

A woman in a dark top is speaking at a public event, gesturing with her right hand. Behind her, a crowd of people is visible, some holding signs. One sign clearly says "GREEN JOBS FOR ALL". Another sign partially visible says "STEP UP OR...". The background also shows framed pictures on a wall and an American flag.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL FOR PUBLIC HOUSING ACT CAN STAND UP TO SCRUTINY

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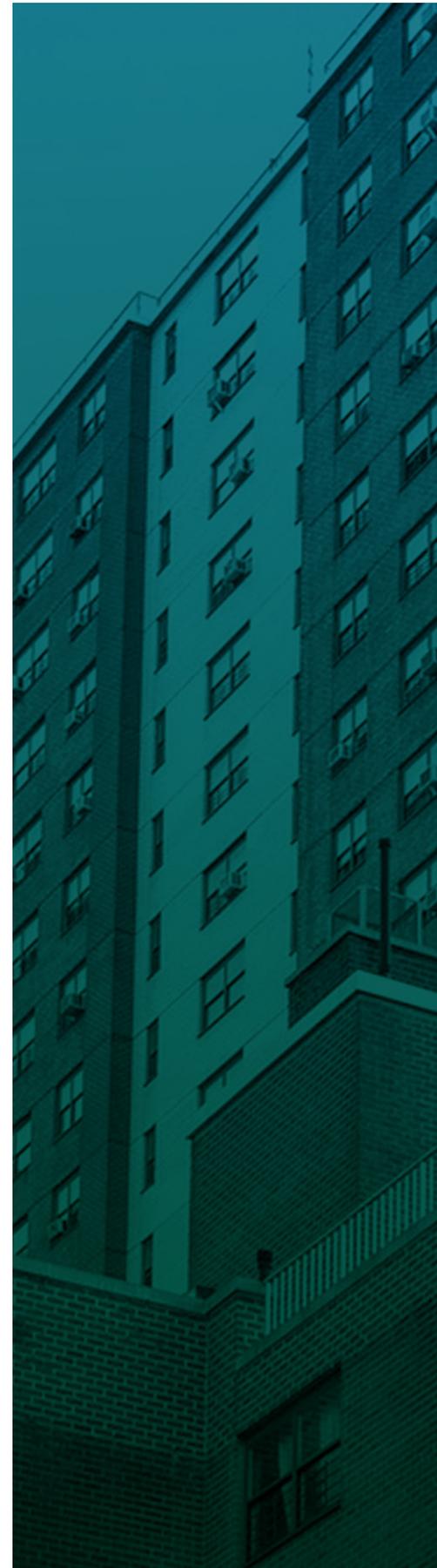
November 2019

Recently, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders introduced their **Green New Deal for Public Housing Act**.

Here, we test that legislation in an electoral environment, with Republican arguments against it. We find that even after being presented with negative messages, voters support the Green New Deal for Public Housing Act 46 percent to 35 percent. We find that that jobs and apprenticeship aspects of the policy are the most popular. These findings are consistent with [previous research on Green Housing legislation](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ Democratic voters clearly support new policies on housing reform, with independents being split. Republicans oppose these policies but report they would be more likely to support the policies if they included tax relief and new programs for jobs.
- ▶ Voters across the ideological spectrum move in favor of comprehensive housing reform when the reform includes job-training programs, new jobs, and the removal of lead and mold.
- ▶ Partisanship and political ideology are the strongest motivations determining support for housing reform, controlling for a variety of political and demographic factors.



Housing policy is one of the most important issues in American politics.

Many of the Democratic candidates for president have [released comprehensive housing plans](#), and voters [have shown a strong appetite](#) for new housing policy to improve access to housing, the health of their communities' housing economy, and the quality of public housing facilities. Here we asked voters to consider comprehensive housing reform, and then we asked them follow-up items on how other policies might persuade voters for or against comprehensive reform.

In order to explore how the Green New Deal for Public Housing Act would perform after being the subject of Fox News coverage, we tested the policy with partisan framing and messaging, to see how they would perform after partisan scrutiny. The item read,

Some Democrats in Congress have proposed legislation that would invest \$10 billion retrofitting public housing to reduce carbon pollution and eliminate toxic mold. The program would also fund career training opportunities and workforce training to people living in public housing and in neighboring communities.

