

**"Civil Death" or Civil Rights? Public Attitudes Towards Felon  
Disfranchisement in the United States**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents new experimental survey results about Americans' attitudes towards the political disfranchisement of felons and ex-felons. Two long-term trends in public opinion provide the backdrop for this investigation: strong (though variable) public support for conservative anti-crime policies, and growing public support for civil rights and civil liberties for most major groups. We find evidence that Americans favor providing non-incarcerated felons (those on probation, parole, and ex-felons who have completed their sentences) with the right to vote. These results are robust in the face of alternative question wordings. Those who endorse other civil liberties and a rehabilitative orientation to punishment tend to favor extending voting rights to convicted felons, even when the effects of age, race, sex, region, residency, education, and ideological identification are statistically controlled. In the clash between two different imperatives – a desire to punish and deter crime versus a desire to promote and protect the civil liberties of even unpopular groups – we find evidence that the latter has greater public support. The paper concludes with a discussion of how these results might inform the recently emerging debate over felon disfranchisement laws.

“CIVIL DEATH” OR CIVIL RIGHTS? PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS FELON  
DISFRANCHISEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Since passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, debates around suffrage in the United States have largely shifted from questions about formal individual rights to participation to questions of fairness in the practical implementation of those rights. Prior to the VRA, the disfranchisement of African American voters provided a vivid example of persistent suffrage inequities in the American political system, and its passage was a landmark development in the struggles to extend the franchise to all citizens (cf. Keyssar 2000). Following its passage, concern over voting rights faded rapidly. As one authoritative recent treatment put it, “at least since the voting rights reforms of the 1960s, political rights have been universalized in the United States. With relatively insignificant exceptions, all adult citizens have the full complement of political rights” (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995, p. 11).

Reflecting this conventional wisdom, the most hotly contested questions about American democracy in recent years have thus focused not on the right to participate but rather on questions of institutional design and fairness of elections. Among the most important of these have been whether legislative districts afford all groups equal representation (Kousser 1999; Issacharoff, Karlan and Pildes 1999, chaps. 5-8), the power of money in the electoral system (Domhoff 1998; Broder 2000), and the restrictive impact of state-level voter registration laws on political participation (Piven and Cloward 2000; National Commission on Federal Election Reform 2001). Concerns about low levels of citizen participation in elections have also

stimulated exhaustive theorizing and research on the state of democracy in America (Putnam 2000; Conway 2000), as has declining confidence in political institutions and government (e.g. Nye, Zeligow and King 1997; Hetherington 1998).

The apparently settled character of the right to vote and its disappearance from the scholarly and popular literatures on American democracy, however, is challenged by the rapid growth in incarceration and conviction rates within the criminal justice system over the past three decades. Because election laws in most states bar felons and some ex-felons from voting, these developments have re-injected the issue of formal voting rights back into the contemporary political agenda. The changing character of punishment has played a particularly important role, by driving up rates of disfranchisement. From the 1920s through the late 1960s, rates of incarceration in the United States were very stable. In the past thirty years, however, incarceration and conviction rates have soared.<sup>1</sup> Between 1972 and 2001, even while crime rates were first stable, then declining (in the 1990s), the number of state and federal prisoners has grown by over 600 percent, from 196,429 to 1,324,465 (U.S. Department of Justice 1973, p. 350; 2002b). Other correctional populations have also grown in rate and number, with more than a four-fold increase in the number of felony probationers (from 455,093 to 2,084,358) and parolees (from 160,900 to 731,147) from 1976 to 2001 (U.S. Department of Justice 1979;

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<sup>1</sup> Although our analysis will not engage explanations for rising punishment rates, it is important to note that this trend is not a simple product of rising crime rates. National Crime Victimization Survey data show steady declines in property crime since 1973, trendless fluctuation in violent crime from 1973 to 1994, and steep drops in all offenses from 1994 to 2001 (U.S. Department of Justice 2002a). By year-end 2001, overall violent and property crime rates fell to “record lows” (U.S.D.O.J. 2002a:2), even as U.S. correctional populations reached all-time highs (U.S.D.O.J. 2002b:1). The FBI’s Uniform Crime Report series shows greater evidence of rising crime throughout the 1960s and 1970s (with violent offenses not peaking until 1991), but by 2000 even the UCR crime index had fallen to its lowest level since 1972 (U.S.D.O.J. 2001:278-9; see U.S.D.O.J. 1995 for a comparison of UCR and NCVS data sources).

2002c). When jail inmates are added to state and federal prisoners, approximately 2 million offenders are currently incarcerated, with an additional 4.7 million persons supervised in the community on probation or parole (U.S. Department of Justice 2002c), and some 9.5 million ex-offenders in the general population (Authors 2002).

Because virtually all incarcerated felons, and many non-incarcerated felons as well, are barred from voting, the size of the disfranchised population has grown in tandem with the general expansion of the criminal justice system. Currently, 48 states disfranchise incarcerated felons, 37 states disfranchise felony probationers or parolees (or both), and 14 states additionally disfranchise some or all ex-felons who have completed their sentences (Fellner and Mauer 1998; authors 2002). Although states vary widely in the proportion of citizens disfranchised, felon disfranchisement laws have significant consequences in the United States. For example, in the most recent presidential election, an estimated 4.7 million people (2.3% of the voting age population) were disfranchised by virtue of having a felony conviction on their record (Authors 2002). This represents by far the largest group of American citizens who are not allowed to vote (Keyssar 2000, p. 308).

The rapid growth in felon disfranchisement in recent years has not gone unnoticed. In the face of a mounting campaign several states have amended their laws in the past year to expand felon voting rights. For example, in 2001, Connecticut and New Mexico both liberalized their felon disfranchisement laws. Connecticut changed its law to allow probationers to vote, and New Mexico now restores voting rights upon completion of sentence. In 2001, Nevada eliminated its five-year post-sentence waiting period to *apply* for the restoration of voting rights, but the

restoration process is not automatic. In 2002, Maryland passed legislation to automatically restore voting rights upon completion of sentence for first-time offenders (and three years after completion for non-violent recidivists). At the national level, a measure banning the states from placing any restrictions on the voting rights of ex-felons reached the floor of the Senate in February 2002, where it was defeated 63-31 (U.S. Congress 2002). While a wide variety of civil and voting rights organizations continue to exert pressure for the liberalization of voting laws regulating felons, a number of states have adopted more *conservative* restrictions. Since 1997, for example, Utah and Massachusetts have disfranchised inmates and Colorado and Oregon disfranchised federal inmates (Colorado disfranchised federal parolees as well). Overall, a very mixed picture emerges. One recent canvass of changes since 1975 finds that while 13 states have liberalized their laws, 11 states have passed further limitations on felons, and three states have passed *both* types of laws (Schiffman 2001)

Conflicts over felon disfranchisement reflect an enduring tension in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American political life, reflected in public policy, partisan debates, and public opinion: the clash between the desire to maintain social and political order versus the desire to extend civil rights and liberties to all citizens (Huntington 1981; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Sniderman 1996). Public fear of crime, and a desire to punish criminal offenders in ways that will reduce their future propensity to commit crimes, co-exists alongside broad support for basic civil liberties, democracy, and a right to due process for those accused of crimes. Contemporary debates over disfranchisement engage this important cleavage in ways that have not been heretofore examined.

