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Voters Demand Progress on Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act

Huge Majorities of Both Parties Favor the Udall-Vitter Bill

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

Three central findings emerge from a new Environmental Defense Fund survey on the legislation introduced by Senators Udall and Vitter to ensure the safety of all chemicals used in commercial products:

- 1. After hearing balanced positive and negative information about the Udall-Vitter bill, voters overwhelmingly determine that it represents a great leap forward. They do not want their members of Congress to hold out for an alternative.**
- 2. Members of Congress can leverage their support for the Udall-Vitter bill to potential political benefits not only at the ballot box, but also when it comes to improving perceptions of their advocacy, effectiveness, leadership and bipartisanship.**
- 3. The Udall-Vitter bill generates overwhelming consensus support from voters of all political stripes and across every demographic and geographic subgroup.**

Voters See Udall-Vitter as a Major Improvement and Do Not Want It Blocked

Following an unbiased initial vote, this survey played out the debate in a balanced manner, with each respondent hearing five messages in favor of the Udall-Vitter bill and five opposed (Appendix A). The negative messages included strong critiques claiming that bill does not go far enough.

Then, voters were asked to choose between the following two statements—the results demonstrate a lack of concern about opponents' claims that the Udall-Vitter bill is not strong enough, as well as a clear prioritization of progress over an idealized alternative. Democratic voters are particularly eager for their elected representatives to pass the Udall-Vitter version of the bill, even when they are told of opponents' claims that it is imperfect.

	Total	Democrats
This proposal may not be perfect, but I want my Senators to support it because it is a big improvement over the current law and represents a step in the right direction.	64	75
This proposal is a bad idea, and I want my Senators to take a principled stand by opposing it and working to pass something better.	33	23

The Political Benefits of Supporting Udall-Vitter

Voting for this bill can have positive political implications for members of Congress by contributing to an improvement in their overall standing and helping them start to make a case that pushes back against many current stereotypes of politicians.

- By huge margins, voters attribute key characteristics much more closely with a member of Congress who votes for Udall-Vitter than one who votes against it, including the key swing bloc of Independent voters.

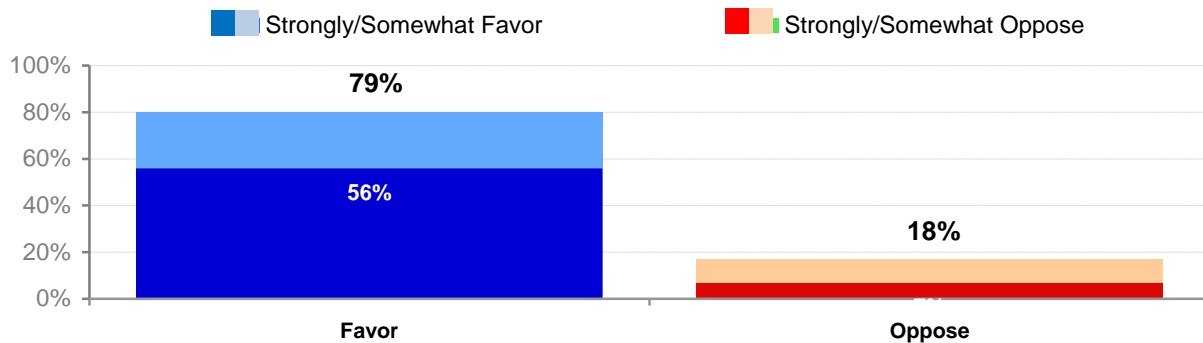
	Total (Voted For – Against)	Independents (Voted For – Against)	Democrats (Voted For – Against)
Cares about people like me	74-17	68-19	84-11
Effective; gets things done	72-19	64-20	81-12
Puts what is best for people ahead of their political party	73-19	66-21	82-13
Has strong principles	70-20	65-21	80-14
Strong leader	69-20	62-22	80-11

Now I'm going to read you a list of phrases used to describe elected officials. After I read each one, please tell me if it better describes a member of Congress who votes FOR the proposal to reform the way toxic chemicals are regulated or one who votes AGAINST the proposal.

- Seventy-one percent report that the following is a convincing reason to support the Udall-Vitter proposal, indicating willingness of voters to view this as an issue that can transcend the partisan gridlock that defines Washington: *“This proposal represents a rare opportunity for Congress to work together and pass a law that both protects people’s health while also benefiting the business community. This proposal has the support of both Democrats and Republicans in Congress because they both recognize that we cannot afford to miss another opportunity to reform chemical safety.”*
- Forty-one percent of voters say that they would be more likely to vote to reelect their member of Congress if they voted for Udall-Vitter, while only 12 percent said they would be less likely.
- By a 66-23 percent margin, Democratic voters favor a strong national standard for regulating toxic chemicals over allowing states to set their own guidelines.

Voters Overwhelmingly Support the Udall-Vitter Bill

Given the preceding points in this memo, it comes as no surprise that support for the Udall-Vitter proposal is both broad and deep. Overall, the bill is supported by almost eight-in-ten voters; moreover, this support is robust, with an outright 56 percent majority favoring it strongly.



“Now I would like to read you the language of a proposal being considered by Congress to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, which gives the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, the authority to regulate chemicals. The proposal would require all chemicals currently used in commercial products to undergo a mandatory safety evaluation. All new chemicals would be required to pass a safety check before the products they are used in could be sold on the market. The proposal also provides explicit protections for the most vulnerable to toxic chemicals, like infants and pregnant women and the proposal would give EPA more authority to require testing of new and existing chemicals, while also setting concrete deadlines for EPA to make their decisions.”