Democrats argue this proposal would combat climate change, improve access to clean air and provide upward mobility for low-income Americans.

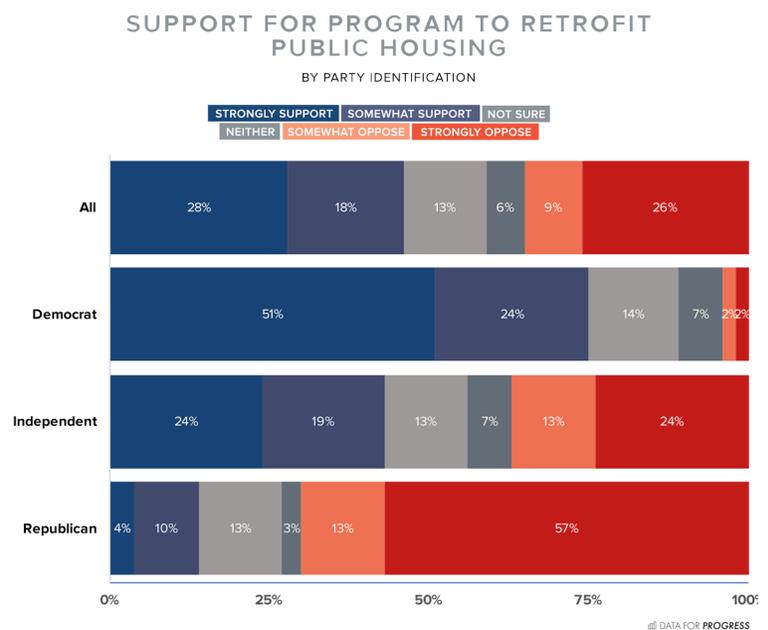
Republicans argue that this proposal would end up being a waste of taxpayer money and that the free market will do a better job providing jobs to low-income people.

Do you (support or oppose) this proposal?

Across the full set of voters, 46 percent supported and 35 percent opposed the item. Despite the seeming complexity of the item, only 19 percent reported having no

opinion or being unsure how they felt about the idea. Partisanship drove responses to this item, with Democrats overwhelmingly favoring the policy by a 75-4 margin and Republicans opposing the policy by a 70-14 margin. Independents were in favor of the issue by a 43-37 margin, with 26 percent of Independents undecided. The following plot breaks out support for a housing retrofit program by party identification.

► Figure 1



We included a series of follow-up items on housing reforms in anticipation of divided public opinion. We presented some hypothetical outcomes and additional policies that may be associated with comprehensive reform, and then asked voters if voters became more or less supportive of the policy in response. Those items included:

And thinking about that housing policy Democrats have proposed, would you say you would be [more or less/less or more] supportive of that policy if it would...

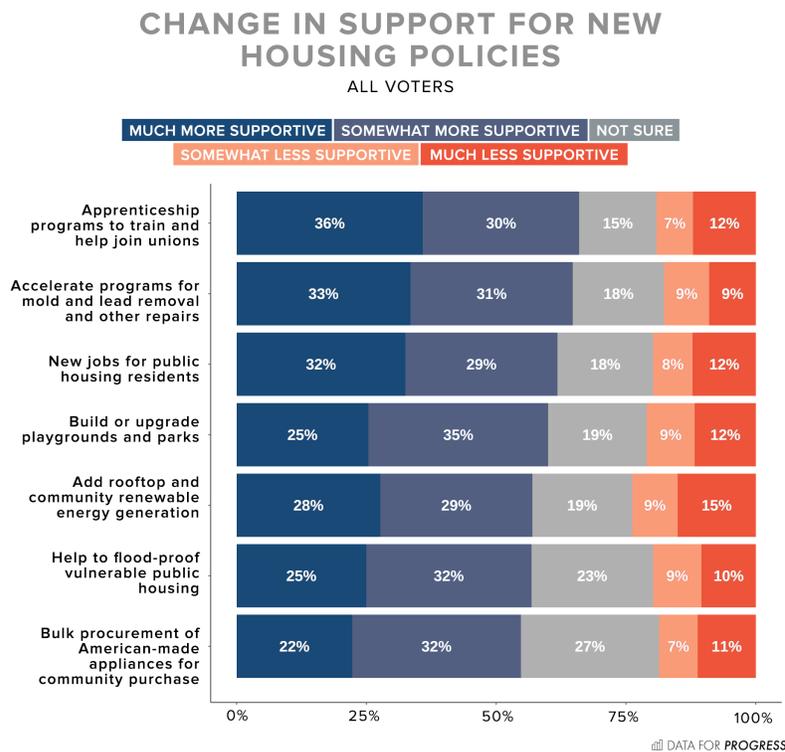
- *Create hundreds of thousands of jobs, prioritize new jobs for public housing residents and low-income residents of nearby communities?*

