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IN 2020, CLIMATE IS A WINNING ISSUE FOR DEMOCRATS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

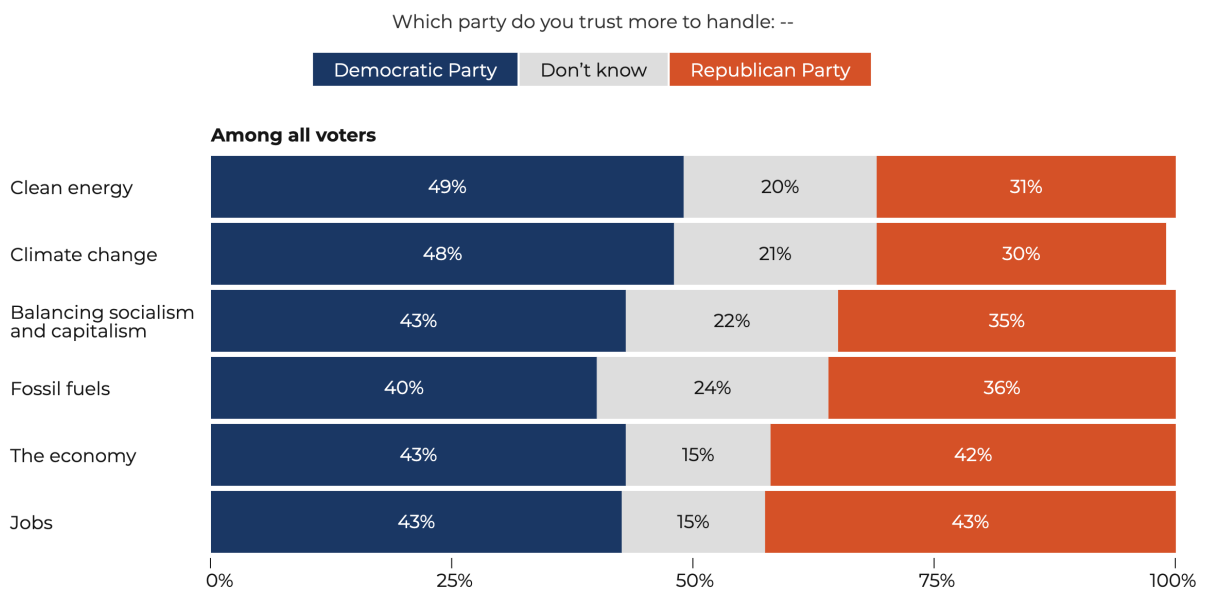
- ▶ Voters have a positive impression of an agenda to tackle climate change. A Green New Deal, for instance, maintains a net favorable rating of eleven percentage points.
- ▶ Voters trust the Democratic Party more than the Republican Party when it comes to climate change by an 18 percentage point margin.
- ▶ Firm commitments on the part of former Vice President Joe Biden provide an avenue for winning increased support—especially with voters under forty-five.

As part of a May survey, Data for Progress sought to test attitudes around a series of issues surrounding climate change. We were especially interested in the way climate change is influencing the ongoing presidential campaign,

general opinions towards climate-related individuals and organizations, and potential support for a host of proposals designed to combat climate change.

We sought to test whether voters trust the Democratic or Republican Parties more on climate. We asked the question of which party they trusted more six times, each time substituting in a distinct issue set. On the aggregate, voters tend to trust the Democratic Party more than the Republicans. Of the six issues tested, five returned in the Democratic Party's favor with the sixth—jobs—yielding a tie at 43 percent apiece. The key takeaway, however, is that climate change presents especially favorable terrain upon which the Democratic Party can engage their Republican counterparts. On both clean energy and climate

Voters Trust The Democratic Party On Climate Issues



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change policy, voters trust the Democratic Party more than the Republican Party by an 18-point margin. On the issue of jobs and the economy, meanwhile, voters' attitudes are much evenly divided.

In addition, we found that questions of climate change present especially strong terrain for the Democratic Party.

What likely explains this, at least in part, is a real commitment on the part of voters to tackle climate change, even at a considerable financial burden. To test this we presented voters with two response options which asked them to weigh the

relative merits of a proposal to move the United States to 100 percent renewable energy over the span of 20 years at a price of \$5 trillion dollars. We found that, overwhelmingly, voters think this is worth the cost. Fifty-eight percent of voters said this plan is worth it while 42 percent said it was not. While there was some sorting along party lines, 38 percent of Republicans still thought a \$5 trillion dollar proposal to move the U.S. to clean energy sources was worth it.

