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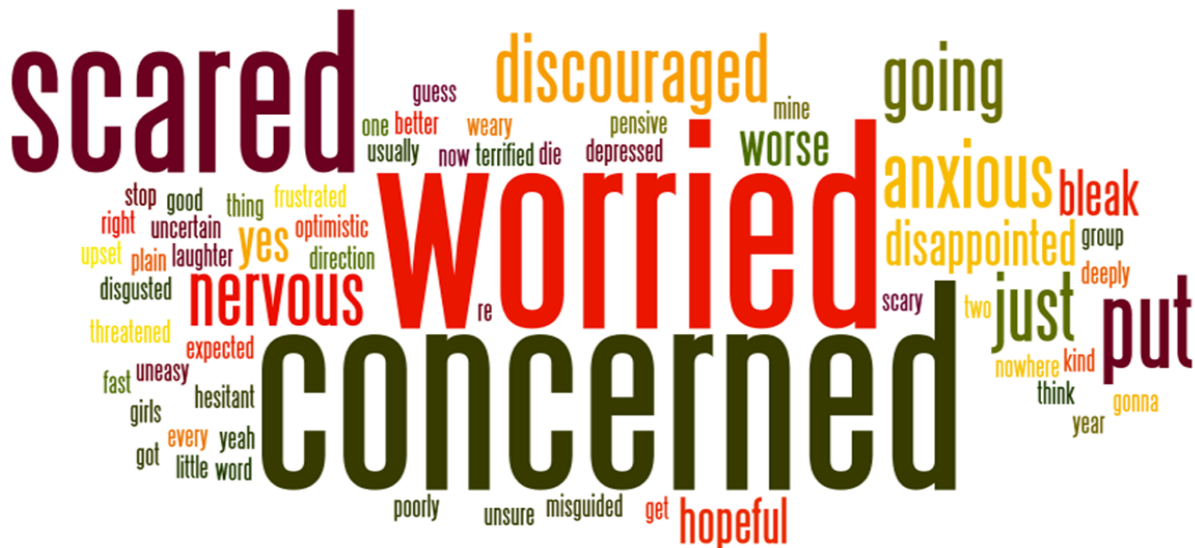
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Inside the GOP:

Report on focus groups with Evangelical, Tea Party, and moderate Republicans

If you want to understand the government shutdown and crisis in Washington, you need to get inside the base of the Republican Party. That is what we are doing in the Republican Party Project and these focus groups with Evangelicals, Tea Party, and moderate Republicans.¹ All the passion, nuances and divisions found expression when we conducted this work in the summer.

Understand that the base thinks they are losing politically and losing control of the country – and their starting reaction is “worried,” “discouraged,” “scared,” and “concerned” about the direction of the country – and a little powerless to change course. They think Obama has imposed his agenda, while Republicans in DC let him get away with it.



¹ Over the last two months, we have been releasing initial findings from the first phase of research for Democracy Corps’ new Republican Party Project. This report details findings from six focus groups among Republican partisans—divided into Evangelicals, Tea Party adherents, and moderates. All participants indicated that they voted only or mostly for Republican candidates and were screened on a battery of ideological and political indicators. The groups were conducted in Raleigh, North Carolina (moderate and Tea Party), Roanoke, Virginia (Tea Party and Evangelical), and Colorado Springs, Colorado (moderate and Evangelical.)



We know that Evangelicals are the largest bloc in the base, with the Tea Party very strong as well. For them, President Obama is a “liar” and “manipulator” who has fooled the country. It is hard to miss the deep disdain—they say the president is a socialist, the “worst president in history,” and “anti-American.”

For all that, this is a deeply divided base. Moderates are a quarter of those who identify Republican, and they are very conscious of their discomfort with other parts of the party base. Their distance begins with social issues, like gay marriage and homosexuality, but it is also evident on immigration and climate change. Fiscal conservatives feel isolated in the party.

Evangelicals who feel most threatened by trends embrace the Tea Party because they are the ones who are fighting back. They are very in tune politically, but the Tea Party base is very libertarian and not very interested in fighting gay marriage.

Republicans shutdown the government to defund or delay Obamacare. This goes to the heart of Republican base thinking about the essential political battle. They think they face a victorious Democratic Party that is intent on expanding government to increase dependency and therefore electoral support. It starts with food stamps and unemployment benefits; expands further if you legalize the illegals; but insuring the uninsured dramatically grows those dependent on government. They believe this is an electoral strategy—not just a political ideology or economic philosophy. If Obamacare happens, the Republican Party may be lost, in their view.

And while few explicitly talk about Obama in racial terms, the base supporters are very conscious of being white in a country with growing minorities. Their party is losing to a Democratic Party of big government whose goal is to expand programs that mainly benefit minorities. Race remains very much alive in the politics of the Republican Party.

These are strong common currents in the Republican base, but the thinking and passions are very distinct and telling among the key blocs – and those have consequences for those who seek to lead.²

- ***Evangelicals.*** *Social issues are central for Evangelicals and they feel a deep sense of cultural and political loss. They believe their towns, communities, and schools are suffering from a deep “culture rot” that has invaded from the outside. The central focus here is homosexuality, but also the decline of homogenous small towns. They like the Tea Party because they stand up to the Democrats.*

² We selected these three groups (Evangelicals, non-Evangelical Tea Party adherents, and moderates) because combined they represent almost all of today’s Republican partisans. The focus group locations, demographic characteristics, and participants’ ideological characteristics were all selected based on statistical analysis of our first survey for this project. While these are focus groups, and not statistically representative, this analysis gives a real, robust, and serious snapshot of who these Republicans are, how they think, and what matters to them.



