Gray is the New Green: The Growing Strength of Older Climate Voters

Key findings from predictive models identifying climate-first voters aged 65 and older across 20 states

December 2025

Environmental Voter Project

Executive Summary

This report highlights key findings about older climate voters in 20 states[1] where the Environmental Voter Project (EVP) has built predictive models to identify voters who are likely to rank "climate change" or "clean air, clean water, and the environment" as their top political priority.[2]

Unlike polls, which attempt to measure the attitudes of an entire population, 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.

EVP's 2025 predictive modeling identified such a large number of climate voters aged 65 and older that our research shows these older voters now make up the single largest age cohort of climate voters across the 20 states studied. This report details EVP's findings on these older climate voters, including their demographic characteristics and their potential voting strength in the 2026 midterm elections.

Consistently Large Numbers of Older Climate Voters

- **Americans aged 65+ make up the largest percentage of climate-first voters.** More than one-third (34.3%) of voters who are likely to consider "climate change" or "clean air, clean water, and the environment" as their top issue priority are aged 65+, far outpacing 35–49 year-olds (26.4%), 50–64 year-olds (20.5%), and 18–34 year-olds (18.8%).

[1] The 20 states included in this study are Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. Although the Environmental Voter Project also works in Alaska, Alaska data is not included in this study because Alaskans can choose to keep their age and other data out of public-facing voter files, leaving the remaining public data unreliable for inclusion in this study.
[2] Voters referred to as "Climate Voters" in this report are registered voters who have an 85.00% – 99.99% likelihood of listing either "climate change" or "clean air, clean water, and the environment" as their top priority according to EVP's 2025 predictive models.

- **18–34 year-old voters — particularly young men — are much less likely to prioritize climate than that age group was two years ago.** In 2023, the Environmental Voter Project studied 18 states and found that 29.7% of young voters were likely to list climate or the environment as their top priority, but that number has since plummeted to 7.7% in 2025, and only 5.4% of young men are now identified as Climate Voters.

- **The Potential Electoral Impact of Older Climate Voters in the 2026 Midterms.** Older Climate Voters have particularly high turnout rates in midterm elections, with public voter files showing that climate-first voters aged 65+ could make up 7.2% of the Arizona midterm electorate, 7.4% of the Pennsylvania midterm electorate, and 7.5% of the New Hampshire midterm electorate.

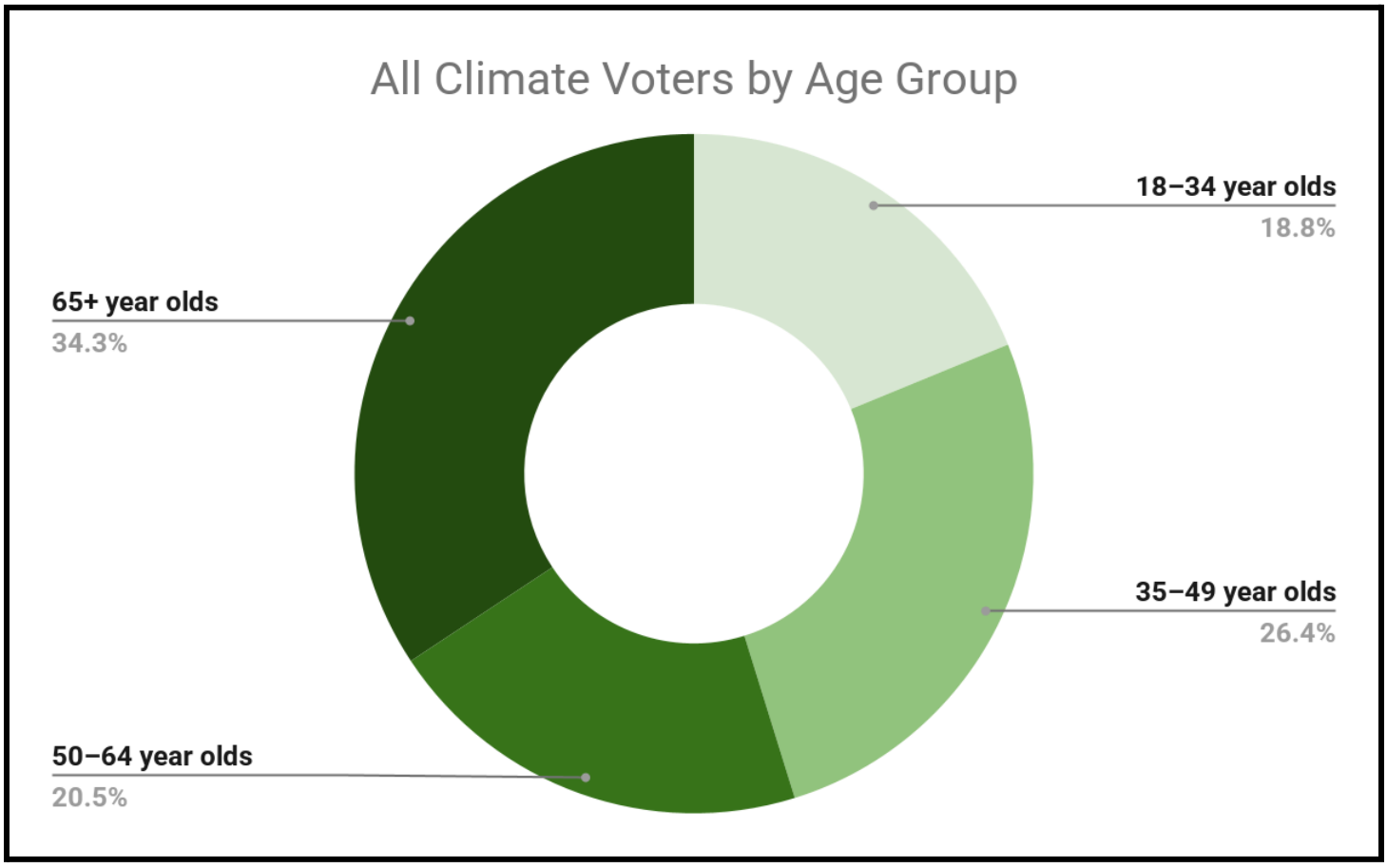
Who Are These Older Climate Voters?

