

**CLEMENCY AND PUBLIC OPINION:
A SURVEY OF MISSOURI VOTERS**

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ABSTRACT

Executive clemency presents a law and policy puzzle. The executive power to grant clemency is quite broad and unregulated; historically, it was frequently exercised. Although discretion remains powerful, the use of clemency has declined dramatically in practice. One common and well-supported explanation might be that the exercise of mercy in criminal cases began to be seen as politically infeasible, given strong public support for incarceration. While that might explain the decline in clemency from the 1970s through the 1990s, in the past two decades, public-opinion polling in the United States suggests a steady decline in support for harsh sentencing, death sentencing, and overuse of incarceration. Today, large majorities support the use of clemency, at least when used in sound ways, to address overly harsh or erroneous results. Alternative explanations include that, with politics polarized, views on clemency may be partisan. It may also be that public support changes when people consider the facts of a specific case, rather than considering the exercise of clemency in general.

This Commentary presents the findings from a public-opinion survey assessing attitudes toward executive clemency. We sought to test these questions regarding public support for clemency in the context of a high-

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profile recent clemency decision in Missouri, the capital case of Lance Shockley. A sample of 440 participants was weighted to be representative of registered voters in Missouri in terms of age, sex, race, and political affiliation. Participants were presented with a summary of the case facts in the Lance Shockley case, drawn from the description provided by the Missouri Supreme Court. At that time, the Governor had not yet decided whether to grant clemency or not (the Governor ultimately declined to do so). We asked participants whether the Governor should commute Shockley's death sentence to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. After reviewing the details of the case, 65 percent of Missouri voters indicated that the Governor should grant clemency, with an additional 15 percent undecided and seeking more information. Only 19 percent opposed clemency. This support was bipartisan, with a majority of voters across political affiliations—Democrat, Republican, and Independent—expressing support for clemency. Public support for clemency also cut across ideological lines on the death penalty.

The results demonstrate that a clear majority of voters, across partisan divides, supports clemency in a particular, and quite high-profile, case. This finding suggests that attitudes towards and support for clemency are not driven solely by partisan leanings but reflect broader public attitudes about fairness and finality. Attitudes appeared to reflect doubts about the conclusiveness of the evidence, concerns about procedural irregularities (such as the imposition of a death sentence by a judge without unanimous jury agreement), and recognition of the person's rehabilitative efforts while incarcerated. Even among those undecided, the dominant theme was a desire for additional information to make a more confident judgment, rather than outright rejection of clemency.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the public, even in the context of a high-profile case, is receptive to clemency when there are lingering doubts, legal ambiguities, or evidence of meaningful rehabilitation. These findings may be relevant to policymakers and elected officials tasked with making clemency decisions, as they indicate that serious consideration is warranted—particularly when the decision aligns with values of justice, proportionality, and second chances. These findings further suggest a sizable disconnect between the current diminished executive practice of clemency and the broad public appetite for a far more robust exercise of executive clemency.

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INTRODUCTION

The discretionary power of executive clemency, vested in the President, governors, and pardon boards to grant pardons, commutations, and reprieves to persons convicted of crimes, has never been more high-profile or fraught.¹ Indeed, the state of executive clemency in the United States presents both a law and policy puzzle.² Executive power to grant clemency

1. Clemency is the general term for the exercise of executive discretion to grant relief from criminal punishment, which includes pardons, which entirely extinguish responsibility for criminal conduct; commutations, which reduce a sentence; and reprieves, which temporarily suspend or defer the exercise of punishment. For descriptions, see, for example, *Ex parte Garland*, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 333, 379–80 (1867) (describing pardons); *Schick v. Reed*, 419 U.S. 256, 264 (1974) (describing commutations). For an overview of the English roots of the power, see, for example, Stanley Grupp, *Some Historical Aspects of the Pardon in England*, 7 AM. J. LEGAL HIST. 51, 52–55 (1963).

2. For work examining concerns with partisan use of the clemency power, dating back to the earliest presidential administrations, see generally Bradley D. Hays, *The Politics of Clemency in the Early American Presidency: Power Inherited, Power Refashioned*, 34 J. POL'Y HIST. 91 (2022). For studies over use during the twentieth century, see generally, for example, Andrew B. Whitford & Holona L. Ochs, *The Political Roots of Executive Clemency*, 34 AM. POL. RSCH. 825 (2006). For an overview of the political science literature, see generally, for example, P.S. Ruckman Jr., *The Study of Mercy*:

remains quite broad. The Supreme Court has called it not just a matter of mercy alone, but rather the “‘fail safe’ in our criminal justice system.”³ Yet the use of the clemency power has experienced a historic decline in practice.⁴ This cannot be due to a lack of candidates for mercy during a time of historically lengthy sentences and high incarceration rates in the United States.⁵ Nor can it be due to the successful use of judicial review to challenge convictions and sentences, given the pronounced trend towards limiting post-conviction relief in the courts.⁶

The most common explanation in the literature for the decline in the use of clemency by executives is that broader exercise of mercy in criminal cases is politically unpopular, given strong public support for retribution and incarceration. While there is evidence that executives have long been affected by public opinion when deciding whether to grant clemency, and public opinion may very well explain the decline in use of clemency in the 1970s through the 1990s,⁷ more recent public-opinion polling in the United States suggests a steady decline in support for harsh sentencing, death sentencing, and overuse of incarceration.⁸ We have far less evidence concerning clemency, but a handful of recent polls suggest that large majorities support the use of clemency, at least when used in sound ways, to address overly harsh or erroneous results.⁹ Today, there is evidence that large numbers of people support executive grants of mercy to individuals, including those serving sentences for non-violent offenses, those serving

What Political Scientists Know (and Don't Know) About the Pardon Power, 9 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 783 (2012).

3. *Herrera v. Collins*, 506 U.S. 390, 415 (1993).

4. For data regarding federal clemency, see *Clemency Statistics*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. (Jan. 23, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/clemency-statistics> [<https://perma.cc/D3LU-R86K>]; regarding state clemency, see generally, for example, Cara H. Drinan, *Clemency in a Time of Crisis*, 28 GA. ST. U. L. REV. 1123 (2012). For data on state-level clemency, see *50-State Comparison: Pardon Policy & Practice*, RESTORATION OF RTS. PROJECT (July 2025), <https://ccresourcecenter.org/state-restoration-profiles/50-state-comparisoncharacteristics-of-pardon-authorities-2/> [<https://perma.cc/4ZK6-CSVF>].

5. Derek Mueller, *Prisons Report Series, Preliminary Data Release, 2023*, BUREAU OF JUST. STAT. (Dec. 2024), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/preliminary-data-release-prisons-2023> [<https://perma.cc/FW9D-H6CX>].

6. See, e.g., Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d).

7. For a discussion on how public opinion influences clemency, see CTR. FOR POL'Y RSCH., NAT'L GOVERNORS' ASS'N, *GUIDE TO EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY AMONG THE AMERICAN STATES* 1 (1988), <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/guide-executive-clemency-among-american-states> [<https://perma.cc/7EFS-BGGS>].

8. For an overview, see generally Brandon L. Garrett, *Unified Criminal Justice Reform*, 85 LAW & CONTEMP. PROBS., no. 3, 2022, at 123 (describing public opinion and common ground on a range of criminal justice reforms).

9. See, e.g., DANNY FRANKLIN & JESSICA REIS, BULLY PULPIT INTERACTIVE, *MAJORITY SUPPORTS CLEMENCY TO ADDRESS UNFAIR SENTENCING* (2022), <https://www.aclu.org/documents/majority-supports-clemency-address-unfair-sentencing> [<https://perma.cc/AB74-986C>] (describing over two-thirds of those surveyed supporting clemency in cases where laws or sentencing guidelines changed, for excessive sentences, and for persons not posing a threat to the community).

outdated sentences, and those who claim innocence.¹⁰ Clemency practices may slowly be adjusting; for example, President Joseph Biden granted a record 4,245 acts of clemency.¹¹ And, to be sure, support for clemency is not unqualified, as members of the public have expressed particular concerns about the potential for political or partisan uses of the clemency power.¹²

So, have executive actors become out of touch with public opinion, or are there other explanations for the persistence of the decline in the use of clemency? One alternative explanation is that with growing partisan divides, executive actors may be appealing to a narrower base, which may itself have stronger views than the public as a whole regarding the appropriateness of clemency.¹³ Clemency may have become more partisan if public opinion has become more partisan. Another explanation is that support for clemency is different when people are presented with the facts of a particular case, rather than the case for using clemency in general.¹⁴ It is possible that, in particular cases, executives are justified in fearing public disapproval due to concerns for community safety; conversely, it is also possible that executives have far less to fear than they might suppose. Apart from public opinion surveys, however, there is no empirical work on

10. *Id.* (describing support for clemency “for people serving time for crimes that are no longer considered illegal under the current law” and those “serving time for selling marijuana”); *see also infra* Section I.C.

11. *See* John Gramlich, *Biden Granted More Acts of Clemency than Any Prior President*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (Feb. 7, 2025), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/02/07/biden-granted-more-acts-of-clemency-than-any-prior-president/> [<https://perma.cc/A5PL-W4BR>].

12. *See* MONMOUTH UNIV. POLLING INST., FEW APPROVE OF HUNTER BIDEN PARDON 1 (2024), https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_us_121124/ [<https://perma.cc/BM2A-KXPJ>] (describing public disapproval of Hunter Biden pardon by President Joseph Biden and potential pardons of January 6 rioters and associates of President Donald Trump during his first term). For an article examining the use of clemency to cement political corruption, *see* Lee Kovarsky, *Patronage Pardons*, 76 DUKE L.J. (forthcoming 2026) (manuscript at 19–38), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5376034 [<https://perma.cc/7ARN-P9BU>]; *see also* Mark Osler, *The Trump Clemencies: Celebrities, Chaos, and Lost Opportunity*, 31 WM. & MARY BILL RTS. J. 487, 487, 507–16 (2022).

13. *See generally, e.g.*, JAMES E. CAMPBELL, *POLARIZED: MAKING SENSE OF A DIVIDED AMERICA* (2016) (describing evidence of increasing polarization, over decades, in the United States); Simon A. Levin, Helen V. Milner & Charles Perrings, *The Dynamics of Political Polarization*, 118 PNAS, issue no. 50, Dec. 2021, art. no. e2116950118, at 1 (providing an overview of the special issue’s research regarding polarization in the United States).

14. Peter M. Steiner, Christiane Atzmüller & Dan Su, *Designing Valid and Reliable Vignette Experiments for Survey Research: A Case Study on the Fair Gender Income Gap*, 7 J. METHODS & MEASUREMENT SOC. SCI. 52, 53 (2016) (describing advantages of vignette studies, including that “since vignettes are multivalent representations of subjects or situations, the corresponding questions are embedded in a concrete, realistic context”).

attitudes towards clemency in the context of particular cases, as opposed to the general use of clemency.¹⁵

Given how attitudes towards clemency may be case-specific, and given how partisanship and other attitudes may have changed in recent years, we sought to examine how American adults view clemency decisions in the capital case of Lance Shockley, which was at the time pending before the Governor of Missouri (the Governor has since rejected the request for clemency).¹⁶ A sample of 440 participants was weighted to be representative of registered voters in Missouri by age, sex, race, and political affiliation.¹⁷ Using a vignette-based approach, participants were presented with a summary of the case facts, drawn from the Missouri Supreme Court, and asked whether the Governor should commute Shockley's death sentence to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.¹⁸

The results raise questions about the common explanations for the decline in executive clemency use and suggest alternative approaches and future research directions. As we describe, after reviewing the details of the case vignette, a nearly two-thirds majority of participants expressed support for clemency: 65 percent of Missouri voters indicated that the Governor should grant clemency, with an additional 15 percent undecided and seeking more information.¹⁹ Only 19 percent opposed clemency outright.²⁰ This support was bipartisan, with a majority of voters across political affiliations—Democrat, Republican, and Independent—expressing support for clemency in this case.²¹ Public support for clemency also cut across ideological lines on the death penalty: Sixty-three percent of those who

15. There have been studies examining general support for “second chance” relief for sentences, in addition to clemency. *See generally* Colleen M. Berryessa, *A Tale of “Second Chances”: An Experimental Examination of Popular Support for Early Release Mechanisms That Reconsider Long-Term Prison Sentences*, 18 J. EXPERIMENTAL CRIMINOLOGY 783 (2021) (providing a broad overview of “second chance” relief).

16. *See* Steph Quinn, *Advocates for a Man Sentenced to Death by a Missouri Judge Ask Governor for Clemency*, MO. INDEP. (Oct. 10, 2025, at 10:11 CT), <https://missouriindependent.com/2025/10/10/advocates-for-a-man-sentenced-to-death-by-a-missouri-judge-ask-governor-for-clemency/> [<https://perma.cc/UCZ4-BKKJ>]. Regarding the denial of the request for clemency, *see* Press Release, Mike Kehoe, Governor, State of Missouri, Governor Kehoe Denies Clemency Request of Mr. Lance Shockley (Oct. 13, 2025), <https://governor.mo.gov/press-releases/archive/governor-kehoe-denies-clemency-request-mr-lance-shockley> [<https://perma.cc/VDB9-UHA8>].

17. *See infra* Section II.B.

18. *See infra* Section II.C. These survey results were presented to the Missouri Governor's Office when clemency was being considered. *See* Editorial, *Gov. Kehoe, There Are Too Many Questions to Execute Lance Shockley Now*, KAN. CITY STAR (Oct. 8, 2025, at 13:58 CT), <https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/editorials/article312428824.html> [<https://perma.cc/CU5B-XKS5>] (describing the results presented to the Governor of “a public opinion survey of 440 registered voters in Missouri that found overwhelming and bipartisan support to grant clemency to Shockley”).

19. *See infra* Section II.C.

20. *See infra* Section II.C.

21. *See infra* Section II.C.

somewhat support the death penalty and 23 percent of strong supporters believe clemency should be granted in this case, with many others unsure.²²

Among those who supported clemency, many cited doubts about the strength of the evidence, concerns about the fairness of the judicial process, and Shockley's positive conduct and transformation while incarcerated. Even among the undecided participants, the most commonly requested information involved clarifying the evidence, understanding the judge's rationale for imposing the death sentence despite a non-unanimous jury, and providing further details about Shockley's behavior in prison.²³ Participants who opposed clemency most often did so based on the belief that the death penalty is appropriate in cases involving the murder of a law enforcement officer or because they did not believe in Shockley's innocence.²⁴

Overall, the findings indicate that voters—when given factual context in a vignette-based survey—tend to support clemency, reflecting both substantive concerns about the case and a broader openness to reconsidering death sentences in exceptional circumstances. Neither partisan divides nor demographics fully explain their positions; instead, the strongest predictors of support for clemency in the Shockley case were views on the importance of mercy and attitudes toward the death penalty. These mercy-oriented views, therefore, explained opinions about the specific case and were common across political affiliations and demographics among Missouri adults in this sample. These findings suggest that, rather than public opinion continuing to explain patterns in executive clemency, executives may, if they broadly respond to their constituents over time, be more likely to return to broader clemency-granting practices.

We then discuss the implications of these findings for future research regarding clemency in the United States. These findings suggest that while public-opinion surveys regarding clemency in general are informative, attitudes in specific cases, which can be studied using vignette-based methods, further indicate broad amenability to reconsidering sentences, even in quite serious, high-profile cases. If executive clemency practices have tracked public opinion, then those practices may be changing. If, instead, the decline in executive clemency reflects other institutional or political considerations, then we may see a growing divide between public opinion and the practice of executive clemency.

22. See *infra* Section II.C.

23. See *infra* Section II.C.

24. See *infra* Section II.C.

I. STUDYING CLEMENCY

In this Part, we first describe the breadth of the executive clemency power in the United States, its constitutional authority, and its uses. Second, we describe the decline in the use of clemency in practice, particularly since the 1970s. Third, we summarize existing research on public attitudes toward the use of executive clemency, which consists of just a handful of mostly relatively recent polls. We focus on the heightened concerns regarding the use of clemency in death penalty cases, given the stakes for the inmate, as well as the role of public opinion.

A. *The Clemency Power*

The exercise of clemency by an executive is a largely unregulated power to reverse convictions and sentences in criminal cases.²⁵ In the federal system, the U.S. Constitution provides the President with the “Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.”²⁶ As noted, clemency is the catch-all term that may include pardons, which excuse all criminal responsibility for conduct;²⁷ amnesty, which prevents future prosecution of groups of persons;²⁸ commutations, which provide relief from a sentence;²⁹ reprieves, which delay the exercise of punishment;³⁰ as well as remissions of fines or forfeitures in criminal cases.³¹

This executive power is broad, discretionary, and essentially not subject to judicial review,³² although in many states some of the power is delegated to administrative bodies, such as parole boards.³³ Beginning with the first U.S. Supreme Court case to consider the subject, *United States v. Wilson* in

25. *Ohio Adult Parole Auth. v. Woodard*, 523 U.S. 272, 280–81 (1998) (plurality opinion) (“[T]he heart of executive clemency . . . is to grant clemency as a matter of grace, thus allowing the executive to consider a wide range of factors not comprehended by earlier judicial proceedings and sentencing determinations.”).

26. U.S. CONST. art. II, § 2.

27. For an overview, see Daniel T. Kobil, *The Quality of Mercy Strained: Wrestling the Pardoning Power from the King*, 69 TEX. L. REV. 569, 576 (1991).

28. See *Burdick v. United States*, 236 U.S. 79, 94–95 (1915) (comparing the similarities and differences between amnesty and pardons).

29. See, e.g., *Schick v. Reed*, 419 U.S. 256, 273 n.8 (1974) (Marshall, J., dissenting).

30. See, e.g., *Ex parte United States*, 242 U.S. 27, 43–44 (1916).

31. See Grupp, *supra* note 1, at 51.

32. For an overview of state pardon power and caselaw, see 59 AM. JUR. 2D *Pardon and Parole* § 10 (2001).

33. *Solesbee v. Balkcom*, 339 U.S. 9, 12 (1950) (“Power of executive clemency . . . has traditionally rested in governors or the President, although some of that power is often delegated to agencies such as pardon or parole boards. Seldom, if ever, has this power of executive clemency been subjected to review by the courts.” (citing *Ex parte United States*, 242 U.S. at 42)).

1833, the Justices have consistently interpreted the presidential power as broadly discretionary.³⁴ As the Court put it in *Ex parte Garland*, in 1867, the clemency power is “unlimited,” except in cases of impeachment, and “is not subject to legislative control. Congress can neither limit the effect of his pardon, nor exclude from its exercise any class of offenders.”³⁵

The exercise of clemency is also traditionally considered to be a routine stage in the administration of criminal law. Thus, the Supreme Court has called it not just a matter of mercy alone, but rather the “‘fail safe’ in our criminal justice system.”³⁶ Or, as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes explained:

A pardon . . . is not a private act of grace from an individual happening to possess power. It is a part of the Constitutional scheme. When granted it is the determination of the ultimate authority that the public welfare will be better served by inflicting less than what the judgment fixed.³⁷

As discussed next, however, the use of clemency in practice is no longer a routine or typical part of the administrative process in criminal cases but rather an extremely exceptional one.

