



Washington Examiner

Liberals are never scared to speak up. Why are conservatives?

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July 25th, 2020

A handful of friends and I have spoken privately about the crippling anxiety apparently only experienced by independents and right-leaners when politics comes up in a social setting. Right up until now, it was just a theory.

A new study confirms what we suspected all along: Liberals really do feel like they can spew their thoughts freely, while everyone else quivers with fear that anything they say might offend.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, published a study this week showing that overall, 62% of people in the United States believe that the current “political climate” keeps them from sharing their political opinions. Broken down by ideology, however, self-identified liberals and “strong” liberals were significantly more likely to feel comfortable airing their opinions than centrists or conservatives.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “The political climate these days prevents me from saying things I believe because others might find them offensive.”

Among both conservatives and “strong” conservatives, 77% said they agreed with the sentiment that they mute themselves when it comes to politics. For centrists, 64% agreed.

But liberals were much more bold. Only about half of liberals said they feel the current climate prevents them from speaking their thoughts on politics out loud. As for “strong” liberals, nearly 60% disagreed with the statement.

And we wonder why modern opinion polls are consistently skewed. Honest centrists and right-leaners really are scared to say what they think.

It happens all the time. In a group setting, the first person to declare their opinion on President Trump or the police will invariably be a liberal. Everyone else will find that moment as perfect timing for refreshing their drink.

The Cato study doesn’t explore or even offer any guesses as to why, but it’s obvious. Liberals are simply more likely to act out when presented with differing opinions. They are rarely exposed to other views — the entire national media and all of Hollywood entertainment reinforce their beliefs — and that means they have fewer inhibitions when it comes to being strident, rude, or even hysterical when they hear opinions that contradict their own.

Anyone reading this has probably had it happen to them. A liberal makes some sweeping declaration — something like, “Jeff Sessions is a racist” — and the conservative asks, “What makes you say that?” The liberal then replies with the fury of a dragon before they inevitably cry.

I’ve long held the view that liberals are far more likely to behave this way. The new study goes a long way toward proving it.