

Nationwide Waste in Government Poll

June 18-24, 2026

N=1000 Registered Voters Nationwide (Online Only)

Q4. In November, there will be a general election for Congress and other offices. It's a long way off, but as things stand now, how likely are you to vote in the November election - are you almost certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or will you probably not vote?	Almost certain	80%
	Probably	10%
	50-50	9%
	Will not vote	1%
	Don't know / Refuse to say	0%
Q14. When thinking about elections for Congress, are you more likely to vote for...?	Democratic candidates	44%
	Republican candidates	40%
	Depends	14%
	Neither	1%
	Don't know	1%
Q15. Which of the following do you feel is the most important issue that Congress should make a top priority?	Affordability and the cost of living	38%
	Creating jobs	3%
	Taxes	2%
	Healthcare	11%
	Crime and public safety	6%
	Immigration	7%
	Foreign policy and national security	3%
	Climate change and clean energy	4%
	Education	3%
	Artificial intelligence (AI) and new	1%
	Corruption in government	11%
	Reducing government spending	4%
	The national debt	3%
	Other	3%
	Don't know	1%

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Q16. Here are some people and groups. Please indicate whether you have a very favorable opinion, a somewhat favorable opinion, a somewhat unfavorable opinion, or a very unfavorable opinion of each. If you don't recognize one, just indicate that.

Q16_1. Donald Trump	Very Fav	25%
	Somewhat Fav	18%
	Total Fav	43%
	Somewhat Unfav	9%
	Very Unfav	48%
	Total Unfav	56%
	Name ID	100%
	Can't Rate	0%
Q16_2. The Democratic Party	Very Fav	14%
	Somewhat Fav	29%
	Total Fav	43%
	Somewhat Unfav	19%
	Very Unfav	35%
	Total Unfav	54%
	Name ID	97%
	Can't Rate	3%
Q16_3. The Republican Party	Very Fav	19%
	Somewhat Fav	27%
	Total Fav	46%
	Somewhat Unfav	18%
	Very Unfav	35%
	Total Unfav	53%
	Name ID	98%
	Can't Rate	2%
Q16_4. The Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE	Very Fav	16%
	Somewhat Fav	24%
	Total Fav	39%
	Somewhat Unfav	14%
	Very Unfav	33%
	Total Unfav	47%
	Name ID	86%
	Can't Rate	14%

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Q17. How would you rate the job Donald Trump is doing as President?	Excellent	18%
	Good	24%
	Total Positive	42%
	Not so good	13%
	Poor	45%
	Total Negative	58%
	Don't know	0%
Q19. How would you rate the job Donald Trump is doing stopping corruption in government?	Excellent	16%
	Good	22%
	Total Positive	38%
	Not so good	15%
	Poor	45%
	Total Negative	59%
	Don't know	2%
Q20. How would you rate the job Donald Trump is doing stopping waste, fraud, and abuse in government?	Excellent	19%
	Good	21%
	Total Positive	40%
	Not so good	15%
	Poor	42%
	Total Negative	57%
	Don't know	2%

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Q21. Next, between the Democrats in Congress and the Republicans in Congress, who do you trust more to handle each of the following issues? If you trust both of them equally, or trust neither, just say so.

Q21_1. The economy	Democrats in Congress	36%
	Republicans in Congress	39%
	Both equally	11%
	Neither	13%
	Don't know	1%
Q21_2. Inflation and rising prices	Democrats in Congress	36%
	Republicans in Congress	35%
	Both equally	10%
	Neither	17%
	Don't know	1%
Q21_3. Taxes	Democrats in Congress	35%
	Republicans in Congress	38%
	Both equally	10%
	Neither	16%
	Don't know	2%
Q21_4. Corruption in government	Democrats in Congress	33%
	Republicans in Congress	35%
	Both equally	11%
	Neither	19%
	Don't know	1%
Q21_5. Reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in government	Democrats in Congress	34%
	Republicans in Congress	37%
	Both equally	9%
	Neither	17%
	Don't know	2%
Q21_6. Making government work better	Democrats in Congress	35%
	Republicans in Congress	34%
	Both equally	11%
	Neither	18%
	Don't know	2%

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Q22. How much do you believe the following groups care about reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in the U.S. government? Do they care a lot, some, a little, or not at all about reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in the U.S. government?

Q22_1. Democrats in Congress	A lot	21%
	Some	23%
	Total A lot / Some	44%
	A little	22%
	Not at all	33%
	Total A little / Not at all	54%
	Don't know	2%
Q22_2. Republicans in Congress	A lot	22%
	Some	23%
	Total A lot / Some	46%
	A little	18%
	Not at all	35%
	Total A little / Not at all	52%
	Don't know	2%
Q22_3. The Trump Administration	A lot	28%
	Some	16%
	Total A lot / Some	44%
	A little	12%
	Not at all	44%
	Total A little / Not at all	55%
	Don't know	1%

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Q24. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “government waste”? **[OPEN ENDED]**
[MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]

Unnecessary Spending	33%
Inefficient Spending and Mismanagement (bureaucratic redundancy)	22%
Fraud, Embezzlement, and Corruption	14%
Trump and Republicans as Wasteful (White House ballroom, reflecting pool)	12%
Misappropriation of Funds	7%
Discontent with Politicians	6%
Programs Failing to Help Americans	5%
Military Action and War Spending	4%
Overpriced Purchases	4%
Benefits Going to Undeserving Recipients	4%
Foreign Aid and Overseas Spending	3%
Democrats and Liberals Overspending	4%
Ineffective and Self-Serving Initiatives ("pork" projects)	3%
Wasted Time and Inaction	3%
Environmental and Food Waste	2%
Public Sentiment on Government Spending	2%
National Debt and Inflation Harms	1%
Government Waste as Overblown Rhetoric	1%
Other	7%
No Comment	3%

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Q25. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “fraud in government programs”? **[OPEN ENDED]**

[MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]

Exploitation of Government Programs and Benefits (Medicaid, Medicare, food stamp fraud)	20%
Political Dishonesty and Financial Misconduct	12%
Misuse of Funds for Unintended Purposes	11%
Corruption and Self-Enrichment by Government Officials	12%
Trump and Republican Corruption	10%
Wasteful Government Spending	9%
Fraudulent Government Programs	7%
Disgust and Ethical Outrage	7%
Weak Oversight and Control Failures	5%
Corporations and the Wealthy Taking Advantage	6%
Government Mismanagement and Misuse of Funds	5%
Inevitable (rampant, not surprising)	5%
Overblown Issue (should prioritize helping the needy instead)	5%
General Theft and Deception	4%
Minnesota-Specific Fraud Concerns	4%
Democratic Party Corruption	4%
Calls for Investigation and Accountability	2%
Election or Voting Fraud	1%
Immigrant or Foreigner Benefit Abuse	1%
Other	3%
No Comment	2%

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Q26. Here are some federal programs. For each one, how much of the money spent do you think is lost to waste, fraud, or abuse?

Q26_1. Medicare	A lot	30%
	Some	32%
	Total A lot / Some	62%
	Not too much	22%
	None	13%
	Total Not too much / None	35%
	Don't know	3%
Q26_2. Medicaid	A lot	35%
	Some	30%
	Total A lot / Some	65%
	Not too much	22%
	None	11%
	Total Not too much / None	33%
	Don't know	3%
Q26_3. Social Security	A lot	25%
	Some	28%
	Total A lot / Some	54%
	Not too much	26%
	None	17%
	Total Not too much / None	43%
	Don't know	3%
Q26_4. Veterans' programs	A lot	19%
	Some	27%
	Total A lot / Some	46%
	Not too much	30%
	None	19%
	Total Not too much / None	49%
	Don't know	5%
Q26_5. Foreign aid	A lot	46%
	Some	30%
	Total A lot / Some	76%
	Not too much	15%
	None	5%
	Total Not too much / None	20%
	Don't know	4%

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Q26_6. Military and defense	A lot	31%
	Some	34%
	Total A lot / Some	65%
	Not too much	18%
	None	13%
	Total Not too much / None	31%
	Don't know	4%
Q26_7. Infrastructure like roads and bridges	A lot	26%
	Some	37%
	Total A lot / Some	63%
	Not too much	22%
	None	12%
	Total Not too much / None	34%
	Don't know	3%
Q26_8. Scientific research	A lot	20%
	Some	34%
	Total A lot / Some	54%
	Not too much	28%
	None	14%
	Total Not too much / None	42%
	Don't know	4%
Q27. Which of the following do you trust MOST to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the U.S. government?	Democrats in Congress	24%
	Republicans in Congress	11%
	The Trump Administration	23%
	Government agencies	3%
	Inspectors general and other government watchdogs	18%
	Academics	3%
	Business leaders	2%
	The news media	2%
	Don't know	13%

