State of the State Courts

// 2023 POLL

10TH ANNUAL SURVEY

NCSC
National Center for State Courts

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Chief Justice Beth Walker
West Virginia

Molly Justice
NCSC

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NCSC

// METHODOLOGY

What: NCSC Online Survey

When: November 16-19, 2023

Who: Conducted by GBAO Strategies

Polled: 1,000 Registered Voters

Stats: MOE +/- 3.1% (19 times out 20)

2023 NCSC Focus Groups

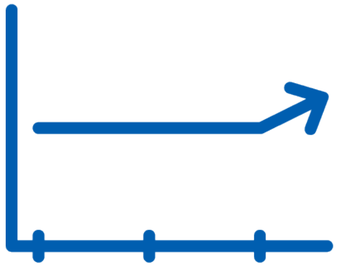
August 24: Chicago, Illinois

August 31: Arlington, Virginia

September 11: Phoenix, Arizona

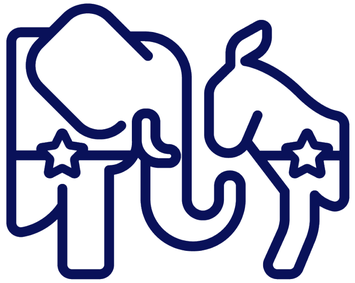
October 30: Virtual

// KEY **FINDINGS**



Baseline **public trust** measures are unchanged from one year ago, but with some hints that numbers may rise in the future.

Support for **remote hearings** continues to grow, and the age gap on this issue is shrinking.



An increasing number of Americans see the courts as **a political institution.**

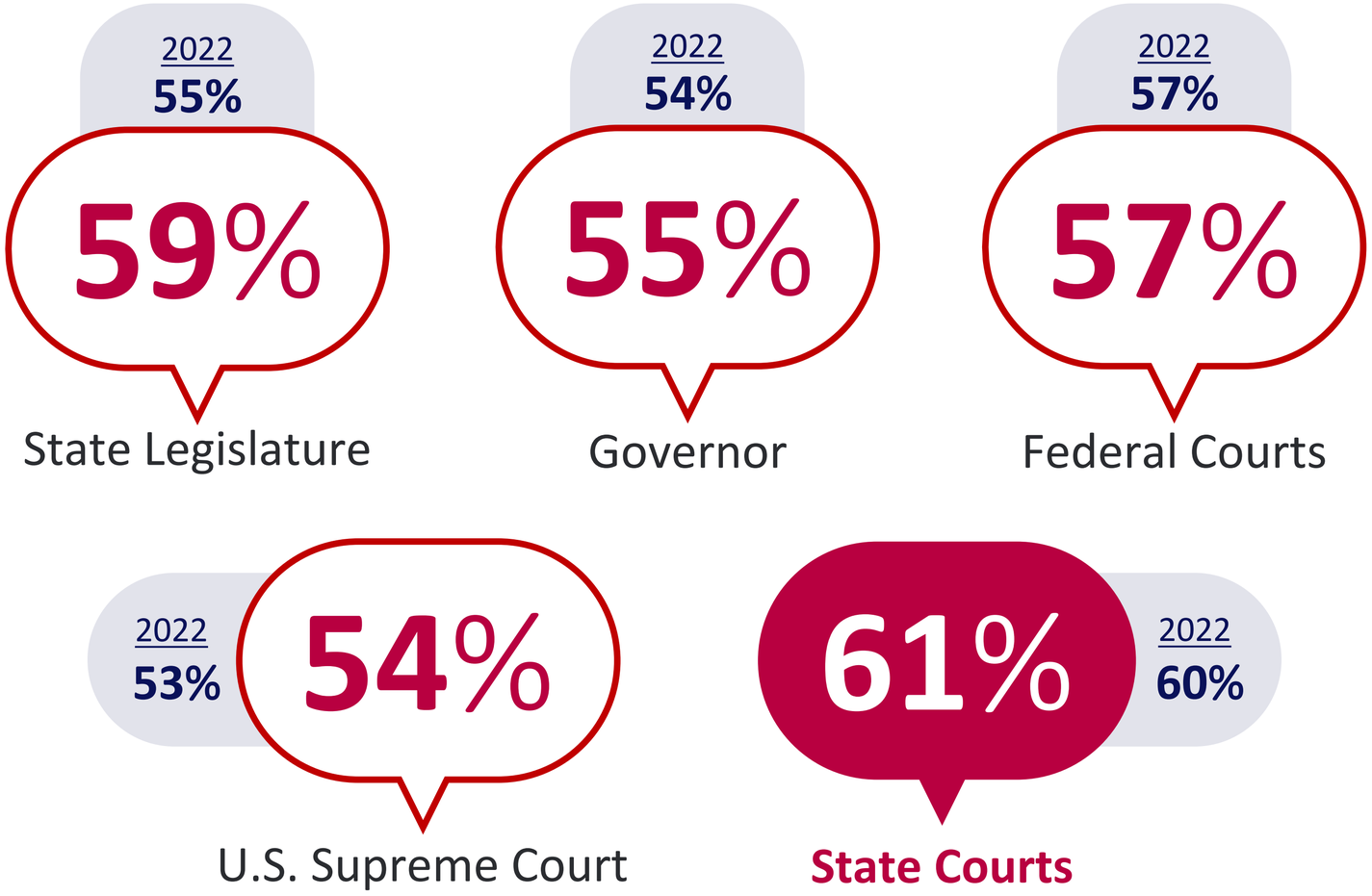
While TV news remains paramount, **a generational shift** is underway that will propel new media to the top.

