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Thursday, September 28th

The Latest on a Potential Government Shutdown: A Guide for Advocates

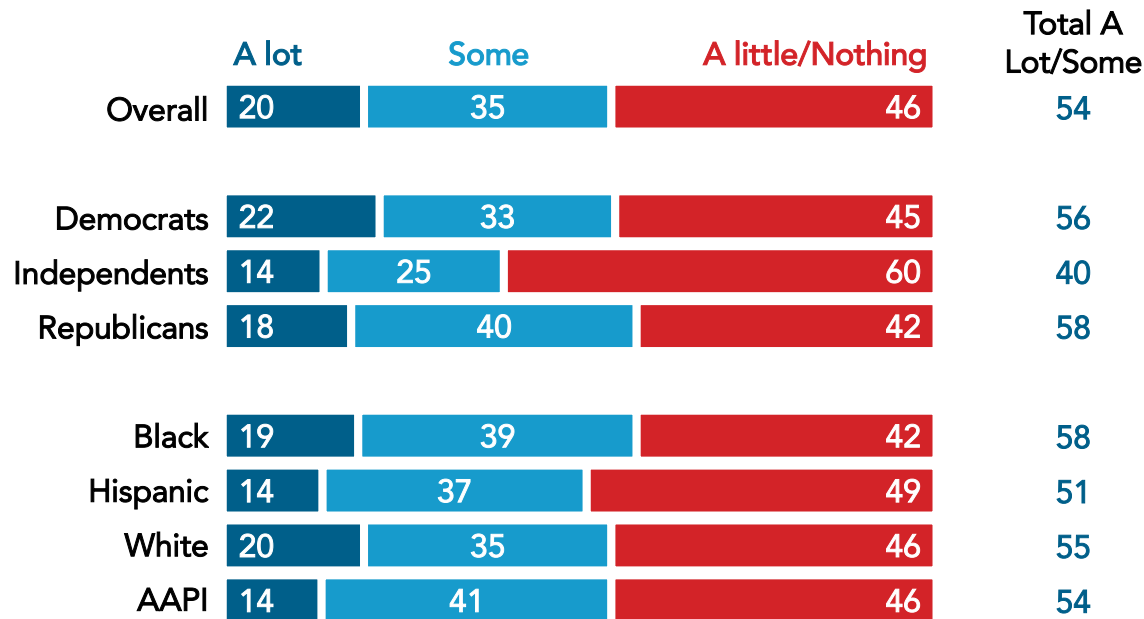GSG GLOBAL STRATEGY GROUP   GBAO

Key Takeaways:

- There has been a significant increase in Americans hearing about a potential government shutdown, but the divide persists on who to blame.

- Nearly two in three Americans say their lives would be negatively impacted if the government were to shut down.

- Americans say the greatest victims of a shutdown would be seniors on Social Security and Medicare, families who depend on government programs, and the economy at large.

- The most concerning and credible outcomes of a shutdown are general damage to the American economy, jeopardizing food stamp funding, and the unemployment rate rising.

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The Government Shutdown Now Dominates What Americans Are Hearing About Elected Officials in D.C.

While Democrats and independents are hearing the most about a potential government shutdown, Republicans are also hearing about the Biden impeachment inquiry.

- Only one in five Americans (20%) report hearing "a lot" about what elected officials in Washington are doing.

Over the past few days, how much have you seen, read, or heard about elected officials in Washington, D.C. and what they are doing or working on?

	A lot	Some	A little/Nothing	Total A Lot/Some
Overall	20	35	46	54
Democrats	22	33	45	56
Independents	14	25	60	40
Republicans	18	40	42	58
Black	19	39	42	58
Hispanic	14	37	49	51
White	20	35	46	55
AAPI	14	41	46	54

