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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

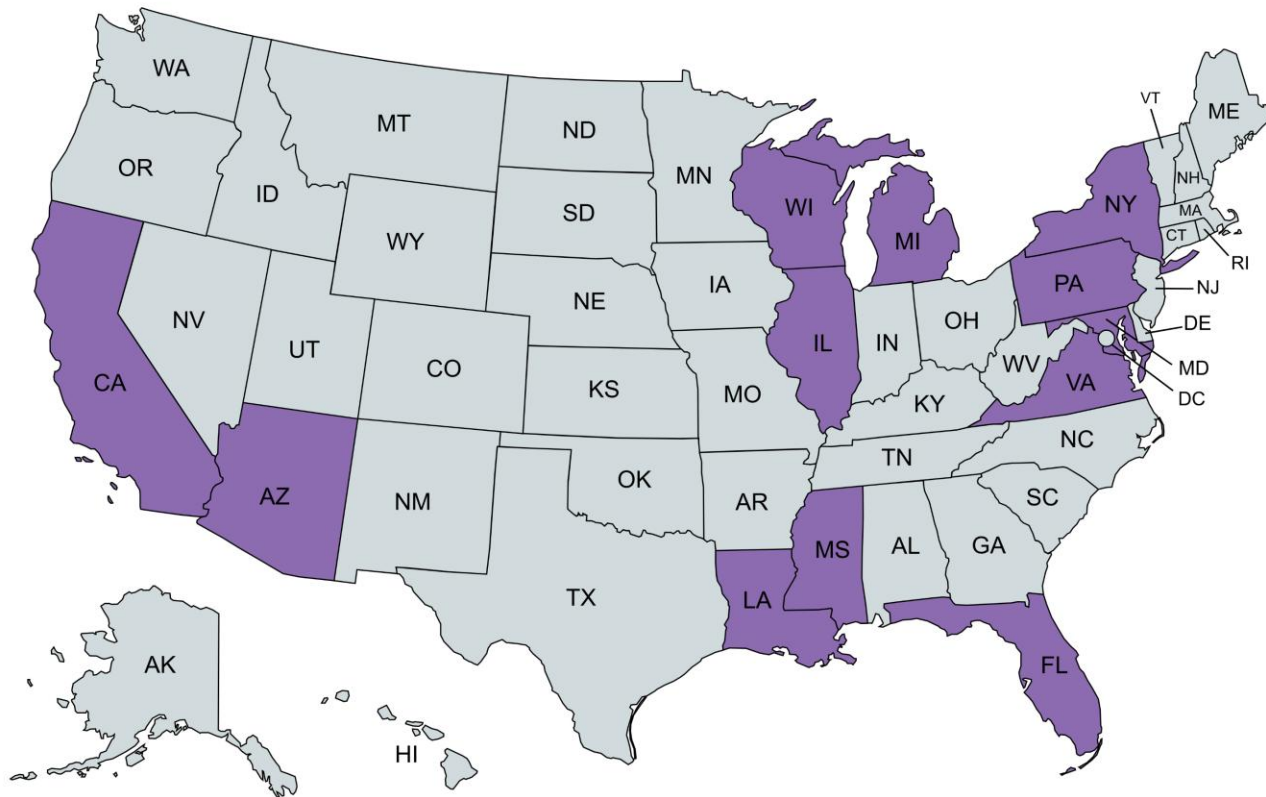
Thursday, October 9, 2025

Health, Wellness, and MAHA



Methodology

On September 30, 2025, GBAO conducted three online focus groups with mothers from Florida, young women, and young men, including a mix across partisanship, education, and race.



