

expanding *the* *battleground

September 16, 2026

Expanding the Battleground
– Iowa



IMPACT
RESEARCH

Methodology



Impact Research conducted a survey of N=600 likely 2026 general election voters in Iowa.



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



Interviews were conducted between August 18-29, 2026.



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

Key Takeaways – Political and Economic Landscape

- Inflation and the cost of living (48% top five) and government corruption (46%) are the top issues for Iowans. Other top issues for Iowa constituents are jobs and the economy (39%) and healthcare (35%).
- **President Trump's brand in Iowa is underwater.** A majority of constituents in Iowa have an unfavorable opinion of him (-11 net fav) and give him a failing grade overall (-17 net job rating), on the economy (-20 net job rating), and handling the war with Iran (-24 net job rating).
- **Nearly 70% of Iowans rate the economy negatively and they place the blame on Trump and Republicans in Congress.** By a 12-point margin, Iowans say Trump and Republicans in Congress are more to blame than Democrats. Nearly half of constituents in the Hawkeye State say corporate greed and price gouging (49% top two) is the main non-political culprit for high prices, followed by tariffs (37% top two).
- **Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Iowans say that it's more important that officials share their values, rather than being part of the political party they support.** This holds true across partisan lines.
- Neither party has a clear advantage on Iowans' biggest priorities – lowering costs and taking on corruption in government.

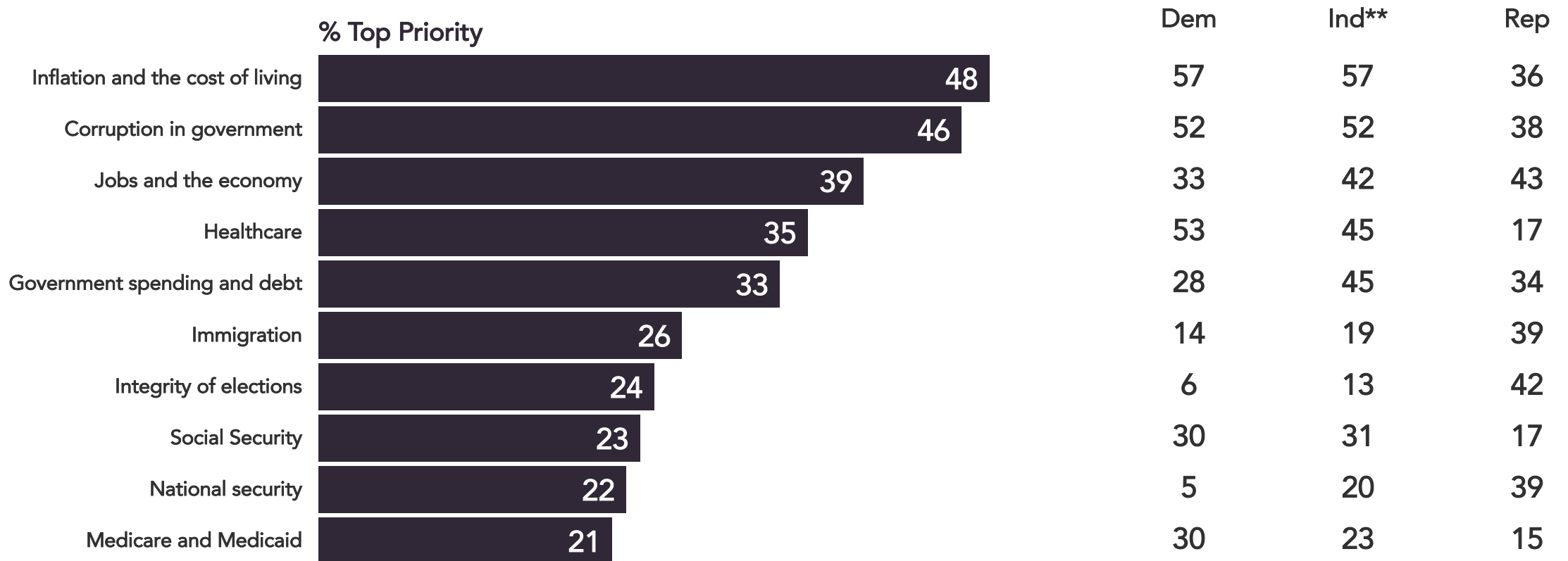
Key Takeaways – Party and Elected Official Branding

- **Iowans are sour on both parties in Congress.** Constituents in the Hawkeye State give the parties identical favorable ratings, with 60% of the unfavorable.
- **Iowans don't see their priorities reflected in the priorities of Republicans in Congress, especially on cost of living.** There is a 40-point gap between what issues Iowans want Congress to prioritize and where they think Republicans are placing their energy.
- **A gap exists with Democrats in Congress, as well.** Iowans are more likely to think Democrats are prioritizing lowering costs than Republicans.
- **Democrats have a trust advantage on key issues like healthcare and protecting Social Security, while Republicans have an advantage on immigration.** Things are more mixed on issues like handling the economy, lowering costs, taking on government corruption, and handling the war with Iran.
- **Beyond securing the border, Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA)'s brand is weak.** Iowans don't think she is lowering costs, will bring change to Washington, or is looking out for Iowans. Iowa residents are also deeply concerned about Hinson refusing to ban pesticides that pollute water.
- **Iowans think their Republican senator will just vote with Trump all of the time regardless if it's good for the state.** Only 37% of constituents in the Hawkeye State think a Republican senator would stand up to Trump in the interest of their state. And this is their biggest concern in a forced choice – that an elected official will blindly follow Trump over things like self-enrichment and doing the bidding of the ultra-wealthy.

Political and Economic Landscape

The Top Issues for Iowans are Inflation and the Cost of Living and Corruption in Government

Which of the following do you feel are the most important issues that Congress should make a top priority?*



*Multiple responses accepted. Top 10 are shown.

**Smaller sample leading to a higher margin of error.

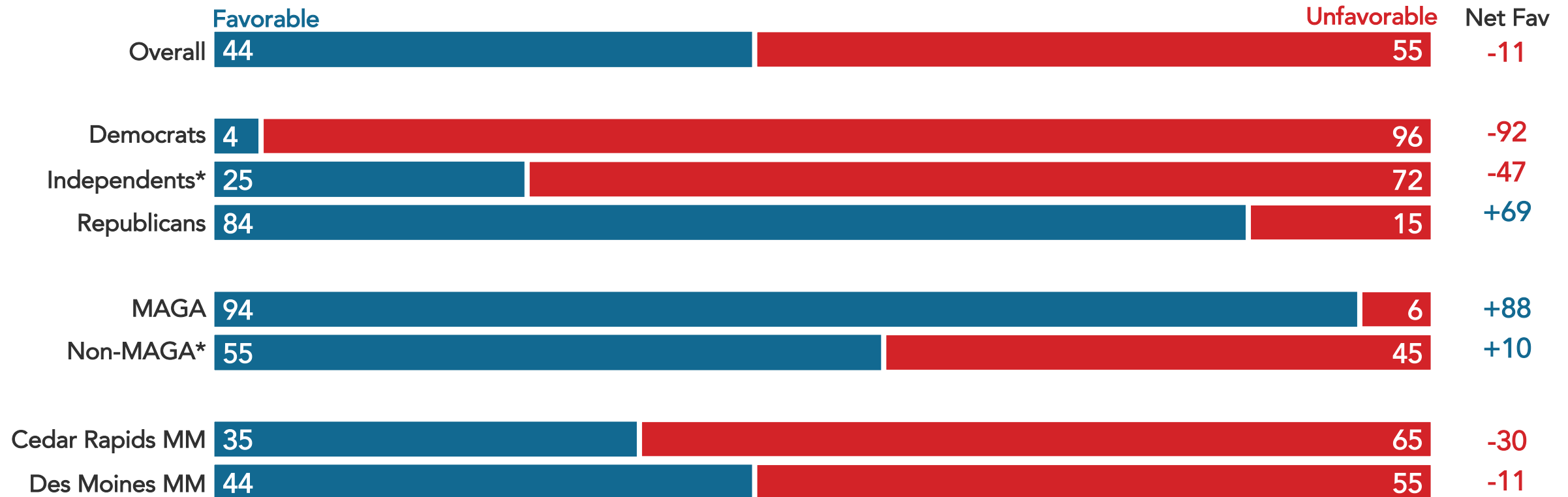
Survey of 600 likely 2026 general election voters in Iowa conducted August 18-29, 2026.