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Q28. If reducing the budget deficit required tradeoffs, which would you prefer: [SPLIT A]	Cutting spending and government programs	34%
	Raising taxes on the wealthy	54%
	Not reducing the deficit	5%
	Don't know	7%
Q29. If reducing the budget deficit required tradeoffs, which would you prefer: [SPLIT B]	Cutting spending and government programs	35%
	Raising taxes on anyone with a household income over \$400,000 a year	54%
	Not reducing the deficit	4%
	Don't know	7%
Q30. Which of the following comes closer to your view?	It is possible to cut government spending significantly without reducing services people rely on.	75%
	Meaningful cuts will require reducing services that people rely on.	20%
	Don't know	5%

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Q31. If a government agency saves money by reducing waste or rooting out fraud, what should be done with those savings?	Return the money to the Treasury to reduce the deficit.	30%
	Reinvest the money in the same program to provide more or better services.	30%
	Use the savings to reduce taxes on Americans.	35%
	Don't know	4%
Q32. Which of the following do you agree with more? [ASKED IF 'STRONG DEM' OR 'NOT SO STRONG DEM' IN Q10-13; N=XXX]	Democrats should take on waste, fraud, and abuse because it means more of our tax dollars are actually spent helping people.	74%
	Democrats talking about waste, fraud and abuse plays into the Republican narrative that government doesn't work and puts important programs at risk.	16%
	Don't know	10%
Q33. Which of the following comes closest to your view? [ASKED IF 'STRONG REP' OR 'NOT SO STRONG REP' IN Q10-13; N=XXX]	Trump has done a good job reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in government.	57%
	Trump has the right idea on reducing waste, fraud, and abuse, but isn't going about it in the right way.	28%
	Trump has not done a good job reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in government.	11%
	Don't know	4%

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Q34. Here are some things that might occur in government. Do you consider the following waste, fraud, abuse, or not a problem?

Q34_1. The government keeps paying for office buildings that sit mostly empty.	Waste	73%
	Fraud	14%
	Abuse	9%
	Not a problem	2%
	Don't know	2%
Q34_2. A military project starts at one price, is delayed, and ends up costing more than promised.	Waste	47%
	Fraud	17%
	Abuse	22%
	Not a problem	8%
	Don't know	7%
Q34_3. Firing government employees with specific expertise, then rehiring them on more expensive contracts because they had needed technical skills.	Waste	35%
	Fraud	21%
	Abuse	25%
	Not a problem	9%
	Don't know	9%
Q34_4. A soup kitchen that received government funds billing for more meals than people who were served.	Waste	16%
	Fraud	54%
	Abuse	14%
	Not a problem	13%
	Don't know	3%
Q34_5. A senior official uses government private jets for trips that are partly personal or could have been taken commercially.	Waste	26%
	Fraud	23%
	Abuse	43%
	Not a problem	4%
	Don't know	3%
Q34_6. A government contractor shares knowledge obtained from working with the government to a foreign adversary for personal gain.	Waste	7%
	Fraud	48%
	Abuse	36%
	Not a problem	3%
	Don't know	6%

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Q34_7. A public official gets private information through their government job, then trades stocks before the public knows what is coming.	Waste	7%
	Fraud	59%
	Abuse	27%
	Not a problem	3%
	Don't know	3%
Q34_8. An elected official buys stock in a company they are supposed to regulate, and then looks the other way as that company's stock price rises.	Waste	8%
	Fraud	59%
	Abuse	27%
	Not a problem	3%
	Don't know	3%
Q34_9. Firing and limiting the ability of government watchdogs to investigate government agencies.	Waste	12%
	Fraud	21%
	Abuse	45%
	Not a problem	10%
	Don't know	12%
Q34_10. Sending foreign aid to countries with poor accountability.	Waste	55%
	Fraud	13%
	Abuse	14%
	Not a problem	9%
	Don't know	8%
Q34_11. The government setting preferences to hire government contractors that are small businesses rather than big corporations. [SPLIT A]	Waste	12%
	Fraud	12%
	Abuse	18%
	Not a problem	45%
	Don't know	13%
Q34_12. The government setting preferences to hire government contractors that are owned by women, veterans, or minorities. [SPLIT B]	Waste	12%
	Fraud	11%
	Abuse	18%
	Not a problem	47%
	Don't know	12%

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Q35. Here are some ideas different elected officials have about improving government efficiency and cutting waste. For each, please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that policy.

