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FAU Poll Finds Climate Change Still is Important Topic for Floridians in Era of Coronavirus

More Republicans Believe in the Issue, But Residents Wary of State Response

BOCA RATON, Fla. (June 25, 2020) – The coronavirus crisis has not altered Floridians’ belief in climate change, according to the third [Florida Climate Resilience Survey](#) by the Florida Atlantic University [Center for Environmental Studies](#) and the [Business and Economics Polling Initiative](#) (CES-BEPI).

The quarterly statewide survey shows that 89 percent of respondents believe climate change is happening, up from 86 percent in January and 88 percent in October 2019. The latest CES-BEPI survey polled 1,319 Floridians from April 1-13 and from May 4-10, when many of the state’s residents were under stay-at-home orders due to the pandemic.

“Almost overnight, the coronavirus dramatically transformed American life, but it’s encouraging to see that climate change remained a hot button issue for Floridians despite the public health crisis that shifted everyone’s priorities,” said Colin Polsky, Ph.D., director of the FAU Center for Environmental Studies, and lead author of the study.

Floridians’ belief in climate change was considerably higher than a record-tying level of support Americans have for the problem of global warming. In an April survey by Yale and George Mason universities, 73 percent of respondents agreed that global warming is occurring.

Meanwhile, 55 percent of Floridians say that humans are causing climate change, a level consistent with the two previous CES-BEPI surveys.

The latest poll also showed that Floridians remain unimpressed with the state government’s response to climate change, with 29 percent of respondents believing the government is doing enough to combat the issue. This is lower than the 33 percent from the January survey and similar to October’s 28 percent.

While Democrats in the Sunshine State still appear to believe in climate change more than their Republican counterparts (89 percent versus 86 percent), the issue is gaining ground among Republicans. In the latest poll, the Republican percentage was higher than it was in January (81 percent) and October (83 percent).

“Because Florida is a political bellwether state, this solidifying of public opinion among Florida Republicans about the reality of climate change may signal a similar change in coming years for the GOP across the nation,” Polsky said.

CES is part of FAU’s [Charles E. Schmidt College of Science](#), while BEPI is in FAU’s [College of Business](#).

The data was collected using an online panel provided by Dynata. The margin of error was +/- 2.7 percent. Responses for the entire sample were weighted to adjust for age, race, income, education and region, according to recent U.S. Bureau of the Census data. It is important to remember that subsets carry with them higher margins of error because the sample size is reduced. For more information, survey results and full cross-tabulations, visit www.ces.fau.edu/ces-bepi/ or contact Polsky at cpolsky@fau.edu.

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About FAU CES:

The Florida Center for Environmental Studies (CES), founded in 1994, is an FAU unit designed to advance Florida’s sustainability on wetlands ecology, coastal resilience, and sustainable energy, through strategic research, education, and community engagement activities. To this end, CES employs 13 full-time faculty and staff, several part-time staff, plus a coordinated group of graduate and undergraduate students, actively managing ~\$800k in external grants and contracts each year.

About FAU BEPI:

The Florida Atlantic University Business and Economic Polling Initiative conducts surveys on business, economic, political and social issues with a focus on Hispanic attitudes and opinions at regional, state and national levels via planned monthly national surveys. The initiative subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research and is a resource for public and private organizations, academic research and media outlets. In addition, the initiative is designed to contribute to the educational mission of the University by providing students with valuable opportunities to enhance their educational experience by designing and carrying out public opinion research.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.