

From: YouGov

To: Alliance for Youth Power

Date: October 1, 2026

On behalf of Alliance for Youth Power, YouGov recently fielded a sample of 3,310 voters aged 18-29 across the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The sample margin of error varies between 4.9% and 5.5% between states. Further sampling details are available in the Methodology section. This memo briefly summarizes the key results.

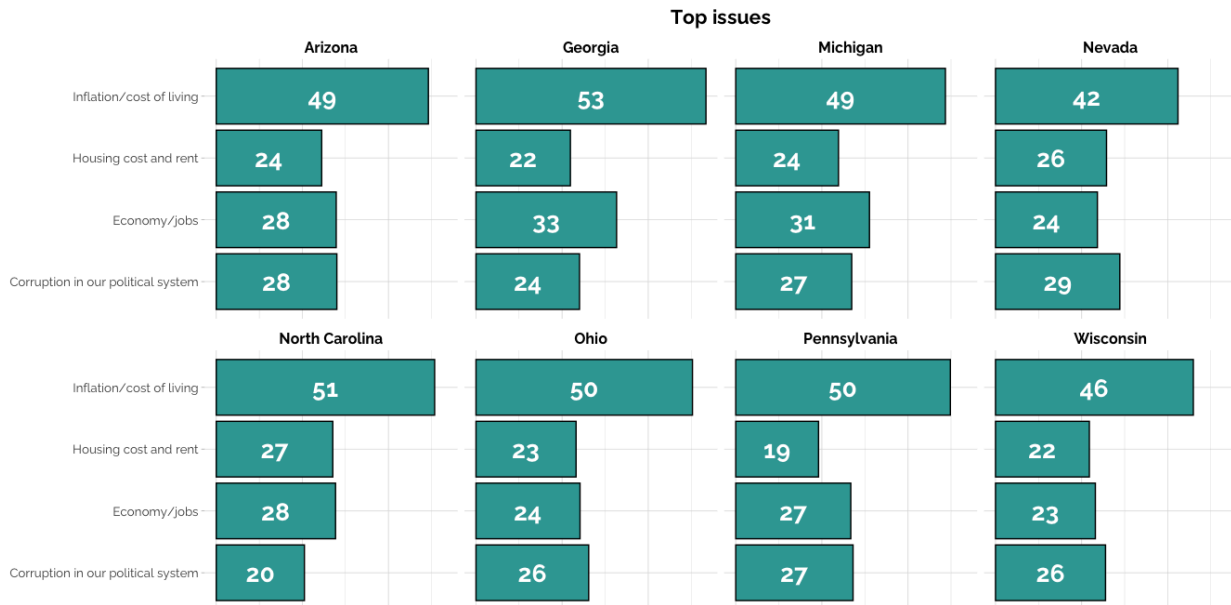
Executive summary

- Similar to other portions of the electorate, young voters say they are very concerned with the state of the economy. Inflation, the cost of housing, and the availability of jobs are among their top concerns
 - Pluralities of young people say their financial situation, and the financial situation of the country, have deteriorated this past year
- Democrats hold a considerable lead among young voters over Republicans in key races across the 2026 battleground states. In key Senate, Gubernatorial, Secretary of State races, and on the generic Congressional ballot, Democrats lead Republicans by about a 60-30 margin among young voters
 - This lead is generally consistent across offices, with Democrats enjoying similar leads across key battleground states
 - Similar to previous election years, the gender gap persists, with Democrats enjoying significantly higher support among young women than young men. But in both cases, Democrats across key battleground states lead their Republican opponents
- Only about 38 percent of young voters report feeling “very prepared to vote” in November in terms of “having a good understanding of the candidates and issues”
 - Generally, young voters who feel less prepared also are less sure who they’re going to vote for, with “unprepared” voters fully about 20 percentage points more likely to say they’re unsure who they’re going to vote for across races in these key battleground states
 - Young voters who feel less prepared also report receiving less information from political campaigns

