

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS SURVEY

Echelon Insights | 301 Small Business Owners

March 4–11, 2026

Polling Memo

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**ADVANCING AMERICAN
FREEDOM FOUNDATION**

TOPLINE: Small business owners strongly support the extension of the 2017 tax cuts with **60% saying that the “One Big Beautiful Bill” will help their business.** But warning signs are flashing: tariffs and inflation are squeezing Main Street, with 53% of owners saying tariffs are having a negative effect on their business and 77% reporting rising supply costs over the past year. Despite those headwinds, small business owners are overwhelmingly optimistic with 88% saying things are going well for their business.

Tax Cuts Lead the Way: Small Business Owners Cheer the Tax Cut Extension

- **60% say that the continuation of the 2017 tax cuts in the “One Big Beautiful Bill” will help their business “a lot” or “some.”**
 - 17% say it will help “a lot”—a strong signal that Congress’ action is landing well on Main Street.
- **58% say that if the tax cuts had expired and their taxes increased, it would have hurt their business “a lot” or “some.”**
- **Tax relief is the #1 most-requested policy change among small business owners at 28%.**
 - 19% cited tariff reduction or repeal as their top priority.

Warning Signs: Tariffs and Inflation Are Squeezing Main Street

- **53% of small business owners say tariffs and recent U.S. trade policy changes are having a “very” or “somewhat” negative effect on their business—**
 - This was the highest negative rating of any policy area tested.
 - Small business owners oppose tariffs 46%–41%.
 - **Tariff reduction or repeal ranks as the #2 policy priority (19%), second only to tax relief.**
- **77% of small business owners report that the cost of supplies and materials has increased over the past 12 months.** In response, 42% have tried to find lower-cost supplies and 40% have raised prices for customers—passing the pain of inflation directly to consumers.



Small Business Owners Remain Optimistic:

- **88% say things are going “very well” (39%) or “somewhat well” (49%) for their business right now.**
- **45% expect economic conditions for their business to improve over the next 12 months.**
 - Just 20% expect them to worsen—a net positive outlook of +25 points.
- **45% report that consumer demand for their products or services has increased over the past 12 months.**
 - Just 21% report a decrease.

BOTTOMLINE: Small business owners support the GOP’s core economic agenda: they want tax relief and they got it. The extension of the TCJA tax cuts in the “One Big Beautiful Bill” was the right call—six in ten small business owners say it will help them.

But Washington should take the tariff and inflation warning signs seriously. Tariff reduction or repeal is the #2 policy priority on Main Street, and 53% say current trade policy is already hurting their bottom line.

The good news: despite these headwinds, 88% of small business owners say things are going well for their business right now—a testament to American entrepreneurial resilience that conservatives should be proud to champion.

BACKGROUND: *Advancing American Freedom* commissioned Echelon Insights to survey 301 small business owners with 1–499 employees nationwide, conducted online from March 4–11, 2026. The sample was provided by Cint using quota targets derived from U.S. Census Bureau benchmarks and weighted to reflect small businesses nationally. The margin of sampling error is ±6.6 percentage points.

