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Federal Investments in Household Electrification Enjoy Bipartisan Support

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Key Findings

- ▶ **Voters are generally underestimating the extent** to which household decisions (home energy usage and personal vehicles) contribute to total U.S. carbon emissions
- ▶ **Over eighty percent of voters** say decreases in their monthly energy costs would have a “Very” or “Somewhat” significant impact on their household budgets
- ▶ **Nearly three-quarters of voters (74 percent)** support federal investments to help households lower their monthly electricity costs
- ▶ **Nearly two-thirds of voters (65 percent)** would prefer the government invests in consumer rebates for electric appliances rather than gas-powered appliances
- ▶ **Over two-thirds of voters (71 percent)** support federal investments to provide consumers rebates for purchasing and installing zero-emission electric appliances
- ▶ **Nearly two-thirds of voters (64 percent)** would “Definitely” or “Probably” consider participating in a federal rebate program for zero-emissions electric appliances
- ▶ **Three-quarters of voters (75 percent)** think the associated jobs created by a federal home electrification rebate program would have a positive impact on their communities
- ▶ **Support for federal investments in home electrification withstands pushback**, with a majority of voters agreeing that a household electrification rebate program would result in positive outcomes for Americans regardless of their income
- ▶ **A majority of voters (51 percent)** agree lawmakers should consider homes and rental units as part of their decision-making framework for the infrastructure bill and reconciliation package that are currently being negotiated in Congress

Introduction

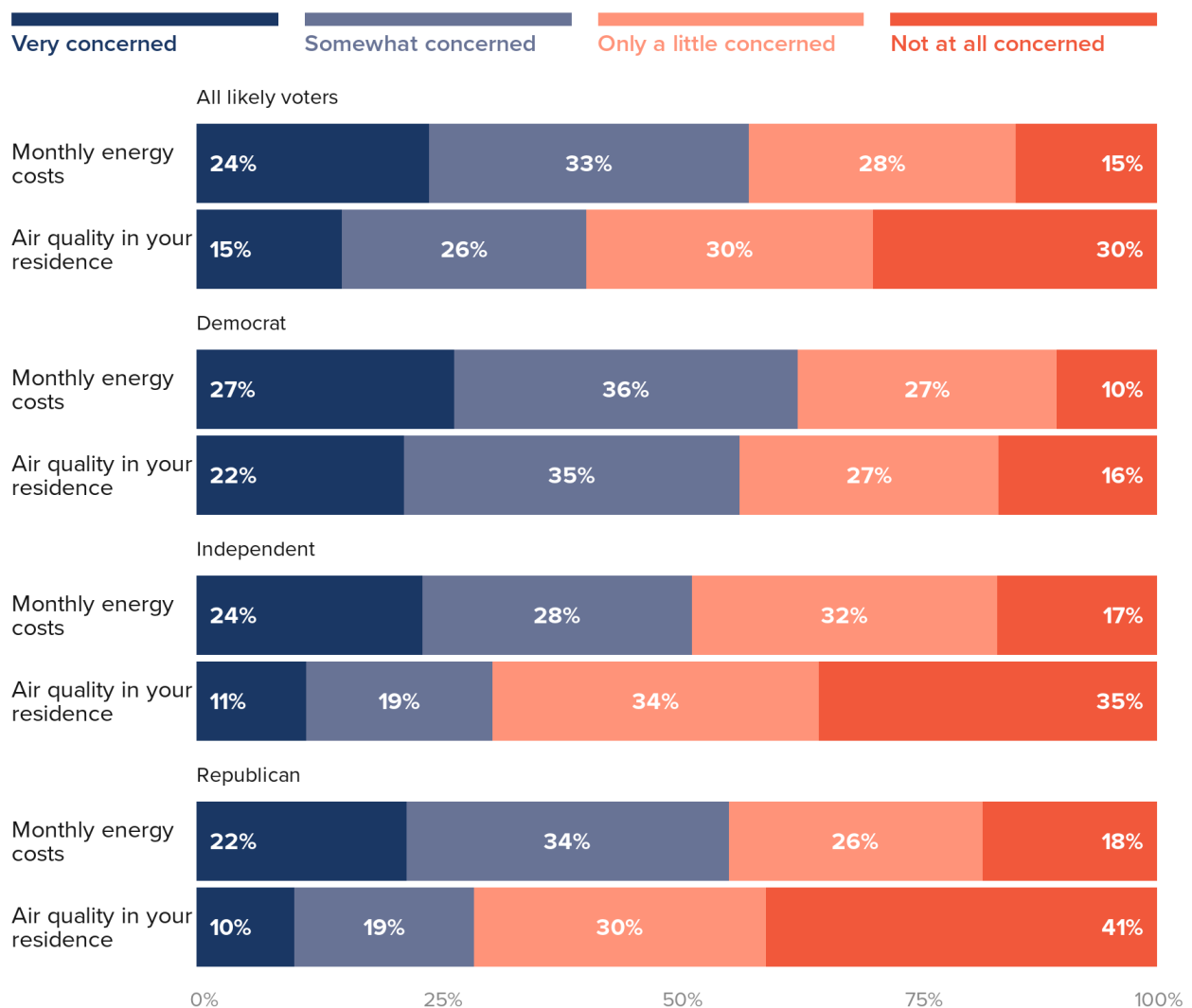
As lawmakers consider passing the historic investments in our nation’s infrastructure from President Biden’s [American Jobs Plan](#), **household electrification emerges as one of the most impactful — and popular — policy proposals to combat climate change, reduce pollution, lower household bills, and create new good-paying jobs**. As part of a July 2021 national survey, nonprofit Rewiring America and think tank Data for Progress assessed likely voters’ knowledge of household emissions and their attitudes towards federal investments in household electrification. We find that **voters across the political spectrum significantly underestimate the impact of their household decisions on carbon emissions, but are widely concerned about their household energy costs and overwhelmingly back federal measures to make zero-emission electric appliances more affordable for consumers**.

