

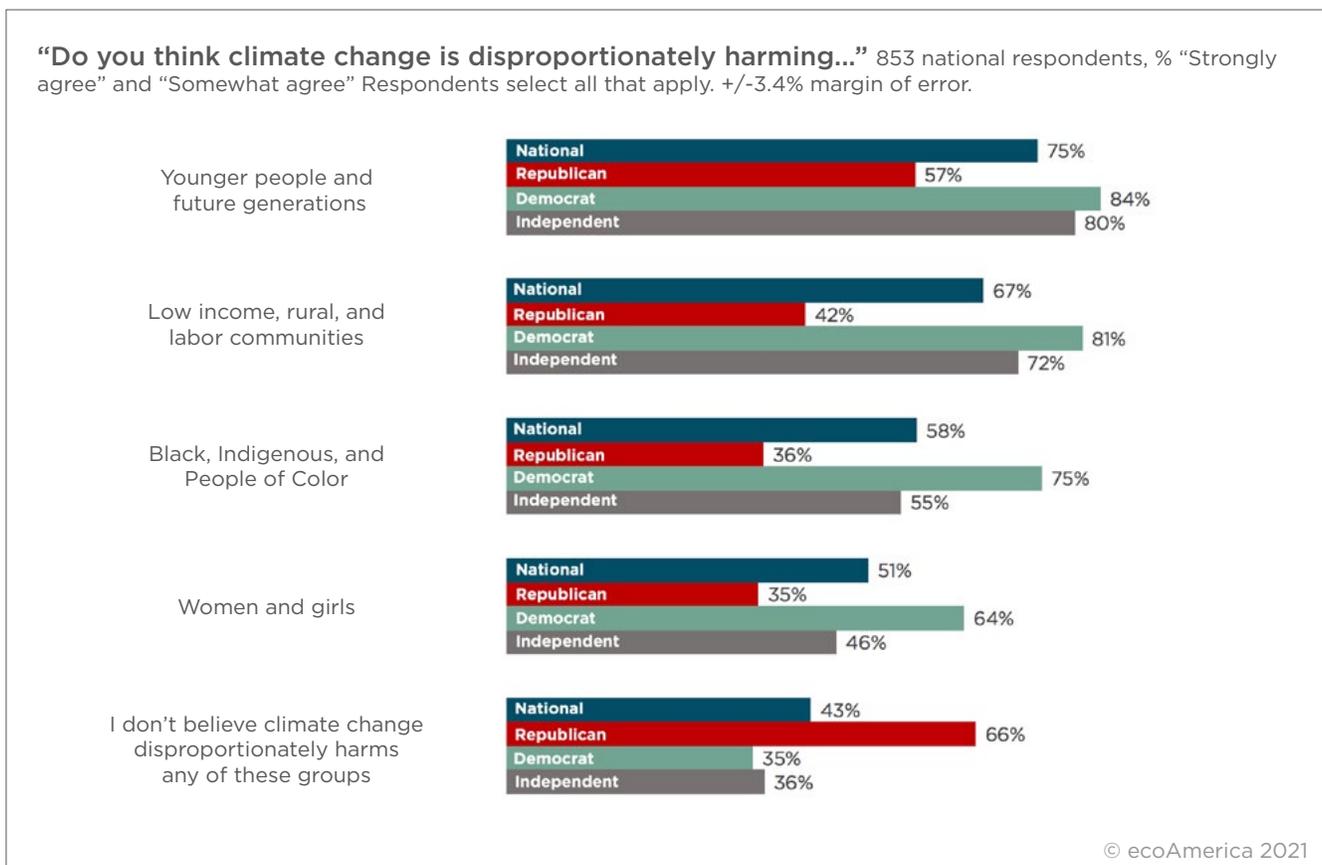
## President Biden Sees Climate Change as a Justice Issue, Do Americans?

ecoAmerica's latest survey finds that 84% of Americans believe climate change harms some people more than others – but some do not yet recognize that as a justice issue. Harm to the environment and nature motivates Americans to act more than harm to communities of color and low income communities or future generations. Climate solutions to address injustice garner weak support from the American public.

The [NAACP](#) states: Environmental injustice, including the proliferation of climate change, has a disproportionate impact on communities of color and low income communities in the United States and around the world. Recognizing this connection and addressing that those harmed first and worst have been historically excluded from solutions will move us closer to achieving climate justice. President Biden has pledged to [make climate justice a priority](#), but where do Americans stand? Have they connected the dots?

