



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 26, 2017

Heartening Results From Latest Poll on Patriotism

Pollster George Barna's [most recent survey on patriotism in America](#) revealed much that remains positive, especially among the younger generation. Instead of defining patriotism as simply "love for or devotion to one's country" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*), Barna chose instead to select 15 different descriptions. He found that most Americans — young or old; black, white, or Hispanic; conservative or liberal; born-again, "notional," or skeptic — consider themselves patriotic. There was notable agreement about six of those descriptions:



- Individual rights come with personal responsibilities;
- Proud to be an American;
- Believe in and obey the Constitution;
- Committed to carrying out your individual civic duty;
- Willing to die to protect our freedoms; and
- Defending and living by the rules and ways of life described in the Constitution, whether you agree with them or not.

Between 70 and 90 percent of the 1,000 people Barna polled in October and November said these six attributes described patriotism as accurate. Constitutionalsists will be quick to note that three of the six (1, 3, and 6) relate to the founding document of the American republic: the Constitution of the United States of America.

This was borne out as part of the survey asked the participants to rank various elements of patriotism, and they came up with this: First, freedom of speech (First Amendment), freedom of religion (First Amendment), American citizenship (Fourteenth Amendment), the U.S. Constitution itself, followed by the American flag, the National Anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Bible, and the right to bear arms (Second Amendment). Encouragingly, among those polled, between 92 and 97 percent said that the first four elements were either "very meaningful" to them or "somewhat" meaningful; 78 percent said the right to keep and bear arms was either "very" or "somewhat" meaningful to them.

Those despairing that the millennial generation (18-29) is the "lost" generation must reconsider. Among that cohort, 83 percent said that freedom of speech was "very meaningful" to them, while 78 percent of them said they felt the same way about freedom of religion. Seventy percent of respondents said that their American citizenship and the U.S. Constitution were "very meaningful" to them as well. More than half (53 percent) reported that the Bible was "very meaningful" to them.

When separated by religious persuasion, Barna's results may also challenge the presuppositions of many: 95 percent of those who call themselves "born again" consider that individual rights come with



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personal responsibilities, while 90 percent of “notionals” (defined by Barna as a “group that doesn’t stand for anything in particular”) hold the same position. According to the survey, 86 percent of skeptics agree.

When it comes to the Constitution, 93 percent of “born again” individuals “believe in and obey” it while 85 percent of “notionals” do, with skeptics right behind, at 81 percent.

Race doesn’t impact the outcome, either. Ninety percent of whites polled believe in and obey the Constitution, while 80 percent of blacks and 78 percent of Hispanics do.

When Barna changed the conversation, additional comfort was found, especially among those who consider the Second Amendment the foundational security of a free state. When respondents were asked, “How patriotic do you consider each of these individuals and organizations to be?” the National Rifle Association (NRA) scored the highest, ahead of the Supreme Court, the Republican Party, the U.S. Senate, and the Democratic Party. At the bottom were Colin Kaepernick, movie producer Michael Moore, liberal TV personality Rachel Maddow, and at the very bottom, Al Sharpton.

At least one other factoid to be gleaned from the survey is this: When asked if they agreed that “basic freedoms are under attack in America,” half of the respondents said yes, including those between 18 and 29.

Barna’s study didn’t escape the notice of the NRA, which noted that “the NRA and the right to bear arms continue to be strongly associated with this notion [of patriotism] in the American consciousness, and particularly the strong attachment to Second Amendment rights by the youngest generation of American adults [which] bodes well for the nation’s future.”

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