B. Declining Exercise of Executive Clemency

Given this broad, largely unfettered clemency power, executives might view its use as routine, expected, and part of administering the justice system. Indeed, in early American history, the use of clemency was commonplace.³⁸ Yet the decline in the use of executive clemency, whether in the form of pardons or sentence commutations, has been well documented. At the federal level, the use of clemency has declined over the decades,³⁹ although with some notable recent revivals that we will discuss further.⁴⁰

34. 32 U.S. (7 Pet.) 150 (1833).

35. 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 333, 380 (1867).

36. *Herrera v. Collins*, 506 U.S. 390, 415 (1993).

37. *Biddle v. Perovich*, 274 U.S. 480, 486 (1927).

38. Margaret Colgate Love, *The Twilight of the Pardon Power*, 100 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 1169, 1175 (2010).

39. Rachel E. Barkow & Mark Osler, *Restructuring Clemency: The Cost of Ignoring Clemency and a Plan for Renewal*, 82 U. CHI. L. REV. 1, 9 (2015).

40. Regarding the record numbers of pardons granted by President Joseph Biden, see Gramlich, *supra* note 11.

The decline in the use of clemency in death penalty cases is also well documented.⁴¹ In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the death penalty was commonly imposed for a broader range of offenses, states exercised clemency frequently in capital cases.⁴² Death sentences increased from 1976, when the Supreme Court reauthorized their use in a trio of decisions that reversed its prior invalidation of all capital sentencing statutes on Eighth Amendment grounds in *Furman v. Georgia*,⁴³ through the 1990s, but the use of executive clemency markedly declined during this same period.⁴⁴ Many have written about the reluctance of governors to exercise clemency in capital cases, with different theories regarding what explains that pronounced trend, including broader changes in politics regarding crime, changes to the administration of clemency processes in states, a focus on retributivism, and increased constitutional regulation of criminal cases more generally and capital punishment specifically.⁴⁵ Political considerations have clearly also been relevant; governors, for example, have been particularly reluctant to grant clemency in death penalty cases in election years.⁴⁶ When executives have exercised the power, such as when

41. STUART BANNER, *THE DEATH PENALTY: AN AMERICAN HISTORY* 53–62 (2002); Michael Heise, *The Death of Death Row Clemency and the Evolving Politics of Unequal Grace*, 66 ALA. L. REV. 949, 949–50, 958, 985 (2015); Michael A.G. Korengold, Todd A. Noteboom & Sara Gurwitch, *And Justice for Few: The Collapse of the Capital Clemency System in the United States*, 20 HAMLINE L. REV. 349, 350 (1996); Paul J. Larkin Jr., *The Demise of Capital Clemency*, 73 WASH. & LEE L. REV. 1295, 1307–13 (2016).

42. BANNER, *supra* note 41, at 291 (describing the use of clemency in “significant numbers,” including, for example, a third of death sentences in North Carolina in the first half of the twentieth century).

43. 408 U.S. 238 (1972) (per curiam).

44. Adam M. Gershowitz, *Rethinking the Timing of Capital Clemency*, 113 MICH. L. REV. 1, 6 (2014) (describing how, apart from mass commutations, only sixty-six death sentences were commuted between 1976 and 2013); Michael Heise, *Mercy by the Numbers: An Empirical Analysis of Clemency and Its Structure*, 89 VA. L. REV. 239, 241 (2003) (describing a decrease in clemency during the modern era of capital punishment).

45. See generally Carol S. Steiker & Jordan M. Steiker, *Capital Clemency in the Age of Constitutional Regulation: Reversing the Unwarranted Decline*, 102 TEX. L. REV. 1449 (2024) (arguing the constitutional regulation of the death penalty caused a decline in executive clemency in capital cases); Paul J. Larkin, Jr., *Revitalizing the Clemency Process*, 39 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL’Y 833 (2016) (describing possible contributors to the decline in clemency, including the turn to retribution and greater confidence in the capital punishment system following the constitutional criminal procedure revolution); Victoria J. Palacios, *Faith in Fantasy: The Supreme Court’s Reliance on Commutation to Ensure Justice in Death Penalty Cases*, 49 VAND. L. REV. 311, 344–45 (1996) (describing changes in the administration of clemency, such as the creation of clemency boards, and the relative susceptibility of different models to political pressures); Michael L. Radelet & Barbara A. Zsembik, *Executive Clemency in Post-Furman Capital Cases*, 27 U. RICH. L. REV. 289 (1993) (examining a well-documented reluctance to grant clemency in capital cases); Stephen E. Silverman, Note, *There Is Nothing Certain Like Death in Texas: State Executive Clemency Boards Turn a Deaf Ear to Death Row Inmates’ Last Appeals*, 37 ARIZ. L. REV. 375 (1995) (discussing the increased use of clemency boards in the death penalty context).

46. Jeffrey D. Kubik & John R. Moran, *Lethal Elections: Gubernatorial Politics and the Timing of Executions*, 46 J.L. & ECON. 1, 3 (2003) (“We find that the occurrence of a gubernatorial election increases the probability of a state execution by approximately 25 percent.”).

Governor George Ryan did so in Illinois,⁴⁷ or when President Joseph Biden did so regarding almost all of the federal death row, it has been at the very end of their last term in office.⁴⁸

C. Surveys of Public Opinion on Clemency

Many scholars have suggested that public opinion plays a decisive role in executive decision-making regarding the clemency power, as described.⁴⁹ This poses a puzzle. Recent public-opinion polling in the United States suggests that large majorities support the use of clemency, at least in some suitable cases, to address overly harsh or erroneous sentencing results.⁵⁰ Despite research documenting growing partisan divides in the United States,⁵¹ which we will discuss further, these polls show broad bipartisan support for clemency.⁵² However, there are only a handful of these polls, perhaps because clemency was not seen as a topic of great interest when its use had become so infrequent. These polls are mostly fairly recent and not the subject of ongoing polling that might help to show trends, as with the decades of national polling regarding the death penalty.⁵³ As noted, these polls ask people about their general support for clemency, or specific types of clemency, rather than whether they would support it in particular cases.

In addition, several recent polls have asked members of the public about well-known and controversial presidential pardons. For example, researchers conducted more pointed polling asking questions about President Joseph Biden's pardon of Hunter Biden and President Donald Trump's pardons of close acquaintances and then the January 6 rioters

47. See AUSTIN SARAT, *MERCY ON TRIAL: WHAT IT MEANS TO STOP AN EXECUTION* 1–32 (2005).

48. See Deepa Shivaram, *Biden Commutes Sentences of 37 Federal Death Row Prisoners*, NPR (Dec. 24, 2024, at 12:50 ET), <https://www.npr.org/2024/12/23/g-s1-38794/biden-death-row-commutations> [<https://perma.cc/3KW7-TCSS>].

49. Paul J. Larkin, Jr., *Public Choice Theory and Overcriminalization*, 36 HARV. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 715, 731–35, 756–63 (2013).

50. See, e.g., FRANKLIN & REIS, *supra* note 9.

51. See CAMPBELL, *supra* note 13; see also Corwin D. Smidt, *Polarization and the Decline of the American Floating Voter*, 61 AM. J. POL. SCI. 365, 379 (2017) (discussing elite polarization).

52. See FRANKLIN & REIS, *supra* note 9; see also Molly Green & Sean McElwee, *Poll: Use Clemency Power to Fight Mass Incarceration*, THE APPEAL (Apr. 28, 2021), <https://theappeal.org/the-lab/polling-memos/use-clemency-power-to-fight-mass-incarceration/> [<https://perma.cc/TBT5-EGAQ>].

53. For an overview of national-level death penalty polling, including by Gallup, over the years, see *Public Opinion*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/policy/public-opinion-polls?amp%3Bscid=23&did=209> [<https://perma.cc/J55U-6MBC>]. For an overview of state-level polling on the death penalty, see *State Polls and Studies*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/policy/public-opinion-polls/state-polls-and-studies> [<https://perma.cc/FU4C-TY2A>].

(polling has found that large majorities oppose such pardons).⁵⁴ Similar polls were conducted after the January 6 pardons, showing a lack of public support (but also partisan differences of view, at least as to pardons of nonviolent offenders).⁵⁵

This public-opinion evidence poses a puzzle in the specific context of clemency in death penalty cases. Support for capital punishment has also been steadily declining, according to public-opinion research.⁵⁶ Similarly, death sentencing itself has been steadily declining since the late 1990s.⁵⁷ As part of that decline, jurors in particular capital trials have rejected death sentences in notable ways.⁵⁸ There is evidence that support for the death penalty is lower, particularly when people consider a life-without-parole option, but also that support for the death penalty is less partisan. Put differently, there is evidence that broader groups of Americans, across parties, increasingly oppose the use of the death penalty.⁵⁹

One question, then, is whether the more detailed, long-standing, and deep body of research regarding attitudes towards the death penalty is consistent with public attitudes towards clemency. The relationship might be fairly direct, to the extent that clemency is being considered in death penalty cases. The available research, however, on clemency and public opinion is relatively recent and scant, as we have described. To advance our understanding of how Americans think about clemency decisions, we conducted the study to which we turn next.

54. See MONMOUTH UNIV. POLLING INST., *supra* note 12.

55. News Release, Marquette Univ., New Marquette Law School Poll National Survey Finds Public Strongly Favors Some Trump Policies, Strongly Opposes Others (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://law.marquette.edu/poll/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/MLSPSC24NationalIssuesPressRelease.pdf> [https://perma.cc/LKG4-TZEV] (“The pardon of all January 6 defendants is opposed by 65% and favored by 34%.”); *Public Anticipates Changes with Trump but Is Split Over Whether They Will Be Good or Bad*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (Feb. 7, 2025), https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2025/02/PP_2024.7.2_views-of-trump_REPORT.pdf [https://perma.cc/VK75-SGVZ] (“Nearly eight-in-ten Republicans approve of Trump’s pardons for those convicted of *nonviolent* crimes related to Jan. 6, 2021. But fewer than half (45%) approve of pardoning those convicted of *violent* crimes.”).

56. For a summary of Gallup polling regarding the death penalty, see *Death Penalty*, GALLUP, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1606/death-penalty.aspx> [https://perma.cc/V6AY-BXVF] (showing a steady decline in American death penalty support since the mid-1990s, with 52 percent supporting and 43 percent not favoring as of 2025).

57. See generally BRANDON L. GARRETT, *END OF ITS ROPE: HOW KILLING THE DEATH PENALTY CAN REVIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE* (2017) (describing the decline in death sentencing and assessing its broader implications); Brandon L. Garrett, Alexander Jakubow & Ankur Desai, *The American Death Penalty Decline*, 107 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 561 (2017) (examining the decline and increasing geographic concentration of death sentences).

58. Brandon L. Garrett, *The Decline of the Virginia (and American) Death Penalty*, 105 GEO. L.J. 661, 664, 666–67 (2017).

59. Brandon Garrett, Daniel Krauss & Nicholas Scurich, *Capital Jurors in an Era of Death Penalty Decline*, 126 YALE L.J.F. 417, 420 (2017) (“[B]road demographics retained opposition to the death penalty.”).

II. SURVEYING MISSOURI VOTERS REGARDING THE SHOCKLEY CASE

In this Part, we begin by describing the Shockley case that served as the basis for this survey research, our research methods, the individuals surveyed, and the materials they reviewed before responding to our questions. Next, we present the study results, beginning with a descriptive overview of our findings. We then provide more detailed information on the respondents' demographics and preferences, as well as the qualitative answers they shared, which offer further insight into what might explain the overall patterns observed.

A. *The Shockley Case*

In this study, we focused on the Lance Shockley case, which, as of October 2025, the Governor of Missouri, Mike Kehoe, was still considering for possible clemency (and, as noted, the Governor ultimately declined to grant the request for clemency).⁶⁰ Shockley was sentenced to death in 2009 for the murder of a police officer who was investigating a fatal car crash involving Shockley.⁶¹ The case relied heavily on forensic ballistics evidence, which later experts have questioned. At the sentencing phase of the trial, the jurors could not reach a unanimous decision on whether to impose the death penalty, but in Missouri, the judge could then do so, and did in this case. We used a summary of the case as set out by the Missouri Supreme Court.⁶² It follows, below:

In November 2004, Lance Shockley was involved in a car crash in Missouri that resulted in the death of his passenger. The crash was under investigation by Missouri Highway Patrol Sergeant Carl DeWayne Graham, Jr.

On March 20, 2005, Sergeant Graham was fatally shot outside his home. Earlier that day, witnesses observed a red car with a yellow sticker parked near his residence. Around that time, Shockley had borrowed a red car from his grandmother that matched that description. Investigators noted that Shockley returned the vehicle shortly after the shooting. It was estimated that the drive from his grandmother's home to Graham's neighborhood would have taken approximately 18 minutes.

60. See Quinn, *supra* note 16.

61. Shockley v. Crews, 696 F. Supp. 3d 589, 616–17 (E.D. Mo. 2023).

62. Shockley v. State (*Shockley II*), 579 S.W.3d 881, 890–92 (Mo. 2019).

Ballistic evidence initially suggested that a bullet recovered from the scene came from a .243 caliber rifle. That evening, Shockley's wife gave a box of .243 caliber bullets to his uncle, reportedly saying that Shockley said he "would know what to do with them." Investigators later identified a rifle connected to Shockley's family. A State ballistics expert initially concluded there was a match between that rifle and the bullet, though a second expert called the results inconclusive. Both testified at trial. During post-conviction proceedings, the first expert revised his opinion to "inconclusive," but later reaffirmed the original finding after consulting with colleagues.

Shockley denied involvement in the shooting and told police he had been home working around his property with a neighbor. The next day, he elaborated that he was also visiting relatives and saw the neighbor working while he was inside. He also stated—without being asked—that he did not know where Sergeant Graham lived. Investigators viewed this as suspicious. Later, Shockley allegedly asked his grandmother to say he had been home all day, and when she refused, he reportedly placed his finger over her mouth and said, "I was home all day."

Shockley was charged with first-degree murder. Prosecutors argued he killed Sergeant Graham to stop the investigation into the fatal crash. His defense team maintained that he was innocent and that it was unreasonable to believe that killing one officer would prevent a legal inquiry. They also contended that investigators quickly focused on Shockley and failed to consider other suspects, and that his actions and statements reflected stress and confusion rather than guilt.

The jury convicted Shockley of first-degree murder. They found three statutory aggravating factors proven beyond a reasonable doubt: that the victim was a peace officer killed in the line of duty, that the murder was committed to avoid arrest, and that Graham was targeted as a potential witness. The jury could not unanimously agree on a sentence, and the judge imposed the death penalty. Although permitted under Missouri law, it is relatively uncommon for a judge to impose a death sentence without a unanimous jury recommendation.

Shockley has continued to maintain his innocence. Since his incarceration, he has developed a strong relationship with his faith and has taken steps to contribute positively within the prison

community. He once intervened to save the life of another incarcerated person, an act that was documented by prison staff. He has also maintained a record of good behavior and has engaged in educational and rehabilitative efforts while in custody.⁶³

That description is fairly detailed. It includes the evidence of guilt, an overview of the trial, new evidence that was obtained post-conviction, and information regarding Shockley's behavior in prison. For a post-conviction case summary, it provides a comprehensive overview of all of the evidence that one would want a governor to consider in a case, including both what was available to the jury at trial and information about what has transpired since.

B. Survey Methods and Procedure

The survey regarding the Shockley case was administered online. Online surveys are now commonly used to gauge public opinion following the widespread use of the internet and the decline in the use of landline phones.⁶⁴ Additionally, compared to telephone surveys administered by a human interviewer, online surveys reduce the tendency of participants to respond to questions in a "socially desirable" but inaccurate manner.⁶⁵ Participants were recruited through Prolific.co. Data were collected from May 19 through June 3, 2025. Participants were eligible for the study if they were over 18 years old and registered to vote in the state of Missouri.

A final sample size of 400 participants was targeted.⁶⁶ This sample size produces generally accepted statistical precision for survey research.⁶⁷ Based on official demographic data, a quota was established to yield a representative sample of Missouri registered voters, taking into account age,

63. *Id.*

64. See Eyal Peer, David Rothschild, Andrew Gordon, Zak Evernden & Ekaterina Damer, *Data Quality of Platforms and Panels for Online Behavioral Research*, 54 BEHAV. RSCH. METHODS 1643, 1643–44 (2022).

65. See, e.g., Scott Keeter, *From Telephone to the Web: The Challenge of Mode of Interview Effects in Public Opinion Polls*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (May 13, 2015), <http://www.pewresearch.org/2015/05/13/from-telephone-to-the-web-the-challenge-of-mode-of-interview-effects-in-public-opinion-polls/> [https://perma.cc/3DPT-FDQE].

66. Due to concerns about attrition, an additional 15 percent of participants were sampled (n = 460). Twenty were removed for failing to complete the study or to enter a valid ZIP code when asked where they reside.

67. LOUIS M. REA & RICHARD A. PARKER, *DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING SURVEY RESEARCH: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE* 164–65 (4th ed. 2014) (explaining that a sample of 400 reduces the margin of error while maintaining a 95 percent confidence level).

sex, race, and political affiliation.⁶⁸ Case weights were applied to ensure that the sample and population characteristics (“baseline”) matched exactly. They reflect either under-sampling (case weight > 1) or over-sampling (case weight < 1), correcting for any disproportionate representation across demographic groups. This ensures that estimates derived from the sample are representative of the target population and not biased by sampling imbalances.⁶⁹

The final sample consisted of responses from 440 registered voters in the state of Missouri. Table 1 in Appendix A presents sample frequencies and percentages by sex, age, race, and political affiliation for the total sample of $n = 440$, along with the baseline percentage according to official demographic data and the case weight. In addition to the four demographics used to weight the sample (sex, age, race, and political affiliation), information was also collected from each participant regarding education, political ideology, religious affiliation, support or opposition to the death penalty in Missouri, and the extent to which the justice system should allow for mercy or rehabilitation in rare and exceptional cases. Frequencies and percentages for these variables are presented in Table 2 of Appendix A, for the total sample.

As noted, participants were presented with the summary of the Shockley case, drawn from the Missouri Supreme Court, that we excerpted above.⁷⁰ They were then asked: “Given this information, do you believe the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) for Lance Shockley?” Participants were subsequently asked questions about the criminal justice system, and they provided demographic information. Furthermore, as we will discuss, they were also allowed to provide open-ended responses.

68. For the sources consulted, see *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2020*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (Apr. 2021), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-585.html> [<https://perma.cc/3G8L-QWRA>]; *QuickFacts: Missouri*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (2022), <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MO/PST045222> [<https://perma.cc/35HW-AL8R>]; *Missouri Election Results*, MO. SEC’Y STATE, https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/s_default [<https://perma.cc/8N8C-SA58>]; *Missouri Voter Registration & Party Affiliation Statistics*, INDEP. VOTER PROJECT, <https://independentvoterproject.org/voter-stats/mo> [<https://perma.cc/FRD8-VZVS>].

