



Affordability National Survey

February 23, 2026

PREPARED BY:

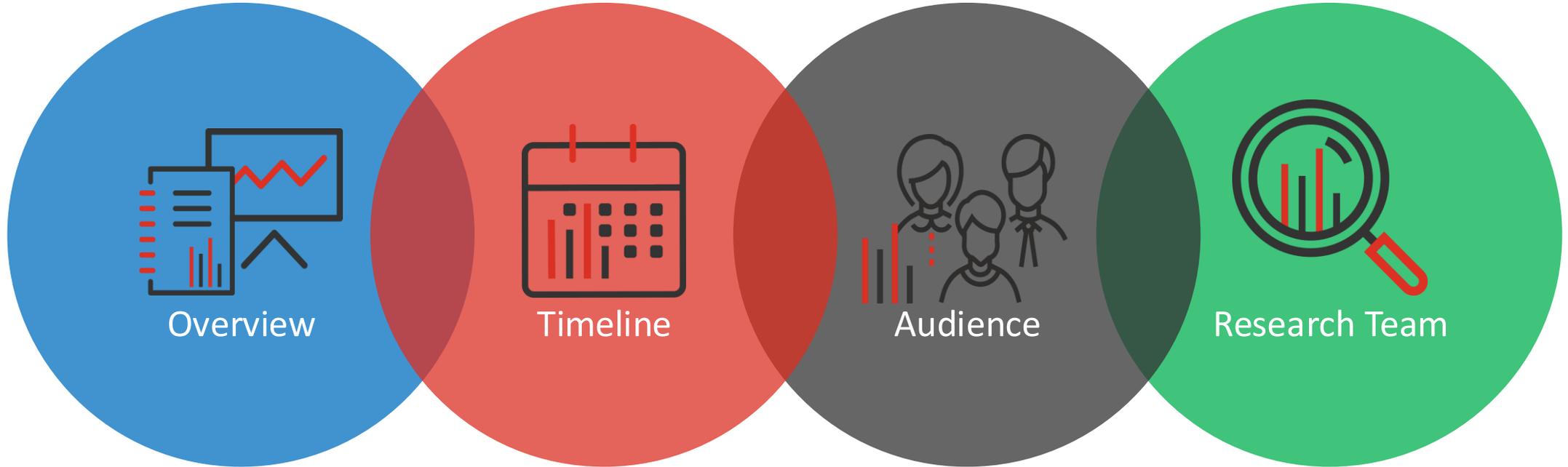
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**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

turning questions into answers



- Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national survey on behalf of Americans for Prosperity.
- The survey was conducted February 10-15, 2026.
- The survey was conducted among N=1,500 Registered Voters across the U.S.
- The credibility interval for a survey of N=1,500 is +/- 2.89%.
- Jarrett Lewis and Jim Hobart were the principal researchers on this project. Torie Bolger was the project director and Sydney Gallagher provided analytical support.

Key Takeaways

1

Cost of living dominates voter priorities. Reducing the cost of living and addressing affordability outrank every other issue, with roughly four-in-ten voters (37%) naming it as their top issue.

2

Everyday essentials are driving economic anxiety. When voters talk about affordability, they are focused on core household expenses, including utilities (58%), food (57%), health care (50%), and housing (41%).

3

Voters largely believe government is making things harder, not easier. Most voters say the federal government makes life harder (61%) rather than easier, and nearly three-quarters (73%) believe government actions contribute to higher consumer prices.

4

Voters believe government actions raise prices and they reject the tradeoffs. Nearly three-quarters of voters (73%) say federal government actions raise consumer prices, and two-thirds (67%) say government regulations specifically increase costs. Further, a majority of all voters (55%) say those tradeoffs are “not worth it,” while only 4% believe they are worth it.

Key Takeaways

5

Voters see bigger economic fixes, not short-term controls, as more convincing solutions. Policies framed around deficit reduction, investment incentives, energy modernization, and portability of health plans produce the strongest combinations of believability and perceived impact.

6

Voters prefer cost reduction over expanded government control. While targeted interventions have appeal, solutions framed around efficiency, competition, and lowering systemic costs resonate more broadly.