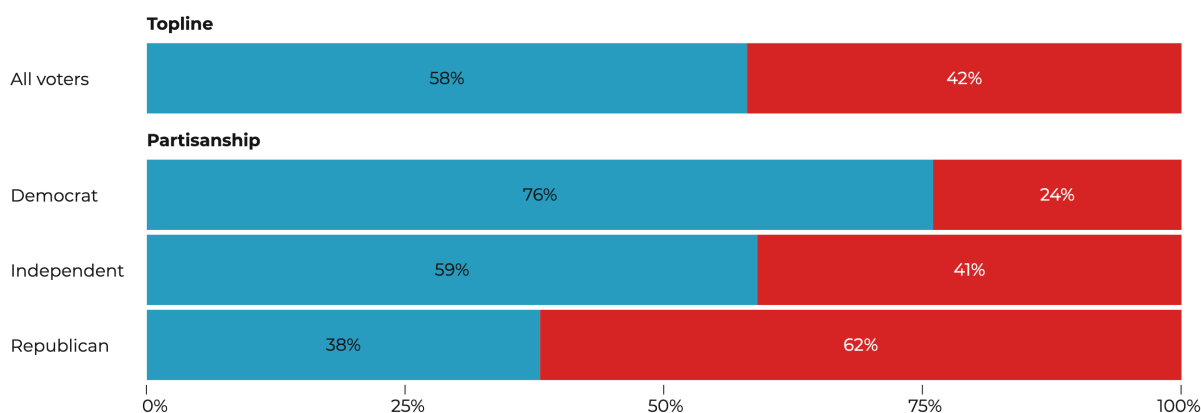
We also asked voters if they have a favorable or unfavorable view on a series of things related to climate. What's striking is that things that may be broadly construed as "green"—solar panels, clean

Voters Think Moving The U.S. To 100% Clean Energy Is Worth The Cost

Joe Biden has proposed a plan to combat climate change by moving the U.S. to 100% clean energy by the year 2040 that would cost \$5 trillion over the next 20 years. Here are two statements about that plan. Which is closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

Moving the US to 100% clean energy is worth the cost because it will protect our children health while spurring innovation, creating millions of jobs, and preventing trillions of dollars in economic damage from climate change. And we can help pay for it by ending giveaways to big oil and coal companies and other big corporations.

This plan to move to 100% clean energy is not worth forcing taxpayers to pay \$5 trillion because it will kill millions of jobs by ending the production of American oil and natural gas, drive up energy costs for American families and business, and add \$5 trillion to our already exploding national debt that our children will inherit.



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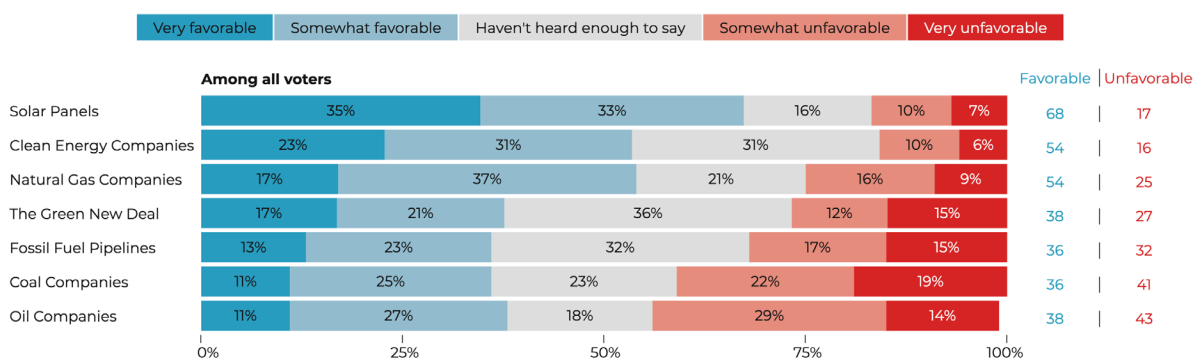
energy companies, and the Green New Deal—were largely viewed in favorable terms while fossil fuel companies tended to be viewed in unfavorable lights, natural gas companies excepted.

Voters also want to use more clean energy. For instance, voters want to use more solar power by a 62-point margin (71 percent more solar, 9 percent

less solar). In addition, most voters want to become less reliant on fossil fuels, coal especially. While voters do think we should use more natural gas, it lags significantly behind cleaner alternatives. In addition, “fracked gas” is fairly unpopular at 16-points underwater (24 percent more fracked gas, 40 percent less fracked gas).

Voters Have Favorable Views Of A Green Agenda

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following groups and people? --

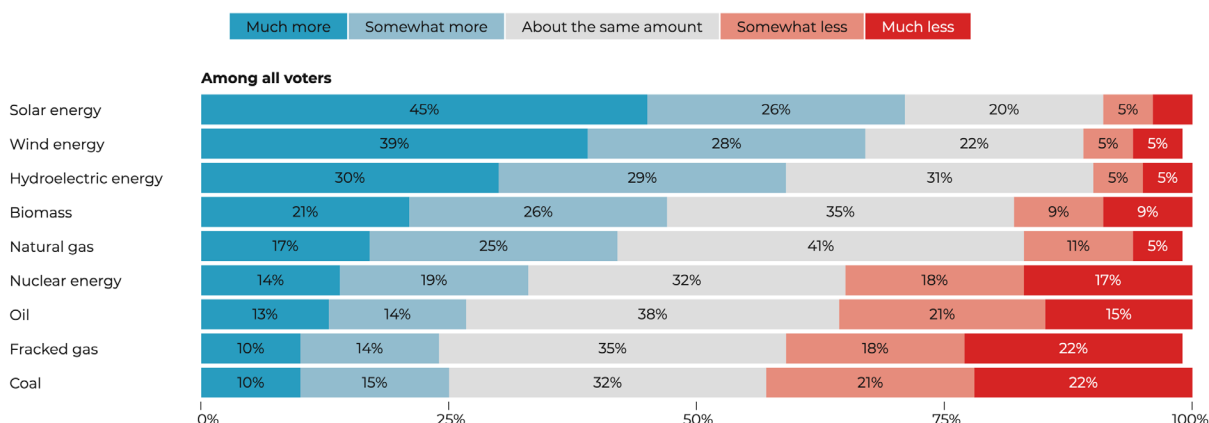


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Voters Want To Use More Green Energy

