

expanding *the* *battleground

September 15, 2026

Expanding the Battleground
– Texas



IMPACT
RESEARCH

Methodology



Impact Research conducted a survey of N=600 likely 2026 general election voters in Texas, one of four surveys across battleground states totaling N=2400.



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 (53% top five) and government corruption (52%) are the top issues for Texans.** Other top issues for Texas constituents are jobs and the economy (35%), immigration (34%), and healthcare (32%).
- **Trump is underwater overall and on the economy.** Despite Trump winning Texas by nearly 14 points, a majority of Texans have an unfavorable opinion of him (-8 net fav) and give him a failing grade overall (-13 net job rating), on the economy (-12 net job rating), and handling the war with Iran (-25 net job rating). 10% of those who voted for Trump in 2024 say they regret that decision.
- **Two-thirds of Texans rate the economy negatively (68%) and Trump receives the blame.** By a 9-point margin, battleground constituents place the blame on Trump and Republicans over Democrats. Corporate greed and price gouging (42% top two) is the most popular non-political culprit followed by policies from Washington (39%) and the Iran war (33%).
- **Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Texans 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 and is especially true of independents (95%). Notably, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is deeply underwater on sharing the values of Texans (-18).
- **No party has a clear advantage on Texans' biggest priorities – lowering costs and taking on corruption.** The parties garner an equal amount of trust on taking on government corruption (36% each / 27% neither or both), and Republicans are only favored by a point on lowering costs. Independents trust Democrats more to take on corruption (+10), but slightly favor Republicans to lower costs (-3).

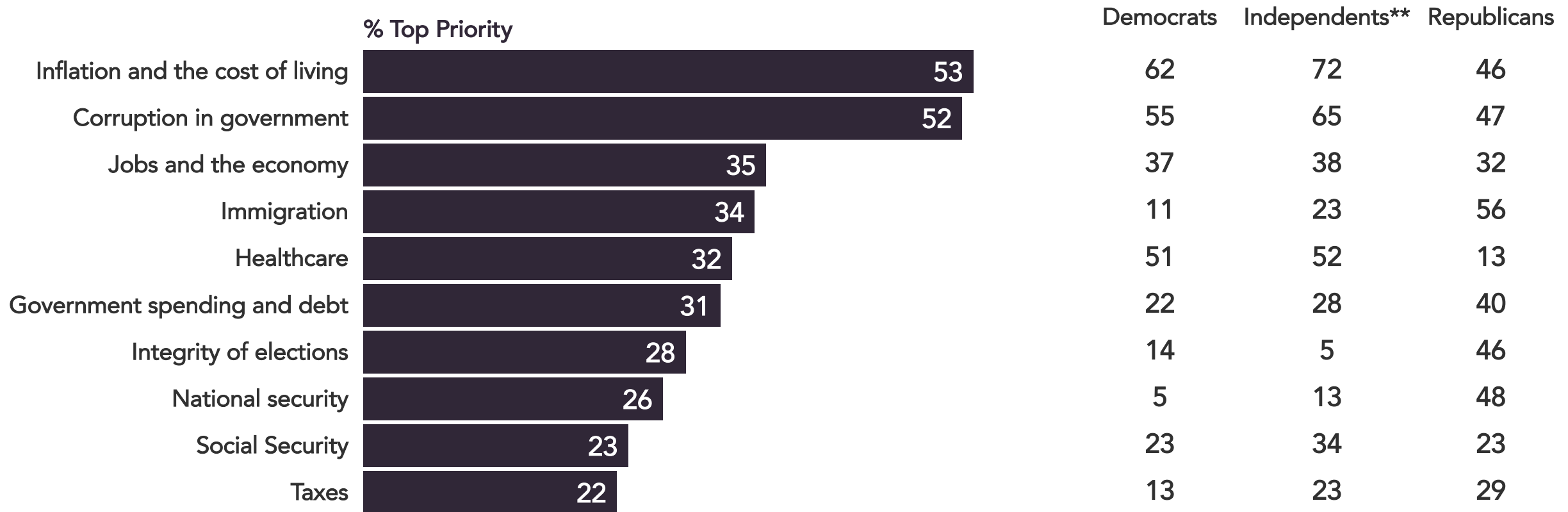
Key Takeaways – Party and Elected Official Branding

- Both parties are well underwater, but Democrats are less popular as a party brand. Democrats in Congress are underwater by 34 points, while Republicans are underwater by 22 points.
- Texans don't view Republicans' priorities as being aligned with theirs. While these voters prioritize the cost of living and the economy, they think Republicans are focused on immigration (68%), foreign conflicts (44%), and election integrity (35%).
- Texans think Democrats are focused on two of their top priorities – healthcare (24% top five) and inflation (19%). But they also think Democrats are focused on trans issues (40%), climate change (36%), and abortion (28%).
- Democrats are most trusted on healthcare, creating a pathway to citizenship, protecting Social Security, protecting abortion, and looking out for the Latino community, while Republicans have the advantage on immigration and sharing my values. 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, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's brand is weak. Texans don't think he is doing key things like looking out for people like them, fighting inflation, or taking on corruption – which are their biggest priorities.
- Texans think their Republican senator will just vote with Trump all of the time. Only 42% of Texans 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 official will blindly follow Trump over things like self-enrichment and doing the bidding of the ultra-wealthy.

Political and Economic Landscape

Inflation and Corruption in Government are the Top Two Issues for Texas Voters

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.

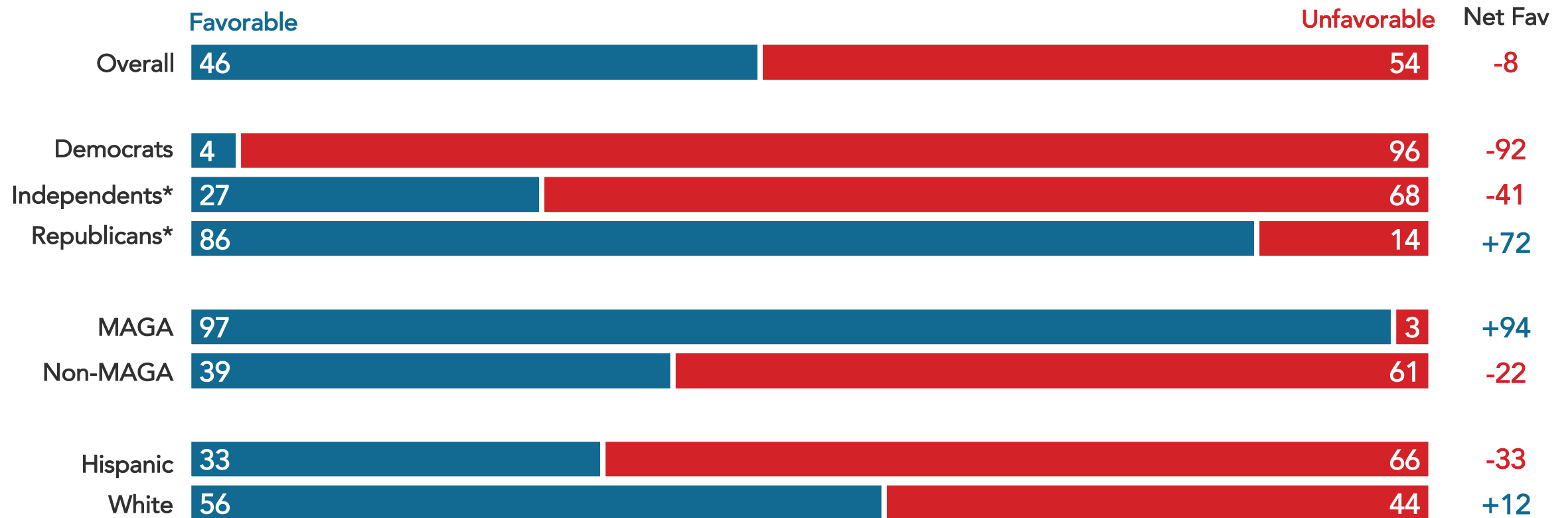
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Trump is Narrowly Unfavorable Overall, but is Panned by Independents and Non-MAGA Republicans

