

FAU Poll Shows Florida Democrats, Republicans And Independents Concerned About Impact Of Climate Change On Future Generations

BOCA RATON, Fla., Feb. 29, 2020

Republican Support for Teaching Climate Change in Schools Jumps

BOCA RATON, Fla., Feb. 29, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Floridians from all major political parties believe climate change is real and are concerned about its impact on future generations in the state, according to the second [Florida Climate Resilience Survey](#), conducted by the [Florida Atlantic University Center for Environmental Studies](#) (CES) in FAU's [Charles E. Schmidt College of Science](#), and the [Business and Economics Polling Initiative](#) (BEPI) in FAU's [College of Business](#).

This quarterly statewide survey shows that 86 percent of Floridians believe climate change is happening, including 81 percent of Republicans, 91 percent of Democrats and 87 percent of Independents.

Overall, 44 percent of Florida Republicans said climate change is largely caused by human activity, compared to 69 percent of Democrats and 51 percent of Independents. Meanwhile, 37 percent of Republicans said climate change is caused by natural changes in the environment, compared to 22 percent of Democrats and 36 percent of Independents.

Age appears to play a role in how Republicans in Florida responded to this question, with those 18-34 years old (52 percent), and those 35-49 years old and 50-64 years old (both at 47 percent), much more likely to say climate change is largely caused by human activity than those 65 and over (31 percent).

"With a strong majority of Floridians [70 percent] saying climate change has them concerned about the well-being of future generations in the state [up slightly from 68 percent in the first [FAU Florida Climate Resilience poll](#) in October 2019], it makes sense that Floridians support policies to tackle the issue," said [Colin Polsky](#), Ph.D., director of the FAU Center for Environmental Studies, and lead author of the study.

For example, 56 percent of Floridians (including 64 percent of Democrats, 57 percent of Independents and 47 percent of Republicans) identify solar as the primary form of energy production that the state should be supporting for the future. This support for solar has risen five points since scoring 51 percent in the first survey.

In addition, 72 percent of Floridians either strongly support or support teaching the causes, consequences and solutions to climate change in the state's K-12 classrooms (up four points from 68 percent in the October poll), including 67 percent of

Republicans (a noticeable 10-point jump from 57 percent in October).

"Floridians believe that our natural resources shape our quality of life," Polsky said. "So, it is not surprising that they support protecting our natural and built landscapes from the negative effects of climate change."

Only 33 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that Florida's government (state, county, and municipal) is already doing enough to address the impacts of climate change. However, that represents a five-point jump from October's poll, fueled by 45 percent of Florida Republicans in January approving of the state's climate change policies to date.

"These trends in climate change approval ratings suggest that Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis' support of environmental issues since taking office in January 2019, which many view as a break from the national GOP, may be paying political dividends already," Polsky said.

The survey was conducted in both English and Spanish from Jan. 7-21. The sample consisted of 1,044 Floridians, 18 years of age and older, with a margin of error of +/- 3.0 percent. The data was collected using an online panel provided by [Dynata](#). Responses for the entire sample were weighted to adjust for gender, race, income, education and region according to recent [U.S. Bureau of the Census](#) data. It is important to remember that subsets carry with them higher margins of error, as the sample size is reduced. For more information, survey results, and full cross-tabulations, visit www.ces.fau.edu/ces-bepi/ or contact Colin Polsky, Ph.D., at cpolsky@fau.edu.

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About FAU CES:

The [Florida Center for Environmental Studies](#) (CES), founded in 1994, is an FAU unit designed to advance Florida's sustainability on wetlands ecology, coastal resilience, and sustainable energy, through strategic research, education, and community engagement activities. To this end, CES employs 13 full-time faculty and staff, several part-time staff, plus a coordinated group of graduate and undergraduate students, actively managing ~\$800k in external grants and contracts each year.

About FAU BEPI: *The [Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative](#) conducts surveys on business, economic, political and social issues with a focus on Hispanic attitudes and opinions at regional, state and national levels via planned monthly national surveys. The initiative subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research and is a resource for public and private organizations, academic research and media outlets. In addition, the initiative is designed to contribute to the educational mission of the University by providing students with valuable opportunities to enhance their educational experience by designing and carrying out public opinion research.*

About Florida Atlantic University: *Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and*

research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.

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