

Artificial Intelligence Voters Want Regulation and Job Protection, But Remain Skeptical of Government AI Contracts

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Artificial intelligence has moved from Silicon Valley buzzword to kitchen-table concern in record time.

More than half of American voters (53%) now use an AI tool at least once a week and 81% say it is essential or important that 2028 presidential candidates have a clear plan for AI regulation and job protection. Voters are adopting this technology at a rapid pace, but they want guardrails, and they want them from elected leaders who take the issue seriously.

At the same time, voters are deeply skeptical of the federal government handing multi-billion dollar contracts to major tech companies to deploy AI in sensitive areas like law enforcement and immigration. Disapproval exceeds approval on every government AI application we tested. And by a 54% to 15% margin, voters say tech CEOs should stay out of politics entirely.



AI ADOPTION

Over Half of Voters are Weekly Users

The AI revolution is not coming, it's here. Fifty-three percent of registered voters report using at least one AI tool weekly for work, research, or following news:

AI Tool	All	18-34	35-49	65+
OpenAI / ChatGPT	30%	60%	41%	15%
Google Gemini	30%	46%	41%	17%
Microsoft Copilot	18%	33%	20%	11%
X / Grok	6%	14%	11%	1%
Perplexity	4%	8%	7%	1%
Anthropic / Claude	3%	8%	4%	0%
None of these	47%	21%	31%	66%

The generational divide is stark. Among voters 18–34, **79% use at least one AI tool weekly**, with ChatGPT and Gemini each reaching roughly 4 in 10. Among voters 65+, only 34% use any AI tool. Among men, 64% are weekly users compared to 44% of women. College-educated voters use AI at higher rates (59%) than those without a degree (49%). These adoption patterns will shape the politics of AI regulation for years to come.

Notably, Grok usage skews heavily Republican (9% vs. 3% for Democrats), reflecting X's conservative user base. ChatGPT and Gemini show more balanced partisan adoption. This means the AI policy debate is not a niche tech issue, it touches voters across the political spectrum.



GOVERNMENT AI CONTRACTS

Voters are Skeptical Across the Board

We tested voter attitudes toward multi-billion dollar government contracts with major tech companies to develop AI for three applications. In every case, disapproval exceeded approval:

AI Application	All Approve	All Disapprove	GOP Approve	Dem Approve	Ind Approve
National Security	37%	42%	45%	28%	28%
Law Enforcement	35%	43%	46%	26%	30%
Immigration Enforcement	33%	46%	49%	19%	28%

The partisan divide here is significant. **Republicans are the only group where approval approaches or exceeds disapproval**, with 45–49% approving of government AI contracts depending on the application. Democrats are strongly opposed: only 19% approve of AI for immigration enforcement, and 28% for national security. Independents track closer to Democrats, with approval in the high 20s across all three applications.

Among voters 18–34, there is more openness to government AI: 51% approve for national security, 44% for law enforcement, and 41% for immigration. But even among young voters, the “not sure” numbers are low (11–12%), suggesting these are settled opinions rather than uninformed ones. The skepticism reflects a broader distrust of the combination of Big Tech and Big Government—a concern that crosses ideological lines.



THE 2028 ELECTION

81% Want Candidates with an AI Plan

Looking ahead to the next presidential election, voters are sending an unmistakable message about the importance of AI policy:

Importance of an AI Plan in 2028	All	GOP	Dem	Ind
Essential	43%	43%	44%	42%
Important, but Not a Priority	38%	37%	38%	41%
Total Essential + Important	81%	80%	82%	83%
Not Important	7%	8%	7%	6%
Not Sure	12%	12%	11%	12%

This is one of the most bipartisan results in the entire survey. **Republicans (80%), Democrats (82%), and Independents (83%) all agree at virtually identical levels that AI regulation and job protection should be a priority for presidential candidates.**

Among voters 18–34, 89% say it is essential or important, driven by the fact that this generation uses AI tools at the highest rates and will be most affected by AI-driven job displacement.

Among voters 50–64, 79% say it's essential or important. Among voters 65+, 84%. This is not a young-voter issue or an old-voter issue. It is a universal demand that cuts across every demographic the survey measured. Candidates who ignore AI policy in 2028 will be ignoring the stated priorities of four out of five voters.



TECH CEOS AND POLITICS

54% Stay Neutral

In an era of increasing CEO activism, voters push back strongly. Fifty-four percent say tech and AI company CEOs should remain politically neutral, not endorse candidates, not use their platforms to advocate for policies. Just 15% say it's their right to be politically active, and 13% would accept it only on policies that directly affect their industry.

This sentiment is consistent across parties: 53% of Republicans, 52% of Democrats, and 58% of Independents say tech CEOs should stay neutral. Among voters 65+, 62% favor neutrality. The message is clear: voters want tech leaders to build products, not political coalitions. The high-profile political activities of major tech CEOs in the 2024 cycle have not endeared them to the public.





THE POLITICAL INFORMATION LANDSCAPE

YouTube Dominates

When asked where they primarily encounter political influencers and independent commentators, voters overwhelmingly point to YouTube (46%), followed by TikTok (23%), X/Twitter (23%), and Instagram/Threads (20%). Among voters 18-34, YouTube reaches 67%, followed by X at 47% and TikTok at 45%.

This has direct implications for AI policy communication. The platforms where voters encounter political content are also the platforms being reshaped by AI, from algorithm-driven recommendations to AI-generated content. Candidates and policymakers who want to reach voters on AI issues need to meet them where they already are: on YouTube and social media, not in white papers and press releases.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Voters are Ahead of Washington

American voters are already living in the AI era: 53% use these tools weekly. They have formed clear opinions: they want regulation and job protection (81%), they're skeptical of government handing billions to Big Tech for AI deployment (approval underwater on all three applications tested), and they want tech CEOs out of politics (54%). The 2028 presidential race will be the first where AI policy is a defining issue.

METHODOLOGY

This poll surveyed 1,008 registered voters via online panel from February 25–27, 2026. Results were weighted by 2024 vote, gender, age, race, and education to match population demographics. The margin of error is ± 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.





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