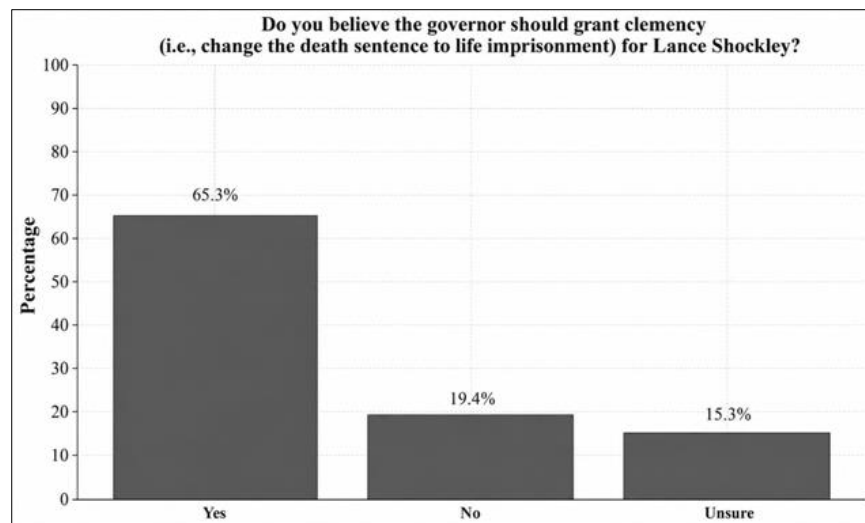
69. The final case weights (CW) were calculated as: $CW = CW_{sex} * CW_{age} * CW_{race} * CW_{PoliticalAffiliation}$.

70. *Shockley II*, 579 S.W.3d 881, 890–92 (Mo. 2019).

C. Survey Results

All analyses reported herein utilize the weighted sample to make the data and results representative of Missouri voters by age, sex, race, and political affiliation. The results of the primary question appear in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: OVERALL SUPPORT FOR CLEMENCY



One can readily see that after reviewing the facts of this case, a clear majority supports clemency. That overall result, with almost two-thirds supporting clemency, was also, as discussed next, supported by open-ended responses, which shed light on the reasoning behind these participants' views.

1. Open-Ended Responses

After deciding on whether clemency should be granted, all participants were asked, "Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?" The complete list of responses appears in Table 1 of Appendix B, which also displays each participant's age, sex, and ultimate decision (yes, no, unsure).⁷¹ After reviewing the complete set of responses,

71. Appendix B is available online at <https://washulawreview.org/clemency-and-public-opinion-a-survey-of-missouri-voters/> [<https://perma.cc/PB8Y-PACA>].

four major themes emerged regarding the appropriateness of the death penalty in this case.

First, many participants expressed concern about the reliability of the evidence and the possibility that Shockley may not be factually guilty. Participants repeatedly cited the lack of direct evidence and the inconclusive nature of key forensic testimony. One participant noted, "I do not support the death penalty unless there is irrefutable evidence that the accused committed the crime (DNA, video footage, etc.)." Another similarly stated, "The evidence seems merely circumstantial. I didn't see anything incontrovertible proving his guilt, which should be the bar for the death penalty." Another wrote, "It seems that the judge made a rash decision and imposed a strong penalty on a case where the evidence was inconclusive." These doubts led many to conclude that the death penalty was too extreme in a case with unresolved factual questions.

Second, numerous participants objected to the judge's imposing the death penalty despite the jury's failure to reach a unanimous sentencing recommendation. This was seen as both procedurally unfair and indicative of judicial overreach. One person wrote, "As the jury could not reach a unanimous decision and could not agree on a sentence, the judge was overstepping to sentence him to death." Others were more emphatic: "A single judge should not pass a death sentence; that itself is shocking." Many saw this as a departure from fair judicial practice and questioned the appropriateness of overriding the jury in a capital case. "There's a process for a reason, judges aren't meant to be, and shouldn't be, executioners."

Third, a large group of participants expressed outright opposition to the death penalty, regardless of the case facts. Some framed this as a moral or ethical stance: "I am against the death penalty ever being considered appropriate because I do not believe the government should have the power to kill citizens." Others highlighted structural concerns: "Even one instance of wrongful execution is too much in my opinion." Even among those who believed Shockley was guilty, this firm opposition to execution influenced their views.

Finally, many people believed that while Shockley was likely guilty, the death penalty was still not justified. These participants favored life without parole, both as a more humane punishment and as a safeguard against potential error. As one put it, "While it is likely he committed murder, he is not 100% without a doubt guilty, and the possibility for wrongful conviction means the death penalty should be out of the question. I also believe the death penalty is morally objectionable on its own." Several others echoed the view that "lifetime imprisonment is a more suitable punishment." These

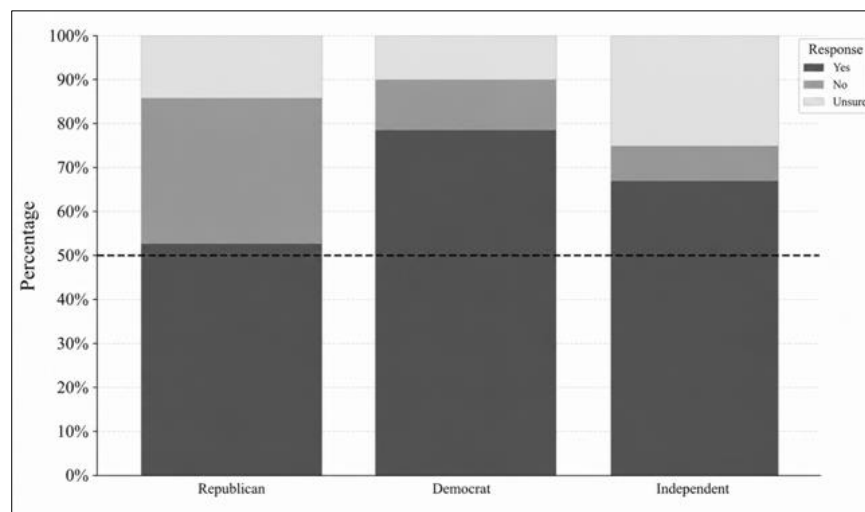
individuals often cited concerns about finality, fairness, or the potential for reform.

Together, these themes highlight widespread public discomfort with both the evidence and the process used to impose the death penalty in this case, even among those who felt the defendant was likely responsible. Again, the complete responses are available online.⁷²

2. *Support for Clemency Was Bipartisan*

To assess whether support for clemency was bipartisan, we examined participants' political affiliations in conjunction with their views on the Shockley case. Participants identified as Republican, Democrat, or Independent, allowing us to compare clemency support across party lines. The results are plotted in Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: SUPPORT FOR CLEMENCY BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION



The data show strong support for clemency for Lance Shockley across all political affiliations, indicating that this was not a partisan issue. Among Democrats, support was overwhelming: 79.0 percent said yes, 11.1 percent said no, and 9.9 percent were unsure. Independents also showed clear support, with 67.3 percent in favor, 8.2 percent opposed, and 24.5 percent

72. Appendix B is available online at <https://washulawreview.org/clemency-and-public-opinion-a-survey-of-missouri-voters/> [https://perma.cc/PB8Y-PACA].

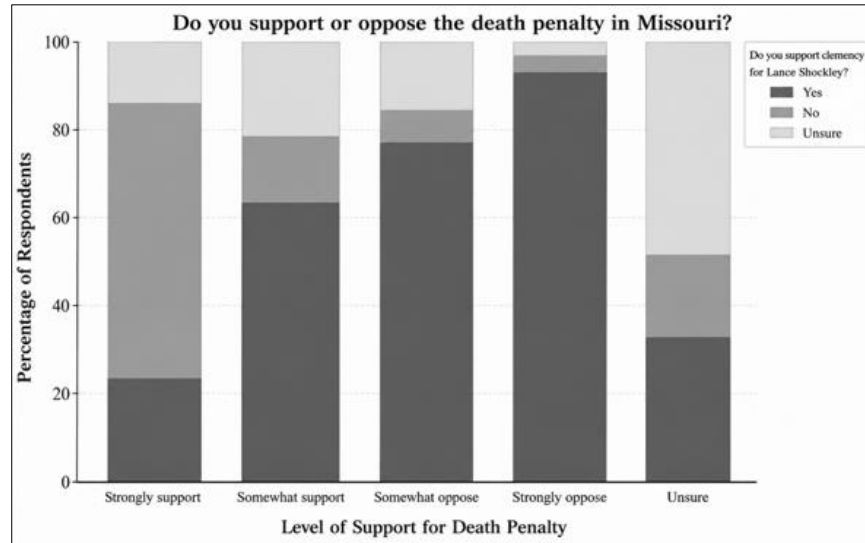
unsure. Among Republicans, a majority (52.8 percent) supported clemency, compared to 33.6 percent who opposed it and 14.0 percent who were unsure. Thus, a majority of each of the three major political groups supported clemency, although the level of support varied across groups.

We also note that a notable proportion of participants, particularly among Independents (24.7 percent) and Republicans (13.9 percent), selected “Unsure.” This indicates that many voters were hesitant to affirm a death sentence—a penalty that allows no room for error or reconsideration. Furthermore, only 11.3 percent of Democrats, 8.6 percent of Independents, and 33.6 percent of Republicans opposed clemency. These relatively low opposition rates—especially from groups that span the political spectrum—indicate that few were firmly convinced that execution was appropriate in the Shockley case.

3. Clemency and Death Penalty Support

Regarding views on the death penalty, Figure 3 below shows how participants’ opinions on granting clemency to Lance Shockley varied by their level of support for the death penalty in Missouri. The x-axis represents participants’ baseline views on the death penalty in Missouri—categorized as strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose, or unsure—as reported before they were presented with details about the Lance Shockley case.

FIGURE 3: SUPPORT FOR CLEMENCY BY SUPPORT FOR THE DEATH PENALTY



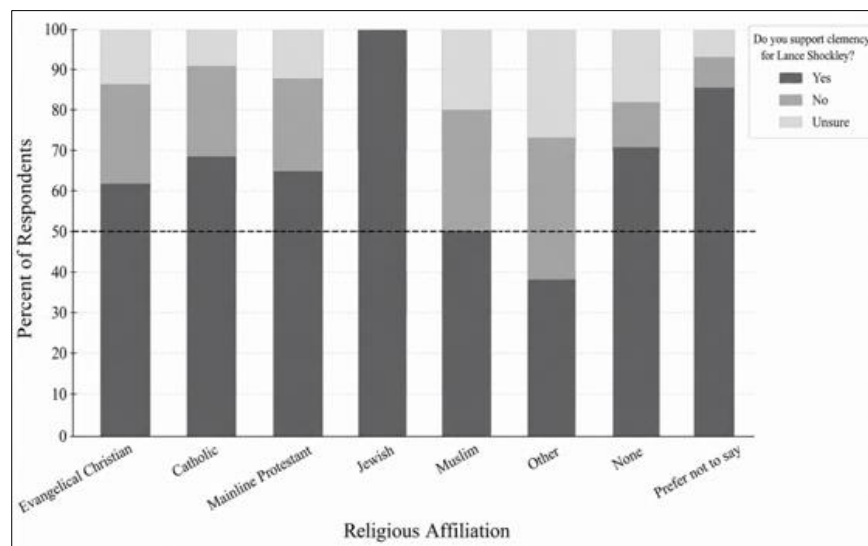
The results show strong public support for granting clemency to Lance Shockley, even among those who generally supported the death penalty. Among those who somewhat supported the death penalty, 63.1 percent supported clemency, compared to just 16.1 percent who opposed it and 20.8 percent who were unsure. And among the strongest supporters of the death penalty, 22.9 percent favored clemency and 12.9 percent were unsure—indicating that over one in three expressed doubt about whether execution was appropriate in this case.

Among participants who opposed the death penalty, support for clemency was overwhelming. 76.5 percent of those who somewhat opposed and 94.1 percent of those who strongly opposed the death penalty believed the Governor should commute Shockley's sentence. This near-unanimous agreement among opponents is not surprising—but what is most notable is that a significant share of death penalty supporters also favored clemency, a rare convergence in public opinion. The consistently high rates of uncertainty—12.9 percent among strong death penalty supporters and 20.8 percent among moderate death penalty supporters—further highlight public discomfort with the case. These findings demonstrate that clemency for Lance Shockley, although ultimately not granted, was not a fringe position. It reflected a clear and cross-cutting public consensus that this case warranted clemency.

4. Clemency and Religious Affiliation

Regarding religious affiliation, Figure 4 below presents the percentage of participants in each affiliation who supported, opposed, or were unsure about granting clemency to Lance Shockley.

FIGURE 4: SUPPORT FOR CLEMENCY BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



Support for clemency was clearly the dominant view across nearly all groups. Among participants with no religious affiliation, a striking 72 percent favored clemency, compared to just 11 percent who opposed it and 17 percent who were unsure. Evangelical Christians—often associated with more conservative views—still showed strong support, with 64 percent in favor, 21 percent opposed, and 15 percent unsure. Similarly, among Catholics, 69 percent supported clemency, while 22 percent were opposed, and 9 percent were unsure. Mainline Protestants showed a comparable pattern, with 66 percent in support, 21 percent opposed, and 13 percent unsure. Even among those who selected “Other” for their religious affiliation, support outweighed opposition (38 percent vs. 36 percent), although the proportion of undecided (26 percent) was relatively high. Smaller groups of participants, such as Jewish and Muslim participants, were too few to support strong conclusions, but neither group had a majority that expressed opposition. Importantly, every group—regardless of religious identity—showed more support than opposition for clemency, and

in most cases, support exceeded 60 percent. These results suggest that the call for clemency in Shockley's case resonated across religious lines and reflected a broad and diverse base of moral concern.

Participants who did not support clemency ($n = 85$) were asked to indicate the main reasons for that decision. They were presented with the following options and were permitted to select as many as they saw fit.

TABLE 1: REASONS FOR REJECTING CLEMENCY

Reason(s) for Rejecting Clemency	Number of Participants
I believe the death penalty is appropriate for killing a law enforcement officer	60
I trust the jury and courts made the right decision	48
I don't believe Lance Shockley is innocent	65
Clemency would undermine accountability	36
I don't support clemency in any death penalty cases	13
I think the governor should not interfere with court decisions	20
Other	6

The modal (most common) response was disbelief that Shockley is innocent, followed by the view that the death penalty was appropriate for killing a police officer. Note that half of the participants who opposed clemency selected three or fewer reasons from the list.

Participants who were unsure whether the governor should grant clemency were also asked: "What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?" The responses were quite varied. Many participants expressed a desire for more or clearer evidence (for example, "I would need to see more conclusive evidence one way or the other."). Several participants indicated that they would support clemency if Shockley showed genuine personal change or contrition (for example, "Is his behavior

in prison genuine?”). The complete responses appear in Table 2 of Appendix B.⁷³

5. Regression Analyses Regarding Support for Clemency

We examined whether support for clemency for Lance Shockley varied by demographic variables (age, sex, and race), life experiences (identifying with a religious belief, attending college), and political beliefs and affiliations (importance of mercy in the justice system, political party affiliation, political orientation, and support for the death penalty). This analysis allowed us to determine how ubiquitous the nearly two-thirds support for clemency was among subgroups and to examine whether support for clemency varied across these characteristics while accounting for the other predictors in the model.

We used Binary Logistic Regression (BLR) to predict support for clemency for Lance Shockley, with 1 = Yes and 0 = No or Unsure. We estimated three nested BLRs: (1) demographic predictors only; (2) demographic and life experience predictors; and (3) demographic, life experience, and political beliefs and affiliations predictors. Table 2 presents the results for each of the three BLRs.

TABLE 2: BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION PREDICTING SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNOR GRANTING CLEMENCY TO LANCE SHOCKLEY

Predictors	Model		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	1.756	1.041	0.712
Age (Centered around 40 years)	1.009	1.007	1.017*
Sex (-.5 = Male, 0 = Other, .5 = Female)	0.995	1.172	1.036

73. Appendix B is available online at <https://washulawreview.org/clemency-and-public-opinion-a-survey-of-missouri-voters/> [<https://perma.cc/PB8Y-PACA>].

Predictors	Model		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Race (-.5 = White & Non-Hispanic, .5 = Non-white or Hispanic)	1.044	0.995	1.023
Religious (-.5 = None, .5 = Religious)		0.576*	1.227
Education (-.5 = No College, .5 = Some College)		4.187***	3.393**
Importance of Mercy in the Justice System (5 points) (-2 = Not at all, 2 = Extremely)			1.896***
Political Party (-.5 = Republican, 0 = Independent and Other, .5 = Democrat)			0.931
Political Orientation (5 points) (-2 = Very Conservative, 2 = Very Liberal)			1.247
Support for the Death Penalty (5 points) (-2 = Strongly Support, 2 = Strongly Oppose)			1.722***
Model Fit Indices	Model		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
-2 Log likelihood	527.033	504.225	395.093
Cox & Snell R Square	0.004	0.058	0.279
Nagelkerke R Square	0.006	0.080	0.384
Chi-square Model	1.679	24.486***	133.619***
(df)	(3)	(5)	(9)

Predictors	Model		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Chi-square Block	NA	22.808***	109.132***
(df)	NA	(2)	(4)
Note: N = 406. Values are estimated odds ratios, calculated as: exp (raw Beta parameter). Support for Clemency is coded: Yes = 1, No or Unsure = 0. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001			

Demographics. The demographic predictors in Model 1 do not enhance the prediction of clemency support beyond the base rate in the sample (65.3 percent). The odds ratios for age, sex, and race are all close to 1.0, indicating that support for clemency did not vary across participants' age, sex, or race.

Life Experiences. Model 2 includes the demographic variables and adds religious beliefs and education to the BLR. The Chi-Square values for Model 2 indicate that including religious beliefs and education significantly predicted clemency support for Lance Shockley, compared with using either the base rate or demographic variables alone. Likewise, the -2* log likelihood value has decreased, and the R-squared values have increased. Those who had no religious affiliation had 1.736 (=1/.576) times greater odds of supporting clemency for Lance Shockley than those who identified with a religion. Those who had attended college had over four times greater odds of supporting clemency for Lance Shockley than those who had never attended college. All three demographic variables remain not significantly predictive of clemency support.

Political beliefs and affiliations. The last four predictors related to political beliefs and affiliations (Model 3) significantly predicted clemency support for Lance Shockley, over and above the predictors in Model 2. The -2*log likelihood values were dramatically attenuated for Model 3, and the R-Square values were substantially increased. An increase of one unit on the five-point scale of the importance of mercy in the justice system increased the odds of clemency support by a factor of nearly 1.9. In addition, for each unit increase in opposition to the death penalty, the odds of supporting clemency for Lance Shockley increased by a factor of over 1.7 once all predictors are entered into Model 3. In addition, attending college still increased the odds of supporting clemency for Lance Shockley by nearly 3.4 times. Similarly, for the full nine-predictor model, we found that older adults were more supportive than young adults of clemency for Lance Shockley; each additional year increased the odds of supporting clemency

by a factor of 1.017, equivalent to a factor of just over 1.18 for each additional decade. Neither political party affiliation nor political orientation (conservative vs. liberal) was predictive of support for clemency for Lance Shockley.