Voters Are Concerned About Household Energy Costs and Indoor Air Pollution

First, we asked voters how concerned they are about their monthly energy costs and the air quality in their residence. A majority of all likely voters (57 percent) say they are “Very” or “Somewhat” concerned about their monthly energy costs, including a majority of Democrats (63 percent), Independents (52 percent), and Republicans (56 percent). While forty-one percent of voters are also “Very” or “Somewhat” concerned about the air quality in their residence, indoor air quality is less concerning than monthly

Voters are Concerned About Their Indoor Air Quality and Monthly Energy Costs

How concerned or not concerned are you about:



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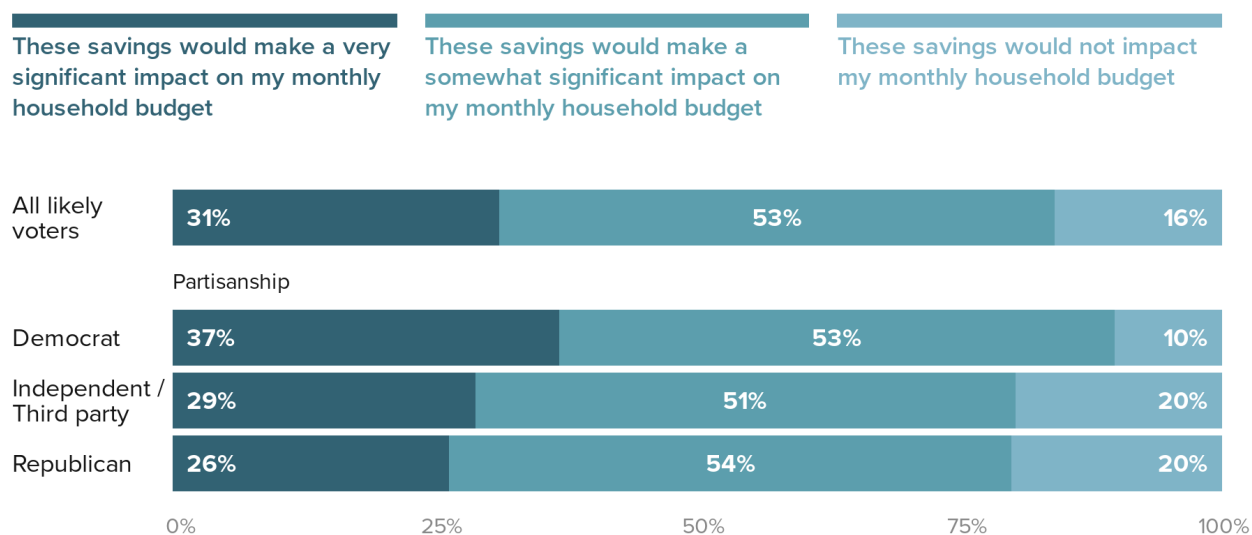
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energy costs. Democrats are most concerned about their indoor air quality (57 percent), while Independents and Republicans express nearly the same amount of concern about indoor air quality (30 percent and 29 percent, respectively).

Given this high level of concern toward monthly energy costs, a majority of voters say that decreasing their monthly energy costs by 20 to 80 percent — possible with electric appliances replacing fossil-fueled versions like gas furnaces, stoves, and water heaters — would have a “Very” or “Somewhat” significant impact on their monthly household budgets. Among all likely voters, nearly a third (31 percent) say these energy savings would have a “Very” significant impact, while over half (53 percent) say these savings would be “Somewhat” significant. There is strong consensus among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, who all express similar attitudes towards these potential savings, though Democrats more than Independents and Republicans say these savings would be “Very” significant on their monthly household budget.

Voters Say Reductions in Energy Costs Would Have a Positive Impact on Their Household Budgets

If you were able to decrease your monthly energy costs by 20-80%, how would this impact your household budget?



