

Who Have Evangelicals Supported More: Trump or Romney?

The narrative in the 2016 election, so far, was that evangelicals refuse to support Republican presidential nominee-in-waiting Donald Trump, but a new report from Pew Research has turned that theory on its head.

The report states:

Evangelical voters are rallying strongly in favor of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Indeed, the latest Pew Research Center survey finds that despite the professed wariness toward Trump among many high-profile evangelical Christian leaders, evangelicals as a whole are, if anything, even more strongly supportive of Trump than they were of Mitt Romney at a similar point in the 2012 campaign.

At this time in 2012, Romney had the support of 73 percent of evangelicals; Trump currently has the support of 78 percent. But, even more interesting, of those, 36 percent say they strongly support Trump, a full 10 points higher than for Romney four years ago.

Simultaneously, voters who describe themselves as “atheist,” “agnostic,” or “nothing in particular” religiously appear to be lining up behind Hillary Clinton. She currently has the support of 67 percent of “religious nones,” which is roughly the same as the level of support for President Obama in 2012.

However, her support overall is not as strong as it was for Obama four years ago.

While her support with atheists and agnostics is only one

point lower than the president's was in 2012, that support is less enthusiastic. Four years ago, 37 percent strongly supported Obama, but now only 26 percent strongly support Clinton.

The divide is even greater among evangelical voters. Four years ago, Obama had the support of 21 percent of liberal evangelicals—nine percent strongly—while Clinton has only 17 percent support (6 percent strongly).

The Pew Research report explains the significance of these numbers:

Considering both groups are quite large, the votes of white evangelical Protestants and religious “nones” could be important to the outcome of the 2016 election. White evangelical Protestants make up one-fifth of all registered voters in the U.S. and roughly one-third of all voters who say they identify with or lean toward the Republican Party. Religious “nones,” who have been growing rapidly as a share of the U.S. population, now constitute one-fifth of all registered voters and more than a quarter of Democratic and Democratic-leaning registered voters.