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AMERICA'S UNIONS

Voters Support Biden Using Executive Action To Advance Workers' Rights

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Introduction

With the power of presidency, Biden wields a potent tool to improve working conditions, promote the clean energy sector, and strengthen labor unions in this country. One of the strongest tools Biden holds is in the federal government's role as a purchaser of goods and services, often referred to as "procurement." This can function as a simple, yet effective instrument of industrial policy, allowing the administration to invest in American workers and build up domestic manufacturing and critical supply chains with high labor standards.

The other policy avenue available to the Biden administration comes in the form of revised use of existing federal labor law. This can materialize in a handful of ways. Biden has already taken the step of instructing the Department of Labor to reconsider how it treats workers who leave their jobs because of unsafe conditions due to the pandemic, potentially making them eligible for unemployment insurance. Biden can also work to ramp up enforcement on platform companies such as Uber and Instacart that incorrectly treat their employees as independent contractors. This can represent a means of reversing the damage of measures such as Proposition 22 in California.

As part of a February, 2021 survey of 1,215 likely voters nationally, Data for Progress polled a range of steps that the Biden administration could through executive action regarding procurement, the misclassification of workers, and towards improving labor standards more generally. We find high levels of support for these proposals, even when tested using partisan frames and with explicit mention of the use of executive orders.

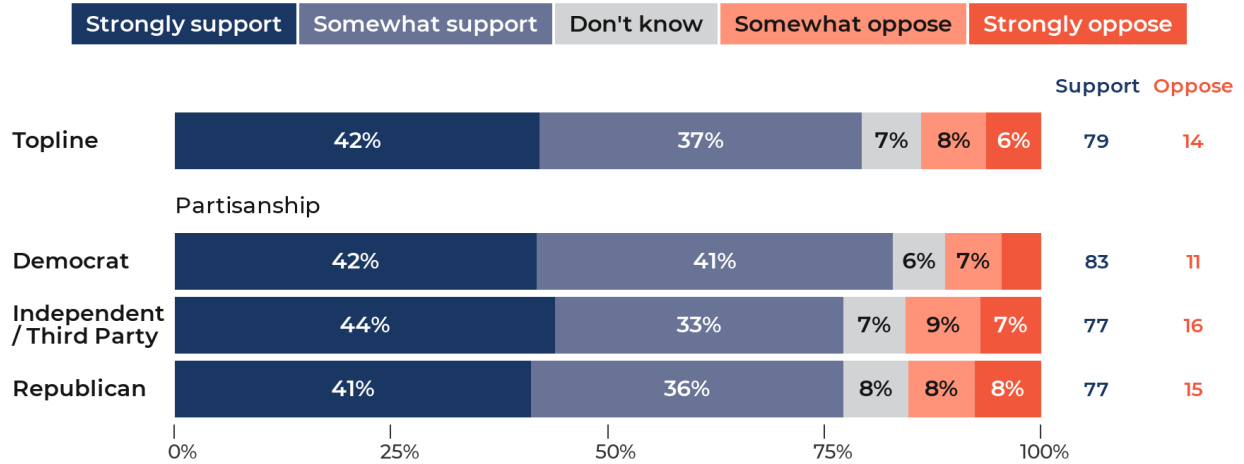
Voters support the use of government procurement to promote union jobs and America's clean energy sector

By a margin of 65-percentage-points, likely voters support the creation of a new rule that would require the products of any new clean energy research funded by the federal government to also be manufactured in the United States (79 percent support, 14 percent oppose). There is broad bipartisan support for this. Likely voters that self-identify as Democrats, Independent / Third Party, and Republican back this proposal by margins of 72-points, 61-points, and 62-points, respectively.

When making purchasing decisions, likely voters also back the federal government prioritizing buying sustainable products made by union workers here in the United States by a margin of 54-points (73 percent support, 19 percent oppose). There is, again, deep bipartisan agreement on this proposal. Democrats, Independents, and Republicans all support this proposal by a margin of 75-points, 52-points, and 32-points, respectively.

Voters Want The Results Of Government Research And Development To Be Built In The United States

Would you support or oppose the creation of a new rule mandating that if the government pays for clean energy research, such as research into new kinds of batteries for electric vehicles or more efficient solar panels, that this new technology must be produced in the United States?

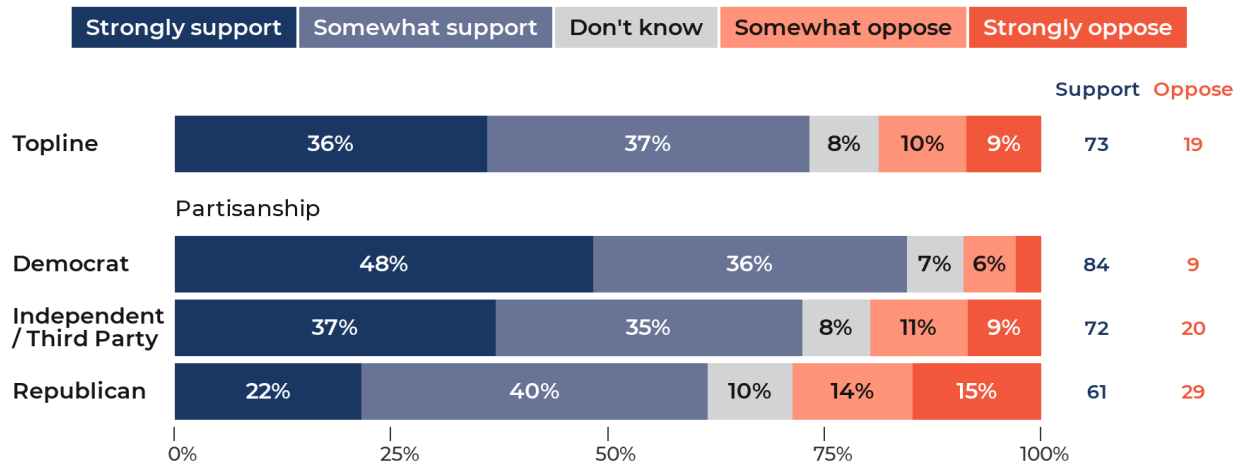


Feb 3 to Feb 4, 2021 survey of 1215 likely voters

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Voters Want The Government To Prioritize Buying Sustainable Products That Union Workers Built Here In The United States

Would you support or oppose the government prioritizing buying sustainable products, such as electric vehicles and green building materials, made by union workers and built here in America?



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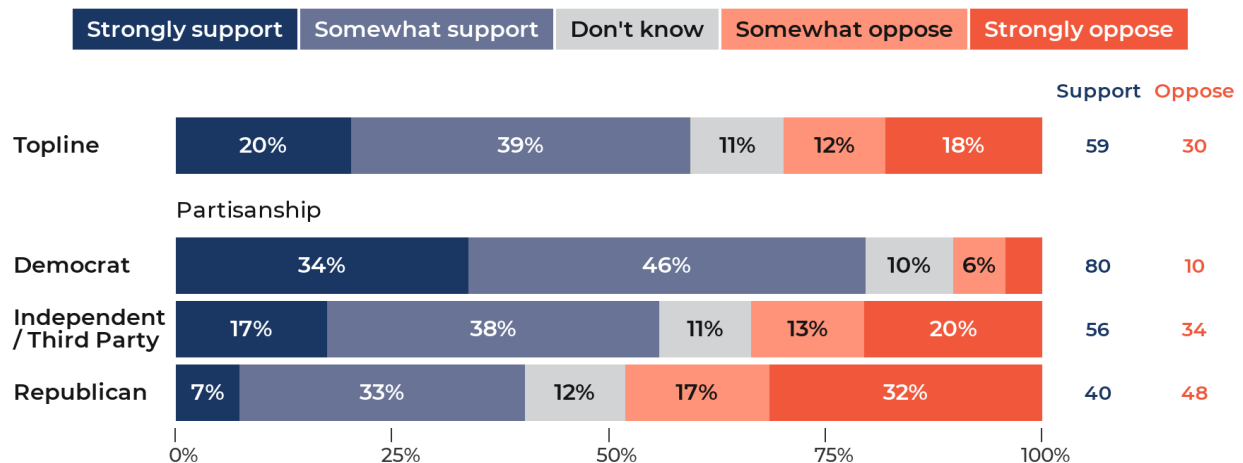
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We also find that likely voters would support the creation by the White House of Purchasing for the Common Good, a body which would coordinate the use of the federal government’s purchasing power, sometimes called procurement, to raise labor standards, support unions, grow domestic manufacturing, and build out America’s clean energy sector. Overall, likely voters support it by a margin of 29-points (59 percent support, 30 percent oppose). Democrats support this by a margin of 70-points and Independents do so by a margin of 22-points. Republicans, meanwhile, narrowly oppose the proposal by a margin of eight-points, though 40 percent say they support it.

