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Shutdown Week 4
Thursday, October 30th

The Government Shutdown Messaging: A Guide for Advocates



Credit: Shutterstock/Lucky Photographer

Key Takeaways:

- Top concerns for Americans in the shutdown are rising health care costs, an indefinite government shutdown, and the loss of food assistance.
- At the same time, Americans deeply oppose a range of recent financial decisions by the Trump administration, especially new tax cuts for the rich, the bailout of Argentina, and the building of the new White House ballroom.
- A message highlighting wasteful spending from the White House and Republicans in Congress is effective, especially when paired with the context of the government shutdown, as workers don't get paid and millions lose health care coverage or have to pay more in health care costs.
- Half of Americans say the Republican Party is focused on the wrong things at the outset and even more say so after reading information about Trump and Republicans' recent spending.

Americans Concerned About an Indefinite Shutdown & Its Impacts: Rising Health Care Costs, Lost Coverage, SNAP Funding

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you find it not at all concerning and 5 means you find it extremely concerning, please indicate how concerning you find each one.

Top 10 of 15 Tested	% 5 – Extremely concerning		% Total Concerning (% 4-5)				Shutdown Pers.*
		% 4	Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	
The cost of health insurance doubling for Americans	65	16	80	92	79	69	81
Keeping the government shut down indefinitely	64	16	80	90	76	71	79
Millions of children and pregnant women losing access to healthy food	63	16	79	93	76	66	77
Nearly 5 million Americans losing their health insurance completely	63	15	78	94	78	63	77
Food stamps, or SNAP, stopping services, taking food away from families in need	63	13	76	92	73	61	73
Tens of thousands of Americans permanently losing their jobs	62	15	77	92	78	62	80
Basic customer services for veterans or Social Security recipients stopping	62	19	81	89	79	73	78
Farmers being unable to plan their harvests due to government instability, leading to food shortages, an unstable food supply, and damage to farmers' livelihoods	61	19	80	90	77	70	80
Military service members and veterans not getting paid during the shutdown	61	18	79	86	77	73	78
Millions of American workers not receiving their paychecks	61	20	81	93	76	70	77

*"Shutdown persuadables" are defined as those who say they do not blame the shutdown on either Democrats or Trump and Republicans, blame both of these equally, or don't know, and excludes leaners towards either group on a follow-up ask. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted October 23-October 27, 2025. For more info, visit navigatortresearch.org.

Less Intense Concerns on Shutdown: Air Travel Delays, Head Start Pausing, Delayed Paychecks, Economic Damage

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you find it not at all concerning and 5 means you find it extremely concerning, please indicate how concerning you find each one.

Bottom 5 of 15 Tested

	% 5 – Extremely concerning	% 4	% Total Concerning (% 4-5)				Shutdown Pers.**
			Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	
Critical food safety inspections stopping and making our food supply less safe	57	19	76	90	80	62	75
The economy losing between \$7 billion and \$15 billion a week	57	21	78	88	77	68	77
Hundreds of thousands of American workers not receiving back pay once the shutdown ends, meaning the potential loss of months of income	57	20	77	89	72	66	76
Head Start, which supports low-income children, stopping operations, closing the doors of preschools and stripping children of meals, medical screenings, and dental care	54	19	73	90	69	57	69
Air travel being delayed and canceled as air traffic controllers go unpaid and stop showing up to work, making flying less safe	45	21	66	78	66	55	63

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Bipartisan Majorities Oppose a Range of Recent Trump Spending, From Private Jets to a New Ballroom to Bailing Out Argentina

Majorities of MAGA* (62%) and non-MAGA Republicans* (73%) oppose the U.S. bailing out Argentina.

Below is a list of recent actions and items. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each one.

	Support		Not sure	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	Total Oppose	Non-MAGA Reps.*	MAGA Reps.*
The U.S. spending \$170 million on two private jets for Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem	14	10	14		62	76	91	77	60	47	77	
The \$300 million project to build a White House ballroom	21	9	11		59	70	91	70	49	35	68	
The U.S. passing \$4.5 trillion in new tax cuts, largely benefitting the rich and big corporations	19	9	13		59	72	92	73	51	41	65	
The U.S. giving Argentina \$40 billion to bail out its economy	13	11	19		57	76	88	72	66	62	73	
Trump requesting the Department of Justice pay him \$230 million for past investigations into him	21	10	12		57	69	92	74	46	28	71	
The U.S. tripling ICE's annual budget to nearly \$30 billion	29	9	14		48	63	90	65	34	19	56	

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Most Concerning Trump Administration Spending Includes Tax Breaks for the Rich, Argentina Bailout, and the New Ballroom

Independents (38%) and Republicans (35%) are most concerned about the U.S. giving \$40 billion to Argentina, while Democrats are most concerned about tax cuts for the rich (40%).

