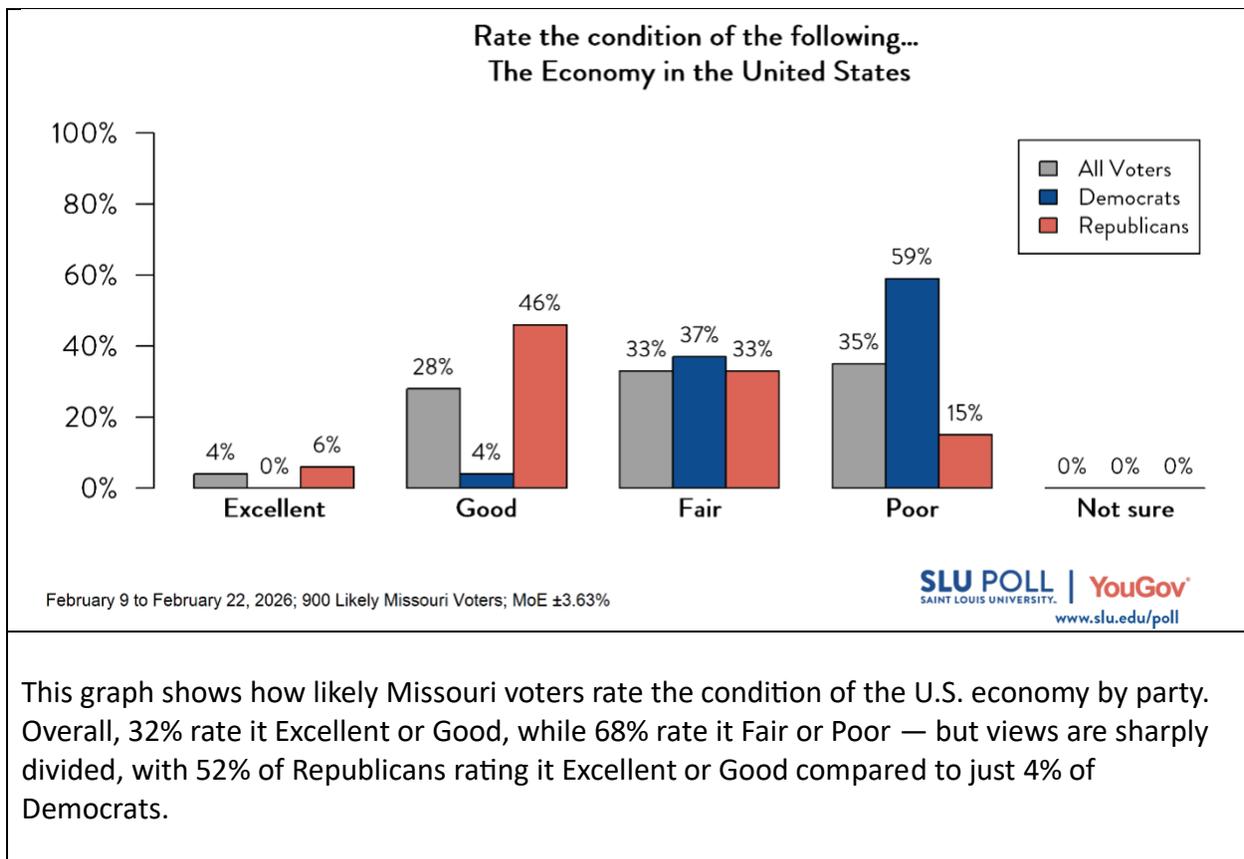


How Missouri’s Likely Voters View Various Political Issues, According to 2026 SLU/YouGov Poll

By Kenneth Warren, Ph.D.

