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TO: EDF Action
FROM: Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group
DATE: July 24, 2020
RE: Survey of Voters Across Key Presidential Battleground States

Garin-Hart-Yang conducted an online survey among 1,015 likely November 2020 voters across nine Presidential battleground states – all of which will have U.S. Senate elections in 2022, five of which will also have U.S. Senate elections in 2020, and seven of which include House frontline districts. The interviews were spread evenly across the nine states of Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In terms of partisan self-identification, 40% of voters in the survey are Democrats and 37% are Republicans.

Overview

Increasing electric vehicle (EV) use is a practical policy proposal that garners a broadly favorable reaction among the battleground electorate and will help increase clean energy use—a goal that a majority of battleground voters feel is important for Congress to address.

Increasing the use of clean energy is a high priority among the liberal Democratic base. And, importantly, proposals to increase the use of electric vehicles are not only favorably viewed by most Democrats and majorities of independents, but they are *not* highly polarizing with Republicans. These attitudes create an opening to promote the expansion of clean transportation powered by clean power.

Messages focused on addressing the threat of climate change and protecting the public's health have the greatest potential to bolster support for increasing EVs among Democrats and independents. Among Republicans, messages that highlight how the expansion of EVs will enable American energy independence and protect public health garner the most support.

The Importance Voters Place on Increasing the Use of Clean Energy:

A 55% majority of voters across these nine states feel that increasing clean energy use is a very important issue that they would like Congress to address, with nearly as many placing a priority on related goals of addressing climate change (53%) and reducing the nation's dependence on oil (51%). More than three in four Democrats (78%) and half of independents (52%) place a high priority on Congress taking steps to increase the use of clean energy, while a smaller share of Republicans (33%) do.

It is perhaps not surprising that, during the coronavirus pandemic and its continued economic fallout, voters' highest priorities for Congress are improving the economy and creating jobs (82% very important), making healthcare more affordable and accessible (75%), improving the nation's infrastructure (68%), and expanding the testing and tracking of COVID-19 cases (67%). Additionally, approximately six in 10 feel it is very important for Congress to focus on reforming policing (61%), reducing gun violence (61%), strengthening national security (61%), addressing racial inequities in access to healthcare, education, and good jobs (58%), and lowering taxes (57%).

Increasing clean energy is a high priority for the liberal Democrats, fully 83% of whom feel it is a very important goal for Congress to address. Among liberal Democrats, increasing clean energy ranks just behind making healthcare more affordable and accessible (95% very important), expanding COVID-19 testing and tracking (89%), addressing climate change

(86%), reforming policing (86%), reducing gun violence (86%), and addressing racial inequities in healthcare, education, and jobs (86%) in importance.

Not only do many voters feel that it is important for Congress to focus on the goal of increasing clean energy, but they recognize the potential for it to create jobs: nearly seven in 10 voters (69%) think that the clean energy industry will be a source of new jobs in the future. This view largely holds across this battleground electorate, with 77% of Democrats, 71% of independents, and 58% of Republicans anticipating this job creation.

Among proposals to increase the use of clean energy tested, 56% of voters feel it is very important to require utility companies to increase the amount of energy that comes from clean, renewable sources, 52% think it is important to require new buildings to use clean energy, and 42% feel it is important to increase the number of EVs on the nation’s roads to accelerate the shift away from fossil-fuel powered vehicles. Democrats place a higher priority on each of these proposals, including increasing the number of EVs (61% Democrats, 37% independents, 23% Republicans).

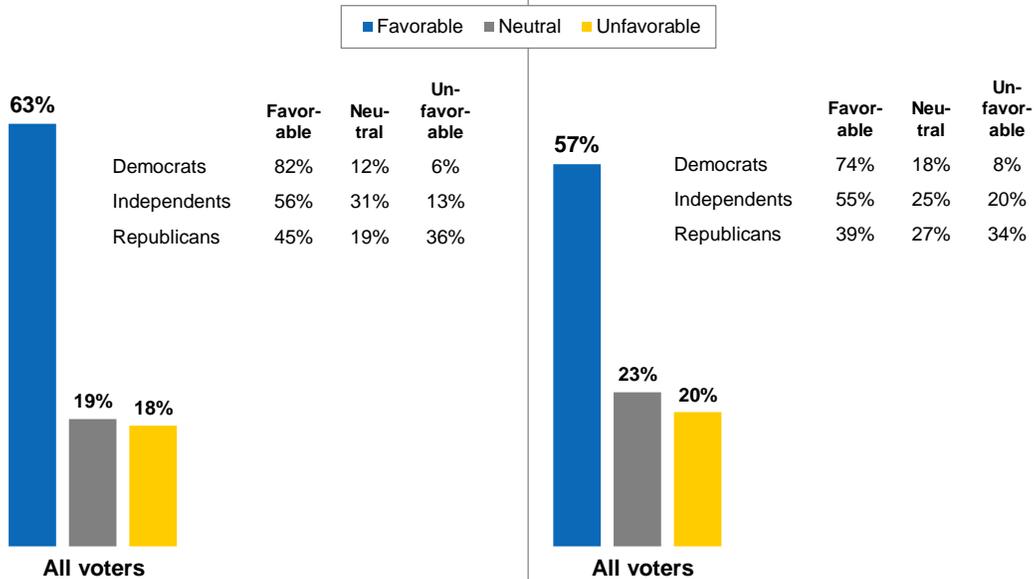
A Favorable Reaction to Expanding the Use of Electric Vehicles:

Battleground voters have a largely favorable reaction to the goal of “increasing the number of zero-emissions, electric cars, trucks, and buses in the United States”: 63% favorable, 19% neutral, 18% unfavorable. When the goal is framed as “transitioning all cars, trucks, and buses in the U.S. to zero-emissions electric vehicles by the year 2050,” a slightly lower but solid majority of voters have a favorable reaction: 57% favorable, 23% neutral, 20% unfavorable. Large majorities of Democrats are favorable to both statements of the goal, as are majorities of independents. While Republicans are less positive to each one, in both cases Republicans are more favorable than unfavorable.

