

Racial Profiling: What Alabama Thinks

- **A majority of Alabamians (54%) believe that racial profiling by local law enforcement officers occurs at least occasionally. Thirty-three percent of minorities believe that racial profiling is widespread, compared to 14% of non minorities.**
- **Sixty percent of all Alabamians disapprove of the practice of racial/ethnic profiling by local law enforcement.**
- **A member of the minority community is three to five times more likely than a non-minority to report a personal or family experiences of being stopped by a police officer during the last year or so because of their race, age, or how they were dressed.**

(Auburn, March 22) The *Ask-Alabama* statewide public opinion survey on the perceptions and attitudes of Alabamians regarding the practice of racial profiling by local law enforcement officers highlights the differences in perceptions of treatment between minorities and non-minorities in Alabama¹. Minorities are more than twice as likely as non-minorities to believe that racial profiling by law enforcement officers is a widespread practice. A third of minority respondents (33%) perceive that the practice is widespread, compared to 14% among non-minorities.

The poll, conducted by Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services, however, also indicates that most Alabamians (60%) disapprove of the practice of racial/ethnic profiling, and that this disapproval is equally strong among both the minority and non-minority communities.

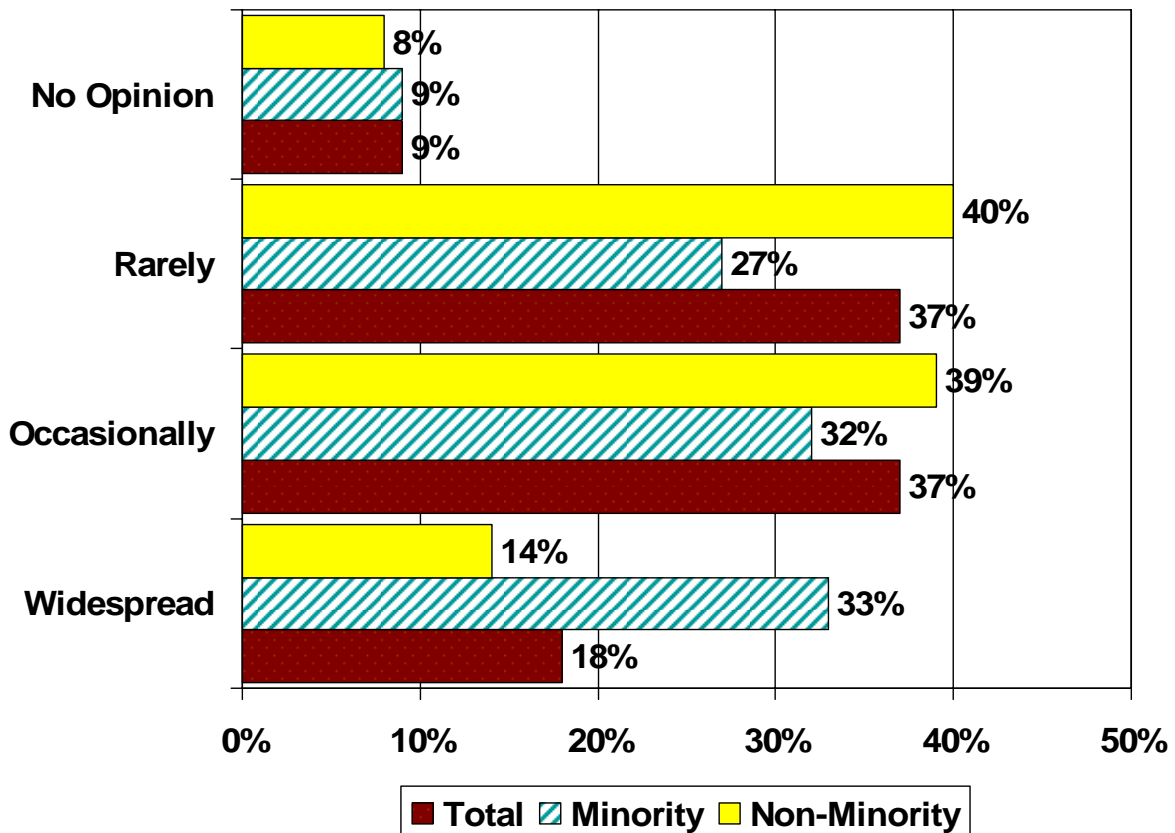
Overall, 9% of Alabamians report that they or a member of their family had been stopped by a police officer because of their race or ethnicity. Minorities are more than five times more likely than non-minorities to report personal experience with racial profiling, and 28% of minority respondents report that they or a member of their family had been the subject of racial profiling by law enforcement officers, compared to 5% of non-minorities. Minorities are also four times as likely as non-minorities to report having been stopped by a policy officer because of their attire, and are three times as likely to report being stopped because of their age.

¹ The survey of a random telephone sample of 629 Alabamians was conducted from January 24 – February 3 of 2005. The average estimated margin of error is +/- 4%.

Prevalence of Racial Profiling

A majority of Alabamians (54%) believe that there are at least occasional instances of racial/ethnic profiling by local law enforcement officers. Perceptions about the prevalence of racial/ethnic profiling, however, vary by the race of the respondent. Fourteen percent (14%) of the non-minority sample perceive that the practice is *Widespread*, compared to 33% among minorities.

Prevalence of Racial/Ethnic Profiling by Law Enforcement Officers in Alabama by Minority Status (Winter 2005)

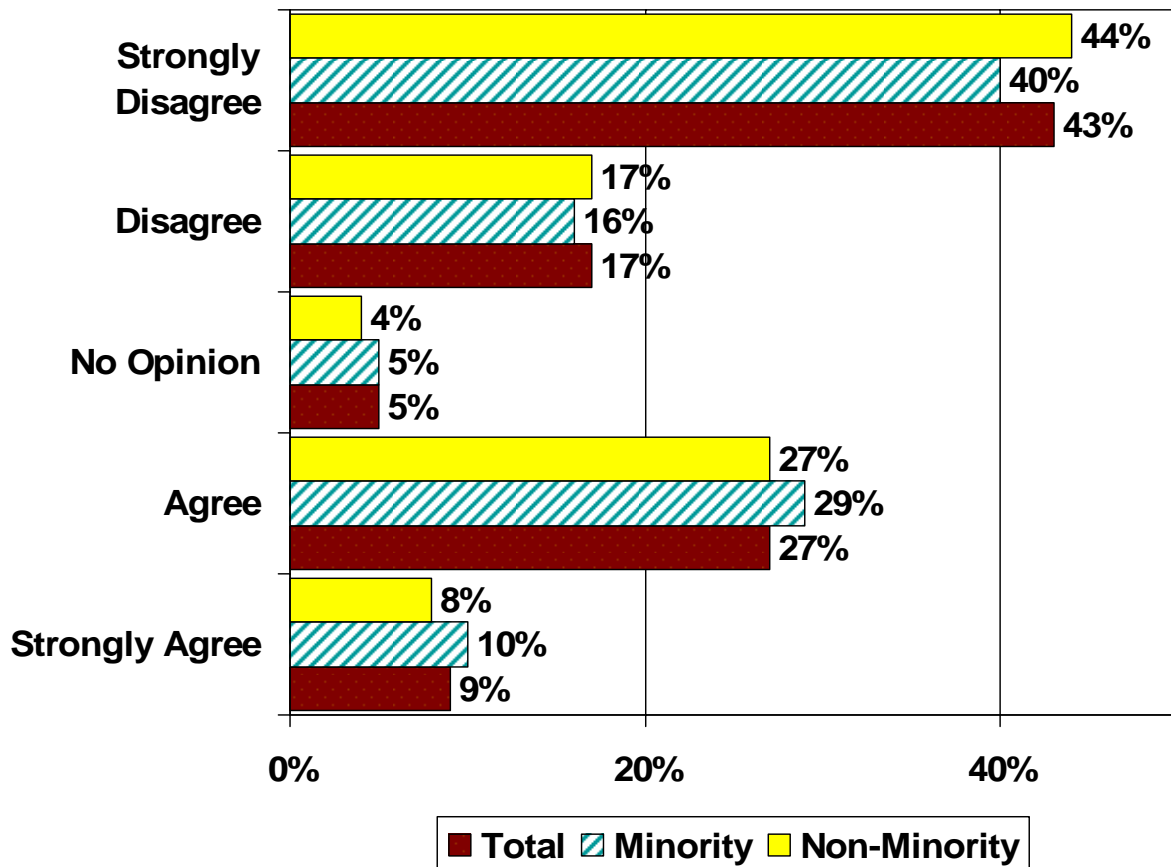


Public Disapproval of Racial/Ethnic Profiling in Alabama

Alabamians generally disapprove of the practice of racial or ethnic profiling by law enforcement officers. Less than ten percent of the respondents (9%) strongly approve of the practice, while 43% strongly disapprove. Public disavowal of the practice of racial

profiling is equally strong regardless of race. Fifty-six percent (56%) of minorities disagree or strongly disagree with the practice, compared to 61% of non-minorities².

Level of Disagreement with the Practice of Racial/Ethnic Profiling in Alabama Local Law Enforcement by Minority Status (Winter 2005)



Personal or Family Experience with Profiling

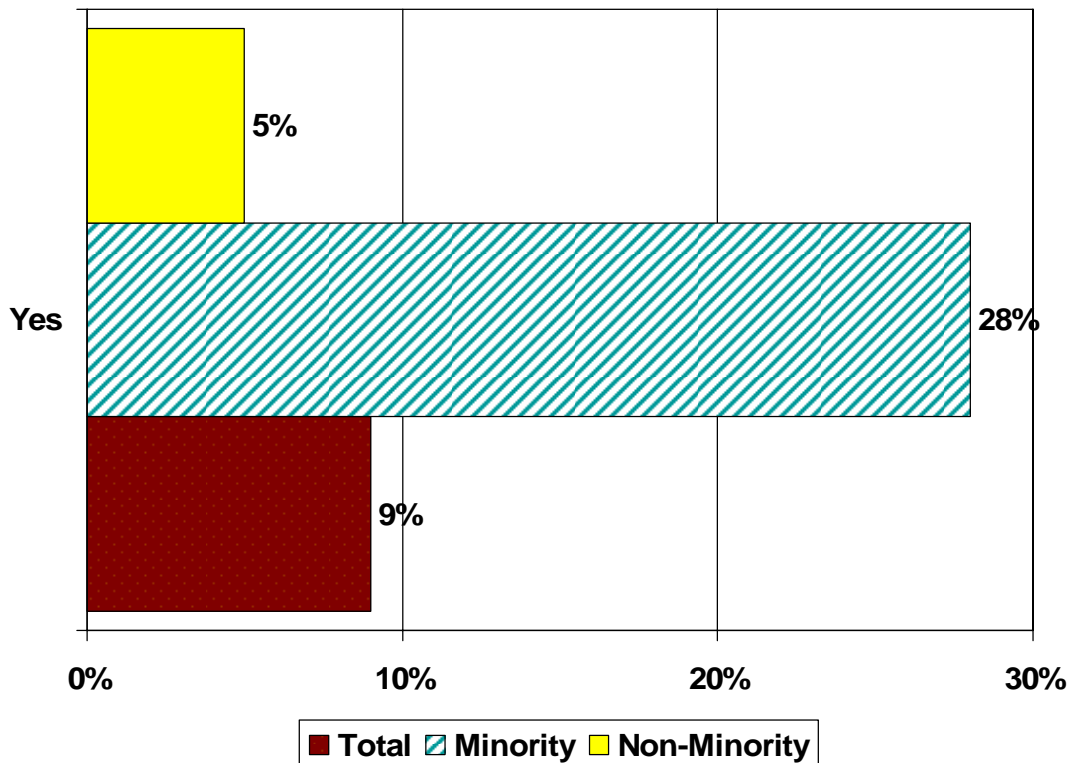
Only a small percentage of the public acknowledge having been stopped or being aware of a member of their family being stopped by local law enforcement officers that they attributed to affinity to a group or group behavior (e.g. race, ethnicity, attire, age). Race or ethnicity was reported as a factor for profiling by 9% of the sample. Age was reported as a factor for 10%; clothing style preferences by 8%; and other characteristics by 7%³. Altogether, 20% of respondents reported a personal or family experience of some type of profiling.

² The differences recorded between non-minorities and minorities on this dimension are not statistically significant.

³ Multiple characteristics (e.g. race, age, and dress) may account for a single instance of profiling.

Minority members, are more than five times as likely as non-minorities to report that they or a member of their family had been stopped by law enforcement officers because of their race or ethnicity. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the minority respondents reported at least one instance in which they or a member of their family had been stopped by a police officer during the past year or so that they attributed to racial or ethnic identity. This compares to 5% among non-minorities.

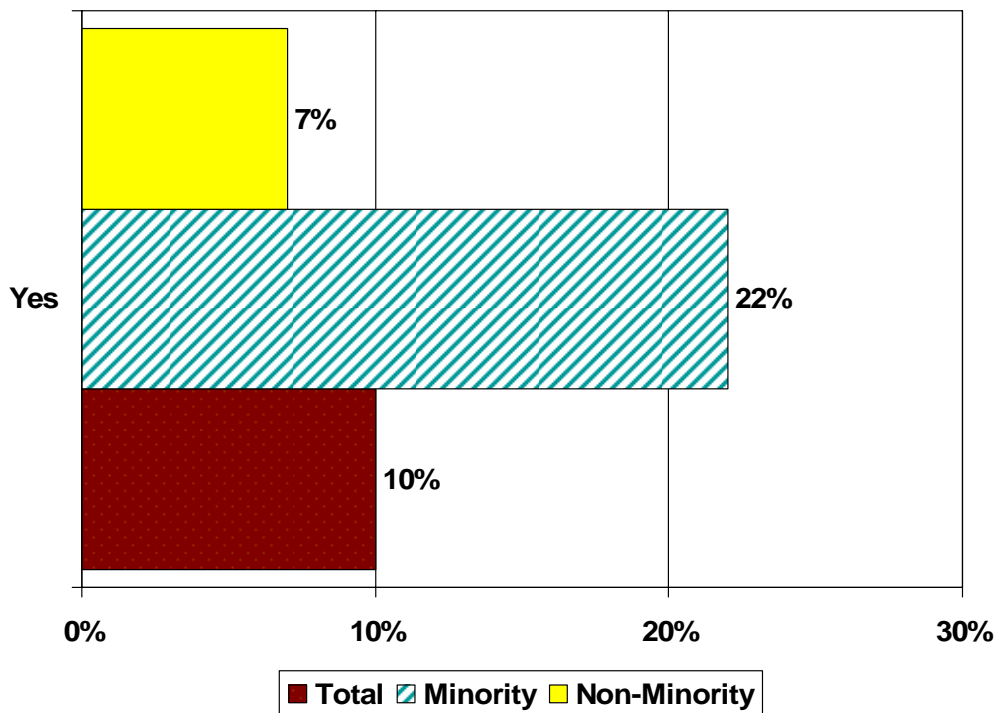
Reported Incidence of Personal or Family Law Enforcement Racial/Ethnic Profiling by Minority Status (Winter 2005)



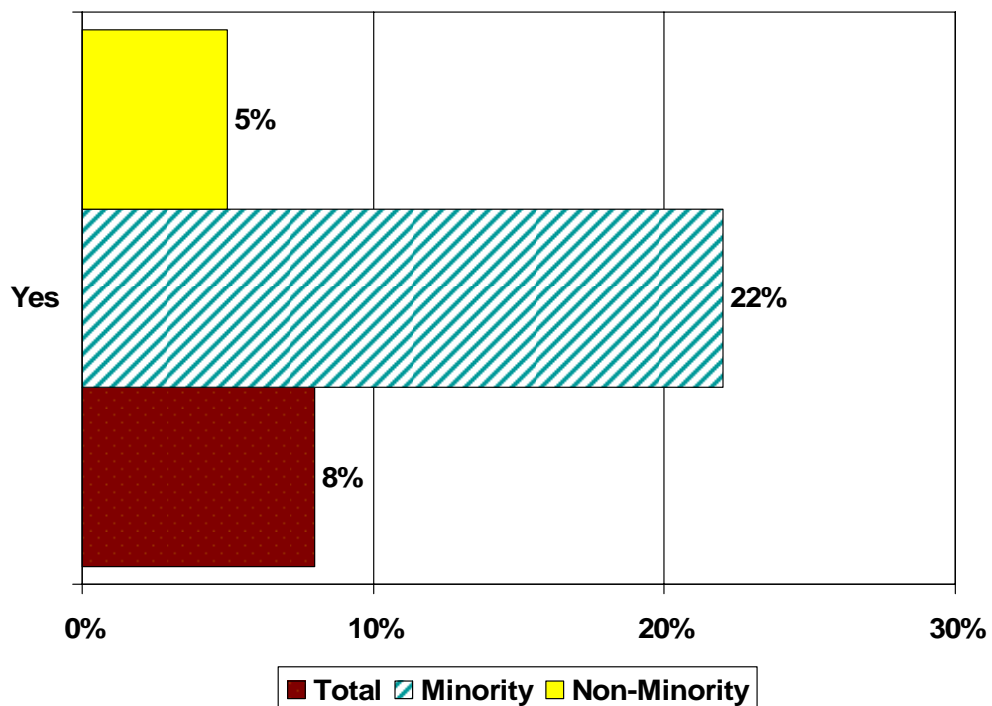
Minorities are also three to four times more likely than non-minorities to report having been stopped by law enforcement officers for other factors such as age or clothing style preferences. Twenty-two percent of minority respondents have some personal or family experience that they attribute to profiling on the basis of age or dress styles. Among non-minorities, however, only 7% report personal or family experience with profiling attributed to age, and 5% attributed to dress style preferences.

When profiling based on race/ethnicity, age, attire or other factors are considered together, 40% of minority report personal or family encounters with profiling by law enforcement officers, compared to 15% of non-minorities who have familiarity with such practices.

Reported Incidence of Personal or Family Law Enforcement Profiling Attributed to Age by Minority Status (Winter 2005)



Reported Incidence of Personal or Family Law Enforcement Profiling Attributed to Clothing Style Preferences by Minority Status (Winter 2005)



Reported Personal or Family Incidence of any Form of Profiling by Minority Status (Winter 2005)

