

# navigator\*

Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>

Student Loan Debt and the  
Economy: A  
Guide for Advocates



## Key Takeaways:

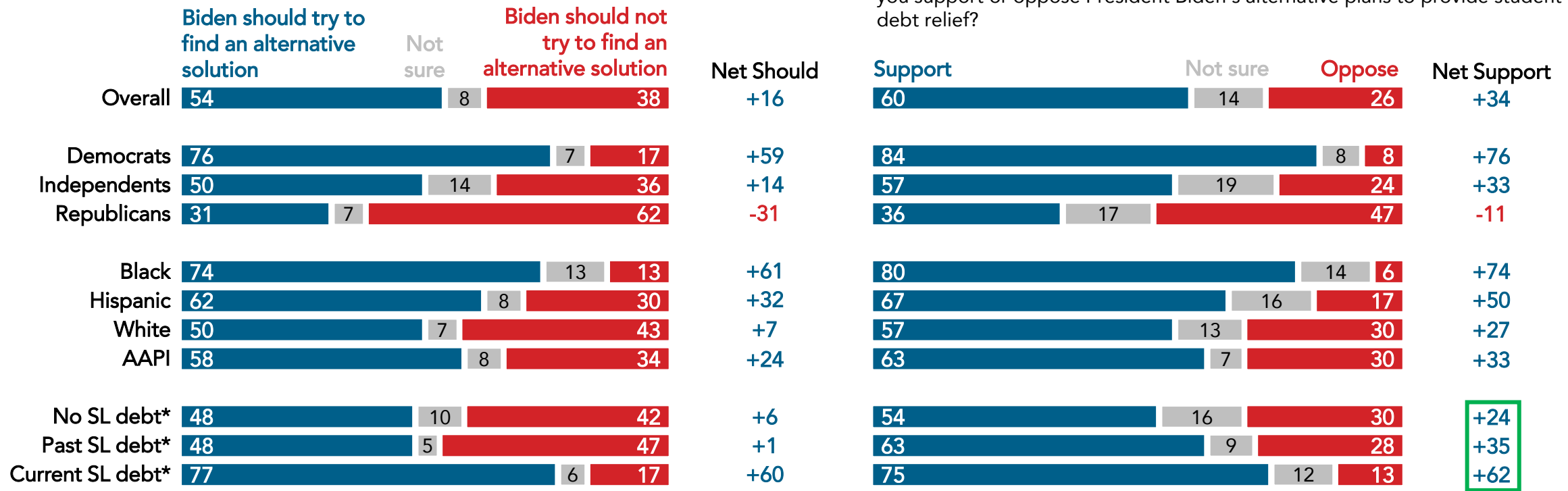
- Majorities, regardless of student loan debt status, support President Biden's alternative plans for forgiveness.
- Americans continue to feel they are paying more for gas and groceries, with groceries, gas, utilities, and housing dominating their cost-of-living concerns.
- On gas prices, oil and gas companies are most to blame, followed by foreign conflicts and supply chain issues.
- The Inflation Reduction Act remains deeply popular, with large bipartisan majorities supporting Medicare being able to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

# Majorities Support Alternative Loan Forgiveness Solutions

Majorities of Americans who currently have student loan debt (+62 support), used to have student loan debt but do not have it anymore (+35), and have never had student loan debt (+24) resoundingly support Biden’s alternative plans to provide student loan debt relief.

As you may know, the Supreme Court overturned President Biden's proposed student loan forgiveness plan – meaning, President Biden's student loan forgiveness plan will no longer go into effect. Knowing this, do you think President Biden should try to find an alternative solution to forgive student loan debt, or should he not try to?

Given the Supreme Court struck down President Biden's student loan forgiveness plan, he has proposed creating a permanent solution that would include a more affordable repayment plan for borrowers and easing into repayment, so people who miss payments are not penalized. Knowing this, do you support or oppose President Biden's alternative plans to provide student loan debt relief?



\*"No SL debt," "past SL debt," and "current SL debt" indicate respondents have never had, used to have but have paid off, or currently have student loan debt, respectively, on a separate question. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted September 7-September 11, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Best Messaging on Student Loans Focuses on Getting Economy Moving & Making Repayment More Affordable

Below are some statements about President Biden's efforts to cancel student loan debt or make student loan debt repayment more affordable. Please indicate how convincing you find each statement.