// **FIGURE 1**

Public trust and confidence is, on balance, unchanged from a year ago…

Q: "How much confidence do you have in each institution?"

Percent saying they have either a great deal of confidence or some confidence.

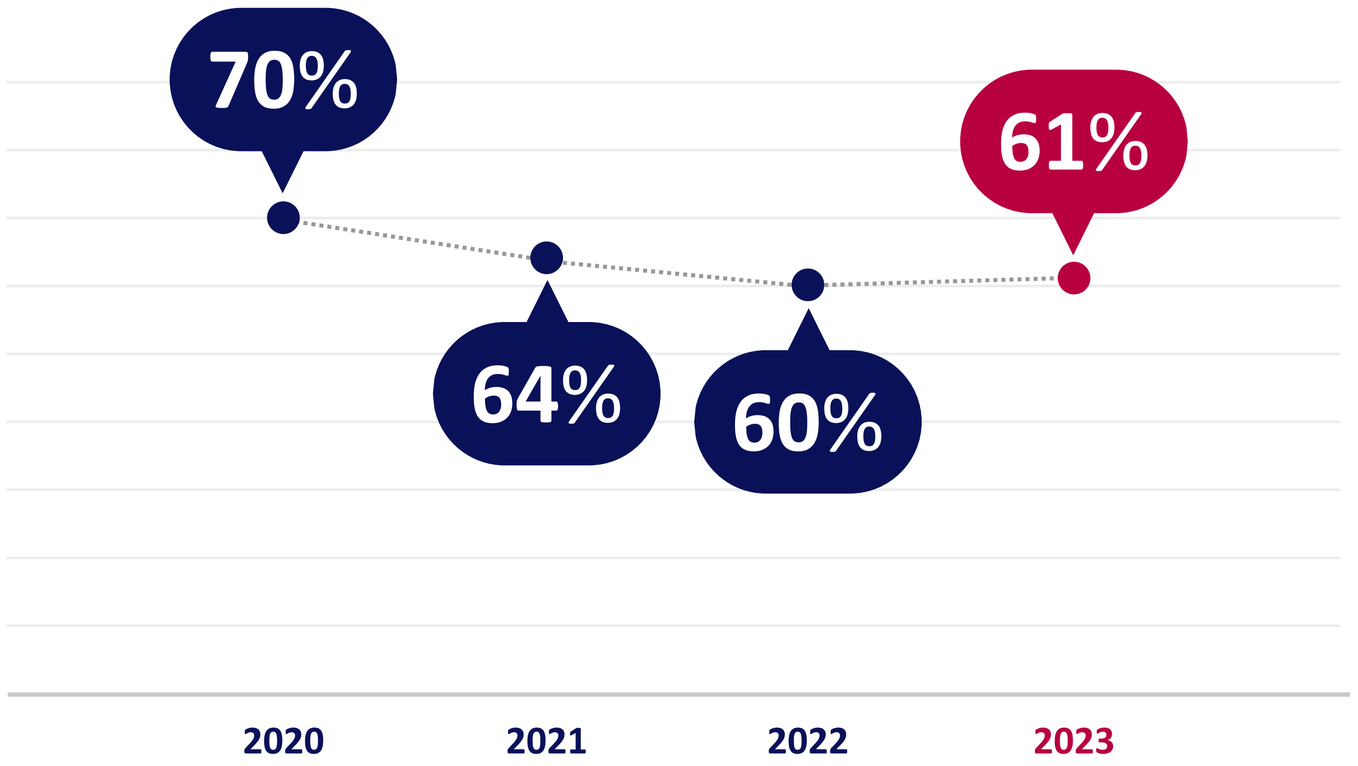


// **FIGURE 2**

…But there are indicators that it may be ready to rebound.