- ❖ Group 1: Women from Florida with kids under 10 years old
- ❖ Group 2: Young men (24-37 years old)
- ❖ Group 3: Young women (21-34 years old) with no kids

Key Takeaways

- Health care in the U.S. is defined largely by its expense and complexity, more than by the standard of our medical care
- Yet most are searching online for alternative answers to their health questions and challenges
- Making America healthy is an admirable and wanted goal
- MAHA is defined by its perceived approach on food, vaccines, and concerns about Tylenol
- Many lament MAHA is “political” and so strive to be “in the middle”
- Rolling back vaccines and cutting medical research are not the solutions MAHA–curious are looking for

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Views On Health Care Are Pessimistic, Centering On Costs

Moderator: Fill in the blank again for me. Health care in this country is [BLANK]

"It's very expensive. If I get an injury, the first thing I'm thinking is do not call me the ambulance. I don't got money to pay for that, so it's very expensive." – MD man, independent lean Democrat

"Immoderate because I feel like it's excessive. You have these different types of insurance, you have the dental, the health, you have long-term disability, and things like that. I feel like it should be all one thing and not just broken up. And those extra fees apply." – MS woman, weak Democrat

"I feel like it's unfair. It's not accessible to everybody...you have to wait two or three months to be seen." – FL woman, independent

"The tiered insurance system would be my, I guess, scapegoat or one of the root causes for the most part. It determines how much you pay at the hospital, it determines how much you pay for your prescriptions. It determines how much you pay before or after the fact. It all comes down to what tier that you're in." – IL man, weak Democrat

"It's just not good. It's just not good compared to other places. From what I've heard, what I've researched a little bit, it's really just inaccessible." – FL woman, independent

"I'm currently still on my parents' health insurance. I'm turning 22 next month, but I guess I have until 26 to figure my own health insurance out....I think it just is intimidating and scary to think about when I have to start planning my own insurance." – LA woman, weak Democrat

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Many Feel Doctors And Medical Professional Largely Do A Good Job

"From a level of care standpoint, I don't really have a complaint personally. I've been going to the same doctor for quite some time. I'm actually quite happy with the care. It is the associated cost of insurance related around that." – VA man, weak Republican

"The doctors are usually very well here. It's just the coverage and sometimes you'll get a denial and you have to go back for another doctor's visit just to get the right paperwork. Or they deem it unnecessary and it's actually very necessary. You're trying to take care of your health and be proactive. So, I think it's a fight with the insurance companies, not so much the doctors." – FL woman, independent

"It can take forever to actually get an appointment, even if they have the type of doctor that you need to see, if it's a specialist." – CA woman, independent lean Democrat

"I think we have some of the best doctors and specialists particularly. I'm not talking about sort of easy type of surgeries, but things that are just very rare and sort of that there aren't really many specialists in the world that can do. I mean, we have a great supply right here in the country. We don't really have to go anywhere for anything. That's not something other countries can sort of say." – CA man, weak Republican



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That Said, Most Are Searching Online For Alternative Answers To Their Health Questions And Challenges

"My algorithm just shows these random trainers, these random fitness buffs, gurus, and stuff of that nature that has these type of stretches for this type of place, this type of food, do this, do this, that type of thing. Now, I randomly just pull up Instagram, it's littered with all of that." – AZ man, weak Democrat

"I follow a few spiritual creators that talk about balancing your body and your mind, your spirit. And also me, personally, I deal with ADHD and bipolar disorder, so I am in groups like that. I try to follow pages that center around that, that try to help you because, personally, I'm not on any medication, so I try to do what I can do so I don't have to be on medication; **herbs and teas, just little things like that.**" – FL woman, independent

"My wife had kidney stones a whole bunch during this pregnancy...**A content creator, his name is Dr. Sebi, but he's on YouTube.** He's a holistic guy. And there's this plant [he talked about], it's called the chanca piedra plant, and it breaks up kidney stones almost to dust. It's something that I read about." – MI man, independent

"I use a lot of Instagram and TikTok outside of Google. I feel like Google... anybody can make a website and just answer, whereas **the people that I follow on Instagram and TikTok are holistic doctors and stuff like that,** because I'm also into the trying to heal things naturally, staying away from medication. I don't even take Tylenol, really." – FL woman, independent

"I'm diagnosed with anxiety, so I follow a lot of how to naturally control it, so that's the type of stuff that I follow or I read. Or I'll Google certain types of teas to help calm, I drink chamomile tea. I'm **prescribed medication, but I prefer not to take it, so I try to control it in natural ways.**" – FL woman, independent

"I think I get a lot of it from social media, **probably like TikTok,** when I'm scrolling. Or sometimes, I follow a lot of news sources on Instagram, so sometimes I'll see an announcement about a study that was done." – LA woman, weak Democrat

