



## New study shows 43 percent of Americans think supporting the First Amendment is racist

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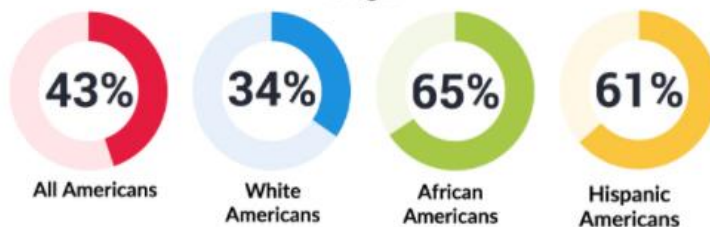
That free speech cliché, the one about disapproving with someone's idea but defending the right to speak it, is quickly becoming a heresy.

In a new Cato Institute survey, the libertarian think tank found that 43 percent of Americans believe supporting free speech of racists is tantamount to sharing the views of those racist. For instance, finding it objectionable to censure Richard Spencer is now equivalent to marching alongside the half-white white supremacist.

### Is Supporting Racists' Free Speech Rights the Same as Holding Racist Views Yourself?

*Agree/Disagree: Supporting someone's right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself.*

% Agree



CATO INSTITUTE 2017 FREE SPEECH AND TOLERANCE SURVEY

This, of course, sets up a standard as unworkable as it is overly broad, making de-facto racists of everyone.

Take Rep. Val Demings for starters. A black Democrat from Florida and a retired police chief, she seems like the furthest thing from a racist. Her law enforcement is exemplary while her understanding of criminal justice is invaluable. She is many good things and anything but a bigot.

Had 43 percent of the population listened to a July 27th congressional hearing on free speech at college campuses, they'd condemn her. Not only did Demings provide security for the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis during demonstrations, the retired police officer was prepared to lay down her life for the rights of racists.

“If someone or anyone had tried to harm them in any way,” Demings explained, “I would have risked my life to protect them, not because I agreed with their speech, but because I agreed with their right to speak, their right as guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

What's especially worrisome is the scope of this new standard. No one is safe, not even the American Civil Liberties Union. For defending the free speech of Milo Yiannopoulos, that civic group would be labeled an organ of hate by a sizeable chunk of the country, even though they adamantly disavow the provocateur's opinions.