

# navigator.\*

Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>

Pocketbook  
Pessimists



Credit: Shutterstock/Miha Creative

## Key Takeaways:

"Pocketbook Pessimists" are targets for economic communication. They are either unsure about the economy, or they are pessimistic but don't blame Trump and Republicans for costs rising. But, a majority of them disapprove of Trump's handling of the economy and inflation.

*Ideologically: they lean independent and are less engaged in politics.*

*Media: they are more likely to be passive news consumers than Americans more broadly, and they get more information from social media than Americans do overall.*

*Priorities: they put an even higher premium on inflation and the economy than Americans overall. They do not trust either party on these issues.*

*Issues: they are most concerned about rising costs and inflation, wages not keeping up with costs, and job loss on the economy. They overwhelmingly see their costs as rising. And, they most see Trump's tariffs, cuts to Medicaid and SNAP, and ending ACA subsidies as reasons costs are rising.*

# A Third Are Unsure on the Economy or Believe the Economy Is Bad, But Don't Yet Blame Trump and GOP for Costs Rising

Nearly a third of Americans are either unsure on the economy or already pessimistic about the economy, but do not yet blame Trump and Republicans – and are most likely open to persuasion.

**Economic Optimists –  
Those who rate the  
economy positively**

33

Very conservative Republicans (80% are Economic Optimists)

MAGA Republicans\* (72%)

Politically engaged Republicans (70%)

Republican men (67%)

Fox News viewers (51%)

**Pocketbook Pessimists – Those who are unsure on the economy OR rate the economy negatively, but don't blame Trump/GOP for costs rising**

31

Independent women (57% are Pocketbook Pessimists)

Uninsured (54%)

Independents (52%)

Non-conservative Independents/GOP (46%)

Non-MAGA Republicans\* (44%)

**Consolidated Pocketbook Pessimists – Those who rate the economy negatively and blame Trump/GOP for costs rising**

36

Republican women (42%)  
Moderates (41%)

Passive news consumers (41%)

Millennials (39%)

Americans 18-44 (37%)

Non-college women (37%)

Politically engaged Dems (75% are Consolidated Pocketbook Pessimists)

Liberal Democrats (72%)

Liberals (65%)

Democratic men (64%)

AAPI Americans (50%)

Black Americans (49%)

Service industry (46%)

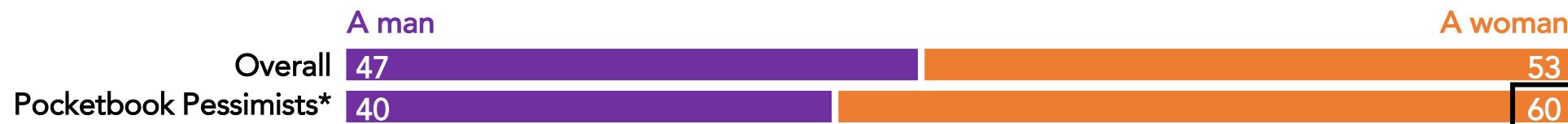
\*"MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who identify as "a supporter of the MAGA movement" on a separate question, while "non-MAGA Republicans" are Republicans who do not consider themselves supporters of the MAGA movement or are not sure. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted January 8-January 12, 2026. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](http://navigatorresearch.org).

# Pocketbook Pessimists Tend to Be Younger, More Female, More Non-College, and Live in Rural Areas

What is your age?



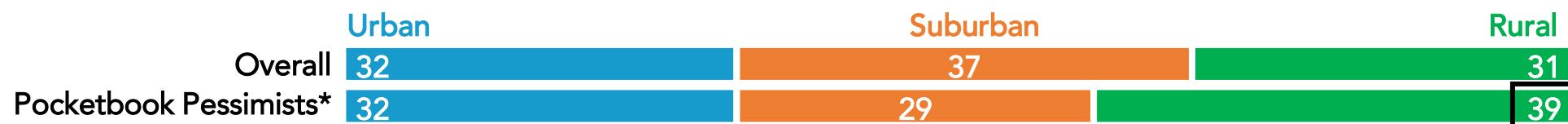
Are you:



What is the last grade of school or level of education you completed?



