

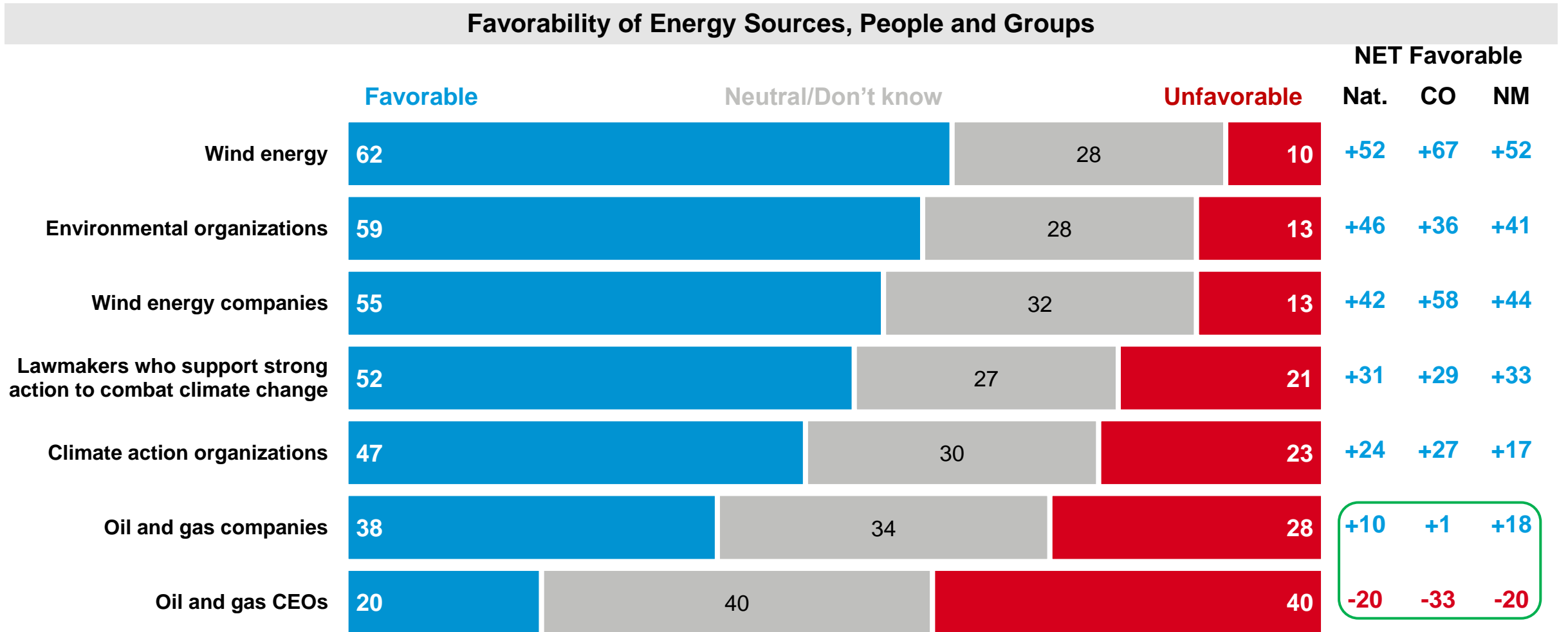
# The Changing Public Opinion on Climate Change

Presented by Andrew Baumann of GSG



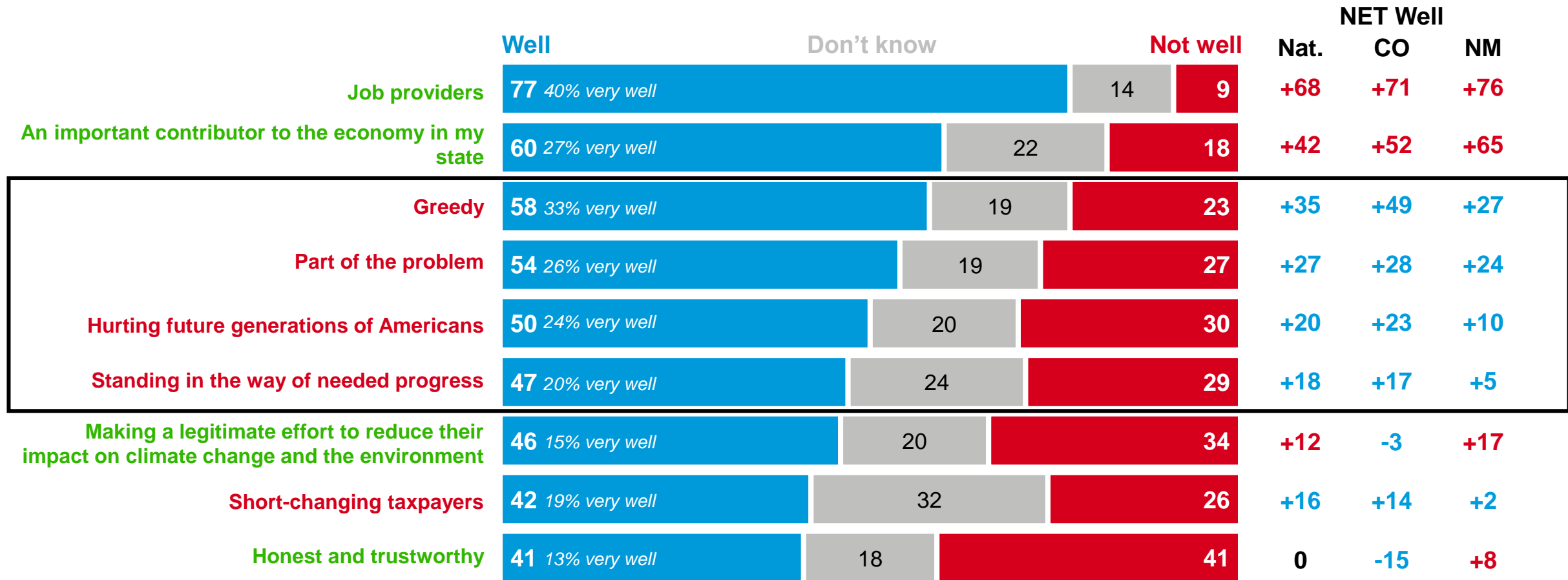
# Views on Clean Energy and Fossil Fuels

# Wind energy is widely popular; oil and gas companies are above water, but their CEOs are not.



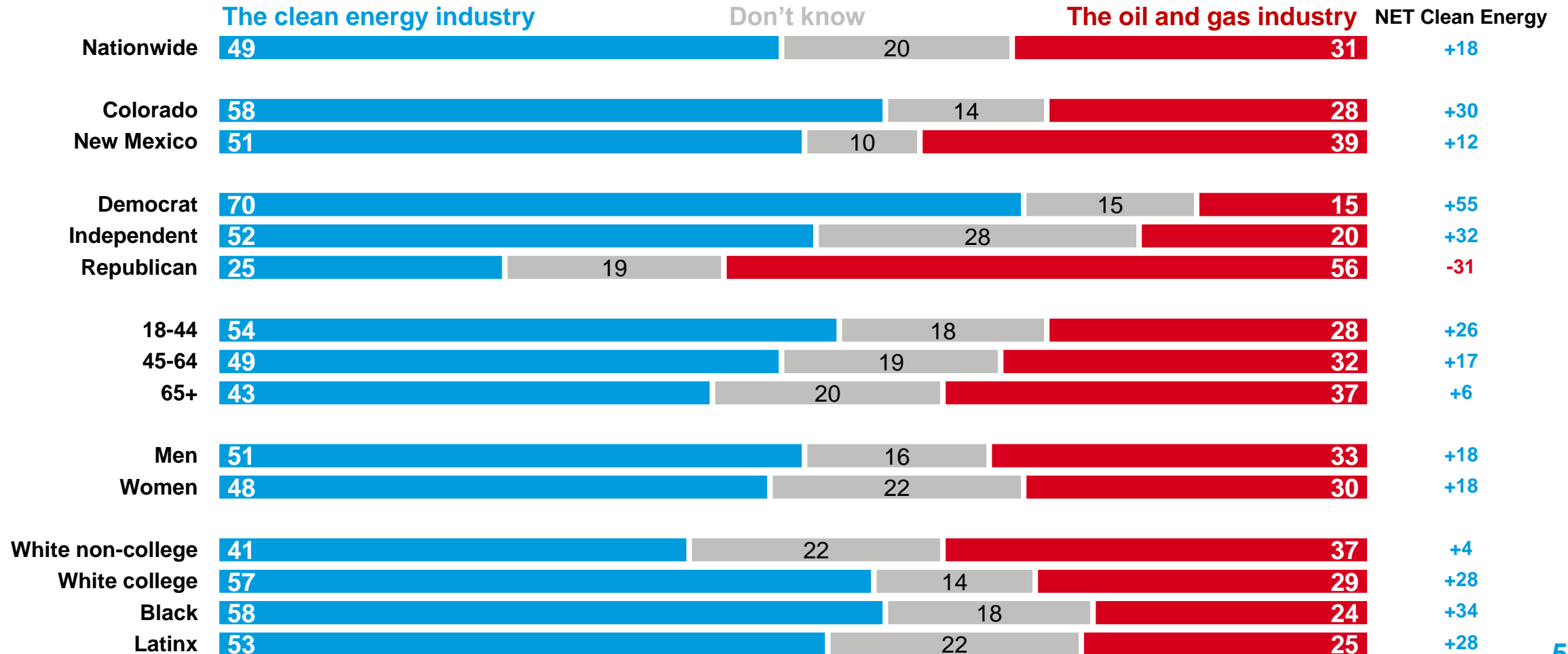
# Oil and gas companies are seen as greedy and part of the problem, but also as job providers and economic contributors

Please indicate how well you think each one describes oil and gas companies.



# BUT a sizeable margin believe that the clean energy has more potential for jobs than oil and gas

Which of the following industries do you think has the potential to create more American jobs in the next five years?

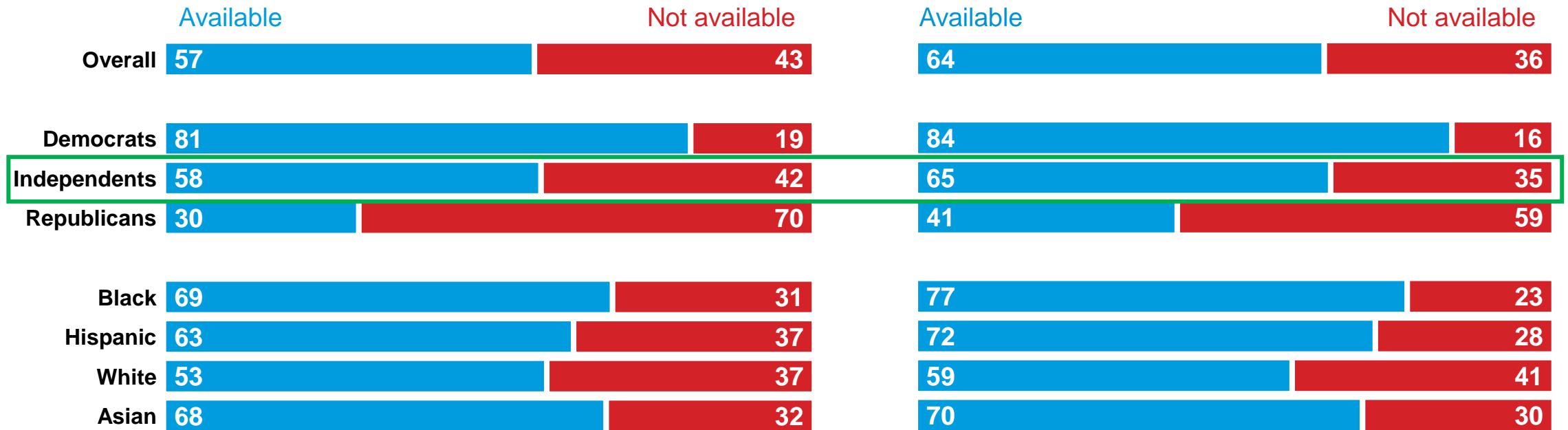


Source: GSG survey for Accountable.US of 1,010 registered voters nationwide with oversamples in CO and NM. February 20 – 28, 2021.

# Americans believe clean energy jobs will be available to them and to people in their community

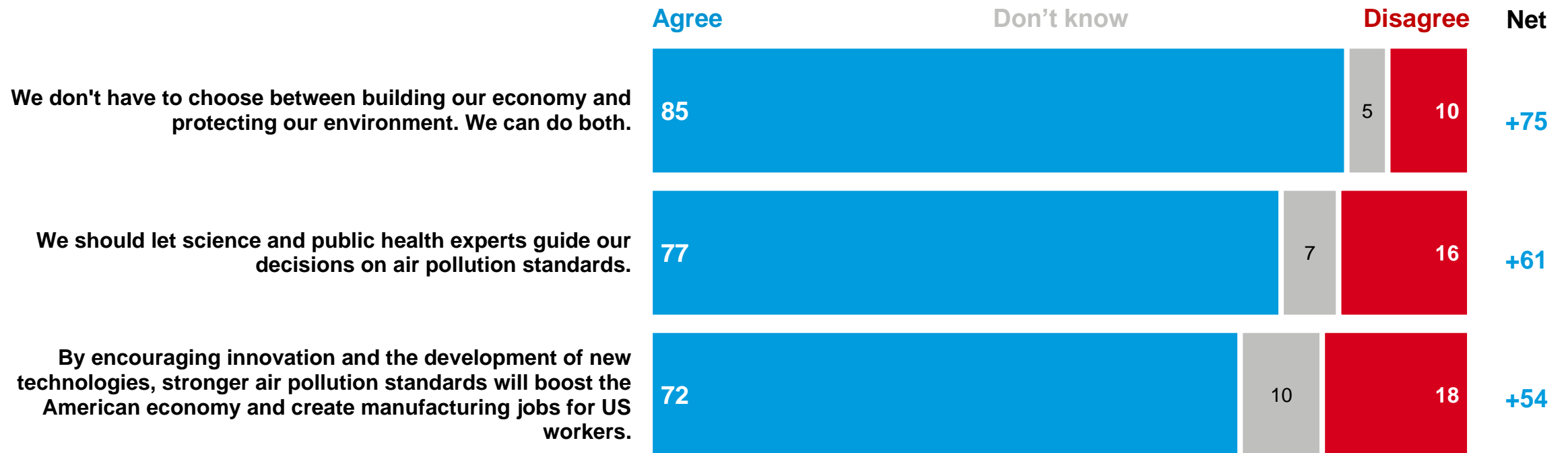
If [the BBB plan's] climate-related proposals pass, do you think clean energy jobs will be created that are available to people like you?

If [the BBB plan's] climate-related proposals pass, do you think clean energy jobs will be created that are available to people in your community?



# Voters reject the idea that we need to choose between economy and environment, and believe that stronger standards will boost economy

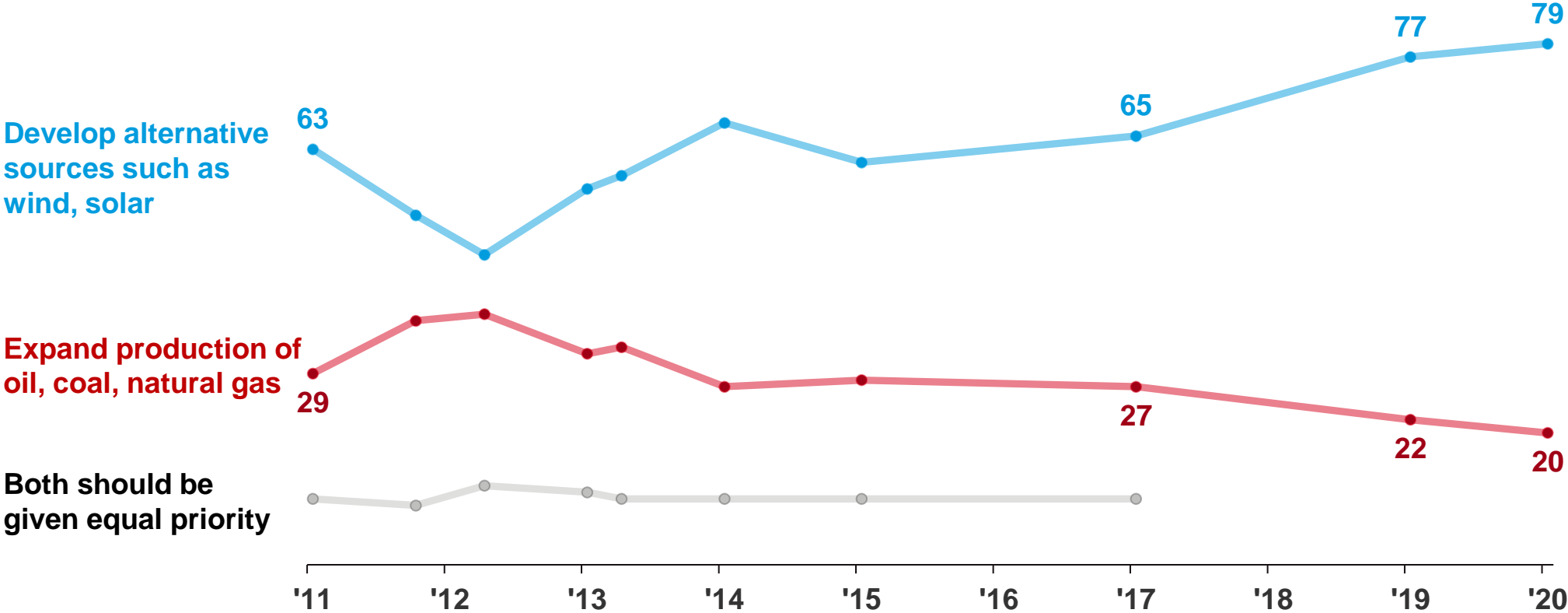
## Support For Statements on Emissions and Air Pollution (Initial)