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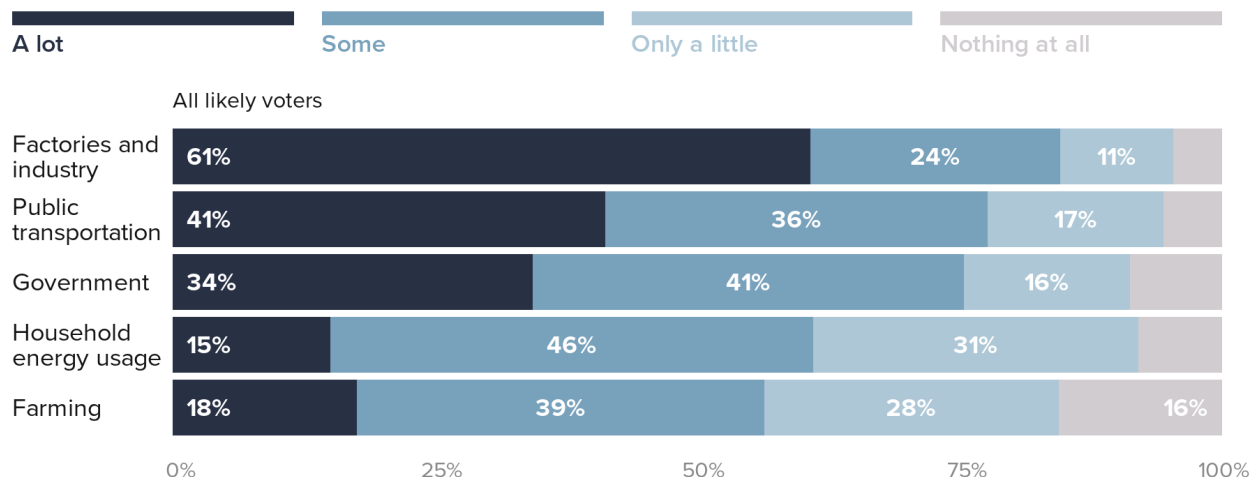
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Voters Underestimate the Contributions of Household Energy Usage Towards Total U.S. Carbon Emissions

Next, we asked several questions to gauge voters' knowledge about how household energy usage contributes to U.S. carbon emissions. We first presented voters with a list of sectors and asked them to indicate how much they thought each sector contributes to U.S. carbon emissions. A plurality of all likely voters (46 percent) think that household energy usage contributes "Some" to U.S. carbon emissions, and nearly a third of all likely voters (31 percent) think household energy usage contributes "Only a little" to U.S. carbon emissions. Only 15 percent of voters think household energy usage contributes "A lot" to U.S. carbon emissions while categorizing factories and industry, public transportation, and government as major emitters.

Voters Think Household Energy Usage Contributes a Moderate Amount Towards Total U.S. Emissions

How much do you think each of the following contributes to U.S. carbon emissions?



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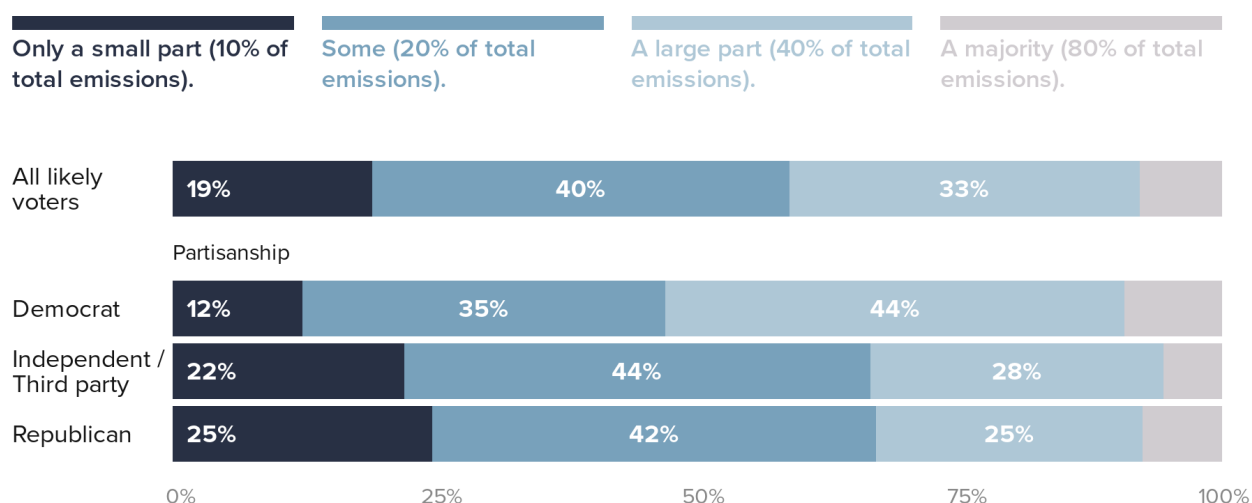
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We then asked voters to guess the percentage that home energy and personal vehicle usage contribute to total U.S. carbon emissions. A majority of all likely voters think home energy and personal vehicle usage contribute between 10 and 20 percent of total U.S. carbon emissions, while the correct answer is approximately 37 percent. Democrats were most likely to guess correctly, with a plurality indicating that home energy and personal vehicle usage contribute “A large part” to U.S. carbon emissions. However, nearly two-thirds of Independents and Republicans underestimate the contributions of home energy and personal vehicle usage towards U.S. emissions.

Voters Underestimate How Much Home Energy Usage and Personal Vehicles Contribute to U.S. Emissions

If you had to guess how much home energy usage and personal vehicles contribute to total US carbon emissions, which one of these do you think is right?



