



## ADD ONE/2010 AP POLL

In other findings, approximately three-quarters agree that the U.S. Constitution is “an enduring document that remains relevant today,” and nearly as many say laws should be followed even if public safety might be at risk. Most also back the rights of the individual over the whims of the majority (62%), and say even offensive speech should be a constitutional right (70%).

“At a time that seems characterized by deepening political polarization, most Americans remain in strong agreement on our highest democratic values,” said National Constitution Center President and CEO David Eisner. “Across party lines, our poll found that the majority of Americans believe in upholding the rule of law and protecting individual rights. On this Constitution Day we can celebrate that, even as partisan debates rage around hot-button issues, Americans still share together a vision of a more perfect Union formed under the framework of our nation’s most cherished document.”

On some of the central political issues of the day, the poll shows that Americans are highly skeptical of government intervention. Approximately three-quarters say they would oppose shifting more power to the president even if it would help improve the economy, and more than eight in 10 say the federal government should not have the power to require all Americans to buy health insurance and pay a fine if they do not.

Another key finding is that support for governmental recognition of same-sex relationships has grown over the three years of polling. Now, 58% say same-sex couples should be entitled to the same government benefits as married couples of the opposite sex, and a majority (52%) says the government should give legal recognition to same-sex marriages.

In rating the government’s handling of six responsibilities as spelled out in the Preamble of the Constitution, the public appears to be shifting toward a more negative view. The government receives majority positive views on only two security measures, and deeply positive ratings have hit new lows in the poll in all but one central government function:

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- Making sure all Americans feel safe, secure and free: 54% good job, with fewer than one in five saying government does a “very good” job;
- Making sure that our nation is safe from foreign and domestic threats: 53% good job, down from 62% in 2008 and 58% last year;
- Making America a better place: 45% good job, a new high and the only measure on which a positive shift is apparent;
- Making sure that Americans are free to pursue happiness now and in the future: 48% good job;
- Making sure that all people are treated equally: 45% good job, just 12% say the government is doing a “very good” job, down six points from last year;
- Promoting the well-being of all Americans, not just special interests: 37% good job, a mere 8% say “very good.”

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

The poll involved telephone interviews with 1,007 adults nationwide. The survey was conducted from August 11 through 16 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

### 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

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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

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