

State of the First Amendment - 2010 core questions survey

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	2009	2010
Freedom of the press	11%	12%	12%	14%	14%	16%	15%	16%	13%	16%	15%	16%	18%
Freedom of speech	49%	44%	60%	59%	58%	63%	58%	63%	56%	63%	56%	55%	61%
Freedom of religion	21%	13%	16%	16%	18%	22%	17%	20%	17%	19%	15%	18%	23%
Right to petition	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	6%
Right of assembly/association	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	11%	10%	14%	11%	17%	14%	14%	14%
DK/Ref. (to all questions/follow-ups)	N/A	N/A	37%	36%	35%	37%	35%	29%	36%	29%	40%	39%	33%

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	2009	2010
Strongly agree	16%	10%	29%	41%	19%	19%	13%	8%	14%	10%	11%	10%
Mildly agree	12%	12%	10%	8%	15%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%	8%	7%
Mildly disagree	22%	26%	19%	15%	18%	21%	16%	22%	15%	15%	16%	17%
Strongly disagree	45%	48%	39%	32%	42%	44%	56%	54%	55%	59%	57%	62%
DK/Ref.	5%	5%	3%	3%	7%	5%	5%	6%	4%	4%	8%	4%

Q3-Q9: Now please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Q3. 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	2009	2010
Strongly agree	23%	27%	32%	34%	31%	35%	34%	31%	41%	32%	42%	37%	46%
Mildly agree	28%	29%	27%	27%	26%	26%	25%	25%	22%	23%	23%	24%	22%
Mildly disagree	16%	15%	12%	9%	14%	10%	12%	14%	11%	13%	9%	9%	10%
Strongly disagree	31%	26%	28%	28%	27%	26%	26%	24%	23%	29%	24%	22%	17%
DK/Ref.	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	7%	3%	2%	3%	8%	5%

Q4. Student speakers should be allowed to speak about their religious faith at public school events.

	2010
Strongly agree	54%
Mildly agree	21%
Mildly disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	12%
DK/Ref.	3%

Q5. Student speakers should be allowed to offer a prayer at public school events.

	2010
Strongly agree	61%
Mildly agree	19%
Mildly disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	13%
DK/Ref.	1%

Q6. The First Amendment requires a clear separation of church and state.

	2010
Strongly agree	48%
Mildly agree	18%
Mildly disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	15%
DK/Ref.	7%

Q7. The U.S. Constitution establishes a Christian nation.

	2008	2010
Strongly agree	36%	38%
Mildly agree	19%	15%
Mildly disagree	15%	15%
Strongly disagree	24%	26%
DK/Ref.	7%	6%

Q8. Public schools should be allowed to discipline students who use their own personal computers at home to post material that school officials say is offensive.

	2010
Strongly agree	20%
Mildly agree	12%
Mildly disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	43%
DK/Ref.	8%

Q9. Corporations and unions should have the same free speech rights that individual citizens have in supporting political candidates.

	2010
Strongly agree	39%
Mildly agree	22%
Mildly disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	24%
DK/Ref.	5%

Q10. Do you support or oppose congress and the president proclaiming a national day of prayer?

	2010
Strongly support	58%
Mildly support	18%
Mildly oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	13%
DK/Ref.	5%

Q11. There will be elections this November. How important is the religious affiliation of the candidates in your vote choice?

	2010
Very important	23%
Somewhat important	25%
Not too important	16%
Not at all important	36%
DK/Ref.	1%

Q12. Do you feel that the freedom to worship as one chooses applies to all religious groups regardless of how extreme their views are, or was it never meant to apply to religious groups that most people would consider extreme or fringe?

	1997	2000	2007	2008	2010
Applies to all groups	69%	72%	56%	54%	61%
Not apply to extreme groups	24%	19%	27%	29%	28%
DK/Ref.	7%	9%	16%	16%	11%

Q13. 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	2009	2010
Should not → Go to IQ8	49%	48%	51%	59%	51%	55%	53%	63%	59%	57%	60%	58%
Should → Go to Q7	49%	51%	46%	39%	46%	44%	45%	35%	38%	40%	35%	38%
DK/Ref. → Go to IQ8	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%

Q14. [If Yes to Q13] 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	2009	2010
Yes	88%	90%	87%	81%	83%	87%	82%	86%	83%	86%	79%	81%
No	9%	8%	12%	15%	15%	12%	16%	11%	15%	12%	15%	15%
DK/Ref.	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	3%