

navigating *the* * **battleground**

Wednesday, May 17th, 2023

The Default Debate



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Methodology



Impact Research conducted a survey of N=1500 likely 2024 general election voters in 61 battleground congressional districts.



74% of interviews were conducted by text-to-web and 26% were via online panel.



Interviews were conducted between April 20-27, 2023.



The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

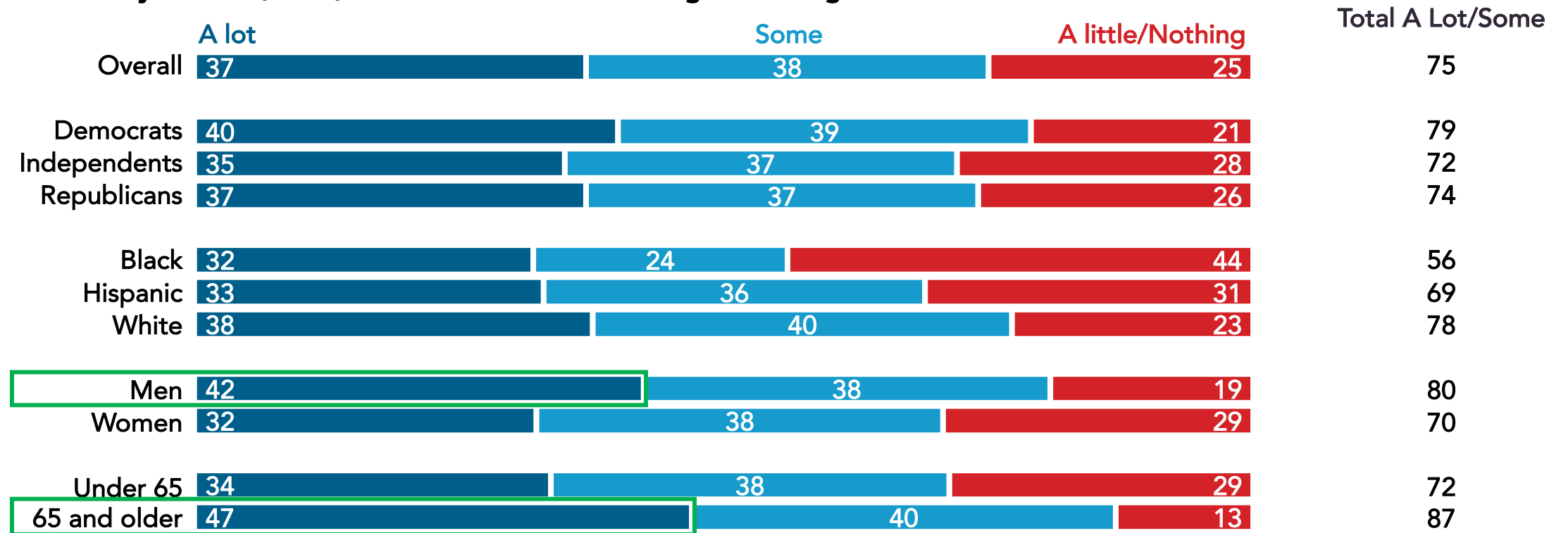
Key Takeaways

- **It is important to frame the debate as avoiding defaulting on debts.** There is plurality support for raising the debt limit when framed as avoiding defaulting on debts rather than raising the limit alone, which a plurality oppose.
- **The public would rather pay the bills now and reduce the deficit later than default.** Two in three would rather see Congress pay our bills now and worry about reducing the deficit later.
- **In a partisan back-and-forth around spending, conservative arguments do have salience.** Conservative arguments on out-of-control spending narrowly edge out progressive arguments; a progressive argument that defaulting would cause economic chaos is a better response among persuadable voters than the government shutting down or not paying Social Security checks.
- **Yet, there is strong opposition to cuts to programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.** Americans would rather see Congress reduce the deficit by raising taxes on billionaires and corporations.

Just Over a Third of Voters Have Heard “A Lot” About the Debt Limit

Men (42%) and those over the age of 65 (47%) are the most likely to say they have heard “a lot” about the federal debt limit.

How much have you heard, seen, or read about the U.S. Congress raising the federal debt limit?



Nationwide survey of 1,500 likely 2024 general election voters across 61 battleground districts conducted April 20-April 27, 2023. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org/battleground.

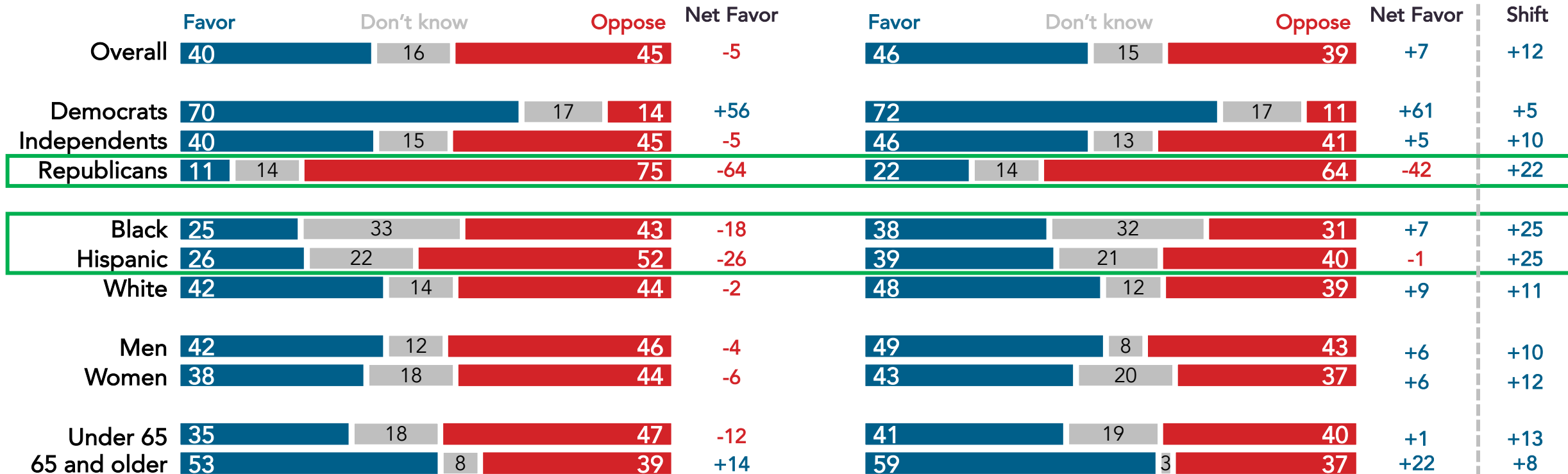
Voters are Split on Their Support For Raising the Debt Limit; Framing Around Avoiding Default Increases Support

Support shifts a net 12 points when framed as “avoiding the U.S. defaulting on its debts” (from net -5 to net +7).

- Among subgroups, Republicans (net +25), Black voters (net +25), and Hispanic voters (net +25) shift the most.

(Split Sample) From what you know, do you favor or oppose Congress raising the federal debt limit?

(Split Sample) From what you know, do you favor or oppose raising the federal debt limit to avoid the U.S. defaulting on its debts?



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Voters are Open to Conservative Arguments on Out-of-Control Spending, Narrowly Beating Progressive Statements on Default

Men and voters 65 and older are more responsive to messaging that a default would result in economic chaos.

Which statement comes closer to your view:

Statement 1: Republicans say that government spending is out of control, and rather than try to balance the budget and pay down the deficit, Democrats just want to raise the limit to spend even more money we don't have.

