

# navigator\*

Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>

## The Government Shutdown: A Guide for Advocates



Credit: Shutterstock/Lucky Photographer

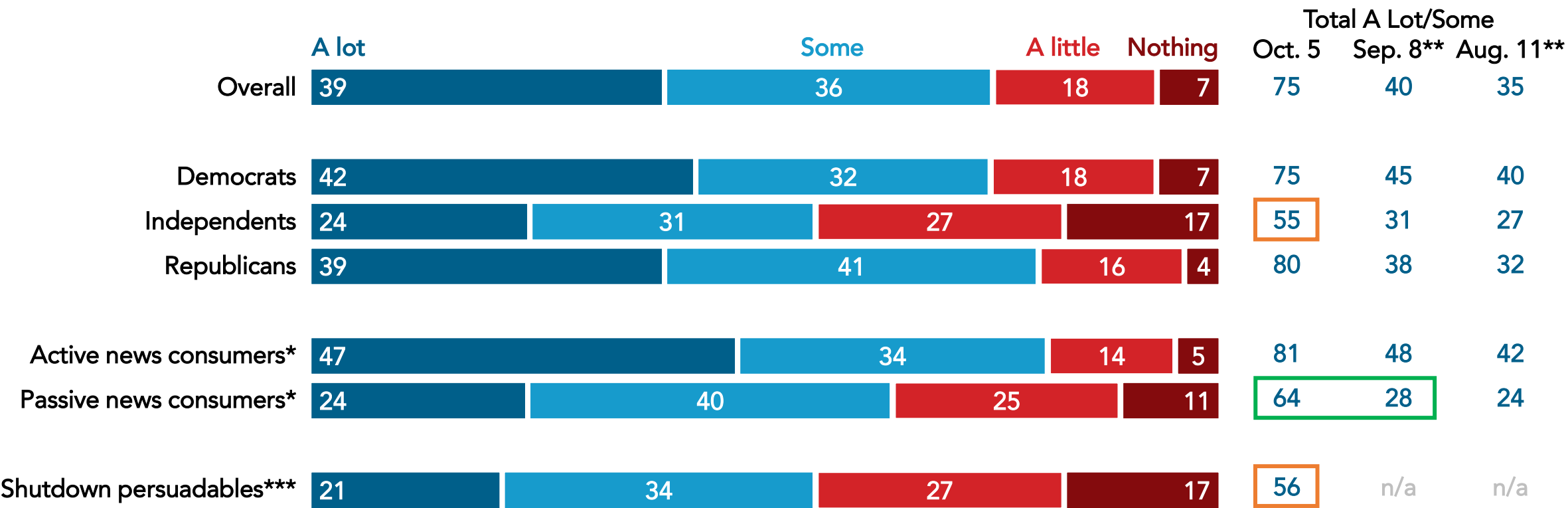
## Key Takeaways:

- News about the government shutdown is breaking through across the political spectrum, though slightly less so with independents.
- Americans blame Trump and Republicans in Congress more than Democrats in Congress for the shutdown, though one in five blame both equally. Those who do not currently blame one side more than the other are disproportionately independents, moderates, and dislike both parties.
- A plurality of Americans want to see Democrats in Congress stand up to President Trump. And, when the debate is put into health care terms, pluralities want to see Democrats hold their ground rather than compromise, even if it means the shutdown continues.
- Democrats hold a trust advantage over Trump and Republicans on health care, as Americans report hearing positive information about Democrats in Congress on health care. Medicaid remains overwhelmingly popular, and the Affordable Care Act is viewed positively by both Democrats and Republicans alike (while views of Obamacare are more polarized).

# Nearly Twice as Many Are Hearing About the Shutdown Compared to Share Hearing About a Potential One in September

Just over half of independents (55%) and shutdown persuadables\*\*\* (56%) report hearing “a lot” or “some” about the shutdown.

How much have you seen, read, or heard about the current government shutdown?

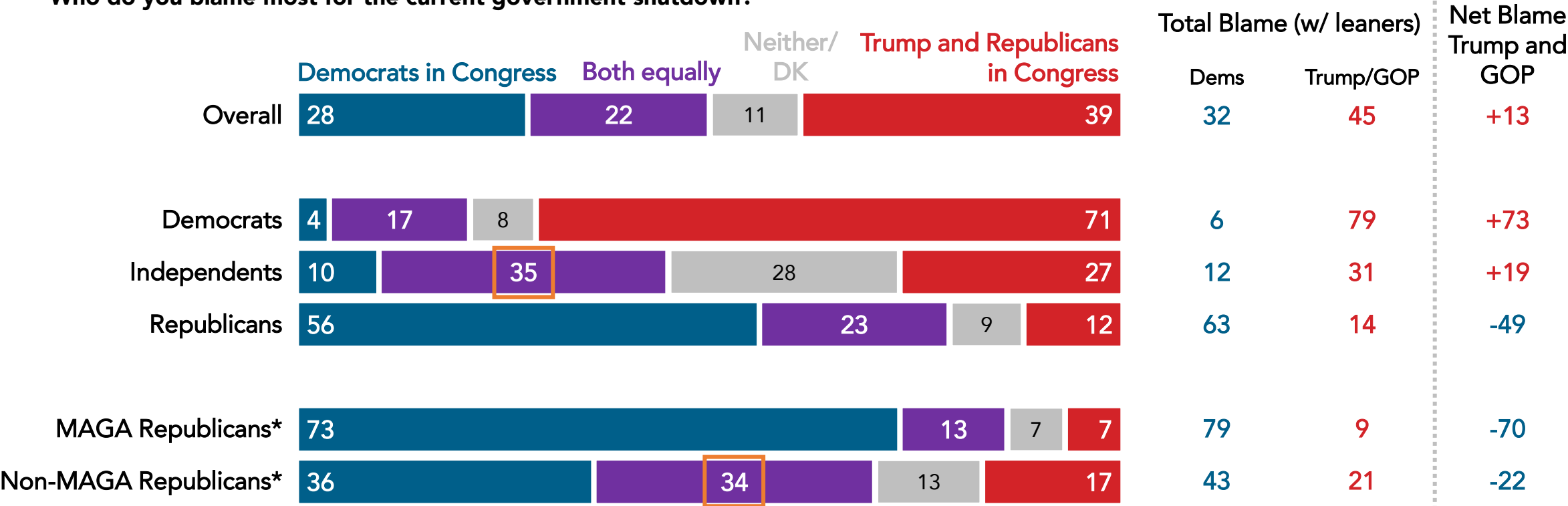


\*"Passive news consumers" are those who say, "News comes to me," while "active news consumers" say, "I seek out news." \*\*Previous question text said, "How much have you seen, read, or heard about a potential government shutdown in the coming months if Congress cannot pass their annual spending bills?" \*\*\*"Shutdown persuadables" are defined as those who say they do not blame the shutdown on either Democrats or Trump and Republicans, blame both of these equally, or don't know, and excludes leaners towards either group on a follow-up ask. Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted October 2-October 5, 2025. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Americans Blame Trump and Republicans in Congress More Than Democrats for the Current Government Shutdown

When asked without any follow-up questions, 22% of Americans blame both parties equally for the shutdown, including 35% of independents and 34% of non-MAGA Republicans\*. With follow-up questions included, 32% of Americans blame Democrats and 45% Trump and Republicans, for a net +13 blame Trump and Republicans.

