

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Corrie Hunt
DATE: September 26, 2024
RE: Poll Results: Clean Energy Messaging Shifts Vote Toward Harris

On behalf of Climate Power, Hart Research recently completed an online survey, fielded September 18-23, 2024, among 2,016 voters in battleground states. The sample included oversamples of young voters ages 18-29 (N = 424), Black voters (N = 440), Latino voters (N = 311), Pennsylvania voters (N = 594), and Michigan voters (N = 508). Here are the key points from the survey.

1. Climate and clean energy messaging gives Harris the edge in the presidential race.

- In battleground states, Harris and Trump start out tied at 47-47 in a multi-candidate trial heat and 49-49 in a head-to-head match. However, Harris's position is stronger. Her voters are more locked in, with 87% saying their minds are made up, compared to 80% for Trump. She also has more potential to expand her vote share, with 28% of non-Harris voters saying there's still a chance they could support her, compared to 19% of non-Trump voters who would consider backing Trump.
- **After voters are presented with a positive narrative on climate and clean energy in favor of Harris, and a negative narrative against Trump (see Appendix), Harris pulls ahead by four points (49% Harris, 45% Trump).** The biggest shifts come from key groups: independents (moving from +6 Trump to +6 Harris), voters of color under age 30 (+42 Harris to +53 Harris), and younger voters (ages 25-34), who shift from +10 Harris (51-42) to +21 Harris (57-36).

2. We have a strong economic contrast to make on clean energy: Harris is focused on working families and the middle class, while Trump is protecting Big Oil. The expansion of clean energy does connect to lower utility costs for voters. Our most persuasive case centers on the cost savings under Harris's clean energy plan versus Trump's \$110 billion in tax breaks for oil and gas companies.

- This argument resonates with "gettable" voters (i.e. likely voters after excluding white strong Republicans who are definitely voting for Trump). Over six in 10 say the positive case for Harris (64%) and the negative case against Trump (63%) are important reasons to support her. The anti-Trump message hits harder, with 51% saying it's a "very important" reason to oppose him, compared to 48% for Harris's positive case.
- In our message highlighting exercise (see appendix), the economic proof points are the most persuasive. Harris's tie-breaking vote to triple clean energy production, saving Americans \$38 billion on electricity bills, and helping middle-class families save \$80 a month stood out. Her track record of holding Big Oil accountable for price gouging as Attorney General also resonated. On Trump, the strongest points against him were his \$110 billion in tax cuts for oil and gas companies and his intent to be a "dictator on day one," allowing corporate polluters to release toxic chemicals into communities.

3. We can effectively counter the false Republican attack that blames Biden and Harris for empowering China by highlighting how their clean energy plan creates jobs, while Trump's plan would cost American jobs by ending clean energy investments.

- We tested two responses to the disingenuous Republican claim that Harris and Biden are shipping jobs to China. Both emphasized Harris’s tie-breaking vote to bring manufacturing jobs and the supply chain back to the U.S. The stronger response, outperforming by 11 points, focused on the fact that Trump would end clean energy investments, causing massive layoffs. This was more compelling than a message focused on auto jobs lost to China under Trump’s presidency.
- The message about Trump ending clean energy investments and costing jobs resonates across party lines and **is particularly effective in key battleground states like Michigan and Pennsylvania.**

STATEMENT A: [CHINA ATTACK] Kamala Harris and Joe Biden are shipping American jobs to China. We’ve already lost too many auto manufacturing jobs, and now we’re going to lose even more because Kamala Harris wants to force you to buy an electric car. Her radical EV (electric vehicle) mandate will take jobs from American workers and further enrich the Chinese. *(All respondents read this)*

STATEMENT B: [FUTURE JOB LOSSES] The truth is that Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote for a plan that is bringing manufacturing jobs and the supply chain back to the United States. The clean energy plan has already created over 300,000 good-paying, clean energy jobs across the country to date and generated hundreds of billions of dollars in private sector investments in local communities. If Trump wins, he will end investments in clean energy, which could lead to thousands of workers being laid off and hurt local communities across the country. *(Half of respondents read this response)*

