

EDF ACTION

Advocacy partner of Environmental Defense Fund

Prepared by



Adrian Gray Consulting LLC

This presentation is part of the EDF Action's nonpartisan effort to assist presidential candidates in understanding and articulating environmental issues.

Messaging and Positioning

Themes

Themes all Republicans
should use

- Balanced energy plan over kitchen sink plan.
- Keep simple and localize.
- Include stewardship and conservation.
- Protect, don't fix.
- Focus on clean air, clean water and health.
- Balance costs of action with costs of inaction.
- Prioritize incentives over subsidies.
- Prioritize innovation and technology.
- Allow consumers to help free market solutions.
- Avoid any one-size-fits-all solutions.

Messaging

2016 Landscape

- Strongly favors balanced policy.
- Voters have dual mandate – for both stronger economy and stronger environment.

Starting Point for GOP

- Most the electorate do not expect to hear anything from Republican candidates on the environment.
- Only a handful of GOP primary voters will base their vote on environmental positions. But even more will reward candidates that reach out the issue.

Messaging

For GOP, wide gap
between “Environment”
and “Climate”

Importance of our
Environment

- Always focus locally first.
- For Democrats, environmental issues are often proxy for global issues such as climate change.
- Republicans see environmental issues more locally. Its about clean air and clean water.
- Challenge solutions, but never challenge importance of our environment.
- Republicans see environmental issues as low priorities...but almost universally agree that they are important.
- During GOP administrations, Republicans often re-emphasize a commitment to protecting the environment.

Messaging

Renewables: Make our cleanest energy into our cheapest energy.

EPA Carbon Regulations

- Republicans support renewable energy.
 - Fossil fuel's most favorable attributes are cost, abundance and reliability, in that order.
 - Renewables compete on abundance.
 - The battleground for renewables will be cost – stress the multiplier effect from the economies of scale.
-
- GOP generally supports stricter limitations on carbon emissions from power plants.
 - While they do not favor President Obama's EPA rules, they are significantly more supportive of replacing them with Republican-passed limits.

Messaging

Recognize the risks of
Climate Change

- Like any risk, there are probabilities and costs to weigh.
- Avoid debating the probability. It is OK to be uncertain.
- Focus on costs, which are huge.

Don't attack science

- All voters – including conservative republicans – trust science.
- Even skeptics will more likely agree that science is incomplete or uncertain than a “hoax” or “junk”.

Messaging

“Climate”

Avoid “97% of scientists agree”

Avoid “climate denier”

- “Climate Change” can be polarizing, even to GOP climate believers.
- “Global environmental issues” is less polarizing and indicates shared culpability and accountability among nations, but is difficult to translate locally.
- Focus on problems and solutions. And avoid addressing all environmental policies under “climate” label.
- To Republicans, it sounds like North Korean election statistics. Avoid using.
- Seen as loaded term used by politicians trying to score points over finding solutions.
- If you must, use “skepticism” or “uncertainty”.

Messaging

Trusted voice

- At national level, few people or institutions are universally trusted by Republicans on environmental issues.
- Republicans are more likely to listen to their friends, family and neighbors. The more local the voice, the better.

Evidence Paradox on climate

- Most Republicans believe the climate is changing, but remain skeptical on the evidence on what is causing it.
- If shown evidence, few minds get changed.
- Suggest uncertain voters ask their friends and family.

Messaging

More Local, Less Political

- Voters don't want Environmental issues to be over-politicized.
- It is easier to see benefits of environmental protection locally, where parties often work together.

Partisanship

- While voters want environment to be non-partisan, Republicans are far more likely to support reforms from Republicans.
- Partisan GOPers that want to see action recognize that the issue is too important to leave to one political party.

Messaging

Energy Policy First

Balanced Energy Plan

- For most Republican audiences, it is better to talk about environmental policy as part of an energy plan.
- A “balanced” plan that weighs economic growth and environmental protection gets considerable more support than a “do everything” or “kitchen sink” plan.
- Republicans better understand our energy mix today. They have also decoupled oil and gas and recognize natural gas as a cleaner fuel source.

Messaging

Global Competitiveness

Innovation and
Technology

- Energy independence still important for Republicans. But there is broadening definition to reduce dependency on both fossil fuels and foreign sources of energy.
- There are also growing concerns about falling behind to China as the world's leader in renewable energy investment.
- For GOP, the environment/jobs scale leans heavily towards putting jobs & economy first.
- Government backed “green job” programs are seen as wasteful and ineffective.
- Instead, Republicans understand there is a growing environmental-consciousness among consumers and want to see private investment in green technologies.

Positioning

Primary vs General

- For Republican candidates in 2016, positioning should not be viewed as running to the right in the primary and towards center in general. Candidates should focus locally in primary contests, nationally in general.

Energy Policy First

- For most Republican audiences, it is better to talk about environmental policy as part of a balanced energy plan.
- But do not substitute environmental policy for an energy plan.

Background Data

Republicans on Climate Change

Depending on how question is worded, polling data varies on how Republicans view Climate Change.

