It Matters!
Engage. Participate. Vote.



MIDTERM MADNESS:
THE GAME-CHANGING, MOTHER OF ALL MIDTERMS,
THE ELECTIONS OF 2026

29 October 2026

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It Matters!
Engage. Participate. Vote.

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Today's Program – from our reception to today's talk –

is brought to You by several Key Partners as part of the *It Matters!*

Series here at SSU -

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IT MATTERS!
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Students, Faculty, and Staff are invited

IT MATTERS: MIDTERM MADNESS

VOTE

Thursday, October 29
Reception | 12-1 p.m. | Stevenson Hall Lobby
Lecture | 1-3 p.m. | Stevenson 1400

Join us for a cross-campus conversation and reception exploring the upcoming midterm elections. Following the reception, stay for Dr. McCuan's lecture, *Unrivaled & Unparalleled: 2026 Midterms.*

Light refreshments will be provided.

Co-sponsored by the Sonoma State University's Department of History and Politics, Center for Community Engagement, College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY Center for Community Engagement

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY History

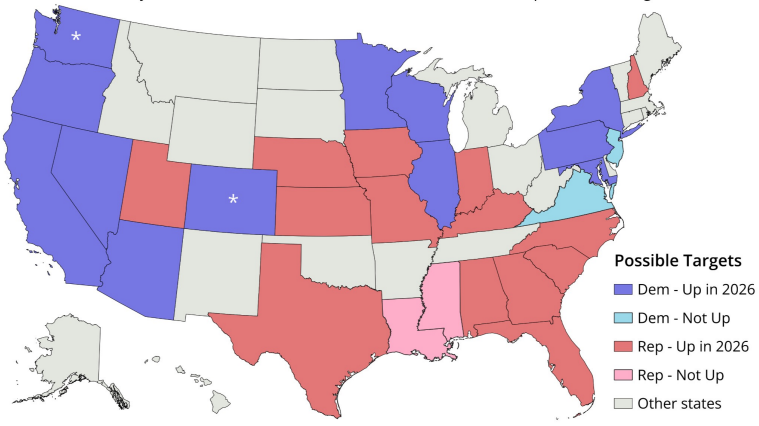
SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY Political Science

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Before We Get Started…How These Midterms Matter…

States That Could Redraw Congressional Maps in 2028 or 2030

Many of these states will host elections in 2026 that could impact redistricting



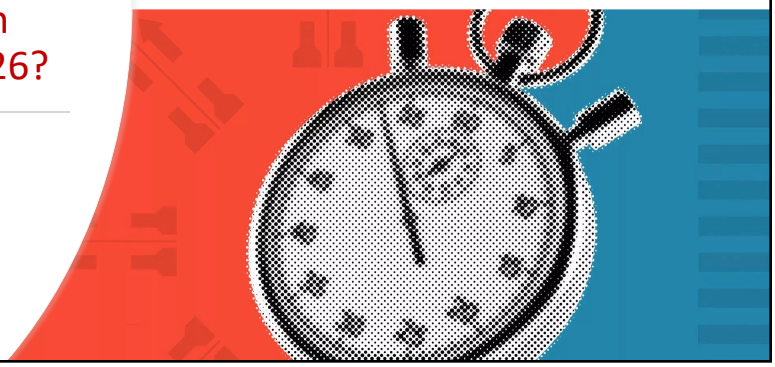
Many Democratic target states would require passage of future ballot measures.
* Democrats couldn't redraw CO or WA until 2030, but 2026 gains would make new maps easier to pass.

THE DOWN BALLOT

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What to make of the **2026 "Mother of All Midterm Elections** - set to be held on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2026?





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Reading the Tea Leaves…







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The "Science of Elections:" What Do We Always Say… "*This Election is The Most…*"???

- The Science of Elections is <u>not</u> a "tastes great, less filling," X versus Y proposition.
- ***<u>How is 2026 different? Is the past really prologue for the future?</u>***
- The GOAL TODAY IS TO MAKE YOU PREPARED AS AN ANALYST FOR NEXT WEEK!
- Why we are in "new" territory? What to watch, how to "see over-the-horizon?"
- How to be Your own "Psephologist:" Where to find data & analysis:
  - https://www.thegreenpapers.com/
  - https://www.reuters.com/world/us/key-dates-2024-us-presidential-race-2024-01-30/



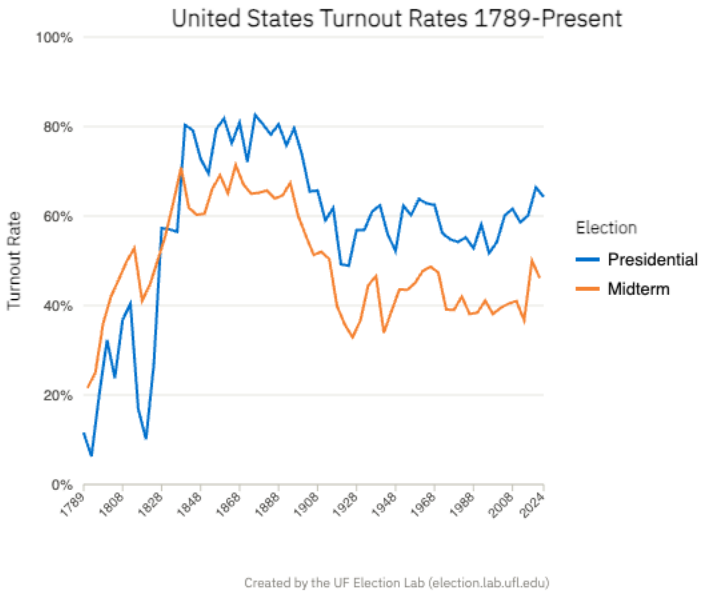
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Some General Midterm Election Ideas

- **<u>First</u>**: the President's party almost always loses ground in midterm House elections, as has happened in 20 of the past 22 midterm elections stretching back to 1938, and both exceptions reflected unusual circumstances (1998; 2002).
- **<u>Second</u>**: the President's SECOND MIDTERM election usually has the steepest loses, going back to the Civil War era;
- **<u>Third</u>:** Who votes in Midterm elections is really, really distinct from General Elections for President

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Presidential vs. Midterm Turnout (T.O.) Rates



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Who is the Midterm Electorate?

	MIDTERM ELECTORATE					PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORATE					MIDTERM - PREZ AVG.
White	2010	2014	2018	2022	Avg.	2008	2012	2016	2020	Avg.	Avg. diff.
	79%	79%	75%	76%	77%	77%	75%	74%	72%	75%	3%

Age	2010	2014	2018	2022	Avg.	2008	2012	2016	2020	Avg.	Avg. diff.
18-29	9%	8%	12%	10%	10%	16%	15%	15%	16%	16%	-6%
30-44	20%	18%	21%	20%	20%	24%	23%	22%	23%	23%	-3%
45-64	45%	43%	38%	36%	41%	39%	40%	38%	35%	38%	3%
65+	26%	31%	29%	33%	30%	20%	23%	25%	26%	24%	6%

College grad	2010	2014	2018	2022	Avg.	2008	2012	2016	2020	Avg.	Avg. diff.
	36%	39%	40%	41%	39%	32%	34%	37%	38%	35%	4%

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How Do We Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes?

- Referendum on the president vs. "Backlash" on the president?

- Reversion to Party ID (PID) and/or ideology
- Response to economy & job approval
- Response to other issues (war/peace, etc.) / "October Surprise"
- Action of strategic politicians (such as "strategic retirements")
- Money and / or turnout races

- Reliable pattern of the 19th AND 20th centuries save 4 elections

- *What is "average" midterm presidential seat loss?*
- What "variables" determine the depth of seat loss?

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Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes, cont'd

- Referendum on the president vs. "Backlash" on the president?

- What does a "Backlash" mean – and why does that matter?

- Growth in the S&P 500 — and economic conditions more broadly — does not exactly predict Midterm election outcomes. There's no correlation between GDP change and seats won/lost, for example;

- The economy ***does matter***, yet to it is more closely proxied by things like the Index of Consumer Sentiment (think, "what do voters perceive their personal economic future to be…?) and presidential approval than annual change in $SPY.

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Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes, cont'd

- Referendum on the president vs. "Backlash" on the president?
- What does a "Backlash" mean – and why does that matter?
- THEREFORE….THE CALENDAR for perceptions matters a TON – July 4th; Labor Day;
- In Political Science papers, this leads to an embrace of the "pocketbook" theory of voting - the window for the effect is strongest between July 1 of an election year Labor Day; then from Labor Day to Election day.

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The Big Picture – <5 Days Out (<120 HOURS OUT)

Why the Stakes Are High?

Today's politics are marked by –

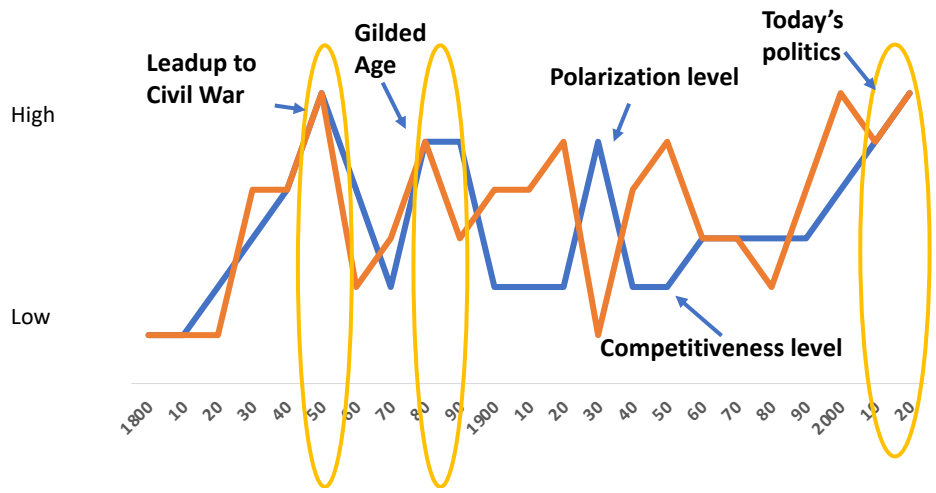
Extreme polarization – the political parties are far apart, at both the leadership and mass levels;

Extreme competitiveness—the parties are very closely matched, with power hanging on the balance with each election.

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Historical Perspective
Party Polarization & Competitiveness



Note: Competitiveness is based on size of majority in House of Representatives

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The Polarization / Competitiveness Effect

- Historically, when the parties have been polarized and closely matched, elections have been:
  - **Perceived as existential** –the future of the country is viewed by many to be at stake
  - **Consuming**—the parties have concentrated as much or more on winning the next election as on governing.
- NOTE: Of the nation's 60 midterm elections, 10 were / are **polarized + competitive + existential**
  - Five are recent: 2006; 2010; 2018; 2022; + 2026?

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The "Generic Ballot" Labor Day 2026 ≅ Two Months Out

- **The question for the 2026 midterms is not "Will there be a blue wave?" but, instead, "Just how BIG will the blue wave be in 2026?"**

  Caveat + new polling data these *LAST two weeks* give us a peek at the answer?:

  - **Democrats** hold lead in recent surveys, ranging from +6 to +18 points.

