

# navigator\*



Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>

Default: A Guide for  
Advocates

## Key Takeaways:

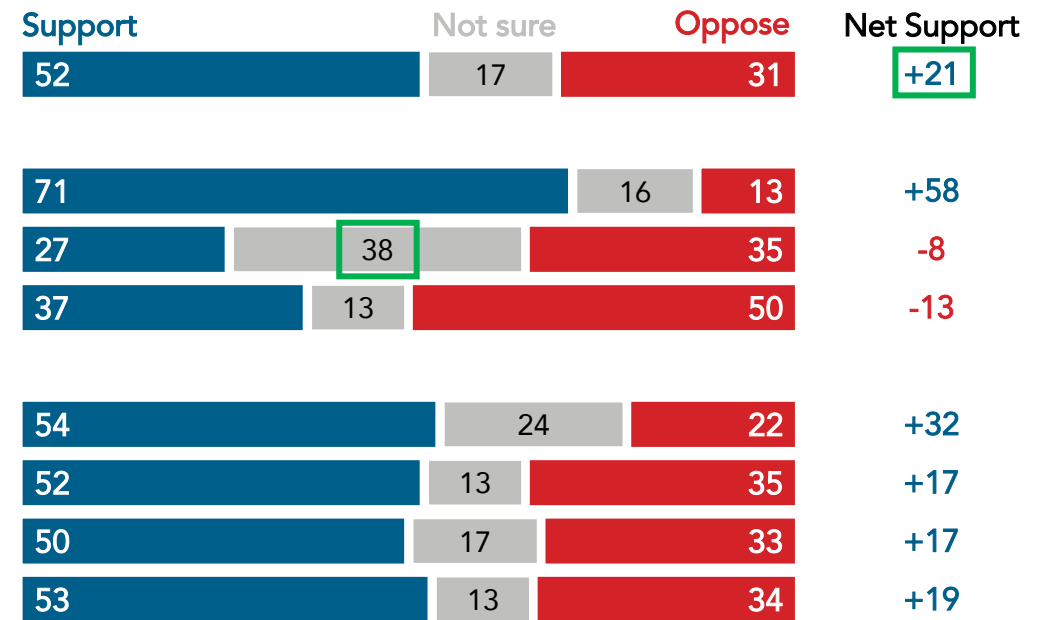
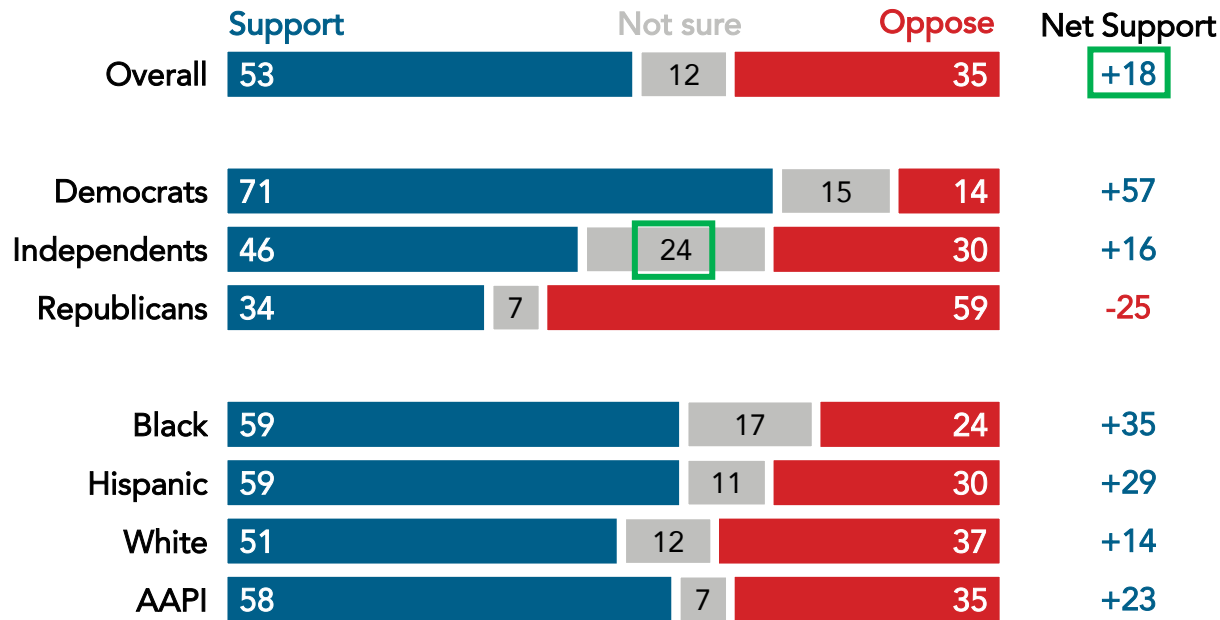
- Americans feel cuts to programs like Medicaid or default would be worse outcomes for the country than raising the debt ceiling.
- Nearly three in five oppose Republicans in Congress' plan, and the most concerning outcomes include cuts to: Medicaid, funding for food safety inspectors (leading to food shortages/higher costs), and education funding.
- The most troubling statements about how Republicans are handling the debt ceiling include their tax cuts for the rich and using the issue to score political points against Biden.

