

Jobs Wins the Argument

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Rainey
Center





Jobs is the only true crossover message.

It wins every subgroup at net +18 to +42, while the China storage argument is net negative with every subgroup, even Republicans.

A paired-comparison exercise forced nine pro-data-center arguments into head-to-head matchups. Pocketbook arguments dominate: Jobs won 65% of its pairings, Growth 60%, and Truth and Prices 57% each. All three national-security frames finished at the bottom and lose more matchups than they win.

The strongest validators are local and unofficial, with family members, farmers and landowners, and small business owners each running roughly net +25, while every institutional messenger is weak. Personal pocketbook benefits dominate the community-benefits menu, the Columbia County, Georgia model tests at 62 to 21, and transparency requirements are nearly free persuasion.

Rainey Center surveyed 1,017 registered voters via online panel, July 14–15, 2026. Weighted by gender, race, education, age, and 2024/2020 vote recall. Margin of error ± 3.5 points at the 95% confidence level.

65%

of Pairings Won by
Jobs—The Best Result
in the Battery

+33

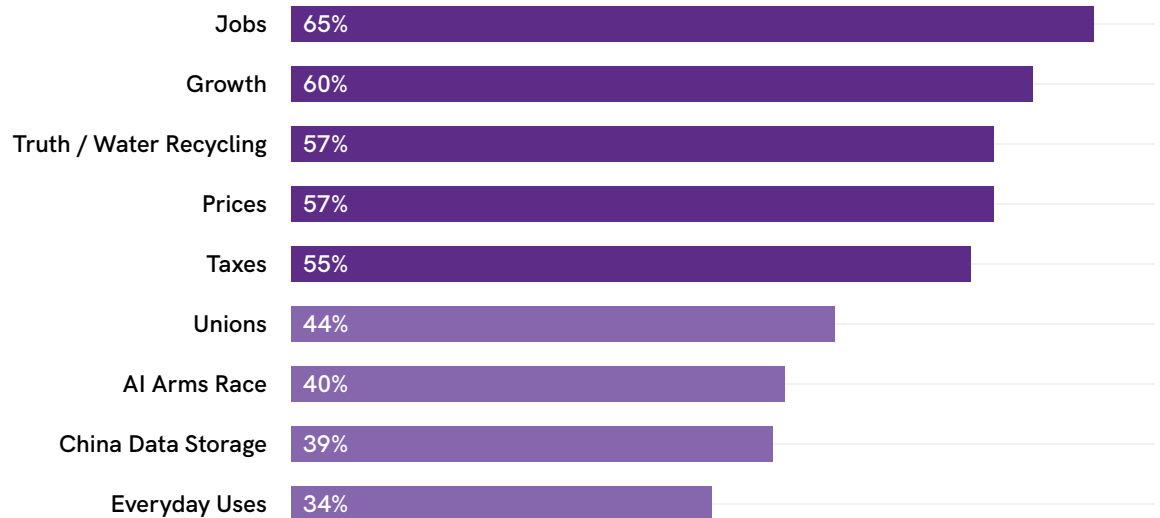
Jobs' Net Margin Among
Women, One of Its
Strongest Subgroups

-13

China Storage Net Among
Republicans—Negative
with Every Subgroup



Share of Head-to-Head Pairings Won



Share of head-to-head pairings each argument won. Arguments below 50% lose more matchups than they win.

Message Testing

Jobs (blue-collar work that can't be outsourced) won 65% of its pairings, followed by Growth (60%), Truth and water recycling (57%), and Prices (57%). The three national-security frames finished at the bottom: the AI arms race won just 40%, Chinese data storage 39%, and everyday uses 34%. Crosstabs sharpen the verdict: the China storage argument is net negative with every subgroup, while Jobs wins every subgroup, with its strongest margins among women (+33) and somewhat-liberal voters (+42).