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

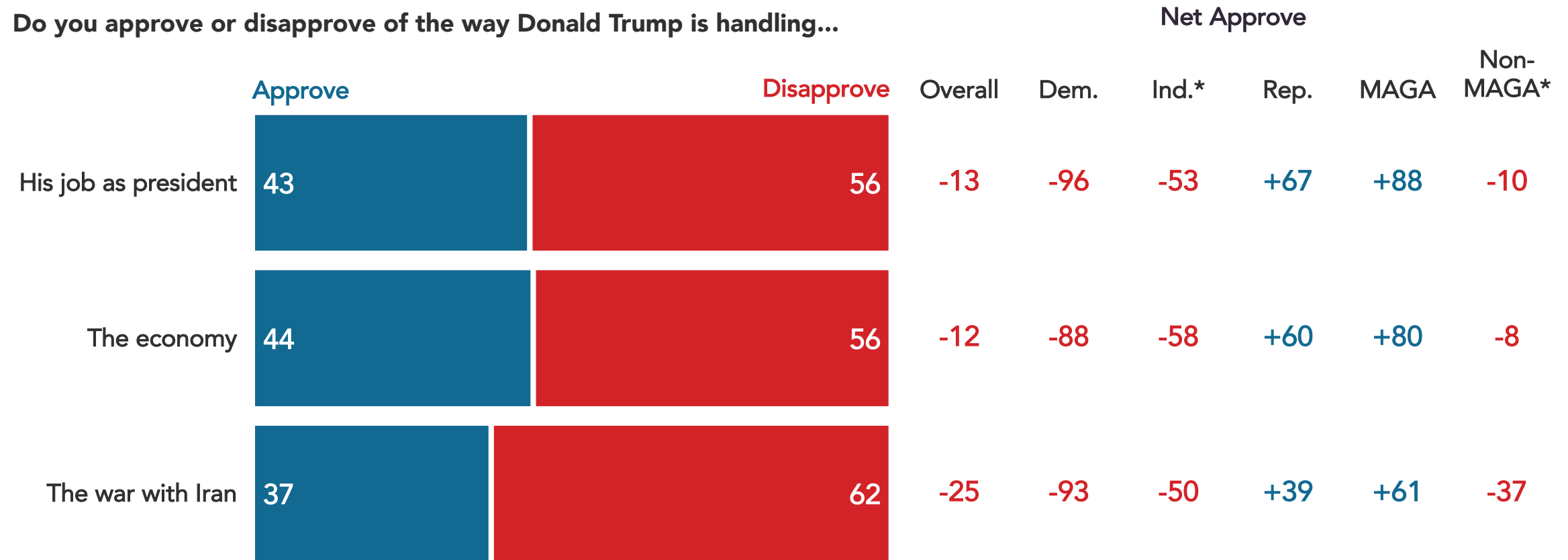


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Trump's Job Ratings are also Underwater, but Especially Regarding the War in Iran

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

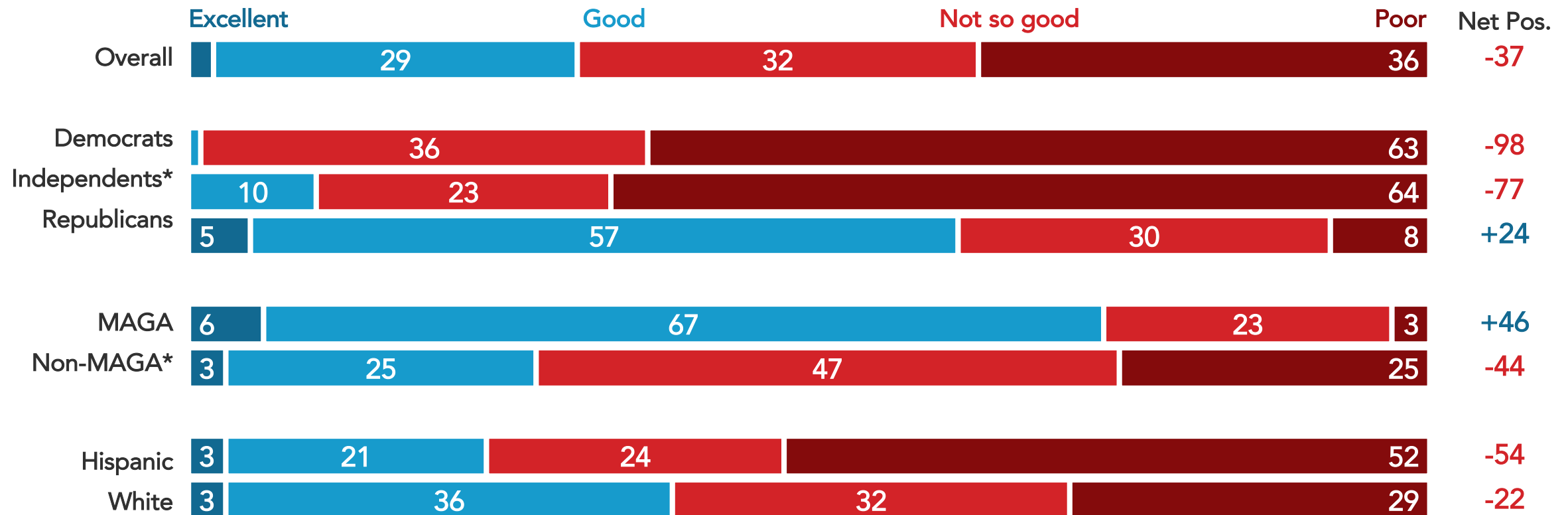


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All Major Demographics Outside of MAGA Republicans Overwhelmingly Rate the Economy Negatively

