

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

# A Path to Democratic Ascendancy on the Economy

June 2, 2011



**DEMOCRACY CORPS**  
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG



## The Economy Project

The Economy Project is a major multi-stage research project to understand the economy and to shape messages for this new environment. It began with the State of the Union research, one-on-one interviews and focus groups and a national survey – reported in this presentation. The next stage are web tests of refined economic messages. These are the current elements:

- **State of the Union – In-time dial meter research and follow-up focus groups on the economic portions of the State of the Union address.**
- **In-depth interviews – 30 one-on-one interviews about economic experiences with individuals from key groups: white non-college voters in the Midwest, Latino voters, and youth voters; conducted from March-April 2011**
- **Focus groups – four focus groups conducted in Columbus, Ohio with white non-college educated men and college educated women on May 10, 2011 and with white non-college educated women and college educated men in Denver, Colorado on May 12, 2011. All participants were swing voters aged 18-68.**
- **National survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps and Women’s Voices, Women Vote: 1481 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) May 21-25, 2011. Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 2.5 percentage points at 95% confidence.**

# Republicans in trouble

---

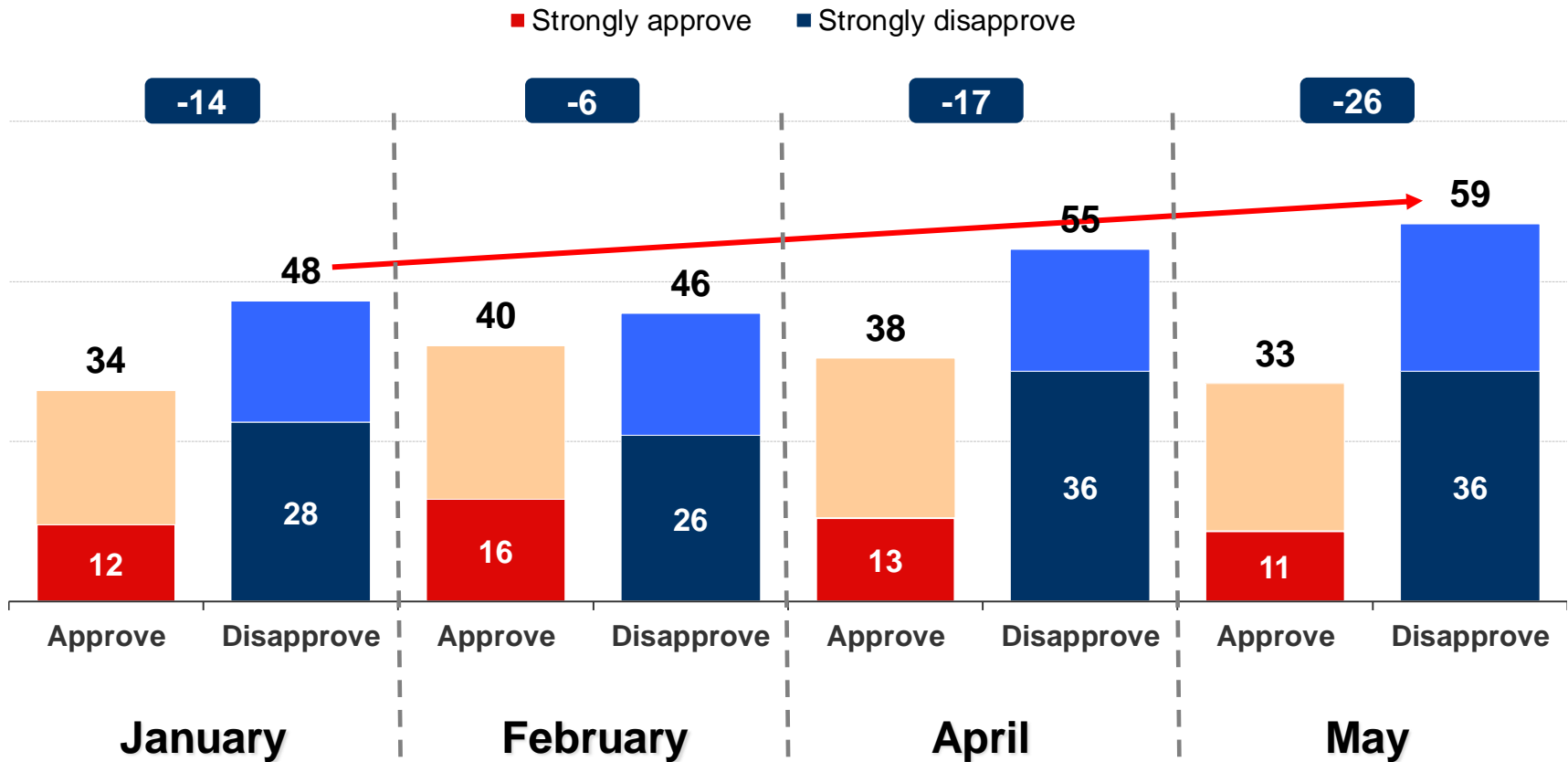
## Introduction

---

- **Republicans crashing on deficits and economy and Democrats can move to big winning economic narrative and message**
- **But understand — there is no gain in confidence in Democrats on economy and none for president.**
- **But Democrats can win a big economic argument if they identify with the difficult challenges of the new economy and address the future**
- **Starting point is to focus on the current and future — and forget the past and whole experience of the economic crash. That is old news and a trap that blocks being relevant to people's fundamentally new and very difficult economic experience that will not change in the years ahead.**

# Disapproval of House Republicans surges to 60 percent

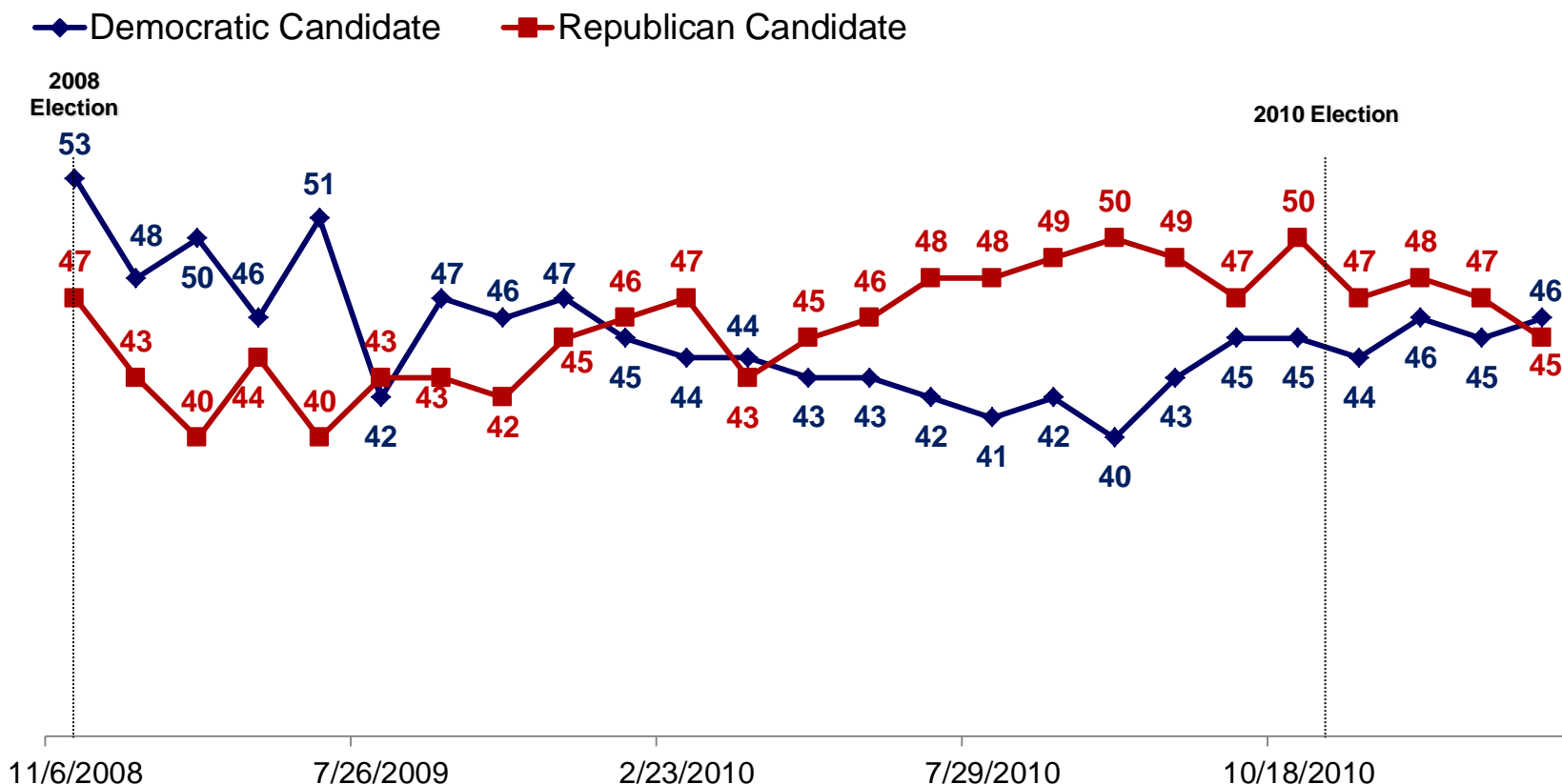
*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Republicans in Congress are handling their job in charge of the House of Representatives?*



\*Note: Question was not asked in March.