In this paper, we provide the first systematic assessment of public attitudes about laws disfranchising felons and ex-felons. This analysis is informative because to this point virtually no national-level survey data exploring multiple dimensions of the issue have been collected. We analyze data from a new national survey conducted in July 2002, focusing, in particular, on whether variations in the framing or target group referenced by survey questions affects the level of support versus opposition to voting rights for felons and ex-felons. To provide a context for understanding attitudes towards felon disfranchisement, we also compare them with attitudes towards other civil liberties for criminal offenders.

The paper is in four parts. Part one discusses the issue of felon voting rights, situating current policy conflicts in comparative and historical context. Part two summarizes our data, measures, and the logic of our survey experiments. In part three, we present the results of our survey, describing aggregate opinion towards voting rights and other civil liberties, as well as multivariate analyses to identify the sources of attitudes towards felon voting rights. The final part of the paper discusses policy and political implications of these results.

## POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although non-propertied white men generally gained the franchise earlier in the United States than in other democratic countries, for other segments of the population the right to vote came much later after protracted struggles (e.g. Rogers 1992; Shklar 1991; Wiebe 1995; Keyssar 2000). Restrictions on the voting rights of criminals were but one of a large number of restrictions

developed from the founding of the Republic onward. Criminal disfranchisement has an extensive history in English, European, and Roman law, both as a form of retribution and as a general deterrent to future offenses. American disfranchisement laws date to colonial times, and states began writing criminal disfranchisement provisions into their constitutions in the late eighteenth century. Most state constitutions explicitly gave their legislatures the power to pass laws disfranchising criminals. Early disfranchisement laws in the United States drew upon European models and were limited to a few specific offenses (Ewald 2002). In 1840, 4 of the then 26 states had felon disfranchisement statutes on the books. From the 1840s onward, states began adopting and expanding their restrictions on felons and ex-felons, frequently broadening the scope of crimes covered and the proportion of offenders involved (Keyssar 2000, pp. 162-63). A wave of disfranchisement laws followed the Civil War. In the South, during and after Reconstruction, many states expanded their restrictions on the felon population (which for the first time began to contain large proportions of African Americans), the first step in a larger process of disfranchising black voters (Perman 2001). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, increasing numbers of states disfranchised some categories of felons, although since the late 1960s a number of states have eliminated their ballot restrictions for ex-felons (see Keyssar 2000, pp. 302-08).

Current disfranchisement laws distinguish four categories of felon offenders: (1) those who are currently incarcerated; (2) those who have been incarcerated but remain under parole supervision; (3) those who were convicted of a felony but sentenced to probation rather than prison; and, (4) those who have completed their entire sentence (ex-felons). In other work (Authors 2002), we have developed a demographic life-table analysis to estimate the overall



distribution of disfranchised felons across these four categories. Figure 1 summarizes that analysis. Although only a minority of states (thirteen) currently disfranchises some or all ex-felons, the cumulative growth over-time has increased their share of the entire disfranchised population. The overall picture suggested by the figure is startling: it shows that only about one-quarter of the disfranchised felon population is currently in prison; the other three-fourths consists of offenders or ex-offenders living in the community. Over 35 percent of the disfranchised are ex-felons, who have completed their entire sentence but still face restrictions on their voting rights. Public policy approaches towards processing different categories of felons – as well as common sense understandings of the differences between offenders serving prison sentences versus those who are in the community – suggest important differences across these various populations. To speak directly to these policy questions, the survey data we present in this paper enable us to measure variation in the level of public support for voting rights for each category (currently incarcerated felon, parolee, felony probationer, and various types of ex-felons).

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ]

### *Felon Disfranchisement in Comparative Perspective*

Current policies regulating felon voting rights in the United States can be instructively compared with those of other democratic countries. Table 1 summarizes cross-national differences in criminal voting rights. As the table shows, many countries allow currently

incarcerated felons to vote. Eighteen European democracies have no electoral ban on incarcerated prisoners and allow them to vote, as does South Africa (following a recent Supreme Court ruling). Eight other European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand disfranchise only some sentenced prisoners. In France and Germany, courts have the power to withdraw voting rights as an additional punishment (cf. Demleitner [2000] on Germany). In most of the other countries with contingent restrictions (including Austria and Belgium in Europe, and Canada, Australia and New Zealand outside it), the length of the sentence determines whether incarcerated individuals can vote. Nine European countries bar all incarcerated prisoners from voting (but none that we have been able to determine maintain those restrictions post-release). Analysis of public opinion data is needed to determine whether the unusual felon disfranchisement provisions in the United States enjoy broad public support.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

### *The Current Controversy: Liberal and Conservative Views*

As we noted above, the current policy of felon disfranchisement in the United States has come under attack in recent years, facing challenges at both the national level and in the states. In these debates, there have been relatively few explicit defenses of restrictions on felon voting rights, although embedded in the legal and political history of these laws, as well as in recent legislative debates and court rulings, a battery of arguments supporting disfranchisement can be found. The most longstanding claims in support of felon disfranchisement concern the impact of

allowing criminals (or ex-criminals) to vote. Having exhibited a propensity to violate the social contract on at least one previous occasion, criminals cannot be trusted to exercise the franchise without corruption. As one supporter of this view put it in Congressional testimony, allowing ex-convicts to vote “could have a perverse effect on the ability of law abiding citizens to reduce the deadly and debilitating crime in their communities” (Graziano 1999, p. 44). Noting the existence of “the high percentage of criminals ... and ...disfranchised people in some communities,” another supporter of ex-felon disfranchisement laws argued “this is an argument against re-enfranchisement, because there accordingly exists a voting bloc that could create real problems by skewing election results” (Clegg 1999, p. 17). In the Senate debate over proposed legislation eliminating restrictions on the voting rights of ex-felons, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) argued that, among other things, removing disfranchisement bans could lead to “ ‘jailhouse blocs’ banding together to oust sheriffs and government officials who are tough on crime” (U.S. Congress 2002, p. S802).

