

Report 24-21



# CLIMATE INSIGHTS 2024

## Partisan Views

Jon A. Krosnick and Bo MacInnis



## About the Authors

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## About RFF

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Resources for the Future (RFF) is an independent, nonprofit research institution in Washington, DC. Its mission is to improve environmental, energy, and natural resource decisions through impartial economic research and policy engagement.

RFF is committed to being the most widely trusted source of research insights and policy solutions leading to a healthy environment and a thriving economy. The views expressed here are those of the individual authors and may differ from those of other RFF experts, its officers, or its directors.

## About the Project

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Since 1997, Stanford University Professor Jon A. Krosnick has explored American public opinion on these issues through a series of rigorous national surveys of random samples of American adults, often in collaboration with RFF. This latest report is the third in the 2024 Climate Insights report series by researchers at Stanford University and RFF examining American public opinion on issues related to climate change.

For the 2024 iteration of the Climate Insights survey, 1,000 American adults were interviewed during the 130-day period from October 16, 2023, to February 23, 2024.

This Climate Insights report focuses on areas of partisan agreement and disagreement in climate change beliefs and American climate policy. This series is accompanied by an interactive data tool, which can be used to view specific data from the survey. Please visit <https://www.rff.org/climateinsights> or <https://climatepublicopinion.stanford.edu/> for more information and to access the data tool, report series, and more.

Note: When this research program began in 1997, “global warming” was the term in common parlance. That term was used throughout the surveys over the decades and was always defined for respondents so it was properly understood. The term “climate change” has risen in popularity, so both terms are used in this report interchangeably. When describing survey question wordings and results, the term “global warming” is used, to match the term referenced during interviews. Empirical studies have shown that survey respondents interpret the terms “global warming” and “climate change” to have equivalent meanings (Villar and Krosnick 2011).

## Acknowledgments

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## Contents

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|                                                     |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                 | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Partisans' Views on Global Warming in 2024</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Mitigation Policies</b>                          | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Economic Consequences of Mitigation</b>          | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Trends in the partisan gap from 1997 to 2024</b> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Conclusion</b>                                   | <b>22</b> |
| <b>References</b>                                   | <b>25</b> |

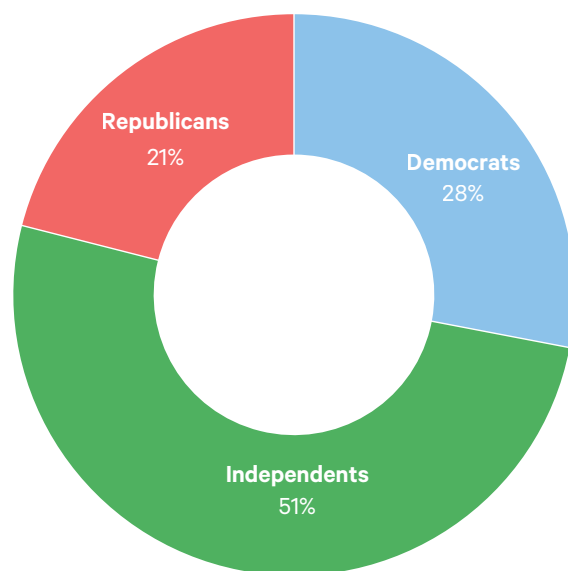
## Introduction

In *Climate Insights 2024: Americans Understanding of Climate Change*, we showed that huge majorities of Americans believe that the earth has been warming; that this warming is due to human activity; and that governments, businesses, and individuals should take steps to address it. In *Climate Insights 2024: American Climate Policy Opinions*, we described how large majorities of Americans favor various policies for mitigating future global warming. Yet, these mitigation policies cannot be achieved without many Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agreeing.

In this report, we assess the degree to which Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agree on various aspects of climate change and climate change policy in 2024. We then use data from prior surveys in our series to track changes in the partisan gap over the past two decades.

In recent years, American partisans have been contemptuous of their opponents. According to a national survey conducted by Gallup in 2023, many more Democrats than Republicans held an unfavorable view of the Republican Party (93 percent vs. 13 percent). Likewise, many more Republicans than Democrats viewed the Democratic Party unfavorably (95 percent vs. 7 percent) (Saad 2023).

**Figure 1. Party breakdown of survey respondents**



A methodological note: We separated Republican, Democratic, and Independent respondents based on their answers to a question asking how they usually think of themselves. The percentages of those three groups in our 2024 survey (21 percent, 28 percent, and 51 percent, respectively) resemble the percentages measured by Gallup during this survey's interview window (28 percent, 30 percent, and 42 percent, respectively, in February 2024).

## Partisans' Views on Global Warming in 2024

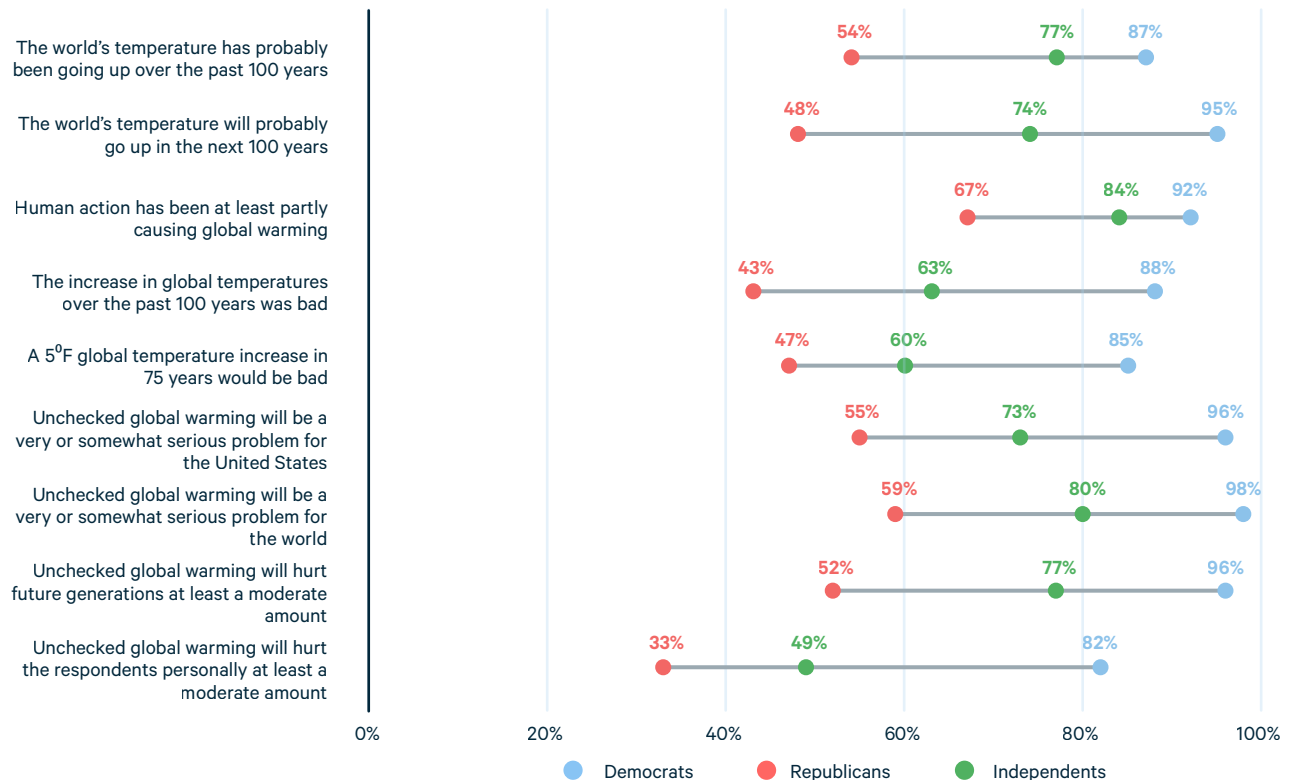
### Fundamental opinions

For five of nine survey questions gauging fundamental opinions regarding global warming, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans hold “green” opinions in 2024.

87 percent of Democrats believe global warming has been happening, as do 77 percent of Independents and 54 percent of Republicans (see Figure 2). 92 percent of Democrats, 84 percent of Independents, and 67 percent of Republicans believe that human action has been at least partly responsible for causing it.

Majorities of Democrats and of Republicans agree about the likely effects of global warming—96 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of Independents, and 55 percent of Republicans believe that global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the United States if nothing is done to address it. Similarly sized majorities (98 percent of Democrats, 80 percent of Independents, and 59 percent of Republicans) believe that unchecked global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the world. 96 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Independents, and 52 percent of Republicans believe that unchecked global warming will hurt future generations at least a moderate amount. 82 percent of Democrats, 49 percent of Independents, and 33 percent of Republicans believe that unchecked global warming will hurt the respondents personally at least a moderate amount.

**Figure 2. Party breakdown of beliefs about global warming and its effects**



Likewise, huge majorities of Democrats (96 percent) and Independents (77 percent) and even a majority of Republicans (52 percent) believe that unchecked global warming will hurt future generations a moderate amount or more.

The majority of partisans diverge from one another on whether specific temperature changes have been or will be bad. Whereas 88 percent of Democrats believe that the warming that has happened over the past 100 years was bad and 63 percent of Independents believe this, only 43 percent of Republicans agree with that assessment. And whereas 85 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of Independents believe that a 5-degree Fahrenheit increase in world temperature over the next 75 years would be bad, only 47 percent of Republicans hold that view.

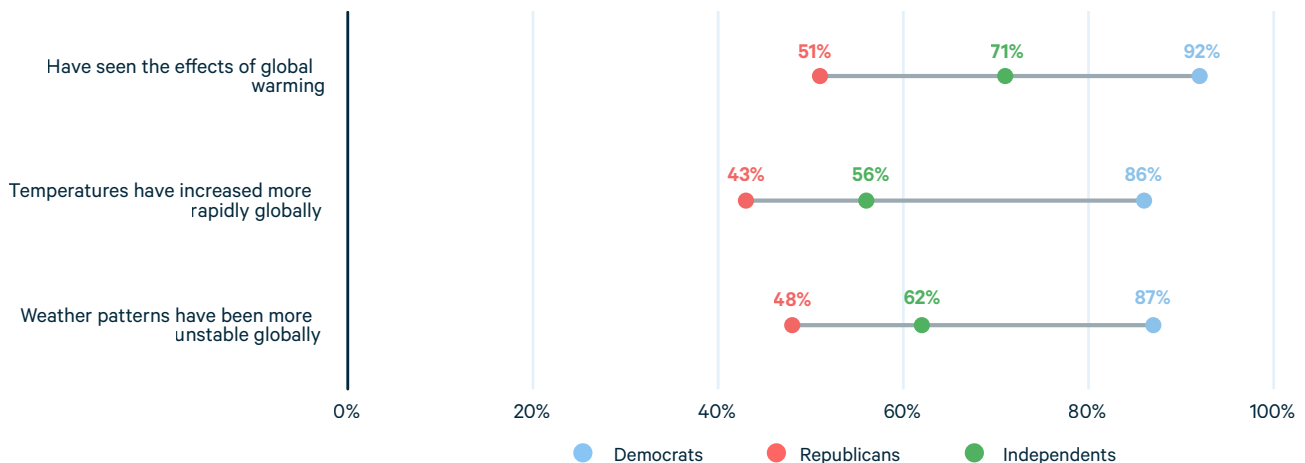
Although 82 percent of Democrats believe that unchecked global warming will hurt them personally at least a moderate amount, that figure is only 49 percent among Independents and 33 percent among Republicans.