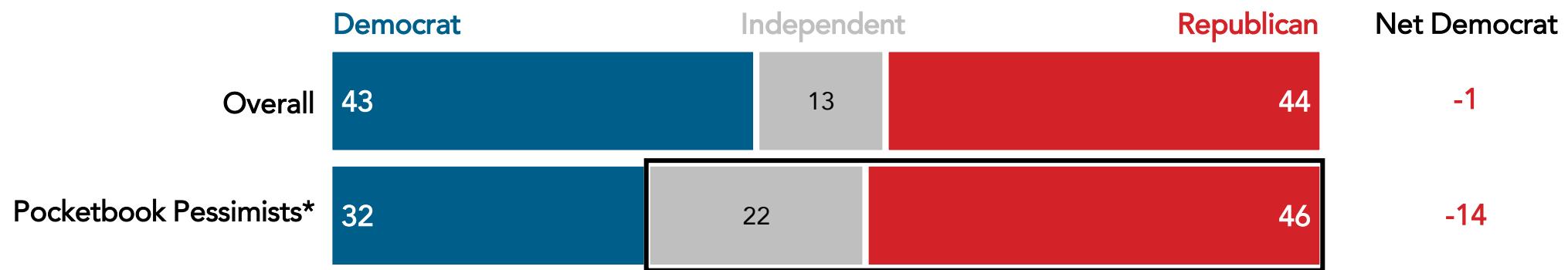
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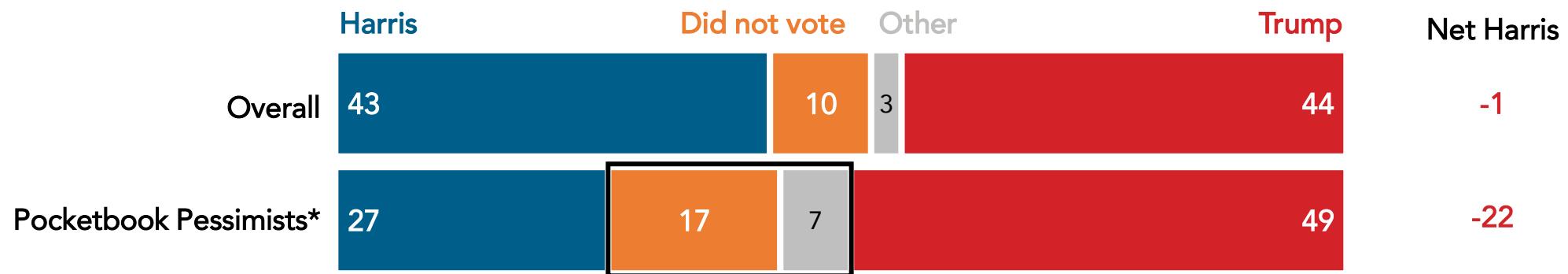
\*"Pocketbook Pessimists" are those who rate the economy negatively but don't blame Trump/GOP for costs rising or are not sure how they feel about the economy. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted January 8-January 12, 2026. For more info, visit [navigatorresearch.org](http://navigatorresearch.org).

# Pocketbook Pessimists Skew More Independent and Are More Likely To Be Non-Voters

When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as:



Thinking back, in the November 2024 general election for President, who did you vote for?



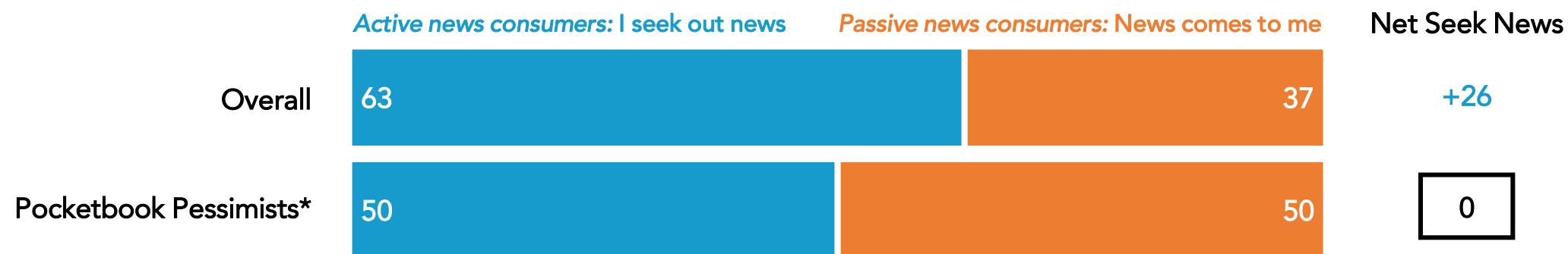
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# These Americans Tend To Be Politically Disengaged and Passive News Consumers

How important is politics to your personal identity?



Which of the following better describes how you get news about things like current events and politics?