### Who Do Americans Think Are Impacted Most?

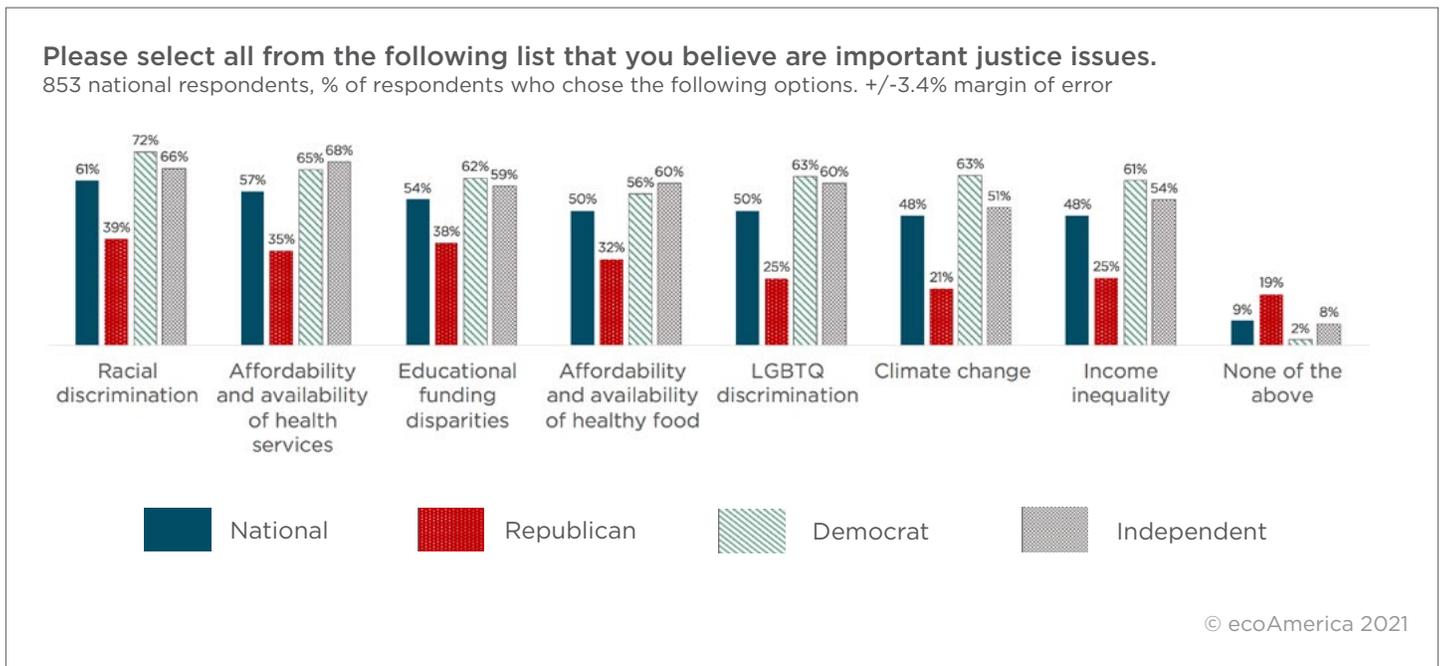
While the majority (84%) of Americans agree that climate change harms some people more than others, identifying impacted groups who bear the burden indicates that some have not yet made the connection. Most Americans (75%) accurately recognize that young people and future generations experience disproportionate harm and 67% understand that low income, rural, and labor communities do as well. A look at political affiliation shows differences in understanding or recognition of climate change harms. 66% of Republicans said they do not believe climate change disproportionately harms any of these groups, roughly 30 percentage points more than Democrats (35%) and Independents (36%). While some Americans grasp the justice component of climate change, there is work to do in educating a wider audience.



## Democrats Rank Climate Change High Among Justice Issues

63% of Democrats say climate change is an important justice issue. This nears the top of the list behind racial discrimination and the affordability and availability of health services. ecoAmerica provided the information: Some issues impact certain groups of people and these are often called justice issues. Nationally, racial discrimination and the affordability and availability of health services rank highest in terms of justice issues.

Results suggest an understanding that climate change is a justice issue is emerging among Democrats and Independents more than Republicans. Fewer Republicans — compared to Democrats and Independents — believe any of the issues provided are justice issues and nearly 1/5 (19%) believe none are. Findings indicate that as the Biden Administration focuses efforts on achieving climate justice, work to engage a broader diversity of Americans in climate action will be paramount to close the divides.



