

What Is The Effect Of Asking Americans To Think About The Greater Good?

March 20, 2013

NPR:

Okay. So is it a problem that the president is saying those two things at once?

It might be, Steve, because we actually have many examples of what happens when politicians make appeals to individual rights versus when they make appeals to the greater good. This isn't a left or right thing, by the way. Obviously, on the case of guns, conservatives are much more likely than liberals to espouse the cause of individual rights. But when you think about gay marriage or abortion, it's liberals who are arguing in those situations that individual choice ought to matter more than the views of communities.

Now, the reason all of this is of interest to social scientists is that we've known for a very long time that Americans have this very strong streak of independence. I spoke with MarYam Hamedani. She's a researcher at Stanford University. Here's how she put it to me.

Read the whole story: [NPR](#)