

SURVEY: 45 MILLION “RED, WHITE AND GREEN” LIKELY VOTERS CUT ACROSS PARTY LINES, ROUGHLY AS BIG A GROUP AS THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

The New Patriotism: “Strikingly Bipartisan” Group Embraces Strong Energy/Environment Agenda, Candidates; 71% of Likely Voters See Buying Fuel-Efficient Car as “Patriotic” Gesture.

WASHINGTON, D.C.//October 11, 2006//There are nearly as many likely voters in the United States who could be labeled “red, white and green” (30 percent) as self-identified Republican likely voters (33 percent), according to a major new survey conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) for the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (CSI), a Boston area think tank that encourages grassroots solutions to energy problems and other issues. The data are based on a detailed analysis of 1,417 respondents who indicated that they are both registered to vote and likely to do so in the 2006 elections.

To learn more about the estimated 45.3 million “red, white and green” (RWG) likely voters in the U.S., CSI and ORC constructed a five-question matrix measuring likely voter attitudes about energy conservation, ending the addiction to oil from the Middle East and other foreign sources, supporting higher fuel-efficiency standards for autos and other vehicles, reducing pollution to curb global warming, and the extent to which buying a hybrid or other fuel-efficient car is viewed as a “patriotic” act. To be considered a RWG voter, the bar was set at the maximum level, with only those respondents classified as “red, white and green” who answered all five matrix questions in an environmentally sensitive fashion.

The result: Red, white and green likely voters are a strikingly bipartisan group of Americans, with more than two out of five describing themselves as moderates (43 percent), about a third as liberals (32 percent) and 22 percent as conservatives. Another key finding: More than four out of five (82 percent) of RWG voters say they are more likely to support a candidate who reflects their strong views on energy and global warming issues.

Civil Society Institute President and Founder Pam Solo said: **“Red, white and green is the new patriotism for this complex era in which energy, the environment and national security are all bound up together. What we see here are a new set of values that equate love of country with energy independence and protecting the environment from global warming. These survey findings show that there is a huge group of Americans who are very clear about their strong embrace of environmental values and the elected officials who reflect those values. The existence of red, white and green voters could have huge implications for the 2006 and 2008 elections.”**

Graham Hueber, senior project manager, Opinion Research Corporation, said: **“The red, white and green likely voters identified in this survey are united by strong views that appear to transcend typical political party divisions. The fact that there are more self-identified moderates than liberals in this group would directly undercut any suggestion that it is dominated by ‘fringe’ or ‘extreme’ types all cut from the same political fabric.”**

More than four out of five (83 percent) of RWG voters say they would be more likely to patronize a business with a good record on the environment. Clear majorities of RWG voters also indicated they were prepared to take action on their views by: weatherizing/adopting other fuel-saving conservation steps at home (91 percent); purchasing a hybrid or other more fuel-efficient vehicle (77 percent); reducing the amount they drive by walking, bike riding or using public transportation (71 percent); and “consider support for an earmarked gas tax that would be invested in development of renewable, clean energy sources” (71 percent).

OTHER KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

The five-question “red, white and green” matrix yielded the following question-by-question results among all likely voters (not just the smaller group of RWG voters):

* Question 1: Conservation v. domestic oil drilling. Three out of five likely voters said that the “first ... way to reduce our dependence on oil from the Middle East and other foreign sources” should be Conservation, such as higher fuel rules for cars and other vehicles to make sure we are using energy as wisely as possible” as opposed to “development of new domestic oil resources” with a major emphasis on drilling (31 percent).

* Question 2: Energy independence as a goal by 2015. When asked if “the U.S. government should set a national goal of declaring July 4th, 2015, or sooner, as ‘Energy Independence Day’ – a real target date for ending our reliance on Middle Eastern and other foreign oil supplies,” more than two out of three likely voters (68 percent) agreed, versus just one in five (26 percent) who disagreed.

* Question 3: Need for more federal leadership on global warming/energy problems. Asked if there is a need for “more leadership from the Federal government to reduce the pollution linked to global warming, encourage new approaches to promoting conservation and spark the development of renewable or alternative energy sources,” 75 percent of likely voters agreed (including 46 percent who did so strongly), compared to just 21 percent who disagreed (only 10 percent strongly).

* Question 4: 40 mile-per-gallon federal fuel-efficiency standard. Respondents were asked to react to the following: “The Union of Concerned Scientists has concluded: ‘If all cars were fuel efficient to 40 miles per gallon, the U.S. would save 75 percent of our dependency on Middle Eastern oil and reduce our contribution to global greenhouse pollution by 30 percent.’ Given these facts, how important do you think government action is to achieve the 40 miles per gallon fuel efficiency target for U.S. cars?” Nearly nine out of 10 (87 percent) likely voters said it was important to take such action, including 61 percent who said it was very important to do so. By contrast, only 11 percent of likely voters said that it was an unimportant goal, with just one in 20 saying that it was “not important at all.”

* Question 5: Conserving energy as an expression of patriotism. Respondents were asked to react to the following: “Some people say it is patriotic to drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle since it requires less fuel to run, and therefore, can help to reduce U.S. dependency on Middle Eastern oil.”

Slightly more than seven out of 10 (71 percent) of likely voters agreed, versus only about one in five (27 percent) who disagreed.

In addition to the 30 percent of likely voters who were classified as “red, white and green” voters by adopting the most environmentally sensitive stances on all five on the questions in the CSI/ORC matrix, 32 percent answered that way on four out of five questions and another 19 percent on three out of five questions. Only about one in 33 likely voters exhibited the extreme opposite stance by answering zero out of the five matrix questions in the least environmentally sensitive fashion.

For full survey findings, go to <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> on the Web.

METHODOLOGY

Results are based on Opinion Research Corporation CARAVAN telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 2,055 adults (1,027 men and 1,028 women) age 18 and over, living in private households, in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed during the period of September 21-25, 2006. Completed interviews of the 2,055 adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus two percentage points for the sample of 2,055 adults. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins.

Some of the survey results are based on smaller groups of the population. The first subgroup is “Likely Voters” and it consists of 1,417 of the total respondents. To be considered a likely voter a respondent had to say they were registered to vote in the state where they live and be very likely to vote in the November elections. Another subgroup is entitled “Red, White and Green Likely Voters” or “RWG likely voters,” for short. This survey created a “Level of Environmental Concern” scale based on the answers to five questions in this survey. Respondents were ranked on this scale from a high of five to a low of zero based on how many pro-environmental answers out of five they gave. Those who gave a pro-environment response to all five and are likely voters comprise the group of 429 respondents referred to as RWG likely voters.

ABOUT THE CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business that can help to improve society. CSI has conducted more than half a dozen major surveys since 2003 on energy issues, including global warming, renewable energy and vehicle fuel-efficiency standards. CSI is the parent organization of 40mpg.org (<http://www.40mpg.org>). The Civil Society Institute is on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org>.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: A streaming audio replay of a related news event will be available on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> as of 6 p.m. ET on October 11, 2006.