

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 14, 2016



CONTACT:
Charles N. Quigley or John Hale
818-591-9321

Survey Reveals Americans Do Not Know Much About the Constitution, But Support Its Basic Ideas

LOS ANGELES — Today, the Center for Civic Education, in cooperation with Professor Diana Owen of Georgetown University, released the results of a [Constitution Day survey](#) that found that only 14 percent of Americans think they know a lot about the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

The survey indicated that although Americans might not be well informed about these documents, there is widespread agreement on many of the basic ideas they contain. This includes agreement about some of the basic purposes of government that transcends party affiliation, political ideology and demographics. Survey items include basic ideas in the documents without identifying their sources. For a rationale of the survey, and summary of its methodology and findings please [click here](#).

Charles Quigley, executive director of the Center for Civic Education stated, “The bad news that can be drawn from this research is that a majority of Americans think their national or state governments are not fulfilling the terms of their contracts with the people to deliver upon the purposes they think government should fulfill.

“The good news is that the social contract is largely intact as reflected by substantial agreement among the people about the central purposes government should serve despite what appears in daily media reports to be a high level of polarization and unwillingness of opposing parties to enter into civil dialogue, negotiation and compromise.

“The survey revealed that the greater respondents’ knowledge of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the greater their acceptance of these documents’ basic ideas. This clearly points to the need to implement effective programs in schools and universities as well as programs for adults that educate people about our founding documents.

“Our goal, therefore, should be to emulate the efforts of the Framers of the Constitution by entering into a widespread civil discussion that seeks consensus on the purposes of government and the best means of attaining them. Such a discussion would provide a constructive way to deal with many of the seemingly intractable issues of the day and further the realization of the ideals of liberty, justice and equality upon which our nation was founded.”

-more-

Downloads:

[Summary of results of survey](#)

[Rationale underlying the survey and summary of results](#)

###