

navigating *the* *battleground

March 2026

Perceptions of Food and Ag
Policy in the House and Senate
Battlegrounds



IMPACT
RESEARCH

Methodology



Impact Research conducted a survey of N=1,200 likely 2026 general election constituents in 62 battleground congressional districts (N=600) and seven battleground Senate states (N=600).



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



Interviews were conducted between February 10 - 17, 2026.



The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.7 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for the House and Senate battlegrounds is +/- 4.0 percentage points and it varies for subgroups and is higher.

Congressional Districts And Senate States Included In Sample

House Districts

Dem Incumbent

Rep Incumbent – Harris

Rep Incumbent - Trump

Democratic Incumbent

Senate States

Open Seat

Republican Incumbents

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

CA-48
 NE-02
 NY-17
 PA-01

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

GA

IA MI NC

ME MT OH

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- Food and ag issues are important to battleground constituents, particularly cost and food safety. In fact, voters prioritize food safety higher than issues like lowering costs generally, and lowering specifically food costs outpaces voters' priority on border security – generally a top concern.
- The generic ballot is a toss-up. With nearly 20% of voters persuadable, battleground constituents living in the most competitive House districts and Senate battleground states are evenly split at 41% between Democrats and Republicans.
- While Democrats' biggest advantages on food and ag issues are related to making people healthier, food safety, and affordability, Republicans receive credit for working to get ultra-processed foods out of schools and supporting farmers.
- The food and agricultural policies tested are well-liked by battleground constituents, and they think the policies will be effective in making people healthier. Banning harmful chemicals from foods and crops, like banning Paraquat, are policies that rise to the top in both support and effectiveness.
- Cuts to SNAP, the continued use of dangerous pesticides, former industry execs leading the administration's policies, and the lack of funding for school lunches are the Trump and Republican actions that concern battleground constituents the most.
- Messaging on SNAP, the impact of America's food policies on kids, and cuts to food safety are key messages to drive home on Trump and Republicans' food and agricultural actions.

The Political Landscape

Food Safety Rivals Healthcare As Voters' Top Priority

Here are issues that some people say the U.S. Congress should make a priority. For each one, please indicate on a 1 to 10 scale how much of a priority you think Congress should make it, where 10 is an extremely high priority and 1 means not a priority at all. If you aren't sure, just indicate that.

	% Extremely High Priority	House Battleground	Senate Battleground	Independents	Generic Ballot Persuadable
Lowering the cost of health care	68	67	69	65	63
Ensuring our food is safe	61	56	65	59	59
Making food more affordable*	48	50	45	47	44
Lowering the cost of everyday goods	47	45	48	43	44
Making healthy food more affordable*	46	46	46	43	45
Supporting America's small, local, and family farms	46	45	47	42	45
Improving the health of Americans	44	43	46	40	41
Securing the border	44	43	45	43	41
Cracking down on food price gouging at the grocery store	43	41	44	39	40
Making healthy food easier to get	39	37	40	36	37
Improving nutritious options for Americans	30	29	32	26	34

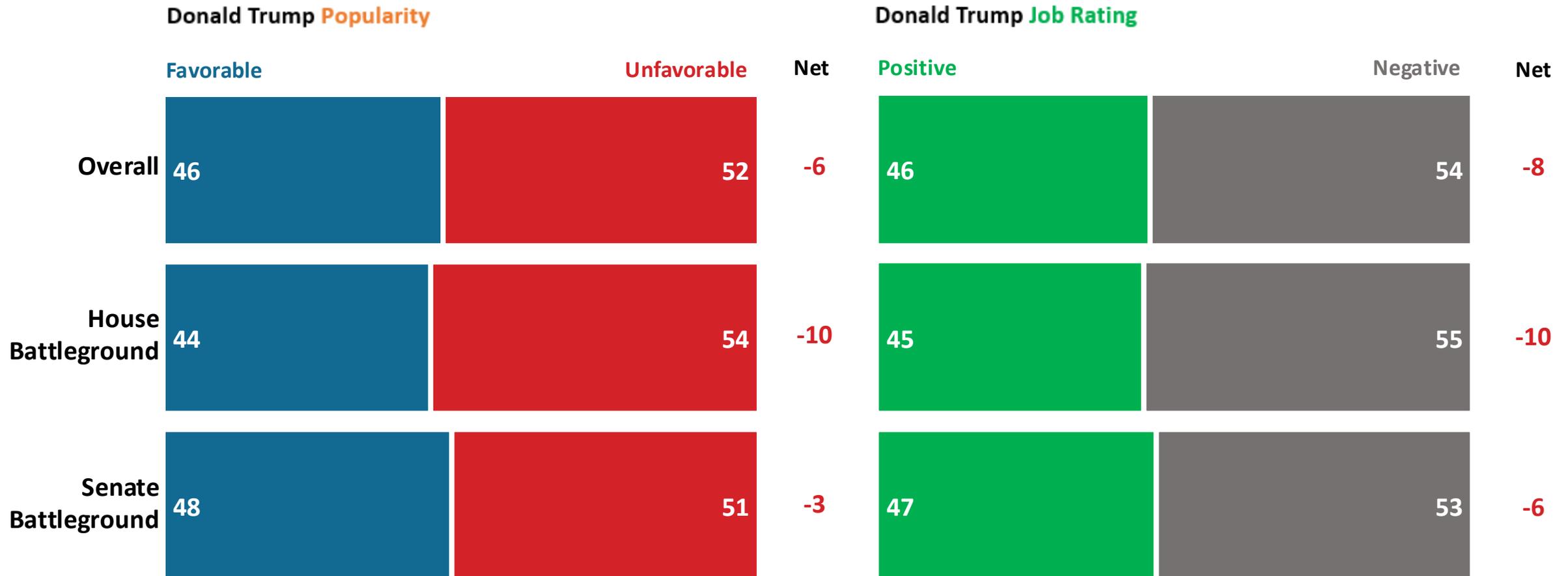
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A Majority Of Battleground Constituents Are Down On Trump Personally And The Job He's Doing As President.



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RFK Jr.'s Popularity And Job Rating Is Underwater Across Both Battlegrounds.

