HART RESEARCH

To: *Interested Parties*

From: *Guy Molyneux and Geoff Garin, Hart Research*

Date: *November 16, 2026*

Re: *The role of healthcare in Democrats' midterm victory.*

On behalf of Protect Our Care and SEIU, Hart Research conducted a survey examining the role of healthcare issues in delivering the new Democratic majority. Interviews were conducted from November 4 to 8 among 1,230 2026 voters in battleground CDs, and the survey's credibility interval is ±3.0 percentage points. This memo reviews the survey's key findings.

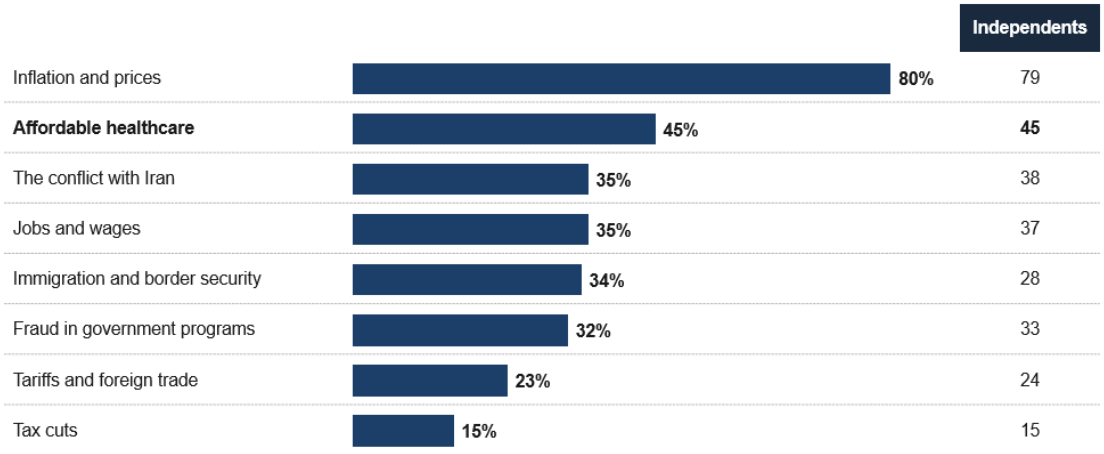
1. Affordable healthcare was a major voting issue this cycle, second only to the cost of living overall and ahead of issues like the war in Iran or tariffs.

Fully seven in ten (71%) battleground voters said that affordable healthcare was a very important issue in their voting this year. It was an issue that mattered deeply to voters across the board: 71% in competitive seats won by Democrats (69% in flipped seats) and 69% in districts won by Republicans. It was important to at least two-thirds of voters in every region of the country, reaching 75% in the South.

Indeed, almost half of battleground voters (45%) said that affordable healthcare was one of their top 3 voting issues this year, second only to inflation and prices more generally.

Affordable healthcare was a top voting issue in 2026.

Please select the three issues that were most important to you as you made your voting decisions this year.



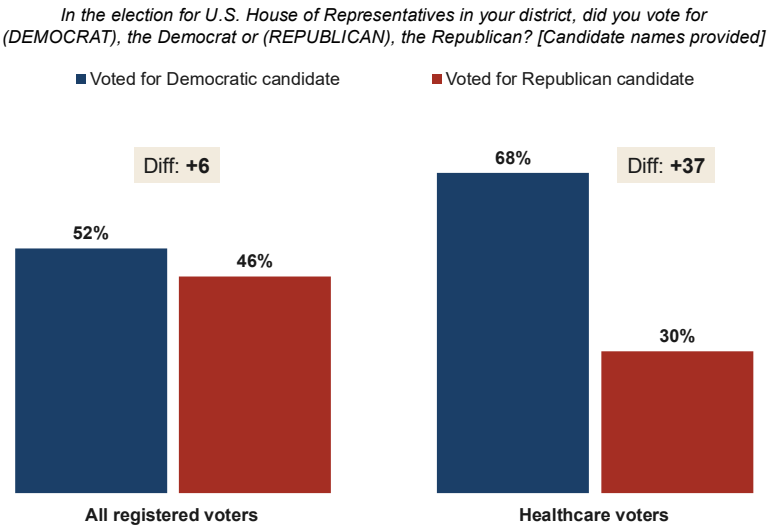
This includes 51% of moderates, 45% of independents, and 48% of late deciders (final week of campaign). Voters ranked healthcare ahead of other key issues prioritized by Democrats, including the Iran war, jobs, and tariffs. More importantly, they made it a higher priority than *every* issue highlighted by GOP candidates, including immigration, fraud in government programs, and tax cuts.

2. The healthcare issue clearly helped Democratic candidates and played a pivotal role in electing the new Democratic majority.

Significantly, healthcare voters – 45% of the battleground electorate – supported the Democratic House candidate by a 37-point margin (68%-30%), far higher than the overall 6-point Democratic margin in these seats. In fact, healthcare voters accounted for more than 100% of Democrats' popular vote edge in these districts.

Among those voters who pulled the lever for Democrats this year, a remarkable 85% said that healthcare was very important in their voting. This includes 86% of Democratic voters who had not voted for Kamala Harris in 2024, and 84% of those in flipped districts (R to D).

Healthcare voters overwhelmingly supported Democratic candidates.



