THE TYSON GROUP
NATIONAL RESEARCH FIRM

PUP RESEARCH

TO: Plymouth Union Public Research
FROM: Derek Falcon, Tyson Group Vice President
SUBJECT: Limits of the MAHA Movement with the GOP Primary Electorate
DATE: April 23, 2025

SUMMARY

In a national survey of likely Republican primary voters for PUP Research, our goal was to gauge support for the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement and its impact on food policy three months into President Trump's second term. Our findings show that Trump's emphasis on utilizing federal policy to improve food safety during his campaign and in recent weeks has energized Republicans behind the cause. However, major caveats exist when it comes to how conservative voters want to see the MAHA agenda deployed and who they want to be its champion.

Echoing trends we are seeing across multiple issues, Republicans no longer prefer federalism to guide food policy now that Trump is in the White House. They want the issue to be decided at the national level and want Trump to take the lead on making the nation healthier by deploying market-based solutions that require voluntary cooperation from private food companies.

While Robert F. Kennedy Jr. enjoys strong favorability numbers, there is a significant gap between how much the GOP base trusts him to implement the MAHA agenda in comparison to Trump.

When voters are pressed to choose between Trump's efforts to lower prices and Kennedy's "at-all-costs" approach to food safety, real cracks in the HHS Secretary's support emerge. As much as the MAHA movement has remade the GOP and activated a key coalition within the party, the broader conservative movement is still anchored to Trump's platform of supporting farmers, bringing jobs and manufacturing back to the U.S., lowering costs, and protecting the freedom of individuals. Republican leaders who side with RFK Jr. over Trump when his efforts conflict with the President's on those core issues could create vulnerabilities for themselves in potential primaries.

Overall, the Republican Party is embracing MAHA to an extent. Republicans just don't want it to get in the way of some of the other transformational changes they are excited about Trump making to boost the economy in his second term and want to make sure the President, and not RFK Jr., is running the show.

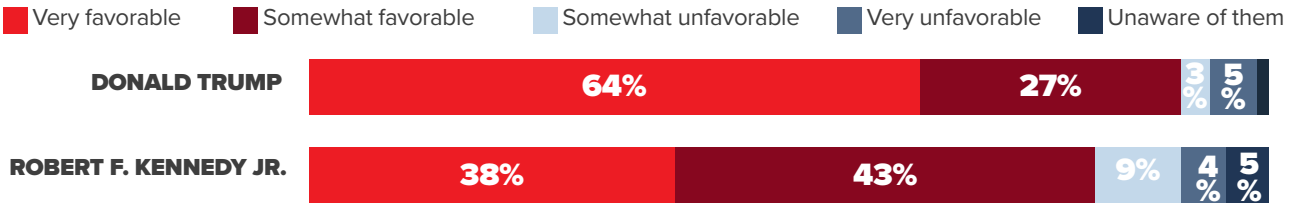
KEY FINDINGS

1. REPUBLICAN PRIMARY VOTERS LIKE KENNEDY, BUT TRUST TRUMP MORE WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD REGULATIONS

Kennedy Jr. is broadly popular with Republican primary voters, but his support consistently trails Trump's across key measures. Ultimately, Republican voters want Trump—not RFK Jr., the FDA, or individual states—leading food regulation. They believe decisions impacting America's food producers should be made nationally and directed by Trump himself.

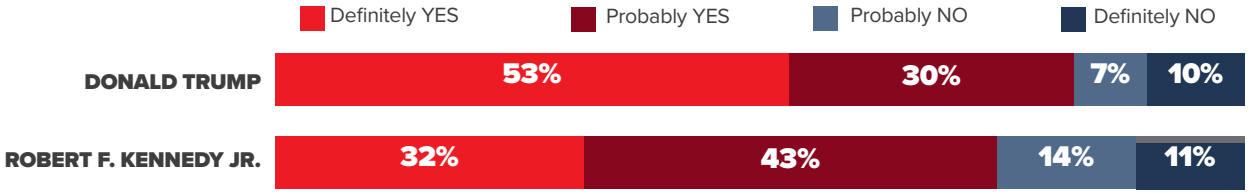
Image Ratings

- Trump: 91% FAV / 8% UNFAV / +83% NET
- RFK Jr: 81% FAV / 13% UNFAV / +68% NET



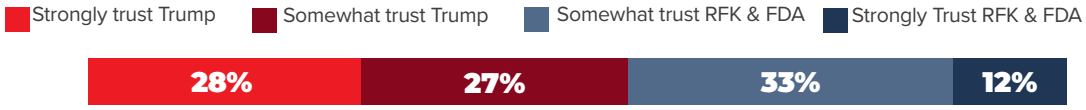
Statement Agreement:

- Donald Trump cares about people like me: 83% YES / 17% NO / +66% NET
- RFK Jr. cares about people like me: 75% YES / 25% NO / +50% NET



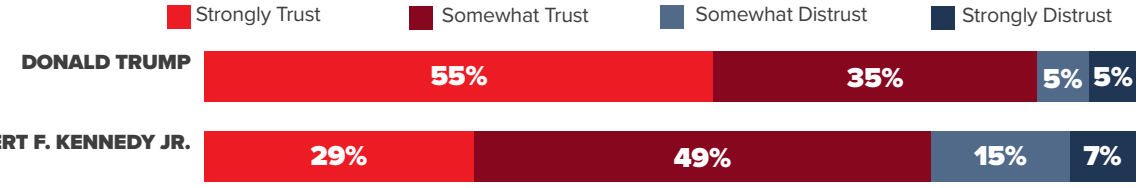
Who do you trust MOST to regulate food ingredients?

- 55% Trump / 45% RFK Jr. & FDA / 10% NET Trump



How much do you trust _____ to regulate the U.S. food supply?

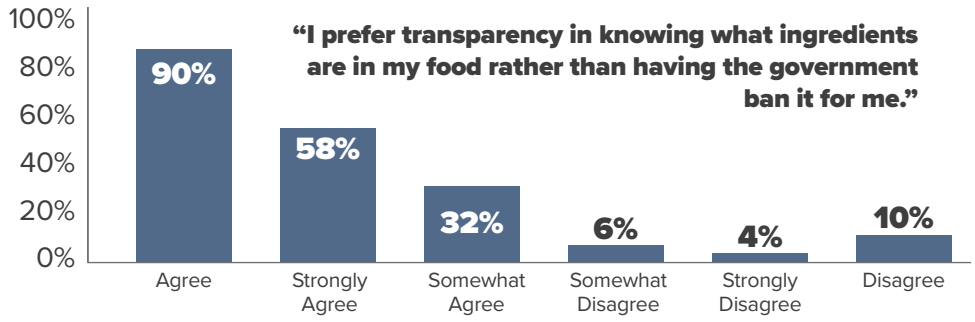
- Trump: +80% NET Trust
- RFK Jr.: +66% NET Trust



Kennedy Jr. has certainly burst on to the scene in the GOP and made himself well-liked. However, the double digit drop off we see in his support in comparison to Trump shows that voters are still far more comfortable with the President on food safety issues. This shows that the enthusiasm GOP voters have for the MAHA agenda has more to do with their affinity for Trump than the ideas themselves.

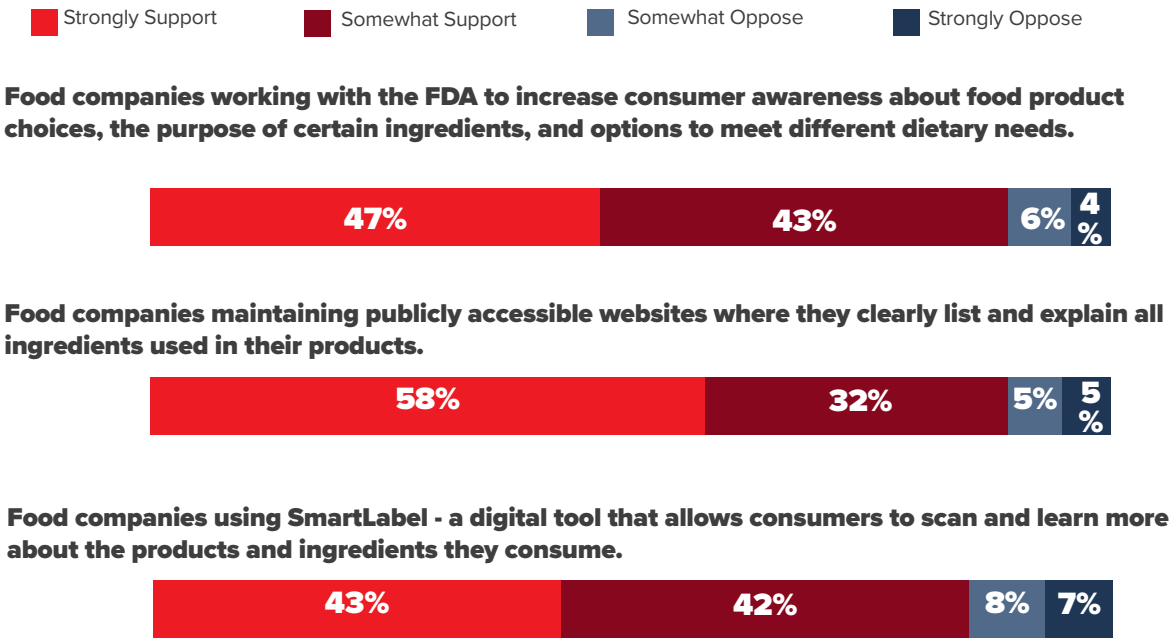
2. REPUBLICANS DESIRE FREEDOM AND TRANSPARENCY OVER GOVERNMENT REGULATION

Even though Republican primary voters back Trump on food safety, they overwhelmingly (90%) agree that food companies voluntarily providing more transparency about their ingredients is a better approach than leaving food regulation up to government. This reflects a strong preference for individual liberty and free-market principles, which remain central to Republican thought on food policy.



3. REPUBLICAN VOTERS BACK VOLUNTARY TRANSPARENCY EFFORTS LED BY FOOD COMPANIES

All transparency measures tested received broad support from Republican primary voters—many of which align with steps food companies are already taking to build trust and inform consumers. The most effective approaches include partnering with the FDA to raise awareness about product choices and maintaining public websites that clearly list and explain ingredients.



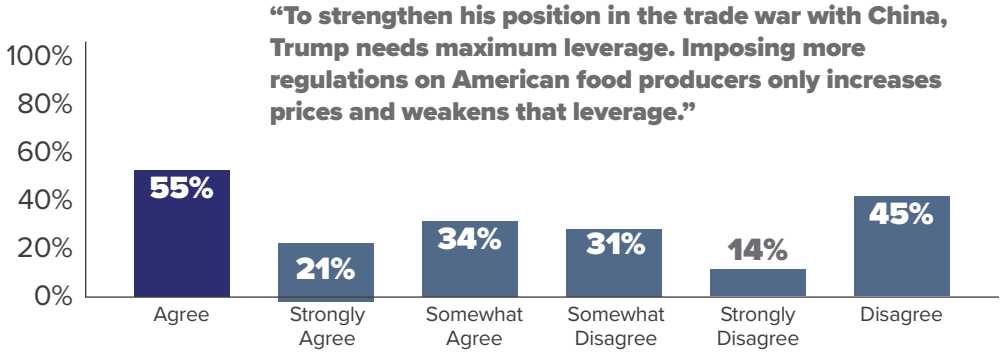
Food companies moving nutrition information and calorie counts to be displayed on the front of food packaging instead of the back.

Support/Oppose: Transparency Measures

These findings suggest a roadmap that might exist for President Trump as he seeks to strike a balance between making food healthier without putting any of his other agenda items at risk and maintaining support from the 90% of conservatives who value the ability to make their own choices on food safety rather than relying on more government regulation.

