

Penta Insiders



2025 Washington Insights **Review:** Economic Pressures and Emerging Technologies Reshape Policymaker Priorities

September 2025
pentainsiders.com

Penta Insiders

2025 Washington Insights Review

Executive Summary

Policymaker priorities in 2025 reflect a convergence of urgent domestic concerns and forward-looking oversight. The economy has re-emerged as the dominant issue, with sharp increases in concern over inflation, cost of living, and trade. Healthcare has also regained prominence, while national security makes its first appearance among leading concerns, even as partisan divisions shape the framing of each challenge. After dipping in 2024, the share of policymakers ranking the economy among their top concerns surged from 31% to 50%, restoring it to pre-2024 levels. Inflation and cost of living dominate economic pressures, but partisan perspectives diverge on secondary priorities with Democrats emphasizing tariffs and trade, meanwhile Republicans highlight federal spending.

Beyond domestic concerns, attention is also shifting toward sectors poised to define the next decade. Fintech is viewed both as the fastest-growing industry and one of the most in need of federal oversight, illustrating the balance between innovation and regulation. Artificial intelligence has overtaken cryptocurrency as the top technology requiring additional regulation, underscoring rising unease over its rapid deployment and societal impact. Meanwhile, the ways policymakers consume information and communicate remain fractured along party lines. While credible news outlets, research, and government sources dominate decision-making inputs, Democrats and Republicans diverge sharply in their preferred social media platforms, shaping how policy messages are delivered and received.

Penta Insiders

At Penta, our mission is to foster non-partisan, impactful policy conversations by bridging the gap between policymakers and advocates through actionable insights. Each year, we connect with thousands of policymakers at every level of government; across Washington, D.C., state capitals, and around the globe, to gather invaluable feedback. This research powers our cutting-edge, tailored reports, addressing the critical challenges facing public servants today. Explore our insights, access exclusive reports, and stay informed by visiting www.pentainsiders.com. To join the conversation follow us on LinkedIn [@pentainsiders](https://www.linkedin.com/company/pentainsiders).



2025 Washington Insights Review

From February through April 2025, we surveyed policymakers to understand their priorities and perspectives. This report presents those findings in a clear, data-driven overview of how policymakers view today's most pressing issues, from media trust and economic pressures to healthcare, the environment, and tech regulation.

Policymakers Rely Most on News, but Trust Is Spread Across Multiple Sources

Policymakers rely most on **credible publications and institutional sources** to guide their **decision-making**. They turn first to **news outlets**, then to **research and white papers**, and finally to **official government sources** to stay up to speed.



News

45%



Research Papers

33%



Government Sources

29%

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Media Trust Remains Politically Divided

When asked about their most trusted news sources, policymakers revealed a clear political divide, **Democrats favor public broadcasting and mainstream media**, while **Republicans prefer business press and cable news**.

