

Americans Weigh In On Hot-Button Topics

(NAPSA)—What keeps Americans up at night and what do they feel they can do about it?

You may be surprised at the answers from multiple polls taken by Parade magazine, which asked readers their opinions on various hot-button topics.

Talking Terror Rating

For example, a surprising number of Americans (76 percent) felt the nation's terror alert system did not make them feel safer. Those in favor of the system weighed in at 24 percent, citing a lack of incidents since its inception. The poll was taken in response to a magazine article exploring the history and future of the system, which may soon be overhauled.

Safety Measure Or Privacy Invasion?

Another area of concern for many Americans is how to stop drunk drivers. Every year, about 13,000 Americans are killed by drunk drivers. Now, California and Wisconsin are considering new laws that would require people convicted of drunk driving to use a technology called an ignition interlock. Drivers blow into a device that measures blood-alcohol content, and if the level is too high, the car will not start. Is this a valid safety measure or an invasion of privacy? Parade's readers weighed in, with 93 percent overwhelmingly in favor of ignition locks. Only 7 percent said that they were opposed, citing the cost of such a device.

Pit Bulls

Are pit bulls an inherently dangerous breed or have they gotten a bum rap? According to a Parade report, dogs have killed at least 20 Americans so far this year, and in two out of three attacks, the killers

were pit bulls. To combat the situation, some local governments have enacted "breed-specific" legislation that bans owning pit bulls. But animal-protection groups like The Humane Society of the U.S. say the problem lies with irresponsible owners, not their pets, and that U.S. cities where pit bulls are outlawed have not seen dramatic decreases in attacks. Parade asked readers if they think it should be illegal to own a pit bull. Seventy-six percent of readers said no; 24 percent disagreed with them.

An overwhelming 95 percent of respondents favored the use of an ignition interlock system for those convicted of drunk driving. (T)

Hot-Button Topics

Parade conducts such polls to take the pulse of readers on various hot-button topics. The magazine regularly explores relevant and controversial issues such as elder abuse, government subsidies of churches, and whether schools should have the right to strip-search students.

Readers were recently asked to weigh in on the subject of obesity. The leaders of many nations are trying to get their citizens to eat less. In Japan, health officials check the waistlines of citizens over 40, and those considered too fat must undergo diet counseling. Failure to slim down can lead to fines. New Zealand bars people it deems too heavy from immigrating to the country, and some British residents are rewarded for staying active. Does the U.S. need a government-backed effort to end obesity? Sixty-six percent said yes; 34 percent said no.

For more information, visit www.parade.com.