

# Elections and Parties in Environmental Politics

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## Abstract

The public influences government policy primarily through elections. Elections affect policy largely by determining which party controls the government. We show that a majority of the public supports policies to protect the environment. But the environment is rarely the most important issue for voters, and thus the environment usually does not have a large impact in elections. Moreover, there are increasingly large divisions between Democrats and Republicans, which incentivizes politicians from both parties to embrace extreme positions. Democratic and Republican elected officials are increasingly polarized on environmental issues, with Democrats staking out much more liberal positions than Republicans in Congress. At the state level, Democratic control of legislatures and governorships leads to more stringent environmental policies. Democratic control of state government seems to have smaller effects, however, on environmental outcomes, such as air pollution emissions.

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# 1 Introduction

Elections play a key role in the democratic process. They are the main mechanism through which members of the public exert control over the policies the government enacts. This chapter examines three interlocked sets of questions about parties, elections, and the environment.

We first assess the mass public's views on the environment. We show that the majority of the mass public supports the enactment of policies to address climate change and other environmental problems. But the environment is rarely the most important issue for voters. Moreover, the public's support for environmental policies masks deep divisions between the Democratic and Republican coalitions. Pressure from the parties' bases of donors, activists, and primary voters often incentivizes politicians to embrace extreme positions.

Next, we examine the effect of the environment in elections. The environment usually does not have a large impact in general elections. But it can occasionally matter, especially when one of the parties supports a salient, unpopular bill in Congress. The environment can also sometimes matter in primary elections. Beyond elections, environmental issues often influence the parties' platform development.

Finally, we examine the consequences of elections for environmental policy and environmental outcomes. Does it matter for environmental policy whether Democrats or Republicans win an election? We show that politicians from the two parties are deeply divided on environmental issues. Democrats in Congress nearly always take more liberal positions than Republicans on the environment. We also show that partisan polarization on the environment is growing overtime. These partisan differences in positions have clear policy impacts. At the federal level, major environmental laws are more likely to be passed when Democrats control Congress. Moreover, we show that Democratic control of state government leads to more stringent environmental policies. But partisan control of government has much smaller effects on environmental outcomes, such as air pollution emissions. Overall, elections have large effects on the positions that politicians take and the policies they pass, but only modest

effects on environmental quality.

## 2 Mass Polarization on the Environment

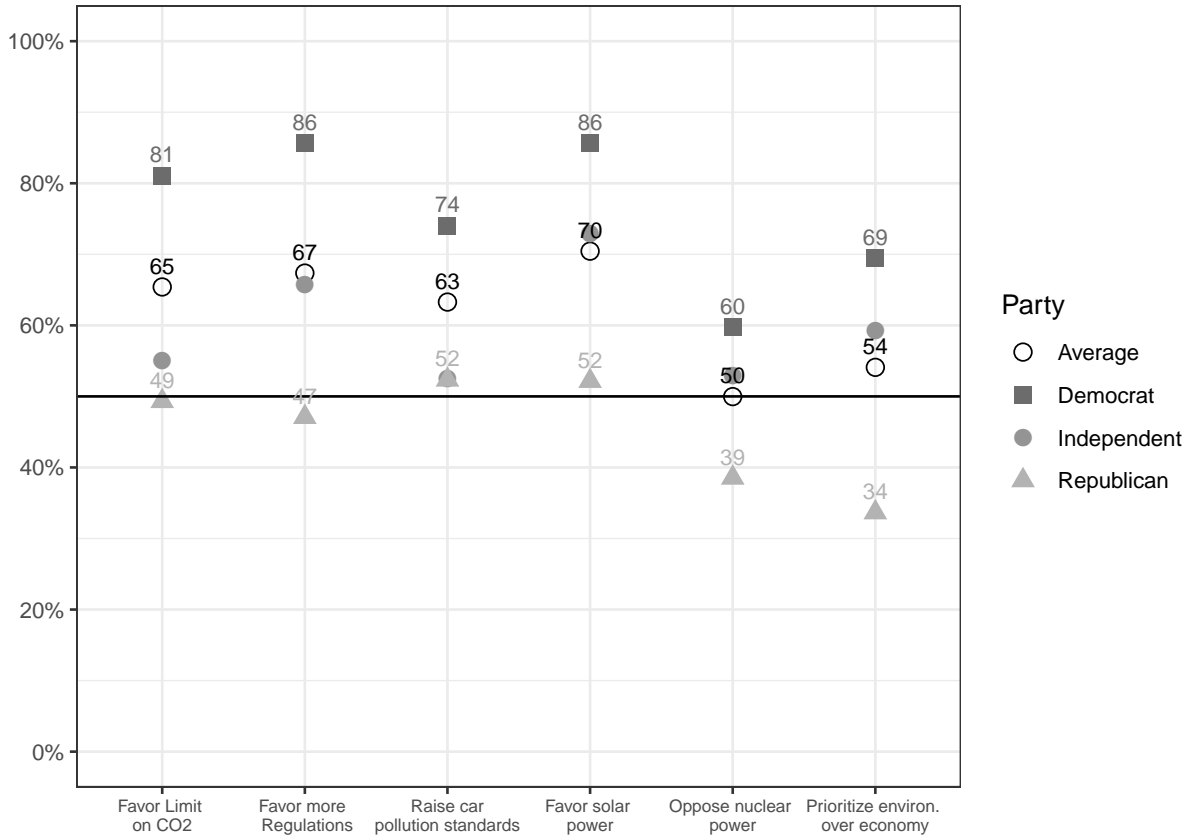
For decades, scholars and polling firms have been tracking public views of environmental issues and support for various policy approaches to address environmental challenges (Kim and Urpelainen 2018, McCright, Xiao, and Dunlap 2014). Polls show that a majority of Americans support government efforts to protect the environment (Funk et al. 2019). In particular, researchers have shown that most Americans believe that climate change is a problem and that policies should be passed to address it. For instance, Gallup surveys show that large majorities of Americans support limiting carbon dioxide emissions, enacting more environmental regulations, raising fuel efficiency standards in cars, and spending money on solar power. Americans are roughly equally split on nuclear power, and a small majority favor prioritizing the environment over the economy (see Figure 1 below).<sup>1</sup> But surveys show that the environment ranks as a low priority for most Americans (Pew Research Center 2016). For instance, only about 2% of the respondents to Gallup’s environment polls since 2010 have listed environmental issues as the most important problem facing the country.

The mass public’s support for most environmental policies masks large partisan divisions (Guber 2013, McCright and Dunlap 2011, Egan and Mullin 2012, 2017). Figure 1 shows the large differences between Democrats and Republicans in recent years on an array of environmental issues. On most issues, there is at least a thirty percentage point split between Democrats and Republicans’ levels of support. For instance, 81% of Democrats favor enacting a mandatory limit on carbon dioxide emissions, while only 49% of Republicans favor a limit on carbon dioxide emissions.

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<sup>1</sup>It’s important to note though that survey margins should be interpreted cautiously since the public is sensitive to contextual information (including partisan cues) in specific policy debates (Hill and Huber 2019). Survey firms rarely provide this information, nor do they make explicit the costs of tradeoffs that the policy options in question might impose (Zaller 2003). Future research could inform the wise interpretation of survey results by focusing on how tradeoffs, context, and information relevant to specific policy debates shapes public support for environmental policy options.

Figure 1: Public Support for Environmental Policy Proposals

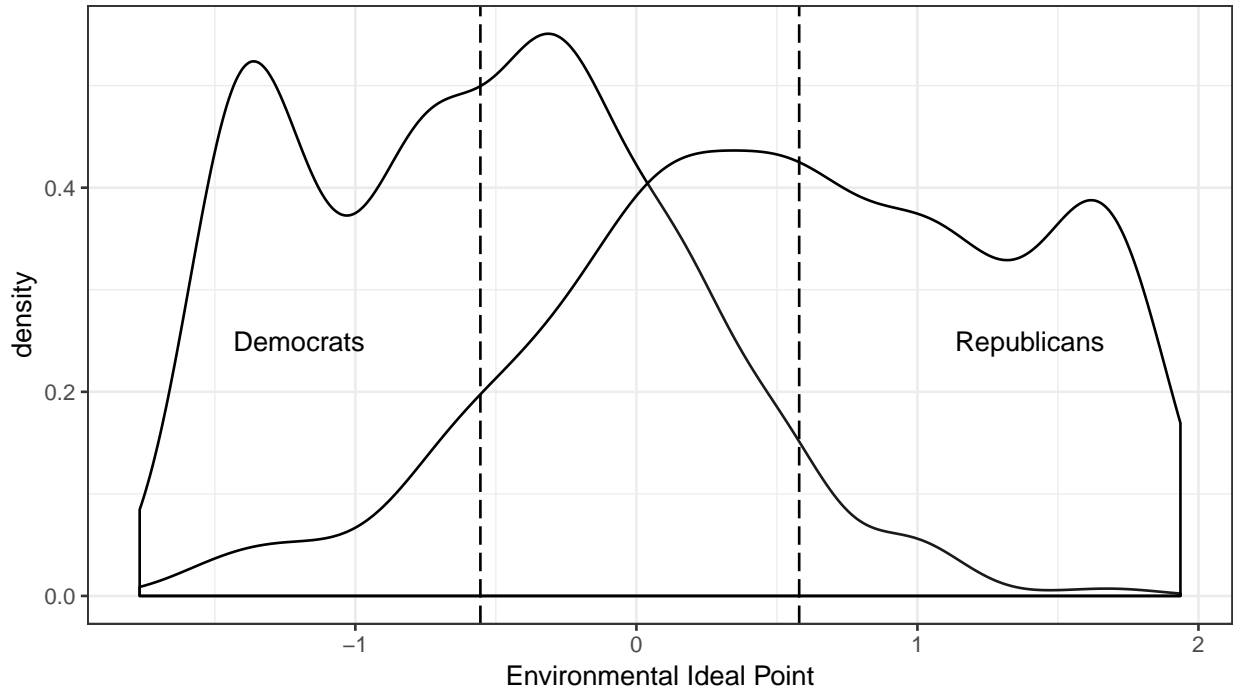


This figure shows support by party for six environmental policy proposals from the 2012-2017 Gallup Environment Surveys.

To further visualize the split between Democrats and Republicans on environmental issues, we scaled the 12 environmental policy issues on recent Gallup Environment surveys to estimate the environmental ideal points of each respondent.<sup>2</sup> Figure 2 shows that there is about a standard deviation difference between the average environmental ideal point of people in each party. Moreover, there is little overlap between the parties.

<sup>2</sup>In order to measure citizens' ideal points, we pool the 2012, 2014, and 2017 Gallup Environment surveys. Each of these surveys asked about a dozen environmental policy questions. This enables us to jointly scale each respondent's ideal point using an approach similar to that of Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013). To estimate citizens' ideal points on the environment, we use the two-parameter IRT model introduced to political science by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004). The ideal point,  $x$ , for individual  $i$  signifies the "liberalness" or "conservativeness" of that individual. We orient the ideal points so that lower values are associated with more liberal preferences and higher values with more conservative preferences. We implement the ideal point model using the `ideal` function in the `pscl` library in R (Jackman 2012).

Figure 2: Public Support for Environmental Policy Proposals



Environmental Ideal Points of Democrats and Republicans. The dashed lines are the mean ideal points of voters in each party. Data: 2012, 2014, and 2017 Gallup Environment Surveys.

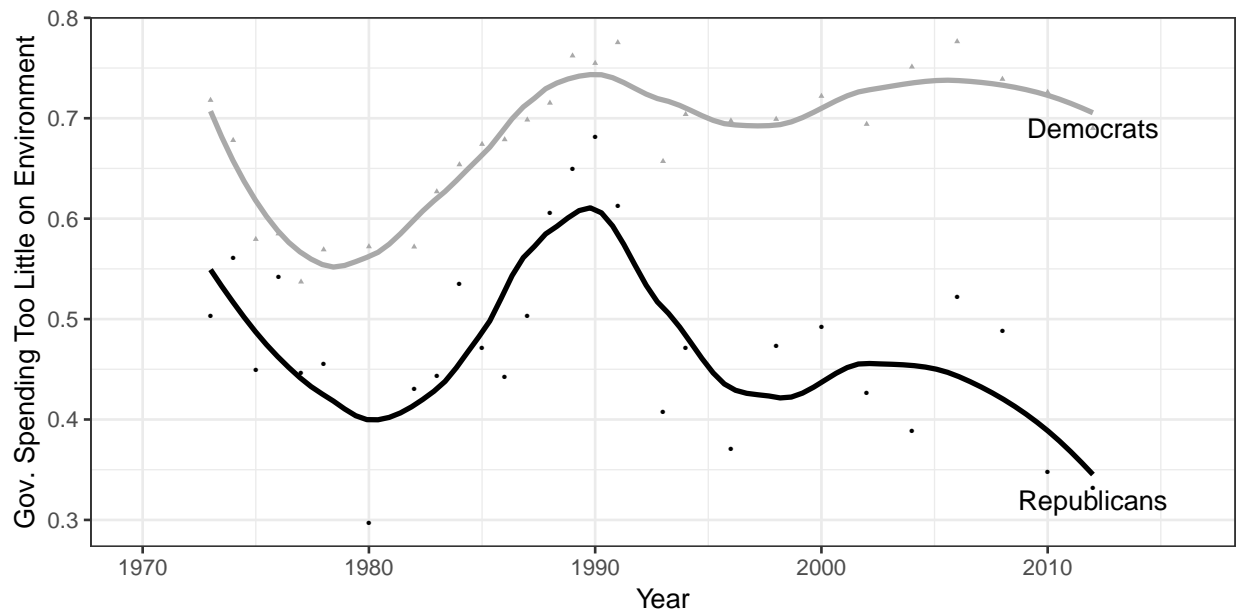
Moreover, these differences between Democrats and Republicans have grown over time (McCright, Xiao, and Dunlap 2014). Guber (2013) shows that there is growing partisan divergence in the US public's level of concern about global warming, as well as other environmental issues, over the past three decades. Likewise, McCright and Dunlap (2011) show growing partisan polarization on global warming from 2001 to 2010.<sup>3</sup>

To illustrate this growth in partisan polarization, Figure 3 displays data from the General Social Survey on public support for environmental spending. It indicates that the gap between Democrats and Republicans in the mass public has grown significantly since 1990. This is primarily driven by a decrease in support for environmental spending among Republican identifiers. The growing partisan polarization on the environment in the mass public

<sup>3</sup>Some of this growing mass polarization on the environment is probably driven by the growing polarization among elites (see below) (Brulle, Carmichael, and Jenkins 2012, Carmichael and Brulle 2017). Indeed, individuals with the highest levels of education and political engagement and thus strongest propensity to pick up partisan cues about the issue (Zaller 2012) are the most polarized in their views (McCright and Dunlap 2011).

mirrors the growing divergence between Democrats and Republicans in the electorate on a wide range of issues (Caughey, Dunham, and Warshaw 2018).

Figure 3: Growth in Polarization in Mass Public Overtime



Percentage of People in Each Party that Believe Gov. Spending on the Environment is Too Low. Source: General Social Survey (GSS).

### 3 The Role of the Environment in Elections

While polls consistently show broad public support for environmental protection, environmental issues are rarely a central focus of general elections (Guber 2001). Perhaps most importantly, most Americans make voting decisions based on group identities, ideological preferences, and partisan identification (Campbell et al. 1966, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2004, Lenz 2013, Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2019). Few Americans decide how to vote on the basis of individual issues, particularly less salient ones such as their preferences on the environment.

Despite the usual low salience of the environment for most voters, legislators' votes on high profile environmental bills can sometimes influence elections. For instance, the American

Clean Energy and Security Act probably affected the 2010 congressional elections. This bill would have established an emissions trading system that capped Americans' greenhouse gas emissions, and gradually reduced them. It narrowly passed the House of Representatives in June, 2009. However, while polls showed that American adults were roughly equally divided on the bill (ABC News Poll 2009), a majority of voters in the 2010 midterm election likely opposed it.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Democrats that supported the American Clean Energy and Security Act paid a 3% penalty in the 2010 elections (Nyhan et al. 2012). This probably cost several Democrats their seats, and perhaps even contributed to the loss of the Democrats' majority in the House.

This example illustrates that voters do penalize parties for salient, unpopular votes on the environment. It's just that we rarely observe these sorts of high profile votes. For example, Democrats would probably be penalized if they tried to pass an unpopular carbon tax or an ambitious, economy-wide cap and trade scheme. This would probably be especially true in places that lost jobs due to a climate bill (Stokes and Warshaw 2017), or if some areas were forced to build wind turbines against their wishes (Stokes 2016). Likewise, Republicans would probably be penalized for major anti-environmental efforts, such as repealing the Clean Air Act. So the fact that the environment usually doesn't matter in elections largely reflects the fact that voters rarely have the opportunity to hold their leaders accountable on highly salient, unpopular environmental bills. Major changes to the status quo on the environment rarely pass Congress.

Beyond general elections, environmental issues may matter in the parties' platform development and candidate selection processes. Activists in each party are even more polarized than other partisans.<sup>5</sup> Figure 4 shows that Democratic activists are about 5 percentage points more liberal than non-activists on environmental issues. Republican activists are

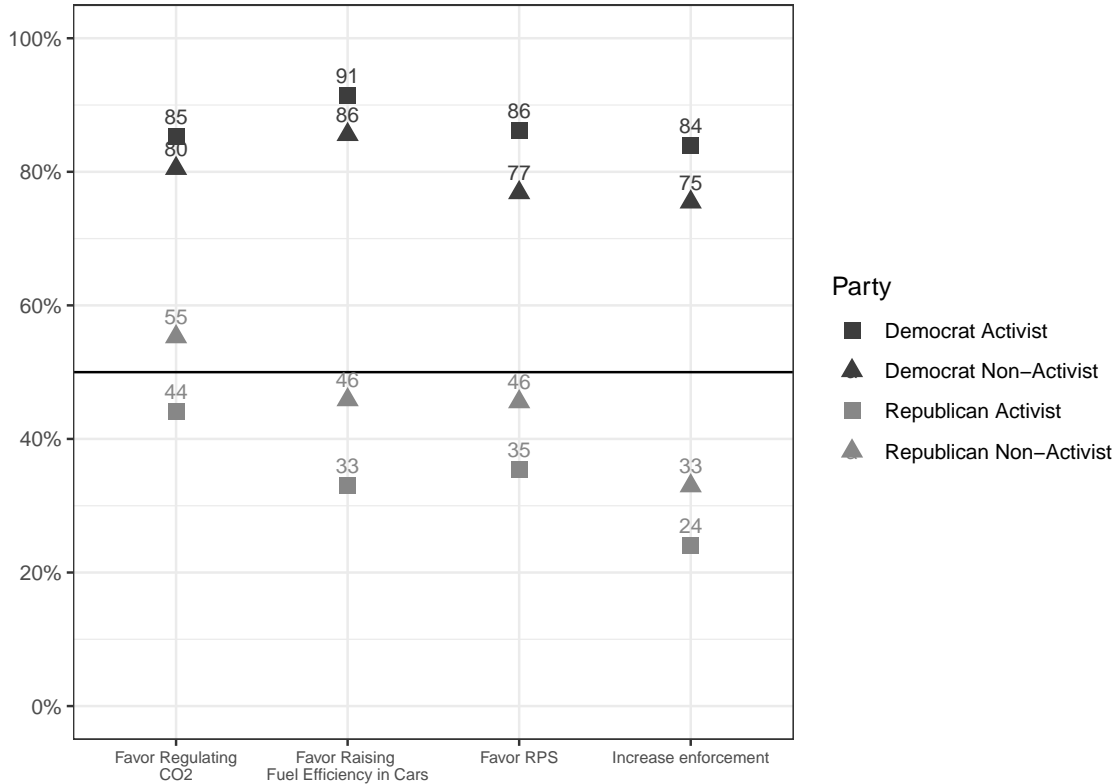
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<sup>4</sup>Polls target the adult population. This may have inflated estimates of support, since the adult population includes non-citizens and non-voters, which tend to be more liberal.

<sup>5</sup>We use the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study for this analysis. This large-scale survey contains issue questions about the environment as well as information about respondents' political activism. We classify respondents as activists if they donated, attending a meeting, displayed a campaign sign, or volunteered with a campaign.



Figure 4: Partisan Support for Policies to Protect the Environment



This figure shows partisan divisions in voter support for policies to protect the environment. Data: 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES)

about 10 percentage points more conservative than non-activists. Activists are likely to exert a significant influence on candidates’ position-taking. Moreover, if candidates are drawn from the set of party activists, their own sincere policy views are likely to be more extreme as well (e.g., Cadigan and Janeba 2002, Hall 2019).

Interest groups may further exacerbate partisan polarization on the environment. Some scholars have argued that parties are essentially coalitions of interest groups that form an alliance to gain control of government (Schattschneider 1942). They do so by capturing the nomination process (Bawn et al. 2012, Cohen et al. 2009, Masket 2011, Hassell 2016) and, once their candidate is in office, subsidizing legislative effort to advance policy priorities (Hall and Deardorff 2006, Hall and Wayman 1990). In this view, candidates respond to the preferences of “policy demanding” interest groups (Bawn et al. 2012), party activists

(Bernstein and Dominguez 2003, Masket 2011), and social movement organizers (Bailey, Mummolo, and Noel 2012, Schlozman 2015, Skocpol and Williamson 2016). These groups vie amongst themselves to nominate candidates who are friendly to their interests and who can attract a sufficient number of votes to win elections.

The interest groups aligned with both the Democratic and Republican coalitions tend to take extreme positions on the environment. On the Republican side, industry-funded conservative advocacy groups have worked to produce and disseminate texts that deny the scientific basis for climate change (Farrell 2016, Jacques, Dunlap, and Freeman 2008), and conservative ideas have had a powerful influence in national policy (Layzer 2012). Environmental advocacy organizations are an important component of the Democratic coalition (Grossmann 2006).

## **4 Partisan Selection and Environmental Policy**

In this section, we examine the consequences of elections for environmental position-taking among elected officials, environmental policy, and environmental outcomes. First, we examine partisan polarization in Congress. We show that Democrats and Republicans are taking increasingly divergent positions on environmental issues. This is not simply because more liberal states tend to elect Democrats, while conservative states elect Republicans. Instead, we find that the partisan outcome of elections has a large, and growing, effect on the voting behavior of politicians. That is, Democrats and Republicans are taking increasingly divergent positions even in identical constituencies. Next, we examine whether the outcome of elections affects environmental policy. We find that states enact more liberal environmental policies when Democrats control the government.

## 4.1 Partisan Polarization in Congress

To assess the consequences of elections for environmental policy, we first examine partisan polarization in Congress. In a perfectly Downsian world, where electorally motivated parties adopt the positions of the median voter, it might not matter for environmental policy whether voters elected Democrats or Republicans. However, a long line of studies has shown that the roll call voting patterns of Democrats and Republicans typically diverge from one another. Past research has shown that Democratic legislators take more liberal positions than Republicans in both Congress and state legislatures (Ansolabehere, Snyder Jr, and Stewart III 2001, Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004, Shor and McCarty 2011). This is true even when legislators share the same constituency. For instance, Democratic senators are much more liberal than Republican senators even in the same state (Poole and Rosenthal 1984, Caughey, Dunham, and Warshaw 2018).

A number of studies have documented that there is a large partisan divide between members of Congress on environmental issues (e.g., Shipan and Lowry 2001, Gershtenson, Smith, and Mangun 2006). Moreover, polarization on environmental issues appears to be growing over time. We show this growing polarization on environmental issues in Figure 5. These graphs show the environmental ideal points (i.e., ideology) of members of Congress over the past several decades. These ideal points summarize the positions of members of Congress across dozens, or even hundreds, of environmental votes in each congressional session.<sup>6</sup> The figure illustrates that in the 1970s there was quite a bit of overlap between the parties on environmental issues. But there is almost no overlap at all in recent years between the environmental ideal points of Democrats and Republicans. In other words,

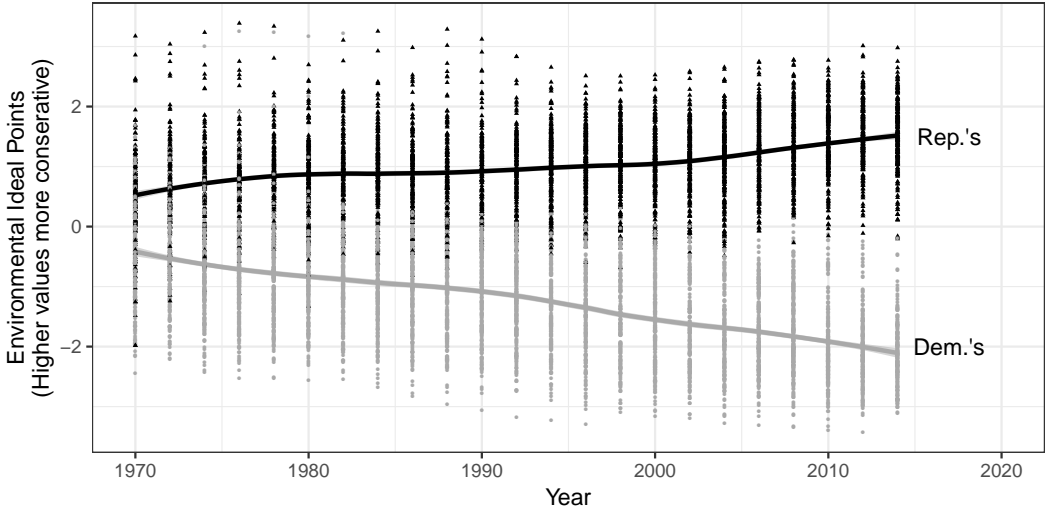
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<sup>6</sup>We downloaded roll call data from [voteview.com](http://voteview.com) and selected roll calls on environmental and energy issues using the issue codes provided by the Policy Agendas Project (Adler and Wilkerson 2017). We measure legislators' environmental ideal points using all roll calls rather than the common practice of using LCV scores because the complete universe of environmental roll calls better captures the congressional agenda on environmental issues. Also, past research has shown that interest group scores could exaggerate partisan polarization (Snyder 1992). We estimate legislators' ideal point on environmental policy with a dynamic one-dimensional item-response theory (IRT) model, which allows legislator ideal points to evolve nonlinearly between congressional terms (Martin and Quinn 2002).

Republicans are *nearly always* substantially more conservative than Democrats in Congress on environmental issues. Moreover the gap between Democrats and Republicans has been steadily growing for the past few decades, particularly in recent years.

In part, these trends probably reflect the growing mass polarization on environmental issues. For instance, Democrats are more likely to represent areas with many environmen-

(a) House of Representatives



(b) Senate

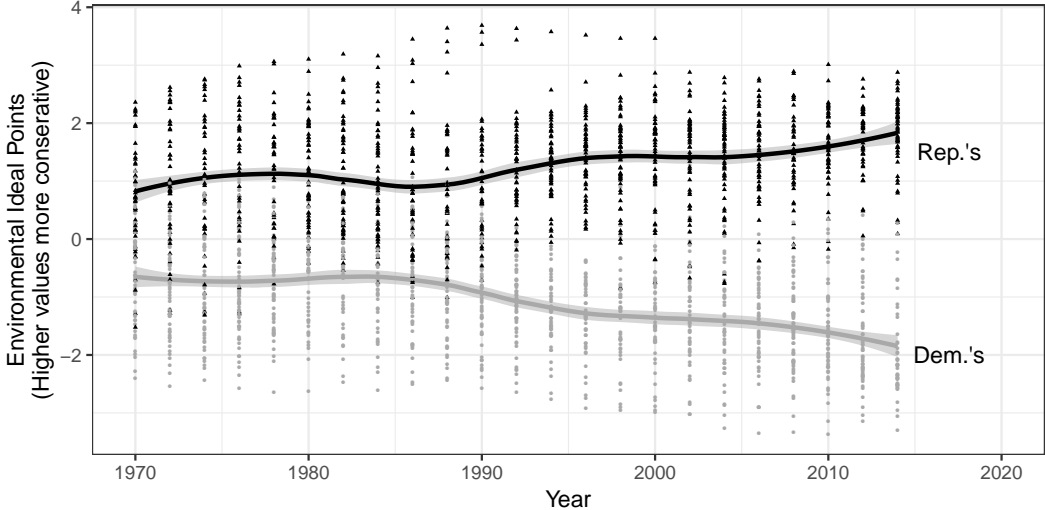


Figure 5: Polarization in Congress. The graphs shows the ideal point of each member of the House and Senate, as well as the average for each party. The black triangles show the environmental ideal points of Republicans. The grey dots show the environmental ideal points of Democrats.

talists, while Republicans are more likely to represent places with fewer environmentalists. Indeed, the gap between liberal and conservative states on environmental issues has probably grown considerably over the past few decades (Caughey, Dunham, and Warshaw 2018).

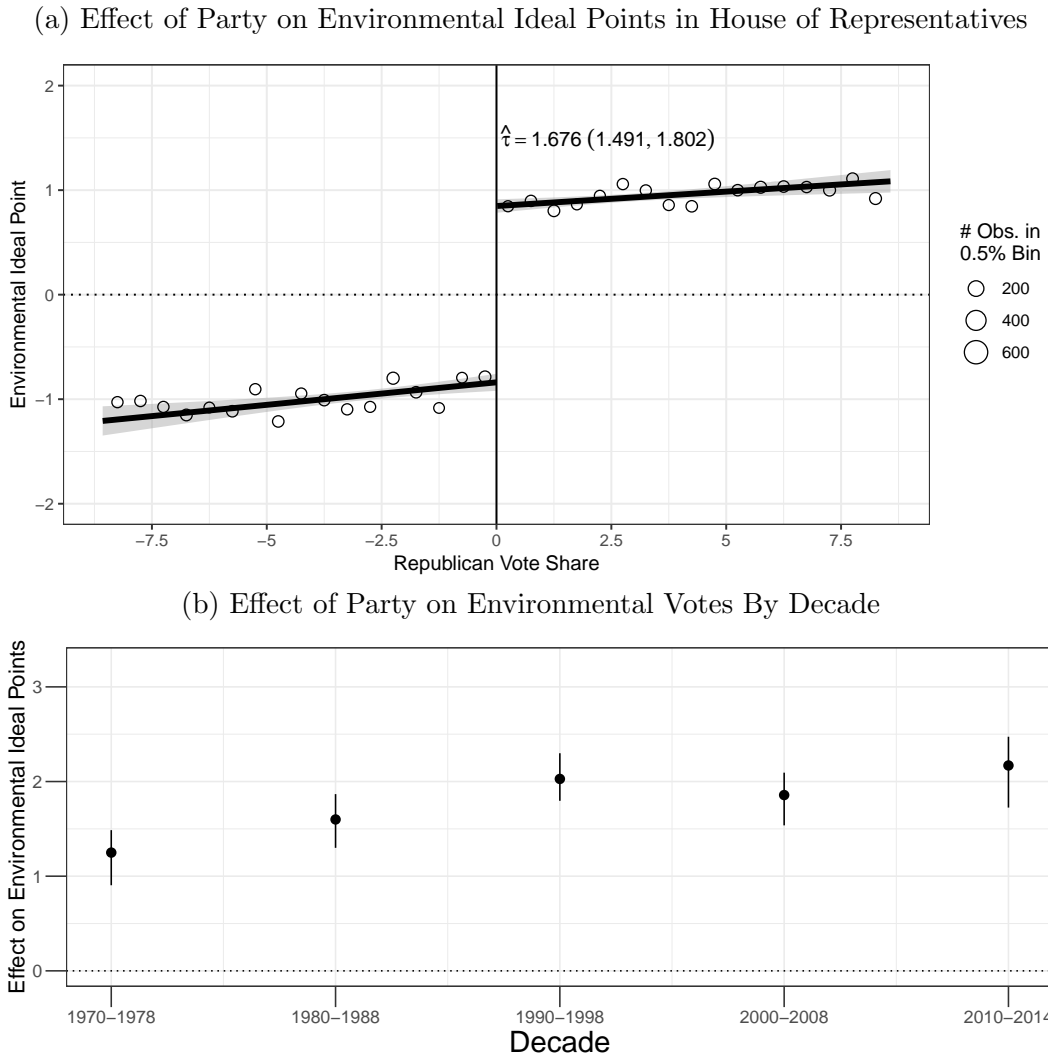


Figure 6: RDD Analysis of Causal Effect of Partisan Selection on Environmental Ideal Points in House.

However, sorting is not the sole explanation for the growing polarization between Democrats and Republican members of Congress. Indeed, Kim and Urpelainen (2017) show that even in nearly tied elections, where the two parties represent identical constituencies on average, Republicans in Congress cast much more conservative roll call votes on environmental is-

sues than Democrats. Figure 6 uses a regression discontinuity (RD) design to illustrate the fact that partisan selection influences voting in the U.S. Congress (Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004, Kim and Urpelainen 2017).<sup>7</sup> The top panel of Figure 6 shows that electing a Republican leads to environmental ideal points that are 1.68 standard deviations more conservative than electing a Democrat. The bottom panel of Figure 6 shows that partisan differences have grown steadily over time.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, the causal effect of electing a Democrat versus a Republican on environmental issues is nearly twice as large as in the 1970s.

The growth in polarization between Democrats and Republicans in Congress mirrors the partisan polarization between the parties’ constituencies. The divergence between Democrats and Republicans in the mass public on environmental issues could be one of the explanations for partisan polarization in Congress on the environment. The divergence of primary voters on environmental issues could lead candidates to position themselves close to their party’s median—shown as dotted lines in Figure 2—and thus diverge from the median voter on environmental issues (Coleman 1971, Aranson and Ordeshook 1972, Cadigan and Janeba 2002, Owen and Grofman 2006, Adams and Merrill 2008). Divergence among activists and the interest groups aligned with both parties could also drive polarization among candidates and elected officials. Future work should explore the discrete and overlapping effects of each of these drivers, as existing theory does not allow us to distinguish their independent effects.<sup>9</sup>

While this analysis has focused on Congress, there are strong reasons to believe that

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<sup>7</sup>Our RD design exploits the fact that a sharp electoral threshold, 50% of the two-party vote share, determines which party wins legislative elections. We estimate the effect of electing a Democratic legislator rather than a Republican one based on the “jump” in outcome variables at the threshold. We model the relationship between the assignment and outcome variables with local linear regression, using the default optimal bandwidth options in the `rdrobust` package in R (Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik 2014a). The optimal bandwidth is chosen to minimize mean-square-error (MSE) and confidence intervals are adjusted to account for remaining bias (Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik 2014b,b).

<sup>8</sup>The results for each decade are based on a regression discontinuity design using elections from that decade.

<sup>9</sup>In particular, there is a tension between the group-focused, elite-oriented theory of parties and views that focus more directly on the link between candidates and voters. Skocpol (2013) highlights this tension in an analysis of the 2010 failure of the American Clean Energy and Security Act. She interprets the failure of cap and trade as an illustration that elite bargaining is insufficient for winning policy battles. She argues that highly professionalized environmental groups (Grossmann 2006) erred in fixating on beltway bargaining to the exclusion of grassroots mobilization. Skocpol’s analysis focuses on a discrete legislative effort, rather than nomination processes or party platform development. Still, she provides a model for fruitful research into the links between groups, voters, and activists in party nominating contests and platform debates.

partisan selection in elections also has large effects on the positions that state legislators and other subnational elected officials take in office. Shor and McCarty (2011) show that Democratic and Republican state legislators take drastically different positions across the slate of political issues. Moreover, several recent studies have used regression discontinuity designs to show that there is a large causal effect of state legislators' partisanship on their voting behavior (e.g., Fowler and Hall 2017).

## 4.2 Effects of Partisan Control on Environmental Policy

As we have seen, the election of Democrats versus Republicans has large effects on the positions that elected officials take in office. However, it is unclear the degree to which these differences affect environmental policy. Policy effects could be attenuated by various institutional constraints on the majority party's capacity to implement their preferred policies (e.g., Alesina, Londregan, and Rosenthal 1993). Legislators in one chamber, for example, cannot simply implement their preferences on environmental issues, but rather must compromise with both the other chamber and the executive. Such limitations on Democrats' and Republicans' capacity to implement divergent policies lead us to the expectation that partisan effects on environmental policy should be small relative to the large partisan differences in positions that we documented above (Caughey, Xu, and Warshaw 2017). The growth in partisan polarization on environmental issues, though, suggests that partisan effects on policy are probably growing over time.

Past research has shown that Democratic control of state government leads states to pass more liberal policies (e.g., Caughey, Xu, and Warshaw 2017). Moreover, past studies have generally found that partisan control of government influences environmental policy outputs (Yi and Feiock 2012, 2014, Lyon and Yin 2010, Huang et al. 2007, Carley and Miller 2012, Chandler 2009, Vachon and Menz 2006, Nicholson-Crotty and Carley 2018, Bergquist 2018, Fredriksson, Wang, and Mamun 2011).<sup>10</sup> A smaller literature has examined

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<sup>10</sup>Some others, however, find null (Fisher 2006, Ringquist 1993, Daley and Garand 2005) or inconsistent

the effect of partisan control of government on environmental outcomes, such as pollution or environmental quality. For instance, Beland and Boucher (2015) finds suggestive results that Democratic control of state government modestly reduces ambient pollution levels. Some studies have also examined whether environmental policies differ under Democratic and Republican presidents.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Fowler and Kettler (2019) find that there is more toxic air pollution at the state level under Republican presidents and governors. In addition, Guenther (2019) finds that Republican presidents are less likely to list new endangered or threatened species than Democratic ones.

We illustrate these findings in Table 1, where we examine the effect of Democratic control of state government on environmental policy outputs and outcomes.<sup>12</sup> The independent variable indicates the number of government offices/chambers (i.e., governorship, state house, and state senate) controlled by the Democratic Party. The dependent variables measure environmental policy outputs and environmental outcomes. To measure policy outputs, we created an estimate of the environmental policy liberalism in each state between 1995-2018 based on data on 18 environmental policies, including renewable portfolio standards, cap and trade, bottle bills, and many others.<sup>13</sup> We measure environmental outcomes with data from the EPA on carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from non-transportation sources and ambient levels of nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). We log these three outcome variables, so that the results can be interpreted as percentage changes in each outcome. We

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(Ringquist 1994, Medler 1989, Ka and Teske 2002, Konisky 2007, Bromley-Trujillo et al. 2016) effects. As one would expect, studies generally find larger effects of partisan control of government in recent decades when there are greater differences in the policy positions of the parties. Most of the studies finding null effects of partisan control of government rely on data from a time period preceding the rise in political polarization (Ringquist 1993, Konisky 2007, Medler 1989, Ka and Teske 2002).

<sup>11</sup>It is important to note, however, that these studies tend to be primarily descriptive due to the difficulty in identifying causal effects at the federal level.

<sup>12</sup>We lag the indicator of Democratic control by one year to avoid concerns about reverse causality.

<sup>13</sup>The bulk of these policies were drawn from Martin and Saikawa (2017) and Caughey and Warshaw (2016). We then extended the time series of policy data to 2018. We used the latent variable model developed by Caughey and Warshaw (2016) to estimate each state's environmental policy liberalism. We standardized the policy liberalism measure to have mean 0 and standard deviation 1. Future research could improve on our environmental policy liberalism index by gathering data on more environmental policies, and perhaps building separate scales for clean air policies, water policies, wildlife and land policies, etc. (Konisky and Woods 2012).



use panel regressions to estimate the effect of Democratic control of government offices on our environmental policy liberalism index and pollution levels. All of the models use state and year fixed effects to account for time invariant confounders in each state and yearly shocks such as changes in the national economy.

The first column of Table 1 shows the effect of Democratic control of state government on the index of clean energy policies. It indicates that each additional branch of government controlled by Democrats leads state environmental policy liberalism to increase by about .1 standard deviations. Moreover, this effect is clearly statistically significant. The next three columns show the effect of Democratic control of state government on various emissions indicators. Column (2) indicates that Democratic control of government has little or no effect on carbon emissions. Column (3) provides suggestive evidence, however, that Democratic control decreases sulfur dioxide levels. Finally, column (4) shows suggestive evidence that Democratic control slightly reduces nitrogen oxide levels but the results are not statistically significant.

Table 1: Effect of Democratic Control of State Governments on Environmental Policy Outputs and Outcomes

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Energy Policy Liberalism (1)	CO2 (2)	SO2 (3)	NOx (4)
Democratic Control <sub>t-1</sub>	0.114*** (0.040)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.072* (0.040)	-0.018 (0.018)
State FE	X	X	X	X
Year FE	X	X	X	X
Observations	1,136	1,039	1,010	984
R <sup>2</sup>	0.853	0.993	0.654	0.830
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.843	0.993	0.628	0.817

*Note:* Standard errors clustered by state.

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Overall, these results show that Democratic control of state government leads to signifi-

cantly stronger energy and environment policies. However, there is weaker evidence that it affects real-world outcomes. Partisan control of governments appears to have modest effects on some outcomes (e.g., sulfur dioxide) and little-to-no effect on other outcomes (e.g., carbon dioxide emissions) (see also Dynes and Holbein 2019). The attenuated effects on real-world outcomes is probably due to the many other influences on state-level pollution, such as national regulations, weather patterns, and trends in the state economy. It is also important to keep in mind that national elections for Congress and the presidency could have larger effects on environmental outcomes than state-level elections. For instance, presidents can influence pollution levels via support for legislation, new regulations, enforcement actions, and lawsuits.

## 5 Conclusion

Overall, the majority of the mass public supports stronger environmental policies to address problems like air pollution, water pollution, and climate change. However, the environment is rarely the most important issue when citizens go to the ballot box. Moreover, there are deep divides between Democrats and Republicans on environmental issues.

These divides are reflected in elections, which have a huge effect on the positions that politicians take in office. Democrats in Congress are almost always significantly more liberal than Republicans on environmental issues, even in identical constituencies. Perhaps more importantly, Democratic control of government leads to significantly more stringent environmental policies. But there appears to be much smaller effects of partisan control of government on outcomes, such as air pollution emissions. So elections have large effects on the positions that politicians take, and the policies they pass, but only modest effects on environmental outcomes.

This review highlights several opportunities for future research into the role of the environment in elections and the consequences of partisan selection for environmental policy. First,

to aid in the interpretation of survey results, future research should assess how tradeoffs, context, and information about specific policy debates shapes public support for environmental policy options (Hill and Huber 2019, Zaller 2003). Second, particularly at the state level, conclusions about the presence and magnitude of partisan effects on environmental policy outputs and outcomes are not definitive. In particular, we need to know more about how the different branches of government influence different types of environmental policies (Bergquist 2018). Third, whereas environmental issues rarely figure prominently in national general elections, voters have been shown to react to some types of environmental policy changes (Stokes 2016). Future research should continue to assess the conditions, magnitude, and mechanisms driving accountability in elections for politicians' positions on environmental issues. Fourth, we need to continue to explore the tensions and interactions between the mass public, activists, and interest groups in the parties' coalitions. This would help us understand how environmental issues are incorporated into party platforms.

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