Democrats

NY Times - 42%

NPR - 42%

Washington Post - 33%

Politico - 28%

Republicans

Wall Street Journal - 38%

Fox News - 21%

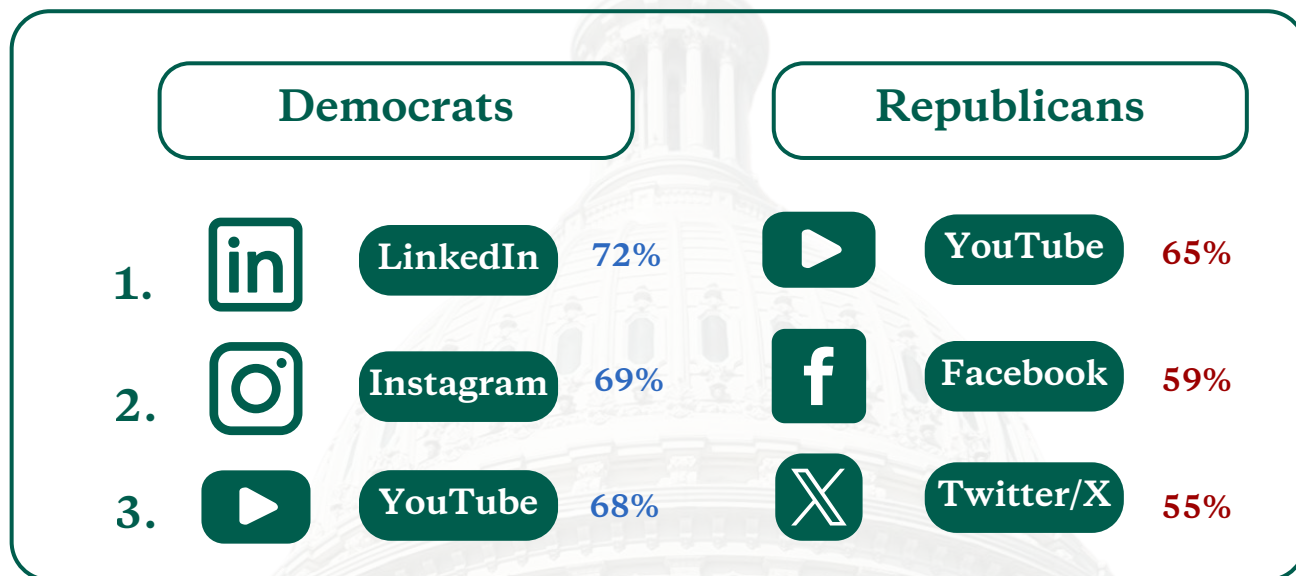
Washington Post - 22%

Politico - 19%

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Party Lines Shape Policymakers' Social Media Habits

Platform preferences in D.C. vary sharply: Democrats are most active on LinkedIn (72%), while Republicans lead on YouTube (65%), underscoring distinct contrasts in how each party engages online audiences.



2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Economy Tops the List, but Party Priorities Diverge

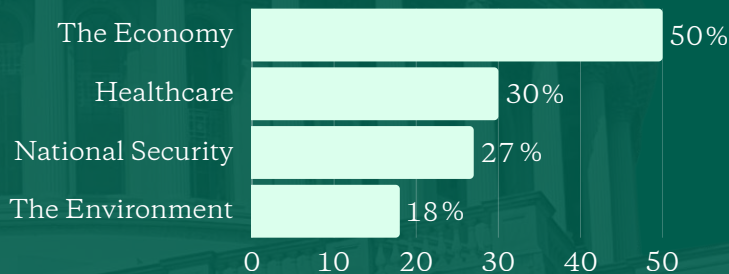
Most Pressing Issues

Policymakers across parties agree the **economy is the nation's top priority**. Beyond that consensus, **Democrats are more likely to emphasize healthcare and climate issues**, while **Republicans place greater focus on national security and immigration**.

Overall: Most Pressing Issues

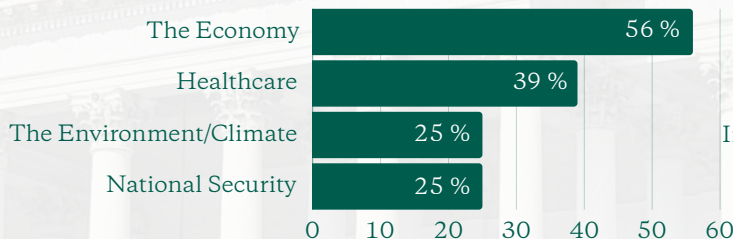
What do you view as the top-most pressing issue facing the nation?

