



GS STRATEGY GROUP

breakthrough
campaigns

2025 Voter Research Journals

FEBRUARY 2025



Methodology

Breakthrough Campaigns conducted **35 Qualitative Journals** between February 17-19, 2025, with voters that do not vote in primaries but voted in the general election. All of these voters participated in prior qualitative research about their feelings and experiences surrounding the 2024 elections.

Participants were selected to ensure interviews were demographically representative.

This qualitative effort was designed to make sure we heard from voters in their own words. As with all qualitative research, results should be considered directional.

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 35 Journals | | | |
| 9 Northeast | 9 Midwest | 10 South | 7 West |
| 16 Men | | 19 Women | |
| 17 18-44 | 9 45-64 | 9 65+ | |
| 23 White voters | | 12 POC voters | |
| 7 Early in person voters | 7 Early by mail voters | 15 Election Day voters | |
| 17 Harris voters | 11 Trump voters | 7 Undecided/ Third Party voters | |



Key Findings

Recap of Phases 1 and 2

We conducted 38 online qualitative voter journals before and after the election to get a better understanding of voters' lived experiences, attitudes, and motivations before and after the election. We analyzed how voters regarded the political climate in 2024 and assessed their outlook going forward.

The Political Climate Surrounding the 2024 Election

- **Election Analysis:** In general, Trump voters chose to support him because they were dissatisfied with the economy and with inflation, and they were optimistic that he would be able to improve these issues as president.
 - We found a continual erosion trust in the electoral system, the political system, and the media by voters. Voters made their decision at the ballot based on opposition to candidates and negative character judgements of candidates, rather than being excited to vote for a candidate.
 - Many citizens actively disengaged from political discourse due to overwhelming negativity and election fatigue, yet still voters deeply feel a sense of civic duty to get out and vote.
- **Post-Election Behavioral Shift:** The 2024 election perpetuated polarization. Voters thought their side made logical choices when they made their vote choice, but they believed the other side made an irrational or emotional decision.
 - There was also an increase in news avoidance among some voters, which became a coping mechanism for voters processing disappointment with the election results.
- **Political Identity and Behavior:** There was a tendency to avoid cross-party dialogue, and some felt no use in speaking to those on the other side unless they could “win” the debate. This contributed to greater polarization of political discourse.
 - Respondents who were Trump voters in blue states or Harris voters in red states understood their vote didn’t “matter” at the top of the ticket, but there was still belief that it mattered down ticket on other races.

Executive Summary

This project demonstrated that Americans still come together in this highly polarized environment. Voters across the political spectrum **shared stories of resilience and community in response to the election of Donald Trump and in the wake of recent tragedies**, such as the LA wildfires and the DC plane crash. **Voters often expressed open-mindedness to alternative perspectives** on political, moral, and personal disagreements, either sharing a time when they changed their own view on an issue or a time when they gained respect for other positions.

This project confirmed that **voters are increasingly wary of Donald Trump only one month into his second term**, even among some of his supporters. Like in the prior phases of this research, **the economy and concerns about the cost of living emerged as the most important issues facing the country**, and many voters anticipated that the economy would improve under Donald Trump's leadership. However, while voters generally agreed that Donald Trump is delivering on other campaign promises like immigration, **they had reservations about his handling of the economy, his sweeping federal spending cuts, and his foreign policy agenda.**

Where Voters Found Common Ground

- **Feelings:** Months after the 2024 election, voters still felt anxious and overwhelmed about the country. They were primarily concerned about Donald Trump's actions since taking office, whether that was opposition to some of the administration's policies or general unease about the economy. The speed of the rollout of his agenda was alarming to them as well.
 - **Still, about half of voters expressed hope.** Many of them were Trump voters who were excited by Donald Trump's speedy delivery of his campaign promises. A few non-Trump voters were simply hopeful that the country would endure his second term.
- **Coming together:** Voters felt connected to others in response to recent tragedies and the election of Donald Trump. Many were disappointed and overwhelmed by the deluge of news, primarily Harris voters. Others were heartened by their hopes for the new administration or by efforts to help other Americans who were struggling to get by.
- **Respect for opposing views:** About half of voters shared a time when someone they trusted changed their minds about a political, interpersonal, or work-related conflict. **Even among those who hadn't changed their minds, many gained new perspective** about the opposing view, softened their initial position, or continued to respect the other person.

Executive Summary Cont.

