

To: Interested Parties

From: Andrew Baumann and Maura Farrell, Global Strategy Group

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Re: New Research Shows that Democrats Should Go on Offense on Climate in 2020

Global Strategy Group partnered with Climate Power 2020 and Data for Progress to conduct in-depth research exploring how climate can impact the 2020 election up and down the ballot – and how Democrats can best use it to their advantage. The research shows that climate is a winning issue for Democrats and can help them expand their margins among key groups of voters who are not yet fully translating dissatisfaction with Trump into votes for Democrats: center-right voters, younger voters, and Latinx voters – particularly women.

This new research shows that these key groups, and voters more generally, overwhelmingly support bold action on climate. More importantly, the research shows that Democrats can effectively rebut dishonest attacks from Donald Trump and other Republicans around the Green New Deal. Not only can Democrats credibly challenge these attacks, Democrats can also use voters’ inherent skepticism about the GOP’s claims to take the attack to Republicans and effectively paint Trump and the GOP as corrupt and selfish liars who are putting the future of our children at risk – and move votes at both the presidential and Congressional level.

The following memo is based on an online survey conducted June 23-July 1 among 1,031 registered voters nationwide, plus additional oversamples to achieve 3,249 interviews, including 1,575 voters in battleground states¹, 2,070 middle partisan voters², 1,073 voters ages 18-34, and 660 Latinx voters.

Key Findings:

- **Vice President Biden and Congressional Democrats are in good electorate shape, though climate helps solidify support among center-right, younger, and Latinx voters, especially women.** Biden and Democrats are currently winning matchups against Donald Trump and Congressional Republicans, but among many key demographic groups, dissatisfaction with Trump (+18 net UNfavorable nationwide) is even greater than support for Biden (+11) and support for a generic Congressional Democrat (+10). As the table below shows, this gap indicates that there is room for further growth in Democrats’ vote share, especially among independents, voters age 27 and younger, and Latinx voters – and the gap is particularly pronounced with women within each of those groups.

	Vote for President Biden-Trump (including leaners)	Generic Congressional Democrat-Republican	Dissatisfaction with Trump Unfavorable-Favorable
Nationwide	+11	+10	+18
Independents	+13	+10	+39
Age 18-27	+27	+30	+46
Latinx	+41	+46	+56

- **Voters want bold action on climate, which makes it a winning issue for Democrats – especially with the same groups with whom Democrats have the most room to grow.** Voters overwhelmingly support BOLD (emphasis added) government action to combat climate change and would vote for a Democrat who supports taking such action over a Republican who does not by 24 points – outpacing the standard generic ballot by 14 points. Framing the vote around climate action results in especially large gains with the same groups where Democrats are underperforming dissatisfaction with Trump the most, including center-right white women (-42 on generic ballot / -7 on climate generic – for a net gain of +35), independents in battleground states (+14 / +47 – net gain of +33), and voters under the age of 35 (+28 / +50, gain of +22).

¹ Battleground states for this survey include: AZ, CO, FL, GA, IA, MI, NC, PA, & WI

² “Middle partisan” voters do not self-identify as strong Democrats or strong Republicans

	Nationwide
Generic Ballot: If the general election for Congress were today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?	51 / 41 Dem Rep
Climate Generic Ballot: If the election for Congress were held today between a Democratic candidate who supports taking bold government action to combat climate change and a Republican candidate who opposes taking bold government action to combat climate change, for whom would you vote?	58 / 34 Dem Rep
Bold Climate Action: Do you support or oppose the U.S. government taking bold action to combat climate change?	71 / 19 Support Oppose

- Voters support investing trillions of dollars in clean energy and this support holds up against Republican attacks.** Framing these investments as policies that will put people back to work now while providing significant long-term benefits for the country allows Democrats' positive case for clean energy investments to withstand arguments from Republicans who claim that this policy is part of a "wish-list of socialist policies like the Green New Deal."