Statement 2: Democrats say the U.S. government cannot default on its debts, because that would **cause economic chaos, including crashing the stock market, job losses, and higher costs for working families.**

Statement 1:	48%
Statement 2:	44%
Net Statement 2:	-4

Statement 3: Democrats say the U.S. government cannot default on its debts, because **the government would shut down and might not be able to send Social Security checks, pay the military, or provide veterans their benefits.**

Statement 1:	48%
Statement 3:	42%
Net Statement 3:	-6

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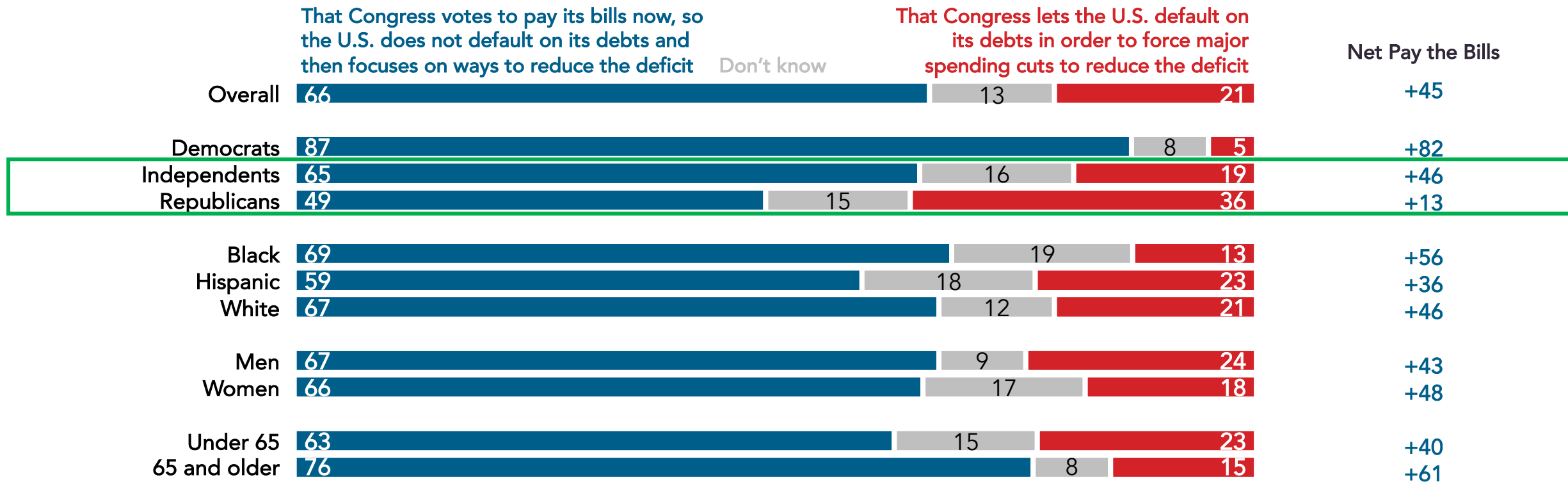
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Across the Partisan Spectrum, Voters Prefer Congress to Pay its Bills and Not Let the U.S. Default

Independents prefer Congress votes to pay its bills now to avoid default by a 46-point margin, as do a plurality of Republicans (49%).

Which of the following do you prefer:



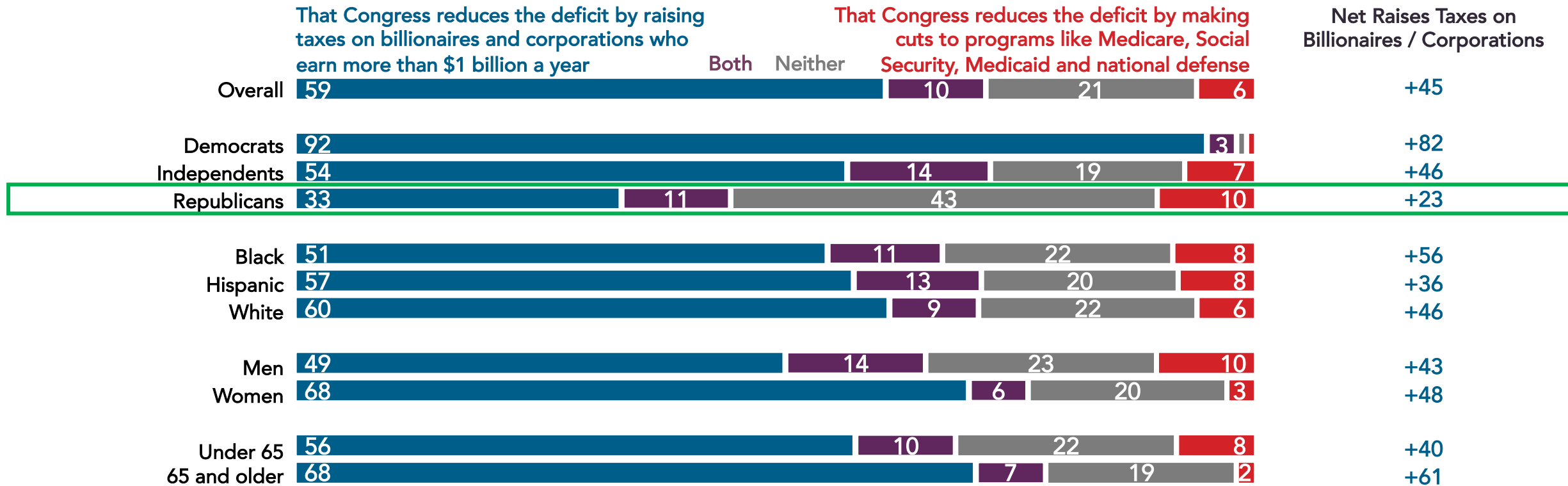
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Most Would Rather Reduce the Deficit by Raising Taxes on Billionaires and Corporations, Not by Cutting Specific Programs

Republicans are more mixed, with a plurality neither wanting taxes raised nor entitlement cuts.

Which of the following do you prefer:



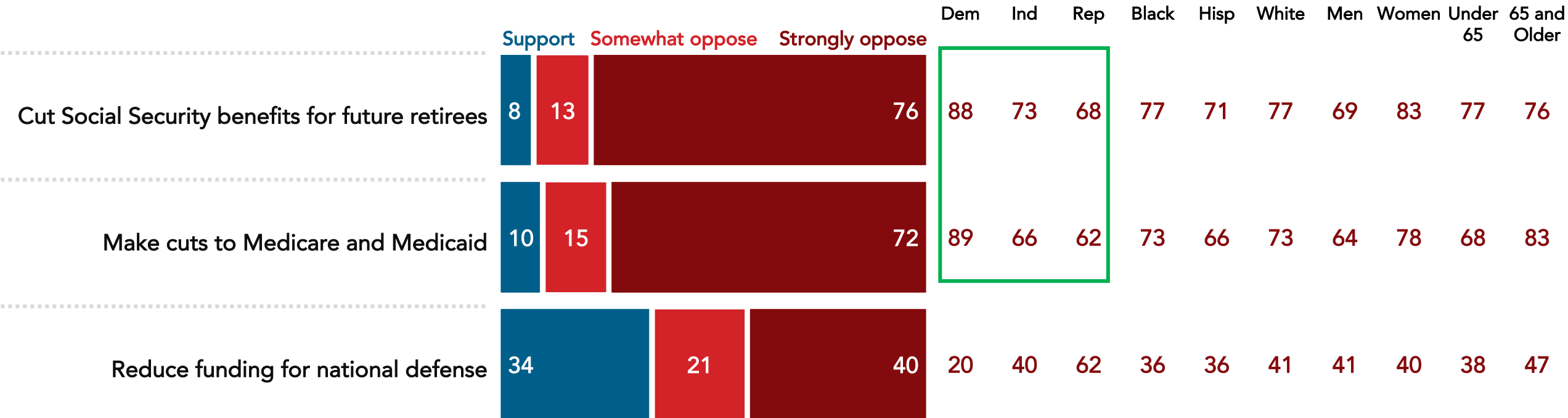
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Majorities of Voters Across the Partisan Spectrum, Strongly Oppose Cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid

Intensity opposing defense cuts is more muted and is driven by Republicans.

Here are some proposals in Congress to reduce the federal debt. Please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of these.

