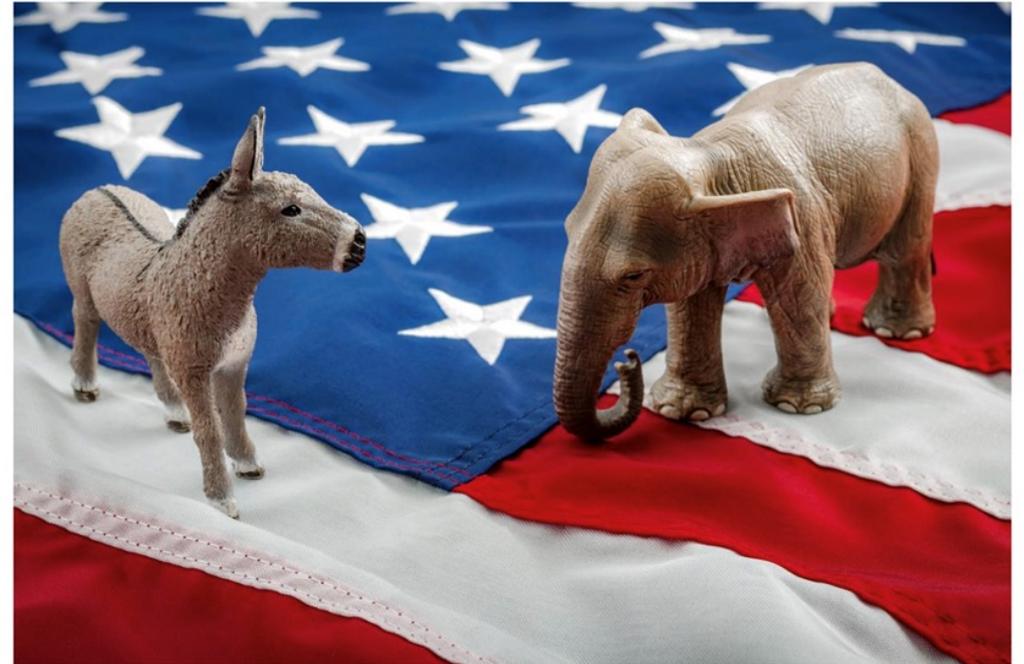# navigating *the* *battleground*

Monday, February 23, 2026

Political and Economic Landscape in the Congressional Battleground

IMPACT RESEARCH

Methodology

Impact Research conducted a survey of N=1,500 likely 2026 general election constituents in 62 battleground congressional districts.

100% of interviews were conducted by text-to-web.

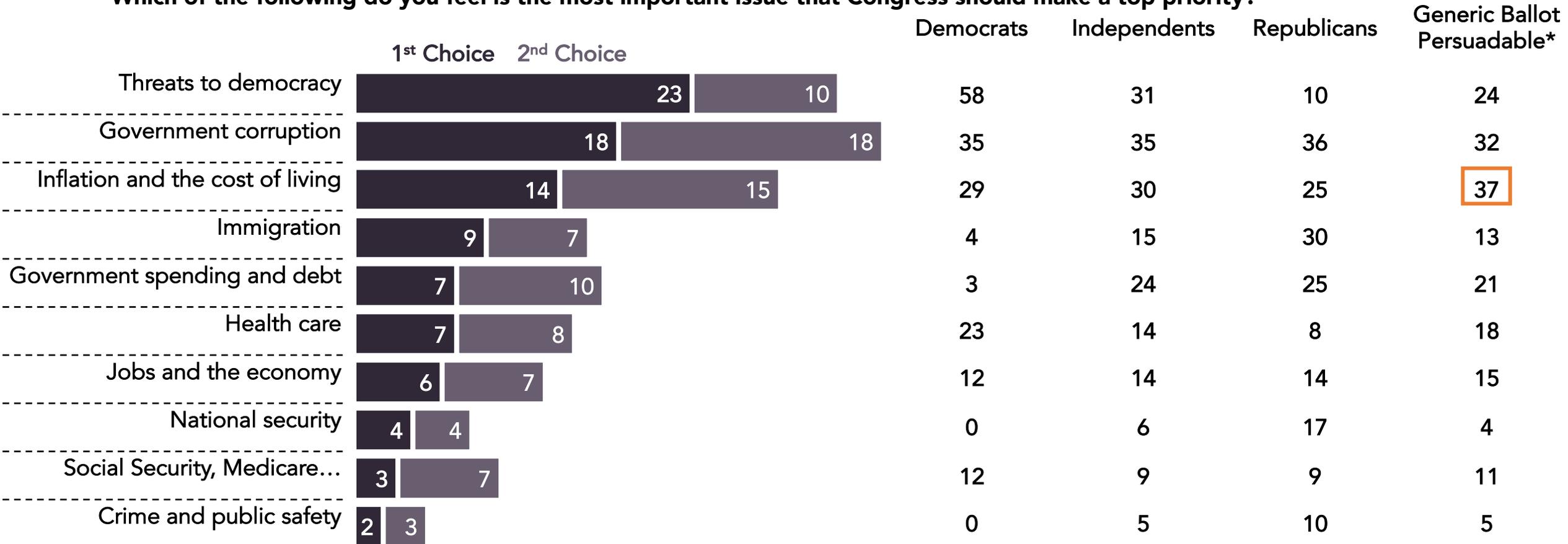Interviews were conducted between February 3 - 9, 2026.