- ***Any further Caveat(s)? Events? Changes with Re-districting maps?***

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What Do Our Models Show *TODAY?*

- House Likelihood:

91% – 93%
of a Δ
From GOP to Dem

(Dems need +3 seats)

- Senate Likelihood:

66% – 70%
of a Δ
From GOP to Dem

(Dems need +4 seats)

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The Three Key Variables for Midterms & Change?

- **Var1:** Some economic measure (consumer sentiment? View of the recent economic past for a HH vs. future HH prospects?);
- **Var2:** Presidential Approval (from one; or multiple time points);
- **Var3:** Generic Ballot (in-party vs. out-part "general" vote difference)
- ***WHAT IS MISSING? Think of the "electoral environment?"***

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What Does Our UPDATED "Time for Change" (TfC) Model Predict?:

Republican generic ballot margin	Predicted number of GOP seats	Predicted change in GOP seats
0	213	-7
-2	208	-12
-4	202	-18
-6	197	-23
-8	192	-28
-10	187	-33

THIS TRANSLATES TO:
Conservative, Lower Limit DEM SEATS: +28 (99% Confidence Interval; and Upper Limit DEM SEATS: +38 (95% Confidence Interval) – IF the GENERIC BALLOT GOES to -9 (-10)? NUMBERS JUMP!!

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What Our Model Predicted in 2022…

Generic Ballot (D% - R%)	Predicted change in Democratic:	
	House Seats	Senate Seats
10	2	3
5	-7	2
0	-15	1
-5	-24	0
-10	-32	-1

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FiftyPlusOne

General election averages

62.0% DISAPPROVE 35.2% APPROVE

Presidential Approval

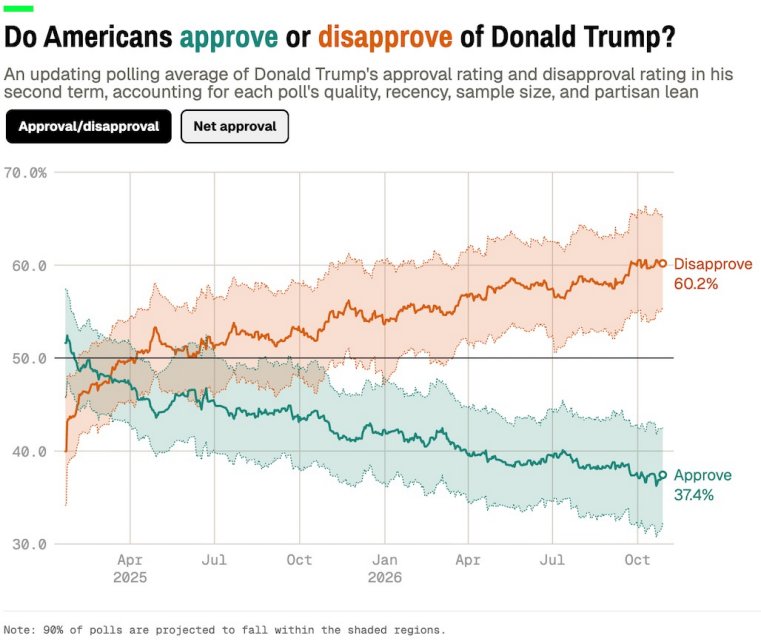
Donald Trump's approval rating for his second term.

52.3% DEMOCRATS 43.5% REPUBLICANS

Generic Ballot

See: https://fiftyplusone.news/polls/approval/president and more at: https://fiftyplusone.news/

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60.2
+
37.4
=
97.6%

DJT up .05 pts from last week

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What to Consider With All of These Polls?

Polling Questions - for General Elections:

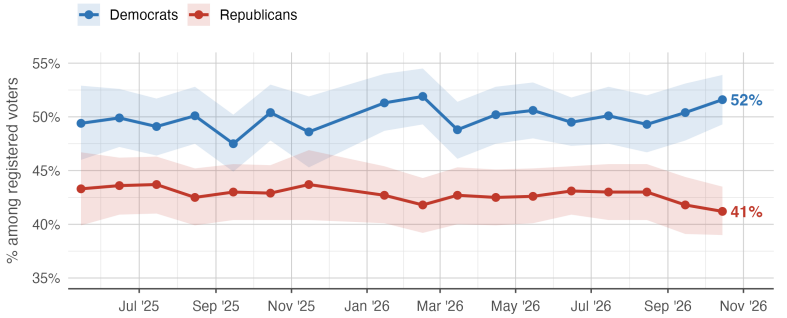
1. Who conducted the poll?
2. Where, how, and when was the poll conducted? ***REGION MATTERS!!***
3. This close (+/- 7 days out to E-Day), ***LVs*** or RVs?
4. ***Outlier poll?*** Or consistent results with others?;
5. National polling sample? ***Or state-level poll?;***
6. ***Track-record operation?*** Or candidate – or campaign operation conducting the poll?
7. Leading questions? ***Can You actually see / find / examine the questions asked?***

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The Early Vote: While Elections are Decided in November, They Are Won in October!

Democrats have led the generic ballot in every single Strength In Numbers/Verasight poll

"If the 2026 general election for Congress were held today, which party's candidate would you be more likely to vote for in your local Congressional district?"
Percent of registered voters.



Data: Strength In Numbers/Verasight monthly polls of U.S. registered voters, May 2025–October 2026.

Strength In Numbers gelliottmorris.com

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The Early Vote: While Elections are Decided in November, They Are Won in October!

2026 Early Vote by Group in the US

	2022 Count (Share)	2024 Count (Share)	2026 Count (Share)	2026 share vs 2022
Black	2,166,888 (10.01%)	4,328,578 (10.77%)	2,773,908 (11.08%)	**+10.7%**
18-29	966,991 (4.46%)	2,601,224 (6.47%)	1,400,478 (5.59%)	**+25.3%**
Hispanic/Latino	1,828,936 (8.44%)	3,495,134 (8.7%)	3,003,555 (12%)	**+42.2%**
White	16,452,219 (75.96%)	29,879,817 (74.36%)	17,631,791 (70.42%)	**-7.3%**
Total Vote	**21,657,931**	**40,180,102**	**25,038,963**	+15.6%

Source: TargetEarly, 10/25/26 midnight report. Compares this day to the same day in the early vote in 2022 and 2024.

Change is the percent change in each group's share of the early vote, 2026 against 2022: (2026 share - 2022 share) ÷ 2022 share. The Total Vote row shows growth in total early votes.

Hopium Chronicles

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Decided on presidential vote:
22,966 total respondents

	In last few days 3%	In last week 3%	In October 5%	In September 6%	Before September 80%
Harris	42%	42%	**49%**	**52%**	49%
Trump	**47%**	**56%**	42%	46%	**51%**

Updated 5:07 p.m. ET, Dec. 13

State	Trump margin, 2024
Kansas	+16.1
Mississippi	+22.9
Nebraska (statewide)	+20.5
South Carolina	+17.9

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Let's Examine Turnout (T.O.) so far…

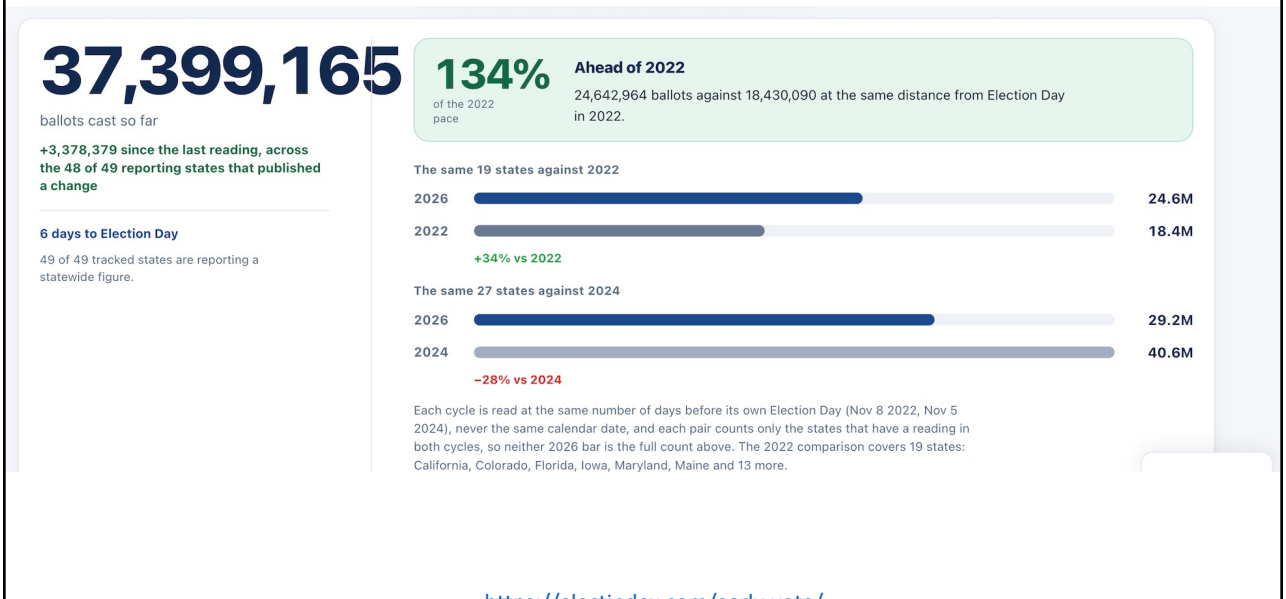


https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/

- ANOTHER EARLY VOTE WEBSITE:

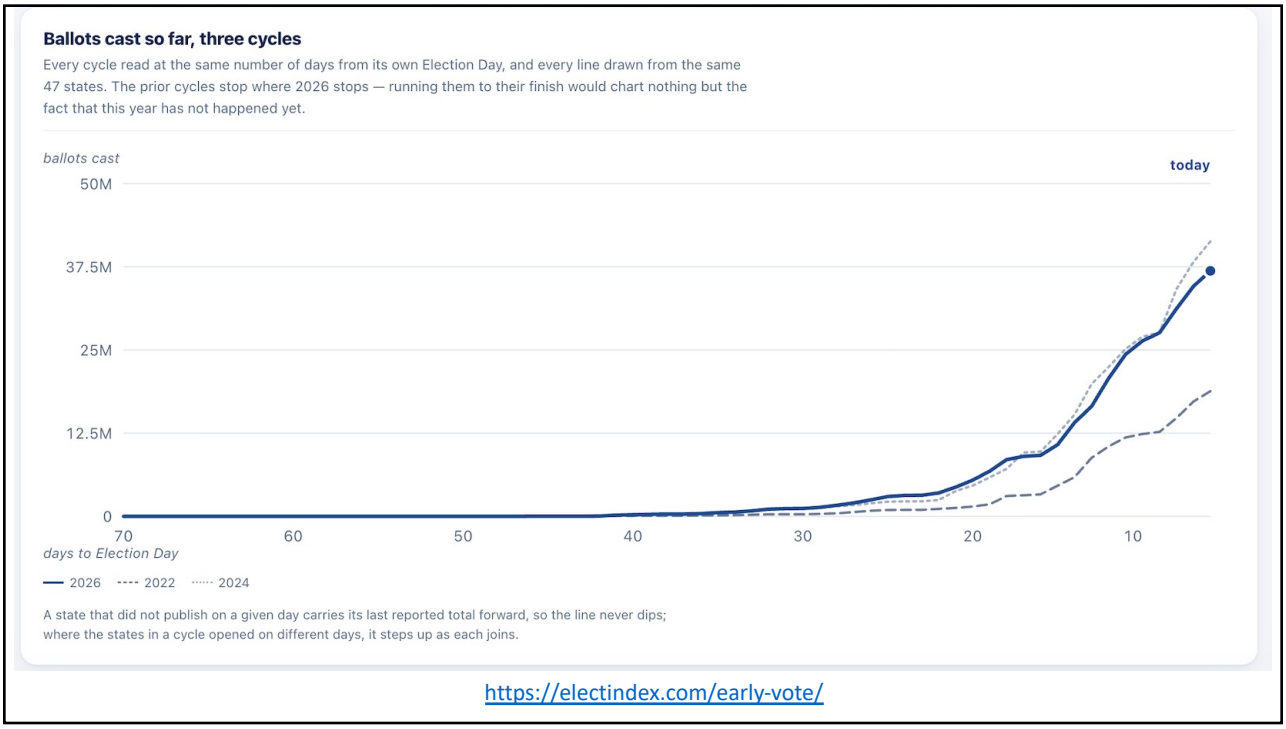
https://electindex.com/early-vote/

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https://electindex.com/early-vote/

