

# Research as Climate Advocacy: Using Scholarship for Social Change

Wednesday, August 19, 2020  
12:00 PM-1:15 PM ET



## Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series



The time has never been more urgent for environmental advocacy. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequity are creating an increasingly unstable and impoverished world. The magnitude of the problems we face demands systemic changes to our economy and way of life, and science and education alone are not sufficient to bring about those changes.



**Clara Fang**

Center for Climate Preparedness & Community Resilience Graduate Assistant & Organizer of the Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

# Local Solutions for Strong Communities

... a series of online courses focused on the fundamentals of climate change resilience.

- Enroll for graduate credit or audit the course
- Increase your skill set in climate resilience for better outcomes
- Discover solutions to local issues you face on the job or in your community.
- Register for one course or the whole series.



<http://www.communityresilience-center.org/climate-change-resilience-series/>

# Local Solutions for Strong Communities

... a series of online courses focused on the fundamentals of climate change resilience.

Join us for our next online course in this series

## **ESP 5100: Policy Advocacy: Climate**

September 8 – December 1, 2020



Instructors: Abi Abrash Walton & Clara Fang

<http://www.communityresilience-center.org/climate-change-resilience-series/>

# Webinar Logistics



Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted



The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR web site within one week



Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q&A section



If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly

# Presenter: Jack Zhou

- ▶ **Jack Zhou** produces and manages the Climate Advocacy Lab's social science-informed resources for their webinars, workshops, and other outreach. His research interests include motivated reasoning, framing effects, and political polarization. In other words, how people think about climate change, how they process information on the issue, and what gets in the way. Prior to joining the Lab, he worked as a postdoctoral associate in energy policy and survey methods. He received his B.S. from UC Berkeley and a Ph.D. from Duke University.



# Presenter: Eric Fine

- ▶ As the YPCCC's Project Manager, **Eric Fine** supports advocacy organizations to optimize and innovate on their campaigns by leveraging public opinion research and data tools. He also collaborates with groups who are studying public perception in Latin America. Prior to YPCCC, Eric was an outdoor educator taking people on expeditions throughout the Americas and Europe. Watching glaciers recede in Patagonia over ten years inspired him to pursue a Masters of Environmental Science at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.







# Research in Climate Advocacy

**Jack Zhou, Ph.D.**  
Climate Advocacy Lab

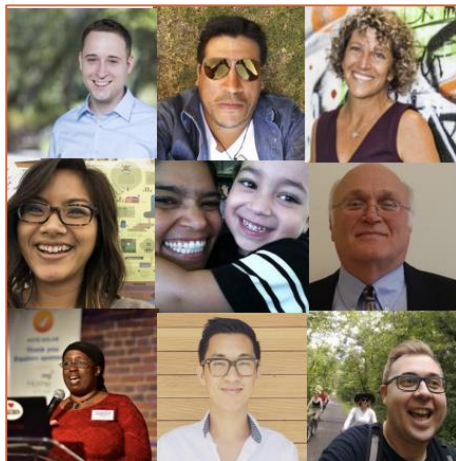


# My background



- BS from College of Natural Resources, UC Berkeley
- PhD from Duke Nicholas School of the Environment
- Postdoc work in survey methods, science policy communication
- Social scientist at Climate Advocacy Lab since July 2018

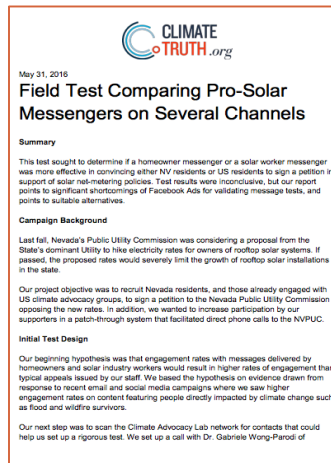
# The Climate Advocacy Lab



Our (awesome!) members



Workshops & Webinars



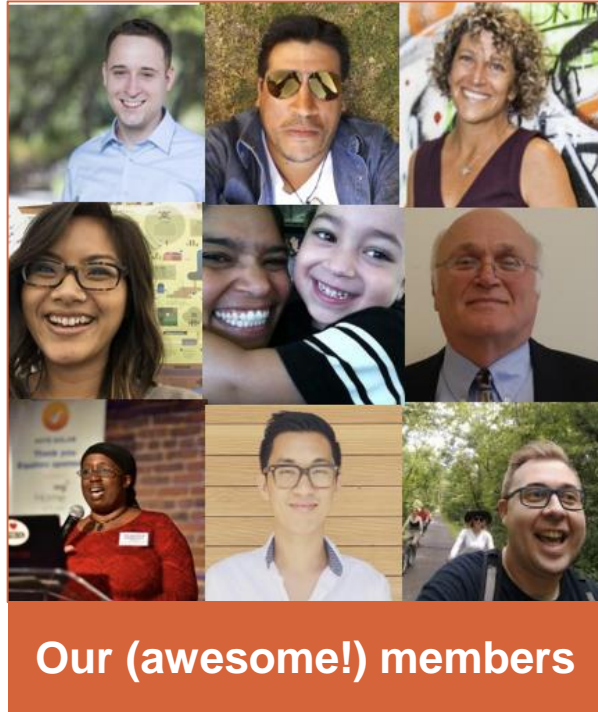
Research & experimentation



Online platform & alerts

*Helping the climate community build grassroots power and win through evidence-based advocacy.*