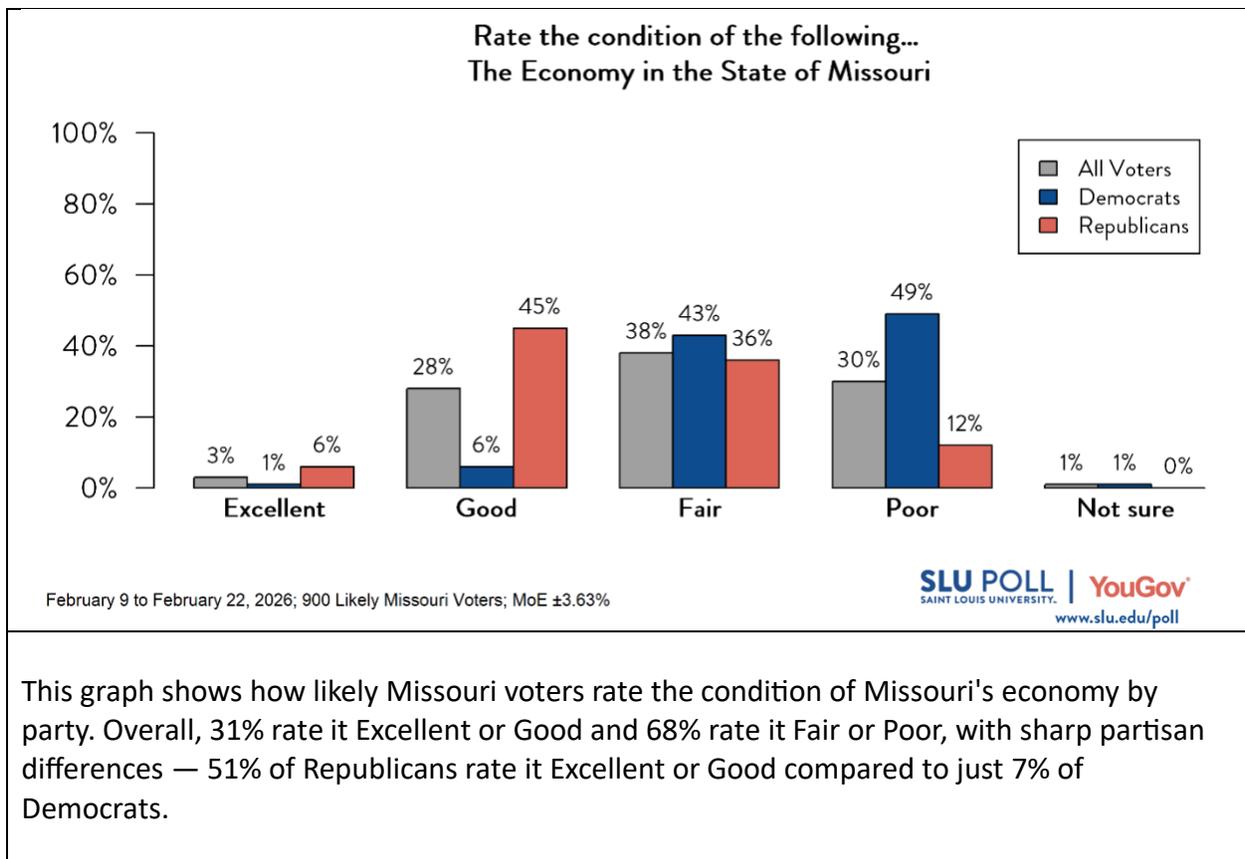
In our 2026 SLU/You Gov poll, we asked 900 likely voters living in Missouri to express their opinions toward a host of political issues facing Missourians today. Their answers help us gain a better understanding of Missouri’s political climate.

We started by asking Missouri’s likely voters what they think should be the top priority of Missouri state government. Forty-seven percent said the economy, followed by health care, 21%, education, 12%, infrastructure, 11%, other 10%. Our polls, as well as national polls, have consistently shown that the top priority for the American people is the economy. Understanding this, Trump prioritized in his 2024 presidential campaign the promise of making the American economy stronger.



