

State of the First Amendment 2008
Final Annotated Survey (N=1,005)
(Interviews conducted July 23-August 3, 2008)

Q1. As you may know, the First Amendment is part of the U.S. Constitution. Can you name any of the specific rights that are guaranteed by the First Amendment?

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Freedom of the press	11%	12%	12%	14%	14%	16%	15%	16%	13%	16%	15%
Freedom of speech	49%	44%	60%	59%	58%	63%	58%	63%	56%	63%	56%
Freedom of religion	21%	13%	16%	16%	18%	22%	17%	20%	17%	19%	15%
Right to petition	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Right of assembly/association	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	11%	10%	14%	11%	17%	14%
DK/Ref. (to all questions/follow-ups)	N/A	N/A	37%	36%	35%	37%	35%	29%	36%	29%	40%

Q2. The First Amendment became part of the U.S. Constitution more than 200 years ago. This is what it says:

'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.'

Based on your own feelings about the First Amendment, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: The First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Strongly agree	16%	10%	29%	41%	19%	19%	13%	8%	14%	10%
Mildly agree	12%	12%	10%	8%	15%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%
Mildly disagree	22%	26%	19%	15%	18%	21%	16%	22%	15%	15%
Strongly disagree	45%	48%	39%	32%	42%	44%	56%	54%	55%	59%
DK/Ref.	5%	5%	3%	3%	7%	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%

Q3. Overall, do you think the PRESS in America has too much freedom to do what it wants, too little freedom to do what it wants, or is the amount of freedom the press has about right?

	1997	1999	1999f	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Too much freedom	38%	53%	42%	51%	46%	42%	46%	42%	39%	40%	34%	39%
Too little freedom	9%	7%	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%	12%	10%	10%	13%	9%
About right	50%	37%	48%	41%	42%	49%	43%	44%	47%	47%	50%	49%
DK/Ref.	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%

Q4. Even though the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of RELIGION, government has placed some restrictions on it. Overall, do you think Americans have too much religious freedom, too little religious freedom, or is the amount of religious freedom about right?

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007	2008
Too much freedom	6%	8%	5%	4%	6%	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Too little freedom	21%	26%	29%	32%	20%	24%	27%	26%	24%	28%
About right	71%	63%	63%	62%	70%	66%	64%	65%	66%	62%
DK/Ref.	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%

IQ5. Now please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q5. Journalists should be allowed to keep a news source confidential.

	1997	1999	2000	2004	2007	2008
Strongly agree	58%	48%	52%	42%	43%	45%
Mildly agree	27%	31%	25%	28%	32%	25%
Mildly disagree	6%	10%	8%	13%	10%	11%
Strongly disagree	6%	9%	10%	12%	11%	11%
DK/Ref.	2%	3%	5%	5%	4%	7%

Q6. Overall, the news media tries to report the news without bias.

	2004	2005	2007	2008
Strongly agree	15%	13%	16%	14%
Mildly agree	24%	20%	21%	18%
Mildly disagree	19%	22%	21%	21%
Strongly disagree	39%	42%	39%	43%
DK/Ref.	3%	3%	3%	4%

Q7. "The falsifying or making up of stories in the American news media is a widespread problem."

	2004	2005	2007	2008
Strongly agree	37%	40%	36%	44%
Mildly agree	24%	25%	26%	22%
Mildly disagree	24%	20%	22%	19%
Strongly disagree	12%	11%	12%	11%
DK/Ref.	6%	5%	4%	5%

Q8. Do you feel that the freedom to worship as one chooses...applies to all religious groups regardless of how extreme their beliefs are, or was never meant to apply to religious groups that most people would consider extreme or fringe?

	1997	2000	2007	2008
Applies to all religious groups regardless of how extreme their beliefs are	69%	72%	56%	54%
Was never meant to apply to religious groups that the majority of the people consider extreme or on the fringe	24%	19%	27%	29%
Neither	2%	3%	6%	6%
DK/Ref.	5%	6%	10%	10%

IQ9. Now please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q9. Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics that others might find offensive.

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Strongly agree	23%	27%	32%	34%	31%	35%	34%	31%	41%	32%	42%
Mildly agree	28%	29%	27%	27%	26%	26%	25%	25%	22%	23%	23%
Mildly disagree	16%	15%	12%	9%	14%	10%	12%	14%	11%	13%	9%
Strongly disagree	31%	26%	28%	28%	27%	26%	26%	24%	23%	29%	24%
DK/Ref.	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	7%	3%	2%	3%

Q10. People should be allowed to say things in public that might be offensive to RELIGIOUS groups.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008
Strongly agree	22%	25%	29%	26%	23%	31%	32%	32%
Mildly agree	24%	22%	28%	23%	25%	24%	28%	23%
Mildly disagree	15%	16%	14%	14%	15%	16%	12%	12%
Strongly disagree	38%	35%	28%	36%	35%	27%	26%	30%
DK/Ref.	1%	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	2%

Q11. People should be allowed to say things in public that might be offensive to RACIAL groups.

