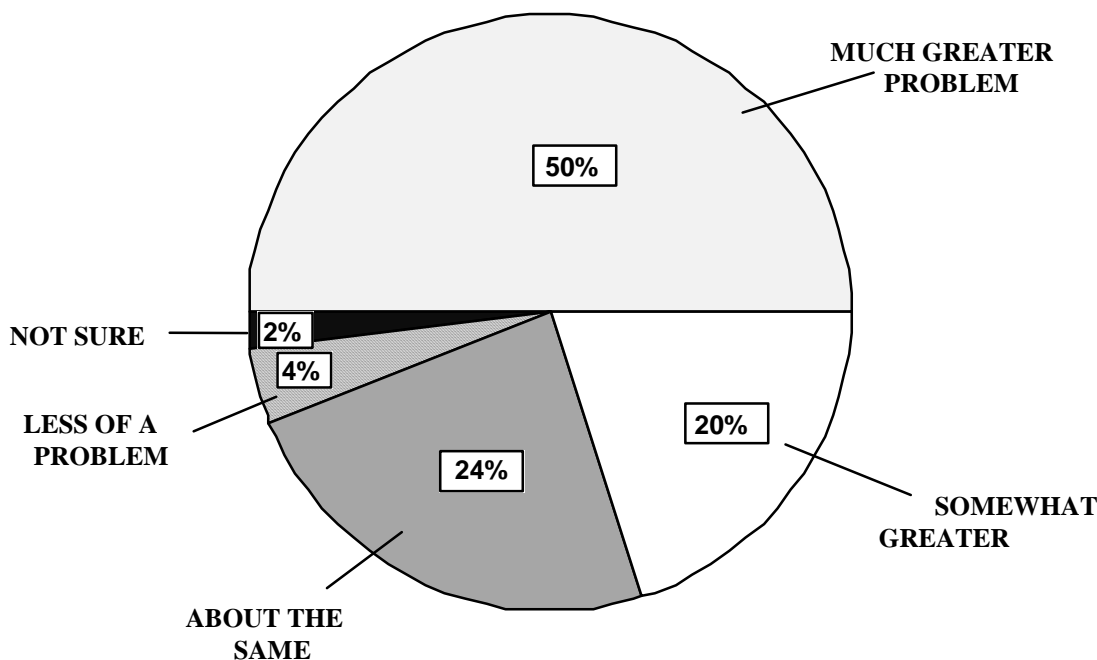


## *Public Perception of Drug Abuse Problem Differs From National Indicators*

The National Household Survey of Drug Abuse (NHSDA) and the National High School Senior Survey (NHSSS), both national survey measures of drug use, indicate that the level of drug use today is lower than five years ago. However, a recent national telephone survey of household residents age 18 and over found that the majority of people believe the drug abuse problem to be greater today than five years ago. Of the 1,001 people surveyed, one-half of the respondents believe that drug abuse is a much greater problem today, while 20% believe it to be a somewhat greater problem. Only 4% believe that drug abuse is less of a problem today than five years ago. The discrepancy between public perception and survey measures of drug use may be due to public misperception of the severity of the drug abuse problem. On the other hand, it may be that these national indicators are not measuring the true extent of drug abuse.

**Public Perception of Drug Crisis Today (1994) Compared to Five Years Ago**  
(N = 1,001)



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.'s telephone survey of 1,001 U.S. residents, February 2-3, 1994. Conducted for Drug Strategies, Washington D.C. For more information contact Caroline Polk of Drug Strategies at (202) 663-6090.

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