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ORTHODOX JEWISH POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS SEPTEMBER 2023

(Report available at <http://nishmaresearch.com/social-research.html>)

MODERN ORTHODOX AND HAREDI JEWS DIFFER SHARPLY IN THEIR POLITICAL PREFERENCES, VIEWS, ISSUES OF CONCERN, AND HOW THEY PLAN TO VOTE IN 2024

A new survey explores the political views of American Orthodox Jewry, among both the Modern Orthodox and Haredi sectors. The survey of 1,224 Haredim and 1,257 Modern/Centrist Jews analyzes attitudes that affect political leanings and tests the conventional wisdom that the leanings have shifted toward the Republican Party in recent years. Among the key findings:

- Over the past forty years, Modern Orthodox Jews have tended to vote Democratic in national elections and Haredim have tended to vote overwhelmingly Republican.
- That trend is likely to continue in 2024, as 90% of Haredi Jews plan to vote for the Republican presidential candidate, while 61% of Modern Orthodox plan to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate.
- Combining the Modern Orthodox and the Haredi sectors, the survey finds that Orthodox Jews overall—in contrast to other Jews in the United States—lean heavily toward the Republican presidential candidate by a wide 74%-to-26% margin.
- At the same time, the disparity between the Modern Orthodox and the Haredi sectors shows that Orthodox Jews give voice to the same kind of polarized political attitudes that are seen nationally between Democrats and Republicans.
- Haredi and Modern Orthodox Jews agree that the economy, Israel, and antisemitism are key issues. But they diverge on other issues: Haredim see crime, schools (including the freedom of religious schools), and religious freedom as important; while Modern Orthodox see the state of American democracy, health care, and foreign affairs (other than those related to Israel) as important.
- While Orthodox Jews share a view that the United States has been hospitable to Jews, substantial majorities see the country as currently headed in the wrong direction.
- The COVID pandemic has had political ramifications. 60% of Haredi and 31% of Modern Orthodox say that COVID shifted their attitudes about government toward a more distrustful and skeptical stance. These views correspond to a substantial shift (in the range of 20%) in 2024 voting plans toward the Republican presidential candidate.

This survey was initiated and sponsored by Prof. David Myers, the Sady and Ludwig Chair of Jewish History at UCLA and co-founder of the Haredi Research Group (<https://www.harediresearchgroup.org/>), established in 2022 to advance the study of the Haredi Jewish community. Prof Myers notes: “This study offers us much-needed longitudinal data on Orthodox political attitudes and voting patterns. While noting the growing demographic import of Orthodox Jews, it challenges the idea of a single Orthodox voting bloc by showing that Modern Orthodox and Haredi Jews have quite different political attitudes, sources of political information, views on the 2020 election and the January 6 events at the Capitol, and plans for the 2024 election.”

Nishma Research collaborated on this effort, and Mark Trencher notes: “While there are substantial research challenges involved in surveying the Haredi community, its members are increasingly eager to make their voices heard, and we appreciate the strong response to this study. We plan to conduct future research in these communities.”

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