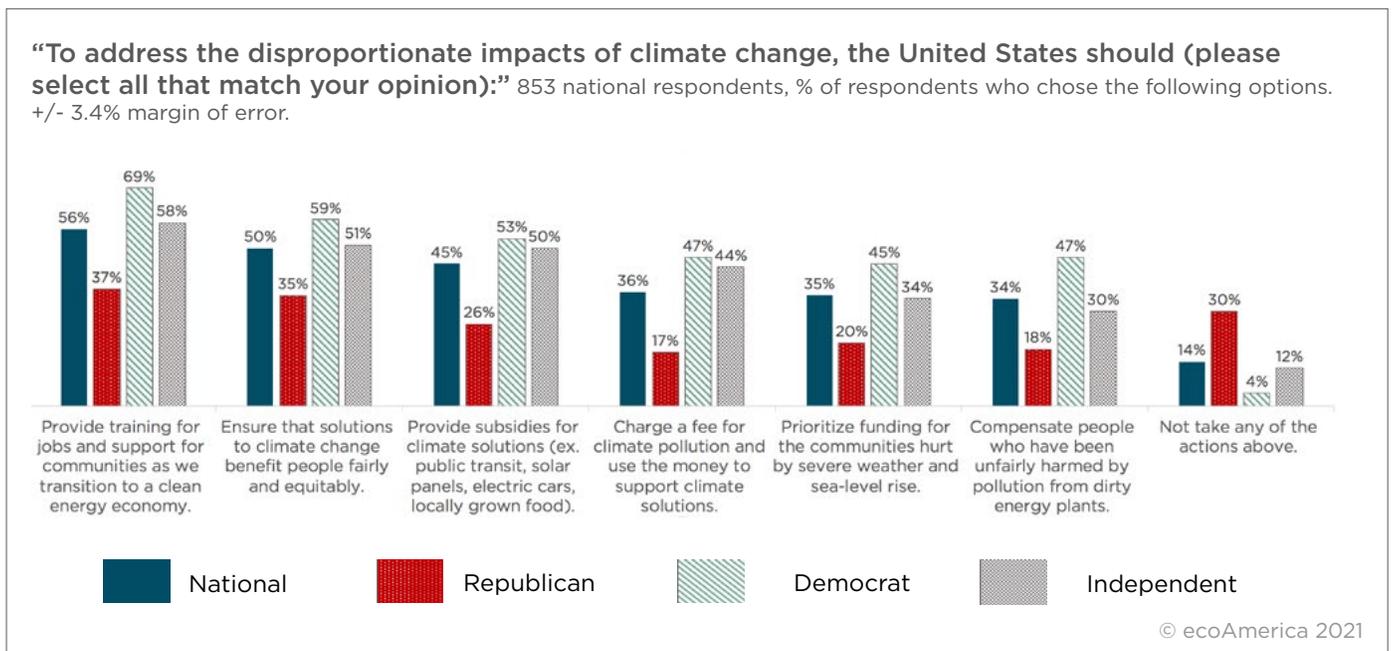
## Environment — Over People — Drives American Motivation

For years, climate activists and scientists have been trying to move the public to take action on climate change, and understanding the motivations behind actions is ever more critical. ecoAmerica’s findings show that the environment leads American motivation to act on climate change. 63% of Americans say they are motivated because climate change is affecting the environment and nature. Those Americans who are motivated specifically by unfairness are in the minority. Just over 1/3 (36%) of Americans say they are motivated because “climate change is unfairly impacting some communities more than others.” Far fewer Republicans report motivation to act on climate change than Democrats and Independents. 39% of Republicans said they did not feel motivated to act on climate change compared to 14% of Independents and only 5% of Democrats.



### Solutions Garner Weak Support from Americans

When presented with six solutions to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change, the only solution that received over 50% of national support was, “Providing training for jobs and supporting communities as we transition to a clean energy economy.” Just half of Americans say the United States should ensure that solutions benefit people fairly and equitably and even fewer (45%) say the US should provide subsidies for climate solutions. Once again, results differ widely by political affiliation. Fewer Republicans support any of the provided solutions than Democrats and Independents. Notably, the solution with the highest national support — providing training for jobs and support for communities in a clean energy economy transition — received support from only 37% of Republicans. This is 32 percentage points lower than Democrats (69%). As President Biden and members of the 117th congress move forward with solutions, efforts to involve more Americans in the climate movement may grow the necessary support.



Full data is available in the accompanying [toplines](#).

## Methodology

ecoAmerica designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online on January 4, 2021 using Survey Monkey. The survey yielded a total of 853 complete adult responses. The sample was drawn from an online panel and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 3.4%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population was interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 853 respondents answered, "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3.4 points, or range from 46.6% to 53.4%.

## Suggested Citation

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For more information contact us at [research@ecoAmerica.org](mailto:research@ecoAmerica.org).

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