



Blind trust leads to a ‘fall’ for America

By Jim Waters

As seasonal as the fall leaves turning are the election polls that accompany them.

We know what the colorful array of foliage means: cooler weather, enjoyable drives through the countryside and the onset of the holidays.

But interpreting the polls doesn't offer so many automatics.

For example, a recent USA Today [story](#) about the latest USA Today/Gallup Poll shows six in 10 respondents find the American government too powerful. But the story's tone reads more like a requiem than a celebration.

The newspaper's take: "Americans are having a crisis of confidence in their government."

As if it's a bad thing for Americans to distrust government.

How different from National Public Radio's take when reporting on a Pew Research Center Poll in April showing that only 22 percent of respondents trust the federal government "almost always or most of the time" while one in three see government as "a major threat to their personal freedoms."

NPR's headline for its story: "Distrusting Government: As American as Apple Pie."

If NPR were around to cover the creation of our great country, the colonials might have been munching on their apple pie while reading a headline like this: "Suspicious of Government: As American as the Founding Fathers."

That's because the founders unflinchingly believed that the greater the distrust of government, the less those ruled would surrender wealth and choice to government. Distrust of government would lead to a free and prosperous nation.

Thus, the TEA party's call for lower taxes, less spending and limited government does not find its strength in radical ideas but in our nation's founding principles and the democratic fabric of our country.

And better yet, it's non-partisan.

Gene Healy, vice president of the Cato Institute and author of "The Cult of the Presidency: America's Dangerous Devotion to Executive Power," says increasing skepticism of government power should please both liberals and conservatives.

For conservatives, it means big-government programs likely won't pass. For liberals, it reduces chances that Americans will have policies that attack civil liberties forced upon them such as what happened following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Don't believe it's a coincidence that the alarming increase in government power accompanied by a frightening decline in civil liberties coincided with a rise in "trusting" government.

"Declining trust in government is a good thing, something that Americans of every political stripe ought to celebrate," Healy said.

But don't confuse distrusting government with supporting anarchy. Rather, it means we restrain government to its constitutional directives and demand accountability for how our taxes get spent.

For Kentuckians, it means that we should question why the [\\$3 billion the state received](#) in "stimulus" funds from Washington has not created the jobs and stimulated the economy as we were promised.

It means we wonder aloud why the unemployment rate remains sky high and our economy remains unstimulated with all of that cash flowing into this small state.

It means we call for a much greater trust in *proven* ideas spurred by freedom and the marketplace rather than in the failed policies of corporate bailouts, appointed czars and healthcare rationing demigods.

In his inaugural speech, President Barack Obama chided those of us who "question the scale of our ambitions" as "cynics ... with stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long."

But it was precisely such "ambitions" that prompted Thomas Jefferson to warn: "In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

Chains? The Constitution?

As if such "stale" ideas — and the "cynics" who believe in them and distrust those who don't — are bad things.

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