

Survey Questionnaire

Religion and Public Life, 2000-2004

This study is based on two national telephone surveys of randomly selected adults aged 18 and older. The tracking survey included 1,004 adults and was conducted between July 28 and August 2, 2004; it averaged 13 minutes in length. The baseline survey, which was published in a 2000 Public Agenda report entitled *For Goodness' Sake: Why So Many Want Religion to Play a Greater Role in American Life*, included 1,507 adults and was conducted between November 4 and November 25, 2000; it averaged 30 minutes in length. The margin of error for both surveys is plus or minus three percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups.

Results of less than 0.5 are signified by an asterisk (*). Results of zero are signified by a dash (-). Responses may not always total 100% due to rounding. Combining answer categories may produce slight discrepancies between the numbers in these survey results and the numbers in the press release.

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %		2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
1			How important an influence is your religious faith in your life—is it the most important influence, a very important influence, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?		
			Most important	28	28
			Very important	40	40
			Somewhat important	22	17
			Not too important	6	8
			Not at all important	4	7
			Don't know	*	*
2			When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to the DEATH PENALTY, do you think that:		
			They should base their vote on their own religious views	31	36
			They should be willing to compromise with other elected officials whose views are different	60	55
			[Vol.] Depends on the elected officials' religious views	5	3
			Don't know	4	6
3			[Base: Should base DEATH PENALTY votes on their own religious views]	(n=450)	(n=357)
			Would you want them to base their vote on their religious views even if their religious views were totally different from yours?		
			Yes	67	76
			No	28	21
			Don't know	6	3
4			When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to POVERTY AND WELFARE, do you think that:		
			They should base their vote on their own religious views	24	27
			They should be willing to compromise with other elected officials whose views are different	68	66
			[Vol.] Depends on the elected officials' religious views	5	4
			Don't know	3	3
5			[Base: Should base poverty and welfare votes on their own religious views]	(n=350)	(n=270)
			Would you want them to base their vote on their religious views even if their religious views were totally different from yours?		
			Yes	71	83
			No	26	15
			Don't know	3	2
6			When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to ABORTION, do you think that:		
			They should base their vote on their own religious views	35	42
			They should be willing to compromise with other elected officials whose views are different	57	51
			[Vol.] Depends on the elected officials' religious views	5	3
			Don't know	4	4

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
7 <i>[Base: Should base ABORTION votes on their own religious views]</i> (n=478) (n=413)		
Would you want them to base their vote on their religious views even if their religious views were totally different from yours?		
Yes	65	80
No	31	18
Don't know	4	3
8 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to GAY RIGHTS, do you think that:		
They should base their vote on their own religious views	31	38
They should be willing to compromise with other elected officials whose views are different	60	54
[Vol.] Depends on the elected officials' religious views	4	4
Don't know	5	4
9 <i>[Base: Elected officials should base GAY RIGHTS votes on their own religious views]</i> (n=440) (n=370)		
Would you want them to base their vote on their religious views even if their religious views were totally different from yours?		
Yes	67	82
No	27	15
Don't know	6	3
10 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related TO GAY MARRIAGE IN PARTICULAR, do you think that:		
They should base their vote on their own religious views	N/A	38
They should be willing to compromise with other elected officials whose views are different	N/A	53
[Vol.] Depends on the elected officials' religious views	N/A	4
Don't know	N/A	5

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
11 <i>[Base: Elected officials should base GAY MARRIAGE votes on their own religious views]</i> (n=374)		
Would you want them to base their vote on their religious views even if their religious views were totally different from yours?		
Yes	N/A	84
No	N/A	15
Don't know	N/A	1
12 If many more of our elected officials were deeply religious, do you think that the laws and policy decisions they make would probably be better, would probably be worse, or would be neither better nor worse?		
Probably better	47	45
Probably worse	11	17
Neither better nor worse	39	33
Don't know	4	5
13 How close does this statement come to your own view: Even elected officials who are deeply religious sometimes have to make compromises and set their convictions aside to get results while in government—is this very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all to your own view?		
Very close	46	38
Somewhat close	38	37
Not too close	7	10
Not close at all	8	14
Don't know	2	2
14 How close does this statement come to your own view: When politicians talk about their religious faith during elections, they are just saying what they think people want to hear—is this very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all to your own view?		
Very close	39	35
Somewhat close	35	35
Not too close	13	12
Not close at all	10	13
Don't know	3	5