Robert Kennedy Jr. Popularity

Favorable

Unfavorable

Net

Robert Kennedy Jr. Job Rating

Positive

Negative

Net



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The Food and Ag Landscape

Government Is Seen As Having A Major Role In Helping People Get Healthy

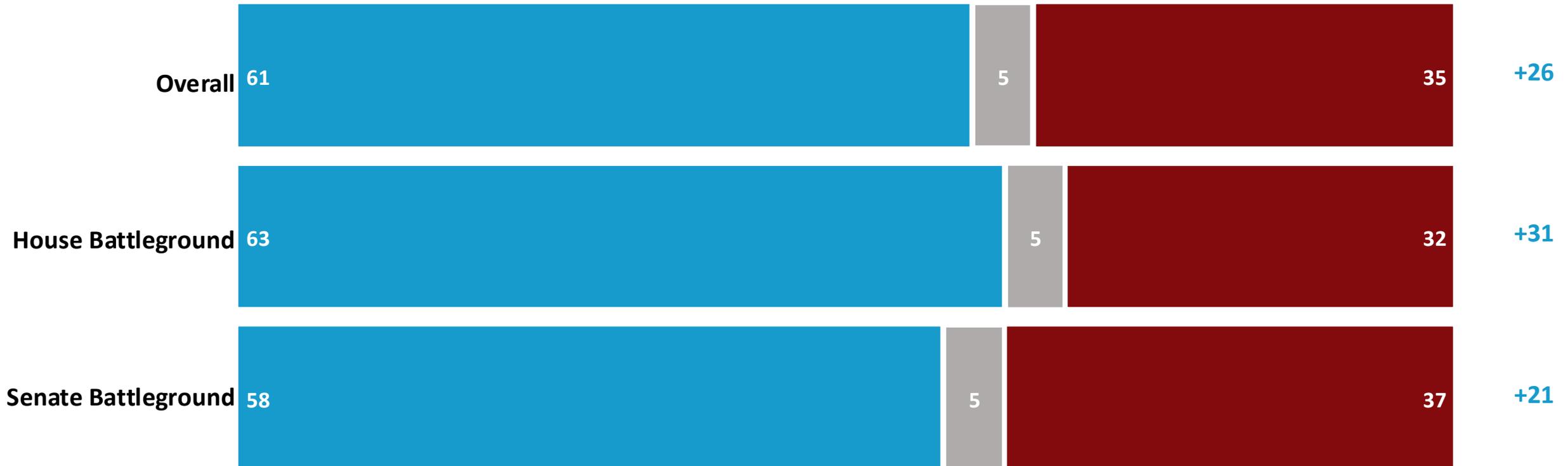
Which of the following comes closer to your own view?

The government should play a major role in making sure people have accurate and scientifically backed information about how to be healthy

Don't Know

The government should let people make their own health choices based on what is best for themselves

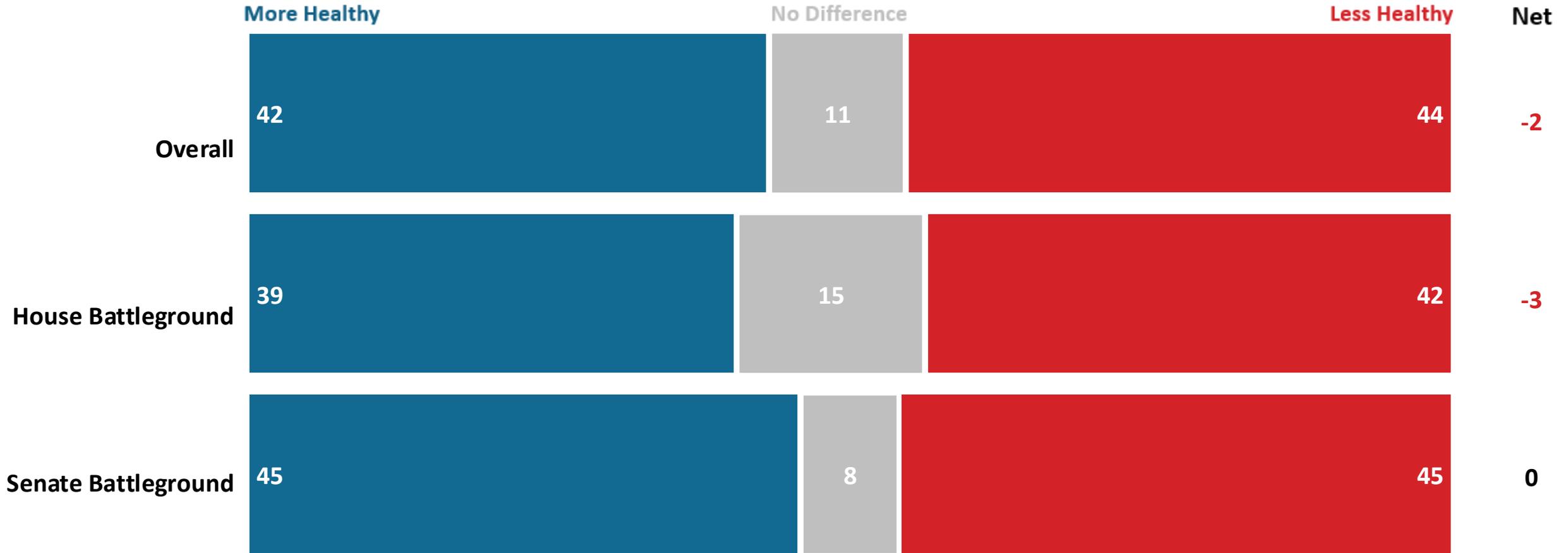
Net Role



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Trump And Republicans Are Ill-Defined On Health

From what you know, are the Trump and Republican policies making Americans **more healthy**, **less healthy**, or making no difference?



*Split

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Democrats Hold Advantages On Most Food-Related Issues, Though Significant Shares Are Still Unsure Of Who To Trust

Here are some issues facing the country. For each one, do you trust **Democrats much more**, **Democrats somewhat more**, **Republicans somewhat more**, or **Republicans much more**. If you trust neither, both, or are unsure, just indicate that.

	Dems Much More	Dems Somewhat More	Neither + Both + Don't Know	Reps Somewhat More	Reps Much More	Overall	House BG	Senate BG	Ind	GB Pers.
Supporting policies that make Americans less likely to get sick	35	11	20	13	23	+10	+11	+9	+11	+22
Improving the health of Americans	30	12	22	13	22	+7	+6	+7	+10	+16
Making food more affordable*	28	13	22	11	24	+6	+5	+7	+12	+17
Ensuring our food is safe	29	12	24	14	21	+5	+5	+5	+12	+13
Making healthy food more affordable*	23	15	28	15	19	+3	+7	0	+5	+7
Making healthy food easier to get	23	13	21	13	20	+3	+2	+3	+4	+5
Getting harmful chemicals out of food	26	11	28	12	23	+3	+4	+1	+8	+11
Protecting America's farm workers	28	12	20	16	24	0	+3	-3	0	+4
Getting ultra-processed food out of schools	19	13	32	12	23	-4	-5	-2	-4	+3
Supporting America's small, local, and family farms	23	13	22	14	27	-4	-1	-8	-8	-1

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Food and Ag Policies and Messaging

Banning Cancer-Causing Chemicals From Food Has Near-Universal Support Followed By Banning Paraquat And Supporting Farmers.