Majorities of Democrats (92 percent), Independents (71 percent), and Republicans (51 percent) believe that they have seen effects of global warming (see Figure 3).

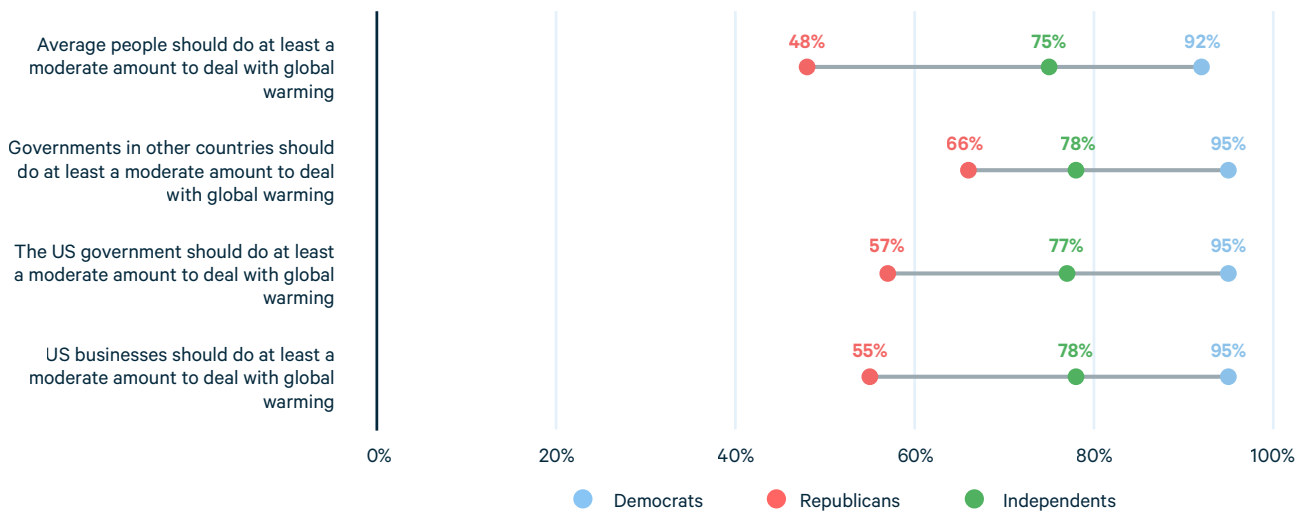
Majorities of Democrats (87 percent) and Independents (62 percent) believe that, during the last three years, global weather patterns have been more unstable, and 86 percent and 56 percent of these groups, respectively, believe that global temperatures have been higher during those years than before. But only a minority of Republicans hold these views: 48 percent and 43 percent, respectively.

Majorities of Democrats and Republicans endorse US government action to deal with global warming. 95 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Independents, and 57 percent of Republicans want the federal government to do at least a moderate amount to deal with global warming (see Figure 4). Similarly sized majorities believe US businesses (95 percent, 78 percent, and 55 percent of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, respectively) and the governments of other countries (92 percent, 78 percent, and 66 percent, respectively) should do at least a moderate amount to deal with global warming.

**Figure 3. Party breakdown of beliefs about effects of global warming**



**Figure 4. Party breakdown of beliefs about action to deal with global warming**

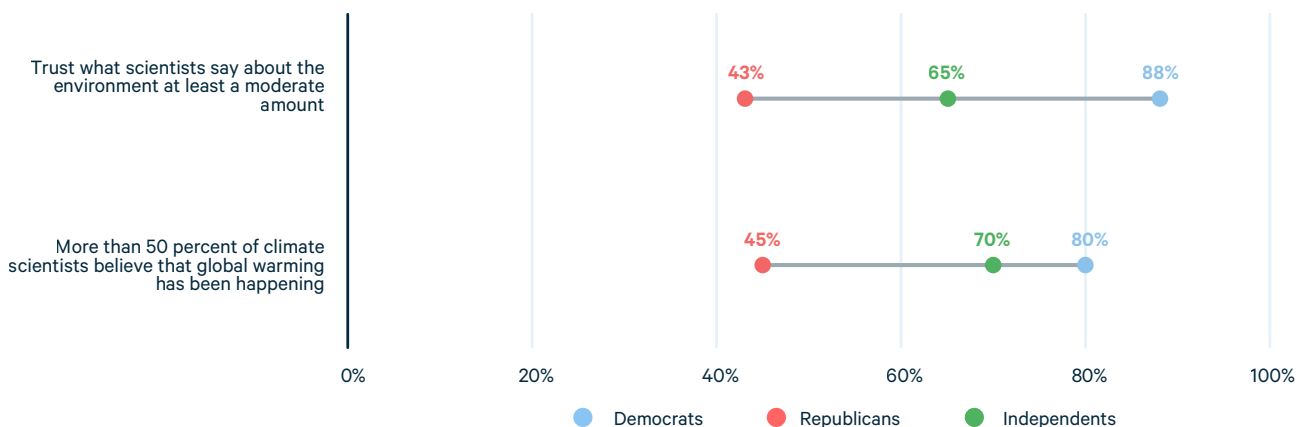


And large majorities of Democrats and of Independents (92 percent, and 75 percent, respectively) , want average people to do at least a moderate amount to deal with global warming, only a minority of (48 percent) Republicans hold this view.

The majority of partisans diverge from one another on their trust in scientists and perception of scientific consensus on climate change. Whereas 88 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of Independents, trust climate scientists at least a moderate amount, only 43 percent of Republicans believe so (see Figure 5). Likewise, 80 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of Independents, believe that a majority of climate scientists agree that global warming has been happening, but that figure is 45 percent for Republicans.

Partisans also diverge on what psychologists call “attitude strength” (Petty and Krosnick 1995). Among Democrats, 84 percent are extremely or very sure of their opinions that the earth has been warming over the past 100 years (see Figure 6). This

**Figure 5. Party breakdown of trust in scientists**



percentage is 63 percent among Independents and 36 percent among Republicans. Thus, although more Republicans than Democrats are doubtful about past warming, Republicans have low confidence in their views on this matter.

79 percent of Democrats expressed high certainty that the world's temperature will go up over the next 100 years if nothing is done to address it, compared to 66 percent of Independents, and 42 percent of Republicans.

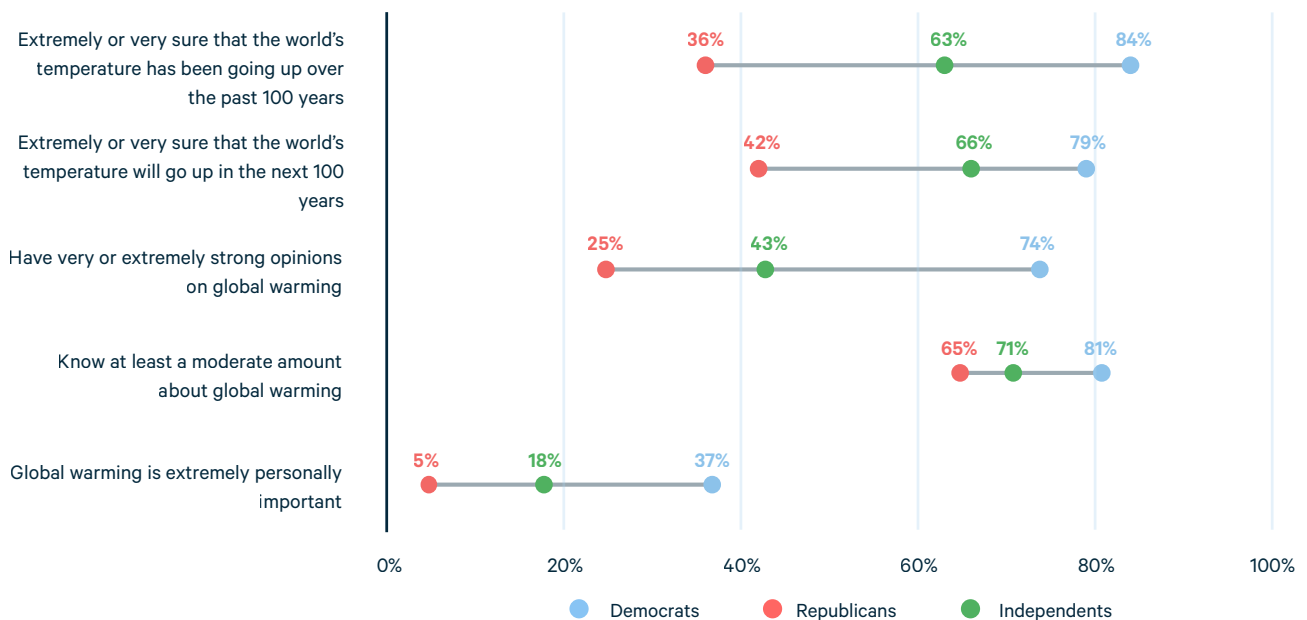
74 percent of Democrats said that their opinions about global warming are extremely or very strong, compared to 43 percent of Independents and 25 percent of Republicans. Again, Republicans hold their views with less strength.

Partisans are more similar when it comes to how much they believe they know about global warming—81 percent of Democrats, 71 percent of Independents, and 65 percent of Republicans believe they know at least a moderate amount about the issue.

It's important to note members of the issue public are unequally present among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. An issue public is a group of people who are passionate about a particular policy issue. These people think and talk a lot about it and vote based on the issue.

