Future MAJORITY

For the People

Build Back Better Agenda

November 2020

CHANGE RESEARCH™

Methodology

- Future Majority and our partners Change Research conducted 4,211 Interviews in U.S. House Battleground Districts (October 9th – 13th) and 4,308 Interviews in Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire Statewide (October 21st – 25th)
- Interviews were conducted online, with participants recruited through social media advertising
- Post-stratification weights were made on age, gender, ethnicity, education, region, and 2016 presidential vote to reflect the distribution of voters
- Data is supplemented by historical data from Future Majority and Change Research

Districts Surveyed

In addition to statewide polls conducted in Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and New Hampshire, the following districts were surveyed:

Competitive 2018 Flips		Competitive Open Seats		GOP Endangered Incumbents	
CA-21	Harder	CO-3	GOP held	AK-AL	Young
FL-26	Mucarsel-Powell	FL-15	GOP held	AR-2	Hill
GA-6	McBath	GA-7	GOP held	AZ-6	Schweikert
IA-1	Finkenauer	IA-2	Dem held	CA-25	Garcia
IA-3	Axne	IN-5	GOP held	IL-13	Davis
ME-2	Golden	MI-3	GOP held	MI-6	Upton
MI-11	Stevens	MT-AL	GOP held	MN-1	Hagedorn
MI-8	Slokin	NY-2	GOP held	MO-2	Wagner
MN-2	Craig	TX-22	GOP held	NC-8	Hudson
NJ-2	Kennedy (Van Drew)	TX-23	GOP held	NE-2	Bacon
NJ-3	Kim	TX-24	GOP held	NY-1	Zeldin
NJ-7	Malinowski	VA-5	GOP held	NY-24	Katko
NM-2	Torres-Small			OH-1	Chabot
NY-11	Rose			PA-1	Fitzgerald
NY-22	Brindisi			TX-10	McCaul
OK-5	Horn			TX-21	Roy
PA-17	Lamb			TX-3	Taylor
PA-7	Wild				
SC-1	Cunningham				
UT-4	McAdams				
VA-2	Luria				
VA-7	Spanberger				

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Strategic Recommendations

1) "For the People" works - both overall, and its individual components. It worked in 2018 and still works today.

2) Economic concerns predominate, especially with Democrats. Come out of the gate with the Heroes Act and then full attention on Jobs. Jobs. Jobs. Skills. Infrastructure and climate policies do best when paired with jobs. For Democrats to be successful, it is crucial they make the American worker the hero of the story.

3) On health care - specifically the public option - Future Majority commissioned a study by Dr. Rob Shapiro about opting into the same health insurance as federal employees. 85% support.

4) Legislate in smaller pieces. Build brand campaigns around each, using modern branding techniques and digital. It is clear in the research that voters had no idea what the House did in 2019-2020. Only 12% knew about HR 1. Large packages are easy to demonize and difficult to communicate to voters.

5) Don't fall into a false choice between "freedom" and "justice." The general electorate prefers "freedom" to "justice" as a core value, but voters want both. Democrats should use this opportunity to incorporate "freedom" in their narratives to persuade a broader coalition of voters to support their agenda.

6) We need to do a better job of building trust in governing. Covid19 has exposed failure of government and if we're in charge and we don't deliver, we will be back to square one in 2022 and 2024.

7) Corruption is the greatest concern (90%+) of all voters. It is imperative that Democrats clean up corruption, because voters do not believe government action will work without anti-corruption first.

Big Winners

There are several policy priorities that are exceedingly popular among voters in swing Congressional districts. These are policies that Democrats have been fighting for – but Americans simply do not connect the issues themselves to Democrats and spread blame for why solutions have not been met fairly evenly among Democrats, Republicans and Trump. The key is connecting these issues to the underlying economic drivers and commonly held values that impact how voters see the world, and driving home Democratic ownership of those values:

- **96%** say the idea of economic freedom is important to them
- **89%** say it is 8 out of 10 or higher level of importance to pass legislation to clean up the corruption in Washington and state governments (55% 10 out of 10 importance)
- **93%** would be more likely (76% much more likely) to support a candidate who advocates for a "for the people" agenda focused on cleaning up corruption in Washington, lowering health care and prescription drug costs, raising wages, and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure
- **72%** support a federal program to help pay for retraining for jobs in advanced technology
- **79%** support a federal program to help pay for retraining in hands-on jobs like plumbing or carpentry
- **86%** support spending more federal money to improve physical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, buildings and waterways
- **80%** support allowing states and localities to raise funds together for new infrastructure projects through regional planning councils

Continued…

Big Winners - Continued

- **82%** support increasing access to high-speed broadband internet by making investments and increasing competition
- **88%** support reducing America's reliance on foreign energy and growing jobs by producing more American-made clean energy
- **84%** support requiring a true minimum tax on all foreign earnings of United States companies located overseas to end rewarding global tax havens
- **91%** support establishing a consumer data bill of rights to protect Americans from fraud, misuse and abuse of their private online data
- **86%** support allowing Americans to buy into the same health insurance plan that government employees receive
- **74%** support allowing people who don't get health insurance at work to buy health insurance through their state Medicaid program
- **74%** agree that "our government should be implementing more policies to value the dignity of work – the idea that hard work should pay off for every American, no matter who you are or what kind of work you do. But wages have been flat and the cost of everything, from rent to an education to health care is going up. When our work has dignity, Americans have the economic security they need to start a family, pay for childcare and college, take time off when they are sick, and save for retirement."

It is clear that there is a great deal of economic insecurity within the progressive coalition, and that these voters' concerns must be addressed. On the positive side, there is low hanging fruit — mostly centering around higher wages, lower health care costs, more rewarding work, cleaning up corruption, better energy policy and freedom — for a majority to implement, which will not cause the sort of backlash Democrats experienced in 2010, and which will further solidify the ability to do good for the American people.

Unpopular Issues

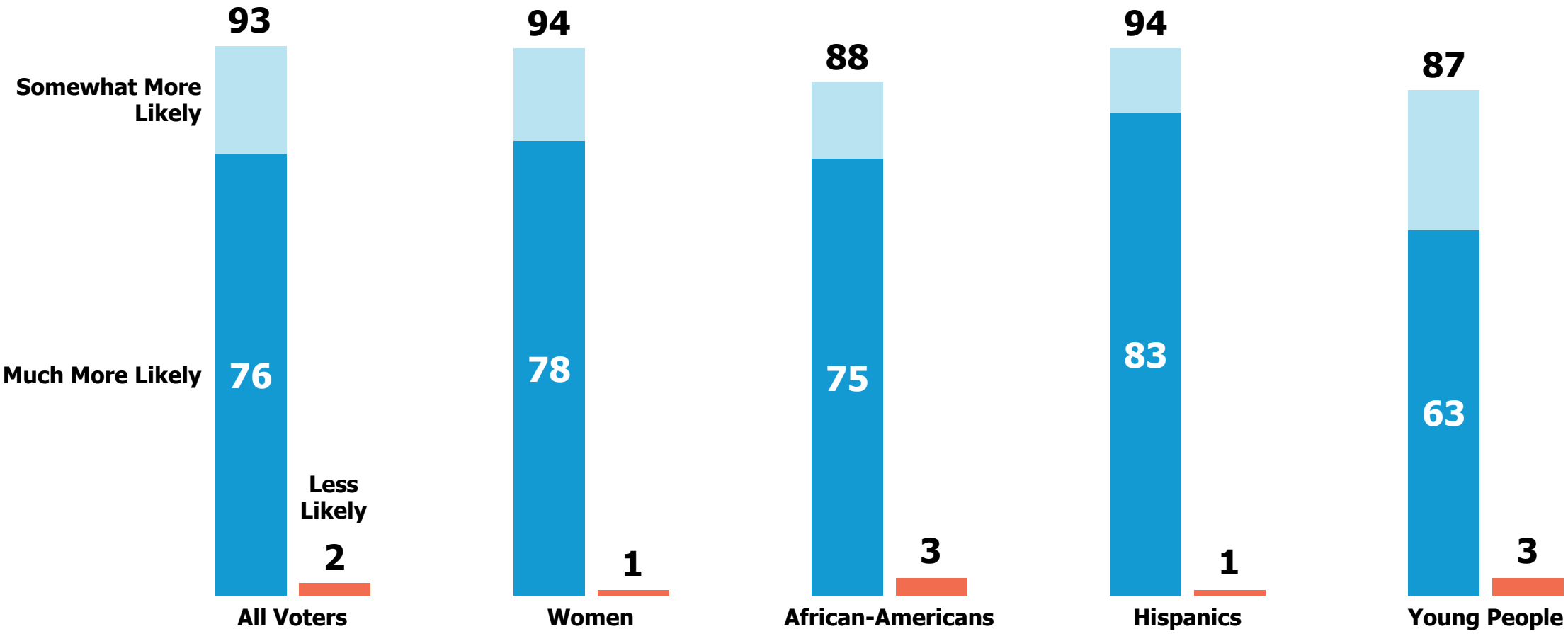
Unpopular Issues

Despite good news for the overall progressive agenda, there are several issues supported by some Democrats, or by no Democrats, but that Republicans have tried to pin on Democrats, that are less popular among these voters – and stand in stark contrast to the multitude of issues, more issues that could ever be legislated in a single session, that gain 65% or 70%+ support. The issues without majority support in these admittedly tough districts are as follows:

- **39%** oppose public financing for candidates through taxpayer dollars on a matching system (39% support)
- **47%** oppose making Washington, D.C. a state (42% support)
- **49%** oppose establishing a national health plan in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan/Medicare for All (46% support, net -3% support)
- **53%** oppose allowing Medicare to put more restrictions on the use of certain drugs (25% support)
- **47%** oppose repealing the Hyde Amendment (45% support)
- **53%** oppose adding more justices to the Supreme Court to restore its balance (35% support)

There is Deep and Strong Support for the "For the People Agenda"

"Would you be more or less likely to support a candidate who advocates for a "For the People" agenda focused on cleaning up corruption in Washington, lowering health care costs, raising wages, and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure."



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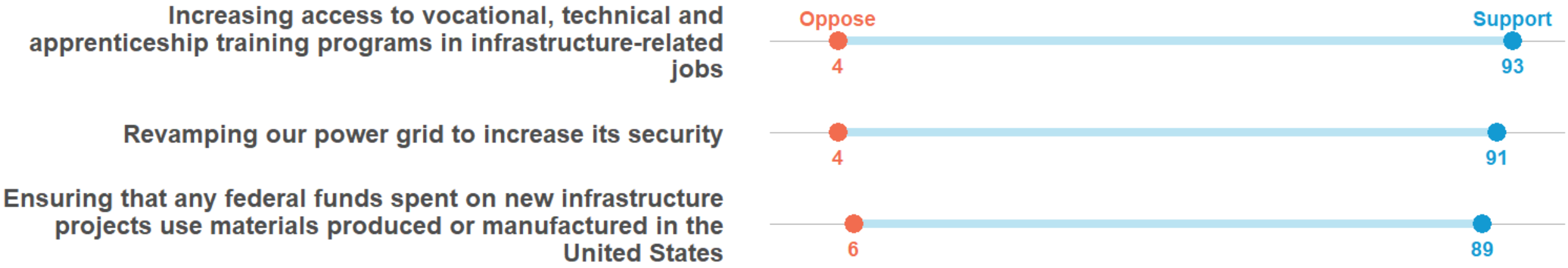

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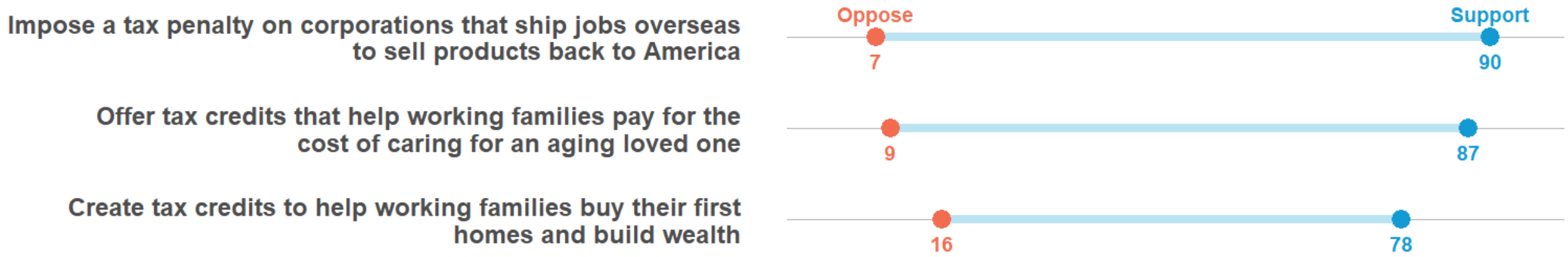

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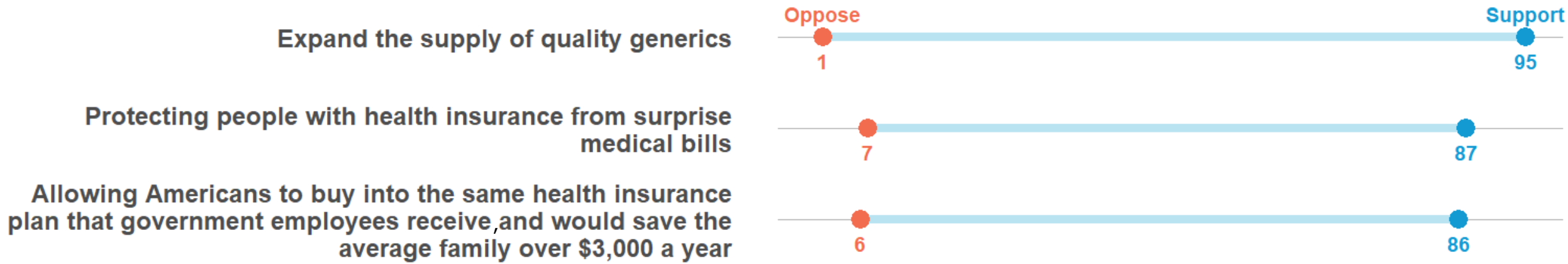

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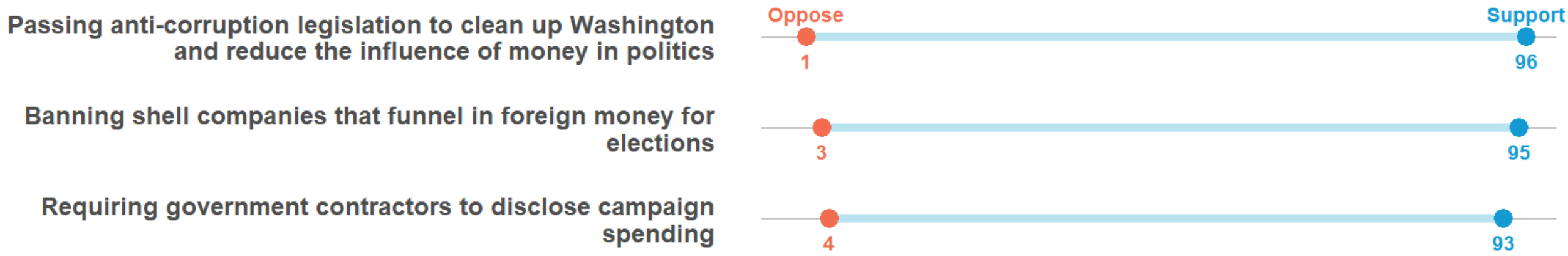
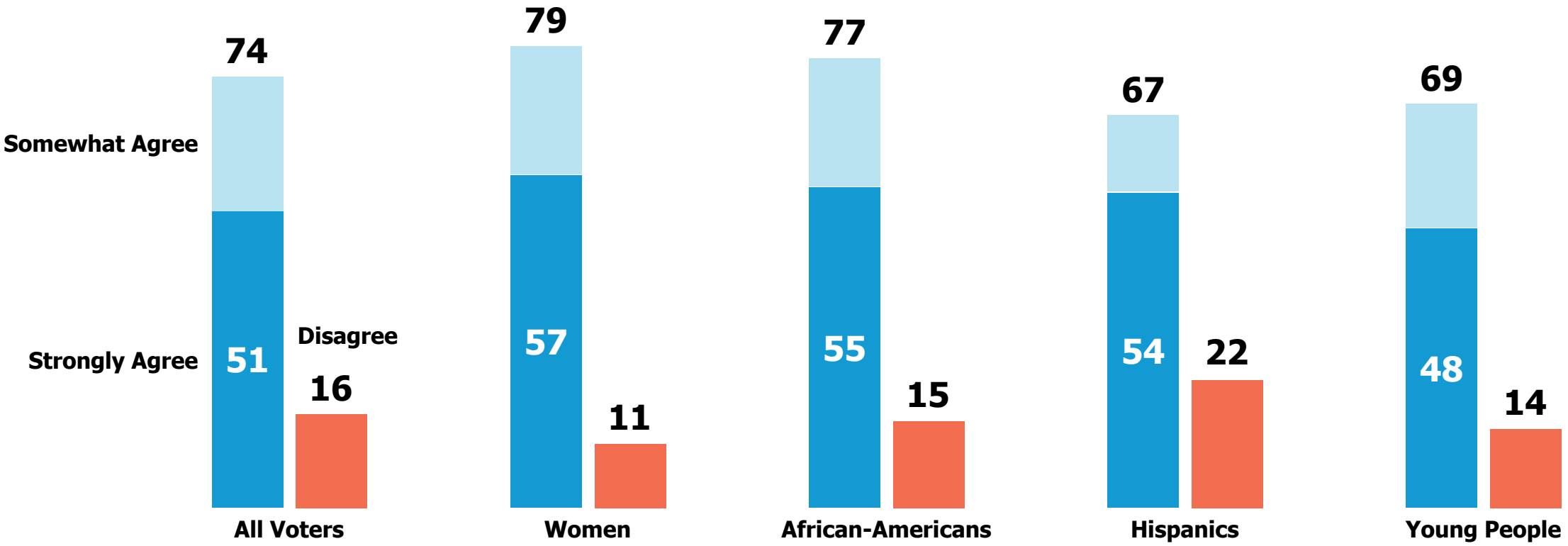


Democratic Voters Face Unique Economic Stress

Democrats must articulate our economic visions in and around the "dignity of work" and drive a better narrative around income inequality and capitalism. We've tested numerous times the notion of investing in people through "smart capitalism" (check out our video on this concept here) and it continues to perform well in our most recent surveys.

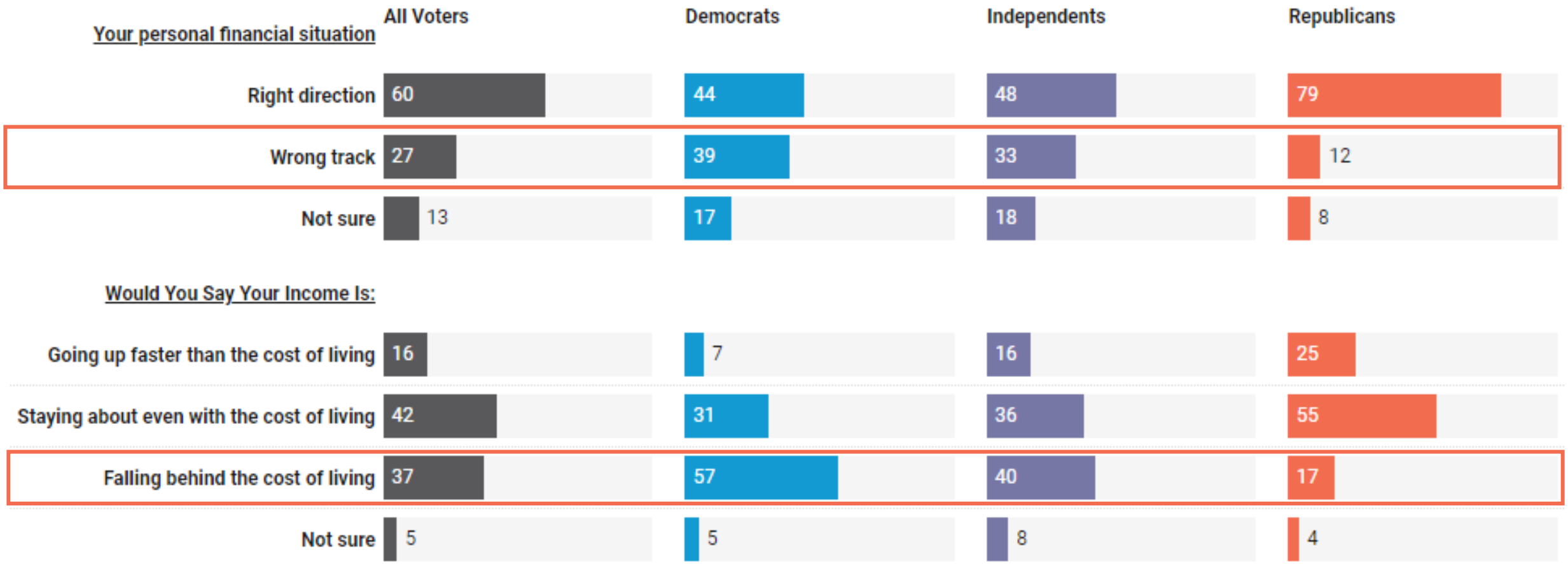
The Dignity of Work Is A Core Voter Belief

"Our government should be implementing more policies to value the dignity of work – the idea that hard work should pay off for every American, no matter who you are or what kind of work you do. But wages have been flat and the cost of everything, from rent to an education to health care is going up. When our work has dignity, Americans have the economic security they need to start a family, pay for childcare and college, take time off when they are sick, and save for retirement."



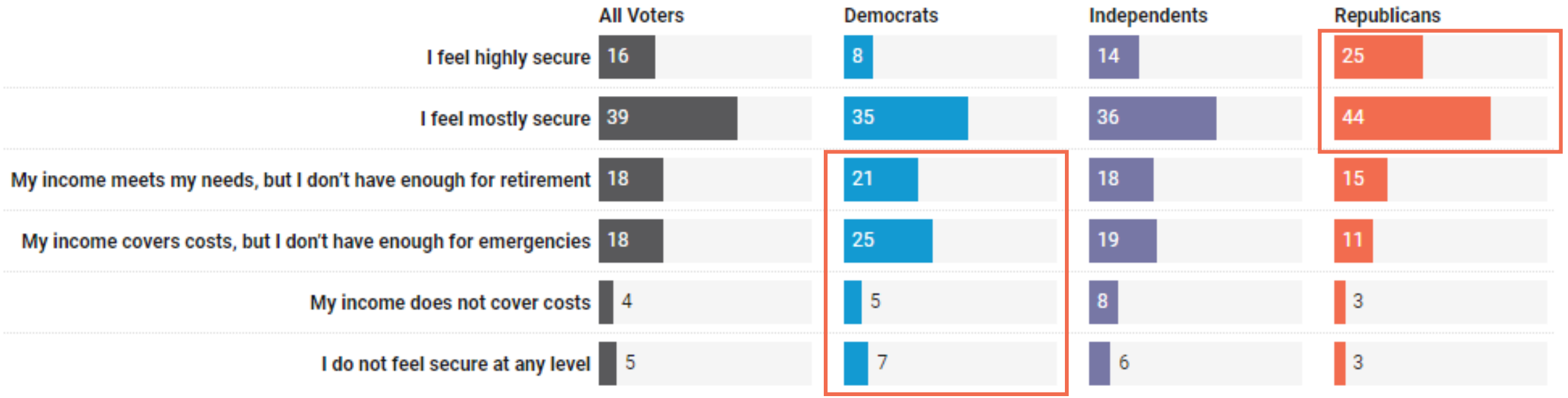
Economic Indicators

Democrats Feel They Are Falling Behind Financially and Are Much Less Secure than Republicans



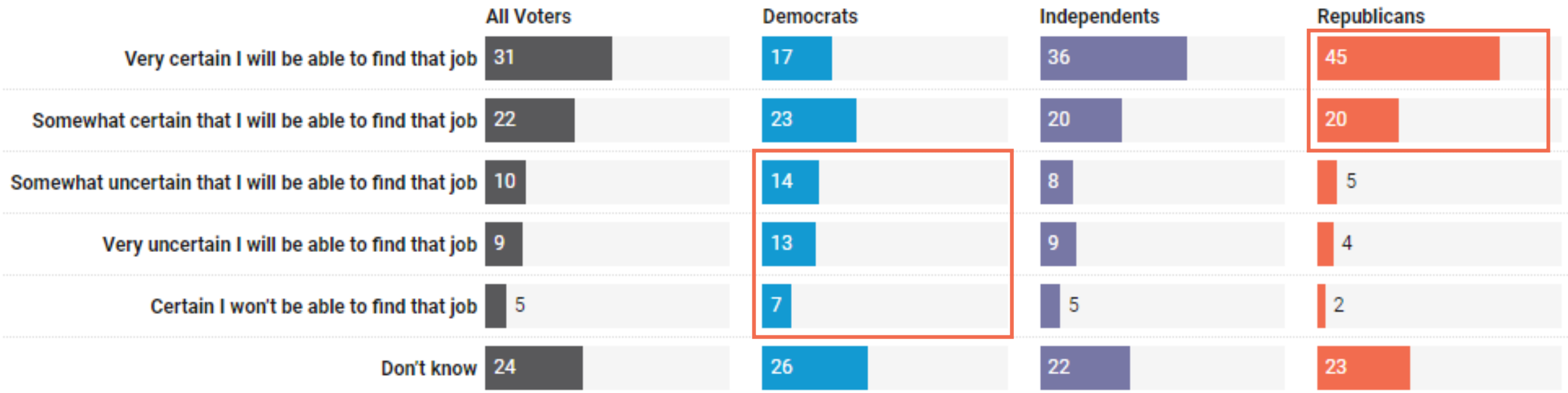
Economic Indicators

58% of Democrats Do Not Feel Economically Secure / 69% of Republicans Do Feel Secure



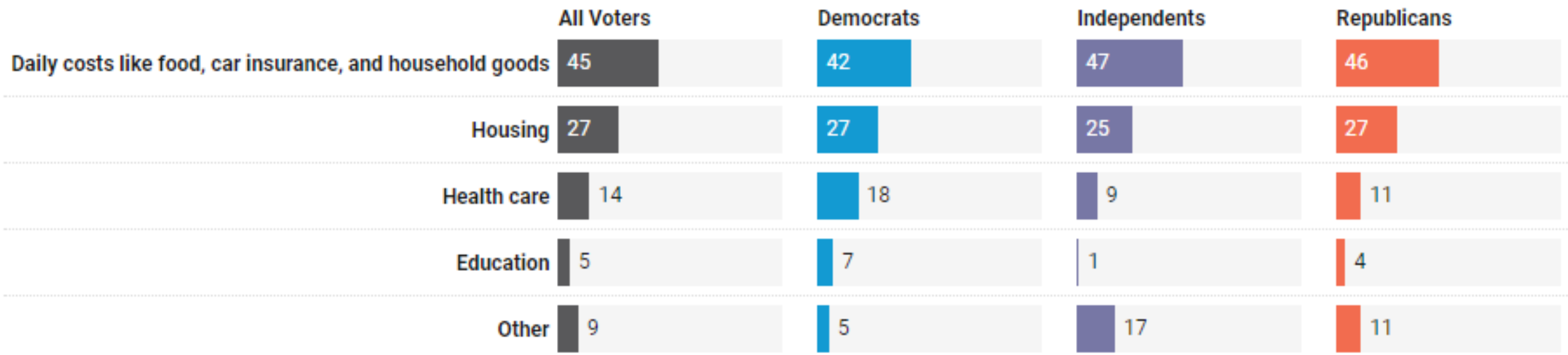
Economic Indicators

35% of Democrats are uncertain they will find a good replacement job if they lose theirs



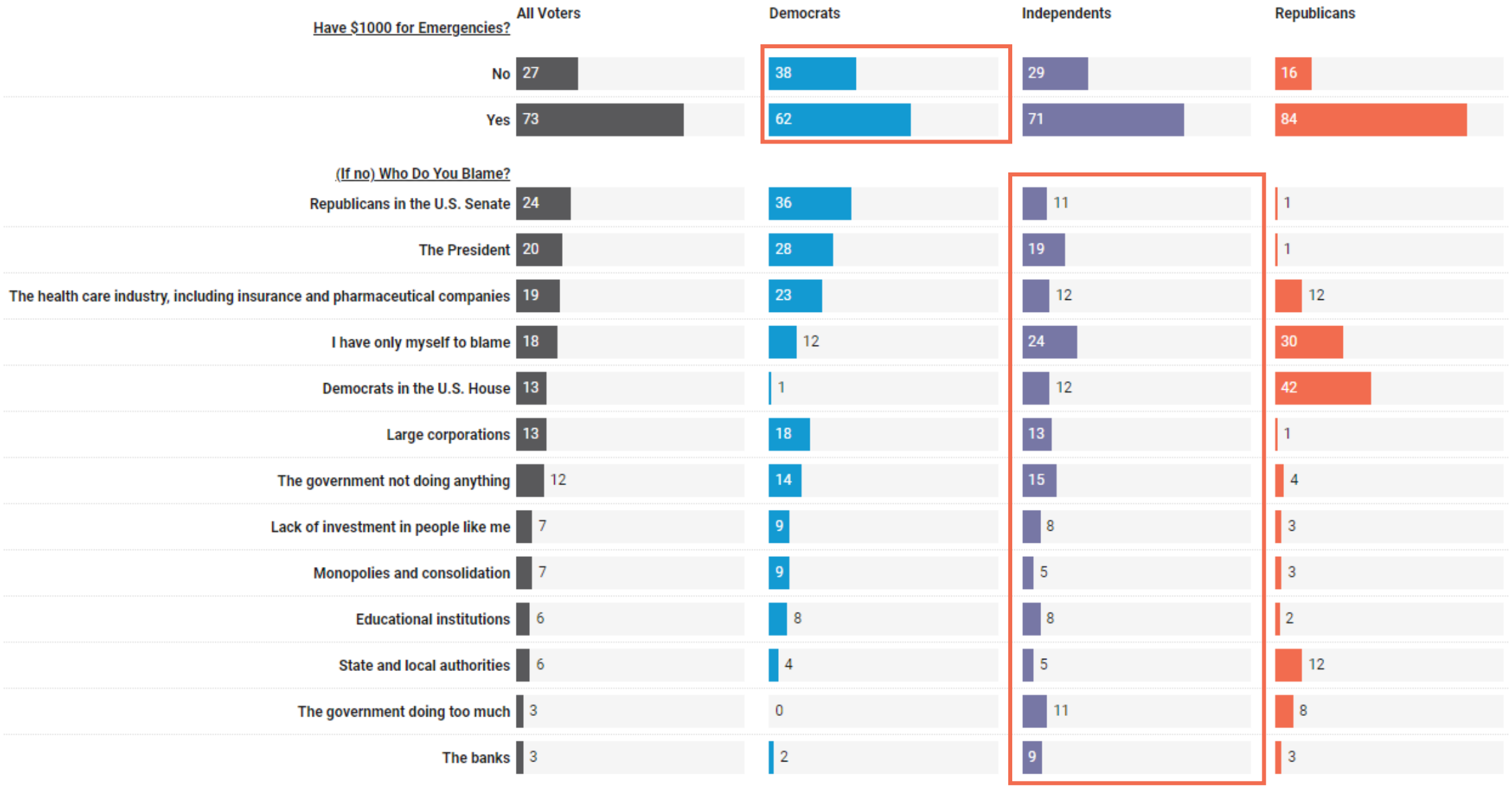
Economic Indicators

Daily Costs Top the List of Income Burdens



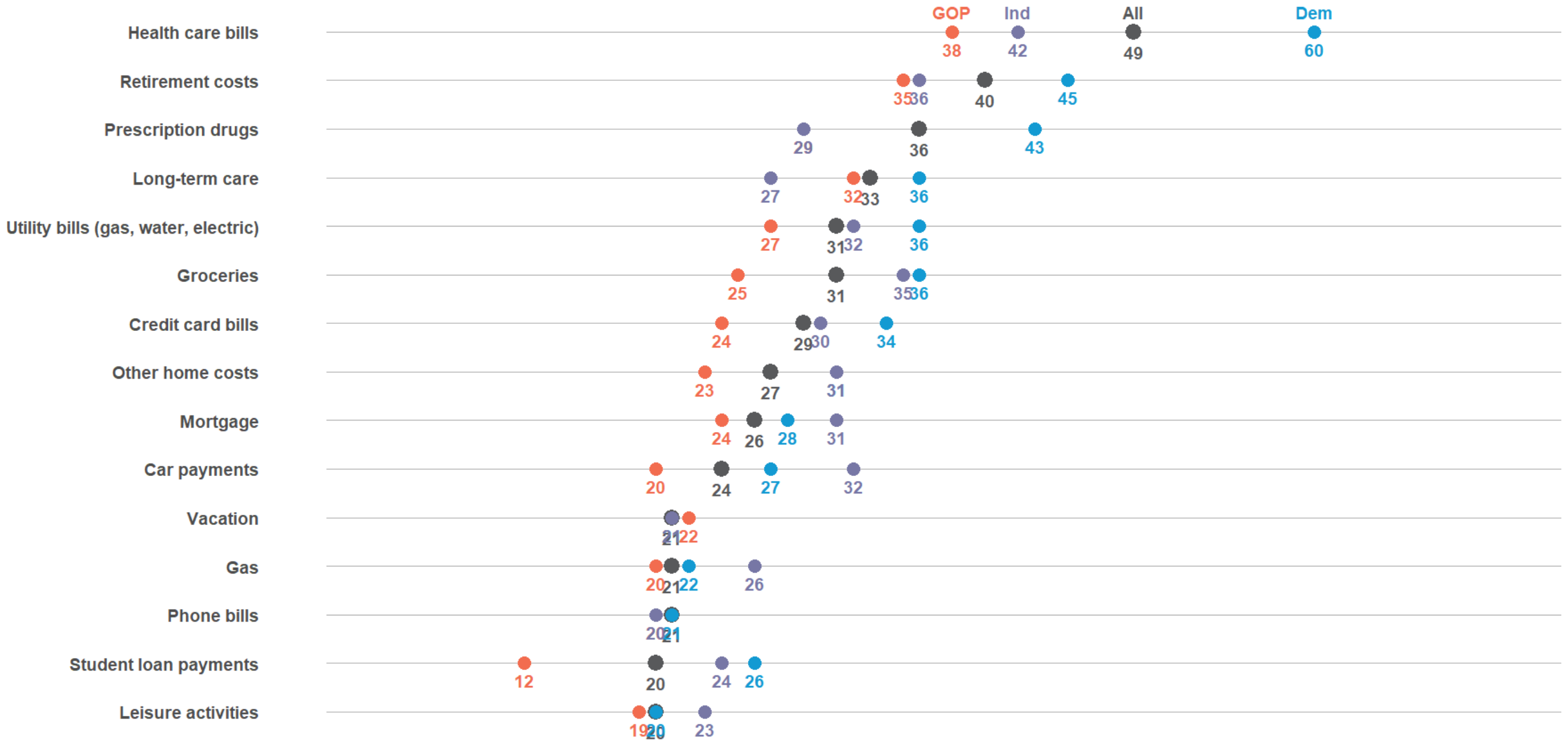
Economic Indicators

38% of Democrats Can't Afford a $1,000 Emergency. Independents Have No Clear Enemy for This



Economic Indicators

Health Care Bills Dominate the List of Concerns People Have in Their Daily Life, Especially Among Democrats



Job #1:
COVID-19 Relief

COVID relief is about investing to fight the pandemic and about helping people and saving jobs – especially small businesses.

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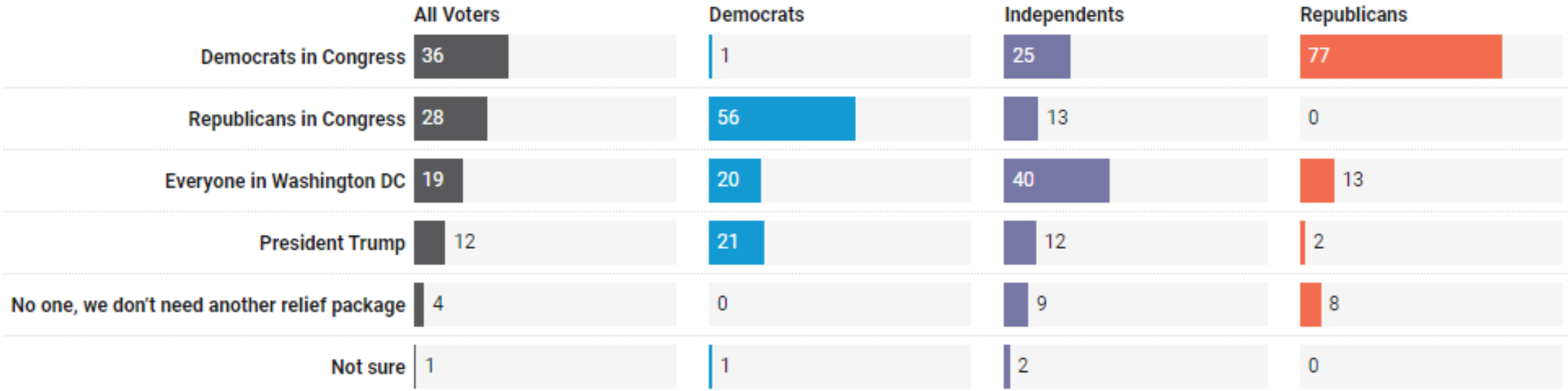
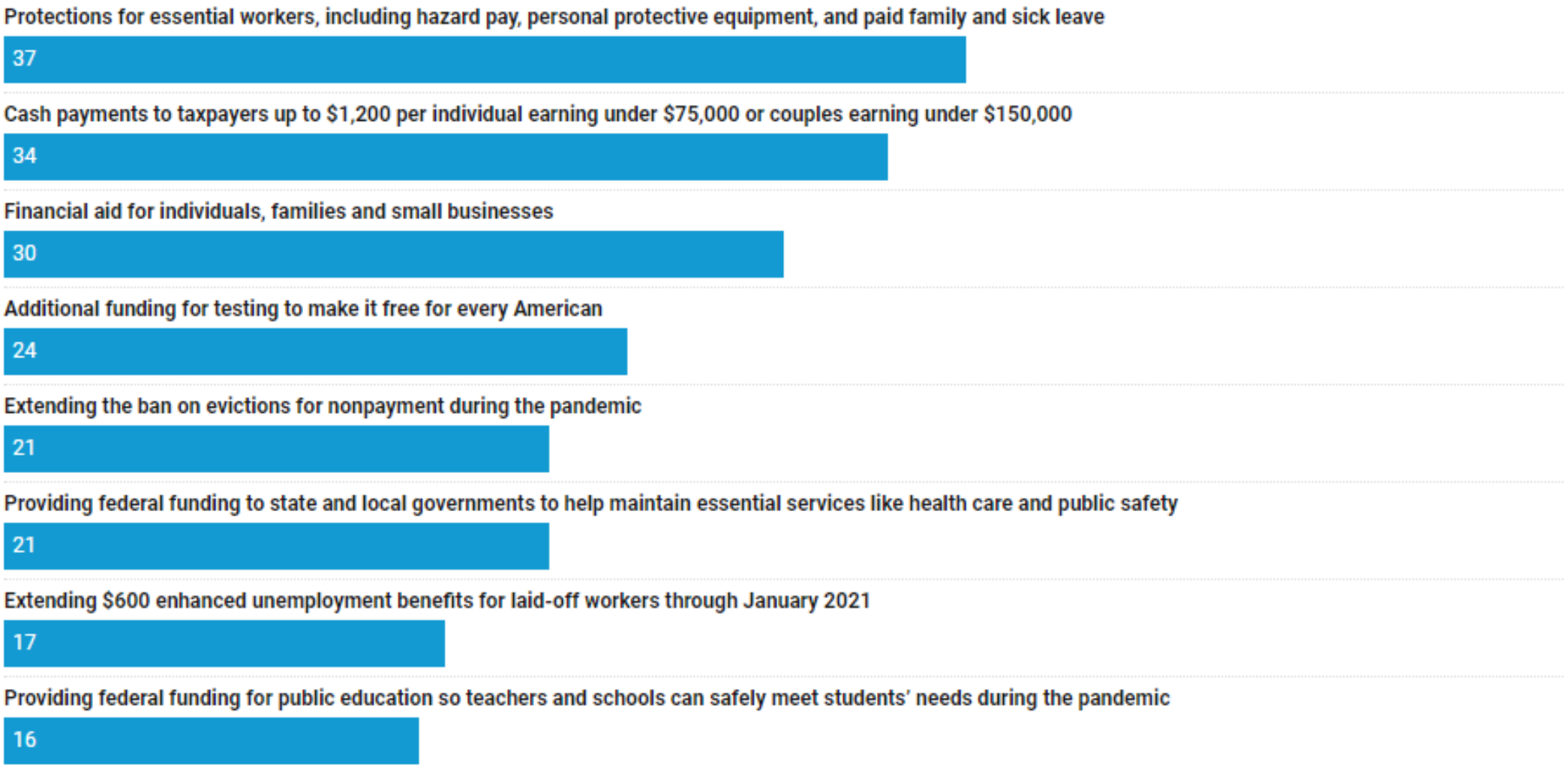
Who Do You Blame for the Lack of Progress Passing Additional COVID Relief?

Independents Do Not Blame the Republicans



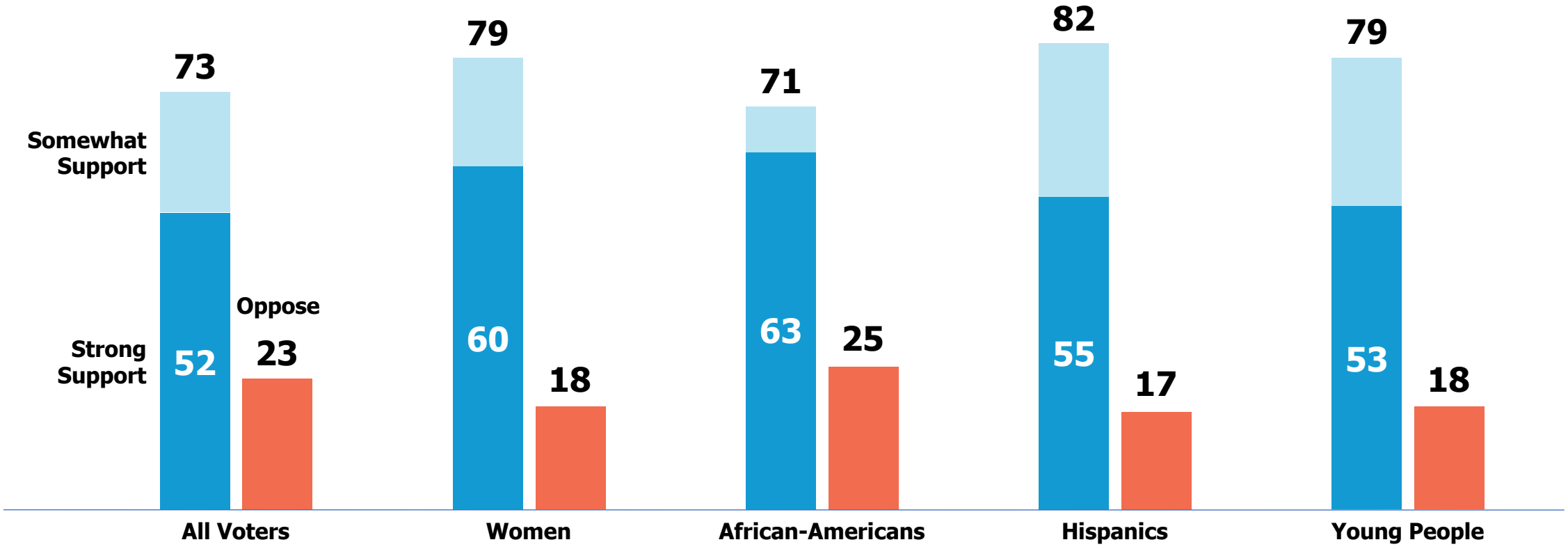
What Voters Want in a Relief Package

All Voters - % Choosing from a list

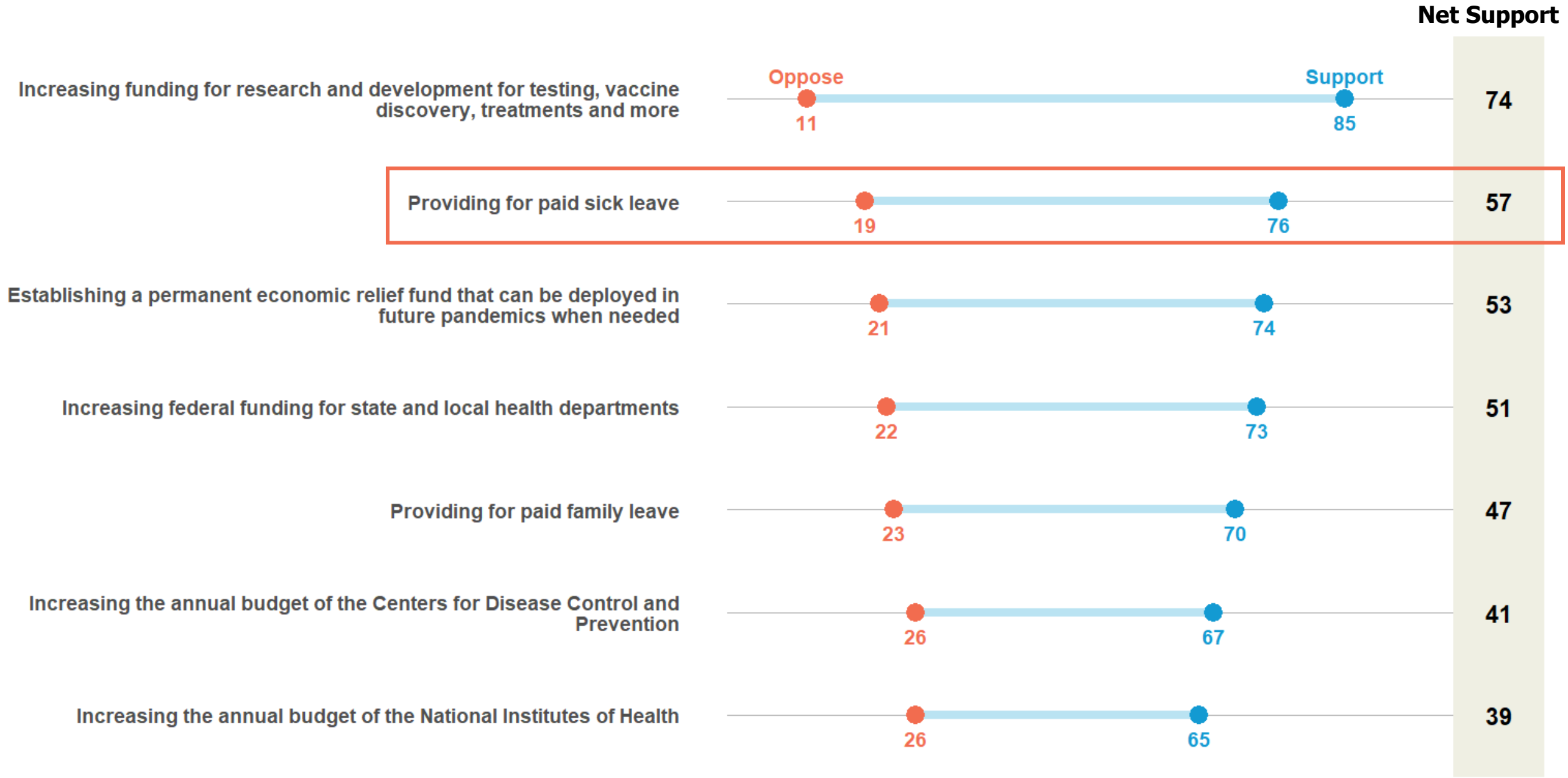


There is Deep and Strong Support for the "Heroes Act"

"In May, House Democrats passed the HEROES Act, a $3 trillion coronavirus relief package. It provides for state and local aid, support for essential workers, unemployment insurance, one-time cash payments for taxpayers, and other measures. Do you support or oppose the HEROES Act?"



Support for COVID Relief Policies



Job #2:

Jobs. Jobs. Jobs.
+
Family Policies

The electorate is clear: Focus on the economy and jobs. In addition, Democrats should focus on specific policies to help families. Doing so would go a long way in keeping and building upon our inroads in the suburbs (e.g. childcare, family and sick leave, etc.). Our polling has also shown that Republicans have given up on the word "family" and there is an opportunity to take it back. Democrats' raison d'être must be be passing clear economic policies to produce jobs and improve wages and economic wellbeing every chance they get (including family-centric policies, infrastructure, climate, COVID) and use those wins as direct contrast to Republicans so there is a clear economic difference.

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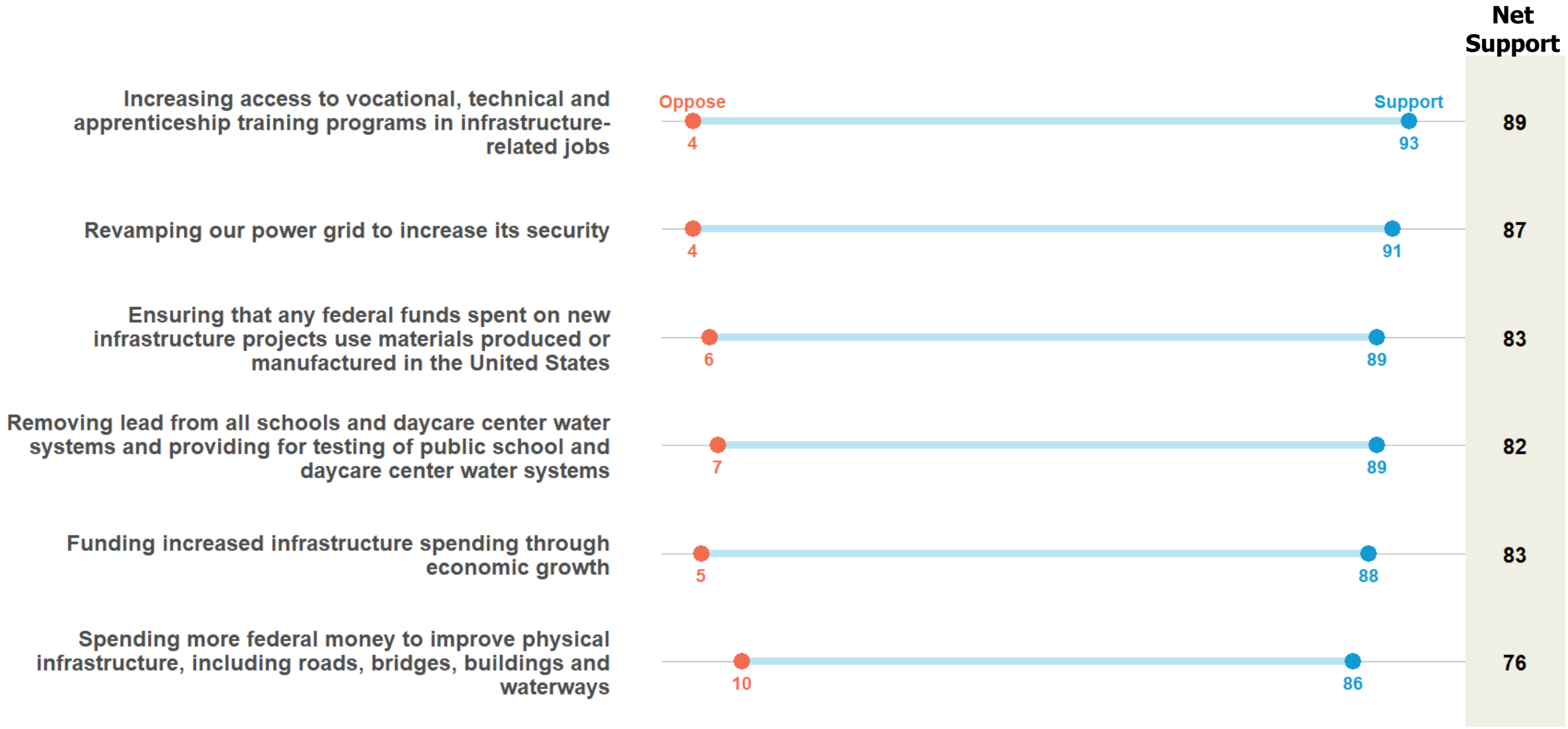
Support for Infrastructure Proposals



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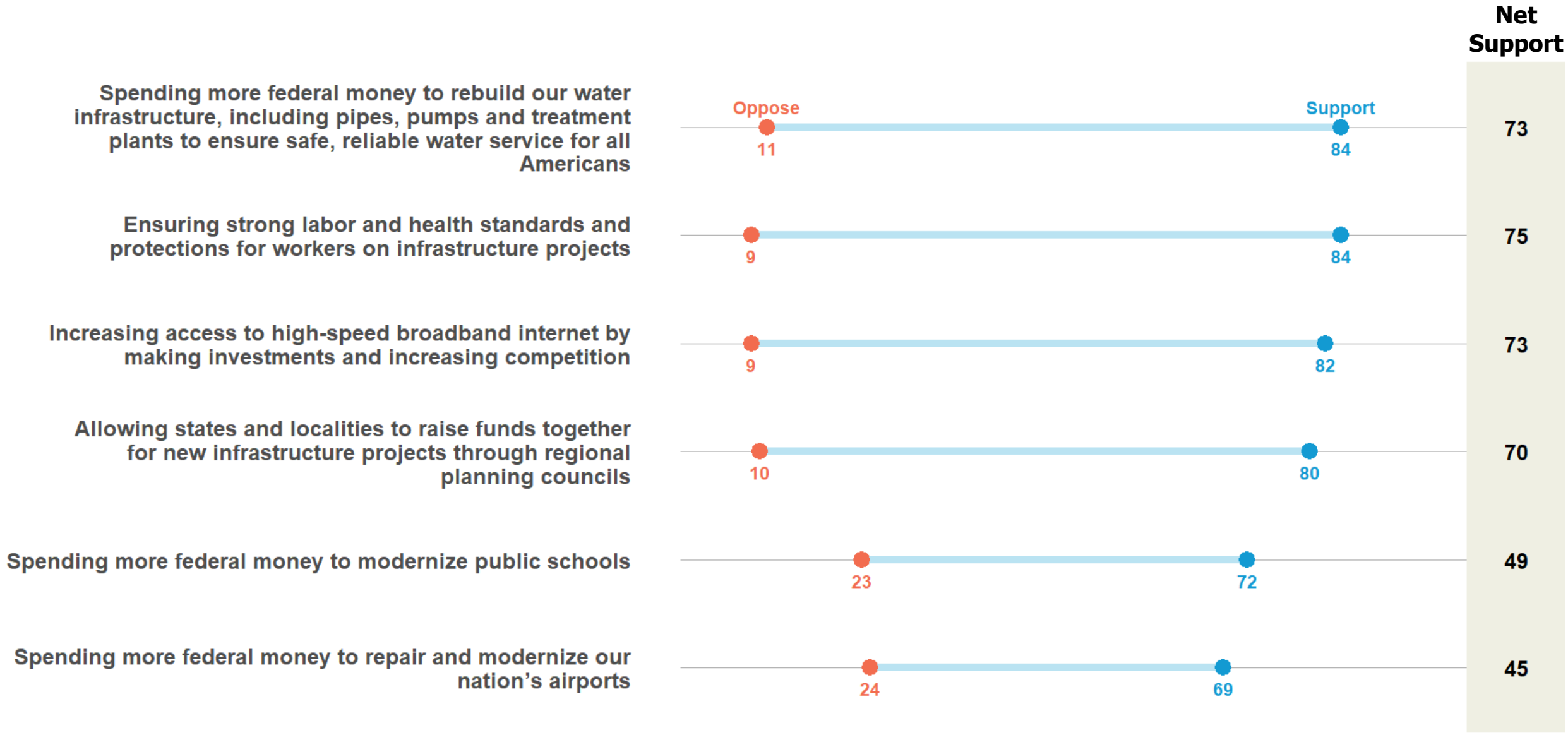

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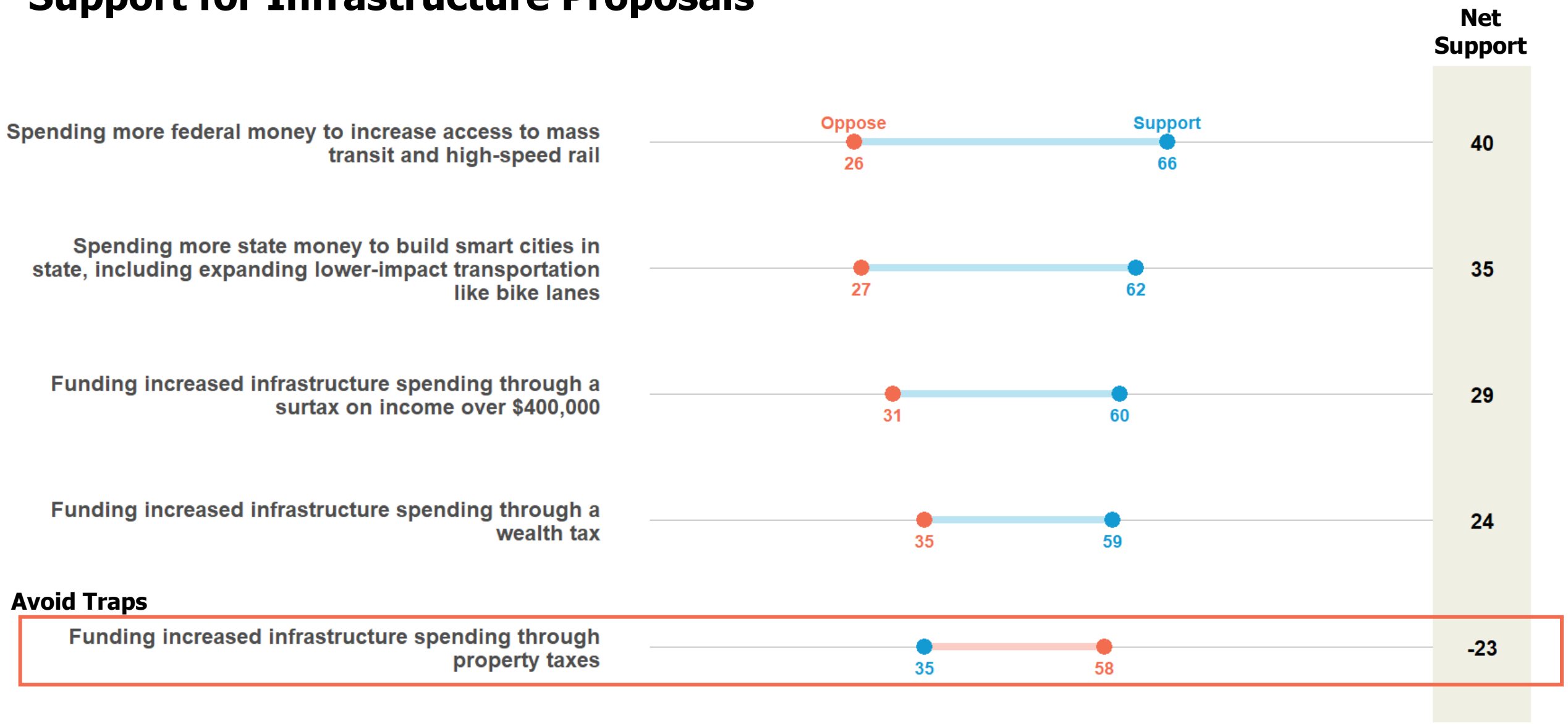
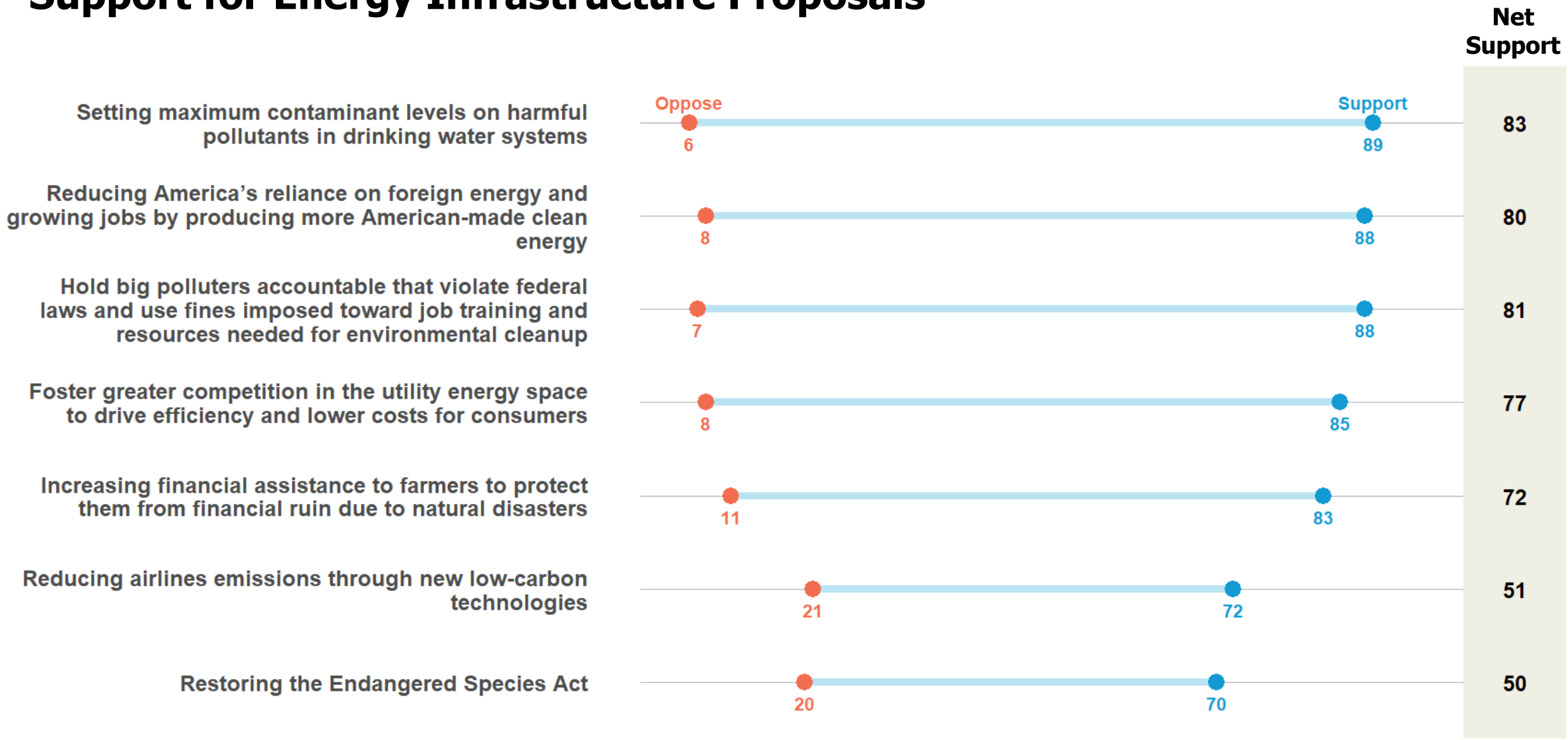


Support for Energy Infrastructure Proposals



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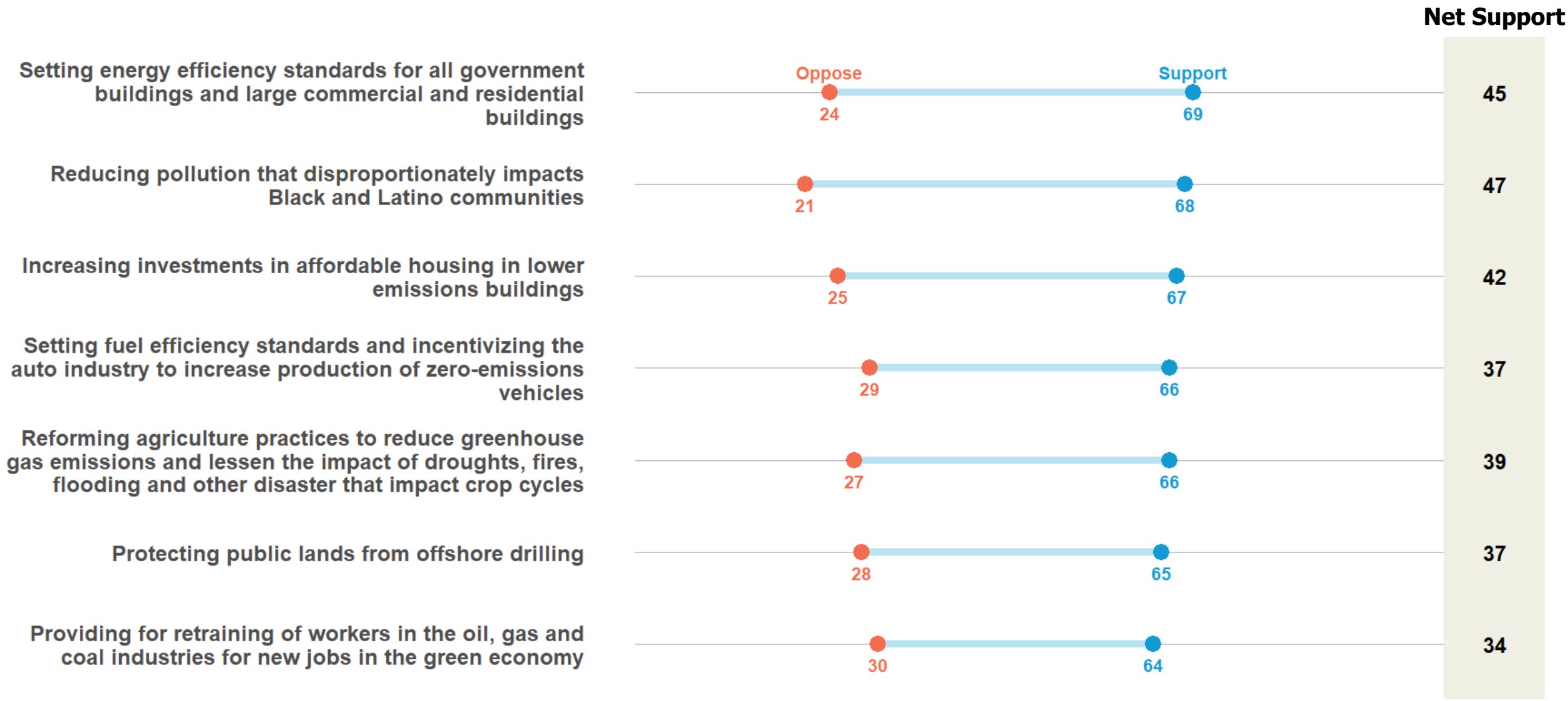
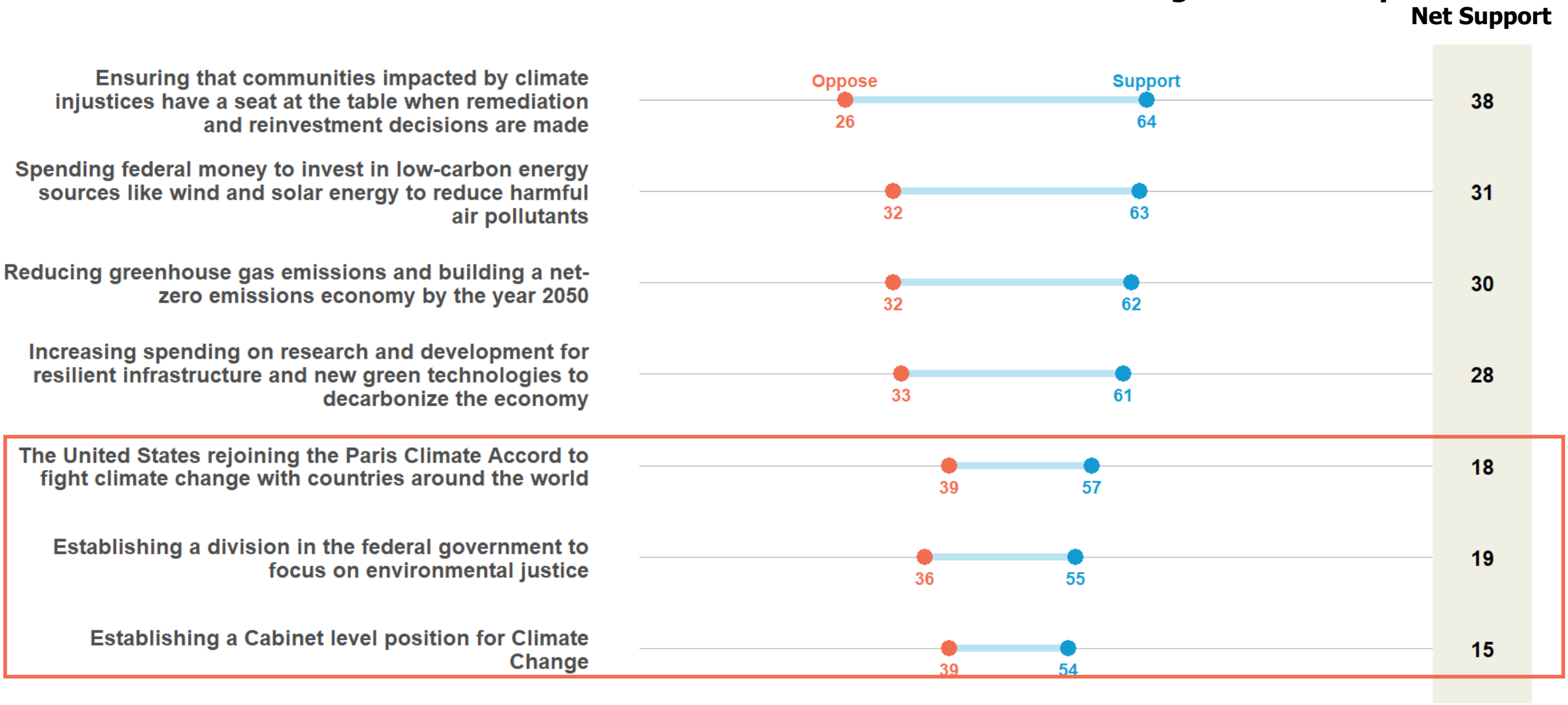
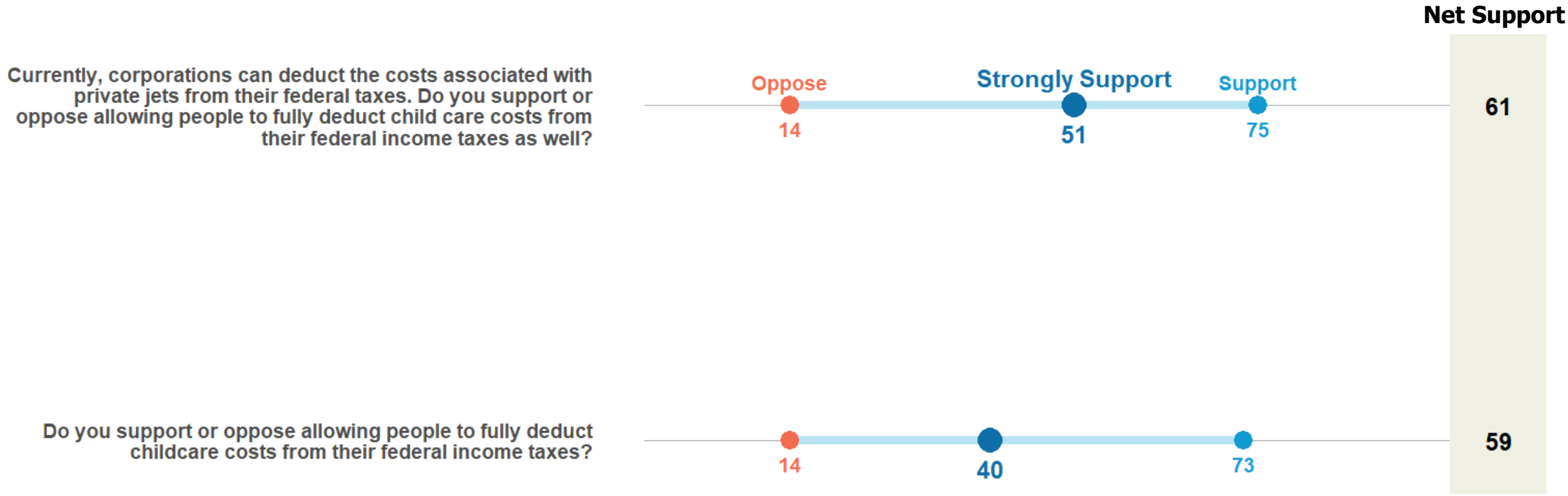


Support for Energy Infrastructure Proposals

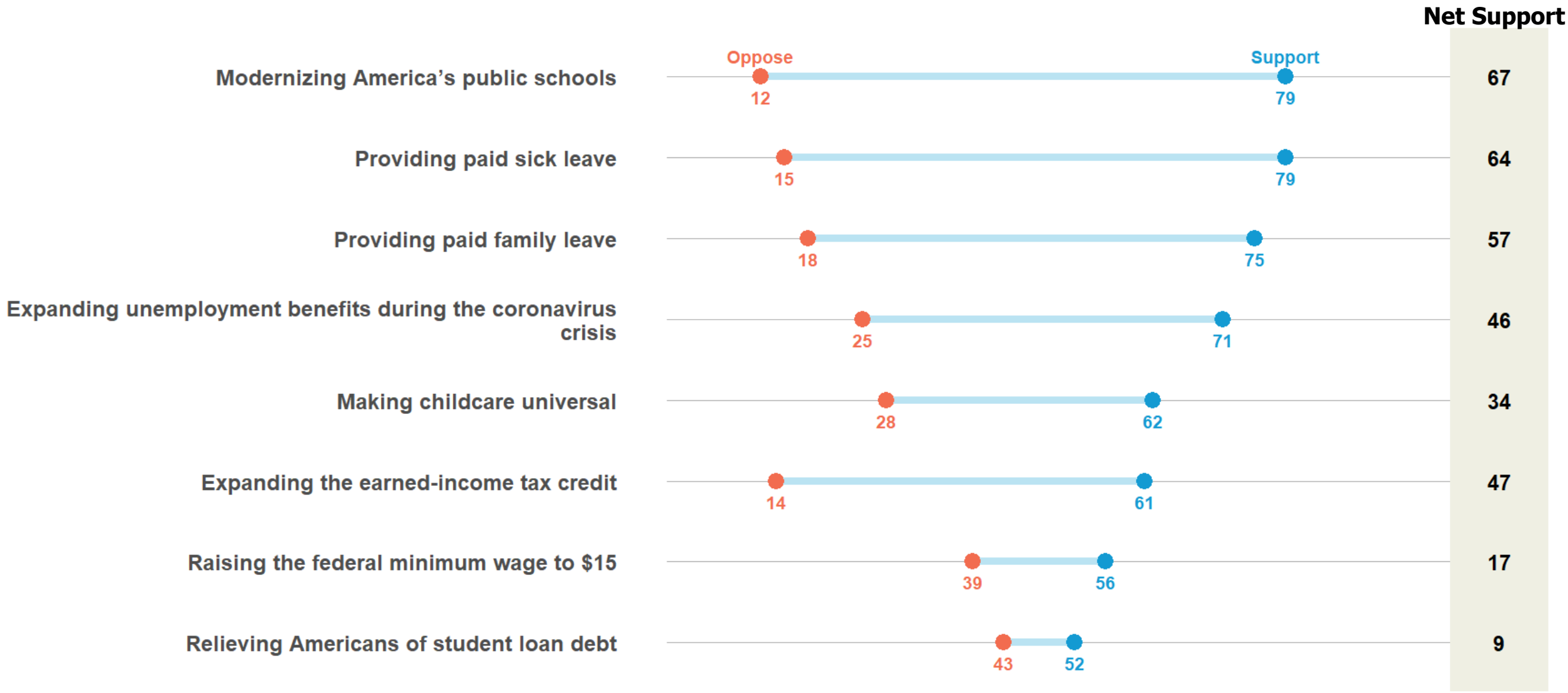
Government Process Isn't Sufficient on its Own. Needs to be Paired with Tangible Jobs Proposals