# Majorities Support Raising the Debt Ceiling/Limit After Learning Failure to Do So Would Mean Default

Higher shares of Americans are unsure on the “debt limit,” including 17% overall (compared to 12% not sure on the “debt ceiling”), 38% of independents (compared to 24%), and 13% of Republicans (compared to 7%).

**(Split sample)** As you may know, the debt ceiling is the maximum amount of money the U.S. government can borrow to pay its bills. The government has already reached this amount, which means the debt ceiling needs to be raised in order to avoid defaulting on the government's bills. Knowing this, do you support or oppose raising the debt ceiling?

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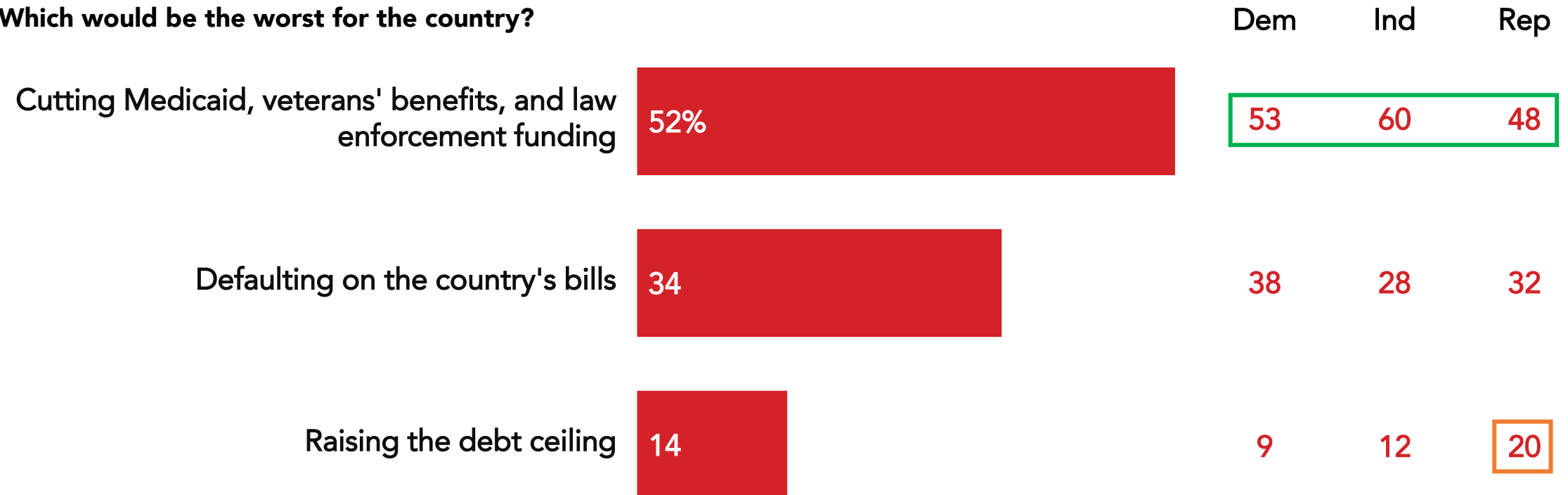
Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted May 4-May 8, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Cutting Medicaid and Other Programs or Defaulting Seen As Worse Outcomes for U.S. Than Raising the Debt Ceiling

Americans across party lines say that “cutting Medicaid, veterans' benefits, and law enforcement funding” would be the worst outcome.