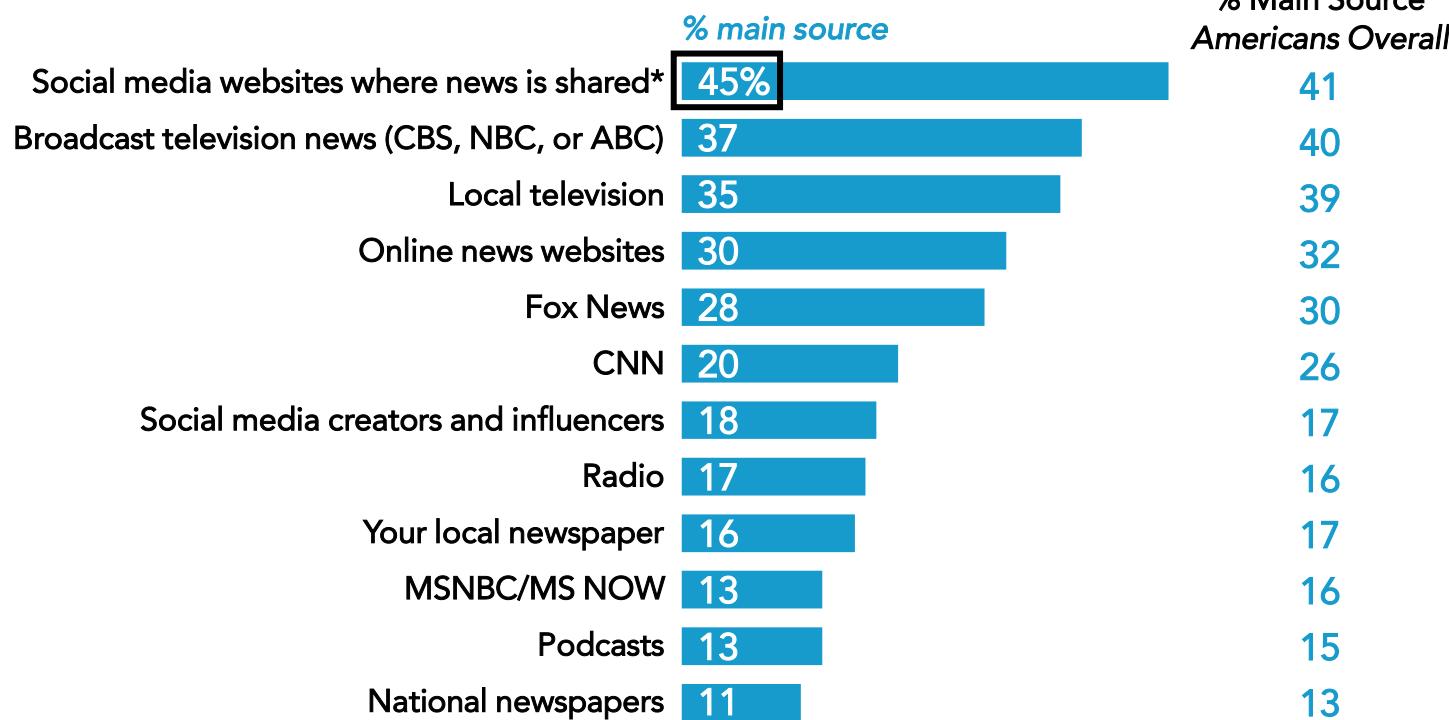
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# This Group Is More Likely to Get News From Social Media and Use TikTok, Snapchat

Over two in five pocketbook pessimists\*\* report getting their news from social media (45%).

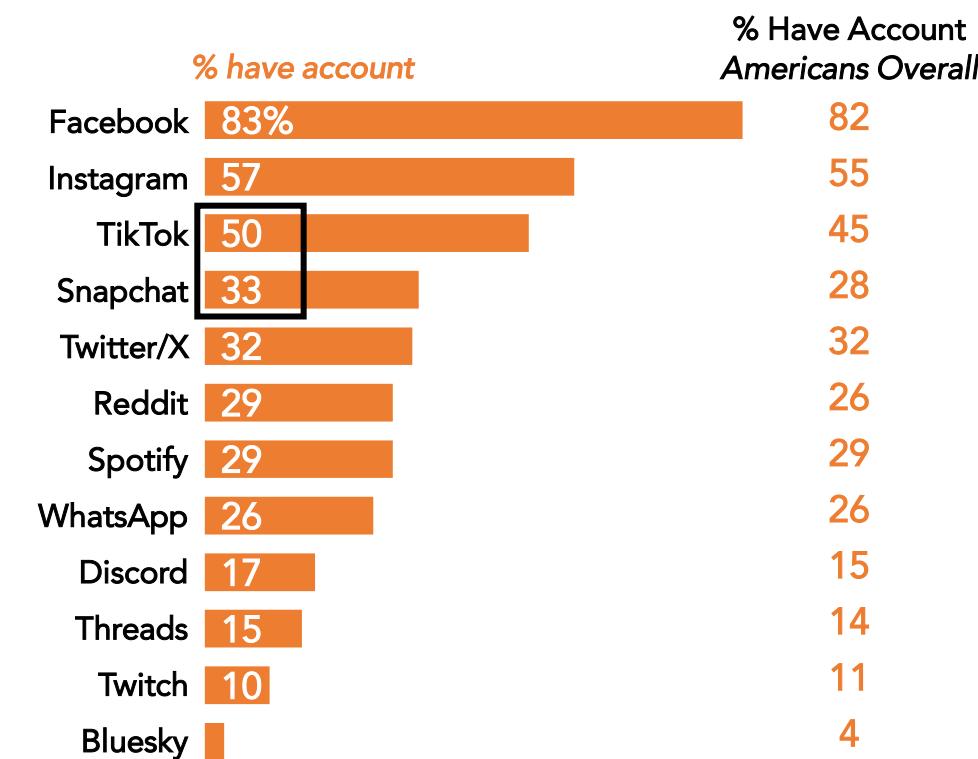
**(Among Pocketbook Pess.\*\*) Which of the following would you say are your main sources of news about politics and current events in the U.S.?**



\*Full text read "Social media websites where news is shared (such as Facebook, X/Twitter, or YouTube)."

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**(Among Pocketbook Pess.\*\*) Do you have an account on any of the following platforms?**



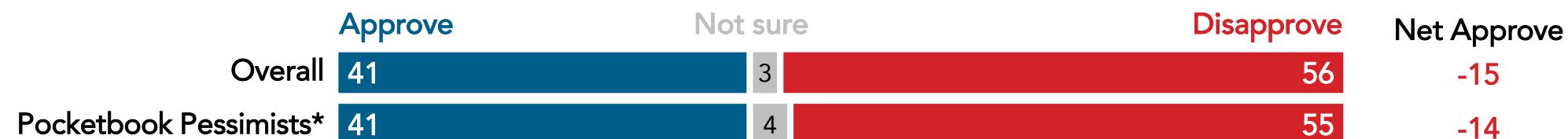
# Though They're Not Yet Ready to Blame Trump/GOP on Costs, Trump's Ratings Are Not Glowing With This Group Either

A majority of pocketbook pessimists\* disapprove of Trump overall (52% disapprove), on the economy (55%), and on inflation (58%).

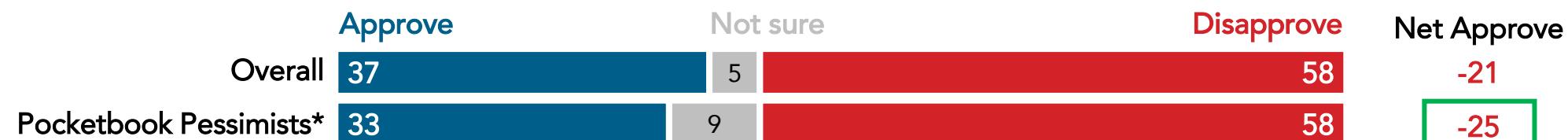
**Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?**



**Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling the economy?**



**Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling inflation and the cost of living?**



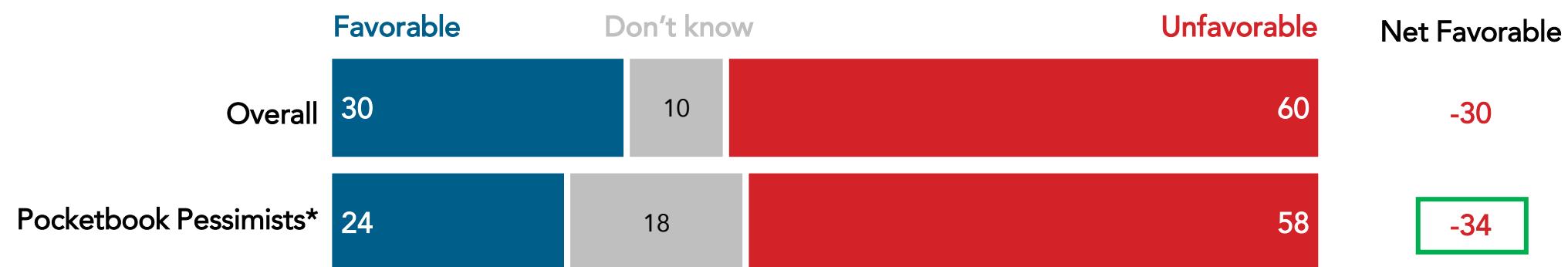
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# While These Pocketbook Pessimists Don't Like Tariffs, They're Supportive of the ACA

While a majority of pocketbook pessimists\* feel unfavorably toward tariffs (58% unfavorable), half say they are favorable toward the Affordable Care Act (51% favorable).

**Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to:** Tariffs.



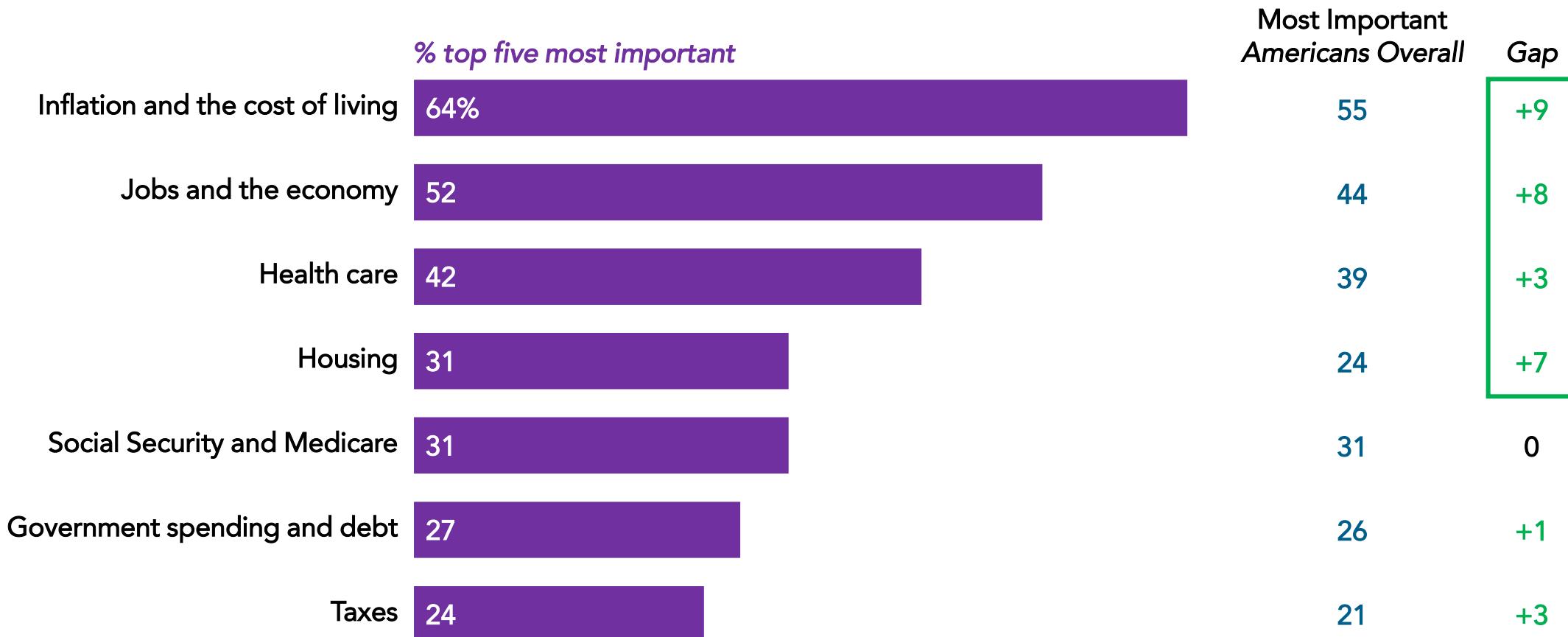
**Please indicate how favorable or unfavorable you are to:** The Affordable Care Act.



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# Pocketbook Pessimists Prioritize Inflation and the Cost of Living Even More Than Americans Overall

(Among Pocketbook Pessimists\*) Which do you feel are most important for the President and Congress to focus on?



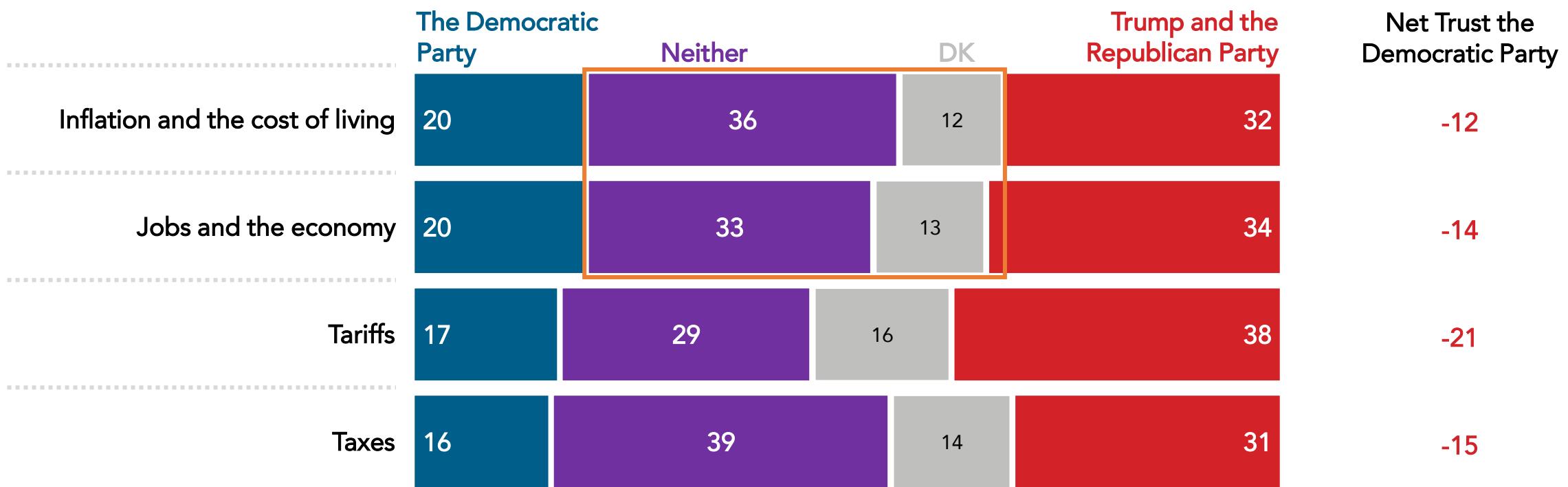
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# This Group Is Largely Untrusting of Both Parties on the Economy, Though They Lean Towards GOP