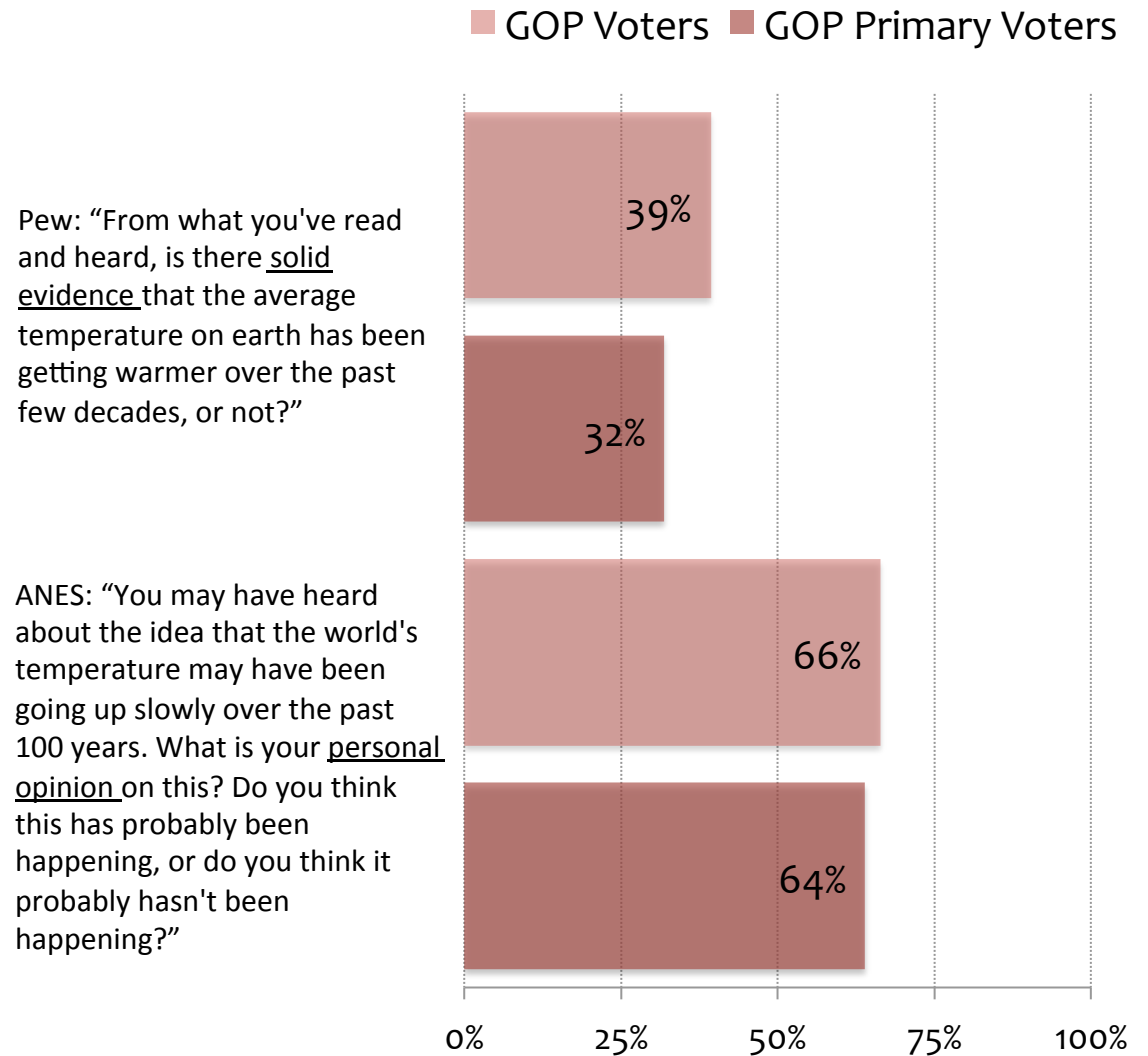
Question	Poll	% GOP	Wording
Serious Threat?	ABC/WaPo	49%	“Serious Problem”
	CBS/NYT	26%	“Serious Impact”
	Pew	14%	“Very serious problem”
Question	Poll	% GOP	Wording
Temperatures rising?	ANES	66%	“Temperatures are rising”
	Pew	39%	“Solid evidence” temps rising
Question	Poll	% GOP	Wording
Human Cause?	Gallup	41%	“Mainly due to human causes”
	GSS	36%	“Caused mainly by human activities”
	Pew	24%	“Mostly because of human activity”
	ANES	19%	“Mostly by human activity”

Republicans on Climate Change

... not all Republicans believe the evidence is solid...

... but Republicans – including GOP primary voters – generally believe that climate change *is* happening.

Republican Belief in Climate Change



Environment as Issue

Environmental issues are often lower priority issues for Republicans...

	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
Dealing with global warming	15	54	39	-39
Protecting the environment	35	66	48	-31
Dealing with problems of poor and needy	40	70	52	-30
Improving the educational system	52	77	67	-25
Supporting scientific research	33	51	39	-18
Dealing with role of money in politics	33	51	43	-18
Improving roads, bridges and transit	34	52	41	-18
Addressing race relations	45	62	43	-17
Dealing with nation's energy problem	37	51	47	-14
Reducing health care costs	64	70	59	-6
Making Medicare system sound	55	58	67	-3
Improving the job situation	70	72	63	-2
Dealing with global trade issues	29	31	31	-2
Reducing crime	62	64	51	-2
Reducing the influence of lobbyists	41	42	46	-1
Strengthening the nation's economy	75	74	75	+1
Making Social Security system sound	65	62	70	+3
Reforming the nation's tax system	60	45	45	+15
Dealing with issue of immigration	60	45	53	+15
Defending country from terrorism	87	71	74	+16
Dealing with moral breakdown	58	42	48	+16
Reducing the budget deficit	72	55	68	+17
Strengthening the U.S. military	71	41	51	+30

