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How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue

Mixed views of how climate policies impact the U.S. economy

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand how Americans view climate change and policies to address the issue. For this analysis, we surveyed 9,593 U.S. adults from Oct. 21 to 27, 2024.

Everyone who took part in the survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), a group of people recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses who have agreed to take surveys regularly. This kind of recruitment gives nearly all U.S. adults a chance of selection. Surveys were conducted either online or by telephone with a live interviewer. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the <u>ATP's methodology</u>.

Here are the <u>questions used for this report</u>, the <u>topline</u> and <u>the survey methodology</u>.

How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue

Mixed views of how climate policies impact the U.S. economy

The United States and countries around the world continue to grapple with the impacts of climate change, including record heat and more intense extreme weather events.

A Pew Research Center survey of 9,593 U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024, takes stock of Americans' views on climate change, including its impact on their own lives, their support for policies to address the issue and the emotional reactions they have to climate news.

Key findings

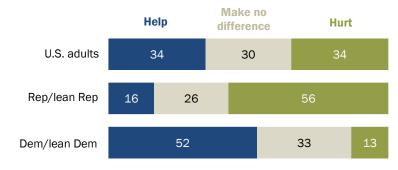
Americans are split over the economic impact of climate policies

Economic issues like inflation have been front of mind for many voters in this year's election. The survey finds that U.S. adults are just as likely to say that policies aimed at reducing the effects of climate change usually help the economy as they are to say these policies usually hurt it (34% each).

Among Republicans and those who lean to the Republican Party, 56% think climate policies usually *hurt* the economy. By contrast, 52% of

Equal shares of Americans say climate policies help or hurt the U.S. economy

% who say policies aimed at reducing the effects of global climate change generally $_$ (for) the U.S. economy



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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Democrats and those who lean Democratic say they usually *help*.

Large businesses and corporations seen as doing too little on climate change

Overall, 69% of Americans say large business and corporations are doing too little to help reduce the effects of global climate change. Six-in-ten also say state elected officials are doing too little on climate.

Broad support for a number of policies to address climate change

Sizable majorities favor tax credits for Americans who improve their home's energy efficiency (83%) and tax credits for businesses that develop carbon capture technologies (79%). Notably, majorities of both Republicans and Democrats support these policy actions.

Widespread frustration with political disagreement over climate change

Eight-in-ten Americans say climate news makes them feel frustrated about the level of political disagreement on the issue. A large share (73%) also say climate news has made them feel sad about what's happening to the Earth. At the same time, 51% of U.S. adults say they've felt

suspicious of the groups pushing for action on climate change (a view expressed by 75% of Republicans).

64% say climate change currently affects their local community either a great deal or some

Among Republicans, 41% say climate change is currently impacting their own community. For Democrats, a large majority (86%) holds this view. These wide partisan differences in perceptions exist across geographic regions.

Relatively few expect to make major sacrifices in their lifetime due to climate change

Three-quarters of U.S. adults expect they'll have to make at least minor sacrifices in their everyday life during their lifetime because of global climate change. But the share who expect to make *major* sacrifices remains modest, at 23%.

Emotional reactions to climate change news

Climate change news and information sparks a mix of feelings among Americans.

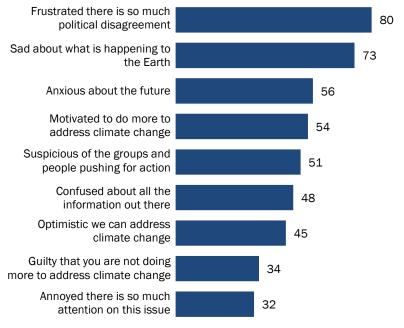
Large shares express frustration with the partisan nature of climate debate. Eight-in-ten say they've felt frustrated by the level of political disagreement when they've seen news and information about climate change.

Climate change is not an easy subject for all Americans to make sense of: 48% report feeling confused about all the information out there on the issue.

For some, climate news sparks a sense of skepticism: 51% say they

8 in 10 Americans say climate news makes them feel frustrated by political disagreement on the issue

% of U.S. adults who feel ___ when thinking about news and information on climate change they've come across recently



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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have felt suspicious of the groups and people pushing for action on the issue. A 2023 <u>Center analysis of qualitative interviews</u> with U.S. adults who do not see climate change as an urgent issue found one theme was skepticism about the motives of those calling for more action on climate change.

Many express sadness about what's happening to the Earth. About three-quarters (73%) say climate news has made them feel this way. A sense of anxiety about the future because of climate news also registers with 56% of Americans.

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Just under half (45%) say climate news and information has made them feel optimistic we can address the issue. The share who say climate news has made them feel optimistic is 7 percentage points higher than it was in an October 2023 Center survey.

Partisan differences in reactions to climate news

There continue to be wide differences between Republicans and Democrats – including those who lean to each party – in their reactions to climate news and information.

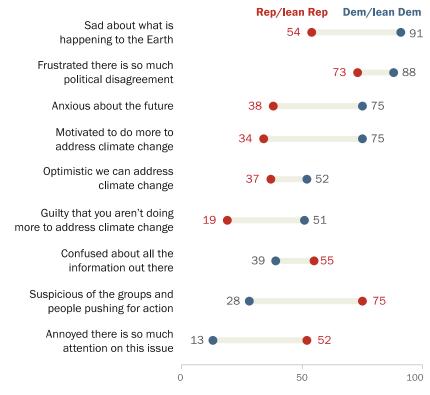
Large majorities of Democrats say climate news has made them feel sad about what's happening to the Earth (91%), and 75% say it has made them feel anxious about the future.

At the same time, 75% of Democrats also say climate news has made them feel motivated to do more to address the issue.

For Republicans, a top reaction is a sense of suspicion toward the groups and people pushing for action on the issue (75% say they've

Republicans and Democrats differ in their emotional reactions to climate change news

% who feel __ when thinking about news and information on climate change they've come across recently



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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felt this way). And 52% say they've felt annoyed there is so much attention on the issue.

Republicans are much less likely than Democrats to say climate news has made them feel sad about what's happening to the Earth; still, 54% of Republicans say they've felt this way.

Large majorities of Democrats and Republicans share a sense of frustration over the level of political disagreement over climate change: 88% of Democrats and 73% of Republicans say they've felt frustrated there is so much political disagreement over this.

Perceptions of the local impact of climate change

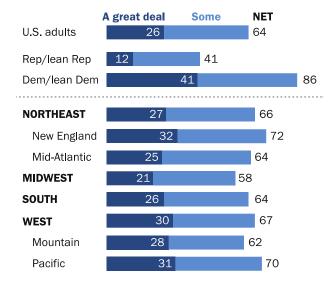
Climate scientists highlight the many ways climate change can affect communities' environments and everyday lives. Nearly two-thirds of Americans say that climate change is affecting their local community either a great deal (26%) or some (38%).

Americans' views on local climate impacts are closely related to their partisan leanings. A large majority of Democrats (86%) say climate change is affecting their local community at least some. By contrast, fewer than half of Republicans say this (41%). A majority of Republicans (58%) say climate change is having not too much or no impact at all on their community.

There are modest differences in perceptions of climate impacts in different areas of the country. U.S. adults living in New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) (72%) and Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington) (70%) states are somewhat more likely than adults living in other areas to see at least some local climate impact.

Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to see local climate impact

% who say global climate change is currently affecting their local community ...



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024. "How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Jesue"

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Across the country, Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say climate change is affecting their local community. For example, among those living in Pacific states, Democrats are more than twice as likely as Republicans to say climate change is affecting their local community at least some (89% vs. 41%).

How much do Americans think humans contribute to climate change?

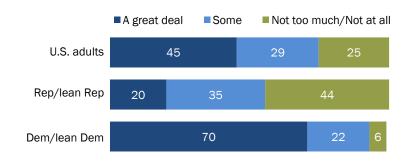
Overall, 45% of Americans say human activity, such as the burning of fossil fuels, contributes a great deal to climate change, while another 29% think it contributes some. A quarter say humans are contributing not too much or not at all to climate change.

Since 2019, the share of Americans who see a human contribution to climate change has not increased, despite scientific consensus on the issue and widespread media coverage.

There continues to be a sharp partisan divide in views over how much humans affect climate change. Seven-in-ten Democrats say human activity contributes a great deal to climate change; another 22% say it contributes some.

Republicans much less likely than Democrats to say human activity contributes to global climate change

% who say human activity, such as the burning of fossil fuels, contributes ___ to global climate change



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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Republicans are far less likely to see a human impact: 20% say humans contribute a great deal to climate change. (A larger share of Republicans – 44% – say natural patterns in the Earth's environment contribute a great deal to climate change.)

Majority of Americans expect to make sacrifices due to climate change – but relatively few expect them to be 'major'

When asked if they will have to make sacrifices in their everyday lives due to climate change, 75% of Americans expect they will need to make either major or minor sacrifices. A quarter of U.S. adults expect to make no sacrifices in their daily lives.

The share who expect to make *major* sacrifices is relatively modest: 23% think climate change impacts will require them to make this level of sacrifice in their own life.

