

# Number of Americans Willing to Vote for 'Godless' President Is on the Rise

Atheists are still the most mistrusted group in the U.S., and a godless politician is still the least likely candidate to win votes in a presidential election.

True, 53 percent of Americans said they are least likely to choose a candidate who doesn't believe in God, according to a survey conducted in April. But in 2007, that number was 63 percent.

And those who said a candidate's lack of belief didn't matter to their vote rose, from 32 percent in 2007 to 41 percent today.

Only two other categories of candidates showed a sharper shift toward more favorable views: gay or lesbian candidates, and candidates over age 70.

A 2006 study by University of Minnesota sociologist Penny Edgell found atheists were the most mistrusted minority in the U.S. Edgell said Tuesday that an updated study based on a 2014 online survey would be released soon. Preliminary results show the mistrust meter hasn't budged.

Alec Tyson, research associate at Pew Research Center, said the Pew survey did not ask people whether they had close friends or family who are atheist.

Other social shifts may also have had an effect. Recent Pew surveys have shown more people say that churches should stay out of politics and that there is "too much religious expression" by politicians.

---

*Copyright 2014 Religion News Service. All rights reserved. No part of this transmission may be distributed or reproduced without written permission.*