Pocketbook pessimists\* don't trust either party or don't know who to trust on inflation (36% neither/12% don't know), jobs and the economy (33% neither/13% don't know), tariffs (29% neither/16% don't know), and taxes (39% neither/14% don't know).

**(Among Pocketbook Pessimists\*) Please indicate who you personally trust more to handle each one.**

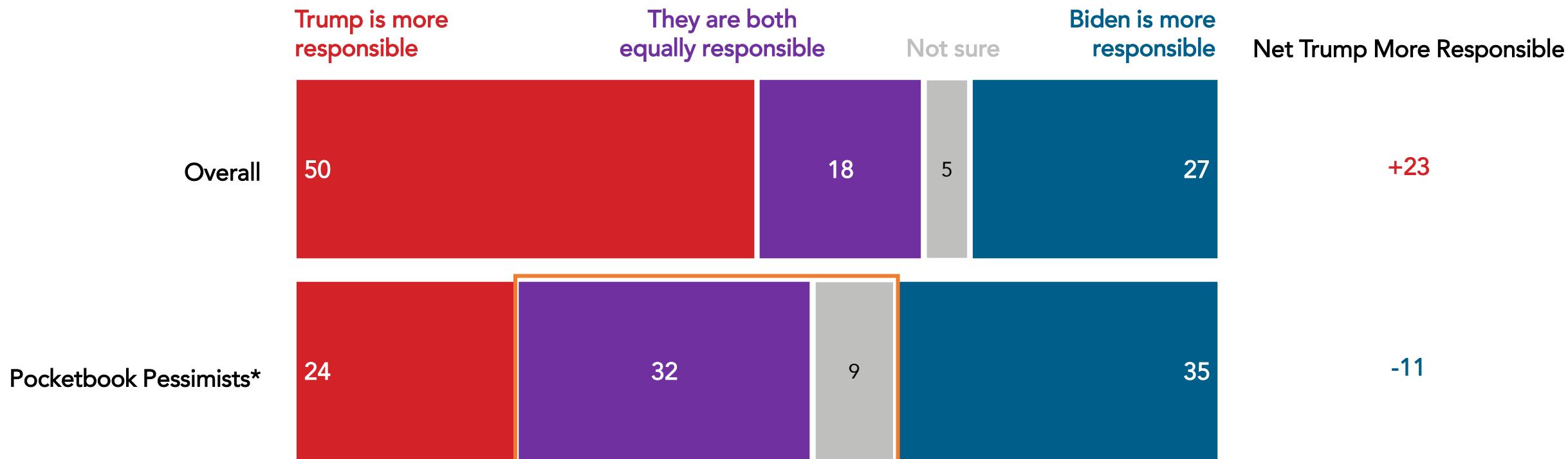


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# Pocketbook Pessimists Are Divided on Whether This Is Trump's Economy or Biden's

A plurality of pocketbook pessimists\* say that they are either both responsible (32%) or are not sure (9%), compared to just 18% and 5% of Americans overall, respectively.

