

DOMESTIC POLICYMAKING OBSTACLES



AGENDA



*When life gives you **policy**
lemons...*



POLICY OBSTACLES
(Basseches, et al. (2022))



FOUNDATIONAL US
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



MODERN US
POLICY

GREEN NEW DEAL
INFLATION
REDUCTION ACT
(IRA)



POLICY [LEMONS] BARRIERS

**BASSECHES,
ET AL.
(2022)
REVIEWED
POLICY
BARRIERS**

- Bureaucratic organization & occupational capacity affect how institutions are run, how they govern, *and* implementation.
- Media coverage shapes public opinion, which shapes discourse.
 - Attitudes vary with respect to scientific evidence, issue salience, and policy.
- Industry & interest groups are primarily concerned about potential profit.
 - EX: US States with heavy fossil fuel industry presence have the weakest relative environmental policies (WY, AL, ND, WV, & LA).
 - BUT fossil fuel companies (e.g., BP) are investing in clean energies to secure financial futures.

BASSECHES, *ET AL.* (2022), CONT'D.

NOTE: There are fewer climate deniers, but there is still wide disagreement about what to do about climate change

- Fragmentation within pro-climate coalitions:
 - Alternative/Renewable energy industries are not cohesive as they attempt to operate in a competitive capitalist system.
- Advocacy strategies:
 - Market-based technocratic: Expert-led, incremental strategies
 - Climate Justice/ System: Holistic, equity-based social overhauls
- Partisanship:
 - US Dems have become more pro-environmental.
 - Republicans are still likely to believe that mitigation efforts are too costly and involve too much government intervention.



POLICIES

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AFFECTING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND NATURAL RESOURCE USE.

FOUNDATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The "Command and Control" Era:

- Historical approach where the government sets strict standards (e.g., emission limits) and penalizes non-compliance.

Key Historic US Legislation:

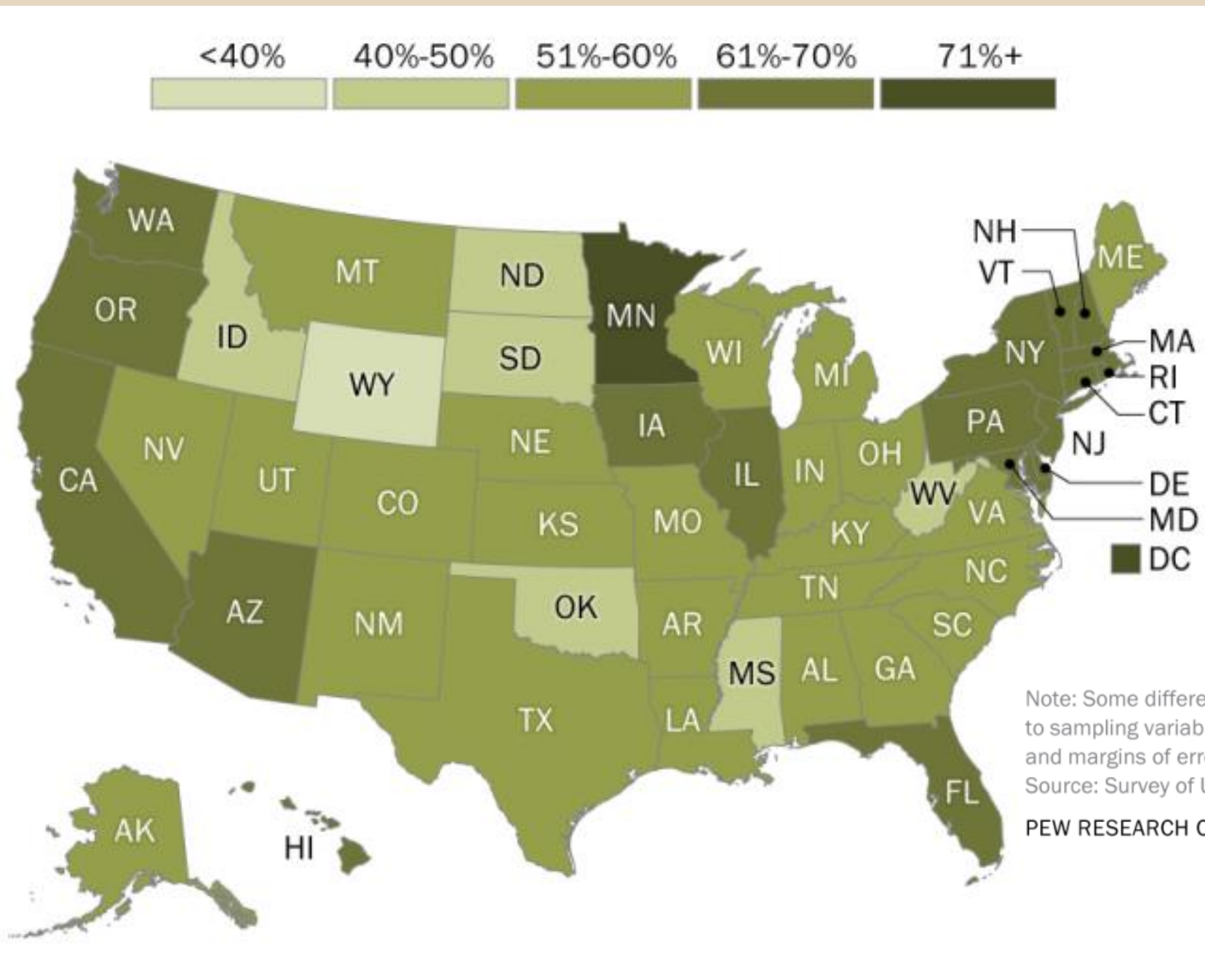
- NEPA (1969): Required agencies to document environmental impacts before acting.
- Clean Air Act (1970) & Clean Water Act (1972): Established federal quality standards.
- EPA Creation (1970): Established under President Nixon following public outcry (e.g., the Cuyahoga River fire).



“POLICY TOOLS” TO INCENTIVIZE CHANGE

- Promotional: Subsidies and tax credits
 - EX: the IRA
- Regulatory/“Punishments”: Fines and penalties
 - EX: the Clean Air Act
- Redistributive: Manipulating the economy to promote equality of opportunity.
 - EX: ... “good” insider trading? (JK)





MAJORITIES IN MANY STATES SEE STRICTER ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AS WORTHWHILE

% of adults in each state who say stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost

Note: Some differences between states may not be statistically meaningful due to sampling variability. Refer to "How we did this" for state-level survey responses and margins of error.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 17, 2023-March 4, 2024.

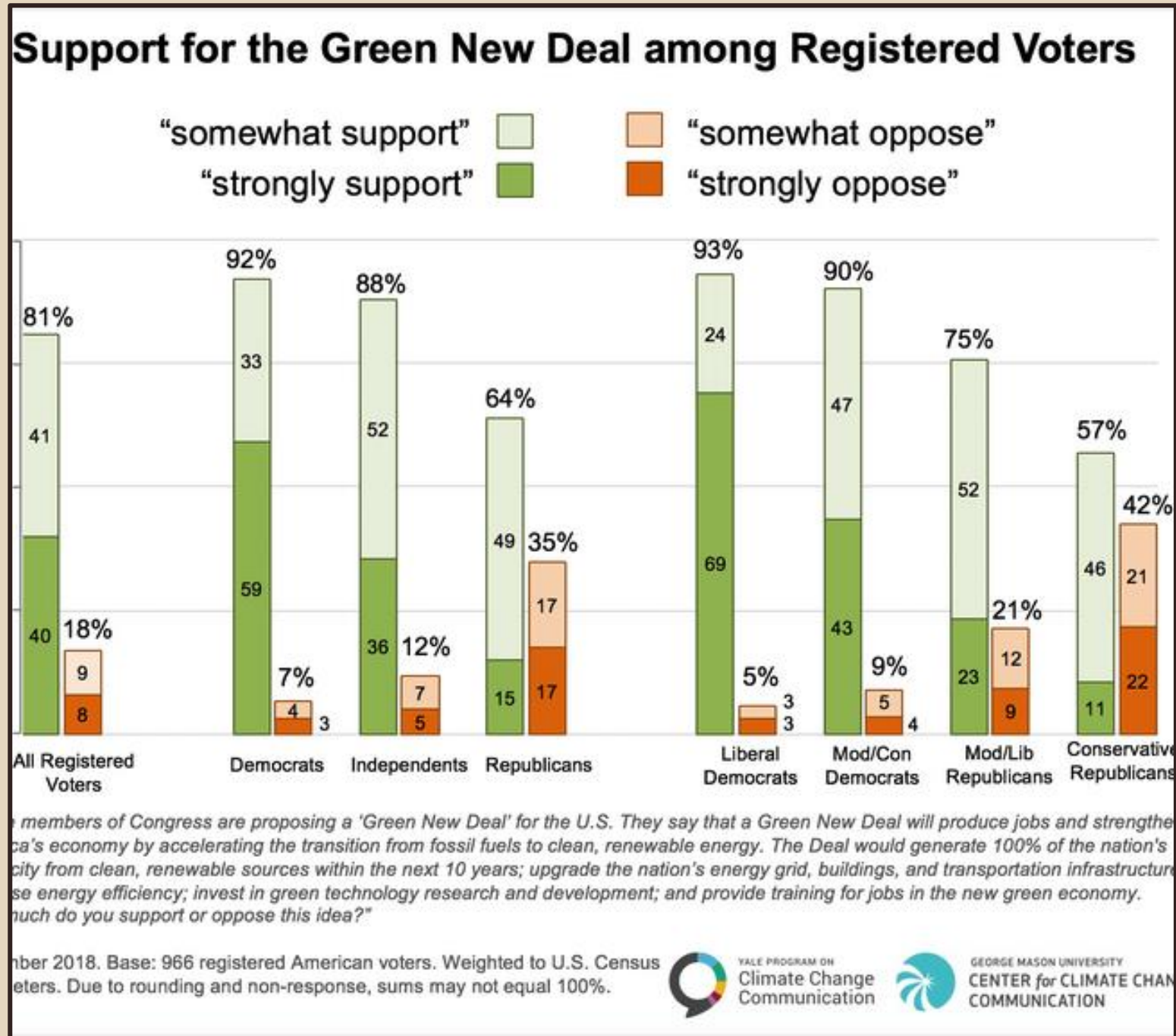
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

