Methodology

The First Amendment Center commissioned Professors David Yalof and Kenneth Dautrich at the University of Connecticut to conduct a general public survey of attitudes about the First Amendment. The questionnaire that was utilized was a national survey developed jointly by the First Amendment Center and the University of Connecticut. Gene Policinski of the First Amendment Center provided overall direction for the project. He also aided in developing the questionnaire, along with Paul K. McMasters, Ronald K.L. Collins and Charles C. Haynes of the First Amendment Center. The State of the First Amendment Survey was conducted by telephone between Oct. 25 and Nov. 6, 2006.

Interviews were conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Surveys were conducted by professional survey interviewers trained in standard protocols for administering survey instruments. The draft survey questionnaire and field protocols received thorough testing prior to the start of the formal interviewing period. Interviews were extensively monitored to ensure standards for quality were continually met.

The national sample used for this research project included residential telephone numbers in the 48 contiguous states. The sample was stratified to ensure that broad geographic regions were represented in proportion to their share of the total adult population in the United States. Within each of these regions, telephone numbers were generated through a random-digit-dial telephone methodology to ensure that each possible residential telephone number had an equal probability of selection. Telephone banks that contain no known residential telephone numbers were removed from the sample selection process. Once selected, each telephone number was contacted a minimum of four times in an attempt to reach an eligible respondent. Households where a viable contact was made were called additional times. Within each household one adult was randomly selected to complete the interview.

The sampling error for 1,000 national interviews is $\pm$ 3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means that there is less than one chance in 20 that the results of a survey of these respective sizes would differ by more than 3.5% in either direction from the results, which would be obtained if all adults in the appropriate area had been selected. The sample error is larger for subgroups.