



GS STRATEGY GROUP

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TO: LCV

FROM: Amy Levin, Benenson Strategy Group
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RE: Recent Polling on Youth Voters

- **Our recent polling strongly states that young voters of both parties want to see action on climate change and want leaders willing to take steps to address that threat.**
- **An overwhelming majority of voters under 35 understand the threat of climate change and already see the harmful effects of it, or expect to in their lifetime.**
 - 66% of young voters say climate change is a problem to address, while just 27% say climate change is a natural event that humans can't affect, and only 3% don't believe climate change is really happening.
 - Similarly, 65% say climate change is already affecting us or will in their lifetimes.
- This recognition of the threat, coupled with the age group's strong favorability towards the President, leads to **intense support for action.**
 - 80% support the President taking action to address climate change.
 - Among those favorable to the President, nearly all support him taking action.
 - But even among the minority who are unfavorable to him, 56% support action and just 38% oppose.
- **This widespread and intense support translates into a willingness to punish legislators who stand in the way of the President's plan...** and to support those who back it.
 - 79% say they are more likely to vote for someone who supported these steps
 - 73% say they are less likely to vote for someone who opposed these steps
- **Notably, over half of young Republican voters (52%) would be less likely to vote for someone who opposed the President's plan.** Just 34% would be more likely to vote for someone who opposed the plan.

- But leaders who deny the problem of climate change are at risk on more than just a policy and legislative front. **For voters under 35, denying climate change signals a much broader failure of values and leadership.** When asked which of the following words they'd use to describe a climate change denier:
 - *Negative:* 37% said ignorant, 29% said out-of-touch and 7% said crazy
 - *Positive:* 12% said independent, 8% said commonsense and 3% said thoughtful
 - Moreover, 74% of Independents and 53% of Republicans said ignorant, out-of-touch, or crazy.

- It is not surprising then that **a climate change denier faces stiff headwinds with young voters**, with 68% saying they would be less likely to vote for a climate change denier.
 - Among Independents, 66% would be less likely to vote for a denier
 - And even among Republicans, 47% would be less likely to vote for a denier

- **Arguments from those who oppose action also fall flat with young voters**, who are far more likely to say we have a moral obligation to act than to believe action is too expensive and unnecessary.

60% would vote for someone *who says we have a moral obligation to leave behind a planet that's not polluted or damaged. But carbon pollution is already causing asthma attack rates to double and increasing floods, heat waves, and droughts put farmers out of business and raise food prices. We set limits for arsenic and mercury, but we let power plants release as much carbon pollution as they want. It's time to deal with climate change by limiting carbon pollution from power plants, investing in clean energy, and taking responsible steps to protect public health.*

vs.

35% would vote for someone *who says we cannot afford burdensome regulations and new energy taxes when millions of Americans are out of work and the cost of gas and groceries continues to rise. With the evidence on global warming mixed, we shouldn't throw billions of dollars into unproven solutions while we continue to restrict the use of affordable, domestic energy sources. We should focus on getting the economy moving again rather than being distracted by issues like climate change. Now is not the time to shutter power plants, destroy good-paying American jobs, and raise electricity bills for struggling families.*

- Finally, **young voters reject the false choice that climate change deniers have constructed between the environment and the economy.** By a nearly 40-point margin, they believe we can combat climate change in ways that help our economy:
 - 65% say taking action on climate change would create jobs with investments in clean energy and technology development
 - Just 26% say action will kill jobs because of more burdensome regulations and higher energy costs

The Benenson Strategy Group and GS Strategy Group conducted 600 telephone interviews nationwide from July 8, 2013 through July 10, 2013 on behalf of the League of Conservation Voters. All respondents were registered voters age 18-34 who voted in the 2012 general election. The margin of error for the entire sample is ±3.9% at the 95% confidence level.