- **Tea Party.** *Big government, Obama, the loss of liberty, and decline of responsibility are central to the Tea Party worldview. Obama's America is an unmitigated evil based on big government, regulations, and dependency. They are not focused on social issues at all. They like the Tea Party because it is getting "back to basics" and believe it has the potential to reshape the GOP.*
- **Moderates.** *Moderates are deeply concerned with the direction of the country and believe Obama has taken it down the wrong path economically. They are centrally focused on market-based economics, small government, and eliminating waste and inefficiency. They are largely open to progressive social policies, including on gay marriage and immigration. They disdain the Tea Party and have a hard time taking Fox News seriously.*

Key Findings

- You can't understand the government shutdown unless you understand the GOP from the inside.
- They think they are losing ground and Obama has won his socialist agenda.
- Obama is big government – but much bigger — they believe he is building dependent minorities that will give the Democrats a governing majority.
- They are very conscious of being white in a country that is increasingly minority—as Democrats use government to build dependency and therefore also their support with minorities. The race issue very much alive.
- Obamacare is the end game for Republicans: Democrats have already built constituencies of dependence based on welfare, unemployment insurance, food stamps, and illegal immigrants. Now add to that the uninsured.
- The problem in DC is not gridlock; Obama has won; the problem is Republicans failing to stop him.
- For Evangelicals, homosexuality is the defining issue and threat.
- Evangelicals and Tea Party dominate the party—make up more than half of all Republicans. They are both cheered by the Tea Party (despite the fact that non-Evangelical Tea Party adherents are social libertarian) because the Tea Party will stand up to Obama, Democrats, and RINOs in the Republican Party.
- Moderates are a quarter and they matter. They are very conscious of being illegitimate within their own party, which requires being both social and fiscal conservatives. The women open to splitting ticket if Republican candidates do not represent their views.
- Climate is next and could prove explosive outside the party and divisive within the party as climate skeptics are a majority in the conservative factions.



1. Focus groups as real life

When a Macomb County focus group participant shot back, “No wonder they killed him” after I read a statement by Robert Kennedy, that stopped me and led to a whole new analysis of Reagan Democrats – and what were the core blockages to working whites voting Democratic again. These groups with core Republican voters had similar moments – but more important, these emerged as affinity groups where the participants worked through their alienation and isolation, not just from politically correct-liberal dominated media, but other Republicans, family members, and neighbors. If you want to know why Republicans are at war internally, start with their voters who are in turmoil.

While we always reassure people of anonymity to allow open discussion, this was the first time ever in our groups when the participants asked at various points whether the NSA was listening in or whether their handouts were going to the IRS. At the end of the group in Roanoke, one man left his handout and noted, “It’s probably digital, so you can check it on the NSA files.” He laughed, but it was raised multiple times throughout the groups with Evangelicals. Some of the Tea Party men in Raleigh half-joked that the focus group was being monitored by the IRS.

Now you’re going to guarantee that what we put down here, we won’t be getting a call from the IRS about an audit or anything like that? (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

That did cross my mind when I did the first phone call and she was asking all the questions. I said, ‘I’m going to get a call from the IRS when this is done.’ (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

The Evangelicals—who seem the most on the defensive when discussing popular culture, demographic trends, changes in the family, and what is happening in their states—wrote post-cards at the conclusion of the groups and commented what a relief it was to be with people who think like they do.

I’m not alone in the way I view things for the most part.

Republicans are not the same as they were 50 years ago and need to go back to their standards.

Not by myself in thought process. ... Thought it was a great conversation and very informative. Thank you for the opportunity.

Good to be around like minded people. All of the people feel the country is in trouble due to the Democratic Party. Hope and pray that this will turn around.



While our methodology is for groups to be homogenous to encourage free discussion, we discovered here that the focus group became the opportunity to express opinions they feel on the defensive about in real life.

The moderates who are uncomfortable with their own party on social issues used the private post cards at the end of two hours to express surprise there are other Republicans who think like themselves. While we did not use the word “moderate” in the focus group script, they used the word self-consciously in their postcards.

Surprised at other females with fiscal conservative values while also being social more moderate. ...

I was surprised that the group was more moderate on social issues, like I am. It seems that this group focused on the fiscal aspect of Republicanism as the main component.

Discussion on “hot button” issues and how people with varying backgrounds seems to have middleground...

Many people are moderate because of \$ issues & social issues.

The common desire for a more moderate political party.

Again, we underscore the uniqueness of what is happening in the Republican Party. We conduct homogenous groups to replicate real life homogeneity where people can feel free to talk about their feelings and emotions. We think this is what people say around the water cooler or a family dinner. But for the first time for me, it felt like we were creating a safe space where Republican voters could express feelings freely—and they did.

We expected that in this comfortable setting or in their private written notes, some would make a racial reference or racist slur when talking about the African American President. None did. They know that is deeply non-PC and are conscious about how they are perceived. But focusing on that misses how central is race to the worldview of Republican voters. They have an acute sense that they are white in a country that is becoming increasingly “minority,” and their party is getting whooped by a Democratic Party that uses big government programs that benefit mostly minorities, create dependency and a new electoral majority. Barack Obama and Obamacare is a racial flashpoint for many Evangelical and Tea Party voters.



I had a concussion so they had to ask me a bunch of questions 'cause my mind wasn't quite working and they said, 'who's the President?' And I said, 'an S.O.B.' and he said, 'good enough.' (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

They talk about him as though he is a manufactured object, created by great political operatives.

I think he's a marketing miracle because he was built. He was constructed by marketing. The logo – what presidential campaign has had that kind of a logo and that kind of a visual – the posters, the colors, the way he was portrayed in the logo. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

He can tell every single person exactly how they want to hear what they want to hear. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

When the teleprompter's not there, he really falls apart. So I don't know how much of all of this is him or if it's his staff or whoever the Democratic Party is – and he's just the figurehead. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

The moderates are not very different on this score:

He's trying to sell something. Like the old 1800s. Lay this bottle, cure all your ills, sells it to the people and he's out of dodge. That's basically what he's trying to do. Trying to sell snake oil. (Moderate man, Colorado Springs)

He's always campaigning. He's never, it's like you won. Now start leading. Quit campaigning to me. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

He's really good at the art of spin and kind of saying what we want to hear but it's all kind of empty. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

Gives a good speech. (Moderate man, Colorado Springs)

He has to lie because he is pursuing big-spending big-government programs and a secret socialist agenda that the American people would never buy into if they really knew.

When they watch a TV video of President speaking on the Affordable Care Act, the Evangelical women in Colorado Springs wrote down some pretty harsh and dismissive things: “Spin Dr” and “Chronic liar”; “fake”; “lies”; “just a speech”; “liar,” “bullshit.” But the moderate men there were almost indistinguishable: “He could grow some items with the B/S he is spewing”; “Lies, lies, Lies, Lies, Lies!!!!!!”; “lies,” “disregards real facts”; “Socialism,” “Lies, Lies, Lies”; “Health care lies.”

Not surprisingly, all the groups think Obama is about big government and big wasteful spending. But in Evangelical and Tea Party groups participants think he is trying to fool the middle class with a more palatable patina while pursuing a darker, secret, socialist agenda.



Even when he's trying his hardest to appease conservative capitalist-oriented people...he still is spouting pure Marxist philosophy. He can't get away from it... I don't know if he can...even find a speechwriter that can help him sound like he's actually an American capitalist. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

Obama's...just pure distilled Marxism. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

We're not on his agenda. And he thinks these are things he should say to appease us, because we're middle class. We want jobs. We care about energy. We care about whatever his talking points are. And yet...he can't stop the ultra-liberal Marxist bleeding through what he's trying to say. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

And when asked what is going right in the country, a Tea Party woman in Roanoke joked, "Well, we're not a communist nation...yet."

Running through these reactions to Obama is a sense of him being foreign, non-Christian, Muslim – and they wonder what really are his motives for the changes he is advancing. They are not raised by everyone but they pretty common in the private doubts that they had written on pieces of paper before the discussion with the group.

Socialist, income redistribution (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

What is he really thinking? (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Background (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Lack of relationship with the American people. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Muslim; birth agenda; Fake; not true (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Not a US citizen. Supports Terrorists. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I don't believe he's a Christian. He's a tyrant. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

He wants to fundamentally change the country (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

He is going to try to turn this into a communist country. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

His motives behind his actions. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

He supports everything that is against Christianity. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)



Citizenship question (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Socialist background (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Origin of birth (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

The moderate men in Colorado Springs raise as many questions as the other Republicans about who Obama really is:

Only cares about self-promotion, not the AMERICAN people.

Hopefully, he doesn't change the Constitution so he can try to get elected again.

Feels government can solve any problem.

He is masonic Devil Illuminati, Lier can't stand Him

American?

Lies and scandals

Muslim?

They think President Obama is on the verge of using his powers to pursue his agenda without limits. That is evident in the frequent discussions about executive orders and action: "*When Congress is gone...he just does an Executive Order. He's going to get anything he wants. And there's nobody there that will have the guts enough to stand up to him*"; "*There's so many secret things that go on – that are – bills are passed and regulations are passed – we never know about.*" (Evangelical men, Roanoke)

Much more troubling was the fear of NSA and IRS being turned against the Republican opponents of the government,

That's a big thing right now is when they were spying on us and looking at all the stuff and you know I mean years ago my parents were talking about it. They're not like crazy and nuts or anything but I mean they always talked about it and I kind of tried to, no they're not but now we're finding out more and more information that everything we do you know, every Google search you make they know about. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

He's [Obama] turned the government into a spy agency on us. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)



I think what we fail to realize—that it has ...to do with setting up an organization and a machinery that can control and spy on every asset of our lives, and control it. And once it's infiltrated with all of the little webs...you won't be able to undo it. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

When you find out that they're keeping all the records of your telephone conversations, every email, everything that you're doing – the government is spying on you. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

And they fear is that he is getting away with it – unchecked.

3. Big government and dependency Democrats: Obamacare

Unifying all Republicans is their revulsion toward big government. That revulsion involves three distinct strands of thinking – two of which take the Republican Party into realms of pre-occupation that threaten to marginalize the party.

The first strand is big programs, spending, and regulations that undermine business. That is pretty straightforward and is hardly surprising. That is probably the dominant strand among the moderates who long for a fiscally conservative and focused Republican Party. Their first associations with government are: “big”; “waste”; “Regulations. Inefficient”; “Red tape, that’s all.” [Raleigh] They think big programs go hand-in-hand with special interest groups and lobbyists who buy off politicians and push up spending. [Colorado Springs] Their objections pointedly do not put increased dependency center-stage.

The moderates are very opposed to Obamacare because it is big spending; it won’t work; it will hurt business and employment. Their first associations are: “Stupidity”; “Job killer”; “And I say debt, D-E-B-T”; “Job killer.” [Raleigh]

The second strand is a concern with intrusive government that invades their privacy, diminishes their rights and freedoms, and threatens the Constitution. Those worries are dominant among the Tea Party, though not exclusively. In both Tea Party groups, they immediately associate the word government with the phrase “too big.” This is followed by “out of control,” “wasteful,” “corrupt,” “Obama,” and “Democrats.”

And the third is the most important and elicits the most passions among Evangelicals and Tea Party Republicans – that big government is meant to create rights and dependency and electoral support from mostly minorities who will reward the Democratic Party with their votes. The Democratic Party exists to create programs and dependency – the food stamp hammock, entitlements, the 47 percent. And on the horizon—comprehensive immigration reform and



Obamacare. Citizenship for 12 million illegals and tens of million getting free health care is the end of the road.

These participants are very conscious of being white and valuing communities that are more likeminded; they freely describe these programs as meant to benefit minorities. This is about a Democratic Party expanding dependency among African Americans and Latinos, with electoral intent. That is why Obama and the Democrats are prevailing nationally and why the future of the Republic is so at risk.

They associate the Democrats with government dependence and talk pointedly about welfare recipients who demand too much and take advantage of the system.

And the entitlement. Everybody seems to feel – And I volunteer at a food pantry...And the thought of entitlement – I didn't get my food stamps, and I need my TANF and I have to get my disability and I have to get my housing. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Abused...It's too easy to get on it. People who can work won't work, because they're receiving too many government benefits, and it's easier to stay home and cash in on the unemployment and the food stamps. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They eat better than I do. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

That's the whole problem with the whole unemployment and the food stamps: people have taken advantage of it.... Now... It's a way of living. And that's the problem. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I work at Sam's Club...lady comes in all the time. All of them: first, fourth, seventh, ninth. "I'm tired of ribeye steaks. Where's your lobster tails? Where's your seafood?" And they're putting it in an Escalade...It's disgusting...it's full of graft. It's full of fraud. It's full of abuse. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

In this way, the Democratic Party looks to inject the government in places where Evangelical and Tea Party Republicans believe matters are better left to family, community, individuals, and churches.

They worry that minorities, immigrants, and welfare recipients now believe it is their “right” to claim these benefits. Tea Party participants, in particular, were very focused on those who claim “rights” in the form of government services, without taking responsibility for themselves.

