

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Geoff Garin and Jill Normington
Date: June 25, 2019
Re: Climate and Clean Energy: Winning Issues in 2020

The following is a summary of findings from two surveys: 1) 1,000 likely 2020 Democratic primary voters and caucus-goers in the United States and; 2) 1,201 registered voters in the 14 2020 battleground states (AZ, CO, FL, GA, IA, MI, MN, NV, NH, NC, OH, PA, VA and WI). Both surveys included oversamples of Latinx and African American voters. The primary survey also included an oversample of Asian American and Pacific Islanders. The primary survey was conducted online from June 1-6, 2019 and the battleground survey was conducted from June 3-10, 2019. The sampling error for the primary survey is ± 3.1 percentage points and for the battleground survey is ± 2.8. The error for subgroups will be greater. The surveys were conducted jointly by Hart Research and Normington Petts for CAP Action Fund and the League of Conservation Voters.

Summary

- **Democratic primary voters expect and demand that candidates offer clear and effective plans for addressing climate change and moving the country to 100% clean energy. They want candidates to offer plans that do what scientists say is necessary to address the climate challenge, and they want candidates to take on fossil fuel special interests.**
- **Climate policy and clean energy can be important assets for the Democratic nominee in the general election. A large majority of voters disapprove of Trump’s handling of these issues. They reject Trump’s dismissal of climate science and his record of putting oil, gas, and coal company CEOs in charge of the country’s climate and environmental policies.**
- **General election voters support moving America to 100% clean energy and believe this will create jobs. It is important for Democratic candidates to communicate their commitment to climate and energy policies that work for working families and promote a growing economy.**

Addressing climate change and developing a clean energy economy is one of Democratic primary voters’ top issues. When Democratic primary voters are asked what their top priorities are, they choose climate as their most important issue. Climate change ranks 2nd as their most important issue, tied with a woman’s right to choose. Only universal healthcare ranks more highly. It is a top-tier issue among Democratic primary voters – with 71% rating it either very important or the single most important issues to them.

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY VOTERS: Most important/very important issue

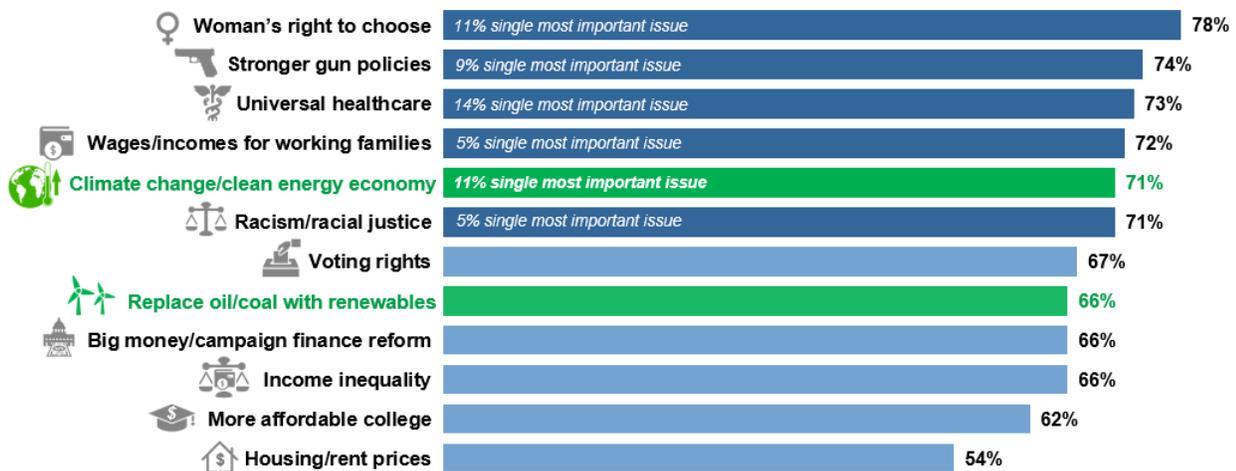


Figure 1. Most Important Issues When Deciding Support in Democratic Presidential Caucus/Primary

Climate change is an area of competitive advantage for Democrats among general election voters in battleground states. They trust Democrats more, compared to President Donald Trump and Republicans, on a range of issues including climate change, clean energy, clean water and air and public lands. Against Donald Trump in particular, Democrats have a 30-point advantage on addressing climate change and a 26-point advantage on moving to a clean energy economy.