# Congressional race: 2010 result erased and contest even

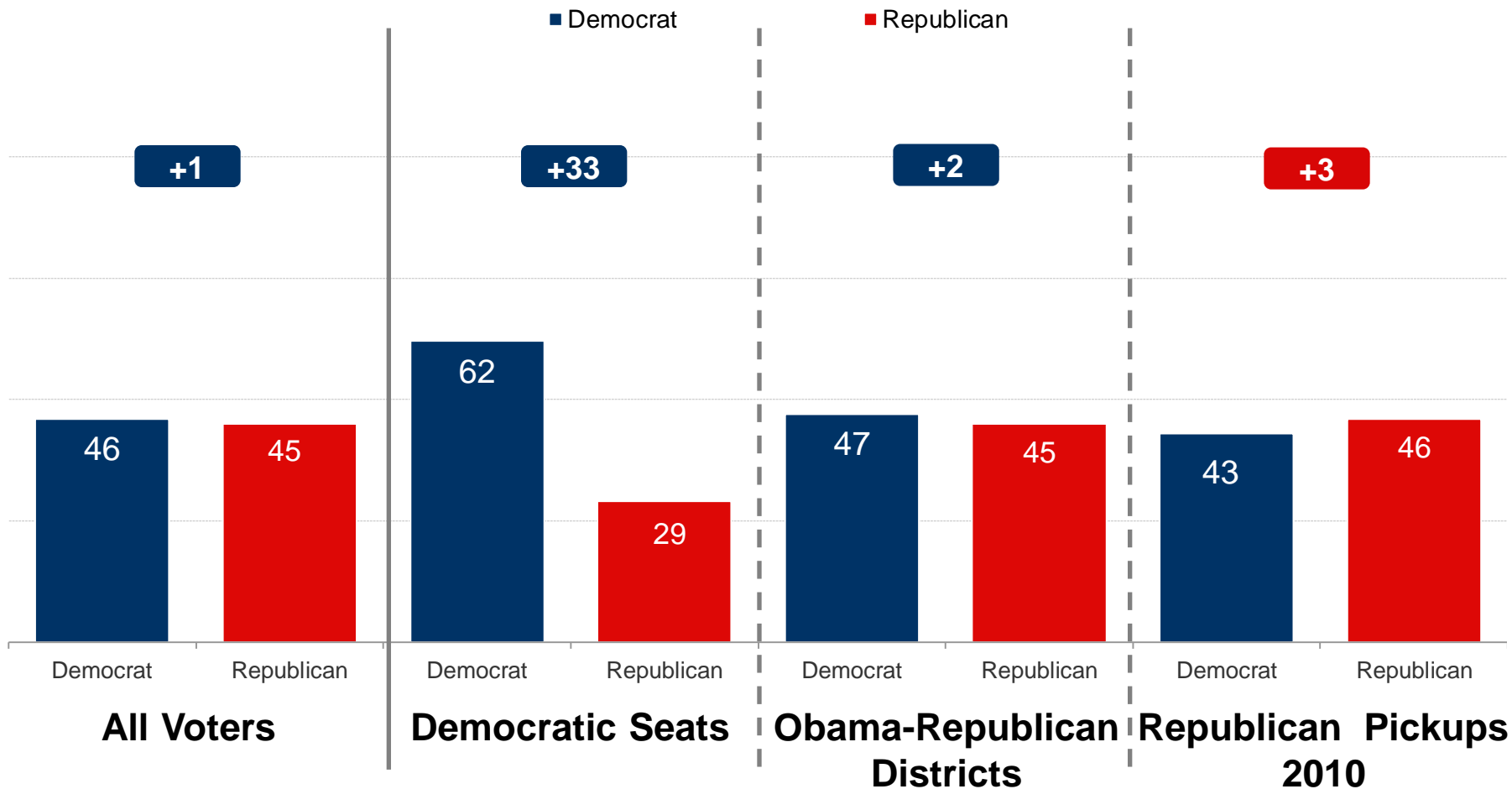
*I know it is a long way off, but thinking about the elections for Congress in 2012, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for **DEMOCRATIC HOUSE CANDIDATE** or **REPUBLICAN HOUSE CANDIDATE**?*\*



\* In the landline sample, the incumbent names were inserted preceded by party identification. Generic “the Democratic candidate” or “the Republican candidate” were inserted for the opposition. For the cell phone sample and open seat districts, both candidates were given a s generic.

# Congressional Vote: Republicans will lose a lot of the battleground

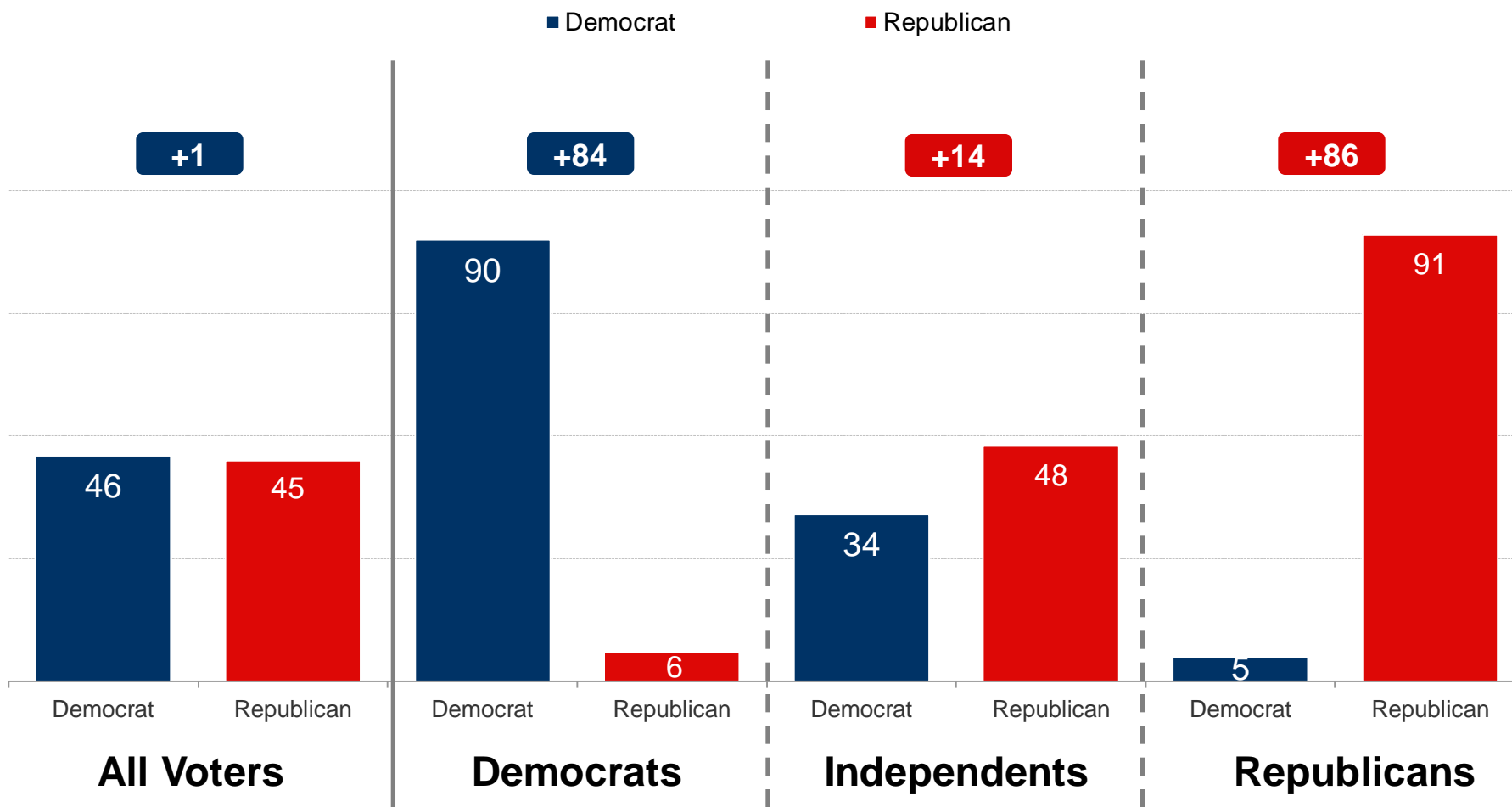
*I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the elections for Congress in 2012, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for **DEMOCRATIC HOUSE CANDIDATE** or **REPUBLICAN HOUSE CANDIDATE**?*\*



\* In the landline sample, the incumbent names were inserted preceded by party identification. Generic “the Democratic candidate” or “the Republican candidate” were inserted for the opposition. For the cell phone sample and open seat districts, both candidates were given a s generic.

# Congressional Vote: Democrats still trail with independents

*I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the elections for Congress in 2012, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for **DEMOCRATIC HOUSE CANDIDATE** or **REPUBLICAN HOUSE CANDIDATE**?\**

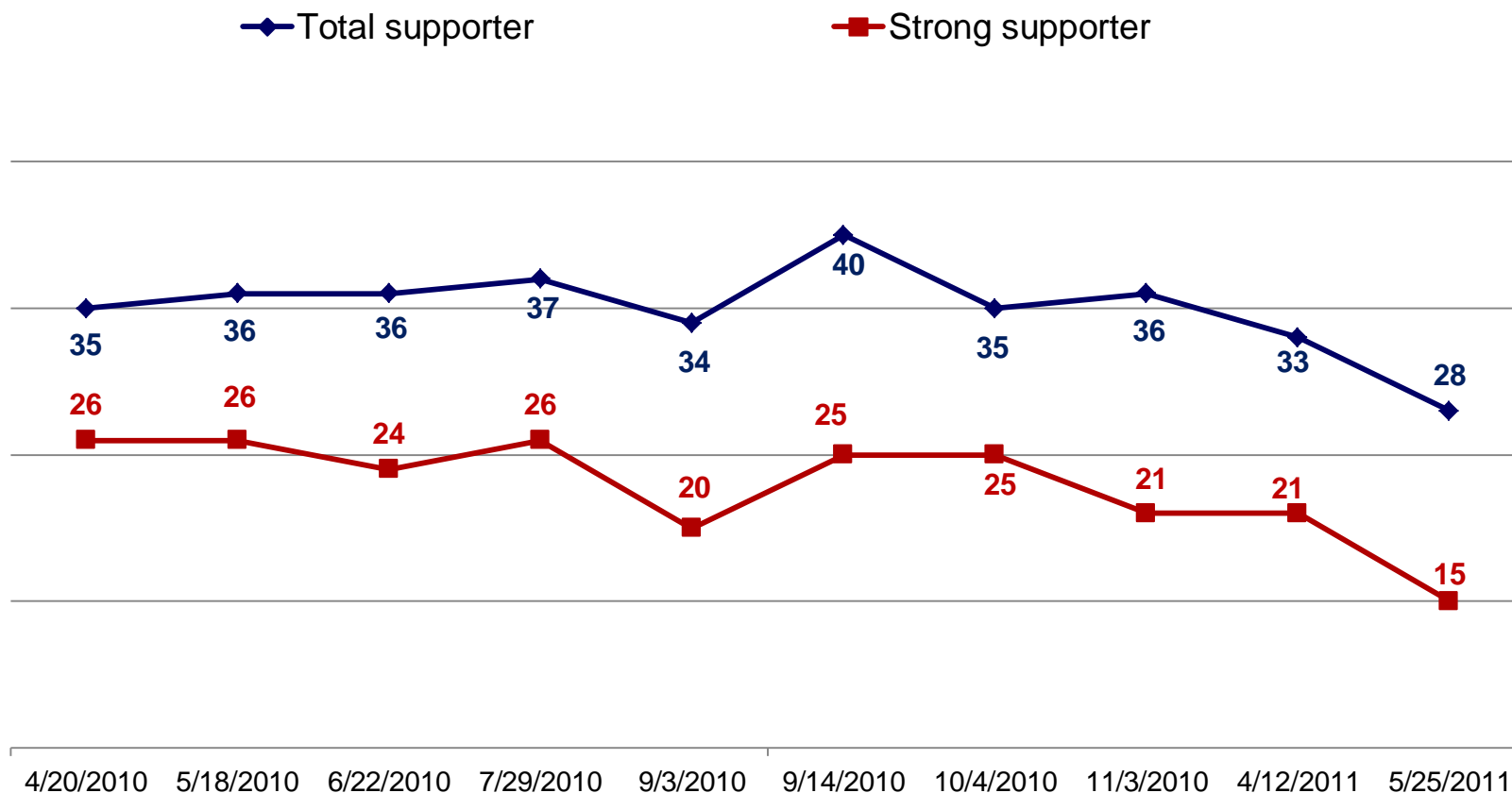


\* In the landline sample, the incumbent names were inserted preceded by party identification. Generic "the Democratic candidate" or "the Republican candidate" were inserted for the opposition. For the cell phone sample and open seat districts, both candidates were given a s generic.



