

Getting the Democratic Economic Message Right

National survey of 1,217 general election voters conducted February 2023.

Global Strategy Group conducted a panel survey of 1,200 nationwide 2020 or 2022 voters between February 16th and February 20th, 2023.

National survey of 1,202 likely 2024 voters conducted May 2023.

Global Strategy Group conducted a panel survey of **1,200** nationwide 2020 or 2022 voters between May 11th and May 15th, 2023.

Key Recommendations

Democrats face a trust deficit on the economy

- Challenge is one of volume and message clarity
- Need to prioritize talking about the economy everyday and with a consistent message

Democrats should anchor your economic message around “growing the middle class”

- 85% of Americans view this approach as “in-step” with their goals
- It resonates with working class and low-income Americans
- It is a powerful contrast with Republicans and can be the anchor for ALL of your policies

Middle Class is less a status symbol than an emotional state

- Security + stability; Less stress and more control
- Not about “going to college” and “getting a degree” and “buying a house” etc.

Four Key Contrasts with MAGA Republicans

- Investing in the American people vs. Gutting investments mc families depend on
- Lowering costs by cracking down on corporate greed vs. protecting corporations that rip-off families
- Making the wealthy pay what they owe vs. Give corporations and the wealthy special tax breaks
- Protect and strengthen retirement security vs. Cutting Social Security and Medicare



Partisan Challenges on the Economy

Strengthening the economy stands out as the top priority for voters

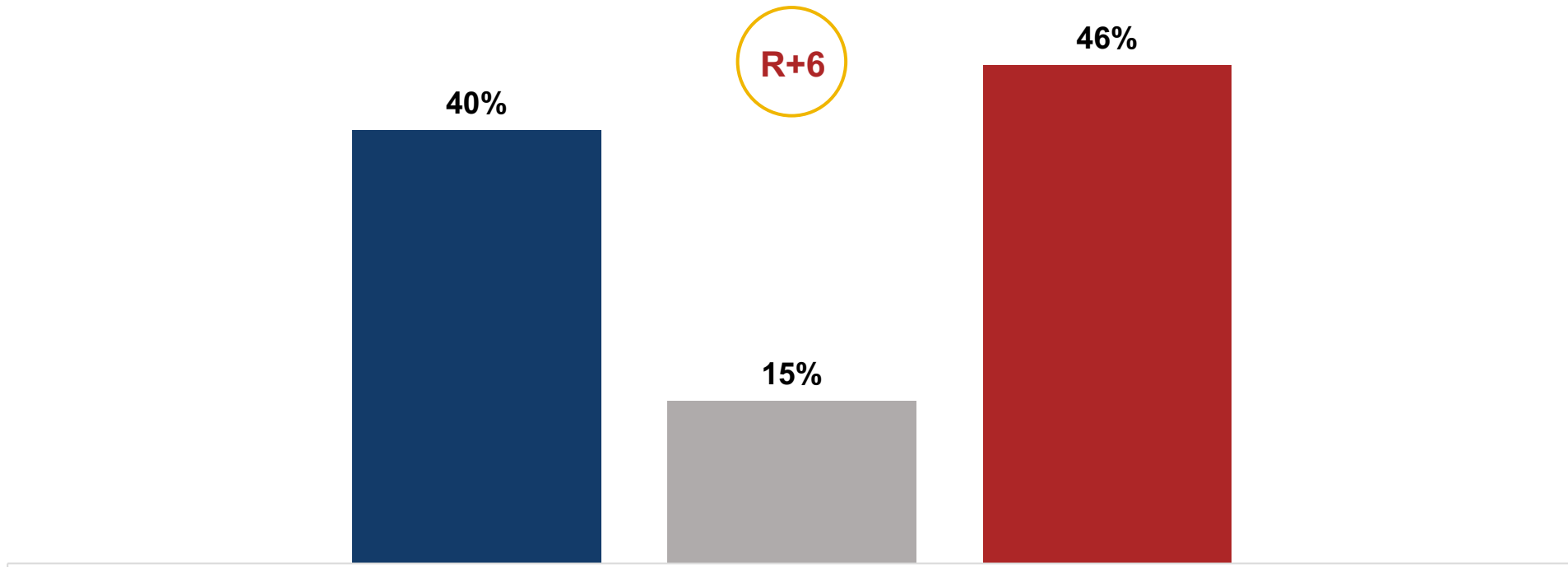
Priorities for the President and Congress to address rated as high priority (9-10 on a 0-10 scale)

		DEM %	GOP %	White %	Black %	Latino %
Strengthen the economy	71%	62	80	72	70	60
Reduce crime	59%	56	65	58	68	57
Reduce gun violence	56%	76	38	53	64	60
Protect voting rights	54%	63	49	54	62	51
Stop illegal immigration	47%	25	71	52	34	36
Increase oil and gas production	40%	24	58	42	32	38
Protect abortion rights	39%	62	19	38	45	42
Address climate change	35%	57	15	32	49	38
Stop “woke” culture (schools/bsns)	35%	16	55	39	19	27
Treat immigrants humanely	34%	51	20	30	47	45
Protect the rights of gun owners	32%	15	50	35	26	30
Protect LGBTQ rights	24%	42	9	21	33	31
Restrict abortion	19%	14	25	18	26	22

Republicans More Trusted on the Economy

Do you have more confidence in Democrats or in Republicans to have the right approach on the economy?

■ More confidence in Democrats ■ No confidence in either ■ More confidence in Republicans



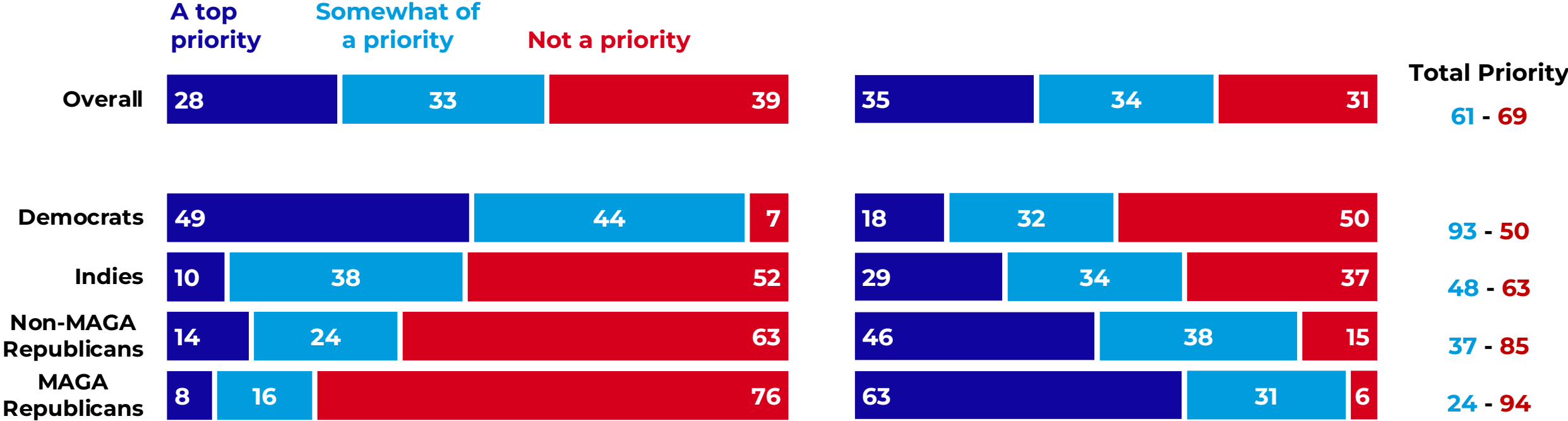


Democrats Not Viewed as Prioritizing the Economy

Republicans hold 8-pt edge on making the economy a priority including a 15-point edge with Independents

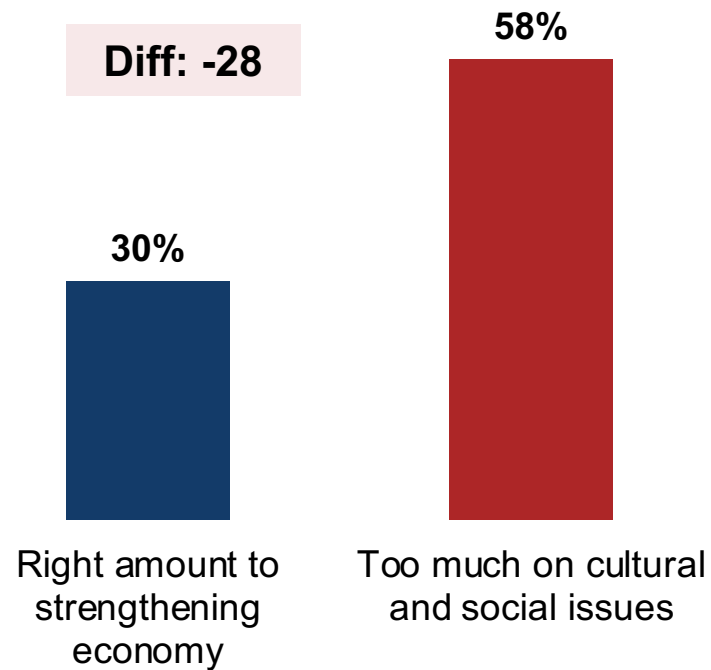
Just based on what you know, how much of a priority is the economy for the **Democratic Party?**

Just based on what you know, how much of a priority is the economy for the **Republican Party?**

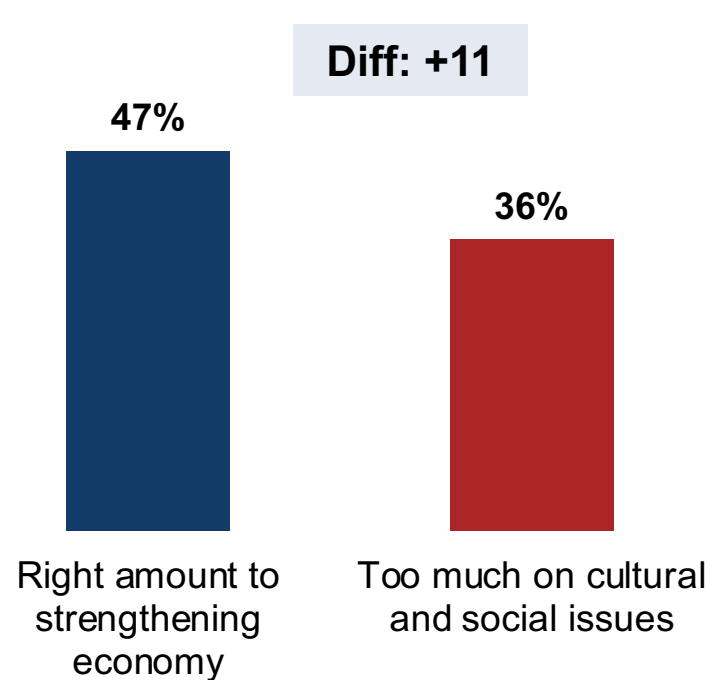


Democrats are seen as prioritizing cultural issues over strengthening economy, while Republicans are not.

