

expanding *the* *battleground

September 2026

Expanding the Battleground
– Americans' Perceptions in
Ohio



IMPACT
RESEARCH

Methodology



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



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 and government corruption (52% each) are the top issues for Ohioans. Other top issues for Ohio constituents are healthcare (37%) and government spending and debt (34%).
- **President Trump's brand in Ohio is underwater.** A majority of constituents in Ohio have an unfavorable opinion of him (-7 net fav) and give him a failing grade overall (-12 net job rating), on the economy (-11 net job rating), and especially handling the war with Iran (-22 net job rating).
- **Nearly 70% of Ohioans rate the economy negatively and they place the blame on Trump and Republicans in Congress.** By a 13-point margin, Ohioans say Trump and Republicans in Congress are more to blame than Democrats for rising costs. Nearly half of constituents in the Buckeye State say corporate greed and price gouging (49% top two) are the main non-political culprits for high prices, followed by other policies in Washington (36% top two).
- **A majority of Ohioans (69%) 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 Ohioans' biggest priorities – lowering costs and taking on corruption.** However, independents trust Democrats more on lowering costs.

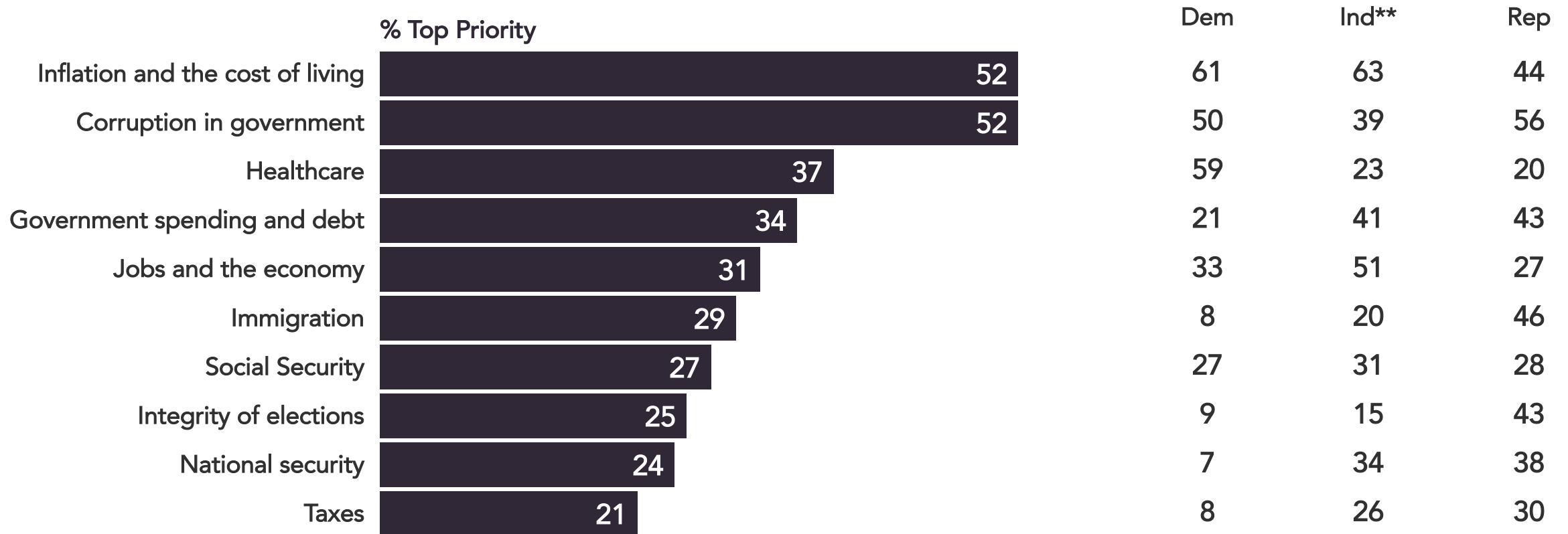
Key Takeaways – Party and Elected Official Branding

- **Ohioans are sour on both parties in Congress.** Both Democrats and Republicans are viewed unfavorably by at least 60% of the constituents in the Buckeye state.
- **Ohioans don't see their priorities reflected in the priorities of Republicans in Congress, especially on cost of living.** There is a 41-point gap between what issues Ohioans want Congress to prioritize and where they think Republicans are placing their energy.
- **Ohioans are more likely to see Democrats in Congress focused on lowering costs, but a gap in focus exists.** Buckeye State residents see Democrats overly focused on trans issues and abortion.
- **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 corruption, and handling the war with Iran.
- **Senator Husted (R-OH)'s brand is weak.** Ohioans don't think he is lowering costs, bringing change to Washington, or looking out for Ohioans. Ohio residents are also deeply concerned about Husted allowing data centers to be built unregulated and allowing utility companies to raise costs. He is only given credit on securing the border.
- **Ohioans think their Republican senator will just vote with Trump all of the time regardless if it's good for the state.** Only 39% of constituents in the Buckeye 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

Ohioans Equally Prioritize Inflation and the Cost of Living and Corruption in Government as Their Top Issues

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.

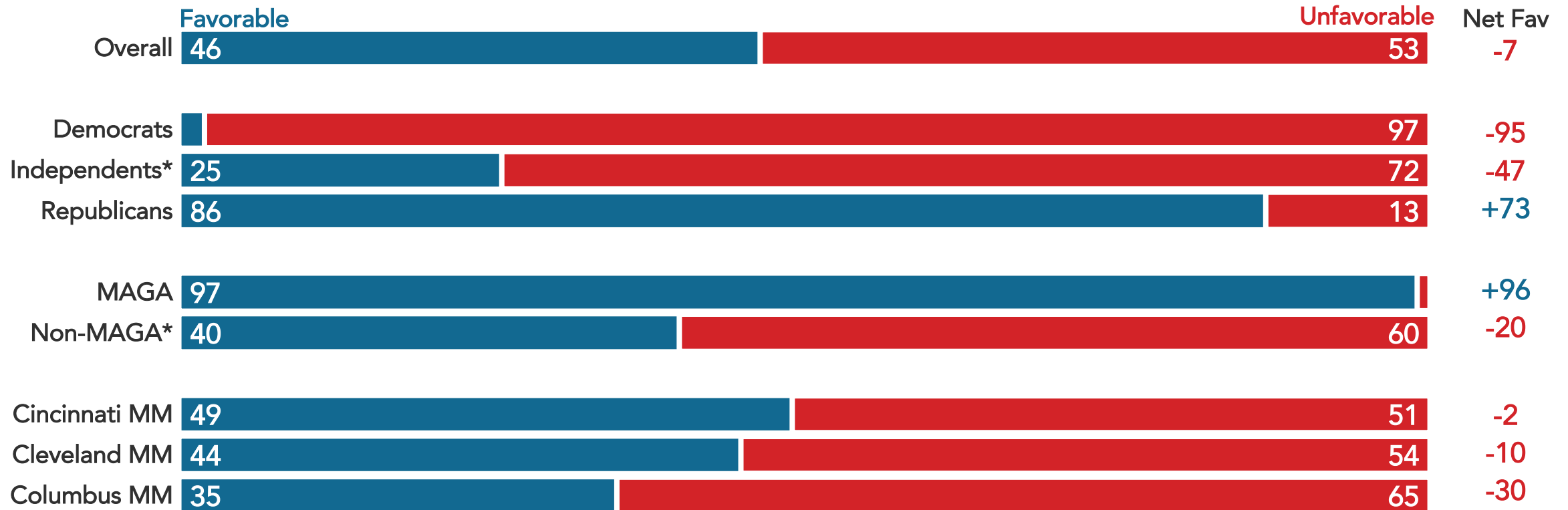
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Trump's Favorability is Underwater, Including Among Independents and Non-MAGA Republicans

