

Rutgers poll: Most feel Ravi sentence was too lenient

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NEW BRUNSWICK – Dharun Ravi’s sentence for bias intimidation and invasion of privacy in the Tyler Clementi case was “not tough enough,” according to most respondents to a new Rutgers-Eagleton Poll.

Just over half felt his sentence of 30 days in jail, three years probation, community service and a fine was too lenient.

Thirty-nine percent think Ravi got “the sentence he deserves,” seven percent believe the punishment was “too tough,” and four percent are unsure, the new poll says.

Ravi was sentenced on May 21 for using a webcam to spy on Clementi, who was his roommate at Rutgers University. Clementi killed himself in September 2010 a few days after Ravi and a fellow student used a webcam on Ravi’s computer to spy on Clementi kissing another man.

Ravi could have been sentenced up to 10 years in prison.

“Virtually everyone had heard about the case and has an opinion on it,” said Poll Director David Redlawsk, a professor of political science at Rutgers, in a release. “The case gripped New Jersey and the country, and the sentencing has generated strong opinions. In the end New Jerseyans agree with a recent statement by Tyler Clementi’s parents that Dharun Ravi’s sentence is not enough.”

Results are from a poll of 1,191 adults conducted statewide among both landline and cell phone households from May 31-June 4. The sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points.

The feelings about the sentence were similar among different groups. Fifty-two percent of Democrats and of Republicans and 50 percent of independents believe the sentence was too lenient.

Fifty-one percent of whites, 47 percent of blacks, and 62 percent of Hispanics felt the sentence did not go far enough, according to the poll.

Perhaps not surprisingly, 57 percent of younger residents say the punishment was not harsh enough, higher than any other age group, the poll shows.

“Those who are closest in age to Ravi and Clementi may feel the case more directly and may be empathizing more with the victim than older New Jerseyans,” said Redlawsk.



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