- **Older Climate Voters are disproportionately female, but gender is less predictive of climate support than it is among younger voters.** 15.8% of female voters aged 65+ are climate-first voters, compared to 12.2% of older male voters, but this 3.6pt gap is smaller than the 4.7pt gender gap among 18–34yo Climate Voters and the 5.4pt gender gap among 35–49yo Climate Voters. In all age groups, women are more likely than men to be climate-first voters.

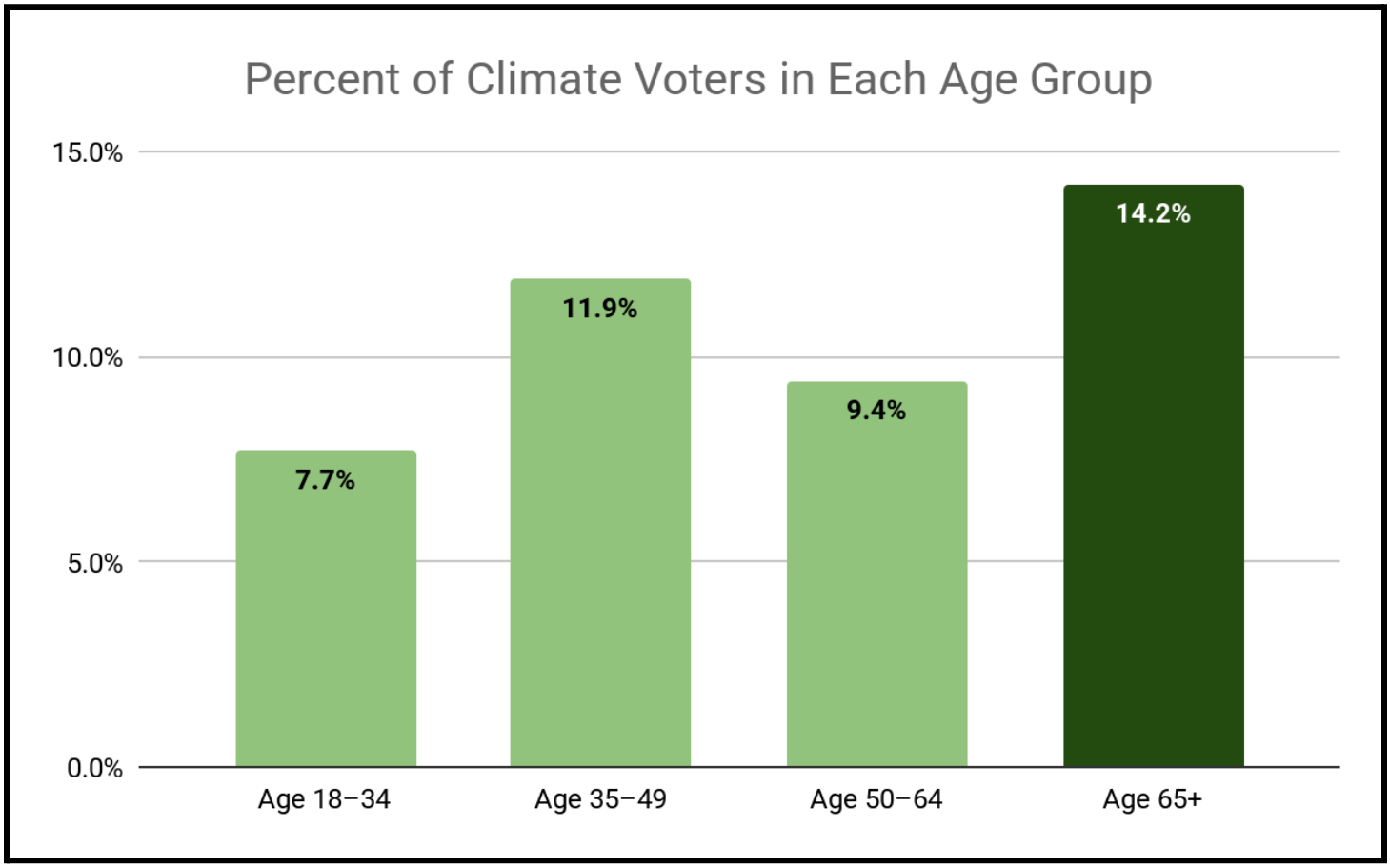
- **White women make up a majority of older Climate Voters.** In the 20 states studied, white women make up 42.0% of all registered voters aged 65+, but they represent a disproportionately large 51.2% of Climate Voters aged 65+.

