

Climate Change in the American Mind

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Shifting Seas: The Law's Response to Changing Ocean Conditions
Roger Williams School of Law, November 2012

Agenda

1. Introduction to YPCCC
2. Overview of Public Opinion on Climate Change
3. Support for Policies
4. Introduction to the “Six Americas”



Introduction to YPCCC

Mission of YPCCC

1. To conduct research on public climate knowledge, risk perceptions, decision-making and behavior
2. To design and test new strategies to engage the public in climate science and solutions
3. To empower educators and communicators – including in the faith community - with the knowledge and tools they need to more effectively engage their audiences

YPCCC Projects

Research

National: Climate Change in the American Mind

International: India, China, UK, Spain, Israel, Malta

Global: The Gallup World Poll

State & Local: Alaska, Florida, New York City, NW Arctic Borough

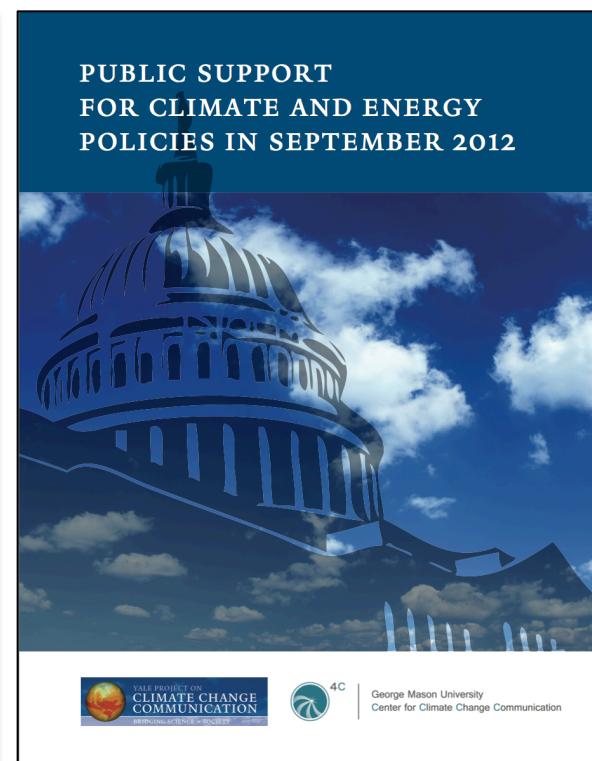
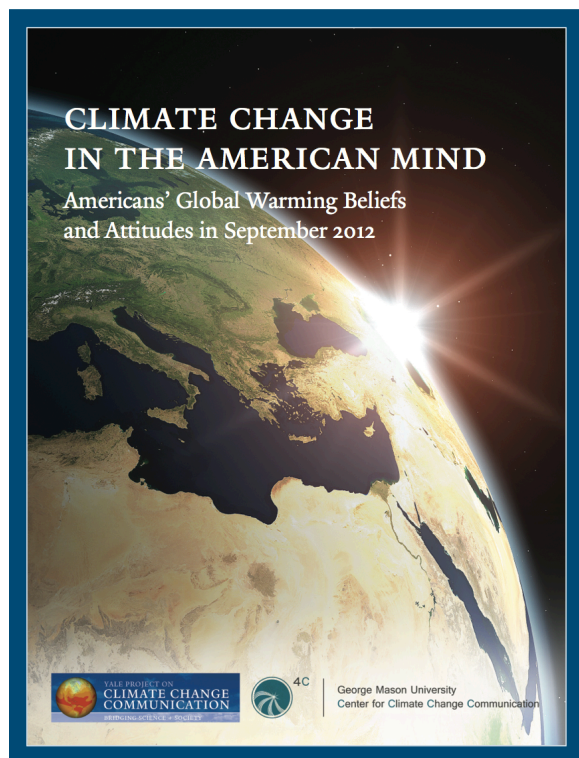
Outreach