In a few words, what – if anything – have you heard about elected officials in Washington, D.C. and what they are doing or working on?
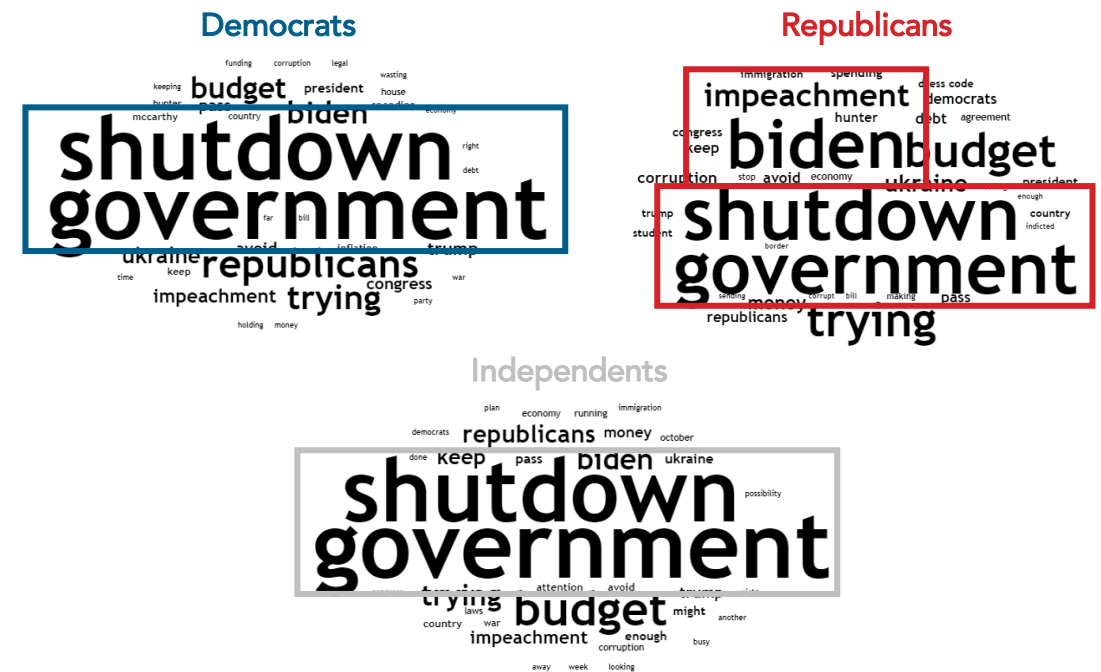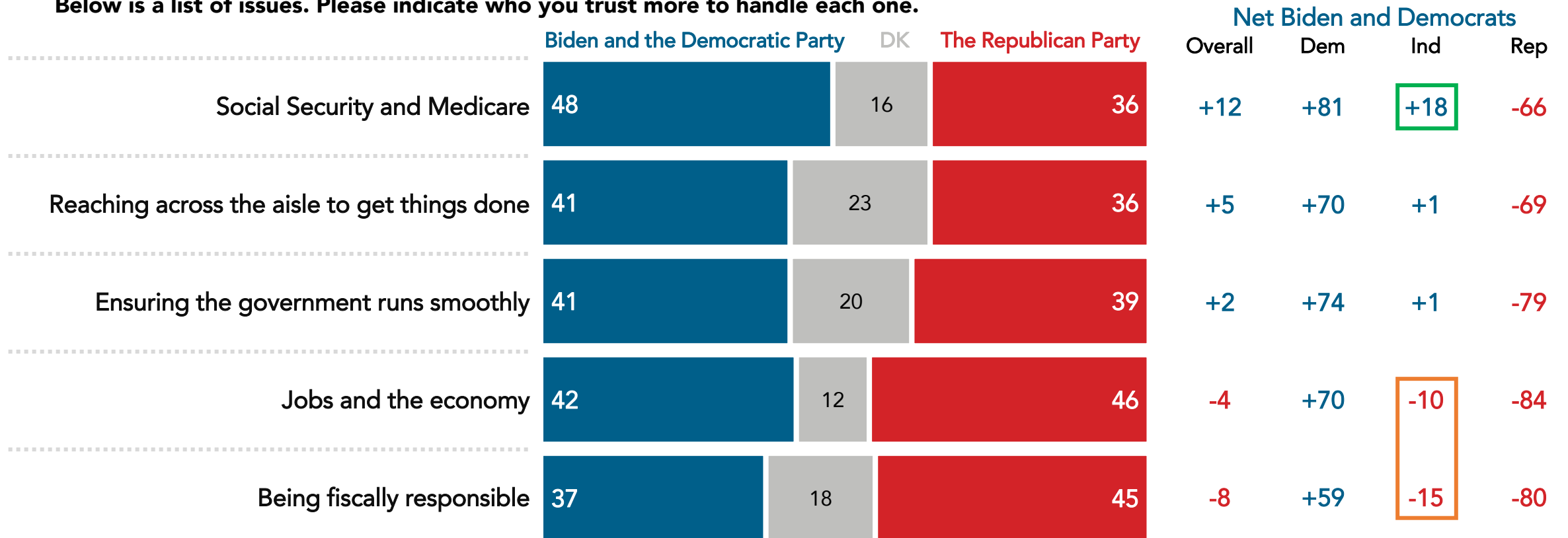

Democrats

Republicans

Independents

Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted September 21-September 25, 2023. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

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Biden and Democrats Lead on SS/Medicare, Reaching Across the Aisle; Trail on the Economy and Fiscal Responsibility

Independents trust Biden and Democrats more on Social Security and Medicare (net +18 Biden and Democrats), while they trust Republicans more on jobs and the economy (net +10 Republicans) and being fiscally responsible (net +15).

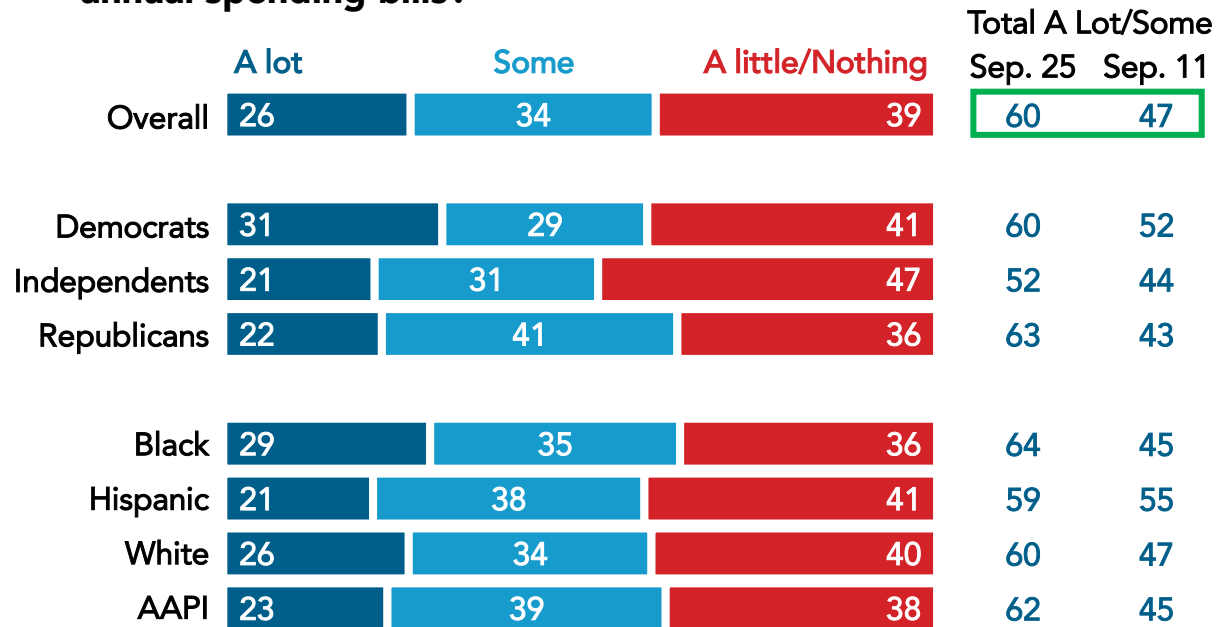**Below is a list of issues. Please indicate who you trust more to handle each one.**

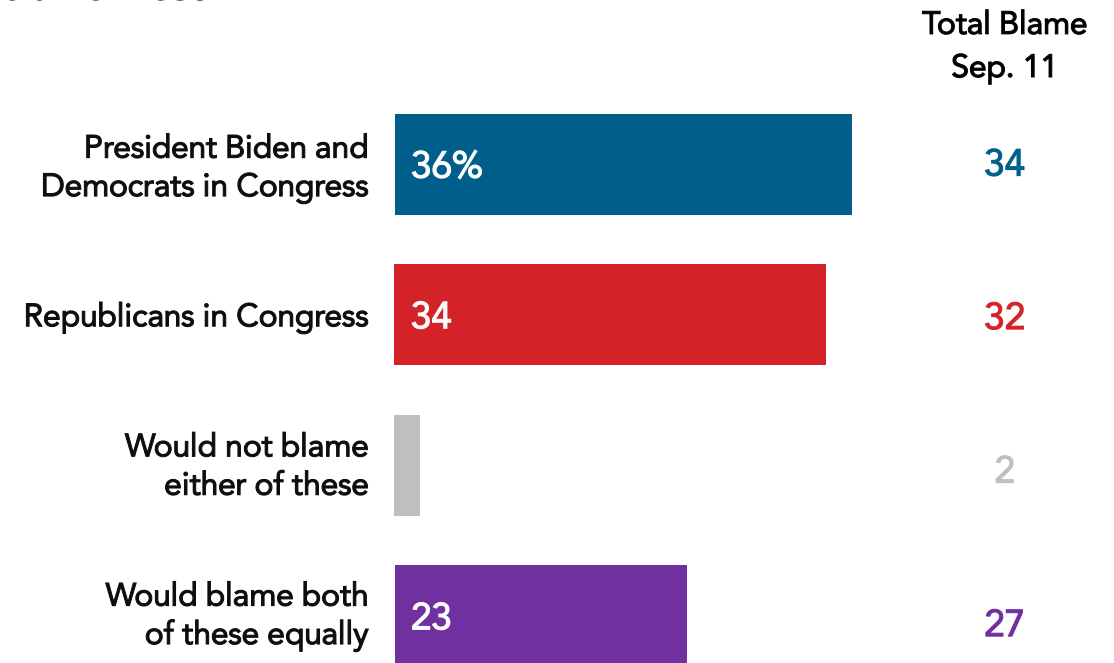|	Biden and the Democratic Party	DK	The Republican Party	Net Biden and Democrats			
				Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep
Social Security and Medicare	48	16	36	+12	+81	+18	-66
Reaching across the aisle to get things done	41	23	36	+5	+70	+1	-69
Ensuring the government runs smoothly	41	20	39	+2	+74	+1	-79
Jobs and the economy	42	12	46	-4	+70	-10	-84
Being fiscally responsible	37	18	45	-8	+59	-15	-80

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More Americans Are Hearing About a Potential Government Shutdown, While Blame Remains Divided

Three in five Americans (60%) now report hearing "a lot" or "some" about a potential government shutdown, up from fewer than half in early September (47%); Americans continue to be divided on whom they would blame for such a shutdown, split between Biden and Democrats in Congress (36%) and Republicans in Congress (34%), with another quarter who would blame both equally (23%).