- ▶ *Create apprenticeship programs to build skills, create lifelong career opportunities, and help newly trained workers join unions?*
- ▶ *Help flood-proof vulnerable public housing and increase backup power, to make public housing complexes community safety centers during disasters?*
- ▶ *Add rooftop and community renewable energy generation including wind and solar, and have all building systems be powered by electricity so that public housing can transmit energy back to the grid and generate a revenue?*
- ▶ *Accelerate programs for mold removal, lead removal, and other immediate repairs to make public housing apartments safe for residents?*
- ▶ *Use bulk, public procurement for the most efficient American-made electric appliances to lower prices, and allow community members to purchase these efficient appliances at the bulk price discount?*
- ▶ *Build or upgrade playgrounds, parks, and community centers in public housing complexes that would benefit the whole community?*

Across the sample, majorities of voters reported that each of these outcomes or policies would make them more supportive of new housing policy. Sixty-six percent of voters reported that a policy providing new apprenticeships and job-training programs would make them more supportive of housing reform, down to 54 percent who said they would be more supportive of a policy that included buying American-made appliances. With the exception of the policy calling for the purchase of American-made appliances, which enjoyed more support among independents and Republicans than it did among Democrats, there were not many partisan divides on which of these additional policies was most persuasive. The approximate

ordering of how persuasive each policy or reform was preserved across Democrats, Republicans, and independents. While Democratic voters reported that each of these reforms would move them in favor of comprehensive reform, they also reported they most strongly supported reform to begin with.

▶ Figure 2



Independents, who were statistically split on comprehensive reform, responded most strongly to the item calling for the purchase for American-made appliances. That item read:

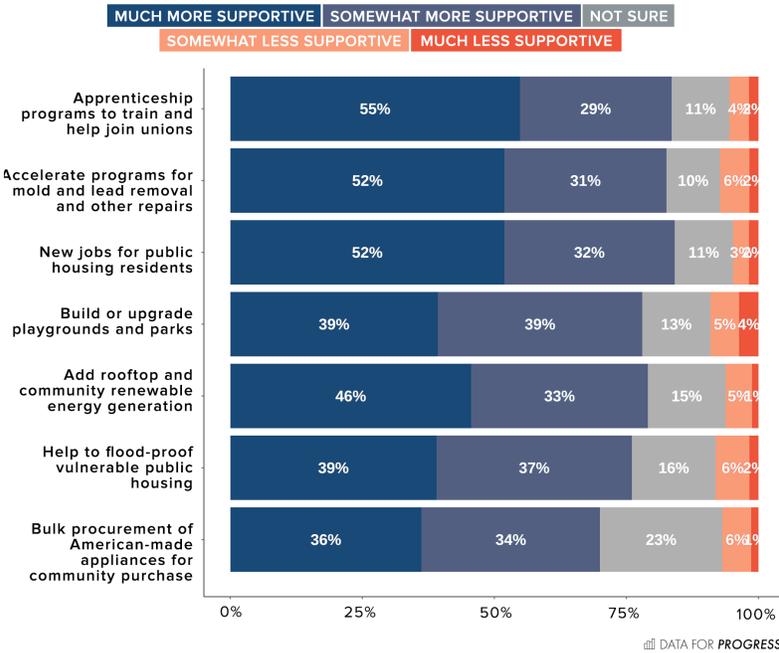
And thinking about that housing policy Democrats have proposed, would you say you would be [more or less/less or more] supportive of that policy if it would...

Use bulk, public procurement for the most efficient American-made electric appliances to lower prices, and allow community members to purchase these efficient appliances at the bulk price discount?

