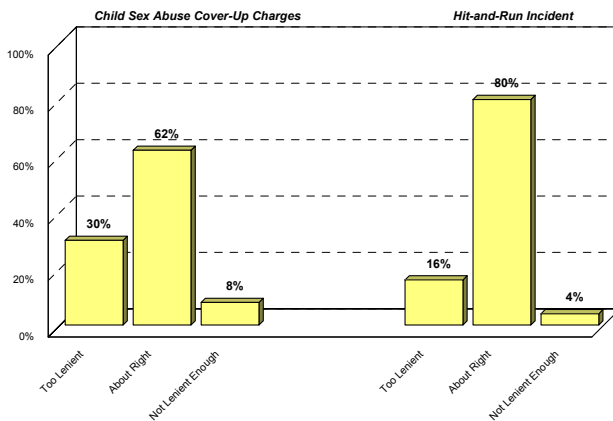




## **Community Leaders Support County Attorney Rick Romley’s Handling of Bishop O’Brien Cases**

**COMMUNITY LEADERS’ SUPPORT FOR RICK ROMLEY’S TREATMENT OF BISHOP O’BRIEN**



The majority of Valley community leaders support County Attorney Rick Romley’s treatment of Bishop O’Brien according to a just released survey of 400 community leaders. The *Valley Influentials Poll*, a survey of members of Valley Leadership, Greater Phoenix Leadership, the East Valley Partnership, and Westmarc, found that 62% think that the County Attorney’s treatment of the child sex abuse cover-up was about right. An even greater proportion (80%) thinks that the County Attorney’s treatment of the Bishop’s hit-and-run incident was about right.

*If anything, too lenient.* In each case, however, of those not feeling the treatment was ‘about right,’ approximately four times as many feel that the treatment was too lenient as feel the treatment was too harsh. In the case of the sex abuse cover-up case, 30% feel that the County Attorney’s treatment of the Bishop was too lenient, in contrast to only 8% who feel it was not lenient enough. In the case of the hit-and-run incident, the ratio was approximately the same: 16% feel he was treated too leniently and only 4% feel he was not treated leniently enough. The sole exception to this trend is among members of the Phoenix Leadership, who are equally divided between the three responses. This difference may be attributed to Bishop O’Brien’s affiliation with that organization.

**About the Poll.** The *O’Neil Associates Valley Influentials Poll* is a web-based survey that was sent to all members of Greater Phoenix Leadership, Valley Leadership, East Valley Partnership, and Westmarc. As such, this survey does not purport to be a random or representative sampling of the general population of the Phoenix metropolitan area. It would be difficult, however, to conceive of a more comprehensive representation from which to draw inferences about the opinions and sensibilities of *business and community leaders* than the combined membership of these organizations, although, inevitably, any definition of influentials is somewhat subjective. The persons surveyed are likely to exert disproportionate influence on and be an early indicator of community opinion by virtue of their position, community involvement, and political participation. The *O’Neil Associates Valley Influentials Poll* **was not sponsored or paid for by any outside organization.** Four hundred participants completed the survey between June 23 and July 2, 2003, yielding a margin of error of  $\pm 4.9\%$ . O’Neil Associates, Inc. is a Tempe-based public opinion research firm specializing in client-focused attitude and awareness studies for a wide variety of industries and organizations.

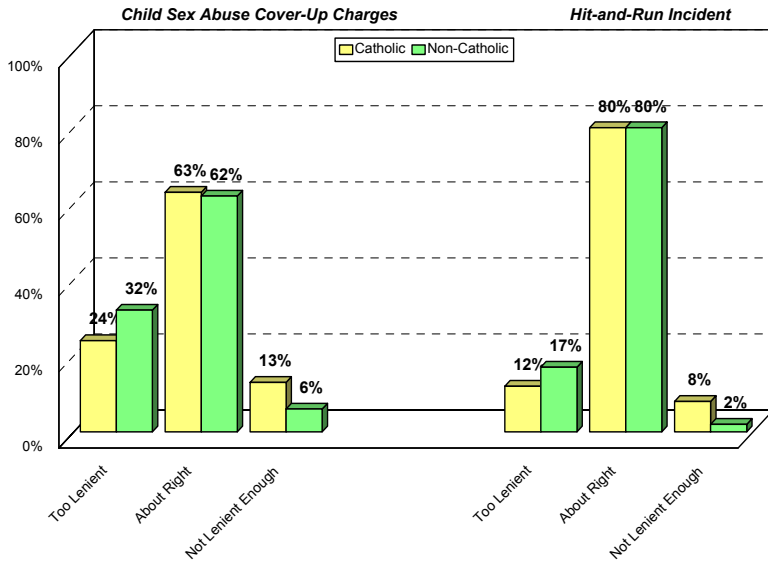
**FOR RELEASE FRIDAY, JULY 11, 2003**

**(VIP020-2003-04)**

FURTHER INFORMATION: Michael O’Neil, Ph.D., 480-967-4441

*These results may be reported freely provided that they are identified as the “O’Neil Associates Valley Influentials Poll” including identification on any graphic material.*