7

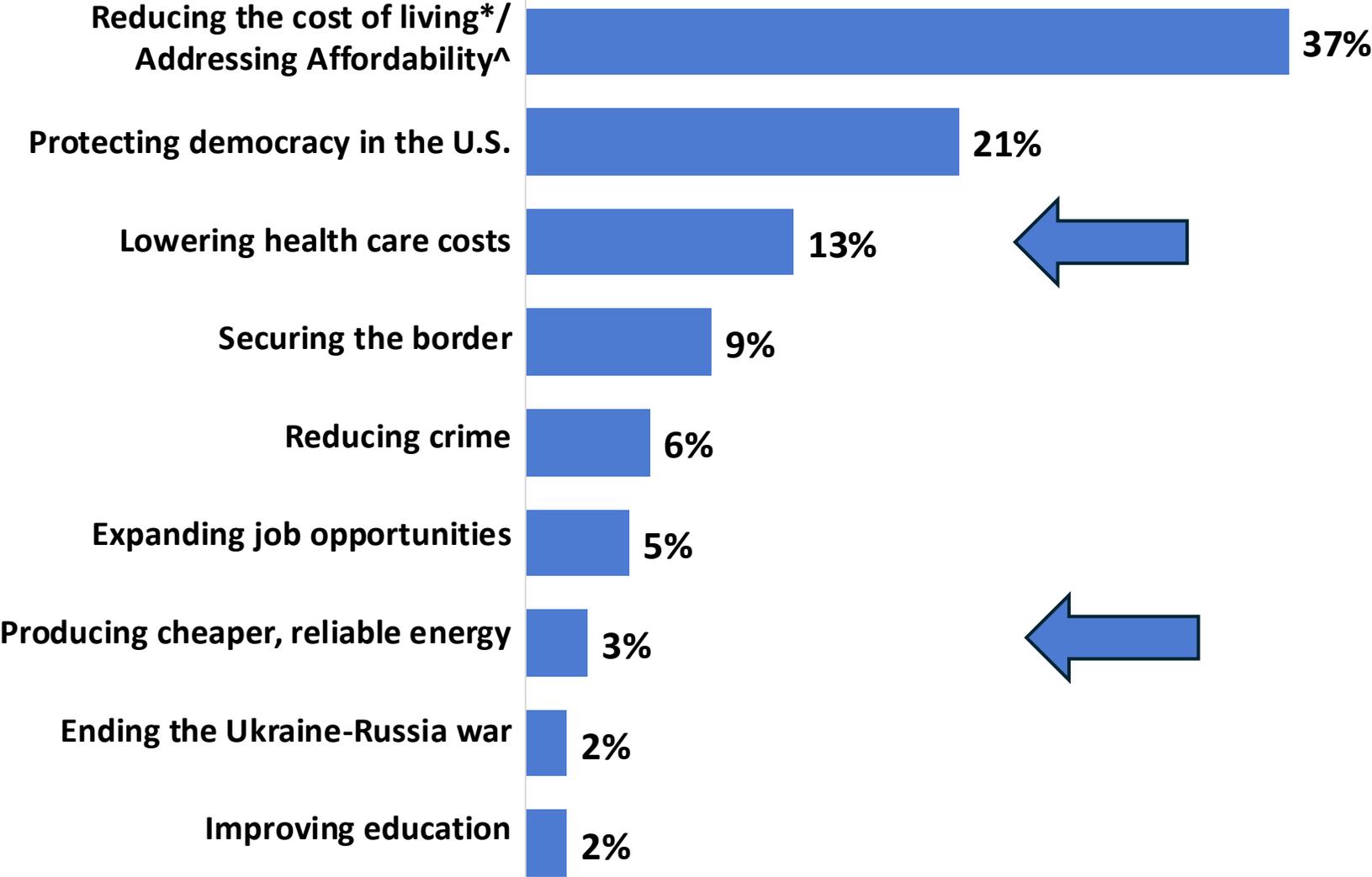
The data is very similar in key 2026 states. We also conducted an oversample of N=869 interviews in Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. There were minimal differences in the two sets of data, suggesting that affordability is an issue playing out very similarly both nationally and in key states.



Current Affordability Landscape

Reducing the cost of living is the top issue voters want Congress and the President to address. Energy and health care alone rank lower, but they are key components of affordability (see slide 8).

Which one of the following issues do you most want Congress and the President to address?



The cost of living and addressing affordability is the top issue across partisan and economic lines.

Which one of the following issues do you most want Congress and the President to address?