► Figure 3

CHANGE IN SUPPORT FOR NEW HOUSING POLICIES

DEMOCRATIC VOTERS



Fifty-three percent of independent voters said this policy made them more supportive of comprehensive reform, the second highest for independents of any of the policies we proposed next to new apprenticeship programs. Notably, independents' initial uncertainty over comprehensive reform persisted across this battery. On average, about three in ten independents reported they were unsure how they felt about whether the policies we proposed would move them for or against comprehensive housing reform.

As with Democrats and voters overall, Republicans responded strongly to the policies providing new apprenticeship programs, jobs, and the removal of lead and mold. Perhaps surprisingly, Republicans on net responded favorably to each policy, with the exception of the policy providing for new energy facilities for public housing.

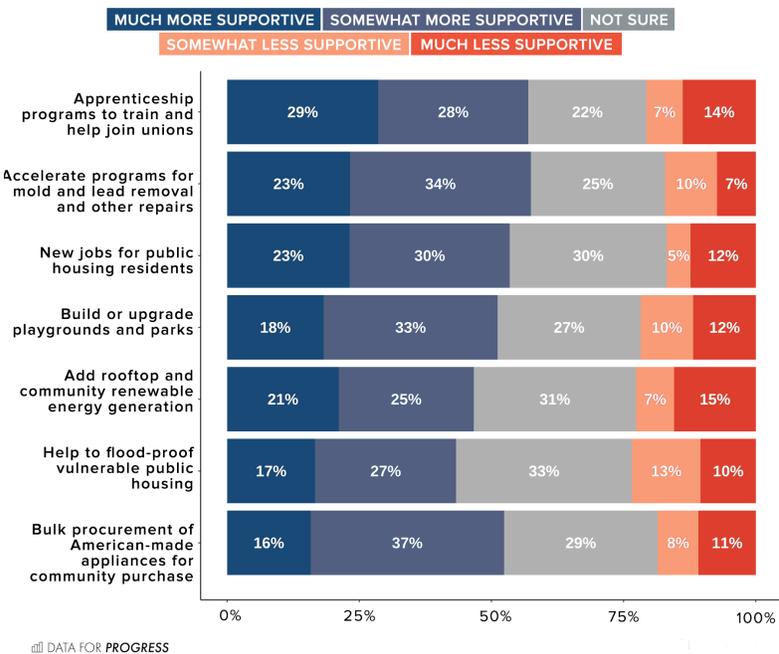
That item asked:

And thinking about that housing policy Democrats have proposed, would you say you would be [more or less/less or more] supportive of that policy if it would...

► Figure 4

CHANGE IN SUPPORT FOR NEW HOUSING POLICIES

INDEPENDENT VOTERS



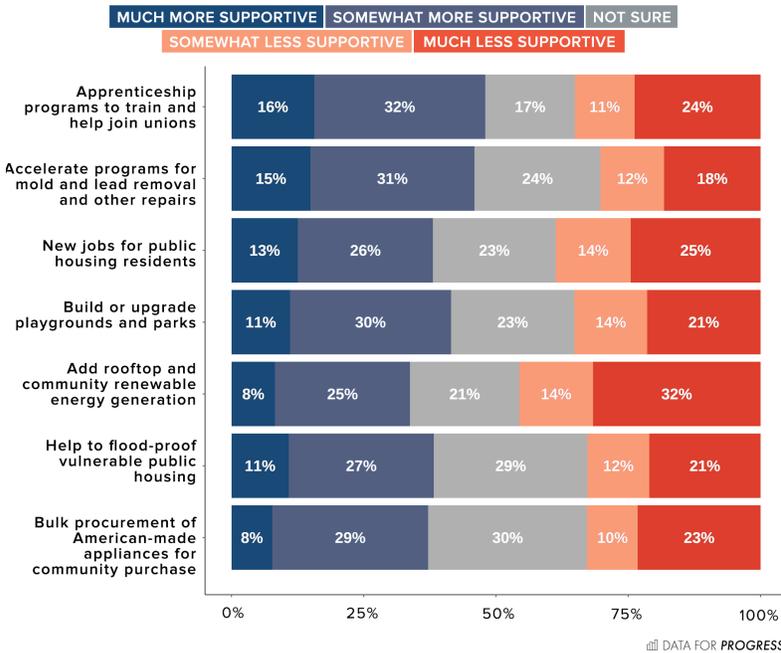
Add rooftop and community renewable energy generation including wind and solar, and have all building systems be powered by electricity so that public housing can transmit energy back to the grid and generate a revenue?

