Methodology Appendix:
Politicians Shouldn't Hide from Climate

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Surveys

The results reported in the 2035 Initiative's "Politicians Shouldn't Hide From Climate" report are from two surveys of American adults (aged 18+), fielded online from June 28-30, 2026. Respondents were recruited through a blend of online panels provided by Cint. Quality control methods included attention checks, checks for straight-lining, a bot filter, and a speed check; respondents failing these checks were excluded from analysis.

Two surveys (A & B) were fielded with shared demographic, political, issue preference, and climate attitude measures. Survey A (n = 2,055) included a module on issue prioritization, and a conjoint experiment to measure electoral penalties for candidate positions on a set of issues. Survey B (n = 1,443) included modules measuring comparative support for different energy technologies, a framing ("renaming") experiment, a measure of the role of "policy tools" in affecting support levels for energy policy goals, and an experiment to test whether climate and/or affordability messages survive attack.

Respondent-level survey weights were applied (calculated using iterative proportional fitting, also known as raking) to correct for observable sample imbalance on age, gender, race, education, and census region using population tables from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Core political measures

The report includes results by party (including committed partisans and those who would consider voting for the parties).

Partisanship is measured with the following questions:

Politically speaking, do you consider yourself...

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Something else

THEN...

[IF REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT]
Do you consider yourself a strong [Republican/Democrat] or not a strong [Republican/Democrat]?

- Strong [Republican/Democrat]
- Not a strong [Republican/Democrat]

[IF INDEPENDENT/SOMETHING ELSE]
Do you consider yourself to be closer to one of the parties?
- Republican Party
- Democratic Party
- No, neither party

Respondents who identify with or lean toward one of the parties are categorized with that party ID, independents selecting "no, neither party" are categorized with the Independent party ID.

Additionally, respondents are asked whether they would consider voting for each of the parties.

For each party, would you consider voting for them in the next presidential election?

[MATRIX]
Rows: Republican Party; Democratic Party; A third party
Columns: Definitely would vote; Possibly would vote; Never would vote

Respondents who answer "possibly would vote" are characterized as gettable/open to voting for [party X] in the analysis.

Respondents are also asked whether they are registered to vote at their current address.

1: Issue Prioritization

Section 1 in the report measures issue prioritization using a MaxDiff measurement approach. Respondents are randomly presented with 5 issues from the full set of 15 issues.

On the next screens you'll see small groups of issues. For each group, pick the highest and the lowest priority for you personally.
(Choose only one option as highest and a different option as lowest)

Of these issues, which is the *highest priority for you*, and which is the *lowest priority for you*?

The full set of 15 issues presented to respondents are:

[RANDOMLY SHOW 5]
- Foreign policy
- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Climate change
- Electricity and energy
- Pollution / clean air and water
- Strength of the economy
- Cost of living
- Unemployment and jobs
- Tariffs and trade
- Quality of leadership in government

- Immigration
- Unifying the country
- Crime
- Rights of transgender people
- Heath care

Respondents repeated the choice task six times. By aggregating across respondents and choice tasks, we generate a ranking of issue prioritization. To replicate previous studies that use a top-three priority-issue measure, we transform the MaxDiff results by computing the share of respondents who selected any issue as one of their top-three issues; however, because choice tasks were limited to six, when respondents did not have a clear top-three, we allocated their three points proportionally such that each respondent's issues summed to 3 (for example, if there was a clear top-two and then two additional issues that each appeared, the additional issues would each receive a weight of 0.5). We report the top-three share aggregated across all respondents using these tie-breaking weights.

2: Issue preferences and vote importance

Section 2 of the report outlines voter preferences on a range of issues mapped against how big a factor they report these issues being in their vote choice.

For each issue, we first measure their issue position; second, we measure how much a candidate's position (worded to match the valence of the respondent's position) factors into their vote choice. Issues were presented in a random order.

Full question wordings are included here:

Preventing Climate Change

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

[INCLUDED IN ALL POLICY SUPPORT QUESTIONS IN THIS MODULE:] Please use a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means you strongly oppose the policy, and 100 means you strongly support the policy. 50 would mean you are neutral on the policy.

Policy:
Government action to prevent climate change
[Slider 0-100; labeled "Strongly oppose" to "Strongly support"]

[THEN…]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to prevent climate change influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100; labeled "No influence at all" to "Extremely large influence"]

Advancing the clean energy transition

The “clean energy transition” refers to the process of moving away from fossil fuels like oil, gas, and coal, and replacing these fuels with cleaner options like electricity from solar panels and wind turbines.

Please tell us whether you support or oppose government action to advance the clean energy transition.
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN…]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to advance the clean energy transition influence your decision on who to vote for?

Restricting immigration

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Government action to reduce immigration into the US
[Slider 0-100]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to reduce immigration into the US influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Regulating and limiting AI

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Government action to regulate and limit artificial intelligence (AI)
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN…]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's support for government action to regulate and limit artificial intelligence (AI) influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Protecting the rights of transgender people

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Government action to protect the rights of transgender people
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN…]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to protect the rights of transgender people influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Lowering the cost of living

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Government action to lower the cost of living
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN...]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to lower the cost of living influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Making it more difficult to access abortions

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Government action to make it more difficult to access abortions
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN...]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] government action to make it more difficult to access abortions influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Investigating politicians for corruption

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Investigating politicians for corruption when they use their office for financial gain.
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN...]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's [support for / opposition to / position on] investigating politicians for corruption when they use their office for financial gain influence your decision on who to vote for?
[Slider 0-100]

Military action for US economic gain

Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following policies.

Policy:
Military action against foreign countries to gain an economic advantage for the US.
[Slider 0-100]

[THEN...]

When it comes time to cast your vote, how much does a candidate's support for military action against foreign countries to gain an economic advantage for the US influence your decision on who to vote for?

[Slider 0-100]

3: Conjoint study on electoral penalty for candidate issue prioritization

In Section 3, we conduct a conjoint experiment to test whether making certain issues a priority (or top priority) leads to a gain or loss of support. A conjoint design like this one allows us to isolate the causal effect of changing the prioritization a candidate puts on an issue, while statistically controlling for the wide variety of prioritizations (and combinations of prioritizations) they put on any of the other issues in the conjoint study. In other words, what boost or penalty do they receive from shifting cost-of-living from "a priority" to "top priority," or from shifting addressing climate change from "top priority" to "not a priority"?

Respondents are randomly shown profiles of two candidates. The profiles always contain the candidate's party, and a constant issue set (in conjoint parlance, these are the conjoint attributes). Each issue then gets a *randomized* level of prioritization. We employ constrained randomization, such that an issue can be labelled "top priority" with probability 0.2; "a priority" with $p = 0.35$; and "not a priority" with $p = 0.45$. Respondents are asked to choose which of the candidates they would be more likely to vote for (a "forced choice conjoint" design).

For analysis, we set "not a priority" as the baseline, and we report the causal of effect of shifting an issue from "not a priority" to "a priority" or to "top priority" relative to that baseline. If prioritizing issue X would induce an electoral penalty, the effect of shifting from "not a priority" to "a priority / top priority" would be negative. Conversely, if issue prioritization induced an electoral reward, the effect would be positive.

In addition to party, we include the following issues (worded as follows) in every candidate profile:

- Economy and growth
- Lowering everyday costs
- Addressing climate change
- Health care
- Racial and gender diversity
- Crime and policing

Each of these issues randomly gets one of the following issue prioritizations:

- Top priority
- A priority
- Not a priority

An example of what the respondent might see is included below:

On the next screens you'll compare six pairs of political candidates. For each pair, pick the candidate you'd be more likely to vote for, and then give each candidate a rating.

Click the button below to see the first pair of candidates.

Comparison 1 of 6

	CANDIDATE A	CANDIDATE B
Party	Democrat	Democrat
Economy and growth	A priority	Not a priority
Lowering everyday costs	Top priority	A priority
Addressing climate change	Not a priority	A priority
Health care	A priority	Top priority
Racial and gender diversity	Not a priority	Not a priority
Crime and policing	Top priority	Not a priority

Which candidate would you be more likely to vote for?

- Candidate A
- Candidate B

How favorable are you toward Candidate A?
[Slider 0-10; labeled Very unfavorable to Very favorable]

How favorable are you toward Candidate B?
[Slider 0-10; labeled Very unfavorable to Very favorable]

We analyze results using ordinary least squares regression, where the dependent variable is whether a profile is chosen or not (binary variable), with each conjoint attribute (party or issue) as a factor variable that takes "not a priority" as the baseline level and estimates effects for the "a priority" and "top priority" levels relative to the baseline. We use robust standard errors clustered at the respondent level.

4: Favorability of clean energy technologies

In Section 4, we measure the favorability/unfavorability of a variety of clean energy technologies with the following question wording

Please tell us whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following technologies:

[MATRIX]

[ROWS, ORDER RANDOMIZED:]

- All-electric vehicles
- Rooftop solar panels
- Large home batteries
- Induction stovetops
- Large solar power facilities for generating electricity
- Wind turbines on land for generating electricity
- Wind turbines in bodies of water (offshore) for generating electricity
- Nuclear power plants
- Heat pumps, an electric technology that provides heating and cooling in buildings

[COLUMNS:]

- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Very unfavorable
- Don't know enough about them

5: Effect of renaming climate policies

Respondents are asked if they support/oppose a policy, with a randomized "frame" attached.

Consider the following program:

A government program that invests in solar and wind power, as part of [*RANDOMIZED:* addressing climate change / reducing pollution and protecting clean air and water / developing new energy sources to meet America's energy demands].

How much do you support or oppose this program?
[Slider 0-100; labeled "Strongly oppose" to "Strongly support"].

We report mean support levels with 95% confidence intervals.

6: Policy tools vs. policy goal

Past studies on the reported unpopularity of pro-climate policies have often conflated the policy's goal (for example, the clean energy transition) with policy tools (new fees vs. building more of one particular kind of energy). Some of these tests have thus pitted pro-fossil policies with popular *mechanisms* ("expand") against pro-clean policies with unpopular mechanisms ("ban" or "new fee/tax"). We test identical policy mechanisms but vary the pro-clean vs. pro-fossil goal.

In Section 6, We report mean support levels for each policy tool + goal combination with 95% confidence intervals. The question wording for the eight survey items (order randomized in the survey) is as follows:

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Lower electricity bills by building more solar and wind.
[Slider 0-100; labeled "Strongly oppose" to "Strongly support"]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Lower electricity bills by producing more oil and gas.
[Slider 0-100; labeled "Strongly oppose" to "Strongly support"]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Cut red tape so wind and solar get built faster.
[Slider 0-100; labeled "Strongly oppose" to "Strongly support"]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:

Cut red tape so oil and gas get drilled faster.
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Ban new oil and gas drilling.
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Ban new wind and solar projects.
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Put a new fee or tax on solar and wind power.
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

How much do you support or oppose this policy:
Put a new fee or tax on oil and gas.
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

7: Attack message experiment

Respondents were shown a message from a hypothetical candidate and asked for their support level for the candidate. Respondents were then shown an “attack message” from the candidate’s opponent tailored to the initial message they saw. We then took a second measure of their support for the first candidate, and report pre-attack and post-attack results with 95% confidence intervals.

Please imagine a political candidate who made the following statement:

[RANDOMIZE]

1. "We should prioritize solutions to address climate change that will help lower costs and make basic goods and services more affordable."
2. "We should prioritize solutions to address climate change."
3. "We should prioritize keeping costs down and making basic goods and services more affordable."

How likely would you be to vote for a candidate who said this?
[Slider 0-10; labeled “Very unlikely” to “Very likely”]

[IF RESPONDENT SAW MESSAGE 1 OR 2]

The opposing candidate responds:
"While they talk about climate change, families are struggling to pay their bills.”

Now, how likely would you be to vote for the first candidate?
[Slider 0-10; labeled “Very unlikely” to “Very likely”]

[IF RESPONDENT SAW MESSAGE 3]

The candidate's opponent responds:
"They have no real plan for the climate crisis at all."

Now, how likely would you be to vote for the first candidate?
[Slider 0-10; labeled “Very unlikely” to “Very likely”]

8: Price beliefs experiment

Respondents were asked about their beliefs over whether building much more clean energy would raise or lower prices. Half of respondents were provided with information about clean energy price advantages. Then all respondents were asked about their support for building more clean energy. We compare across groups who vary on their price beliefs, as well as between groups who received price information and those who did not. Results are reported with 95% confidence intervals. Survey question wording is as follows:

If the federal government built much more solar and wind power, what would happen to electricity prices for households like yours?

- Increase a lot
- Increase a little
- No change
- Decrease a little
- Decrease a lot
- Not sure

[HALF OF RESPONDENTS SEE:]

For context: independent analyses find that adding low-cost solar and wind generally lowers wholesale electricity prices, because cheaper power is used first.

[THEN, ALL RESPONDENTS:]

How much do you support or oppose building more clean energy?
[Slider 0-100; labeled “Strongly oppose” to “Strongly support”]

9: Perceptions of elite priorities

Respondents were asked to select the three issues that they believe are the top-three priorities of average Americans, Democratic party leaders, and Republican party leaders. They selected from an identical list. We report the share (with 95% confidence intervals) for each of these groups. Question wording is as follows:

Which three issues would the average American say are the highest priority? (Choose 3.)

Which three issues do you think the leaders of the Democratic Party are most focused on? (Choose 3.)

Which three issues do you think the leaders of the Republican Party are most focused on? (Choose 3.)

[ISSUE LIST, RANDOMIZE ORDER:]

- Foreign policy

- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Climate change
- Electricity and energy
- Pollution / clean air and water
- Strength of the economy
- Cost of living
- Unemployment and jobs
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