

To: Interested Parties

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Re: NEW POLL RESULTS: There is support for Democrats’ transportation agenda and pro-electric vehicle policies, and the right messaging improves positive perceptions of Democrats

A new nationwide survey from Global Strategy Group finds that rising gas prices thanks to the war in Iran have created a real opportunity for Democrats not only to boost their standing vis-à-vis Republicans on transportation policy, but also to drive contrast messaging on the issues of costs, Big Oil, and pollution that shift the broader debate in their favor. Meanwhile, Democrats have a real need (and opportunity) to reverse the perception that they are the party that wants to ban certain kinds of vehicles. The right messaging, which we lay out below, generates big gains in trust for Democrats on several issues, including transportation policy, the cost of living, and looking out for regular people.

Key Findings

Rising gas prices thanks to the Iran war create a real opportunity for Democrats on transportation.

Democrats are already more trusted on transportation policy and looking out for people, all while Trump and the GOP are taking on serious water over rising gas prices due to the Iran war. Meanwhile, the GOP’s proposed transportation policies are toxic, and their fealty to Big Oil is a big vulnerability. Engaging on this issue has the potential to expand Democrats’ overall advantage on which party is “looking out for people like you.” That margin grows from 8 to 21 points over the course of the survey. Of course, this survey was wildly unbalanced, but that is a lot of movement, even given the structure of this survey.

Net trust Democrats more to “look out for people like you”				
	Overall	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Initial	+8	+93	+11	-84
Post-EV Debate	+11	+88	+15	-71
Post-Policies	+17	+90	+26	-64
Final	+21	+92	+29	-55
Change – Initial to Final	+13	-1	+18	+29

A debate over electric vehicles boosts Democrats. Nearly two-thirds of respondents want to see the federal government implement pro-EV policies (63% agree) and that support grows after a balanced debate everywhere (71% agree, a +8 shift). That debate also expands Democrats’ margin on “looking out for people like you” (+11 net trust Democrats more, up from +8 initially) (see appendix for language tested).

Though Democrats should not shy away from talking about any of the Democratic proposals we tested, they will be in the strongest position with a primarily focus on public transit, reestablishing fuel efficiency standards, and a windfall profits tax. Over half of respondents support each Democratic transportation policy proposal we tested, though a few emerge as especially popular. These are investing in public transit to make it cheaper and more accessible (or easier to use), reestablishing fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, and implementing a windfall profits tax on oil companies.

Democratic Transportation Policies		
	Total Support	Net Support
Investing in public transit to make it cheaper and more accessible	79	+65
Investing in public transit to make it cheaper and easier to use	78	+62
Reestablishing fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks	73	+56
Implementing a windfall profits tax on oil companies when they make excessive profits, with those profits returned to taxpayers through rebates	71	+54
Investing in zero-emissions buses and heavy-duty trucks	68	+48
Investing in publicly available charging stations for fast charging of electric vehicles	68	+44
Providing consumers with incentives like rebates that make it more affordable to purchase electric vehicles	67	+43
Providing American automakers with incentives to increase electric vehicle and battery manufacturing in the U.S.	62	+34
Providing American automakers with incentives to increase electric vehicle manufacturing in the U.S.	59	+29
Setting stronger limits on tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks	58	+30

Additionally, Democrats will be in the strongest position when focusing on Republican proposals to make it harder to manufacture batteries in the U.S. and eliminate fuel efficiency standards. At least half of respondents, or more, oppose each of the Republicans' actions we tested, especially making it harder to manufacture batteries and other EV components in the U.S. and eliminating fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks.

Republican Transportation Policies		
	Total Oppose	Net Oppose
Making it harder to manufacture batteries and other electric vehicle components in the U.S.	65	+40
Eliminating fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks	60	+31
Eliminating federal funding for publicly available EV charging stations	56	+23
Eliminating federal funding for zero-emission buses and heavy-duty trucks	56	+26
Imposing a new, yearly tax of \$150 for electric vehicles and \$50 for hybrids	56	+23
Placing a 25% tariff on imported vehicles and auto parts	55	+21
Eliminating federal limits on tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks	51	+16
Prohibiting states with poor air quality from setting limits on tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks	50	+16

