

Who Are Independents?

We talk about independent voters on a frequent basis, and one of the questions we get most often is about understanding who independents are. In recent elections, there have seen sizable increases in voters identifying as independent rather than as Republicans or Democrats. In the 2024 election, independents surpassed Democrats as a percentage of the electorate nationally and in 5 out of 7 competitive presidential states. In our latest survey for Winning the Issues (May 30-June 2), we asked voters how their current party ID compares to five years ago to understand how long independents have considered themselves “independent” and how large the percentages of voters leaving the two parties were.

Party ID	Indep		Indep 18-44		Indep 45+	
	Now	5 Years Ago	Now	5 Years Ago	Now	5 Years Ago
GOP	—	11	—	11	—	12
Dem	—	13	—	14	—	12
Independent/other/don't know	100	76	100	74	100	77

Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding

The key takeaways from these findings:

- Among independents, a quarter (24%) identified as either Republicans (11%) or Democrats (13%) five years ago.
- Three out of four independents (76%) say they have been independents more than 5 years.
- These results show a slightly higher percentage of ex-Democrats (13%) than ex-Republicans (11%), but there is not one former party affiliation dominating the other.
- In both age categories, there were similar proportions of voters identifying themselves as former Republicans or Democrats.
 - Among independents 18-44, there is a slightly higher percentage of ex-Democrats (14%) than ex-Republicans (11%) now identifying as independents.
 - Among 45+, the percentages coming from the two parties were the same (12% ex-Republicans, 12% ex-Democrats).

The comparable numbers in both age groups having left the two parties indicates the trend of voters becoming independents is affecting all age groups and is not limited to younger voters. With 1 in 4 independents having left one of the two major parties in the last five years, this trend indicates the increasing size of the independent voter group may continue.

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra