



Written by [David Kelly](#) on August 18, 2023

Young “Conservatives” Want GOP to Lead the Way on Climate Change

The American Conservation Coalition ([ACC](#)), a “conservative” environmental organization and headline sponsor of the Republican National Committee’s official party following Wednesday’s debate in Milwaukee, is hopeful they can gain the attention of the Republican presidential candidates.

Jackson Radandt, a volunteer activist with ACC, [wrote](#) in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that the ACC sponsorship “demonstrates just how important environmentalism is for the conservative movement and provides a clear mandate for GOP candidates to display an optimistic and definitive environmental agenda for the 2024 cycle and beyond. Climate change is an issue that affects everyone, and conservatives must take charge in addressing the matter.”



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[According](#) to ACC, their mission is quite simple: to build a conservative environmental movement. The group was founded in 2017 by a group of millennials “who saw an ideological gap in the environmental movement preventing necessary bipartisan action.” ACC seeks to activate young people that are tired of partisan inaction on the grassroots, state, and federal levels.

Hosting the afterparty on Wednesday night is ACC’s way of expressing to the White House hopefuls the importance of establishing a campaign narrative that will attract younger voters, who are increasingly in favor of addressing climate change.

[The Washington Times](#) reported:

“Republicans need to engage on energy and climate or they’re going to lose young voters,” said Karly Matthews, spokeswoman for the American Conservation Coalition Action. “I think party leaders understand the importance of young people and not alienating an entire generation of voters to appeal to a fringe part of the party that doesn’t want to acknowledge climate change.”

Radandt shared that “young voters tend to prioritize environmental issues at a much greater rate than their older counterparts.” He noted that, according to a recent poll:

69% of Republicans between the ages of 18 and 34 worry “a great deal” or “a fair amount” about the impacts of climate change. The poll also points out that 83% of Independents of



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the same age group worry at least “a fair amount” about the impacts of climate change, and 85% of young Democrats fear the same.

A Pew Research Center [survey](#) published in June on how Americans view climate change reported that “there are important differences by age within the GOP. Two-thirds of Republicans under age 30 (67%) prioritize the development of alternative energy sources. By contrast, 75% of Republicans ages 65 and older prioritize expanding the production of oil, coal and natural gas.”

Pew also found that Americans in general are reluctant to phase out fossil fuels, but younger adults are more open to it. “Overall, about three-in-ten adults (31%) say the U.S. should *completely* phase out oil, coal and natural gas. More than twice as many (68%) say the country should use a mix of energy sources, including fossil fuels and renewables,” stated the survey.

Making ACC’s point on why the GOP candidates need to prioritize commonsense solutions to climate-related concerns, especially with young voters, the Pew survey noted age differences within both political parties on the question of phasing out fossil fuels.

Pew [shared](#):

Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, 58% of those ages 18 to 29 favor phasing out fossil fuels entirely, compared with 42% of Democrats 65 and older. Republicans of all age groups back continuing to use a mix of energy sources, including oil, coal and natural gas. However, about three-in-ten (29%) Republicans ages 18 to 29 say the U.S. should phase out fossil fuels altogether, compared with fewer than one-in-ten Republicans 50 and older.

The surveys reveal that young voters have a different view on climate issues, which is something the GOP candidates need to consider in pursuing their own solutions on the matter. As Radandt [opined](#), “climate actually *can* be a winning message for Republicans. Ensuring the American people that the free market and innovation – rather than red tape and regulation – is what drives environmental progress, would go a long way for these presidential hopefuls.”

You can expect the ACC members in attendance at the afterparty to be prepared to assist willing GOP candidates by sharing the group’s [Climate Commitment](#) and agenda that they [released](#) in January for the 118th Congress. The agenda focuses on four policy areas: permitting reform, nuclear energy, critical minerals, and natural climate solutions. The climate policy commitment offers solutions that “will require the combined efforts of individuals, innovators, communities, and governments.”

The ACC is optimistic about their efforts and hopeful that their message will resonate with the GOP contenders. Radandt stated, “While prioritizing climate action with a clear and optimistic vision for the future doesn’t guarantee a political coup d’état for the Republican candidates, it could be instrumental in successfully making it through the primaries and establishing a message that could defeat President Biden in the general. Investment and innovation within the free market is key in creating a cleaner world, and the GOP can lead the way.”

The *Times* [reported](#) that the “ACC expects all participating debate candidates to join the afterparty. Those who have qualified to be on stage include Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former U.N. Ambassador and ex-South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.”



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