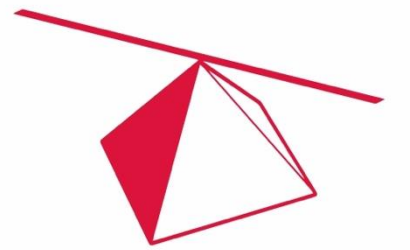
Preparing for Civil Unrest Risk Around the 2026 Midterm Elections

Practical and immediately actionable information

Last updated: October 20, 2026



Risk of election-related civil unrest is higher than in past midterm elections but still modest

6 reasons why the risk is higher in 2026

1 The United States is in an armed-conflict with Iran

- Prior election interference from Russia and China was carefully calibrated not to trigger an armed-conflict.
- Iran does not need to fear an armed-conflict.

2 2026 - first election where AI is pervasive across social media

- Anyone with an I-Phone and TikTok account can plant a seed.
- Enhanced algorithms intensify true-believer engagement.
- Risk of AI enhanced swatting misdirecting law enforcement.

3 Majority of Americans do not believe that the Midterm Elections will be free and fair

- First time in history.

4 Demonstrations and protests over the past two years have crescendoed

- There are hyper-involved participants on both sides of the political spectrum.
- Groups that want to create civil unrest may trigger it whether their candidates win or lose.

5 A well-trained cadre exists that is prepared to hijack peaceful protests and demonstrations

- Cadres exist on both sides of the political spectrum and they have gained experience over the last three years.

6 Recent riots in France may provide inspiration

- Highly visible unrest abroad can supply imagery, narratives and tactics that domestic agitators may seek to imitate.

Any election-related civil unrest is much more likely to become wide-spread than in past elections

WHY IS THE SPREAD OF CIVIL UNREST MORE LIKELY?

Only 49%

of Americans expect a free and fair midterm

Distrust of results

Only half of Americans expect the midterms to be free and fair. Slow counts are easy to cast as fraud and can undermine trust in the result.

2% → 14%

was the increase of threats as a percentage of election-office incident reports from 2020 vs. 2024

Threats to election offices

Threats to election offices rose sevenfold between 2020 and 2024.

78%

of Americans are concerned about fake political content that looks real

AI-driven misinformation

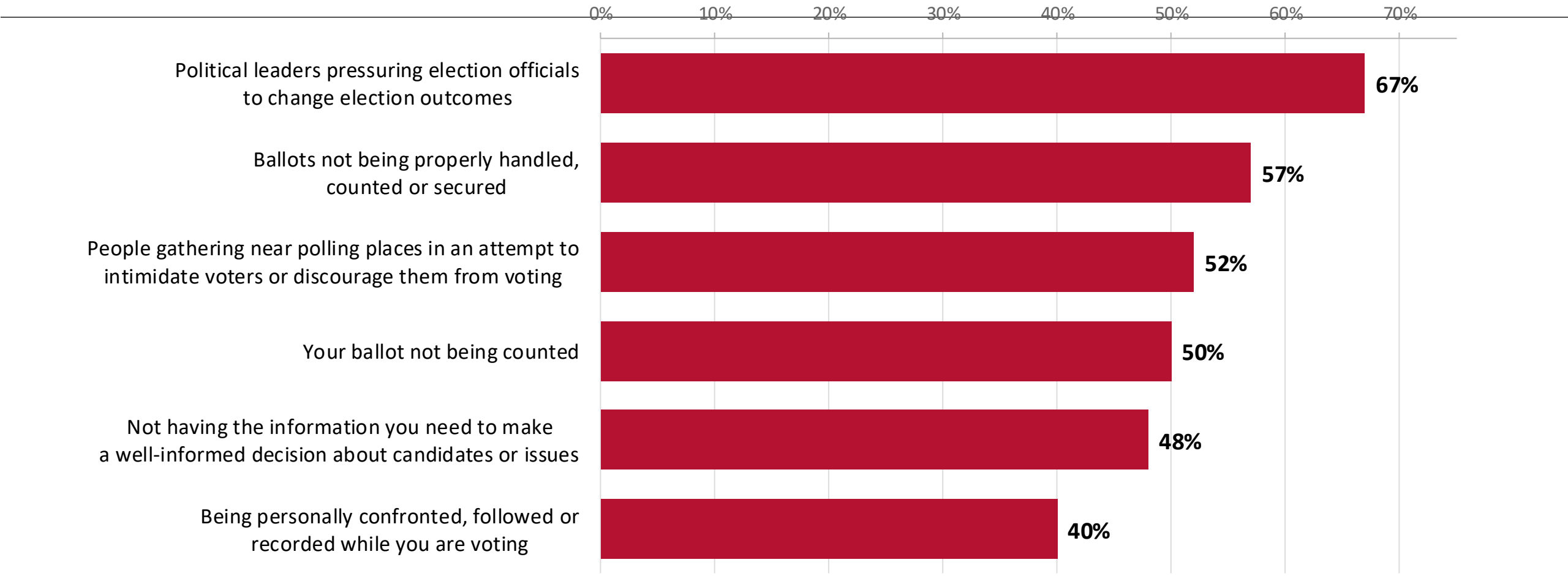
Most Americans worry about AI-generated political content; nearly half have already seen it.