A variant of this argument focuses on macro-level consequences for the legitimacy of democratic government. It maintains that the “purity of the ballot box” is undermined by the participation of tainted individuals, as the Alabama Supreme Court put it in a famous case in 1884 (*Washington v. State* 75 Ala. 582, quote at p. 585). In the philosophical arguments associated with the republican and communitarian traditions, for example, the political community can remain viable only insofar as it consists of citizens who respect the rules of democratic procedure and can be expected to live within the norms those rules generate (for review, see Ewald 2002, pp. 35-40). In conservative variants of these arguments, the presence of

criminals within the polity potentially erodes confidence in the community by diluting the votes of non-criminal citizens. As Sen. McConnell put it, “those who break our laws should not dilute the vote of law-abiding citizens” (U.S. Congress 2002, p. S802).

A third type of argument in support of felon disfranchisement, focuses on the implications of restoring voting rights to violent criminals. For example, Florida Governor Jeb Bush argues against routinely restoring civil rights to those who have “committed more serious crimes, such as violent or multiple felonies, or have broken the law after previously having their rights restored.” Similarly, in the 2002 Senate debate, Senator McConnell noted explicitly that restoring voting rights to ex-offenders would mean that “rapists, murderers, robbers, and even terrorists or spies” would be allowed to vote (U.S. Congress 2002, p. S802).

Finally, and perhaps related to the concerns about violent offenders, implicit racial appeals (cf. Mendelberg 2001) can also be found in some of the defenses of felon disfranchisement (cf. Ewald 2002). Fear of crime has frequently been shown to have a racial component (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Quillian and Pager 2001; Mendelberg 2001) and research on media coverage of crime suggests the disproportionate use of images of African American offenders (Entman and Rojacki 2000). Evidence for the use of implicit racial appeals can also be found in some of the rhetoric in recent debates. Consider, for example, the 2001 legislative debate in South Carolina over a bill to disfranchise all felons for fifteen years beyond their sentence (an expansion beyond the current law which restores voting rights upon completion of sentence). After one representative opposing the bill introduced an African American ex-felon, one of the bill’s sponsors, John Graham Altman, distributed an old newspaper article that detailed the

man's crime, entitled "Democratic poster boy for murderers' right to vote" (Wise 2001a). Nevertheless, Altman denied the bill was racially motivated, declaring "if it's blacks losing the right to vote, then they have to quit committing crimes" (Wise 2001b). Use of states' rights rhetoric – long associated with implicit racial appeals (Mendelberg 2001) – can also be found in some of the positions taken by conservatives in the U.S. Senate debate. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) argued, for example, that "I think this Congress, with this little debate we are having on this bill, ought not to step in and, with a big sledge hammer, smash something we have had from the beginning of this country's foundation – a set of election law in every State in America ... To just up and do that is disrespectful to them" (U.S. Congress 2002, p. S803).

Opponents of restrictions on the voting rights of felons and ex-felons have raised several objections to these laws. On the whole, opponents argue, democratic governance in the modern world entails universal suffrage for all citizens; indeed, although a fairly recent invention in the long sweep of human history (Markoff 1996; Dahl 1998, pp. 86ff.), universal suffrage has become such a taken-for-granted aspect of democracy that its foundational importance is rarely the subject of debate. Deviations from the norm of universal suffrage are said to require special and careful scrutiny, and should only be permitted in very unusual cases. Non-citizens are generally prevented from voting, at least in national elections, around the world (Honig 2001). Among adult citizens, however, criminals are among the few categories of persons denied voting rights (and, as noted above, only in the United States are non-incarcerated criminals denied voting rights). Other barriers to universal suffrage include restrictions on individuals mentally incapable

of voting, such as institutionalized individuals, and the absence of adequate facilities to permit disabled persons to vote (see authors 2001).

In the specific case of non-incarcerated felons on probation and parole or ex-felons, where the U.S. is far outside the international norm, scholars have raised questions about the basic fairness of disfranchisement laws and their implications for the reintegration of felons back into society. The fairness point concerns the obligation and duties of citizenship, all of which apply in equal (or perhaps greater) measure to probationers, parolees, and ex-felons. These individuals are expected to respect the law (and indeed, are often subject to significantly harsher penalties, and indeed face a higher level of scrutiny, than non-felons). They are expected to pay taxes to the government, and to be governed by elected officials. Yet they have no formal right to participate in the selection of those officials or the public policies that allocate governmental expenditures.

The reintegration argument for re-enfranchising felons comes at the point from a quite different angle. A record 606,000 people were released from prison in 2000, and prisoner reentry has emerged as a central concern for research and policy on crime (Petersilia 1999; Travis et al. 2001; Visher and Travis 2003; U.S.D.O.J. 2002d:7). Facing important disadvantages in the labor market (Pager 2002; Western 2002) and a variety of restrictions on their ability to obtain housing, receive government benefits, and enjoy other civil rights (Samuels et al. 2002), it is perhaps not surprising that about two-thirds of released prisoners will be rearrested within three years (U.S.D.O.J. 2002e). Research on the factors promoting desistance from crime has shown it to be closely linked to successful transition to work (Sampson and Laub 1993; Uggen 2000), family (Laub et al. 1998), and community (Maruna 2001) roles. In a recent review of research on

transitions from prison, Visher and Travis (2003:27) suggest a plausible connection between voting rights and successful reintegration, identifying factors such as joining a community organization and becoming politically active as potential milestones in the reintegration process. Denying voting rights to ex-felons, or felons living in their communities on probation and parole, undermines their capacity to connect with the political system and may thereby increase their risk of recidivism.

#### *What About the Mass Public?*

The liberal and conservative arguments summarized above have been advanced by political elites in various arenas: politicians and political activists in the legislative debates, and policy intellectuals and legal and political theorists in scholarly journals and in the media. But the issue has not, heretofore, been investigated with reference to the attitudes of the mass public. We know that high levels of public support for conservative crime policies, though highly variable and responsive to elite appeals, have been sustained over a long historical period (Roberts and Stalans 2000). But opinion research also simultaneously presents evidence of dramatic growth in mass support for civil rights and civil liberties during the past four decades (e.g. Davis 1975; Nunn et al. 1978; Smith 1990; Wilson 1994; Brooks 2000). Absent further evidence, there are thus initial grounds for anticipating support for felon enfranchisement as well as for

disfranchisement. The current study presents the first national-level data with which to better understand American public opinion on issues of voting rights for criminal offenders.

