



The Hidden Potential of Green Voters in Red States

Key findings from early-2023 predictive models identifying environment-first voters in 12 Republican-leaning states.

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Executive Summary

This report highlights key findings from 12 Republican-leaning states where the Environmental Voter Project (EVP) built predictive models to identify registered voters who (a) have a high likelihood of listing “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top political priority but (b) did not vote in the 2020 presidential general election.

Unlike polls, which attempt to measure the attitudes of an entire population or its subgroups, predictive models identify specific individuals who have a high likelihood of prioritizing an issue – in this case, climate change or environmental issues. These individuals can then be targeted for mobilization campaigns, and the aggregate voter data often reveals the relative size of certain voting blocs as well as some of their unique characteristics.

The Environmental Voter Project’s February 2023 predictive modeling data has identified large numbers of Non-Voting Environmentalists (NVEs)¹ in all 12 of these purple and red states, in many of which even small increases in turnout of environmental voters could impact the 2024 presidential election. Additionally, EVP has found that these potential environmental voters continue the demographic trends we saw in our [2021 research](#) – namely, that seldom-voting and Non-Voting Environmentalists are disproportionately young people of color.

Latent Political Power of Environmentalists in Purple and Red States.

- **Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada.** Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada were three of the closest four states in the 2020 presidential election – with Joe Biden narrowly winning the states by a combined total of just 55,832 votes – yet the Environmental Voter Project has identified a stunning 792,962 Non-Voting Environmentalists in those three states.
- **Pennsylvania and North Carolina.** In both Pennsylvania and North Carolina, there are more than 3.5 times as many Non-Voting Environmentalists as the margin of votes that decided the 2020 presidential contests in each state.

¹ Voters identified as “Non-Voting Environmentalists” or “NVEs” are registered voters who (a) have a 75.00% – 99.99% likelihood of listing either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top priority according to EVP’s February 2023 predictive models and (b) according to public voter files, did not vote in the 2020 presidential general election. Although varying percentages of these NVEs were too young to vote in 2020 (from 3.5% in Louisiana to 16.9% in Texas), the overwhelming majority of even those 18-20 year olds still have not voted in a single election since becoming eligible, so pollsters, campaigns, and policy-makers will consider them to be highly unlikely to vote in presidential elections.

- **Texas.** In the darker red state of Texas, EVP identified 721,968 Non-Voting Environmentalists, far surpassing the 2020 presidential vote margin of 631,221.
- **Alaska.** In Alaska – a fossil fuel industry state which Donald Trump won by 10% in 2020 – EVP identified 34,573 environment-first registered voters who did not vote in the 2020 presidential election. This population of Non-Voting Environmentalists is so large that it equals 9.6% of all ballots cast in Alaska’s 2020 presidential contest, almost surpassing Donald Trump’s 36,173-vote margin of victory in 2020.

Who Are These Non-Voting Environmentalists?

- **Overwhelmingly Young.** In the 12 states studied, voters 18-34 years old make up anywhere from 64.7% (in NE) to 91.5% (in TX) of the population of environmentalists who skipped the 2020 presidential election.
- **Disproportionately People of Color.** In each of the 12 states studied, people of color make up a much larger percentage of the population of Non-Voting Environmentalists than they do in the state’s overall population of registered voters. People of color make up over 60% of Non-Voting Environmentalists in Louisiana, North Carolina, and Texas, and represent over 70% of Non-Voting Environmentalists in Georgia.

1. Purple States that Lean Red

The purple states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania each have a 1–3 point Republican partisan lean when compared to the national average, yet each of these states also has an enormous number of Non-Voting Environmentalists, far surpassing each state’s margin of victory in the 2020 presidential election.

State	Partisan Lean ²	Non-Voting Environmentalists (NVEs)	2020 Vote Margin	2020 Total Ballots Cast ³	NVEs as % of 2020 Total Votes
Nevada	R+1	103,057	33,596	1,407,754	7.3%
Arizona	R+2	216,869	10,457	3,420,585	6.3%
Pennsylvania	R+2	281,835	80,555	6,958,551	4.1%
Florida	R+3	570,188	371,686	11,144,855	5.1%
Georgia	R+3	473,036	11,779	5,023,159	9.4%
North Carolina	R+3	261,181	74,483	5,545,848	4.7%

A. New Environmental Voters could be Difference-Makers in Purple States.

Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada were three of the four closest states in the 2020 presidential election – with Joe Biden narrowly winning the states by a combined total of just 55,832 votes – yet the Environmental Voter Project has identified a stunning 792,962 Non-Voting Environmentalists in those three states alone. In Georgia, the population of registered-to-vote environmentalists who did not vote in the 2020 presidential election is so large that it equals 9.4% of all votes cast in Georgia in 2020.