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

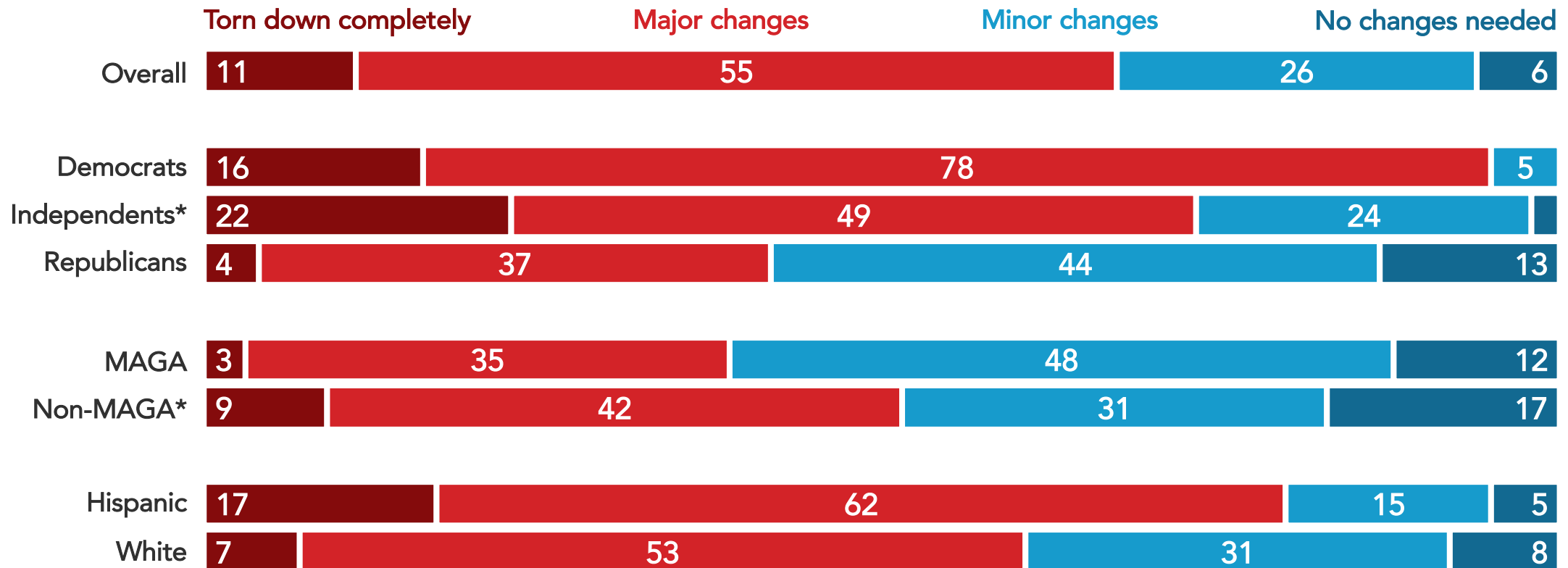


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Two-Thirds of Texans Say That the Current Economic System Needs At Least Major Changes

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



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Constituents in Texas Say That Stopping Fraud and Corruption Is the Most Necessary Change to the Economic System

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

		Overall	Dem.	Ind.**	Rep.	MAGA	Non-MAGA**
Stop Fraud / Corruption in Government	11	11	9	13	12	13	7
Higher Taxes on the Wealthy	10	10	19	10	2	1	5
Lower Cost of Living and Inflation	9	9	7	12	12	12	14
Cut Government Waste and Deficit Spending	8	8	3	8	15	14	14
Reduce Overseas Spending and War Costs	8	8	8	17	6	4	15
Combat Trump / Republicans	7	7	14	5	1	0	6
Stronger Limits on Corporate Power	7	7	10	8	3	2	4
Higher Wages and Better Jobs	7	7	6	18	6	5	8
Lower Taxes	7	7	3	3	11	12	3
Less Government Intervention in the Economy	6	6	2	3	10	11	7

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

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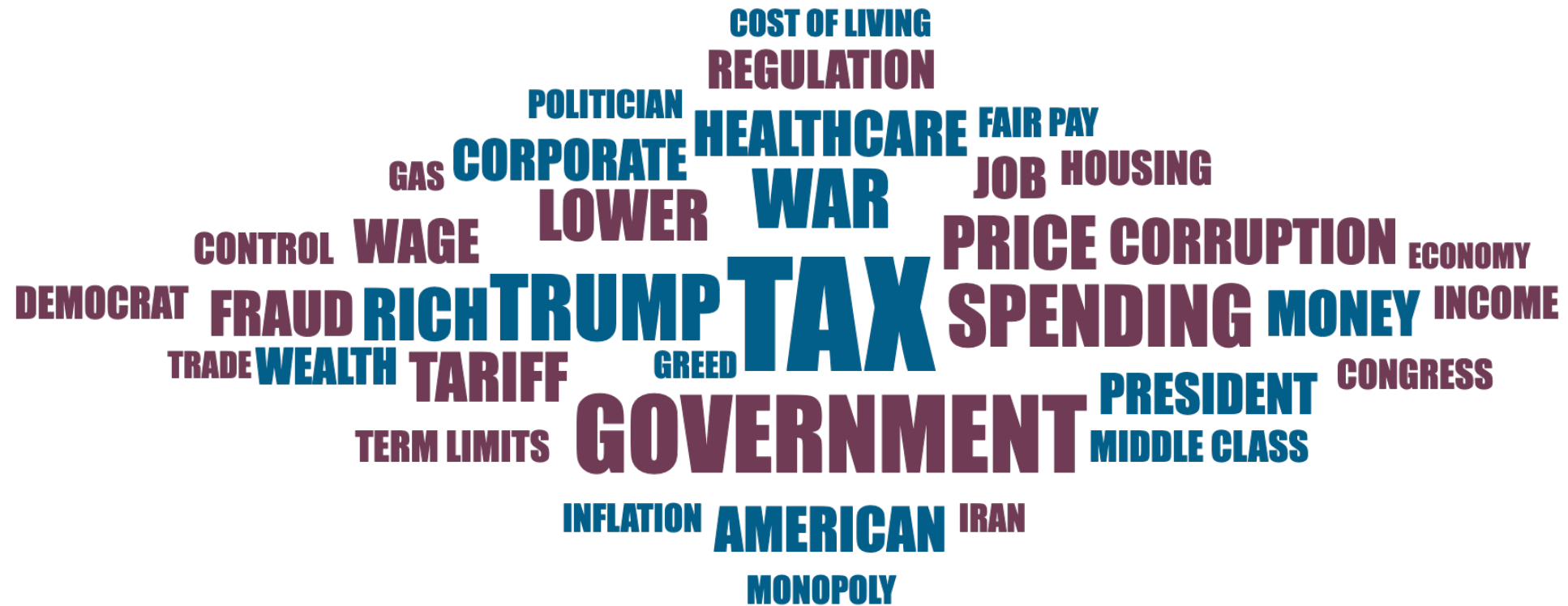
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In a Word Cloud, Taxes and Government Spending Pop Along With Healthcare and Corruption and Fraud

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

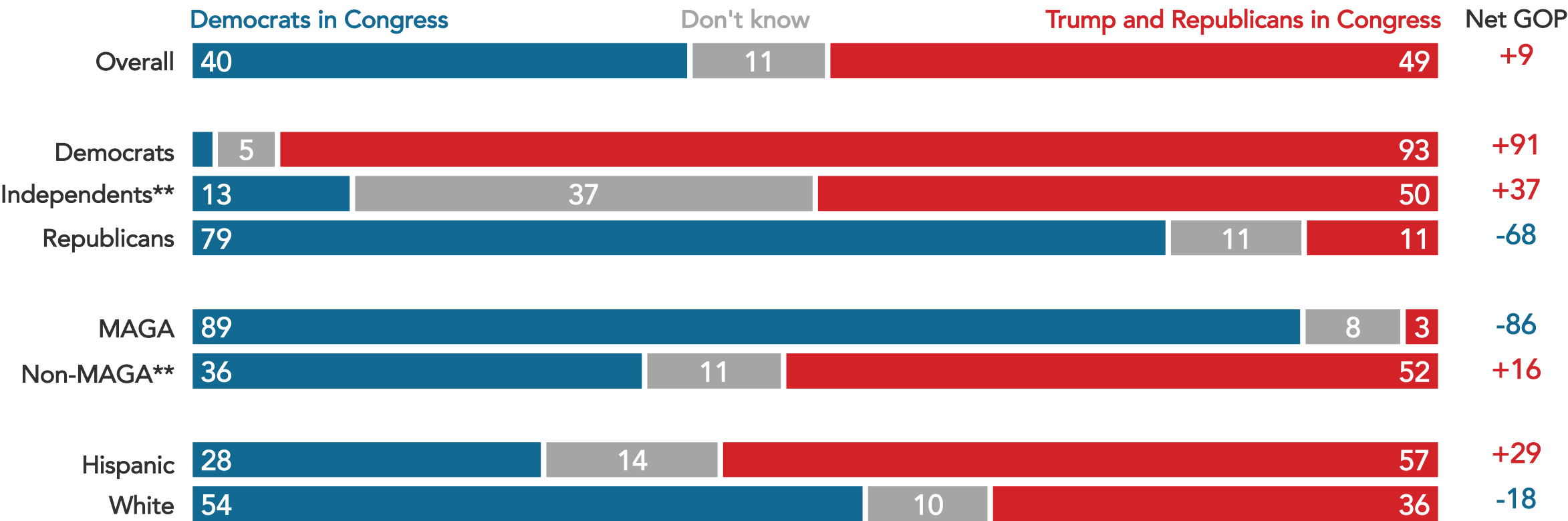


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Texans, Including a Majority of Non-MAGA Republicans, Blame Republicans Over Democrats for Rising Costs