These results indicate that support for clemency for Lance Shockley was not significantly associated with sex and race and only slightly associated with age; older adults were slightly more likely to support clemency than younger adults. We also found that support for clemency for Lance Shockley was substantially higher for those who had attended college. There was also a small relationship between religious affiliation and support for clemency, but it became non-significant once political beliefs and affiliations were entered as predictors. Finally, we found that support for clemency for Lance Shockley was not significantly associated with political party affiliation and political identification as conservative or liberal. The strongest predictors of support for clemency for Lance Shockley were belief in the importance of mercy in the justice system and support for or opposition to the death penalty.

Thus, these findings suggest that participants held nuanced views regarding the case and engaged with the fact pattern as one might expect jurors to. They were examining questions of culpability, the strength of the evidence of guilt, and the finality and appropriateness of the sentence. Their views on the importance of mercy and the death penalty influenced their views regarding clemency. And those views were far more predictive than partisan affiliations, demographics, or other factors. As discussed below, these findings have implications for the case at hand and for clemency research and policy more broadly.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY ON EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY

We began this Commentary by asking what executive clemency is for, what explains the decline in its use, and whether its use tracks public opinion. This Part turns from the survey results regarding the Lance Shockley case to those more fundamental questions raised by the current state of executive clemency in the United States. We examine the implications of these study findings for future research regarding clemency and for the practice of executive clemency in high-profile, capital, and more routine cases. Finally, we discuss broader implications for our understanding of the nature of public opinion and its relevance to important decisions in the criminal justice system. Most significant, in our view, are the findings that partisan affiliations and demographics did not explain

people's views, but rather that broadly shared views regarding sentencing and mercy did.

A. Directions for Future Research

This study suggests the utility of conducting vignette-based research on case-specific topics such as clemency. As described in Part I, most of the evidence we have regarding public opinion and clemency has taken the form of a small number of general surveys on approval of clemency practices and brief questions in surveys on particular high-profile examples of executive clemency.⁷⁴ It has long been recognized that to understand jury behavior, mock jury studies using realistic vignettes provide a helpful model for experimental research.⁷⁵ While people may not be able to put themselves in the shoes of a governor or president, opinions of those executive decisions may be shaped by the facts of the cases before those executives.

To be sure, the public opinions formed may not reflect a neutral, judicial description of the facts, as outlined in the Missouri Supreme Court's description that we provided to the participants in this study. Unlike jurors who may become polarized because of groupthink during their deliberations,⁷⁶ but who may also be carefully instructed and receive carefully marshaled evidence,⁷⁷ the public receives information about legal cases in very disparate ways. People may consume far more polarizing and slanted social media and news coverage regarding such high-profile cases.⁷⁸

In contrast, executives may consider submissions from a wide range of constituencies when making these decisions. Their decision-making may not simply rely on the wisdom of crowds, or at least of their voting constituents. Indeed, there are hard questions to ask about the consideration of research like ours. What if executives did this type of research before making decisions regarding clemency? As informative as research on public opinion may be, relying on it in the executive context might be problematic,

74. See *supra* Section I.C.

75. See Steiner et al., *supra* note 14, at 53 (discussing how vignette studies provide a useful experimental model for studying decision-making).

76. Daniel J. Isenberg, *Group Polarization: A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis*, 50 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCH. 1141, 1142 (1986).

77. See generally NEIL VIDMAR & VALERIE P. HANS, *AMERICAN JURIES: THE VERDICT* (2007) (examining the factors that shape jury decision-making).

78. See, e.g., Zach Sommers, *Missing White Woman Syndrome: An Empirical Analysis of Race and Gender Disparities in Online News Coverage of Missing Persons*, 106 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 275, 311 (2016); Travis L. Dixon, Cristina L. Azocar & Michael Casas, *The Portrayal of Race and Crime on Television Network News*, 47 J. BROAD. & ELEC. MEDIA 498, 506 (2003) (examining the role of race in crime stories on nightly national television news programs); John W.C. Johnstone, Darnell F. Hawkins & Arthur Michener, *Homicide Reporting in Chicago Dailies*, 71 JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUN. Q. 860, 867 (1994).

potentially linking such decisions to popular opinion and biases, rather than the ends of justice.

Turning from clemency to underlying attitudes regarding the death penalty, the views expressed by these participants were aligned with their concerns regarding both the importance of mercy and the use of the death penalty. As discussed in Part I, there is a substantial body of public-opinion research regarding the death penalty and evidence that support for the death penalty has declined, including in a bipartisan way. Similarly, support for severe sentencing has declined, but there is less polling on that topic. The concordance between views on clemency and views on the death penalty, of course, could reflect that this case was a capital case. One open question, then, is whether people would express similar views regarding clemency in a case involving a serious but non-capital sentence, or a lower-level criminal sentence. Further research should examine these questions.

B. Directions for Executive Clemency Policy

This study suggests that, on the one hand, the handful of popular opinion polls conducted in recent years on the topic are not misleading in finding that a growing majority of Americans generally support executive clemency. Our findings confirm those results in the context of a capital case, in line with survey work on public opinion and declining support for the death penalty in the United States. Our findings, in the context of a complex and troubling case, point to underlying reasons why this is so and, in particular, a non-partisan, not polarized consensus view regarding what factors are appropriate to consider when granting clemency.

These results also support the view that, while politics may be more polarized on a range of issues, attitudes towards criminal justice remain decidedly shared, bipartisan, and focused on alternatives to harsh sentencing and on public safety.⁷⁹ People do not just want to end incarceration, nor do they care only about public order. They do not fully endorse either of what Herbert Packer famously called the “crime control” and “due process” models of criminal justice;⁸⁰ they care about both.

79. See, e.g., *Overwhelming Majority of Americans Support Criminal Justice Reform, New Poll Finds*, VERA INST. JUST. (Jan. 25, 2018), <https://www.vera.org/blog/overwhelming-majority-of-americans-support-criminal-justice-reform-new-poll-finds> [<https://perma.cc/NXX6-CMT2>]; Colleen Long & Hannah Fingerhut, *AP-NORC Poll: Nearly All in US Back Criminal Justice Reform*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (June 23, 2020, at 10:02 CT), <https://apnews.com/article/police-us-news-ap-top-news-politics-kevin-richardson-ffaa4bc564afcf4a90b02f455d8fdf03> [<https://perma.cc/W9Z8-A4TJ>]; *As Public Safety Tops the Agenda, Americans Want Both Order and Justice*, IPSOS (July 8, 2021), <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/usa-today-crime-and-safety-2021> [<https://perma.cc/TC9R-AA95>].

80. Herbert L. Packer, *Two Models of the Criminal Process*, 113 U. PA. L. REV. 1, 9–23 (1964).

These views and our finding that the most predictive factors were support for mercy and concerns regarding the death penalty may reflect a broad majority of the American public, which is concerned with public safety as well as due process and fair treatment of individuals accused of crimes.⁸¹ Future research, as noted, should investigate whether these views extend beyond the most serious criminal cases, but policymakers should also explore whether clemency practices continue to reflect public attitudes towards appropriate criminal punishment.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that a clear majority of Missouri voters supported clemency for Lance Shockley. When presented with a concise, neutral summary of the case—drawn from the Missouri Supreme Court’s description—nearly two-thirds of participants endorsed the idea that the Governor should commute Shockley’s death sentence to life without parole. This finding held across political affiliations, suggesting that support for clemency in this case was not driven solely by partisan leanings but reflected broader public attitudes about fairness and finality in capital punishment.

Significantly, support for clemency was not based on a categorical opposition to the death penalty. Indeed, many participants who expressed support for capital punishment in principle also supported clemency. Their openness in this case appears to reflect doubts about the conclusiveness of the evidence, concerns about procedural irregularities (such as the imposition of a death sentence by a judge without unanimous jury agreement), and recognition of Shockley’s rehabilitative efforts while incarcerated. Even among those undecided, the dominant theme was a desire for additional information to make a more confident judgment, rather than outright rejection of clemency.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the public is receptive to clemency in cases involving lingering doubts, legal ambiguities, or evidence of meaningful rehabilitation. These data may be relevant to policymakers and elected officials tasked with making clemency decisions, as they indicate that serious public consideration is warranted in cases like Shockley’s—particularly when the decision aligns with values of justice, proportionality, and second chances. The public may increasingly view clemency as the “fail-safe,” as the Supreme Court has described it, rather than a type of extraordinary mercy.

81. See Brandon L. Garrett & Gregory Mitchell, *Error Aversions and Due Process*, 121 MICH. L. REV. 707, 748–49 (2023).

These findings have broader implications for the future of executive clemency in the United States. These findings suggest that while public opinion surveys on clemency in general are informative, attitudes in specific cases further indicate a broad willingness to reconsider sentences, even in the most serious, high-profile cases. If executive clemency practices have tracked public opinion, then those practices may be changing. If, instead, the decline in executive clemency reflects other institutional or political considerations, then we may see a growing divide between public opinion and the practice of executive clemency.

APPENDIX A

TABLE A1: QUOTA SAMPLE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES VERSUS
BASELINE BY SEX, AGE, RACE, POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Sex	Sample N	Sample %	Baseline %	Case Weights
Male	169	38.41%	47%	1.1931
Female	260	59.09%	53%	0.8745
Non-binary	8	1.82%		1.0000
Prefer not to say	3	0.68%		1.0000
Total	440	100.00%	100.00%	
Age (Years)	Sample N	Sample %	Baseline %	Case Weights
18-29	97	22.05%	15%	0.6804
30-44	178	40.45%	25%	0.6180
45-64	136	30.91%	35%	1.1324
65+	29	6.59%	25%	3.7931
Total	440	100%	100.00%	
Race	Sample N	Sample %	Baseline %	Case Weights
White (non-Hispanic)	355	80.68%	77.00%	0.9500
African American (non-Hispanic)	35	7.95%	11.40%	1.4266
Hispanic (any race)	20	4.55%	4.90%	1.0731
Other & Multi-racial (non-Hispanic)	28	6.36%	6.70%	1.0481
Prefer not to say	2	0.45%		1.0000
Total	440	100.00%	100.00%	
Political Affiliation	Sample N	Sample %	Baseline %	Case Weights
Republican	110	25.00%	41.68%	1.6293
Democrat	176	40.00%	36.46%	0.8908
Independent	128	29.09%	19.52%	0.6558
Other	16	3.64%	2.34%	0.6289
Prefer not to say	10	2.27%		1.0000
Total	440	100.00%	100.00%	

TABLE A2: SAMPLE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES BY EDUCATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, VIEWS OF THE DEATH PENALTY, AND MERCY IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Education	Sample N	Sample %
Less than a high school diploma	6	1.4%
High school graduate	49	11.1%
Some college but no degree	98	22.3%
Associate's degree in college	55	12.5%
Bachelor's degree in college	147	33.4%
Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS, etc.)	84	19.1%
Prefer not to say	1	0.2%
Total	440	100%
Political Ideology	Sample N	Sample %
Very conservative	34	7.7%
Somewhat conservative	78	17.7%
Moderate	100	22.7%
Somewhat liberal	114	25.9%
Very liberal	106	24.1%
Prefer not to say	8	1.8%
Total	440	100%
Religious Affiliation	Sample N	Sample %
Evangelical Christian	86	19.5%
Catholic	65	14.8%
Mainline Protestant	44	10.0%
Jewish	4	0.9%
Muslim	3	0.7%
Other	57	13.0%
None	166	37.7%
Prefer not to say	15	3.4%
Total	440	100%

Death Penalty Views	Sample N	Sample %
Strongly support	59	13.4%
Somewhat support	147	33.4%
Somewhat oppose	98	22.3%
Strongly oppose	117	26.6%
Unsure	19	4.3%
Total	440	100.0%
How important is it to you that the justice system allows for mercy or rehabilitation in rare and exceptional cases?	Sample N	Sample %
Not at all important	17	3.9%
Slightly important	61	13.9%
Moderately important	94	21.4%
Very important	147	33.4%
Extremely important	120	27.3%
Total	439	99.8%

APPENDIX B

TABLE B1: OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES REGARDING THE DEATH PENALTY
IN THE SHOCKLEY CASE

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
62	Male	No	I don't think the death penalty is right unless the case is very clear and serious. It feels too final, and mistakes can happen. Justice should be fair but also kind.
42	Female	No	Yes, I believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case because the crime was very serious and caused a lot of harm. It feels like a way to hold the person fully responsible and protect others from future danger.
55	Female	No	Yes, because he killed a police officer, lied about him being home and forcing his grandmother to lie.
37	Female	Yes	I don't support the death penalty except in egregious cases, like a dangerous serial killer or child rapist. The evidence against Lance was mostly circumstantial and he doesn't seem a danger to his fellow inmates.
38	Female	Yes	No, I don't. I wouldn't put it as appropriate in most cases, but this case there was reasonable, actionable doubt and he is rehabilitated within the facility. He has helped others and been a contributing member to the society that he is in. He maintains his innocence.
38	Male	Yes	Death Penalty was not appropriate. Shockley may have tensed due to the accident and acted inappropriate. The Judge could have suggested for medical records of Shockley before ruling out to check if he was under any medical use or even mentally well. The Judge should have given life imprisonment to Shockley rather than death sentence.
53	Female	Yes	I do not. The jury couldn't agree so there should have been another hearing to determine punishment.
34	Female	Yes	No, mainly because the jury was not unanimous.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
62	Female	Yes	Significant Doubt Regarding Ballistics Evidence
41	Female	Unsure	No, it doesn't seem suitable for a case that doesn't seem to have any aggravated, egregious or vicious killing. From the information provided, I'm not even convinced myself that this was proven beyond a reasonable doubt. But trusting the jury, who got more evidence and information than I did, this doesn't seem to be a situation that would warrant the death penalty besides the victim being an officer. I don't think that alone is enough to make the death penalty appropriate in every case.
32	Female	Yes	I do not agree with the death penalty. The jury was unable to make a decision and it seems the testimony from professionals were inconclusive. Although the defendants actions seem suspicious, you do not take the life of another without being absolutely certain they are guilty without any doubts.
30	Male	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate since the jury did not come to a unanimous decision. I do believe there was still at least some doubt about whether Shockley killed the police officer.
37	Female	No	I don't think death penalty is right in this case, he is serving his time for what he did. I believe death penalty should be used for heinous crimes, serial killers and pedophiles.
58	Male	Yes	Yes at first it was because according to the investigation and the follow up lots of evidence directs the action to Lance, but after being in prison and everything that he has done like saving the life of another incarcerated person, him maintaining good behavior and engaging in rehabilitative effort while in prison he deserves clemency
54	Male	No	I don't think it was appropriate but it also doesn't seem wholly unjustified here, I'd trust the judge over myself on this

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
23	Female	Yes	I believe anyone can change and while I do believe he committed the crime, judging by his behavior in prison and growing faith, I think he deserves a second chance and life imprisonment would keep the public safe while still giving him a second chance.
29	Male	Yes	No. I don't believe it is ever appropriate. Especially in this case it isn't appropriate since the jury didn't unanimously agree on it. The motive also seems iffy.
39	Male	Yes	No because I don't believe the death penalty is appropriate at all due to objective data failing to show that it works as a deterrent for violent crime.
40	Male	Yes	Life in prison
29	Male	Yes	I believe the death penalty was not appropriate; Even the jury couldn't fully agree on the ultimate punishment, leaving a clear division among them when the judge ultimately imposed the death penalty. t's deeply troubling that the critical ballistics evidence, even when eventually reaffirmed, wasn't always clear-cut, shifting between certainty and doubt at different times.
27	Male	Yes	No, I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate because I never believe the death penalty is appropriate. The government should not have the authority to kill citizens and residents regardless of what crimes committed. The justice system is also entirely too biased and unreliable to properly execute capital punishment without executions of the innocent, which is wholly unacceptable. One single innocent man executed, which has happened more than once, is enough to justify removal of the entire process of capital punishment.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
33	Female	Unsure	I think I do not like that the judges decided without the jury reaching unanimous agreement. A wrongfully killed person equates to murder so I wouldn't want to be even possibly wrong.
33	Female	Yes	No. It was not conclusive that he murdered someone. There is evidence of the contrary. Life in prison seems like a more appropriate choice.
67	Female	Yes	No. The judge did not allow the jury to make a decision. It makes no sense for this judge to straight to the death penalty. I don't think it was a non-biased decision.
71	Male	Yes	It's not appropriate in any case. An eye for an eye just leaves everyone blind.
37	Male	Yes	I don't think it was since the jury didn't agree on a sentence unanimously. I also think there are enough doubts about his innocents that even if they convict the death penalty shouldn't apply. I think the death penalty should only apply to the most extreme cases of crime involving multiple people or children/other aggravating factors.
21	Prefer not to say	Yes	I believe the death penalty is only appropriate in very rare circumstances. This was not one of them. I truly believe that people can turn their lives around and deserve second chances.
32	Female	Yes	Absolutely not. If a jury couldn't even find the defendant wholly guilty, I don't see how a judge even felt comfortable attempting to do so. There's a process for a reason, judges aren't meant to be, and shouldn't be, executioners.
33	Female	Yes	No, I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case as there was uncertainty that the man had shot the officer. It sounds like a case of cop bias and that there is probable cause to believe it could have been someone else. I am sure the officer upset more than just this one man.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
43	Female	Yes	No, even though the officer was killed in the line of duty and most likely by Shockley, the inconclusive ballistics testimony with the jurors not being able to reach a unanimous decision is enough information for me to believe that the death penalty is not a fair sentence.
55	Female	Yes	Absolutely not. 1. The death penalty should never be used, you never know if 20 years from now we have new technology that could clear someone and prove their innocence. 2. This judge WAY overstepped; the sentence (if he insists on using it) should only be given when the decision is unanimous by the jury. 3. Our governor will never grant this poor man clemency. We have governors right now who enjoy watching innocent people executed.
45	Female	Unsure	If he is guilty, it is. I would say it could also depend on if he has any other violence in his past. If there is nothing but similar cars and no DNA evidence then I private would not have chosen the death penalty.
68	Female	Yes	I do not since it was imposed by the judge, not the jury that deliberated on the case.
66	Female	Yes	It seems it was mostly circumstantial evidence in this case. Shockley is still getting life in prison which means he can not harm anyone else and he may have truly changed his ways while in prison.
62	Female	Yes	Not unanimous jury, some evidence inconclusive.
59	Female	Yes	No. The jury didn't reach a unanimous decision and so the judge immediately went to the death penalty. Doesn't say if there is prior history with the law, but I assumed not.
30	Female	No	Yes. A life for a life.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
31	Female	Yes	The evidence did not seem conclusive enough to determine whether or not Shockley was guilty, and even the jury could not be sure. Additionally, he seemed to have changed for the better while imprisoned. In this case, I think the possibility of rehabilitation is more important than giving the death penalty.
18	Female	Yes	No I do not because the jury couldnt all vote on a punishment so i think the judges ruling was unfair.
35	Male	Yes	No. Based simply on the fact that the jury did not come to an agreement, the death penalty should not have been considered. Additionally, all of the evidence presented was circumstantial at best, and expert testimony was mishandled.
23	Female	Yes	The death penalty was definitely not appropriate in this case because they do not have solid evidence that Shockley even committed the murder. There is too much to be inconclusive about all of it, and like his defense said, they are not considering other leads they may have-they just pinned it on Shockley.
25	Female	Unsure	I do believe it was appropriate, he killed one person in an accident which in itself would not be a reason for the death penalty, but the fact that he (very likely) killed an office in cold blood shows he feels no remorse for taking innocent lives