- Only one in five Republicans (20%) say that “raising the debt ceiling” would be the worst for the country.

Which would be the worst for the country?



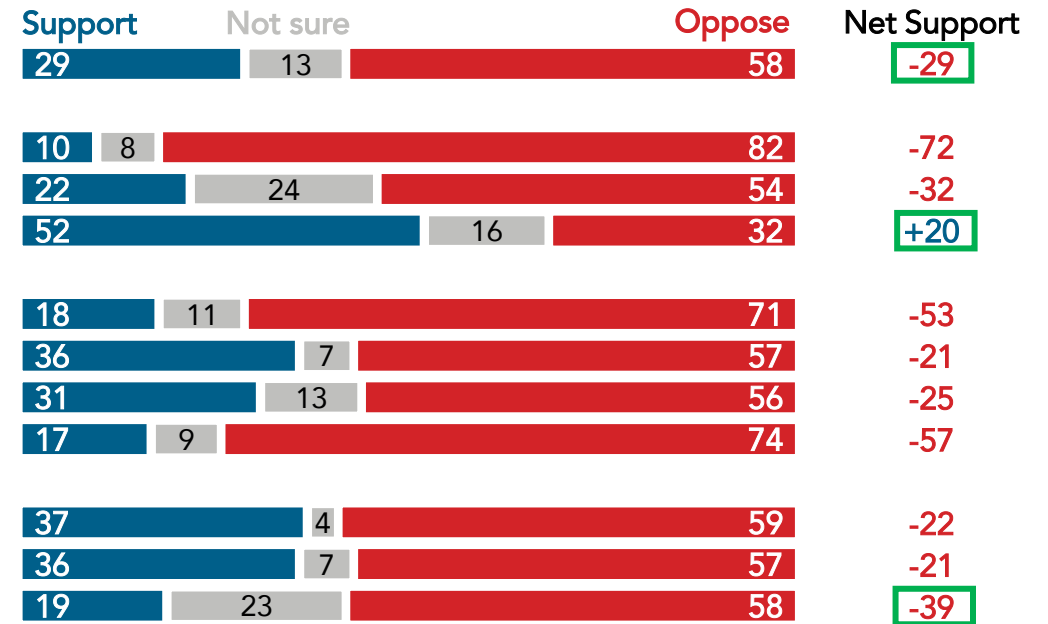
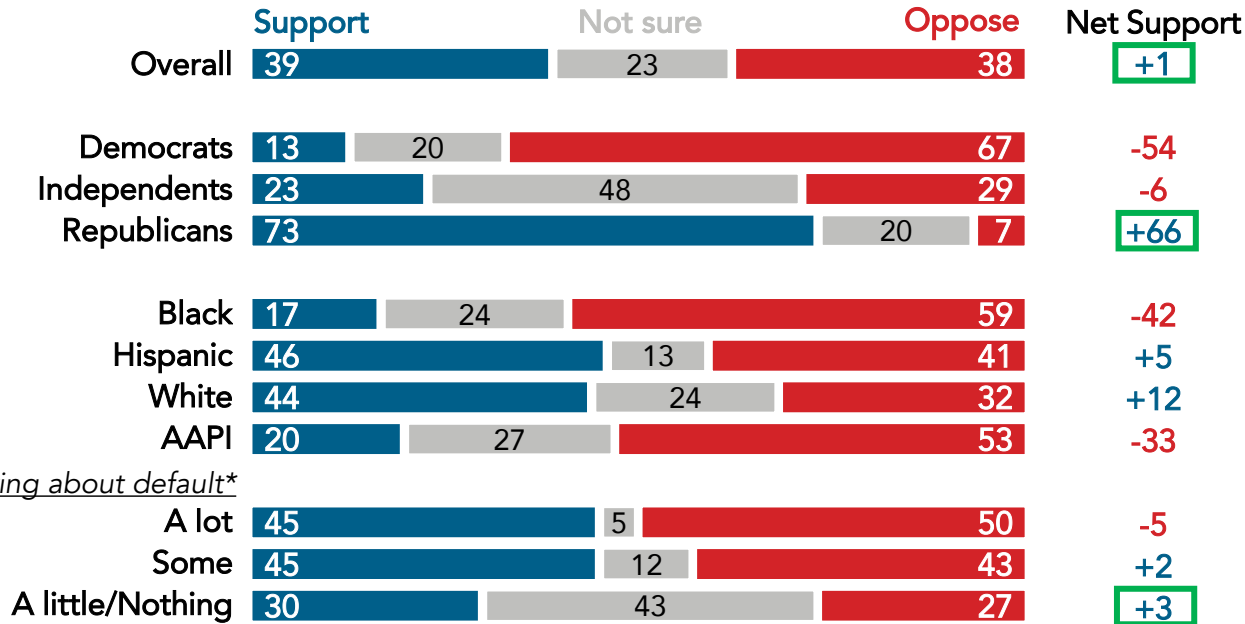
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# The Public Rejects the GOP's Latest Plan Only When Details Are Explained

