



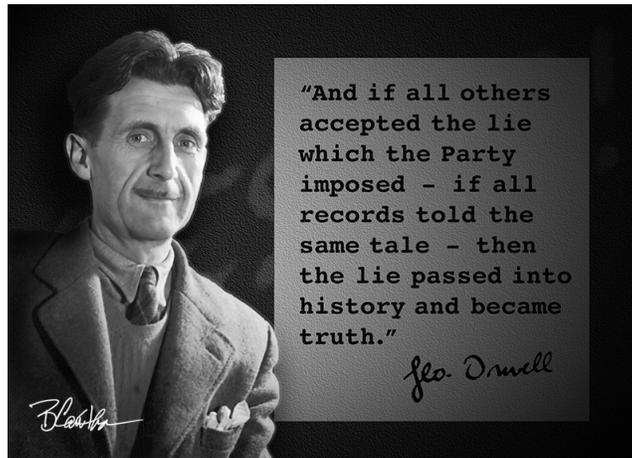
Andi's Answers
Lies, Damn Lies, and Polls
 How gun control manipulates public opinion surveys

During legislative hearings on Texas' permitless carry law, those speaking in opposition often mentioned surveys saying 81% of Texans oppose permitless carry. That's a lovely dream. However, there's more you should know.

The thing that most people don't know is that polls are a snapshot in time. Literally, how people feel about a given subject may change depending on what's happening in and around them at the time, what's in the news or frankly, sometimes just their mood. Properly done, they can be seen as an indicator but a poll that is say- a month old, can be very misleading. As people learn more about a subject, their opinions may change. Opinion polls are always a poor basis for public policy but despite the many examples of polls getting it wrong, people still consider them authoritative - especially when the results confirm their own opinions.

Also, having read many, many polls, a group who has an agenda can make the numbers say pretty much anything they want. So, the sponsor of the poll matters a great deal.

Opinion polls are always a poor basis for public policy- as I said, they are a snapshot in time among other problems, but despite the many examples of polls getting it wrong, people still consider them authoritative - especially when the results confirm their own opinions.



In his classic novel 1984, George Orwell envisioned a grim future where a totalitarian government manipulated information by what we now call the big lie. If you are going to lie, make it a big lie and repeat it often. Over time, the people will accept it as the truth.

Groups like Moms Demand Action and Everytown for Gun Safety, two members of Michael Bloomberg's Gun Control Mafia, are fond of citing studies paid for by Everytown for Gun Safety and the Bloomberg-funded Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Prevention and Policy. Either of those should raise a red flag.

There is often bias built into the phrasing of poll questions. A poll conducted by the Dallas *Morning News* and the University of Texas - Tyler claimed that 77% of Texans oppose constitutional carry. Here is the exact question that was asked:

"Texas law allows individuals to openly carry a gun on the hip and shoulder or conceal the handgun if the person has an approved permit. Should Texas change its law to allow

individuals to conceal their handgun without a permit?"

Now ask the question this way: *"Nineteen states had no problems when they enacted permitless carry laws. Is it time for Texans to have the same right?"*

Both questions present facts, even though they are different facts. Both ask essentially the same question. But it's highly unlikely that the survey outcome would be the same.

There two more significant defects in polling: Getting a representative group, a significant challenge for modern pollsters, and participant

awareness. Do those being polled know anything about the issue? Do they understand both sides? Gun control activists have leveraged the fact most people don't question what they hear to dominate what is heard. Also, the number of people polled makes a difference. 300 people polled vs 1,000 can vastly change the narrative.

In February 2019, NPR and the PBS Newshour commissioned the Marist School of Public Opinion to canvas public opinion on several well-known gun control ideas. The 880 adults who participated answered questions survey covering issues such as universal background checks and various restrictions on types of firearms and magazine capacities.

[NPR reported](#) high levels of support for more regulation although they did try to minimize the fact that a majority of Americans believe the Second Amendment is just as important as the other protected rights by artfully cherry-picking results and reporting only those.

“There are also political divides, especially when it comes to the importance of the Second Amendment compared to other key constitutional protections — 58 percent of the country says it is just as important as other constitutional rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion or freedom of the press.

“But while 74 percent of Republicans think so, 56 percent of Democrats do not.”

The survey question actually grouped responses into three groups: those who thought the Second

Amendment was as important; those who thought it was less important and those who thought it was *more* important. A more honest report would have said 68% of Americans thought the Second Amendment was just as important or more important. Just 31% of participants said it was less important. The majority of every demographic group, other than Democrats, both men, and women, believed that the Second Amendment was at least equal in value to the other rights covered in the Bill of Rights.

Curiously, almost none of the news reports even mentioned the results of the last question on the survey: "From what you have read or heard, do you think, compared to 25 years ago, the per capita gun murder rate in the U.S. is higher, lower, or about the same?"

59% said the rate was higher; 23% said it was about the same.

The 25-year span closest to early 2019 was 1994-2018. According to the CDC's fatal injury reports for that period, the gun homicide rate plunged nearly 36%.

In fact, total gun-related deaths, even including suicides, dropped 17%.

That means that 82% of the people who answered believed something that was untrue.

Americans aren't stupid. But the gun control groups, the media, and certain politicians have been lying to them so loudly and for so long that, as George Orwell predicted in *1984*, they have accepted those lies as truth.

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