In our previous polling on [environmental reforms including the Green New Deal](#), we found Republicans were sharply opposed to many renewable-energy reforms, [especially those who watch Fox News](#). As such, it is not too surprising to see here that Republican voters are not persuaded by a policy expanding the efficiency and availability of renewable energy to public housing items.

► Figure 5

CHANGE IN SUPPORT FOR NEW HOUSING POLICIES

REPUBLICAN VOTERS



Many voters report being unsure whether they support or oppose new, comprehensive housing reform, including about one in three independent voters. Those same voters also report they would likely move in favor of new reform if it included any of several recent Democratic policy proposals. The most-popular proposals provide new jobs and apprenticeships, and deal with lead and mold in existing housing.

This may be surprising as our initial item explicitly tied the policy reform to one political party, and included a significant expenditure of government revenue. A majority of voters support reform in these circumstances, with many more reporting they would move in favor of reform if they included various Democratic policy proposals.

Appendix

We tested another version of the policy focused on zero emission housing rather than pollution. This version also had net positive support, suggesting durable support for the policy, robust to multiple framings. We asked:

Some Democrats in Congress have proposed legislation that would invest \$100-\$200 billion over the next ten years upgrading public housing to net-zero carbon emission housing. The program would also fund career training opportunities and workforce training to people living in public housing and in neighboring communities.

Democrats argue this proposal would combat climate change, improve access to clean air and provide upward mobility for low-income Americans. Republicans argue that this proposal would end up being a waste of taxpayer money and that the free market will do a better job providing jobs to low-income people.

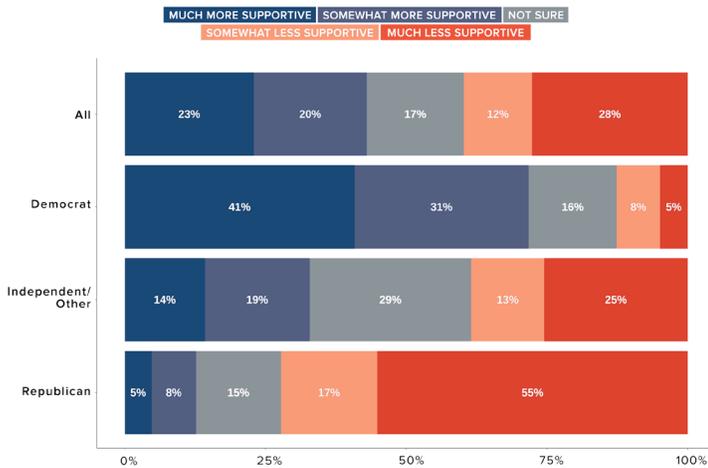
Would you [support or oppose] this proposal?

- <1> Strongly support
- <2> Somewhat support
- <3> Somewhat oppose
- <4> Strongly oppose
- <5> Not sure

Voters say they are ready for an investment of this kind, 43 percent to 40 percent. Among all voters, about one in five report they are unsure how they feel, suggesting there is room for movement on this policy. This includes almost one in three independent voters, while Democrats clearly support the policy and Republicans clearly oppose it.

► Figure 6

**SUPPORT FOR HOUSING POLICY REFORMS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND NEW JOBS**
BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION



Some Democrats in Congress have proposed legislation that would invest \$10 billion retrofitting public housing to reduce carbon pollution and eliminate toxic mold. The program would also fund career training opportunities and workforce training to people living in public housing and in neighboring communities. Democrats argue this proposal would combat climate change, improve access to clean air and provide upward mobility for low-income Americans. Republicans argue that this proposal would end up being a waste of taxpayer money and that the free market will do a better job providing jobs to low-income people. Do you (support or oppose) this proposal?

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Methodology

Oh behalf of Data for Progress, YouGov Blue fielded a survey using YouGov’s online panel including 1,216 US voters. The survey fielded from November 9 through November 11, 2019. The results were weighted to be representative of the population of US voters by age, race/ethnicity, sex, education, US Census region, and 2016 presidential vote choice.

From August 29, 2019-September 1, 2019, YouGov Blue fielded an additional survey on 1,127 US voters as part of its Registered Voter Omnibus program. That sample was weighted to be representative of the population of US voters by age, race/ethnicity, sex, gender, US Census region, and 2016 vote choice.