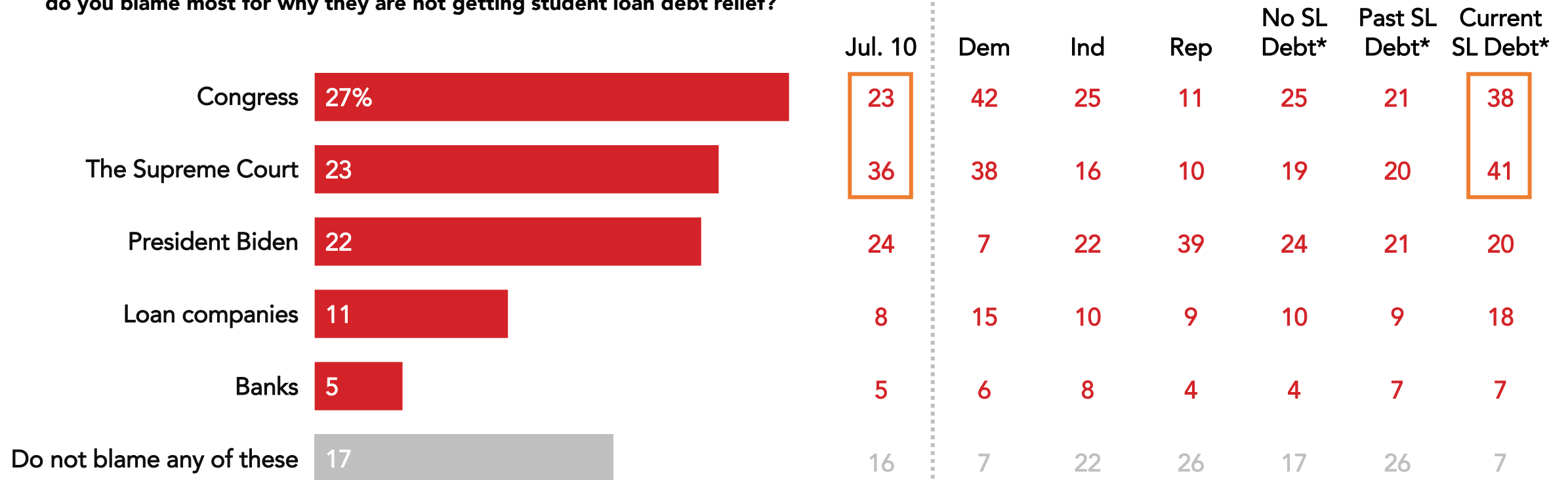
	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Don't believe	Not convincing	Total Convincing				Current SL debt*
					Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	
<i>*/** Split sample</i>									
*Making student loan debt repayment more affordable helps our economy. It frees up money people can use to buy goods and services and get our economy moving	31	34	10	25	65	84	58	47	76
Making student loan debt repayment more affordable is crucial, as getting a college degree becomes more and more expensive in the United States and more jobs require a college education	34	31	9	26	64	85	59	44	74
**Making student loan debt repayment more affordable helps our economy. It frees up money people can use to buy goods and services and will help speed up the economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic	29	29	14	28	58	82	53	33	75
President Biden has already canceled more than \$116 billion in student loan debt for millions of Americans; continuing to make student loan debt repayment more affordable is evidence he is keeping his promise to help deal with student loan debt	25	30	14	31	55	81	51	28	65
President Biden is trying to forgive student loan debt, but the Supreme Court ruled against his plan. The Court is supposed to be independent and above politics, but conservatives have stacked it with political appointees who act on their political views instead of the Constitution	28	24	17	31	52	79	49	24	65
President Biden is trying to forgive student loan debt, but Republicans are standing in the way of Congress helping to pass any kind of relief	28	24	14	34	52	79	49	24	60

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# Since July, Fewer Blame SCOTUS and More Blame Congress for Failed Student Loan Forgiveness

Americans who currently have student loan debt are much more likely to blame the Supreme Court (41%) and Congress (38%) for why they are not getting student loan debt relief than President Biden (20%), loan companies (18%), or banks (7%).

Because of recent events, 43 million Americans who have been promised student loan debt relief will no longer be getting it. As far as you know, which do you blame most for why they are not getting student loan debt relief?

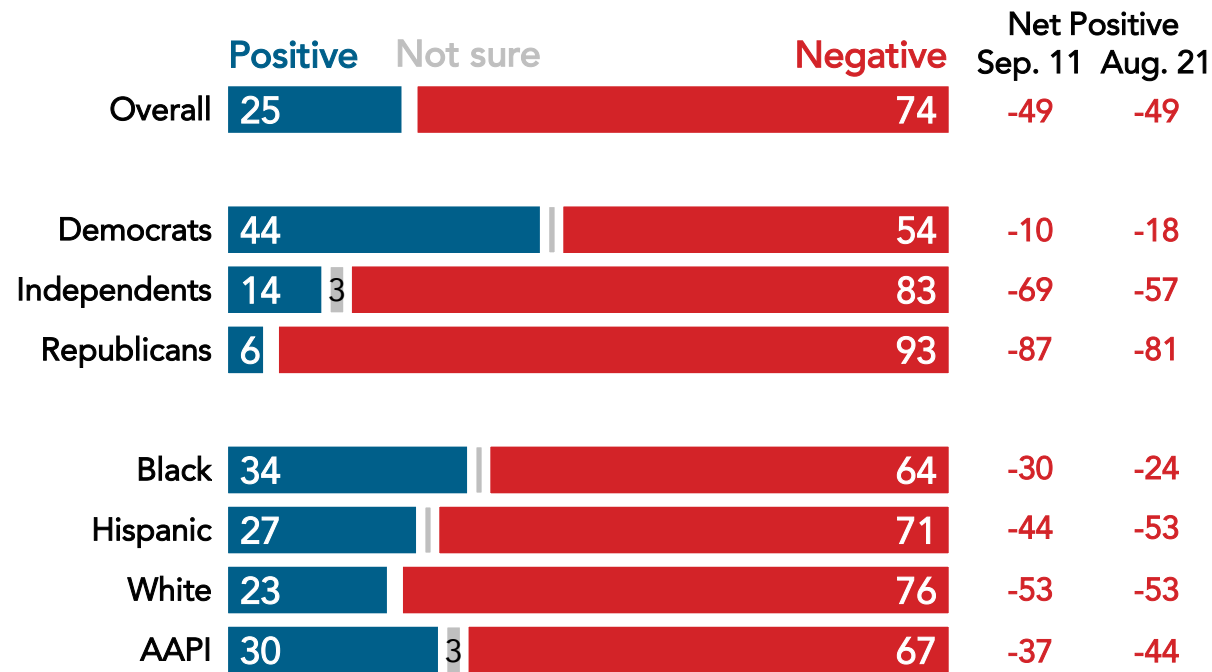


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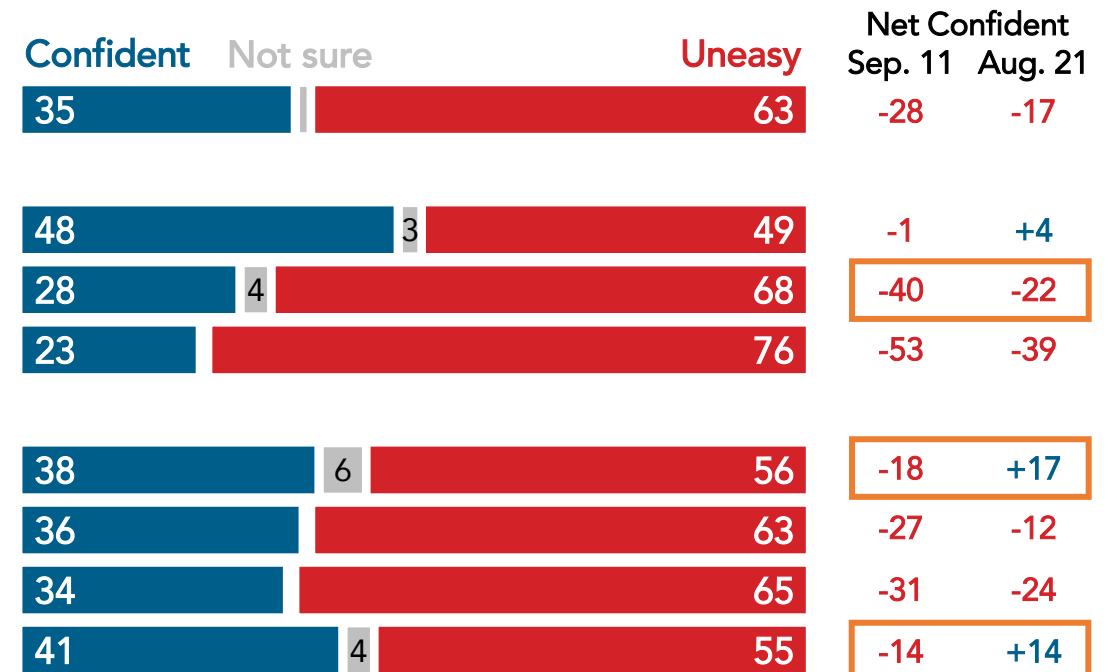
# Three in Four Remain Negative on National Economy, With Growing Unease in Personal Financial Situations

A majority of Democrats (54%), along with large majorities of independents (83%) and Republicans (93%), continue to rate the economy negatively, as Americans' confidence in their personal finances has declined since late August, especially among independents (net -40 confident now, down from net -22), Black Americans (net -18 vs. net +17), and AAPI Americans (net -14 vs. net +14).

How would you rate the state of the U.S. economy today?



Thinking about your personal financial situation over the next few months, do you feel confident or uneasy?



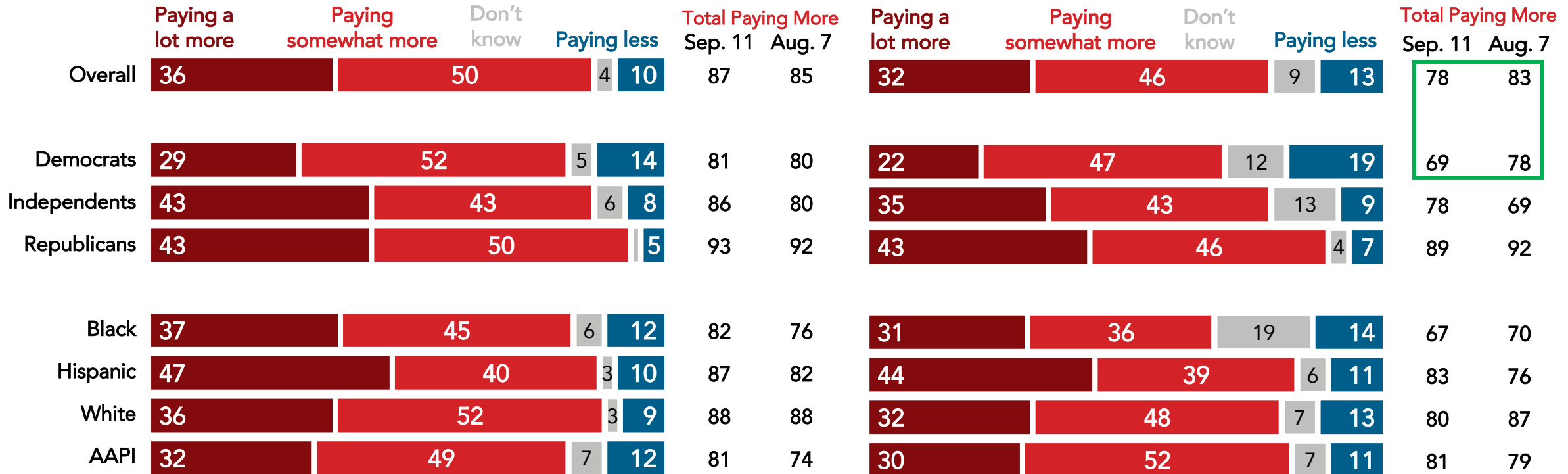
Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted September 7-September 11, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Americans Feel They Are Paying More at Both the Grocery Store and at the Gas Pump

The share of Americans who say they are paying more at the pump has declined slightly since early August (78% now, down from 83%), driven mostly by Democrats (78% said they were paying more in August, 69% say the same now).

**(Split sample)** Thinking more about grocery costs in your community... compared to a few weeks ago, would you say you're...

**(Split sample)** Thinking more about gas prices in your community... compared to a few weeks ago, would you say you're...

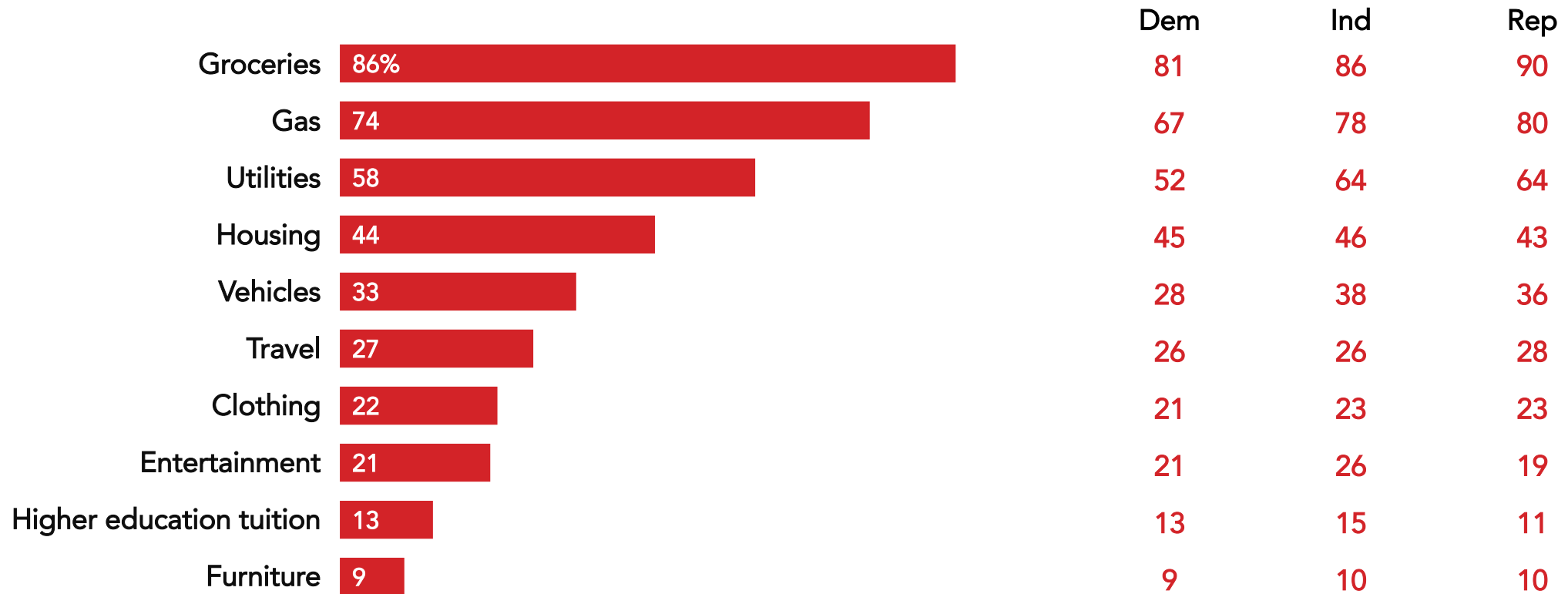


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# Groceries, Gas, Utilities, and Housing Dominate Cost of Living Concerns

Costs like higher education tuition and furniture are much lower-impact areas, by comparison.

Which of these, if any, are you feeling the most impact on with regard to rising prices right now?



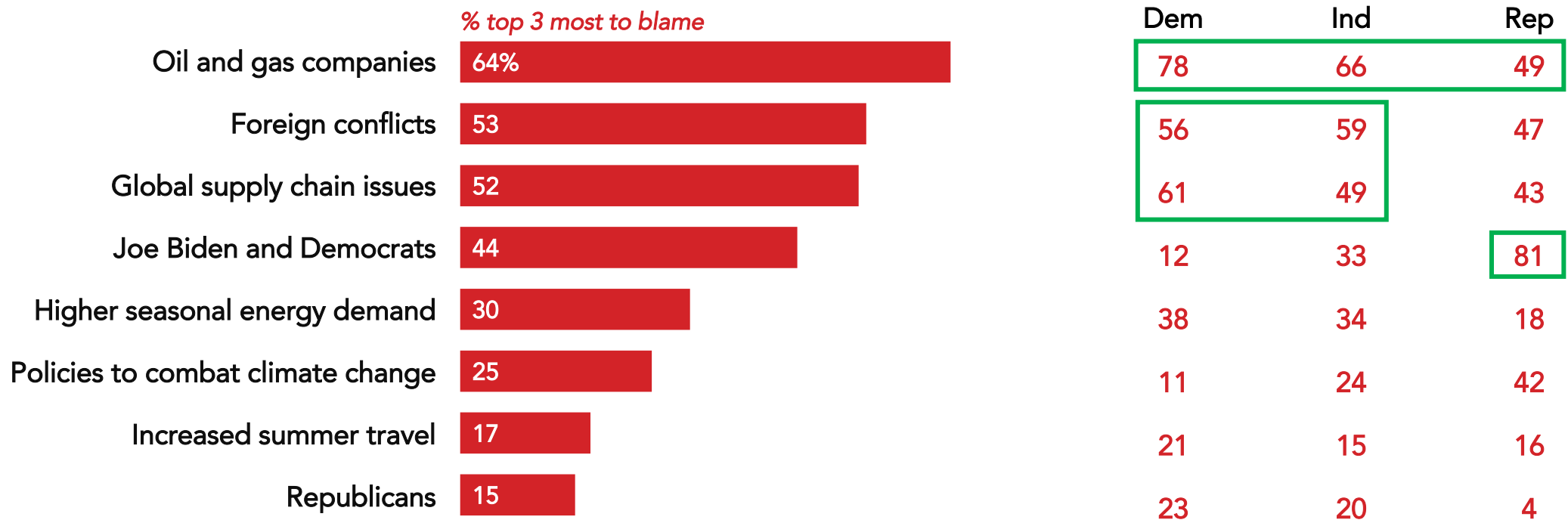
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# Americans Blame Oil and Gas Companies, Foreign Conflicts, and Supply Chain Issues Most for Higher Gas Prices

Oil and gas companies are seen as most responsible by Democrats (78% top 3) and independents (66%), and second-most responsible by Republicans (49%). Independents also blame foreign conflicts (59%) and global supply chain issues (49%) most, while Republicans drive the share blaming Biden and Democrats (81%).

Please rank the following in terms of who or what you hold most responsible for gas prices increasing, with 1 being the most to blame, and 8 being the least to blame.

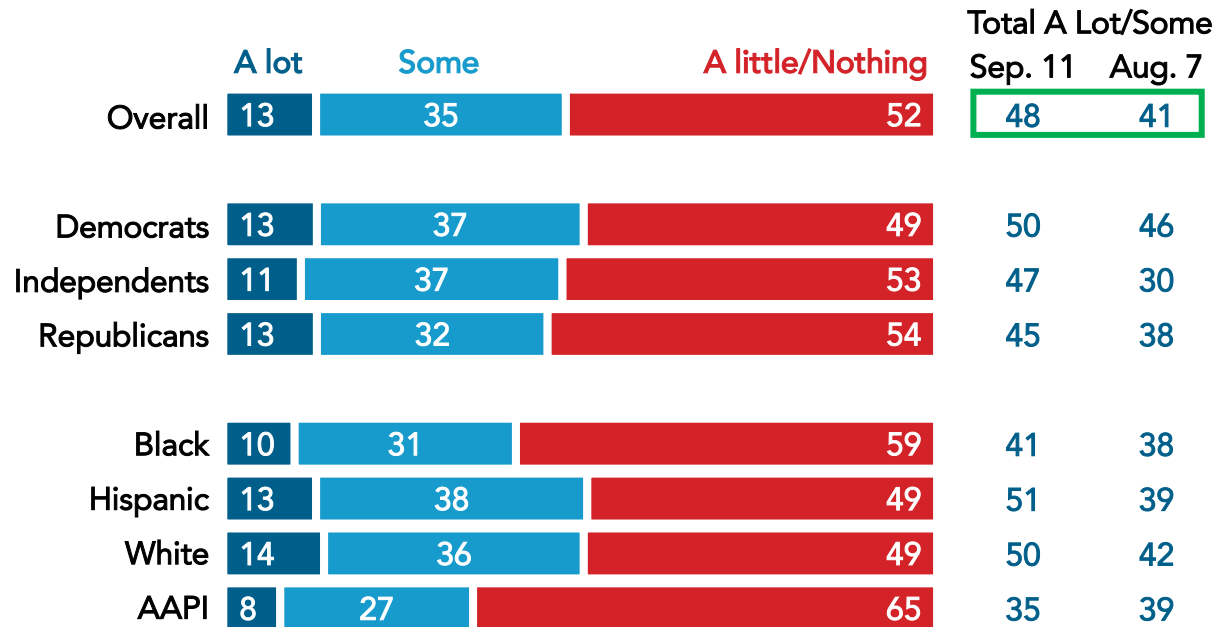


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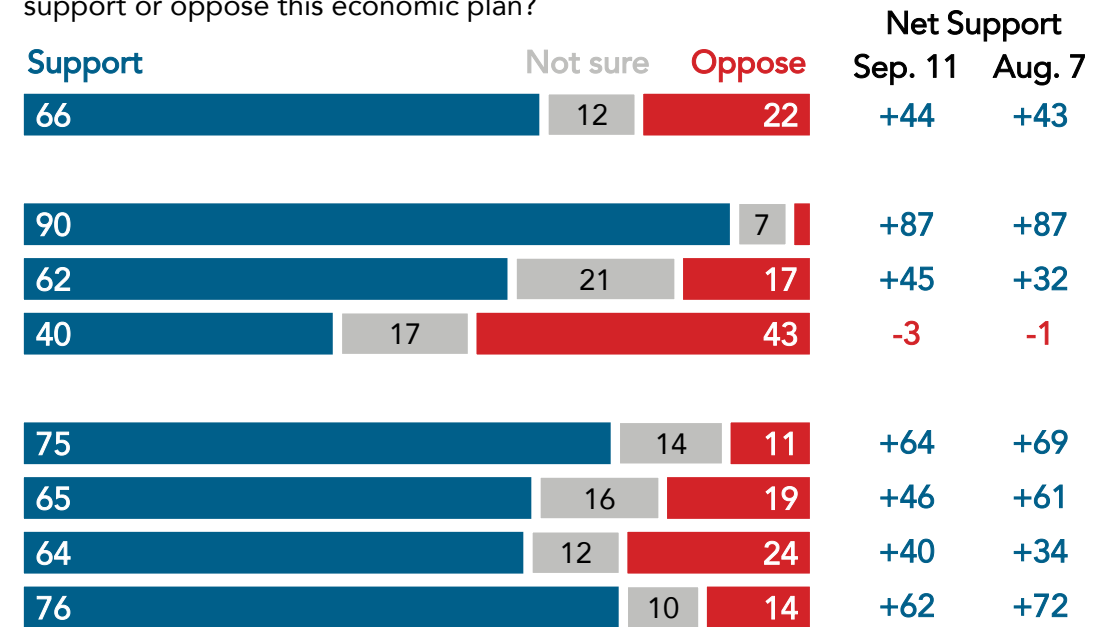
# More Are Hearing About the Inflation Reduction Act Than in August, and Support Levels Remain High

Nearly half of Americans (48%) now report hearing “a lot” or “some” about the legislation, up from just two in five in August (41%); in 2024 Presidential battleground states\*, awareness has increased by 14 points since early August (from 35% “a lot”/“some” to 49%), with 68% of Americans in those states supporting the legislation.

How much have you seen, read, or heard about the legislation called the Inflation Reduction Act passed by Democrats in Congress and signed by President Biden?



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?