Which, if any, do you find most concerning?

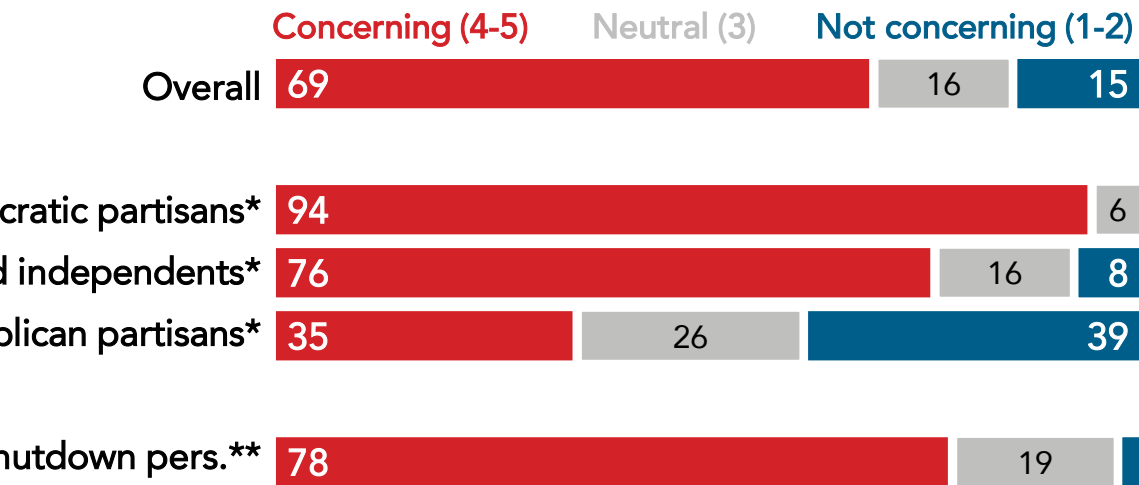
	% top two most concerning	Dem	Ind	Rep	MAGA Reps*	Non-MAGA Reps*	Shutdown Pers.**
The U.S. passing \$4.5 trillion in new tax cuts, largely benefitting the rich and big corporations	33%	40	27	27	26	30	33
The U.S. giving Argentina \$40 billion to bail out its economy	29	20	38	35	37	32	28
The \$300 million project to build a White House ballroom	29	36	27	21	15	30	31
Trump requesting the Department of Justice pay him \$230 million for past investigations into him	26	34	24	17	14	22	19
The U.S. tripling ICE's annual budget to nearly \$30 billion	20	28	26	10	8	12	18
The U.S. spending \$170 million on two private jets for Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem	18	12	21	22	20	25	30

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Framing Recent Trump Spending With Shutdown Context Drives Up Concerns, Especially Among Republicans

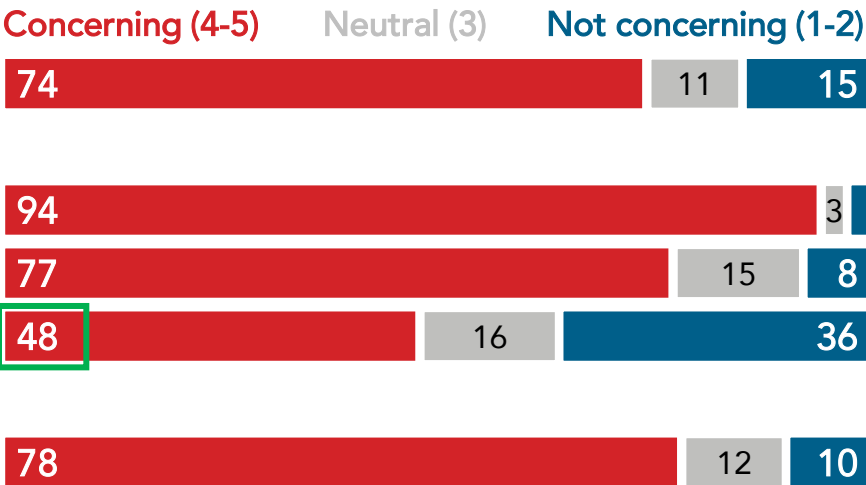
(Split Sample) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you find it not at all concerning and 5 means you find it extremely concerning, please indicate how concerning you find the following statement.

[WASTE] Trump and Republicans claim to be the party of reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending, but in reality, they're the ones who are spending money on everything except what benefits American families. In just the last few weeks, they've announced the spending of \$40 billion on a bailout of Argentina, \$170 million on a purchase of two private jets for Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and \$300 million on the building of a brand new White House ballroom. They're not looking out for American families – they're looking out for themselves.



(Split Sample) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you find it not at all concerning and 5 means you find it extremely concerning, please indicate how concerning you find the following statement.

