◫ DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

TO: Progressives and
the Fossil Fuel Lobby

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POLLING THE **GREEN NEW DEAL**

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW:

Preliminary evidence shows that the concept of a Green New Deal is popular, but critics have raised objections that support may collapse when the proposal is subjected to partisan competition and voters are faced with tradeoffs. Are they right?

WHAT WE DID:

To test the viability of a Green New Deal after it faces conservative opposition, we offered respondents counter-arguments, partisan framing and explicit pay-fors of different amounts included in the question. By randomly varying the cost of the pay-for between participants, we are able to determine how strongly support for policies varies at different cost levels.

Our findings should be heartening for progressives: even with counter-arguments, partisan framing and expensive revenue pay-fors, most parts of the Green New Deal, even some of its most ambitious elements, have net support among likely voters.

WHAT WE FOUND:

▶ Out of the eleven policies surveyed, eight have net positive support with an unstated pay-for, five have net support with a low pay-for and four with a high pay-for.

▶ The most popular policies are improving drinking water infrastructure (36 percent net support), reforesting land (25 percent net support), job training and insurance for displaced workers (18 percent net support) and a green jobs guarantee (9 percent net support).

▶ The least popular policies are requiring all cars to be electric by 2030 (-15 percent net support), requiring that fossil fuels stop production by 2035 (-3 percent net support) and affordable housing subsidies (-1 percent net support).

ANALYSIS:

The Green New Deal has risen from being an obscure progressive pipe dream to an emerging pillar of the Democratic platform in just a few months. After being championed by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a recent Green New Deal resolution from Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Markey has nearly seventy House co-sponsors and nearly a dozen Senate co-sponsors, including most Democratic Presidential candidates.

Data for Progress published an early blueprint in September 2018, and Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Edward Markey recently introduced a resolution laying out the goals and projects of a Green New Deal. There is broad agreement that a successful Green New Deal would combine aggressive mobilization to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions with economic and racial justice for communities affected by climate change.

To help answer the question of which planks of a Green New Deal politicians should use to drive messaging, Data for Progress commissioned research from Civis Analytics, who surveyed 3,496 likely voters between January 4th and January 26th, 2019 on a slate of the commonly proposed policies. We tested the centrist idea that a Green New Deal would suffer when voters know the price tag, and we find that nearly every component is still popular with an explicit pay-for. In order to test how sensitive the public is to the Green New Deal's price tag, we randomly varied the amount we told respondents the plan would cost, while holding all other aspects of the question wording constant. We also explicitly note that the Green New Deal is being proposed by Democrats and provide conservative arguments against the Green New Deal.

The chart below shows net support for each policy component.

