



**THIRD WAY**

Rural Voter Climate Change Survey  
Executive Summary  
September 2019

# Methodology

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**Date conducted** August 29, 2019 – September 10, 2019

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Total: 1,600 Likely Rural Voters

**Sample Size** 200 likely rural voters in each of the following states:  
Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Pennsylvania,  
Ohio, Alabama

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**Methodology** Online Survey

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**“Obama-Trump Voters”** Voted for Obama in 2012, and Trump in 2016

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# Executive Summary

- Rural Voters believe Climate Change is having a serious impact, but don't believe that it is affecting their communities and families
- They don't support an "all-out mobilization," instead favoring a measured approach focused on protecting jobs, creating new jobs and preserving their way of life
- Rural voters believe they have a valuable voice to add to the conversation, but believe that political leaders across the spectrum are ignoring their viewpoints and lifestyle
- They support investments in direct incentives and research, but are skeptical of "transformational change" and bans on oil and gas exploration



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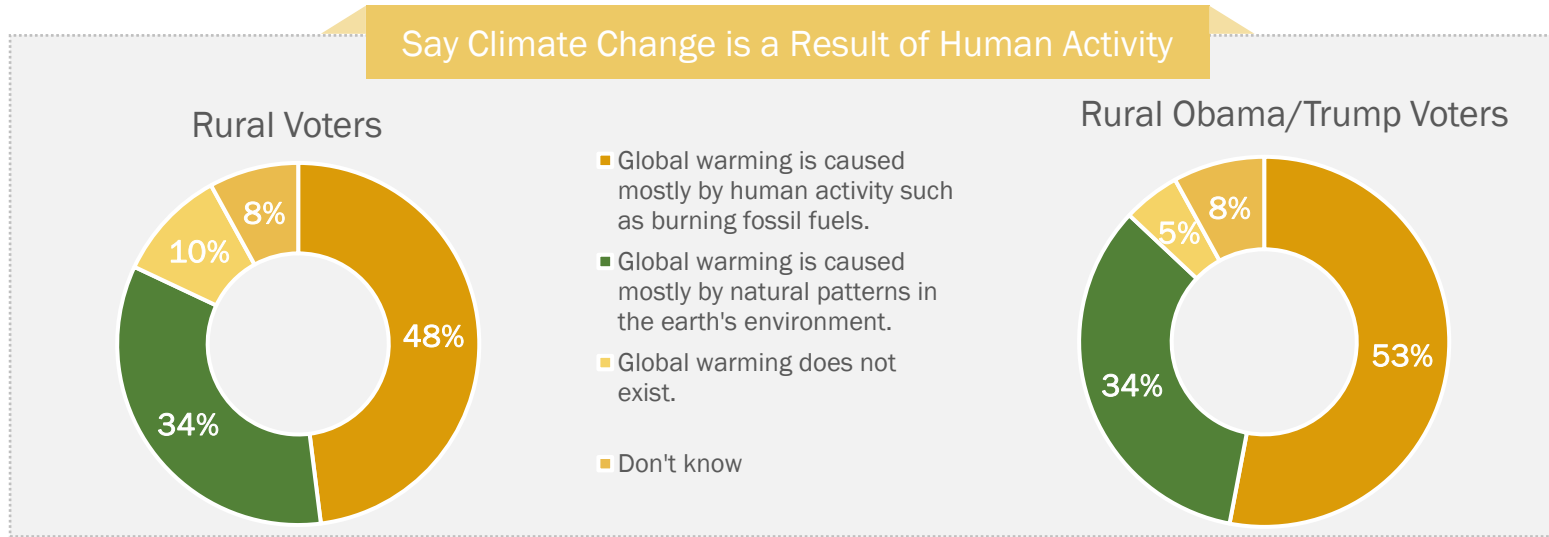
Rural Voters believe climate change is having a serious impact, but don't believe that it is affecting their communities and families



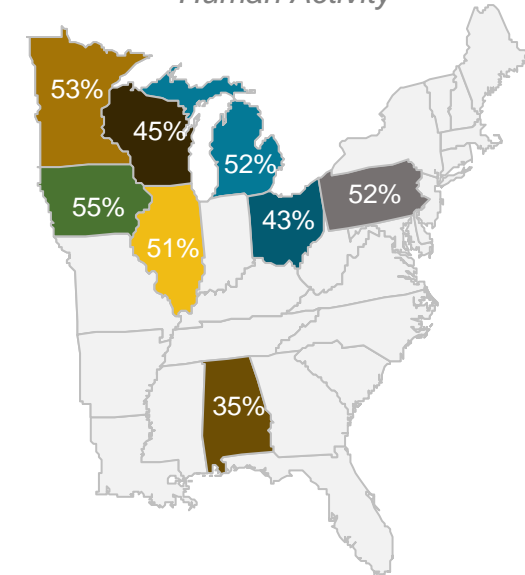
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# Rural Voters Believe Climate Change is Real, with a Majority of Obama/Trump Voters Saying it is a Result of Human Activity