The issue of global warming is extremely important to 37 percent of Democrats, 18 percent of Independents, and 5 percent of Republicans. Thus, when politicians or candidates talk about this issue, Democrats and Independents are more attentive than Republicans to those comments and use them more in decisionmaking.

**Figure 6. Party breakdown of opinion strength**



A photograph of the White House in Washington, D.C., taken from a low angle looking up at the portico. The building's white columns and pediment are prominent against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are green bushes and a black metal fence.

**Majorities of Democrats,  
Republicans, and  
Independents want the  
federal government to  
do at least a moderate  
amount to deal with  
global warming.**

## Mitigation Policies

In general, Republicans tend to oppose government regulations and government involvement in the economy and the business sector. Democrats tend to be more open to government regulation and government interventions in the economy. Therefore, one might expect that Republicans would be especially likely to oppose emissions reduction policies, whereas Democrats would be especially likely to favor these policies. Although this is true for many policies in the climate arena, we do see agreement between majorities of Republicans and Democrats regarding some policies.

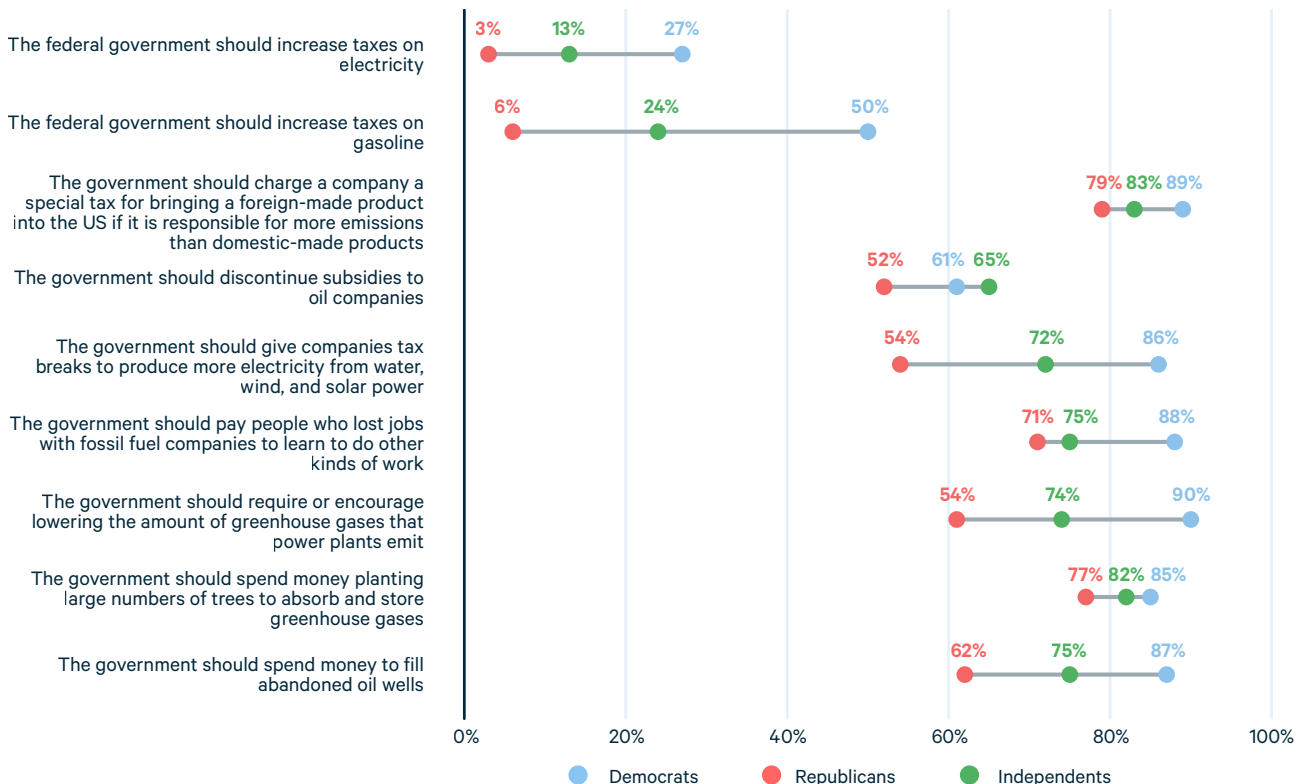
Respondents were asked to report their opinions about 22 policies intended to reduce future greenhouse gas emissions. Majorities, and sometimes huge majorities, of Democrats favor most of those policies—those majorities range from 53 percent to 90 percent. Only four policies are favored by minorities of Democrats.

A majority of Independents favor 14 of these policies, and a majority of Republicans favor nine of these policies.

Policies favored by majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans include:

- Reducing emissions from power plants
- Charging a tax for importing goods with higher carbon footprints than domestic equivalents
- Paying for job training so people can leave the fossil fuel industry
- Filling in abandoned oil wells
- Giving tax breaks to encourage utilities to make more electricity from renewables
- Planting trees to absorb greenhouse gases
- Discontinuing federal subsidies to oil companies

**Figure 7. Party breakdown of support for “common ground” policies on which the majorities of Democrats and Republicans agree**



**Figure 8. Party breakdown on opinions on mitigation policies on which the majorities of Democrats and Republicans disagree**



Among the 22 climate policies, Democrats and Republicans agree on nine: majorities of both favor seven and oppose two (see Figure 7). Democrats and Republicans disagree on the remaining 13 climate policies: majorities of Democrats favor while majorities of Republicans oppose 11 such policies, and majorities of Democrats oppose while majorities of Republicans favor the remaining two of such policies (see Figure 8).

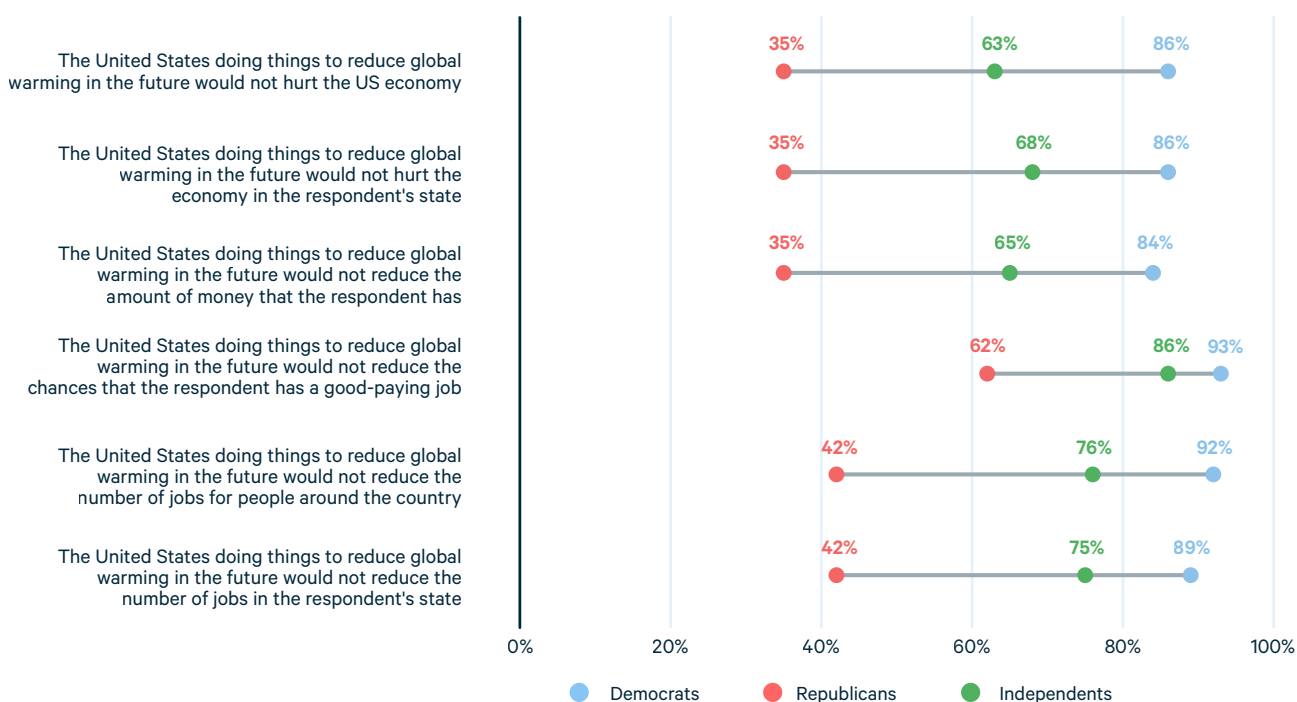
In sum, Democrats are generally more supportive of emissions reduction policies than Republicans, and Independents are generally in between those two groups. And although majorities of Republicans and Democrats agree with one another about some (nine) policies, they disagree on more others (13).

## Economic Consequences of Mitigation

According to some economists (e.g., Gillingham and Stock 2018; Gillingham 2019), implementing some policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may increase the cost of American-made goods and services relative to those goods and services produced elsewhere, thus costing consumers and companies alike in the short term. Climate Insights 2024: American Climate Policy Opinions demonstrated that few Americans believe that such undesirable economic side effects will result from mitigation efforts. Here, we report how partisans perceive these economic consequences.

Majorities of Democrats and Independents believe that mitigation policies will not exert undesirable economic effects, whether at the national, state, or personal level. Among Democrats, huge majorities (84–93 percent) believe that the United States taking action to reduce future global warming will not hurt the national economy, their state economy, the number of available jobs, or their own personal finances and job prospects (see Figure 9). These sentiments were expressed by majorities of Independents as well (ranging from 63 to 86 percent). However, a majority of Republicans expressed this sentiment only with regard to their own personal job prospects. Regarding all other economic side effects, minorities of Republicans believe there will be no damage done, ranging from 35 to 42 percent. The partisan gap, averaged over these six measures of economic impacts, was 21 percentage points.

**Figure 9. Party breakdown of beliefs about how climate action would affect the national economy, the respondent's state's economy, and the respondent personally**



## Trends in the partisan gap from 1997 to 2024

Next, we explore change in the partisan gap over time.

When we conducted our first national survey in 1997, just before President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore hosted the White House Conference on Climate Change, the partisan gap on many aspects of global warming was small. However, over the years since then, the partisan gap has grown.

### Overview

We have asked different questions in different surveys over the decades. The availability of measures by years is shown in the Climate Insights 2024: Partisan Views technical report.