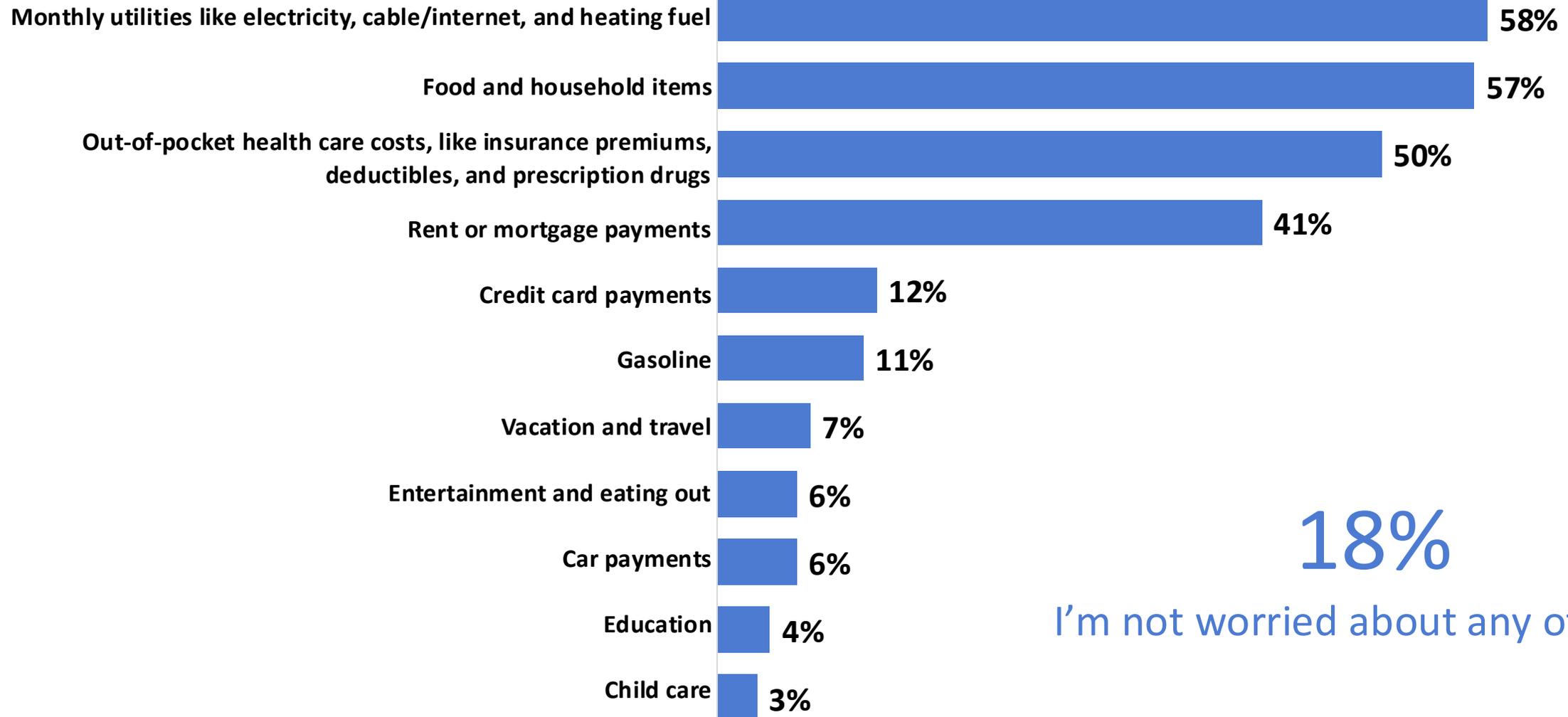
Ranked by % All Voters

	All Voters	GOP (40%)	IND (21%)	DEM (39%)	Income: <\$40K (30%)	Income: \$40K- \$80K (35%)	Income: \$80K+ (35%)
Reducing the cost of living*/addressing affordability^	37%	40%	38%	34%	42%	39%	32%

Voter's top two affordability concerns are utilities and food and household items.

Thinking specifically about the cost of living and affordability, which of the following are you most worried about being able to afford?

Ranked by % Combined Choice



18%

I'm not worried about any of these



Perception of Government Role in Prices

Clear majorities of voters believe THE federal government actions and regulations raise consumer prices.

Would you say that the overall actions of the federal government generally...

-62%

73%

11%

16%

■ Raises consumer prices **■ Lowers consumer prices**
■ Has no real impact

Do you think the rules and regulations the federal government issues and enforces generally...

-56%

67%

11%

22%

■ Raises consumer prices **■ Lowers consumer prices**
■ Not sure

A majority of voters believe that when federal government rules and regulations raise prices, the tradeoff is not worth it.

*When federal government rules and regulations raise prices, do you think those increases in prices are generally...**

Worth it

4%

Not worth it

55%

Not sure

8%

**Asked if answered yes, raises consumer prices to Q15 "Do you think the rules and regulations the federal government issues and enforces generally..."*



Affordability Solution & Message Testing

Voters were split into two samples and the two samples rated affordability-related policy proposal language.