Support for Child Care Tax Policy: Direct Helps to Families



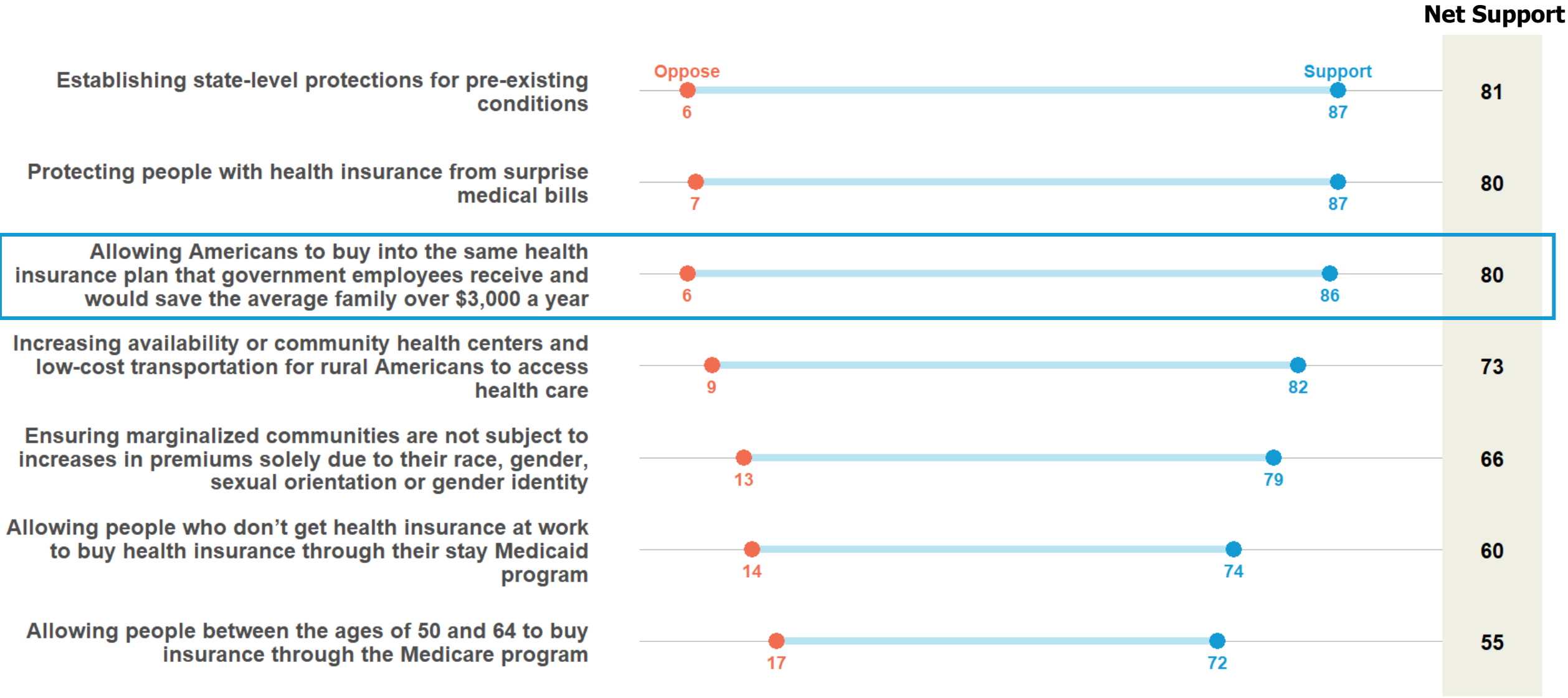
Support for Family/Child Policies



Health Care

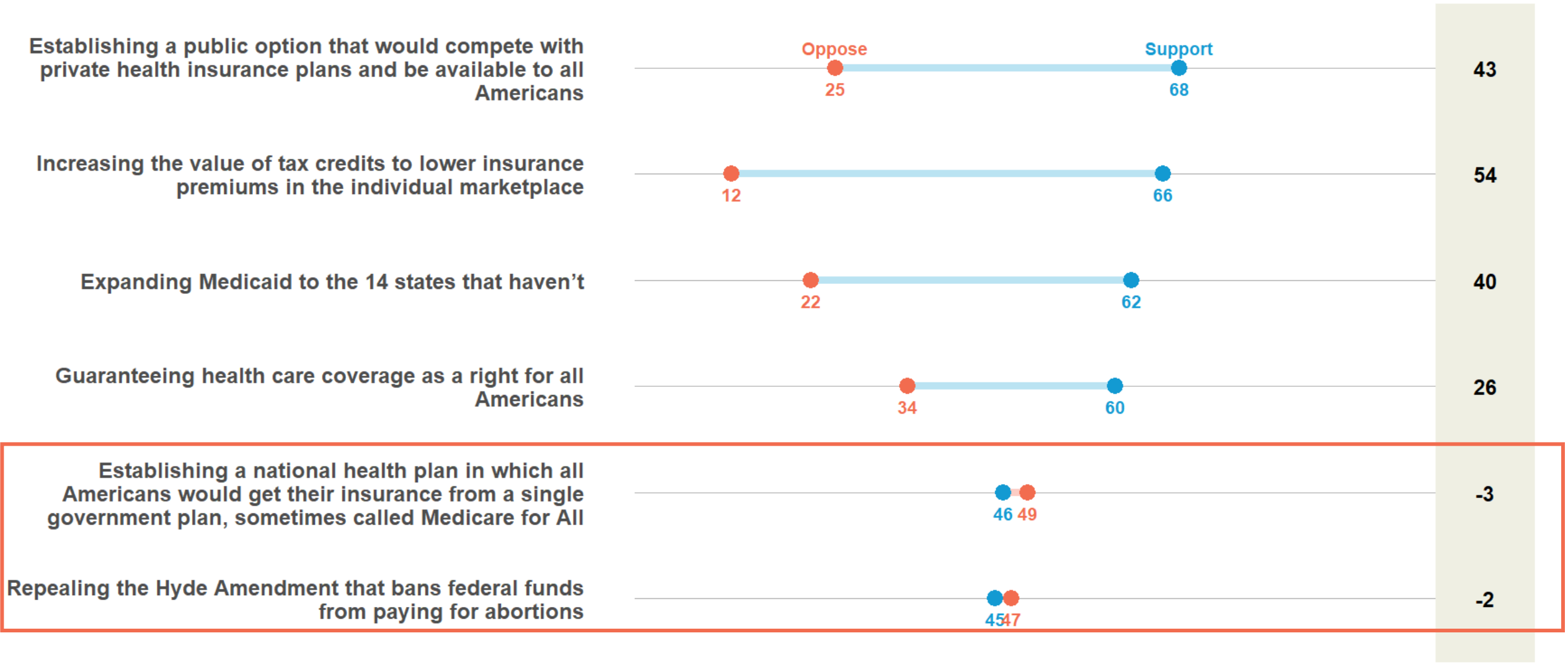
On the question of, "who do you blame for rising cost of health care" the result was shocking: 44% blame insurance companies, 31% blame the government, 14% blame the drug companies, 3% blame the hospitals.

Support for Health Care Proposals



Support for Health Care Proposals

Avoid GOP Traps – Start with What Works



Corruption

It is baffling why HR1 was not front and center of the 2020 campaign. This strong anti-corruption message should have dominated in every district. Voters want their candidates and elected leaders to root out corruption. The video Future Majority made in 2018 tests great and should be the foundation of this argument: "Built Not Bought."

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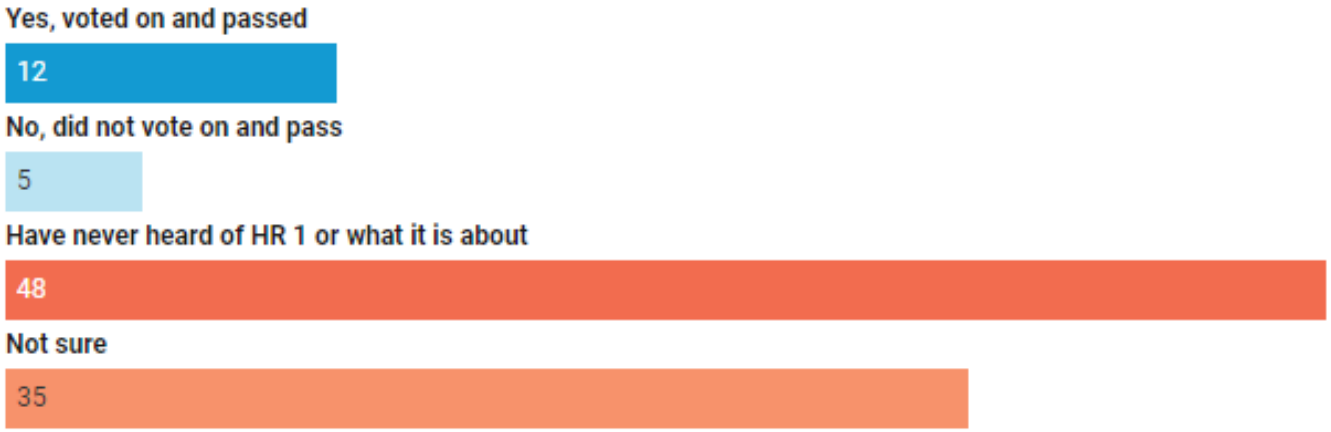
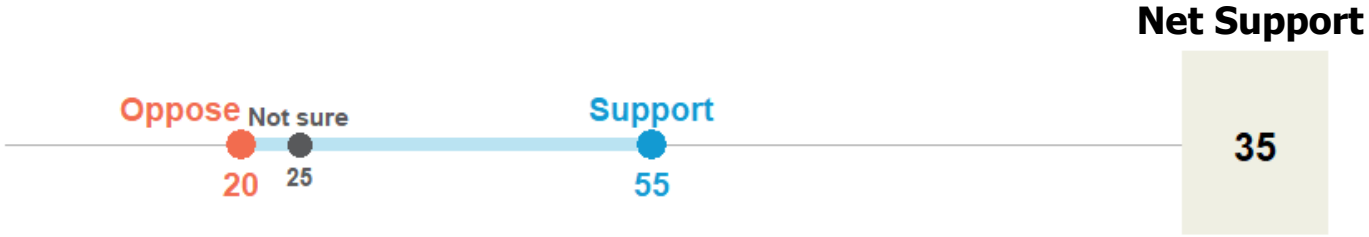
Voters Did Not Know Anything about HR1 Months after Passage and They Support It Now

As far as you know, has the House of Representatives voted on and passed the For the People Act (HR 1), a 400-page anti corruption measure called the "strongest reform since Watergate"?

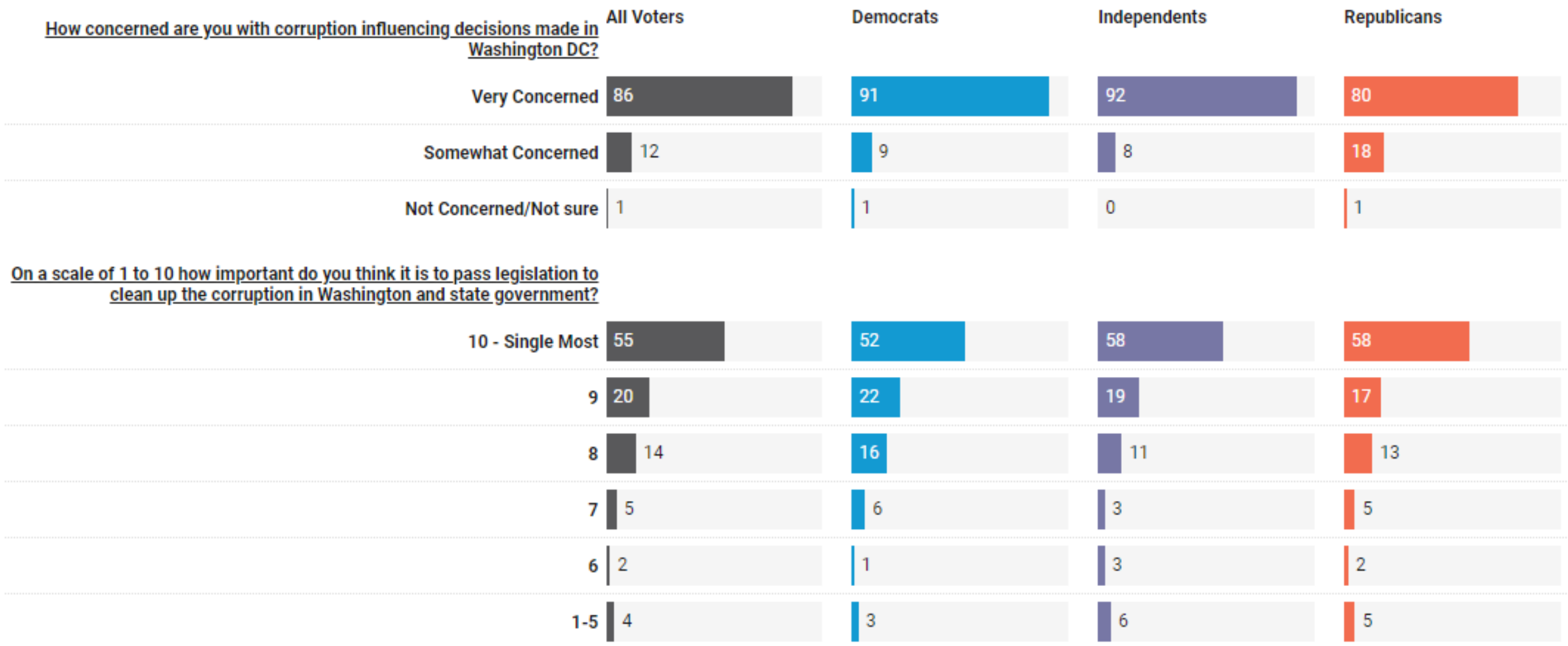


Michigan Poll – October 2019

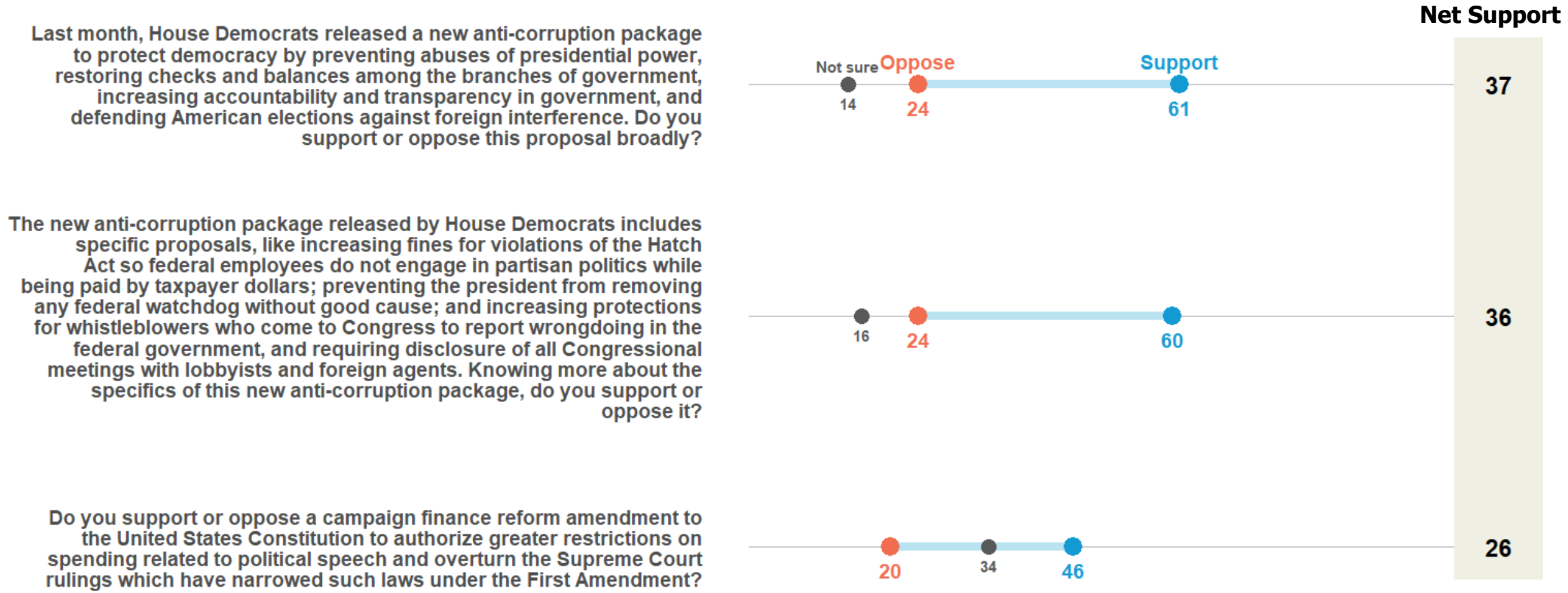
Last year, Democrats in the U.S. House passed what they say is the most extensive anti-corruption act since Watergate, with full transparency of all dark money, and public disclosure of all meetings of Members of Congress with any paid advocates, including domestic lobbyists, bundlers, and foreign agents, and giving up of PAC money, among other provisions. The legislation is currently blocked in the Senate from a vote. Do you support or oppose this?



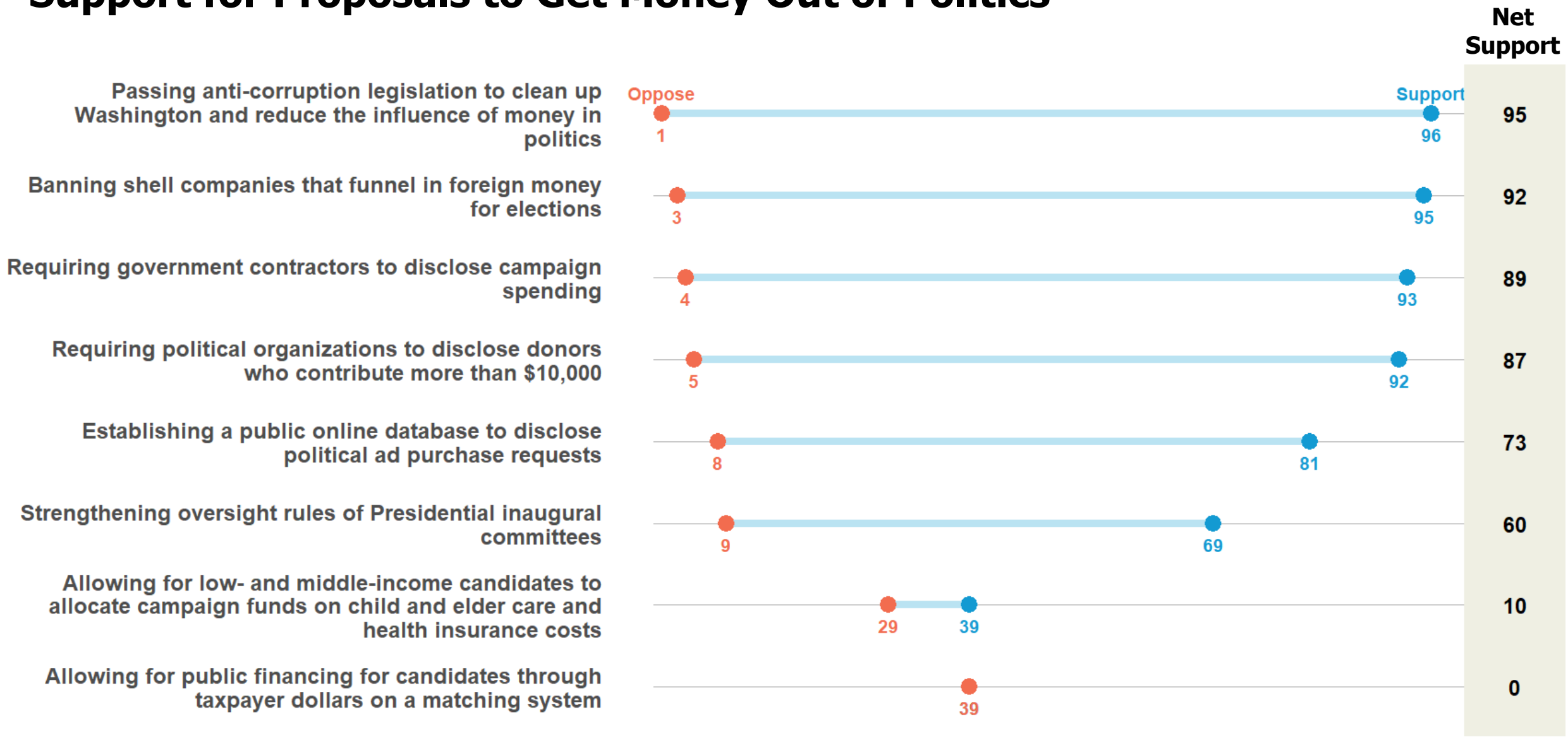
Voters are Deeply Concerned about Corruption and Want Legislation to Address It. But Public Financing Is Underwater.



