

# FLORIDA VOTERS SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION



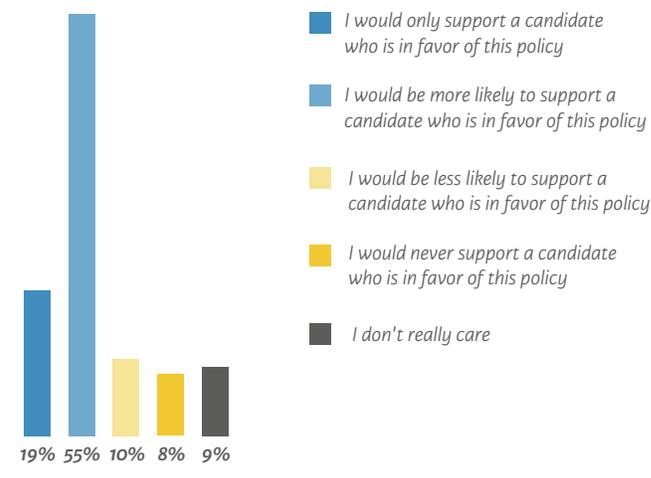
As Democratic candidates head to Miami for the first presidential primary debate, a new survey finds Florida voters strongly support government action to address climate change. Voters want increased action from the federal government, their state government, corporations, and health professionals. To assess Floridians' attitudes toward various climate policies, as well as their experiences with impacts of climate change, Climate Nexus, in partnership with the Yale University Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, conducted a representative survey of 1,558 registered voters in Florida from June 7-11, 2019. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 2.6% at the 95% confidence level.

## AMONG FLORIDA VOTERS, CLIMATE CHANGE IS POLITICALLY SALIENT

Seventy-one percent of Florida voters support government action to address climate change, including 43% who strongly support it. Just one out of five voters somewhat (11%) or strongly (9%) oppose the government taking action to address climate change. Democrats especially favor government action, with 85% supporting action on climate change, as do about three-quarters (74%) of independents.

Nearly three in four (74%) voters say they would be more likely to support a candidate for political office who favors setting a national renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) of 100% by 2050, including 19% who say they would only support candidates who favor this national RPS. More Florida voters say they'd be more likely to support a candidate who is in favor of establishing an RPS than any other issue position tested – including banning semi-automatic assault rifles in Florida (64%), establishing universal health care in the United States (63%), or legalizing marijuana for recreational use (58%).

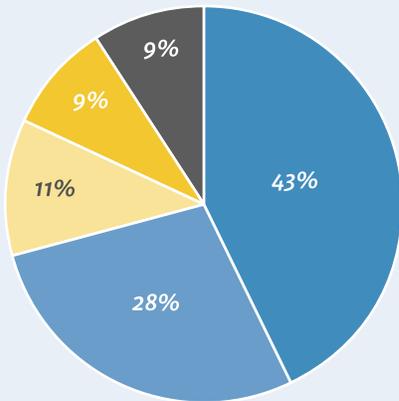
**Q:** Please indicate how likely you would be to support a candidate for political office who is in favor of requiring electric utility companies in the United States to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources, like wind and solar, by the year 2050. If you don't care about this policy, just say so.



Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%



### Do you support or oppose government action to address climate change?



Among Registered Voters

- Strongly support
- Somewhat oppose
- Not sure
- Somewhat support
- Strongly oppose

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Six in 10 registered Democrats in Florida say they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate for political office who pledges to refuse any campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry, including three in 10 who say they would be much more likely to vote for a candidate who did this. Only 8% say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who pledges to refuse fossil fuel money, while about one-third (32%) say it wouldn't make a difference to their vote.

Climate change ranks a close third behind health care and jobs and the economy as the top issue for Florida Democrats in deciding their presidential vote. When asked about the two most important issues to their vote for president in November 2020, Democrats in the state select health care (40%), the economy and jobs (25%), and climate change (21%). Fifteen percent of Florida voters overall say climate change is one of the two most important issues for their presidential vote.

There's high interest among registered Florida Democratic voters in the first Democratic primary

debate. Nearly two-thirds (64%) report they plan to watch or attend the debates on June 26 and 27.

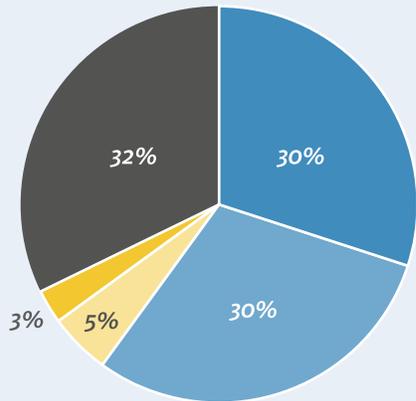
Going into the debate, Joe Biden is leading the field among registered Democratic voters in Florida, with nearly one-third (32%) selecting him as their top-choice candidate. Sixteen percent select Bernie Sanders as their top choice, and 10% pick Elizabeth Warren. Kamala Harris and Pete Buttigieg are each at 6%, with none of the remaining Democratic candidates receiving more than 2%. Notably, 14% say they prefer another candidate or are unsure who they would like to see as the Democratic presidential nominee.