Here are some health and agriculture policies. For each one, please indicate whether you strongly support that policy, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that policy.*

	% Strongly Support	House BG	Senate GB	Ind.	GB Pers.	Trust Loss	Support Loss
Banning the use of cancer-causing chemicals in foods	85	88	82	76	75	83	82
Banning the use of Paraquat, an herbicide that is banned in 70 other countries and has been found to cause Parkinson's disease	80	82	78	77	71	79	81
Increasing support for local farmers to sell to schools and grocery stores	79	80	78	81	84	71	85
Banning harmful food additives, including food dye	72	75	69	66	62	75	79
Reducing added sugars in school food	64	64	64	65	58	68	76
Requiring warning labels on ultra-processed foods	64	65	63	58	56	62	70
Banning ultra-processed foods from public school lunches	59	62	56	60	54	62	66
Increasing access to grocery stores	56	55	56	54	49	35	55
Restricting the purchasing of sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods for recipients of food assistance programs	43	48	39	46	41	62	48

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 "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.
 "Support loss" are those who start out thinking that Republican policies are making Americans but move away from that after more information.
 "Trust loss" are those who trust Republicans more on a food or ag issue but move away from that after more information.
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Battleground Constituents Think Banning Chemicals From Food And Crops Will Be The Most Effective Policies To Get People Healthier.

Here are some health and agriculture policies. For each one, please indicate whether you think that policy will make Americans a lot healthier, some, a little, or do nothing at all to make Americans healthier.*

	% A Lot	House BG	Senate GB	Ind.	GB Pers.	Trust Loss	Support Loss
Banning the use of cancer-causing chemicals in foods	76	76	76	71	75	74	67
Banning the use of Paraquat, an herbicide that is banned in 70 other countries and has been found to cause Parkinson's disease	65	66	63	67	70	61	62
Banning ultra-processed foods from public school lunches	55	53	56	59	52	52	68
Banning harmful food additives, including food dye	53	52	53	55	50	56	59
Increasing support for local farmers to sell to schools and grocery stores	50	53	47	48	46	47	48
Reducing added sugars in school food	48	46	49	52	54	50	60
Requiring warning labels on ultra-processed foods	40	39	41	38	40	35	41
Restricting the purchasing of sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods for recipients of food assistance programs	32	32	31	30	28	41	28
Increasing access to grocery stores	31	33	30	29	32	19	29

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Battleground Constituents Across The Board Think It's Extremely Important For Congress To Ban Paraquat – With No Partisan Gap.

As you may know, Paraquat is a pesticide that is linked to Parkinson's Disease and increased risk of kidney and thyroid cancer. It has been banned in over 70 countries, including the European Union and China where its parent company is based, but is still being used for farming in America where it affects workers and nearby residents. Accidents have also contaminated drinking water sources, forcing locals to purchase bottled water since it is highly poisonous.

How important do you think it is for Congress to ban the use of Paraquat in America?



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SNAP Cuts, Use Of Dangerous Pesticides, And Corruption In Food Policies Are The Most Concerning Food And Ag Issues.

Trump and Republicans Food and Ag Actions % Top 3 Choice	Overall	House BG	Senate BG	Support Loss	Trust Loss
[SNAP] Trump and Republicans made the largest cuts to the food assistance program, known as SNAP...	49	52	47	54	34
[PESTICIDES] Trump and Republicans have refused to ban certain dangerous pesticides, like Paraquat...	46	45	47	44	60
[CORRUPT] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies...	41	41	40	40	43
[KIDS] Trump and Republicans failed to fund free school lunch programs...	28	26	30	20	24
[BIG FOOD] Trump and Republicans have given more power to the corporate food industry...	26	24	27	27	29
[INSPECTION CUTS] Trump and Republicans have cut funding for food safety inspections...	26	24	27	24	24
[TARIFFS] Trump and Republicans imposed tariffs on food and agriculture products that have driven up food prices...	21	22	20	24	17
[IMMIGRATION] Trump and Republicans' mass deportation policy has led to a shortage of workers on American farms and in food processing plants...	19	21	17	16	13
[FARMERS] Trump and Republicans have upended the livelihood of farmers with unpredictable tariffs...	18	18	18	20	19
[MERGERS] Trump and Republicans have allowed food and grocery company mergers that eliminate competition...	14	14	14	12	18
[MEAT] Trump and Republicans have changed nutrition guidelines to push Americans to eat more red meat..	10	10	9	10	13
[WORKER SAFETY] Trump and Republicans eliminated health and safety protections for farm workers...	4	3	5	9	7

“Support loss” are those who start out thinking that Republican policies are making Americans but move away from that after more information.
 “Trust loss” are those who trust Republicans more on a food or ag issue but move away from that after more information.
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Messages On SNAP, Impact on Kids, Price Gouging Resonate

Messaging on Trump and Republicans Food and Ag Actions % Very Serious Concerns	Overall	House BG	Senate BG	Ind.	Support Loss	Trust Loss
[SNAP] Trump and Republicans made the largest cuts to SNAP in history making it more difficult for over 40 million Americans... to access healthy foods...	45	46	44	43	36	18
[KIDS] Trump and Republicans are hurting American children and setting them up for worse health outcomes than previous generations by making it harder for them to access healthy foods...	45	46	44	41	35	19
[DANGEROUS] Trump and Republicans are putting Americans at risk by cutting funding for food safety inspection...	44	44	44	44	37	22
[PRICE GOUGING] Trump and Republicans have allowed food companies to take advantage of inflation to raise price...	43	44	42	40	35	21
[MONOPOLIES] Trump and Republicans have taken nearly \$30 million from the corporate food and agricultural industries and have allowed them to drive out competition...	43	44	42	42	41	21
[CORRUPTION] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies...	41	42	40	40	39	23
[CORRUPTION W/ POISON] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies... [and have] allowed food companies to price gouge customers and sell food that is poisoning Americans...	41	43	39	38	34	16
[TARIFFS] Trump and Republicans have imposed tariffs that have caused the prices of healthy foods like meat and produce to skyrocket...	37	38	37	38	32	12
[DEPORTATIONS] Trump and Republican mass deportation policy has caused massive worker shortages throughout the food and agriculture industry...	35	38	33	32	22	12
[SICKNESS] ...Trump and Republicans are making these problems worse by encouraging Americans to eat foods known to cause heart disease...	35	33	37	31	33	12

*Split

"Support loss" are those who start out thinking that Republican policies are making Americans but move away from that after more information.