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
53	Female	No	If you take a life, not in self defense or in defense of another, or without their permission such as an assisted suicide, you shouldn't be able to live your life out, not even in prison. There are too many actions and words to believe they were all just coincidences, or done or said after duress. Had I been on the jury I would have voted guilty, though I would still question if that was the right answer unless the person was literally seen killing the person and there was a 0% chance of them being innocent. ... Now I'm questioning myself. If there were no unquestionable pieces of evidence or witnesses then the defense does have reasonable doubt. Yeah this is difficult, I'm glad I wasn't on the jury. I wish courts could get rid of experts who lean the way the defense or prosecution wants them too, they make everything blurry. Now I'm undecided. Sorry for being so wishy-washy.
32	Male	Yes	No. While I don't support the death penalty in any instance, this particular case had no unanimous decision, and inconsistent evidence and proceedings shouldn't result in such a finality.
51	Female	No	Yes. The evidence was overwhelming. He ultimately took two lives and appeared to be acting with little remorse.
56	Male	No	With the limited evidence presented here, I support the judge's decision to pass down a sentence of death. The evidence was compelling and did not rely on a single factor, including witness testimony. I believe that any person convicted of the first-degree murder of law enforcement officers should receive a mandatory death sentence.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
46	Female	Yes	It is hard to say. I tend to empathize/sympathize too easily. But, there are no witnesses that say that they saw Shockley shoot Graham, although evidence does seem to point to Graham with the red car, the shells, and the gun. Also if he really did demand his grandmother lie for him, that seems super suspicious as well. I think life imprisonment is better for him, especially if it has strengthened his faith. Maybe one day he will tell the whole truth of what happened.
25	Female	Yes	No, it seems that the judge made a rash decision and imposed a strong penalty on a case where the evidence was inconclusive. It seems like the entire case was not done correctly and that other outlets were not even considered.
23	Female	Yes	I do not believe it is appropriate. In my opinion based on what I know, one-time murders can be rehabilitated from, even if pre-meditated. I believe the death penalty should be reserved for the most heinous of crimes: serial rape, serial murder, extreme terrorism, and torture.
61	Female	Yes	No. Evidence was circumstantial and inconclusive. Over-reach by authorities since the victim was "one of their own"
43	Male	Yes	No, I don't think the level of evidence needed for such a punishment was met. All the physical evidence was inconclusion or contested.
19	Female	Yes	No, mostly because some things were left to speculation about the case. Also life imprisonment is a worthy punishment even if he did commit the shooting.
26	Female	Yes	No the death penalty isn't justified.
23	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	No. I generally against the death penalty as a whole.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
20	Female	Yes	No, it wasn't necessary the punishment or sentencing did not fit the punishment. And it seemed like overkill. Furthermore, I think the judge himself was bias and believed in some way or fashion that any act that results in the death of a respected official. Should result in a death penalty Especially if it's officer of the law.
48	Male	No	Being found guilty of killing a law enforcement officer is a top reason for being given a death sentence. If our backwards state insists on wasting time and money on blood lust and revenge, then being a model citizen and finding <u>jesus</u> shouldn't change the sentence.
30	Female	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty is appropriate in this case, though it is a difficult case. While I personally believe Lance is guilty, I don't believe it has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt, based on the information provided. Police are known for using tactics on confused victims, and defense has a good point. How would one murder stop an entire investigation? The jury was also unable to agree. I think most people could agree that the evidence suggests he murdered the officer, and many would agree that life in prison is acceptable, especially since he has a record of good behavior and does not appear to be a threat to his fellow prisoners. The death penalty should be reserved for situations where there is zero doubt about the party's guilt and preferably more evidence than he-said, she-said.
32	Female	Yes	I feel that if they're gonna give the death penalty, it should be for a crime that is really high up that something that somebody did that was like a serial killer or did something really horrible I feel like in his case – it was it wasn't bad because one he went to somebody's house he knew what he was doing and he was gonna hurt somebody and he did hurt somebody

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
37	Female	Yes	I do NOT believe it was appropriate. There was no conclusive evidence that he murdered the officer. The gun ballistic report was not unanimous. One expert changed their mind a few times. The jury also did not agree to the death penalty for Shockley.
47	Female	Yes	I don't believe it was appropriate. If the jury could agree on it after receiving all of the evidence. Then I don't believe a judge should be able to decide.
25	Male	Yes	In general, I do not believe death penalty to be a valid form of punishment regardless of the circumstance.
49	Female	Yes	No because the jury couldn't Decide Should've had a new trial.
25	Male	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty to be a valid form of punishment regardless of the circumstance
34	Male	Yes	Yes, only if that is what the law applies. I am not sure what counts for the death penalty but if this case does then yes. If it does not, then no.
22	Male	Yes	No. Many believe that the trial's evidence and judgment were not fair because of differing courtroom testimonies, suspected bias by the investigators and the judge ignoring what the jury believed. Also, viewing Shockley's behavior after conviction and his efforts at rehabilitation, some argue he could be rehabilitated.
33	Female	Unsure	I do not necessarily think it was warranted if it was in self defense. He should get the death penalty if it was premeditated.
41	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case. The evidence was largely circumstantial and there was no unanimous position on the death penalty from the jury.
27	Female	Unsure	No - being i'm already somewhat against it and the fact the it was not a cut & dry case.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
40	Female	Yes	I think the death penalty was appropriate in this case, he harmed and killed a police officer to evade arrest and prosecution. I think his ordeal should be changed to life imprisonment to continue to atone for his sins, as he has shown consistent and good behavior.
23	Female	No	I do believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case. Officer Graham was murdered by an individual who was responsible for the death of a passenger in his car. All of the evidence pointed towards the suspect.
49	Female	Unsure	yes. he planned to take a life to avoid punishment.
43	Female	Yes	No, I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case because the jury was unable to reach unanimous decision.
19	Male	Yes	No I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate as there was no consensus among the jury. While is is likely he committed murder, he is not 100% without a doubt guilty and the possibility for wrongful conviction means the death penalty should be out of the question. I also believe the death penalty is morally objectionable on its own.
51	Female	Yes	I am ok with the death penalty if it is proven without a doubt that they are guilty. Must have very solid evidence. So many people end up on death row that do not deserve to be there and are killed when they did not do what they are being killed for. Slippery slope in my opinion.
26	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	If you are not 100% sure someone is guilty of a crime, the death penalty is permanent and irreversible. This case has some doubt and I do not believe in the death penalty in general.
34	Female	Unsure	unsure
68	Prefer not to say	Unsure	Unsure. I believe in using the jury. I am just not certain on the Judge and jury decisions being different.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
50	Female	Yes	No. I am against the death penalty, in general. In this case, the evidence seems merely circumstantial. I didn't see anything incontrovertible proving his guilt, which should be the bar for the death penalty.
55	Female	Yes	Not at all! The judge used his power to take a man's life and I don't think that is fair. They didn't seem to look at other people. They focused on one person.
33	Female	Unsure	As he was suspected of the crime, yes. But I believe more information is needed to look into the likelihood that he committed the crime, before the death penalty is carried out.
19	Female	Yes	No, if there is ANY doubt or reconsideration on a case, then the death penalty should be off the table.
34	Female	Yes	Death penalty does not seem appropriate in this case. Strong and conclusive evidence needs to be found guilty for death penalty.
23	Prefer not to say	No	I believe the death penalty is appropriate given the evidence suggesting his involvement in a death.
55	Female	Yes	No, the case against him was not strong enough and the jury was split. The judge overstepped
29	Female	Yes	In this description of the case, there was far too much indecision involved. Had the evidence been found conclusive across the board, and had all other suspects been interviewed appropriately, there would be more reason to serve the death penalty. Barring a full and certain consensus of his guilt, I find the death penalty unnecessary at the time.
53	Female	Yes	I am somewhat against the death penalty in general but in this case, I also don't know if I agree that the acts warrant the death penalty, even if he is guilty of it.
59	Female	Yes	no. I don't even see where prosecution proved their point of view. no one else, per the information was even investigated. innocent people go to prison all the time due to not caring by the courts

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
36	Female	Yes	Because there were serious questions about the forensic evidence, which turned out to be inconclusive, and since the prosecution's case was mostly based on circumstantial evidence, the jury couldn't come to a unanimous decision on the sentence, showing they were unsure about giving the death penalty. Plus, Shockley has made good progress in prison, and without solid proof of guilt, it wouldn't be fair to impose the death penalty.
47	Female	Yes	No. We are suppose to be judged by a jury of our peers, not one person.
19	Female	Yes	I don't believe it was appropriate because a life for a life is not a reasonable explanation, which is basically what the death penalty is.
28	Male	Yes	The lack of evidence and the maintaining innocent plea
24	Female	Yes	To support the death penalty all possible avenues would need to be investigated and there needs to be no doubt that this person committed the crime.
32	Male	Yes	I do not believe it is appropriate for a judge to sentence someone to death when the jury doesn't reach that outcome
35	Male	Yes	No, I don't believe it's appropriate in the vast majority of cases. It also seems extreme in this instance since even the jury couldn't come to that option.
30	Female	Yes	I don't believe that the death penalty is ever appropriate, especially not when there is any level of uncertainty.
51	Female	Yes	No, I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate. In this case. I think it should be reserved for serial killers or the killing of children.
28	Male	Yes	The death penalty was inappropriate. Life should not be lost, instead, it could be replaced with life imprisonment.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
46	Female	Yes	I do believe the death penalty was appropriate because he took someone's life, however, since the jury couldn't decide on a sentence, I also think that life in prison would have been appropriate as well.
40	Female	Yes	No, the death penalty is never appropriate. There was a lot of reasonable doubt in the case and the jury did not choose the death penalty.
38	Female	Unsure	Again, I would not be able to decide on something like that. It is not my job, especially as a normal citizen without a law degree. A jury of your peers sounds terrifying for that reason.
43	Female	Unsure	I think the death penalty is a bit extreme. It almost sounds worse to live each day chained behind bars.
37	Male	No	It is hard for me to determine without more info. Based on what was provided it seems appropriate, but I would not say for sure unless I had been present as a jury member and had the full case and all evidence presented to me.
45	Female	Yes	I feel that the evidence is really shaky and for the jury not to be unanimous, but the death penalty still given by the judge wasn't right.
44	Female	Yes	No. As the jury could not reach a unanimous decision and could not agree on a sentence, the judge was overstepping to sentence him to death.
30	Female	Yes	I feel like there was enough evidence to prove that he did it. And if he murdered someone then I believe the death penalty would be acceptable
28	Female	Yes	absolutely not. an eye for an eye, you know? we don't teach toddlers by doing what we tell them not to do. what does killing someone for killing someone achieve?

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
27	Female	Yes	No - I don't believe the death penalty is ever justified. In this case especially, it seems like there wasn't enough evidence. The judge deciding on the death penalty seems very extreme - there are plenty of murderers in prison and there was nothing even especially egregious about this one. It feels to me like the judge is overly sympathetic to cops and is acting on emotion rather than law.
31	Male	Yes	I don't believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case because the death penalty is meant for "the worst of the worst" offenders. This case did not meet those standards, as Shockley had shown clear signs of rehabilitation which is rare for those within the penal system. There was also no direct evidence and inconclusive DNA reports which creates a reasonable doubt. Lastly, I think a more reasonable sentence for the crime would be life in prison with the chance at parole after confirmed positive transformation and remorse for the crime committed.
33	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case. The jury did not reach a unanimous sentencing decision, and based on the information provided, the plaintiffs failed to investigate potential other suspects and immediately focused on Lance.
63	Female	No	The evidence points to the accused committing the crime.
22	Female	Yes	I do not think that the death penalty was appropriate in this case because the evidence was largely circumstantial and included conflicting expert testimony. The jury couldn't unanimously agree on the sentence, and Shockley has shown significant rehabilitation in prison. These factors raise serious doubts about whether execution is a just and necessary punishment in this case.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
39	Female	No	Shockley was convicted of a serious crime, with multiple aggravating factors deemed significant enough to warrant the death penalty. The jury found the case compelling enough for a conviction.
39	Female	Yes	No, I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate. For one, I don't believe in the death penalty. Two, just from the passage, the evidence seems circumstantial. He very well could be guilty but from the passage alone, it does not seem that he was proven guilty beyond a shadow of doubt.
32	Male	Unsure	Yes, because it was murder. I believe second chances do exist. However, it would be hard for me to allow someone who murdered someone to live when someone lost someone on purpose.
23	Female	Unsure	it's hard for me to decide
40	Female	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case because not only could the jury not unanimously come up with a sentence (so one person made the choice), there were a couple areas that could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. I think the death penalty should only be imposed when there is no question the individual committed the crime (that was violent enough to even have the death penalty as an option).
29	Male	Yes	I'm already unsure if we should ever use the death penalty, but if we are to use it, it should be pretty much 100% sure. No doubt about it, and something absolutely terrible. I believe that his act was awful, but not a whole new level of evil, also, there was at least some doubt in his guilt.
49	Female	Unsure	If the jury couldn't unanimously decide to issue the death penalty then I don't think the judge should have. I would like to hear why the jury didn't choose it.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
31	Male	Yes	I do believe Shockley was guilty, but not beyond rehabilitation. He has done some good while being incarcerated, so I think he should at least be able to live out his life and make up for what he did in any small way possible.
25	Female	Unsure	not really, i feel like life imprisonment because he did kill the initial person in the car accident but we don't know the second thing. plus doing death penalty just because the man was a police officer is unfair, if he had killed a random women or man, it would probably only be life. its sad but every life should be treated equally.
35	Female	Yes	No. I do not support the death penalty unless there is irrefutable evidence that the accused committed the crime (DNA, video footage, etc)
33	Male	No	If it is offered, there's a good reason for it to be the verdict.
21	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	In the case of Shockley, it is to consider that overall it seems contentious that he may have committed the murder. Even if he did, life imprisonment seems far more suitable than the death penalty, especially if there was no unanimous punishment agreed on and could have been debated more without settling on the death penalty.
52	Female	Yes	It's never appropriate, and even more inappropriate in cases of killing a 'peace' officer and/or a non unanimous jury
36	Female	Unsure	If he committed the crime and it was one hundred percent certain, then yes. Otherwise without complete certainty he could very well be an innocent man being sentenced to death.
51	Female	Unsure	Not sure
40	Female	Yes	No. I don't think the death penalty is ever justified.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
27	Male	Yes	Although there was a lot of circumstantial evidence that pointed towards the suspect, it wasn't proved beyond a reasonable doubt, in my opinion. However, regardless of whether he was indeed the murderer, his behavior in prison should count for something. If he has shown good behavior and even saved a fellow inmate, that suggests he's rehabilitated. Although murder in all forms is horrific, I usually reserve the death penalty for cases of mass shootings or serial killings. Although terrible, I wouldn't advocate for the death penalty in an isolated murder, but rather, 25-life depending on the case.
59	Female	Yes	No because the jury couldn't reach a verdict, the judge should not have given the death penalty. There must have been doubt in the jurors minds. I believe when there is any doubt the death penalty should not be the sentence.
61	Female	Yes	No, because the jury was not unanimous.
61	Female	Yes	No, because the jury was not unanimous
54	Male	Unsure	I think the death penalty may have been extreme, given the somewhat tenuous conviction, but a life with no chance of parole would have been more warranted.
35	Female	No	It was appropriate in this case. Killing a cop is bad and should be punished.
56	Female	Yes	I do not. While the murder was wrong, I think that it is different than a repeat offender. He also seems to have been rehabilitated even though he still denies responsibility.
42	Female	Unsure	Yes. It seemed he was found guilty and there was enough evidence to say so.
34	Female	Yes	If the evidence had been more substantial than an eyewitness description of a vehicle and the jury had been unanimously convinced, it may have been appropriate. The murder of an officer or witness is an act of savagery that should not be given welcome in a shared society.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
44	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	I dont evet think the death penalty is appropriate
50	Female	No	Yes It seems to me that this was a thought out killing.
53	Female	Yes	I do not. There are too many holes in the entire situation that need to be reinvestigated.
61	Male	No	There are too many coincidences in this case that would seem to indicate the involvement of the perpetrator. It is unfortunate that there was an accident in the first place, but that seems to have started the ball rolling and resulted in an unveiling of a true criminal character. His subsequent actions show that he is not fit to be a member of society at large. Death Penalty is appropriate in this case. Jailhouse faith is not an indicator of remorse or rehabilitation.
30	Female	Yes	I don't feel it is the role of any government agency to take life from any person without consent.
44	Female	Unsure	Not without an animous vote
45	Female	Unsure	No. I feel like the judge overstepped.
24	Female	Yes	The evidence was not clear enough to know with complete certainty that Shockley was the murderer.
66	Female	No	I feel it is appropriate because 2 lives were lost because of 1 persons actions.
46	Female	No	I believe he killed the police officer to prevent him from testifying
69	Male	Yes	No, the jury in this scenario had the best information to make the decision, and it was not unanimous. The death penalty is too serious to take the chance of being wrong. Clemency would seem appropriate.
39	Male	Yes	No. There is no reason to utilize the death penalty in eye for eye cases

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
75	Male	Yes	The death penalty was appropriate for first degree murder. But the evidence leaves me with some doubt about the defendants guilt.
45	Female	Unsure	i don't think it was appropriate because the judge decided that was needed without the jury's recommendation. I also don't know the circumstances of when a person is normally sentenced to the death penalty.
47	Male	Yes	the death penalty was inappropriate.as much as the situation is very anger provoking,all life has meaning even lance"s even if he is 100% guilty
18	Male	Yes	I believe the death penalty was not appropriate in this case because I believe the crime was not heinous enough. While the death of an officer is a big deal and very heartbreaking, I believe the death penalty should only be instated for more amounts of deaths, for example a terrorist attack resulting in the deaths of more people or a serial killer with a high victim tally. There also wasn't much evidence and the judge being able to solely decide the death penalty is not very fair to me.
30	Male	Unsure	Given the gravity of the crime, it should be a death penalty
29	Male	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate. Despite all the evidence pointing towards the defendant being guilty, without DNA or video evidence clearly incriminating the defendant I cannot feel confident in deciding if a person should be executed.
71	Male	Yes	Someone who would ambush and kill another person is a menace to society since their opinion of who is wrong and deserving of punishment is fully subjective.
46	Male	Unsure	Not with incarceration circum
20	Male	Yes	No. Firstly, I don't think that there was substantial evidence to convict him of murder in the first place. Secondly, there was not a unanimous decision to sentence him to the death penalty, which should be required in my opinion.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
34	Male	Unsure	I am in the middle on this. People make bad decisions and should definitely be held liable for their actions. This is especially true if there is no doubt that all evidence points back to the story being one hundred percent true. However, if there is even the slightest doubt that the suspect did not commit the crime, then the sentence would need to be changed.
54	Male	Yes	Not appropriate, there are too many loose ends and bits that needed deeper review but that did not happen. A judge should not make such a move even in extreme cases.
49	Male	Yes	No. It should be reserved for none but the most vile individuals who show zero remorse and openly and freely, without coercion, admit to heinous crimes. That the judge ruled the death penalty was adequate almost certainly had something to do with a police officer's death being involved.
29	Male	Unsure	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate because the evidence was inconclusive in confirming whether or not Shockley committed the murder. I believe it to be unfair that he was sentenced to the death penalty because of his family connections to the gun if Shockley was not directly involved.

