

AMERICAN VIEWPOINT

Open Space Preservation:

National Conservation Easement Survey

Key Points Summary

Prepared By

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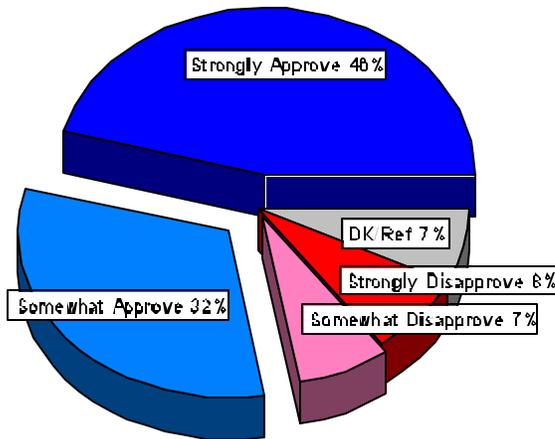
August, 2003

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Overwhelming Support For Conservation Easements

This survey of 800 registered voters nationwide found overwhelming support for preserving open-space and natural lands in general and through the use of conservation easements in particular. What's more, better than three out of every four registered voters support HR2036 and a majority would be more likely to vote for a candidate for U.S. Congress who supported this measure.

Voter Attitudes Toward Conservation Easements



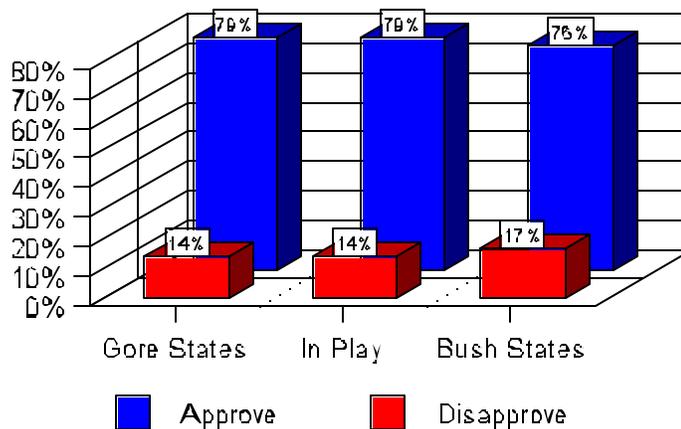
Once informed of how conservation easements work and the benefits they provide, 78% approved, while just 15% disapproved of government purchasing development rights as a means of protecting open-space and natural lands. What's more, almost a majority (46%) said that they *strongly* approved.

Not only is support for conservation easements deep, it is also very broad. In fact, 79% of Independents, 82% of Democrats and even 73% of Republicans approve. Similarly, 81% of Moderates, 90% of

Liberals and 71% of Conservatives say that they approve of the government using conservation easements as a means of protecting open-space.

Approval for the use of conservation easements as a means of preserving open-space and natural lands is almost as high in states that President Bush won by more than 5% in the 2000 election as it is in states in which Al Gore won by more than 5%. And in states in which the 2000 Presidential vote was within 5%, 79% approve of conservation easements to protect open-space and natural lands.

View On Con. Easements By 2000 Presidential Vote



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It is also apparent that this support is not confined to any particular region of the country or community type. Approval for conservation easements was 81% in the East, 76% in the South, 78% in the Midwest & Plains and 78% in the West.

Support was also just as high in Rural Areas as it was in Urban Areas, Suburbs and Medium Size Cities.

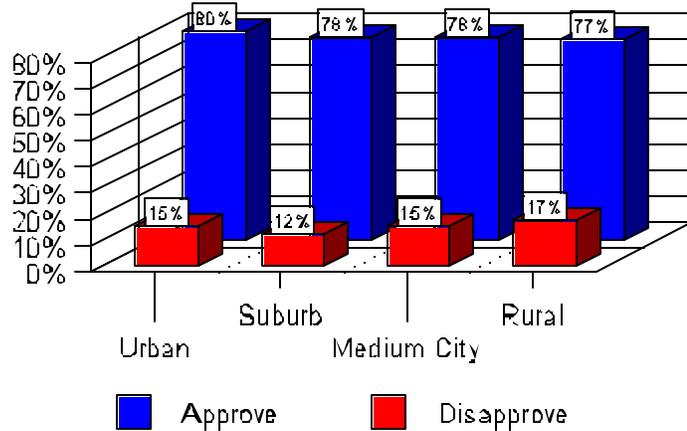
In short, voters from every area of the country and from every walk of life and political philosophy overwhelmingly support using conservation easements to preserve open-space and natural lands.

Support For Congressional Action

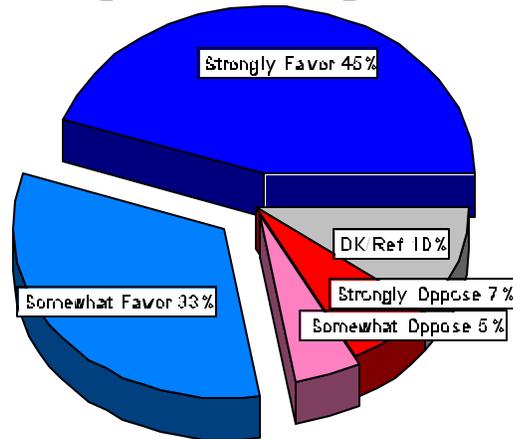
Given the extremely high level of voter support for the use of conservation easements, it is not surprising to see that 78% also support legislation that would provide \$25 billion in tax credits over the next five years to acquire critically important open space and natural lands through conservation easements from property owners who voluntarily agree to sell their property rights. Note the intensity of feeling reflected by voters on this question, ie. **45% Strongly Favor this legislation.**

Once again, support was very high regardless of Party or Ideology. Not only do 71% of GOP, 87% of Dems, 79% of Independents, 89% of Liberals, 82% of Moderates and 71% of Conservatives support this legislation, **but even among Conservative Republicans, over two-thirds support this legislation.**

View On Conservation Easements By Community Type



View On Congressional Legislation



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Likewise, 80% of the voters from Gore States, 75% of the voters from Bush States and 78% of the voters from states in which the 2000 Presidential election was within 5% support this legislation – and **48% strongly favor it.**

Once again, support was very strong regardless of Region or Community Type.

It is also worth noting that this legislation is strongly favored by key voting groups such as those who are undecided on the Generic Congressional Ballot Test (80% Favor), Working Women (82% Favor) and those who disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job (74% Favor).

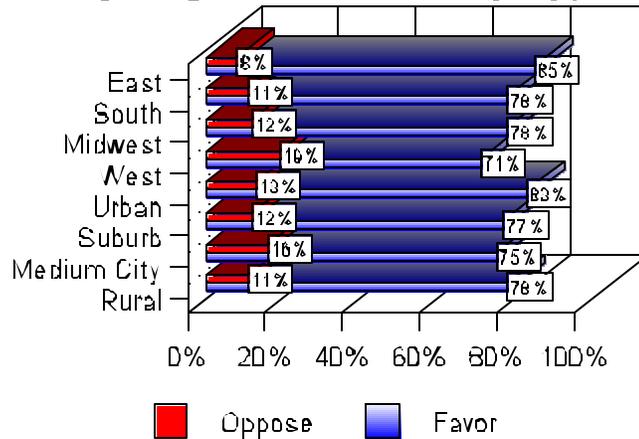
In short, voters are *very* supportive of the government purchasing development rights as a means of protecting open-space and natural lands and they overwhelmingly favor Congressional action in this area.

Congressional Vote Effect

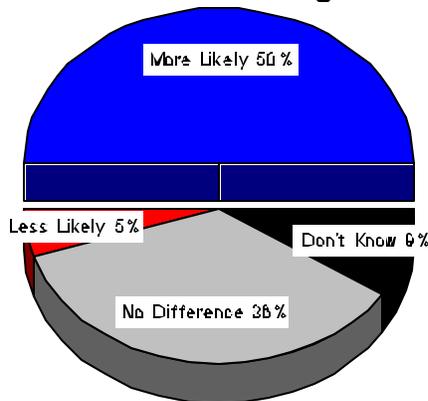
Given the strong support this legislation receives, it is not surprising to see that a majority of voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supported this bill. In fact, one in every four voters would be *much more* likely to vote for this candidate.

Not surprisingly, Liberals (62% More Likely) and Democrats (66% More Likely) were the groups highest in saying that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supported

**View On Cong. Legislation
By Region & Community Type**



**Vote If Member Supports
Con. Easement Legislation**

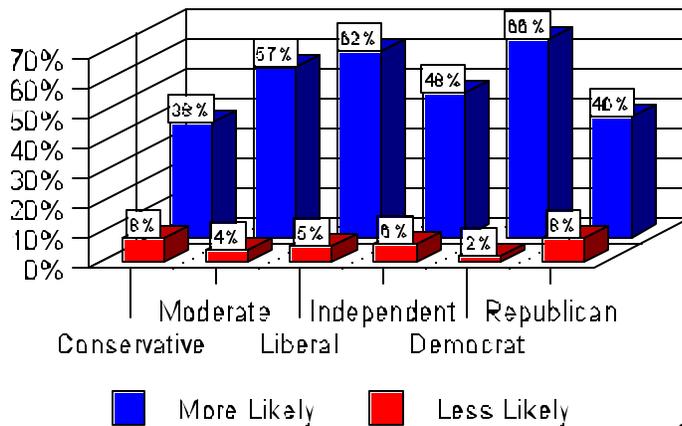


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this legislation. However, a plurality of Independents (48%) and 40% of Republicans also feel this way. 57% of Moderate voters and even 38% Conservatives said they would be more likely to support a Member of Congress who supported this legislation.