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



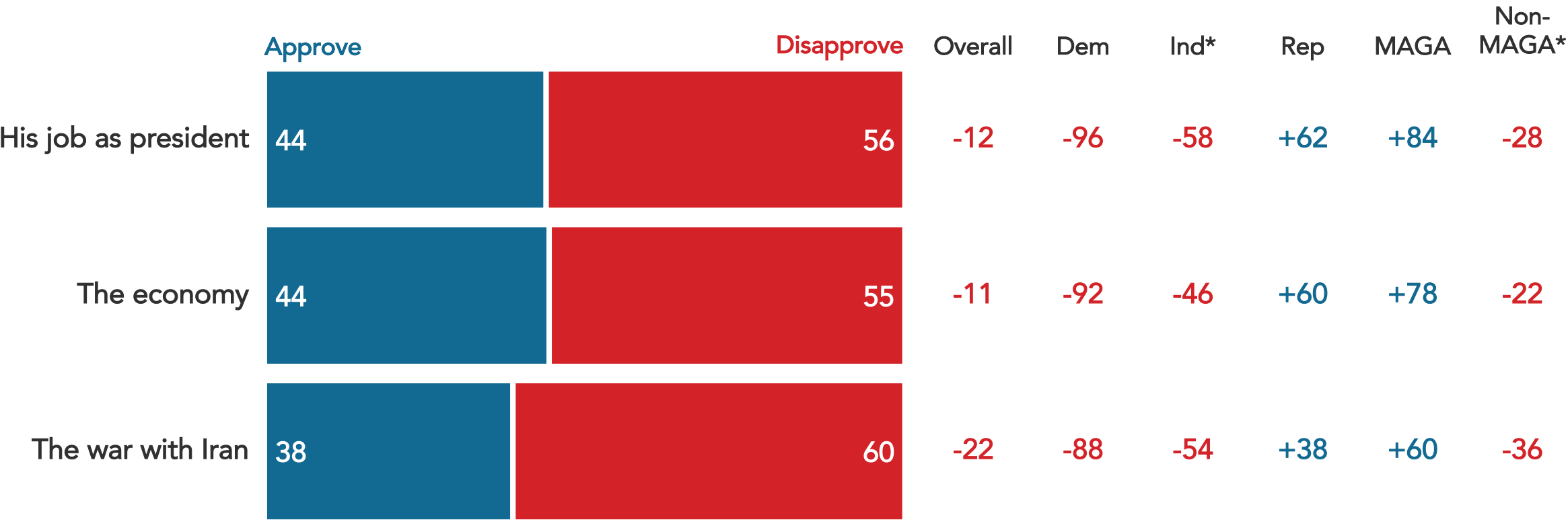
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Majorities of Ohioans Disapprove of Trump’s Handling of the Presidency, Economy, and War with Iran

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

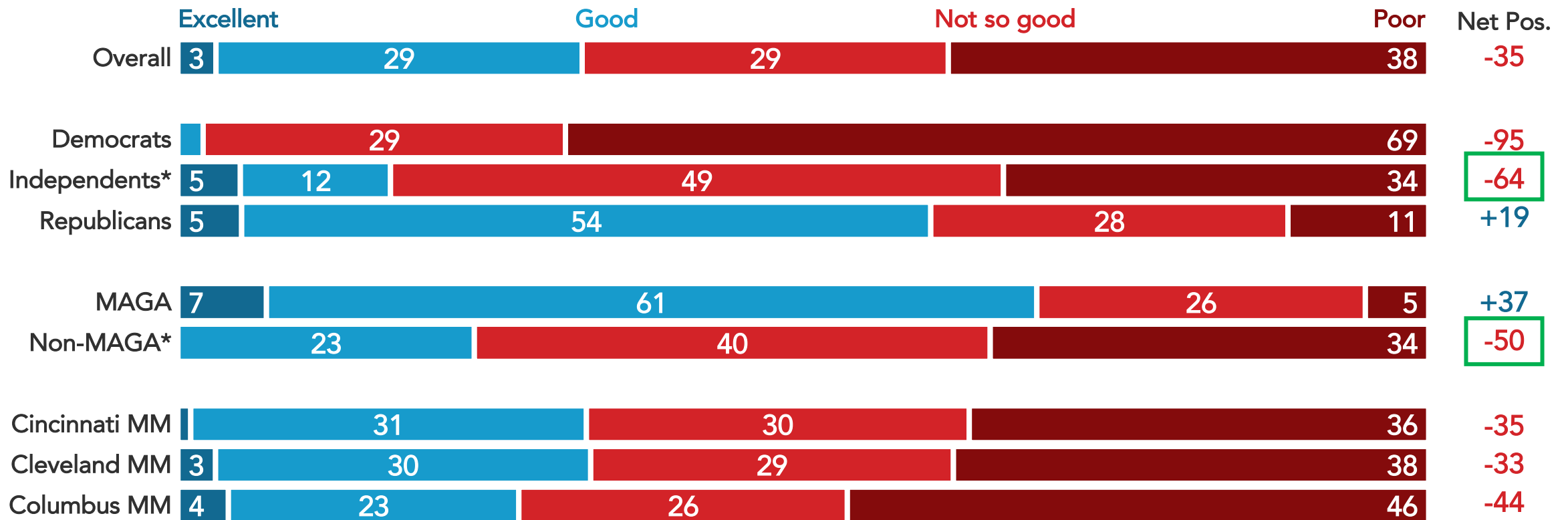
Net Approve



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Ohioans Have Deeply Negative Views on the Economy, Including Both Independents and Non-MAGA Republicans

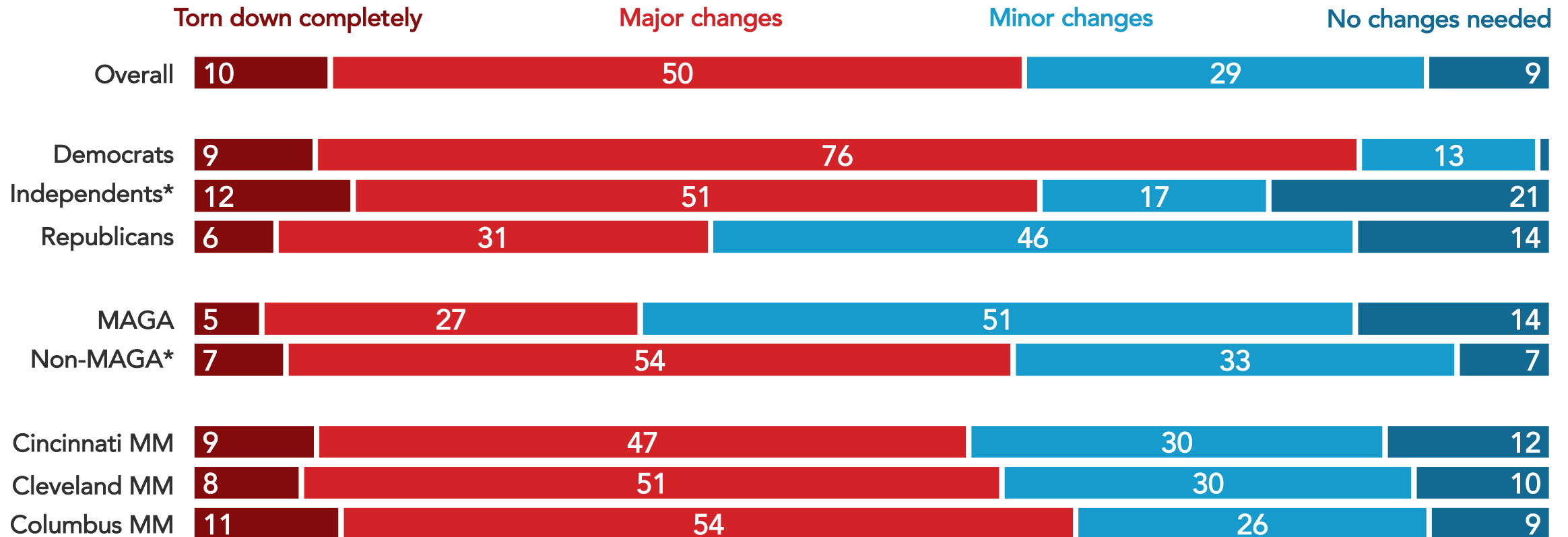
How would you rate how things are going in the U.S. economy?



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A Majority of All Groups Besides MAGA Republicans Believe At Least Major Changes to the Economic System are Needed

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

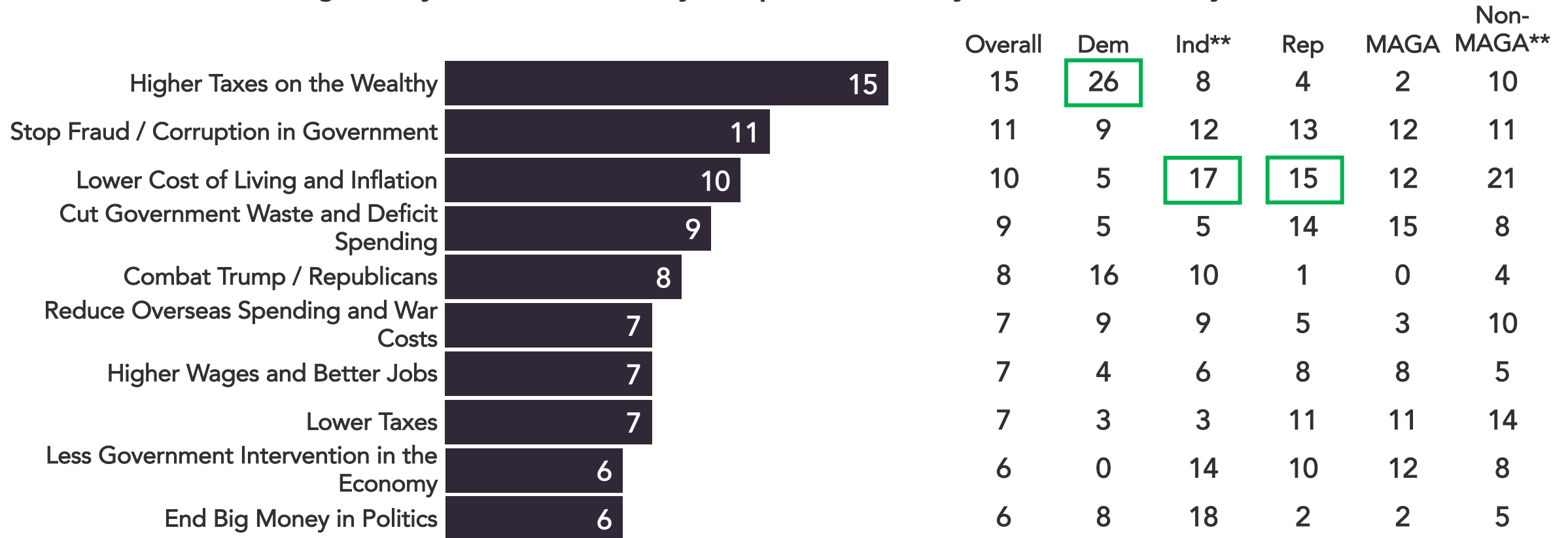


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Democrats Want Higher Taxes on the Wealthy While Independents and Republicans Want to Stop Inflation

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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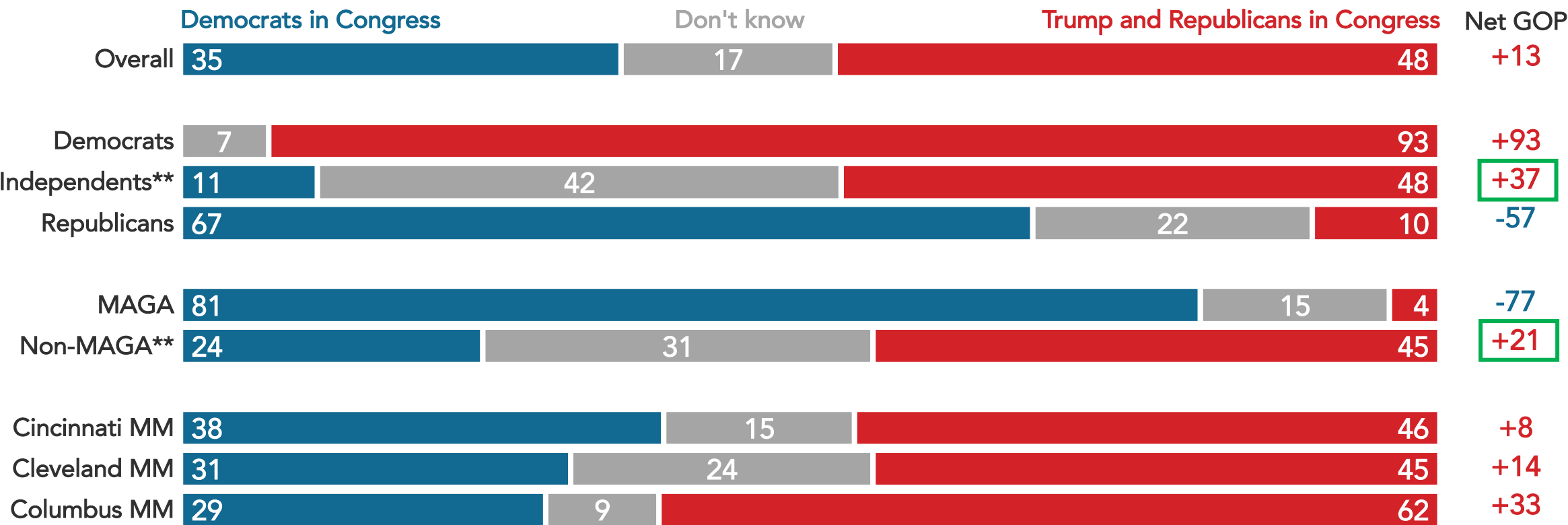
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Trump and Republicans in Congress Receive the Most Blame for Rising Costs, Including Among Non-MAGA Republicans