Democrats have a real opportunity – and need – to reverse perceptions that Democrats want to ban certain vehicles and don't want Americans to have the ability to choose different vehicles. While Democrats enter the debate being seen as better than Republicans on making transportation less expensive and standing up to oil companies, they are also seen, by an 11-point margin, as the party that wants to ban certain kinds of vehicles more than Republicans, while respondents rate both parties equally on “wanting Americans to have the freedom to choose different vehicles” (the latter of which

is an important driver in regressions). However, these are also the areas where our messaging is most successful in moving the needle, with a net 31-point shift on want to ban certain kinds of vehicles (from +11 to -20 describes Democrats better to -20) and a 26-point net shift on wanting Americans to have the freedom to choose different vehicles (from 0 to +26). Positive messaging on choice is quite important for Democrats:

- *Every American should have the freedom to drive what they want. Electric vehicles not only save drivers money, but they have better performance than gas-powered cars. By providing incentives like tax credits and rebates and making it easier to charge EVs, Democrats will make it easier for anyone to afford and use an EV if they want to.*

Democratic messaging will be strongest when it leads with a contrast on costs that tilts towards the negative and ties Iran to other GOP policies. We all know how important affordability is right now, and the damage that Republicans are facing over the Iran war is difficult to overstate. In fact, in an open-ended question, respondents overwhelmingly blame Trump and the war for rising gas prices. Regressions show that views on costs are an important driver of overall views of the two parties, and the cost negative against Republicans is the most potent in the survey. The Democrat positive on cost does not score particularly high but comes through in the open end after messaging. The negative piece here is clearly stronger than the positive, but the positive piece certainly adds value.

- *Donald Trump got us into a reckless and unnecessary war in Iran that has already cost the average American family over \$1,000 in higher gas and grocery prices. Now, he and Republicans want to make consumers pay even more at the pump by eliminating fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, implementing the first ever national car tax, and making it harder to buy and use EVs if you want to.*
- *Democrats want to save consumers money at the pump by increasing fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, making public transit cheaper and more accessible, making it easier to own an EV if you want to, and taxing the excess profits of Big Oil CEOs and giving that money back to consumers.*

And it can be strengthened by tying costs to each party's willingness (or lack thereof) to hold Big Oil accountable. Messages focused on Big Oil work well as a positive for Democrats AND an attack on the GOP.

- *During the 2024 presidential election campaign, Trump promised Big Oil CEOs a "windfall" of profits if they contributed to his campaign, and they came through for him. Now, thanks to Trump's war in Iran, they're making record profits and Republicans are working to keep it that way by keeping Americans reliant on oil while killing alternatives that would save us money.*
- *Democrats want to hold the Big Oil companies accountable and stop their price gouging by forcing them to return their excess profits to consumers.*

Democrats also have a useful negative against Republicans (or a contrast) on health and pollution. The health/pollution negative on Republicans scores quite well and sticks with respondents in the post-messaging open end. The health/pollution positive on Democrats scores solidly, though not top tier, but also sticks with respondents in the post-messaging open end. The strength of this kind of messaging rates a bit behind messaging on costs and Big Oil, but health and pollution can add value either as a straight negative or as a negative-tilted contrast.

- *Cars, trucks, and buses are among the largest sources of toxic air pollution, yet Trump and Republicans in Congress are not only eliminating federal limits on pollution from cars and trucks, but they are also trying to ban states from setting their own limits on this pollution. Doctors say these policies will drastically increase air pollution along with rates of premature*

- death, asthma, heart and lung disease, and even cancer – especially in children and seniors.
- Meanwhile Democrats want to encourage the use of more zero-pollution vehicles and reestablish limits on tailpipe pollution, which doctors say would save tens of thousands of lives.

Appendix

Electric Vehicle Debate Full Text

Democrats say that every American should have the freedom to drive what they want, be that an electric or gas-powered vehicle. Electric vehicles not only have better performance than gas-powered cars, but the average electric vehicle owner saves over \$2,000 per year in fuel costs, that's why Democrats support expanding EV charging infrastructure and providing incentives to make EVs more affordable – while also cracking down on oil company price gouging to bring down the price of gas. But Donald Trump and Republicans are making it harder to use EVs by imposing a new \$150 yearly tax on EVs and eliminating funding for charging infrastructure.

Republicans say that we should be cutting red tape and expanding American oil production to bring down the cost of gas, not forcing Americans to purchase expensive and untested electric vehicles. Yet, even as prices are skyrocketing, Democrats and radical environmentalists are trying to pass regulations that would force everyone to own expensive EVs instead of more affordable and reliable gas-powered cars. Meanwhile, Republicans are working to repeal expensive and wasteful taxpayer subsidies for EVs and charging infrastructure and to get rid of excessive Democratic environmental regulations that have increased the price of gas

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1000 registered voters nationwide between July 16 and July 22, 2026. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.1%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of registered voters are properly represented.