

DATA CENTERS

★ IS THE ★ NEW ABORTION ISSUE

A WEDGE THAT CAN DIVIDE REPUBLICANS
AND EMPOWER DEMOCRATS



DATA CENTERS

- ✓ Rising Costs
- ✓ Strain on Infrastructure
- ✓ Local Opposition
- ✓ Corporate Profits
- ✓ Who Pays?



ABORTION

- ✓ Deeply Divisive
- ✓ Mobilizes Voters
- ✓ Splits Coalitions
- ✓ Defines Elections
- ✓ Political Leverage

SUPPORT INNOVATION. PROTECT COMMUNITIES.

★ PUT TAXPAYERS FIRST. ★

Data Centers Is the New Abortion Issue

A Strategic Communications Opportunity for the Byron Donalds Campaign

The Opportunity

For decades, abortion was one of the most powerful wedge issues in American politics. It was not simply because Americans disagreed passionately about abortion, but because the issue became politically powerful by exposing a fault line within the Republican coalition. Republican candidates could strongly support conservative principles on abortion while still facing difficult questions from moderates, independents, suburban voters and even members of their own party.

Democrats understood that dynamic and used it effectively. Now, a different issue is beginning to create a remarkably similar political tension: hyperscale data centers.

At first glance, the comparison may seem strange. Abortion is a deeply personal moral and cultural issue, while data centers are massive industrial facilities filled with computers, servers and cooling equipment. The comparison isn't about the issues themselves; it's about the politics.

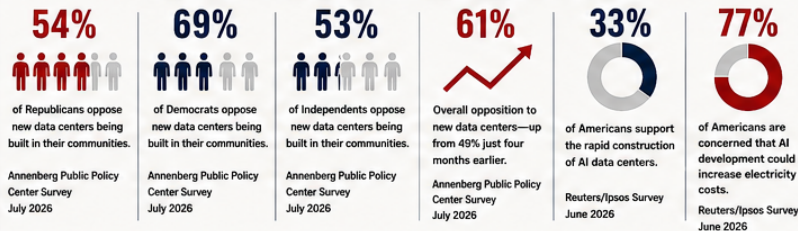
Data centers have the potential to put Republicans in a difficult position because the party's principles point in two different directions. Republicans strongly support technological innovation, economic growth, American competitiveness and maintaining the country's leadership in artificial intelligence, all of which are reasons to welcome technology investment. At the same time, Republican voters care deeply about property rights, lower taxes, affordable electricity, local control and protecting their communities from unnecessary government or corporate overreach.

Hyperscale data centers can put those principles into direct tension. A voter can be completely supportive of artificial intelligence and still ask why their electric bill should go up to power a massive facility owned by one of the world's largest technology companies. That is where the political opportunity—and the political danger—begins.

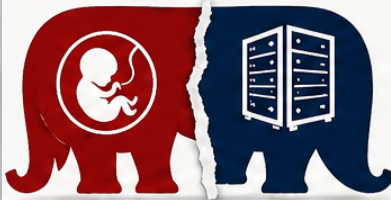
DATA CENTERS ★ IS THE ★ NEW ABORTION ISSUE

A wedge that can divide Republicans
and empower Democrats.

★ THE POLLING TELLS THE STORY ★



THE ABORTION COMPARISON: A LESSON IN POLITICS



This isn't about comparing the issues themselves.
It's about the **POLITICS**.

Like abortion, data centers create a divide between Republican principles and voter concerns—one that Democrats can exploit.

A REPUBLICAN VOTER CAN...

- ✓ Support AI leadership and American innovation
- ✓ Want economic growth and high-paying jobs
- ✓ Believe in free markets and private enterprise
- ✓ Value property rights and local control

...AND STILL ASK

- ✓ Why should my electric bill go up?
- ✓ Why should a corporation get a free ride?
- ✓ Do the benefits justify the costs?
- ✓ Why shouldn't our community have a say?



THE LESSON: WHEN AN ISSUE DIVIDES A COALITION, DEMOCRATS WIN. REPUBLICANS MUST DEFINE THE ISSUE BEFORE OUR OPPONENTS DO. ★ ★ ★

★ WHO PAYS? ★ THE DATA CENTER QUESTION REPUBLICANS ARE ASKING

THE QUESTIONS VOTERS ARE ASKING

- Who pays for the additional electricity generation and transmission infrastructure?
- Will existing customers see higher utility costs?
- Who pays for roads, substations and other infrastructure?
- How much water will the facility consume?
- How much land will it require?
- How many permanent jobs will it actually create?
- What will the project contribute to the local tax base?
- Should taxpayers subsidize infrastructure for enormously profitable corporations?
- What say should local communities have?



These are conservative values: property rights, fiscal responsibility, local control, free markets and protecting taxpayers from corporate cost-shifting.

THE FLORIDA CONTEXT



Florida has 128 data centers, including 120 operating and 8 planned.

