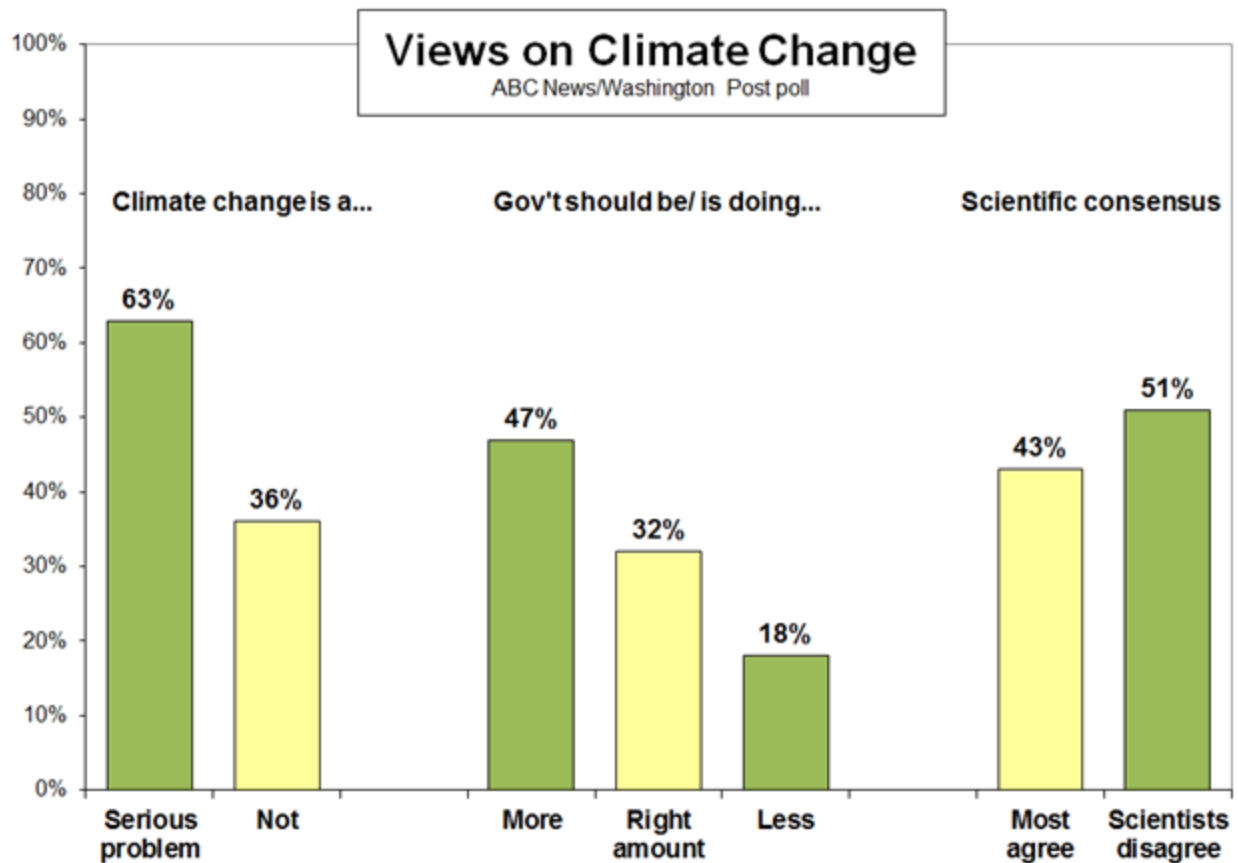


Two in Three Call Climate Change Serious; Many Still See Scientific Disagreement

Nearly two-thirds of Americans call climate change a serious problem facing the United States, with more than half calling it very serious. But those numbers have slipped in the past year and a half, marking lingering doubts about the issue's severity among a minority of adults.

Underscoring that doubt, just 43 percent in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll think most scientists agree that global warming is happening. While that's a new high in polls back nearly 20 years, 51 percent still think there's a lot of disagreement among scientists on the issue.

It makes a difference, because people who think that scientists agree about the issue are far more likely than others also to see climate change as a serious problem and to support additional action by the federal government to address it.



As things stand, a new low, 47 percent, say the federal government should do more than it is doing now to try to deal with global warming, down from a high of 70 percent under the Bush administration eight years ago. This likely reflects increased action on the issue under the Obama administration; indeed more, 32 percent, say the government is doing the right amount, up 11 points. Many fewer say it's doing too much – 18 percent, also up 11 points.

This survey, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), was conducted in advance of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris this week. It finds that 63 percent of Americans see climate change as a serious issue, with 52 percent saying it's very serious.

Those numbers have declined by 6 and 5 points, respectively, from an ABC/Post poll in June 2014. Thirty-six percent say climate change is not a serious problem at all, up 7 points.

Public assessments of the issue may be impacted by more immediate concerns about terrorism, given the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris. Questions on climate change in this poll directly followed questions about terrorism, and some respondents may have seen climate change as less pressing in comparison.

Regardless, views on scientific consensus are important. Among those who think most scientists agree on climate change, 84 percent call it a serious problem, 74 percent call it very serious and 65 percent think the government should do more to address it. Among those who think there's a lot of disagreement among scientists, these numbers fall to 46, 33 and 33 percent, respectively.

	Serious problem		Gov't should do		
	Very/Smwht	Very	More	Same	Less
Think most scientists agree (43%)	84%	74	65%	26	6
See a lot of disagreement (51%)	46	33	33	37	29

POLITICAL SPLIT – Opinions on the issue remain highly politicized. Eight in 10 Democrats call climate change a serious problem, as do 62 percent of independents; this drops to 43 percent among Republicans. Fifty-seven percent of Democrats think most scientists agree on the issue, while two-thirds of Republicans feel the opposite.

