

From: Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute
Re: Fossil Fuel Industry Should Bear the Costs of Climate Change, Voters Say
Date: 10/9/2020

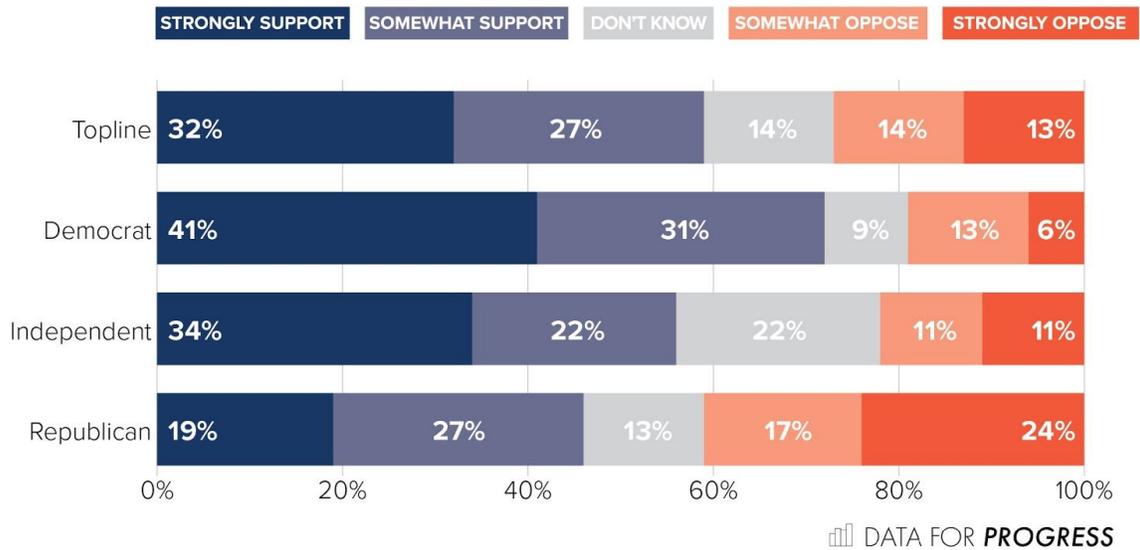
“If you are in denial about climate change, come to California,” Governor Gavin Newsom [said](#) in August. The record-setting [wildfires](#) that have devastated the American West this year have forced thousands of people from their homes and caused toxic chemicals to leach into drinking water. In the middle of a pandemic, the air quality and excessive heat have left many to balance the relative risks of breathing inside or outside. Anticipating more fires, insurance companies have canceled homeowner policies and the state’s main utility preemptively shut off power to tens of thousands of people. In the South, record-setting hurricanes have pummeled the coast. Both wildfires and hurricanes are getting worse, year after year, in large part because of human-caused climate change.

None of this is a surprise. For over 50 years, the fossil fuel industry has known that its practices were contributing to the irrevocable warming of the planet, and corporate executives knew that this warming would have devastating economic and health consequences for life on Earth. But instead of changing their practices in response to this alarming information, they set about hiding it. Since the 1990s, these corporations have conducted a misinformation campaign to create public skepticism about the accuracy of climate science and of the conclusions their own researchers made, all while they continued to accrue tremendous wealth. The six largest oil and gas companies reported an excess of \$55 billion in combined profits in 2019 alone. Since 1990, these six companies have generated \$2.4 trillion in profits.

Cities and states across the country are now faced with the accelerating economic and health costs of climate change, which have disproportionately hurt nonwhite communities. Various state and local leaders are suing the fossil fuel industry for damages to cover these costs. Prompted by the failure of state and local governments to regulate the industry, groups of people, often young people and others whose futures are made especially uncertain by climate change, have started suing their elected officials and administrative agencies in an effort to stop them from permitting further destruction.

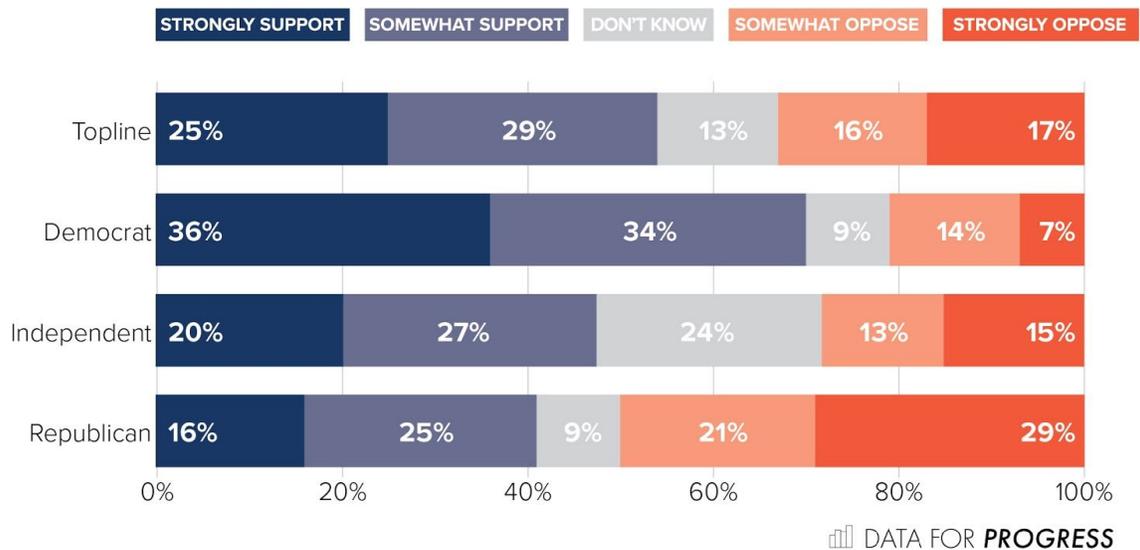
New polling from Data for Progress and The Justice Collaborative Institute finds strong bipartisan support for holding fossil fuel corporations accountable, and asking them to help fix the crisis they helped to create. In a national survey of 1,107 likely voters, 59% of respondents, including 56% of independents and 46% of Republicans, said that they support requiring fossil fuel companies to cover the costs of dealing with the fallout of climate change, such as increased flooding or increased wildfires.

