

# 1,115 voters. One day in the field. And the answer to **why**.

Every poll says "affordability" is the top issue. Nobody can act on that word. On Long Island, Convos and NNG Research fielded a text poll where an AI agent asked the follow-up, and the follow-up turned out to be the whole story.

Fielded for **Flashpoint Strategies** · Long Island likely primary voters · June 22, 2026

## 1,115

completed surveys, matched to the voter file

## 1 day

in the field. Launched and closed on June 22

## ±3.3

margin of error at 95% confidence, effective n of 906 after weighting

## 685

voters pushed past their first answer by the AI follow-up

## The problem with "the economy"

Ask voters to pick from a list and the economy wins in both parties. That tells a campaign nothing about what to say. A closed-ended poll stops there; a focus group goes deeper but gives you twelve people in a room. Flashpoint Strategies wanted both: a real sample with a real margin of error, and the texture of an open conversation, by text, in a day.

## How the poll worked

- 1 Sample from the voter file.** Likely primary voters in Nassau and Suffolk, so every response could be weighted and mapped back to the file.
- 2 Structured questions by text.** Ballot, approval and the economy as numbered choices, so the topline read like any poll.
- 3 Then the Convos AI agent asked why.** Open-ended questions in between, in the voter's own words. Short or vague answers got a follow-up, so "the economy" became groceries, gas, property taxes or a pension that doesn't stretch. The agent pushed on non-answers and let people change or expand what they said.
- 4 NNG Research coded and weighted.** Open ends coded into themes, results weighted by party, age, gender, race/ethnicity and congressional district, delivered as clean crosstabs.

### ONE REAL CONVERSATION FROM THE POLL

#### STRUCTURED

##### CONVOS AGENT

If the election for Governor of New York were held today, who would you vote for?

1. Kathy Hochul, the Democrat
2. Bruce Blakeman, the Republican
3. Someone else
4. Not sure

VOTER  
1

#### OPEN-ENDED, AGENT FOLLOWS UP

##### CONVOS AGENT

Thinking about your own life right now, what's the single biggest issue affecting you and your family?

VOTER  
High property taxes

##### CONVOS AGENT

When you decide who to vote for in November's governor's race, what issue will matter most to you?

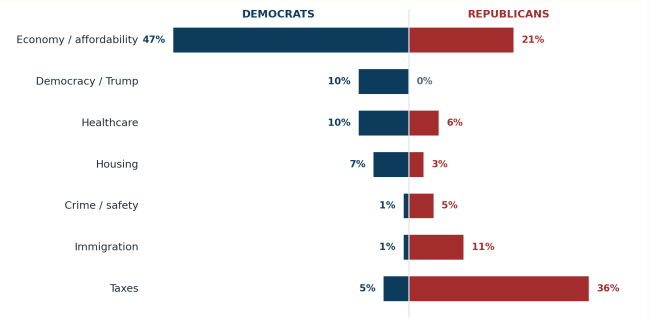
VOTER  
I'm not really sure. I have very unfavorable ratings of both candidates right now for a variety of reasons.

Real conversation from the June 22 poll, name removed. The poll then returns to numbered questions. A Hochul voter whose biggest issue is property taxes and who is cool on both candidates: a closed-ended poll flattens that into one row.

## One economy, two languages

The first open-ended answer already showed something a list would have hidden. Both parties named the economy most often, but they did not describe the same pressure the same way. Democrats said **affordability** and **cost of living**. Republicans said **taxes**, about four times as often.

That vocabulary gap mapped almost perfectly onto the governor's race. Voters who framed the squeeze as affordability backed Hochul **62 to 26**. Voters who framed the same squeeze as taxes backed Blakeman **69 to 21**. Same economy, opposite votes, and the only difference was the word.