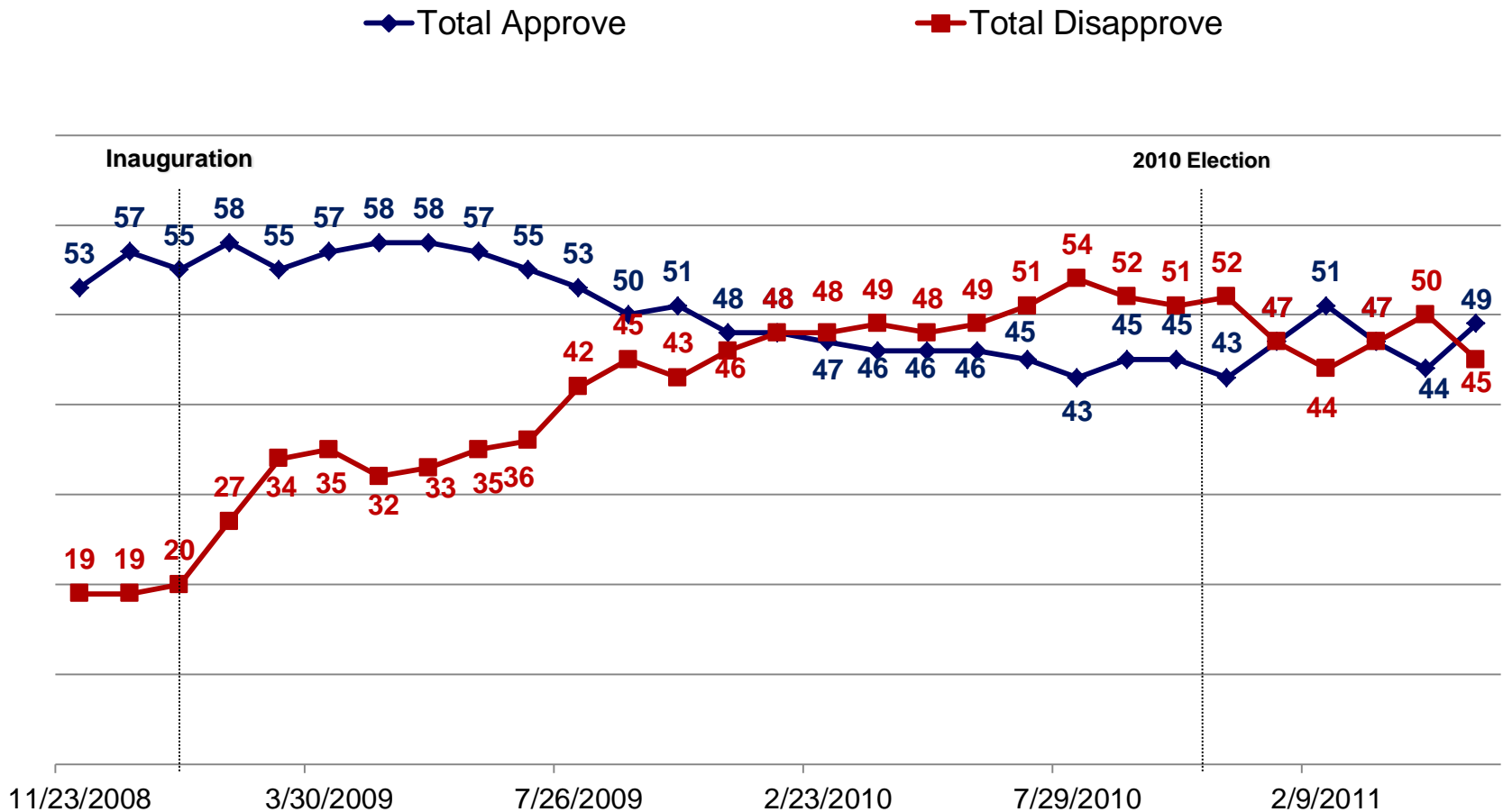
## Support for Tea Party at an all time low

*Do you consider yourself to be a supporter of the Tea Party movement, or not?*



# Obama approval near 50 percent

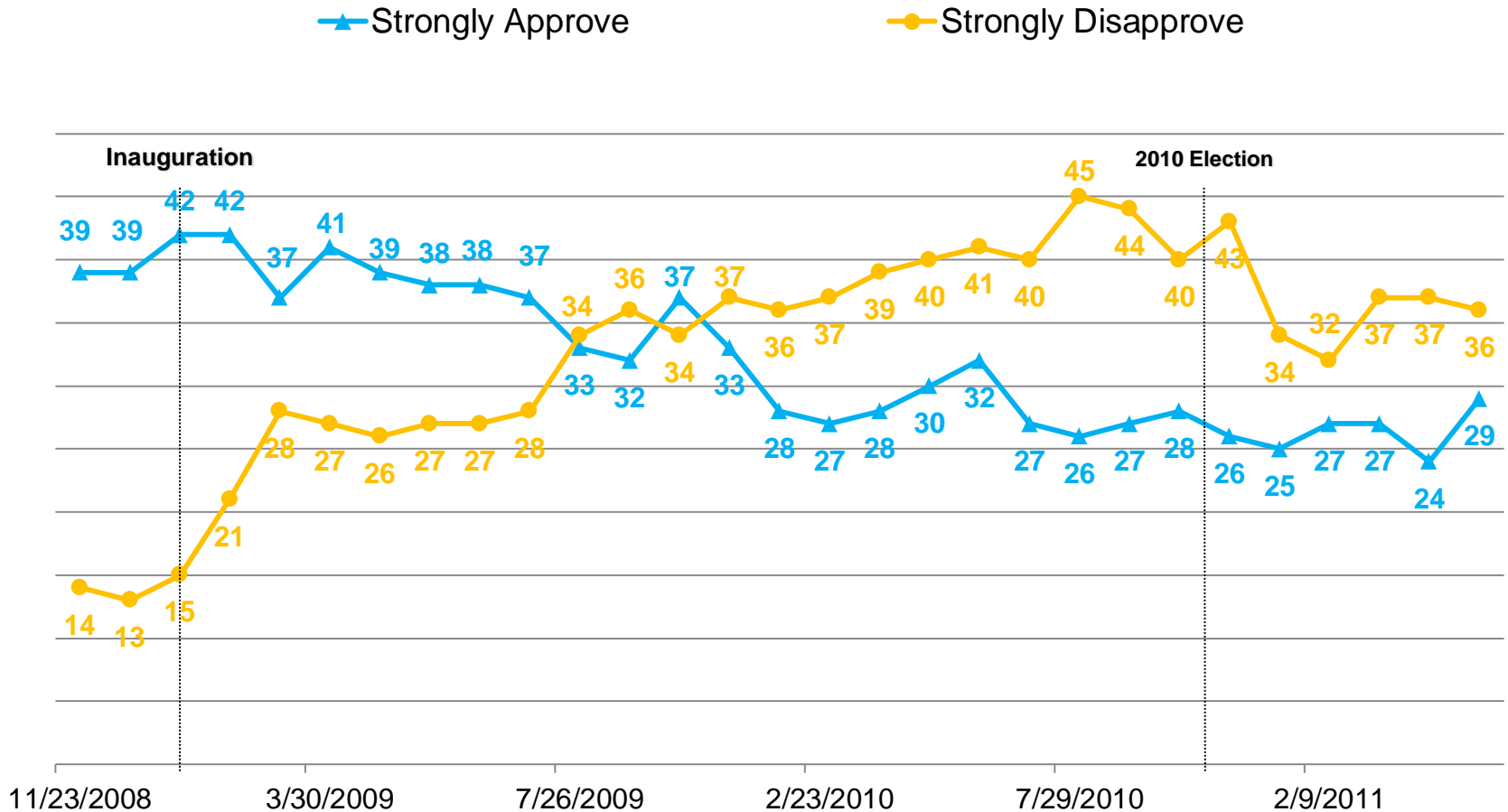
*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?*



*\*Note: From Democracy Corps surveys since the 2008 election. Before inauguration, question read: "Do you approve or disapprove of the job being done by Barack Obama as president-elect?"*

# With intense approval up sharply

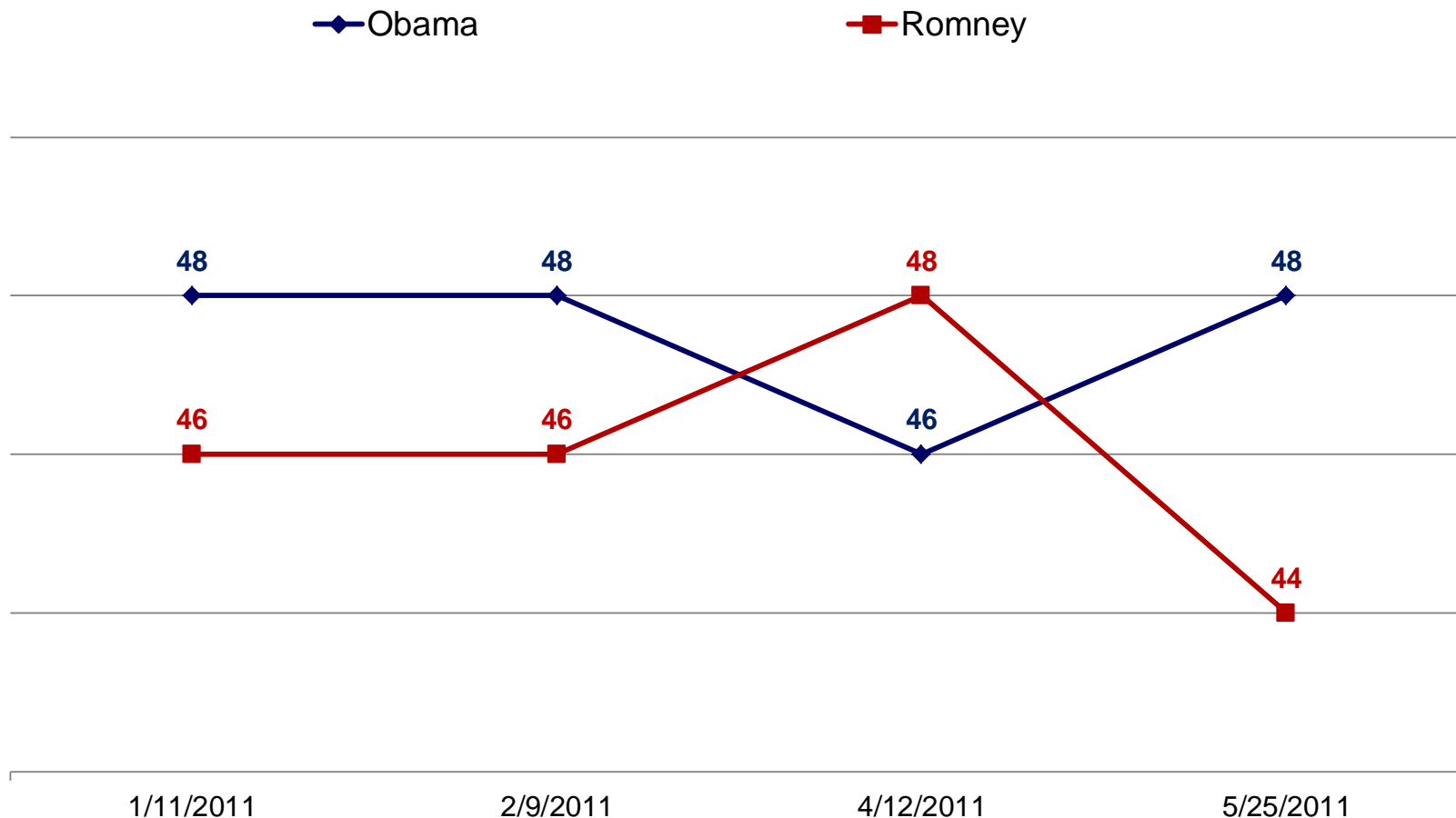
*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?*



*\*Note: From Democracy Corps surveys since the 2008 election. Before inauguration, question read: "Do you approve or disapprove of the job being done by Barack Obama as president-elect?"*

## Romney slips in race against Obama

*I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the presidential election in 2012, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?*