NET SUPPORT
GREEN NEW DEAL POLICIES
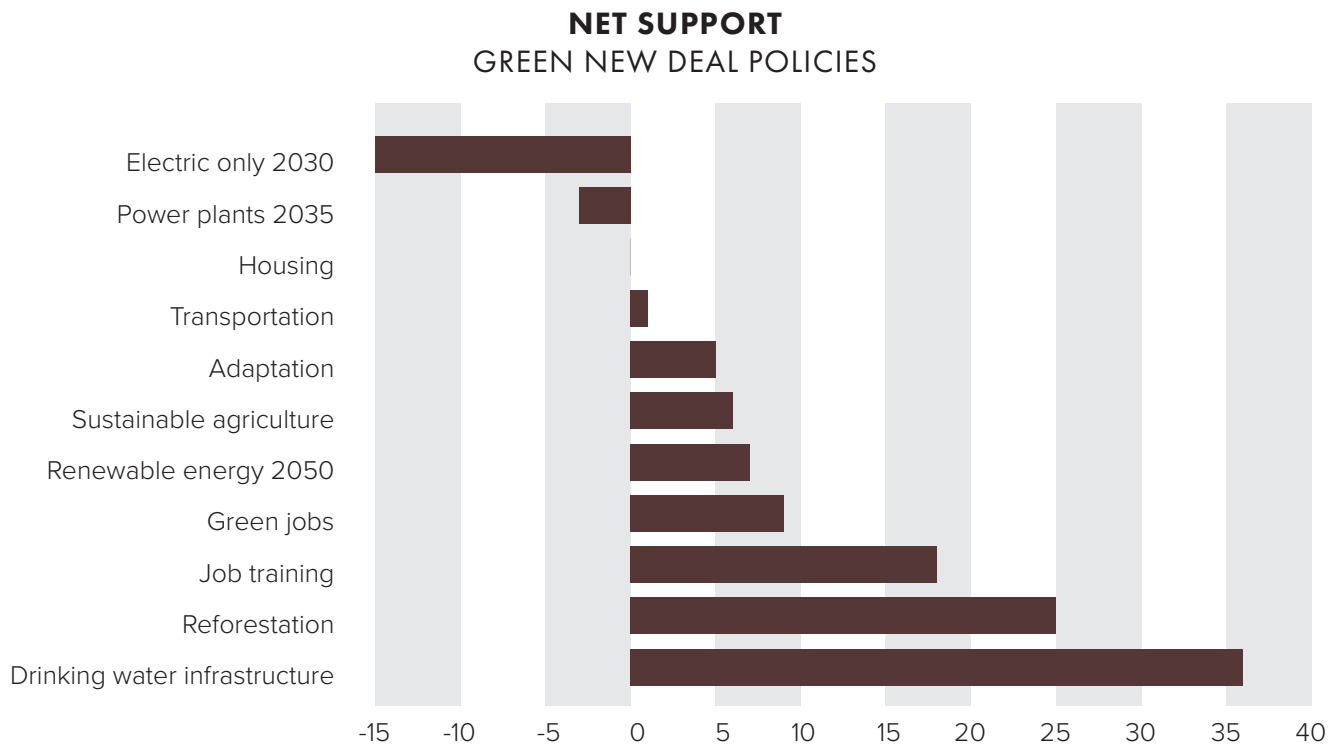
*Net Support by Policy with
Unstated Pay-For*

We find that many of the policies contained within a Green New Deal are supported by the general public even when including a pay-for. On average including a pay-for compared with no pay-for leads to a drop of net support for a given policy by 7 percentage points. Once a pay-for has been added, however, support is relatively inelastic -- changing from a low to high pay-for only leads to an average drop of 4 percent in net support.

We do not find substantial differences in net approval by pay-for levels among demographic groups. The average drop in support for Green New Deal policies fall by similar levels from unstated to high pay-fors remains relatively stable.

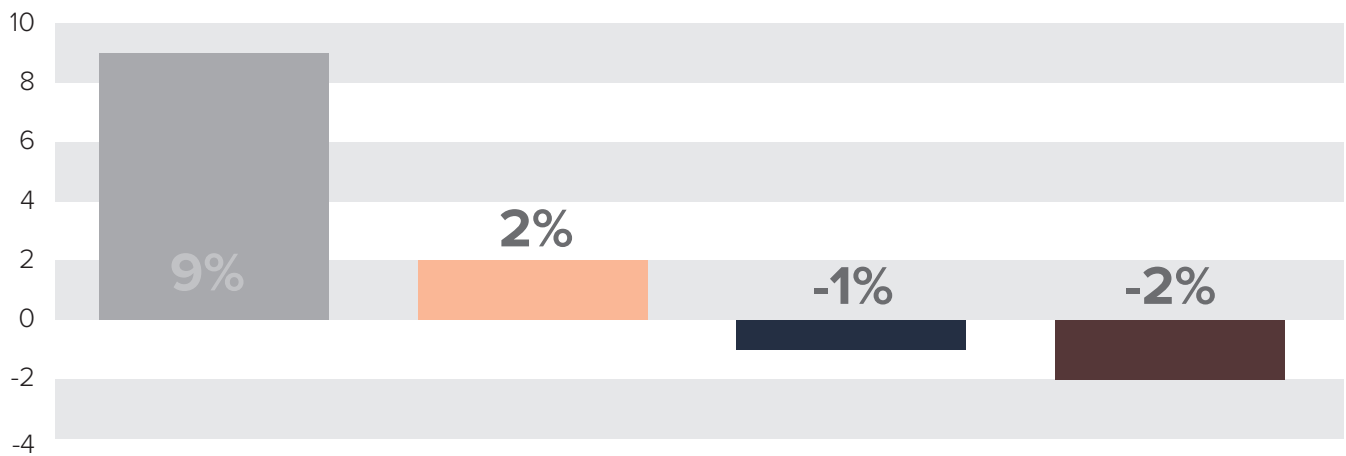## NET SUPPORT ACROSS PAY-FOR LEVEL BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP

DEMOGRAPHIC	GROUP	UNSTATED	HIGH	SUPPORT DROP
Gender	Male	5.0 percent	-3.2 percent	-8.2 percent
	Female	5.2 percent	-2.4 percent	-7.6 percent
Age	18-34	4.7 percent	-2.4 percent	-7.1 percent
	35-49	5.0 percent	-3.1 percent	-8.1 percent
	50-64	5.4 percent	-3.3 percent	-8.7 percent
	65+	5.4 percent	-3.3 percent	-8.7 percent
Race	Black	4.6 percent	-3.4 percent	-8.0 percent
	Hispanic	5.3 percent	-3.2 percent	-8.5 percent
	Other	3.4 percent	-3.2 percent	-6.6 percent
	White	5.7 percent	-2.5 percent	-8.2 percent

POLICY DEEP DIVES:

GREEN JOBS NET SUPPORT BY RACE

35			
30			
25			
20			
15			
10			
5			
0			
1% White	**33%** Black	**15%** Hispanic	**15%** Asian
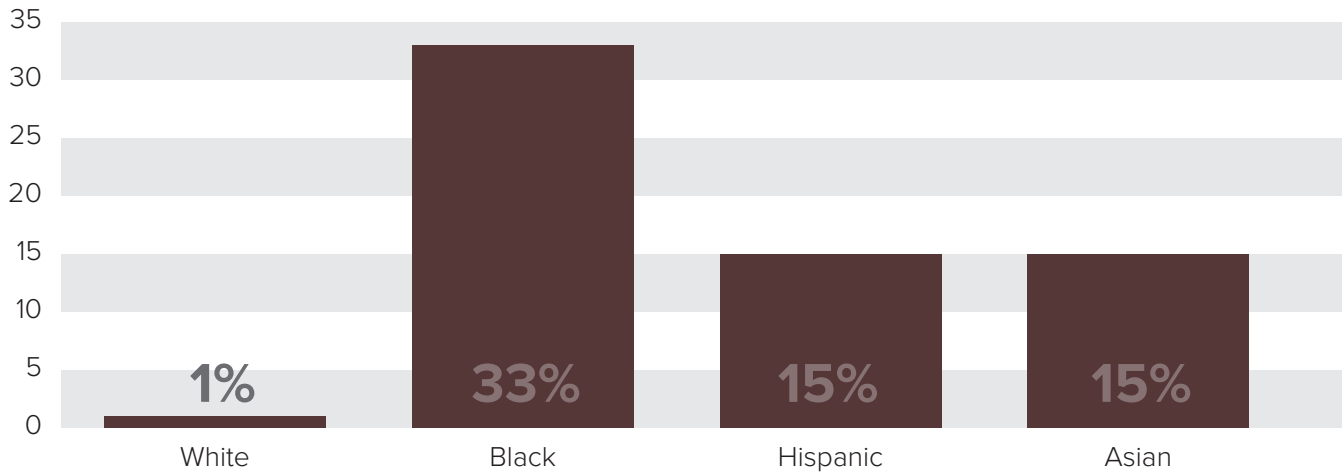
GREEN JOBS NET SUPPORT BY PAY-FOR LEVEL