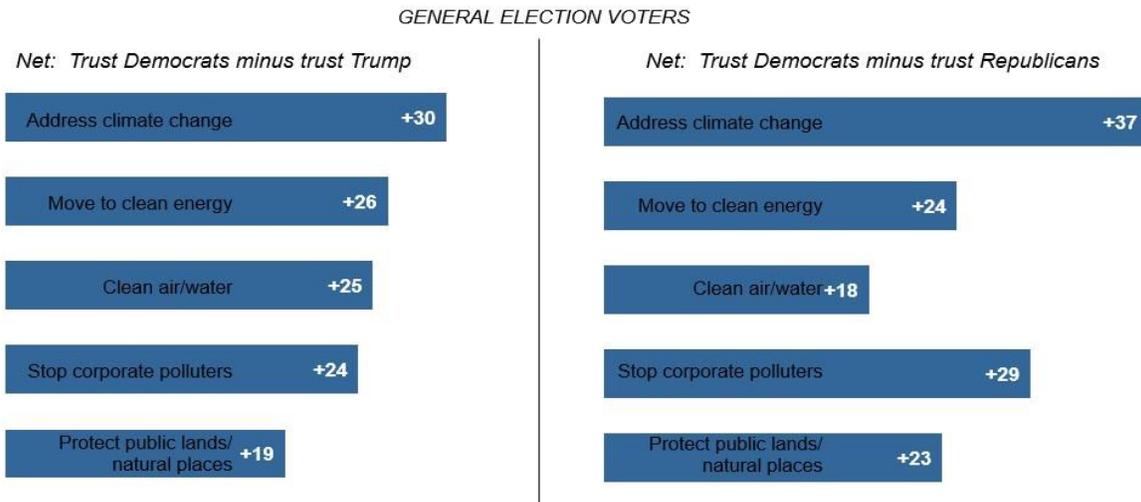


Figure 2. Net Trust Gap Between Democrats v. Republicans and Donald Trump among General Election Voters in Battleground States

When it comes to addressing climate change, 55% of voters trust the Democrats more, compared to only 25% who trust Trump more. Democrats have a 38-point advantage on climate among Independents (54% trust Democrats more, 16% trust Trump more). **Even among Republicans, just half (51%) trust Trump more on this.** The story is similar on moving the country to clean energy sources, where 51% of voters trust the Democrats more, compared to 27% who trust Trump (among Independents, 52% trust the Democrats and 17% trust Trump); here too, only 57% of Republicans say they trust Trump more than the Democrats.

General election voters now think that climate change is very serious problem. It is not merely Democratic primary voters and caucus-goers who care about climate change. A majority (55%) of general election voters says that it is a crisis or a very serious problem, including 57% of Independent voters and 30% of Republicans. Moreover, climate change is a problem to large majorities of Latinx voters (68%) and African American voters (63%). When President Trump and other Republican officials deny the seriousness of climate change as a problem, it puts them at odds with 3 in 5 college-educated whites and half of all non-college educated whites.

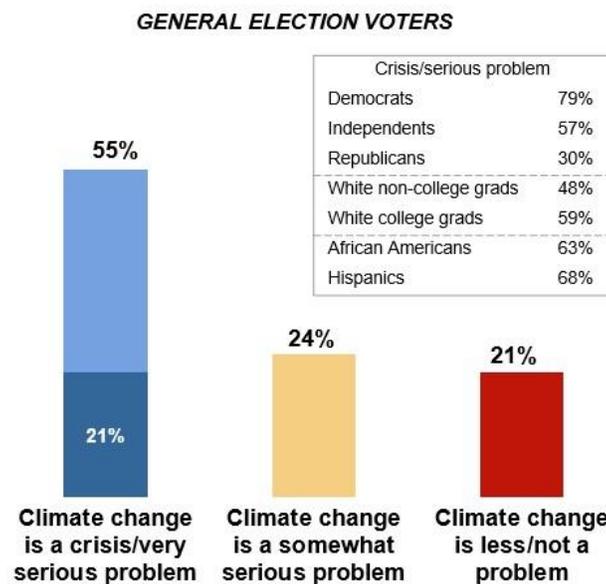


Figure 3. Seriousness of the Problem of Climate Change to General Election Voters

General election voters see a clean energy economy as a net benefit to the economy because it creates jobs. When asked whether moving the country to clean and renewable energy sources would create or cost jobs, 55% said it would create jobs, with another 27% saying it would not affect jobs either way. Only 18% of voters think moving to clean energy will cost jobs. Even 41% of Republican voters think it will create jobs and majorities in the Midwest (50%), Sunbelt (58%) and of Independent voters (51%) think that clean energy will create jobs. Even when voters are specifically told that clean energy will require moving away from fossil fuels, a majority (50%) still say that moving to a clean energy economy will be a net jobs benefit. Simply put, voters believe that a plan to move to a clean energy economy is also a plan to create jobs.

Moving the country to clean and renewable energy sources like wind and solar power:

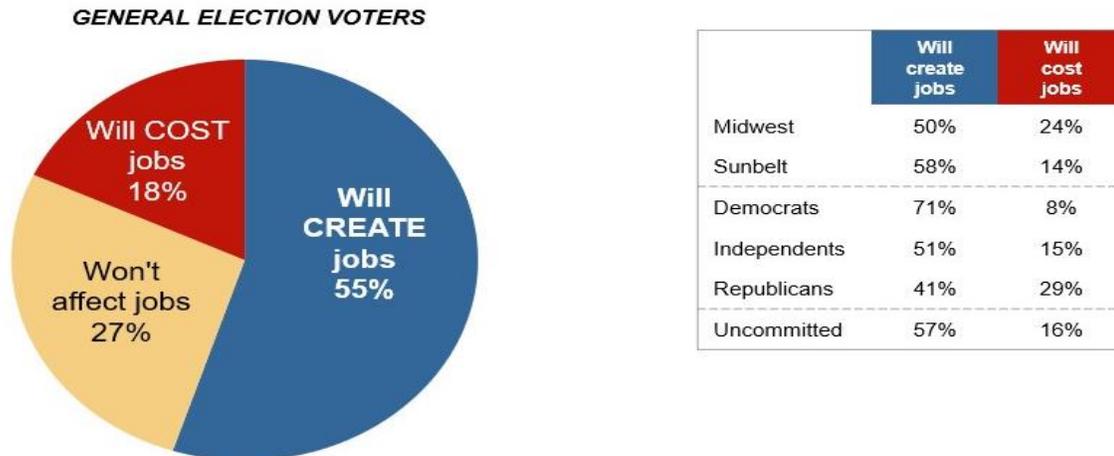


Figure 4. Effect of Moving the Country to Clean and Renewable Energy Sources Like Wind and Power Among General Election Voters

General election voters are concerned that Trump denies climate science, allies with big polluters and sides with oil and gas over every day Americans. When asked how concerning Trump's actions have been on a variety of issues, general election voters rate those relating to Trump's climate record as highly concerning (assigning their concern a 7, 8, 9 or 10 on a 0 to 10 scale). Three in five voters are highly concerned about Trump's record, including his record on doing the bidding of his oil and gas donors, siding with polluters, and denying climate science.

- After oil, gas, and coal companies poured millions of dollars into Trump's campaign, Donald Trump let former lobbyists for the fossil fuel industry take over key positions in the Trump administration that oversee corporate polluters. Now these former oil and coal lobbyists are rewriting laws to weaken environmental protections and have opened up the nation's public lands and coastal areas to drilling and mining (**60% high concern**)
- Donald Trump promised to look out for everyday people and hold special interests accountable. But as president, Trump has repeatedly sided with big oil companies and other corporate polluters, giving them billions in new tax cuts. While oil companies have gotten richer, everyone else is left with dirtier air and more health risks like asthma and polluted water (**60% high concern**)
- Donald Trump continues to deny the overwhelming scientific evidence of climate change--he calls it a hoax--while putting interests of polluters ahead of the environment and public health. While scientists say that unless we take action to address carbon emissions, the worst consequences of climate change will be unavoidable, Trump named a climate change denier to head the climate scientist committee (**59% high concern**)

Finally, after reading a balanced back-and-forth of critiques against both the Democrats and Trump on climate, 55% of voters say they worry more about Donald Trump's record on the issue, compared to 45% who say they worry more about the policies of the Democratic candidates.