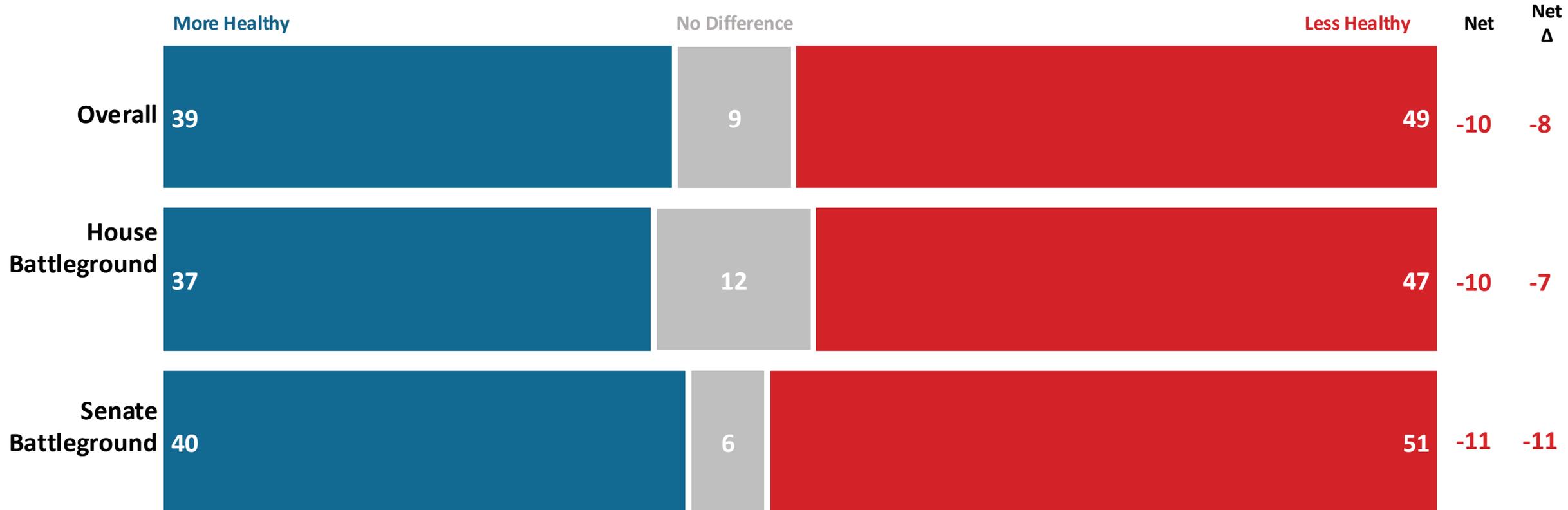
"Trust loss" are those who trust Republicans more on a food or ag issue but move away from that after more information.

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After More Information, By 10 Points Battleground Constituents Believe Trump and Republicans Are Making America Less Healthy.

Swing voters (persuadable voters and Independents) and Black voters shift the most.

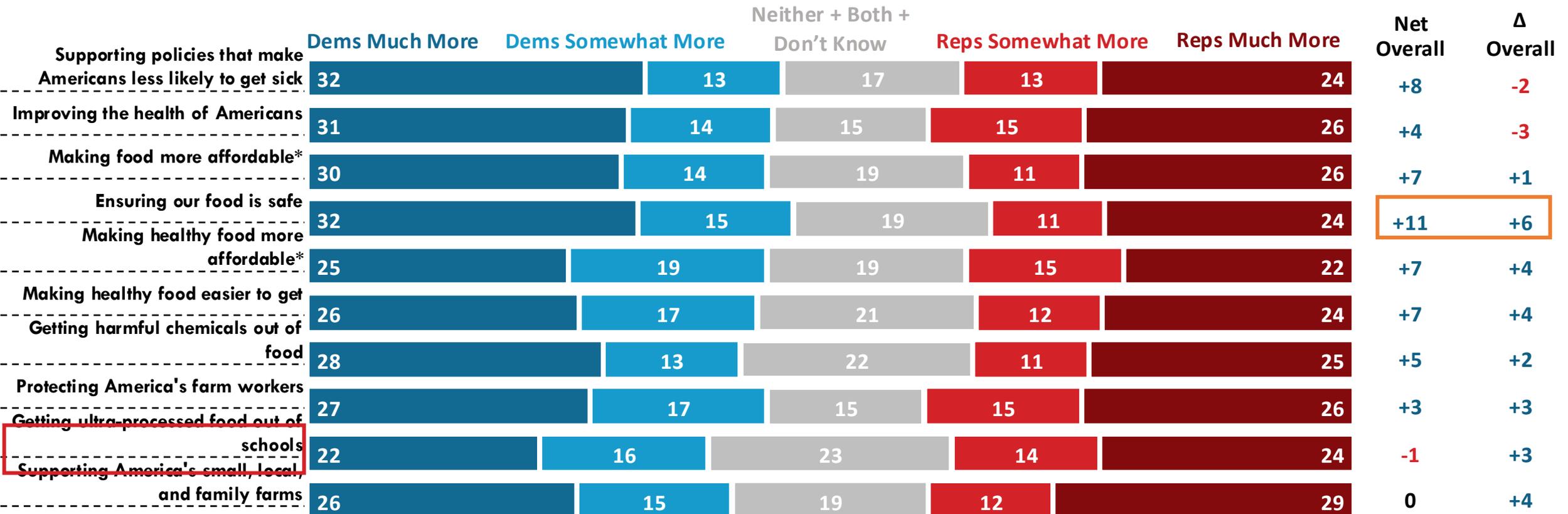
From what you know, are the Trump and Republican policies making Americans **more healthy**, **less healthy**, or making no difference?



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After Hearing More Information On Trump And Republican Policies, Democrats Make The Most Gain On Food Safety.

Here are some issues facing the country. For each one, do you trust **Democrats much more**, **Democrats somewhat more**, **Republicans somewhat more**, or **Republicans much more**. If you trust neither, both, or are unsure, just indicate that.



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Recommendations

Recommendations

- **Elevate food safety as a crucial way Trump and Republicans are endangering Americans' health and push for policies that emphasize getting harmful chemicals out of food – particularly pesticides like Paraquat.** Right now, Trump and Republicans are ill-defined on health and receive some credit on certain food issues.
- **Define Trump and Republicans as in the pocket of the food industry to describe both the motive for failing to make food safer, but also more expensive.** Among voters who shift away from Trump, learning that he's installed food executives to regulate the food industry is deeply concerning and defines motive to not ban harmful chemicals. However corruption can be a deeper attack as voters believe food costs are high because of price gouging, and they are concerned about Trump allowing the food companies to consolidate and price gouge.
- **Drive the SNAP cuts and impact on kids to define the active harm that Trump and Republican policies are currently causing.** These are powerful examples of how Trump and Republicans have taken actions that harm the vulnerable.

Message Framework

Advocates should follow three steps to effectively message on food, health, and agriculture policy issues:

**ELEVATE
FOOD
SAFETY**

President Trump and Republicans in Congress are putting Americans' health at risk by cutting funding for food safety inspections and have allowed the use of dangerous cancer-causing pesticides and chemicals in our food.

**CONNECT TO
CORRUPTION**

Trump and Republicans have put food industry executives and lobbyists in charge of regulating the food companies. They have let food companies use dangerous chemicals to make our food less safe and raise prices to increase their profits by driving out competition through creating loopholes and unfair monopolies that give them total price control.

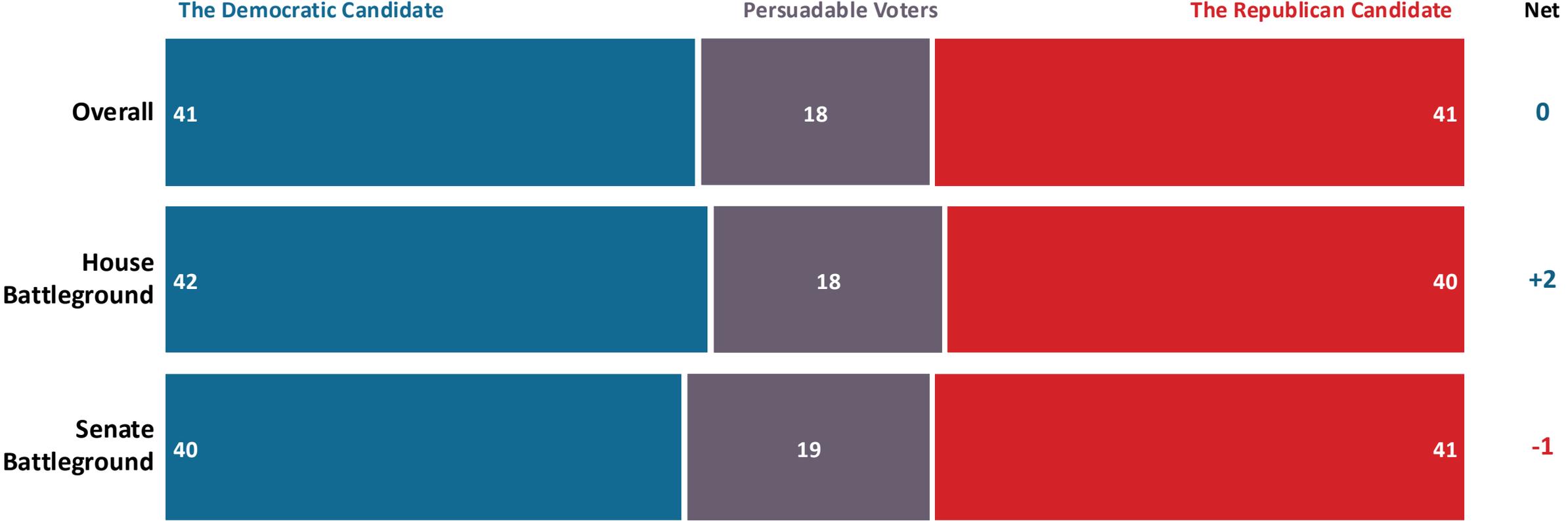
**DEFINE THE
HARM**

Trump and Republicans have cut food access for over 40 million Americans, including 16 million children and 8 million seniors, and made it harder for kids to get access to healthy foods, forcing them to rely on unhealthy ultra-processed foods.

Appendix

Democrats Lead In The House Battleground And Are Functionally Tied In The Senate Battleground.

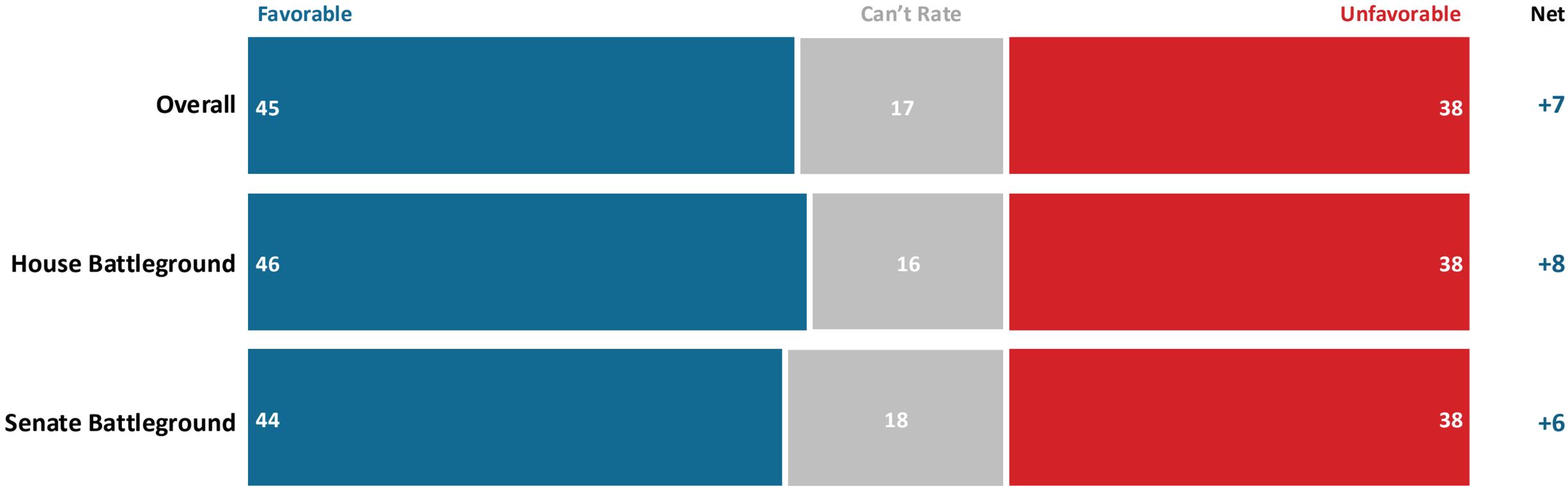
When thinking about elections for Congress, are you more likely to vote for:



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Nearly 20% Of Battleground Constituents Can't Rate MAHA, But They Give it A Positive Rating.

