

TO: Clean Energy Works
FROM: Joel Benenson, Amy Levin
DATE: September 15, 2009
RE: Youth Poll Results

Methodology

The Benenson Strategy Group conducted 601 interviews nationwide with registered voters age 18-29 who are likely to vote in the 2010 U.S. Congressional elections.

All interviews were conducted between August 25-29, 2009 by telephone, using a sample of registered voters.

The total data set has a margin of error of $\pm 4.00\%$ at the 95% confidence level, and it is larger among subgroups.

Key Findings

Environmental and Energy Issues Critical To Youth Voters

- Younger voters strongly believe that energy independence and environmental issues are critical priorities for their leaders to address.
 - After education, investing in renewable energy and protecting our environment emerge as the most important issues for youth when deciding whether or not to re-elect their Senator.
 - Similarly, 68% say "investing in renewable energy to create new jobs" should be an important priority for their Senator to address and 63% say "reducing America's dependence on foreign oil" should be (both 6+7 on 7-point scale).
- They acutely feel that the consequences of inaction in Washington will harm their generation – with 81% agreeing that "younger generations are the ones that will suffer the consequences if Congress doesn't act on global warming and invest in clean energy now."
- Also, after the critical role they played in 2008, younger voters are demanding a voice in this debate, with 84% agreeing that "young voters had a huge role in electing President Obama in the '08 election, so their voice on clean energy issues deserves to be heard now."

Issue Priorities for Senators/ Impact on Vote

	Important Priority*	Important To Vote**
Improving public <u>schools</u> .	78	94
Investing in <u>renewable energy</u> to create new <u>jobs</u> .	68	90
Protecting our <u>environment</u> .	60	87
Reducing America's <u>dependence on foreign oil</u> .	63	86
Reforming <u>health care</u> to lower costs for every American.	59	83
Reducing pollution that causes <u>global warming</u> .	52	78
Cutting <u>taxes</u> .	40	73

- *Important priority for Senator to address (6+7 on a 7-point scale)
- **Important issue when deciding whether or not to re-elect Senator (very + somewhat)

Youth Voters Determined to See Washington Act on Environment and Energy Independence Issues

- Youth voters show intense and widespread support for the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), with 75% saying they support the bill and only 14% opposing it.
- Support for this bill largely transcends party lines:
 - Democrats: 87% support/3% oppose
 - Independents: 76% support/14% oppose
 - Republicans: 58% support/30% oppose
- A Senator's vote on ACES could be a meaningful factor for young voters when deciding whether to re-elect their Senator. About two-thirds will reward Senators who vote in favor of the bill and make Senators pay for a "no" vote.
 - 69% say they would be more likely to re-elect their Senator if he or she votes *for* the bill (just 19% would be less likely to re-elect).
 - 65% say they would be less likely to re-elect a Senator who votes *against* it (just 22% would be more likely).
- Independent and even Republican voters would punish a "no" vote:
 - 75% of Democrats would be less likely to re-elect a Senator who voted against the bill.
 - 66% of Independents would be less likely to re-elect.
 - 48% of Republicans would be less likely to re-elect.
- These voters are vehement about holding their Senators accountable for campaign promises they made to support Obama's plan to pass clean energy legislation, with 89% agreeing that "if a U.S. Senator promised in last year's election to support President Obama's plan to pass clean energy laws that create jobs and address climate change, he or she should be held to that promise now."

- Youth also show intense favorability towards the key players on the pro-ACES side. Conversely, they are intensely unfavorable to oil and coal – more so, even, than they are to health insurance companies.
 - Alternative or renewable energy companies: 83% favorable/8% unfavorable
 - Environmental groups: 73% favorable/20% unfavorable
 - Barack Obama: 68% favorable/29% unfavorable

 - Oil companies: 30% favorable/63% unfavorable
 - Coal companies: 37% favorable/40% unfavorable
 - (By comparison: health insurance companies are 43% favorable/50% unfavorable)