

March 17, 2022

*Release is effective immediately*

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**Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll: Majority of Iowans Who Have Heard of It Support Teaching Critical Race Theory in Schools**

According to a recent Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll, a majority of Iowans who have heard of critical race theory (CRT) support teaching it in schools. The online poll, designed by University of Iowa faculty and students as a research project, surveyed 883 voting-age Iowans between Feb. 10 and Feb. 25, 2022.

Respondents were initially asked how much they heard of CRT: 21.5% reported that they had a lot, 47.5% had heard a little, 23.9% had heard nothing at all, and 7.1% did not know or declined to respond. Those who had heard “a lot” or “a little” were then asked additional questions about CRT. Among that knew at least a little about CRT, 35.3% definitely support students learning CRT in school, 19.1% slightly support it, 7.8% slightly oppose it, and 24.1% definitely oppose it.

Broadly speaking, CRT arose decades ago as a legal theory that argues that government, business, and social institutions in the United States produce different outcomes for people of different races, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

For those who have heard or read about CRT, differences emerged based on demographics such as political identity, religion, and age. Those who identify as liberal were more likely to support teaching CRT in school than those who identify as conservative: 87.1% of liberal respondents support teaching CRT compared to only 27.5% of conservatives and 54.3% of those who identify as in-between these two ideologies. There were also differences among those who are religious compared to those who are not. Those who stated that religion provides a great deal of guidance in their lives are more likely to oppose teaching CRT in school than those who stated that religion is not an important aspect of their life (48.3% opposition compared to 24.8%). Additionally, respondents are more likely to oppose learning CRT as they increase in age: 71.0% of those aged 18-34 support teaching CRT compared to 54.3% of those aged 35-54; 44.1% of those aged 55-69, and 40.6% of those ages 70 and older. However, those aged 55-69 were the most likely to strongly oppose teaching CRT, with 32.3% stating strong opposition.

Respondents have heard about CRT were asked about various information sources where they might have heard about it. One-third (33.3%) of Iowans who were surveyed heard about CRT on social media, 29.3% heard about it from friends or family, and 21.5% heard about it from their community. Most Iowans heard more about CRT from national news outlets, 51.4%, compared to 24.1% from Iowa news sources, and 39.2% having heard from local news sources.

When analyzing knowledge of CRT, very few differences were found when among various demographics. Liberals, conservatives, and those in between were all equally likely to have knowledge of CRT, with about 29.0% of each group stating that they had heard about CRT.

Additionally, all age groups were about equally likely to have previously heard about CRT: 27.6% of those aged 18-34; 30.5% of those aged 35-54; 31.7% of those aged 55-69; and 26.4% of those aged 70 and older. There were also no notable differences when analyzing by community: 28.8% of those living in a rural area had heard of CRT compared to 29.3% of those living in an urban area and 30.3% of those living in a suburban area.

Regardless of their awareness of CRT, all 883 respondents were asked whether they supported teaching various concepts related to CRT in schools. A majority of survey respondents supported various race-related topics: 92.0% of respondents supported teaching the history of slavery and its impacts in the United States; 86.9% supported teaching the history of racism and its impacts in the U.S.; 67.2% supported teaching that racism is embedded in American institutions; and 56.4% supported teaching that American institutions favor white Americans.

**Respondent identification:** The Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISRC) contracted with a respected web panel vendor to field the survey to a demographically representative sample of up to 900 respondents. Respondents invited to complete the web survey were Iowa adults, aged 18-120 years, recruited for participation via web panel. To obtain a census-representative sample, quotas were set on the following demographics: sex, age, and urbanicity.

**Sample:** 883 voting-age residents in Iowa, margin of error +/-3.4%. Margin of error among 602 respondents who had “a lot” or “a little” about critical race theory is +/-4.1%.

**Weighting:** Reported results are weighted by age, sex, and party identification.

#### **About the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab**

The poll was designed by the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, comprised of University of Iowa faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab is co-directed by Frederick J. Boehmke, professor of political science and Kajsa Dalrymple, professor of journalism and mass communication. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, and was implemented in collaboration with the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke. The University of Iowa Public Policy Center provided support for this poll as part of its student success mission, intended to expand experiential policy-relevant research for UI students.

Marissa Good, Sahithi Shankaihgari, and Caleb Slater, research fellows for the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, assisted with the preparation of this release.

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