

Americans Favor Limits on Protest and Hate Speech and Don't Think that Holocaust Denial Qualifies as Free Speech

Survey reveals most Americans oppose vandalism and mask-wearing in protests, while views on free speech show generational divides.

MONTREAL, QUÉBEC, CANADA, December 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While freedom of



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Jack Jedwab

speech is considered a fundamental right in the US, it not absolute. For more than a year, heated protests related to the Israel-Gaza War across American university campuses have given rise to debates over limits on protest and speech.

Most Americans (48%) do not believe that protesters should be allowed to wear masks to hide their faces and the majority (67%) do not think that vandalism of public / commercial property is acceptable even if aims to send a political message. These are amongst the key findings arising from a survey conducted for the Metropolis

Institute by the firm Leger USA. As regards speech most Americans think it should be protected even with the expression of overtly racist views (43%) but do not think it merits full protection in the case of hate speech targeting specific groups (56%). Most Americans don't believe that denial of the Holocaust constitutes free speech.

Metropolis Institute President and CEO Jack Jedwab stated that “The survey results are an important reminder that the majority of Americans regard acts of vandalism as indefensible and want protesters that condone vandalism and/or hate speech to be accountable for their actions”

It is important to note that there are important generational differences when it comes to public protesting.

While Americans over the age of 30 don't agree that people should be allowed to wear masks to hide their faces when protesting in public, half the respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 support mask wearing for protesters. Younger Americans are also more likely to feel that there

are circumstances under which vandalizing public / commercial property to send a political message is acceptable.

When it comes to free speech and Holocaust denial there are important differences between men and women with men more likely to agree that Holocaust denial should qualify as free speech and that even overtly racist views merit protection.

“It’s a reminder that despite the reasonably broad consensus on issues of protest and free speech, the potential for polarization is ever present” said Jack Jedwab.

[Study link](#)

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