1. Voters 65 and Older are now the Largest Group of Climate Voters

Across the 20 states studied by the Environmental Voter Project, fully one-third (34.3%) of all Climate Voters we identified were aged 65+, easily making them the largest age group of voters who are likely to list either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top issue priority. By contrast, only 18.8% of Climate Voters were in the youngest 18–34 age group.



Because the number of registered voters varies across age groups, we also looked at the percentage of Climate Voters within each age cohort. Older voters again lead the way, with Climate Voters making up 1 out of 7 (14.2%) voters aged 65+, compared to 1 out of 8 voters aged 35–49 (11.9%) and 1 out of 11 voters aged 50–64 (9.4%). Although 18–34 year-olds held the largest share of climate-first voters in our 2023 research,[3] our 2025 findings show that only 1 out of 13 young voters (7.7%) are likely to list climate or the environment as their top priority. This result mirrors data from the 2024 presidential election showing that young voters moved 21 points towards Donald Trump compared to the 2020 presidential election.[4]



[3] Gray is the New Green: The Growing Strength of Older Climate Voters (2023), the Environmental Voter Project.
[4] The Youth Vote in 2024, Tufts University Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

2. Older Climate Voters Predominate Across the 20 States Studied

As detailed in the chart below, the percentage of Climate Voters in different age groups can vary — sometimes dramatically — from state-to-state, but the overall trend lines are remarkably consistent across all 20 states studied. In 16 of the 20 states studied, the oldest age cohort of 65+ has the highest percentage of Climate Voters, with 35–49 year-olds having the highest percentage in the remaining four states. Only in Louisiana do 18–34 year-olds even reach second place.

