

SURVEY: 3 OUT OF 4 AMERICANS FAULT FEDERAL LEADERSHIP ON GLOBAL WARMING & ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, BACK GROWING STATE & LOCAL EFFORTS

*58 Percent More Concerned About Global Warming Now Than Two Years Ago;
Bipartisan 4 Out of 5 Urge Energy, Climate As Top Issues for Bush & 2006/2008 Elections.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.///March 15, 2006////With concerns up sharply about global warming, Americans of all political beliefs are disgruntled about weak federal leadership on global warming and energy issues, while lining up solidly behind the growing number of state and local efforts to rein in climate change problems and to tap alternative fuel sources, according to a major new Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) national survey released today by the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (CSI) and 40MPG.org, which is a project of the CSI think tank.

The CSI/40mpg.org survey found that 58 percent of Americans – including 57 percent of independents and 42 percent of conservatives -- are more concerned about global warming today than they were two years ago. Also, more than three out of four Americans (76 percent) -- including two out of three conservatives -- think the federal government is not doing “enough to address global warming and develop alternative energy sources in order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.” At the same time, more than four out five Americans (83 percent) – including 77 percent of conservatives -- said that “in the absence of federal leadership” today, they support the fast-growing number of pushes by “state and local officials to curb global warming and promote new energy resources.”

Other key survey findings: 77 percent of Americans think that “developing alternative or renewable energy sources and reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil should be President Bush's top priority for the balance of his term in office”; and 83 percent of Americans – including 72 percent of conservatives and 85 percent of independents – would like to see more attention paid to global warming during the 2006 Congressional elections and the 2008 Presidential elections.

Civil Society Institute President Pam Solo said: **“This survey shows that Americans of all political stripes are dissatisfied with the lack of national leadership on climate change and energy issues. Americans want the President and Congress to take decisive leadership steps on climate change. Right now, state and local officials are filling a massive leadership vacuum in the absence of meaningful federal action. The most important step to solving climate change is clean, safe and renewable energy. The time for diagnosis is long past. We know we have to kick the oil habit.”**

Opinion Research Corporation Senior Research Associate Graham Hueber said: **“One of the most striking aspects of these findings is the widespread and decidedly bipartisan nature of the concerns about inaction on global warming and energy solutions. We don’t see the party-line polarization that is so evident on many other national issues. This survey will give no comfort at all to politicians who think they can drag their feet on climate change and energy solutions.”**

OTHER KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Entitled “*Global Warming & Alternative Energy: A Leadership Survey*,” the CSI/40mpg.org poll also found the following:

- More than four out five Americans (83 percent) support “more leadership from the federal government to reduce the pollution linked to global warming, encourage new approaches to promoting conservation and spark the development of renewable or alternative energy sources”. The level of support is relatively uniform across political lines, including 81 percent of conservatives, 83 percent of independents and 88 percent of liberals.
- About three out of five Americans (58 percent) are more concerned about global warming today than they were two years ago – including 76 percent of liberals, 57 percent of independents and 42 percent of conservatives. Only about three in 10 Americans (29 percent) say there is “no change” in their view about global warming.
- A growing number of Americans think “it is patriotic to drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle since it requires less fuel to run, and therefore, can help to reduce U.S. dependency on Middle Eastern oil.” Today, 71 percent of Americans agree with that statement, including 66 percent of conservatives. When the same question was posed in a 40mpg.org survey released on March 17, 2005, two thirds of Americans agreed with the statement, including 57 percent of conservatives.
- Three out of four Americans (74 percent) – including 79 percent of conservatives – agree with the following statement: “Growing concerns about the reliability of Middle Eastern oil now make it difficult to separate our national security policy - keeping America safe - from our environmental policy - preserving the environment through conservation and the development of renewable or alternative energy resources.”
- More than four out of five Americans (83 percent) support “federal scientists and other experts” who “have been barred from speaking out on such topics as global warming - or strongly discouraged from doing so.” Most Americans – including 73 percent of conservatives and 87 percent of independents – back “whistleblowers who alert the public to potential problems that their superiors may want to keep hidden.”
- Nearly nine out of 10 Americans (87 percent) agree with the following statement: “Given that pollution from human activities already may change the climate in irreversible ways, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: U.S. leaders should take steps to reduce carbon pollution now and speed up the conversion to renewable energy and other alternatives.” Over half (55 percent) agreed strongly with the statement, with the overall level of support being 79 percent among conservatives and 89 percent among independents.

For full survey findings, go to <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> and <http://www.40mpg.org>. The Web sites also feature a new CSI report, “Policy Abhors a Vacuum,” which outlines steps that

“more than 40 states, and almost 200 municipalities are taking ... to address global warming concerns.”

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,029 adults (512 men and 517 women) aged 18 and over living in private households in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed by Opinion Research Corporation during the period of February 23-26, 2006. Completed interviews of the survey adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the complete sample of 1,029 adults. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

ABOUT THE GROUPS

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business that can help to improve ~~society~~. You can find CSI on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org>.

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Launched in March 2005, the 40mpg.org Web site includes powerful features that permit visitors to: determine how much they would save by getting 40 miles to the gallon; compare and contrast one vehicle's fuel-efficiency ratings with those of others; monitor how individual members of Congress weighed in on the most recent fuel-efficiency standard votes; contact automakers to speak out in favor of more fuel-efficient vehicles; and send a letter to the editor of a local newspaper urging the adoption of a 40 mpg fuel-efficiency standard. A project of the Civil Society Institute, 40mpg.org has no direct or indirect affiliations with any vehicle maker or fuel-efficiency technology.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A streaming audio recording of the news event will be available on the Web as of 6 p.m. ET on March 15, 2006 at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> and <http://www.40mpg.org>. The full survey findings, news release and CSI report already are available on the Web sites.