



## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

# National Post-Election 2022

November 10, 2022

### TOP TAKEAWAYS

- Inflation and crime are among the top factors participants say, unaided, that motivated their vote choice in the midterm elections.
- Government regulations and government spending are issues removed from everyday consideration, and participants have little to say about these issues.
- Immigration is a top concern among Republicans, who see it as contributing to crime, but it is less of an issue for Independent voters.

### THE BIGGEST ISSUES

**Issue 1:** Inflation continues to be top of mind for voters—both Republican and Independent—and it was a key motivating factor for both their decision to vote and their choice of candidate.

**Issue 2:** Crime was also a key electoral motivator for several voters. Several participants had been recent victims of crime, but concern wasn't just about local crime; several participants also say they are concerned about regional or national crime as well.

**Issue 3:** Many of the participants make a connection between immigration and crime and view the situation at the southern border as problematic, although Independent voters are less likely than Republicans to view immigration through those lenses.

## WHAT DID PARTICIPANTS THINK?

**Inflation, including higher energy costs, is a major issue for participants and is a motivating factor behind their vote choices.**

- *"This inflation thing...it's been a lot of crime and this whole thing with the border."*
- *"The main issue is the fact of raising prices. Rent going higher. Gas going higher. That's a big issue, the economy. It just doesn't seem like it's back to normal...food's even going higher. And I think it needs to be addressed."*
- Participants say that dependence on foreign sources of energy is driving up the cost of energy for Americans and that we should get back to energy independence.
- *"If we were energy independent, I would think it was cheaper. But because [of] shutting down pipelines and all this weird stuff, where we have to depend on other people now and have them to give us these higher prices."*

**While few participants have thoughts about government regulation and spending, those who do tend to see both as problematic.**

- Some participants acknowledge that some regulation is necessary, but the regulatory environment is out of control.
- *"I always think of it as a big government. Too much government, too many regulations, too many rules."*
- Participants tend to agree that regulations should be limited to those necessary and they should be set to expire.
- *"Some are helpful, some aren't. I definitely think they should be voted in. I don't think you can just make a regulation and it goes into effect. I think it's good that...a committee reviews, like the House or Senate review them. I do think they should expire, though."*
- Participants say that constantly raising the debt ceiling decreases America's credit worthiness and that any negotiation of an increase in the debt ceiling must include spending cuts and other program reforms.
- *"When we go to buy a parcel of land, we're authorized to spend up to a certain amount. When we get there, our first thought isn't, 'Gee how can we raise even more?' Say you have a credit card that you've maxed out. If you go to the credit card company and say, 'Raise my limit,' they're going to look and go, 'No, you're not a good risk anymore.'"*

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- *"What they need to do is just look and say, 'Hey this is what we want to spend but can't afford it right now.' And they just have to really start looking and say, 'What can we do with that? What can we postpone? What can we reshift?'"*
- *"Maybe instead of trying to raise it [the debt ceiling], they can see what they can cut back on. Like, unnecessary programs that they spend a lot of money on, or like giving money away to a lot of other countries...or supplying just people in this country who probably don't really qualify for, but they'll give it to 'em anyway..."*

### **Crime is a top concern for many voters, and while immigration is less of a concern for Independent voters, they still see the situation at the southern border as problematic.**

- Some participants mention, unaided, that crime is a top factor for them in making vote choices.
- Several participants say that they have recently been the victim of a crime, and one even says that she moved out of a major city in part to escape crime.
- Among the leading contributors to crime rates, participants mentioned inflation, soft-on-crime policies, moral failure (fatherless homes), immigration, and drugs.
- In addition, one Independent voter said that illegal immigration is ***"a problem causing other economic issues."***
- When asked to describe the situation at the southern border, participants said it was: ***"uncontrollable," "overflowing and excessive," "frustrating," and an "annoyance."***

### **Independent voters say that Governor Ron DeSantis has a broad appeal because he is a "more polished" version of Trump—good on policy and on personality.**

- *"I think they look to him as a Trump alternative...he has similar policies, a lot of similar thoughts to Trump, but he does it, to me, in a much more refined way...When they voted Trump in, they liked his message. I think what kind of did him in was people were tired of him, basically, any time something didn't go his way, pitch a fit. Where I think DeSantis does that, but again, in a more polished, a more refined way."*
- *"When anyone decides to move to Florida, you're making a decision, very personal, 'Hey, I want more independence, more of driving whatever happens in my life. That's the kind of model I feel of Florida...Voters that are Latino or Latina, they're also seeing DeSantis is following policies that let me control my own destiny."*
- *"I meet people everywhere, minorities, that support DeSantis."*