

Appendix 1. Evidence from other polls on attitudes to Climate Change:

Sticking to the US and looking through the lens of *environmental priorities only*, what do we see? [According to Gallup](#) overall concern for the environment has been falling in recent years, ‘to historic lows’ in fact, yet also of 7 concerns tested (within a wider survey), the relative rank order ‘has generally been consistent over time, with water-related problems at the top and *global warming at the bottom*’. Most of the trends go back to 1989, other issues being forest and species loss, water and soil pollution and such. Placing global warming within a list of other environmental issues in this way will likely reduce the dependency of responses on political identity, as the other issues are not so politically charged and hence ‘dilute’ the issue which is. [The link above only goes up to 2012, the format seems to have changed a bit thereafter, but similar figures for 2013/14 can be found embedded in the wider survey tables for the [2014 Gallup Environment Poll](#)]. While many polls about global warming pick up concern, this result shows the seriousness of that concern in context. Many less folks are worrying a lot about the environment, and of those that do global warming is far from their chief worry. This is also against a background where according to the same Gallup poll, those that feel they understand the issue of global warming ‘very well’ have more than doubled over the last 15 years, whereas those who feel that they understand it ‘not very well’ have halved. While the political allegiance of respondents is not available here, the global warming score is low enough to imply that there are Democrats / Liberals who do *not* think global warming is a major worry.

And what if the list of concerns is much wider still? Incorporating not only environmental issues but national or world worries generally? This ought to reduce a bit further the dependency of responses on political identity in respect of global warming / climate change alone, because dealing with a large mixed bag of issues dilutes any thoughts of particular allegiance still more. Well the [March 2014 Gallup poll of worry on US National issues](#) puts climate change down at 14th out of 15 issues. However this time we do have further data on political allegiance, *and even for Democrat leaning respondents, climate change only makes it up to 11th on the list.*

A recent PRRI / Brookings survey ([hat-tip Watts Up With That](#)) agreed with the low priority for climate change when respondents were asked to score against a variety of other issues in a single list (in this case their priorities for Obama and Congress to address). Five out of six self-described groups (Conservative, Moderate, Liberal, Republican, Democrat, Independent), ranked climate change *last* of six concerns. The issues were: Jobs, The Deficit, Moral Breakdown, Health Care, Immigration System, Climate Change. Only Liberals did not rank it last, but fourth, showing that for views on climate change at least, Democrat and Liberal are not the same. All age groups bar one also ranked climate change last (18-29, they ranked it second to last), as did all racial groups and both religious plus non-religious groups. Full report [here](#).

A January 2014 [Pew Research poll](#) also agrees with these findings, ranking global warming 19th out of 20 issues within a single list of priorities for congress and the president to deal with. And even for Democrat supporters alone, *only 42%* considered global warming a top priority. That’s pretty soft support for a party whose leader and president has placed the issue front and centre, framing it as a coming calamity for the entire planet, which I guess is pretty much the strongest terms one could claim for any political issue at any time in history.

In another contextual sign of the true import of global warming in people's minds (in the US), while many appear to believe it is indeed a problem, only [41% are willing to pay more in taxes or in utility costs to generate cleaner energy and fight global warming](#). This includes 23% who are only willing to pay up to \$100 extra a year (see [bottom of text here](#)), *leaving just 18% who would pay more*. Yet \$100 annually is a pretty low sum for the vast majority of the population within a developed nation to contribute (above the existing 2013 taxes), almost trivial. And there must be many Liberals / Democrats who *cannot* be inside the 18%, this figure is simply way too low. What happened to their belief in the *certain science* which says that serious human-caused damage will occur to the whole planet; is this not worth more than \$100 extra to fix? And it seems that only 41% of people are willing to pay *anything extra at all* to save our world. One wonders just how many of the 18% would also opt out if the price rose to \$200 annual, which is still less than 0.4% of the average US salary (per 2013 [OECD survey](#): \$54,214 in 'Jobs' section).

So I think a pattern is visible here. As Dan finds, questions concentrating on core global warming issues alone (e.g. the simplest: is man causing the temperature to rise?), show a strong polarization, from which one might intuitively assume *a similarly strong* support of global warming policies from the Democrats / Liberals for this, the 'ultimate of issues'. The surveys above having such questions also produce polarized results (albeit not filtering out the extra strength for the science-aware). BUT... when global warming is placed into the context of other general issues, or even other environmental issues, *a great deal of that support evaporates*, leaving the mandate to fight global warming trailing towards the rear of almost every survey, in fact often dead last. So... this is jolly interesting, because it raises the question *just who is modifying their position? And Why?* And indeed just as interesting, *who *isn't* modifying their position?*

Well the *who* questions seem to be straightforward. While for those surveys which don't establish the political allegiance of respondents one has to reasonably intuit that it is the Democrats / Liberals who are shifting position, this is *confirmed* by those surveys which do establish allegiance. Where there is data on the Independents, they appear to be shifting too (albeit to a much lesser extent). *And it is the Republicans / Conservatives who maintain a much more consistent position throughout*. They score low on both the core global warming questions, *and* when the issue of global warming is set within a list of other policy choices. Their responses show *much less* dependency upon the precise question and context.

For instance in the Pew poll above, 66% of Democrats say global warming is due to human activity, and similar figures or higher still ([>80%](#)) are reported from various recent polls. It is this kind of decisive majority support that sags to just 42% of Democrats who consider the issue to be top priority within the same poll, or the even less impressive 36% of Democrats who consider it to be top priority in the above Gallup poll on US national issues, or indeed the merely 25% of the same allegiance who consider global warming to be top priority in the PRRI / Brookings poll (see [pdf](#) pg 40). And although the much greater part of the 18% of the whole US population who would pay more than \$100 extra to fight global warming, must be Democrat aligned, these also could not be enough for a majority within their own party voting base. While the spread of these figures no doubt depends upon particular issue lists plus wording and context, in every case they represent *a big drop to a clear minority*. In contrast, only modest numbers of Republicans fail to

convert the belief in human caused global warming into their top priority. Around 10%. But clearly far less of them hold this belief in the first place; typically 25% at most, significantly lower in some surveys (23% in the above Pew poll). And absolute numbers matter. *The modest Republican loss of resolve isn't driving a collapse in support for action on Global Warming, the much larger Democrat loss of resolve is.*