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Strongly agree	8%	8%	15%	16%	14%	18%	17%	21%	22%	21%	24%
Mildly agree	15%	13%	17%	18%	20%	20%	18%	22%	20%	21%	19%
Mildly disagree	14%	16%	15%	15%	16%	14%	14%	14%	13%	12%	12%
Strongly disagree	61%	62%	52%	49%	48%	47%	49%	39%	42%	44%	42%
DK/Ref.	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%

Q12. The nation's founders intended the United States to be a Christian nation.

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	46%	46%
Mildly agree	19%	17%
Mildly disagree	12%	13%
Strongly disagree	19%	19%
DK/Ref.	4%	5%

Q13. The U.S. Constitution establishes a Christian nation. (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Agree/Disagree Strongly/Mildly)

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	38%	36%
Mildly agree	17%	19%
Mildly disagree	15%	15%
Strongly disagree	26%	24%
DK/Ref.	4%	7%

Q14. School officials should be allowed to discipline students who, while off-campus, post entries on social networking sites like "MySpace.com" that may be disruptive to school classes. (PROBE IF NECESSARY: Agree/Disagree Strongly/Mildly)

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	30%	33%
Mildly agree	20%	17%
Mildly disagree	17%	17%
Strongly disagree	29%	27%
DK/Ref.	5%	6%

Q15. The government should be able to place restrictions on the amount of money a POLITICAL CANDIDATE can contribute to his or her own election campaign.

	2000	2007	2008
Strongly agree	36%	46%	37%
Mildly agree	17%	16%	12%
Mildly disagree	18%	11%	17%
Strongly disagree	26%	24%	31%
DK/Ref	3%	3%	4%

Q16. The government should be able to place restrictions on the amount of money a PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL can contribute to someone else's election campaign.

	2000	2007	2008
Strongly agree	40%	48%	39%
Mildly agree	17%	16%	16%
Mildly disagree	17%	11%	15%
Strongly disagree	24%	22%	25%
DK/Ref	2%	3%	4%

Q17. The government should be able to place restrictions on the amount of money a PRIVATE CORPORATION OR A UNION can contribute to an election campaign.

	2000	2007	2008
Strongly agree	52%	57%	54%
Mildly agree	16%	14%	14%
Mildly disagree	12%	9%	11%
Strongly disagree	18%	17%	18%
DK/Ref	2%	3%	3%

Q18. The government should be allowed to require broadcasters to report a specified amount of “positive” news in return for the granting of licenses to use the public airwaves.

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	21%	22%
Mildly agree	19%	16%
Mildly disagree	16%	19%
Strongly disagree	38%	36%
DK/Ref.	6%	6%

Q19. In your view, who should be primarily responsible for keeping inappropriate material on television away from children: Parents, Government officials or Broadcasters?

	2004	2005	2007	2008
Parents	87%	82%	74%	76%
Government officials	1%	2%	6%	4%
Broadcasters	10%	15%	19%	17%
Nobody (vol.)	0%	0%	0%	0%
DK/Ref.	2%	1%	1%	2%

Q20. The government currently has some authority to regulate content on broadcast television. Should that authority be extended to allow the regulation of programs available by subscription to cable or satellite television systems?

	2005	2007	2008
Yes, it should be extended	35%	38%	39%
No	60%	57%	56%
DK/Ref.	5%	5%	5%

IQ21. Now please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q21. The government should be allowed to require TELEVISION BROADCASTERS to offer an equal allotment of time to conservative and liberal commentators.

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	36%	40%
Mildly agree	26%	26%
Mildly disagree	11%	12%
Strongly disagree	24%	20%
DK/Ref.	4%	3%

Q22. The government should be allowed to require NEWSPAPERS to offer an equal allotment of time to conservative and liberal commentators.

	2007	2008
Strongly agree	35%	38%
Mildly agree	26%	24%
Mildly disagree	13%	13%
Strongly disagree	23%	21%
DK/Ref.	3%	4%

Q23. Some people feel that the U.S. Constitution should be amended to make it illegal to burn or desecrate the American flag as a form of political dissent. Others say that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended to specifically prohibit flag burning or desecration. Do you think the U.S. Constitution should or should not be amended to prohibit burning or desecrating the American flag?

