DATA FOR PROGRESS

Voters Support Climate Finance Regulations

By **Danielle Deiseroth**, *Senior Climate Data Analyst, Data for Progress*

Key Findings

- **Two-thirds of voters (66 percent)** think Wall Street has a responsibility to address climate change
- **Nearly two-thirds of voters (64 percent)** think banks, insurers, and other financial institutions have a responsibility to address climate change
- **A majority of voters (61 percent)** think the federal government should enforce more safeguards on banks to prevent a future financial crisis driven by climate change
- **Nearly three-quarters of voters (74 percent)** agree that banks should increase transparency about their climate risks
- **A plurality of all likely voters (50 percent)** agree that federal regulators should rein in the risky behavior of big banks that is driving climate change — even when presented with negative messaging against this proposal

Introduction

In April 2021, President Biden unveiled a landmark new executive order outlining the White House's international climate finance plan. Now, the White House is shifting its focus to climate finance at home through a new executive order that will establish a government-wide approach to assess the risks that climate change poses to both public and private investments.

Building upon our recent findings that highlighted the widespread popularity of federal climate finance reforms, Data for Progress and Evergreen Action assessed the attitudes of likely voters nationwide towards the government reining in risky investments that are contributing to climate change, enforcing more financial safeguards to prevent a future climate-driven financial crisis, and ensuring banks are transparent about their activities that are driving climate change and pollution.

DATA FOR **PROGRESS**

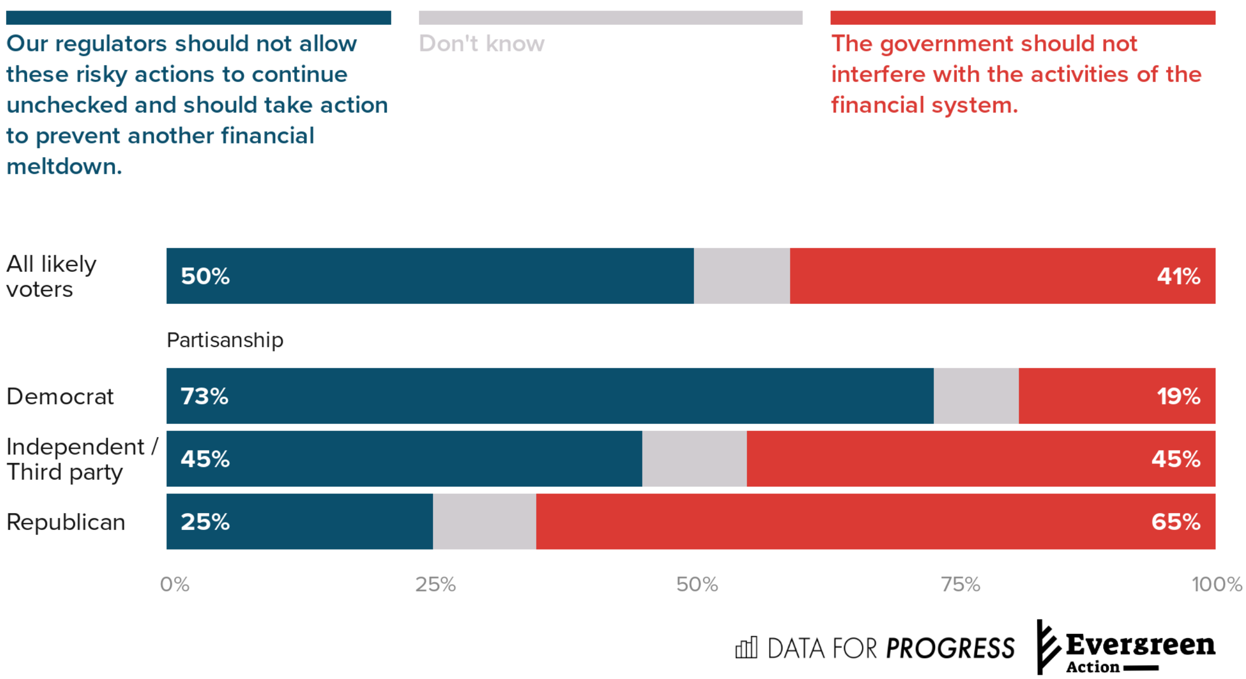
Voters Aren’t Buying Republican Attacks on Federal Climate Finance Regulations

