



## MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: LORI WEIGEL / PARTNER

DATE: JULY 16, 2012

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY OF VOTERS REGARDING REGULATION OF CHEMICALS

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Public Opinion Strategies recently completed a national survey of voters regarding their perceptions of government regulation of chemicals.<sup>1</sup> The survey results show that voters overwhelmingly support reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act, with half saying that they would strongly support reform of the regulation of chemicals produced and used in the United States. Voters across the political spectrum and of every demographic sub-group support reform. Support appears to be grounded in a strong sense that exposure to toxic chemicals in day-to-day life poses a serious threat. A viewpoint in support of reform is seen as compelling by nearly two times more respondents than find the critics' viewpoint compelling.

Specifically, the survey found that:

- **Voters are concerned about the effects of exposure to toxic chemicals in day to day life.** Almost three-quarters of voters (74 percent) think that the threat posed to people's health by the exposure to toxic chemicals is serious, and a third (34 percent) say they think the threat is very serious. Only five percent say they think the threat is not serious at all. A majority of every single sub-group indicates concern about the threat to public health from toxic chemicals present in everyday life.
- **Most voters support "stricter regulation of chemicals produced and used in everyday products."** Fully 68 percent of voters indicate support for stricter regulation, with support across the country and evident among all demographic sub-groups. When not presented with specific legislation, only a quarter (28 percent) say they oppose stricter regulation. This generic support for stricter regulation is most striking as majorities of voters

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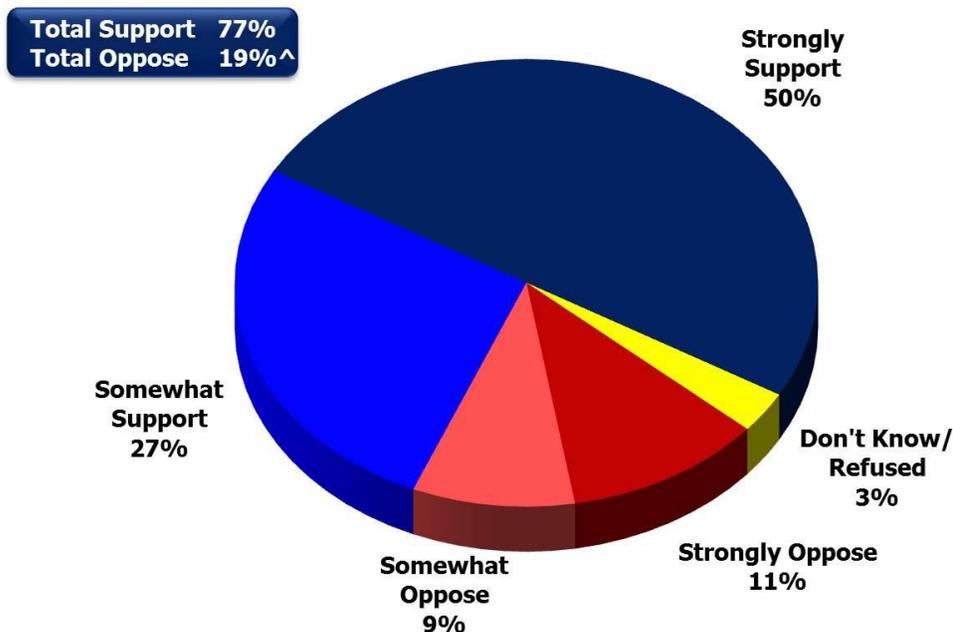
<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national telephone survey of N=800 registered voters. The survey was conducted June 25-27, 2012 and has an overall margin of error of +3.46%. Sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the country, and are demographically representative of the electorate. Interviews were conducted both on traditional land lines and cell phones.

representing every political sub-group indicate support for stricter regulation, including majorities of GOP voters (57 percent), Independents (66 percent) and Democrats (79 percent), and even groups typically opposed to government regulation, such as self-described conservatives (54 percent) and Tea Party supporters (51 percent).

- **There is even stronger support for specific legislation to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act, with three-quarters (77 percent) backing such a plan.** Respondents were provided with a brief explanation of a proposal to reform current law governing chemicals and then asked for their opinion of it:

*One proposal that may be considered in Congress is to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act that was passed in 1976 that provides the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, with the authority to regulate chemicals. Under this plan, all chemical manufacturers would be required to show their chemicals are safe in order to sell them, and the EPA would be able to limit some or all uses of a chemical that may harm the public health or the environment.*

As one can see in the following graph, support is fairly intense as a majority of voters (50 percent) strongly support the specifics.



- **Support for reforming the law is wide-spread and broad-based.** Majorities of all key sub-groups of voters support this proposal to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), including:
  - 83 percent of women and 71 percent of men;
  - 79 percent of voters in the Northeast region of the county, 80 percent in the Midwest region, 73 percent in the South and 78 percent in the West;
  - 90 percent of Democrats, 75 percent of Independents and 64 percent of Republicans, including 58 percent of Tea Party Republicans;
  - 85 percent of Latinos, 82 percent of African Americans and 75 percent of Whites;
  - 84 percent of voters under age 35, 78 percent of 35-44 year olds, 74 percent of 45-54 year olds, 80 percent of 55-64 year olds and 64 percent of seniors; and,
  - 77 percent of parents and 77 percent of those without kids at home.
- **A majority of American voters side with reform supporters after hearing both points of view about TSCA legislation.** Respondents were provided with two viewpoints about this issue. Both were drawn from Congressional testimony and publicly available information in order to simulate the discussions and debates which have and could take place on this issue. The two statements were rotated in order to ensure there was not a bias based on the order in which they were presented. Respondents were almost TWICE as likely to side with the viewpoint in support of reform:

**62 percent**

*People who say that Congress SHOULD pass this plan to reform the regulation of chemicals say that existing regulations are outdated. Currently, the EPA only requires safety testing for a tiny fraction of the tens of thousands of chemicals being used. Companies should prove that their products are safe and do not cause diseases or health problems, such as cancer, Parkinson's or children's learning disabilities.*

**32 percent**

*People who say that Congress SHOULD NOT pass this plan to reform the regulation of chemicals say that updating the law is important, but the current proposal is too extreme. Chemicals are vital to ninety-six percent of U.S. manufacturing, and the industry employs eight hundred thousand highly skilled American workers. We do not want to do anything that will hurt jobs, stifle innovation, or add to costs.*

- **In conclusion,** U.S. voters overwhelmingly support reform to regulations overseeing chemicals produced and used in everyday products, particularly when provided with specifics about what that reform might entail. This support is wide-spread and broad-based. Even when provided with robust arguments on both sides of the issue, voters continue to side with supporters of reform. This support appears to be grounded in their view that exposure to chemicals is a serious threat to people's health.