



YOUNG ELECTED OFFICIALS NETWORK

Identifying Your Electorate and Effectively
Communicating With It

March 3, 2007

Presentation by Celinda Lake

www.LakeResearch.com



Overview:



- ? What are voters' priorities?
- ? How do voters see the political parties performing on these priorities and how do political ideologies drive these perceptions?
- ? What are elements that make up a strong progressive message frame?
- ? How can one develop a strong progressive message frame?
- ? What are real life applications to strong progressive message frames?

KEY FINDINGS



- The war in Iraq, health care, and jobs and the economy dominate the issue agenda – all issues voters feel Democrats are stronger on.
- **We now know why “persuadable” voters are persuadable.** On the ideological spectrum, they more closely align with Republican voters. On the policy spectrum, they more closely align with Democratic voters. If we can make the “ideological” seem policy-oriented instead, we can move persuadable voters to our side of the debate, but we need values oriented language.
- In this environment, **it is better to be a progressive candidate than a liberal candidate**, but overall, it is better to be seen as moderate.
- **Freedom is a key value.** Progressives have yet to tap into it the way we need to. We need to create energy around this value if we want to compete with conservatives because it is the top value we tested. If we tap into freedom the way we need to, we can wedge a good share of weaker conservative, Republican, and persuadable voters to our side of the debate.
- **Our values are strong.** Indeed, our framework is more than competitive, but we need to include freedom as a component. Voters believe government should ensure security, fairness, and opportunity so all Americans can get ahead. These values interact together to be more powerful than they are individually.

KEY FINDINGS



- **Opportunity has weakened as a core value and freedom and security are now much stronger.** “Common good” works well as a framework plank, but as a message in the context of equal opportunity, it does not capture voters.
- Our messages tested well, but our message frames, with less rhetoric, tested better. This is a warning: **Our ideal language on freedom, security, opportunity, and the common good needs to be filled in.**
- Voters want a small government, one that has a limited area of involvement. However, they also think government should make health care more affordable, level the playing field, and protect our privacy. **They want government to act as an enforcer of basic rules, fix problems, and be a watchdog.**

Issue Priorities and Political Parties



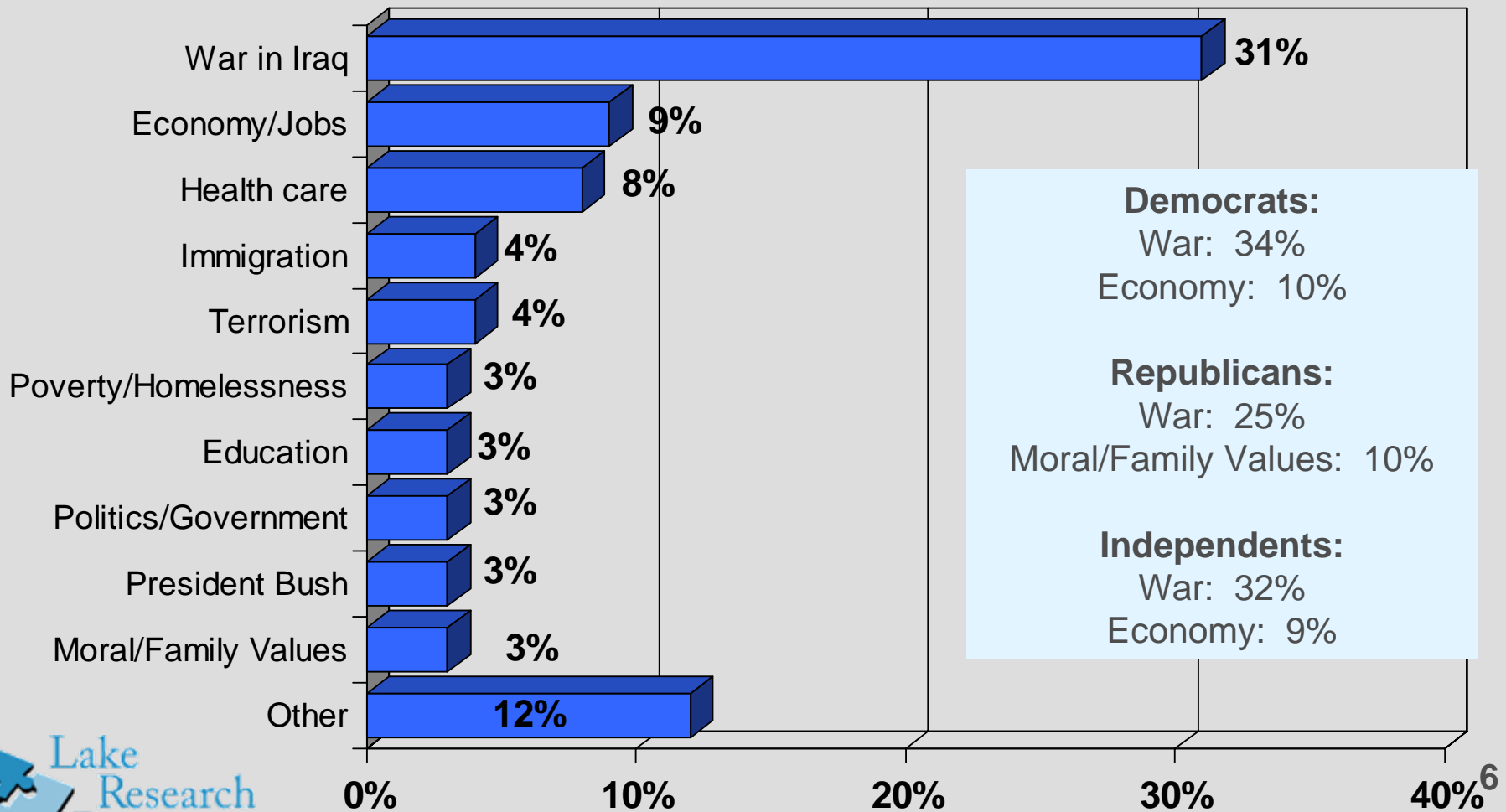
The War and the economy are foremost on voters' minds. Voters see Democrats as the better party to address these issues. However, moderates are preferred and conservatives are trusted more than liberals or progressives on issue priorities.



The war continues to dominate voters' concerns these days. The economy and health care are also concerns.



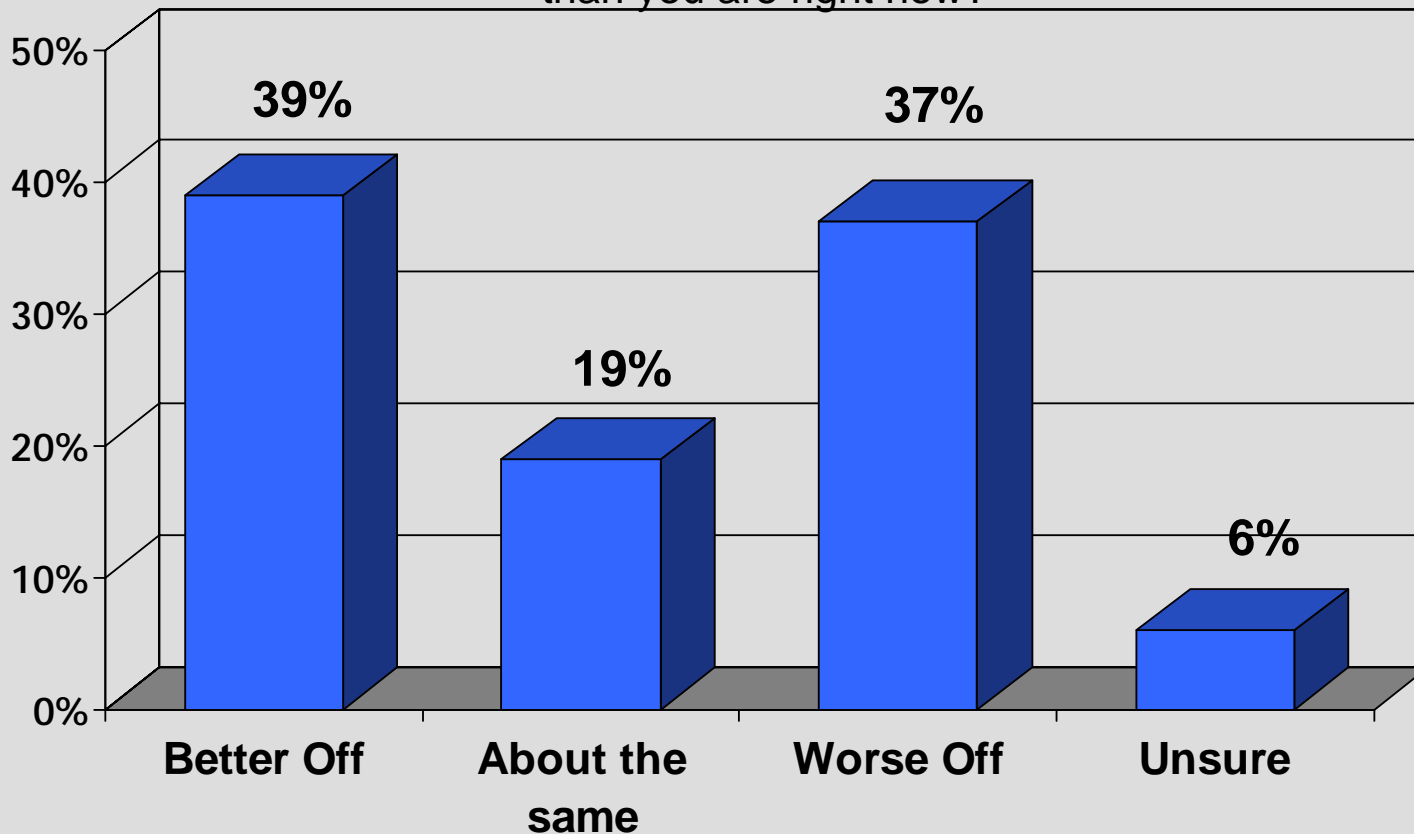
Number One Problem Facing the Country:



Voters are divided on their children's economic future.



Do you believe that in the future your children will be Better off, About the same, or Worse off than you are right now?

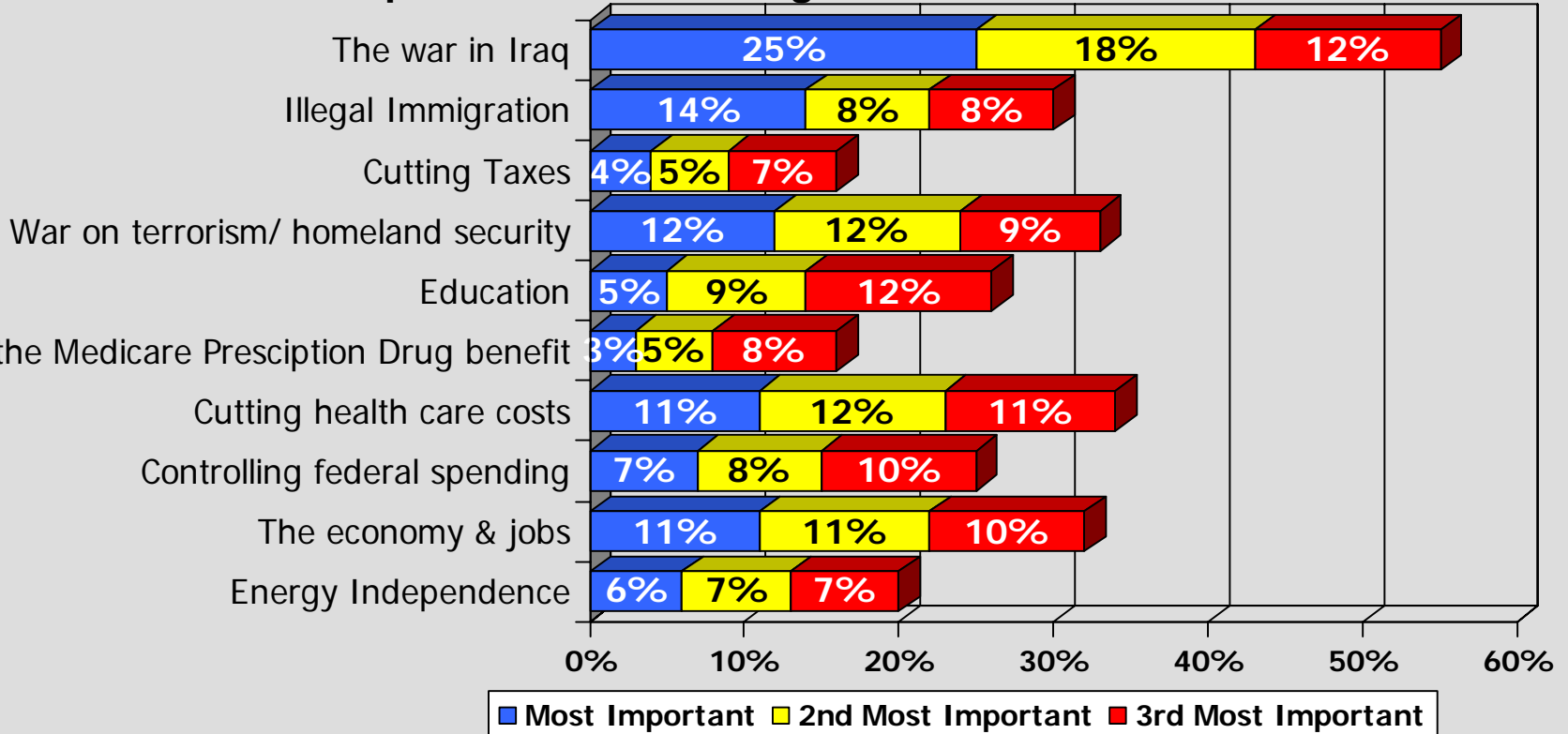


Voters 18-34 are also divided as 35% think their children will be better off and 37% think they will be worse off.

Although voters worry about economic issues, they prioritize Iraq and illegal immigration as issues Congress should work on.



Most Important Issue for Congress to Work on



Voters 18-34 prioritize Congress to work on the economy/jobs (19% most important), the war in Iraq (16%), and terrorism (15%). Unlike voters overall, they also prioritize energy independence (13%).

A plurality of voters said the midterm elections were about the Iraq war and a change of course.

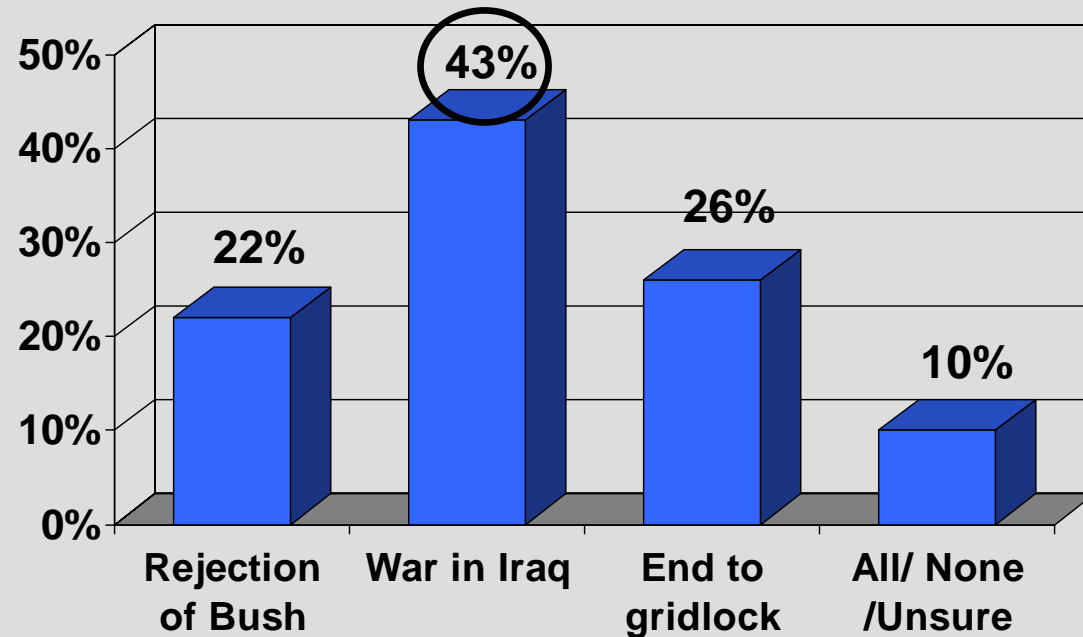


Some people say that these elections were a **rejection of the domestic & economic agenda & policies of the Bush administration & the Congressional Republicans.**

Other people say that these elections were about **the War in Iraq & sent a clear message that the US should change the way it is fighting the war there.**

Still other people say that these elections were a **vote against partisan bickering & gridlock in Congress & sent a message that Congress should work in a bipartisan way to solve problems.**

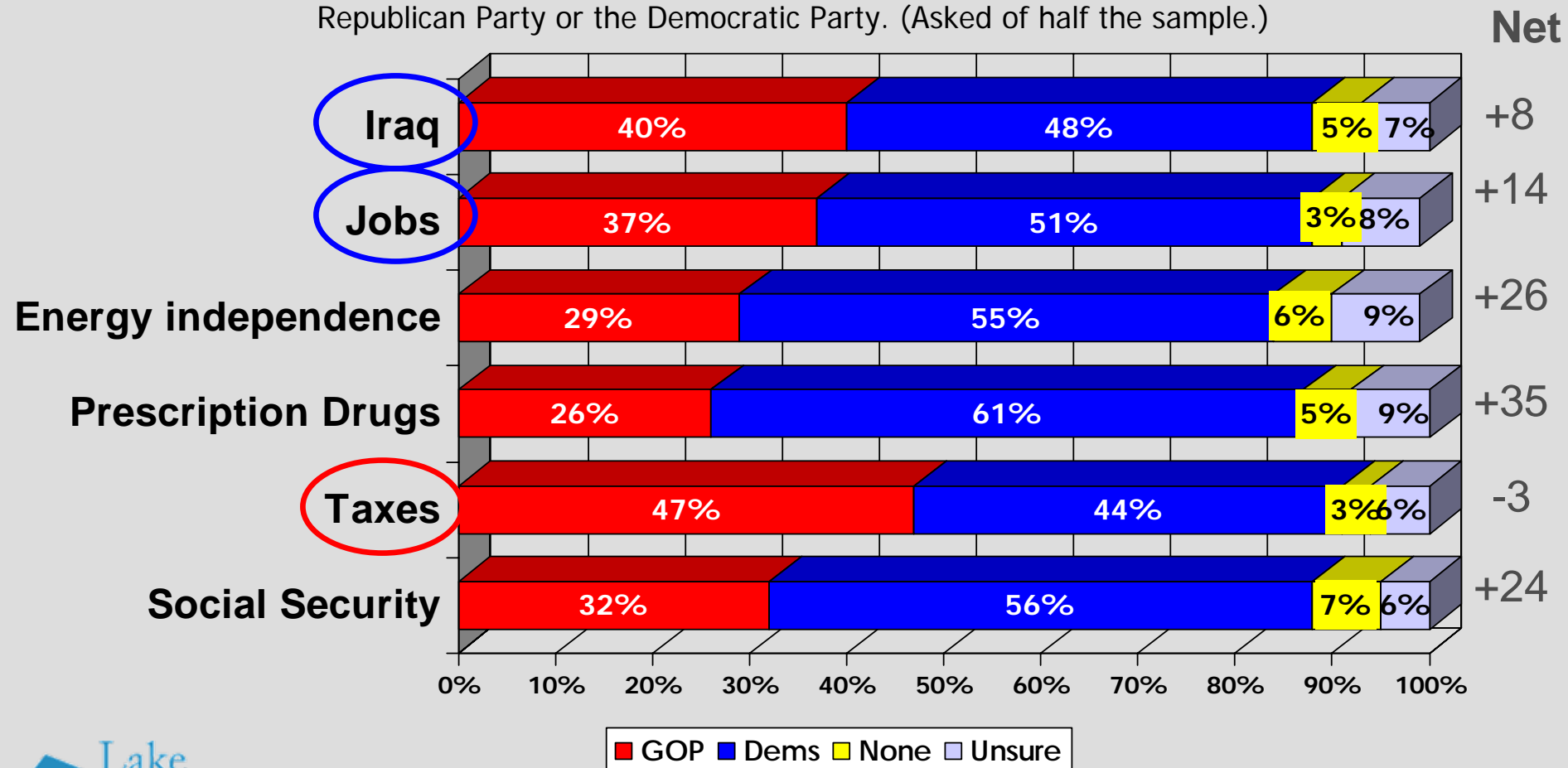
Which viewpoint comes closest to your own?



Voters trust Democrats on their most important issues – Iraq and jobs.



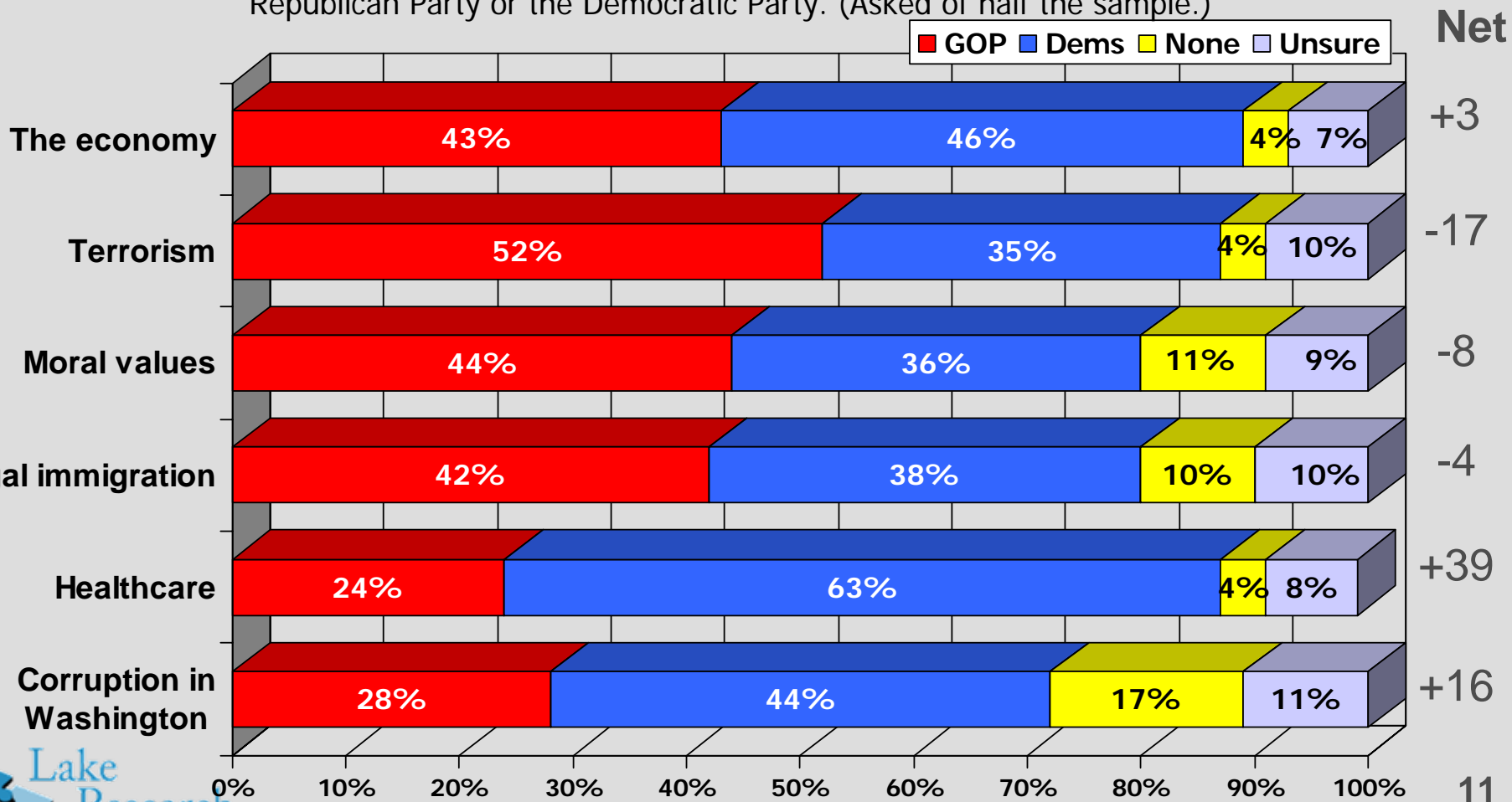
Please tell me, for each one, which political party would do a better job of handling this issue- the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. (Asked of half the sample.)