Vote If Member Supports By Party & Ideology

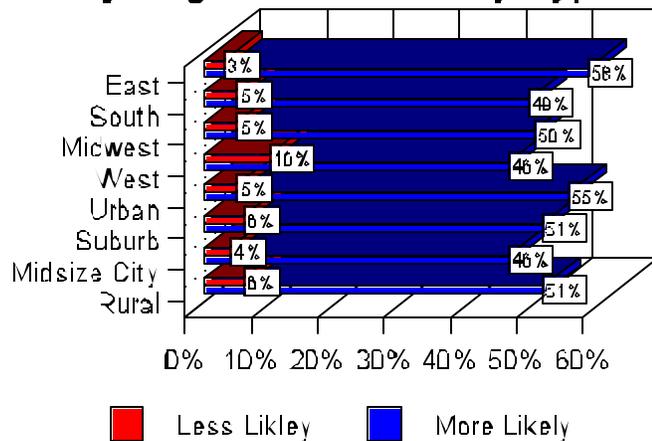


Congressional support for this legislation would also have a positive effect on a number of key voting blocks including Working Women (58% More Likely), Independent Women (55% More Likely), those who are undecided on the Generic Congressional Ballot Test (47% More Likely), those who disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job (51% More Likely), and those from the Presidential Battleground States that were won or lost by 5% or less in 2000 (53% More Likely).

And as one might expect, the strong tendency for voters to say that they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for Congress who supported this legislation was also high regardless of which region of the country the respondent was from or the type of community they live in.

In short, voters not only approve of this legislation in overwhelming numbers, but they are prepared to reward Members of Congress who support this legislation with their vote.

Congressional Vote Effect By Region & Community Type



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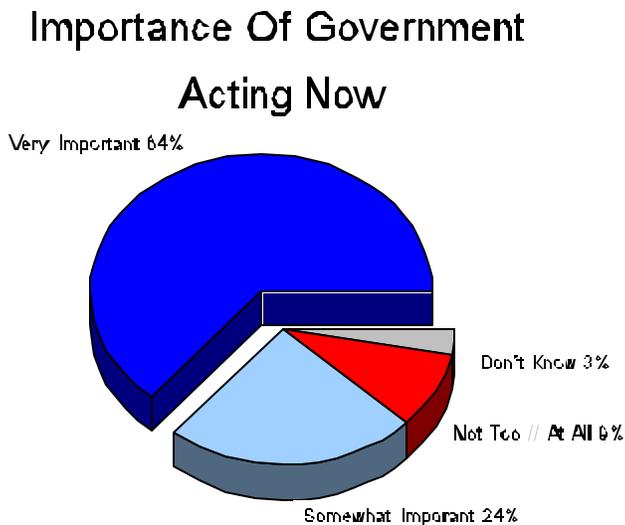
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Keys To Support For Conservation Easements

The survey found three important reasons why voters support government programs that promote the use of conservation easements.

First and foremost, voters feel it is very important for federal, state and local governments to act *now* to protect open-space and natural lands before they are lost to development. In fact, 64% said this is Very Important, another 24% said it is Somewhat Important and only 9% said that it is either Not Too or Not

At All Important for government to act now.



The second key to support for legislation promoting the use of conservation easements to protect open-space and natural lands lies in the fact that a majority of voters feel that the federal government is not currently doing enough in this area. Overall, 54% gave this response and, even among Conservatives better than one in three feel the federal government is not doing enough to preserve open-space and natural areas (while just 11% feel the government is doing too much).

The final key to voter support for conservation easements lies in the fact that voters strongly approve of virtually everything about conservation easements – how they work and what they can accomplish. The following pages detail voters' strong approval in this regard.

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How Conservation Easements Work

C Under a conservation easement program, the government purchases development rights from owners of critically important open-space and natural lands, such as wetlands, forest lands, farms, ranches and watersheds along rivers and lakes.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
64%	30%	34%	25%

C Conservation easements are only purchased from willing sellers.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
70%	43%	27%	21%

C Once landowners sell their development rights, the land can never be developed with houses or commercial buildings even if the land is sold to someone else.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
65%	47%	17%	27%

C The landowner may continue to use the land for farming, ranching, hunting, fishing or whatever it has traditionally been used for, as long as it is not developed.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
89%	68%	21%	7%

C The land stays in private ownership and stays on the tax rolls.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
71%	41%	30%	17%

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- C Purchasing conservation easements costs less than outright purchase of the land itself, and therefore allows us to protect more land as well as land that isn't currently for sale.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
74%	44%	30%	14%

What Conservation Easements Can Be Used For

- C Conservation easements can be used to protect drinking water sources.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
90%	72%	18%	5%

- C Conservation easements can be used to direct growth and development and to slow urban sprawl.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
78%	49%	29%	14%

- C Conservation easements can be used to protect highly sensitive natural areas such as wetlands and lands along rivers and streams from development.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
87%	64%	23%	9%

- C Conservation easements can make it possible for many family farmers to keep their farms rather than being forced to sell their land to developers.

Total Approve	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapprove
87%	70%	17%	8%

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Methodology Statement: 800 registered voters were interviewed by American Viewpoint, Inc. between August 11th and 18th, 2003. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5%