

Understanding Rural Attitudes on the Environment

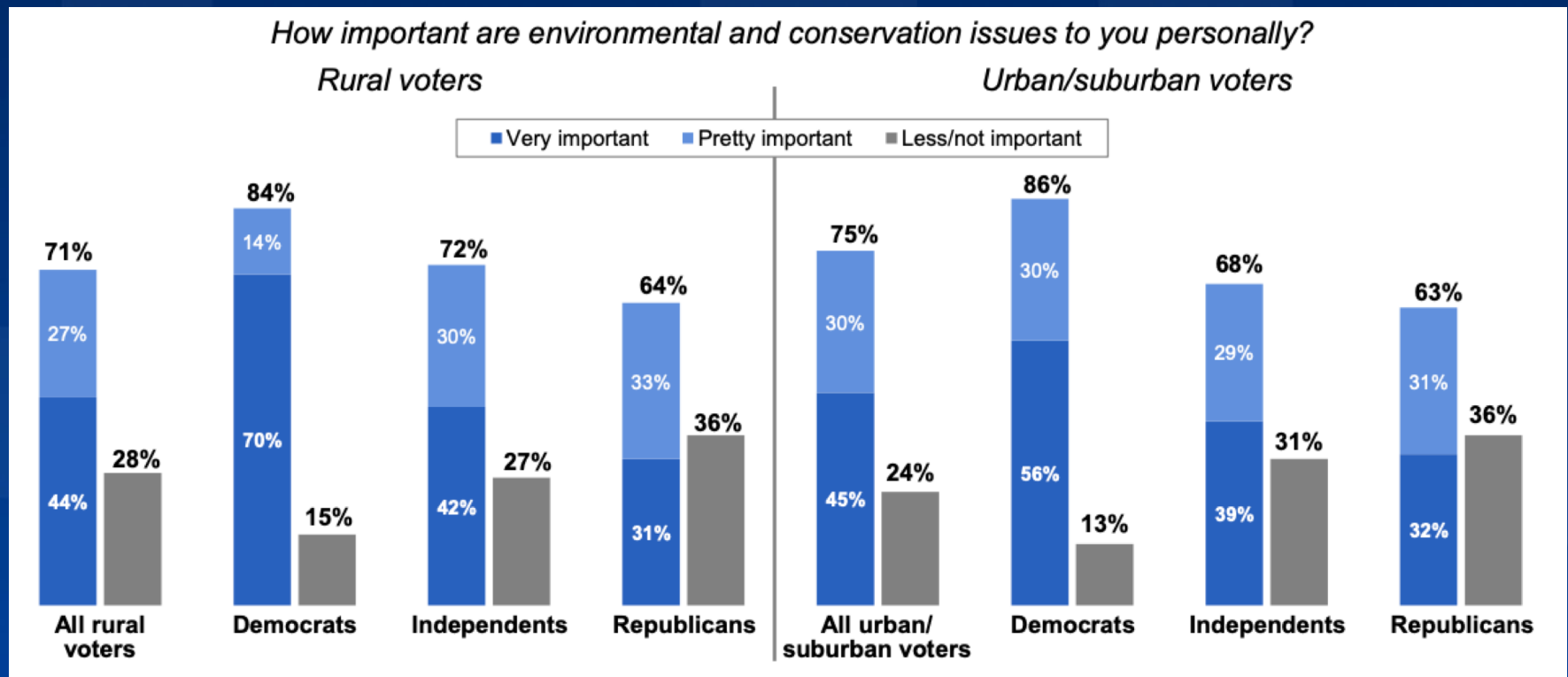
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What we did

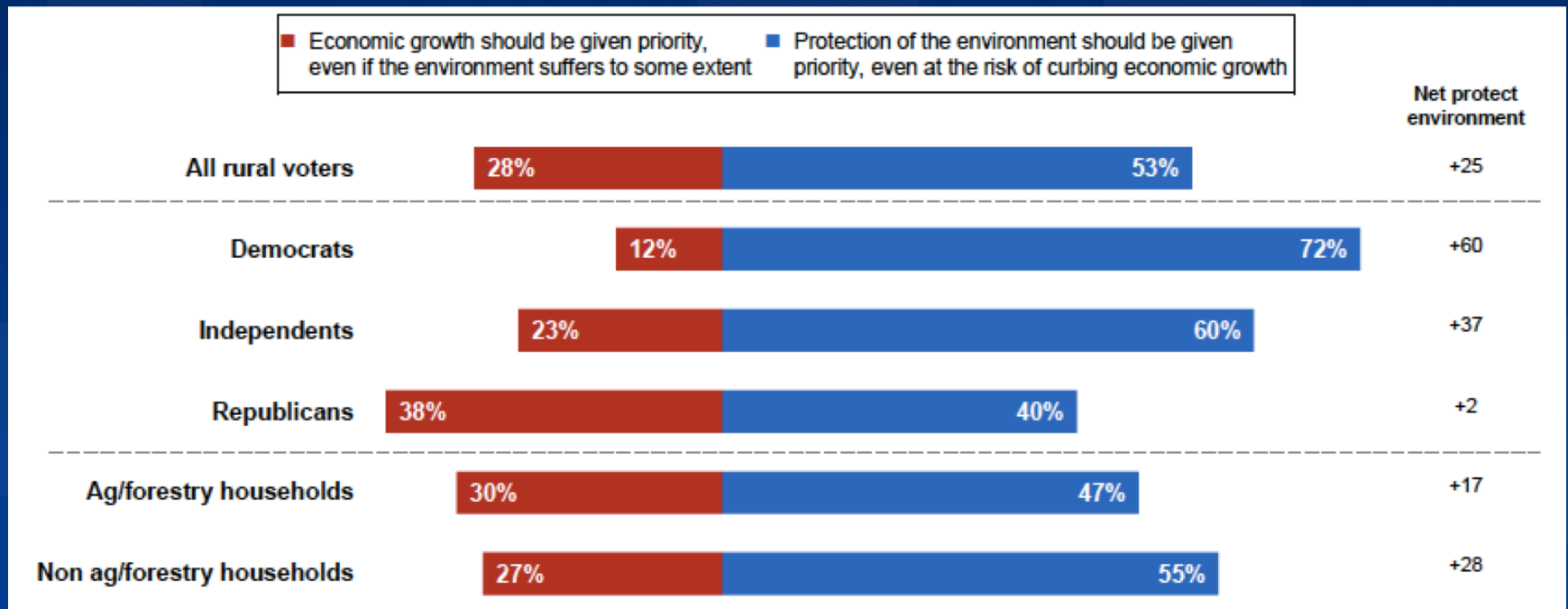
- Focus groups with about 125 rural voters in west, midwest, south
- National telephone poll of 1600+ voters (1000+ rural; 600+ urban/suburban)
- Online poll of 400+ Midwest rural voters focused on climate, agriculture; telephone poll of 400 Wyoming voters
- Interviews of 36 US rural leaders in agriculture, forestry, local government, labor, tribes, African American landowner

Rural voters care about the environment about the same as urban/suburban voters

(there's no difference when you correct for party)



The divide is not driven by economic concerns; rural voters are willing to give the environment priority

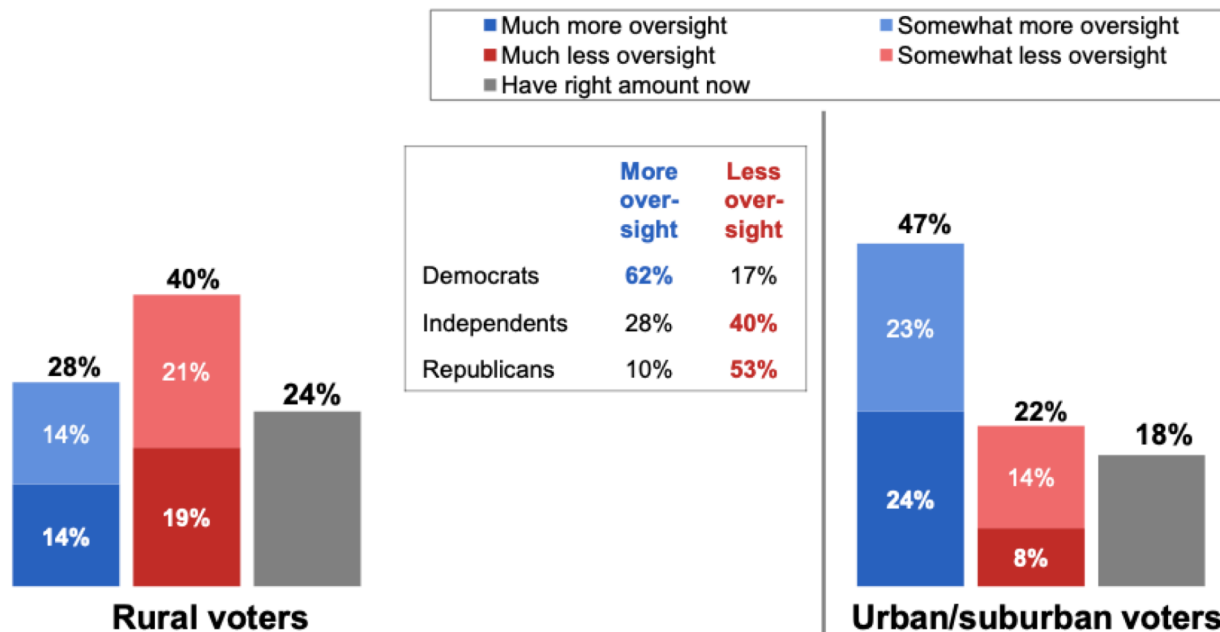


Views on government are the key driver of the divide & it's not just party

Government regulation is a key cleavage point, especially among Republicans and independents.

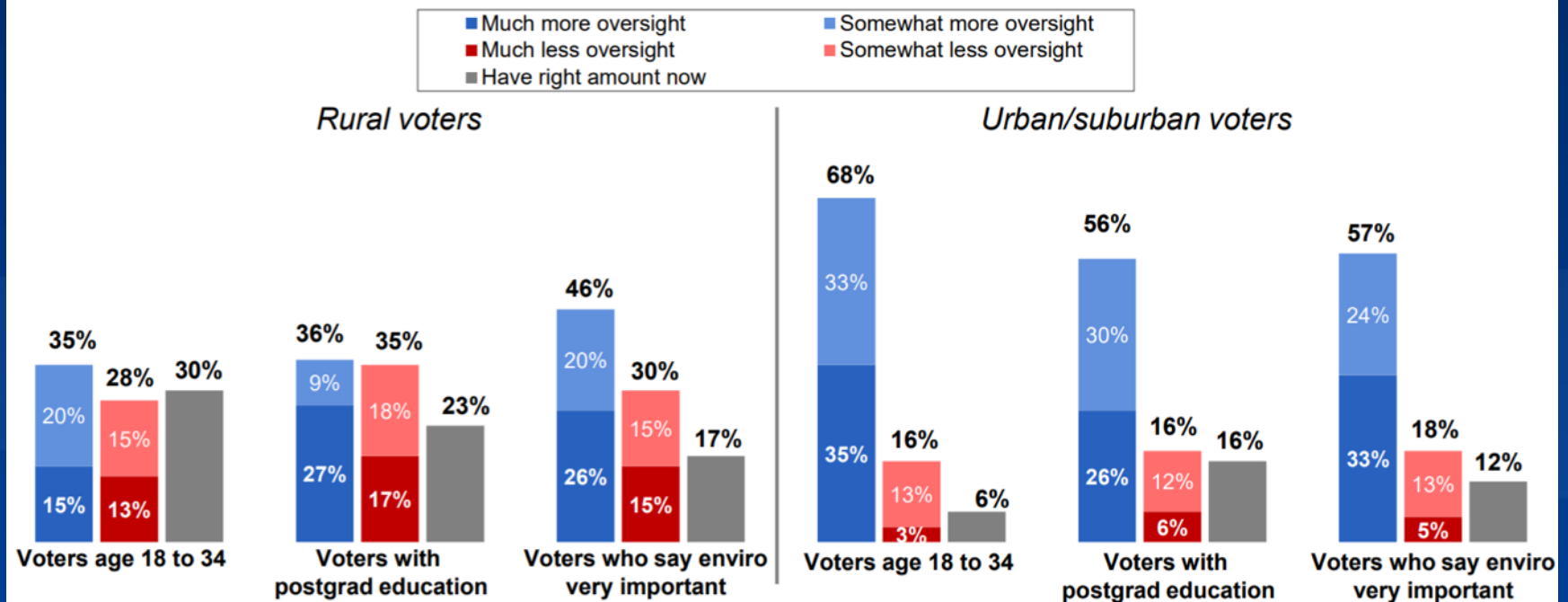


Preferred Level of Government Oversight over Environment and Conservation Issues



Being from rural influences attitudes toward gov't regulation even among those who tend to be pro-environment

Preferred Level of Government Oversight over Environment and Conservation Issues



Views on gov't can drive views on environmental policy -- example: Clean Water Act WOTUS

"I have mixed feelings because it could be good for water conservation; but may be bad for the development of housing and farming, which is needed in order to live. I would think that making compromises would be important."

