



New C-SPAN Poll:

What Americans Know About the Supreme Court, Judge Sotomayor

(July 10, 2009) - Even if they can not name her directly, two-thirds of Americans in a new C-SPAN poll are aware that Sonia Sotomayor is the first Hispanic ever to be nominated for the High Court.

Results of a survey of 1,002 voters conducted for C-SPAN on July 7th by Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates indicate that 66 percent of those surveyed knew that Judge Sotomayor is the Court's first Latina nominee, and fully 43 percent were able to correctly identify her by name. That's about as many (41 percent) who could cite Sandra Day O' Connor as the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice O'Connor served on the Supreme Court for more than 20 years, after being nominated by President Reagan in 1981.

"These are very considerable high awareness numbers. The high awareness is there because people are hungry for more information about the Supreme Court, in some larger sense," pollster Rob Green said on C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" interview program this morning. "People realize on some level how important every nomination is and how important the Court is in their lives."

To that end, a large majority - 61 percent - says it is time for Supreme Court Oral Arguments to be open to television coverage.

See the full interview with Rob Green here: http://www.c-spanarchives.org/library/index.php?main_page=product_video_info&products_id=287590-3. Full results of this survey can be found at C-SPAN's website, www.c-span.org <<http://www.c-span.org>>. Topline results are as follows:

1. How many Justices sit on the United States Supreme Court?

- 7: 11%
- 8: 7%
- 9: 49%**
- 10: 3%
- 11: 2%
- 12: 14%

2. Can you name any Justices on the U.S Supreme Court?

Yes 46%

- Clarence Thomas 14%
- John G. Roberts 11%
- Ruth Bader Ginsberg 7%
- Antonin Scalia 6%

No 54%

3. Can you name the first woman to serve as Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court?

Yes (Sandra Day O'Connor) 41%

No 59%

4. What is the maximum number of years a Justice can serve on the U.S. Supreme Court?

For life: 76%

Other amounts: 13%

5. Can you identify the individual just named by President Obama to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court?

Yes (Sonia Sotomayor) 43%

No 57%

6. If confirmed, what would be historic about the individual President Obama recently nominated to become a member of the US Supreme Court?

First Hispanic/Latina nominated: 66%

Woman nominated: 3%

7. Can you name any case ever heard by the U.S. Supreme Court?

Yes 56%

Roe v. Wade 45%

Brown v. Board of Education 5%

No 45%

8. Does a jury hear cases before the U.S. Supreme Court?

Yes: 19%

No: 67%

9. How long is the average argument before the U.S. Supreme Court?

30 minutes: 10%

One hour: 9%

90 minutes: 10%

One day: 5%

Two days: 9%

Don't know: 58%

10. The U.S. Supreme Court currently does not allow television coverage of its sessions. Please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that the U.S. Supreme Court should allow television coverage of its sessions.

Agree: 61%

Disagree: 38%

Survey Methodology

Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates, LLC, conducted online interviews on June 7, 2009 among 1,002 2008 general election voters in the United States. The margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 3.1 at the 95% confidence level and larger for subgroups.

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