Democrats have a large advantage on handling health care and corruption in Washington, while Republicans are seen better handling terrorism, moral values, and illegal immigration.



Please tell me, for each one, which political party would do a better job of handling this issue- the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. (Asked of half the sample.)



Source: LRP/Tarrance Group: National Survey of 1000 voters nationwide – January 8-11, 2007

The Identification Conundrum



Moderates are preferred and conservatives are trusted more than liberals or progressives on issue priorities. However, moving forward, “progressive” has strength among target persuadable voters and less baggage than “liberal.”



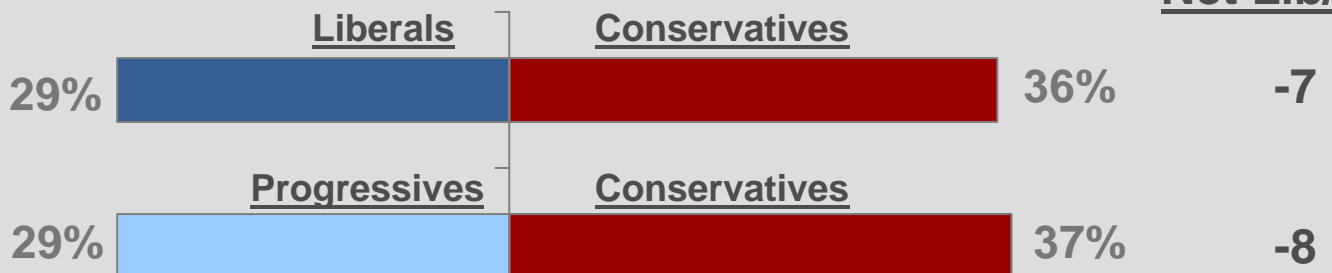
Compared to liberals or progressives, voters believe conservatives would do a better job handling their issue priority. Only a quarter of persuadable voters trust progressives more than conservatives to work on their top priority The term “progressive” does better than does “liberal,” but



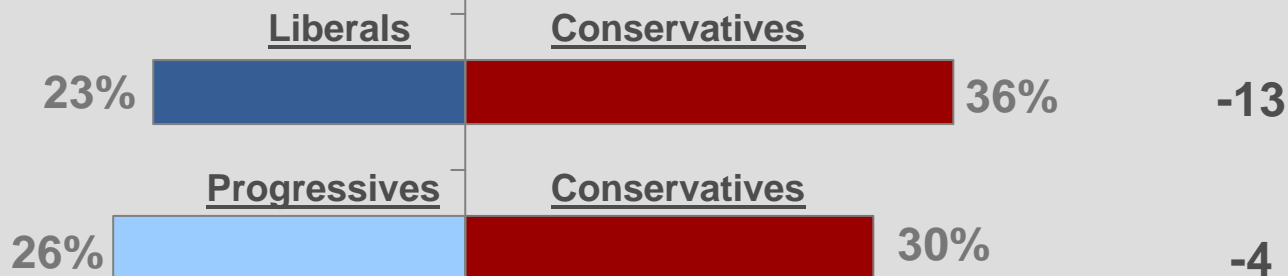
And who do you think would do a better job addressing that problem – [ROTATE] – conservatives or liberals?*

Net Lib/Prog

Total Voters



Persuadable Voters

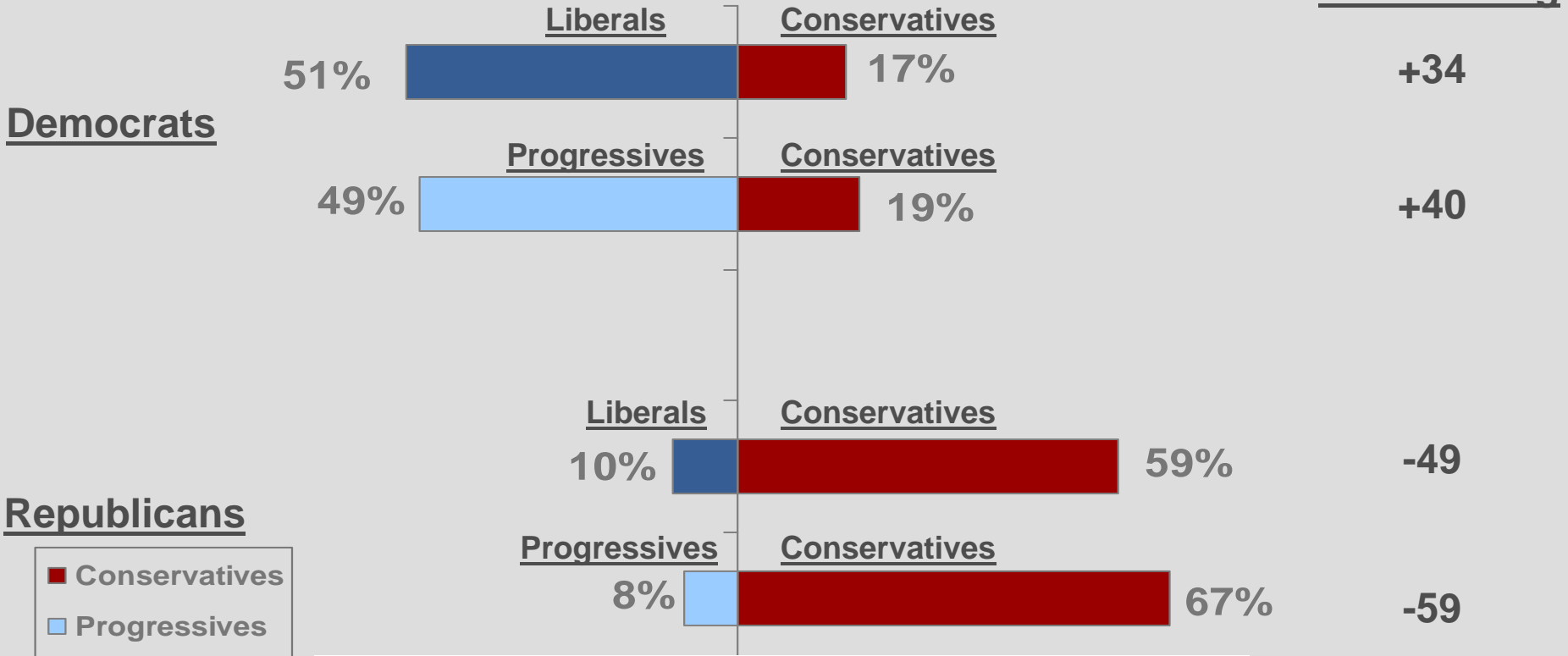


*Split sampled question

.....Republicans are more polarized when we mention progressives. Democratic voters also lose some steam when we use the term “progressive.”



And who do you think would do a better job addressing that problem – [ROTATE] – conservatives or liberals?*



Democrats

Republicans

- Conservatives
- Progressives
- Liberals

“Liberal” may be code for Democrats and “progressive” less intensely supported. On the other hand, “progressive” has more reach among persuadable voters and is their term of choice. Remember, also, that this issue references their “top priority.”

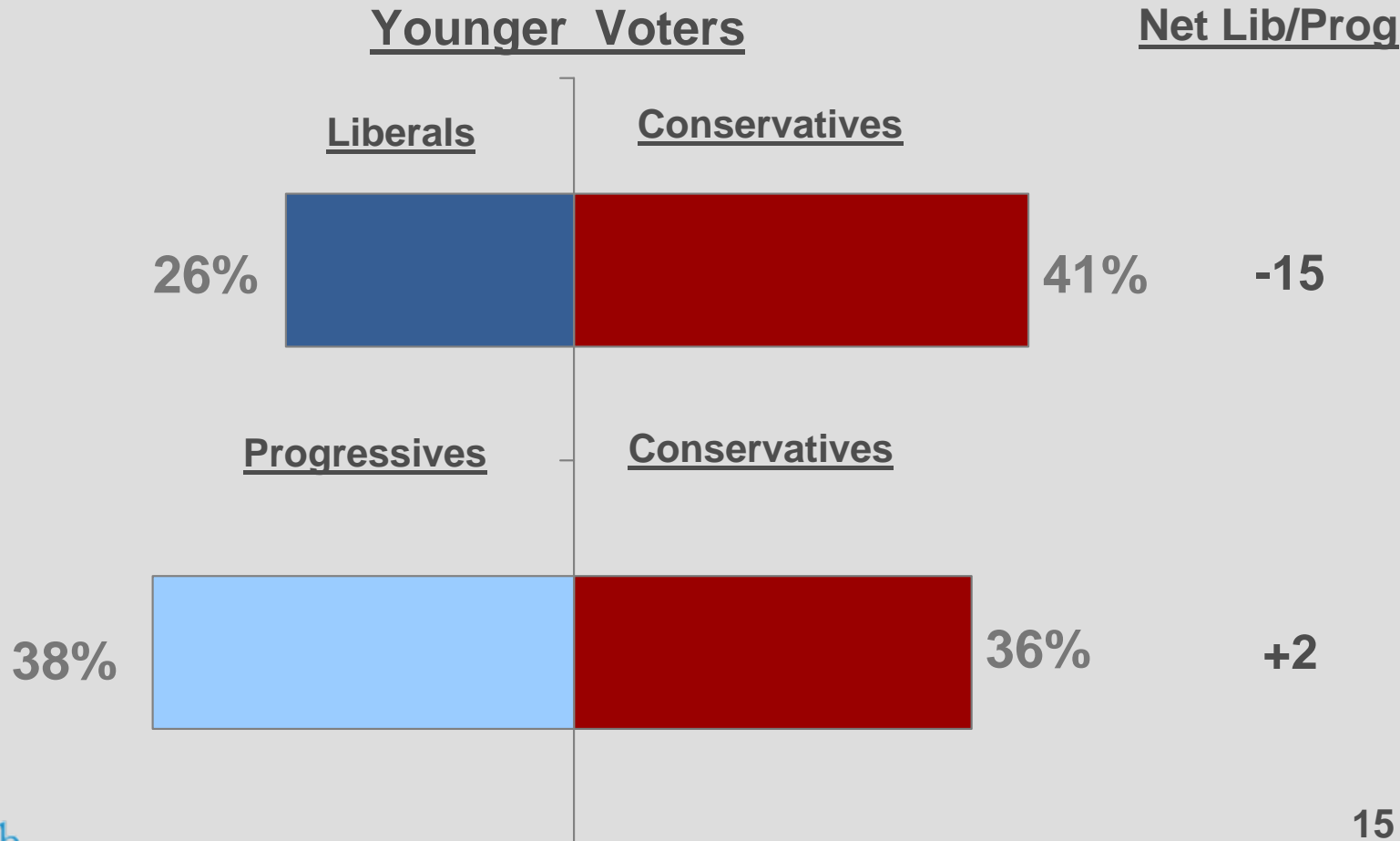


*Split sampled question

Younger voters feel that progressives would do a better job than liberals addressing their issue priority.



And who do you think would do a better job addressing that problem – [ROTATE] – conservatives or liberals?*



Identifying Persuadable Voters



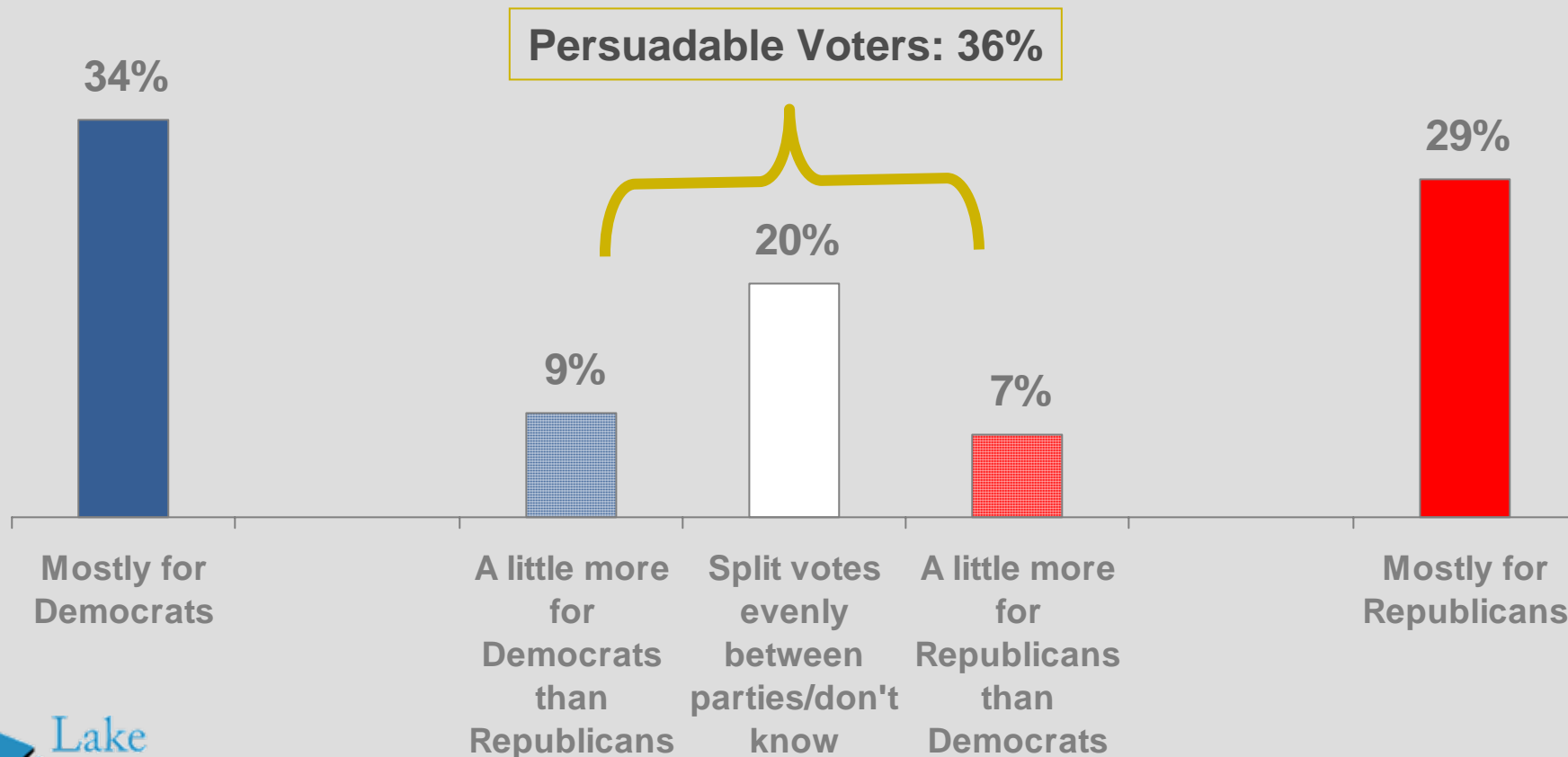
About a third of all voters are persuadable, splitting their ticket or only voting for one party “a little more” than the other party. These voters determine the winner in close elections.



A third of voters fall into the persuadable voter category and say they do not vote solely for one party. Overall, a third vote mostly for Democrats and three in ten vote mostly for Republicans.



In general, would you say that you (ROTATE): mostly vote for Democrats, vote for Democrats a little more often than for Republicans, split your votes evenly between the parties, vote for Republicans a little more often than for Democrats, or mostly vote for Republicans?



Independents, moderates, and weak partisans are the most likely to split their ballot and fall within the ranks of persuadable voters. This constituency is comprised mostly of those with moderate leanings, and they tend to be slightly older and have weaker religious affiliations.



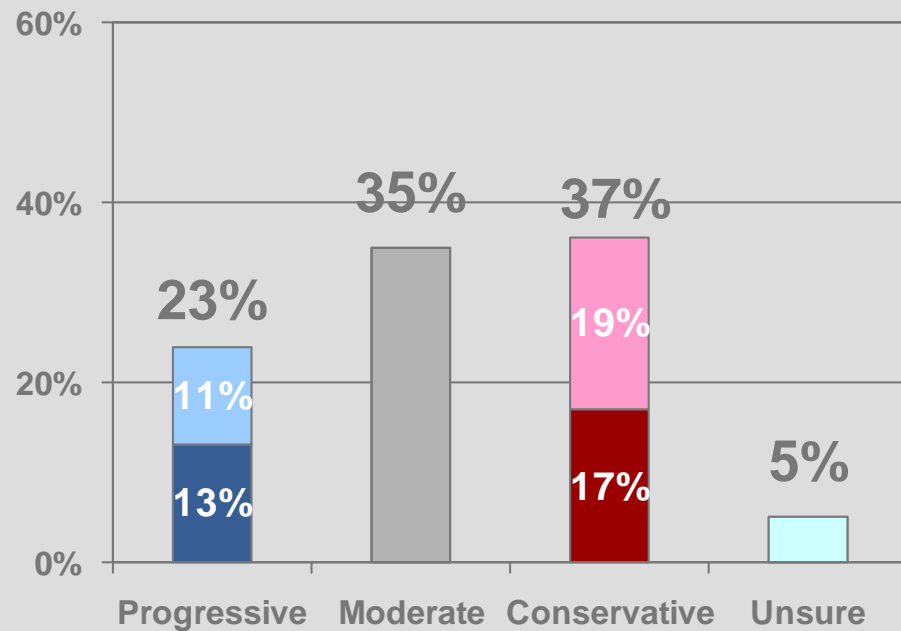
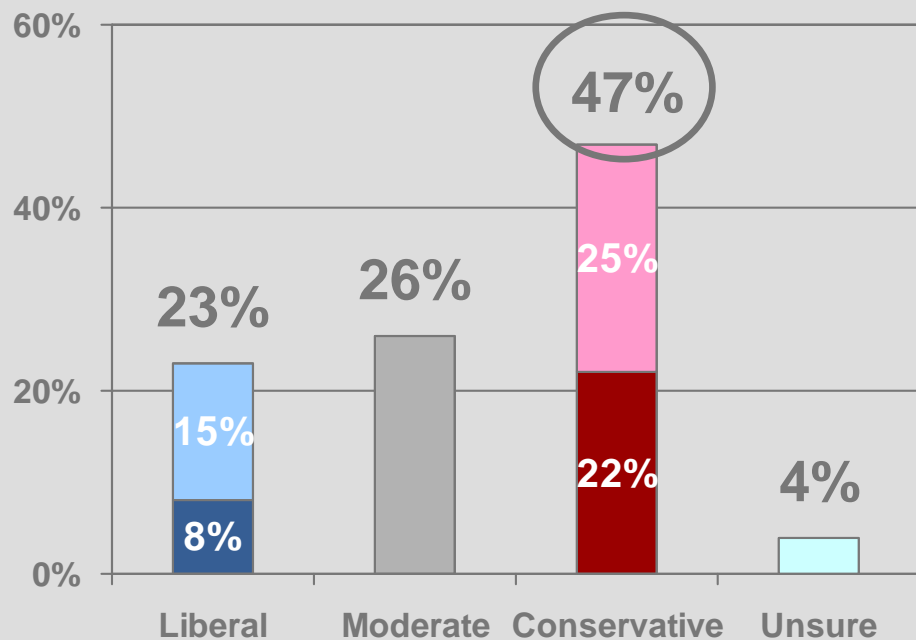
Total	36%
Independent men	82%
Independents	74%
Independents 50 and older	73%
Independent women	66%
Moderate men	49%
Weak Republicans	46%
No religious affiliation	45%
Moderate women	44%
Secular voters	44%
Men 50 and older	43%
Married women	42%
Unmarried men	42%

When voters are asked to identify themselves as progressive compared to conservative, more say they tend toward moderate. The liberal label is more polarizing – when we ask them to identify as conservative or liberals, conservatism dominates.



Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*

Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very progressive, somewhat progressive, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*



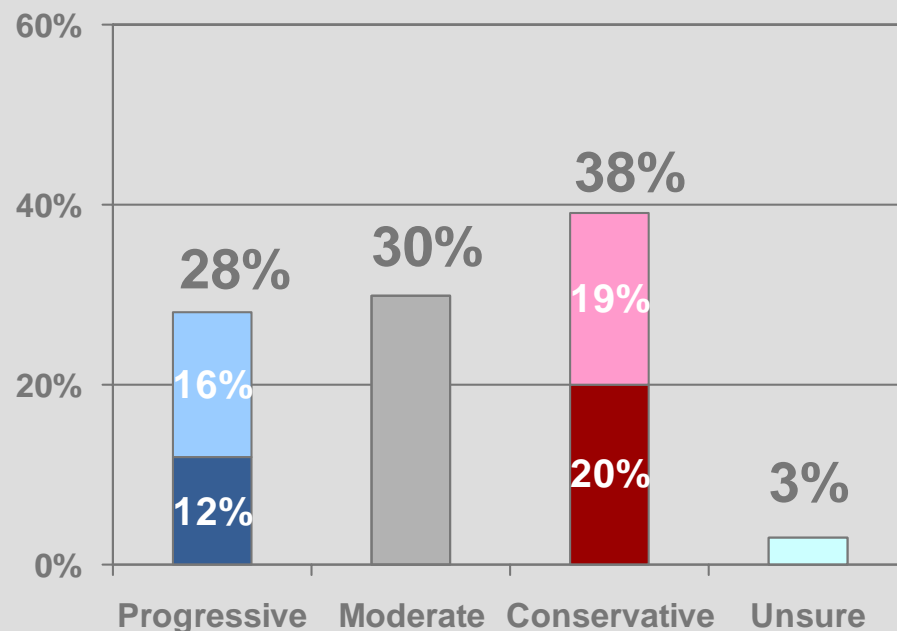
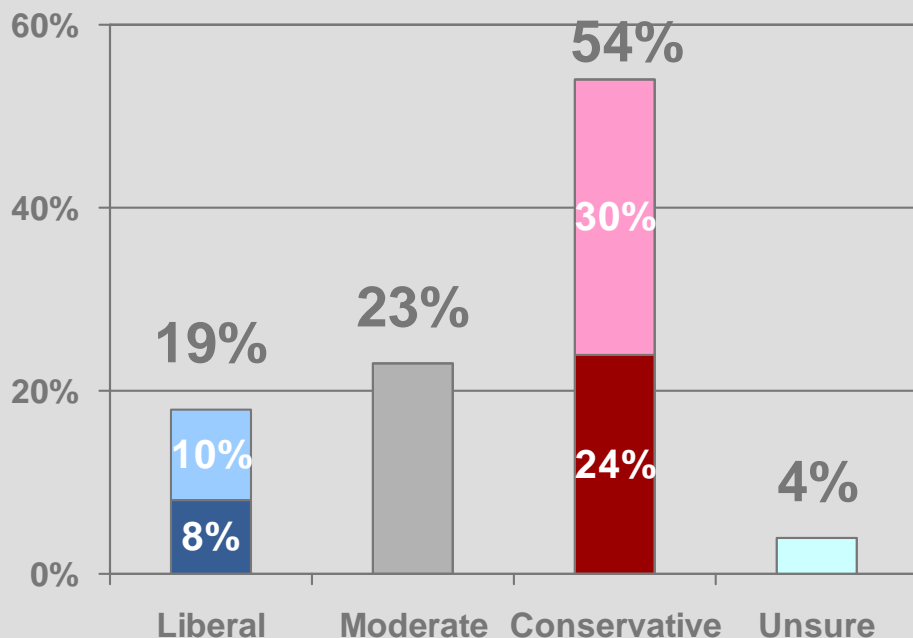
The liberal label is especially polarizing to younger voters.



Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*

Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very progressive, somewhat progressive, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*

Younger Voters



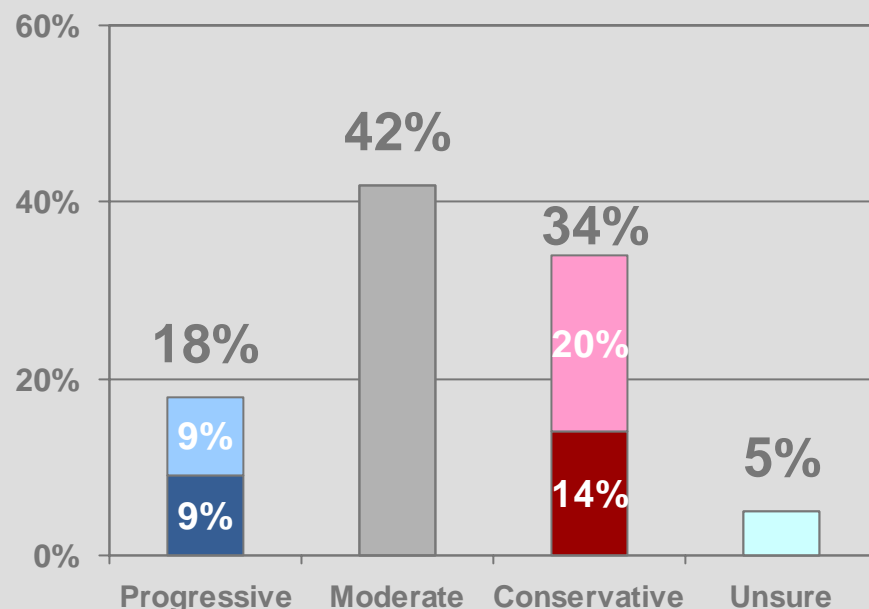
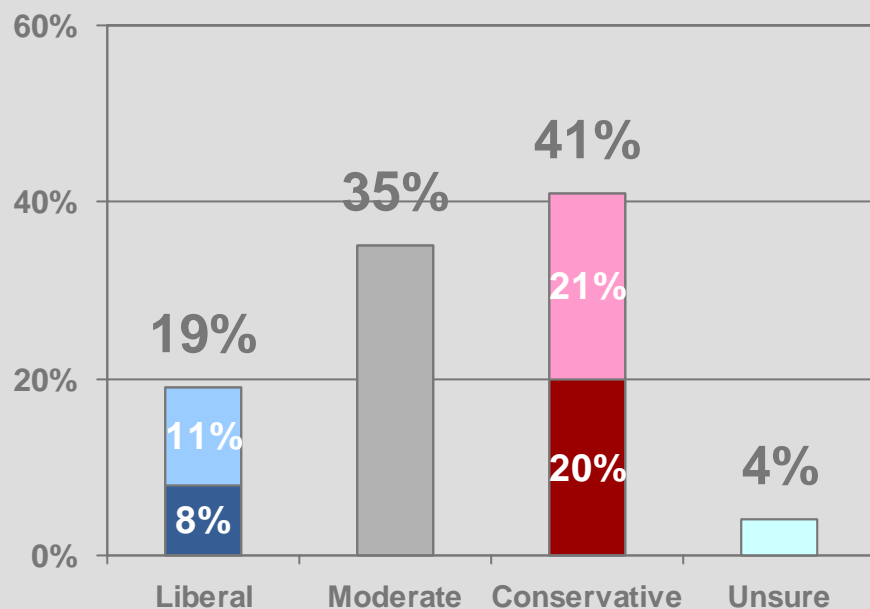
The liberal label is polarizing among persuadable voters as well – voters are more likely to say they are moderate than conservative when offered the progressive option, whereas they lean toward conservative rather than moderate when offered the alternative of liberal.



Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*

Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself very progressive, somewhat progressive, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?*

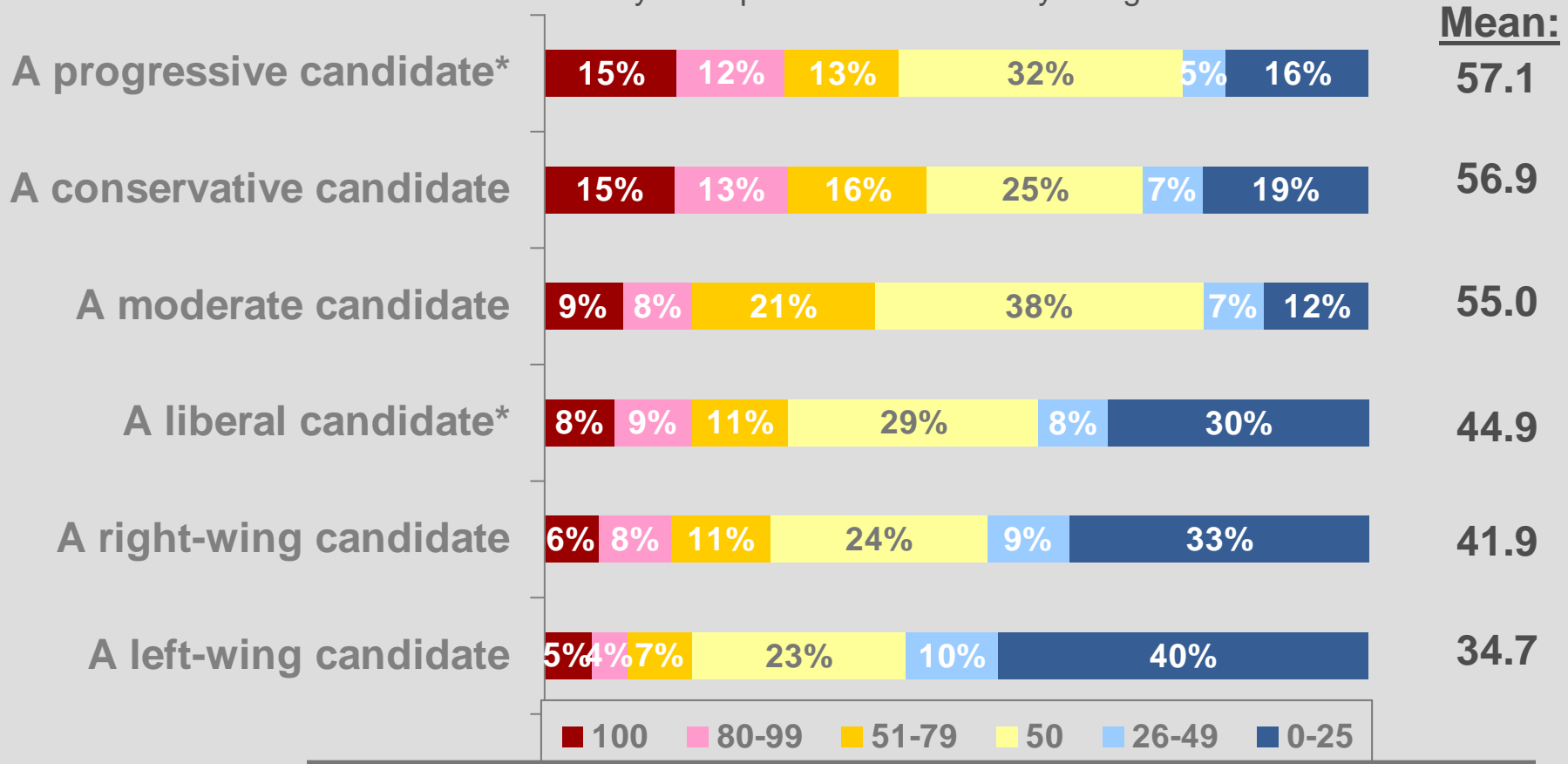
Among Persuadable Voters Only:



A progressive candidate and a conservative candidate do better because Democratic and Republican voters stay loyal and are more ideological....



Please rate how favorable or unfavorable your impression of each is by using a scale from 0 to 100.



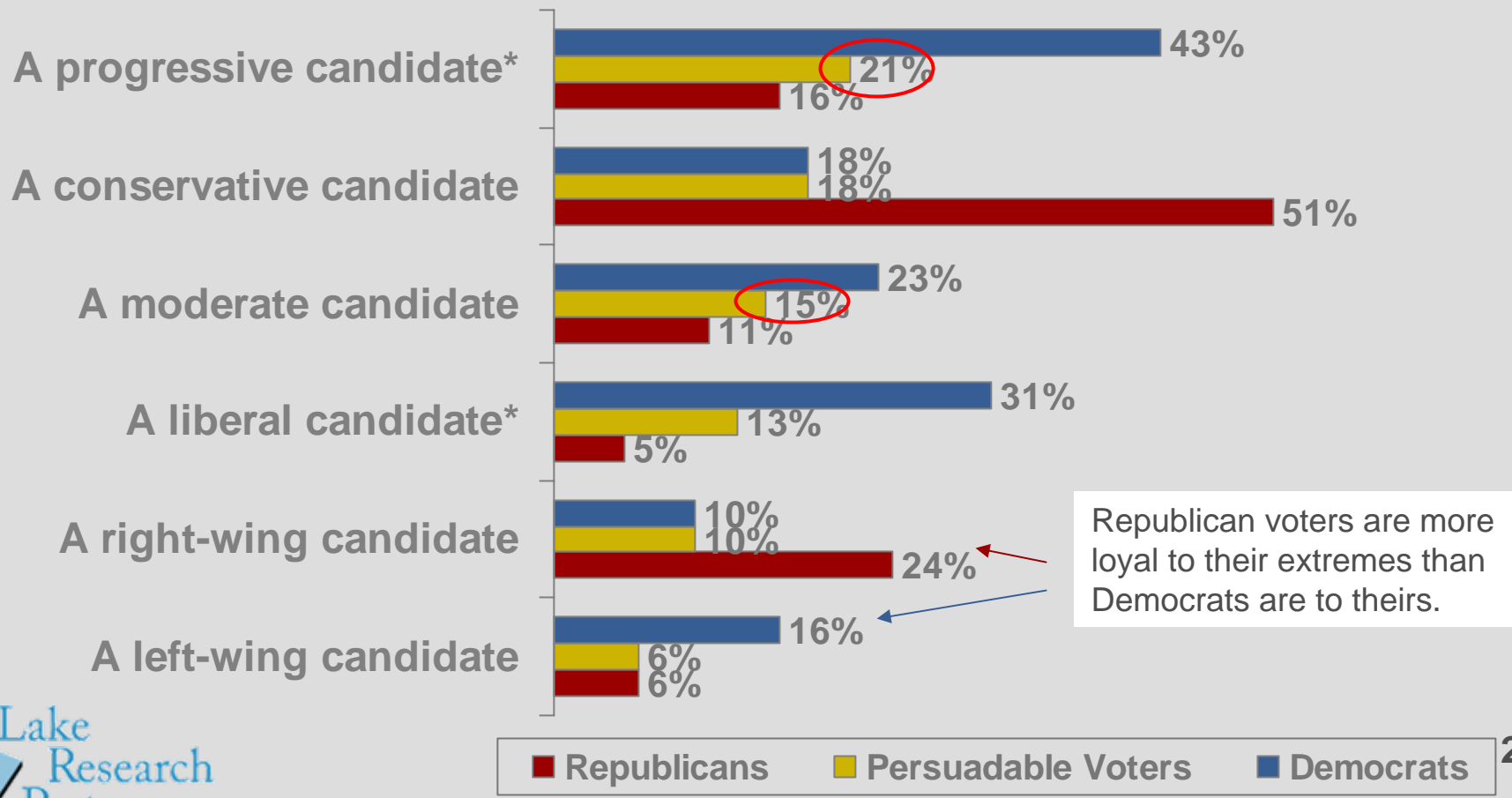
Younger voters are slightly more favorable to a right-wing candidate (45.6 mean) than a left-wing candidate (38.7).

...But persuadable voters are less ideologically rigid and in fact may be more policy and results oriented. Notably, even among Democratic voters, a left-wing candidate is unpopular. Persuadable voters like neither left-wing nor right-wing, but are more positive toward a right-wing candidate.



Please rate how favorable or unfavorable your impression of each is by using a scale from 0 to 100.

Percent rating 80-100



Values That Work



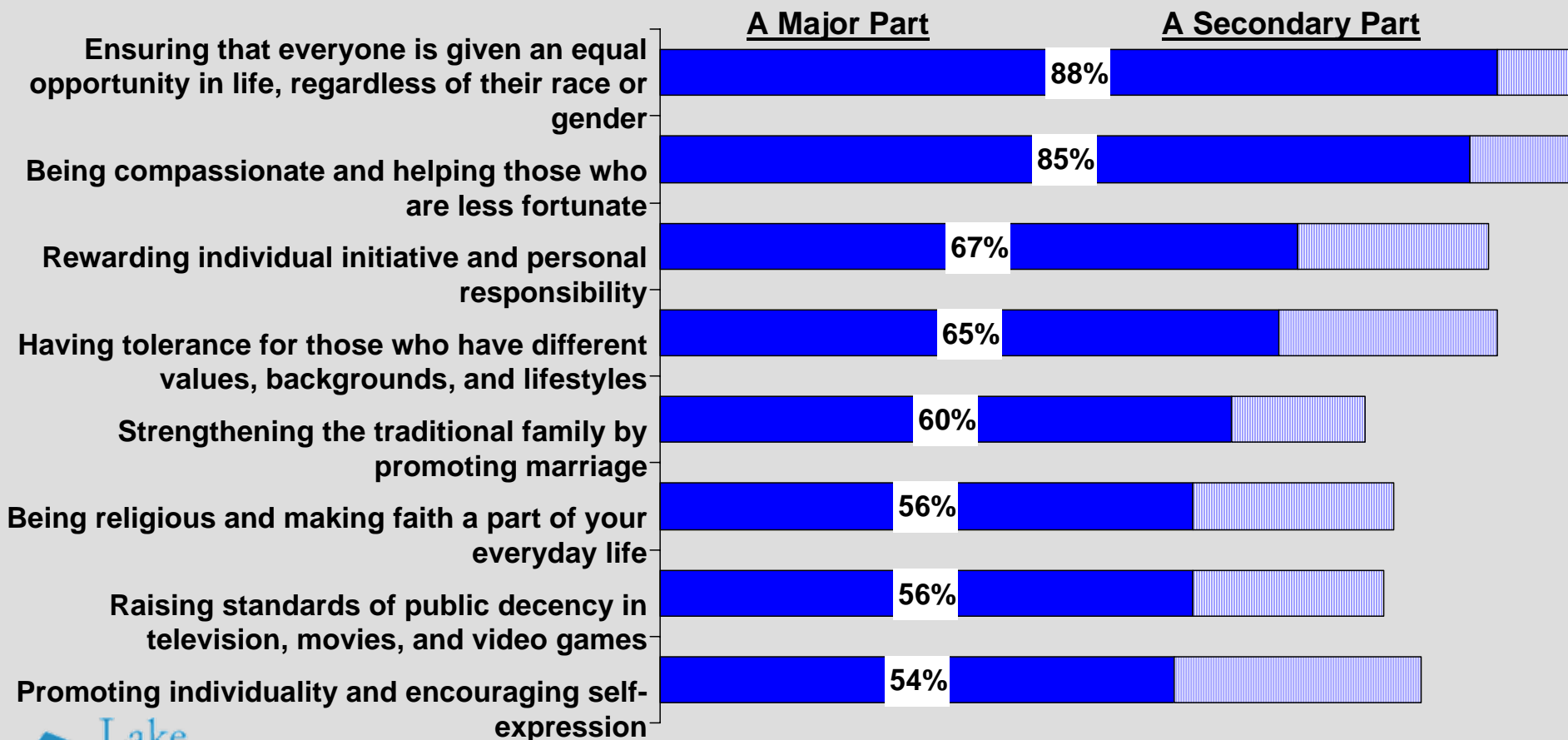
Freedom is the “hot” value, while opportunity has recently lost some of its appeal. To compete on values, progressives need to tap into the freedom framework.



When Americans are asked how they personally define values, the top two qualities they select are opportunity and compassion, followed by personal responsibility, and tolerance.



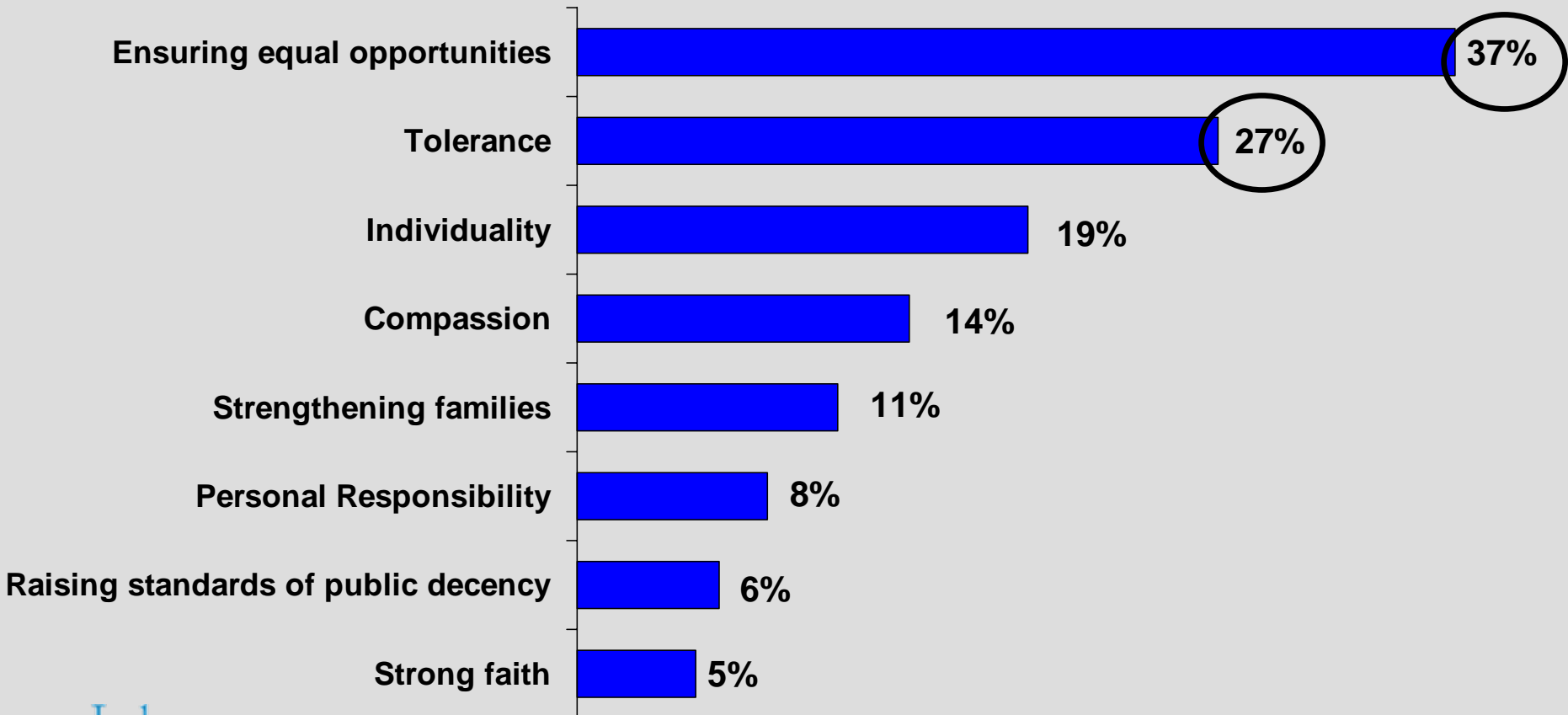
Personal Definition of Values



Americans see the Democratic party as the party of equal opportunity and tolerance.



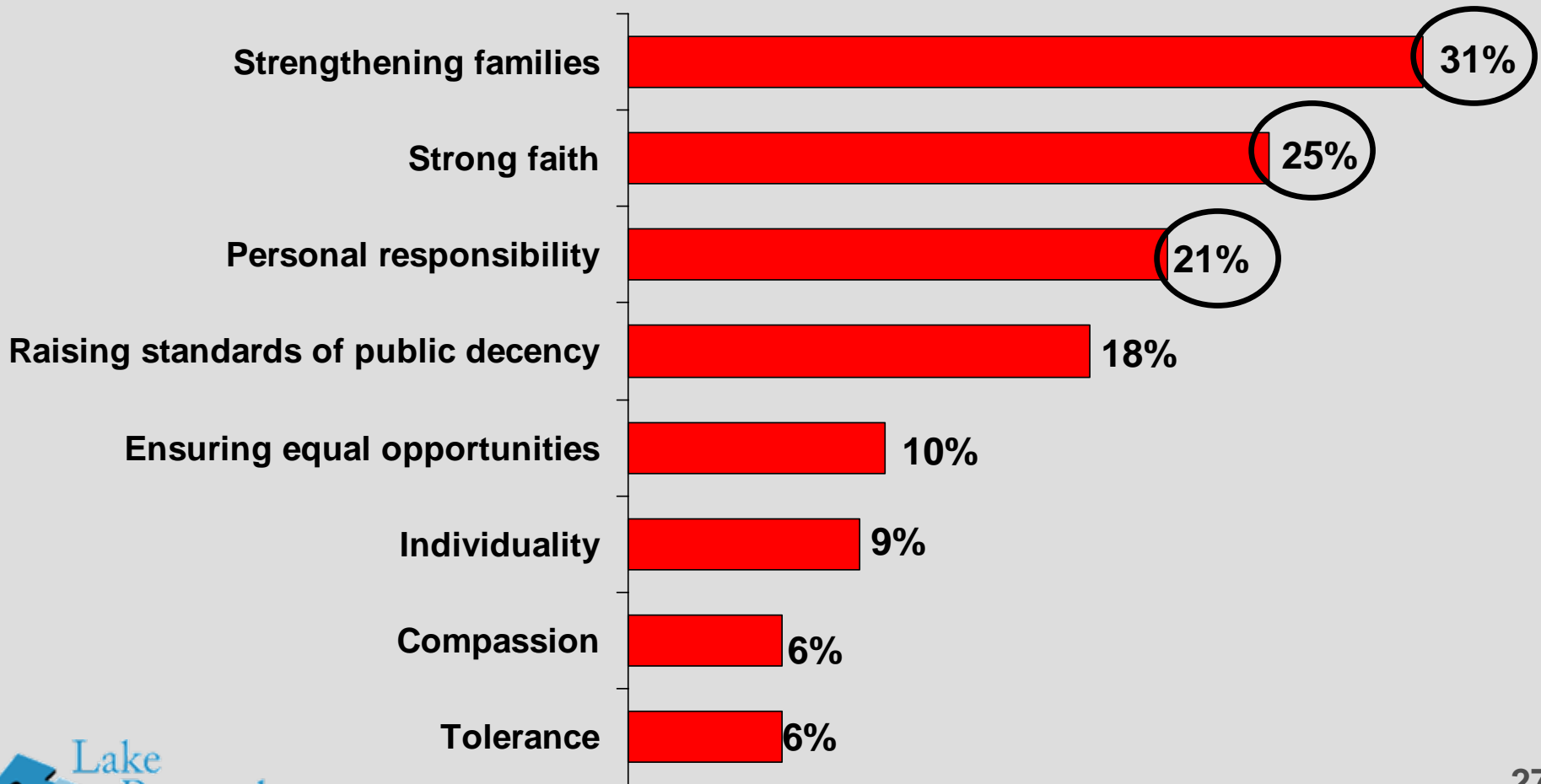
Values Americans Associate With The Democratic Party



Americans see the Republican party as the party of families, faith, and personal responsibility.



Values Americans Associate With The Republican Party

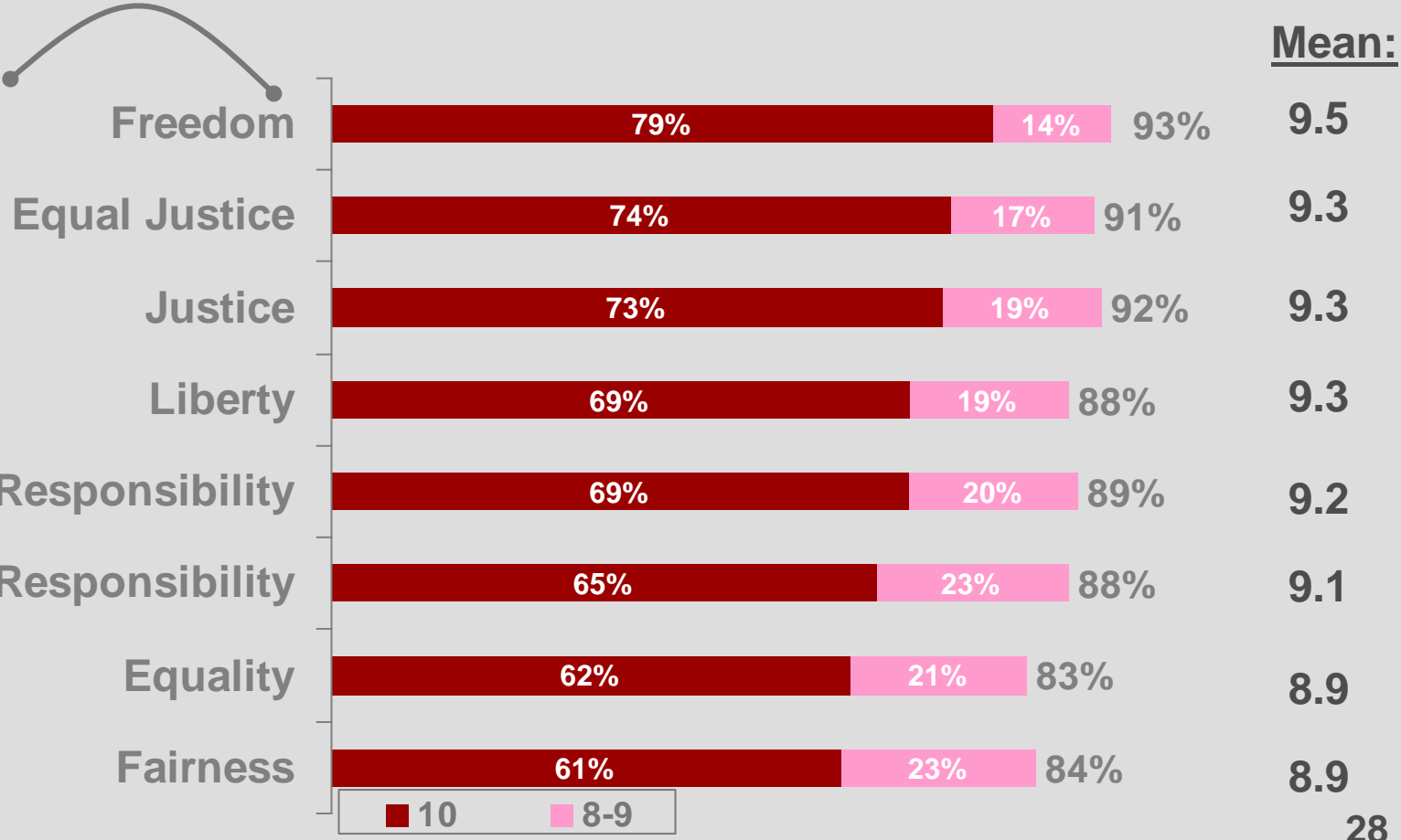




Voters make careful distinctions on values. Freedom is the top value. If progressives fail to compete on this value it will be difficult to overcome other weaker framings that the opposition may use.

I'd like you to tell me how important that value is for our country on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. You can use any number in between.

The mean rating for freedom does not drop below 9.1 among any demographic group. Its reach is broad and deep.



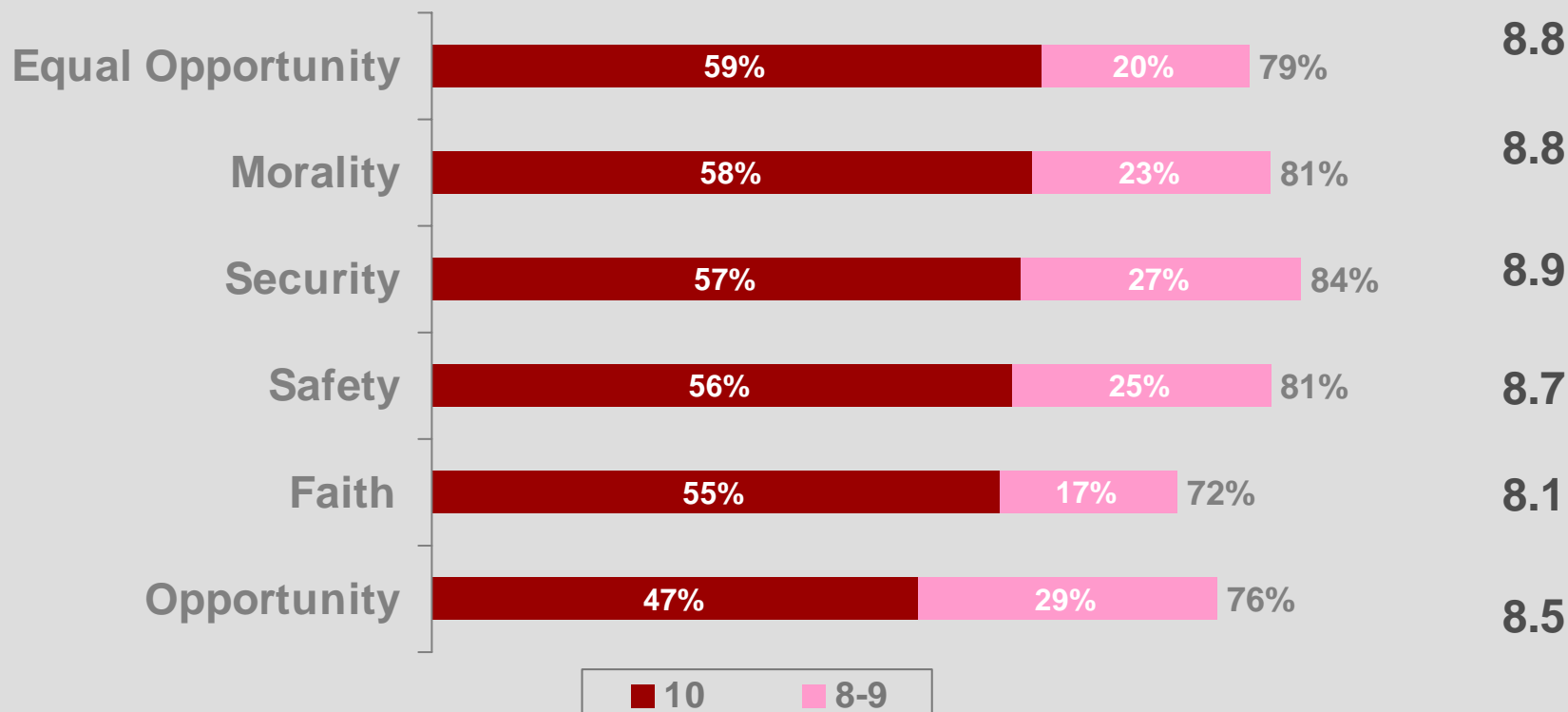
All questions in this battery were split sampled.

LRP: National survey of 800 2006 voters – November 9-15, 2006

Our progressive framework has long held opportunity as a strong value – it still is. However, it has lost intensity over the last year, especially when compared to “equal opportunity.” Faith and morality are lower values comparatively, but in many ways, they remain code-language since Republican and conservative voters prioritize them.



I'd like you to tell me how important that value is for our country on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. You can use any number in between.

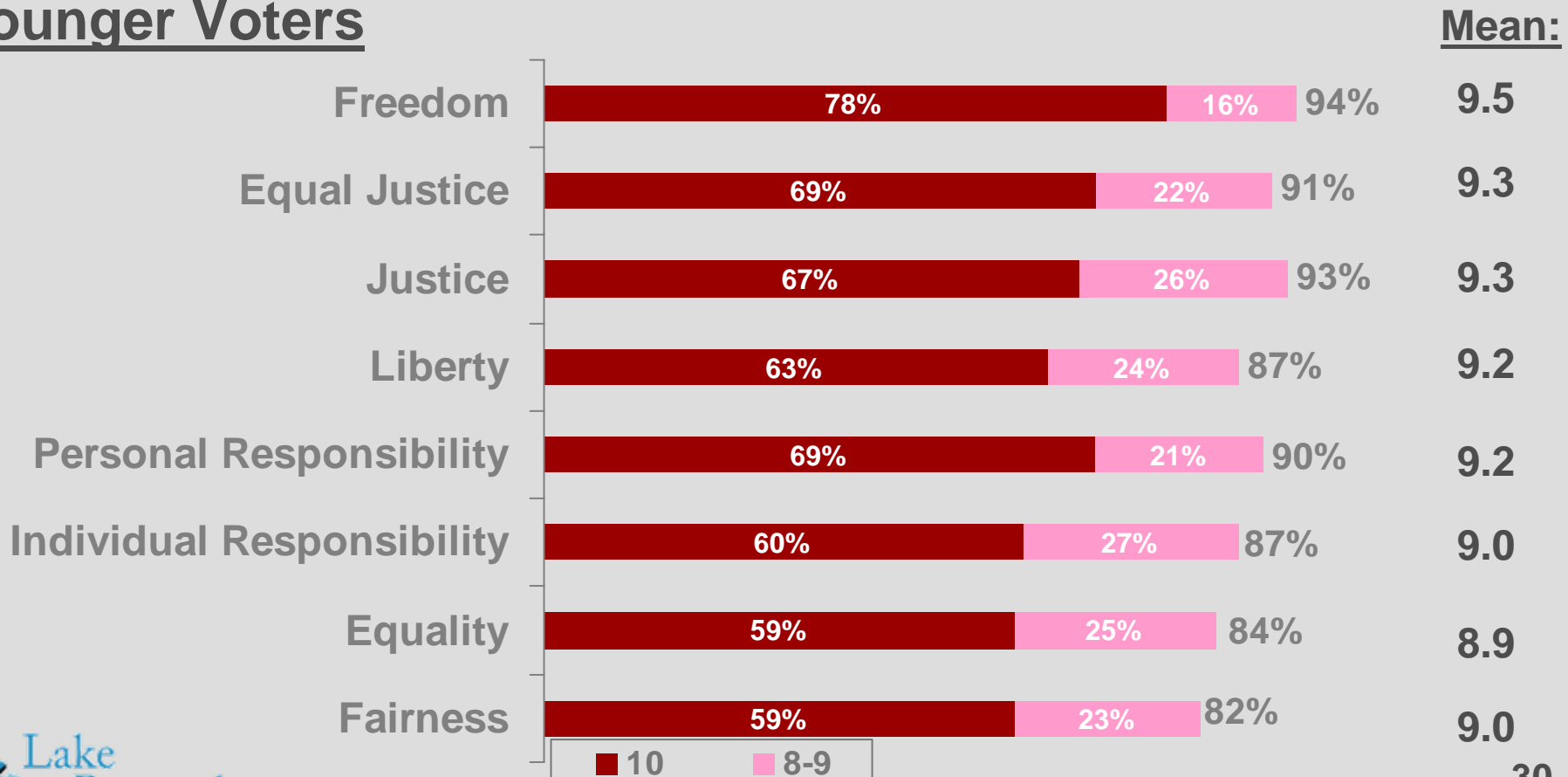


Age does not matter as younger voters share the same values as voters overall.



I'd like you to tell me how important that value is for our country on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. You can use any number in between.

Younger Voters



All questions in this battery were split sampled.

LRP: National survey of 800 2006 voters – November 9-15, 2006



Equal justice is driven by the Democratic base, but even Republicans respond well to it. Persuadable voters prefer simply “justice.” Personal responsibility is not just a conservative value, and Democrats rate it highly as well. Freedom is strongest for Republicans and persuadable voters, but it is still the second strongest value for Democrats.

I'd like you to tell me how important that value is for our country on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important. You can use any number in between.

Percent rating '10'



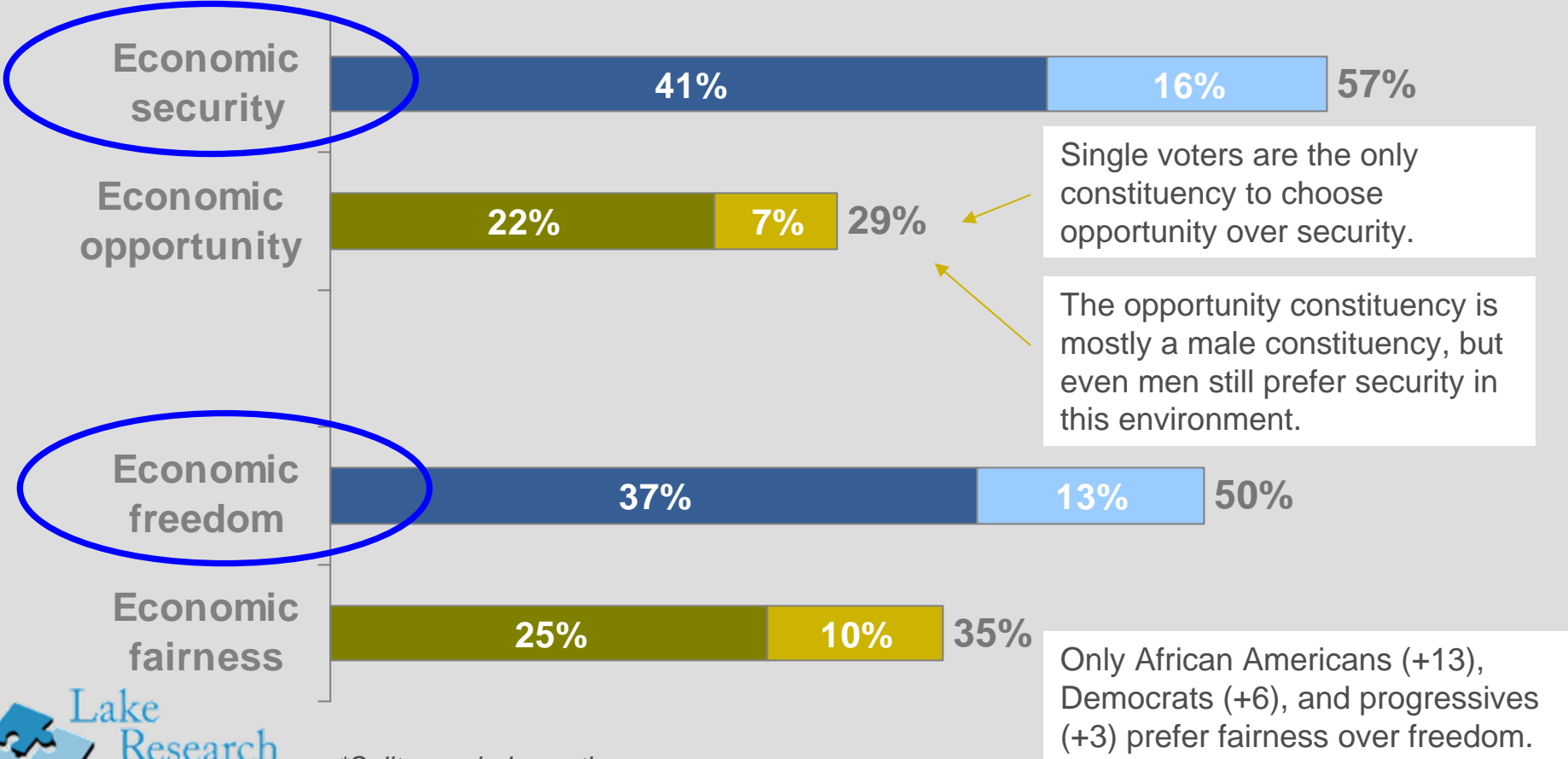
Personal responsibility is not just a conservative value. It has strength among Democrats as well





Economic security is a powerful frame, more powerful than economic opportunity or economic freedom. However, the frame from which conservatives operate from – security and freedom – is more powerful than our competing traditional framework of opportunity and fairness. To compete, we must gain influence by including freedom in our dialogue with voters.

Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic OPPORTUNITY or _economic SECURITY? * Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic FAIRNESS or _economic FREEDOM? *



Economic security

Economic freedom



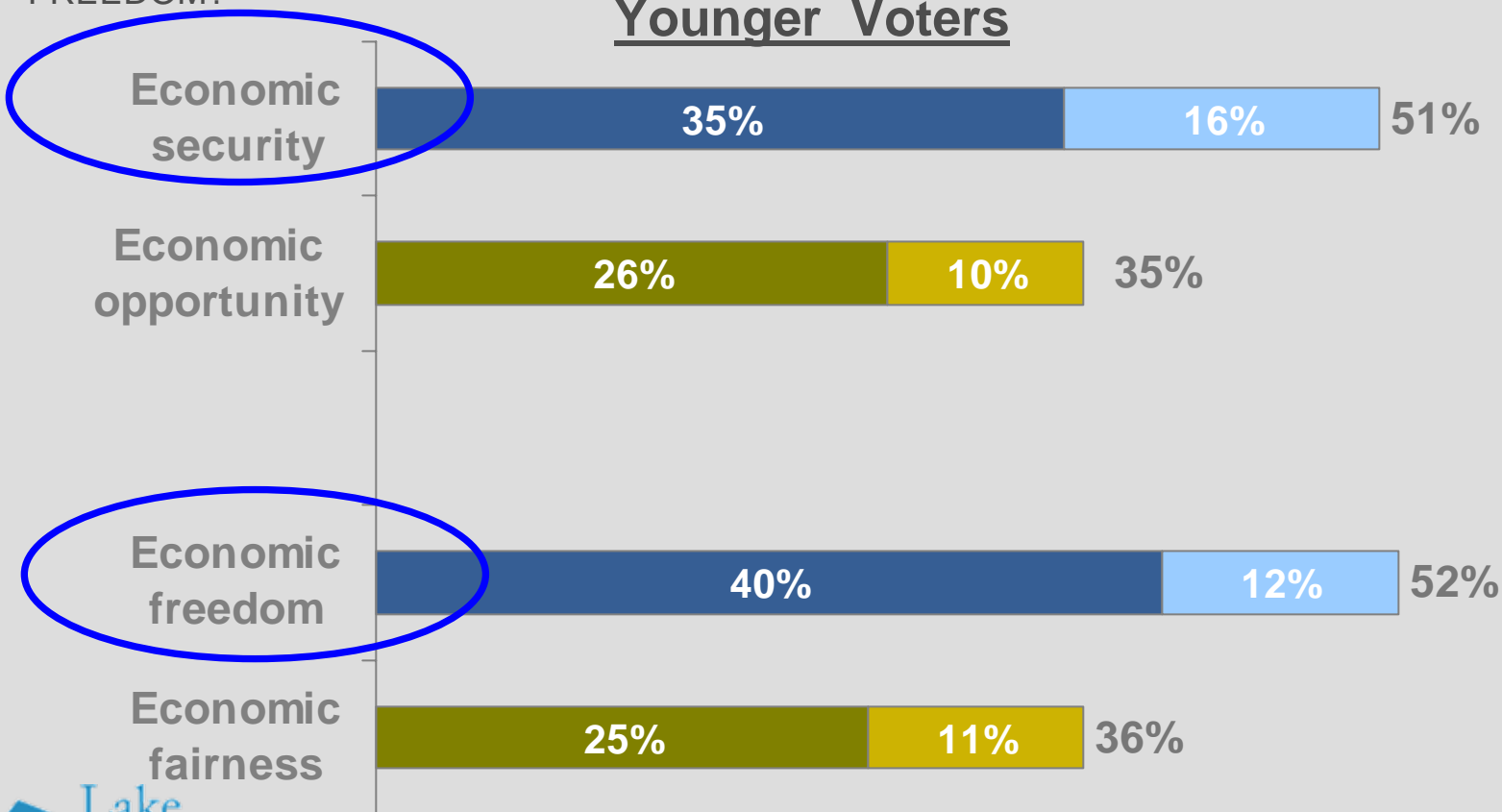
*Split sampled question.
Darker colors indicate intensity.

Economic security and economic freedom are equally powerful frames to younger voters.



Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic OPPORTUNITY or _economic SECURITY?* Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic FAIRNESS or _economic FREEDOM?*

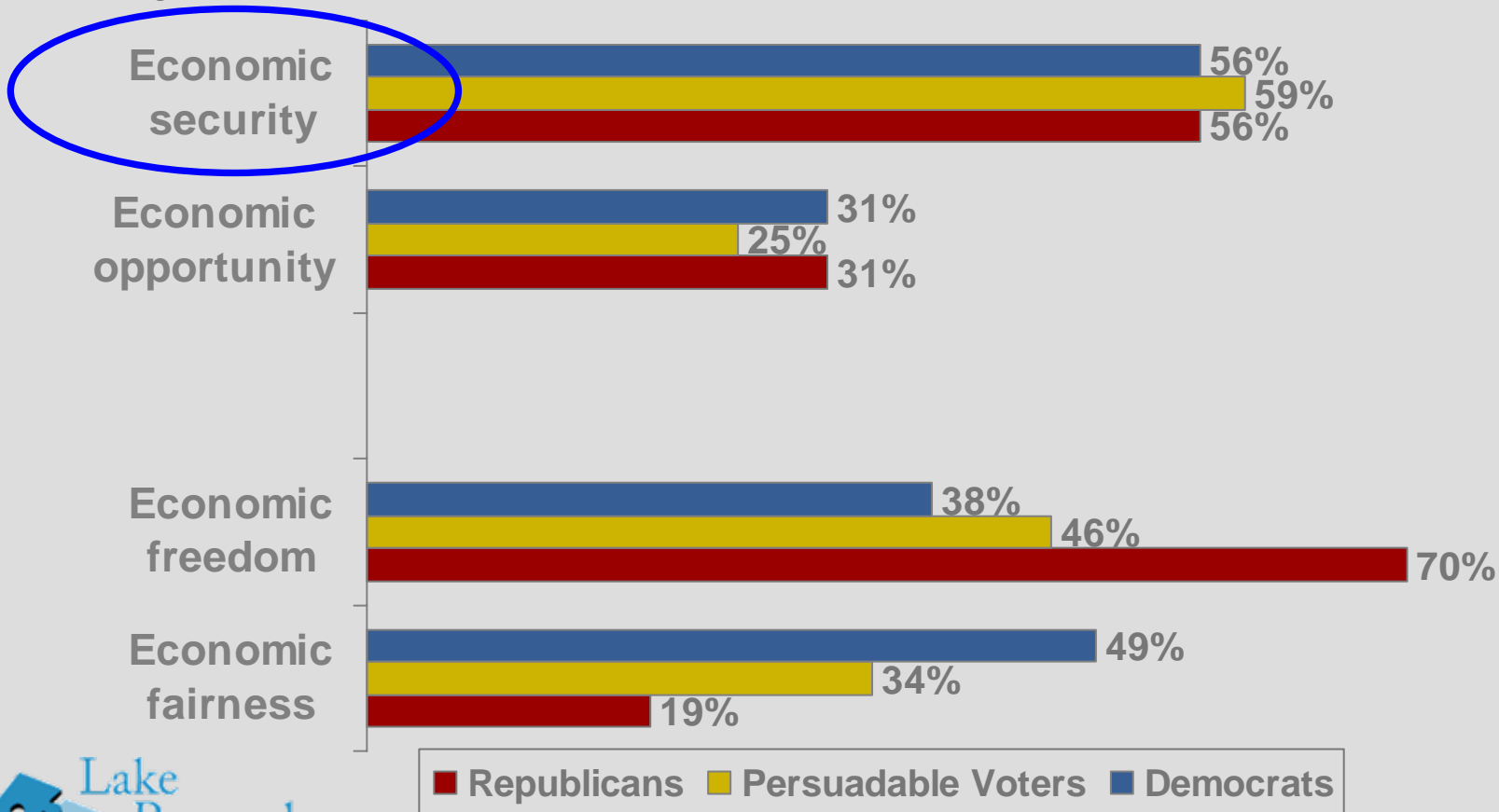
Younger Voters



Economic fairness has some strength among Democratic voters, but growth is limited elsewhere. Persuadable voters believe economic security is the most important to them personally. Economic opportunity is less powerful in reaching persuadable voters.



Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic OPPORTUNITY or _economic SECURITY?* Which is more important to you personally—[ROTATE] _economic FAIRNESS or _economic FREEDOM?*



Conceptualizing Good Government



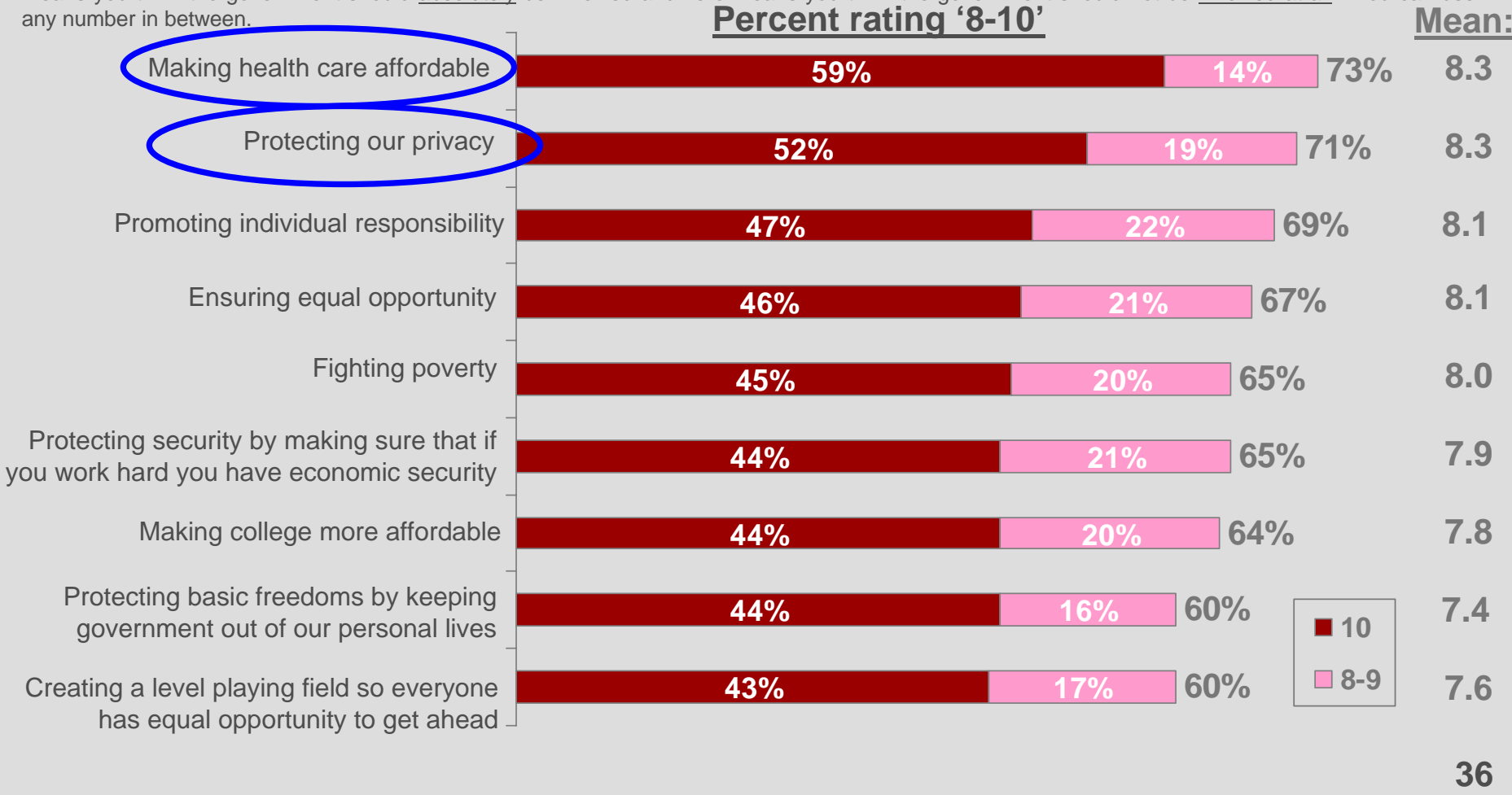
Voters want government to be small and involved in only a few areas.....but they also want government to make health care more affordable, protect our privacy, and enforce basic rules and minimums.





Voters believe government ought to make health care more affordable, protect our privacy, and promote individual responsibility. There is also a constituency that believes government ought to fight poverty and ensure equal opportunity. A second tier of priorities for the government includes economic security and college affordability.

Here are some things people think government ought to be involved in. For each one, please tell me what you think using a scale from zero to ten. Ten means you think the government should absolutely be involved and zero means you think the government should not be involved at all. You can use any number in between.



Younger voters tend to believe that the government should be involved with issues affecting working families and the middle class.



Younger Voters

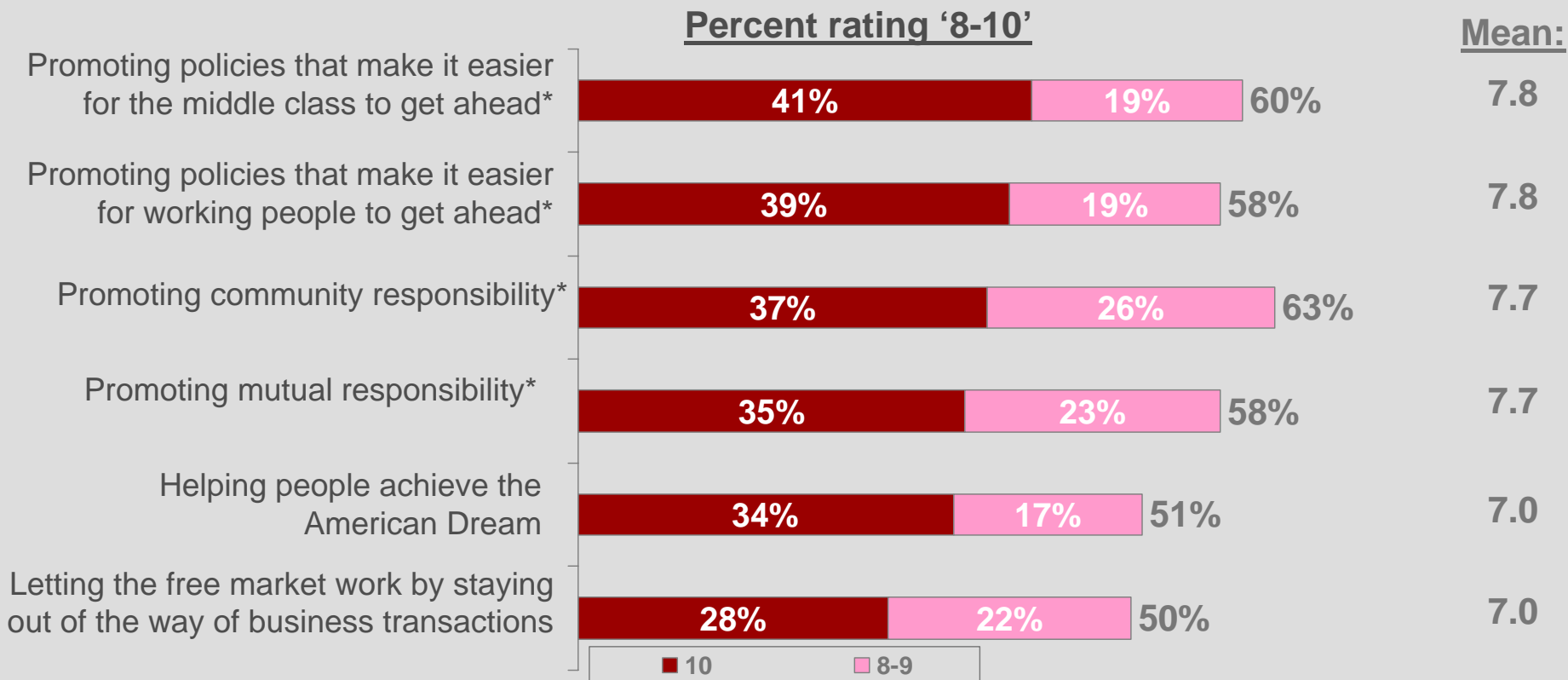
Rated 10

- Health care more affordable: 55%
- Level playing field: 48%
- Protect Privacy: 48%
- Easier for middle class to get ahead: 46%
- Easier for working people to get head: 43%
- Making college more affordable: 42%

The American Dream, as a place for government involvement, is a weaker than expected concept. While the components of the dream test well – college, health care, privacy, opportunity – it may be more elusive as a package.



Here are some things people think government ought to be involved in. For each one, please tell me what you think using a scale from zero to ten. Ten means you think the government should absolutely be involved and zero means you think the government should not be involved at all. You can use any number in between.



Voters want the government to act as an enforcer in economic matters. Leveling the playing field for everyone is important. An “enforcer” is stronger than a “referee,” especially among women.



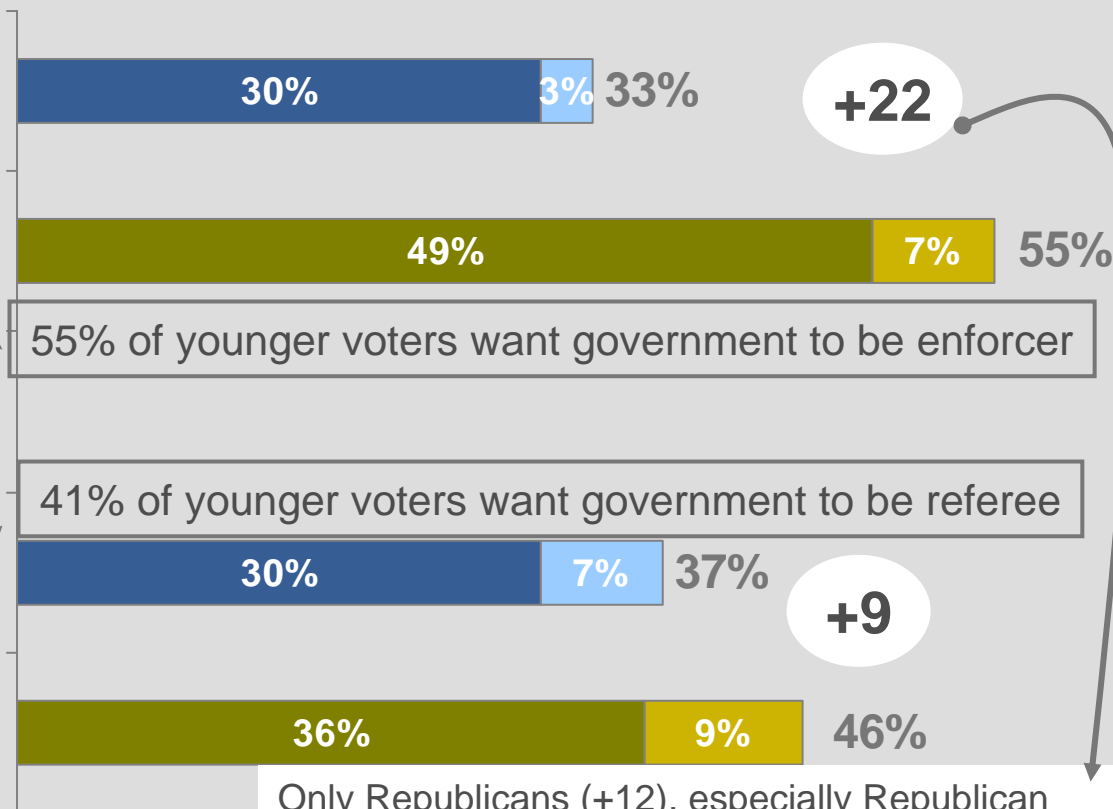
Here are pairs of statements about the government and the economy. For each pair tell me which one is closest to your opinion. **IF CHOICE:** Is that strongly or not so strongly?

Is as small as possible and stays out of economic transactions

Acts to enforce the rules so that the playing field starts out level for everyone

Is as small as possible and stays out of economic transactions

Acts as a referee so that the playing field starts out level for everyone



55% of younger voters want government to be enforcer

41% of younger voters want government to be referee

Only Republicans (+12), especially Republican men (+20), rural men (+1), and those in the Mid-Atlantic region (+10) prefer the government staying out over being an enforcer.



Darker colors indicate intensity.



A government that “enforces the rules” should be our agent of change. Democratic voters especially prefer the enforcer to the referee. Persuadable voters prefer both the enforcer and the referee.

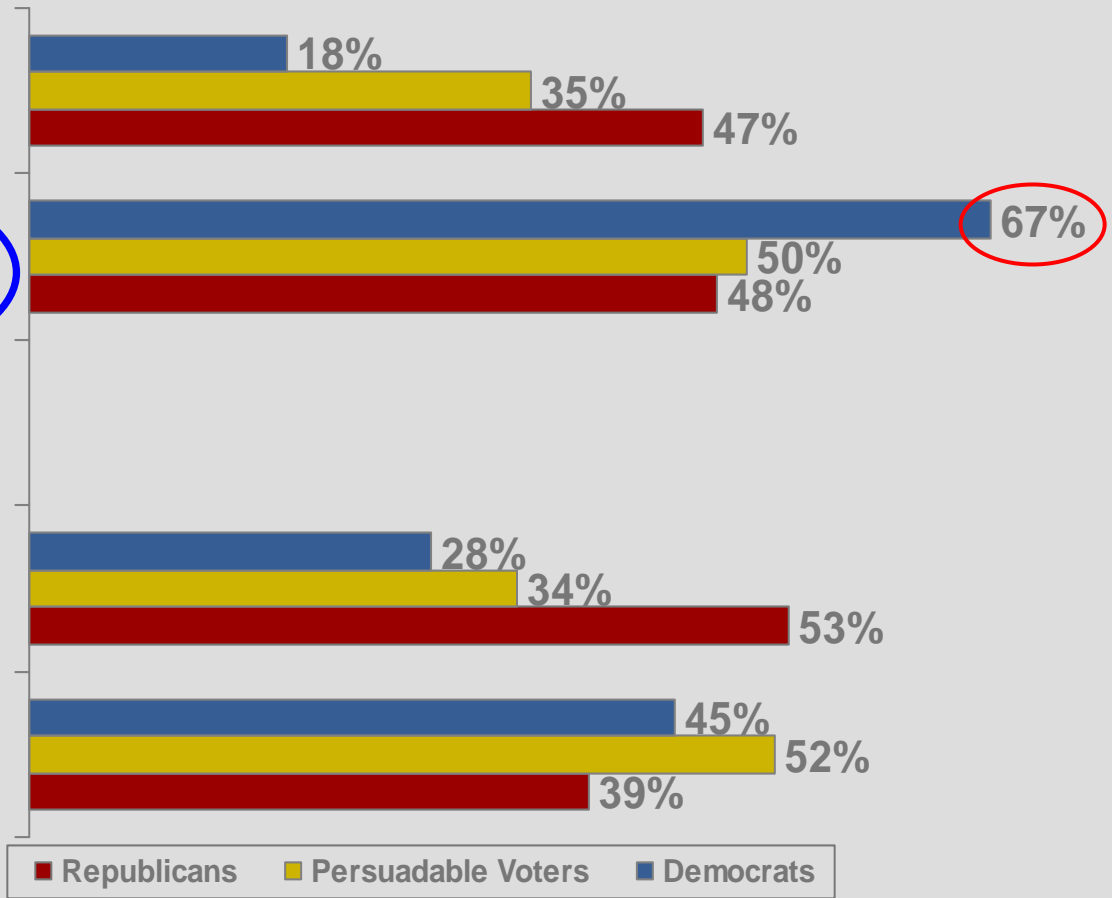
Here are pairs of statements about the government and the economy. For each pair tell me which one is closest to your opinion. **IF CHOICE:** Is that strongly or not so strongly?

Is as small as possible and stays out of economic transactions

Acts to enforce the rules so that the playing field starts out level for everyone

Is as small as possible and stays out of economic transactions

Acts as a referee so that the playing field starts out level for everyone





Freedom wins again on economic matters, compared to fairness, though the comparisons are close. Voters want the government to value FREE competition, rather than FAIR competition. Surprisingly, they also want the government to stay out of the way rather than stop unfair competition, though again the gap is smaller.

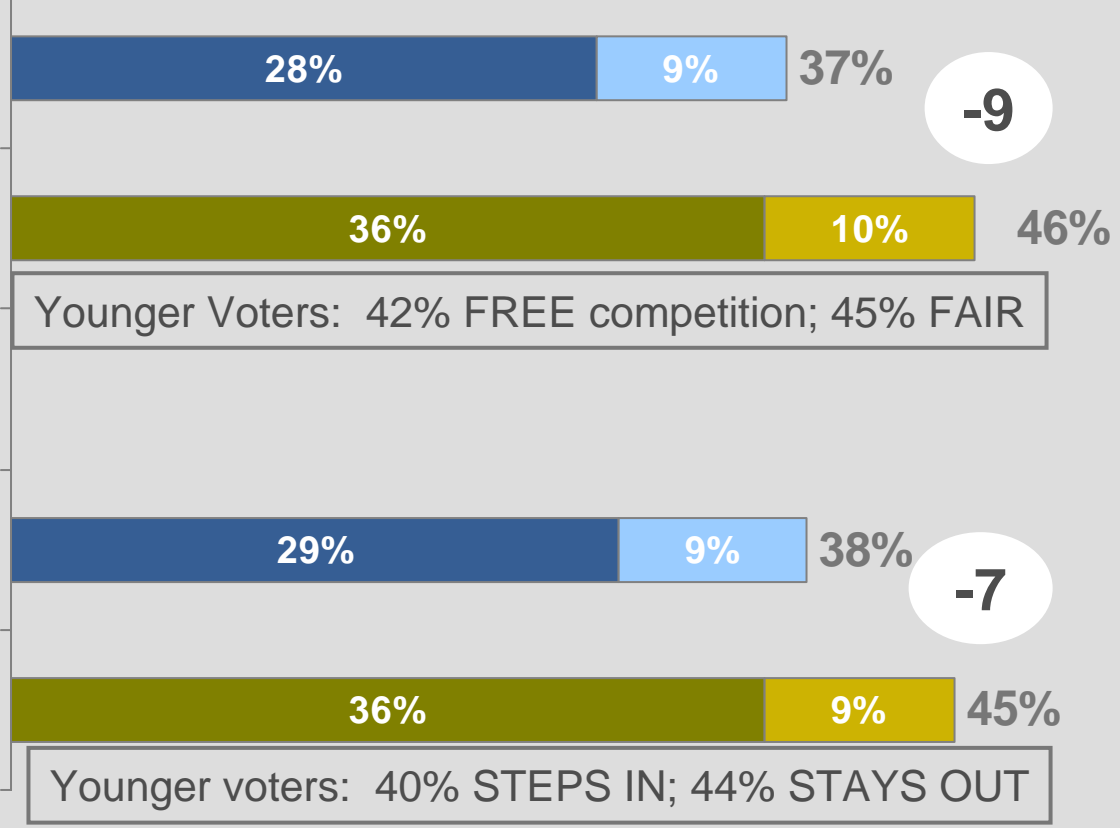
Here are pairs of statements about the government and the economy. For each pair tell me which one is closest to your opinion. **IF CHOICE:** Is that strongly or not so strongly?

Values **FAIR** competition, because when it comes to the economy totally free often means unfair

Values **FREE** competition, because when it comes to the economy things cannot always be fair.

Steps in to stop unfair competition

Stays out of the way and lets the free market work.



The phrase “basic protections” works better than “basic rules and minimums” when it comes to wages, health insurance and retirement. Our frame would also be stronger if we included “security” in our dialogue.



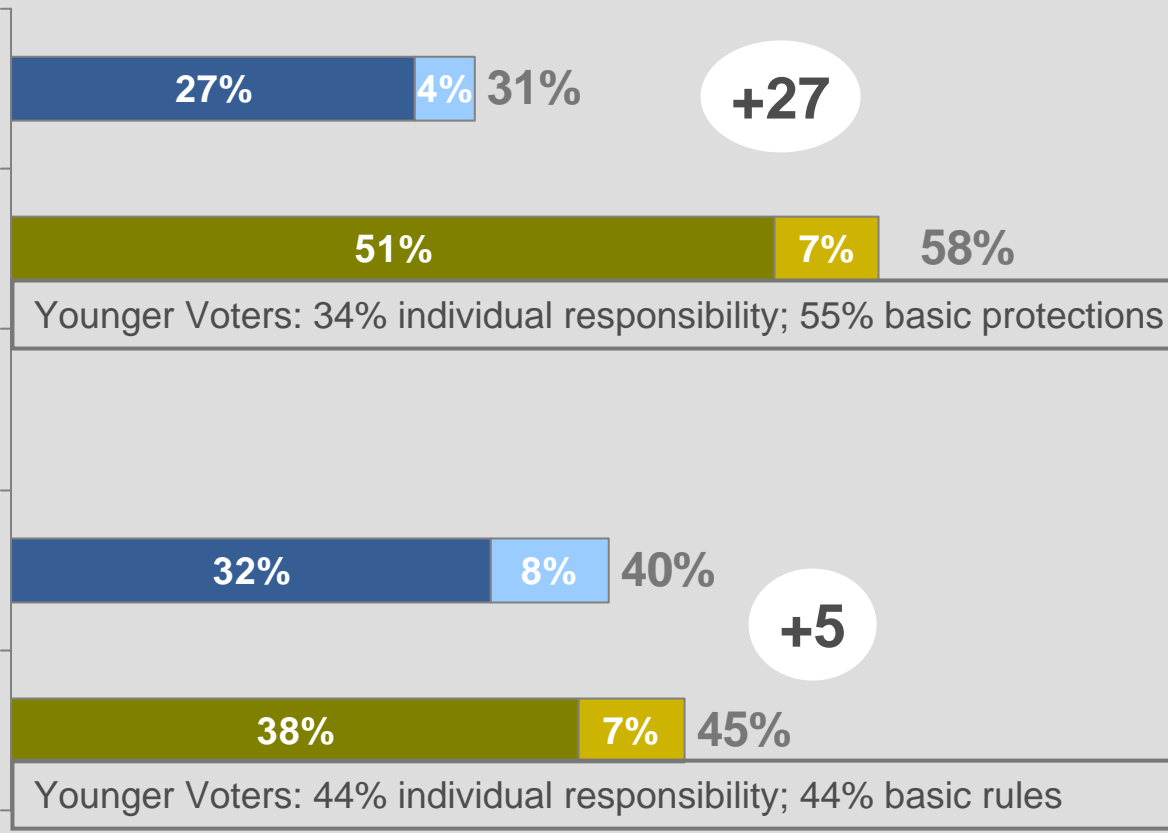
Here are pairs of statements about the government and the economy. For each pair tell me which one is closest to your opinion. **IF CHOICE:** Is that strongly or not so strongly?

Asks individuals to take responsibility for their own affairs, like their wages, health insurance, and retirement.

Provides basic protections on wages, health insurance, and retirement

Asks individuals to take responsibility for their own affairs, like their wages, health insurance, and retirement.

Provides basic rules and minimums on wages, health insurance, and retirement



Darker colors indicate intensity.

LRP: National survey of 800 2006 voters – November 9-15, 2006

Progressive Messaging



Our message planks are stronger than our rhetoric.
We need to gain control of freedom and exploit our
strengths on equal access to security, opportunity,
and the common good.



Message Development



- Advocates are highly informed about their issues and have many things they want to say. But trying to tell voters everything about the issue means they will remember nothing.
- Voters think activists like to worry about everything.
- A powerful narrative is key. Facts and policies back up the narrative, but are not a message on their own.
- When the facts don't fit the frame, voters reject the facts.

Framing Issues: The Optimist / Solutions



- While it is important to show an awareness of the difficulties facing working families, we need to be careful not to be overly negative or to offer nothing more than a litany of woes. In American politics, the optimist has always won.
- Americans are aware of the challenges they face; they are seeking from us hope that things can get better.
- They often find our dialogue focuses on problems when they want solutions.

The problem: messages vs. value statements



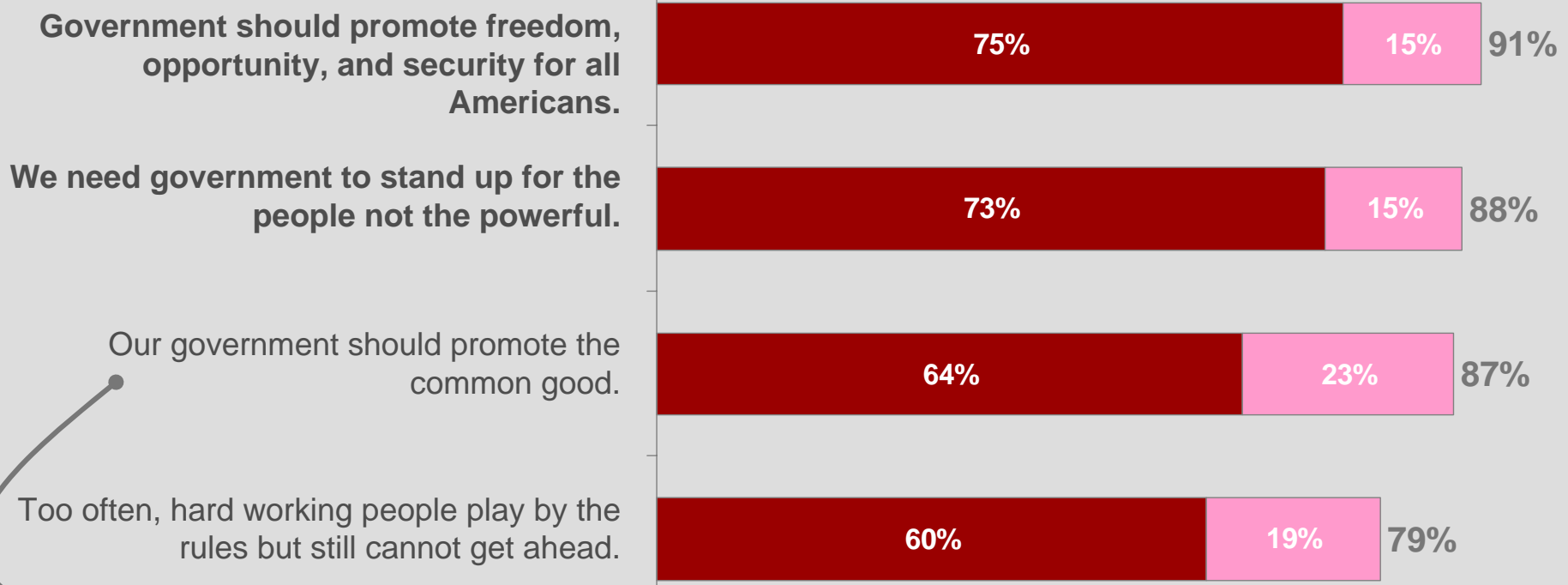
- While the election was not about moral values, we do need a more compelling values-based narrative. For far too long, progressives have ceded the values terrain to the right-wing. It's time to take it back.
- “My friends, we are constantly being told that America is deeply divided But all Americans value freedom and faith and family.”
» -*Bill Clinton at the 2004 Democratic Convention*
- People are focused on family values such as helping children and the difficulty in raising children in a culture of “Hollywood” values.
- Progressives need to develop values-oriented language, not only on traditional issues such as tolerance and equality, but also on values voters currently do not associate with us, such as family, personal responsibility, and freedom.



The strongest message thematic is that government should promote freedom, opportunity, and security for all Americans. Voters also believe the government should stand up for the people, not the powerful. These thematics have strength across target groups, including persuadable and Republican voters.

Now I am going to read you some statements, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

Percent agree



Darker colors indicate intensity.

Promoting the “common good” is effective and works among Democratic and persuadable voters. However, the freedom, security, and opportunity framework is stronger and pulls in Republican voters.



Similarly, younger voters feel government should promote freedom, opportunity, security and the common good.



Now I am going to read you some statements, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

Younger Voters

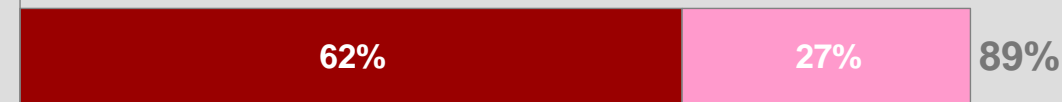
Government should promote freedom, opportunity, and security for all Americans.



We need government to stand up for the people not the powerful.



Our government should promote the common good.



Too often, hard working people play by the rules but still cannot get ahead.



The "Two Americas" frame is the weakest. Americans want there to be one America and rebel against messages that say otherwise. If we implicitly say there are two Americas, and one America is working America, the other should probably be corporations and conglomerates.



Now I am going to read you some statements, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

Percent agree

I don't have a problem with the government helping the vulnerable; I have a problem with the government helping the undeserving.



We cannot just depend on the marketplace. Government has a responsibility to make sure the rules are fair and enforced.



Today there are two Americas. There is a working America whose needs are forgotten by the government and an America of wealthy special interests whose every wish is fulfilled by the government.



Darker colors indicate intensity.



Fairness generates little energy.

Standing up for ordinary people is appealing to Democrats and persuadable voters, but the corporate frame is stronger among persuadable voters. We should be specific about who the powerful are.



Now I am going to read you some statements, and I want you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

Percent agree

When it comes to the economy, the playing field is uneven, **with large corporations having too many advantages.**



When it comes to the economy, the playing field is uneven, **and the government needs to stand up for ordinary people again.**



Darker colors indicate intensity.

Democrats: 85% agree, 69% strongly
Persuadable voters: 71% agree, 50% strongly
Republicans: 52% agree, 28% strongly

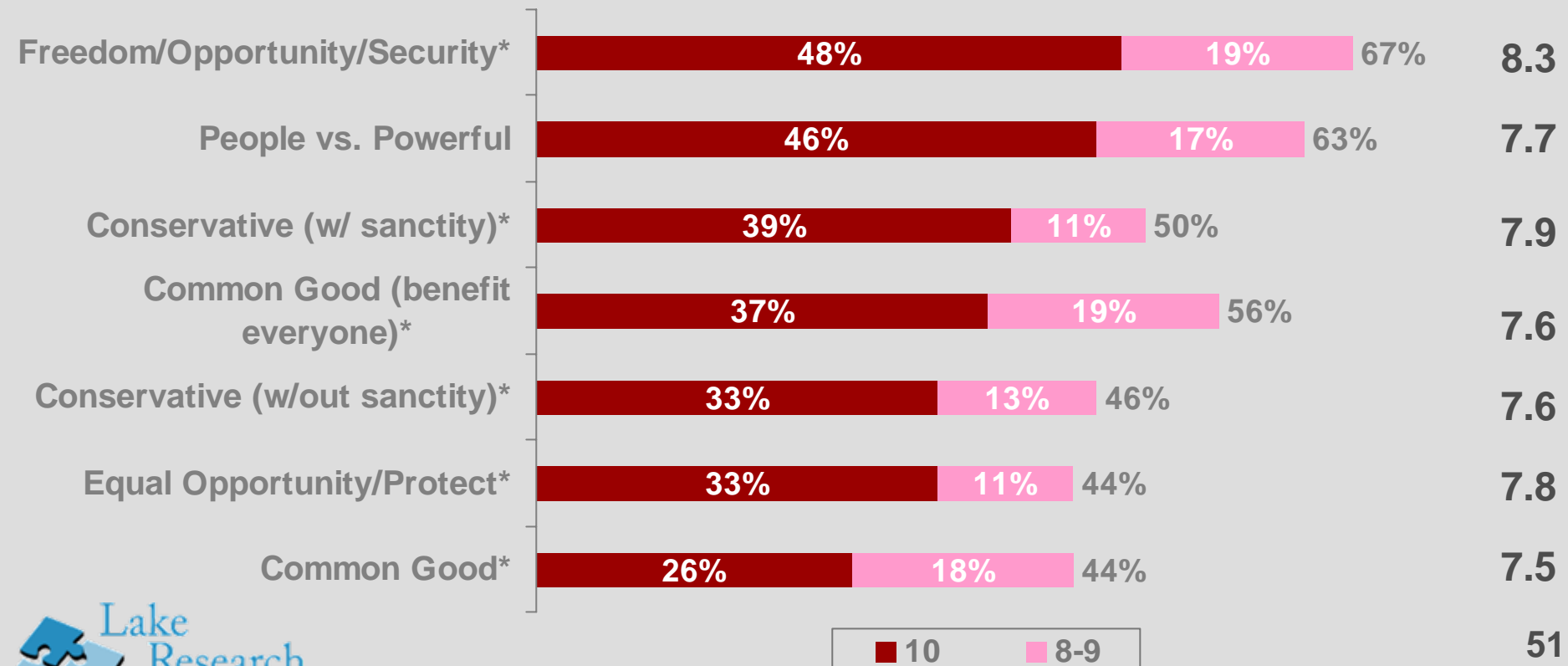
Our message framework tests better than our individual messages. This is a warning. Our core values work well, but our strongest messages have yet to be written. Overall, the strongest message focuses on offering freedom, opportunity, and security to all.



Now I am going to read you some statements about the economy and the proper role of government. For each one please tell me how convincing each statement is using a ten point scale. Ten means it is extremely convincing, zero means it is not convincing at all, and five is neutral. You can be anywhere in between.

Percent rating '8-10'

Mean:



*Split sampled question

LRP: National survey of 800 2006 voters – November 9-15, 2006

Younger voters respond similarly to the messages as voters overall. However, they find the messages slightly less convincing across the board.

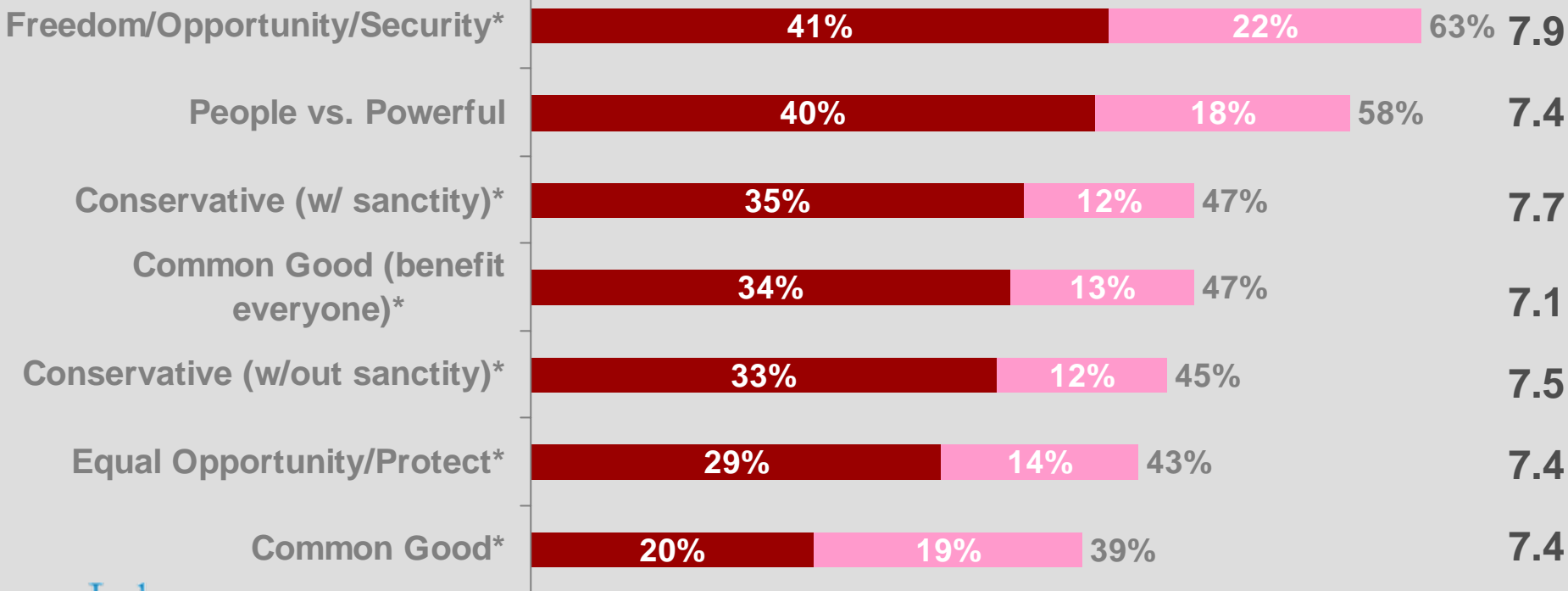


Now I am going to read you some statements about the economy and the proper role of government. For each one please tell me how convincing each statement is using a ten point scale. Ten means it is extremely convincing, zero means it is not convincing at all, and five is neutral. You can be anywhere in between.

Younger Voters

Mean:

Percent rating '8-10'



52

Applying Framing and Messaging to Real World Issues



The War in Iraq: *The issue shaping America's dialogue*



Key Talking Points on Iraq:



- U.S. troops and taxpayers have sacrificed a great deal in Iraq. After four years of a conflict that has taken the lives of nearly 3,000 American troops, over 23,000 wounded, and cost American taxpayers over \$400 billion, it is long past time for the Iraqis to take control of their own future. They must govern and secure their nation. U.S. military forces, who have performed heroically, cannot do the job for them.
- [X number of] weeks ago, the American people demanded a change of course in Iraq. Democrats have called for the phased redeployment of troops from Iraq, beginning in the next four to six months. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group has also unanimously called for combat forces to transition out of Iraq by the first quarter of 2008.
- It is up to the President to respond accordingly and to bring our open-ended commitment in Iraq to a close. Democrats and the blue-ribbon Iraq Study Group have given the President a road-map for change. It is up to President Bush and the Defense Secretary to follow this course.

Key Talking Points on Iraq:



- The failed policy of this president has made America less safe and emboldened our nation's enemies.
- President Bush is escalating the war against the advice of his own military commanders, a bipartisan majority of Congress and an overwhelming majority of the American people. Escalating the war will not make America safer.
- Congress will always stand up for the safety of our troops and the security of our nation, and that means standing up for a real change of course in Iraq—we will hold this President accountable with an up-or-down vote.
- Democrats have a plan for success in Iraq that will make America safer, protect our strategic interests and honor the sacrifice of our troops and their families.
 - Shifting the principal mission of our forces from combat to training, logistics, force protection, and counter terrorism;
 - Beginning the phased redeployment of our forces in the next four to six months;
 - Implementing an aggressive diplomatic strategy, both within the region and beyond, to help the Iraqis achieve a sustainable political settlement, including amending their constitution.
- Making sure the veterans here at home are taken care of by fully funding the V.A., providing adequate health care for our military personnel who served so bravely for our country.

The Cost of War:



- 3162 U.S. military personnel dead (DoD 2/28)
- 23,677 U.S. military personnel wounded (Pentagon)
- The Iraq war has already cost more than \$351B*
- The President has asked for an additional \$61B for 2007 and \$113B for 2008, for total projected expenditures of \$532B from 2003-2008.
 - That averages to:
 - \$ More than 250M per day**
 - \$ More than 1.7B per week
 - \$ More than 8.2B per month
 - \$ \$4,089.16 per taxpayer in the US***

*Figures based on 2/7/07 CBO report to Senator Kent Conrad.

**Based on \$532B requested and approved Operation Iraqi Freedom appropriations distributed across dates of 3/19/03-12/31/08 (2,112 days)

***Based on 130.1M income tax filers in 2003 (latest date available - IRS)

Iraq Vs. Domestic Needs



- The \$532B appropriated or requested for Iraq could pay for:****

 905,724 new teachers for the next decade

 Healthcare for one year for 151,714,073 people

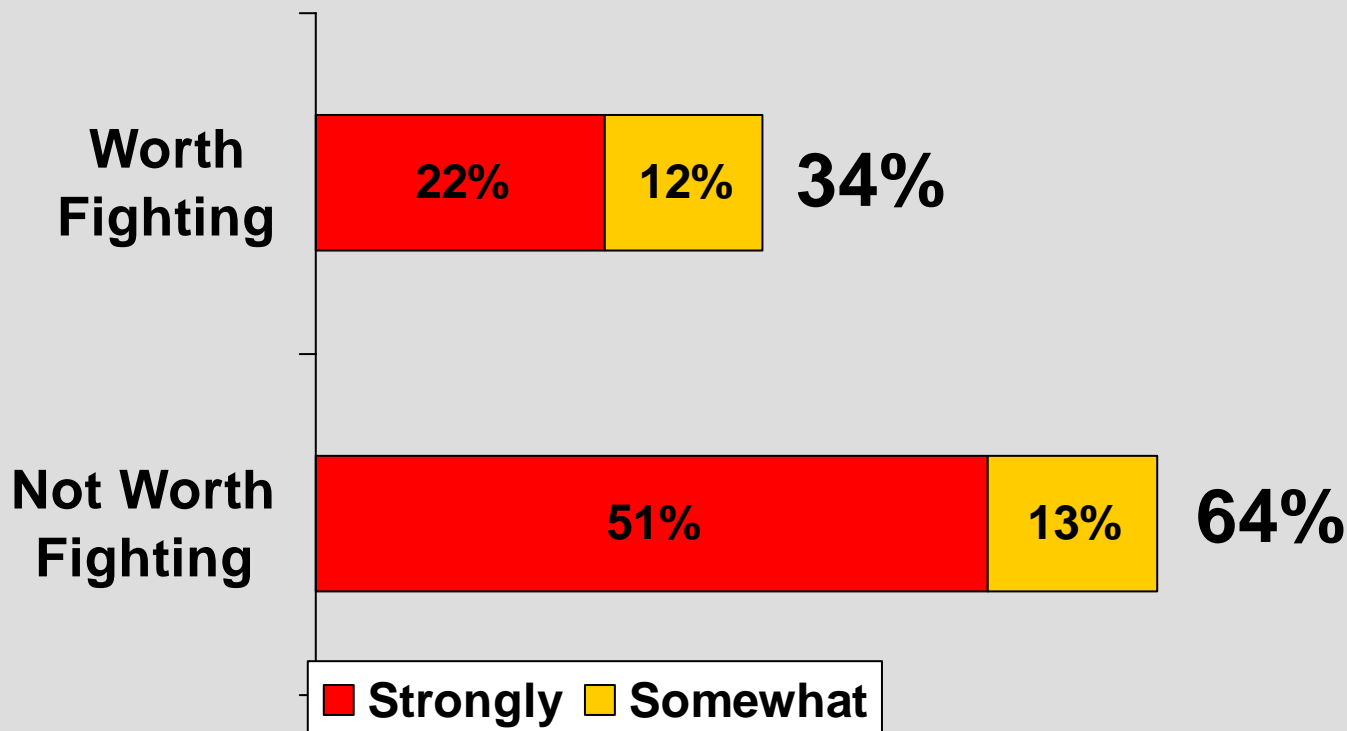
 53,515 new elementary schools

 87.8M 1-year college scholarships

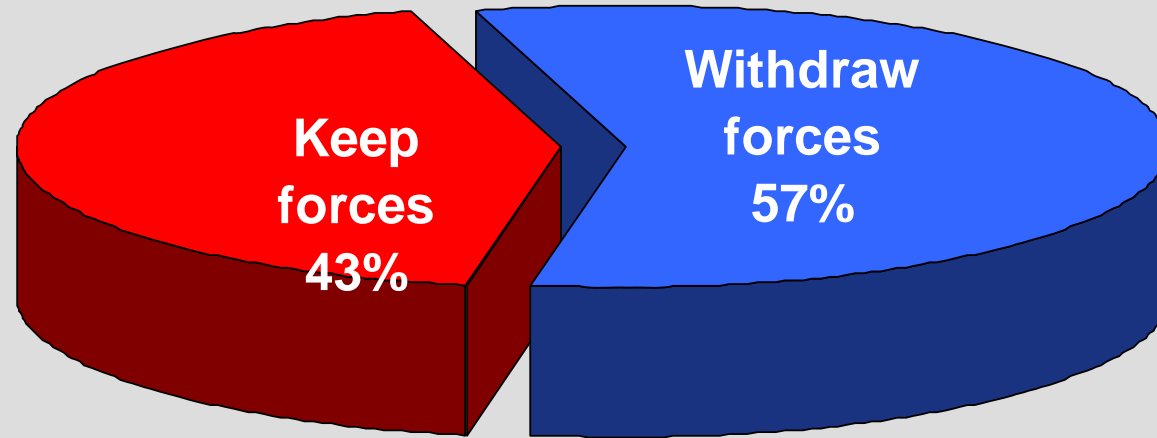
 11.9M firemen, police officers, and first responders

****Estimated based on data gathered by the National Priorities Project

Almost two out three voters now believe the war in Iraq was not worth fighting.



For the first time, a majority of Americans favor withdrawing the troops from Iraq.



<u>% Withdraw</u>	
December 2005:	39%
June 2006:	47%
February 2007:	53%

- 67% oppose (56% strongly) Bush's proposal to send 20,000 additional troops to Iraq
- 56% agree there should be a deadline set for withdrawing U.S. troops.

Applying Framing and Messaging to Real World Issues



Health Care:

A salient issue that speaks
to voters' values



The Context



- ✓ **Health care is clearly salient to voters. Rising costs are the top concern for voters**, the vast majority of whom are insured. A recent* Gallup poll shows health care is the top concern for 27% of voters – the highest level seen in more than a year.
- ✓ Voters connect to health care as consumers. They feel they are getting less for more.
- ✓ Voters often support reform proposals in principle — but pull away from policy specifics fearing higher costs or lower quality *for them personally*.
- ✓ The concept of “quality affordable health care” is more appealing than “universal coverage.” It bridges uninsured and underinsured to insured who are worried about rising costs.

* Gallup: February 22-25, 2007

Cynicism about government and blocked altruism are barriers to change.



- ✓ Insured voters fear losing what they have
- ✓ Voters are highly doubtful about the abilities of government
- ✓ Across the board voters are feeling tax sensitive

Health care is an example of advocates caring most about one thing (access) and voters another thing (costs).



- First and foremost, any health care reform proposal must be framed as an answer to the problem of rising health care costs. We need to position our opponents as blocking reform to protect their profits.
- Voters see a strong connection between the economy and health care concerns like rising costs and the uninsured as well as between jobs and health care. “Good jobs” to them implies jobs with decent benefits, including health care.
- We must stand for affordable, quality health care for all – after all, cost is what prevents the uninsured from buying insurance.

The Facts



- ✓ **The fact that 80% of the uninsured are in working families is still not widely understood.** This information is powerful in reframing the issue and helping voters identify with the uninsured.
- ✓ **Cost-shifting is not readily understood by voters.** Despite the seemingly strong argument linking cost-shifting to voters' intense concerns about their own rising health care costs, the connection remains difficult for voters to make.
- ✓ To broaden the dialogue, talk about using costs, not just access, and the underserved as well as the uninsured.

Core beliefs



- ✓ **Health care has become a core value** -- linked to the pursuit of the American Dream, our country's destiny, and each family's well-being and future.
- ✓ Voters talk about it in moral terms – no American should be denied access to health care.
- ✓ Yet, just calling this or that health care proposal a “moral issue” is insufficient to move voters.
- ✓ Voters see health care as a necessity. **They see a role for something beyond market forces to ensure affordable access.**
- ✓ Voters believe everyone should have access to quality, affordable health care — but they don't want to pay for those they perceive to be “undeserving”.
- ✓ Voters want an “American” solution.

Barriers



- ✓ Cynicism about government
- ✓ Fear of higher costs, higher taxes, lower quality care.
- ✓ Opposition to helping those perceived as undeserving.
- ✓ The ability of powerful interests to block action.
- ✓ Blocked altruism – what do I lose?
- ✓ Who is going to pay for it?

Overcoming the Barriers



- ✓ Incorporate an Element of Personal Responsibility
- ✓ Include Options and Choices in Proposals
- ✓ Use Preventative Care as a Stepping Stone
- ✓ Find a Uniquely *American* solution
- ✓ Emphasize Security and Peace of Mind, Especially with Women
- ✓ Focus on Our Support for Small Business
- ✓ Propose Initiatives that Reflect Voter Values about Health Care
- ✓ Define a Role for Government as Watchdog and Rule Maker
- ✓ Animate Anger, not Fear

The Voters



- ✓ Core health care voters supporting progressive reforms **include Democratic women, African-Americans, and Latinos.**
- ✓ **Older women and seniors are the most attentive voters on this issue.** They need to be reassured that reforms will not adversely affect the quality of their health care.
- ✓ **Small business owners are an important constituency on this issue.** A small business voice on our side is an important signal to persuadable voters. Women-owned small businesses have **health care insurance for their employees** as one of their top issues.

Key values and themes that move voters



- ✓ Responsibility as a two-way street
- ✓ American ingenuity; an American solution
- ✓ Prevention as a smart investment
- ✓ Control and peace of mind: better choices and real options
- ✓ An aspirational vision of the future
- ✓ Government as an enforcer or watchdog

Universal coverage for children is popular, but not a strong bridge to universal coverage for adults.



Many believe that all children are covered now — they believe state children’s health insurance program is working.



Universal child health coverage is hugely popular *but* is not a bridge to universal coverage for adults...

...it may even reinforce the sense that universal coverage isn’t for “the undeserving.”



My Family and Me First



People will look for themselves in any proposal.

People want to know what a proposal will do *for me* and *to me* as a taxpayer and as someone with coverage provided by an employer or the government.



Change must keep good aspects of the current system.

Consumer Orientation



The role of government is not alternative to consumer frame. Rather it is way of ensuring individual choices are available, responsible behavior rewarded, and greed punished.

Government should work as a *watchdog* and *enforcer* of rules — not as the mass provider of health care.

People of color and base voters are the only groups comfortable with government's role defined as providing benefits.



*“I like [Guaranteed Choice]. That way everybody has some kind of insurance. I’m just a little worried about my employer. Are they really going to give me a choice or are they going to say let’s push everybody over to this one?”
(Columbus, non-college, female)*

Avoid Triggering Fears of Change



Our proposals are in trouble if they make people worry that they will lose what they currently have.

When people are fearful, they tend to become less open and less generous.

When fearful, they blame others: freeloaders, illegal immigrants, bad parents, welfare cheats, etc.



“I would worry they [my employer] would cut back if this [Health Security Card] was in effect. They’re already trying to cut back now and we work for it.” (Atlanta, marginalized middle ager, female)

Channel Anti-Greed Anger Rather than Fear



People blame insurance, drug companies that exhibit greed, which they perceive as costing us and undermining affordable quality health care.



Anger must be channeled. Generalized anger without a clear proposal for change can result in cynicism and the attitude that nothing can be done.

“The pharmaceutical companies... they spend money like it’s going out of style. They don’t care about the consumer. They don’t care about what it costs.” (Atlanta, male)

Individualism Trumps Collectivism



America remains a very individualistic culture. Even collective concepts that worked well (e.g., responsibility, obligation, family) had individualistic aspects to them (e.g., parental responsibility).

People like the idea that “responsibility is a two way street,” and “everyone pays something” (e.g., “sliding scale”).



We must co-opt personal responsibility and individualism — not fight it.

Quality, Affordable Health Care is a Value



Voters agree with the central principle that there should be access to quality affordable health care.

Health Care has become a core value, not just a commodity. It is linked to the American Dream, our families' and country's well being

It is a moral obligation when focused on deserving recipients such as children and seniors.



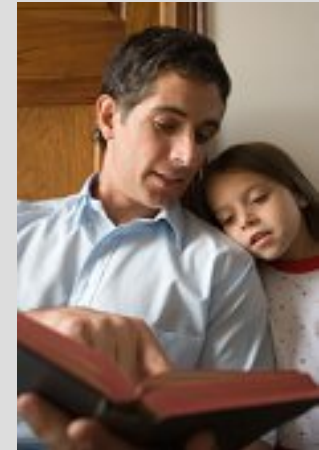
*“Because we’re a compassionate nation. We can’t let people be dying in the streets. It’s not Calcutta. That’s not what America’s principles or values are.”
(Columbus, female)*

Personal Responsibility



If voters don't clearly hear a central place for "personal responsibility" in proposals, they are turned off.

Once their need for others to demonstrate personal responsibility is met, people become more generous.



"I thought [Healthy Generation] was a good idea but I think that parents need to take more responsibility over what their kids do and what they watch on TV and what they eat." (Atlanta, Latina)

Embrace Personal Responsibility and Prevention

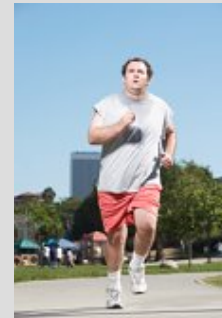


Voters want people (corporations, parents, individuals) to take responsibility. Sliding scale works because people believe it's fair that "they should pay something."

Prevention is seen as encouraging personal responsibility.

Guaranteeing access to preventive care is a clear role for government.

Preventive care is potential policy escalator. When included, most people embrace offering treatment.



Personal responsibility and prevention are often linked in minds of voters.

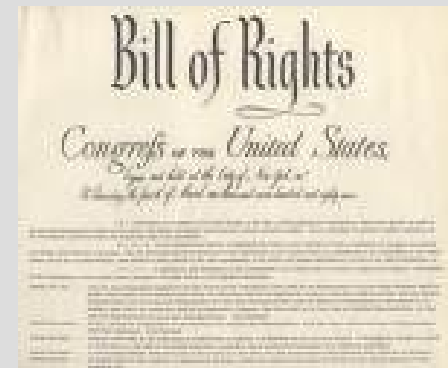
Define Government as Rule Enforcer



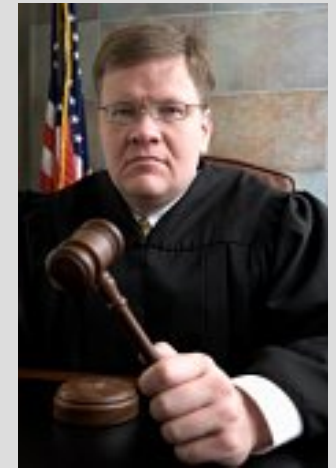
People blame insurance, drug companies that exhibit greed, which they perceive as costing us and undermining affordable quality health care.

Anti-government cynicism high — including around Medicare — but voters want “somebody” (i.e. government) to hold insurance and drug companies accountable.

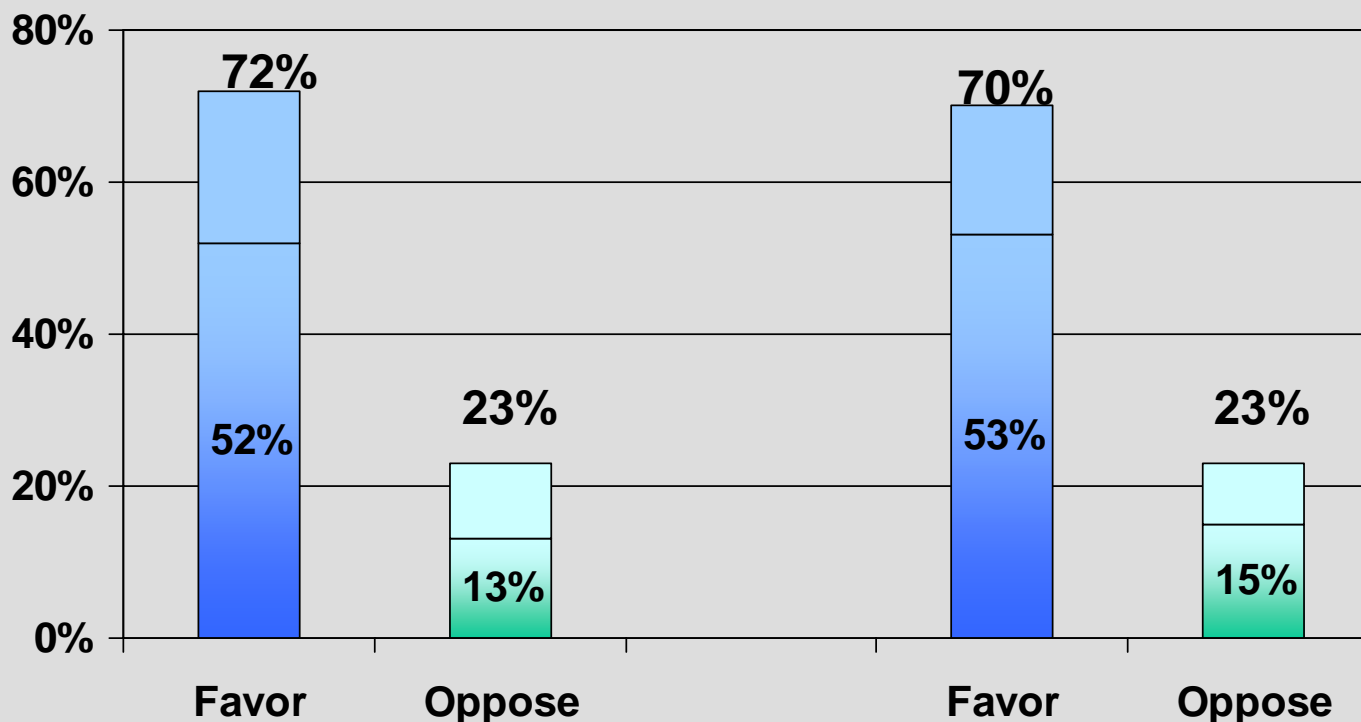
Voters want standardized rules that people can depend on.



**THE BUCK
STOPS HERE**



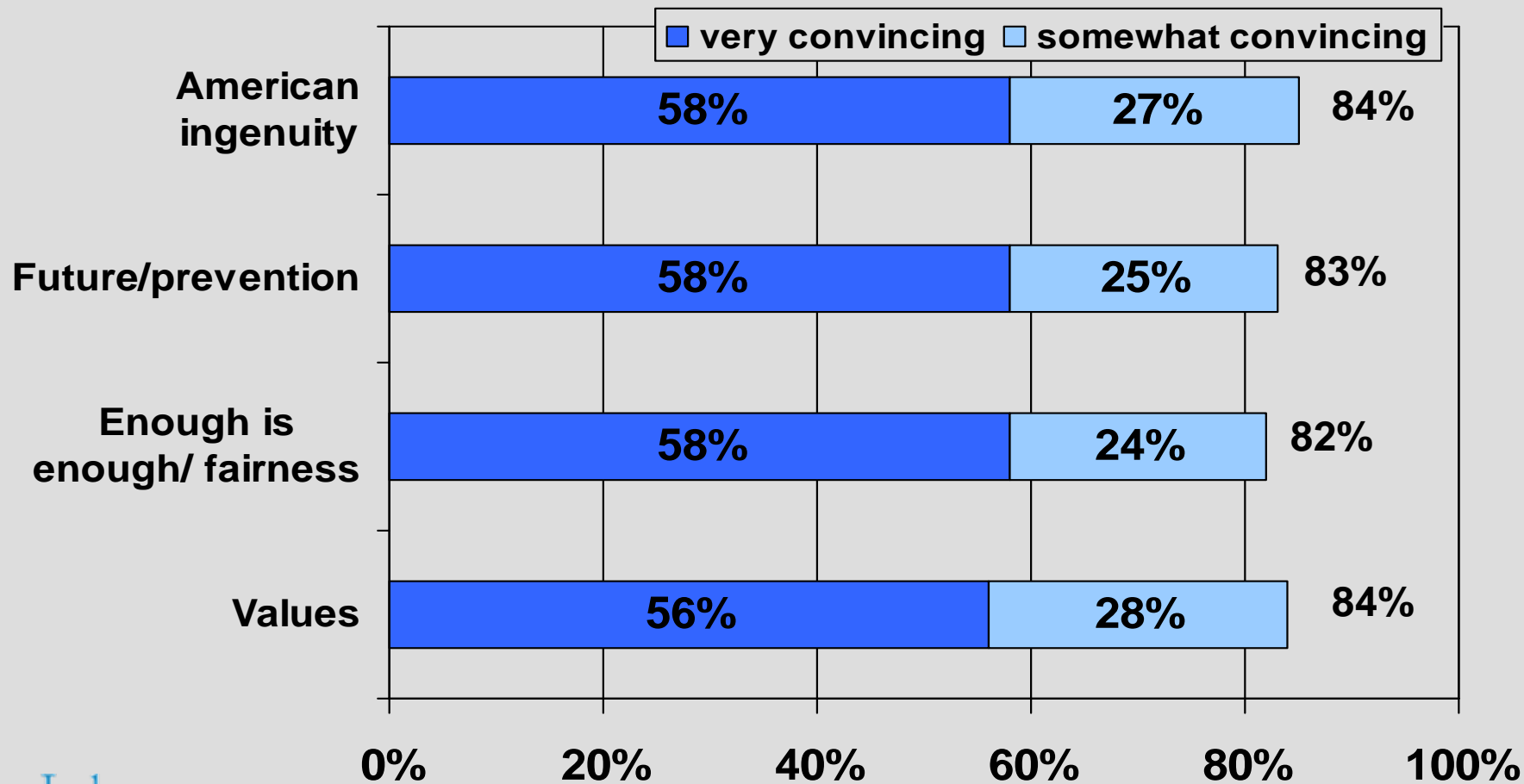
In principle, over two thirds of all voters favor health care access for all Americans, a majority strongly, even if it means higher taxes or a major government role.



Do you favor or oppose providing access to affordable, quality health care for all Americans even if it means raising your taxes?

Do you favor or oppose providing access to affordable, quality health care for all Americans even if it means a major role for the federal government?

The best messages highlight the value of fairness and use aspirational language. Voters value an “American” solution to the health care crisis. Screening and preventive care are seen as a smart investment.



Text of Messages



- » **American Ingenuity** We live in the greatest country in the world, and we need an American solution to the health care crisis. We should use American ingenuity to develop a fair, common sense plan to make sure that every American has access to the highest quality health care in the world.
- » **Future/ Prevention** We need to make smart investments in our families' and country's future. By guaranteeing everyone access to affordable early screening, standard health care, and prevention, we can start investing in a healthy future for our country and ensure healthier families and a healthy next generation. It's a smart investment in our future.
- » **Enough is Enough/ Fairness** Enough is enough. Insurance and drug companies are making record profits. We're paying more and more, but you can't count on coverage when you really need it. We need to guarantee that people get the affordable quality care they deserve and have paid for.
- » **Values** It's just wrong for anyone who works hard, pays taxes, and plays by the rules to go without decent affordable health care. America can and must do better.

Words that Work:



Words to Use	Words to Avoid
Quality affordable health care	Universal coverage
American health care	Medicare for All; A system like Social Security; Canadian Style Health Care
Sliding scale	Free
Prevention	Wellness
Smart investments; investing in the future	Inexpensive
Choice	Competition
Rules	Regulations

Words that Work:



Words to Use	Words to Avoid
Guaranteed	Required
Giving people control; peace of mind	Government health care for all
Standard package; affordable health plans	Basic health care
Public/private partnership	Public health care
Government enforcement/watchdog	Government health care; public health care

Applying Framing and Messaging to Real World Issues



Energy:

Now, much more than just an environmental issue.



Energy is no longer just an environmental issue; it speaks to jobs, rising costs, security, and foreign policy.



»The American public overwhelmingly believes we have major problems or are in a state of crisis surrounding energy issues and we must move to cleaner more efficient energy now.

- Voters understand that cleaner energy and energy alternatives that could lead to energy independence are both possible and necessary for a secure future.

»The energy issue speaks to jobs, rising cost of living for middle class families, homeland security, and foreign policy.

- It is a strong values oriented issue speaking to the future, independence, American superiority, patriotism, security, and a better future for the next generation.

»In choosing the Democrats in 2006, voters sounded a call for change, voicing their frustration with President Bush and Congress' failure to set the country on a course towards national and economic security. Yet, this election tells a story that goes beyond Iraq and speaks to voter frustrations with a self-serving Congress.

Energy issues are now a hot campaign topic and one that cannot be ignored.

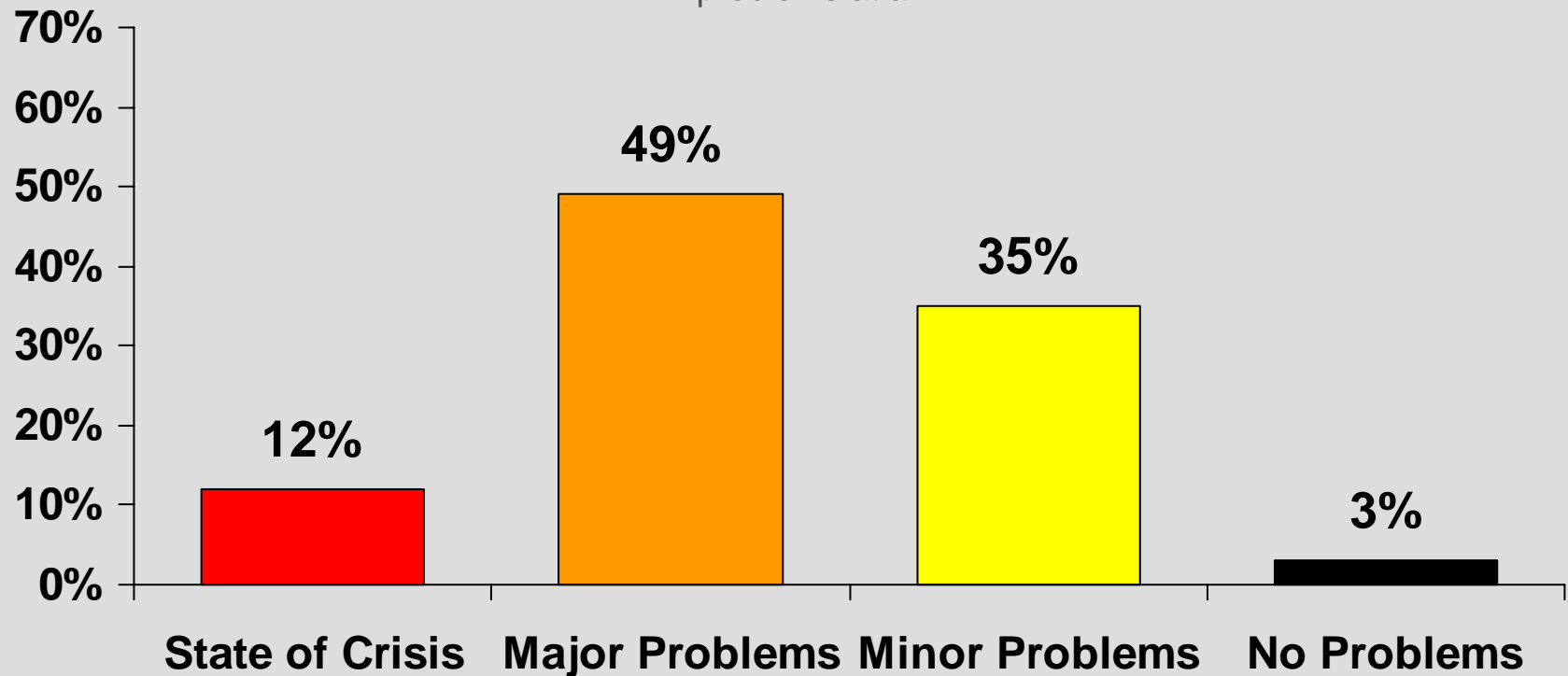


- Campaign ads focused on energy independence in a way they haven't in recent history. Challengers highlighted incumbent ties to oil companies and energy interests. Rising gas prices were also a focus that included anti-price gouging measures as a campaign platform point.
- Candidates also used energy in a broader context taking it to building a strong, secure economy; creating jobs; and increasing national security. Voters made the connections between energy issues and the broader ones, progressives can continue to build on these connections.

While only about one in ten Americans believe we are in an energy crisis, a majority believes we have at least *major* problems, and virtually no one says we have no energy problems at all.



