

# navigator\*

Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

## Default and the Budget: A Guide for Advocates



## Key Takeaways:

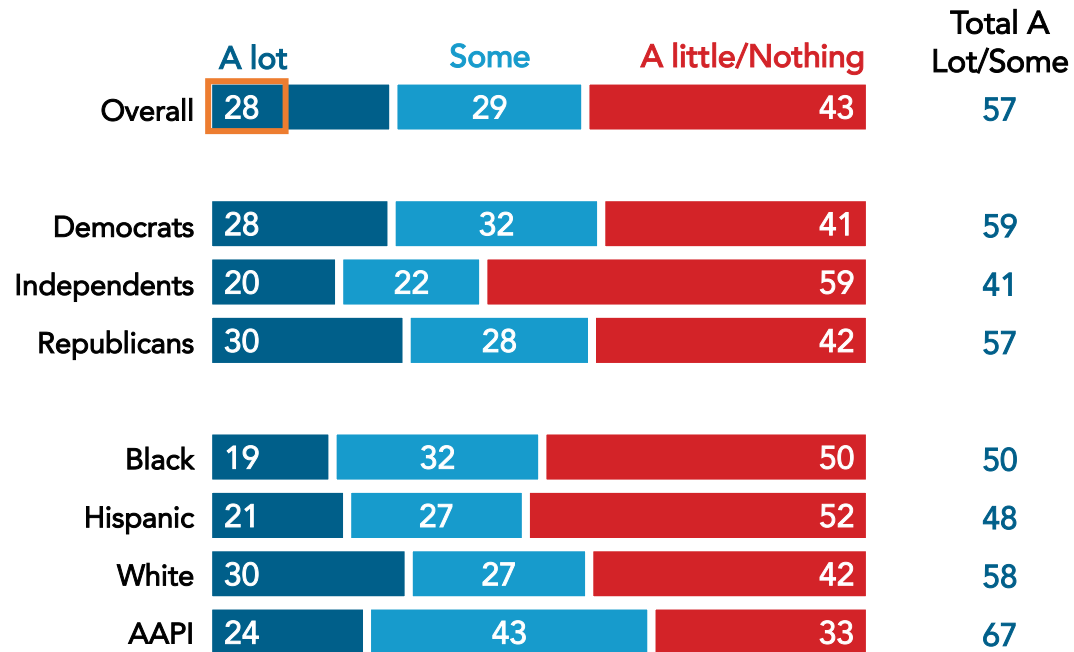
- Three in five Americans are hearing “a lot” or “some” about the debt ceiling deal struck between Republicans in Congress and President Biden in keeping with the share aware of the June 1<sup>st</sup> deadline last month, and a majority support the deal.
- The most strongly supported outcomes of the deal and the strongest messaging lanes for President Biden include protecting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans’ benefits.
- Against a conservative argument, the strongest progressive rebuttal on the debt ceiling deal incorporates protecting programs while reducing the deficit by ending tax breaks for the wealthy and big corporations.

# Less Than a Third of Americans Have Heard “a Lot” About the Debt Ceiling, While a Majority Support the Deal

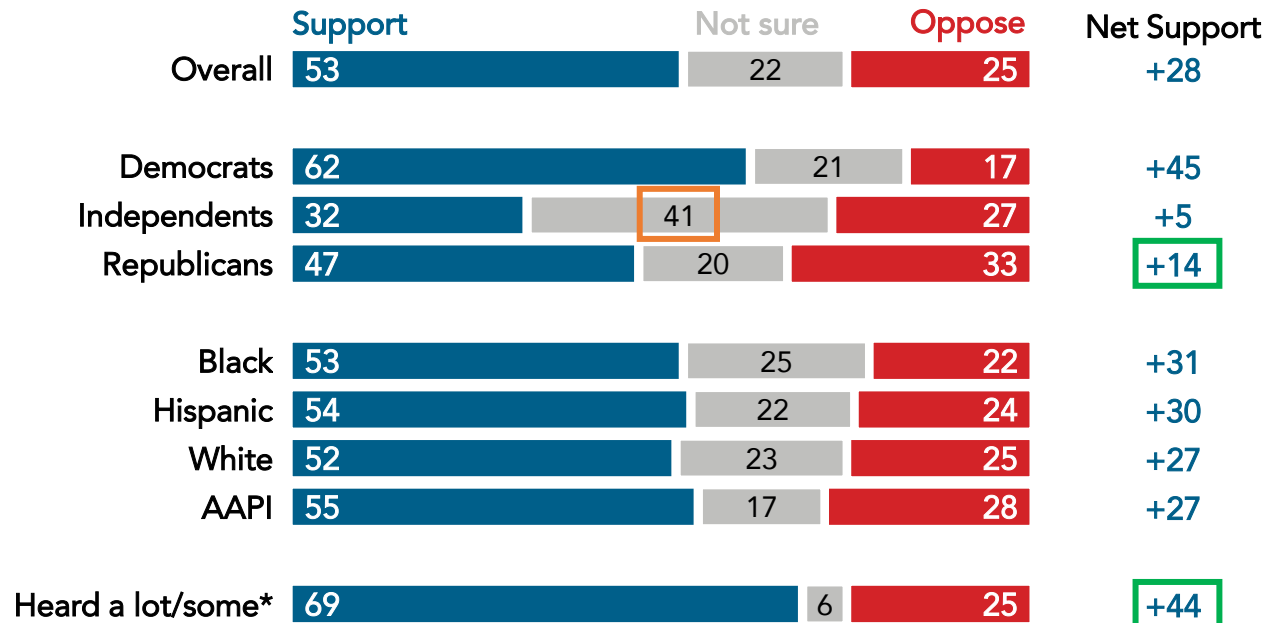
Two in five independents (41%), along with one in five Democrats (21%) and Republicans (20%), report that they are “not sure” whether they support or oppose the deal to raise the debt ceiling.

- Americans who report hearing “a lot” or “some” about the deal support it by a 44-point margin.

How much have you seen, read, or heard about the debt ceiling deal struck by Republicans in Congress and President Biden to avoid default?



As you may know, Republicans in Congress and President Biden have struck a deal to raise the debt ceiling, avoiding defaulting on the government's bills. Do you support or oppose the deal they struck to raise the debt ceiling and avoid default?



\*“Heard a lot/some” indicates that respondents have heard “a lot” or “some” about the deal struck by Republicans in Congress and President Biden to avoid default. Nationwide survey of 1,001 registered voters conducted June 2-June 5, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

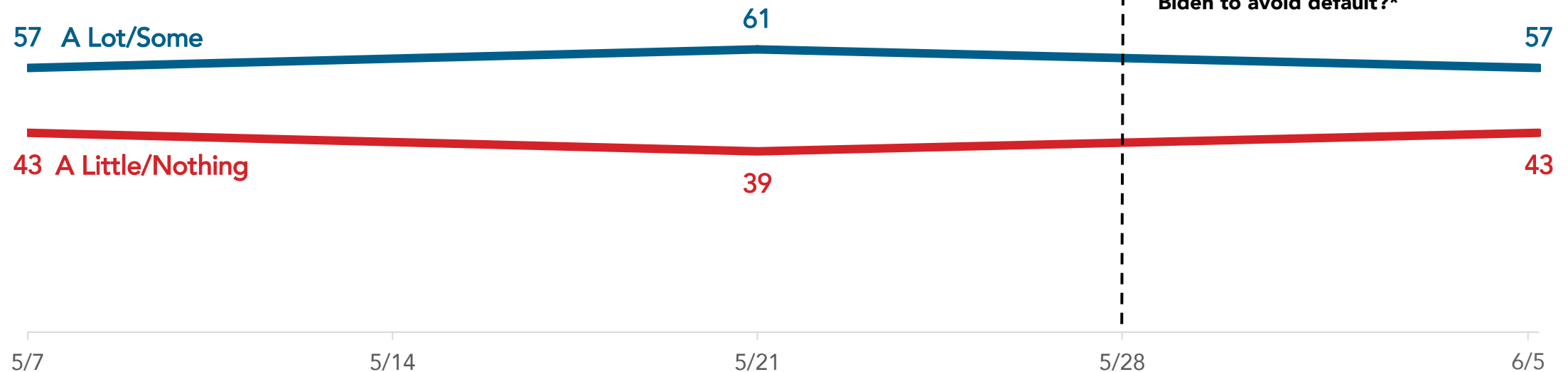
# Roughly Three in Five Are Hearing About the Debt Ceiling Deal; Same Share Heard About June Deadline Weeks Ago

Fewer Americans have now heard about the debt ceiling deal struck by Republicans in Congress and President Biden and had heard about a potential default in early May (57% hearing “a lot” or “some” each) than heard about the shooting down of a Chinese surveillance balloon in February (78%), Trump’s potential indictment in March (66%), or the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in March (59%).

Deal Reached

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>?

How much have you seen, read, or heard about the debt ceiling deal struck by Republicans in Congress and President Biden to avoid default?\*

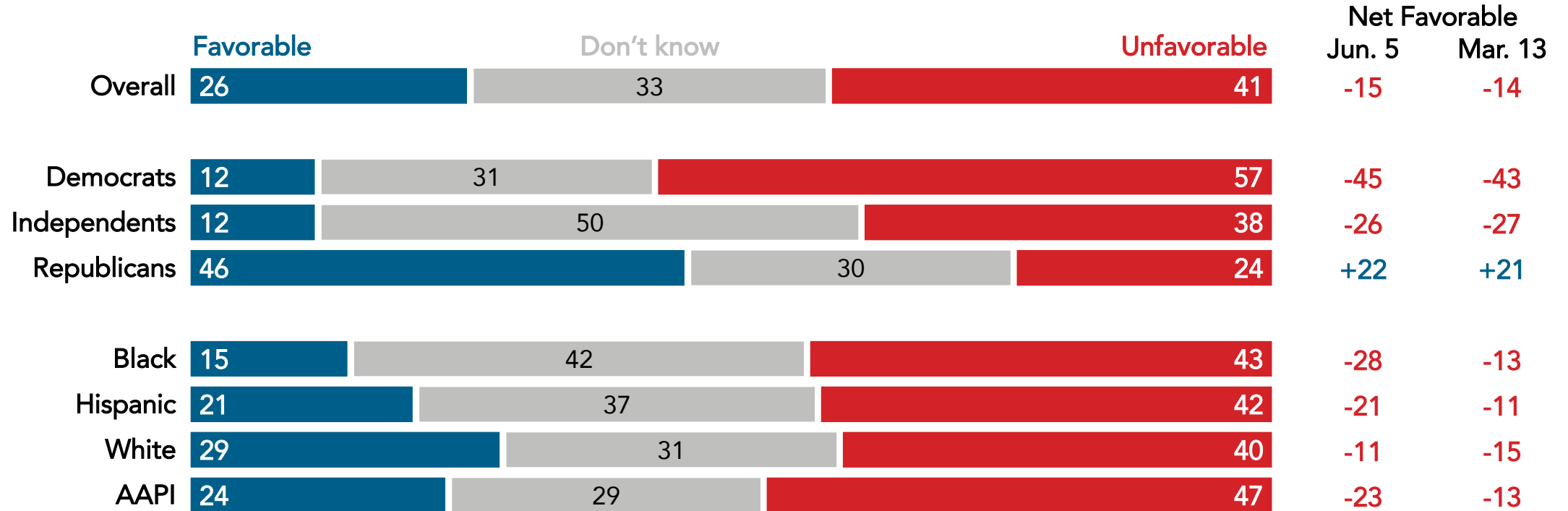


Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted June 2-June 5, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org)

# Kevin McCarthy's Favorability Remains Stagnant and Underwater Post-Debt Ceiling Deal

McCarthy is underwater by 15 points overall, in keeping with his mid-March numbers: pluralities of independents rate him negatively (net -26 favorable), and 24% of Republicans view him unfavorably.

Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to: Kevin McCarthy.



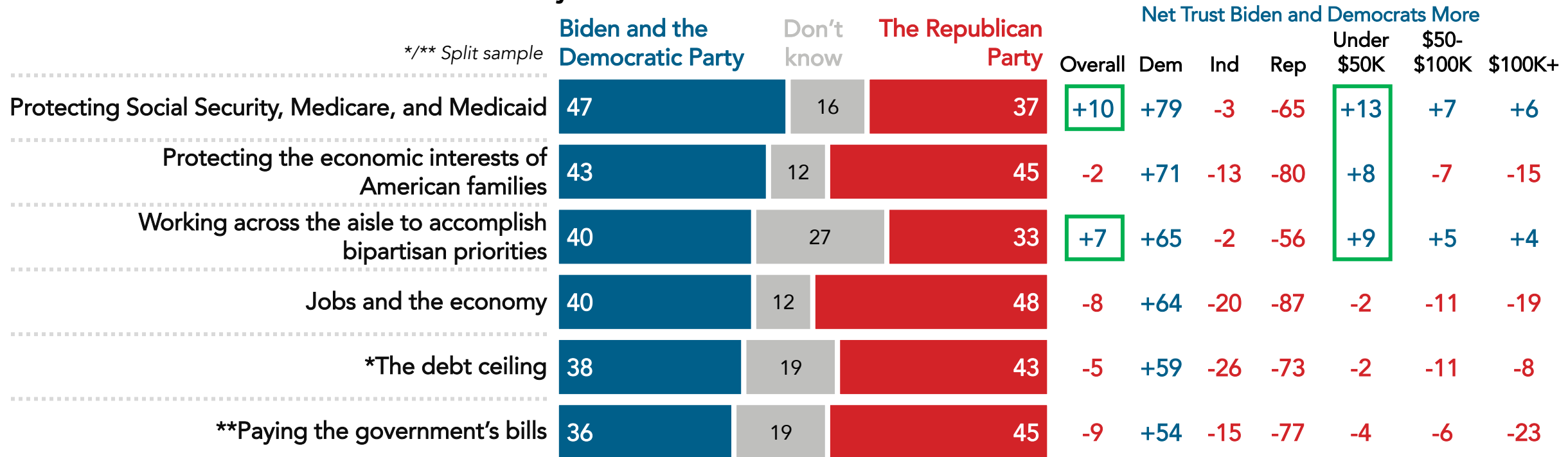
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# Biden and Democrats More Trusted on Protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and Working Across the Aisle

Americans trust Biden and the Democratic Party more than the Republican Party on “protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid” (net +10) and “working across the aisle” (net +7).

- Americans who make under \$50,000 a year trust Democrats more than Republicans on “protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid” (net +13 Democrats) and “protecting the economic interests of American families” (net +8 Democrats).

Below is a list of issues. Please indicate who you trust more to handle each one.

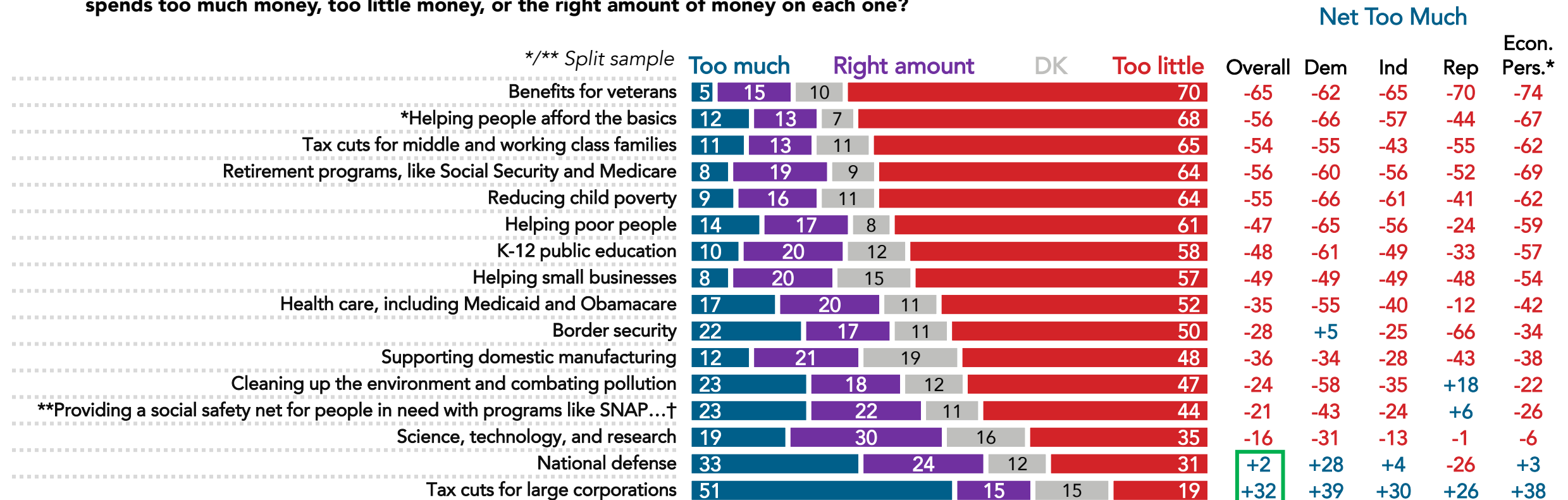


Nationwide survey of 1,001 registered voters conducted June 2-June 5, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Most Think Government Spends Too Little on Veterans, Affording the Basics, Tax Cuts for Working Americans, SS/Medicare

More than two in three say the U.S. government spends too little on benefits for veterans (70% too little) and helping people afford the basics (68%). By contrast, most say the government spends too much on tax cuts for large corporations (net +32 too much).

Below is a list of items. When you think about how much money the U.S. government spends on the following things, would you say the government spends too much money, too little money, or the right amount of money on each one?



\*"Economic persuadables" disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy but support the Inflation Reduction Act on separate questions.

†Full response text read: "Providing a social safety net for people in need with programs like SNAP, formerly known as food stamps."

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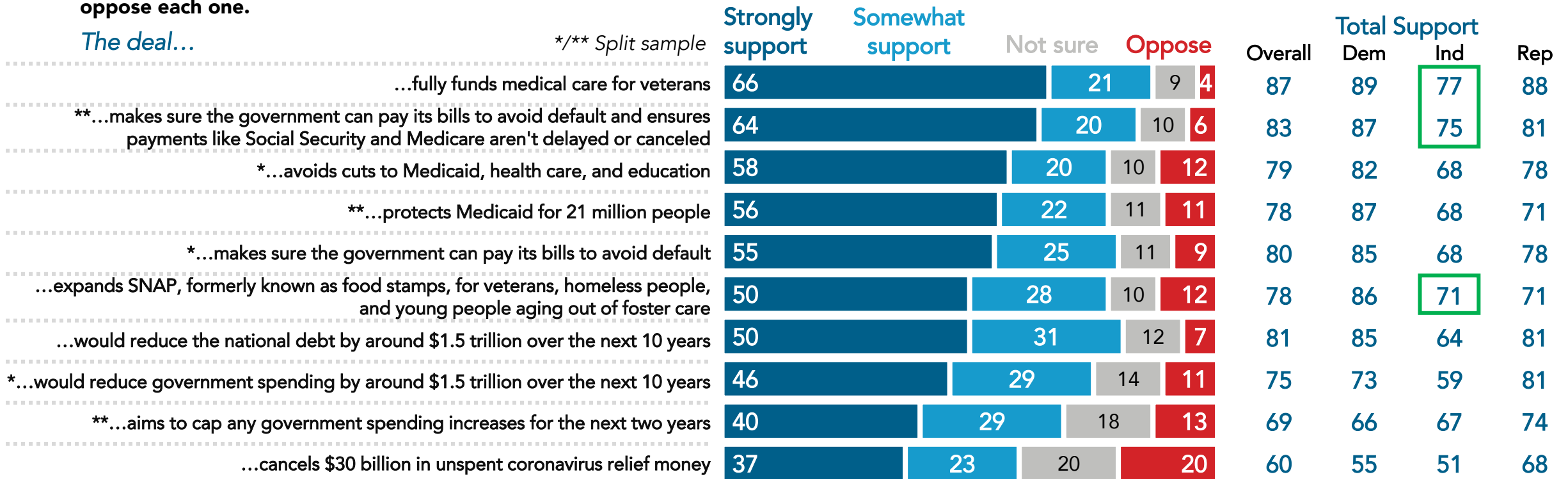
# The Debt Deal's Funding of Veterans' Care, SS/Medicare, Health Care, Education, and Medicaid Strongest Selling Points

Independents most strongly support that the deal "fully funds medical care for veterans" (77% support), "makes sure the government can pay its bills to avoid default and ensures payments like Social Security and Medicare aren't delayed or canceled" (75%), and "expands SNAP... for veterans, homeless people, and young people aging out of foster care" (71%).

Below is a list of some of the policies and outcomes from President Biden's deal with Republicans in Congress. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each one.

The deal...

\*/\*\* Split sample



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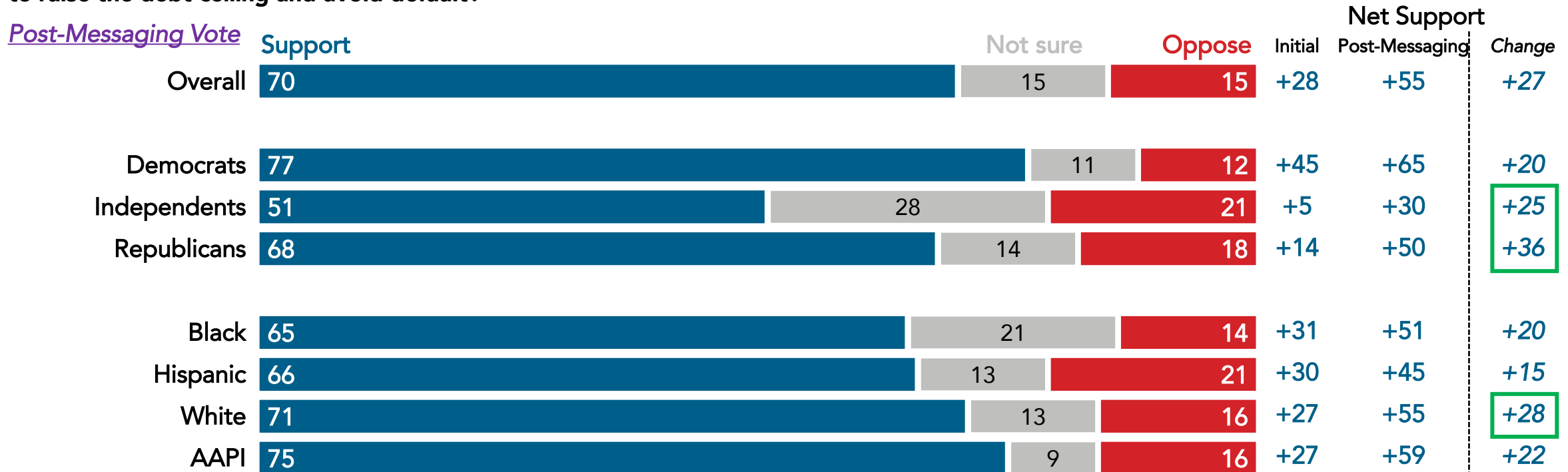


# Bipartisan Pluralities Support the Debt Ceiling Deal When They Learn More About It

Information about the deal boosts support most among Republicans (net 36-point increase, from net +14 to net +50), independents (net 25-point increase, from net +5 to net +30), and white Americans (28-point increase, from net +27 to net +55).

- Midwestern Americans (29% are debt ceiling movers\*), women (27%), 18–44-year-olds (27%), blue collar and service industry workers (26% each), and rural Americans (26%) are more likely to be debt ceiling movers; 22% of Americans are debt ceiling movers overall.

**After reading those policies and outcomes... Again, do you support or oppose the deal Republicans in Congress and President Biden struck to raise the debt ceiling and avoid default?**



\*"Debt ceiling movers" do not support the deal when initially asked but support it after learning about specific policies and outcomes of the deal.  
 Nationwide survey of 1,001 registered voters conducted June 2-June 5, 2023.  
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# Most Convincing Statements on Biden's Handling of Debt Ceiling: Protecting SS, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans' Benefits

The most convincing arguments overall and with debt ceiling movers\* highlight President Biden protecting Social Security and Medicare (net +38 and net +28, respectively), protecting Medicaid (+35 and +22), and protecting veterans' benefits (+32 and +22).

Below is a list of statements some supporters have made about how President Biden handled the debt ceiling and the deal that has been struck. Please indicate how convincing you find each statement.

	Convincing	Don't believe	Not convincing	Net Convincing				*DC Movers
				Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	
<i>*/** Split sample</i> President Biden ensured that people will continue to receive the Social Security and Medicare payments that they've earned over a lifetime	62	14	24	+38	+77	+19	0	+28
President Biden protected the Medicaid that 21 million Americans rely on. Six in ten seniors in nursing homes and 60% of children with disabilities rely on Medicaid	61	13	26	+35	+81	+23	-13	+22
President Biden prevented cuts to veterans' benefits	58	16	26	+32	+69	+8	-5	+22
President Biden brought both Democrats and Republicans together to compromise on a bipartisan deal that avoids default	51	20	29	+22	+57	+11	-15	+14
Under President Biden, unemployment has dropped to 3.5%. Without this deal, a default would have caused the loss of millions of jobs	51	20	29	+22	+63	+2	-20	+7
**President Biden stood up to MAGA Republican extremists that voted to cut all non-military spending by 22%	48	20	32	+16	+62	-3	-31	-5
*President Biden stopped a default and saved the economy from catastrophe	44	21	35	+9	+52	-5	-35	+2
President Biden is fiscally responsible and reined in government spending, reducing the national debt	43	22	35	+8	+56	-20	-26	+3

\*"Debt ceiling movers" do not support the deal when initially asked but support it after learning about specific policies and outcomes of the deal. Nationwide survey of 1,001 registered voters conducted June 2-June 5, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Emphasizing Democrats' Protection of Social Security/Medicare and GOP Refusals to Tax the Rich is Strongest

A progressive argument emphasizing Congressional Republicans' willingness to cut essential programs while extending tax breaks for the wealthy and big corporations is the most effective rebuttal to a conservative portrayal of blocking new government spending in the deal (net +6).

- A less effective argument focuses on Congressional Republicans trying to "manufacture an economic crisis that would have hurt millions of Americans, just to score political points against President Biden," which loses to the conservative argument (net -6).

Which side do you agree with more?

**Republican argument:** Republicans who say they forced President Biden and Democrats in Congress to negotiate and blocked them from spending trillions more in taxpayer dollars at a time when inflation and the cost of living are at record highs.

**PROCESS:** Democrats who say Republicans in Congress wanted to manufacture an economic crisis that would have hurt millions of Americans, just to score political points against President Biden, but President Biden and Democrats in Congress stepped up to make sure a deal was struck.

Republican argument:	53%
Process argument:	47%
Net process:	-6

**SPENDING ONLY:** Democrats who say Republicans in Congress tried to take away things like Social Security, Medicare, veterans' health care, and education funding that people rely on, but President Biden and Democrats in Congress protected those programs in this deal.

Republican argument:	50%
Spending argument:	50%
Net spending:	0

**SPENDING + REVENUE:** Democrats who say Republicans in Congress refuse to reduce the debt by ending tax breaks for the wealthy and big corporations. Instead, they want to cut programs that tens of millions of Americans rely on like Social Security and Medicare. President Biden and Democrats in Congress protected those programs in this deal.

