

Economic Issue Handling Slips For Republicans

Throughout the conflict with Iran, the economy has stumbled and we have seen Republican leads on the economy erode. But from our trending for Winning the Issues, slippage on economic issue handling started last year and before the conflict started in late February. Our new numbers (May 30-June 2) confirm this trend.

Issue Handling - Which party do you have more confidence in to handle [issue]? (R-D)	Post-Elect 2024	January 2026	March 2026	Current
Inflation	+12	+3	-6	-9
Economy	+11	+3	-1	-6
Taxes	+6	+6	+5	+3
Jobs	+3	0	-4	-6

In the 2024 election, Republicans led by double digits on inflation (+12) and the economy (+11). By January 2026, the lead was down to 3 on both issues. The spike in gas prices during the spring led to further erosion of those leads, with Republicans now trailing by 9 on inflation and 6 on the economy. Republicans have slipped on jobs going from +3 in the 2024 election to -6. Of the four economic benchmarks, taxes is the strongest economic issue for Republicans with the lead of +3.

Among independents, there are similar patterns with the erosion being more prominent than among voters overall.

Issue Handling Among Independents (R-D)	Post-Elect 2024	January 2026	March 2026	Current
Inflation	+13	+6	-8	-12
Economy	+13	+7	0	-11
Taxes	+6	+4	+3	-4
Jobs	+2	-3	-6	-8

Among independents, Republicans had 13-point leads on inflation and the economy in the 2024 election, but those leads have now reversed to -12 on inflation and -11 on the economy. Republicans have slipped to -8 on jobs issue handling and -4 on taxes.

Outlook on the direction of economy stands at 27-65 right direction-wrong track, down from 36-51 at the beginning of the year. **From our trend data, this is the worst result for the direction of economy since July 2022 (21-66), which occurred as inflation hit its peak of 9.1% in the previous month of June 2022.** Gas prices have started coming down which is a good start, but more work is needed to regain standing on the economy.

As Republicans have encountered difficulty on economic issues that have been their strength, Democrats are hoping for a Blue Wave this fall. If Democrats could sustain leads on the economy and win double digit margins among independents as some polls show, a Blue Wave is possible. In [Episode 1 of the Discussion Points Podcast \(Is the 2026 Midterm Election Headed For A Wave?\)](#), we discuss past wave elections in the House of Representatives and what it takes for waves to happen. At the 10:22 mark, we feature our chart that explains everything you need to know about wave elections.

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra