

# Americans Continue to Give Trump Good Ratings on the Border, More Information Increases Support for Data Centers

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Rainey  
Center





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A new Rainey Center survey of 1,021 registered voters finds deep economic anxiety, broad appetite for student loan reform, and strong concern about Chinese access to American data.

## METHODOLOGY

Rainey Center surveyed 1,021 registered voters via online panel from March 23–26, 2026. Results were weighted by 2024 vote, gender, age, race, and education to match population demographics. The margin of error is  $\pm 3.2$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



## The American Dream

A plurality of voters (44%) say the American Dream is out of reach for them personally, while 33% say they are on the way and 23% say they have achieved it. Views are slightly more optimistic for the next generation—41% say their children are on the way to achieving it, though 22% say it is out of reach.



## Border Security

A majority (53%) say the border is more secure now than under Biden, while 21% say it was more secure under Biden and 26% are unsure.





# Higher Education and Student Loans

Fifty-six percent say a four-year degree is no longer worth the cost. Half say the federal student loan system needs significant reform, and only 7% say it is working well. Voters are closely split on whether the federal government (36%) or private institutions (34%) should primarily provide student loans.

There is broad support for accountability and structural reform: 61% agree colleges should face consequences when graduates can't repay federally backed loans, 50% support limiting federal loans to high-placement fields like STEM and healthcare, and 51% support capping loan amounts to in-state tuition rates. A proposal to securitize the government's \$1.7 trillion loan portfolio into bonds draws 42% support with 32% unsure. Student Loan Repayment Insurance—a low-cost add-on covering payments during hardship—is the most popular proposal at 63% support. A broader Trump-led student loan system overhaul receives 48% support and 27% opposition.



## Government Shutdowns and Budget Process

Fifty-eight percent call recurring shutdowns unacceptable. Fifty-nine percent support automatically continuing government operations at current funding levels when Congress misses a budget deadline, and 59% support switching to a biennial budget cycle. Fifty-two percent say Democrats shouldn't use shutdowns as a policy tactic, while 32% say they are right to do so. Voters rank the Department of Defense (62%), Homeland Security (58%), Justice (54%), and CDC (53%) as the agencies most essential to protect from future shutdowns.



## Taxes

Eighty-two percent say taxes take too much of their paycheck. Only 10% feel they get good value for their tax dollars, while 47% say they do not.





# Data Centers and AI Infrastructure

Seventy-five percent are at least somewhat aware of data center construction across the country. Forty-five percent believe local data centers are driving up their electricity costs. However, voters respond positively to new information: after learning about water recycling practices, 29% became more supportive of data centers.

Trump's "ratepayer protection pledge"—requiring tech companies to build their own power—draws 65% support, and learning about it moved 38% toward greater support.

Messaging around community benefits (infrastructure upgrades, investment funds, jobs) moved 37% toward more support, and framing around local grid upgrades moved 45%.



## China, Security, and Data Sovereignty

Concern about Chinese access to American data is high. Sixty-three percent worry about Chinese-made software in U.S. security cameras, and 72% are concerned that data from American devices is being used by China to develop AI. Fifty-one percent support banning Chinese-developed software in U.S. security cameras, and 68% support state legislation banning storage of Americans' personal data in Chinese data centers.





## Election Integrity

Seventy-two percent favor using government records and death certificates to remove deceased voters from rolls. Fifty-eight percent support a nationwide interstate database to identify duplicate registrations and voters who have moved. When forced to choose, 53% say the government should prioritize ensuring registrant eligibility over making it as easy as possible to vote (35%).





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