



### Shifting Political Landscape in the U.S. Amid Economic Anxiety and Other Areas of Voter Dissatisfaction

Analysts and observers have highlighted an increasingly apparent shifting political landscape across the United States during the preceding months amid economic anxiety and other areas of voter dissatisfaction with the current administration. Between the major affordability and cost of living crisis, a flagging economy now exacerbated by the Iran war, high levels of public opposition to the aforementioned conflict, and outrage over the lack of transparency surrounding the release of the Epstein files, many who even previously supported the president are growing ever more discontent with Trump's policies and actions. The evolving political landscape which has seen major electoral gains made for Democrats throughout the country reflects this trend. What is most noteworthy is that many of these shifts are not taking place in traditionally "blue" states or districts, but rather in "red" and "purple" ones. All of this indicates that while there is certainly a huge amount of anti-Trump sentiment among traditional Democrats themselves, much of what is actually driving the changing political climate is the rising dissatisfaction from non-Democrats.

Evidence of this can be seen by the significant number of electoral seats that have flipped from Republicans to Democrats in recent months. In fact, Democrats have flipped a total of 12 state legislative seats from Republicans in special elections over the preceding months – with many of these taking place in so-called "red states." In Texas, Democratic candidate Taylor Rehmet won in a deep-red district that has historically been held by Republicans. On top of the array of state legislative flips, Eileen Higgins became the first Democrat in nearly three decades to be elected mayor of Miami. It is not just the electoral wins themselves, but the margins of victory and the swings in favor of Democrats that have been so staggering and eye-opening. Among the 12 aforementioned state legislative special election flips, the swings towards Democrats ranged anywhere from 8 to 32 percentage points. This demonstrates the extent to which Republican candidates are losing voters to their Democratic counterparts, as the large percentage point swings show that many who normally vote for Republicans are now casting ballots for Democrats.

Democrats have flipped a total of 30 legislative seats since Trump was elected for his second term, compared to none for Republicans. Earlier this week, the electoral victory of Emily Gregory in Florida was seen as the latest indicator that Trump's base is becoming more and

more divided. Her win is especially noteworthy because her seat resides within a district that includes Trump's home in Mar-a-Lago, and she prevailed over Jon Maples, who was endorsed by the president. On Monday, Trump urged voters to support Maples, as he was backed by "so many of his Palm Beach County friends." To political analysts, the fact that Gregory flipped this seat, even though the other candidate was directly supported by the president, says a lot about how Trump is currently perceived in his own home county. It also could be a bellwether for the midterms later this year and signals that Democrats have a good chance to flip both houses of U.S. Congress. For now, a growing foothold in state government houses is important as it allows Democrats to have more say in setting local policies and pushing forward their political agenda ahead of November. Beyond mere party control, these electoral shifts also point to growing frustration among voters – particularly within the Republican Party. Local and state elections like these ahead of major federal ones later this year are normally a solid indicator of what way the public is swaying, so they suggest a larger trend of dissatisfaction that may very well manifest itself at the federal level in November.

One of the central reasons for this growing dissatisfaction is the ongoing war with Iran and the economic strains that it has exacerbated. In the time since the onset of the conflict, gas prices have risen substantially, and this is on top of already existing inflation and economic hardship for many Americans. The war has put pressure on global oil markets, which has impacted gas prices across the United States. Travel has also been increasingly stressful for the public because of long wait times, cancellations, and expensive ticket prices. Additionally, airport workers are not being paid because of the government shut down, prompting ICE agents to be deployed there despite lacking the qualifications needed to do the job. This has also raised concerns over proper training and public safety, contributing to public dissent.

All of this is taking place as well amid a cost-of-living crisis and rising healthcare costs, which many people are frustrated with too. High interest rates and limited housing supply have made it increasingly difficult for many Americans to afford homes. This frustration can be reflected in the national net approval ratings by issue, which have seen Trump's latest numbers dip across the board when it comes to inflation/prices, jobs and the economy, foreign policy, immigration, and even crime. The March 2026 ratings compared to those after Trump was inaugurated have included significant increases in disapproval, with jobs and the economy and inflation/prices in particular now consisting of disapproval-approval gaps of around 20 and around 30 percentage points, respectively. In total, approximately 58% of voters disapprove of Trump's handling of the economy, as opposed to only 38% who approve. Similarly, the majority of Americans oppose U.S. military action against Iran. This has prompted more than 50% of voters to express that if the midterm elections were held today, they would prefer Democrats to control the House of Representatives – further reinforcing the idea that public opinion is shifting.

The major economic challenges, foreign policy concerns, and political shifts support the notion that Trump's base is becoming more divided and that dissatisfaction with his policies is starting to grow at high levels, even among these voters. The significant number of flipped seats for Democrats in recent elections is ultimately a reflection of an undeniable shifting political landscape ahead of midterms later this year.