This spring, Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) — the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs — expressed concern that the Federal Reserve was “engaging in mission creep” by forming new committees to understand financial risks caused by climate change. While Senator Toomey thinks that climate finance is out of their jurisdiction, a plurality of voters (50 percent) agree that federal regulators should not repeat the mistakes that led to the Great Recession and should take action to prevent a future financial meltdown caused by climate change. By a 54-percentage-point margin, Democrats agree with regulators reining in Wall Street’s climate risks, while Independents are split. Though a majority of Republicans (65 percent) agree that climate finance is out of the Biden administration’s regulatory purview, a quarter (25 percent) believe that it is.

Voters Agree Regulators Should Rein In Wall Street's Risky Investments That Are Driving Climate Change

Which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

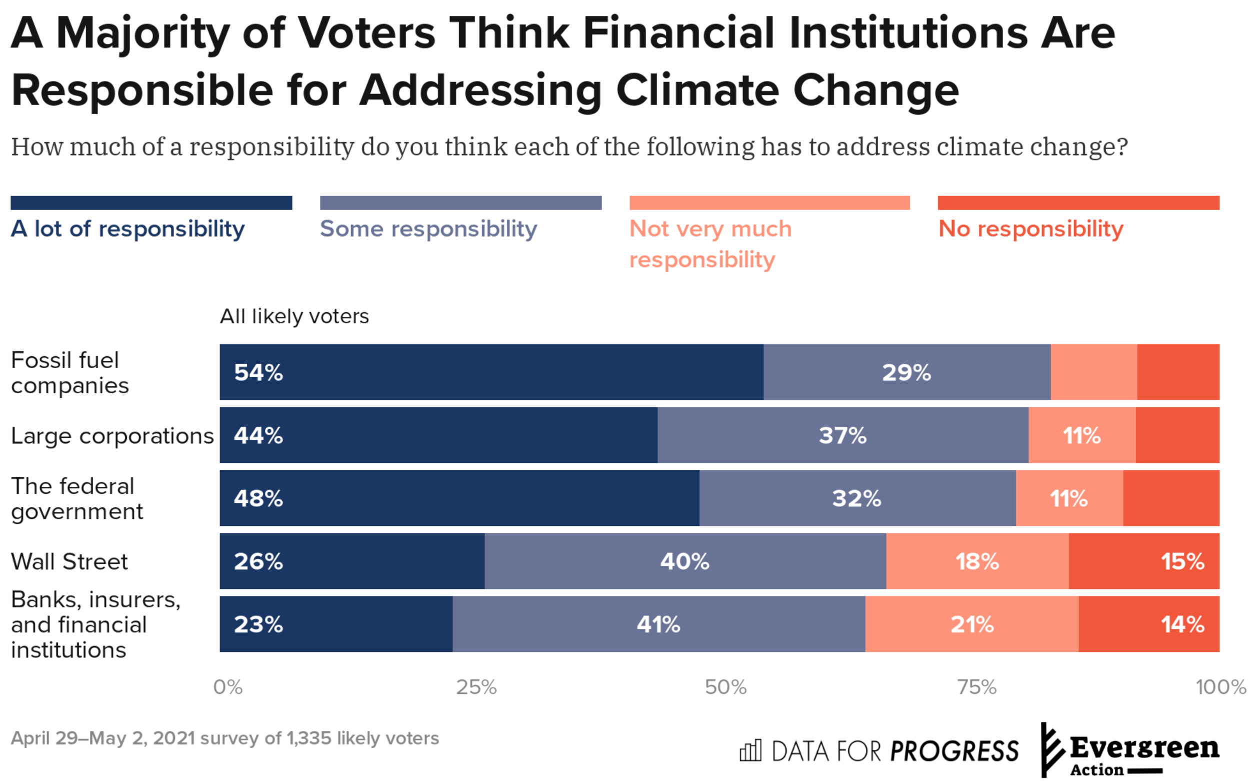
- Before the Great Recession, the government refused to rein in the risky behavior of big banks, and then hundreds of thousands of American small businesses went under. These same financial institutions are again ignoring huge risks, this time from climate change. But this time, our regulators should not allow these risky actions to continue unchecked and should take action to prevent another financial meltdown.
- The government should not interfere with the activities of the financial system. Radical Democrats want to put unelected federal bureaucrats ahead of Congress to tell banks what they can and can't invest in. This is out of the jurisdiction of federal regulators.