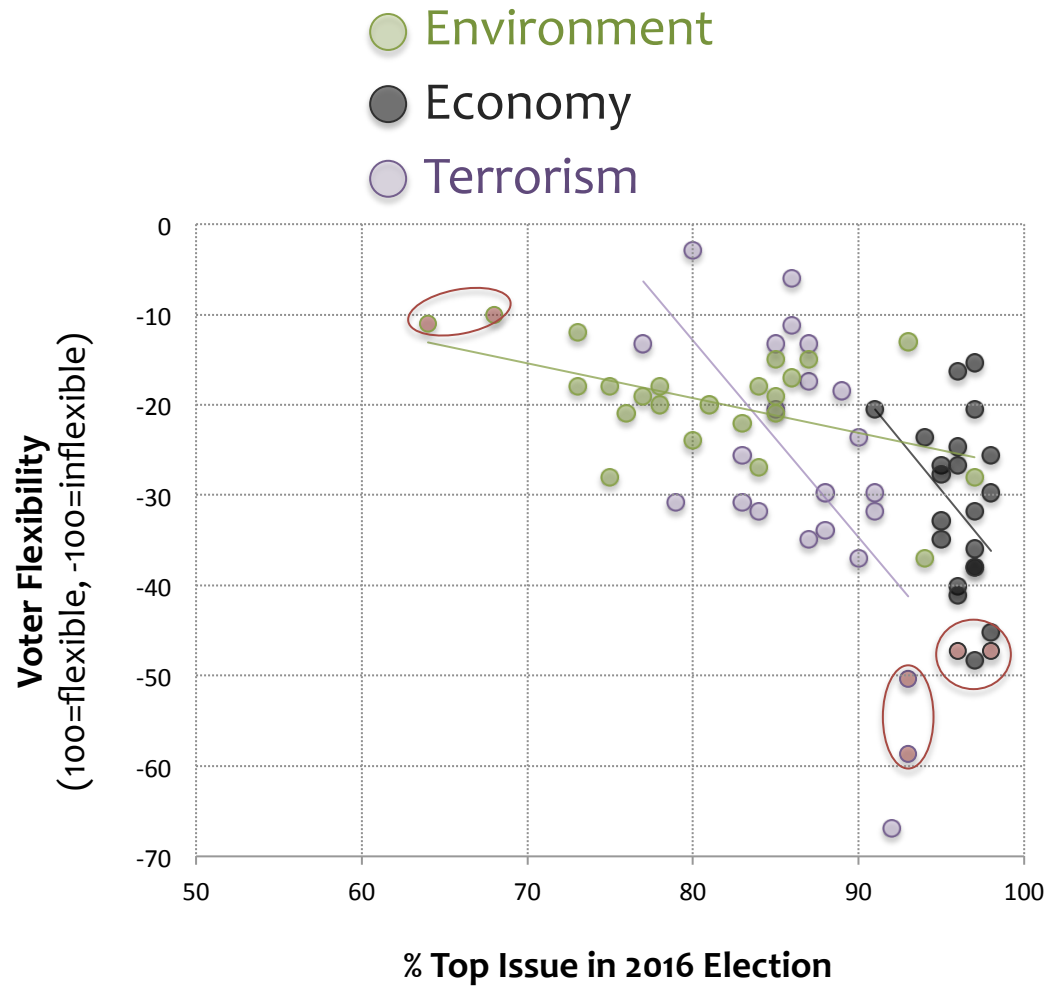
Survey conducted Jan. 7-11, 2015. Significant differences in **bold**.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew, January 2015