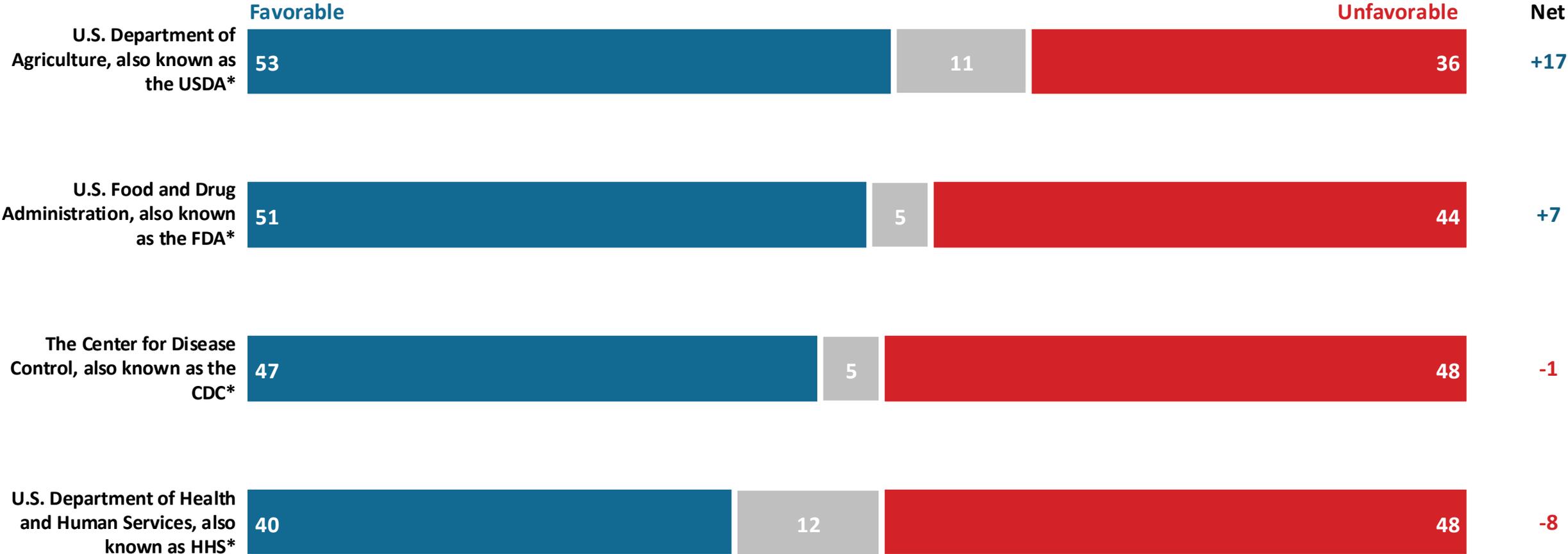
The Make America Healthy Again movement, also known as MAHA **Popularity**



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Both The USDA And The FDA Have A Majority Of Support Among Battleground Constituents.

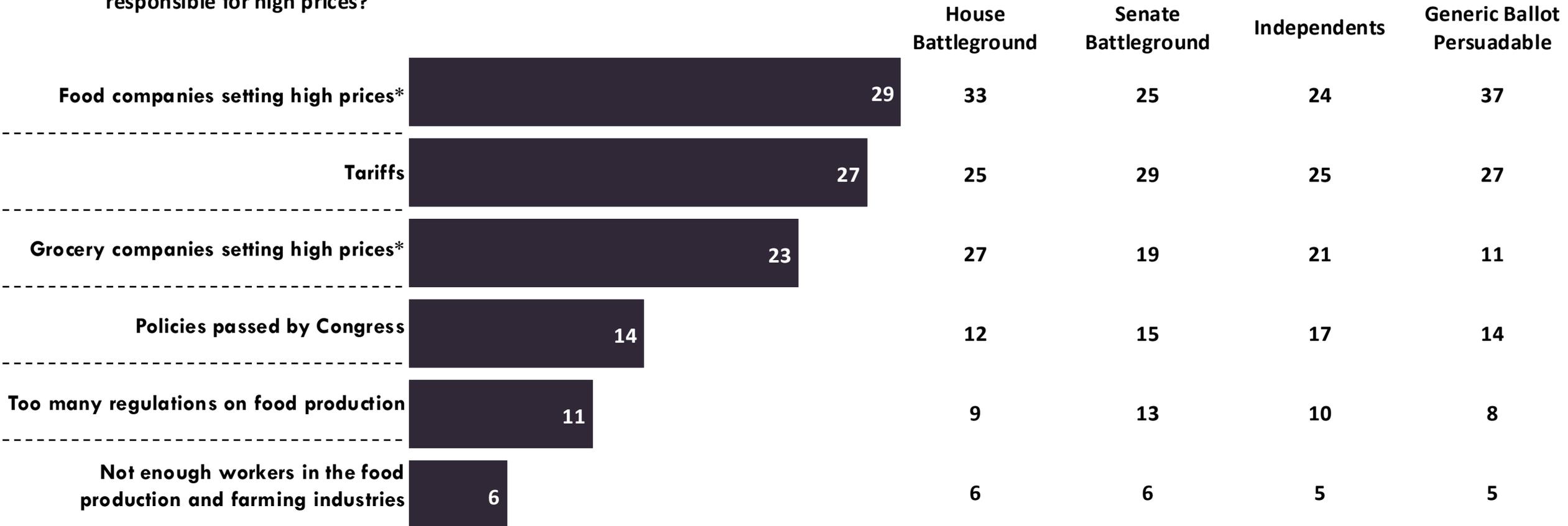
Popularity of Food and Agriculture-Related Agencies



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Battleground Constituents Blame Food Companies Price Gouging And Tariffs As The Main Culprits For High Food Prices.

When it comes to food prices in America, which of the following do you feel is MOST responsible for high prices?



*Split

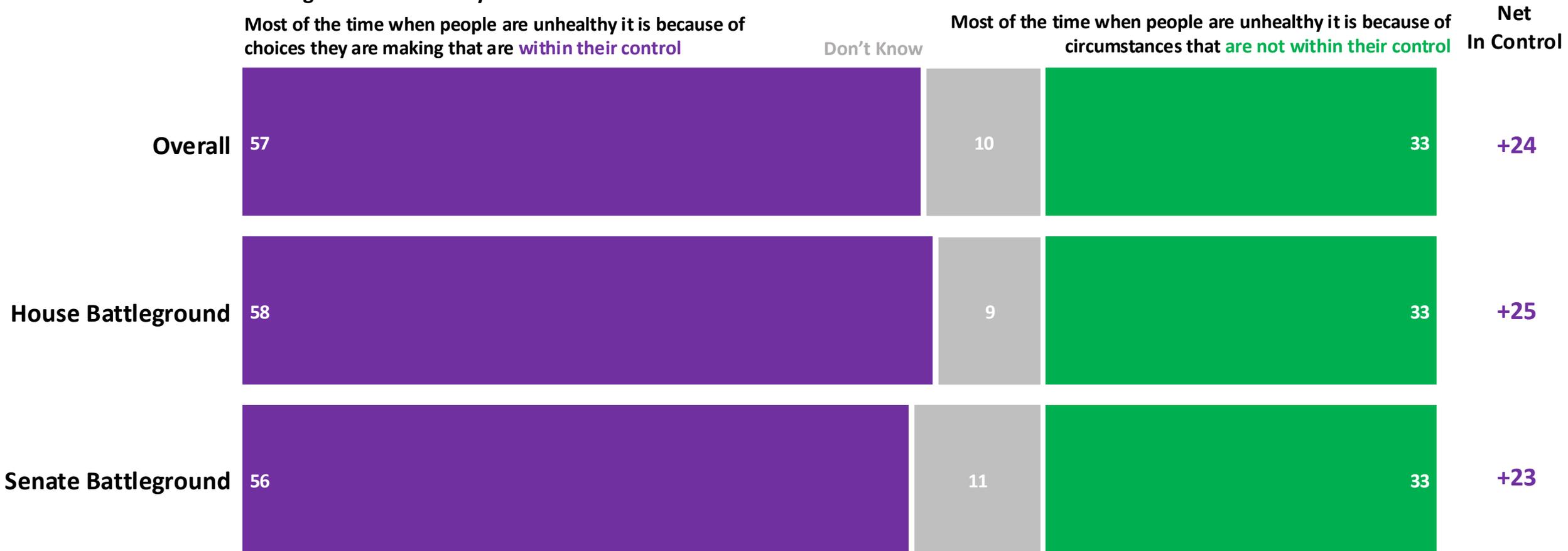
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Battleground Constituents Think People Are Unhealthy Because Of Decisions Mostly In Their Control

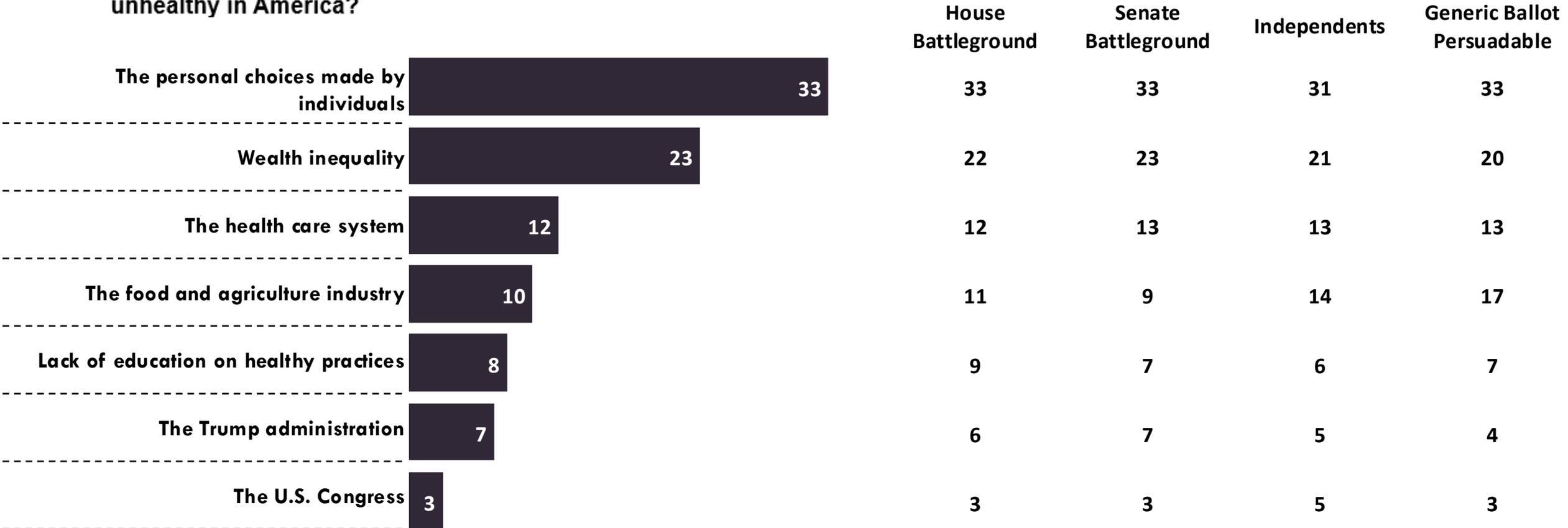
Which of the following comes closer to your own view?



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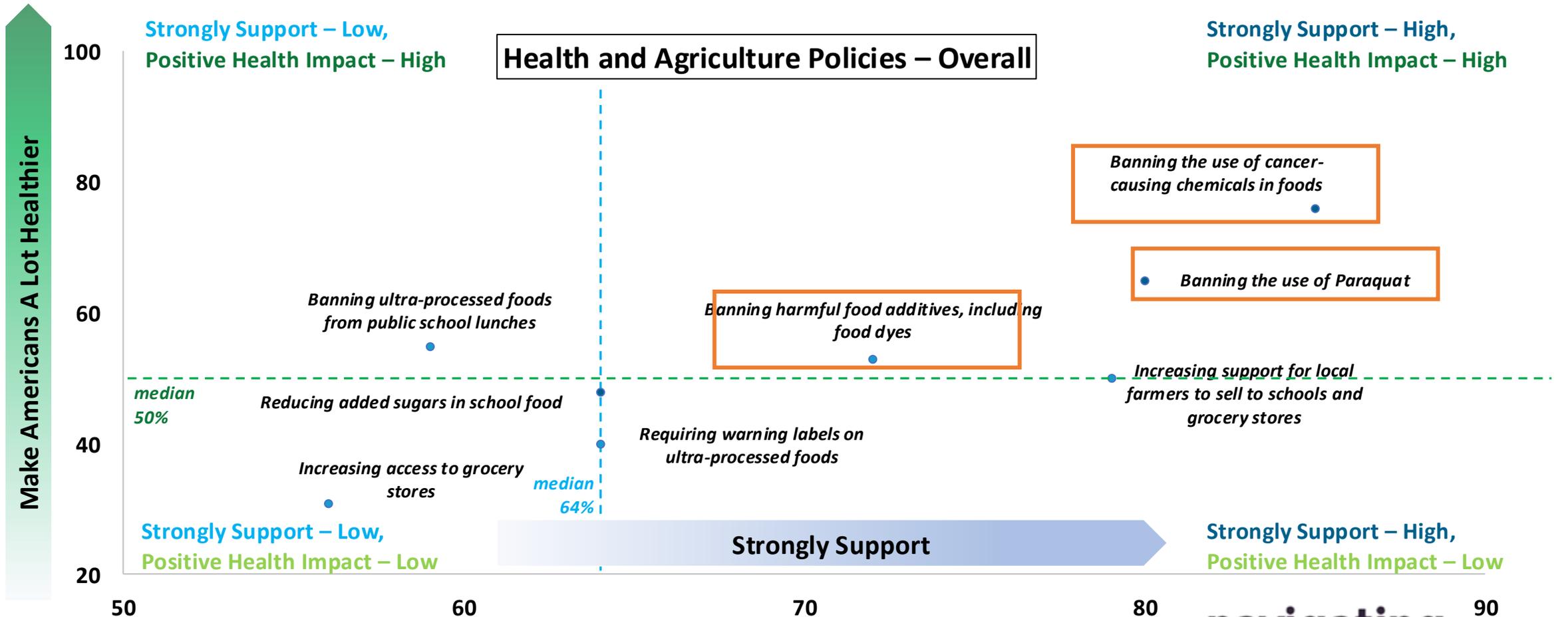
Battleground Constituents Think Individual Choices Are Responsible For People Being Unhealthy Followed By Wealth Inequality.