# Pew: Americans increasingly, and overwhelmingly, believe we should be prioritizing wind and solar over oil, coal, and gas

Most say that developing alternative sources should be U.S. energy priority

% of U.S. adults who say the most important priority for addressing America's energy supply should be to...

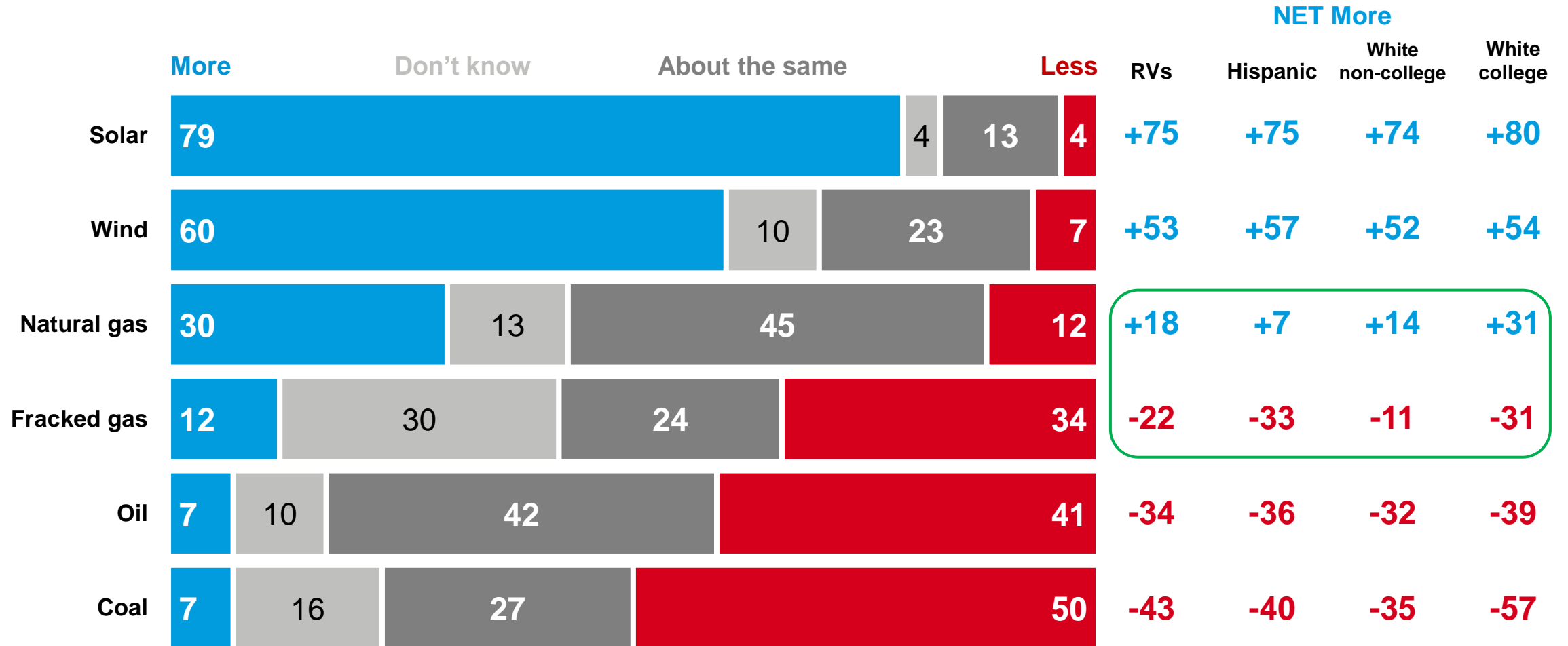


Source: Pew Research Center, January 2020



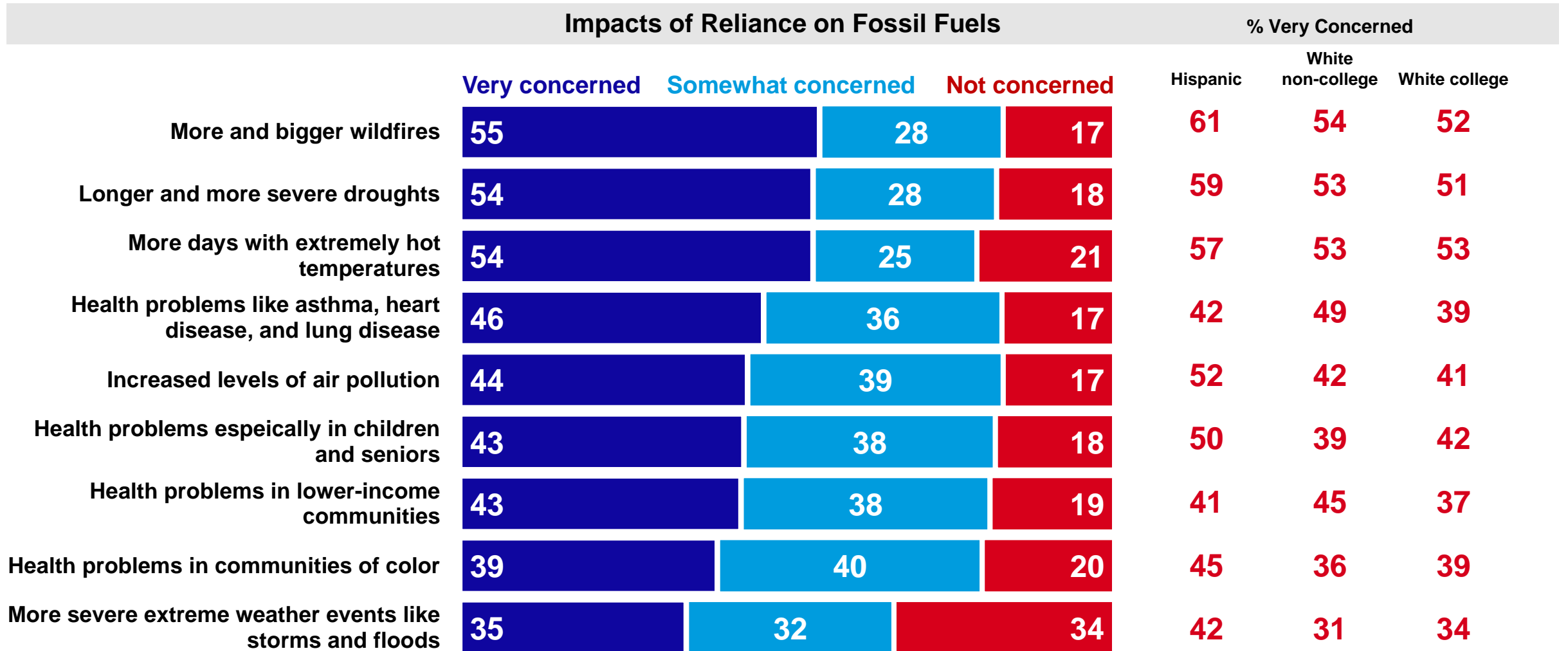
# AZ: Voters overwhelmingly want state to move toward clean energy, away from fossil fuels; “natural” vs. “fracked” determine attitudes on gas.

## Energy Source Usage in Arizona



Source: Global Strategy Group survey for the American Lung Association of 800 registered voters in Arizona from November 19-29, 2020.