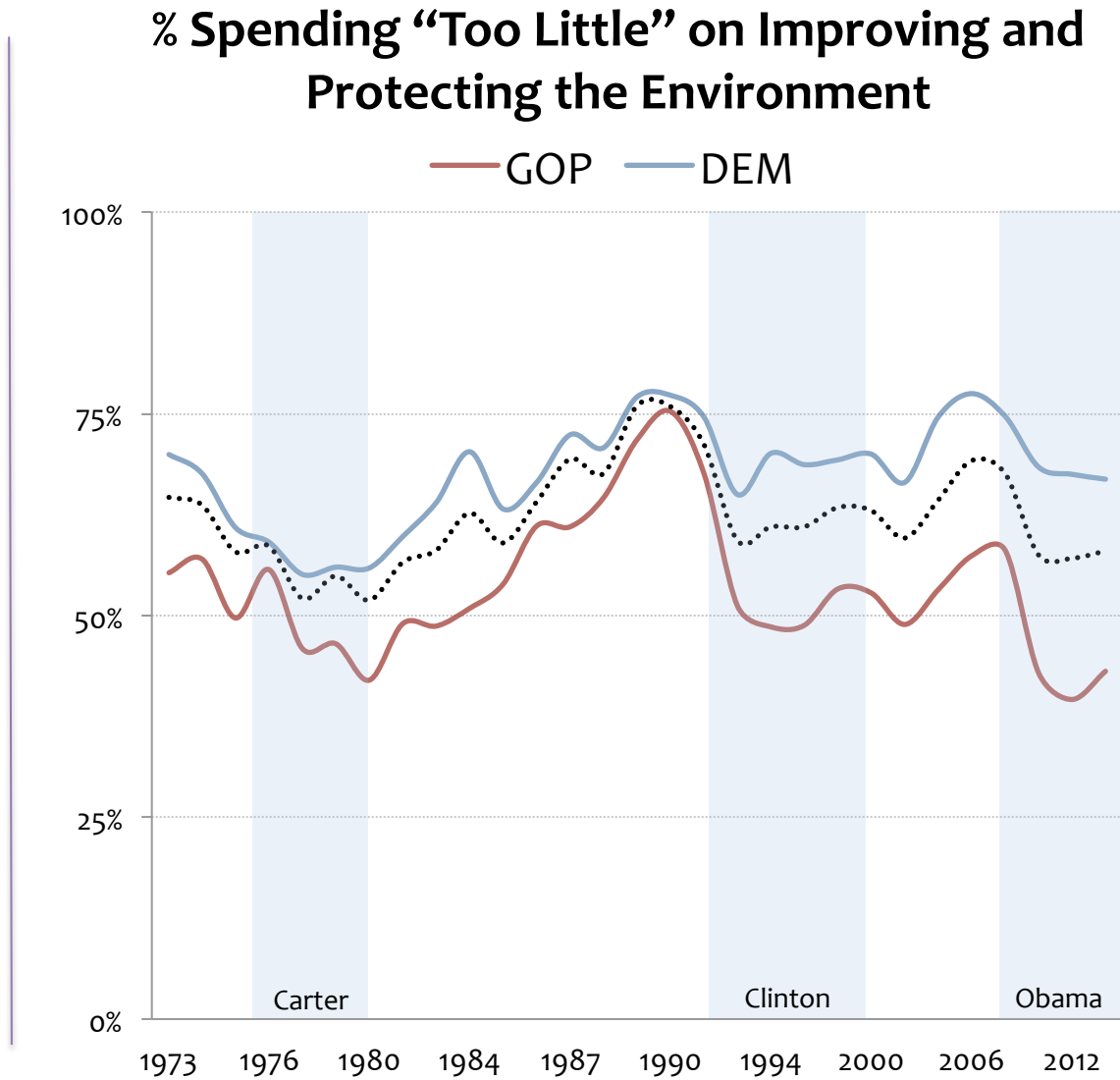
Environment as Issue

While Republicans are unlikely to support candidates they disagree with on economic or security issues, they are often flexible on environmental issues.



Environment as Issue

Republicans tend to deprioritize the environment during Democrat Administrations, especially early on.

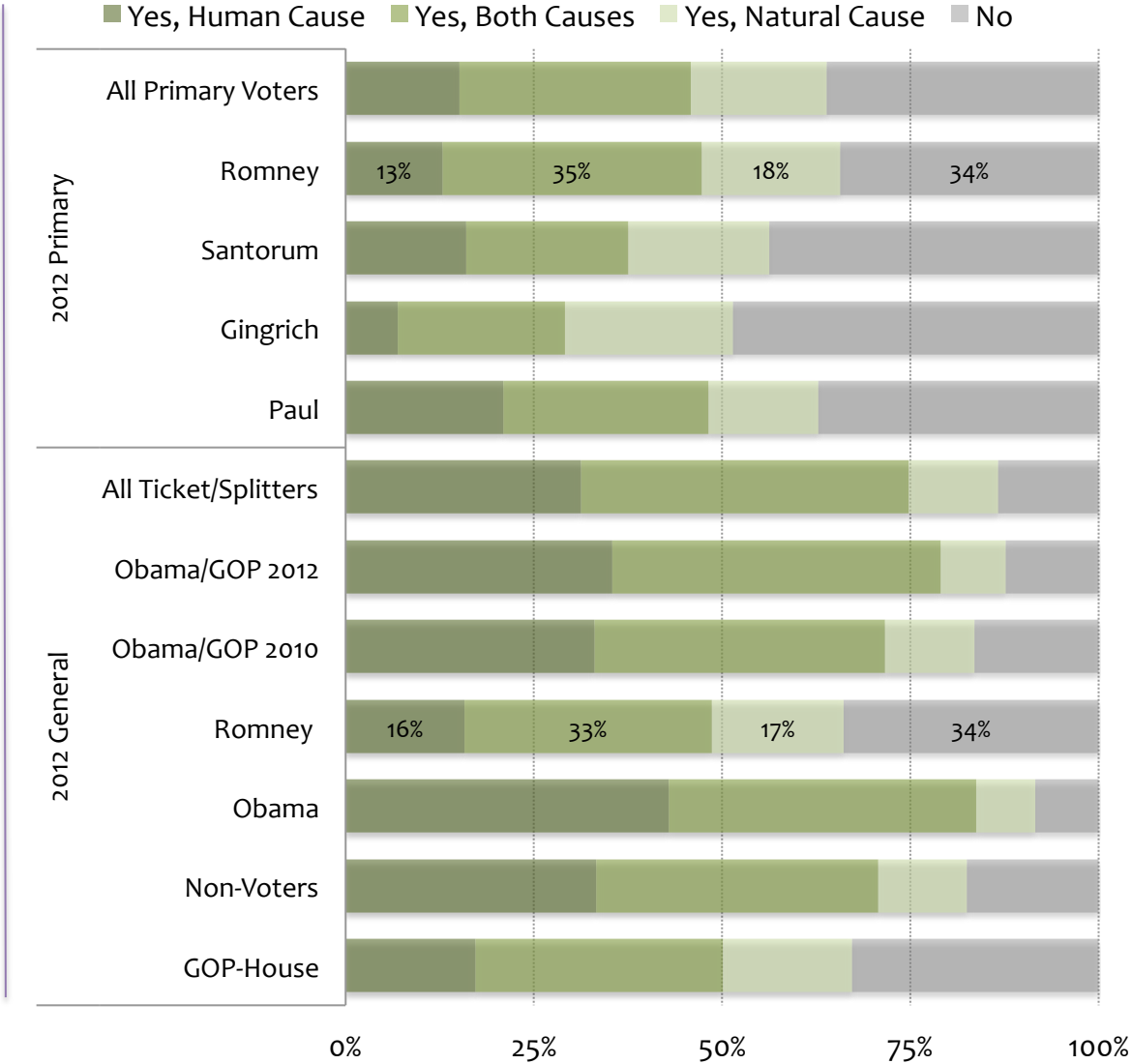


Climate in 2012

In 2012, Governor Romney's primary coalition was typical on anthropogenic climate change...

...but his general election coalition did not grow with climate believers.

Is Global Warming Happening?