For each of these sources of energy, select whether you think the US should be using more, less, or about the same amount. --



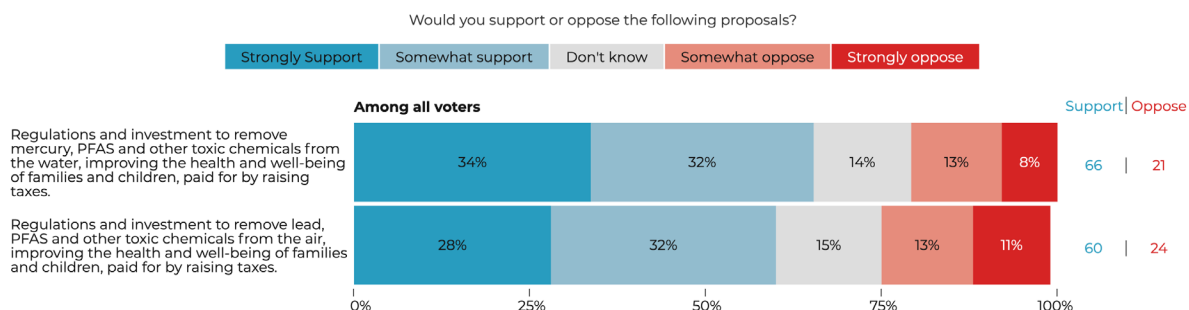
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We also asked voters for their opinions about a series of climate-related proposals. Here, we offered two framings, either a regulatory and investment regime that sought to remove toxic chemicals from the water or from the air. We found that both courses of action were viewed in a positive light, water was more popular framing than air—the former being supported by a 45-point margin and the latter by a 36-point margin, a nine-point difference.

Next, we asked voters about two ten-year mobilization schemes to combat climate change, one weighing in at \$1.7 trillion and the other \$5 trillion. Both plans earned the same total support at 55 percent apiece. On net, the \$1.7 trillion plan was three-points more popular than the \$5 trillion plan, which generated slightly more opposition, a difference within the margin of error.

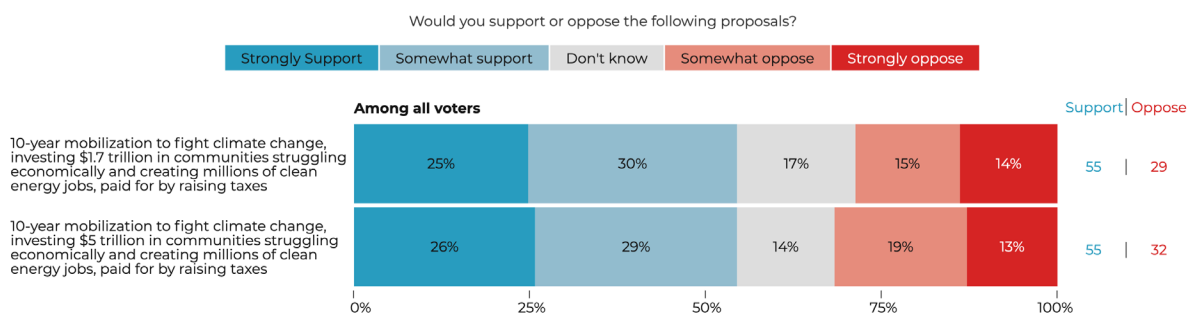
A Clean Water Framing Is More Effective Than Clean Air



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Voters Support Investing Trillions Of Dollars To Combat Climate Change



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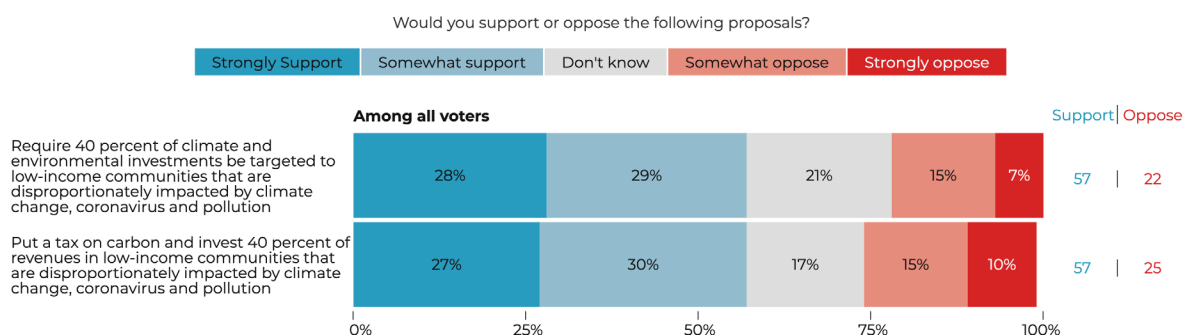
We also asked voters about a series of proposals to allocate 40 percent of funding to communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change, coronavirus, and pollution. We found support among voters for all of these schemes. The most popular was the one framed around climate and environmental investments and which garnered a 35-point margin of support (57 percent support, 22 percent oppose). The next most popular proposal was the one built around a hypothetical tax on carbon, which enjoyed a 32-point margin (57 percent support, 25 percent oppose).