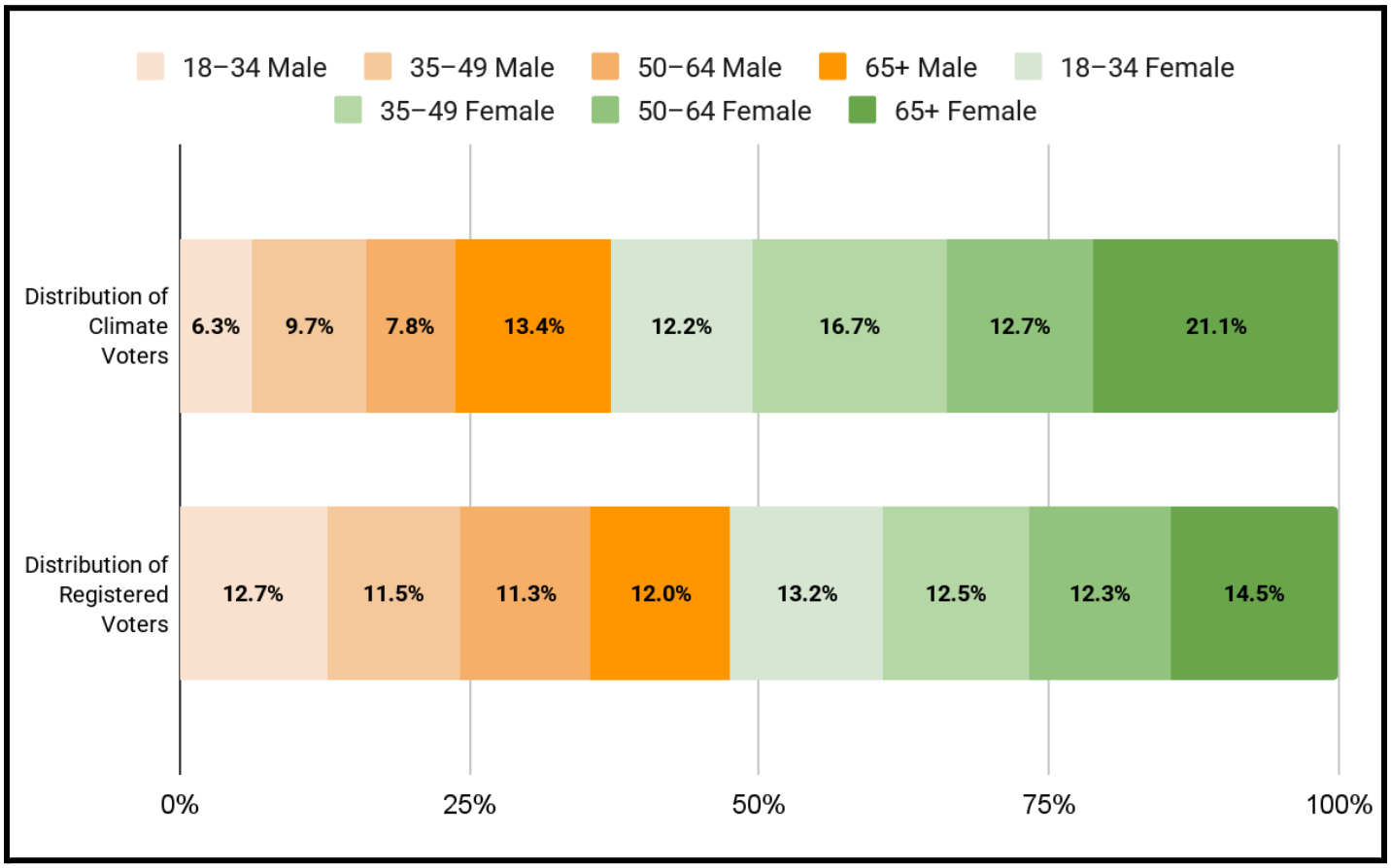
State	Percent of Climate Voters in Each Age Group[5]			
	Age 18–34	**Age 34–49**	**Age 50–64**	**Age 65+**
Arizona	6.6%	10.0%	8.3%	**14.4%**
Colorado	11.3%	21.5%	18.7%	**24.9%**
Florida	7.2%	10.2%	7.7%	**13.9%**
Georgia	5.0%	**9.1%**	7.0%	7.1%
Iowa	7.4%	13.0%	10.1%	**18.2%**
Kansas	8.2%	11.7%	8.3%	**14.5%**
Louisiana	12.0%	10.9%	8.5%	**15.6%**
Maine	9.5%	**15.0%**	7.8%	13.3%
Massachusetts	8.2%	18.1%	17.6%	**26.3%**
Michigan	4.6%	9.5%	6.9%	**10.8%**
Nebraska	6.3%	11.0%	8.0%	**13.3%**
Nevada	4.5%	7.2%	6.5%	**11.1%**

[5] For each state, the percentages shown represent the percentage of Climate Voters in an age group over the total number of registered voters in that particular age group. For example, 6.6% of 18–34 year-olds in Arizona are likely to consider "climate change" or "clean air, clean water, and the environment" as their top priority.

New Hampshire	14.9%	**19.0%**	9.9%	16.7%
New Jersey	11.4%	15.8%	14.9%	**20.7%**
New Mexico	8.4%	14.2%	14.3%	**24.8%**
New York	8.2%	10.8%	8.1%	**12.1%**
North Carolina	5.5%	**10.0%**	6.7%	9.8%
Pennsylvania	11.8%	15.9%	10.7%	**17.5%**
Texas	7.0%	9.9%	8.1%	**10.8%**
Virginia	7.5%	13.7%	12.3%	**14.4%**

