



MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: American Edge Project (AEP)
RE: Voters Want the New Congress and Administration to Focus on Issues that Impact Economic Security, Health Care, and Stability at Home, Not Further Regulation of U.S. Tech Industry and AI
DATE: January 2025

New Poll: About 9-in-10 Voters Prioritize Economic and National Security Issues

As the new Administration and 119th Congress get to work, a new poll finds that nationwide voters want elected officials to prioritize national security and pressing pocketbook issues – like the cost of living, jobs, and Social Security – instead of pursuing regulatory policies that stifle innovation in the U.S. tech industry and in artificial intelligence (AI) technology, according to new polling from the American Edge Project (AEP).

Voters continue to worry about technological threats from foreign adversaries like China and see U.S. tech as part of the solution to their national security concerns. They also want policymakers to take steps to ensure the U.S. remains a global tech leader – for example, by encouraging U.S. tech innovations and open-source AI models.

Doug Kelly, AEP CEO said, “This poll makes it clear: voters want leaders who put America first by strengthening our economy, protecting national security, and keeping us ahead of adversaries like China. That’s why American tech innovation, especially in AI, is so important: it drives prosperity, defends our freedom, and ensures America stays on top. To secure our leadership, policymakers must partner with the private sector and champion open- and closed-source AI development, while avoiding misguided regulations that risk weakening us and handing the future to authoritarian regimes.”

This survey, conducted by Mercury Analytics, was fielded between December 2 and December 9, 2024, and surveyed 1,508 registered voters nationwide. It is a continuation of research conducted in the lead up to the election, between October 3 and 10, 2024, in which Mercury Analytics surveyed 1,504 likely voters.

Key findings of this research include:

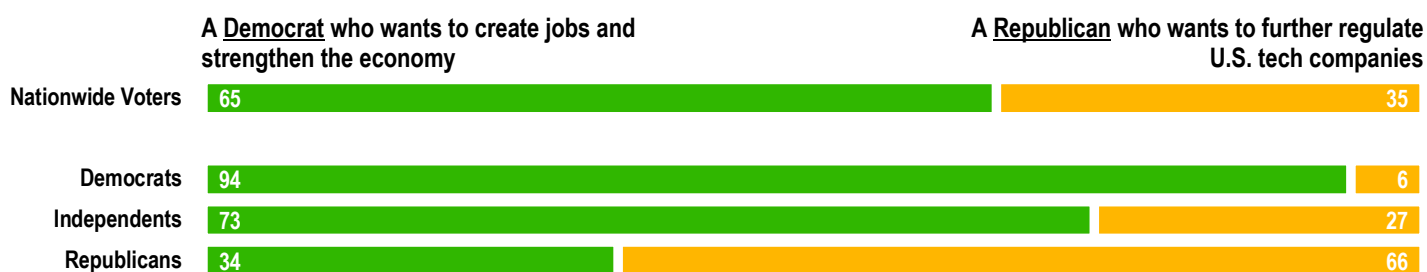
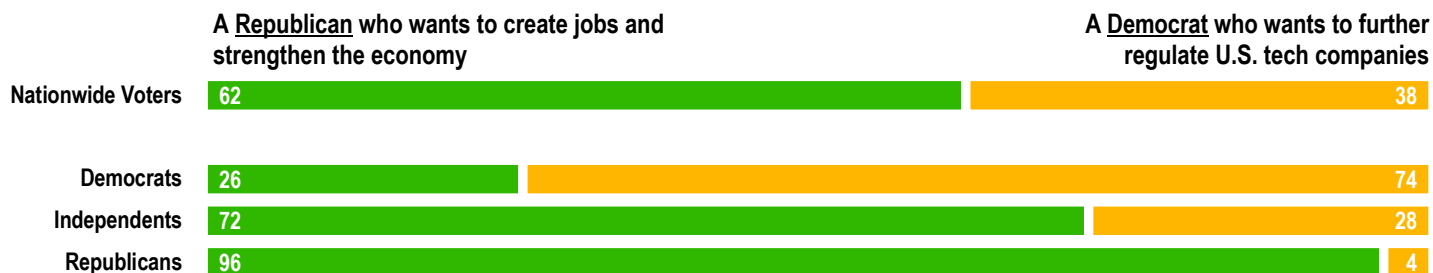
- Policymakers pushing tech and AI regulation are pursuing low priority issues. Regulating U.S. tech companies and AI are relatively low priorities. Rather, across party lines, voters want elected officials to focus on key economic, health care and national security issues.

Question: For each issue, please indicate how much of a priority it is for you that the government address that issue.

Table with 5 columns: Issue, Major + Top Priority (percentage), Dem Voters, Ind Voters, GOP Voters. Rows include Inflation & cost of living, Jobs & the economy, Medicare & Social Security, Health care, National security, Reg. of artificial intelligence, and Reg. of US tech companies.

- Prioritizing key pocketbook issues over far-reaching tech regulation can help bolster political support.** Republicans, Democrats, and Independents reward leaders who prioritize key issues such as creating jobs and strengthening the economy over further regulating American tech companies.

*Question: If there was a Congressional election tomorrow, which candidate would you be more likely to support?*



- Voters continue to worry about the security implications of foreign technology surpassing American tech.** Nationwide, the vast majority of voters are worried about technological threats from foreign adversaries. Specifically, voters fear cyberattacks on U.S. infrastructure and falling behind countries like China on tech innovations (e.g., advancements in AI).

