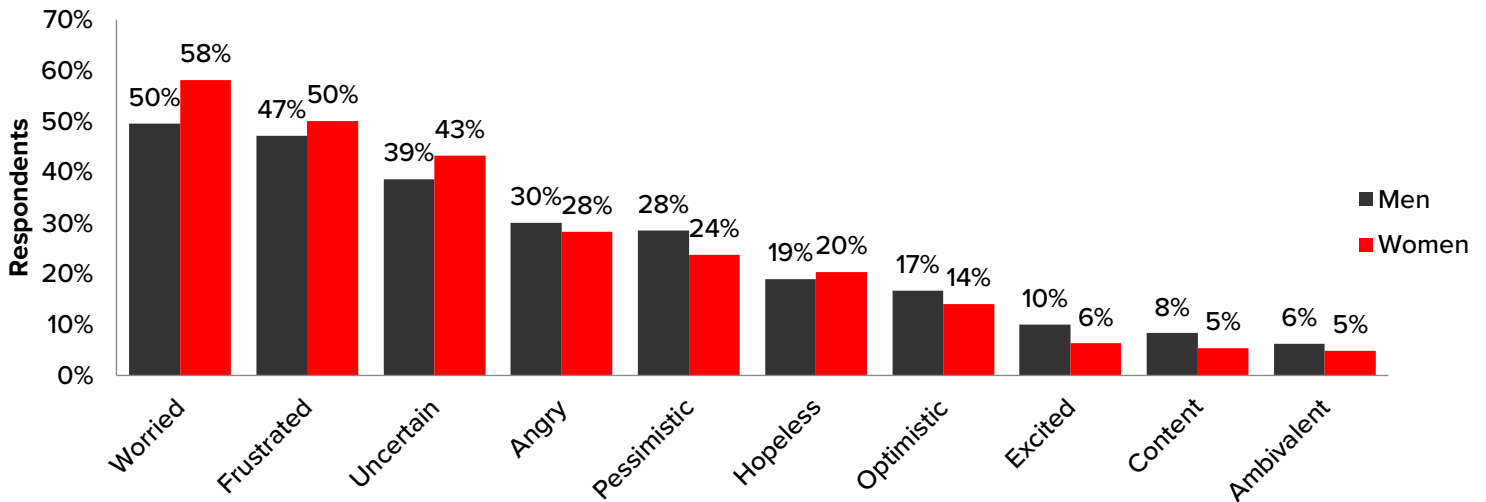
How do different groups of jurors feel about the state of the country today?

- The majority of respondents (55%) reported being worried about the state of our country today. Other commonly held emotions were frustration, uncertainty and anger. Only 15% were optimistic and 8% were excited.
- Men were less likely to feel worried or frustrated, but more likely to feel angry and pessimistic.
- Republicans were more likely to feel worried, frustrated, angry and hopeless, which may be largely due to currently having a Democratic administration.

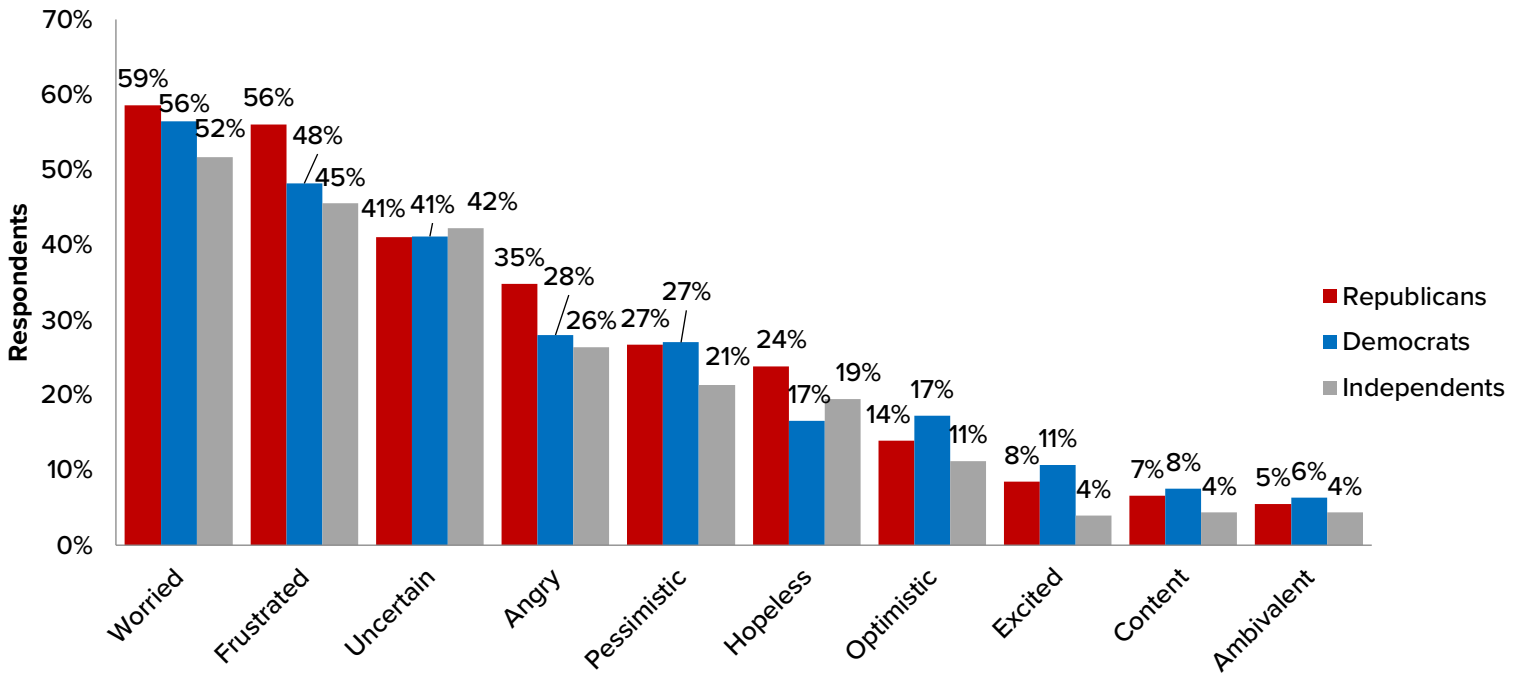
Which of the following describe how you feel about the state of our country today? (Overall)



Which of the following describe how you feel about the state of our country today? (Men vs women)



Which of the following describe how you feel about the state of our country today?



Methodology

These results were based on a survey of 1067 participants drawn from across the US. The survey was conducted between July 28th and August 4th, 2022. The sample approximated the US census on several key attributes, including political ideology, age, and gender.