Do **Democrats** give right amount of attention to strengthening the economy, or focus too much on cultural and social issues?



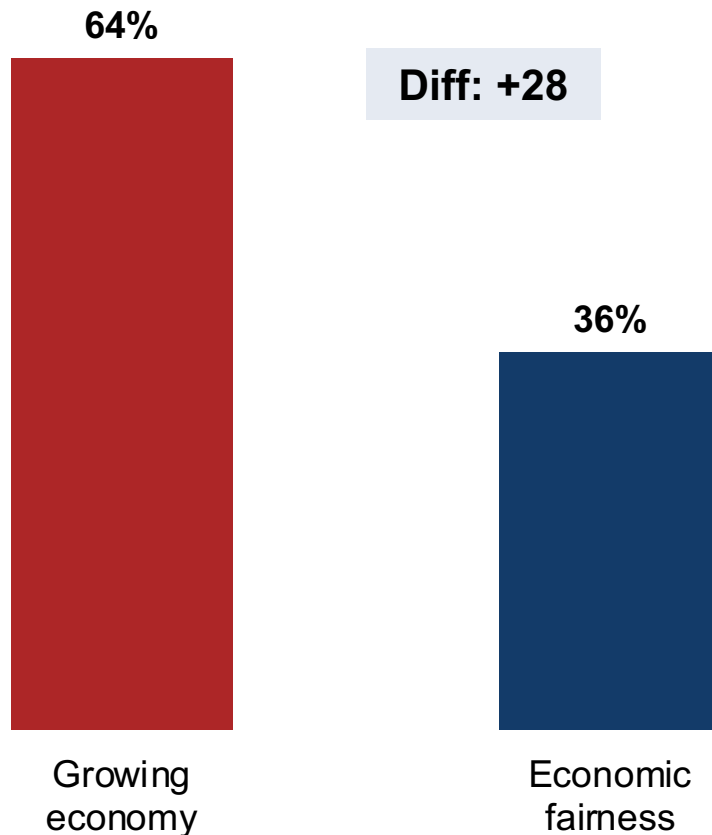
Do **Republicans** give right amount of attention to strengthening the economy, or focus too much on cultural and social issues?



	View of DEMs (Diff)	View of GOP (Diff)
Democrats	+33	-41
Independents	-40	+1
Republicans	-85	+66
All Non-MAGA	-6	-11
Center voters	-34	+11

Voters prioritize economic growth over fairness.

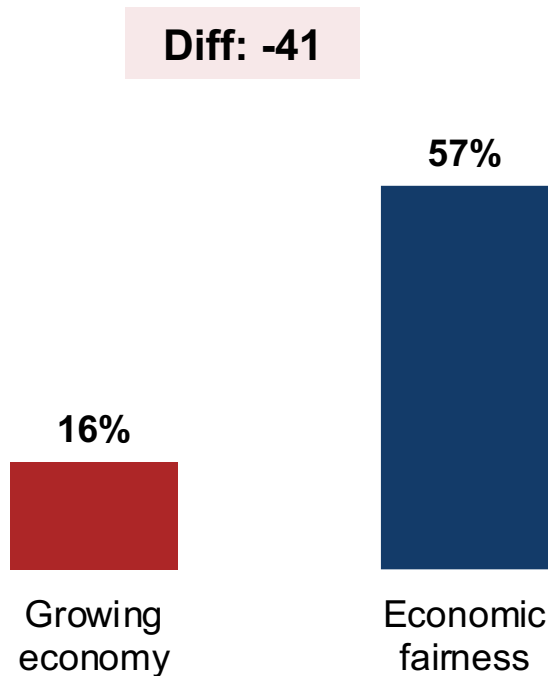
Which would you say is the more important goal for the country: growing the economy, or ensuring economic fairness?



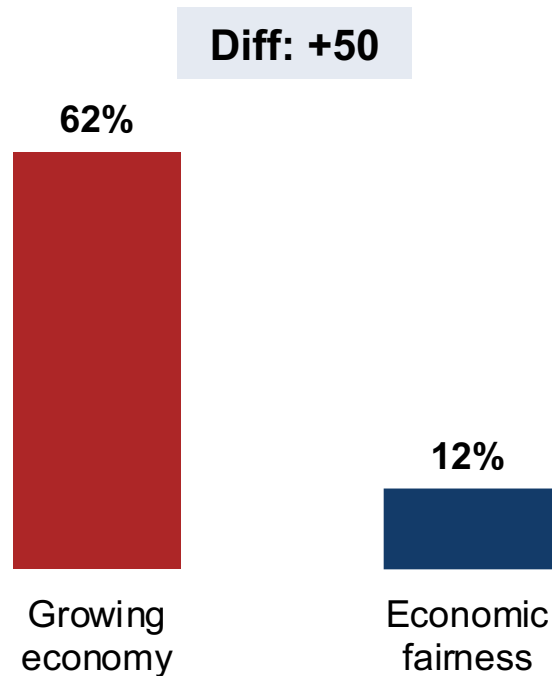
	Growing Economy %	Economic Fairness %
Liberal Democrats	36	64
Other Democrats	51	49
Independents	68	32
Republicans	84	16
Black voters	44	56
Hispanic voters	53	47
18-34	50	50
Biden voters	47	53

Voters believe that Republicans share their focus on growth, while Democrats favor fairness.

Do the **Democrats** generally give a higher priority to growing the economy, or ensuring economic fairness?

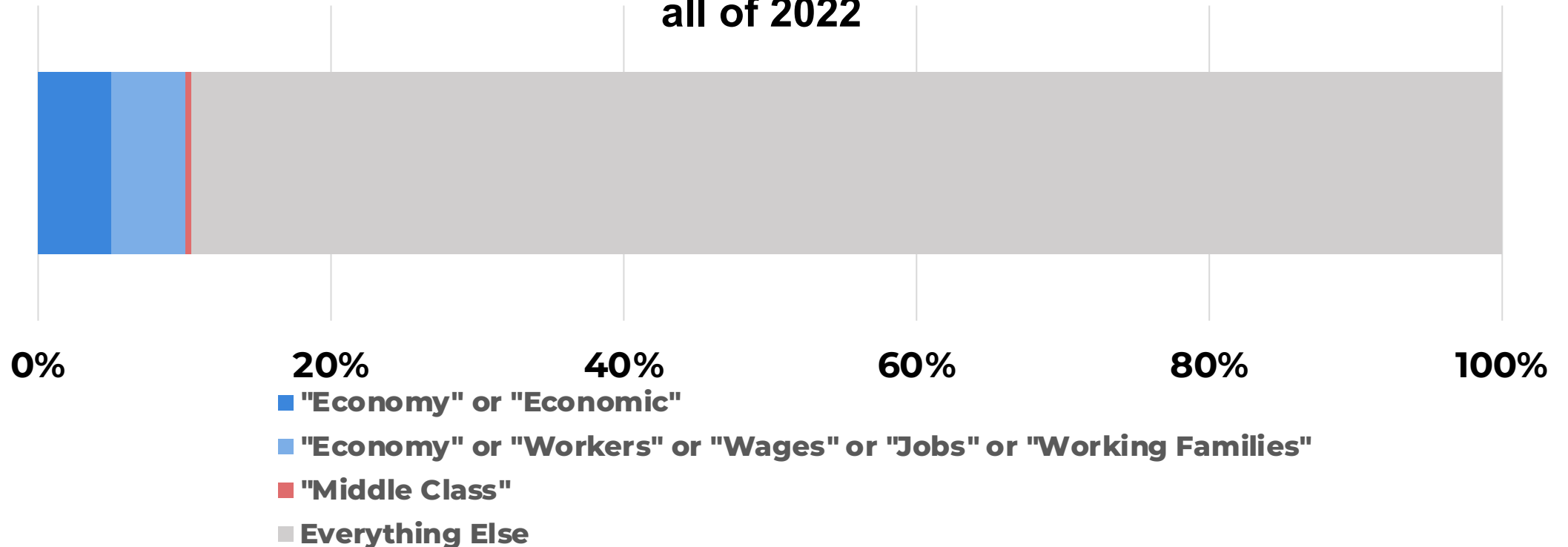


Do the **Republicans** generally give a higher priority to growing the economy, or ensuring economic fairness?



As a party, “the economy” occupies a small share of your voice

Share of voice on economy—based on press releases, FB posts, and tweets in all of 2022

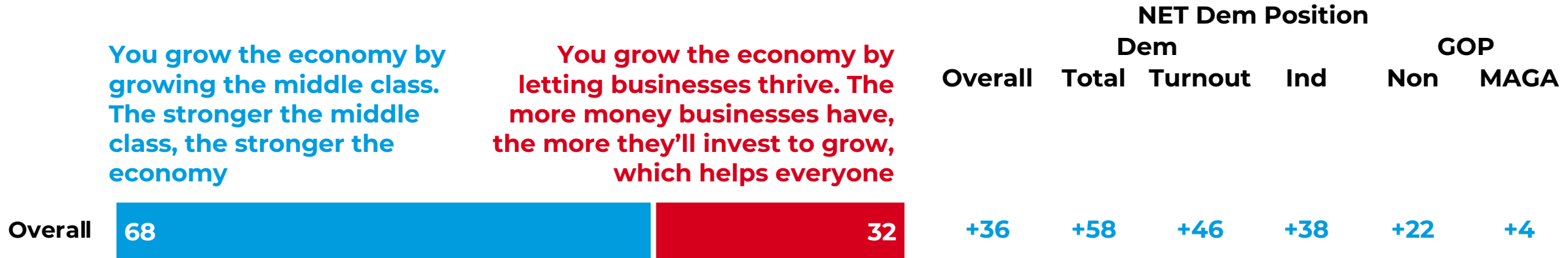




Economic Anchor: **Growing the Middle Class**

Voters believe you grow the economy by growing the middle class over letting businesses thrive

Which comes closer to your opinion?

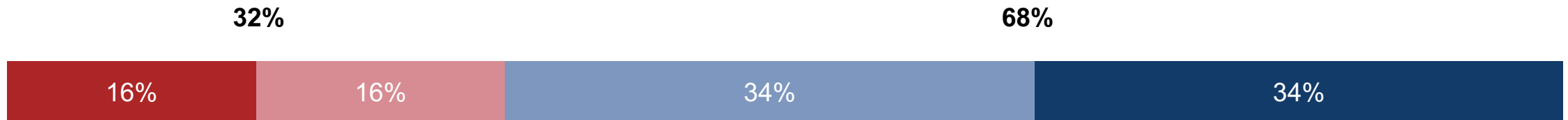


With which statement do you agree more?

■ A - Much More
 ■ A - Somewhat More
 ■ B - Somewhat More
 ■ B - Much More

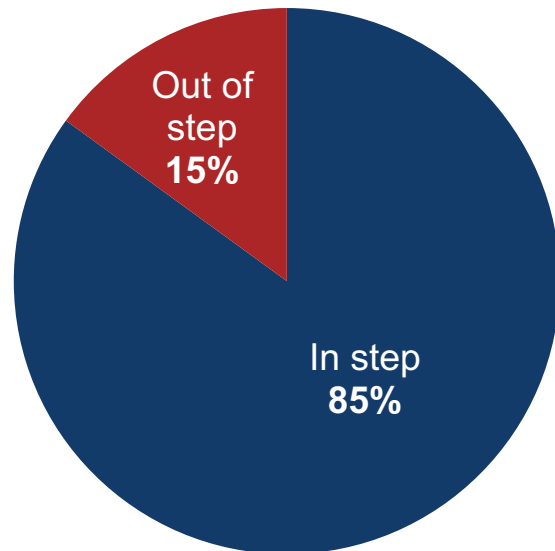
A) The key to a strong economy is a commitment to free markets instead of big government.

B) The key to a strong economy is investing in the American people and building a strong middle class.

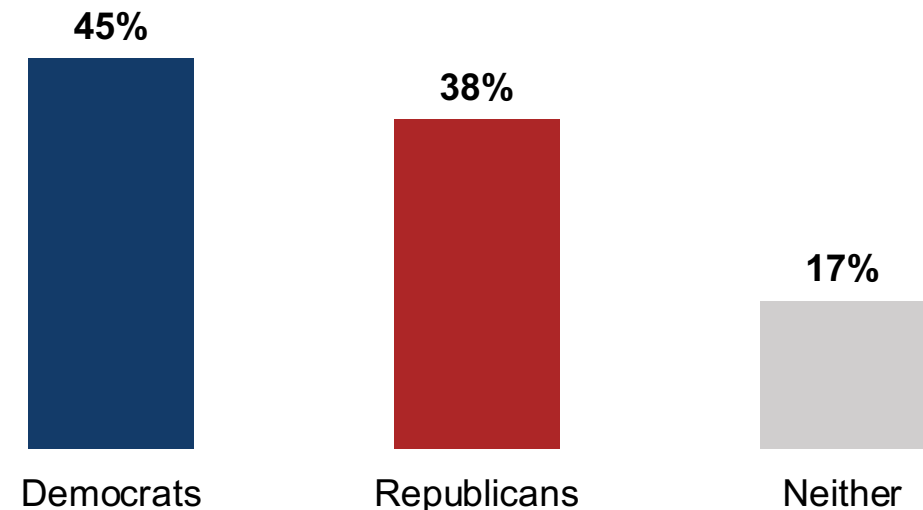


Voters identify with a candidate who wants to grow the economy by growing the middle class, and see Democrats more likely to focus on it

If a candidate said their economic priority is to grow the economy by growing the middle class, would this candidate be in step or out of step with your goals on economic issues?



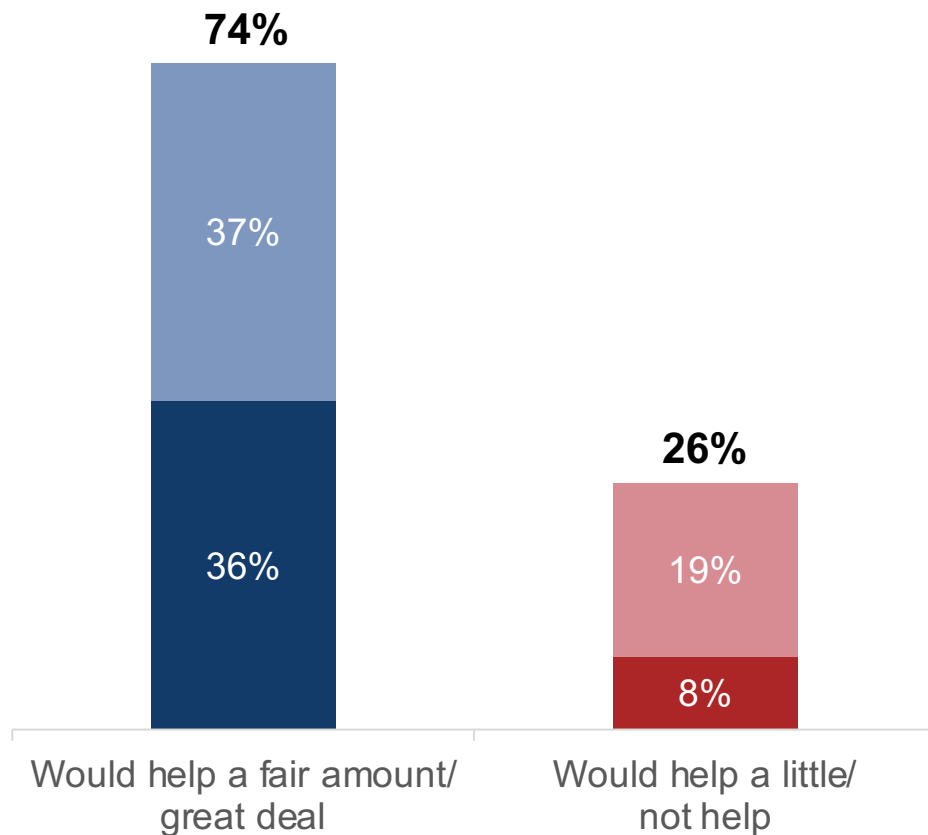
Which party do you think is more likely to focus on growing the economy by growing the middle class?



81% of working-class voters and 81% of low-income voters say this candidate is in step with their economic goals.

Voters of all classes believe they will benefit from an agenda focused on growing the middle class.

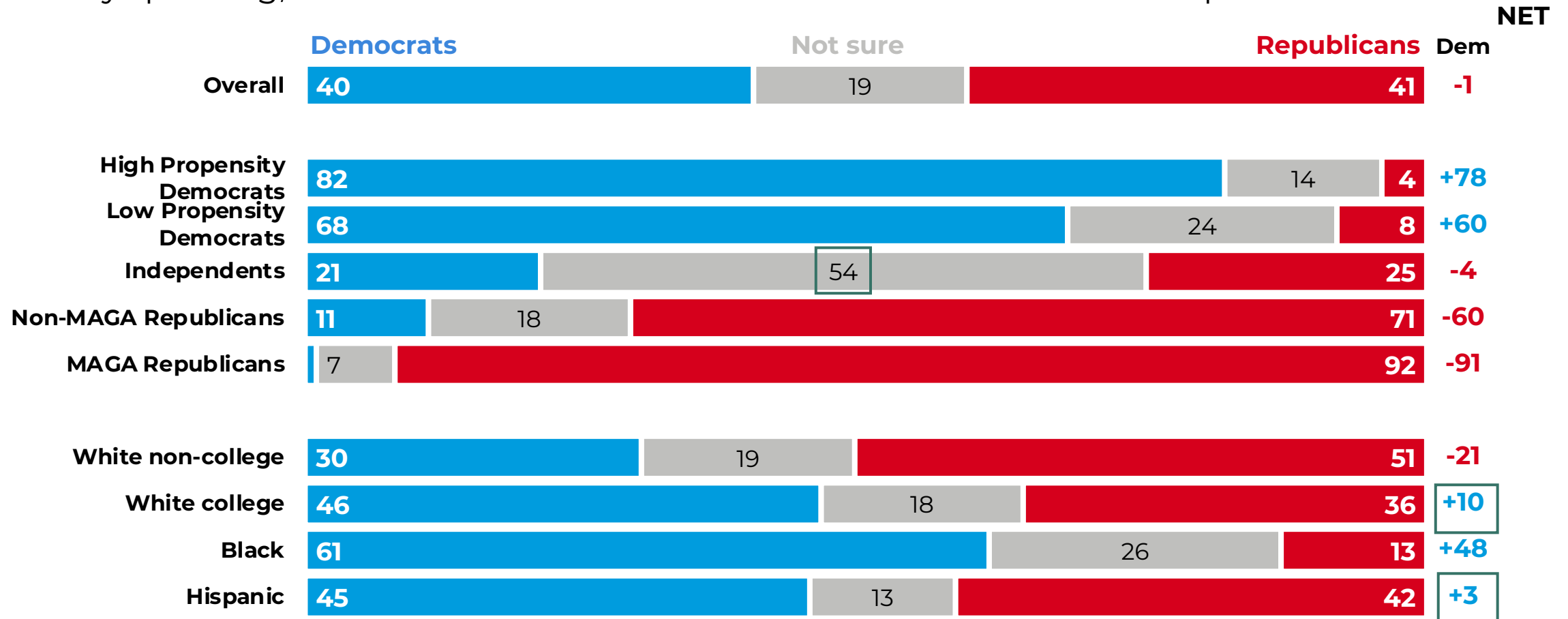
Do you think an agenda focused on growing the middle class would help people like you and your family?



	Total Great Deal/fair amount %
All	74
White	71
Black	80
Latino	77
Middle class	75
Working class	77
Lower class	60

Voters are evenly divided on how the middle class does under either party; turnout targets have less confidence in Dems

Generally speaking, does the middle class do better under Democrats or Republicans?



Complete List of Messages Tested

(TAXES) Democrats believe that big corporations and the ultra-wealthy should start paying their fair share in taxes and that no profitable company should ever pay zero in taxes again.

