



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tues, Sept. 14, 2010

CONTACT: Shayna Samuels, 718-541-4785
or Margie Kelly, 541-222-9699

Attn Journalists: A copy of the full poll and interviews with experts are available upon request

New Polling Data Indicates Overwhelming Public Support for Chemicals Regulation

New public opinion research conducted by the Mellman Group (<http://www.mellmangroup.com/>) in key electoral "swing" districts finds overwhelming public support for reforming our out-of-date system for managing chemicals. Respondents from across the political and demographic spectrum express serious concerns about everyday exposure to toxic chemicals and want to see stronger federal regulation.

The findings indicate that, regardless of political affiliation, voters are much more likely to support a candidate for public office who promotes better health and safety standards for chemicals. Those polled ranked toxic chemicals high among issues that voters think is important for Congress to focus on – higher than global warming, immigration reform and regulating off shore drilling.

Andy Igrejas, Director of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, a coalition of 250 environmental health groups that commissioned the research, said: "These results suggest that the vast majority of Americans agree that now is the time to reform chemical regulation. This gives political leaders and candidates a mandate to put common-sense limits on toxic chemicals, and provide the peace of mind Americans are asking for."

Following are highlights of the poll results. A copy of the full poll is available upon request.

Public Opinion

The majority of respondents said they think the threat posed by everyday exposure to toxic chemicals is serious (73%, with 33% saying it is "very serious"). 78% said that the threat posed to children by exposure to everyday toxic chemicals is "serious." (45% called the threat "very serious.")

Tightening chemical regulations was listed in the top five national issues of concern for those polled – ranked above all other prominent national priorities, apart from the economy and terrorism. By comparison, reducing global warming was ranked tenth by respondents.

Reactions to Reform Opposition

The polling data suggests that not only does most of the public (74%) support stronger controls on toxic chemicals, most of them look unfavorably at the primary interest group opposing reform, the chemical industry. Whereas environmental groups and the Environmental Protection Agency are seen favorably by respondents (57% and 59%, respectively), nearly half (45% view chemical companies unfavorably). **The**

strongest opposition messages tested by researchers were only half as influential as the weakest messages supporting reform. When respondents were given details about the pending bill, the support increased significantly. Even when given opposition arguments, respondents continued to strongly support reform (78%).

Implications for Political Candidates

According to the polling data, 84% say that "tightening controls" on chemical regulation is important, with 50% of those calling it "very important." After hearing both sides of the debate, a large majority (66%) preferred a candidate for political office who supports the proposal for reform. A supporter from either political party would have a greater likelihood of getting a participant's vote (57% for Democrats and 52% for Republicans) than their opponent.

A candidate who argues that existing regulations are outdated and inadequate gets nearly triple (66%) the support of a candidate who opposes reform on the grounds that it would hurt the economy and cost jobs (23%). Supporting reform makes a candidate seem more empathetic, more of an ally, more likely to be a change agent, and more likely to care about reducing the deficit and creating jobs.

Mandate for Regulators

The current bill to impose tougher regulations on chemicals enjoys overwhelming, bipartisan support. A super-majority favor stricter regulations on U.S. chemicals (with 74% supporting and 52% "strongly" supporting). Tighter controls on chemicals are important to most people (84%). Initial support for the proposed legislation is very strong (including among Republicans and Independents — 71% said they would support it and 48% said their support would be "strong").

After hearing more about the specific elements of the bill, support expands (from 71% to 82%). Those most likely to lend stronger support for the bill after hearing more about the proposal are Republicans (25% shift) and those in a household dependent on the chemical industry (22%). More than half (53%) would feel more favorable towards a U.S. Congress representative who voted for the reform bill.

Timeliness of the Research

There is growing national momentum and pressure to change the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), our federal system for overseeing chemical safety, which has not been updated in thirty-five years. Recently, the Safe Chemicals Act of 2010 (S 3209) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Frank Lautenberg; and the Toxic Chemicals Safety Act of 2010 (HR 5820) was introduced in the House by Congressmen Henry Waxman and Bobby Rush to change our federal chemicals policy and make products safer.

Summary of Methodology

The opinion research by the Mellman Group was conducted through interviews from July 29th – August 1st, 2010 with 825 likely voters in seventy-five swing congressional districts (as identified by Cook and Rothenberg). The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4% with a slightly higher margin for the subgroups polled.

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