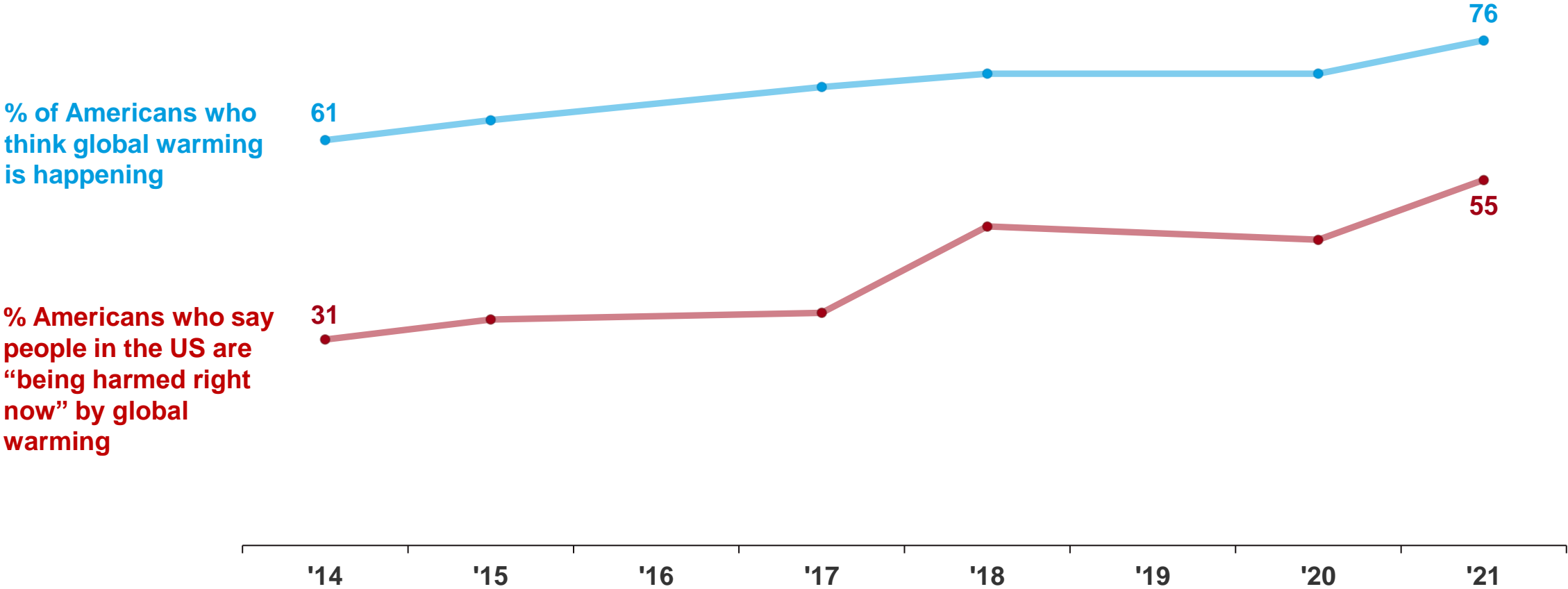
# AZ: The related issues of heat, droughts, and wildfires are biggest concern about reliance on fossil fuels.



Source: Global Strategy Group survey for the American Lung Association of 800 registered voters in Arizona from November 19-29, 2020.

# Views on Climate Change

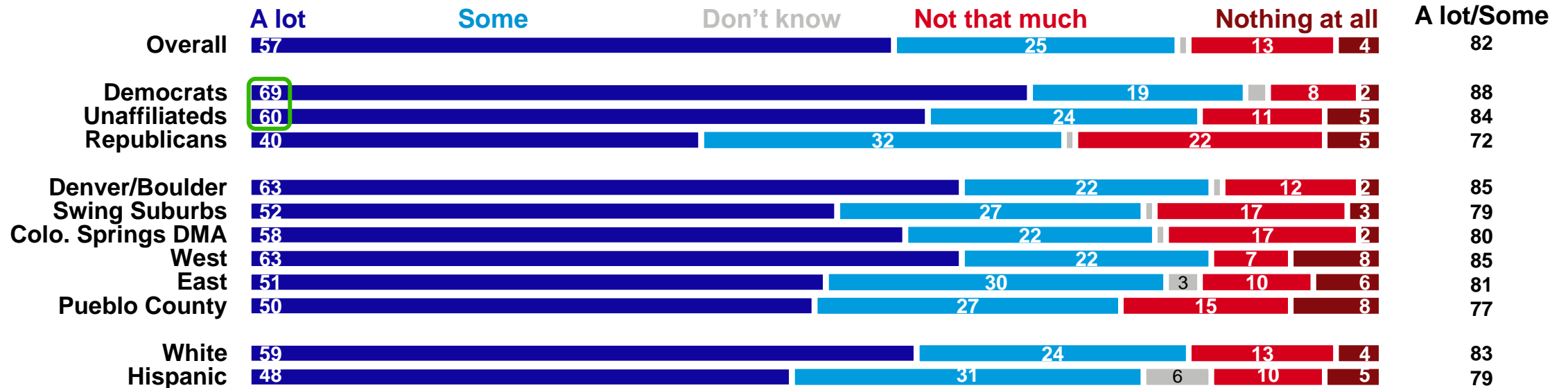
# Yale/GMU: Belief in climate change and that it's harming people in the U.S. is at an all-time high



Source: Yale / George Mason University, Sept. 2021

# Coloradans are highly aware of recent strange and severe weather, especially hurricanes in the South and wildfires in the West

How much have you heard recently about climate change and strange and severe weather?



[IF HEARD A LOT/SOME] And what have you heard about climate change and strange and severe weather?

“Severe **drought in West** and more **forest fires**. More **hurricanes** too”

“**Floods** in NY, PA, and LA”

“The **average temperatures** have **risen** over the last number of years”



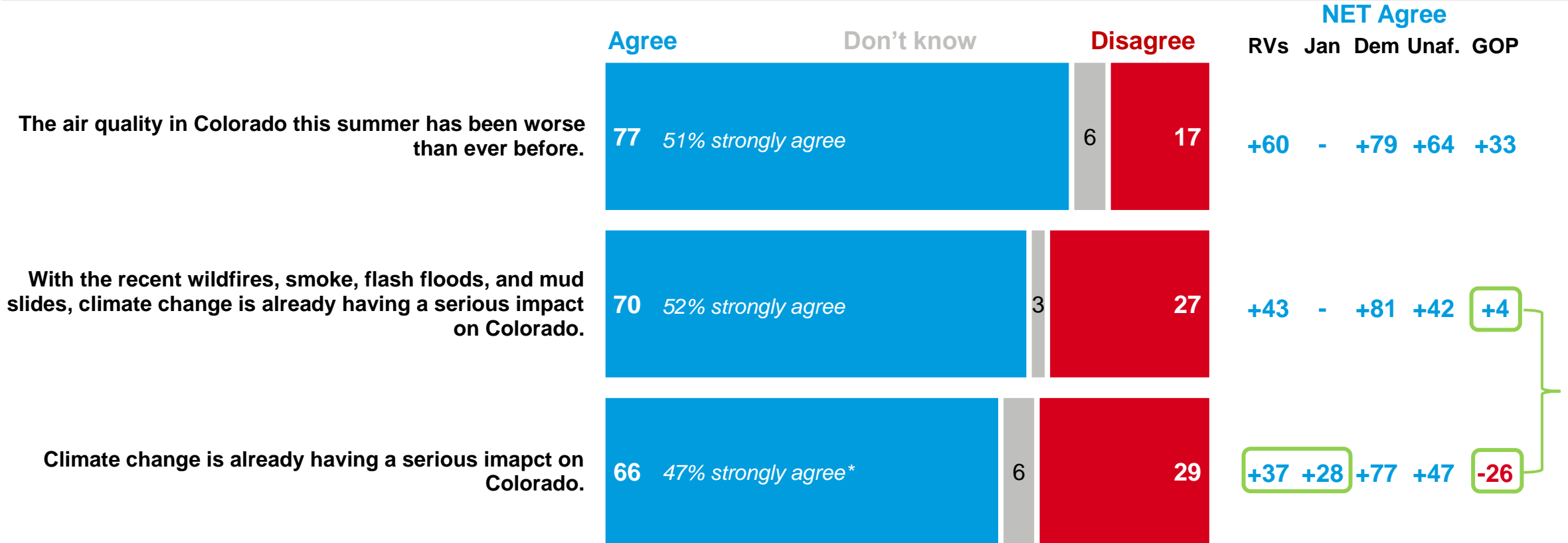
“Due to **climate change**, we have more **intense hurricanes and fires**”

