WORLD HEADQUARTERS
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A Failed Anti-Trans Strategy

Post-election survey

To: Interested parties
From: HRC and GQR

Rarely in the history of our democracy have voters' repudiation of the party in power proved so definitive. It touched states no one thought were in play (Mississippi, Kansas, South Carolina, among others), it involved massive swings among Hispanics, Independents, younger men and even non-college voters. Equality Voters and LGBTQ voters delivered huge and elevated margins to the Democrats and largely delivered the House and Senate. Voters singularly rejected Donald Trump, his economy, his foreign policy, his corruption and his cruelty.

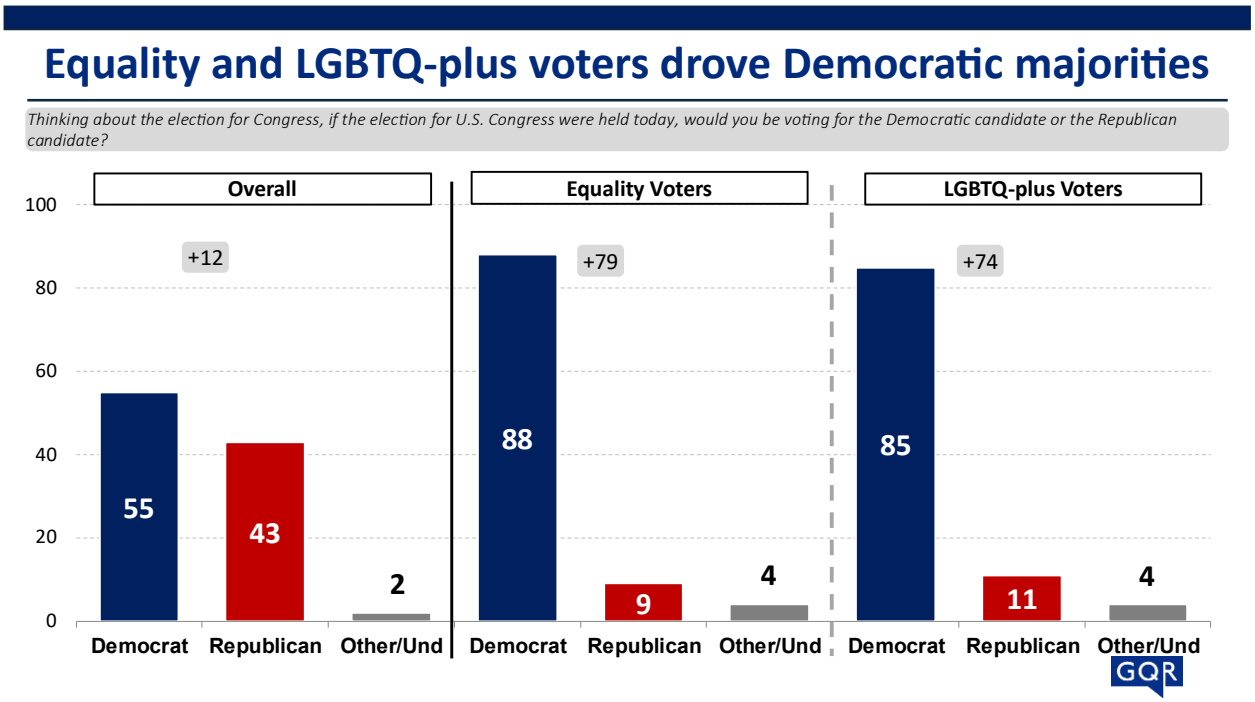
In terms of scale, this was less of a midterm correction than a recall election.

Voters also rejected the MAGA strategy of marginalizing trans people in a desperate effort to stave off this disaster. This strategy not only failed, but as this survey makes plain, this strategy amplified Democratic majorities up and down the ballot.

Key Findings

- ✓ **Equality Voters[1] and LGBTQ voters drove the Democratic majority up and down the ballot**. In the national House vote, 88 percent of Equality Voters supported Democratic candidates, a margin as high as any other subgroup in the electorate and a notable increase from 2024 (81 percent). Equality Voters delivered the same numbers in the Senate (88% Democratic) and gubernatorial (88% Democratic) elections. In the pivotal congressional battleground, 86 percent of Equality voters pulled the lever for Democrats and flipped control of the House.

[1] Equality voters are voters who are modeled to support LGBTQ+ issue and are defined as having a 64.4 or higher on the new TargetSmart Equality score.



✓ Republicans *tried* to make their case. Republicans spent nearly $400 million on anti-trans ads this cycle. Half the country (47%) recall seeing ads criticizing Democrats for "allowing people who were born as men or transgender people to compete in in women's sports or allowing gender-changing surgery on children." This jumps to 55 percent in the congressional battleground, to 72 percent in Ohio and 66 percent in Texas.

Voters got their message--but it had the opposite impact they intended.

✓ Voters believe the GOP is obsessed with trans people. Strikingly, a 58 percent majority agree with the statement, "Republicans' obsession with transgender people and children is strange and over the top." This majority is higher than the number of voters who supported Democrats this cycle (55 percent), includes a hyper-majority of Equality voters (84 percent), as well as a huge number of those voters who swung Democrats' way this cycle:

- 64% agree among Hispanic voters;
- 61% among younger men;
- 62% among Independents.

