



**SMALL BUSINESS
MAJORITY**



Opinion Poll: American Voters Want Elected Officials to Support Small Business

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Introduction

America is a nation powered by entrepreneurship. With more than 36 million small businesses that make up 99.9% of all American businesses and employ more than 62 million workers, small businesses are central to American life and the economy.¹ Entrepreneurs in Main Streets across the country give towns their unique character and are pillars of their local communities. They create opportunities and keep the economy vibrant and competitive while following their passions and pursuing the American Dream. Despite their centrality to American life, small businesses and their needs are too often overlooked by elected officials and candidates seeking public office.

A new national opinion poll of likely voters, conducted for Small Business Majority by Lake Research Partners, reveals overwhelming bipartisan support for small businesses and pro-small business policies. Voters believe by dramatic margins that the success of small business is better for their families and the economy than the success of large corporations, and it's personally important to them that local small businesses in their communities thrive.

Importantly, voters strongly believe that conditions have worsened for small businesses over the past year. More than three quarters, including majorities across party lines, believe that small businesses are bearing the brunt of dramatic increases in the cost of living, that large corporations are raking in huge profits, and that we need elected leaders who stand up for small businesses and the American Dream while fighting against monopolies and power consolidation.

As voters indicate small businesses are confronting increasing challenges, they believe that the cost of healthcare, taxes and unfair competition are the most pressing problems for small businesses today. They're more likely to vote for candidates who support small business policies that would address these and other issues related to affordability. In particular, the research reveals that voters across party lines are much more likely to support policymakers who would work to reduce the cost of healthcare and prescription drugs, as well as those who support access to more affordable healthcare for small business owners and their employees. They are strongly supportive of statements that highlight the need to level the playing field for small businesses, and they want elected officials to fix the tax system to benefit small businesses instead of large corporations.

This poll illustrates the strength of small business as an issue for elected officials and those who seek public office. Political leaders would do well to show their constituents that they care about small business and will fight for policies that benefit Main Street over large corporations.