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Trump is Underwater by Double-Digits and is Rated Negatively by Nearly Three-in-Four Independents

Please indicate whether you have a very favorable view, somewhat favorable view, somewhat unfavorable view, or very unfavorable view of: **Donald Trump**

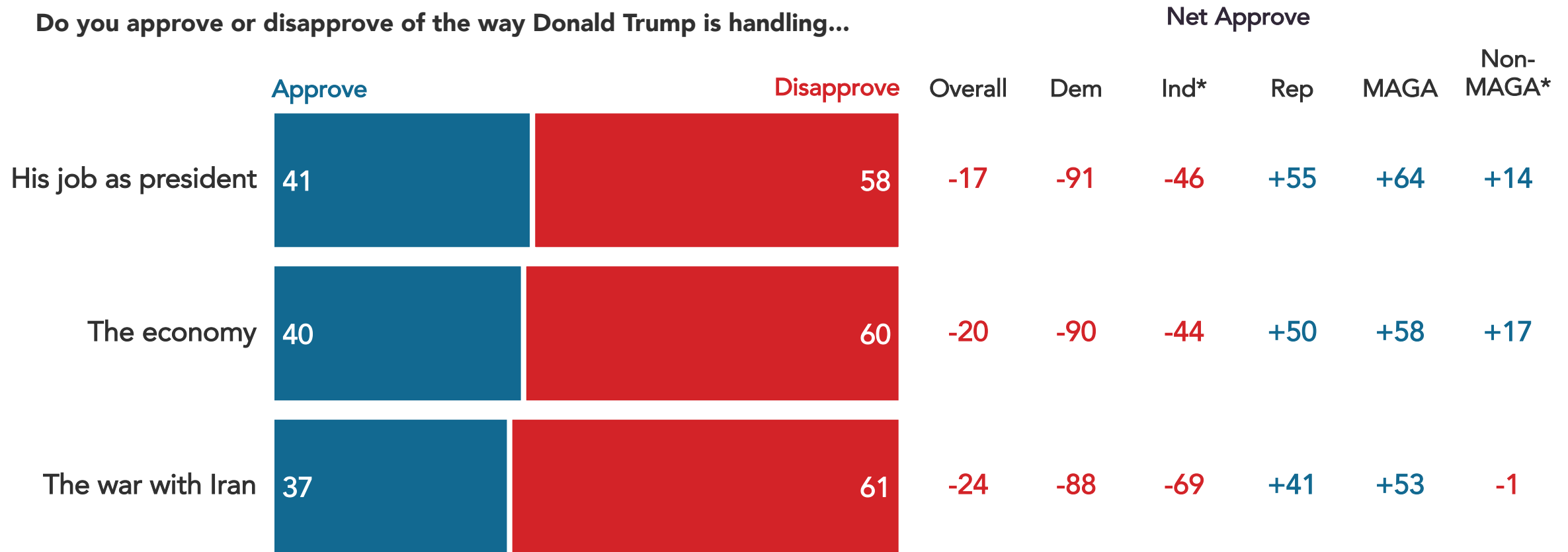


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Trump is Underwater on His Handling of the Presidency, the Economy, and the War with Iran

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling...

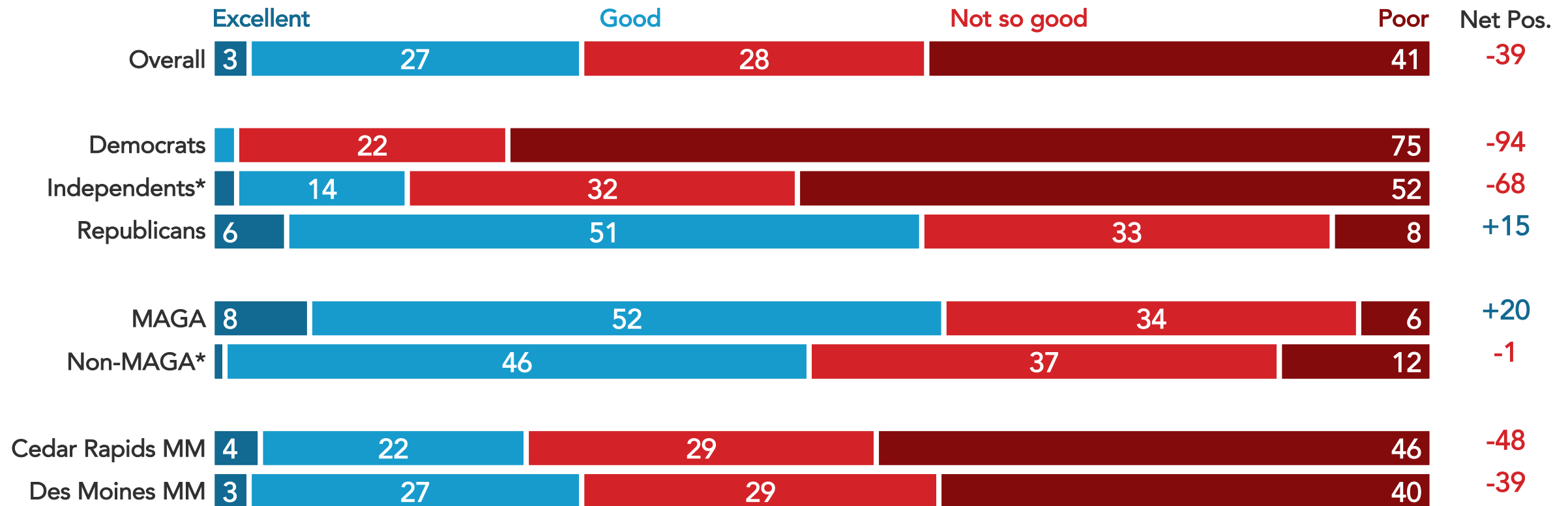


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7-in-10 Rate the Economy Negatively, including Over 80% of Independents

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

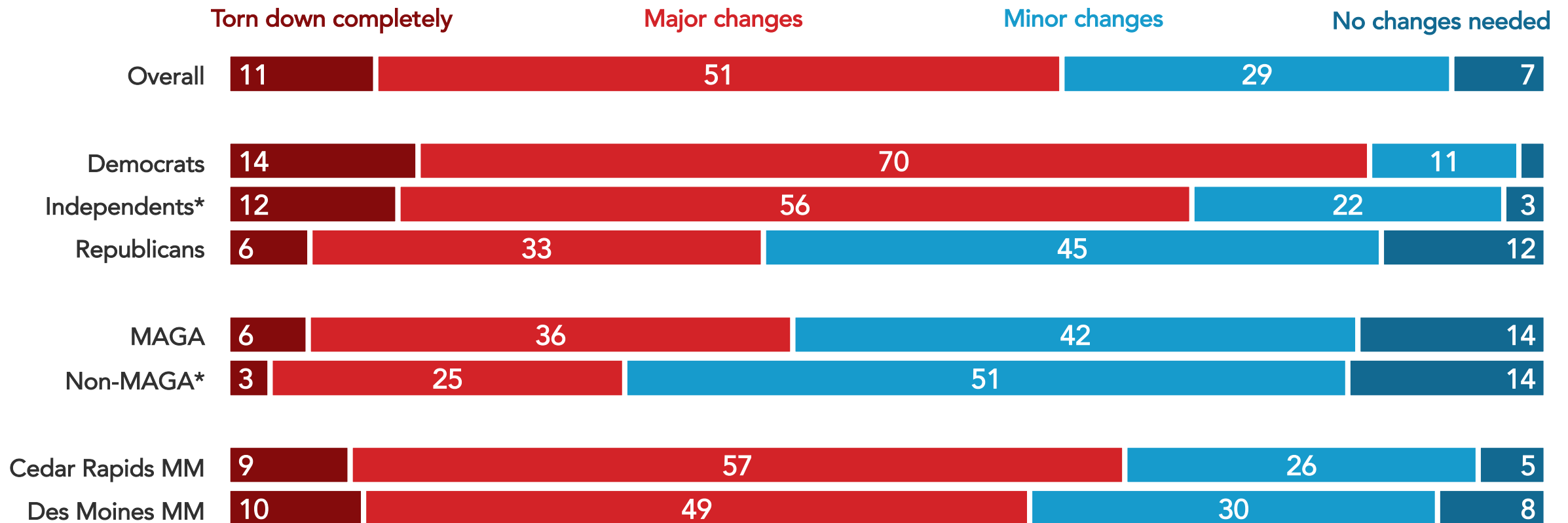


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A Majority of Iowans Say That the Economy Needs at Least Major Changes, Including a Majority of Independents

Which comes closest to your view of the current economic system in America?

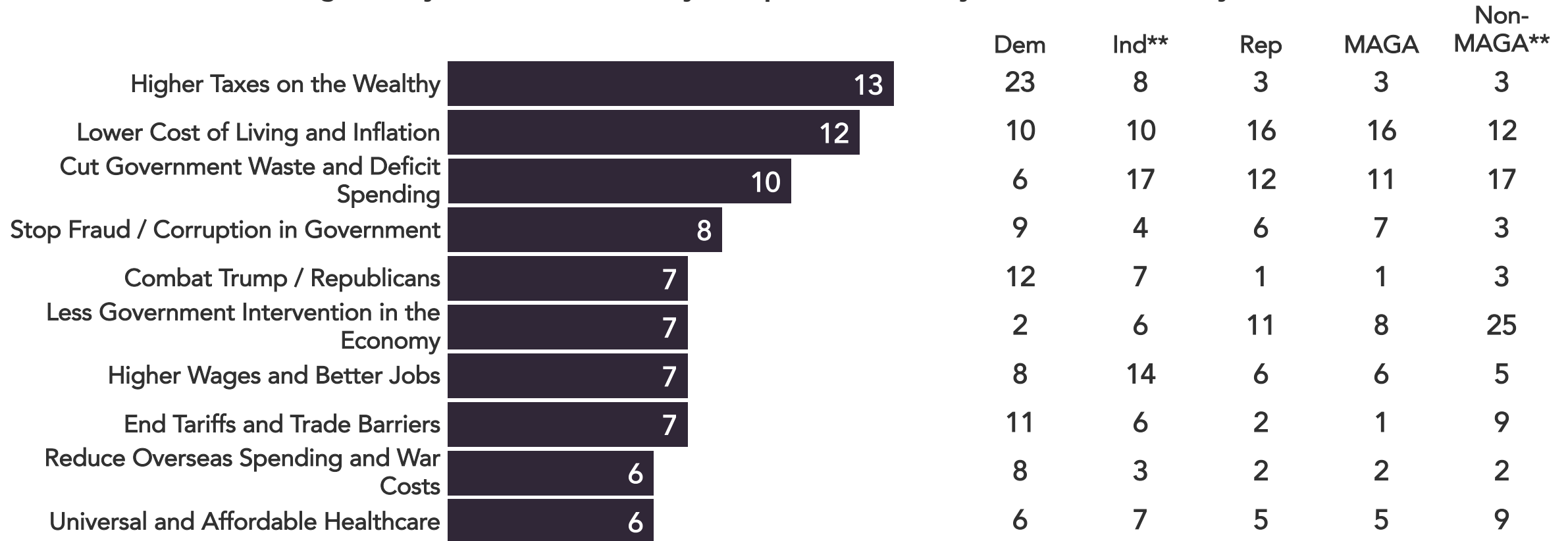


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Independents Think Cutting Government Waste and Better and Higher Paying Jobs Will Improve the Economic System

What are the main changes that you think are necessary to improve the country's current economic system?



*Open-ended. Asked of those who say the system needs changes. Top 10 are shown.

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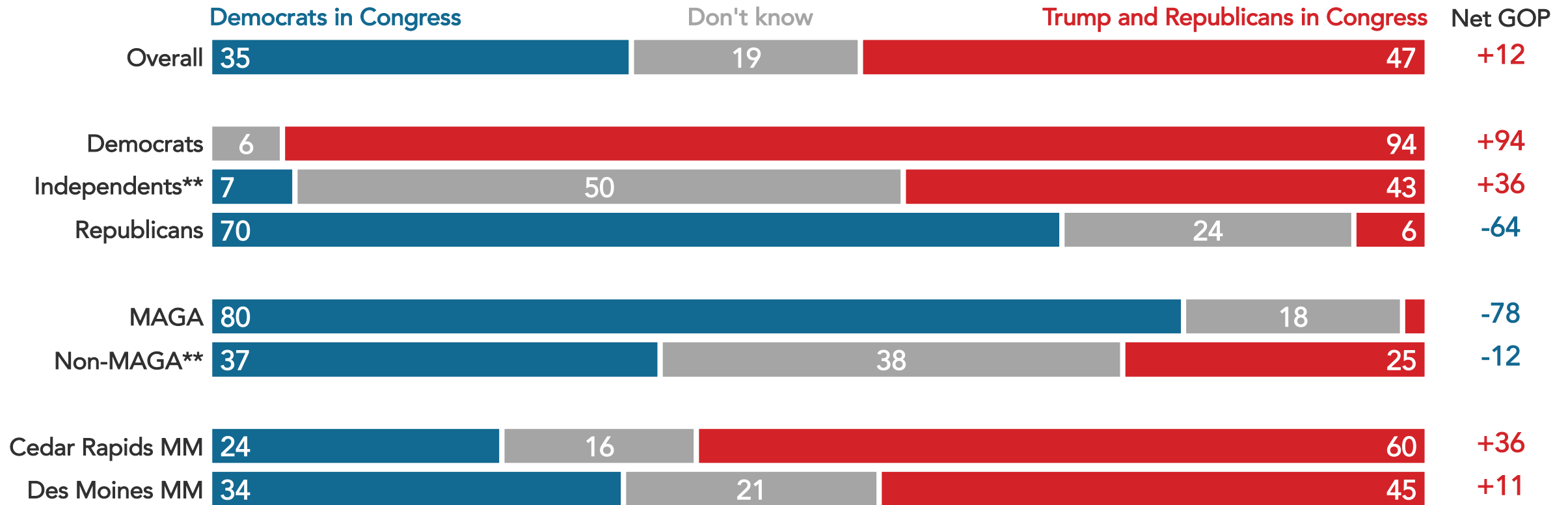
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More Iowans Blame President Trump and Republicans in Congress for Rising Costs Than Blame Democrats

When it comes to rising costs, who do you believe is MOST to blame?*



*Split

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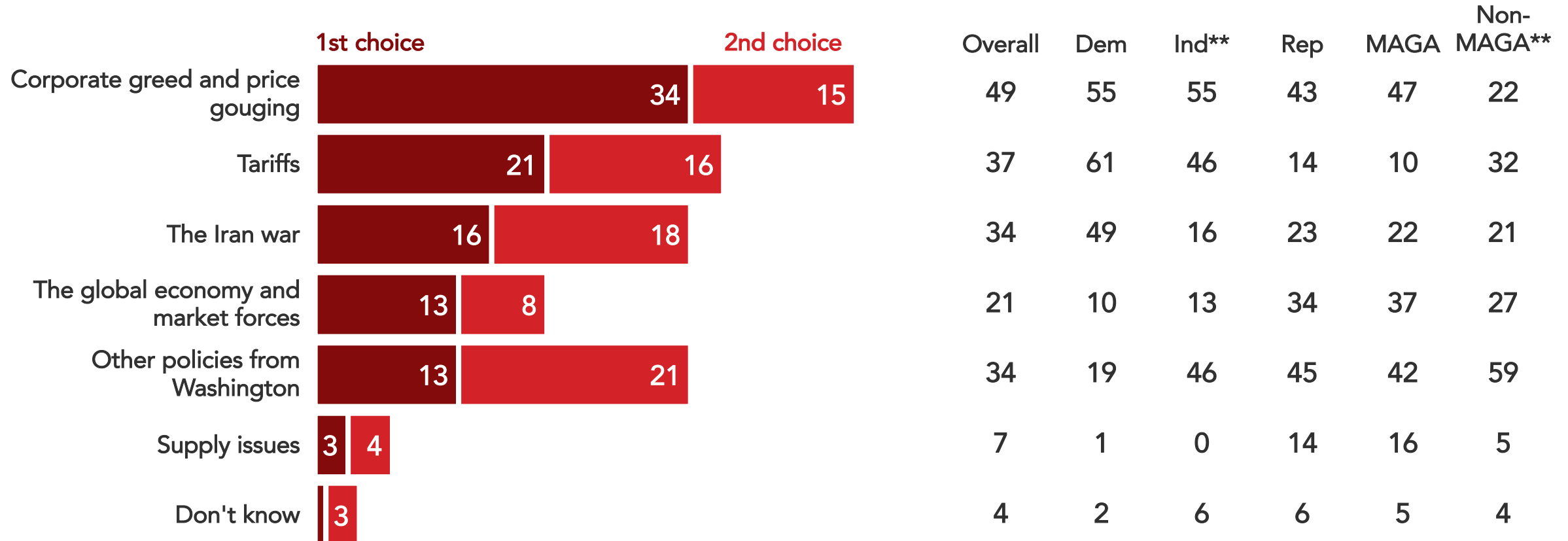
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Iowans Place Corporate Greed and Pricing Gouging Above Anything Else for Rising Costs

When it comes to rising costs, what do you believe is MOST to blame?*



*Split

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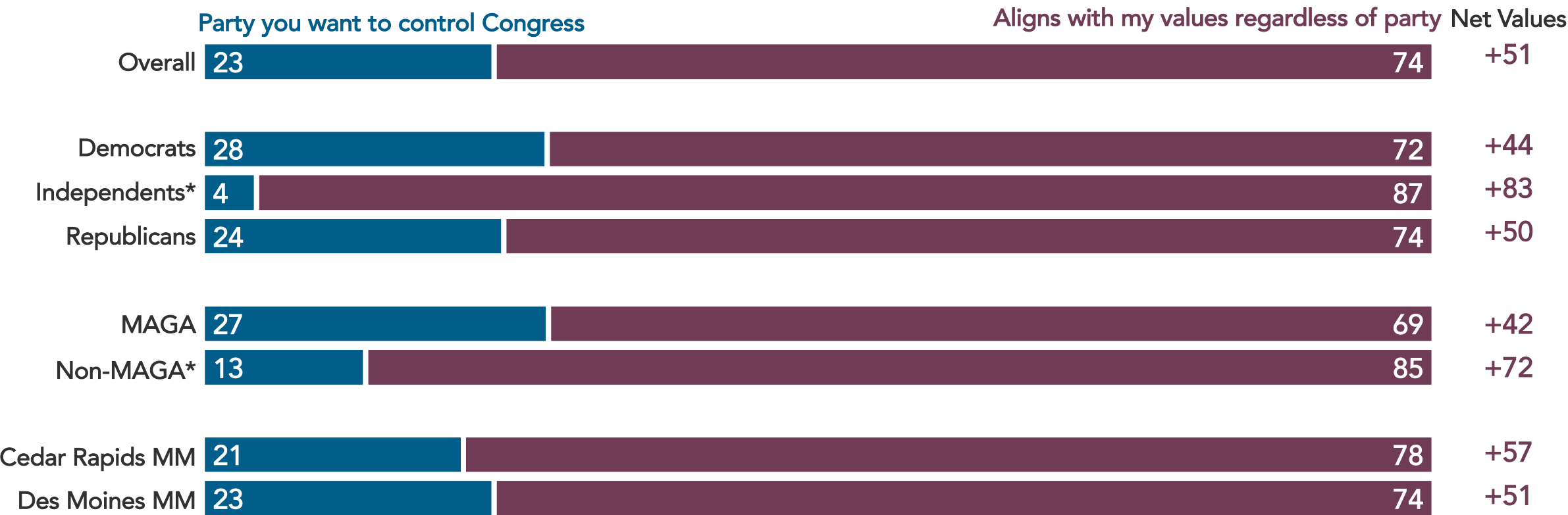
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Party Branding

Iowans Care More About a Candidate Who Aligns With Their Values Than Their Preferred Party Having Control

When thinking about elections for U.S. Congress, which is more important to you: a candidate from the party you want to control Congress, or one who aligns with your values regardless of party?

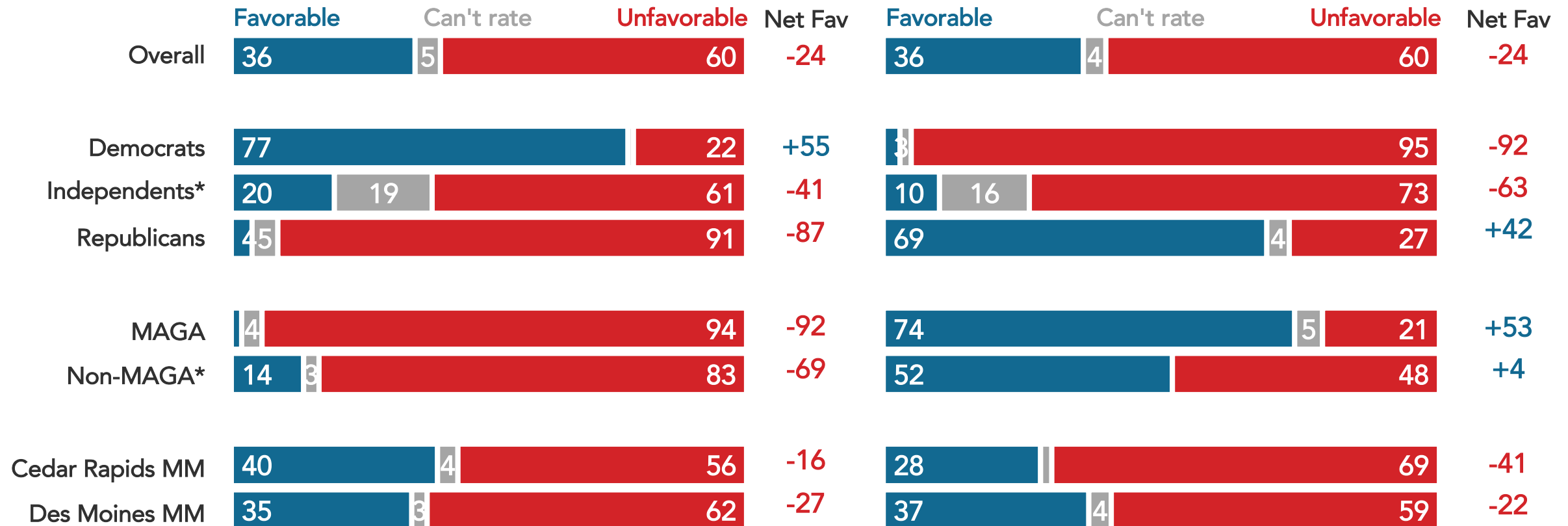


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Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress are Disliked, Though Independents are More Negative Towards Republicans

Favorability of Democrats in Congress

Favorability of Republicans in Congress

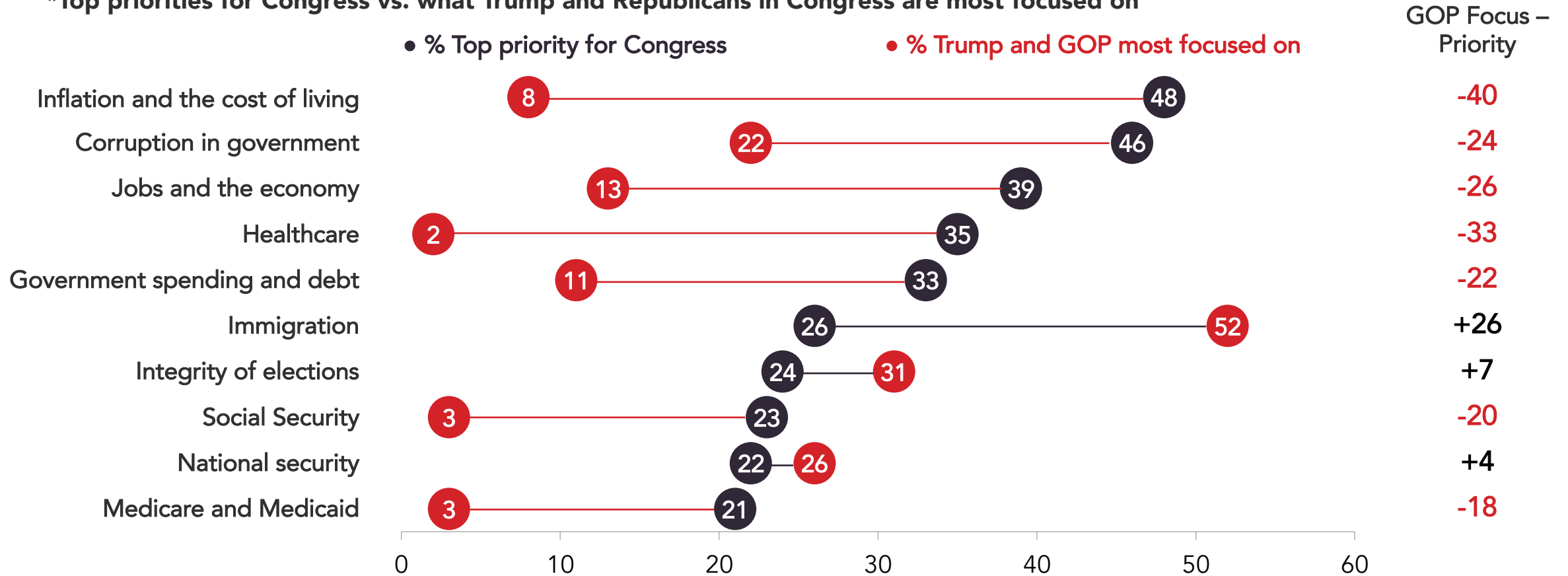


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Iowans See Trump and Republicans in Congress as too Focused on Immigration, Not Focused Enough on Costs

*Top priorities for Congress vs. what Trump and Republicans in Congress are most focused on

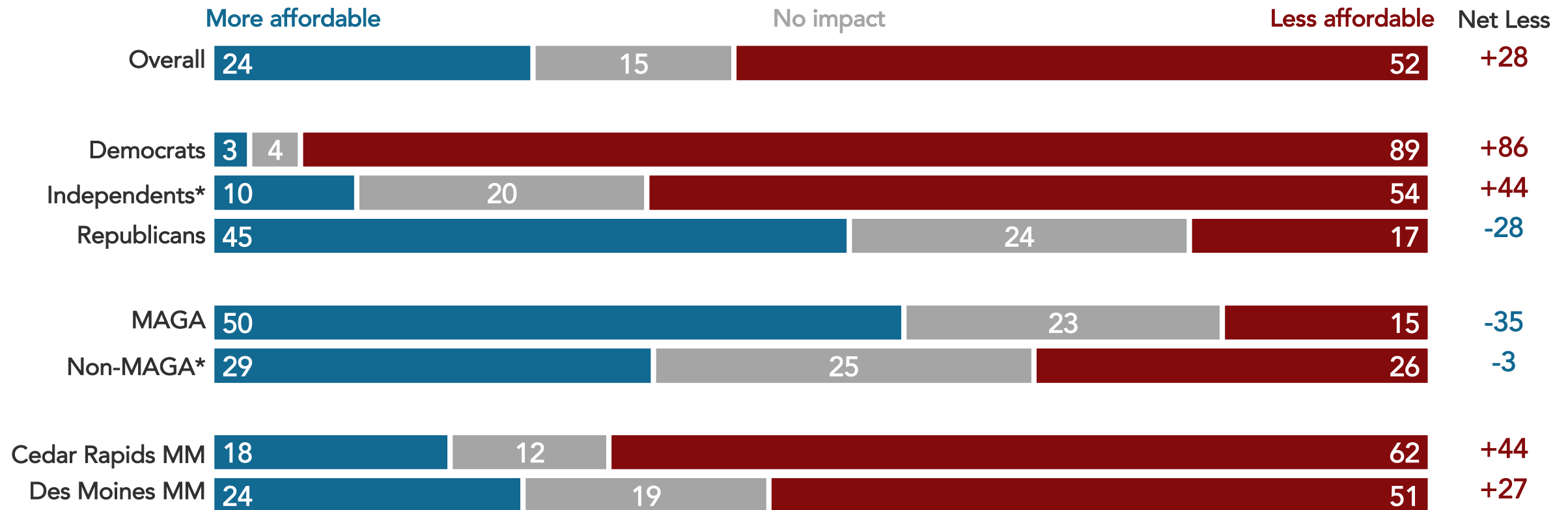


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A Majority of Iowans Say That Republicans in Congress are Focused on Policies that Make Life Less Affordable

From what you know, have Republicans in Congress focused on policies that have made life more affordable, had no impact on affordability, or made life less affordable?

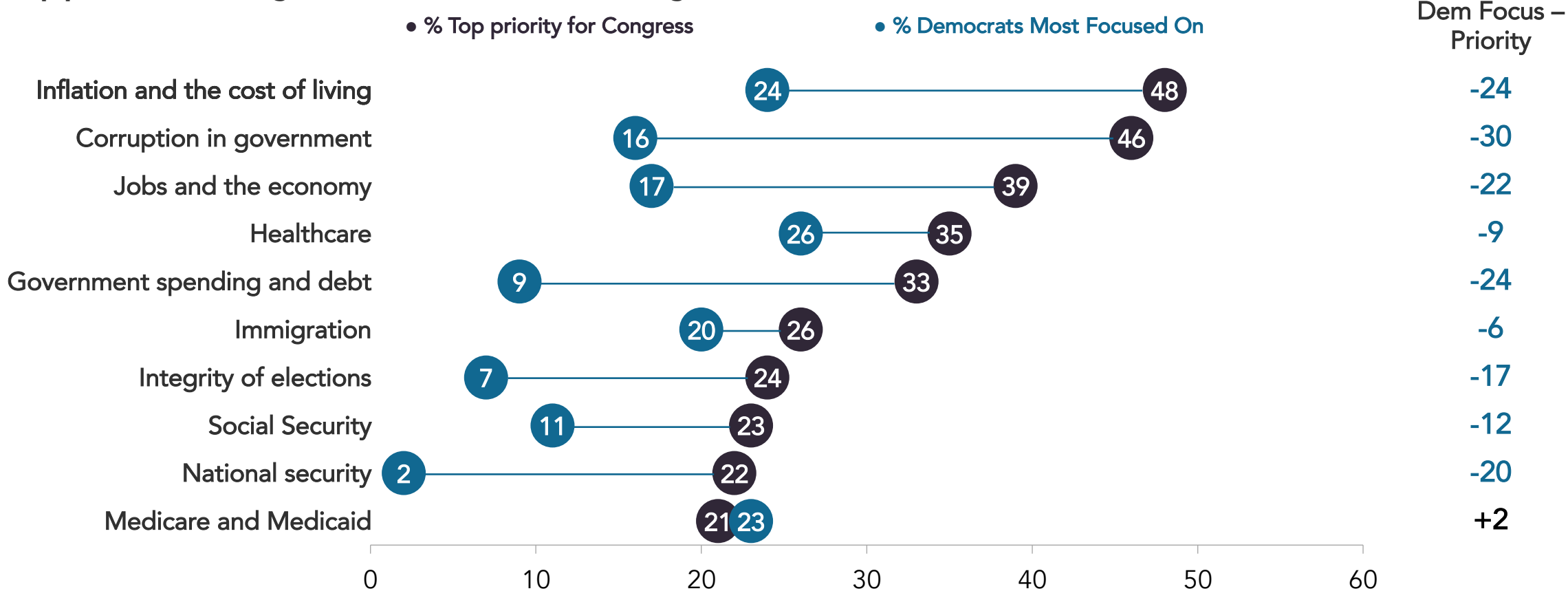


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Democrats in Congress are Seen as More Focused on Cost of Living Than Their Republican Counterparts

*Top priorities for Congress vs. what Democrats in Congress are most focused on

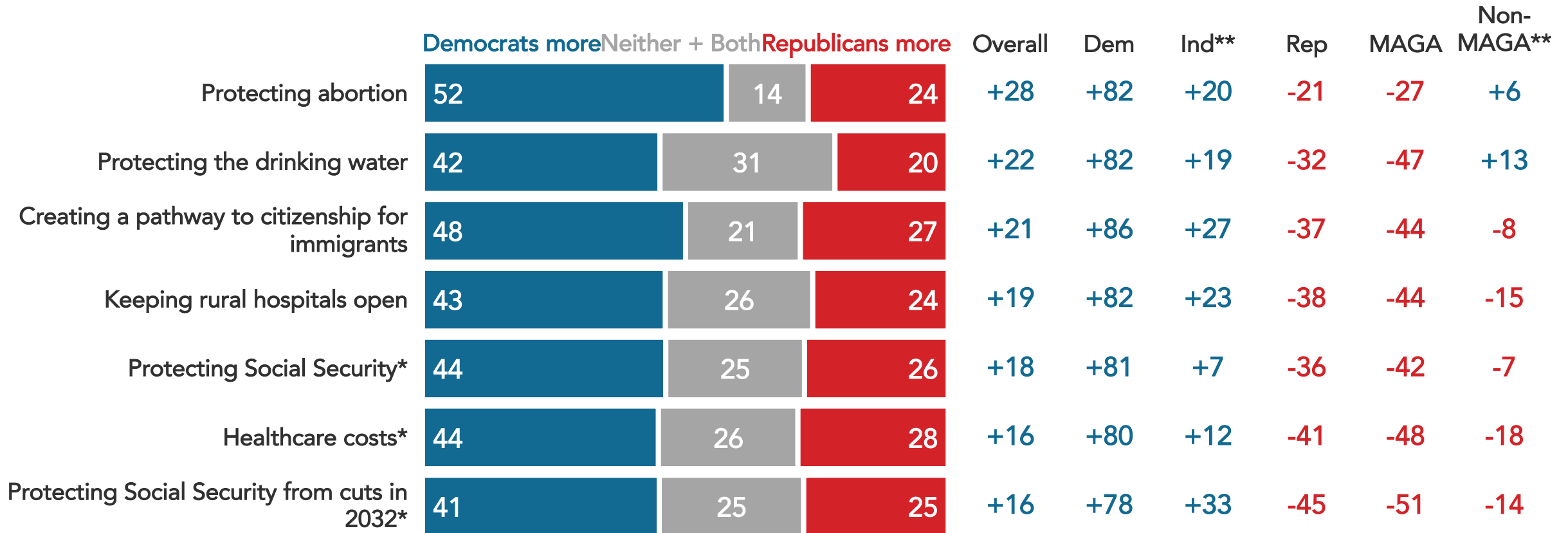


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Democrats Hold Trust Advantages on Protecting Abortion and Drinking Water and Keeping Rural Hospitals Open

Which party do you trust more to handle each of the following?

