

OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

Dear OCPA Member:

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Just how important is the United States Constitution to our citizens? Well, a new poll from the National Constitution Center and the Associated Press is very encouraging, and establishes that this historical document is indeed still enormously important in the hearts and minds of our countrymen.

Several interesting findings emerged. For instance, the poll found that “Americans oppose giving federal government more power to improve the economy, and strongly oppose government intervention in private enterprise.”

The numbers show that “Americans strongly oppose allowing government to take partial ownership of private enterprise, even if it would prevent them from going out of business (71%) or losing jobs (66%), or if the failure of the industry would seriously harm the economy (60%).”

Despite concerns that the Constitution is being ignored by far too many elected officials on Capitol Hill, the poll shows that “Americans generally have a strong attachment to constitutional values and an overall commitment to the ideals laid out in the Preamble of the Constitution, including the separation of power, rule of law, and protection of individuals rights. In particular, 61% of Americans believe the rule of law should be followed, even if it comes at the expense of public safety. This result is up from 54% in 2008.” These are indeed positive indicators.

Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center said, “It is encouraging to see the principles enshrined in the Constitution over 222 years ago are essential to Americans today as they were when we were initially fighting for those fundamental liberties.” Johnson added that, “Public opinion is the foundation of our democracy . . .”

The poll involved telephone interviews with 1,001 adults nationwide. The survey was conducted by GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media, and had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (see: <http://surveys.ap.org>).

That is where all future policy discussions should begin – the proper role of government within the framework of our Constitution. Yes, some may balk at such an assertion, but last time I checked we were still a Constitutional Republic. So these questions remain relevant. How much importance are we going to place on our Constitution? And, how much importance are we going to insist our elected officials place on it too? Clearly the answers to these two questions will form the basis for everything which will happen in the next few years.

With Congress pressing the accelerator down to the floor with their profligate “progressive” legislation, those answers are needed sooner rather than later. Citizens should realize that without unwavering conviction and loyal support for this cherished document, the U.S. Constitution becomes just so many words on paper. We won’t lose heart if we will only remember those first three little words, “We the People . . .”

Until next time . . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc., 1401 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104

Tel: 405-602-1667 / Fax: 405-602-1238 / Website: www.ocpathink.org

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