BY PARTY

The Practical Menu

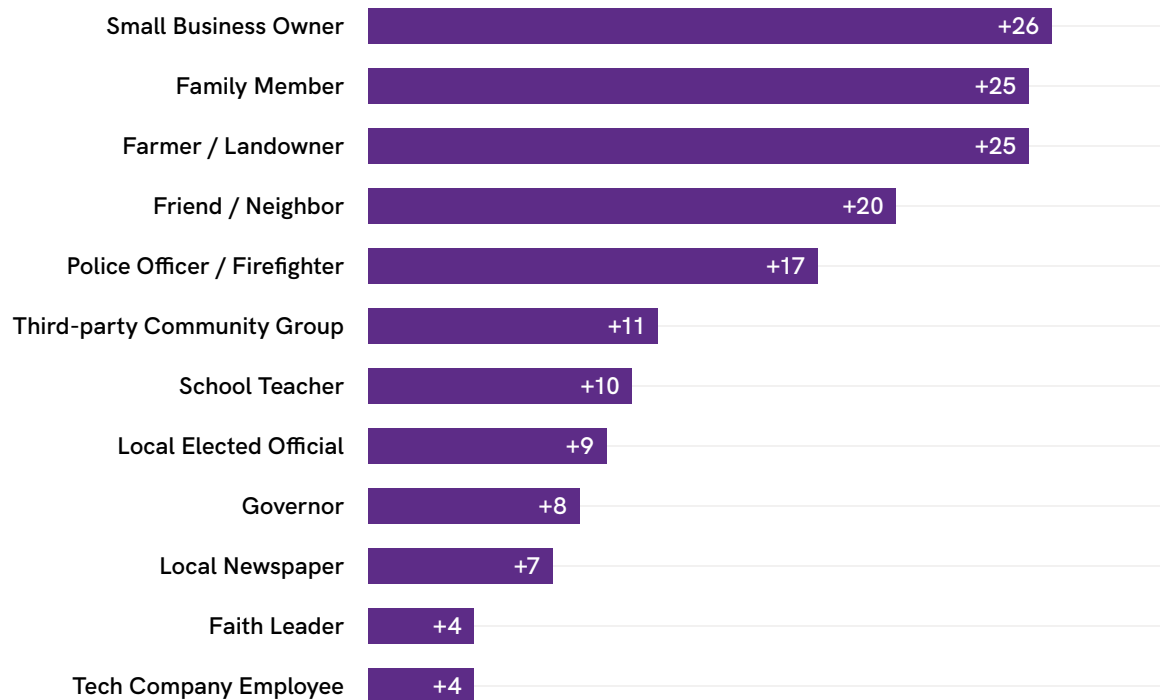
The top tier is remarkably stable: Jobs wins 66% of its pairings with Democrats, 62% with Republicans, and 66% with Independents, and Prices is nearly identical across all three (56 to 57%). The partisan differences live in the second tier. Growth is the best Republican-specific argument (64% with Republicans, net +28, but only 55% and +11 with Independents). Taxes is the sleeper Independent argument: it wins 61% with Independents (net +22, second only to Jobs) while barely breaking even with Republicans (+3). Unions is a Democratic-only argument, splitting 50-50 with Democrats but losing badly with Republicans (39%, net -23). The China frames reach their ceiling with Republicans at 43% and still lose.

Which Argument for Which Audience

Argument	Audience
Jobs & Prices	Travel everywhere
Growth	Red audiences
Taxes	Independents
Unions	Democratic audiences only
China Frames	No one



Net Effect of Each Messenger Endorsing a Local Data Center



Net effect of each messenger endorsing a local data center (more likely to support minus less likely).

Local, Unofficial Voices Are the Strongest Validators

Family members, farmers and landowners, and small business owners each run roughly net +25. Every institutional messenger is weak: governors net +7, local elected officials +9, tech company employees +4, faith leaders +4.



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Personal Pocketbook Items Dominate

Free or reduced electricity and elimination of local property taxes lead, with guaranteed local jobs and infrastructure upgrades close behind. One-time cash payments and teacher raises trail.

62-21

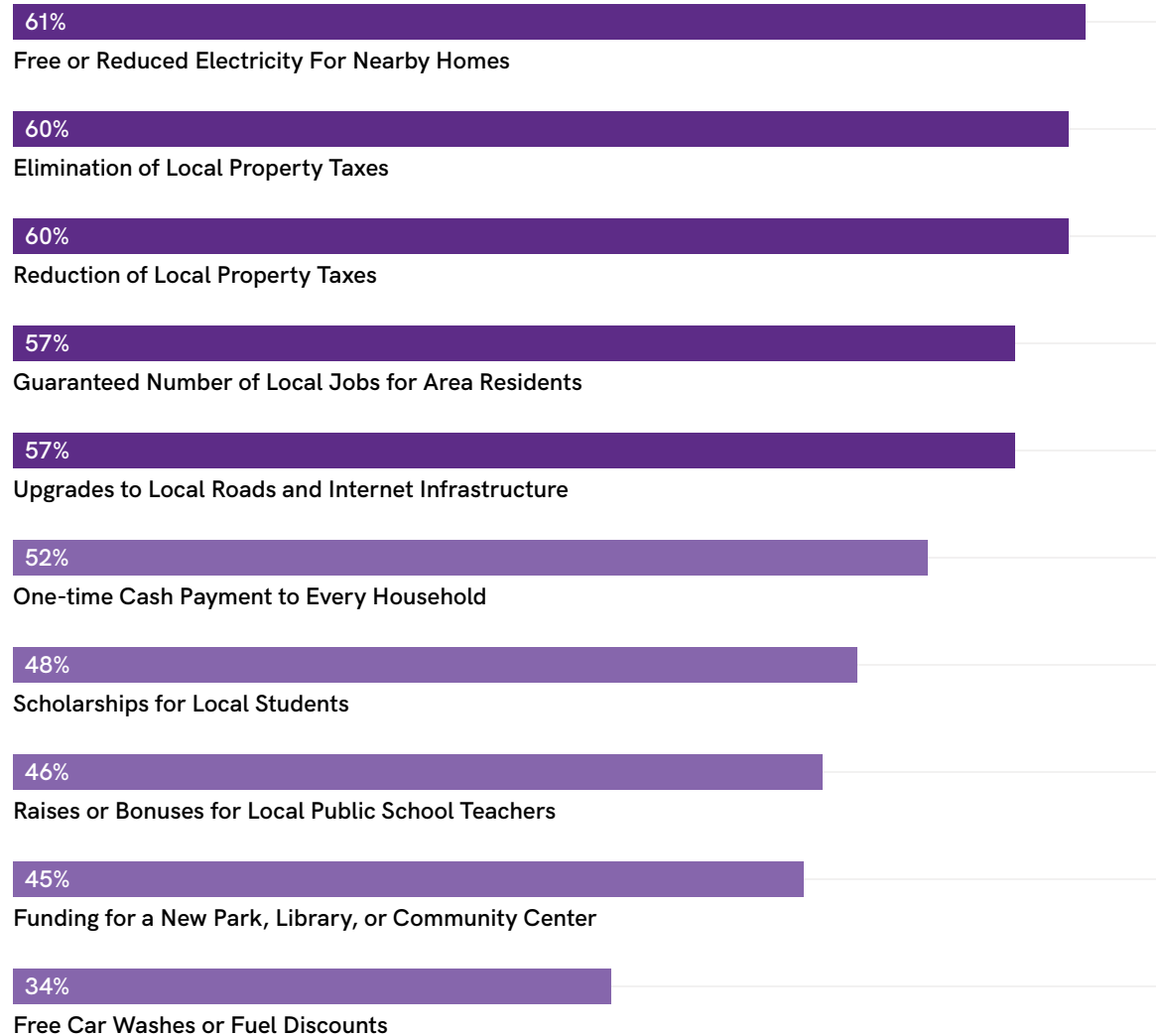
The Columbia County, Georgia model, using data center revenue to eliminate local property taxes and fund large teacher bonuses, tests at 62% support versus 21% opposition.