STATEMENT B: [PAST JOB LOSSES] The truth is that under Trump, thousands of auto jobs moved overseas, and China took the lead in clean energy and electric vehicle manufacturing. Kamala Harris cast the tiebreaking vote for a plan that is bringing manufacturing jobs back to the United States and seizing leadership back from China on the industries of the future. The clean energy plan has already created over 300,000 good-paying, clean energy jobs across the country to date and generated hundreds of billions of dollars in private sector investments in local communities. *(Half of respondents read this response)*

Which statement do you agree with more?

	China Attack %	Future job losses %	Net ±	China Attack %	Past job losses %	Net ±
All voters	45	55	+11	50	50	-
Democrats	15	85	+70	21	79	+58
Independents	40	60	+19	49	51	+2
Republicans	72	28	-45	77	23	-55
Michigan voters	45	55	+10	48	52	+5
Pennsylvania voters	44	56	+12	49	51	+3

4. Project 2025 has become a growing liability for Trump as more voters have become familiar with it over the summer.

- Awareness of Project 2025 rose sharply from July to September, with 62% of voters now reporting they know a lot or some about it (up from 49% in July). The biggest increases in awareness were among Democrats (from 57% to 73%), college-educated voters under 30 (from 54% to 78%), and Black voters over age 50 (from 45% to 71%).

- The more people know, the less they like it. Overall, 61% view Project 2025 unfavorably, while only 19% have a favorable opinion. It's particularly toxic among Democrats (85% unfavorable) and independents (62% unfavorable). More notably, among Trump's soft supporters—those who could still change their vote—53% view it unfavorably, making this issue a potential vulnerability.

Appendix

Results from Message Highlighting

Positive Harris Narrative*

Kamala Harris **knows prices** are too high, and many **Americans** are **struggling** with the **cost of living**. That's why she cast the **tie-breaking** vote for a plan to **triple clean energy production**, **save Americans \$38 billion on electricity bills** and **help middle-class** and **working families save \$80 per month on energy bills**. This was the most transformative energy law in history, proving we can address climate change while expanding opportunities for **good-paying jobs** and lowering energy costs. She will take on **Big Oil for price gouging**, just like she did as Attorney General when she won millions in settlements for taxpayers from Big Oil for polluting our air and water and harming people's health. Trump sides with Big Oil billionaires over working people. His policies increase profits for Big Oil CEOs and eliminate clean energy choices, destroying thousands of jobs and leaving Americans vulnerable to more price hikes at the pump. He would also allow Big Oil to pollute as much as they want with no accountability.

*Message only shown to "Gettable voters." Skip white strong republicans who are definitely voting for Trump. Larger words correspond to greater percentages of respondents highlighting that word as a strong reason to support Harris.

Trump Negative Narrative*

Donald Trump will put **working people and future generations at risk to serve his own interests and gain more power**. He has openly stated that he would be a **dictator on day one** and would **eliminate environmental protections and expand oil drilling with no accountability**, including in our treasured public lands and coastal areas. If elected to a second term, **Trump would give oil and gas companies \$110 billion in tax cuts**, while those same companies raise prices on American families. Trump would allow **corporate polluters to release toxic chemicals into our communities**, just as he did when he was president—letting companies pump **cancer-causing chemicals and toxins** linked to child **health** risks and brain damage into our water. Kamala Harris believes we have a responsibility to leave a better world for our children and grandchildren. As president, she will fight to lower energy costs, protect freedom, ensure commonsense safeguards for our air and water, and keep our communities safe from corporate polluters.

*Message only shown to "Gettable voters." Skip white strong Republicans who are definitely voting for Trump. Larger words correspond to greater percentages of respondents highlighting that word as a strong reason to support Harris.