## DATA AND MEASURES

### *Data*

In July 2002, as part of its regular monthly telephone survey, Harris Interactive asked a nationally representative sample of 1000 adults 18 years of age or older a battery of questions that we designed regarding attitudes towards crime, punishment, and the civil liberties of criminals and ex-offenders. The telephone numbers were generated using a random-digit-dial (RDD) selection procedure to maximize the representation of persons in households within the 48 continental United States and the District of Columbia. The national sample was stratified by geographic region and by metropolitan versus non-metropolitan residence; first states, then counties, then minor civil divisions were selected, with probability of selection proportionate to the U.S. Census Bureau estimates of the population.

A telephone number was dialed at least four times before a new telephone number was generated for that area, and once a residential contact was established, the interviewer used the “youngest adult male/oldest adult female” procedure for selecting a respondent in the household for the interview. Generally at least one additional call-back was made to convert refusals into completed interviews, and the interviews were conducted using a computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. For the July survey, the response rate (calculated as one minus the total number of refusals divided by the total number of contacts) was 39%.



## *Measures*

Our measurement of attitudes toward felon enfranchisement takes into account two sources of complexity: the various statuses of convicted criminals as prisoners, probationers, parolees, or ex-felons; and also variability in the crime committed by an individual. We seek to measure the effects of this variation on public attitudes through a series of question-wording experiments. These experiments enable us to analyze whether the varying references to target groups and other framing processes used by competing elites or other opinion leaders affect public opinion concerning enfranchisement (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder 1998; cf. Gamson 1992).

With regard to criminal status, we fielded four parallel survey items that employ similar question-wording but vary the target group in question. As summarized in table 2, these items ask respondents their level of support for enfranchisement for probationers, parolees, and prisoners. The two items that refer to probationers differ in two ways: whether they specify that probationers have *not* been imprisoned (*Probationer*<sub>2</sub>) versus whether the wording does not make this explicit (*Probationer*<sub>1</sub>); and whether they enable respondents to endorse a “haven't thought much about this” response (*Probationer*<sub>1</sub>) or not (*Probationer*<sub>2</sub>).<sup>2</sup> The second and fourth items use the same wording as the *Probationer*<sub>2</sub> item, while referring respectively to parolees and prisoners. The assignment of these items to survey respondents reflects a randomized design in

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<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of the “haven't thought much” response appears to result in a somewhat lower proportion of respondents not selecting the primary “yes” or “no” response categories: for the *Probationer*<sub>1</sub> item 15% choose the “haven't thought much” response (with 1% volunteering “not sure/don't know”), while only 8% of those asked the *Probationer*<sub>2</sub> item volunteered “not sure/don't know.” The corresponding figure for the parolee and prisoner items

which approximately one-quarter of the total sample was asked a given item. This randomization facilitates comparisons by ensuring that any observed differences in measured opinion are a product of the variable target group references reflected in the question wording.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

The second set of dependent variables consists of four items that all refer to individuals convicted of a crime who have completed their entire sentence (ex-felons). These items were asked of respondents immediately following the first set, and as before, assignment of items reflects a full randomization (rather than a split-quarter design in which the same one-fourth of respondents received a specific pair of first and second-stage questions). Whereas the *Generic Ex-Felon* item makes no specific references to the crime committed, the *White-Collar Ex-Felon* item specifies the “illegal trading of stocks,” the *Violent Crime Ex-Felon* item refers to a “violent crime,” and the *Sex Crime Ex-Felon* item refers to “people convicted of a sex offense.” This variability in reference to specific crimes enables us to evaluate whether Americans exhibit greater support for felon enfranchisement in the abstract (*Generic Ex-Felon*), and, if so, whether support is also lower for violent criminals or those convicted of a sex crime in comparison to white-collar felons.

Our two independent variables of primary interest measure attitudes toward the criminal justice system and toward general support for civil liberties. Depending upon how individuals view the proper goals of incarceration, such attitudes may subsequently affect their willingness to extend voting rights to those convicted of a crime. We measure these attitudes using a question

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are 7% and 8% respectively.

about whether rehabilitation, punishment, or deterrence from committing future crimes represent the proper purpose of prison.

Our *Generic Civil Liberties* measure is one of the items fielded initially by Stouffer (1963 [1955]), and subsequently incorporated into the repeated General Social Surveys. This item was asked of all survey respondents, and we consider it to measure “generic” or abstract civil liberties insofar as its reference to speech by “somebody who is against all churches and religion” involves a different target group than criminals.

The next three involve more specific references to either the target group or content of speech involved in the expression of civil liberties. The *Ex-Felon Civil Liberties* item refers to someone whose prison sentence has been completed (without specifying the content of their speech). The *Ex-Felon/Legalization Activist* item refers to someone who has completed a sentence for drug dealing, further specifying “legalizing drugs” as the content of the speech in question. The *Legalization Activist* item also refers to a speech in favor of legalizing drugs, but makes no reference to the status of the speaker as an ex-felon who had previously been convicted of selling drugs. These three items were randomly assigned to one-third of the sample, and they enable us to observe differences in respondents’ level of support for civil liberties across the four sets of conditions specified.

The remaining variables in the analysis are statistical controls. We measure race using two dichotomous variables for African Americans and other minorities (non-minority status is the reference). Dummy variables for city and suburban residence provide contrasts with the reference category (small town/rural residence). Geographical region is measured using three dichotomous

variables for Northeast, South, and West (with Midwest as the reference). Gender is a dichotomy (female = 1), and age and education are measured in years. We control for individuals' general ideological orientations using a five-point scale whose categories range from strongly conservative (1) to strongly liberal (5).

## RESULTS

Do Americans support the enfranchisement of voters convicted of a crime, and does the level of public support vary depending upon the level of supervision or the specific nature of the crime?

We begin our examination of these questions with the data presented in Table 3 below. Entries in this table are sample proportions (standard deviations in parentheses) for the first set of four enfranchisement items. As discussed earlier, assignment of items to survey respondents is randomized, and question wording varies primarily by the reference of items to *Probationers* (*Probationers*<sub>1</sub> leaves implicit non-prison status while *Probationers*<sub>2</sub> makes this status explicit), *Parolees*, and *Prisoners*.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Given that these items are dichotomies with “1” reflecting support for enfranchisement (and “0” no support), sample proportions for the first three items indicate majority support for allowing probationers and parolees the right to vote. Differences in question wording for the two

probationer items initially suggest divergent levels of support, with the explicit clarification that probationers are not imprisoned yielding 68% support (vs. 60% for the alternative probationer item). However, the 8% difference is not statistically significant (as is the 8% difference between the probationer vs. parolee items).<sup>3</sup> The final item in Table 3, however, reveals very different attitudes toward prisoners, with only 31% of respondents supporting their enfranchisement. This suggests that while Americans may not penalize parolees for having served prison time once they are released from prison, they remain unwilling to extend voting rights to currently incarcerated offenders. Consistent with the policy approaches adopted by other countries that disfranchise criminals, Americans appear to draw a similar distinction between imprisoned offenders versus those who are living in the community (regardless of whether the latter have completed their sentence).

