

**Four Years after September 11:
Majority of Sacramento Residents Remain Concerned About Civil Liberties,**
Although profound political divide and mixed views on phone/email surveillance exist

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On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked America, and more than 3,000 innocent people died. Since then, a great deal of legal and administrative changes have taken place to protect our national security, including Congress passing the "USA PATRIOT Act" (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) in October 2001. Many other executive orders, policies, and practices have been enacted, such as the executive order signed by President Bush just after September 11 that permits the National Security Agency (NSA) to intercept vast quantities of international telephone communications without court approval.

The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States maintains, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized" (<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment04/>). Many Americans have argued that some of the recent legal and administrative modifications have sacrificed this fundamental right and undermined our freedom and civil liberties. How concerned are residents in the Sacramento region? Do they care more or less about civil liberties and/or the government's regular surveillance of both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens four years after September 11?

To answer these questions, we asked area residents in 2002, 2003, and 2006, "Which concerns you more right now: that the government will fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws, or that the government will enact new anti-terrorism laws which excessively restrict ordinary Americans' civil liberties?" According to the *2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, a majority of Sacramento region residents are anxious that new anti-terrorist laws will excessively restrict Americans' civil liberties (56%). This level of concern stays almost the same since the last time the question was asked (57% in 2003), which is slightly less than 2002 (60% in 2002). However, fear of government's failure to enact strong anti-terrorism laws has increased slightly since 2002 (33% in 2002, 38% in 2003, and 37% in 2006, Liu 2002 and 2003).

The region's concerns for civil liberties vary by county of residence, race, income, age, and gender, yet those concerns are less pronounced when we examine the responses of registered voters. Democrats (72%) overwhelmingly worry about civil liberties. In sharp

contrast, the majority of Republicans (60%) are fearful of weak anti-terror laws, which has increased steadily over the past four years (36% in 2002, 51% in 2003, and 60% in 2006), even though it has decreased among Democrats (32% in 2002, 32% in 2003, and 23% in 2006, Liu 2002 and 2003).

Moreover, the majority of residents (66%) in the Sacramento region don't want the government to monitor phone calls and emails of ordinary American citizens on a regular basis. This holds true regardless of race, gender, income, age, or county of residence. However, more than half of the area residents (52%) are willing to allow government agencies to regularly monitor non-citizens, including foreign students and visitors, and permanent residents living in America. Support has also increased in the past four years for the surveillance of telecommunications of both non-U.S. citizens (49% in 2002 vs. 52% in 2006) as well as American citizens (23% in 2002 vs. 30% in 2006, Liu 2002).

Attitudes were quite different in early 2002 when the majority of registered voters were reluctant to allow the government to spy on ordinary American citizens, regardless whether they were Democrats (78% unwilling), Republicans (70% unwilling), or other voters (71% unwilling). Since then, Republicans have become more supportive in allowing government agencies to monitor U.S. citizens (27% willing in 2002 vs. 46% willing in 2006); on the other hand, Democrats are less willing to allow government to do so (78% unwilling in 2002 vs. 83% unwilling in 2006, Liu 2002). Now, the overwhelming majority of Democrats (83%) and about two-thirds of other voters (65%) are reluctant to tolerate government surveillance of U.S. citizens. However, Republican voters are divided on the issue: 50 percent unwilling vs. 46 percent willing.

These are some of the results from the *2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 4 to March 5, 2006 by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Majority of Sacramento residents concerned more about civil liberties

Four years after terrorist attacks on September 11 and the 2001 USA PATRIOT Act, the majority of Sacramento region residents remain worried that the government will enact new anti-terrorism laws that will excessively restrict Americans' civil liberties (56%) than the government failing to enact efficient security policies (37%). This level of worry has stayed the same since 2003 (57%). However, there is also a greater apprehensiveness among some residents (37%) that the government may fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws than there was in 2002 (30%). Such a fear has remained virtually unchanged since 2003 (38% in 2003 and 37% in 2006, Liu 2003).