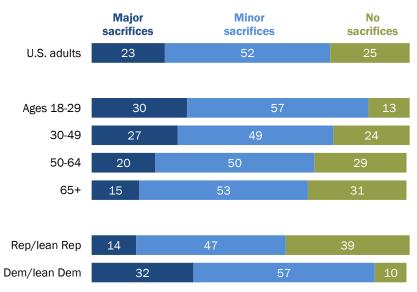
Younger Americans are more likely to foresee having to make sacrifices in their everyday lives.

Among those ages 18 to 29, 30% think they will need to make major sacrifices because of climate change, compared with 15% of those 65 and older.

Among Democrats, 89% think they'll have to make sacrifices in their own life because of climate change, including 32% who expect major sacrifices. Among Republicans, this

23% of Americans expect 'major sacrifices' in their own life because of climate change impacts

% who say that in their lifetime, they will have to make __ in their everyday life because of global climate change



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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sense is less widely held: 60% expect to make at least minor sacrifices, including just 14% who think they'll need to make major sacrifices. About 4-in-10 Republicans expect to make no sacrifices in their everyday life because of climate change.

Multiple actors – including large businesses and state officials – seen as doing too little on climate

About seven-in-ten Americans (69%) say large businesses and corporations are doing too little to help reduce the effects of climate change; 22% say they are doing about the right amount and only 8% say they are doing too much.

Majorities also view state elected officials (60%) and the energy industry (57%) as doing too little on climate.

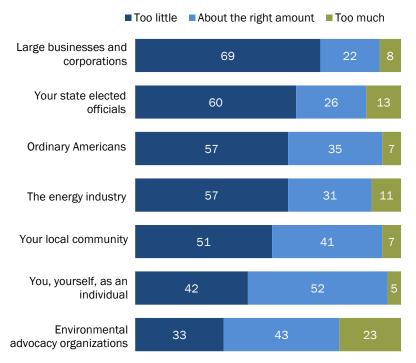
The public offers some critique of the efforts of "ordinary Americans" on climate: 57% say ordinary Americans are doing too little to reduce the effects of climate change.

Asked to consider their own role, 52% of Americans think they themselves are doing about the right amount on climate change. Of those who don't rate themselves this way, far more say they are doing too little on climate than too much (42% vs. 5%).

Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to say each of the groups included in the survey are doing too little

Majority of Americans say large businesses are doing too little to help reduce effects of climate change

% of U.S. adults who say each group is doing ___ to help reduce the effects of global climate change



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024. "How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue"

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to address climate change. For instance, 87% of Democrats say this about large businesses and corporations, compared with 51% of Republicans. For more details, refer to the Appendix.

Support for policies to address climate change

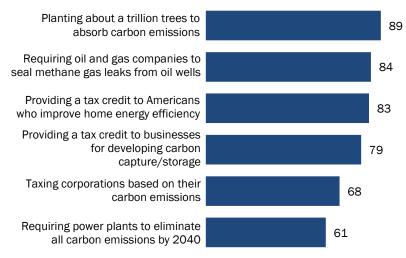
Majorities of Americans continue to support a number of proposals to address climate change.

In a finding similar to a Center survey in 2023, about nine-inten Americans (89%) favor planting about a trillion trees to absorb carbon emissions. This was a proposal supported by Donald Trump in his first presidential term.

Large majorities also favor requiring oil and gas companies to seal methane leaks from oil and wells (84%), a tax credit to Americans who improve home energy efficiency (83%), and a tax credit to businesses for developing carbon capture and storage technology (79%).

Most Americans favor a tax credit for carbon capture and storage technology

% of U.S. adults who say they **favor** the following proposals to reduce the effects of climate change



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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The Biden administration

recently introduced <u>a rule</u> requiring oil and gas companies to pay a fee if their methane emissions are above a certain level. This rule is highly likely to be rescinded in the new Trump administration.

Business tax credits for carbon capture is one climate proposal that has <u>received support from some congressional Republicans</u>.

Americans also are generally in favor of taxing corporations based on carbon emissions (68%) and requiring power plants to eliminate all carbon emissions by 2040 (61%) – though support is less widespread than for the other proposals included in the survey.

Large majorities of Democrats favor all proposals to address climate change included in the survey. Views among Republicans vary by the particular policy in question.