– Rural Arizona voter

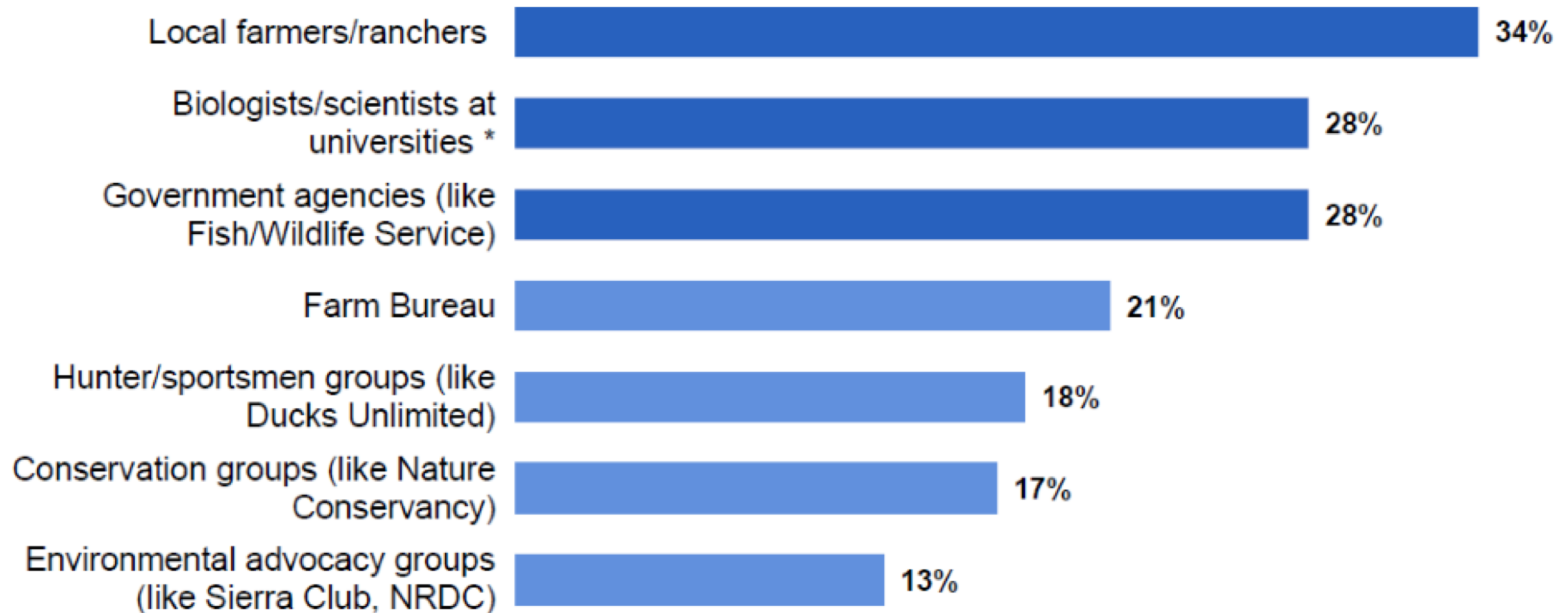
"I have concerns about the government's ability to design a program with enough flexibility to accommodate situations already in play."

– Rural Idaho voter

Who do rural voters trust most on the environment?