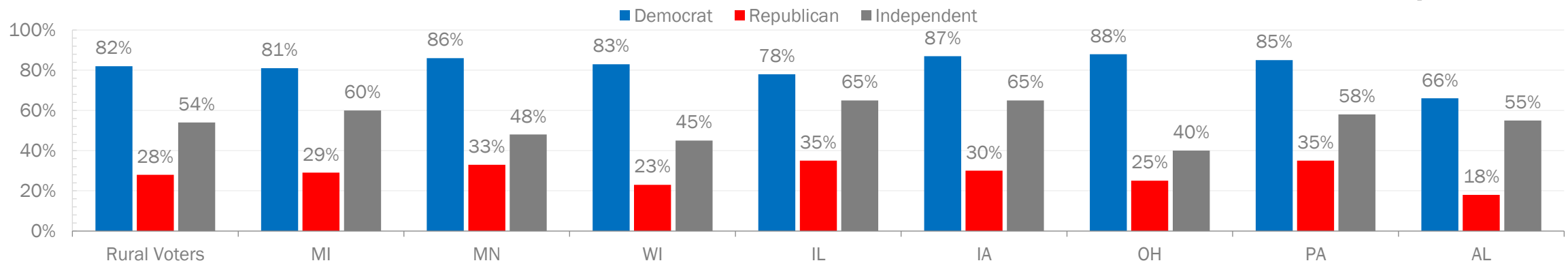
While a sizable minority say that it is “the results of natural patterns,” those rural voters also acknowledge that there have been recognizable changes in our climate



State by State: Climate Change is a Result of Human Activity



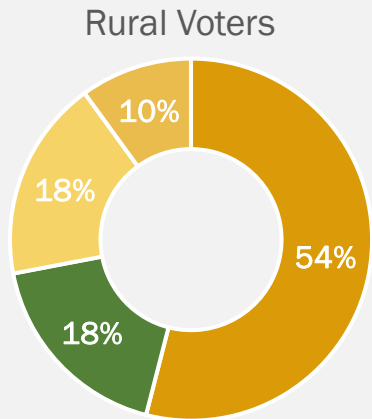
State by State Party Breakout: Climate Change is a Result of Human Activity



# Many Rural Voters Believe it is a Problem that is having a Serious Impact Now

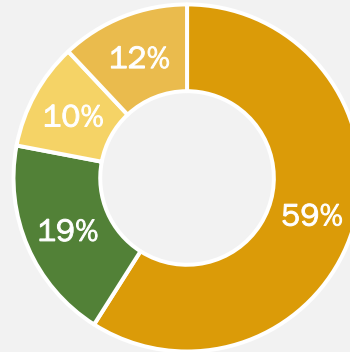
There is general acknowledgment of the broad impact that climate change is having – or could have in the future

## Say Climate Change Has A Serious Impact Now

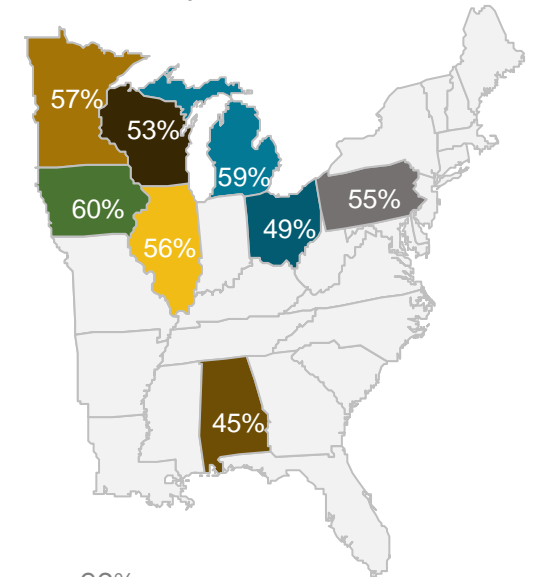


- Climate change is an environmental problem that is causing a serious impact now.
- The impact of climate change won't happen until sometime in the future.
- Climate change won't have a serious impact at all.
- Don't know