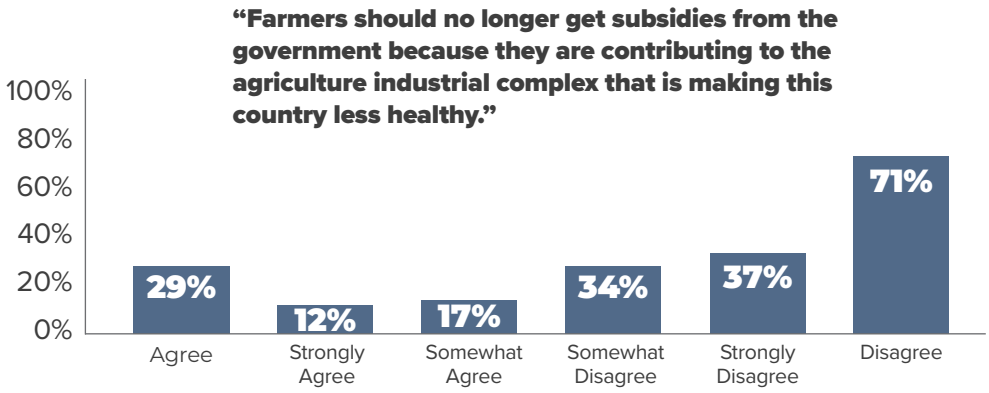
4. GOP VOTERS CONCERNED ADDITIONAL FOOD REGULATIONS HANDCUFF AMERICA IN THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AGAINST CHINA

Republican voters are firmly opposed to allowing new food regulations to get in the way of holding China accountable on trade. A majority (55%) agree that President Trump needs maximum leverage to succeed in his negotiations with China. To maintain that leverage, voters express concern about imposing new regulations on American food producers that could drive up prices further and weaken the President's ability to beat China in potential trade negotiations.



5. REPUBLICANS SIDE WITH FARMERS ON SUBSIDY REFORM

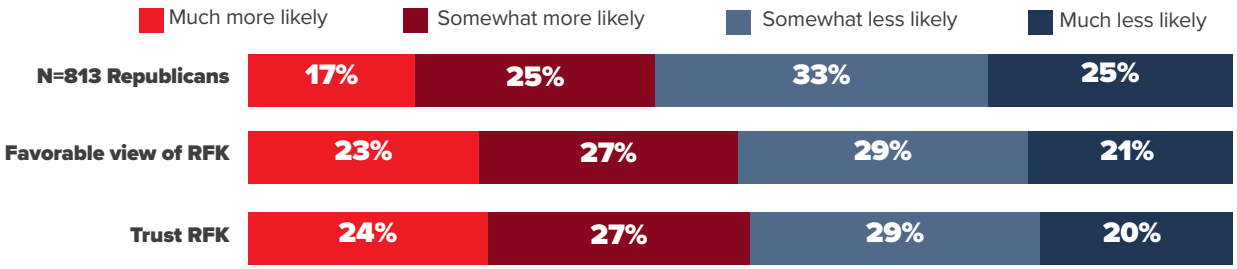
Another example of the limits of RFK Jr.'s support in the GOP is when his agenda clashes with the pro-farmer sentiment in the party. Kennedy Jr. has expressed a desire to end subsidies for farmers because of his belief that they lead to unhealthy food. Republican primary voters firmly reject this view: 71% disagree, including 37% who strongly disagree.



6. REPUBLICANS ABANDON RFK IF HIS AGENDA UNDERMINES TRUMP

While RFK Jr. and the MAHA movement enjoy strong support among Republican primary voters, that support has clear boundaries. A majority (55%) say they would be less likely to support a candidate who sided with RFK over President Trump—especially if it meant higher food prices or weakening the MAGA agenda. Even among voters who view RFK favorably or said they trusted him, roughly half would turn away if his influence appeared to undermine Trump.

Would you be more or less likely to support a candidate for state legislator or Governor that sided with RFK Jr. on food regulation, knowing it could undermine President Trump and make food more expensive for Americans?



METHODOLOGY

On behalf of PUP Research, The Tyson Group conducted a nationwide survey of n=813 likely Republican primary voters from April 11–13, 2025. Respondents were reached via text-to-web. The sample was randomly selected and weighted to reflect national voter registration trends. The margin of error is ±4%.