

A SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE  
POLICY PUBLICATION

**Issue Brief:**

# **Views on Religion**

**New survey data profiles Utahns' views on  
religion and religious freedom**



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For more information about this survey or the work of Sutherland Institute, contact us:

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Y<sup>2</sup> Analytics conducted the survey highlighted in this report.

#### **METHODOLOGY DETAILS**

n = 642

Online interviews fielded May 1 – 28, 2024

Margin of error +- 3.9

For this survey, likely Utah voters were sampled from the Utah state voter file. Survey invitations were sent via email and text message, and interviews were completed online. The data were weighted to reflect the demographics of likely voters in the Utah 2024 general election, specifically in regard to gender, age, race, political party registration, and probability of voting in the election.

Before drawing the sample, a model of general election turnout was estimated using age, party registration status, length of registration, permanent absentee status, and past election turnout. This model produces a sampling pool of registered voters that can be randomly sampled based on their likelihood of voting. A Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) sample was drawn using this predicted turnout estimate such that voters with a higher probability of voting have a higher probability of being selected in the sample. Thus, the final sample accurately approximates a population of general election voters.

For more information about survey methodology, please contact Kyrene Gibb or Quin Monson at:

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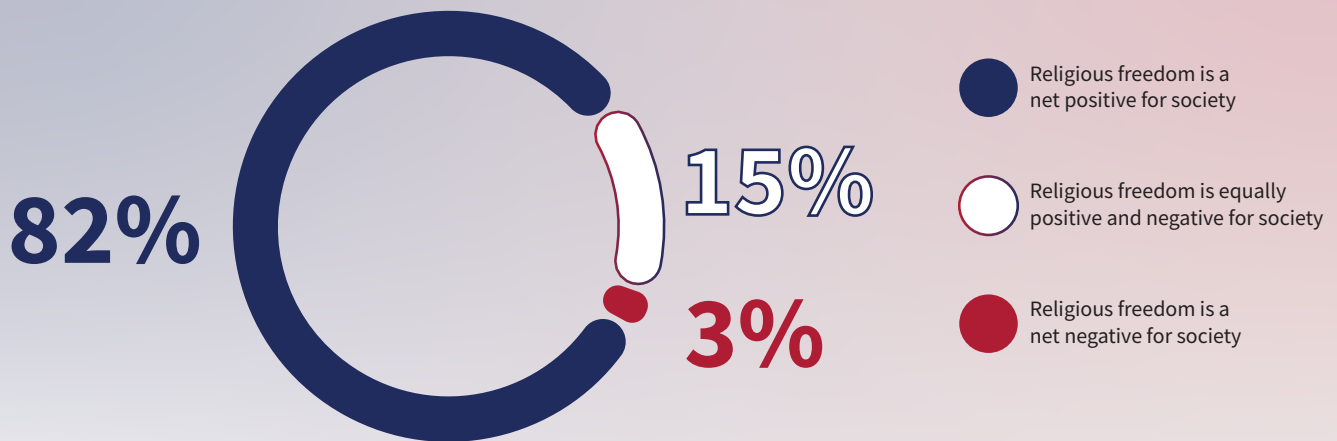
## Views on Religion

A new Sutherland Institute/Y<sup>2</sup> Analytics survey found that most likely voters in Utah (82%) believe religious freedom is a net positive for society.

Methodology: 642 Utah likely voters were selected via email and text messages and then interviewed online between May 1 and 28, 2024. Data were weighted to reflect demographics of likely voters in the Utah 2024 general election, with a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points.

### The overwhelming majority of likely Utah voters believe religious freedom is good for society.

The overwhelming broad support for religious freedom is encouraging, though not universal. 15% of respondents believe religious freedom has equally positive and negative effects, while only 3% think it is negative for society.



A vast majority of likely voters in Utah believe that religious freedom is a net positive for society