CASE: THE GREEN NEW DEAL (GND)

- Overview: A Congressional resolution (H.Res. 109) designed to tackle climate change while simultaneously addressing economic inequality.
- Key Pillars:
 - Decarbonizing the entire U.S. economy.
 - Job creation (Federal Job Guarantee).
 - Social justice (focusing on "frontline and vulnerable communities").
- Political Context: Often framed as a "Holistic & Systemic" approach (referencing Basseches' advocacy strategies) rather than a market-based one.

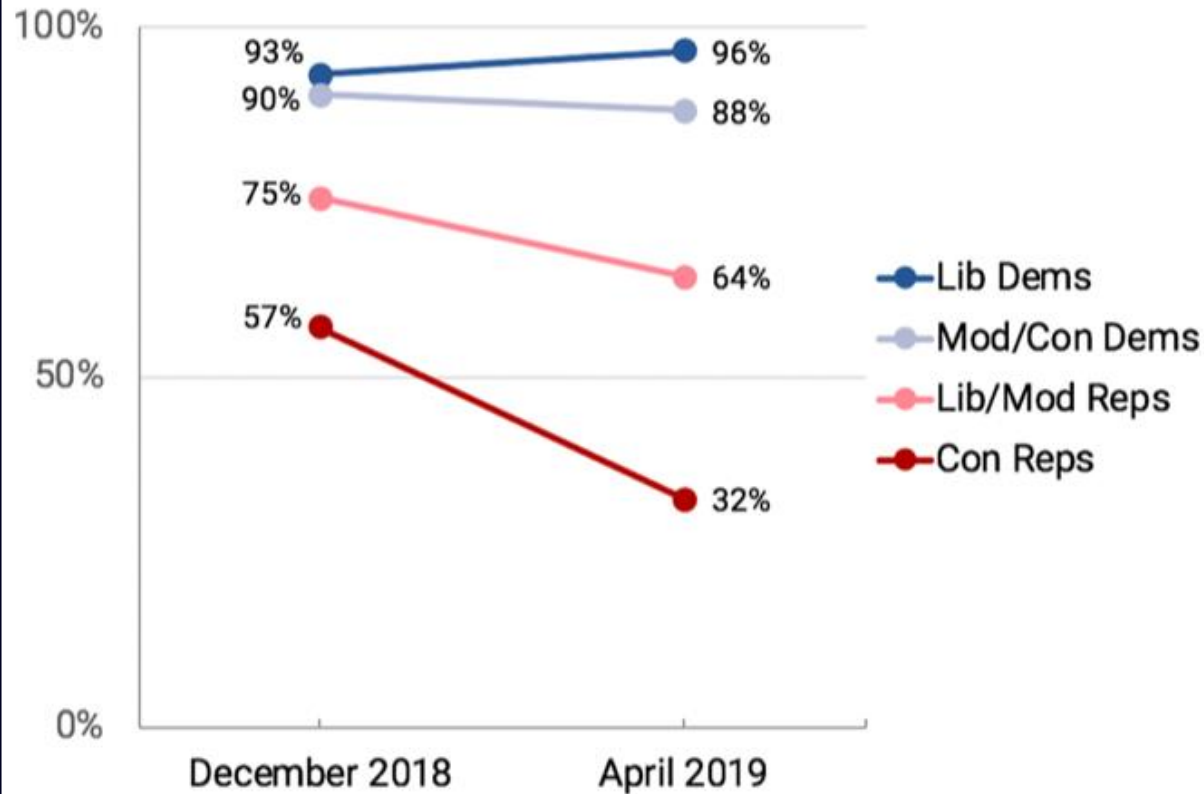
CASE: GND

- A combination of Roosevelt's economic plan to bring the US out of the Great depression + renewable energy (2018).
 - Ed Markey (D-MA)
 - AOC (D-NY)
- Had bipartisan support in 2018 in Congress & amongst registered voters.



Support for the Green New Deal Has Grown More Politically Polarized

- % who say "strongly" or "somewhat" support -



"How much do you support or oppose this idea?" Support = % responding "Strongly support" or "Somewhat support." Other response options were: "Somewhat oppose" and "Strongly oppose."

December 2018 and April 2019.



CASE: GND

- By April 2019 'Fox News Effect' convinced GOP reps voted against it.
 - Shorthand for hyper-conservative media publications & discourse (e.g., think tanks)
 - Ran more coverage before vote than CNN & MSNBC combined.
- Disagreement on *policy*.



CASE: THE GND MOVEMENT [RESOLUTION VS. LAW]

It is a "Non-binding Resolution": H.Res. 109 was a statement of intent. It didn't "do" anything in terms of immediate regulation or spending.

Unlike the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a statutory law with hundreds of billions of dollars in allocated funding,

The "Movement": Its primary impact was political and cultural. It shifted the "Overton Window" (the range of policies acceptable to the mainstream population), making a massive investment like the IRA seem "moderate" by comparison.

It set a high-ambition goal for what climate policy *should* look like, centering on the idea that climate change cannot be solved without also solving economic inequality.





GND FAILURE...?

How it fits into Basseches et al. (2022):

- "Holistic & Systemic Climate Justice" strategy.
- It failed to become law because of **Partisan** and **Interest-Group** barriers.