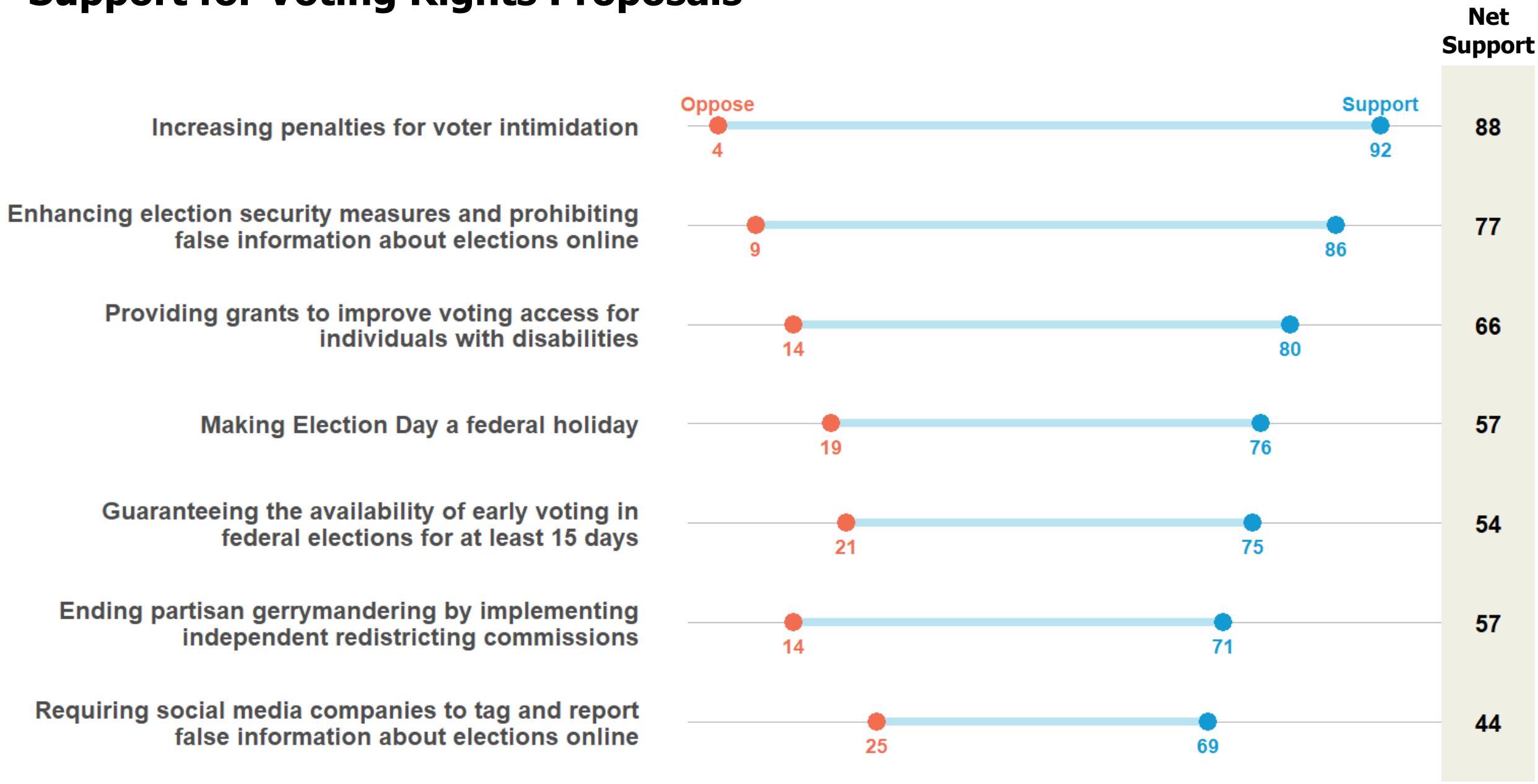
Anti-Corruption Proposals with Clear Specifics about Who It Impacts Get Strong Support



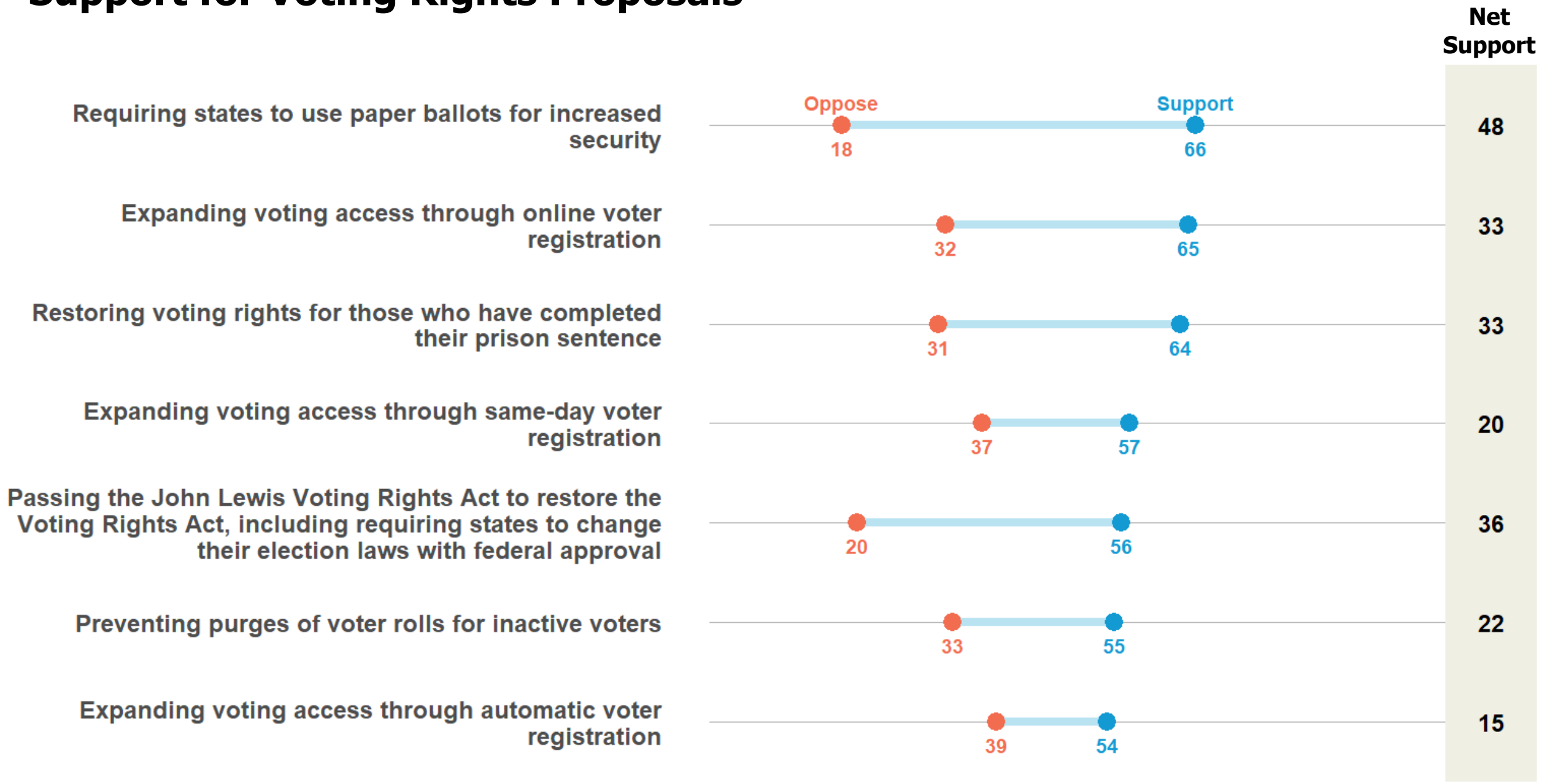
Support for Proposals to Get Money Out of Politics



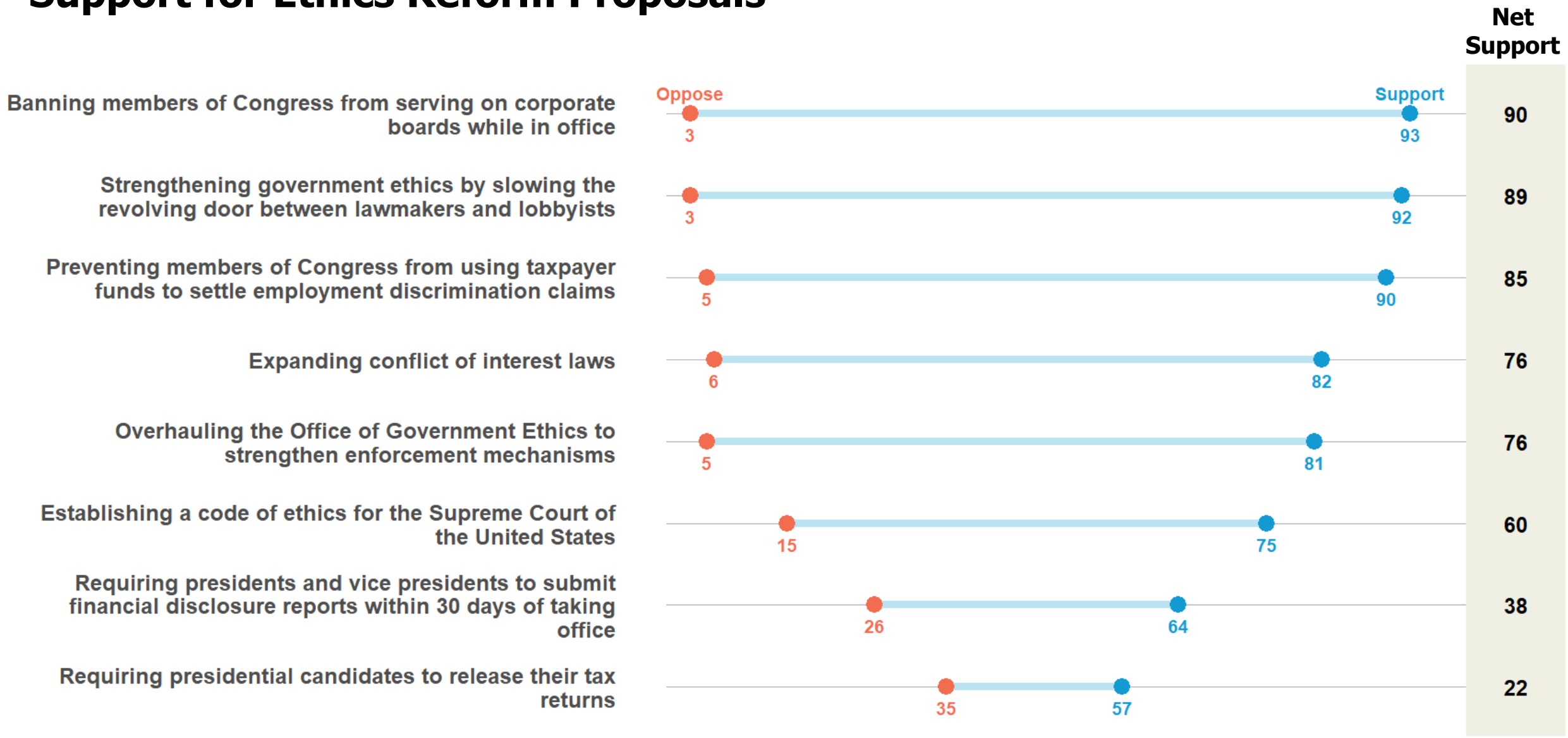
Support for Voting Rights Proposals



Support for Voting Rights Proposals



Support for Ethics Reform Proposals



Opportunity:

Veterans Bill of Rights

On the heels of Trump's "suckers and losers" comments and Biden's support from wide array of military and national security leaders, Democrats should step up and support American veterans. Not only does the Veterans Bill of Rights poll off the charts, but it is the right thing to do.

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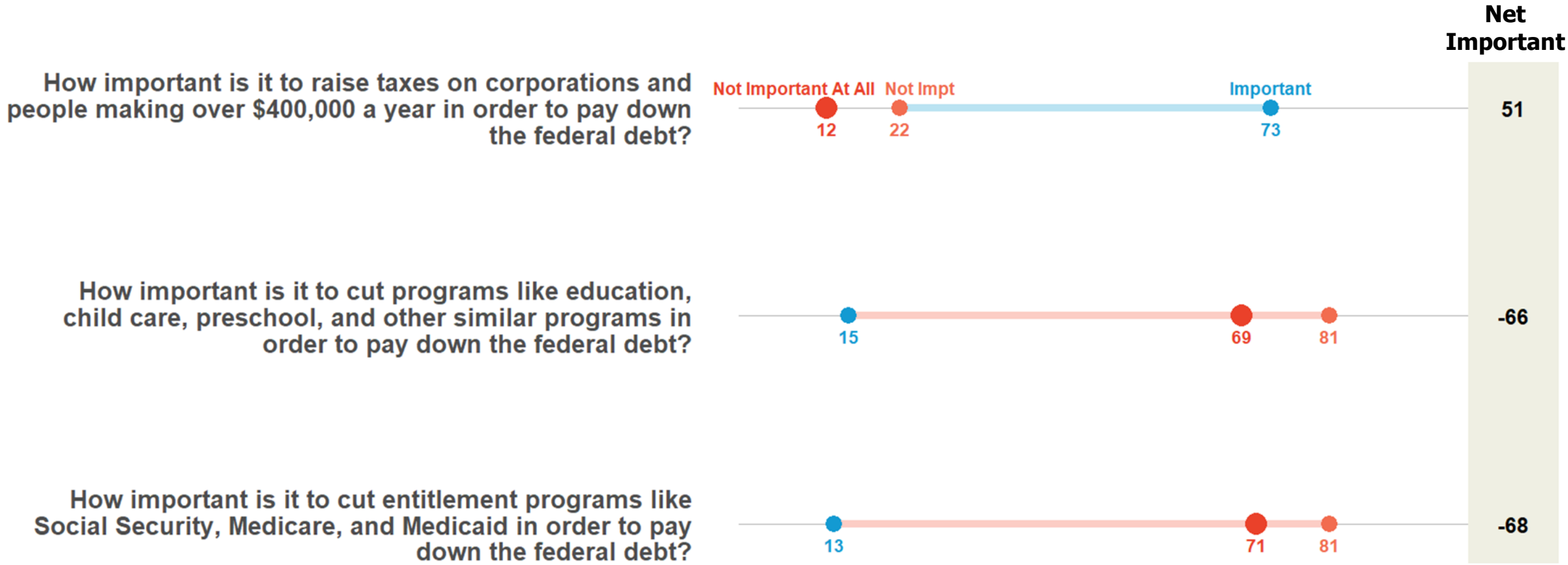
Voters Overwhelmingly Support a Veterans Bill of Rights

Do you support or oppose a national Veterans Bill of Rights that protects veterans' healthcare, increases veterans' job opportunities, makes higher education more affordable, and helps prevent veteran suicide and mental health issues?

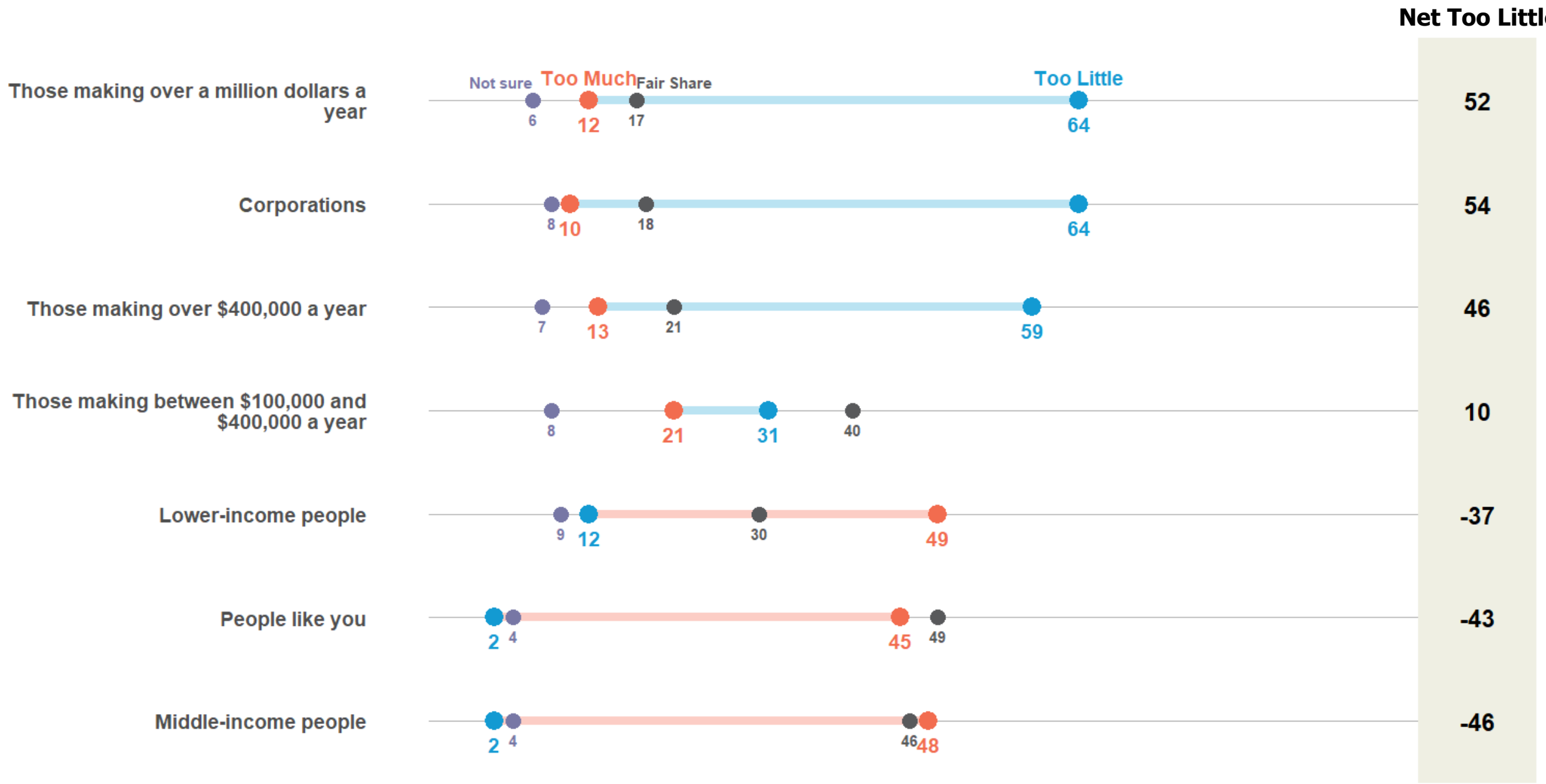
Challenges:

Avoiding Austerity & Getting Tax Policy Right

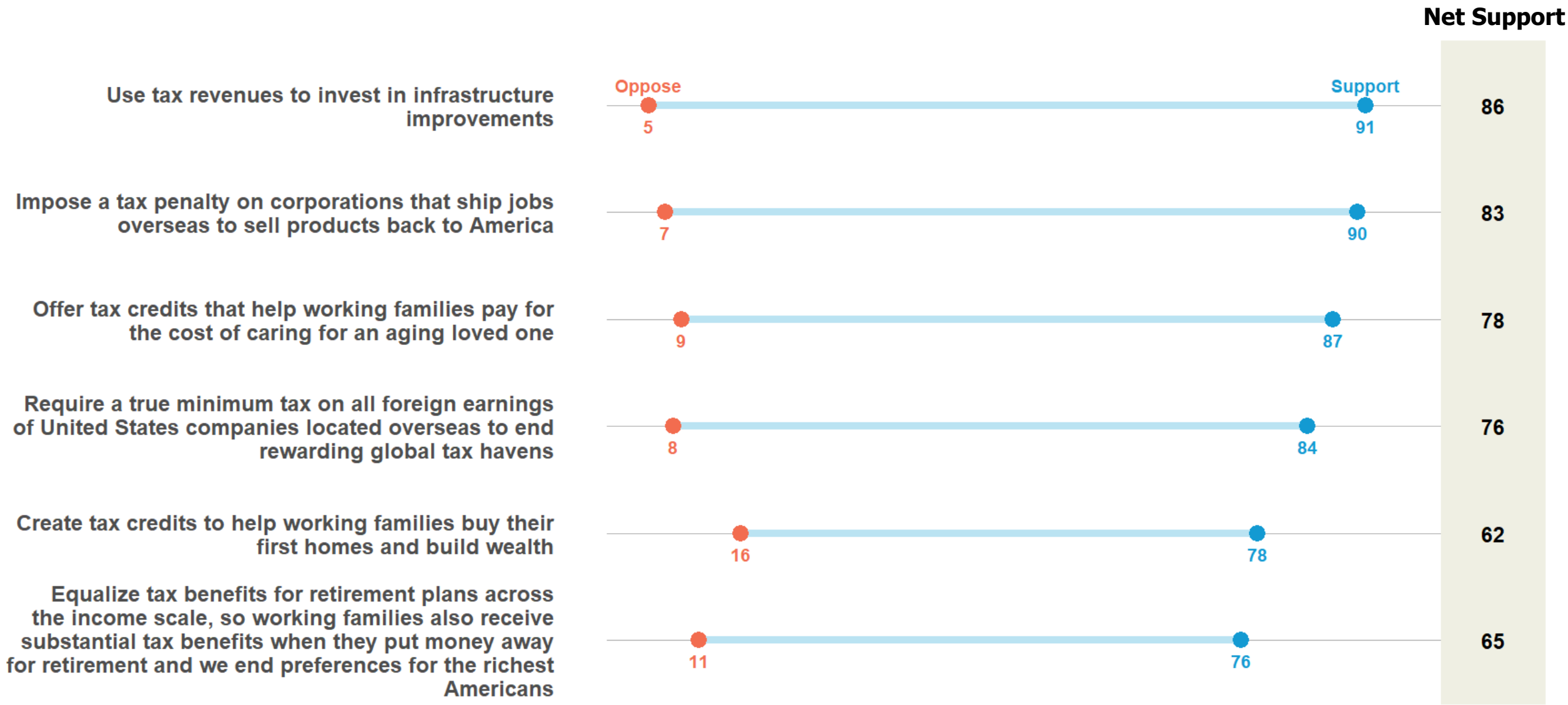
Voters Want the Wealthy to Pay Their Fair Share – Not Austerity