The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

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Key Takeaways

- While protecting democracy is a top concern overall, inflation is the top priority for persuadable battleground constituents.

- Democrats have a small lead in the House battleground. The generic ballot has marginally improved for Democrats.

- Trump's standing in the battleground is slipping.

- Battleground constituents are still down on the economy and they're not optimistic on where it's heading.

- There is a real fear that the economy is in a recession or on the brink of one.

- More battleground constituents have negative sentiments about the economy than positive ones.

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Independent Voters Want Congress to Tackle Corruption, Address Democracy, and Address Inflation.

Which of the following do you feel is the most important issue that Congress should make a top priority?

1st Choice   2nd Choice

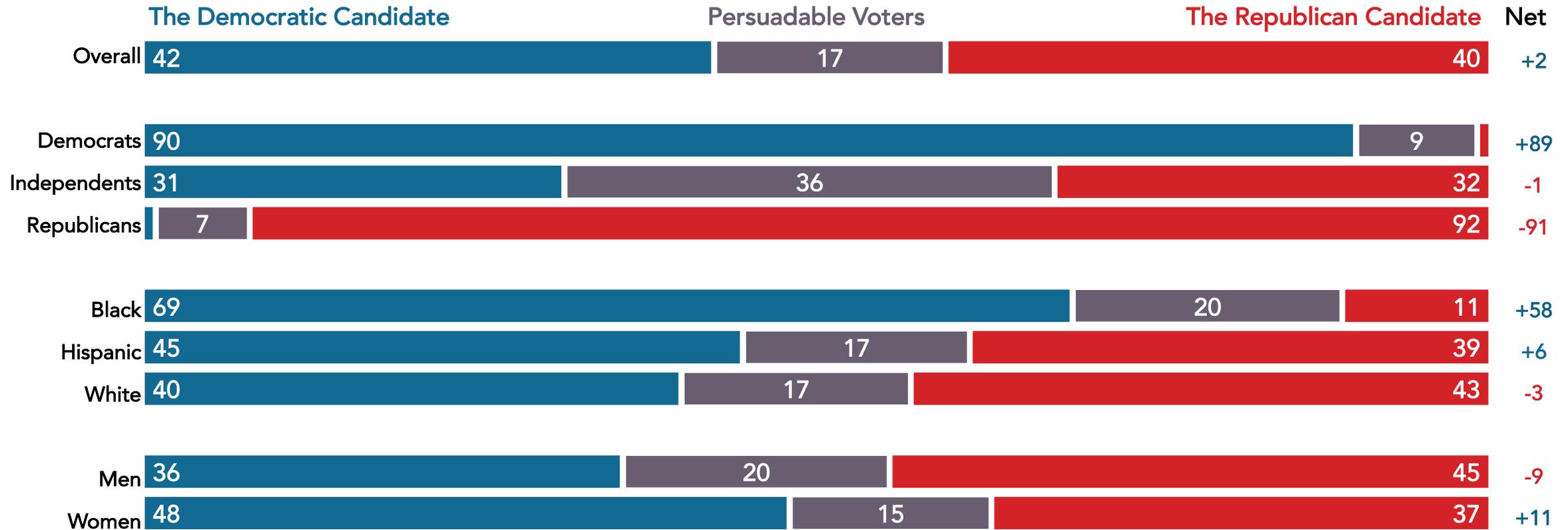|	1st / 2nd Choice	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Generic Ballot Persuadable*
Threats to democracy	23 / 10	58	31	10	24
Government corruption	18 / 18	35	35	36	32
Inflation and the cost of living	14 / 15	29	30	25	37
Immigration	9 / 7	4	15	30	13
Government spending and debt	7 / 10	3	24	25	21
Health care	7 / 8	23	14	8	18
Jobs and the economy	6 / 7	12	14	14	15
National security	4 / 4	0	6	17	4
Social Security, Medicare…	3 / 7	12	9	9	11
Crime and public safety	2 / 3	0	5	10	5

"Generic ballot persuadable" are those who did not choose a Democratic or Republican candidate on who they would likely support for Congress in the 2026 election.
Nationwide survey of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters across 62 battleground districts conducted February 3 – 9, 2026.
For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org/battleground.

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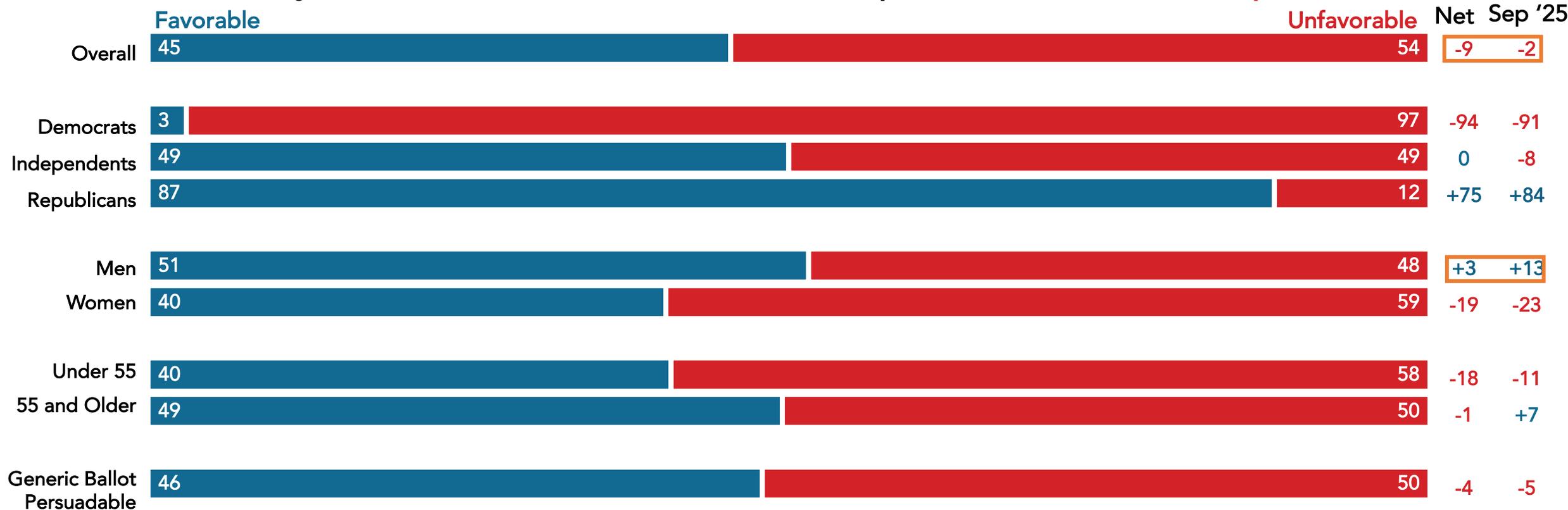# Democrats Hold a Modest Advantage Over Republicans on the Generic Ballot.

When thinking about elections for Congress, are you more likely to vote for:

	The Democratic Candidate	Persuadable Voters	The Republican Candidate	Net
Overall	42	17	40	+2
Democrats	90	9		+89
Independents	31	36	32	-1
Republicans		7	92	-91
Black	69	20	11	+58
Hispanic	45	17	39	+6
White	40	17	43	-3
Men	36	20	45	-9
Women	48	15	37	+11

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Battleground Constituents Have Soured on Trump. His Popularity Has Fallen by 7 points Since September.

