Poll finds more positive views of U.S. Muslims: Pew Forum findings

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As the nation marked the eighth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, almost six in ten Americans agreed that Muslims are the subject of discrimination—more than members of other major religious groups, according to a new survey.

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found that 58 percent of U.S. adults think Muslims face "a lot" of discrimination. Only gays and lesbians were named by a higher percentage of respondents (64 percent) as victims of discrimination.

Certain sectors of society, including young adults (ages 18-29) and liberal Democrats, were especially likely to believe that Muslims face a lot of discrimination.

The survey, released September 9, also showed a recent change in how much Americans connect Islam and violence. Forty-five percent of those surveyed said Islam is no more likely than other faiths to encourage violence; 38 percent said it is more likely to do so. That's a shift from two years ago, when 45 percent thought Islam encouraged violence more than other faiths.

Compared to two years ago, smaller percentages of almost every group surveyed said Islam encouraged violence, including a 13-point drop, to 55 percent, among conservative Republicans. The change was less dramatic among white evangelical Protestants, with 53 percent now saying Islam encourages violence, a drop of just 4 percentage points from 2007. *–Religion News Service*