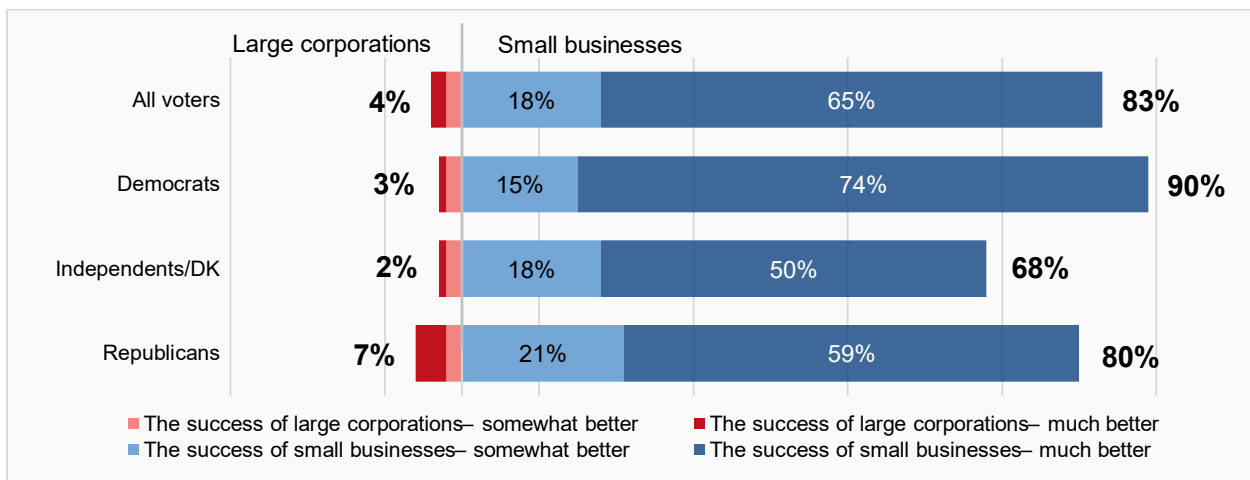
Key findings

- **The vast majority of voters believe the success of small businesses is better for their families (73%) and the economy (83%)** than the success of large corporations.
- **American voters want small businesses to thrive.** Nearly 9 in 10 (89%) say the success of small business is important to them personally, and this holds true across party lines and demographics.
- **An overwhelming majority of voters believe that healthcare and an uneven playing field are the biggest issues for small businesses.** They say that healthcare becoming more expensive and harder to obtain (88%) and big corporations having loopholes to pay less taxes (82%) are problems for small businesses.
- **Policies that address rising costs and affordability resonate broadly.** Almost all Democrats (94%), 80% of independents and 59% of Republicans are convinced that the cost of living is rising with small businesses bearing the brunt, and that elected officials should stand up for small businesses while fighting against monopolies.
- **Voters across party lines are much more likely to support candidates who favor policies that reduce small business healthcare costs.** Ninety-one percent are more likely to vote for a candidate that would support policies reducing the cost of healthcare including prescription drugs, with 89% of Democrats, 73% of independents and 64% of Republicans much more likely to vote for that candidate. Additionally, 91% are more likely to vote for a candidate that believes small businesses should be able to access affordable healthcare for themselves and their employees.
- **Across party lines, voters support the need to level the playing field between small businesses and large corporations.** Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Democrats, half of independents (50%) and 43% of Republicans are very convinced that elected officials need to fight for small businesses instead of large corporations and that they need to level the playing field.
- **Additionally, voters are more likely to support candidates who support tax policies that benefit small businesses over large corporations.** The vast majority (85%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who thinks that the government should fix the tax system to benefit small businesses instead of large corporations, and across party lines, 86% of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who believes that “we should ensure government tax incentives go to Main Street businesses and not to large AI companies.”
- **Many respondents report connections to small businesses, underscoring the importance of small business to households across the country.** About one-third (34%) say they or someone in their household is a current or retired entrepreneur. Similarly, 34% of respondents say they or someone in their household is a current or retired small business employee. Nearly half (48%) of voters fall into at least one of these two categories.

Voters see small business as key to both their family’s financial wellbeing and the broader economy

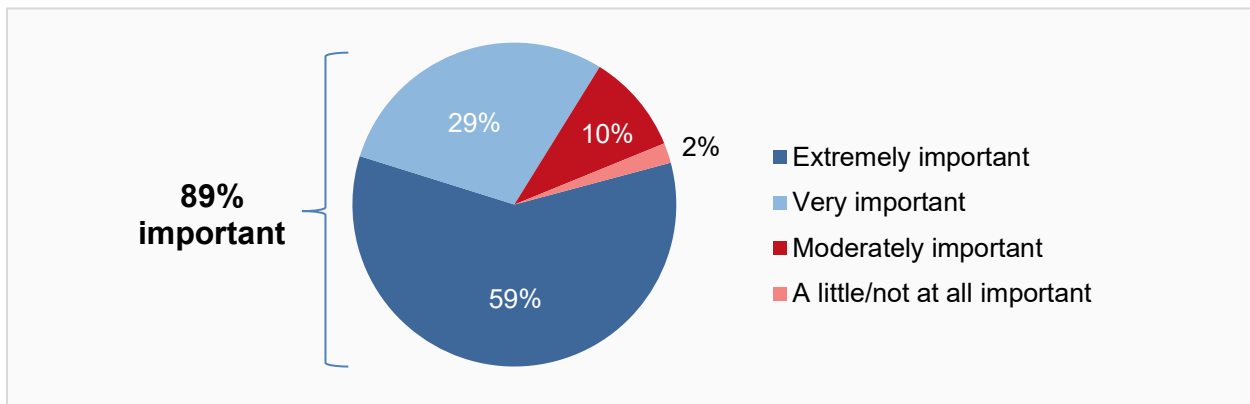
Overwhelmingly, voters across party lines believe that the success of small businesses is better for their families and for the economy than the success of large corporations. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say the success of small businesses is better for them and their family, and 51% say it is much better, while only 8% say the success of large corporations is better. Even more (83%) say the success of small businesses is better for the economy, while a mere 4% say the success of large corporations is better. Regardless of their political affiliation, voters say the success of small businesses is better both personally (79% Democrats, 76% independents, 67% Republicans) and for the economy overall (90% Democrats, 68% independents, 80% Republicans). This also holds true for voters across demographics.

Voters say small business success benefits the economy more than success of large corporations



American voters care about the success of small businesses because they deeply value them. Nearly all voters (89%) say it is important to them personally that small businesses in their community are able to thrive, with 59% saying it’s extremely important. This statement holds true across party lines and demographics, and it is especially true among people of color, small business owner and employee households, and voters who are interested in starting a small business.

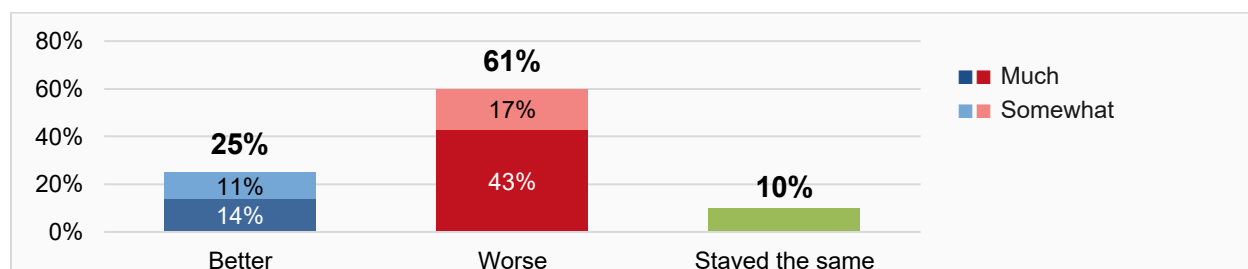
A thriving small business community is personally important to most voters



Voters' views on current problems for small businesses

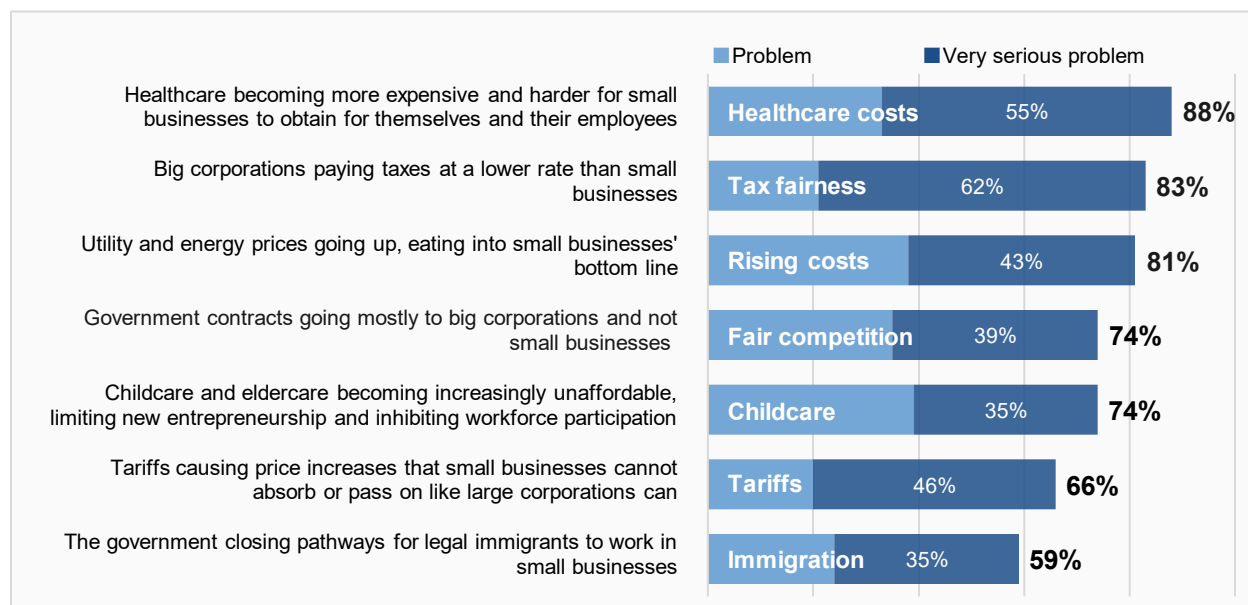
Since voters want their local small businesses to thrive, it's not surprising that they have strong views on the state of their economic and business conditions. Overall, more voters think the climate in which small businesses operate has gotten worse over the past year (61%), rather than better (25%) or stayed the same (10%). This number aligns with how people who actually own or work at a small business are feeling—roughly 6 in 10 say things have gotten worse.

Majority of voters agree conditions for small business have worsened over the past year



As voters believe that business conditions are declining, they identify several major problems for small businesses, with healthcare as the most pressing issue. Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) think that *healthcare becoming more expensive and harder for small businesses to obtain for themselves and their employees* is a problem, with more than half of voters (55%) thinking it's a very serious problem. This issue finds strong bipartisan support; however, it ranks as the top issue with Republicans with 43% saying it's a very serious problem. Notably, women over the age of 50 are disproportionately concerned about healthcare becoming more expensive and harder for small businesses to obtain.

Voters identify the most pressing problems facing small businesses



Additionally, voters think that big corporations have more advantages than small businesses and that they're not competing on a level playing field when it comes to taxes, government contracts and tariffs. More than 8 in 10 (82%) say it's a problem that *big corporations have more loopholes to pay less taxes than small businesses*. These challenges come at a time when small businesses are being squeezed by rising costs. More than 8 in 10 (81%) voters say that *utility and energy costs going up, eating into small businesses' bottom lines* are a serious issue and 78% say the same about utility and energy price increases driven by AI data centers.

Voters strongly support policy solutions that benefit small business and want elected officials to act on them

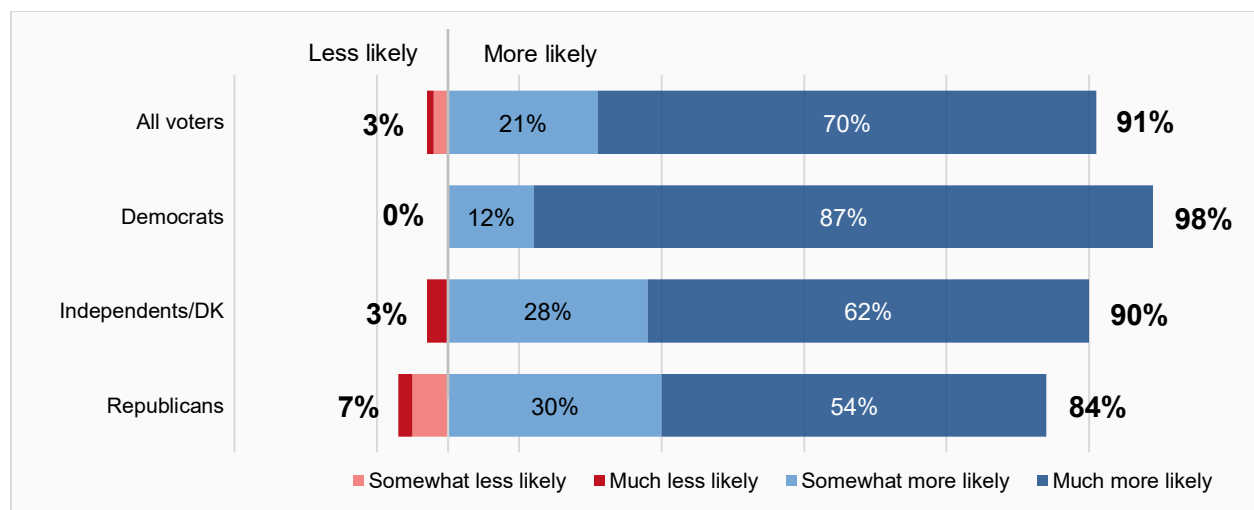
Respondents were asked about a number of issues and whether they would be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for public office who supported each issue or policy. The top small business policy issues they support relate to healthcare costs and taxes.

Healthcare

More than 9 in 10 (91%) voters report they are more likely to vote for a candidate who would support *reducing the cost of healthcare including prescription drugs*, with 77% much more likely. This is the top issue for voters across gender, age, race and education; it's most important, however, to voters over the age of 50 and Latinos. It has extremely strong bipartisan support with 89% of Democrats and 64% of Republicans much more likely to vote for a candidate who supports this issue. It also resonates strongly with independents (73% much more likely to vote for a candidate with this position) and small business owner respondents (75% much more likely).

Similarly, voters are highly supportive of making small business healthcare more affordable. The overwhelming majority (91%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who believes that *small businesses should be able to access affordable healthcare for themselves and their employees*, with 70% being much more likely. Voters are also more likely (87%) to vote for a candidate that supports *rolling back the huge increases in the cost of healthcare for small businesses that use the health insurance marketplace*, with nearly two-thirds (65%) much more likely. Additionally, more than 8 in 10 (82%) voters are more likely to support a candidate who believes that *small business owners should not face medical debt that sends them into bankruptcy or hampers their ability to get loans*, with 56% much more likely. This last statement is strongly supported by Latinos and other voters of color.

Majority of voters across party lines would support candidates who back access to affordable healthcare for small business owners and their employees

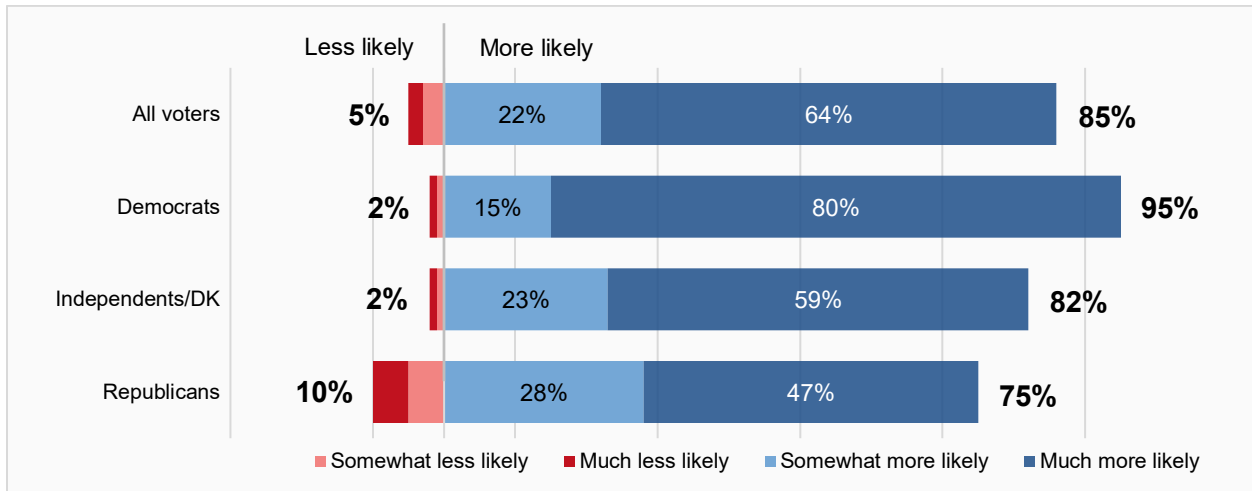


Tax fairness

Tax policies that would level the playing field for small businesses are also very important to voters. The vast majority (85%) of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who thinks that *the government should fix the tax system to benefit small businesses instead of large corporations*, with 64% much more likely to vote for that candidate. Additionally, the overwhelming majority (86%) are more likely to vote for

a candidate who believes that we should *ensure government tax incentives go to Main Street businesses and not to large AI companies building data centers in communities across the country* and 69% are much more likely to vote for a candidate with that position. This statement finds broad support across party lines, and it finds strong support across demographics, with women and Latinos being especially likely to vote for a candidate with this position.

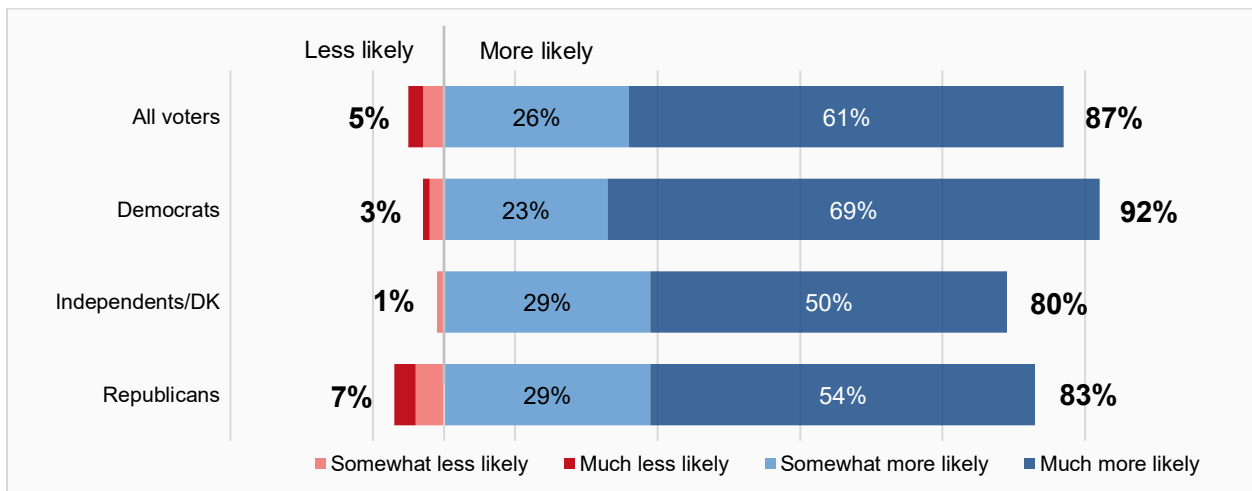
Most voters more likely to support candidates who want to fix the tax system to benefit small businesses over large corporations



Fair competition

Furthermore, voters are highly supportive of other policies that would level the playing field for small businesses. Notably, 87% of respondents are more likely to vote for a candidate that supports *enforcing laws to ensure there is no price discrimination against small businesses*, with about 6 in 10 (61%) much more likely. This statement resonates strongly with women, voters who are 50 and older, non-college voters and Latinos. Nearly three-quarters of voters are more likely to support a candidate who believes that *small businesses should be able to compete with larger corporations on a level playing field by paying the same prices for materials and labor*, with about half (48%) being much more likely to support that candidate.

Voters support leveling the playing field by enforcing laws that prevent price discrimination against small business



Tariffs

Policies that would address the impact of tariffs on small businesses are also supported by the majority of voters. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of voters are more likely to support a candidate with the position that *the government should stop the instability of raising and lowering tariffs, which creates uncertainty for small businesses* and 57% are much more likely to vote for that candidate. More than 6 in 10 (61%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who believes that *the government should reduce tariffs, which raise the costs of everyday goods and hurt small businesses*, with half being much more likely to vote for that candidate. There are partisan differences with Democrats and independents being notably more likely than Republicans to support candidates that would mitigate the impact of tariffs.

Immigration

Additionally, voters are supportive of policies that would address immigration. Two-thirds of voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who believes that *the government should support strong visa programs and other pathways that allow legal immigrants to work for and start small businesses* and 62% are more likely to vote for a candidate who believes that *the government should stop dismantling visa programs and other pathways that allow legal immigrants to work for and start small businesses*. Some partisan differences emerge, with Democrats and independents being more likely to support this than Republicans.

Additional small business policies with strong support

Voters also express strong support for policies aimed at making entrepreneurship more accessible and sustainable. In particular, ensuring access to affordable capital alongside reducing barriers to starting a business are top priorities. Voters also see a need to address rising costs pressures, including access to childcare and spikes in utility bills that make it harder for small businesses to operate and compete.