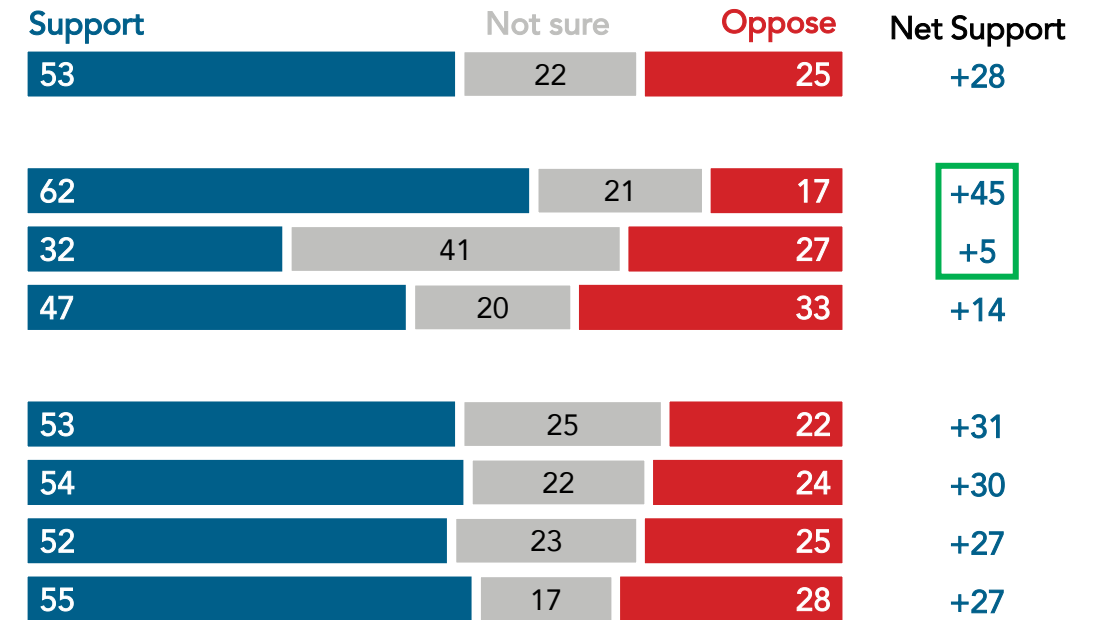
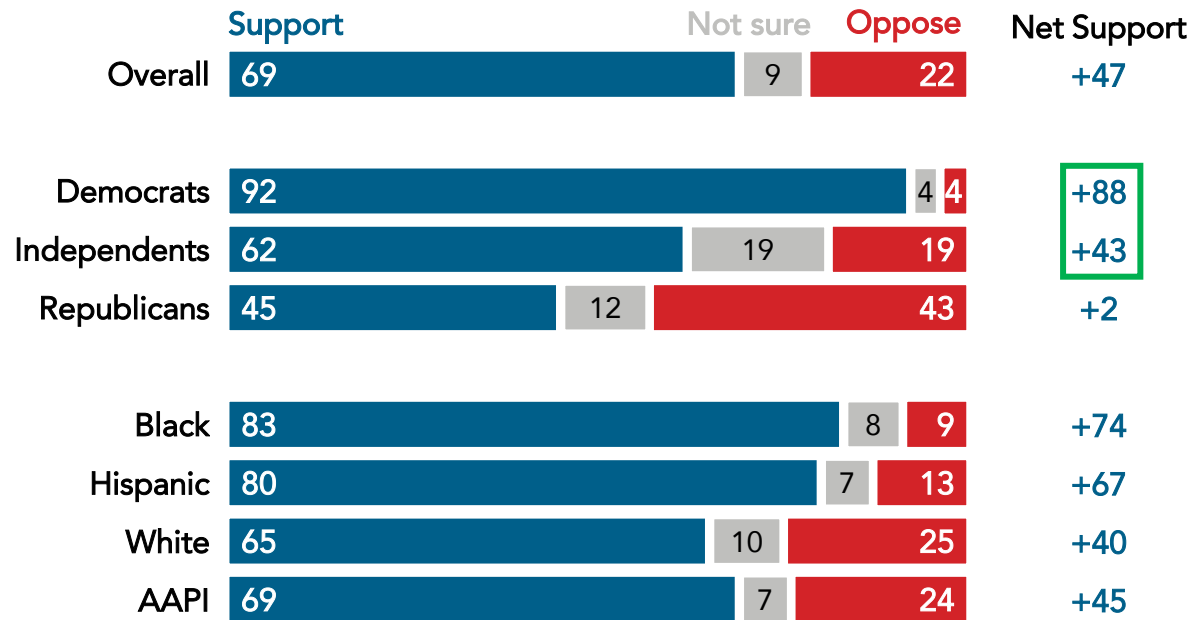
Republican argument:	47%
Spending/revenue argument:	53%
Net spending/revenue:	+6

# The Inflation Reduction Act Remains Broadly Supported – More Than the Recent Debt Deal, and In Spite of Republican Attacks

Democrats and independents are much more supportive of the Inflation Reduction Act (net +88 and net +43 support, respectively) than the debt ceiling deal (+45 and +5), as are members of every racial group. Only Republicans are more supportive of the debt ceiling deal (net +2 on Inflation Reduction Act, net +14 on debt ceiling deal).

As you may know, Biden and Democrats’ legislation that was passed by Congress is called the Inflation Reduction Act, which will give Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices, bring down health insurance premiums, and invest in clean energy like wind and solar power. Knowing this, do you support or oppose this economic plan?

As you may know, Republicans in Congress and President Biden have struck a deal to raise the debt ceiling, avoiding defaulting on the government’s bills. Do you support or oppose the deal they struck to raise the debt ceiling and avoid default?



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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 1,001 registered voters from June 2-June 5, 2023. 100 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 72 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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