



# Straight Tickets and Ticket-Splitting: Moderate Independent Voters in the Volatile Middle

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## Abstract

In the 2024 U.S. elections, there was a modest but meaningful resurgence of ticket-splitting in several battleground states, with voters dividing their support between presidential and Senate candidates. Using 2024 exit poll data from Edison Research and American National Election Studies (ANES), our analysis reveals that moderate independent voters are the most likely to be ticket-splitters who vote for candidates from multiple parties. We identify some distinguishing demographic characteristics of moderate independents and explore factors that drive their voting choices. These independents are divided in their straight-ticket voting, with about half voting a straight Democratic ticket and half a straight Republican ticket. We found that moderate independents delayed finalizing their 2024 choice for President until just before the election and that they are more likely to have changed their party choice between the 2020 and 2024 elections. Their tendency to cast split tickets at higher rates and divide their straight ticket voting between the two major parties suggests that this relatively large group in the middle of the electorate is more persuadable in election campaigns and may be the key to determining election outcomes.

**Keywords:** ticket-splitting, independent voters, 2024 U.S. Elections