To: Interested Parties
From: Senate Majority PAC
Date: July 24, 2026
Subject: Donald Trump's Iran War Expanded the Senate Map

Donald Trump’s war with Iran is nearing its 150th day - and while voters are consistently against foreign entanglements, the conflict's largest political impact is hardening Americans’ distrust of Republicans on the economy. This has created new pathways for an expanded battleground map, and the war is forcing higher prices and economic instability on families.

A Marist poll in March found 56% of Americans opposed U.S. military action in Iran, and a CNN poll put disapproval of the strikes at 59%. That opposition has not faded as the war has dragged on: a Reuters/Ipsos poll taken after fighting resumed in late June found only 37% approval for the renewed strikes.

And since the war started in late February, gas prices spiked, grocery bills climbed, and Trump's approval on cost of living has cratered. Put those two forces together - a war voters didn't want, and a cost-of-living crisis it worsened - and you get exactly what's happening now: Ohio and Alaska have moved to toss-up, and Iowa's open seat has become one of the most competitive races in the country. None of that was true a year ago.

Since the war began, Trump's approval on gas prices has dropped from 46% to 33%. His approval on the overall cost of living has dropped from 39% to 35%. Every state we track has seen a drop of at least four points, and none of it bounced back during the brief ceasefire, according to internal Senate Majority PAC polling. There is no reason to expect it improves now that fighting has resumed.

Public polling backs this up. The Economist's approval tracker, which has followed presidential job performance since 2009, put Trump's net approval at negative 25 in early June, the worst mark of any president in that series. His worst issue was inflation and prices, at negative 43. A separate NPR/PBS News/Marist poll, fielded June 8-11, found only 33% of Americans approve of his handling of the economy, worse than Joe Biden's low point, and just 36% approve of his job performance overall, against 59% who disapprove. By mid-July, Forbes reported his net approval on the economy had fallen further still, to an all-time low of negative 22. Voters are feeling this directly: AAA recorded gas prices above $4 a gallon in early June. And as the New York Times has reported, $4 a gallon gas will persist even if the Trump administration manages to end this war of their own creation.

That damage is landing hardest exactly where Republicans can least afford it. Ohio, Iowa, and Alaska are three of the most competitive Senate races on the map, and Trump's cost-of-living numbers are falling there right along with the national trend, wiping out the economic argument Republican candidates in those races are counting on.

This isn't just a swing-voter problem. The same Marist poll found the share of Republicans who "strongly approve" of Trump fell from 61% in April to 53% in June, and 22% of Republicans now disapprove of his handling of the economy outright. Rural America, a core piece of the 2024 coalition, went from net +22 approval in February 2025 to net -10 today, a 32-point collapse. That is the kind of shift that turns thin margins in red-leaning states like Iowa and Alaska into losses. It is already showing up in Congress: four House Republicans crossed party lines in early June to help pass a resolution limiting Trump's authority to keep fighting.

By restarting the war, Trump reopened this exact wound at the worst possible time for his party. Every extra week of fighting means another week of gas prices and cost-of-living anger stacking up in Ohio, Iowa, and Alaska, and other states across the battleground map that could deliver a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate.

These findings are based on a Blue Rose tracking poll (March 1 to July 14, 2026; N=81,651-133,567).