Voters Overwhelmingly Support Climate Finance Regulations — Even After Seeing Negative Messaging

After voters answered the previous question that pitted positive and negative statements about climate finance regulation against each other, we asked voters a series of questions about which institutions have a responsibility to address climate change, whether the government should enforce more climate finance safeguards, and the degree to which big banks should be transparent about their climate risks.

While voters place the most responsibility on fossil fuel companies, large corporations, and the federal government, a majority of voters (66 percent) think Wall Street has "A lot" or "Some" responsibility to address climate change. Voters place a similar onus on banks, insurers, and other financial institutions, with 64 percent indicating that these financial actors have "A lot" or "Some" responsibility to address climate change.

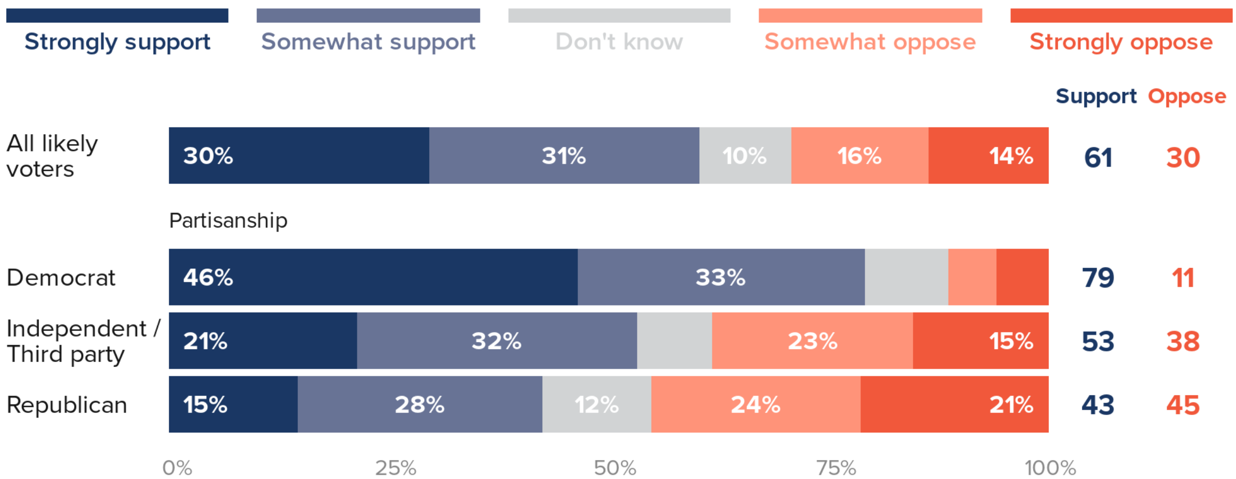


Next, we asked voters whether they support or oppose the federal government enforcing more safeguards on banks to prevent a future financial and economic crisis driven by climate change. Nearly two-thirds of all voters (61 percent) — including over three-quarters of Democrats (79 percent) and a majority of Independents (51 percent) — support more financial safeguards to rein in climate finance risks. Meanwhile, Republicans oppose this proposal by only a narrow 2-point margin — an indication that while Republicans might respond to partisan messaging about climate finance regulations, they inherently support the proposal.

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Voters Support Enforcing More Safeguards on Banks to Prevent a Climate-Driven Financial Crisis

Would you support or oppose the federal government enforcing more financial safeguards on banks to prevent a future financial and economic crisis driven by climate change?



April 29–May 2, 2021 survey of 1,335 likely voters

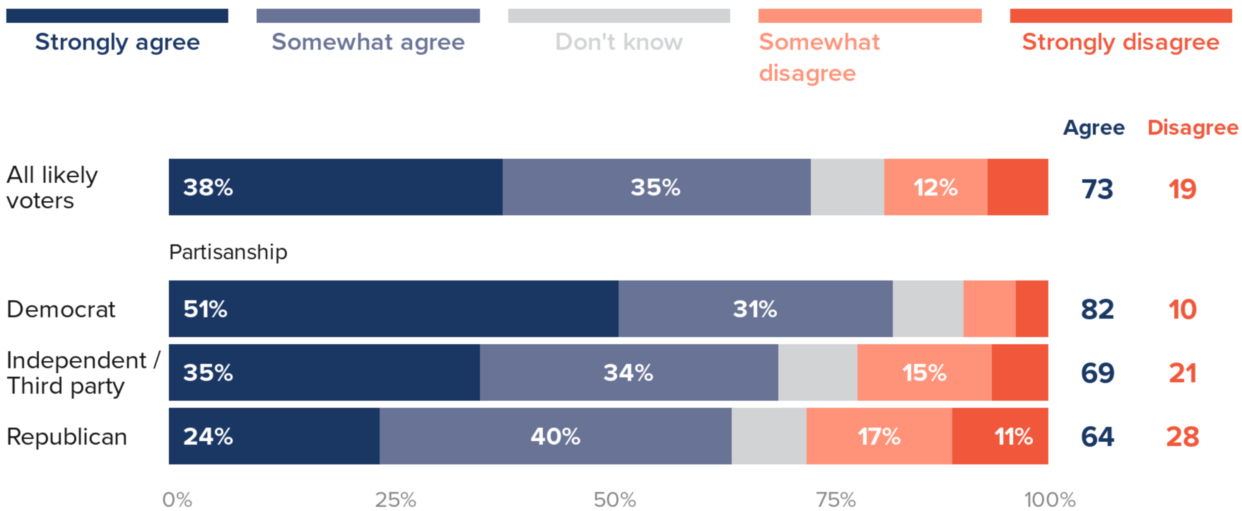
DATA FOR PROGRESS Evergreen Action

Lastly, we asked voters whether they agree or disagree that big banks should be transparent to the public and their investors about the risks associated with their investments that are contributing to climate change and pollution. Nearly three-quarters of all voters (73 percent) — including a majority of Democrats (82 percent), Independents (69 percent), and Republicans (64 percent) — all agree that banks should not be allowed to hide behind their climate finance risks.

DATA FOR PROGRESS

A Bipartisan Majority of Voters Agree Banks Should Increase Transparency About Their Climate Risks

Do you agree or disagree that banks should be transparent to their investors and the public about the risks associated with their investments that are contributing to climate change and pollution?



April 29–May 2, 2021 survey of 1,335 likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS Evergreen Action

Conclusion

With executive orders outlining plans to shape climate finance policy at home and abroad, the Biden administration is taking a historic step to ensure the financial sector plays its part in combating the climate crisis. Even after seeing negative messaging, voters strongly support the government enforcing more financial safeguards on risky investments that are driving climate change, and voters overwhelmingly agree that banks should be transparent about these risks to both their investors and the public. As the Biden administration moves forward to implement their whole-of-government approach to climate finance, they can feel confident knowing that voters back these measures.

Survey Methodology

From April 29 to May 2, 2021, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,335 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.