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

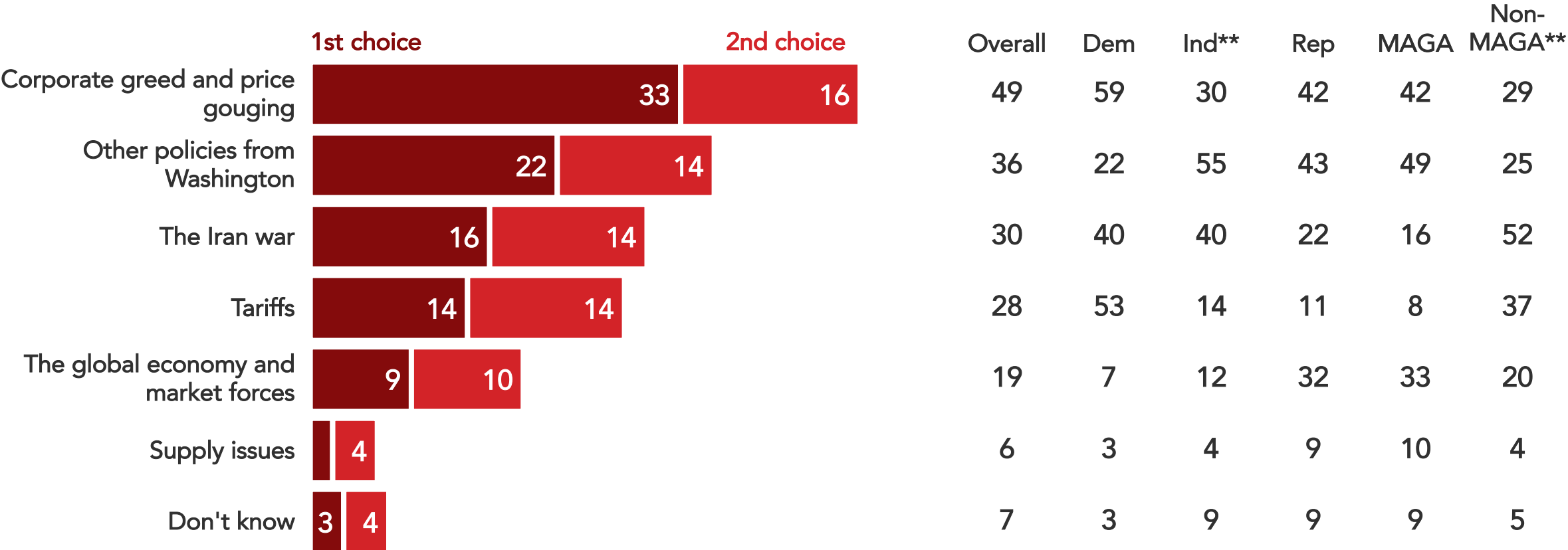


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Corporate Greed Blamed for Rising Costs Though Independents and Non-MAGA Republicans Blame Washington

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

% 1st or 2nd choice

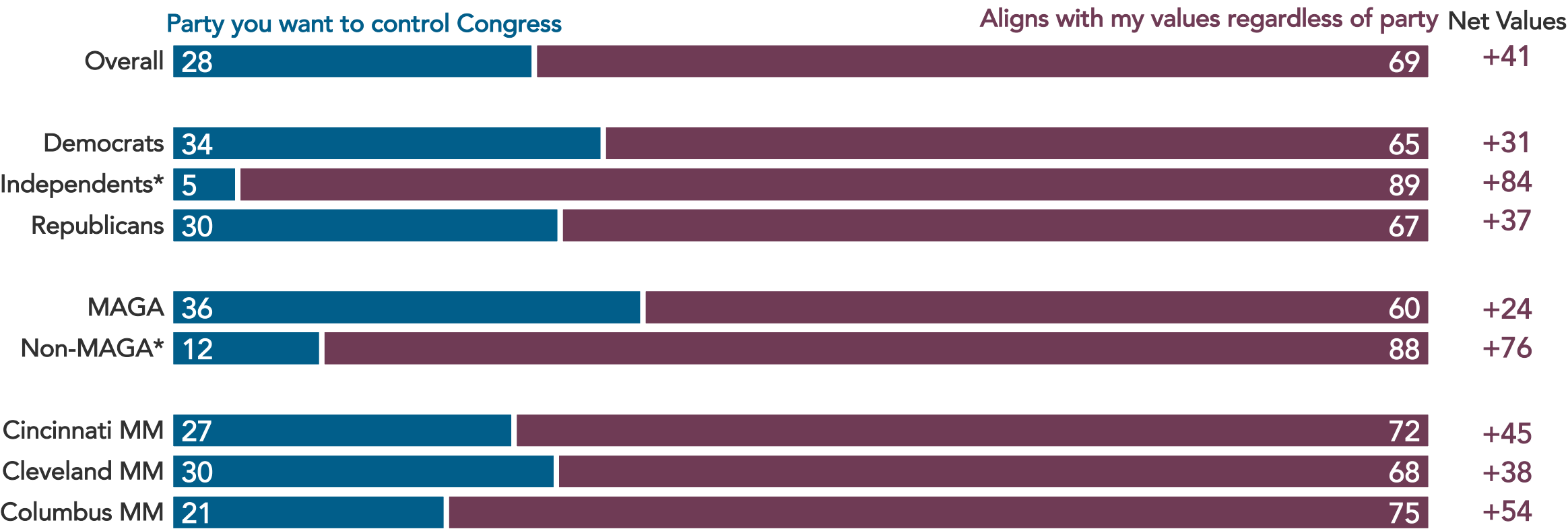


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Party Branding

Over Two-Thirds of Ohioans Want Elected Officials to Align With Their Values

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?

