



Attitudes toward Environmental Issues in California

Key findings from two phone surveys among California voters (conducted March 28 to April 6) and three online QualBoards among voters in swing congressional districts (conducted April 18 to 20)



Key Findings and Recommendations

1

Voters' attitudes on climate change are mixed (and nuanced) with **the economy and cost of living**, among others, leading the list of their priorities over climate change. HOWEVER, climate change itself is viewed as a top priority and the cause of natural (and importantly, economic) problems in California.

- The climate-caused events of the past few years CLEARLY have made an impact on voters' attitudes, with wildfires and drought vying with economic concerns such as gasoline prices and energy bills.
- In promoting climate change as an effective 2024 issue, messaging should emphasize the **economic and job benefits of addressing climate change**. Future climate action should connect clearly to reducing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events **AND** bolstering the economy of California.

2

With cost of living and economy THE top-of-mind issue for voters (both statewide AND in targeted CDs), cost is the biggest pain point impacting support and favorable feelings toward climate change policies. Voters fear that the transition period as we shift to cleaner energy will be too pricey and costly for people like them. **This is the CORE challenge we face in making climate change a winning issue in California.**

Key Findings and Recommendations, cont'd.

3

Answering the cost criticism should be a top priority—the suggestion that climate action will lead to cost savings has no credibility without both an explanation on HOW and strong messaging behind it. Effective responses should emphasize how climate action will protect Californians from the **unforeseen costs of climate change**, buffer against **future price hikes by strengthening our supply chains**, and **increase the number of American jobs** that cannot be outsourced to other countries.

4

One important finding is there is more in common between the statewide and targeted CDs samples on many core environmental issues than there are differences. There is **a surprising congruence between the two samples on effective climate change policies AND messaging.**

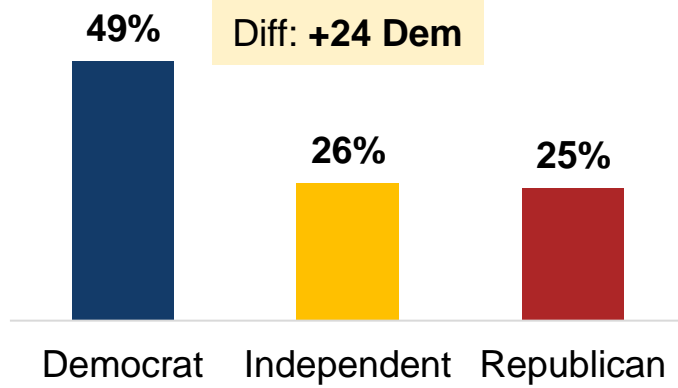
5

Taken together, this is an encouraging finding because, despite the partisan differences between the statewide and targeted CDs samples, the challenge of making climate change an effective 2024 campaign issue is not any more challenging in the targeted CDs, AND we have several strong messages (provided we address cost concerns).

