

For additional information: Bill Winter, Director of Communications ♦ (202) 333-0008 Ext. 226

Booming popularity: New surveys say 24% to 30% of Americans are libertarian More shocking: Voters trust prostitutes more than politicians

WASHINGTON, DC — **Libertarians are multiplying.**

Two recent surveys show that 24% to 30% of Americans now hold solidly *libertarian* opinions about government — the highest number ever.

“Libertarianism is gathering force like a tornado, tearing up the traditional political landscape,” said Perry Willis, national director of the Libertarian Party. “More Americans are telling the government to get out of my face, get out of my bedroom, and get out of my wallet.”

The numbers are a big jump over a January 1996 Gallup survey, which found that just 20% of the population was libertarian.

And Americans *distrust* government more than ever. Another surprising poll says Americans think politicians lie more often than prostitutes.

“Voters trust *hookers* more than politicians!” said Willis. “No wonder 50 million to 80 million Americans now embrace the leave-me-alone philosophy of the Libertarian Party.”

The two surveys about libertarianism’s growing popularity were reported in the February 6th issue of *Roll Call*, which noted: “Poll after poll reveals enormous skepticism about the performance of the federal government — [which] should boost Libertarians’ fortunes.”

■ A poll taken by Penn & Schoenn Associates after the 1996 election found that 30% of Americans agree “government should stay out of people’s lives so they can solve their problems without interference or regulation” — an explicit libertarian position.

The same survey found that 65% of Americans say “government is too big and must be cut back,” and 59% say government should play a “smaller role in our lives.”

■ A survey by the Lake Research/Tarrance Group (November 1996) reported that 24% of Americans say that “other than national defense and the administration of justice, government should do as little as possible to interfere in the lives of individuals.”

But the most demoralizing result for politicians, said Willis, is a poll showing that prostitutes are considered more trustworthy than political leaders. A survey taken by Fox News Sunday/Opinion Dynamics in February found that 55% of Americans think prostitutes are likely to tell the truth, compared to only 12% who chose politicians.

“We’ve always heard that politics makes strange bedfellows,” said Willis. “This survey shows that Americans apparently trust those strange bedfellows *more* than the politicians.”

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