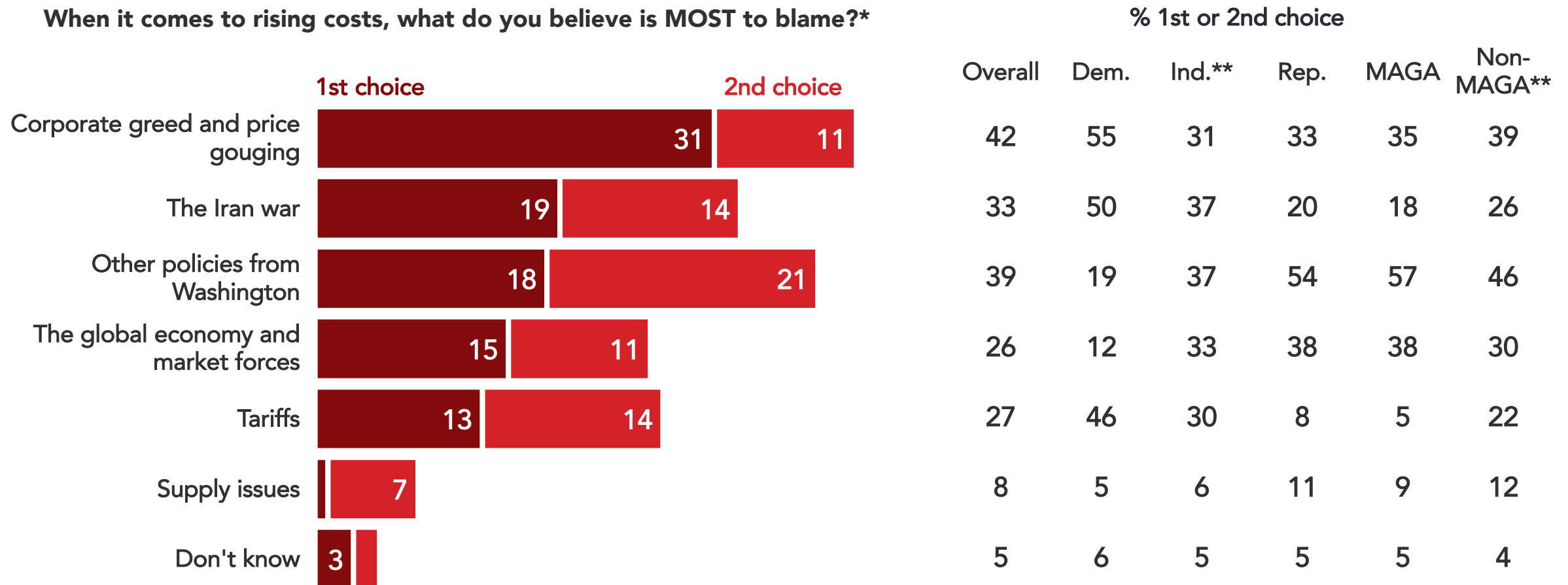
When it comes to rising costs, who do you believe is MOST to blame?*



*Split sample
**Smaller sample leading to a higher margin of error
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Among Environmental Factors, Constituents in the Lone Star State Blame Corporate Greed and Price Gouging

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



*Split

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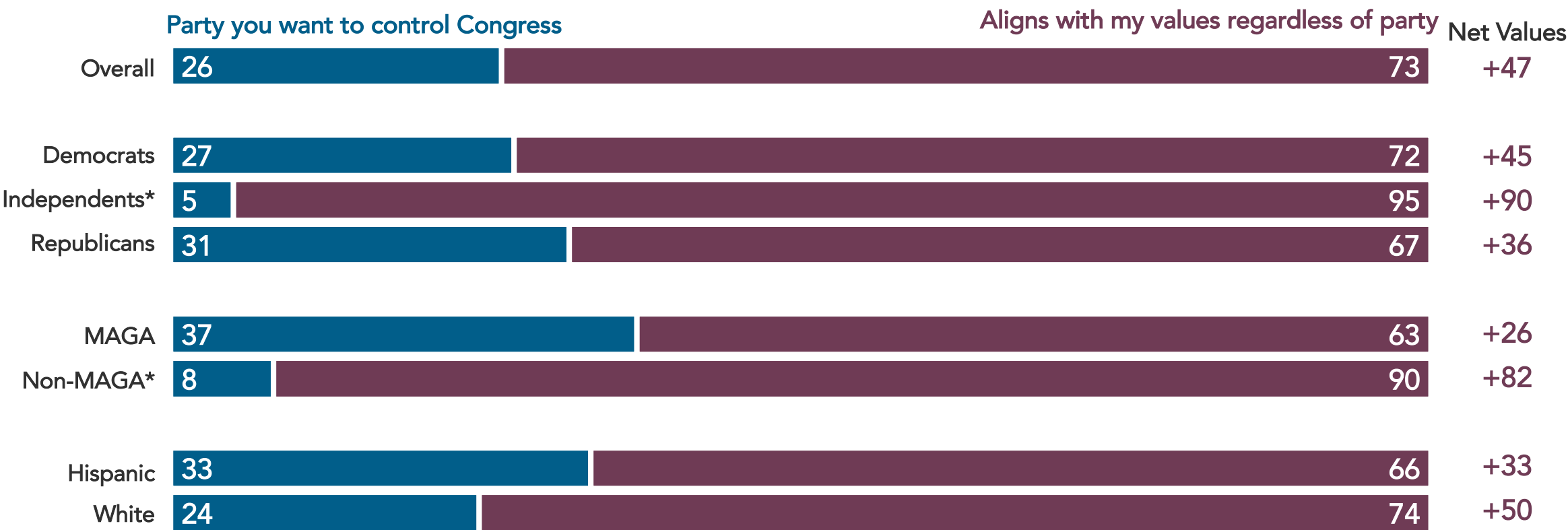
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Party Branding

Nearly Three-in-Four Texans Say it's More Important That Candidates Align With Their Values Than Their Party

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?