Opinions on anti-terrorism laws and civil liberties in this region vary by age, gender, race, household income, and county of residence. Those under 40 (62%), those with household incomes less than \$30,000 (60%) or between \$30,000 and \$75,000 (59%), and men (57%) show more concern for limiting our civil liberties than people 65 or older, (45%), residents with household income more than \$75,000 (52%), and women (54%). Residents in Sacramento (58%), El Dorado (55%), and Yolo (53%) counties are also more likely than people in Placer County (48%) to feel anxious about loss of civil liberties. White residents worry more about both the weak defense laws (39% whites vs.

31% other racial groups) and the new anti-terror policies that would excessively restrict civil liberties than other racial groups (57% whites vs. 55% other racial groups).

“Which concerns you more right now: that the government will fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws, or that the government will enact new anti-terrorism laws which excessively restrict ordinary Americans’ civil liberties?”

Comparison among 2002, 2003, and 2006

	Sacramento Region (2006)	Sacramento Region (2003)	Sacramento Region (2002)
Fail to enact strong laws	37%	38%	33%
Restrict civil liberties	56	57	60
Other	7	5	7

Comparison among People with Different Age

	Less than 40	41 to 64	65 or Older
Fail to enact strong laws	30%	40%	42%
Restrict civil liberties	62	56	45
Other	8	4	13

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$75,000	More than 75,000
Fail to enact strong laws	25%	35%	45%
Restrict civil liberties	60	59	52
Other	15	6	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Fail to enact strong laws	33%	41%
Restrict civil liberties	57	54
Other	10	5

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Fail to enact strong laws	42%	48%	34%	38%
Restrict civil liberties	55	48	58	53
Other	3	4	8	9

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other
Fail to enact strong laws	39%	31%
Restrict civil liberties	57	55
Other	4	14

Registered voters deeply divided over civil liberties

The largest division regarding new anti-terrorism laws/practices and civil liberties, however, is found among registered voters in the Sacramento region. Registered Democrats (72%) overwhelmingly worry more about the government restricting civil liberties, while only 34 percent of Republicans share the same concern. Anxiety over the restriction has increased in recent years among Democrats (72% in 2006, 65% in 2003, and 63% in 2002). In sharp contrast, the majority of Republicans (60%) are more likely to worry that the government may fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws, even though only 23 percent of Democrats share the same fear. Republicans have also become more apprehensive about weak anti-terrorism laws than in the past few years. Only thirty-six percent of Republicans reported they were more worried that our government would fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws to protect Americans in 2002, which was not that much different from Democrats (32%) and other registered voters (30%). However, this fear has increased dramatically for Republicans in the past four years (36% in 2002, 51% in 2003, and 60% in 2006), while it has decreased somewhat among Democrats (32% in 2002, 32% in 2003, and 23% in 2006, Liu 2002 and 2003).

Although the fear that new laws will not be harsh enough has also increased among other voters (30% in 2002, 27% in 2003, and 39% in 2006), the majority still remain more concerned about the restriction of civil liberties (57% in 2006, 66% in 2003, and 64% in 2002).

“Which concerns you more right now: that the government will fail to enact strong anti-terrorism laws, or that the government will enact new anti-terrorism laws which excessively restrict ordinary Americans’ civil liberties?”

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
2006			
Fail to enact strong laws	23%	60%	39%
Restrict civil liberties	72	34	57
Other	5	6	4
2003			
Fail to enact strong laws	32%	51%	27%
Will restrict civil liberties	65	42	66
Other	3	7	7
2002			
Fail to enact strong laws	32%	36%	30%
Will restrict civil liberties	63	55	64
Other	5	9	6

Mixed views on the government’s monitoring of emails and phone calls

*Majority of residents **oppose** government’s regular surveillance of American citizens*

Four years after September 11, the majority of residents (66%) in the Sacramento region remain unwilling to allow the government to regularly monitor phone calls and emails of ordinary American citizens. This holds true regardless of race, gender, income, age, or county of residence.

