



# Memorandum

From: Orion Strategies Research Team

RE: West Virginia 2020 Poll

Date: December 23, 2020

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## Overview

Orion Strategies executed a survey in West Virginia to gauge public opinion on a number of issues surrounding energy and the environment.

The survey was conducted among eligible voters in the Mountain State via live-interview telephone and online after verifying physical location of the respondents. A total of 643 respondents completed the entire survey – giving the poll a 3.86 +/- margin of error with a 95% confidence rate. The poll was conducted November 30, 2020 through December 13, 2020.

Respondents were proportionally within the margin of error to by the state's three congressional districts, gender, age and political party registration (38% Republican, 36% Democratic and 26% Independent). Further, respondents had to complete the entire survey in order for his/her response to be counted. Due to minor rounding, not all sums will equal 100%.

## Key Findings

### **West Virginia is a conservative state**

A total of 68% of respondents identify as conservative – which roughly aligns with the share of the vote that President Trump received in the most recent election in the state. Of the 68% who identify as conservative, 31% were very conservative and 37% were somewhat conservative. It is important to note that even 50% of Democrats identify as conservative (14% very conservative and 36% somewhat conservative).

### **West Virginia is headed in the wrong direction**

Only 29% of respondents believe that things are headed in the right direction in West Virginia. The highwater mark was found among Republicans only 35% saying things were going well.

On the question of the state of the economy in West Virginia, 78% of respondents were pessimistic (with 39% seeing the economy as “only fair” and an additional 39% seeing the economy of the state as “poor”).

### **West Virginians see the climate changing**

When asked if winters seemed more or less severe than when the respondent was younger, the answer was an overwhelming 82% seeing winter as less severe.

Additionally, 70% of respondents reported that they think the climate is changing. Among Democrats, the number was highest at 85%, but even 66% of Independents and 59% of Republicans agreed.

### **West Virginians support removing carbon in the atmosphere**

Respondents were asked if they supported or opposed the United States government taking action to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. 61% supported action (33% strong, 28% somewhat) compared to only 29% opposed (13% somewhat and 16% strongly).

Only 28% of respondents would have a less favorable impression of their Senator for taking action to reduce carbon in the atmosphere.

### **West Virginians have strong views on energy**

84% of respondents believe that America should be self-sufficient when it comes the country's energy supply. This number holds strong across all parties and has a 11-point gap by gender (90% of men, 79% of women).

When asked if a new coal-fired power plant would be built in West Virginia during the respondent's lifetime, only 20% responded in the affirmative.

### **West Virginians see renewables as a significant part of the future**

Respondents were asked if renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power should be increased, reduced or kept at current levels to ensure America's energy supply. 52% of West Virginians want to see them increased and only 12% want to see them reduced.

Further, a combined 59% of West Virginians support the United States Government taking action to accelerate the development and use of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar (29% strongly and 30% somewhat). Only 28% were opposed.

56% of West Virginia respondents agreed that increasing opportunities to use renewable energy sources such as wind and solar would lead to new job opportunities in West Virginia.

And when asked if respondents would support legislation aimed at transitioning electric utilities to more renewable fuel sources, 53% said they would support such legislation while only 33% were opposed.