



To: Interested Parties

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: October 2026

Re: NEW POLL RESULTS: Voters See Holding Corrupt Politicians Accountable as Central to Addressing Affordability

Voters see holding corrupt officials and corporations accountable as the most impactful policy tested for improving affordability. Research from Global Strategy Group, conducted on behalf of the ACLU, makes a strong case for putting accountability at the center of an affordability agenda. Voters identify out-of-touch leaders and corrupt politicians serving corporate interests as the biggest barriers to bringing down costs.

The implication is clear: an affordability agenda should explain how it will change whom government answers to. Voters want leaders who will confront corruption, change the rules that allow officials to serve themselves and powerful interests, and give ordinary people the ability to hold those leaders accountable.

The following analysis is based on a survey of 1,001 likely 2026 general election voters nationwide conducted between August 17th and 20th, 2026, and a three-day online journaling exercise among 50 swing voters and soft partisans nationwide between July 29th and August 1st, 2026. Additional information about the instruments can be found at the end of this memo.

Voters see affordability and economic opportunity as a key component of a strong democracy.

When asked to describe a strong democracy, voters organically volunteer the ability to afford everyday things and make a life for oneself. As one voter says, "[A strong indicator of a democracy is] when costs are down. When people are using their vacation days without breaking their bank or being worried if they're going to be able to afford food the next month. [It means] having a healthy housing market where the American dream of owning a home is actually attainable." Most Americans agree that "having true civil rights means making sure every American has the chance to work hard, succeed, and provide for their family, no matter who they are or where they come from" (91% agree/9% disagree) – including over half (58%) who strongly agree. Moreover, this is a widely held belief spanning the political spectrum, as 68% of Democrats, 53% of independents, and 49% of Republicans *strongly* agree.

Voters strongly support policies that hold corrupt officials accountable and see them as having a major impact on making life more affordable.

Cross-pressured voters¹ are drawn to policies like ensuring real accountability so that government officials, corporations, and others who have abused people's rights, broken laws, and engaged in corruption have to answer for their wrongdoing (66% strongly support; 50% major impact on making life more affordable). This policy is perceived as even more impactful at lowering costs among cross-pressured voters than items like expanding sick and parental leave (42% strongly support; 32% major impact on making life more affordable) and increasing the minimum wage so it keeps up with the cost of living (46% strongly support; 46% major impact on making life more affordable). Voters also respond best to messaging that argues if we want an economy that works for everyone, we need to be able to hold politicians accountable for putting wealthy donors and powerful corporations ahead of ordinary people.

Voters identify out-of-touch leadership and corruption as the biggest barriers to bringing down costs. Nearly half of voters name leaders who fail to prioritize families' financial struggles (47%) and corrupt politicians who won't lower costs because doing so would hurt their corporate benefactors (47%) among their top three barriers. Both rank above partisan dysfunction (31%) and leaders lacking bold, new ideas (20%). Voters' diagnosis points directly to the need to change whom government serves.

¹ Cross-pressured voters are voters who do not self-identify as Democrats who voted for Harris in 2024 and do not self-identify as Republicans who voted for Trump in 2024.

Voters favor big changes to how our politics work so politicians have to be responsive to voters over more bipartisan compromise to overcome partisan gridlock in D.C. Across party lines, voters say they prefer big changes (67%) over more bipartisan compromise (33%) – including among cross-pressured voters (73% big changes/27% bipartisan compromise).

When it comes to **affordability and civil liberties**, successful messaging should:

- **Connect with voters on the value of opportunity:** *“Having true civil rights means making sure everyone has the chance to work hard and succeed and, at the very least, afford daily life, no matter who they are.”*
- **Reflect voters’ frustration that the affordability crisis is not just about high prices; it’s about the power imbalance that enables and perpetuates this crisis in the first place:** *“For too long, greedy and out-of-touch politicians have put their corporate donors and self-interest first, not lowering our costs.”*
- **Envision a system where voters hold their leaders accountable:** *“We need a system where we can hold politicians accountable.”*
- **Provide the policies to hold leaders accountable and lower costs (as voters see it):** *“We need to ban insider trading and ensure greedy and out-of-touch politicians answer for what they’ve done, so our leaders can focus on lowering our costs.”*

“Accountability” can be the throughline that ties together the affordability agenda, fighting corruption, and challenging abuses of power. Prices are high because corrupt politicians would rather serve the corporations lining their pockets than get serious about bringing down costs.

Voters already believe that the economy and politics are rigged against them in favor of corrupt and powerful people and interests. They understand that their affordability struggles are connected to government choices and believe that structural reforms that allow voters to hold politicians accountable will have a meaningful impact on their struggles. In their own words, voters describe how they believe the system is stacked against them.

“Special interest groups, wealthy people, and businesses can spend millions to buy a spot at the table and a voice in decision-making, while we have people who can’t afford meals, housing, or healthcare.” – Swing Woman in Utah

“When the wealthy, lobbyists, or corporations have greater access to influence politicians, it makes it more challenging to trust that the voice of the common person matters.” – Republican Man in Pennsylvania

The bills considered and the oversight conducted during the 120th Congress should relentlessly contrast the corrupt status quo with a vision of and demonstrated commitment to holding corrupt and out-of-touch politicians accountable – making sure people’s needs come first and that government is making their lives more affordable and their quality of life higher by ensuring that politicians work for the voters, not for themselves.

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1,001 likely 2026 general election voters nationwide between August 17th and 20th, 2026. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.4%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are properly represented.

In addition to the survey, Global Strategy Group conducted a three-day online journaling exercise among 50 swing voters and soft partisans nationwide between July 29th and August 1st.