

# NEWS RELEASE

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## POLL FINDS 4 OUT OF 10 AMERICANS SAY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF CANDIDATES ARE IMPORTANT IN DECIDING WHOM TO VOTE FOR

SANTA FE – On the eve of Democratic National Convention that begins in Boston next week, a new public opinion poll finds that almost 40 percent of Americans believe it's important to consider the religious beliefs of candidates in deciding whom to vote for.

The poll was conducted for the Barnabas Institute, a non-denominational religious organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

“Although the separation between church and state is an important part of our national heritage, it is clear that many Americans find religious beliefs to be an important factor in evaluating candidates,” noted Miki Vasquez, president of the Barnabas Institute. “Candidates such as John Kerry can surely thank John F. Kennedy for paving the way to be accepted by such voters.

“The poll results send an important message to all politicians that millions of people will consider the religious beliefs of candidates when deciding whom to support in the November elections,” she said.

Other key findings of the poll include:

- A majority of Protestants, 56%, felt faith should be considered in candidate selection; only 31% of Catholics felt religion should be considered.
- 34% percent of those not involved in any faith said the religious beliefs of the politicians should be considered.
- Although the Republican Party has been editorially branded as the party of the “religious right,” 62 percent of Democrats and 67 percent of Republicans said they are “actively involved in some faith now.”

### **About the Poll**

The telephone poll of a representative national sample of 2,000 adults was conducted by Synovate, Inc., July 9-18, 2004. The findings have a margin of error of less than three percent. More information is available at [www.barnabasinstitute.org](http://www.barnabasinstitute.org).

### **About the Barnabas Institute**

The Barnabas Institute is a nondenominational religious organization that is headquartered in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Institute combines scholarly research with person-to-person programs that provide inspiration, support and practical help for people who want to live a Christian life.