Well, on the news, everything is -- every minority group wants to say they have the right to something, and they don't. It's life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It doesn't say happiness. You get to be alive and you get to be free. The rest of it's just a



pursuit. You don't even – you're not guaranteed happiness. You have to work for it.
(Tea Party man, Raleigh)

I think that America doesn't give us enough responsibility. I don't think that they let us be responsible for ourselves because we know we have – or people think that there's someone to catch them. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I see a lot of lack of personal responsibility...People are constantly looking toward the government to get what they need. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Welfare and making your own money. I think people don't take responsibility for themselves because they know – the government will take care of me and my five children while they can't. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

Health care reform is just that. They believe Democrats not only create institutional dependency, but also feeds it for their own political gain.

The government's giving in to a minority, to push an agenda, as far as getting the votes for the next time. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They've got their hands in everything. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

They want us to be dependent upon the government, more so than self-sufficient. And that's what makes them powerful. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

That's the sort of subculture that the Democrats are creating, is that sense of entitlement, because they want us dependent on them. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Obama got elected because he kept saying, 'I'll keep giving you unemployment forever.' That's why he got elected. Now you can live in this country without a green card. Come on, we'll give you insurance, we'll give you money. That's why he got elected.
(Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

There's so much of the electorate in those groups that Democrats are going to take every time because they've been on the rolls of the government their entire lives. They don't know better. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

They've got a very effective process apparently. They've figured out how to convince the largest number of people to step in line. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

It's going to be viewed as a means for everyone to get the same amount of healthcare, whether they work for it or get it just because they're here. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)



And worry that it's the uneducated who are most inclined to vote for Democrats:

"They vote on emotion instead of voting on what are they going to do. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

This strategy extends beyond food stamps and unemployment to helping illegal immigrants. And they fear this is just about creating a base for the Democratic Party.

One of the things the Democrats have done is created a dependency class of loyal voters. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

That's why they want all the illegal aliens legalized. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

Obamacare is the final blow. When Evangelicals talk about what is wrong in the country, Obamacare is first on their list and they see it as the embodiment of what is wrong in both the economy and American politics. In fact, when asked what she talks about most, one woman in Colorado replied, "Obamacare, hands down, around our house." In Roanoke, it was the first thing mentioned when asked "what's the hot topic in your world?"

To participants in these groups, Obamacare *"just looks like a wave's coming, that we're all going to get screwed very soon."* (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Obamacare's just another intrusion on the Constitution. ... And I just – I'm appalled. I'm appalled by what's going on in our country. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

It's putting us at the mercy of the government again. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

[Our rights] are slowly being taken away...like health care. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke),

4. Evangelicals: "A very politically incorrect minority"

Evangelicals are a third of the Republican base; they are the biggest and most intense group: four-in-five are "strong" Republicans and straight ticket voters. Over three quarters are married and well over 90 percent are white. Their demographics – white, married, religious, and older – sets up a feeling that they are losing. They talk about how the dominant politics and cultures have encroached on their small towns, schools, and churches. What troubles them when they talk with friends, family, and fellow believers is Obamacare, guns, government encroachment, gay marriage, and "culture rot."

They sense they are "pretty white" and "didn't go to Harvard" – and "we're just not [Obama]" – which means they are becoming a pretty "politically incorrect minority." The so-called "tolerant" liberals just aren't very tolerant when it comes to them.



It used to be different, as illustrated by several men in Roanoke when describing their own towns.

It's a little bubble. So everybody – it's like a Lake Wobegon. Everybody is above average. Everybody is happy. Everybody is white. Everybody is middle class, whether or not they really are. Everybody looks that way. Everybody goes to the same pool. Everybody goes – there's one library, one post office. Very homogenous. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

It is from that perspective that they view President Obama.

I think that his picture of the people in this room would be that we're all a bunch of racist, gun-clinging, flyover state, cowboy-hat wearing yokels. Because we didn't go to Harvard, and we're not from New York, and we're pretty white, we're pretty middle class. We like to go to church, we like our Bibles. And so we're just not him. We're not on his agenda. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

In Roanoke, participants remarked that it was refreshing and unusual to be in a room where everyone shared their beliefs—and gave them an opportunity to speak openly about guns, gay marriage, church, and their values. In Colorado Springs, participants remarked that Colorado used to be a conservative state and they could expect that their values and rights and would be protected. This seems to be slipping away.

We're having to realize that we're going to be in a very politically incorrect minority pretty soon. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

And the point of departure for being a politically incorrect minority is what's happening with the acceptance of homosexuality and the gay agenda.

Giving gay and lesbian citizens of the right to marry the person they love can seriously harm them, and seriously harm the children that they were raising. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They've taken what I consider a religious union between a man and a woman—pardon my French – and bastardized it. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They believe the dominant national culture promotes homosexuality and makes this “minority” culturally “normal.” There is a conspiracy to push “the gay agenda.”

The fact that it is so prominent, that's day to day. Like...that stupid song on 96.1 ... It's on every five minutes. The “I can't change” song. It's on constantly. It's song promoting gay and lesbian rights and all that stuff. But it's so prominent. It's every 10 minutes. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)



Like it's a normal way of life. There's a minority of people out there are homosexual, but by watching TV, you'd think everybody's that way. And that's the way they portray it. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

Somebody's got to say "the gay agenda." That gets thrown around, a lot—that there's this vast conspiracy of gays that are trying to push this. But—you know, to some extent, it almost seems like that, because these things are just moving so quickly along a certain trajectory. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

Their kids are under threat from popular culture and in the schools – and the gay agenda seems to have displaced school prayer as the intrusive secularism that is undermining their ability to raise their children right.

