



CLIMATE POWER 2020

May 11, 2020
Washington, D.C.

To: Interested Parties
From: Andrew Baumann and Maura Farrell, Global Strategy Group
Date: April 30, 2020
Re: Climate Critiques Against Trump Move Swing Voters and Motivate Younger and Hispanic Targets

Global Strategy Group partnered with Climate Power 2020, the Center for American Progress Action Fund and the League of Conservation Voters to conduct an online survey among 603 persuadable registered voters, with additional samples of 302 non-Republican Hispanic voters and 300 non-Republican younger voters in key states between March 20th and March 29th, 2020.

Key Findings:

- **The voters that are up for grabs in the presidential race are Republican-leaning, but they are also fundamentally pro-climate.** Though persuadable voters are split on President Trump's overall job performance, this group leans Republican, largely because Democrats are more solid in their decision to vote against Trump and thus fewer fit our definition of persuadable voters. Persuadable voters overwhelmingly disapprove of the job he is doing on climate change, and a majority think climate change is a crisis or a very serious problem and support taking strong action to combat climate change and moving to a 100% clean energy economy by 2050. Plus, persuadable voters feel strong action to combat climate change will be good for the economy.

	Persuadable Voters
Partisanship (self-identified)	30 / 29 / 41 Democrat Independent Republican
Trump Job Approval	47 / 48 Approve Disapprove
Trump Climate Performance	18 / 62 Approve Disapprove
Support for 100% Clean Energy Economy by 2050	66 / 11 Support Oppose
Support for Strong US Action to Combat Climate Change	67 / 13 Support Oppose
Strong US Action Will Be...	72 / 28 Good for the economy Bad for the economy

- **There is a huge opportunity to move persuadable voters on the Congressional ballot using climate.** While Republicans lead the generic ballot with these GOP-leaning persuadable voters by 9 points, when that is reframed as a choice between a Democrat who “supports taking strong government action to combat climate change” and a Republican who opposes such action, **the generic ballot shifts to a 20-point Democratic lead – a net 29-point shift.** Among center-right white women, the shift is even more dramatic, as these voters move from -36 to +12 an incredible 48-point shift. This finding demonstrates a real opportunity for Democrats in Congressional and Senate races and is consistent with other research we have done in battleground states around the country in the last 6 to 8 months.

Persuable Voters

Generic Ballot: If the general election for Congress were today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?	32 / 41 Democrat Republican
Climate Generic Ballot: If the general election for Congress were held today between a Democratic candidate who supports taking strong government action to combat climate change and a Republican candidate who opposes taking strong government action to combat climate change, for whom would you vote?	46 / 26 Democrat Republican

- **Critiquing Trump’s record on climate results in real movement away from Trump among persuadable voters AND increases motivation to vote for Hispanic and younger voters.** Messaging that highlights Trump’s poor record on climate moves these GOP-leaning persuadable voters away from Trump on both the 2020 ballot and disapproval of his job performance. This strategy also boosts the percent of younger voters who initially support Vice President Biden and say they are extremely motivated to vote by 12 points. Motivation among Hispanic voters who stated they initially supported Biden increased by 9 points, in addition to upping Biden’s lead over Trump with these audiences.

	Persuable				Hispanic			Younger		
	Initial	Final	Δ		Initial	Final	Δ	Initial	Final	Δ
Biden vs. Trump	-9	+6	+15	Biden vs. Trump	+63	+69	+6	+61	+64	+3
Trump Job Approval	-1	-20	-19	Motivation to Vote <small>% extremely motivated among initial Biden supporters</small>	75%	84%	+9	67%	79%	+12

- **Talking about climate is credible to voters in the midst of the public health crisis surrounding the coronavirus.** Coronavirus is certainly a top-of-mind issue for voters right now, with a majority of persuadable voters classifying coronavirus as a crisis (39%) or at the very least a very serious problem (40%). However, this does not diminish the seriousness of climate change in their minds: A 65% to 24% majority of persuadable voters agree with the statement: “the coronavirus is disrupting our lives for a few months, but if we fail to act, climate change will disrupt our lives for decades.” And a 57% to 29% majority agree with the statement “the public health effects of climate change will be just as bad or worse than the coronavirus”.

- Critiques of Trump's record of ignoring experts and denying reality on the dual crises of climate and coronavirus reinforce negative frames on Trump and move persuadable voters away from him.** Out of seven anti-Trump messages that focused on Trump's record on climate, a message that critiques Trump for dismissing military leaders, scientists and the CDC about both climate change and coronavirus (language below) is top-testing among persuadable voters as well as non-Republican younger and Hispanic voters. Not only is this argument the most effective framing of Trump's record on climate change among these key audiences, this framing reinforces voters' existing negative feelings about Trump, driving up the percent of persuadable voters who agree that Trump ignores the advice of experts by 10 points, the percent of persuadable voters who agree that Trump denies reality and ignores the truth by 9 points, and the percent who agree that Trump is putting future generations of Americans at risk by 14 points.

Persuadable Voters			
Initial	Final	Δ	
66% Describes Trump well	76%	+10	Ignores the advice of trusted figures like military leaders and public health experts
62%	71%	+9	Denies reality and ignores the truth
51%	65%	+14	Is putting future generations of Americans at risk

*****Definition of persuadable voters:** Persuadable voters were defined as anyone who is in categories 3-5 on the following scale AND not a strong Democrat or a strong Republican: (1) Definitely vote for the Democrat, regardless of who the Democrats nominate, (2) Probably vote for the Democrat, regardless of who the Democrats nominate, (3) Undecided/Depends on candidate, but lean Democrat (4) Undecided/Depends on candidate, no lean, (5) Undecided/Depends on candidate, but lean Trump, (6) Probably vote for Trump, regardless of who the Democrats nominate, (7) Definitely vote for Trump, regardless of who the Democrats nominate.

*****States surveyed:** Voters were surveyed in Rust Belt (Minnesota, Michigan, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) and Sun Belt (Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, and Texas) states. Voters in Texas were only included in the Hispanic and younger voter samples.

*****Language tested:** Our politicians have a duty to listen to our nation's most respected leaders and experts, especially in a time of crisis, but Trump dishonors them by insisting he knows better. First, he dismissed our military leaders when they said climate change was a growing threat to our country. Then, for eight weeks, he ignored the Centers for Disease Control's warnings about the threat of coronavirus and even overturned their proposed plans to fight the virus.