Young voters deeply worried about the economy

Young voters are chiefly concerned with the cost of living, the cost of housing, the availability of jobs, and political corruption. Generally, these concerns are in line with the overall day to day concerns of the broader electorate. Early in the survey, prior to questions about their 2026 vote intent, respondents were asked about their general day to day concerns, and their view of the

“top issues facing the U.S. today.” The full list of options are presented at the end of this memo. Roughly averaging across states, the top few issues that consistently surpassed 20 percent of respondents as a top concern included inflation (typically about 48 percent of respondents selecting this), jobs and the economy (27 percent), corruption in our political system (25 percent), and housing costs and rent (23 percent). Across states, these are consistently the top concerns of young voters.



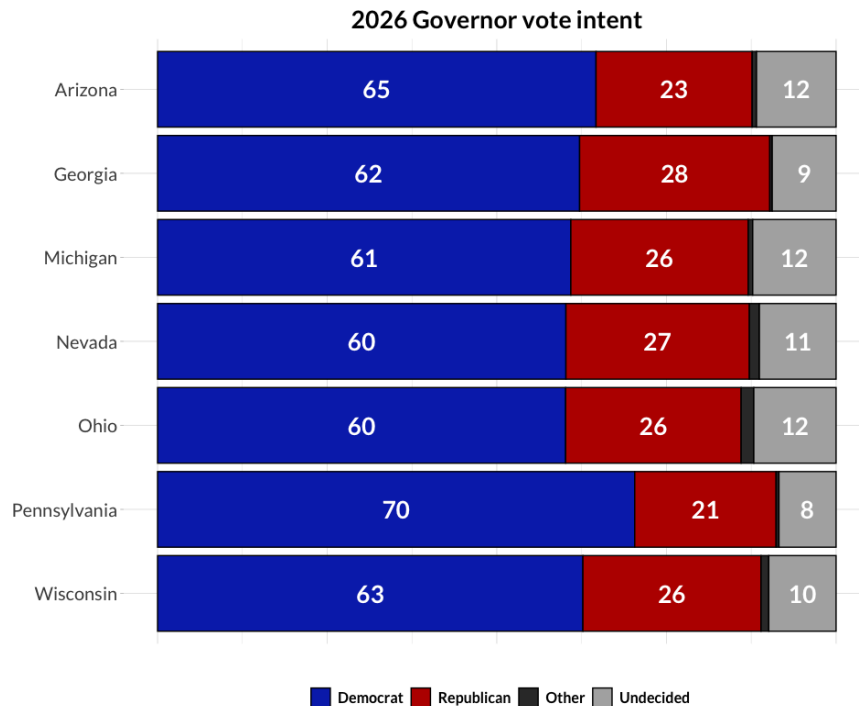
Across states, other issues failed to break about 20 percent as a “top concern” for young people. For example, only about 10 percent of young voters across battleground states listed “Israel and Gaza” as a top concern, about 15 percent listed “Climate change” as a top concern. About 11 percent listed “Data centers” as a top concern.

Young voters believe the country and the economy are headed in the wrong direction. Across states, about 77 percent of young voters say the country is “off on the wrong track,” and only about 15 percent say it is headed in the right direction. Young people are notably less pessimistic about “their own community.” About 49 percent of young people say their community is “on the wrong track” compared to 34 percent who say it is “headed in the right direction.”