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https://electindex.com/early-vote/

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National Statistics

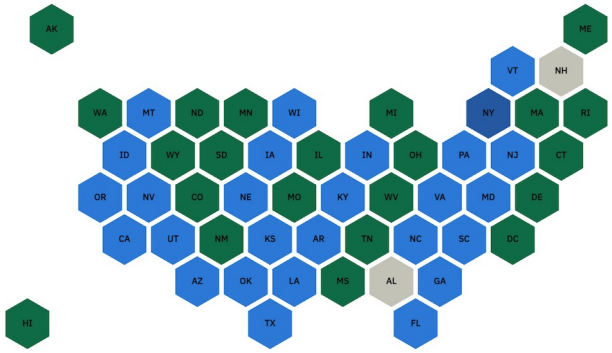
Total early votes	In-person early votes	Mail ballots returned	Mail ballots requested
37,229,522	19,188,842	18,044,041	60,196,438

Last updated: Oct 28, 2026 @ 12:00pm Eastern Time

Click on a state to display state statistics

Reporting Status

No data yet | Votes reported earlier | Votes reported today | Updated again



Where is the Early Vote?

Navigate here:

https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/

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Early Vote, Synopsis, 28 OCT 2026

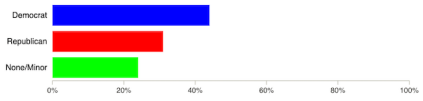
Detailed Statistics

Total Voted | In-Person Early | Mail Ballots | Fast Stats

Total Voted by Party Registration

Reporting states with party registration data: AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, ID, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NC, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, WV, WY

Party	Total Voted	Percent
Democrat	8,179,765	44.5 %
Republican	5,734,642	31.2 %
None/Minor	4,469,616	24.3 %
TOTAL	18,384,023	100 %

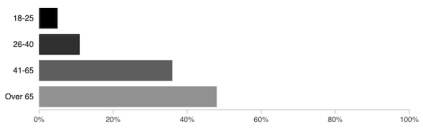


Note: Party registration statistics are for states that have party registration. These statistics are not actual votes. By federal law, election officials do not begin counting ballots until Election Day, although they may start the process of preparing ballots for counting in advance.

Total Voted by Age

Reporting states with age data: CO, CT, DE, GA, ID, IA, KS, MI, NV, NC, OK, PA, RI, VT

Age	Total Voted	Percent
18-25	445,544	5.0 %
26-40	992,742	11.1 %
41-65	3,207,972	35.8 %
Over 65	4,303,360	48.1 %
TOTAL	8,949,618	100 %



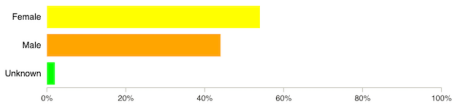
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Early Vote, Synopsis, 28 OCT 2026

Total Voted by Gender

Reporting states with gender data: CO, GA, ID, KS, LA, MI, NC, WA

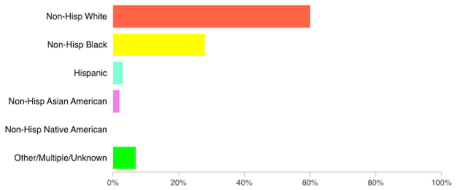
Gender	Total Voted	Percent
Female	4,599,131	54.1 %
Male	3,758,994	44.2 %
Unknown	147,345	1.7 %
TOTAL	8,505,470	100 %



Total Voted by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity

Reporting states with race and Hispanic ethnicity data: GA, LA, NC, SC

Race	Total Voted	Percent
Non-Hisp White	2,770,272	59.6 %
Non-Hisp Black	1,302,150	28.0 %
Hispanic	130,798	2.8 %
Non-Hisp Asian American	90,317	1.9 %
Non-Hisp Native American	21,398	0.5 %
Other/Multiple/Unknown	329,419	7.1 %
TOTAL	4,644,354	100 %

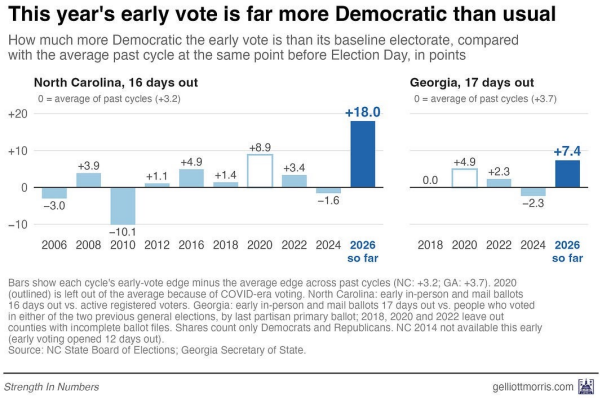


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Early Vote Synopsis, Cont'd 28 OCT 2026

- Republicans are skipping early voting. Question is: Will they show up on Election Day?

- In North Carolina, Democrats have cast **70%** of the two parties' early ballots, the most lopsided split at this point since at least 2006.

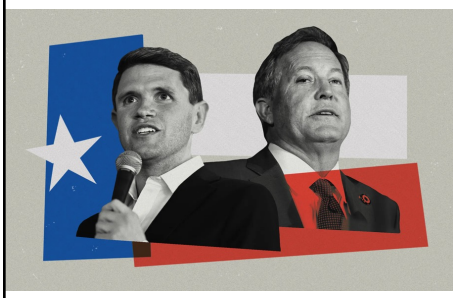


PUNCHLINE: Registered Republicans are voting at lower levels even as turnout goes up for everyone else.

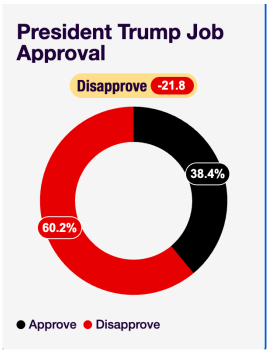
NOTE: This *is* leveling off as We've moved from 3 weeks out to 2 weeks to 1 week out.

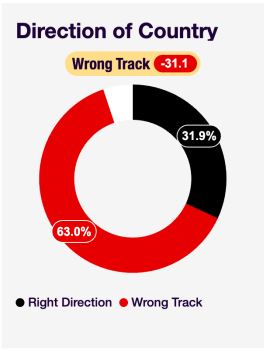
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Dem Leads Narrow in TX, MI, ME & NE Moves to Even / Toss-Up



State Of Union





Where to find CA Early Vote tracking? Here:
https://tracker.politicaldata.com/?type=statewide

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Setting Up a Discussion $$$ & Advertising

- **Trump is shoring up support in the states he won by double digits;**
- **Therefore, there are certain "measuring sticks" to consider with polling headed into this weekend for:**
- **OH; KS; IA; TX; and AK**

(all states DJT won by +11 or more in 2024)

In nearly every Senate battleground, more Republicans say they're worse off than better off

The 2024 presidential margin, the current FiftyPlusOne Senate polling average, and the share saying they're financially better off minus the share saying they're worse off than a year ago

State	2024 presidential margin	Current Senate polling average	Better minus worse off: all adults	Better minus worse off: Republicans
North Carolina	R+3.2	D+10.1	−19	−6
Georgia	R+2.2	D+9.1	−20	−8
New Hampshire	D+2.8	D+7.1	−20	+1
Ohio	R+11.2	D+4.0	−17	−3
Minnesota	D+4.2	D+3.5	−23	−4
Michigan	R+1.4	D+3.3	−22	−4
Texas	R+13.7	D+3.2	−23	−9
Alaska	R+13.1	D+3.0	−23	−6
Maine	D+6.9	D+2.2	−23	−2
Kansas	R+16.1	D+1.5	−18	−3
Iowa	R+13.2	D+0.7	−22	−6
South Carolina	R+17.9	R+1.1	−19	−7
Nebraska	R+20.5	R+1.1	−18	−5
Florida	R+13.1	R+6.3	−18	−3
Montana	R+19.9	R+15.9	−22	−6
Mississippi	R+22.9	–	−14	−4
Louisiana	R+22.0	–	−14	−3

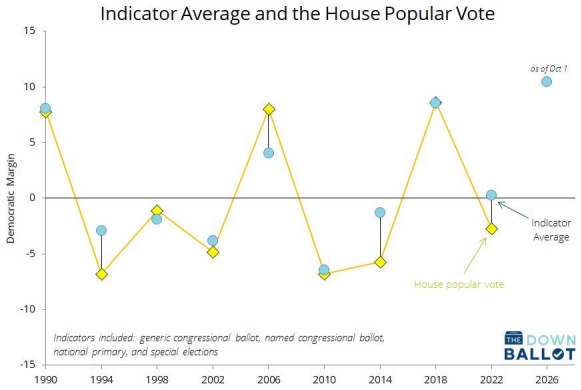
Source: Wave Polling and Research poll of 5,000 U.S. adults, conducted online Oct. 5–8, 2026, by Verasight; state estimates by MRP (Republican figures are +/- about 8 points). Republicans include leaners. FiftyPlusOne polling averages as of Oct. 15, 2026; Nebraska and Montana margins are for independent candidates; no average for Louisiana or Mississippi.

