Report: The Hidden Potential of Green Voters in Red States

Subject: Key Findings from Predictive Models Identifying Environmental Voters in Nine Republican-Leaning States

Date: June 2021

Executive Summary.

This memorandum highlights key findings from nine 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 the environment" as their top political priority but (b) are unlikely to vote in midterm elections.

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 the environment. These individuals can then be targeted for mobilization campaigns, and the aggregate voter data can sometimes also reveal the relative size of certain voting blocs as well as some of their unique characteristics.

The Environmental Voter Project's March 2021 predictive modeling data reveals huge numbers of Low Propensity Environmental Voters (LPEVs)[1] in both purple and red states, where even small increases in turnout of environmental voters could significantly impact the upcoming 2022 midterm elections. Additionally, EVP has found that these potential green voters are disproportionately young, female, and people of color.

Latent Political Power of Environmentalists in Red States.

- **Small Bumps in Green Turnout Could Swing Elections in Purple States.** In the Republican-leaning purple states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, the number of Low Propensity Environmental Voters far surpasses each state's 2018 midterm election margin. In Florida, where the 2018 U.S. Senate election was decided by a mere 10,033 votes, EVP identified 794,332 LPEVs.

- **Surprising Numbers of Potential Environmental Voters in Dark Red States.** There also are a surprising number of LPEVs in the darker red states of Texas, Iowa, Alaska, and Kansas. In Texas and Iowa, the populations of

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[1] Voters identified as "Low Propensity Environmental Voters" or "LPEVs" are registered voters with (a) a 75.00 – 99.99% likelihood of listing "climate change or the environment" as their top priority according to EVP's March 2021 predictive models and (b) a 0 – 49.99% likelihood of voting in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections according to TargetSmart's widely available 2022 Midterm General Turnout Propensity predictive models.

seldom-voting and non-voting environmentalists are more than triple the size of each state's 2018 electoral margin.

Who are these Low Propensity Environmental Voters?

- **Overwhelmingly Young.** In the nine states studied, voters 18-34 make up anywhere from 62.6% (in TX) to 85.9% (in IA) of the population of environmentalists who have a low likelihood of voting in 2022.

- **Large Gender Gap.** Women outnumber men among LPEVs in all nine states studied, and by more than 15 percentage points in Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Iowa, and Kansas.

- **Less White Than the General Population of Registered Voters.** In the nine states studied, the white percentage of LPEVs was on average 6.7 percentage points smaller than in the overall population of registered voters, with Texas being the only state where white voters made up a slightly larger percentage of the LPEV population than in the overall electorate (and only by 0.2%).

- **Disproportionately Asian American & Pacific Islander.** More than any other ethnic group, AAPI voters are over-represented among LPEVs in red states. In 8 of the 9 states studied, AAPI voters were at least twice as prevalent among LPEVs than in the overall electorate, and in North Carolina and Iowa they were three times as prevalent.

- **Disproportionately Hispanic.** Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina have particularly large Hispanic blocs of LPEVs. In Georgia, only 4% of registered voters are Hispanic, but a stunning 13.4% of low propensity environmental voters are Hispanic.

A methodological statement can be found at the end of this memo.

1. Purple States.

The purple states of Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida each have a 2-3 point Republican partisan lean when compared to the national average, yet each of these states also has an enormous number of LPEVs, far surpassing the typical midterm margins of victory.

State	Partisan Lean[2]	Low Propensity Enviro Voters for 2022 (LPEVs)	2018 Statewide Margin[3]	2018 Total Votes	LPEVs as % of 2018 Total Votes
Pennsylvania	R+2	870,565	657,589	5,009,400	17.4%
Arizona	R+3	306,991	55,900	2,384,308	12.9%
Florida	R+3	794,332	10,033	8,190,005	9.7%
North Carolina	R+3	329,195	n/a	3,755,778	8.8%
Georgia	R+3	207,907	54,723	3,939,328	5.3%

A. Enormous Latent Political Power of Environmentalists in Pennsylvania and Arizona.

Pennsylvania and Arizona have shockingly large populations of low propensity environmental voters whose latent political power could easily swing elections if activated.