(BOTTOM UP, MIDDLE OUT) Democrats believe you don't grow the economy from the top down; you grow the economy from the bottom up and middle out, creating opportunities for everyday Americans to thrive.

(AFFORDABILITY) Democrats believe that we have to raise wages and lower costs so that life is more affordable and working families aren't constantly stressed.

(HAVE YOUR BACK) Democrats believe when corporate special interests go too far and try to cheat American families, the government must have their back.

(INVESTMENTS) Democrats believe that you grow the economy by investing in working people. When government and businesses stop investing, workers and communities struggle to get ahead.

(MIDDLE CLASS) Democrats believe that we grow the economy by building a strong middle class and that when the middle class does well, everyone does better.

(NOT RICH) Democrats believe we need an economy where you don't have to be rich to be able to buy a home or save for retirement.

(STABILITY) Democrats believe that after years of chaos and violent division, we need stability so that our economy can grow and everyday Americans can thrive.

(COLLEGE) Democrats believe that you shouldn't have to get a four-year degree to get a good-paying job or retire with dignity.

(RETIREMENT) Democrats believe that every American who works hard their entire life is entitled to retire with dignity and security.

(MANUFACTURING) Democrats believe we should be proud to make things in America again and that means we have to invest in growing industries like clean energy and advanced manufacturing.

(HARD WORK) Democrats believe we must respect hard work and that every American who works hard should be able to afford a good life.

(COMPETE) Democrats believe that instead of giving companies tax breaks to ship jobs overseas to places like China, we should incentivize them to invest in American workers and create good-paying jobs at home.

(SUPPLY CHAIN) Democrats believe that our supply chains should start in America, so that we are exporting American goods to other countries instead of just buying the things other countries make.

Base + swing voters respond to messaging focused on building a strong middle class

Max Diff Test

OVERALL		
Item	Score	Rank
Middle Class	160	1
Taxes	117	2
Bottom Up	115	3
Retirement	114	4
Affordability	111	5
Compete	107	6
Investments	107	7
Hard Work	104	8
Not Rich	104	9
Supply Chain	100	11
Manufacturing	85	12
Stability	63	13
College	59	14
Have Your Back	55	15

TARGETS - SWING		
Item	Score	Rank
Middle Class	138	1
Affordability	125	2
Compete	118	3
Not Rich	111	4
Bottom Up	109	5
Taxes	106	6
Supply Chain	104	7
Investments	101	8
Retirement	99	9
Hard Work	98	10
Manufacturing	86	11
Stability	71	12
College	68	13
Have Your Back	66	14

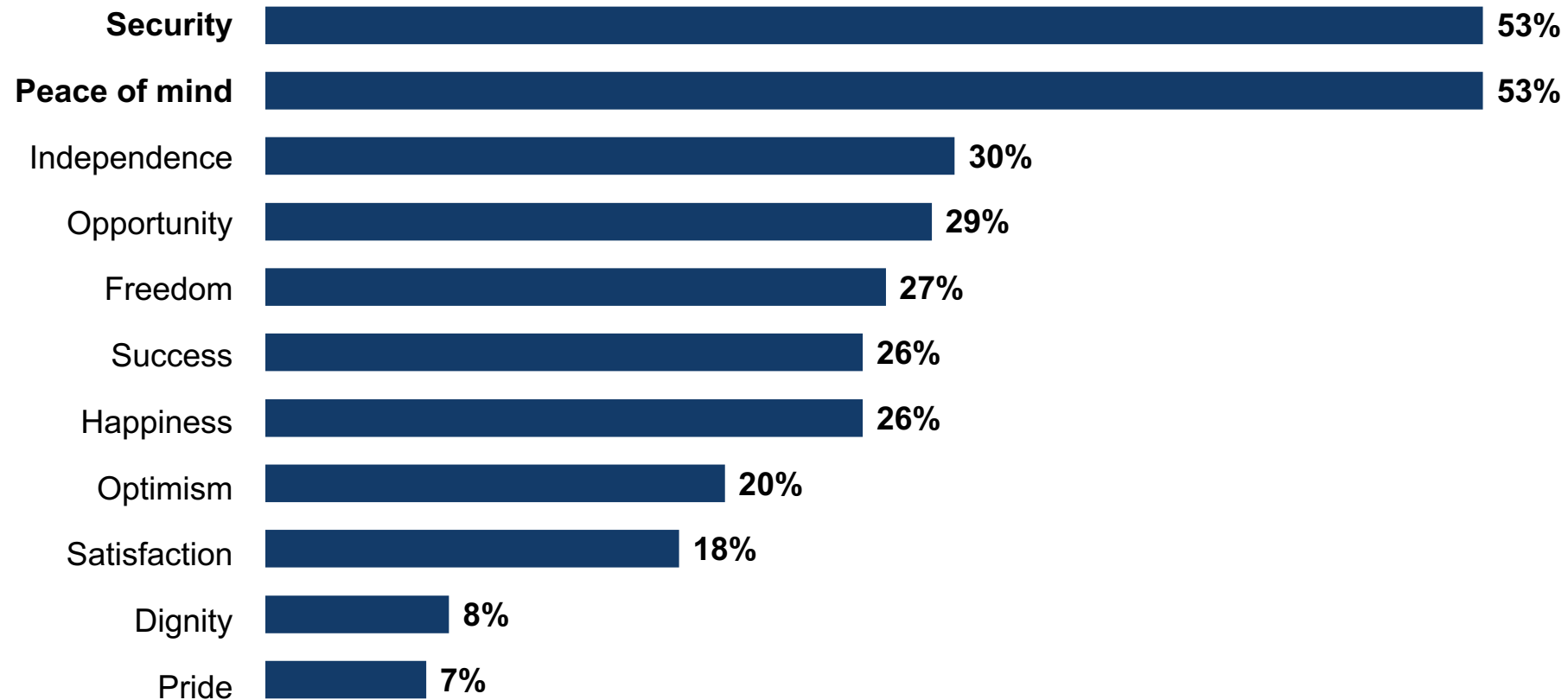
TARGETS - BASE		
Item	Score	Rank
Middle Class	194	1
Taxes	183	2
Bottom Up	140	3
Affordability	116	4
Retirement	105	5
Investments	104	6
Not Rich	94	7
Compete	92	8
Hard Work	87	9
Manufacturing	72	10
Supply Chain	65	11
Stability	61	12
Have Your Back	49	13
College	38	14

Middle Class is an Emotional State



What does “good economic times” mean to you?

When you think about what “good economic times means for you personally, which three of the following words do you most associate with that phrase?



FOCUS GROUPS: What Does It Mean to be “Middle Class”

- Participants associated being in the middle class with more immediate financial security, like being able to pay bills or save money, and still have disposable income.
- However, in an era of rising costs, many expressed pessimism that being in the middle class is enough to get by – or skepticism that being in the middle class today means the same thing it meant a generation or two ago (like owning your own home).

“Middle class people **have a measure of disposable income.**”

— White non-college man

“You just feel like **you're never going to catch up, especially if you're in the middle class, because you're always one step behind.**”

— Hispanic woman

“**How you feel after you pay bills. How much money do I then have to survive on until I get paid again? How can I sustain a lifestyle that's not just surviving? So that's a good marker** [of how the economy is doing].”

— Hispanic man

“I remember **my parents talking about feeling comfortable in the middle class and how you have pride in owning your own home** and my grandparents as well. And I haven't really been in an era where I've seen that. **You're really lucky if you can afford to own a home, especially if you're single.**”

— White non-college woman

“**In the 50s, [you had] one income in the household, one vehicle, maybe one television. The expectation was less.** I look around my house today. We're in the middle class in my family. **I look around my house today, I've got four TVs, I've got two refrigerators.**”

