

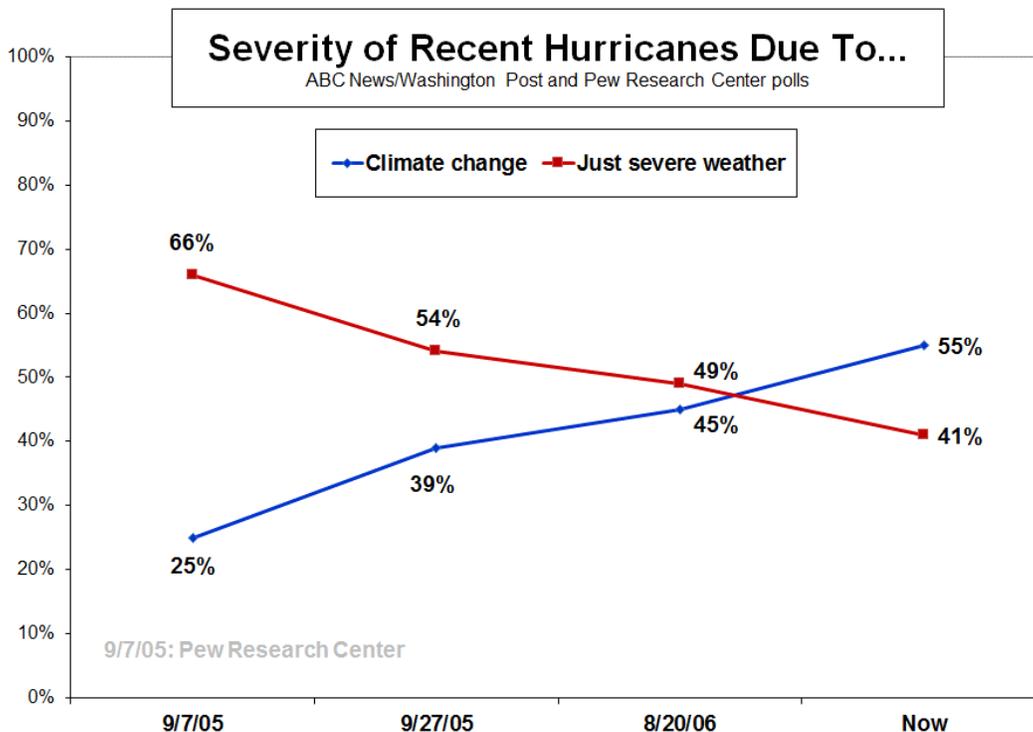
Most Now See Climate Change As Responsible for Hurricane Severity

More than half of Americans now see climate change as responsible for the severity of recent hurricanes – an about-face from 12 years ago, when most attributed it to happenstance.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post poll finds a near-universal shift in this direction, even among formerly skeptical groups, albeit with smaller gains among Republicans and Republican-leaning groups.

In a Pew poll in early September 2005, shortly after Hurricane Katrina, just a quarter of Americans thought climate change likely was responsible for its severity. Two-thirds said it was more likely “just the kind of severe weather that happens from time to time.”

As the storm’s impact became clear, more, 39 percent, blamed climate change just weeks later, and this moved to a near-even 45-49 percent by 2006. It’s flipped entirely in the ensuing decade: In this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), 55 percent mainly blame climate change, vs. 41 percent happenstance.



The shift is highly partisan. Seventy-eight percent of Democrats, whose party made combating climate change part of its 2016 election platform, mainly blame climate change for hurricane severity, a 47-percentage-point increase from 2005. So do 56 percent of independents, a 27-point increase. By contrast, after an 8-point bump in the weeks following the devastation of Katrina, there's been essentially no change among Republicans, with about a quarter blaming climate change in late September 2005, 2006 and 2017 alike.

That's particularly notable in light of large swings among other groups such as college graduates (61 percent, vs. 22 percent in early September 2005) toward climate change as the main cause, as well as smaller but significant increases among many others.

	% saying climate change is responsible		
	Sept. 2017	Early Sept. 2005	Diff.
All	55%	25%	+30 pts.
College graduates	61	22	+39
Non-graduates	52	26	+26
Democrats	78	31	+47
Republicans	23	16	+7
Independents	56	29	+27
Liberals	83	34	+49
Moderates	58	25	+33
Conservatives	30	20	+10
White evangelical Protestants	25	17	+8
No religion	68	29	+39
Among whites:			
Men, no college	32	19	+13
Women, no college	50	24	+26
Men, college degree	49	15	+34
Women, college degree	63	24	+39

Mostly Republican-leaning groups are more apt to point to normal weather events rather than climate change as the cause of recent hurricane severity, including conservatives, evangelical white Protestants and white men who lack a college degree – all groups that have seen comparatively little change since 2005.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Sept. 18-21, 2017, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 31-23-36 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 Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Sofi Sinozich.

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

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Full results follow.

1-10, 12-29 previously released.

11. Do you think the severity of recent hurricanes is most likely (the result of global climate change), or is it (just the kind of severe weather events that happen from time to time)?

	Climate change	Just happens	No opinion
9/21/17	55	41	5
8/20/06**	45	49	5
9/27/05	39	54	7
9/7/05*	25	66	9

**"recent hurricanes like Katrina"

*Pew Research Center, "Hurricane Katrina"

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