Freedom Shrinks: 62% of Americans Afraid to Share Political Views

Joseph Vasquez

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The Cato Institute recently released a survey showing that the majority of Americans feel they have to self-censor their political views because they might offend people, even lose their jobs.

Welcome to 2020 America.

Specifically, the **national survey** discovered that "[n]early two-thirds—62%—of Americans say the political climate these days prevents them from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive." Cato stated that the results indicate a rise in "self-censorship." Here's the kicker: "**Strong liberals stand out, however, as the only political group who feel they can express themselves**." In fact, "nearly 6 in 10 (58%) of staunch liberals feel they can say what they believe." Go figure. [Emphasis added.]

The 2020 Cato survey results (62%) were an increase from 2017. During that year, "58% of Americans agreed with the statement" that they feel the need to self-censor because of political views others might find offensive.

Cato broke down the results among the political affiliations:

These fears cross partisan lines. Majorities of Democrats (52%), independents (59%) and Republicans (77%) all agree they have political opinions they are afraid to share.

Even "centrist liberals" felt differently from "strong liberals." "A slim majority (52%) of liberals feel they have to self-censor," according to Cato. This was interesting, given that it "demonstrates that political expression is an issue that divides the Democratic coalition between centrist Democrats and their left flank."

By contrast, 64% of moderates and **a whopping 77% of conservative**s felt the same way.

The results reflected on how Americans feel about the safety of their employment when expressing their political views. Cato stated that "[n]early a third (32%) of employed Americans say they personally are worried about missing out on career opportunities or losing their job if their political opinions became known."

The results here were evenly split: "[I]t's not just one side of the political spectrum: 31% of liberals, 30% of moderates and 34% of conservatives are worried their political views could get them fired or harm their career trajectory."

But there was a stark contrast between how "strong liberals" and "strong conservatives" feel about executives who donate to either presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden or President Donald Trump. Cato stated that "[t]he survey found that many Americans think a person's private political donations should impact their employment."

Specifically, "[s]upport rises among political subgroups. **Support increases to 50% of strong liberals who support firing executives who personally donate to Trump.** And more than a third (36%) of strong conservatives support firing an executive for donating to Biden's presidential campaign."

This **indicates that half of those who identify with the extreme left** believe that executives who donate to Trump should be fired.

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