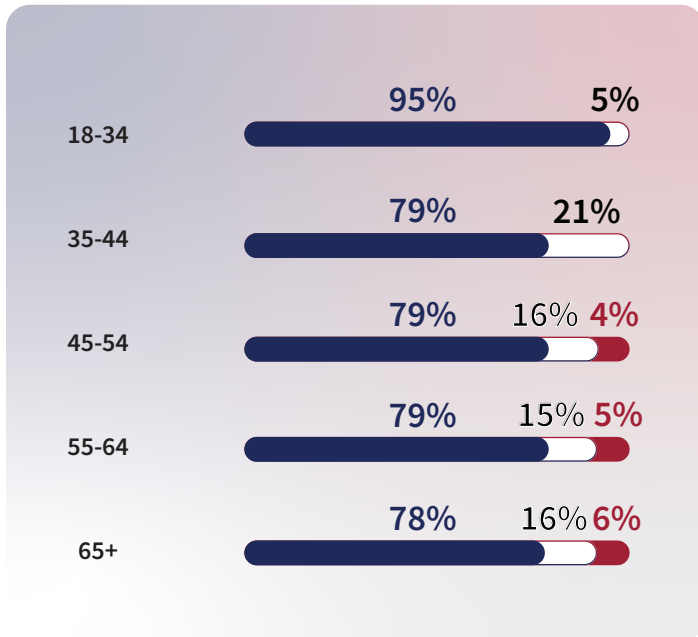
Support for religious freedom varies somewhat when broken out by political ideology, age, and level of religiosity. The survey also asked whether religious freedom in Utah has a sufficient level of legal protection. These additional breakouts are shown below.

**Religious freedom is a net positive for society**

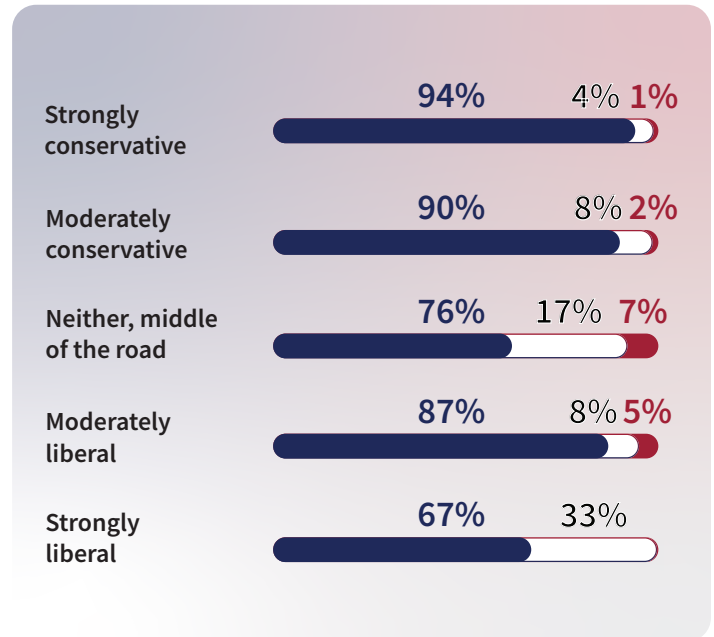
**Religious freedom is equally positive and negative for society**

**Religious freedom is a net negative for society**

**Age**

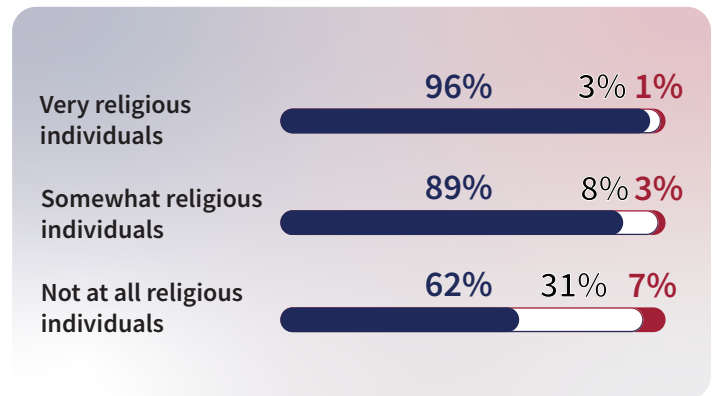


**Ideology**



While it may not be surprising that conservative voters support religious freedom in overwhelming proportions, “moderately liberal” voters were very close in their support (87%). While all groups gave strong support, the lowest percentages were from “extremely liberal” and “middle of the road” voters. Strongly liberal voters might have slightly less positive perceptions of religious freedom due to a common criticism that it provides a license to discriminate. It is not clear why centrists are less likely than moderate liberals or conservatives to believe religious liberty is good for society (again, their support is still very high).

