

To: Interested Parties
From: Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Co-Founders Stephanie Taylor and Adam Green
Re: Winning Messaging on Green Mountain Care

PROGRESSIVE CHANGE
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE
BOLDPROGRESSIVES.ORG

The Progressive Change Campaign Committee (PCCC) commissioned a statewide poll of 1,220 Vermont likely voters on September 25-26. Through Public Policy Polling, we gauged voter opinion of Green Mountain Care and did extensive message testing on this issue. Given the prominence of Green Mountain Care recently in the 2012 elections, we are issuing this polling memo.

Vermont voters strongly favor Green Mountain Care, the single-payer health care system that will guarantee coverage for everyone in the state. **53% of respondents said that they approve of Green Mountain Care moving forward, while only 38% said they do not.**

When voters learned that a candidate supports Green Mountain Care, they are more likely to support that candidate. For example, 43% of voters were more likely to vote for State Treasurer candidate Beth Pearce when they learned she strongly supports Green Mountain Care and her opponent strongly opposes it. Only 32% said they were less likely.

We tested positive and negative messaging around Green Mountain Care itself.

The four positive messages we tested were: It will save taxpayers money, it will create jobs, we have a moral obligation to cover everyone, and Green Mountain Care is an alternative to greedy insurance companies. Each of these messages were seen as 59% to 64% persuasive, and only 29% to 35% unpersuasive.

Interestingly, **the strongest argument for Green Mountain Care was “there are nearly 50,000 uninsured residents in Vermont and 150,000 underinsured residents, and we have a moral obligation to help them.”** 63% called this a good reason to support the program, including 49% who called it a very good reason. Only 31% found it unpersuasive, making this a 2 to 1 argument.

The three negative messages about Green Mountain Care that we tested were: It will increase taxes, it's a distraction from more pressing issues like jobs, and government-run health care is un-American and socialist. These last two were least persuasive – only 28% and 34% called these very good reasons to oppose Green Mountain Care, increasing to 45% and 46% respectively when “somewhat good reason” is added in. But 47% and 48% respectively say these are not at all good reasons, making these attacks basically a wash.

The tax message had more resonance. 36% called it a very good reason to oppose Green Mountain Care and 36% said it was not at all a good message. But 19% called it a somewhat good reason – making it overall a 54% to 36% argument. (Not as strong as the 63%-to-31% positive moral argument, but strong nonetheless.)

In a breakthrough finding, Democrats can definitively beat back the tax argument by making clear that new taxes will only affect the wealthy.

When Vermont voters are asked, “In order to pay for Green Mountain Care, would you support or oppose a small increase in state income taxes?” 40% support that tax while 45% oppose, which is just outside the 3.8% margin of error for that question. But when asked, “In order to pay for Green Mountain Care, would you support or oppose a small increase in taxes on the richest two percent of Vermont residents?” 58% support it while only 32% oppose. Going from a -5% argument to a +26% is a massive 31% swing.

So overall, a winning message on Green Mountain Care would be along these lines: “I support Green Mountain Care, the single-payer health care system that will guarantee coverage for everyone in the state. My opponent strongly opposes this program. By issuing a small tax on the richest 2% of Vermont residents, we can help nearly 50,000 uninsured residents in Vermont and 150,000 underinsured residents – and that's the moral thing to do.”

Also of interest, we found that **the Democratic label helps candidates in down-ballot races.** In a head-to-head comparison without party identification, Wendy Wilton beat Beth Pearce, 31% to 29%, with 40% undecided. But when voters were asked whether they would vote for Democrat Beth Pearce or Republican Wendy Wilton, Beth Pearce won handily -- 46% to 37%, with just 18% undecided.

The full results of our message testing can be found below.

Vermont Polling Results

Poll conducted September 25-26, 2012

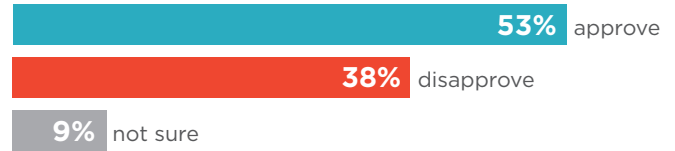
Survey of 1,220 likely voters

Margin of error = +/- 2.8%

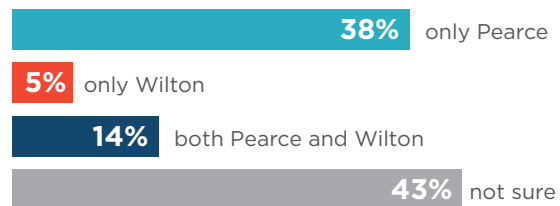
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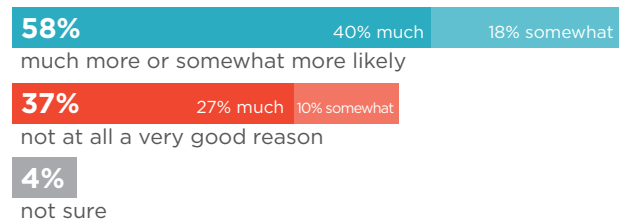
Do you approve or disapprove of Vermont going forward with Green Mountain Care, a single-payer health care system that will guarantee coverage for everyone in the state?



