

Texas v. Johnson / Data Analysis: How Do Americans Feel about a Flag Desecration Amendment?—Answer Key

Directions: Review the data in the tables below. Then answer the Questions to Consider (page 2).

Do you think burning the American flag is . . .														
	Total	Gender		Age				Race				Political Party		
		Male	Female	< 30	30-44	45-64	65+	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
An appropriate way to protest?	16%	20%	12%	26%	20%	12%	7%	13%	29%	17%	17%	31%	5%	11%
Not an appropriate way to protest?	74%	70%	78%	61%	68%	77%	89%	80%	49%	73%	68%	55%	91%	78%

Do you favor or oppose passing a constitutional amendment that would make it illegal to burn the American flag?														
	Total	Gender		Age				Race				Political Party		
		Male	Female	< 30	30-44	45-64	65+	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
Favor	48%	43%	53%	50%	44%	45%	57%	51%	32%	55%	43%	40%	70%	43%
Oppose	37%	45%	31%	34%	41%	38%	35%	36%	47%	27%	41%	49%	21%	37%

Source: YouGov Poll, <http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/tabsHPFlagBurning20161201.pdf>. *Interviewing Dates:* November 30–December 1, 2016. *Target population:* U.S. citizens, aged 18 and over. *Sampling method:* Respondents were selected from YouGov’s opt-in Internet panel using sample matching. A random sample (stratified by gender, age, race, education, geographic region, and voter registration) was selected from the 2014 American Community Study. *Number of respondents:* 1000. *Margin of error:* ±4% (adjusted for weighting). *Survey mode:* Web-based interviews.

Questions to Consider

1. How do most Americans feel about whether it is an appropriate form of protest to burn the flag?
Most Americans (74%) feel that flag desecration is not an appropriate way to protest.
2. Which demographic group is most in favor of a constitutional amendment making it illegal to burn the flag?
Republicans are most in favor (70%) of a constitutional amendment making it illegal to burn the flag. According to the chart, Hispanic Republican women over 65 years of age are likely to be the most in favor of an amendment.
3. Which demographic group is most opposed to a constitutional amendment making it illegal to burn the flag?
Democrats are most opposed (49%) to a constitutional amendment making it illegal to burn the flag. According to the chart, Black Males ages 30–44 are likely to be the most opposed to an amendment.
4. Which of the following conclusions can be drawn from the data regarding the constitutional amendment to protect the flag?
 - a. It will pass by a large margin.
 - b. It enjoys widespread political support.
 - c. It has only partisan support.
 - d. Many people who disapprove of flag burning do not support an amendment to ban it.
5. From studying the tables, what conclusions can be drawn regarding American political opinion on the issue of the Constitutional amendment to protect the flag?
Student answers will vary but they will likely conclude that this is a partisan issue.
6. What would account for the differences in results in Question 2 and Question 3?
Many people believe that burning the flag is an inappropriate way to protect and may not engage in that kind of behavior, but value free speech and do not support passing an amendment that would allow for laws making it illegal.
7. Why do some people believe that even speech that is unpopular needs to be protected?
Student answers will vary but may include that some people believe that even speech that is unpopular needs to be protected because it is one of the fundamental principles upon which our country was founded. A difference of opinion is actually a good thing because it protects minority interests and helps prevent tyranny of the majority.