**Religiosity**



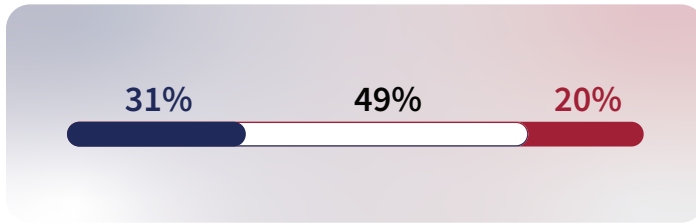
A surprising finding is that the strongest support came from younger voters, with 95% seeing religious freedom as a net positive. More significant differences in attitudes were noted when the religiosity (determined by religious activity, participation in prayer and study of religious texts, and church attendance) was taken into account. Again, all were very supportive, but there was a large gap between those who are “not at all religious” (62%) compared with those who are “somewhat” (89%) or “very” (96%). It seems likely that those who are more likely to practice religion are also more likely to have experienced or at least perceived opposition to their beliefs and are thus more sensitive to the vulnerability of people of faith to disparate treatment based on beliefs.

 Religious freedom is not protected enough

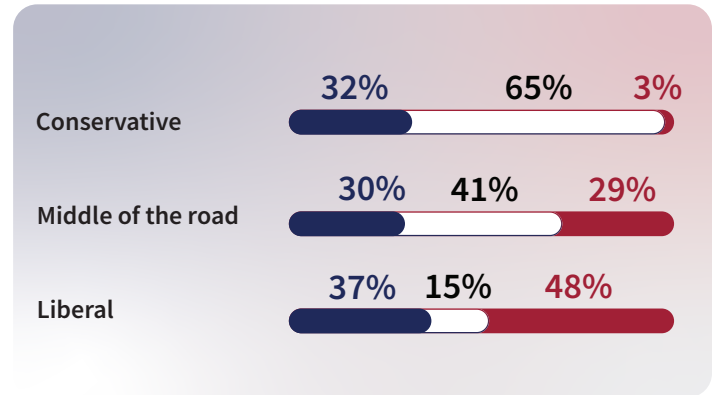
 Religious freedom is protected about the right amount