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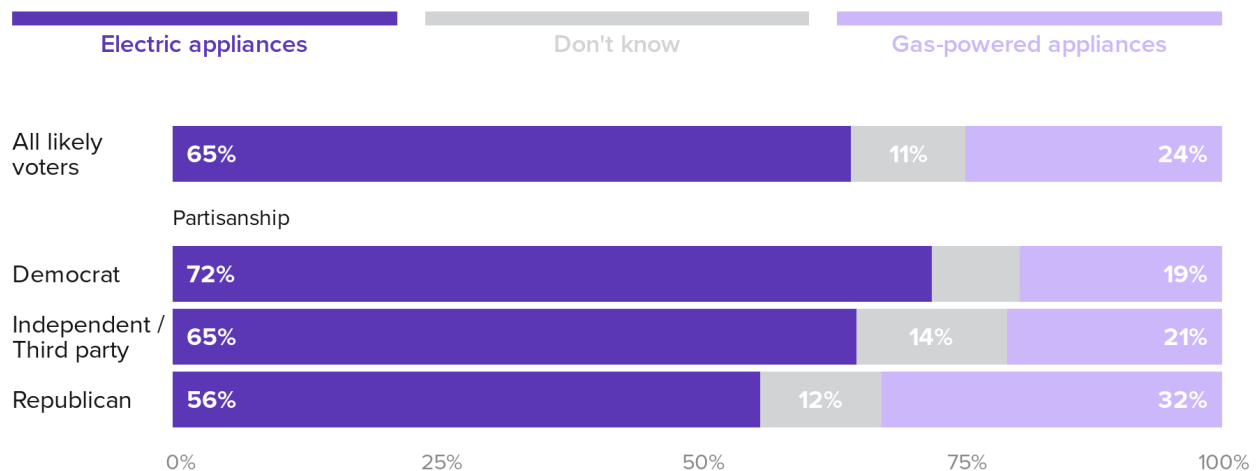
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Voters Prefer Electric, Climate-Smart Appliances Over Traditional and Gas-Powered Appliances

After assessing voters' knowledge of household emissions, we then asked voters several questions about their preferences for both federal investments in consumer appliance rebates and their personal preferences for appliances. First, we asked voters whether they would prefer for the government to offer rebates on similar-performing electric or gas-powered appliances. Nearly two-thirds of all likely voters (65 percent), including a majority of Democrats (72 percent), Independents (65 percent), and Republicans (56 percent), all prefer for the government to offer rebates on electric appliances rather than gas-powered appliances.

Voters Strongly Prefer Government Incentives for Electric Appliances Over Gas-Powered Appliances

If electric appliances and gas-powered appliances have the same performance, which one would you prefer that the government offers rebates on to lower the price to consumers:



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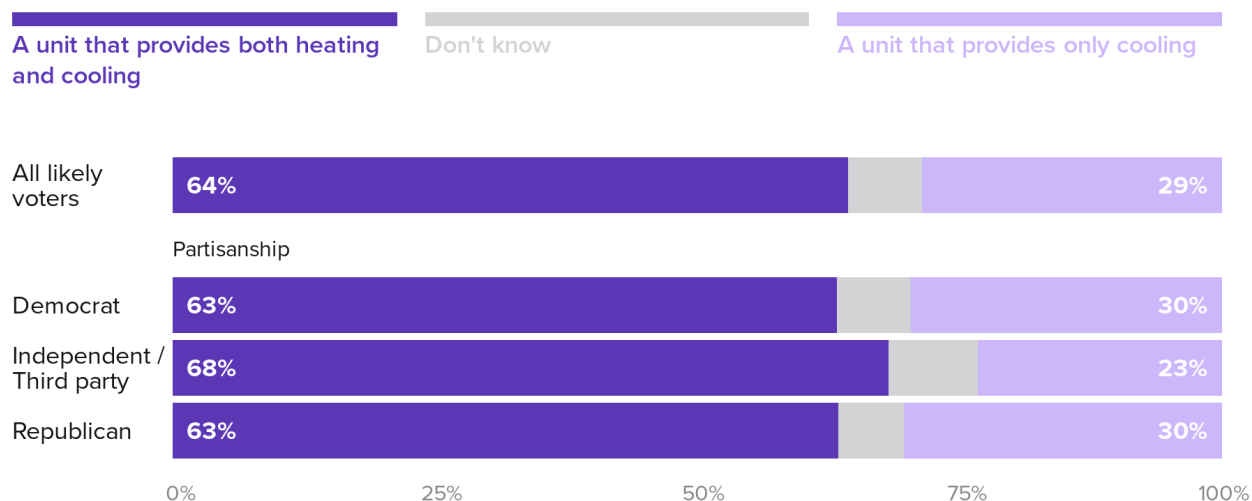
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Additionally, in a hypothetical scenario to replace their air conditioner, nearly two-thirds of all likely voters (64 percent) would prefer to replace their air conditioner with a dual heating and cooling unit, such as a heat pump. Consensus is nearly unanimous: Sixty-three percent of Democrats, 68 percent of Independents, and 63 percent of Republicans all say they prefer a dual heating and cooling unit over an air conditioner that only provides cooling.

