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## **NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER AND ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL REVEALS AMERICANS OPPOSE GIVING THE PRESIDENT MORE POWER**

*Give Government High Marks on Protecting Security and Freedom;  
Failing Grade on Putting General Welfare over Special Interests*

PHILADELPHIA, PA (September 15, 2008) -- Americans oppose giving the president more power at the expense of Congress and the courts, and strongly respect the divisions of powers among the three branches of government, according to a new poll on constitutional issues released today by the National Constitution Center and The Associated Press.

The poll found that a large majority of Americans oppose altering the balance of power among the branches of government. Americans also think Congress should have the power to force presidential aides to testify before Congressional committees.

Americans also strongly support private property rights, and oppose allowing government to take private property for the purposes of development, even if a fair price is paid for the property and when the project would create jobs. Most think private property rights are as important as other rights like freedom of speech and religion.

In other findings, the poll shows that Americans generally have a strong attachment to constitutional values and an overall commitment to the ideals laid out in the Preamble of the Constitution, including the separation of power, rule of law, and protection of individual rights.

“There could be no more appropriate time than the eve of both Constitution Day and a presidential election to measure Americans’ commitment to constitutional ideas and opinions about constitutional issues,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO Joseph M. Torsella. “And somewhere the Founders are smiling, because 221 years later Americans are deeply committed to basic constitutional values.”

In a Preamble index of questions, when asked to rate the job performance of the government in fulfilling the mandate of the government as spelled out by the framers in the Preamble of the Constitution, the public gave higher marks for security-related tasks than for social concerns:

- Making sure the nation is safe from foreign and domestic threats: 62 percent good job
- Making sure all Americans feel safe, secure and free: 58 percent good job
- Making sure that all Americans are free to pursue happiness now and in the future: 55 percent good job
- Making sure all people are treated equally: 47 percent good job
- Making America a better place: 40 percent good job
- Promoting the well-being of all Americans, not just special interests: 38 percent good job

80 percent of respondents opposed changing the Constitution to allow people not born in the United States to become president.

-MORE-

## ADD ONE/NCC AND AP POLL

The Center commissioned the poll and intends to poll annually to see how responses change over time.

The AP-National Constitution Center poll involved telephone interviews with 1,000 adults nationwide. The survey was conducted from August 22 to 29 by Abt SRBI, Inc. and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Complete poll results are posted at <http://surveys.ap.org>.

### About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

### About the AP

The Associated Press is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world, to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the largest and most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP.

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