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Poll: Voters Agree on Need for More Protections from Chemicals

American voters overwhelmingly say they want government and industry to ensure the products they buy are free of harmful chemicals, and they are willing to pay more for it, according to a national online survey commissioned by the Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF).

“At a time when most issues are politically polarized, the issue of keeping people safe from harmful chemicals finds widespread agreement among Democrats, Republicans and Independent voters,” said Celinda Lake President of Lake Research Partners, which conducted the poll.

The survey of 1,200 registered voters found broad agreement that the government require products to be proven safe before they are put on the market. More than 90 percent of those surveyed support this requirement and two-thirds strongly agree with these ideas.

The poll also found:

- 92% of voters agree and 63% of voters strongly agree that the government should require products be proven safe before companies are allowed to put them on the market.
- 93% of voters agree and 62% strongly agree that companies should do a better job of removing harmful chemicals from consumer products.
- 88% agree that companies should do a better job of removing plastic and plastic packaging from consumer products.
- 76% are concerned about the impact that chemicals and plastics have on climate change.
- 54% say chemical regulations are not strong enough, while 21% say they are about right and 10% say they are too strong.
- 89% support (56% strongly support) the goal of the Toxic Substances Control Act to make it easier to limit or ban harmful chemicals and better protect vulnerable populations like pregnant women, children, and people who live near polluting factories.
- 93% agree (57% strongly) that it is important to remove harmful chemicals from where we live, work and go to school even if it increases the costs for some products and similar numbers agree that it is important for companies to keep harmful chemicals out of everyday products, even if it increases costs for some products.

Voters are concerned about all the chemicals they were asked about in the survey and expressed the most worry about chemicals ingested through water, food, and food packaging. Still, they are unsure of how the chemical regulatory system works. About half (49%) say the chemicals in food and consumer products have been tested for safety, although this is not true.

“People assume that what they buy is safe and that almost always isn’t the case,” said Tracey J. Woodruff, PhD, a professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences, who directs PRHE and the EaRTH Center at UCSF. “The good news is this survey reveals overwhelming support for the government to do a better job of protecting people from harmful chemicals.”

The poll was conducted May 25 to June 5, 2022.

Survey methodology: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this online dial survey that was conducted May 25 to June 5, 2022. The survey reached a total of 1,200 registered voters nationwide including 800 base voters and oversamples of 100 Black registered voters, 100 Latinx registered voters, 100 Asian American Pacific Islander registered voters, and 100 Gen-Z registered voters. Oversamples were designed to ensure the results were representative of the U.S. voting population.

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