Voters Would Prefer Replacing Their Air Conditioner with a Dual Heating and Cooling Unit

If you were replacing your air conditioner, which type of unit would you prefer to purchase:



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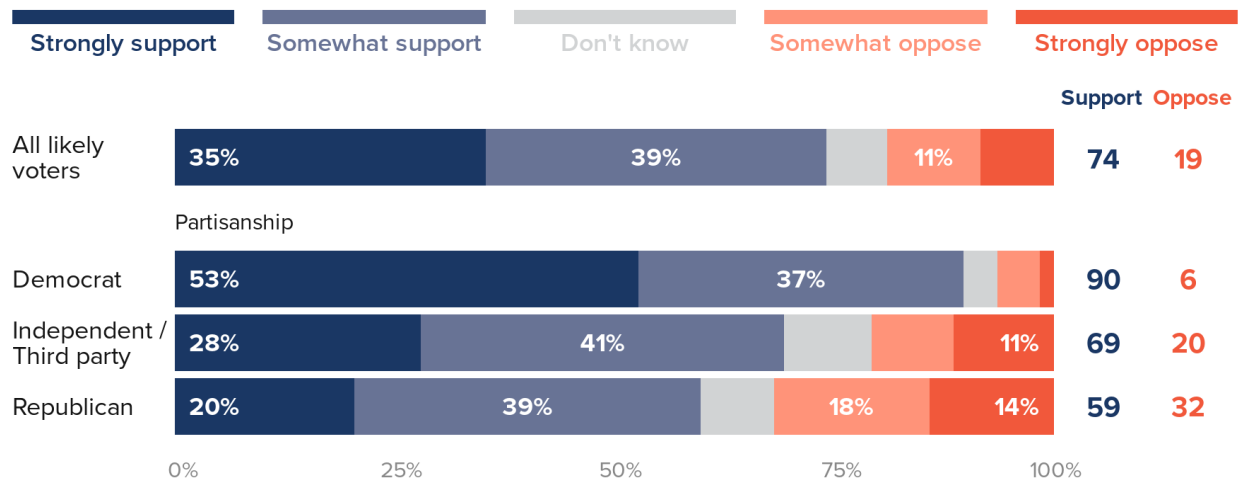
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Voters Support Federal Investments in Household Electrification

After assessing these initial attitudes and opinions, we asked voters a series of questions about federal investments to help households lower their energy bills and make zero-emission electric appliances more affordable for consumers. Nearly three-quarters of all likely voters (74 percent), including nearly all Democrats (90 percent), over two-thirds of Independents (69 percent), and a majority of Republicans (59 percent) all support federal investments to help households lower their monthly electricity costs.

Voters Overwhelmingly Support Federal Investments to Lower Electricity Bills

Would you support or oppose the federal government making investments to help households lower their monthly electricity costs?



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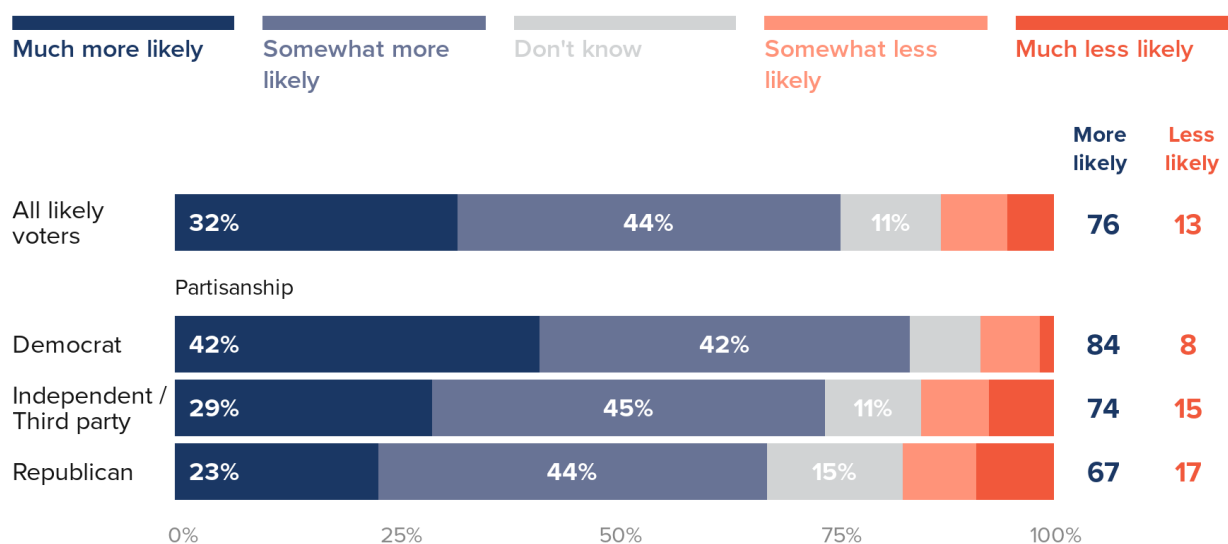
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Notably, over three-quarters of all likely voters (76 percent) say they would be “Much more” or “Somewhat more” likely to take actions in their own lives to reduce pollution and combat climate change if given a financial incentive from the federal government. This agreement is bipartisan: Nearly all Democrats (84 percent), 74 percent of Independents, and 67 percent of Republicans all say financial incentives from the government would make them more likely to take personal actions to reduce pollution and combat climate change.