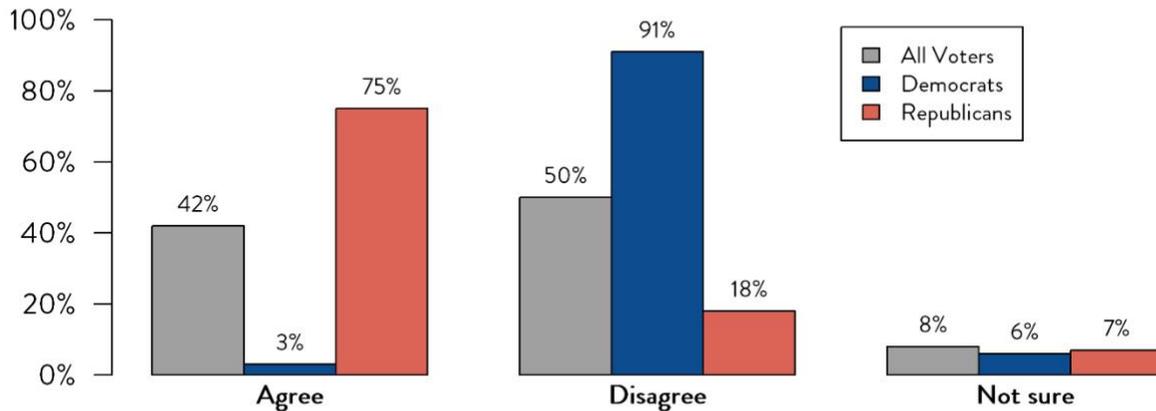
We then asked how Missouri’s likely voters rate the economy of the United States. Thirty-two percent rated the U.S. economy as good, 28%, to excellent, 4%, while 33% said fair and 35% said

poor. This may seem like a low rating, yet in our SLU/You Gov poll last year, only 14% gave the U.S. economy a good, 13%, to excellent rating, 1%, while 46% answered fair and 38% said poor. This is likely explained by the fact that Trump relentlessly blamed President Biden for a bad U.S. economy, especially inflationary prices, and Trump had only been in office a few weeks when we polled. Although the American economy has not really improved since Trump took office, depending upon what metrics are evaluated, over a majority of Missouri voters give Trump positive approval ratings and are therefore more likely to view the economy as better under him than Biden. But regardless, the rating of the economy by Missourians is not good. Yet, their rating is close to how Americans view the economy. A February 2026 Pew Research poll found that only 28% of U.S. adults rated the U.S. economy as good to excellent, up from 23% at about the time Trump took office in 2025.



Missouri's likely voters rank Missouri's economy very similarly with 31% saying the economy is good, 28%, to excellent, 3%. Of course, ratings were very different by party in the rankings of the U.S. economy and the economy of Missouri. While only 7% of Missouri's Democrats said Missouri's economy was good to excellent, 51% of Republicans said so. Similarly, only 4% of Democrats rated the U.S. economy as good, 4%, to excellent, 0%, while 52% of Republicans ranked the U.S. economy as good, 46%, to excellent, 6%.