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Most Say They Cross-Reference Online Health Information, And Involve Their Doctors

"I question all of it because all of them are human the same way that we are. Even a doctor that can have 17 years of experience of doing a specific brain surgery, he's still human at the end of the day. Everything's going to be different. No rule is absolute. Regardless, I try to cross-reference any and everything with something else of that nature." – AZ man, weak Democrat

"I also get a lot of my health information from social media, which will lead me to look it up on Google and then if I'm kind of confused with my answers, because sometimes you get yeses and nos back to back and then you're wondering which one's correct. So then I'll take it to my doctor and I'll be like, 'What do you think?'" – PA woman, weak Democrat

"If I've got heartburn or something, I tell my doctor about it. He'll give me his suggestions, and I'll say, 'Hey, I saw so-and-so works with this, and I saw this study.' I'll never bring up anything that doesn't have some sort of medical backing, because it's just a waste of time. But yeah, for supplements, I've definitely brought those up to be like, 'Hey, what do you think? Is this legit? Would this work, this thing?'" – IL man, weak Democrat

"I usually follow holistic accounts on TikTok and creators. And if I have a question, I will reference ChatGPT...I will usually type in their name. I'll ask it for their credentials, what's their licensing, anything on their record, anything like that. I will use ChatGPT just to learn a little bit more about the person. – FL woman, weak Democrat

"I was seeing a lot online that certain supplements help with [ADHD], so one of them is L-theanine and I did try myself, saw some improvements and then I asked my doctor about it, what she thought about it and she said that it is something that is kind of known to help it, but of course it doesn't always work as effectively as actual medication." – PA woman, weak Democrat

"I was watching a lot of weight loss videos and surgery videos, so I took it to my doctor and they told me I should do what I want to do. It's a good decision." – NY woman, independent

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Most Feel America Is Less Healthy Than It Used To Be, Mostly Because Of Processed Food

Moderator: Would you say Americans are more healthy or less healthy now than 10 or 20 years ago?

"People's diets are worse, but **what actually goes into our food is that much worse**. There's a clear difference between what's allowed in our food versus around the world, different countries that they have around not letting certain things into there." – VA man, weak Republican

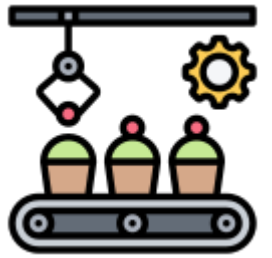
"I don't feel food is real food anymore. A lot of it is, even in fruits and vegetables, **there's so much pesticides** that I don't think was in there 10 years ago, meats, all that. Also, people who can't afford to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, they rely on a lot of rice or junk food that's cheaper but filling at least." – FL woman, weak Democrat

"A lot of stuff is processed. **We have a major obesity problem**....People were more in shape and worried about their weight years ago and didn't eat too much. Everything has changed, the food has changed, everything has sugar... **if you cough, you gain weight**." – NY woman, independent

"I think that they changed the food. It's not natural. Like the fruits, they got pesticides on it. They add all these additives." – FL woman, weak Republican

"There are some things that have improved, but across the board, **chronic issues** or health, lifestyle issues, like diabetes, things like that, **have been... on the rise**." – WI woman, independent lean Republican

"We don't get enough sunlight and fresh air and things that on top of all the bad food that we eat too. So that has something to do with it, for sure." – PA woman, weak Democrat



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"MAHA" Is Mostly, But Not Universally, Known, And Largely Defined By Perceptions Around Food, Vaccines, And Tylenol

Moderator: What comes to mind when I say "MAHA?"

"There's a lot of talk about autism and what's in our foods potentially causing that....And so me having four kids, their nutrition, their healthy wellbeing is very important to me. So if there's one thing that I connect with that MAHA movement, it would be the focus on our children and youth in the country." – VA man, weak Republican

"I think it's a plan to phase out petroleum-based dyes from our food. **Dyes like red 40.** The whole Make America Healthy Again is this whole plan to stop these negative outcomes that these dyes are causing in our diet and our health." – MD man, independent lean Democrat

"Eliminating all the additives and dyes in the food and less processed food." – FL woman, weak Republican

"The declaration that there is a linkage between Tylenol taken during pregnancy and autism, that's one example of a declaration that has been made as a part of MAHA." – WI woman, lean Republican



