

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Global Strategy Group  
DATE: June 29, 2018  
RE: **Battleground Survey Findings: Environmental Messaging Can Swing Battleground Districts**

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A new survey conducted by Global Strategy Group of 20 swing Congressional districts among likely 2018 voters shows the potential for major victories for pro-environment challengers across the country. In these seats, which anti-environment Republicans won by an average of 15 points in 2016, they are now losing by 4 points on a generic ballot and are already behind by two points when voters hear the names of the actual candidates.

This survey also demonstrates the potential for larger gains by progressive challengers by focusing on their Trump-aligned opponent's anti-environment policies. Plans to cut EPA funding, reduce clean air and water regulations, and open public lands to oil and gas drilling are opposed by sizable majorities of voters in these districts, including nearly two-thirds of voters who oppose the specific plan to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling.

Most important, after voters are presented with a short series of critiques of the pro-Trump candidates for their positions on a range of environmental issues (along with one message on healthcare or taxes), the progressive candidate's margin extends to 13 points in a named ballot exercise. These pro-environment messages have a particularly strong impact among key blocs of voters including independents, white women and Latinas.

#### KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

**Pro-environment Democrats start out in strong positions across this GOP-held battleground.** In this 20-district battleground of Republican-held seats that, on average, tilted slightly for Clinton in 2016 and slightly for Romney in 2012, Democrats hold a 4-point lead on the generic ballot (44% to 40%). Moreover, only 37% of voters have a favorable view of Republicans in Congress, compared to 53% who hold an unfavorable view. More important, even though Republicans won these seats by, on average, 15 points in 2016, in a named Congressional ballot<sup>1</sup> Democrats already have a two-point lead, 45% to 43%.

**Environmental groups and the EPA are popular, but anti-environmental actors like Scott Pruitt and the Koch Brothers are decidedly not.** "Environmental groups" are viewed favorably by a 57% to 26% margin and the EPA has strongly positive ratings as well (51% favorable to 34% unfavorable). Meanwhile, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt<sup>2</sup> is well underwater at 19% favorable to 39% unfavorable and the Koch Brothers are known by more than half the electorate and very unpopular, at 14% favorable vs. 42% unfavorable.

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<sup>1</sup> Candidate named were inserted where known, otherwise a generic descriptor was used.

<sup>2</sup> Asked with the label "EPA Administrator"

**The Trump-aligned candidates' positions on environmental issues are deeply unpopular with key groups and across the political spectrum.** Many of the policies proposed and/or enacted by anti-environment Republicans in Washington – led by their efforts to open the Arctic Refuge and our public lands to oil and gas companies – are extremely unpopular, even more than their highly unpopular health care plan. Notably, voters who are undecided on the initial named Congressional ballot, who compose 13% of the electorate, are more likely to reject these policies than the average voter.

Support for Trump Policies				
	Support	Oppose	Net Support	Net among Undecided Voters
The Republican plan to reduce clean air and water regulations	37	52	-15	-22
The health care plan that Republicans tried to pass through Congress last year	35	51	-16	-19
The Republican plan to reduce funding for the EPA by 30%	36	56	-20	-23
The Republican plan to allow oil and gas companies to drill in national public lands	34	61	-27	<b>-34</b>
The Republican plan to allow oil and gas companies to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska	32	64	-32	<b>-48</b>

Opposition to many of these anti-environment policies is cross-partisan. For example, Democrats and independents strongly oppose drilling in national public lands, with only conservative Republicans in support. Moreover, policies like drilling in national public lands are overwhelmingly opposed by Latinos, who will be a key voting bloc in many of these districts

Support for Drilling in Public Lands			
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
Democrats	8	90	-82
Independents	25	59	-34
Non-Conservative Republicans	45	47	-2
Conservative Republicans	69	26	+43
Latinos	27	71	-44

**Environmental and health concerns raise serious doubts about voting for anti-environment GOP candidates.** Several messages that critique Republicans for their environmental records resonate strongly with voters – generating doubts with 60 percent or more of the electorate and an even higher percentage of voters who are undecided on the Congressional race. These messages resonate as strongly as a critique

against Republicans for their vote on the healthcare bill, and there are clear opportunities to tie the health impacts of Republican candidates' anti-environmental actions to their votes on health care, especially among undecided voters.

Doubts about Voting for GOP Candidate		
	Total Doubts	Total Doubts among Undecided Voters
<b>[HEALTH CARE] [REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE]</b> supported the Republican health care plan that, would have ended protections for pre-existing conditions, cut Medicare, and, according to AARP, imposed an age tax on older Americans, charging people age 50 to 64 premiums that are up to five times more than what younger consumers pay.	62	62
<b>[POLLUTON AND HEALTH] [REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE]</b> wants to gut commonsense protections like the Clean Air and Water Acts and allow big corporations to spew more toxic pollution into our air and water. Doctors say that will lead to more asthma, heart and lung disease and even cancer - especially among children and seniors.	62	64
<b>[POLLUTION AND HEALTH COSTS]</b> First, <b>[REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE]</b> supported a plan that sabotaged the Affordable Care Act and is already causing health care premiums to increase by up to 50% in some parts of the country. Now <b>[REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE]</b> wants to gut common-sense limits on air and water pollution, which will lead to more disease and even higher health care costs.	60	68

**Environmental messaging shifts the race significantly toward the Democratic candidates.** After respondents hear a short series of messages critiquing Republicans for their environmental positions (plus a critique on either the health care or tax bill), the original Democratic margin expands 11 points, from +2 to +13.

Vote Shift After Messaging			
	Initial Vote	Post-Messaging	Net Shift
Democratic Candidate	45	50	+5
Republican Candidate	43	37	-6
<i>Difference</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>+13</i>	<i>+11</i>

**Democratic gains are particularly large among independents voters, women and more moderate Republicans.** The environmental messaging generates particularly large gains among some key electoral blocs. After messaging, the Democratic candidates improve by a net 21 points among independents, by a net 17 points among white women, and by a net 17 points among Latinas.

Importantly, support for the environment is bipartisan. Environmental messaging also speaks to less conservative members of the Republican coalition, resulting in a net 19-point shift in favor of Democrats among Republican women, and a net 17-point shift among non-conservative Republicans.

**And these issues can have an even larger impact in specific geographies.** While these messages generate movement across the battleground, the movement is particularly striking in the two New Jersey districts (NJ-03 and NJ-11), which see a net 18-point shift in favor of the Democrats.

#### ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey from November June 11-21, 2018 with 2,000 likely 2018 voters in 20 Congressional Districts with additional oversamples of 300 voters in each of five districts. The oversamples were weighted down so that each district held the same weight in the overall results. The districts, number of interviews per district, and names of candidates read in each district are listed below. The results have a margin of error of +/-2.2% and care has been taken to ensure that the survey is weighted to reflect the makeup of the projected 2018 voter universe. Interviews in the Virginia 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional district did not begin until June 13<sup>th</sup> to reflect the results of the primary.

State	District	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidate
CA	10	Jeff Denham	Josh Harder
CA	21	David G. Valadao	T.J. Cox
CA	25	Steve Knight	Katie Hill
CA	39	Young Kim	Gil Cisneros
CA	48	Dana Rohrabacher	The Democratic Candidate
CA	49	Diane Harkey	Mike Levin
CO	6	Mike Coffman	Jason Crow
IA	1	Rod Blum	Abby Finkenauer
IL	6	Peter J. Roskam	Sean Casten
MI	11	The Republican Candidate	The Democratic Candidate
MN	2	Jason Lewis	The Democratic Candidate
MN	3	Erik Paulsen	The Democratic Candidate
NC	9	Mark Harris	Dan McCready
NJ	3	Thomas MacArthur	Andy Kim
NJ	11	Jay Webber	Mikie Sherrill
NM	2	Yvette Herrell	Xochitl Torres Small
TX	23	Will Hurd	Gina Ortiz Jones
TX	32	Pete Sessions	Colin Allred
VA	10	Barbara Comstock	Jennifer Wexton
WA	8	Dino Rossi	The Democratic Candidate