We then asked voters a series of questions about whether or not they'd be more willing to support Biden's candidacy for the presidency if he adopted stronger commitments to combat climate change. We found that, on the whole, climate policy is an area that can generate increased support for Biden.

We also sought to test whether or not voters would be more or less likely to support Biden if he adopted commitments to address climate change. Here, for instance, we asked voters if Biden adopted a clean job agenda, i.e., a commitment to moving the U.S. to 100 percent renewable energy creating 10 million jobs in the process, would make them more or less likely to support Biden.

We found that, indeed, it would. Fifty-four percent of voters reported they'd be more likely to support Biden while 19 percent said they'd be less likely (28 percent said it wouldn't make much difference). We also broke out responses according to partisanship. Seventy-five percent of Democrats said they'd be more likely to support Biden while five percent said they'd be less likely (21 percent said it wouldn't make much difference). Among Independents, meanwhile, 54 percent said they'd be more likely to support Biden while 15 percent said they'd be less likely (31 percent said they'd be less likely).

Voters Support Allocating Federal Aid To Disproportionately Impacted Communities



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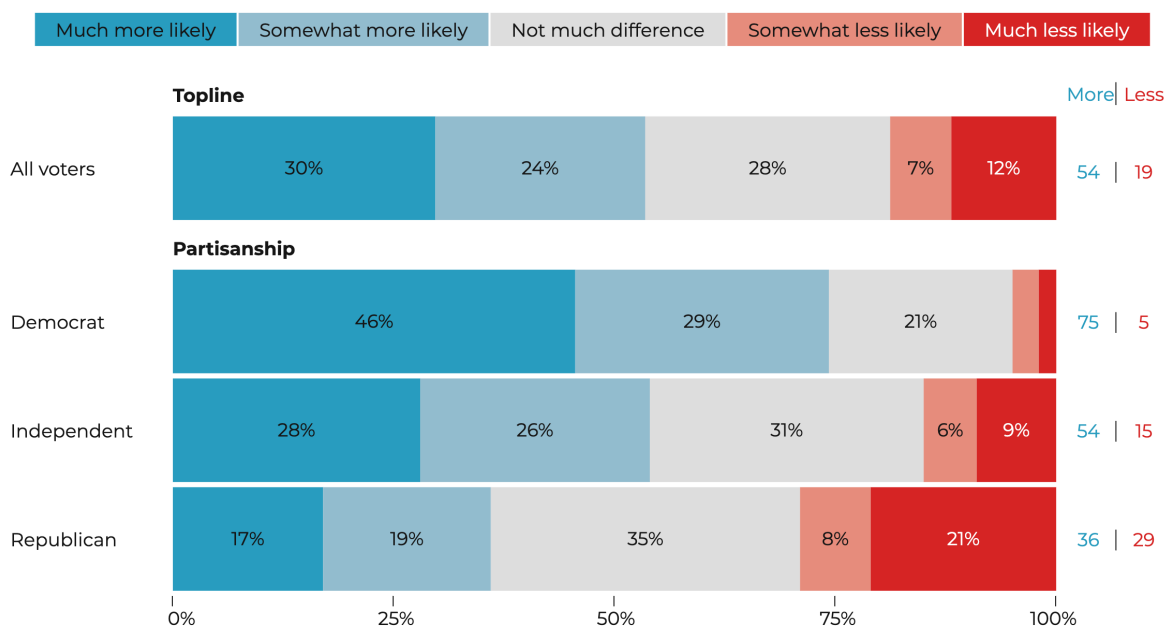
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Of significant note, among Republicans, 36 reported that if Biden adopted a clean job commitment, they'd be more likely to support Biden while 29 percent said they'd be less likely (35 percent said it wouldn't make much difference). In other words, just over one-third of Republican voters reported they'd be more willing to support a Democrat for the presidency if that democrat committed to a massive green jobs program. This appears to confirm [previous Data for Progress](#) published in Vox that demonstrated Biden can unite progressives and swing voters on a climate-change-based agenda.

Using this same framework—offering voters a hypothetical Biden commitment on a climate or environmental-related policy and then asking if this would make them more or less likely to support his candidacy—we then tested a series of additional proposals. We also used, as a baseline, the averaged support of non-climate progressive policies. Again, our goal was to see how Biden staking out different policy positions on a slate of environmental issues may generate more (or less) willingness to support his candidacy for the presidency.

Voters Would Be More Likely To Support Biden If He Committed To A Clean Jobs Agenda

Committed to moving the US to 100% clean energy and creating 10 million good-paying jobs to grow a strong middle class