"[MAHA has] been raising awareness in some of the chemicals in the foods that we eat, like Fruit Loops having that **red dye**, unlike other countries over in Europe that have gotten rid of that dye." – FL man, independent lean Democrat

"I think I saw that they were trying to get rid of certain dyes, I think it was red 40, some of the **yellow**s, things like that in our food." – PA woman, weak Democrat

"I know [RFK] was trying to get a campaign to I guess make everything more healthier, try to cut out all of those pesticides and herbicides too that's in the vegetables and produce." – MS woman, weak Democrat

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Several Worry MAHA Is “Too Political,” Citing Ties To Trump And MAGA

“Some of this **feels very political**. Some of this does not seem very factually scientific based....People have noted the recent stuff about Tylenol and the link to different diseases. It does feel a little bit to push a political agenda to an extent, and I think that's where it gets blurred to me between true scientific or is there different agendas at play here.” – VA man, weak Republican

“If it is something with the government, it's just really not that trustworthy. So, I just feel like if it's anything, if you're trying to do better for you, for your kids, all right, whatever, but if there's a political stance to it, then I'm just not really for it.” – FL woman, independent

“It's a political movement because it's associated and tied to a politician... **it's a play off of Make America Great again, which is notoriously a political thing** and it's made up by somebody who is a politician.” – PA woman, weak Republican

“Anything with ‘Make America,’ we know usually what that represents and what that has to do with, so it's based on that, unfortunately.” – FL woman, independent

“**MAGA and MAHA, they kind of the same with just different acronyms**. So I think it's 50/50... the anti-vaxxers, they could be like, ‘hey, I don't want this in my body.’ **They don't trust the government** and things like that. So I feel like **that's more on the political side**” – MS woman, weak Democrat

“I try not to focus on the political because times right now are very divided, but as long as we're trying to do better, and if anything that's out there that can help us get better, I'm all for it.” – FL woman, independent



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Some Strive To Be “In The Middle” On MAHA-Related Issues, Even If That Is Hard To Define

“I think there's no question by anybody in the medical community that Tylenol is not good for pregnant women...The question becomes, **what is worse for you?** A very high fever, or taking Tylenol? And that I think, there is no proof that, and RFK pretty much admitted to that, there's really no proof.” – CA man, weak Republican

“Honestly, I don't know. I'm independent, basically whatever rings to my ear and whatever I feel best. I honestly could not tell you....I **don't really like to touch that subject.**” – FL woman, independent

“You could be healthy and make all those same choices and want those things **without labeling yourself as that...** I feel like it is a certain type of person who would really label themselves as that.” – PA woman, weak Democrat

“It was announced that Tylenol may be a cause of autism when pregnant women take a pill or two while they're carrying their baby to term....I **don't want to get caught up in the hysteria of it, but at the same time, I'm just going 'okay, I need to take a step back and step out of the looking glass' so to speak, and then just swivel my head on straight so I can keep it going and moving forward.**” – FL man, independent lean Democrat

“But I also know that some people have concerns about [fluoride] and I'm **not really sure how to feel about it myself.** I've seen a lot of fluoride-free toothpaste recently, for example.” – CA woman, independent lean Democrat

“Most people are either anti-vax or are, yes, [get] all the vaccinations because we'll get herd immunity from that, **instead of [becoming] aware of the pros and cons of it and [making] their own educated decision about it.**” – PA woman, weak Republican



Vaccines Are Seen As Far More Good Than Bad, Although Most Support Parental Autonomy

"They're creating a bit of, I would say, hesitancy towards vaccines. I don't think they've ever said, 'don't get vaccinated,' but they're spreading them out. I think they have some interesting points on certain vaccines maybe, particularly Hep B....So they're creating some good conversations around that, but I think part of it is **creating a little bit more hesitancy than they should probably be doing.**" – CA man, weak Republican

"When I hear Make America Healthy Again, I also think about what they're saying about vaccines at the moment. And I **know that some vaccines are created to make America healthy**, to diminish chicken pox, and measles, and polio, and things like that." – FL woman, independent