3. Climate Voters by Age and Sex

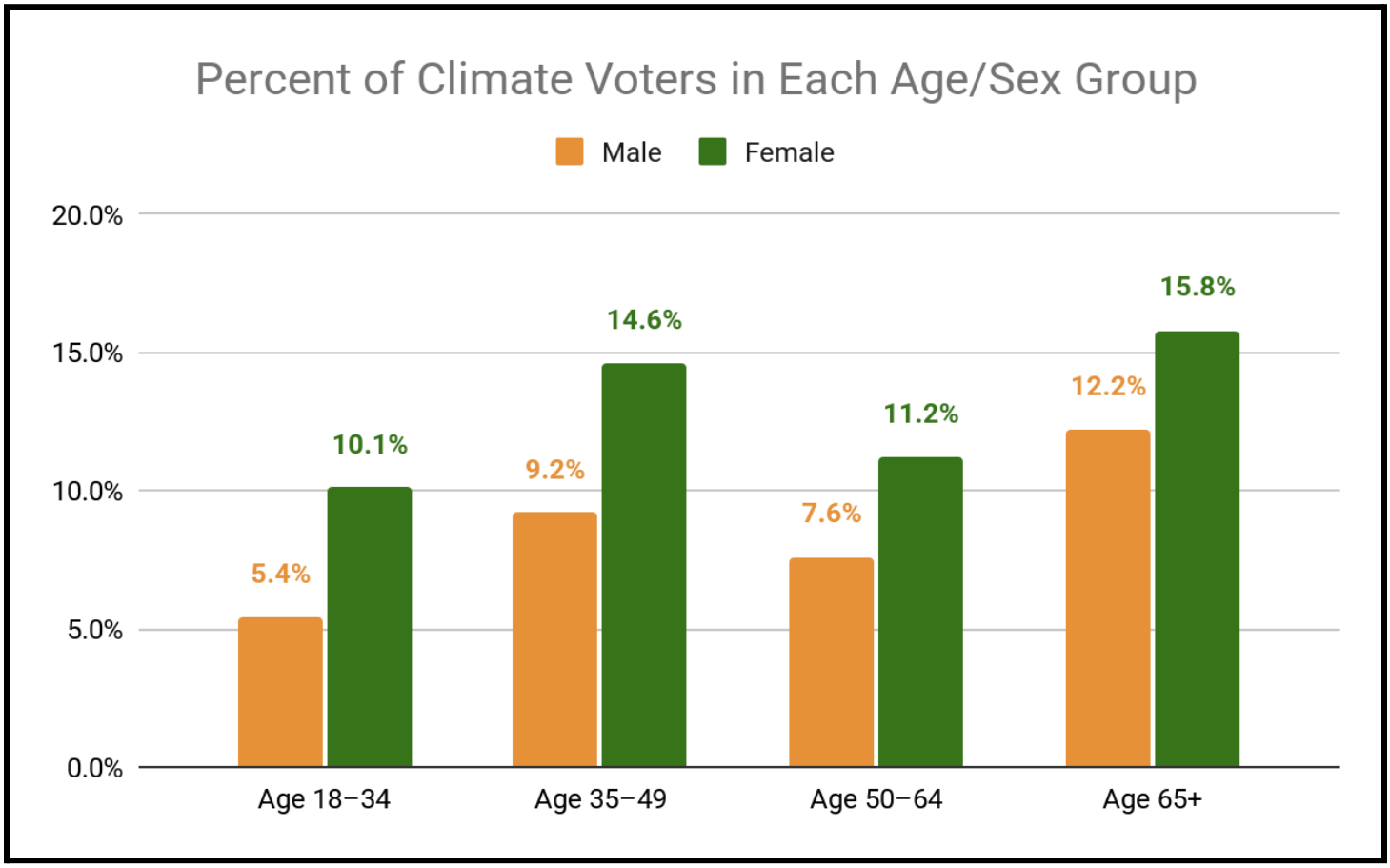
Across all age groups, women are more likely to be climate-first voters than men, resulting in the overall make-up of Climate Voters being 62.7% female.[6] Women make up just 52.5% of all registered voters in the 20 states studied, so 62.7% is a significant overrepresentation.



When looking at sex distributions within each age group of Climate Voters, there is a "climate gender gap" in all age cohorts, but sex is less predictive of climate support among older voters than it is in most younger age groups. 15.8% of female voters aged 65+ are climate-first voters, compared to 12.2% of older male voters, and this 3.6pt gender gap is also found among Climate Voters aged