9% **2%** **-1%** **-2%**

PAY-FOR LEVELS:

Low | $100 Billion   **Medium** | $500 Billion   **High** | $1 Trillion
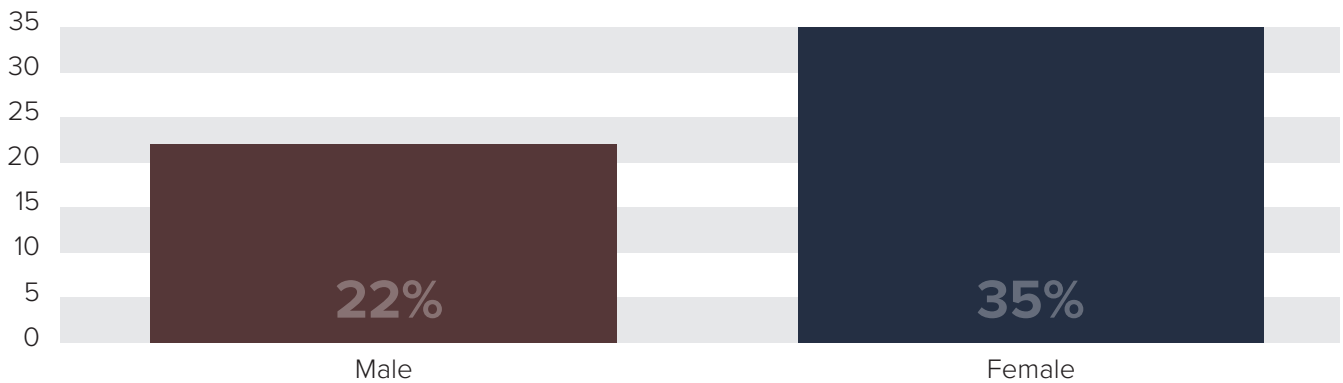
Analysis: **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

A green job guarantee, which pays a living wage to do the work required to transition to a sustainable economy, is one of the most common elements included in Green New Deal proposals. We find that there is 9 percent net support for a green job guarantee with no included pay-for. There is a drop-off once a monetary figure is included, but increasing the spend amount by an order of magnitude from $100 billion to $1 trillion only results in a relatively modest 4 percent drop in net approval.

There is a clear preference among voters of color for a Green Job guarantee, with each polled non-white demographic supporting the policy by double digits. While this isn't surprising given party breakdown between white / non-white groups it helps emphasize the importance of the Green New Deal as not just a policy for hitting climate targets but also centering racial and economic justice.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NET SUPPORT BY GENDER

Male	22%
Female	35%

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NET SUPPORT BY PAY-FOR LEVEL

