

TO: Center Forward
FROM: Benenson Strategy Group, Public Opinion Strategies
RE: Survey of 2022 Likely Voters in Battleground States
DATE: July 26, 2022

Methodology

Methodology: Benenson Strategy Group and Public Opinion Strategies conducted n=1020 interviews with likely 2022 voters in battleground states from June 15 – 30, 2022. Respondents were registered to vote in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Interviews were conducted using a multi-mode methodology that included live dialers, SMS text-to-web services, and online panels. The sample was weighted to ensure it was proportionately representative of likely voters in these states, and the margin of sampling error is ±2.99% at the 95% confidence level.

Overall, this research suggests that Election 2022 will hinge on which party is able to show they are taking meaningful action to stabilize the economy, lower inflation costs (housing, gas, and food), reduce gun violence, and protect a woman’s right to choose. This issue set covers the top issues for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Moreover, persuadable voters in the battleground states want bipartisanship that produces results and see ‘toeing the party line’ as the greatest barrier to meaningful legislation that affects their everyday lives.

There’s a lot of media attention around immigration and abortion, but when push comes to shove, battleground state voters care most about pocketbook issues, regardless of their partisan alignment.

- Stabilizing and strengthening the economy is the outright winner when it comes to issues that voters feel our national leaders should be prioritizing, driven by support from voters across the political spectrum. 46% of battleground voters choose “stabilizing / strengthening the economy” as one of their top two priorities.
- On the state and local front, the desire to prioritize inflation follows the national cry to stabilize the economy. It is currently the most pressing state or local issue for Independents (48%) and Republicans (58%), and the second-most pressing issue for Democrats (38%), after the need to prioritize commonsense gun reform (47%).

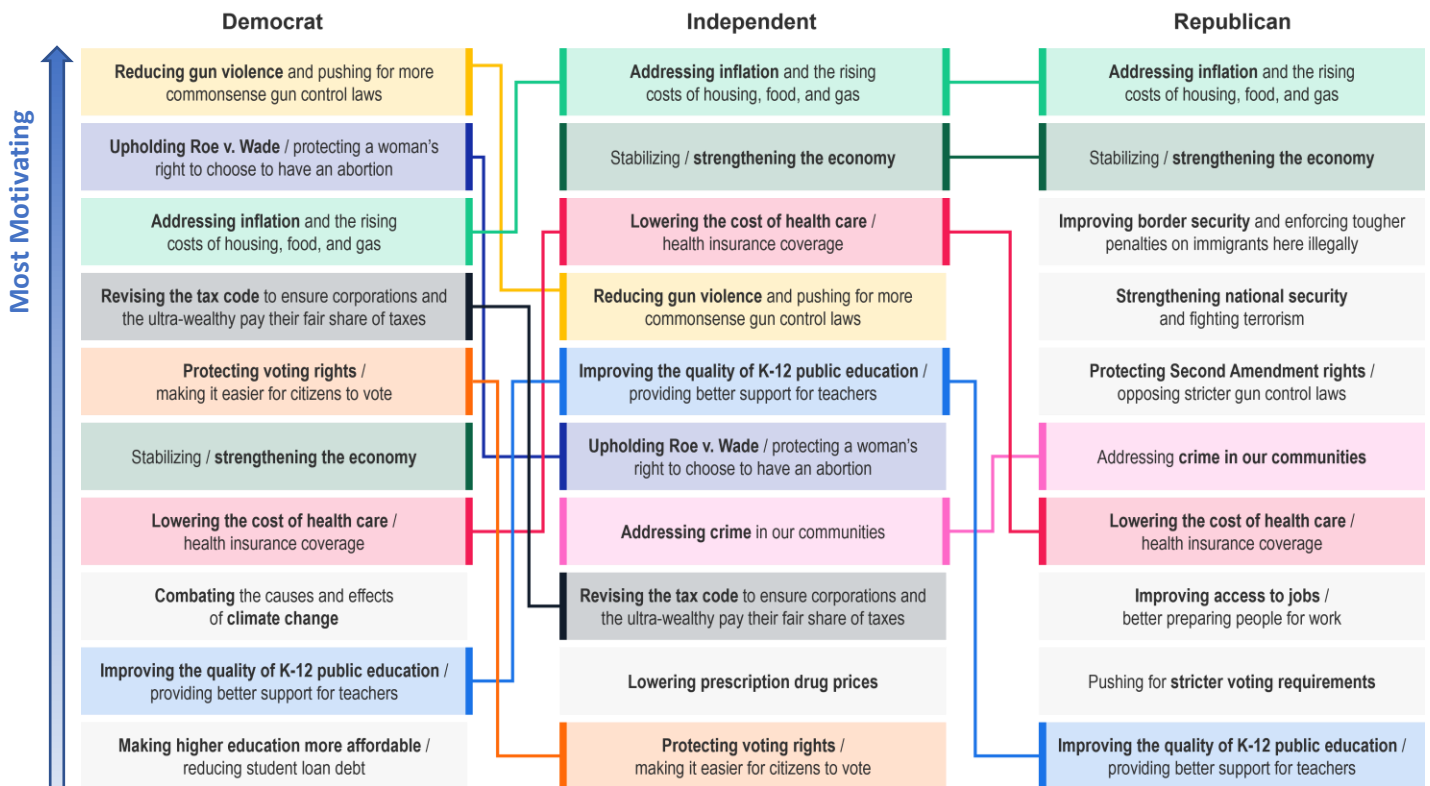
Voters’ pain points are real, and they are common – things are hard for them right now, and they fear they’ll only get worse.