Q35_1. Using artificial intelligence to track spending to hunt down and eliminate misspent tax dollars in every agency and department across the federal government.	Strongly support	28%
	Somewhat support	36%
	Total support	64%
	Somewhat oppose	14%
	Strongly oppose	12%
	Total oppose	25%
Q35_2. Requiring government agencies to identify, minimize, and recover overpayments and report it each year to the public.	Don't know	11%
	Strongly support	60%
	Somewhat support	29%
	Total support	89%
	Somewhat oppose	4%
	Strongly oppose	3%
Q35_3. Increasing the criminal penalties for anyone convicted of defrauding the government.	Total oppose	7%
	Don't know	4%
	Strongly support	59%
	Somewhat support	25%
	Total support	84%
	Somewhat oppose	8%
Q35_4. Requiring the Department of Defense to pass a full, independent audit or else return 1 percent of its budget to the Treasury for deficit reduction. [SPLIT A]	Strongly oppose	3%
	Total oppose	11%
	Don't know	5%
	Strongly support	47%
	Somewhat support	33%
	Total support	80%
Q35_5. Requiring all government agencies to pass a full, independent audit or else return 1 percent of their budget to the Treasury for deficit reduction. [SPLIT B]	Somewhat oppose	5%
	Strongly oppose	4%
	Total oppose	9%
	Don't know	11%
	Strongly support	55%
	Somewhat support	30%
	Total support	85%
	Somewhat oppose	6%
	Strongly oppose	2%
	Total oppose	8%
	Don't know	7%

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Q35_6. Setting a cap on administration and overhead expenses in each government agency.	Strongly support	50%
	Somewhat support	34%
	Total support	84%
	Somewhat oppose	7%
	Strongly oppose	3%
	Total oppose	9%
Q35_7. Strengthening whistleblower protections for anyone who reports the fraudulent use of government funds.	Strongly support	66%
	Somewhat support	22%
	Total support	88%
	Somewhat oppose	6%
	Strongly oppose	3%
	Total oppose	9%
Q35_8. Banning corporations and their lobbyists who receive taxpayer-funded contracts from contributing to political campaigns.	Strongly support	56%
	Somewhat support	26%
	Total support	82%
	Somewhat oppose	8%
	Strongly oppose	4%
	Total oppose	12%
Q35_9. Banning any politician or government official convicted of fraud in court from ever holding a federal job again, and stripping them of their taxpayer-funded benefits like retirement and health care.	Strongly support	68%
	Somewhat support	20%
	Total support	88%
	Somewhat oppose	6%
	Strongly oppose	2%
	Total oppose	8%
Q36. If your member of Congress supported the policies you just read, how would it impact your likelihood to vote for them?	Much more likely to vote for them	45%
	Somewhat more likely to vote for them	33%
	Total More Likely To Vote For Them	78%
	Somewhat less likely to vote for them	4%
	Much less likely to vote for them	4%
	Total Less Likely To Vote For Them	8%
	No impact on vote	8%
	Don't know	5%

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Q37. Here are some things elected officials might say about waste in government. For each, please indicate whether that statement would make you much more likely to support that candidate, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, much less likely, or make no difference in your likelihood of supporting that candidate.

