

COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

Americans Want to See Legally-Binding Treaty After Copenhagen

Most people think the U.S. government should ratify any agreement coming out of the Climate Summit.

[SAN FRANCISCO – Dec. 1, 2009] – If countries meeting at Copenhagen, Denmark, for a Climate Summit this month reach an agreement on reducing polluting greenhouse gases, many Americans want the government to sign on to it, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample of 1,008 American adults, 44 per cent of respondents would like to see the Copenhagen meeting—which will run from Dec. 7 through Dec. 18—to result in a legally binding document in which all 170 nations attending will commit to reduce polluting emissions.

About a quarter of respondents (23%) would rather see Copenhagen resulting in a political compromise in which countries are allowed to deal with climate change individually and take action on a voluntary basis. Fifteen per cent of Americans would prefer to see no agreement at all.

Beyond wishful thinking, expectations on what will actually happen are low. Only 11 per cent of Americans expect the 170 nations represented at the Climate Summit to draft a legally binding treaty. One third (32%) foresee the meeting resulting in a loose, non-binding agreement, and 34

KEY FINDINGS

- **44% of Americans want summit to result in legally-binding pact; but only 11% expect countries to agree to one**
- **48% are against the U.S. committing funds to help developing countries reduce emissions**
- **25% say fighting global warming is more urgent than fighting terrorism**
- **49% support cap-and-trade; 44% support carbon tax**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From November 24 to November 25, 2009, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,008 randomly selected American adults who are Springboard USA panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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per cent think nothing will happen—no agreement will be reached at the summit.

A Potential Agreement

Countries attending the Copenhagen summit are supposed to draft a new agreement to replace the 1998 Kyoto Protocol for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, which is due to expire in 2012. The United States did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

If Copenhagen participants manage to draft a legally binding document, 49 per cent of Americans want the U.S. government to ratify it, while 16 per cent disagree. However, almost half of Americans (48%) reject having a document in which industrialized nations, including the U.S., would have to commit financial assistance to developing countries in order to help them implement programs and policies to reduce their carbon emissions.

Cap-and-Trade vs. Carbon Tax

The U.S. Congress is currently studying the possibility of implementing a cap-and-trade system in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Roughly half of Americans (49%) would support this initiative, but 32 per cent would oppose it. Support for a carbon tax is also relatively high, with 44 per cent of respondents saying that they would agree with its implementation in the U.S.—but 38 per cent would oppose it.

Importance of Climate Change

Climate change is a reality for 49 per cent of Americans, who say the phenomenon is caused by human activity through polluting vehicles and industries. A fifth of Americans either think climate change is happening, but see it as a natural occurrence (20%), or think it is an unproven theory (19%).

Most people agree that there is an urgency to fight climate change. A quarter of respondents say this is more pressing than fighting terrorism, while some people also think it is more urgent than combating the global financial crisis (21%), world hunger (20%), global poverty (20%), and HIV/AIDS (18%). A larger number of Americans think that curbing polluting emissions is at least just as urgent as fighting global poverty (41%), HIV/AIDS (41%), world hunger (40%), the global financial crisis (39%), and terrorism (33%).

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Copenhagen Climate Summit

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of global warming (or climate change)?

Political Allegiance				
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Global warming is a fact and is mostly caused by emissions from vehicles and industrial facilities	49%	63%	27%	46%
Global warming is a fact and is mostly caused by natural changes	20%	19%	25%	19%
Global warming is a theory that has not yet been proven	19%	8%	40%	24%
Not sure	11%	11%	9%	11%

Copenhagen Climate Summit

As you may know, representatives from 170 countries will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, next month to participate in a Climate Summit organized by the United Nations. Which of these scenarios would you prefer to see when the Climate Summit is over?

Political Allegiance				
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
A legally binding agreement that sets specific targets for all signatories	44%	56%	32%	38%
A political compromise to meet certain milestones on a voluntary basis	23%	24%	20%	24%
No agreement—countries dealing with climate change independently of each other	15%	6%	30%	18%
Not sure	18%	14%	19%	20%

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Copenhagen Climate Summit

And which of these scenarios do you expect will actually happen when the Climate Summit is over?

	Political Allegiance			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
A legally binding agreement that sets specific targets for all signatories	11%	12%	12%	9%
A political compromise to meet certain milestones on a voluntary basis	32%	39%	26%	31%
No agreement—countries dealing with climate change independently of each other	34%	29%	45%	37%
Not sure	22%	20%	18%	23%

Copenhagen Climate Summit

One of the main discussions at the Copenhagen Climate Summit will revolve around whether industrialized nations should help developing nations combat climate change by providing financial assistance. Would you agree or disagree with a decision to implement a system in which United States gave financial assistance to developing nations to help them combat climate change?

	Political Allegiance			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	8%	14%	5%	5%
Moderately agree	26%	35%	16%	25%
Moderately disagree	20%	17%	18%	23%
Strongly disagree	28%	18%	49%	30%
Not sure	18%	17%	13%	17%
Agree – Net	35%	48%	21%	30%
Disagree – Net	48%	35%	67%	54%

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Copenhagen Climate Summit

Do you think that dealing with climate change is more urgent, just as urgent, or less urgent than dealing with each one of the following issues?

	More urgent	Just as urgent	Less urgent	Not sure
Terrorism	25%	33%	38%	4%
The global financial crisis	21%	39%	36%	4%
Global poverty	20%	41%	35%	5%
AIDS	18%	41%	35%	6%
World hunger	20%	40%	36%	4%

Copenhagen Climate Summit

In 1998, several countries signed the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement that commits nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Canada ratified the treaty, which is due to expire in 2012. If the Copenhagen Climate Summit results in a new binding agreement, do you think the United States should ratify it?

Political Allegiance				
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	49%	62%	32%	46%
No	16%	8%	32%	21%
Not sure	35%	30%	37%	33%

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Copenhagen Climate Summit

There are different approaches to encourage a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Here are two examples of what some countries are doing. Would you support or oppose implementing each one of these ideas in the United States?

A Cap-and-Trade System: a carbon emissions trading system that aims to reduce pollution by giving businesses a permit to release up to a certain amount of greenhouse gas emissions. The mechanism will apply to stationary energy, transport, fugitive emissions, industrial processes, and the waste and forestry sectors.

	Political Allegiance			
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	18%	25%	14%	13%
Moderately support	30%	36%	20%	31%
Moderately oppose	14%	15%	14%	15%
Strongly oppose	18%	7%	35%	23%
Not sure	19%	17%	19%	17%
Support – Net	49%	61%	34%	44%
Oppose – Net	32%	22%	48%	39%

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Copenhagen Climate Summit

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A Carbon Tax: a tax on each ton of emitted carbon dioxide aimed at discouraging the use of polluting sources of energy, such as oil, gas, and coal. The mechanism will apply to households and enterprises.

Political Allegiance				
	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	19%	27%	14%	15%
Moderately support	25%	28%	17%	27%
Moderately oppose	17%	17%	19%	18%
Strongly oppose	21%	10%	37%	26%
Not sure	17%	17%	15%	15%
Support – Net	44%	56%	30%	42%
Oppose – Net	38%	28%	55%	43%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election.

<http://bit.ly/4zxf1S>

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://bit.ly/3z0u1l>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

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