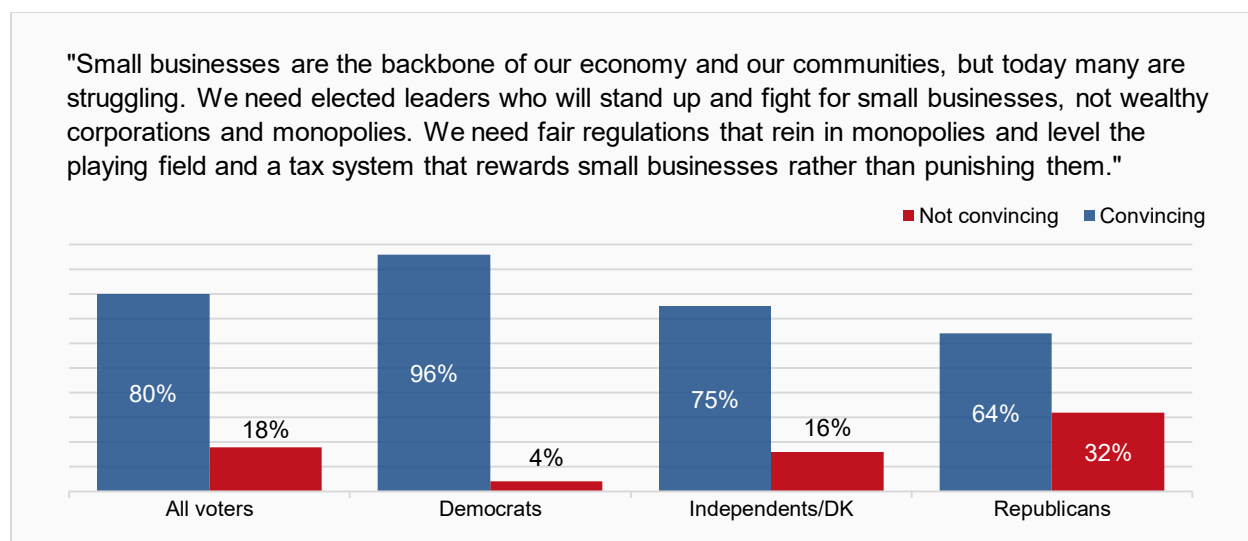
Support for policies that aim to strengthen small business and entrepreneurship

<i>% more likely to vote for a candidate with this position:</i>	<i>Total more likely</i>	<i>Much more likely</i>
The government should ensure small businesses have access to capital that doesn't carry exorbitant interest rates or other unfavorable terms	85%	60%
The government should reduce regulations that inhibit small business from starting and growing	84%	61%
Small businesses and their employees should be able to access affordable childcare and eldercare	84%	60%
We need to stop the spikes in small business utility bills stemming from building new AI data centers that demand huge amounts of power	76%	53%
The government should cut red tape, such as permitting and licensing requirements, to allow more small businesses to start and grow	73%	44%

Voters weigh in further on statements of support for small business

Respondents were asked about a number of statements that have been made about supporting small businesses, and they were asked to rank them in terms of how convincing they are. Among that series of statements on small business issues, the most popular messages highlight the need to level the playing field between small businesses and large corporations, as well as those that address the real-world pressures small businesses face, such as rising costs and affordability.

Statements emphasizing fair competition for small businesses resonates strongly across party lines

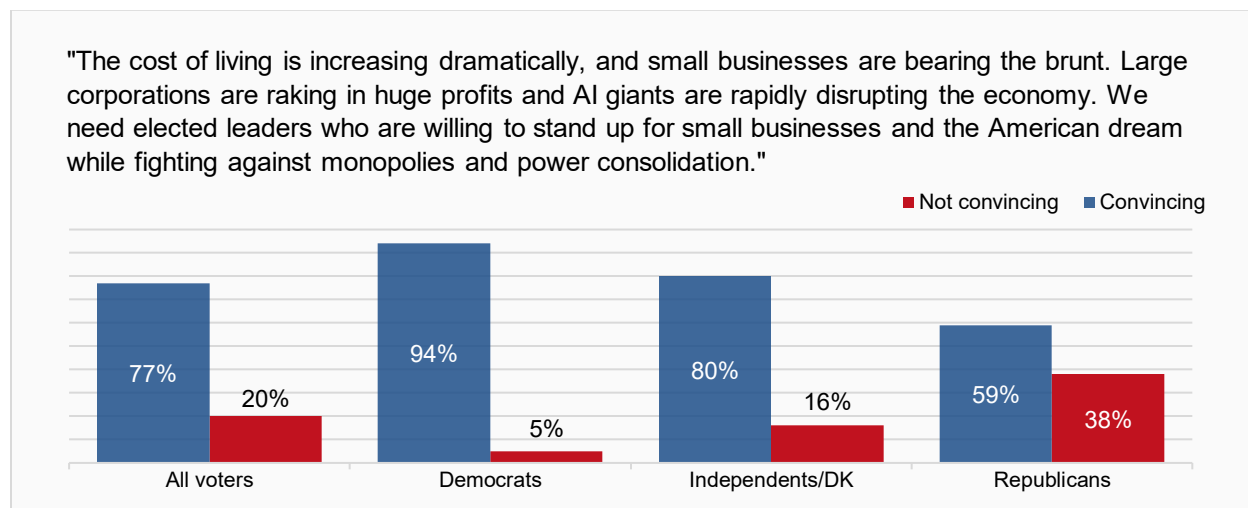


The statement above (55% very convincing, 80% total convincing) centers on elected leaders standing up and fighting for small businesses, not wealthy corporations and monopolies, and advocating for regulations that level the playing field and a tax system that rewards small businesses rather than punishing them.