% Strongly Oppose

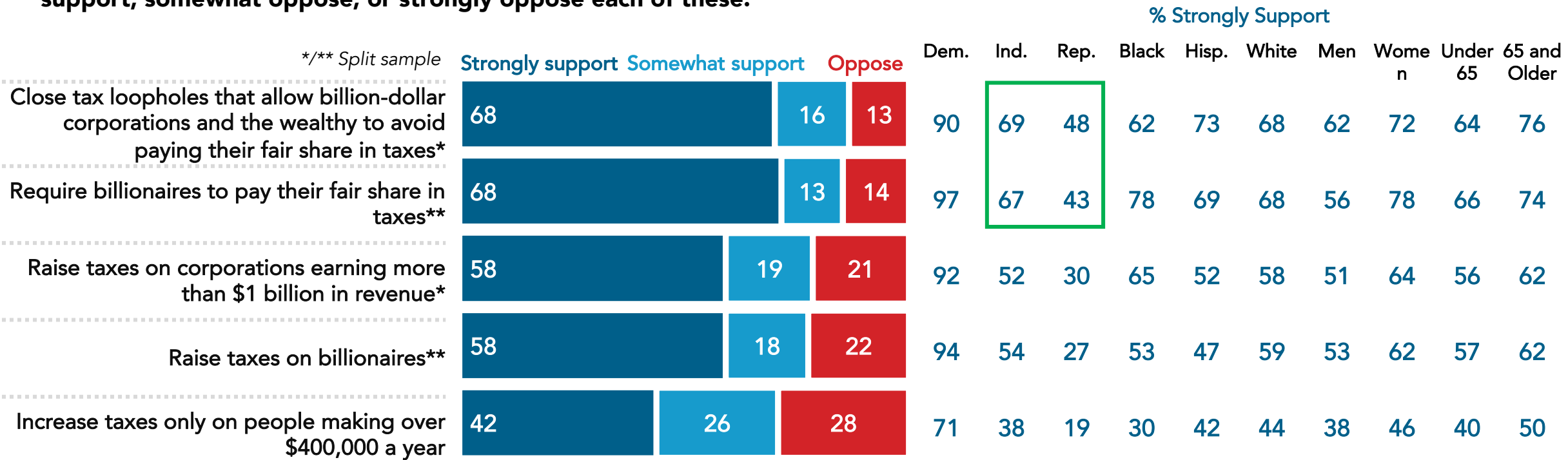


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Corporations and the Wealthy Paying Their Fair Share is Most Effective When Framing Revenue Increases to Reduce the Deficit

Frames emphasizing tax fairness perform better than other language to raise taxes on the wealthy and corporations by at least 15 points among independents and at least 13 points among Republicans.

Here are some proposals in Congress to reduce the federal debt. Please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of these.



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Appendix: Congressional Districts Included In Sample

AK-01	CA-08	IN-01	NE-02	NY-17	PA-07
AZ-01	CT-05	KS-03	NH-01	NY-18	PA-08
AZ-06	FL-07	ME-02	NJ-07	NY-19	PA-17
CA-13	FL-13	MI-03	NM-02	NY-22	TX-15
CA-22	FL-27	MI-08	NV-03	OH-01	VA-02
CA-27	IA-01	MI-10	NV-04	OH-09	VA-07
CA-40	IA-02	MN-02	NY-01	OH-13	WA-03
CA-41	IA-03	MT-01	NY-02	OR-05	WA-08
CA-45	IL-13	NC-01	NY-03	OR-06	WI-01
CA-49	IL-17	NC-13	NY-04	PA-01	WI-03
CA-03					

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About Navigator and Navigating the Battleground

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. **Navigating the Battleground** is a project designed to understand messaging nuances in different types of battleground geographies, led by pollsters from Impact Research along with an advisory committee, including: Jessica Floyd, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

Impact Research conducted public opinion surveys among a sample of 1,500 likely 2024 general election voters from April 20-April 27, 2023. The survey was conducted by a mix of text-to-web (74 percent) and an opt-in, online panel (26 percent). Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the 61 congressional districts included in the sample across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 2.5 percentage points. The margin for error for subgroups varies and is higher.

For Press inquiries contact:

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To learn more about Navigator
or Navigating the Battleground:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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