

2020 Index Summary

In its second year, the Religious Freedom Index gives a unique look into American public opinion on First Amendment freedoms. The Index’s focus on core religious liberty principles, contextualized with questions on some of the year’s most pressing societal issues, provides a yearly cross section of public sentiment on the intersection of law, religion, and culture.

Survey Instrument

21

Index Questions –
Same questions every year

50+

Additional Questions –
Change to ask about timely topics

n=1,000

Sample Size –
*Nationally representative of
American adults*

2020 Findings

1 Americans weather storms anchored by faith:

Americans are anchored in their opinions on religious freedom, just as religion sustains them through difficult times.

2 Religious identity cannot be quarantined:

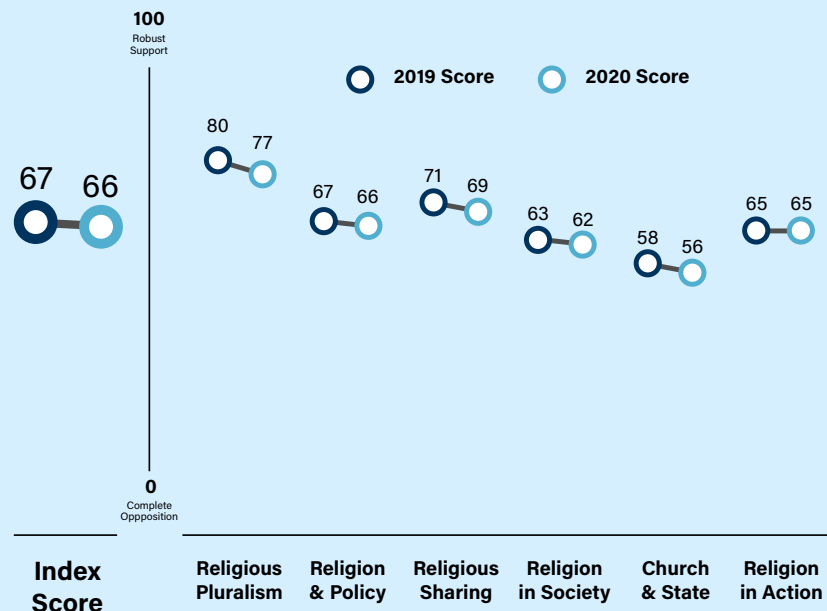
Religion is part of who Americans are, not just something they do. Respondents support protections that reflect the reality of religious identity.

3 Leadership gaps in defending racial justice and religious freedom:

In two areas—religious communities advocating for racial justice and elected officials prioritizing religious freedom—the Index reveals a significant leadership gap.

Index Results

The Index questions track responses across six dimensions of religious freedom on scale of 0 to 100, where 0 indicates complete opposition to principles of religious freedom and 100 indicates robust support. The average of these dimensions creates the **composite Index score**, which is **66** in this year’s edition—indicating continued strong support.

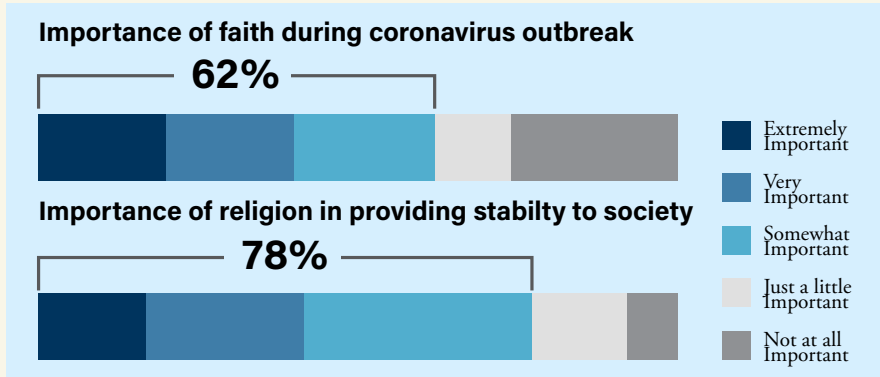


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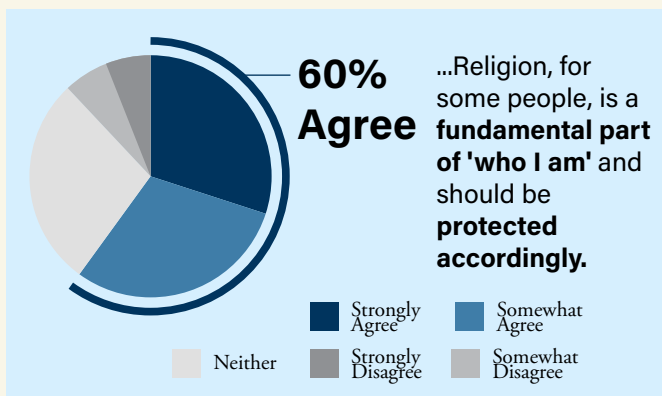
Americans relied on religion to navigate the challenges of 2020, fueling continued support for religious freedom across the board.

62% of respondents said that faith or religion was important to them during the outbreak.

More than three quarters of respondents said that religion is important to providing stability to society during times of social unrest.



Religious identity cannot be quarantined:



The Index finds evidence that Americans understand religion as a facet of identity, helping to explain opposition to policies that treat it as a mere hobby or activity.

60% agreed that religion, for some people, is a fundamental part of 'who I am' and should be protected accordingly.

A majority of respondents said that houses of worship should be treated with at least the same priority as reopening businesses during the pandemic.

Leadership gaps in defending racial justice and religious freedom

The Index identified two areas where respondents cared deeply about an issue but didn't find the engagement they desired from leaders—racial justice and religious freedom public policy.

More than 4 out of 5 respondents who said faith was important also think that religious organizations and people should have a role in advocating for racial equality and justice.

But less than half of that group think their faith community is doing a good job of responding to issues of racial equality and justice.

More than 3 in 5 registered voters said a candidate's stance on religious freedom was an important factor in their voting decisions this year. However, they also chose unelected officials in the courts as the best protectors of religious freedom.

