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BELIEFS ABOUT SANDY HOOK COVER-UP, COMING REVOLUTION UNDERLIE DIVIDE ON GUN CONTROL

Democrats and Republicans continue to be divided over the need for new gun control laws, and the most recent national survey of registered voters from Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds that attitudes regarding the perceived likelihood of an armed revolution to protect liberties and the truth about the Sandy Hook shooting are helpful in explaining this partisan divide. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Democrats say that Congress needs to pass new laws to protect the public from gun violence, but the views of Republicans are almost completely opposite: 65 percent don't think new laws are necessary. Overall, registered voters are divided over the need for new gun control legislation. Fifty percent agree it is needed, with 39 percent who disagree.

"If there was a bipartisan moment after Sandy Hook to pass gun control legislation, it's past," said Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson, and an analyst for the poll. "Partisan views have strongly re-asserted themselves, and there's no sign that they'll get any weaker."

Partisan divisions on gun control go deeper than the legislation being fought over in Congress. Supporters and opponents of gun control have very different fundamental beliefs about the role of guns in American society. Overall, the poll finds that 29 percent of Americans think that an armed revolution in order to protect liberties might be necessary in the next few years, with another five percent unsure. However, these beliefs are conditional on party. Just 18 percent of Democrats think an armed revolution may be necessary, as opposed to 44 percent of Republicans and 27 percent of independents.

Only 38 percent of Americans who believe a revolution might be necessary support additional gun control legislation, compared with 62 percent of those who don't think an armed revolt will be needed. "The differences in views of gun legislation are really a function of differences in what people believe guns are for," said Cassino. "If you truly believe an armed revolution is possible in the near future, you need weapons and you're going to be wary about government efforts to take them away."

Turning to attitudes toward the Sandy Hook shooting in December 2012, which prompted the recent debate over the need for new gun control laws, the survey finds that overall, a quarter (25%) of Americans think that facts about the shootings at Sandy Hook elementary last year are being hidden and an additional eleven percent are unsure. Republicans are more likely to think that the truth about Sandy Hook is being suppressed, with 32 percent agreeing. Education matters as well. About a third (31%) of those with no more than a high school degree think the truth is being hidden, compared with 16 percent of college grads.

After Sandy Hook, there was a huge swell of theories claiming that it was faked,” said Cassino. “It’s easy to deride these sorts of conspiracy theories, but they seem to have found an audience.”

Gun control opponents are also more likely to believe that the truth about the Sandy Hook shootings, which prompted the current gun control debate, is being hidden for political purposes. Thirty-seven percent of Americans who think the public is being lied to about Sandy Hook support new gun control efforts, compared with 59 percent of Americans who don’t think there’s a Sandy Hook conspiracy.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 863 registered voters was conducted nationally by telephone with both landline and cell phones from April 22 through April 28, 2013, and has a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

Methodology

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from April 22 through April 28, 2013 using a randomly selected sample of 863 registered voters nationwide. One can be 95 percent confident that the error attributable to sampling has a range of +/- 3.4 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a landline phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected.

Landline households are supplemented with a separate, randomly selected sample of cell-phone respondents interviewed in the same time frame. The total combined sample is mathematically weighted to match known demographics of age, race and gender.

New gun control legislation

T2 Congress needs to pass new laws to protect the public from gun violence.

	All	Party			Gender		Education		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	HS	Some college	College grad
Agree	50%	73	48	24	41	59	49	49	54
Disagree	39%	16	42	65	48	30	39	40	38
Neither	9%	10	8	8	9	10	11	10	7
Unsure	2%	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1

	Need for armed revolution		Sandy Hook Shooting	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Agree	38	62	37	59
Disagree	52	31	52	31
Neither	8	6	10	8
Unsure	1	1	1	2

Gun Control Tables

T1 In the next few years, an armed revolution might be necessary in order to protect our liberties

	All	Party			Gender		Education		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	HS	Some college	College grad
Agree	29%	18	27	44	30	29	36	31	22
Disagree	47%	61	45	31	50	45	35	44	60
Neither	18%	16	20	20	17	20	21	18	15
Unsure	5%	6	6	4	2	7	8	6	2
Refused	1%	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	1

T3 Some people are hiding the truth about the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in order to advance a political agenda.

	All	Party ID			Gender		Education		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Men	Women	HS	Some college	College grad
Agree	25%	20	23	32	30	20	31	30	16
Disagree	41%	51	42	31	40	43	31	38	54
Neither	22%	20	23	24	21	23	22	22	22
Unsure	11%	9	12	13	9	14	16	11	8

Exact Question Wording and Order

US1 and US2 released Tuesday, April 30
 SC1 through SC3 withheld for a later release
 RENT1 through RENT13 withheld for a later release
 M1 released Tuesday, April 30

T1 In the next few years, an armed revolution might be necessary in order to protect our liberties.

- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 9 DK/Refused (VOL)

T2 Congress needs to pass new laws to protect the public from gun violence.

- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 9 DK/Refused (VOL)

T3 Some people are hiding the truth about the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in order to advance a political agenda.

- 1 Agree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 9 DK/Refused (VOL)

Sample characteristics – Registered voters**Gender**

Male	47
Female	53

Age

18-29	14
30-44	24
45-59	30
60+	30
Refused	2

Race/Ethnicity

White	71
Black/African-American	13
Latino or Hispanic	8
Asian	2
Other/refused	6

Census region

Northeast	20
Midwest	21
South	32
West	27

Education

HS or less	31
Some college	33
College graduate	35

Party identification (with leaners)

Democrat	45
Independent	15
Republican	35
Other	2
DK/Refused	4