Q37_1. [DOGE] Washington is broken and the bureaucrats running it are wasting taxpayer money. Billions go to bloated agencies and programs nobody can even explain. It's time to stop tinkering around the edges. We need to cut deep, fire the deadweight, and fundamentally overhaul how this government operates.	Much more likely	45%
	Somewhat more likely	31%
	Somewhat less likely	7%
	Much less likely	5%
	No difference	5%
	Don't know	6%
Q37_2. [MODERATE DEM CASE] Making government more efficient means we can do more with the money we have. People want the government to deliver better health care, better transportation, and things like job training—they just don't trust the government will spend their money wisely. We've got to get the government working better if we're going to ask people for their hard-earned tax dollars to fund critical services.	Much more likely	46%
	Somewhat more likely	35%
	Somewhat less likely	6%
	Much less likely	4%
	No difference	6%
	Don't know	4%
Q37_3. [DELIVER] Restoring faith in government starts with proving government can actually deliver. Americans deserve a government that works as hard as they do – and a government as careful with their money as they are. For too long, bureaucracy has stood in the way of delivering services our nation needs. We must take a hard look at how our government functions and identify the reforms we need to deliver faster, smarter and more effectively for working people.	Much more likely	48%
	Somewhat more likely	34%
	Somewhat less likely	7%
	Much less likely	3%
	No difference	5%
	Don't know	4%
Q37_4. [ACCOUNTABILITY] Waste and fraud keep happening because the people writing the rules benefit from it. Contractors overbill by millions and get another contract, officials misuse government funds and keep their jobs. We need to add accountability so anyone who defrauds taxpayers goes to jail, any contractor that cheats gets banned, and any official who abuses their position gets fired and prosecuted.	Much more likely	55%
	Somewhat more likely	26%
	Somewhat less likely	5%
	Much less likely	5%
	No difference	5%
	Don't know	4%
Q37_5. [INVEST] Politicians talk about waste while spending trillions on foreign wars, bloated Pentagon budgets, and a \$500 million White House ballroom. We need to cut the wasteful spending, close tax loopholes, and invest in programs that actually help families — affordable health care, lower costs, and good schools.	Much more likely	45%
	Somewhat more likely	23%
	Somewhat less likely	10%
	Much less likely	8%
	No difference	9%
	Don't know	5%
Q37_6. [RIGGED] Fraud and abuse are an example of the rigged system that benefits the elites over working people. Companies give cash to politicians and get no-bid contracts, politicians and officials trade stocks off insider information instead of doing their jobs as watchdogs, and politicians write the rules to not hold themselves accountable.	Much more likely	41%
	Somewhat more likely	29%
	Somewhat less likely	7%
	Much less likely	8%
	No difference	7%
	Don't know	8%

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QUESTIONS FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES

Q5. What is your gender?	Man	47%
	Woman	53%
Q6. Age	18-34	26%
	35-49	24%
	50-64	23%
	65+	27%
	Refused	0%
Q7/8. Race	White or Caucasian	68%
	Black or African American	13%
	Hispanic or Latino	13%
	Asian American or Pacific Islander	4%
	Mixed Race	1%
	Other	1%
	Don't Know	0%
Q9. What was the last year of education you completed?	1st-11th grade	1%
	High school graduate	25%
	Vocational or technical school	4%
	Some college, but no degree	23%
	Associate degree	13%
	4-year college graduate or bachelor's degree	22%
	Graduate school or advanced degree	12%
	Refuse to say	0%
Q10-13. Party Self-ID	Strong Democrat	26%
	Not so strong Democrat	12%
	Indep / lean Democrat	9%
	Strong Republican	27%
	Not so strong Republican	12%
	Indep / lean Republican	6%
	Independent	8%
	Other	1%
Q38. How often do you use social media — such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, or YouTube?	Don't Know	0%
	Every day	72%
	Several times a week	14%
	About once a week	3%
	Less than once a week	3%
	Never	8%
	Don't know	0%

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Q39. Generally speaking, do you consider yourself...?	Very liberal	14%
	Somewhat liberal	14%
	Moderate	32%
	Somewhat conservative	22%
	Very conservative	17%
	Don't Know	1%
Q40. How important is politics to your personal identity?	Very important	30%
	Somewhat important	43%
	Not too important	19%
	Not at all important	8%
	Don't Know	0%
Q41. Voting is by secret ballot, and you can be assured this survey is confidential. Your individual answers will not be seen by anyone. In the November 2024 election for President, did you vote for...?	Kamala Harris	50%
	Donald Trump	50%
	Another candidate	0%
	Refuse to say	0%
	Did not vote	0%
Q46. Census Region	Midwest	21%
	Northeast	18%
	South	39%
	West	22%

****Due to rounding, "totals" of the individual components may differ by +/-1.**