Explaining the specifics of Republicans' proposed cuts erodes support from roughly even (net +1 support) to a 29-point deficit, with the largest declines among those hearing "a little" or "nothing" about a default (from net +3 to net -39) and Republicans (from net +66 to +20).

Republicans in Congress refused to work with President Biden and Democrats on a solution to the debt ceiling, so they released their own budget plan. Do you support or oppose Republicans in Congress' plan?

Republicans in Congress refused to work with President Biden and Democrats on a solution to the debt ceiling, so they released their own budget plan. **The plan would cut 22% of funding for almost everything aside from military spending, including health care, schools, and law enforcement, while also protecting tax cuts for the rich.** Knowing this, do you support or oppose Republicans in Congress' plan?

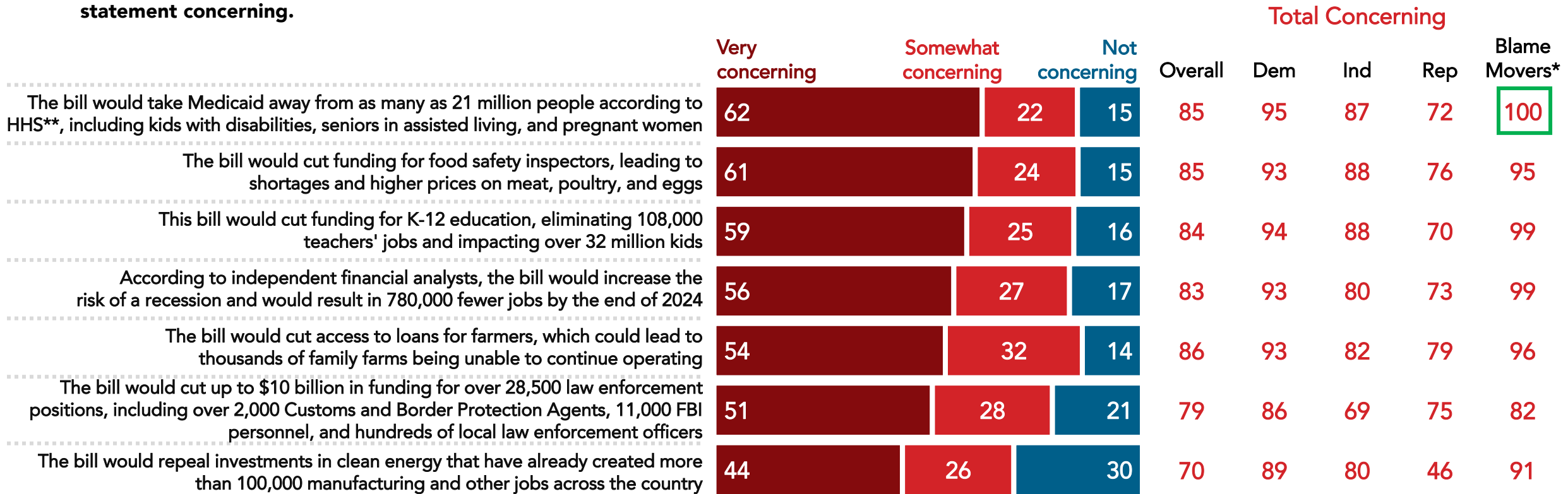


\*Based on results from a separate question. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted May 4-May 8, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](http://navigatorresearch.org).