Who do you blame most for the current government shutdown?



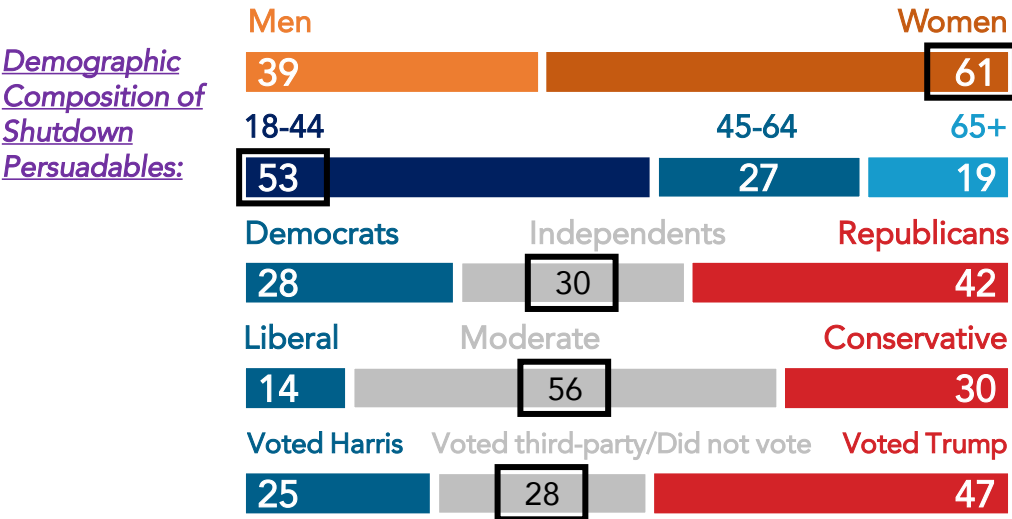
\*"MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who identify as "a supporter of the MAGA movement" on a separate question, while "non-MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who do not consider themselves supporters of the MAGA movement or are not sure. \*\*Previous question text said: "If the government were to shut down in the coming months, who would you blame most?" Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted October 2-October 5, 2025. For more info, visit [navigatortresearch.org](https://navigatortresearch.org).

# Roughly One in Four Americans Are Conflicted on Who to Blame More for the Government Shutdown

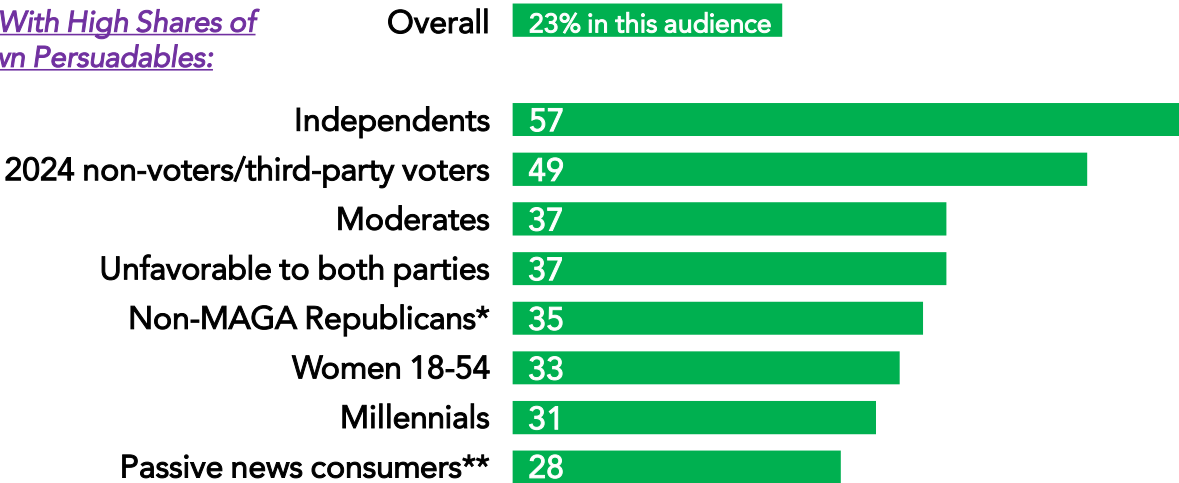
Nearly one in four Americans (23%) blame neither party, both parties equally, or don't know enough to say on the government shutdown. Groups that are disproportionately likely to include shutdown persuadables are independents (57% are shutdown persuadables), Americans unfavorable to both parties (37%), non-MAGA Republicans\* (35%), younger women (33%), and passive news consumers\*\*(28%).

## Shutdown Persuadables (23% of Americans):

Who do you blame most for the current government shutdown? (Democrats in Congress or Trump and Republicans in Congress): *Would not blame either of these, would blame both of these equally, or don't know* and don't lean toward blaming either group on a follow-up ask.



## Groups With High Shares of Shutdown Persuadables:

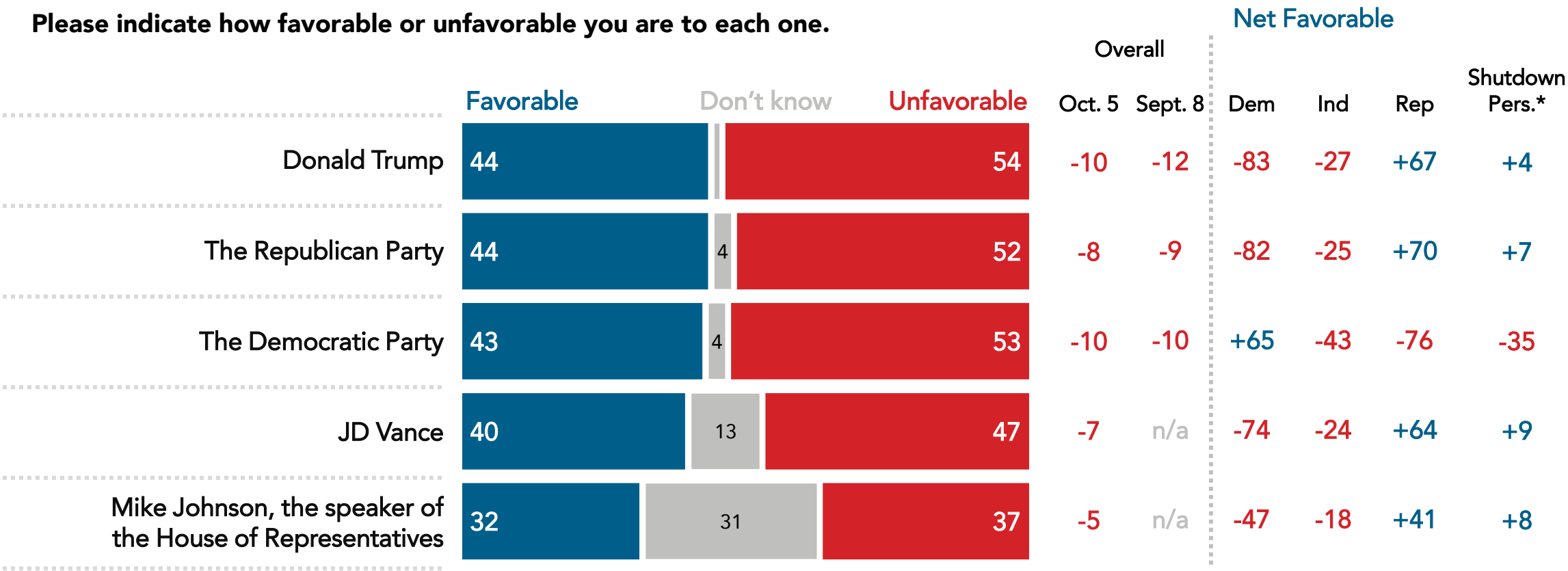


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# Shutdown Figures Are Underwater Across Party Lines

Independents are more unfavorable than favorable toward each figure and group tested, with the most negative ratings for the Democratic Party (net -43 favorable), followed by Donald Trump (net -27).

Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to each one.



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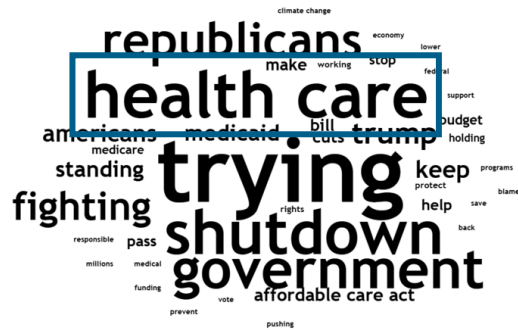


## On Both Democrats and Republicans, the Government Shutdown Dominates Negative Information Heard

On Democrats, Americans report hearing positive information on “health care.”

[If hearing positive/mixed information] In a few words, what **positive** things have you seen, read, or heard recently about...

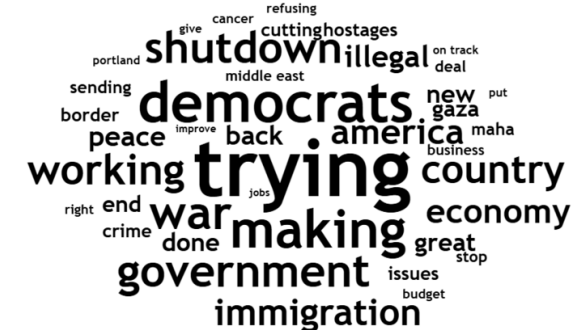
### Democrats in Congress (47% hearing positive)



### Republicans in Congress (41% hearing positive)

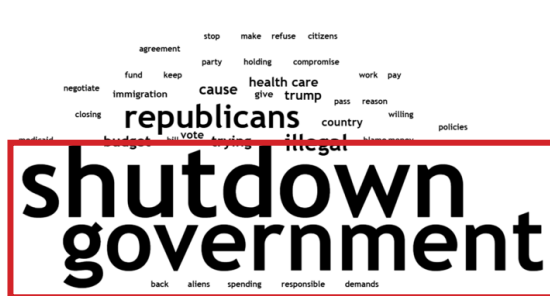


Donald Trump (46% hearing positive)

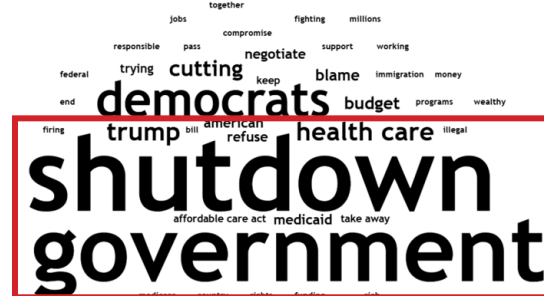


[If hearing negative/mixed information] In a few words, what **negative** things have you seen, read, or heard recently about...

### Democrats in Congress (65% hearing negative)



### Republicans in Congress (66% hearing negative)



### Donald Trump (74% hearing negative)



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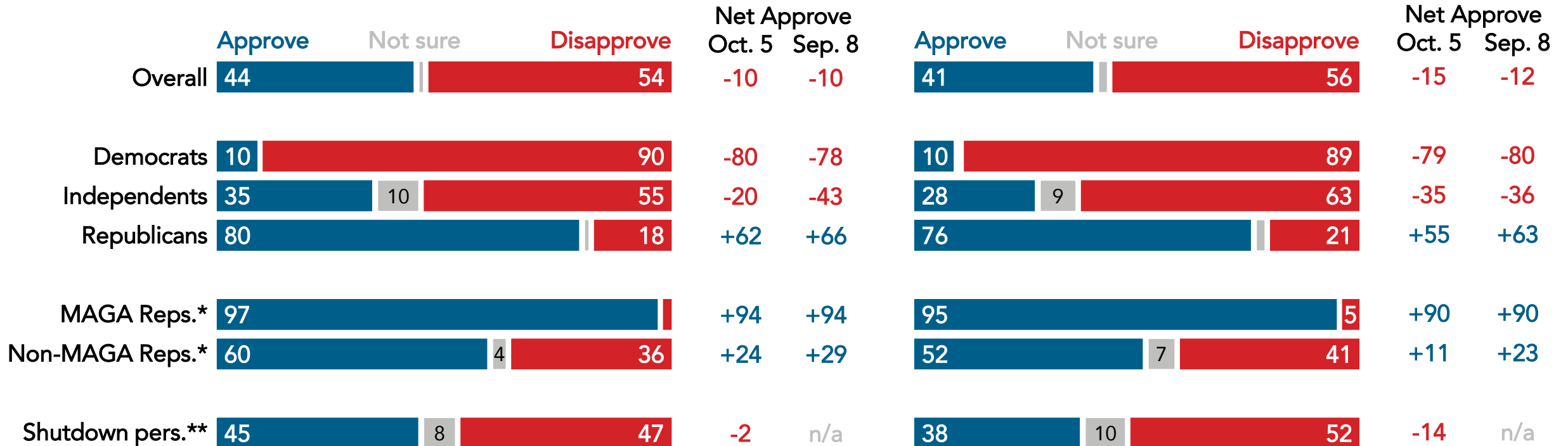
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# Trump's Overall and Economic Approval Ratings Remain Negative; His Economic Rating Continues to Decline

Among shutdown persuadable Americans\*\*, Trump is in the negative by 2 points overall and by 14 points on the economy.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling the economy?



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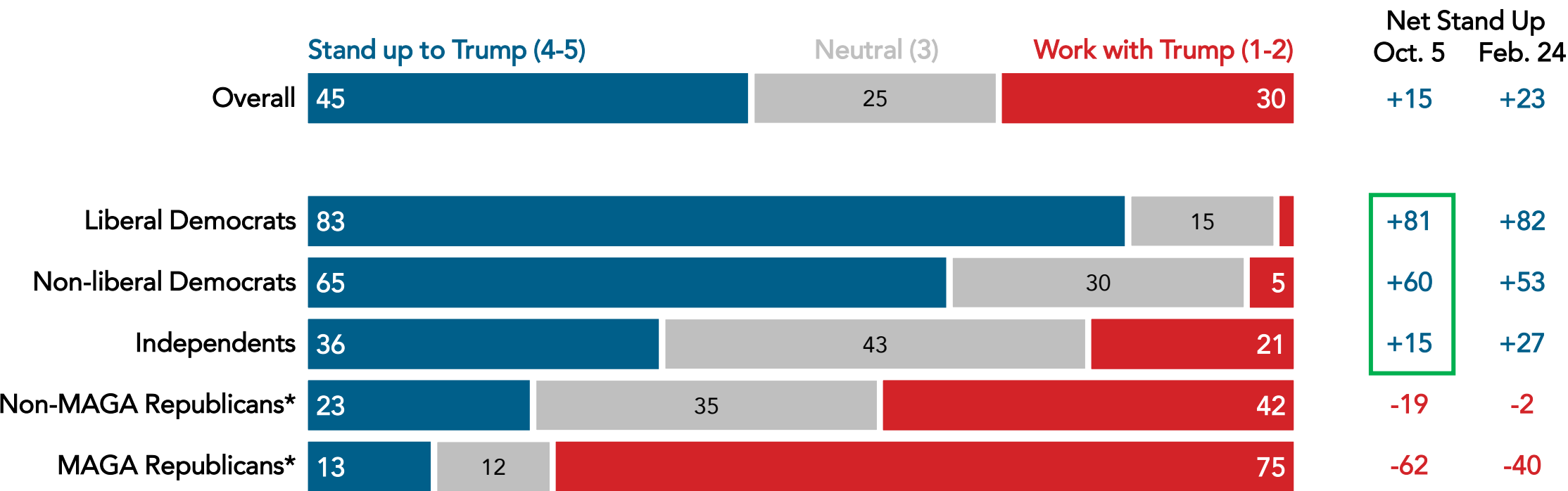
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# A Plurality of Americans Say That Democrats in Congress Should Stand Up to President Trump

Pluralities of liberal Democrats (net +81 stand up), non-liberal Democrats (net +60), and independents (net +15) alike want to see Democrats in Congress stand up to Trump.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "work with President Trump all the time" and 5 means "stand up to President Trump all the time," what do you think Democrats in Congress should do?

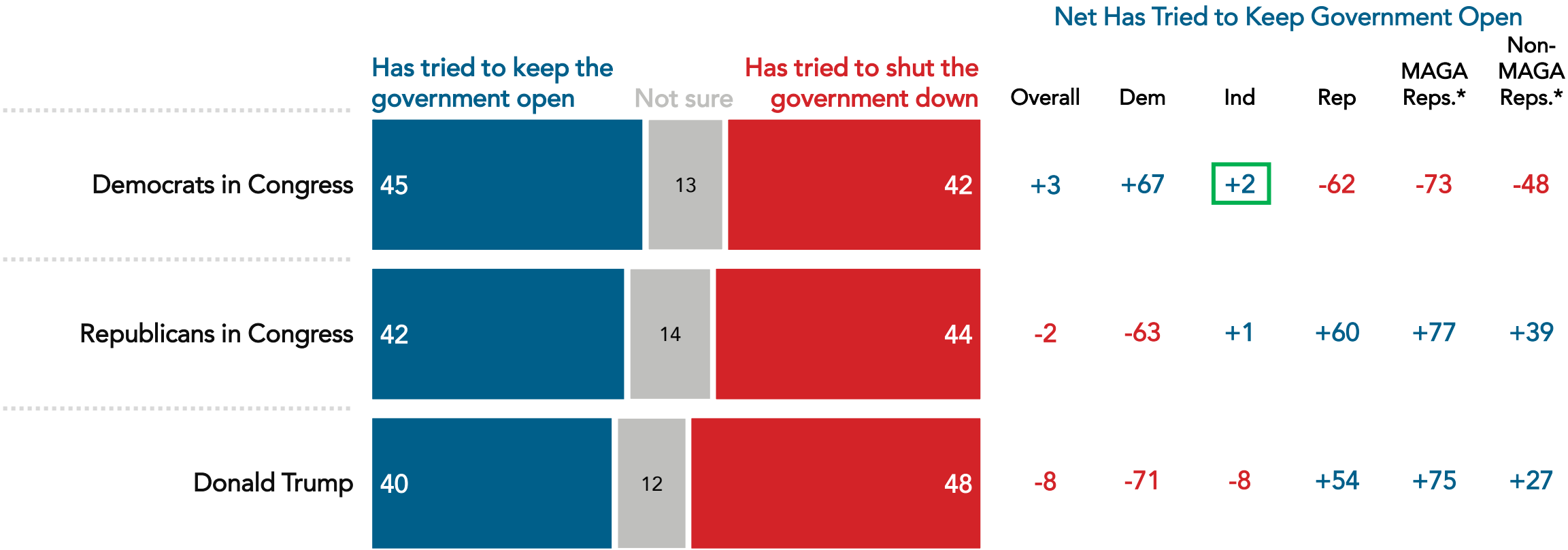


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# Americans Divided on Who Is Trying to Keep the Government Open; Democrats Seen Doing Slightly More to Do So Than GOP

A plurality of Americans say Democrats have tried to keep the government open (45%), including independents (net +2 keep open).

Please indicate whether you think each has tried to keep the government open or has tried to shut the government down.