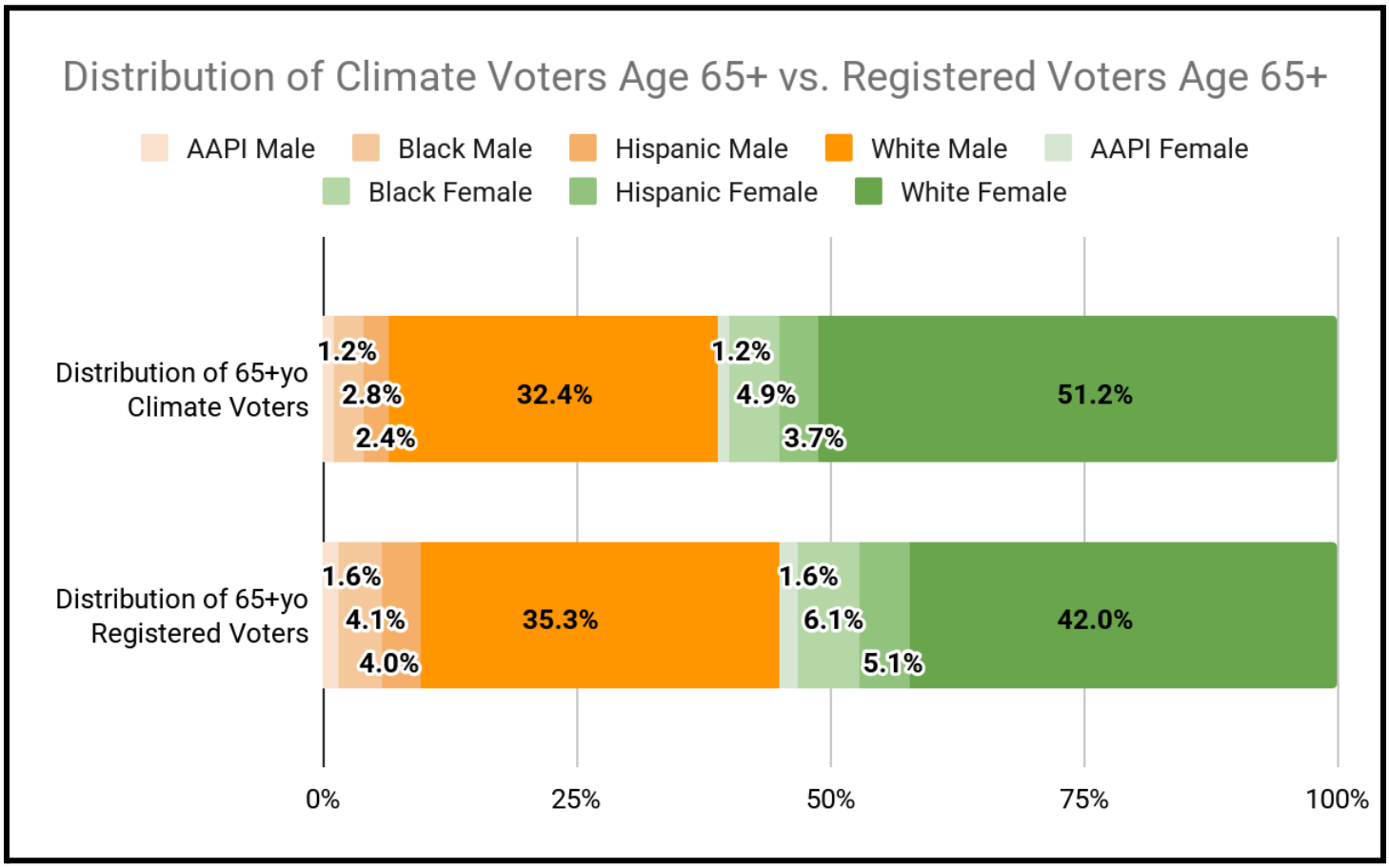
[6] Voter file data includes sex — rather than gender — as a demographic category. In some instances, this identifier is self-selected by the voter and in others it is state-identified or modeled. Since sex is not analogous to gender, this report presents only the "male" and "female" identifiers categorized as sex in SmartVAN 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. Some states 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 varying rates of "unknown" sex for voters in certain states. This report also includes the commonly-used term "gender gap" when referring to aggregate differences in the sex of voters.

50–64. However, among younger voters the “climate gender gap” grows to a 4.7pt gender gap among Climate Voters aged 18–34, and a 5.4pt gender gap among Climate Voters aged 35–49.



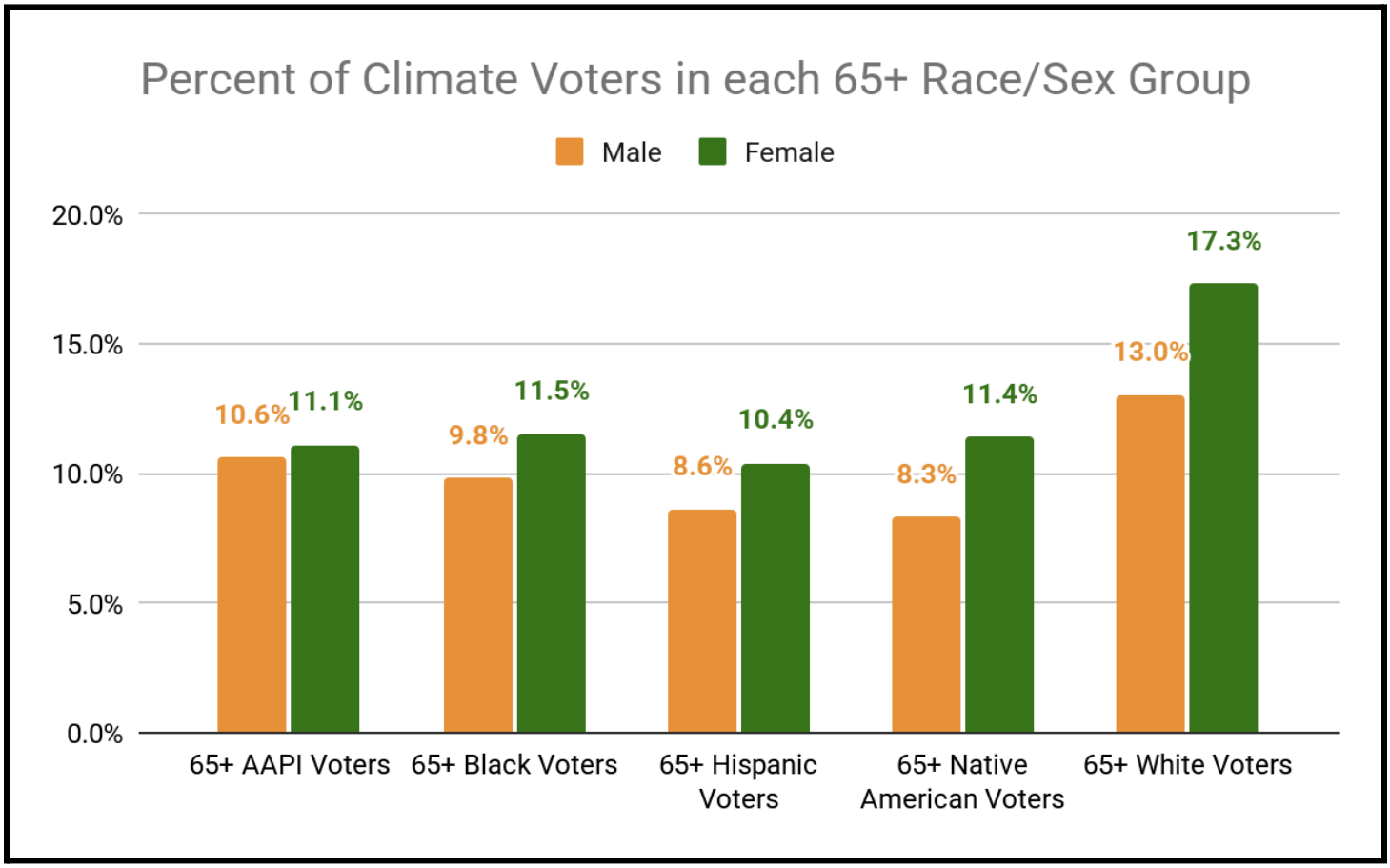
4. Older Climate Voters by Race[7] and Sex

When we compare the demographic characteristics of Climate Voters aged 65+ to the overall population of registered voters aged 65+, we find that (a) women are much more prevalent among older Climate Voters than they are in the baseline population all registered voters aged 65+, and (b) older white women make up an absolute majority (51.2%) of all Climate Voters aged 65+.[8]



