ELECTION POSTMORTEM

The 2026 midterms: what voters told us

National Omnibus, November 8–12, 2026 · 1,001 voters, weighted to the 2026 electorate

November 2026



HOW TO READ THIS WAVE

This wave is weighted to the people who voted in 2026

	October	November
Universe	Registered voters	Likely voters
Weighted on 2024 vote recall	Yes	Yes
Weighted on 2026 vote recall	No	Yes
2024 recall, Trump / Harris	48 / 48	43 / 47
Did not vote in 2024	3%	9%
Party ID, Dem / Rep / Ind	42 / 37 / 20	42 / 37 / 19
Bachelor’s degree or more	40%	46%
Age 65 and older	33%	35%

THE ELECTION

Democrats take the House

House vote among 2026 voters

56%
Democratic

43%
Republican

All or mostly for each party, with leaners (Q20, n = 897). The sample is weighted to 2026 vote recall, so this matches the result by design.

Seats and margin

National House popular vote	**About D+13**
House seats flipped	**Dem 44 · Rep 3**
House seats won so far	**Dem 255+ of 435**
Senate	**Dem 55 · Rep 44**

Results not final. Counts as of Nov. 12. About a dozen House races and Alaska's Senate race are uncalled.

The swing to Democrats was bigger in red states

States Trump won in 2024 · 31 states

R+17 → D+3

House vote margin, 2024 to 2026. A 20-point swing toward Democrats.

States Harris won in 2024 · 19 states

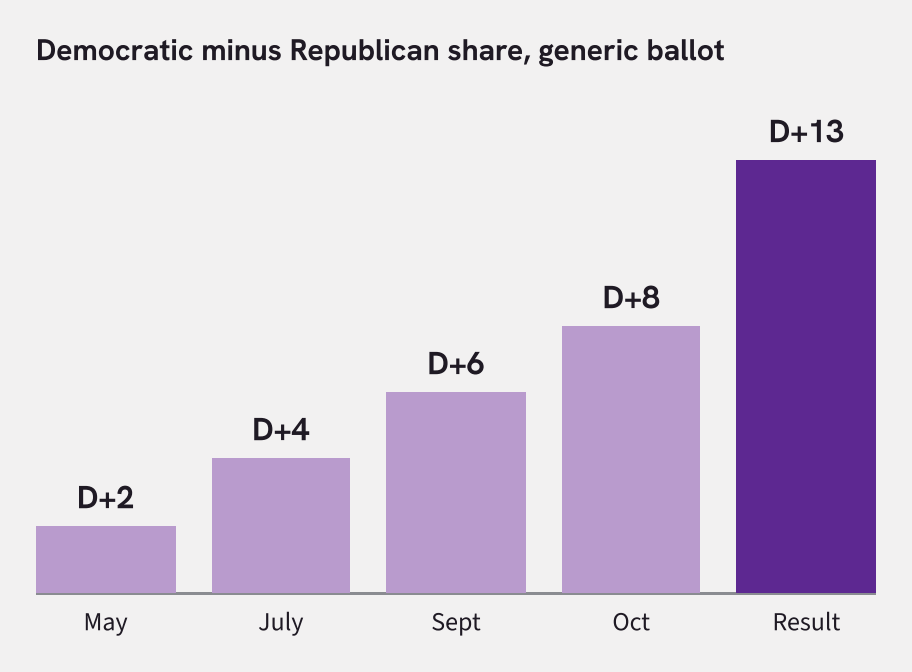
D+17 → D+30

House vote margin, 2024 to 2026. A 13-point swing toward Democrats.

Democrats did no better in blue states. The swing there was 13 points, against 20 in the states Trump won.

80% of the national gain in Democrats' House vote margin came from states Trump won. Those states cast 59% of the vote.

Rainey's generic ballot moved toward Democrats all year. The result was D+13.



October: 52% to 44% among registered voters (n = 1,279).

Result: national House vote, about D+13 on preliminary counts. Rainey's November sample of 2026 voters is weighted to it, 56% to 43%.