The Yale Forum on Climate Change & The Media

Yale Roundtables on Climate Science for Journalists

TV Weathercasters as Climate Change Educators

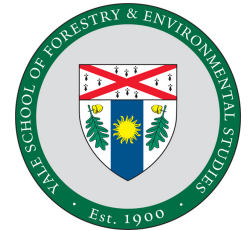
Selected Publications



A Team Effort



George Mason University
Center for Climate Change Communication

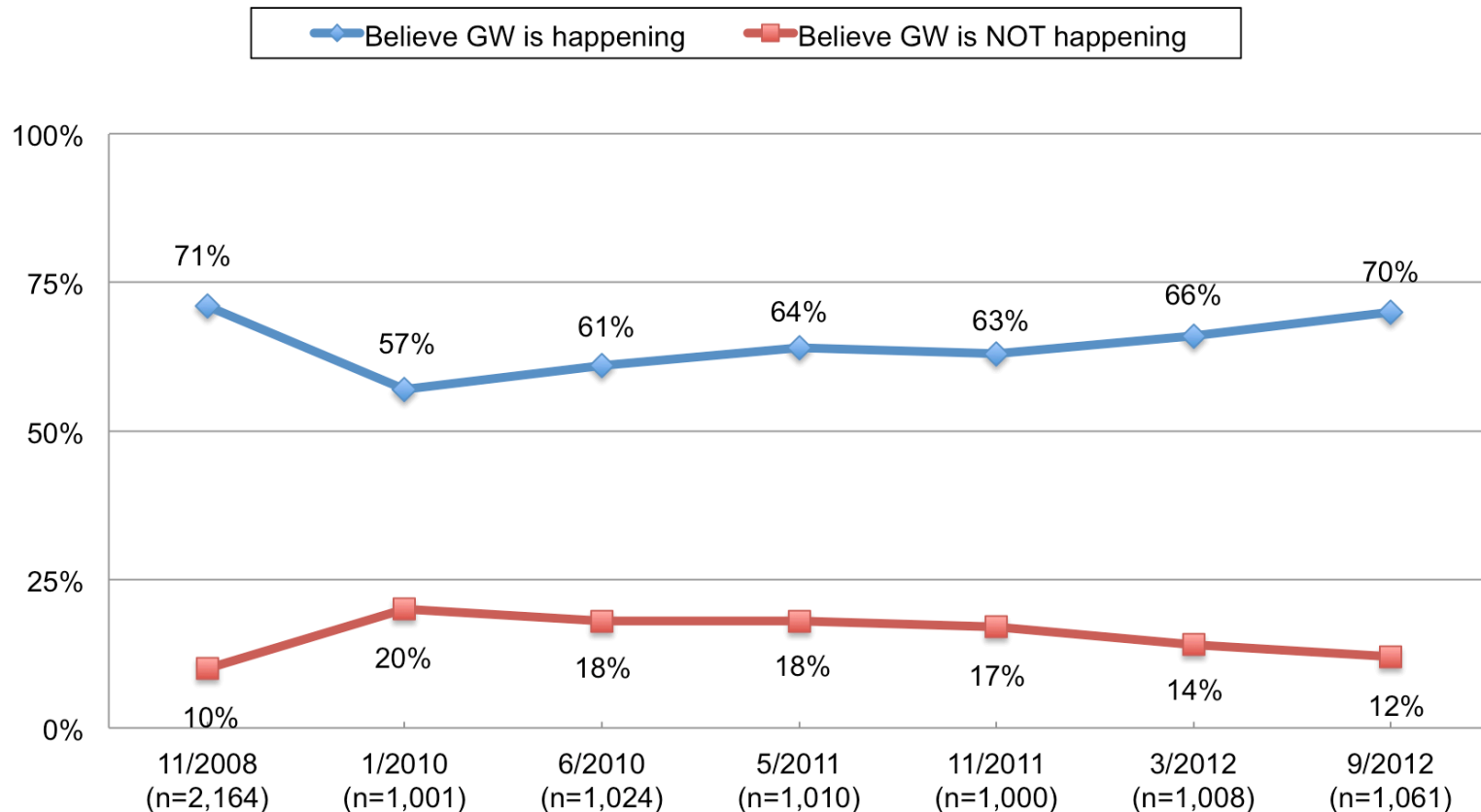




Overview of Public Opinion on Climate Change

Perceived Reality of Global Warming

Growing Majority of Americans Believe Global Warming Is Happening - Fewer Believe It Is Not -



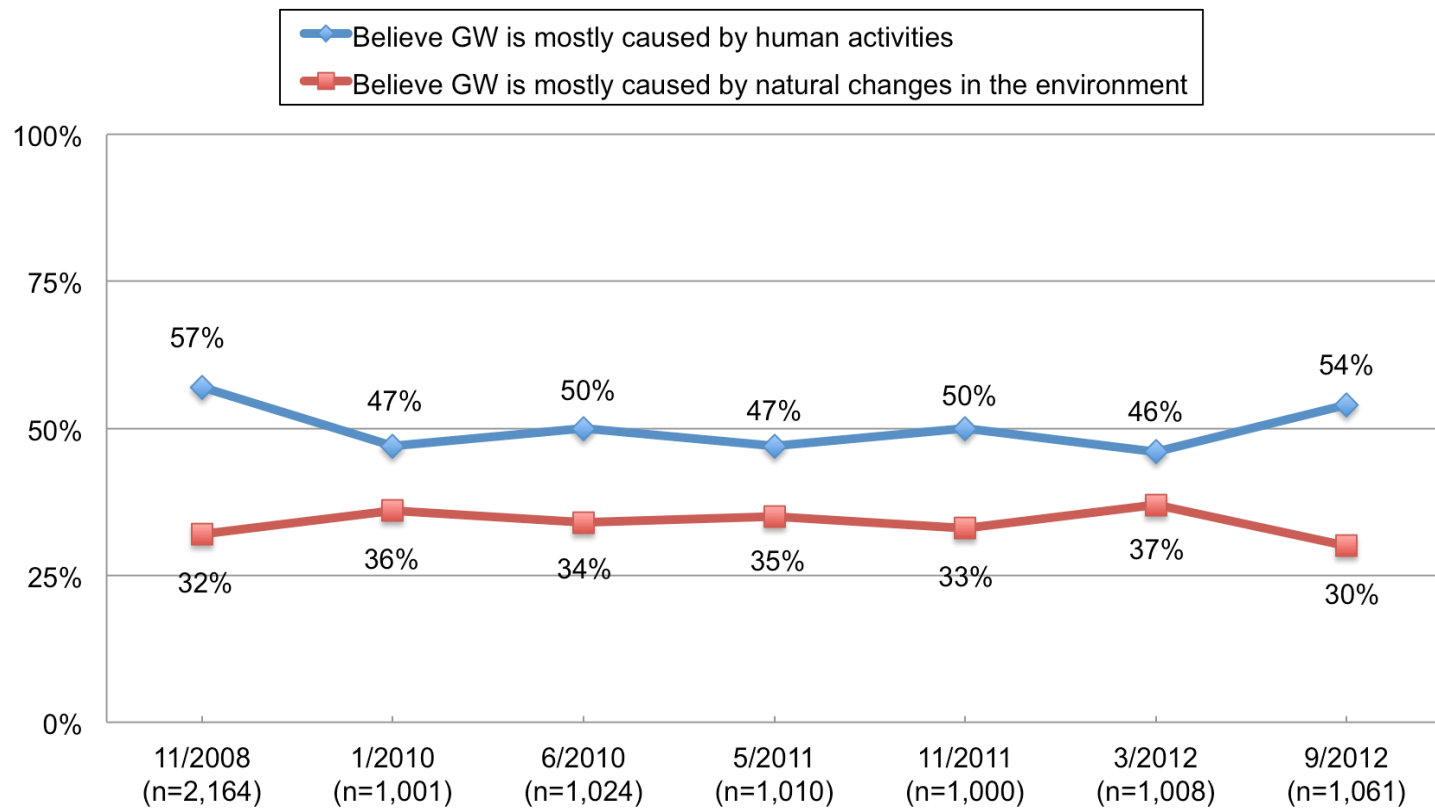
Do you think global warming is happening?

