The Club for Growth's recent survey of likely general election voters in the 41 most competitive Republican-held Congressional races in America found three key challenges facing Republican incumbents but also found several policy messages that can help persuade voters and mobilize reluctant Republican voters.

Republican Incumbents Face Real Challenges

Incumbents in these highly competitive districts face two key challenges.

First, the generic ballot across these competitive districts is Republicans 45%, Democrats 42%, just a three-point lead for Republicans. Given the past electoral results in these districts, we would expect them to be around a Republican +6 average.

Second, and more concerning, is that Republicans face a 12-point enthusiasm gap going into November. Sixty percent (60%) of Republican voters say they are "very interested" in the mid-term elections while 72% of Democratic voters say they are "very interested." This difference in enthusiasm correlates with turnout and could indicate that the eventual electoral turnout will be skewed heavily toward Democrats.

Republican Messaging Opportunities

We found several messages and issues that can help Republican candidates in these highly competitive districts persuade voters and motivate more Republican voters to turn out.

The strongest of these was defending the tax cuts and making them permanent.

Defending the tax cuts and making them permanent was both the strongest persuasive message in moving swing voters to vote for Republicans and the strongest message in creating additional interest in the election among Republican voters.

We also tested some non-economic messages and found that banning sanctuary cities was a strong message at persuading swing voters to support Republican candidates.

Finally, we found that Democrat efforts to impeach President Trump and the need to elect Republicans to protect the President from partisan impeachment was a strong message for mobilizing additional Republican votes.
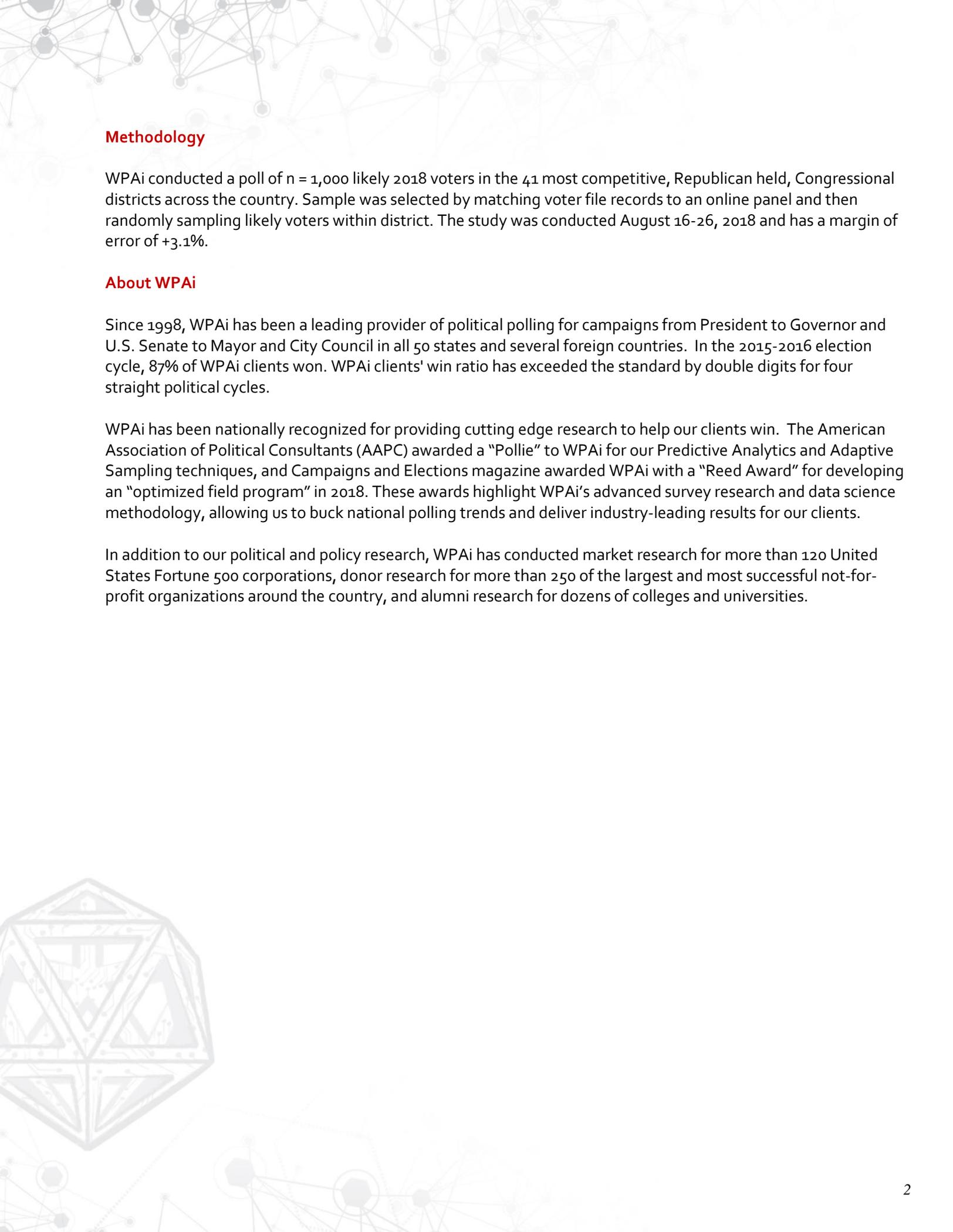
Methodology

WPAi conducted a poll of n = 1,000 likely 2018 voters in the 41 most competitive, Republican held, Congressional districts across the country. Sample was selected by matching voter file records to an online panel and then randomly sampling likely voters within district. The study was conducted August 16-26, 2018 and has a margin of error of +3.1%.

About WPAi

Since 1998, WPAi has been a leading provider of political polling for campaigns from President to Governor and U.S. Senate to Mayor and City Council in all 50 states and several foreign countries. In the 2015-2016 election cycle, 87% of WPAi clients won. WPAi clients' win ratio has exceeded the standard by double digits for four straight political cycles.

WPAi has been nationally recognized for providing cutting edge research to help our clients win. The American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) awarded a "Pollie" to WPAi for our Predictive Analytics and Adaptive Sampling techniques, and Campaigns and Elections magazine awarded WPAi with a "Reed Award" for developing an "optimized field program" in 2018. These awards highlight WPAi's advanced survey research and data science methodology, allowing us to buck national polling trends and deliver industry-leading results for our clients.

In addition to our political and policy research, WPAi has conducted market research for more than 120 United States Fortune 500 corporations, donor research for more than 250 of the largest and most successful not-for-profit organizations around the country, and alumni research for dozens of colleges and universities.