

February 1, 2016

Poll: Americans Support Teaching Students the Evidence For and Against Darwin's Theory by Overwhelming Margin

Just in time for Charles Darwin's birthday on February 12, a new nationwide survey reveals that 81% of American adults believe that "when teaching Darwin's theory of evolution, biology teachers should cover both scientific evidence that supports the theory and scientific evidence critical of the theory." Only 19% of Americans believe that "biology teachers should cover only scientific evidence that supports the theory."

"Americans agree by an overwhelming margin that students should learn about all of the scientific evidence relating to Darwinian evolution, pro and con," said Dr. John West, Vice President of Discovery Institute. "This is a common-sense approach. Most people understand that it's not good education to present a one-sided review of the data, especially in science."

"There is growing peer-reviewed research that questions the adequacy of the Darwinian mechanism of random mutation and natural selection," added Discovery Institute biologist Ann Gauger. Gauger holds a Ph.D. in developmental biology from the University of Washington, and she has served in the past as a post-doctoral Fellow at Harvard University.

Support for teaching the scientific evidence for and against Darwin's theory is overwhelming regardless of age, gender, religious affiliation, geography, party affiliation, and household income:

- 79% of men and 83% of women support teaching the evidence for and against Darwin's theory.
- 85% of theists, 65% of atheists, and 79% of agnostics support this approach.
- 79% of Democrats support teaching the evidence for and against Darwin's theory, and so do 82% of independents and 85% of Republicans.
- 85% of middle-aged Americans (ages 45-59) support teaching the evidence for and against Darwin's theory, and so do 81% of young adults (ages 18-29) and senior citizens (ages 60 and older).

Survey Methodology

The data for this national survey was collected over the period Jan. 5-9, 2016 using SurveyMonkey Audience, a nationally representative panel of more than 6 million people recruited from the 30+ million people who take SurveyMonkey surveys each month. The

SurveyMonkey platform has been utilized for public opinion surveys by NBC News, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other media organizations.

Survey respondents were randomly sampled from members of SurveyMonkey Audience in the United States who are 18 years of age or older, and the survey included 2,117 completed responses for this question. According to SurveyMonkey, “SurveyMonkey Audience respondents represent a diverse group of people and are reflective of the general population. However, as with most online sampling, respondents have Internet access and voluntarily joined a program to take surveys... We automatically balance results according to census data for age and gender, while location tends to balance out naturally.” SurveyMonkey conducts “regular benchmarking surveys to ensure our members are representative of the U.S. population.” Although SurveyMonkey Audience is a representative panel, respondents to this particular survey were significantly more secular and more Democratic than the general American adult population. However, we chose not to do any post-survey weighting to correct the overrepresentation of these groups. More information on how respondents are recruited for SurveyMonkey Audience is available here: www.surveymonkey.com/mp/audience.

Survey Results

The following table provides more detailed information about the survey results, including cross-tabulations comparing responses by age, gender, income, party affiliation, and region.

	<i>When teaching Darwin’s theory of evolution, biology teachers should cover both scientific evidence that supports the theory and scientific evidence critical of the theory.</i>	<i>When teaching Darwin’s theory of evolution, biology teachers should cover only scientific evidence that supports the theory.</i>
All Respondents (n=2,117)	81%	19%
Men (n=920)	79%	21%
Women (n=1,012)	83%	17%
Party: Democrats (n=743)	79%	21%
Party: Independents (n=701)	82%	18%
Party: Republicans (n=491)	85%	15%
Religion: Theists (n=1,239)	85%	15%
Religion: Atheists (n=234)	65%	35%
Religion: Agnostics (n=462)	79%	21%
Age: 18-29 (n=424)	81%	19%
Age: 30-44 (n=502)	78%	22%

Age: 45-59 (<i>n=510</i>)	85%	15%
Age: 60+ (<i>n=496</i>)	81%	19%
Household Income: Under \$50,000/yr (<i>n=644</i>)	84%	16%
Household Income: \$50,000-\$99,000/yr (<i>n=559</i>)	81%	19%
Household Income: \$100,000-\$199,000/yr (<i>n=378</i>)	79%	21%
Household Income: Over \$200,000/yr (<i>n=90</i>)	77%	23%
Region: New England (<i>n=110</i>)	81%	19%
Region: Mid Atlantic (<i>n=256</i>)	80%	20%
Region: E North Central (<i>n=287</i>)	82%	18%
Region: W North Central (<i>n=138</i>)	83%	17%
Region: S Atlantic (<i>n=312</i>)	81%	19%
Region: E South Central (<i>n=94</i>)	82%	18%
Region: W South Central (<i>n=173</i>)	77%	23%
Region: Mountain (<i>n=165</i>)	84%	16%
Region: Pacific (<i>n=350</i>)	82%	18%