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GS STRATEGY GROUP
breakthrough campaigns
2025 Voter Research Journals
SEPTEMBER 2025

Methodology

Breakthrough Campaigns and GS Strategy Group conducted qualitative ethnographic journals between September 3-7, 2025.

Interviews were conducted among 38 voters who:

- Do not vote in primaries but voted in the 2024 election.

This study is the fourth iteration in a larger qualitative longitudinal research project which has tracked the political views of the same voters, starting in the lead up to the 2024 presidential election with several follow-up interactions in the months over 2025.

- 36 of these 38 voters have participated in prior iterations of the project.

Voters that indicated that they were undecided about their vote choice leading up to the 2024 elections are labelled as "unknown" in this report, otherwise their 2024 vote choice of Kamala Harris or Donald Trump is indicated.

As with all qualitative research, results are directional.

38 Journals			
18 Harris voters	**12** Trump voters	**8** Undecided/ Third Party voters	
9 Northeast	**9** Midwest	**12** South	**8** West
18 Men		**20** Women	
19 18-44	**11** 45-64	**8** 65+	
24 White voters		**14** POC voters	

Key Findings

Finding Common Ground: On Values

Americans are united in their values — though they may not see or say them in the same way

What's Shared: Freedom, opportunity, equality, and hard work were named by a plurality of voters as the values they believe are most important to them as Americans and to the country's success.

What's Not Shared: At the same time, voters don't necessarily talk about values in the same way, and many don't believe that anyone in public life shares their values.

Obstacle To Overcome: There's a leadership values vacuum. Few political leaders are seen as embodying voters' values – and those who do come from the old guard, not the next generation.

Opportunity to Explore: In the absence of trusted leaders, everyday Americans may be better positioned to be the face of core values, providing an opportunity to decouple values from partisanship and demonstrate how deeply values are shared across party lines.

Finding Common Ground: On Bipartisanship and Compromise

Weary of polarization, voters want compromise – but they are uncompromising on compromise

What's Shared: There's an appetite for bipartisanship and compromise – driven by exhaustion with the current political climate and a belief that compromise, when done right, can result in better policy and politics.

What's Not Shared: A vision of how to do it or what to compromise on. Compromise on cultural issues faces steep resistance, while there is somewhat more interest in compromise on issues that that could improve voters' financial well-being.

Obstacle To Overcome: Democrats are more hesitant than Republicans to compromise. Paradoxically, being out of power fuels a strong reluctance to find middle ground – and instead to hold their ground at all cost.

Moreover, the issues voters care most about, are also the ones they are least willing to compromise on.

Opportunity to Explore: Most say that in government, compromise is a sign of strength and makes for more productive legislatures, better policy outcomes, and a more civilized political discourse.

Finding Common Ground: On The Parties

Voters agree: Democrats should be less dogmatic; Republicans should be more empathic

Views Of Democrats

Republicans see Democrats as out-of-touch, elitist radicals, who are fine with lawlessness and who support the rights of the few over the many.

But even Democrats agree the party has lost its way – they are frustrated with a leadership vacuum and unclear messaging, platform, or direction.

What's Shared

Voters across the ideological spectrum believe both parties are changing in ways that call into question their identity and purpose.

While traces of the old remain, the new party identities are increasingly defined by the culture wars, which voters largely abhor and blame for worsening partisanship.

Views Of Republicans

Democrats see Republicans and Trump as too often cruel and acting as divisive chaos agents.

But even some Republicans are upset with the intensity of immigration crackdowns and cuts to programs that help the poorest Americans to fund tax cuts for the richest.

Finding Common Ground: On Civic Engagement

The president is both causing voters to unplug while also driving them to vote in 2026

What's Shared: A belief in the importance of voting as a civic duty. A year out from the midterms, only 2 voters said they weren't motivated to turnout in an election that voters have already name as a referendum on the president.

What's Not Shared: News exhaustion hasn't impacted all voters equally. Since Trump's inauguration, Democrats have looked to tune out news about politics and current events, while Republicans' news engagement has remained consistent from the Biden years.

Obstacle To Overcome: Apathy drives disengagement. Voters who stay out of civic life say it's because they feel disempowered, indifferent, and exhausted from the political landscape and discourse.

Opportunity to Explore: Midterm motivation. Enthusiasm over upcoming elections presents a moment to further bring voters into civic life.

Key Changes In Voters' Views Towards President Trump: Phases 1-4

	Phases 1-3 (October-November 2024, February 2025)	Phases 4 (September 2025)
Trump	Harris voters expressed serious doubts about Trump's character and agenda, describing him as unfit to lead in character or temperament – pessimism for the future was pervasive. Trump voters were either happy, hopeful, or holding their noses to vote for "the lesser of two evils" in pulling the lever for Trump.	Despondence among Democrats has further entrenched, and the mood of voters, including Republicans, is more frustrated and less hopeful.
Economy	Voters chose Trump on the promise that he would fix the economy -- and some Harris voters acknowledged this being the "bright spot" of a Trump administration. In the early months of Trump's administration, there were rumblings of concern of whether the cost-of-living crisis would indeed be addressed.	The economy has been a big let down for Trump and non-Trump voters alike. Uncertainty born from tariffs, persistent inflation, mass lay-offs, slow job growth, and cuts to benefits to help make ends meet.
Immigration	Many non-Harris voters saw the chaos at the southern border and Democrats "amnesty" policies as disqualifying Democrats.	The intensity with which the administration has gone after immigrants with and without status has raised concern among voters, including many who voted for Trump and agreed with him immigration platform during the 2024 campaign.

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The State of the Union

Negative sentiment continues to outweigh positive outlooks – what's changed from February is the extent to which voters now lay blame on Trump specifically for what's going wrong

Current voter mood

Anxious (20)

DOGE cuts, tariffs, and immigration crack-downs have left many Dems and Inds anxious about the state of the country

+0 from one month into new administration

"**The executive orders of the current administration have affected citizens negatively. Countless people have lost their jobs, medical coverage, and access to public assistance will be reduced.** None of these things invoke feelings of security or hope for better days."