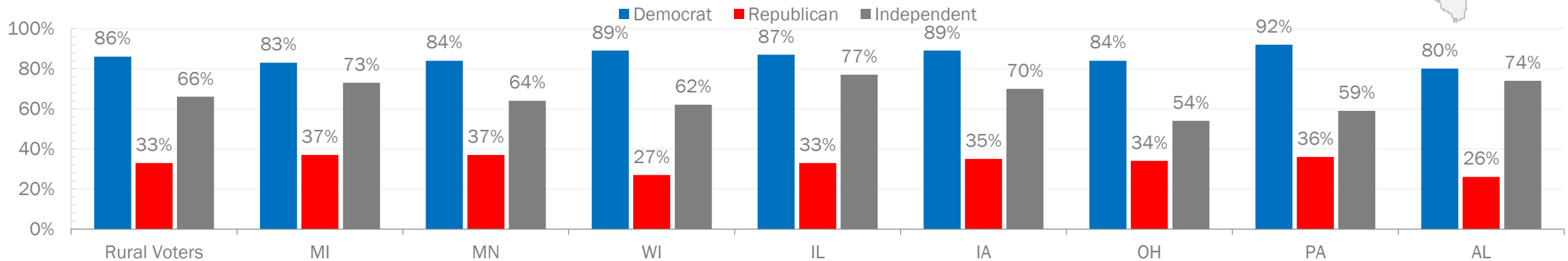
## Rural Obama/Trump Voters



## State by State: Climate Change Has a Serious Impact Now











## State by State Party Breakout: Climate Change Has a Serious Impact Now

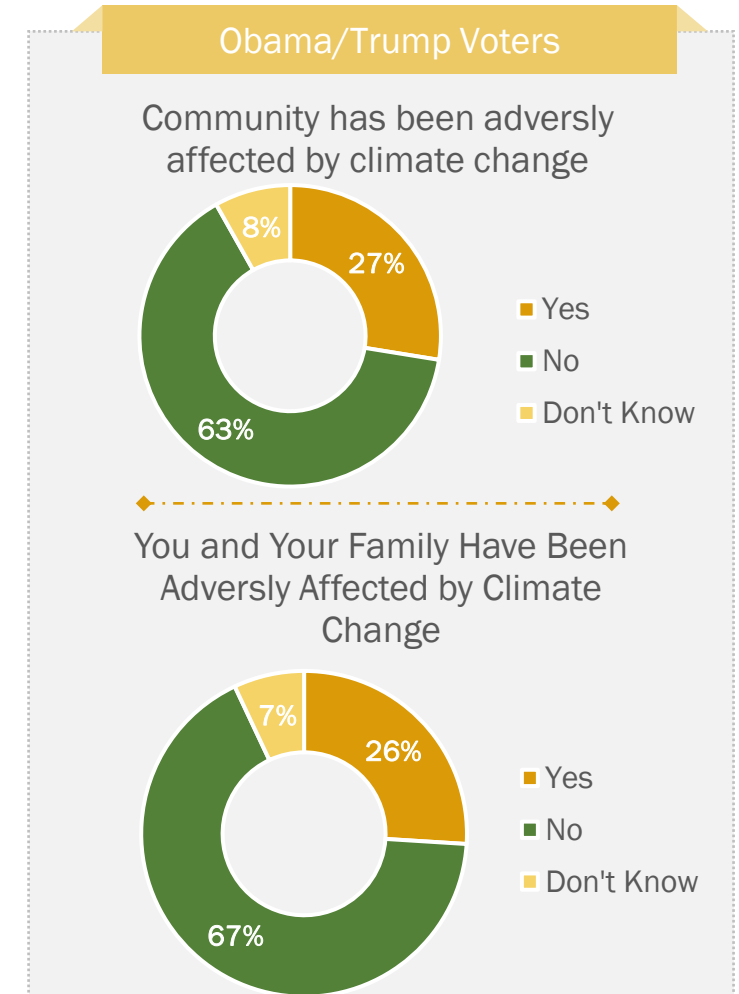


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# However, Few Rural Voters in these states Believe Climate Change is having an impact on them or their families

While they acknowledge the presence of climate change and its broad impact, these rural voters are not seeing its impact in their daily lives – or that of their community

	Your <u>community</u> has been adversely affected by climate change.			You and your <u>family</u> have been adversely affected by climate change.		
	All	% saying "Yes"		All	% saying "Yes"	
		Democrat	Republican		Democrat	Republican
<b>Rural Voters</b>	<b>30%</b>	55%	14%	<b>25%</b>	45%	12%
	<b>35%</b>	61%	16%	<b>30%</b>	50%	13%
	<b>29%</b>	48%	16%	<b>24%</b>	42%	12%
	<b>32%</b>	62%	16%	<b>26%</b>	51%	14%
	<b>28%</b>	43%	13%	<b>26%</b>	41%	15%
	<b>27%</b>	47%	8%	<b>19%</b>	38%	7%
	<b>28%</b>	55%	16%	<b>19%</b>	34%	11%
	<b>29%</b>	56%	15%	<b>26%</b>	50%	14%
	<b>31%</b>	68%	14%	<b>26%</b>	55%	12%



# Perhaps as a result, climate change is a low priority across states and audiences – even among Democrats in most states. Immigration and Border Security Reign

<i>Which of the following issues is MOST IMPORTANT for the federal government to address over the next year?</i>			Most Important Issue By State: Immigration and Border Security: 22%	<i>Which of the following issues is MOST IMPORTANT for the federal government to address over the next year?</i> <i>(Climate Change + Damage from Severe Weather Patterns Combined)</i>			
Climate Change	Damage from severe weather patterns	Combined		Democrat	Republican	Independent	
Rural Voters	3%	1%	4%	Immigration and Border Security: 22%	10%	1%	5%
	4%	1%	5%	Immigration and Border Security: 22%	9%	0%	8%
	4%	2%	6%	Healthcare: 23%	16%	0%	2%
	5%	0%	5%	Immigration and Border Security: 22%	10%	3%	2%
	3%	1%	4%	Immigration and Border Security: 16%	7%	2%	6%
	2%	1%	3%	Immigration and Border Security: 26%	7%	0%	5%
	3%	1%	4%	Immigration and Border Security: 23%	10%	1%	9%
	5%	2%	7%	Immigration and Border Security: 24%	21%	1%	10%
	1%	1%	2%	Immigration and Border Security: 26%	4%	1%	3%
Rural Obama/Trump Voter	2%	2%	4%	Healthcare: 23%			

The most important issue for rural voters is **Immigration and border security** followed by health care. Among Republicans, Immigration and border security is the top issue (35%). But among Democrats, healthcare is the top issue (28%), dwarfing climate change (10%).

After healthcare, **jobs and economic growth (9%)** is next in salience, followed by federal spending and the deficit.