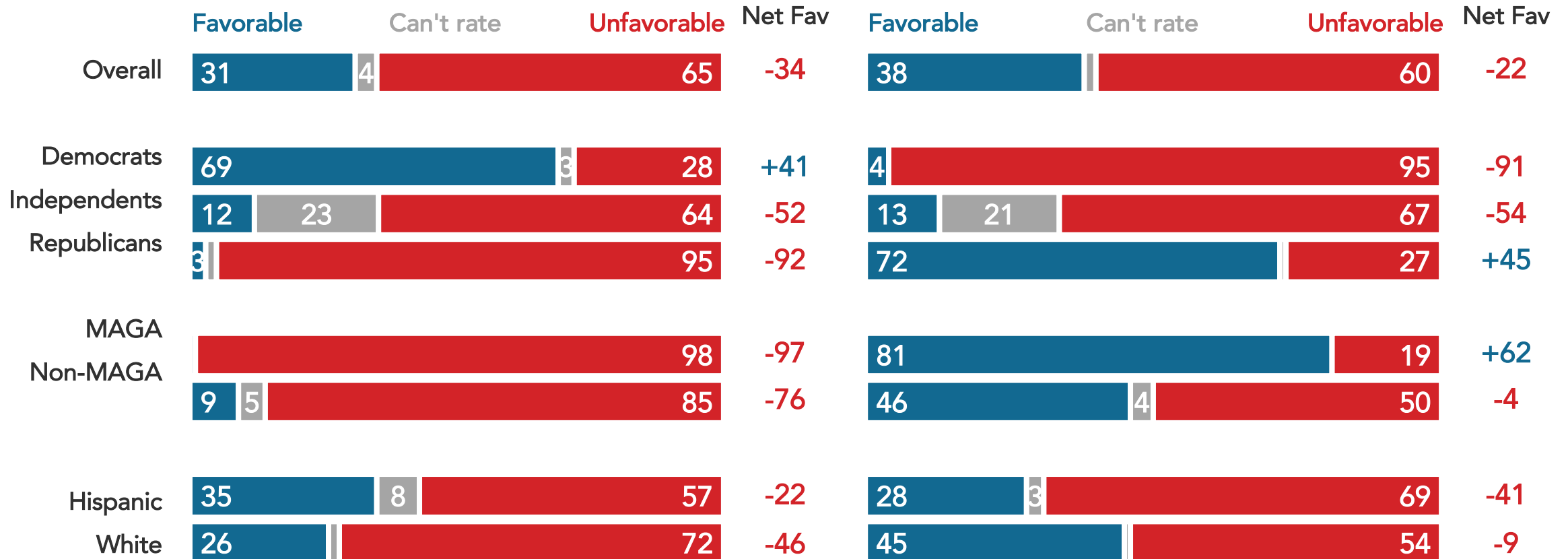


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Despite Republicans Receiving Blame for Rising Costs, Independents View Both Parties the Same

Favorability of Democrats in Congress

Favorability of Republicans in Congress

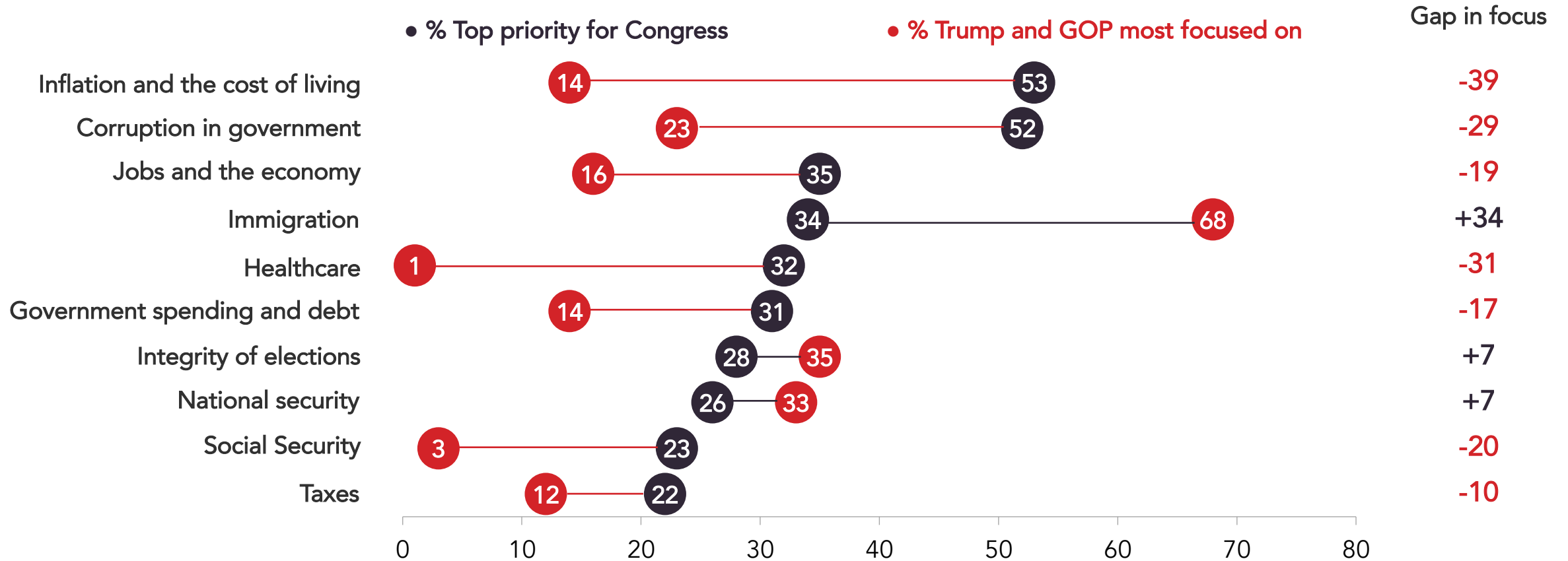


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Texans Don't Think Trump and Republicans are Prioritizing Issues They Care About

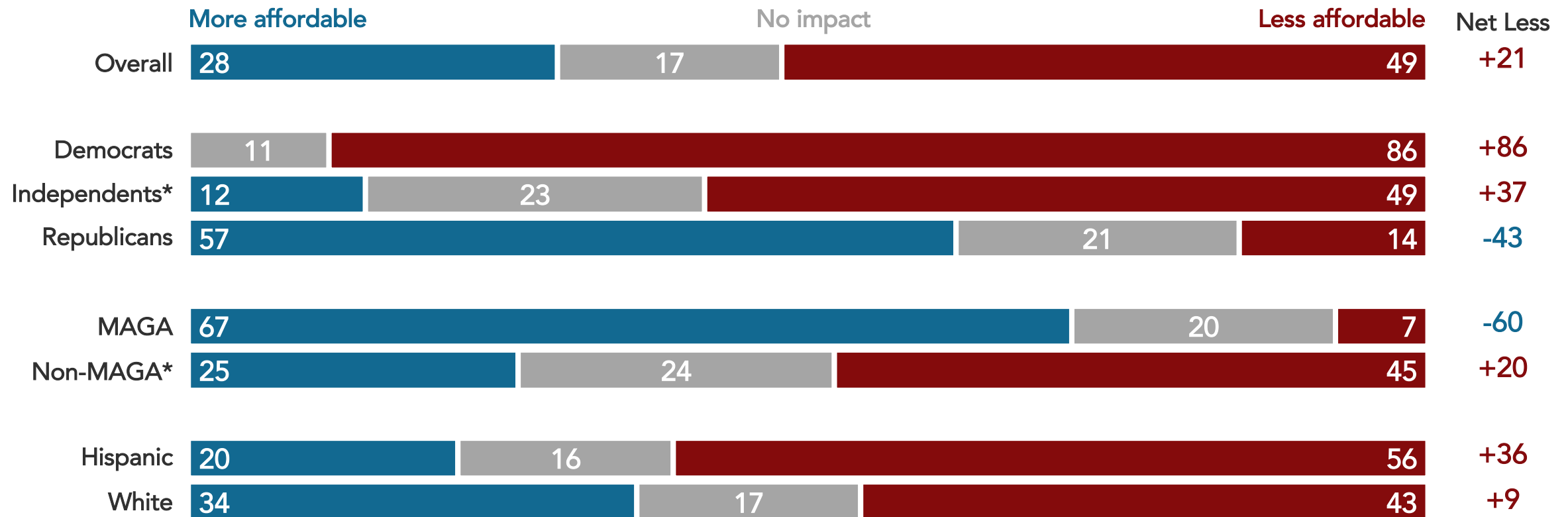
Top priorities for Congress vs. what Trump and Republicans in Congress are most focused on*



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Texans Say Republicans are Focused on Policies That Make Life Less Affordable, Including a Plurality of Non-MAGA Republicans

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?