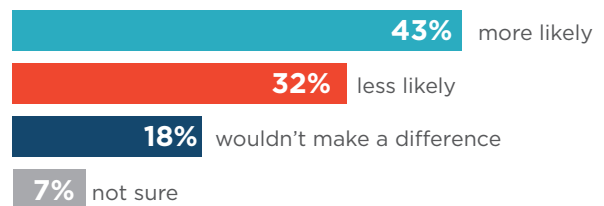
Which candidates for State Treasurer do you believe are supportive of Green Mountain Care?*



Governor Peter Shumlin has led the fight to pass Green Mountain Care in Vermont. Does this make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to vote for him?



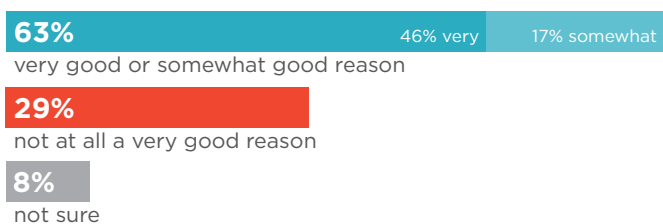
If you heard that Democratic State Treasurer Beth Pearce strongly supported Green Mountain Care, and Republican State Treasurer candidate Wendy Wilton strongly opposed it, would that make you more or less likely to vote for Democrat Beth Pearce for State Treasurer, or would it make no difference?*



Supporters of Green Mountain Care say that there are nearly 50,000 uninsured residents in Vermont and 150,000 underinsured residents, and we have a moral obligation to help them. Do you think this is a good reason to support Green Mountain Care, or not?



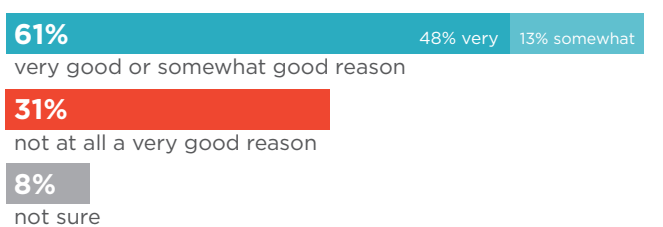
Supporters of Green Mountain Care say that it will directly create thousands of jobs and make it easier for businesses to hire and retain workers. Do you think this is a good reason to support Green Mountain Care, or not?



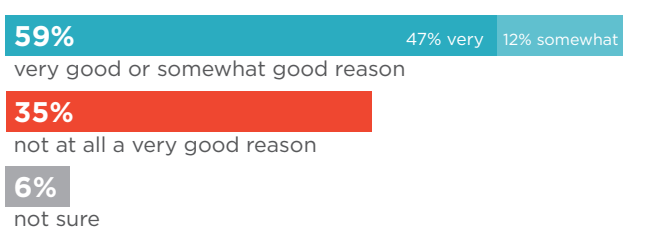
Supporters of Green Mountain Care say that it will save \$580 million annually and \$1.9 billion by 2019. Do you think this is a good reason to support Green Mountain Care, or not?



Supporters of Green Mountain Care say that private insurance companies profit by denying people care, and that's why we need Green Mountain Care. Do you think this is a good reason to support Green Mountain Care, or not?*



Supporters of Green Mountain Care say that we can't rely on greedy insurance companies, and that's why we need Green Mountain Care. Do you think this is a good reason to support Green Mountain Care, or not?*



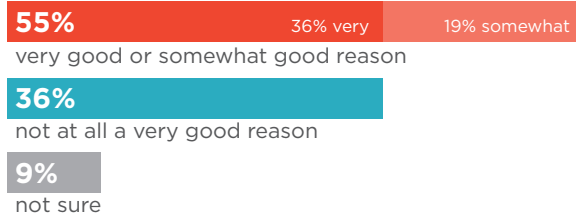
Opponents of Green Mountain Care say that having government-run health care is socialist and un-American, and it's dangerous for Vermont to go down that road. Do you think this is a good reason to oppose Green Mountain Care, or not?



Opponents of Green Mountain Care say that dealing with this issue is a distraction from more pressing issues facing Vermont, like creating jobs. Do you think this is a good reason to oppose Green Mountain Care, or not?



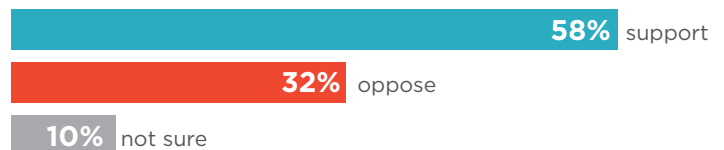
Opponents of Green Mountain Care say that it will increase taxes. Do you think this is a good reason to oppose Green Mountain Care, or not?



Opponents of Green Mountain Care say that having government-run health care is socialist and un-American, and it's dangerous for Vermont to go down that road. Do you think this is a good reason to oppose Green Mountain Care, or not?*



In order to pay for Green Mountain Care, would you support or oppose a small increase in taxes on the richest two percent of Vermont residents?*



* 592 survey respondents were asked this question. The margin of error is +/- 4.0%.

** 628 survey respondents were asked this question. The margin of error is +/- 3.8%.