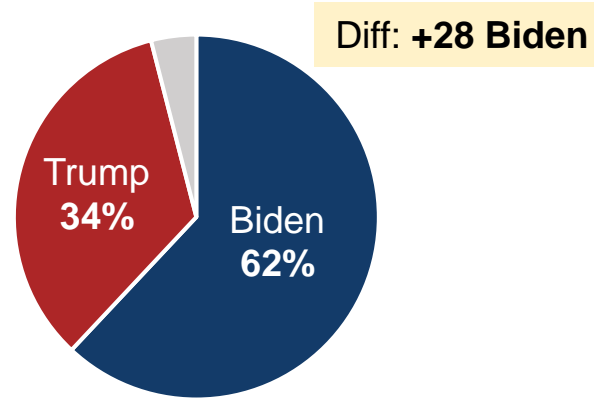
Sample Overview: Partisanship

MAIN SAMPLE

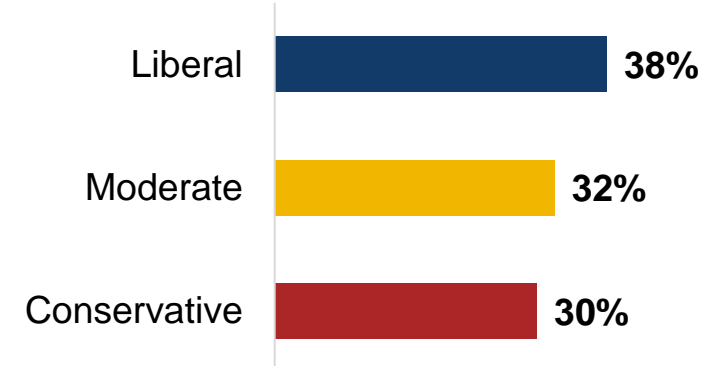
Party Registration



2020 Vote

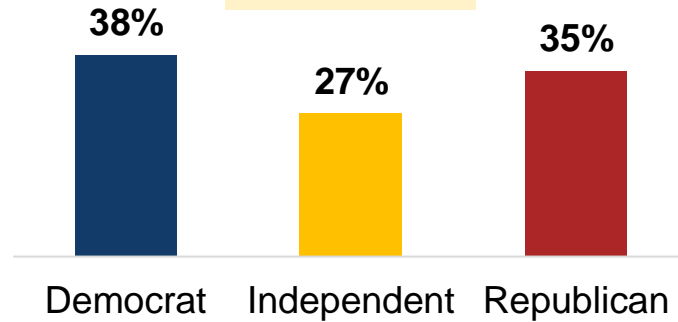


Ideology

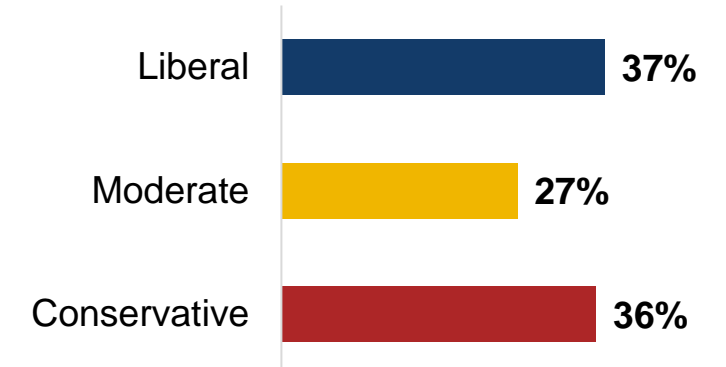
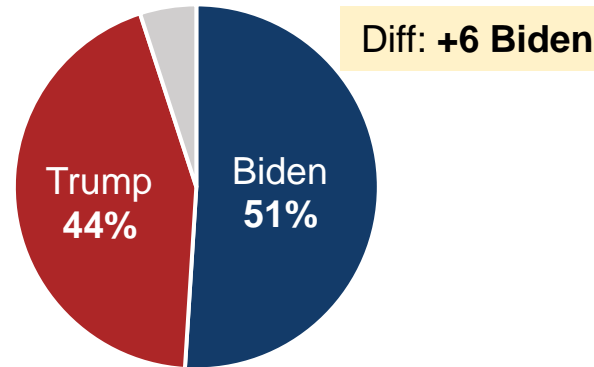


SWING CDS

Diff: +3 Dem



Diff: +6 Biden

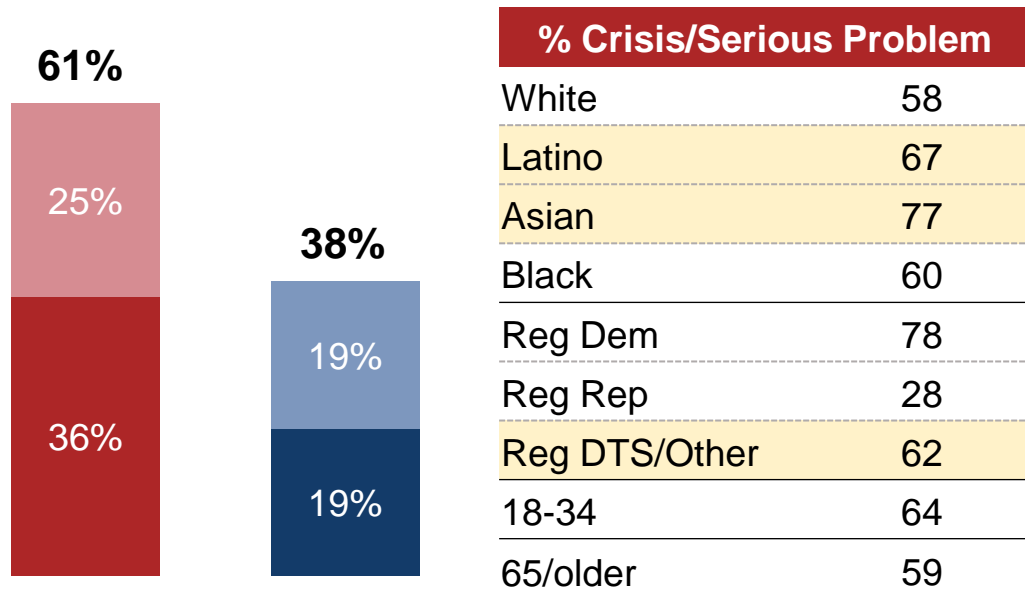


Little difference between main sample and swing CDs on climate change.

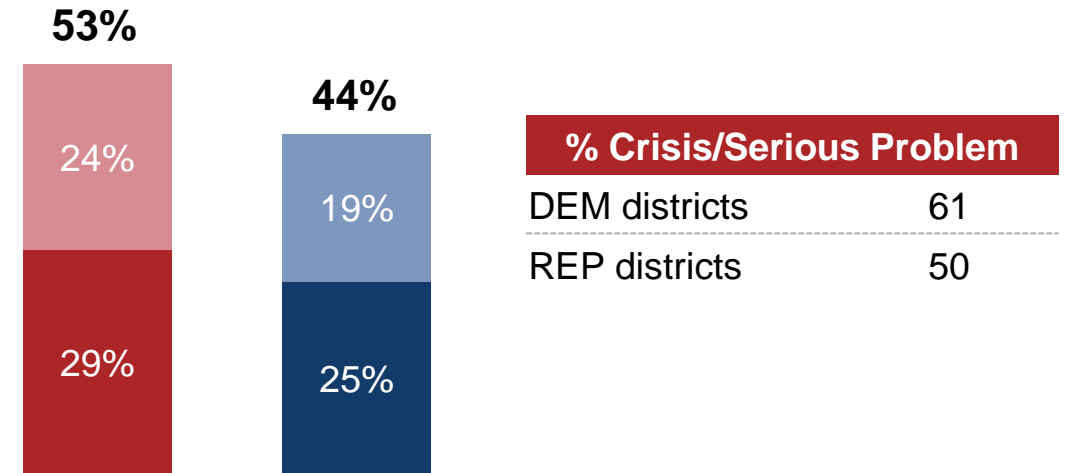
Do you consider climate change to be...?

■ A crisis ■ A very serious problem ■ A somewhat serious problem ■ Not a serious problem

Main Sample

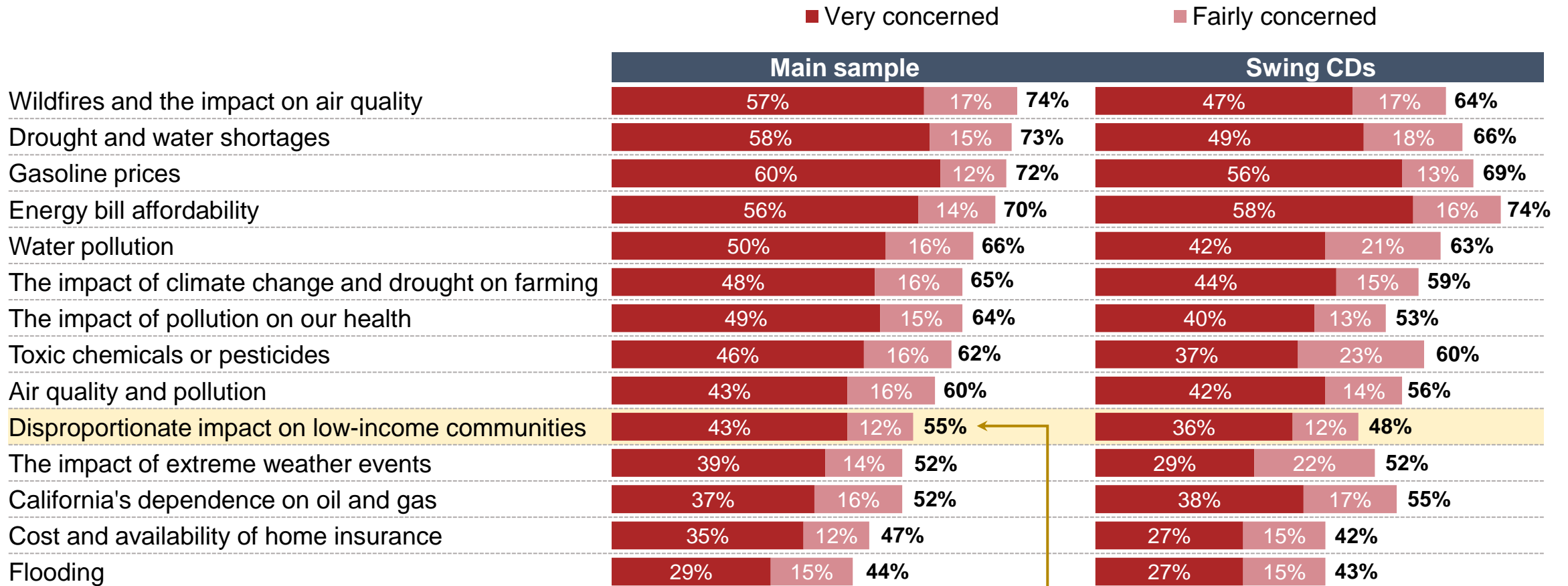


Swing Congressional Districts



CA voters are primarily concerned with the daily, tangible effects of climate change; price sensitivity is greater in swing districts.

How concerned are you about each issue affecting your community and you personally?



Total Concerned
 White: 52% | Latino: 57% | Asian: 55% | Black: 83%

In Their Own Words: Voters Concerns about Climate Change



Wildfires

“I live in an area that has been affected by many wildfires. The school I taught at had to be evacuated a couple of times over the last 20 years due to wildfires.” – **AAPI voter**

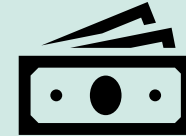
“When I think of climate change, the first thing that comes to mind is wildfires. CA has gone through severe droughts that have created areas in CA that are dry and make it easier for fires to start and spread very quickly.” – **Latino voter**



Drought and Water Shortages

“[When I think about climate change,] I think about the persistent California drought. It seems like we are always running low on water as a State” – **Latino voter**

“I'd like to see water storage being addressed. With the exception of the current year, we are often in a drought. The lack of water has a very real impact on farmers as well as the way farmers are expected to pay for the water that they may or may not receive.” – **Rep./DTS voter**



Costs of Climate Change

“The hotter temperatures have been slightly tolerable except for the need to use air conditioning more often which in turn raises energy consumption and higher bills to pay in a given month.” – **AAPI voter**

“Utility companies have been allowed to proceed with ridiculous rate hikes. My gas bill was 4 times the normal price this winter and then we are told that the state is entertaining a motion from the utilities to raise our gas rates even higher.” – **Rep./DTS voter**

It will be important to address voters' concerns with EVs and Cap-and-Trade to boost support for those policies.



Electric Vehicle Concerns

- Costs to purchase, fuel, and repair EVs
- Infrastructure capabilities (e.g., electricity grid, charging stations)
- Travel and charging time constraints
- Sustainability of materials to build EVs

“[EVs are not] feasible, the power grid wouldn't take it...Look at the lines in gas stations when it only takes 5 minutes to fill your tank. Also, the hazardous waste from disposal of batteries. Big chunk of money for service and replacement.

From what I understand it's almost the cost of a new car, makes them almost disposable. Need to wait until affordable and safe all around.” – **Rep./DTS voter**



Cap-and-Trade Concerns

- Increased costs for consumers and taxpayers
- Higher priorities for CA
- “Pay to play” is unfair and let's big business continue to pollute
- Not familiar with program

“I think it's a bit of a conflict of interest, the policy was developed and is promoted by the fossil fuel industries that climate policy is meant to regulate and transform.” – **AAPI voter**

“I am not too familiar with California's cap and trade program to be honest. As for pollution, I think there are many other more important things we should be worried about right now than the air quality.” – **Latino voter**

In the online discussion boards, we provided additional details on California's Cap-and-Trade Program.



The Cap-and-Trade Program is a key element of California's strategy to reduce the pollution that causes climate change.

The program started in 2012 and establishes a declining limit (or “cap”) on major sources of carbon pollution throughout California, and **it creates a powerful economic incentive for significant investment in cleaner, more efficient technologies**. A company can decide to reduce its emissions, or if it cannot reduce emissions, it must pay for credits—which fund other projects to cut pollution.

The program is **structured the way it is to drive change without impeding the state's economic growth**. It has been wildly successful, helping California hit its first pollution reduction goal four years early.

Intensity of support for Cap-and-Trade increases after voters receive additional details on the policy in California.

Favorability BEFORE detailed description

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total favor	Total oppose
AAPI voters	8	4	5	1	12	6
Latino voters	7	7	5	1	14	6
Rep./DTS voters	0	10	3	3	10	6
All participants	15	21	13	5	36	18

Favorability AFTER detailed description

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total favor	Total oppose
AAPI voters	13	3	0	2	16	2
Latino voters	12	5	2	1	17	3
Rep./DTS voters	2	7	4	3	9	7
All participants	27	15	6	6	42	12

Best Responses to the Cost Concern among Key Audiences



Top-tier Response among
AAPI and Latino Voters

Unforeseen Costs

“The leading accounting firm Deloitte calculated that insufficient action to address climate change **could cost our economy \$14.5 trillion dollars**. Hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, and other climate-driven disasters are already harming local economies and driving up health costs, crop losses, and rebuilding expenses. Passing comprehensive environmental laws will **help us avoid bigger costs later.**”



Top-tier Response among
Latino Voters

Price Hike Protections

“The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear how vulnerable we are to price hikes because **our supply chain is so reliant on other countries’** manufacturing and products. Comprehensive environmental laws would **protect Californians from future price hikes**, especially on items that affect our pockets, by strengthening our domestic supply chain and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.”

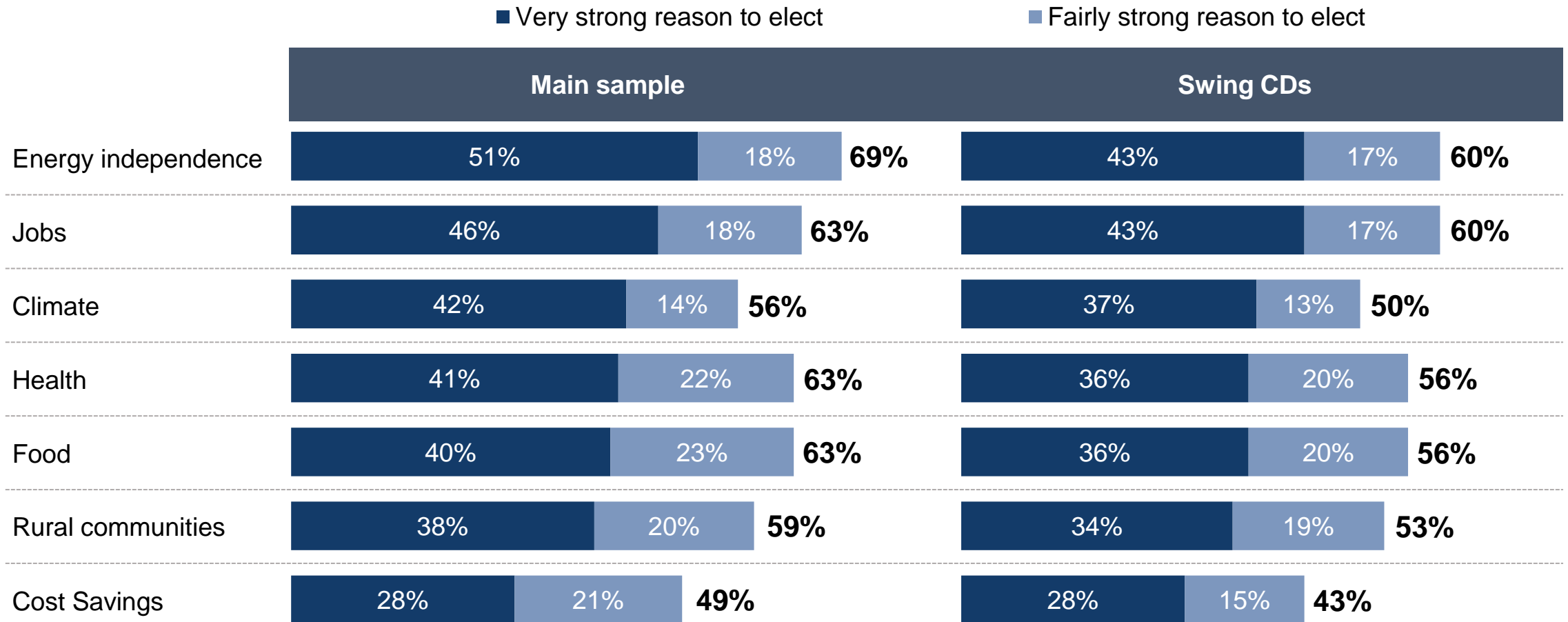


Top-tier Response among
Rep./DTS Voters

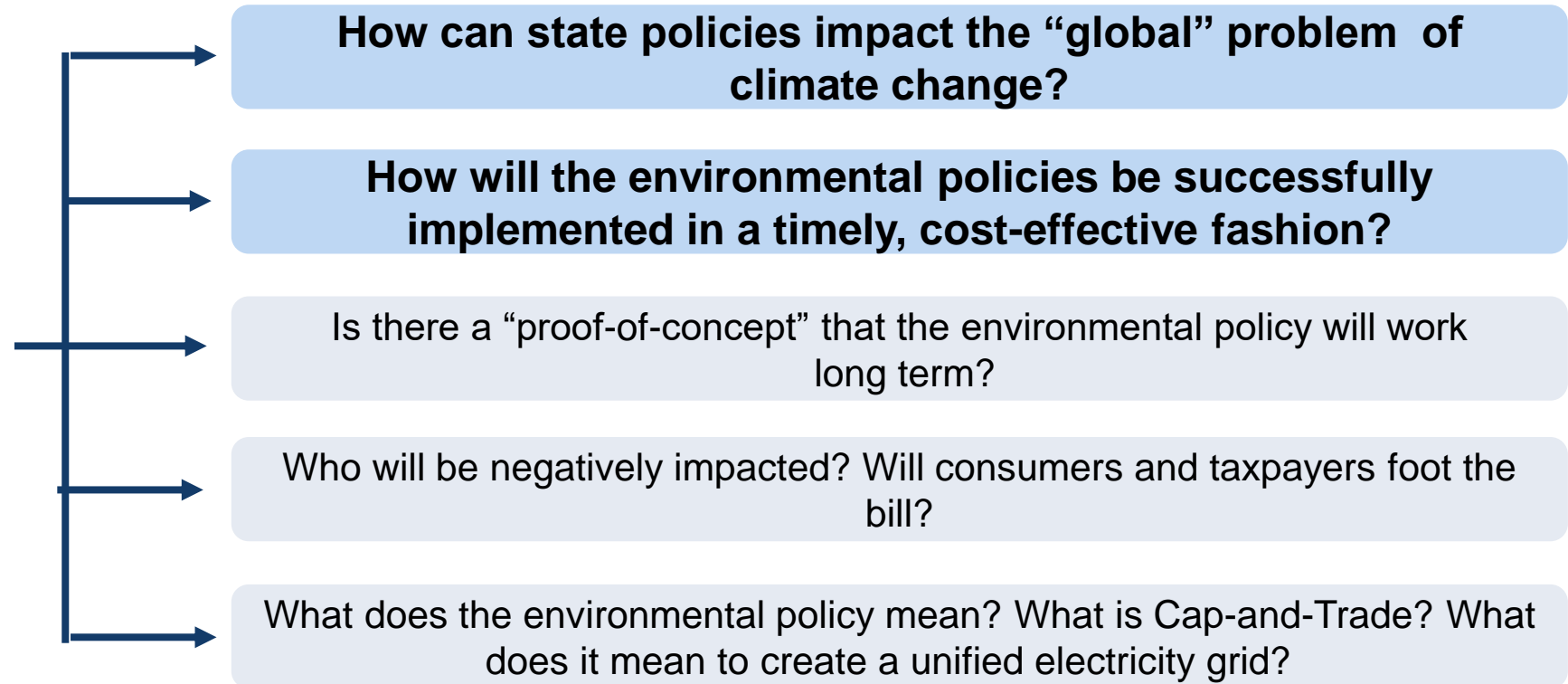
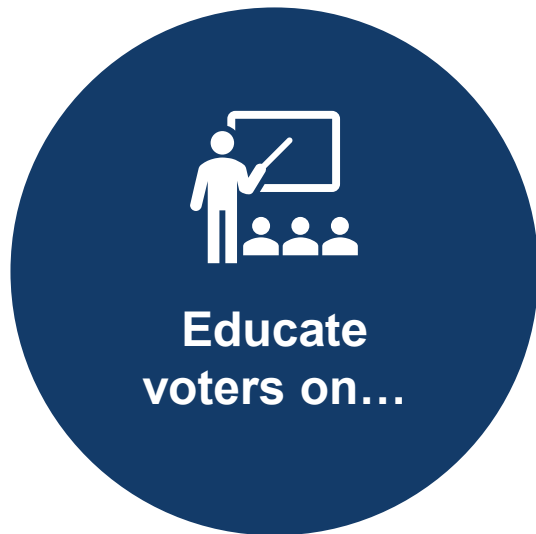
Jobs

“The U.S. has ALREADY seen **100,000 new clean energy jobs** since Congress passed climate legislation last year. Developing and producing clean energy in the United States will create jobs in big cities and small towns, jobs for everyone from engineers and scientists to construction workers and carpenters. **These jobs can’t be outsourced to other countries and would include training for new workers entering these industries.** More American jobs will strengthen every part of our economy.”

Of the reasons to elect a “pro-environmental” candidate, economic and job arguments make the strongest case statewide AND in swing CDs.



Future messaging should also integrate an educational component; many voters are skeptical of the effectiveness of new or stronger environmental policies.



“While I do support a decline on climate pollution, I’m wary of the speed and methods of doing so. Basically, at what cost will it be? And to whom? I understand we all play a part in this, but we have to carefully look at who are the gross polluters and see what regulations are they already not following before implementing more limits. As for putting a price on carbon, I’m not sure how we would quantify that?...I’m not completely opposed to this [policy], I just need more clarification on just how these cap-and-trade programs would work and to whom they directly affect.” – **AAPI voter**

Appendix

Methodology



Telephone Surveys

- Conducted March 28 to April 6 on landline and cell phone
- Two samples:
 - 600 statewide likely 2024 voters
 - 475 likely 2024 voters in swing Congressional Districts (CDs) 13, 22, 27, 40, 41, 45, 47, 49



Qualboard Online Discussions

- Conducted April 18 to 20
- Three groups:
 - **AAPI voters** in congressional districts CA-27, CA-40, CA-41, CA-45, CA-47, and CA-49
 - **Registered Republicans or Decline-to-State (DTS) “pro-environmental” voters** in congressional districts CA-13 and CA-22
 - **Latino voters** in congressional districts CA-27, CA-40, CA-41, CA-45, CA-47, and CA-49