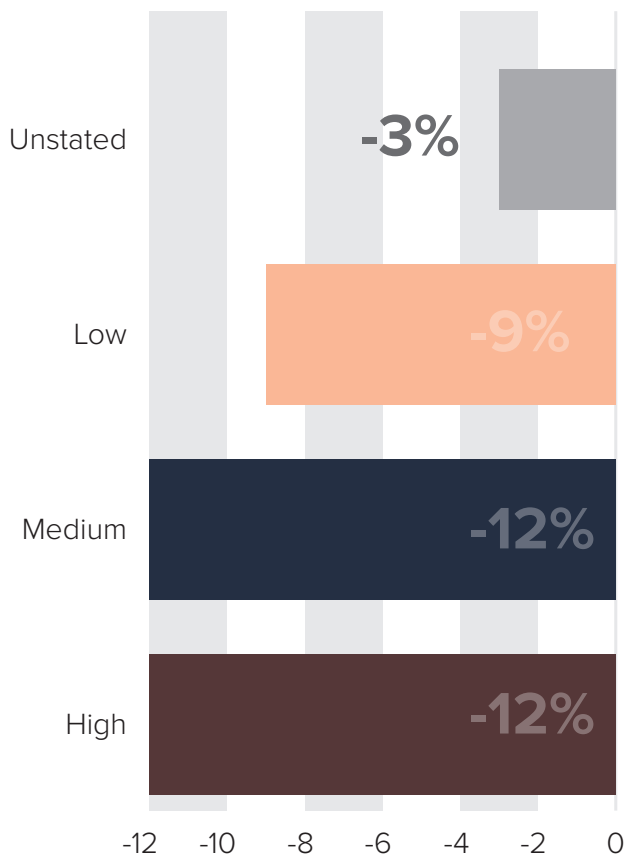| Unstated	Low	Medium	High
36%	27%	23%	22%
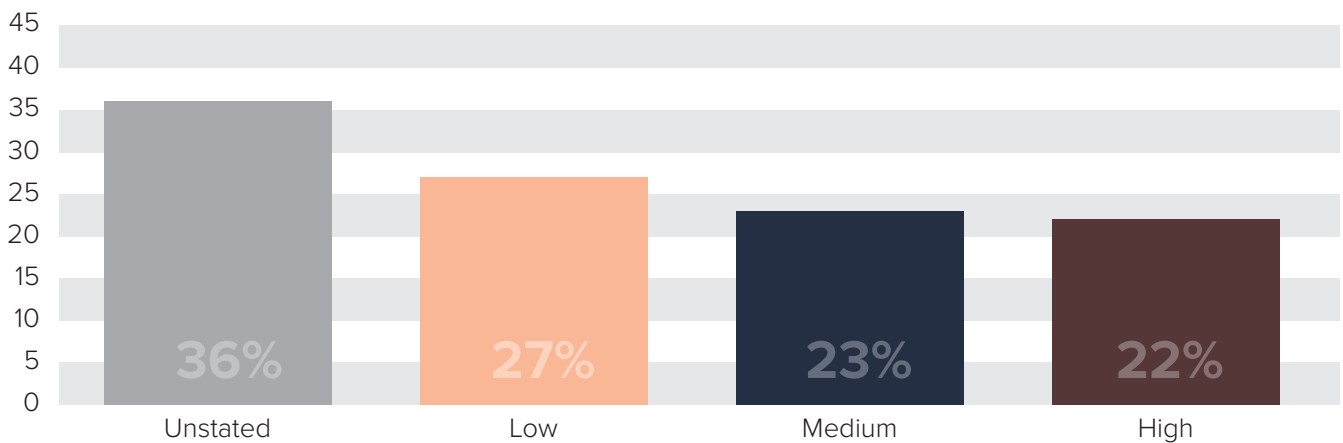
PAY-FOR LEVELS:

Low | $125 Billion   **Medium** | $37.5 Billion   **High** | $50 Billion

Analysis: **POWER PLANT CLOSURE**

Amidst the ongoing water crisis in Flint, there is increasing awareness of the need to upgrade critical drinking water infrastructure, particularly in light of the stresses which climate change will put on an already fragile system. A plan to fix the nation's water systems, as a part of the Green New Deal, has broad public support, with 36 percent net support at an unstated pay-for and 22 percent at the highest pay-for level. This suggest that tying water infrastructure improvements to a Green New Deal may expand the base of support.
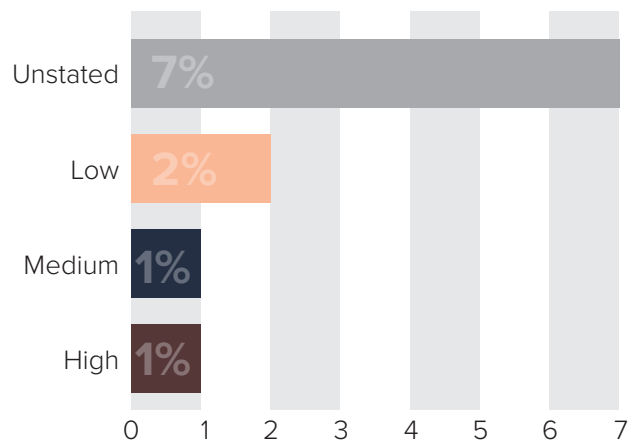
Analysis: **RENEWABLES 2050**

Republicans have successfully activated partisan framing around coal and other power plant closing through tactics such as labelling President Obama's environmental policies a "war on coal." These tactics have proven successful, with net negative support found at every level for this policy. With a small variance between the low and high pay-fors, it would appear that this disapproval is driven more by a dislike of the ramifications of shutting down the plant than the price.

POWER PLANT CLOSURE
NET SUPPORT BY PAY-FOR LEVEL

Unstated **-3%**
Low **-9%**
Medium **-12%**
High **-12%**

-12   -10   -8   -6   -4   -2   0

RENEWABLES 2050
NET SUPPORT BY AGE

18-34 **15%**
35-64 **0%**
65+ **-11%**

-12 -9 -6 -3 0 3 6 9 12 15

RENEWABLES 2050
NET SUPPORT BY PAY-FOR LEVEL

Unstated **7%**
Low **2%**
Medium **1%**
High **1%**

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
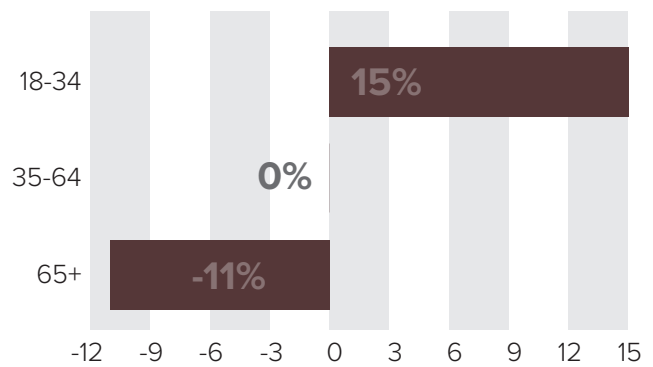
PAY-FOR LEVELS:

Low | $5 Billion   **Medium** | $10 Billion   **High** | $15 Billion

PAY-FOR LEVELS:

Low | $25 Billion   **Medium** | $37.5 Billion   **High** | $50 Billion

Analysis:

Requiring that all energy produced in the country be from renewable sources by 2050 has net support across all pay-for levels. Switching to renewable energy is a core part of every Green New Deal proposal, so it is beneficial that it enjoys broad popularity.

Hitting renewable energy targets is most supported by the people who will have to live with climate change if it is not addressed. The only age demographic against hitting these targets are voters age 65+, among whom climate change is a less pressing concern for obvious reasons. Pursuing a strong Green New Deal looks to be a winning strategy for candidates who hope to energize the younger voters that overwhelmingly prefer Democrats.

CONCLUSION

The Green New Deal has proven remarkably contagious as a concept and is certain to become an important discussion point in the 2020 elections. When drafting messaging and planning concrete policy proposal, lawmakers can must balance realistic policy goals and ambitious messaging. For the Green New Deal to achieve its ambitious environmental and socio-economic it must prove a political boon to Democrats in 2020.

The data contained within this memo lays out a blueprint for this. Messaging centered around green jobs, renewable energy and improving critical infrastructure such as water systems are Green New Deal proposals that appeal to voters.

When discussing the Green New Deal, the policies are indeed more popular without explicit cost framing, but once monetary concerns have been introduced there is relatively low variance in support across different spend levels. This suggests that there is little political value in an incremental Green New Deal: a green jobs guarantee has similar levels of support when voters are told it will cost $100 billion as it does when it costs $1 trillion. A cynic may interpret this result as voters being insensitive to big differences between big numbers, but it could also be the case that citizens who are willing to pay for a Green New Deal are willing to pay quite a bit for it; it's less expensive than a climate catastrophe either way.

The available data suggests that the lawmakers who will most benefit from Green New Deal framing are those who display a strong, holistic vision for the Green New Deal -- one which combines the very real desire Americans have to see climate change addressed with social and racial justice.

APPENDIX:

Item: **Green Jobs** ———————————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing bill which would guarantee an environmentally friendly job to every American adult, with the government providing jobs for people who can't find employment in the private sector. All jobs would pay at least $15 an hour, include healthcare benefits, and collective bargaining rights.

Democrats say this would improve the economy by giving people jobs, by financing better public services and infrastructure, and by making sure people can find a job when times are tough.

Republicans say this would increase the national debt, endanger the long term health of our economy, and this policy will end up paying people who can't contribute in the job market to perform pointless busy work.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Reforestation** ———————————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing reforest 40 million acres of public and private forests and 5 million acres of wetlands.

Democrats say that this would help stop climate change and create scenic wilderness for all Americans to enjoy.

Republicans say this is a waste of taxpayer money, and will burden future generations with debt.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Job Training** ———————————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing a bill which would provide job training and unemployment insurance to anyone who loses a job due to the closure of fossil fuel power plants or extraction.

Democrats say this would allow everyone to transition to a new green economy. It would make sure that everyone in America continues to have a good meaningful job and can support their families.

Republicans say instead of a bandaid and forcing people out of their current jobs, we should keep fossil fuel plants humming and supporting the American economy.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Power Plants** ————————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing requiring that all fossil fuel plants (coal, natural gas, and oil) cease operating by 2035.

Democrats say this would help stop climate change, and would allow new renewable energy plants to take their place.

Republicans say this would put many Americans out of work, and could lead to an energy crisis as energy prices soar.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Transportation** ————————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing funding local mass transportation across the country.

Democrats say this will make community less burdensome, improve livability, and spur growth.

Republicans say that much of this funding will end up wasted and that the debt would burden future generations.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Renewable Energy 2050** ————————————————

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing requiring that all energy Americans use be from renewable sources by 2050.

Democrats say this would help stop climate change, would kickstart the renewable energy sector, creating jobs for many Americans and ensuring that America leads the world in green technology.

Republicans say this would take away freedom from American consumers, put people out of work, and raise prices for everything from transportation to consumer goods.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Electric Only**

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing requiring that all new cars sold be electric by 2030.

Democrats say this would help stop climate change, save thousands of lives by reducing pollution, and make the US the definitive leader in the electric care industry.

Republicans say this would take away freedom from American consumers, put people making cars out of work, and make new cars unaffordable for the average American.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Sustainable Agriculture**

"Democrats in congress are proposing a bill which would subsidize environmentally friendly agriculture processes. including no till-farming and organic farming. The bill would also limit the amount of petroleum fertilizer farmers could utilize.

Democrats say this would lead to sustainable agriculture that can feed the country while also protecting the environment.

Republicans say these burdensome regulations will raise the price of food and hurt farmers.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Adaptation**

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing creating a national adaptation fund to improve communities' ability to adapt and cope with extreme weather.

Democrats say that this would save lives and keep infrastructure intact during natural disasters.

Republicans say this is a waste of taxpayer money, and will burden future generations with debt.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Housing**

"Some Democrats in congress are proposing in congress are proposing a housing packages that would involve construction and subsidies for affordable housing. Additionally, this would require that urban and suburban communities remove height and single family home restricts restrictions and create density targets for 2040.

Democrats say this will lead to more housing and cheaper rent where it's needed most. Additionally, they claim greater density will help reduce pollution and fight climate change.

Republicans say that increasing the density of neighborhoods will lead to more crime and poorer quality schools. They also claim that such a large increase in the deficit will be a substantial burden on future generations.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"

Item: **Drinking Water**

"Democrats in congress are proposing a bill which would improve the nation's drinking water infrastructure and replace lead pipes.

Democrats say this would allow everyone to have safe, clean drinking water while avoiding disasters like the lead poisoning in Flint, Michigan.

Republicans say that our drinking infrastructure is in good shape already, and this represents a wasteful use of resources that will burden our children with debt.

Do you support or oppose this policy?"