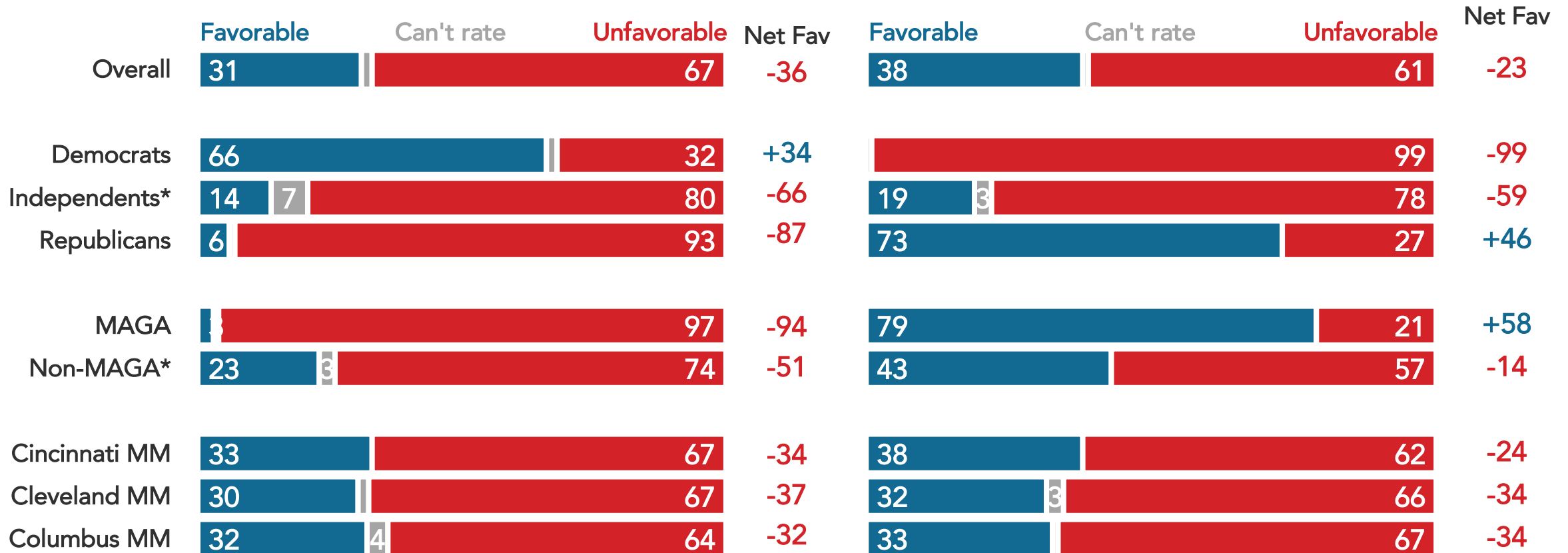


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Both Parties are Underwater, but Democrats are Viewed More Harshly by Independents

Favorability of Democrats in Congress

Favorability of Republicans in Congress

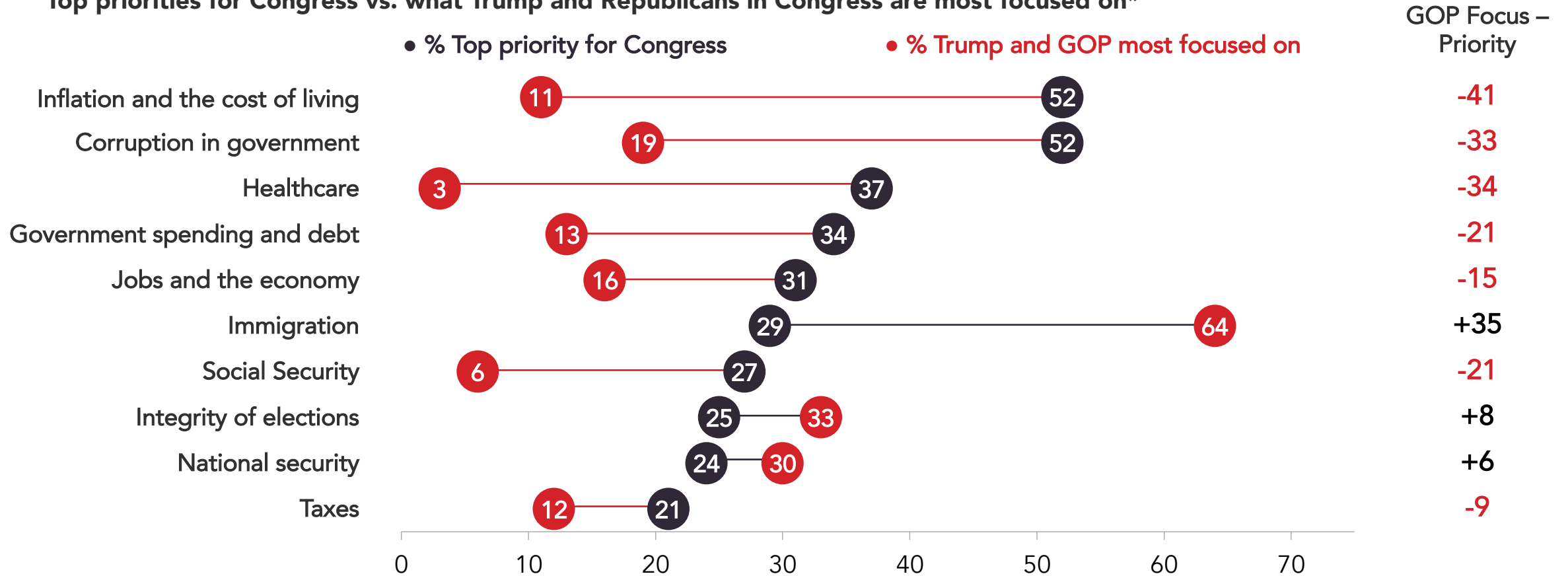


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Republicans are Viewed as Caring Nearly Exclusively About Immigration Instead of Issues Voters Care About

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

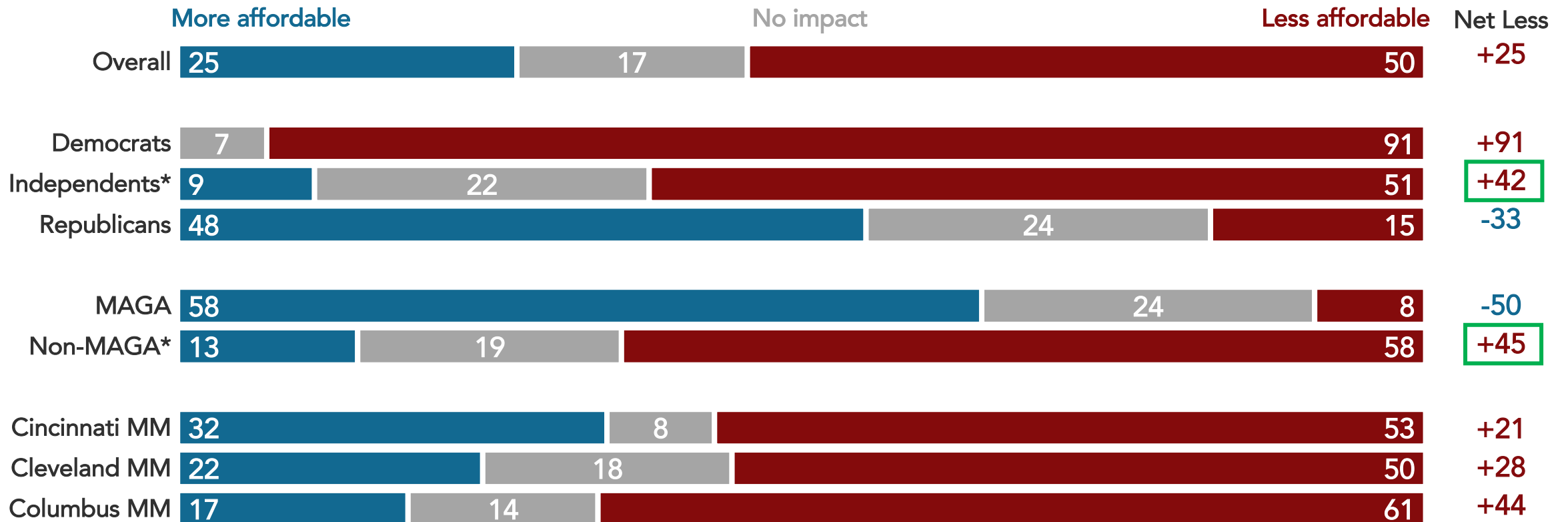


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Ohioans Say That Republicans in Congress are Focused on Policies That Make Life Less Affordable

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?