² Partisan Lean is the [Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index](#), measuring each state’s average “lean” towards a political party in comparison to the country as a whole from 2016 to 2020. Cook Political Report weights the more recent presidential election (2020) three times more than the more distant presidential election (2016), resulting in a 75/25 weighting in favor of the most recent presidential election.

³ All “ballots cast” statistics are based on data compiled by the [US Elections Project](#) at the University of Florida.

B. While Parts of Florida are Getting Redder, Other Parts are Getting Greener.

Since 2016, Florida has been trending Republican in both its voter registration data and its election results,⁴ yet this “red shift” has not been geographically consistent across the state. A [New York Times analysis](#) showed that while Miami-Dade County shifted 22 points towards Republicans from 2016 to 2020, Duval County (home to Jacksonville) bucked the statewide trend and moved 5 points towards Democrats over the same period. Likewise, although EVP’s Florida research shows the statewide number of environmentalists staying roughly the same over the past few years, we see a dramatic re-shuffling of where these environment-first Floridians live. Just since 2021, EVP has seen the number of predicted environment-first Floridians in Miami-Dade County plummet from 267,325 down to 40,988, but we have seen a countervailing surge of environmentalists around Jacksonville in Duval County (from 50,493 to 92,110), around Orlando in Orange County (from 185,947 to 240,275), and around Tampa in Hillsborough County (from 132,791 to 155,764).

As discussed below, we also see more environment-first African-Americans in Florida but fewer environment-first Hispanics. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, as the profile of Florida environmentalists is changing so are their voting habits. Of the environment-first Floridians we identified in our [2021 research](#), only 232,245 did not vote in the 2020 presidential election, compared to a stunning 570,188 Non-Voting Environmentalists we have identified in our 2023 Florida research. Simply put, Florida has an enormous number of environmentalists, but they are not voting.

C. Green Voters are Crucial in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Even in Pennsylvania and North Carolina – where the somewhat smaller populations of Non-Voting Environmentalists are equal to less than 5% of the presidential ballots cast in each state – NVEs still have a tremendous amount of potential political power. In both Pennsylvania and North Carolina there are more than 3.5 times as many Non-Voting Environmentalists as the margin of votes that decided the 2020 presidential contests in each state.

⁴ See [Florida Department of State voter registration data](#) and also [Vox: It’s Official: Florida is a Red State](#).

2. Red States

The darker red states of Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Texas all have significant populations of registered voters who care deeply about the environment yet skip presidential elections. Interestingly, the states of Texas, Louisiana, and Alaska – where the fossil fuel industry has a particularly large footprint – also have some of the largest (relative) populations of Non-Voting Environmentalists of the states included in this report.

State	Partisan Lean	Non-Voting Environmentalists (NVEs)	2020 Vote Margin	2020 Total Ballots Cast	NVEs as % of 2020 Total Votes
Texas	R+5	721,968	631,221	11,350,000	6.4%
Iowa	R+6	63,373	138,611	1,700,130	3.7%
Alaska	R+8	34,573	36,173	361,400	9.6%
Kansas	R+10	79,638	201,083	1,375,125	5.8%
Louisiana	R+12	144,433	399,742	2,169,401	6.7%
Nebraska	R+13	44,094	182,263	966,920	4.6%

A. Alaska Environmentalists Could be a Powerful Political Bloc.

The Environmental Voter Project has identified 34,573 environment-first registered voters in Alaska who skipped the 2020 presidential election. This population of Alaskan NVEs is so proportionately large that it is equal to 9.6% of all ballots cast in the state's 2020 presidential contest – a greater percentage than we found in any of the other 11 states discussed in this report. Additionally, Alaska's population of Non-Voting Environmentalists almost surpasses Donald Trump's 36,173-vote margin of victory in the state in 2020.

B. Texas and Louisiana: Big Oil and Big Green.

Alaska isn't the only fossil fuel industry state with lots of untapped environmental political power – both Texas and Louisiana have a surprising number of environmental voters who could change political dynamics in their states if they begin voting in greater numbers. With 721,968 Non-Voting Environmentalists, Texas has so many NVEs that they surpass Donald Trump's 631,221-vote margin of victory in the state in 2020. The Environmental Voter Project has also identified 144,433 Non-Voting Environmentalists in Louisiana – a state where environmental injustice runs deep, and entire communities urgently need more political power to fight for safe air and water.

C. Significant Environmental Voting Blocs in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

Although the Plains states of Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska have proportionately fewer Non-Voting Environmentalists than most other states in this report, the numbers are still large enough that increased turnout rates could yield real political power for the environmental movement. The 15,597 Non-Voting Environmentalists in Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District – which has its own electoral college vote – could be particularly relevant to the 2024 presidential election, seeing as how Joe Biden only won that district by 22,091 votes in 2020, yet the district is now [3 points more Republican-leaning](#) after the last round of redistricting.

3. Who are these Non-Voting Environmentalists?

As shown by the series of charts below, the Non-Voting Environmentalists found in these 12 red-leaning states are disproportionately young, female, and people of color (particularly African-American, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), and Native American voters).

A. Purple States that Lean Red.

State	Age (%)					Sex ⁵ (%)			Race ⁶ (%)					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Unk.	Cauc.	Af-Am	Hisp.	Asian	Nat- Am	Other
Nevada NVEs	62.4	24.6	4.5	1.8	6.7	35.0	32.3	32.7	49.2	14.9	24.3	9.3	0.2	2.0
Nevada Registered Voters	10.4	19.2	24.2	23.4	22.9	44.8	42.8	12.4	64.9	7.9	20.0	5.7	0.2	1.4
Arizona NVEs	46.4	35.2	7.5	3.1	7.8	37.7	37.3	24.9	51.4	3.9	30.6	3.4	7.0	3.8
Arizona Registered Voters	10.0	18.2	22.7	23.1	26.0	44.9	46.5	8.6	71.6	2.3	20.7	2.3	1.9	1.2
Pennsylvania NVEs	45.0	33.7	7.1	2.3	11.9	40.1	53.0	6.9	75.7	12.2	4.4	6.7	0.0	1.0
Pennsylvania Registered Voters	8.2	16.9	23.1	25.5	26.4	46.9	51.4	1.7	83.9	8.8	4.5	2.4	0.0	0.4
Florida NVEs	49.4	31.4	5.9	2.3	11.1	45.0	53.3	1.7	41.5	30.4	19.3	3.7	0.3	4.9
Florida Registered Voters	8.4	15.9	22.1	25.1	28.6	46.5	53.1	0.5	62.3	13.9	18.7	2.3	0.3	2.5
Georgia NVEs	44.1	44.8	5.9	1.3	3.9	44.6	55.2	0.2	28.2	56.8	6.6	4.2	1.2	3.1
Georgia Registered Voters	10.9	19.8	24.9	24.4	19.9	46.8	53.1	0.1	57.2	32.7	4.5	3.2	0.5	2.0
North Carolina NVEs	56.3	34.4	3.4	0.6	5.3	41.6	53.0	5.4	38.5	42.7	9.5	3.9	0.7	4.8
North Carolina Registered Voters	11.6	17.2	22.4	24.8	24.0	45.8	53.2	1.1	69.4	21.9	3.9	1.8	0.8	2.3

⁵ Voter file data includes sex – rather than gender – as a demographic category. In some instances, this identifier is self-selected by the voter and in others it is state-identified or modeled. Since sex is not analogous to gender, this report presents only the “male” and “female” identifiers categorized as sex in NGP/VAN voter files. In our narrative discussion, we use the term men to encompass the group identified as male and the term women for the group identified as female. Nevada and Arizona do not supply data about the sex of each registered voter, so the data for those states must be commercially sourced and is therefore incomplete, leading to a high percentage of “unknown” sex for Nevada and Arizona voters.

⁶ When presenting charts of racial subgroup data in this report, we have chosen to maintain the subgroup-identifying nomenclature found in NGP/VAN voter files: African-American (Af-Am), Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian, and Native American (Nat-Am). In this report’s narrative discussion, we use the more commonly accepted terminology of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and white. We do not replace African-American with Black, Hispanic with Latinx, or Native American with Indigenous because these terms are not necessarily analogous, and we want to avoid misrepresenting any voter file data. The “Other” category includes voters listed as “multi-racial” or “uncoded” in voter files.

B. Red States.

State	Age (%)					Sex (%)			Race (%)					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Unk.	Cauc.	Af-Am	Hisp.	Asian	Nat-Am	Other
Texas NVEs	65.7	25.8	3.6	0.8	4.1	38.5	60.1	1.3	36.4	17.4	37.3	7.7	0.1	1.2
Texas Registered Voters	11.7	18.0	25.4	23.8	21.1	47.3	52.4	0.3	56.4	10.7	27.9	4.1	0.1	0.8
Iowa NVEs	58.7	29.3	3.7	1.6	6.7	46.6	54.4	0.0	89.1	3.5	3.7	3.1	0.1	0.6
Iowa Registered Voters	10.6	17.4	23.0	23.4	25.5	48.2	51.8	0.0	93.9	1.6	2.9	1.3	0.1	0.3
Alaska NVEs	---	---	---	---	---	48.4	51.5	0.1	60.1	2.0	3.5	9.2	12.3	12.9
Alaska Registered Voters⁷	---	---	---	---	---	51.2	48.8	0.0	81.9	1.4	4.2	3.9	4.4	4.2
Kansas NVEs	51.3	28.2	7.5	3.2	9.8	43.3	55.7	1.0	77.2	7.9	10.5	3.5	0.2	0.7
Kansas Registered Voters	10.4	17.3	23.8	23.7	24.8	47.5	52.4	0.2	88.4	3.3	6.1	1.6	0.2	0.4
Louisiana NVEs	33.4	37.7	10.0	3.9	15.1	43.9	56.0	0.1	33.7	58.9	1.1	1.5	0.3	4.5
Louisiana Registered Voters	8.2	16.9	25.9	25.7	23.3	45.0	55.0	0.0	62.8	31.2	1.6	1.1	0.5	2.8
Nebraska NVEs	36.7	28.0	12.4	7.1	15.7	37.0	44.0	19.0	81.6	5.4	6.6	3.1	1.4	1.9
Nebraska Registered Voters	9.7	16.3	24.5	23.9	25.6	45.9	48.5	5.6	90.3	2.7	5.2	1.1	0.2	0.5