- It succeeded in changing **Media Coverage** and **Public Discourse**, paving the way for the IRA.

THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA) OF 2022



- **Promotional Policies** – rewards and incentives for compliance.
- **Renewable Energy Tax Credits:**
 - Investment Tax Credit (ITC): Deducts a percentage of the cost of renewable systems.
 - Production Tax Credit (PTC): Provides a credit based on the amount of electricity generated.
- **Bonus Credits:**
 - Using U.S.-manufactured products/content.
 - Siting projects in "Energy Communities" (e.g., former coal mining areas).
 - Serving low-income or tribal lands.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS *(SUBMITTED BY STUDENTS & ANONYMIZED)*

- **Student 1**: Is political polarization stopping us from reaching...climate [solutions] or is it actually much more nuanced than what it may seem to me?
 - **Student 2**: Is moderation really an abjectly bad thing?

INDUSTRY

- **Student 3**: If industry is such a major influence on policy, would policy reform be more effective to provide financial incentives to work with industry or instate limitations on political spending and influence to work with governance?

FRAMING & COMMUNICATION

- **Student 3**: Could reframing climate policy with an industrial framework reduce or otherwise affect environmental sustainability/environmental justice goals?
- **Student 4**: Basseches et al. are suggesting that framing climate action around public health or economic development can win over skeptical audiences.
 - Do you think this “reframing” is a smart political strategy, or does it risk diluting the urgency of the climate crisis by making it about something else?
- **Student 5**: Nebraska is proving that the transition to renewables is as much a social and political negotiation as it is a technical challenge.
 - If local opposition to wind farms is growing even in places where they provide massive tax relief for schools, does this mean “economic self-interest” is no longer enough to win the climate debate, or are we just failing to communicate those benefits effectively?
- **Student 6**: What strategies can be used in media (and everyday life) to connect the public engagement?