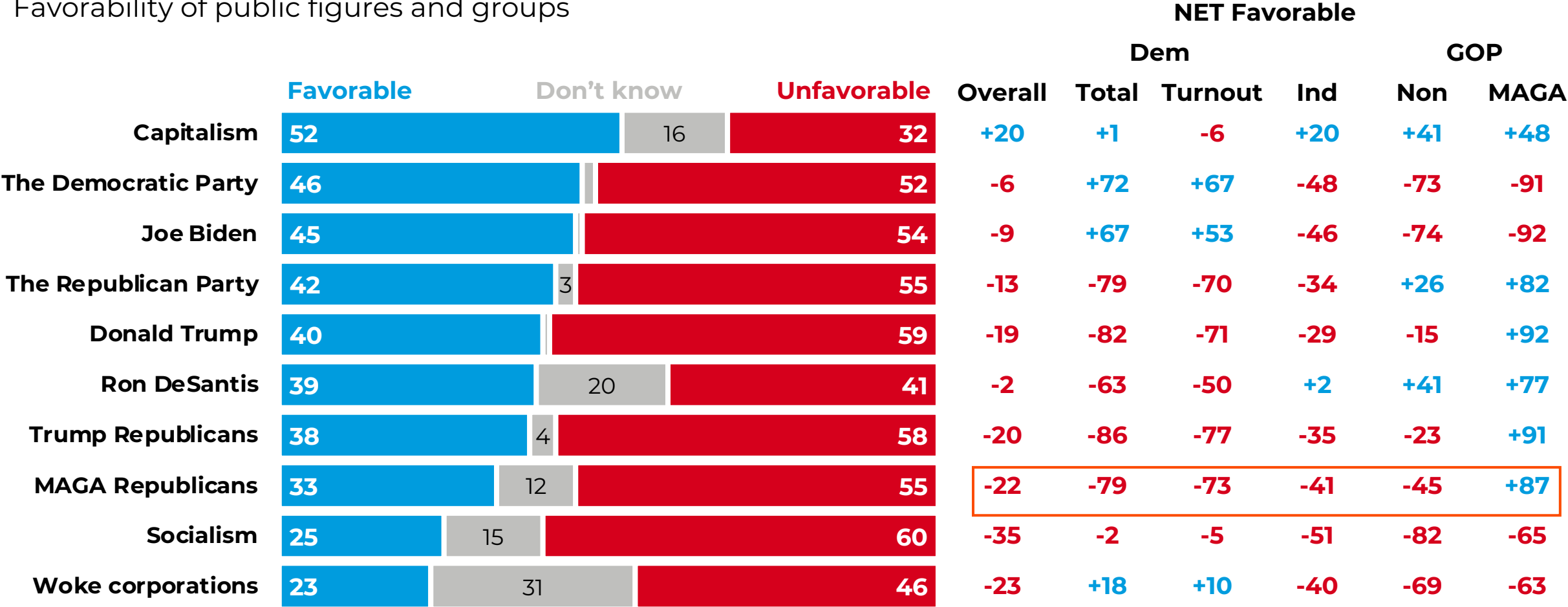
— White non-college man



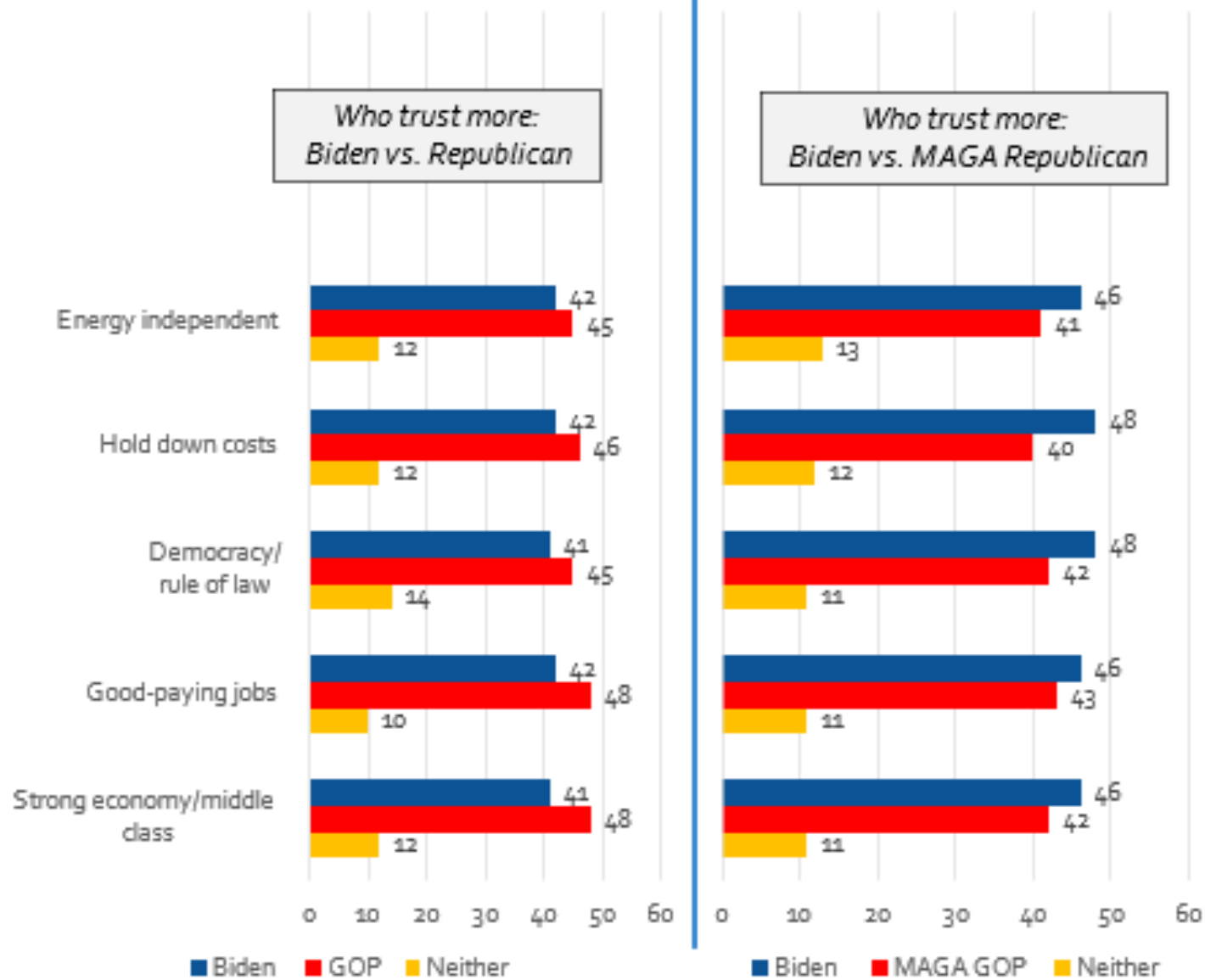
Contrast
MAGA Republicans

Biden and the Democratic Party viewed more favorably than Trump and the GOP overall; MAGA less popular than GOP overall or Trump

Favorability of public figures and groups



On key issues, including economics, Biden has the advantage only against a MAGA Republican



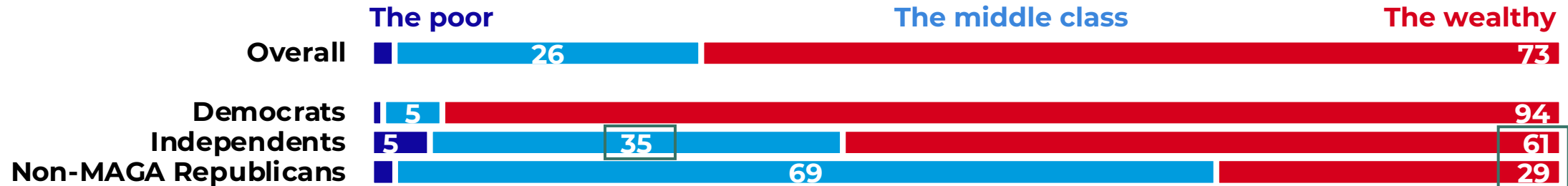
Ratings of 8-10 (highly important) on a scale of 0 to 10

More Independents and non-MAGA Republicans say MAGA Republicans are focused on the rich that Republicans

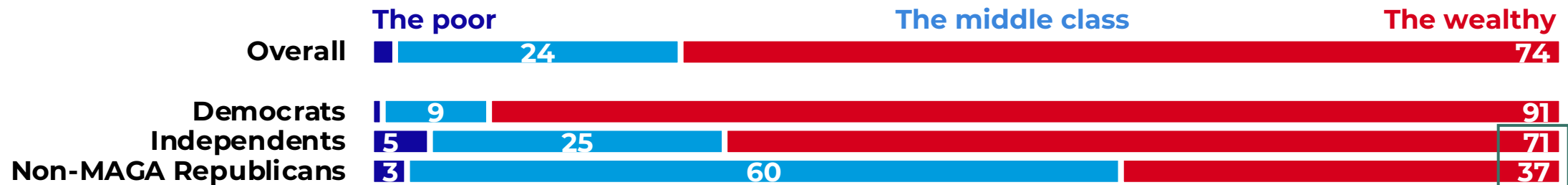
Do you think **Democrats'** economic policies will primarily favor...



Do you think **Republicans'** economic policies will primarily favor...



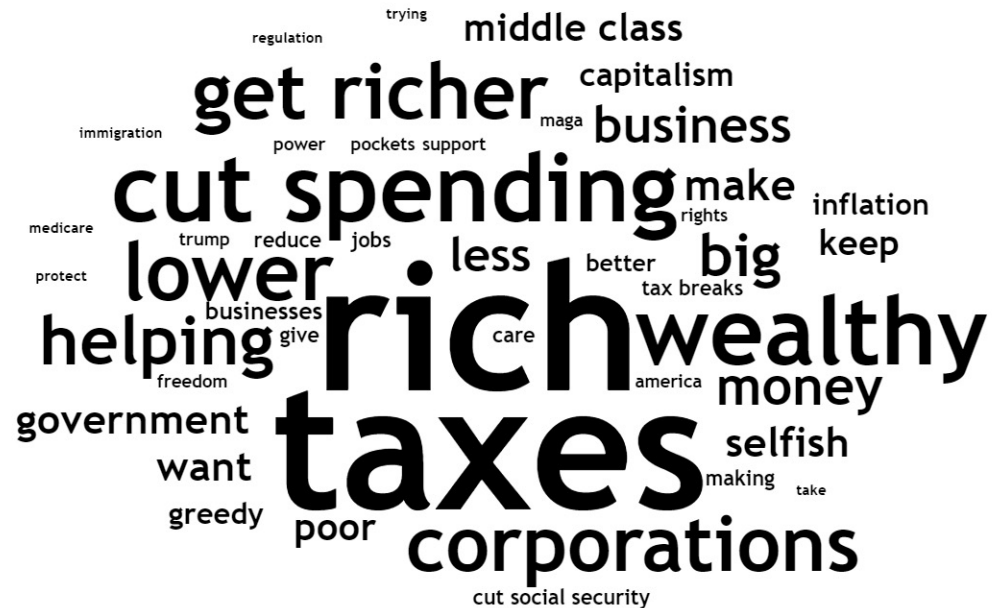
Do you think **MAGA Republicans'** economic policies will primarily favor...



* Data on this slide excludes MAGA Republicans.

Voters associate the same economic priorities to both the Republican Party and MAGA Republicans: helping the rich and corporations, lower taxes, and spending cuts

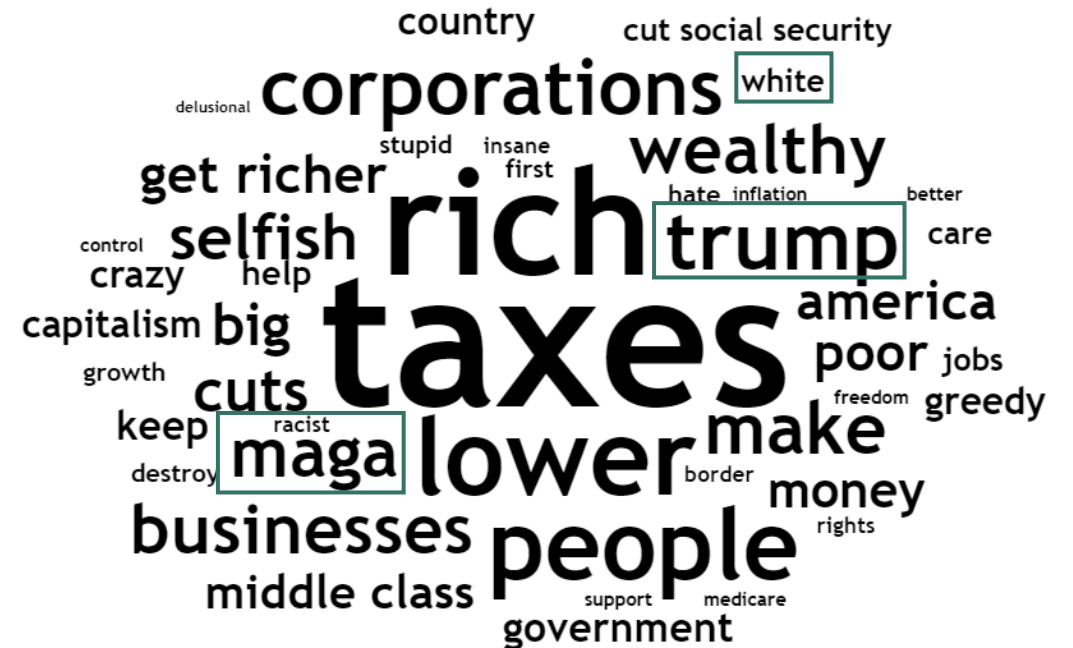
In one or two words, please describe the economic priorities of the **Republican Party**.