**Do you think Donald Trump or Joe Biden is more responsible for the current state of the economy?**

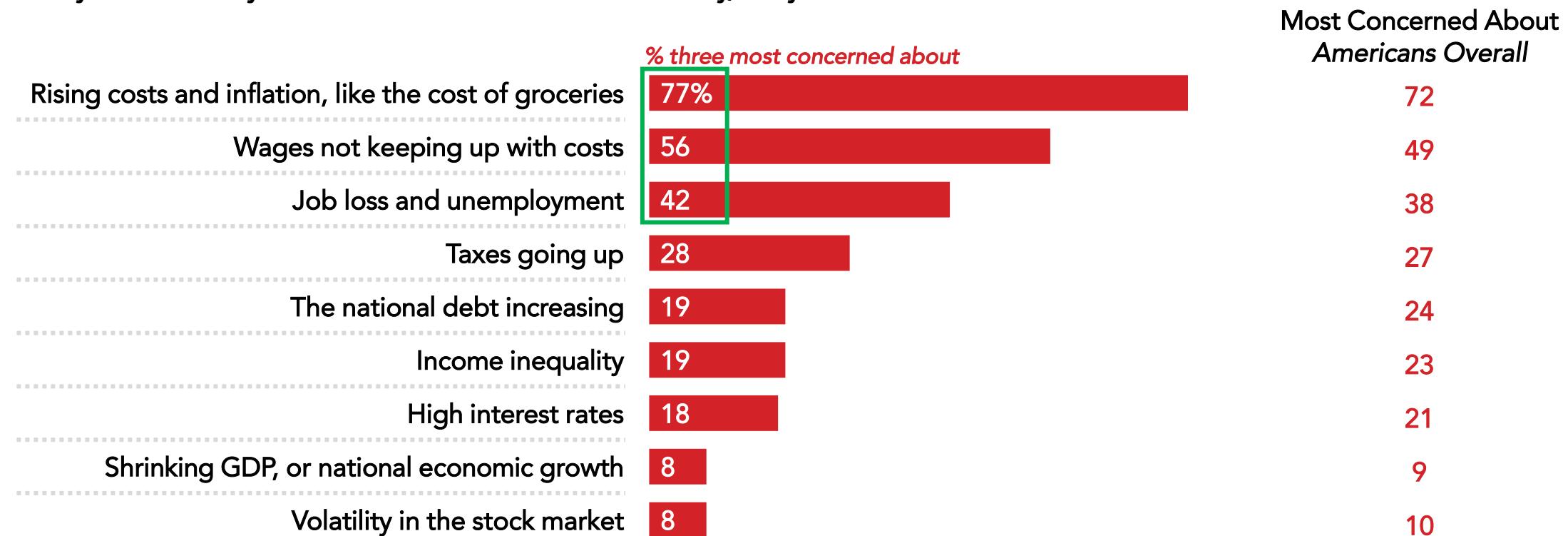


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# Pocketbook Pessimists Feel Personal Costs Like Inflation and Wages Not Keeping Up More Acutely Than Americans Overall

Over three in four pocketbook pessimists\* are concerned about rising costs and inflation (77%), compared to 72% of Americans overall. More pocketbook pessimists\* are concerned about wages not keeping up (56%) and job loss (42%) than Americans overall (49%, 38%).

**(Among Pocketbook Pessimists\*)** Below is a list of potential concerns people might have about the national economy right now. Please indicate which three you are currently most concerned about in the U.S. economy, if any.

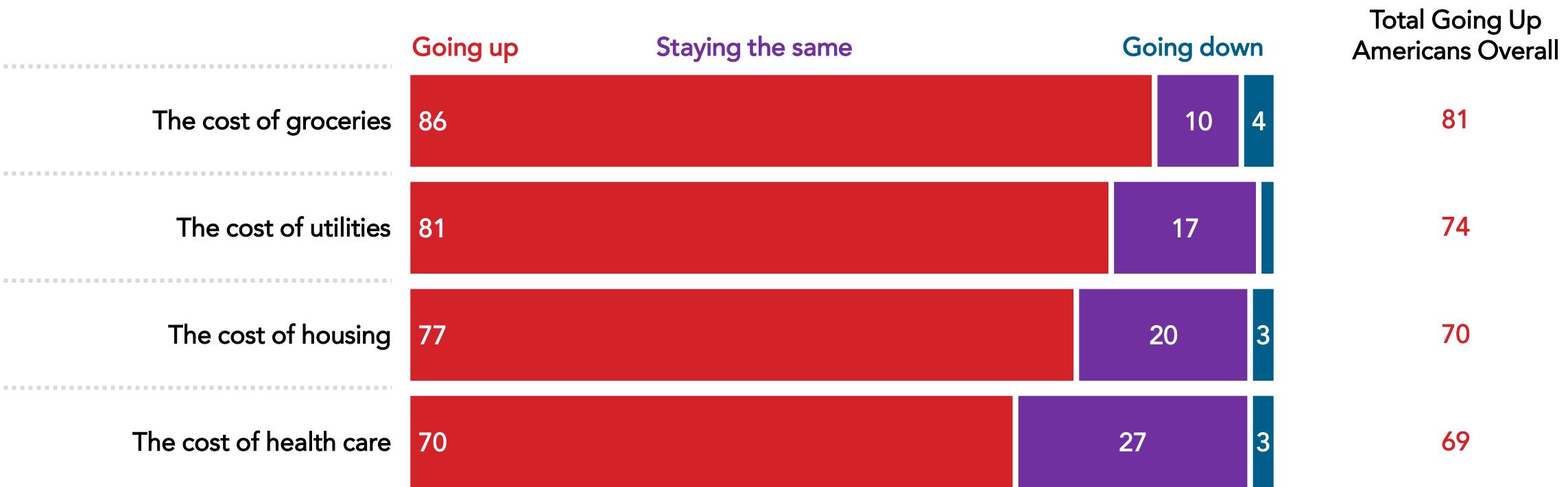


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# Pocketbook Pessimists Say the Costs of Groceries, Housing, Health Care, and Utilities Are on the Rise