Base: Americans 18+.

Perceived Cause

A New Majority Believes Global Warming Is Human Caused

- Fewer Believe It Is Due Mostly to Natural Changes -

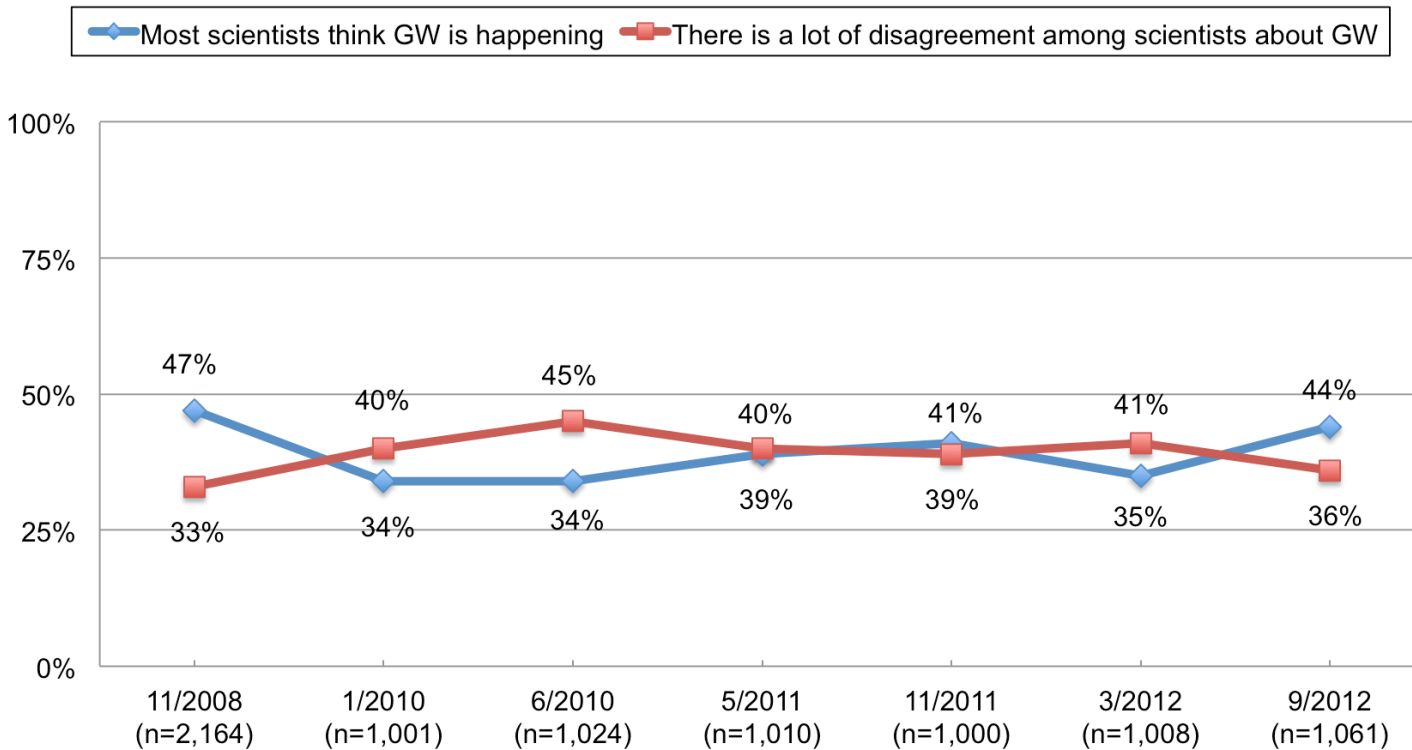


Assuming global warming is happening, do you think it is...

Base: Americans 18+.

Perceived Agreement Among Scientists

More Americans Believe Scientists Agree Global Warming Is Happening - Fewer Believe Scientists Disagree -