Q: "How much confidence do you have in each institution?"

Percent saying they have either a great deal of confidence or some confidence in their state court system.



// **FIGURE 3**

There are improvements on numerous attributes compared to the 2022 survey.

Q: "Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statement."

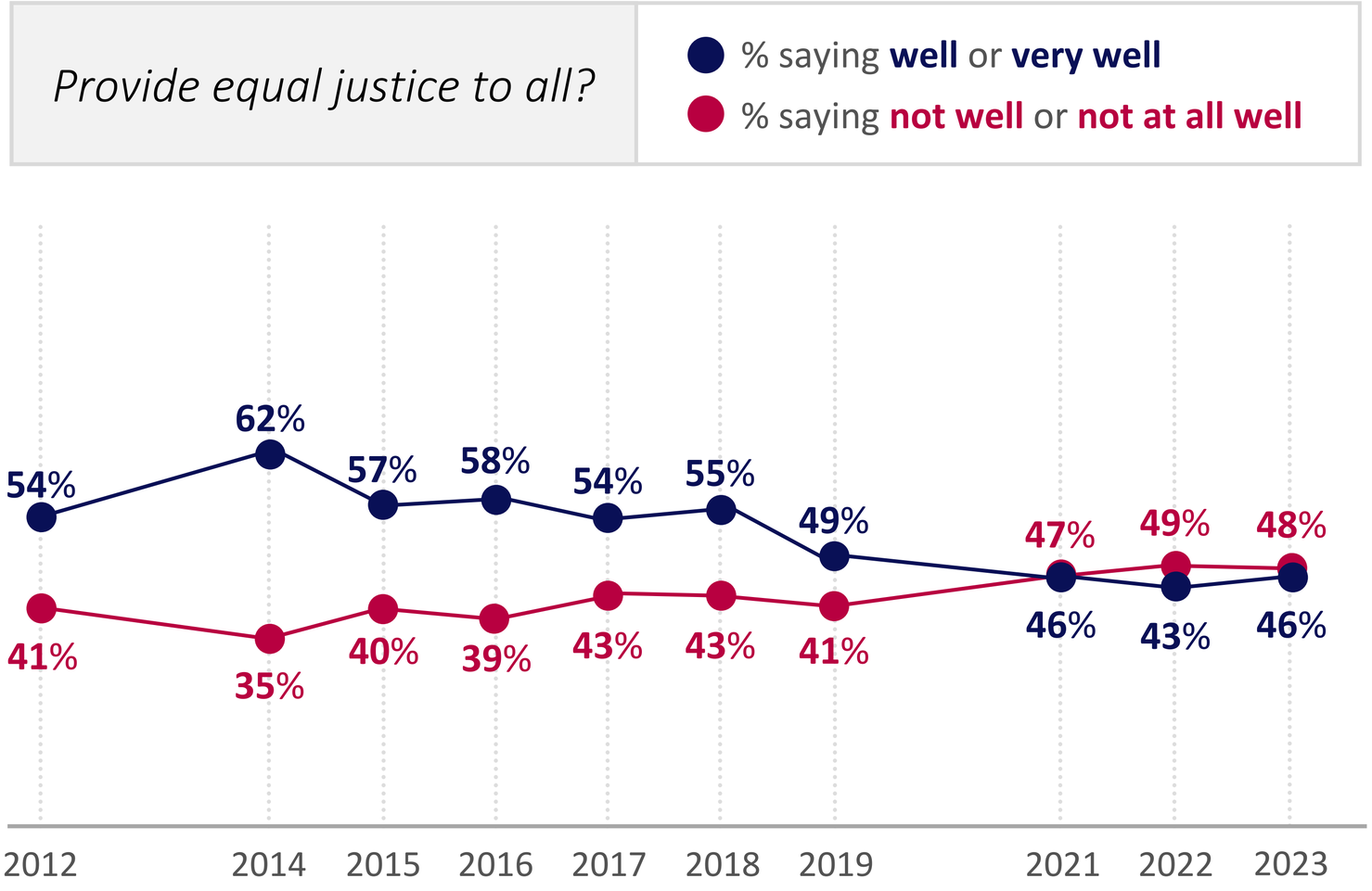
Percentage increase of those answering "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" with each statement compared to 2022 survey.

Take the needs of people into account	+3
Fair and impartial	+4
Treat people with dignity & respect	+4
Listen carefully to those before them	+4
Serve as an appropriate check on other branches	+4
Unbiased in case decisions	+5

// **FIGURE 4A**

Delivering equal justice for all—and being seen as doing so—remains a critical priority.