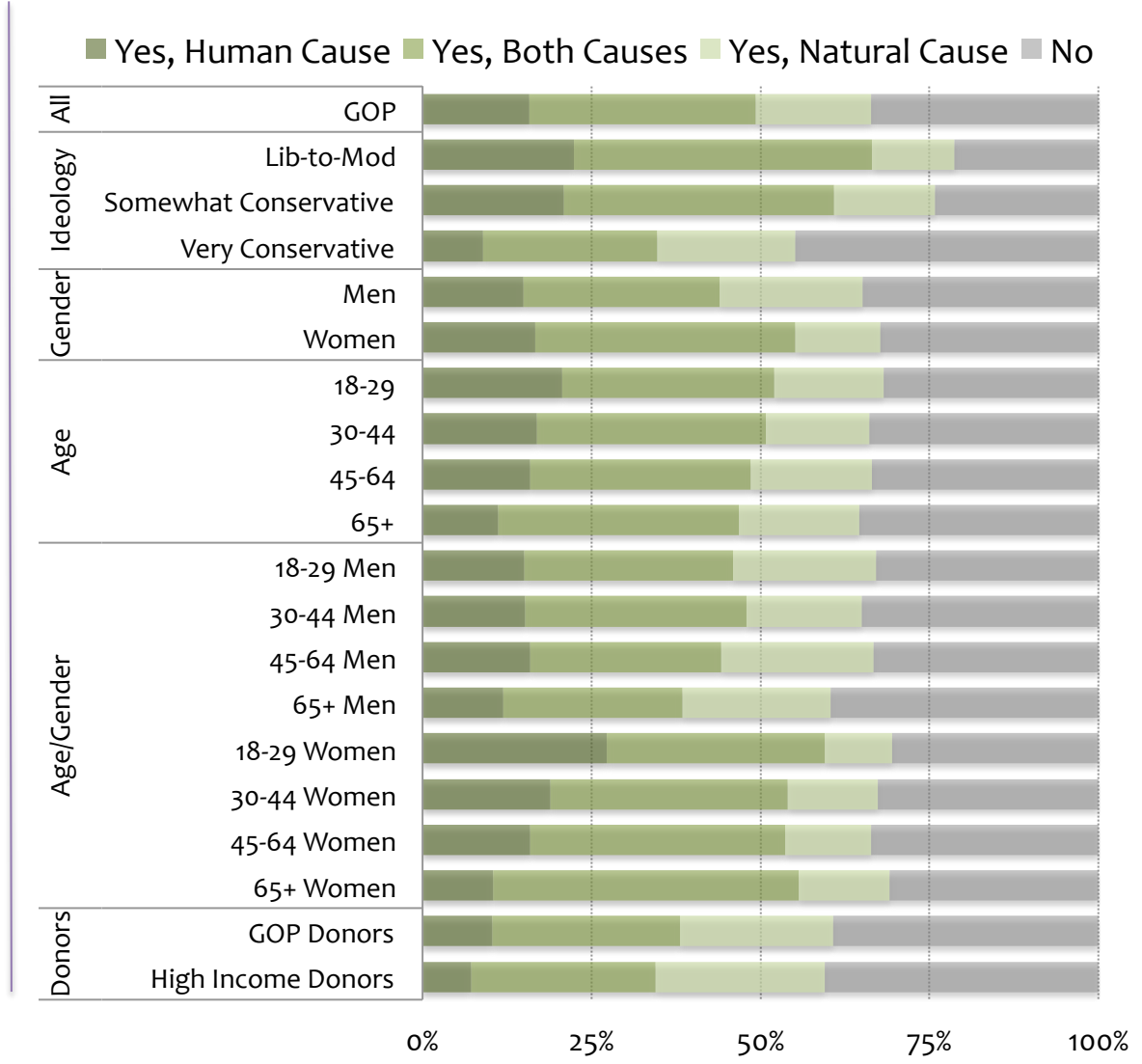


Source: 2012 American National Election Study

Climate in 2012

Is Global Warming Happening? (among Republicans)

In 2012, younger Republicans, especially young GOP women, were less likely to be skeptics of climate change.