Please indicate whether you have a very favorable view, somewhat favorable view, somewhat unfavorable view, or very unfavorable view. If you have never heard of them, or cannot rate them, please indicate that. Donald Trump

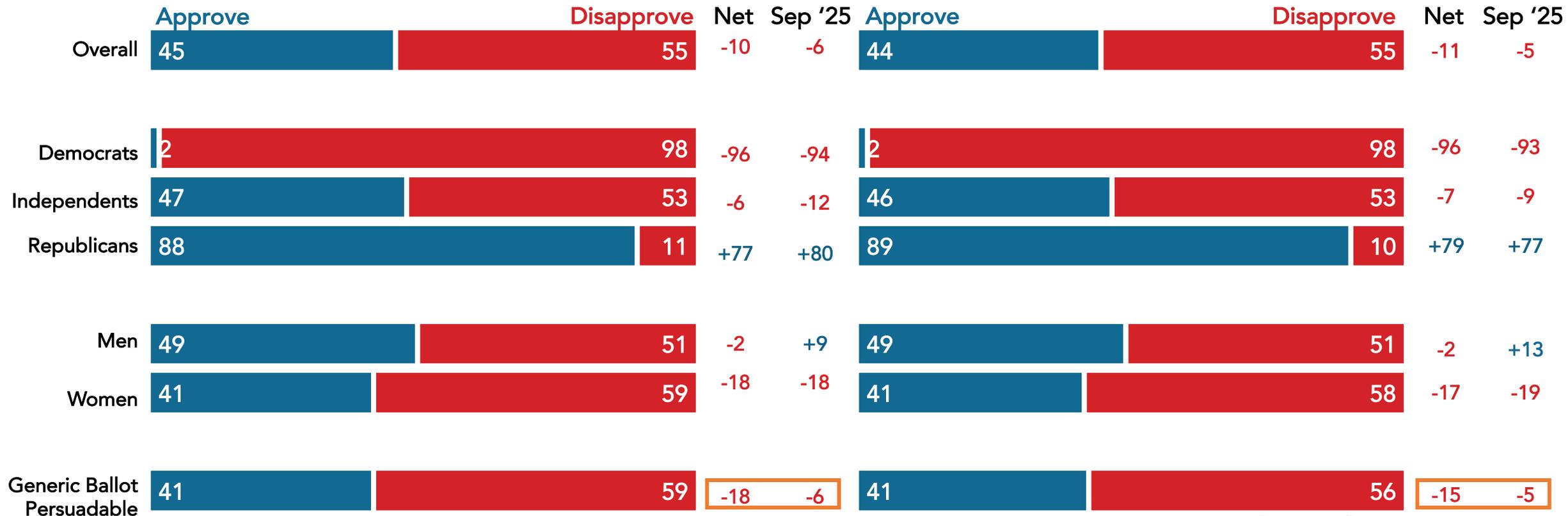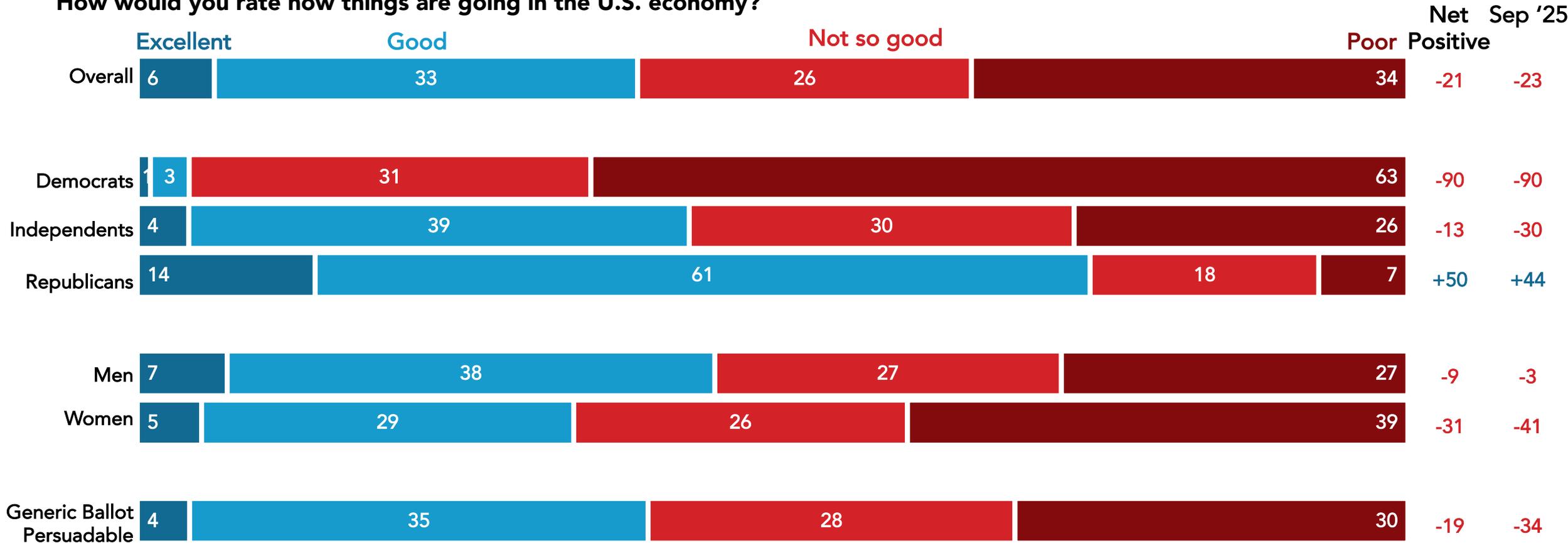|	Favorable	Unfavorable	Net	Sep '25
Overall	45	54	-9	-2
Democrats	3	97	-94	-91
Independents	49	49	0	-8
Republicans	87	12	+75	+84
Men	51	48	+3	+13
Women	40	59	-19	-23
Under 55	40	58	-18	-11
55 and Older	49	50	-1	+7
Generic Ballot Persuadable	46	50	-4	-5