# Our community



- ~3,000 advocates, organizers, social scientists, data analysts, consultants, and funders from all 50 states, working across the climate and clean energy space
- 247 social scientists working in academia and the private sector
- Most represented:
  - Yale, Michigan, UCSB, George Mason, NCSU

# Webinars and workshops



Trainings

- **In-person workshops** for organizations and coalitions – and everyone in between
- **Monthly webinars**, skill-shares, and peer learning exchanges offered by (and for!) other Lab members, as well as Lab staff

# Research and Experimentation



May 31, 2016

## Field Test Comparing Pro-Solar Messengers on Several Channels

### Summary

This test sought to determine if a homeowner messenger or a solar worker messenger was more effective in convincing either NV residents or US residents to sign a petition in support of solar net-metering policies. Test results were inconclusive, but our report points to significant shortcomings of Facebook Ads for validating message tests, and points to suitable alternatives.

### Campaign Background

Last fall, Nevada's Public Utility Commission was considering a proposal from the State's dominant Utility to hike electricity rates for owners of rooftop solar systems. If passed, the proposed rates would severely limit the growth of rooftop solar installations in the state.

Our project objective was to recruit Nevada residents, and those already engaged with US climate advocacy groups, to sign a petition to the Nevada Public Utility Commission opposing the new rates. In addition, we wanted to increase participation by our supporters in a patch-through system that facilitated direct phone calls to the NVPUC.

### Initial Test Design

Our beginning hypothesis was that engagement rates with messages delivered by homeowners and solar industry workers would result in higher rates of engagement than typical appeals issued by our staff. We based the hypothesis on evidence drawn from response to recent email and social media campaigns where we saw higher engagement rates on content featuring people directly impacted by climate change such as flood and wildfire survivors.

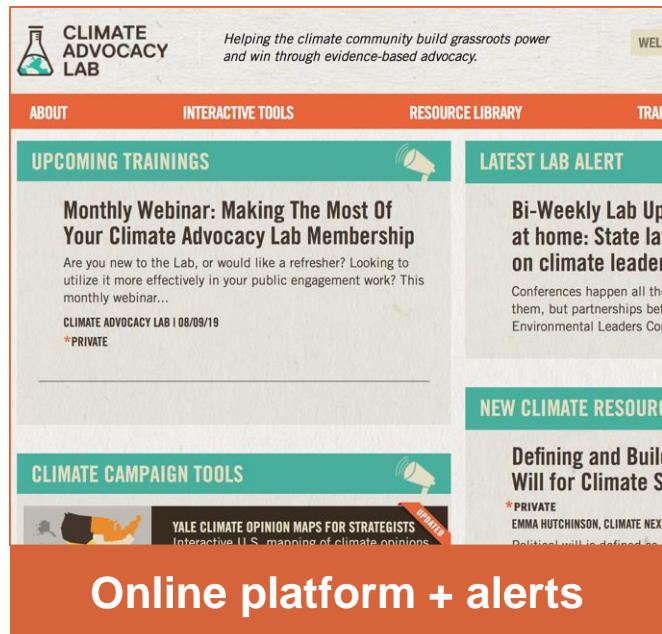
Our next step was to scan the Climate Advocacy Lab network for contacts that could help us set up a rigorous test. We set up a call with Dr. Gabriele Wong-Parodi of

- Support for organizations **testing innovative approaches** to public engagement on climate
- All the **results are shared back** with the Lab community to increase our collective knowledge about what's working – and what isn't

