

# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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## ASSOCIATED PRESS-NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER POLL REVEALS PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

***But more Americans favor rather than oppose the use of domestic drones***

Philadelphia, PA (September 27, 2012) – A recently released poll by The Associated Press and the National Constitution Center indicates that Americans are concerned about privacy infringement. In fact, less than half (47%) give the government good marks on protecting the right to privacy, and 40% believe the government is doing a poor job protecting that right. While a right to privacy is not explicitly enumerated in the Constitution, which celebrated its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary last week, the public does give Washington positive reviews on protecting other constitutional rights, including the right to vote (76% “good job”), freedom of speech (70%), the right of everyone to equal protection under the law (57%), and the right to keep and bear arms (53%).

There is, however, disagreement across party lines. Regarding the government’s job protecting the public’s right to privacy, high marks come solely from Democrats, 58% of whom say the government is doing a good job. That figure drops markedly among Republicans (37%) and independents (35%). In addition, only 41% of political independents believe the government is doing a good job ensuring equal protection for everyone. Among Democrats and Republicans, reviews are more positive, at 55% and 63%, respectively.

Only a little over a third of the public is deeply concerned about encroachments on their privacy from new technologies. Just 37% say they are extremely or very concerned that using social networking websites such as Facebook or Twitter will cause them to lose some of their privacy. Additionally, more Americans favor rather than oppose the use of drones for domestic law

enforcement, with only 35% expressing a high level of concern for this kind of police department surveillance, an issue that is gaining awareness in the United States. Even fewer are concerned about loss of privacy due to banking electronically (30%), using GPS enabled devices (27%), roadside speed or red light cameras (27%), or doctors or hospitals using electronic medical records (23%).

The series of questions about privacy in the 2012 AP/National Constitution Center poll sought to address privacy in the light of changing technology and laws. Congress has directed the Federal Aviation Administration to change domestic flight rules by 2015 to enable the use of unmanned aircraft in the United States. Law enforcement agencies also may begin using drones for surveillance in the U.S., similar to the way they have been used abroad by the military. Overall, 44% of Americans say they favor allowing police forces inside the U.S. to use unmanned aircraft to assist in their police work, 36% say they would oppose that plan, and 17% are neutral about it.

Additional poll results were released to the public on September 14. Complete results are available at <http://surveys.ap.org>.

The poll involved telephone interviews with 1,006 adults nationwide. The survey was conducted from August 16-20, 2012 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

#### About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center is the first and only nonprofit, nonpartisan institution devoted to the most powerful vision of human freedom ever expressed: the U.S. Constitution. Located on Independence Mall in Historic Philadelphia, the birthplace of American freedom, the Center illuminates constitutional ideals and inspires active citizenship through a state-of-the-art museum experience, including hundreds of interactive exhibits, films and rare artifacts; must-see feature exhibitions; the internationally acclaimed, 360-degree theatrical production *Freedom Rising*; and the iconic *Signers' Hall*, where visitors can sign the Constitution alongside 42 life-size, bronze statues of the Founding Fathers. As America's forum for constitutional dialogue, the Center engages diverse, distinguished leaders of government, public policy, journalism and scholarship in timely public discussions and debates. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, the national hub for constitutional education, which offers

cutting-edge civic learning resources both onsite and online. Freedom is calling. Answer it at the National Constitution Center. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

#### About the AP

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