



# Engaging Young Voters: Lessons Learned from Content Creators

---

Key findings from two focus groups with content creators and an online survey with young voters

**CLIMATE  
POWER**



# Methodology: How We Studied Youth and Content Creators



## Two online Discussions

- 1 with 18–29-year-old voters
- 1 with 30–39-year-old voters
- Participants from the following nine battleground states: AZ, GA, MI, MN, NV, NH, NC, PA, WI
- We only talked with young adults who believe climate change is a legitimate problem and we **screened out 2020 Trump voters**
- Conducted Oct 24-26



## Online survey of 2,113 voters age 18-39 in battleground states

- Conducted in AZ, GA, MI, MN, NV, NH, NC, PA, WI
- **Screened out 2020 Trump voters**
- Included oversamples of Black, Hispanic, and AAPI voters to yield a total of:
  - 497 Black voters
  - 364 Latino voters
  - 205 AAPI voters
- Conducted Oct 19-26, 2023

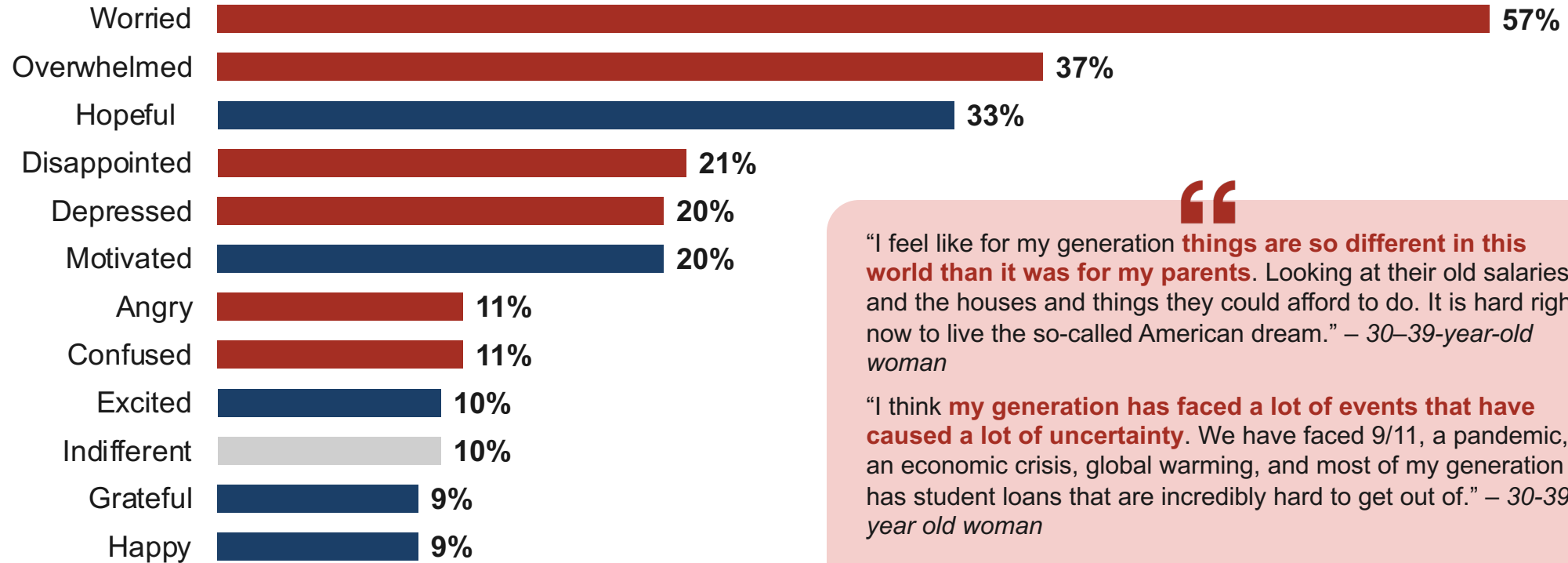


## Two focus groups with content creators

- All creators had communicated with Climate Power and had minimum of 130k followers on short-form video social platforms
  - One group with 'general content creators'
  - One group with creators actively engaged with political and climate issues
- Fielded Oct 30<sup>th</sup> and Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>

# Young people feel beat down; we need to give them something to be optimistic about.

*When you think about the future for your generation, what are the main emotions that you feel?*