	Nationwide Net Support	Middle Partisans	18-34	Latinx
Initial: Democrats have proposed spending trillions of dollars to invest in clean energy infrastructure. Would you support or oppose this proposal?	+23	+24	+41	+45
Informed: <u>Democrats say that</u> , instead of giving more bailouts to big oil CEOs as the Republicans want to do, we should be focusing on policies that will put people back to work now and build a better future for our children. Investing in clean, renewable energy will create millions of good-paying jobs for all kinds of workers while boosting innovation and economic growth, combating climate change, and protecting our kids' health in the long-term. <u>Republicans say that</u> we should be focusing on policies that will help American workers and business – including the oil and gas industry – recover from the economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis, not exploiting the crisis to push through a wish-list of socialist policies like the Green New Deal that will kill millions of jobs, drive up the cost of energy for American families and businesses, and cost taxpayers trillions of dollars. Now that you've read these statements, do you support or oppose the Democrats' proposal to spend trillions of dollars to invest in clean energy infrastructure?	+21	+23	+42	+46

- Voters are skeptical of Republican claims on not only costs but also hamburgers, cars and airplanes – creating an opening for Democrats to parry these attacks and go on the offensive against Republicans.** We tested a robust negative attacking Democrats for supporting climate action and clean energy investments (see images below). If not responded to, Republican attacks on climate action (via the Green New Deal) for supposedly costing nearly \$100 trillion and necessitating huge new taxes can have power. However, voters are also skeptical about these claims – as well as the even more outlandish claims that Democrats would ban hamburgers, cars, and airplanes.

Convincing arguments to vote against Democrats:

Joe Biden, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Bernie Sanders and other liberal Democrats and radical environmental activists in Washington are pushing the so-called Green New Deal. Their plan is a massive **government takeover** of our energy system that economists say would **cost nearly \$100 trillion - or \$40,000 for every American family**. That is more than every dollar our federal government has spent in its entire history and **Democrats want to raise taxes 70% to pay for it** - something that is unthinkable even in the best of times.

The Democrats' Green New Deal would kill our country and have a devastating effect on our way of life. It would **ban airplanes, hamburgers, and gasoline powered cars**. It would crush the dreams of the poorest Americans, and disproportionately harm minority communities. What's worse, it would end the production of American coal, oil and natural gas, destroying an industry that has driven American economic growth and severely damaging our already fragile economy - economists say it would kill millions of jobs.

With their Green New Deal, Biden, Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders, and their radical environmental allies not only want to **raise taxes**, but also **drive up electricity bills for families by hundreds of dollars per year and the cost of gas by 50 cents per gallon**. This is a very bad idea. We have the cleanest air and water we've ever had. We will defend the environment, but we will also **defend American sovereignty, American prosperity, and we will defend American jobs**.

Least concerning / Least believable arguments:

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With their Green New Deal, Biden, Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders, and their radical environmental allies not only want to raise taxes, but also drive up electricity bills for families by hundreds of dollars per year and the cost of gas by 50 cents per gallon. That is a very bad idea. We have the cleanest air and water we've ever had. We will defend the environment, but we will also defend American SOVEREIGNTY, American prosperity, and we will defend American jobs.

This creates openings for Democrats to push back against these ridiculous claims, which generate real backlash from voters. When voters were asked to describe Trump and Republicans in three words after hearing a series of counterattacks, the dominant response was "liars," followed closely by "greedy," "selfish," and "corrupt":

3 words to describe Trump and Republicans in Washington:



- After messaging from both sides, Democrats gain with both key swing and base groups – and move key metrics in their favor. As the table below shows, following strong messaging attacks from Trump and Republicans and a set of counterattacks from Democrats, Democrats gain among middle partisans, younger voters and Latinx voters at both the presidential and Congressional level.

	Vote for President Biden-Trump (without leaners)			Generic Congressional Democrat-Republican		
	Initial	Final	Change	Initial	Final	Change
Middle partisans	+12	+14	+2	+13	+18	+5
Age 18-34	+23	+25	+2	+28	+33	+5
Latinx	+39	+43	+4	+46	+49	+3

Moreover, this balanced exchange of messaging results in Democrats significantly expanding their advantage – when matched against Trump – on key metrics like leaving a better world for future generations and standing up to corporate special interests.

	Middle Partisans Net Dems. better			18-34 Net Dems. better			Latinx Net Dems. better		
	Initial	Final	Δ	Initial	Final	Δ	Initial	Final	Δ
Leaving behind a better world for future generations	+16	+24	+8	+28	+36	+8	+40	+47	+7
Standing up to corporate special interests	+8	+17	+9	+15	+24	+9	+26	+32	+6
Looking out for people like me	+12	+17	+5	+24	+28	+4	+41	+47	+6

- **And Democrats should not be afraid to lean into environmental justice, particularly with younger voters and voters of color.** An environmental justice message against Trump and Republicans that focuses on environmental racism and the higher levels of toxic pollution and dirty air in Black, Latino, and Native American communities which has made them more likely to contract and die from the coronavirus – all the while Trump and Republicans rolled back environmental protections and allowed big energy CEOs to spew even more pollution into communities of color – rises to the top among younger, Latinx, and African American voters and should be a strong focus of communications to these important targets.