Just 22 percent of Republicans favor additional government action on the issue, compared with 47 percent of independents and two-thirds of Democrats. Still, even among Republicans, just a third say the government should be doing less than it is now to try to address the issue.

GROUPS – Results are similar among ideological groups, with concern highest among liberals, lowest among strong conservatives. Among other groups, concerns about climate change are higher among 18- to 29-year-olds; 76 percent in this group call it a serious problem and 64 percent favor more government action to address it, compared with 56 and 39 percent, respectively, of those 50 and older. Concerns also are higher among nonwhites than whites, a result that follows partisan patterns (nonwhites are much less apt to identify with the Republican Party).

Evangelical white Protestants – generally a conservative Republican group – are especially skeptical about climate change, with 63 percent saying it’s not a serious problem and 67 percent saying there’s no agreement among scientists. Even in this group, however, a minority, 37 percent, want the government to do less to address it.

Conversely, concern peaks among non-religious adults: Seventy-five percent in this group say the environment is a serious concern, 61 percent want more government action to handle it and 61 percent think scientists agree on climate change.

Catholics are in the middle of these two groups; 68 percent call climate change a serious problem. Compared with June 2014 there are no significant changes among Catholics in this view, despite Pope Francis’s encyclical on environmental issues last spring.

Indeed, compared with 2007, Catholics are 32 percentage points less likely to favor additional government action, 19 points more apt to prefer the current level of action, and 12 points more likely to say the government should do less. The decline in support for more government action is steeper among Catholics than among all other adults.

There is a wide gap between college graduates and those without a degree in the sense that most scientists agree on the issue – 55 percent of graduates say so vs. 38 percent of non-graduates. At the same time, given political and ideological influences, there are no substantive differences between these two groups in views on the seriousness of climate change or government action to address it.

	Serious problem			--- Gov. action ---			Scientists...	
	NET	Very	Not	More	Right	Less	Agree	Disagree
All	63%	52	36	47%	32	18	43%	51
Democrats	81	72	18	65	28	4	57	37
Independents	62	49	37	47	30	22	44	52
Republicans	43	28	57	22	41	32	28	68
Liberals	89	77	10	71	22	5	63	31
Moderates	67	54	32	51	37	11	47	49
Conservatives NET	41	31	58	25	35	38	25	70
Somewhat cons.	44	35	53	32	39	28	28	70
Very cons.	36	25	64	17	30	50	22	69
18-29	76	63	23	64	27	7	52	45
50+	56	45	42	38	34	25	36	57
Whites	56	46	43	43	32	24	41	55
Nonwhites NET	78	63	21	53	33	7	46	45
Non-grads	64	52	35	46	32	19	38	56
College grads NET	63	52	36	48	33	17	55	42
Post-grads	74	62	26	58	28	11	64	29
Protestants:	55	43	44	37	38	22	35	61
Evangelical	48	38	50	32	39	26	29	64
Non-evangelical	62	51	37	44	36	18	42	55
Catholics	68	52	31	46	35	16	42	48

No religion	75	63	25	61	26	11	61	37
Evangelical white Protestants	35	25	63	22	38	37	26	67

In terms of change over time, the decline in those wanting the government to do more is spread evenly across the political spectrum. However, compared with 2007, Democrats are 17 points more apt to say the government is doing the right amount; Republicans and independents, respectively, are 19 and 13 points more likely to say it's doing too much.

The sense that most scientists agree on the issue, at 43 percent, is up from a low of 30 percent in early 1998 and up from 36 percent when last asked in late 2009. It's up by about 10 points since 2009 among independents and Republicans, while essentially unchanged among Democrats.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Nov. 16-19, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 33-23-36 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y. See details on the survey's methodology here.

Analysis by Margaret Tyson and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1-24, 28 previously released.

Changing topics,

25. Do you think global warming, also known as climate change, is a serious problem facing this country, or not a serious problem? (IF SERIOUS) Would you say it's a very serious problem, or a problem but not a very serious one?

	----- Serious -----			Not a serious	No
	NET	Very	Not very	problem	opinion
11/19/15	63	52	12	36	1
6/1/14	69	57	12	29	2

26. Do you think the federal government should do more than it's doing now to try to deal with global warming, should do less than it's doing now, or is it doing about the right amount? (IF MORE) Should it do much more or somewhat more? (IF LESS) Should it do much less or somewhat less?

	----- More -----			Right	----- Less -----			No
	NET	Much	Somewhat	amount	NET	Somewhat	Much	opinion
11/19/15	47	32	14	32	18	8	11	3
7/28/08	61	40	21	27	10	4	6	2

4/10/07	70	49	20	21	7	2	5	2
3/14/06	68	46	22	25	5	2	3	1

*2008, ABC/Planet Green/Stanford University; 2007, ABC/Post/Stanford; 2006,

27. Do you think (most scientists agree with one another) about whether or not global warming is happening, or do you think (there is a lot of disagreement among scientists) on this issue?

	Most agree	A lot of disagreement	No opinion
11/19/15	43	51	6
12/13/09	36	62	2
7/28/08*	39	57	4
4/10/07	40	56	3
3/14/06	35	64	1
2/13/98	30	67	3
10/5/97	35	62	3

*2008, ABC/Planet Green/Stanford University; 2007, ABC/Post/Stanford; 2006, ABC/Time/Stanford; 1998 and 1997, Ohio State University.

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