



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on July 6, 2020

## Pride in America Has Declined in Recent Years, Poll Finds

A recent Gallup Poll showed a substantial decline in the percentage of adults in the United States who said that they are “extremely proud” to be Americans. Gallup said pride in our nation is the lowest it’s been since the polling company first measured it in 2001.

A CBS News report about the poll’s findings observed, “This Fourth of July, amid the coronavirus pandemic and nationwide Black Lives Matter protests, American patriotism has fallen to its lowest point in nearly 20 years.”



While these are undoubtedly difficult times, during other difficult times in our nation’s past, especially during World War II, patriotism flourished. It was during those trying years that the tradition of singing the national anthem before baseball and football games began.

At the end of the war, after Japan announced it would surrender, NFL Commissioner Elmer Layden called for all of the league’s teams to play “The Star-Spangled Banner” at their games, explaining, “The National Anthem should be as much a part of every game as the kick-off. We must not drop it simply because the war is over. We should never forget what it stands for.”

Apparently some athletes who choose to “take a knee” rather than standing respectfully during the playing of our national anthem have forgotten what it stands for.

The Gallup poll found that while pride in America still exists, it has definitely declined in recent years. Although a majority of adults in the United States still say they are “extremely proud” (42 percent) or “very proud” (21 percent) to be an American, these figures are much lower than when Gallup started asking the question in January 2001, eight months before the September 2001 terrorist attacks. In that first poll, 55 percent said they were “extremely proud” to be an American. In the three years following the attacks, that figure increased to between 65 and 70 percent. But in subsequent years, the figures dwindled. By 2005, that numbers fell to 61 percent and remained steady until 2015 when it dropped to 54 percent.

The rise in pride in America after the 2001 9/11 attacks fueled the popularity of Lee Greenwood’s inspiring patriotic song, “God Bless the U.S.A.” (also known as “Proud to Be an American”). Although the song was originally released in 1984 (when it was played at the Republican National Convention with President Ronald Reagan and First Lady Nancy Reagan in attendance), as the country came together in response to 9/11, patriotism flourished and the popularity of the song rose sharply.

A little-known story behind the creation of “God Bless the U.S.A.” will have special interest for readers of *The New American*. Greenwood wrote the song in 1983 in response to the downing of Korean airliner KAL 007 by the Soviet Union. Among the 269 civilian passengers lost in that attack were 63 Americans including U.S. Representative Larry McDonald (D-Ga.). McDonald had become the chairman of the John Birch Society (with which *The New American* is affiliated) in 1983, succeeding the society’s founder,



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Robert Welch.

*Image: Thinkstock*

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