


PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES
turning questions into answers



The 2026 Midterm Elections

March 2026

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The Impact of Iran

- Clearly the war with Iran and its domestic consequences have the potential to reorient this cycle, either improving President Trump's standing and Republican prospects or further dimming them.
- What strikes us about the initial round of polling is how modest the actual changes are in the structure of the partisan data. Our partisan boundaries are so strong that the initial reaction was to stick to our filter of red team/blue team.

A Democratic Perspective

By past tracking standards, it is easy to document Democrats' advantages heading towards November:

- Unusually high interest in the election numbers, with a decided Democratic advantage over Republicans.
- President Trump's job approval rating would need to be higher to assure GOP gains.
- Before Iran/gas prices have been in the most important issue question mix, the top issue of the cycle is "inflation and the cost of living" where Democrats enjoy a wide advantage.
- The second most important issue this cycle is captured under the rubric of "threats to democracy." It is both the most important issue to Democrats and one in which they again have a wide advantage.

A Republican Perspective

There continue to be significant Republican strengths that are not given enough weight in the coverage of this campaign year:

- Party identification continues to be even.
- President Trump continues to benefit from a committed partisan base.
- Republicans continue to dominate on important issues including border security and immigration, crime, and jobs and the economy.
- Overall, when asked which party is better on the issues most important to voters, Democrats have only a modest three-point edge.
- MAGA Inc. and Republican committees have a strong financial standing.
- The image of the Democratic Party continues to be quite weak by historic standards.
- The numbers today for Republicans are better than cycles with significant Democratic congressional gains in 2006, 2008, and 2018.
- The number of Toss-up/Lean seats is so competitive (18 Republican/18 Democratic seats in play) it profiles as a coin flip election for the U.S. House, *not* a wave election.

Party Identification of Registered Voters – Trend



	Republican	Democrat	<i>Net Difference</i>
March 2026	42%	42%	-0-
2025 Merge	43%	42%	+1%
2024 Merge	42%	41%	+1%
2020 Merge	37%	43%	+6%
2016 Merge	37%	44%	+7%
2012 Merge	37%	46%	+9%

Showing trend data among Independents misses the shift in the composition of these voters.



<i>Self-Described Independents by Ethnicity/Education</i>	2014 Merge	2016 Merge	2018 Merge	2020 Merge	2022 Merge	2024 Merge	2025 Merge
Total Independents Non-College Whites	44%	46%	47%	40%	41%	41%	39%
Total Independents College+ Whites	27%	25%	33%	30%	25%	24%	23%
Independents of Color	19%	20%	21%	24%	29%	34%	35%

Yellow highlight indicates highest percentage to date

A narrow majority of Americans initially disapproved of U.S. military action in Iran.



Do you think that the United States should have or should not have taken military action against Iran?*

	Should Have	Should Not Have	Net Difference
All Voters	41%	52%	-11%
Men	52%	43%	+9%
Women	32%	60%	-28%
Men <College	59%	35%	+24%
Men College+	38%	57%	-19%
Women <College	38%	54%	-16%
Women College+	23%	71%	-48%
Ages 18-34	30%	66%	-36%
Ages 35-49	34%	53%	-19%
Ages 50-64	52%	43%	+9%
Ages 65+	47%	49%	-2%
White Voters	47%	46%	+1%
Black Voters	20%	76%	-56%
Latino Voters	31%	65%	-34%

	Should Have	Should Not Have	Net Difference
All Voters	41%	52%	-11%
Harris states	39%	56%	-17%
Trump states	44%	49%	-5%
Swing states	40%	51%	-11%
Democrats	9%	89%	-80%
Independents	27%	58%	-31%
Republicans	77%	15%	+62%
MAGA GOP	90%	5%	+85%
Non-MAGA GOP	54%	36%	+18%
Progressive Dem.	6%	93%	-87%
Non-Progressive Dem.	20%	77%	-57%

Most Important Problem

Which party do you think would do a better job of handling the issues you think are most important?

48% Democrats - 45% Republicans

<i>Ranked by % Combined</i>	1st Choice	Combined 1st/2nd Choice
<i>Inflation and the cost of living</i>	26%	48%
<i>Threats to democracy</i>	26%	36%
<i>Immigration and border security</i>	13%	25%
<i>Jobs and the economy</i>	11%	24%
<i>The cost of healthcare premiums</i>	7%	21%
<i>Availability of affordable housing</i>	6%	16%
<i>Crime</i>	5%	10%
<i>Climate change</i>	2%	6%
<i>Abortion</i>	2%	5%

Which one of these issues is the most important issue facing the country?

Issue Priorities Vary Widely by Party

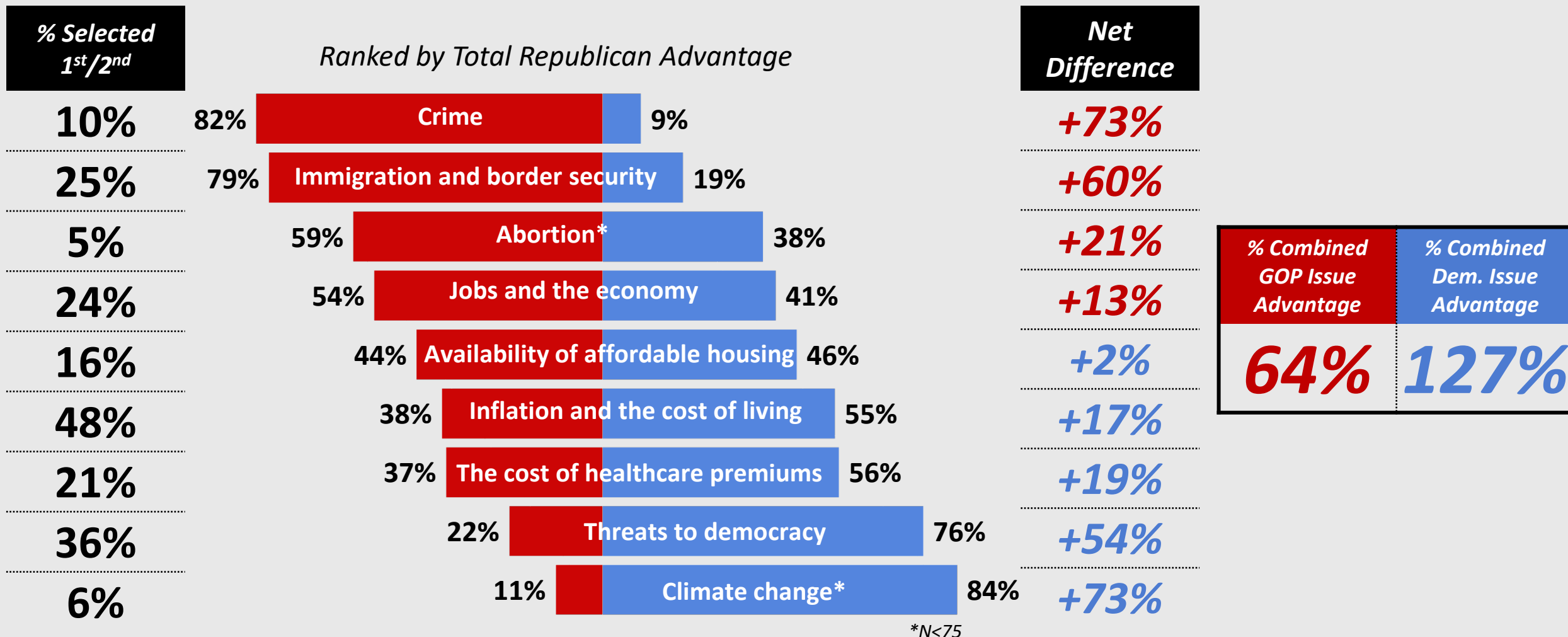


Ranked by % Combined

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
<i>Inflation and the cost of living</i>	52%	51%	43%
<i>Threats to democracy</i>	55%	35%	20%
<i>Immigration and border security</i>	12%	14%	42%
<i>Jobs and the economy</i>	17%	33%	31%
<i>The cost of healthcare premiums</i>	25%	19%	18%
<i>Availability of affordable housing</i>	14%	18%	15%
<i>Crime</i>	2%	8%	18%
<i>Climate change</i>	11%	6%	1%
<i>Abortion</i>	4%	4%	7%

Which one of these issues is the most important issue facing the country?

Congressional Preference by Combined Most Important Issue



Which one of these issues is the most important issue facing the country? What is your preference for the outcome of this year's congressional elections – a Congress controlled by Republicans or a Congress controlled by Democrats?

Election interest is already incredibly high. One more example: today's 18 to 34-year-old voters are already showing a uniquely high interest in a midterm election.



Please tell me how interested you are in the elections this November, using a scale from one to ten on which a “ten” means that you are very interested in the elections and a “one” means that you are not at all interested.