Percent of respondents who placed the issue in their top three

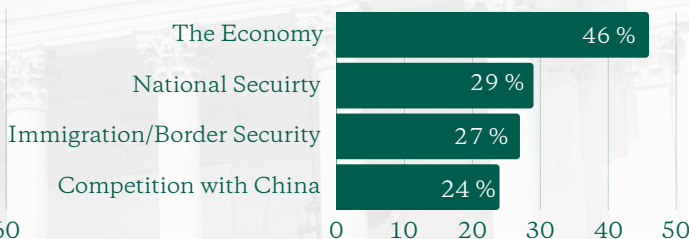


2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Dems: Most Pressing Issues



GOP: Most Pressing Issues



Concern Over the Economy Surges in 2025 After a Dip Last Year

Alongside the economy's resurgence, healthcare reclaims prominence and national security emerges as a leading concern in 2025.

Which of the following do you view as the most pressing issues facing the nation?

Percent of respondents who placed the issue in their top three

2023

Top Issue :

Economy

48%

Issue 02 :

The Environment

28%

Issue 03 :

Healthcare

25%

2024

Top Issue :

Economy

31%

Issue 02 :

Immigration

24%

Issue 03 :

Repro. Rights

20%

2025

Top Issue :

Economy

50%

Issue 02 :

Healthcare

30%

Issue 03 :

Natl. Security

27%

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

After falling to 31% in 2024, the share of policymakers ranking the economy among their top concerns jumped to 50% in 2025, returning to levels last seen in 2023. Inflation and affordability likely drove the renewed focus, even as other priorities shifted.

This renewed focus on the economy underscores a broader shift in Washington: while the economy has reclaimed its place as the top concern, healthcare has also reemerged as a pressing issue in 2025, rising to its highest level since 2023. At the same time, national security makes its first appearance in the last three years among leading concerns, signaling a widening set of priorities shaping the policymaker agenda.

The Economy



Policymakers Cite Inflation and Cost of Living as Primary Economic Challenges

Overall: Most Pressing Issues, if selected Economy

Which of the following do you view as the most pressing issues in regard to the economy?

Percent of respondents who placed each sub-issue in their top 3 among those who said economy was a pressing issue



2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Top Economic Issues by Party

Percent of respondents who placed each sub-issue in their top 3 among those who said economy was a pressing issue

Democrats



Top Issue :

Cost of Living

58%

Issue O2 :

Tariffs/Trade

51%

Issue O3 :

Inflation

51%

Republicans



Top Issue :

Inflation

50%

Issue O2 :

Cost of Living

39%

Issue O3 :

Federal Spending

39%

While both Democrats and Republicans rank inflation and cost of living among their top economic concerns, Democrats elevate tariffs and trade to the same level, reflecting a focus on global market dynamics. Meanwhile, Republicans, highlight federal spending, pointing to priorities around fiscal restraint. These contrasts show how each party frames economic challenges through distinct policy lenses, even amid shared concerns.

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Healthcare

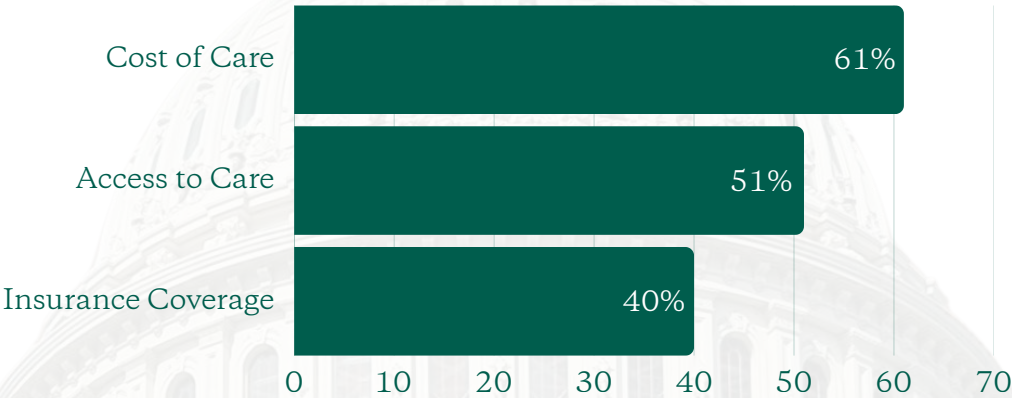


Access and Affordability Top Policymaker Concerns in Healthcare

Overall: Most Pressing Healthcare Issues

Which of the following do you view as the most pressing issues in regard to healthcare?

Percent of respondents who placed each sub-issue in their top three among those who said healthcare was a pressing issue



2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

Subtle Partisan Differences in Healthcare Priorities

Democrats	Republicans
Cost of Care 66 %	Cost of Care 58%
Access to Care 58 %	Access to Care 41%
Insurance Coverage 49%	Drug Cost 36%

Healthcare ranks as the second most pressing issue among policymakers, with both parties prioritizing cost of care and access to care as the top challenges.

While this alignment reflects broad agreement on the core pressures facing the system, differences emerge in the third issue each party emphasizes.

Democrats place greater importance on insurance coverage (49%), whereas Republicans focus more on drug costs (36%). These distinctions highlight how each party approaches healthcare with a different set of policy priorities, even as they remain aligned on affordability and access.

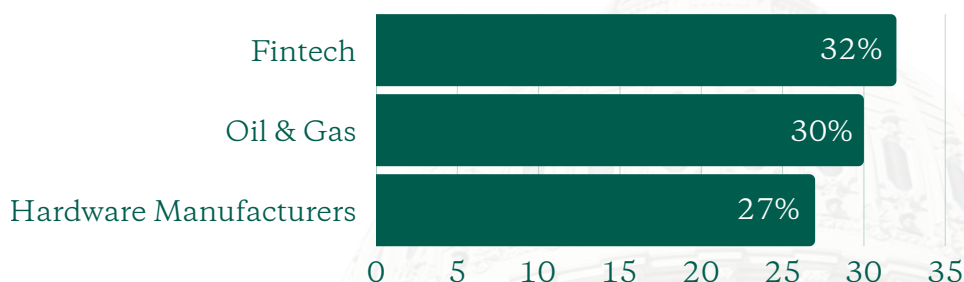
Innovation and Oversight



Fintech Seen as Both a Growth Engine and a Regulatory Priority

Which sectors do you think will experience the greatest growth over the next three years?

Percent of respondents who placed the sector in their top three



Which sectors do you think are in the greatest need of additional federal regulation?

Percent of respondents who placed the sector in their top three



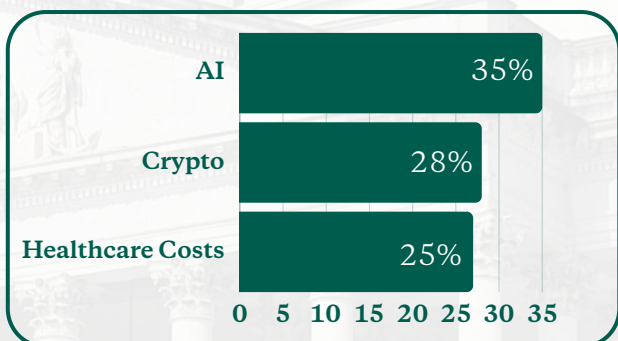
Fintech stands out as the sector policymakers expect to see the most growth in over the next three years, reflecting strong interest in its potential to reshape financial services. At the same time, **they also rank it among the top three sectors most in need of additional federal regulation.** This dual view underscores how policymakers are highlighting the balance between innovation and oversight.

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research

AI Outpaces Crypto in Calls for Federal Oversight

Which of the following areas do you think are in the greatest need of additional federal regulation?

Percent of respondents who placed the issue in their top three



Policymakers rank AI as the top area in need of additional federal regulation, surpassing both cryptocurrency and healthcare costs, which reflects heightened concern over its rapid deployment and broader societal impact.

2025 Washington Brand Policy Research