A Majority of Voters Are More Likely to Take Personal Actions to Address Climate Change if Given a Financial Incentive from the Government

Would you be more or less likely to take actions in your life to reduce pollution and combat climate change if you were given a financial incentive from the federal government?



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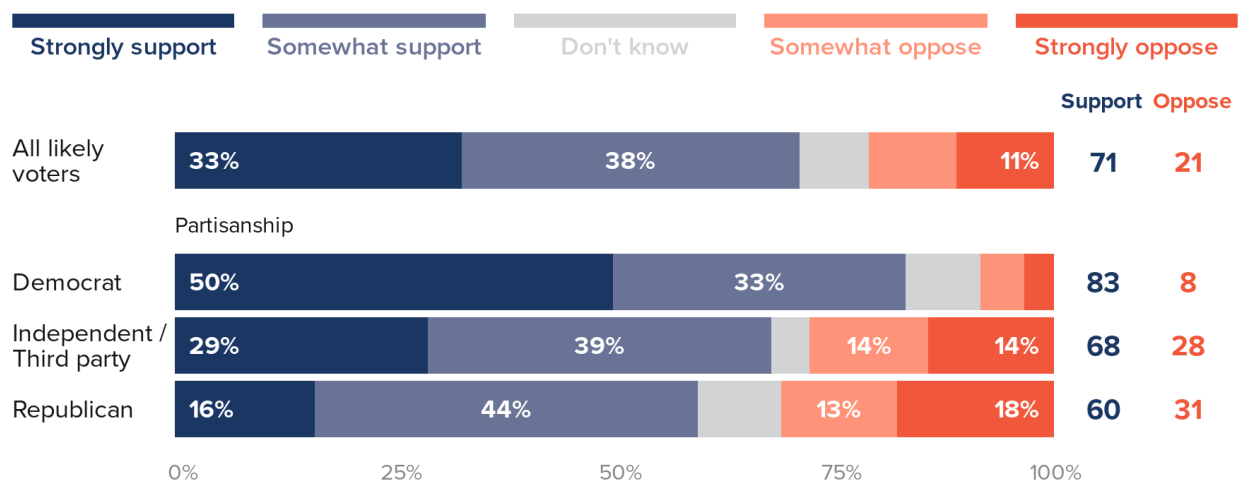
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Next, we provided voters with a brief description of a new bill that members of Congress are introducing to make it easier and more affordable for consumers to purchase electric appliances through a rebate program for zero-emission and energy-efficient electric appliances. An overwhelming majority of all likely voters (71 percent) support this bill. Again, there is bipartisan consensus. Nearly all Democrats (83 percent), over two-thirds of Independents (68 percent), and a majority of Republicans (60 percent) support this bill to incentivize the electrification of household appliances through a consumer rebate program.

A Majority of Voters Support Federal Rebates for Zero-Emission Appliances

Some members of Congress are introducing a new bill to make it easier and more affordable to purchase electric appliances. The bill would provide consumers rebates for the purchase and installation of zero-emission and energy-efficient electric appliances, with additional support for low- and moderate-income households.

Would you support or oppose this bill?



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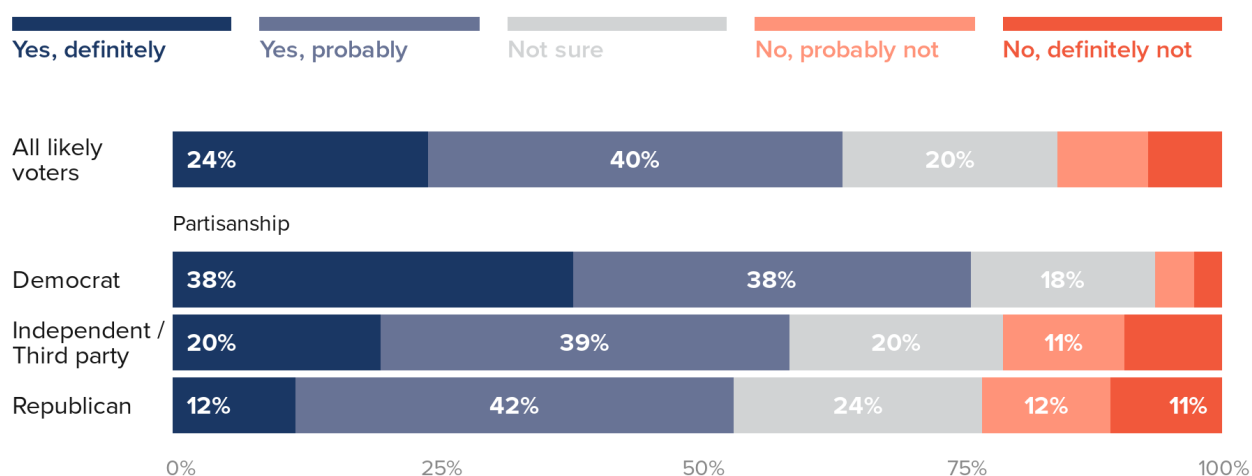
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Given that an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of voters indicated a financial incentive from the federal government would make them more likely to take personal actions to reduce pollution and address climate change, it follows that 64 percent of voters say they “Definitely” or “Probably” would consider participating (or ask their landlord to participate) in this government rebate program for zero-emission and energy-efficient electric appliances. Over three-quarters of Democrats (76 percent) would “Definitely” or “Probably” consider participating in this rebate program, as well as 59 percent of Independents and 54 percent of Republicans.