– Female, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"**The USA is going down with tariffs [and] the rise of ICE.** Tariffs are killing small businesses and the general public. ICE is detaining hard-working people who provide for their families."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, <College, Trump, Republican

Frustrated (13)

Trump voters aired grievances on the economy, foreign policy, and the impacts of the Big Beautiful Bill cuts

+8 from one month into new administration

"My husband and I were kicked off Medicaid even though we meet the work hour criteria and income limit for our family size. It is much harder to get food assistance. Funding is being cut to harvesters and other food banks…**Trump is definitely a president for the upper class."**

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, <College, Trump, Republican

"**Trump has underdelivered on the majority of his promises.** I was hoping to have seen some progress by now, but either there has been no progress, or I feel like he has made things worse. **We are still funding a genocide in the Middle East and thanks to his bill, looks like a lot of Americans are losing health insurance.**"

– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

Disappointed (9)

Across the aisle, voters bemoan a lack of bipartisanship and a struggle to make ends meet

+2 from one month into administration

"**Our country feels like it is so divided**, and rather than trying to get along, **people are being forced to disagree**."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Independent

"**I'm disappointed that I have to be mindful as to what is a need versus a want.**"

– Female, 65+, Black, South, <College, Harris, Democrat

"The whole political climate seems ready to explode."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Other

Hopeful (11)

Trump voters uniquely supported his economic and immigration policies – though some caveated hope with concern

-5 from one month into new administration

"**I believe we have turned the corner to bring back this country in the right direction.** We have **stabilized the economy** and are about to see it take off and we have **tackled immigration and crime**."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, College+, Trump, Republican

"**This current political climate has me feeling both anxious and worried.** The decisions being made by our current administration seem impulsive and confusing. Tariffs make sense in theory, but tariffs on things we would never be able to produce like coffee and chocolate don't. **But I am still hopeful that this current administration will bring about positive change.**"

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

Q1. Which TWO of the following best describe your feelings about how things are going in the US right now? Why did you choose those two words to describe how you are feeling? If none of those words describe how you feel, which words would you choose?

The consensus among voters of all stripes is that Trump has delivered on some of his campaign promises – whether that is a good thing or not, depends on where you sit politically

Trump 2.0 administration accomplishments

DELIVERING ON CAMPAIGN PROMISES: Around half named policy areas where they think Trump has followed through on his 2024 platform

Economic Promises: Tariff & Taxes

"**Donald Trump is absolutely delivering on his promises.** The **tariffs he imposed are bringing in billions of dollars** in new money that our country desperately needs to get out of debt."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

"**I was surprised with how well the tariffs have been going.** I truly thought it was going to be a dumpster fire, but it is going better than I expected. Not GREAT, but not terrible either."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

Culture War Promises: DEI & Project 2025

"This is what happens when you gut out all of the fraud and the waste. **No more funding Trans operas in Iraq.**"

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

"**Donald Trump is delivering on Project 2025 with a side of complete chaos**."

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Democrat

Immigration Promises: Deporting Illegal Immigrants

"I do unfortunately feel that Donald Trump is delivering on some of his promises. His promises were to deport non-citizens and restore America to what he deemed 'great.' **Though I don't agree with those things, to his supporters, he is doing what he said he would.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"Trump has delivered on some promises but also not delivered on some as well, such as **ICE and getting rid of illegal immigrants. In my opinion, it's inhumane, but he has delivered on what he said.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Unknown, Democrat

Foreign Policy: Ending Wars

"It has been for the better. **He has plans and enacted tax reform. There have been wars ended.** He has stated the truth when all we have been hearing has been lies."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Unknown, Independent

"For a man that ran on anti-war promises, this seems pretty ridiculous. Both the tariff and anti-war promises have been a let down."

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

Notably, no one mentioned other key campaign promises such as environmental deregulation or Make American Health Again (MAHA). Like in all prior waves, voters discussed the economy, social issues, and immigration most often.

Q13. Do you feel that Donald Trump is delivering on his campaign promises? Has he been better, worse, or about what you expected? What makes you feel this way? Has anything surprised you, positively or negatively, and is his administration how you expected it would be?

At the same time, both sides leveled frustration over the impact of Trump administration's immigration, economic, and foreign policies, with critiques about under-delivery or overreach

Trump 2.0 administration accomplishments

HAS FALLEN SHORT ON CAMPAIGN PROMISES: The other half of voters described where Trump 2.0 had been different to what they expected

Economic Policy: The administration **hasn't put the economy back on track as expected** – this includes Harris voters and Democrats.

"My only glimmer of hope for his presidency was to improve the economy, but **his strategy with the tariff war and bullying the Federal Reserve to drop rates is a complete failure**"

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Other

Immigration Policy: Trump's immigration approach has struck some – mostly Democrats but also some Trump voters – as **going too far and being more extreme than expected**

"**As far as immigration he is delivering to his followers.** Personally, I feel that immigration was out of control and needed to be addressed. But the things happening now are cruel and inhumane, and there is no due process. **He ran on the economy [and] ending the Russia/Ukraine war the first day. Inflation is high, prices are at its highest, tariffs are a disaster, and an end to war is not on sight. So he has not kept those promises.**"

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"He's a liar. He said he would crack down on criminals who were here illegally, instead **he is grabbing innocent people off the street and not giving them due process**"

– Male, 45-64, White, Northeast, College+, Harris, Democrat

Foreign Policy: Many are **disappointed in Trump's approach to foreign policy, namely in his relationships with foreign leaders** – either being too lenient or too harsh

"**I have been negatively surprised about him being so docile with Israel. When the Ukrainian president went to the White House, him and his vice president did not hesitate in being hostile with him** and arguing with him in front of the press. I feel like he does not have this same energy with Netanyahu. One of the images that made me the most upset is when Trump pulled out the chair for Netanyahu like if he was his subordinate."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

Epstein: There was some backlash to the **Trump administrations decision to shut down the Epstein investigation**

"So far, he seems to be delivering on some of his campaign promises... But one of the biggest ones was dealing with **Epstein's client list**. I'm hopeful there's a lot going on that we just aren't able to hear about yet, but **so far it doesn't seem like that campaign promise is being fulfilled**."

– Male, 18-44, White, West, <College, Unknown, Independent

"I was surprised on the Epstein issue, as I still feel like there is something there."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, College+, Trump, Republican

Q13. Do you feel that Donald Trump is delivering on his campaign promises? Has he been better, worse, or about what you expected? What makes you feel this way? Has anything surprised you, positively or negatively, and is his administration how you expected it would be?