Civil unrest: public disorder at a scale that disrupts business, damages property, or threatens public safety.

Sources: UC San Diego (Sept 2026) · Center for Internet Security; FBI · Catawba College/YouGov (Sept 2026)

Two-in-three U.S. adults are concerned about political pressure in elections

Source: Kettering Foundation= Gallup Democracy for All Project, April 24 – June 10, 2026



The institutions that settle election disputes are under strain

In 2000 and 2020, disputes were resolved through the courts, election boards, and Congress. This year, each of those institutions faces added pressure.

59% → 35%

of Americans confident in the courts, 2020 vs. 2024. One of the largest drops Gallup measured worldwide.

Courts

May not rule in time, may issue ambiguous or conflicting rulings, or may be ignored.

2 in 3

Americans worry political leaders will pressure election officials to change results.

Election boards

Certification should be routine, but some counties have delayed it in recent cycles. Party-affiliated officials certify in most states.

3 in a row

The last three Houses have had the thinnest majorities in a century.

Congress

Each chamber has final say over its contested races. By custom it seats the state's certified winner; thin majorities test that custom.

30 states + DC

sued by DOJ for voter-roll data.

Federal-state friction

The federal role in elections is growing and contested. Standoffs could slow resolution.

Sources: Gallup (2024, 2026) · Election Reformers Network · ABC News/538 · CBS News (Oct 2026)

Expect a noisy election; prepare for a disputed one

Four scenarios, from most to least likely. The bottom two meet the definition of civil unrest that could disrupt business.

Most likely	**A normal, noisy election**	Some, perhaps many, races take weeks to call. Misinformation, scattered threats, lawsuits. Results certified on schedule.
Fairly likely	**A bumpy but peaceful process**	Some counties or states delay certification until courts order it. Protests are brief and mostly peaceful. Outcome is widely accepted.

WHERE CURRENT PLANNING LIKELY RUNS OUT

Less likely	**Localized unrest**	Larger protests in a few cities, with some violence. Disruption is local and fairly short. Control of Congress not at stake.
Unlikely but possible	**A drawn-out national dispute**	Races deciding House or Senate control unresolved by Jan 3. Federal and state governments face off. Unrest, marked by violence, in several cities for weeks.

KEY DATES

- **Now**
- **Nov 3** — Election Day
- **Mid-Nov to early Dec** — State certification deadlines
- **Jan 3, 2027** — New Congress seated

Scenarios reflect CBI's and Crimson Fulcrum's assessment of the 2026 cycle.

Preparing now for a disputed election lets you act quickly if needed, or choose not to

This risk doesn't sit with any one department, and most companies won't want to respond on their own. These five steps cover both.

INSIDE YOUR COMPANY

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

1

Designate an owner now

One for the internal cross-functional plan, one for external coordination to react to civil unrest.

2

Help to lower the risk

Amplify official election information. In a nonpartisan manner, encourage employees to vote and serve as poll workers.

3

Prepare across companies

Connect with peer and local business leaders before a crisis, not during one.

4

Identify a trusted convener

Respected across the political spectrum, able to bring companies together quickly for de-escalation, e.g., a local chamber or business association

5

Engage officials

Early private outreach from major employers can encourage officials to follow established procedure.

Whatever happens this election season, these steps leave the company with stronger ties to its community and peers, and ready for future elections.

Source: Civic Business Unrest - Civil Unrest Preparedness Guide

Sources

Statistics cited on each slide.

SLIDE 2 – WHY CIVIL UNREST DISRUPTION RISK HAS ESCALATED

Crimson Fulcrum Strategic Institute Assessment

SLIDE 3 — WHAT COULD SPARK UNREST

UC San Diego, Yankelovich Center Trust in Elections survey; 5,016 U.S. adults, Sept 1–9, 2026

Center for Internet Security 2024 General Election Incident Reporting Wrap-up

FBI Statement on bomb threats to polling locations, Nov 2024

Catawba College / YouGov National survey; 1,200 U.S. adults, Sept 4–9, 2026

SLIDE 4 — WHAT COULD SPARK UNREST

Kettering Foundation= Gallup Democracy for All Project, April 24 – June 10, 2026

SLIDE 5 — INSTITUTIONS UNDER STRAIN

Gallup Americans Pass Judgment on Their Courts, Dec 2024

Gallup Election Concerns Run High Ahead of 2026 Midterms; 23,683 U.S. adults, April–June 2026

Election Reformers Network Analysis of state certification authority, 2022, as reported by Governing

ABC News / 538 Republicans start 2025 with the smallest House majority since 1931, Jan 2025

CBS News Tracker of Justice Department lawsuits seeking state voter-roll data, Oct 1, 2026

SLIDE 6 — A RANGE OF SCENARIOS

Scenarios reflect the Civic Business Initiative' and Crimson Fulcrum's assessment of the 2026 cycle, drawing on the sources above and on precedents from past contested elections.

SLIDE 7 — HOW BUSINESS CAN REDUCE THE RISK

Civic Business Initiative – Civil Unrest Preparedness Guide

www.crimsonfulcrum.com