Strength In Numbers gelliottmorris.com

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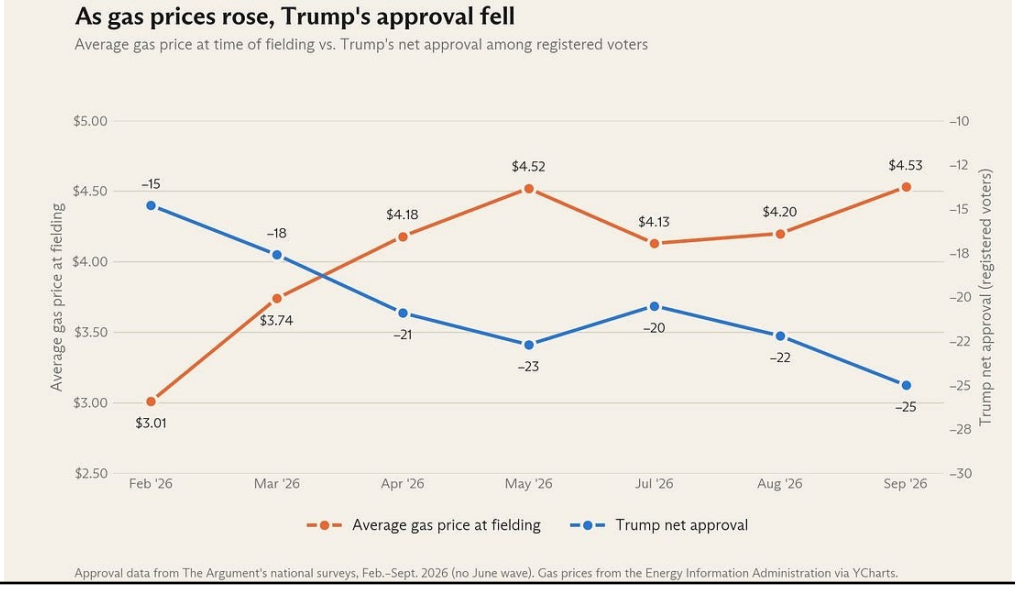
Setting Up a Discussion $$$ & Voting

- **Pay attention to the "swing" of the vote from SAFE GOP to Swing / "Toss-Up" race**
- A recent Democratic poll of a House race in Ohio featured a remarkable finding:
- 15th CD around Columbus, represented by Republican Mike Carey, a survey found Democratic challenger Don Leonard leading by a 46-45 margin.
- ***What made the result so noteworthy is that Carey's district voted for Donald Trump over Kamala Harris by a comfortable 10-point spread in 2024***. If that poll is indeed accurate, it not only means Leonard could win but also that he's doing **11 points better** than you'd expect given the outcome of the most recent presidential election.



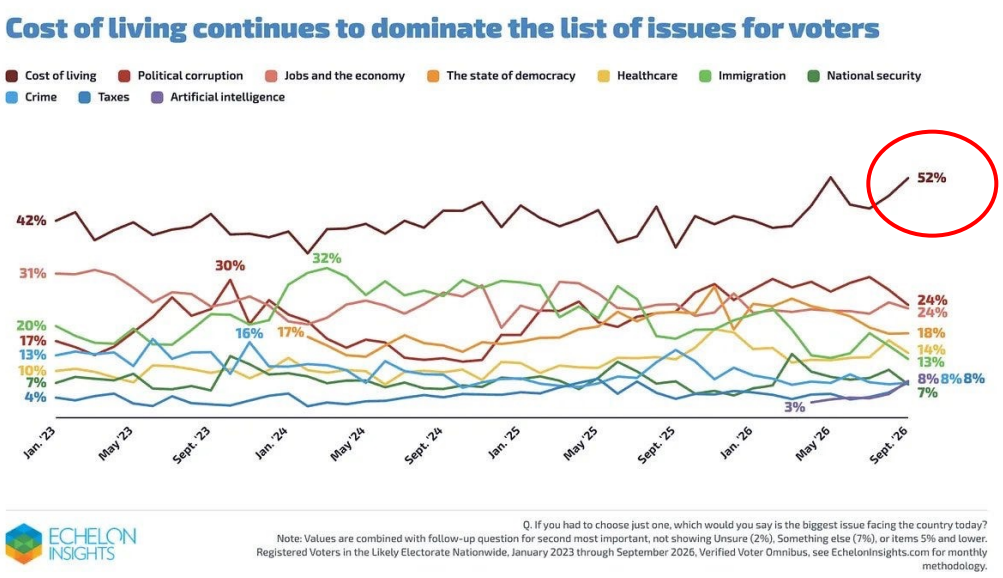
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The Patrick Ruffini Take…



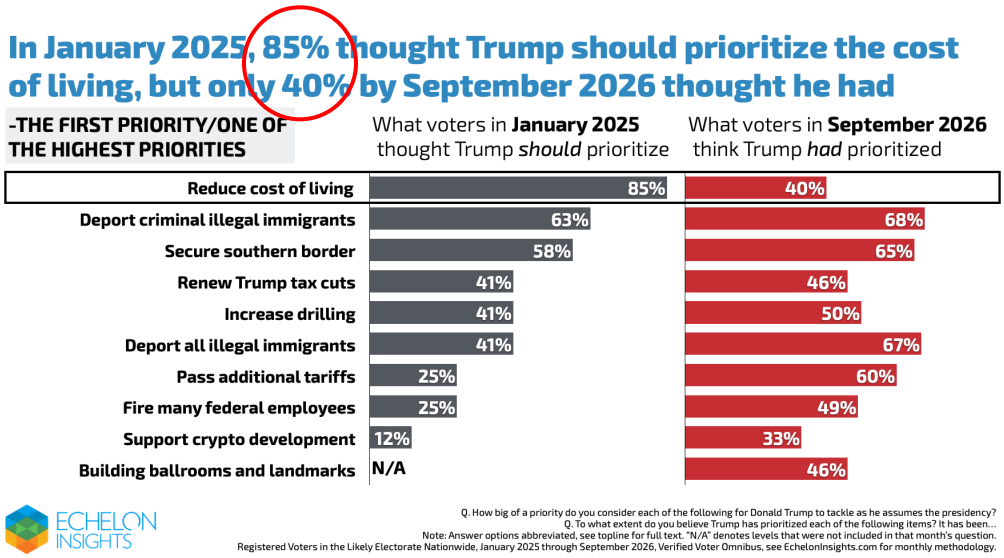
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The Patrick Ruffini Take TWO…

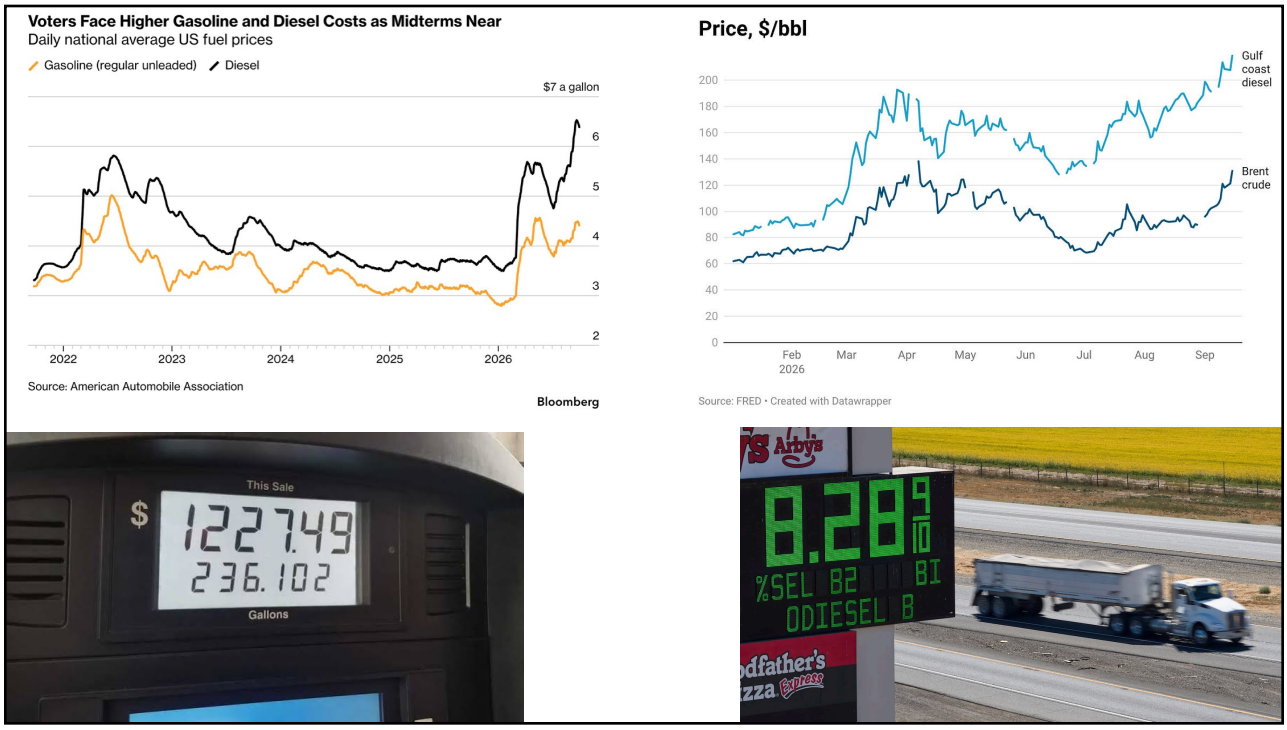


39

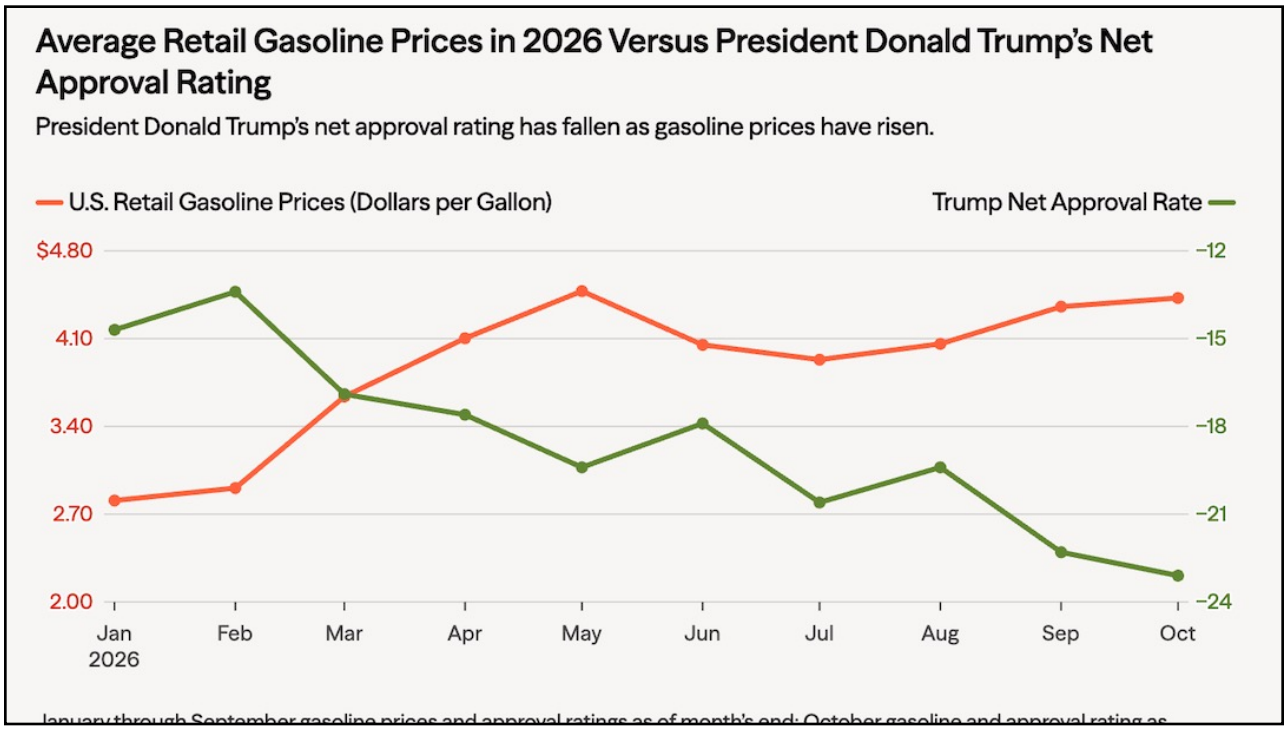
Does This Explain "the Shed" of Support?