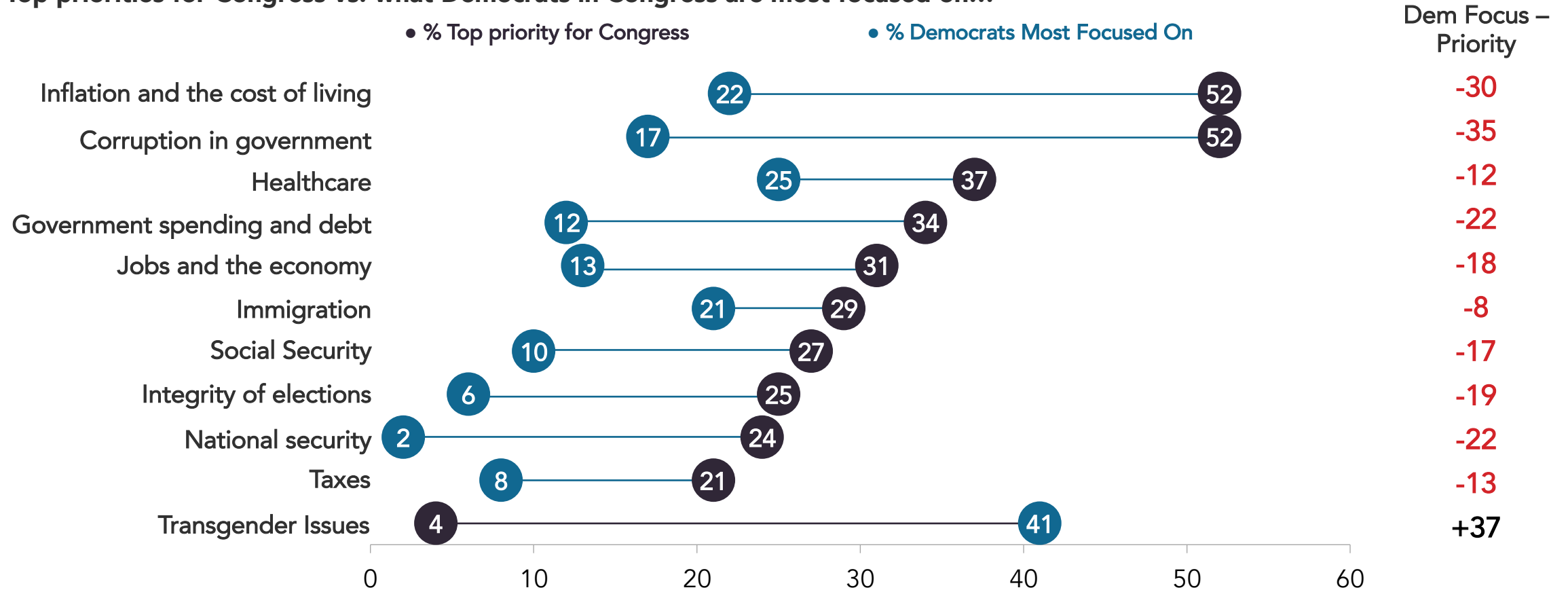


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Democrats are Also Viewed as Not Focused on the Issues That Matter Most to Voters

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

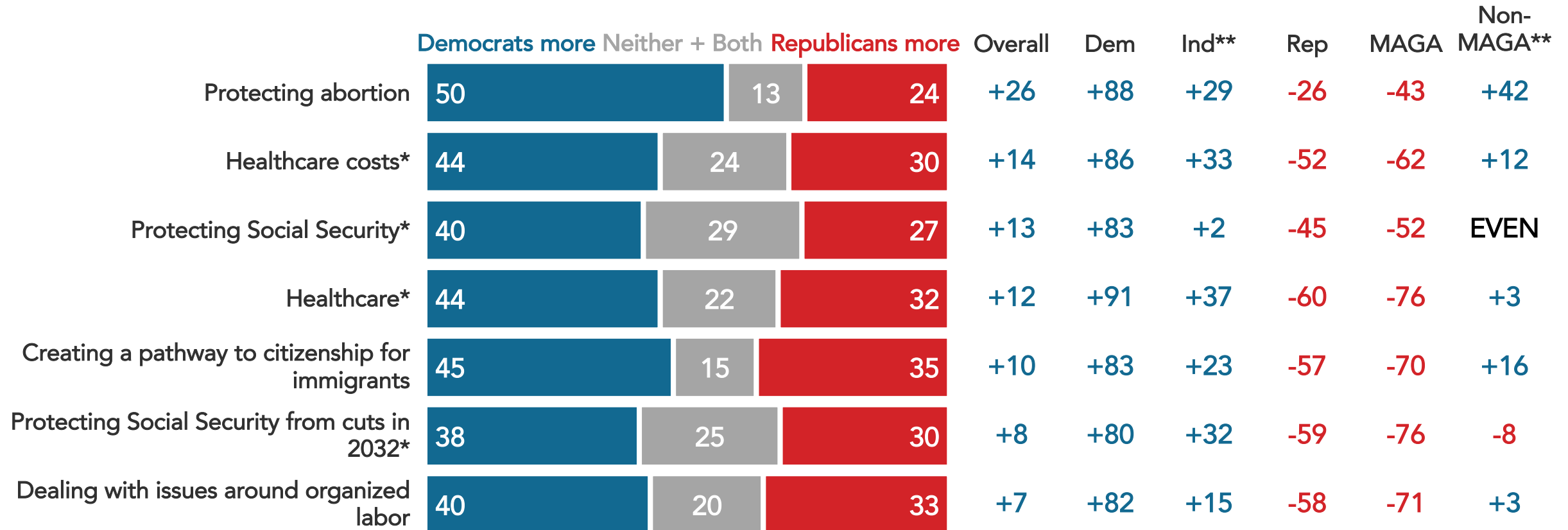


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Democrats Hold Trust Advantages on Healthcare and Protecting Abortion and Social Security

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



*Split

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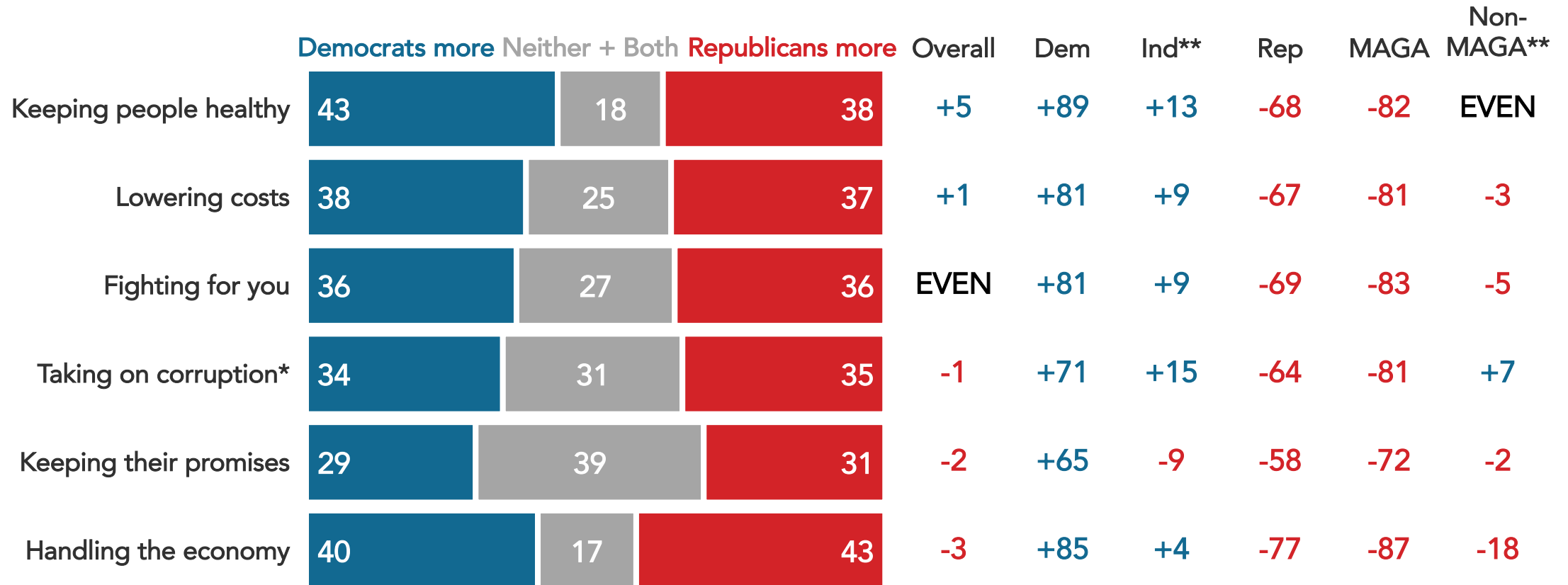
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Ohioans are Split on Who to Trust on Issues, like Lowering Costs, Taking on Corruption, and Fighting for You

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



*Split

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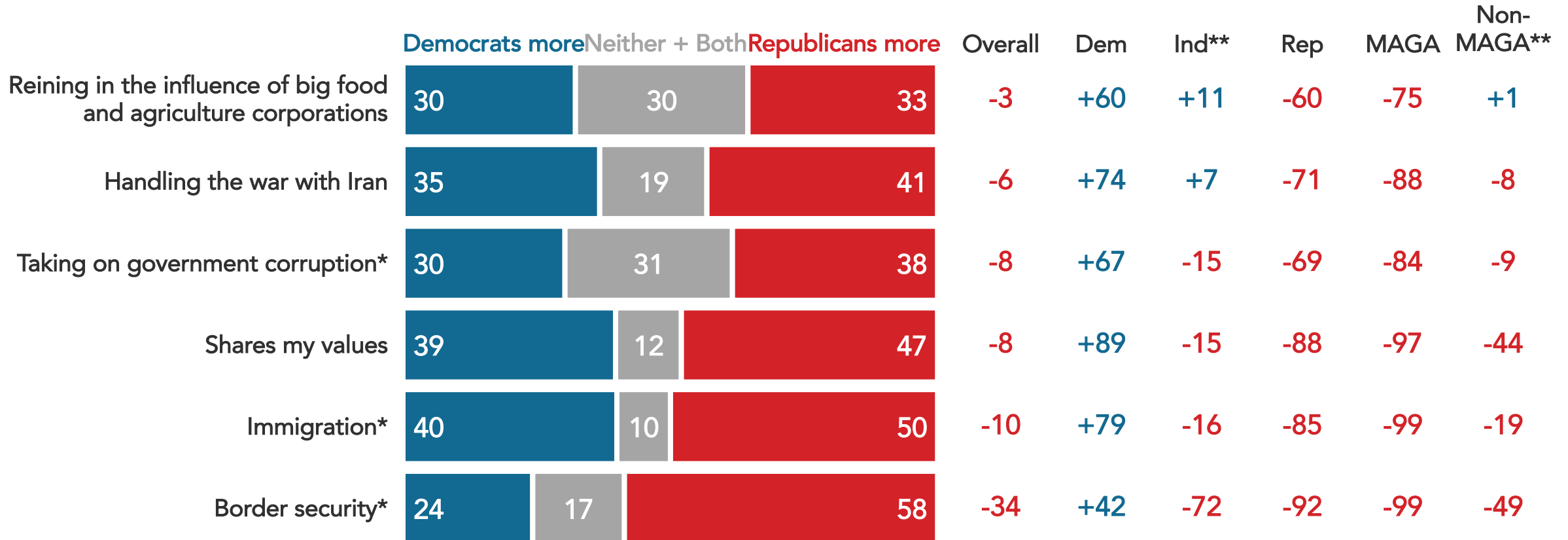
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Ohioans Trust Republicans More on Taking on Government Corruption and Immigration Issues

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



*Split

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Branding of Elected Officials

Senator Husted is Deeply Underwater on Inflation, Costs, and Corruption

How well does each of the following describe Jon Husted?