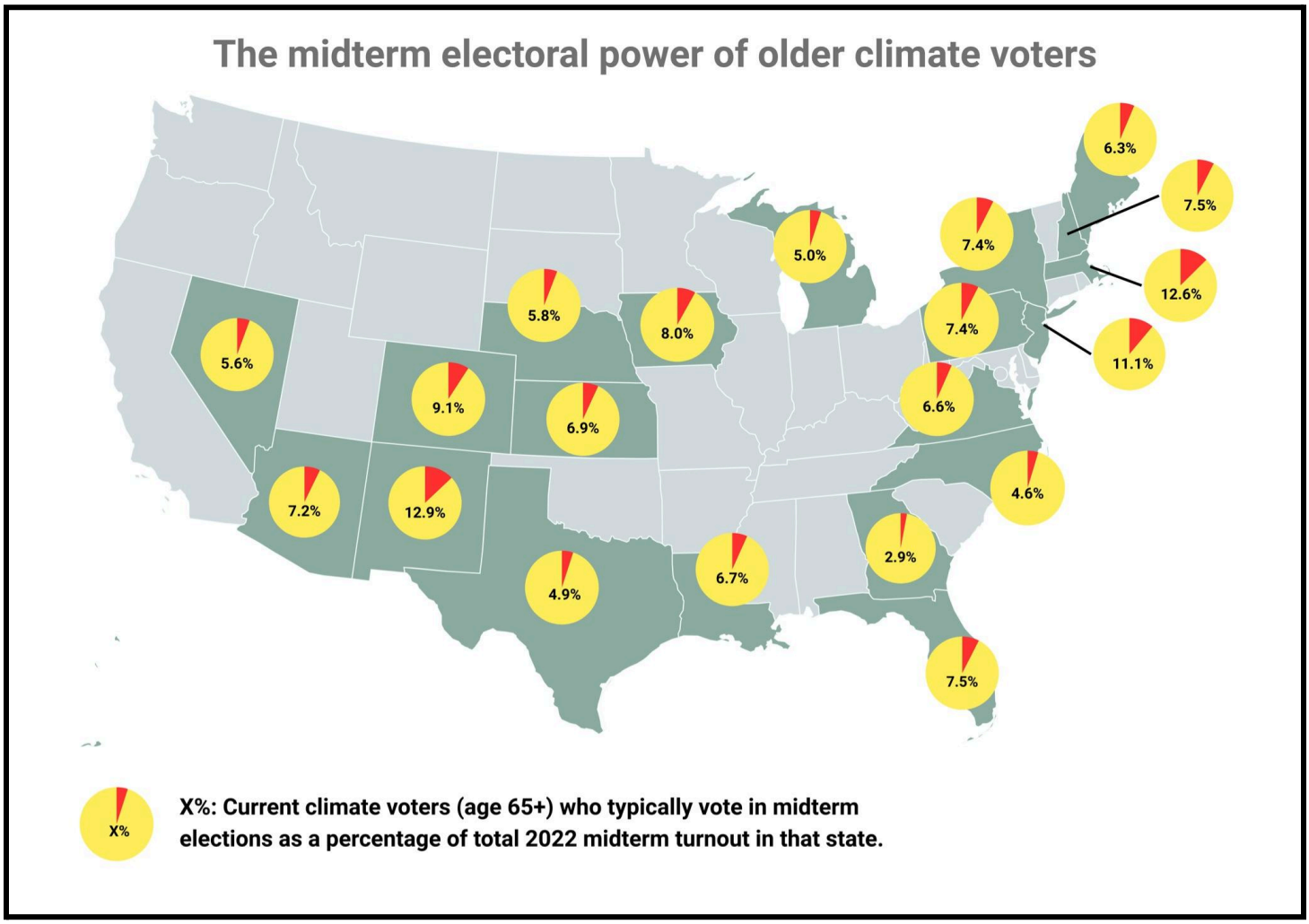
[7] When presenting charts of racial subgroup data in this report, we have chosen to maintain, shorten, or abbreviate the subgroup-identifying nomenclature found in SmartVAN voter files: "AAPI" for Asian or Pacific Islander, "Hispanic" for Hispanic or Latino, Black, Native American, and White.
[8] Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding and also due to Native Americans aged 65+ not being included in this chart because they make up just 0.1% of the population of registered voters aged 65+ in these 20 states.

By looking at distinct race and sex groupings of Climate Voters aged 65+, we can once again see the disproportionately large presence of older white Climate Voters as well as a persistent gender gap, with older women of all races being more likely to prioritize climate than older men of all races. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that this gender gap is quite small among older AAPI voters, where Climate Voters are almost as prevalent among 65+ AAPI men as they are among 65+ AAPI women.



5. Midterm Electoral Power of Older Climate Voters

In many important midterm states — such as Arizona, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania — older Climate Voters could make up more than 7% of all ballots cast in the 2026 midterms, representing a powerful voting bloc.[9] Additionally, older Climate Voters could occupy a smaller — but still significant — piece of the midterm electorate in other important battleground states like Maine (6.3%), Nevada (5.6%), Michigan (5.0%), Texas (4.9%), and North Carolina (4.6%).



[9] The midterm electoral power of older climate voters in each state has been calculated by (a) taking the number of existing climate voters age 65+ in each state, (b) reviewing public voter files to see which of those older climate voters typically vote in midterm elections, and then (c) dividing the number of midterm-voting older climate voters in each state over the number of ballots cast in that state for the 2022 midterm elections.

The Environmental Voter Project

The Environmental Voter Project (EVP) is a non-partisan nonprofit that uses data analytics to identify environmentalists who do not vote and then applies cutting-edge behavioral science messaging to nudge them into being more consistent voters. With over 7,000 volunteers, EVP has canvassed, called, mailed, and sent digital ads to non-voting and seldom-voting environmentalists in over 450 local, state, and federal elections in 2025.

Methodology

From January 2–16, 2025, the Environmental Voter Project and TargetSmart Communications surveyed 10,500 registered voters in 21 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 21 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; rather, it is 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 “Climate Voters” are registered voters with approximately an 85.00–99.99% likelihood of listing either “climate change” or “clean air, clean water, and the environment” as their top priority. Race, age, sex, and vote history data have been sourced from SmartVAN voter files.