# Cuts to Medicaid, Threats to Grocery Costs, and Cuts to School Funding Most Concerning Parts of Republicans' Debt Plan

Among those who shift to blame Republicans more for a potential default after reading more information\*, fully 100% say they find the move to “take Medicaid away from as many as 21 million people” either “very” or “somewhat concerning.”

Below is a list of statements regarding Republicans in Congress' proposed budget plan to lift the debt ceiling. Please indicate whether you find each statement concerning.



\*“Blame Movers” do not say they would blame Republicans more for a potential default initially but say they would blame Republicans more after messaging.

\*\*Question text fully wrote out “the Department of Health and Human Services.”

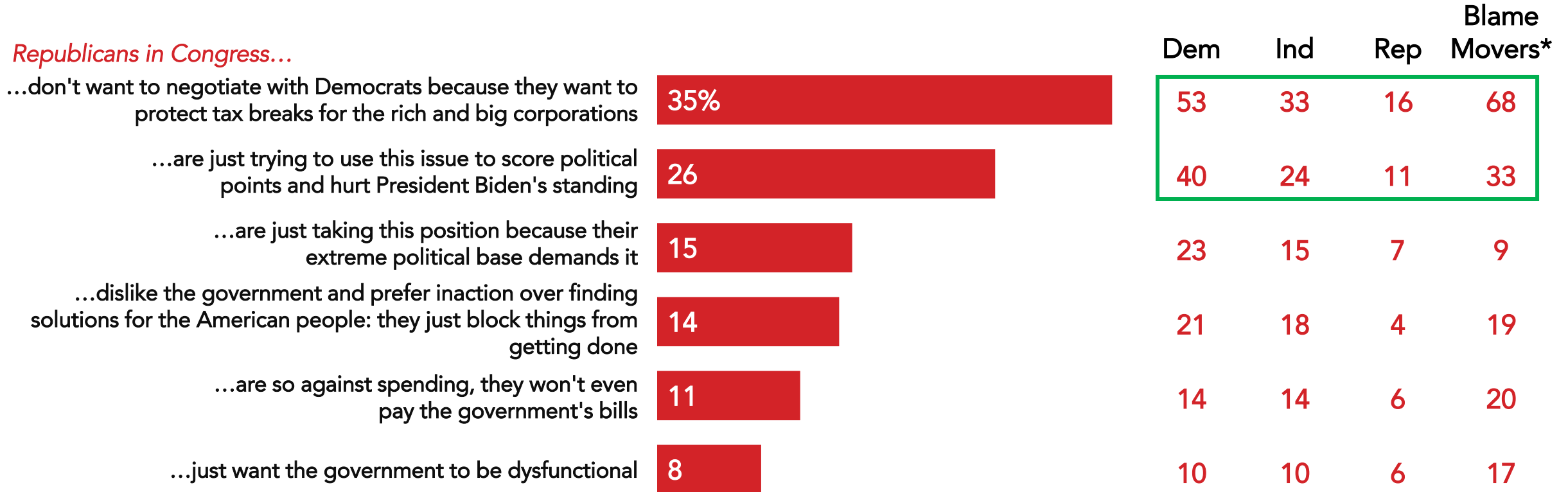
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# Republicans' Protection of Tax Breaks for the Rich and Using the Issue to Score Political Points Most Troubling on Debt Ceiling

Americans who shift to blame Republicans for a potential default after messaging\* say they find it most troubling that Republicans in Congress "want to protect tax breaks for the rich" (68% top two) and are "just using this issue to score political points" (33%).

Which of the following statements best describe what is most troubling about how Republicans in Congress are handling the debt ceiling?

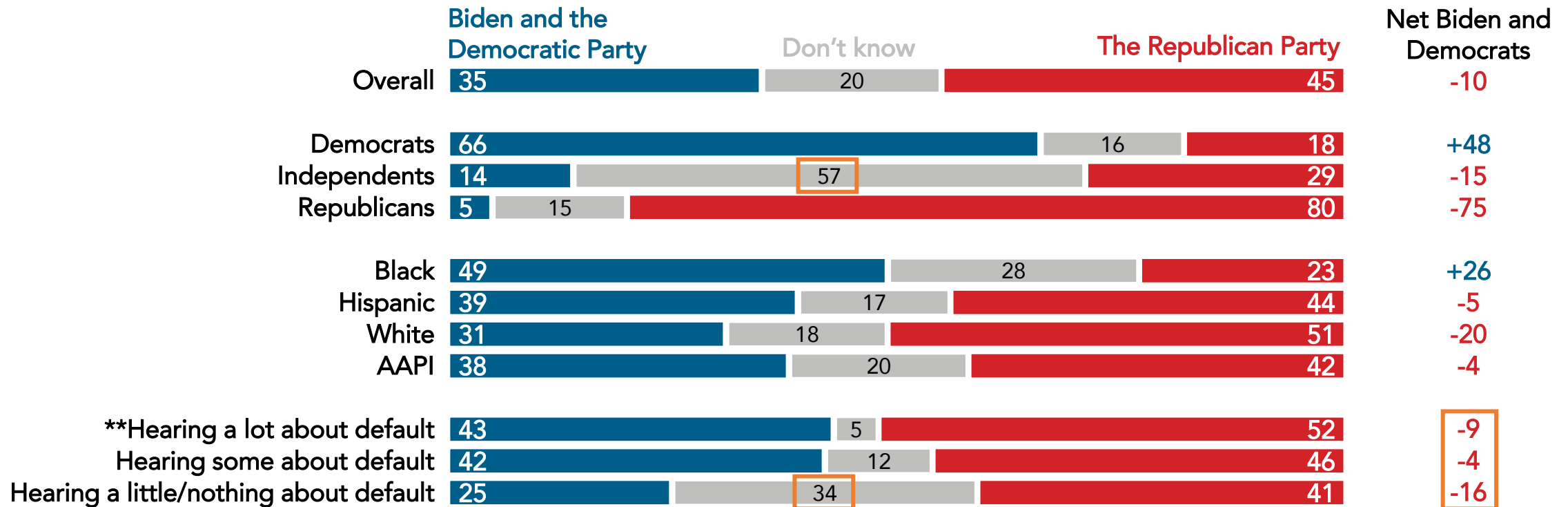


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# Americans Trust Republicans More on Avoiding Default on the National Debt, Though Many Are Unsure

Independents trust the Republican Party more on “avoiding default on the national debt” (net -15 Biden and Democrats), though nearly three in five (57%) don’t know enough to say. Americans who report hearing “a little” or “nothing” about a potential default on a separate question are less likely to trust Biden and Democrats (net -16), though 34% don’t know enough to say.

Please indicate who you trust more to handle: Avoiding default on the national debt.\*



\*This question was asked to half of the audience. \*\*Based on results from a separate question. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted May 4-May 8, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

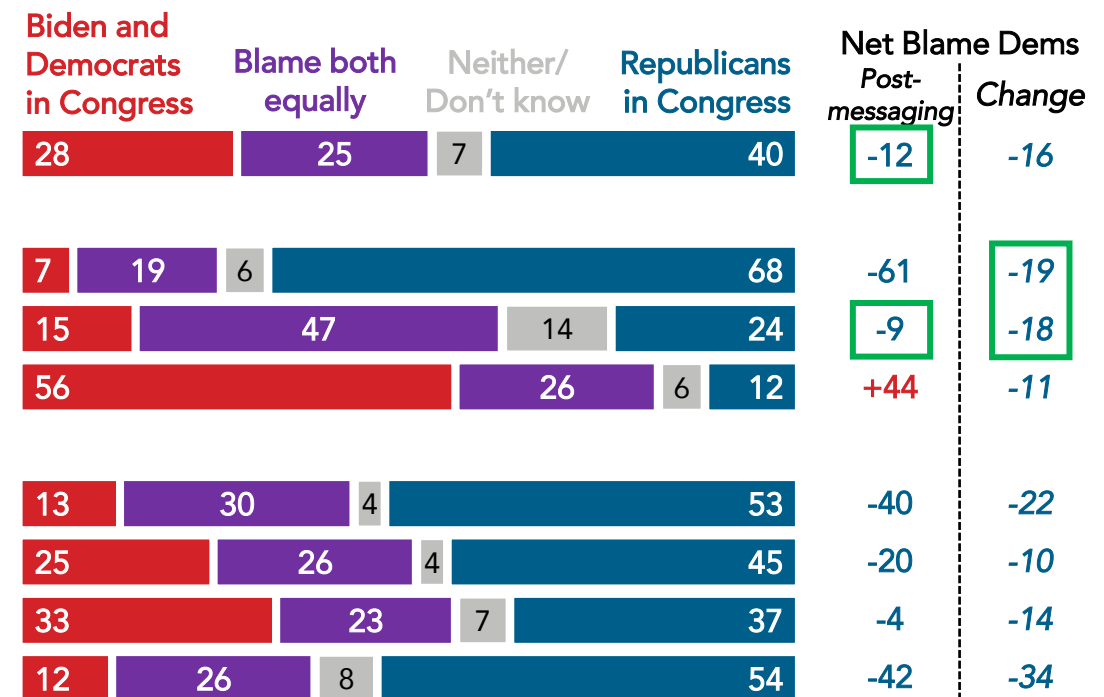
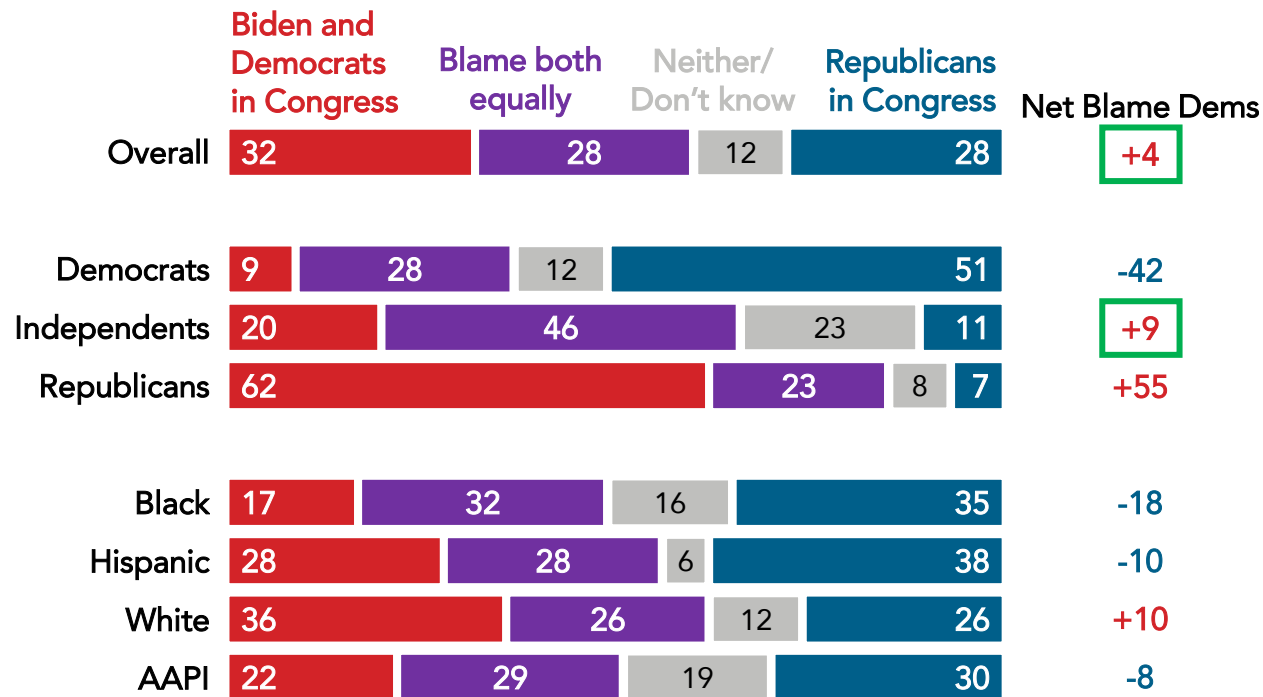


# The Public Swings from Blaming Democrats Slightly More on Debt Ceiling to Blaming Republicans More After Messaging

After messaging, the share who blame Republicans more for a potential default increases from 28% to 40%; independents in particular shift from blaming Democrats by net 9 points to blaming Republicans by net 9 points (an 18-point swing), though still 47% blame both equally.