The State of the Union Is That Everything Is Too Expensive

- **The economy:** Voters overwhelmingly concluded that the economy and the cost of living are the most important issues for the Trump administration to address next, and they believed that Americans are most likely to find common ground on pocketbook issues because they impact everyone. Still, many, including some of his supporters, disapproved of Trump's handling of the economy, citing anxiety about tariffs or frustration that inflation has not improved yet. Some are waiting patiently for the economy to improve, but others are growing impatient.
- **Federal spending cuts:** Voters had mixed views on DOGE's efforts to decrease federal spending. On the one hand, many agreed that the federal government is too big and that cutting spending could eliminate government waste. On the other hand, they were upset about the way DOGE is cutting spending without following proper procedures and were afraid that it could impact key programs and benefits.
 - Harris voters were most likely to express this concern, and they desired greater caution and empathy toward what is being cut.
- **Foreign policy:** Several Trump voters were frustrated with his foreign policy agenda. Some were upset that Trump was alienating key allies, such as Europe and Canada, with his expansionism and his views on the war between Russia and Ukraine. Others questioned how getting involved in complicated foreign entanglements in Gaza would advance his campaign promise to put "America first."
- **Frustration with both political parties:** Voters associated the Democratic Party with promoting equity and preserving democracy, but many Democratic voters aren't sure what the party stands for these days and want to see better messaging and more resistance to Trump. Voters associated the Republican Party with traditional values and liberty, but Republican voters wanted to see greater empathy toward disadvantaged groups and for them to promote welfare programs.
- **Hope for the future:** Harris voters expect little, if any, good to come out of Trump's second term. Still, voters hope and expect Donald Trump to deliver on improving the economy by bringing down the cost of living.

Despite the turmoil of the past month, voters still want change. They believe that Donald Trump ran on improving the economy and curbing inflation, and they expect him to deliver. These issues concern everyone across the political spectrum, and they are demanding action. Leadership in DC must address these concerns so that the country can heal from political polarization and economic uncertainty to return to a state of normalcy.

Common Themes Across Phase 1-3

- **The economy:** In general, Trump voters chose to support him because they were dissatisfied with the economy and with inflation, and they were optimistic that he would be able to improve these issues as president. Harris voters often raised this as a key issue throughout the research as well, citing concerns about wealth inequity and the cost of living. Although the economy was a major concern for Harris voters as well, fewer Harris voters mentioned this as a key reason why they voted the way they did.
 - Multiple Trump voters who said the economy was the most important issue to them during the 2024 elections now have notable reservations about his handling of the economy a month into his second term, principally about his handling of inflation and tariffs. Non-Trump voters also raised alarms about the current cost-of-living crisis, and many were apprehensive or frustrated about Trump's economic policy agenda.
- **Assessments of Trump:** Throughout the research, Harris voters expressed serious doubts about Trump's character and agenda, describing him as unfit to lead, a felon, and reckless. They were very pessimistic about the direction of the country under the new administration.
 - Trump voters generally said they were either voting for Trump's platform or against Harris and her platform. Trump voters said his views on the economy and immigration aligned with their own, or they were apprehensive about what the country would look like under a Harris administration. A few Trump voters had reservations about him and his character during the election, with one framing him as "the lesser of two evils." Their concerns about specific components of his agenda crystallized a month into his second term, namely about his handling of tariffs, inflation, and foreign policy.
- **Political disengagement:** Avoidance of cross-party dialogue was consistent throughout the research. Many described these conversations as too upsetting or generally futile. Some voters recalled a time when a conversation about politics made them change their mind. Most did not change their minds about politics but demonstrated openness to learning more about other perspectives.
 - Voters avoided political conversations and the news throughout the research as well, especially Harris voters who felt overwhelmed and disappointed by Trump's win.
- **Anxiety:** Voters expressed anxiety throughout the research about a number of issues: civil unrest after the election, fear the opposing candidate would win, the economy, and pessimism about the direction of the country. Harris voters became more anxious after Trump won, and a number of Trump voters worried about the impact of Trump's tariffs and foreign policy agenda.





Finding Common Ground

Concerns about the rising cost of living and economy are issues that most can agree on

Issues where Americans find common ground

ECONOMY: Voters across the political spectrum said that basic necessities like food and housing are becoming too expensive, and they believe Americans find common ground on these issues because price increases impact everyone's wallet and financial security

"An issue that most Americans can agree on is the prices of goods. The grocery prices are fairly high, especially for things like eggs, and no matter who you are, everyone feels as if everyone can agree on this... **What makes most people agree on the issues is they need food to survive. It's a necessity."**

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Undecided

"The rising cost of living is something all sides can agree upon. **I think because it impacts everyone's wallet, versus being a moral or a philosophical topic."**

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

"The issues I find most Americans agree on are related to the economy, the concern about inflation, the current cost of living, and the affordability of housing and rental market. **The values that make people agree on these issues are around the idea that hard work and dedication should lead to a higher quality of life for individuals and families."**

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

HEALTHCARE: Many who discussed the cost of living said that healthcare is also too expensive

"We all want affordable healthcare and easy-to-use insurance... It's not a trivial or moral dilemma."