<i>Off-Year Election/First Track</i>	All Voters % 9-10
January 2006	53%
December 2009	54%
March 2014	47%
December 2017	53%
October 2021	59%
October 2025	66%
March 2026	64%

<i>Midterm in October</i>	All Voters % 9-10
October 2006	61%
October 2010	61%
October 2014	55%
October 2018	65%
October 2022	70%
	Ages 18-34
Midterms (Average)	36%
Today	47%

% 9-10 Interest in the Election – Trend



	Republicans	Democrats	Net Difference
October 2006	61%	66%	+5%
2010 Merge	66%	49%	+17%
2014 Merge	59%	48%	+11%
2018 Merge	57%	66%	+9%
2022 Merge*	70%	63%	+7%
October 2025	67%	74%	+7%
March 2026	61%	74%	+13%

**Democratic interest in the election surged in the final weeks of the 2022 election cycle
 September 2022 Republican (69%) Democrat (66%)
 November 2022 Republican (73%) Democrat (73%)*

Please tell me how interested you are in the elections this November, using a scale from one to ten on which a "ten" means that you are very interested in the elections and a "one" means that you are not at all interested.

Presidential Approval and Midterm Election Results

Year	President	Approval	House Seats
2022	Biden	45%	-9
2014	Obama	42%	-13
2006	Bush	38%	-30
2018	Trump	47%	-41
1994	Clinton	48%	-52
2010	Obama	47%	-63
1998	Clinton	68%	+5
2002	Bush	63%	+8
2026	Trump (RCP Avg)	43%	?

Congressional Preference & Historical Election Results – Democratic Strength Years



	GOP Preference	Dem Preference	Net Difference	# of Dem. House Seats Pre-Election	# of Dem. House Seats Won
October 2006	37%	52%	+15%	201	233
November 2008	36%	48%	+12%	236	257
2018 Merge	41%	50%	+9%	194	235
March 2026	44%	50%	+6%	215*	?

**Democrats currently hold 214 seats with one open seat in NJ-11 they should retain.*

+3	=	218 Majority
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Ten Keys to Building a Republican Coalition

