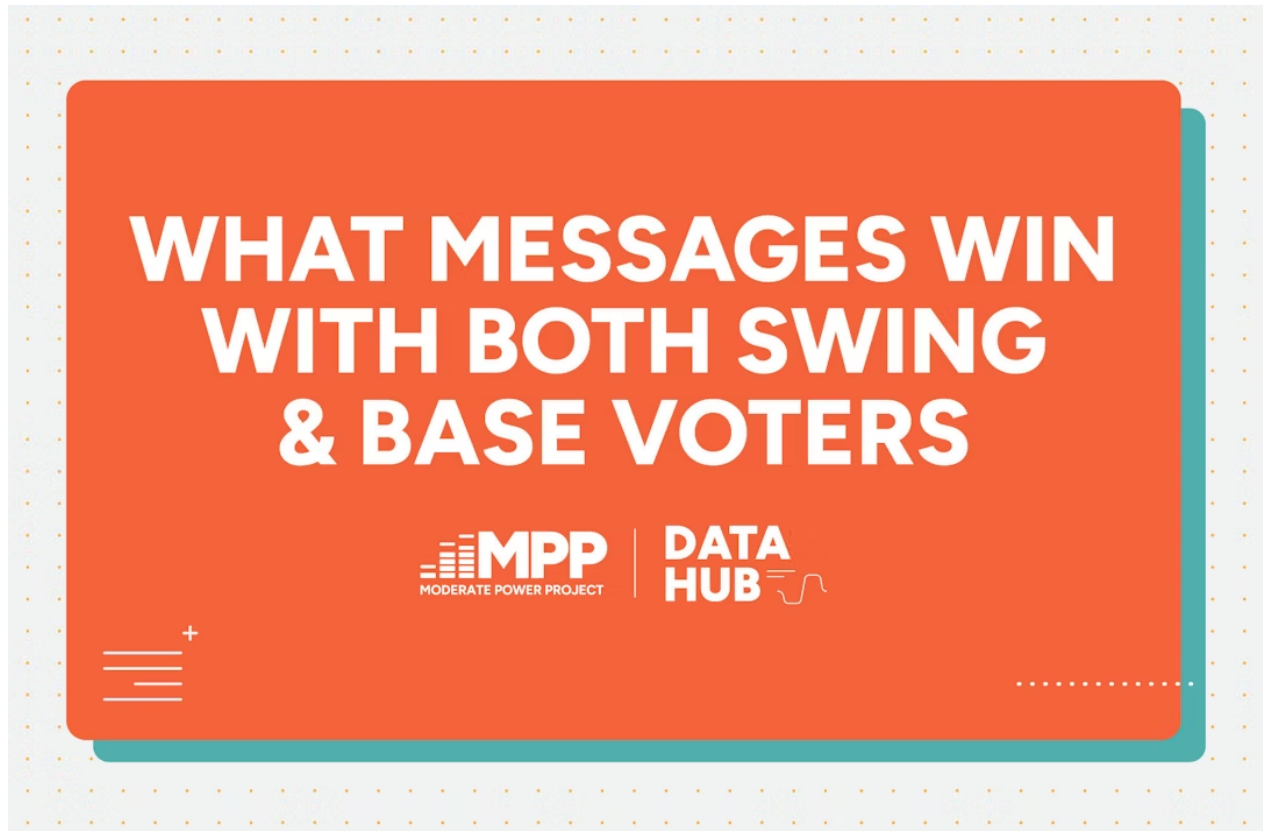


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What Messages Win with Both Swing & Base Voters



Third Way,

Moderate Center-Left Messages Outperform Far-Left Messages across the Board

Third Way tested moderate positions and messages advocated by Harris in 2024, as well liberal messages that Trump’s paid communication highlighted, sometimes with archival footage of Kamala Harris from her time in 2019 running for President in the Democratic primary. On all five issues tested, the moderate message garnered significantly stronger support than that of the liberal message – particularly with ticket-splitters and persuadable swing voters, but also with self-described Democrats, with each message garnering 85% or more support. Meanwhile, the liberal messages significantly underperformed the moderate messages (11% to 24% less support) even garnering

slightly lower support with Democratic base voters on issues such as the economy and transgender issues. – Third Way

Moderate Messages Beat Liberal Messages

Category	Issue/Message	Support
Moderate	Crime: This candidate believes everyone has the right to feel safe where they live, which is why they are focused on holding violent criminals accountable, keeping guns out of criminals' hands, and ensuring law enforcement has the resources and training they need to keep communities safe – working together to prevent crime in the first place.	78%
Liberal	Crime: This candidate knows the best way to stop crime is to prevent it before it happens. That's why they're focused on investing in community violence intervention and mental health and drug treatment programs, while also finding ways to hold police accountable for their mistreatment of citizens and abuse.	67%
Moderate	Trans: This candidate has seen firsthand the challenges kids are facing today and, as a parent, they recognize the importance of parents having a say in what goes on in their kids' lives. When it comes to transgender youth, they believe decisions should be left up to parents and families because we all deserve the freedom to make personal choices about our lives without the government telling us what to do.	74%
Liberal	Trans: This candidate believes everyone deserves to freely express who they are, without the government interfering. They oppose attempts to ban transgender kids from playing sports, using bathrooms, and changing in locker rooms, and they support making essential gender-affirming care accessible to all.	50%
Moderate	Border: This candidate recognizes we have to end the chaos at our Southern border. They supported the bipartisan border security bill endorsed by the Border Patrol Union and continues to work with Democrats and Republicans to re-establish order by adding more border security agents and enhancing technology to improve the detection and confiscation of illegal drugs like fentanyl and to establish a pathway to citizenship for hardworking legal immigrants who have been here for years.	71%
Liberal	Border: This candidate is taking a comprehensive approach to immigration reform. They see past the lies and supports decriminalizing border crossings because migrants are not criminals. The fact is, solving the border crisis means working with foreign countries to solve the root causes of migration, and reforming our immigration system so migrants who come here legally can build a better life for their families.	59%

Moderate	Climate: This candidate is helping the U.S. become more energy independent by continuing to produce more oil than any country in history and exploring clean energy opportunities that will create more jobs and stimulate the economy here at home. They are keeping costs down and ending the stranglehold Big Oil has over hardworking families.	70%
Liberal	Climate: This candidate is tackling climate change head-on and declaring a climate emergency. They are committed to phasing out fossil fuels, including banning fracking, because transformative change can't wait – our kids' future depends on it.	56%
Moderate	Economy: This candidate is focused on creating an opportunity economy so that everyone, everywhere has the opportunity to earn a good life where they live. That includes a middle-class tax cut, capping the price of prescription drugs, protecting and expanding Obamacare, and holding corporations	67%

A moderate approach to policy enjoys more support among key voters Democrats need to win, without alienating our base

Support for Moderate vs. Liberal Approaches to Issues

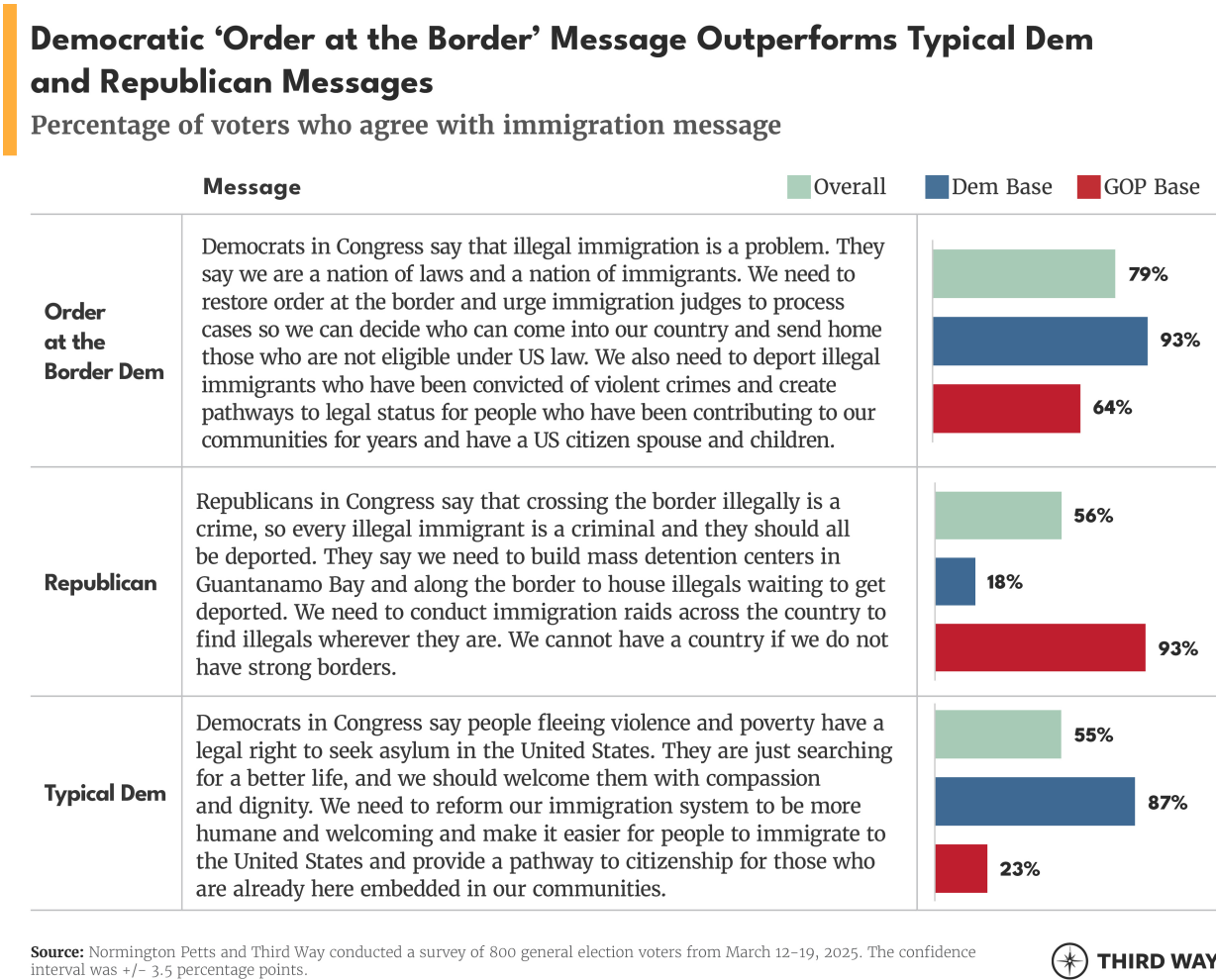
		Overall	Solid Dem	Ticket Splitters	Solid GOP % support	Late Deciders	Low Prop.	Pers.
MODERATE APPROACH	Crime	78	93	88	59	80	87	89
	Trans Issues	74	93	71	58	75	83	66
	Climate	73	85	76	60	77	85	74
	Border	71	89	76	51	73	78	74
	Economy	67	97	63	38	71	60	55
LIBERAL APPROACH	Crime	67	94	68	40	68	74	75
	Border	59	93	58	25	55	56	51
	Economy	56	94	54	19	54	46	59
	Climate	56	92	53	20	59	53	50
	Trans Issues	50	81	47	19	43	46	36

Source: Third Way/GSG poll of 1,600 battleground state voters, with an oversample of 208 Latinos, conducted 11/7–11/11/2024. Confidence interval is +/- 2.5 percentage points.

Democratic Immigration Messages Emphasizing “Order at the Border” Perform Better with Trump Voters and the Democratic

Base than the Typical Democratic and Trump/Republican Immigration Messages

The “Order at the Border Dem” message had 79% support, 23 points higher than Trump’s message and 24 points higher than the typical Democratic message. Crucially, the “order at the border” message did 41 points better with Republican voters and even performed 6 points better with Democratic base voters than the typical Dem message. – [Third Way](#)



Democratic Messaging on Crime Focused on a Proactive, Strong Accountability Frame Wins with Swing Voters and Dem Base Voters

Democrats need to speak proactively about keeping communities safe from crime and respond to Republican attacks—not be seen as changing the subject. If left unanswered, voters will believe the

narrative Republicans are pushing. Third Way's message testing shows that an approach focused on both accountability and prevention neutralizes Republican attacks, closes the GOP advantage on the issue, and doesn't hurt Democrats with their base. We recommend the following approach:

1. Invoke the value of safety.
2. Acknowledge that there is still too much crime.
3. Demonstrate bipartisanship.
4. Focus on accountability and prevention.
5. Provide solutions that pass the accountability and prevention test and are relevant to local communities.
6. Recognize there's more work to be done.

Democratic 'Order at the Border' Message Outperforms Typical Dem and Republican Messages

	Democratic candidate	Republican candidate	Net
Post-GOP messaging			
Overall	42%	47%	GOP+5
Democratic voters	89%	5%	DEM+84
Swing voters	19%	46%	GOP+27
Post-DEM+GOP messaging			
Overall	44%	45%	GOP+1
Democratic voters	90%	5%	DEM+85
Swing voters	28%	38%	GOP+10

Source: Normington Petts and Third Way conducted a survey of 800 general election voters from March 12-19, 2025. The confidence interval was +/- 3.5 percentage points.

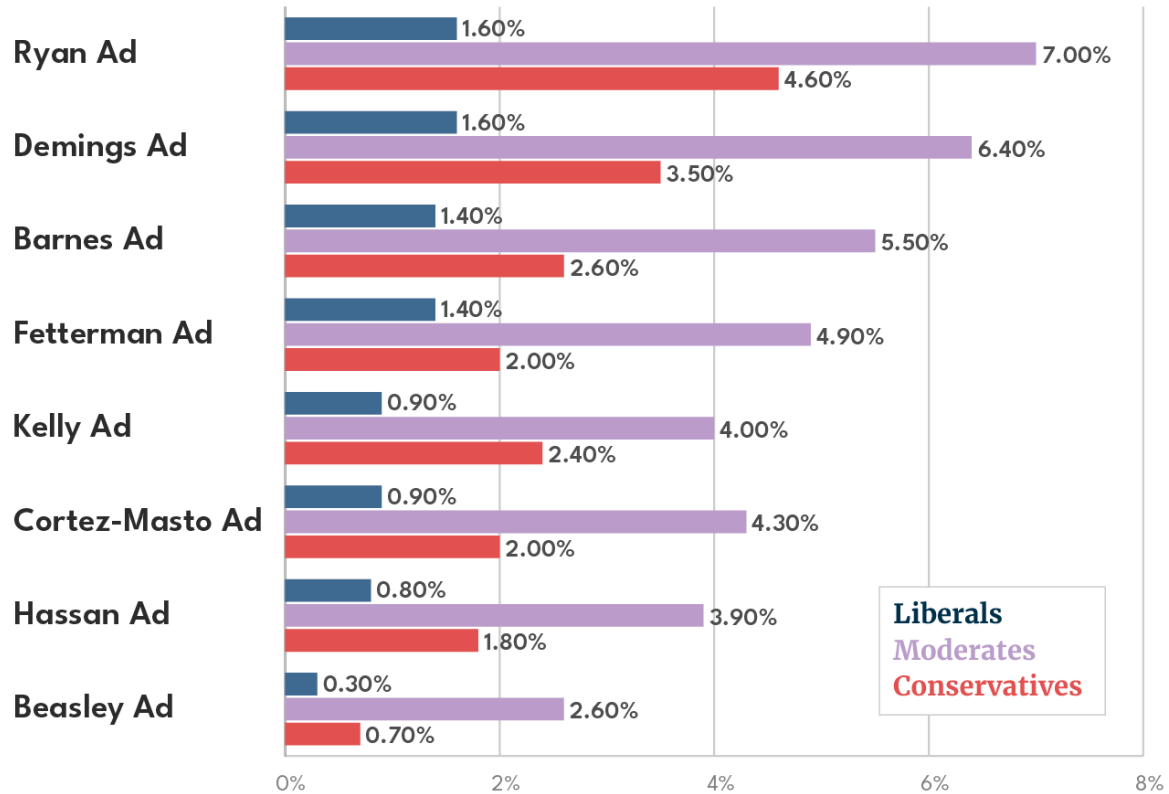
Democratic Candidates Making Strong Prebuttals and Rebuttals around Crime—Getting Out Ahead of Republican “Defund the Police” Attacks—Were Very Effective with Swing Voters and Had a Positive effect with the Liberal Base

In 2022, public safety ads with law enforcement validators touting increased public safety funding and/or explicitly stating that Democrats did not support defunding the police had a positive effect with voters from *every* ideological bloc. Ads from Tim Ryan (OH), Val Demings (FL), Mandela Barnes (WI), John Fetterman (PA), Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Mark Kelly (AZ), Maggie Hassan (NH), and Cheri Beasley (NC) all had a *positive effect* in moving moderates and conservatives towards casting a ballot for Democrats, and they also marginally moved “very liberal” and “somewhat liberal” voters towards Democrats. – Third Way



Public Safety Ads Moved All Ideological Blocs Towards Dems

(Percentage points voters moved towards voting for Senate Dem candidates after watching the ad)



Source: Blue Rose Research message library. Accessed August 2023.