Voters Support The Federal Government Using Its Purchasing Power To Achieve Progressive Policy Priorities

Some people are proposing that President Joe Biden create a White House Office of Purchasing for the Common Good. The mission of this office will be to use federal purchasing power to lift labor standards and compliance, advance industrial policy and Buy American, and advance other progressive contracting reforms, such as increasing clean energy and green purchasing, by coordinating national strategies and driving institutional change within the federal government in this area.

Would you support or oppose the creation of this new office?



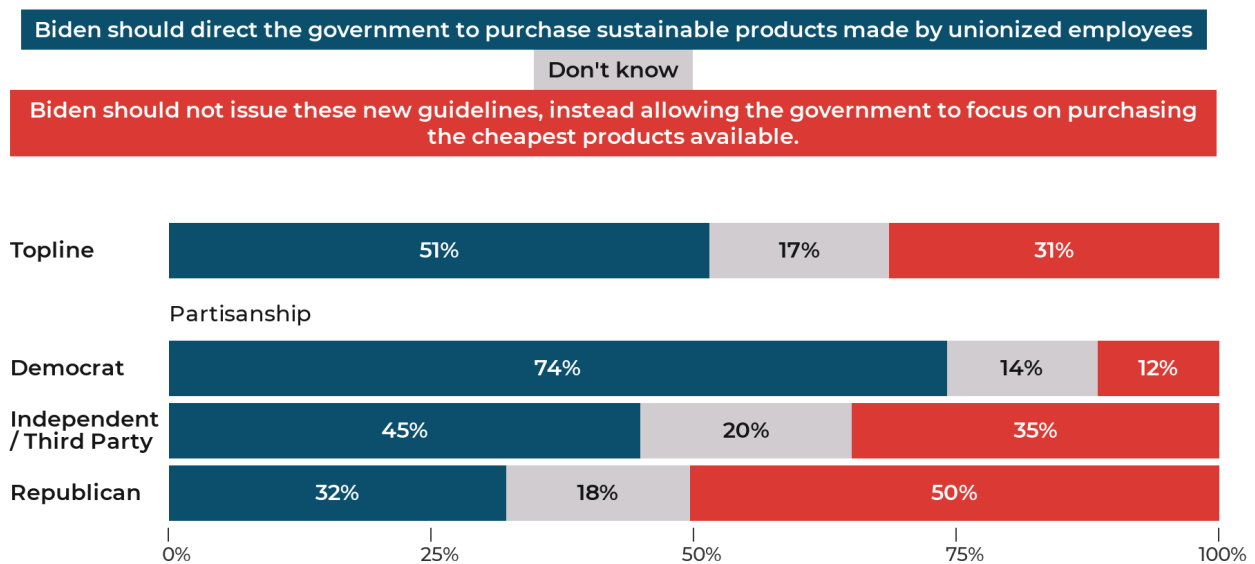
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We also tested support for this proposal using an explicit executive order frame, again finding majority support for the position. Specifically, we asked if Biden should task the government to prioritize purchasing sustainable union-made goods or, alternatively, focusing on purchasing products at the cheapest rate. We find that likely voters, by a margin of 20-points, want Biden to direct the government's procurement power towards promoting the production of sustainable, union made goods. Democrats and Independents support this action by margins of 62-points and ten-points, respectively. Republicans, in contrast, prefer the government to purchase cheaper made goods by a margin of 18-points.

