

FAU analysis: climate change becoming a bipartisan issue in Florida

by Jordan Kirkland | Dec 2, 2021



Belief in climate change among Florida Republicans has climbed to nearly 9 out of 10 adults, according to a new analysis conducted by researchers at [Florida Atlantic University](#).

The new analysis — consisting of five sequenced surveys since 2019 — found that despite belief in climate change being found highest among Florida Democrats (96%), compared to their Republican counterparts (88%), the latter group's share appears more than sufficient for Florida Republican lawmakers to embrace the science around climate change without it dampening support from their voter base.

FAU also noted in the report that the size of these numbers suggests no significant partisan divide on the question, suggesting that the key issue may no longer be an effective campaign strategy for candidates heading into the mid-term elections.

"This sequence of results begins to paint a picture of Floridians' attitudes during a period of particularly dynamic political, economic and environmental conditions. During the period of these five surveys, public opinion about climate change was likely shaped negatively by the Trump Administration's 2017 decision to retract the United States from the United Nations 2015 Paris Climate Accord," said **Colin Polsky**, Ph.D., director of the **Center for Environmental Studies** and a professor of geosciences in FAU's **Charles E. Schmidt College of Science**. "Similarly, the importance of climate change for the public was likely diminished in response to new, immediate daily concerns associated with the coronavirus pandemic and economic crises it triggered. As such, these Florida opinion survey results about climate change can be viewed as reflecting public sentiment net of at least two significant external and independent influences on public opinion."

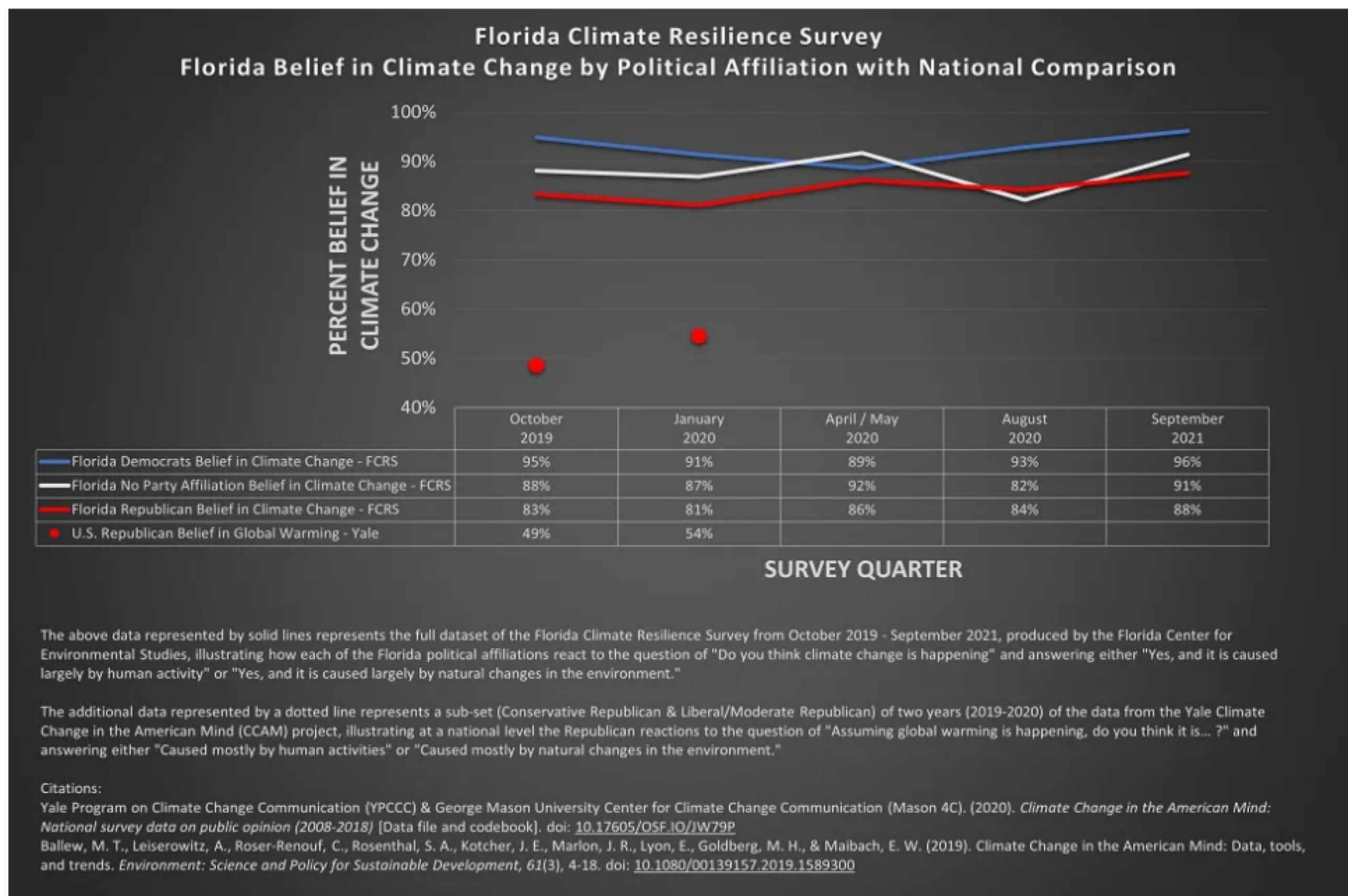
Additionally, FAU found that party affiliation is linked with differences of opinion about the cause of climate change: nearly half of Florida Republicans believe climate change is largely a human-caused issue, compared to three-fourths of Florida Democrats. Researchers added that the distinction may explain why the state's Republican leaders appear willing to discuss climate change solutions but not willing to reference the underlying reasons for the changing climate.

FAU says these overarching general beliefs are echoed by respondents' support for or against specific climate-related policies. Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of Floridians, including 60 percent of Republicans, support teaching climate change causes, consequences and solutions in K-12 classrooms, and close to half (47 percent) are willing to pay \$10 per month to strengthen Florida's infrastructure to weather hazards. The tax question does not appear to be linked to age or race, but does vary by income, with higher-income individuals being more supportive of the tax than lower-income respondents.

It's only at the national-level that climate change opinions among Florida Republicans begin to diverge. FAU reported that approximately one-half of surveyed Republicans believe in 'global warming,' and one-third in a human caused 'global warming,' according to recent national surveys.

"Consequently, the national party may continue to oppose openly acknowledging the science behind 'global warming,' even while statements and actions by Florida Republicans likely take a generally different approach to climate change," FAU added in a press release.

The **latest** of the five surveys was conducted in English from Sept. 1-18, by the **Center for Environmental Studies** at FAU. The sample consisted of 1,400 Floridians, age 18 and older, with a margin of error of +/- 2.62 percent. The data was collected using an online panel provided by GreatBlue Research. Responses for the entire sample were weighted to adjust for age, race, income, education and gender according to the 2019 American Community Survey from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. FAU's **Business & Economics Polling Initiative** assisted with data collection for the first four surveys.



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