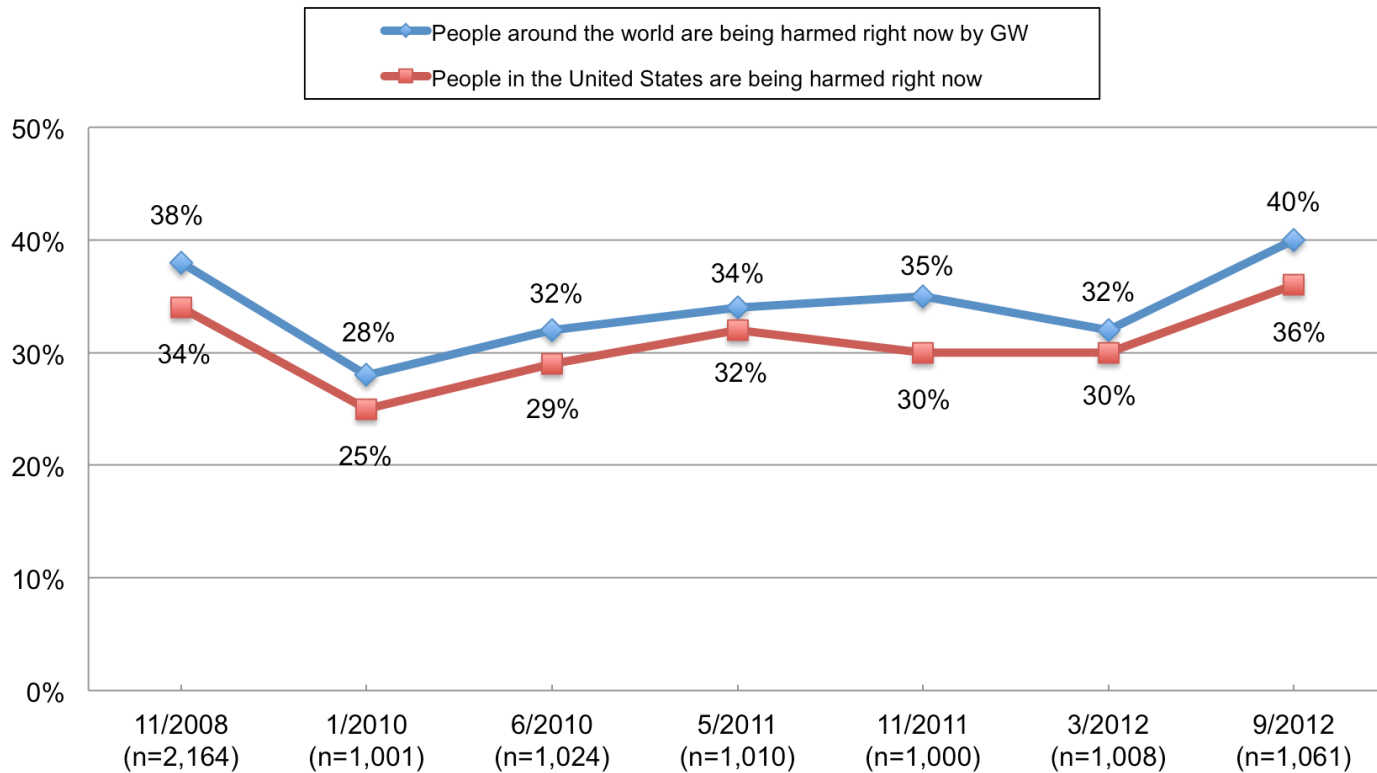


Which comes closest to your own view?

Base: Americans 18+.

Perception of Current Harm

More Say Global Warming Is Harming People Now



When do you think global warming will start to harm people...?

Base: Americans 18+.

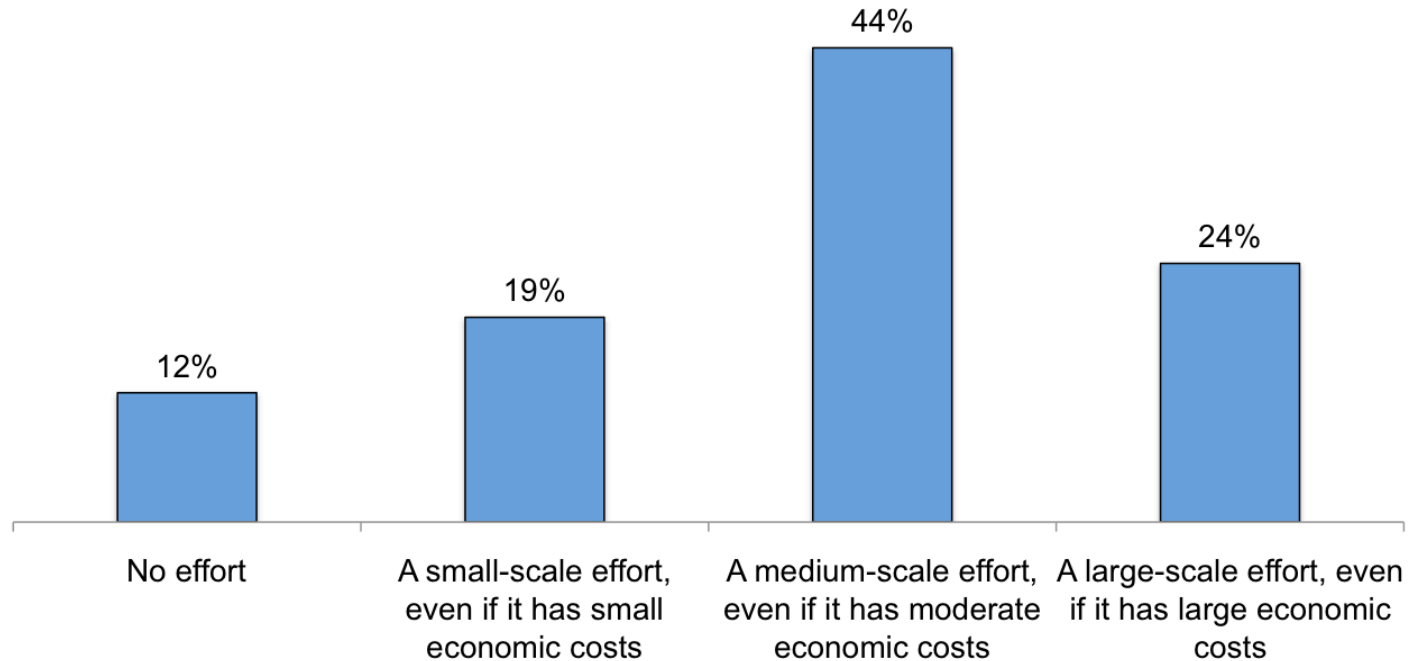


Support for Policies

Support for Efforts to Reduce Global Warming

A Large Majority of Americans Support a U.S. Effort to Reduce Global Warming, Even if It Has Economic Costs

How big of an effort should the U.S. make to reduce global warming?

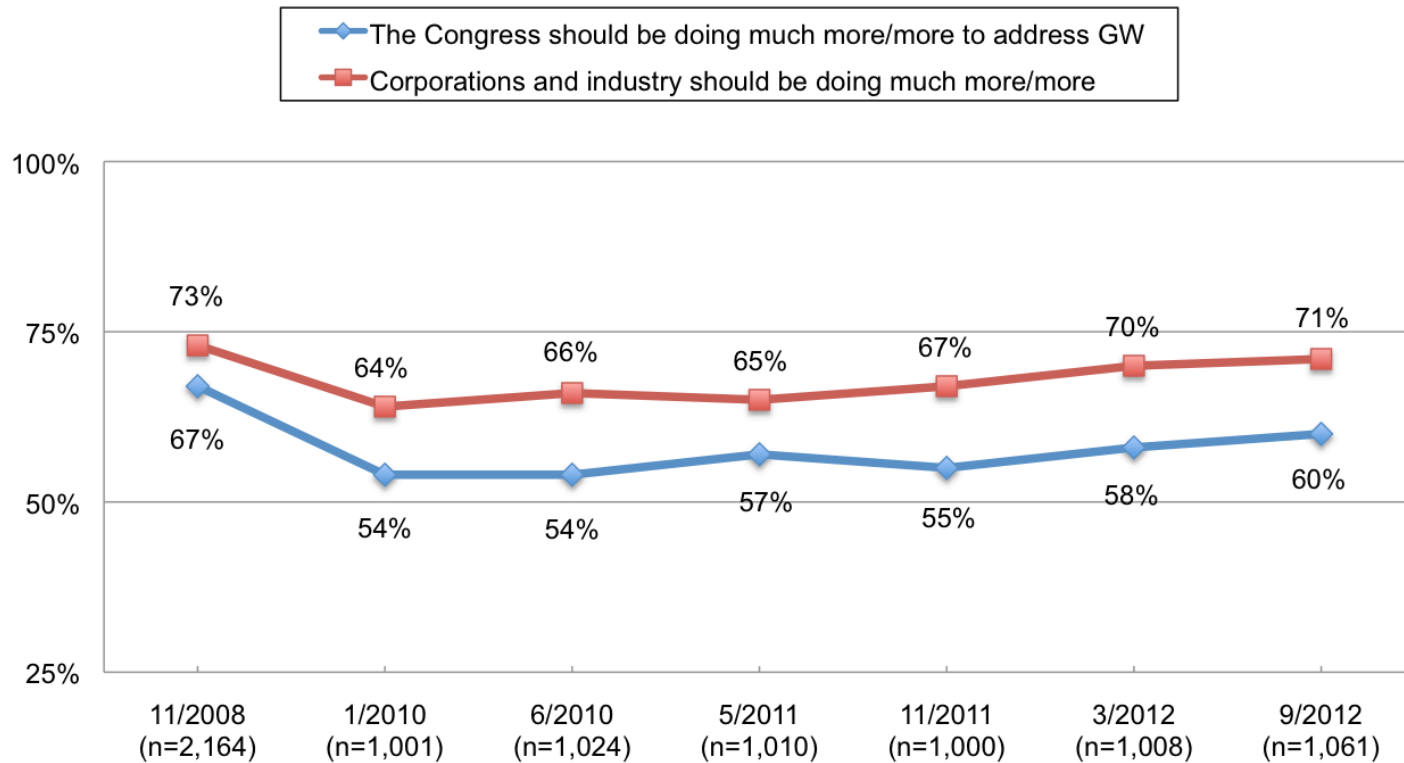


How big of an effort should the United States make to reduce global warming?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,061)

Who Should Address Global Warming?

Growing Majorities of Americans Say Corporations, Industry, and Congress Should Do More to Address Global Warming

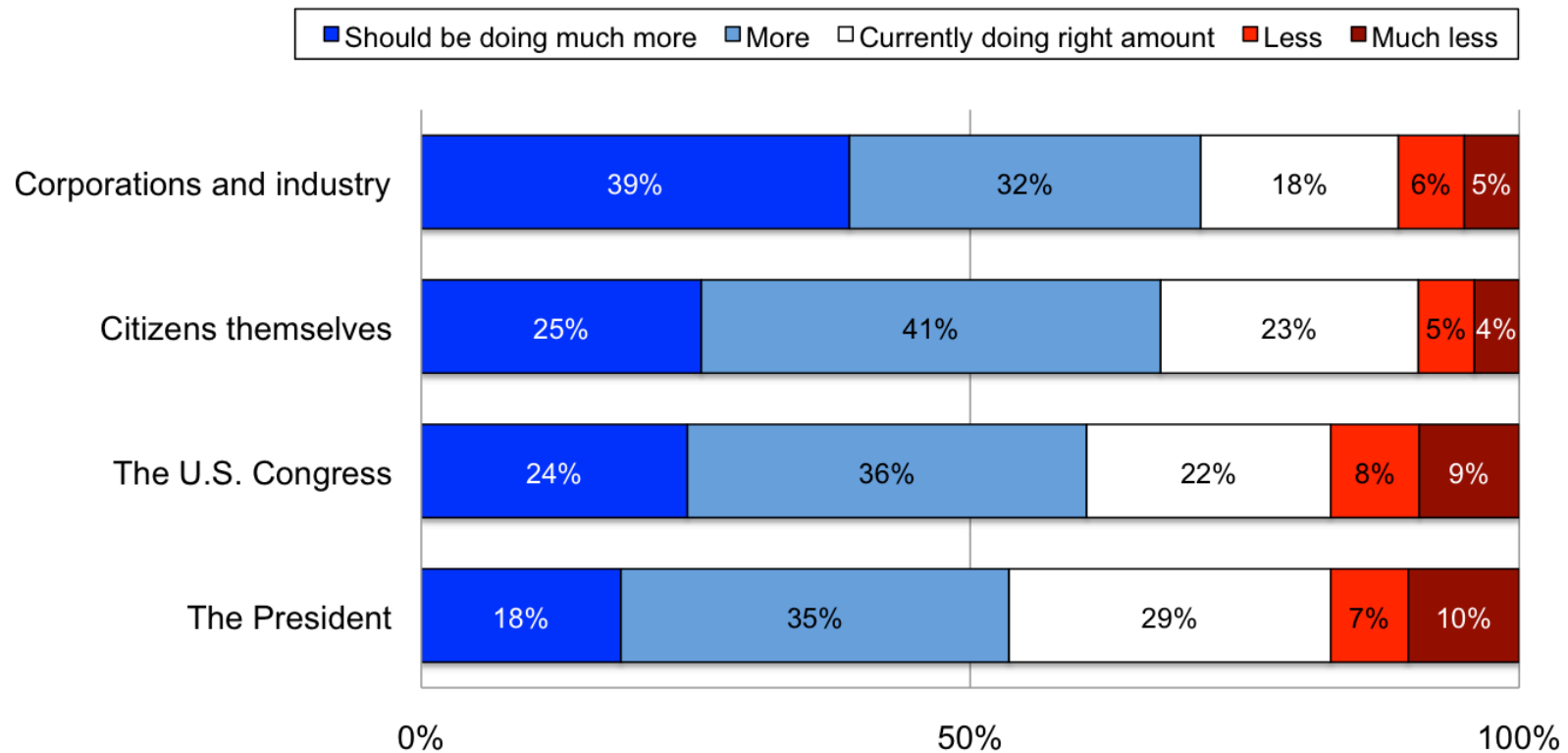


Do you think each of the following should be doing more or less to address global warming?

Base: Americans 18+.

Who Should Address Global Warming? (Cont'd.)

Americans Are Most Likely to Say Corporations and Industry and Citizens Themselves Should Be Doing More to Address Global Warming

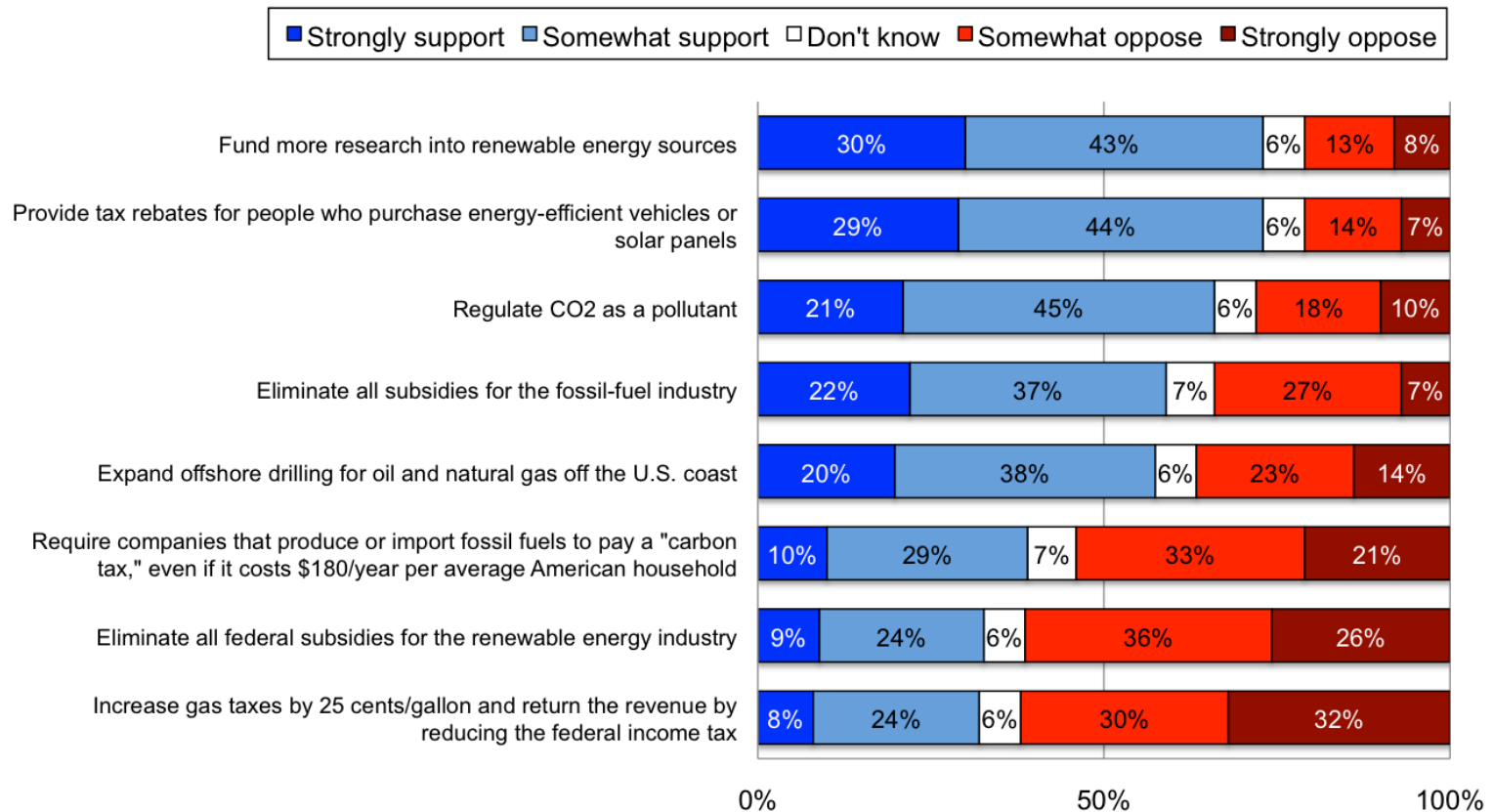


Do you think each of the following should be doing more or less to address global warming?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,061).

Support for Specific Policies

Majorities of Americans Support More Research Into Renewable Energy, Providing Tax Rebates for Energy-Efficient Cars or Solar Panels, and Regulating CO₂ as a Pollutant



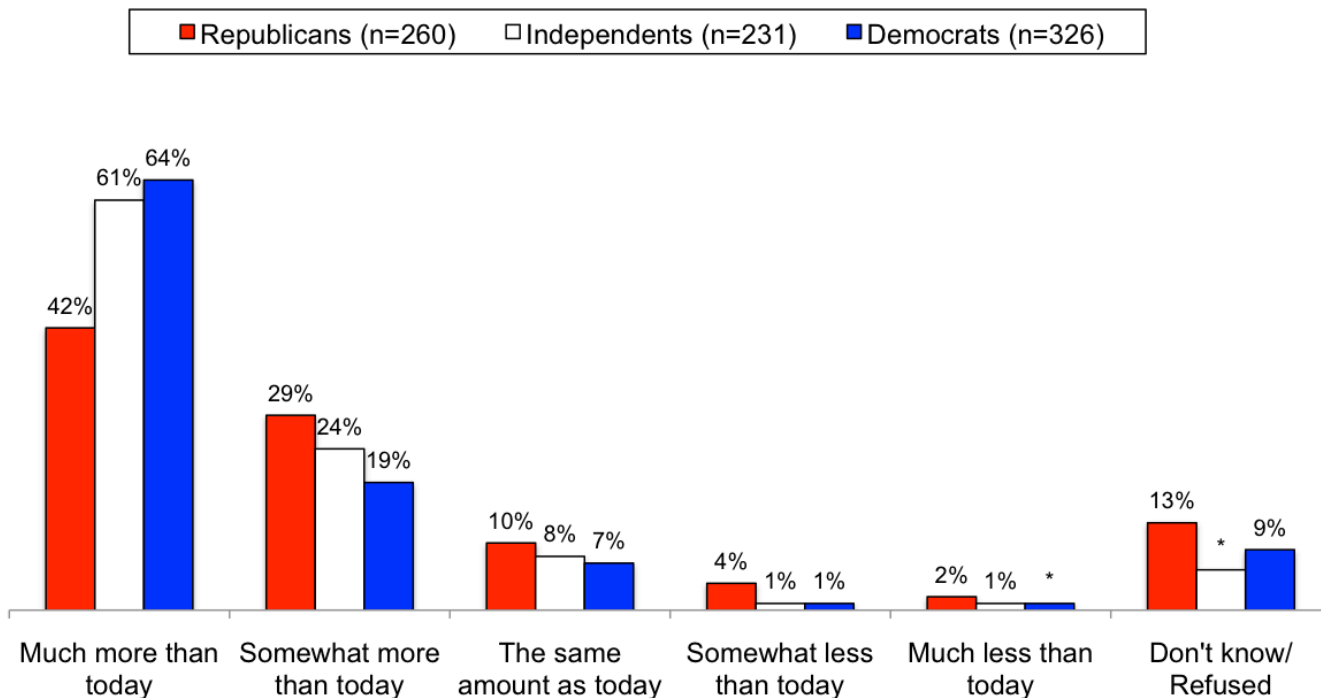
How much do you support or oppose the following policies?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,061).

Use of Renewable Energy in the Future

There Is Bipartisan Agreement That the U.S. Should Use More Renewable Energy in the Future

In the future, do you think the United States should use renewable energy sources (solar, wind, and geothermal) less, more, or the same amount as we do today?



Base: Americans registered to vote 18+.

A satellite image of Earth showing North and Central America. The image is a high-resolution view from space, showing the continents of North and Central America, the surrounding oceans, and various cloud patterns. The colors are naturalistic, with blues for the oceans, greens and browns for the land, and whites for the clouds.

Introduction to the “Six Americas”

Global Warming's "Six Americas"

Alarmed

Concerned

Cautious

Disengaged

Doubtful

Dismissive

March
2012
n = 992

13%

26%

29%

6%

15%

10%



Highest Belief in Global Warming
Most Concerned
Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming
Least Concerned
Least Motivated

Proportion represented by area

Source: Yale / George Mason University



Global Warming's “Six Americas”



Alarmed (13%) Most engaged with the issue; convinced it is happening; it's human-caused; a serious and urgent threat. They have already made changes in their own lives and want to do more.

Likely to be women, middle-aged, college educated, moderate to liberal politically.



Concerned (26%) Also persuaded global warming is real, serious and requires policy intervention; but less involved and less likely to reduce their carbon footprint.

Closely resemble the American norm—ethnically and income wise—although with relatively stronger egalitarian values and a greater likelihood of being moderate politically.



Cautious (29%) Believe global warming is a problem, but not as firm in their beliefs; don't perceive it as a *personal* threat; feel little urgency to act.

Evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, exhibit fairly low civic engagement and tend to hold traditional religious beliefs.

Global Warming's "Six Americas" (Cont'd.)



Disengaged (6%) Less focused on the issue and are most likely to say they could change their minds about it.

Demographically similar to the cautious but tend to be less educated, report lower incomes, and are more likely to be minority women.