It's really tough when my 13 year old comes home, and saying, the girls are holding onto to hands in school, and the guys, there's nothing that can be done. Which comes back to, Christ is taking – being taken out of schools. They're trying to take anything that mentions the word God out of schools. They could get in trouble, if they bring a Christian book. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

The schools aren't going to teach your kids the stuff that you want to. We don't need the schools raising our kids. We need to raise our kids, teach them what our beliefs are, what our standards are, our morality is, and let them get an education there, but not raise them there. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

It's hard when the school is directly opposing what you're trying to teach your kids. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

As a result, some have taken their kids out of the public schools and instead placed them in church schools or are homeschooling:

"My daughter's only one, and I already am making plans for her not to go to school and have that [homosexuals] in her life, because it's not – Not only that it's not just something that I agree with, but it's not something that should have to be forced down her throat." (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Another had a hard time describing homosexual boys:

The Scouts just started accepting boys that are – that – that identify as homosexual. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They believe there is a dominant culture that has marginalized them ideologically, linguistically, and culturally. They believe that their views are unacceptable outside of their small circles of like-minded friends and family. They are also very conscious that they are viewed as rednecks by the liberal elite. Take, for example, this exchange between Evangelical women in Colorado Springs:



It becomes hard, because [if you're conservative] you're not allowed to have your opinion, but everybody else is.

You have to agree with another opinion. That's very annoying.

[Does anyone else feel that way? That you're allowed to have certain opinions, but not others?]

Yes. (All around)

[Where does that pressure come from?]

It's from the people who say that we're supposed to be tolerant.

[Who are they?]

The people who are intolerant. It's the left, for the most part...I just recently had a debate on Facebook with a nephew of mine. And he accused me of so much stuff out of one comment...And it was just – He was just clueless on where I stood.

So, we should not be surprised that the Evangelicals are not politically correct on immigration. In this case their feeling of being invaded is literal, as when they discuss immigration in graphic terms, and point to language as what bothers them most: “*Don't come here and make me speak your language. Don't fly your flag. You're on American soil. You're American.*”; “*You come to our country, you need to learn our language.*” (Evangelical men, Roanoke).

Why should I put—press 1 if I want to speak in English? You know, everything—every politically correct machine out there says, “Press 1 for English. Press 2 for Spanish.” (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

The only ones standing up for them against these forces are the Republican Party, Fox News, and the Tea Party – and the Grand Old Party is doing none too well.

Feeling most besieged by what is happening in the country, these strong Republicans need an effective and principled party, but they think many Republican politicians have lost their way. There are too many “RINOs” who cannot stop what is happening.

The problem is there's not a party that thinks like us. We don't have a voice in Washington. Or where else? The Republican Party? They might as well just have a D beside their name, as far as I'm concerned. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I don't have a party anymore. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

And the Republicans – a lot of Republicans are just RINOs – Republican in name only. But we've really got to turn this ship around, or we're in deep doo. (Evangelical)



man, Roanoke)

Above all, they think the Republican Party has proved too willing to “cave” to the Obama agenda, which is winning.

They cave all the time. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

They're rollovers. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

They worry that the party is too internally divided to be effective.

It sounds like they're fighting. And they're not happy with each other. And it's like little kids sometimes. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Fortunately, there is Fox News, which they describe as the only network “in the middle.”

FOX is about the middle. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

[Fox News is] *about the only one that gives you both sides.* (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I don't think they're trying to make the news. I think they're trying to report the news. It seems like everybody else is trying to make the news. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

The greatest source of hope is the Tea Party because they are standing up and pushing back. They may not agree with the Tea Party on some issues, but they share a special solidarity given how isolated they are.

When asked about our country's greatest strengths and what gives them hope, the Tea Party is universally mentioned. They say that people are finally “standing up” and “fighting back.”

Well, I would say, the rise of the Tea Party, that people are getting involved, and they're standing up... People are saying hey, this isn't what's in our Constitution, and it's not what's in our schools. And I think people are taking a stand now, and we need to, before it's too late. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

America is rising back up and getting a backbone again, and making our voices heard one way or another, whether it's Tea Party, or whatever else. People are being emboldened. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

They are a group to be reckoned with, because if we're going to turn things around, The Tea Party's going to need to be part of it. And less government and less spending, and throw the rascals out – to quote Ross Perot – is what they're all about. I'm there. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)



I thank God there's enough people getting angry now and it will have to stop. I think people realize that we're going to have to rise up and take control. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I'm very proud of them for standing up. It was about time...it's given me courage to be able to say what I believe. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

And in a room full of like-minded others, they become energized and feel ready to fight back, and reclaim what they believe has been taken from them. At the conclusion of the group in Roanoke, the men had formed a serious bond and parted vowing to remain in touch, “*These are the kind of people the Tea Party's made of.*”

5. Tea Party: “Back to basics”

Tea Party enthusiasts form just over a fifth of the base Republican voters – and are cheered on for the moment by the Evangelicals who are depending on their conservative backbone. These are straight ticket, anti-government, pro-business voters who are more confident that they can get America back to basics if they fight back. They are libertarian and not very concerned with homosexual encroachment, but the hot topics for their friends and family are Obama, gun control, Obamacare, taxes, and government spending. They have hope because they are trying to get America back to the Constitution, to American entrepreneurship, freedom, and personal responsibility.

In both Tea Party groups, the phrase “back to basics” was repeated multiple times. What this means is they want to return to a time when they believe government was small, people lived largely free of the government, and Americans took responsibility for themselves.

This is not those times. Government is catering to those who have not earned their benefits or the freedoms of this country. They freely talk about food stamps, “welfare recipients,” and illegal immigrants. These groups are the most anti-immigrant, anti-food stamps, and anti-Obamacare and its potential beneficiaries of the Republican groups. They are also the most anti-Obama, anti-Obama agenda and anti-Obama politics—because these threaten the basics.

Like other Republicans, they hate big government and dependency that are central to the Obama Marxist project, but they are also acutely alarmed at government invasion of their privacy, rights, and freedoms. Freedom is on the line.

I think the government needs to stay out of our private lives. That's my right to privacy and the issues that affect – that run this country like a business, that's where they belong. But telling people on a personal level what they can or cannot do I do have a problem with that. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)



Our freedoms are getting taking away all the time with more regulations and rules and things we can't do. And we let it happen, and then all of a sudden we're not going to have any left. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Gun control, business taxes... regulations. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Gun control is the most immediate battle to stop big government encroachment.

I think that our freedom is slowly being taken away from us, like with the gun control and I don't know, just everything. I just fear for our freedom. I don't want to be like the other countries and have to be told what to do and when to do it. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I think we're slowly losing our freedom. You know just by – you can't choose anything, you know when it comes to gun control or anything...I don't think they should take the guns away. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

There's talk of the repeal of Stand Your Ground laws and things like that. That's a diminishing right. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

And some used a combination of revisionist history and Constitutionalism to articulate this right.

For me you know our founders...we had to rise up and we had to defend ourselves and take over this country and who knows if that has to happen again sometime so I don't want the government – the government already has enough knowledge and stuff about what's going on in my life so if they want to take away all of our rights, I mean I just feel like we're Nazi Germany or something. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

The Tea Party Republicans are staunchly pro-business—to the point of celebrating trickle-down economics. While there was some skepticism about Wall Street in the women's group, for the most part, these participants expressed pro-business, anti-tax, anti-regulation attitudes. Even if they were not currently reaping the rewards of the economy, they did not blame business greed, but rather government regulation.

The whole middle-class-up economy format is completely ridiculous. Because who's going to give the middle class their money? The upper class. The middle class isn't going to make money coming out of nowhere. They've got to get a job. And who gives the jobs? The rich people. So if you take all the rich people's money, they're not going to be able to give anybody a job. Just it's so backwards. He keeps talking about a strong middle class. I don't want a strong middle class. I want to make all the middle class rich people, because then you've got even more rich people who can give more jobs. It's like a – it's just ridiculous. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

I think [Wall Street] provides a lot of jobs. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)



Our economy feeds off of people who make more money than others. That's just the way capitalism works and I think that it is punishing people who go out and make a great job and have a lot of money. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

The Evangelicals admire the Tea Party activists right now, but at some point, their relaxed, almost libertarian views on social issues may create new fractures. They are in a very different place, and they think the focus on homosexuality and gay marriage may be unhelpful politically.

On gay marriage, Tea Party Republicans are apt to say, “who cares?” or it’s not the government’s business.

Who cares? (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I don't want the government telling me who I'm sleeping with or whatever in my bedroom, so I just don't think it's the government's business. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

It's fine with me. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I think it's not important. I mean either way we have so many bigger issues to worry about. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

It doesn't hurt anybody. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I don't think the government as any say in it...I personally don't agree with gay marriage, but I don't think the government should say who can get married and who can't. It's not their business. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

They've got a lot more to deal with than that. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

And the Tea Party women in Roanoke even edged toward being pro-choice on abortion and positive about Planned Parenthood.

I think it's all right to choose. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

Even though I'm not for abortion myself ... I don't think it's right to tell a women whether she can or not because you don't know her situation. Do I think that it's OK for women to use abortions as their birth control? No I think that's completely wrong but if a woman was raped and conceived a child and she knows she can't look at that child every day, she can't carry it in her body, why stop her from – I don't know. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)



They do other good things. They do yearly exams. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And birth control. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And they teach what's realistic you know, they teach that kids are gonna have sex these days. It's just the way things are. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

Not only are they more open to gay marriage and choice, but many see social issues as a potential distraction, or a force to divide the Republican Party.

The government, the media, the news media, you know. Of course – it's gay rights, it's abortion, it's stuff that's been going on for years. What we need to be focused on is the financial situation. All the rest of it, I think they're throwing stuff out, they're feeding it to the media. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

The government is feeding stuff to the media to get us talking and arguing about gay rights, about abortions and stuff like that when we need to be focusing on jobs you know. If we have no jobs, we have no money, we are gonna be at the mercy of the government. They take our jobs. We're done. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

For many of these Tea Party voters, gay rights and abortion are getting in the way of their battle against big government. The women in Roanoke criticized the Republican Party for being too socially conservative.

I think the Republicans have lost so many people to the Democratic Party because of social issues, because of pro-life and more open ideas where if we could eliminate that from the conversation I think we'd have an entirely different electorate. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And another pointedly critiqued the GOP's conservative social agenda because it distracts and fractures the party.

They feel like... if they scream loud enough about you know, gays you know and lesbians you know, ruining our country that that's gonna make some Christian fired up and say yeah I'm gonna vote for him even if maybe I don't agree with these other things and gain that vote when really I think in general we're all sick and tired of hearing about all that and I just wanna hear how you're gonna help the country in general. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

For the Tea Party Republicans the solution to this internal discord lies in the Tea Party. Many believe the whole party should rally around the Tea Party faction.

The Tea Party is trying to get back to the basics. Then you've got – even within the Republican Party trying to fight the Tea Party. It's like, "Don't fight each other. Let's join together and be one party." (Tea Party man, Raleigh)



I think [the Tea Party] is good [for the Republican Party.] I think that the rest of the GOP needs to get on board. We need to all agree on some of the basic stuff. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

I think it's a good thing, because [the Tea Party represents] core Conservatives...So you've got the Republicans against the Conservatives, and they said, "You need to be more Conservative if you're going to win the elections and get more people." (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

And thank God they have Fox News – and as a consequence they do not feel as embattled as they take on the fight to restore the basics.

In Roanoke, the women responded to Fox News with near universal approbation.

I like it. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I enjoy it. If I'm on the treadmill, I'm plugging into Fox. I just agree with a lot of their approach. I'm a conservative. I'm a social liberal but I'm a fiscal conservative and I agree with a lot of what they have to say. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I like Bill O'Reilly. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I absolutely love Bill O'Reilly. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I wish there was more Fox News. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And men in Raleigh confessed that Fox is the only news station they watch.

It's great. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

It's the only news channel I watch. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

It's the only one I watch. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

I like it. I'm missing two hours of it. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

6. Moderates: "I can't sell my kids on this party."

Moderate Republicans make up a quarter of the Republican Party – and pale in size and influence to the Evangelicals and Tea Party supporters – and they know it. While they are firm Republicans, some have started splitting their tickets.



They are acutely conscious that their biggest difference is on social issues. While the Tea Party Republicans asked, “who cares?” and questioned government’s role in regulating personal choices, the moderates could not understand why gay couples did not have comparable rights. They were comfortable with a legal basis for gay marriage.

Their modern views on gay marriage mark a sharp distinction from Evangelicals. In fact, many moderates don’t understand why it is a debate at all.