WHY VOTERS CROSSED OVER

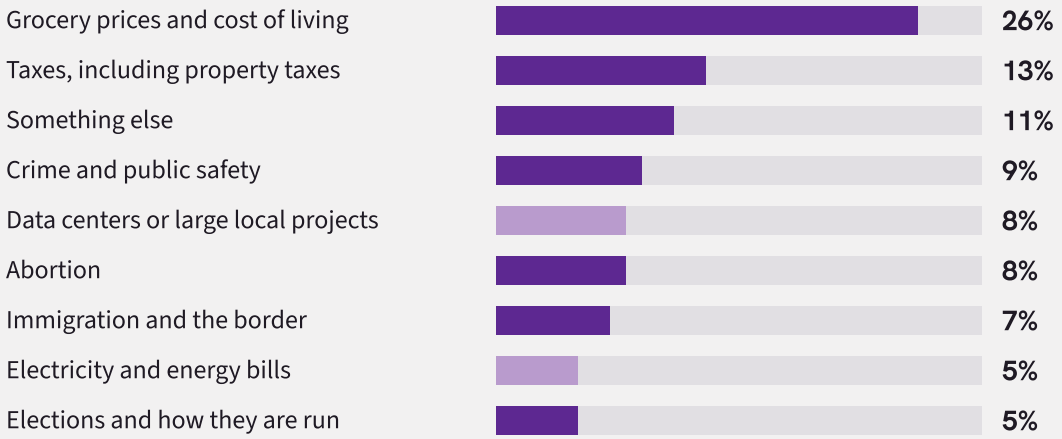
One in four voters crossed party lines, most often over cost of living

24%

of 2026 voters backed a candidate from a party they usually do not support, including 32% of independents and 37% of voters under 35 (Q95).

Light purple: Rainey issue areas.

Issue that mattered most in crossing over (Q97, n = 222)



CROSSOVER VOTERS

Of voters who crossed over, here is why in their own words

27% About the candidate

19% About an issue

15% About the parties or Trump

28% Gave no reason

OTHER ANSWERS

15% Said they did not cross party lines

4% Vote the person, not the party

3% Only one party on the ballot

THE CANDIDATE

"I voted for somebody else because it was the right thing to do, and they're looking out for me, not just the rich."

Democrat · 35–49 · Black · NJ

AN ISSUE

"About the issue of lowering the electricity bills and making AI pay for their own energy prices"

Democrat · 50–64 · White · OH

THE PARTIES

"I voted more for Democrats this year than Republicans because I feel like we're headed in the wrong direction."

Republican · 50–64 · Latino · TX

TRUMP

"I voted for more Democrats than usual to try to get people in there to control Trump and his crazy moves."

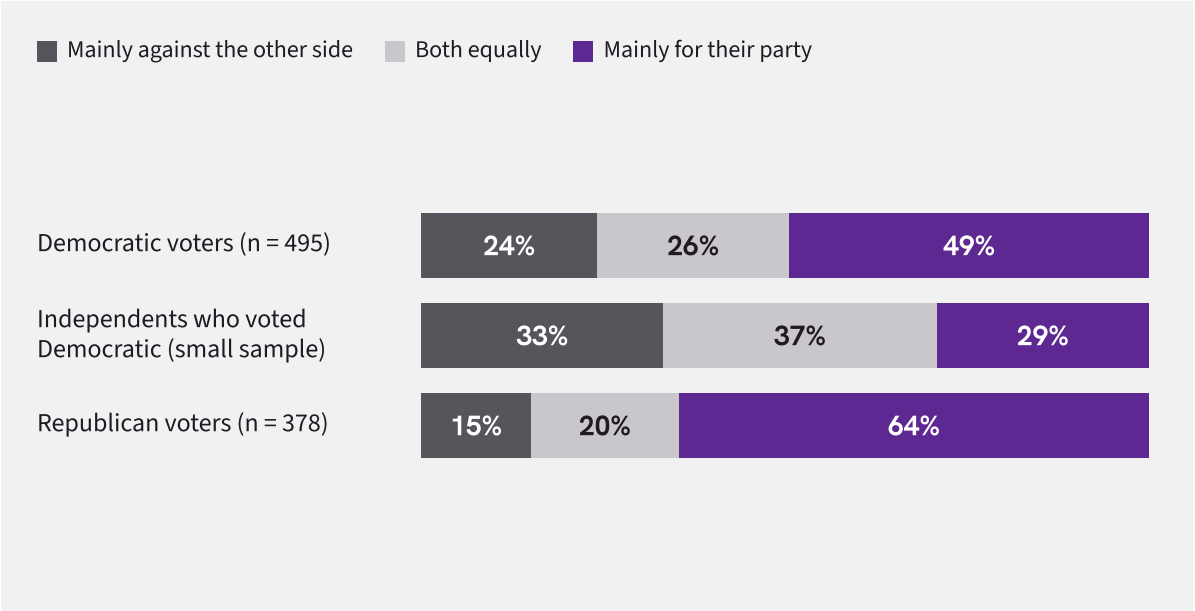
Republican · 65+ · White · MI

FOR OR AGAINST

Half of Democratic voters were voting against Trump and the GOP, at least in part

50%

of Democratic voters say their vote was mainly against Trump and the Republicans (24%) or for and against equally (26%).



What it means: Democrats won on opposition as much as on their own agenda, and now have to govern on something tangible.

Six in ten say wrong track and disapprove of Trump

63%
Wrong track

60%
Disapprove of Trump

56%
Dem Party favorable

42%
GOP favorable

Trump job approval	Approve	Disapprove
May	43%	52%
July	41%	53%
Sept	41%	59%
Oct	42%	58%
Nov (new weighting)	39%	60%

Favorable view of	Favorable	Unfavorable
Kamala Harris	48%	49%
Gavin Newsom	43%	44%
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	42%	43%
Marco Rubio	42%	45%
J.D. Vance	42%	52%
Donald Trump	38%	61%

COST OF LIVING

Seven in ten voters feel squeezed by rising costs

69%

say feeling “squeezed” describes their situation; 38% say very well (Q57).

53% say their finances are declining, whether good or poor today (Q56).

A major burden for the household right now (Q58)

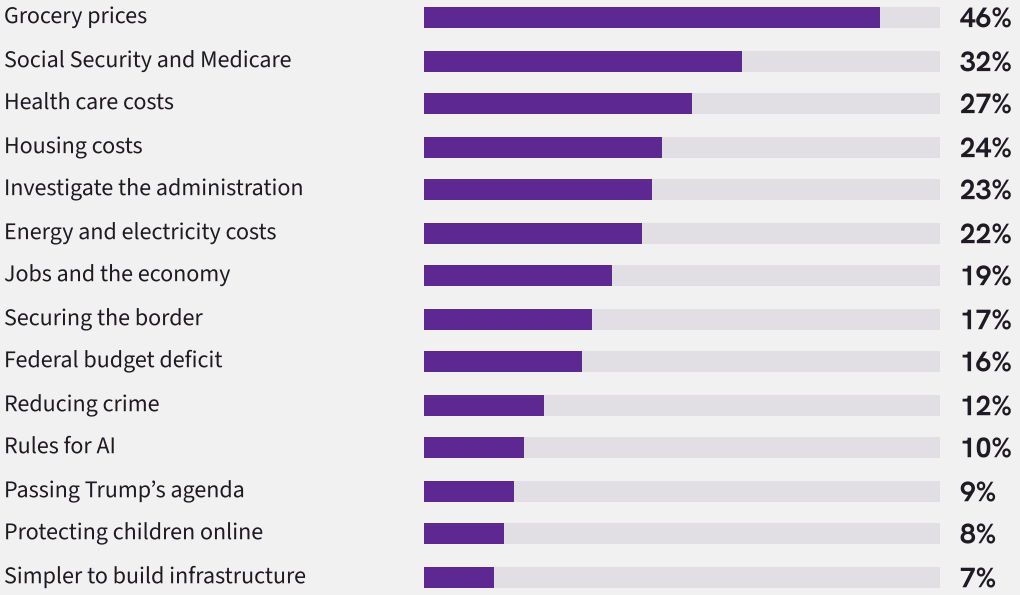


43% say grocery prices rose further over the last six months (Q59)

85% think a recession in the next year is at least somewhat likely (Q53)

51% vs 29% would blame Trump vs. congressional Democrats if the economy worsens (Q55)

Lowering grocery prices is the top priority for Congress in every party



Democrats' top three

Grocery prices	49%
Investigate the administration	42%
Social Security and Medicare	34%

Republicans' top three

Grocery prices	43%
Securing the border	32%
Social Security and Medicare	30%

Independents' top three

Grocery prices	46%
Social Security and Medicare	33%
Health care costs	28%

Rainey Center National Omnibus, Nov 8–12, 2026, n = 1,001 · Q24, select up to three · something else 4%, not sure 1%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Voters' top ask of Congress is lower costs

Any mention	All	Dem	Rep	Ind
Lower prices and the cost of living	18%	16%	18%	21%
Health care costs and access	11%	11%	8%	16%
Work together across parties	11%	4%	17%	13%
Lower gas and energy prices	8%	9%	9%	5%
Do their job, keep promises	7%	3%	12%	9%
Lower grocery and food prices	7%	9%	6%	4%
Investigate the administration	7%	13%	0%	6%
Fix the economy	7%	7%	6%	7%
End corruption, reform Congress	6%	7%	6%	6%
Impeach or remove Trump or officials	6%	11%	1%	5%
Check Trump, reverse his policies	5%	10%	1%	4%
Serve ordinary people	5%	4%	6%	6%

24%

name a price or cost: the cost of living, gas and energy, groceries or housing.

25%

ask Congress to work differently: work together, do its job, serve ordinary people or end corruption.

15%

want Trump or his administration investigated, checked or removed.



Rainey Center National Omnibus, Nov 8–12, 2026 · open-ended question, spoken answers, n = 999, weighted

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

What voters want Congress to do next year

COST OF LIVING

"Lower the cost of living for working families, especially rent, groceries, and health care."

Democrat · 18–34 · White · FL

COST OF LIVING

"Lower the cost of groceries, gas, utilities, and everyday expenses."

Republican · 50–64 · White · MI

ACCOUNTABILITY

"I would like to see Congress hold this administration accountable for any potential crimes and corruption."

Democrat · 50–64 · White · IL

HEALTH CARE AND PRICES

"Try to find out why groceries and health care costs so much, try to figure out how to help the American people."

Independent · 65+ · Latino · TX

WORKING TOGETHER

"I want Congress to work together to get things done and not to use it as a weapon against the current administration."

Republican · 50–64 · White · AZ

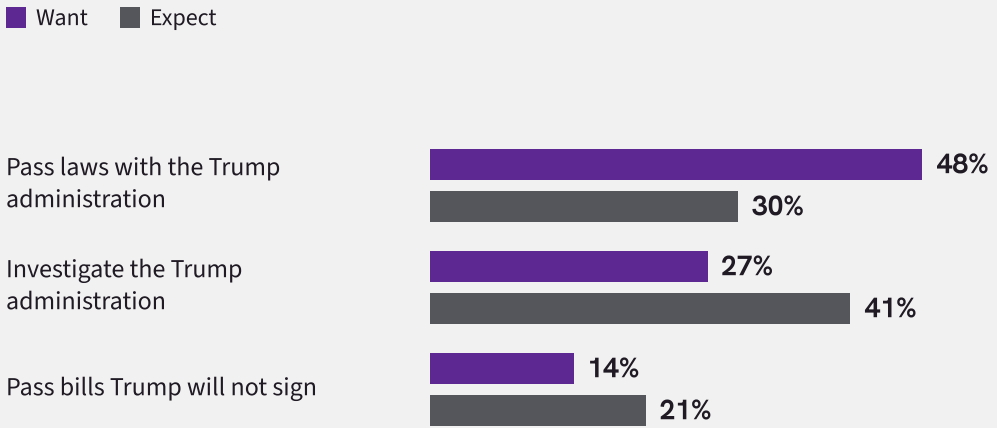
WORKING TOGETHER

"I would like Congress to learn to work together and not consider each other to be enemies but partners in doing what's best for the American people."

Democrat · 65+ · Black · TX

Voters want House Democrats to work with Trump. They expect investigations.

What House Democrats should spend most of their time on (Q25), and what voters expect (Q26)