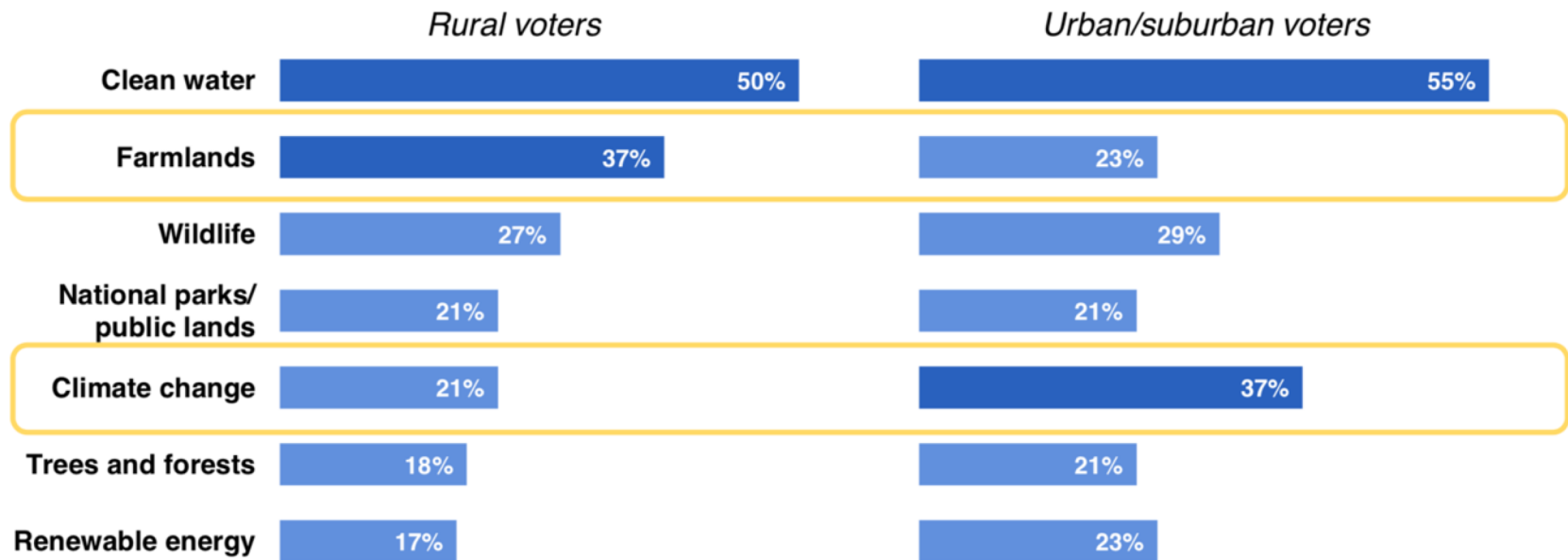
Which two or three of these sources would you trust the most for information about environment and conservation issues?

(all rural voters)



Rural voters have different environmental priorities: note climate

TWO Most Important Environmental and Conservation Issues to Address

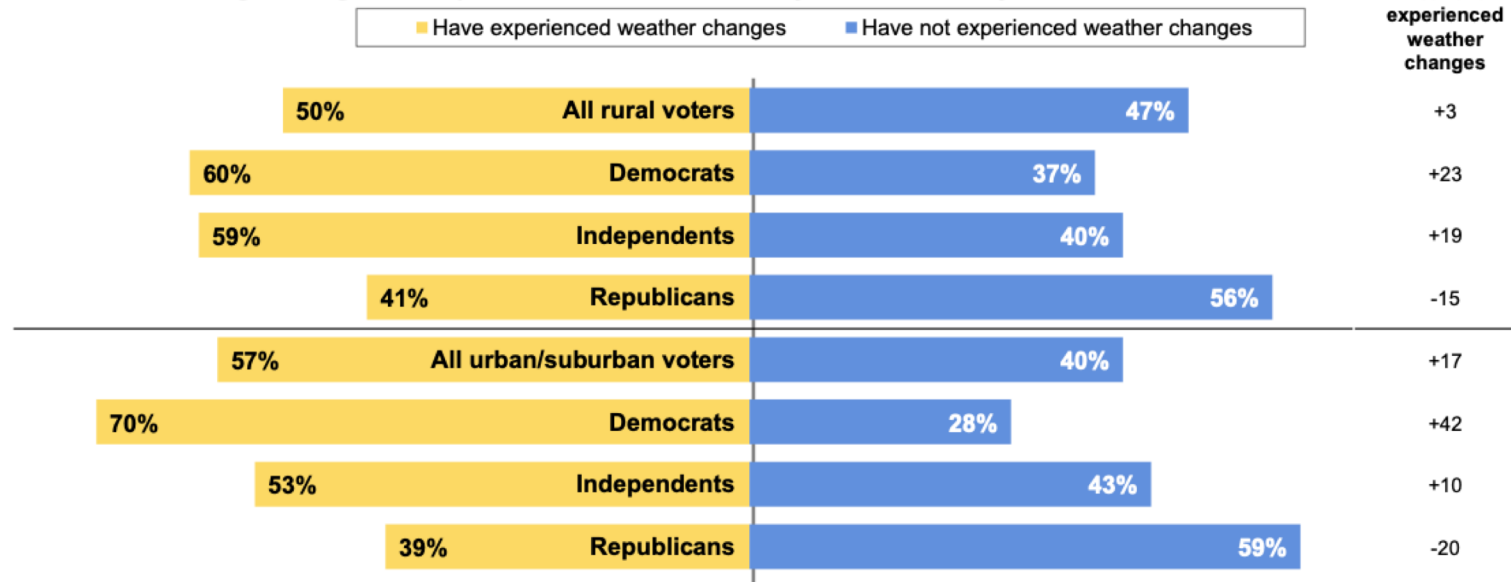


The weather is polarized (!) across party and the urban/rural divide

Experience with extreme weather appears to be a partisan phenomenon.

HART
RESEARCH
NEW BRIDGE
STRATEGY

Have you experienced weather changes such as increased hurricanes and flooding, droughts, higher temperatures, or wildfires in your community?

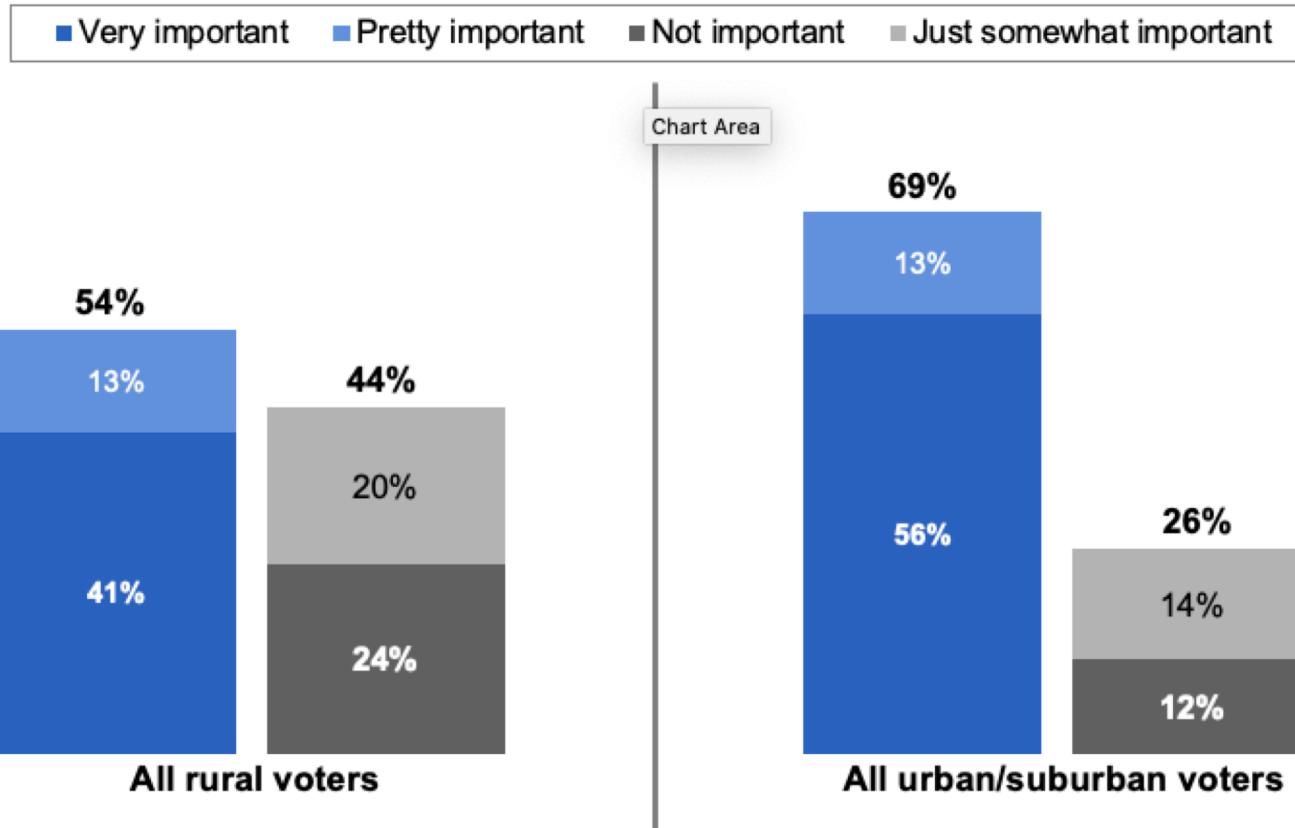


Rural Americans' Relationship to the Environment and Outdoors – August 2019

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Rural vs. urban/suburban on climate

How important is it that the United States take action to reduce climate change?