"I'm a bit worried that if there's overall lack of societal trust, if **we get messaging coming out saying vaccines across the board aren't safe**, that margin of people who will just not take any vaccines altogether or just not vaccinate their children [will increase]; we're **going to lose some degree of our herd immunity.**" – PA woman, weak Republican

"Parents should decide if their kids should have it or not, and then I think that the parents should give it to them." – FL woman, weak Republican

"I do think **everybody should have a choice on what to put in their body.** I'm big on that. What you want to put in your body is your choice and for your child, as well. And maybe vaccines should be spread out, but I **don't know if leaning in that way not to do them at all is right either.**" – FL woman, independent



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Young Women Cite Online Skepticism About Birth Control

Moderator: What kind of health or wellness content comes up about birth control without you searching for it?

"I know this herb called Vitex. You take it every day. It's something like a birth control. It don't have those harsh ingredients in there." – MS woman, weak Democrat

"I've seen that birth control, the pill, can lead to cancer. I saw that in a post and I'm on the pill... I think it's encouraged me to want to go off of the pill sooner and maybe go more towards an IUD." – LA woman, weak Democrat

"I've read that taking birth control for prolonged periods can cause blood clots, but I haven't really seen anything good about taking birth control long term." – FL woman, independent

"I know I have migraines every time I switch my birth control, my doctor always tell me, 'Hey, you know you're at high risk to have a stroke since you get migraines.'" – MS woman, weak Democrat



"I've heard mixed reviews about birth control. I mean, I'm personally, I'm on birth control, and I have an IUD, and it's not hormonal, but I deal with lots of stuff when it comes to that, especially during the time of the month. **It's not good for your body.**" – FL woman, independent

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Few See Pollution Or Clean Air And Water As A MAHA Priority

Moderator: How would you say the MAHA movement feels about pollution, like in our air and water?



"I just find it a little bit touch and go with what he wants to do in terms of attending to pollution....[RFK] took his family to go walking in and swimming in a creek. And it was some of the dirtiest water ever that no one would ever touch in Washington, D.C. So I just think, 'okay, is there really a leg to stand on when it comes to all of this pollution?'" – FL man, independent lean Democrat

"When I hear about anything that's announced by that group, I kind of tend to ignore it...I think something happened with climate change, I think some deal was reversed a while ago. I don't know how accurate that is, but I know that they're not the most progressive with trying to help with climate change." – LA woman, weak Democrat

"You can't really have any equal care and attention given to pollution and given to environmental concerns when you're not willing to invest in renewable energy and you're part of that system that doesn't allow it...without having those renewables in place and being pushed by the other arms of the government, it's going to be a toothless endeavor no matter what he says." – IL man, weak Democrat

"I haven't heard them speak of any of that, actually, so I'm not sure. I'm actually surprised to hear it coming from this group." – FL woman, weak Democrat



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Neither Party's Position On Health And Wellness Is Particularly Understood

Moderator: What do you think [Democrats/Republicans] stand for when it comes to health and wellness?

"I had a question because **wasn't RFK on the side of Donald Trump** and now if he's not?...I was just confused on what the deal is between them. Are they on the same side or are they not on the same side?" – MI man, independent

"[Democrats are] just giving the power to, I guess the people more so, letting them decide their own **health and wellness**, which sometimes it's hard to make a decision if everything in front of you is bad. So it doesn't matter what you decide, it's all going to be kind of a crappy deal." – PA woman, weak Democrat

"I think part of the reason RFK is no longer a Democrat is because they didn't let him talk about these kinds of things, or just **health and wellness because it doesn't really meet their... specific approach**. And if you're not kind of in their silo, regardless of whether you're RFK, Tulsi Gabbard, the other guy from Minnesota, I think that was running as a Democrat, if you don't align with them they try to push you out of the party." – CA man, weak Republican

"Oh, I think they like **whatever the Republicans want, [the Democrats] don't want**, so it's just no win with them. They don't stand for nothing to me." – FL woman, independent

"I'm not too familiar [with Republicans' position on health], but I guess...it's like everyone for themselves." – LA woman, weak Democrat



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Although Some Articulate The Democratic Position As “Help Their Own Safety,” “Transgender Surgeries,” Or “Access To Abortion”

“There is stuff that the Democrats do talk about with respect to health and wellness. It's probably more of the far left, not really maybe the center left. But I mean, **they do talk about providing a certain amount of money, funds, care for gender reaffirming surgery**, things like that. So I do think you hear from it, and that's, I think, part of the money they want to go to for mental health for people like that and part of it is actually towards the physical surgeries themselves.” – CA man, weak Republican

“I think [Democrats] allow more so for people to choose how they want to live. **Creating bodily autonomy** that people can decide for themselves how they want their healthcare to go.” – PA woman, weak Republican

“[Democrats] want to give you vaccines for their safety.” – FL woman, weak Republican

“I'm not sure if it aligns with health and wellness, but I think **Democrats are, they're pushing for Women's Health Protection Act, about access to abortion**. So it could classify as health and wellness, but I think that's something I heard recently.” – MD man, independent lean Democrat



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Not Many Have Heard About Cuts To Medical Research But Find Them Ill Advised

"I can't really think nothing because I don't know what research and what those grants have been doing so far, so **maybe they're changing it to try to put it into another pot.** I don't know. I don't really follow that." – FL woman, independent

"I didn't know that was MAHA. I heard about the FDA cuts and that concerns me a little bit." – FL woman, independent

"The ability to put research out there for people to read, the ability to give...**health information is being taken away, which honestly just screws everything up** for everybody. Nobody's going to be healthy." – CA woman, independent lean Democrat

"I don't think I've seen anything [about **medical research**]. Very, very far in my brain, I feel like maybe at some point someone was making cuts to medical research, like funding-wise but I could be lying to you guys." – MI woman, independent lean Democrat

"I never knew about that, but I don't agree with that. I think **they shouldn't cut that stuff. That's important.**" – FL woman, weak Republican



"I mean, I've heard a lot about cutting, **getting rid of all those FDA employees, those CDC employees, how doing that has done pretty much irreparable damage** because that's decades of experience and research out the door, that's not going to come back." – IL man, weak Democrat

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There Is Some Concern About Doctors “Becoming Greedy” And The Medical Industry Having An Incentive For People To Stay Sick



“If we want to keep the economy going, you got to have that moneymaker. So, I do feel like **cutting the funding for research sets us back** and the cure for cancer and stuff like that, which in turn keeps people ill, which is horrible to think of, but **it stimulates the economy, keeps the money coming in.**” – MI woman, independent lean Democrat

“There's a lot of **bogus research and articles out there**, and I think some of the cuts in this area are going to help us do what's right, make this company sit up and actually take proper research and do proper things the right way. And then on the negative side, you can't tell who's to say whether that this research is a bogus and they're doing not good.” – VA man, weak Republican

“I've said for a long time that **healthy people don't make the country money.** I feel like if they could find a cure for cancer and stuff like that, that would lose the country a lot of money. So I feel like by doing that, that's making us stay unhealthy.” – PA woman, weak Republican

“Nowadays, the **greed has really turned things around in the medical field.** I believe doctors **get an incentive if they give out certain medication.** So, because of the greed, it is like we don't get the same treatment we used to get.” – FL woman, independent

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Making Food Healthier And More Affordable Is A Clear Winner

Moderator: what is one policy or thing the government could do that would make Americans healthier?



"I think if you had to ask me the single most important thing that I would take away from this is generally **what they put in our food and the chemicals** that go into it." – VA man, weak Republican

"Just **making sure to take out chemicals in foods that other countries don't have** chemicals in. And just trying to go back to the basics and having natural food." – LA woman, weak Democrat

"**Policy should be targeted on our food**, the food companies, what they put inside it, how it's made. I think that's the baseline of our health." – MD man, independent lean Democrat

"[One change I would make is] to **make healthy food or organic food cheaper** or more affordable across the board." – AZ man, weak Democrat

"One thing they could do is **minimize some of that processed food**. And they could lower the food costs." – MS woman, weak Democrat

"One policy that they can do is **not make those cuts to the CDC, NIH and federal government institutions like that** when it comes to the health and safety of all of us as a whole, that's number one." – FL man, independent lean Democrat

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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Jessica Floyd, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds; Mike Podhorzer; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted three online focus groups September 30, 2025 with women from Florida with kids under 10 years old, young men, and young women with no kids.

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