DEEP ROOT ANALYTICS - MEMORANDUM

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To: Interested Parties

Subject: The Voters Who Will Decide Tuesday

Bottom Line

The 2026 election will be decided by two groups of voters, not by the bases. Both parties' core voters have barely moved this year. The voters who moved are the ones with the weakest ties to either party, many of them people Trump brought to the polls for the first time in 2024.

The first group to watch is the **Cost-Squeezed Swing Voters**. They will set the direction of the night. The second group to watch is the **Young Dealigned**. If they show up in larger than normal numbers, Democrats will have a very big night. In November, relying on young voters to deliver midterm races must feel like Lucy holding the football for Democrats.

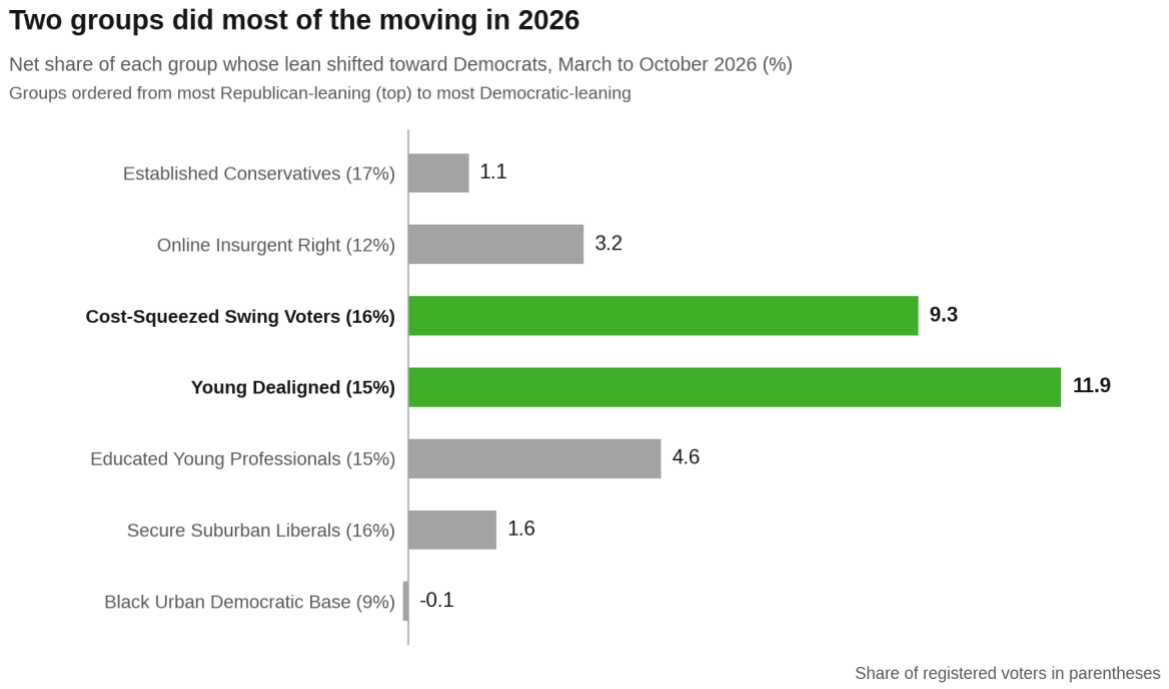
About the Data

Deep Root Analytics studied modeled data on 60,000 registered voters, scored on models from six national surveys from April 2025 to October 2026. We clustered this data to find the core political cohorts that exist after the 2024 election. The findings are validated over three independent samples.

The Landscape Going In

We sort American voters into seven groups by what they believe, from Established Conservatives on the right to the Black Urban Democratic Base on the left. In March the electorate was about evenly split between Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning voters. By October it had moved at least 9 points toward Democrats, and the shift built steadily through the summer. Obviously, who shows up in a midterm has a lot to say about the outcomes, but Democrats have a significant advantage among registered voters.

Most of that movement came from two groups. The three base groups held firm.



Source: Deep Root Analytics modeled voter data · same voters, March vs. October 2026 · n = 20,000; replicated in two further samples

Cost-Squeezed Swing Voters Decide the Direction

One in six registered voters fall into this group. They feel rising prices harder than anyone else and trust institutions and the media least. Most are women without a four-year degree living in rural areas and suburbs, though one in five are men. By party affiliation, nearly half are Republicans, a quarter are Democrats and the rest sit in between.

They are the only group in the electorate that is up for grabs. In March they leaned Republican by about two to one. By October it was 55–45. That shift alone is worth about 3 points to Democrats in the national picture. The men in this group moved even further, from clearly Republican to roughly even.

Their values did not change. Prices are squeezing them, they don't trust institutions, and they have little holding them to either party. Many were new to the Republican coalition in 2024, and Trump's first-time voters have been leaving at three times the rate of his longtime supporters.

What they care about. Prices, first and last. They are the most frustrated by grocery prices of any group, just ahead of the Young Dealigned, and they are more anxious about money and housing costs than the average voter. On cultural issues they lean right: more supportive of parental rights in education, more opposed to transgender athletes in women's sports, and warmer to the MAHA

"medical freedom" message. AND they are also among the least supportive of building new data centers.

Our call. Cost-Squeezed Swing Voters break Republican on Tuesday, but narrowly, well short of the two-to-one edge Republicans held in the spring. If they split evenly, Democrats are having a big night. If they come home to Republicans by a wider margin than the October data suggests, the 2026 slide was softer than it looked and Republicans will hold some competitive seats. Watch women without college degrees for the best demographic representation of this group.

Young Dealigned Decide the Size

The Young Dealigned are the newest voters in the country: young, diverse, and more than half registered since 2021. They trust neither party, yet they moved toward Democrats more than any other group this year and now lean heavily Democratic.

The question is whether they vote. Only about one in eight voted in the last midterm. If they turn out the way they did in 2024, that adds roughly 5 points to the Democratic margin.

What they care about. Housing. They are 18 points more frustrated with housing costs than the average voter, and they are the most financially anxious group we found. They are cool to the Trump immigration agenda, from deportations to troops at the border to the National Guard at protests.

Our call. Their turnout lands well above the last midterm but short of a presidential year. Every point of turnout from this group widens the Democratic margin.

What to Watch Tuesday Night

- **Rural and suburban areas with many working-class women.** That is where Swing Voters live, and where a Republican slide would show up first.
- **Turnout.** Young, racially diverse voters. If turnout is higher than 2022 among these voters, the Democrats may get their wave. If turnout stays similar to 2022 the illusion of the youth vote in the midterms will catch Democrats again.

Where These Two Groups Are Key

State	Swing Voters	Young Dealigned
Ohio	22%	14%
South Carolina	22%	13%
Iowa	20%	15%
Kansas	20%	15%
Michigan	20%	15%
Nevada	19%	31%
North Carolina	19%	16%
Arizona	17%	22%
Texas	16%	20%
Oregon	16%	17%
All US registered voters	**16%**	**15%**

Swing Voter states. Ohio, South Carolina, Iowa, Kansas and Michigan have the heaviest concentrations of Cost-Squeezed Swing Voters in the table, about one voter in five.

Turnout states. Nearly a third of Nevada's registered voters are Young Dealigned, the highest share of any state. In the table, Arizona and Texas follow at about one in five. If young voters turn out, these are the states where it moves the result.

Follow-Up

Deep Root Analytics has been carefully studying the electorate since 2024 and has a full report on the American political landscape, including a close look at Democrats and Republicans as our parties realign.

You can access a deck with the full analysis by clicking here.