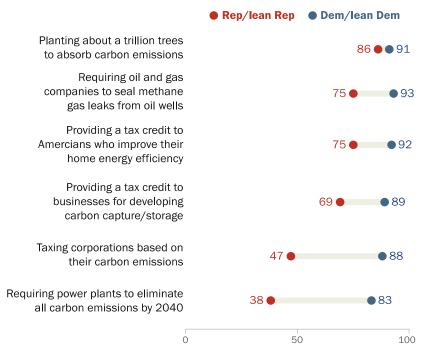
For example, three-quarters of Republicans favor providing a tax credit for improving home energy efficiency and requiring oil and gas companies to seal methane leaks from oil wells.

A slightly smaller share (69%) also favors a tax credit to businesses for developing carbon capture and storage technology.

But Republicans are less likely to favor taxing corporations based on their carbon emissions (47%) or requiring power plants to eliminate all carbon emissions by 2040 (38%).

Partisan differences in support for climate policies

% who say they $\textbf{\textit{favor}}$ the following proposals to reduce the effects of climate change



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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Top considerations for climate change policies

Asked broadly about what's important to them in climate policy, protecting the environment for future generations ranks at the top of the list for Americans. Economic factors – like keeping costs low – also register widely.

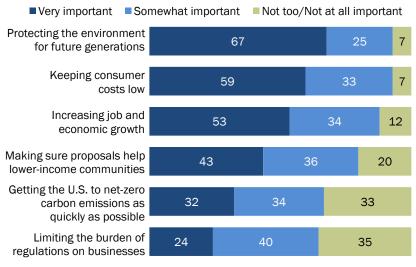
(67%) say protecting the environment for future generations is a very important consideration to them when thinking about climate proposals. Another 25% say this is somewhat important, and just 7% place little or no importance on this.

Two-thirds of U.S. adults

Economic considerations also rank highly. About sixin-ten (59%) say keeping consumer costs low is a very important consideration to them in climate policy, and 53% place the highest level of importance on increasing job and economic growth.

Protecting the environment, keeping consumer costs low among Americans' top priorities in climate policy

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following is ___ to them personally when thinking about proposals to reduce the effects of global climate change



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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Fewer say helping low-income

communities or getting the country to net-zero carbon emissions are very important climate policy considerations. Overall views on climate policy priorities have remained fairly stable over the past several years.

Republicans and Democrats express different priorities for climate policies

For Republicans, keeping consumer costs low is the top factor when thinking about climate-related proposals

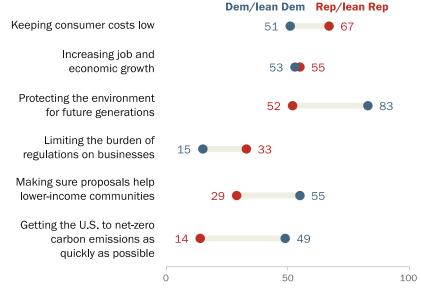
(67% call this very important to them personally). In addition, 55% say increasing job and economic growth is a very important consideration to them in climate proposals. About half of Republicans (52%) say protecting the environment for future generations is very important.

Among Democrats, protecting the environment for future generations is by far their top climate policy consideration: 83% say this is very important to them.

Slightly more than half of Democrats say making sure proposals help lower-income communities (55%) is a very

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to emphasize environmental protection in climate policy

% who say the each of the following is **very important** to them personally when thinking about proposals to reduce the effects of global climate change



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

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important consideration to them. Directing federal climate and energy funds to disadvantaged communities has been a <u>policy priority of the Biden administration</u>. (Just 29% of Republicans view this as very important.)

About half of Democrats place the highest level of importance on economic factors: 53% say increasing job and economic growth is a very important consideration to them in climate policy, and 51% say this about keeping consumer costs low.

While differences between Republicans and Democrats are evident in the shares who put the highest level of priority on these considerations, large majorities of both groups say protecting the

environment, keeping costs low and increasing economic growth are at least *somewhat* important considerations to them in climate policy. Go to the <u>Appendix</u> for more.

Impact of climate change policies on the economy and environment

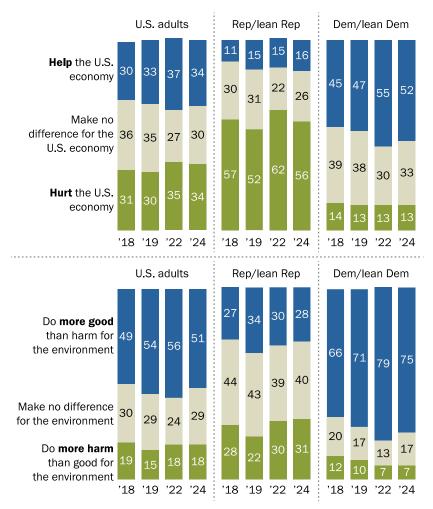
There's ongoing debate about whether climate change policies help or hurt the economy. About one-third (34%) of Americans say climate change policies help the U.S. economy, and an equal share say they hurt the economy. Three-in-ten Americans say these policies make no difference to the economy.

