

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Joel Benenson, CEO, Benenson Strategy Group  
**Date:** April 26, 2018  
**Re:** Scott Pruitt's Performance as EPA Administrator

The NRDC Action Fund commissioned a survey from the Benenson Strategy Group among 800 likely 2018 voters nationwide, plus oversamples of 300 likely voters each in Colorado, Ohio, Pennsylvania.

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- The longer EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt remains in office, the more he puts Republican seats at risk in November's mid-term elections.
- After a basic introduction to the facts about Pruitt's alleged unethical behavior and misuse of public funds, 58% of likely 2018 voters say he should be fired. That includes 34% of Republicans, 35% of conservatives and fully 61% of Independents.
- These numbers are reflected in key battleground states.
  - In Colorado, 57% of likely voters say he should be fired, including 28% of Republicans.
  - In Ohio, 60% of likely voters say he should be fired, including 33% of Republicans.
  - In Pennsylvania, 64% of likely voters say he should be fired, including 40% of Republicans.
- Voters understand the environment is linked to their own health and safety, as well as that of their communities, and consequently Pruitt's performance presents a risk to them and their families.
  - Just 11% of likely 2018 voters say they are "very confident" in Pruitt's ability to ensure the EPA is protecting their health, including just 19% of Republicans.
  - Meanwhile, 30% of voters, including 36% of Independents say they are "not at all confident" in his ability to ensure the EPA is protecting their health.
- Given how well-known Pruitt is for a Trump administration official, this is likely to have real costs for Republicans in November. After hearing one of three messages that call for President Trump to make good on his promise to drain the swamp and fire Pruitt:
  - 61% of voters say they are more likely to vote for a candidate who calls for Pruitt to be fired. That includes 66% of Independents and 41% of voters who plan to vote for a Republican in November.
  - Moreover, if a candidate sticks by Pruitt and advocates for him to remain head of the EPA, 70% of voters say they are less likely to vote for that candidate, including 72% of Independents and 46% of those saying they'll vote for a Republican.
- Pruitt is surprisingly well known for an EPA Administrator – just 25% say they don't know of him, compared with 37% who don't know of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. In addition, Pruitt's approval rating is underwater with 33% of likely voters approving of his performance and 43% disapproving.
  - Even Republicans are lukewarm on him with just 14% "strongly" approving of his job performance.
  - And among Independents, his approval rating is 21 points underwater 29% approve/50% disapprove with just 9% strongly approving and 34% strongly disapproving.
- And the news about his activities is breaking through: three out of four voters have heard at least something about him in the news recently and one in five voters say they have heard "a great deal".

**Methodology:** BSG conducted this survey among 800 likely 2018 voters nationally, plus oversamples of 300 likely voters each in Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Interviews were conducted from April 20-24, 2018 by telephone and online. The telephone interviews reached voters on landlines and cell phones. All data was combined and weighted to be fully representative of the likely voter universe nationally and in each state oversample. The overall margin of error for the national sample of 800 likely voters is  $\pm 2.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level, it is higher among subgroups. Due to rounding, displayed answer choices may not always add up to 100%.