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
15 Do you think that voters should seriously consider the religious affiliation of candidates when they decide whom to support, or is it wrong to do so?		
Should seriously consider religious affiliation	37	42
It's wrong to do so	58	52
Don't know	5	5
16 Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who draws emotional comfort and strength from religion, or would this make no difference to you?		
More likely	52	50
Less likely	7	5
No difference	39	43
Don't know	2	2
17 Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who always votes for legislation according to his or her religious convictions, or would this make no difference to you?		
More likely	26	27
Less likely	40	34
No difference	29	35
Don't know	5	4
18 Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who keeps religious faith separate from actions while in government, or would this make no difference to you?		
More likely	40	41
Less likely	24	22
No difference	33	35
Don't know	3	3
19 Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who is open about NOT believing in God, or would this make no difference to you?		
More likely	11	11
Less likely	54	52
No difference	33	35
Don't know	3	2

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
20 Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who relies on church leaders for advice on how to vote on specific legislation, or would this make no difference to you?		
More likely	25	21
Less likely	44	39
No difference	29	38
Don't know	3	2
21 Can you tell me the specific religious affiliation of President George W. Bush?		
[Vol.] "Methodist"	6	8
[Vol.] "Born Again"	7	2
[Vol.] "Protestant"	10	11
[Vol.] "Christian"	N/A	18
[Vol.] Incorrect response	14	18
Don't know	64	43
22 Can you tell me the specific religious affiliation of the Democratic nominee for President, John Kerry?		
[Vol.] "Catholic" or "Roman Catholic"	N/A	37
[Vol.] "Christian"	N/A	4
[Vol.] Incorrect response	N/A	4
Don't know	N/A	56
23 Which statement comes closer to your own view?		
The nation needs more politicians with honesty and integrity—it does not need more politicians who are religious	48	48
If more politicians were religious, they would be more likely to be honest and have integrity	49	48
Don't know	4	4
24 Would you like the news media to devote more attention to the religious backgrounds and beliefs of candidates running for elected office, less attention, or should things stay the same?		
More attention	26	25
Less attention	22	32
Stay the same	50	41
Don't know	2	2

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
<p>[Now I'm going to ask you some questions about religious leaders and their role in politics. By "religious leaders" we mean people like ministers, priests, or rabbis, not elected officials who are religious.]</p>		
25	<p>How close does this statement describe your own view about religious leaders who regularly speak out on political issues: These religious leaders have as much right as anyone else to participate in the political process—is that very close, somewhat close, not too close or not close at all to your own view?</p>	
	Very close	55 54
	Somewhat close	30 29
	Not too close	8 7
	Not close at all	6 8
	Don't know	2 2
26	<p>How close does this statement describe your own view about religious leaders who regularly speak out on political issues: When these religious leaders speak out, they are intruding into areas that are best left to politicians—is that very close, somewhat close, not too close or not close at all to your own view?</p>	
	Very close	16 18
	Somewhat close	32 24
	Not too close	23 24
	Not close at all	25 31
	Don't know	3 3
27	<p>Do you think that our political system would be threatened if religious leaders and groups were to become a lot more involved in politics, or do you think our political system could easily handle this type of involvement?</p>	
	Political system would be threatened	31 33
	Political system could easily handle this	63 61
	Don't know	6 7

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
28	<p><i>[Base: Political system could easily handle this]</i> (n=936) (n=605)</p> <p>What if these religious leaders and groups were fundamentalist or ultra-orthodox? Do you think that our political system would be threatened, or could it easily handle this type of involvement?</p>	
	Political system would be threatened	21 25
	Political system could easily handle this	70 68
	Don't know	9 8
29	<p>If more religious leaders were to take public positions on specific legislation and urge their congregations to adopt their point of view, would you see this as positive, negative, or would you be neutral?</p>	
	Strongly positive	11 9
	Positive	14 14
	Neutral	50 47
	Negative	14 15
	Strongly negative	8 13
	Don't know	2 3
30	<p>And if more religious leaders were to urge their congregations to vote for the candidates they prefer, would you see this as positive, negative, or would you be neutral?</p>	
	Strongly positive	9 7
	Positive	10 11
	Neutral	46 39
	Negative	20 24
	Strongly negative	14 19
	Don't know	2 1
30A	<p>Suppose that a company has several deeply religious MUSLIM workers who need to take two or three breaks each day for religious observance. Do you think that the company should be required to give them the time they need, or is that not really the company's responsibility?</p>	
	<i>[Split sample]</i> (n=495) (n=329)	
	Company should be required to give them the time	42 38
	Not really the company's responsibility	50 57
	Don't know	8 5

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
30B Suppose that a company has several deeply religious JEWISH workers who need to take two or three breaks each day for religious observance. Do you think that the company should be required to give them the time they need, or is that not really the company's responsibility?		
<i>[Split sample]</i>	(n=492)	(n=331)
Company should be required to give them the time	44	44
Not really the company's responsibility	50	50
Don't know	6	6
30C Suppose that a company has several deeply religious CHRISTIAN workers who need to take two or three breaks each day for religious observance. Do you think that the company should be required to give them the time they need, or is that not really the company's responsibility?		
<i>[Split sample]</i>	(n=490)	(n=329)
Company should be required to give them the time	33	32
Not really the company's responsibility	62	62
Don't know	5	5
31 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or something else?		
Republican	32	32
Democrat	33	29
Independent	25	27
Something else	10	11
Don't know	1	1
32 <i>[Base: Independent]</i>	(n=360)	(n=265)
Do you lean toward the Republican or Democratic party, or do you not lean either way?		
Republican	23	24
Democrat	23	31
Don't lean either way	54	45
Don't know	*	*

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
33 These days, many people are so busy they can't find time to register to vote, or move around so often they don't get a chance to re-register. Are you NOW registered to vote in your precinct or election district, or haven't you been able to register so far?		
Yes	N/A	85
No	N/A	15
Don't know	N/A	*
34 Many people weren't able to vote in the 2000 election for President between George Bush, Al Gore, and Ralph Nader. How about you? Were you able to vote, or for some reason were you unable to vote?		
Voted	N/A	77
Did not vote	N/A	21
[Vol.] Ineligible/too young	N/A	2
Don't know/Can't Remember	N/A	1
35 What are your chances of voting in the election for President this year: are you almost certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or don't you think you will vote?		
Almost certain	N/A	83
Probably	N/A	6
50-50	N/A	4
Will not vote	N/A	6
Don't know	N/A	*

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
36 What is your religious preference, if any?		
No religion/secular	11	9
Agnostic	1	2
Atheist	1	1
Amish	-	-
Assemblies of God	1	1
Baha'i	*	-
Baptist	17	16
Born-again Christian	*	1
Brethren	*	-
Buddhist	1	*
Catholic	24	24
Charismatic	*	*
Christian	8	15
Christian Scientist	*	-
Church of God	1	*
Church of Christ	1	1
Congregational	*	*
Disciples of Christ	*	*
Dutch Reformed/Reformed	*	-
Episcopalian	1	1
Ethical Culture	-	-
Evangelical Christian	1	*
Friends	-	-
Greek Orthodox	*	-
Hindu	*	*
Holiness/Holy	*	-
Humanist	-	-
Islam	*	*
Jehovah's Witness	*	1
Jewish	1	1
Jew for Jesus/Messianic Jew	*	-
Latter Day Saints	1	1
Lutheran	5	4
Mennonite	-	-
Methodist	8	5
Mormon	1	1
Muslim	*	*
Nazarene	*	1
Pentecostal	2	2
Presbyterian	3	2
Protestant	5	7
Quaker	-	*
Reformed/Dutch Reformed	*	-
Russian Orthodox	*	-
Scientology	-	-

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
Seventh Day Adventist	*	1
Shintoist	*	-
Southern Baptist	1	1
Taoist	-	-
Unitarian	1	*
United Church of Christ	*	*
Wesleyan	*	*
Other Religion [specify]	2	2
Don't know	1	1
37 Would you describe yourself as an EVANGELICAL Christian, or not?		
Yes	25	26
No	75	74
38 Would you describe yourself as a Born-Again Christian, or not?		
Yes	N/A	37
No	N/A	63
39 Which of the following comes closest to your view about deeply religious people:		
They should spread the word of God whenever they can	35	41
They should be very careful about doing this so that they do not offend people	46	37
They should keep their faith a private matter altogether	18	21
Don't know	1	2
40 How often, if ever, do you attend religious services—never, a few times a year, about once a month, nearly every week, every week, or more than once a week?		
Never	13	12
A few times a year	24	25
About once a month	11	13
Nearly every week	14	14
Every week	22	24
More than once a week	15	12
Don't know	*	*

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
41 What is the highest level of school you completed?		
Less than High School	6	5
High School graduate	26	26
Some College or Trade School, no degree	22	24
Associates or 2-year degree	12	11
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	22	22
Graduate degree	13	12
Don't know	-	*
42 What is your age?		
18-34	29	32
35-49*	35	31
50-64*	21	20
65+	15	17
Don't know	*	*
* Note: In 2000, age categories were 35-50 and 51-64, respectively.		
43 Are you white, black or African American, Hispanic, Asian, or something else?		
White	81	75
Black/African American	8	11
Hispanic	6	9
Asian	2	2
Something else	3	4
Don't know	*	-
44 I'm going to read some ranges of annual household income. Please stop me when I read the one that best describes your total household income in [1999/2003].		
\$15,000 or Under	11	11
\$15,001 to 25,000	13	12
\$25,001 to 35,000	16	14
\$35,001 to 50,000	19	19
\$50,001 to 75,000	20	20
Over \$75,000	17	21
Don't know	4	3
Region		
Northeast	20	18
Midwest	24	23
South	35	35
West	22	24

	2000 (n=1,507) %	2004 (n=1,004) %
Urbanicity		
Rural	23	24
Suburban	52	46
Urban	24	30
Gender		
Male	48	47
Female	52	53

Survey Results on “Compromise”

These findings are based on a select number of questions from two national telephone surveys of randomly selected adults aged 18 and older. The tracking survey included 1,004 adults and was conducted between July 28 and August 2, 2004; it averaged 13 minutes in length. The baseline survey, which was published in a 2000 Public Agenda report entitled *For Goodness’ Sake: Why So Many Want Religion to Play a Greater Role in American Life*, included 1,507 adults and was conducted between November 4 and November 25, 2000; it averaged 30 minutes in length. The margin of error for both surveys is plus or minus three percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups. Results of less than 0.5 are signified by an asterisk (*). Results of zero are signified by a dash (-). Responses may not always total 100% due to rounding. Combining answer categories may produce slight discrepancies between the numbers in these survey results and the numbers in the press release.