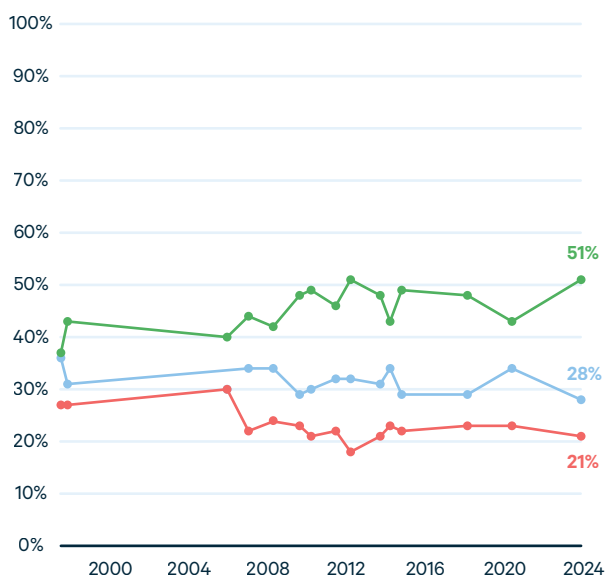
Because we have not asked every survey question every year, documenting trends over time in the partisan gap requires making a tradeoff. We can either

describe more years using fewer questions, or fewer years using more questions. We describe results using both approaches, which end up supporting similar conclusions.

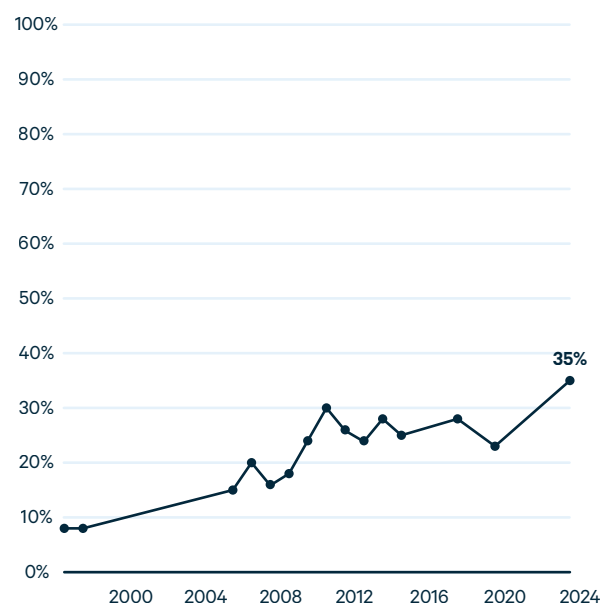
Over the past few decades, more Americans have identified themselves as Independent and fewer have done so as Republican, while the proportion of Americans identified as Democrat has remained stable (see Figure 10).

Figure 11 shows the average partisan gap on two opinions that were measured in all of our surveys: whether global warming has been happening and whether, if warming has been happening, it has been caused at least partly by human activity. The partisan gap, which was only 8 percentage points on average in 1997 and 1998, peaked at 30 percentage points in 2011, and stabilized between 24 and 28 percentage points from 2012 to 2020. In 2024, this gap is 35 percentage points, the largest ever observed.

**Figure 10. Trends in party identification in America**



**Figure 11. Trends in the partisan gap using two measures (global warming existence and role of humans) across all years**



These data are consistent with the claim that the gap has grown during the Biden administration amid increasing political polarization in the United States.

Figure 12 shows the partisan gap using seven measures included in 10 surveys: (1) global warming has been happening, (2) if warming has been happening, it was caused at least in part by human activity, (3) government should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by power plants, (4) Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards should be increased, (5) energy efficiency of buildings should be increased, (6) energy efficiency of appliances should be increased, and (7) climate scientists are trustworthy.

Using those measures, the partisan gap was 9 and 11 percentage points on average in 1997 and 1998, respectively. The gap grew from 15 to 31 percentage points during 2007–2013 and stabilized between 21 and 27 percentage points in 2015–2020. In 2024, the gap was 38 percentage points, again the largest ever observed.

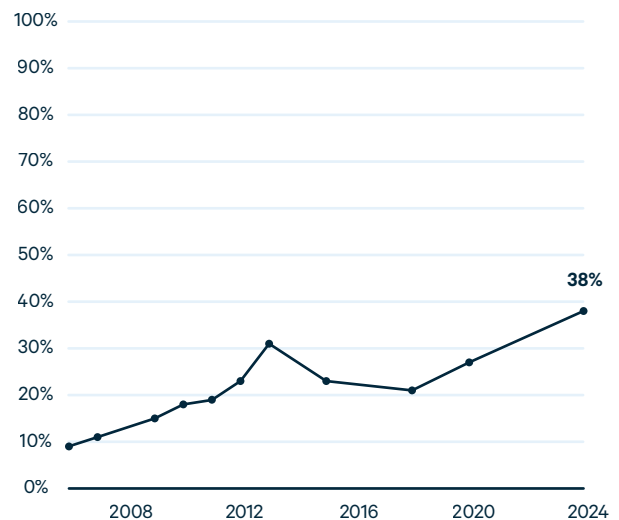
## Fundamental Beliefs and Attitudes

Next, we describe the magnitude of and trends in the partisan gap for individual opinions over the years.

**Global warming has been happening.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have believed that the earth has probably been warming over the past 100 years.

In 2020, 94 percent of Democrats, 67 percent of Republicans, and 78 percent of Independents believed that global warming has been happening (see Figure 13).<sup>1</sup> In 2024, the proportion among Democrats is similar (88 percent), but the proportions among Republicans and Independents are the lowest ever observed: 43 percent and 65 percent, respectively. The partisan gap grew from 9 percentage points in 1997 to 45 percentage points in 2024.

**Figure 12. Trends in the partisan gap using the largest common set (seven) of global warming fundamental measures**



**Figure 13. Proportion of each group who believed the world's temperature has probably been increasing over the past 100 years**



1 Some results from the 2020 survey reported here may be slightly different from those reported in Climate Insight 2020 series due to the recomputed stratification-weights for the 2020 survey data.



**45%**

**The partisan gap in 2024  
between the percentage  
of Democrats and  
Republicans who believe  
the world's temperature  
has probably been  
increasing over the last  
100 years.**

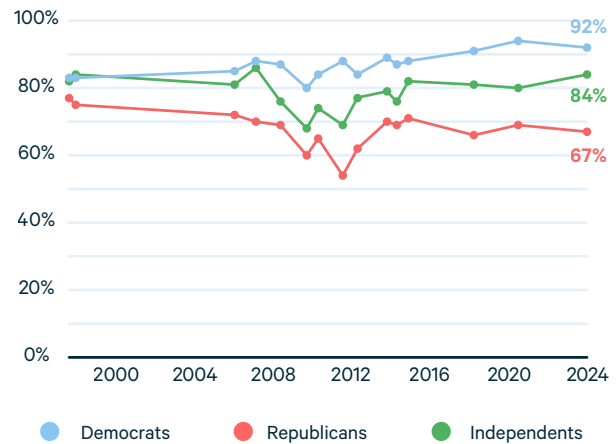
**Global warming has been caused mostly or partly by humans.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have believed that, if the world's temperature has increased over the past 100 years, warming has been caused at least partly by humans. In 2024, 92 percent of Democrats, 84 percent of Independents, and 67 percent of Republicans, respectively, believe this, marking a partisan gap of 25 percentage points (see Figure 14).

**Future warming.** From 1997 to 2020, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have believed that the earth will probably be warmer in a century if nothing is done to prevent it. In 2024, 95 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of Independents believed this, but among Republicans, only a minority (48 percent) hold that view (see Figure 15). The partisan gap is now 47 percentage points.

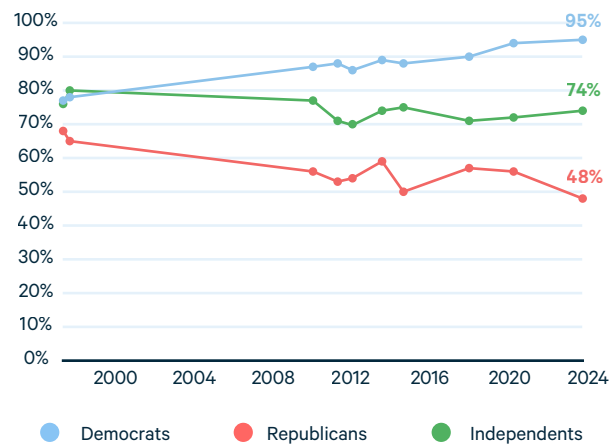
**5°F warmer would be bad.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats and of Independents have believed that 5°F of global warming would be bad; but the proportion of Republicans expressing that belief has hovered around the midline, peaking at 59 percent in 1997 and dipping to its lowest points of 47 percent in 2010 and 2015 (see Figure 16). In 2024, the proportion among Republicans dipped again to the low of 47 percent. The partisan gap in 2024 is the biggest observed since 1997: 38 percentage points.

**Serious problem for the United States.** Since 2006, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have consistently believed that global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem

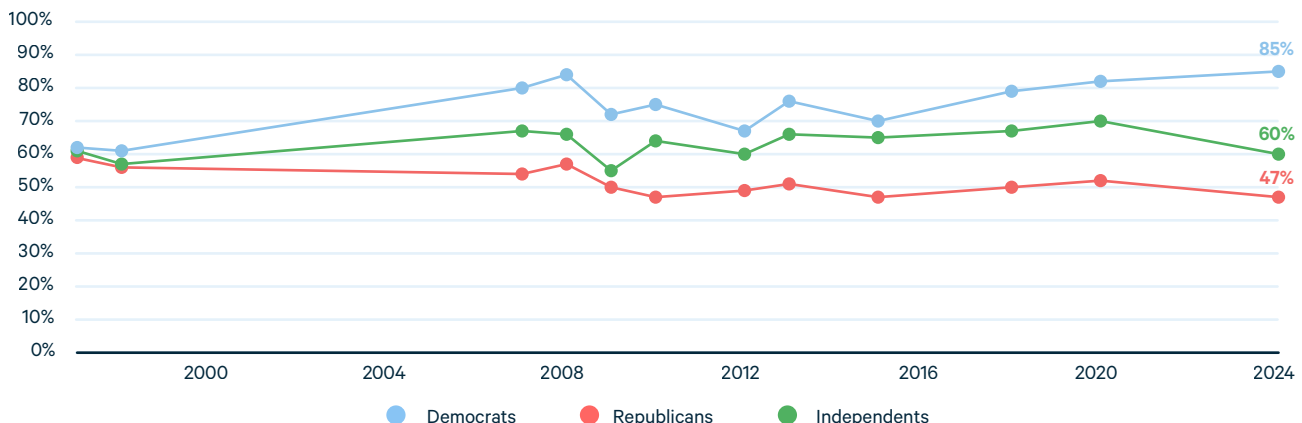
**Figure 14. Proportion of each group who believed the increase in the world's temperature over the past 100 years was caused mostly or partly by humans**



