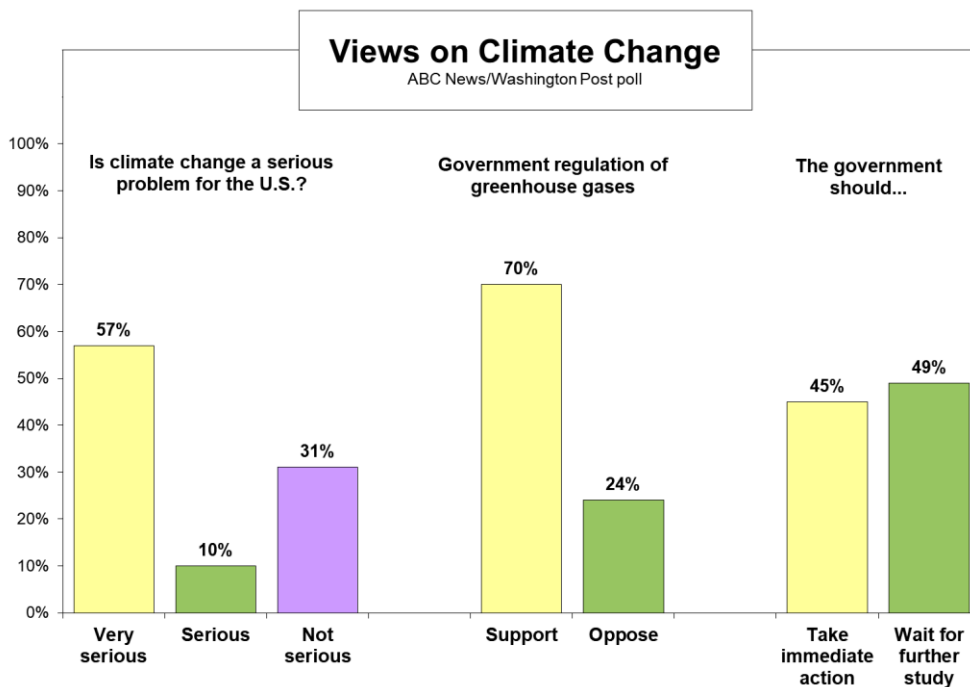


Most Favor Steps Against Climate Change, Though the Public Divides on its Urgency

Broad majorities of Americans see climate change as a serious problem and favor government regulation of greenhouse gas emissions to address it – yet the public divides on the urgency of the issue, a contrast to the views of leaders at the COP26 climate summit in Scotland.

Leaders at the global conference, which ends today, described climate change as an existential threat to humanity that demands a concerted response. In a new ABC News/Washington Post poll, however, Americans split, 45-49 percent, on whether it’s “an urgent problem that requires immediate government action” or “a longer-term problem that requires more study” first. (Five percent volunteer that it’s not a problem.) Views that it’s urgent are 8 percentage points off their peak, 53 percent, in 2018.

Nonetheless, other results in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), show continued substantial majority support for action, albeit without steady growth. In one, 67 percent call climate change a serious problem facing the country, including 57 percent calling it very serious. Both are about the same as in a 2014 ABC/Post poll.



In another, 70 percent say the federal government should regulate the release of greenhouse gases from sources such as power plants, cars and factories in an effort to reduce global warming. It’s ranged from 65 to 75 percent in a half-dozen polls since 2009.

Intensity of sentiment is on the side of regulation: Forty-eight percent strongly support regulating greenhouse gas emissions, vs. 16 percent strongly opposed. That said, strong support is at a numerical low; it peaked at 54 percent in April 2009.

GROUPS – Political views play a substantial role in these attitudes. In one example, the drop since 2018 in seeing climate change as urgent is steepest among conservatives, down 13 points, compared with non-significant declines (3 and 4 points) among moderates and liberals.

Indeed, 95 percent of Democrats and liberals alike see this as a serious problem, compared with half as many Republicans and conservatives, 39 and 41 percent, respectively. Independents and moderates fall between the two, with 69 and 75 percent saying it's a serious problem.

There also are notable differences by race/ethnicity, metro status, education and age, albeit with majorities across these groups calling climate change a serious problem. It's 93 percent among Black people, 72 percent of Hispanics and 60 percent of whites. It's 76 percent among urbanites and 67 percent among suburbanites, dropping to 54 percent among rural residents. Seventy-eight percent of those with post-graduate degrees say it's a serious problem, compared with 64 percent of those without a college degree. And 78 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds see it as serious, vs. 64 percent of those 30 and older.

Seeing climate change as a “very” serious problem peaks among liberals (92 percent), Democrats (90 percent) and Black people (85 percent). It's lowest among strong conservatives (21 percent), Republicans (25 percent), evangelical white Protestants (26 percent) and those who identify themselves as “somewhat” conservative (37 percent).

Views of the seriousness of the issue inform attitudes on urgency in addressing it. Among those who think climate change is a very serious problem, 73 percent think it's urgent and requires immediate government action. That drops precipitously to 16 percent of those who think it's a serious problem but not very serious and 4 percent of those who don't think it's a serious problem.

These views correspond to support for regulation of greenhouse gases, as well. This is backed by 89 percent of those who see climate change as very serious and 69 percent of those who see it as serious, vs. 40 percent of those who don't see it as serious. A relationship also holds in terms of urgency: Those who see an urgent problem are 40 points more likely than others to support emission controls, 93 vs. 53 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Nov. 7-10, 2021, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 percentage points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 27-26-37 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

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Full results follow.

1-14, 18-24 held for release. *= less than 0.5 percent

15. Do you think global warming, also known as climate change, is a serious problem facing this country, or not a serious problem? (IF SERIOUS) Would you say it's a very serious problem, or a problem but not a very serious one?

	NET	----- Serious ----- Very	Not very	Not a serious problem	No opinion
11/10/21	67	57	10	31	2
11/19/15	63	52	12	36	1
6/1/14	69	57	12	29	2

16. Do you think global warming is (an urgent problem that requires immediate government action), or (a longer-term problem that requires more study before government action is taken)?

	Urgent problem	Longer-term problem	Not a problem (vol.)	No opinion
11/10/21	45	49	5	2
6/11/18*	53	44	NA	3
9/27/05	41	47	6	6
6/5/05	38	58	3	1

*ABC/Stanford/RFF

17. Do you think the federal government should or should not regulate the release of greenhouse gases from sources like power plants, cars and factories in an effort to reduce global warming? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	NET	----- Should ----- Strongly	Somewhat	NET	----- Should not ----- Somewhat	Strongly	No opinion
11/10/21	70	48	23	24	8	16	5
8/5/12*	74	51	23	21	8	13	5
6/6/10	71	52	19	26	7	19	4
12/13/09	65	50	15	29	9	20	6
6/21/09	75	53	22	22	9	13	3
4/24/09	75	54	21	21	9	12	4

*Washington Post-KFF

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