- The vast majority of battleground state voters say the cost of living for most Americans has gotten more expensive (93% say much more or somewhat more expensive).
- Voters whose personal expenditures have risen over the last several months and have had to make tough tradeoffs on the basics say they’re feeling the pain of higher costs on groceries (90%), gasoline (88%), utility bills (66%), and food at restaurants (55%).

- A majority of voters (52%) consider themselves less financially stable than “compared to a couple of years ago, before the start of the pandemic,” and the majority of voters (75%) fear their personal financial situation will be the same (note that “the same” isn’t necessarily *good*) or worse in a year, while only a quarter (24%) feel that their financial situation will be better in a year.

But the economy and inflation aren’t the *only* things that matter. Reducing gun violence, lowering the cost of health care, and protecting a woman’s right to choose also rise to the top as important – and motivating – national issues.

- For Democratic voters, “reducing gun violence” and “protecting a woman’s right to choose” are the most motivating issues to vote in November – above even “addressing inflation”.
- “Addressing inflation” and “stabilizing the economy” are the most motivating issues for Independents and Republicans, followed by “lowering the cost of health care” and “improving border security,” respectively.
- Lowering prescription drug prices and reducing student loan debt are weak motivators for voters regardless of partisan affiliation.



A clear majority of voters believe the healthcare system is not working for Americans, and 1-in-5 voters want national leadership to address rising out-of-pocket costs.

- Out-of-pocket health care expenses are more problematic for voters than the price of prescription drugs. When asked which issues national leadership should be prioritizing right now, triple the number of voters answered, “lowering the cost of health care / health insurance coverage” (20%) than those who said, “lowering prescription drug prices” (6%). Lowering the cost of health care is even more important to Independent voters (28%) than to Democrats and Republicans (at 23% and 11%, respectively).
- A strong majority of battleground state voters feel that *something* within our healthcare system needs to change: 58% of voters from all sides of politics feel that the healthcare system is not meeting the needs of most Americans, and many also recognize (77%) they are paying more every year and it’s more than what’s seen as reasonable.
- As a further indication that many voters feel the American healthcare system is, at best, underperforming and, at worst, fundamentally broken, more than half (53%) say that affordability of coverage is an extremely important indicator of whether or not the healthcare system is working.

The political institutions in America are failing – while our leaders prioritize issues at the extremes, everyday battleground state voters feel alienated; neither party will win points in battleground states by catering to more extreme views.

- The battleground electorate thinks the country is off on the wrong track (76% of voters), and the frustrated mindset is reflected in voters’ views toward national and local figures.
- Battleground voters don’t see themselves in the extremes of the parties or in the candidates representing them, with 91% agreeing “While hard-working Americans are struggling to make ends meet and provide a better life for their families, our leaders are too preoccupied with hyper-partisan issues that don't matter to us.”
- Most Strong Democrats (83%) say that compromise in the name of progress is more important than standing strong on their principles and remaining at a standstill, compared to a slim majority of Strong Republicans (53%).
- For both Democrats and Republicans who don’t identify as “Strong”, there is a clear preference for compromise (D: 79%, R: 73%).
- Top for voters across parties and ideologies, a third of voters (30%) feel the biggest barrier to more cooperation is that members toe the party line as directed by leadership, rather than putting first those who elected them.