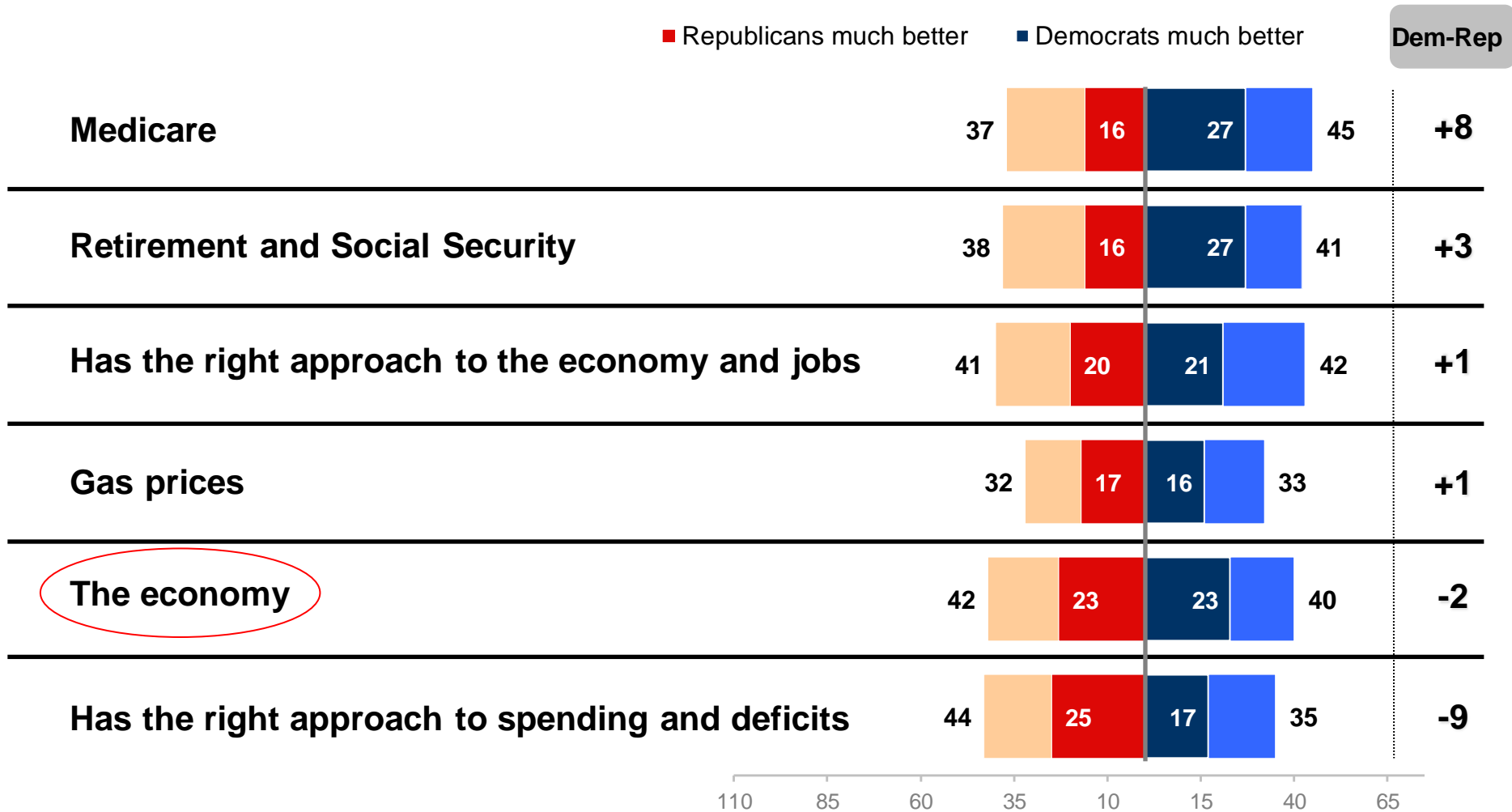


# Republicans in trouble on the economy

---

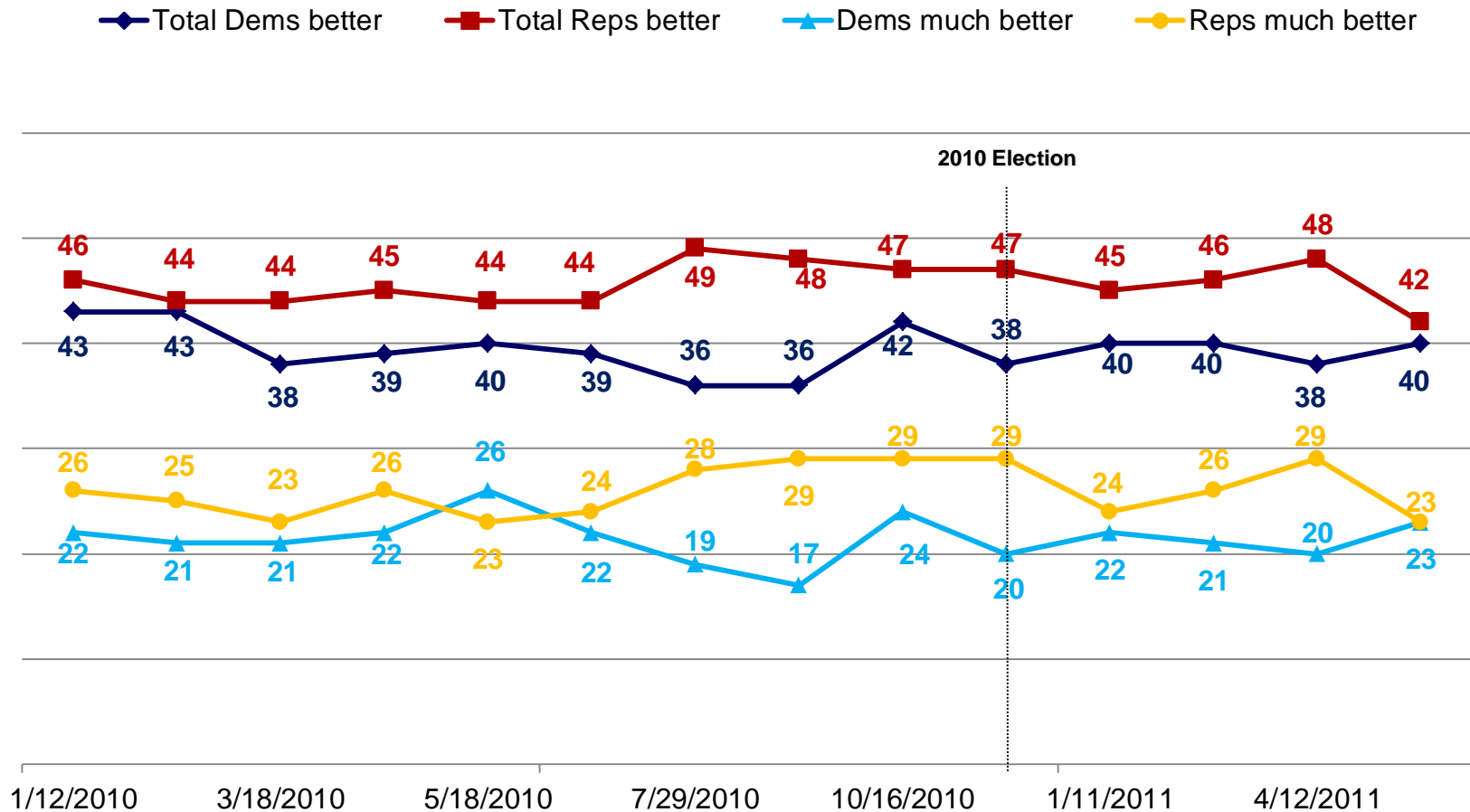
# Republicans losing trust on handling of economic issues

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue. If you do not know, just tell me and we will move on to the next item.



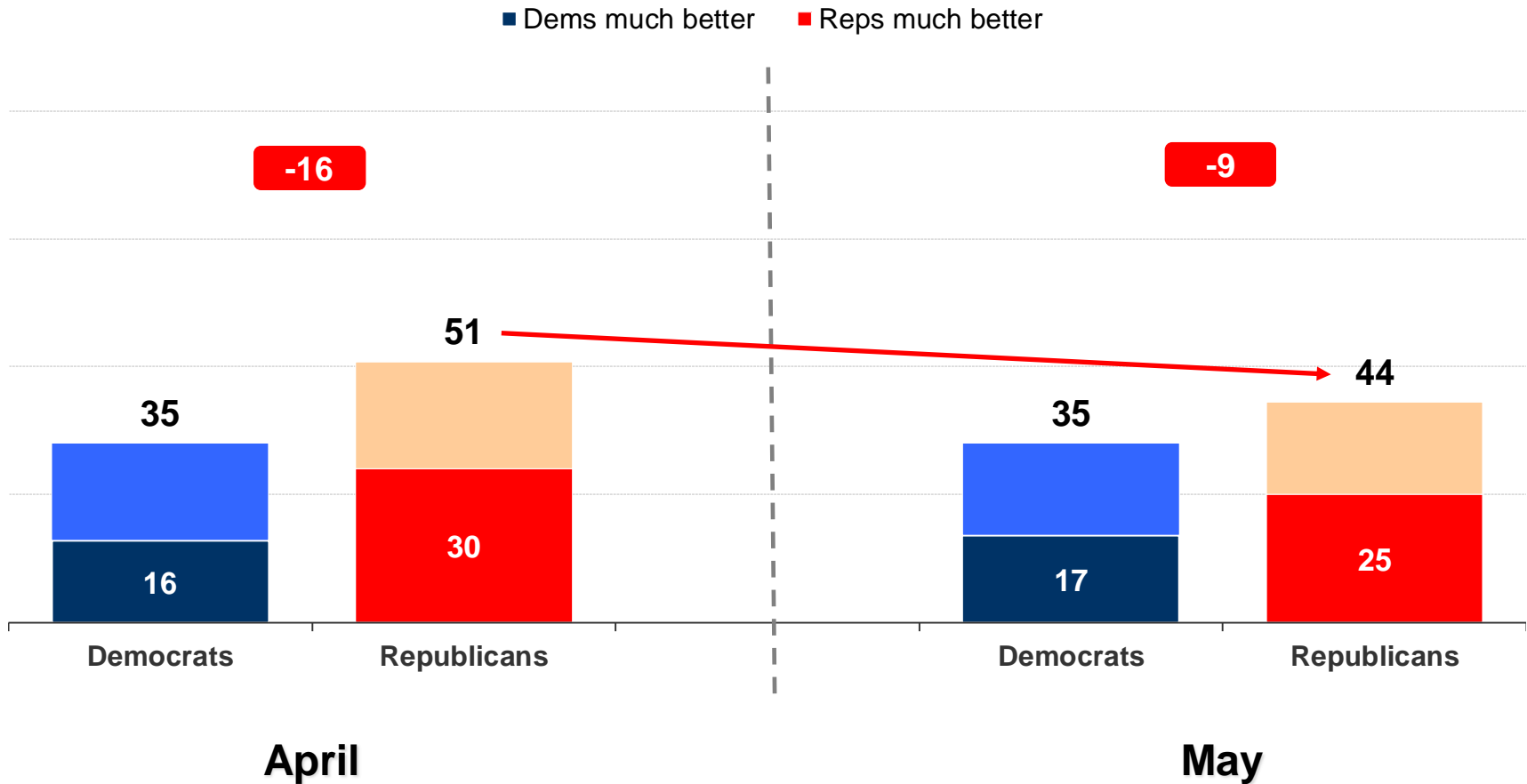
# Sharp decrease in trust of Republicans to handle economy

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue...**The economy.**



# Collapse of confidence in GOP having right approach to spending/deficits

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue...**Has the right approach to spending and deficits.**

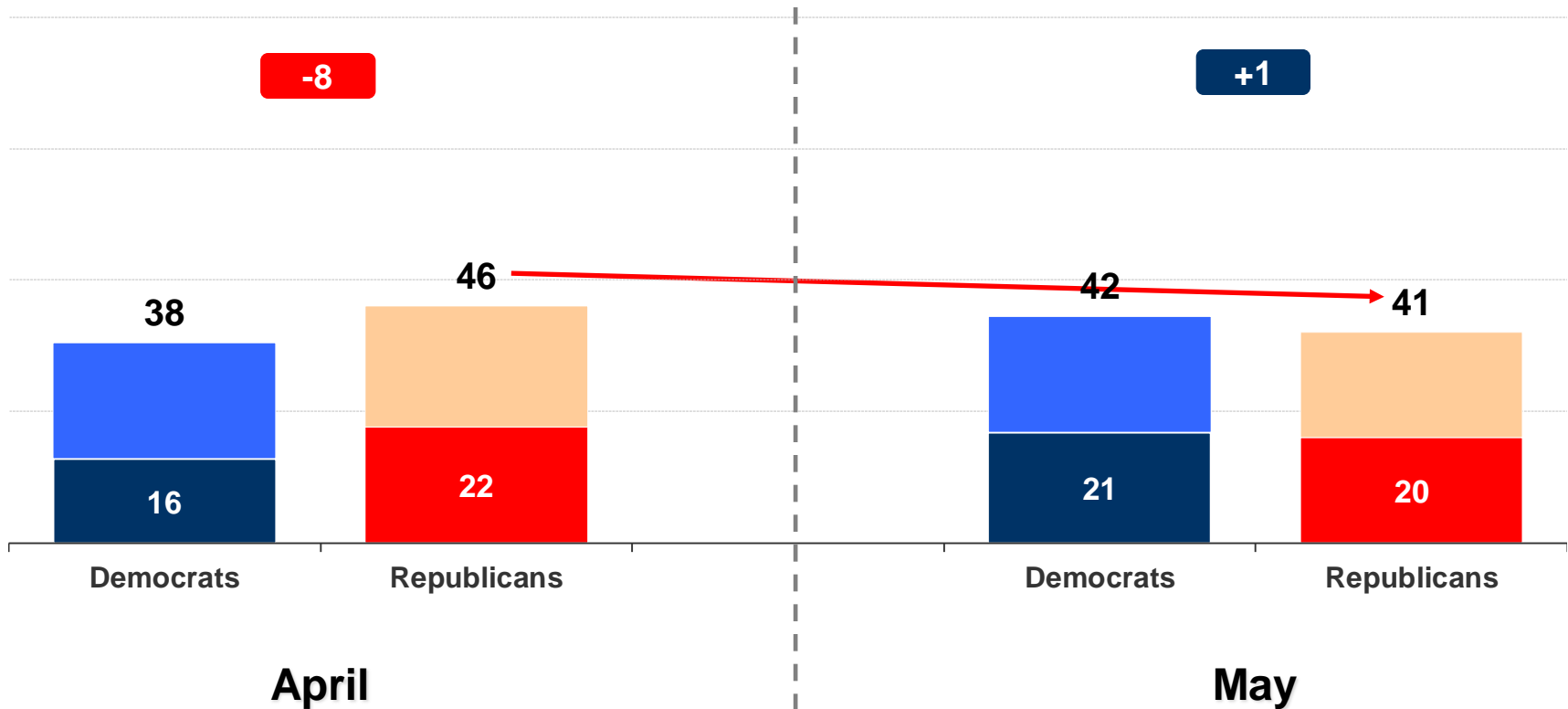




# Collapse in confidence in GOP on right approach to economy and jobs

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue...**Has the right approach to the economy and jobs.**

■ Dems much better ■ Reps much better

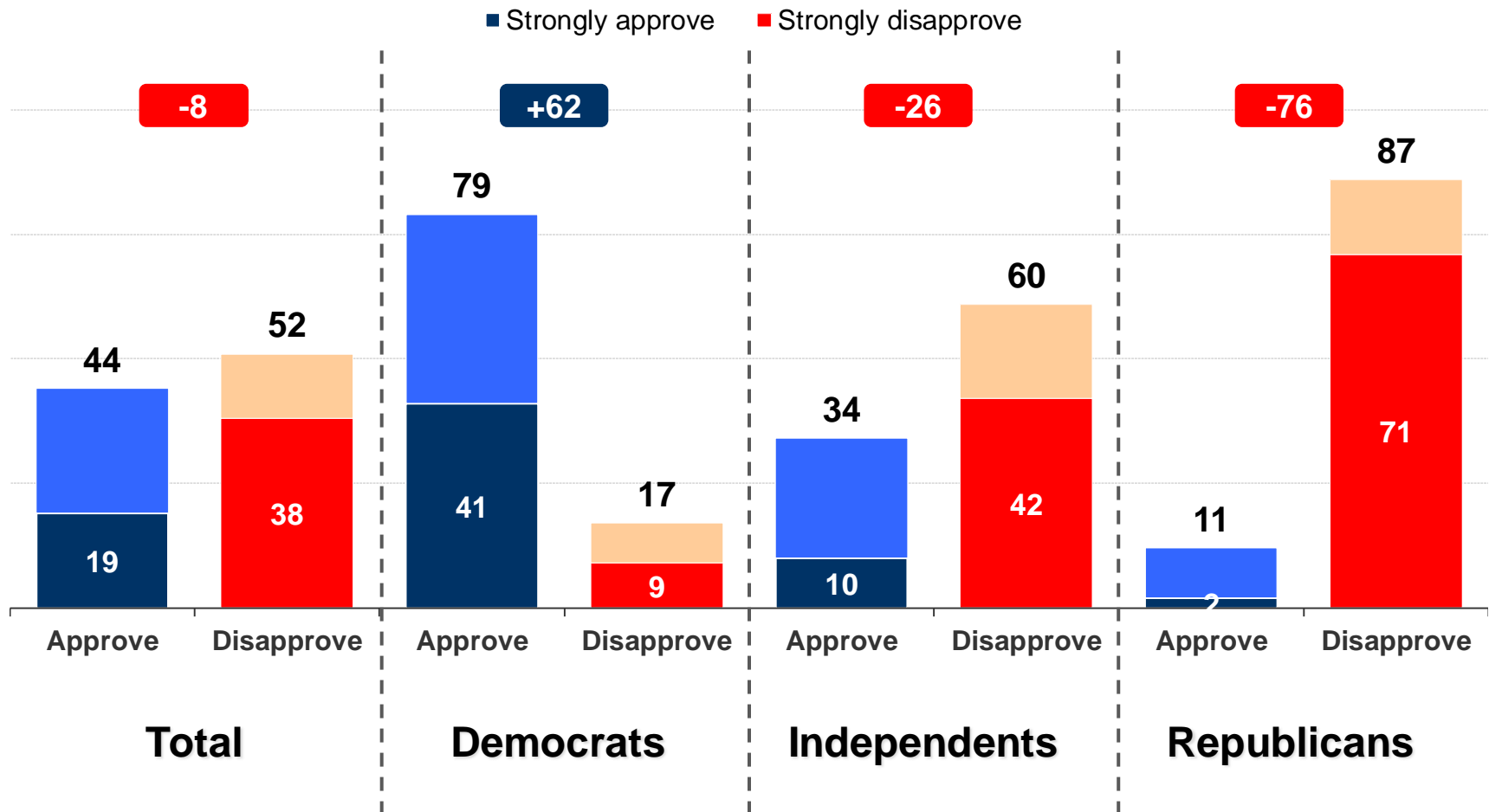


But economic mood bleak and Democrats  
not relevant

---

# President stuck on economic approval – at 1/3 for independents

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling the economy?*



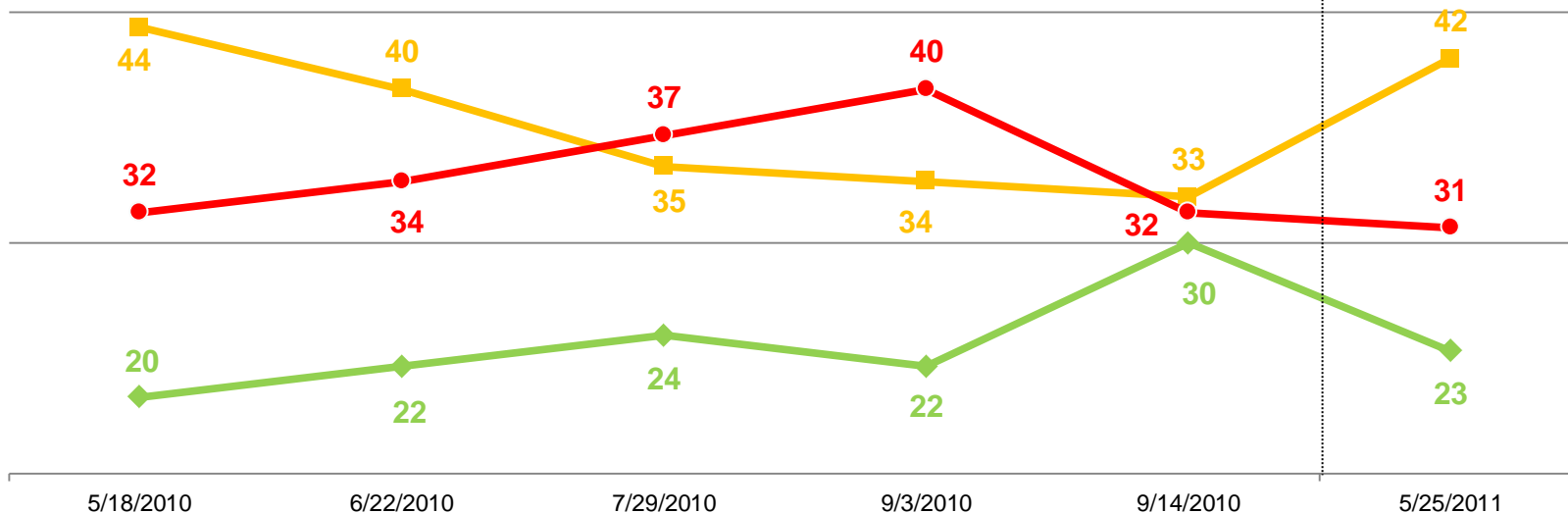
# Majority continue to believe economy getting worse or stuck

Now, thinking about the nation's economy, do you believe the economy has already bottomed out and is starting to improve, is at the bottom but is not yet getting any better or has not yet bottomed out and will still get worse?