We also consider a second source of potentially significant variability in public opinion: the specific type of criminal offense involved. In Table 4, we present estimates of the level of public support for ex-felon voting rights, exploiting the experimental design to compare across sub-samples that received one of the following four items: “generic” ex-felon (no reference to the specific crime), white-collar ex-felon (convicted of “illegal trading of stocks”), violent offender, and an ex-felon convicted of a sex crime.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The *t*-score for comparing these two proportions is -1.35, under the critical 1.96 value for rejecting the null hypothesis ( .05, 2-tailed test).

<sup>4</sup> We emphasize that these four items all refer to *ex*-felons (i.e. individuals who have served their entire prison sentence); the earlier results suggest low levels of public support for currently-incarcerated individuals, and this second set of items thus enables us to probe further how variability in the details of ex-felons’ criminal convictions affect individual attitudes.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The *Generic Ex-Felon* item elicits the highest level of support for voting rights, with 80% endorsing enfranchisement. In contrast, reference to any of the specific types of criminal conviction results in lower levels of support, with 63% endorsing the enfranchisement of white-collar ex-felons, and 66% endorsing enfranchisement of ex-felons convicted of a violent offense. The 3% difference in sample proportions for the *White-Collar* and *Violent Crime* items is not statistically significant ( $t$ -score = .69), but the larger differences between these items and the *Generic Ex-Felon* item are significant at the conventional .05 level ( $t$ -scores = 4.18 and 3.48). This suggests that the willingness of Americans to grant voting rights is shaped by whether a policy question is framed abstractly versus by reference to a specific criminal offense. Moreover, particularly high levels of support for the enfranchisement of generic ex-felons (80%) appears to over-estimate support under the more realistic conditions in which political elites or media coverage involves reference to particular types of criminals or criminal offenses. Nevertheless, because levels of support for the enfranchisement of white-collar (63%) and violent crime ex-felons (66%) are very *similar* to the corresponding levels found earlier for probationers (61 and 67%) and parolees (62%), these results provide evidence that a majority of Americans support extending voting rights across a wide variety of criminal statuses and felony convictions.

Of the various types of criminal offenses included among our survey items, the fourth item mentioning a “sex offense” elicits the lowest level of support for the extension of voting

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rights (52%). This contrasts significantly with the higher (66%) level of support for ex-felons convicted of a violent crime ( $t$ -score = 3.13), attesting perhaps to the particularly poor regard or potential threat individuals attribute to sex offenders (Brown 1999; Jenkins 1998). While it would be informative to know whether even greater specificity in the framing or description of sex offenses (or other offenders) might further reduce support for extending the franchise, we note that sex offenders constitute a very small proportion of current prisoners and ex-felons.<sup>5</sup> Taken together, these considerations imply that the main avenue through which political activists or politicians might influence public opinion would be to target a specific category of criminal offender (a point we discuss further in the conclusion).

With six of the eight categories of criminal offenders measured in our question-wording experiments receiving clear majority support for voting rights, an informative further question is whether Americans reason about this issue in a similar or different fashion from issues involving matters of civil liberties. For instance, if we find evidence for comparably high levels of support for the civil liberties of criminal offenders within domains other than voting, this would suggest the existence of a principled form of reasoning behind Americans' attitudes. We investigate this possibility using the survey items whose proportions and standard deviations are presented in Table 5.

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

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<sup>5</sup> In 2001, there were an estimated 386,112 offenders in state sex offender registries, representing 6 percent of the 6.6 million persons under correctional supervision (U.S.D.O.J. 2001; 2002c). In 1994, approximately 234,000 offenders convicted of rape or sexual assault were under correctional supervision, with about 60 percent serving sentences in the community (U.S.D.O.J. 1997).

The first item in this table is the content-neutral or “generic” civil liberties item, and it was asked of the entire sample, whereas the other three items were randomly assigned to approximately one-third of respondents. Civil liberties support is high using the generic item (82%), and the ex-felon item yields a similar figure (85%). Comparing the sample proportions of the ex-felon versus ex-felon/legalization activist items is instructive because the latter further specifies a particular type of criminal offense (“selling drugs”) and the specific content of speech involved (“legalizing drugs”). Given negative views of drug dealers as well as expectations of threats stemming from drug-related activities, the 72 percent endorsement of the pro-civil liberties position on this item provides *prima facie* evidence of Americans’ willingness to extend civil liberties to criminal offenders.

The indistinguishable sample means for the third and fourth items (72%) provide additional evidence that slightly lower levels of civil liberties support are linked to the controversial or threatening aspects of speech rather than to the criminal status of the speaker. This is because while the third item identifies the speaker as an ex-felon convicted of drug dealing, the fourth item makes no reference to the identity of the speaker. Such results indicate that although civil liberties reasoning among the American public is likely to involve some evaluation of the legitimacy or expected effects of speech itself, these processes nevertheless appear to operate amidst a background of substantial support for civil liberties.



### *Multivariate Results*

We conclude our analysis by investigating causal factors affecting the level of public support for voting rights among various types of criminal offenders. For these analyses, we treat the eight voting rights items as dependent variables, using a logistic specification for the analysis.<sup>6</sup> The bulk of our covariates represent such control variables as gender, race, and region. Our primary interest focuses on coefficient estimates for two specific factors: attitudes toward the goals of criminal justice; and civil liberties attitudes (measured using the generic civil liberties item<sup>7</sup>).

[TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

The coefficient estimates for our first set of dependent variables provide evidence that attitudes toward criminal justice are consistently the strongest source of voting rights attitudes. In all four models, the coefficient for the contrast of respondents endorsing punishment versus rehabilitation as the proper goal of incarceration is large and statistically significant. For instance, endorsing punishment over rehabilitation *lowers* by 1.01 the log-odds of support for extending voting rights to prisoners. This represents a very large effect, translating into a predicted .23

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<sup>6</sup> By virtue of the randomized assignment of the two sets of four items to survey respondents, responses to the eight items cannot be summed into a single scale; we thus analyze responses as separate dependent variables.

<sup>7</sup> Because of its content neutrality with respect to criminal offenders (as well as its availability throughout the entire sample), we treat the generic civil liberties item as our indicator of civil rights support in the regression analyses. Further analysis (available upon request) using the three alternative civil liberties items from Table 5 yield results that are consistent with those presented below.