Voters Want The Biden Administration To Prioritize Buying Goods Made By Unionized Workers

The federal government's purchasing power is sometimes called "procurement." When thinking about how President Joe Biden should or should not use this procurement power, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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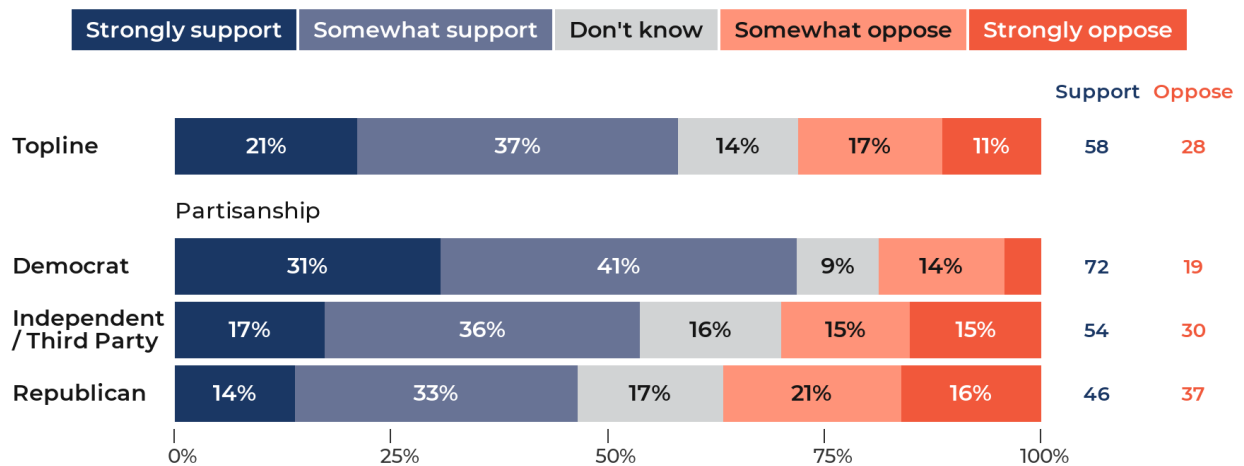
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Voters want the Biden administration to crack down on the misclassification of workers

We also asked likely voters if they would support the Department of Labor using its enforcement power to crack down on platform services like Uber and Instacart who misclassify their employees as independent contractors. We find that likely voters support this by a margin of 30-points (58 percent support, 28 percent oppose). A majority of Democrats and Independents both support this, backing it by margins of 53-points and 24-points, respectively. A plurality of Republicans are also in favor, supporting it by margins of nine-points (46 percent support, 37 percent oppose).

Voter Support The Department Of Labor Cracking Down On Companies That Misclassify Their Employees As Independent Contractors

Would you support or oppose the Department of Labor using its enforcement authority to crack down on platform companies, such as Uber or Instacart, that currently treat their employees as independent contractors? The goal would be to allow these workers to benefit from all the protections and benefits that employees enjoy, such as minimum wage and overtime.



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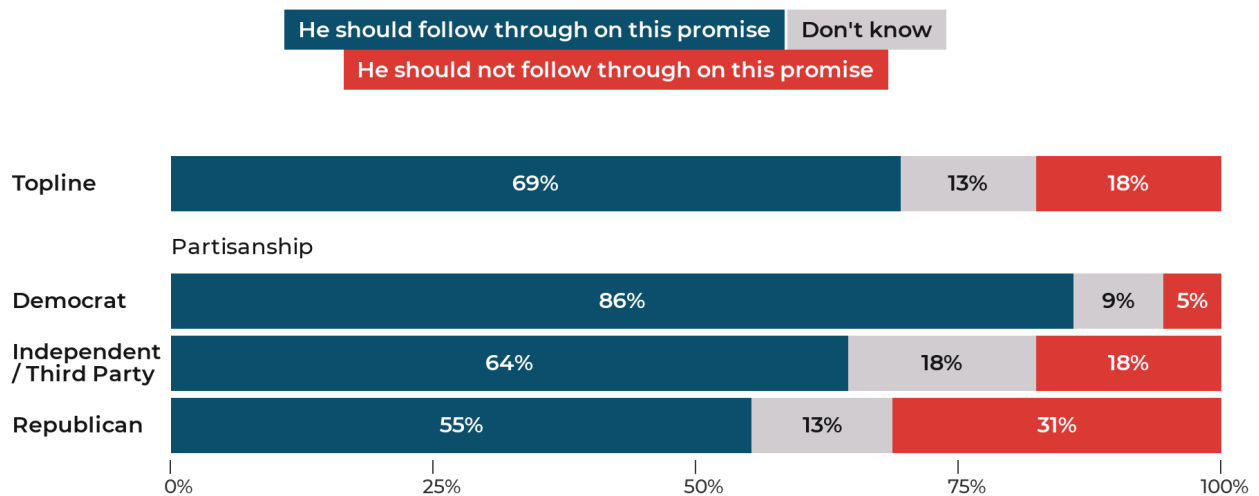
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Voters want Biden to raise labor standards