A statement on tariffs that underscores how constantly changing tariffs can raise costs and create instability for small businesses also performs strongly (48% very convincing, 66% total convincing).* The statement emphasizes that while larger corporations can often absorb these increases, pass them on to consumers, or negotiate exemptions, small businesses operate on thinner margins and have less flexibility to adapt. This makes tariffs an important addition to voter concerns around fairness and competition, particularly among Democrats (77% very convincing) and independents (52% very convincing).

A statement about regulations and cutting red tape (47% very convincing, 79% total convincing) centers on fairness and reducing bureaucratic barriers that disproportionately affect small businesses, while also reinforcing the idea that rules should apply equitably to large corporations.* It resonates across parties, with particularly strong appeal among independents (84% total convincing) and Democrats (83% total convincing), and slightly lower, but still a strong majority support among Republicans (75% total convincing). This suggests that ideas focused on leveling the playing field and addressing structural disadvantages for small businesses resonate broadly regardless of political party.

Voters care about addressing affordability and causes of rising costs for small businesses

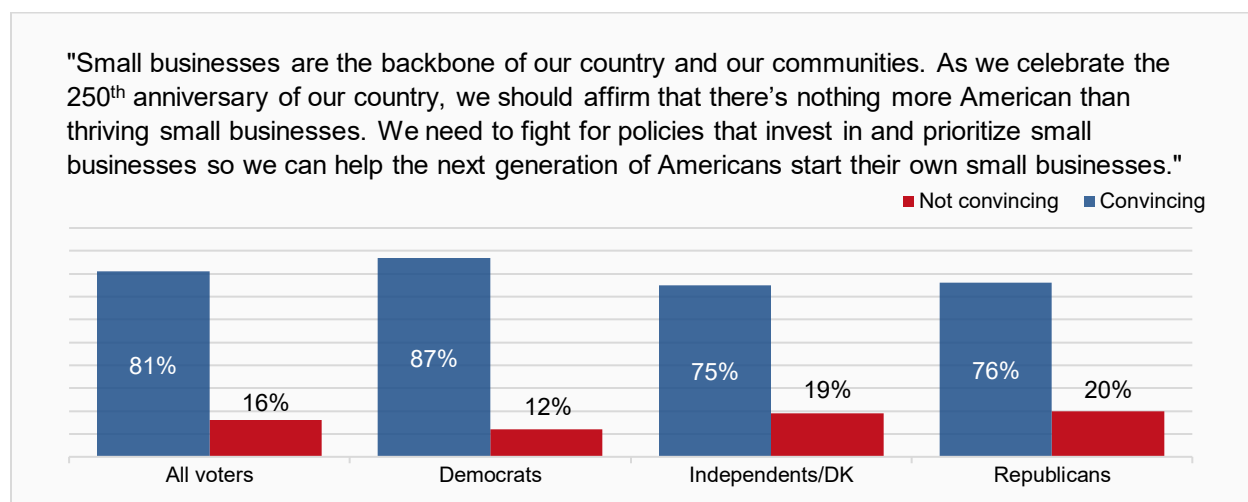


The statement above (55% very convincing, 77% total convincing), about small businesses bearing the brunt of increased cost of living while large corporations make huge profits resonates more strongly with Democrats and independents; however, it still finds support with a majority of Republicans.

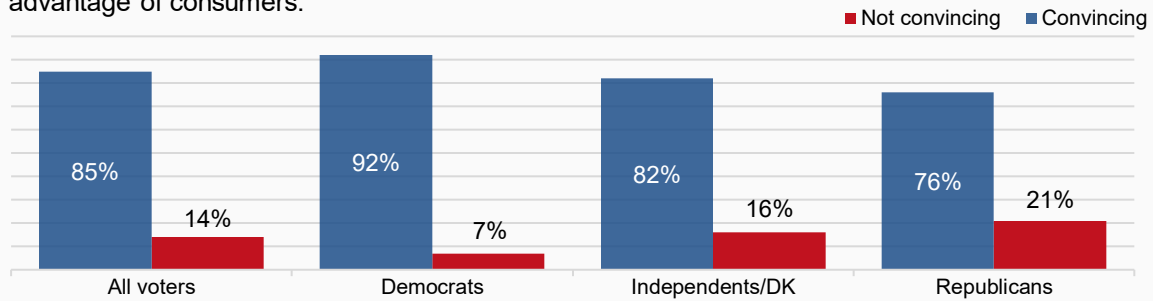
Consistent with voters' concerns about broader affordability and issues of rising costs, a statement on healthcare (52% very convincing, 77% total convincing) highlights how small businesses are striving to provide employee benefits like quality, affordable health coverage while struggling with rising expenses.* It emphasizes that we need to fight to lower the cost of quality, affordable healthcare so small businesses can continue to support employees and communities. It finds especially strong support among Democrats (70% very convincing, 92% total convincing), and more moderate, but still majority support among independents (43% very convincing, 68% total convincing) and Republicans (34% very convincing, 64% total convincing).