Sample Sizes:	2000 (n =)	2004 (n =)
General Public	1,507	1,004
Religion		
• Non-Religious	208	180
• Catholic	359	225
• Evangelical	368	228
• Non-evangelical Protestant	444	360
Church Attendance		
• Greater than once a week	230	124
• Once a week	330	237
• Never	194	122

	General Public ('00/'04)	Religion			Church Attendance			
		Catholic	Non-religious	Nonevan Protest	Evangelical	> Once a week	Once a week	Never
2 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to the DEATH PENALTY, do you think that:								
They should base their vote on their own religious views	31/36	24/37	13/18	30/35	46/54	50/60	39/51	15/12
They should be willing to compromise with others whose views are different	60/55	69/54	79/70	61/58	42/37	37/26	52/42	78/80
[Vol.] Depends on their religious views	5/3	3/3	2/6	4/2	7/3	7/5	5/3	3/3
Don't know	4/6	4/7	6/6	5/6	5/6	6/9	4/5	4/5
4 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to POVERTY AND WELFARE, do you think that:								
They should base their vote on their own religious views	24/27	16/28	10/14	22/26	38/39	40/50	28/38	13/11
They should be willing to compromise with others whose views are different	68/66	78/66	84/78	70/67	52/55	47/42	65/54	81/85
[Vol.] Depends on their religious views	5/4	3/2	1/6	4/4	6/2	7/4	5/4	4/2
Don't know	3/3	3/4	5/3	4/2	4/4	6/4	3/5	2/2
6 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to ABORTION, do you think that:								
They should base their vote on their own religious views	35/42	26/42	14/19	33/42	55/61	60/69	41/60	19/17
They should be willing to compromise with others whose views are different	57/51	68/50	81/73	58/52	34/31	25/23	51/32	75/78
[Vol.] Depends on their religious views	5/3	3/2	1/5	5/2	8/3	9/4	5/2	4/4
Don't know	4/4	3/7	5/4	5/4	3/4	6/4	3/6	2/2

	General Public ('00/'04)	Religion			Church Attendance			
		Catholic	Non-religious	Nonevan Protest	Evangelical	> Once a week	Once a week	Never
8 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to GAY RIGHTS, do you think that:								
They should base their vote on their own religious views	31/38	19/37	13/21	30/37	50/53	55/60	36/52	16/14
They should be willing to compromise with others whose views are different	60/54	75/56	79/73	61/55	36/36	30/29	57/39	77/81
[Vol.] Depends on their religious views	4/4	3/2	2/5	4/3	7/6	10/6	4/4	3/2
Don't know	5/4	4/5	6/2	5/5	7/5	6/6	4/5	5/2
10 When elected officials who are deeply religious have to vote on issues related to GAY MARRIAGE IN PARTICULAR, do you think that:								
They should base their vote on their own religious views	-/38	-/37	-/17	-/42	-/54	-/59	-/56	-/12
They should be willing to compromise with others whose views are different	-/53	-/56	-/74	-/52	-/32	-/25	-/35	-/82
[Vol.] Depends on their religious views	-/4	-/2	-/5	-/2	-/7	-/8	-/4	-/2
Don't know	-/5	-/6	-/4	-/5	-/7	-/8	-/5	-/5
<i>Note: This question was not asked in 2000.</i>								
13 How close does this statement come to your own view: Even elected officials who are deeply religious sometimes have to make compromises and set their convictions aside to get results while in government—is this very close, somewhat close, not too close, or not close at all to your own view?								
NET Close	84/74	85/78	85/82	85/73	79/63	75/55	82/63	85/82
Very close	46/38	45/41	56/43	47/38	38/28	35/24	37/29	56/44
Somewhat close	38/37	40/37	29/39	38/37	42/35	40/31	45/34	30/38
Not too close	7/10	6/10	4/4	7/11	9/14	8/17	9/15	3/6
Not close at all	8/14	7/12	8/11	6/13	11/21	15/25	8/20	10/9
Don't know	2/2	2*	3/3	1/3	1/2	2/3	1/2	2/3
27 Do you think that our political system would be threatened if religious leaders and groups were to become a lot more involved in politics, or do you think our political system could easily handle this type of involvement?								
Political system would be threatened	31/33	29/32	56/47	32/30	20/24	20/24	24/25	49/47
Political system could easily handle this	63/61	66/62	38/46	61/62	75/70	73/68	72/69	44/47
Don't know	6/7	5/6	6/7	7/8	6/6	7/8	4/6	8/6