*decrease* in the probability of extending voting rights (assuming for purposes of calculation a baseline probability of .50).

Coefficient estimates for the effect of civil liberties are positively-signed in three of the four models, indicating that higher civil liberties support is associated with support for enfranchising criminal offenders (the fourth item that refers to prisoners has a negatively-signed coefficient). However, only one coefficient is statistically significant (for the parolee item) at the conventional .05 level. In general, the relatively small sample size resulting from the experimental design yields large standard errors, and when combined with the limitations of using a single indicator for a complicated latent variable (or variables), it is appropriate to exercise some caution in inferring that non-significant coefficients provide conclusive evidence against the existence of real effects. For example, despite much stronger African American support relative to non-minorities for the first probation item, we cannot detect statistically significant race differences because very few African Americans were in the sample.<sup>8</sup>

With this caveat in mind, we note that the remaining coefficient estimates rarely attain statistical significance, providing no evidence for strong group-based or demographic sources of attitudes toward voting rights for criminal offenders. Race and education each significantly affect attitudes in two of the four cases, with African Americans being more supportive of voting rights for criminal offenders in comparison to non-minorities and higher levels of education disposing individuals toward *lower* levels of support. The result for race is consistent with the assumption that the disproportionate risk of imprisonment and conviction among African Americans leads to

a greater willingness to support the rights of criminal offenders. However, the negative sign of the two education coefficients is perhaps surprising given the well-known status of education as a source of support for civil rights and liberties (see e.g. Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997). Given that bivariate estimates of the interrelationship of education with the *probationer<sub>2</sub>* and *prisoner* items are also negatively signed (-.14 and -.18), it is possible that our measure is also picking up status or class-related processes. Socially or economically advantaged individuals (in comparison to others) may be disposed to endorse lower levels of voting rights support among criminals because of an underlying perception of their potential threat to existing policies or to the status quo.

Coefficient estimates for the logistic regression models of attitudes toward voting rights for the second set of criminal offender items are presented in Table 7. Attitudes toward criminal justice have a sizable effect on voting rights support in two cases. Predicted effects of civil liberties attitudes are in the expected direction, with the coefficient estimates attaining statistical significance only for the *Generic ex-felon* item. Education has a significant impact only on responses for the sex crime item, and while African Americans are predicted as being more supportive of enfranchising ex-felons than non-minorities, the relevant coefficient is significant in only one of the four models.

[TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE]

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<sup>8</sup> Note that the particularly large coefficient and standard error for African Americans on the *probationer<sub>2</sub>* item (7.20

## DISCUSSION

Our assessment of public attitudes regarding the current practice of felon disenfranchisement in the United States leads to novel conclusions. Stripping citizens who receive a felony conviction of the right to vote is likely to be viewed by many as a harsh penalty in a democratic society characterized by universal suffrage. Indeed, taking away the right to vote for life is analogous, some commentators have suggested (Ewald 2002), to the medieval practice of “civil death,” where severe violations of the social contract led to complete loss of citizenship rights. In sharp contrast, modern conceptions of civil liberties suggest a strong normative basis for protecting the right to vote for all citizens, except in extreme cases.

However, before the new data reported in this study, both a “civil death” and a “civil rights” view could be thought to have support among the mass public. Approval of harsh criminal justice penalties, and opposition to the perceived coddling of criminals, could suggest support for a temporary or even more extreme version of the civil death scenario as a penalty to be imposed on offenders. Alternatively, growing support for civil liberties might lead us to anticipate a broad willingness to allow criminals the right to vote. Contemporary conflicts over voting rights among criminal offenders thus raise a fundamental question about the extent to which citizens prioritize an expansive view of civil liberties and political rights versus a desire to impose harsh penalties and constitutional restrictions on criminals.

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and 15.60) is a product of all black respondents endorsing enfranchisement. Dropping the dummy variable for African Americans from the model yields nearly identical results for all other estimates.

This paper has presented the first systematic survey data bearing directly on these issues. Our main findings suggest that the civil liberties view trumps support for civil death with regard to the political rights of criminal offenders. For all categories of felons who are not currently in prison, relatively large majorities (between 80% in the case of generic *ex-felons* and 52% in the case of former sex offenders) favor enfranchisement. We also find evidence that between 60 and 68% of the public believes that felony probationers, who make up a full quarter of the disfranchised felon population, should have their voting rights restored, while 60% support voting rights for felony parolees (who have been released from prison), and 66% support voting rights for even ex-felons convicted of a violent crime who have served their entire sentence. The latter is particularly relevant to recent policy debates, suggesting that conservative arguments that violent offenders should lose all rights find little endorsement among the American public.

The principled willingness of Americans to support the enfranchisement of ex-felons gains further support from our analysis of civil liberties attitudes. While it is well known that Americans have become, over time, more willing to enable the civil liberties of such generally disliked groups as Communists and atheists. Nevertheless, towards criminal offenders have been up to this point unclear. We find that support for freedom of speech for ex-felons (as a core dimension of civil liberties) is supported at comparably high (85%) levels to those found for the well-known atheist speech item (82%). Our results suggest that generally negative attitudes toward criminal offenders do not preclude a relatively strong disposition to extend civil liberties such as the freedom of speech.

Our question-wording experiments do suggest some limiting conditions on public willingness to extend voting rights. That only 52% of the public supports such rights for ex-felons convicted of a sex offense is notable in comparison to higher figures for other offenses, and less than a third support the enfranchisement of current prisoners. Although sex offenders comprise a small proportion of ex-felons, it appears that support for “civil death” is significantly higher with regard to this group.

When, how, and to what extent policy change is informed by public opinion is a widely debated question among scholars (cf. Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Manza, Cook, and Page 2002; Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, chaps. 8-9). Public opinion can of course only influence policy debates when it is knowable; on most issues before Congress, for example, little or no survey data about public preferences exist (Burstein, Bauldry, and Forese 2001). In the case of felon disfranchisement, the results presented here suggest an important degree of coherence and appear to be particularly timely with respect to the formation of future policies regarding the franchise. In the clash between two competing imperatives – a desire to punish and deter crime versus a desire to promote and protect the civil liberties of even unpopular groups – we find evidence that the latter has greater public support.