Sample A rated them on a believability scale, specifically:

For the policy changes listed below, please indicate how believable it is that each proposal would bring down the cost of living and make life more affordable. Is it... very believable, somewhat believable, not very believable, or not at all believable?

Sample B rated the same solutions language on an impact scale, specifically:

Please read the policies below and indicate how much of an impact each policy would have on making life more affordable for you and your family. Would it be...very impactful, somewhat impactful, not too impactful, or not at all impactful?

We then combined these two ratings to see which affordability policies are seen as both impactful AND believable.

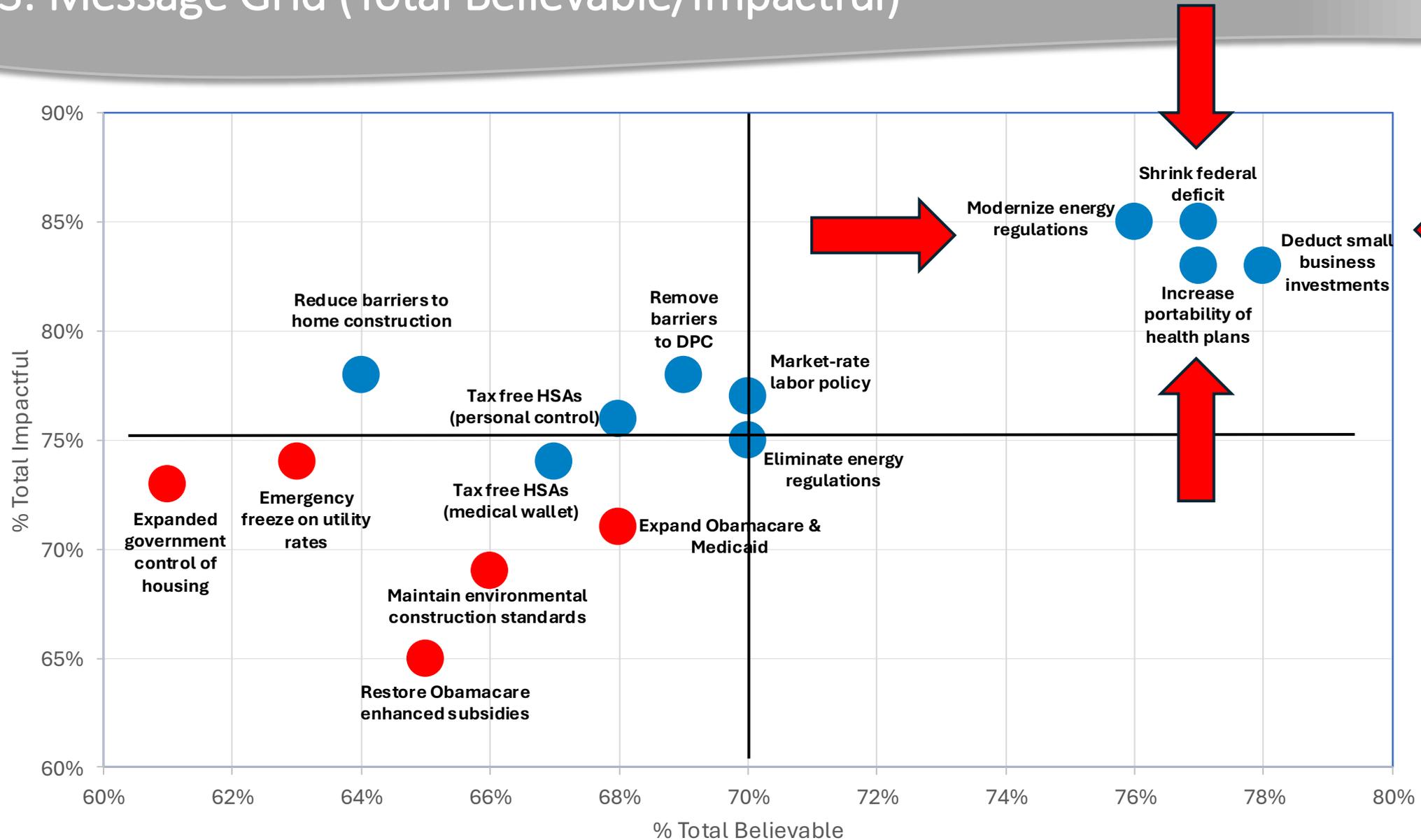
Affordability Solutions and Messages Tested

