Jews are the Most Warmly Regarded Religious Group in America

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This article is from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, February 15, 2017.

Jews are the most warmly regarded religious group in America, according to a new survey by the Pew Research Center.

The survey, which was released Wednesday, found that Americans generally express more positive feelings toward various religious groups than they did three years ago.

As they did the first time the survey was taken in 2014, Jews topped the survey, in which respondents rank various religious groups on a “feeling thermometer.” On the scale of 1 to 100, 1 is the coldest and 100 the warmest; 50 means they have neither positive nor negative feelings.

Jews were ranked at 67 degrees, up from 63 in the 2014 survey, followed by Catholics at 66, up from 62, and Mainline Protestants at 65. Evangelical Christians stayed at 61 degrees.

Buddhists rose to 60 from 53, and Hindus increased to 58 from 50. Mormons moved to 54 from 48.

Atheists and Muslims again had the lowest ratings, but both still rose on the warmth scale. Atheists ranked at 50 degrees, up from 41, and Muslims were at 48, up from 40.

The authors noted that warm feelings toward religious groups rose despite a contentious election year that deeply divided Americans. “The increase in mean ratings is broad based,” according to the authors. “Warmer feelings are expressed by people in all the major religious groups analyzed, as well as by both Democrats and Republicans, men and women,

and younger and older adults.”

The random-digit-dial survey of 4,248 respondents was conducted Jan. 9-23. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Americans tend to rate their own faith groups highest, the survey found. Jews rated themselves at 91 and rated Muslims at 51, up from 35 three years ago. Jews rated themselves the highest compared to other groups; the next highest was Catholics at 83.

The survey showed a divide between older and younger Americans. While Jews received a 74 from respondents aged 65 and up, the age group’s second-highest ranking behind Mainline Protestants, respondents aged 18-29 ranked Jews at 62 and gave their highest ranking to Buddhists at 66.

Religious groups also were rated higher by respondents who knew someone from that religion. Those who knew Jews gave them a 72, and those who do not know any Jews gave them a 58.