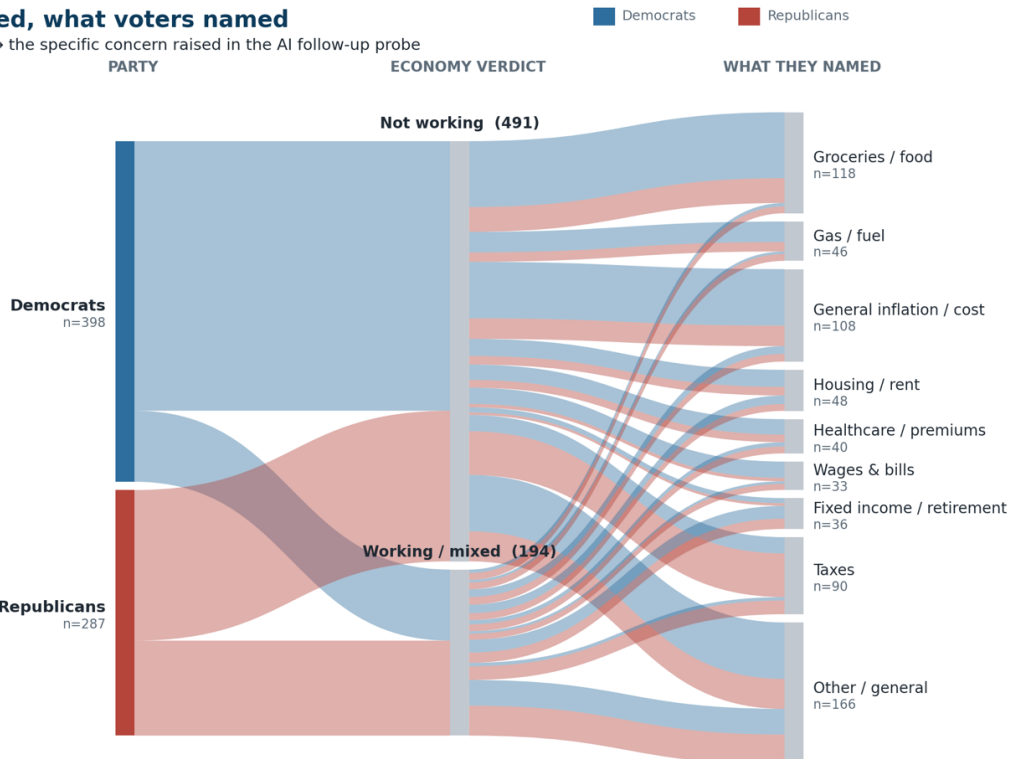
Share of each party naming the issue as their biggest personal concern (weighted). Open-ended responses, coded into themes.

## What the follow-up found

This is the part a traditional poll cannot do. Among the 685 voters the agent pushed to get specific, **the two parties named almost the same things**. Groceries and food was the single largest concrete concern and it was bipartisan. Inflation, gas, housing and healthcare were the same: both sides routed into them at similar rates. The lived experience voters describe, when you make them describe it, is shared.

### When pushed, what voters named

Economy verdict → the specific concern raised in the AI follow-up probe



North Node Group · Long Island likely-voter survey, June 22, 2026 · weighted base n = 685 · ribbon width = voters

Economy verdict to the specific concern raised in the AI follow-up probe. Ribbon width equals voters, weighted base n = 685.

## Taxes, 3x

The one concrete item that split by party. The Republican ribbon into "taxes" is roughly three times the Democratic one, almost all from voters who say the economy isn't working.

## 70% not working

Seven in ten said the economy isn't working for families like theirs. Who they blamed split cleanly: 81% of Democrats named President Trump, 57% of Republicans named Governor Hochul.

## Age, not party

Under 40 talked about wages and housing. Over 65 talked about pensions, Social Security and fixed income, and tended toward a hedged verdict rather than a flat no. The pattern held inside both parties.

### The partisan divide isn't in what people experience. It's in the one cost that is also a policy.

Everyone names groceries and gas. Taxes is where a private cost becomes a government decision, and where kitchen-table economics becomes a vote. A campaign that stops at "affordability" misses that entirely. A campaign that knows which cost, whose household and whom they blame has a message. That knowledge came from the follow-up question, at the sample size of a poll.

## In their own words

### DEMOCRATIC VOTERS

- "Cost of living has gone up exponentially!"
- "Affordable health care, specifically the cost, it's ridiculous."
- "The cost of living crisis and threats to democracy."

### REPUBLICAN VOTERS

- "Property taxes."
- "Affordability, living expenses, school taxes."
- "Taxes, regulations, illegal immigrants, and crime."

**Methodology.** Flashpoint Strategies and Convos surveyed 1,115 Long Island voters by text on June 22, 2026. Respondents were matched to the voter file and results were weighted to the universe of likely primary voters in Nassau and Suffolk by iterative proportional fitting on party, age, gender, race/ethnicity and congressional district. Margin of sampling error for the full sample is  $\pm 3.3$  points at the 95% confidence level; effective sample size after weighting is 906. The likely primary universe is more partisan and engaged than the November electorate and topline ballot figures should be read in that light. Issue figures are drawn from coded open-ended responses; subgroup figures carry wider error margins. Quotes are verbatim with spelling lightly standardized. Analysis by NNG Research. Findings were published by Matt Krayton and Molly Magarik in Strategy Unbounded, "Affordability Isn't Meaningless. It Means Too Many Things." (September 19, 2026).

## Polls that ask why.

Structured questions. AI follow-ups. Clean data back. Convos builds and fields the conversation by text; NNG Research delivers the full statistical analysis mapped to the voter file. Minimum 500 completes per poll.

**convos**

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