40


Voters Face Higher Gasoline and Diesel Costs as Midterms Near
Daily national average US fuel prices
Gasoline (regular unleaded)
Diesel
$7 a gallon
6
5
4
3
2
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
Source: American Automobile Association
Bloomberg
Price, $/bbl
Gulf coast diesel
Brent crude
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Feb 2026
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Source: FRED • Created with Datawrapper
This Sale
$
1227.49
236.102
Gallons
8.28 9/10
%SEL B2
ODIESEL B
BI

41


Average Retail Gasoline Prices in 2026 Versus President Donald Trump's Net Approval Rating
President Donald Trump's net approval rating has fallen as gasoline prices have risen.
U.S. Retail Gasoline Prices (Dollars per Gallon)
Trump Net Approval Rate
$4.80
4.10
3.40
2.70
2.00
-12
-15
-18
-21
-24
Jan 2026
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct

42

Ok….Are YOU Ready??

What to Consider This Last Week?

Are Democrats High on Hopium?

Has DJT 2.0 Triaged Enough to Blunt Midterm History?





43

The $$$ & CF Discussion (Campaign Finance) + Campaign Spending in 2026

- **CF, This Election: GOP**

TOTAL SPENDING:

$4.185 billion

- **CF, This Election, Dems:**

TOTAL SPENDING:

$3.562 billion

- **Campaign Spending, 2026:**

Consider this a few ways – from JAN to now;

Just this last month / four weeks;

Just the final 10 – 14 days

The most precious commodity <seven days out? It isn't $$$

44

What is *NOT FULLY* in These CF Totals?

- **GOP $$$ Effects:**

RNC has, "transferred more than $44 million between mid-August and mid-October" in a roughly even split to the NRSC and the NRCC.

Many of those transfers will be disclosed in a filing TONIGHT (20 OCT 2026).

"At least $6 million more is set to be sent to those two committees by Election Day, the committee said."

RNC said it raised $18.5 million in September and entered October with $76 million cash on hand. (*New York Times*)

- The "full effect" of these USSC decisions earlier this year:

***National Republican Senatorial Committee v. Federal Election Commission* (June 30, 2026)**

The Ruling: In a 6–3 conservative-majority decision, the Supreme Court struck down long-standing federal limits on coordinated campaign spending between political parties and candidates.

+

Political Advertising Rates Dispute / Lower Court Pause (September/October 2026)

The Ruling: USSC paused a lower-court ruling (from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit) that had challenged the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) policy allowing political parties and joint fundraising committees to access discounted "lowest unit charge" TV and radio advertising rates. [1, 2, 3]

45

Campaign Spending Has *SOARED* Since 1998

- According to OpenSecrets, a nonpartisan group that tracks money in American politics, federal elections in 1998 cost roughly $3.1 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars.
- By 2014, that figure had grown to nearly $5.1 billion. Four years later, the 2018 midterms cost $7.1 billion.



- The 2020 elections — presidential and congressional — cost about $18.3 billion in today's inflation-adjusted terms, making them the most expensive federal election cycle in history.
- One big reason: Democratic presidential primary, where billionaires Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer spent nearly $1.4 billion combined on unsuccessful bids. Add in an expensive Biden-Trump showdown and several extraordinarily costly Senate races, and 2020 became a particularly costly election year.

46

SOARING Campaign Spending

More recently, the 2022 midterms came in at $9.5 billion in campaign spending; and the 2024 presidential election cycle cost another $14.8 billion, which is more than the entire GDP of North Korea.

These record fundraising numbers have resulted in record spending numbers, primarily for candidate advertising.

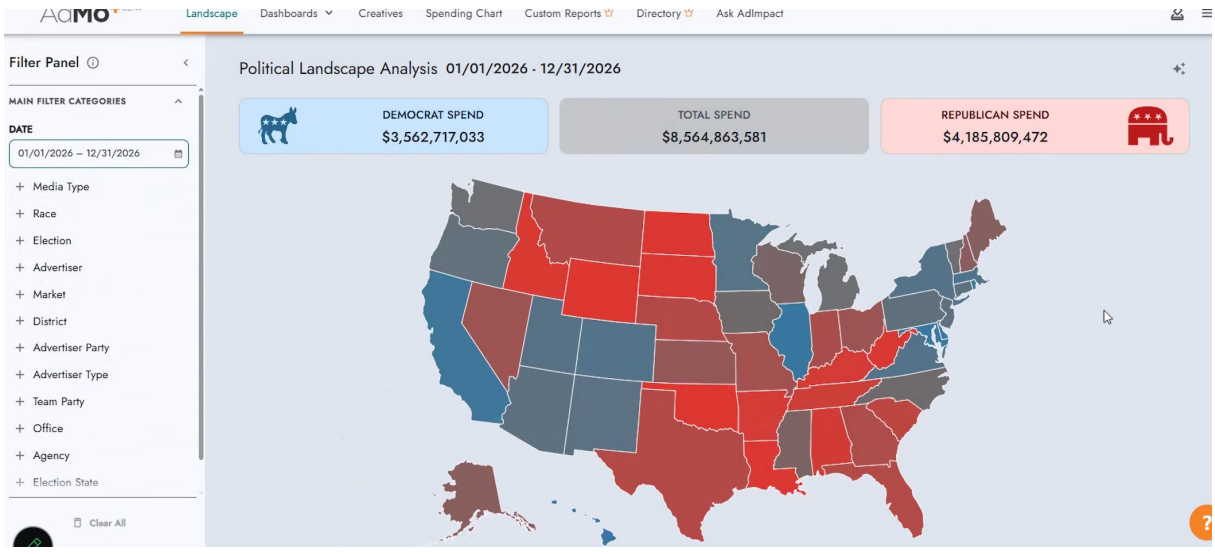
AdImpact, a company that tracks political advertising, projects that in the 2026 election cycle candidates and parties will spend $11.6 billion in political advertising, more than 30% more than the roughly $8.9 billion spent on advertising in the 2022 midterms.

$5.6 billion is projected for traditional broadcast television; $2.7 billion for connected TV and streaming; and another $1.6 billion for advertisements on major digital platforms.

As much as the world has gone digital, traditional TV commercials are still the biggest line item on a candidate's spending sheet.

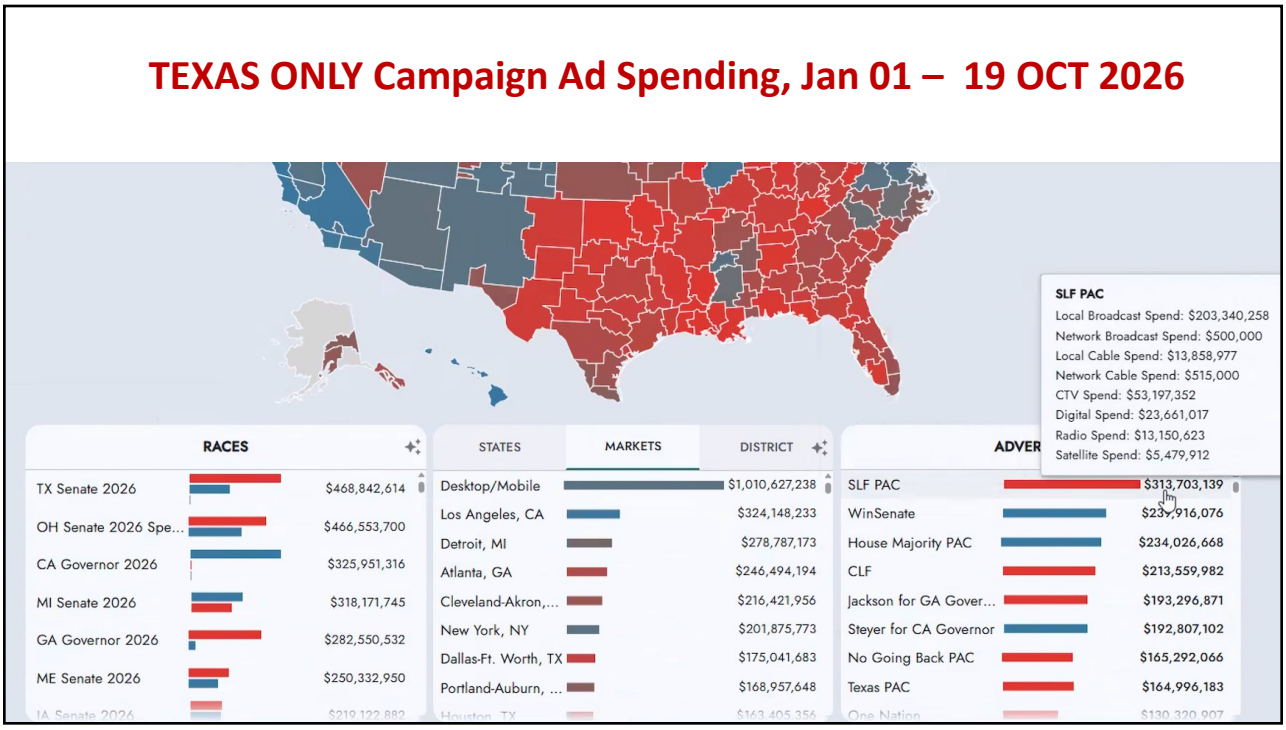
47

Total Campaign Ad Spending, Jan 01 – 19 OCT 2026 – in BILLIONS of DOLLARS!