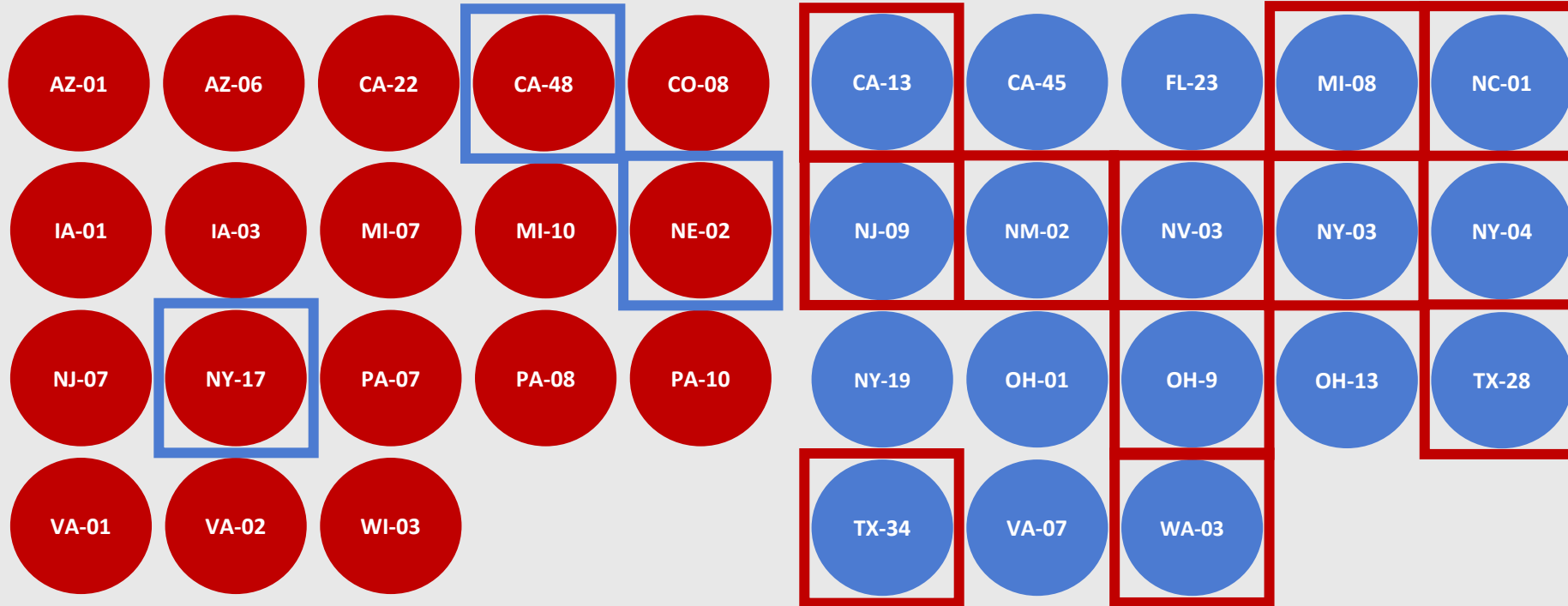


	September 2022	2025 Merge	March 2026
White men voting GOP by +20 or more	YES	YES	NO
Men Ages 18-49 voting GOP	YES	TIED	NO
Swing states voting GOP	YES	NO	NO
White college+ men voting GOP by a comfortable margin	YES	NO	NO
White women voting GOP	YES	NO	TIED
Suburbs voting GOP	YES	YES	TIED
GOP margin with men higher than Democratic margin with women	YES	NO	NO
Independents voting GOP by a high single-digit or double-digits	CLOSE	NO	NO
GOP election interest higher than Dems	TIED	NO	NO
Moderates voting for Democrats by less than 15 points	NO	NO	NO

While 2026 is not a *Republican* wave election, the competitive number of toss-up/lean House seats profiles it as a coin flip election, *not* a Democratic wave.

Republican Seats (18)

Democrat Seats (18)



Dem Seat Voted for Trump in 2024 

GOP Seat Voted for Harris in 2024 

Toss-Up/Lean Seats

	Republican	Democrat	Net Difference
2006	55	6	+49
2010	7	93	+86
2014	12	27	+15
2018	69	5	+64
2022	19	45	+26
2026	18	18	-0-

Congressional Preference by Key Groups - Trend



	2010 Merge			2018 Merge			2022 Merge			2024 Merge			March 2026		
	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.
All Voters	44%	43%	+1%	41%	50%	+9%	46%	46%	-0-	47%	47%	-0-	44%	50%	+6%
Men	48%	39%	+9%	48%	44%	+4%	53%	40%	+13%	55%	39%	+16%	50%	43%	+7%
Women	40%	47%	+7%	35%	56%	+21%	40%	53%	+13%	40%	54%	+14%	39%	56%	+17%
White Men	55%	32%	+23%	55%	38%	+17%	60%	33%	+27%	62%	33%	+29%	54%	41%	+13%
White Women	47%	39%	+8%	45%	47%	+2%	48%	45%	+3%	48%	47%	+1%	47%	47%	-0-
White <College	51%	33%	+18%	55%	36%	+19%	60%	32%	+28%	64%	31%	+33%	58%	34%	+24%
White College+	51%	39%	+12%	39%	55%	+16%	43%	53%	+10%	41%	55%	+14%	37%	61%	+24%
White Voters	51%	36%	+15%	49%	44%	+5%	53%	41%	+12%	55%	40%	+15%	50%	44%	+6%
Black Voters	6%	83%	+77%	9%	82%	+73%	13%	76%	+63%	11%	81%	+70%	15%	76%	+61%
Latino Voters	30%	59%	+29%	26%	61%	+35%	35%	56%	+21%	39%	51%	+12%	36%	58%	+22%
Ages 18-34	38%	48%	+10%	33%	55%	+22%	36%	55%	+19%	40%	53%	+13%	33%	59%	+26%
Ages 35-49	46%	41%	+5%	41%	50%	+9%	47%	43%	+4%	46%	46%	-0-	44%	49%	+5%
Ages 50-64	44%	43%	+1%	47%	44%	+3%	53%	41%	+12%	52%	43%	+9%	49%	46%	+3%
Ages 65+	48%	39%	+9%	41%	53%	+12%	48%	46%	+2%	51%	45%	+6%	49%	48%	+1%
Republicans	89%	4%	+85%	89%	6%	+83%	92%	5%	+87%	92%	5%	+87%	91%	7%	+84%
Independents	38%	26%	+12%	30%	43%	+13%	39%	37%	+2%	38%	42%	+4%	28%	51%	+23%
Democrats	7%	85%	+78%	4%	92%	+88%	5%	92%	+87%	4%	92%	+88%	4%	94%	+90%
GOP House Districts	N/A	N/A	N/A	49%	42%	+7%	56%	37%	+19%	57%	37%	+20%	53%	42%	+11%
Dem. House Districts	N/A	N/A	N/A	30%	60%	+30%	36%	57%	+21%	37%	56%	+19%	33%	61%	+28%

Congressional Preference by Key Groups - Trend



	2010 Merge			2018 Merge			2022 Merge			2024 Merge			March 2026		
	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.	GOP Control	Dem. Control	Net Diff.
All Voters	44%	43%	+1%	41%	50%	+9%	46%	46%	-0-	47%	47%	-0-	44%	50%	+6%
Men 18-49	45%	41%	+4%	43%	47%	+4%	49%	41%	+8%	51%	41%	+10%	45%	47%	+2%
Men 50+	51%	37%	+14%	53%	40%	+13%	57%	38%	+19%	59%	36%	+23%	57%	39%	+18%
Women 18-49	38%	49%	+11%	31%	58%	+27%	32%	59%	+27%	32%	61%	+29%	31%	62%	+31%
Women 50+	41%	46%	+5%	38%	53%	+15%	46%	48%	+2%	46%	50%	+4%	44%	53%	+9%
White Men <College	56%	31%	+25%	61%	31%	+30%	65%	27%	+38%	70%	25%	+45%	60%	33%	+27%
White Men College+	57%	33%	+24%	45%	49%	+4%	51%	45%	+6%	49%	46%	+3%	42%	56%	+14%
White Women <Coll.	49%	36%	+13%	50%	41%	+9%	56%	37%	+19%	57%	37%	+20%	57%	36%	+21%
White Women Coll.+	43%	47%	+4%	33%	60%	+27%	25%	61%	+26%	34%	62%	+28%	33%	64%	+31%
High School or Less	40%	45%	+5%	47%	41%	+6%	55%	36%	+19%	57%	35%	+22%	56%	36%	+20%
Some College	46%	39%	+7%	43%	48%	+5%	49%	42%	+7%	52%	42%	+10%	49%	44%	+5%
College Graduate	49%	41%	+8%	37%	54%	+17%	39%	55%	+16%	38%	56%	+18%	32%	65%	+33%
Postgraduate	41%	47%	+6%	30%	64%	+34%	32%	62%	+30%	32%	63%	+31%	32%	66%	+34%
Liberals	11%	80%	+69%	7%	89%	+82%	8%	89%	+81%	6%	91%	+85%	4%	95%	+91%
Moderates	36%	48%	+12%	30%	57%	+27%	36%	52%	+16%	36%	55%	+19%	32%	59%	+27%
Conservatives	73%	16%	+57%	77%	16%	+61%	84%	11%	+73%	86%	10%	+76%	88%	8%	+80%

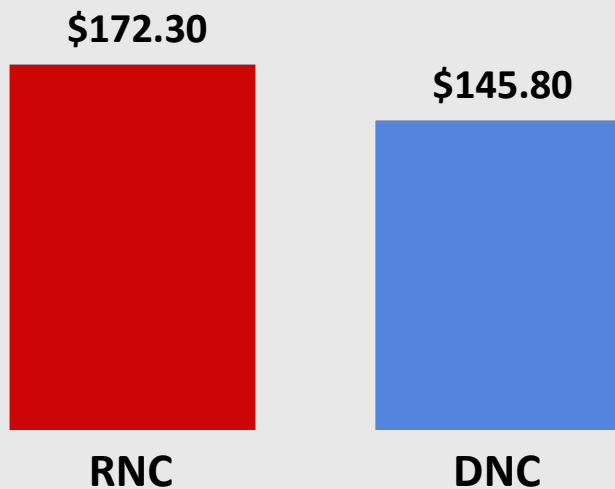
Republicans enjoy a fundraising advantage over Democrats heading into the 2026 midterm elections.



Trump SuperPAC



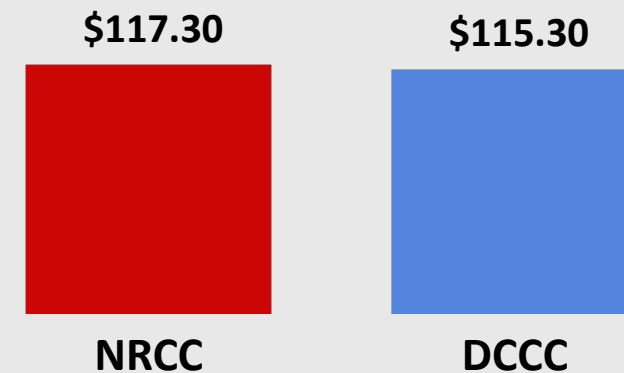
National Parties



Senate Committees



House Committees



■ Republicans

■ Democrats

**Raised through Dec. 31, 2025
Numbers in Millions* **20**

Feelings Toward the Republican and Democratic Parties Over Time

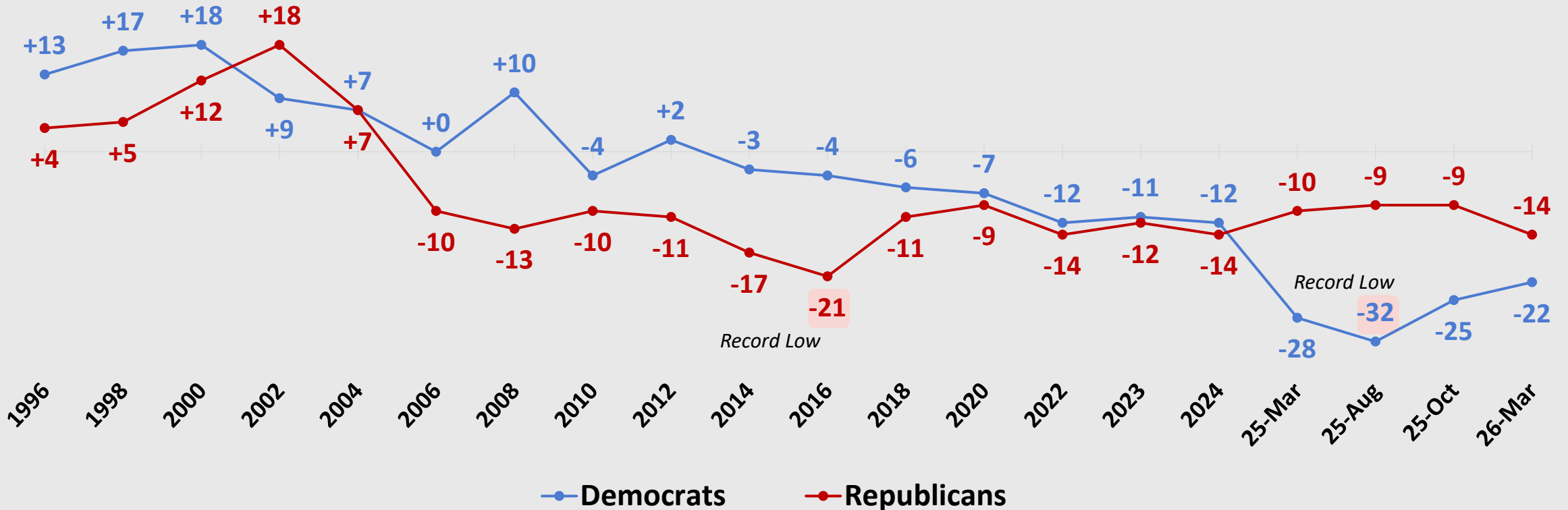


Republican Party

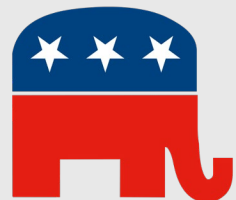
2018 Merge	34% - 45%
2020 Merge	37% - 46%
2022 Merge	34% - 48%
2024 Merge	35% - 49%
2025 Merge	39% - 48%
March 2026	37% - 51%

Democratic Party

2018 Merge	36% - 41%
2020 Merge	38% - 45%
2022 Merge	36% - 48%
2024 Merge	36% - 48%
2025 Merge	27% - 55%
March 2026	30% - 52%



Feelings Toward the Republican and Democratic Parties Over Time by Ethnicity among Registered Voters in Off Years



