



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 26, 2010

American Ideals Still Highly Favored

ABC News reported the results of its latest poll indicating that the American public's optimism had just hit a 36-year low. A quick scan of the headline, however, revealed that 75 percent of those polled "still call America the greatest country in the world."

What's remarkable is that this belief in America remains so high in the face of the many assaults sustained by its citizens not only over the past two years of the Great Recession but over the past several decades. For instance, [a recent post](#) reviewed 10 signs that the "U.S. is becoming a third world country," including:



- Rising unemployment and poverty
- Increasing economic dependence
- Declining civil rights
- Increasing political corruption
- Disappearing middle class, and
- Declining value of the currency

The writer builds a strong and unsettling case for each point, but he does so in a vacuum. The upcoming election, built into the system of government bequeathed by the Founders, is allowing concerned citizens to express their opinion at the polls. According to ABC News, it isn't the system that's broken, it's the people running it. In answer to the specific poll question: "As far as the future is concerned, thinking about our system of government and how well it works — is this something you feel generally optimistic about, generally pessimistic about, or uncertain about?" those responding pessimistic was at 20 percent, which was *within a couple of percentage points of all polls on the question taken as far back as 1974.*

The next question, however, was telling: "Which of these do you think is the main problem — the system of government itself, or the people in government who are running it?" Results: 24 percent responded "the system," while 74 percent responded "the people running it." By more than three-to-one, then, those polled think the problem is the people running the government, and on Tuesday, November 2, the people have the opportunity to do something about that.

There are those who have been through highly contentious elections before and who have modified their expectations accordingly. [Lew Rockwell](#) is one of those who remember the 1994 election when Republicans took back the House of Representatives during the Clinton administration, offering its "[Contract with America.](#)"

The governed have long been very unhappy about the government, and they periodically wake up and seek to change it. It's been some 16 years since the last go-round of such revolutionary



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sentiment. [That sentiment] is arguably stronger today than it was back in 1994.

But Rockwell is not persuaded that much will change *politically*, regardless of Tuesday's election. The primary benefit, he says, is that elections focus the attention and the mind of the citizens on their beliefs and principles, and by questioning and reconfirming those beliefs, the freedom fight can be strengthened far beyond a single election.

If American politics can be said to contribute anything to American culture, it is this educational aspect that stands out. The elections focus the mind and lead people to a new consciousness...it is the very urgency of the election that gives rise to the concern in the first place.

Rockwell is a realist. He is not persuaded that the Tea Party, by itself, will have any significant impact in the short run. He reminds his readers that "all candidates tend to water down their positions after the primaries [in order] to get funding from the corporatists allied with both parties."

The larger problem occurs once they take office...They are leaned on by their new colleagues, the party elites, related financial interests, the press, and the entire system of which they are now part....

What choice do they make? The same choice that everyone else in office makes (Ron Paul being the lone exception in all of human history). It is for this reason that newly seated "revolutionary" politicians will betray those who put them in power....

The new Congress that was seated after the 1994 election certainly curbed the ambitions of the Clinton administration for a time. But avoiding great evil is not the same as doing good.

He, like those polled by ABC News and elsewhere, understands that the freedom fight is an ongoing one, but one that can be won through an understanding of the principles underlying the Republic. [What he sees](#) in the immediate actions of concerned citizens through the Tea Party is a "sea change in the ideas that people hold toward freedom itself. It is in the realm of ideas, and not in the sector of political action, that the real battle is being waged." Rockwell concludes:

I have no doubt that we can win this struggle for liberty. There are too many examples in history, even in our times, of how good ideas triumph over coerced rule. A people who resent and resist all forms of government control cannot finally be subjugated. And government control is far more vulnerable than it first appears. It can be toppled in the blink of an eye when the people it is attempting to control decide they have had enough.... But the preconditions to make this happen are the spread of the love of liberty, and an understanding of what makes it both beautiful and a fact that can never be permanently suppressed.

No matter the outcome on Tuesday, Americans' belief in their system and its ideals is highly favored and growing.



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