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### **NOT ALL ARIZONANS SUPPORT FREE SPEECH AND FREE PRESS**

Twenty two percent of Arizonans do not agree that we should protect the right to freedom of the press for all regardless of the topics they choose to discuss. In a recent poll out of the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University, between 15 and 22 percent of Arizonans expressed a degree of opposition to the notions of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the pursuit of a nondiscriminatory work environment. Nineteen percent are not supportive of the notion that we should protect freedom of speech. Fifteen percent of respondents do not believe that it should be against the law to discriminate against people in the workplace because of the values they hold.

Despite the presence of minority opposition, most Arizonans expressed a high degree of support for traditional democratic values. For instance, a large majority (79%) of Arizonans agree with the notion of free speech for all no matter what their views might be. Similarly, most residents of the state (75%) embrace the belief that we should protect the right to freedom of the press for all regardless of the topics they choose to discuss. Additionally, 82% of Arizonans agree that it should be against the law to discriminate against people in the workplace because of the values they hold.

## **ARIZONANS LESS TOLERANT WHEN ASKED ABOUT SPECIFIC GROUPS**

This support for tolerance breaks down when applied to specific instances. The poll measured how willing respondents were to let individuals with potentially controversial beliefs benefit from free speech, free press and nondiscrimination in the workplace. In the survey, levels of tolerance toward homosexuals, feminists, racists, proponents of a military run government, and individuals with anti-religious views were assessed.

Generally speaking, respondents were least tolerant toward individuals with controversial beliefs teaching in a college or university. In fact, over a third (35%) stated they did not think that someone who believes that Blacks are “genetically inferior” should be allowed to teach in a college or university. Thirty-one percent felt that someone who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country should not be allowed to teach. Similarly, almost one quarter were unwilling to allow individuals who are against all churches and religion teach. Fewer Arizonans were opposed to letting homosexuals (15%) and feminists who argue that women should serve in all combatant positions and be subject to the draft during times of war (12%) teach.

Similar trends were found when respondents were asked how they felt about representatives from each of the groups speaking in their community and having books in their library. Again, Arizonans were least tolerant toward individuals who think Blacks are genetically inferior and those who want to get rid of elections and just let the military run the country, going so far as to state that racists should not be able to speak in their communities (23%) and to support removing a book from the library advocating such beliefs (20%). About the same number were unwilling to allow individuals who want the military to govern to speak in public and would support removing a book advocating such views from a public library.

Arizonans were slightly more tolerant toward allowing atheists, homosexuals, and feminists to speak in public and have books in public libraries. About 16 percent were unwilling to allow an atheist to make a speech in their community and 15 percent would support removing a book promoting such ideas from a library. Only nine percent did not

think homosexuals should be able to speak in public while almost seventeen percent stated that they would favor removing a book. Finally, Arizonans were most tolerant toward feminists, with only 10 percent wanting to remove books and seven percent wanting to limit their ability to speak.

### **LEVELS OF TOLERANCE LINKED TO INCOME AND EDUCATION**

Differences in opinions were also evident when analyzed across income levels with individuals earning higher incomes demonstrating more tolerance than individuals earning lower incomes. For example, while 27% of individuals earning up to \$20,000 felt that a book claiming that Blacks are genetically inferior should be removed from the public library, 22% of those earning up to \$40,000 felt the same way. Only 13% of those earning up to \$75,000 and seven percent of those earning over \$75,000 felt that the racist's book should be removed from the library. Likewise, tolerance levels increased with additional education. Overall, respondents with at least some college education are more tolerant than individuals with junior high and high school degrees.

The telephone survey was conducted by Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory from March 19 to April 4. A random sample of 438 Arizonans participated in this survey. The margin of error for a survey of this size is +/- 5 percent.

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## STATEWIDE TELEPHONE POLL

**Social Research Laboratory  
Northern Arizona University**

### BACKGROUND MEMO

The statewide telephone poll was conducted between March 19 and April 4, 1998. A random sample with a weighted number of 438 Arizonans was interviewed by telephone. Figures of this sampling size are subject to a sampling error of about +/- 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below.

Now I'm going to read three statements and ask if you agree or disagree with each one. First, I believe in free speech for all no matter what their views might be. Do you disagree or agree with this statement? [Is that strongly or somewhat?]

<b>Support for Freedom of Speech</b>	<b>%</b>	
Strongly disagree	12	
Somewhat disagree	7	
Somewhat agree	18	(N= 438)
Strongly agree	61	
Don't know	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Second, I think that we should protect the right to freedom of the press for all regardless of the topics they choose to discuss. Do you disagree or agree with this statement? [Is that strongly or somewhat?]