How much have you seen, read, or heard about a potential government shutdown this fall if Congress cannot pass their annual spending bills?

	A lot	Some	A little/Nothing	Total A Lot/Some Sep. 25	Total A Lot/Some Sep. 11
Overall	26	34	39	60	47
Democrats	31	29	41	60	52
Independents	21	31	47	52	44
Republicans	22	41	36	63	43
Black	29	35	36	64	45
Hispanic	21	38	41	59	55
White	26	34	40	60	47
AAPI	23	39	38	62	45

If the government were to shut down this fall, who would you blame most?

		Total Blame Sep. 11
President Biden and Democrats in Congress	36%	34
Republicans in Congress	34	32
Would not blame either of these		2
Would blame both of these equally	23	27

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Nearly Two in Three Say They Will Be Negatively Impacted Personally If the Government Shuts Down

Large majorities across party lines say a government shutdown would negatively impact them (including 60% of independents, 61% of Republicans, and 65% of Democrats).

If Congress does not pass spending bills to fund the government by September 30, it will cause a government shutdown. Which of the following best describes the impact you think this will have on you?
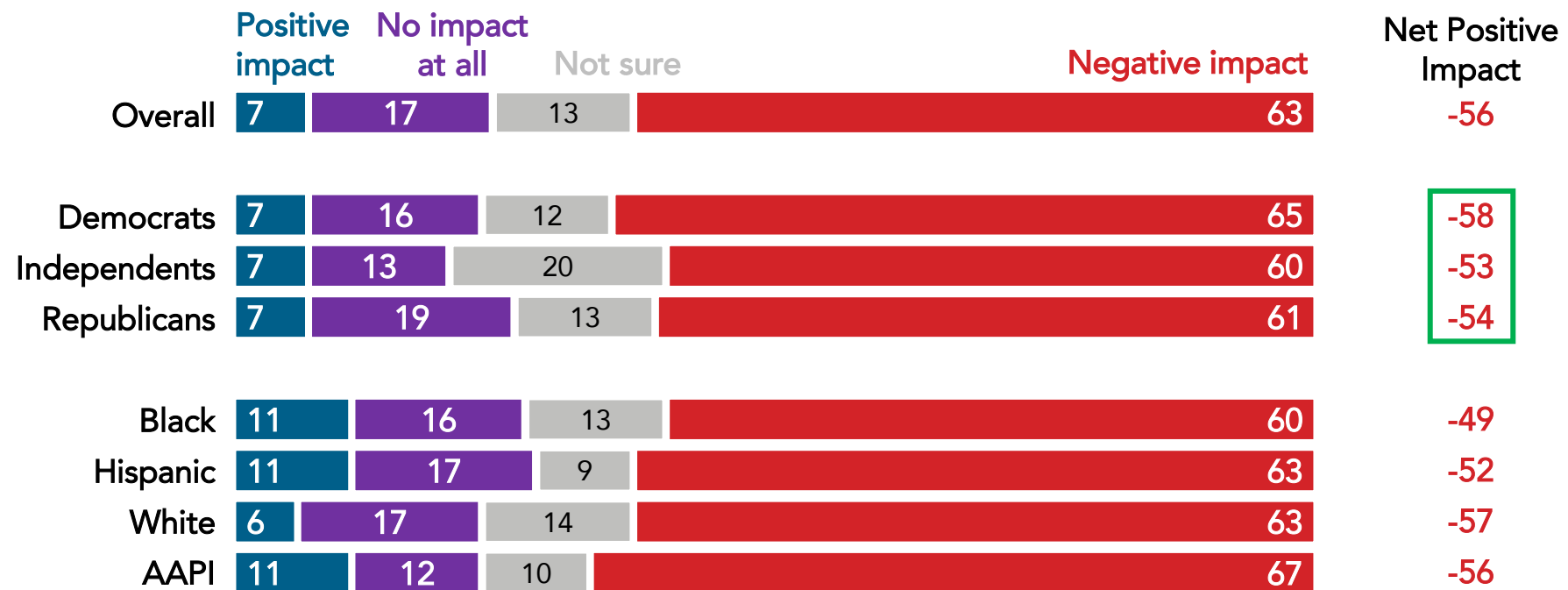
	Positive impact	No impact at all	Not sure	Negative impact	Net Positive Impact
Overall	7	17	13	63	-56
Democrats	7	16	12	65	-58
Independents	7	13	20	60	-53
Republicans	7	19	13	61	-54
Black	11	16	13	60	-49
Hispanic	11	17	9	63	-52
White	6	17	14	63	-57
AAPI	11	12	10	67	-56

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Seniors, Families, and the Economy At Large Seen as the Greatest Victims of a Potential Shutdown

Americans across party lines say "seniors who depend on Social Security and Medicare" will be most negatively impacted by a government shutdown, while only 3% of Americans say "the rich and big corporations" will be among the top three most impacted.

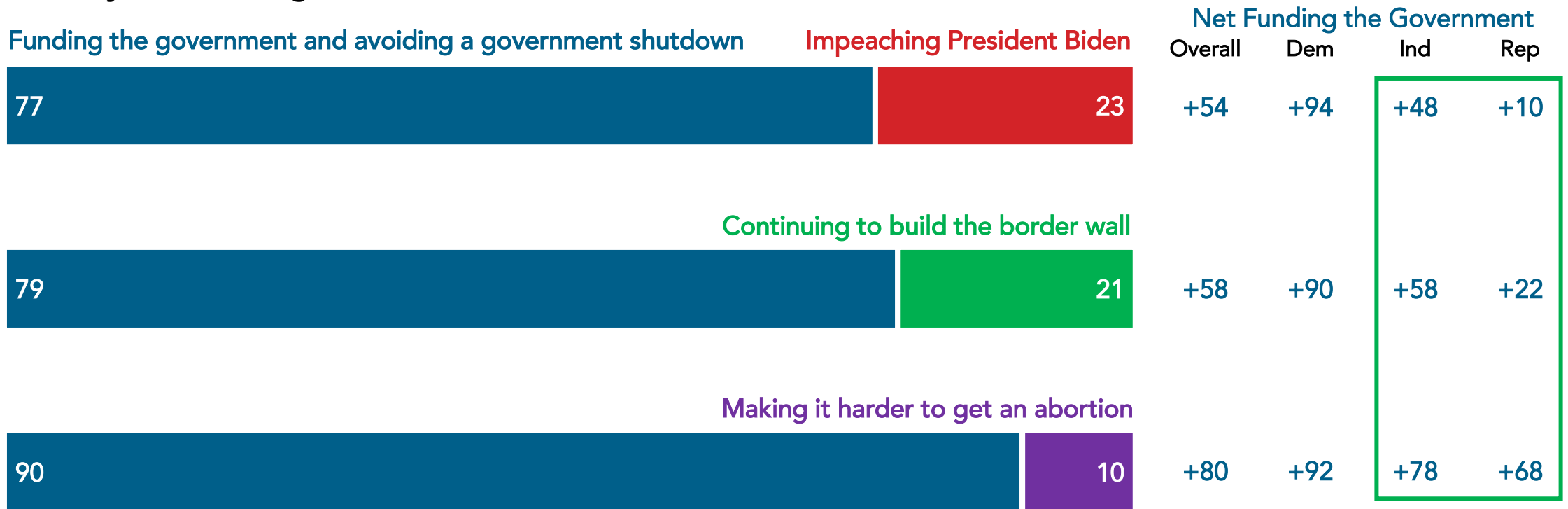**If the government shuts down, who do you think will be most negatively impacted?**
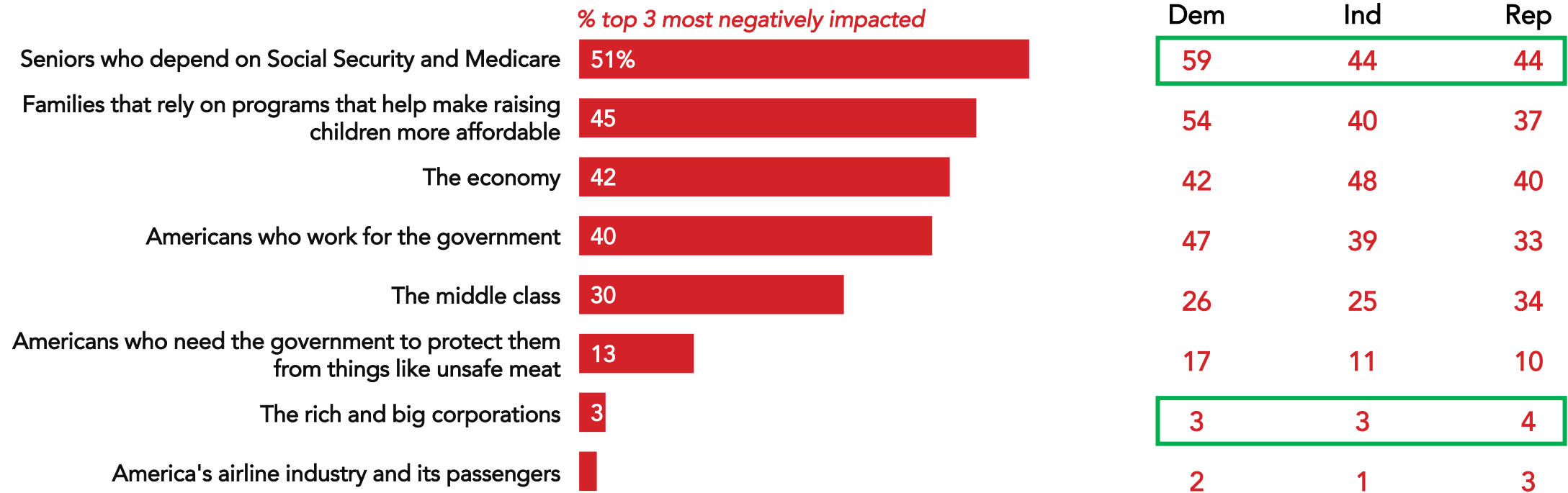
% top 3 most negatively impacted