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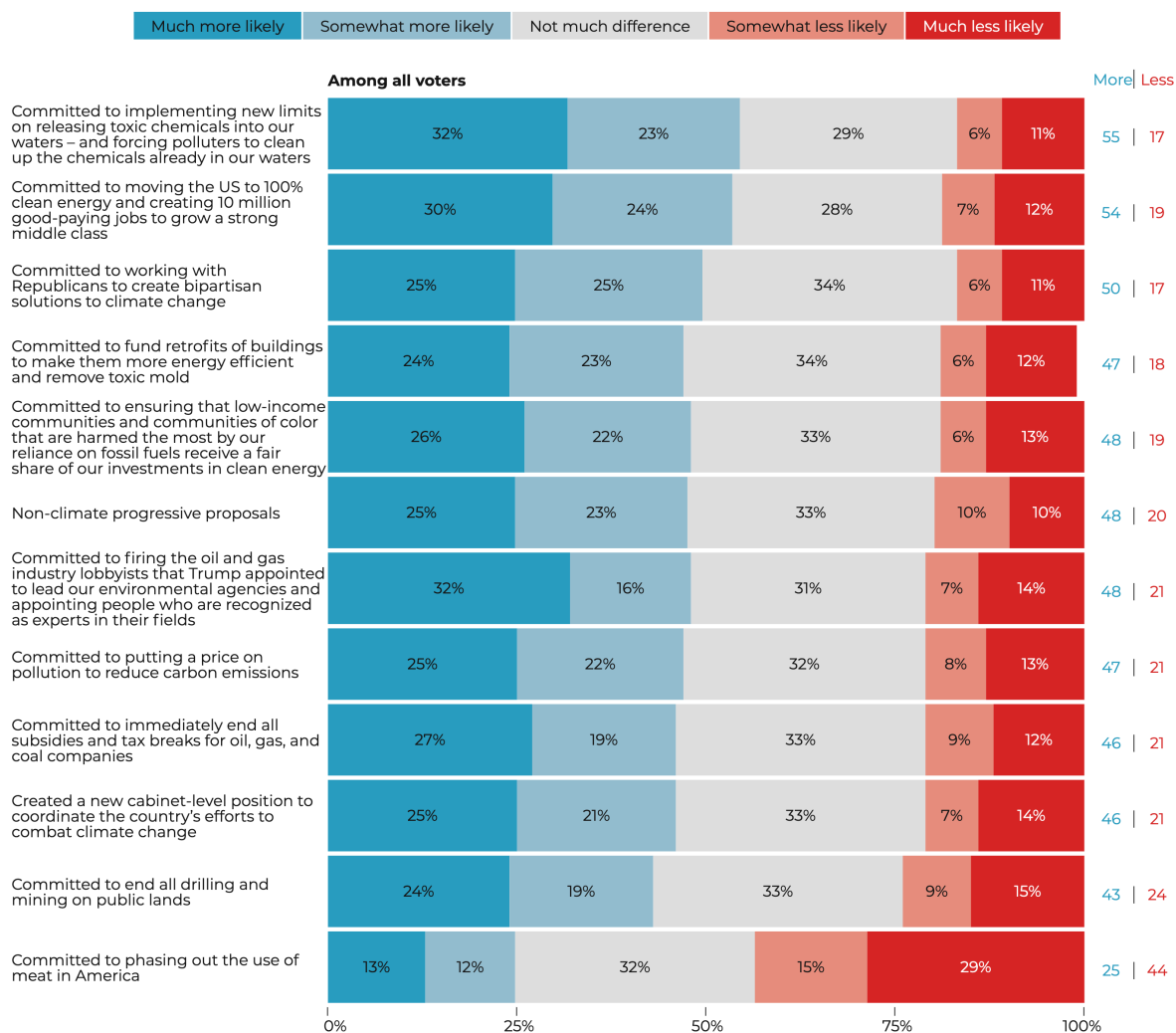
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We found that, looking at responses among all voters, that all proposals tested—the phasing out of meat consumption excluded—all were popular. Five climate-related proposals—new limits on water pollution and a commitment

to move to 100 percent renewable energy, seek bipartisan agreements, fund green retrofits, and that disproportionately impacted receive adequate federal funds—ran ahead of the non-climate related proposals.