However, support for the surveillance of American citizens’ telecommunication in the region has increased over the last four years (23% in 2002 vs. 30% in 2006, Liu 2002), even though only 30 percent of respondents say they are *willing* to allow monitoring of US citizens. Furthermore, over half of those residents who are more alarmed about the government failing to enact strong anti-terrorism laws (56%) are also willing to allow the government to monitor emails and phone calls of American citizens. On the other hand, 85 percent of those who are concerned more with civil liberties are opposed to this kind of surveillance.

“In order to reduce the threat of terrorism, would you be willing or not willing to allow government agencies to monitor telephone calls or e-mails of ordinary American citizens on a regular basis?”

Comparison between the Sacramento Region in 2002 and 2006

	Sacramento Region (2006)	Sacramento Region (2002)
Willing	30%	23%
Unwilling	66	73
Don't know	4	4

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other
Willing	31%	25%
Unwilling	64	72
Don't know	5	3

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$75,000	More than 75,000
Willing	23%	28%	35%
Unwilling	70	68	62
Don't know	5	4	3

Comparison among People with Different Age

	Less than 40	41 to 64	65 or Plus
Willing	29%	29%	34%
Unwilling	67	67	63
Don't know	4	4	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Willing	29%	30%
Unwilling	68	66
Don't know	3	4

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Willing	30%	39%	28%	27%
Unwilling	66	57	69	65
Don't know	4	4	3	8

Comparison among Residents Concerned about Government Failing to Enact Strong Laws and Residents Concerned about Restricting Civil Liberties

	Fail to Enact Strong Laws	Restrict Civil Liberties
Willing	56%	12%
Unwilling	42	85
Don't know	2	3

Split over government's regular surveillance of non-U.S. citizens

In sharp contrast, more than half of residents (52%) in the Sacramento region are willing to allow government agencies to regularly monitor non-citizens, including foreign students and visitors, and permanent residents living in America. Moreover, willingness to allow the government to monitor foreign visitors and recent immigrants has also increased slightly (49% willing in 2002 vs. 52% willing in 2006, Liu 2002) from 2002, when the region was clearly divided on the issue (49% willing vs. 46% unwilling).

However, attitude toward regular surveillance of non-U.S. citizens living in America vary by county of residence, household income, age, and race. About two-thirds of residents from Placer (64%) and El Dorado (64%) counties are willing to allow the government to monitor telecommunications of non-U.S. citizens, whereas less than half of the residents from Sacramento (48%) or Yolo (43%) counties reported the same sentiment. People 65 or older (60%), residents with household income more than \$75,000 (57%), and white residents (54%) are more tolerant of the government monitoring telephone calls and emails of non-U.S. citizens than those under 40 (47%), those with household incomes less than \$30,000 (47%), and people from other racial groups (45%).

Furthermore, 79 percent of those residents who are more concerned about the government failing to enact strong anti-terrorism laws are also willing to allow the government to monitor emails and phone calls of non-American citizens. Conversely, 62 percent of those who worry more about civil liberties oppose this kind of surveillance.

“In order to reduce the threat of terrorism, would you be willing or unwilling to allow government agencies to regularly monitor telephone calls or emails of non-U.S. citizens, including foreign students, visitors, and permanent residents living in the United States?”

Comparison between Sacramento Region in 2002 and 2006

	Sacramento Region (2006)	Sacramento Region (2002)
Willing	52%	49%
Unwilling	42	46
Don't know	6	5

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Willing	64%	64%	48%	43%
Unwilling	31	31	46	48
Don't know	5	5	6	9

Comparison among People with Different Age

	Less than 40	41 to 64	65 or Plus
Willing	47%	52	60%
Unwilling	48	41	35
Don't know	5	7	5

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$75,000	More than 75,000
Willing	47%	53%	57%
Unwilling	42	43	39
Don't know	11	4	4

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other
Willing	55%	45%
Unwilling	39	49
Don't know	6	6

Comparison among Residents Concerned about Government Failing to Enact Strong Laws and Residents Concerned about Restricting Civil Liberties

	Fail to Enact Strong Laws	Restrict Civil Liberties
Willing	79%	33%
Unwilling	18	62
Don't know	3	5

Summary

Sacramento residents are more willing to allow surveillance of non-US citizens (52%) than American citizens (30%). Of those residents who are in favor of monitoring American citizens, 95 percent are just as likely to allow the government to monitor non-U.S. citizens. In addition, more than one-third (34%) of those who are unwilling to allow the government to monitor American citizens (34%) and who are unsure of whether American citizens should be observed (37%) are willing to allow the government to monitor non-citizens, including recent immigrants who are permanent residents.

“In order to reduce the threat of terrorism, would you be willing or unwilling to allow government agencies to regularly monitor telephone calls or emails of non-U.S. citizens, including foreign students, visitors, and permanent residents living in the United States?”

Comparison among Residents Willing and Unwilling to Allow Monitoring of American Citizens

	Willing (citizens)	Unwilling (citizens)	Don't Know (citizens)
Willing (non-citizens)	95%	34%	37%
Unwilling (non-citizens)	4	62	0
Don't Know(non-citizens)	1	4	63

Deep political split over government monitoring of emails and phone calls

Republicans, Democrats, and other registered voters have become divided on whether the government should monitor telecommunications of U.S. citizens. The overwhelming majority of Democrats (83%) and about two-thirds of other voters (65%) are reluctant to allow the government to regularly monitor phone calls and emails of American citizens. However, Republicans voters are divided on the issue: 50 percent unwilling vs. 46 percent willing.

This is quite different from four years ago. At that time the majority of registered voters were reluctant to allow the government to watch ordinary Americans, regardless of whether they were Democrats (78% unwilling), Republicans (70% unwilling), or other voters (71% unwilling). Since 2002, Republicans have become more accepting of monitoring U.S. citizens (27% willing in 2002 vs. 46% willing in 2006), while Democrats have become more disinclined to allow the government to do so (78% unwilling in 2002 vs. 83% unwilling in 2006, Liu 2002).

There is also an amplified difference of opinions along political party lines regarding government surveillance of non-citizens. A majority of Democratic voters (61%) are *unwilling* to allow monitoring of telephone calls and emails, a seven percent increase from 2002 (54%). In contrast, over three-quarters of Republicans (76%) are *willing* to allow the monitoring, a 13 percent increase from 2002 (63%). Other registered voters are split with 49 percent claiming they are willing, and 44 percent declaring they do not favor surveillance.

“In order to reduce the threat of terrorism, would you be willing or not willing to allow government agencies to monitor telephone calls or emails of ordinary American citizens on a regular basis?”

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
2006			
Willing	16%	46%	30%
Unwilling	83	50	65
Don't know	1	4	5
2002			
Willing	18%	27%	26%
Unwilling	78	70	71
Don't know	4	3	3

“In order to reduce the threat of terrorism, would you be willing or unwilling to allow government agencies to regularly monitor telephone calls or emails of non-U.S. citizens, including foreign students, visitors, and permanent residents living in the United States?”

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
2006			
Willing	34%	76%	49%
Unwilling	61	19	44
Don't know	5	5	7
2002			
Willing	42%	63%	47%
Unwilling	53	35	47
Don't know	5	2	6

Survey Methods

The above results are based on our fifth annual survey, *The 2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*¹. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1122 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion regarding a wide range of important local and national issues in the Sacramento region.

More than 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 4 to March 5, 2006, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region and comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census (68% residents in the Census vs. 65.4% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 16.3% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 8.2% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 10.1% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, the Office of Community Collaboration at California State University (CSU), Sacramento, and CSU, Office of Community Service Learning sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

This research is directed by Amy Q. Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 Annual Surveys of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

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¹ This study was called Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region.

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