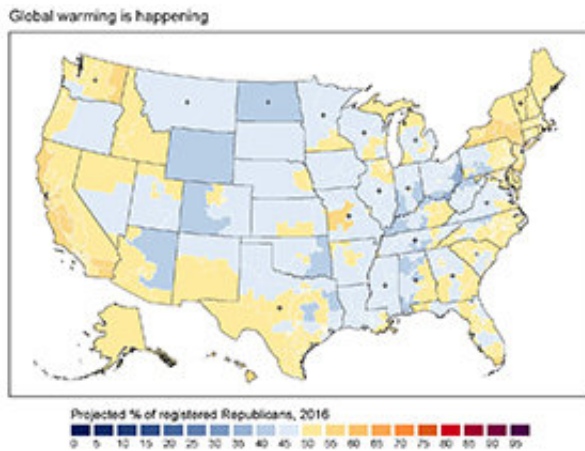


Not all Republicans are climate change doubters: study

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Credit: Springer

The idea that all Republicans think climate change isn't happening is a myth. A new study published in Springer's journal *Climatic Change* finds substantial differences in the climate change views of both Republicans and Democrats across different states and congressional districts. The research is led by Matto Mildenerger of the University of California Santa Barbara together with colleagues at Yale University and Utah State University.

The research team combined information from state voter files with [climate](#) and energy opinions collected online between 2008 and 2016 by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George

Mason Center for Climate Change Communication. The data allowed them to estimate the geographic distribution of Republican and Democratic climate and energy opinions across the country.

The researchers found substantial differences between the climate stance of Republican elites and their party members. For example, many Republican members of Congress doubt whether [climate change](#) is happening, yet most Republican party members in different states do not actually doubt it. In particular, those Republicans living in New York, Delaware and Alaska were particularly likely to accept climate change is happening. But overall only a quarter of Republicans in most [states](#) believe climate change is both happening and human-caused.

The differences in climate opinions also translate into party members' policy preferences. There is, for instance, majority Republican [support](#) for Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) policies in 111 congressional districts currently held by Republican Members of Congress. Similarly, a majority of Republicans in every state but Wyoming support regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant. And in particular, relative to the average national party member, Republicans in Southern Florida strongly support regulating carbon pollution.

"While subsets of the Republican voting public do not support [climate policies](#) and hold views consistent with party elite, Republican climate and energy opinions are more varied than might be presumed from political discourse," says Mildenerger. "Similarly, the results emphasize consistent support among Democrats for climate and energy policies, despite variation in belief intensity."

The research team says that the geography of partisan climate opinions in the US highlighted in the study should inform decision-makers, educators, and communicators working at sub-national scales. Co-author Peter Howe says that an understanding of how support for climate

change and energy reforms differs at local scales is especially important given the current policymaking context. Despite the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement in mid-2017, state and local governments continue to act as critical sites of climate and [energy](#) policymaking in the US.

"Accelerating state and local policymaking highlights the need for public [opinion](#) and policy preference data at these subnational spatial scales," notes co-author Jennifer Marlon.

More information: Matto Mildenerger et al, The spatial distribution of Republican and Democratic climate opinions at state and local scales, *Climatic Change* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s10584-017-2103-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-017-2103-0)

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