Biden Committing To Combat Climate Change Wins Him Support From Voters

Would you be more or less likely to support Joe Biden if he... --



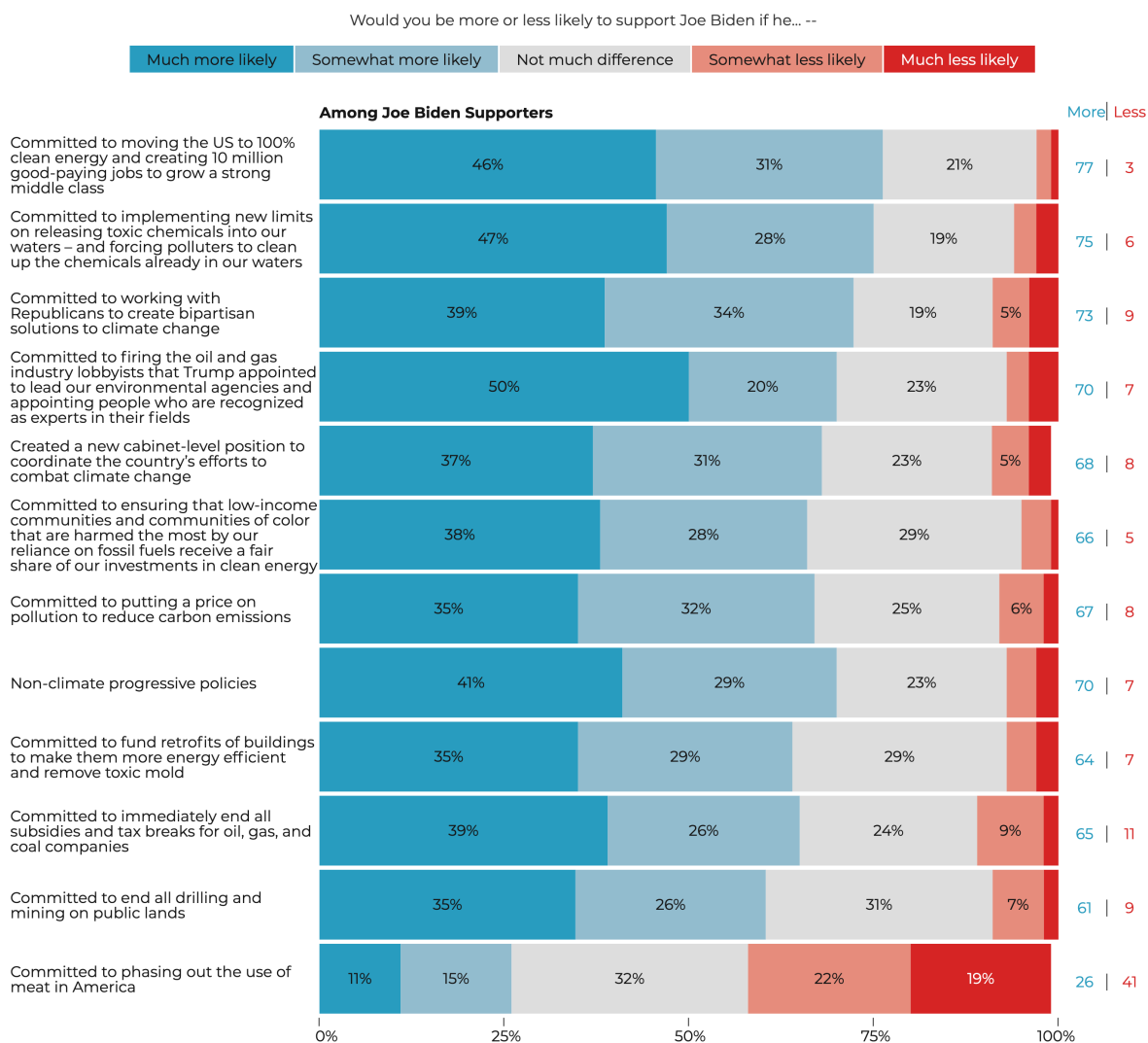
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Next, we sorted responses based on whether or not the voters surveyed supported Biden in the Democratic Party's presidential primary. We found climate-related policies tended to make Biden's primary supporters more likely to support him at a rate slightly higher than non-climate

related progressive policies. One of the essential takeaways here is that Biden making firm climate commitments would not necessarily *hurt* him when you consider attitudes among his primary supporters.

Comitting To Tackle Climate Change Shores Up Biden's Base Of Support



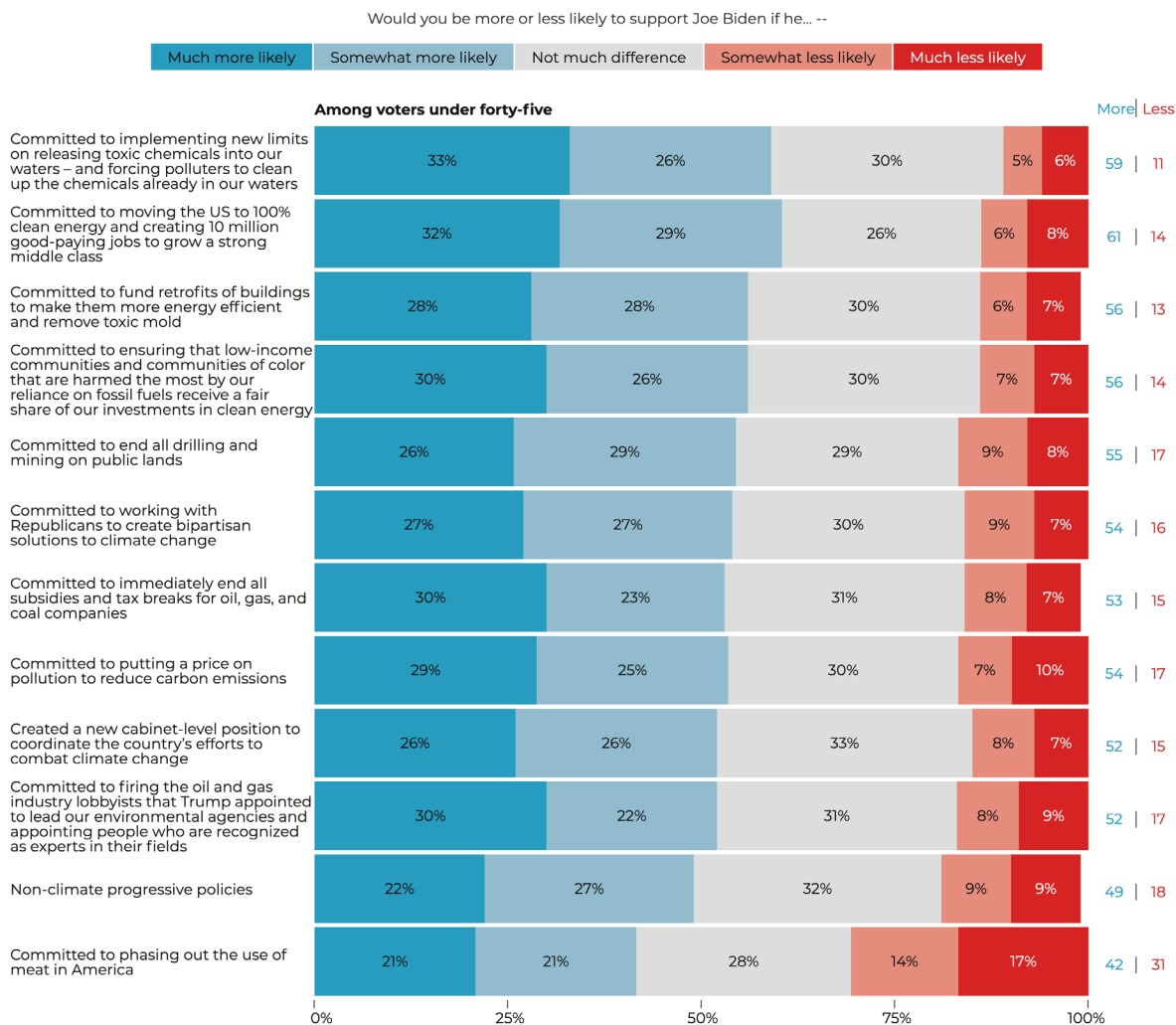
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Among voters under 45, climate-related consistently makes younger voters more likely to support Biden at a rate surpassing the average of the non-