 Religious freedom is too protected

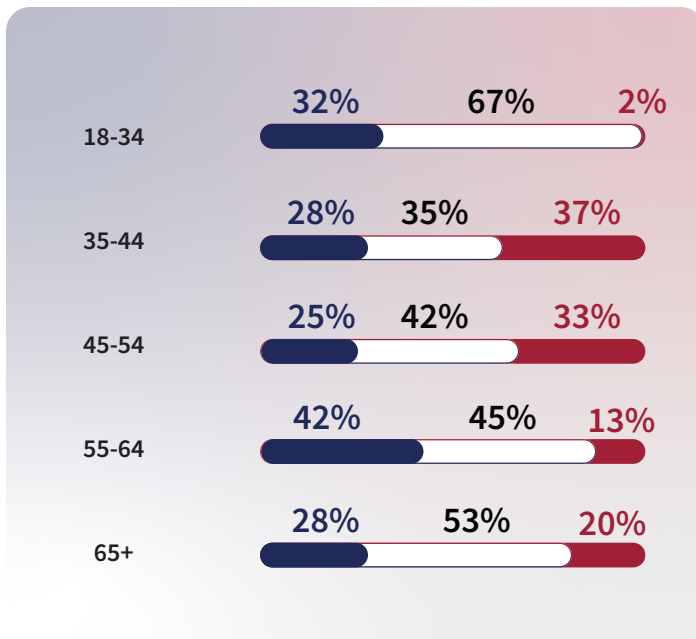
### All



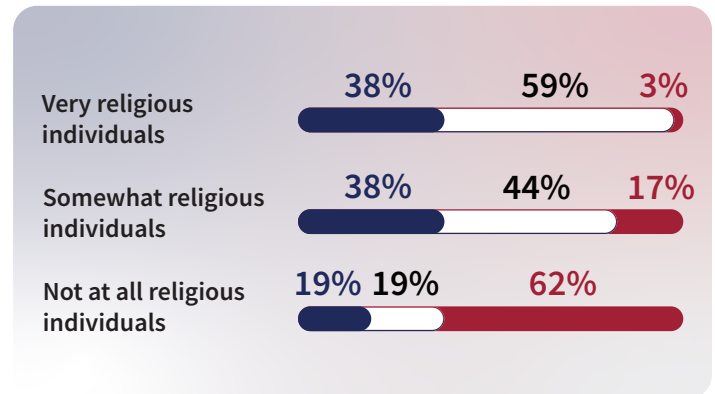
### Ideology



### Age



### Religiosity



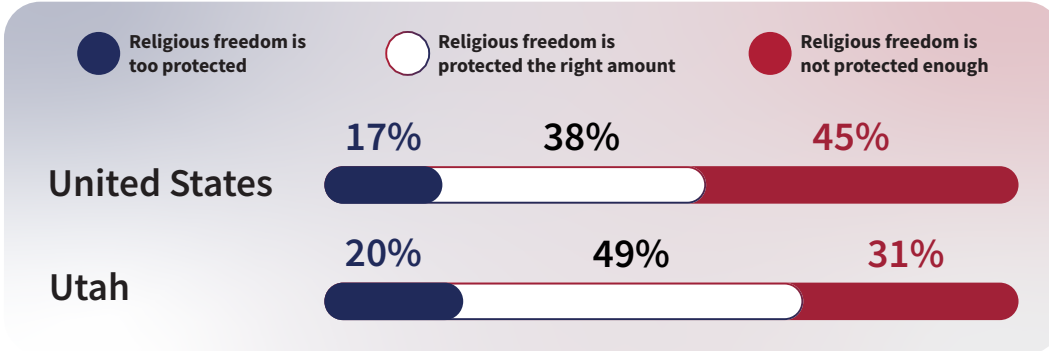
Despite strong support for religious freedom as a benefit to society, voters expressed concern with how well it is being protected. Religious voters were more likely to think that religious freedom protections were insufficient, while nonreligious voters were much more likely to think protections are adequate.

One very interesting finding was that even in Utah, sizeable minorities of religious voters think the state did not give adequate protection to religious freedom.

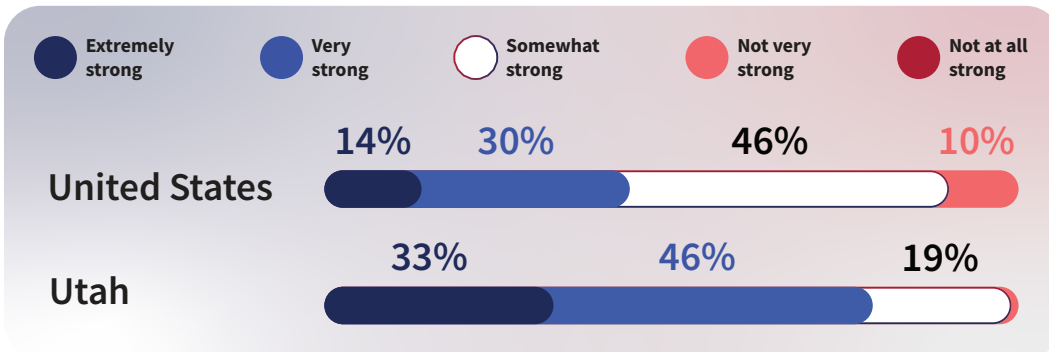
Similar proportions of close to one-third each of conservative (32%), moderate (30%), and liberal (37%) voters believe religious freedom is not protected enough. The sentiment that religious freedom is protected too much increases dramatically among voters less conservative and more liberal.

Additional charts below show noteworthy differences in how Utah likely voters view the strength of faith and religion, as well as the level of legal protections at the state and national level.

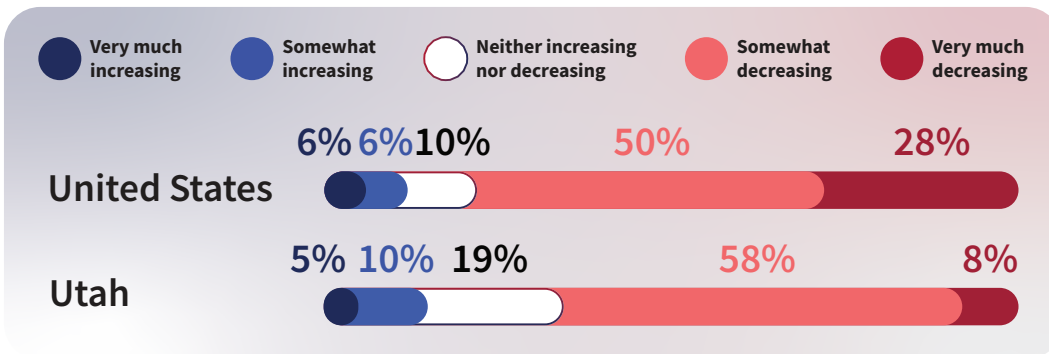
### Religious freedom’s protection level



### Strength of religious organizations today



### Religious activity level today



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