

Climate Change, Tax Pledge Among Issues to Watch for 2016

Two issue positions show potential to carry unexpected clout in the 2016 presidential election – support for action to address climate change and opposition to a no-tax pledge, a new ABC News/Washington Post poll finds.

Openness to political compromise also has the support, and the priority, to carry weight in the national conversation that lies ahead.

All three emerge from an approach that combines public preferences on these and other issues with the level of importance Americans ascribe to them. They're combined in a PxP score – preference times priority – assessing the interplay of these two factors in political attitudes.

The poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that opposing a no-tax pledge has the broadest base: Seventy-two percent of Americans hold this view, including big majorities across party lines. Only about half in this group overall call the issue an important one, but their views on it are so lopsided that it wins a high score nonetheless.

Supporters of a tax pledge, by contrast, are much more likely to call it an important issue – but there are few of them.

Desire for the next president to support action on climate change takes a different path: It's low among Republicans, but broad enough among Democrats and independents, and important enough to them, to give it potential influence.

Overall, Americans by 59-31 percent say they want the next president to be someone who favors government action to address climate change, and 58 percent call it an important issue. Again there's a sharp difference in importance depending on one's position: Among those who favor federal action, 68 percent call it an important issue. Among those who oppose action, far fewer say it's important to them, 39 percent.

On a third issue to emerge as potentially influential, Americans by 58-37 percent say they'd rather have a president who mainly tries to compromise than one who mainly stands up for his or her side, and 72 percent overall say it's important to them. Both those who favor compromise and those who prefer a more partisan approach say it's an important issue, with preference for taking partisan sides, and calling this important, peaking among Republicans.

Other issues are contentious, but with no clear advantage in preference or priority for one side or the other. Obamacare is an example. Americans divide, 49-45 percent, on whether the next

president should be someone who wants to keep the federal health care law or wants to repeal it, and those on both sides call the issue highly important. The partisan divisions are vast.

Views on a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants are similarly inconclusive in terms of their potential political influence. Americans by 51-45 percent say they'd like to see the next president support rather than oppose a path to citizenship, again with sharp partisan differences. Fifty-nine percent overall call this an important issue, about equal numbers on both sides.

One other issue tested, views on the next president's approach to a nuclear agreement with Iran, also produced sharply partisan responses, but in this case opponents are more apt to call it important.

The first section of the table below shows Americans' preferences on each issue listed. The second shows the importance given to the issue among those who hold that position on it. (NA = insufficient sample size.)

	Action on climate Fav-Opp	No-tax pledge Yes-No	Compromise vs. partisanship	ACA: Keep-Repeal	Path to citizenship Supp-Opp	Iran deal Supp-Opp
Preference:						
All	59-31%	23-72	58-37	49-45	51-45	49-42
Dems	77-13	19-77	61-34	80-16	68-28	63-28
Reps	32-55	26-69	51-44	12-82	24-70	31-60
Inds	61-32	26-69	63-35	49-45	52-44	51-40
Importance:						
All	68/39	74/40	70/75	78/76	56/62	44/60
Dems	76/NA	NA/47	72/72	81/NA	60/NA	46/NA
Reps	NA/39	NA/35	63/83	NA/87	NA/66	NA/70
Inds	70/38	NA/35	74/71	78/70	56/59	43/59

PxP SCORE – The PxP score was developed by Langer Research Associates for use in political and market research alike. Computed here on a scale of -100 to 100, it multiplies individuals' preferences on an issue (or for a candidate or product) with the importance they give to that position. Moving farther from 0 in either direction indicates that an issue has priority, differentiated preference or both of these at sufficient levels to be potentially influential.

Overall, PxP values are 29 for climate change, -25 for the tax pledge issue (the negative sign shows opposition) and 15 on compromise vs. partisanship. (Consider that very high or very low scores are difficult to obtain – they'd require very broad agreement on policies and priorities alike.) Scores drop to 3, 3 and 2, respectively, on Obamacare, immigration reform and a pact with Iran; those indicate either a lack of differentiated preference overall, a low priority, or both.

As noted, though, sharp partisan divisions may make for different discussions in the 2016 primaries as opposed to the general election. Government action on climate change has a PxP score of 58 among Democrats and 29 among independents, but -12 among Republicans. On compromise vs. partisanship, it's 21, 22 and 1, respectively. And on the ACA, most strikingly, it's 55, 5 and -63.

	PxP scores			
	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
A president who supports...				
Gov't action vs. no action on climate change	29	58	-12	29
Tax pledge vs. no pledge	-25	-33	-21	-20
Compromise vs. take a stand	15	21	1	22
Keep vs. repeal the ACA	3	55	-63	5
Support vs. oppose path to citizenship	3	30	-39	4
Agreement with Iran vs. no agreement	2	24	-29	5

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone March 26-29, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including design effect. Partisan divisions are 30-22-38 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

* in data columns = less than 0.5 percent

1-16, 20-27 previously released; 17 held for release.

18a. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who mainly (tries to compromise with the other political party), or someone who mainly (stands up for his or her side)?

	Compromise with the other political party	Stands up for his or her side	No opinion
3/29/15	58	37	5

18b. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who wants to keep the federal health care law, or someone who wants to repeal it?

	Keep the law	Repeal the law	No opinion
3/29/15	49	45	6

18c. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who favors government action to address climate change, or someone who opposes such action?

	Favors government action	Opposes government action	No opinion
3/29/15	59	31	10

18d. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who favors a negotiated agreement with Iran, or someone who opposes it?

	Favors negotiated agreement	Opposes negotiated agreement	No opinion
3/29/15	49	42	9

18e. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who supports a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, or someone who opposes it?

	Support path to citizenship	Oppose path to citizenship	No opinion
3/29/15	51	45	5

18f. All else equal, would you like the next president to be someone who pledges never to raise taxes, or someone who does not make such a pledge?

	Pledge never to raise taxes	No such pledge	No opinion
3/29/15	23	72	5

19. Now how important is each of those issues to you? First is electing someone who [Q18 ANSWER]. Would you say that's extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not so important to you?

Full wording:

- a1. Mainly tries to compromise with the other political party
- a2. Mainly stands up for his or her side
- b1. Wants to keep the federal health care law
- b2. Wants to repeal federal health care law
- c1. Favors government action to address climate change
- c2. Opposes government action to address climate change
- d1. Favors a negotiated agreement with Iran
- d2. Opposes a negotiated agreement with Iran
- e1. Supports a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants
- e2. Opposes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants
- f1. Pledges never to raise taxes
- f2. Does not make a pledge never to raise taxes

3/29/15 - Summary Table (Asked among those who provided this response in Q18.)

	---- Important ---			- Less important-			No
	NET	Extrmly	Very	NET	Smwt	Not so	op.
a1. Tries to compromise	70	27	43	29	25	4	*
a2. Stands up for his or her side	75	31	44	24	21	3	1
b1. Keep the health care law	78	41	37	21	17	3	1
b2. Repeal the health care law	76	40	36	24	20	4	*
c1. Favors action on climate change	68	31	37	32	29	4	*
c2. Opposes action on climate change	39	18	21	60	28	32	1
d1. Favors agreement with Iran	44	15	30	55	45	9	1
d2. Opposes agreement with Iran	60	28	32	39	28	11	1
e1. Supports a path to citizenship	56	22	33	44	37	7	*
e2. Opposes a path to citizenship	62	29	33	37	28	9	1
f1. Pledges never to raise taxes	74	34	40	26	20	6	1
f2. Doesn't pledge never to raise taxes	40	17	23	59	35	24	1

*** END ***