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Attitudes About Climate and Environmental Issues

Climate change is a high-priority issue for young Americans, while the cost of living is their single most pressing concern.

- The majority of young Americans aged 18-34 (53%) choose inflation/the cost of living as one of their top three issue priorities. Climate change (26%) ranks in the next tier of issues for young Americans along with jobs that pay a living wage (28%) and gun violence prevention (26%). [\[CIRCLE, Nov. 2023\]](#)

Young Americans are deeply concerned about climate change and overwhelmingly supportive of clean energy.

- Roughly half of young Americans aged 18-34 (49%) say that they worry "a great deal" about climate change, compared to 39% of all U.S. adults. [\[Gallup, Mar. 2023\]](#)

- Nearly four in five young Americans aged 18-29 (78%) say that the country should prioritize the expansion of clean energy sources over fossil fuels, compared to 64% of all U.S. adults. [[Pew](#), May 2024]

Young conservatives are much more climate-conscious than their fellow partisans, and support clean energy over fossil fuels.

- Nearly two-thirds of Republicans aged 18-29 (65%) say that they care at least “some” about climate change, compared to around half (52%) of all Republicans. [[Pew](#), Oct. 2023]
- While Republicans on the whole are more likely to say that the country should prioritize expanding fossil fuels (61%) than clean energy sources (38%), young Republicans aged 18-29 are twice as likely to say that the country should prioritize clean energy (67%) than fossil fuels (32%). [[Pew](#), May 2024]

Climate/Environment as a Voting Issue

Young Americans who prioritize climate change are particularly motivated to vote this year.

- Young Americans aged 18-34 who name climate change as a top issue are 15 points more likely to say that they’re “extremely likely” to vote in 2024 (72%) than young Americans overall (57%). [[CIRCLE](#), Nov. 2023]

Many young voters say that it’s a “deal-breaker” for them if a candidate doesn’t prioritize climate change.

- Among young voters aged 18-34 in battleground states (AZ, GA, NC, NV, and PA), four in five (80%) say that they prefer candidates who prioritize addressing climate change. This includes 40% who say that it’s a “deal-breaker” for them if a candidate doesn’t prioritize climate change. [[Environmental Voter Project](#), Aug. 2024]

Despite limited awareness of the Biden-Harris administration’s climate record, young voters in battleground states overwhelmingly trust VP Harris over Trump to handle climate change and environmental issues.

- In a survey of young voters aged 18-34 across five battleground states (AZ, GA, NC, NV, and PA), nearly four in ten (38%) say that they have heard little or nothing about the Inflation Reduction Act. A little more than half (55%) have heard some about it, including only 20% who have heard “a great deal.” [\[Environmental Voter Project, Aug. 2024\]](#)
- Across seven battleground states (AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, PA, and WI), large majorities of young voters aged 18-34 say that they are confident in Harris to handle clean energy (65%), reduce air and water pollution (65%), and address climate change (62%). [\[Climate Power, Aug. 2024\]](#)
 - For context, among young voters in these states, Harris’s advantages over Trump in trust to handle climate change (Harris +29) and the expansion of clean energy sources (Harris +37) are comparable to her advantage on abortion (Harris +31).

Messaging

Climate messaging resonates more with young Americans when it is tied to the cost of living.

- In a national poll of young Americans aged 18-29, a message focused on extreme weather rated as the most convincing rationale for climate action. Messages focused on costs and energy security were also effective. [\[Climate Action Campaign, Jan. 2024\]](#)

[Extreme Weather] *“Climate change is already causing more extreme heat, wildfires, droughts, and flooding. This extreme weather will only grow worse until we treat climate change as the existential crisis that it is and take urgent action.”*

[Costs] *“The rising cost of living is making it harder for people to make ends meet. By switching America to wind and solar power we can address climate change and lower energy costs, which will help with the cost of living.”*

[Energy Security] *“Gas prices spike every time there’s a war where our oil comes from. By using more American-made clean energy, we can combat climate change and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.”*

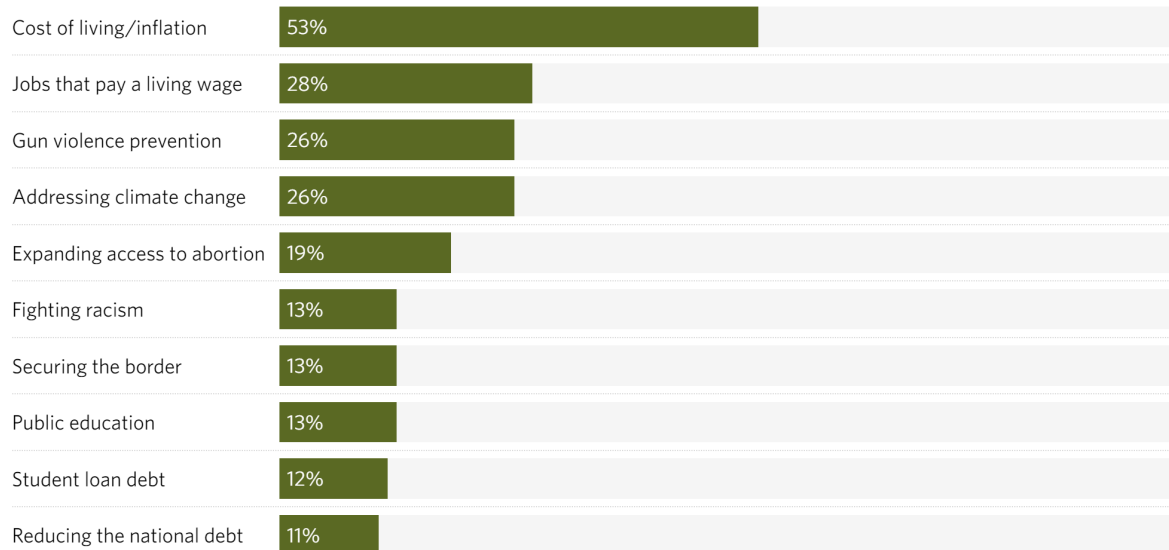
- Out of a series of contrast messages about Harris and Trump related to climate change and clean energy issues, young voters aged 18-34 in battleground states (AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, PA, and WI) ranked the following cost-focused message as the best reason to support Harris: [\[Climate Power\]](#), Aug. 2024]

[Price Gouging] *“Kamala Harris knows prices are too high, and many Americans are struggling with the cost of living. That’s why she cast the tie-breaking vote for a plan to triple clean energy production and save Americans \$38 billion on electricity bills. She will take on Big Oil for price gouging. Trump sides with Big Oil billionaires over working people. His policies increase profits for Big Oil CEOs, leaving Americans vulnerable to more price hikes at the pump.”*

Charts

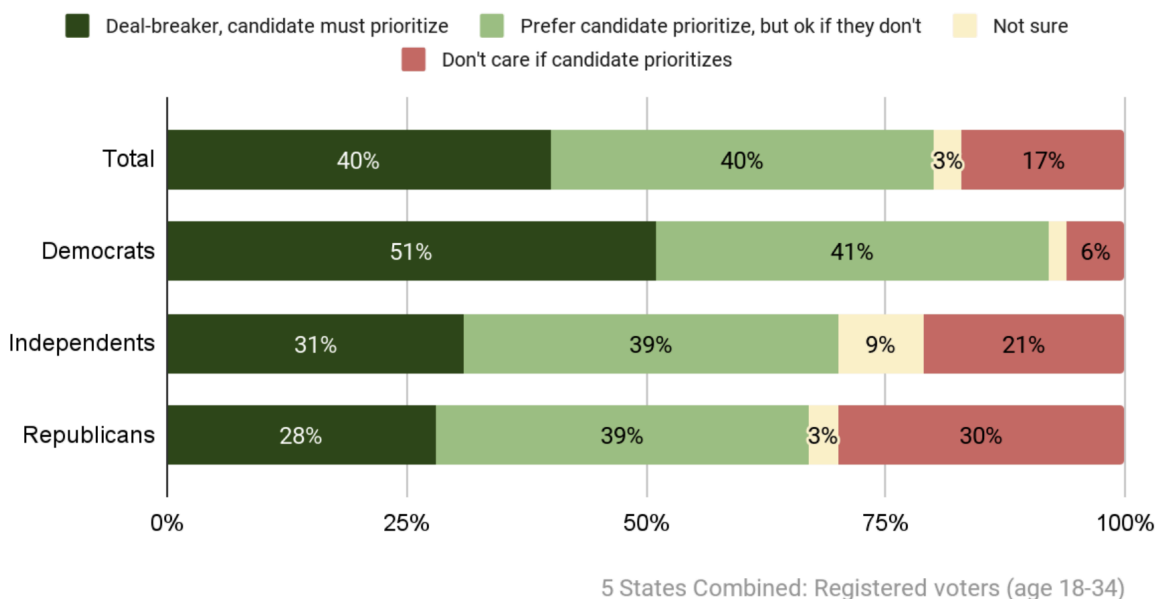
The Economy, Gun Violence, and Climate Are Young People's Top Issues

The percentage of youth, ages 18-34, who selected each issue as one of their top three priorities.



[CIRCLE](#), Nov. 2023

Importance of Candidates Prioritizing Climate Change



[Environmental Voter Project](#), Aug. 2024

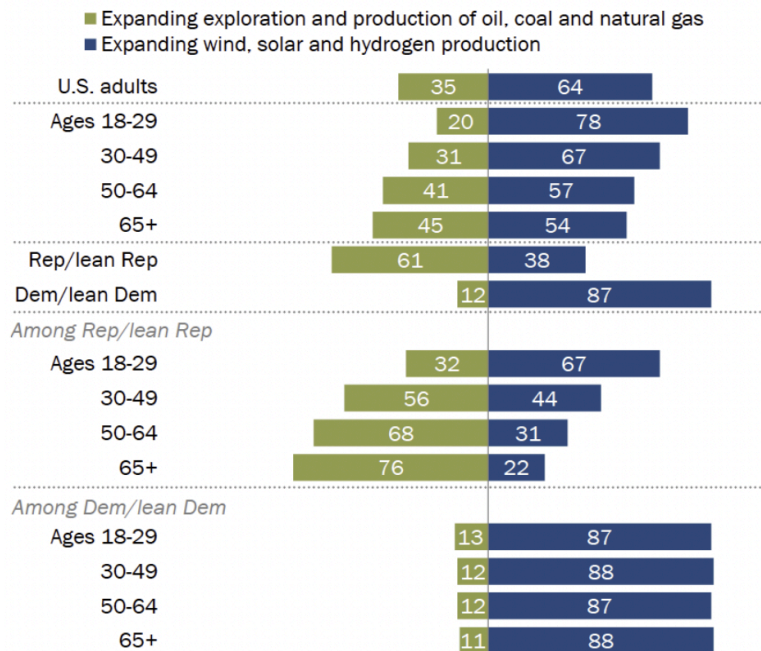
2023 Global Warming Views Among U.S. Subgroups

	Effects have already begun	Due mainly to effects of pollution from human activities	Will pose a serious threat in your lifetime	Worry a great deal
	%	%	%	%
U.S. adults	60	62	46	39
Gender				
Men	54	56	40	33
Women	64	68	52	44
Age				
18 to 34	59	72	59	49
35 to 54	63	65	55	36
55+	58	54	31	36

[Gallup](#), Mar. 2023

Younger Republicans far more likely than older Republicans to prioritize renewable energy

% who say the more important priority for addressing America's energy supply should be ...



[Pew](#), May 2024

Additional Resources

[*Youth Battleground State Poll: Political Priorities & Opinions on Climate Change*](#)

Environmental Voter Project, Aug. 2024

[*Harris Battleground Poll: Winning on Climate and Energy*](#)

Climate Power, Aug. 2024

[*Harris Has Significant Edge Over Trump on Climate and Energy Issues*](#)

Climate Power + Data for Progress, Aug. 2024

[*How Americans View National, Local and Personal Energy Choices*](#)

Pew, June 2024

[*The Most Effective Climate Change Messaging with Americans Under 30*](#)

Climate Action Campaign, Feb. 2024

[*Survey of Young Conservatives on Climate Change and Clean Energy*](#)

American Conservation Coalition, Jan. 2024

[*Poll of Youth on Climate*](#)

LCV, Nov. 2023

[*Youth and the 2024 Election: Likely to Vote and Ready to Drive Action on Key Political Issues*](#)

CIRCLE, Nov. 2023

[*Young Voters' Attitudes About Climate Change Policy and Biden*](#)

LCV Victory Fund + Climate Power, Oct. 2023

[*How Americans View Future Harms From Climate Change in Their Community and Around the U.S.*](#)

Pew, Oct. 2023

[*What the Data Says About Americans' Views of Climate Change*](#)

Pew, Aug. 2023

[*A Steady Six in 10 Say Global Warming's Effects Have Begun*](#)

Gallup, Mar. 2023