47 / 9

Transparency is nearly free persuasion: requiring public disclosure of water use, energy use, and tax breaks makes 47% more likely to support a project and only 9% less likely.



Support if the Company Provides Each Benefit



Percent more likely to support a nearby data center if the company provides each benefit. Darker bars: top tier (55%+).



42% v. 29%

Gender

The widest gap after ideology: 42% of women strongly oppose a data center in their community versus 29% of men, and women are less responsive to every messenger and argument tested.

19% v. 10%

Race

Black voters are the warmest group, nearly twice as likely as the sample overall to be very favorable, and far less likely to strongly oppose local siting (26% versus 39% among white voters).

10% v. 23%

Education

College graduates are somewhat warmer and far more opinionated, with about half the “not sure” rate. The remaining persuadable universe skews non-college and lower-information, a further argument for simple pocketbook framing over abstract national-security appeals.

50% / 52%

Ideology

Intensity is concentrated on the left: half of very liberal voters are very unfavorable and 52% strongly oppose community siting.

INSIDE THE CROSSTABS

The Structure of Opposition

Beyond party, opposition has a clear demographic structure. Data center opposition increasingly behaves like a left-coded intensity issue even though every ideological group is net negative at baseline.



APPENDIX

Message Texts as Tested

Full wording of the nine arguments tested in the paired-comparison exercise (Q30), with the share of head-to-head pairings each won overall and by party identification. Respondents saw pairs of arguments and selected which they found more persuasive as a reason to support data center construction, even if they did not support construction themselves.

Jobs

WON 65% | D 66 | R 62 | I 66

“Data center construction creates blue collar jobs that don’t require a college degree and can’t be outsourced, jobs like electrician and heat and air conditioning installation.”

Growth

WON 60% | D 59 | R 64 | I 55

“AI will keep America’s economy growing. Economic growth means more jobs, more prosperity and more opportunity.”

Truth

WON 57% | D 55 | R 59 | I 56

“There have been a lot of lies spread about data centers. The truth is that new data centers bring their own power instead of drawing from the grid and they recycle water.”

Prices

WON 57% | D 56 | R 57 | I 57

“AI can keep prices low. By making companies more efficient, AI can drive lower prices for consumers, fighting inflation.”



Taxes

WON 55% | D 55 | R 51 | I 61

"Data centers pay large amounts in taxes, which lowers property taxes for people who live near the data centers."

Unions

WON 44% | D 50 | R 39 | I 43

"AI data centers can create well-paying union jobs that create pathways to the middle class. That's why unions support data center construction."

AI

WON 40% | D 36 | R 43 | I 39

"If we don't invest in data centers, China will beat America in the AI arms race. AI will keep America the leading superpower."

China

WON 39% | D 36 | R 43 | I 38

"If we don't build data centers here, they will have to be built in China which means your family photos and passwords will be stored in data centers accessible to the Chinese government."

Uses

WON 34% | D 36 | R 32 | I 33

"Data centers aren't just for AI, they make it easy and cheap to stream TV shows and store emails."



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