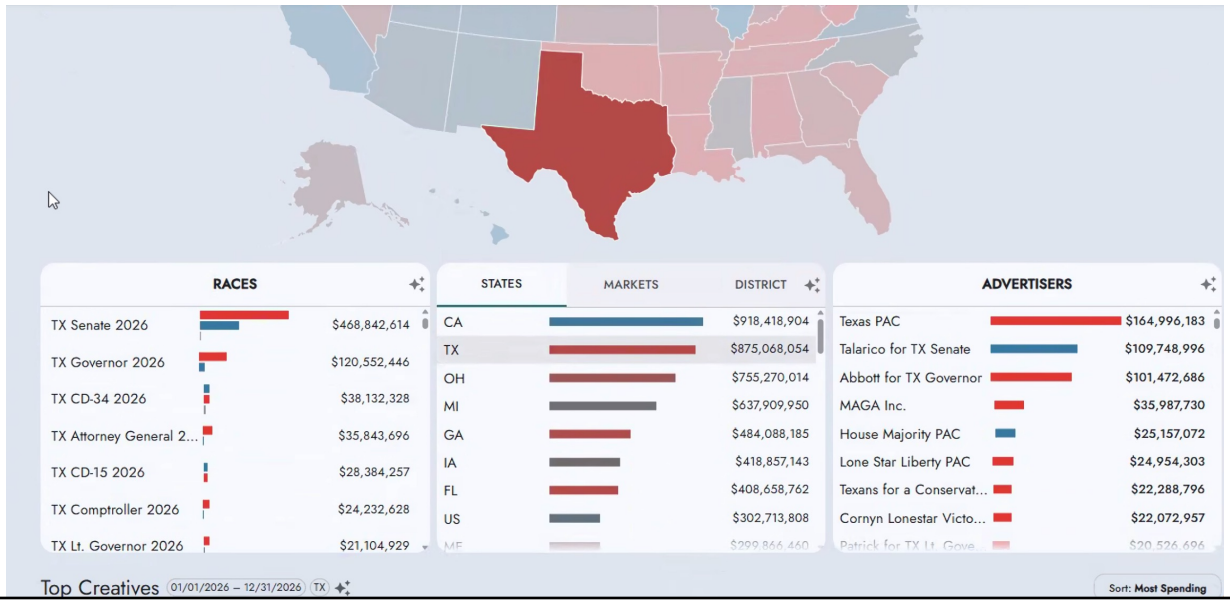
48

TEXAS ONLY Campaign Ad Spending, Jan 01 – 19 OCT 2026



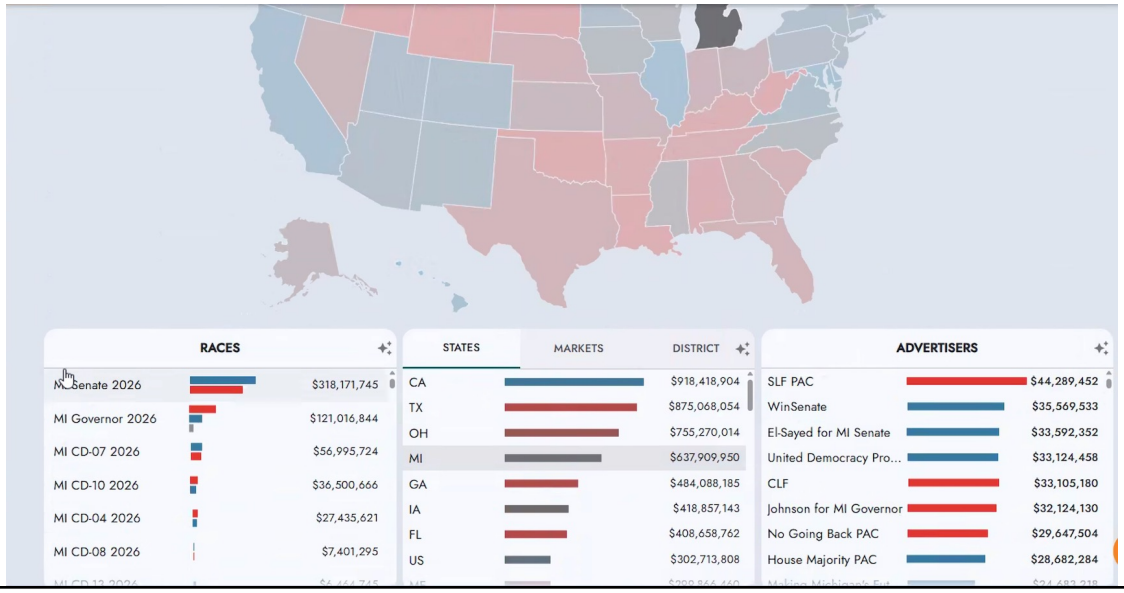
49

TEXAS ONLY Campaign Ad Spending, Jan 01 – 19 OCT 2026



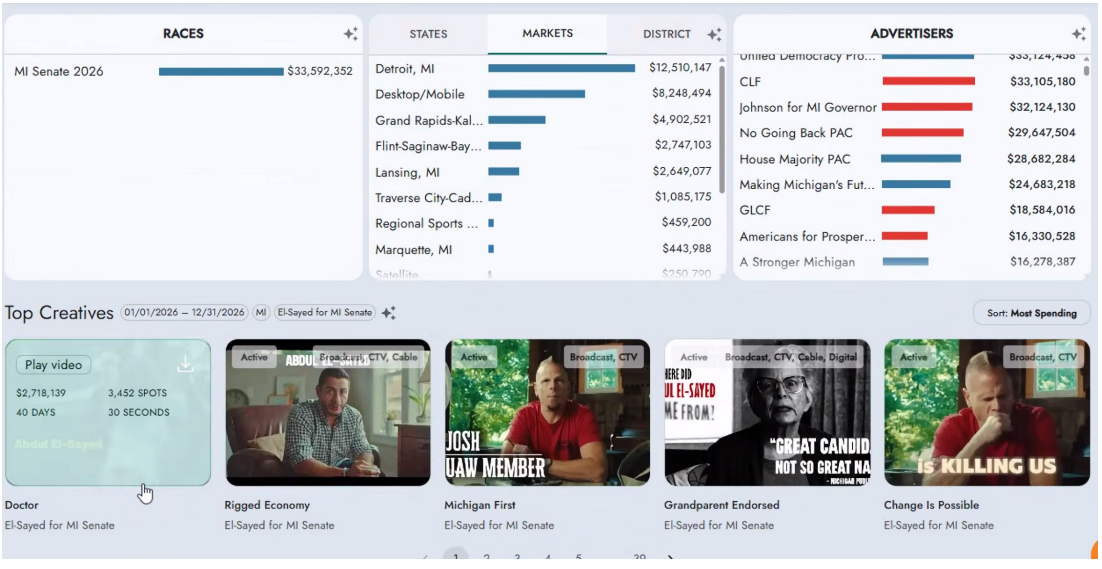
50

MICHIGAN ONLY Campaign Ad Spending, Jan 01 –19 OCT 2026



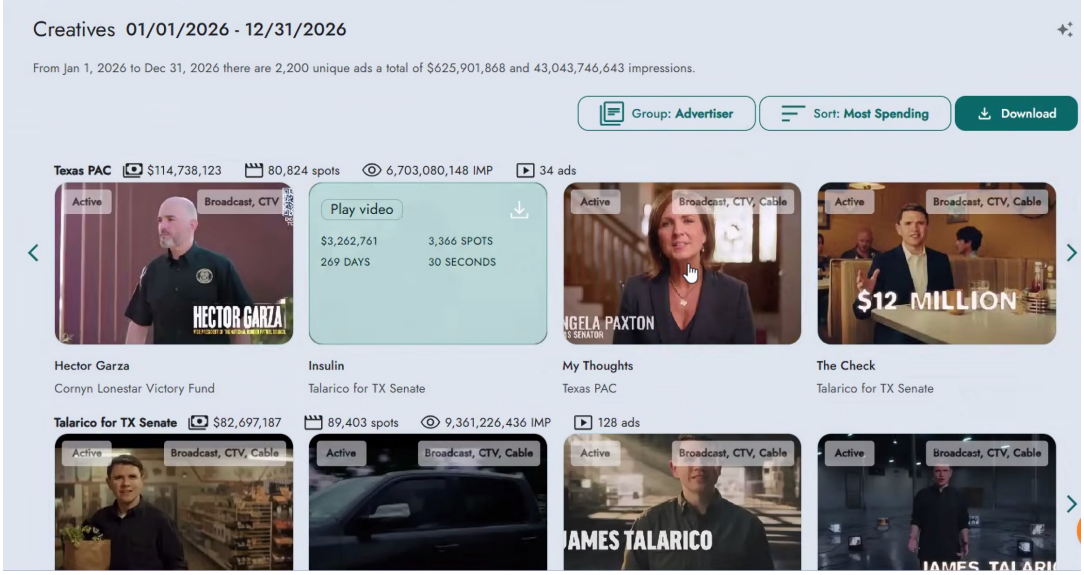
51

More on MICHIGAN Political Advertising



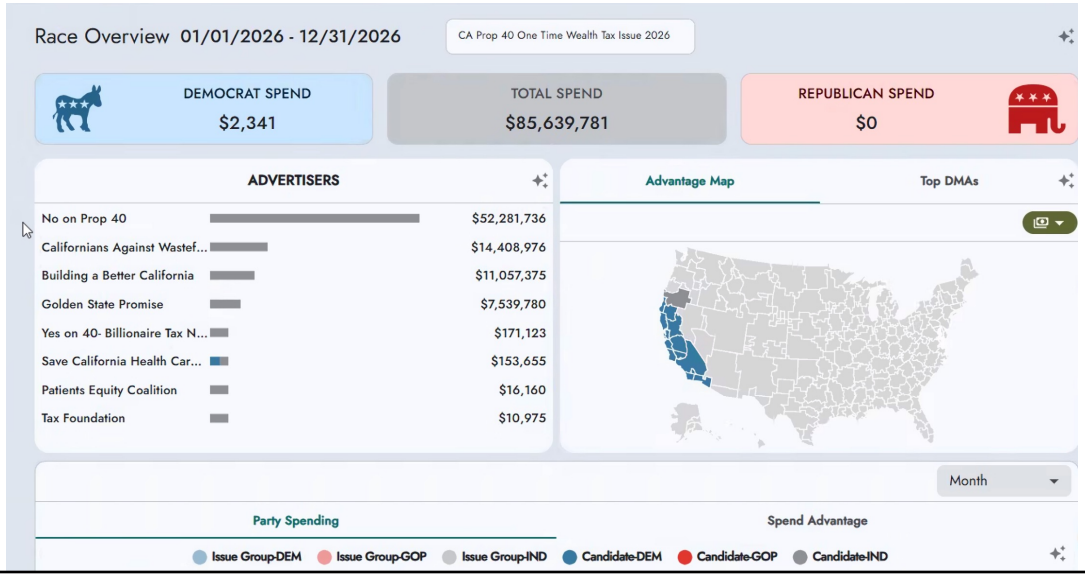
52

AdImpact Tool for Ads & Digging Into Spending



53

AdImpact Tool for Ads & Digging Into Spending
What About CA – Prop. 40?



54

A FUNDAMENTAL REMINDER!!

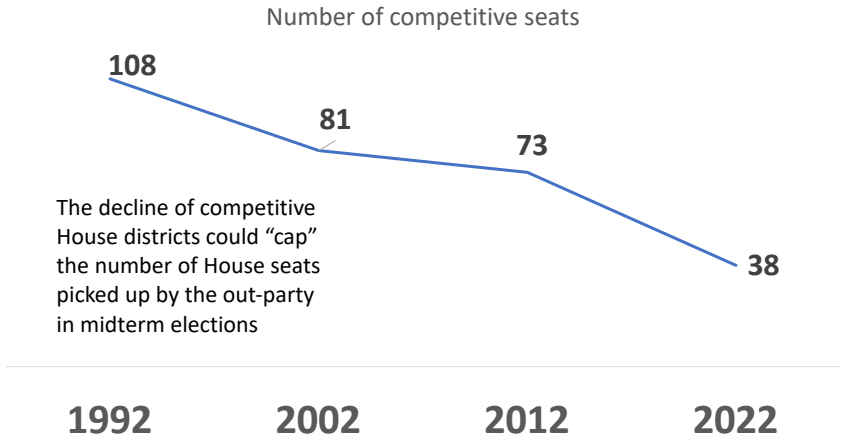
- House seats:
- Number of "Marginals?" vs. "Swing Seats?"
- Expanding vs. Contracting maps?
- Waves are smaller than in the past (: redistricting)
- Blue wave confined to Red states?

- Senate "fundamentals:"
- Party base + "types of independents / leaners"
- Candidate Quality & Ability to self-fund?
- Challengers NEED to be +5 by Halloween
- Blue wave confined to Red states?

KEY QUESTION: Where do competitive Senate seat races have to be by Halloween weekend?