18	Male	Yes	No, the death penalty does not appear appropriate in Lance Shockley's case. The application of capital punishment should be reserved for the most certain and egregious offenses, where guilt is beyond reasonable doubt and the aggravating circumstances clearly outweigh any mitigating factors. In Shockley's case, there are serious questions about the strength and reliability of the evidence presented at trial. For example, one of the prosecution's central claims relied on ballistics evidence linking a bullet from the crime scene to a rifle associated with Shockley's family. However, this evidence was undermined when the ballistics expert who originally claimed a match later revised his opinion to "inconclusive." Although he eventually reaffirmed his original position, the inconsistency alone raises doubt about whether this evidence should have served as a foundation for a death sentence. Moreover, there is no direct physical or eyewitness evidence placing Shockley at the scene of the crime. The case largely relied on circumstantial indicators—such as Shockley's use of a red car similar to one seen near the victim's home, and his suspicious behavior when speaking with family members and police. While these behaviors may raise concerns, they can also be interpreted as the actions of someone under immense stress and scrutiny, rather than clear indicators of guilt. The defense rightly argued that Shockley's alleged motive—killing a single officer to stop an investigation—was implausible and irrational, making it a weak foundation for a capital case. In addition, the process by which Shockley received the death penalty further calls its appropriateness into question. The jury could not reach a unanimous decision on sentencing, which often signals a lack of consensus about whether death is the right punishment. Nonetheless, the judge chose to impose the death penalty—a decision that, while permitted under Missouri law, is rarely used and arguably
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Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
69	Male	Yes	I believe that the evidence was clear beyond a reasonable doubt. Additional information from the family corroborated that he wanted to cover his tracks. It seems reasonable to me that a person who had killed someone in a car accident might think that this was a way to get out of it.
35	Male	Yes	I don't think the death penalty was right in Lance Shockley's case because there were real doubts about whether he actually did it. He was blamed for killing Highway Patrol Sergeant Carl DeWayne Graham, but there wasn't strong proof against him, and he might have been wrongly accused. No one could clearly connect him to the murder, and it seems like other unknown people could have done it. That's why I believe the death penalty shouldn't be used when the evidence isn't clear, because it's too risky to take someone's life if there's even a chance they're innocent.
29	Male	Yes	I do not. I am against the death penalty ever being considered appropriate because I do not believe the government should have the power to kill citizens. Even one instance of wrongful execution is too much in my opinion. In this specific case, though extremely likely that the defendant did commit the murder of the officer, I would not say that he deserves the death penalty due to the lack of concrete evidence that he committed murder without a reasonable doubt.
26	Male	Yes	No, it is should not be the province of the Judge to impose death when the jury is not in unanimous agreement. furthermore, I believe the death penalty should be reserved for truly exceptional cases like the murder of children, or especially brutal murders
25	Male	Yes	The evidence was too uncertain and the jury was divided, making the death penalty inappropriate.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
44	Male	No	I believe people get sentenced for two reasons. 1. to get rehabilitated and 2. to set an example to others/ With clemency, I don't believe 2 is fulfilled
52	Male	Yes	There should be an opportunity for rehabilitation inside the prison system. Clemency should be given when there is reasonable doubt.
36	Female	Yes	it was not originally pre meditated
49	Male	Yes	I do not think the death penalty is appropriate for this case. I personally do not believe that killing someone for a murder will change anything. I think rehabilitation can do so much more for our country. Sure most signs pointed to it being Shockley but you can never be 100% without video evidence.
35	Male	Yes	I don't think the death penalty is appropriate in any case managed by the government/state. I think there are too many ethical and moral concerns to allow it.
32	Male	Yes	The death penalty should be reserved for cases where guilt is established with extraordinary certainty, the crime is especially heinous, and no lesser sentence would suffice for justice or safety.
73	Female	Yes	I don't think the death penalty was the correct sentence simply because there was no absolute proof of guilt.
52	Female	No	Yes he was found guilty of the courts for killing another person whom was also a police officer so the person couldn't give their testimony in court
70	Female	Yes	The death penalty was not appropriate. This judge took a page from Trump's dismissal of protocol and law when he decided on the death penalty. The jury should have decided that part of the sentence.
43	Female	Yes	There was reasonable doubt in this case, due to no outstanding evidence.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
30	Female	Yes	I do not believe it was appropriate because there was insufficient physical evidence. I do not believe that merely circumstantial evidence is enough to enforce the death penalty.
45	Male	Unsure	Not necessarily since idk the defendants past and he's saying he's innocent as well.
45	Female	No	Yes because he killed an innocent man for no reason
65	Female	Yes	It was not a unanimous jury verdict and in that set of circumstances, I don't believe the death penalty should be imposed when it was not a unanimous jury. I used to be okay with the death penalty but I have since changed my mind when I started learning the rates at which innocent people have been convicted, since DNA testing became useful. I want criminals to be punished, but it seems to me the death penalty should be at least rendered by a unanimous jury.
44	Male	No	Because there must of been evidence to where he was proven guilty of murder beyond a reasonable doubt. He was also guilty of killing someone through reckless driving. Both should be death penalty.
19	Female	Yes	I don't believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case. I think that he should have to live with the pain he caused and his actions.
32	Female	Unsure	I don't believe so because who are we to decide the fate of others.
39	Female	Unsure	The appropriateness of the death penalty in this case depends on several factors, including the strength of the evidence, legal precedent, and the moral considerations surrounding capital punishment.
37	Male	Yes	I think there was enough reasonable doubt to prevent a death penalty.
25	Male	No	He killed an officer and that is why I think it is appropriate for death penalty to make it know what happens when you kill an officer
49	Male	No	I do i think it is pretty apparent he killed him

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
21	Female	Yes	I don't think so because the jury did not agree on a prison term.
20	Male	Yes	No. Death penalty cases must be proven beyond the standards of normal trials. This case did not meet those standards.
33	Male	Yes	I feel for the most part, that the evidence was strong but lacked that concrete final piece that would without a shadow of a doubt prove he did it. I don't feel comfortable sentencing someone to death when there is a chance they might of not done the deed
46	Female	Yes	Because a life sentence gives him time to find out who really did it if it wasn't him.
72	Female	Yes	The evidence rendered were not enough to give him the death penalty, the jury/judge could have been more lenient concerning the case.
39	Female	No	If the vote was not unanimous, I'm not sure that I support the death penalty
37	Female	Yes	No, because of the jury did not conclude anything so the judge took it upon himself to do it
55	Female	Yes	I am not a fan of the death penalty anyway, but the judge definitely should not imposed it if it was not the wishes of all the jurors. If the death penalty is ever used it should be with absolute certainty of the guilt of the one being killed.
49	Male	Yes	No, I don't think it was appropriate. The jury was not unanimous for the sentencing, so I don't think it is acceptable for the judge to add the death penalty. This seems like an extreme action taken based on the subjective biases held by the judge. I am also against the death penalty in general, regardless of whether I think the defendant is innocent or guilty. I think it is morally wrong to take another life, and that is not something that humans can fairly decide on.
24	Female	Unsure	I feel that it is too harsh for Lance.
35	Female	Unsure	No I do not. I believe the judge should not be able to sentence an inmate to death.
27	Male	No	He seemed to do it out of spite and hate he seems guilty.com

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
27	Male	Yes	He seems guilty he did it out of hate.
33	Male	Yes	No. I believe the death penalty should only be used in cases where the convicted is still a danger to others while behind bars. Such cases are few-to-none nowadays, so I generally oppose the use of the death penalty.
41	Female	Yes	No, there was reasonable doubt in this case. The death penalty should only be used when the evidence is strong and beyond a doubt.
60	Female	Yes	I definitely think the judge should have imposed a lighter sentence, since the jury didn't even agree on a sentence and it's unprecedented to impose the death penalty so readily when the jury can't agree.
34	Female	Yes	I think it would have been appropriate if the evidence had been more conclusive, but it looks to me like enough doubt to avoid that.
42	Male	No	The bullet matches the rifle, he was unaccounted for during the crime, and he made several attempts to have family lie for an alibi.
61	Female	Yes	The jury couldn't come to that decision. The judge should not have imposed the death penalty.
57	Female	No	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate because there is still a little doubt that Lance Shockley committed the murder. While I think it is highly likely, I don't think it is for certain. The death penalty should be for cases that are 100% certain.
37	Female	No	Yes. I think it's appropriate because it was premeditated. The crime was also targeting a police officer. He sought him out to murder him.
42	Female	Unsure	I think life in prison would be a better sentence since there was some doubt.
35	Male	Yes	No it's never appropriate
45	Female	Yes	I don't support the death penalty in any case.
39	Female	Yes	No. A Jury of his peers could not agree, and therefore, he was punished on the beliefs of one man, the judge.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
54	Female	No	Yes. If you decide to take a life, you'd better be willing to give up yours. Your life is no better than the one you took.
30	Male	No	Yes, he deliberately killed him because he was investigating him.
58	Female	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty is ever appropriate, so I have to say no. But, if there ever was a time when someone else would justifiably support it, in my opinion, it would not be here. I still don't approve of the death penalty, but could understand it more if it was a child victim of sexual assault and murder, or something especially heinous like that. I just don't believe that a police officer's life is worth more than any other person's life just because they are a police officer.
30	Female	Unsure	No because the crime does not sound as heinous as many others crimes. Life in prison feels more reasonable
31	Male	Unsure	No, if there is any doubt, it should not be implemented
57	Female	Yes	I don't believe so in this instance. The jury did not make the recommendation. It was made by a single person, the judge who could be biased since the murder was that of law enforcement. I believe that life in prison would be the better sentence in this case.
19	Female	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate for this case. I don't think it is right for the judge to make this big of a decision basically by themselves.
45	Male	Yes	No....there were questions about ballistics and motive. Also the jury couldn't agree so it is rare and odd the judge stepped in. These questions make me uncomfortable with the decision for the death penalty

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
35	Male	No	Yes, the jury found beyond reasonable doubt that Shockley was guilty of first degree murder. No new evidence has been presented to suggest this verdict was incorrect. As a result, the death penalty is appropriate for a murder conviction, in my opinion. Shockley gave no regard for the victim of his fatal crash or the officer that he murdered. I support the death penalty in this instance.
60	Male	No	As already mentioned, the death penalty is appropriate in this case . The heinous nature of the crime warrants death .
38	Female	Yes	No because they can't really prove without a shadow of a doubt that he actually killed the officer
62	Male	Yes	No, because the death penalty is never appropriate.
49	Female	Yes	The governor should grant clemency to Lance Shockley because the case against him contains significant doubts, including conflicting ballistics evidence and no direct proof tying him to the crime. The jury could not unanimously agree on a death sentence, and the judge's decision to impose it despite this raises concerns about fairness. Given these issues and Shockley's positive behavior and rehabilitation in prison, life imprisonment is a more appropriate and just outcome.
58	Male	Yes	No. The taking of a life is NEVER right and certainly not moral. I oppose the death penalty in all instances. I find it inhumane and cruel.
57	Female	Yes	No it wasn't. The jury could never agree and the evidence is inconclusive.
63	Female	No	Shockley gunned down a police officer. No amount of finding faith, good behavior, etc., changes that.
47	Male	Yes	No, The evidence wasn't strong. Experts had different opinions and jury was divided. When guilty isn't completely obvious, a life sentence is a better option than a death sentence that can't be changed.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
59	Female	No	Yes, the death penalty was appropriate because a police officer was killed with intent and it was premeditated.
38	Female	No	Yes I do as he obviously was hiding something about the original accident if he had to go out and kill the investigating officer. what was he trying to hide?
21	Male	No	I think that if that is what the jury found, there is no reason or evidence to overturn. What he did was an incredibly malicious act to protect himself after already killing someone else.
55	Male	Yes	It was unclear in the description a few times when someone allegedly said something, but you don't know who the person saying it was, and how they know the information. I think the death penalty should only be used in extreme cases where the verdict is certain, and kept on the books for leverage when negotiating with suspects. This case had too much uncertainty. Even the ballistics people were uncertain, or couldn't decide if it was a match or uncertain (which means they are uncertain)
58	Female	Unsure	Probably not, given the lack of a unanimous decision by the jury
76	Female	Yes	There were no eyewitnesses to the murder. The prosecution's ballistics expert changed his testimony twice. It makes no sense to think that Shockley thought killing the officer would stop the investigation into his car accident. The police targeted him as their suspect and didn't bother looking for anyone else. The jury weren't convinced enough of his guilt to recommend the death penalty, and he has apparently made great positive changes during his incarceration (although that isn't related to the facts of his case.)
61	Female	Unsure	Yes all evidence shows he murdered someone
47	Male	Unsure	Yes, all the reasons listed in the context.
71	Female	Yes	I don't think there was enough evidence to support the guilty verdict. I think this case was circumstantial.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
34	Male	Unsure	No unless it is beyond a shadow of a doubt that the man killed the police officer.
50	Female	Unsure	I do think it is appropriate. He killed another person only to protect himself from imprisonment.
53	Male	No	Yes, he killed a man in cold blood and was found guilty
36	Female	Yes	No. I think the death penalty should only be used for exceptional, extreme cases. I don't believe this case falls under that category.
40	Male	Unsure	No because people that get the death penalty should be for something more. For instance with the murder case, it should be either the amount of people murdered or the way it was done maybe in an inhumane way or barbaric way.
51	Male	No	Yes because he murdered a law enforcement person.
44	Female	Yes	At first the death penalty was appropriate because the prosecution had proven that the defendant was guilty and indeed had killed Graham. Many factors had been considered in the investigation and was certain that without reasonable doubt the suspect had shot dead the investigating officer to prevent any further investigation. Those aggravating factors considered are enough to impose a death penalty
68	Female	Yes	No I don't. I don't think the judge should have decided the death penalty.
52	Female	Yes	No I don't take them to death penalty should be saved for people that do really bad disgusting crimes Against other people
46	Male	Unsure	I'm opposed to the death penalty in virtually cases, especially at the state level. The evidence against this person doesn't seem to be conclusive, and the jury didn't unanimously approve the death penalty, so those could also be reasons to oppose it. But my primary reason for opposing the death penalty here is that I feel the death penalty is unproductive and highly unethical, in basically all circumstances.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
40	Female	Unsure	I don't feel I have enough information to make a decision on that without questioning it later
22	Male	Yes	I do not think it was because he was potentially innocent and did not know what was going on from my understanding.
43	Female	Yes	I don't think so because it was not decided by a jury of his peers. The judge imposing this without concrete evidence that he committed this crime was not giving the defendant due process. Although circumstantial evidence clearly points to his guilt, that's not really how the justice system is intended to work. It should be proven beyond reasonable doubt.
57	Female	Yes	No I do not. First the jury was not unanimous in wanting the death penalty and what I just read said that it is unusual for a judge to sentence to death without the unanimous vote. But more importantly it doesn't sound like the case was irrefutable that he committed this crime to begin with. For those reasons I think the death penalty was inappropriate.
77	Male	Unsure	there was the death of the passenger in the wreck
69	Male	Yes	Writing as someone once employed by the AG's office, Criminal Division. I never liked seeing cases without direct evidence and believe if the jury can't agree on death, it should be mandatory life.
35	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case. The jury was not unanimous, and there was some doubt. The judge should not have imposed the death penalty. I honestly believe the death penalty should never be imposed, but this case doesn't seem to have any justification for the death penalty at all.
25	Female	Unsure	I don't know if it was appropriate or not to be honest. I think that if he is guilty then yes because he took that man's life just so he wouldn't be charged or maybe just revenge. It sounds like he never confessed though and kept it up until the end. I don't know it's a rough call.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
26	Female	Yes	Im not sure
44	Male	Yes	I am of the belief that the death penalty is never appropriate, as the state should not have the capability to execute a citizen, as a life cannot be replaced once lost, in the case of new evidence, bias discovered later, etc.
38	Male	Yes	I myself feel I steel don not have enough information about the incident to think that the death penalty is the right choice
58	Male	No	I do, because the jury found him guilty of killing a police officer, and so he should be executed.
73	Male	Yes	No, I don't believe that it was appropriate for the judge to impose this sentence if the jury did not recommend it.
24	Male	No	Yes. He lied about the case and he had the motive and the bullets were from the rifle he has access to.
63	Male	Yes	I do not think the death penalty is appropriate in this case, but life without parole would be ok.
24	Female	Yes	No, there is so little direct evidence connecting him to the crime
39	Female	Yes	No, because I think it was a harsh decision considering
30	Male	Yes	No, using the death penalty was not the right choice for Lance Shockley. The jury chose not to give a unanimous recommendation for death, a decision which is rarely made. Moreover, ballistics evidence played a key role, but it was inconsistent, with an expert reversing their judgement and then returning to the original one, which makes it doubtful. While in prison, Mr. Shockley has rehabilitated a lot, saving a fellow inmate's life and maintaining proper behavior. Since the jury could not agree on a sentence and with doubts about key evidence, keeping him in prison for life would have been the best decision, given his realistic potential for growth.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
41	Male	Yes	I think there are too many unknown variables in this case to impose the death penalty. In my opinion the death penalty should only be if the suspect is guilty without a shadow of a doubt. There is enough evidence to say that he did the crime and deserves prison, but not even if there is just a 1% doubt we should not take a human life over it.
22	Female	Yes	It was inappropriate because i believed the authorities jumped into a conclusion that Shockley was the murderer without concrete evidence. He should be given a second chance instead of death penalty
32	Male	Yes	No. There needs to be an additional burden of proof for death penalty than guilty
44	Male	No	Well I would guess there is evidence that proves beyond a reasonable doubt he was guilty. I would have to been there at court to know but that's the law. He should of gotten the death penalty for being negligently responsible for the death of another with the car accident. They don't give that sentence. So I think it is appropriate.
33	Female	Yes	No I don't - especially because the jury did not recommend it. It seems like an overreach of power for the judge to impose. It also reeks of bias because it was a police officer that was shot, and the judge, also in the justice system, imposed the death penalty. The man was to be tried by a jury of his peers, not by a judge. The inconclusive ballistics evidence is alarming. I also find it odd that the officer was said to be shot in the line of duty, even though he was previously said to be shot at his home.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
53	Female	No	I absolutely do believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case. I was married to a deputy sheriff for 11 years. I believe that killing a cop should be punishable by death. I also believe that this man was a cold blooded killer who would have killed twelve people to try to save his own hide. He is a menace to society and he has no sense of value for any life but his own . Had he just taken personal responsibility for the first death, he wouldn't be in so much trouble. But clearly he's never going to take personal responsibility for anything he does- and he will kill his own mother if it keeps him from facing the consequences of his own actions.
27	Female	Yes	No, I do not think it was appropriate since there was not 100% proof that he did it. I have heard cases of people being proven innocent after years on death row and it seems he could possibly be one of those cases. I am unsure if the death sentence should be used at all for anyone and I definitely don't think we should use the death sentence in cases where there are doubts or disagreements about the evidence. I think people think of the death sentence to lightly instead of viewing it as taking someones actual one life that they get. It is extremely immoral to take someones life especially if they are innocent so it is not worth the risk of being wrong.
21	Female	Yes	I do not think the death penalty is an appropriate punishment in any case. I would need to see extreme evidence to even consider the death penalty, and even then, I feel lifetime imprisonment is a more suitable punishment.
45	Female	Unsure	I think there is quite a bit of evidence proving that he was involved in some way. I think a life sentence might be more appropriate in this case.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
30	Female	Unsure	I do not. I live in Missouri so I do understand that the legal system doesn't have a good reputation here, but if the jury wasn't unanimous in their decision, I don't believe a judge should impose such a harsh sentence as well. The Jury and jury know more information regarding the case than I do, though.
45	Male	No	I do because he killed a police officer. Police officer's are in high risk positions and there are ton of criminals out to get them for being arrested. There needs to be a very high consequence for killing a police officer to make criminals think twice.
35	Female	Yes	It's hard to say for sure but I believe it is more appropriate than inappropriate because of the severity of his actions of killing two people, one in the wreck and the investigator
35	Male	Yes	I do not believe in the death penalty carried about by the state in the first place so I do not think it is appropriate in this case or any other. It is a serious act that is open to a lot of mistakes, corruption, and abuse. There is no way to fairly implement it that protects potential innocent people in my opinion.
58	Male	No	I believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case, as he was convicted of murder, and it was premeditated against a law enforcement officer.
37	Female	Yes	I don't approve of the death penalty unless it's a special case, like a dangerous serial killer or child rapist. Life imprisonment is more appropriate, especially in this case where it's possible that Shockley is innocent, even it's just a chance. Also, from his prison record, it does not seem that he is a danger and that he is trying to do his best.
45	Male	Unsure	Again depends on his age. It also seems like if he killed someone that wasn't a police officer there would be no death penalty (like the person in the car accident).