	%	Dem	Ind	Rep
Seniors who depend on Social Security and Medicare	51%	59	44	44
Families that rely on programs that help make raising children more affordable	45	54	40	37
The economy	42	42	48	40
Americans who work for the government	40	47	39	33
The middle class	30	26	25	34
Americans who need the government to protect them from things like unsafe meat	13	17	11	10
The rich and big corporations	3	3	3	4
America's airline industry and its passengers		2	1	3

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Keeping the Government Open Is a Clear Bipartisan Priority Over Impeachment, Border Wall, and Reducing Abortion Access

Majorities of independents and Republicans prefer the government focus on "funding the government and avoiding a government shutdown" rather than impeaching President Biden (net +48 and net +10, respectively), continuing to build the border wall (net +58 and net +22), or making it harder to get an abortion (net +78 and net +68).
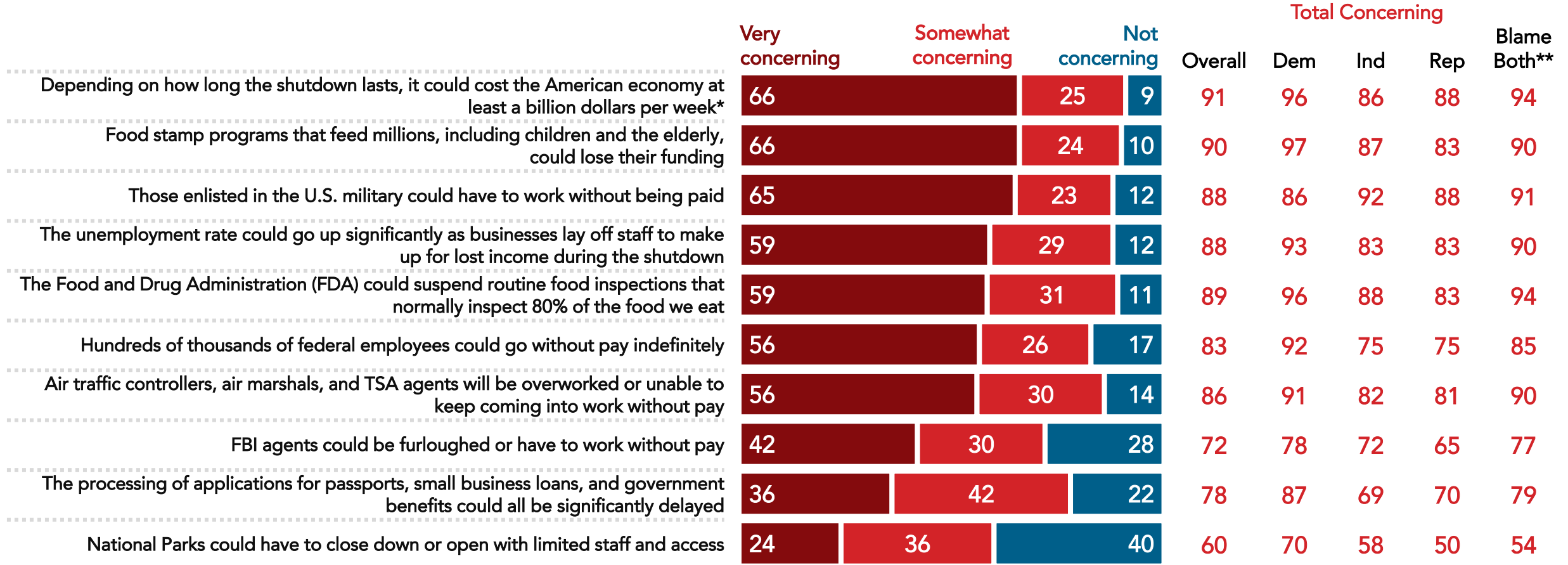
Which would you rather the government focus on?

Net Funding the Government

	Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep

Funding the government and avoiding a government shutdown — **Impeaching President Biden**

77	23	+54	+94	+48	+10

Continuing to build the border wall

79	21	+58	+90	+58	+22

Making it harder to get an abortion

90	10	+80	+92	+78	+68

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The Most Concerning Outcomes Are Economic Damage, Funding for Food, Military Pay Delays

Below is a list of potential outcomes if the government were to shut down. Please indicate how concerning you find each potential outcome.