PUBLIC AGENDA



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FOR RELEASE Sunday, January 23, 2005

New Survey Shows Religious Americans Less Likely to Support Compromise

*Elected officials should base votes on abortion, death penalty and gay rights on their religious principles, say most who attend religious services weekly.
Notable shifts in outlook since 2000*

New York City – As public officials continue to wrestle with hot-button issues ranging from abortion to gay rights to the death penalty, they may find thinner ranks of Americans supporting compromise, although slim majorities still do.

Those are some of the findings from a national survey by the nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization **Public Agenda** that compares how Americans' views of religion in public life have changed between the years 2000 and 2004. The survey (conducted before the November election) found a smaller number of Americans who believe that deeply religious elected officials sometimes have to compromise in the political arena, with major decreases among those who attend religious services weekly.

For example, in 2000, 84% of Americans overall said "Even elected officials who are deeply religious sometimes have to make compromises and set their convictions aside to get results while in government." In 2004, that number had dropped to 74%, with even sharper drops among weekly service attenders (82% in 2000 vs. 63% in 2004) and Evangelicals (79% in 2000 vs. 63% in 2004).

On abortion, gay rights and the death penalty, the majority of Americans who attend services weekly now say that deeply religious politicians should stick to their own religious beliefs rather than be willing to compromise (see table on page 2).

"Compromise has a long and important history in American politics," said **Ruth A. Wooden, President of Public Agenda**. "But in 2004, there were more Americans who wanted elected officials to keep their religious principles in mind when they vote on issues like abortion and gay rights. We found double-digit decreases in support for compromise on these issues among those who attend services weekly and among Catholics. The changes are really quite dramatic."

Analysis, complete survey questions and top line data for this research are available at:
http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/religion_2005.pdf

THINNING SUPPORT FOR COMPROMISE

While a majority of Americans still want their elected officials to compromise, their ranks are dissipating – significantly among certain groups.

When asked if they agree with the statement, “Even elected officials who are deeply religious sometimes have to make compromises and set their convictions aside to get results while in government,” Americans said:

	<u>Percent Agreeing</u>		<u>Change</u>
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	
General Public	84%	74%	-10
Attend services once a week	82%	63%	-19
Never go to services	85%	82%	- 3
Catholics	85%	78%	- 7
Non Evangelical Protestants	85%	73%	-12
Evangelicals	79%	63%	-16

ABORTION, GAY RIGHTS AND THE DEATH PENALTY

Support for compromise on specific issues such as abortion, gay rights and the death penalty has dropped to fairly slim majorities. When asked if deeply religious elected officials should vote based on their own religious views or if they should be willing to compromise, Americans said:

General Public:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Be Willing to Compromise</u>			<u>Base Vote on Religious View</u>		
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>
Abortion	57%	51%	-6	35%	42%	+7
Gay rights	60%	54%	-6	31%	38%	+7
Death Penalty	60%	55%	-5	31%	36%	+5
Poverty/welfare	68%	66%	-2	24%	27%	+3

Those who attend services at least once a week or who identify themselves as Catholics showed dramatic shifts in outlook.

Attend Religious Services Once a Week:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Be Willing to Compromise</u>			<u>Base Vote on Religious View</u>		
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>
Abortion	51%	32%	-19	41%	60%	+19
Gay rights	57%	39%	-18	36%	52%	+16
Death Penalty	52%	42%	-10	39%	51%	+12
Poverty/welfare	65%	54%	-11	28%	38%	+10

Catholics:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Be Willing to Compromise</u>			<u>Base Vote on Religious View</u>		
	2000	2004	Change	2000	2004	Change
Abortion	68%	50%	-18	26%	42%	+16
Gay rights	75%	56%	-19	19%	37%	+18
Death Penalty	69%	54%	-15	24%	37%	+13
Poverty/welfare	78%	66%	-12	16%	28%	+12

TIME TO TALK ABOUT COMPROMISE

“For many, compromise is essential in a diverse society,” Ms. Wooden noted about the implications of the study. “But others see compromise as a retreat from core values and beliefs. What this research suggests is that this nation is still struggling with the challenges and benefits of compromising on difficult issues and working through the role of religion in public life.”