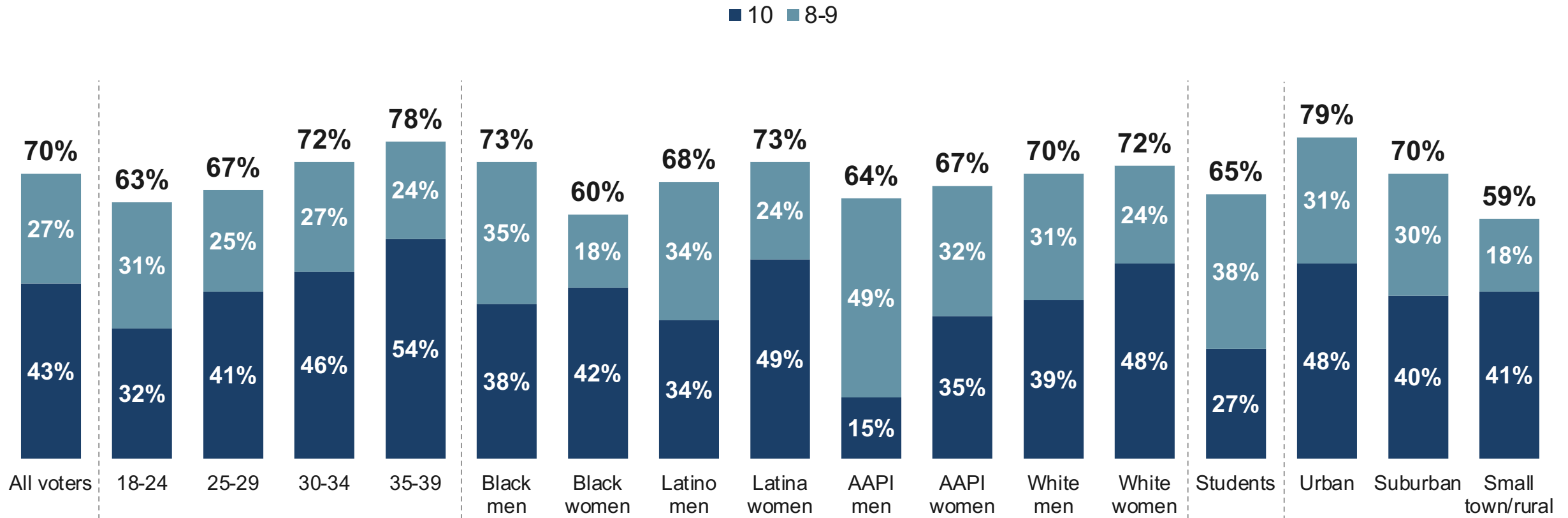
“I feel like for my generation **things are so different in this world than it was for my parents**. Looking at their old salaries and the houses and things they could afford to do. It is hard right now to live the so-called American dream.” – 30–39-year-old woman

“I think **my generation has faced a lot of events that have caused a lot of uncertainty**. We have faced 9/11, a pandemic, an economic crisis, global warming, and most of my generation has student loans that are incredibly hard to get out of.” – 30-39 year old woman

**61%** say their generation has it very or somewhat harder than their parents' generation

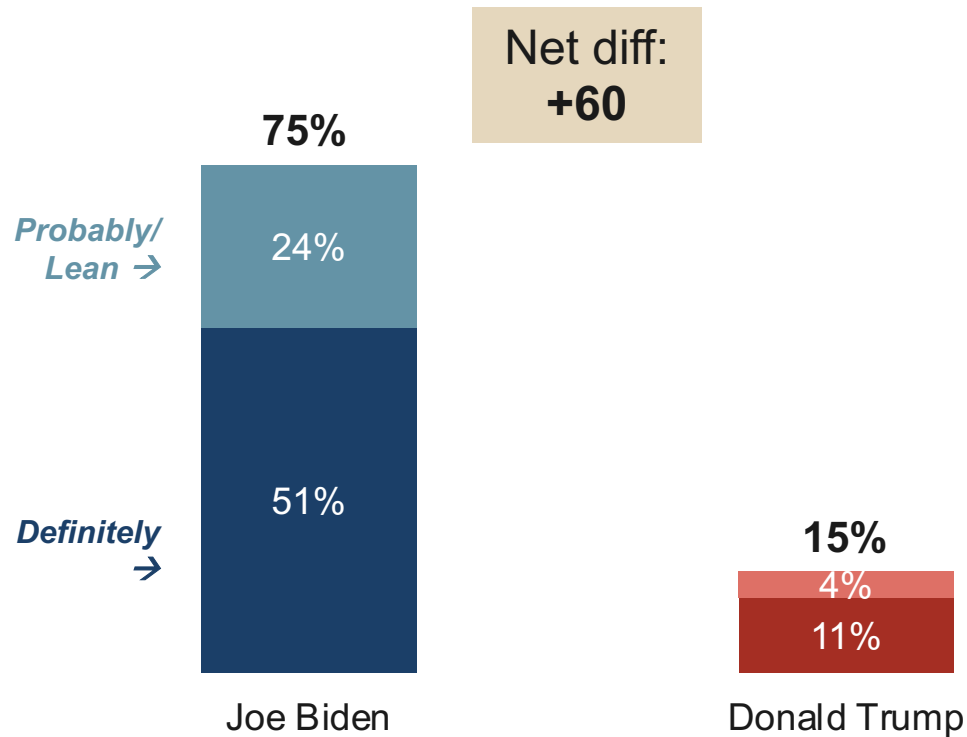
# The youngest voters are least motivated to vote.

