

National Speech Index: October 2024 Topline Results

When it comes to whether people are able to freely express their views do you think things in America are heading in the RIGHT or WRONG direction?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Heading in the RIGHT direction	355	36
Heading in the WRONG direction	645	64

The First Amendment became part of the U.S. Constitution more than 225 years ago. This is what it says: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of 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.”

Based on your own thoughts about the First Amendment, can you tell us what you think about the following statement: “The First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Does not describe my thoughts at all	485	48
Slightly describes my thoughts	108	11
Somewhat describes my thoughts	174	17
Mostly describes my thoughts	142	14
Describes my thoughts completely	92	9

How secure do you think the right to freedom of speech is in America today?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not at all secure	114	11
Not very secure	310	31
Somewhat secure	334	33
Very secure	196	20
Completely secure	44	4
(Missing)	1	0

How worried, if at all, are you about losing your job because someone complains about something you have said?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not at all worried	386	39
Not too worried	243	24
Slightly worried	162	16
Somewhat worried	120	12
Very worried	88	9

Think specifically about your life and all the interactions you have had in the past month. How often have you watched what you said – that is, possibly censored your comments, questions, or words?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Never	160	16
Rarely, once or twice	232	23
Occasionally, a handful of times	336	34
Fairly often, a couple times a week	175	18
Very often, nearly every day	97	10

Do you think that American citizens should or should not have the right to do each of the following?

	Definitely should have the right	Probably should have the right	Probably should not have the right	Definitely should not have the right	Not sure
Take a ballot selfie.	28	20	14	20	18
Criticize a public official during a council meeting.	52	21	10	8	8
Speak freely during a public comment session.	70	17	4	4	5
Use profanity when speaking with elected officials.	18	19	21	33	9
Post a parody video mocking a candidate for public office.	32	23	16	20	10

How important or unimportant is it that citizens have the right to do each of the following?

	Very important	Important	Neither important or unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
Take a ballot selfie.	11	12	29	25	23
Criticize a public official during a council meeting.	40	29	19	8	5
Speak freely during a public comment session.	60	25	10	3	2
Use profanity when speaking with elected officials.	11	13	27	24	25
Post a parody video mocking a candidate for public office.	20	16	28	20	16

How much, if at all, does the following statement describe your thoughts: “Words can be violence.”

Response	Frequency	Percent
Describes my thoughts completely	220	22
Mostly describes my thoughts	230	23
Somewhat describes my thoughts	229	23
Slightly describes my thoughts	121	12
Does not describe my thoughts at all	200	20