



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 31, 2011

Conservatives Now Surpass Liberals in the U.S.

The most recent Gallup poll reveals surprising figures that could potentially impact the 2012 presidential election. It shows that self-described conservatives now outnumber self-described liberals nationally, even in traditionally liberal states.

Business Insider [reports](#), Conservatives now outnumber liberals in deep-blue bastions like Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Oregon.

It explains:

Mississippi is the first state with more than 50% conservative identification, with Idaho, Alabama, Wyoming, and Utah approaching that level, and Arkansas, South Carolina, North Dakota, Louisiana, and South Dakota (the rest of the top-ten conservative states) 45% or higher. Conservatives outnumber liberals in even the most liberal-leaning states (excluding the District of Columbia): Vermont, (30.7% conservative to 30.5% liberal), Rhode Island (29.9% to 29.3%), and Massachusetts (29.9% to 28.0%).



Some assert that the trend towards conservatism is in response to President Obama's extremely liberal agenda, while others contend it pertains to economics.

Richard Florida, an urban theorist who writes for *The Atlantic*, [purports](#):

Conservatism, at least at the state level, appears to be growing stronger. Ironically, this trend is most pronounced in America's least well-off, least educated, most blue collar, most economically hard-hit states. Conservatism, more and more, is the ideology of the economically left behind. The current economic crisis only appears to have deepened conservatism's hold on America's states. This trend stands in sharp contrast to the Great Depression, when America embraced FDR and the New Deal.

So much for the oft-touted assertions that the Democrats are for the poor and Republicans are for the rich.

However, Florida's theory appears to be misguided. For example, one of the most well-known current conservative movements in the country is the Tea Party movement. And according to a [New York Times/CBS News poll](#) of backers of the Tea Party movement, its supporters are more affluent and better educated than the general public.



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Likewise, Floridas theory appears cloaked in the typical elitist liberal philosophy that believes one requires a reputable college degree to fully comprehend politics and economics. Similar sentiments have been articulated by elitist lawmakers like [Californias Congressman Pete Stark](#), who called reporter Jan Helfeld simple-minded and stupid for daring to question the Congressman on the national debt. Stark went on to question Helfeld on the integrity of his degree:

Did you ever study economics? Stark asked Helfeld, who had, at the University of Puerto Rico.

Stark responded, Oh the University of Puerto Rico? Do you have a doctorate in economics? A Masters Degree? How many classes did you take?

When Helfeld attempted to regain control of the interview, he was told by Stark to shut up for a minute because Helfeld was apparently blabbing away about something you dont know anything about.

The notion that one requires an advanced degree to understand the current political or economic climate is insulting to say the least. It does not take a genius or a degree in rocket science to understand that when a country operates by spending nearly half of its GDP, its encroaching upon dangerous territory. Nor does it require an advanced political science degree to recognize when the federal government has foisted its constitutional limitations. After all, it requires a lot less effort to read the short Constitution than it does to read any of the thousand plus-paged bills being passed by Congress on a regular basis.

As far as the conservative trend, it is not atypical to witness a [fluctuation](#) between conservative and liberal trends, as history shows. According to Public Opinion Quarterly:

Analysis of 455 survey trends during the postWorld War II period shows that America has generally moved in a liberal direction. The growth of liberalism has not been uniform across topics and time however. Trends dealing with equal rights and individualism had the most consistent liberal movement. Trends dealing with economic regulation and government power showed mixed change, while movement was mostly in the conservative direction on the topic of crime. Liberal growth was strongest during the 1960s and early 1970s. In the mid-1970s, many liberal trends slowed, with some stopping their advance and a few reversing direction. On average, liberal growth leveled off, but did not move in conservative direction. In large part, this shift in social change represents a response to the events of the period, but it may also be a periodic alternation of the cycle of reform.

Furthermore, analysis of these trends does not typically reflect splits within conservative and liberal movements. For example, while *Business Insider* reports that conservatives are becoming more prevalent, it does not account for the substantial differences within the conservative movement, as in [neoconservatives](#) versus [paleo-conservatives](#).

Photo: Rep. Ron Paul (who might be categorized as a "conservative," "libertarian," or "constitutionalist") at the Free State Project's Liberty Forum.



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