

THE ROADMAP TO NOVEMBER

Realignment,
Unalignment or Swing?
A Closer Look at
Hispanic Independent,
Undecided and
Crossover Voters

Hispanics are the second-largest group of voting-age Americans and a continuously growing electorate. Approximately one-fifth of Latinos casting a ballot this November will be doing so for the first time in a midterm election. This influx of new voters, added to a continued trend of Hispanics identifying as independent and previous ticket-splitting tendencies observed by this electorate, means greater potential for fluidity in traditional party support patterns observed among Latino voters.

Based on data from the 2026 [UnidosUS Bipartisan Poll of Hispanic Voters](#)ⁱ, Hispanic undecided, independent and crossover voters combined make up approximately 38% of the overall Hispanic electorate. With Latino voters having a significant presence in a dozen of the 37 [competitive districts](#)ⁱⁱ that will decide the congressional balance of power in the 2026 midterm election, this memo takes a closer look at this “middle” group of more fluid or potentially swayable Hispanic voters to see where they may differ (or not) from Hispanic voters as a whole.

Pocketbook concerns are top of mind for these voters, as they are for the Hispanic electorate overall. But this group is more pessimistic about the direction of the country and their own economic outlook — likely one of the main reasons for the higher share of self-identified Trump voters in this group who would not repeat that vote, compared to the overall Hispanic electorate.

One of the most distinct characteristics of this group is the much higher number who see no difference in which party would be better at handling a slew of issues, compared to the Hispanic electorate overall. This puts an exclamation point on the opportunity, and the challenge, for parties and candidates trying to win these voters. They need to reach out and meaningfully engage these voters, particularly on their vision to right the economic ship, and motivate them to go to the polls. In the last four election cycles, nearly half of Hispanics who voted reported receiving no outreach at all, a figure likely to be consistently higher among newer and independent voters. In 2024, for example, 45% of Hispanics who voted reported receiving no contact from anyone; among Latino independent voters, that figure was 51%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Who are these “middle” voters?

The demographics of this middle group and its component parts are very similar to those of the Hispanic electorate overall in many respects (e.g., nativity, generation, national origin). However, there are some specific characteristics that define one or more of the segments:

Independent and Undecided Voters. These groups naturally are likely to overlap and thus share many similarities. Independents were those who reported neither strongly preferring either party nor leaning in either direction, and “undecideds” were those who reported being unsure of the direction of their vote on the 2026 generic House ballot question. Compared to the Hispanic electorate overall, these voters are:

- More likely to be women: One standout difference of undecided voters is that they are 5 points more likely to be female (57%) compared to the overall sample. Women also make up 51% of independent voters.
- Younger: 8 percentage points more likely to be below age 44 than the overall Hispanic electorate.
- Lower income: 37% to 38% earn less than \$40,000, compared with 32% of the electorate overall.
- Significantly less likely to be married: 37% for undecided and 39% for independents compared with 45% of the electorate overall.

- Less likely to have a college degree: 23% of independents and 21% of undecideds have college degrees or more, compared with 28% overall.
- Less religious: 23% state “no religion” compared with 19% overall. They are 3% or 4% less Catholic or Protestant and 4% to 5% more “other Christian.”
- Less urban: Independents are 3 points less urban and 4 points more likely to live in a small town. Comparable numbers for the undecided are 6% less urban and 5% more in small towns.
- Less likely to be Spanish dominant by 3 or 4 percentage points.

Crossover Voters. While the overall patterns are similar to the national sample, this group also exhibits some distinct characteristics:

- While they are also younger, as was the case for the previous groups, crossovers are more male (57%).
- Crossover voters were 5 points more urban than the overall group.
- About half of crossover voters (48%) can be found in the two middle income categories, unlike the skew toward lower income among the undecided and independent.
- Two-thirds of crossover voters were Democrats who voted for Trump, compared with a third being Republicans who voted for Harris. This will be of importance when we look at current preferences among these voters.

Third-Party or “Some Other Candidate” Voters. This group is possibly the most distinct:

- There is a slight skew toward men (54%).
- This group is more suburban than the others.
- Two-thirds of “other candidate” voters (63%) can be found in the two middle income categories, unlike the skew toward lower income among the undecided and independent.
- It is also worth noting that those claiming to vote for another candidate were overwhelmingly more likely to answer the survey in Spanish, around two-thirds spoke Spanish every day, and this group was nearly 9 points more Mexican in origin than the other groups.
- They also had a higher share of employment in full-time jobs.
- The meaning of all this is not clear, in part because they are not more likely to be foreign-born (which might have explained information deficits). This raises the possibility that these voters were misreporting or misremembering their vote.

What Issues Do They Care About?

Pocketbook concerns are top of mind for these voters. In this regard, there are few to no differences when comparing the issue priorities and top concerns between these “middle” voters and the overall Hispanic electorate. The top priorities and their order, as well as the item selected as the number one issue, vary only by 1-4 points from the overall Hispanic electorate. A few of these are outside the margin of error but only barely so, and the takeaway is the same: **Those voters who could be broadly understood as “up for grabs” are heavily focused on economic concerns and financial well-being.** When these top issues are broken down into specific issue aspects and policy ideas, there is again very little meaningful variation between this group and the overall Latino electorate — often just 1 percentage point or zero.

On the whole, what are the most important issues that you want your member of Congress to do something about? Select up to three and rank them in order of importance to you. (Total ranked 1, 2, or 3. Chart shows top 5 of 19 choices given.)

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Undecided26	3rdParty24	Crossover24
Total (Unweighted)	N=3000	N=1403	N=744	N=751	N=633	N=252	N=114
Cost of living / inflation	60%	60%	62%	56%	60%	55%	49%
The economy/jobs & wages	40%	40%	39%	40%	43%	42%	43%
Health care	37%	39%	32%	40%	39%	36%	37%
Housing	27%	23%	27%	32%	32%	31%	25%
Immigration reform	21%	22%	22%	19%	17%	22%	25%

That said, **these middle voters are even more pessimistic than the overall Latino electorate — both about the direction of the country, as well as about their economic outlook.** While only 21% of all voters expected to be better off economically in a year, the comparable number among this group was 6 points lower, at 15%.

Generally speaking, do you think things in the United States today are going in the right direction, or the wrong direction?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Undecided26	3rdParty24	Crossover24
Total (Unweighted)	N=3000	N=1403	N=744	N=751	N=633	N=252	N=114
Going in the right direction	25%	11%	59%	17%	12%	17%	26%
Going in wrong direction	68%	86%	34%	73%	71%	70%	69%
Don't know	6%	3%	7%	10%	17%	13%	5%

How would you describe your personal financial situation today?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Undecided26	3rdParty24	Crossover24
Total (Unweighted)	N=3000	N=1403	N=744	N=751	N=633	N=252	N=114
Live comfortably	15%	12%	23%	13%	9%	5%	20%
Meet expenses with a little left over	33%	36%	35%	27%	26%	48%	36%
Just meet expenses	30%	31%	27%	33%	32%	31%	23%
Have trouble meeting expenses	19%	20%	13%	22%	27%	12%	18%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	4%	6%	4%	3%

Given that economic discontent has been the most powerful driver in the last elections — helping Biden beat Trump, then Trump beat Biden and Harris — a concern particularly for Republican candidates ahead of the midterms is that a significant portion of these voters expect to be worse off financially as a result of the president's policies.

Looking ahead to the next year, do you think President Trump's economic policies will make you:

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Undecided26	3rdParty24	Crossover4
Total (Unweighted)	N=3000	N=1403	N=744	N=751	N=633	N=252	N=114
Better off	21%	8%	52%	14%	9%	11%	24%
Worse off	52%	69%	19%	54%	53%	47%	54%
About the same	27%	23%	29%	32%	38%	42%	22%

And since immigration became a hot topic of debate in 2024 about whether Hispanic voters’ views were dramatically changing, it’s important to note that for these voters, as well as for the Hispanic electorate overall, the top immigration policy priority continues to be legalization for the long-residing undocumented population

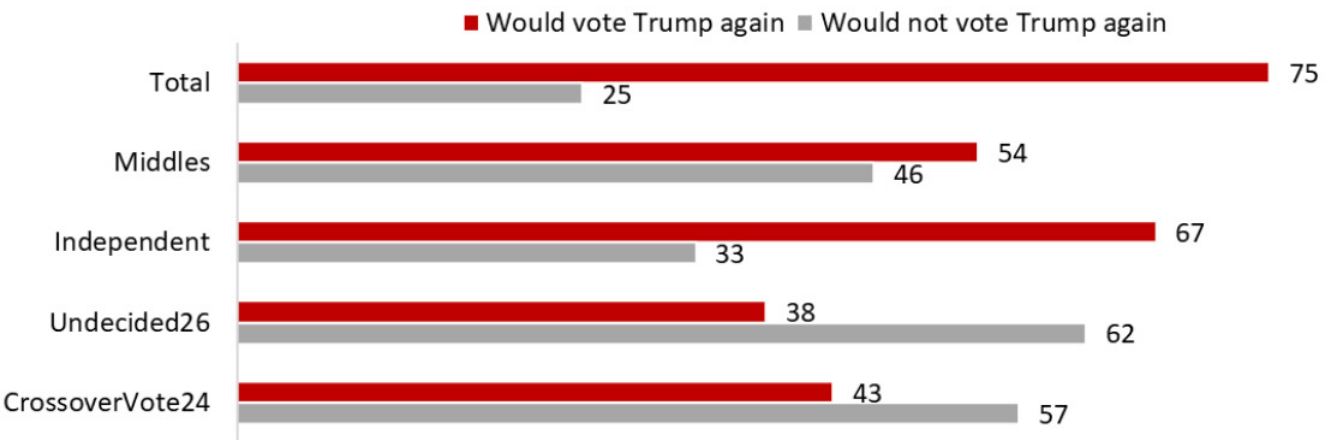
How do they view the parties? Looking back and looking forward

2024 VOTE

On many measures of political attitude and behavior, this group of voters does look different:

- A slightly larger share of these voters are newer to the electorate.
- Their recalled vote from 2024 is different from that of the Hispanic electorate overall: 54% Harris-27% Trump, compared to 60%-39%.
- When we take into account third-party voters (which are included in the middle), the reported vote was 43% Harris, 37% Trump, 20% someone else, compared with 57%-37%-6% for the Hispanic electorate overall. This suggests that the third-party votes among this group came overwhelmingly at Harris’s expense.
- The gains Trump made with this group of voters has waned more significantly. Among self-identified Trump voters in this group, 46% would not support him if they had to do it over again, and that number climbs to 57% among those who crossed party lines for him in 2024. The comparable figure for the overall Hispanic electorate is 25%, which suggests much of this 25% came from these movable voters. For comparison, among self-identified Harris voters, 93% would repeat their vote for her compared with 7% who would not — only 2 points softer than the overall Hispanic electorate.

[If Trump voter] If you had to do it over again, would you still vote for President Trump?