The United States is on the right track and headed in a good direction

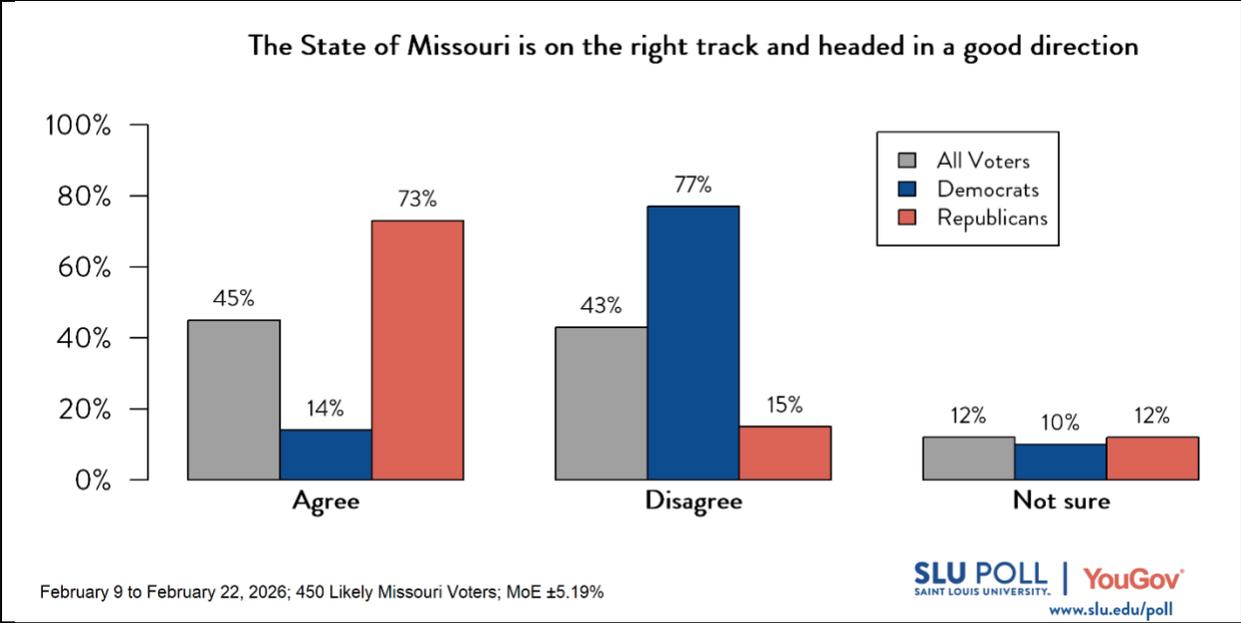


February 9 to February 22, 2026; 450 Likely Missouri Voters; MoE $\pm 5.19\%$

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This graph shows whether likely Missouri voters think the United States is headed in the right direction, broken down by party. Overall, 42% agree and 50% disagree — but 75% of Republicans agree compared to just 3% of Democrats.

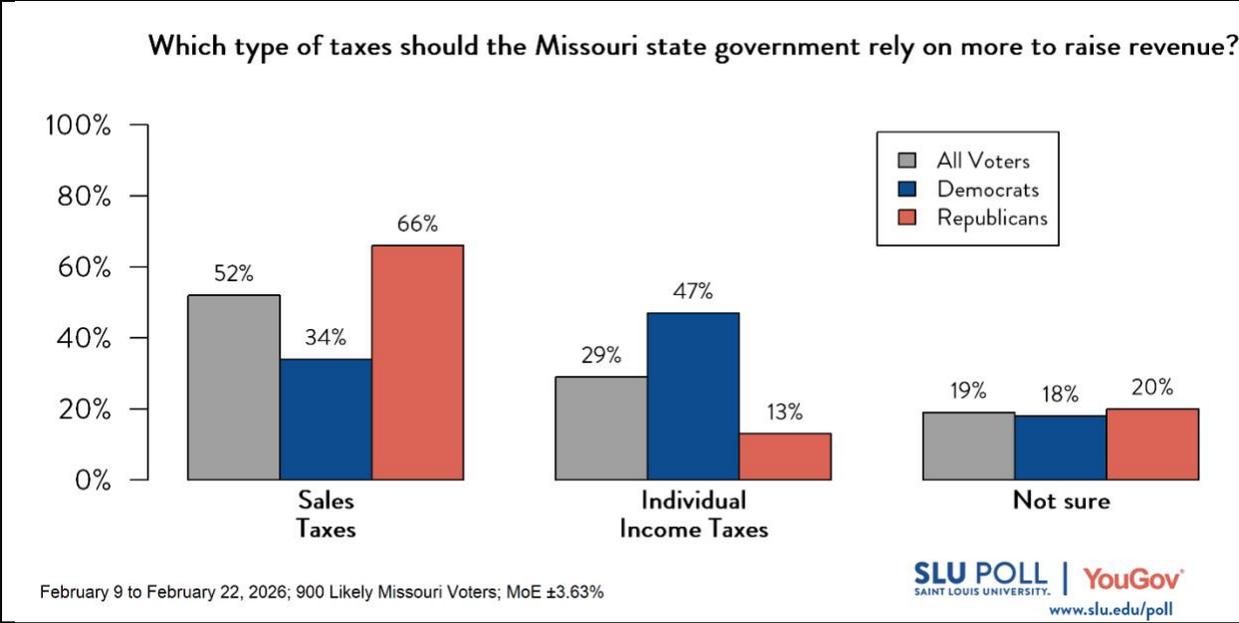
We also asked Missouri’s likely voters whether they felt the U.S. is on the right track and headed in a good direction. Forty-two percent agreed that it was, while 50% disagreed with 8% saying they were not sure. Women, those under 30 years old, blacks and other non-whites, Democrats, those making under \$50k per year, those 4-year and graduate education, and those living in the metro areas of St. Louis and Kansas City, were all much more likely to disagree. These findings closely reflect national sentiment. In a December 2025 Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll, 39% believed the U.S. was on the right track, while an Ipsos February 2026 poll showed that 41% of Americans felt the U.S. was on the right track and headed in a good direction.



This graph shows whether likely Missouri voters think the State of Missouri is headed in the right direction, broken down by party. Overall, 45% agree and 43% disagree — with 73% of Republicans agreeing compared to just 14% of Democrats.

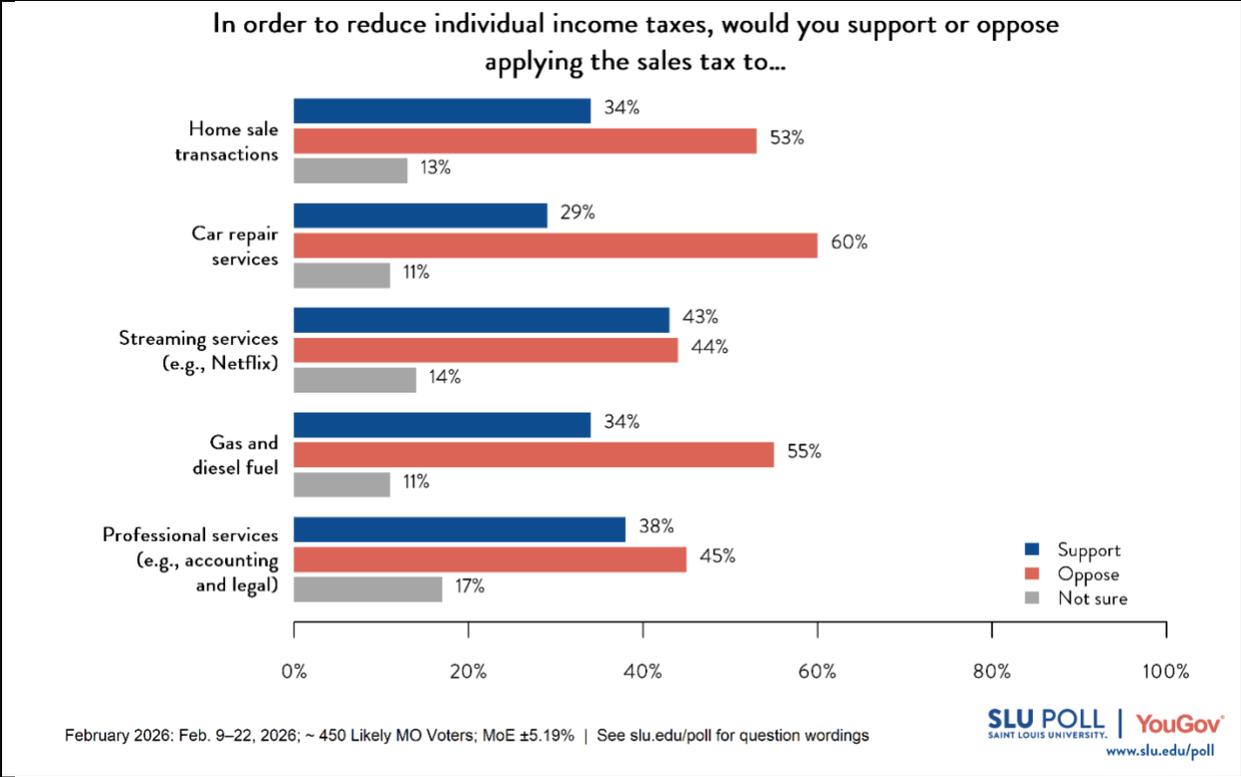
We then asked whether respondents believed Missouri is on the right track and headed in a good direction. The results were more positive with 45% agreeing and 43% disagreeing with 12% not sure. Republicans were much more likely to agree, 73%, than Democrats, 14%.

Another question we asked was whether Missouri’s likely voters agreed that the State of Missouri should spend more money to aid the poor. Fifty-six percent agreed with only 29% disagreeing with 16% not sure. However, only 32% of Republicans agreed as compared to 92% of Democrats who agreed.



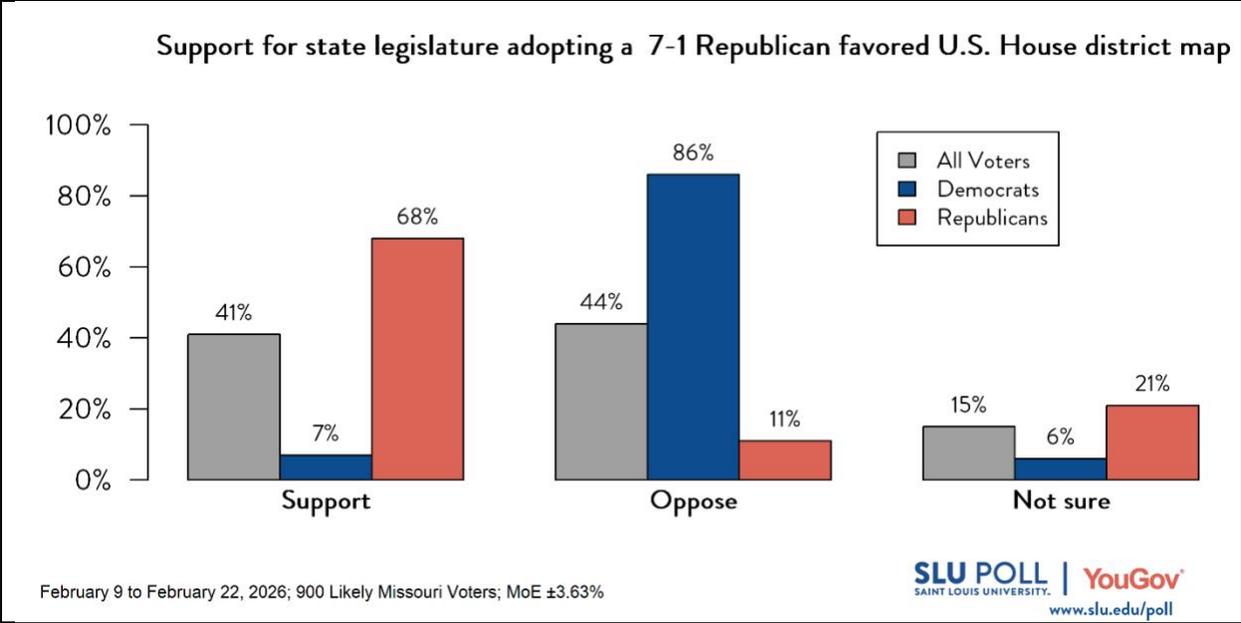
This graph shows which type of taxes likely Missouri voters think the state should rely on more to raise revenue, broken down by party. Overall, 52% prefer sales taxes and 29% prefer individual income taxes — with Republicans strongly favoring sales taxes (66%) and Democrats evenly split (47% income taxes, 34% sales taxes).

A controversial proposal that has been pushed by conservative groups in Missouri for years (e.g., Show-Me Institute; Americans for Prosperity, Missouri) has been to do away with Missouri’s state income tax, which accounts for approximately 65% of Missouri’s general revenues, using increases in state sales taxes to make up for the estimated \$9 billion in losses from eliminating the state income tax. In our February 2025 poll, fifty-two percent of our respondents supported the idea of doing away with the state income tax, 25% did not, while 23% answered not sure. In our February 2026 poll we asked Missouri’s likely voters what types of taxes they thought the Missouri state government should rely on more to raise revenues, sales taxes or individual taxes. Fifty-two percent said sales taxes, 29% said individual income taxes, while 19% said not sure. Republicans were much more likely to favor sales taxes than Democrats, 66% to 34%. This should be expected since sales taxes are considered regressive taxes, meaning that lower income families tend to pay disproportionately more on consumer purchases because purchasers all pay the same sales tax, regardless of income.



