

Nearly Half of Republicans Reject Freedom of the Press

Have you ever wondered what America's pet peeve is? Based on the last year alone, I would wager it is media bias. After all, one can't swing a dead cat these days without hearing about some form of "fake news" or reading an article with a clear political agenda.

The fact that Americans are sick of media bias is clearly demonstrated in a new [Economist/YouGov poll](#). The poll asked:

"Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose permitting the courts to shut down news media outlets for publishing or broadcasting stories that are biased or inaccurate – or haven't you heard enough about that yet to say?"

Naturally, the biggest headline to come out of this poll is that 45 percent of Republicans support such a measure. *Almost half of Republicans.*



In some ways, such an outcome is understandable. After all, Republicans currently control all branches of government, and as such, are the continual target of the media.

What's not quite understandable, however, is the fact that more than one in four American adults also favor the courts shutting down biased media. That number includes 25 percent of Independents.

Why is it that a quarter of American adults seem to be okay with shutting down the press, or even, as the following video shows, willing to abolish the First Amendment in its entirety?

It's certainly an idea anathema to the America's Founding Fathers. For example, [John Adams](#), explained that:

"The liberty of the press is essential to the security of freedom in a State; it ought not, therefore, to be restrained in this commonwealth."

[George Mason](#) concurred, stating:

"The freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments."

[Thomas Jefferson](#) admitted that freedom of the press can cause great discomfort, but argued that said discomfort should be squelched by reason, not force:

"I am for... freedom of the press, and against all violations of the Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents."

And as Jefferson infers, freedom of the press is enshrined prominently in America's foremost document, the [Constitution](#):

*"**Congress shall make no law** respecting an establishment or religion, or **prohibiting the free exercise** thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or **of the press**; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

Given their adamant support for this freedom, the Founders would likely be aghast to hear that in 2015, only [10 percent of Americans](#) were able to name the freedom of the press as one of our First Amendment freedoms. With a statistic like that, perhaps it's no wonder that so many Americans are ready to shut down media outlets.

The American public – particularly those identifying as Republican – clearly is fed up with the press, and [perhaps for good reason](#). But are Americans prepared to sacrifice the principles on which our nation was founded because of the actions of a hostile press?