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007	2008
Should not → Go to Q24	49%	48%	51%	59%	51%	55%	53%	63%	59%	57%
Should → Go to Q25	49%	51%	46%	39%	46%	44%	45%	35%	38%	40%
DK/Ref. → Go to Q25	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Q24. [If Yes to Q23] If an amendment prohibiting burning or desecrating the American flag were approved, it would be the first time any of the freedoms in the First Amendment have been amended in over 200 years. Knowing this, would you still support an amendment to prohibit burning or desecrating the flag?

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007	2008
Yes	88%	90%	87%	81%	83%	87%	82%	86%	83%	86%
No	9%	8%	12%	15%	15%	12%	16%	11%	15%	12%
DK/Ref.	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%

Q25. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Religious leaders should be allowed to openly endorse political candidates from the pulpit without endangering the tax-exempt status of their organizations?”

	2008
Strongly agree	22%
Mildly agree	18%
Mildly disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	39%
DK/Ref.	6%

Q27. As you may be aware, the government recently arrested an adult who deceived a 13-year-old using the on-line social network, MySpace. The teenager committed suicide. Do you agree or disagree that government should prosecute the adult who committed this deception?

	2008
Strongly agree	65%
Mildly agree	13%
Mildly disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	6%
DK/Ref.	11%

Q28. “Blogs” are defined as online journals in which people post diary entries about their personal experiences and opinions, to be read online by others. Do you agree or disagree that bloggers should receive the same exact First Amendment protection as do journalists at newspapers?”

	2008
Strongly agree	41%
Mildly agree	23%
Mildly disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	18%
DK/Ref.	7%

IQ30. I’m going to read to you a list of some of the candidates for the presidency in 2008. For each, please tell me if the media’s coverage of that individual has been very fair, somewhat fair, not too fair, or not fair at all?

Q30. John McCain?

	2008
Very fair	30%
Somewhat fair	44%
Not too fair	13%
Not fair at all	7%
DK/Ref.	6%

Q31. Barack Obama?

	2008
Very fair	48%
Somewhat fair	31%
Not too fair	10%
Not fair at all	5%
DK/Ref.	7%

Q32. Hillary Clinton?

	2008
Very fair	35%
Somewhat fair	36%
Not too fair	14%
Not fair at all	8%
DK/Ref.	6%

Q33. Mike Huckabee?

	2008
Very fair	17%
Somewhat fair	43%
Not too fair	14%
Not fair at all	10%
DK/Ref.	17%

Q34. Mitt Romney?

	2008
Very fair	17%
Somewhat fair	41%
Not too fair	18%
Not fair at all	8%
DK/Ref.	16%

Q35. John Edwards?

	2008
Very fair	21%
Somewhat fair	46%
Not too fair	11%
Not fair at all	8%
DK/Ref.	14%

Q36. Rudolph Giuliani?

	2008
Very fair	18%
Somewhat fair	44%
Not too fair	14%
Not fair at all	8%
DK/Ref.	17%

Q38. The Federal Communications Commission is considering a proposal to provide free Internet access to anyone, anywhere in the United States. However, under the proposal, the government would block access to material it deemed indecent or obscene. Do you favor or oppose the FCC's proposal?

	2008
Strongly favor	38%
Mildly favor	16%
Mildly disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	28%
DK/Ref.	5%

Q39. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government should be allowed to fine television broadcasters who air profane or obscene words that are scripted PRIOR to the broadcast.

	2008
Strongly agree	43%
Mildly agree	19%
Mildly disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	22%
DK/Ref.	3%

Q40. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government should be allowed to fine television broadcasters who air profane or obscene words spoken as part of SPONTANEOUS, UNSCRIPTED MATERIAL.

	2008
Strongly agree	30%
Mildly agree	20%
Mildly disagree	17%
Strongly disagree	30%
DK/Ref.	4%

Q41. Some feel that print newspapers may be replaced entirely by the Internet, blogs and other forms of electronic news sources in the next decade or so. Would that have a positive impact on free expression, a negative impact on free expression, or would it have no impact at all?

	2008
Positive impact	16%
Negative impact	43%
No impact at all	34%
DK/Ref.	7%

Q42. If print newspapers were replaced by Internet and electronic news sources, would that increase, decrease, or not change your access to news?

