

National Survey on Independent Candidates

— Toplines

Survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted from June 27-28, 2026. All interviews were conducted online. Survey invitations were distributed randomly, with demographic balances aligned to general population benchmarks. The sample carries a margin of error of ± 3.1 points of the true population value 95% of the time. Figures below are unweighted.

Core questions

How aware are you of independent candidates on the ballot for the 2026 midterm elections?

Response	%
I'm not aware of any	31.5%
I'm aware of some candidates	27.4%
I'd be interested, but haven't heard anything	22.6%
I'm not aware of any and don't care	9.8%
I'm actively following them	8.7%

Any awareness (following + aware of some): 36.1%. Interested but uninformed: 22.6%. Not aware (including "don't care"): 41.3%.

When you think about independent or third-party candidates, which best describes your first reaction?

Response	%
New ideas — they push the major parties to address issues they'd otherwise ignore	23.8%



Response	%
Fresh start — a new perspective free from partisan gridlock	21.9%
Not sure	20.2%
Spoiler — they mainly pull votes from a major-party candidate	20.0%
Protest vote — a way to express frustration, but not a serious option	14.1%

Net positive framing (new ideas + fresh start): 45.7%. Net negative framing (spoiler + protest): 34.1%.

Imagine a future congressional election with a strong, well-funded independent candidate, unaffiliated with either party, who shared many of your views and was willing to work with both sides. How likely would you be to vote for this candidate?

Response	%
Somewhat likely	40.0%
Very likely	29.5%
Not sure	14.6%
Very unlikely	8.0%
Somewhat unlikely	7.9%

Net likely (very + somewhat): 69.5%. Net unlikely: 15.9%.



If the election for U.S. Congress were held today, which party's candidate would you vote for in your district?

Response	%
The Democratic candidate	43.1%
The Republican candidate	36.5%
Undecided	14.1%
An independent or third-party candidate	6.3%

As America celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, which statement comes closer to how this milestone impacts your political identity?

Response	%
More strongly aligned as an independent American, pulling together as one nation	63.0%
More strongly aligned with my political party and its vision for the country	37.0%

Job approval and affiliation

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Donald Trump is doing?

Response	%
Strongly disapprove	44.0%
Strongly approve	21.1%
Somewhat approve	19.1%



Response	%
Somewhat disapprove	12.2%
Not sure	3.6%

Total approve: 40.2%. Total disapprove: 56.2%.

What is your political affiliation?

Response	%
Democrat	35.9%
Republican	32.7%
Independent	25.8%
Undecided	5.6%

Demographics

Gender

Female 52.6% · Male 47.4%

Age

30-44: 22.8% · 55-64: 20.6% · 45-54: 20.3% · 65-75: 19.6% · 18-29: 8.9% · 75+: 7.8%

Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

No 89.7% · Yes 10.3%

Race

White or Caucasian 77.4% · Black or African American 16.2% · Other 2.9% · Asian 1.8% · American Indian / Alaska Native 1.5% · Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander 0.2%



Education

High school / GED 25.4% · Bachelor's 24.3% · Some college 22.9% · Associate / technical 13.0% · Graduate / professional 12.0% · Some high school or less 2.4%

Household income

\$25k–\$49,999: 23.2% · Under \$25k: 21.8% · \$50k–\$74,999: 18.8% · \$75k–\$99,999: 13.9% · \$100k–\$149,999: 12.9% · \$150k+: 9.4%

Registered voter

Yes 90.0% · No 10.0%

Top states represented

Florida 9.4% · Texas 8.8% · California 7.1% · New York 5.2% · Pennsylvania 4.7% · Georgia 4.2% · Ohio 4.0% · North Carolina 4.0% · Illinois 3.6% · Virginia 3.5% *(All 50 states plus DC represented.)*

Selected crosstabs

Openness to a strong independent (net "very/somewhat likely"), by affiliation

Group	Net likely
Independent	78.7%
Democrat	71.3%
Republican	62.7%
Undecided	55.4%



Openness to a strong independent, by age

Group	Net likely
18-29	78.7%
30-44	74.6%
55-64	72.3%
45-54	66.0%
75+	64.1%
65-75	62.2%

Openness to a strong independent, by Trump approval

Group	Net likely
Somewhat disapprove	79.5%
Strongly disapprove	71.8%
Somewhat approve	71.2%
Strongly approve	64.0%

"One nation / independent American" identity (250th anniversary), by affiliation

Group	One-nation identity	Party-aligned
Undecided	85.7%	14.3%
Independent	83.3%	16.7%
Democrat	54.6%	45.4%
Republican	52.3%	47.7%