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

"Most Americans can agree that the healthcare system in this country is broken... People are directly affected by illness, high grocery, and rent prices and can recognize that **politicians are not doing anything to help."**

– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, College+, Undecided

IMMIGRATION: A few on both sides of the aisle talked about immigration in broad terms

"There seems to be a large consensus surrounding immigration. **In general, the value of protecting American land and jobs can make these people agree."**

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

"I think both the left and the right would like **a southern border that is secure as possible and to deport immigrants that have committed crimes** while being here in America."

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

EDUCATION: A couple mentioned the right to an education in addition to other necessities

"I think most Americans agree that we should have access to water, healthcare, and an education of some sort... The main value that make people agree on these issues is basic human decency. If someone needs water, give it to them. If someone needs healthcare and shows up at the ER, they aren't turned away. Public schooling is free."

– Male, 18-44, White, West, <College, Undecided

Americans have come together in the face of recent tragedies, but for some the new administration has brought them closer to those who share their views

Most common recent events that made people feel connected to others

TRAGEDIES (13): Voters felt connected to others because they were worried in general or were comforted by how people came together

“I think the plane crashes have left me feeling more connected. It left me feeling more concerned about plane travel in America. So many accidents in a short period of time left me and many others concerned.”

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

“I recently participated in a benefit that was held to raise money for victims of the SoCal fires, it helped me feel connected to my community and those suffering down in SoCal during these tremulous times. It made me feel better about America because it helped me remember that there are still loving people out there that care for others.”

I think a good way to replicate it would be to have the media cover more positive stories of helping others rather than feeding the political divide that is currently going on in our country.”

– Male, 18-44, White, West, <College, Undecided

INAUGURATION OF DONALD TRUMP (11): Joy and anger about Trump’s inauguration united voters with others who shared their views

“I can’t think of anything other than Trump’s victory. It made me feel better that the majority of voters have common sense about the economy and border security.”

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

“I think the (ongoing) rollout of DOGE’s attack on the bureaucracy of the government has made the gap between me and some new work colleagues much less daunting. As the new year started and we bonded over new things, having talk of the government come up could have been a dicey subject, but folks from across the political spectrum could all mutually agree that what we were witnessing was unprecedented and scary. I don’t think this made me feel better about the country, but it did feel good to know that some people can separate their policy preferences from what is best for the greater good, at least in principle. Trauma bonding in this way is obviously not an ideal mode of bringing people together, but I do think it is rather effective at creating quick, surface-level bonds between people who may not get along otherwise.”

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

COMMUNITY (5): A few voters found connection by getting involved in their local communities and by meeting people with different backgrounds

“One thing that comes to mind is that most Fridays, I go to my local soccer field and play soccer with the people there, who are mostly strangers. It makes me feel better about America because it’s just a bunch of people with clearly different ethnic and religious backgrounds getting along fine and having a good time. I think a way this could be replicated is by having an increase of a variety of third spaces for people to get together and have a good time.”

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

“I go to a food pantry weekly. Oftentimes it’s the usual people, sometimes it’s new faces. I’m taken aback about how connections are made while waiting for food. It makes me feel good to know that friendships can be made over something as simple as this. It can be replicated if you’re open to human interactions.”

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

Q2. Can you think of a recent event that made you feel more connected to someone you didn’t know? Did that make you feel better, worse, or no different about America? What do you think caused that reaction? Are there ways to replicate it?

Half of voters changed their minds after talking to someone they trust; these conversations were mostly about personal issues

Changed mind or view about something

CHANGED MIND (16)

POLITICAL: More men discussed political disagreements and said that listening to people they already trust made them change their minds

“At first, I was all for the cutting of ‘wasteful’ spending, and after talking to someone who works in DC, I got to understand it was a little more than I thought. He informed me that the cutting may be good in the long run, but that there will be some cuts that will directly impact what I do for work and will impact some of my coworkers. **DOGE has cut a bunch from the USFWS and USFS, and it directly impacted people I know who were doing some great things in their fields.** I am now more on the side of caution when it comes to blanket cuts without due process.”

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Undecided

“Years ago, when I was an evangelical Christian, I was against abortion. After taking a philosophy class in college I became an atheist. **Discussing the problem of evil in class really helped me open my mind to new ideas,** which led me to support abortion rights. **I respect and thank my professor** for bringing up the topic in class.”

