

Pew Survey: GOP Voters Prefer Blunt Talk About Islamists

A new report from Pew Research suggests President Obama's visit to a mosque, praise for Muslims and attacks on Republican politicians for "anti-Muslim rhetoric" may have been a popular move.

But it won't be popular with Republican voters, who prefer to hear blunt talk about Islamists, even if it is directly critical of Islam. The same report found blunt talk is preferred by 65 percent of Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party, while 70 percent of Democrats and independents who lean Democratic express the opposite view, saying the next president should speak carefully about Islamic extremism so as not to criticize Islam as a whole.

The survey also shows that many Americans think a substantial segment of the U.S. Muslim population is anti-American. Eleven percent said "most" or "almost all" U.S. Muslims are anti-American, and 14 percent said "about half" the U.S. Muslim population is anti-American.

Meanwhile 42 percent of those surveyed said "just a few" Muslims, or "none," in the country are anti-American.

Regarding whether or not Americans view Islamist violence as a product of the people or the religion, 68 percent of Americans said the bigger problem is that some violent people use religion to justify their actions. Only 22 percent said the bigger problem is that the teachings of some religions promote violence.

However, among those who said they think religious teachings are the bigger problem, Islam was most often cited as the religion presenting the biggest problem.

Additional key findings in the report included:

GOP Presidential Candidates and Islam: The data showed that among Republican voters who want the next president to speak bluntly about Islamic extremism even if it means being critical of Islam (69 percent of all Republican voters), a solid majority thought that both Donald Trump (63 percent) and Ted Cruz (61 percent) would be good or great presidents.

Views on Discrimination: Most Americans (59 percent) said there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. today. This view is particularly common among Democrats (74 percent); far fewer Republicans and Republican leaners say there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims (42 percent).

Familiarity With Muslims: About half of Americans (52 percent) said they personally know someone who is Muslim. This includes 10 percent who said they know a lot of Muslims, 26 percent who said they know “some” Muslims and 16 percent who said they know one or two Muslims.