



THIRD WAY

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ONE COUNTRY PROJECT-THIRD WAY POLL: A MAJORITY OF RURAL AMERICANS BELIEVE CLIMATE CHANGE IS HAVING AN IMPACT NOW, LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

A poll of 200 Likely Rural Voters in Illinois Shows Desire to Increase U.S. Competitiveness, Distrust of Both Parties

Washington, DC – The One Country Project and Third Way [released a poll of likely voters in rural communities in AL, IA, IL, MI, MN, OH, PA, and WI](#), which found respondents know climate change is happening and want practical solutions that help their communities.

Specifically, the survey of rural voters in Illinois, found 56 percent of respondents believe climate change is having a serious impact right now. 64 percent of rural voters in Illinois also believe that if U.S. policies addressing climate change are done right, they have the potential to not only create new jobs and economic opportunities, but would also make America a global technology leader capable of influencing countries like China to follow its leadership on climate.

“Rural Illinoisan voters, many who live and work in agricultural and manufacturing communities, feel the impact of climate change every day. Whether it’s nonstop rain damaging crop yields or interrupting supply chains of raw materials and manufactured goods, Illinoisans see how this extreme weather threatens their way of life,” said **Heidi Heitkamp, former North Dakota Senator and founding board member of the One Country Project.**

“The President’s policies don’t address these needs and his misguided trade wars are only exacerbating these problems. This poll shows that rural Illinoisans are looking for practical, measured solutions that will help sustain our climate, create new jobs, and position the United States as a world leader in innovation.”

“If we’re going to solve climate change, we have to include the voices of rural Americans. Our research challenges and clarifies long-held misconceptions about voters who live in rural communities and climate change,” said **Josh Freed, Senior Vice President of the Clean Energy Program at Third Way.** “Rural Americans want realistic steps taken to create more clean energy, invent what we still need, and have America lead. What we’re getting from the President is the opposite – policies that are hurting rural communities, accelerating climate change, and eroding our nation’s leadership and ability to compete.”



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Other key findings include:

- Rural Illinoisans polled do not believe they are being considered by President Trump (54%), Republicans (59%) and Democrats (59%) when officials talk about climate change.
- 39% of rural Illinoisans trust scientists a great deal on climate change, followed by farmers and ranchers (32%), people in their communities (27%) and even environmental groups (27%).
- 74% say that rural voices have an indispensable perspective on climate change.
- 52% of Illinoisan voters preferred “concrete steps” to fight climate change while protecting their jobs and way of life.
- 69% agree that farmers could benefit from incentives to improve soil health and develop more environmentally friendly forms of agriculture, including 74% of Obama/Trump voters.

Methodology

Results are from a survey of voters, conducted in rural counties across Illinois for a total sample size 200. The margin of error for the entire sample size is +/- 2.45 percentage points, higher for subgroups.

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About One Country Project

The One Country Project, led by former Senators Heidi Heitkamp and Joe Donnelly, is working to promote greater opportunities for rural communities and ensure leaders earn their support. One Country is reengaging with rural Americans, serving as a clearinghouse of research and information for rural Americans, and working to ensure leaders regain trust by fighting for these communities.

About Third Way

Third Way is a national think tank that champions modern center-left ideas. Our work is grounded in the mainstream American values of opportunity, freedom, and security. But we identify as center-left, because we see that space in U.S. politics as offering the only real path for advancing those ideals in the century ahead. Our agenda is ambitious, aspirational, and actionable. It is built on the bedrock belief that for political movements to succeed in our political system, they must relentlessly re-imagine their policies, strategies, and coalitions. We are fighting for opportunity, so everyone has the chance to earn a good life; progress on social issues, so all have the freedom to live the lives they choose; and security, so we are protected from 21st century global threats.

Data



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Question	Answer	Respondents
Sample Size (Weighted)	Entire Sample	200
When it comes to climate change, do you think?	Climate change is an environmental problem that is causing a serious impact now.	56%
	The impact of climate change won't happen until sometime in the future.	23%
	Climate change won't have a serious impact at all.	13%
	Don't know	9%
Which comes closer to your point of view?	If we address climate change the right way it will improve America's competitiveness as we become a world leader in clean energy and technology, which will create new, high paying jobs and allow us to export our products all over the world, while countries like China will have to follow the same rules.	64%
	If we take an aggressive approach to climate change, we will hurt our competitiveness by limiting our potential in areas like oil and gas, while countries like China will take advantage of us by ignoring climate agreements as they compete in the global economy.	27%
	Don't know	10%
When President Trump talks about climate change do you think he is considering you and your way of life?	Yes	33%
	No	54%
	Don't know	13%
When members of the Republican Party, including elected officials and candidates, talk about climate change do you think they are considering you and your way of life?	Yes	29%
	No	59%
	Don't know	12%



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<p>When members of the Democratic Party, including presidential candidates and other elected officials and candidates, talk about climate change, do you think they are considering you and your way of life?</p>	Yes	26%
	No	59%
	Don't know	16%
<p>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?</p>	Federal government	8%
	State government	6%
	Local government	12%
	Sportsmen groups	12%
	Environmental organizations	27%
	Scientists	39%
	Large businesses	5%
	Small businesses	16%
	Farmers and ranchers	32%
	Community organizations	16%
	People in your community, like your friends and neighbors	27%
<p>Next are a list of statements about a national effort to combat climate change. After each please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with that statement.</p>	Innovations like cleaner forms of energy and electric vehicles will benefit me and my community	66%
	American leadership in clean energy technology will lead to more high paying manufacturing jobs in my area	50%
	Innovations like cleaner forms of energy and electric vehicles will only benefit people in bigger cities and suburbs, and leave rural communities behind	49%
	New regulations will kill manufacturing jobs and other good jobs in my community	43%
	The rural way of life will be threatened	45%
	We will lead the world in clean energy technology, and be able to export clean technology and products	64%
	Rural voices have an indispensable perspective on	74%



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	climate change, and should play a leading role in any decisions that affect our community	
	Farmers will benefit from incentives to improve soil health, reduce erosion, and develop new, more productive and environmentally friendly forms of agriculture	69%
	Policies to address climate change will cost me and my family money by raising the prices we pay for energy and other things we buy, and by raising our taxes	65%
Generally speaking, which of the following comes closest to what you believe....?	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.	34%
	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.	52%
	Don't know	13%