My idea is if they’re going to do it, let them do it. (Moderate man, Colorado)

From a legal standpoint I don't understand why it's a debate because I think that gay people should actually be allowed to get married because they should have, well first of all every argument I've heard against it has been based on religion and if our government is truly separate from religion in our government should be able to make laws based on religious beliefs. Secondly I think if gay people want to get married and then they want to get divorced they should have to pay for divorce just like I did. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

It just doesn't really make any sense why they shouldn't be allowed to...have that kind of special bond. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I mean they're [together anyway. You know? The world is going to change anyway. And it is changing anyway every way. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

That's what I don't understand, is like a have houses together and they do everything that a married couple would do together and I just don't understand. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

The first gay divorce was filed in Massachusetts—Good, that’s what I like. I’d like them to have the same opportunity we have. (Moderate man, Colorado)

Doesn’t hurt me. It doesn’t affect my life. (Moderate man, Colorado)

I don’t understand why you can regulate what the hell I think and do. This is a free fricken country. There’s been homosexuals since the Roman times and before. What the hell are you scared of them? Are you scared they’re going to get you? Are you? Are you scared they’re going to get your kids? (Moderate man, Colorado)

And they diverge sharply from Evangelicals when it comes to Planned Parenthood.

I think it's necessary for a lot of different reasons and not saying just abortion, people associated with abortion but I think it does so much more than that they don't get credit for. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I think Planned Parenthood is great and I think it always has been, just I mean it just offers people options it offers a lot of education. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)



While illegal immigration was a defining issue for Tea Party and Evangelical Republicans, the moderates do not focus on the illegals as undeserving and seem mostly pragmatic, particularly on the feasibility of mass deportation:

“I mean I don't think it's feasible to say, send everybody home;” (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I mean it's a huge struggle to get here illegally so I think if they are here illegally...they are not leaving. And that means they are going to be putting a toll on our roads...taking up space in classrooms...so it would be nice if they were legal and they actually could be contributing to that tax circle...I just think getting them a path to that would be great. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

Others even articulate that immigrants are good for the country and the economy. They speak of them having good work values, not as people looking to become dependent.

I feel like if we're not going to embrace some sort of path to citizenship we're going to see a cost of a lot of services go up. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

And they work hard and they actually realize the American dream. And a lot of us Americans complain, we won't do what we think we'll do. (Moderate man, Colorado)

Many immigrants come into our country do better than we do... they don't complain. (Moderate man, Colorado)

I need more customers. I need more people to sell things to. I need more people to do business with. And I can see that these people are potential customers. And the jobs they did... we won't do... We just flat won't do it... We don't have some of the worth ethic they have...I want it to all be legal... I don't mind that they're customers. They can pay taxes. (Moderate man, Colorado)

The moderate Republicans were surely concerned about big government. Their first associations with government are negative—it is too big and does not operate well. They associate it with “waste,” “inefficient,” “regulations,” and “red tape.” They believe their taxes are too high and believe government spends too much money on bureaucrats’ salaries and high end offices.

But those views of big government combine with more positive associations—how rights have progressed and how the country has become more free. They honor freedom without the same sense of threat as Tea Party and Evangelical Republicans.

How they've progressed through the years. Women, people of color. We have a lot to be thankful for. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)



I just think of our whole Bill of Rights, a lot of places where people still immigrate here. I mean everything from voting to I mean property, just all of them come to mind. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I think we feel more free than we probably ever have before. I just look at, as much as we have all these debates and whatever and yet we're able to have all these debates because we are really more free than we're ever been. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

But they stand out for being equally concerned with government dysfunction – and the Republican Party role in national polarization and gridlock. As one woman in Raleigh said, “I think for me it's a highlight of a lot of division. Everything seems very divided and angry.” Another said,

They've been holding every thing up in Congress lately. Like, the Democrats proposed this but Republicans just say no. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

In stark contrast to the conversations among Evangelical and Tea Party adherents, these folks are desperate for “middle ground.”

It's like you have to be on one side or the other about race. And you have to be on one side or the other about healthcare. And you, like all these other things and I mean it really, it seems like maybe there's some middle ground that it never seems to be that we get to that, as a country it doesn't ever seem like we really get to that kind of middle ground. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I feel like everybody, especially in politics, like a magnet. There's both sides and we can't get to that middle ground...which accomplishes anything. I feel like there's a whole lot of talk and not a whole lot of action that just keeps tying everybody up and just this constant circle of just kind of anger and you can't get through it. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

As a result, they see that necessary government functions no longer function.

It goes back to also the government's fighting, it's like we have a...Democratic legislature and they all get voted out and replaced by Republicans who will undo everything the Democrats did but then the next time then it will be Democrat again and they'll undo everything and put in new stuff and then it will go back and the undo everything and things that used to be so simple like a transportation bill can't get past anymore because they say I'm not voting for it because it's Republican or vice versa. So that's my concern, the leaders can't get together. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

Like other Republicans, the moderates worry about Obamacare: companies not hiring full time; more part-time jobs and stress on small businesses. But in the group of moderate Republican women, these conversations about Obamacare had a different tone than in the other



groups. While strongly opposed to big government, inefficiency, and higher taxes, the discussion in the moderate women's group was very pragmatic—with women weighing the potential trade-offs between the benefits of the ACA and its potential costs. It was not focused on newly dependent populations.

I think just in general the pre-existing condition, getting rid of that I think is great but at the same time you have to look at what that's affecting. And it means that healthy young people are going to be paying more. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

And in striking contrast, the moderate women launched into a discussion that was more characterized by uncertainty than by anger. The dominant thrust of the conversation revolved around questions about Obamacare—and what it would mean for them, their healthcare plans, and their healthcare choices. In that, they sounded like normal voters.

When I think about just what I'm concerned about healthcare is one of the things. I'm just uncertain about what the changes would mean for me... So that scares me for my own future. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

My mom's all worried about like if she got Alzheimer's...Like what are the real ramifications of the bill? (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

The moderates view the Tea Party and Fox News as part of the problem – “extreme” and “a bunch of crap” respectively. They are turned off by Fox and at best amused by the Tea Party.

Some say they like the small government ideas the Tea Party was putting forward several years ago, but say they have been turned off by the Tea Party's leaders, who are “unlectable,” “idiots,” “extreme,” and:

A little wacky. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

Extreme. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

It's kind of, the Tea Party is being just as closed minded as the other group. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

Idiots. (Moderate man, Colorado)

Just something doesn't smell right. (Moderate man, Colorado)

As one man in Colorado said, he liked the Tea Party's initial “rallying point” of “small government,” but wonders what it has turned into.