◆ At bottom    
 ■ Already improving    
 ● Will get worse

Total Worse/Not Better: 54%

244,000  
New Jobs

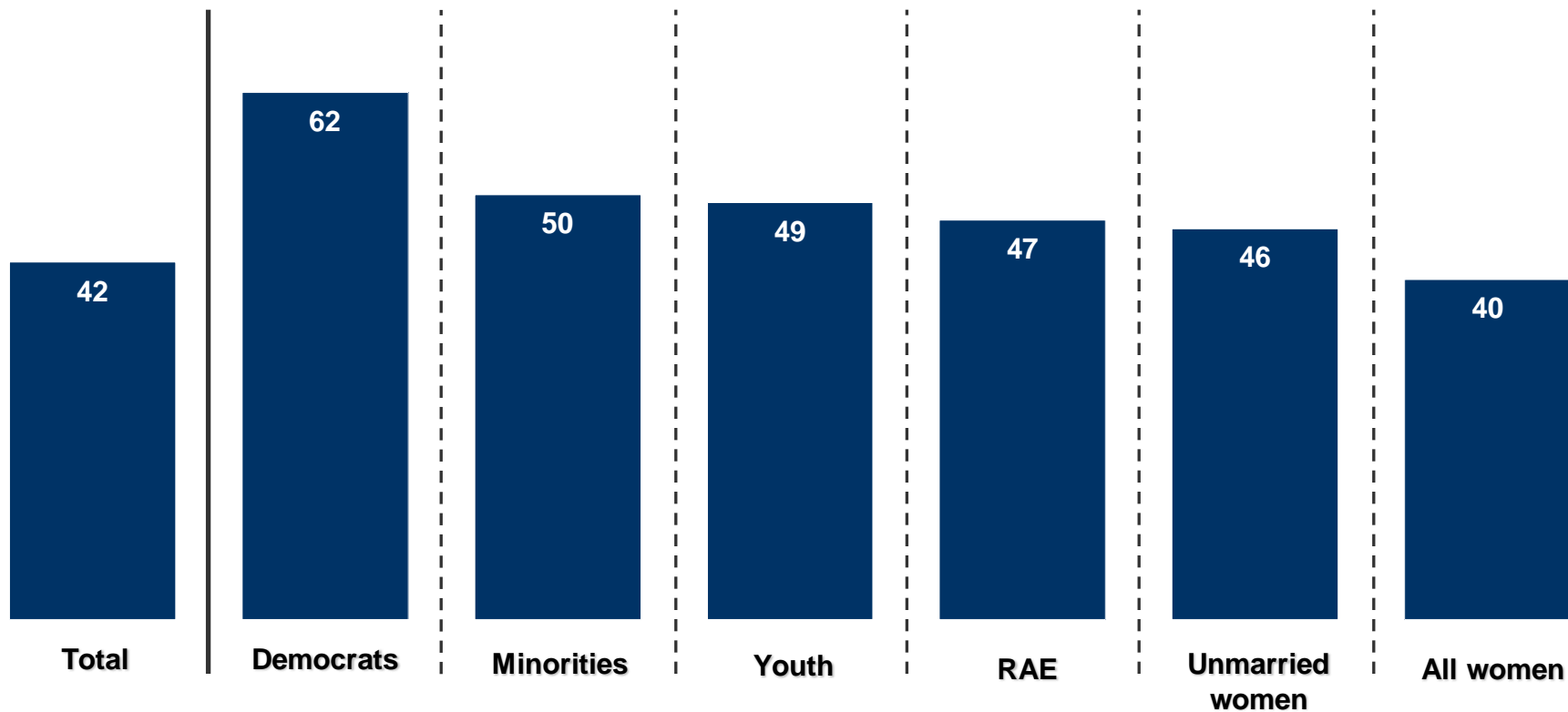


\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys conducted since July 2009. Current wave reflects 2012 LV. Prior waves reflect 2010 LV.

## Democrats main group believing economy recovering

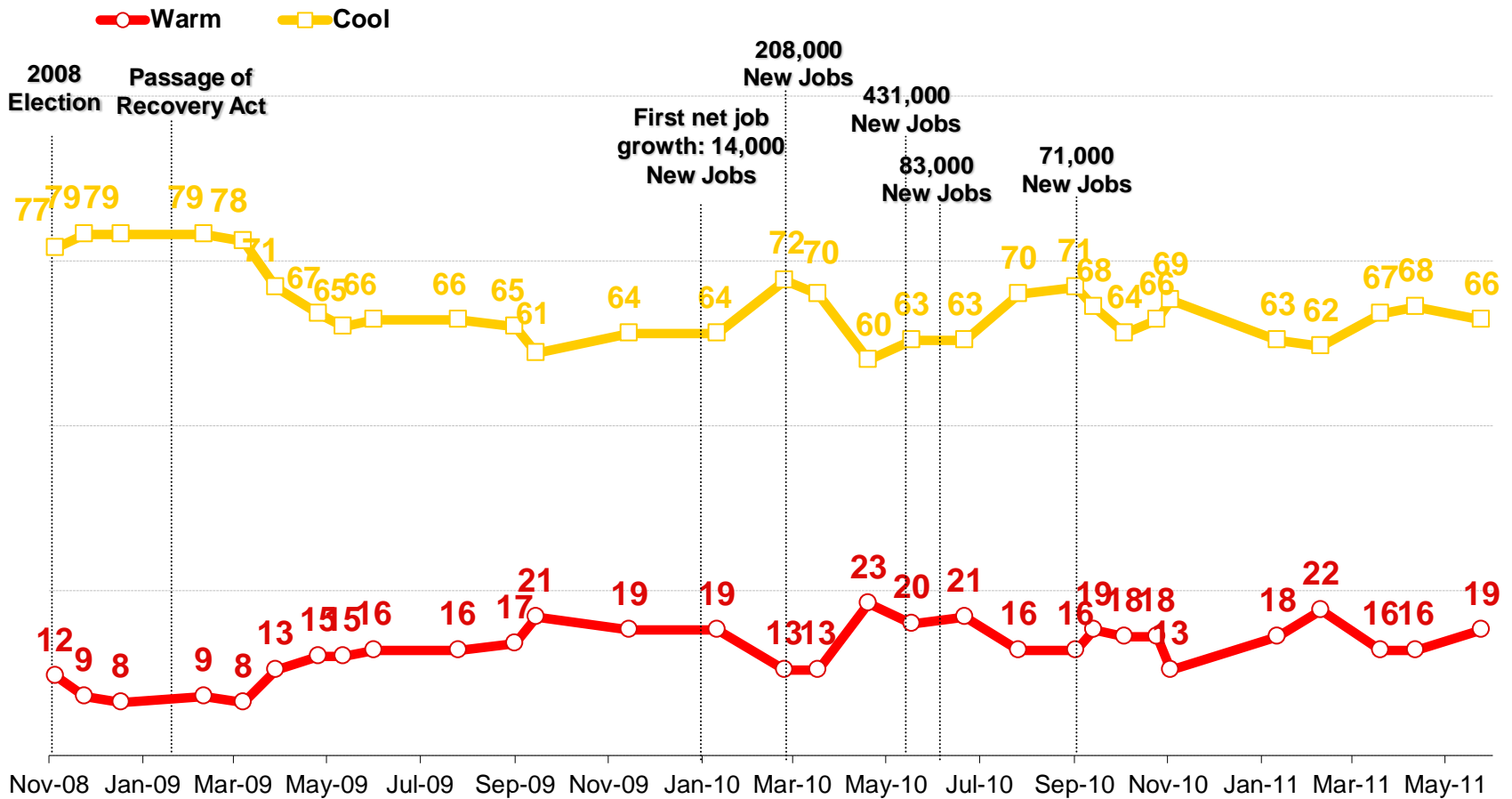
*Now, thinking about the nation's economy, do you believe the economy has already bottomed out and is starting to improve, is at the bottom but is not yet getting any better or has not yet bottomed out and will still get worse?*

■ Economy starting to improve



# Economic mood still very gloomy and barely changed

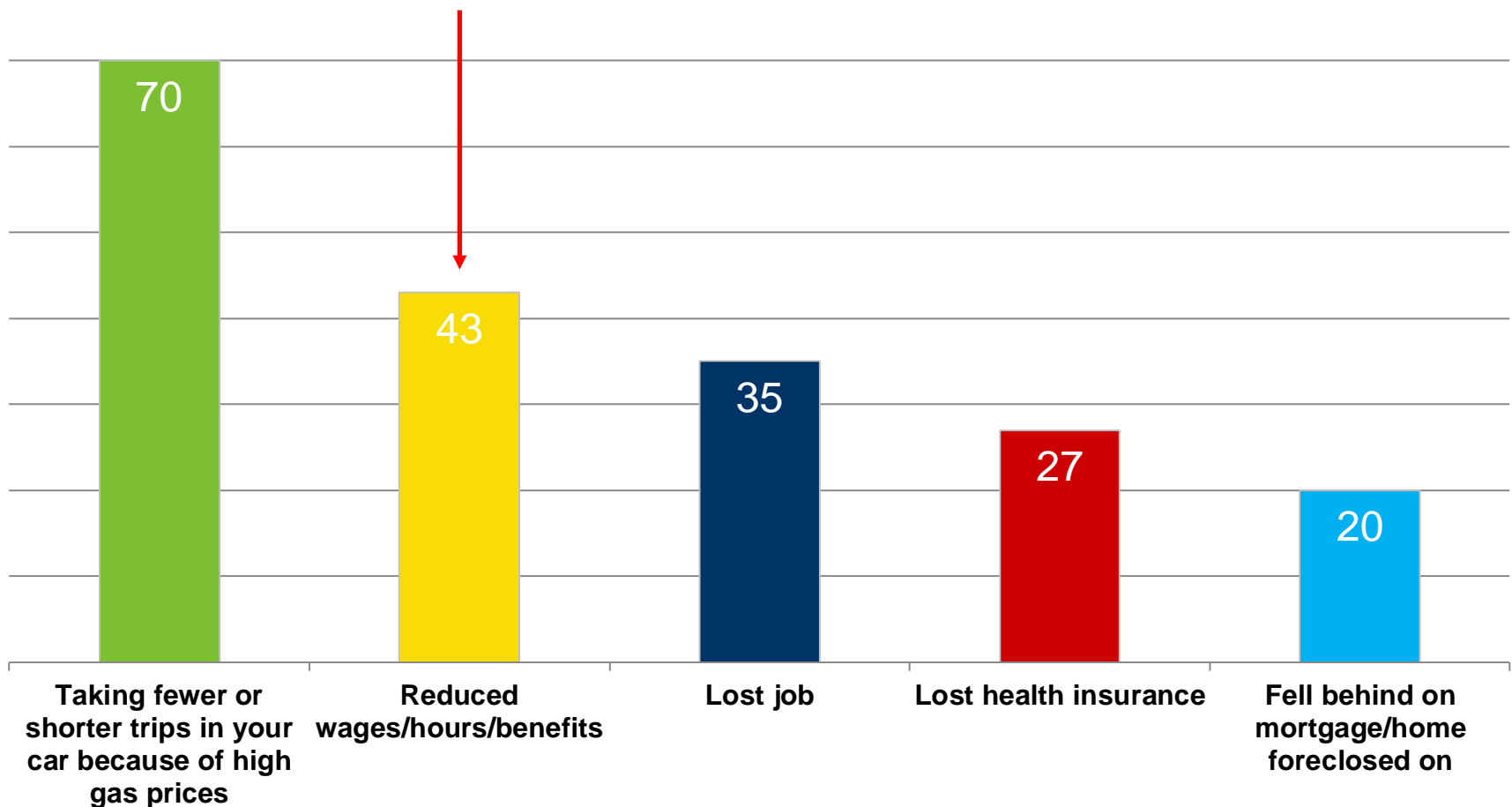
Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. **The state of the economy...**



\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys prior to March 2010. Based on research for Citizen Opinion. Data reflects full sample.

