



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Emily Seidel, Senior Advisor & Nathan Nascimento, Executive Director, AFP Action
DATE: April 30, 2026
RE: **AFP Action’s Strategy to Mobilize Independents and the Republican Base, and the Imperative for a Serious Plan to Drive Down Costs**

Senator Schumer has made clear that Democrats fully intend to fight this cycle on the cost of living. Right now, despite the significant progress made in the last year with The Working Families Tax Cut, our internal polling in several battleground states and one-on-one conversations with voters show that for the first time, Democrats are more trusted on the economy and inflation.

At this stage in the race, this shouldn’t be surprising. History is unambiguous: the party in power faces structural headwinds at the midterms. Decades of harmful government regulations, reckless spending, and unchecked bureaucracy was never going to be undone in one year. The fundamentals of this cycle favor a correction, and Democrats know it.

As it stands today, our view is that the Republican Senate majority is at risk. But there is still time.

The window to act is now.

What’s At Stake

AFP Action is not in the business of building bare majorities. We are in the business of building *stronger* majorities — composed of elected leaders who will move the country in the right direction over the long term, not just hold a seat for a cycle. America cannot afford to keep swinging from one extreme to another every two years. Durable progress requires durable coalitions, and that is what we are working to build.

The consequences of coming up short are not abstract. Failure to win key Senate and House races means a small number of unaligned Members will determine the direction of federal policymaking on the issues that matter most to the families we talk to every day.

This is especially true in the Senate. The senators elected in 2026 will still be in office in the early 2030s — a period when the country will face some of the most consequential policy decisions of the next generation:

- **Social Security insolvency** and the reforms required to protect it
- **The national debt** and long-term fiscal sustainability
- **Long-term economic growth** and expanding opportunity for working families

- **Supreme Court nominations** that will shape the law for decades

These are not decisions that can be easily reversed in a single election cycle. The leaders we help elect this November will cast the votes that define the next era of American governance. That is why we are so focused on the Senate — and why we are so selective about where and how we engage.

Why the Senate Majority Is at Risk

Independents Are Ascendant—and Up for Grabs

American voters are shedding partisan identity at a pace that should alarm both parties—but especially the one in power. Independent voters now represent a decisive share of the electorate, and they are precisely the voters most animated by kitchen-table economics. In a midterm cycle where Republicans control Washington, the structural headwinds are real: disengaged and disenchanted voters are the margin that flips chambers.

A Map That Punishes Complacency

While a handful of pickup opportunities exist for Republicans—Georgia, Michigan, New Hampshire—the preponderance of competitive 2026 contests involve Republican-held seats. Any failure to center the campaign on what voters actually care about—pocketbook concerns, above all—opens a plausible path back to a Democratic Senate.

Surging Energy Costs Add to Growing Concern

Despite the important progress made through the Working Families Tax Cut, the conflict in the Middle East is also now having significant upward pressure on energy costs and creating uncertainty around supply chains. Energy costs touch virtually every product Americans buy. The longer these issues sustain, the more Americans will feel the impact – adding a layer of intensity to what is already a top concern.

Bottom Line: *A narrow environment combined with a relentless cost-of-living contrast is a credible recipe for a progressive takeover—unless Republicans campaign and lead on a governing agenda serious enough to earn the trust of independents and re-engage a frustrated base.*

What Voters Are Telling Us

The Data Is Unambiguous

Recent public surveys paint a stark picture. Nearly half of Americans report difficulty affording basic necessities—utilities, groceries, and fuel—and majorities assign blame to whichever party holds power. Reducing the cost-of-living ranks as the top priority for Congress and the president. These are not abstract policy preferences. They are daily anxieties, and voters will reward the party that takes them seriously.

What We Hear at the Door

Since passage of the Working Families Tax Cut – a landmark piece of legislation that turned the largest tax increase in history into the largest cut –AFP's grassroots teams have continued hundreds of thousands of face-to-face conversations across battleground states connecting people to the bill's benefits. The message AFP hears back from voters is remarkably consistent: the cost of living is the defining issue of 2026—spanning housing, groceries, energy, and childcare.

Implication: *Voters want to see candidates do everything in their power to lower costs. Where results are achievable, they should be pursued aggressively. But even in a difficult legislative environment, the path to voter trust runs through substance—a credible, specific, and consistent plan to lower costs that voters can evaluate. Slogans will not close the gap. A serious plan can.*

AFP Action's Plan to Engage Critical Voters

Built for This Moment

AFP Action does not scale up in election years—we operate year-round chapters and field teams that are ready to engage early, test messages through real conversations, and persist with layered follow-up across door, digital, mail, and phone channels. This multi-channel, personalized, policy-focused outreach is precisely how AFP Action can connect with independents who tune out late-cycle party advertising and to re-energize base voters who want governing results, not talking points. **When AFP Action enters a race, it signals two things:** we're fully committed to winning, and the candidate has shown they can be a true policy leader — not just another vote, but part of a better majority that delivers real results.

Core Capabilities That Set Us Apart

- **Permanent Grassroots Presence Across All 50 States.** Our field teams knocked more than 20 million doors in 2024 and are already active in 2026 battleground states—Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Ohio—building the early trust and name recognition that late-cycle programs can never replicate.
- **Data-Driven Targeting and Layered Persuasion.** Using i360's voter intelligence, we identify the exact voters each candidate must persuade, deploy credible messengers to their doors, and reinforce with precisely targeted communications so the message endures.
- **Purpose-Built Coalition Partners.** LIBRE Action extends decisive outreach to Latino voters; Concerned Veterans for America Action elevates trusted veteran voices in key states. Both are critical in close races.
- **Candidate-Specific Strategies in Priority States.** We are already executing in pivotal Senate contests and tracking engagement where early groundwork matters most.

The Imperative for Republican Lawmakers

The strongest political counter to a progressive cost-of-living message is policy outcomes. Voters struggling with the cost of living are looking for more than reassurance. They are looking for leaders who take their situation seriously enough to fight for real solutions.

The path forward is clear: relentless focus on driving costs down and keeping them low. Every policy fight, every floor speech, every campaign event should answer one question—what are you doing to lower the cost of living for working families? Energy. Groceries. Housing. Childcare. Wages that go further.

Republicans have solutions that voters support in large numbers, but few have seen their elected leaders fighting for them. Progressives don't win when it comes to policy, but right now they are winning the messaging battle.

When elected leaders take the concerns of working families seriously—and respond with real, substantive plans to lower costs—they earn something that no amount of campaign spending can buy: trust.

The grassroots case is strongest when it is grounded in something real—a serious plan to lower costs, fought for with conviction, whether it crosses the finish line this session or becomes the mandate voters send lawmakers back to pursue.

The Case for Urgency

The next several months represent the most valuable window of the election cycle. Voters remain open to persuasion, and authentic engagement can still shape the battlefield before it is saturated by advertising. Winning requires acting now—both electorally and legislatively. Missing this window cedes the conversation to progressives and forfeits the first-mover advantage that our permanent grassroots network is built to capture.

Where the legislative environment allows, sitting lawmakers should use the current session to advance cost-cutting reforms that voters can see and feel. Pursue results with urgency. And where the conditions for passage are not yet present, campaign on a specific, serious plan with the same intensity you would bring to a floor vote. Voters can tell the difference between candidates who are fighting for them and those who are going through the motions.