Tracking Case Study: Upon Trump's re-election, Independents were initially open-minded about what was to come – increasingly, that has given way to disappointment

Views of Independents & Unknown voters

POST-ELECTION: NOVEMBER 2025		SEPTEMBER 2025
These independent voters were good with the election results and optimistic to see Trump's campaign promises come to life, with an eye towards economic growth		Now, they take issue with how Trump 2.0 is playing out, and are particularly concerned over Trump's leadership style and economic approach
Proud & Happy	"**I am happy to know that the Democrats didn't find a way to steal another election**." – *Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent*	**Disappointed & Hopeful**	"**I was very hopeful that things would turn around in our social climate, and I was quite disappointed that Trump is a bully.** I mean the USA has always been a bully, but almost in a positive way for its citizens." – *Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent*
None of the above	"[I am] **patiently waiting to see what is going to happen.** No fear nor anxiousness. Just waiting." – *Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Unknown, Republican*	**Disappointed & Frustrated**	"[I am] **frustrated due to media manipulation, a contradictory statements by the president.** [I am] anxious/worried due to media notifications of **job loss/unemployment rate**." – *Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Unknown, Republican*
Disappointed & Hopeful	"**I'm disappointed that Trump was elected again, although I do think Republicans will help revive the economy.** I am sad to see the polarizing emotions of constituents and negative energy circulating." – *Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Other*	**Disappointed & Anxious**	"I'm **disgusted with the actions of the Trump administration, slashing public health benefits** (Medicaid and nonprofit funding). I'm also **concerned about our economy given the tariff game and wars overseas**. The whole political climate seems ready to explode." – *Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Other*

S2Q1/S4Q1. Which TWO of the following best describe your feelings about how things are going in the US right now, particularly the political climate after Election Day? Why did you choose those two words to describe how you are feeling? If none of those words describe how you feel, which words would you choose?

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The State of Union's Values

Freedom is a – if not *the* – fundamental value of the American experiment

American values

FREEDOM: The Meta Value

Voters across the political spectrum named "freedom" – sometimes articulated in the language of "liberty" – as a core American value. The resonance of "freedom" lies in its ability to mean many things to many people, most often informed by political outlook.

Among Democrats

FREEDOM *FOR*

- **Civil Rights:** Equal treatment, minority rights
- **Healthcare**: Reproductive rights, healthcare access
- **Workers and families:** Unions, living wages, benefits

Among Everyone

FREEDOM *OF*

- Speech
- Religion

"**Freedom of speech: The ability to speak our minds, the ability to have an independent thought** and not be subjected to punishment if in fact you do not agree with the masses."

– Male, 45-64, Black, South, College+, Harris, Democrat

"**If we can't speak (and peacefully protest) freely, the government controls thought. If we can't practice our chosen religion (or no religion),** the government controls that facet of life."

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Democrat

"**The freedom to speak freely on almost any subject, the freedom to choose your lifestyle, to simply live free without fear of persecution** based on race, religion, or gender."

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

Among Republicans

FREEDOM *FROM*

- **Government overreach:** States' rights, property rights, gun rights, parents' rights
- **Over taxation and over regulation**
- **Fear:** Protecting law and order, border security

Q2. Let's talk about values in America. List 3 of the values you feel are most important to you as an American. Why are they so important to America's success? Is there a public or political figure – who is living – who demonstrates these values to you?

Freedom facilitates opportunity, and opportunity is the value that voters named as the crux of the American Dream

American values

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity intersects with freedom, hard work and equality to engender the context wherein folks are empowered to make a better life for themselves

"We should have the ability to pursue whatever dreams, desires, what we would like to do to make ourselves or our lives better. First and foremost, **we all have to work as a collective to make things happen, but each individual should have the opportunity to voice whatever opinions, decisions, laws they feel like should govern their lives**."

– Female, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"Equality joined with acceptance we can hope to see **all individuals as having equal access to opportunity."**

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

"We are all different but should be given equal opportunities."

– Male, 45-64, Latino, West, <College, Unknown, Democrat

"The achievement and successes that we can do, **like making your way forward or the American Dream**. That's another one of those things where we feel very confident and **blessed that we get to have those opportunities in America to achieve what we want to achieve and live out that American dream**."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

"**Hard work and opportunity**: **America gives people chances to start from nothing and build something if they push through.** That drive is what keeps the country innovative and competitive."

– Male, 18-44, White, Northeast, College+, Trump, Republican

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Values once considered universal – namely equality and hard work – are now seemingly co-opted by partisan camps, even when used to describe similar principles of empowerment

American values

EQUALITY: Democrats, voters of color, and women were most likely to name "equality" as a value of importance – sometimes articulated as "compassion"

Equality is about how you are treated but its also about **what it empowers individuals to do in society** – the things you can say or do, the jobs you can have, the people you can love, and the compassion you show others

"**Equality means everyone should be treated the same.** It shouldn't matter their race or their economic status."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

"I was born in New York to parents who migrated here from the Caribbean, and despite being a person of color, **I've always been thankful for the fact that I wasn't born into a culture or society where being a woman, especially a woman of color, voided me of my ability to speak freely to give my opinions.**"

– Female, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"**Compassion a value that is important to me. Having compassion for people around you, regardless of their status or anything of the sort.** Looking out for people out of the kindness of oneself is important because it creates a sense of community and it ties in with unity. Being together and having compassion for others around you would lead to a greater society."

-Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Unknown, Democrat

HARD WORK: Trump voters and men named work ethic as core to their identity as Americans and to the success of America – sometimes articulated as "integrity"

Hard work is not just about what you do, it's about who you are – but it's also about **how it empowers individuals to succeed in society**

"**People can come here from all over the world, become citizens, come here legally, hopefully, and, and make something of themselves and of their families.** My parents grew up in the Depression. My mother had to drop out of high school at 15, and yet she became my dad's bookkeeper, and they managed to raise four kids and send us all to college."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

"**With hard work comes the ability to innovate into commerce. The ability to be an entrepreneur** I think is something that I value in this country. And I think a lot of it speaks to being a free thinker."

– Male, 45-64, Black, South, College+, Harris, Democrat

Q2. Let's talk about values in America. List 3 of the values you feel are most important to you as an American. Why are they so important to America's success? Is there a public or political figure – who is living – who demonstrates these values to you?

Fairness is a guiding value for all, but it increasingly feels like something that is more "in theory" than "in practice"...

On "fairness"

In theory: Dimensions of Fairness

Fairness as Individual Freedom:
The ability to make personal choices without undue restriction

"**Fairness to me means simply treating everyone equally**, whether you're wealthy or whether you're poor. People should be treated the same, regardless of skin color or their stature in society."

– Male, 65+, White, South, <College, Harris, Independent

"I would think fairness means that everyone has an equal chance and opportunity to do the same thing. **There's no differences based on your gender, based on your religion, based on your ethnic background.** Everyone can have the same opportunity for the same jobs to live in a home, get loans from a bank, and everyone just has the same equal ability to do things."

– Female, 18-44, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

Respondents who see fairness as a reflection of individual freedoms are more likely to be older and White

Fairness as Individual Opportunity:
The ability to pursue advancement and success on one's own merit

"Fairness means that every American has a fair chance to succeed if they work hard."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Trump, Republican

"Fairness to me is that **all people have the same access to basic opportunities.** For example, everyone should have access to an education. That does not mean everyone will go to the same school."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, College+, Trump, Republican

"Fairness has had many meanings over the course of our country's history, but I think recently it really boils down being able **to freely experience what America has to offer.** Fairness in a sense that anyone **should be able to go to school, get employment, start a family if they desire, and enjoy a life that is meaningful to them.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q6. Let's talk about "fairness." What does fairness in America mean to you today? Compared to other values, how important is "fairness" to you? Does the meaning of fairness change over time? In your lifetime, has America become a fairer place? Or has it become less fair? Why do you think that is?

…As voters say recent political, social, and economic currents have made America less fair

On "fairness"

In your lifetime, has America become a fairer place? Or has it become less fair?

Most voters felt the country has become less fair

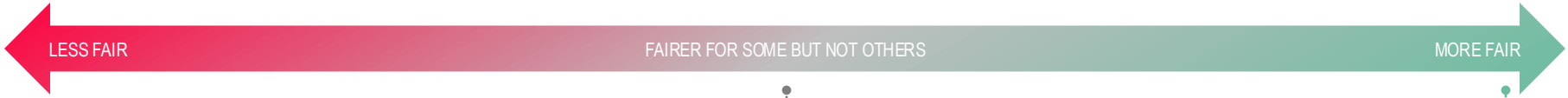
Non-college educated Trump voters say that elites are making it harder by cutting benefits (Medicaid)

Democrats believe the US has become less fair under Trump because of certain culture wars policies (LGBTQ+, DEI, Roe v. Wade)

College educated and non-white voters named concerns over fairness with changes to judicial approach, including on immigration

Lower income voters named the country as becoming less fair because of policies that have driven income inequality (tax codes that favor the rich)

Some men cited financial reasons including a gap between the wealthy and ordinary people, increasing prices without wage raises & lack of affordable housing.



Trump voters were most likely to name Democratic DEI policies as making life fairer for some (women, people of color) but less fair for others (white people, white men)

Democrats said the country has become fairer for white and wealthy Americans and less fair for communities of color, immigrants, women and low-income Americans

Only one voter said they thought the US has become fairer

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Voters reveal contradictions in the way they think and talk about fairness

On "fairness"

Fairness is both a universal truth…

"**Fairness in America to me means that everybody has the same opportunity to make their lives better.** Fairness is incredibly important to me."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

"**Fairness is to try and treat everybody as equal as possible.** Respect everyone's beliefs, have everybody have the same opportunity regardless of race, color, creed. Everyone should be able to live peacefully and just be treated equal."

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Fairness is both a static moral imperative…

"I don't think fairness can change over time. **Being fair to others is almost a moral to me and your morals shouldn't ever change.**"

– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

"Fairness to me is ensuring that all people no matter of the race, sexual orientation, financial status, or mental capabilities are heard, respected and understood. Fairness is very important to me. **Fairness doesn't change over time.**"

– Female, 65+, Black, South, <College, Harris, Democrat

…and a subjective experience

"**I think 'fairness' is more of a concept. Nothing in life is fair.** But I do believe it is important to take the right action. **The meaning of fairness can end up being a huge contrast between just two individuals**."

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Unknown, Republican

"**'Life isn't fair - the only fair is where you ride the rides and eat cotton candy.'** What I mean by that is that life is not fair, so you do what you can with the resources you have. **If you work hard, most of the time you can get ahead. I think that still stands true today but to a lesser extent given the housing shortage.**"

– Male, 18-44, White, Northeast, College+, Trump, Republican

…as well as an evolving norm

"The meaning of fairness does change over time. **Looking at the Civil Rights era, segregation was considered fair to some extent because of what came before it**, so it seemed like a big step up. **If we look at the Civil Rights era through the lens of today's time, it would be completely unfair.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Unknown, Democrat

"Fairness has had **many meanings over the course of our country's history**, but I think recently it really **boils down to being able to freely experience what America has to offer.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q6. Let's talk about "fairness." What does fairness in America mean to you today? Compared to other values, how important is "fairness" to you? Does the meaning of fairness change over time? In your lifetime, has America become a fairer place? Or has it become less fair? Why do you think that is?

Voters don't feel American values are anchored or exemplified in today's political class

Public figures who embody important American values

There's a clear disconnect between voters' values frameworks and today's leaders: Few referenced current political figures when asked to articulate their values, suggesting a growing disconnect between individual leaders and the broader values that voters hold dear

Is there a living public or political figure who demonstrates these values to you?

MOST MENTIONS ▲

No one – *Especially among younger voters*

Obama – *Among Democrats*

Trump – *Among Republicans*

Misc – *Pete Buttigieg, JD Vance, Elon Musk, AOC*

▼ FEWER MENTIONS

"Everyday Americans are living those values, but politicians and lots of public figures are failing."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Independent

"**I cannot say that there is currently any public or political figure who is demonstrating these qualities.** Most public figures are self-serving and only using pieces of these values to manipulate and garner support for their own political agendas."

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

"**I don't know if there is a public or political figure who is still living that demonstrates all these values without being self-serving…**You see all the insider trading…But I would like to see someone that enables those values. But I don't know if there is one or if there will be one with the political climate we are in now."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

Q2. Let's talk about values in America. List 3 of the values you feel are most important to you as an American. Why are they so important to America's success? Is there a public or political figure – who is living – who demonstrates these values to you?