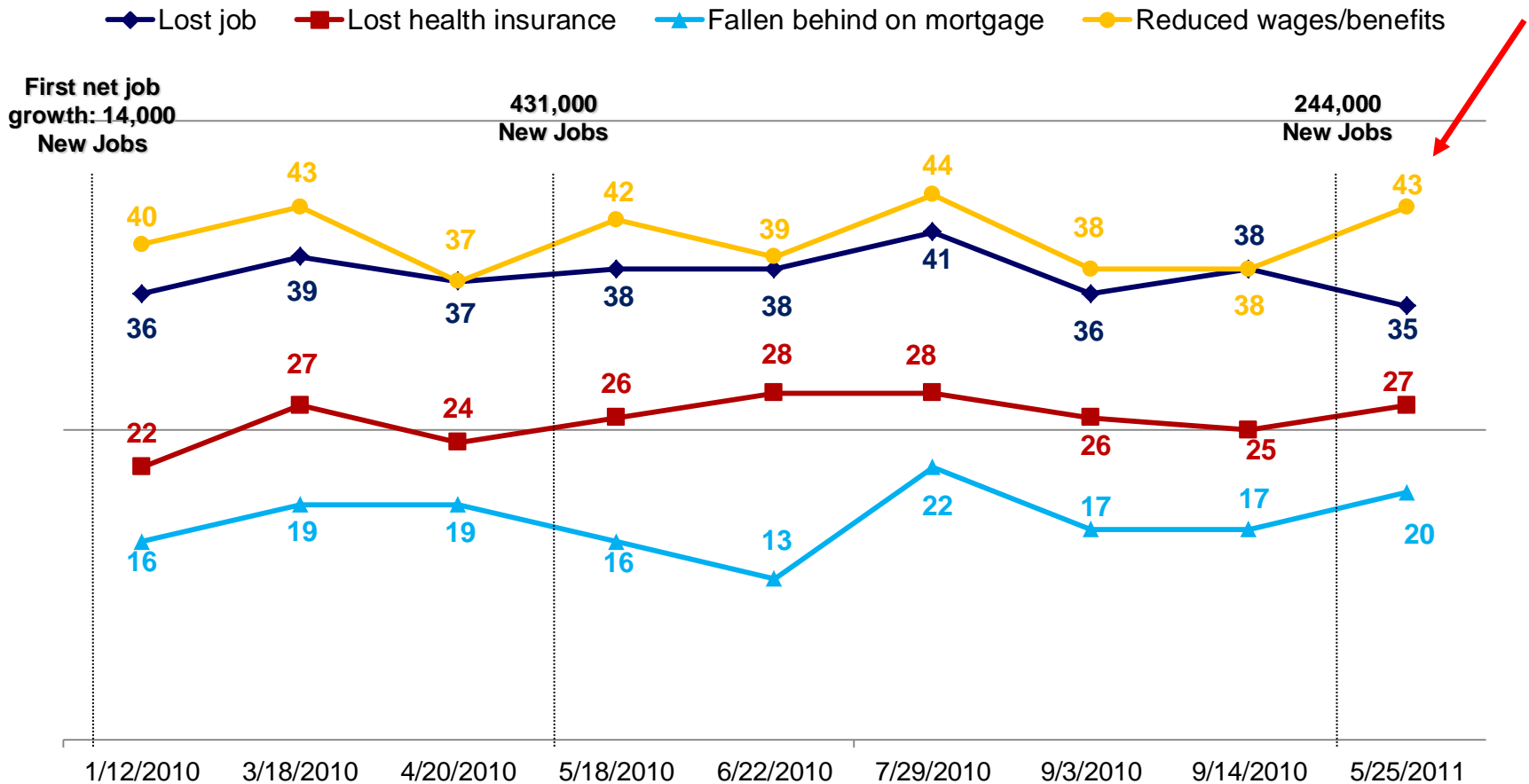
## New economy of reduced income gains

*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*



# Negative economic indicators: reduced wages/benefits stand out

*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*



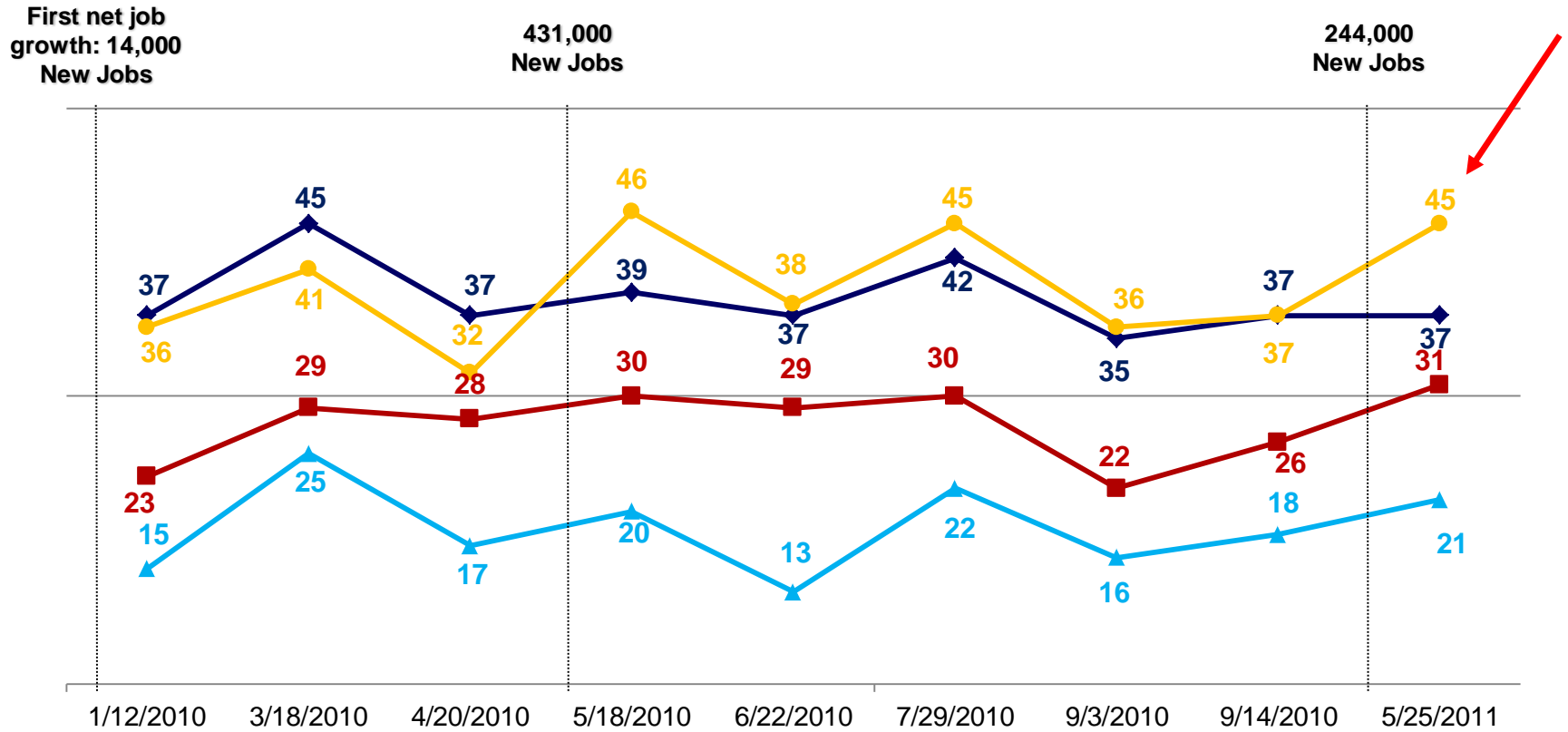
\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys prior to March 2010. Based on research for Citizen Opinion. Data reflects the total of those who have felt a personal impact of an impact on someone in their family. Data reflects full sample.



# Particularly for white non college and blue collar voters

*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*

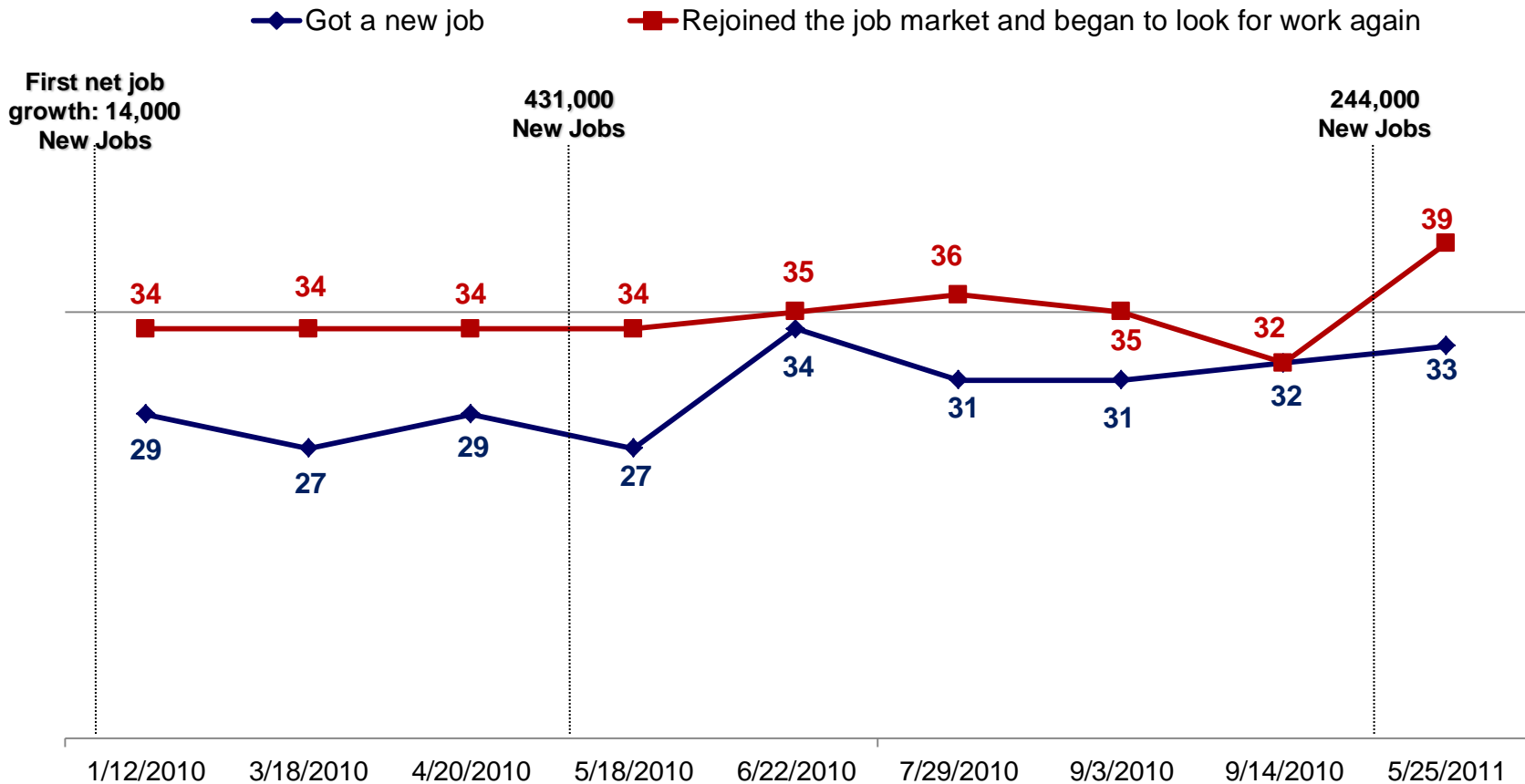
◆ Lost job    
 ■ Lost health insurance    
 ▲ Fallen behind on mortgage    
 ● Reduced wages/benefits



\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys prior to March 2010. Based on research for Citizen Opinion. Data reflects the total of those who have felt a personal impact of an impact on someone in their family. Data reflects full sample.