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Battleground Constituents Disapprove of the Job Trump Has Done Overall and on How He's Handled the Economy.

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?

	Approve	Disapprove	Net	Sep '25	Approve	Disapprove	Net	Sep '25
Overall	45	55	-10	-6	44	55	-11	-5
Democrats	2	98	-96	-94	2	98	-96	-93
Independents	47	53	-6	-12	46	53	-7	-9
Republicans	88	11	+77	+80	89	10	+79	+77
Men	49	51	-2	+9	49	51	-2	+13
Women	41	59	-18	-18	41	58	-17	-19
Generic Ballot Persuadable	41	59	-18	-6	41	56	-15	-5

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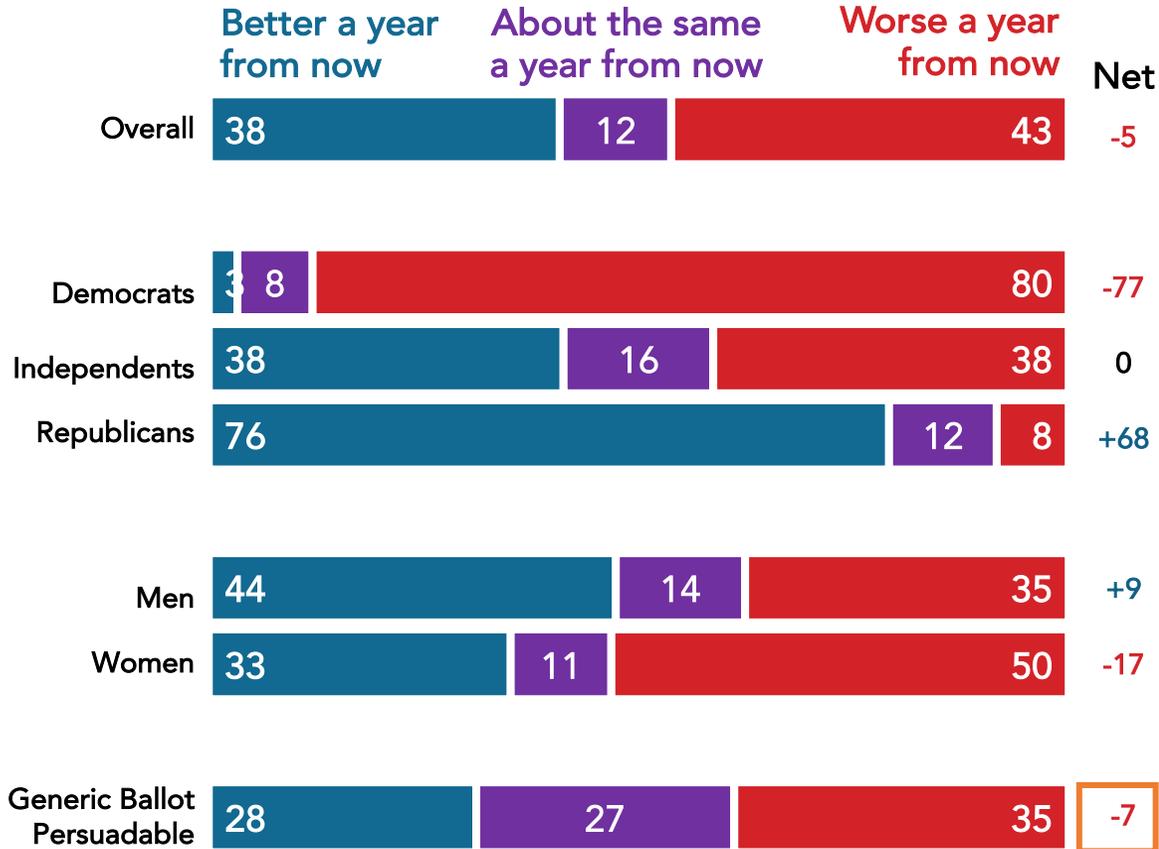Nationwide survey of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters across 62 battleground districts conducted February 3 – 9, 2026.
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Battleground Constituents Are Still Very Down on the Economy.