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The State of the Parties

Independents: Democrats should be less dogmatic, Republicans should be more empathetic

Independents' views of the Democratic and Republican Parties

DEMOCRATS: Arrogance lets perfect be the enemy of the good – and enduring purity tests to rally the base, alienate the majority

"I feel like the Democratic Party **could also be more inclusive**. Just because someone **doesn't fully agree on all issues doesn't make them 'bad' people**."
– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

"I would like them to show more patriotism and more humility. Plenty of times, Democrats give off the vibe that they don't really love America and **when talking to people that disagree with them, they come off as condescending and arrogant.**"
– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

"I want the Democratic Party to stop antisemitism in colleges and media**. I also want them to stop pushing LGBT and gender change agenda on to school kids.** I want them to agree that women sports should be for women, not for men that became women due to gender change."
– Female, 65+, White, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

REPUBLICANS: Extremism supersedes compassion and celebrates cruelty – and a culture of Trump's Yes Men, leaves no more for debate

"I would like **Republicans to demonstrate more empathy and compassion.** Whether it be to immigrants already in this country that have led an exemplary life here in the U.S or people from a lower economic class, I think Republican leaders can do a better job demonstrating empathy."
– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

"I want the Republican party to grow a pair. **They are being they're bending over backwards kissing this horrible human** finder, and it's inhumane what they're letting him get away with. He is becoming a dictator, and it makes me sick."
– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

"I want the Republicans to be **more willing to work with others and to stop being radical in their changes and ideas.** They need to be willing to compromise."
– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Independent

THERE IS AN APPETITE FOR COMPROMISE: Independents want the parties to work together to better meet constituents' needs

"**I would like for there to be a lot more unity within our government, regardless of political affiliation.** I don't care if you are a Republican or Democrat, you are a representative of Unites States citizens, and you should do the best for your citizens"
– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

"I'd like it if **both parties could do a better and more consistent job of trying to serve the American people and being less concemed with serving their own corporate and foreign donor's interests!** I'd appreciate a bit more of a focus on building strong nuclear families as well."
– Male, 18-44, White, West, <College, Unknown, Independent

"I would like the Republican Party to be more honest with their communication with the country. I expect the same from the Democrats. **Maybe to stop attacking each other and respond to issues in an open and responsible manner** rather than simply trying to win over people with the 'Look at what we did.'"
– Male, 65+, White, South, <College, Harris, Independent

Q5. What values do you want the Republican Party to more clearly demonstrate? What values do you want the Democratic Party to more clearly demonstrate?

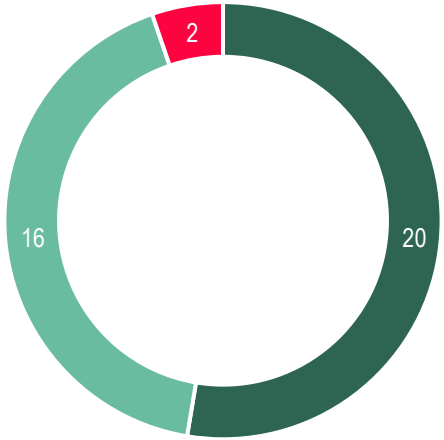
CENTER FORWARD

On Finding Common Ground

There's near universal support for the idea of compromise in the abstract, though notably its resonance lacks intensity among many voters

Views on compromise generally

Do you have a positive or negative view of compromise?



SOMEWHAT POSITIVE:
Compromise, with some caveats

"**Compromise is a key tool used in negotiations**. This is what Donald Trump is using to restore peace around the world. It also helps keep the peace in every family and in every home. **Are there some issues that are not for compromise? Absolutely**."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

VERY POSITIVE:
Compromise categorically

"I think compromise is a **win-win situation. Everyone gets something** and everyone gives up something. I have a very positive view of compromise. Compromise to me, you know, for us, **it makes us better.**"

– Male, 65+, White, South, <College, Harris, Independent

"**Compromise as a meeting of the minds.** Where two sides don't necessarily agree on whatever they're discussing, but the agree to a compromise where both sides come to a conclusion **that each are happy with.**"

– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

Q7. Do you have a positive or negative view of "compromise"?

Compromise in Congress, specifically, is also universally seen as preferable to the zero-sum nature of winner-takes-all politics

Views on compromise in Congress

"Compromise in Congress is good because our government should represent all Americans, and by working together our country will be more unified and fairer for all" (34)

"I think compromise is good because most elections, **the popular vote is mostly evenly divided in America.** For example, Trump won by a lot the last electoral vote but only won by around 2 million votes in the popular vote. This shows the country is not overwhelmingly in favor of other side and there should be compromise to appease the majority of Americans."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

"Compromise in Congress is good because our government should represent all Americans. That's what the Founding Fathers wanted. They wanted **different viewpoints to come to a conclusion together.** There's a book, I believe Doris Kearns Goodwin did call *Team of Rivals*, and I think it's about Abraham Lincoln. And **he had people who were against a lot of his beliefs and values on his team because he wanted to get everyone's viewpoint.** That's the way that things should be done."

– Male, 45-64, White, Northeast, College+, Harris, Democrat

"Compromise is not always good, but typically **I think that it is a good thing because then both parties are getting a little bit of something they want.** And when both parties come together and can agree on something **that means that most of the American people are being accounted for** with what the general population would want."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Democrat

"Compromise in Congress is bad because winner-take-all elections determine which direction the country should go, and the winning party should lead with a clear mandate" (4)

"The elected party should lead because **the citizens have voted them in to stand with their belief on how things should be done for the country and have change."**

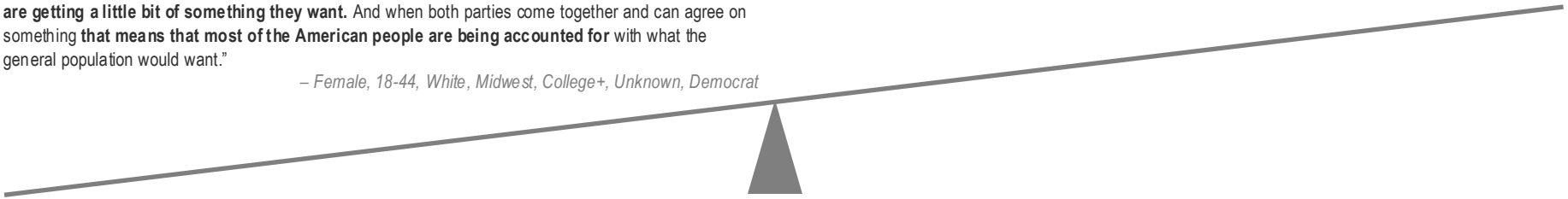
– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

"When people are voted into office, they **should vote according to what their mandate was from the voters.** They shouldn't get into office and then change based upon what the other party wants to do and compromise in ways. **That was not the reason that got 'em voted into office to start with.**"

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Unknown, Independent

"The winning party is **elected because this party represents the will of the people. BUT the elections must be honest, fair and with only Americans voting.** No illegals, No dead people. No people voting multiple times in different states. Legal voting only."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican



Q12. Which of the following two statements comes closer to your opinion?

But most feel both parties are unwilling to compromise when push comes to shove

Views on compromise in politics today

Which party is more willing to compromise with the other side to get things done in D.C.?

MOST MENTIONS ▲

▼ FEWER MENTIONS

BOTH PARTIES ARE EQUALLY UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE

– 25 mentions

Cutting across political ideology, though skewing to conservative and moderate voters

"I feel like they are always in a 'Sibling Rivalry.' **I think greed and bribes keep some of the compromising away,** and in other cases it could motivate compromise depending on which companies or individuals would benefit."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, <College, Trump, Republican

"**I believe both parties are not willing to compromise**. Instead, **both parties are interested in winning the majority and putting forward their own agenda** and allowing it to pass down the party line."

– Male, 45-64, Black, South, College+, Harris, Democrat A

DEMOCRATS COMPROMISE MORE

– 13 mentions

Democrats largely reported their side negotiating in good faith historically, but without power are left without leverage to do so meaningfully

"**Democrats have been more willing to compromise. But the GOP doesn't need to, so they don't.** They have been manipulated and **controlled by Trump, and anything that he doesn't like they don't budge on**."

– Male, 45-64, White, Northeast, College+, Harris, Democrat

"**It is hard for the Democrats to compromise as the Republicans have control of everything.** Also, the MAGA movement is a whole new thing with many Republicans saying it's not the same party."

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

REPUBLICANS COMPROMISE MORE

– 6 mentions

More conservative Trump voters said GOP compromises more

"The Republican party for sure. **The current Democratic Party is you believe what we say you will believe and if not, you are dead to us and kicked out and scrutinized for it.**"

– Male, 18-44, Latino, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

"**The Republican Party compromises more. The Democratic Party have shown that they will do only what they want** and take no account into the Republican Party ideals or decisions. There is too much slander and lies against the Republicans that stand up for the truth and what is right."

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

Q11. In your view, in the last few years, which party is more willing to compromise with the other side to get things done in D.C. – the Democratic Party or the Republican Party – or are they the same? Why do you think we don't see more compromise between our elected leaders from different parties? Today, what motivates elected leaders from different parties to compromise? What motivates them to NOT compromise today?

Most say that in government, compromise is a sign of strength and makes for more productive legislatures, better policy outcomes, and a more civilized political discourse

Positive views on compromise in politics today

COMPROMISE AS A SIGN OF POLITICAL STRENGTH

MORE PRODUCTIVE: Many said with compromise comes more bills being passed that reflect the will of the American public

"**I think this is strength. People need to work together to make things happen.** We can't have everything one-sided. **Compromise helps everyone come to a solution that fits both parties and is successful."**

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

"**We want to see them come together and at least get something passed** for the good of all. I don't think it's a bad thing one, one bit."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

"**Compromise is a good thing because it allows for more bills to be passed to help Americans.** I think it's a sign of strength for those involved. It demonstrates the ability to not be stubborn and be willing to be have self-awareness, courage, and control."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Trump, Republican

BETTER POLICY OUTCOMES: Some, mostly older, respondents saw it as a way to improve policy quality

"**Good policy boils down to the mandatory things that must be fixed and cutting away the ancillary "fluff".** Though sometimes things may seem like they are black and white, sometimes **incorporating both perspectives can actually lead to a better solution all around.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"**It is a good thing compared to the situation when every decision gets obstructed by other party**, and nothing moves. There had been situations when **good policies and laws did not go through because no one wanted to compromise.** I think compromise is a sign of strength and not a weakness."

– Female, 65+, White, Northeast, College+, Trump, Independent

"Compromise is a good thing in the government. **No side has all the answers, so it's important that they listen to each other and work together.** Getting to a bipartisan compromise that can actually pass is a sign of strength."

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Democrat

RESPECT: A few, mostly younger voters, saw compromise as a sign of respect and "maturity"

"**Compromise is a sign of strength and maturity.** Both parties have different viewpoints but there are ways to meet in the middle if effort was put in."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, College+, Harris, Democrat

"**Compromise shows maturity.** Compromise is a sign of strength. We don't get everything we want but **we can walk away with something versus walking away empty handed.**"

– Female, 65+, Black, South, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q8. Now, let's talk more about compromise in government. Imagine elected leaders from different political parties are debating a policy. In the end, they agree to compromise, neither side gets everything they want, but both get some things they like in the final policy. Overall, do you think this kind of compromise in government is a good thing or a bad thing? When it comes to passing policies or laws, do you think compromise is a sign of strength or weakness? Explain your thinking.

Resistance to compromise – most often voiced by Democrats – doesn't so much reflect opposition to the concept, as it reflects skepticism that it's viable in the current landscape

Mixed or negative views on compromise in politics today

COMPROMISES AS BOTH STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

These voters were more likely to be Harris voters or Democrats who would support compromise so long as it doesn't compromise their values

"If it is simply meeting in the middle on a budget amount, I see compromise as a positive. If you really want something in the final policy and you think it is very important, but you have to allow something that goes against your ideas to get it...is it worth it? I feel when compromises are about related items, they make sense. But, other than that, they can almost feel like ultimatums or bribes."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

"Compromise can be a sign of strength or weakness. Really depending on what side of the party you are on. It's really kind of difficult that you know if you're Republican at all.**We won this last bill, but we did. We no, there's a lot that was snuck in there. If you're a Democrat, you lost so much so it's a struggle.**"

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

COMPROMISES AS WEAKNESS

Other Democrats and a few Independents pushed back not because they disagreed with compromise, but because they had little evidence to support it actually happens

"Compromise is incredibly important, so long as everyone is engaging in it. But for the previous administration it seemed an awful lot like one side compromised all the time, and the other side didn't, **so government seemed to be quite one-sided**."