While on the campaign trail, Biden promised that he wouldn't direct federal spending towards firms that engage in anti-union activity and violate labor law. We asked likely voters if they wanted Biden to follow through on this pledge now that he's been elected. We find that they do by a margin of 51-points (69 percent want him to follow through, 18 percent do not). Democrats, Independents, and Republicans want the president to keep this promise by margins of 81-points, 46-points, and 24-points, respectively.

Voters Want Biden To Follow Through On His Promise To Not Send Federal Dollars To Firm That Engage In Anti-Union Activity, Wage Theft, And That Violate Federal Labor Law

President Joe Biden has committed to ensuring that "federal dollars do not flow to employers who engage in union-busting activities, participate in wage theft, or violate labor law." When thinking about this, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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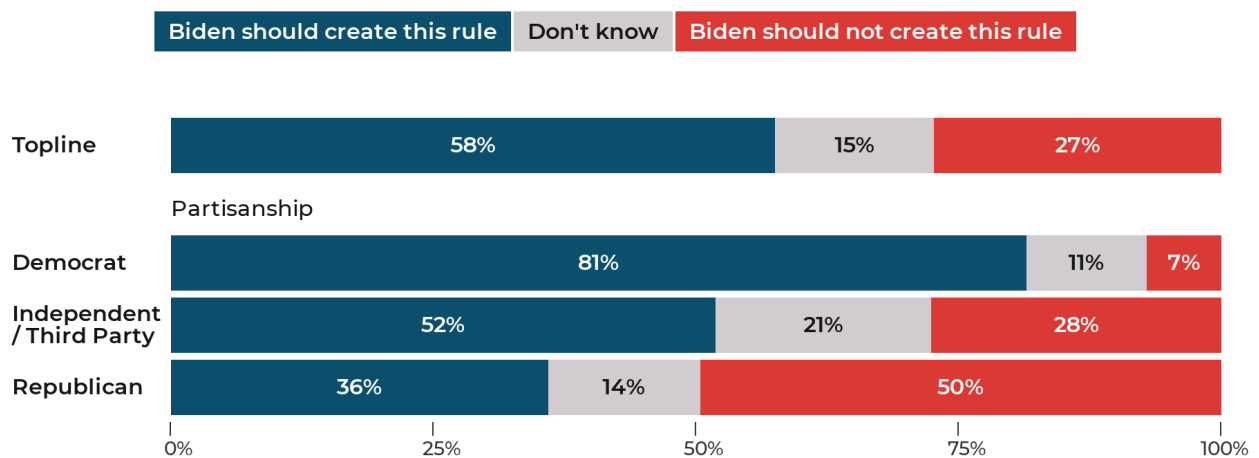
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Relatedly, we tested a proposal to formalize a rule where companies could only bid for federal contracts if they exceed a certain threshold of working protections. We find that likely voters are quite enthusiastic about this proposed rule, backing it by a margin of 31-points (58 percent support, 27 percent oppose). By margins of 74-points and 24-points Democrats and Independents, respectively, support this proposal. Republicans are more split: On net, they oppose it by a 14-point margin, though over a third of Republicans say that they back the creation of this new rule.

Voters Support Biden Creating A Rule Where Companies Would Only Be Allowed To Bid On Federal Contracts If They Surpass A Threshold Level Of Workplace Protections

President Joe Biden is currently considering creating a rule that employers can only bid on federal contracts if they surpass a threshold level of workplace protections, such as providing their employees paid leave, and bolstered job security.