	2008
Increase	12%
Decrease	37%
No change	49%
DK/Ref.	3%

Q43. Overall, where would you say you get MOST of your news from – newspapers, television, radio, magazines, the Internet, or some other source?

	1997	2007	2008
Newspapers → Go to Q44	26%	20%	21%
Television → Go to Q45	50%	52%	49%
Radio → Go to Q45	15%	9%	10%
Magazines → Go to Q45	2%	1%	0%
Internet → Go to Q45	2%	15%	17%
Other → Go to Q45	1%	3%	2%
DK/Ref. → Go to Q45	-	-	1%

Q44. [If Newspapers from Q43] If print newspapers were eliminated in favor of Internet and electronic news sources, which of the following news sources, would become your primary source for daily access to news? Television, radio, magazines, online news organizations, blogs and other personal news reports online, or some other source?

	2008
Television	54%
Radio	10%
Magazines	1%
Online news organizations	27%
Blogs and other personal news reports online	2%
Something else	2%
DK/Ref.	4%

Q45. Some people argue that requiring journalists to reveal their confidential news sources will help make America safer, while others say it will not. Do you favor or oppose court orders that require journalists to reveal their sources?

	2008
Favor strongly	18%
Favor mildly	19%
Oppose mildly	24%
Oppose strongly	31%
DK/Ref.	9%

Q46. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is important for our democracy that the news media act as a watchdog on government.

	2004	2005	2008
Strongly agree	49%	50%	51%
Mildly agree	28%	24%	25%
Mildly disagree	11%	11%	8%
Strongly disagree	10%	11%	11%
DK/Ref.	3%	3%	5%

Now I'd like to ask you some questions for classification purposes only...

ID1. Now, I'd like to ask you some questions for classification purposes only...

D1. In what year were you born? (Age)

	2008
18-35	33%
36-49	26%
50-64	23%
65+	15%
DK/Ref.	1%

D2. What was the last grade of school you completed? Grade school or less, some high school, high school, some college, college grad, or post graduate?

	2008
Grade school or less (1-8 years)	1%
Some high school (9-11 years)	5%
High school grad (12 years)	38%
Trade school (vol.)	1%
Some college (13-15 years)/Associate Degree	27%
College graduate	18%
Post-graduate	9%
DK/Ref.	0%

D3. Are you White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or something else?

	2008
White	79%
Black	10%
Hispanic	5%
Asian	1%
Bi-racial (vol.)	1%
Something else	2%
DK/Ref.	2%

D4a. For classification purposes only, is the total yearly income of all the members of your family now living at home \$40,000 or more, or would it be less than \$40,000?

	2008
Less than \$40,000 → Go to D4b	31%
\$40,000 or more → Go to D4c	60%
DK/Ref. → Go to D5	9%

D4b. [If Less than \$40,000 from D4a.] And is that...

	2008
Under \$10,000 → Go to D5	13%
\$10,000 to less than \$20,000 → Go to D5	27%
\$20,000 to less than \$30,000 → Go to D5	20%
\$30,000 to less than \$40,000 → Go to D5	30%
DK/Ref. → Go to D5	9%

D4b. [If \$40,000 or more from D4a] And is that...

	2008
\$40,000 to less than \$50,000	17%
\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	28%
\$75,000 to less than \$100,000	21%
\$100,000 or more	27%
DK/Ref.	7%

D5. Are you Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or some other religion?

	2008
Catholic	22%
Protestant	51%
Jewish	1%
Other (specify)	4%
No Religious Affiliation (vol.)	17%
DK/Ref.	5%

D6. Would you describe yourself as either a fundamentalist or evangelical Christian, or would you not describe yourself that way?

	2008
Fundamentalist/Evangelical	22%
Neither	70%
Not sure (vol.)	4%
DK/Ref.	4%

D7. In politics TODAY, are you a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent or what?

	2008
Democrat	32%
Republican	25%
Independent	31%
No preference (vol.)	6%
Other (vol.)	2%
DK/Ref.	3%

D8a. Do you have any children under the age of 18?

	2008
Yes	31%
No → Go to D9	68%
DK/Ref. → Go to D9	1%

D8b. [If Yes to D8a.] Do you have any children under the age of 12?

	2008
Yes	69%
No → Go to D9	31%
DK/Ref. → Go to D9	0%

D8c. [If Yes to D8b] Do you have any children under the age of 6?

	2008
Yes	67%
No	33%
DK/Ref.	67%

D9. RECORD ONLY. RESPONDENTS SEX:

	2008
Male	48%
Female	52%

Those were all the questions we had for you today. Thank you for your time.