	Very concerning	Somewhat concerning	Not concerning	Total Concerning				
				Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	Blame Both**
Depending on how long the shutdown lasts, it could cost the American economy at least a billion dollars per week*	66	25	9	91	96	86	88	94
Food stamp programs that feed millions, including children and the elderly, could lose their funding	66	24	10	90	97	87	83	90
Those enlisted in the U.S. military could have to work without being paid	65	23	12	88	86	92	88	91
The unemployment rate could go up significantly as businesses lay off staff to make up for lost income during the shutdown	59	29	12	88	93	83	83	90
The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could suspend routine food inspections that normally inspect 80% of the food we eat	59	31	11	89	96	88	83	94
Hundreds of thousands of federal employees could go without pay indefinitely	56	26	17	83	92	75	75	85
Air traffic controllers, air marshals, and TSA agents will be overworked or unable to keep coming into work without pay	56	30	14	86	91	82	81	90
FBI agents could be furloughed or have to work without pay	42	30	28	72	78	72	65	77
The processing of applications for passports, small business loans, and government benefits could all be significantly delayed	36	42	22	78	87	69	70	79
National Parks could have to close down or open with limited staff and access	24	36	40	60	70	58	50	54

*Full question text included: "the government shutdown in 2019 cost the government $11 billion."
**"Blame both" are respondents who would blame both parties equally for a government shutdown on a separate question.
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The Outcomes Seen as Most Likely Are National Park Closures, Delays, Federal Employee Pay Delays

Looking at the list below, please indicate how likely you think each is to happen if the government shuts down.

Very likely   **Somewhat likely**   **Unlikely**

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Unlikely	Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	Blame Both**
				Total Likely				
National Parks could have to close down or open with limited staff and access	44	40	16	84	85	83	84	83
The processing of applications for passports, small business loans, and government benefits could all be significantly delayed	41	45	13	87	89	91	82	89
Hundreds of thousands of federal employees could go without pay indefinitely	41	37	23	77	82	80	71	75
Depending on how long the shutdown lasts, it could cost the American economy at least a billion dollars per week*	38	47	15	85	90	84	80	88
Food stamp programs that feed millions, including children and the elderly, could lose their funding	37	38	25	75	83	79	64	75
Those enlisted in the U.S. military could have to work without being paid	32	38	30	70	78	70	61	70
The unemployment rate could go up significantly as businesses lay off staff to make up for lost income during the shutdown	32	44	24	76	81	69	73	76
Air traffic controllers, air marshals, and TSA agents will be overworked or unable to keep coming into work without pay	30	42	28	72	80	71	64	68
The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could suspend routine food inspections that normally inspect 80% of the food we eat	29	41	31	69	76	69	63	65
FBI agents could be furloughed or have to work without pay	27	40	33	67	73	66	60	59

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The Outcomes Seen as Most Concerning/Most Likely Are Broad Economic Damage, Unemployment, Funding for Food