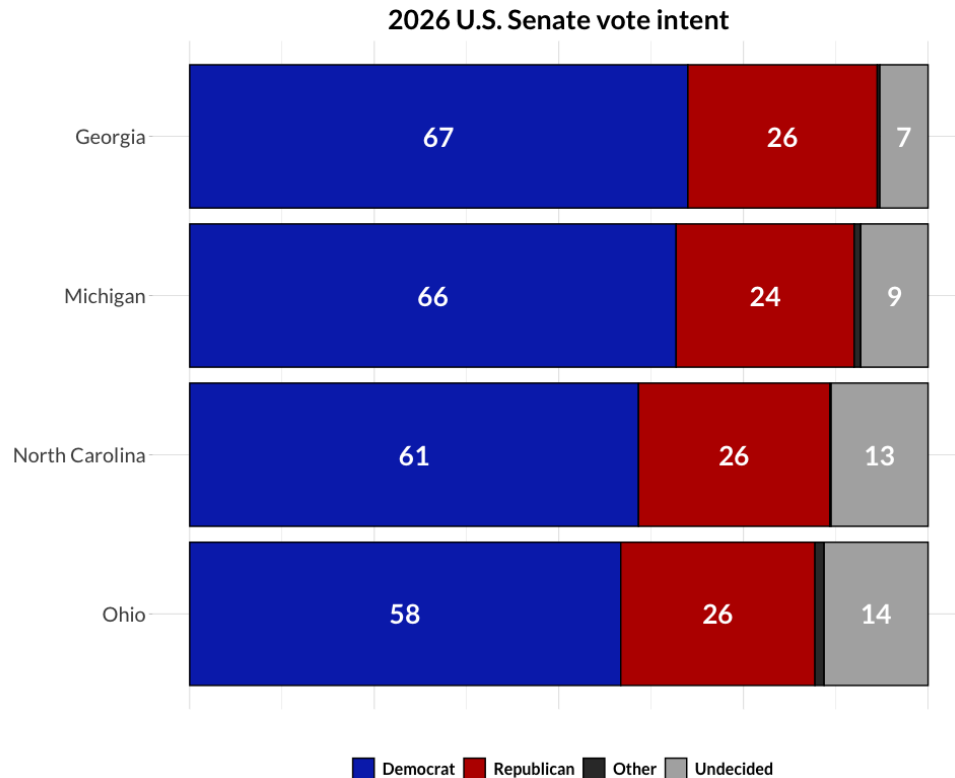
Few young voters say their own financial situation has “improved” recently, but they are split between whether it has recently deteriorated or stayed about the same. In Arizona, slightly more young people say their financial situation has “stayed the same,” by 39-44, as do young people in Georgia (38-41), North Carolina (45-37), and Pennsylvania. Young people in Michigan say their personal financial situation has deteriorated (by a 49-39 margin), as do those in Nevada (52-35) and Wisconsin (45-37), with young people in Ohio being split on this question (42-42).

Democrats lead in key battleground races

The following chart shows the current state of Gubernatorial vote intent for voters aged 18-29 across key battleground states. In each case, the Democrat enjoys a net advantage of about 40 percentage points over the Republican, from a D+33 advantage in Nevada to a D+49 advantage in Pennsylvania. In each case the Democratic advantage is far outside the margin of error. About 10 percent of young voters remain undecided in these elections overall, from 8 percent in Pennsylvania to 12 percent in Arizona, Michigan, and Ohio.