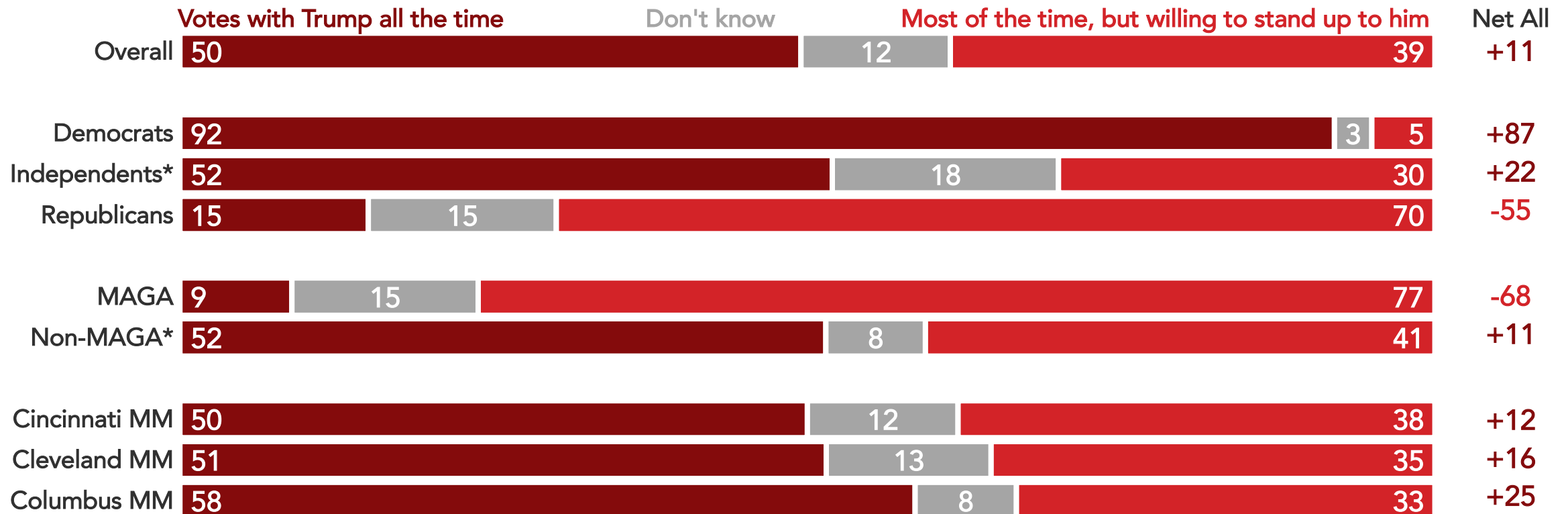
				Net Describes Well					
	Well	Don't know	Not well	Overall	Dem	Ind*	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA*
Fighting inflation	27	21	52	-25	-86	-58	+32	+45	-31
Lowering costs for working families	28	21	51	-23	-86	-45	+32	+42	-20
Bringing needed change	28	21	50	-22	-87	-42	+34	+48	-19
Making health care and prescription drugs more affordable	26	26	48	-22	-81	-42	+34	+44	-12
Standing up to corruption	28	21	50	-22	-82	-50	+31	+43	-26
Looking out for people like me	31	18	51	-20	-87	-50	+40	+47	+1
Getting things done	31	23	46	-15	-81	-38	+42	+51	-8
Shares my values	33	20	47	-14	-86	-21	+47	+57	-5
Ensuring our food and water is safe	29	29	43	-14	-80	-31	+43	+53	+4
Securing the border	41	28	30	+11	-44	+10	+60	+68	+28

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A Majority of Ohioans Believe that Republican Senators Vote with Trump Even When it's Not in the Best Interest of Ohio

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 Ohio?



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Ohioans are Most Concerned with a Congressional Slush Fund, Alongside Data Centers and Raising Utility Costs

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	73	70	66	79
Supported allowing big tech companies to build data centers with no restrictions*	67	87	59	51	54	49
Allowed utility companies to raise utility rates	62	76	50	52	52	47
Supported one of the biggest tax increases in history on goods, like cars and medicine	61	79	40	51	47	64
Refused to ban pesticides that pollute water	59	79	62	40	39	41
Supported building data centers that pollute local waterways*	59	84	49	43	38	53
Opposed a stock trading ban for members of Congress	58	66	59	50	49	59
Ended tax credits that help working people and small businesses pay for health insurance, driving up premiums by 114%	58	84	36	40	36	53

*Split

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Independents are More Concerned About Pharma Support and Voting to Continue the Iran War

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**
Passed one of the largest tax cuts for billionaires in history	56	94	45	27	22	47
Is supported by big Pharma and the health care industry	54	67	54	43	43	38
Cut Medicaid, putting 11 Ohio hospitals at risk of closure*	52	88	20	25	23	41
Voted to spend billions of dollars on the war with Iran	51	86	57	20	12	47
Cut Medicaid, putting health insurance at risk for 356,000 Ohioans*	50	81	27	26	26	25
Supported the privatization of Social Security	48	79	29	25	23	30
Supported ICE raids in communities that have killed innocent civilians	48	95	32	11	6	33

*Split

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Ohioans are Less Concerned About Cuts to FEMA and Opposing Pathways to Citizenship

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

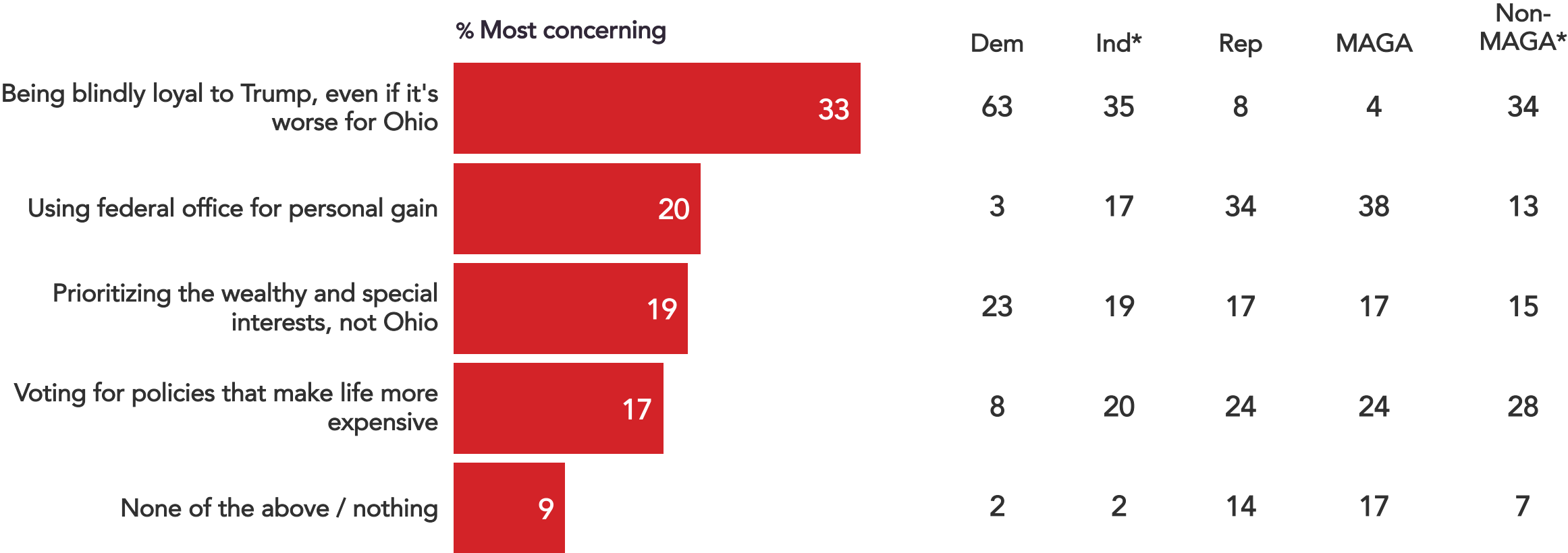
	% 10 - Serious concern	Dem	Ind*	Rep	MAGA	Non-MAGA*
Passed handouts for and decreased regulations on big food corporations	47	72	39	27	27	26
Passed funding cuts for rural health care	46	72	31	26	24	34
Supported a nationwide abortion ban	45	85	36	13	11	25
Voted for funding cuts to SNAP, taking food away from families and children	43	83	23	12	9	21
Passed limits on more sources of energy	40	55	17	30	29	44
Passed funding cuts to the federal disaster relief agency	38	68	25	15	12	30
Opposed a pathway to citizenship for immigrants	35	60	12	16	14	30

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Ohioans 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 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:

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To learn more about Navigator or
Expanding the Battleground:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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