They don't support an "all-out mobilization," instead favoring a measured approach focused on protecting jobs, creating new jobs and preserving their way of life



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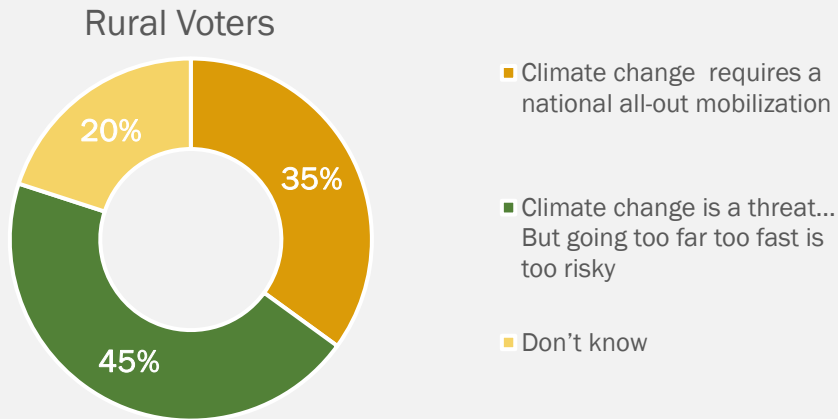
# An All-Out Mobilization Message Fails to Resonate, particularly among Obama/Trump Voters

Climate change is the **defining challenge of our time and requires a national all-out mobilization**. We need to meet the climate challenge head-on, including transforming our economy through groundbreaking government policies focused on **dramatically reducing carbon emissions while creating jobs building a clean energy economy**.

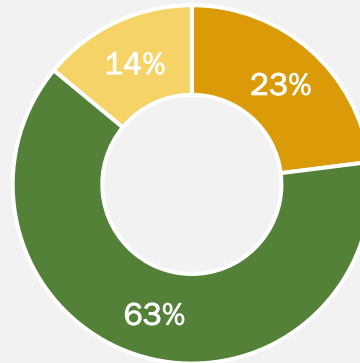
VS

Climate change is a threat, and we can see it in more severe weather than we've ever seen in our lifetime. **But going too far too fast is too risky**. The best way to address it is through concrete steps that balance our needs to **address the challenge while also protecting jobs and our way of life**.

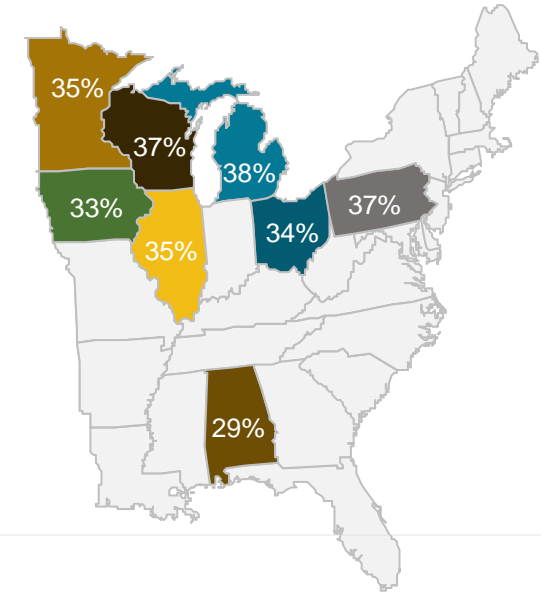
Say Climate Change Requires National All-Out Mobilization



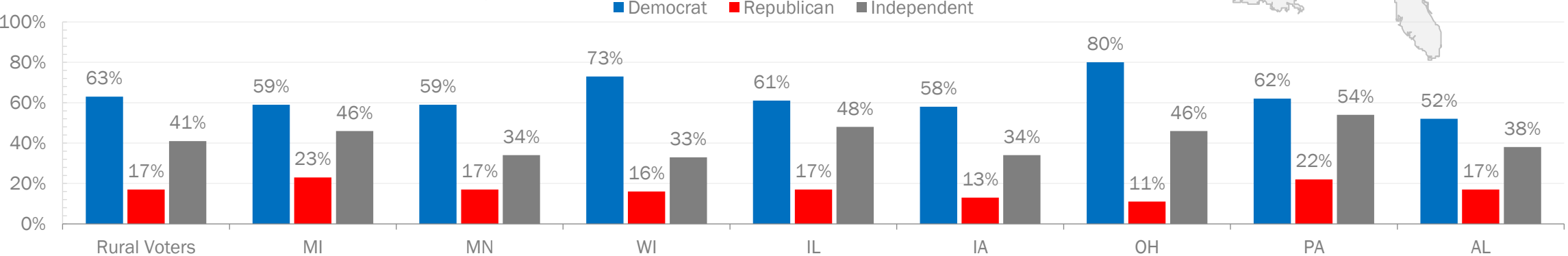
Rural Obama/Trump Voters



State by State: Say "requires a national all-out mobilization"



State by State Party Breakout: Say Climate change requires a national all-out mobilization

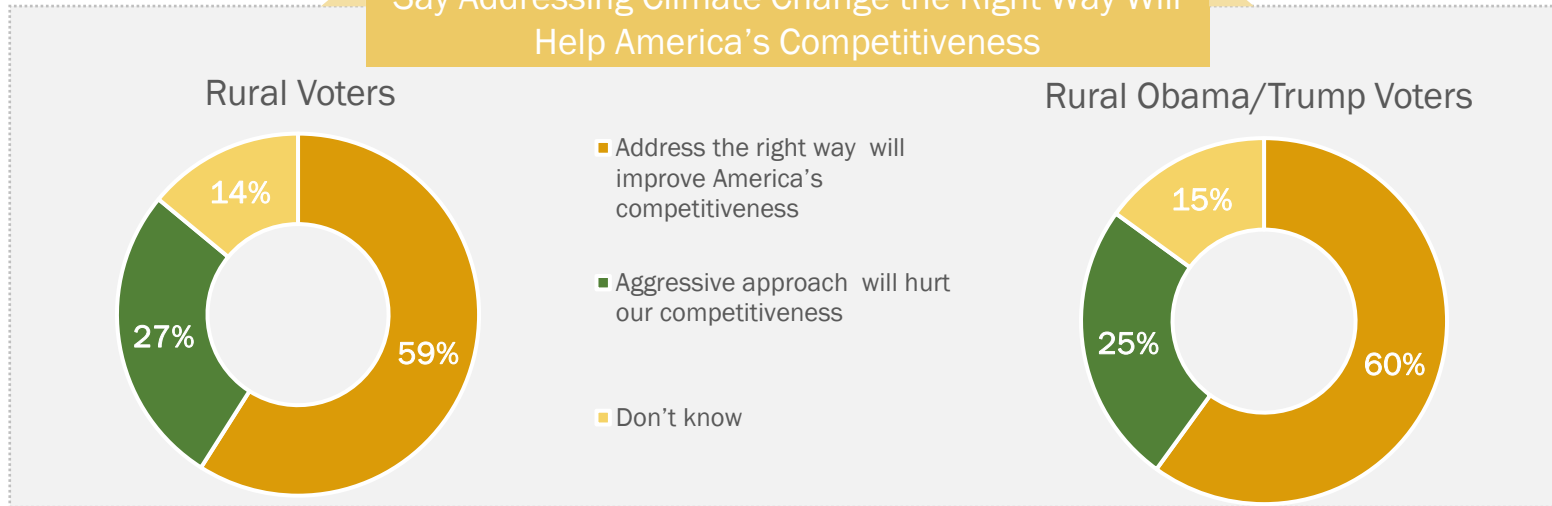


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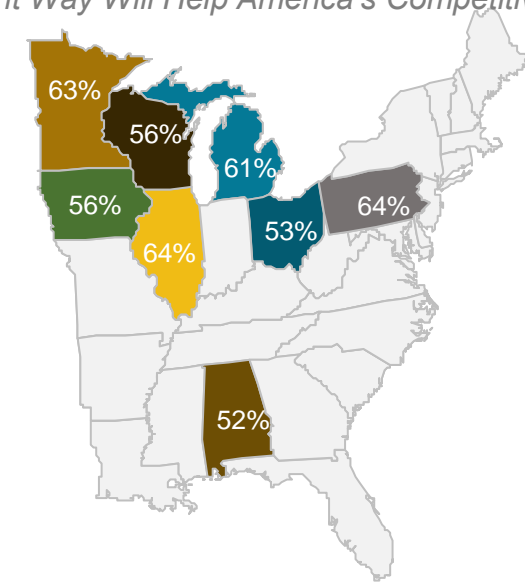
# Yet there is a kernel of optimism – rural voters say that doing this “the right way” can help Improve American Competitiveness

Rural voters see an upside to research and investment in clean technology in our competitiveness on the world stage, agreeing that if done correctly “it will improve America’s competitiveness as we become a world leader in clean energy and technology, which will create new, high paying jobs.”

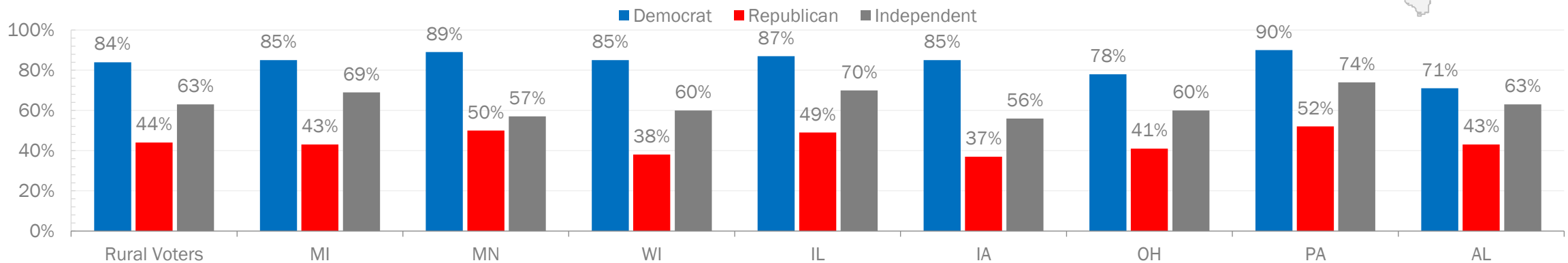
Say Addressing Climate Change the Right Way Will Help America’s Competitiveness



State by State: Say Addressing Climate Change the Right Way Will Help America’s Competitiveness



State by State Party Breakout: Say Addressing Climate Change the Right Way Will Help America’s Competitiveness

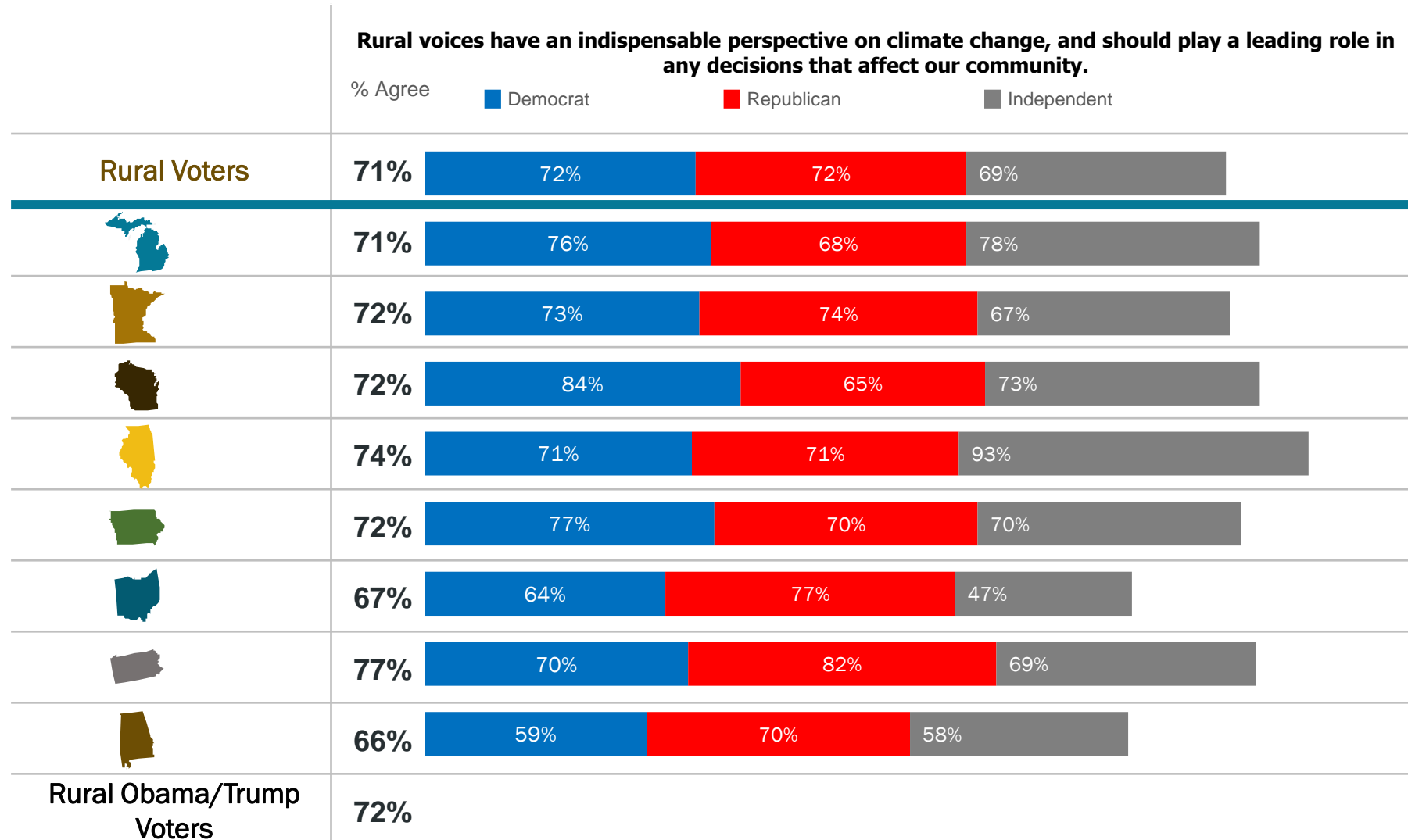


Rural voters believe they have a valuable voice to add to the conversation, but believe that political leaders across the spectrum are ignoring their viewpoints and lifestyle



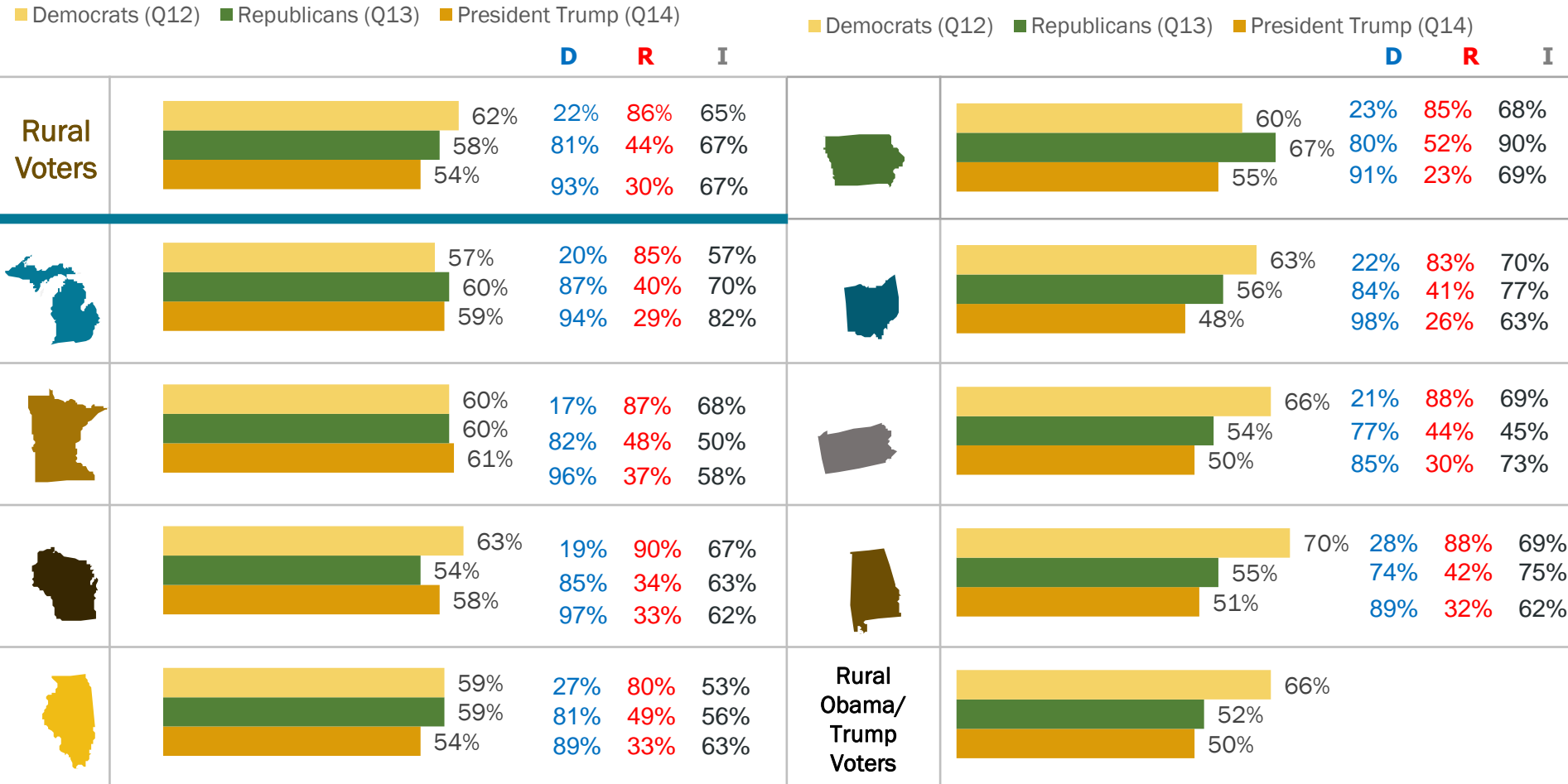
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# Strong majorities believe that rural voices should play a leading role in the conversation about climate change....