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
61	Female	Yes	Without a jury verdict for death it was inappropriate for the judge to impose that sentence. Life imprisonment would have been appropriate in the first place.
46	Female	Yes	I don't. The facts don't seem to be 100%conclusive.
32	Male	Yes	No, the jury should make that choice.
27	Female	Yes	I never believe the death penalty is appropriate.
43	Male	Yes	Yes because he targeted a police officer at his home.
45	Male	Yes	I would say no because the evidence was so shaky or insubstantial. The first expert going back and forth casts doubt on his conclusion, and the witnessing of a similar car near the scene does not definitely place Shockley there. His behavior around his alibi and what he told his grandmother is suspicious, but it doesn't prove murder.
65	Female	Yes	I would prefer life imprisonment over the death penalty. I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate. The fact that the jury was not unanimous disturbs me.
42	Female	Yes	I think without a unanimous jury, and with some inconclusive evidence, a lifetime sentence is more appropriate than the death penalty.
24	Female	No	I think he took a life and does not deserve to live.
36	Male	Unsure	I believe the death penalty was warranted in this case. There are simply too many "coincidences" adding up to be unrelated. Even his family testified he put his finger over her mouth and told her to stay quiet and stick to the false story. Your family does not usually testify against you like that.
34	Female	Yes	It set precedent and it shouldn't have if the jury couldn't agree it should have been 30 yr life or something. Also the police in this stare are corrupt as fuck even the "good ones"
34	Female	No	Yes because he intentionally went to go take another persons life.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
40	Male	Unsure	No its just another murder, not sure if it was calculated. Plus it wasn't brutal, he didnt torture the person and only killed one
58	Male	Yes	The death penalty was not appropriate in this case, because there was no unanimous jury consent. The judge should not have given the death sentence.
32	Female	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty is warranted because the crime was not an extreme act of violence. Shockley did not blow up a police building, he allegedly targeted a single officer. While such a crime deserves serious punishment, it is not a crime that suggests Mr. Shockley is such a danger to society that the best thing for society as a whole is to end his life.
55	Female	Unsure	I kind of believe it was because he killed a police officer those are very serious offenses.
51	Male	Unsure	I don't think the death penalty was just due to some doubt and not being one hundred percent sure. I don't think the judge should put himself as jury and prosecution.
41	Male	Yes	No, the jury couldn't unanimously decide on a verdict, the murder, if there was one, was limited to one person. Life imprisonment at most would've been appropriate.
33	Male	Yes	No. I believe the death penalty is only acceptable in cases where the criminal can still cause harm while behind bars. Shockley does not fit that criteria.
51	Female	Unsure	Again, I would have to read the entire transcript and get the whole picture before I can make a decision like that.
28	Female	Yes	At the same time, I don't believe in the death penalty, so I would say life in prison.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
38	Male	No	Yes, I believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case because Lance Shockley murdered a law enforcement officer to obstruct justice, which demonstrates a calculated and dangerous disregard for the law. The presence of multiple aggravating factors, including targeting a peace officer and attempting to avoid arrest, justifies the severity of the sentence.
52	Female	Yes	I never think the death penalty is appropriate. He continued to deny he was responsible for the crime. I think it is wrong to impose such a horrific and barbaric penalty on anyone.
54	Female	Unsure	He was convicted of planning to murder a human
43	Female	Yes	I am strongly opposed to the death penalty to begin with. But the fact that the jury could not unanimously decide guilt and that the judge imposed the death penalty is shocking. I believe for something as serious as the death penalty, it should be unanimous. Further I don't think the evidence shows he committed the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.
55	Female	Unsure	No it's never right
35	Male	No	Yes, the offender was rightfully found guilty and there is no new information that would remove the judgement that was previously handed down by the jury. The offender must be responsible for his actions, which in this case is the death penalty.
50	Female	Unsure	Yes, he murdered someone
29	Female	Yes	I do not believe in the death penalty, and specifically in this case I felt there was reasonable doubt in the trial. The jury not coming to a conclusive decision points me to that reasonable doubt as well. Although it seems from the evidence that the suspect LIKELY committed the murder (and I personally think he did based on evidence) it doesn't seem like it was 100% proven.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
32	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate because the jury could not agree on an unanimous decision.
45	Male	Unsure	I do not because the jury was not unanimous
36	Female	Yes	I don't believe it was appropriate because the weapons expert seemed wishy-washy on their decision, the jury didn't have a unanimous vote, and it appeared as though other people weren't investigated as potential murderers.
48	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was appropriate for several reasons. First, I don't believe that the death penalty is ever a truly appropriate solution. Second, there was not a unanimous jury recommendation, which is typically necessary for a judge to impose the death penalty. Third, it is clear that Shockley has maintained his innocence and is contributing good to his surrounding environment. It seems inhumane to essentially murder him when the facts are unclear and he has proven himself to be a valuable contributor to society.
45	Female	Yes	I do not believe it was appropriate as it was imposed by one judge instead of a unanimous jury verdict.
30	Male	Yes	I don't think there was enough concrete evidence to say 100% Shockley was the murderer. Also the jury didn't reach a unanimous decision.
40	Male	Unsure	I can see why the judge imposed the death penalty. It's likely that Sharky wanted to avoid arrest for his crash that killed a passenger.
48	Female	No	Yes because he murdered an official. I believe that anyone who commits murder is eligible for the death penalty.
57	Female	Unsure	yes, because a police officer was killed.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
39	Male	No	Yes. Too many times the courts have been insanely lenient and just letting criminals walk out free it's time to put justice back in and let people know "Biden era is over. Obama Judges are rogue and the judicial needs to learn its place and do what needs to be done" nope death penalty them all on PPV so states can get funding.
32	Female	Unsure	No. Because it is not in my hands/nor the government's hands to play God
43	Female	Yes	I don't believe it's appropriate for a judge to unilaterally impose a death sentence. Only a jury should have that responsibility.
58	Male	Yes	The death penalty, in my opinion, is never appropriate, as I strongly oppose the death penalty.
63	Female	No	I believe the death penalty is appropriate because murder was committed. The evidence strongly points at the incarcerated. It is encouraging that the prisoner made life changes, it doesn't excuse the crime, nor the fact that he attempted to cover it up.
68	Female	Yes	No I do not. Because it doesn't seem too be a lot of evidence that he did it. They seem to have been convinced that he did the crime. Without looking at anyone else.
32	Female	Yes	I don't think it was appropriate in this case, because it seemed like most of the "evidence" was speculation, vs actual proof that he committed the crime.
30	Female	Yes	No. Even if he did kill the man, I do not believe one murder warrants the death penalty. They should absolutely be punished. But I believe the death penalty should be reserved for cases of mass death, or serial killers. Both which have to be proven without a doubt
53	Male	No	Yes, I like the death penalty for any pre meditated murder
66	Female	Unsure	I do believe the death penalty was appropriate for Shockley. He took a life and should pay the price with his own life.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
31	Female	Yes	No, because others who are convicted of first degree murder do not automatically get the death penalty. Additionally, the jury was not conclusive.
46	Female	No	I think that it was appropriate in this case. I think he did it.
41	Male	Unsure	I do not think the death penalty was appropriate. There seems to be some lingering doubt around this case. I would need more information.
50	Female	Yes	I do not think that the death penalty was appropriate. I feel this way because there is no real proof that Shockly was the killer. Shockly has maintained his innocence and has not become bitter even if there is a chance he was falsely accused.
31	Male	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty is appropriate in any case. I think prisoners who murder others should serve life in prison, because I think the death penalty is barbaric.

51	Female	No	First off, the person may WANT to die if prison is making them deathly sick and tortured. They should be able to choose a quick death, but it should be outside under the sky in public like they used to do bc they need to connect to their Creator. It is in my deep opinion, heresy of the sort to hold a person underground in a room for execution & extremely ungodly to kill them there in what is already considered a torture chamber. A sheriff car, other drivers in the opposite direction lane, the drunk man, & I could have been killed while by the drunk person in my passenger seat when he fell over into my steering wheel area veering us off into a headon collision. This truly happens even when a incompetent passenger is disabled sometimes and cant control their body movements. I have had to have people ride in my back seat, but if I don't know they are impaired bc sometimes you can't tell then the headon could have occurred. One would have to swiftly turn the steering wheel back into alignment to avoid the headon. But if the driver can't, are they at fault for the passenger causing the wreck? No. These cases have many details we don't know. But I DEFINITELY believe an accused person should have the right to have a form of euthanasia if the lockdown is intolerable. Idk if the whole situation is at all to be altered bc the man killed was a sheriff. This is bc there are criminal law enforcement officers out there which commit lethal crimes that are covered up. A man wearing a badge does not make him innocent. I don't know anything about the situation but for what I told you. The actual decision and my opinion could be altered somewhat by details, but definitely the old fashioned outdoor death penalty is accepted NOT the underground torture chamber kill which is ungodly and may cause those conducting those deaths Judgement Day concern. I hope that I don't get shot by an illegal officer. It happens all the time and they don't spend a day in jail yet get more add
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Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
62	Female	Unsure	no. There were too many loopholes in evidence chain.
33	Female	Yes	No, I don't think that the death penalty was appropriate in this case because there was doubt that he was the murderer. The cops were too quick to only focus on this man. I think that there is reasonable doubt that it was him and it isn't fair to kill someone.
49	Female	Unsure	I'm not positive that the death penalty was the right sentence simply because I have so many questions that this summary did not answer. Did they forensically prove he shot a gun at all? Is there proof, other than eye-witnesses, that a red car with a yellow sticker was there? This is incriminating, but witnesses are wrong all the time. And, is his grandmother the only person in the entire area with a red car? Maybe a life sentence would have been better since the evidence around the gun/bullet isn't definitive.
23	Female	Yes	I think more third party investigators should look into the case. I believe the MSHP could have been biased since they lost a fellow officer.
46	Male	Yes	No, I don't support the death penalty when the jury does not choose that unanimously.
31	Male	No	The death penalty was appropriate in this case. All evidence pointed to the suspect. He borrowed the red car, he used the same bullets ".243" that the ballistic officers found, and lastly he told his grandma to not say a word by putting his finger on his mouth. An eye for an eye is the best form of punishment, it also saves Missouri tax dollars.
69	Female	Yes	Even as bad as the crime was, I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case. When the jurors could not reach a unanimous decision, I don't feel his sentencing was appropriate. A death penalty cannot be taken back, once it's done. Even though there might be strong evidence and reasons for him to have committed the murder, I would give the benefit of doubt.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
29	Male	Yes	I believe it is appropriate, however I also believe clemency would be fair.
28	Female	Yes	No, I don't believe it was appropriate. When the ballistics evidence is inconclusive and the jury is hung, I think it's important to continue the process until there is an agreement by an impartial jury. Especially when you are considering a man being put to death, it should not be a sole decision of a judge.
30	Female	No	Yes I do. It sounds like police was work was done effectively to conclude both probable cause and guilt.
20	Male	Yes	No, for the death penalty it has to have a great amount of proof.
38	Male	Yes	I don't think the evidence proved that Shockley committed the murder, and I don't think the evidence presented was enough to kill another person over. There didn't seem to be any physical evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, just a narrative that presumed guilt. Specifically around the weapon, there was "one in the family" or whatever, but apparently no evidence or shaky evidence that it was connected to the crime. The ballistics experts did not seem confident at all. The car matching the description seems quite shaky. There's a lot of suspicious stuff but even the jury wasn't convinced what to do, and if the victim wasn't a cop, I'm not sure the judge would've made the same decision. I also think the death penalty is always wrong, but especially when the case has holes in it. Conduct in prison should also factor into one's decision making process.
25	Female	No	no, its too harsh
46	Female	Yes	No, a single judge should not pass a death sentence, that itself is shocking. I will look up this judges name and if they are up for re-election I will vote them out.
41	Female	Yes	No, the evidence, casings were not conclusive. The death penalty should require certainty, like video or DNA evidence.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
58	Female	Unsure	I am not familiar with this case and there isn't enough information in this write-up to convince me that this person deserved the death penalty.
25	Female	Yes	The death penalty should be saved for cases where the crime is so heinous and unashamed that rehabilitation is unfathomable. This does not, to me, sound like such a case.
63	Female	No	I believe it was appropriate because if a person kills another person they should be put to death. It is not fair that tax payers pay for him to be in prison if he was sentenced to die.
37	Female	Yes	Specialists found the gun match inconclusive, everything sounds circumstantial at best, and things sound far from sure. I also don't think a death penalty should be brought on the say-so of one judge, but should require more agreement between jurors.
41	Female	Unsure	I'm unsure if he was guilty
19	Male	Unsure	I believe it is appropriate, although I personally would be very hesitant, as I do not know all the facts of the case, a unanimous decision would be nice
38	Male	Yes	No, because the jury did not provide unanimous recommendation of the death penalty and the evidence was circumstantial.
26	Male	Yes	No, i don't believe the death penalty was appropriate because future evidence could always prove someone to be innocent. Executing someone removes an chance for them to make an appeal or be exonerated and set free down the line. It's also more expensive to execute someone than keep them imprisoned for life, so there is no real advantage to execution other than potentially allowing for a greater sense of vindication among the public and those directly effected by a person's crimes. But no amount of vindication is worth the risk of killing an innocent person.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
47	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	The death penalty is never appropriate. If there's ever a chance of an innocent person being killed then it is never appropriate. And there have been many, many instances of this happening, where an innocent person was being killed.
31	Female	Yes	I think the death sentence should be reserved for repeated offenders of heinous crimes with undeniable evidence pointed at them. I think this situation doesn't have any of those factors.
50	Female	Yes	No, the death penalty was too harsh. With the evidence not being air tight life in prison would have been better if they found him guilty.
38	Female	No	Yes. He planned and executed the murder of an individual to try to stop an investigation into another death he caused.
48	Male	Yes	Among other reasons: I think since the jury was unsure it should have defaulted to life imprisonment. There may be other reasons, but this seems to be the top-level one to me.
42	Female	Yes	No, because the jury did not come to a unanimous decision, which means some did not believe that he committed the murder beyond a reasonable doubt. The death penalty should be reserved for when the case is certain beyond a reasonable doubt.
31	Female	Unsure	No, since it wasn't a unanimous decision by the jury and I feel more evidence is needed.
37	Female	Yes	I do not believe it was appropriate. The death penalty should never be given out if the jury can't come to a unanimous decision.
29	Non-binary / third gender	No	Based solely on the explanation given here, I found that there was a preponderance of evidence linking Shockley to the crime, as well as his obstruction of its investigation, destruction or hiding of evidence, and his attempt to falsify his alibi. While some cases like this (especially in the pre-mass-surveillance era) are much less clear-cut, I think Shockley can be linked strongly enough to the killing that it approaches or exceeds a threshold of reasonable doubt of his guilt.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
57	Female	Yes	I believe the death penalty is over kill in this scenario. I tend to want to see the death penalty applied in cases involving the rape, torture, and murder of children.
47	Female	Yes	No, the death penalty was not appropriate because the jury wasn't unanimous.
75	Male	Yes	I think the judge was a little premature with his decision. He should have at least had a unanimous jury to make such a decision in my opinion,
41	Male	Yes	The case was not without doubt, and the man had shown improvement.
26	Female	No	Yes and no, if the jury unanimously agreed then yes. In this specific instance, no, because someone had doubts about his sentence, not his innocence. A life sentence would also suffice here.
27	Male	No	The death penalty was appropriate because I, like most people, believe in an eye for an eye. You take a life, yours should absolutely be taken. I think we're way too soft on criminals and it's why they continue doing what they do. If we brought back public hangings and actually enforced the law like we used to things would be great. Look at El Salvador for a prime example. I 100% support everything El Salvador has done with its criminals. You don't want to contribute to progressing the society that birthed you? Now it's either you do it or you die. That's how things SHOULD be, but we're stuck in this weird PR phase, which I believe is slowly dying out currently thanks to Trump.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
36	Male	Yes	No. My primary reason is that it seems that the sentence of the death penalty fell outside the confines of a criminal determination by a jury of your peers. This judgment was handed down by a single individual (the judge). I imagine there might be legal processes/complexities that would suggest a judge independently handing down a sentence like this is acceptable and perhaps a common part of the legal process. But for me, as a citizen and non-expert, that would bother me and seem to violate Shockley's constitutional right of his fate being determined by a jury of his peers. From the very brief information provided, I would, as a juror, err towards Shockley being guilty of the alleged crime. However, I think that the sentence should be determined by the jury. And considering the details of the case, I would support the issuance of clemency. I also erred toward supporting the provision of clemency based on Shockley's "rehabilitation" (e.g., good behavior, pro-social/human motivations) during his imprisonment.
27	Female	Yes	It absolutely wasn't - if the death penalty was concerned with something related to the extreme abuse of a child or other person I would understand; but I don't think it was warranted at all in this scenario. Even then / I think a lot of people who acruslly committed actual crimes deserve to die slowly after a life deprived of most benefits prisoners may earn, and not to be given an "out" via death penalty.
26	Male	Yes	It was not so intense an incident that it called for the death penalty. I believe, since he has seemed to improve mentally while in prison,n that he should be granted life in prison.
40	Male	Unsure	I do. I think that (if) he killed the police officer (still I don't know the full details and I have no clue), he should have the death penalty. I feel that he did something VERY bad in taking his grandmas car and then going to the officers house and killing him warrants a death penalty.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
65	Female	Yes	If the law requires the jury unanimously agree on sentence, then the death penalty should not have been given.
18	Female	Yes	No because the jury wasn't unanimous and there is only circumstantial evidence.
39	Female	Yes	No, simply because the judge decided on it unilaterally. That was not cool.
35	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	I don't believe the death penalty is appropriate in any case. An eye for an eye and all that.
37	Male	Yes	I don't think so there's enough evidence for the death penalty.
32	Female	Unsure	Absolutely not. Way too much room for error and not one shred of actual evidence was used. Just because he behaved strangely doesn't make him a killer.
37	Male	Yes	There isn't enough evidence for the death penalty.
34	Male	Unsure	I don't know, but if I had to pick one I don't think the death penalty was necessarily appropriate in this case. I think the death penalty is appropriate when the crime is a pattern (like a serial killer) or if it was an especially brutal or disturbing murder and the perpetrator shows no remorse.
24	Male	No	Yes, because the death of a public servant is one of the highest forms of harm a person can do to society.
30	Male	Yes	I do not believe death penalty should have been appropriate because there was a lot of unknowns during the trial bases.
42	Female	No	Premeditated killing of a police officer
24	Male	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty was the right call, as I believe there is chance for redemption and being able to see the error of your ways through being inaccurate

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
33	Male	Yes	No, I don't believe the death penalty was appropriate. If they feel there's enough evidence to convict him, great, but the evidence collected did not say 100% that he did it. If you cannot completely prove that a person did it, they shouldn't be put on death row.
34	Female	Yes	No, the jury didn't agree to impose it. I also don't feel like they had enough direct evidence (like fingerprints, threats, direct contact between the him and the victim) to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he was really the killer.
53	Female	Yes	I do not believe the death penalty should have been ordered because it was not conclusive that he was guilty
20	Male	Yes	There was not enough evidence to convict him
58	Male	Yes	I used to be a supporter of the death penalty, and over time I seen too many circumstantial evidence convictions receive the death penalty. I don't believe our system of justice is accurate enough to be doling out death as punishment. This case exemplifies this belief. It is quite likely that he is guilty, but that is not good enough. It is certainly not "beyond a shadow of a doubt:.
23	Male	Yes	No, I do not believe the the penalty was appropriate in this case. The evidence used to convict Shockley, particularly the ballistic match, was later determined to be inconclusive.
48	Male	Yes	No, crimes against law enforcement officers are given higher value than those of non LEO citizens. Similar to hate crimes it is unfair and unjust to elevate the value of a crime based on the victim or motive. Crime is crime.
36	Male	No	it is appropriate because the suspect was guilty given the provided facts and he should receive death penalty for killing the officer.
67	Female	Yes	I dont believe it is up to us to determine the death of a person. However, life in prison, should be enough punishment

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
24	Female	Unsure	I'm not sure. It feels like this case was very convoluted with a lot of he said she said on both sides. I feel the evidence should be irrefutable but there does seem to be more evidence against him than for him.
54	Male	Yes	I think the penalty was appropriate because of the evidence and the defendants lack of accepting responsibility.
28	Female	Yes	No—the jury did not make a unanimous decision and this seems like a crime of passion. I believe death penalty should only be used in cases of sociopathy.
37	Female	Yes	No because there wasn't a full agreement with everyone
57	Male	No	No. A lifetime in prison would be a far worse punishment. A life sentence has no hope for redemption. The prisoner may have hope to be someday released, but mostly it is just a coping mechanism to keep from going crazy.
38	Male	Unsure	Unsure.
64	Female	Yes	Since a jury of 13 could not come to an agreement I do not believe this was fair for the judge to give this man the death penalty. I think it should have been life in prison without ever getting out no matter what his demeanor has been.
32	Female	Unsure	I don't think the death penalty was appropriate in this case. I think it should be used for especially heinous crimes committed by individuals who are beyond redemption and rehabilitation.
41	Female	Unsure	I do believe if you take a life then your life can be the price. So with that in mind then yes I do believe the death penalty was an appropriate punishment.
25	Male	Yes	No, the jury was not unanimous
26	Female	Yes	Absolutely not. A judge should not be able to give a death penalty sentence without a unanimous decision from the jury.
35	Female	Yes	No, there are too many doubts in the case.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
26	Female	Yes	I am still unsure, but based on the nature of the crime I think life in prison would be just,
25	Female	Yes	I think people should get life instead
24	Female	No	He killed 2 innocent people, even if the passenger he killed was an accident, he killed a good hardworking and innocent police officer. He showed no remorse.
54	Female	No	Yes because if you willingly take a life you need to be prepared for your life to be taken. Why should you get to live when you cut someone's life short?
43	Female	Yes	No, because it should be the jury's decision. I don't really believe in weighing the prisoner's current rehabilitation - since that can easily be faked, and as a non-religious person the "faith" thing does nothing but make me roll my eyes. But in a case where there's mostly circumstantial evidence and the defendant maintains his innocence, we shouldn't be killing people without absolute 100% certainty that they committed the crime. You don't take someone's life for "probably."
37	Male	No	I do believe that the death penalty was appropriate in this case because I believe the evidence points to Mr Shockley being the one who was the murder. While me may maintain his innocence, many criminals do that
26	Female	Yes	I do not believe it was appropriate. The jury was not unanimous in its sentencing recommendation to the judge which shows there was doubt in the jury about whether the death penalty was appropriate. I think the judge should have went with the lesser option. I also generally am against the death penalty in almost all cases.
40	Male	Yes	The details are not solid enough.
52	Female	Yes	The death penalty is not appropriate in ANY case. Convictions are sometimes overturned when new evidence comes to light.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
47	Female	Unsure	I do not necessarily support the death penalty as a form of punishment. I have a hard time believing that we can play judge, jury and executioner with people's lives when data can be manipulated, people say what you want to hear and lawyers work with loopholes to get guilty people out of having to serve their punishment. The evidence in this case wasn't strong enough for me to warrant the death penalty
59	Female	Yes	No but it would not matter what Mr. Shockley did as I am simply opposed to the legal system determining which persons should live or die.
39	Male	Yes	No
39	Male	Yes	No
70	Male	Yes	I rarely believe a death sentence is warranted, except perhaps in cases involving mass murder. If the victim wasn't a police officer, I don't believe the judge would have given that sentence and I don't think that's right.
47	Male	Yes	No. The death penalty should rarely be an option, and the judge may have had some sympathies to a LEO.
34	Female	Yes	I don't think it was appropriate in this case, because death is an irreversible solution to a temporary problem--especially when there was no consensus between the jury.
41	Female	No	Just because he is behaving in prison doesn't mean that he didn't commit the crime that he is convicted of
51	Female	No	He killed a man. I believe the death penalty is warranted. If we have harsher crimes it might deter others from crime. There is so little accountability today.
19	Male	Yes	I do not think so because the jury did not unanimously decide to implement it. In addition, the suspect also showed that he was capable of having a positive impact on those around him while in prison.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
27	Male	Yes	No. The biggest factor for me is that the whole case seems to be based on circumstantial evidence. There is no "smoking gun" that proves that the defendant is guilty. Another factor that I considered was the judge issuing the death penalty, when the jury was not unanimous on what the sentencing should be. Overall, I feel that the death penalty was unfairly used in this case to punish a potentially innocent man, because the justice system determined him to be an easy target.
42	Male	Yes	One of the three "beyond a reasonable doubt" statements, that the officer was killed to prevent investigation, is indeed NOT beyond a reasonable doubt. Additionally, the judge-declared penalty seems out of the ordinary.
29	Male	Yes	I don't support the death penalty. People should be given the opportunity to change; even though the criminal did not afford that opportunity to the victim, we as a society should rise above and not kill. There have also been too many cases of wrongful death sentences.
52	Male	Yes	The evidence against the defendant was circumstantial and the possibility of his innocence was too high.
28	Male	No	Yes. Life for life in this case. Guy was shot for doing his job.
38	Female	Yes	I do not think it is appropriate. It seems extreme. I don't think the evidence is concrete and irrefutable enough to put him to death. Moreover, Shockley is not a danger to the community at large, assuming he is even actually guilty of murdering the officer. Therefore, even if there was irrefutable proof that he did it, I don't think it warrants death. The death penalty should only be used for the most extreme, heinous, dangerous people, like mass shooters and serial killers.
68	Female	Yes	No. There was not enough real evidence to convict him. It was all circumstantial.

Age	Sex	Clemency Decision	Do you believe the death penalty was appropriate in this case? Why or why not?
18	Non-binary / third gender	Yes	No, because the jury could not come to a full conclusion on if Lance Shockley was innocent
30	Male	Yes	I don't believe that the death penalty is ever appropriate so definitely not in this case. I certainly believe he did it from the summary I was provided, but I don't think the state or a jury should have the power to take a life. I would be happy to hear that he was granted clemency by the governor.

TABLE B2: THE QUESTION POSED ONLY TO PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE
UNSURE OF WHETHER CLEMENCY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- I wonder if there's other information not being put forward, as this doesn't seem like a case that's suited for the death penalty. There doesn't seem to be anything about it, from the information provided, that would make it egregious or push it to the level of the death penalty, except perhaps that the person killed was an officer. I don't think that alone is enough, but I'm not sure what the legal details of the statutes entail. I wouldn't have a problem with clemency being granted, but I also would want to know if there's chances of appeals or some other avenue that might be more suitable for this case.
- If there are any other options, would also be interested what would have happened in other states regarding a non unanimous jury. What other suspects exist if any.
- Was there any DNA out other evidence such as photo or video that makes his guilt undeniable?
- More details about the case/trial
- If it was proven to be self defense or not premeditated.
- more proven cases of rehabilitation. psychiatric evaluation. the evidence for shockley's defense
- I would like to know how long have he's been on the good road.
- unsure
- More information on the jury's decision and why they decided the way they did.
- Further details on what's been found as far as evidence, etc
- What I believe is that killing one doesn't cancel out what they may have done. Without evidence that proves it was Lance without a doubt, I would not want to vote for a death sentence because you can't take it back. Life in prison would prevent him from potentially harming others, while still not allowing him to be free, considering the accident that took a life. I do not think there would be such an investigation if they did not believe that he was somehow responsible.

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- I believe there should be way more research and investigation into his current behavior. He could just be doing these things to get out of the death penalty.
- More of a testimony of the defendant.
- evidence
- Time to study the evidence presented by both parties.
- I need to know if he really killed the officer, just because he has turned to god does not immditatlly change my view on him
- Viewing video evidence of the car compared to his grandmothers car. Maybe there was an outdoor camera that could show if he was outside helping his neighbor or not.
- Life imprisonment
- I would like to know if there has been any contrition or acceptance for responsibility in the crime for which he was convicted. His behavior and acts are one thing, and in general I'm OK with life imprisonment if there is not parole, but the family of the officer will never get him back, and if the responsible party doesn't take responsibility, I'm less inclined for clemency.
- I would need more information. More factual information and examples of Mr. Shockley being a good person in prison. It doesn't dismiss what he was convicted of which was killing another man. I always think what if that was my family member? I wouldn't want them put to death. Then I think what if the man killed was my family member. Then I would want justice. So I always have a hard time with deciding whether someone should be granted clemency.
- I think that if the law states it has to be an animous vote for someone to be sent to death row then that is how it should be
- I would be good with a chance to life in prison or a retrial. The judge overstepped.
- I don't know that I completely agree with the death penalty in the first place. I do believe if he does not receive the death penalty, he should probably do 25 years to life. I don't know what circumstances would normally warrant a death penalty to be issued so that information would help me to better make a decision.

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- NOT SURE
- Change to life without parole
- The main information that I would need is simply strong evidence or even new evidence that hasn't been brought forth that would make me support the change from death sentence to life sentence. There is no reason to change the ruling with the same provided evidence if it is already proven without a reasonable doubt that the suspect is guilty.
- Whether there was more forensic evidence that connected Shockley to the crime.
- I would need to know his age. If young he should be given another chance.
- if they don't have a reasonable doubt that the person did it
- Strength of the Evidence: Is there lingering doubt about Shockley's guilt, particularly regarding the ballistics analysis and conflicting expert testimony? If uncertainty exists, it could support clemency.
- I'd want to see more evidence about the case and about Lance.
- I believe more evidence or a solid alibi would make it a for sure decision for me.
- I think more doubt is needed for the governor to grant clemency.
- The evidence presented leans heavily toward Shockley being guilty to me. I do think that something more concrete, like DNA or video evidence would make me feel more confident in a death sentence. With that being said, I think life in prison would be my recommendation.
- Further details around the car accident and the connection to both parties
- Polling of jurors to determine why jury could not reach unanimous decision on sentencing
- I would have to read all the evidence and understand why the jury was not unanimous in their sentence
- Statement from the inmate in person
- If a reinvestigation of whether the man actually killed the officer or if there was and still is reasonable doubt as it seems not all angles were considered,
- I feel doubtful only because the jury did not impose it. I would want to know why.

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- Direct witnesses that can show that he wasn't at crime scene. Any fingerprints from other known criminals or other people that would fit his description.
- I would have no problem with the governor granting clemency in this case, but I don't feel that I know enough about this inmate to say that he is more deserving of clemency than other inmates. I'm opposed to the death penalty, so I would not oppose clemency. However, I would need to know more about this inmate to form an opinion on if he is any more deserving of clemency than others.
- More details
- more information on the facts
- I think if a person came forward as a witness and said they saw him that day and it confirmed that he couldn't have killed the police officer then that would be enough evidence to consider changing the sentencing
- I suppose there just needs to be more solid proof that he was not involved in the killing.
- I would like more information about the murder case. Shockley does seem to be doing okay in prison but I would like more details of his family information, witness testimony (the neighbor who was out working) and information from his wife and uncle. I would also like more info from the witness who saw the red car around the officers home. I do believe clemency might be a good option, but I would want more information. I'm also curious about the car accident with the fatality and the circumstances surrounding it.
- How old he was when all this happened.
- I need a bit more forensic evidence to put him to death but I do think he probably killed the officer. He should NOT be let out of prison but with something related to DNA we can indeed save tax payer dollars and put him to death. We just must be 99% certain
- It would be credible and no questions about him being not guilty. It seems suspicious that he drove a red car that was identified as being used at the scene for the crime. And the ballistics matched bullets and shutting his grandma up

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- I hate picking the death penalty but it is very serious when you kill a police officer.
- There is a lot of evidence that points to the defendant, but there is some doubt where I wouldn't feel comfortable pursuing the death penalty in this case. I think life in prison until he could possibly clear his name would be just.
- I would have to know every single piece of evidence before I could make a decision like that. I'd want to read the entire transcript from the trial.
- I am not 100% sure he's innocent. I feel if he is guilty then it's a rightful punishment. Time to be a better person doesn't take away the fact he killed someone. In a cage we can all adjust our behavior..
- If complete new evidence came into light
- If any other person also had a chance to do it
- Need more information about the case. Don't feel comfortable making a life or death decision after reading just a couple of paragraphs in a summary. If the details of the case show that there is a solid defense / alibi, then I would lean towards clemency.
- If Sharky were to apologize for his crimes and genuinely ask the victim's family for forgiveness, then I believe he could serve life in prison without parole.
- who else might have committed this crime? is there possible strong evidence against someone else?
- -detailed ballistic report with unbiased explanations from an expert. especially since the first report was inconclusive
- I do feel Shockley is guilty in the death of Sergeant Graham. Shockley has maintained his innocence and good behavior but in my opinion he is only doing this to hopefully have the death sentence removed. There is no mention of a possible parole with life imprisonment. It was proven beyond a doubt that he murdered Sergeant Graham. If there is no chance of parole it would make a difference in how I feel.
- I would need to see more conclusive evidence one way or the other.
- There should have been more conclusive evidence
- I am not sure that he is innocent based on the story he gave and then changed (how would you change if you were working with someone or

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

just saw that person working, that's a major difference). But, also, did they really prove that he shot the gun or that his grandmother's car was actually at the scene? Yes he has been good and found Christ (they all do) but that doesn't mean he isn't guilty of a crime. I would need more information about the actual crime itself to add with his current behavior in prison to determine if his punishment should be changed.

- I think hearing the actual testimony would assist me in determining whether to believe Shockley. It would matter who the people testifying were and their relationship to Shockley. Making a greater connection with his faith is not persuasive to me, as many people use "faith" to boost their perceived goodness. Saving the life of another inmate is good but it would be helpful to know the circumstances. I am not familiar with this case and there isn't enough information in this write-up to persuade me that this man should be put to death or whether he deserves a life sentence.
- more evidence as to if he did it
- If this is a real turn around in behavior, and if any new evidence or old evidence has come to light. I would like for their to be unanimous decision before pursuing the death penalty
- I'm confused as to why the first examiner changed his opinion to agree with the second examiner (inconclusive) and then later after talking with his colleagues, went back to his original reporting. I feel there should possibly be a third testing done by another party. Were there any witnesses such as the neighbors, did anyone corroborate his story that he was home during the incident? Did anyone confirm that the red car of the grandmother's was gone at that specific time? Were there any other suspects or evidence that could suggest this was done by someone else? I do feel more things should be looked into, however, I don't agree with the death sentence. Especially, since it wasn't a unanimous vote by the jury.
- I want to hear more on why they think it was Lance. I think that what we read just didn't go into to much detail for me to really get a full understanding of the trial. What did the neighbor say about him working with Lance on the day of murder? Why did the grandma say Lance put his finger up to her mouth and so on and on. I just don't know.

What information would help you decide whether the governor should grant clemency (i.e., change the death sentence to life imprisonment) in this case?

- I don't think I agree to life imprisonment either, but I'd need to know a lot more of the minor details regarding the cop's death because none of those details are very incriminating.
- I would want more specific information about saving someone's life in prison and I would want to know whether he maintains his innocence about the shooting.
- If there was reasonable evidence that he was not involved. It seems like hearsay on both sides but more evidence seems to point to him doing it based on this description.
- More supporting evidence that he committed the crime. Death sentence should not be given without 100% certainty.
- I am not saying he shouldn't grant clemency. I am just torn because there is evidence that he committed the crime but evidence that he didn't. The original verdict has already been rendered and to overturn that I would need definitive evidence that he was innocent. I would really want a conclusive opinion that the bullets did not match or that the car was not his.
- It's very hard to make this type of determination in a case without hard, concrete evidence. People will say or do anything to overturn a conviction. I can't feel confident unless I see solid, concrete evidence