Additional indicators point to the pervasive popularity of the Udall-Vitter proposal to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976:

- Support crosses ideological and geographic boundaries.** While Democrats are the stronger proponents of the bill, it wins by a 40-point margin even among Republicans, and conservatives favor it by better than two-to-one. In fact, the proposal gets solid majority support from every major subgroup in the poll.

	Favor-Oppose
Republicans	93-6
Independents	75-21
Democrats	68-28
Liberal	93-5
Moderate	86-10
Conservative	65-32
Northeast	82-16
Midwest	79-17
South	76-20
West	82-17

- **The value of this bill trumps concern about regulation.** Even among voters who believe that there is too much government regulation of business and industry, the bill is favored by a 65-31 percent margin.
- **Support for the Udall-Vitter bill remains solid after the debate is played out.** Following the balanced messaging exercise described above, 77 percent support the Udall-Vitter proposal against just 20 percent who oppose it.

About The Survey

This national survey of 800 Americans likely to vote in the November 2016 general election was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. The survey was conducted by live professional interviewers between February 28th and March 3rd, 2015. Forty-two percent of all respondents in the survey were reached on a cell phone.

The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; margin of error is higher among subgroups.

The sample for this survey was drawn randomly from a list of registered voters and stratified by state. Quotas were assigned to reflect the actual contribution of these areas to the total expected electorate. The sample reflects the demographic composition of the likely 2016 electorate per data from the U.S. Census Bureau, exit polling, and several distinct voter files. It is 38 percent Democratic, 33 percent Republican, and 28 percent Independent by self-identification. According to nation exit polling, the 2008 electorate was 38 percent Democratic, 32 percent Republican, and 29 percent Independent while 2012 was 39 percent Democratic, 32 percent Republican, and 29 percent Independent.

Appendix A: Message Text

Messages in Favor of the Udall-Vitter Bill

The law regulating chemicals is inadequate and outdated, and needs to be modernized - it has not been updated since the 1970's while our understanding of science and technology have improved greatly. Under current law, only a small fraction of the tens of thousands of chemicals in everyday products like clothing and furniture have ever been reviewed for safety. We can't even regulate known dangers such as lead and asbestos.

This proposal will protect people's health. Scientific studies link common chemicals to cancer, infertility, diabetes, Parkinson's and other illnesses. Pregnant woman, infants, and children are especially vulnerable. Many babies are born with as many as 300 chemicals in their bodies. Parents should not have to worry about unsafe chemicals in their baby's toys, crib mattress or child's car seat.

(SPLIT A – ½ SAMPLE) This proposal is supported by leading health groups, doctors, and nurses, but also by the business community, including the very chemical companies it seeks to regulate. It will eliminate uncertainty from the law and modernize the system, saving American businesses hundreds of millions of dollars, restoring confidence in the safety of their products, and helping them lower costs and create jobs.

(SPLIT B – ½ SAMPLE) This proposal is supported by leading health groups, doctors, and nurses, but also by the business community, including the very chemical companies it seeks to regulate. It will eliminate uncertainty from the law and modernize the system, saving American businesses hundreds of millions of dollars, restoring confidence in the safety of their products, and helping them lower costs and create jobs.

(SPLIT A – ½ SAMPLE) We need strong national chemical standards, rather than the current state-by-state patchwork of regulations which results in nothing being done on the majority of potentially dangerous chemicals. Even for the few chemicals that are covered, people in one state have different protections than those in another, leaving many people without even piecemeal protections.

(SPLIT B – ½ SAMPLE) This is a national problem, that requires a national solution. With tens of thousands of chemicals in use today, the problem is much too big for individual consumers, product companies, retailers or states to handle on their own.

This proposal represents a rare opportunity for Congress to work together and pass a law that both protects people's health while also benefiting the business community. This proposal has the support of both Democrats and Republicans in Congress because they both recognize that we cannot afford to miss another opportunity to reform chemical safety.

Messages in Opposition to the Udall-Vitter Bill

This proposal is being pushed by the multi-billion dollar chemical industry because it does nothing except further line their pockets. It is a phony reform that does not actually make people safer; it just continues the bare minimum requirements for chemical corporations. In

return for doing their bidding, the main Republican sponsor of the proposal is the beneficiary of more than one-hundred thousand dollars in campaign contributions from the chemical industry.

This proposal is full of loopholes that allow the chemical industry to continue their business as usual. The proposal would even allow the chemical companies to get around a ban on asbestos, a deadly carcinogen that kills 10,000 Americans every year. And it only requires the EPA to review ten chemicals out of thousands and to take seven years to make its decisions.

This proposal puts all the power in the hands of the same politicians who do nothing but bicker and fail to get anything done. It turns over control to the federal government while taking power away from individual states, who are much more efficient and better equipped to make decisions about what is right for the people who live there.

At a time when the economy is down and the cost of living is up, this proposal would increase the cost of everything people buy, from medicine to clothing to electronics to detergents and cosmetics. In fact, chemicals are vital to 96 percent of American manufacturing - companies would simply pass along the increased cost of making these products to the people buying them.

This proposal would cost American jobs at a time when we can least afford it. The chemical industry employs 800,000 skilled workers, not to mention all the companies which use their chemicals in other products. Many businesses will have to shut down, while others will be forced to downsize. Still others will end up sending jobs overseas to countries like China and India in an effort to avoid these overly stringent regulations.