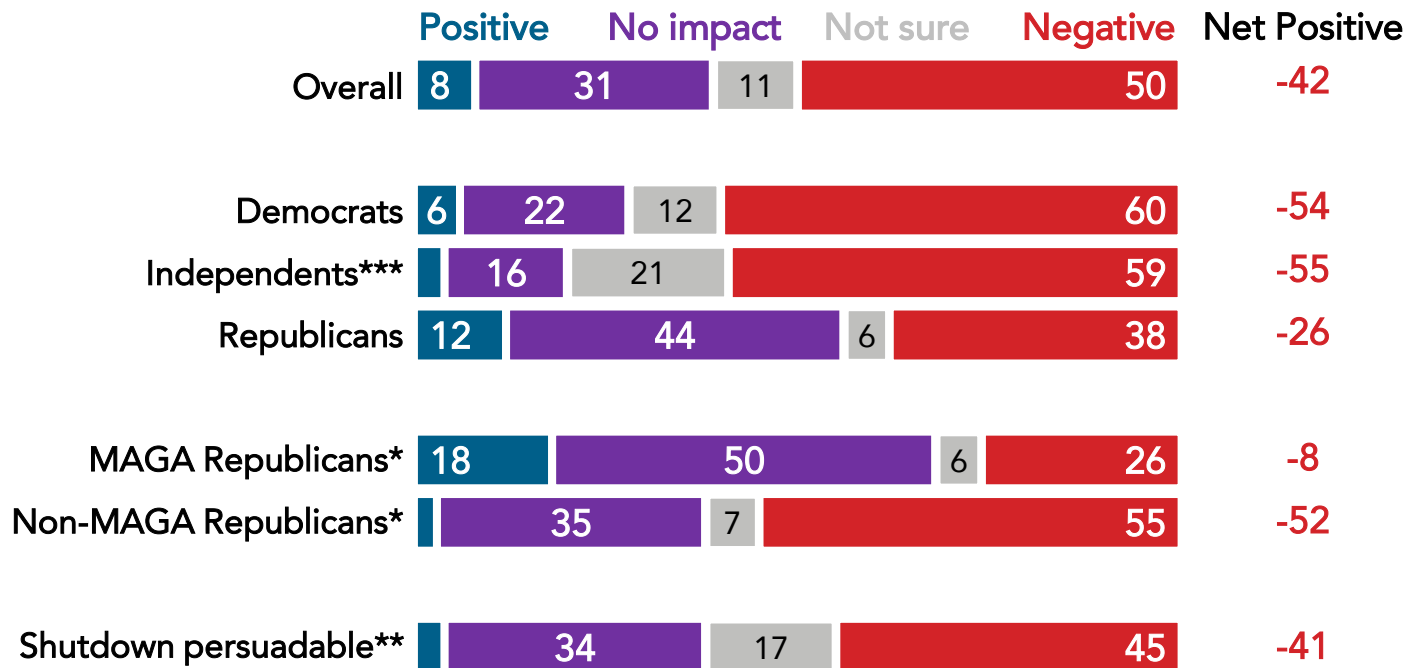
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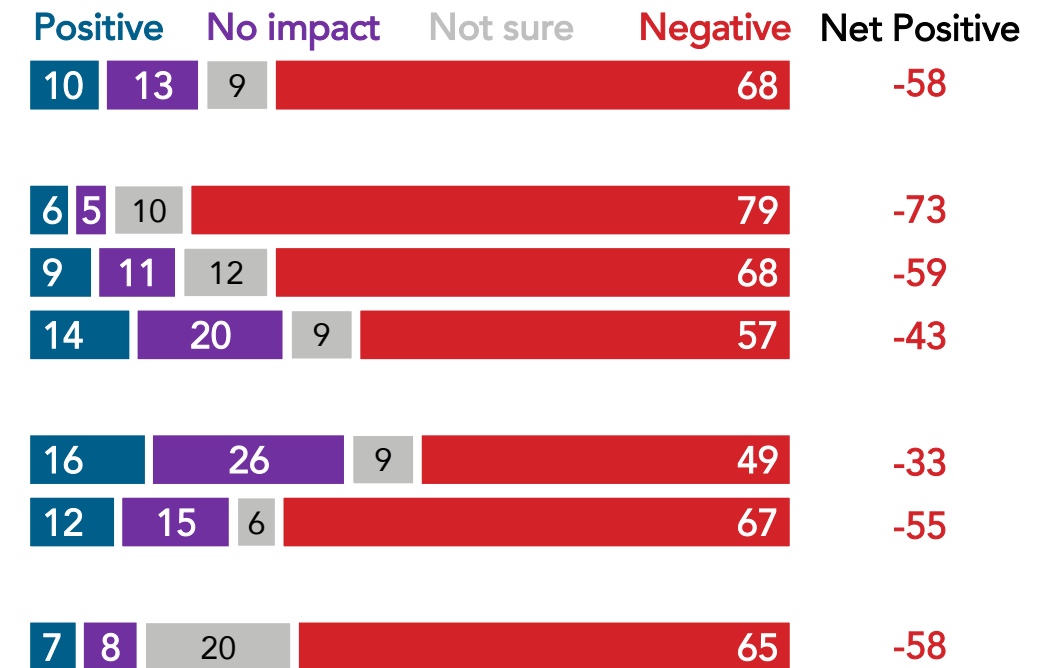
# Two in Three Say That the Shutdown Will Have a Negative Impact on the Country, Half Say on Themselves

Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to say they will be personally negatively impacted by the shutdown and that the country will be negatively impacted by the shutdown.

**(Split Sample)** Regardless of how much you have heard about the government shutdown, which of the following best describes the impact you think it will have on **you personally**?



**(Split Sample)** Regardless of how much you have heard about the government shutdown, which of the following best describes the impact you think it will have on **the country**?



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\*\*Small sample size on split questions; results are directional. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted October 2-October 5, 2025.

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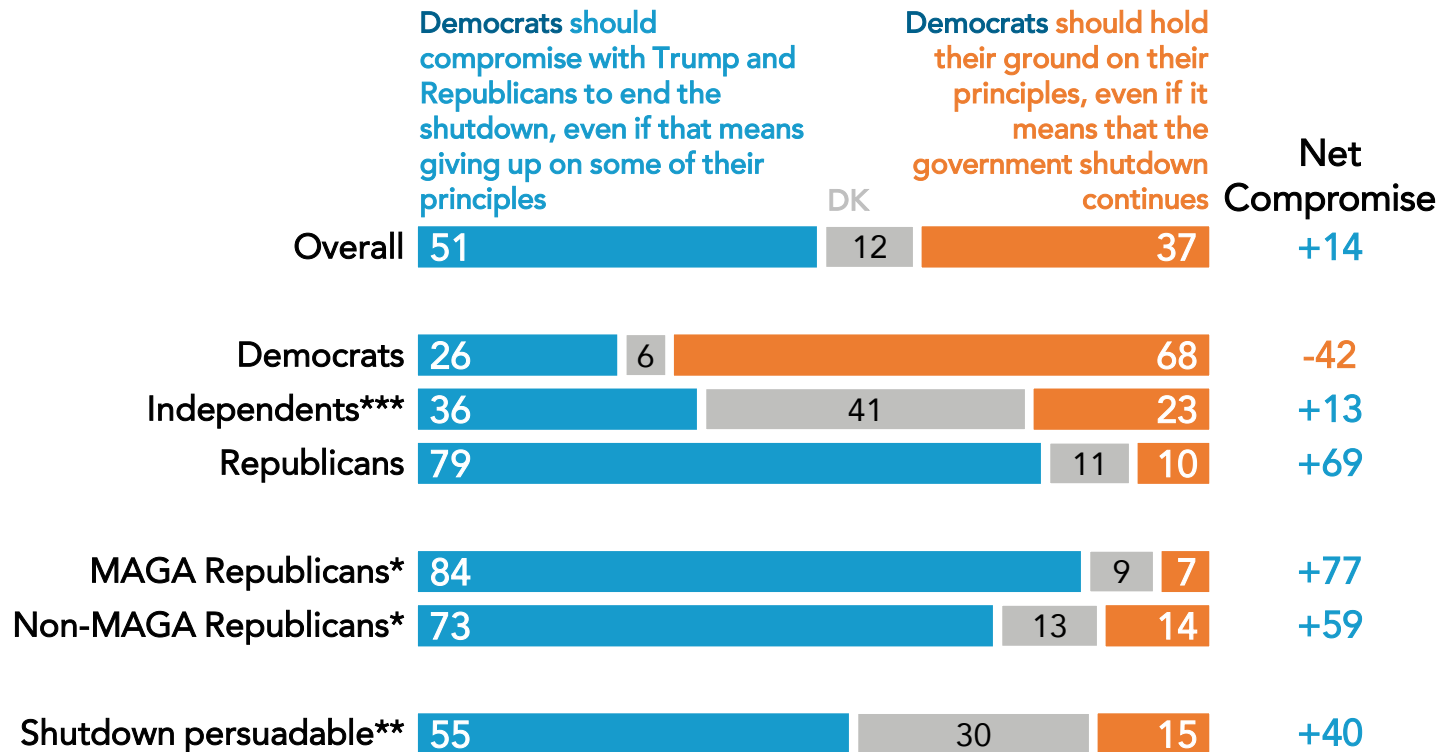
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# Americans Want Compromise Over a Shutdown, Though More Say Trump and the GOP Need to Compromise Than Democrats