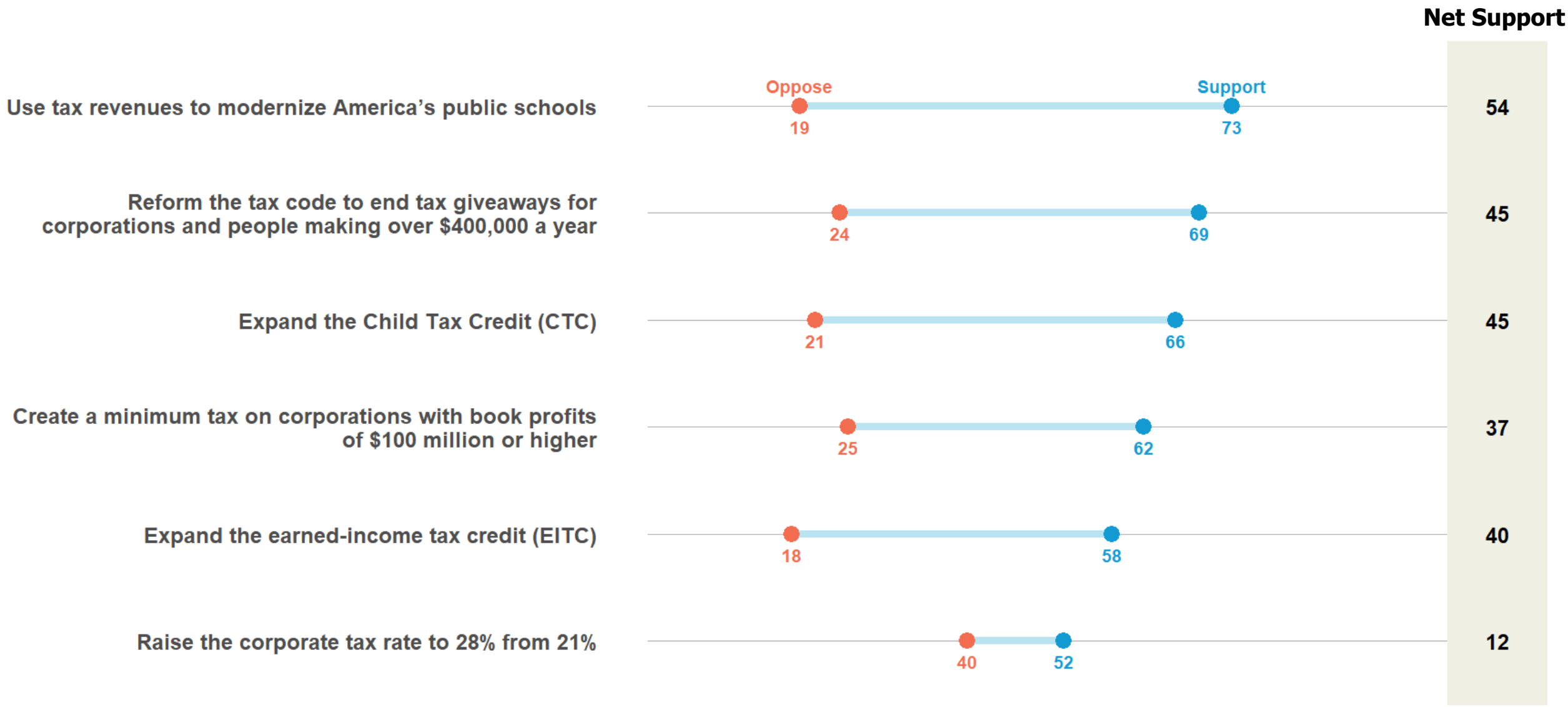
Voters Think The Wealthy ($400K+) & Corporations Pay Too Little in Taxes



Support for Tax Policy



Support for Tax Policy



Wake-up Call:

Improving Government Customer Service

Democrats are are viewed as party of government, and it is not working for voters. Improving the Democratic brand also means improving government service so there is a positive association between how government functions and the party identity.

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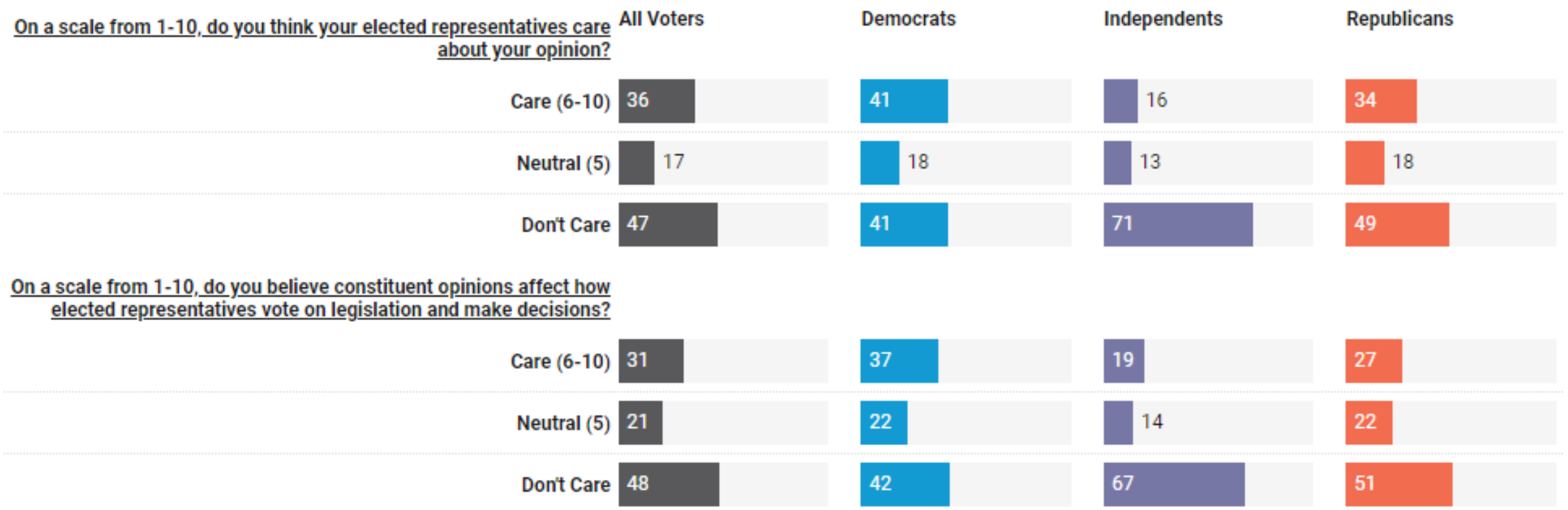
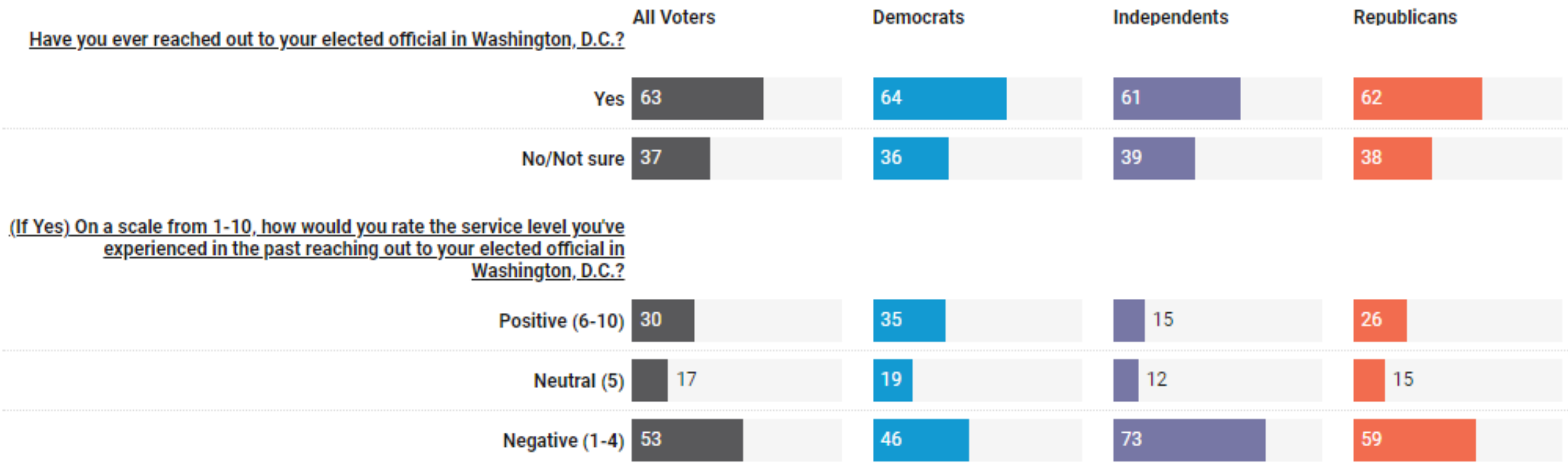
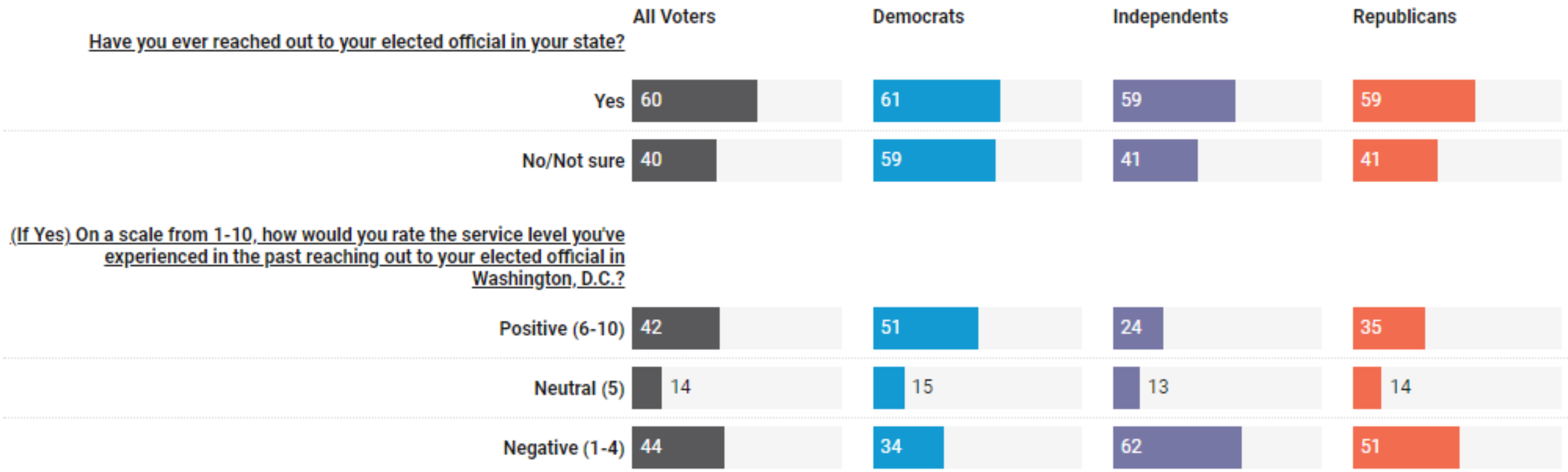
Voters – Particularly Independents – Don't Believe Elected Officials Care about Their Opinion



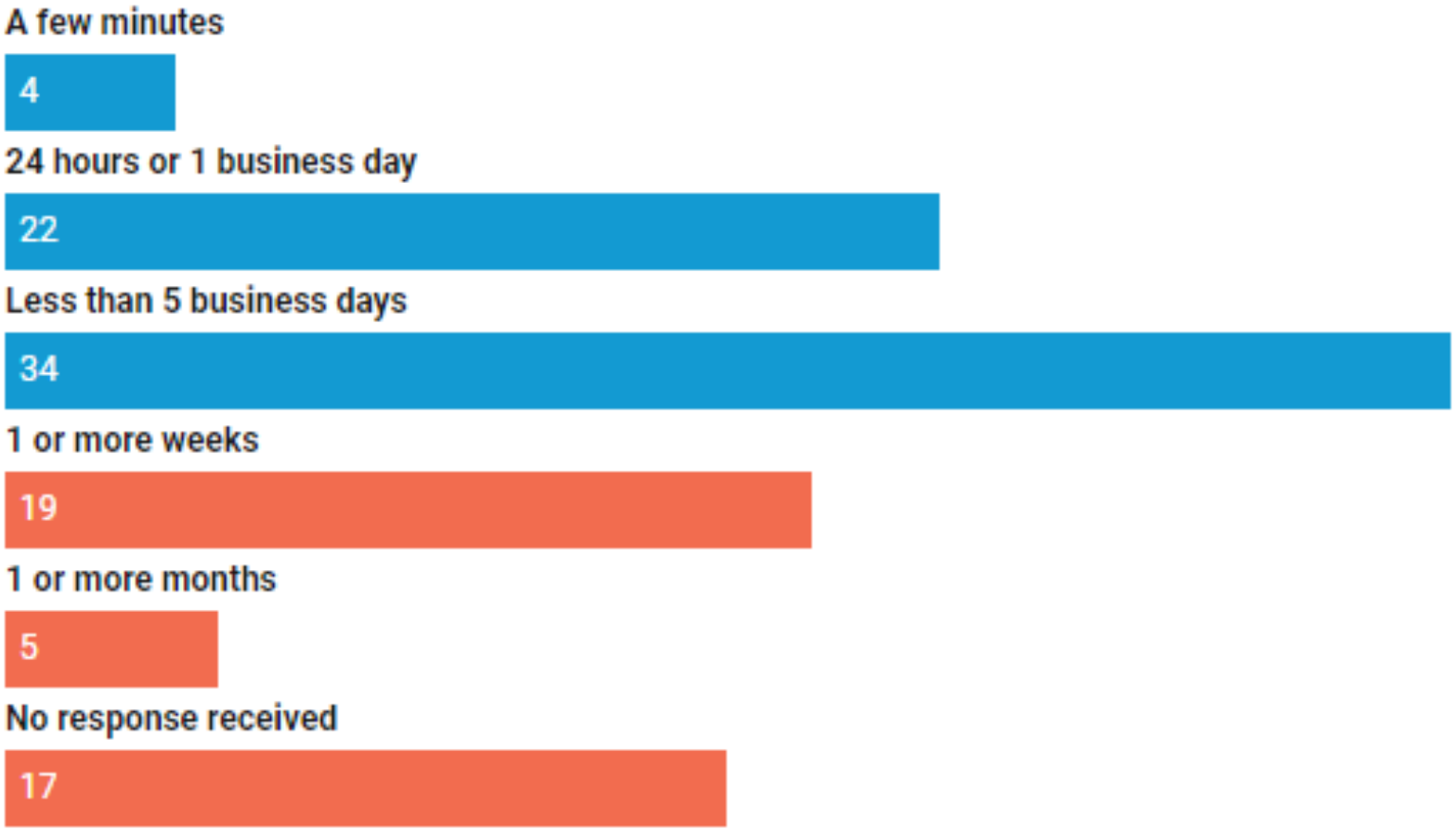
And Voters Don’t Rate Their Experience Contacting Officials in DC Positively



They Are Mixed on State Interactions with Democrats More Positive



A Majority Received a Response in Less Than a Week. 41% Did Not.



The Word "Democrat" is a Bad Brand. We Have an Opportunity with the 2020 White House win to rebuild the brand and use words that work.

Our recommendation since 2017 has been that the Democratic Party cannot afford to cede the basic American word of "freedom." Both Republican and Independent voters rank "freedom" as their most important value – it is thus difficult to expand the map if we're talking two different languages with half of the country. Democrats must seize this overarching American concept instead of fighting headwinds with large blocs of voters (kudos to the choice movement for understanding this and leaning into reproductive freedom).

And further, we have an opportunity to reclaim the word "family" from the Republicans who have totally relinquished this key word. With everything we do, we should always be talking about "future." And considering there is an incredible amount of economic stress underlying Democratic voters, we must talk more as a party about "a fair shot." Strong words like "build" work. Finally, we need to give voters agency to participate. Our simple recommendation is the word, "let's."

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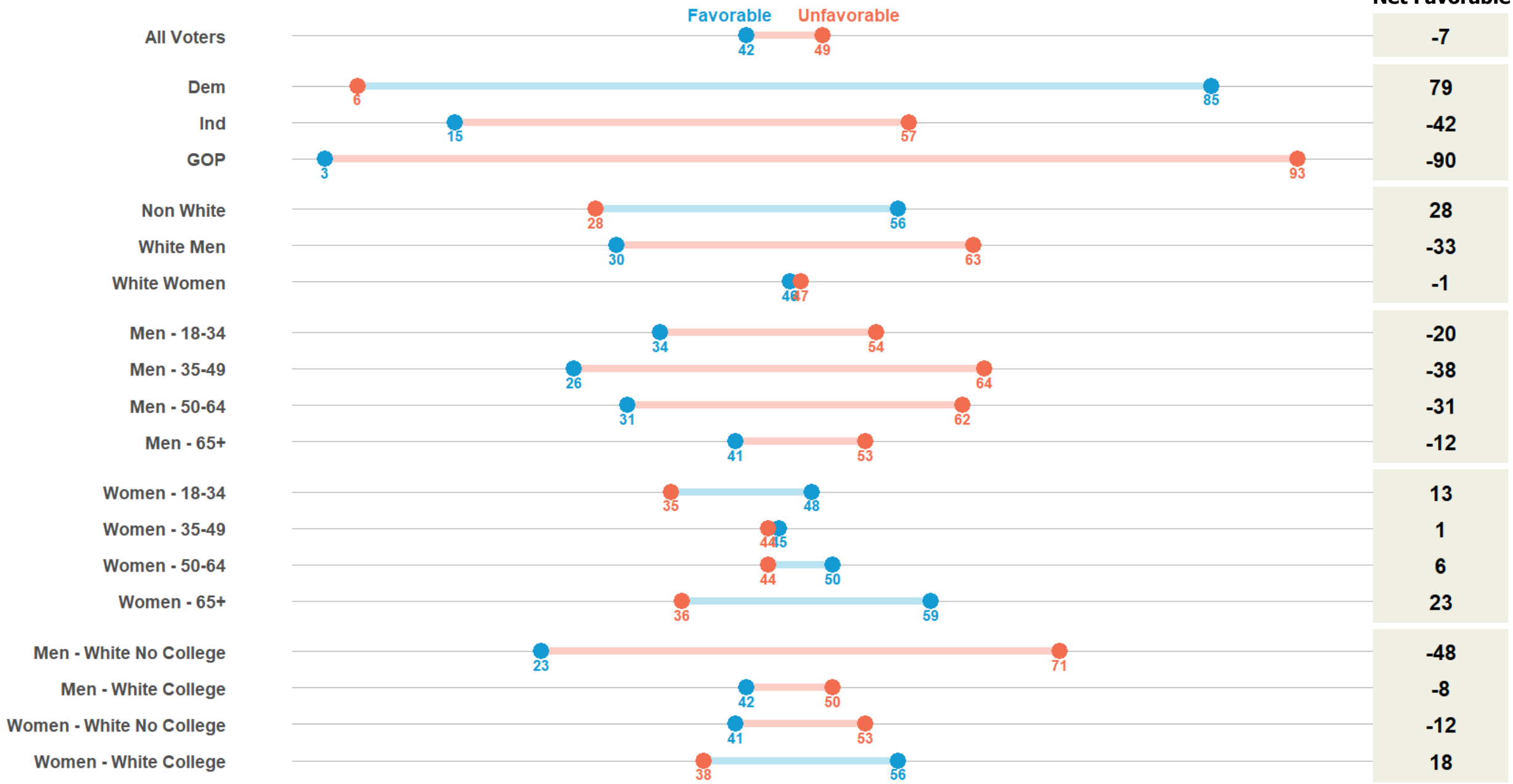
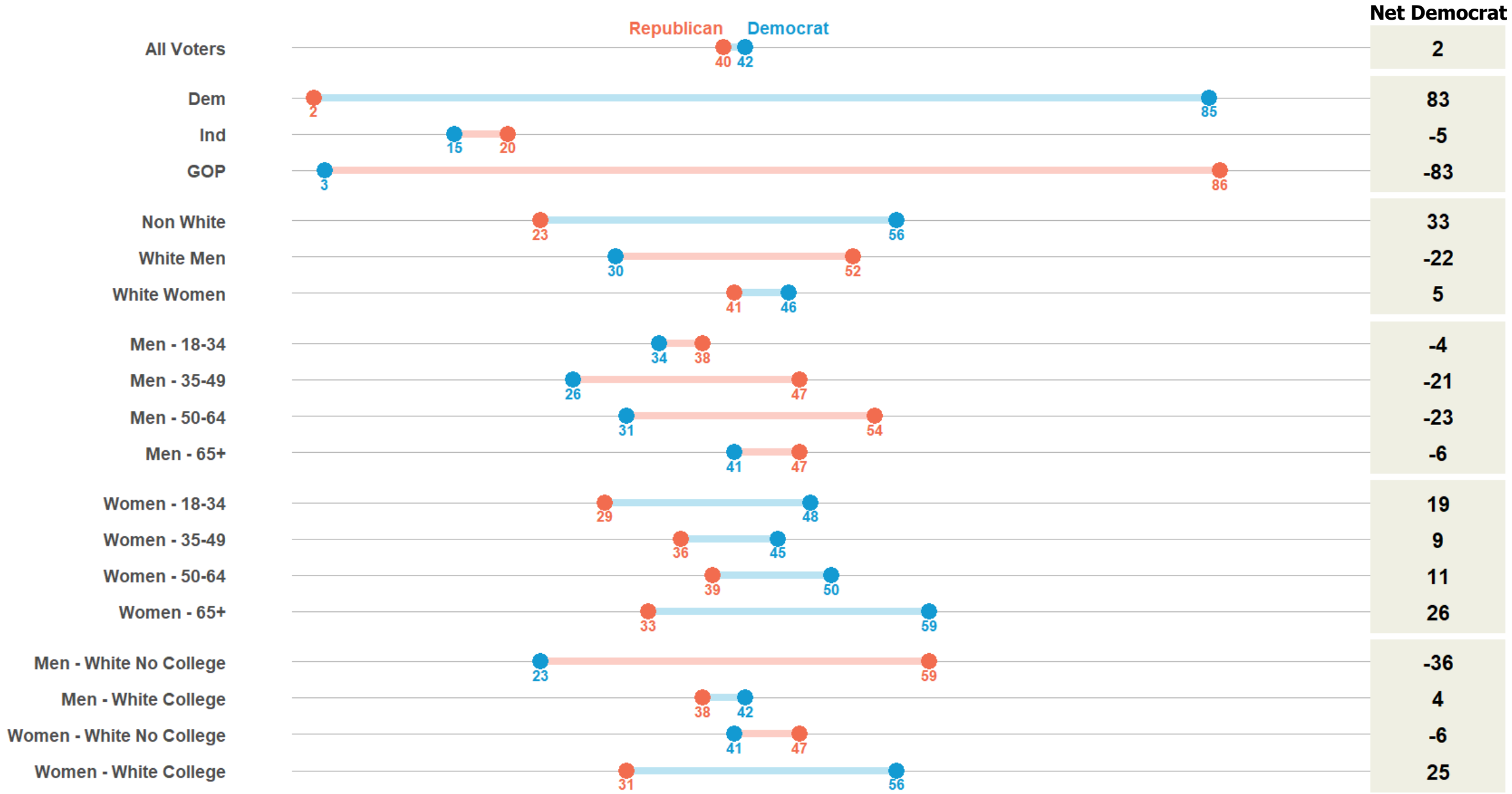
Opinion of the Democratic Party

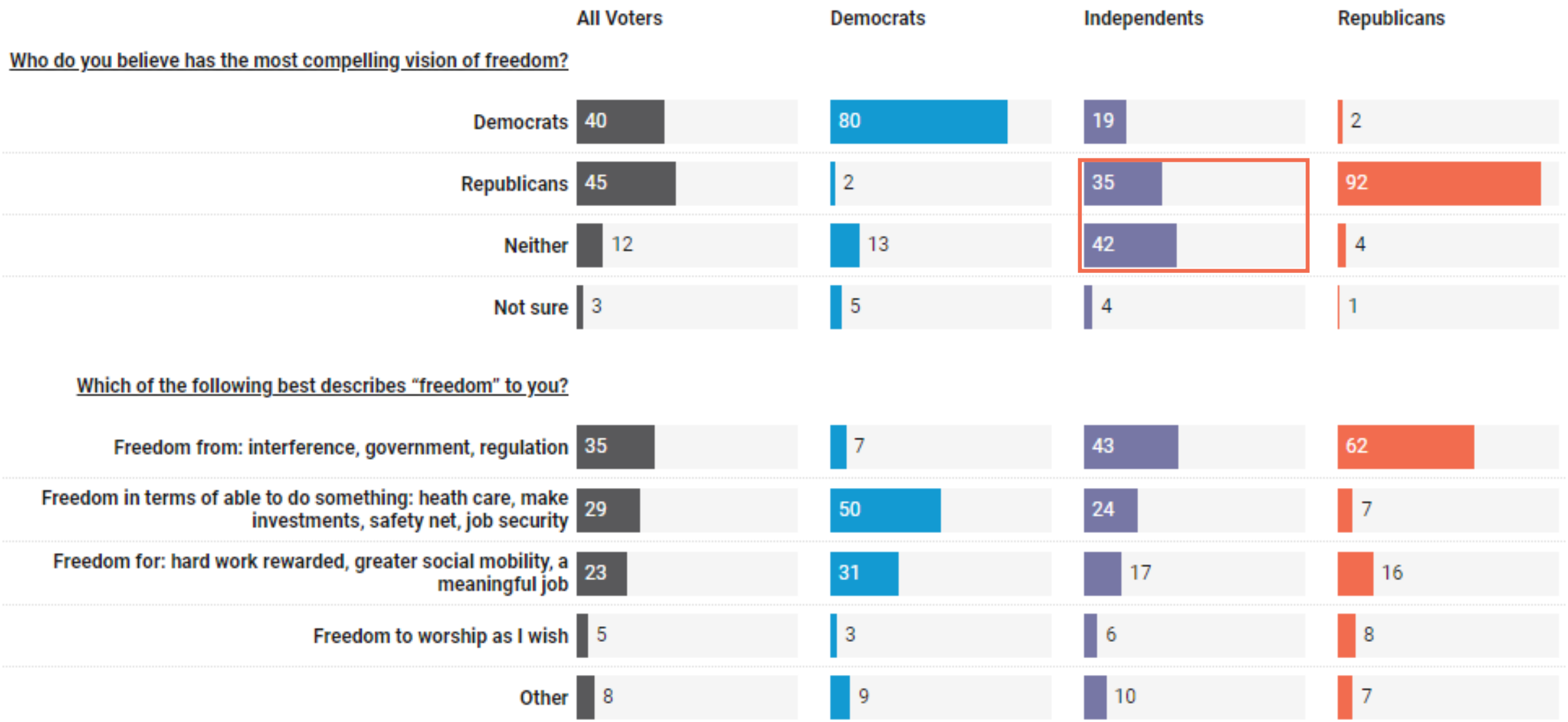


Democratic – Republican Party Favorable Rating



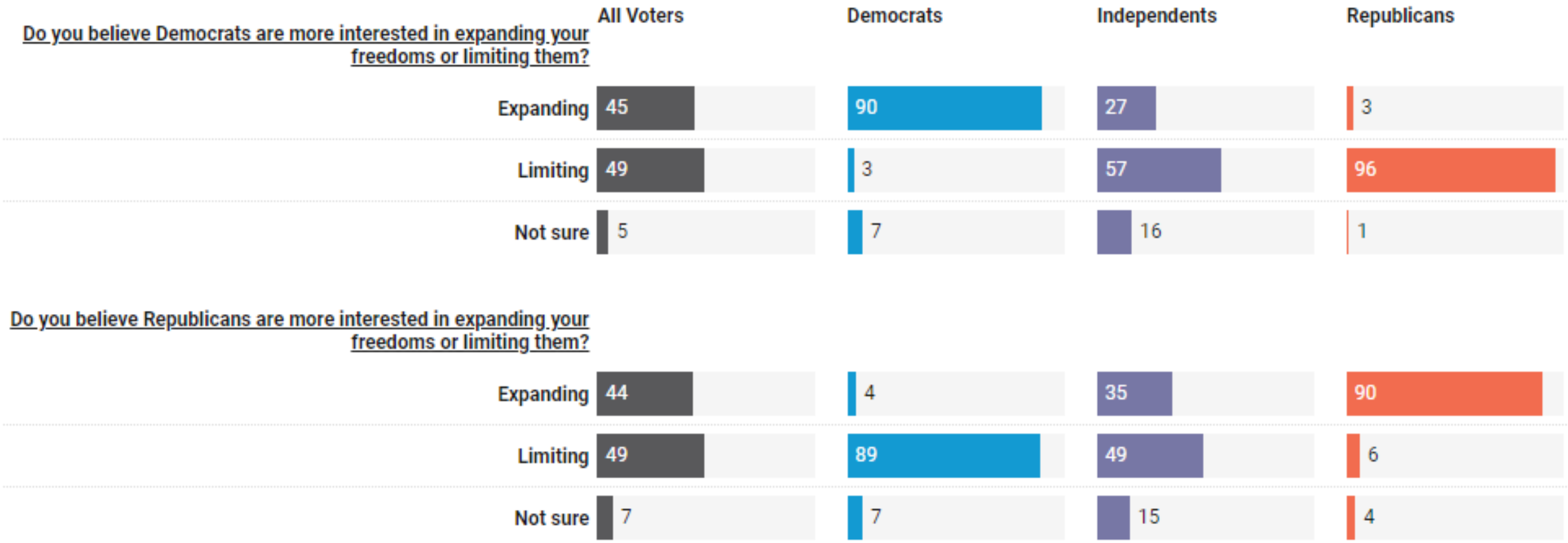
Views of Freedom

Independents Don't See Democrats Having the Most Compelling Vision of Freedom



Views of Freedom

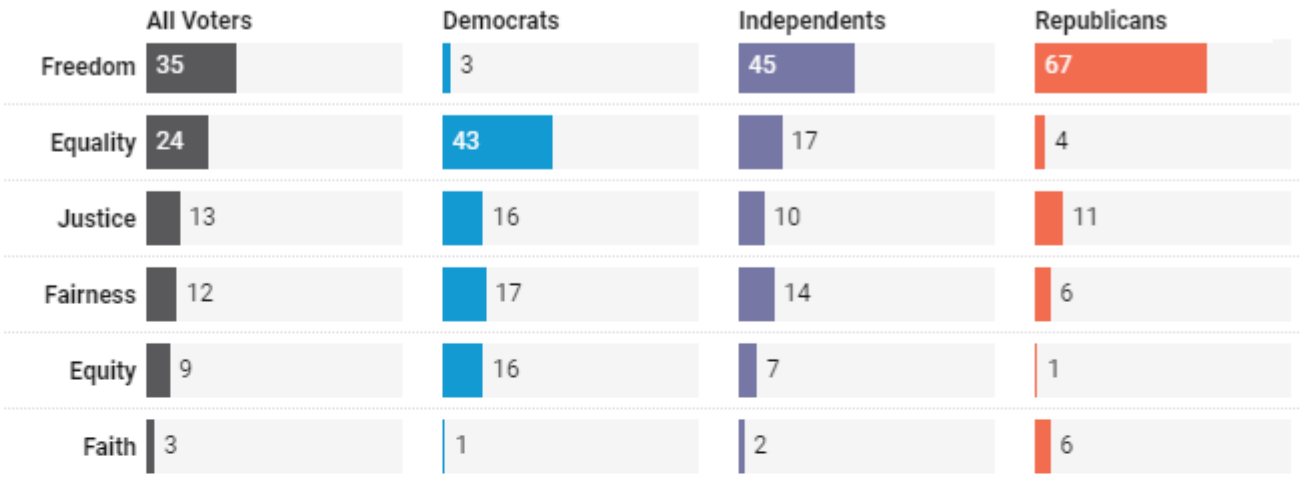
Independents Are More Likely to See Republicans Expanding Freedom



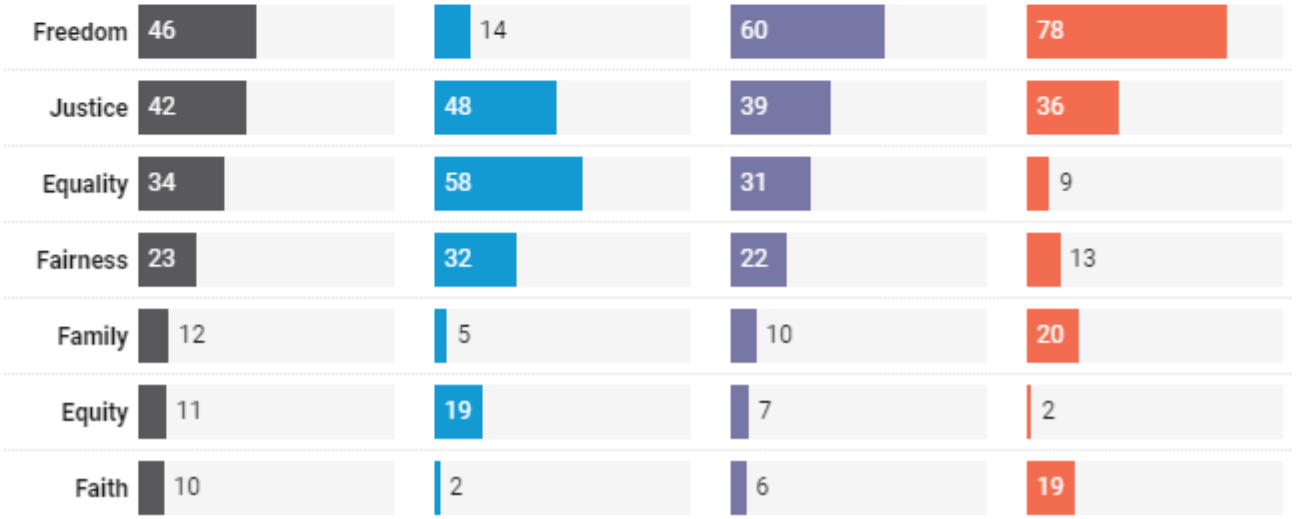
Most Important for a Candidate to Value

Independents/Republicans Prioritize Freedom – Democrats split on Justice/Equality/Fairness

If a political party could choose one and only one value to place highest in their governing and in their message, what would that value be?

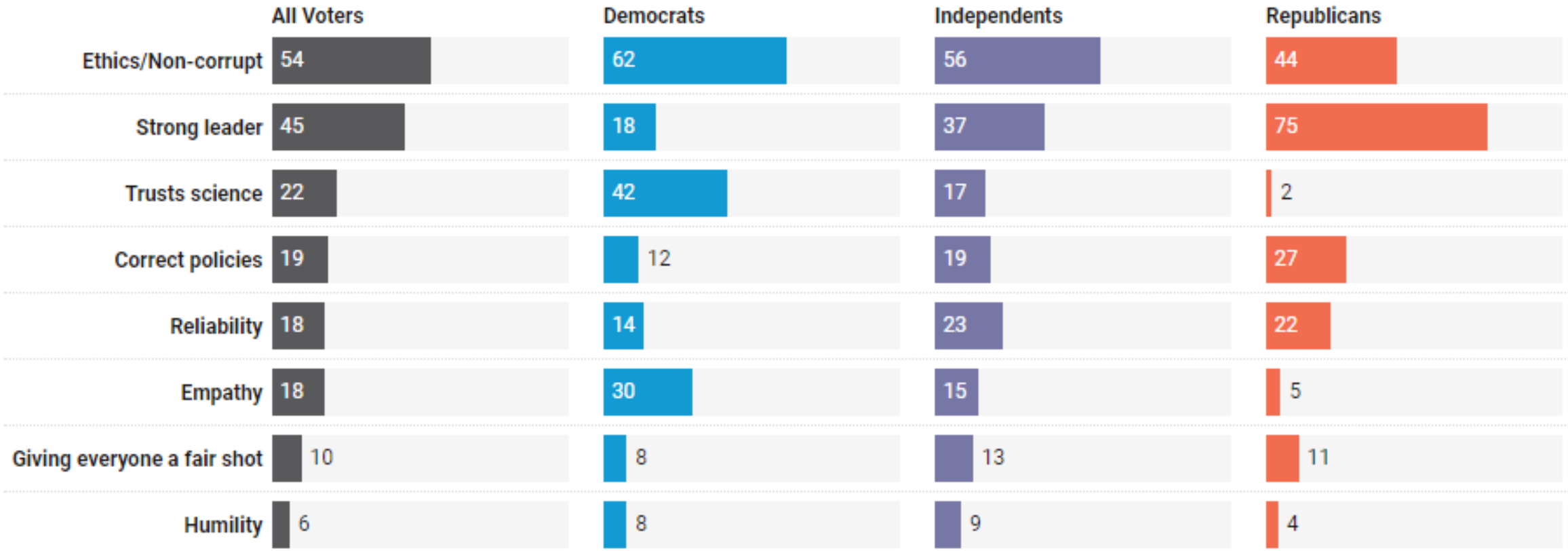


Which is the most important for a candidate to value?



Most Important Quality in a Candidate

Republicans Prioritize Leadership – Democrats and Independents Choose Ethics and Anti-Corruption



Conclusion

1) Democrats need to focus on the meat and potatoes issue of the economy. That means going big on jobs and family polices, while avoiding the austerity trap and speaking to voters' economic anxieties to ultimately improve their economic wellbeing.

2) The For the People Agenda works – stick with it. Recapture "freedom" and deliver policies that make good on the promise to build the American future in which every person – no matter their race, gender or place – has a fair shot. The For the People Agenda must be understood as the agenda for multiethnic, multiracial, working-class voters – because it is.

3) We need voters broadly to feel better about what Democrats do – and to ease the reflexive mistrust among a large swath of the electorate. For the next two years, we are in charge, and we need to accomplish things that are important to voters and articulate those wins. Doing so will build trust in the word Democrat for future elections.

4) Democrats must stop tearing each other apart and avoid self-defeatist language and arguments. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris won a historic election, Democrats retained the House after big wins in 2018, and we are coming close in the Senate with a tough map. Biden's favorability for an incoming president is very high. We need to project confidence, act like we won (we did!) and govern. The Biden-Harris ticket showed us path to not only winning, but also expanding the map to places like Arizona and Georgia. There are lessons to take into 2022 and 2024, but for gosh sake everyone needs to act like we actually won.

To learn more, contact Mark Riddle at Mark.Riddle@FutureMajority.org

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