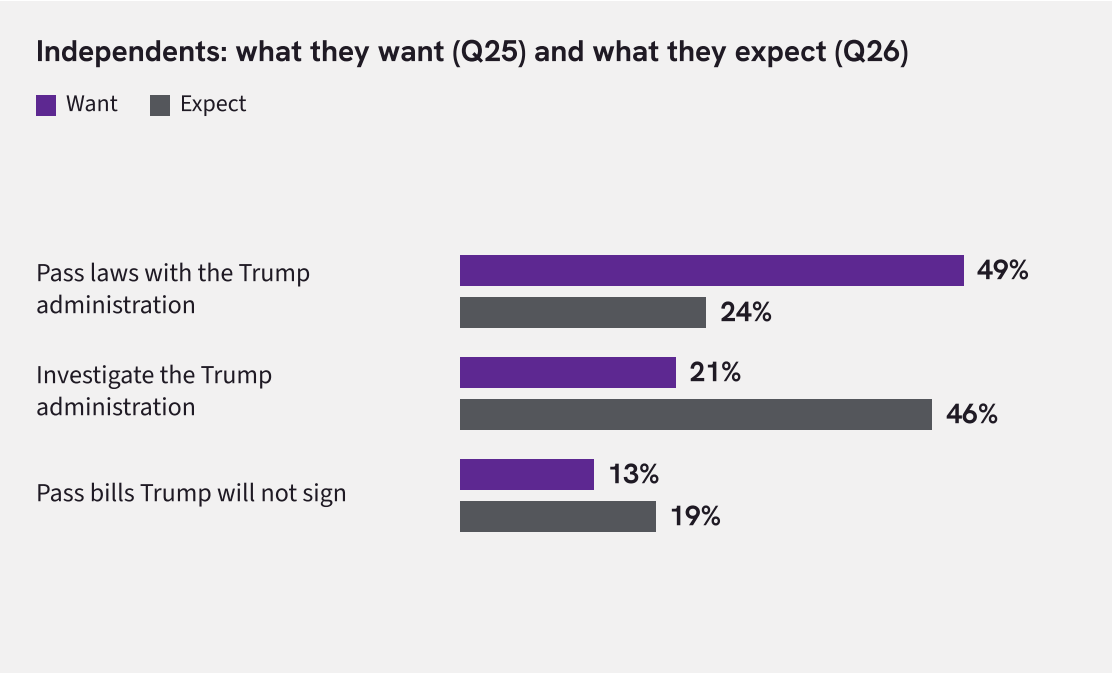
68%

expect mostly gridlock between Congress and Trump over the next two years; 24% expect them to mostly work together (Q27).

73% of Republicans and 49% of independents want House Democrats to work with Trump. Democrats lean toward investigating: 48%, against 26%.

Rainey Center National Omnibus, Nov 8–12, 2026, n = 1,001 · not sure: want 10%, expect 8%

Independents want House Democrats to work with Trump. They expect investigations.



72%

of independents expect mostly gridlock between Congress and Trump over the next two years; 20% expect them to mostly work together (Q27).

49% of independents want House Democrats to pass laws with Trump, against 73% of Republicans and 26% of Democrats.

Seven in ten want Washington to be more bipartisan

71%

want officials in Washington to be more bipartisan, working with the other party to get things done

17% want them more partisan, fighting for their own party's priorities. Democrats 68%, Republicans 75%, independents 70%.

72%

want their party's leaders to get things done with the other side, even if it shares the credit

21% want them to stand firm

62%

more likely to back their own party's member who passed a bill with the other party

6% less likely; 28% no difference

66%

likely to vote for a once strong Trump backer who now works with both parties

24% not likely to

70%

want a 2028 presidential candidate who will mainly work with the other party

19% want one who will mainly fight

Voters want 2028 nominees who work with the other party

Any 2028 candidate (Q49)

70% want a candidate who will mainly work with the other party

19% want one who will fight hard against the other party

	Work with	Fight
Democrats	66%	23%
Republicans	73%	19%
Independents	75%	11%

Republican nominee (Q50)

63% would rather see a traditional conservative Republican win

20% would rather see a candidate who carries on Trump's MAGA movement

	Traditional	MAGA
Democrats	68%	8%
Republicans	59%	36%
Independents	61%	15%

Democratic nominee (Q51)

59% would rather see a moderate Democrat who works with Republicans win

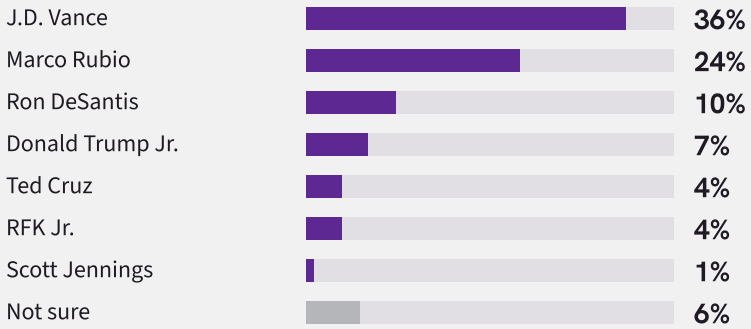
29% would rather see a progressive who fights for Democratic priorities

	Moderate	Progressive
Democrats	41%	50%
Republicans	78%	8%
Independents	62%	24%

Each party on its own nominee: Republicans prefer a traditional conservative 59% to 36%. Democrats prefer a progressive 50% to 41%.

Vance leads the Republican field; Rubio is second

First choice



Would consider

	Consider	Would not
J.D. Vance	82%	15%
Marco Rubio	77%	10%
Ron DeSantis	72%	11%
Ted Cruz	64%	21%
RFK Jr.	51%	36%
Donald Trump Jr.	43%	41%
Tucker Carlson	25%	49%

Republicans: 59% want a traditional conservative nominee, 36% a candidate who carries on the MAGA movement.

No Democrat tops 17% in an open 2028 field

First choice



Would consider

	Consider	Would not
Gavin Newsom	69%	16%
Kamala Harris	68%	28%
Pete Buttigieg	63%	16%
Ocasio-Cortez	59%	22%
Mark Kelly	55%	14%
Josh Shapiro	53%	14%
Jon Ossoff	52%	13%

Democrats: 50% want a progressive nominee, 41% a moderate who works with Republicans.

CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNT

Republicans trust the count close to home, not nationwide or by mail

Votes counted as intended	All	Dem	Rep
Your own vote (2026 voters)	74%	84%	66%
Your county or city	74%	88%	62%
Your state	70%	86%	55%
Nationwide	61%	80%	40%
In person at polling places	71%	85%	57%
In person, early voting	66%	83%	47%
By absentee or mail ballot	56%	77%	35%

Extremely or very confident.

This November	All	Dem	Rep
Eligible people were able to vote	72%	81%	63%
Workers handled ballots securely	66%	83%	50%
Midterms fair, counted accurately	58%	77%	36%
Noncitizens who tried were stopped	54%	75%	34%

83%

of voters hit none of the listed problems; long waits led at 11%

88%

of in-person voters felt highly secure or secure at check-in

ELECTION RULES

Three in four back ID rules, and nearly nine in ten like their voting options

Photo ID to vote (Q16)

77%

support, 59% strongly; 18% oppose

ID number with mail ballots (Q17)

75%

support, 49% strongly; 22% oppose

Satisfied with voting options (Q14)

88%

satisfied, 62% very; 10% dissatisfied

Mail voters returned ballots by Postal Service (61%), drop box (35%) or in person (4%). 79% felt extremely or very secure doing it (n = 210).

Support by party	Photo ID	ID with mail ballots
Democrats	64%	67%
Republicans	90%	86%
Independents	78%	71%

FISCAL

Voters worry about the debt. The parties split on the fix.

70%

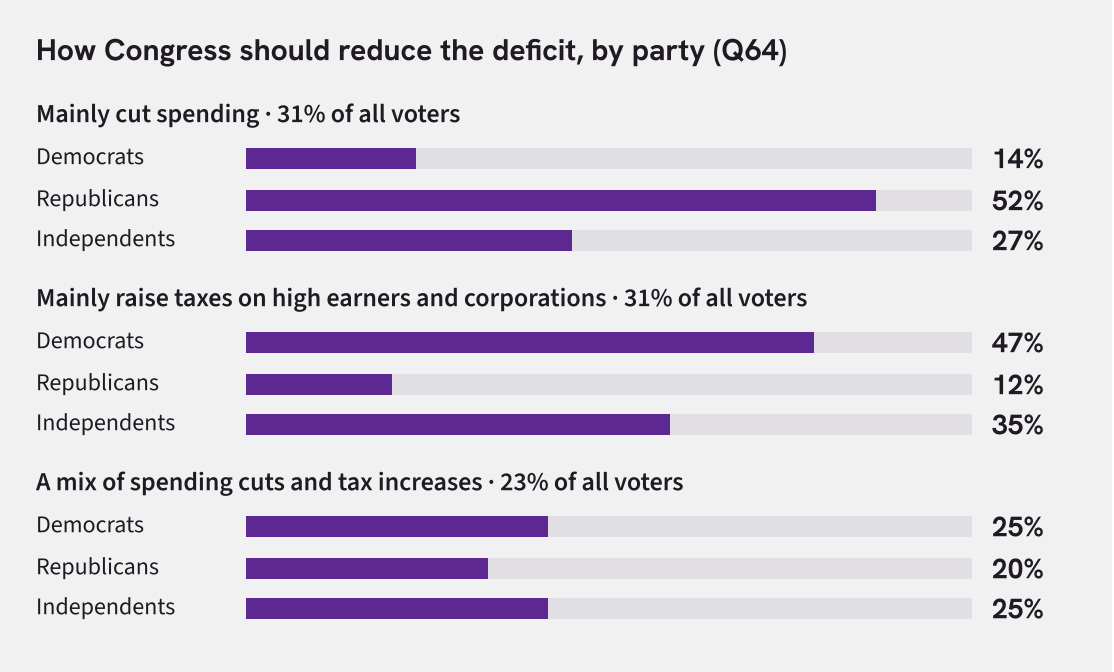
say recurring shutdowns are unacceptable and Congress must fix the process (Q69)