Pew Research Center (2026)



67% of planned U.S. data centers are in rural areas, compared with 13% of existing facilities.

Pew Research Center (2026)



Communities across Florida are considering moratoriums, restrictions and additional oversight of large-scale data center development.



The issue is now part of Florida's legislative debate—encompassing local authority, land use, water, infrastructure and ratepayer costs.



Utility costs and grid reliability are becoming top-of-mind issues for Florida families and businesses.

77% OF AMERICANS

are concerned that AI development could increase electricity costs.

Reuters/Ipsos Survey - June 2026



A REPUBLICAN FRAMEWORK FOR DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT

1



AMERICA MUST WIN THE AI RACE

The U.S. should remain the global leader in artificial intelligence and advanced computing.

2



FLORIDA SHOULD COMPETE FOR INNOVATION

We should welcome technology companies, investment and high-paying jobs.

3



CORPORATIONS SHOULD PAY THEIR OWN WAY

Private companies should bear the full infrastructure costs created by their projects.

4



COMMUNITIES DESERVE A VOICE

Local governments and residents should have meaningful input and local control.

5



GROWTH SHOULD PRODUCE REAL VALUE

Projects should be judged by long-term economic benefits—not just the size of the investment.

THE WINNING MESSAGE

- ✓ YES to American AI leadership.
- ✓ YES to innovation.
- ✓ YES to economic growth.
- ✗ BUT NO to forcing Florida families to subsidize the infrastructure required by profitable corporate development.

We can embrace the future without making Florida families pay for it. That's the **REPUBLICAN WAY.** ★ ★ ★

The Wedge Is Already Emerging

The numbers suggest this is not simply a theoretical concern. A July 2026 [Annenberg Public Policy Center survey](#) found that 54% of Republicans oppose new data centers being built in their communities, compared with 69% of Democrats and 53% of independents. Overall opposition had risen to 61%, up from 49% just four months earlier.

A 2026 [Reuters/Ipsos survey](#) found that only 33% of Americans supported the rapid construction of AI data centers, while 64% opposed the pace. Even more importantly from a Republican perspective, 77% expressed concern that AI development could increase electricity costs.

Those numbers reveal something important: the emerging political problem isn't that Republicans have suddenly become anti-technology. It is that Republicans can be pro-technology and still be against the way hyperscale development is being implemented in their communities. That distinction is critical because a Republican voter can support American AI leadership while still believing that private companies should pay for the infrastructure they require.

David Jolly Is Already Making Data Centers a Major Campaign Issue

This is no longer a hypothetical political wedge. Byron Donalds's Democratic opponent, David Jolly, has already made data-center development a [major part](#) of his campaign against Donalds. Jolly has called for an immediate [statewide moratorium](#) on new data centers, arguing that Florida is not prepared for their environmental, labor and infrastructure impacts. In July, he escalated the issue by directly attacking Donalds over his support for allowing data-center development, framing the choice as one between protecting Florida's communities and giving the technology industry greater access to the state.

That makes the issue strategically important for the Donalds campaign regardless of where someone stands on individual data-center projects. Jolly is attempting to define Donalds as the candidate who will put Big Tech ahead of Florida families, while Donalds is arguing that Florida can welcome AI investment while protecting ratepayers, water resources and local communities. The contrast is already becoming a clear Republican-versus-Democrat campaign issue: Jolly [favors a moratorium](#), while Donalds opposes a statewide halt and argues for [regulated growth](#) under [Florida's new data-center law](#).

This Is Where the Abortion Comparison Gets Interesting

The lesson from abortion is not that data centers are somehow as important, emotional or consequential as abortion. They aren't. The lesson is what happens when an issue creates a divide between the party's broader philosophy and the concerns of individual voters.

For years, Republicans were forced to navigate a difficult [political equation on abortion](#). A candidate could satisfy the party's conservative base while risking support among moderates, independents and suburban voters. Democrats understood that tension and repeatedly used it to put Republican candidates on the defensive.

Data centers have the potential to create a different version of the same problem. The Republican coalition can agree that America must maintain its technological edge, that artificial intelligence will be economically transformative, and that Florida should welcome investment and innovation. But that consensus can fracture when the discussion moves from AI in the abstract to a hyperscale facility that requires enormous amounts of electricity, land, water and infrastructure.

A Republican voter may enthusiastically support American AI leadership while also saying, "I don't want that facility in my community, and I don't want my electric bill paying for it." That voter is not necessarily becoming anti-AI; the voter is confronting the local cost of a national technological strategy.

That distinction creates the political opportunity. Democrats can attempt to use the issue to argue that Republicans are protecting large technology companies at the expense of ordinary families, while Republicans can either allow that framing to take hold or establish a position that addresses the underlying concerns without abandoning technological leadership. The lesson from abortion is therefore strategic: Republicans should define the issue before their opponents define it for them.

The Issue Is Bigger Than the Environment

Democrats will naturally have an opportunity to frame opposition to data centers as an environmental issue, but Republicans should not accept that framing. The questions voters are asking are much broader and go directly to conservative principles about markets, property rights, local control and fiscal responsibility.

- Who pays for the additional power infrastructure?
- Will electricity rates increase for existing customers?
- Who pays for new roads, substations and other infrastructure?

- How much water will these facilities consume?
- How much land will they occupy?
- What happens to surrounding communities?
- How many permanent jobs will they actually create?
- Should taxpayers subsidize enormous corporations while local residents absorb the infrastructure costs?

These are not inherently Democratic questions. They are questions about property rights, fiscal responsibility, local control, free markets, infrastructure and protecting taxpayers from corporate cost-shifting. That is why this issue has the potential to become a particularly effective Republican wedge.

The Republican Position Should Not Be Anti-AI

The strategic mistake would be allowing the debate to become AI versus no AI. That is a false choice.

America should lead the world in artificial intelligence. Florida should attract technology companies, investment and high-value jobs. Republicans should support innovation and economic growth, but that does not mean every hyperscale project should automatically receive approval, subsidies or preferential treatment.

A stronger Republican position is straightforward: America should lead the world in artificial intelligence, but American families should not be forced to subsidize the infrastructure required to power it. That message allows a candidate to be pro-technology, pro-innovation, pro-growth, pro-business, pro-taxpayer, pro-property rights and pro-local control while drawing a clear distinction between supporting AI and supporting unrestricted hyperscale development.

The Political Opportunity

The Republican Party has an opportunity to define this issue before Democrats define it for us. America needs to win the AI race, Florida should lead in technology and innovation, and communities should benefit from the jobs and investment that come with economic growth.

At the same time, corporations should pay the true cost of the infrastructure they require. A conservative approach to economic development does not mean opposing development; it means asking whether the benefits justify the costs, whether taxpayers are

protected, whether markets are allowed to function, and whether private companies are being asked to bear the costs they create. That framework gives Republicans a way to address legitimate voter concerns without abandoning economic growth and technological leadership.

Why This Matters in Florida

Florida already has 128 data centers, including 120 currently operating and 8 planned, according to a [Pew Research Center analysis](#) of Data Center Map data. The geography of the data-center boom makes the political implications even more significant: 67% of planned U.S. data centers are located in rural areas, compared with just 13% of currently operating facilities.

At the same time, communities across the state are beginning to consider [moratoriums, restrictions and additional oversight](#) of large-scale data-center development.

The issue has also entered [Florida's legislative debate](#), including questions about local authority, land use, water consumption and the appropriate treatment of hyperscale facilities. This makes Florida an ideal place for Republicans to establish a coherent position before the issue becomes even more politically divisive.

A Republican Framework for AI Infrastructure

A strong Republican framework could be built around five principles.

America Must Win the AI Race

The United States should remain the global leader in artificial intelligence, computing and technological innovation.

Florida Should Compete for Innovation

Florida should welcome technology companies, investment and high-paying jobs.

Corporations Should Pay Their Own Way

Private companies should bear the infrastructure costs created by their projects rather than shifting those costs onto taxpayers and existing utility customers.

Communities Deserve a Voice

Local governments and residents should have meaningful input when enormous industrial facilities are proposed in their communities.

Growth Should Produce Real Value

A project should be evaluated on its actual economic benefits, including permanent employment, tax revenue and broader economic development, rather than simply the size of its construction budget. A hyperscale project can generate enormous construction activity without necessarily creating a comparable number of permanent jobs; [Axios reports](#) that hyperscale facilities can employ up to 1,500 workers during construction but average about 50 employees once operational.

This creates a position that is difficult to characterize as anti-business or anti-technology. It is pro-growth with conditions that protect the people who have to live with the consequences.

The Strategic Recommendation

Data centers are emerging as a Republican wedge issue in much the same way abortion became one: not because the issues themselves are comparable, but because both have the potential to expose tensions within the Republican coalition and give Democrats an opportunity to exploit them.

The polling demonstrates significant Republican concern with local data-center development. Candidates are increasingly being forced to take positions, and Republican campaign organizations are already recognizing its potential electoral consequences. The question is whether Republicans will react after the issue has been defined by their opponents or define it themselves.

The opportunity for Byron Donalds is to establish a position that does not force Republicans to choose between technological leadership and protecting Florida families. America should lead the AI revolution, Florida should compete for the jobs and investment

that come with it, but corporations should pay the true cost of the infrastructure they require and communities should have a meaningful voice in what gets built in their backyards.

That is not an anti-technology message. It is a conservative message about growth, responsibility, markets and protecting the people who make Florida home. If data centers continue along their current political trajectory, defining that position now could prevent the issue from becoming the next major fracture within the Republican coalition. The opportunity is to get ahead of the wedge before it becomes one.