55

Reminder: Decline in "Competitive" House Seats

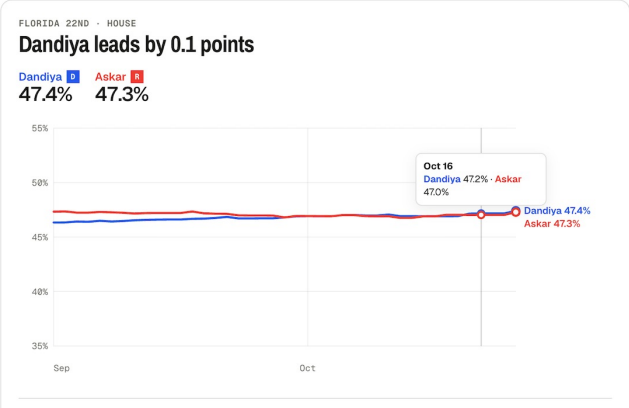


Source: *NY Times*, Feb 7, 2022 for 1992, 2002, and 2002. The 2002 number estimated by author from multiple sources. A competitive seat is defined as one in which the presidential candidates in prior election were within 5 percentage points of each other.

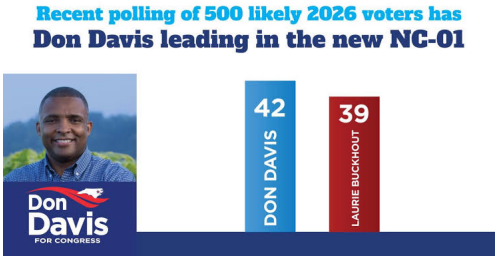
56

Examples of Closeness in Races - Dem Leads?

- **FL-22**

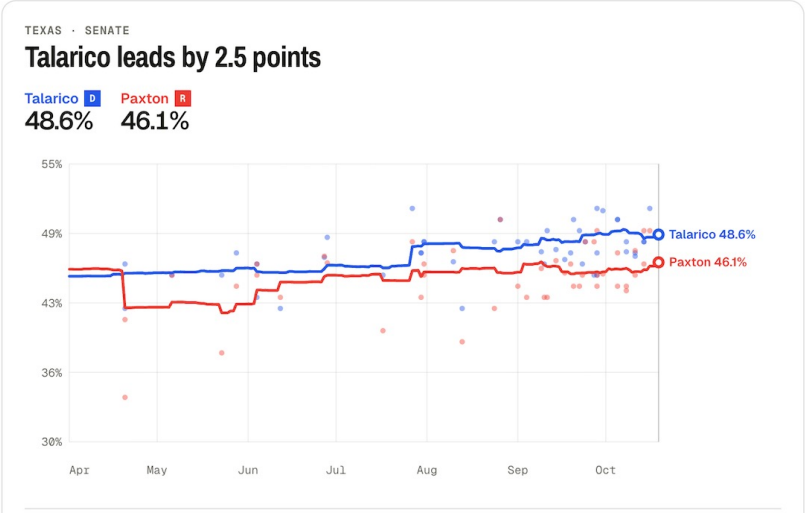


- **NC-1**
- Democratic incumbent Don Davis leads Republican challenger Laurie Buckhout 50% to 43% in the latest general election poll for North Carolina's 1st Congressional District.



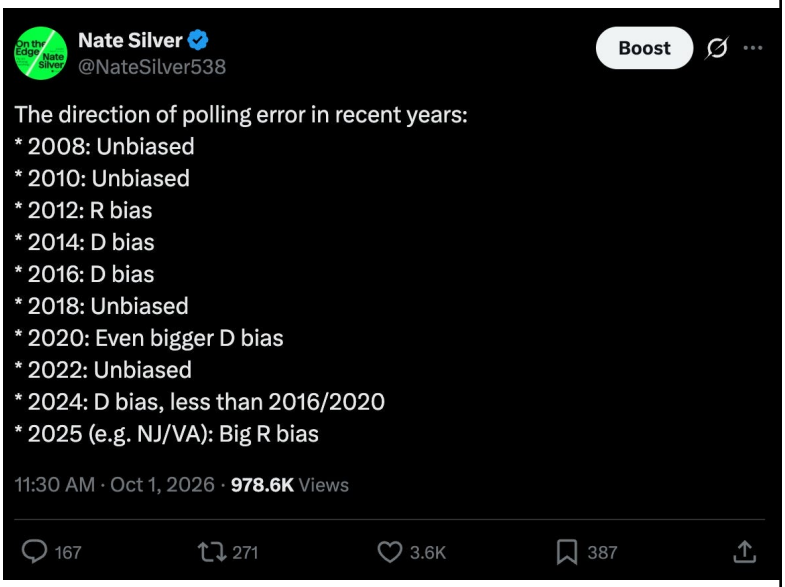
57

Sliver Bulletin, TX Senate Race, PAST WEEKEND to FRIDAY



58

Polling Bias Ahead?

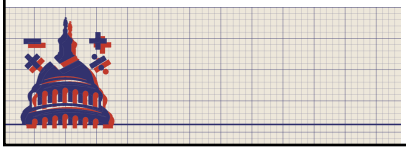


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Here is the Broader Polling Bias Concern for 2026…

- **WEIGHTING: Most reputable pollsters "weight" about 15% of 2024 Trump voters into polls in the bluest zip codes, which are home to a fifth of American adults.**
- **YET ONLY about 7% of Trump's actual votes were cast there.**

- These urban Republicans are far more likely than other Trump voters to back Democrats for Congress, so there is a concern this bias may end up artificially inflating support for Democrats on the House generic ballot.



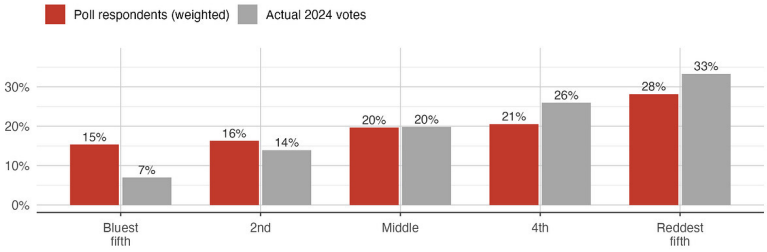
60

Broader Polling Bias Concern for 2026…, cont'd

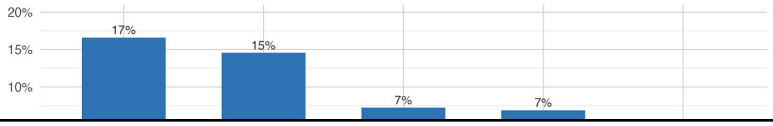
- **HERE'S THAT WEIGHTING in Practice – a Case Study in Polling:**

The poll has twice as many Trump voters from the bluest zip codes as it should, and they're far likelier to defect

Share of Trump's 2024 voters living in each fifth of zip codes



Share of the poll's Trump voters who back the Democrat for Congress



61

Which way could the polls miss?

Possible sources of error in 2026 midterm polls, by the party they would overstate

Polls may be too favorable to Democrats	Polls may be too favorable to Republicans
Too few rural Trump voters Our poll has twice as many Trump voters from the bluest zip codes as it should, and they're likelier to back Democrats	**Trump voters who stop admitting it** Soured Trump voters stop saying they voted for him, so weighting to 2024 inflates his loyalists
Discouraged Republicans skip polls Bad news for the GOP may make Republicans less willing to answer surveys, tilting samples toward Democrats	**Weights frozen at 2024** Past-vote weights and stale party-ID targets miss the electorate's shift toward Democrats
Low-effort respondents lean Republican If people who skip polls resemble the people who rush through them, polls overstate Democrats	**Missing disengaged voters** Low-knowledge Trump voters have swung toward Democrats almost three times as far as high-knowledge ones
Undecideds "coming home" Among undecided voters, Trump voters outnumber Harris voters nearly 2 to 1	**Undecideds break against incumbent party** In 2022, voters who were undecided before the election broke 55-45 against the president's party
Polls underestimated Republicans in 2016, 2020 and 2024 Final Senate polls overstated Democrats by 3.4, 5.4 and 2.5 points	**GOP-aligned pollsters flooding the zone** In 2022 they were over a third of late Senate polls and overstated Republicans by 3.5 points
	Polls underestimated Democrats in 2022 and 2025 Final polls overstated Republicans by 2.1 points in 2022 Senate races, and by 8.7 and 5.3 in the 2025 New Jersey and Virginia governor races

62

The Red ---> Blue Game, House Level

NRCC

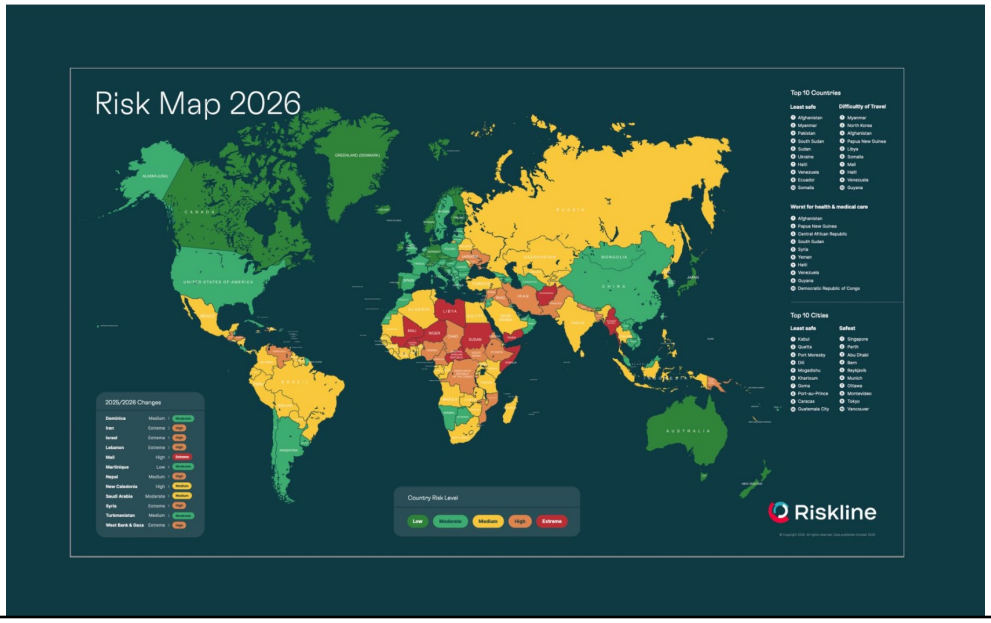
https://www.nrcc.org/2026/03/17/nrcc-introduces-maga-majority-to-expand-house-gop-majority-in-2026/



https://dccc.org/2026-red-to-blue/

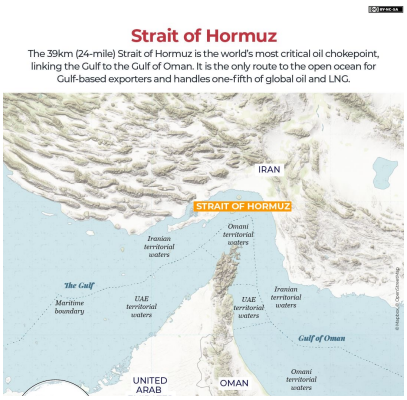
63

The Global Risk Landscape is Shifting



64







Iran Then (1978); Iran Now…

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Let's TACKLE YOUR Questions, Comments, & Concerns

Where to get Information on politics…

Resources on AMERICAN Politics - Looking to 2026 and beyond…

Links on the following pages

Anything further, please Contact me at:

david.mccuan@sonoma.edu

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Where to Find Info.: The Politics of the New Roaring '20s

Websites for General Elections Info.:

- www.thegreenpapers.com
- www.votesmart.org
- http://election.princeton.edu
- www.opensecrets.org (on $$$)
- http://funderscommittee.org/ (Dem. $$)
- www.politico.com
- www.centerforpolitics.org (UVA)
- www.electoralmaps.org
- www.uselectionatlas.org
- www.smartvoter.org
- www.factcheck.org
- www.vote.caltech.edu

- The Election Resource Hub @ MIT:
- https://electionlab.mit.edu/

Websites for Polling…Data…and DD:

- https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/latest-us-opinion-polls
- http://www.ppic.org/survey/
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/library/california-ballot-measure-guides
- http://www.iandrinstitute.org/
- http://www.iandrinstitute.org/data.cfm

- https://gking.harvard.edu/electit/#ours_race_rcp_pace-history_err-hist_rp-expected

How to Read Polls, in general, some guidelines:

- https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/here-are-five-questions-ask-when-analyzing-political-polls-n1053401

67

What to Consider With All of These Polls?

Polling Resources:

- https://fiftyplusone.news/latest-polls
- https://www.natesilver.net/p/trump-approval-ratings-nate-silver-bulletin
- https://morningconsult.com/articles/tag/political

- https://www.thegreenpapers.com/

- https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/latest-us-opinion-polls
- http://www.ppic.org/survey/
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll

- https://www.pewresearch.org/u-s-surveys/
- https://ssrs.com/ssrs-solutions/voter-poll/

How to Read Polls, in general, some guidelines:

- https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/here-are-five-questions-ask-when-analyzing-political-polls-n1053401

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What are "Midterm Elections?"
Tools to Arm Yourself for the 2026 Midterms:

On All Things Midterms of 2026:

- https://statesunited.org/resources/2026-midterm-elections-resource-hub/
- https://www.usvotefoundation.org/when-are-2026-midterm-elections-and-what-their-purpose
- Factcheck.org
- https://www.us.vote/how-to-vote
- https://www.usvotefoundation.org/

On All Things Redistricting:

- Moritz Law School, The Ohio State:
- http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/election-law/information-analysis/
- Loyola School of Law:
- http://redistricting.lls.edu/
- The Brennan Center, NYU School of Law:
- http://www.brennancenter.org/

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More Websites for Politics & Elections Info.

- elections.gmu.edu
- www.pollster.com
- www.gallup.com
- www.pollsandvotes.com
- www.cqpolitics.com
- www.rollcall.com ; www.thehill.com
- www.fivethirtyeight.com
- www.pewresearch.org
- http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cspg/smartpolitics/

Just on money / $$$ below:

- www.opensecrets.org
- www.maplight.org
- www.followthemoney.org
- www.campaignfinance.org

Top CA Elections Resources:

- CVF Online Guide:
- www.calvoter.org
- https://calvoter.org/covg
- Voter's Edge:
- http://votersedge.org/
- https://votersedge.org/ca/
- Official CA Voter's Guide:
- http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/
- California Choices Guide:
- http://www.californiachoices.org
- CA Dept. of Finance, Demographic Research Unit:
- http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/

70

Top CA Elections Resources: NOV 2026 CA Resources

- CVF Online Guide:

www.calvoter.org

https://calvoter.org/covg

- **Voter's Edge**: KEY, HELPFUL RESOURCE FOR ALL OF US!

http://votersedge.org/

https://votersedge.org/ca/

- Official CA Voter's Guide:

http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/

- California Choices Guide:

http://www.californiachoices.org

- CA Dept. of Finance, Demographic Research Unit:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/

71

Where to Monitor Social Media (SM) Trends on Campaigns, Elections, & Politics?

Observatory on Social Media, Indiana U.

OSoMe ("awe•some") highlights the results of a broad research project aimed to study information diffusion in social media. Site has tools to explore how people spread ideas through online social networks.

https://osome.iu.edu/

Center for an Informed Public (CIP), U. of Washington

The Center for an Informed Public is an interdisciplinary research initiative at the University of Washington that helps individuals, communities, and institutions navigate our complex information environments.

https://www.cip.uw.edu/research/

72

On Polling & Polling "Error" in 2024

- Pew Public Opinion Polling Basics:
  - https://www.pewresearch.org/course/public-opinion-polling-basics/

and

- Washington Post (WaPo) Polling Averages Methodology, Pres Elections:
  - https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2024/06/26/presidential-polling-averages-methodology/

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Appendix – More *IF* We Have Time…

and / or as Questions Arise…

74

The Tinderbox of Chaos Election That is Ahead–

What of the Aftermath of 03 November & Moving Forward?



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The Five Conditions for Chaos

1. A Potential Lame-Duck Donald Trump;
2. A Super-Close Election;
3. Battleground States, Legal Smackdown;
4. The Gun-Behind-the-Door Threat(s) of Violence; and
5. The Dis-, Mis, and Mal-Information Wars of Perception Post-Election

All of this = a play for exploiting our on-going, existing divisions within our Body Politic.

AI-Generated Image →



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This is Part Of a Broader, Deeper Assault by DJT & His Supporters Than What We Have Previously Seen









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Careful – This is NOT the Same as 2020



The New York Times

In Case of an Election Crisis, This Is What You Need to Know

Oct. 16, 2024



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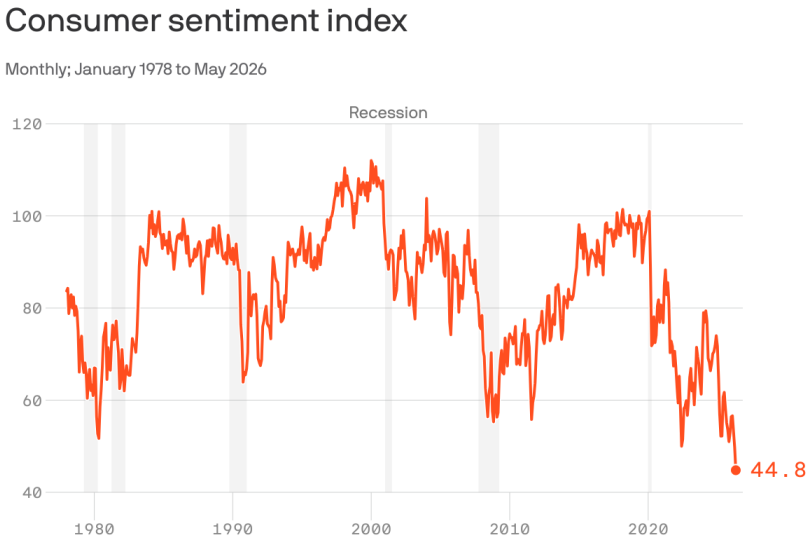
Changes & Effects on the Ground –
THE *WILD CARDS* - Affecting the 2026 MIDTERM ELECTIONS:

How These Four Horsemen Can Affect an Electoral Apocalypse



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Wild Card #1 – U. of MI Consumer Surveys



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Wild Card #1 – U. of MI Consumer Surveys

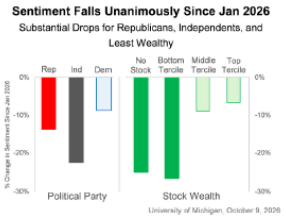
surveys of consumers
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

HOME TABLES CHARTS REPORTS CONTACT DATA SITE

Preliminary Results for October 2026

	Oct 2026	Sep 2026	Oct 2025	M-M Change	Y-Y Change
Index of Consumer Sentiment	**46.3**	48.1	53.6	-3.7%	-13.6%
Current Economic Conditions	**44.7**	50.9	58.6	-12.2%	-23.7%
Index of Consumer Expectations	**47.3**	46.3	50.3	+2.2%	-6.0%

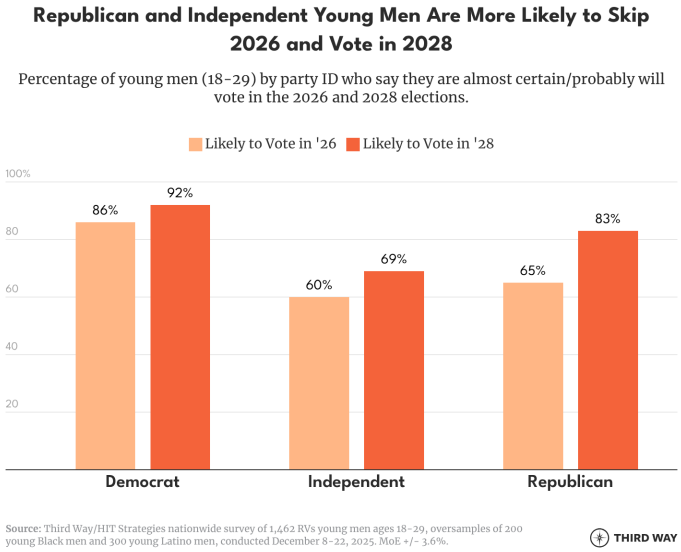
Featured Chart (Image | PDF | Excel)



https://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/

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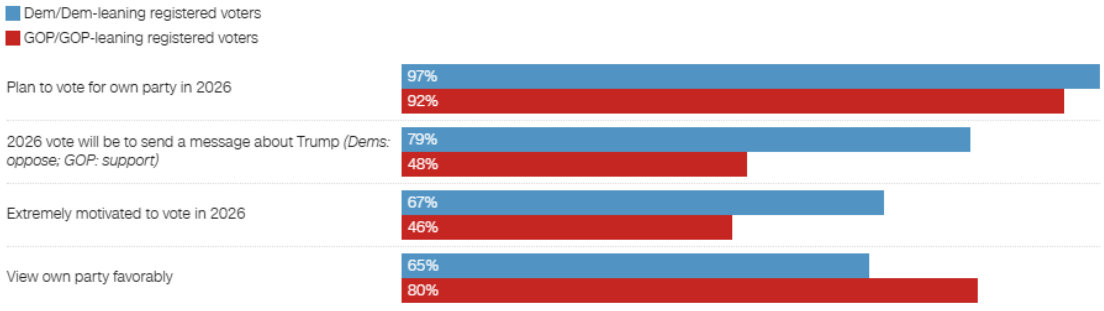
Wild Card #2 –Turnout Factors



82

Wild Card #3 – Both Parties Have Challenges

Dem-aligned voters are less positive than GOP voters about their own party, but more motivated for 2026



Note: The CNN poll was conducted by SSRS from October 27-30 among a random national sample of 1,245 US adults drawn from a probability-based panel. Surveys were either conducted online or by telephone with a live interviewer. Results shown in this chart have a margin of sampling error of up to ±5.3 percentage points.

Source: CNN/SSRS polling
Graphic: Ariel Edwards-Levy, CNN

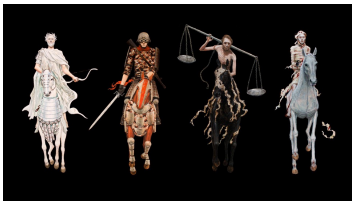
83

Wild Card #4 – The Nightmare Scenario











For more information? See this link to 50 U.S.C. 1621 and link. Also see:

https://www.brennancenter.org/voting-mail-and-using-drop-boxes-are-safe-and-trustworthy-ways-vote-thanks-numerous-security

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