[WASTE AND SHUTDOWN] Trump and Republicans are spending money on everything except what benefits American families. In the last few weeks, they've announced the spending of \$40 billion on a bailout of Argentina, \$170 million on two private jets for Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and \$300 million to build a White House ballroom. At the same time, they are keeping the government shutdown because they refuse to help Americans with rising health care costs, and instead could strip nearly 5 million of their health insurance and double the cost of health insurance for millions more.



*"Democratic partisans" are strong Democrats or weak Democrats who say they always vote for Democratic candidates; "Republican partisans" are MAGA-identified Republicans and/or Republicans who say they always vote for Republicans; "expanded independents" are weak Democrats who don't always vote for Democrats, independents, and non-MAGA Republicans who don't always vote for Republicans. **"Shutdown persuadables" are defined as those who say they do not blame the shutdown on either Democrats or Trump and Republicans, blame both of these equally, or don't know, and excludes leaners towards either group on a follow-up ask. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted October 23-October 27, 2025. For more info, visit navigatortresearch.org.

Top Contrasts to Trump's Spending on the Ballroom, Argentina Are Americans Losing Their Jobs, Paychecks, and Health Care

Independents are most concerned about workers not getting paid (42%), cuts to health care (32%), and the economy losing money during the shutdown (29%).

When you think about the items you just saw, including a bailout of Argentina, buying private jets, and new tax cuts for the rich and big corporations... Which of the following two bother you the most, if any? **That we're spending money on those items, while...**

	% top two bother most	Dem	Ind	Rep	MAGA Reps*	Non-MAGA Reps*	Shutdown Pers.**
Millions of Americans do not receive their paychecks and some will not receive back pay, and thousands will lose their jobs permanently	35%	41	42	27	25	30	37
Millions of Americans will lose their health care completely and millions more will see their health care costs double	33	46	32	21	14	30	24
Millions of pregnant women and children could lose access to food	26	32	22	22	19	26	31
Veterans don't get paid and Social Security recipients stop receiving basic services	26	26	25	26	24	30	27
Our economy loses up to \$15 billion a week during the shutdown	22	22	29	21	18	24	31
The government remains shut down indefinitely	19	19	17	19	21	16	19

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Majorities Agree With Democratic Messaging Highlighting Trump and GOP Spending and Health Care Concerns in Shutdown

Expanded independents* and shutdown persuadables** are more compelled by spending arguments than health care – though both work.

Which side do you agree with more?

[SPENDING] Democrats who say Trump and Republicans are spending billions on foreign aid and conflicts, including a \$40 billion bailout of Argentina and billions more in overseas military spending. Meanwhile, Trump and Republicans are doing nothing for us at home – keeping the government shut down and pushing to strip health care from millions of Americans and raise healthcare costs for millions more

Trump and Republicans who say Democrats have shut down the government and refuse to work together to reopen it. Democrats are unwilling to cut waste, fraud, and abuse from government spending, and instead want to continue to waste taxpayer dollars on healthcare for illegal aliens



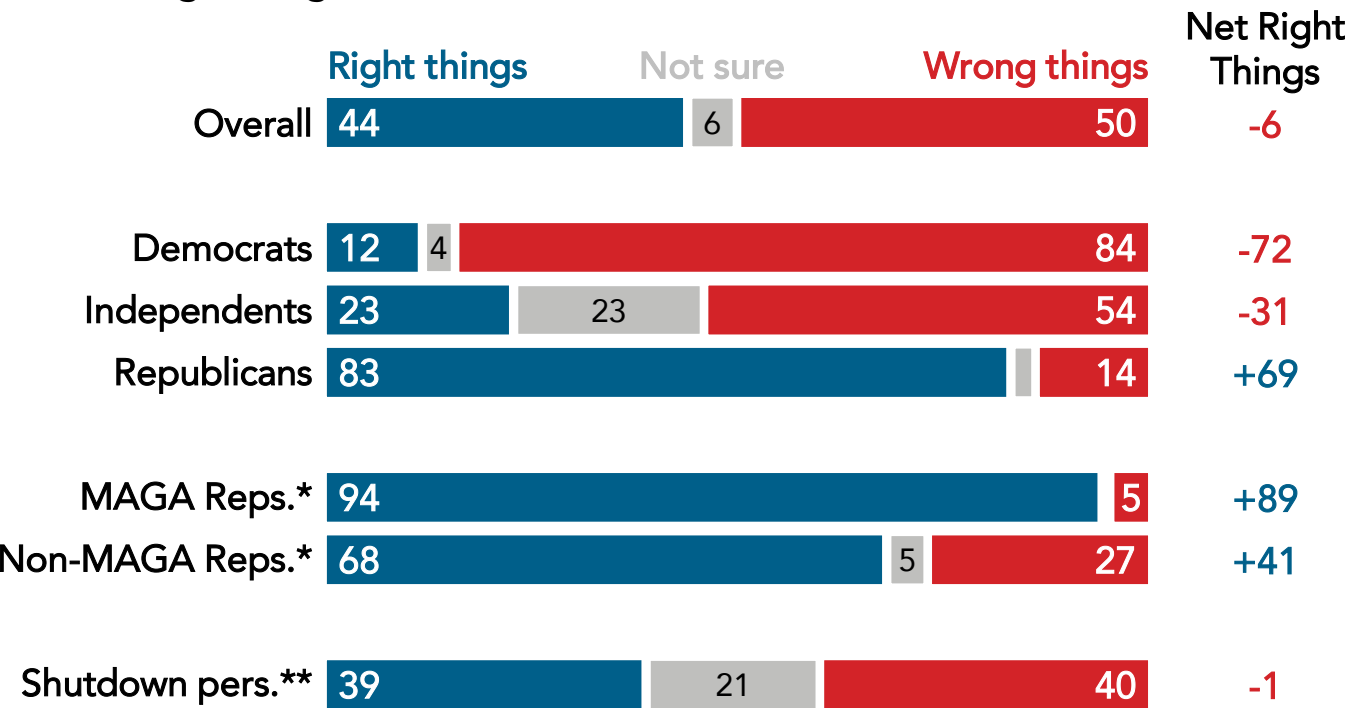
[HEALTH CARE] Democrats who say Trump and Republicans' budget would more than double health care costs for 22 million Americans. Democrats say health care costs have already been skyrocketing, and so they are doing everything they can to stop health care costs from rising even more, at a time when tariffs are already driving up costs