– Male, 18-44, White, West, <College, Unknown, Independent

"**There are nonnegotiable and instances when you shouldn't even compromise with someone whose politics are harmful to people.** Compromise can be a good thing depending on the situation. **As I see it right now, Democrats compromise too much they confirm Trump's judges and officials and make it too easy for him.**"

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, College+, Unknown, Democrat

Q8. Now, let's talk more about compromise in government. Imagine elected leaders from different political parties are debating a policy. In the end, they agree to compromise, neither side gets everything they want, but both get some things they like in the final policy. Overall, do you think this kind of compromise in government is a good thing or a bad thing? When it comes to passing policies or laws, do you think compromise is a sign of strength or weakness? Explain your thinking.

Support for compromise on issues related to the economy and healthcare often reflect practical financial concerns

Issues & compromise: opportunities

Pocketbooks: Compromise on economic and healthcare policy is seen as a way to improve costs and quality of life

Tariffs & Taxes

These voters tended to be older and non-Trump voters

"**Tariffs should be thought out better and have some compromise.** Nobody is going to get exactly what they want**. But compromise could lead to compassion and understanding.** Bullying and trying to one up another just leads to disgrace and distrust."

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Unknown, Republican

"**There needs to be more compromise on tax breaks for the middle class.** We also need to figure out ways to cut costs for day-to-day needs. Grocery in particular. It amazes me how much I spend and how little I take home weekly at the supermarket."

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Cost, Access & Programs

More likely to be Trump voters or younger voters

"Making healthcare prices transparent would be a good one to do. It's important because it would help all Americans. **We need more healthcare compromises in congress**."

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Trump, Republican

"**Elected leaders should find compromise on is social welfare like Medicaid**. We have personally lost health insurance and so had my disabled uncle. We had to go through so many more questions and had delays in having SNAP processed this last time. It was very stressful."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, <College, Trump, Republican

"**Elected leaders should compromise on healthcare reform**. I believe that affordable, available, quality healthcare should be a given right to all citizens**. "**

– Female, 18-44, White, West, <College, Trump, Republican

Q9. What policy or topic do you think elected leaders should find compromise on? Why is it so important to you that elected leaders seek compromise on this particular issue? Where in our government do we need compromise these days? Why is that?

Meanwhile, opposition to compromise on other core issues such as civil rights, culture, and immigration reflects personal values that voters aren't willing to cede ground on

Issues & compromise: obstacles

CULTURE WARS: Abortion & LGBTQ+ Rights

Voters across the political spectrum don't want elected leaders to compromise on their side of the cultural debate

"We should never compromise **on equal rights. So, when it comes to the issue of abortion or the issue of gay marriage, things like that, we should never compromise**. There's no ifs or buts. Your body, your choice a hundred percent."

– Female, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Harris, Democrat

"No compromise when it comes **to grooming children. I don't care** if you're gay. Or trans. Or fluid. **Just don't encourage our children to do the same.**"

-Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS: Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP

Democrats were not willing to compromise on government programs that they feel reflect their values serve seniors or children

"**Cutting Social Security. Medicaid. Helping poor families with food subsidies, helping the veterans.**"

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"I don't think there should ever be a compromise when it **comes to keeping our children and our elderly safe.** I think our laws should be very stringent when coming to children and elderly."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

IMMIGRATION

Trump voters don't want compromise on immigration which they see as a safety issue. Democrats and Independents don't want compromise on immigration if it treats people unfairly, which is a core value

"We can't compromise on immigration and security. **We cannot allow for taxpayers' money to be spent on non-citizens.**"

– Male, 18-44, White, Northeast, College+, Trump, Republican

"There should **never be compromise when it comes to treating people in a humane manner.** It's heartbreaking what people are enduring in the detention centers, it's absolutely crazy that **citizens are also being rounded up as well.** I understand that there **are people who came here illegally but then how do you counter that action with equally illegal actions?**

– Female, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q10. What policy or topic do you think elected leaders should NEVER compromise on? Why is it so important to you that elected leaders DON'T seek compromise on this particular issue? Where in our government do we need LESS compromise these days? Why is that?

There's some sense that the more emotionally charged an issue is for a voter, the less likely they are to welcome compromise on it

Issues & compromise: obstacles

AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, ISSUES WITH DEEP EMOTIONAL RESONANCE ELICIT LESS OPENESS TO COMPROMISE

CULTURE WARS

"I am **relieved that Trump is punishing schools that push immoral DEI and Transgender ideology that will warp our future generations**…**A nation that goes against the law of God can't expect to have peace and prosperity. We need less compromise on abortion**. It should never be allowed no matter what. **We need to keep marriage to one man and one woman (neither transgender).** That is how God intended it.""

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, <College, Trump, Republican

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

"**I don't think Trump aligns with any of my values as it's more difficult each day to keep your family afloat and afford a decent living with Healthcare, the latest being attacked every day…[I don't want to compromise on] Cutting Social Security. Medicaid. Helping poor families with food subsidies, helping the veterans.**"

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

IMMIGRATION

"**I am surprised that rogue, Obama-era judges are blocking him from deporting Tren de Aragua members and other dangerous criminals… I want no compromise on an open border, ANY crimes committed by illegals against American citizens should not be subject to any compromise**."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

FREEDOM

"**The 3 values I identified are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and democracy.** Donald Trump does not align with any of those 3 values. **He is actively infringing on each and every one of them.** The only values that I can discern from Trump's actions are greed and selfishness…**[I don't want compromise on] Freedom. The government should not control our speech, who we love, how we earn our living (as long as it's legal), etc.**""

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q10. What policy or topic do you think elected leaders should NEVER compromise on? Why is it so important to you that elected leaders DON'T seek compromise on this particular issue? Where in our government do we need LESS compromise these days? Why is that? | Q13. Do you feel that Donald Trump is delivering on his campaign promises? Has he been better, worse, or about what you expected? What makes you feel this way? Has anything surprised you, positively or negatively, and is his administration how you expected it would be? Of the three values you identified above, which does President Trump most align? What value or values do you associate most strongly with President Trump and why?