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

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL: Women and voters over 45 were more likely to talk about interpersonal or work-related conflicts

“It was with my direct report supervisor. We were going over a process we had in place, which we have always done the same way. I am 49, and he is 32 years-old. **Just to see the different thinking and using new updates and technology got me to change my mind.** The old way was a long process where we got all the information we needed, but it just took time. Using some new reports available to us, he showed me it was faster, and you got more information. **It’s hard to change something you have been doing for a long time, but if you are willing to open up, you see how easier it can be.**”

– Male, 45-64, Latino, West, <College, Undecided

“I was thinking about purchasing a car. I want a luxury car. I've always wanted one, but I decided to bring up the conversation to my brother. He was just like, ‘You know, there's a lot of factors that go into making that decision. You drive a really affordable car that's really great on gas, but there's a repair that has to be done. **It’s much more affordable and cheaper [to just repair it]! It actually made me change my mind,** so I'm not going forward with purchasing that”

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

Few engage in political discourse to try to change someone else's mind or to change their own mind

Changing own and others' perspectives

MORE LIKELY TO TRY TO CHANGE OTHER'S MIND (4)

This group believed they are highly principled and highly informed

"I haven't had any conversations in which someone has changed my viewpoint or opinion on anything. **I like to believe that I keep myself fairly informed and keep a very practical viewpoint.** In my last quibble, I was the one trying to persuade someone, and it went nowhere."

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

"I tend to feel like I am usually in a position to convince someone of a position different than their own, mostly because **I try to come from an objective place when approaching most things that aren't brazenly right or wrong.** That being said, I'm also willing to admit that I don't know everything and that it's okay for a perspective to evolve with age, new information, etc."

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

"I feel like in most situations that I'm usually the one trying to change people's minds. I would say that the reason is because **I'm very loyal to my values, to say that I'm going to change my values is just a big ask.**"

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

MORE LIKELY TO CHANGE MY OWN MIND (3)

This group was more non-confrontational and wanted to see reliable sources before changing their minds

"**I have always wanted to see both sides of an argument before I made up my mind about it.** I have never blindly followed party lines or viewpoints. I am more likely to change my stance with more information than most."

– Male, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Undecided

"I'm way more likely to change my own mind because I don't like altering people's viewpoints. **A lot of times people are fixated on their viewpoints, and I don't want to change that.**"

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Undecided

"I am more likely to change my mind if new information that I trust is presented. I usually will give my opinion on a subject, but **I really don't like the conflict of arguing or trying to change their mind. I feel we are all entitled to our own opinion.** I hate drama and conflict."

– Female, 65+, White, Midwest, <College, Harris voter

Even without changing their minds, some, primarily women, value other perspectives after political dialogue

Did not change mind or view about something

NEVER CHANGED MIND/DON'T REMEMBER (16)

Even if they did not change their minds, some voters said talking with others who have different perspectives either softened their initial positions or that it did not impact their respect for the other person

"I'm pro-choice, and I was dating a pro-life woman, and it was interesting hearing her perspective. **It didn't change my mind, but I learned a new perspective,** and I understand how someone could be pro-life even though I disagree with it."

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

"My coworker believes that lack of gun laws/control are the cause of so many deaths. My reply was that people kill people, and a gun is only one method. **While I appreciated her point of view and could understand some of her talking points, I do not agree with her thinking.** Banning an object or trying to control a person's possession of an object does not make the object the issue. It is up to the individual to be able to deal with a situation before taking aggressive action. I was trying to change her mind, as a weapon can be any item - not just a gun. **Do I have respect or trust for that individual? To some extent, yes. It has neither grown nor diminished. My feelings are still the same.**"

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Undecided

"The conversation that almost made me change my mind was yesterday at my friend's house. **We were talking about tariffs for Canada, Mexico, and China that Trump wants to place. I was saying I was not sure if this was such a bad idea as in the long-run** because it could reduce a trade deficit and bring businesses back to the US. **However, my friend was saying that this wouldn't achieve that goal but instead will only create price increases and growing inflation...** My friend told me that he learned a lot about Trump's business practices and even read his book. He insisted that his tariffs proposal is just the result of his personality, which means that he wants to always prevail, be above his business partners (in this case, neighboring countries and China), and it will not necessarily lead to economic advantage. **This statement made me think differently about Trump and feel more cautious about his economic program. I did have a respect for my friend as he is a member of some political club and knows much more than I do.**"

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

Q3. When was the last time you had a conversation, a debate, a quibble, or even an argument with someone that resulted in you changing your view or opinion on something? Please describe the conversation - what was the issue? What information or ideas made you think differently or change your mind?



Conversations about politically polarizing topics, like Trump and MAGA, can erode respect

Did not change mind or view about something

NEVER CHANGED MIND/DON'T REMEMBER (16)

Only a few voters described heated political debates that left them with less respect for that person than they had before

“My grandpa made a comment about wondering if my husband’s dad [from Belgium] was a Republican or Democrat, which my grandpa (who is a strong Republican) assumed that my husband’s father was a strong Republican as well. I let him know that the majority of people in Europe that I speak to think that Trump is an idiot and that our country is quickly becoming a laughing-stock to the rest of the world, including my husband’s father. My grandpa couldn’t believe it. I have respect for my grandpa, but I have never respected his political views.”

