



Poll: 62 Percent of Americans Are Afraid to Share Their Political Views

Rick Moran

July 23rd, 2020

America in the Age of Wokeness is a dreary place, where conformity of thought is demanded and any transgression that triggers just about anyone will get you canceled.

The libertarian think-tank [Cato Institute](#) published a poll that clearly shows what all of us on the right have been aware for many years but has now reached epidemic proportions. The poll discovered that 62 percent of Americans fear to express at least some of their political opinions in public.

That includes 52 percent of people who identify as Democrats, 59 percent who identify as independents, and a whopping 77 percent of those who are Republicans.

A breakdown in ideology is similar — with some surprises. A majority of those who identify as “strong liberals” — 58 percent — feel perfectly safe in expressing their views. But for those who identify as moderate liberals, 52 percent fear speaking out. That number rises to 64 percent of moderates and 77 percent of conservatives.

What does that tell us?

Although strong liberals are the only group who feel they can say what they believe, the share who feel pressured to self-censor rose 12 points from 30% in 2017 to 42% in 2020. The share of moderates who self-censor increased 7 points from 57% to 64%, and the share of conservatives rose 7% to 77%, also a 7-point increase. Strong conservatives are the only group with little change. They are about as likely now (77%) to say they hold back their views as in 2017 (76%).

Self-censorship is widespread across demographic groups as well. Nearly two-thirds of Latino Americans (65%) and White Americans (64%) and nearly half of African Americans (49%) have political views they are afraid to share. Majorities of men (65%) and women (59%), people with incomes over \$100,000 (60%) and people with incomes less than \$20,000 (58%), people under 35 (55%) and over 65 (66%), religious (71%) and non-religious (56%) all agree that the political climate prevents them from expressing their true beliefs.

It says that America is in the grip of radicals who bully us into believing what they say is good and proper to believe in and any contrary views are “racist” or hateful in some way. More than that, if you hold contrary views you don’t deserve a job, respect, or consideration from society. You deserve to get death threats. Your family deserves to be punished and threatened. It’s

remarkable to observe this transformation. A nation born out of colonists speaking their minds has been reduced to being led around by the nose out of fear of retribution. So sad.

To get along, people go along. Even if many don't agree with Black Lives Matter they're terrified to say otherwise out of fear and to avoid conflict and consequences. Those consequences could be personal, as in losing friends and lovers, but especially professional.

Nearly 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. These results are particularly notable given that most personal campaign contributions to political candidates are public knowledge and can easily be found online.

And it'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. This suggests that it's not necessarily just one particular set of views that has moved outside of acceptable public discourse. Instead these results are more consistent with a "walking on eggshells" thesis that people increasingly fear a wide range of political views could offend others or could negatively impact themselves.

In the 1950s and early '60s, one's political opinions were almost totally separate from his or her professional life. But then, "the personal is political" took hold among liberal activists from race-hustlers to feminists. It became a convenient way to attack the system and punish those who disagreed.

The problem with "the personal is political" is that the definition of "political" naturally gets narrower and narrower. The space to disagree gets smaller and smaller. I don't think there are a lot of liberals who fear conservatives forcing them out of their jobs. But if you prove to be insufficiently woke — if your absolute dedication and commitment to the cause becomes suspect — you can be canceled as easily as any conservative.

It took 70 years for the Russians to rouse themselves out of this stupor and throw off the Communist yoke. How long will it take Americans to regain their confidence to speak their minds?