⁷ Alaska does not supply data about the age of each registered voter, so the data must be commercially sourced. In this case, even with commercially-sourced data, the information is so incomplete that we thought it could be misleading to include it in this report.

C. Overwhelmingly young.

Like all people who list climate or the environment as a top priority, Non-Voting Environmentalists are also disproportionately young. In the 12 states studied, 18-34 year olds make up anywhere from 64.7% (in NE) to 91.5% (in TX) of the population of environmentalists who did not vote in the 2020 presidential election.

D. Disproportionately African-American and AAPI.

In each of the 12 states studied, both African-American and AAPI voters make up a disproportionately large percentage of Non-Voting Environmentalists. Weighting each state evenly, African-Americans make up 11.5% of registered voters in these 12 states, but they are 21.3% of all Non-Voting Environmentalists. Similarly, AAPI voters make up 2.6% of these states' registered voters, but they are 4.9% of all Non-Voting Environmentalists. In Florida, we see a particularly dramatic shift compared to [EVP's 2021 research](#): in 2021, Florida African-Americans were 5 points under-represented among low propensity environmental voters (compared to the overall electorate), but now African-American Non-Voting Environmentalists are 17 points over-represented compared to Florida's baseline electorate.⁸

E. Disproportionately Hispanic in Arizona and Texas, but not Florida.

Whereas previous [predictive modeling analyses](#) showed that Hispanic voters were heavily over-represented in populations of low propensity environmental voters, this current research tells a more complicated story. In Arizona and Texas the population of NVEs skews more Hispanic than the overall electorate. However, we no longer see this trend in Florida where low propensity environmental voters skewed 14 points Hispanic in 2021 but are now evenly represented when comparing Non-Voting Environmentalists to the overall electorate.⁹

F. Native Americans in Alaska and Arizona.

Of the 12 states studied, only two have Native American populations of greater than 1% of registered voters: Arizona (1.9%) and Alaska (4.4%). However, Native Americans make up a stunning 7.0% of Non-Voting Environmentalists in Arizona and 12.3% in Alaska.

⁸ EVP's 2021 analysis of environmentalists who are unlikely to vote in the 2022 midterm election is not directly comparable to the current 2023 analysis of environmentalists who did not vote in the 2020 presidential election, but we believe the demographic trends are strong enough that they are worth highlighting even as part of an imperfect comparison.

⁹ See fn 8.

The Environmental Voter Project

The Environmental Voter Project (EVP) is a non-partisan nonprofit that uses data analytics to identify environmentalists who don't vote and then applies cutting-edge behavioral science messaging to nudge them into being more consistent voters. With over 6,000 volunteers, EVP will canvass, call, mail, and send digital ads to non-voting and seldom-voting environmentalists in over 300 local, state, and federal elections in 2023.

Methodology

From January 13 – 23, 2023, the Environmental Voter Project and TargetSmart Communications surveyed 11,091 registered voters in 19 states over a variety of online panels and text-to-web panels. Voters were asked about their top issue priorities and matched to voter file records so their responses could be combined with voter file and other publicly available data to build predictive models identifying how likely each voter in these 19 states is to list either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top priority over other issues.

Unlike polls – which attempt to measure the attitudes of an entire population – predictive models identify specific individuals who have a high likelihood of prioritizing a particular issue. Thus, the end result of a predictive model is not a representative sample of the population, but rather a set of issue-priority likelihood scores assigned to each single voter in that population, with the highest scores correlating with voters who are the most likely to list either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top priority.

In this memo, voters identified as “environmentalists” are registered voters with a 75.00–99.99% likelihood of listing either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top priority, whereas Non-Voting Environmentalists (or NVEs) are a subset of that group who did not vote in the 2020 presidential general election.