“More severe **hurricanes** hitting land”

“**Climate change** is real and causing the **fires** and severe weather”

# CO: Increasingly strong agreement that climate change is already having an impact on state. Tying it to weather events boosts agreement with Republicans

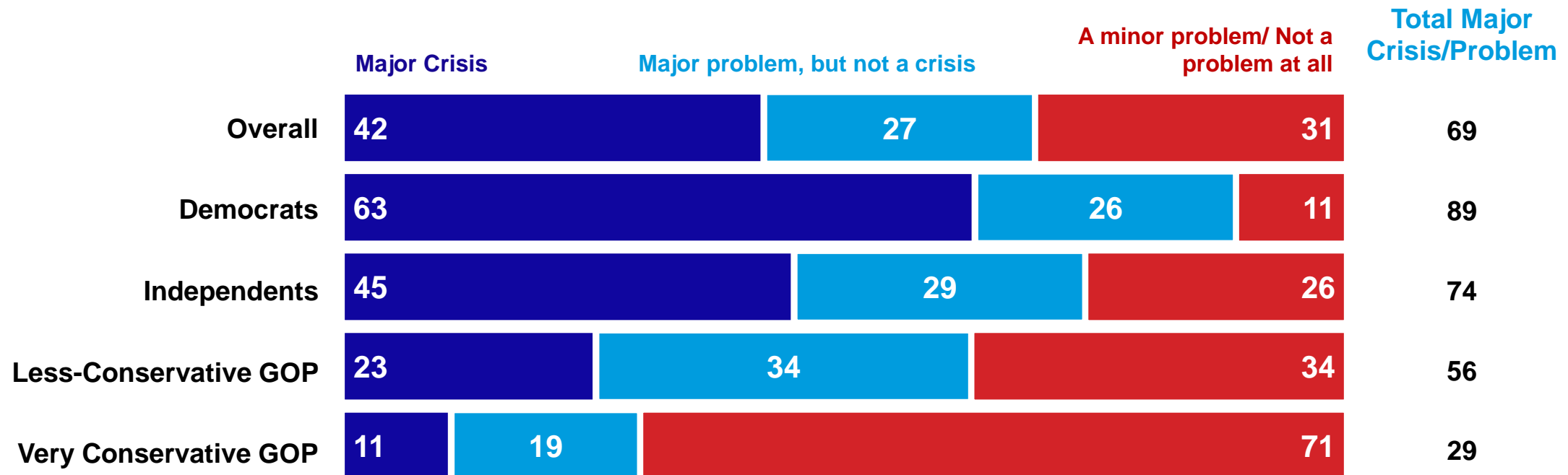
## Statements about Air Quality, Climate Change, and Clean Energy



\* Up 8 points from 39% strongly agree in January

# Seven in ten Americans recognize climate change as a major problem – including over half of less-conservative Republicans. But intensity is polarized

Please indicate whether you believe each is best described as a major crisis, a major problem but not a crisis, a minor problem, or not a problem at all: Climate change.



# No longer acceptable for politicians to say climate change is a hoax – even with many Republicans

Quote from 2019 Focus Group with Republican Men in Rural, Carbon County, UT

*“Listen. Al Gore is an asshat, but climate change is real and anyone who says it’s not is a fucking idiot.”*

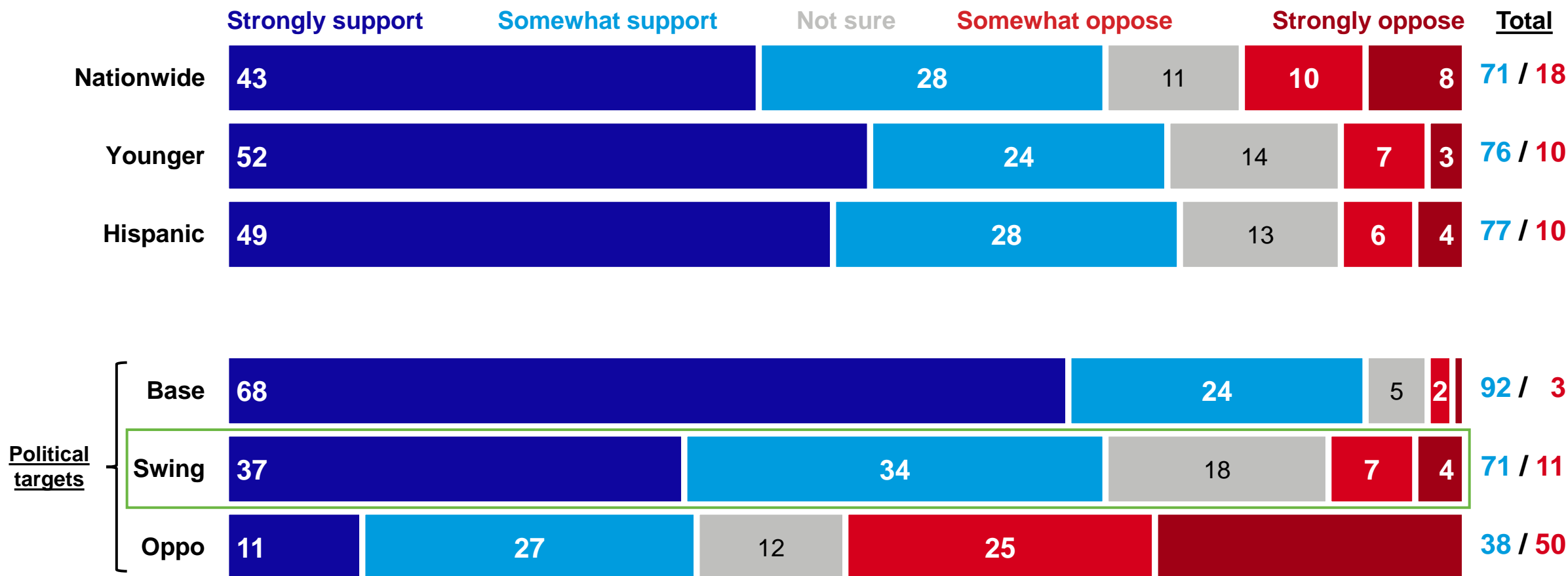
*– Republican Man from rural Carbon County, Utah*



# Support for Climate Action

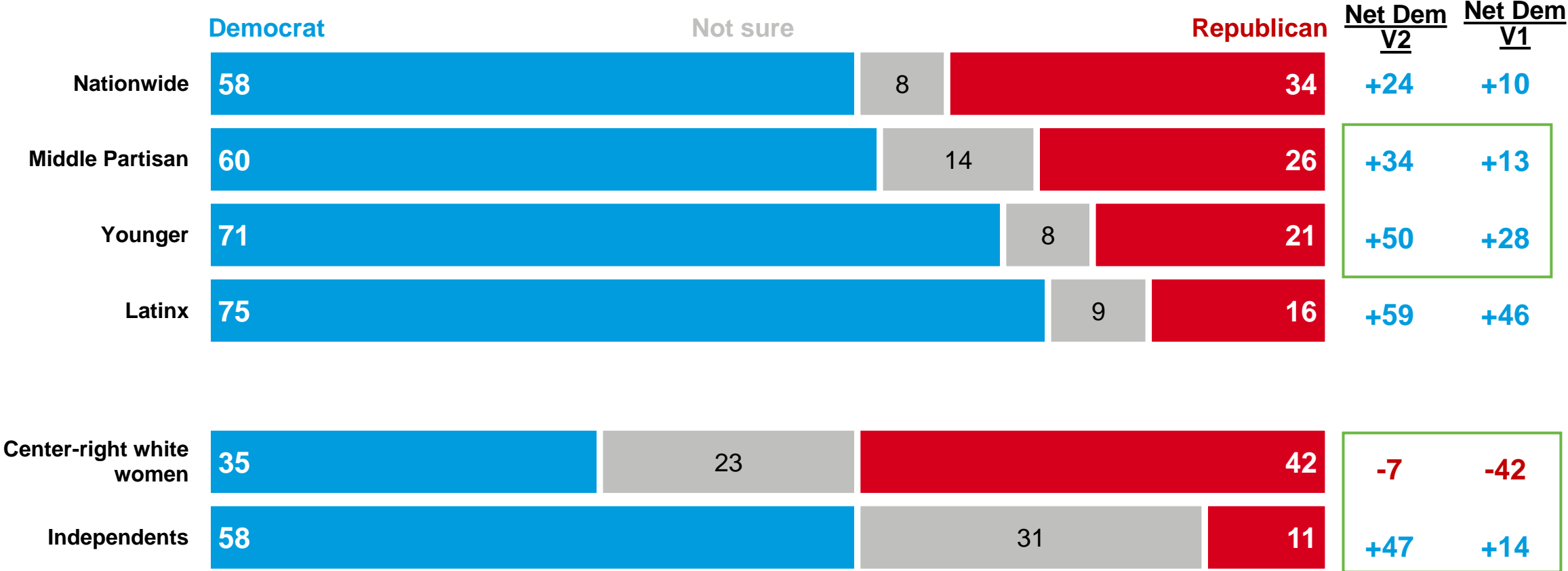
# Overwhelming support for “bold” “government” action on climate, including with swing voters, Hispanic voters, and younger voters

Do you support or oppose the U.S. government taking bold action to combat climate change?



# A climate-focused generic ballot shifts the vote towards Dems by 14 pts overall and even more among younger and center-right voters.

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?



Source: Global Strategy Group survey for Climate Power of 1,031 registered voters nationwide from June 23 – July 1, 2020.

# More voters are worried about politicians and the oil lobby preventing action, but there is some concern that climate “alarmists” will go too far

Which one comes closer to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?

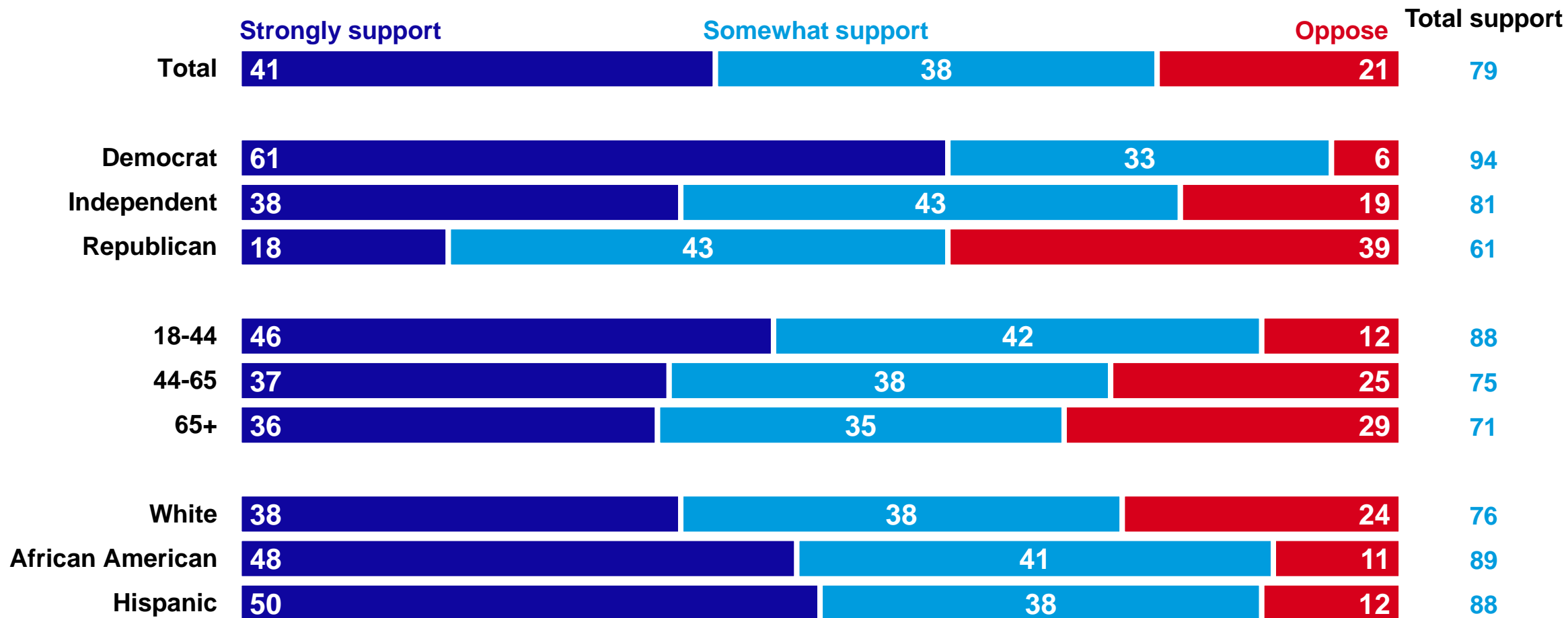
I am more worried that **politicians who are bought and paid for by the big oil companies and deny that climate change exists** will prevent us from taking the action we need to leave a better world for our children and grandchildren

I am more worried that **liberal politicians and environmental alarmists who are exaggerating the problem of climate change** will push us to pass big and unnecessary gov't programs that will raise taxes, kill jobs, and harm our way of life



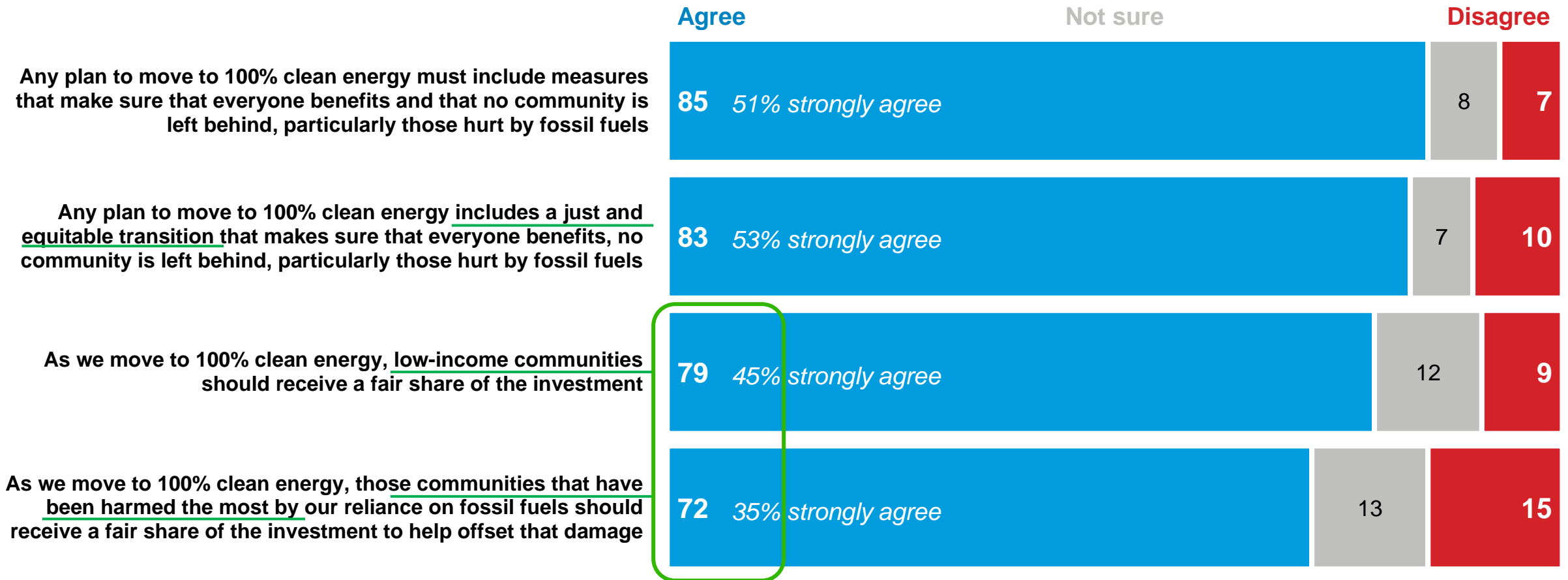
# Strong support for 100% clean across partisan and demographic lines. Higher support among younger voters and people of color

## Support for Moving US to 100% Clean Energy



# Strong agreement that any 100% clean plan must ensure no communities are left behind.

For each, please indicate whether you generally agree or disagree with each statement.

