



Social Research Laboratory, PO Box 15301, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 (520) 523-1515

For Immediate Release:
Tuesday, March 20, 2001

For More Information:
Fred Solop, Director
NAU, Social Research Laboratory
(520) 523-3135 -- office
(520) 606-5120 -- cell phone

**MANY THINK RACIAL PROFILING IS WIDESPREAD;
SUPPORT FOR POLICE IS HIGH;
RACIAL DIVIDE EXISTS IN ATTITUDES**

Most people in Arizona disapprove of the practice of racial profiling; yet, 45 percent of people in the state, including 60 percent of people of color, believe the practice of 'racial profiling' is widespread, according to recent *Grand Canyon State Poll* findings. More than one of every four people of color in Arizona believes they have been stopped by the police because of their race or ethnicity. Overall, most Arizonans say they are treated fairly by local and state police, but perceptions of whites and people of color differ somewhat on this issue.

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University, from February 23 to March 9, 2001. A random sample of 505 Arizona residents was asked questions about racial profiling. A sample of this size is associated with a margin of error of +/-4.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

-- more --

Visit the Social Research Laboratory Web Site at: www.nau.edu/~srl

MANY CONSIDER RACIAL PROFILING TO BE WIDESPREAD

More than three-quarters of Arizonans disapprove of the use of racial profiling by police, whereby members of certain racial or ethnic groups are treated differently because of the belief that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain types of crimes. Yet, nearly half of Arizonans (45%) believe the practice of racial profiling is widespread in society. People of color are more likely than whites to believe racial profiling is a widespread practice (60% versus 42%, respectively).

People of color are nearly nine times more likely than whites to report being stopped by police just because of their racial or ethnic background than whites. Three percent of whites in Arizona and 27 percent of people of color say they have been stopped because of their race or ethnicity.

Despite high levels of concern in Arizona about racial profiling, Arizona fares better than the nation as a whole. In a December 1999 Gallup survey, 56 percent of whites and 77 percent of African Americans in the United States said they believe the practice of racial profiling is widespread. In that same survey, 6 percent of whites and 42 percent of African Americans said they were stopped by the police because of their racial or ethnic background.

FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD POLICE

Arizonans, overall, think favorably about the local and state police. Seventy-four percent of people have a favorable opinion of the local police and 70 percent have a favorable opinion of state police. There are racial differences in attitudes, however. While seventy-eight percent of whites hold a favorable opinion of local police, just 56 percent of people of color think similarly.

-- more --

Seventy-five percent of whites and 49 percent of people of color view Arizona state police favorably.

Nationally, more people report favorable attitudes toward the local and state police than is true in Arizona. Eighty-one percent of the national public has favorable attitudes toward the local police and 83 percent think favorably of state police in their area. A gap between perceptions of whites and African-Americans exists at the national level.

Generally, Arizonans believe they receive fair treatment by local and state police. Eighty percent of Arizonans say their local police treat them fairly and three-quarters of Arizonans (76%) say the state police treat them fairly. Whites and people of color in Arizona differ in their attitudes toward local and state police. Whereas 83 percent of whites say they are treated fairly by local police, 67 percent of people of color say they are treated fairly. Seventy-nine percent of whites say they are treated fairly by state police compared to 67 percent of people of color. Twenty percent of people of color say they are not treated fairly by local police and 15 percent of people of color say they are not treated fairly by state police.

Nationally, eighty-seven percent of people in the United States report being treated fairly by local police and 86 percent say they are treated fairly by state police.



Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University

March 20, 2001

**GRAND CANYON STATE POLL
BACKGROUND MEMO**

2-NAU016/Spring 2001

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted between February 23 and March 9, 2001. A random sample of 505 Arizona residents was asked questions regarding attitudes toward police and perceptions of racial profiling. Survey question results are subject to a sampling error of +/-4.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below. People of color include those of Latino ethnicity, Native American or Alaska natives, Asian Americans, African-Americans, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander racial groups. National level data was collected by the Gallup Organization and released on December 9, 1999 (see www.gallup.com/poll/Releases/pr991209.asp).

* The total N for the 'Whites' and 'People of Color' columns do not necessarily sum to the total N of the 'Total' column. This is due to the small percentage of respondents who refuse to disclose their race or ethnicity.

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about police.

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... *[rotated answers]*

A. Your local police?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Favorable	74%	78%	56%	81%	85%	58%
Unfavorable	13%	10%	24%	17%	13%	36%
Don't know/not sure	14%	12%	20%	2%	2%	6%
	N=(502)	N=(398)	N=(90)			

B. State police or state troopers in your area?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Favorable	70%	75%	49%	83%	87%	64%
Unfavorable	7%	4%	21%	11%	8%	26%
Don't know/not sure	22%	21%	31%	6%	5%	10%
	N=(500)	N=(397)	N=(88)			

Do you feel you are treated fairly by each of the following or not? (Rotated answers)

A. The state police or state troopers in Arizona?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Yes	76%	79%	67%	86%	89%	69%
No	6%	3%	15%	6%	4%	17%
Don't know/not sure	19%	18%	18%	8%	7%	14%
	N=(499)	N=(396)	N=(88)			

B. The local police in your area?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Yes	80%	83%	67%	87%	91%	66%
No	10%	8%	20%	10%	7%	27%
Don't know/not sure	10%	9%	13%	3%	2%	7%
	N=(502)	N=(398)	N=(90)			

It has been reported that some police officers stop motorists of certain racial or ethnic groups because the officers believe that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain types of crimes.

Do you believe that this practice, known as “racial profiling,” is widespread or not?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Practice is widespread	45%	42%	60%	59%	56%	77%
Practice is not widespread	37%	38%	32%	34%	38%	16%
Don't know/not sure	18%	20%	9%	7%	6%	7%
	N=(500)	N=(396)	N=(87)		N=(934)	N=(1001)

Do you approve or disapprove of the use of “racial profiling” by police?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Approve	12%	13%	9%	14%	15%	9%
Disapprove	76%	76%	83%	81%	80%	87%
Don't know/not sure	12%	11%	8%	5%	5%	4%
	N=(497)	N=(396)	N=(87)		N=(934)	N=(1001)

Have you ever felt that you were stopped by the police just because of your race or ethnic background?

	Arizona			National		
	Total	Whites	People of Color	Total	Whites	African Americans
Yes	7%	3%	27%	11%	6%	42%
No	91%	96%	70%	89%	94%	57%
Don't know/not sure	2%	1%	3%	--	--	1%
	N=(503)	N=(399)	N=(89)		N=(934)	N=(1001)