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Undecided

“Both of us were older, single, so we both thought this could lead to a relationship. I knew he voted Republican. He knew I voted Democratic. That was fine until we talked about [politics]. The conversation turned into a heated argument, and he made it personal, going as far as to tell me why didn’t I move to another country. I kept it calm, stating my facts, backing it up with various press clippings from different sources, and he said he couldn’t believe I listened to fake news. Everything was fake news, and he tried to back up his claims with an article from an unknown paper, with the reputation of being biased and giving false information... It did not make me change my mind in any way, as everything that was being said was propaganda. I did not try to change his mind, just explain my point of view in a calm way.”

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

“It was a discussion with my parents, and I was the one trying to change their mind and convince them to agree with me. They didn’t think it was right for Elon Musk and DOGE to be doing all these audits and helping President Trump. I told them that the only reason for these people with the audits to be upset is because they have a lot to hide and don’t want it to be discovered where a lot of the money trails have lead. It was a frustrating conversation that left me upset and angry at their closed-mindedness. I do not have the respect I once did and find it hard to deal with my feelings.”

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Trump voter



Views of the Trump Administration

Voters are more likely to express a negative emotion about the current political climate than a positive emotion

Feelings about the political climate after one month of Trump administration

+2 from immediately after the election

(20) Anxious

Non-Trump voters were more anxious about the political climate, and a few Trump voters worried about inflation and foreign affairs

“I chose anxious/worried because **there are a couple of things that Trump has done that seems to be getting other countries upset**, specifically with the tariffs and hinting at taking over places like Greenland. **I don't know if getting half the world mad at us is the best move**. Also, I'm worried that tariffs might affect domestic prices for things too much.”

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

“**Trump/Musk are ignoring the rule of law**. That's it. They are doing whatever they want, and no one is stopping them. The courts are telling them to stop, and they are ignoring them. **They think they are above the law. I worry this will result in a civil war.**”

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

+5 from immediately after the election

(9) Overwhelmed

Many were overwhelmed by how quickly Trump is enacting policies they oppose; they tended to be older

“**I feel overwhelmed because of the number of cutbacks and Trump's attitude toward the citizens of Gaza.**”

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College,
Trump voter

“I just feel ultimately **overwhelmed by everything that is currently happening**. For normal working people like me, we have to go to work everyday, complete our tasks, take care of our families, etc. **To have to keep track of which government agency is being dismantled every day and how that will affect you and the people you know is a whole separate job that is thankless**. It just feels hopeless to even attempt to monitor...”

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

-1 from immediately after the election

(16) Hopeful

Trump voters were more hopeful about the direction of the country; a few non-Trump voters were just hoping for the best

“I'm happy because **my candidate won, and I'm hopeful because many issues are already being addressed** (border security, cutting spending, inflation).”

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

“**I tend to be a very optimistic person** and try to look for a bright side of everything, even if it's a long-term view.”

– Female, 65+, White, Midwest, <College,
Harris voter

-3 from immediately after the election

(7) Disappointed

Harris voters more likely to be disappointed and feel the country is going in the wrong direction

“I was hopeful that more people would choose a way forward that benefitted all Americans, and instead **it feels like we are taking steps backwards.**”

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

“**I'm very disappointed due to a few policies**. The **tariffs** on other countries make things more expensive for citizens, and also policies like **trying to change the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America**. It just seems like a waste of time when **there are bigger issues at hand.**”

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College,
Undecided

Q4. 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?

Some, primarily Harris voters, began to avoid the news and political discourse to protect their mental health

Changes in behavior after inauguration of Donald Trump

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT (3): A few described increased tuning more into the news

"I am more uncertain about the future and feel somewhat anxious. Maybe I travel less. **I watch the news events more.**"
– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Trump voter

"Yes, I try to keep up because he's doing so much! Really excited about the future. I try to watch all interviews and briefings."
– Male, 18-44, White, Northeast, College+, Trump voter

"I have been checking the news a lot more to see what has happened during the day or night [and] what he has cut or plans to."
– Male, 45-64, Latino, West, <College, Undecided

AVOIDING MEDIA (7): Some non-Trump voters felt overwhelmed after Trump took office and began to limit their social media and news consumption

"I watch less news because my mental health can't take it. I glance at Apple News for headlines, but I stay away from MSNBC which I used to watch religiously - on occasion I will put it on but not watch for very long. I have started listening to podcasts instead which some are political in nature, but I pick and choose what I want rather than watch whatever is given to me on TV."
– Male, 45-64, White, Northeast, College+, Harris voter