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**APPENDIX TABLE 1: State Bans on Voting by Category (as of 12/31/2001).**

State	Prisoners	Parolees	Felony Probation	Jail Inmates	Ex Felons
Alabama	X	X	X	X	X
Alaska	X	X	X	X	
Arizona	X	X	X	X	X <sup>a</sup>
Arkansas	X	X	X		
California	X	X		X	
Colorado	X	X		X	
Connecticut	X	X	X		
Delaware	X	X	X		X <sup>b</sup>
Dist. Col	X			X	
Florida	X	X	X	X	X
Georgia	X	X	X	X	
Hawaii	X				
Idaho	X	X	X	X	
Illinois	X			X	
Indiana	X			X	
Iowa	X	X	X	X	X
Kansas	X	X		X	
Kentucky	X	X	X	X	X
Louisiana	X			X	
Maine					
Maryland	X	X	X	X	X <sup>a</sup>
Massachusetts	X				
Michigan	X			X	
Minnesota	X	X	X	X	
Mississippi	X	X	X	X	X
Missouri	X	X	X	X	
Montana	X			X	
Nebraska	X	X	X	X	
Nevada	X	X	X	X	X
New Hampshire	X			X	
New Jersey	X	X	X	X	
New Mexico	X	X	X	X	
New York	X	X		X	
No. Carolina	X	X	X	X	
North Dakota	X			X	
Ohio	X			X	
Oklahoma	X	X	X	X	
Oregon	X			X	
Pennsylvania	X				
Rhode Island	X	X	X		
South Carolina	X	X	X	X	
South Dakota	X			X	
Tennessee	X	X	X	X	X <sup>c</sup>
Texas	X	X	X	X	
Utah	X	X			
Vermont					
Virginia	X	X	X	X	X
Washington	X	X	X	X	X <sup>d</sup>
West Virginia	X	X	X	X	
Wisconsin	X	X	X	X	
Wyoming	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>a</sup> Recidivists lose voting rights. <sup>b</sup> Five year waiting period. <sup>c</sup> Ex-felons convicted prior to 1986 are disfranchised. <sup>d</sup> Ex-felons convicted prior to 1984 are disfranchised.

**Table 1. Prisoner Voting Rights Around the World**

**Europe:**

<i>No Ban</i>	<i>Specific Ban</i>	<i>Complete Ban</i>
Bosnia	Austria	Armenia
Croatia	Belgium	Bulgaria
Cyprus	France	Czech Republic
Denmark	Germany	Estonia
Iceland	Italy	Hungary
Ireland	Malta	Luxembourg
Finland	Norway	Romania
Greece	San Marino	Russia
Latvia		United Kingdom
Lithuania		
Macedonia		
Netherlands		
Poland		
Slovenia		
Spain		
Sweden		
Switzerland		
Ukraine		

**Elsewhere:**

<i>No Ban</i>	<i>Specific Ban</i>	<i>Complete Ban</i>
South Africa	Australia	
	Canada	
	New Zealand	



**Table 2: Variables in the Analysis<sup>a</sup>**

Items	Question Wording (coding)
<b>Dependent Variables:</b>	
<i>Enfranchisement of Probationers<sub>1</sub></i>	There has been some discussion recently about the right to vote in this country. Some feel that people convicted of a crime who are sentenced to probation and are living in the community should have the right to vote. Others feel that they should not have the right to vote. What about you? Do you think people on probation should have the right to vote? Or haven't you thought much about this? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Enfranchisement of Probationers<sub>2</sub></i>	There has been some discussion recently about the right to vote in this country. Some feel that people convicted of a crime who are sentenced to probation, but not prison, and are living in the community should have the right to vote. Others feel that they should not have the right to vote. What about you? Do you think people on probation should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Parolee</i>	There has been some discussion recently about the right to vote in this country. Some feel that people convicted of a crime who have been released from prison on parole and are living in the community should have the right to vote. Others feel that they should not have the right to vote. What about you? Do you think people on parole should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Prisoner</i>	There has been some discussion recently about the right to vote in this country. Some feel that people convicted of a crime who are in prison should have the right to vote. Others feel that they should not have the right to vote. What about you? Do you think people in prison should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Generic Ex-Felon</i>	Now how about people convicted of a crime who have served their entire sentence, and are now living in the community. Do you think they should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>White-Collar Ex-Felon</i>	Now how about people convicted of the illegal trading of stocks, who have served their entire sentence, and are now living in at the community. Do you think they should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Violent Crime Ex-Felon</i>	Now how about people convicted of a violent crime, who have served their entire sentence, and are now living in the community. Do you think they should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Sex Crime Ex-Felon</i>	Now how about people convicted of a sex offense, who have served their entire sentence, and are now living in the community. Do you think they should have the right to vote? (0. no; 1. yes)
<b>Independent Variables:</b>	
<i>Attitudes toward Criminal Justice</i>	Once people who commit crimes are in prison, which one of the following goals Do you think should be the most important goal of prison? Rehabilitation of criminals so they do not commit future crimes; punishment for their crime; deter them from and others from committing similar crimes? (categorical: reference = rehabilitation)
<i>Generic Civil Liberties</i>	There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad more dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your city or town against churches and religion, should that person be allowed to speak or not? (0. no; 1. yes)

**Table 2... (continued)**

Items	Question Wording (coding)
<b>Independent Variables (continued):</b>	
<i>Ex-Felon</i> <i>Civil Liberties</i>	How about someone who served a prison sentence, and is now living in the community. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your city or town against prisons, should that person be allowed to speak or not? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Ex-Felon/</i> <i>Legalization Activist</i> <i>Civil Liberties</i>	How about somebody who served a prison sentence for selling drugs and is now living in the community. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your city or town in favor of legalizing drugs, should that person be allowed to speak or not? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>Legalization Activist</i> <i>Civil Liberties</i>	How about somebody who wanted to make a speech in your city or town in favor of legalizing drugs. Should that person be allowed to speak or not? (0. no; 1. yes)
<i>African American</i> <i>Other Minority</i>	(categorical: non-minority = reference)
<i>City</i> <i>Suburb</i>	(categorical: rural = reference)
<i>Northeast</i> <i>South</i> <i>West</i>	(categorical: categorical: Midwest = reference)
<i>Female</i>	(categorical: male = reference)
<i>Age</i>	(continuous: years)
<i>Education</i>	(continuous: years)
<i>Ideological</i> <i>Identification</i>	How would you describe your own political philosophy-conservative, moderate, or liberal? [if conservative] would that be strongly conservative or slightly conservative? [if liberal] would that be strongly liberal or slightly liberal? (continuous: 1. strongly conservative; 2. slightly conservative; 3. moderate; 4. slightly liberal; 5. strongly liberal)

a. Data are from the HarrisInteractive Omnibus Telephone Poll, July 2002.