Further confirmation of healthcare's essential role in this election emerges when the survey asks about the impact of various elements of Republican candidates' record. We tested voter reaction to ten different positions taken by most GOP candidates and found a strongly negative response to seven of them. Significantly, the three positions drawing the most negative reaction from voters were all related to healthcare: cutting funds for local hospitals (66% reason to oppose GOP

candidate, 10% reason to support), premium increases for people in ACA plans (62%-11%), and cutting $1 trillion from Medicaid (61%-23%). Opposition to these three votes exceeded the negative response to Republican support for ICE funding (52%-35%), the Iran war (54%-28%), or the Trump tariffs (59%-26%).

- In another sign that Medicaid cuts mattered in this election, the survey reveals that voters in households where someone receives coverage through Medicaid (34% of battleground voters) supported Democratic House candidates by a 19-point margin (58% to 40%).

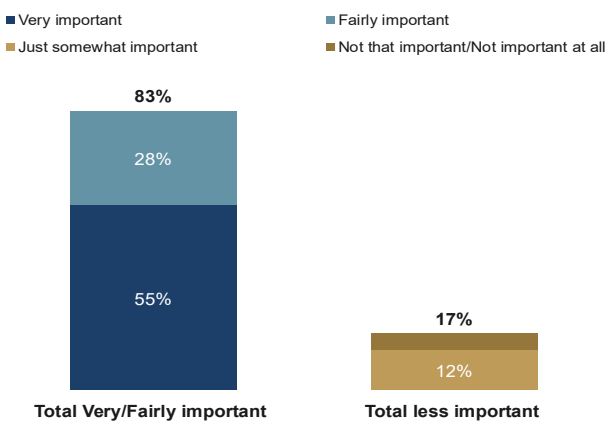
Republican candidates often sought to counter Democratic appeals focused on affordability and healthcare by trumpeting their tax cuts provided in the One Big Beautiful Bill. However, by a lopsided 63% to 34% margin, voters said that affordable health care was more important to them this year than cutting taxes. Moreover, they were clearly aware both that Democrats shared their healthcare priority (73% perceived Democrats to be more focused on healthcare) and that Republicans did not (63% said Republicans cared more about tax cuts).

3. Battleground voters insist that the new Congress take action to lower healthcare costs and support a range of healthcare affordability legislative initiatives made by Democrats.

An extraordinary 83% of battleground voters say it is important for the new Congress to take action to lower healthcare costs, including 55% who say very important. This includes overwhelming numbers in both districts won by Democrats and those won by Republicans, and in battleground districts in all regions of the country. This focus on healthcare affordability also crosses partisan lines, embraced by Democrats, independents, and Republicans.

Voters say new Congress must act to lower healthcare costs.

How important do you think it is for the new Congress to take action to lower the cost of healthcare?



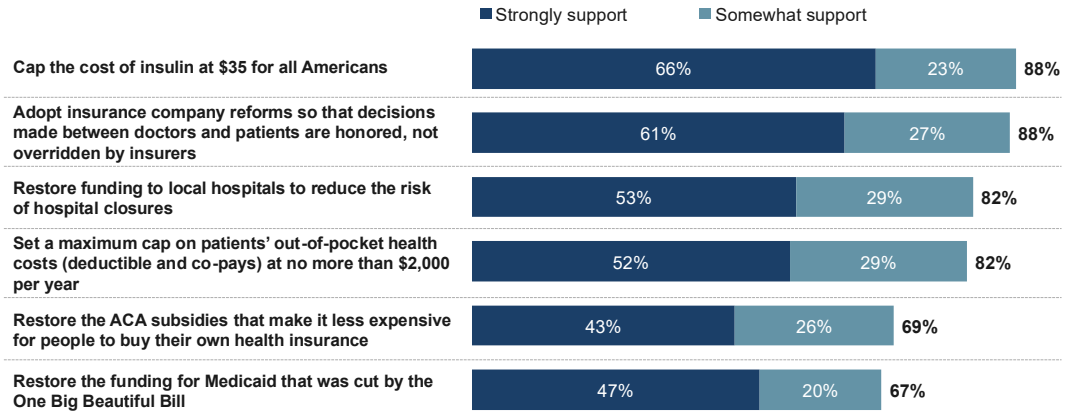
	% Very/fairly important
Dem Flip	82
Dem won	83
Rep won	84
Northeast	81
South	86
Midwest	81
West	82
Democrats	95
Independent/lean	85
Republicans	71

As the nation considers remedies to the affordability crisis, Democrats will enjoy a notable trust advantage over the GOP. By a remarkable 34-point margin (60% to 26%) these battleground voters report they trust Democrats over Republicans to have the right approach on healthcare. This exceeds Democrats' advantage on every other issue tested, including the cost of living (+21) or the war in Iran (+13).

Finally, voters endorse a range of bold actions proposed by Democrats to address healthcare affordability. Over 80% of voters support capping the cost of insulin at $35, reforming the insurance system to ensure decisions made by patients and their doctors are honored, increasing funding to local hospitals, and capping patients' annual out-of-pocket healthcare expenses. About two in three voters (69%) favor restoring the expanded ACA subsidies eliminated by Republicans in 2025, with just 20% opposed. And a similar proportion (67%) wants the new Congress to restore the Medicaid funding that was cut by the One Big Beautiful Bill.

Voters support ambitious Democratic agenda in Congress on healthcare affordability.

Below are some different policies related to healthcare that Democrats in Congress are expected to propose next year. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each one.



As Democrats in Congress seek next year to provide relief to Americans struggling with rising healthcare costs, they can expect to enjoy very strong support from the voting public. As revealed in this survey data, they will be responding directly to the message voters were seeking to send on November 3rd.