When thinking about this decision, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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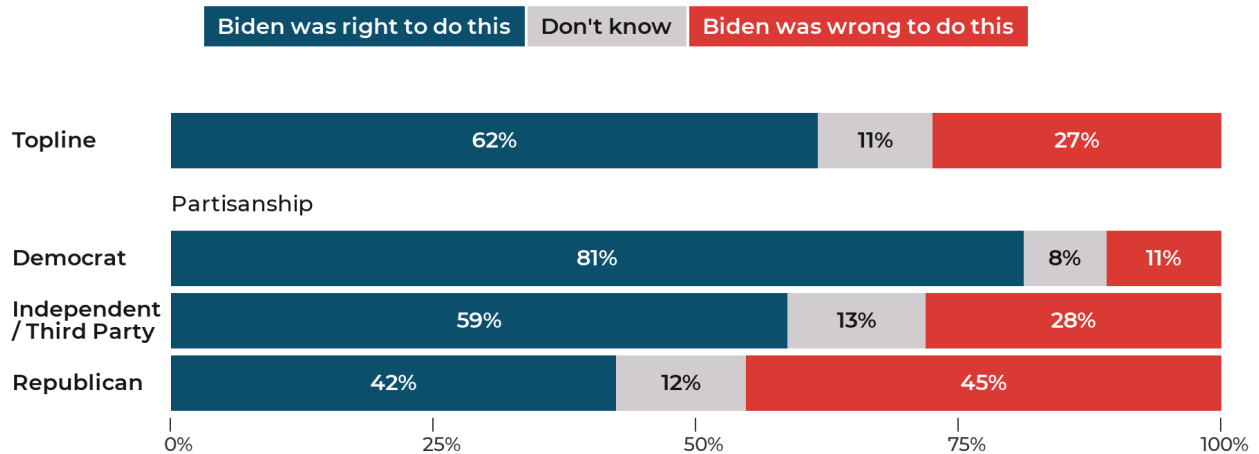
Voters support Biden's executive action allowing workers who quit their job because of the pandemic to be eligible for unemployment insurance

Upon taking office, Biden asked the Department of Labor to consider changing eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance, allowing workers who quit because they're in unsafe conditions due to the pandemic to still be eligible. We find that likely voters are in support of this, backing it by a margin of 35-points (62 percent support, 27 percent oppose). Democrats support this by a margin of 70-points and Independents do so by a margin of 31-points. Republicans are split: forty-two percent support this and 45 percent oppose it.

Voters Back Biden's Decision To Allow Workers Who Quit Their Job Because Of The Coronavirus To Be Eligible For Unemployment Insurance

Recently, President Joe Biden asked the Department of Labor to consider clarifying that workers who refuse unsafe working conditions due to the coronavirus pandemic can still receive unemployment insurance.

When thinking about this decision, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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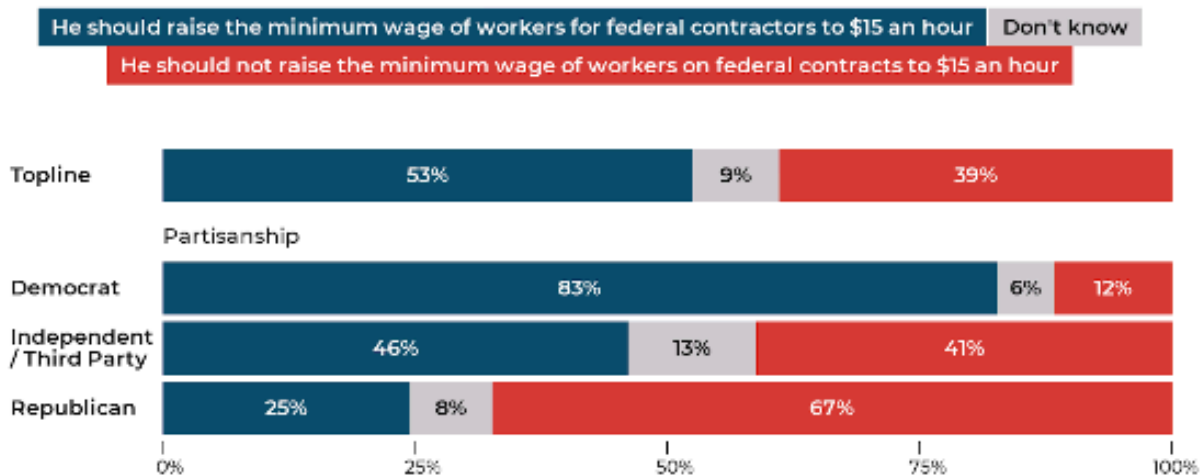
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Voters want workers on federal contracts to be paid at least \$15 an hour

