

USA: Conventions' Fixation on Religion Lamented by Secular Group

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Statement from Ronald A. Lindsay, President and CEO of the Center for Inquiry, on the conclusion of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions:

"Much about these political conventions has been extremely disheartening to secular Americans: Trivial bickering about who mentioned God a sufficient number of times, the fact of our warming planet being used as a punchline for derision, and leaders constantly citing Bronze Age mystical texts as a basis for acting on our very real problems. And at almost no point were nonreligious Americans mentioned or made to feel welcome in either party's verbose orations.

"Our nation, and our entire planet, face so many great challenges that demand a clear focus on what is true and what is not. Reliance on facts, science, and real data have never been more crucial to the formulation of policy and for helping voters decide which candidates will have the best programs to resolve our pressing crises. Secular, evidence-based reasoning is the only reliable means by which all Americans can evaluate and discuss critical policy questions. A fixation on religion and faith will only serve to obscure the issues and divide us as a people. It is our sincere hope that as the campaign goes on, the candidates and the media will refocus their attentions on debates based on reality and reason rather than myths and faith."

Rise in Religiously Unaffiliated Holds Promise for the Future, Says Secular Organization

October 09, 2012

A new survey showing that just under 20 percent of American adults claim no religious affiliation was heralded by the Center for Inquiry, an international organization advocating for science, reason, and secular values.

Data released today by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life showed that the religiously unaffiliated (nicknamed the "nones") make up 19.6% of the U.S. adult population, with a significant

29% of those describing themselves as atheist or agnostic—6% of the total population, or 13 million people. Adults under 30 showed the largest rise, with fully 32% claiming no religious affiliation.

“Though the ‘unaffiliated’ are not entirely made up of nonbelievers, the fact that one in five Americans have rejected traditional religion means that the enormous influence religion has had over policy and culture will continue to wane,” said Ronald A. Lindsay, President and CEO of the Center for Inquiry. “Furthermore, thanks to the high percentage of ‘nones’ among the younger generations, these numbers tell us that we are closer than ever to realizing a society in which religious dogma has no significant influence on public policy—that is, a society based on reason and science rather than myth and superstition.”

CFI has been instrumental in advocating on behalf of the nonreligious, and fostering community for those that have turned away from traditional religion, and seek a movement based on reason and the freedom to question. Its Office of Public Policy works to bring a rational perspective to government and politics, local CFI branches provide social events and grassroots activism, CFI On Campus cultivates the upcoming generation of secular leaders, and initiatives such as African Americans for Humanism and the Campaign for Free Expression open new doors and champion causes of great import.

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http://www.centerforinquiry.net/newsroom/conventions_fixation_on_religion_lamented_by_secular_group/

* The Center for Inquiry (CFI) is a nonprofit educational, advocacy, and research organization based in Amherst, New York; it is also home to both the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry and the Council for Secular Humanism. The mission of CFI is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. CFI’s web address is www.centerforinquiry.net.