Q: "Does the following word or phrase describe [state] courts very well, well, not very well, or not well at all?"



// **FIGURE 4B**

Delivering equal justice for all—and being seen as doing so—remains a critical priority.

"It's just an underlying fact that if you have money, if you have connections…[then] you have the ability to fight a case and win it."

white woman
Phoenix focus group
September 11, 2023

// **FIGURE 4C**

Delivering equal justice for all—and being seen as doing so—remains a critical priority.

"If you find yourself in the American court system, you want to find yourself a lawyer."

white man
Chicago focus group
August 24, 2023

// **FIGURE 4D**

Delivering equal justice for all—and being seen as doing so—remains a critical priority.

"They don't make it easy, because they don't want you to figure it out."

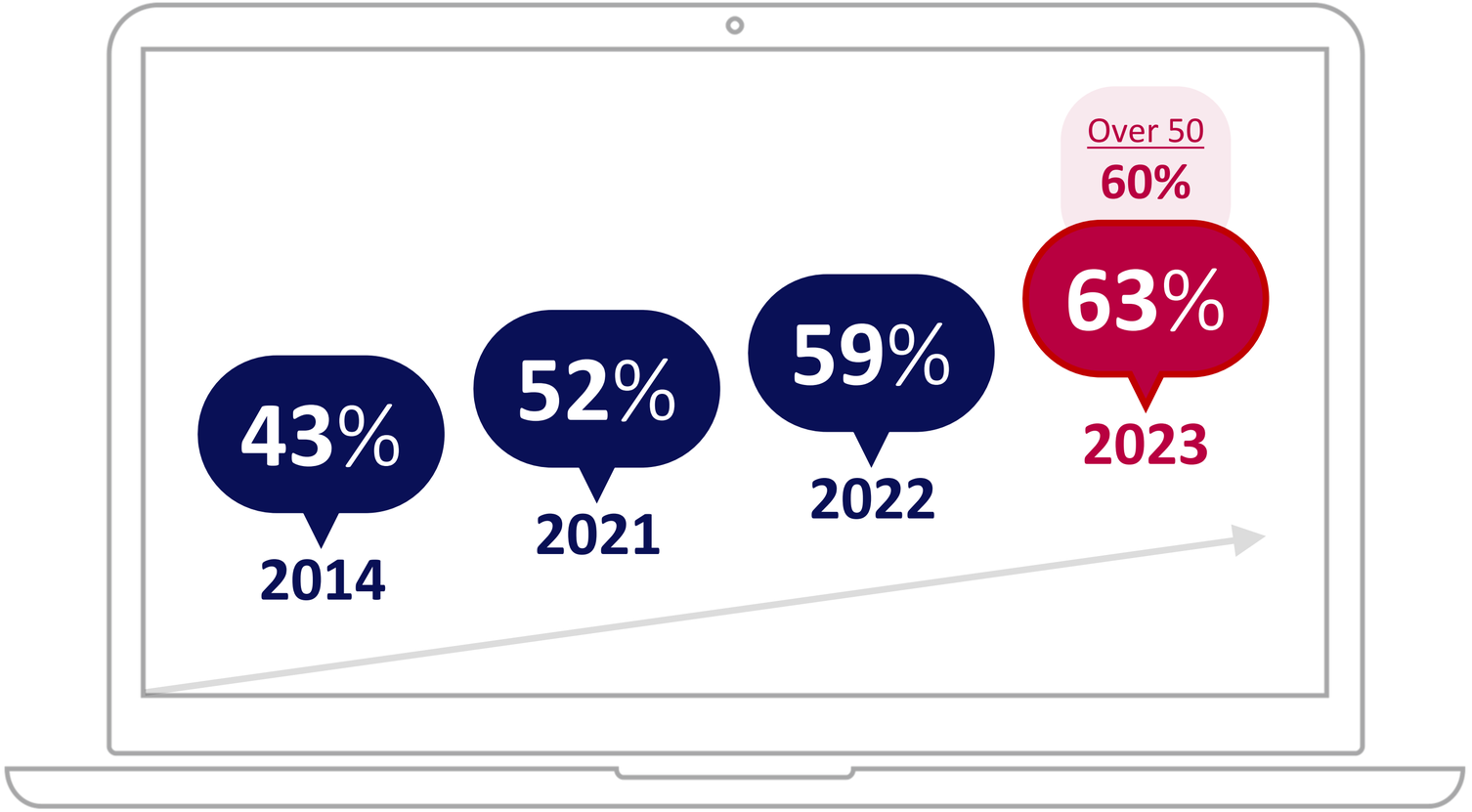
black woman
Arlington focus group
August 31, 2023

// **FIGURE 5**

Remote appearances—even for older Americans—are increasingly accepted and expected.