When it comes to environmental impact, 51% say climate policies do more good than harm for the environment, while 18% say they do more harm than good and 29% say they make no difference. Americans are slightly less likely to say climate policies do more good than harm for the environment today than in January 2022.

Consistent with past Center surveys, Republicans and Democrats are far apart in their views of how climate policies impact the economy and the environment.

How Americans view the economic and environmental impacts of climate policies

% who say policies aimed at reducing the effects of global climate change generally...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024. "How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue"

About half of Democrats (52%) say climate policies help the economy. By contrast, 56% of Republicans say climate policies hurt the economy. And while 75% of Democrats say climate policies do more environmental good than harm, just 28% of Republicans hold this view.

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pewresearch.org/science.

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 158 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center's nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted from Oct. 21 to 27, 2024. A total of 9,593 panelists responded out of 10,612 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 90%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 9,593 respondents is plus or minus 1.3 percentage points.

SSRS conducted the survey for Pew Research Center via online (n=9,320) and live telephone (n=273) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read "About the American Trends Panel."

Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population. Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request. Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an "oversample") to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling, 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

² Email pewsurveys@pewresearch.org.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. All active panel members were invited to participate in this wave.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Oct. 21-27, 2024. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

For panelists who take surveys online:³ Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on Oct. 21.⁴ Survey invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Oct. 21. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Oct. 22.

³ The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys.

⁴ Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents, ATP Wave 158

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	Oct. 21, 2024	Oct. 22, 2024
First reminder	Oct. 24, 2024	Oct. 24, 2024
Final reminder	Oct. 26, 2024	Oct. 26, 2024
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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer: Pre-notification postcards were mailed on Oct. 18. Soft launch took place on Oct. 21 and involved dialing until a total of seven interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, four ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed) Age x Gender Education x Gender Education x Age Race/Ethnicity x Education Race/Ethnicity x Gender	2022 American Community Survey (ACS)
Black (alone or in combination) x Hispanic Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans Years lived in the U.S. Census region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2021 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2020 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Frequency of internet use Religious affiliation Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity Party affiliation among registered voters	2024 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and mar	gins of error,	ATP Wave 158	
Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus	
Total sample	9,593	1.3 percentage points	
Form 1	4,785	1.9 percentage points	
Form 2	4,808	1.9 percentage points	
Rep/lean Rep	4.440	1.9 percentage points	
Dem/lean Dem	4,952	1.9 percentage points	

Note: Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. Read the Sample design and Weighting sections for more details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	9,593
Logged in (web) / Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	194
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	64
Never logged on (web) / Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	757
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other noninterview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	4
Total panelists sampled for the survey	•	10,612
Completed interviews	l	9,593
Partial interviews	Р	0
Refusals	R	258
Noncontact	NC	757
Other	0	4
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		10,612
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		90%

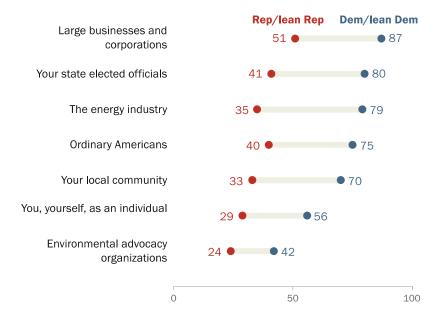
Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 158	
	Tota
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	11%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	73%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 158	35%
Response rate to Wave 158 survey	90%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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Appendix: Detailed charts and tables

Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to say these actors are doing too little on climate change

% who say each group is doing **too little** to help reduce the effects of global climate change

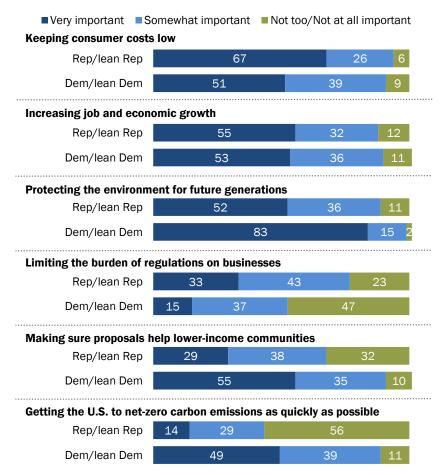


Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

[&]quot;How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue"

Republican and Democratic views on considerations for climate change proposals

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following is ___ to them personally when thinking about proposals to reduce the effects of climate change



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.

"How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue"