

THE POLITICS OF GLOBAL WARMING

America Speaks Out about Climate Change, but is Washington Listening?

Nov. 28, 2006 (Washington, DC) Americans are setting the Global Warming agenda for the nation's leaders if they're willing to listen, and topping the list of solutions are energy efficiency and renewable energy, according to a new national public opinion poll commissioned by Earth Day Network. The poll also shows that Americans are worried about global warming - 58% say global warming will have a "great to extreme" impact on their children's future and two out of three agree it will adversely impact the U.S. economy over the next ten years.

The poll of 1020 adults, taken Oct. 26-29, also found a majority of Americans (61%) believe it is "very to extremely" important for their government leaders to require higher fuel efficiency standards in automobiles, and nearly half say it is that important for oil companies to be taxed for their contributions to global warming.

These poll results are the second in a two-part series commissioned by Earth Day Network (EDN) to highlight the current U.S. public sentiment about Global Warming. The first part of the series, released just before the November 7th elections, revealed that global warming will be a major issue in the 2008 presidential election, but more for Democrats and Independents than for Republicans.

"Americans are worried about their kids, the economy and even national security because it's linked to our dependence on foreign oil," said EDN President Kathleen Rogers. "Our poll confirms that climate change is growing as a major concern for the average American and those who have made personal changes to address the problem are voting for candidates who actively address global warming, but it also shows that we have some more educating to do at every level - all the way up to Capitol Hill."

Key poll results include:

More than half of Americans, 55%, say it would be "very to extremely" beneficial to national security to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, compared to only 12% who see little or no benefit at all, 30% who fall somewhere in between and 3% who don't know. (See pgs. 36 & 37)

When asked to rate the importance of six solutions being considered by government leaders to solve global warming, the greatest percentage, 61%, chose higher fuel efficiency standards, followed by 55% who selected higher energy efficiency requirements for electronics and appliances and tax breaks for industries which invest in renewable energy. All of these global warming solutions rate "very to extremely" important among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike, with higher fuel efficiency standards topping the list (Democrats (71%), Republicans (49%) and Independents (65%)). (See pgs. 7, 14, & 20)

Of those who say higher taxes are a "very to extremely" important solution to global warming, 49% support a tax on oil companies – more than twice those who don't (21%) and 39% support a tax on gas guzzlers. Democrats are nearly twice as likely (48%) as Republicans (25%) to strongly favor a gas tax for gas guzzlers. Conversely, Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to say that taxing oil companies and gas guzzlers is not very important or not at all important to solving global warming. (See pgs. 7, 14, & 20)

A majority of Americans, 58%, say global warming will have a great to extreme impact on their children's future. 42% say the same about their family's health and welfare and slightly less, 39%, say the same about their own health and welfare. Democrats are much more concerned about global warming affecting their children's future – 71% of Democrats compared to 56% of Independents and 40% of Republicans. And, Democrats are nearly twice as likely as Republicans and much more likely than Independents to say global warming will have a great to extreme impact on their families or themselves. (See pg. 27)

When considering the impacts of global warming, the vast majority of Americans, 61%, are most concerned about the impact on the health and safety of people, compared to 18% who are most concerned about the impact on wildlife, such as polar bears in the Antarctic, and 15% who are most concerned about the impact on economies. Republicans are twice as likely (20%) as Democrats (11%) and more likely than Independents (15%) to be concerned about global warming's impact on economies. On the other hand, Democrats are much more likely (72%) than Independents (62%) and Republicans (54%) to be most concerned about the impact of global warming on the health and safety of people. (See pg. 35)

Approximately two out of three Americans agree that the U.S. economy will be adversely impacted over the next ten years by global warming. Democrats are the most likely to agree (72%), followed by Independents (67%) and then Republicans (57%). Democrats are twice as likely as Republicans, 51% compared to 25%, to strongly agree. Independents fall squarely in between at 38%. (See pg. 24)

A majority of Americans, 57%, agree that religious and faith groups should take a stand on global warming, compared to 41% who disagree and 2% who don't know. But less than half (45%) say their own convictions – moral, ethical or religious – compel them to solve global warming by changing their own personal habits. Of those who would, most have already purchased energy efficient products and services, reduced their auto emissions and voted for candidates who actively address global warming. In addition, roughly one out of three volunteer time or donate to nonprofits which address global warming. (See pgs. 21, 22, & 23)

Broken down by political party affiliation, roughly one out of two Democrats or Independents would change their personal habits to solve global warming, compared to one out of three Republicans. The top personal change for members of all three parties is the purchase of energy efficient products and services. (See pgs. 22 & 23)

This national probability survey has a standard error of measurement of plus or minus 3%. The survey was performed by Opinion Research Corporation, www.opinionresearch.com, the company which has conducted many of the recent political polls for CNN. This news release is accompanied by full tables of the results.

About Earth Day Network

Earth Day Network, www.earthday.net, was founded by the organizers of the first Earth Day in 1970 and promotes environmental citizenship and year round progressive action worldwide. EDN's primary mission is to broaden the environmental movement. Its current grassroots programs include the Climate Change Solutions Campaign, Campaign for Communities, and the National Civic Education Project. Earth Day Network works with more than 105,000 K-12 teachers in the United States alone. In 2006, EDN launched Earth Day Network Television, www.earthdaynetwork.tv, and the EDN Blog, greatly expanding its reach to a global network of more than 15,000 partners and organizations in 174 countries. More than 500 million people participate in Earth Day civic activities, making it the largest secular civic event in the world. The 37th Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22, 2007.

The Politics of Global Warming was prepared for the Earth Day Network by Question America™: Opinion Research Corporation

This report presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted among a national probability sample of 1,020 adults comprising 507 men and 513 women 18 years of age and older, living in private households in the continental United States. Interviewing for this Survey was completed during the period October 26-29, 2006.

All interviews are conducted using Opinion Research Corporation's computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The system is state-of-the-art and offers several distinct advantages such as: full screen control which allows multi-question screens, fully-programmable help and objection screens to aid interviewing, an extremely flexible telephone number management system and powerful data checking facilities. CATI ensures that interviews are conducted in the most efficient manner and allows interviewers easy response recording. This interviewing method also allows for the most accurate form of data entry by guiding the interview through the programmed question flow and by providing on-screen interviewer instructions.

The most advanced probability sampling techniques are employed in the selection of households for telephone interviewing. Opinion Research Corporation utilizes an unrestricted random sampling procedure that controls the amount of serial bias found in systematic sampling to generate its random-digit-dial sample. The sample is fully replicated and stratified by region. Only one interview is conducted per household. All sample numbers selected are subject to up to four attempts to complete and interview.

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