

VOTERS IN UPCOMING PRIMARY STATES SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION

As the Democratic presidential primary gets underway, a new survey finds voters in the 26 states with Democratic primaries and caucuses between February 22 and March 17, 2020, support a range of policies to expand renewable energy and address the impacts of climate change, from infrastructure to air quality, and they want their elected officials to support those policies as well. Climate Nexus, in partnership with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, conducted a representative survey from February 6-9, 2020, of 1,934 registered voters in the 26 states with Democratic primaries and caucuses between February 22 and March 17, 2020. The margin of error for this survey is 2.3% at the 95% confidence level.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS POLITICALLY SALIENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Nearly seven in 10 (69%) voters in these 26 states support government action to address climate change, including close to four in 10 (39%) who strongly support such action. About seven in 10 also believe the federal government (70%), their state government (69%), and their member of Congress (68%) should be doing more to address the issue of climate change.

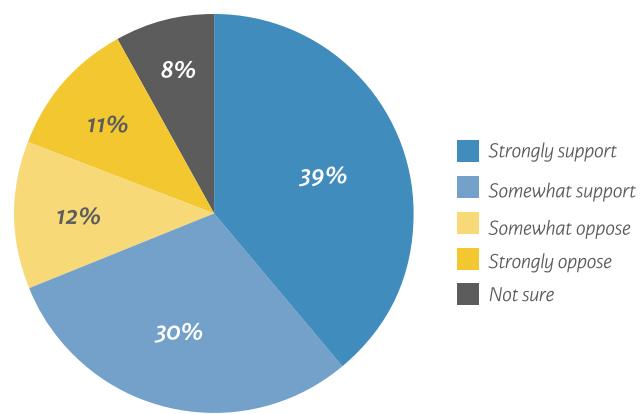
Climate change ranks as a top-tier issue for Democrats as they consider their presidential vote. When asked to identify the two most important issues to their vote for president, Democrats in these states are most likely to choose health care (43%) and climate change (29%). Eighteen percent of all voters in these states say climate change is one of the two most important issues to their vote for president this year.

Voters in these states are also more likely to support candidates for political office who back specific climate action. At least seven in 10 say they would be more likely to support political candidates who favor

setting stronger pollution standards for business and industry (74%), increasing government funding for renewable energy (72%), and setting stronger fuel efficiency standards (70%). About two-thirds (66%) would be more likely to back candidates who support requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a tax on their carbon pollution. And fully six in 10 (60%) would

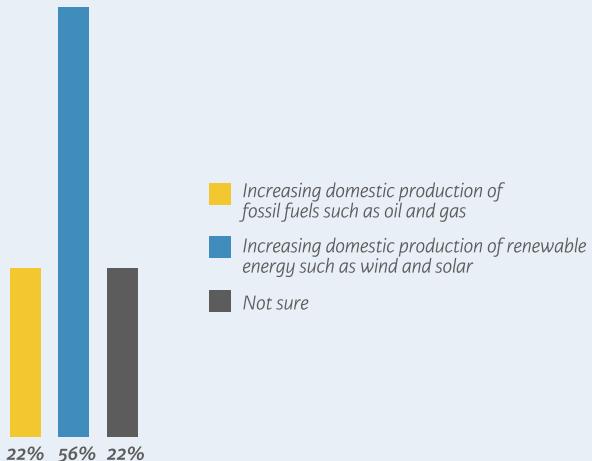


Do you support or oppose government action to address climate change?



Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%

Q: *Generally speaking, which do you think is more likely to produce a greater number of good jobs for people in your state?*



Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%

be more likely to support candidates who favor the Green New Deal, defined as “a plan to significantly reduce carbon pollution and create jobs by spending billions of government dollars on infrastructure, wind and solar energy, and more efficient buildings and transportation systems.”

VOTERS SUPPORT SPECIFIC CLIMATE AND CLEAN ENERGY POLICIES

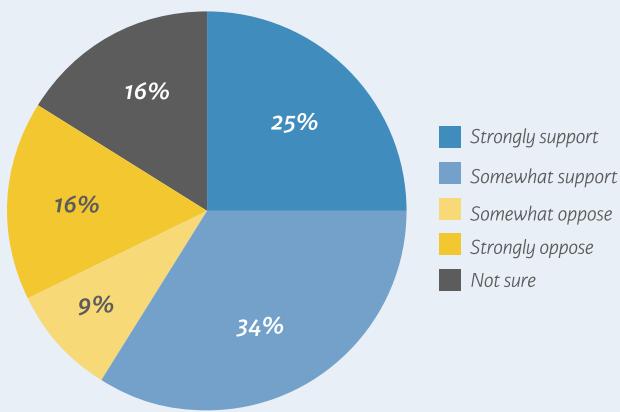
Voters across these 26 states support shifting away from fossil fuels and toward increased renewable energy, both in their state and nationwide. Roughly two-thirds say developing more renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, should be the most important priority to address the energy needs of both their state (64%) and the country as a whole (68%), as opposed to natural gas (11% and 9%, respectively) or nuclear energy (6% and 6%, respectively). A majority (56%) of voters in these states also believe increasing domestic production of

renewable energy is more likely to create good jobs for people in their state, while roughly one in five (22%) say the same of fossil fuels like oil and gas.

Voters also support specific policies to increase the amount of renewable energy in their state. More than seven in 10 (71%) voters in these states support establishing a national renewable portfolio standard (RPS) requiring 100% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2050, and close to three-quarters (73%) support increasing government funding for renewable energy. Voters believe enacting a 100% RPS will benefit their state in a number of ways. Three-quarters (75%) say a 100% RPS will have a positive impact on their state’s environment, and roughly seven in 10 (69%) say it will improve the health of residents of their state. About six in 10 say the policy will improve their state’s economy (61%), lower electricity costs (59%), and help rural and farming communities (58%), while pluralities say a 100% RPS will lower their state’s unemployment rate (49%), improve wages (49%), and benefit communities of color (43%).

Almost six in 10 (59%) voters in these states support the Green New Deal, and strong majorities also support many of the individual elements that make up the proposal. Nearly eight in 10 support providing assistance, including job training and guaranteed wages, to workers who lose jobs in the oil, gas, and coal industries (79%) and setting stronger pollution standards for business and industry (78%). About three-quarters support requiring new infrastructure projects in the United States to be built to withstand extreme weather events even if it costs taxpayers more (74%) and setting stronger fuel efficiency standards for cars, trucks, and SUVs (73%). Close to two-thirds (66%) favor ensuring protection of low-income and minority communities that are most vulnerable to climate change, pollution, and environmental harm. Roughly six in 10 support providing a good-paying job to anyone who wants one through a federal jobs guarantee (62%) and creating a universal health care system (59%).

Q: As you may know, some members of Congress are advocating for a proposal called the Green New Deal, which is a plan to significantly reduce carbon pollution and create jobs by spending billions of government dollars on infrastructure, wind and solar energy, and more efficient buildings and transportation systems. Based on what you know, do you support or oppose the Green New Deal?



Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%

Voters in these states support expanding access to electric vehicles (EVs). Almost seven in 10 (69%) say the federal tax credit for EVs should extend beyond each manufacturer's first 200,000 vehicles.

Voters in these states favor a variety of additional policies to address and reduce impacts from climate change. Roughly two-thirds support requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a tax on their carbon pollution (69%) and providing federal assistance to help people relocate from areas made uninhabitable due to climate change impacts (65%).

VOTERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE IMPACTS

Many voters across the country report personally experiencing impacts from extreme weather events and climate change. More than a third (36%) of

voters in these states say they or someone in their family has experienced more severe seasonal allergies in the last year. Roughly three in 10 say they or someone in their family has experienced anxiety due to extreme weather events (31%) or has had to take off work because of extreme weather (29%), and one in five (20%) have experienced property damage or other economic hardships as a result of extreme weather. Notably, more than a quarter (27%) of voters in these states say they have made major upgrades to their homes, like replacing windows or appliances or installing solar panels, to make them more energy efficient.

Voters also worry about the quality of their local environment and changes to the environment as a result of climate change. Roughly eight in 10 voters in these states say the quality of infrastructure (83%) and pollution of natural waterways (77%) are serious problems in their local area. About seven in 10 (71%) say air pollution is a serious problem in their area, and nearly two-thirds say extreme weather (65%) and smaller crop yields (64%) are serious problems.

Voters also recognize the impacts climate change is having across the United States. Seven in 10 voters in these states say climate change is impacting U.S. agriculture (70%) and extreme weather events in the U.S. (70%), and roughly six in 10 say climate change is impacting Americans' health (60%) and the U.S. economy (59%). About half (49%) say climate change has an effect on their family's health.

When extreme weather events occur, most voters in these states say the media should discuss how climate change impacts those events as they unfold or immediately after. Almost half (48%) say the media should talk about how climate change impacts extreme weather while those events are occurring, and another 11% say the media should discuss climate change in the first couple of days after extreme weather events. Only about one in 10 say the media should wait a week (7%), a month (3%), or longer than a month (2%) to discuss how climate change affects extreme weather.

STATE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE STILL UNCERTAIN

Nine months before the general election, generic Democratic candidates for Senate – and some Democratic presidential candidates – have the edge over their Republican counterparts. Close to half (48%) of voters in these states say if the election for the U.S. Senate were held today, they would vote for the Democrat, while 42% would vote for the Republican, and 10% would vote for neither candidate or for another candidate.

When asked how they would vote if the election for president were held today, Michael Bloomberg (47% to Trump's 40%), Bernie Sanders (47% to Trump's 43%), Pete Buttigieg, (45% to Trump's 41%), and Joe Biden (45% to Trump's 42%) beat Trump, while

Elizabeth Warren (44% to Trump's 44%) and Amy Klobuchar (41% to Trump's 42%) come within the margin of error to Trump.

The 26 states with Democratic primaries and caucuses between February 22 and March 17, 2020, are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Climate Nexus Polling, Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Kotcher, J., & Rosenthal, S. (2020). Voters in Upcoming Primary States Support Climate Action. Climate Nexus Polling, Yale University, and George Mason University. Washington, DC: Climate Nexus Polling.