A Majority of Voters Would Consider Utilizing a Federal Rebate Program for Zero-Emission Appliances

If the government created this new program to provide rebates for zero-emission and energy-efficient appliances, would you consider participating in this program if you are a homeowner, or asking your landlord to do so if you are a renter?



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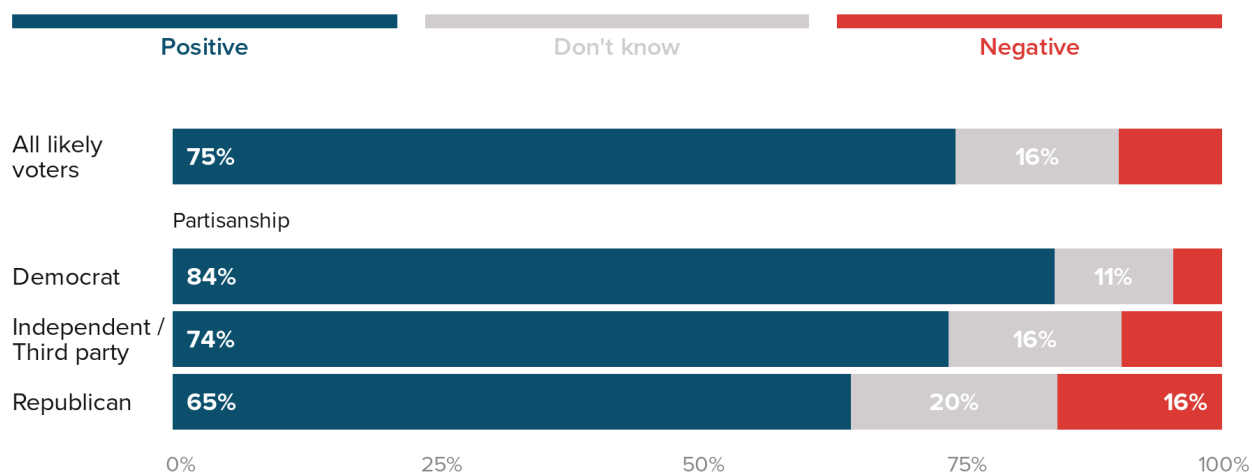
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Next, we provided voters with information stating that this household electrification rebate program would spur demand for new jobs, including plumbers and electricians, to complete these installations. Three-quarters of all likely voters (75 percent), including a majority of Democrats (84 percent), Independents (74 percent), and Republicans (65 percent), agree that these new jobs would have a positive impact on their communities.

Voters Agree Federal Investments in Home Electrification Would Have a Positive Impact on Their Communities

If the government created this new program to provide rebates for zero-emission and energy-efficient appliances, demand would increase for professions such as plumbers and electricians who can install these appliances.

Do you think these new jobs would have a positive or negative impact on your community?



