

# Survey finds that many want creationism taught

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In a finding that is likely to intensify the debate over what to teach students about the origins of life, a poll released Tuesday found that nearly two-thirds of Americans say creationism should be taught alongside evolution in public schools.

The poll found that 42 percent of respondents hold strict creationist views, agreeing that "living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time."

In contrast, 48 percent said they believed that humans had evolved over time; of those, 18 percent said evolution was "guided by a supreme being," and 26 percent said evolution occurred through natural selection.

In all, 64 percent said they were open to the idea of teaching creationism in addition to evolution, but 38 percent favored replacing evolution with creationism.

The poll was conducted July 7 to 17 by the Pew Forum on

Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. The questions about evolution were asked of 2,000 people, and the margin of error is 2.5 percentage points.

John Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum, said he was surprised to see that teaching both evolution and creationism was favored not only by conservative Christians but by majorities of secular respondents, liberal Democrats and those who accept the theory of natural selection. Green called it a reflection of "American pragmatism."

Eugenie Scott, the director of the National Center for Science Education and a prominent defender of evolution, said the findings were not surprising because "Americans react very positively to the fairness or equal time kind of argument."

"In fact, it's the strongest thing that creationists have got going for them, because their science is dismal," he said.