The people they bring out or they put forward, you sometimes have a sense of how they actually got there. You know, maybe...their fundamentals good but...have them promote fundamentals. (Moderate man, Colorado)

And on Fox News, many moderates outright reject it as a news channel: “*It tells about as much truth as like Jerry Springer does now.*” (Moderate man, Colorado)

Moderates are not so sure about their place in the current Republican Party. They worry about the ability of Republicans in Congress to make government work. They believe the party is stuck, not forward-looking, and representative of old ideas. They worry about the Republican Party’s right turn on social and environmental issues—which makes it difficult, especially for young moderates—to view the Republican Party as a modern party.³

While they continue to appreciate the GOP’s fiscal conservatism, these fractures make it difficult for educated young people to identify with Republicans. As one man in Colorado said, “I can’t sell my kids on this party.”

I can’t sell my kids on this party. I agree with...some of their positions. But the stupid things... for instance, the rape crap they were saying... I can’t sell them on my party. These kids are smart, they know these stupid politicians are saying crap. And these guys are representing us and they show their ignorance often. And just shut their mouth and do – again, get out of our bedrooms, get out of our lives and do what they’re supposed to do. (Moderate man, Colorado Springs)

I think of a white 54-year-old man in a business suit. And my mom. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I feel hopeful [about the Republican Party] on an economy level. I feel doubtful on a personal rights level, a women's rights level, an environment level. So those two issues. But the rest, economy-wise, budget-wise I feel hopeful. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

I just tend to be a little bit more moderate on social issues. However I'm a pretty staunch fiscal conservative so it's kind of like at least among my peers there's a change in kind of the conservative group. But it doesn't necessarily seem like the Republican Party is changing with it. (Moderate woman, Raleigh)

³ In the group of moderate women in Raleigh, participants were very supportive, surprisingly so, of a Hillary Clinton presidency. Weighing the option of voting for Hillary Clinton versus a Republican male, the moderate Republican women in Raleigh chose Clinton, on balance. One woman said, “*I don't consider myself a Democrat but... if she was the nominee...I would seriously consider...voting for her more than a Democratic male candidate.*”



7. Climate change

Climate change is poised to replace health care reform among Republicans, with the very same dynamics already in evidence. But that also could further isolate and divide Republicans too.

Moderates are more apt to accept the science—and respond more positively to science in general. When we asked them about “scientists,” they responded, “respected” and “smart.” Although some are doubtful about climate change, they do not reject science offhand, but rather say they simply do not know enough to know who to believe.

We've gone through drought cycles in the '80s. And we're in a little bit of a drought cycle now, but it balances out left and right. And it's not because we're driving more Prius's, you know. It's just the way that mother earth runs itself. (Moderate man, Colorado)

I'm not smart enough to say [climate scientist are] full of shit... But I am smart enough to know I need to get more information before I say anyone's full of shit. I do know that. (Moderate man, Colorado)

There's been climate change all through history. But I just don't know enough to know what we're doing. I can't say for sure we're not a problem. (Moderate man, Colorado)

And while moderates reject high taxes and over-regulation, many do accept that climate is one area where government ought to do more.

I'm glad we're starting to do [more on] energy standards, I wish it was higher...I'm glad that we're seeing more efficient cars. I'm glad they passed that to where in 2015, we have to have cars that run more efficiently. (Moderate man, Colorado)

Watching landfill and watching vehicle emissions, watching what we're pumping into our rivers, that's very, very smart, period. Regardless of climate change. (Moderate man, Colorado)

I mean, that's just part of good stewardship of the earth that we've been given. And I think that you find a lot of Republicans will feel that way too because a lot of Republicans hunt. They're very sensitive to what the environment does to the hunting, you know, the changes that they see and anything like that. (Moderate man, Colorado)

Moderates are not even in the same conversation as Evangelicals who deeply doubt scientists writ large and Tea Party Republicans who are consumed by the big government and regulations that inevitably result from climate science.

Evangelicals and Tea Party Republicans share and are consumed by skepticism about climate science—to the point where they mistrust scientists before they begin to speak.



Well, the scientific community in general is minimizing or marginalizing people that are bringing up doubts... You can look in biology, you can look in geology, you can look in chemistry, and you can see that the theory doesn't hold up. And yet the scientific world won't acknowledge that. And if you do say it, and you're a PhD candidate, you can be denied your PhD. You can be denied your Master's degree. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

I think that we're being fed a lot of misinformation. (Evangelical woman, Colorado Springs)

Just like the whole evolution-creation thing...I think we waste a lot of time arguing with the science. I think we would all agree that it's the policy that we don't agree with... So that seems to be where we're – we're losing the fight because we're fighting the science. And you can't fight the science. (Evangelical man, Roanoke)

I wonder if they don't put that out there to distract you. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

Back in the 70s, there were articles out there that another ice age was coming, and that's just 30 years ago. So now all the articles say, "Hey, it's getting warmer." Well they've already proven the past 12 years it hasn't gotten warmer. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

You could have 12 scientists on this side talking all about global warming, and you can get 12 scientists that will have the complete opposite. So you're listening and you just don't know. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

If you look, there was an ice age. So it used to be really, really, really cold, and inevitably it's got to warm up eventually. It can't stay that cold all over forever. And eventually – I think that nature is in cycles. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

Tea Party Republicans, in particular, are concerned that climate science is another way to force regulations on individuals and businesses.

I think I saw somewhere we have like 100-plus regulations added every day. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

The politicians and those people – celebrities. Most of them may or may not believe it, but it's an opportunity for them to gain power, make money, push their agenda. They want to regulate everything...they want to control it, so this is a great excuse for them to gain that control. And if the world were covered in ice right now, they'd find another reason to gain control. (Tea Party man, Raleigh)

And they fear the subsequent costs—both to consumers and taxpayers.



The government will spend you know hundreds of thousands of dollars to check out some bird you know, that's fading away or something. Don't worry about that bird. Worry about the people you know. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

I mean I think we have to...you know and try to make sure that we're recycling and taking care of our resources...but not at the cost of the jobs and our economy. I mean if we regulate down ...to zero emissions...but then a car costs...200,000 dollars, well then we can't afford it all right. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And all those regulations are putting companies out of business and like you're saying, making products too expensive. (Tea Party woman, Roanoke)

And we probably need to remind you that Evangelicals and Tea Party Republicans dominate the party. This looks like the future battle ahead, driven by dynamics of the Republican Party.