

## **A Division on Imus With a Vast Racial Gap**

Americans divide on whether it was right to fire radio personality Don Imus for his controversial remark about a women's college basketball team, with a vast gap between blacks and whites on the issue.

Overall, 51 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say it was right for Imus to have lost his job over the comment; 45 percent say he should have kept his position. Within that overall result is a broad racial division: Seventy-three percent of blacks support Imus' firing, while many fewer whites, 47 percent, agree.

	Should Imus have lost his job?	
	Yes	No
All	51%	45
Blacks	73	25
Whites	47	49

The gap echoes longstanding differences in experience and attitudes on racial issues. In a 2005 ABC News poll, for example, 54 percent of blacks said they'd been discriminated against because of their race, while just 19 percent of whites said the same. In 2006, 55 percent of blacks saw the government's response to Hurricane Katrina as an example of racial inequality; many fewer whites, 32 percent, agreed.

**GROUPS** – There are differences on Imus beyond race: Democrats, Liberals, and women all are more apt than their counterparts to favor his firing, while support for his removal is lowest among Republicans. (His remark included both racial and sexual content.)

In the political center, 52 percent of self-described moderates and 48 percent of independents say it was right for him to have lost his job. Among other groups, young adults are more likely than their elders to favor firing Imus.

	Should Imus have lost his job?	
	Yes	No
All	51%	45
Women	55	41
Men	48	50
Democrats	61	37
Independents	48	48
Republicans	45	52
Liberals	58	39

Moderates	52	45
Conservatives	47	49
Age 18-29	61	38
Age 30+	49	47

A regression analysis holding these factors (plus education) constant finds that two of them independently predict support for Imus' firing – being black and being a Democrat.

COMMENTS – Regardless of the differences on Imus, this poll finds that racially charged comments are commonly heard in this country, targeting blacks and whites alike, and that people of both races are more apt to consider such remarks offensive when they're directed against blacks.

More than eight in 10 Americans (blacks and whites equally) say they've heard racially insensitive or insulting remarks about blacks. Sixty-two percent of whites, as well as 65 percent of blacks, say they were personally offended by it.

Again, eight in ten of blacks and whites (80 and 81 percent, respectively) also say they've heard racially insensitive or insulting remarks about white people. In this case, more than half of blacks and whites alike were offended (59 and 51 percent, respectively).

	Heard a racially insensitive comment about blacks	Offended by it
All	86%	62%
Blacks	84	65
Whites	86	62

  

	Heard a racially insensitive comment about whites	Offended by it
All	80	52
Blacks	80	59
Whites	81	51

In other areas, as noted, blacks and whites long have reported dramatically different experiences of racial equality in this country. In a 2003 ABC/Post poll, 66 percent of whites said they believed that blacks and whites received equal treatment from the police in their community; just 28 percent of blacks agreed.

There was a similar gap in perceptions of equal treatment of blacks in access to good public schools, or when visiting shops, restaurants or banks. Indeed, reporting personal experience, 61 percent of blacks said they'd felt that a shopkeeper had tried to make them feel unwelcome because of their race, and 41 percent felt they'd been stopped by a police officer just because of their race.

There also, however, have been positive trends. In 2005, three-quarters of whites and more than eight in 10 blacks reported having a friend of the other race (both up sharply from 1981); seven in 10 adults reported living in racially mixed communities; and just

over half of Americans (48 percent of whites, 63 percent of blacks) said they'd had a friend of the other race to dinner, compared with 20 percent in 1973.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 12-15, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,141 adults, including an oversample of African-Americans for a total of 206 black respondents. The results have a three-point error margin for the full sample, seven points for blacks. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

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

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

Q1 - Q46 HELD FOR RELEASE.

47. Have you ever heard someone make a racially insensitive or insulting remark about African-Americans, or not? IF YES: Were you personally offended by it, or not?

	----- Heard -----		----- Offended -----				
	NET	NET	Was offended	Offended sometimes not others (vol.)	Not offended	Have not heard	No op.
4/15/07							
All	86	62	59	3	23	14	*
Blacks	84	65	62	3	19	16	0
Whites	86	62	58	3	25	13	*

48. Have you ever heard someone make a racially insensitive or insulting remark about white people, or not? IF YES: Were you personally offended by it, or not?

	----- Heard -----		----- Offended -----				
	NET	NET	Was offended	Offended sometimes not others (vol.)	Not offended	Have not heard	No op.
4/15/07							
All	80	52	50	2	28	20	*
Blacks	80	59	57	3	20	20	0
Whites	81	51	49	2	29	19	*

49. (ROTATE WITH Q47 AND Q48) As you may know a radio personality named Don Imus has been fired for making a racially insensitive or insulting remark about black women basketball players during his radio show. Do you think Imus should or should not have lost his job over this issue?

	Should have	Should not have	No opinion
4/15/07			
All	51	45	3
Blacks	73	25	2
Whites	47	49	3

\*\*\*END\*\*\*