

Majority of Pennsylvania voters say Fetterman should leave the Democratic Party, Quinnipiac poll finds

By **Jenny Curran** on
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Just over half of Pennsylvania's registered voters now believe Sen. John Fetterman should walk away from the Democratic Party, and the sharpest push is coming from Democrats themselves. A **Quinnipiac University poll conducted July 9, 13** found that 57 percent of the state's Democratic voters think Fetterman should go, compared with 55 percent of Republicans and 46 percent of independents.

The numbers tell a clear story: the party Fetterman belongs to wants him out more than the party he has refused to join.

Quinnipiac surveyed 895 registered voters in Pennsylvania, with a margin of error of plus or minus 4.3 percentage points. The crosstabs show a senator stranded between two coalitions, rejected by his own base, cautiously welcomed by the opposition, and splitting independents roughly down the middle.

A man without a faction

Quinnipiac polling analyst Tim Malloy summed up the predicament in a single line:

"The Democrats would like to show him the door. The Republicans seem to be welcoming him in. Thus is the political irony of Senator John Fetterman."

Fetterman has spent months fielding questions about a party switch. He acknowledged that Republicans have approached him about crossing the aisle, though he declined to discuss what he called "private conversations." In a May op-ed for the Washington Post, he dismissed the speculation directly.

"I'd be a terrible Republican who still votes overwhelmingly with Democrats."

That line was designed to close the door. The Quinnipiac numbers suggest it didn't work, at least not with the voters back home.

Israel as the bright line

Fetterman has drawn his clearest red line on Israel. On Wednesday, he laid out the condition under which he would leave the party he has represented since entering the Senate:

"My long-term concern has been with the Democratic Party, as I am a member of that, is that our party is going to back away and turn their back to Israel. If our party ever becomes, and just makes it official, the anti-Israel party, that's when I would leave because that's been a moral clarity for me."

That statement did not land in a vacuum. House Minority Whip Katherine Clark, a Massachusetts Democrat, recently broke with House Democratic leadership by backing legislation to end all U.S. defensive aid to Israel. When a member of the party's House leadership team endorses cutting off a key ally's defense support, Fetterman's "if" starts to look less hypothetical.

Fetterman has been willing to name what he sees as the source of the problem. In a Fox News interview with Sean Hannity, he offered a blunt assessment of the progressive wing's influence on Democratic primaries:

"It's just been the dancing days of the dirtbag left. The kind of people they are trying to run out of office, they are just good, traditional kinds of Democrats you would expect in New York City now."

The senator's **willingness to break publicly with his party over controversial candidates** has become a recurring theme. He has not hesitated to call out Democratic nominees he views as liabilities, even when doing so puts him at odds with the national party apparatus.

The broader Democratic fracture

Fetterman's situation is not just a personal drama. It reflects a structural problem inside the Democratic coalition. Progressive primary victories have pushed the party's center of gravity leftward on foreign policy, policing, immigration, and cultural issues.

Fetterman, a tattooed populist who once embodied the party's blue-collar aspirations,

now finds himself treated as an outsider for holding positions that were mainstream Democratic stances a decade ago.

His stance on Israel is the most visible fault line, but it is not the only one. The "dirtbag left" comment on Fox News pointed at a wider frustration: that the party's activist class is systematically purging moderates and traditional Democrats from competitive races.

That internal warfare has played out in public. A **Maine Democratic Senate hopeful directed a profanity at Fetterman** during a town hall event, a moment that captured just how personal the infighting has become. When a party's own candidates are cursing at a sitting senator from the same side, the cracks are not cosmetic.

Fetterman has not been shy about returning fire. He has publicly dismissed Maine Democratic nominee Graham Platner as someone who does not even qualify as a real Democrat, a striking rebuke from a senator who is himself being told he does not belong.

What the Pennsylvania numbers mean

The Quinnipiac poll also tested President Trump's standing in the state. Trump's job approval sat at 39 percent, with 58 percent disapproving. His numbers on the economy were nearly identical: 39 percent approval, 58 percent disapproval. Those figures have barely moved since February, when Quinnipiac found 40 percent approving and 55 percent disapproving of Trump's overall performance, and 39 percent approving and 56 percent disapproving on the economy.

The stability of Trump's numbers is notable context. Pennsylvania voters are not warming to the Republican president, but they are simultaneously telling their Democratic senator to get out of his own party. That combination suggests the dissatisfaction with Fetterman is not about voters drifting rightward on policy. It is about a Democratic base that has decided Fetterman's heterodoxy is intolerable.

For Republicans, the 55 percent figure among their own voters is interesting but not overwhelming. It suggests a majority of Pennsylvania Republicans would welcome Fetterman in theory, but a significant minority remains skeptical. Fetterman himself seems to understand the limits of that welcome. His Washington Post op-ed made the

practical case: a senator who votes with Democrats on most legislation would be an awkward fit in a Republican conference.

Independents, at 46 percent, were the least likely to say Fetterman should leave his party. That number falls within the poll's margin of error of a coin flip, hardly a ringing endorsement of the idea, but not a rejection either.

A party that punishes dissent

The deeper question the poll raises is not really about Fetterman at all. It is about what the Democratic Party is willing to tolerate from its elected officials. A senator who supports Israel, questions progressive primary candidates, and appears on Fox News now faces majority opposition from his own party's voters in his home state.

The **mounting controversies around Democratic candidates** Fetterman has criticized only sharpen the irony. The party's base wants to push out a senator who calls out problematic nominees, while those nominees generate their own cascading scandals.

Fetterman's response so far has been to hold his ground rhetorically while staying put organizationally. He has not filed to change his registration. He has not joined the Republican caucus. He has simply continued saying things that infuriate progressives and intrigue conservatives, occupying a political no-man's land that the Quinnipiac data now maps in hard numbers.

The road ahead

Whether Fetterman eventually leaves the Democratic Party may depend less on his own convictions than on how far the party moves. His stated trigger, the party becoming officially anti-Israel, is a threshold, not a prediction. But with figures like Katherine Clark already crossing lines that would have been unthinkable in the Obama era, the distance between Fetterman's red line and the party's trajectory is narrowing.

The **prediction markets tracking Democratic candidate viability** tell their own story about a party struggling to manage its internal contradictions. Fetterman is one of those contradictions, a populist who won a swing state by running as a Democrat and now finds that the label fits less comfortably each month.

Fifty-seven percent of your own party's voters telling you to leave is not a policy disagreement. It is a verdict. The question is whether Fetterman accepts it, or whether the Democratic Party, by continuing its leftward march, eventually renders the question moot.

When a party's base would rather lose a senator than tolerate one who thinks for himself, the party has a bigger problem than John Fetterman.