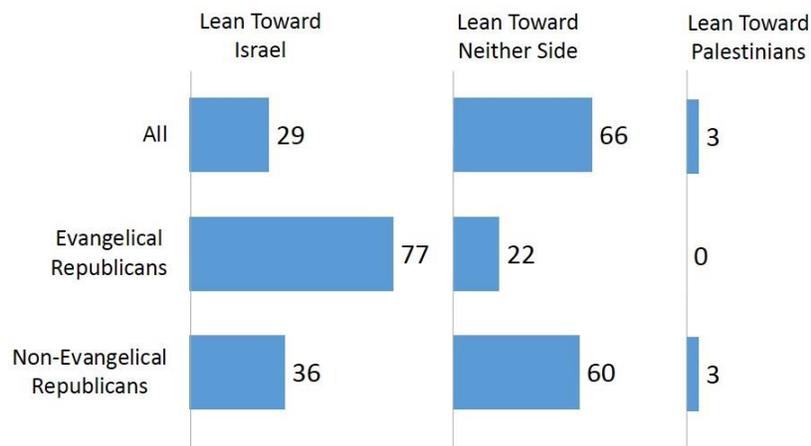


Evangelical Republicans Favor Pro-Israel Policies At Odds With Majority of Americans, Including Non-Evangelical Republicans

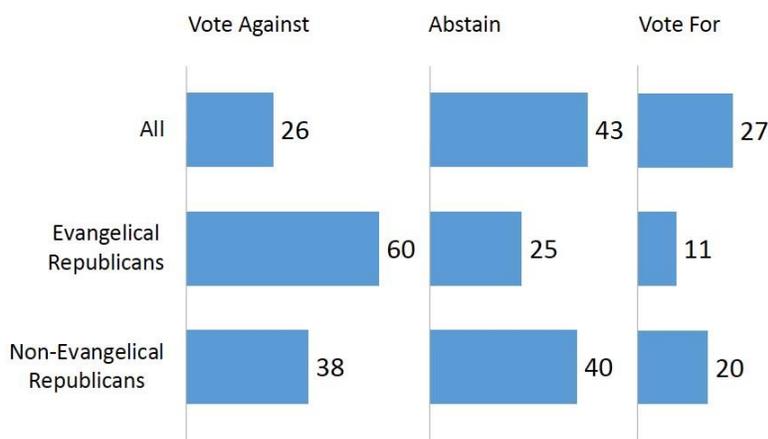
A new poll shows that in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overall, an overwhelming 77% of Evangelical Republicans want the United States to lean toward Israel as compared to 29% to Americans overall and 36% of non-Evangelical Republicans. In contrast 66% of all Americans and 60% of Non-Evangelical Republicans want the United States to lean toward neither side.

In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Should the United States:



This pattern holds on other aspects of US policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. If the UN Security Council considers endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state, only 26% of all Americans and 38% of non-Evangelical Republicans favor the US voting against it. However six in ten Evangelical Republicans say that the US should vote against it, thus vetoing the move.

If the UN Security Council votes on endorsing a Palestinian state, what should the United States do?



Evangelical Republicans also differ in that they pay far more attention to a candidate's position on Israel. When considering which candidate to vote for in Congress or for president just 26% of all Americans and 33% of non-Evangelical Republicans say they consider the candidates position on Israel a lot. Among Evangelical Republicans 64% say they consider it a lot.

Views of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also vary dramatically. Among the general public just 32 percent have a favorable view of Netanyahu, as do 47 percent of non-Evangelical Republicans. Favorable views rise to 66% among Evangelical Republicans.

When asked, in an open-ended question, to name a national leader they most admire 22 percent of Republican Evangelicals chose Netanyahu, far more than any other leader. Among Non-Evangelical Republicans 9 percent named Netanyahu and 6 percent for the public as a whole.

Evangelical Republicans represent 23% of all Republicans and 10% of the general population.

“There are of course partisan differences on Middle East policy in American public attitudes, but what's most striking is that much of the differences between Republicans and the national total disappears once one sets aside Evangelical Republicans, who constitute 10% of all Americans” said Shibley Telhami, the poll's principal investigator. “The Israel issue in American politics is seen to have become principally a Republican issue, but in fact, our results show, it's principally the issue of Evangelical Republicans.”

One possible explanation for Evangelical Republicans' attitudes is their religious views. Sixty-six percent of Evangelical Republicans say that for the rapture or Second Coming to occur it is essential for current-day Israel to include all the land they believe was promised to Biblical Israel in the Old Testament, with 35% holding this view strongly.

The poll was sponsored by the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland, and conducted in cooperation with the University's Program for Public Consultation, and released at the Brookings Institution. It was fielded by Nielsen Scarborough November 4-11, 2015, among a nationally representative sample of online panelists of 875, plus an oversample of Evangelicals/Born-Again Christians of 863. The margin of error is 3-4%.

Other Select Findings:

- Overall, twice as many Americans say the Israeli government has too much influence (37%) than say too little influence (18%), while a plurality (44%) say it's the right level. Among Democrats, about half (49%) say Israel has too much influence, compared with 14% who say Israel has too little influence, and 36% who say it's the right level; Among Republicans, slightly more people say that Israel has too much influence (25%) than say it has too little influence (22%) with a slight majority (52%) saying it's the right level. The percentage of people who think that Israel has too little influence increases with age: 8% of 18-24 year olds feel this way in contrast to 17% of 25-44 year olds, 20% of 45-64 year olds, and 22% of those who are 65 years of age and older.
- Given five options to explain the escalation of Israeli-Palestinian violence the largest number--31%--attributes it to the absence of serious peace diplomacy, while 26% blame continued Israeli occupation and settlement expansion in the West Bank, and the same number blame Palestinian extremists. Only 6% each blame Israeli extremists and Palestinian authority ineffectiveness
- Concerns about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are driven more by considerations related to human right and international law than US interests. Offered five options to explain their concern, the largest number -- 47%-- say human rights or international law, while 32% say America's interest. Thirteen percent say cite religious beliefs, while 8% express concern for Israel's interests.

- Overall, 37% of Americans (and 49% of Democrats) recommend punitive measures against Israel over its settlement policy (27% recommend economic sanctions, and 10% recommend taking more serious action); 31% recommend that the U.S. limits its opposition to words, 27% recommend that the U.S. do nothing.
- American views of Muslims are strikingly partisan. While 67% of Democrats express favorable views of Muslims, only 41% of Republicans do.
- 73% of Evangelicals say that world events will turn against Israel the closer we get to the rapture or end and 78% say that the unfolding violence across the Middle East is a sign that the end times are nearer.

You can find the full results at: www.sadat.umd.edu; and www.Brookings.edu. For further information, contact sadat@umd.edu.