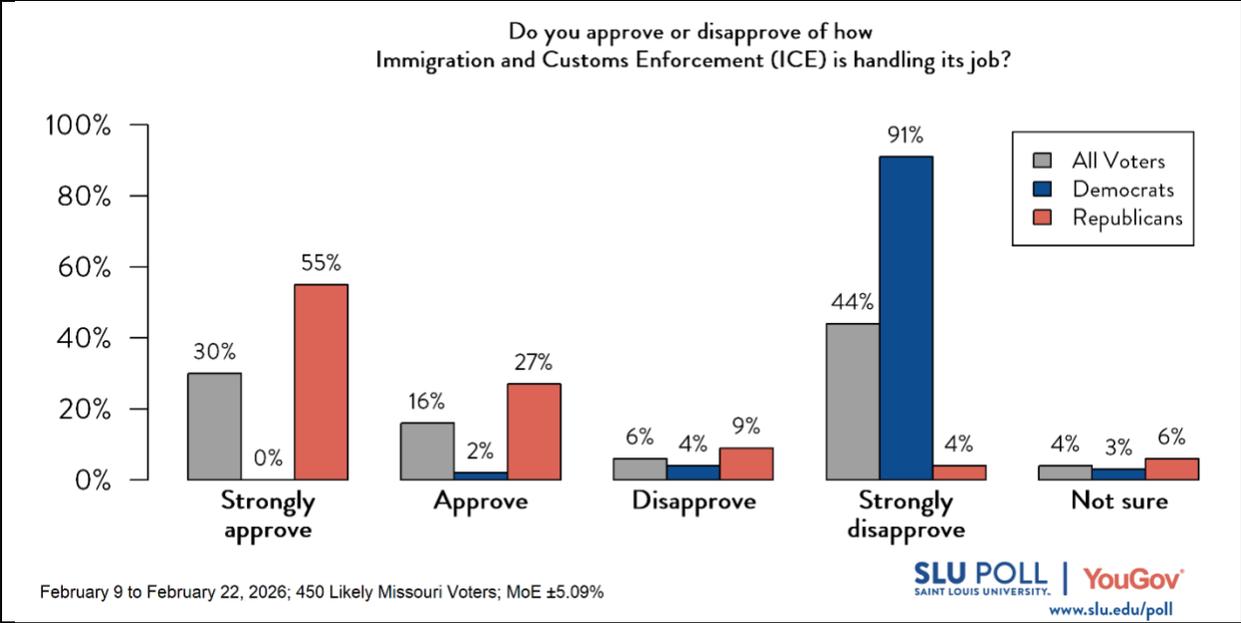
This graph shows whether likely Missouri voters would support applying the sales tax to five categories of goods and services in order to reduce individual income taxes. Opposition exceeds support for four of the five categories, with car repair services drawing the most opposition at 60%.

We then asked, “If the Missouri state legislature expanded the sales tax to include additional goods and services in order to reduce individual income taxes, would you support or oppose applying the sales tax to each of the following”: home sale transactions, 34% support, 53% oppose; car repair services, 29% support, 60% oppose; streaming services (for example, Netflix), 43% support, 44% oppose; gas and diesel fuel, 34% support, 55% oppose; professional services (for example, accounting and legal), 38% support, 45% oppose. It is interesting to observe that not any sales tax option received close to majority support. The closest was streaming services at 43% support. This suggests that shifting away from the state income tax to increased sales taxes may be difficult.



This graph shows whether likely Missouri voters support the state legislature adopting a new congressional district map designed to favor a 7-1 Republican advantage, broken down by party. Overall, 41% support and 44% oppose — with 68% of Republicans in support compared to just 7% of Democrats.

Regarding electoral questions, we asked whether respondents supported or opposed the new redrawn U.S. House district map passed by the Missouri legislature that Republicans hope will allow Republicans to win 7 of the 8 U.S. Representative seats in Missouri. Forty-one percent answered support, 44% opposed, and 15% were not sure. Expectedly, 86% of Democrats opposed this new map with only 7% in support with 6% not sure, while 68% of Republicans supported the new map, 11% opposed and 21% said they were not sure. Because the new map so blatantly benefits Republicans, it is noteworthy that only 68% of Republicans in our poll support this map. Do even some Republicans question the fairness of this new map, especially considering that the average Republican win in presidential elections in Missouri in the past three elections was by an average of 17.4% or a margin of 57.4 to 40%, while the new Republican map gives Republicans an 87.5% to 12.5% advantage in gerrymandered U.S. House seats.



This graph shows likely Missouri voters' approval of how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is handling its job, broken down by party. Overall, 46% approve and 50% disapprove — views are starkly divided, with 82% of Republicans approving compared to just 2% of Democrats.

The actions of ICE agents have been controversial, attracting much news coverage, so we asked, “Do you approve of how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is handling its job?” Thirty percent strongly approved, 16% approved, 6% disapproved, 44% strongly disapproved, and 4% said not sure. The partisan polarization on this question was stark. While only 2% of Democrats strongly approved, 0%, or approved, 2%, 82% of Republicans strongly approved, 55%, or approved, 27%. Independents were found to disapprove more than approve of ICE’s actions with 25% strongly approving, 16% approving, 5% disapproving, and 51% strongly disapproving.

This analysis is based on data from the February 2026 SLU/YouGov Poll and reflects the opinion of the author.