

Poll: GOP seen less friendly to religion: Only 44% of population hold favorable view of Christian conservatives

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The number of Americans—particularly white evangelical Protestants—who view the Republican Party as friendly to religion has fallen from 55 percent last year to 47 percent, according to a poll released last month. And less than half of the population (44 percent) holds a favorable view of Christian conservatives.

The poll, taken by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, shows Americans' attitudes toward a host of issues touching on faith and public policy.

Republican losses were not matched in gains by Democrats: only 26 percent of Americans see the Democratic Party as friendly to religion.

In fact, 69 percent of Americans say liberals have gone too far in trying to keep religion out of schools and government. Simultaneously, 49 percent believe that conservative Christians have gone too far in trying to impose their religious values on the country—up 4 percent since 2005.

The percentages of Americans identifying with hardline religio-political labels remain relatively small. Only 7 percent of the public identify with the “religious left,” while just 11 percent identify with the “religious right.” But more Americans (32 percent) do think of themselves as “liberal or progressive Christians” than identify as white evangelical Christians (24 percent).

Yet evangelicals remain more cohesive, according to the pollsters, because members “share core religious beliefs as well as . . . consistently conservative political attitudes.”

While evangelicals believe that the Bible is the literal word of God (62 percent) and that the present-day state of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy (59 percent), respondents generally tend to believe that the influence of religion is lessening. Also, 79 percent of Americans say there is solid evidence that the earth is getting warmer.

The Pew survey was conducted July 6-19 among a nationwide sample of 2,003 adults. -*Religion News Service*