Doubtful (15%) Split evenly between those who believe global warming is happening, those who don't, and those who don't know. The most likely to attribute climate change to natural causes, believe it will harm people only in the distant future if at all, and say that no further policy action is needed.

Older, white, better-educated Republican men with strong individualistic values.

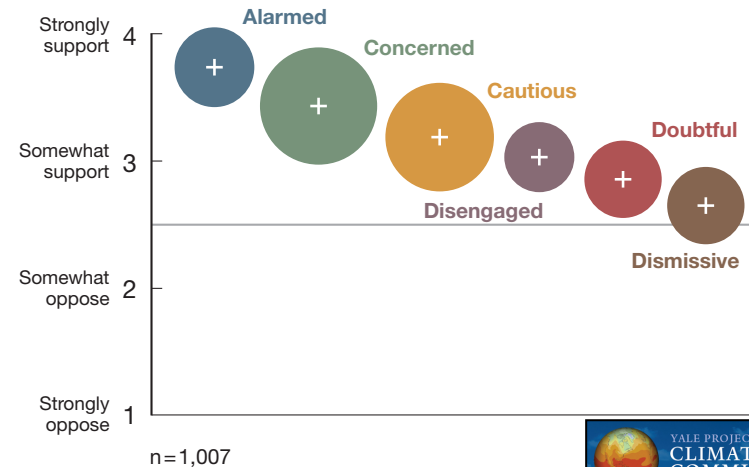
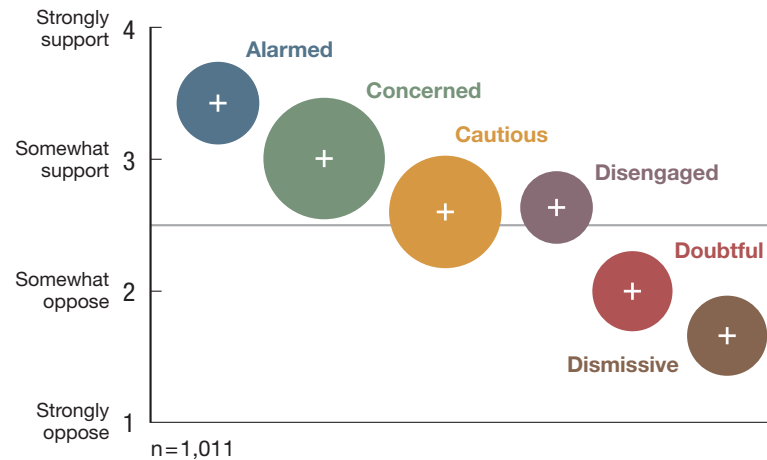
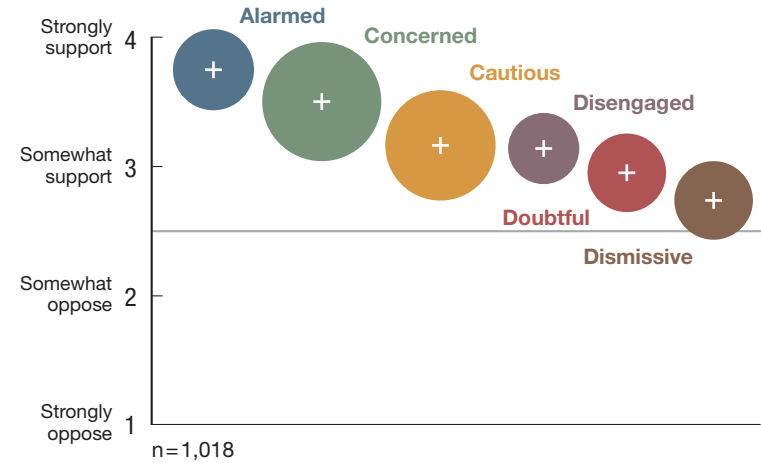
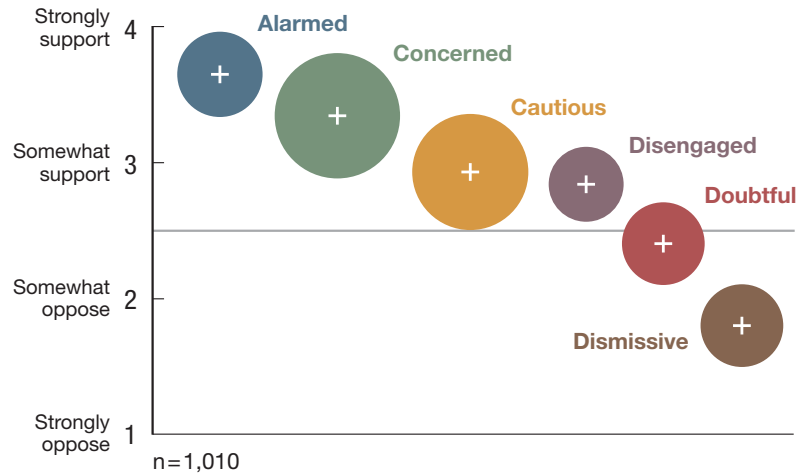


Dismissive (10%) Are in some sense like the alarmed: they are very actively engaged on the issue, but on the other side. Global warming is not happening and is not a threat. They strongly oppose a policy response.

They are typically male and politically conservative and active and hold firm traditional religious beliefs. Strongly individualistic and reject most government intervention.

Support for Climate & Energy Policies

(Mean ratings)



“If you could ask an expert on global warming one question, which question would you ask?”

What can the world do to reduce global warming? Is there still time?

Is it happening?
What harm will it cause?

How do you know global warming is happening or human-caused?

Alarmed & Concerned

Cautious & Disengaged

Doubtful & Dismissive



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