

From: Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute
Re: Voters Support Reviving the Federal Civilian Conservation Corps Jobs Program
Date: 09/11/2020

At the height of the Great Depression, with national employment soaring to over [25%](#), President Franklin D. Roosevelt championed federal jobs programs that put Americans to work—part of the New Deal that used public works projects to ignite the economy and stem unprecedented job loss. Among those programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) combined economic recovery with environmental conservation. CCC workers developed state and national parks, managed national forests, planted trees, and prevented and fought wildfires. Through its nine years in existence, from 1933 until 1942, the CCC employed about [3 million men](#), providing desperately needed wages as well as other necessities including shelter and food.

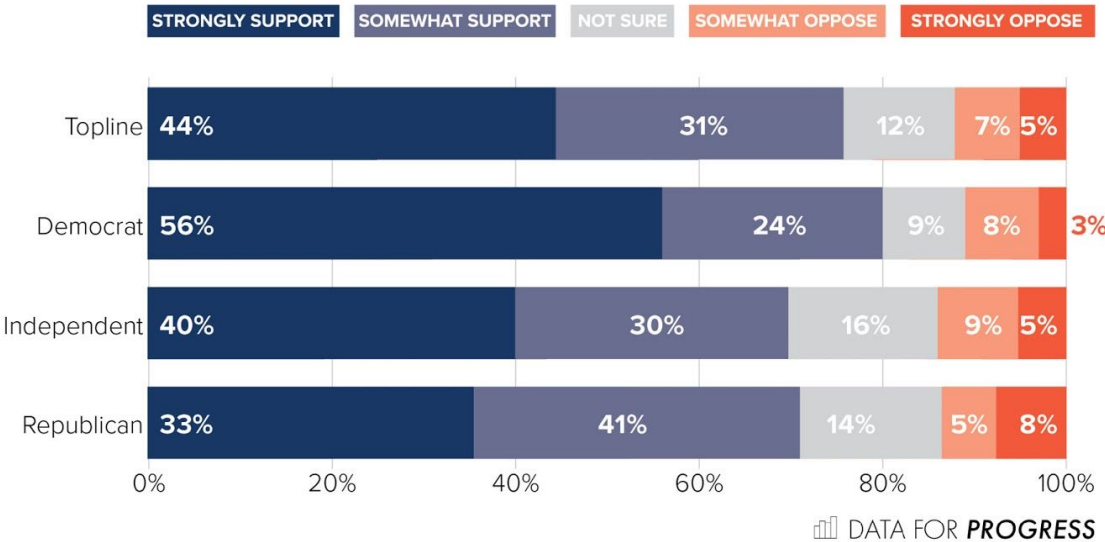
This week, with the nation fighting a pandemic amid another economic crisis, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin [introduced legislation](#) to revive the CCC, but in a more inclusive way. The RENEW Conservation Corps Act would create 1 million jobs over the course of five years, empowering and employing Americans to work on conservation projects nationwide for up to a year. And while the original CCC employed only men and housed workers in segregated camps, RENEW requires that participants reflect the demographics of the communities where they are working.

A revived CCC, with a mission of protecting and stewarding the environment, could also help mitigate the impact of climate change, an existential crisis that only worsens the sort of record-breaking wildfires currently devastating [the American west](#), burning millions of acres and smothering cities in ash and smoke. Federal CCC workers can provide natural climate solutions by planting native trees that store and capture carbon, and can build more resilient natural systems through restoring shorelines, protecting wetlands, and maintaining dams, among other conservation efforts.

On Thursday, former California Governor Jerry Brown, who in 1976 created what is now the largest state conservation corps in the country, appeared on [The Briefing](#), a streaming news show co-produced by NowThis News and The Appeal, to discuss how the conservation corps provides important work and inspires a shared civic engagement that could strengthen our democracy in perilous times. The CCC “builds an ethos,” he said. “It builds on the best part of human beings working together for a greater cause. That's very important in America today with all the separation and the ideologies that are dividing us. This is a unifying experience ... for young men and women today.”

New polling from Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute shows popular support for such a federal initiative. We asked 1,231 likely voters if they would support the federal government restarting the CCC, and 75% said they supported the initiative while only 12% were opposed. This broad support was bipartisan: 80% of Democrats and 74% of Republicans said they favored reviving the CCC.

Would you support or oppose the federal government restarting the Civilian Conservation Corps, which would provide paid work in forest firefighting, planting trees, and other conservation related work, such as caring for our public lands?



Polling Methodology

From 9/4/2020 to 9/5/2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,231 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points.