CENTER FORWARD

On Civic Engagement

Trump hasn't driven more news engagement; instead, voters are holding steady or checking out

News consumption & engagement

Since the beginning of the year, have you started consuming more or less news about politics and current events?

Less	The Same Amount	More
16	16	6
Almost entirely comprised of non-Trump voters, and they tended to be under 45 years-old, female, and college-educated	Cuts across demographics	Skews 45+

Those who engage with the same amount of news as at the beginning of the year are more likely to be white and Trump voters who likely haven't experienced news fatigue at any point this year

"The fact that our country is rapidly declining makes me consume less news and it honestly makes me feel better to not look at the news as much. Yes - **if Trump was impeached or something happened to his administration, it would make me want to watch more news**."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Democrat

"I don't like knowing what's happening regularly. **Things seem to also change rapidly, so I'd rather not have to follow along with the day-to-day. If something is important enough, I'll hear about it.**"

– Female, 18-44, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

"**The state of news is depressing, and I had to take a break for my mental health.** The economy is worsening, people are getting laid off, tariffs are causing prices to increase. I try to pay attention to local news."

– Male, 18-44, Black, Midwest, College+, Harris, Independent

"**I like to have the knowledge on what is happening in the world. It makes me feel empowered.** There is so much happening now on a daily basis and every day it's a new thing. I consume more to keep up."

– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris, Independent

"Trump is constantly trying to cancel and change policies. [I am] **having to pay more attention to see what is affecting me and my elderly mother on Social Security**."

– Male, 45-64, Latino, West, <College, Unknown, Democrat

"**I think it's important to be informed.** Also, when it comes to electing local candidates, I want to know if they favor policies or are against them. **Sometimes it's overwhelming. But I still want to know**."

– Female, 65+, Latino, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q14. Since the beginning of the year, have you started consuming more or less news about politics and current events? What is making you consume more news about politics and current events? How does it make you feel to be paying more attention to what is going on in the news day-to-day?

Outside voting, civic engagement is mixed: around half report being disengaged, while college educated and older voters drive engagement across issues and campaign involvement

Civic engagement

LITTLE TO NOTHING: Non-Trump voters often said they vote in elections but weren't civically engaged otherwise – they were mostly apathetic or said they were held back by family and work commitments or safety concerns

"I don't really think there's been any point in my life where I have really jumped into more civic life activities more. I've **always been big on voting, reminding people to vote around me, but I don't think it's gotten really past that**. There's been moments where I've wanted to, but I just don't, just simply because **I feel like I just don't have time**."

– Female, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Harris, Democrat

"Nothing really has changed in my decisions towards civic life. **I work and enjoy my family as much as I can**."

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

"I have been not as engaged because **it did not feel like I was making a difference.** People were so aggressive and negative to other opinion it became a safety concern."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Unknown, Independent

ISSUE ADVOCACY: These voters were more likely to have a college education

"There were issues at our state level that would have greatly impacted one of my 'passions.' **I wrote many letters, made calls, ran social media pages against the topics that were being brought forth to KS legislature.** I continue to call and write my representatives on certain topics that I feel could damage the state, but I am not nearly as engaged as some."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Unknown, Independent

"I am very involved in my community. **I serve on 3 non-profit boards, and I ran for township trustee in 2024.** I have recently become more involved in **policy advocacy at the state level concerning the broken mental health system** in Michigan."

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Harris, Other

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS: Older voters were more likely to get more involved in politics during an election

"In the past, **I have worked in campaigns and volunteered to go door-to-door and man phone banks.** Now, I have health problems that limit me, but I still vote, put signs in my yard, and pray."

– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump, Republican

"I've jumped into to civic life with regards to work, as **I'm a union worker.** I used to hold an active role in my prior labor union. I held that role for about 3 years. In 2022, **a family member ran to become an elected official in NYC, that caused me to become a bit more active in support of their campaign.**"

– Female, 18-44, Black, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Apathy Drives Disengagement: Voters who stay out of civic life say it's because they don't think most efforts result in change, they feel disempowered, indifferent, and exhausted from the political landscape

Q15. In the past ten years, have there been moments when you have decided to jump into civic life more actively? When were those moments and why did they cause you to engage more actively? How long did you keep up this civic engagement? Was it on-going or was it every so often?

A year out from the midterms, intention to turnout runs high, driven by a pervasive sense of what's at stake; in voters' minds it's a referendum on Trump

Midterms engagement

About two-thirds of voters said they plan to vote in the midterms

Motivation to vote is driven by support or opposition to Trump

"**I definitely plan to vote, and I want to see candidates call out Trump's agenda to eliminate democracy and be a dictator.** They need to speak up."

– Male, 45-64, White, Northeast, College+, Harris, Democrat

"I believe the midterms will have many tight races. I don't really have any feelings about it. **I just plan to vote like how I always do. I don't plan to do anything else.**"

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, <College, Trump, Republican

A few said they hadn't made up their mind yet on whether or not they will vote

A few women said they were generally indifferent about the midterms and wanted to see who was running

"I am very nervous about the midterm elections. If he is able to get the redistricting to go through, there's no telling how bad things could get. It makes me mad that so much time and energy is going into this when it could be spent doing things that can actually help our country. **Whether or not I get involved or vote will depend how bad things get before that. If things continue to go his way, I will probably keep my head buried in the sand until he goes away.**"

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

"I haven't thought about the midterms in November. **I'll vote if my husband or family encourages me too, but I kind of feel like my vote doesn't matter all that much anymore.** I don't even know who will be running."

– Female, 18-44, White, West, College+, Harris, Democrat

Only two voters stated they do not plan to vote

These voters weren't civically engaged

"**I honestly wouldn't know about midterms coming up if you hadn't mentioned it.** I didn't know. I do not plan to vote on midterms."

– Male, 45-64, White, West, <College, Trump, Independent

"I will probably not vote midterms. **I haven't in the past and probably will not this time.**"

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Harris, Democrat

Q15. How do you feel about the upcoming midterms in November 2026? What emotions do you feel about them? How do you plan to engage during the 2026 midterms? Do you plan to vote? Do you plan to do other things in the lead up to the midterms to support the candidates or issues you care about?

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