

To: *Interested Parties*
From: *Geoff Garin, Jay Campbell, and Corrie Hunt*
Date: *November 16, 2023*
Re: *Connecting with Younger Voters on Climate Change and Clean Energy*

Our company recently completed research on behalf of Climate Power and the League of Conservation Voters Victory Fund shows that there is significant potential for increasing young voters' recognition of President Biden's and Vice President Harris' leadership on climate change and clean energy. Climate change and clean energy are important issues to younger voters, and highlighting the Biden-Harris record on these issues provides an opportunity to lift up key personal attributes that are important to improving President Biden's overall standing with younger voters.

Context

Younger voters are a critical voting bloc for reelecting President Biden, and there is much work to be done to grow President Biden's support among them.

Younger voters do not give President Biden the credit he deserves for his leadership on climate change and other key issues, often because they lack information about what he has done, judge him against an ideal standard, and do not factor in the opposition he faces from congressional Republicans and their allies in the oil and gas industry.

Younger voters say they are worried and overwhelmed when they think about their future, and they approach the election in a negative frame of mind. As with other parts of the electorate, the cost of living is a key concern for younger voters – especially the cost of housing and rent.

Climate change is a key vote driver for many younger voters. Over half (58%) say the issue of climate change is very important to them personally, and 36% say it is one of the top-tier issues that will matter the most to them in voting next year. While younger voters are generally downbeat in their outlook, the transition to clean energy is one development that stands out to them as a cause for hope and optimism.

Campaign Imperatives

1. Job #1: Close the knowledge gap and make sure younger voters know about the important actions President Biden has taken to confront the climate crisis and advance America's transition from fossil fuels to clean energy.

Young voters lack awareness of President Biden's accomplishments; only 21% believe that the statement "he has gotten a lot done as president" describes him very well. In online discussions, many young voters explicitly say they have no idea what Biden has done and, indeed, many believe he has not done anything in large part because they have not heard about it.

When it comes to climate change specifically, only 31% of young voters are satisfied with President Biden's handling of the issue. Messaging significantly moves the needle, increasing satisfaction by 17 points after young voters hear about specific actions and progress made on climate change and clean energy.

2. Demonstrate that meaningful action and progress on climate change and clean energy is already happening because of President Biden's leadership.

Young voters want to hear about concrete steps that are happening now to advance their climate and clean energy goals, and often react with skepticism to claims about outcomes that might occur five or ten years now. Telling them about legislation that has passed is much less impactful than telling them about real progress that is occurring today.

Compelling examples of things happening right now because of President Biden's leadership include:

- a. Hundreds of thousands of people going to work at new, good-paying clean energy jobs across the country
- b. Tens of thousands of young people signing up for President Biden's Climate Corps
- c. Work that is being done right now to modernize and strengthen the electricity grid
- d. President Biden's actions to break the stranglehold of Big Oil over our energy future and stop price gouging by oil company CEOs

Younger voters see the ultimate payoff of the transition to clean energy in terms of lower costs, health, and sustainability; showing them the progress that is occurring today increases their confidence that the promise of clean energy will be fulfilled.

3. Put President Biden’s leadership and accomplishments on climate change and clean energy in an understandable comparative context, rather than having his record judged against an absolute or ideal standard.

There are two essential ways to do this:

- Make it clear that President Biden has done more than any other president to confront and address climate change.
- Compare and contrast President Biden’s determination to continue leading the country forward to a clean energy future with Donald Trump’s determination to take us backward and make us more dependent on fossil fuels.

Even if younger voters do not agree with everything President Biden has done or not done (and it is okay to acknowledge they might not), it is important for them to know that Biden has done much more than any president who has come before him and has a record of action and leadership that is in sharp contrast to Donald Trump’s record of climate denialism and anti-environmental activism.

4. Use President Biden’s leadership on clean energy to strengthen the case he is focused on lowering costs.

Our best-testing message with young voters in the poll speaks directly to this:

Joe Biden understands that the rising cost of living is a burden for many young Americans and is taking action to make it easier for them to afford healthcare, a college education, and clean energy. While clean energy is our future, it is not within everyone's reach today. That's why Biden is investing in it--to lower costs so it's truly affordable. He's making sure that switching to clean energy is a real choice for those who want it, and not a luxury only available to the wealthy.

5. Recognize that connecting with younger voters requires a different approach and we must meet them where they are.

Reaching younger people, especially those under the age of 30, is hard. They don’t use traditional news and information sources – in fact they often come across news only while doing other things online (primarily on their phones). The youngest voters tell us they get their information from TikTok and Instagram. Trusted online influencers are an important conduit, by their delivery needs to feel authentic and a product of personal passion.