



Candidate Questions: 2026 Midterm Elections

The specialty automotive aftermarket industry has a profound influence on the nation and its economy, with SEMA's more than 7,000 member companies making significant contributions our nation's economy (with an annual \$337 billion economic impact and 1.3 million employed nationally).

This outsized role played by the specialty automotive aftermarket comes with a significant to put lawmakers on the record about the challenges and concerns our industry faces, along with their positions on policies at the federal and state levels that impact industry businesses. The decisions made in Congress and the halls of state capitals can have a lasting impact on our members and the industry more broadly, particularly how automotive aftermarket products are made, distributed, and marketed.

- Lawmakers need to hear and learn from their constituents about the challenges facing your business, your employees and the customers you serve.

The campaign trail leading up to the midterm election on Nov. 3, 2026, is an opportunity to interact with future presidential contenders, current members of Congress, and local candidates; it's your time to share your stories and engage lawmakers on critical issues that will have a significant impact on your business.

The following sample questions and background information are designed for your use when attending town halls, hosting lawmakers at your facility or having discussions with candidates on the campaign trail.

ISSUE: The Right to Modify

BACKGROUND:

Historically, aftermarket modifications have been largely mechanical. However, modifying newer vehicles to improve performance, safety, reliability, and appearance requires aftermarket businesses to access a vehicle's electronic control unit (ECU), on-board diagnostics systems (OBD), and advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) to ensure it understands how the parts and products installed interact with OEM systems. Accordingly, it is imperative that OEM data from testing and system calibration is available and able to accommodate vehicle modifications to maintain the integrity and performance of safety systems after a vehicle has been modified.

SEMA POSITION:

SEMA, on behalf of the specialty automotive aftermarket industry and community of automotive enthusiasts nationwide, believes that individuals' right to modify and customize the vehicles they own is essential to a free nation and the future of the industry. New barriers, whether legal or technological, hinder vehicle owners' ability to work on their vehicles, seek repairs at independent automotive shops, and manufacture

and install replacement and specialty parts, software, and services to enhance their vehicles' safety, performance, and comfort each year. ADAS is a necessary and life-saving technology that brings significant opportunity for aftermarket retrofitting and vehicle upgrades with advanced technology. However, it is essential that ADAS technology isn't a barrier to the American people's right to modify their vehicle to meet their needs.

QUESTION:

Do you support the right to modify vehicles that you legally own and laws that would protect this right, including the ADAS Functionality and Integrity Act, a bill that would enable vehicle owners and those who they enlist to work on their vehicles to safely make common modifications, including wrapping a vehicle, installing larger wheels and tires, or installing a winch, bike rack, or aftermarket bumpers, without compromising the functionality of ADAS?

ISSUE: The Cultural and Economic Value of Motorsports

BACKGROUND:

Motorsports in the U.S. has a \$69 billion annual economic impact and supports more than 318,000 American jobs. This important segment of the automotive community is culturally significant and economically formidable. Local tracks are the venues where the next generation becomes part of the community that forms around motorsports, providing an important proving ground for the next great driver, the next genius engineer, and the parts and products that enhance safety and performance. The tracks, many of which are family-run and operate as small enterprises, have outsized roles as community anchors and economic drivers.

SEMA POSITION:

SEMA is committed to fostering an economic environment that allows racetracks to thrive and continue to serve their surrounding communities, those in the motorsports industry, and the nation's racing enthusiasts. Whether it's protecting racetracks from NIMBY-generated nuisance complaints or promoting a favorable business environment, SEMA seeks legislation and policies that serve to advance and grow the U.S. motorsports industry.

QUESTION:

Do you believe motorsports has value to our nation's culture and economy, and do you support the renewal of tax incentives that help small, family-owned racetracks thrive?

ISSUE: Access to Public Lands for Motorized Recreation

BACKGROUND:

Millions of Americans and their families enjoy off-roading, snowmobiling, overlanding, hiking, bicycling, and cross-country skiing on public lands. Public trails and lands draw tens of millions of visitors annually, stimulate local economies across the country, and spur economic development. Every year, off-roading accounts for \$68 billion in direct

spending: Americans spend \$23 billion to modify trucks and SUVs, and motorcycling and ATVing have a \$16.2 billion economic impact.

SEMA POSITION:

There must be legislation to protect this vital American industry. SEMA understands that land use decisions must balance competing needs for access and conservation. While SEMA supports necessary land conservation to protect public lands unsuitable for motorized recreation, the association opposes land-use policies that unnecessarily limit access, such as wilderness and national monument designations that are larger than needed to protect unique natural resources.

SEMA supports federal legislation that streamlines the process and expenses associated with obtaining special recreation permits, makes maps of all lands where vehicles are allowed and prohibited available to the public, and ensures that gas taxes paid by OHV users are reinvested in roads and trails. It is important that land use decisions, including national monument designations and wilderness, are supported by local and state officials and that the motorized recreation community is consulted.

QUESTION:

Do you believe that federal lands, aside from those that are set aside to protect significant cultural resources, should be accessible for motorized recreation?