“The Republicans **just want the rich to get richer.**”

“**Fewer taxes for corporations and people to boost the economy.**”

In one or two words, please describe the economic priorities of **MAGA Republicans**.



“**Cut taxes. Pander to the rich. Cut Social Security, Medicare, [and] Medicaid. Cut regulations.**”

“They are **only concerned with getting Donald Trump re-elected.**”

Four Core Contrasts

- 1 Lower Costs
- 2 Invest in the American People
- 3 Secure Retirement
- 4 Taxes

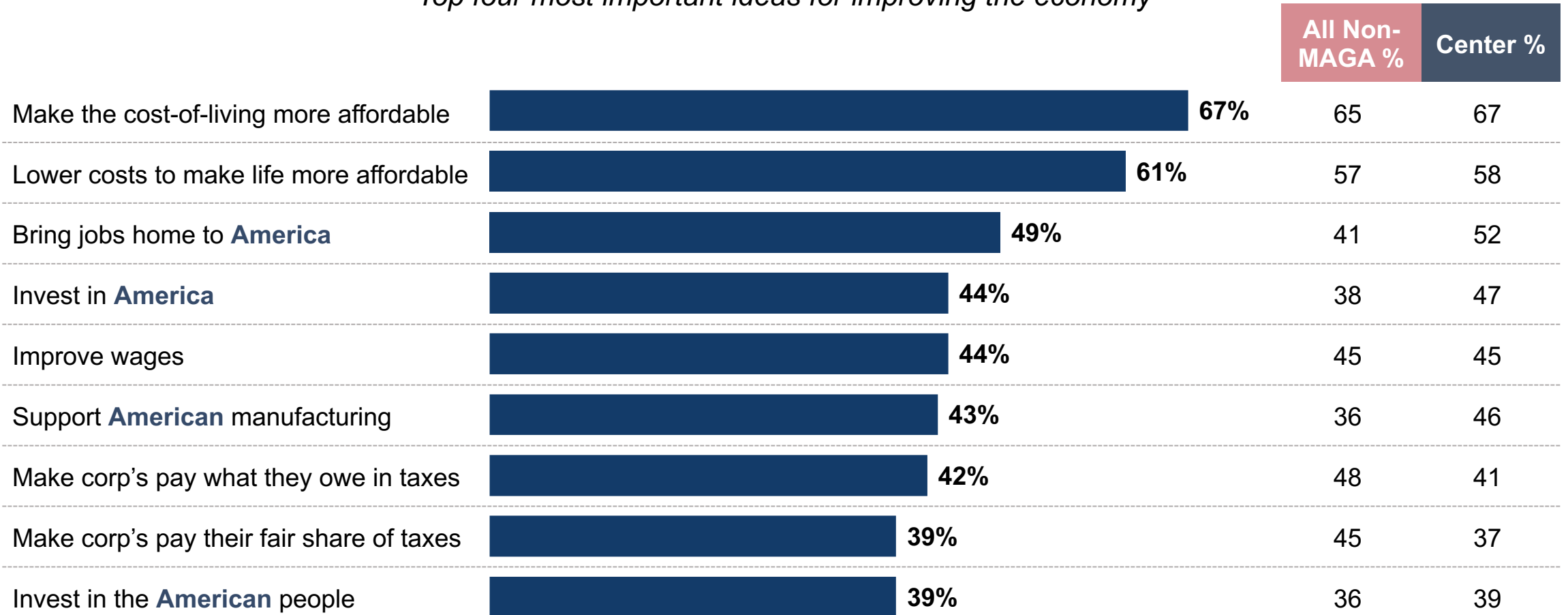
Contrast on Lowering Costs

**Lower costs by cracking down
on corporate greed**

**Protect corporations that
rip-off families**

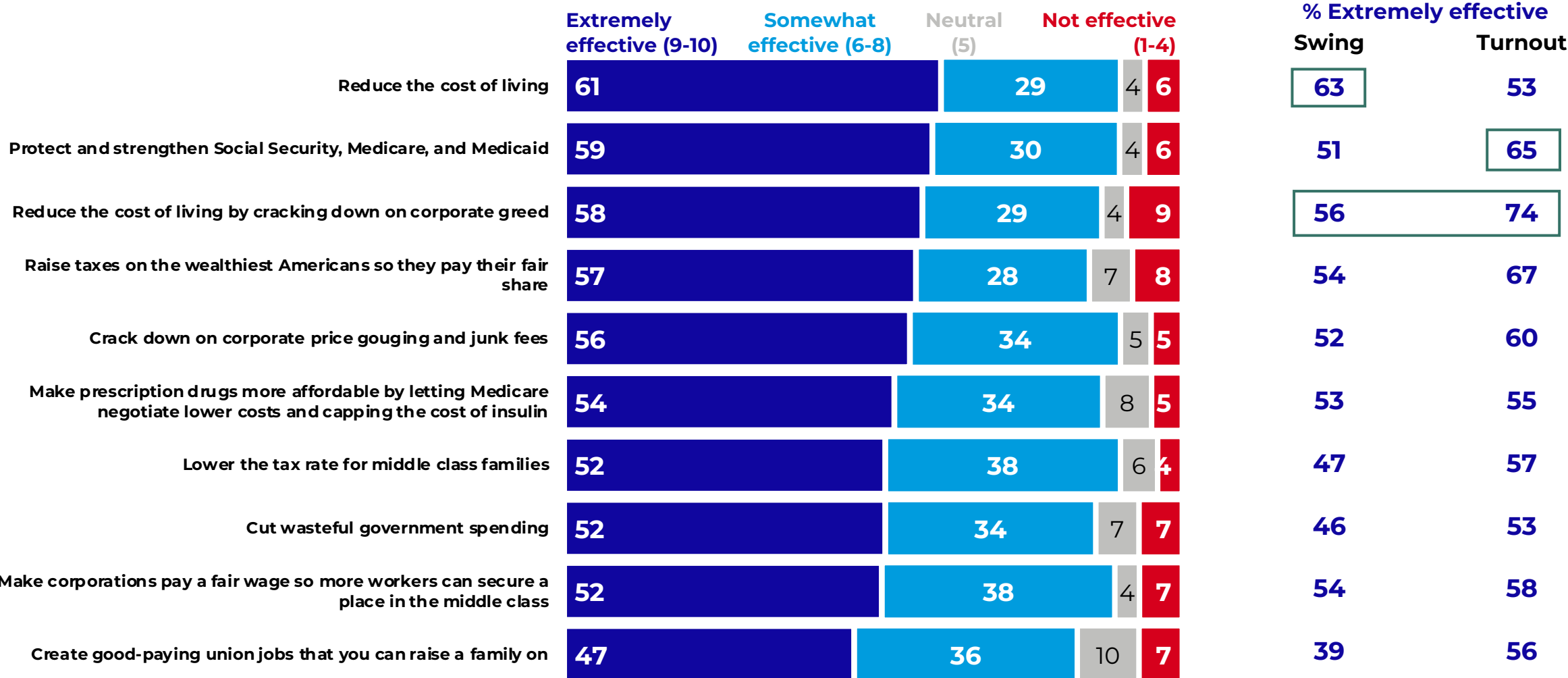
Affordability is a the most important economic priority for Democrats to address. Economic nationalism also resonates

Top four most important ideas for improving the economy



The most effective policies to grow the middle class include reducing the cost of living, protecting Social Security and Medicare, and cracking down on corporate greed

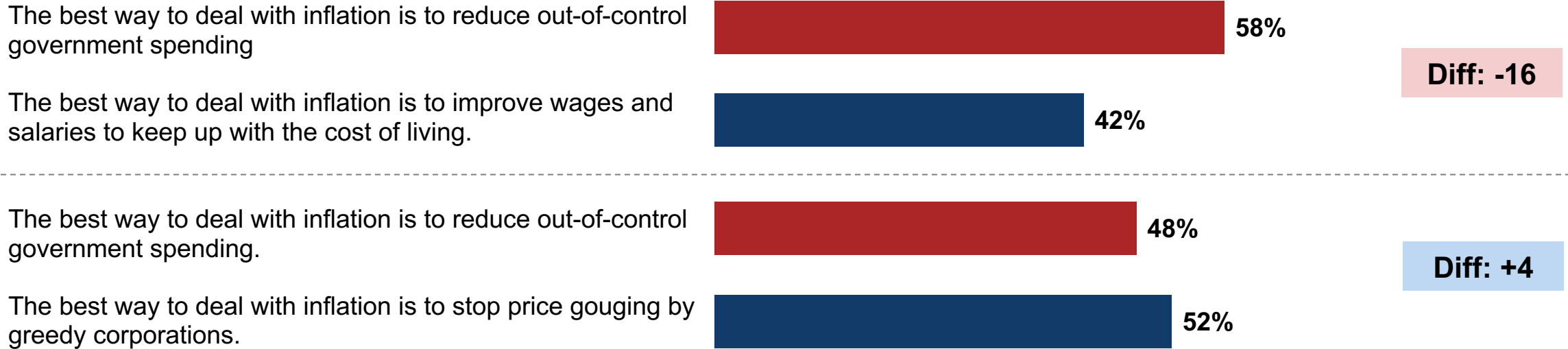
More Effective Policies to Grow the Middle Class



* Data on this slide excludes MAGA Republicans.

Best inflation response: stop price gouging by greedy corporations

With which statement do you agree more?