R + E



# Online platform & weekly newsletters

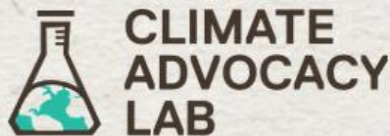
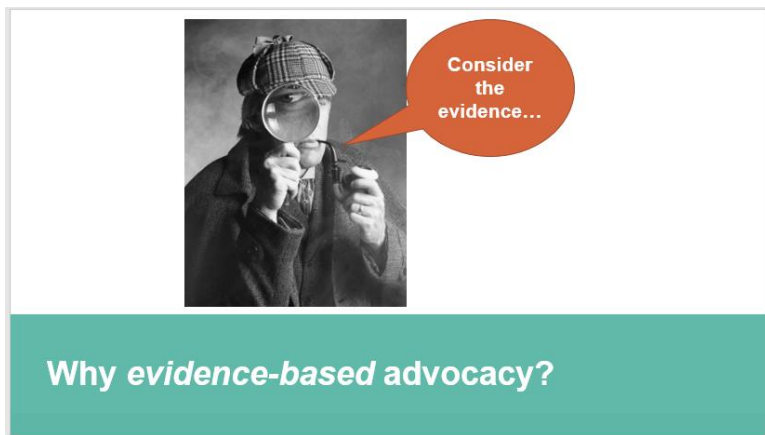


- Public-facing and members-only versions – be sure to **sign in!**
- Weekly updates, **sent out every Thursday**
- Sign up to **receive push alerts** when we add resources related to topic or geographic areas of interest



# Ethos

- Promote evidence-based advocacy
- Spread a culture of learning (and sharing)



*Helping the climate community build grassroots power and win through evidence-based advocacy.*

# Mission alignment and complementarity

- **Broad shared goal: Tackle climate change**
- Academics: Production of generalizable knowledge via theory building and testing (e.g., how do social norms shape behavior?)
- Advocates: Answering a specific practical question (e.g., how to reduce the rate at which volunteers drop out from the organization)

# Evidence and tools to support climate advocates



Public opinion research



Social science research



Data and analytics



Experimentation



Case studies

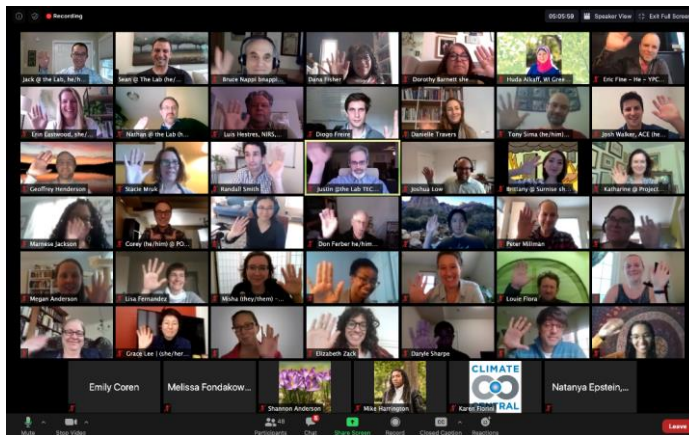
# Advocacy in conversation with research



2019 Research +  
Experimentation  
convening (Oakland)



2017  
Sustaining  
Movement  
Momentum and  
Building  
Political Power  
workshop  
(Santa Barbara)

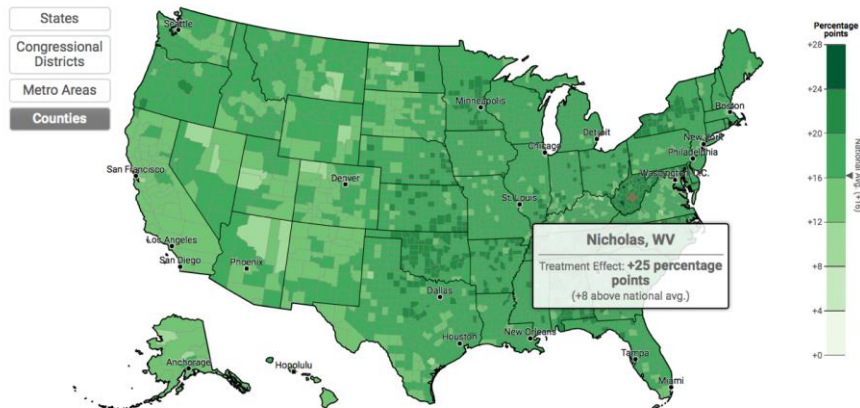


2020 Research +  
Experimentation  
convening (virtual)



# Applying theory and data to advocacy

*Using YCOM public opinion data and social norms messaging to overcome personal barriers to action and increase feelings of efficacy*



**Oil Change International**

Sponsored • Paid for by Oil Change International

**You're not alone. A growing number of Texans (now 71%) agree we should do more to fight climate change, including a majority of Texas Republicans.** However, U.S. oil and gas production is poised for an expansion that will be unparalleled



# Review and synthesize literature



Getting our volunteers, campaign targets, and communities to take meaningful actions can be difficult. Check out these tips from social science that may make the difference between action and apathy.



## Efficacy is essential.

Whether it's persuading new faces to join your cause or mobilizing an existing base, it's essential to help people believe their actions matter. Efficacy is the feeling that "my actions matter and make a difference." This seems obvious but many tactics, improperly framed, may not build efficacy. Four major forms of efficacy are:

- someone feeling like they are capable of helping,
- the belief that their voice will be heard,
- believing that acting together is more effective than acting alone, and
- that the solutions we're pushing for will solve the problem.



## Use language that empowers your base.

We often try to emphasize how "easy" an action will be to encourage action-taking – but research suggests that might be the wrong approach. In fact, since many of the actions we are asking people to take are, in fact, challenging, it is better to acknowledge their discomfort. For particularly difficult asks, like meeting policymakers – which can be unfamiliar situations or potentially involve unpleasant interactions – build up your activists with legitimization rhetoric that acknowledges their anxieties while reinforcing the importance of the task.



## We are not logical. We are psychological.

People are not perfectly rational, even if they think they are. For instance, powerful emotions can stoke powerful actions. But simply provoking an emotional response is just the first step. While the academic literature on how emotions in climate change communication is still evolving, research has shown that pairing emotional appeals with clear, understandable, and appropriate actions is likely the best way forward. In other words, if you want to provoke a fear response in your message, make the corresponding ask a way to reduce that fear.



Credit: Chris Yakimov (Flickr CC 2.0)

## THE YOUTH...BUT WHO ARE THEY REALLY?

- **Talkin' 'bout my generation.** When we talk about youth, we usually think of **two generations**: Millennials and Gen Z (or "Zoomers"). Millennials were born from 1981-1996 (ages 24-39), coming of age during 9/11 and the Great Recession; Zoomers were born from 1997-2012 (ages 8-23), shaped by powerful forces like school shootings, the climate crisis, and the current push for racial justice.
- **Like a real-life Benetton ad.** Millennials and Zoomers are **more racially diverse** across their generation than their elders, with Gen Z being the least white generation on record. This racial diversity, along with greater exposure to minority cultures and voices, partly explains why youth activists are so invested in racial justice and climate justice issues.
- **It's not Tron but it's close.** Millennials grew up and developed alongside the internet and personal electronic devices; Zoomers, meanwhile, have lived their entire lives connected online. You may have heard youth described as "**digital natives**," individuals who live entirely at ease with their devices, social media, and the power of the world wide web. However, youth audiences also understand the vagaries and limitations of the internet, and are among the **savviest consumers** of digital information.

## YOUNG & POLITICAL

- **A silent plurality.** By the numbers, Millennials and Zoomers make up the **biggest block of eligible voters in 2020, accounting for nearly 40% of the**

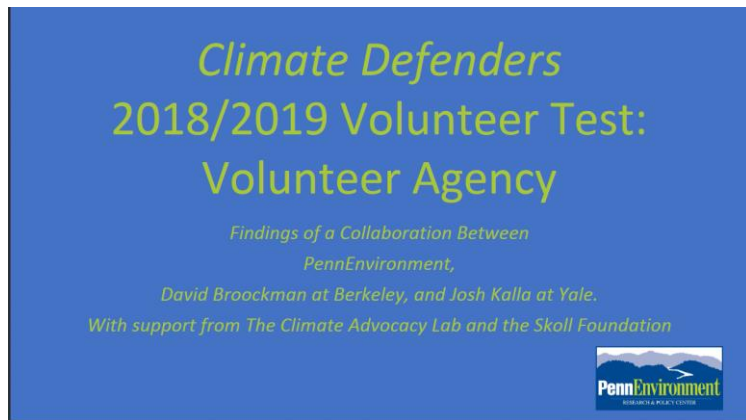


# Co-produce original research



CALIFORNIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Fight Back Against Big Oil    Protect Community Health



# Facilitate researcher-advocate collaborations

## Webinar: Researcher-Advocate Collaborations Peer Learning Exchange

Climate Advocacy Lab | 12/03/18

For researchers, partnering and collaborating with advocacy organizations offers a variety of benefits: access to novel data and populations, increased grant prospects, networking opportunities, and the knowledge that their work is making a difference. But how do such opportunities arise and how should you navigate the various choices regarding expectations, trust, equity, and data ownership? During this peer learning exchange, Lab members who have performed and facilitated this type of collaborative research (from both sides) will share their experiences and insights -- and we hope you will bring yours, too! (Registration restricted to social scientists only, though a recording will be available for all Lab members afterwards). Featured panelists:



Also check out research4impact ([r4impact.org](http://r4impact.org))

# Ways to plug in

- Join the Lab!
- (Learn how to) collaborate with advocates
  - Consider ways you can assist advocates with their work and mission
  - Establish clear expectations on resources, timeline, and communication
  - Report back!



# Thank you!



Drop me a line at [jack@climateadvocacylab.org](mailto:jack@climateadvocacylab.org)



**CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN MIND**


**AUGUST 19, 2020**

**RESEARCH AS CLIMATE ADVOCACY**



**Eric Fine**

YALE PROGRAM ON  
Climate Change  
Communication

 When poll is active, respond at **PollEv.com/ypccc1**

 Text **YPCCC1** to **22333** once to join

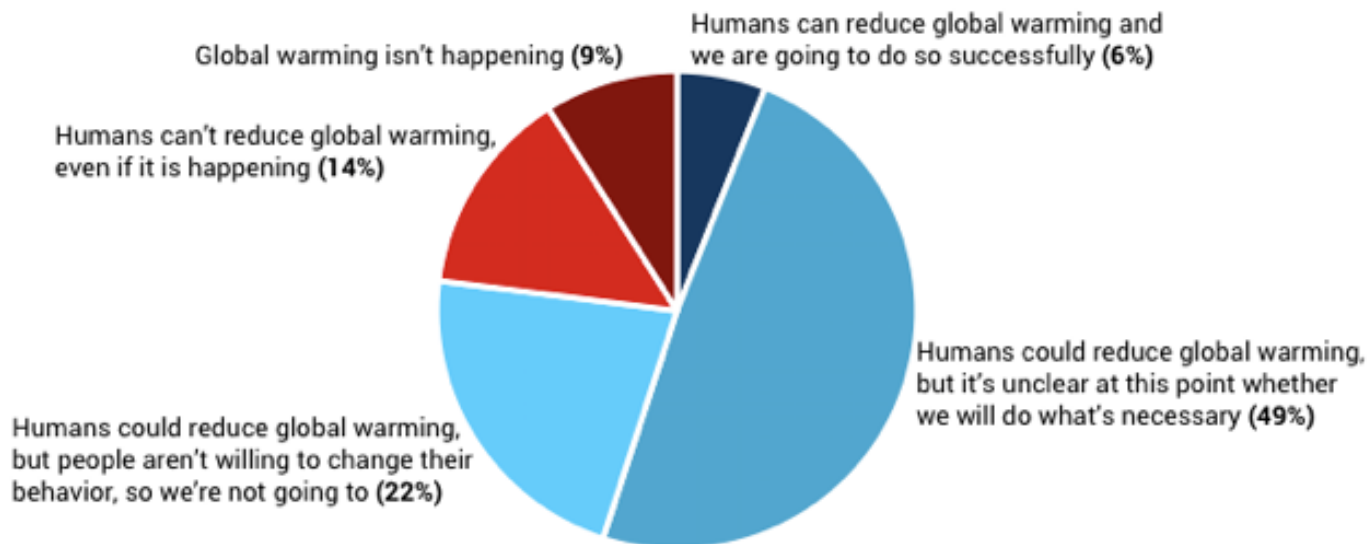
**Which of the following comes closest to your view?**



# A Majority of Americans Think Humans Can Reduce Global Warming

- But few are optimistic that we will -

*Which of the following comes closest to your view?*



Which of the following comes closest to your view?

March 2018. Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,278).

# Global Warming's "Six Americas"

Alarmed

Concerned

Cautious

Disengaged

Doubtful

Dismissive

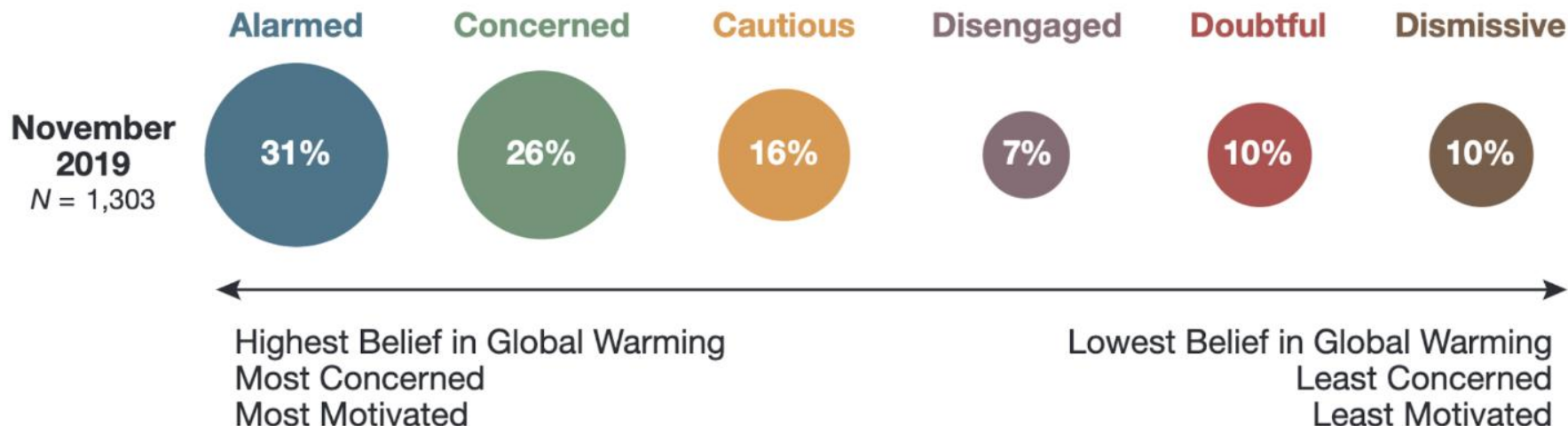


Illustrations by Michael Sloan

 When poll is active, respond at **PollEv.com/ypccc1**

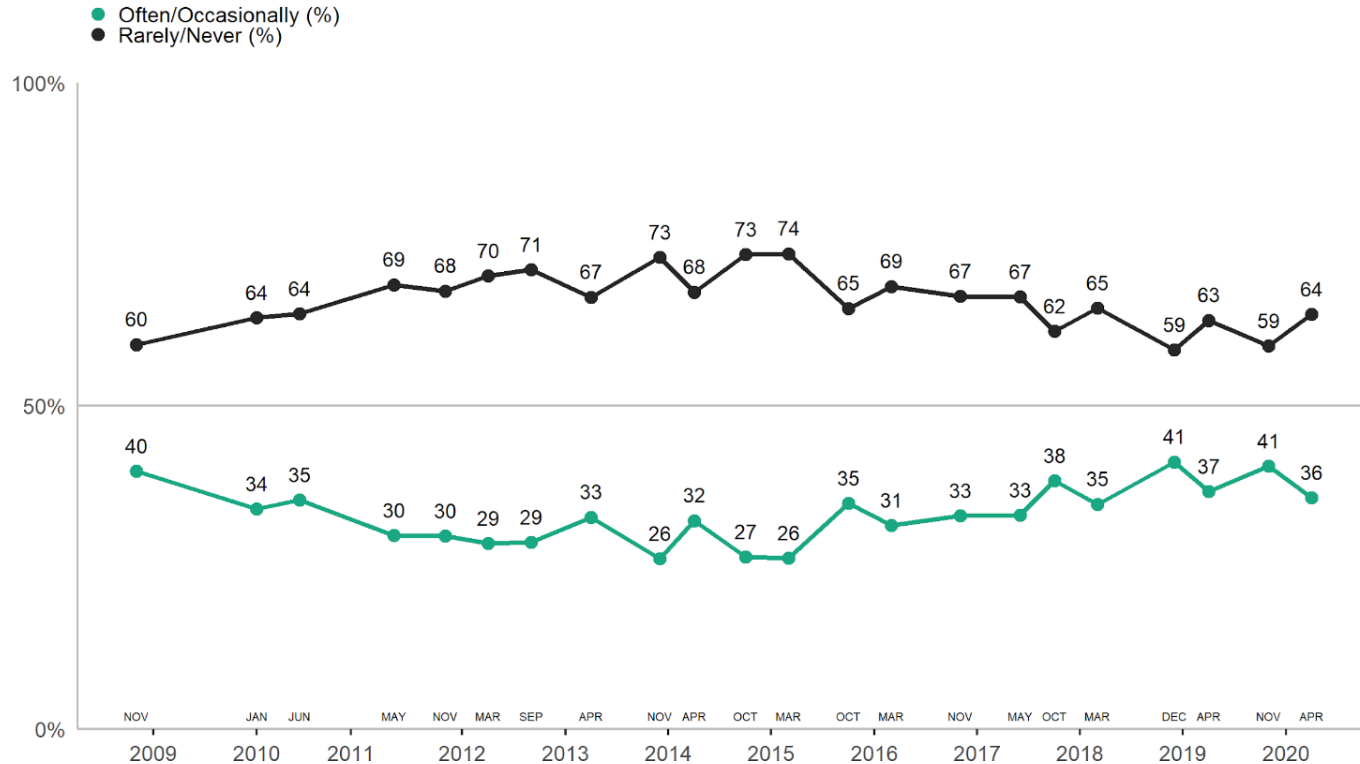
 Text **YPCCC1** to **22333** once to join

# Global Warming's "Six Americas"



Illustrations by Michael Sloan

# Most Americans "rarely" or "never" discuss global warming with family and friends



How often do you discuss global warming with your family and friends?

April 2020



0%

72%

Actually Say Global Warming is Happening

## Americans Underestimate How Many Adults in the U.S. Think Global Warming is Happening

General U.S. Population

54

Perception of what % of the U.S. Population Thinks Global Warming is Happening

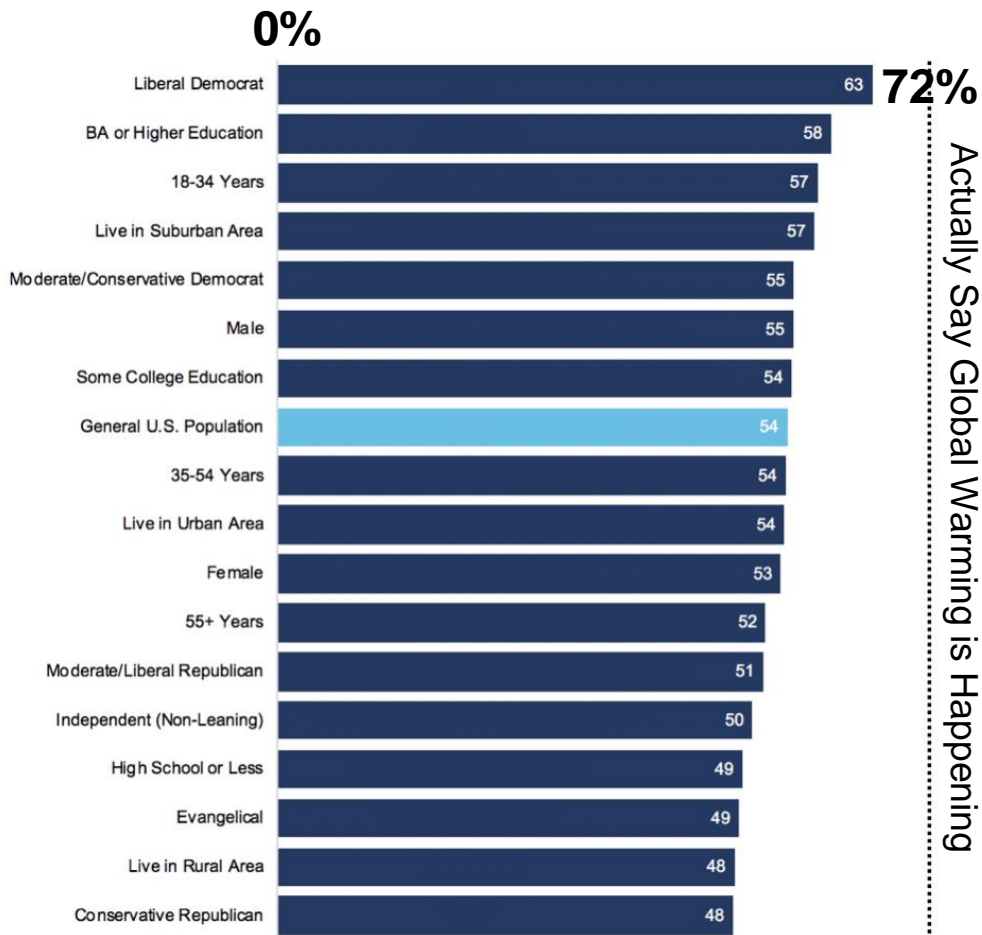
April 2019. Base: U.S. Adults



# Americans Underestimate How Many Adults in the U.S. Think Global Warming is Happening

Perception of what % of the U.S. Population Thinks Global Warming is Happening

April 2019. Base: U.S. Adults



# Leveraging Social Norms

**ACE** Alliance for Climate Education  
Sponsored · Paid for by Alliance for Climate Education ·

77% of Americans want climate education in schools. We have everything you need to bring climate science to your students.



OURCLIMATEOURFUTURE.ORG

**Free climate lesson plans**

Our Climate Our Future is a no-cost, award-winning climate education video collection created by Alliance for Climate Education. Sign up today.

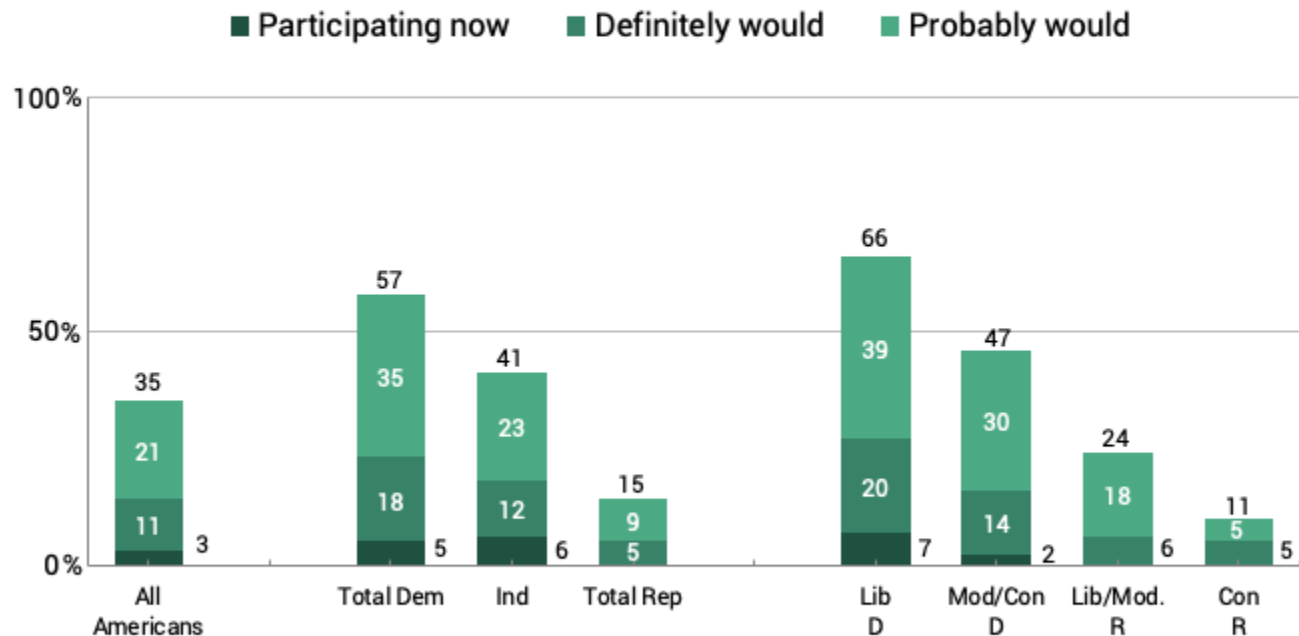
Sign Up

13K 2.6K Comments 6.7K Shares



**THAT'S NEARLY 8 IN 10 ADULTS WHO SAY STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AT SCHOOL.**

# About One In Three Americans Would Join, Or Are Already Participating In, A Campaign To Convince Elected Officials To Take Action To Reduce Global Warming

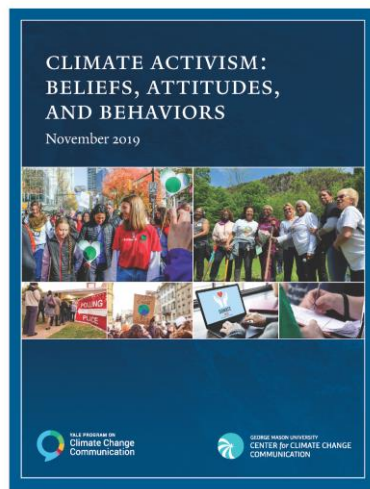
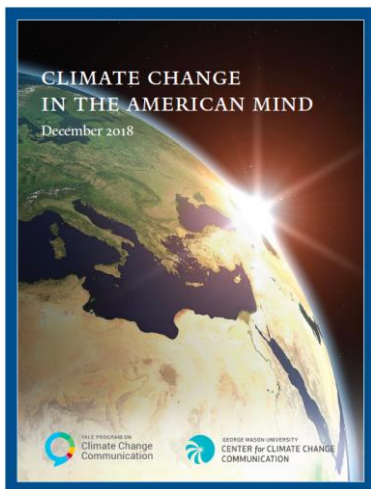


How willing or unwilling would you be to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming?

November 2019.



YALE PROGRAM ON  
Climate Change  
Communication



**Thank you!**  
**Feel free to reach out**  
**[eric.fine@yale.edu](mailto:eric.fine@yale.edu)**



**@YaleClimateComm**



**Yale Program on Climate  
Change Communication**

**[www.climatecommunication.yale.edu](http://www.climatecommunication.yale.edu)**



# Questions?



# Enhancing Opportunities for Socially Vulnerable Populations to have “a Seat at the Table”

Thursday, September 17, 2020 – 12:00-1:15 PM ET

↓ While all people living in the United States are affected by climate change, some communities and some populations are more vulnerable to changing climate conditions than others. Extensive research here in the United States and across the world points to populations of concern including those that are low-income, people of color, immigrant populations, people with limited English proficiency, Indigenous people, older and younger adults, people with disabilities and compromised health and mental health conditions, and others.

<http://www.communityresilience-center.org/>



Presenter:  
**Jeanne Herb**



Presenter: **Lisa Auermuller**

# The Power of Nonviolent Direct Action: Using Civil Resistance to fight Oppression

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM ET

↓ In this workshop, participants will explore the history of nonviolent direct action (NVDA) through civil resistance and civil disobedience. Participants will learn the different steps needed to engage in NVDA through your campaigns and grassroots organizing. We will work through the different types of NVDA seen throughout history and in the current uprising along with the successes and challenges. Participants will have time to think through their own NVDA plans and how to be more strategic with their demands through a NVDA lens.

[http://www.communityresilience-center.org/  
environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/](http://www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/)



Presenter: **Dominique Thomas**

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Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences

**Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series**