Net Democrats More



*Split

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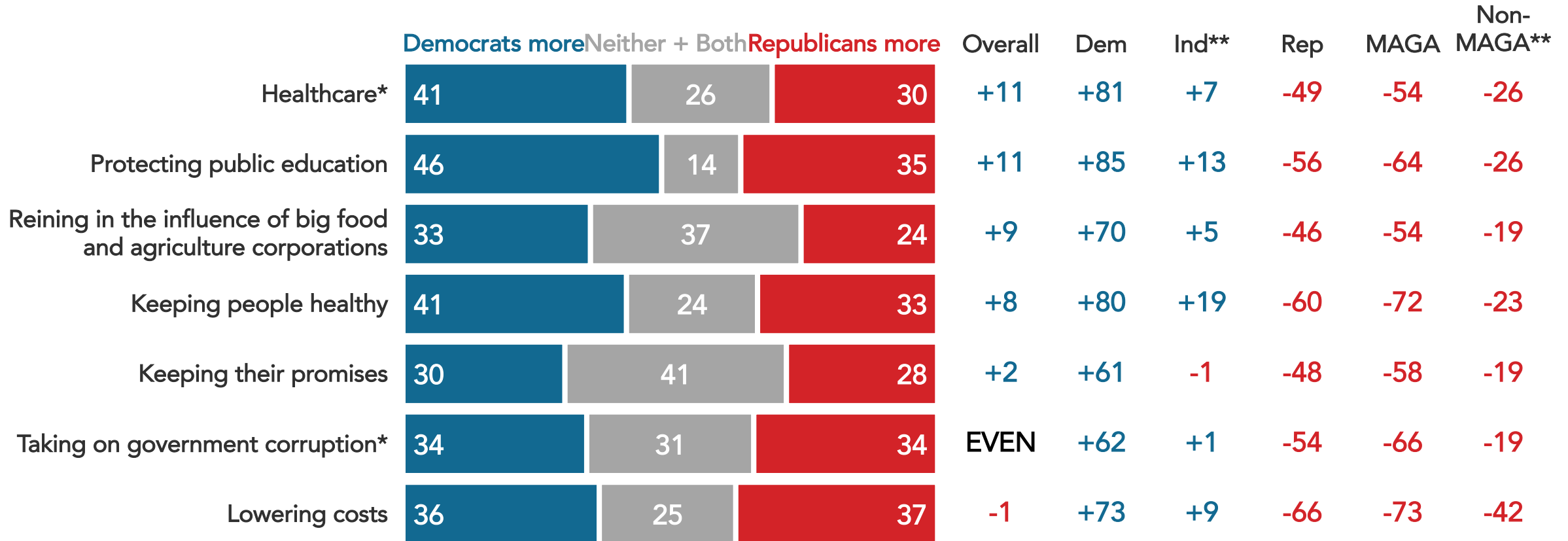
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Both Parties are at Parity on Lowering Costs and Taking on Government Corruption

Which party do you trust more to handle each of the following?



*Split

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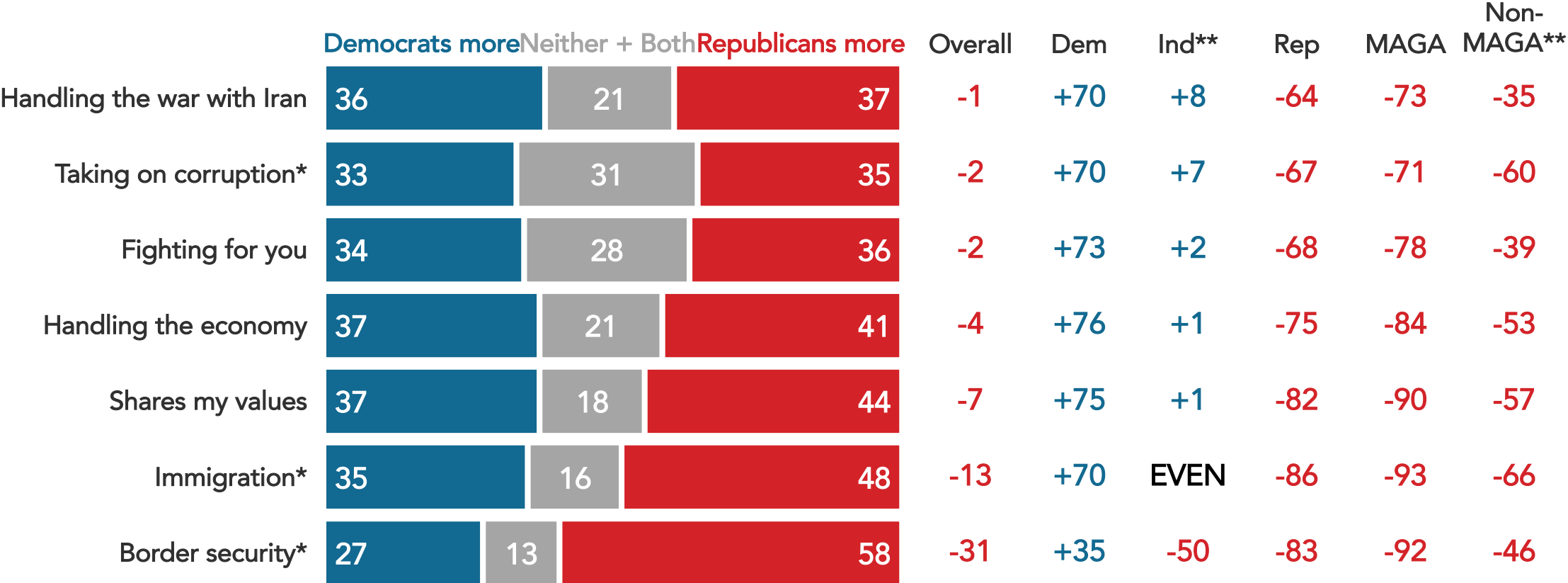
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Republicans' Biggest Advantages are on Immigration and Border Security

Which party do you trust more to handle each of the following?

Net Democrats More



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Branding of Elected Officials

Iowans Don't Think Representative Hinson is Fighting Inflation or Can Bring Change to Washington

How well does each of the following describe Ashley Hinson?

Net Describes Well

	Well	Don't know	Not well	Overall	Dem	Ind*	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA*
Fighting inflation	28	27	44	-16	-77	-39	+43	+55	+7
Bringing needed change	30	24	45	-15	-79	-34	+46	+56	+16
Making healthcare and prescription drugs more affordable	30	25	44	-14	-74	-38	+42	+49	+28
Looking out for people like me	33	21	46	-13	-81	-37	+52	+65	+10
Lowering costs for working families	33	21	45	-12	-77	-33	+50	+60	+27
Standing up to corruption	32	24	44	-12	-75	-37	+51	+64	+16
Getting things done	36	21	43	-7	-71	-34	+54	+61	+32
Ensuring our food and water is safe	34	25	41	-7	-69	-26	+52	+58	+30
Shares my values	38	18	44	-6	-74	-38	+60	+73	+24
Securing the border	49	22	29	+20	-35	-6	+74	+81	+49

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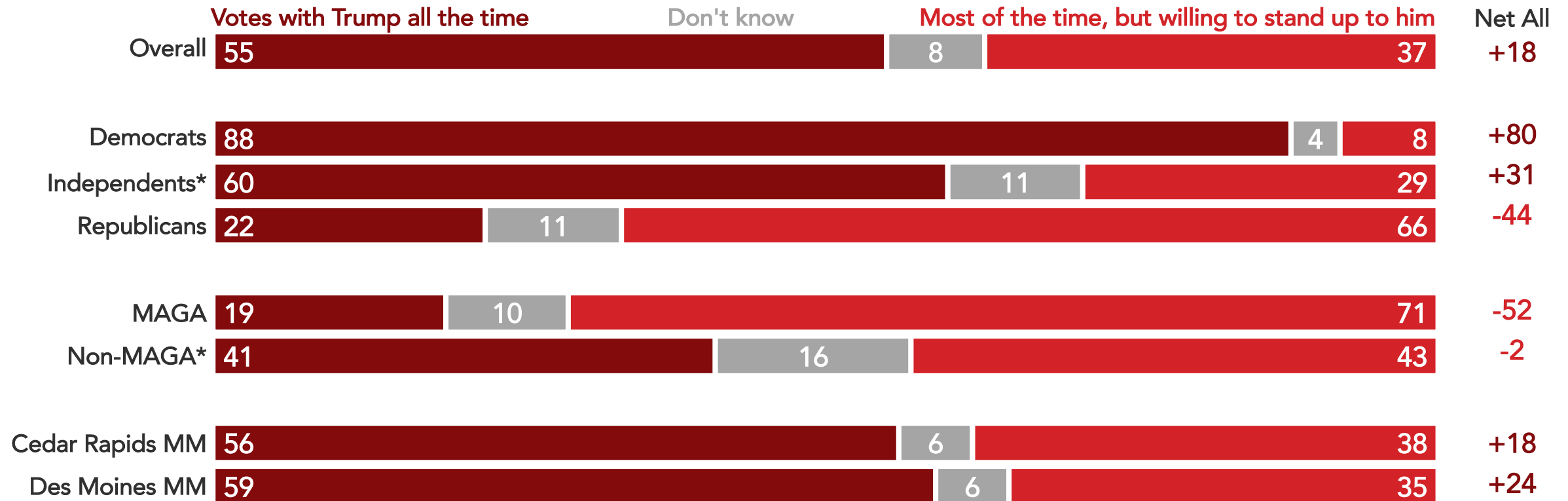
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Over Half of Iowans Say That Republican Senators Vote With Trump All of the Time, Even When it's Bad for Iowa