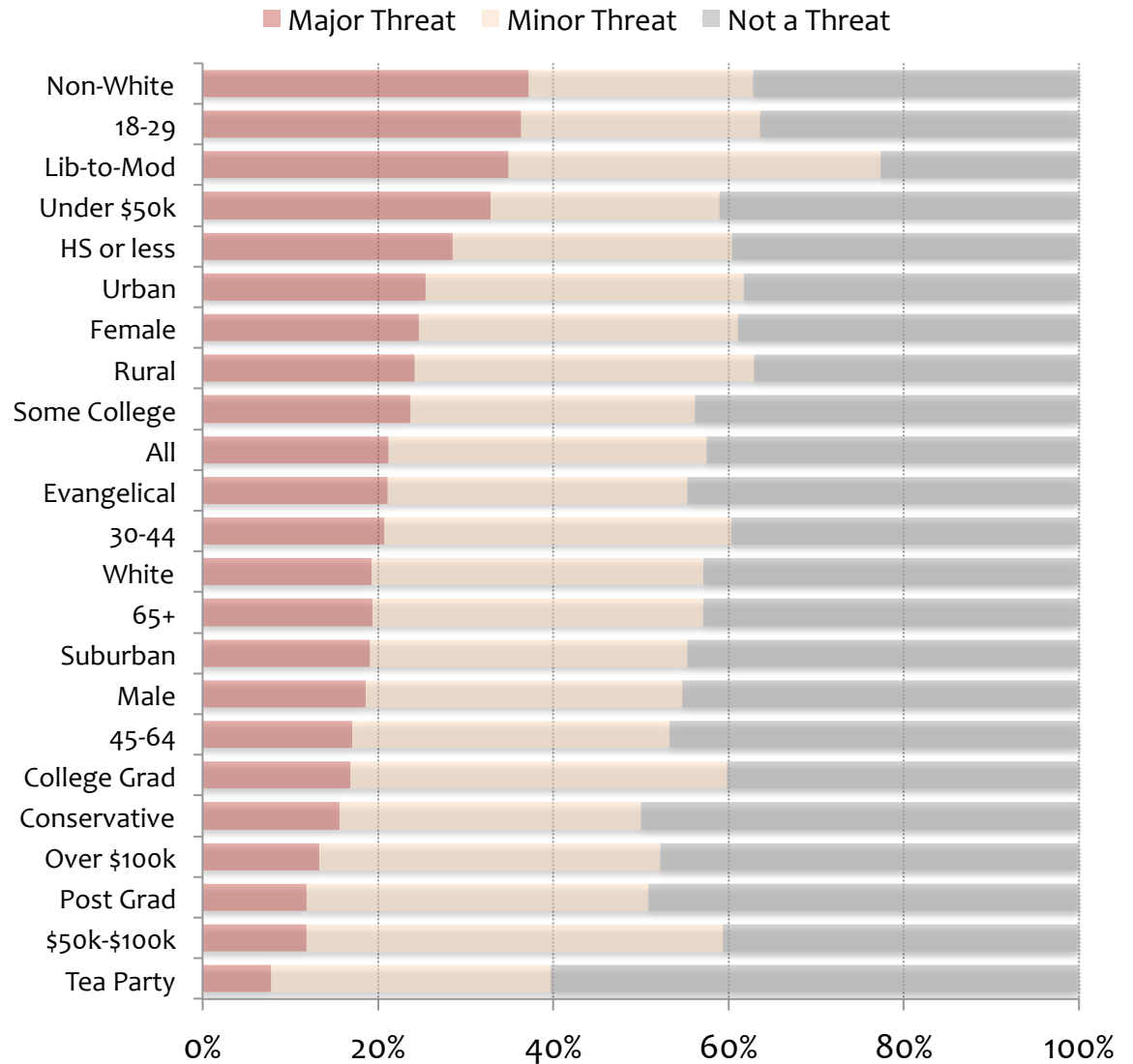


Source: 2012 American National Election Study

Climate as Threat

Do you think that Global climate change is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the well being of the United States?
 (among Republican and Republican-Leaners)

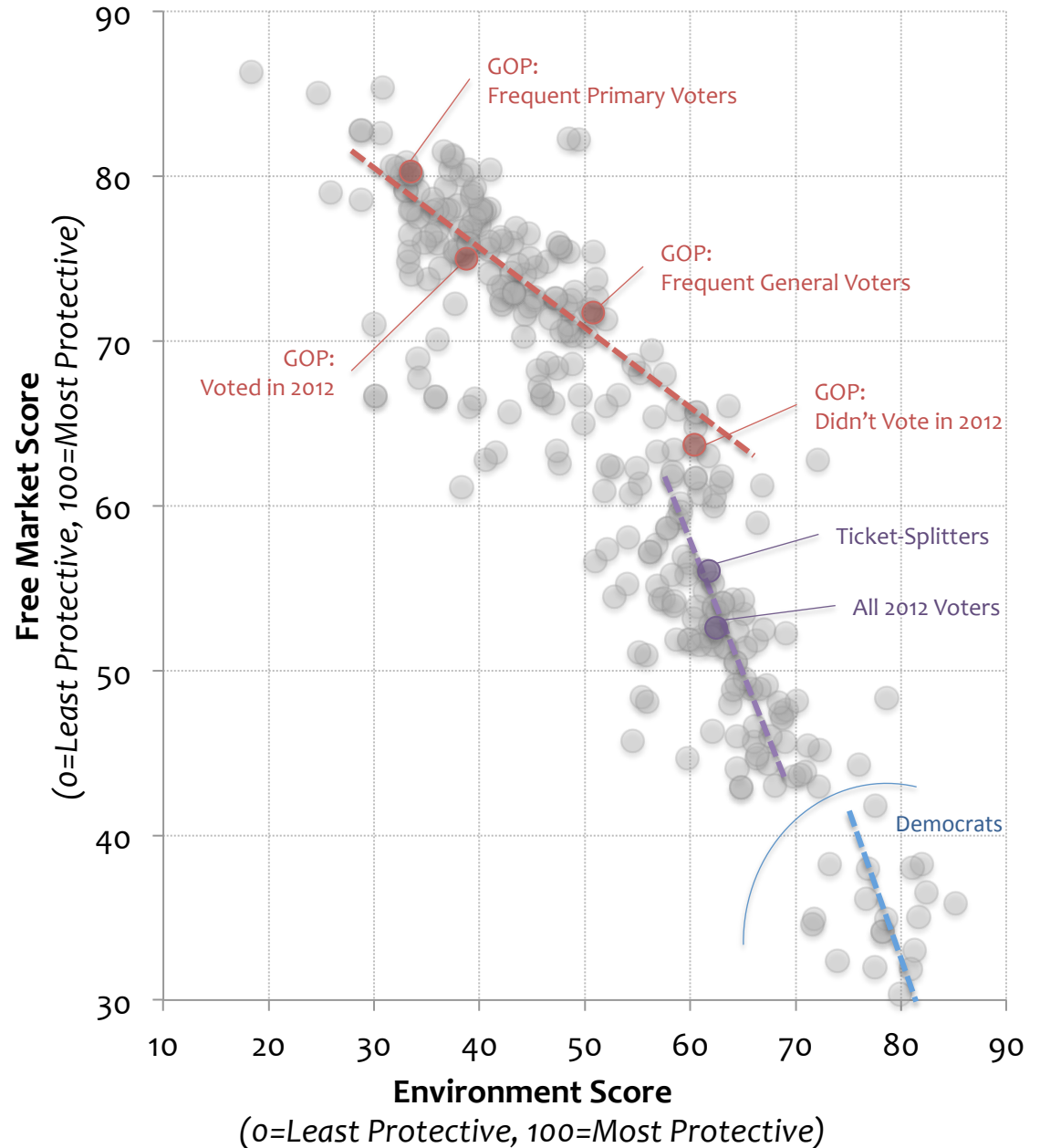
Currently, many swing Republicans and Republican-leaners find climate change is a threat.



