



**TO:** Pew Campaign For Fuel Efficiency

**FROM:** The Mellman Group, Inc. & Public Opinion Strategies

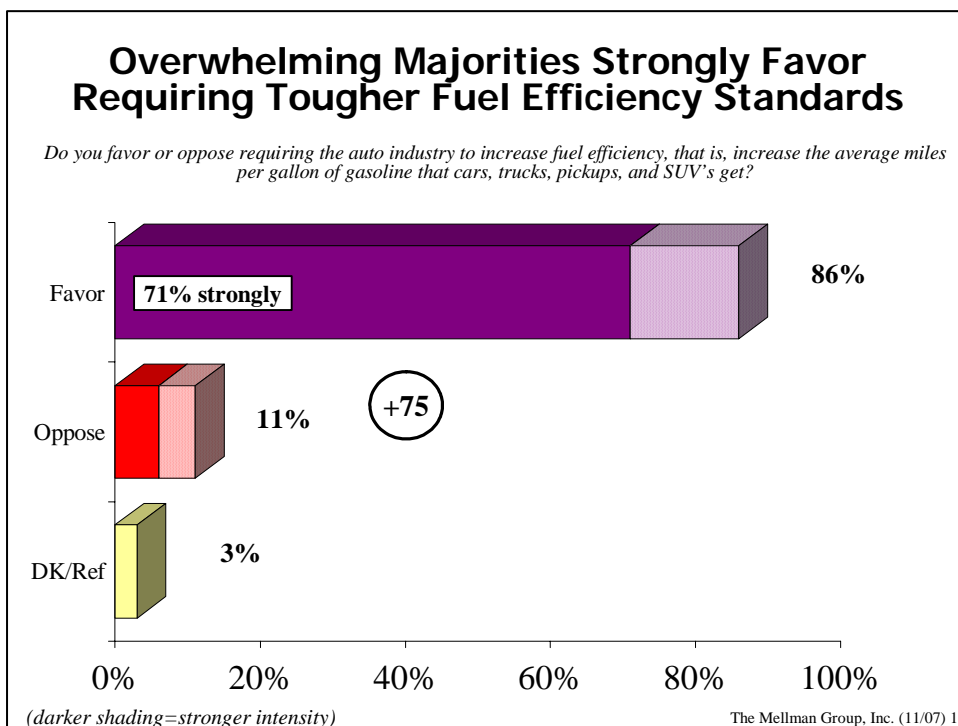
**RE:** Voters Strongly Support Stricter Fuel Efficiency Standards Which They See As Vital For National Security

**DATE:** November 9, 2007

*This analysis presents the findings of a national survey of 1000 likely 2008 general election voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone November 3 to November 6, 2007. To insure an unbiased sample, random-digit-dialing techniques were used and respondents screened for being likely voters. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.1% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.*

Overwhelming and unwavering support for increased fuel efficiency standards is predicated in large measure on the belief that reducing our dependence on foreign oil is vital for America’s national security. Our nation’s veterans share that view and express overwhelming support for higher fuel efficiency standards. Thus, when we pit the opposition’s message against the national security argument for stricter fuel efficiency standards, support for CAFE remains overwhelming. These strongly pro-CAFE views emerge time after time across every demographic, geographic and political segment of the population, including among those whose views command particular respect in these matters: veterans of our armed forces.

**VOTERS ARE ALMOST UNANIMOUS IN DEMANDING TOUGHER FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS**



Nationwide, nearly nine in ten voters (86%), favor requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency for cars, pickup trucks and SUVs while only 11% oppose increases. What’s more, nearly three quarters (71%) *strongly* favor requiring increases in fuel efficiency, while only 6% are *strongly* opposed.

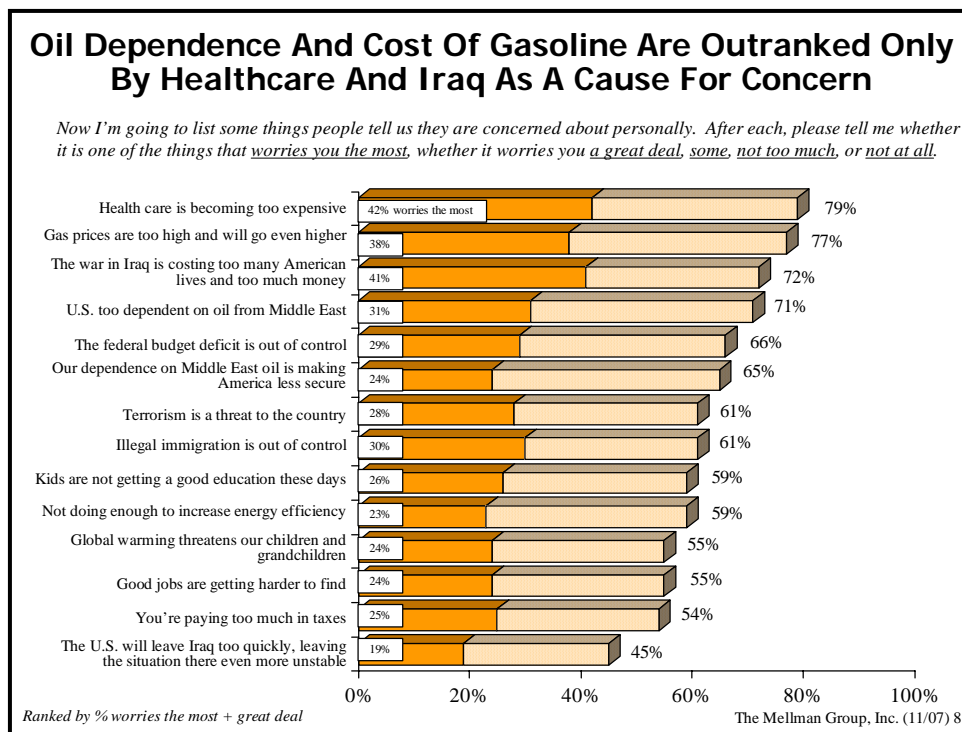
Support is both deep and wide. Overwhelming majorities of every demographic subgroup strongly support tougher

fuel efficiency standards as a requirement. Support for stricter fuel efficiency standards cuts across partisan and ideological lines as 92% of liberal Democrats, 87% of moderate-to-conservative Democrats, 83% of moderate-to-liberal Republicans, 83% of conservative Republicans, and 87% of moderate independents all favor tougher CAFE standards. All told, 90% of Democrats, 83% of independents and 83% of Republican support the higher standards, as do 87% percent of veterans.

Support is also strong among demographic segments which opponents charge would be adversely affected. Seventy-six percent (76%) of households that are dependent on the automotive industry for a living support higher standards, as do 84% of households dependent on agriculture, 84% of SUV owners, 85% of pick-up truck owners, 88% of rural pickup truck owners, and 88% of those who use their pick-ups on the job. Rural voters overall support increased CAFE standards by 88% to 10%.

In fact, there is no segment of the population among which support for higher fuel efficiency standards falls below 75%.

**GAS PRICES AND DEPENDENCE ON MID-EAST OIL ARE AMONG VOTERS’ TOP CONCERNS**



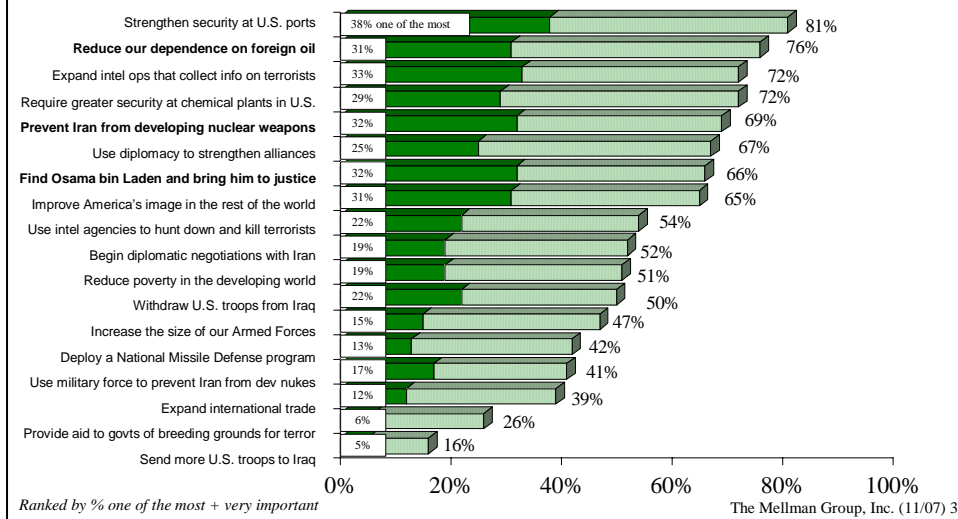
Gas prices and our dependence on Middle East oil join Iraq and healthcare costs as voters’ top personal concerns. More than three-quarters (77%) express at least a great deal of worry about gas prices. Only health care is viewed with greater alarm (79%). Seventy-one percent (71%) express at least a great deal of concern that the United States is too dependent on oil from the Middle East, and 65% are concerned that our dependence on that foreign oil is making America less secure, on

par with Iraq (72%) and the federal deficit (66%). In fact, more voters are concerned about our dependence on foreign oil making America less secure than are concerned about terrorism (61%) and illegal immigration (61%).

**VOTERS BELIEVE REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL IS CENTRAL TO AMERICA’S NATIONAL SECURITY**

**More Voters See Reducing Oil Dependence As Important To American Security Than Capturing Osama Bin Laden Or Stopping Iranian Nukes**

*Now I'm going to list some things that could be done to make America more secure. After each one, please tell me if it is one of the most important things that could be done to make America more secure, very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all in making America more secure.*



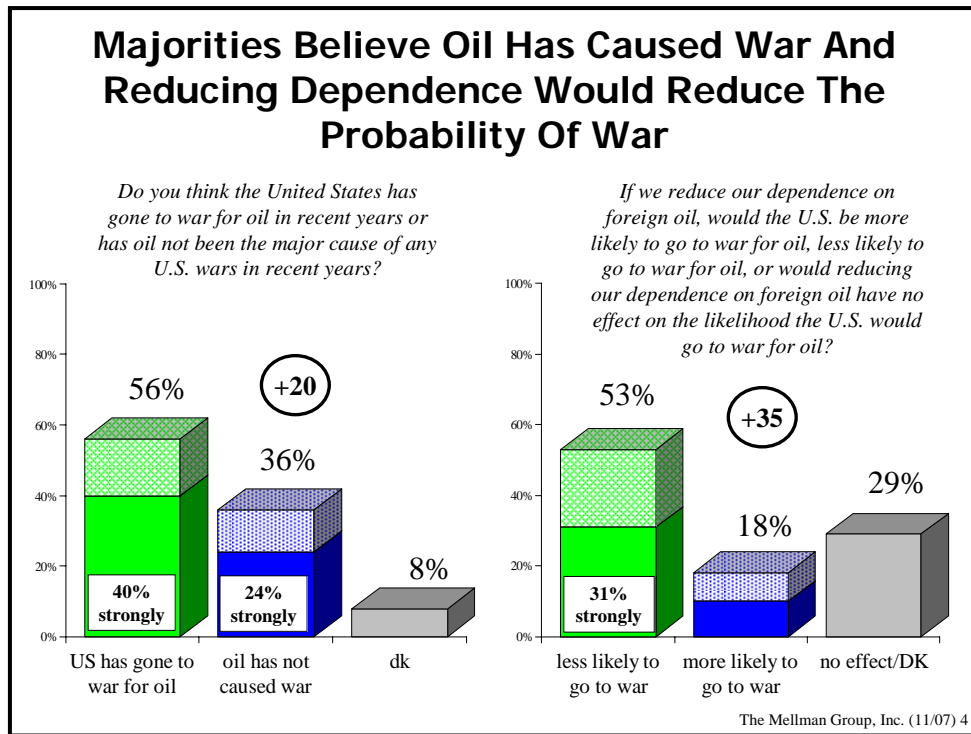
Reducing our dependence on foreign oil has emerged as one of voters’ preeminent national security imperatives. When offered a variety of proposals to enhance our national security, reducing our dependence on foreign oil ranks second only to improved port security as the most important to the largest number of voters. The list included seventeen other national security goals.

As the chart to the left indicates, 76% regard reducing oil dependence as

at least “very” important in improving our security, above actions like requiring greater security at chemical plants (72%); expanding intelligence operations that collect information on terrorists and their plans (72%); preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons (69%); strengthening alliances (67%); bringing Osama Bin Laden to justice (66%); and improving America’s image in the world (65%). Reducing dependence on oil also far outranks diplomatic negotiations with Iran (52%) and hunting down and killing terrorists (54%), among others.

Our nation’s veterans rank these national security actions the same way. Given a menu of choices to promote America’s national security, 76% of America’s veterans say it is at least “very important” to our security to reduce our dependence on oil. Port security (79%) was ranked three points higher than reduced dependence on foreign oil, and all other potential national security actions were ranked lower among veterans.

**VOTERS BELIEVE AMERICA HAS GONE TO WAR FOR OIL, BUT THAT REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL WOULD MAKE WAR LESS LIKELY**



A clear majority of American voters (56%) believe our country has gone to war for oil “in recent years,” while just 36% say “oil not been the major cause” of recent wars (8% don’t know).

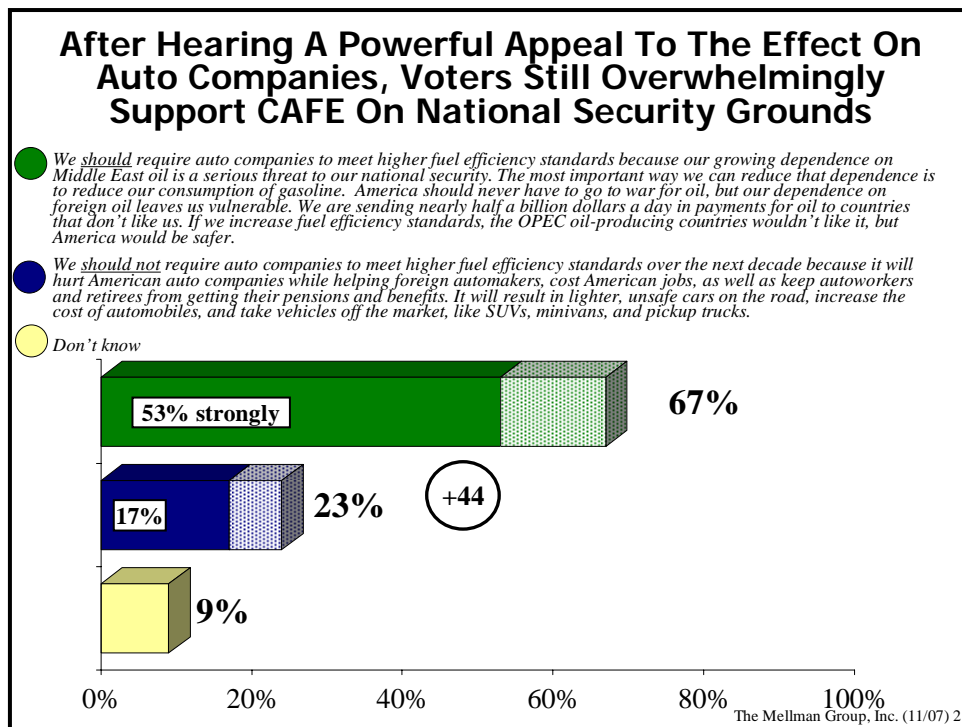
Moreover, voters believe reducing our dependence on foreign oil would decrease the prospects for war in the future (53%).

Men and women who have actually served their country share the view of oil’s importance as a cause of war. A 51% majority

of veterans believe the United States has gone to war for oil in recent years (43% do not) and 54% believe that reducing our dependence on foreign oil would decrease the prospect of future wars.

A large majority of Democrats and independents share the view that oil has been the underlying cause of war (72% of Democrats, 58% of independents). Republicans have a different view with just 34% saying the U.S. has gone to war for oil compared to 53% who believe we have not gone to war over oil. Across party lines, though, at least pluralities believe reducing our dependence on oil will reduce the prospects of future wars, as 51% of Republicans join 58% of Democrats and 50% of independents in expressing that belief.

**OPPOSITION ARGUMENTS DO LITTLE TO DIMINISH SUPPORT FOR STRICTER FUEL ECONOMY STANDARDS IN THE FACE OF A NATIONAL SECURITY ARGUMENT FOR CAFE**



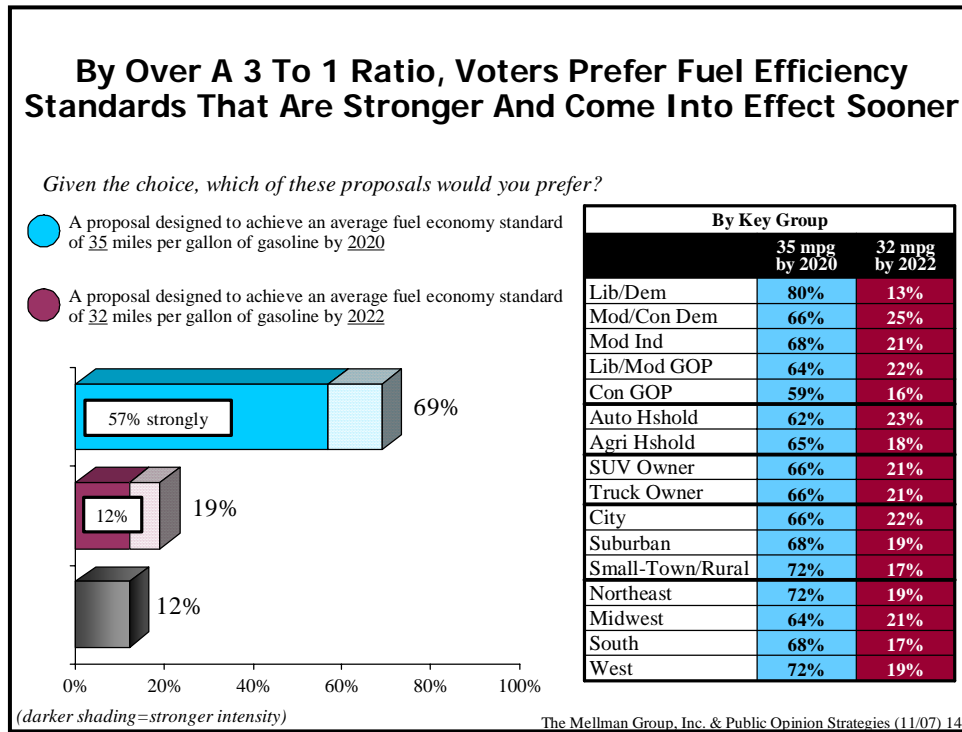
The full weight of opponents' messages does little to shake public support for higher fuel efficiency standards in the face of the national security argument for CAFE. Respondents heard a strong statement from opponents arguing that tougher requirements would hurt U.S. auto companies while helping foreign automakers, cost jobs, reduce safety, and take popular vehicles like SUVs, minivans, and pickups off the market.

When juxtaposed to the national security argument, 67% still favor requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency, while just 23% oppose. In fact, a majority (53%) continue to strongly support the stricter standards. Our security argument made the case that “our growing dependence on Middle East oil is a serious threat to our national security. The most important way we can reduce that dependence is to reduce our consumption of gasoline. America should never have to go to war for oil, but our dependence on foreign oil leaves us vulnerable. We are sending nearly half a billion dollars a day in payments for oil to countries that don't like us ...”

Across demographic segments, voters are largely impervious to the arguments against increasing fuel efficiency. A large majority (64%) of veterans continue to favor requiring CAFE for reasons of national security (52% strongly). Strong majorities across party lines continue to agree that standards should be raised, with 72% of Democrats 66% of independents, and 63% of Republicans all maintaining their support for stricter standards. Robust support is also evident geographically, with 71% of those in the Northeast, 65% in the South, 64% in the Midwest, and 72% in the West all favoring higher standards even after hearing the arguments on both sides.

Even after hearing the counterargument, 68% of rural pickup owners continue to support higher standards, as do those who use their pickup on the job (68% favor), SUV owners (61% favor), minivan owners (74% favor), as well as those who make their living from the auto industry (54% favor) and agriculture (66% favor).

**VOTERS ALSO FAVOR STRICTER CAFE STANDARDS SOONER**



Offered a choice between legislation that requires 32 miles per gallon by 2022 and a bill leading to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, voters prefer fuel efficiency standards that are stronger and come into effect sooner by more than 3-1. In fact, a majority (57%) *strongly* prefer increasing standards to 35 miles per gallon by 2020 to weaker, less rapid standards.

This desire for stricter, quicker standards is universal across demographic and

geographic groups. Strong majorities of Democrats (73%), Republicans (65%) and independents (56%) favor increasing fuel efficiency standards to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, as do households dependent on the automotive industry (62%), SUV owners (66%) and truck owners (66%). From city dwellers (66%) to rural households (72%), from the Midwest (64%) to the Northeast (72%) and from the South (68%) to the West (72%), the desire for stronger, quicker standards is clear.