Do you believe Republican Senators vote with Trump all of the time, or most of the time, but are willing to stand up to him when it's in the best interest of Iowa?



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Iowans Have Serious Concerns About Rep. Hinson's Refusal to Ban Pesticides That Pollute Water and Her Support for Medicaid Cuts

On a scale of 1-10, how concerned would you be if your representative in Congress did each of the following?

	% 10 - Serious concern	Dem	Ind**	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA**
Created a taxpayer funded slush fund that would give members of Congress a half a million dollar payout	78	90	85	66	65	75
Refused to ban pesticides that pollute water	60	78	51	48	44	57
Cut Medicaid, forcing rural hospitals and clinics to close and cut services*	59	87	48	37	34	50
Opposed a stock trading ban for members of Congress	58	65	61	55	56	54
Supported one of the biggest tax increases in history on goods, like cars and medicine	58	73	58	45	44	52
Ended tax credits that help working people and small businesses pay for health insurance, driving up premiums by 114%	57	83	62	34	33	36
Is supported by big Pharma and the healthcare industry	54	67	54	44	45	43
Passed one of the largest tax cuts for billionaires in history	54	85	55	27	27	27

*Split

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A Majority also Have Serious Concerns About Data Centers, Health Insurance Cuts, and Decreased Regulations on Big Food

On a scale of 1-10, how concerned would you be if your representative in Congress did each of the following?

	% 10 - Serious concern	Dem	Ind**	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA**
Supported allowing big tech companies to build data centers with no restrictions*	54	74	57	35	39	27
Passed handouts for and decreased regulations on big food corporations	53	72	58	37	39	36
Cut Medicaid, putting health insurance at risk for 68,000 Iowans*	52	86	60	20	19	21
Voted to spend billions of dollars on the war with Iran	51	85	58	20	19	24
Passed funding cuts for rural healthcare	50	81	46	25	25	24
Supported building data centers that pollute local waterways*	50	76	50	28	29	24
Supported ICE raids in communities that have killed innocent civilians	48	85	38	18	16	25

*Split

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Limiting Sources of Energy and Opposing a Pathway to Citizenship for Immigrants are Less Concerning to Iowans

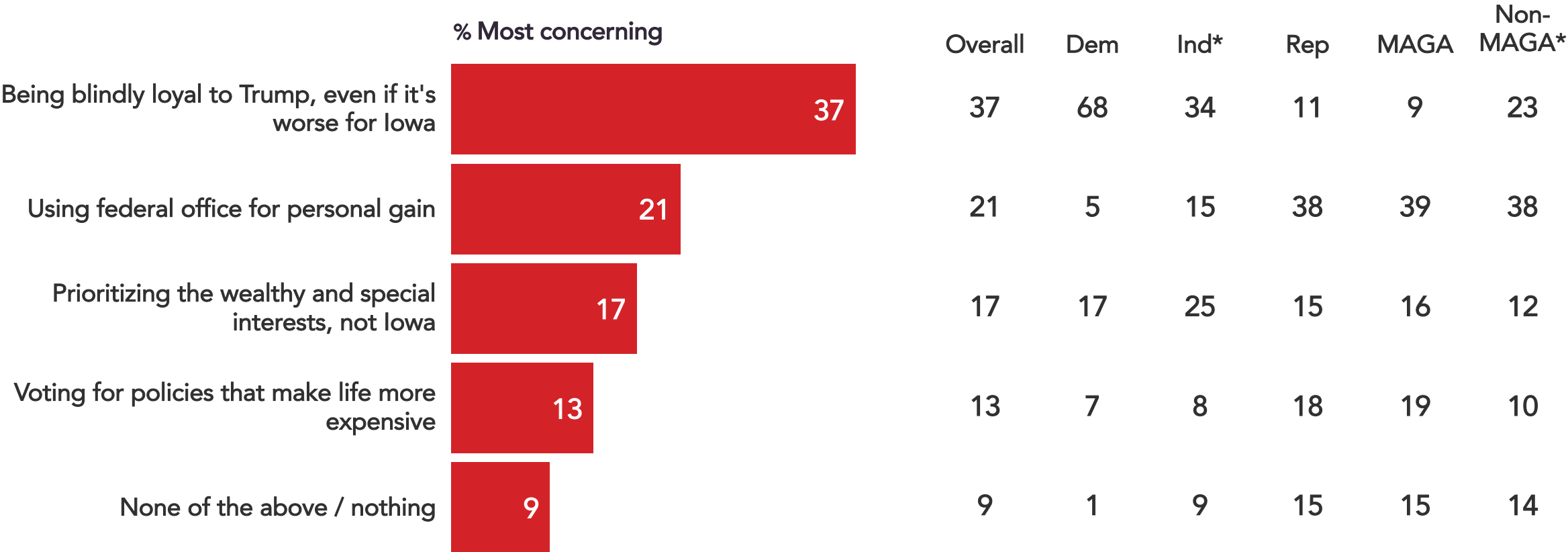
On a scale of 1-10, how concerned would you be if your representative in Congress did each of the following?

	% 10 - Serious concern	Dem	Ind**	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA**
Supported the privatization of Social Security	46	79	42	18	16	21
Allowed utility companies to raise utility rates	46	61	42	35	35	38
Supported a nationwide abortion ban	45	80	25	18	14	26
Voted for funding cuts to SNAP, taking food away from families and children	42	79	44	11	9	17
Passed funding cuts to the federal disaster relief agency	41	73	37	13	10	25
Opposed a pathway to citizenship for immigrants	39	61	24	24	24	23
Passed limits on more sources of energy	39	59	27	23	21	31

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Iowans, Including Independents, are Most Concerned about Representatives Being Blindly Loyal to Trump

Which of the following is the most concerning policy action your elected representative could take?



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About Navigator and Expanding 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. Expanding the Battleground is a project designed to understand messaging nuances in different types of battleground geographies, led by pollsters from Impact Research.

About the Study

Impact Research conducted public opinion surveys among a sample of 600 voters likely 2026 general election voters in each of Alaska, Iowa, Ohio and Texas for a total sample size of 2,400 between August 18-29, 2026. The survey was conducted via text-to-web interviews. Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of each state 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 +/- 2.0 percentage points. The margin for error for subgroups varies and is higher.

For Press inquiries contact:

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