Republican Party

	White Voters			Black Voters			Latino Voters		
	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.
2010	34%	40%	-6%	15%	61%	-46%	24%	45%	-21%
2014	34%	43%	-10%	13%	61%	-48%	26%	44%	-18%
2018	39%	42%	-3%	12%	66%	-54%	25%	45%	-20%
2022	40%	44%	-4%	13%	65%	-52%	24%	54%	-30%
2024	41%	45%	-4%	9%	69%	-60%	31%	49%	-18%
2025	46%	43%	+3%	11%	71%	-60%	30%	53%	-23%
March 2026	43%	46%	-3%	11%	68%	-57%	28%	60%	-32%



Democratic Party

	White Voters			Black Voters			Latino Voters		
	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.	Positive	Negative	Net Diff.
2010	30%	51%	-21%	72%	10%	+62%	50%	25%	+25%
2014	30%	50%	-20%	71%	10%	+61%	44%	28%	+16%
2018	32%	47%	-15%	60%	15%	+45%	43%	25%	+18%
2022	31%	55%	-24%	62%	18%	+44%	39%	39%	-1%
2024	31%	55%	-24%	65%	15%	+50%	39%	34%	+5%
2025	24%	60%	-36%	47%	26%	+21%	28%	48%	-20%
March 2026	25%	59%	-34%	53%	20%	+33%	36%	43%	-7%