*Question: Thinking about the future of America, how worried are you, if at all, about each of the following?*



- To better protect U.S. national security, voters want their elected leaders to partner with and utilize U.S. tech companies.** The vast majority of nationwide voters agree that U.S. tech companies are central to U.S. cyber defense capabilities and want to see the government partner with them on issues related to national defense.

*Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?*

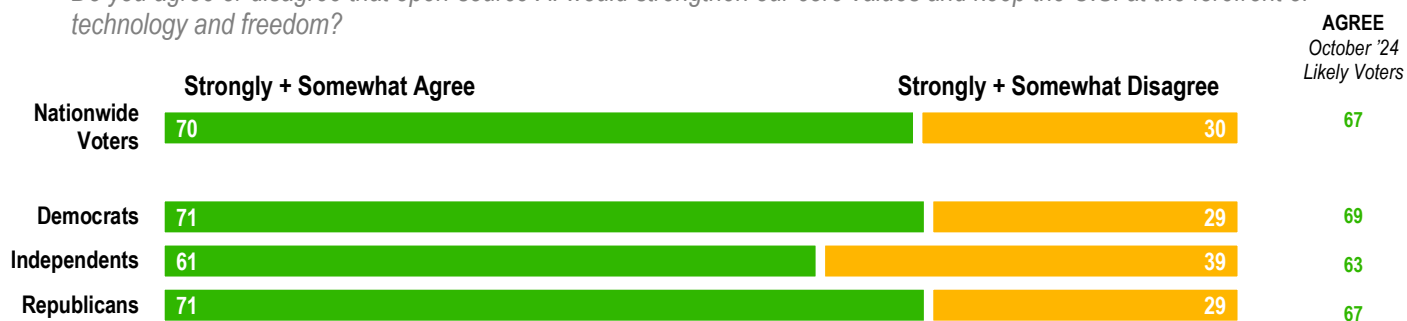
*American tech companies are central to U.S. cyber defense capabilities. We are fortunate to have the most innovative tech companies in the world, and it is essential that the government fully partners with American tech companies to properly protect our national defense.*



- **Voters increasingly see open-source AI as a way to strengthen our core values and keep the U.S. at the forefront of technology and freedom.** Nationwide, over two-thirds of voters agree that open-source AI would strengthen our core values – like free speech, an open internet, and an open society – while also ensuring the U.S. remains a global tech leader.

*Question: Many of us value principles like free speech, an open internet, and an open society, all of which have contributed to making the U.S. strong and resilient. In the same spirit, open-source AI makes all of its computer code, operating rules, and data available for everyone to use and improve upon.*

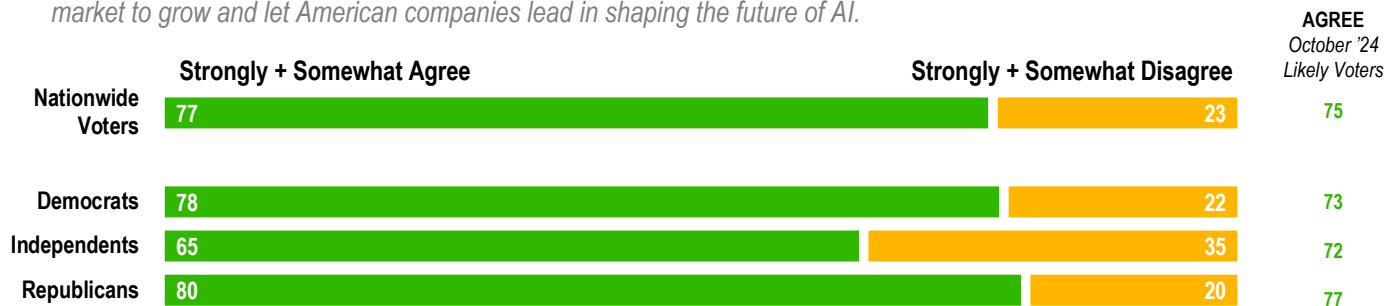
*Do you agree or disagree that open-source AI would strengthen our core values and keep the U.S. at the forefront of technology and freedom?*



- **Voters want to encourage both open- and closed-source AI models, so that the U.S. can be a global leader in shaping the future of AI.** To ensure the U.S. remains a global leader on AI, voters support both open- and closed-source AI models. They also oppose heavy-handed regulations that would prevent maximum innovation and security.

*Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?*

*To remain the global tech leader, the U.S. should encourage both open- and closed-source AI development to ensure maximum innovation and security. By avoiding heavy-handed regulation at this early stage of development, we allow the market to grow and let American companies lead in shaping the future of AI.*



**The bottom line:** Voters want to see their elected leaders address the priorities that matter to them – issues like the economy, health care, and national security. They see U.S. tech as a central part of the solution to their national security concerns. Misguided policies that further regulate U.S. tech innovations, such as open-source AI, could have negative unintended consequences that voters are worried about, including greater threats to national security and the U.S. losing its competitive edge to China.

**Additional Methodology Notes**

Mercury Analytics, on behalf of American Edge Project, conducted two surveys, one between October 3 and October 10, 2024, and another between December 2 and December 9.

October Survey: A sample of 1,504 likely voters nationwide were interviewed online. The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval level is +/- 2.5%. The margin of error on subsamples is greater.

December Survey: A sample of 1,508 registered voters nationwide were interviewed online. The margin of error at the 95% confidence interval level is +/- 2.5%. The margin of error on subsamples is greater.

**About American Edge Project**

The American Edge Project is a coalition dedicated to the proposition that American innovators are an essential part of U.S. economic health, national security, and individual freedoms.

For more information, visit <https://americanedgeproject.org/>