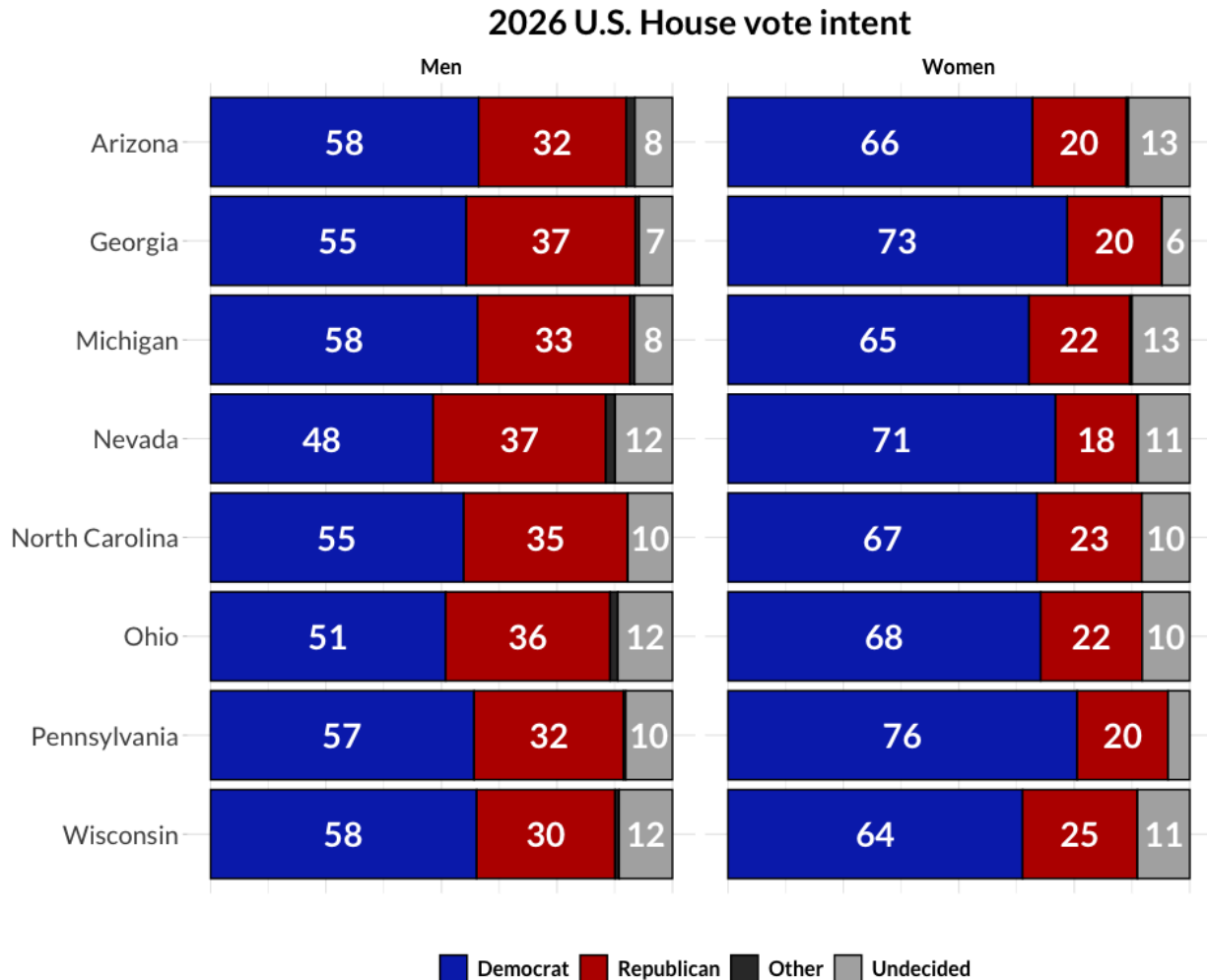
Similarly, young voters overwhelmingly prefer the Democratic candidates in key US Senate races in these battleground states. Democrat Jon Ossoff currently has a 67-26 lead over Mike Collins, Abdul El-Sayed leads Mike Rogers by 66-24, Roy Cooper leads Mike Whatley by 61-26, and Sherrod Brown leads Vivek Ramaswamy by 58-26. Fully about 13 percent of young North Carolina voters and 14 percent of young Ohio voters remain undecided, high for these races and considerably higher than the undecided share for the overall electorate.



In each of these states, the youth gender gap persists but has likely declined since 2024, when it is generally believed Republicans gained [an overall advantage](#) among young men. In 2024, the progressive data firm Catalist estimated that Donald Trump won about 55 percent of the young male vote against Kamala Harris's 45 percent support. The same estimates suggested Donald Trump won only 35 percent of young women against Kamala Harris's 65 percent.

