CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

After Blue Tsunami, How Far Are Democrats Ready to Go To End Iran War?

Latest UMD/Ipsos Poll Finds Dems Ready to Risk Government Shutdown to End War

University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll

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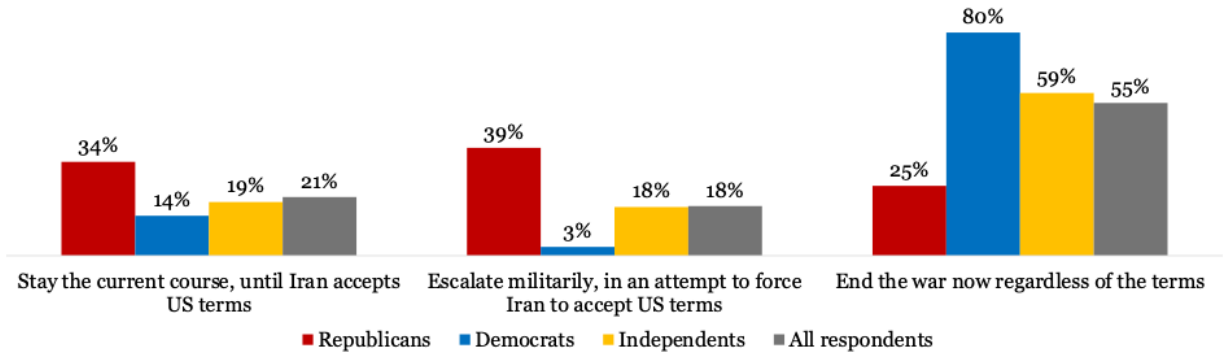
Are Democrats prepared to risk shutting down the US government in an attempt to force the Trump administration to end the Iran war? Yes, according to our latest University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with Ipsos, fielded November 20-22, 2026, among a sample of 1,022 US adults with a margin of error of 3.2 percentage points.

The impact of the Iran war on the American public mood as well as on the US midterm elections has been unmistakable, with even President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance acknowledging public anger. Even before Israel and the US started the war, the public position was clear, as our own pre-war poll showed only one in five Americans supported resorting to force against Iran. And just before the midterm elections, our poll found that Americans expected the war to impact their vote, with subsequent exit polls providing further evidence. This has been especially true of Democrats whose mobilization resulted in historic Democratic victories in Congress. What is the extent to which Democrats and other Americans are prepared to go to force an end to the war, especially as President Trump will remain in office for the next two years?

Here are three key findings on this question from our latest poll:

- Overwhelmingly, 80%, Democrats want to end the war "now, regardless of the terms," compared to 14% who want to "stay the current course, until Iran accepts US terms," and 3% who want to "escalate militarily, in attempt to force Iran to accept US terms." Overall, 55% of all Americans want to end the war now, including 59% of independents and 25% of Republicans.

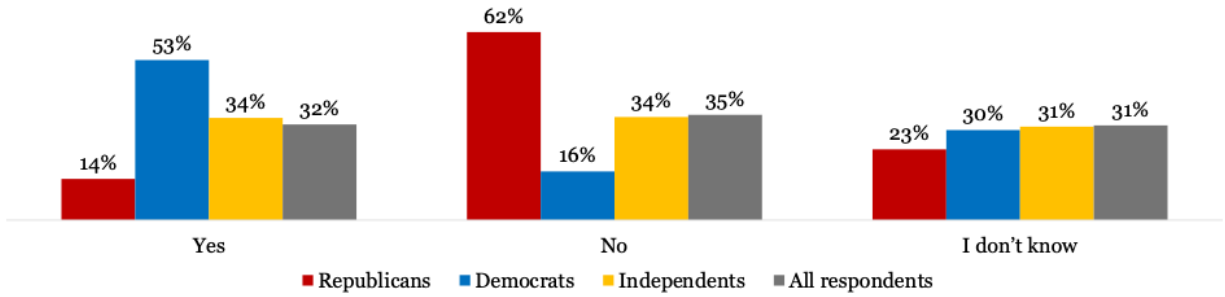
Q. Which of the following military steps regarding the Iran war do you support?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos November 20 – 22, 2026, among 1,022 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

- A majority of Democrats, 53%, support Congress withholding funds for military operations as a way of forcing the end of the Iran war, while only 16% oppose this and 30% say they don't know. Overall Americans are roughly divided, with about a third each saying they support such a move, oppose it, or don't know.

Q. Do you support Congress withholding funds for military operations as a way of forcing the end of the Iran war?

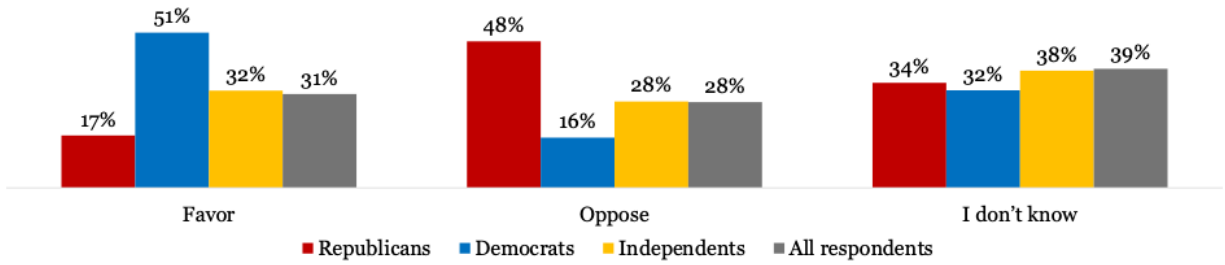


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos November 20 – 22, 2026, among 1,022 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

- A majority of Democrats, 51%, favor including an Iran war-funding cutoff in the upcoming stopgap funding Congressional bill, while 16% oppose it and 32% say they don't know. Overall, Americans are divided, with 31% saying they support a war-funding cutoff, compared to 28% who oppose it, and 39% who say they don't know.

Q. Congress faces a December 11, 2026, deadline to pass a stopgap funding bill to keep the government open.

Do you favor or oppose including an Iran war-funding cutoff in that bill, even if it risks a presidential veto and a possible government shutdown?



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Analysis

The strong desire of the Democratic public to end the Iran now is unmistakable, increasing the pressure on their elected officials even before they take office in January 2027. But are Democrats aware of the implications of their position? For example, ending the war now gives Iran more control over the Strait of Hurmuz, more income, and leaves the Iran nuclear issue unaddressed. Recent UMD Critical Issues Polls indicate that Democrats are prepared to live with these consequences. Here is a sampling:

- Most Democrats (and a plurality of all Americans) say that Iran now controls Hormuz, not the US.
- Half of Democrats say the US should be responsible for reparations to Iran for damage caused by the war, while only a minority, 16%, oppose reparations, as a majority also say the Iran war is illegal under both US law and international law.
- Only 21% of Democrats say Iran is now in a worse position to acquire nuclear weapons than it was before the war.
- A large majority of Democrats, 82%, as well as a majority of all Americans, 57%, say they oppose trying to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons by military means.

- Most Democrats say they prefer the US focusing on turning the Middle East into a nuclear-free zone, instead of focusing only on Iran's program.
- A plurality of Democrats, 45%, say if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would use them only as a deterrent, compared to 24% who say Iran would use them offensively.

Still, with all the Democrats' new clout, Donald Trump remains the president of the United States. If faced with tying the budget to cutting war funding, he may risk shutting down the government, blaming it on Democrats. As is implicit in the wording of our poll question on this issue, the Democratic public is apparently prepared to take that risk. On the other hand, Trump may be looking for a way to end the war, and cutting war funding may provide him with an exit ramp, while blaming Congress, especially Democrats, for the consequences.

I am grateful to Karenna Sarney for her contributions to this report.