Do you support requiring fossil fuel companies to cover the costs of dealing with the fallout of climate change, such as increased flooding or increased wildfires?



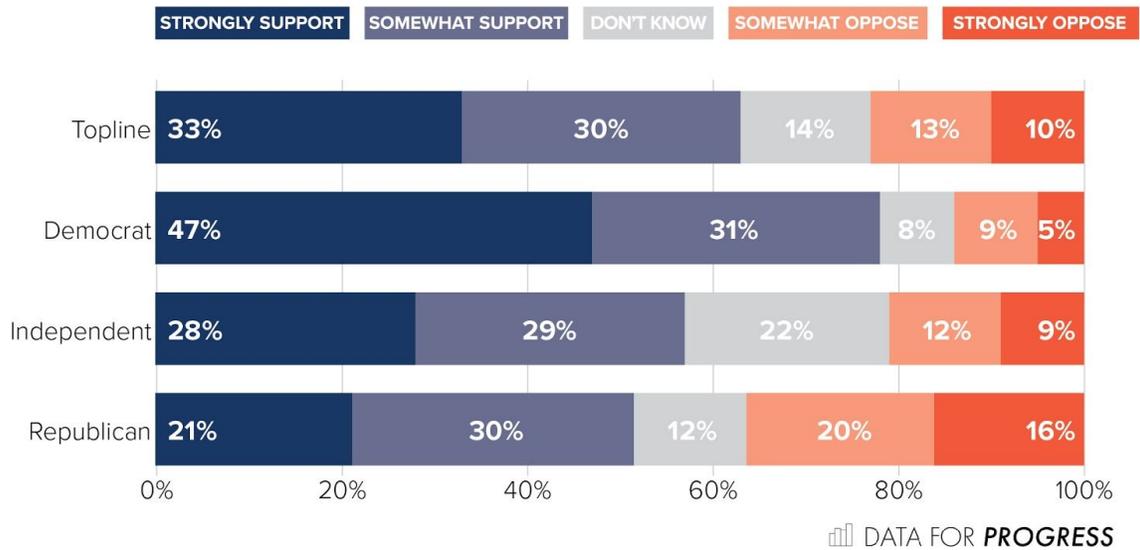
In addition, 54% of likely voters, including 47% of independent voters and 41% of Republicans, said they would support a local or state law enforcement official who sued the fossil fuel industry to help cover the costs associated with climate change.

Would you support your attorney general or your district attorney suing the fossil fuel industry to help cover the costs of the damages that climate change has created?

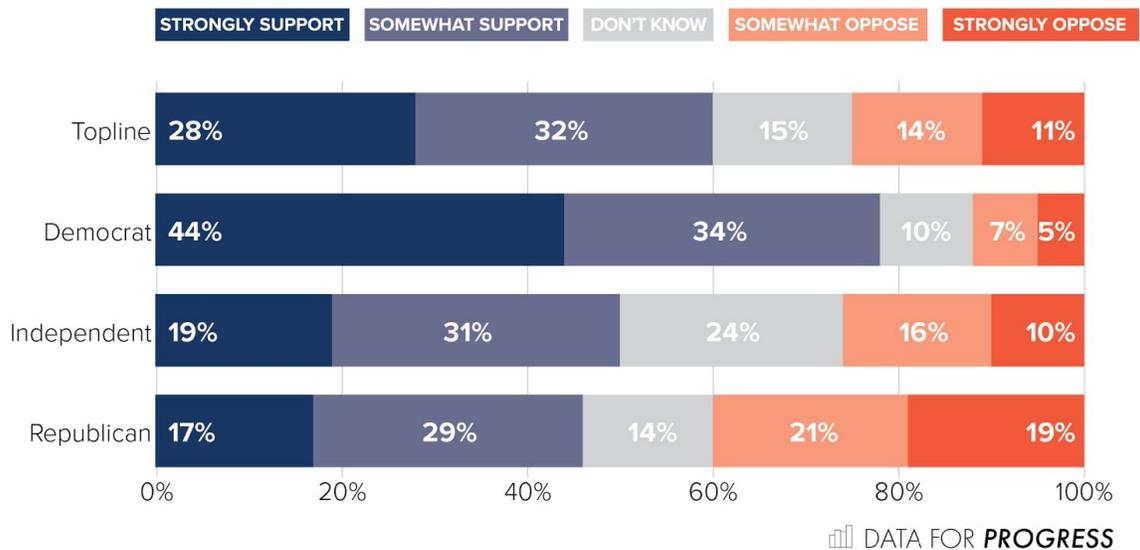


A full 60% of those polled, said that they would support their elected officials in joining people, often young people, to bring lawsuits to ensure that regulatory laws are followed. And 63% of those polled, including 51% of Republicans, said they would go further, supporting their state’s governor in imposing stronger regulations on fossil fuel companies.

Would you support or oppose your state’s governor imposing stronger regulations on fossil fuel companies to ensure these companies work to stop climate change?



Do you support or oppose your state’s governor and/or attorney general joining in these legal cases to fight fossil fuel companies?



Polling Methodology

From 10/2/2020 to 10/3/2020 Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,106 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 +/- 2.9 percentage points.