The three outcomes seen as most likely and most concerning include broad damage to the American economy, including billions in dollars lost per week of a shutdown; the unemployment rate rising; and food stamp programs going underfunded.
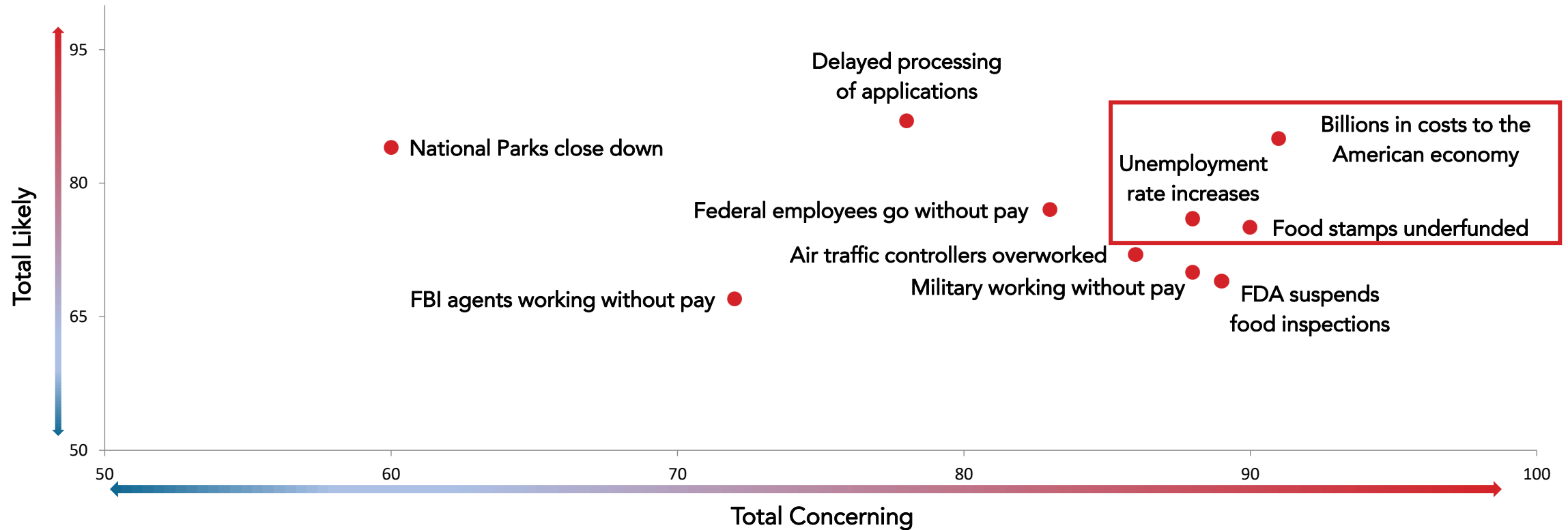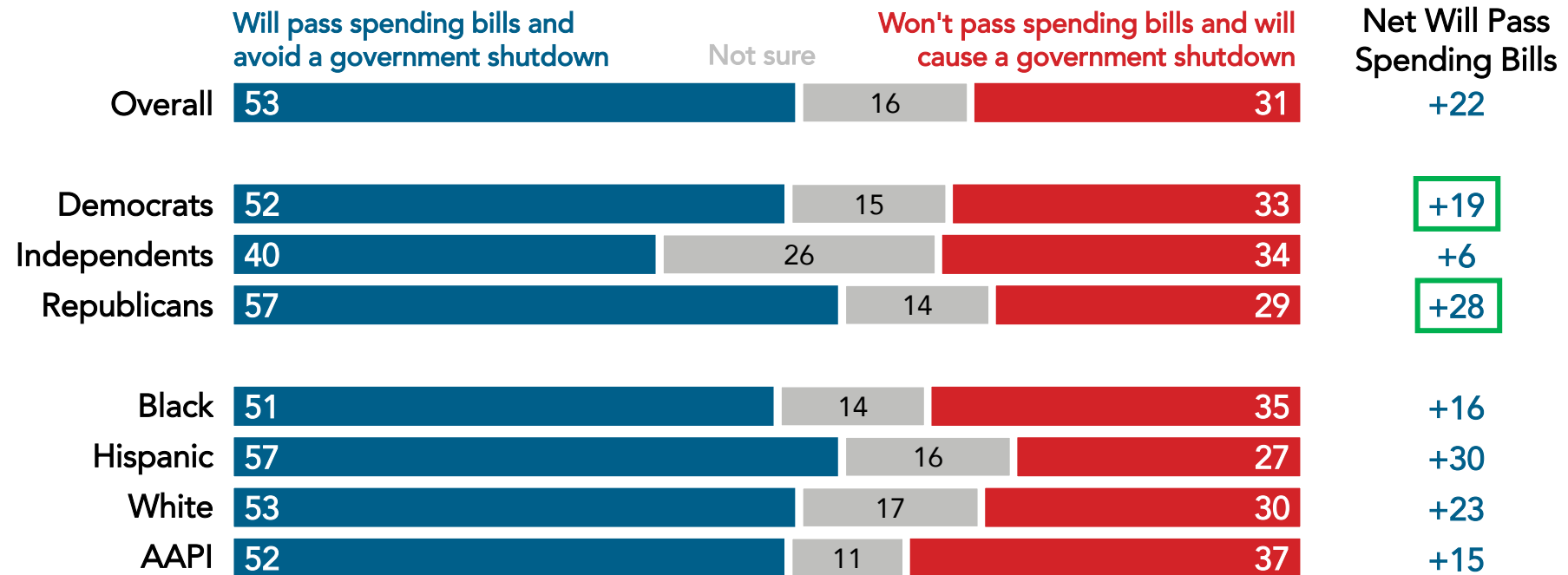
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Most Americans Expect Congress Will Pass Spending Bills and Avoid a Shutdown

Majorities of both Democrats (52%) and Republicans (57%) expect that Congress will pass spending bills and avoid a government shutdown, as do majorities across racial groups; independents are more skeptical with 26% not sure, though a plurality (40%) agree.

If Congress does not pass spending bills to fund the government by September 30, it will cause a government shutdown. Which of the following do you think is most likely that Congress will do by September 30?

	Will pass spending bills and avoid a government shutdown	Not sure	Won't pass spending bills and will cause a government shutdown	Net Will Pass Spending Bills
Overall	53	16	31	+22
Democrats	52	15	33	+19
Independents	40	26	34	+6
Republicans	57	14	29	+28
Black	51	14	35	+16
Hispanic	57	16	27	+30
White	53	17	30	+23
AAPI	52	11	37	+15

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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 21-September 25, 2023. 105 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 75 additional interviews were conducted among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. 104 additional interviews were conducted among African American voters. 102 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.