Compared to Americans overall, more pocketbook pessimists\* say the costs of groceries (86% going up compared to 81% overall), utilities (81% compared to 74%), and housing (77% compared to 70%) are going up.

**(Among Pocketbook Pessimists\*)** Below is a list of items. Please indicate, for each one, whether you feel like those costs are going up, going down, or staying the same.

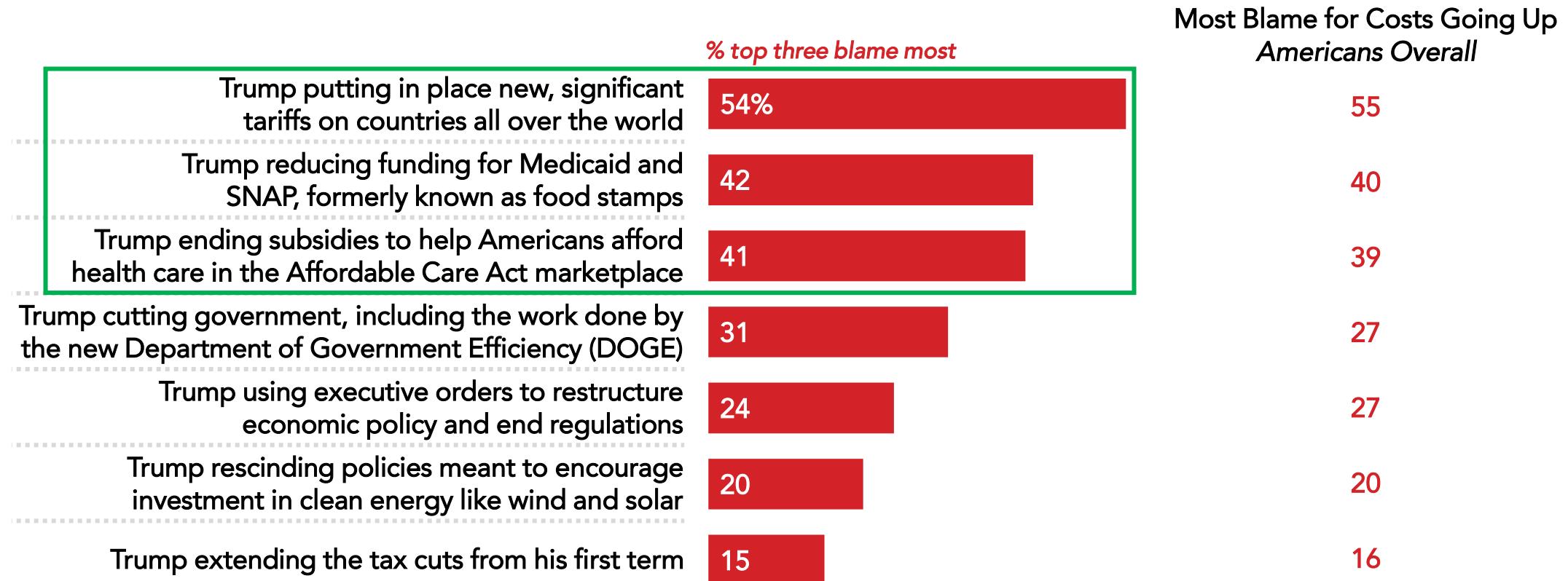


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# The Greatest Wedges With These Americans Against Trump on the Economy Are Tariffs, Medicaid/SNAP Cuts, ACA Subsidies

A majority of pocketbook pessimists\* blame Trump's tariffs the most for rising costs (54%), as well as him reducing Medicaid and SNAP funding (42%), and ending ACA subsidies (41%).

**(Among Pocketbook Pessimists\*)** Below is a list of policies. Please rank the three that you blame the most for costs going up.



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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.

## About the Study

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a sample of 1,000 registered voters from January 8-January 12, 2026. 100 additional interviews were conducted among Hispanic voters. 100 additional interviews were conducted among African American voters. 75 additional interviews were conducted among Asian American and Pacific Islander 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. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

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**To learn more about Navigator:**

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