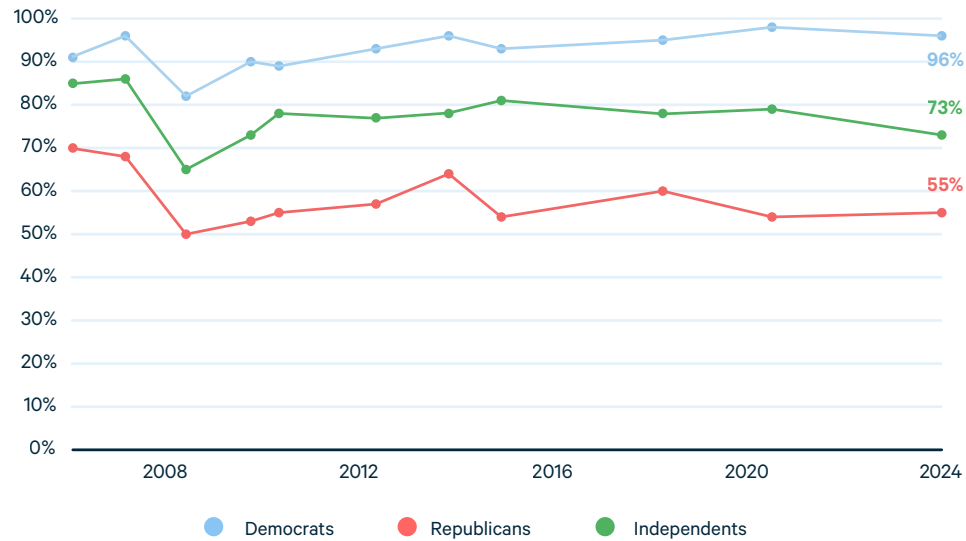
**Figure 15. Proportion of each group who believed the world's temperature will probably go up over the next 100 years**



**Figure 16. Proportion of each group who thought 5°F of warming in 75 years would be bad**



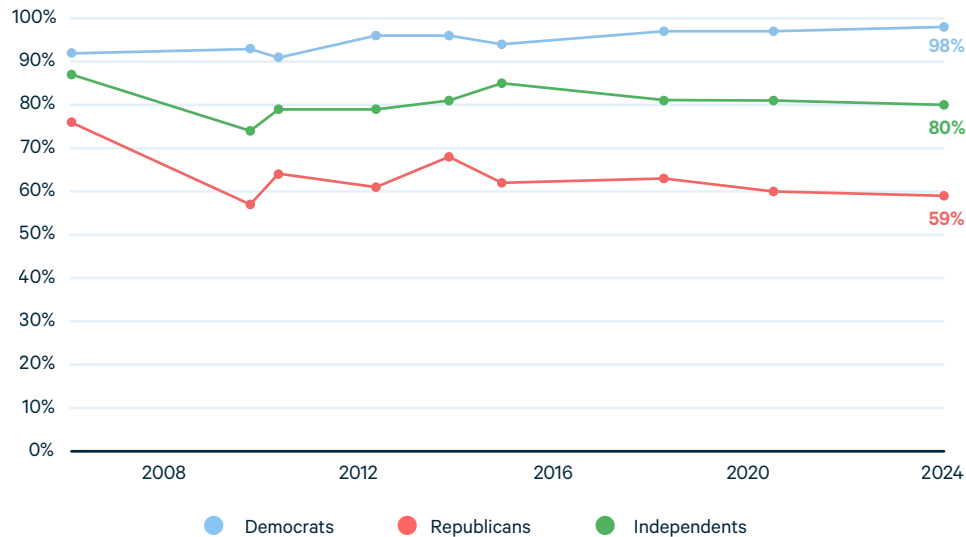
**Figure 17. Proportion of each group who thought global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the United States**



for the United States in the future. In 2024, nearly all Democrats (96 percent) believe that, compared to 55 percent of Republicans and 73 percent of Independents (see Figure 17). The partisan gap is now 41 percentage points.

**Serious problem for the world.** Since 2006, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans have believed that global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the world in the future. In 2024, those majorities are 98 percent, 80 percent, and 59 percent, respectively (see Figure 18). The partisan gap is 39 percentage points.

**Figure 18. Proportion of each group who thought global warming will be a very or somewhat serious problem for the world**



## Who Should Do More?

**The US government should do more to deal with global warming.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats and Independents have believed that the federal government should do more about global warming. In 2020, 92 percent of Democrats, 63 percent of Independents, and 37 percent of Republicans favored more federal action. Those figures are now 85 percent, 65 percent, and 45 percent, respectively (see Figure 19). The partisan gap was 55 percentage points in 2020 and is a statistically significant decline in 2024 to 40 percentage points.

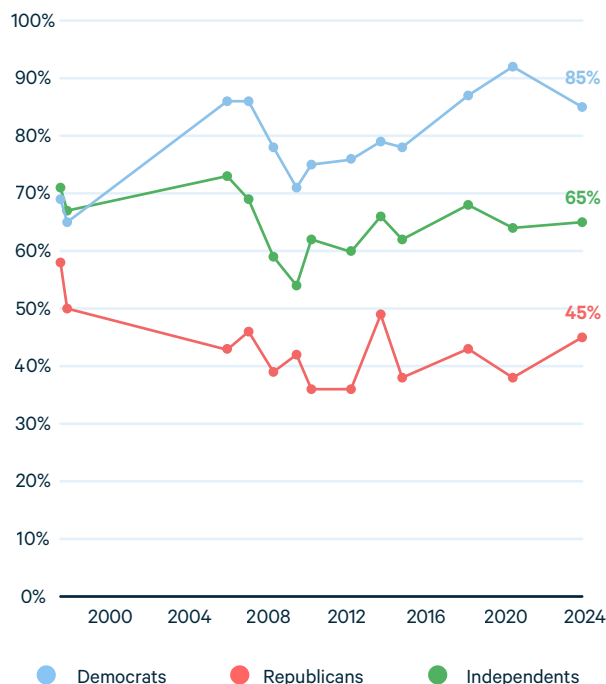
**Governments in other countries should do more to deal with global warming.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have believed that governments in other countries should do more about global warming. In 2024, 83 percent of Democrats, 69 percent of Republicans, and 55 percent of Independents believed this, with a partisan gap of 28 percentage points, about the same as four years ago (see Figure 20).

**US businesses should do more to deal with global warming.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats and Independents have believed that US businesses should do more about global warming. In 2024, 88 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of Independents believed that businesses should do more. Minorities of Republicans favor increased action from businesses, with 43 percent in favor in 2024 (see Figure 21). The partisan gap is now 45 percentage points, which marks no change from 2020.

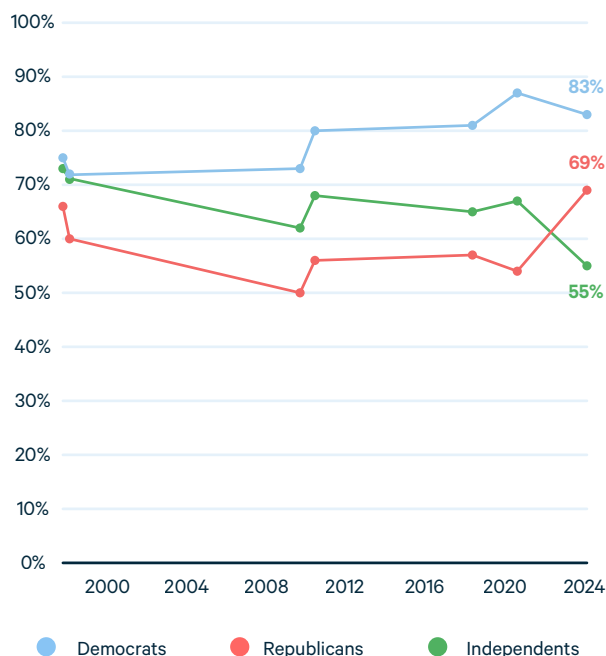
**Average people should do more to deal with global warming.** Since 1997, majorities of Democrats and Independents have believed that average people should do more about global warming. In 2020, 90 percent of Democrats, 71 percent of Independents, and 49 percent of Republicans thought that, for a partisan gap of 42 percentage points. Those figures in 2024 are 83 percent, 63 percent, and 41 percent, respectively (see Figure 22). With fewer Americans across the board supporting more individual action on climate change, the partisan gap stayed at 42 percentage points.

**Limit greenhouse gas emissions.** Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have consistently believed that the federal government should

**Figure 19. Proportion of each group who thought the US government should do more about global warming**



**Figure 20. Proportion of each group who thought that governments in other countries should do more about global warming**



limit the amount of greenhouse gases that businesses emit. In 2024, 90 percent of Democrats, 76 percent of Independents, and 47 percent of Republicans favored this, with a partisan gap of 43 percentage points, about the same as four years ago (see Figure 23).