The Environmental Voter Project identified 870,565 environmental voters in Pennsylvania who are currently unlikely to vote in the 2022 midterms – a number so large that it equals 17.4% of total voter turnout in the state's 2018 midterm elections. Arizona's 306,991 Low Propensity Environmental Voters equal 12.9% of the state's 2018 midterm turnout and is almost six times the margin of victory in that election.

B. Florida's History of Small Margins in Midterms.

The Environmental Voter Project identified 794,332 environmental voters in Florida who are currently unlikely to vote in the 2022 midterms. For context, the last time a gubernatorial election was decided by more than 65,000 votes in Florida was 2006. If just 2% of Florida's 794,332 Low Propensity Environmental Voters vote in 2022, those 16,000 new voters would far surpass the mere 10,333 votes that decided Florida's 2018 U.S. Senate election.

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[2] PVI is the Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index, measuring a state's average "lean" towards a political party in comparison to the country as a whole from 2016 to 2020.
[3] The 2018 midterm electoral margins provided are from the closest U.S. Senate or gubernatorial election for the state in 2018.

2. Red States.

The darker red states of Texas, Iowa, Alaska, and Kansas have surprisingly large populations of seldom-voting and non-voting environmentalists, representing a largely unrecognized pool of latent political power for the climate and environmental movements.

State	Partisan Lean	Low Propensity Enviro Voters for 2022 (LPEVs)	2018 Statewide Margin	2018 Total Votes	LPEVs as % of Actual 2018 Electorate
Iowa	R+6	121,683	36,289	1,334,279	9.1%
Texas	R+5	747,250	241,921	8,371,655	8.9%
Alaska	R+9	14,309	19,892	283,134	7.2%
Kansas	R+11	72,330	53,479	1,054,622	6.9%

Iowa and Texas have particularly large blocs of low propensity environmental voters, more than triple the size of each state's 2018 electoral margins.

3. Who are these Low Propensity Environmental Voters?

As shown by the series of charts below, the large populations of Low Propensity Environmental Voters found in these nine red states are disproportionately (a) 18-34 years old, (b) women, and (c) people of color (particularly Hispanic and AAPI voters).

State	Age					Sex			Race[4]					
	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	AAPI	NAT AMER	UNCODED
PA LPEVs	27.7%	38.9%	18.4%	7.6%	7.4%	39.8%	57.4%	2.8%	84.9%	4.2%	2.1%	2.8%	----	6.0%
PA Reg Voters	9.1%	16.9%	22.8%	26.3%	25.0%	46.9%	51.5%	1.6%	85.4%	7.7%	2.5%	1.0%	----	3.4%
AZ LPEVs[5]	38.9%	42.1%	9.6%	4.0%	5.4%	38.4%	44.4%	17.3%	59.9%	1.0%	28.8%	1.4%	2.7%	6.4%
AZ Reg Voters	9.6%	18.1%	22.9%	23.7%	25.7%	45.3%	47.1%	7.6%	74.9%	1.1%	17.0%	0.7%	1.7%	4.6%
GA LPEVs	30.2%	50.7%	10.8%	4.2%	4.2%	42.4%	57.5%	0.1%	54.5%	17.2%	13.4%	7.9%	0.4%	6.7%
GA Reg Voters	11.2%	19.9%	24.9%	24.7%	19.3%	46.7%	53.2%	0.1%	58.3%	32.2%	4.0%	2.8%	0.2%	2.5%
NC LPEVs	36.8%	44.0%	10.3%	4.1%	4.8%	41.2%	56.7%	2.2%	63.9%	14.7%	9.0%	5.2%	0.3%	6.9%
NC Reg Voters	11.1%	16.9%	23.0%	25.6%	23.5%	45.6%	53.3%	1.1%	70.3%	21.6%	3.3%	1.5%	0.7%	2.5%
FL LPEVs	36.8%	42.0%	10.0%	4.2%	6.9%	44.2%	54.7%	1.1%	50.0%	8.6%	32.0%	3.8%	0.4%	5.3%
FL Reg Voters	8.8%	15.9%	21.9%	25.4%	28.0%	46.3%	53.2%	0.5%	63.0%	13.9%	18.1%	2.1%	0.3%	2.6%
TX LPEVs	23.6%	39.0%	18.6%	9.8%	9.0%	41.5%	58.1%	0.4%	62.6%	3.4%	22.7%	4.6%	----	6.7%
TX Reg Voters	11.6%	17.7%	25.3%	24.6%	20.8%	47.0%	52.7%	0.3%	62.4%	7.4%	23.7%	2.1%	----	4.3%
IA LPEVs	44.6%	41.3%	7.3%	2.9%	3.9%	41.5%	58.5%	----	87.8%	1.2%	2.6%	1.4%	0.1%	7.0%
IA Reg Voters	11.2%	16.9%	22.7%	24.3%	24.8%	48.1%	51.9%	----	94.9%	0.9%	1.2%	0.4%	0.1%	2.6%
AK LPEVs[6]	----	----	----	----	----	47.6%	52.4%	----	77.8%	1.2%	2.3%	3.6%	5.1%	10.1%
AK Reg Voters	----	----	----	----	----	51.2%	48.8%	----	85.2%	1.1%	1.5%	2.1%	3.0%	7.0%
KS LPEVs	42.4%	40.5%	9.6%	3.6%	4.0%	40.6%	58.8%	0.6%	82.9%	1.5%	5.5%	1.6%	0.2%	8.3%
KS Reg Voters	10.3%	17.1%	23.7%	24.7%	24.2%	47.6%	52.3%	0.1%	90.0%	2.5%	3.2%	0.6%	0.1%	3.6%

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[4] Demographic subgroupings (and sometimes, their nomenclature) are based on voter file information which, in turn, depends on how each state categorizes and collects information from registered voters.
[5] Arizona does not supply data about the sex of each registered voter, so the data must be commercially sourced and is therefore incomplete, leading to a high percentage of "unknown" sex for Arizona voters.
[6] Alaskans can elect to keep their demographic data private when registering to vote, which so skews the age distributions that they are not worth using for research purposes.

A. Overwhelmingly Young.

Like all people who list climate or the environment as a top priority, Low Propensity Environmental Voters are disproportionately young. In the nine states we studied, voters age 18-34 made up anywhere from 62.6% (in TX) to 85.9% (in IA) of the population of environmentalists with a low likelihood of voting in 2022. This trend is particularly strong in Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, Kansas, and Iowa, where young people make up more than 4 out of every 5 Low Propensity Environmental Voters. In Iowa, a stunning 1 out of every 6 registered voters between the ages of 18-34 is an environmentalist who (absent an impactful mobilization campaign) is currently predicted to skip the 2022 midterm elections.

	PA	AZ	GA	NC	FL	TX	IA	AK[7]	KS
18-34yo as % of LPEVs	66.6%	81.0%	80.9%	80.8%	78.8%	62.6%	85.9%	----	82.9%
18-34yo as % of RVs[8]	26.0%	27.7%	31.1%	28.0%	24.7%	29.3%	28.1%	----	27.4%

B. A Huge Gender Gap.

In eight of these nine states – with Alaska being the only outlier – more women are registered to vote than men, but this baseline gender gap is fairly small and usually in the 4-7% range. When, however, we focus only on Low Propensity Environmental Voters, the gender gap doubles or triples in size, with LPEV women outnumbering LPEV men by more than 15 percentage points in Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Iowa, and Kansas.

To be clear, our data show that this gender gap has almost nothing to do with voting propensity, but rather is because all adult women are more likely to care about climate and the environment than men, regardless of their voting habits. Indeed, this same gender gap is detailed in a December 2020 Data For Progress report showing that only 56.5% of American men view climate change as important, compared to a stunning 73.4% of women.

Female Shift Gender Gap - LPEVs vs Registered Voters

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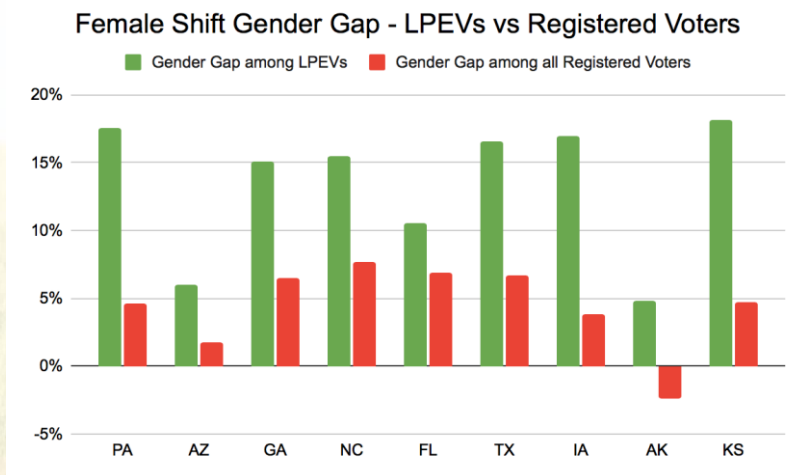
[7] Ibid.
[8] RVs are registered voters.

C. Less white than the general population of voters.

Mirroring polling data reported by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and Data For Progress, our predictive modeling shows that environmentalists (and, more specifically, Low Propensity Environmental Voters) are much less likely to be white than the overall electorate.

	PA	AZ	GA	NC	FL	TX	IA	AK	KS
White Voters as % of LPEVs	84.9%	59.9%	54.5%	63.9%	50.0%	62.6%	87.8%	77.8%	82.9%
White Voters as % of RVs	85.4%	74.9%	58.3%	70.3%	63.0%	62.4%	94.9%	85.2%	90.0%

In the nine states studied, the white percentage of LPEVs was on average 6.7 percentage points smaller than in the overall population of registered voters, with Texas being the only state where white voters made up a slightly larger percentage of the LPEV population than the overall electorate (and only by 0.2 percentage points).

White voters were particularly under-represented among Florida and Arizona LPEVs, where they were, respectively, 13 and 15 percentage points smaller than in the overall electorate.

D. A Huge Asian-American and Pacific Islander Presence.

Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters increasingly occupy a large place in the environmental movement – both among high- and low-propensity voters. As shown in a December 2020 Data For Progress polling report, a stunning 84.2% of Asian Americans viewed climate change as an important issue - more than any other demographic group studied.

	PA	AZ	GA	NC	FL	TX	IA	AK	KS
AAPI as % of LPEVs	2.8%	1.4%	7.9%	5.2%	3.8%	4.6%	1.4%	3.6%	1.6%
AAPI as % of RVs	1.0%	0.7%	2.8%	1.5%	2.1%	2.1%	0.4%	2.1%	0.6%

Similarly, in each of the nine states studied in this memo (except for Florida), AAPI voters were at least twice as prevalent among LPEVs than in the overall electorate, and in North Carolina and Iowa they were three times as prevalent.

E. A significant Hispanic presence.

In seven of the nine states studied, Hispanic voters were more prevalent among Low Propensity Environmental Voters than among all registered voters.

Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina had particularly large Hispanic blocs of LPEVs. In Georgia, only 4% of registered voters are Hispanic, but a striking 13.4% of LPEVs are Hispanic. In Florida, Hispanics make up less than one-fifth of the state's overall electorate, but they are fully one-third of the state's population of LPEVs.

	PA	AZ	GA	NC	FL	TX	IA	AK	KS
Hispanics as % of LPEVs	2.1%	28.8%	13.4%	9.0%	32.0%	22.7%	2.6%	2.3%	5.5%
Hispanics as % of RVs	2.5%	17.0%	4.0%	3.3%	18.1%	23.7%	1.2%	1.5%	3.2%

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, text, call, mail, and send digital ads to non-voting and seldom-voting environmentalists in over 800 local, state, and federal elections in 2021.

Methodology.

From January 22 to March 1, 2021, the Environmental Voter Project and Civis Analytics surveyed 8,800 registered voters in 17 states over a variety of online 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 data to build models identifying how likely each voter is in these 17 states to list "climate change or the environment" as a top priority.

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 (in this case) to list "climate change or the environment" as a top priority.

In this memo, voters identified as "environmentalists" are registered voters with a 75.00 – 99.99% likelihood of listing "climate change or the environment" as their top priority, whereas Low Propensity Environmental Voters (or LPEVs) are a subset of that group who also have less than a 50% likelihood of voting in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections.