

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: NRCC Political Director Mike Thom
DATE: April 17, 2023
RE: NRCC to Vulnerable Energy District House Dems Opposing HR 1: You're Doomed



TOP LINE:

The contents of H.R.1 are broadly popular with both the American public and voters in battleground House districts across the country. From Pennsylvania to Alaska to New Mexico, vulnerable House Democrats representing districts with jobs tied to domestic energy production made a critical mistake opposing H.R. 1.

How two former Democratic House Members – Kendra Horn & Xochitl Torres Small – fared after not doing enough to solidify their position on pro-energy policies is the proof. Despite entering the Fall of 2020 popular with their constituents, both Horn & Torres Small lost their seats because voters viewed their stance on energy issues as a betrayal in the oil & gas producing districts they represented in Oklahoma & New Mexico, respectively.

THE PROVISIONS WITHIN H.R. 1 ARE POPULAR NATIONWIDE:

- 90% of **registered voters support** the U.S. developing its domestic sources of energy rather than relying on other regions of the world.
- 86% of **independent voters support** policies that make it easier to develop the American minerals and resources that are necessary for clean energy production in the U.S. and our allied countries.
- 78% of **independents voters support** policies that speed up government review of energy infrastructure project applications to allow projects to be built faster.

KENDRA HORN CASE STUDY:

In August of 2020, Kendra Horn, who represented oil & gas-rich Oklahoma City, was well positioned to win her first reelection. According to the NRCC's internal polling, she held a 43% favorable to 30% unfavorable opinion among voters in August of 2020.

So why didn't she win? In Republican **campaign ad** after **campaign ad** Horn was pegged as someone who betrayed Oklahomans by not doing enough to support the energy industry and was "putting politics ahead of 90,000 jobs in the state."

These ads were extremely effective, and voters responded in polling verbatims that her stance on energy issues was a top reason to vote against her:

- "The main thing is that she isn't for the oil that the guys in our state are trying to make a business."
- "She doesn't stand for Oklahoma and votes against the oil and gas industry. Putting 90,000 people's jobs at risk."

- “She doesn’t support the oil and gas industry which is essential to Oklahoma’s economy. The stronger they are, the better off we all are.”

By late October, Horn’s race was essentially over. Horn’s unfavorables skyrocketed by 16% in 3 months and voters’ opinion of her stood at 41% approve – 46% disapprove. Kendra Horn lost her election by 4.2 percentage points.

XOCHITL TORRES SMALL CASE STUDY:

Former Congresswoman Torres Small enjoyed a high approval rating throughout the 2020 campaign, and the race appeared to be a statistical tie in multiple internal NRCC surveys leading up to election day.

So why did Torres Small lose reelection by more than 7 points?

Voters felt she had betrayed New Mexico jobs and public schools by aligning with environmental extremists in a district that includes a large portion of the Permian Basin. Ads criticizing Torres Small on this topic ([here](#) & [here](#)) clearly resonated with voters in polling verbatims:

- “She has more interest in the Green New Deal than she has interest here in New Mexico, like oil and gas.”
- “She was for oil and gas for the economy, but she voted against. It is hurting our economy.”
- “I don’t believe her ads and actual actions. She continues to claim to support in oil, gas and agriculture, but her actions show otherwise.”

BOTTOM LINE:

The majority of vulnerable House Democrats took an ill-advised votes against HR 1. However, for the likes of Mary Peltola, Yadira Caraveo or Gabe Vasquez, this vote is likely the beginning of the end of their reelection campaign.

Why? The impact of oil & gas production on their respective states’ budgets & local economies is outsized.

For example, in Peltola’s Alaska, in 2019 oil & gas production **supported** more than 47,300 total jobs, contributed **\$3.1 billion** to state & local taxes, and is the **“single most important economic engine in the state.”**

In Colorado where Caraveo represents regions critical to the state’s oil & gas production, **one in eight jobs** in the state are supported by the energy industry & in 2019 **contributed** \$46.1 billion to the state’s GDP.

Gabe Vasquez’s vote against HR 1 was a slap in the face to the **61,720 energy jobs** in NM-02 where taxes from oil and gas production **fund** a large portion of the public school system and 25% of state and local budgets.

When Members put an extreme anti-energy ideology over the practical concerns of their districts, the ad scripts write themselves.