HART RESEARCH

TO: **Interested Parties**
FROM: **Jay Campbell, Aileen Cardona, and Corrie Hunt, Hart Research**
DATE: **November 10, 2026**
RE: **How Energy Costs Shaped the 2026 Midterms**

Hart Research was retained by Climate Power, EDF Action, League of Conservation Voters, and NRDC Action Fund to conduct a survey to understand how energy costs affected voters' thinking and behavior in the 2026 election. We interviewed voters* across 62 House districts which the *Cook Political Report* rated as Lean D, Toss Up, Lean R, or Likely R.

Key Findings

1) **This election was a rejection of Donald Trump and the GOP. But Democrats now have to prove themselves to the American people.** Both Trump's (35% positive, 61% negative) and congressional Republicans' (34% positive, 57% negative) images are deeply underwater. And though Democratic candidates won the vote in these districts by an estimated eight percentage points, congressional Democrats' image is also slightly underwater (41% positive, 46% negative). Democrats have to rise to the governing challenge voters have granted them.

2) **Voters hold Republicans responsible for high energy bills. They have strongly rejected and are ready to move past Trump's approach to energy.** Nearly two thirds (64%) say Trump has made things worse for consumers on energy prices; 59% say this of Republicans in Congress, the highest rates we recorded across six surveys over the past year. Fully 78% say oil, gas, and utility companies have benefited more than consumers from Trump's and the GOP's energy policies, and a majority believe that Trump and his family (63%) and Republicans in Congress (67%) have personally profited from them. Nearly six in 10 (58%) want our energy policies to be different from Trump's going forward. Voters are ready to move on.

3) **Voters are clear: reining in electricity costs is a crucial part of addressing the affordability crisis.** In this affordability election, the cost of food was the top vote driver this year (66% cite it as a top voting issue), but the cost of gas (41%) and utilities (32%) were both in the top four. As such, 62% say working to bring down electricity prices should be one of the top (26%) or a high (36%) priority for the new Congress. Majorities of voters say this is the case whether they voted for a Democratic or Republican candidate.

4) **Americans want change, and a big part of that is access to more affordable, clean energy. Even in this populist moment, voters trust renewable energy to help bring down costs more than they trust either Democrats or Republicans.** Nine in 10 voters say we need changes in how the U.S. produces, delivers, and manages energy, including 57% who say we need a complete overhaul or major changes. When asked in an open-ended question what changes they would make, the top response (34%) was more reliance on and investment in renewable energy. In fact, across eight entities in the energy arena, the only two that voters say are making things better for consumers on energy prices are solar and wind energy (53% better, 16% worse) and clean energy companies (45% better, 21% worse). Every other entity is "worse", including oil and gas companies (13% better, 63% worse), Republicans by a large margin (22% better, 59% worse) and Democrats by a small one (32% better, 39% worse).

5) **Voters have given Democrats a chance to show they are serious about energy affordability.** The new Democratic majority can rise to the affordability occasion in part by improving the U.S. energy system. At the beginning of this year, voters in competitive districts were slightly more likely to trust Republicans and Trump more than Democrats on addressing energy issues, whether it was lowering monthly bills, making the country energy-independent, or improving the reliability of the grid. Over the past year, voters have swung dramatically and now trust Democrats in much greater numbers on each of those elements, but also on several others related to energy, like regulating AI data centers and having a long-term plan to meet the country's needs. If Democrats can rise to the occasion, they will prove voters' trust in them was well-earned.

* Online survey of n=1,778 individuals who reported either casting a vote or being certain to vote, credibility interval of ±2.6 percentage points; data collected October 26-November 6, 2026