How would you rate how things are going in the U.S. economy?

	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor	Net Positive	Sep '25
Overall	6	33	26	34	-21	-23
Democrats	1	3	31	63	-90	-90
Independents	4	39	30	26	-13	-30
Republicans	14	61	18	7	+50	+44
Men	7	38	27	27	-9	-3
Women	5	29	26	39	-31	-41
Generic Ballot Persuadable	4	35	28	30	-19	-34

"Generic ballot persuadable" are those who did not choose a Democratic or Republican candidate on who they would likely support for Congress in the 2026 election.
"Non-Democrats Republicans Aren't Lowering Costs" are those who don't identify as a Democrat and say Republicans are focused on policies that aren't making costs go down
Nationwide survey of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters across 62 battleground districts conducted February 3 – 9, 2026.
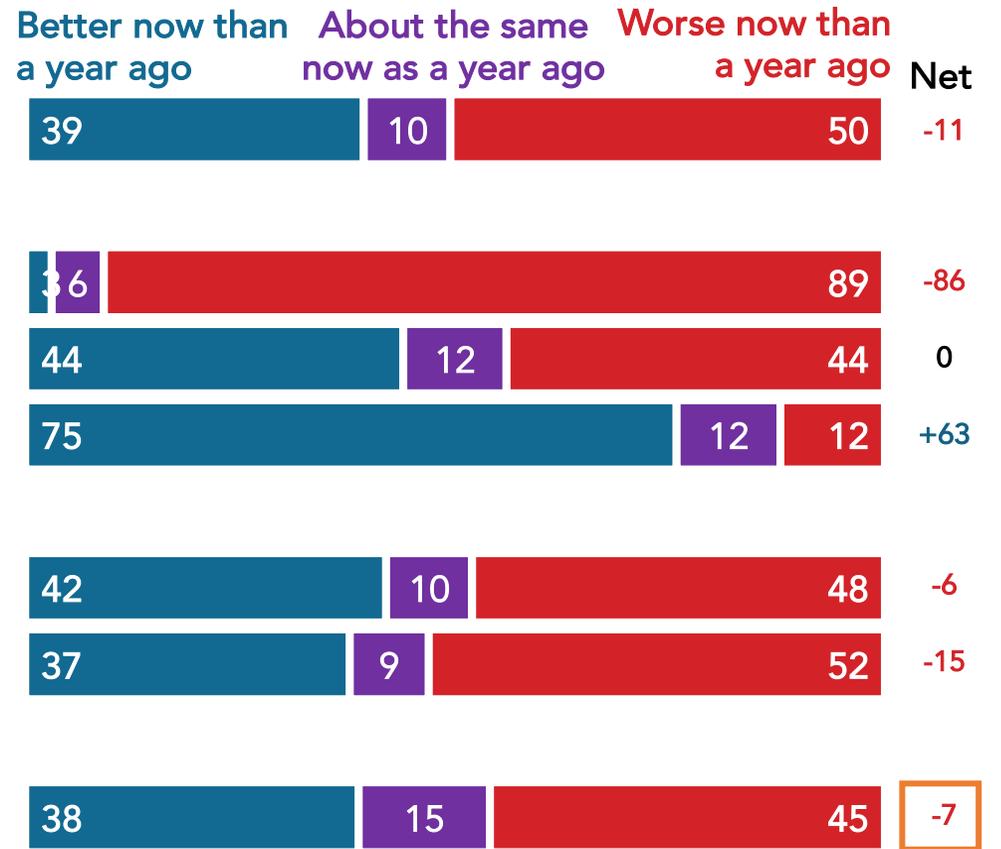For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org/battleground.

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Battleground Constituents Are Pessimistic About the Direction of the Economy.