climate policy. If Biden wants to win over the support of younger voters, aggressive climate policy commitments present a clear path to doing so.

Firm Commitments From Biden On Climate Wins Him The Support Of Younger Voters



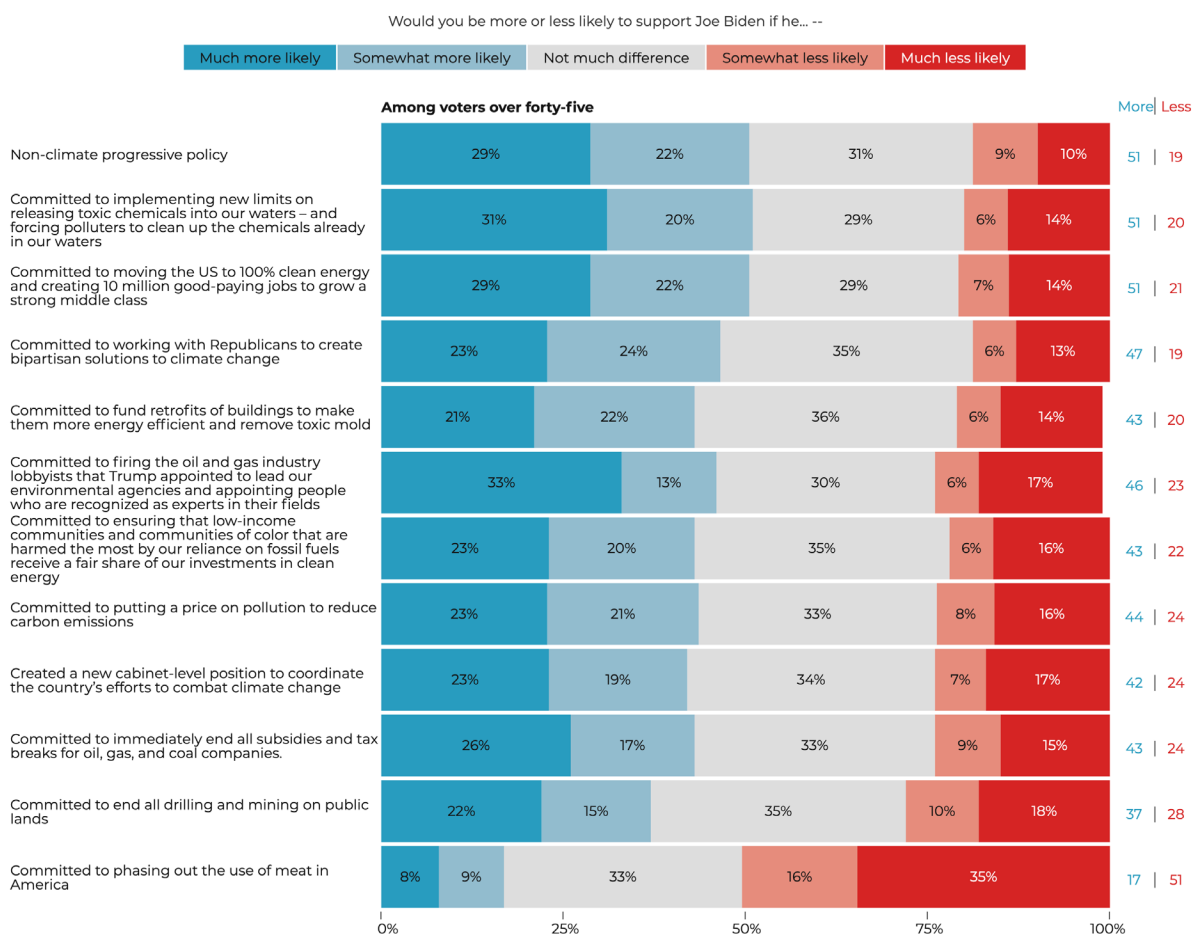
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Next, we examined responses from voters above forty-five. We found all of these proposals—save the phasing out of meat—would push, on net, voters over the age of forty-five into Biden’s camp.

