GSG GLOBAL STRATEGY GROUP

NORTH STAR OPINION RESEARCH


August 2026 PGPF FCI

August 17 - 19, 2026
49423

1002 Interviews
Margin of Error: +/- 3.1%

**REG.** Are you currently registered to vote?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 100% |
| No | - |
| Not sure | - |

**P1.** When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as a strong Democrat, not very strong Democrat, strong Republican, not very strong Republican, an Independent, or some other political party? **[IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER]** Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

| | |
|---|---|
| Strong Democrat | 26% |
| Weak Democrat | 13 |
| Independent / Closer to the Democrats | 7 |
| Independent | 13 |
| Independent / Closer to the Republicans | 5 |
| Weak Republican | 14 |
| Strong Republican | 23 |
| | |
| DEMOCRAT (NET) | 39% |
| INDEPENDENT (NET) | 24 |
| REPUBLICAN (NET) | 37 |
| | |
| DEMOCRAT W/ LEANERS (NET) | 45% |
| REPUBLICAN W/ LEANERS (NET) | 42 |

**Q1C.** Some people say that addressing the national debt should be among the President and Congress's top 3 priorities. Do you agree or disagree that the national debt should be among the President and Congress's top 3 priorities? **[IF AGREE]** And do you strongly or just somewhat agree that the national debt should be among the President and Congress's top 3 priorities? **[IF DISAGREE]** And do you strongly or just somewhat disagree that the national debt should be among the President and Congress's top 3 priorities? **[IF DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, would you lean toward agreeing or disagreeing that the national debt should be among the President and Congress's top 3 priorities?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 58% | 56% | 56% | 60% | 55% | 56% | 52% | 52% | 55% | 52% | 54% | 53% |
| Somewhat agree | 23 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 27 | 23 | 24 |
| Somewhat disagree | 11 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 13 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Don't know/Refused | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AGREE (NET) | 82% | 79 | 81 | 84 | 81 | 82 | 79 | 77 | 79 | 79 | 77 | 77 |
| DISAGREE (NET) | 14 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 15 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18 |

**Q2C.** Thinking about our national debt over the last few years, would you say your level of concern about our national debt has: **[IF NO CHANGE/DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, would you say that your level of concern about our national debt has probably increased a little or probably decreased a little over the last few years?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increased a lot | 55% | 52% | 53% | 56% | 54% | 53% | 49% | 48% | 50% | 48% | 49% | 50% |
| Increased a little | 28 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 31 | 30 | 31 |
| Decreased a little | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Decreased a lot | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| No change | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| Don't know/Refused | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| INCREASED (NET) | 83% | 81 | 81 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 77 | 77 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 81 |
| DECREASED (NET) | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 8 |

**Q3C.** Thinking about our national debt over the next few years, do you expect the problem to get: **[IF THE SAME/DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, do you think the national debt problem will probably get a little better or probably get a little worse over the next few years?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Much better | 9% | 9% | 10% | 9% | 11% | 12% | 11% | 13% | 13% | 14% | 13% | 11% |
| Somewhat better | 18 | 19 | 18 | 16 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 23 | 18 | 21 |
| Somewhat worse | 28 | 26 | 30 | 26 | 31 | 25 | 29 | 28 | 25 | 24 | 24 | 27 |
| Much worse | 40 | 40 | 37 | 42 | 35 | 38 | 33 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 38 | 36 |
| No change | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Don't know/Refused | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| BETTER (NET) | 27% | 28 | 28 | 26 | 28 | 31 | 32 | 35 | 37 | 37 | 31 | 31 |
| WORSE (NET) | 67 | 66 | 67 | 69 | 66 | 63 | 61 | 60 | 58 | 58 | 62 | 63 |

**Q4C.** When it comes to addressing our national debt, would you say things in the United States are heading in the right direction or do you think things are off on the wrong track? **[IF NONE/DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, would you say that things in the United States are probably heading in the right direction or probably off on the wrong track when it comes to addressing our national debt?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Right direction - Strongly | 13% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 15% | 14% | 16% | 16% | 17% | 18% | 16% | 15% |
| Right direction - Somewhat | 18 | 17 | 19 | 17 | 16 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 24 | 21 | 21 | 20 |
| Wrong track - Somewhat | 20 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 21 | 17 | 19 |
| Wrong track - Strongly | 46 | 46 | 44 | 47 | 44 | 43 | 38 | 36 | 38 | 37 | 42 | 41 |
| Neither/Mixed | 1 | * | 1 | 1 | * | 1 | * | * | * | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Don't know/Refused | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| RIGHT DIRECTION (NET) | 31% | 29 | 30 | 29 | 31 | 35 | 37 | 40 | 41 | 39 | 36 | 36 |
| WRONG TRACK (NET) | 66 | 67 | 66 | 67 | 65 | 61 | 59 | 57 | 55 | 58 | 59 | 60 |

**Q5C.** And when it comes to our national debt, do you think it is an issue that the President and Congress should spend more time addressing or less time addressing? And is that a lot **[MORE/LESS]** or a little **[MORE/LESS]** time? **[IF THE SAME AMOUNT/DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, would you say the President and Congress should probably spend more time addressing the national debt or probably spend less time addressing the national debt?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A lot more time | 55% | 52% | 53% | 57% | 56% | 52% | 49% | 49% | 50% | 49% | 51% | 52% |
| A little more time | 30 | 29 | 31 | 28 | 27 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 32 | 33 | 30 | 29 |
| A little less time | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 8 |
| A lot less time | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| The same amount of time | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Don't know/Refused | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| MORE TIME (NET) | 85% | 81 | 84 | 85 | 83 | 83 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 82 | 81 | 81 |
| LESS TIME (NET) | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 12 |

**Q6C.** And when it comes to our national debt, how optimistic or pessimistic are you that the U.S. will make progress on the national debt over the next few years? **[IF TOTALLY MIXED/DON'T KNOW]** If you had to choose, would you say you lean toward being optimistic or lean toward being pessimistic that the U.S. will make progress on the national debt over the next few years?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 | Jan 26 | Dec 25 | Nov 25 | Oct 25 | Sep 25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very optimistic | 9% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 10% | 11% | 10% | 12% | 10% | 12% | 9% | 10% |
| Somewhat optimistic | 28 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 30 | 34 | 30 | 36 | 34 | 34 | 32 |
| Somewhat pessimistic | 32 | 32 | 34 | 28 | 33 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 29 |
| Very pessimistic | 25 | 26 | 23 | 28 | 22 | 25 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 24 | 23 |
| Neither/Mixed | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Don't know/Refused | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| OPTIMISTIC (NET) | 37% | 37 | 38 | 38 | 40 | 41 | 44 | 42 | 47 | 45 | 43 | 43 |
| PESSIMISTIC (NET) | 57 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 53 | 50 | 52 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 52 |

**Q7.** As you may know, economists from across the ideological spectrum agree that the rising national debt can increase inflation and interest rates, which makes things like goods, services and transportation more expensive for consumers.

How concerned are you that the national debt's effect on inflation is increasing your own cost of living, such as prices for things like groceries, energy, housing and other everyday expenses?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very concerned | 55% | 54% | 55% | 56% | 54% | 55% | 48% |
| Somewhat concerned | 36 | 36 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 36 | 41 |
| Not that concerned | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Not concerned at all | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| CONCERNED (NET) | 91% | 90 | 92 | 93 | 92 | 90 | 90 |
| NOT CONCERNED (NET) | 9 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 10 |

**Q8.** How concerned are you that the national debt's effect on interest rates is contributing to higher borrowing costs, such as credit card interest, car loan rates, mortgage rates and other personal loans?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very concerned | 47% | 45% | 44% | 48% | 48% | 47% | 41% |
| Somewhat concerned | 41 | 42 | 44 | 42 | 40 | 39 | 44 |
| Not that concerned | 8 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Not concerned at all | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| CONCERNED (NET) | 89% | 86 | 88 | 90 | 88 | 86 | 85 |
| NOT CONCERNED (NET) | 11 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 15 |

**Q9.** How important is the cost of living and overall affordability to your vote in the 2026 elections?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very important | 69% | 66% | 66% | 68% | 66% | 67% | 64% |
| Somewhat important | 25 | 26 | 27 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 28 |
| Not too important | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Not at all important | 1 | 1 | 1 | * | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I do not plan to vote in 2026 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| IMPORTANT (NET) | 94% | 92 | 93 | 95 | 92 | 91 | 92 |
| NOT IMPORTANT (NET) | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 6 |

**Q10.** Over the past month, do you think candidates for political office are talking enough about the national debt and its impact on the cost of living?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, candidates are talking about this enough | 28% | 28% | 30% | 25% | 28% | 29% | 30% |
| No, candidates should talk about this more | 72 | 72 | 70 | 75 | 72 | 71 | 70 |

**Q11.** Is a candidate having a plan to address the national debt a factor in deciding whether you would support them in the 2026 election?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, definitely | 34% | 29% | 35% | 35% | 36% | 37% | 31% |
| Yes, probably | 52 | 53 | 49 | 52 | 47 | 46 | 52 |
| No, probably not | 12 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 14 |
| No, definitely not | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| YES (NET) | 86% | 82 | 85 | 87 | 83 | 83 | 83 |
| NO (NET) | 14 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 17 | 17 | 17 |

**Q12.** How likely are you to support a candidate this year that has a clear plan to address the national debt?

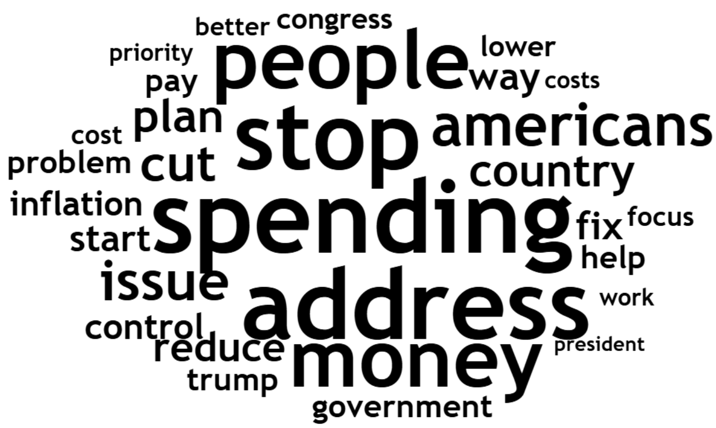
| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Much more likely | 41% | 37% | 39% | 40% | 42% | 44% | 38% |
| Somewhat more likely | 55 | 57 | 55 | 55 | 52 | 49 | 55 |
| Somewhat less likely | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Much less likely | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| MORE LIKELY (NET) | 96% | 94 | 94 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 93 |
| LESS LIKELY (NET) | 4 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 |

**Q13.** Would you consider supporting a candidate from a political party you don't usually support if that candidate had a clear plan to address the national debt?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, I would consider it | 73% | 73% | 74% | 75% | 74% | 74% | 72% |
| No, I would never consider it | 27 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 28 |

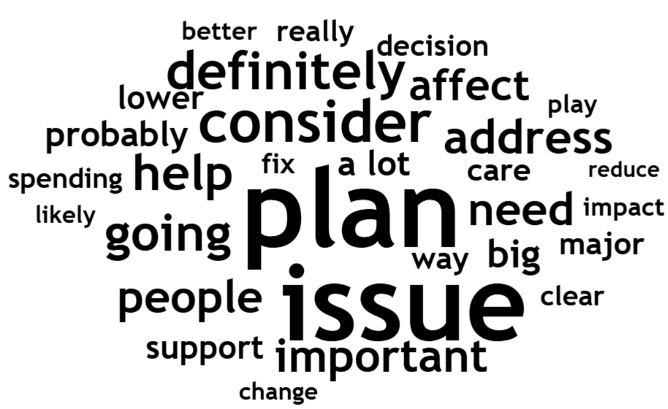
**Q14.** As you may know, the national debt is expected to pass $40 trillion this week. This is earlier than previously projected, and it means the national debt has doubled in less than 10 years. On our current path, the national debt will reach $50 trillion in six years, leading to record interest costs and contributing to inflation. In a few words, what would you say about this issue to elected officials in Washington and candidates running for Congress in this November's midterm elections?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Take Debt Seriously / Urgency | 40% |
| | Impact on Cost of Living / Inflation | 16 |
| | General Frustration with Politicians | 14 |
| | Cut Government Waste / Excessive Spending | 13 |
| | Need a Plan to Address Debt | 10 |
| | Blame Specific Party or President | 9 |
| | Stop Foreign Aid / Military Spending | 8 |
| | Cut Spending / Spending Priorities | 4 |
| | Bipartisan Cooperation Needed | 4 |
| | Debt Affects Voting / Electoral Accountability | 4 |
| | Debt Burden on Future Generations | 3 |
| | Tax the Wealthy / Revenue Solutions | 2 |
| **VOL:** | (Not Coded) | 10 |




**Q15.** And thinking about the national debt exceeding $40 trillion, in a few words, how will the debt factor into your vote this November?

| | |
|---|---|
| Will Vote for Candidate with Debt Plan | 28% |
| Debt as Top/Major Voting Factor | 22 |
| Debt One of Many Factors | 19 |
| Debt Will Not Affect Vote | 10 |
| Undecided / Unsure How It Will Factor | 9 |
| Other Issues More Important | 5 |
| Frustration/Outrage at Debt Level | 5 |
| Debt Linked to Cost of Living/Inflation | 5 |
| Skepticism/Pessimism About Debt Being Fixed | 5 |
| Party-Line Voting Intent (Democrat) | 5 |
| Government Spending Must Be Cut | 4 |
| Party-Line Voting Intent (Republican) | 3 |
| Candidate Must Address Debt to Earn Vote | 2 |
| Will Vote Out Incumbents/Current Administration Over Debt | 2 |
| Will Not Vote / Voting Unlikely | 1 |
| (not coded) | 3 |



Changing topics slightly…

**Q16.** As you may know, if Congress doesn't act, current and future Social Security beneficiaries will receive an immediate 23% benefit cut starting in 2032. The U.S. Senators elected this November will be in office at that time.

Do you think candidates this year should clearly explain their plans to prevent automatic cuts to Social Security benefits?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, definitely | 77% | 74% | 75% | 76% | 76% | 74% | 70% |
| Yes, probably | 20 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 25 |
| No, probably not | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| No, definitely not | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| YES (NET) | 97% | 95 | 96 | 96 | 97 | 95 | 95 |
| NO (NET) | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 |

**Q17.** Over the past month, do you think candidates are talking enough about plans to prevent automatic Social Security benefit cuts?

| | Aug 26 | July 26 | June 26 | May 26 | April 26 | Mar 26 | Feb 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, candidates are talking about this enough | 20% | 21% | 21% | 19% | 22% | 22% | 22% |
| No, candidates should talk about this more | 80 | 79 | 79 | 81 | 78 | 78 | 78 |

For statistical purposes only, please answer the following questions.

**D100.** What is your gender?

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | 47% |
| Female | 53 |
| Self-describe | * |

**DAGE.** What is your age?

| | |
|---|---|
| 18-29 | 17% |
| 30-44 | 24 |
| 45-54 | 17 |
| 55-64 | 18 |
| 65+ | 23 |

**DRACE.** To ensure we have a representative sample, please indicate your race. **[IF BLACK/WHITE/OTHER]** Do you consider yourself a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-speaking American?

| | |
|---|---|
| Black/African-American | 12% |
| White/Caucasian | 74 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 10 |
| Asian-American | 2 |
| Native American | 1 |
| Other | 1 |

**D102.** What is the last grade of school or level of education you completed?

| | |
|---|---|
| Did not complete high school | 2% |
| Graduated high school | 24 |
| Attended technical/vocational school | 3 |
| Attended some college but no degree | 19 |
| Graduated two-year college with Associate's degree | 15 |
| Graduated four-year college with Bachelor's degree | 28 |
| Obtained Master's, PhD, or other professional degree (MD, DMD, etc.) | 9 |

**D105.** When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as:

| | |
|---|---|
| Very liberal | 14% |
| Somewhat liberal | 17 |
| Moderate | 37 |
| Somewhat conservative | 16 |
| Very conservative | 16 |

**D108.** Which of the following best describes you and your family?

| | |
|---|---|
| Working class | 28% |
| Lower middle class | 21 |
| Middle class | 39 |
| Upper middle class | 8 |
| Affluent | 1 |
| I'm not sure | 3 |

**REGION.** What state do you live in?

| | |
|---|---|
| Northeast | 18% |
| Midwest | 23 |
| South | 38 |
| West | 21 |

**REGION9.** Coded National Region **[9-WAY]**

| | |
|---|---|
| New England | 5% |
| Middle Atlantic | 13 |
| East North Central | 16 |
| West North Central | 7 |
| South Atlantic | 21 |
| East South Central | 6 |
| West South Central | 11 |
| Mountain | 7 |
| Pacific | 14 |