In your opinion, who is MOST to blame for the number of people who are unhealthy in America?



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Banning Chemicals And Dyes Seen As Most Impactful And Important



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Trump And Republicans Food And Ag Actions

Trump and Republicans Food and Ag Actions

[SNAP] Trump and Republicans made the largest cuts to the food assistance program, known as SNAP, making it harder for more than 40 million Americans, including 16 million low-income children and 8 million seniors, to afford to buy healthy foods.

[PESTICIDES] Trump and Republicans have refused to ban certain dangerous pesticides, like Paraquat, that have been banned in over 70 countries and has been linked to Parkinson's disease.

[CORRUPT] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies. This has led to the elimination of protections that keep food safe and has allowed food companies to price gouge customers.

[KIDS] Trump and Republicans failed to fund free school lunch programs that allow low-income children to receive at least one guaranteed meal a day.

[BIG FOOD] Trump and Republicans have given more power to the corporate food industry by giving them subsidies and decreasing regulations, allowing corporate consolidation with a few companies producing most of the food supply.

[INSPECTION CUTS] Trump and Republicans have cut funding for food safety inspections leading to more food contamination and risking outbreaks and foodborne illnesses from unsafe foods.

[TARIFFS] Trump and Republicans imposed tariffs on food and agriculture products that have driven up food prices for Americans, especially on healthy foods like produce and meats which have gone up nearly 3% in less than a year.

[IMMIGRATION] Trump and Republicans' mass deportation policy has led to a shortage of workers on American farms and in food processing plants, which has caused food prices to increase as producers struggle to get food on shelves.

[FARMERS] Trump and Republicans have upended the livelihood of farmers with unpredictable tariffs and the termination of contracts that have put small and local farms on the brink of financial ruin.

[MERGERS] Trump and Republicans have allowed food and grocery company mergers that eliminate competition and allow a few companies to control the entire market and raise prices on consumers.

[MEAT] Trump and Republicans have changed nutrition guidelines to push Americans to eat more red meat which experts say leads to an increased risk of heart disease and colon cancer.

[WORKER SAFETY] Trump and Republicans eliminated health and safety protections for farm workers making where our food is grown and produced less safe.

Messages On Trump And Republicans Food And Ag Actions

Messaging on Trump and Republicans Food and Ag Actions

% Very Serious Concerns

[SNAP] Trump and Republicans made the largest cuts to SNAP in history making it more difficult for over 40 million Americans, including 16 million children and 8 million seniors, to access healthy foods and forcing them to rely on the cheapest possible foods for survival, which is often the most ultra-processed foods.

[KIDS] Trump and Republicans are hurting American children and setting them up for worse health outcomes than previous generations by making it harder for them to access healthy foods. They cut funding to support farm to school programs and food banks, passed the largest cut to food assistance in history, and ended the decades-old practice of putting fluoride in water to reduce tooth decay. They have even allowed food companies to use cancer-causing chemicals in snack foods targeted to children.

[DANGEROUS] Trump and Republicans are putting Americans at risk by cutting funding for food safety inspections, putting them at the lowest they've been in decades. They have allowed the use of dangerous pesticides that are linked to diseases like Parkinson's on the crops that produce our food. This has increased the risk of food contamination and foodborne illnesses and has allowed food companies to put cancer-causing chemicals into our food.

[PRICE GOUGING] Trump and Republicans have allowed food companies to take advantage of inflation to raise prices to increase their profits. The CEO of one grocery company said that inflation is "good for business" and that it allowed them to raise prices on milk and eggs higher than necessary.

[MONOPOLIES] Trump and Republicans have taken nearly \$30 million from the corporate food and agricultural industries and have allowed them to drive out competition by creating loopholes and forming unfair monopolies that give them total price control. As a result, family farms are going bankrupt across the country and small grocery stores can't survive.

[CORRUPTION] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies. This has led to the elimination of protections that keep food safe and has allowed food companies to price gouge customers.*

[CORRUPTION W/ POISON] Trump and Republicans have put former food and agriculture lobbyists and executives in charge of overseeing the country's food policies. This has led to the elimination of protections that keep food safe and has allowed food companies to price gouge customers and sell food that is poisoning Americans. *

[TARIFFS] Trump and Republicans have imposed tariffs that have caused the prices of healthy foods like meat and produce to skyrocket. Since Trump and Republicans came into power, the cost of food has increased by nearly 3%, leaving people to cut down on buying healthy foods and turn to ultra-processed foods instead.

[DEPORTATIONS] Trump and Republican mass deportation policy has caused massive worker shortages throughout the food and agriculture industry leaving restaurants short-staffed across the country and affecting farm workers and staffing in food processing plants. This has caused the price of healthy food options in grocery stores to skyrocket with no end in sight.

[SICKNESS] The health care system is broken, and Americans are sicker now than at any other point in modern history. Trump and Republicans are making these problems worse by encouraging Americans to eat foods known to cause heart disease and colon cancer and allowing the food industry to make our food less safe with the use of cancer-causing chemicals.

[MISINFO] Trump and Republicans are spreading misinformation about health, food, and medicine that will cause people to make harmful decisions. By encouraging people to eat more red meat in order to be healthy, they are risking Americans' health.

*Split

Nationwide survey of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters across 62 battleground districts conducted February 10 – 17, 2026.

For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org/battleground.

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About Navigator and Navigating the Battleground

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. ***Navigating the Battleground*** is a project designed to understand messaging nuances in different types of battleground geographies, led by pollsters from Impact Research 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; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

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.

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**To learn more about Navigator or
Navigating the Battleground:**

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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