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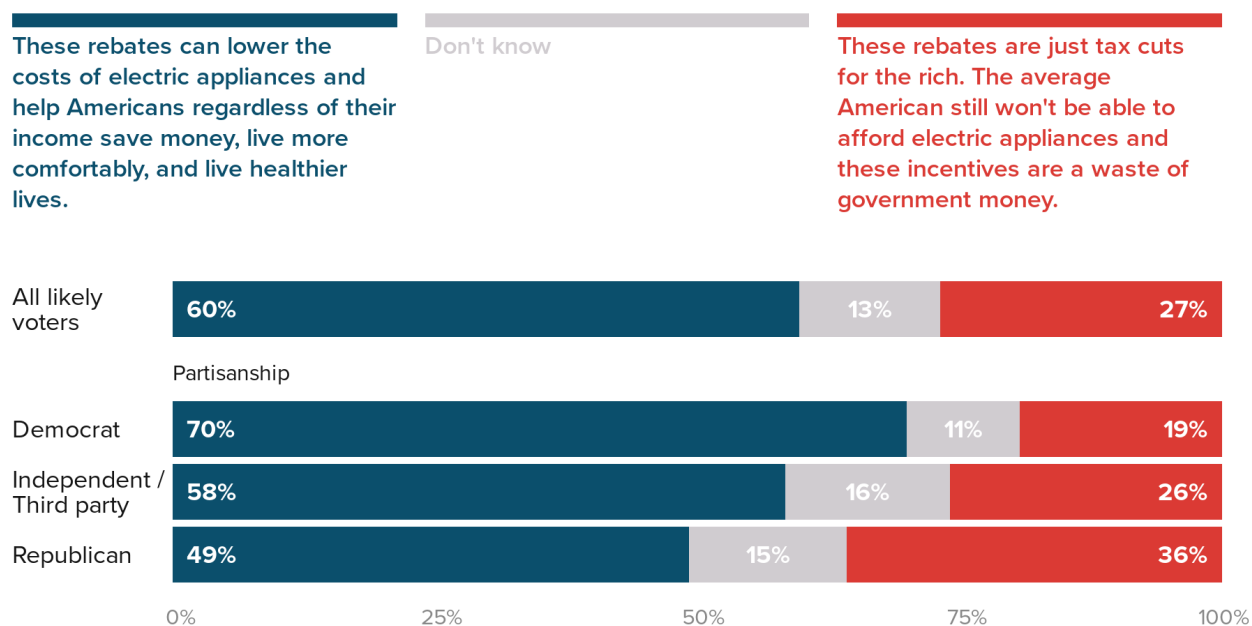
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While voters across party lines overwhelmingly back federal investments in household electrification, support is also resilient in the face of pushback. A majority of voters (60 percent) agree this potential federal appliance electrification rebate program would help Americans save money and live more comfortable, healthier lives, while only 27 percent think these rebates would be wasteful tax cuts for the rich that would not help average Americans afford electric appliances. Voters across party lines agree. Over two-thirds of Democrats (70 percent), a majority of Independents (58 percent), and a plurality of Republicans (49 percent) all think a government appliance electrification rebate program would have positive outcomes for all Americans, regardless of income.

Support for Home Electrification Investments Withstands Pushback

When thinking about the government creating a new program to provide rebates for zero-emission appliances, which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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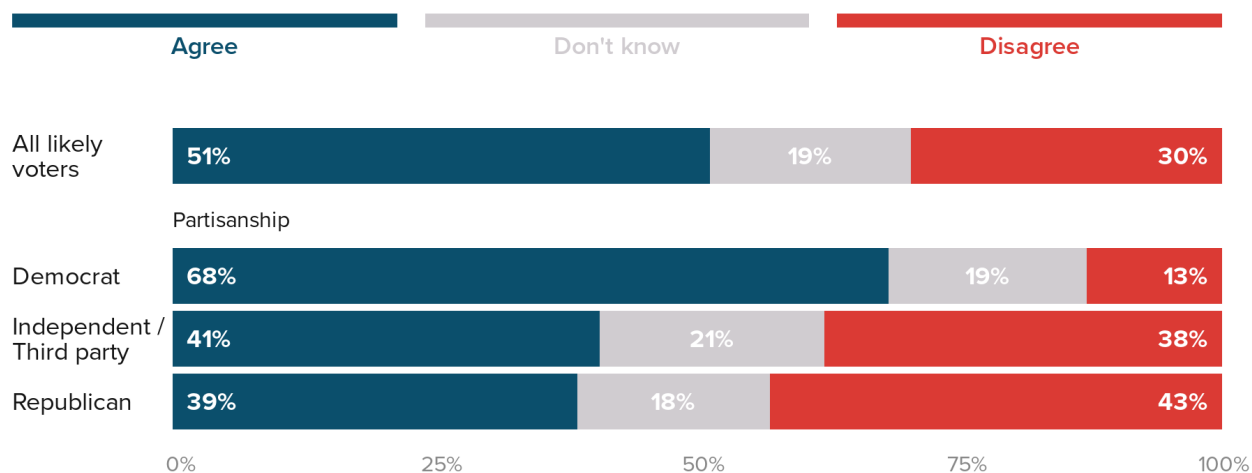
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Finally, we asked voters whether they think lawmakers in Congress should consider U.S. homes, including rental units, as part of their decision-making framework for new federal investments in the nation's infrastructure. By a 21-point margin, voters agree that homes and rental units should be considered in congressional infrastructure bill negotiations (51 percent agree, 30 percent disagree). Democrats agree with this consideration by a 55-point margin (68 percent agree, 13 percent disagree), while Independents agree by a 3-point margin (41 percent agree, 38 percent disagree). While Republicans are nearly split, 39 percent agree lawmakers should consider households and rental units in discussions around infrastructure legislation.

A Majority of Voters Agree Lawmakers Should Consider Homes as Infrastructure

Do you agree or disagree that lawmakers in Congress should consider U.S. homes, including rental units, as part of our nation's infrastructure when making decisions about new federal investments in infrastructure?



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Conclusion

As lawmakers in Congress determine which investments to include in a budget reconciliation package, they should feel confident including a rebate program for household electrification. **A federal consumer rebate program for zero-emission electric appliances enjoys overwhelming popularity among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, and a majority of voters across party lines also express significant interest in participating in this program.** With broad, bipartisan support and indications that voters would both participate in and positively benefit from a household electrification rebate program, as well as [research from Rewiring America](#) showing significant environmental, economic, and health benefits from household electrification, lawmakers would be wise to include this proposal in a budget reconciliation proposal.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

From July 7 to 9, 2021, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,264 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 ± 3 percentage points.