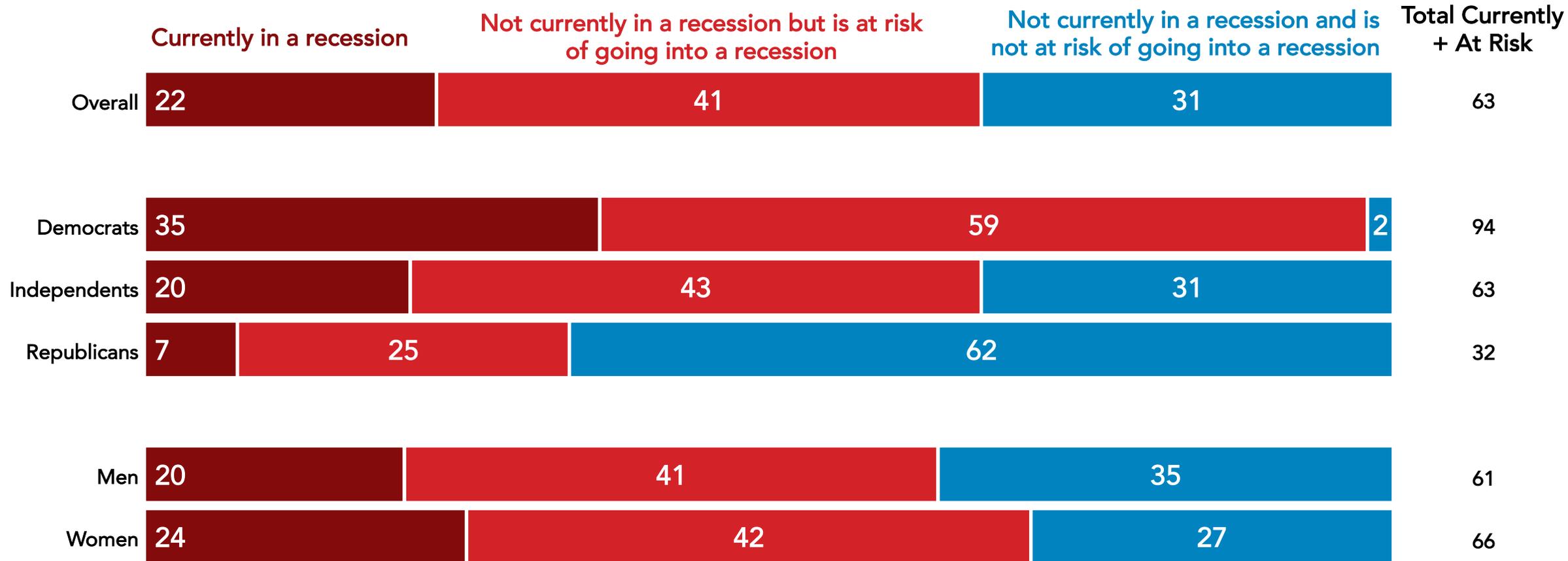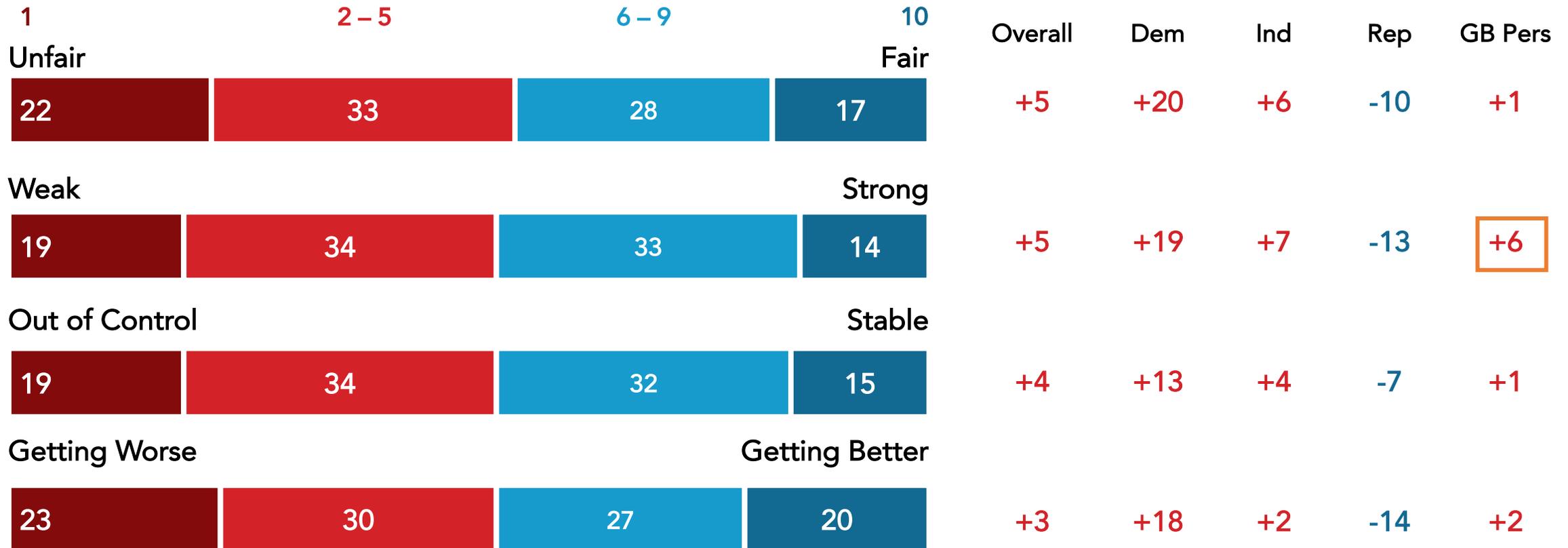## Which of the following comes closest to your view of the U.S. economy?*

	Better a year from now	About the same a year from now	Worse a year from now	Net
Overall	38	12	43	-5
Democrats	3	8	80	-77
Independents	38	16	38	0
Republicans	76	12	8	+68
Men	44	14	35	+9
Women	33	11	50	-17
Generic Ballot Persuadable	28	27	35	-7

Which of the following comes closest to your view of the U.S. economy?*

	Better now than a year ago	About the same now as a year ago	Worse now than a year ago	Net
Overall	39	10	50	-11
Democrats	3	6	89	-86
Independents	44	12	44	0
Republicans	75	12	12	+63
Men	42	10	48	-6
Women	37	9	52	-15
Generic Ballot Persuadable	38	15	45	-7

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Nearly Two-Thirds Believe The Economy is in or at Risk of Going into a Recession.

Which of the following comes closest to your view of the U.S. economy?

	Currently in a recession	Not currently in a recession but is at risk of going into a recession	Not currently in a recession and is not at risk of going into a recession	Total Currently + At Risk
Overall	22	41	31	63
Democrats	35	59	2	94
Independents	20	43	31	63
Republicans	7	25	62	32
Men	20	41	35	61
Women	24	42	27	66

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Most Lean Towards Negative Economic Descriptors

Next are some pairs of words that people might use to describe the economy. For each pair, please indicate on a scale from 1 to 10 which word is closer to your view of the economy, where 1 is the first word and 10 is the second word.

NET Negative (1) – Positive (10)

	1	2 – 5	6 – 9	10		Overall	Dem	Ind	Rep	GB Pers
Unfair → Fair	22	33	28	17		+5	+20	+6	-10	+1
Weak → Strong	19	34	33	14		+5	+19	+7	-13	+6
Out of Control → Stable	19	34	32	15		+4	+13	+4	-7	+1
Getting Worse → Getting Better	23	30	27	20		+3	+18	+2	-14	+2

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Appendix: Congressional Districts Included In Sample

Dem Incumbent		
CA-13	NV-03	TX-34
CA-45	NV-04	VA-07
CA-47	NY-03	WA-03
CT-05	NY-04	
IN-01	NY-19	
ME-02	NY-22	
MI-08	OH-01	
NC-01	OH-09	
NJ-09	OH-13	
NM-02	OR-05	
NV-01	TX-28	

Rep Incumbent - Harris
CA-48
NE-02
NY-17
PA-01

Rep Incumbent - Trump		
AK-01	IA-02	OH-10
AZ-01	IA-03	OH-15
AZ-02	KY-06	PA-07
AZ-06	MI-04	PA-08
CA-22	MI-07	PA-10
CO-08	MI-10	TN-05
FL-07	MO-02	TX-15
FL-13	NC-03	VA-01
FL-15	NC-11	VA-02
FL-27	NJ-07	WI-01
IA-01	OH-07	WI-03

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About the Study

Impact Research conducted public opinion surveys among a sample of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters from February 3-9, 2026. The survey was conducted by text-to-web (100 percent). Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the 62 congressional districts included in the sample across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 2.5 percentage points. The margin for error for subgroups varies and is higher.