**If Congress fails to pass a bill to deal with the debt ceiling to avoid a default, who would you blame more?**

**Again...if Congress fails to pass a bill to deal with the debt ceiling to avoid a default, who would you blame more?**



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# Those Who Shift to Blame Republicans Most for a Potential Default Tend to Be Younger, People of Color, Democrats

Women under 55 (26%) and Americans ages 18-34 (24%) most disproportionately fall into this group, while only 5% of seniors 65+ fall into this category. People of color (17%) are also more likely to fall into this group than white Americans (12%).

- This group also reports hearing less about a potential default, with only about one in three blame movers (35%) saying they are hearing “a lot” or “some” about it, compared to 57% of Americans overall.

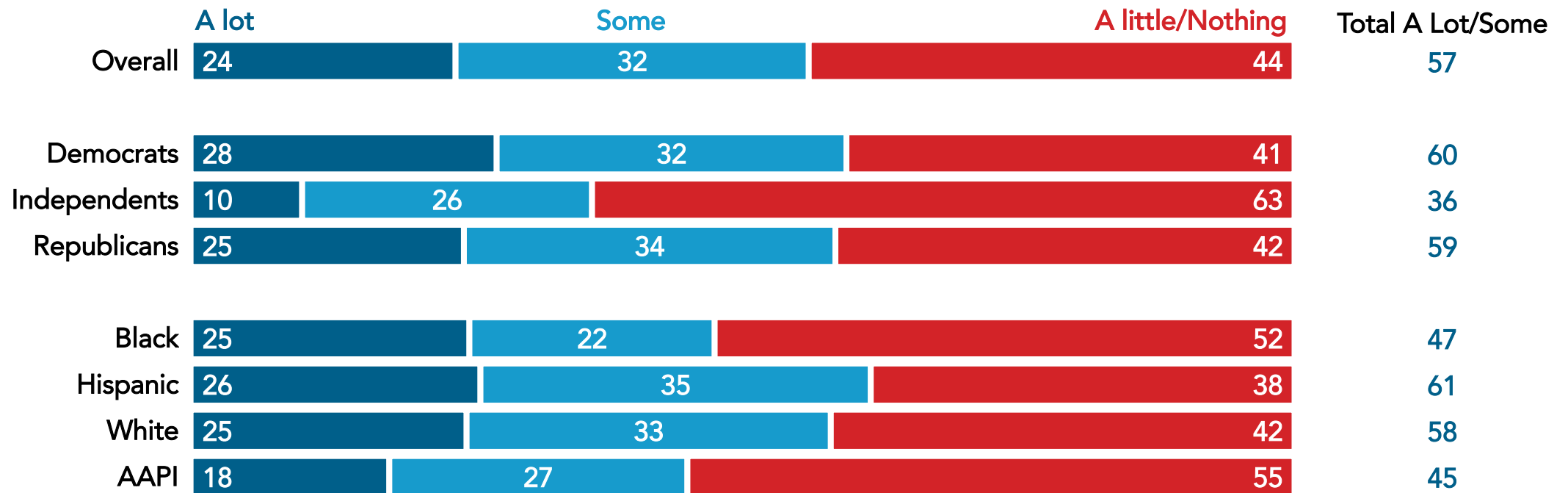
**Blame Movers:** Respondents who initially would not blame Republicans in Congress more if “Congress fails to pass a bill to deal with the debt ceiling to avoid a default” but who say after messaging they would blame Republicans in Congress more.



# Only One in Four Have Heard “a Lot” About the Government’s Default Timeline, Three in Five at Least “Some”

Democrats (60% hearing “a lot” or “some”) and Republicans (59%) report hearing more about the potential default next month than independents (36%), though just 28% of Democrats and 25% of Republicans have heard “a lot” about it.

**How much have you seen, read, or heard about projections that if Congress does not raise or suspend what is commonly referred to as the debt ceiling or the debt limit, the government will default on its bills by around June 1<sup>st</sup>?**



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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, 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

Global Strategy Group conducted public opinion surveys among a sample of 1,000 registered voters from May 4-May 8, 2023. 102 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 75 additional interviews were conducted among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. 100 additional interviews were conducted among African American voters. 100 additional interviews were conducted among independent voters. 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.

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To learn more about Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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