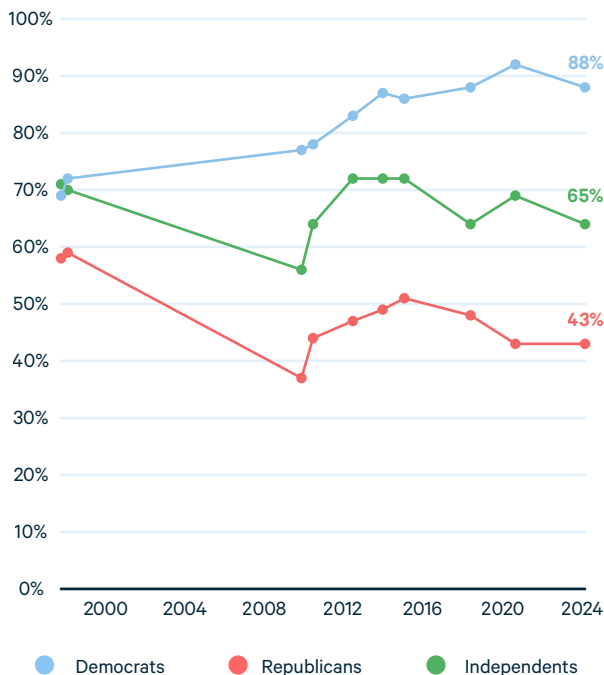
## Mitigation Policies

### Produce electricity from renewable energy sources.

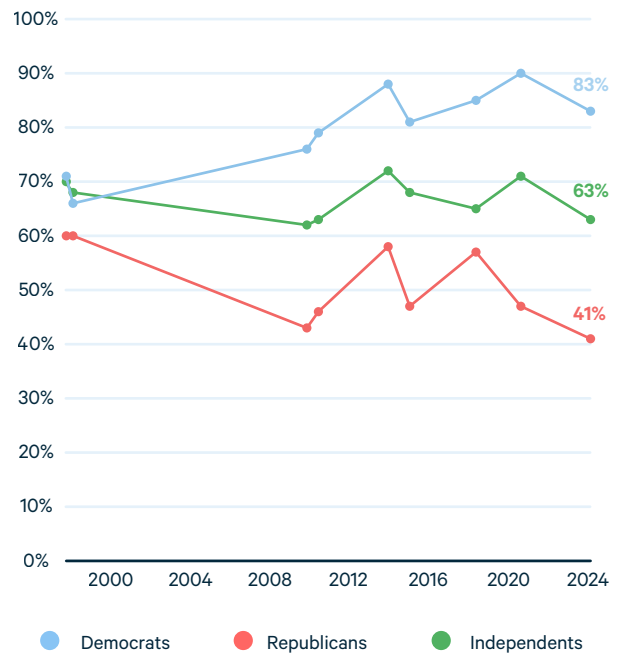
Since 2006, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have favored federal government efforts to encourage generating more electricity using water, wind, and solar power. In 2020, 93 percent of Democrats, 85 percent of Independents, and 75 percent of Republicans favored this policy, reflecting a partisan gap of 18 percentage points. In 2024, those figures are 86 percent, 72 percent, and 54 percent, respectively, for a considerably larger partisan gap of 32 percentage points (see Figure 24).

**Reduce emissions from power plants.** Since 2006, majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have favored federal government

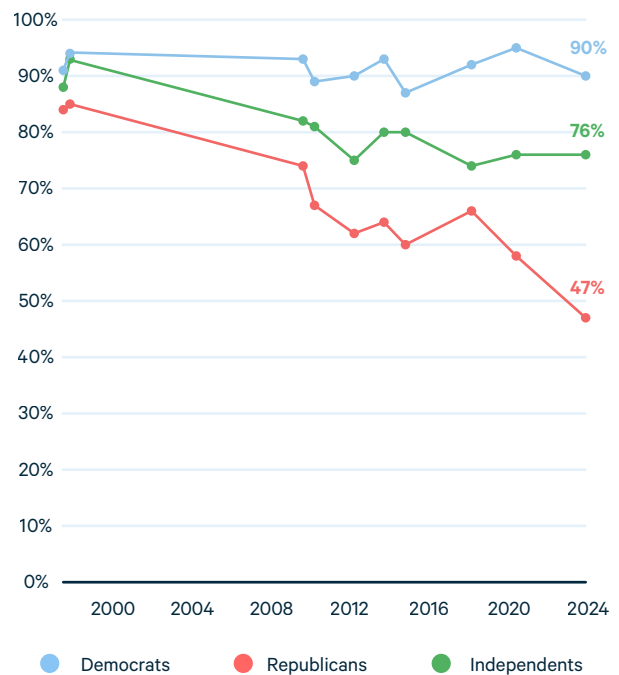
**Figure 21. Proportion of each group who thought that US businesses should do more about global warming**



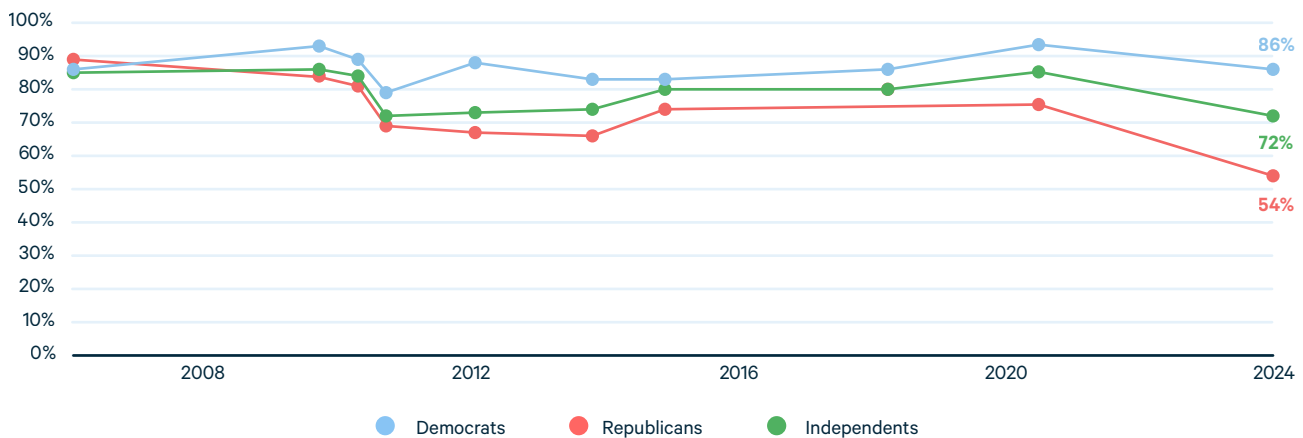
**Figure 22. Proportion of each group who thought average people should do more to deal with global warming.**



**Figure 23. Proportion of each group who thought the federal government should limit the amount of greenhouse gases US businesses emit**



**Figure 24. Proportion of each group who favored the federal government giving companies tax breaks to produce more electricity from water, wind and solar power**



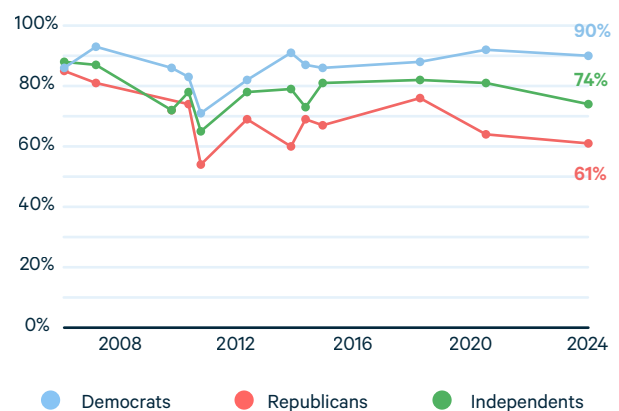
efforts to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced by power plants. In 2024, 90 percent of Democrats, 74 percent of Independents, and 61 percent of Republicans favored this policy, for a partisan gap of 29 percentage points, about the same as four years ago (see Figure 25).

**Increase CAFE Standards.** Between 2006 and 2020, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans favored federal government efforts to implement standards to improve vehicle fuel efficiency. In 2020, those percentages were 87 percent, 72 percent, and 51 percent, respectively, for a partisan gap of 36 percentage points. But, in 2024, these figures are 80 percent, 62 percent, and 41 percent, respectively, approve of fuel efficiency standards, for a partisan gap of 39 percentage points (see Figure 26).

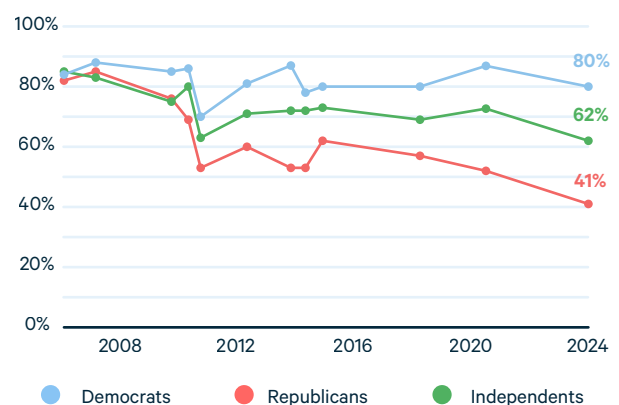
**Increase energy efficiency of buildings.** Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents have consistently favored federal government efforts to improve the energy efficiency of new buildings. In 2020, 86 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of Independents, and 55 percent of Republicans favored this, for a partisan gap of 31 percentage points. In 2024, those figures are 88 percent, 69 percent, and 40 percent, respectively, for a much larger partisan gap of 48 percentage points (see Figure 27).

**Increase energy efficiency of appliances.** Between 2006 and 2020, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans favored federal government efforts to make appliances more energy efficient. In 2020, 86

**Figure 25. Proportion of each group who favored the government requiring or encouraging with tax breaks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants**



**Figure 26. Proportion of each group who thought the government should either require or give tax breaks to construct more energy-efficient cars**

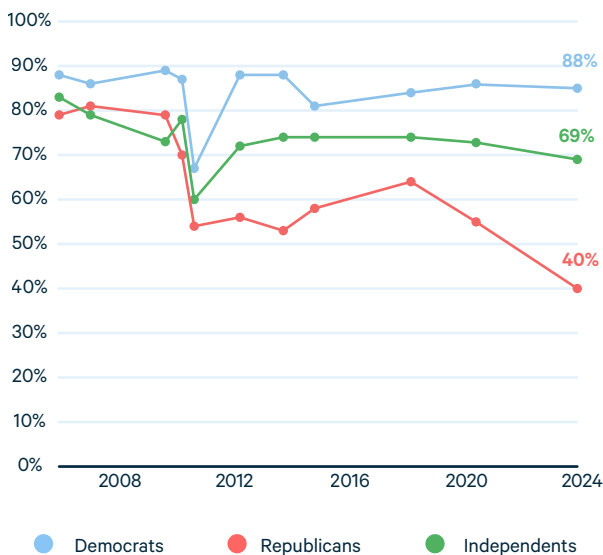


percent of Democrats, 72 percent of Independents, and 55 percent of Republicans favored this, with a partisan gap of 31 percentage points. Those figures are 85 percent, 68 percent, and 48 percent, respectively, for the increased partisan gap of 37 percentage points (see Figure 28).

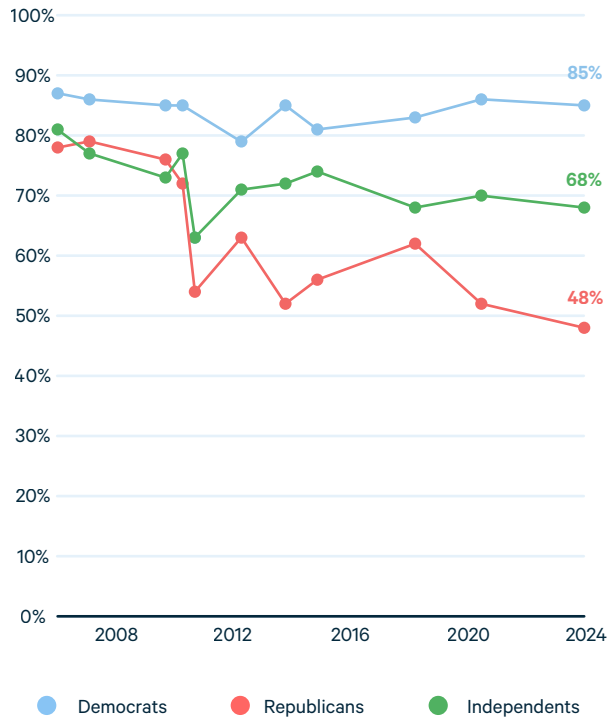
**Electric vehicles.** Between 2009 and 2015, majorities of Democrats favored federal government efforts to encourage manufacturing of electric cars; majority support among Independents and Republicans appeared in 2009 and 2010 but not later. In 2024, 70 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of Independents favor this policy, but the proportion of Republicans favoring this bottomed out at 16 percent. The partisan gap is a very large 54 percentage points (see Figure 29).

**Carbon capture and storage.** Since 2009, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans have favored federal efforts to provide tax breaks to electricity companies to reduce air pollution from burning coal. In 2024, the proportions are 62 percent, 66 percent, and 57 percent, respectively. The partisan gap is small: 5 percentage points (see Figure 30).

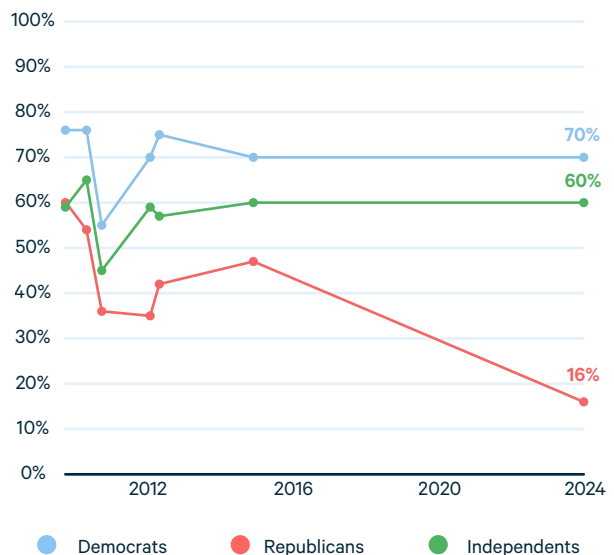
**Figure 27. Proportion of each group who thought the government should either require or give tax breaks to construct more energy-efficient buildings**



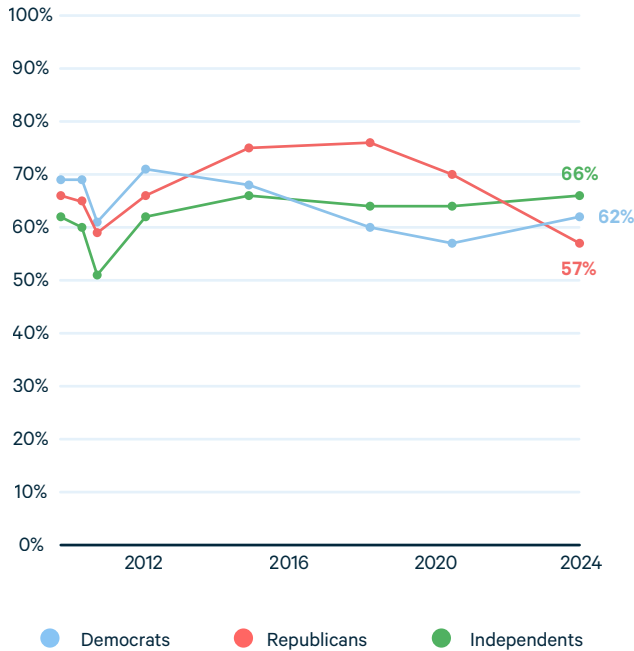
**Figure 28. Proportion of each group who thought the government should require or encourage more energy-efficient appliances**



**Figure 29. Proportion of each group who thought the government should require or encourage building cars that run completely on electricity**



**Figure 30. Proportion of each group who thought the government should require or give tax breaks for the use of new methods to reduce air pollution from coal-fired electricity generation**



**Nuclear power.** Since 2006, the proportions of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans who favored government efforts to provide tax breaks to encourage construction of nuclear power plants have rarely been above 50 percent. In 2024, 38 percent of Democrats, 48 percent of Independents, and 55 percent of Republicans favor this policy, for a partisan gap of 10 percentage points in the direction opposite to what would be expected based upon the general aversion to government intervention expressed by Republicans in other responses (see Figure 31).

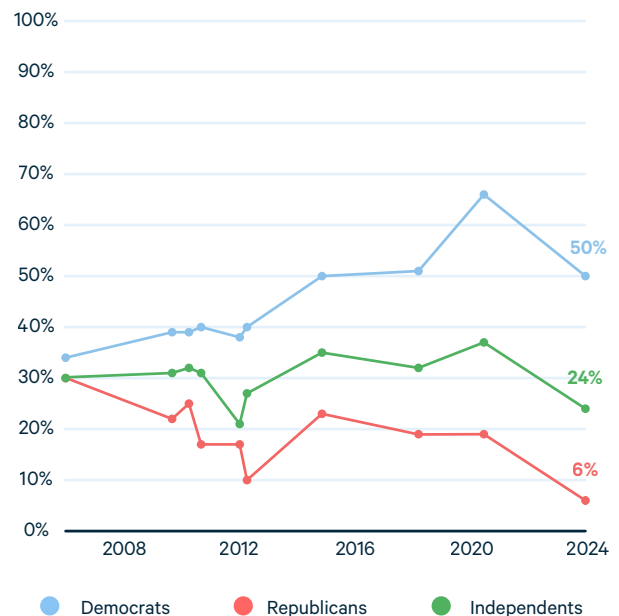
**Gasoline consumption taxes.** Since 2006, increasing federal taxes on gasoline to cause people to use less has rarely enjoyed majority support in any partisan group. In 2024, 50 percent of Democrats, 24 percent of Independents, and just 6 percent of Republicans favor this, for a partisan gap of 44 percentage points (see Figure 32).

**Electricity consumption taxes.** Similarly, since 2006, increasing federal taxes on electricity to cause people to use less has never enjoyed majority support in any partisan group. In 2024, this policy is favored by only 27 percent of Democrats, 13 percent of Independents, and 3 percent of Republicans, for a partisan gap of 24 percentage points (see Figure 33).

**Figure 31. Proportion of each group who favored the federal government giving tax breaks to build nuclear power**



**Figure 32. Proportion of each group who favored the federal government increasing taxes on gasoline**



# Engagement

**Issue public.** In 2024, the proportion of people in the global warming issue public (for whom the issue is extremely personally important) is largest among Democrats: 37 percent; 18 percent of Independents and 5 percent of Republicans fall into the issue public. This represents a 32-percentage point partisan gap, about the same as four years ago (see Figure 34). From 1997 to 2020, the issue public among Democrats and Independents grew, and it then shrank slightly, though not statistically significantly, in both groups in 2024.

**Knowledge about global warming.** In 2024, reported knowledge about global warming is high among all three partisan groups: 81 percent of Democrats, 71 percent of Independents, and 65 percent of Republicans said they know at least a moderate amount about global warming, for a 16-percentage point partisan gap (see Figure 35).

Figure 33. Proportion of each group who favored the federal government increasing taxes on electricity

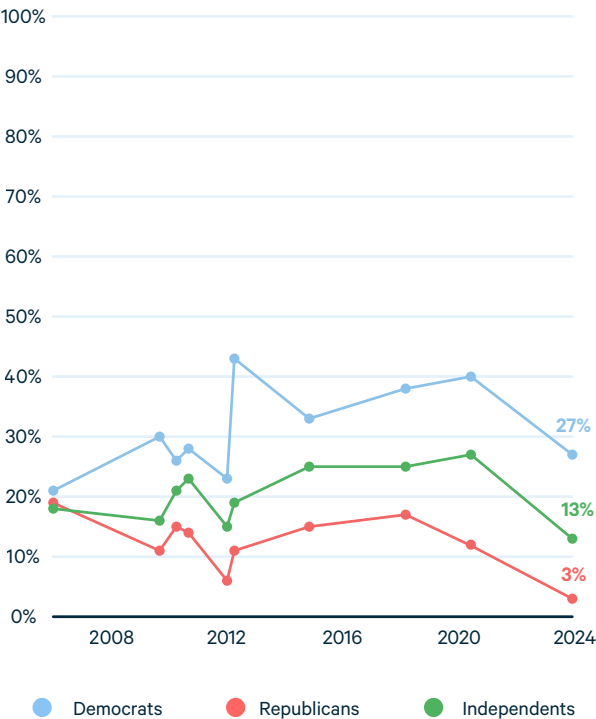
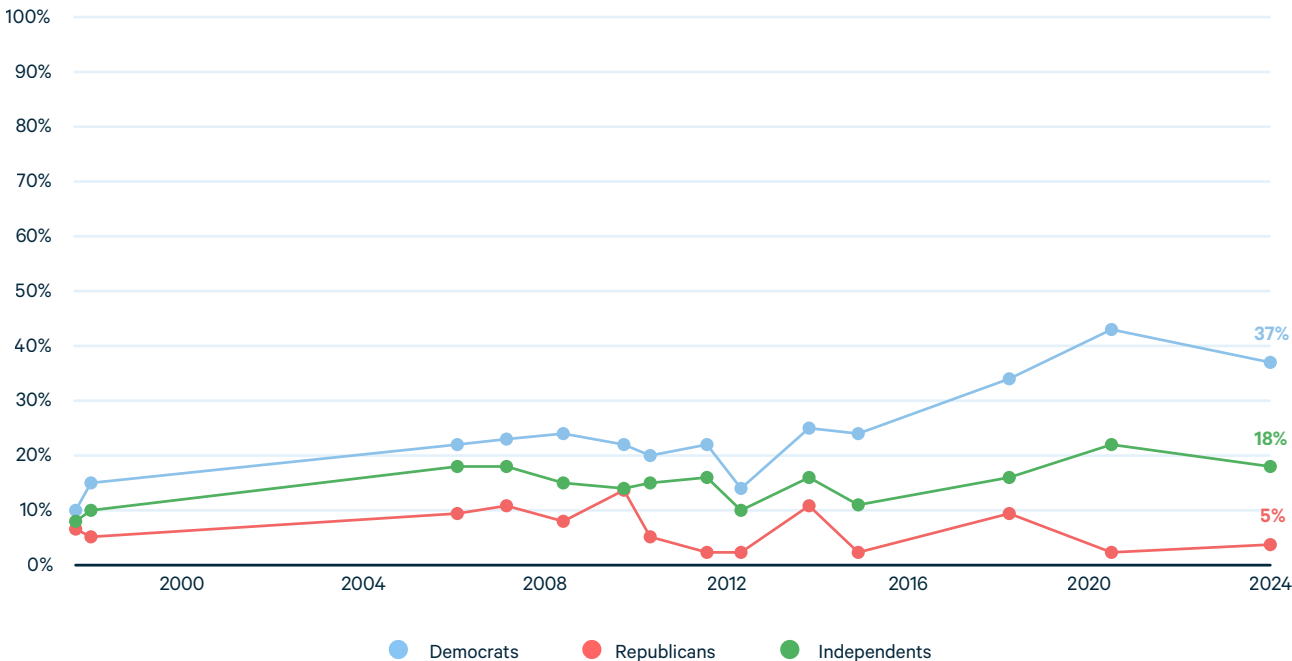