Reactions to Goals for Expanding Electric Vehicles

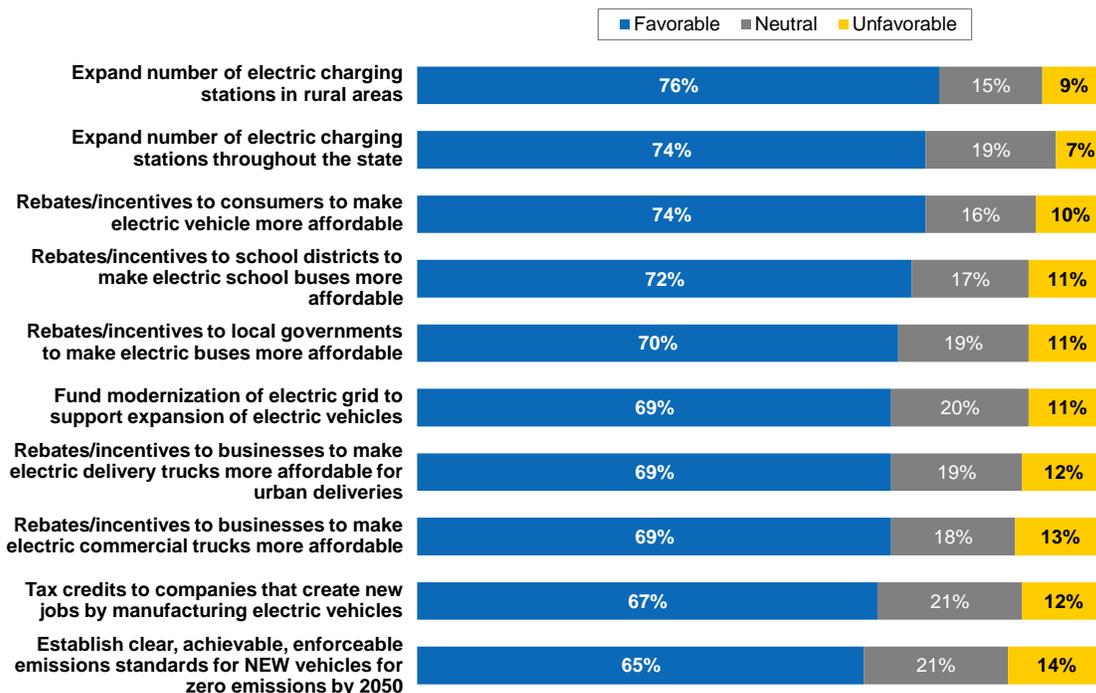
Increasing the number of zero-emissions, electric cars, trucks, and buses in the U.S.

Transitioning all cars, trucks, and buses in the U.S. to zero-emissions electric vehicles by the year 2050



Voters react even more favorably to specific proposals that could be enacted to help reach the goal of a 100% clean vehicle fleet by 2050, with at least two in three expressing a favorable reaction to each one and some garnering a positive response from three in four voters. Democrats respond most positively to the various proposals, but majorities of Republicans are favorable to all of them as well. In fact, approximately two in three Republicans have a favorable reaction to expanding the number of charging stations and providing rebates or incentives for individual consumers to buy electric vehicles and to school districts to buy electric school buses.

Reactions to Specific Policies to Reach Goal of a 100% Clean Fleet By 2050



Reactions to these various policy proposals are positive across urban, suburban, and small town/rural areas. While voters in urban areas register the most favorable reactions, large majorities of suburban and small town/rural voters also respond positively to the proposals. Whether it comes to expanding the number of EV charging stations in rural areas (urban 81% favorable, suburban 75%, small town/rural 74%) or all areas (urban 82% favorable, suburban 74%, small town/rural 67%), there is broad favorability across type of area. When it comes to rebates or incentives for individual consumers (urban 81% favorable, suburban 73%, small town/rural 68%), school districts (urban 79% favorable, suburban 72%, small town/rural 69%), local governments (urban 77% favorable, suburban 68%, small town/rural 67%), or businesses (urban 76% favorable, suburban 68%, small town/rural 63%), support is widespread.

Making the Case for Setting a Goal for A 100% Clean Fleet by 2050:

The three most compelling reasons to set a goal for a transition to a 100% clean vehicle fleet are to reduce the threat of climate change (53%), to protect public health (43%), and to achieve American energy independence (36%). Climate change is the top reason for Democrats and independents, and protecting public health is the next best reason for both.

Republicans are most closely divided between the goals of achieving American energy independence and protecting Americans' health.

Best Reason to Set A Goal for a 100% Clean Fleet By 2050