Diff. among key subgroups

	Biden Voters	Trump Voters	Swing Voters	Men	Women	18 to 49	50/older
Improve wages/salaries	+23	-57	-28	-26	-5	-9	-21
Stop price gouging	+42	-37	+4	-4	+10	+6	+2

With party labels attached, a Democratic approach to the economy is on par with long-standing GOP message—BUT must hit on affordability + push-off of corporate greed

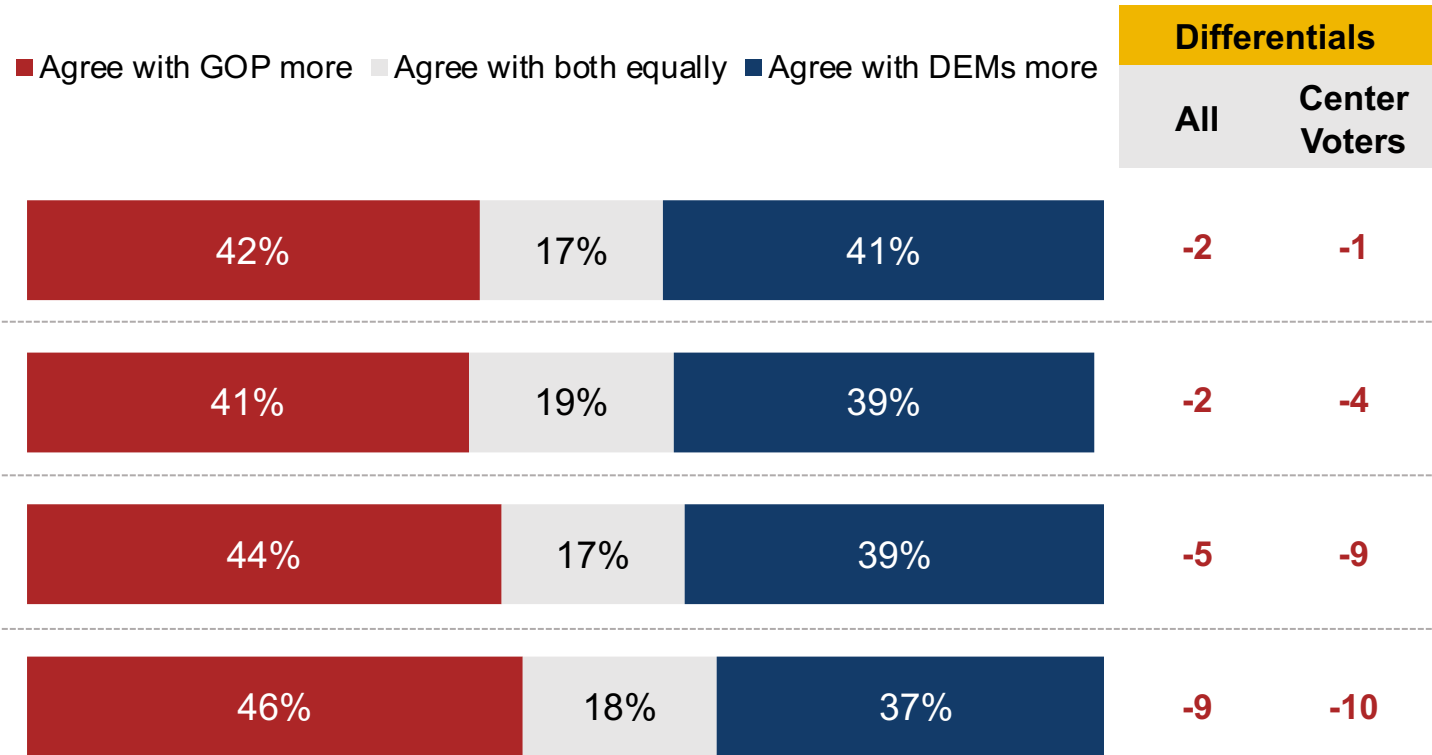
Republicans say: The best way to improve the economy is to lower taxes, cut government spending, and reduce regulations on business, OR

Democrats say the best way to improve the economy is to invest in the middle class, lower costs, and make the wealthy pay their fair share.

Democrats say the best way to improve the economy is to invest in the middle class and lower the cost of living by cracking down on corporate greed.

Democrats say the best way to improve the economy is to grow the middle class by investing in good-paying jobs and lowering the cost of living.

Democrats say the best way to improve the economy is to grow the middle class by investing in America.



Contrast on Investment

Invest in the American people

**Gut investments families
depend on**

The “Investments” frame is convincing to half of voters overall, including nearly half of swing voters

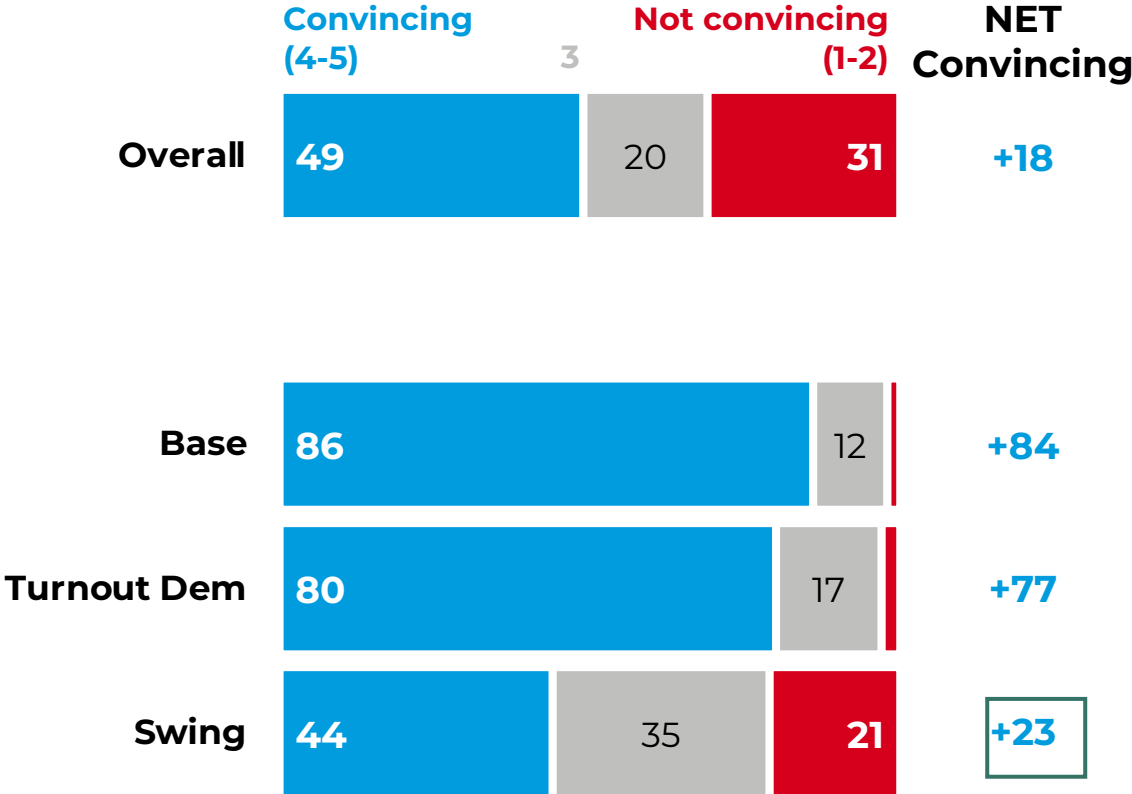
Please use the green highlighter to select the parts of the statement that are most appealing to you about Democrats.

INVESTMENTS

Democrats believe that we **grow the economy by investing in the American people.** When government and businesses stop investing,

workers and communities struggle to get ahead. For decades, businesses increased their profits by moving factories and jobs overseas, and the middle class in America kept shrinking. China and other countries are investing in their people and businesses, and it’s time we started doing that too. But Republicans want to cut investments and let businesses keep making choices that hurt the American people. Democrats say we need to invest in **modernizing American manufacturing and rebuilding our infrastructure.** And we need to **incentivize businesses to hire more workers in America, pay them higher wages and offer better benefits,** instead of giving them tax breaks to ship jobs overseas.

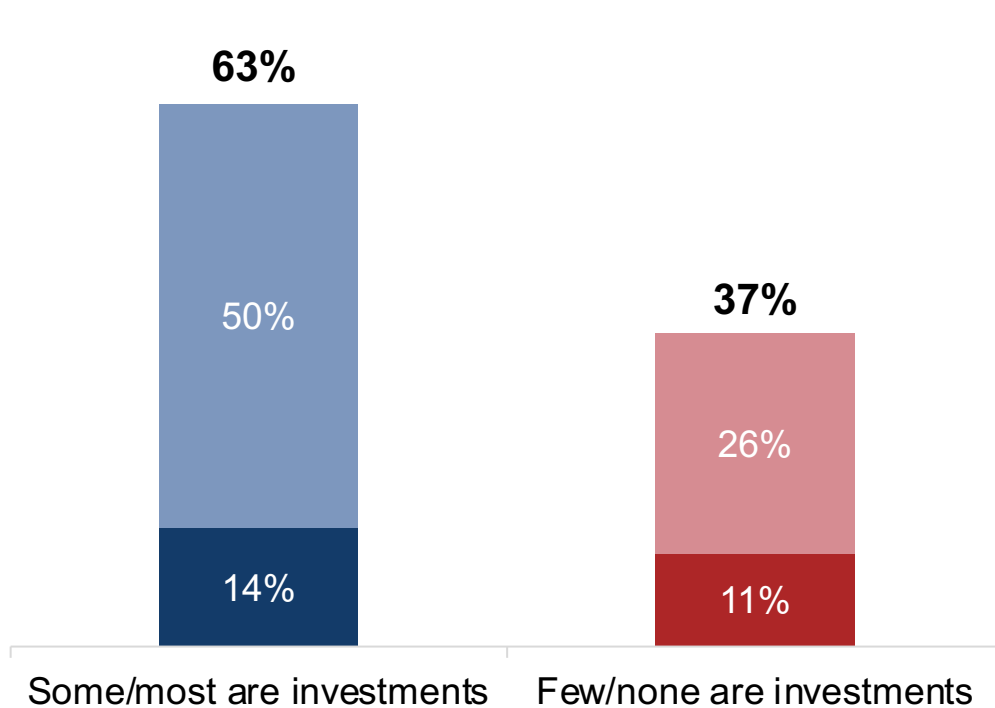
Thinking about the information you just read, please rate how convincing it is as a reason to vote for the Democrats on a scale from 1 to 5.



Are government programs “spending” or “investments?”

People sometimes refer to government programs or activities as an “economic investment,” meaning that they help strengthen the economy in the long term in addition to whatever immediate benefits they may provide to some people.

What share of government programs would you consider to be economic investments that help strengthen the economy?

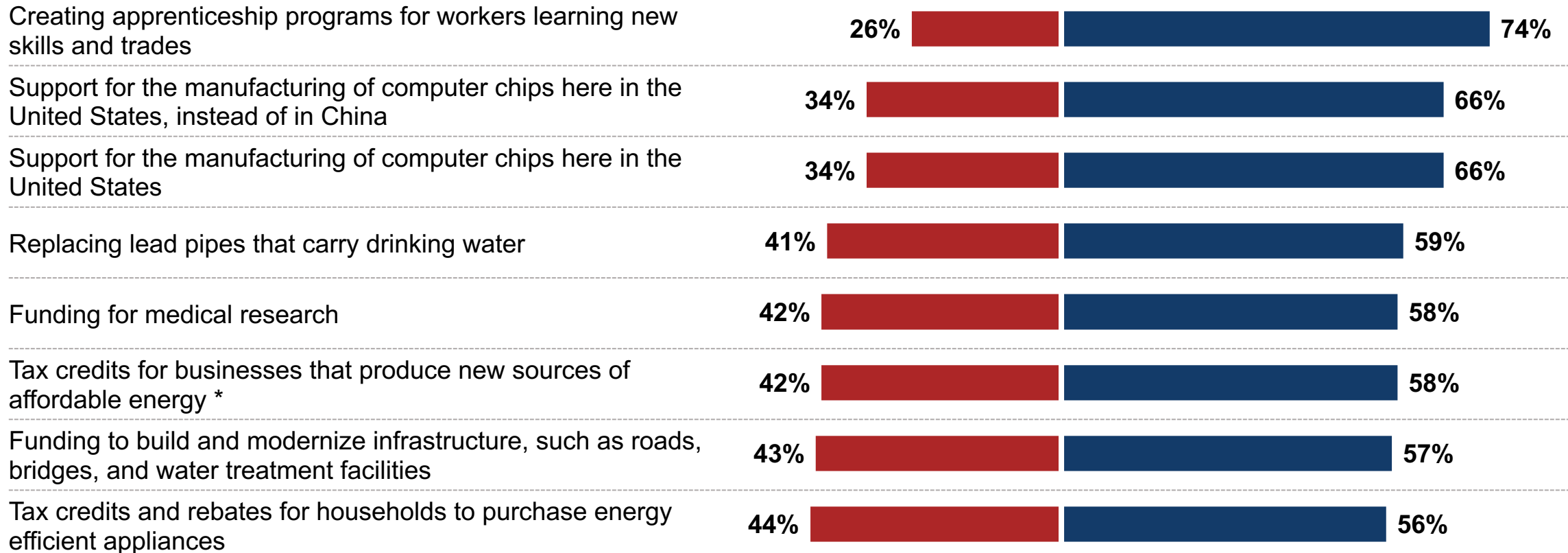


	Most/some are investments %	Just a few/almost none are investments %
Democrats	81	19
Independents	56	44
Republicans	47	53
MAGA Republicans	48	52
Non-MAGA Republicans	44	56
Less than \$75k Republicans	49	51
More than \$75k Republicans	44	56
Age 18 to 49	73	27
Age 50+	55	45
White non-college	59	41
White college	62	38

Majority say these programs are investments

Are the following government programs/activities government spending, or economic investments?

Government spending **Economic investments**



The fact that the Republican budget proposal would cut Social Security, Medicaid, and 22% of funding for other programs is most concerning overall and with our targets

Max Diff Test

OVERALL			SWING			TURNOUT		
Item	Score	Rank	Item	Score	Rank	Item	Score	Rank
Social Security	219	1	Medicaid	193	1	Social Security	203	1
Medicaid	189	2	Social Security	183	2	Medicaid	189	2
22% Cut	136	3	22% Cut	135	3	22% Cut	151	3
Veterans	117	4	K-12	117	4	Veterans	107	4
K-12	98	5	Veterans	104	5	K-12	101	5
Public Safety	98	6	780K Jobs	98	6	Tax Enforce	96	6
780K Jobs	89	7	Recession	87	7	LIHEAP	93	7
LIHEAP	89	8	Public Safety	85	8	780K Jobs	79	8
Recession	82	9	Tax Enforce	82	9	Public Safety	74	9
Tax Enforce	74	10	Childcare	78	10	Recession	73	10
Childcare	66	11	LIHEAP	76	11	Head Start	68	11
Head Start	61	12	Head Start	69	12	Clean Energy	65	12
Clean Energy	53	13	Clean Energy	57	13	Childcare	64	13
Pell Grants	31	14	Pell Grants	35	14	Pell Grants	37	14

The fact that the Republican budget proposal would cut Social Security, Medicaid, and 22% of funding for other programs is most concerning overall and with our targets

Most Concerning About the Republican Economic Plan (Max Diff Test)

Overall	Swing	Turnout	
1	2	1	[SOCIAL SECURITY] This plan cuts the Social Security Administration, making it harder for seniors who rely on Social Security to get accurate and prompt Social Security payments.
<i>Statement Ranking</i>			
2	1	2	[MEDICAID] This plan would cut Medicaid, jeopardizing care for 21 million people who count on it, including low-income Americans and people with disabilities.
3	3	3	[22% CUT] This plan would cut 22% from the budget of many major government programs that middle class families depend on, including cancer research, meals for seniors, education, veterans' health care, and more.

Swing and turnout voters more concerned that MAGA Republicans will harm the middle class than they are concerned about radical socialists agenda.

Which statement do you agree with more?

Democrats who say MAGA Republicans are so extreme they will harm the middle class by cutting investments families and seniors depend on like Social Security and Medicare and protecting greedy drug and oil companies when they price gouge consumers

Republicans who say Democrats support a radical socialist agenda that increases government spending, creates job-killing regulations, and gives handouts to people who won't work

66

34

NET Democrats		
Overall	Swing	Turnout
+32	+18	+96

Which statement do you agree with more?

MAGA Republicans are so extreme they would rather slash investments in the middle class than force the wealthy and corporations to pay their fair share

MAGA Republicans support more tax giveaways to wealthy CEOs and corporations who don't pay their fair share

63

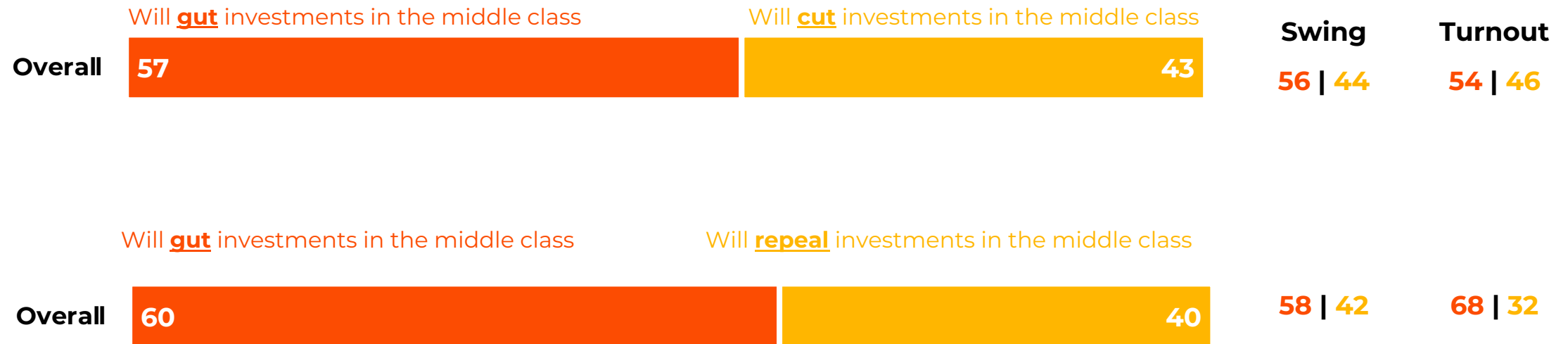
37

Swing	Turnout
66 34	66 34

* Data on this slide excludes MAGA Republicans.

Among both swing and turnout, “gut” investments is more potent than “cut” or “repeal”

Which of the following do you find more concerning? **MAGA Republicans...**



* Data on this slide excludes MAGA Republicans.

Contrast on Taxes

Make corporations and the wealthy pay what they owe

Give corporations and the wealthy special tax breaks

Contrast on Retirement Security

**Protect and strengthen
retirement security**

**Gut Social Security and
Medicare**

Democratic Accomplishments are Popular

Actions taken by President Biden and Democrats in Congress that made voters feel more confident in Democrats' handling of the economy and economic issues.

	Total More Confident %
The cost of <u>insulin</u> for senior citizens on Medicare will be capped at \$35 per month.	67
<u>Computer chip</u> manufacturers are building new factories in the United States, bringing good-paying manufacturing jobs and supply chains back home.	67
Stronger <u>Buy American</u> requirements to make sure our tax dollars go to companies that make things in America and create jobs at home.	67
Pharmaceutical companies will be prevented from raising the <u>cost of existing medicines</u> beyond the rate of inflation.	65
After decades of neglect and decay, states and cities all over the country are <u>breaking ground</u> and beginning work on repairing and modernizing roads, bridges, airports, tunnels, and highways.	64
A new law will limit credit card <u>late fees</u> and crack down on airline <u>price gouging</u> , exorbitant bank overdraft service charges, and junk fees like hotel resort fees.	62
Large profitable <u>multinational corporations</u> that previously avoided paying any taxes at all will now be required to pay a <u>minimum tax of 15%</u> .	61
In just four months since a new law was passed, more than 90 new clean energy projects have been announced, injecting over \$90 billion into local communities and creating 100,000 full-time jobs.	57

Ladder Proof Points to Growing the Middle Class

Investing in the American People

- * Stronger buy American requirement so things are made here
- * Incentivizing companies to manufacture computer chips in America not China
- * Investing in renewable energy manufacturing
- * Apprenticeships programs for new skills + trades

Lowering Costs by Cracking Down on Corporate Greed

- * Capping insulin at \$35
- * Cracking down on junk fees + price gouging
- * Letting Medicare negotiate with drug companies to lower prices

Key Takeaways

- 1 Prioritize talking about the economy—everyday**
- 2 “Grow the Middle Class”**
- 3 Focus on 4 key contrasts with MAGA Republicans**