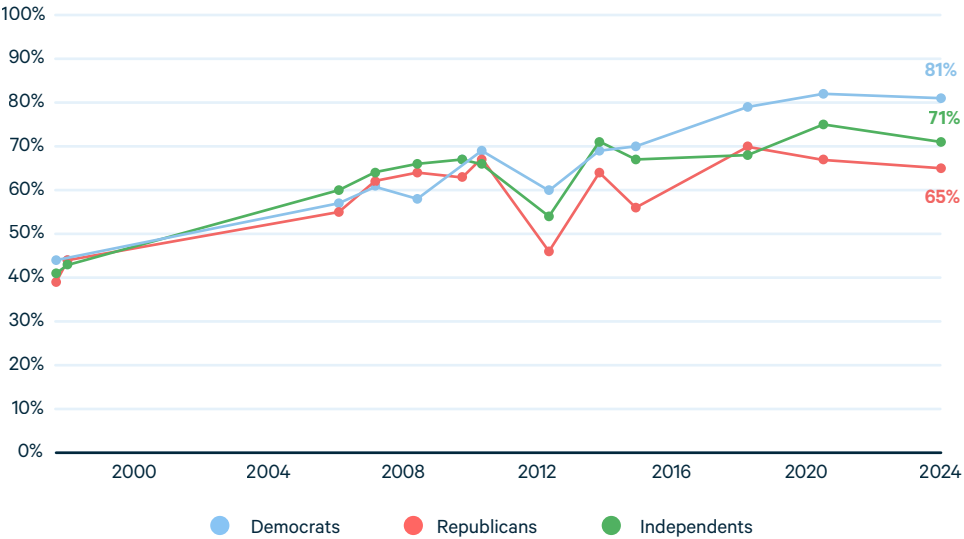
Figure 34. Proportion of each group to whom global warming is extremely personally important



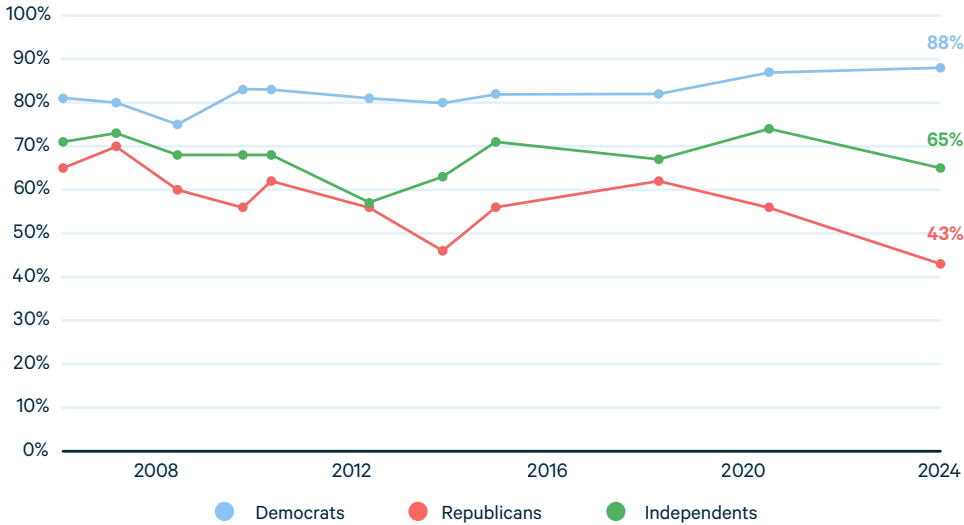
# Trust in Climate Scientists

**Trust in climate scientists.** Since 2006, majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans (with exceptions in 2013 and 2024) have almost always trusted scientists studying the environment at least a moderate amount. In 2024, these proportions are 88 percent of Democrats, 65 percent of Independents, and 43 percent of Republicans, for a partisan gap of 45 percentage points, a substantial increase from the 31-percentage point gap observed in 2020 (see Figure 36).

**Figure 35. Proportion of each group who thought they knew a lot or a moderate amount about global warming**



**Figure 36. Proportion of each group who trusted the things scientists say about the environment completely, a lot, or a moderate amount**



## Conclusion

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Although the gap between Democrat and Republican climate opinions has grown since 1997, opinions on climate policy diverged dramatically between 2020 and 2024. This is most likely due to more Republicans adopting “not-green” opinions. Relatively little change was observed among Democrats and Independents.

This growth in the partisan gap did not appear on all of the opinions measured in our surveys. The gap grew very substantially on some issues, moderately on others, and not at all on others. And there are certainly topics on which a majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agree. It would be a mistake to say that Democrats and Republicans have marched away from each other on every aspect of climate change and climate policy between 2020 and 2024.

The proportions of Democrats and Republicans reporting “green” opinions are potentially important in the upcoming 2024 US presidential and congressional elections. Although Democrats overwhelmingly vote for Democratic candidates, and Republicans overwhelmingly vote for Republican candidates, turnout among these groups in 2024 will certainly not be 100 percent. That means that these citizens can be inspired to vote by what candidates say, including what they say about climate change. A substantial proportion of Democrats fall into the climate change issue public, so “green” statements by candidates can inspire those individuals to vote instead of abstaining.

But the election is more likely to turn on the decisions of Independents, who by definition do not have prior commitments to one party or the other. The evidence in this report shows that the majority of those individuals are on the “green” side of climate change, and a substantial proportion of them are in the climate change issue public. So, candidates stand to gain votes among these individuals by taking “green” positions as well.

One way to think about these findings is from the perspective of policymakers who wish to be guided at least partly by the opinions of their constituents. If America is divided 50–50 along party lines on the issue of climate change, then the public would offer no guidance in the decisionmaking process, leaving legislators to make decisions based on other considerations.

In the [prior reports](#) in this series, we documented large and sometimes dramatic majorities of Americans—including majorities of Democrats and Republicans—agreeing about the existence, cause, and threat of climate change, and about the desirability or undesirability of climate-related policy options. We also documented large and sometimes huge majorities of Americans, regardless of political party, favoring a variety of policies involving climate change mitigation. But this is less true today than it has been in the past.

The 35- and 38-percentage-point average partisan gaps on climate fundamentals and policy (shown in Figures 16 and 17) are best understood in comparison to partisan gaps on other issues. A 2023 survey conducted by Gallup illustrates the partisan gap for a variety of issues (Newport 2023). These examples, shown in Table 1, demonstrate significant variation in the size of the partisan gap across other issues, from a 14 percent gap for holding favorable opinions of Cuba to a 55 percent gap on opinions about universal healthcare.

Thus, a partisan gap of 26 to 29 percentage points on climate and climate policy falls on the lower end of this spectrum of policies, with similar levels of bipartisan support to maintaining spending on Medicaid, and greater bipartisan support than we see on availability of abortion services and reparations for Black Americans.

**Table 1. Partisan gaps on various issues and policies from the 2023 Gallup survey**

| Issue or Policy                                              | Democrats<br>% | Republicans<br>% | Gap<br>pct. pts. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Government Should Ensure That Everyone Has Healthcare        | 85             | 30               | 55               |
| Protecting Environment Has Priority Over Energy Development  | 81             | 26               | 55               |
| Gun Laws Should Be Stricter                                  | 84             | 31               | 53               |
| Worry Great Deal or Fair Amount About Global Warming         | 87             | 35               | 52               |
| Human Activity Is Main Cause of Global Warming               | 88             | 37               | 51               |
| Abortion Should Be Legal Under Any Circumstance              | 59             | 12               | 47               |
| Federal Government Has Too Much Power                        | 31             | 73               | 42               |
| Government Should Do More to Solve Nation's Problems         | 64             | 23               | 41               |
| Immigration Should Be Decreased                              | 18             | 58               | 40               |
| Favor Death Penalty in Cases of Murder                       | 37             | 73               | 36               |
| Sympathize More With Israelis Than Palestinians              | 39             | 73               | 34               |
| Immigration Is Good for Country                              | 83             | 52               | 31               |
| Great Deal or Quite a Lot of Confidence in Police            | 31             | 60               | 29               |
| Marijuana Should be Legal                                    | 83             | 55               | 28               |
| Same-Sex Marriage Should Be Legally Valid                    | 85             | 57               | 28               |
| Income Tax You Pay Is Fair                                   | 62             | 36               | 26               |
| Foreign Trade Is Opportunity for Economic Growth             | 74             | 49               | 25               |
| Completely or Somewhat Satisfied With K-12 Education in U.S. | 51             | 30               | 21               |
| Having Baby Outside of Marriage Is Morally Acceptable        | 82             | 61               | 21               |
| Divorce Is Morally Acceptable                                | 88             | 69               | 19               |
| Doctor Should Be Able to End Life by Painless Means          | 82             | 63               | 19               |
| Sex Between Unmarried Partners Is Morally Acceptable         | 82             | 63               | 19               |
| Satisfied With State of Race Relations                       | 23             | 40               | 17               |
| Favorable Opinion of Cuba                                    | 49             | 35               | 14               |

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