**COMMUNITY LEADERS' SUPPORT FOR RICK ROMLEY'S TREATMENT OF BISHOP O'BRIEN**

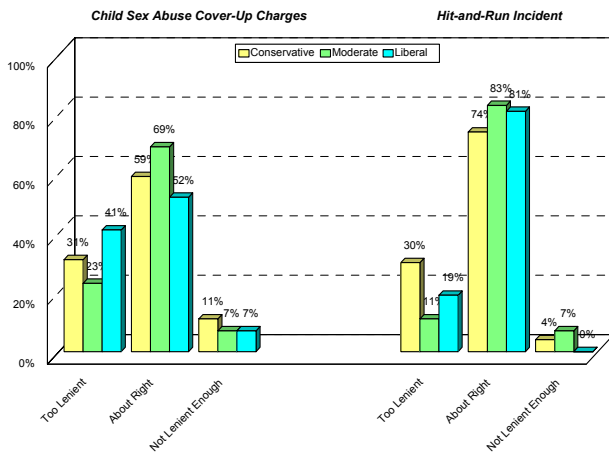


treatment was too lenient (24%) to those who felt the treatment was not lenient enough (13%) is less than 2-to-1. Among non-Catholics, this proportion exceeds 5-to-1 (32% too lenient, 6% not lenient enough). Similar, but slightly less dramatic findings are evident in the differences between the opinions held by Catholics and non-Catholics about the hit-and-run incident. In this instance, 80% of each group feels that the Bishop was treated about right. Among Catholics, slightly more feel that the Bishop was treated too leniently (12%) than feel he was not treated too harshly (8%). Among non-Catholics, the one-in-five respondents (19%) who do not feel the situation was appropriately handled almost unanimously feel the Bishop was treated too leniently (17% too lenient, 2% not lenient enough).

**Catholics and Non-Catholics: Not Much Different**

Given the religious overtones evident in this case, this survey included a question asking respondents whether or not they are Catholic. Interestingly, Catholic respondents' views about the County Attorney's treatment of Bishop O'Brien do not markedly differ from the views that non-Catholic community leaders hold. Specifically, with the child sex abuse cover-up charges, the proportion of Catholics feeling that the Bishop was treated about right (63%) is virtually identical to the proportion of non-Catholics feeling the treatment was appropriate (62%). Among Catholics, however, the ratio of those who feel the

**COMMUNITY LEADERS' SUPPORT FOR RICK ROMLEY'S TREATMENT OF BISHOP O'BRIEN**



**Who's Tough on Crime?**

An interesting juxtaposition of the usual finding was evident in the relationship between self-professed political ideology and propensity to believe that the Bishop was treated too leniently. Fully 41% of liberals feel that the bishop was treated too leniently in the sex abuse cover-up case; this number drops to 23% among moderates and is 31% among conservative respondents. Thus, we have the odd finding that the traditionally more 'law and order' conservatives are not as inclined as are the liberals to argue for harsher treatment in this instance of alleged child sexual-abuse cover-up.

According to the director of the Poll, Dr. Michael O’Neil, “Controversial cases such as this seldom produce any semblance of unanimity. While, if anything, the public would have tilted toward slightly harsher treatment, as evidenced by the ratio of “too lenient” to “not lenient enough” responses, on balance these responses must be seen as a rather rousing endorsement of the County Attorney’s treatment of these cases”.

---

*O’Neil Associates has tracked public opinion across the Valley, Arizona, and the Nation since 1981. To be healthy, public debate must be informed—this is why we commit our resources to measuring opinions on the political and social issues people care about and talk about. O’Neil Associates, however, is much more than that. While the **Valley Influentials Poll** and **Valley Monitor** may be our most publicly visible activities, we do most of our work for private businesses and organizations as well as state and other public agencies. As a full-service research firm, we assist our clients with a broad range of research efforts to measure customer satisfaction, improve customer service, fine-tune public images, focus marketing campaigns, engineer products, increase market shares, strengthen employee relations, and plan, refine, and assess business strategies.*

For more information about us, please visit

[www.oneilresearch.com](http://www.oneilresearch.com)

For other surveys of public interest, please visit

<http://www.oneilresearch.com/surveys.htm>