## FLORIDIANS ARE FEELING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Floridians are worried about a wide variety of impacts of climate change. More than eight in 10 (81%) are worried they or someone in their family will be affected by extreme weather like hurricanes, flooding, and heat waves. More than six in 10 (62%) are worried they or a family member will be impacted by air pollution, and a majority (53%) are worried about sea-level rise.

Climate change is also already impacting many Floridians' health and wellbeing. More than four in 10 Florida voters say in the past year they or someone in their family have experienced more severe seasonal allergies (45%) or anxiety about extreme weather events (43%). Three in 10 report they or someone in their family have experienced heat stress or heat-related illness in the last year. About one in five say they or someone in their family have had to take a break from work or take a day off because it was too hot (21%), had difficulty breathing or another respiratory problem due to air pollution (20%), or had to leave their residence temporarily or permanently due to sea-level rise, flooding, or extreme weather (18%) in the past year. And three in 10 Florida voters say they or a family member have made physical changes to their residence, like installing hurricane shutters or replacing a septic tank, in order to protect their

**Q:** *Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for political office who pledges to refuse any campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry, or would it not make a difference to your vote?*



Among Registered Democrats

- Much more likely to vote for the candidate
- Somewhat more likely to vote for the candidate
- Somewhat less likely to vote for the candidate
- Much less likely to vote for the candidate
- Makes no difference either way

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home against sea-level rise, flooding, or extreme weather in the last year.

Beyond their own personal experiences, Floridians recognize the impacts of climate change on the entire state. Nearly seven in 10 (69%) Florida voters say climate change is affecting extreme weather events in the state, including more than four in 10 (42%) who say it's having a large effect. And nearly the same number (68%) say climate change is affecting Florida agriculture. About six in 10 say climate change is impacting Floridians' health (63%) and Florida's economy (59%).

Residents of the Miami/Fort Lauderdale region report experiencing some climate impacts more acutely than others in the Sunshine State. While more than half (53%) of Floridians say they are worried they or their family will be impacted by sea-level

rise, more than seven in 10 (71%) in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale region say they are worried about sea-level rise. Almost half (49%) report they or someone in their family has made physical changes to their residence to protect it against sea-level rise, flooding, or extreme weather in the past year, compared to 30% of Florida voters overall who report this. More than one-third (35%) of Miami/Fort Lauderdale area residents say they or someone in their family has experienced heat stress or heat-related illness in the last year, and more than one in five (22%) have had respiratory problems due to air pollution.

There's appetite in Florida to talk about the impact of climate change on extreme weather events while those events are still happening. Nearly half (49%) of Florida voters – including almost six in 10 (57%) in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale region – say the media should talk about climate change while extreme weather events are ongoing, and another 9% say the media should talk about climate change in the days immediately after extreme weather. Few Florida voters say the media should wait a week (7%), a month (5%), or longer than a month (2%) to talk about the role of climate change in extreme weather, and only 15% say the media should never talk about climate change and its impact on weather-related disasters.

Florida voters do have faith their state government is prepared to handle a major hurricane this year, though fewer feel that way about the federal government. A majority (52%) of Florida voters think the state government is adequately prepared to deal with a major hurricane this year. Fewer than four in 10 (39%) think the federal government is prepared – and the same number think the federal government isn't prepared to handle a major hurricane this season.

Despite saying their state is prepared for this hurricane season, Florida voters are pessimistic about the quality of the environment for future generations. In fact, close to half (45%) think the condition of the state's environment will be worse for the next generation than it is now. Roughly the same number (42%) think it will be about the same, but

only 13% believe Florida’s environment will be better for the next generation.

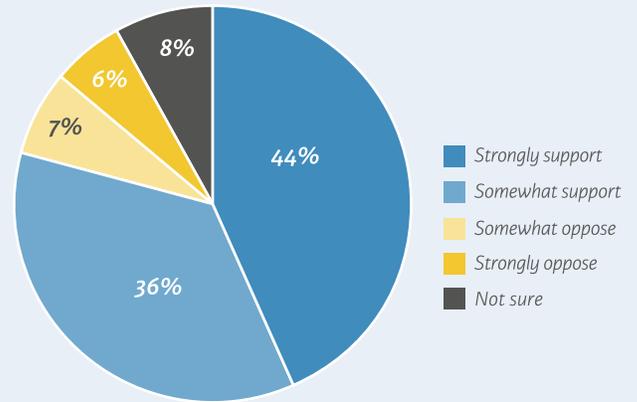
## FLORIDIANS WANT ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Majorities of Florida voters want to see increased action to address climate change – especially from the federal government, which 50% of voters say should be doing much more than it currently does.

All told, about three-quarters of Florida voters say the federal government (73%), corporations (75%), individual citizens (74%), their member of Congress (71%), and the Florida state government (73%) should be doing much or somewhat more on climate change. Slightly smaller majorities say they want to see more action on climate change from non-profit organizations (63%), the media (59%), and health professionals such as doctors and nurses (58%).

In addition to broad government action to address climate change, there is strong bipartisan support for a renewable energy portfolio standard among Florida voters. Overall, eight in 10 Floridians support requiring electric utilities in Florida to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2050, including 44% who strongly support this standard. Support for this RPS in Florida transcends party lines, as 88% of Democrats, 79% of independents, and even 71% of Republicans support requiring electric utilities in the state to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2050.

**Q:** *Do you support or oppose requiring electric utility companies in the state of Florida to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources, like wind and solar, by the year 2050?*



Among Registered Voters

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