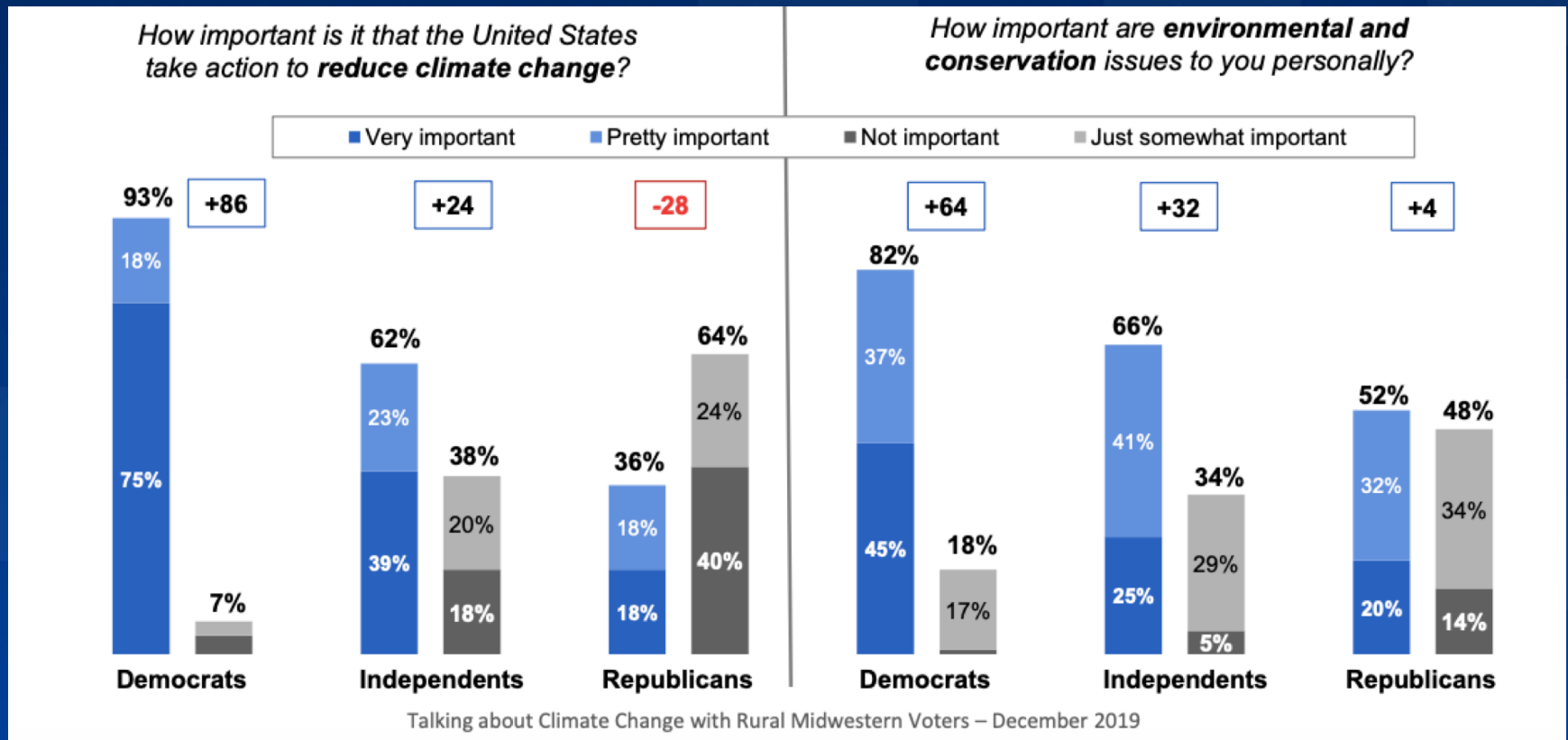


We believe there is a link between
views on gov't and climate denial

I'm going to sit here and tell you that the climate is very different than it was when my dad was farming the ground. [But farmers] are almost hesitant to say it because they are afraid of the policy consequences once everybody admits it.

-Agricultural Stakeholder Leader, North Dakota

From Midwest Rural Poll on climate: note partisanship on climate.



From Midwest Rural Poll – climate beneficial policies are popular when not called climate policy