What this means in plain terms is that climate represents an opportunity for Biden to gain support from voters under forty-five while not losing support from voters over forty-five.

Committing To Firm Climate Commitments Would Hurt Biden



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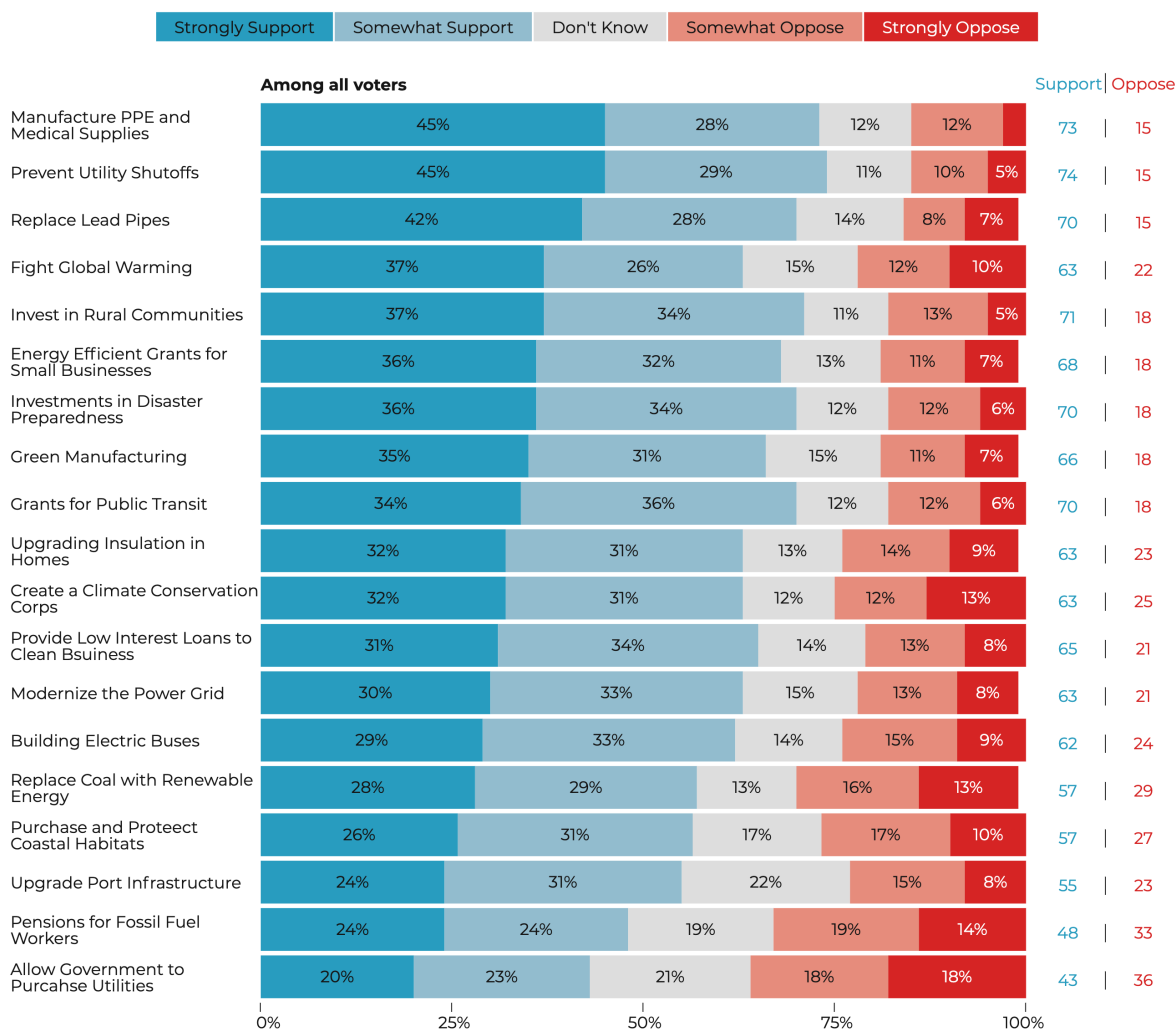
Finally, we asked voters whether or not they'd support federal aid that could be used by states to fund a range of programs. State budgets have been hard-pressed by the simultaneous fall in tax revenue and an increase in expenditures brought on by the coronavirus crisis.

CONCLUSION

For Democrats, climate change is a winning issue. In general, the Democratic Party is trusted more than their Republican counterparts on crucial

Voters Support A Wide Range Of Federal Funds For States

States are facing budget deficits due to expenses related to the coronavirus and decreased revenues from the economic fallout of the pandemic. Congress is considering providing aid to state and local governments to fight and recover from the coronavirus. Would you support the federal government giving state and local governments aid to:



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questions of climate policy. There's real support among voters to take aggressive action to combat climate change. A Green New Deal is viewed in a favorable light by most voters and there's a desire to increase our reliance on renewable energy sources while curtailing the use of fossil fuels. For Biden, in particular, it provides him with voters under forty-five.

METHODOLOGY

From May 11 to May 14, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,919 likely voters nationally using web-panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, urbanicity, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ± 2.2 percentage points.

Due to rounding, some values sum to 99 or 101 percent.