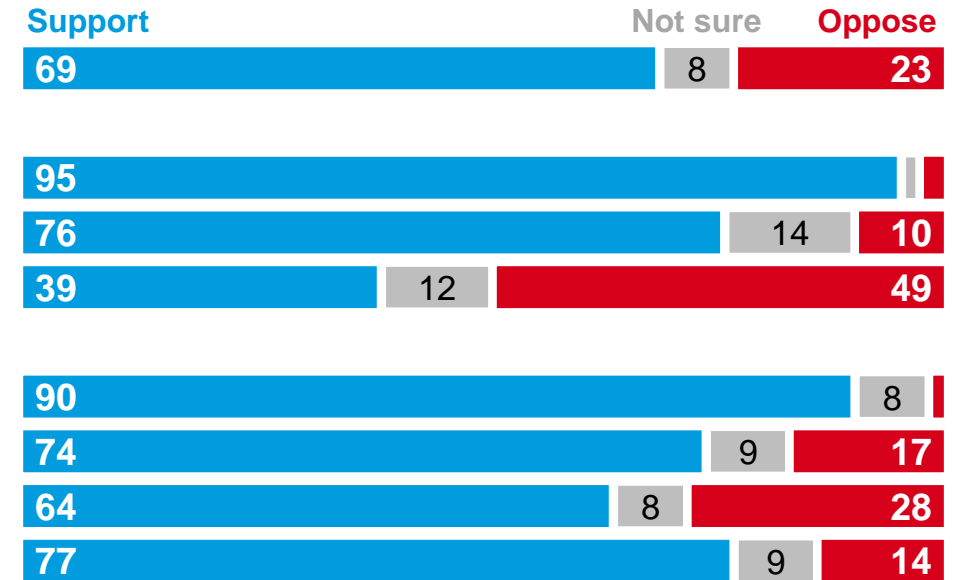


# Strong majorities support clean energy investments in Biden's American Jobs Plan

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
America should make significant investments in clean energy as part of our efforts to rebuild the economy.



As you may know, President Biden has proposed including a number of climate-related initiatives in the "American Jobs Plan," such as investing in clean energy, like wind energy and solar power, modernizing our electric grid, increasing electric vehicle production, and ensuring everyone has access to clean air and water. Do you support or oppose including these policies in the "American Jobs Plan"?



# Policies to cap carbon emissions or move to clean energy are very popular across the country and the West

Location	Policy	Net Support	Date	Pollster
PA	Plan to move the US to 100% clean electricity by 2035	+58	2020	GSG
PA	Plan to move the US to 100% clean energy economy by 2050	+53	2020	GSG
NV	Require NV utilities to get 100% clean electricity by 2040	+53	2020	GSG
NC	Regulations to eliminate carbon emissions in NC reaching zero by 2040	+52	2019	GSG
AZ	Require AZ utilities to get 100% clean electricity by 2050	+50	2020	GSG
NV	Regulations to limit carb emission in NV reach zero by 2050	+50	2020	GSG
CO	Rules to guarantee CO reduces carbon emissions by 90% by 2050	+46	2019	GSG
CO	Transition CO to 100% clean energy in next 10-15 years	+44	2021	FM3/New Bridge
BG	Move the U.S. to a 100% clean energy economy by the year 2050	+43	2020	GSG
NM	Transition NM to 100% clean energy in next 10-15 years	+42	2021	FM3/New Bridge
NV	Transition NV to 100% clean energy in next 10-15 years	+42	2020	FM3/New Bridge
CO	Rules to guarantee CO reduces carbon emissions by 90% by 2050	+42	2020	GSG
MN	Regulations to limit the total carbon emissions in Minnesota	+40	2018	GSG
PA	Regulations to eliminate carbon emissions in PA by 2040	+38	2019	GSG
NM	Regulations to eliminate carbon emissions in NM by 2050	+35	2019	GQR
CO	Limits carbon emissions to guarantee state hits 90% by 2050 target	+32	2021	GSG



# **Messaging in Support of Climate Action and Clean Energy**

# Messaging Recommendations: Climate and Health

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**Remind people why we need to act now – a moral obligation to future generations.** The idea that we have a basic responsibility to address climate change in order to leave a better and healthier world for our children and grandchildren remains one of the most powerful frames for climate action.

- **Feel free to tie health and climate together under the legacy umbrella.** Messaging around public health can be easily and effectively combined with future-based climate messaging by talking about how pollution from dirty energy sources is putting the health and future of our kids and risk and highlighting that climate action will reduce not only carbon pollution, but other pollution like sulfur, mercury, and arsenic.
- **And to emphasize both strange and severe weather.** Reminding voters that, in addition to the impact climate change will have on our kids' futures, that we're already seeing its impact can help boost salience, particularly with more conservative voters. We should always talk about "strange" as well as "severe" weather and highlight hotter than normal temperatures along with things like wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, and/or flooding (depending on the geography).

**Focus on the need to listen to the experts (including both scientists and military leaders) – who all agree that this is a real threat.** Scientists are the most trusted experts when it comes to climate change and people don't know about the scientific consensus. Adding military leaders boosts appeal with more conservative and less-educated white voters who are more skeptical about the scientific elites.

- **Where it makes sense, tie the need to listen to experts to the COVID pandemic.** The pandemic, and the current effort by anti-maskers and anti-vaxxers to undercut the science has boosted the salience of listening to science and experts among a sizeable majority of voters, and both positive and negative climate messaging sometimes can be strengthened by tying it to COVID – but this should be employed more heavily in geographies that have fewer white non-college voters.

# Messaging Recommendations: Economic Impact

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**Always play offense on the economic impact of climate action and clean energy.** The other side always wants to create a false choice between acting on climate and protecting the economy, but voters reject the idea that we need to choose and believe that acting on climate and moving to clean energy will boost the economy.

- **Lean into clean energy as a way to create good-paying jobs for all kinds of people right now...** Clearly, we want to tout the potential of clean energy to create GOOD-PAYING (and feel free to add “union” where it makes sense) jobs. It can help strengthen our messaging by pointing out that it will create jobs for all sorts of people, from engineers, to factory workers, to installers, to secretaries.
- **... but don't forget the long-term benefits – economic and otherwise.** The beauty of messaging around clean energy is that we can credibly make the case that it will have both short- and long-term benefits with the latter including greater innovation and economic growth, along with cleaner air, healthier kids, and a safer climate.
- **And don't ignore costs (including health care costs).** Our greater vulnerability is not that climate action will kill jobs, but that it will raise the cost of energy (both electricity and, especially, gas prices). Again, we should play offense here, not defense. This is a heavier lift than playing offensive on jobs, but voters are open to our arguments that wind and solar will be cheaper than gas and coal, especially in the long-term; that shifting to ZEVs will save them money in gas costs in the long-term, and that moving to clean energy will save everyone in health care costs, again, in the long-term.

# Messaging Recommendations: The Economic Transition

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**Focus more on the transition TOWARD clean energy than the transition AWAY from fossil fuels...** While we know that, in the end, this is a zero-sum game, voters don't think about energy that way. They are more in favor of clean energy than they are opposed to fossil fuels. This isn't to say that we should not talk about moving away from fossil fuels, just that it should always be paired with what we're moving toward, which should have greater emphasis.

- **... And try to avoid using “fossil fuels” as a shorthand – instead, talk about specific “dirty” and “outdated” energy sources.** The term “fossil fuels” is not well liked, but we put ourselves in a stronger position if we are a bit more specific and descriptive and talk about “dirty and outdated energy sources like coal, oil, fracked gas.”
- **Use the terms “fracked gas” and the “fracking industry” rather than “natural gas” and the “natural gas industry.”** The gas industry has done an effective job of branding their product so that voters see it as more clean than dirty. But putting the focus on how that gas is produced using a process about which most voters have great concern changes the equation.

**In energy-producing regions, emphasize the need to make the inevitable transition to clean energy on our own terms.** Selling the transition to clean energy is certainly tougher in states and regions that are heavily reliant on the coal, oil, and/or gas industry – but usually not impossible. In addition to touting the stronger economic potential of clean energy, it can help to talk about how the shift to clean energy is inevitable (and already underway) and by acting “thoughtfully” and proactively, these places can make the transition on their own terms in a way will set them up for a better future.

- **And include assistance and training for workers in the incumbent industry.** Voters in these energy-producing places are much more likely to support our policies if they include assistance to the workers being displaced in the form of job training and placement and/or early retirement.

# Messaging Recommendations: Environmental Justice

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**Don't be afraid of including environmental justice in your messaging and make it a larger emphasis for younger voters and voters of color.** Even a few years ago, an explicit focus on environmental justice could end up hurting our cause. That's not USUALLY the case now. While this messaging is not necessarily our strongest messaging for a broad audience, it is no longer a turnoff for most voters (particularly the ones who are gettable for us) and is clearly a value-add for younger voters, African Americans, and Hispanic voters – though, in most cases, it should be a complementary message with these groups, rather than the centerpiece.