**Table 3: Average Level of Support<sup>a</sup> for Enfranchisement of Probationers, Parolees, and Prisoners, 2002**

<i>Probationers<sub>1</sub></i> (N = 185)	<i>Probationers<sub>2</sub></i> (N = 209)	<i>Parolee</i> (N = 222)	<i>Prisoner</i> (N = 214)
.60 (.49)	.68 (.47)	.60 (.49)	.31 (.46)

a. Numbers in columns are sample means (standard deviations in parentheses); responses reflect random assignment of items to approximately one-quarter of the total sample.

**Table 4: Average Level of Support<sup>a</sup> for Enfranchisement of Generic and Specific Categories of Ex-Felons, 2002**

<i>Generic</i> (N = 232)	<i>White-Collar</i> (N = 239)	<i>Violent Crime</i> (N = 247)	<i>Sex Crime</i> (N = 234)
.80 (.40)	.63 (.4)	.66 (.48)	.52 (.50)

a. Numbers in columns are sample means (standard deviations in parentheses); responses reflect random assignment of items to approximately one-quarter of the total sample.

**Table 5: Average Level of Support<sup>a</sup> for Generic Civil Liberties, and Civil Liberties for Ex-Felons and/or Controversial Speech, 2002**

<i>Generic</i> (N = 990)	<i>Ex-Felon</i> (N = 336)	<i>Ex-Felon/ Legalization Activist</i> (N = 329)	<i>Legalization Activist</i> (N = 329)
.82 (.39)	.85 (.36)	.72 (.45)	.72 (.45)

a. Numbers in columns are sample means (standard deviations in parentheses); the generic civil liberties item was asked of all respondents and the targeted civil liberties items were randomly-assigned to approximately one-third of the total sample.

**Table 6: Logistic Regression Models of Attitudes toward Enfranchisement of Probationers, Parolees, and Prisoners, 2002**

Independent Variables	<i>Probationers<sub>1</sub></i> (N = 202)	<i>Probationers<sub>2</sub></i> (N = 174)	<i>Parolee</i> (N = 211)	<i>Prisoner</i> (N = 208)
<i>Constant</i> .....	.36 (.13)	3.40 (1.42)	.47 (1.20)	1.30 (1.18)
<i>Attitudes toward Criminal Justice</i> (reference = Rehabilitation)				
<i>Punishment</i> .....	-1.20 (.50)	-2.08 (.53)	-1.17 (.39)	-1.01 (.45)
<i>Deterrence</i> .....	-.73 (.41)	-1.15 (.46)	-1.16 (.38)	-.05 (.4)
<i>Generic Civil Liberties</i> .....	.66 (.52)	.90 (.51)	1.00 (.43)	-.46 (.4)
<i>Race</i> (reference = ~ non-minority)				
<i>African American</i> .....	1.23 (.77)	7.20 (15.91)	2.11 (.83)	1.61 (.57)
<i>Other Minority</i> .....	2.12 (1.14)	1.28 (.91)	1.20 (.63)	.42 (.62)
<i>Residence</i> (reference = rural)				
<i>City</i> .....	-.14 (.53)	.42 (.69)	-.47 (.46)	-.06 (.51)
<i>Suburb</i> .....	-.50 (.48)	.19 (.51)	-.11 (.41)	-.16 (.47)
<i>Region</i> (reference = ~ Midwest)				
<i>Northeast</i> .....	.19 (.52)	1.10 (.70)	.16 (.46)	1.10 (.55)
<i>South</i> .....	.29 (.50)			.14 (.53)
<i>West</i> .....	-.60 (.53)	-.14 (.49)	-.18 (.47)	.98 (.50)
		-1.41 (.55)	-.59 (.56)	
<i>Female</i> .....	.56 (.37)	-1.19 (.40)	-.17 (.32)	-.01 (.35)
<i>Age</i> .....	-.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.09 (.09)
<i>Education</i> .....	-.01 (.07)	-.27 (.09)	-.04 (.06)	-.14 (.06)
<i>Ideological Identification</i> .....	.23 (.17)	.52 (.18)	.27 (.14)	.23 (.17)

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-2 Log-Likelihood (d.f.)	197.72 (159)	180.07 (187)	244.75 (196)	220.90 (193)
% correctly predicted	72.4	78.2	69.7	75.5

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**Table 7: Logistic Regression Models of Attitudes toward Enfranchisement of Various Categories of Ex-Felons, 2002**

Independent Variables	<i>Generic</i> (N = 179)	<i>Violent</i> (N = 191)	<i>White Collar</i> (N = 189)	<i>Sex Crime</i> (N = 179)
<i>Constant</i> .....	.04 (.52)	.77 (1.17)	1.33 (1.24)	-1.48 (1.19)
<i>Attitudes toward Criminal Justice</i> (reference = Rehabilitation)				
<i>Punishment</i> .....	-.60 (.49)	-1.01 (.42)	1.12 (.44)	.21 (.41)
<i>Deterrence</i> .....	-.12 (.52)	-.57 (.43)	-.51 (.38)	-.41 (.38)
<i>Generic Civil Liberties</i> .....	1.07 (.45)	.81 (.51)	.19 (.44)	.73 (.45)
<i>Race</i> (reference = ~ non-minority)				
<i>African American</i> .....	1.37 (1.13)	.41 (.68)	2.20 (1.1)	.40 (.66)
<i>Other Minority</i> .....	.33 (.90)	-.13 (.95)	.30 (.63)	.25 (.63)
<i>Residence</i> (reference = rural)				
<i>City</i> .....	1.14 (.62)	-.43 (.51)	.54 (.49)	.12 (.49)
<i>Suburb</i> .....	.52 (.45)	-.44 (.45)	.95 (.42)	-.02 (.43)
<i>Region</i> (reference = ~ Midwest)				
<i>Northeast</i> .....	-.24 (.70)	.01 (.52)	-.08 (.41)	.46 (.46)
<i>South</i> .....		-1.22 (.47)	.21 (.47)	-.17 (.41)
<i>West</i> .....	-.41 (.54)	-.57 (.54)		-.03 (.45)
<i>Female</i> .....	.30 (.4)	-.99 (.36)	.25 (.34)	-.29 (.33)
<i>Age</i> .....	<-.01 (.01)	<-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	<.01 (.07)
<i>Education</i> .....	<.01 (.08)	.04 (.07)	-.04 (.07)	.32 (.07)
<i>Ideological Identification</i> .....	.12 (.20)	.22 (.16)	.07 (.16)	.32 (.15)



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-2 Log-Likelihood (d.f.)	166.16 (164	219.36 (176	219.90 (174	233.58 (164
% correctly predicted	78.8 )	)	)	)
		63.9	66.9	62.0

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**Figure 1. Estimated Distribution of Legally Disfranchised Felons in the United States, 2000**