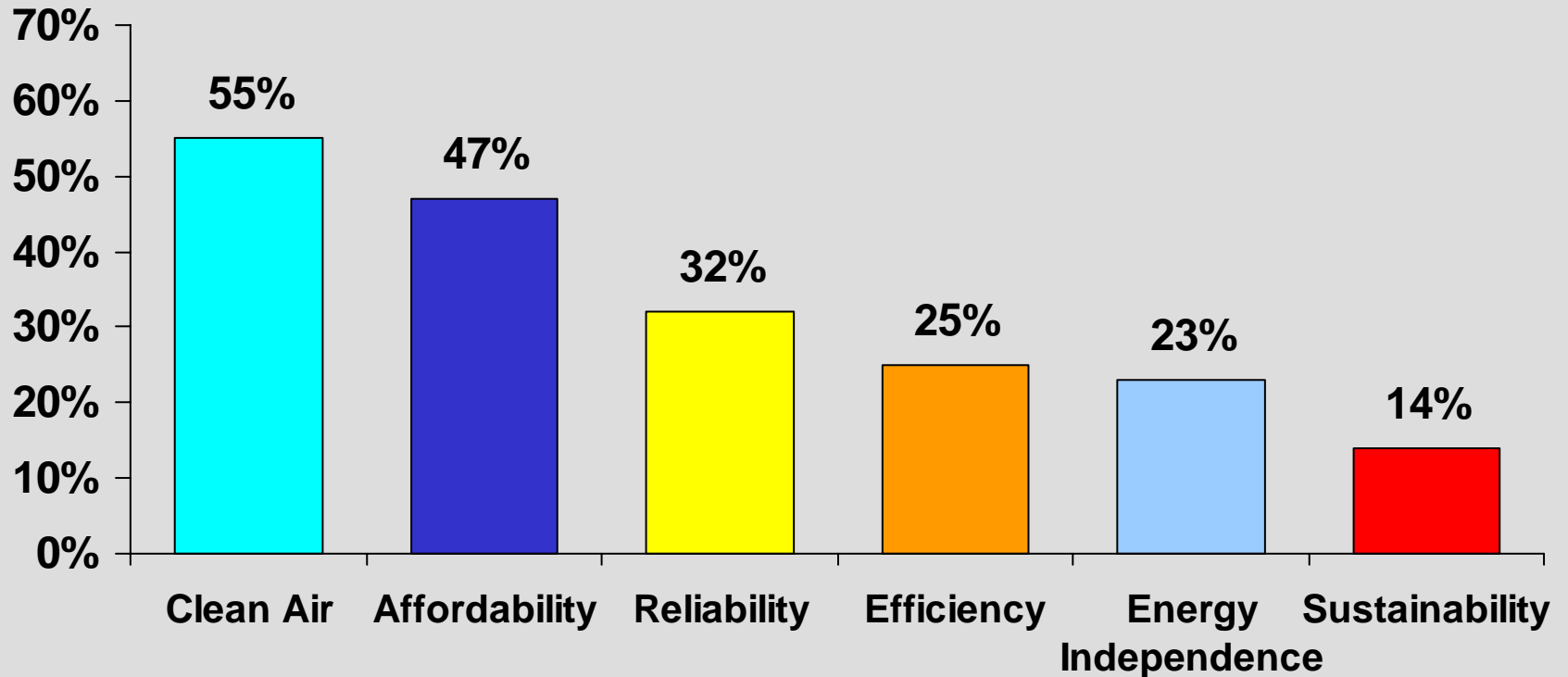
Now, thinking about the cost and availability of electricity, gasoline, natural gas, and other forms of energy, would you say the country is in a state of crisis, has major problems, has minor problems, or has no problems at all?



Voters still often use limited, old frames to talk about energy. When thinking about electricity production people prioritize clean air and affordability. Energy independence ranks lower on the list.



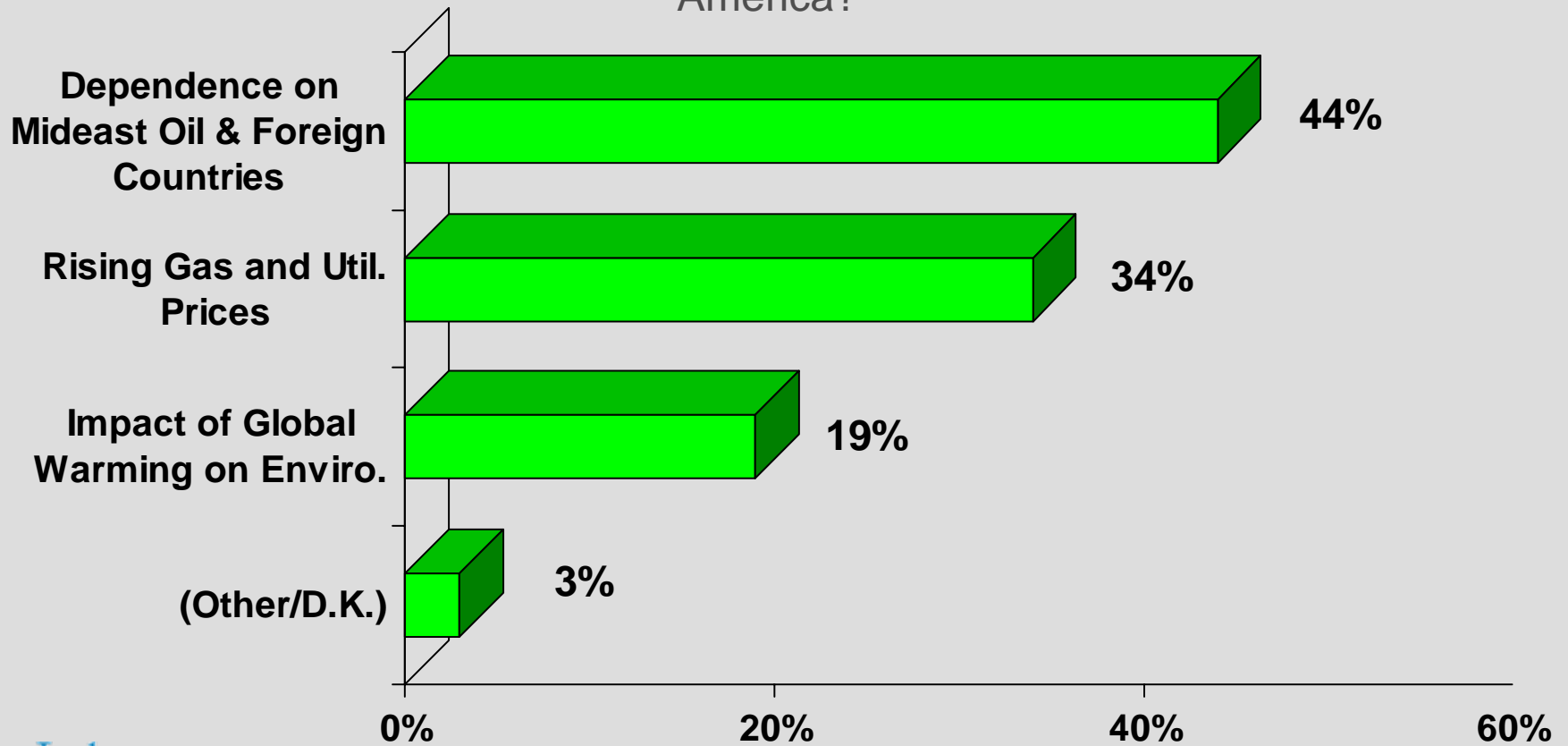
I am going to read you six aspects of electricity production and I'd like you to tell me which one is most important to you...Clean air, affordability, reliability, efficiency, energy independence, sustainability...And, which one is the second most important to you? Again, the choices are...clean air, affordability, reliability, efficiency, energy independence, or sustainability.



Voters are most concerned about our dependence on Middle Eastern countries for oil, followed by rising prices.



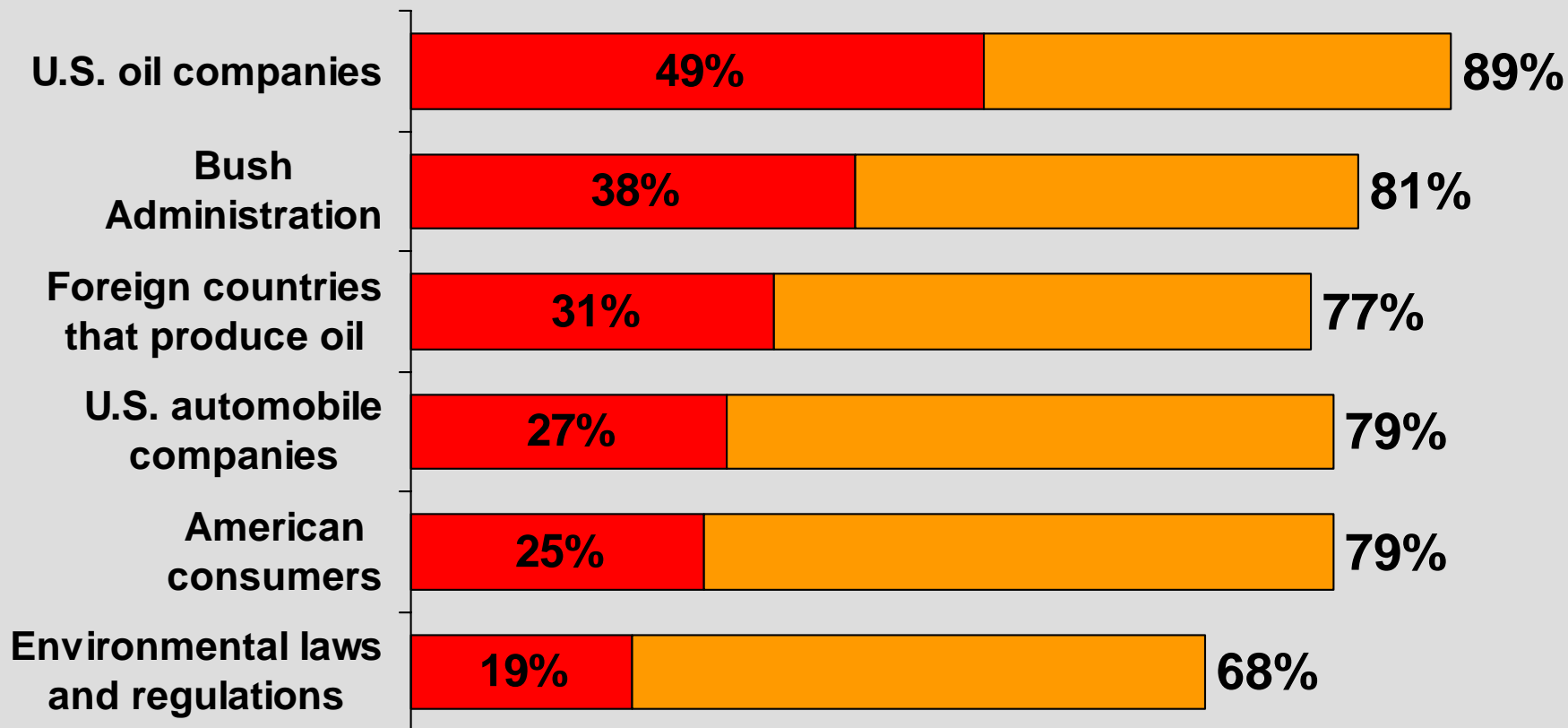
Which concerns you most when it comes to the direction of the energy situation in America?



When asked about America's energy problems in general, people blame U.S. oil companies the most, followed by the Bush administration and foreign, oil producing countries.



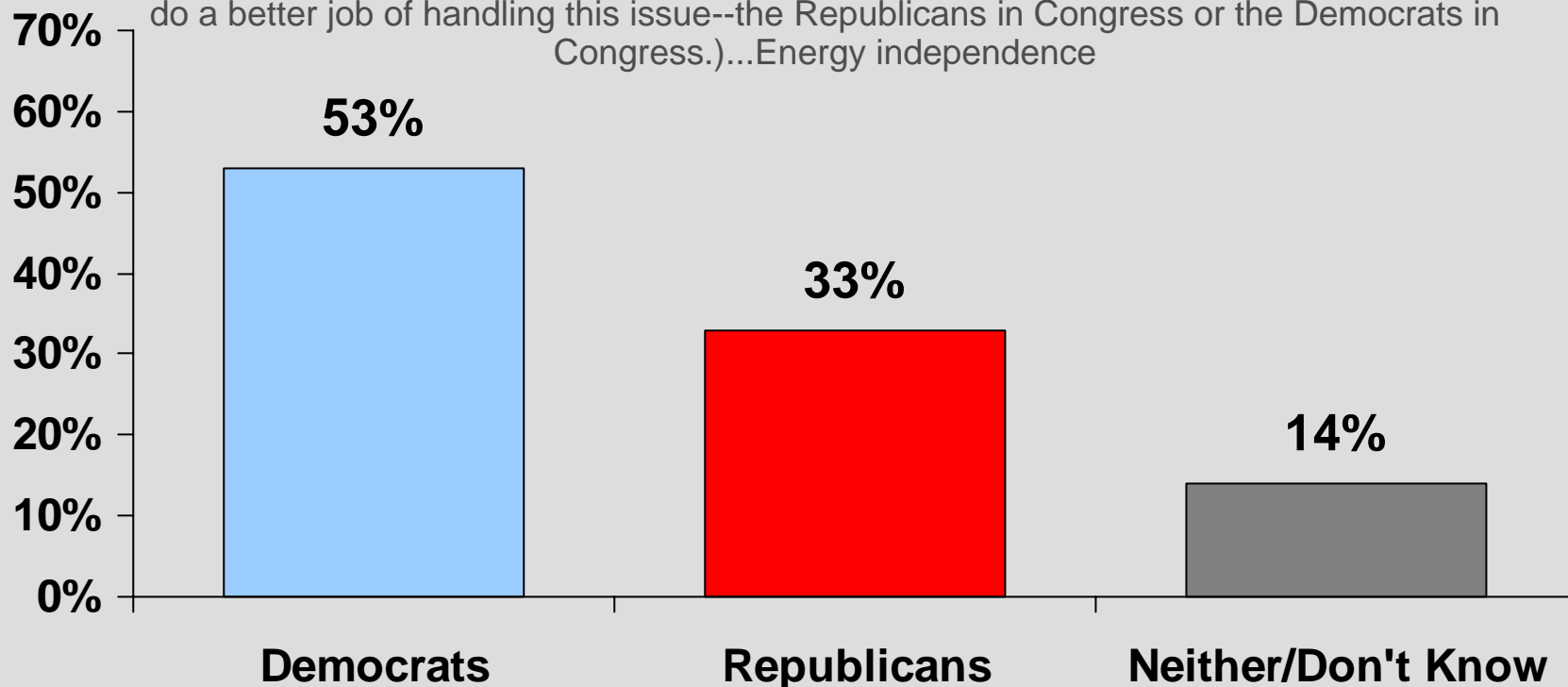
Please tell me whether you think each of the following deserves a great deal of blame, some blame, not much blame, or no blame at all for the country's current energy problems.



Over half of voters believe that Democrats would be better on the issue of energy independence than Republicans.



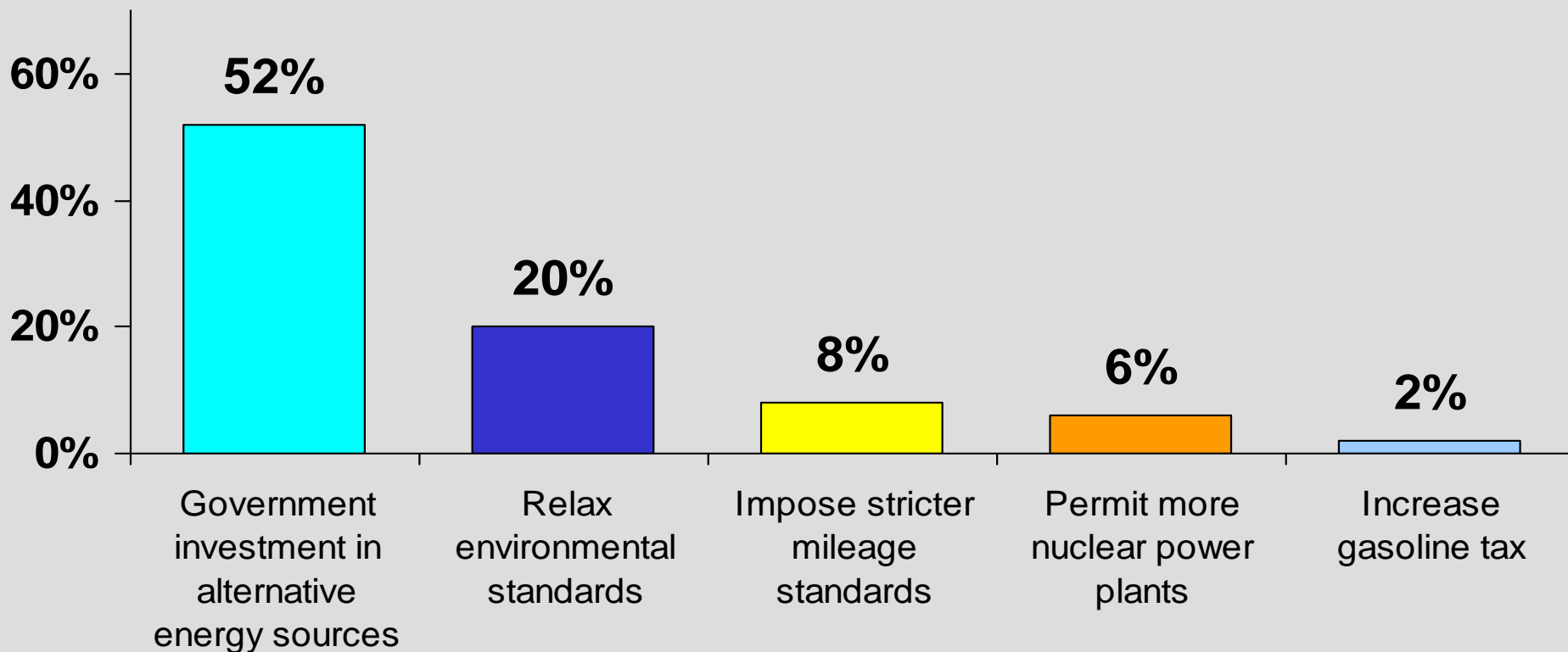
(Thinking again about issues facing the country--Now, I would like to read you a list of issues that some people from this part of the country have said are important for the United States Congress to deal with. Please listen as I read the list and tell me, for each one, who would do a better job of handling this issue--the Republicans in Congress or the Democrats in Congress.)...Energy independence



By far, the most popular tested solution to our dependence on foreign oil is for government to invest more in alternative energy sources.



As you may know, the United States depends on foreign countries for oil. Which of the following would be the best way for the U.S. to reduce reliance on foreign oil?



Applying Framing and Messaging to Real World Issues



Minimum Wage

Values Not Policy



Strongest Minimum Wage Themes



- No one who works full-time should live in poverty. Most Americans work hard and play by the rules, and they see results of their hard work.
- Minimum wage workers make only \$206 per week, many of them parents and adults trying to raise children and make ends meet.
- Raising the minimum wage shows that we value hard work over welfare and will save taxpayers money.
- Personal stories are a powerful way to contextualize this issue and relate it to values of hard work and family.
- For base Democratic and Hispanic voters, a more populist theme juxtaposing the minimum wage with CEO salaries is also strong.

The frame of valuing hard work is common in the top messages in favor of the minimum wage initiative. The best single message emphasizes choosing work over welfare.



»Work over welfare

When the minimum wage is as low as it is now, some full-time minimum wage workers in Arizona make less money than they would on welfare. Raising the minimum wage sends the right message to people – we value hard work. And when people choose work over welfare, they become productive members of society and Arizona taxpayers save money on social services.

– **56% very convincing; 78% convincing**

»Value work

The minimum wage is our way of saying that we value work, especially the tough jobs performed by hotel maids, childcare workers, and nursing home employees. We should make sure the workers who are the backbone of our economy receive fair paychecks that keep up with inflation and put them and their families above the poverty line.

– **49% very convincing; 80% convincing**

Telling a personal story is also effective.



Personal story

Jane and Robert both work long hours for minimum wage in Peoria. They struggle to pay their bills and spend time with their two young daughters. They often turn to a church food bank to help and their biggest nightmare came true last week when they couldn't pay their rent and were evicted from their home. No one who works hard and plays by the rules should have to live like this. Jane and Robert are not asking for handouts, just a decent wage for their hard work.

- 47% very convincing; 73% convincing

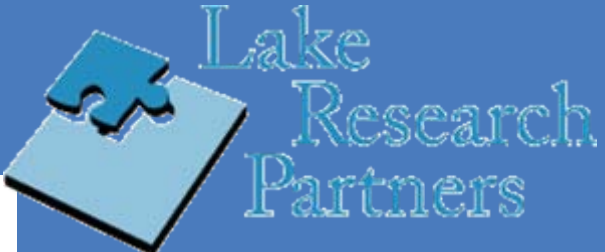
However, we have to be careful how we pick the personal story. People often respond by wanting to “fix the person” rather than “fix the institution.”

Applying Framing and Messaging to Real World Issues



Immigration:

Framing Unpopular Issues



The traditional approach said immigrants are good for you – that failed. The successful frame said immigrants are like you.



- A breadth of research with voters has shown us that we should create empathy for immigrants as like us rather than sympathy for immigrants as “others.”
- An effective message frame shows the similarities of new Americans to Americans already living here and our shared dreams and values: we all work hard and want a better life for our children.
- It is important to portray an image of immigrants as hard-working, paying taxes, and wanting to learn English and become citizens.

The Best Message Elements Include:



- Orderly system that is consistent with our values
- Tough and fair
- Tough border security
- Immigrants here must pay taxes, learn English, no crimes
- Employer sanctions
- A comprehensive solution

The strongest messages reflect these values and beliefs: creating a controlled system that deals with reality, with reasonable rules that treat everyone fairly, is consistent with basic American values and rewards hard work, paying taxes, and learning English.



Our immigration system should fulfill the promise of liberty and opportunity that America represents. Immigrants come here for the opportunity to build a better life and in return they build strong families, serve loyally in the military, and strive to succeed. We need a system with rules applied fairly that rewards hard-working immigrants, who are learning English and paying taxes, with paths to citizenship. And we need a secure and controlled system that will keep the promise of safety and security for everyone living in America.

We are not going to stop the flow of immigration. We need to create an immigration system with fair and reasonable rules that work for everyone-- both American citizens and future citizens. Our policies should create controlled paths to legal citizenship status with reasonable rules like learning English and paying taxes, so that we know who is here and can ensure that immigrants and current citizens are treated fairly.

Important Communication Points:



- **Lead with an ENFORCEMENT message. If you do not seem credible on enforcement, your audience will discount discussion on other components of immigration reform.**
- **Emphasize getting tough on businesses that hire illegal workers.**
- **This is NOT automatic citizenship, it is EARNED citizenship.**
- **We are OPPOSED to Amnesty.**

Important Communication Points: (continued)



- **We need REASONABLE solutions to the immigration problem.**
- **We need solutions that are TOUGH AND FAIR.**
- **Work hard and play by the rules. Immigrants have to pay taxes, have no criminal record, and be learning English.**
- **The Republican plan to deal with the 12 million undocumented workers currently living in the US through attrition will not work. Doing nothing will not solve the problem.**

Push Back on Amnesty:



- We have to deal with the reality of the situation and create an immigration system that is safe, legal, and orderly because the longer we do nothing, the worse it is going to get. This is a realistic solution that is consistent with American values.
- This proposal puts into place a permanent system of registration, rules, and control.
- Voters do not think that deporting 11 million illegal immigrants is realistic. Our opponents call this “amnesty” because they don’t have a realistic solution. But the status quo leaves illegal immigrants and their employers off the hook. We don’t think that is acceptable or fair.
- This is not automatic citizenship. Undocumented immigrants must register with the government, go to the back of the line, pay the fine and show they are playing by the rules. No exceptions, no excuses.



Contact: Celinda Lake
clake@lakeresearch.com
202-776-9066

1726 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036

www.LakeResearch.com