# ... yet they feel that stakeholders across the spectrum don't consider the rural way of life into account when discussing climate change

**Saying "No" when asked if [Democrats (Q12), Republicans (Q13), or President Trump (Q14)] considers their way of life when talking about climate change**



62% of rural voters in the target states DO NOT believe that **the Democratic Party, including presidential candidates and other elected officials** and candidates, consider them and their way of life when talking about climate change.

58% of rural voters in the target states DO NOT believe that **the Republican Party, including presidential candidates and other elected officials** and candidates, consider them and their way of life when talking about climate change.

54% rural voters in the target states DO NOT believe that the **President Trump** considers them and their way of life when talking about climate change.



Perhaps as a result, rural voters show extremely low level of trust in government to handle climate change “the right way,” putting more faith in scientists, farmers and ranchers, and people in their community

**Q20. Next you will see the same list. After each, please say how much you TRUST each to handle climate change the right way. Do you trust each a great deal, some, just a bit, or not at all?**

**% Trust A Great Deal**

- People in your community, like your friends and neighbors
- Farmers and ranchers
- Scientists
- Local government
- State government
- Federal government

		D	R	I			D	R	I
Rural Voters	Community	23%	25%	29%	[Map of Iowa]	Community	15%	16%	39%
	Farmers and ranchers	23%	39%	33%		Farmers and ranchers	17%	33%	40%
	Scientists	62%	23%	36%		Scientists	64%	14%	36%
	Local government	11%	9%	8%		Local government	12%	11%	8%
	State government	7%	7%	3%		State government	4%	12%	5%
	Federal government	7%	6%	3%		Federal government	4%	4%	3%
[Map of Michigan]	Community	26%	17%	12%	[Map of Ohio]	Community	19%	29%	24%
	Farmers and ranchers	23%	37%	20%		Farmers and ranchers	16%	50%	39%
	Scientists	63%	23%	31%		Scientists	63%	17%	38%
	Local government	8%	5%	0%		Local government	7%	9%	9%
	State government	9%	7%	0%		State government	0%	3%	2%
	Federal government	9%	2%	0%		Federal government	5%	3%	1%
[Map of Minnesota]	Community	16%	20%	19%	[Map of Pennsylvania]	Community	30%	29%	34%
	Farmers and ranchers	22%	35%	16%		Farmers and ranchers	32%	41%	36%
	Scientists	59%	26%	23%		Scientists	59%	21%	31%
	Local government	8%	4%	3%		Local government	12%	8%	2%
	State government	10%	0%	3%		State government	13%	7%	1%
	Federal government	4%	1%	3%		Federal government	7%	7%	2%
[Map of Wisconsin]	Community	30%	30%	46%	[Map of Alabama]	Community	24%	32%	26%
	Farmers and ranchers	31%	33%	47%		Farmers and ranchers	18%	49%	27%
	Scientists	77%	28%	51%		Scientists	44%	25%	36%
	Local government	19%	8%	23%		Local government	8%	14%	11%
	State government	7%	8%	2%		State government	5%	13%	13%
	Federal government	10%	11%	2%		Federal government	7%	12%	6%
[Map of Illinois]	Community	27%	25%	31%	Rural Obama / Trump Voters	Community	27%		
	Farmers and ranchers	28%	31%	42%		Farmers and ranchers	32%		
	Scientists	63%	27%	45%		Scientists	33%		
	Local government	14%	11%	7%		Local government	12%		
	State government	7%	5%	3%		State government	8%		
	Federal government	7%	5%	14%		Federal government	10%		

These voters are extremely skeptical of “top-down” organizations when it comes to climate change.