Q: "If you had business with the courts and this service was available online via videoconferencing...would you use it?"

*Percent saying they would **definitely** or **probably** use video to appear for a case before the court.*

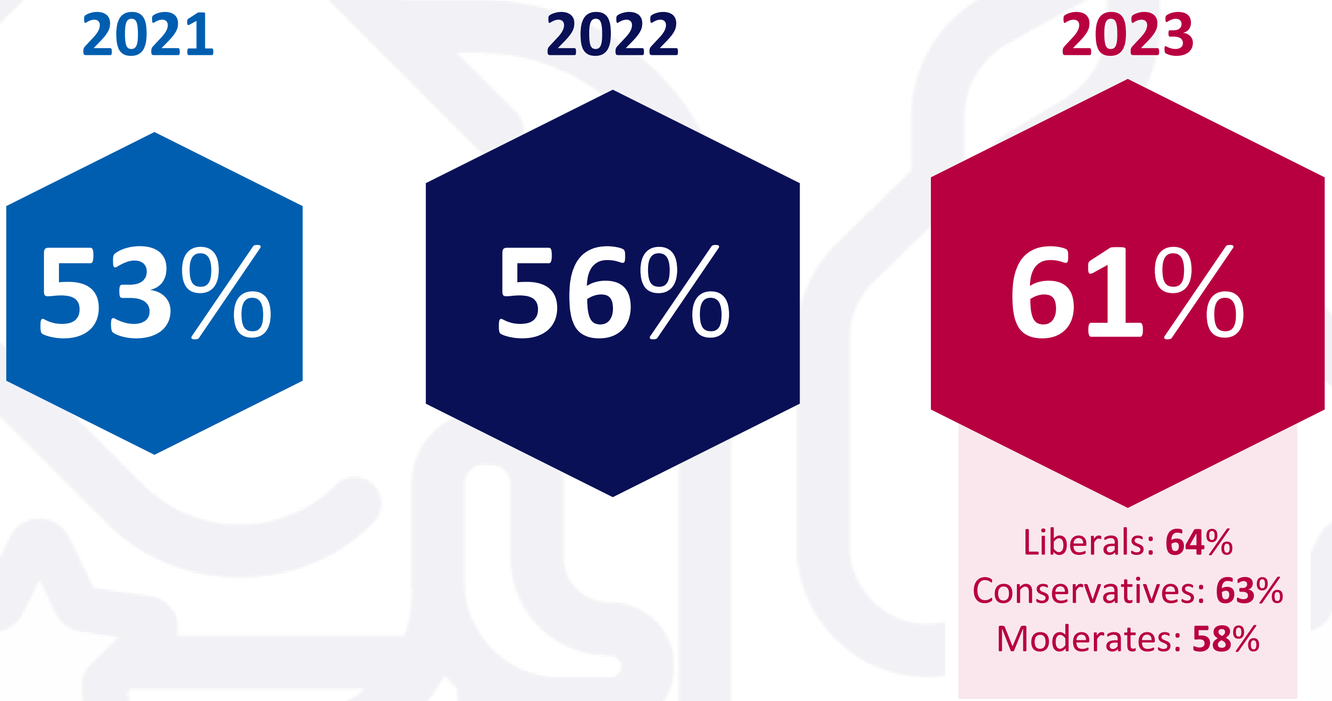


// **FIGURE 6A**

An increasing number of Americans see the courts as a political institution.

Q: "Do each of the following words or phrases describe [state] courts well or not well?"

Percent saying the word "political" describes the courts "well" or "very well."



// **FIGURE 6B**

An increasing number of Americans see the courts as a political institution.

"I am favorable toward the (US) Supreme Court....but you don't know that you are getting the law read the way it actually is...it's being interpreted politically."

white woman
virtual focus group
October 30, 2023

// **FIGURE 7**

While TV news remains king, a generational shift will soon make new media paramount.

Q: "Thinking about daily news and current events in your state and local community, from where do you get most of your news about what is happening?"

Radio

18%

Local Newspaper

22%

News Sites/Apps

36%

Local TV News

63%

Under 30: **32%**
Over 65: **77%**

Social Media / YouTube

49%

Under 30: **70%**
Over 65: **8%**

Because respondents were able to pick multiple answers to this question, the sum of all responses is greater than 100%.

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For more information, visit:

ncsc.org/survey