

Surveillance Cameras Win Broad Support

Crimefighting beats privacy in public places: Americans by nearly a 3-1 margin support the increased use of surveillance cameras, a measure decried by some civil libertarians but credited in London with helping catch a variety of perpetrators since the early 1990s.

Given the chief arguments pro and con – a way to help solve crimes vs. too much of a government intrusion on privacy – it isn't close: Seventy-one percent of Americans favor the increased use of surveillance cameras, while 25 percent oppose it.

London's surveillance network, known as the "Ring of Steel," is said to have aided in the capture of suspects including those accused of a pair of attempted car bombings in June. Such a system is coming to New York City, which plans 100 new surveillance cameras in downtown Manhattan by year's end and 3,000 (public and private) by 2010. Chicago and Baltimore plan expanded surveillance systems as well.

Critics such as the American Civil Liberties Union have opposed such systems, saying they invade privacy and could be used to track innocent people.

Nonetheless majority support for surveillance cameras crosses political, ideological and population groups, albeit with differences in degree. Seniors are most apt to support the increased use of these cameras, under-30s least so; Republicans more than Democrats; women more than men; higher-educated people more than the less educated; and whites more than African-Americans.

	Increased use of surveillance cameras	
	Support	Oppose
All	71%	25
Age 18-29	61	33
65+	80	17
Men	66	29
Women	75	21
Democrats	66	30
Independents	71	23
Republicans	81	16
HS or less	64	29
College grad	74	21
Blacks	63	32
Whites	73	22

Through a political lens, support for increased use of surveillance systems is lowest, 62 percent, among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents who support Barack Obama for president – and highest of all, 86 percent, among Republicans who support Rudy Giuliani, who made his name as New York City’s crime-fighting mayor.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 18-21, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,125 adults. Additional interviews were conducted with an oversample of randomly selected African-Americans for a total of 210 black respondents. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Michelle Lirtzman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-23. Previously released.

24. Some people support the use of surveillance cameras in public places as a way to help solve crimes. Others say these cameras go too far as a government intrusion on personal privacy. What’s your opinion – do you support or oppose the increased use of surveillance cameras in public places?

	Support	Oppose	Depends (vol.)	No opinion
7/21/07	71	25	5	*

25-53. Previously released or held for release.

END