These results suggest the gender gap may have narrowed in Democrats' favor. The following chart shows young voters' generic Congressional ballot support for Democrats or Republicans in each state. The generic ballot is shown here so that the same level of office is available for comparison. This chart includes the undecided vote share, which averages about 10 percent across states. With that in mind, Democrats have an average lead of about 55-35 among young men, and about a 70-20 lead among young women.

Subtracting out the undecided share, this suggests about a 60-40 lead for Democrats among *decided* young men, and a similar approximation suggests a nearly 80-20 Democratic advantage among young women who have decided who they're voting for. In other words, in 2024 young men were estimated to be R+10 and young women to be D+35 – a 45 percentage point gap. In 2026, these results suggest young men who have decided who they're voting for to be D+20 and young women to be D+60 – a 40 percentage point gap. In 2026, the gender gap may shrink as young men move toward the Democrats relative to 2024 to a higher degree than young women move, as most young women already generally supported Democrats.

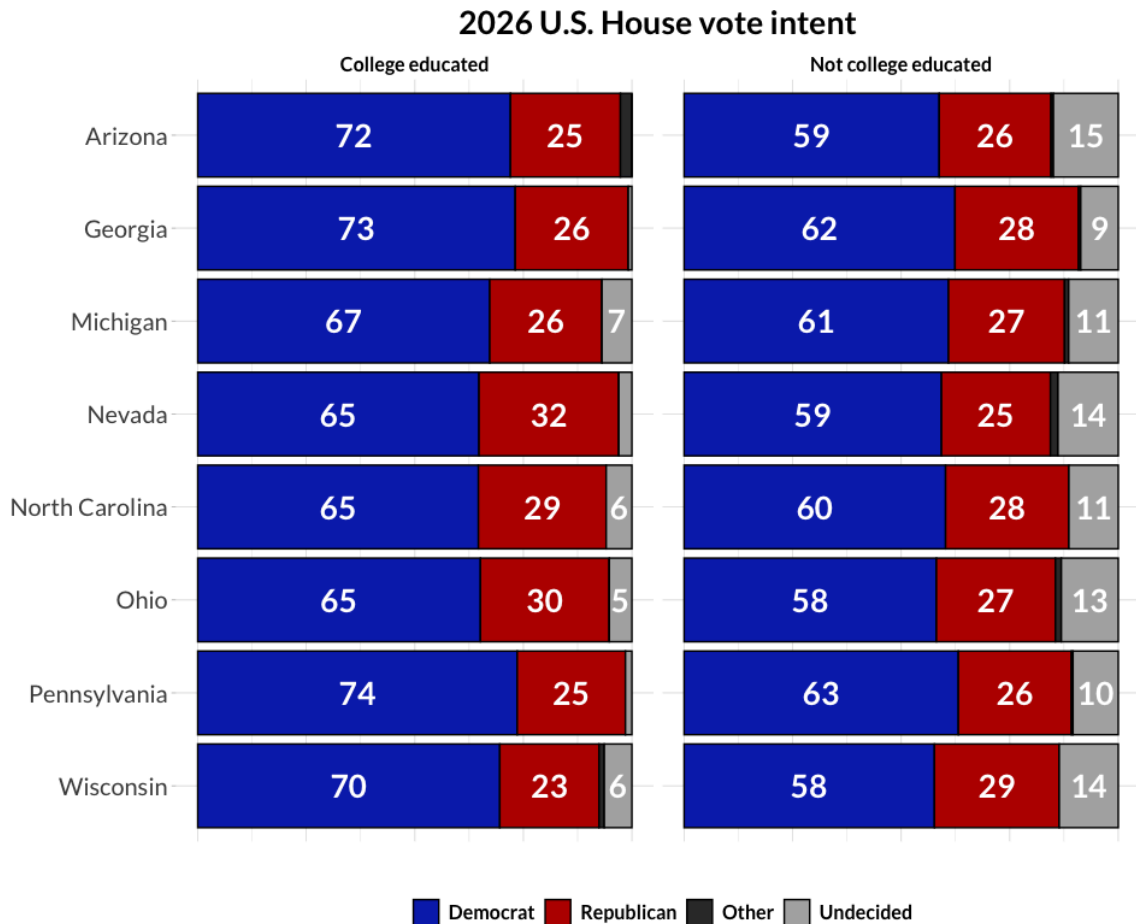


Among Gubernatorial races, the smallest gender gaps are in Arizona, Michigan, and Wisconsin. In Arizona, Democrat Katie Hobbs enjoys a 61-26 (+35) lead among young men, and a 67-21 (+46) lead among young women - an 11-point gap. In Michigan, Democrat Jocelyn Benson enjoys a 58-32 (+26) lead among young men and a 62-33 (+29) lead among young women - a 13-point gap. In Wisconsin, the gender gap Democrat David Crowley (59-30 among young men, 65-24 among young women) is about 12 percentage points.

In key Senate races the gender gap is similar across states. Democrat Jon Ossoff leads Republican Mike Collins by 60-32 among young men and 73-20 among young women, producing a 25-point gender gap. Democrat Abdul El-Sayed leads Republican Mike Rogers by 62-32 among young men and 68-18 among young women - a 20-point gender gap. In North Carolina, the gender gap is about 25 percentage points, and in Ohio the gap is about 31 percentage points.

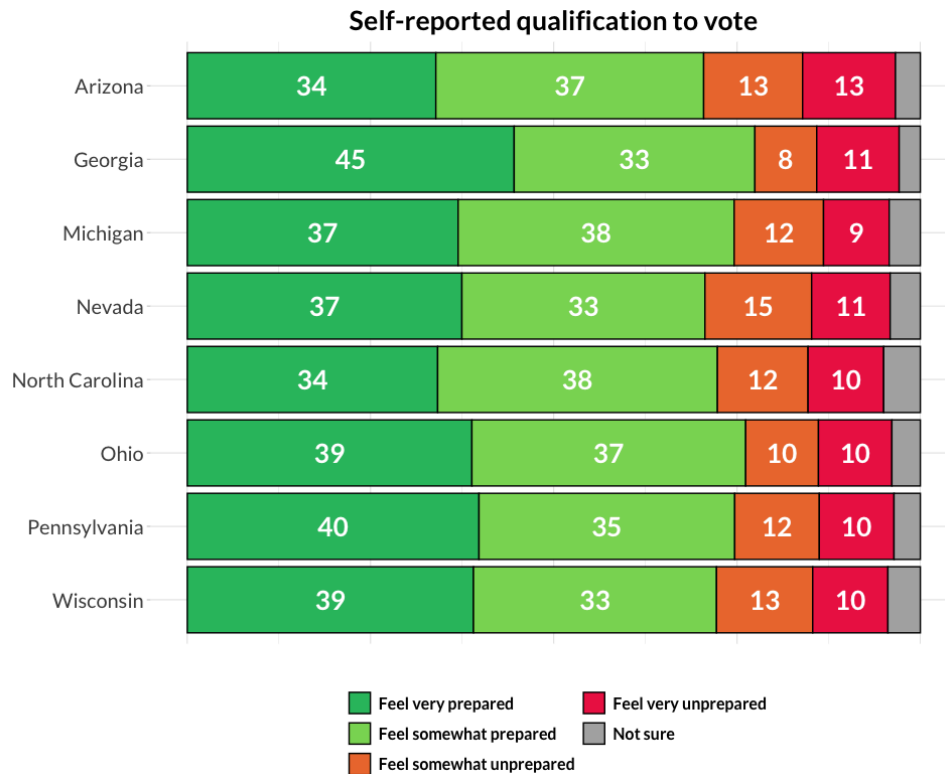
These results also suggest an education gap persists, though this gap is generally smaller than the gender gap. Across key battleground states, Democrats lead by about 70-25 among those with a college degree, and by about 60-30 among those without a college degree. Notably,

virtually all of the young people with degrees in this sample have decided who they're voting for, while about 10 to 15 percent of those without a college degree remain undecided. This "undecided gap" is nearly as large as the education gap overall, with significant persuasion opportunities remaining among the not-college educated compared to college graduates within the sample.



There is a significant education gap in campaign outreach efforts: those with degrees, or currently seeking a degree, are significantly more likely to have been contacted by a campaign or talked about voting recently than those without a degree. Among young voters most likely to currently live on campus - i.e., those in the 18-23 range who report they are currently pursuing a college degree - about 27 percent of respondents said someone had “talked to me [about voting] at a table or event, on campus, or in my community” compared to just 11 percent of those in the same age bracket not currently pursuing a degree. Young people currently in college are more likely to have received campaign texts (36 vs. 24 percent), e-mail (24 vs. 16 percent), or phone calls (12 percent vs. 10 percent) related to voting than young people not currently in college. About 21 of the 18-23 cohort not currently enrolled in college say no one has talked to them about voting recently, compared to just 8 percent of those with a college degree and 13 percent of those currently pursuing a degree.

Ultimately, across the sample, only about 38 percent of young people say they feel “very prepared to vote - [they] have a good understanding of the candidates and issues.” About 35 percent say “somewhat prepared,” 12 percent say “somewhat unprepared” and 11 percent say “very unprepared to vote - [they] don’t have a good understanding of the candidates and issues.” The following chart shows this result broken out by state.



Across states, several groups feel systematically less prepared to vote than others. Only about 28 percent of 18-23 voters not currently in school or with a college degree feel “very prepared to vote,” compared to 33 percent of those in that age range with a degree. Older voters within this group - those aged 24-29 - are generally more prepared to vote, regardless of education level. About 44 percent of voters 24-29 feel “very prepared to vote,” along with 49 percent of those in that group with a degree. In other words, “college-aged” young voters not currently in school feel uniquely unprepared to vote relative to other groups.

Those who feel less prepared to vote are also generally less sure who they’re going to vote for. Across offices, fully about 24 percent of those who feel “very unprepared to vote” remain undecided on the generic Congressional ballot, compared to just 2 percent of those who feel “very prepared” and 6 percent of those who feel “somewhat prepared.” About 37 percent of the “very unprepared” report they’ve received no voting contact recently, compared to 23 percent of the “very prepared.” A significant share of young voters remain persuadable, and those voters report contact from political campaigns at significantly lower rates than others.

Methodology

This survey is based on interviews conducted by YouGov on the internet of registered voters in the states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin who are aged 18-29. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and state geographic region based on voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote and approximate 2024 Presidential vote based on available results. Respondents were selected from YouGov to be representative of 18-29 year old registered voters. The following table summarizes the sample size and margins of error for each sample. Additional weighting diagnostics are available in the crosstabs of this survey.

State	Sample Size	Margin of Error
Arizona	401	+/-5.3%
Georgia	434	+/-5%
Michigan	401	+/-5.1%
Nevada	403	+/-5.5%
North Carolina	417	+/-5.1%
Ohio	423	+/-4.9%
Pennsylvania	420	+/-5%
Wisconsin	411	+/-5.2%

Top Issues full item wording

What are the top issues facing the U.S. today? Select up to three. (Options randomized)

- *Jobs and the economy*
- *The cost of living and inflation*
- *Income inequality*
- *The budget, taxes, and the federal deficit*
- *Foreign trade and tariffs*
- *Healthcare policy, including Medicare and Medicaid*
- *Abortion policy*
- *Social Security*
- *Gun violence*
- *Climate change and the environment*
- *Housing cost and rent*
- *Immigration policy*
- *Education policy*
- *Racism and race relations*
- *LGBTQ rights*
- *Election integrity and voting rights*
- *Democracy*
- *Israel and Gaza*
- *Crime*
- *Corruption in our political system*
- *Data centers*
- *Other*