

washingtonpost.com

Atheist, Muslim Candidates Worry Voters

Advertisement

The Associated Press

Sunday, September 9, 2007, 1:26 PM

WASHINGTON -- One in four people in the U.S. said in a recent poll that they would be less likely to support a presidential candidate who is Mormon, an ominous sign for Republican contender Mitt Romney.

Yet the survey found two groups, atheists and Muslims, were even less likely to win votes.

Sixty-one percent of those questioned said they would be less likely to support a presidential candidate who did not believe in God. Forty-five percent said the same for a Muslim contender.

Only 5 percent or fewer said they would be likelier to support candidates who were atheists, Muslims or Mormons, according to the poll by two nonpartisan research groups, the Pew Research Center and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

In a measurement that might affect Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., 12 percent of those surveyed said they would be less likely to support a woman. Fifteen percent said they would be likelier.

Six percent said they would be less likely to support a black candidate and 9 percent said they would be likelier, which may affect the run by Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

In other findings:

_16 percent said they would be less likely to support an evangelical Christian candidate, though 19 percent said they would be likelier to support one;

_11 percent said they would be less likely to support a Jewish contender, while 9 percent said they would be likelier;

_7 percent would be less likely to support a Catholic and 13 percent would be likelier;

_15 percent would be less likely to support a Hispanic and 9 percent likelier.

Republicans were likelier than Democrats to express concerns about voting for an atheist, Muslim or a woman, while more Democrats than Republicans said they would be less likely to support an evangelical Christian. The party breakdown for the other traits was about even.

The poll was conducted Aug. 1-18 and involved telephone interviews with 3,002 randomly chosen adults. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 2 percentage points.

© 2007 The Associated Press