60%

are extremely or very concerned about the national debt (Q63)

77%

worry Social Security cannot pay full benefits during the next presidential term (Q68)



Rainey Center National Omnibus, Nov 8–12, 2026, n = 1,001 · Q64: 7% say not a priority now, 7% not sure

PERMITTING REFORM

Two in three back the permitting bill

67%

support the permitting bill, up from 64% in October (Q80).

70% back a law to build power plants and lines faster to lower bills (Q85).

7% call simpler building a top priority. Sell it as a bill about electricity costs.

Wind, solar, gas, power lines and nuclear moved toward “easier to build”

Net easier minus harder (Q78)	Oct	Nov	Change
Wind farms	+13	+23	+10
Large solar farms	+15	+22	+7
Natural gas pipelines	−6	+4	+10
High-voltage power lines	−10	+1	+11
Battery storage	−6	−5	+1
Nuclear energy facilities	−29	−12	+17

New this wave, net easier: grain storage +39, roads, bridges and rail +37, water systems +34 (Q79).

More of what voters want from Congress: costs and the economy

COST OF LIVING

"I'd love to see Congress lower the cost of living, since that is one of the primary issues that apparently most Americans were concerned about in the election."

Independent · 65+ · White · NV

GAS AND HEALTH CARE

"Get gas prices down and get better insurance for everybody."

Republican · 35–49 · White · NC

HEALTH CARE

"I want Congress to not put any cuts to Medicaid and Medicare because a lot of people depend on Medicaid and Medicare for their insurance."

Democrat · 50–64 · White · AL

HOUSING

"To do something about the homeless situation here with housing, people on the street, helping those people get help and therapy, a place to live."

Republican · 50–64 · White · CA

JOBS

"The one thing I want Congress to do most next year is work on getting more jobs in this country, getting better paying jobs."

Republican · 50–64 · White · NC

THE ECONOMY

"I want them to focus on the economy more and the cost of living."

Independent · 35–49 · White · OH

More of what voters want from Congress: how it works, Trump and the border

WORKING TOGETHER

“I would like to see Congress come together and stop being all one-sided voting. They need to work together to get things fixed in the economy, in housing, and in health care.”

Republican · 35–49 · White · PA

REFORMING CONGRESS

“I would like Congress to pass a vote or a law that gives you term limits. You can’t be in office forever. You have to have term limits on there.”

Republican · 50–64 · White · FL

SERVING ORDINARY PEOPLE

“Actually start caring about the constituents instead of just trying to pass bills that protects the people who fund them.”

Independent · 35–49 · White · TX

CHECKING TRUMP

“I want Congress to stand up to the President of the United States and comply with the wishes of the electorate.”

Democrat · 65+ · White · IN

IMPEACHMENT

“I would like Congress to impeach President Trump.”

Democrat · 65+ · Black · IL

THE BORDER

“The one thing I want Congress to do next year is to continue getting rid of illegal immigrants. If they want to be here, they need to come legally.”

Republican · 50–64 · White · VA

More from voters who crossed party lines

THE CANDIDATE

"The vote was for a judge who has shown a history of being a fair, equitable judge on issues of crime, where the other candidate had no experience for the position."

Independent · 65+ · White · MS

THE OPPONENT

"State superintendent because the other party was too extreme and voted in the past in a way I didn't like."

Democrat · 18–34 · White · OK

COST OF LIVING

"I voted for Lamont as governor because he's dealing with energy costs."

Republican · 50–64 · White · CT

DATA CENTERS

"Midterm elections I voted for somebody outside my party because of their view on data centers."

Independent · 50–64 · Latino · TX

THE PARTIES

"I voted for Democrats because the Republican party was doing a horrible job."

Republican · 18–34 · White · NY

TRUMP

"I voted for a Democrat for Congress rather than a Republican because he always followed Trump."

Independent · 65+ · White · NE