

New Fourth of July Survey: Confidence in Right to Vote Drops 28%

Public service study by Lucky Star Communications shows drop in public belief that rich and poor have equal access to Constitutional Rights

CLEVELAND, OH, USA, July 5, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One of Abraham Lincoln's least known quotes is this: "Be not deceived. Revolutions do not go backwards."

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Joe Soss

But as we celebrate July 4th, 2020, it looks like that may no longer be true.

Tracking a twenty year plunge, twin opinion polls taken in 2000 and again in 2020, 20 years apart, show that Americans' faith in their Constitutional rights has

cratered.

In the newly released study, the identical questions on Constitutional rights were asked by the same research company, Opinion Research Corp, in both years. The scientific results have a margin of error of 3%.

The disillusioning results are as follows:

--While 64% of Americans felt that rich and poor had the same access to free speech in the year 2000, in the survey taken last month only 52% felt that way, a drop of 12 percentage points.

Only Tik-Tokers and K-Pop fans really enjoy “free speech” in America anymore. "While we've seen wealthy interests and foreign nations use money to try to manipulate and misguide public opinion," says West Hollywood Mayor John Heilman, "people of limited means can use the internet to express and amplify opinions.

The rest of us seemingly have to pay to get our voices heard. In the current Senate race in Colorado right now, for example, says Lucky Star's Jeff Barge, "Democratic candidate John Hickenlooper says he is being outspent 3-1 by his Republic opponent. To get speech nowadays, you have to pay."

--While 83% of Americans felt that rich and poor had the same access to the right to vote in the year 2000, twenty years later only 55% feel that way, a drop of 28 percentage points.

Democrats often accuse Republicans of deliberately making it hard to vote in order to keep minorities, immigrants, young people and other groups from the polls. Referring to a Congressional proposal for increased spending on voting, Trump told Fox & Friends: "The things they had in there were crazy. They had things, levels of voting that if you'd ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again."

"It's worth noting that we may already have a "de facto" vote by mail system in place -- 85% of the vote in the most recent Kentucky primary came by mail, while Minneapolis says 70% of votes for November's election will be mail-in," says Barge

Gerrymandering, purges of voter lists, intimidating poll monitors, inadequate voting facilities, are other barriers that Stacey Abram, and Sens. Sherrod Brown and Elizabeth Warren.

--While 41% of Americans felt that rich and poor had the same access to the right to run for elected office in 2000, the new survey last month shows only 33% now feel that way, a drop of 8 percentage points.

Harvard professor Larry Lessig posits a country called Lesterland, where 144,000 people who are all coincidentally named Lester choose the candidates that the other 300 million get to vote for. Seattle demi-billionaire Nick Hanauer foresees pitchforks coming for his "fellow .01%-ers" if they do not address the issue of increasing wealth inequality.

Whatever the situation, as Timothy Tyson of the Poor Peoples' Campaign and Duke University writes: "Politics requires large sums of money and free time to run, and poor people do not have those things, nor political action committees that flood the airways for their preferred candidates. Poor candidates are practically unelectable."

--While 28% of Americans felt that rich and poor had the same access to the federal courts in 2000, 35% feel they do today, a gain of 7 percentage points.

Joe Soss, the Cowles Chair for the Study of Public Service at the University of Minnesota, writes that criminal courts in the U.S. have become desperate for revenues and begun siphoning them from the bottom up, so that defendants in criminal cases can no longer afford equal justice.

"Since the 1990s, governments and corporations in the United States have created a host of new ways to generate revenues by extracting resources, disproportionately from poor black, indigenous, and other communities of color," he writes. "Such practices include fine-centered policing, court fees, commercial bail, prison charges, civil asset forfeiture, and more."

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And when people get arrested and are taken to court, he says, they enter a whole new world where they're forced to pay fees for various court operations. "They take on legal and financial obligations and then they may find themselves in jail where they have to pay for phone calls and for electronic monitoring. They get ushered into this expensive world of commercial bail, where more money gets taken from their families and friends. And then of course people are put in prison or on probation or parole, and again there are 'pay to stay' fees; basic necessities have to be purchased from commissaries; charges to make video calls and phone calls; you name it, money gets extracted. All that is before we even get to the issue of how people's bodies are used for free or cheap labor in prisons."

The study was commissioned by Lucky Star Communications and was distributed to Stacey Adams, Sen.Elizabeth Warren, and Sen. Sherrod Brown, among others.

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