*How motivated are you about voting in the election for president next year?\**



# One challenge is that even having screened Trump 2020 voters out of the survey, Biden is not shoe-in with young voters. There is a consistent gender gap.

Which candidate will you vote for in the general election for president next year?



	Biden %	Trump %
Age 18-24	67	21
Age 25-29	72	15
Age 30-34	79	13
Age 35-39	82	9
Men 18-29	63	26
Men 30-39	81	13
Women 18-29	73	14
Women 30-39	81	10
Black men	67	23
Black women	65	19
Latino men	64	23
Latina women	74	13
AAPI men	70	20
AAPI women	78	13
White men	74	18
White women	80	9
Vote motivation 8-10	83	11
Vote motivation 0-7	55	24

# It is also clear young voters have no idea what Biden has actually accomplished.

Quotes from Online Qualboard Discussions with Young Voters



“Honestly, I have no idea. I know he said he was going to stop oil fracking when he campaigned and he didn't live up to that. And that's really disappointing but other than that I don't know.” – 18-29-year-old woman



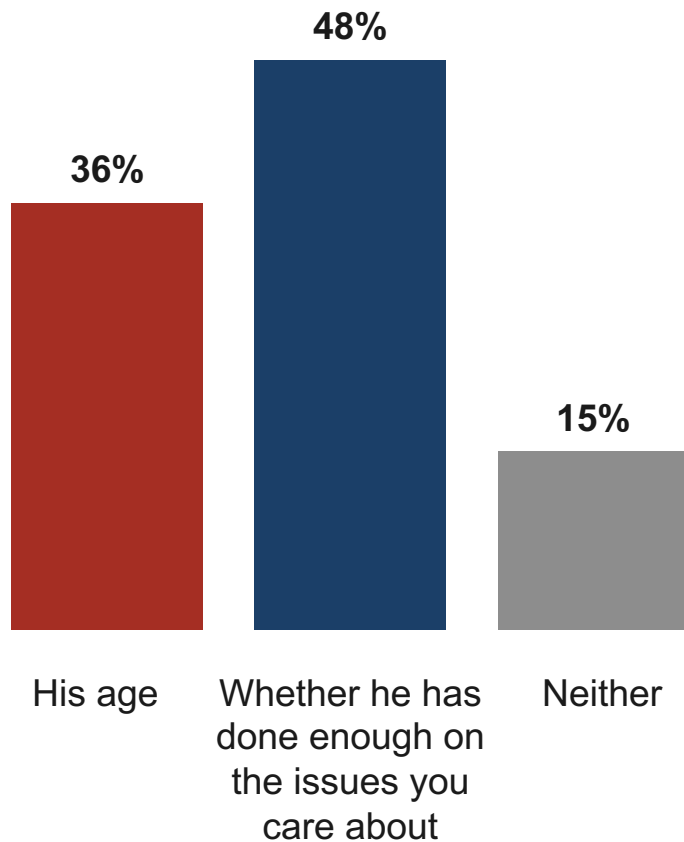
“I don't really think Biden has done anything for climate change, I certainly haven't heard about it... I mean his whole campaign mostly was about climate change and things like that but I don't believe he did what he said he would do.” – 18-29-year-old man



“Not doing enough about the wave of anti-LGBTQ, and especially anti-trans legislation. Supporting Israel & ignoring their genocide of Palestinians. Not doing more to reverse climate change or stop big corporations from the harm they're doing.” – 18-29-year-old woman

# Filling in knowledge gaps is job #1. Young people may not be aware of what the Biden Administration has accomplished, but they want to hear about it.