The federal government employs a large workforce and through executive action, Biden can raise the minimum wage of employees of federal contractors to \$15 an hour. What’s more, likely voters support this proposal by a margin of 14-points. Democrats support this by a margin of 71-points (83 percent support, 12 percent oppose). Independents support this proposal by five-point margin (46 percent support, 41 percent oppose). In contrast, Republicans oppose this by a margin of 42-points (25 percent support, 67 percent oppose).

Voters Want Biden To Make Sure Workers On Federal Contracts Are Paid At Least \$15 An Hour

President Joe Biden is considering raising the minimum wage for all workers on contracts with the federal government to \$15 an hour. When thinking about this, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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Voters want overtime rules protected

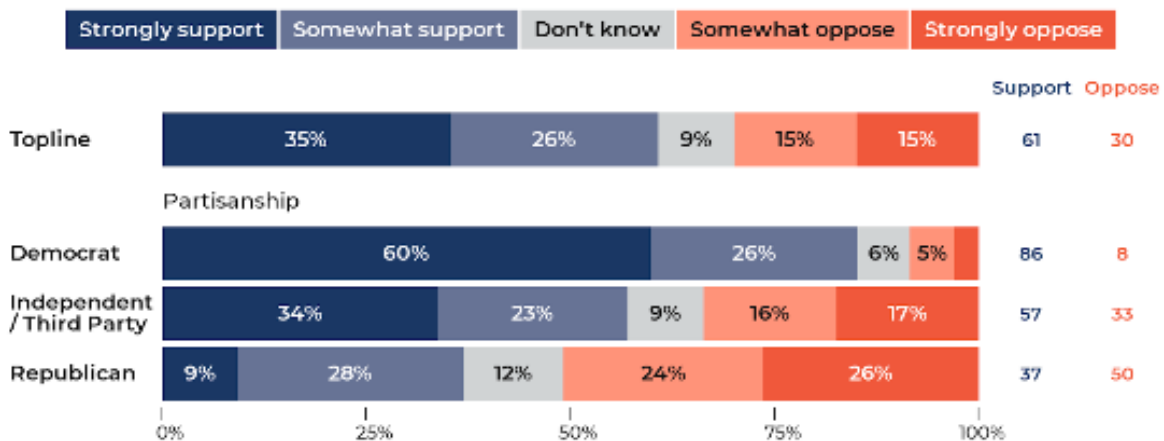
By way of conclusion we present one final result. The Trump administration worked to undermine overtime protections for workers, leaving fewer people eligible. We tested reversing this, restoring Obama era protections. We find that likely voters, by a 31-point margin, want the Biden administration to bring these overtime protections back (61 percent support, 30 percent oppose). By margins of 73-points and 23-points, Democrats and Independents, respectively, both support this rollback of Trump administration policy. While Republicans oppose this by a margin of 14-points, 37 percent want to see worker protections reimplemented.

Voters want Biden’s Department of Labor to chart a new course

What this polling highlights is a clear, incredibly popular, policy course the Biden administration can chart. Through use of procurement policy to promote a smarter, more inclusive industrial policy, unions can be protected and strengthened and critical clean energy infrastructure built here in the United States. Last, through heightened enforcement of federal labor law, those currently misclassified as independent contractors can finally get the benefits of employees they ought to already be eligible for.

Voters Support Biden Bringing Back Obama Era Overtime Protections

The Trump administration has undermined overtime protections that were put in place by President Obama, meaning that fewer workers would be eligible to receive overtime pay. Would you support or oppose the Biden administration restoring the overtime protections President Obama tried to put in place?



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Methodology

From February 3 to February 4, 2021, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,215 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ± 2.8 percentage points

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