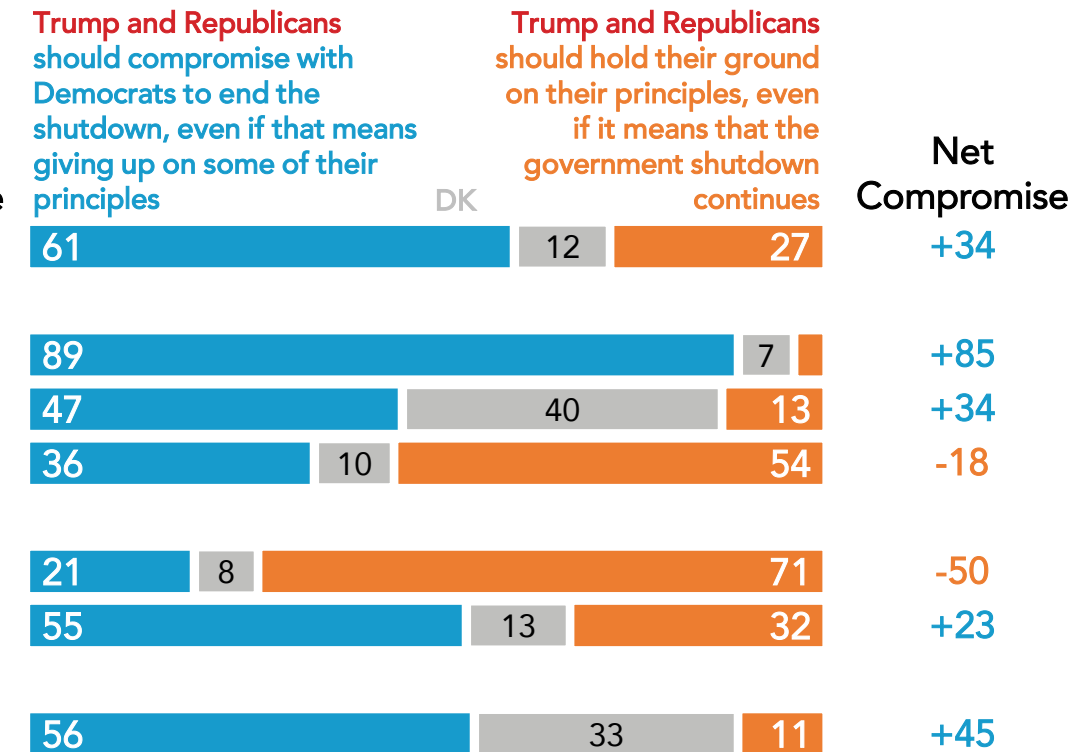
More Democrats want to see their party hold their ground (68%) than Republicans do on their party (54%).

- A majority of non-MAGA Republicans\* (55%) want to see Trump and Republicans compromise with Democrats to end the shutdown.

**(Split Sample)** What do you think **Democrats in Congress** should do in relation to the government shutdown?



What do you think **President Trump and Republicans in Congress** should do in relation to the government shutdown?



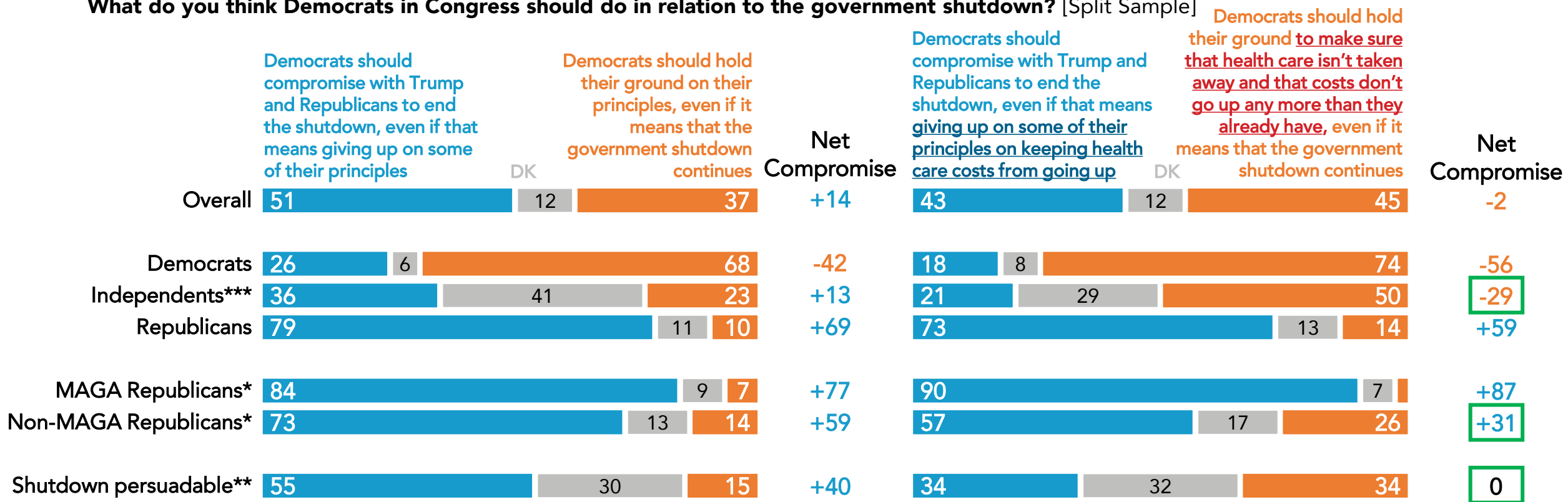
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# Making the Fight About Health Care Shifts Americans in Favor of a Shutdown Rather Than Compromising to Reopen

Groups especially likely to say Democrats should hold their ground (even if it means the government shutdown continues) when health care is involved include independents (from net +13 compromise without health care to net -29 with), non-MAGA Republicans\* (from net +59 to net +31), and shutdown persuadables\* (from net +40 to net 0).

What do you think Democrats in Congress should do in relation to the government shutdown? [Split Sample]



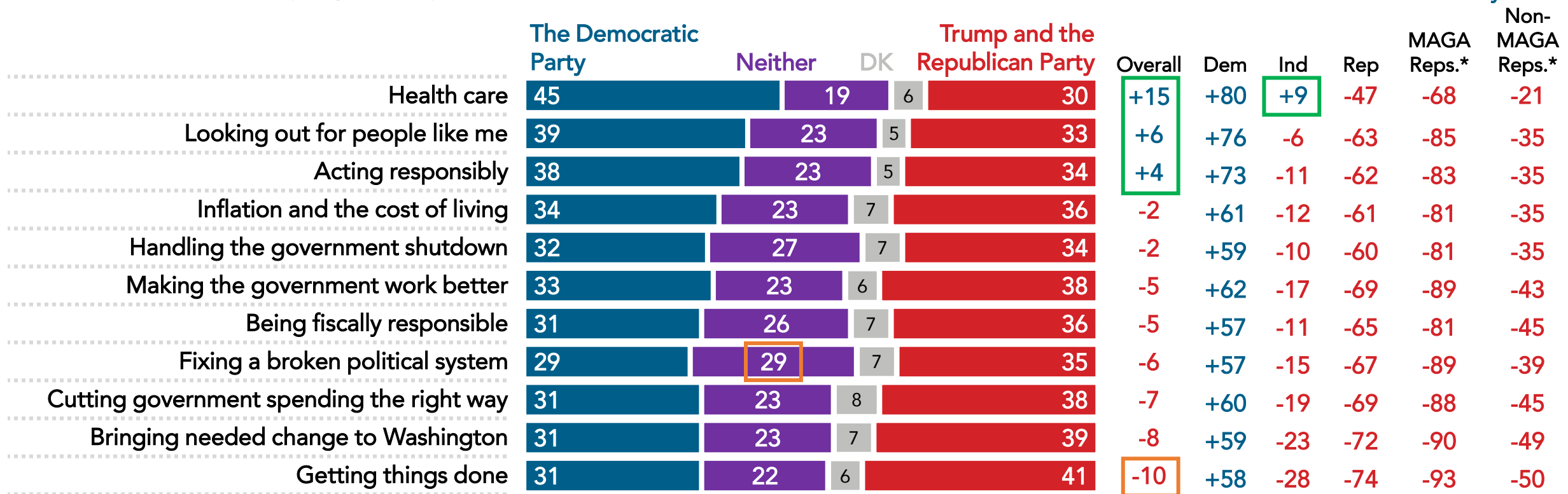
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# On Health Care/Looking Out for People, Democrats Have An Advantage; On Process/Government, Many Don't Trust Either

Outside of health care where Democrats have a 9-point trust advantage with independents, independents trust Trump and Republicans more on a range of issues, including inflation and the cost of living (net -12 trust the Democratic Party).

Please indicate who you personally trust more to handle each one.



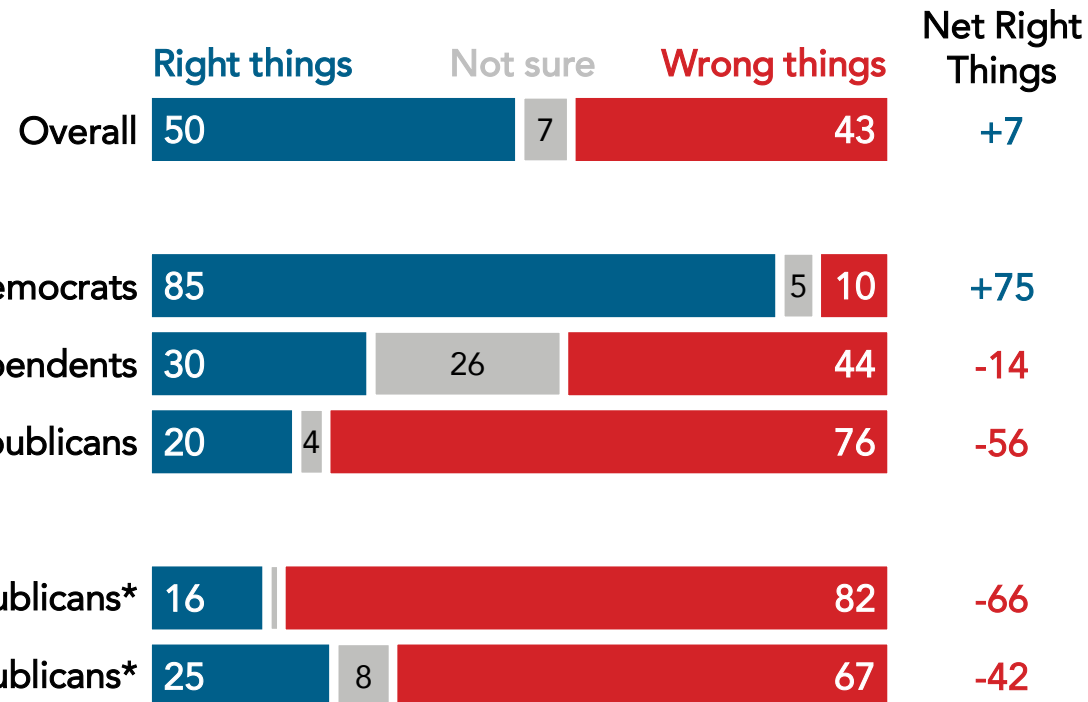
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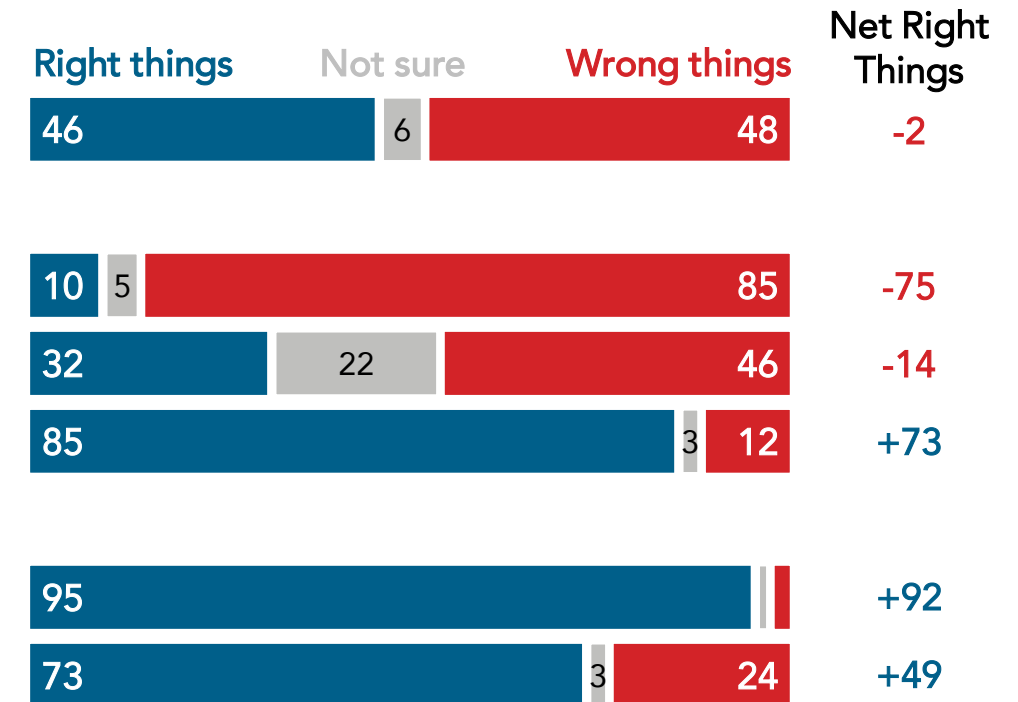
# Americans Say the Democratic Party Is More Focused on the Right Things Than the Republican Party, Though Views Are Mixed

Independents rate the parties equally negatively (net -14 focused on the right things each), while Republicans rate the Democratic Party less negatively (net -56) than Democrats rate the Republican Party (net -75).

Do you think the **Democratic Party** is focused on the right things?



Do you think the **Republican Party** is focused on the right things?



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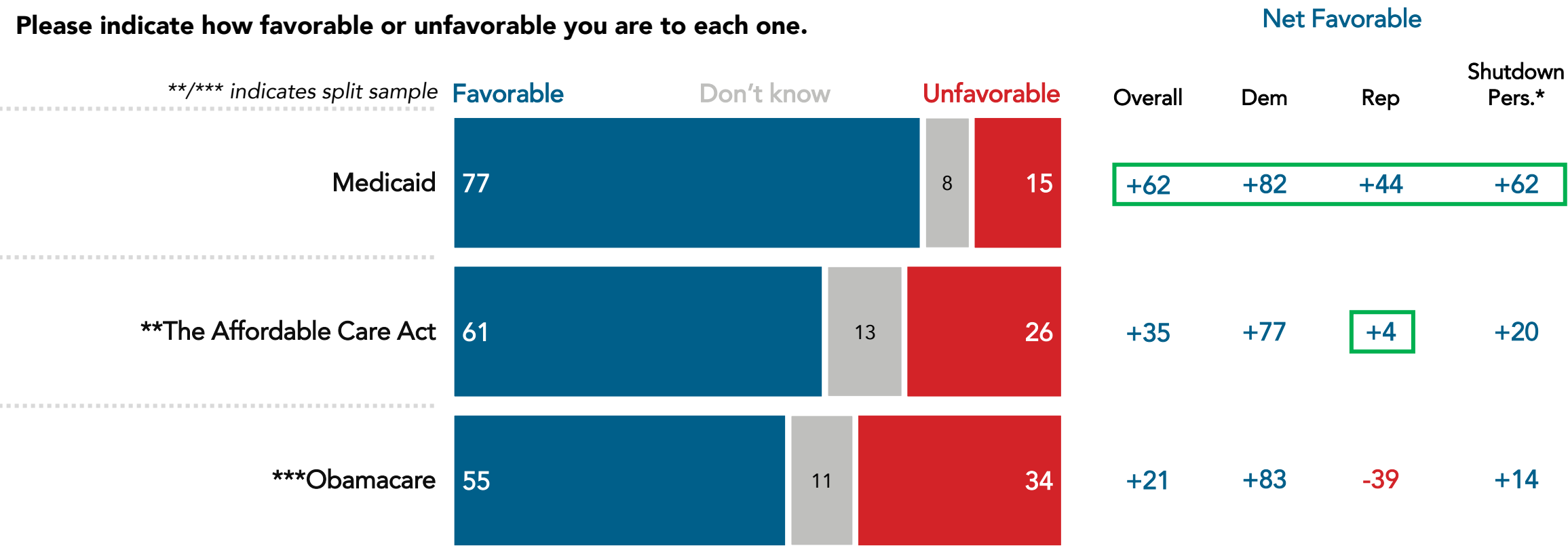
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# Views of Medicaid and the ACA Are Positive Across Party Lines; Obamacare Is Net Positive, But Sees Some Polarization

Both Democrats (net +82 favorable) and Republicans (net +44) view Medicaid deeply favorably. Both parties are positive on the ACA (net +77 for Democrats, net +4 for Republicans), while Obamacare views are divided by party (net +83 for Democrats, net -39 for Republicans).

Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to each one.



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# Economic Harms, Delayed/Denied Paychecks, Defunding Food Programs Most Concerning on Shutdown Consequences

Below is a list of potential consequences of the government shutdown. Which of the following three do you find most concerning, if any?

	% top three most concerning	Dem	Ind	Rep	MAGA Reps*	Non-MAGA Reps*	Shutdown Pers.**
The shutdown harming the U.S. economy, potentially costing billions of dollars each week and increasing unemployment	51%	54	53	47	43	52	53
Millions of Americans not receiving their paychecks on time, and potentially never getting paid for the time of the shutdown	50	54	50	46	46	46	49
Federal food programs that support millions of children and pregnant women losing funding	41	49	40	33	35	31	39
U.S. military service members and veterans facing pay delays and disruptions in health care and child care services	34	29	20	44	47	41	28
Basic customer services for veterans or Social Security recipients stopping	26	24	24	27	26	29	26
Critical food inspections stopping, making the food supply less safe	21	23	28	17	17	17	19
Air travel becoming unsafe or unreliable as air traffic controllers and TSA agents go unpaid and stop showing up to work	20	20	16	20	16	25	20
Delays or freezes in medical research grants, slowing progress toward cures for diseases like cancer	14	14	17	14	14	12	12

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## About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Jessica Floyd, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds; Mike Podhorzer; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

## About the Study

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a sample of 1,000 registered voters from October 2-October 5, 2025. The survey was conducted online, recruiting respondents from an opt-in online panel vendor. Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the national registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

For Press inquiries contact:

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To learn more about Navigator:

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