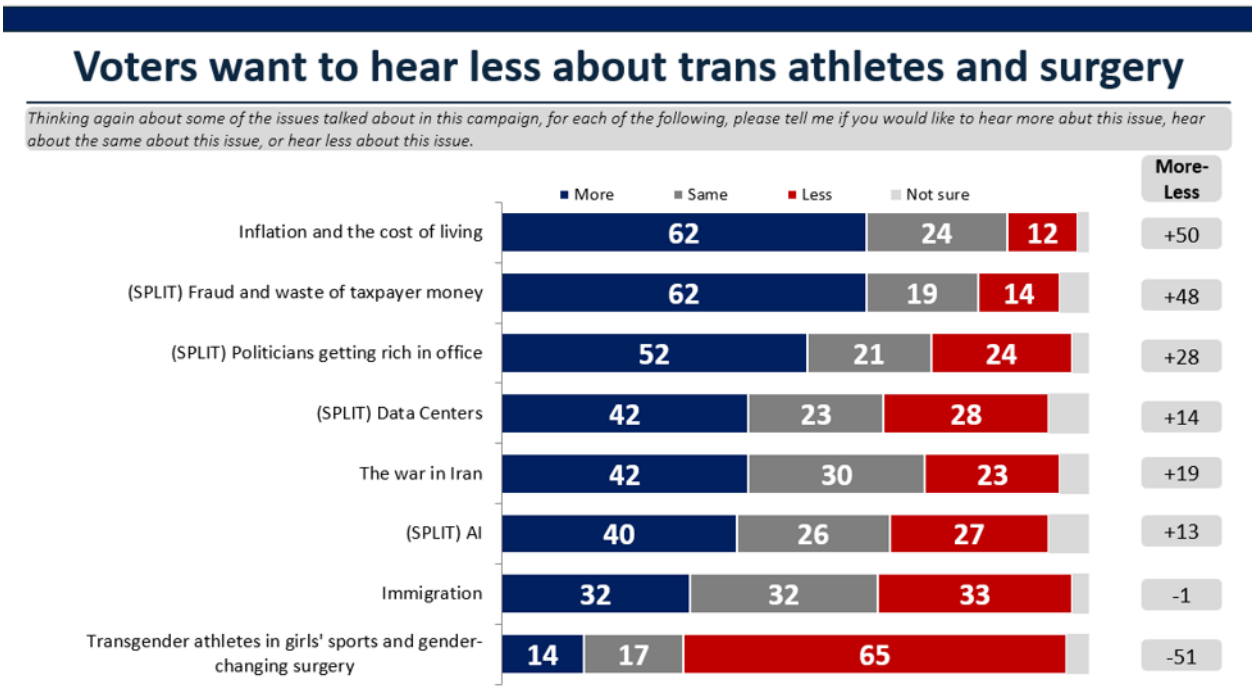
The Voter Poll by SRSS--a survey involving over 100,000 respondents taken October 22 through Election Day and published by most major networks--asked voters which party they trusted more to handle policies about transgender people: 45 percent preferred the Democrats, just 34 percent supported the Republicans.

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- ✓ **Anti-trans attacks were not a priority for voters.** Voters' leading issues were *corruption and politicians using their office to get rich* (37%), *inflation and the cost of living* (33%), and *threats to democracy* (32%). The issue of "*boys in girls' sports and gender-changing surgery on children"* did not resonate at all with Democrats (0 percent) or Independents (8 percent), and even among Republicans, this issue ranked less important than securing the border and stopping corruption.

  Republicans spent much of their time speaking to an issue only a fraction of their base cared about. *Indeed, when we ask voters who voted for Republicans why they did so, only 3 percent mention trans issues (2% against men in women's supports, 1% against sex change operations for children).*

- ✓ **Voters were sick and tired of hearing anti-trans attacks.** Voters wanted to hear more about reducing inflation, stopping politicians from getting rich in office and stopping fraud and waste of taxpayer money. They definitively did not want to hear more about transgender athletes and surgery.



Conclusion

Republicans believed they could target marginalized trans people and prevent, or at least mitigate, the disaster of the 2026 cycle. But voters were never focused on this issue, grew tired of it quickly and came to believe that Republicans' fixation on trans issues was over the top. Voters punished them for this failed strategy.

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Methodology

This memo summarizes the results of a multi-modal survey of 2026 voters taken October 27th – November 3rd. It includes a national sample of 750 voters, as well as oversamples in the congressional battleground (N=400), and oversamples in the key states of Texas (N=400), Ohio (N=300) and Georgia (N=250). This survey also looks at Equality Voters, voters modeled to support LBGTQ+ equality. These voters represent 32 percent of the electorate. The overall margin of error is +/- 2.14 points, though higher at the subgroup level. Battleground districts include: AK-AL, AR-02, AZ-01, AZ-02, AZ-06, CA-13, CA-48, CO-08, FL-09, FL-14, FL-27, IA-02, IA-03, MI-07, MI-08, MI-10, MN-01, MO-02, MT-01, NC-01, NC-11, NE-02, NJ-09, NM-02, NV-01, NV-02, NV-03, NV-04, NY-03, NY-04, NY-17, NY-19, NY-21, OH-09, PA-07, PA-08, PA-10, SC-01, TX-15, TX-23, TX-28, TX-34, VA-02, WA-03, WI-01, WI-03.

Important. As this analysis is being done, votes are still being counted, and we will not know who participated in the 2026 elections until voter files are updated. This will change some of the numbers in this survey but will not change overall conclusions.

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