



**Reaction to Harriet Miers' Nomination**  
*Less Support for Miers than for Roberts*

Nearly two weeks after the announcement of the selection of Harriet Miers to replace retiring Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, controversy continues to surround the nomination. Recent polling, conducted October 6-10, 2005, by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press indicates that much of the public remains undecided about whether or not to support the Miers appointment. Even evangelical Christians, who typically support President Bush, are lukewarm in their response to the Miers nomination.

Overall, one-in-three Americans (33%) say that the Senate should confirm Miers to the Supreme Court and 27% say that she should not be confirmed. A plurality (40%) expresses no opinion on this question. White evangelicals are more supportive of Miers' nomination than are non-evangelical Protestants, white Catholics or seculars. But almost as many evangelicals (41%) are unsure of whether or not Miers should be confirmed as express support for her nomination (43%).

<b>Indecision on Whether Senate Should Confirm Miers</b>			
	Should <u>confirm</u>	Should <u>not confirm</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
	%	%	%
All	33	27	40=100
White Protestant	40	21	39=100
Evangelical	43	16	41=100
Non-evangelical	36	26	38=100
White Catholic	32	31	37=100
Secular	21	31	48=100

There is less public support for Miers' confirmation than there was for the confirmation of John Roberts as Chief Justice earlier this year.

In polling conducted in mid-September, just prior to Senate hearings on the Roberts nomination, the Pew Research Center found that 46% of Americans said that Roberts should be confirmed by the Senate, substantially higher than the 33% who currently support the confirmation of Miers. Only about one-in-five (21%) opposed the confirmation of Roberts, compared with 27% who express opposition to the Miers nomination. This pattern holds across religious groups. Among evangelicals, for instance, a substantial majority (59%) supported the confirmation of Roberts, while fewer than half (43%) currently express support for Miers.

Much of the controversy over the Miers nomination has centered on Miers' judicial experience, as opposed to her ideology or judicial philosophy. A majority of the public (56%) says they don't worry about Miers' ideology at all. Fewer than one-in-five Americans (18%) say they worry that she will make the court too conservative, and even fewer (8%) worry that Miers will make the court not conservative enough. Even among evangelicals, who tend to be politically conservative, only 13% say they worry that Miers will make the court not conservative enough.

<b>Public Not Worried About Miers' Ideology</b>				
	<i>Worry that Miers will make the Court...</i>			
	<u>Too conserv- ative</u>	<u>Not con- servative enough</u>	<u>Don't worry about this</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
	%	%	%	%
All	18	8	56	18=100
White Protestant	15	10	59	16=100
Evangelical	7	13	63	17=100
Non-evangelical	24	7	54	15=100
White Catholic	19	8	58	15=100
Secular	27	4	48	21=100

Polling also indicates that the public is largely unaffected by Miers' personal religious beliefs. A large majority (61%) say that the fact that Miers is an evangelical Christian has no effect on their feelings about her. Only one-in-five (20%) say that Miers' Christianity makes them feel more favorably toward her, and even fewer (14%) say they feel less favorably about her because she is an evangelical. Not surprisingly, evangelicals, much more than other groups, say that Miers' evangelicalism makes them feel more favorably toward her. But even among this group, nearly as many (44%) say that Miers' religion has no effect on their views as say her religion makes them feel more favorably toward her (49%).

<b>Public's Feelings Unaffected by Miers' Religion</b>				
	<i>Does the fact that Miers is an evangelical Christian make you feel...</i>			
	<u>More Favorably</u>	<u>Less Favorably</u>	<u>No Effect</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
	%	%	%	%
All	20	14	61	5=100
White Protestant	31	10	54	5=100
Evangelical	49	3	44	4=100
Non-evangelical	10	18	66	6=100
White Catholic	7	16	75	2=100
Secular	10	26	56	8=100

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life provides opinion leaders with timely, impartial information on issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs. As an independent, nonpartisan and non-advocacy organization, the Forum does not take positions on policy debates. The Forum functions as both a clearinghouse and a town hall. As a clearinghouse, it gathers and disseminates reliable information through polls and reports. As a town hall, it provides a neutral venue for discussion of important issues of religion and public life. Based in Washington, DC, the Forum is a project of the Pew Research Center and is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. For more information, visit [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org).