"I don't engage with news in the first hour of my day, and I stop consuming social media a few hours before bed. If I am on social media, and I come across a post that triggers me to be outraged, **I immediately remind myself the algorithm wants me to react.** I can engage, take a deep breath, and immediately block the account that made me feel this way. I refuse to be outraged it is not a helpful emotion."
– Male, 18-44, Latino, South, College+, Undecided

AVOIDING PEOPLE/CONVERSATIONS (10): More women tended to create personal boundaries

"I am very careful with who I talk to about politics. This started when Donald Trump announced that he was running for president again. **I do not even bring it up unless it is with immediate family who I know are on the same page as me.** Even if someone brings it up, my responses are minimal and benign. I do not want the stress of speaking to someone who has been brainwashed by mainstream media."
– Female, 65+, White, South, College+, Trump voter

"My husband and I have a hard and fast rule: no politics in the car. It has now expanded to everywhere. We used to be aligned but have shifted through the years. I'm saddened that we aren't on the same page. **I have started to close myself off to him and not speak.** I'm afraid to spend money in case everything gets worse, and I don't want to be in public where I hear praise for the current president. My boundaries aren't a line in the sand- it's a wall."
– Female, 45-64, White, Midwest, <College, Harris voter

Q5. How have your behaviors changed in the past month since Donald Trump took office? Do you find yourself doing certain things less? Anything more frequently as a result? Have you created any boundaries for yourself about who you engage with or what information you consume?

Many voters have not meaningfully changed the way they engage with politics since Trump took office, with many avoiding politics as they did before

No change in behavior since the inauguration

NO CHANGE (13): Among this group, some said they are adjusting their spending habits by saving more or by avoiding certain companies

“Nothing has changed for me since the election. The changes I made were well before the election. I eliminated my participation in certain forms of media, as well as supporting certain companies well before the election.”

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

“My behavior hasn’t changed too much besides trying to take care of my money more. Save up as much as possible and only spending money on things I have to. I haven’t created any boundaries on anyone and with the information I consume. It’s the same as before Trump took office with both.”

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Undecided

“I haven’t changed behaviors as of yet. I am continuously mindful of who and how I engage with people since he took office.”

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

“My life doesn’t really change regardless of who is in office. I go to work, and I stay home when not at work. Currently, I am buying less eggs than I used to, but I don’t think that has anything to do with who is in office. I have not created any boundaries, since I am an adult and can have adult discussions with the people I choose to engage with. If I come across someone that can’t have adult discussions, I choose to not have any further discussions with them.”

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

“I don’t do anything less or more frequently yet. The economy is still a total mess, and I think it’s going to take a long time to fix. The price of eggs is insane, and I think people are starting to get depressed with how prices are continuing to rise.”

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

“My behavior has not really changed. I try not to engage other people with political conversations as it seems difficult to have civil conversations regarding the political environment.”

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

Q5. How have your behaviors changed in the past month since Donald Trump took office? Do you find yourself doing certain things less frequently as a result? Have you created any boundaries for yourself about who you engage with or what information you consume?



Voters are most disappointed by tariffs and federal spending cuts, and several Trump voters strongly opposed his foreign policy agenda believing it does not advance our interests

Disappointed with Trump administration policies

DISAPPOINTED

ECONOMY: Some Trump and Harris voters feared proposed tariffs will ultimately increase prices

“His tariffs and more affect my personal and business life. Cost of doing business will increase, and that affects my customers. I am disappointed with the implied and enforced tariffs. This has the most direct impact on my personal and business life.”

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

“At this time, I have no disappointments, except maybe the proposed tariffs. As I mentioned before, I am not sure if this is economically a good idea, and it may affect consumer prices in the nearest future while the long-term goal of significantly reducing trade deficit might not be reached.”

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

SPENDING CUTS: Non-Trump voters lamented that firing federal workers would have lasting impacts on the country and feared their benefits would be cut

“But I think the worst thing is his relationship with Elon Musk. It is beyond my comprehension how Trump is able to bring Musk in and allow him to have so much power. I wonder if Musk has something on Trump. One thing he did that affects me and my family is he put a freeze on federal job hiring. My son was about to interview for a federal job, but they canceled it because of the freeze.”

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

“I am disappointed that Donald Trump is firing several thousands of federal employees which is making the job market even tougher. I'm disappointed that social services are cut and are going to be cut even more which will affect my parents.”

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

FOREIGN POLICY: Trump voters opposed his foreign policy agenda, questioning why the US would want to be involved in foreign entanglements or want to alienate key allies

“Trump saying the US will take control of Gaza. Why the hell are we taking control of a foreign territory and spending money there? Why do we care about the rest of the world? I think the US needs to shut its doors and invest internally.”

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

“Something that was somewhat disappointing is that he is trying to turn Canada into part of America. I feel like that could just cause some problems. It doesn't affect me personally, but it sure would affect a lot of other people.”

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



Moving Forward

A majority of voters wanted the Trump administration to prioritize the economy and the cost of living, with many wary that he won't be able to deliver

Most important issue for Donald Trump to address next

ECONOMY (19)

Harris/undecided voters were anxious about inflation and wanted the Trump administration to take action

"The most important issue for me personally would be prices of goods, and I would want Donald Trump to address that. I'm a college student and things are expensive as is, but I need food to survive, and the prices are just too much. I do trust him because I feel like that's something no matter who you are can agree on."

– Male, 18-44, Black, South, <College, Undecided

"He said on day one prices would come down. He should concentrate on the economy, inflation, gas prices. **All those are going up instead of down.**"

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

"I really would like him to do something about inflation. It is ridiculous and affects everyone I know."

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

"The most important issue is cost of groceries, any necessary items that are used on a day-to-day basis. **Nothing I have seen so far indicates he is working to reduce those costs.**"

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

Some Trump voters expressed that he hasn't been focusing enough on the economy and expressed concerns about tariffs

"I would just like Trump to focus more on the economy. If the economy is doing good, most people will be happy. I do trust him to deliver on this. He's done it before. **I am a little concerned with all the tariffs he is trying to implement, but hopefully everything turns out good.**"

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

"Next issue I would like Donald Trump to address is a health care and drug costs. In his previous term he tried to do something about it, but did not succeed. I understand that this is a very difficult path and there will be a lot of resistance from pharmaceutical companies, **but it needs to be addressed at some point.**"

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

"The most important issues I would like addressed is inflation and the cost of living. This is the most concerning and pressing issue for me personally. **I don't know that I trust him to deliver on this issue, probably not.** I am optimistic for the sake of staying positive, but realistically the chances of reversing our economic decline seems unlikely."

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

Voters are most optimistic about the administration's potential impacts on federal spending cuts and immigration reform

Positive impact/end-result of Trump administration

SPENDING CUTS (7)

This group was across the political spectrum, with Harris voters demanding greater discretion and empathy about what is cut

"To get the Senate and House to approve his reduction of government so the changes are permanent. This will reduce my taxes and be a positive impact to the country and for myself personally."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Undecided

"I think some downsizing of the federal government is good. It would be good for any institution to evaluate periodically if things are redundant. **I certainly don't agree with the methods or criterion being used."**

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

"He could give a shit less about me personally, and I expect that from any politician. I am hoping that the money that DOGE saves will prevent myself and millions of other Americans from paying more taxes."

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

"Reducing government waste and extravagances will be a good thing if it is just done gentler and kinder."

– Female, 65+, White, Midwest, <College, Harris voter

IMMIGRATION (5)

This group was mostly Trump voters who believed the administration's policies will reduce wasteful spending and bring back jobs

"Deportations will allow financials to flow back to the taxpayers who are footing the bill and deserve that money."

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

"Immigration reform has the potential to have a positive impact. The result could force the employers and companies who have been abusing immigration labor to pay living wages to legal immigrants and residents."

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

"I have paid into Social Security my entire life. The positive impact of removing all of these illegals from Social Security is that there will be plenty of money for those of us who deserve this money."

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

"The way that he is handling the border I think will have a positive impact."

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

Q7. What is the most important issue you would like for Donald Trump to address next? Why do you say that? Do you trust him to deliver on the issues that matter most to you? Why or why not? Regardless of if you agree with the method, what is something the Trump administration is doing that you think will have a positive impact/end result?



Most respondents were weary about discussing politics before Trump's term, and very few are motivated to discuss politics with those with differing viewpoints

Motivation to talk about politics

MORE MOTIVATED TO TALK ABOUT POLITICS (3)

These were split demographically

"I am more motivated for these types of conversation because I'm not certain I trust him as much now."

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Trump voter

"I think discussions around the Trump administration may get easier now that he has shown his true face and shown that his major concerns are retaliation and control. Trump voters are expressing voters regret towards him."

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

"I don't think anything will change about we talk about politics with people who have opposing views. I'm more motivated to have these types of conversations. I've always been interested in politics and enjoy conversing about it."

– Female, 45-64, White, West, College+, Undecided

LESS MOTIVATED TO TALK ABOUT POLITICS (5)

This group was more likely to be women

"Political discussions will remain heated and negative until Trump leaves office. I'm less motivated to have these conversations since Trump took office. I am burned out from the political despair and disdain and want to simply hope for a better future, regardless of who won the election."

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

"I do not want to continue talking about politics with Republicans because I feel like there's just no point."