Shorthand	Message
Eliminate energy regulations	Eliminate needless and burdensome regulations to speed up the permitting process for building more power plants and transmission lines which will bring down the cost of energy.
Modernize energy regulations	Modernize energy regulations to allow quicker replacements of outdated energy infrastructure. This will help ensure 24/7 power reliability as demand increases, particularly in fast-growing regions with rising energy needs.
Tax free HSAs (medical wallet)	Let every American have a tax-free Health Savings Account which is like a personal "medical wallet" that puts patients in charge of their care. This will mean more personal control for patients and less control for insurance companies and government bureaucrats.
Tax free HSAs (personal control)	Let every American have a tax-free Health Savings Account, so they have personal control over their health care dollars.
Remove barriers to DPC	Remove tax barriers to affordable Direct Primary Care arrangements where patients contract directly with primary care doctors for care, no unnecessary middlemen, like insurance companies.
Reduce barriers to home construction	Lower the cost of housing and make it easier to build new homes and by removing obstacles such as zoning laws and limits on the type of construction materials that can be used.
Market-rate labor policy	Bring down the cost of large government construction projects by allowing government contractors to pay the market rate for workers, instead of the higher rate that is mandated by the federal government.

Affordability Messages Tested

Shorthand	Message
Deduct small business investments	Make it easier for Mom and Pop business owners to grow their business and provide for their families by letting them fully deduct the cost of business investments in the year they occur.
Shrink federal deficit	To bring down inflation and interest rates, we need to shrink the federal deficit, which would curb excessive government demand and reduce the need for heavy government borrowing.
Increase portability of health plans	Increase the portability of health care plans so that workers can keep the same health insurance coverage when they take a new job, instead of having to worry about losing access to their doctors if they find a better job opportunity that will benefit them and their family.
Expanded government control of housing	Bring down housing costs with strong government intervention, like freezing rents and increasing tenant protections, increasing government housing subsidies, and having government play a larger role in financing, building, or owning housing units.
Expand Obamacare & Medicaid	Expand Obamacare and Medicaid, so that all Americans have better access to more affordable health insurance coverage.
Maintain environmental construction standards	Keep environmental standards for the construction of new roads and new electricity infrastructure in place.
Restore Obamacare enhanced subsidies	Restore the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, tax credits that expired at the end of 2025.
Emergency freeze on utility rates	Implement an emergency freeze on utility rates and subsidize the development of additional clean energy. Rapidly transition away from fossil fuels, with government assistance for renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and electric vehicles, and restrictions on fossil fuel production.

RESULTS: Message Grid (Total Believable/Impactful)



For the policy changes listed below, please indicate how believable/impactful it is that each proposal would bring down the cost of living and make life more affordable. Is it...

RESULTS: Top Affordability Messages Ranked by Effectiveness Score

Ranked by Total Effectiveness Score – % Total Impactful + % Total Believable	% Total Impactful	% Total Believable	Total Effectiveness Score
<p>Shrink federal deficit: <i>To bring down inflation and interest rates, we need to shrink the federal deficit, which would curb excessive government demand and reduce the need for heavy government borrowing.</i></p>	85%	77%	162
<p>Deduct small business investments: <i>Make it easier for Mom and Pop business owners to grow their business and provide for their families by letting them fully deduct the cost of business investments in the year they occur.</i></p>	83%	78%	161
<p>Modernize energy regulations: <i>Modernize energy regulations to allow quicker replacements of outdated energy infrastructure. This will help ensure 24/7 power reliability as demand increases, particularly in fast-growing regions with rising energy need.</i></p>	85%	76%	161
<p>Increase portability of health care plans: <i>Increase the portability of health care plans so that workers can keep the same health insurance coverage when they take a new job, instead of having to worry about losing access to their doctors if they find a better job opportunity that will benefit them and their family.</i></p>	83%	77%	160

RESULTS: Top Affordability Messages Ranked by Effectiveness Score

Ranked by Total Effectiveness Score – % Total Impactful + % Total Believable	% Total Impactful	% Total Believable	Total Effectiveness Score
Remove barriers to DPC: <i>Remove tax barriers to affordable Direct Primary Care arrangements where patients contract directly with primary care doctors for care, no unnecessary middlemen, like insurance companies.</i>	78%	69%	147
Market-rate labor policy: <i>Bring down the cost of large government construction projects by allowing government contractors to pay the market rate for workers, instead of the higher rate that is mandated by the federal government.</i>	77%	70%	147
Eliminate energy regulations: <i>Eliminate needless and burdensome regulations to speed up the permitting process for building more power plants and transmission lines which will bring down the cost of energy.</i>	75%	70%	145
Tax free HSAs (personal control): <i>Let every American have a tax-free Health Savings Account, so they have personal control over their health care dollars.</i>	76%	68%	144



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

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