They want an approach that **heeds scientists, but perhaps most important listens to the people in their community and takes their way of life into account**



They support investments in direct incentives and research, but are skeptical of “transformational change” and bans on oil and gas exploration

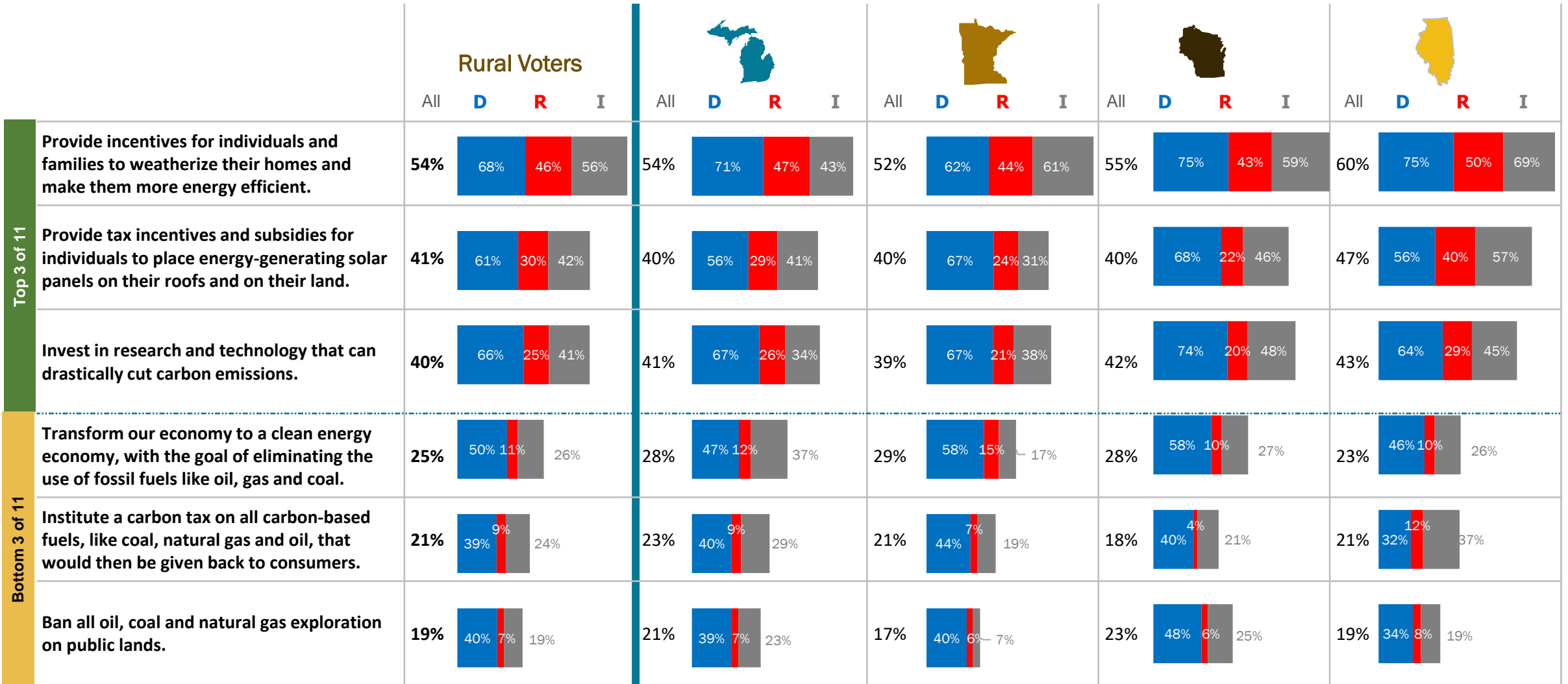


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# Straightforward, direct incentives and research are well-received by rural voters, while they are skeptical of “transformational change” and bans on oil and gas exploration

As is consistent throughout the survey, rural voters in these states express stronger support for concrete action that has clear value, and shy away from broader efforts that have the potential to negatively effect the rural economy and way of life







Top 3 of 11

Bottom 3 of 11



# Straightforward, direct incentives and research are well-received by rural voters, while they are skeptical of “transformational change” and bans on oil and gas exploration

(continued from previous page) As is consistent throughout the survey, rural voters in these states express stronger support for concrete action that has clear value, and shy away from broader efforts that have the potential to negatively effect the rural economy and way of life

					Rural Obama/Trump Voters
	All <b>D</b> <b>R</b> <b>I</b>	All <b>D</b> <b>R</b> <b>I</b>	All <b>D</b> <b>R</b> <b>I</b>	All <b>D</b> <b>R</b> <b>I</b>	
<b>Top 3 of 11</b>					
Provide incentives for individuals and families to weatherize their homes and make them more energy efficient.	52% 68% 43% 44%	48% 61% 44% 52%	59% 70% 51% 69%	51% 56% 47% 60%	58%
Provide tax incentives and subsidies for individuals to place energy-generating solar panels on their roofs and on their land.	37% 57% 26% 28%	38% 58% 26% 47%	46% 72% 31% 57%	42% 51% 38% 38%	37%
Invest in research and technology that can drastically cut carbon emissions.	42% 64% 27% 37%	37% 71% 19% 48%	41% 67% 29% 40%	36% 55% 28% 34%	34%
<b>Bottom 3 of 11</b>					
Transform our economy to a clean energy economy, with the goal of eliminating the use of fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal.	22% 43% 6% 18%	24% 49% 8% 37%	25% 52% 12% 24%	21% 43% 12% 22%	26%
Institute a carbon tax on all carbon-based fuels, like coal, natural gas and oil, that would then be given back to consumers.	23% 39% 16% 13%	20% 52% 5% 32%	17% 37% 7% 17%	21% 30% 13% 32%	19%
Ban all oil, coal and natural gas exploration on public lands.	18% 33% 7% 12%	19% 50% 3% 23%	19% 40% 7% 28%	17% 35% 8% 13%	14%