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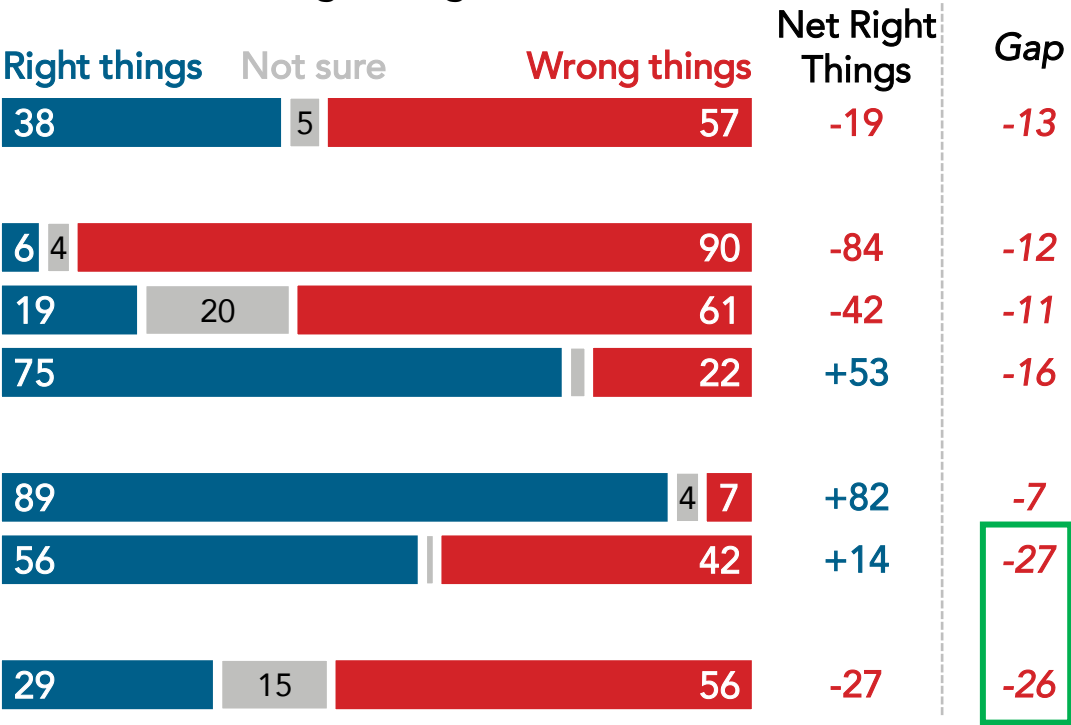
Messaging About Trump/GOP Spending Amid the Shutdown Shifts More to Say the Party Is Focused on the Wrong Things

Non-MAGA Republicans* (from net +41 right things to net +14) and shutdown persuadables** (from net -1 to net -27) shift the most against Republicans on whether they are focused on the right things after learning more about recent spending during the shutdown.

[Pre-Messaging] Do you think the **Republican Party** is focused on the right things?



[Post-Messaging] Again... Do you think the **Republican Party** is focused on the right things?



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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

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a sample of 1,000 registered voters from October 23-October 27, 2025. The survey was conducted online, recruiting respondents from an opt-in online panel vendor. Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the national registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

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<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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