<b>Support for Freedom of the Press</b>	<b>%</b>	
Strongly disagree	11	(N= 438)
Somewhat disagree	11	
Somewhat agree	24	
Strongly agree	51	
Don't know	3	
<b>Total</b>	100%	

Finally, I believe that it should be against the law to discriminate against people in the workplace because of the values they hold. Do you disagree or agree with this statement? [Is that strongly or somewhat?]

<b>Wrong to Discriminate in Workplace</b>	<b>%</b>	
Strongly disagree	8	(N= 438)
Somewhat disagree	7	
Somewhat agree	20	
Strongly agree	62	
Don't know	3	
<b>Total</b>	100%	

There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion . . .

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

<b>Let Him Speak in Public</b>	<b>%</b>	
Yes, he should be allowed to speak	82	(N= 438)
No, he should NOT be allowed to speak	16	
Don't know	2	
No answer	1	
<b>Total</b>	101%	

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

<b>Let Him Teach in College</b>	<b>%</b>	
Yes, he should be allowed to teach	67	(N= 438)
No, he should NOT be allowed to teach	24	

Don't know	8
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	100%

If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote against churches and religion should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

<b>Take His Book out of Library</b>	<b>%</b>
Favor removing the book	15
Don't favor removing the book	79
Don't know	6
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	101%

(N= 438)

Or consider a person who believes that Blacks are genetically inferior.

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community claiming that Blacks are inferior, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

<b>Let Him Speak in Public</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, he should be allowed to speak	74
No, he should NOT be allowed to speak	23
Don't know	2
<b>Total</b>	99%

(N= 438)

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

<b>Let Him Teach in College</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, he should be allowed to teach	58
No, he should NOT be allowed to teach	35
Don't know	6

(N= 438)

No answer	2
<b>Total</b>	101%

If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote which said that Blacks are inferior should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

<b>Take His Book out of Library</b>	<b>%</b>
Favor removing the book	20
Don't favor removing the book	76
Don't know	3
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	100%

(N= 438)

Consider a person who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country.

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should he be allowed to speak or not?

<b>Let Him Speak in Public</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, he should be allowed to speak	78
No, he should NOT be allowed to speak	20
Don't know	3
<b>Total</b>	101%

(N= 438)

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

<b>Let Him Teach in College</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, he should be allowed to teach	61
No, he should NOT be allowed to teach	31
Don't know	6
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	99%

(N= 438)

Suppose he wrote a book advocating doing away with elections and letting the military run the country. Somebody in your community suggests that the book be removed from the public library. Would you favor removing it or not?

<b>Take His Book out of Library</b>	<b>%</b>
Favor removing the book	19
Don't favor removing the book	74

(N= 438)

Don't know	5
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	99%

And what about a man that admits he's homosexual?

Suppose this admitted homosexual wanted to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not?

<b>Let Homosexual Speak in Public</b>	<b>%</b>	
Yes, he should be allowed to speak	87	(N= 438)
No, he should NOT be allowed to speak	9	
Don't know	3	
No answer	1	
<b>Total</b>	100%	

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

<b>Let Homosexual Teach in College</b>	<b>%</b>	
Yes, he should be allowed to teach	80	(N= 438)
No, he should NOT be allowed to teach	15	
Don't know	4	
No answer	1	
<b>Total</b>	100%	

If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote in favor of homosexuality should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book or not?

<b>Take Homosexual's Book out of Library</b>	<b>%</b>	
Favor removing the book	17	(N= 438)
Don't favor removing the book	78	
Don't know	5	
No answer	1	
<b>Total</b>	101%	

Finally, consider a feminist who argues that women should be allowed to fill all combatant positions in the military and be subject to the draft during times of war.

If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should she be allowed to speak, or not?

<b>Let Feminist Speak in Public</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, she should be allowed to speak	90
No, she should NOT be allowed to speak	7
Don't know	2
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

(N= 438)

Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

<b>Let Feminist Teach in College</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes, she should be allowed to teach	82
No, she should NOT be allowed to teach	12
Don't know	5
No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

(N= 438)

If some people in your community suggested that a book she wrote which argues that women should be allowed to fill all combatant positions in the military and be subject to the draft during times of war should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

<b>Take Feminist's Book out of Library</b>	<b>%</b>
Favor removing the book	10
Don't favor removing the book	85
Don't know	4

(N= 438)

No answer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>99%</b>