Free Market & Environment Protection Index

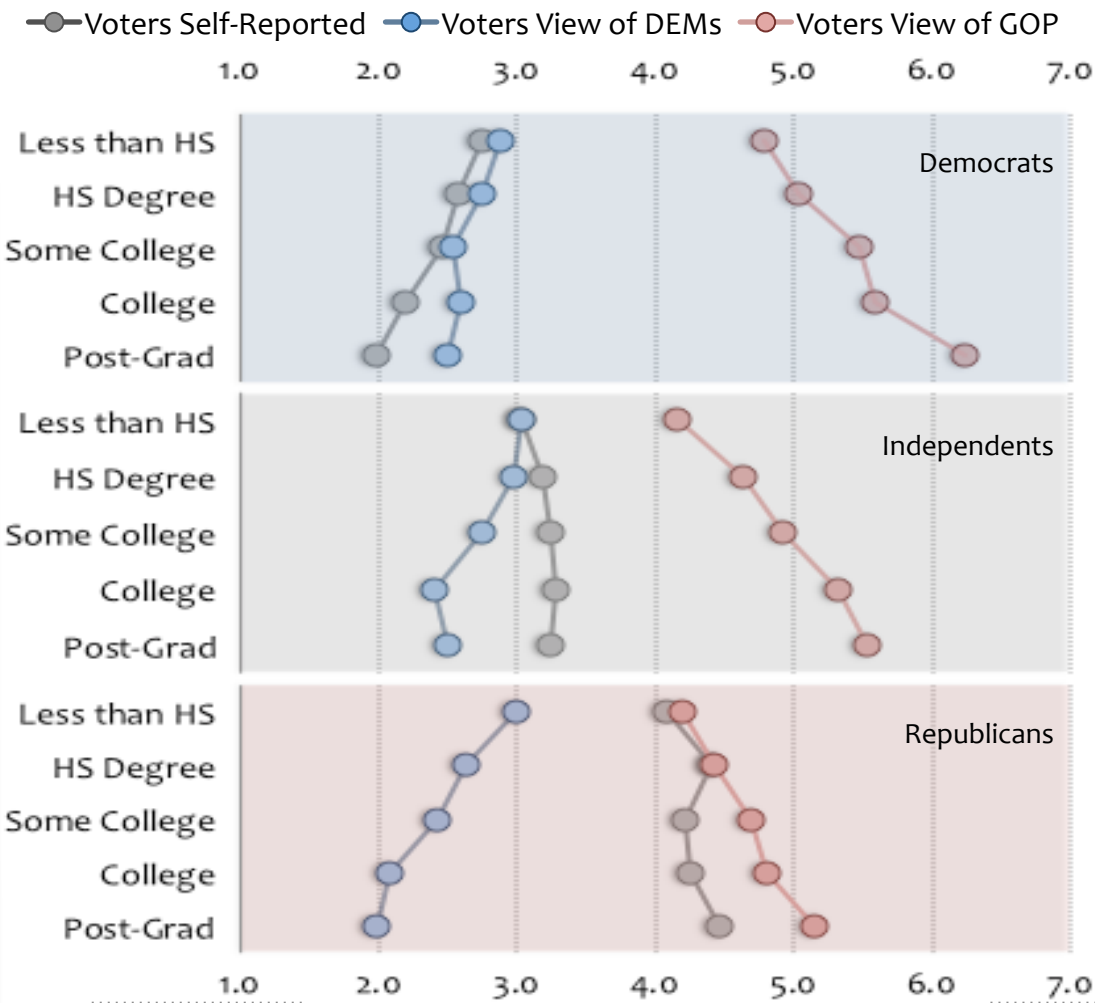
To grow coalition, Republicans can use environmental protection to reach GOP voters that stayed home in 2012.

(The slope of the red line shows a more favorable trade-off for GOP in moving towards center on environmental protection. Democrats, meanwhile, have to cede more ground on free markets to grow.)



Environment Regulation: by Education

The federal government needs to regulate business to protect the environment, which will also create jobs. Or the federal government should not regulate business since this regulation will not do much to help the environment and will cost us jobs.



Educated voters see a larger difference between the parties.

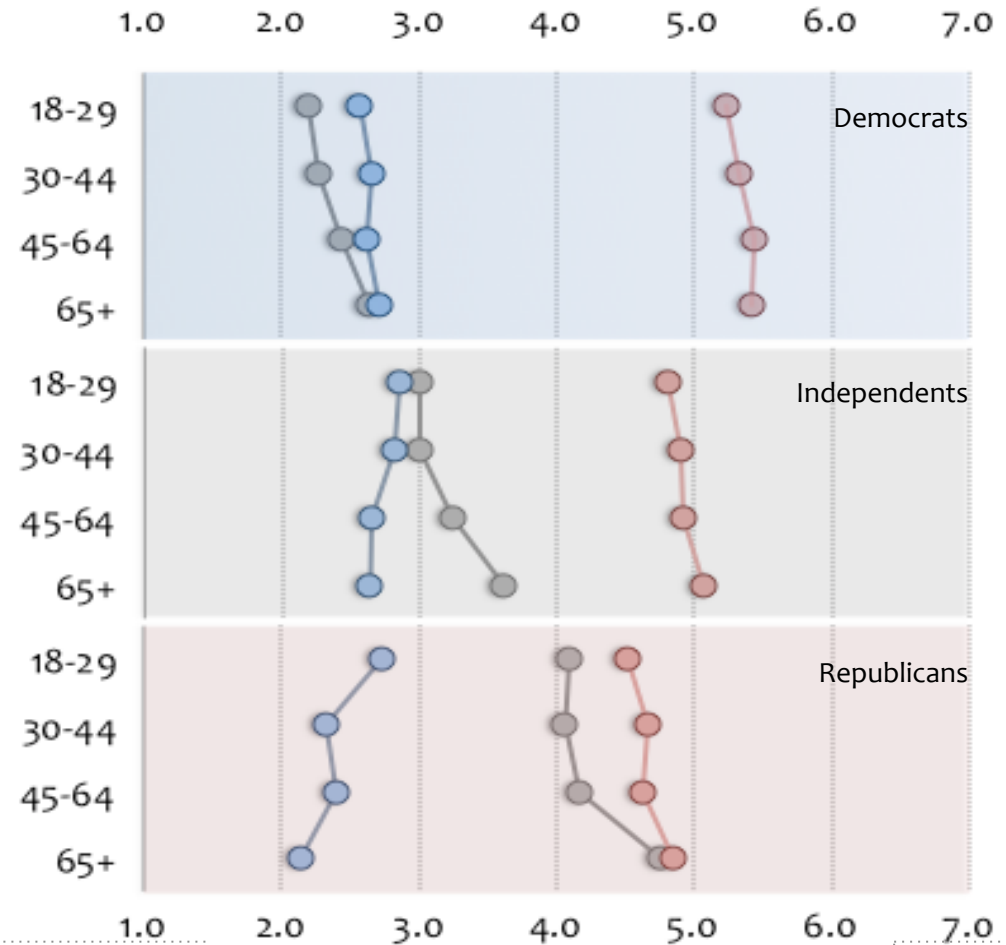
Gov't should regulate business.

