

News-Times

Take a knee and pray for wiser choices

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A survey conducted by Remington Research Group found that 64 percent of Americans agree with President Donald Trump on National Football League players standing for the National Anthem. The national public opinion survey polled 1,633 people on Sept. 25.

The same survey indicated that 47 percent of those polled have an unfavorable view of a Trump, while 46 percent view him favorably and 7 percent have no opinion. When it came to opinions on the NFL, 46 percent were unfavorable; 37 percent were favorable and 17 percent had no opinion.

Another poll, conducted by Reuters Sept. 25-26, poll found that 57 percent of adults do not think the NFL should fire players who kneel. This included 61 percent of NFL fans who watch at least a few games per season. The results were split along party lines, however, with 82 percent of Democrats and 29 percent of Republicans disagreeing with the president's comments about firing football players.

A question released by Newsweek of an upcoming national Cato 2017 Free Speech and Tolerance Survey found that 61 percent of Americans oppose firing NFL players who refuse to stand for the national anthem before football games to make a political statement. The survey of 2,300 Americans was conducted by the Cato Institute in collaboration with YouGov.

For the record, I stand for the National Anthem, pledge my allegiance to the flag, and respect veterans. I have the flag presented to my granny at the burial of my granddaddy framed and proudly displayed in my home. He was a World War II veteran. That said, I don't think those taking a knee during the National Anthem hate America. I think they are protesting social injustice in their country -- injustice they hope to change by drawing attention to it. That is their right. Just as it is the right of those who disagree to oppose it.

In the beginning, the kneeling involved one or a handful of guys. Enter president Trump, who in consistent, poor judgment, said something inflammatory: Fire them. For what? Exercising their rights to free speech and protest? Then we had entire teams and owners taking a knee. Solidarity. Teamwork.

I find this issue troubling, but my questions differ from those asked in public opinion polls. These are my questions:

1. Why aren't we more worried about issues that are being ignored because of this diversion of attention? Is that the point to all of this?
2. Why is Trump weighing in on something that involved a handful of people until he commented and drew more attention to it?

3. Why has Trump had more to say about a protest at a football game than he did a white nationalist rally that resulted in the loss of human life?
4. Another church shooting occurred last Sunday, involving several victims -- wounded a minister. It was reported by the national media. Widely reported, based on my Google search. Why didn't that headline dominate social media posts? Interesting what we raise to viral status, isn't it?
5. Why is the president so engaged in issues that are minor in the scope of national and global affairs?

We have many serious issues: Disasters, health care, North Korea, Russia probe And Trump spends his time cursing, hurling insults and bloviating on Twitter. There is no effort on his part to bridge the divides in this country. In fact, he appears to thrive on the discontent.

The American people should take a knee and pray that we have better options and choose more wisely in future presidential elections.