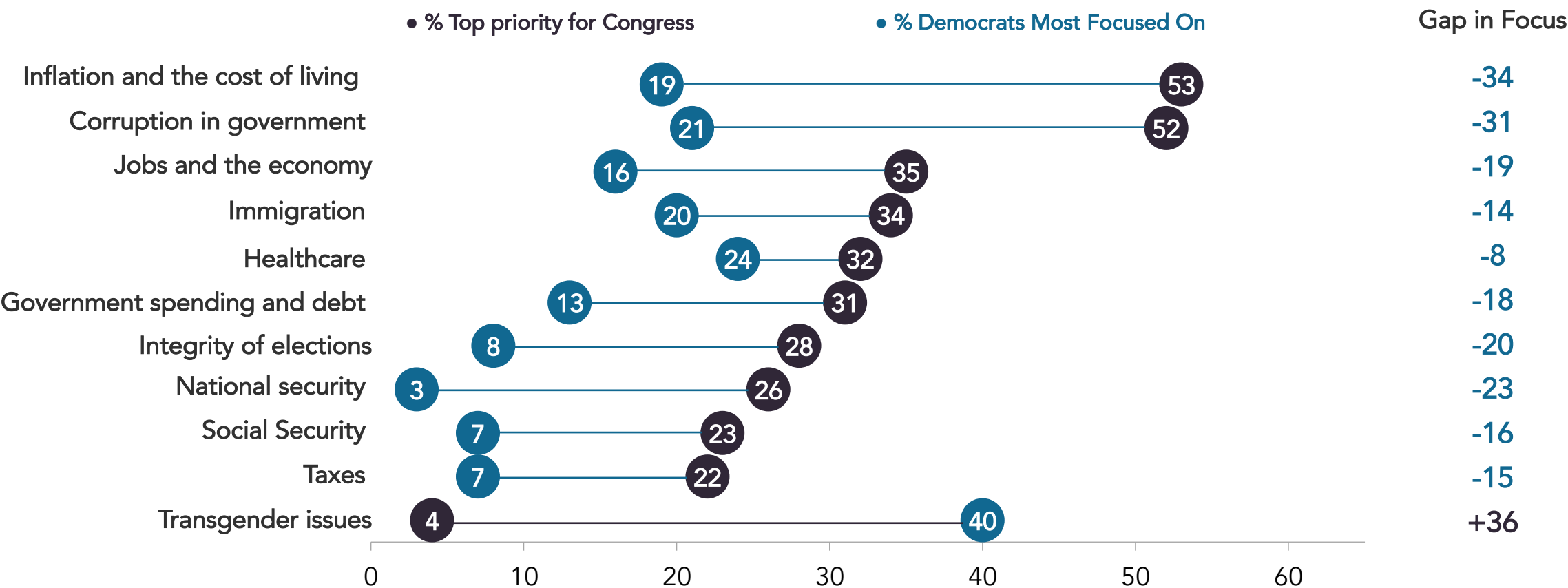


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Democrats are also Viewed as Not Focused on the Issues That Matter

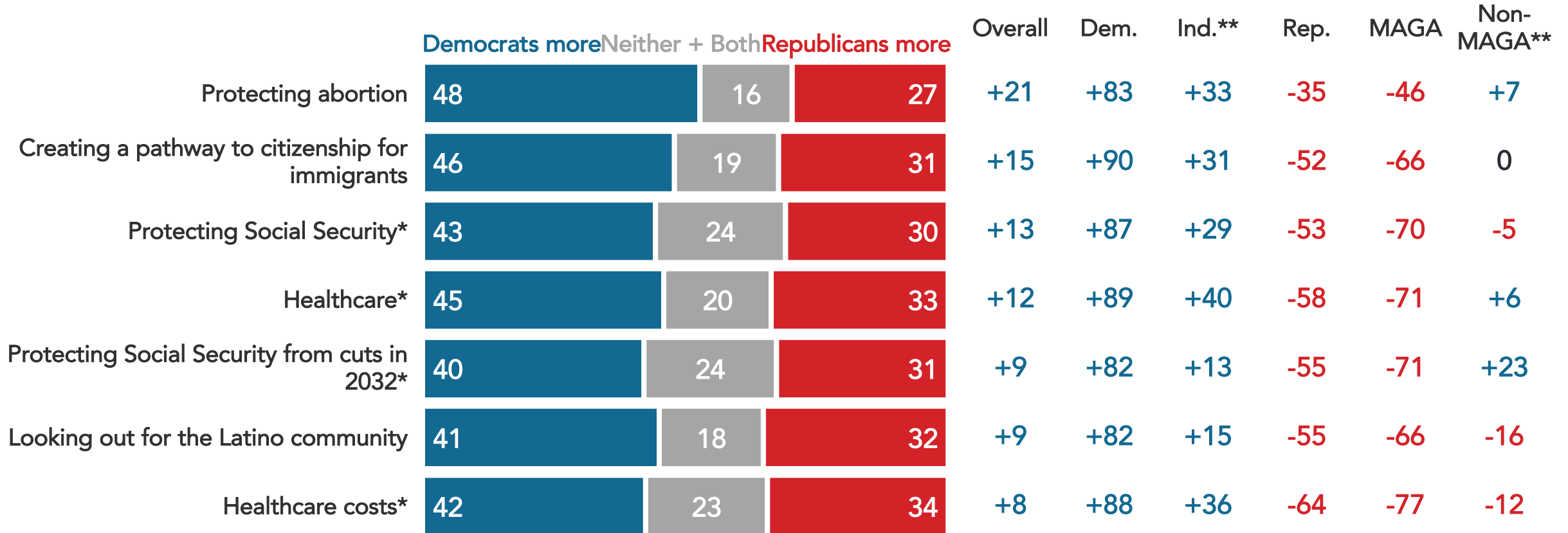
Top priorities for Congress vs. what Democrats in Congress are most focused on*



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Democrats Hold Trust Advantages on Abortion, Pathways for Citizenship, Healthcare, and Protecting Social Security

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



*Split

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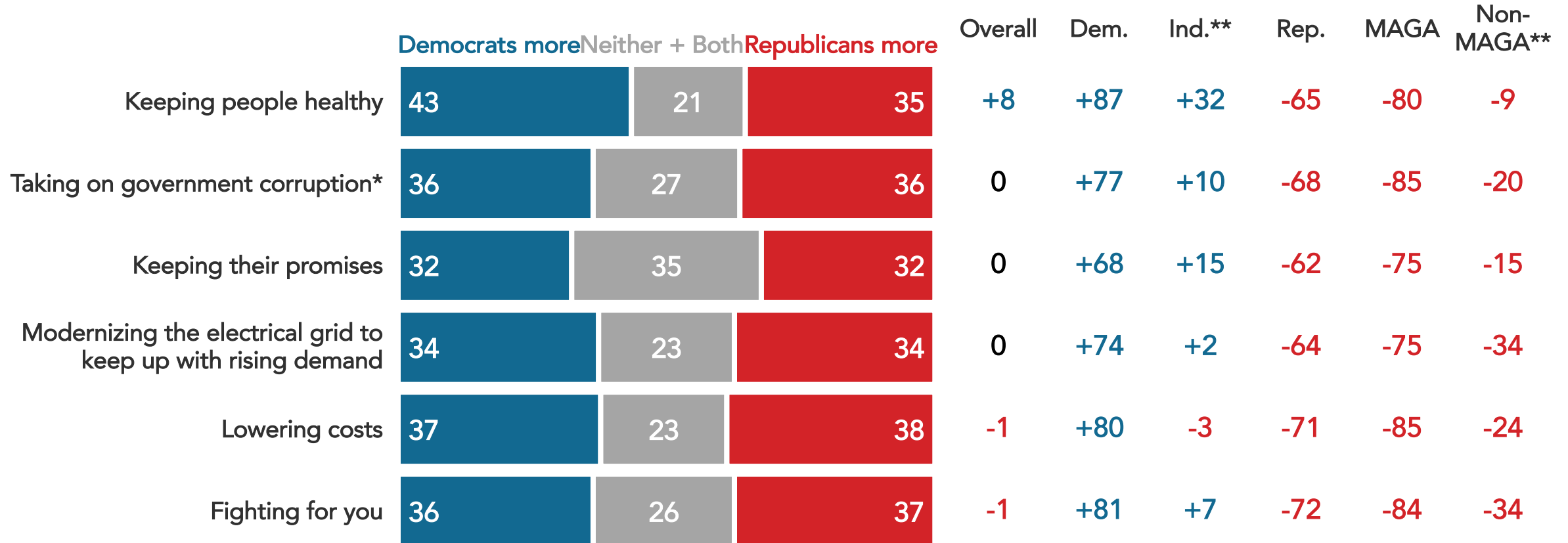
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Independents are Split on Which Party They Trust on Lowering Costs and Taking on Corruption – Texans' Biggest Priorities

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



*Split

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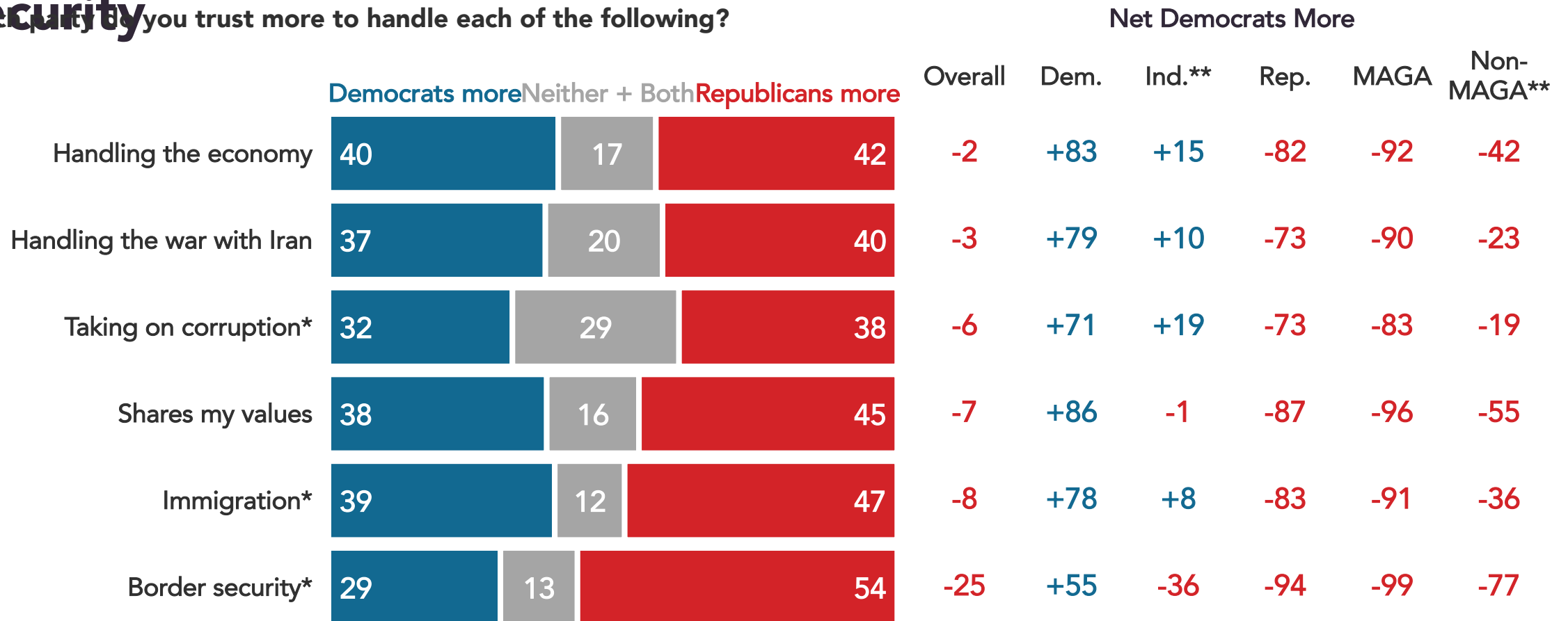
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Republicans Hold a Slim Trust Advantage on Taking on Corruption and Larger Advantages on Immigration and Border Security

Who do you trust more to handle each of the following?



*Split

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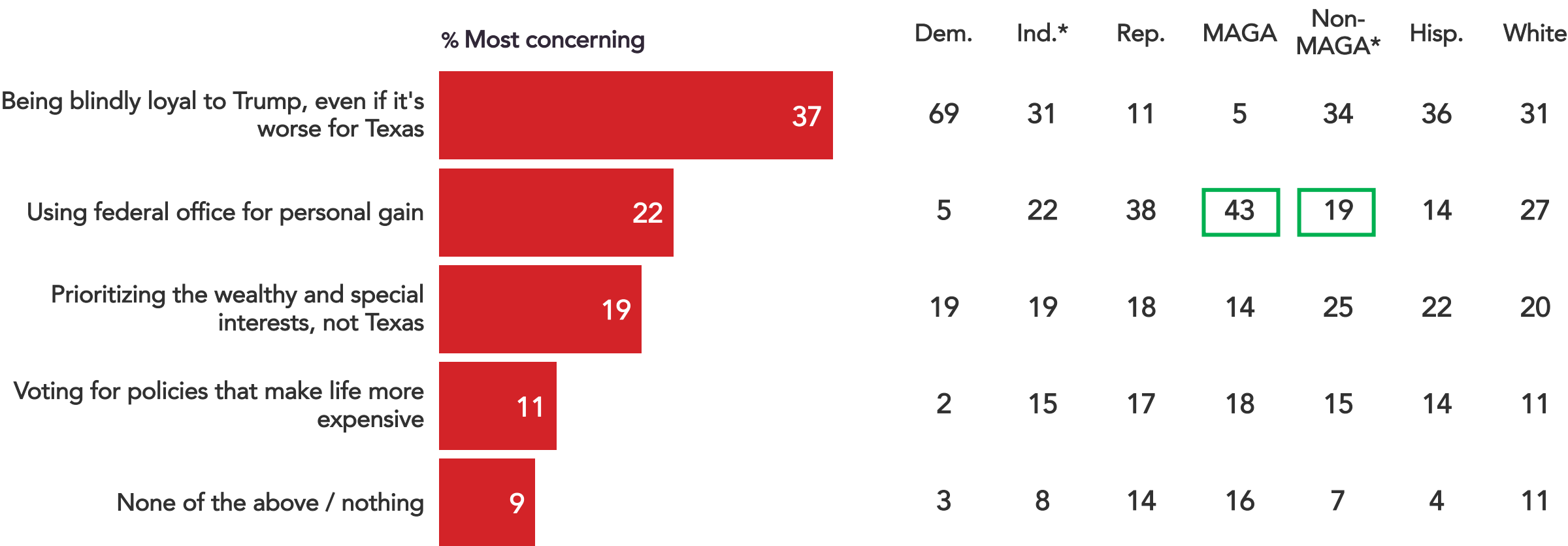
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Branding of Elected Officials

Texans are Most Concerned About Their Elected Representatives Being Blindly Loyal to Trump

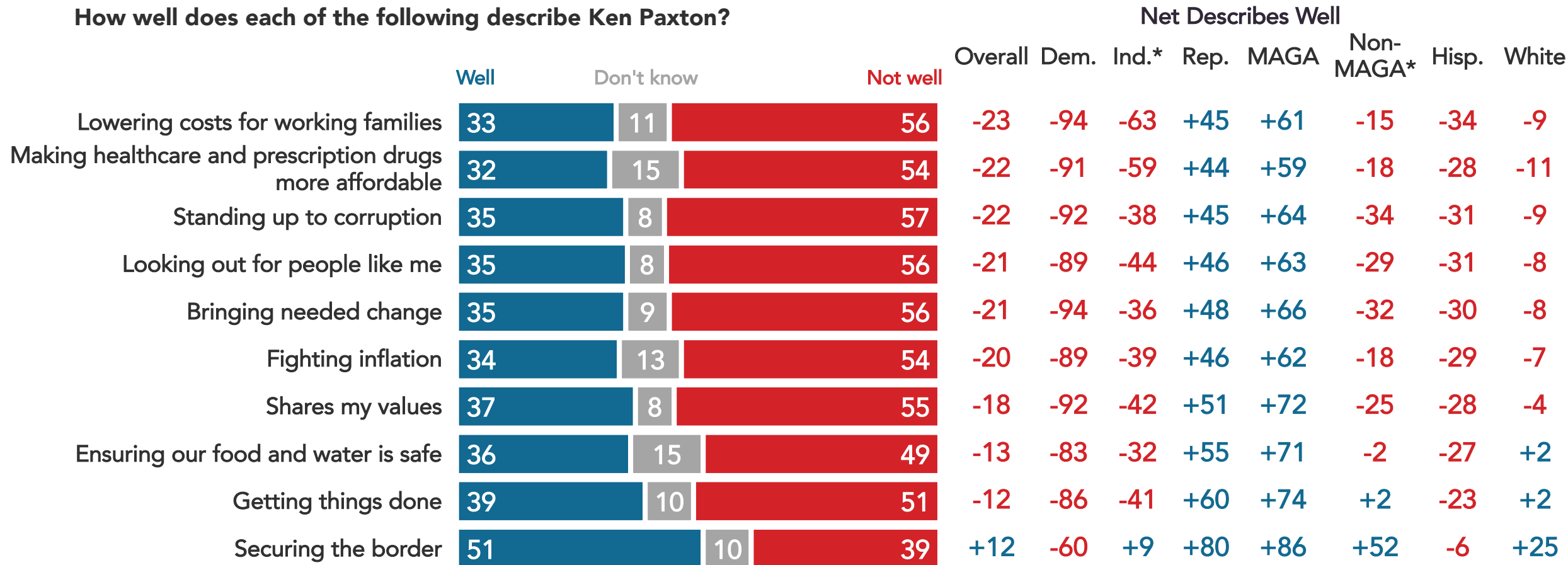
Which of the following is the most concerning policy action your elected representative could take?



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Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is Deeply Underwater on Issues Texans Prioritize – Cost and Corruption

How well does each of the following describe Ken Paxton?

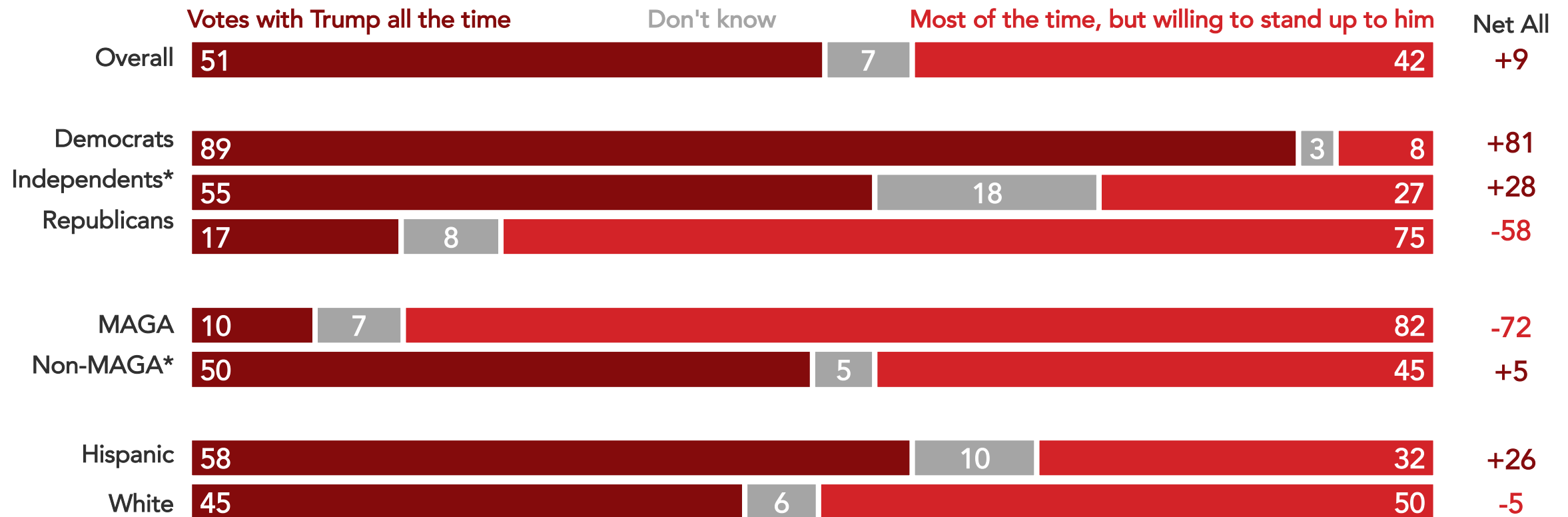


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A Majority of Texans Say that Republican Senators Vote with Trump All the Time

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 Texas?



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Texas Constituents are Most Concerned About Support for No Restrictions on Data Centers and Tariffs

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**	Hisp.	White
Supported allowing big tech companies to build data centers with no restrictions*	70	84	67	59	56	63	75	69
Supported one of the biggest tax increases in history on goods, like cars and medicine	61	74	66	52	53	55	62	58
Refused to ban pesticides that pollute water	61	78	60	46	46	54	65	56
Allowed utility companies to raise utility rates	58	71	69	47	49	38	63	52
Supported ending tax credits that help working people and small businesses pay for health insurance, driving up premiums by 114%	58	82	53	38	36	46	64	53
Is supported by big Pharma and the healthcare industry	56	68	61	45	45	48	54	53

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Cuts to Medicaid and Opposing a Stock Trading Ban are Serious Concerns for Over Half of Texans

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**	Hisp.	White
Opposed a stock trading ban for members of Congress	55	66	51	47	43	64	55	56
Supported Medicaid cuts, putting 15 Texas hospitals at risk of closure*	55	87	64	29	27	33	62	49
Supported Medicaid cuts, putting health insurance at risk for over 300,000 Texans*	54	82	63	26	21	52	58	45
Supported building data centers that pollute local waterways*	54	70	65	38	36	49	61	49
Supported one of the largest tax cuts for billionaires in history	53	86	62	22	16	46	57	47
Supported spending billions of dollars on the war with Iran	53	91	55	18	11	44	62	45
Passed handouts for and decreased regulations on big food corporations	51	74	68	29	29	35	55	46

*Split

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Supporting Limits on Energy and Cuts to SNAP are Less Concerning

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*	Hisp.	White
Supported the privatization of Social Security	50	75	53	28	25	39	61	43
Supported a nationwide abortion ban	49	83	59	19	16	30	51	44
Supported ICE raids in communities that have killed innocent civilians	48	91	56	12	9	23	62	40
Passed funding cuts for rural healthcare	47	71	53	26	25	30	53	42
Passed funding cuts to the federal disaster relief agency	46	73	52	21	22	19	51	41
Supported cuts to SNAP for Americans including children	46	85	39	13	12	21	53	38
Supported limits on more sources of energy	43	58	38	30	32	31	44	39

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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 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 of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

For Press inquiries contact:

press@navigatorresearch.org

To learn more about Navigator or
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