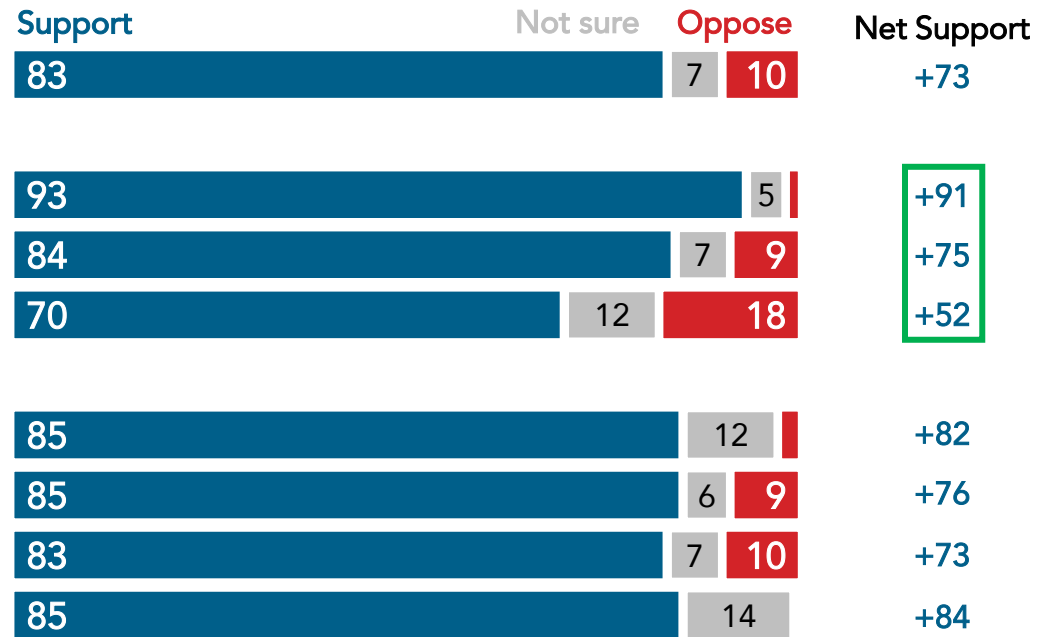
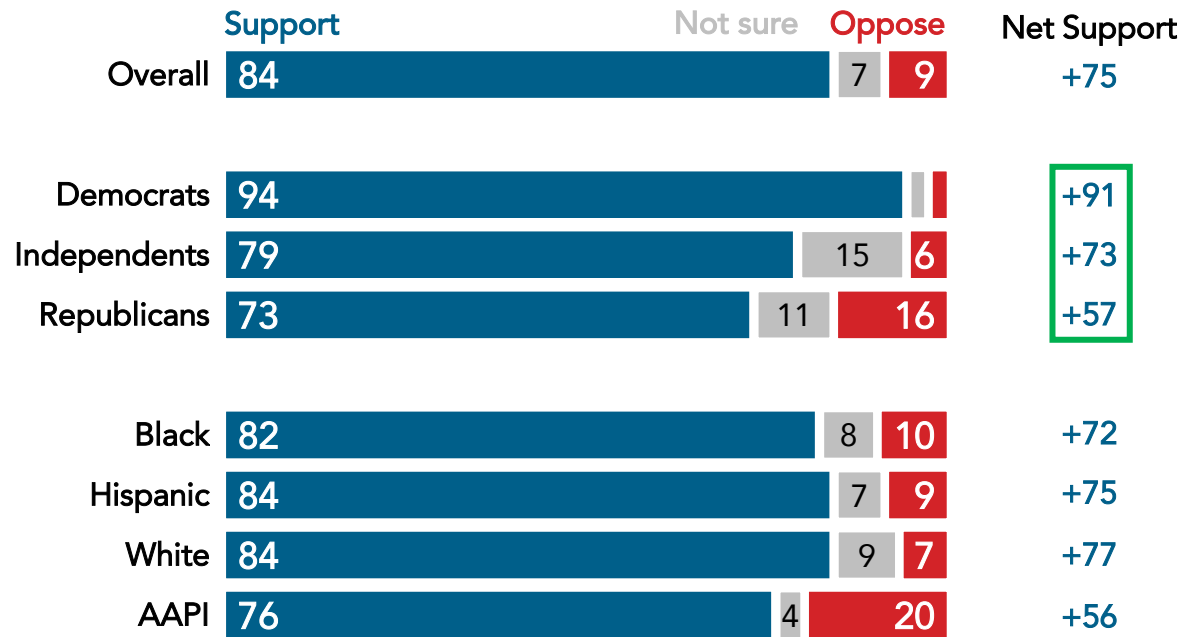
\*“BG States” include respondents in AZ, GA, MI, NV, NC, PA, and WI. Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted September 7-September 11, 2023. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](https://navigatorresearch.org).

# Overwhelming Bipartisan Majorities Support Medicare Negotiating for Lower Prescription Drug Prices

Huge majorities across party and racial lines support Medicare negotiating for lower prescription drug prices, with or without specific drugs.

**(Split sample)** As a part of the Inflation Reduction Act, Medicare now has the power to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices for the first time, reducing prices for prescription drugs. Do you support or oppose Medicare negotiating for lower prescription drug prices on some of the costliest prescription drugs?

**(Split sample)** As a part of the Inflation Reduction Act, Medicare now has the power to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices for the first time, reducing prices for some of the costliest prescription drugs [including Jardiance \(a diabetes drug\), Imbruvica \(a drug for cancer\), and Farxiga \(a drug for diabetes, heart failure, and chronic kidney disease\)](#). Do you support or oppose Medicare negotiating for lower prescription drug prices on some of the costliest prescription drugs?



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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 September 7-September 11, 2023. 99 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 73 additional interviews were conducted among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. 105 additional interviews were conducted among African American voters. 99 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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