*Which concerns you more about voting for Joe Biden for president?*



	His age %	Whether he has done enough %
Biden base	35	42
Turnouts	42	48
Persuadables	36	54
High-risk Biden defectors	31	62
18-24	30	61
25-29	39	45
30-34	39	44
35-39	39	42

# Personalizing issues related to climate change, clean energy, and jobs can be an effective strategy for content creators to drive engagement with their followers.

Highlighting the tangible impact of climate change, including extreme weather and negative health effects

- Helps make complicated issues more accessible to young audiences
- Allows content creators to incorporate real-world experiences (e.g., hot weather) into content in an authentic way



## Staying true to influencers' genre is key

“I was able to do a whole cooking video and a voiceover talking about like my AC going out in Arizona during the summer and then, like, talking about the food a little bit.” – *General Content Creator*



## Untapped topic area

Public transportation = relatable to both content creators and their audience

- Often more relevant to them and their audience than EVs and home upgrades. Many don't own cars or their own homes (they rent).



# Economic growth and job opportunities are especially important.

- Many of their young followers are either starting or getting ready to start their careers and adult lives
- Information about potential job opportunities and career paths related to clean energy have strong potential
- Initiatives like the Climate Corps are especially interesting

“

“People get excited about the opportunity to get out of a dead-end job. It’s not a political thing, it’s an economic thing”. –  
*Political Content Creator*



# Dislike for Trump is clear and pervasive, but creating content focused SOLELY on Trump meets resistance.



## Obstacles

- General content creators **fear inviting MAGA to their platforms**. Their primary goal is to entertain their audience and Trump content is simply not that entertaining to their followers.
- Political content creators observe that **Trump content “is for Boomers,”** with little appeal to their young audience. They do not see Trump content as relevant to them and/or have Trump rage fatigue.



“**He’s not relevant anymore.** But maybe that’ll change going into election year. People just don’t care as much.” – *Political Content Creator*



“I’d rather do Biden than Trump. There is so much **Trump fatigue** and people don’t want to hear it. Makes things more toxic and I’m not interested in participating in that. So would **rather focus on the Biden administration.**” – *Political Content Creator*



“People are over it and hope he doesn’t get elected. I’m over it too. Feels very boomer. **Something my parents would talk about.** I don’t want to engage with it. Now, the **discussion is more about how the current administration can be improved.**” – *Political Content Creator*

# Content creators recommend three strategies for talking about Trump.

1

**Connect Trump to** widely acknowledged climate villains: **'Big Polluters'** such as oil & gas companies

- Young audiences blame corporations (e.g., fast-fashion corporations like Shein and big oil and gas), the wealthy, and other polluting countries like China for negative impact on the environment.
- Highlight all he has done to vastly increase fossil fuel extraction and use or enable corporate polluters.

2

Illustrate all of the ways in which **Trump will take us backward** by reversing the progress we have begun to make on climate change and clean energy.

3

Focus on the **impact of his policy positions** and implications of a Trump presidency for climate change as opposed to his character.

# Summary of Dos and Don'ts when engaging with content creators on climate and clean energy



## The Dos

- ✓ Encourage influencers to **express their creativity** in content creation and show appreciation for their individuality.
- ✓ **Personalize the initial outreach** to influencers (or their representatives) and show that you understand and respect their unique reach.
- ✓ Streamline and simplify campaign briefing materials—provide **concise, easily digestible campaign briefs** with clear visuals to outline the collaboration essentials—the “what, when, and how.”
- ✓ Clearly **distinguish between must-haves and optional elements** in campaign briefs.
- ✓ **Create opportunities for in-person events**, especially with other content creators.
- ✓ **Build long-term relationships**. Aim for sustained partnerships, highlighting ongoing opportunities and support resources for handling any negative feedback from sponsored content.

# Summary of Dos and Don'ts when engaging with content creators on climate and clean energy



## The Don'ts

- × Impose overly prescriptive or rigid directions on the content and format of sponsored posts.
- × Require influencers to ask their followers to sign up for listservs or provide personal information.
- × Approach influencers with campaigns before they are final or close to final.