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PSB survey introduced at Aspen Ideas Festival reveals Americans' views on the U.S. Constitution; Changes to Supreme Court favored

Aspen, CO, July 9, 2010 – Americans are solidly united behind the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, according to new research, however they are also deeply divided over how their governing document should be interpreted and would like to see a series of changes made. The Penn Schoen Berland study was released today at the Aspen Ideas Festival as part of a panel hosted by Mark Penn and Don Baer, CEO and Chairman of PSB, respectively.

Sixty percent of Americans feel that the Constitution is timeless and should be changed minimally. Americans are, nevertheless, unified in wanting to give more power to the people in ways that would have far-reaching impact on the way the U.S. government operates, particularly as it regards the Supreme Court:

- 68% call for a mandatory retirement age for Supreme Court Justices.
- 66% percent favor term limits for judges.
- Most significantly, by a margin of 51 to 34 the public favors popular election of Supreme Court justices over the current appointment process.

That said, Americans still endorse the fundamental principles of the Constitution: 64% support the system of checks and balances it establishes to prevent any one branch from having too much power. Additionally, Americans favor the preservation and expansion of Constitutional rights; 61% believe that the Constitution should protect more rights than it does currently (such as equality regardless of gender, which 70% support).

But when reckoning with our current situation, satisfaction with the Constitution fails to translate to satisfaction with the government. Only a quarter of respondents are satisfied with the current system, and nearly 70% say that it functions worse than the framers intended. Respondents see increased bipartisanship and collaboration in politics as a possible solution to this state of affairs; nearly 60% of Americans feel there's too little collaboration between the two parties to produce results for the people. And Americans prefer divided government (in which the executive branch is controlled by one party, and the legislative by another) by a 2 to 1 margin.

Some of the changes Americans would like to see on these issues include:

- 74% say that they want to abolish the Electoral College.
- A plurality (49%) thinks it should be possible to amend the Constitution through popular referenda.

- 53% think that Congress should do away with the filibuster.

“Americans value and revere our founding document, but they’re frustrated with the way the Constitution is currently being implemented,” said Mr. Penn. “Voters want changes that give the people more power. The country is calling on politicians to move toward the center to get things done – and the research shows that candidates who heed this call should be well-positioned come the November midterms.”

“This research reflects the depth with which Americans are engaged in how our country works – and their frustration with how it does not,” said Mr. Baer. “Their support for more democratic reforms suggests that Americans are eager for solutions that will create progress and want to move beyond old labels and the tired tactics of the past.”

About the 2010 American Constitution Study

Penn Schoen Berland conducted 1000 online interviews within the American general population between June 18 and June 22, 2010. The margin of error is +/- 3.1%, and larger for subgroups.

Between June 30 and July 5, 2010, PSB conducted an additional 500 online interviews within the American general population to gain insight on supplemental questions.

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About Penn Schoen Berland

Penn Schoen Berland, a unit of the WPP Group (NASDAQ: WPPGY), is a global research-based consultancy that specializes in messaging and communications strategy for blue-chip political, corporate and entertainment clients. We have over 30 years of experience in leveraging unique insights about consumer opinion to provide clients with a competitive advantage - what we call Winning Knowledge™. PSB executes polling and message testing services for Fortune 100 corporations and has helped elect more than 30 presidents and prime ministers around the world. More information is available at www.psbresearch.com