Gov't should not regulate business.

Environmental Regulation: By Age

The federal government needs to regulate business to protect the environment, which will also create jobs. Or the federal government should not regulate business since this regulation will not do much to help the environment and will cost us jobs.

— Voters Self-Reported — Voters View of DEMs — Voters View of GOP



Democrats of all ages view themselves to left of Democrat Party, while Republicans under 65 see themselves in the center.

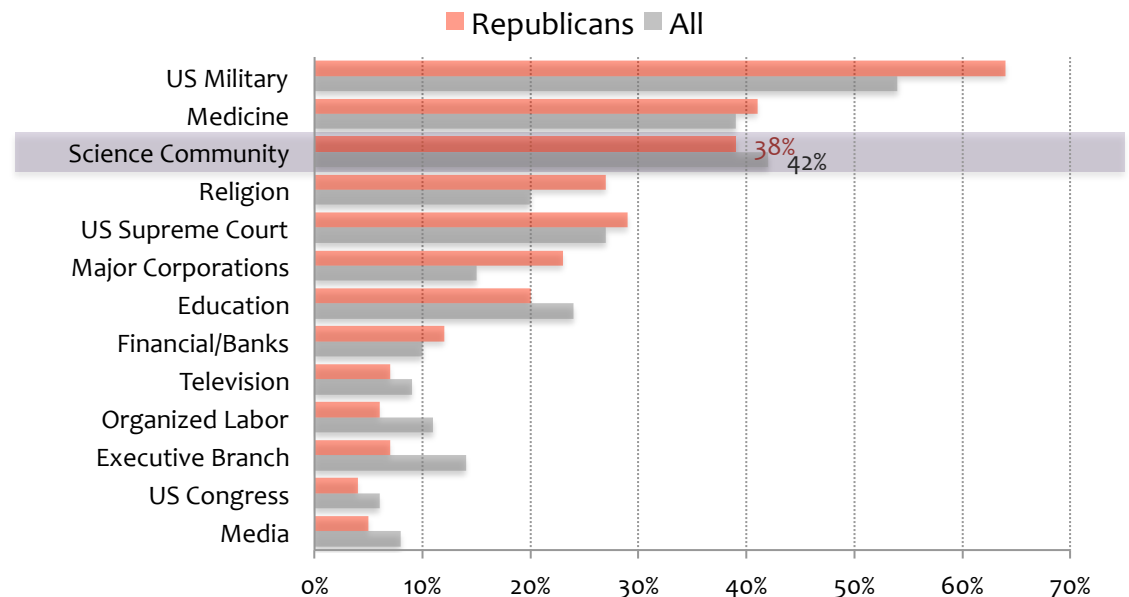
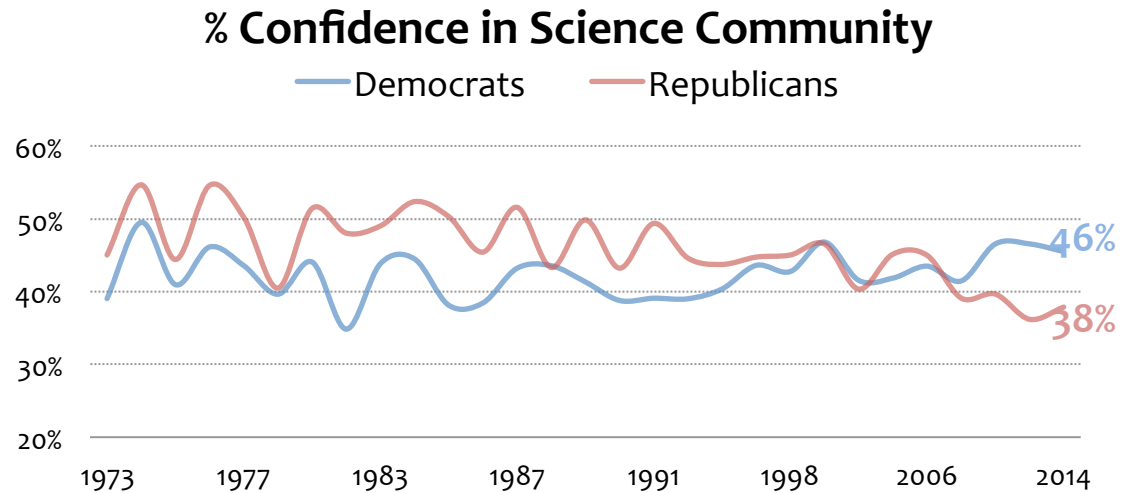
Gov't should regulate business.

Gov't should not regulate business.

GOP Confidence in Science

While Republican confidence in science community is historically lower...

... it is still relatively higher than most other institutions.



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2014

Energy Policy over Environment

Who do you think will have the better approach to...

There are no groups where Republicans have bigger advantage on Environment over Energy Policy...

...best for Republicans to talk about Environmental policies within an Energy plan.