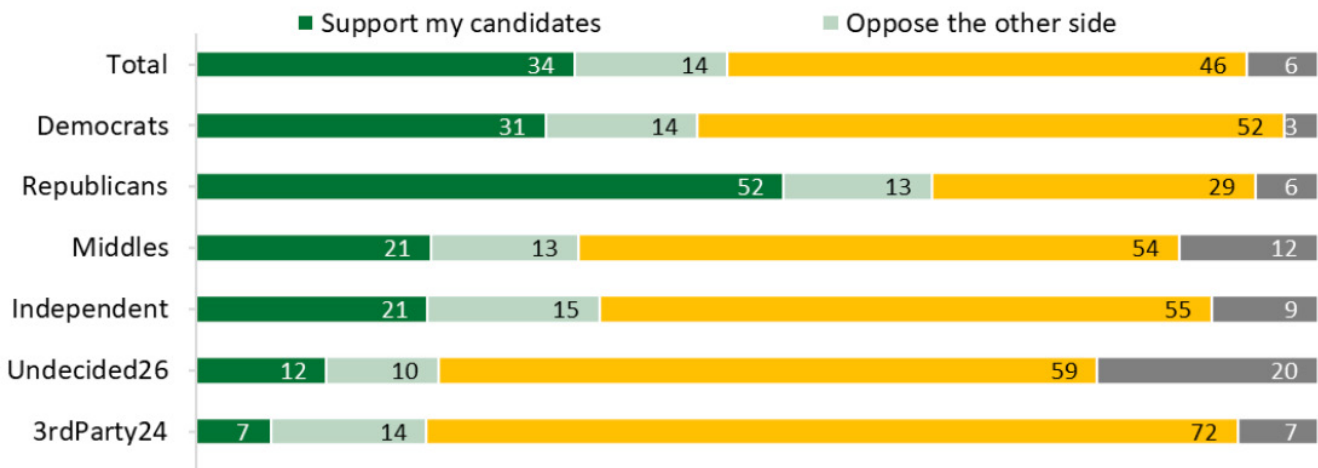


PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL AND PARTY FAVORABILITY

- Presidential approval among this group is lower. Among Hispanic voters overall, Trump approval was 30% to 67% disapproval, but in this movable group, approval was 24%. The top issues shaping views of the president were cost of living, immigration enforcement in U.S. cities, the war against Iran, and jobs/the economy (similar that with the overall Hispanic electorate).
- Congressional favorability is also lower.
- Republicans in Congress receive 34% favorable to 58% unfavorable in the overall sample, but among the movables, it was 27% to 55%, with substantially more “don’t know” answers.
- Numbers for Democrats are even more striking. While overall Democratic approval was 61% favorable to 30% unfavorable, in this middle electorate the comparable numbers were 51% to 30%, with all of the defections going to the “don’t know” category.

Perhaps for this reason, enthusiasm for the midterm is significantly lower. While among the Hispanic electorate overall 76% reported being “100% certain” or “almost certain” to vote this fall, among this more swingable electorate, the comparable number was 64% — a significant 12 percentage point drop. When asked what is more motivating to vote, these voters were 13 points less likely to say they would turn out to support their candidates and 8% more likely to say they were turning out on behalf of the community.

When thinking about why you vote, would you say that you are mainly motivated to vote to:

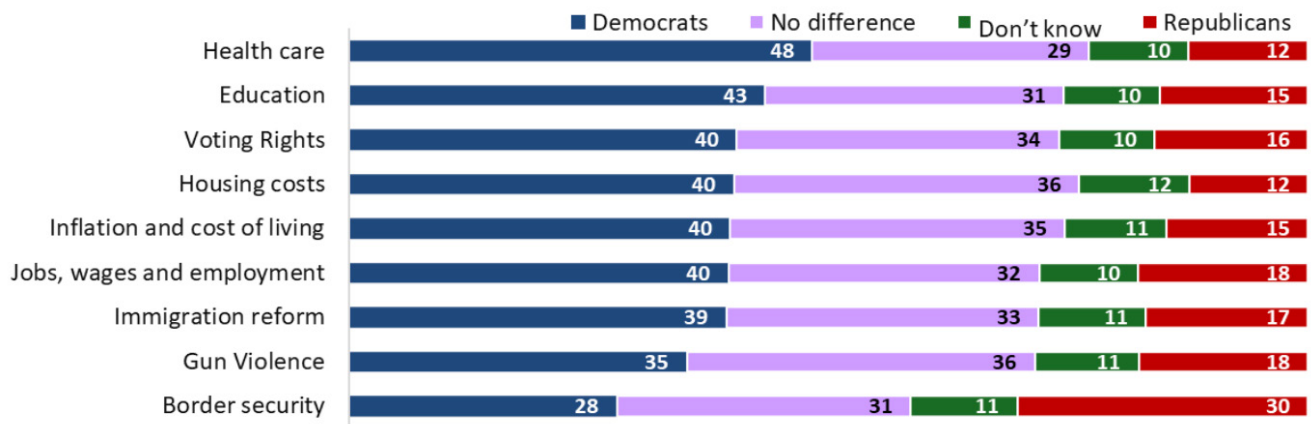


PARTY REPUTATION AND TRUST

Consistent with the previously reported pattern on approval and intention to vote, this middle group is generally less enthusiastic in trusting parties to effectively handle issues. While like the Hispanic electorate overall this group affords Democrats greater trust in most issue areas (ranging from a low of +17 over Republicans on gun violence to a +36 over the GOP on healthcare), Democrats do not break 50%. The exception for this group is border security, where these middle voters give the GOP a 2-point advantage on the border.

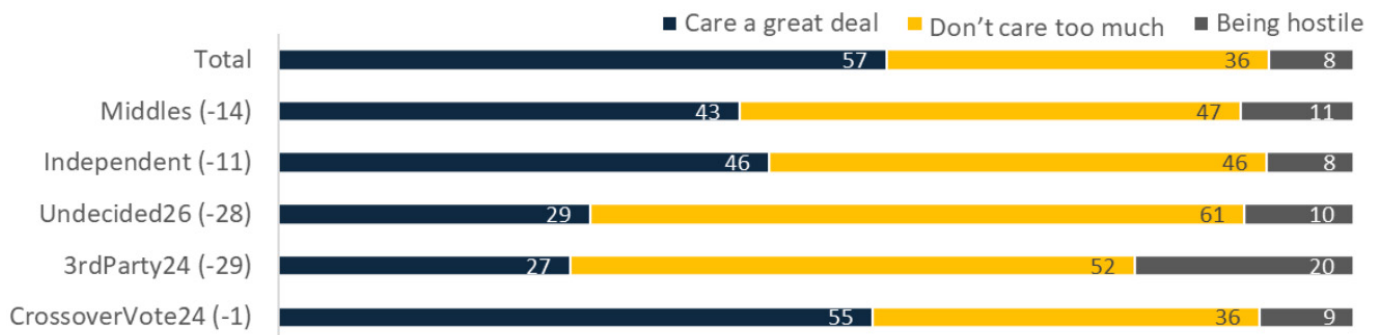
But the real surprise is the dramatic increase in those who see “no difference” in which party would handle an issue better. For every policy area, the share of these middle voters who perceive no difference is 12 to 14 points higher than in the overall Hispanic electorate. The reasons for this can vary — from lack of information about or familiarity with the parties, to low outreach from the parties, to disillusionment with or repudiation of both parties. But it certainly highlights the importance of the parties engaging with these voters to differentiate themselves on the issues and increase motivation among these voters behind candidates.

Which political party would do a better job handling each of the following?

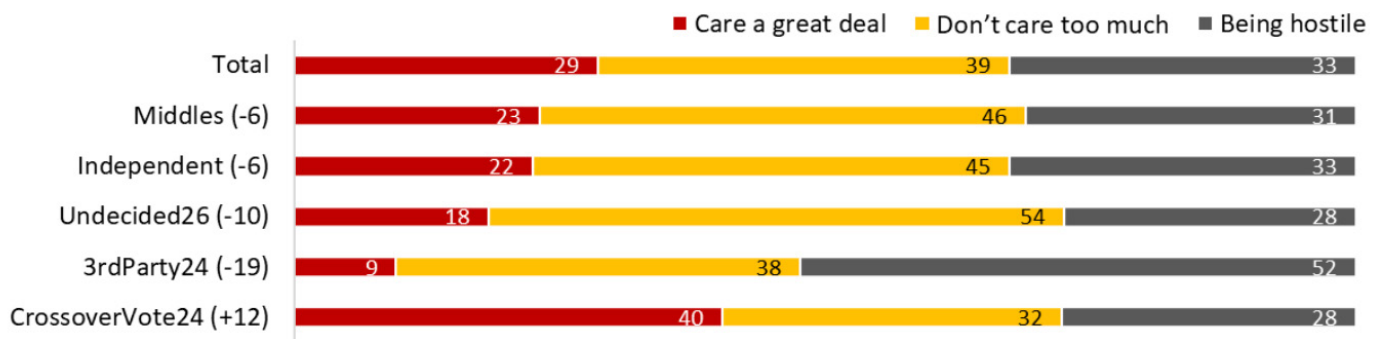


Sentiment toward the parties also emphasizes that point. Middle voters' attitudes regarding the level of care or concern from either party toward the Latino community vary substantially from the overall Hispanic electorate. The plurality of these voters feels that neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party care too much about Hispanics. And for segments of this middle group, a majority feel that way. As with the Latino electorate overall, greater numbers of these middle voters feel Republicans are hostile to the Latino community.

Would you say the Democratic Party cares a great deal about the [Hispanic/Latino] community, that they don't care too much about [Hispanics/Latinos], or that Democrats are being hostile towards the [Hispanic/Latino] community? (Difference between group and total "care a great deal" in parentheses)



Would you say the Republican Party cares a great deal about the [Hispanic/Latino] community, that they don't care too much about [Latinos/Hispanics], or that Republicans are being hostile towards the [Hispanic/Latino] community? (Difference between group and total "care a great deal" in parentheses)



Summary

Those segments of the Hispanic electorate that might be broadly conceived of as “movable” or “swing” are not wildly distinct from their fellow voters, particularly where issues are concerned, but there are some observable differences. These voters are less moored in the party system and less trusting of both parties. They are less likely to see a difference between the parties in which would be best at handling a menu of issues, and they are less likely to approve of both parties in Congress. They also have lower approval of Trump, and the level of buyers’ remorse among those Democrats who crossed over in 2024 is 57%.

The movable electorate is unhappy, alienated and in need of persuasion by both political parties. That persuasion is both about painting a distinction between parties and their candidates, as well as about motivating participation. While the 2018 midterm election saw record-level participation by Hispanic voters, with numbers holding in the 2022 election, 2024 saw the lowest increase in Latino voter growth in over two decades. Thus, it is clear that both parties need to win these voters’ support and motivation to cast a ballot in their column.

Endnotes

- i “UnidosUS Bipartisan Poll of Hispanic Voters: The Road to 2026 Midterms,” UnidosUS, published May 21, 2026, <https://unidosus.org/publications/unidosus-bipartisan-poll-hispanic-voters-road-to-2026-midterms/>.

The poll was conducted April 27 – May 14, 2026, and interviewed 3,000 Hispanic registered voters. It is a representative sample of the Hispanic electorate, with oversamples in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas, and voters in 32 battleground congressional districts with large Latino populations.

Based on this robust representative sample of Hispanic voters, BSP Research provided additional analysis and segmentation for this memo, identifying four segments of this electorate who could be movable in either direction in the 2026 election:

- Independents — those who reported neither strongly preferring either party nor leaning in either direction (N=751)
- Undecideds — those who reported being unsure of the direction of their vote on the 2026 generic House ballot (N=633)
- Crossover Voters — those who reported a Democratic identity but a Trump 2024 vote, and those who reported a Republican identity but a Harris 2024 vote (N=114)

Third-Party Voters — those who reportedly voted in 2024, but for neither Trump nor Harris (N=252)

Since individuals may appear in more than one of these categories — indeed, are likely to appear in more than one — the total N is less than the sum. The sample of these potential swing voters totals 1,144, or 38.13% of the total electorate.

- ii Erin Covey, “As Trump Loses Support From Hispanic Voters, Can These Republican Members Hold Their Seats?” Cook Political Report, September 3, 2026, <https://www.cookpolitical.com/analysis/house/house-overview/trump-loses-support-hispanic-voters-can-these-republican-members-hold>.
- iii See “Polling/Issues” data for 2024 election and previous election cycles in the UnidosUS Hispanic Electorate Data Hub, <https://unidosus.org/hispanicvote/>



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