The First Feeling Thermometer Rating of Democratic Presidential Candidates Compared to Today's Track of 2028 Potential Candidates



<i>Ranked by Net Difference</i>	Total Positive	Neutral	Total Negative	Net Difference
Barack Obama Oct. 2006	31%	18%	11%	+20%
Al Gore March 1991*	21%	26%	11%	+10%
John Kerry Dec. 2002*	19%	25%	13%	+6%
Joe Biden June 2004	16%	25%	10%	+6%
Kamala Harris Aug. 2020	39%	13%	35%	+4%
Bill Clinton Oct. 1991*	10%	14%	7%	+3%
March 2026				
AOC March 2026	31%	12%	42%	-11%
Kamala Harris March 2026	34%	14%	51%	-17%
Gavin Newsom March 2026	27%	15%	45%	-18%

*Sample of All Adults

I'm going to read you the names of several people, and I'd like you to rate your feelings toward each one as either very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or very negative. If you don't know the name, please just say so.

Harris, AOC, Newsom Images by Democrat Subgroups



Harris

	Total Positive	Total Negative	Net Diff.
Democrats	67%	13%	+54%
Democratic Men	51%	21%	+30%
Democratic Women	78%	8%	+70%
Democrats Ages 18-49	61%	18%	+43%
Democrats Ages 50+	75%	9%	+66%
White Democrats	66%	15%	+51%
Democrats of Color	69%	10%	+59%
Liberal Democrats	76%	10%	+66%
Mod./Cons. Democrats	55%	19%	+36%
Progressive Democrats	75%	11%	+64%
Balance of Democrats	43%	26%	+17%

AOC

	Total Positive	Total Negative	Net Diff.
Democrats	64%	10%	+54%
Democratic Men	63%	14%	+49%
Democratic Women	64%	7%	+57%
Democrats Ages 18-49	65%	10%	+55%
Democrats Ages 50+	62%	9%	+53%
White Democrats	65%	11%	+54%
Democrats of Color	61%	8%	+53%
Liberal Democrats	77%	3%	+74%
Mod./Cons. Democrats	45%	19%	+26%
Progressive Democrats	76%	5%	+71%
Balance of Democrats	24%	30%	-6%

Newsom

	Total Positive	Total Negative	Net Diff.
Democrats	52%	16%	+36%
Democratic Men	50%	25%	+25%
Democratic Women	54%	11%	+43%
Democrats Ages 18-49	43%	18%	+25%
Democrats Ages 50+	61%	14%	+47%
White Democrats	55%	16%	+39%
Democrats of Color	47%	16%	+31%
Liberal Democrats	59%	13%	+46%
Mod./Cons. Democrats	41%	20%	+21%
Progressive Democrats	59%	13%	+46%
Balance of Democrats	30%	30%	-0-

Yellow highlight indicates highest net positive rating

Top 10 Positively Rated U.S. Presidents Among Republicans and Democrats

How would you rate the following president?

Republicans

	President	Net Positive
1	Abraham Lincoln	+77
2	George Washington	+74
3	Donald Trump	+71
4	Ronald Reagan	+71
5	John F. Kennedy	+62
6	Thomas Jefferson	+62
7	Theodore Roosevelt	+60
8	Franklin D. Roosevelt	+37
9	John Adams	+31
10	James Madison	+24

Democrats

	President	Net Positive
	Barack Obama	+83
	Abraham Lincoln	+74
	John F. Kennedy	+71
	Franklin D. Roosevelt	+55
	Theodore Roosevelt	+54
	George Washington	+53
	Jimmy Carter	+52
	Joe Biden	+49
	Bill Clinton	+45
	Thomas Jefferson	+32

Yellow highlight indicates similarities