THE SYSTEM CAN HANDLE IT, BUT GROWING CONCERN AMONG THE NON-RELIGIOUS

Remaining unchanged since 2000 is Americans’ belief that the U.S. political system can handle greater interaction between religion and politics. Moving away from the topic of *political* leaders and looking at the role of *religious* leaders (such as ministers, rabbis and priests), the research asked Americans whether the system would be threatened if religious leaders and groups got a lot more involved in politics. 63% of Americans in 2000 and 61% in 2004 believed that the political system could “easily handle” this. A third of Americans, however (31% in 2000 and 33% in 2004) continue to believe the system would be threatened.

Not surprisingly, Americans who are non-religious and those who never attend services are far more likely to say the political system would be threatened by religious leaders and groups getting a lot more involved (56% of non-religious Americans in 2000 and 47% of them in 2004; 49% of those who never attend church services agreed in 2000 and 47% of them agreed in 2004). But from 2000 to 2004, there was a significant 6-point increase (22% to 28%) in the number of Americans who think it is a “negative” for religious leaders to take public positions on legislation and to encourage congregations to adopt certain points of view.

AVOIDING OFFENDING OTHERS VS. SPREADING THE WORD OF GOD

Elected officials and clergy aside, in 2000, 18% of Americans said that deeply religious people should keep their faith private and 46% said people should be very careful about “spreading the word of God” so as not to offend others – for a 64% majority. That combined number has dropped to 57%. Meanwhile, the percentage of people who said

that the deeply religious “should spread the word of God whenever they can” is up 6 points (from 35% to 41%).

SUMMARY

This research indicates that in the past four years there has been an across-the-board decline in support for political compromise on some controversial issues, with the decline especially strong among those who attend religious services weekly and those who are Catholic.

Methodology: This analysis is based on two national telephone surveys of randomly selected adults aged 18 and older. The baseline survey, which was published in a 2000 Public Agenda report entitled *For Goodness’ Sake: Why So Many Want Religion to Play a Greater Role in American Life*, included 1,507 adults and was conducted between November 4 and November 25, 2000; it averaged 30 minutes in length. The tracking survey included 1,004 adults and included 359 Catholics, 208 individuals who identify themselves as non-religious, 444 non-Evangelical Protestants, and 368 Evangelicals. Of those surveyed, 230 attend religious services more than once per week, 333 attend once a week, and 194 never attend services. The survey was conducted between July 28 and August 2, 2004; it averaged 13 minutes in length. The margin of error for both surveys is plus or minus three percentage points; it is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups.

The sample was selected through a standard, random-digit-dialing technology whereby every household in the 48 contiguous states had an equal chance of being contacted, including those with unlisted numbers. The surveys were fielded by Robinson and Muenster Associates, Inc., and sample was provided by Survey Sampling, Inc.

The questionnaire was designed by Public Agenda, and Public Agenda is responsible for all interpretation of the data reflected in this analysis. As in all surveys, question order and other non-sampling sources of error can sometimes affect results. Steps were taken to minimize these, including pre-testing the survey instruments and randomizing the order in which some questions and answer categories were read.

The 2004 survey data were weighted by age to ensure that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the national population of adults. The weighting parameters were derived using Census 2000 data. For a comparison of the weighted and unweighted data, please refer to the Complete Survey Results – Religion and Public Life 2000-2004. Until January 23, the results of the survey can be found at http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/religion_2005.pdf. After January 23 they will be available for download at www.publicagenda.org.

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