Core values also anchor strong statements about small businesses. Arguments using strong language about small businesses as the backbone of American communities and engines of freedom and innovation are strongly supported by independents and Republicans. Statements about patriotism also resonate strongly across party lines.

Core value statements emphasizing freedom and patriotism resonate across party lines



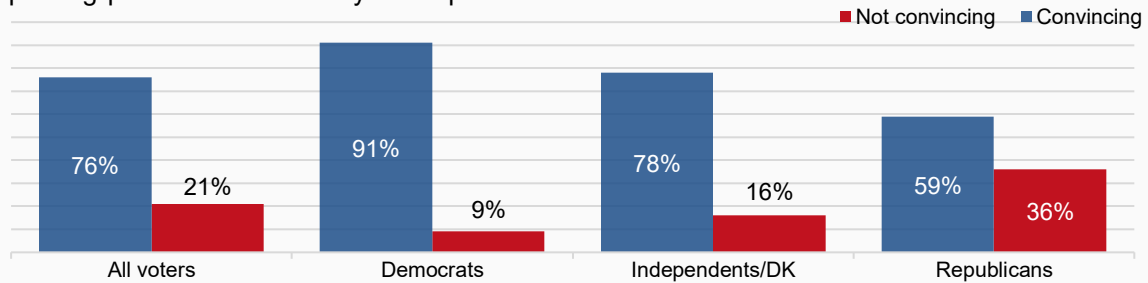
"Small businesses are engines of freedom and innovation. They empower individuals, strengthen local communities, and keep our economy vibrant and competitive. When small businesses thrive, workers and business owners have more freedom, more opportunity, and our communities are less reliant on monopolies and large corporations that price-gouge and take advantage of consumers."



The statement below (76% convincing, 49% very convincing) emphasizing the value of entrepreneurship and concerns about a system that favors monopolies over small business finds majority support across party lines. It resonates especially strongly with Democrats and independents, while still gaining support from more than half of Republicans.

A statement on the American Dream of entrepreneurship and opportunity also finds majority support

"Many Americans dream of starting a small business, but our system favors wealthy corporations and monopolies instead. Owning a small business empowers individuals and communities, building wealth and supporting local economies. Elected leaders should support those who want to start small businesses by leveling the playing field, making capital accessible to startups, and passing policies that allow anyone to pursue the American Dream."



Many voter households connected to small business

Many voters in our survey report connections to small businesses. About one-third (34%) say they or someone in their household is a current or retired entrepreneur. Similarly, 34% of respondents say they or someone in their household is a current or retired small business employee. Because these groups overlap, 48% of voters fall into at least one of these two categories. While a plurality of voters say they aren't interested in starting a small business, 38% say they are, and another 16% already own one.

Voters are aligned in their views of which businesses make up Main Streets across America. A majority agree that both businesses with under 10 employees (52%) and between 10 to 25 employees (61%) are small businesses. Most voters think that businesses with more than 50 employees aren't small businesses. They also are most likely to think about food and beverage establishments (37%), locally owned or family-run shops (37%) and local retail and specialty stores (33%) when they think about small businesses.

Conclusion

This poll of likely voters nationwide shows overwhelming bipartisan support for America’s small businesses. Voters believe that the success of small businesses benefits their families and the economy far more than the success of large corporations, and they deeply value the local small businesses in their communities. As most voters think that things are getting worse for small businesses, they cite healthcare costs and unfair competition from large corporations as some of the top challenges facing small businesses.

Therefore, it’s not surprising that they’re more likely to vote for candidates for public office that support pro-small business policies, with especially strong support for candidates that would address healthcare access, affordability, fair competition and tax equity. Voters are receptive to ideas that highlight the need to level the playing field between small businesses and large corporations, and connect small businesses to values like freedom, patriotism and opportunity. Given the broad support for small businesses in the population, elected officials would do well to highlight their support of Main Street and take positions that would benefit our nation’s job creators.

Methodology

This poll reflects a survey of 1,000 likely 2026 general election voters nationwide. The poll was designed and administered by Lake Research Partners, and was conducted between February 23 – March 2, 2026, by live telephone and text-to-online interviews in English and Spanish.

The sample was weighted by gender, age, region, race and political affiliation to reflect the demographic composition of likely midterm voters. Where there were slight differences between our survey sample and the expected voting population, data were weighted accordingly. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence level. It is larger for subgroups and split-sampled questions.

For questions about this report or to request additional information, please contact us at research@smallbusinessmajority.org.

The toplines for this poll are available on our website at <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/american-voters-want-elected-officials-to-support-small-business>

¹ “2025 Small Business Profile: United States.” U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. 2025. https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/United_States_2025-State-Profile.pdf

* Read the full statement in the survey toplines: <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/american-voters-want-elected-officials-to-support-small-business>