



August 9, 2023

Media contact: press@couragecampaign.org

STATEWIDE POLLING SHOWS “UNAFFILIATED” VOTERS WANT CORPORATIONS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

A critical set of California voters are highly engaged on environmental issues and see corporations as having the power and responsibility to combat climate change

Courage California Institute partnered with Data for Social Good Foundation, Communities for a New California Education Fund, California Environmental Voters Education Fund, Inland Empire United Education Fund, and Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods to conduct polls of over 1,000 registered voters across the state.

Of polled voters who do not identify with any political ideology (liberal, conservative, or moderate, herein referred to as “unaffiliated voters”), 39% are registered as no party preference and 31% lean Democrat, with higher proportions of these voters concentrated in Northern California and Central Valley, in Black communities, and among younger voters. Poll results show that unaffiliated voters care about climate change, are more engaged than other voters on the issue, are less likely to believe elected officials can effectively combat climate change, and see corporations as having the most power and responsibility to do so.

Unaffiliated voters believe climate change is real and have noticed the effects of climate change become more severe.

The majority of California unaffiliated voters believe climate change is real (67%) and have noticed the effects of climate change become more severe (75%). Compared to other voters, more see extreme temperatures as the most likely result of climate change (67%) and see the greatest effects in pollution (28%, compared to 14-22%) and health (27%, compared to 8-16%).

	Where effects of climate change have been greatest			
	Environment al disasters: fires, flooding, beach erosion	Pollution: air pollution, water pollution, contaminated/ hazardous sites	Health: cancer, allergies, asthma, bronchitis, skin condition or sensitivities	Economic: jobs quality and scarcity
Liberal	70%	14%	15%	2%
Moderate	55%	22%	8%	9%

Conservative	61%	22%	8%	9%
I don't think of myself in these terms	45%	29%	27%	0%
TOTAL	59%	19%	18%	4%

While voters have identified jobs and the economy as their top issue in previous polls, the overwhelming majority of unaffiliated voters are unwilling to accept new job creation if it leads to worse health outcomes for their families.

In our 2022 general election poll, more voters across six congressional districts (28-35%) identified jobs and the economy as their top issue than other issues. However, when asked in this poll if they would be willing to accept new job creation even if it leads to worse health outcomes for them and their families, 77% of unaffiliated voters disagreed. Additionally, 61% agree the state should focus on transitioning away from polluting fossil fuels to cleaner renewable energy.

Corporations are seen as having the most power to effectively combat climate change, and unaffiliated voters hold the highest belief in punishing corporate polluters as the best policy.

Unaffiliated voters believe corporations have the most power to effectively combat climate change (41%, compared to 22% who believe an elected official does) and are also more likely than other voters to see ONLY corporations as being able to make a meaningful impact to address climate change (22%, compared to 20% of liberal voters, 11% of conservatives, and 11% moderates).

They also view corporations as the biggest barrier to addressing climate change (24%, compared to 20% who view government/government gridlock and 7% political party establishments) and have the highest belief that punishing corporate polluters is the best policy approach that politicians should take to minimize the effects of climate change (33%, compared to 28% of liberals, 18% of moderates, and 13% of conservatives).

Unaffiliated voters are the most engaged on environmental issues and see voting as the best way to bring about an improved environment.

Nearly half (49%) of unaffiliated voters considered themselves to be engaged “a lot” on environmental issues, noticeably more than all other voters (36% of liberals, 26% of conservatives, and 23% of moderates).

Clear majorities think that voting (67%) and advocating for a policy (59%) are the best ways to bring about an improved environment, though less so than liberals on both (88% and 71%, respectively) and moderates on voting (74%).

Unaffiliated voters are more likely to hear about climate change from social media and are more likely to trust environmental activists for climate change information than other voters.

Unaffiliated voters hear about climate change most from the news (52%), but were more likely than other voters to hear via social media (20%, compared to 18% of liberals, 16% of moderates, and 14% of conservatives).

When asked to rank who they would trust most for information regarding climate change, the majority of unaffiliated voters ranked scientist (61%) at the top, then environmental activist (14%), and environmental organization (8%). Out of all voters, they are the most likely to trust environmental activists (14%, compared to 6% of moderates, 5% of conservatives, and 3% of liberals).

The majority of unaffiliated voters do not believe California is prepared to effectively address climate change, nor that they can encourage their state representatives to focus more on environmental issues.

When asked if California is prepared to address climate change, 53% of unaffiliated voters disagree, 26% neither agree nor disagree, and 21% agree. Similarly, 51% do not believe they can encourage their state representatives to focus more on addressing environmental issues, 25% might or might not, and 25% do.

About this poll

Data for Social Good Foundation conducted the poll for Courage California Institute, Communities for a New California Education Fund, California Environmental Voters Education Fund, Inland Empire United Education Fund, and Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods from May 4 - June 7, 2023. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish. We polled 1,002 registered voters, intentionally oversampling from demographic communities that have seen higher rates of growth in the last decade, including voters of color.

###

[Courage California Institute](#) defends and extends economic justice, human rights, and corporate and political accountability through public education, strategic research, and innovative leadership-development training. We empower Californians by providing the resources needed to courageously participate in the democratic process and create change for the betterment of their families and communities.

Communities for a New California Education Fund promotes economic prosperity and community health for residents in the rural areas of California. We bring valley residents together to champion the needs of poor and working-class families through community organizing, integrated leadership development, and mass non-partisan voter engagement.

California Environmental Voters (EnviroVoters) Education Fund, formerly the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, believes the climate crisis is here and this moment requires transformative change. EnviroVoters Ed Fund fights for equity and justice for all Californians, from voting rights to clean air and water. We work together to make government, policy, and voting accessible by conducting public opinion research, shaping the public narrative, organizing with allies and local communities, and educating legislators on pressing environmental issues. We won't stop until we have resilient, healthy, thriving communities, and a democracy and economy that is just and sustainable for all.

Inland Empire United Education Fund is a coalition of community based organizations serving San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. As a coalition, we organize civic engagement activities and programs that uplift historically marginalized communities and build community power.

VISIÓN (Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods) is a coalition of environmental justice, public health, and frontline organizations leading the fight to end the toxic practice of neighborhood oil and gas drilling in California. Founded in 2019, VISIÓN centers the voices of low-income and non-white communities living near oil and gas extraction in California climate policy.