**Be inclusive and thoughtful in how we deploy justice messaging.** We have found that environmental justice messaging is strongest – not only with swing voters but with our base and voters of color as well – when it is more inclusive, and less divisive. Our messaging is stronger when we talk about “working-class” and/or “low-income communities” rather than saying “marginalized communities.”

**Even better, stress the positive impact on all communities – and that no community should be left behind.** It is even stronger to talk about how “every community deserves a fair opportunity to thrive” and how “no community should be left behind.” Relatedly, language about how no ones should be exposed to more pollution because of their zip code is also strong.

- **Include specific mention of communities of color as a subset of these broader communities.** We should not shy away from calling out the need to ensure that communities of color, specifically, deserve a fair opportunity to thrive. However, our messaging is stronger – including stronger with voters of color – when these communities are cited as part of a more inclusive definition, i.e. “low-income communities, including communities of color” or “low-income communities, be they white or communities of color” rather than simply “communities of color.”

# Messaging Recommendations: Responding to Attacks

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**Push off of anti-climate politicians' fealty to big oil and coal CEOs – and what that means for the health of our families and kids.** Americans believe that we should have already taken stronger action to move to clean energy and combat climate change and that the main reason we haven't is that anti-environment politicians are in the pockets of big oil and coal CEOs. It is important to keep the focus on oil/coal "CEOs," who are universally loathed, rather than oil/coal "companies" or the oil/coal "industry," which includes workers and are viewed much more positively.

**Use voters' skepticism about anti-climate politicians' most outlandish claims to discredit all of their attacks.** Anti-climate politicians' attacks over the cost of climate action can have potency, but voters have warranted skepticism about some of the more outlandish cost claims that the other side makes. Moreover, claims that climate action would ban hamburgers, airplanes, and cars are viewed as totally ridiculous and offer an opportunity to discredit our opponents' entire message.

**Respond to cost attacks by going on offense and highlighting big oil subsidies and the cost of inaction.** As noted early, we should never cede the cost debate to our opponents, and we should aggressively make the case that climate action and clean energy will save people money, especially in the long-term. We can also strengthen that response by pointing out that we can pay for climate action by eliminating subsidies to oil and coal companies and reminding people that the cost of inaction would be far greater.

# Energy and Climate Messaging Dos...

## DOs

**Combine messaging about protecting our kids' future** from climate change with **messaging about protecting their health** from pollution.

**Use the other side's most ridiculous claims to discredit their attacks** – Remind voters that fact checkers have called these claims (particularly around cost) “false” and “bogus” and that no one wants to ban hamburgers, cars, or airplanes.

**Emphasize the consensus beyond scientists (particularly military leaders) more with center-right voters**, and the scientific consensus more with the center-left.

**Talk about “dirty” and “outdated” energy sources.** And specifically, name coal, oil, and “**fracked**” gas.

**Use specifics as much as possible**—specific safeguards (i.e., the Clean Air and Water Acts), specific pollutants (i.e., mercury, arsenic, sulfur dioxide), and specific health impacts (asthma, heart disease, cancer).

**Aggressively stress that clean energy and clean technologies will save regular families money** on both energy and healthcare in the long-term.

**Put more emphasis on economic arguments with center-right voters, and more on health and climate arguments with the center left. Use legacy aggressively with both.**

**Tie climate change to severe and STRANGE weather with more conservative audiences.** Don't only focus on extreme events, but weird/strange weather on a daily or seasonal basis.

## ... and Don'ts

### DON'TS

**Be afraid to highlight support for aggressive, but thoughtful, climate action like 100% clean or carbon-free by 2035/2040** — Climate is a winning issue like never before and voters not only support such policies but believe they are possible.

**Ever cede the economic or costs debates to anti-environment politicians.**

**Ever use the term “Green Jobs.”** Voters have no idea what that means.

**Be afraid to support the EPA.** In most places, it is quite popular and not at all a boogeyman to voters.

**Focus ONLY on anti-environment politicians' support for fossil fuels.** Instead, always juxtapose this with their opposition to clean energy.

**Limit your economic message ONLY to jobs, particularly with center-right voters.** Also talk about innovation, businesses, and economic growth. When talking about jobs, emphasis the creation of local jobs.

**Be afraid to talk about “regulations.”** While “safeguards” is still better language, “regulations” are not unpopular and are preferred to concepts like “cap-and-trade” which can confuse voters.



# Recommended Language

# Recommended Language: The Core Climate and Health Message

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*Our leaders have a duty to listen to our nation's most respected experts – and a basic responsibility to leave a better world for our kids. But unchecked pollution from dirty and outdated energy sources is putting the health and future of our children at risk.*

*The coronavirus pandemic has shown us what happens when we don't listen to the experts. We can't afford to make the same mistakes when it comes to climate change. Ninety-seven percent of scientists, NASA, and the Department of Defense all agree that climate change is a threat to our kids' futures, and we are already seeing its impact, in the form of increasingly strange and severe weather, wildfires, and droughts (and/or hurricanes and floods).*

*By encouraging a transition to clean energy, climate action will not only dramatically reduce the carbon pollution that is disrupting our climate, but also the sulfur and arsenic pollution that cause asthma, heart and lung disease, and even cancer – especially in children.*

# Recommended Language: Supporting Messaging

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## Clean Energy and the Economy

*As we recover from the coronavirus crisis, we should focus on rebuilding an economy that works for regular Americans, not CEOs, by making investments that will create high-quality jobs for all kinds of people right now and provide benefits to the country for decades to come. Investing in clean energy will create millions of good-paying (middle-class/union) jobs starting right now while protecting our kids' health, spurring innovation and economic growth, and combatting climate change in the long-term.*

## Costs

*The cost of coal and fracked gas are volatile, often resulting in spikes in the price that families have to pay for their power. Meanwhile, the cost of wind and solar power is ALREADY cheaper than coal and fracked gas in most parts of the country, and it only continues to drop – in fact, Stanford researchers say that moving to wind and solar will eventually save the average family over a thousand dollars a year in energy and health costs.*

## Environmental Justice

*Every community deserves a fair opportunity to thrive, but low-income communities (including communities of color/be they white or communities of color) have paid the highest price for our dependence on dirty energy sources in the form of polluted air and water and greater levels of asthma, cancer, and birth defects. That's why it's so important that we make a transition to clean energy where everyone benefits, no community is left behind, and these communities receive a fair share of the investment.*

## The Transition in Energy-Producing States

*Current economic trends mean that a transition from coal, oil, and fracked gas to renewable energy is inevitable - it's just a matter of how and when. By embarking on a thoughtful transition to renewable energy now, (STATE/REGION) can make the transition on our own terms, become a national leader, and create thousands of good jobs over the coming decade as we build, install and service the solar and wind farms needed to replace electricity from coal/fracked gas while making sure that coal/gas workers get training, transfer to new jobs, and/or retire early as we make this transition.*

# Recommended Language: Anti-Climate Politicians

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## The three prongs of a climate critique of anti-climate politicians:

- Highlight how these politicians ignore and dishonor experts.
- And how, instead, they have sold the farm to big oil and coal CEOs.
- As a result, their denial of reality has put future generations at risk.

## Main Message:

*Our leaders have a duty to listen to the nation's most respected experts and a basic responsibility to leave a better world for our children. Yet, these anti-climate politicians dishonor the experts and put their fealty to the big oil and coal CEOs who fund their campaigns ahead of our kids' future.*

*Even though 97% percent of scientists, NASA and the Department of Defense all agree that climate change is a threat to our children's future, these politicians continue to deny the science of climate change and oppose efforts to limit carbon pollution.*

*(And, even as scientists and doctors say that masks and vaccines are the best way to fight COVID, these same politicians want to ban local schools from requiring masks or vaccines, putting our kids even further at risk.)*

## Secondary Message – Add in Giveaways to Big Oil and Coal CEOs:

*Instead of listening to scientists and public health experts, these politicians put oil and coal lobbyists in charge of protecting our air, water, climate, and public lands – and they immediately went to work rolling back 98 different environmental safeguards. They not only helped big oil and coal CEOs boost their profits by pumping more mercury, arsenic, and carbon pollution into our air and water, they gave them hundreds of billions of dollars in new tax breaks and subsidies. Thanks to their plan, Chevron did not pay any federal taxes.*

# Thank You

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