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

"I am less likely to have the conversations I had before because I don't know what others around me think. I assumed that people thought the way I did, but obviously I was wrong. There are so many Trump supporters out there, but I don't know who they are. I also don't want to have these conversations anymore because I am exhausted by him... I just want to hibernate until his presidency is over."

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

Most voters will not change how they talk about politics with many choosing not to bring it up at all

Pessimism about political discourse

Voters on both sides are tired of talking about politics and, for the most part, attribute it to those on the other side of the aisle

“I like to avoid confrontations. So, I think regardless of where we are in the future, I will probably never talk about politics or religion during family holidays. But at least we will be able to get along without cutting off family members because of differing beliefs.”

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

“There will be continued animosity and fighting. I do not want to continue talking about politics with Republicans because I feel like there’s just no point.”

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

“I have learned after many years of fighting with Democrats that it’s best to keep my mouth shut. They don’t seem to be open to change of any sort against their beliefs. No amount of logic or seeing good results seems to change their minds. It comes down to Republicans think Democrats are misguided, and Democrats think Republicans are evil.”

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

“We are so divided in this country now that I don’t discuss politics with anyone who has an opposing view because if they voted for Trump and now think he is doing a good job, I can’t respect them at all. They are not Americans in my view. I am much less motivated because he has given permission for people to be cruel and angry and you never know what someone is capable of.”

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

Views on the coming four years are split along party lines, with non-Trump voters expressing anxiety and dismay while Trump voters are mostly excited

Final thoughts from voters

HARRIS/UNDECIDED VOTERS

Non-Trump voters were afraid and overwhelmed about the next four years

“I think the majority is beginning to understand the impact of their vote (hence ‘FAFO’ posts), and we have 4 more years to endure.”

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

“**People are scared.** To some they are potentially being deported. Others are losing their jobs or benefits that they had counted on. **Even people who voted for the president are upset at what is happening and didn’t realize how things could affect them.**”

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

“What has stuck out to me most about the political climate over the last month is **how truly divided this country is. I think that this country is in a very bad place** and it’s extremely concerning to see other countries recognizing this as well.”

– Female, 18-44, White, Midwest, College+, Undecided

TRUMP VOTERS

Generally, Trump voters were optimistic, but one voter stated he regrets his vote choice

“I would say the thing that has stuck out is the number and rate of executive orders taking place. Yes, **I tell people I didn’t vote for Trump; I voted against the Biden administration’s policies**, their handling of the border and immigration, crime and supporting two major wars. **That being said, at this moment, I also have regrets for voting for Trump.**”

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Trump voter

“The political climate is much tamer than I expected it to be. **I’m optimistic our country will come together and become great once again.**”

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

“I am so excited about what is happening in the government these days. **Every day is like Christmas.** The news is no longer depressing. I am very happy.”

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

Views of Independents and undecided voters on the outlook of the country are generally pessimistic with even Trump voters sounding more uneasy

Views of Independents/Undecided voters

POST-ELECTION*

There was a generally hopeful tone from Independents who voted for Trump and undecided voters that the country would stabilize and return to normal; even some Independents who voted for Harris thought there could be minimal change

“I think our country and politics will be more stable in 3-6 months. I think I will feel confident and hopeful.”

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Trump voter

“I think our country will be just fine, as long as our elected official lives long enough to take office.”

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

“I hope it will be better. I am hoping to feel some relief and more optimism.”

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Undecided

“I don’t think much will change. Trump will use all his power to pardon himself and the rioters, we may see another drop in fed rates...but I think that will be it..”

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

POST-INAGURATION

Some Independents who voted for Trump and undecided voters have become more pessimistic while maintaining some hope, especially around economic prospects; nearly all Independents who voted for Harris expressed pessimism

“I think our country may be in a worse situation. I think I feel anxious and insecure. I hope in the future the US will have less crime and a good economy.”

– Male, 65+, White, Northeast, <College, Trump voter

“I hope that our economy stabilizes. I hope our wages keep up with inflation. I have a very good paying job, but I still live paycheck to paycheck. I hope that changes. Everything costs more money, I hope that changes.”

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

“I think that things will go on like they are now for a while, but I am anxious about the repercussions of individuals losing their job/income and the economy stalling.”

– Female, 45-64, White, South, <College, Undecided

“Probably in a war, and a domestic economic [recession] due to tariffs and mass layoffs in public and private sectors..”

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

S2Q9. Where do you think the country and our politics will be in 3-6 months? How do you think you will feel?

*Journals conducted Nov 13-15, 2024 by Breakthrough Campaigns/GSSG among 38 voters that did not vote in the primary

Q10. Where do you think the country will be in the next few months and years? How do you think you will feel? What are your hopes and concerns for the future of the country?



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