# More people getting into labor market

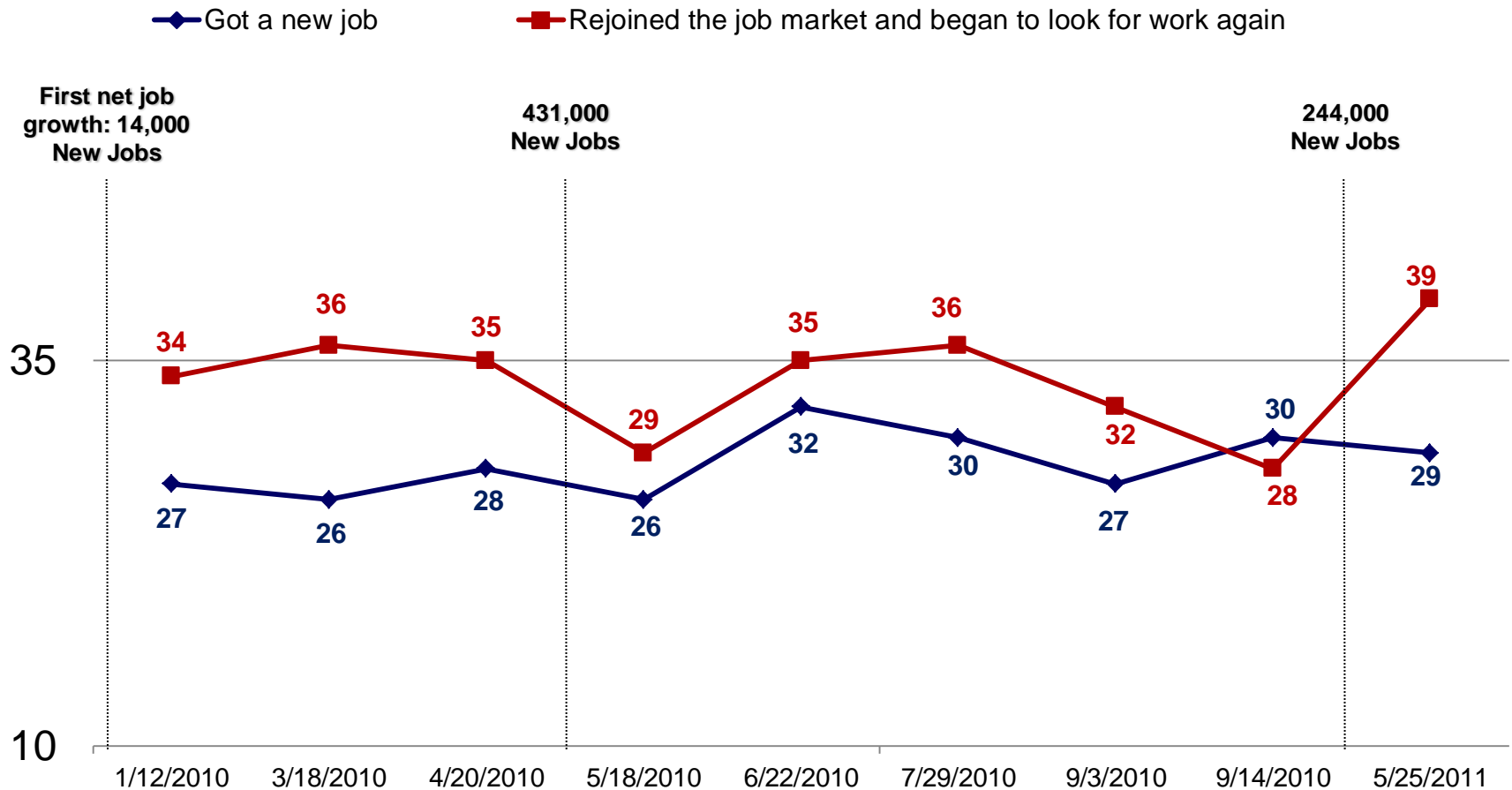
*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*



\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys prior to March 2010. Based on research for Citizen Opinion. Data reflects the total of those who have felt a personal impact of an impact on someone in their family. Data reflects full sample.

# Surge of white non-college into labor market, not jobs

*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*



\*Note: Data from Democracy Corps surveys prior to March 2010. Based on research for Citizen Opinion. Data reflects the total of those who have felt a personal impact of an impact on someone in their family. Data reflects full sample.

# The economy: what's the problem?

---

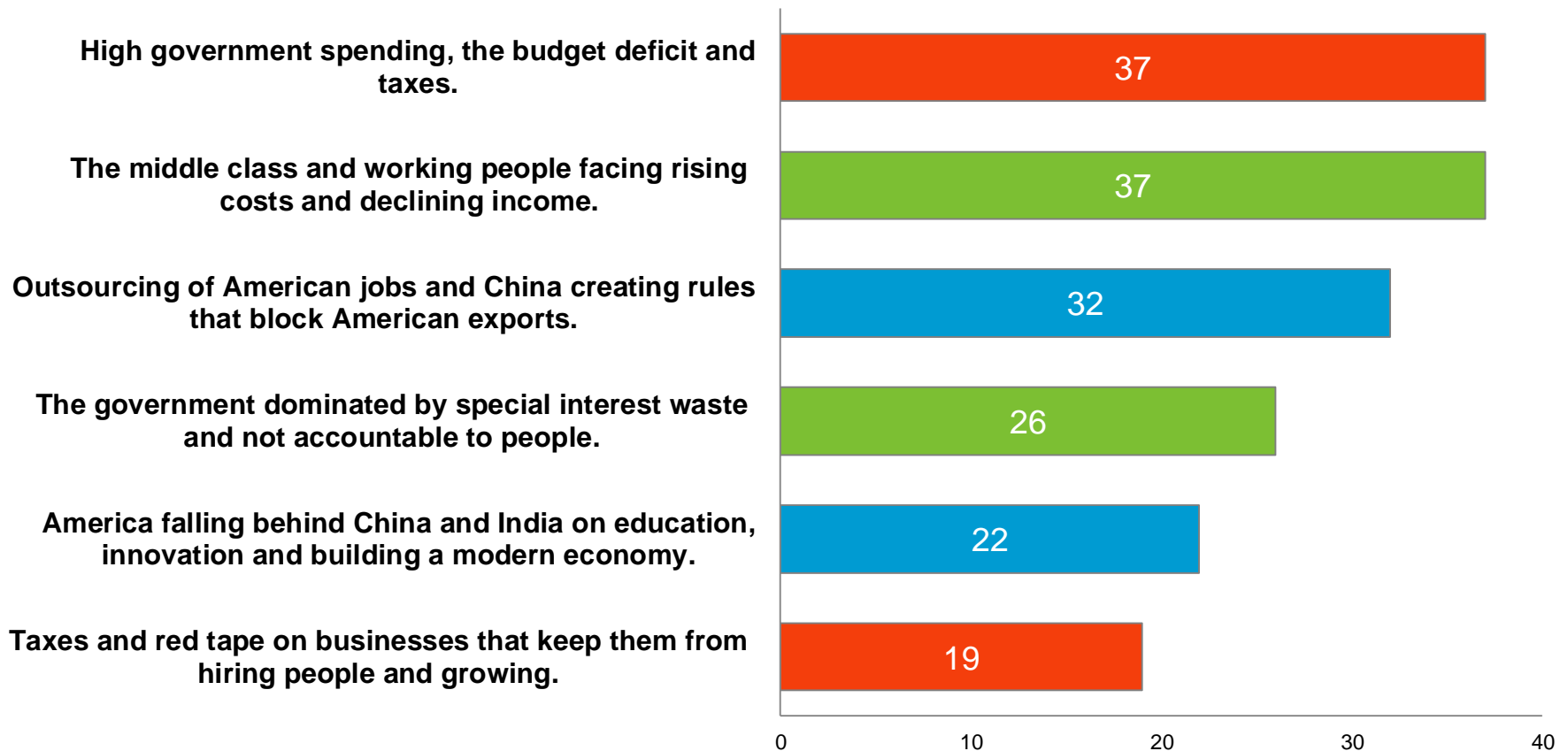
## 'The Economy' structured by 4 powerful dynamics – and none getting better

---

- **Middle class is smashed, focused on rising prices and declining incomes, with the new jobs paying less and with fewer benefits, with downsizing of American dream**
- **American economy and companies no longer creating American jobs, centered on outsourcing, China and lack of commitment to employees and America.**
- **Country weighed down by debt, spending and greed**
- **Corrupted politics that makes economic change impossible — a nexus of big money and politics, bailed out banks and companies — with struggling middle class powerless**

## What are the main economic problems to be addressed?

*Which ONE of the following problems do you think is the most important to be addressed when it comes to the economy? (FOLLOW UP) Which one of the following problems do you think is the SECOND most important to be addressed when it comes to the economy?*



Note: The data represents the combined first and second most important problems.

# Economic narratives that win

---

## Message path

---

- **If our messages are focused on the current economy and the future, our messages are stronger**
- **Republican messages on debt --- are part of the problem — but weaker because miss the rest**
- **Reform first**
- **Must take debt seriously**
- **Middle class and American jobs**



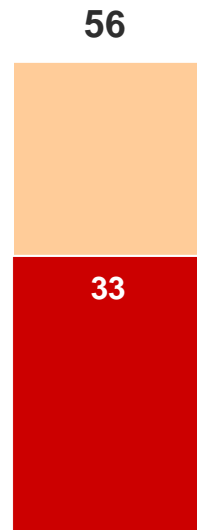
# Republican Messages on debt and spending effective but not as strong

*The following are some statements that a Republican member of Congress may make about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Live within means

The government should live within its means, just as all Americans do every day. Raising taxes hurts families and small businesses that are already paying too much. Ease regulations and red tape on businesses, cut business taxes to help them grow, hire people and expand their businesses - that is the way to improve the economy and create middle class jobs in this country.

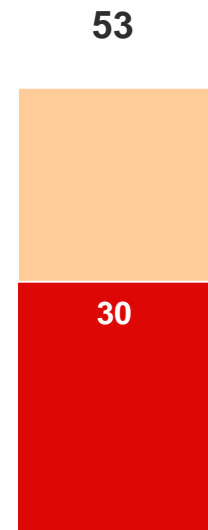
■ Much more likely



## Act now

The government borrows 4 billion dollars every day to pay for a spending binge it cannot afford. The time to act is now. By the year 2030, the debt as a share of the economy will be an explosive 146 percent. Spending on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and interest on the national debt will eclipse all anticipated revenue by 2025. We need to grow small businesses and middle class jobs, not the government, and reduce the debt for our children. That is the only way to truly improve our economy.

■ Much more likely



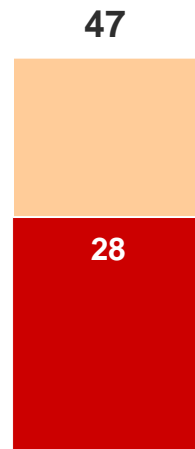
## Republican messages on past much weaker

*The following are some statements that a Republican member of Congress may make about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

### Didn't work

Increased spending is not the answer to the economy. The President and his party's leaders embarked on a stimulus spending spree that added hundreds of billions of dollars to the debt, yet failed to deliver on its promises to create jobs. Now they want to increase taxes on small businesses. We cannot continue this endless taxing and spending that will burden middle class families with more debt and cost our children their economic future.

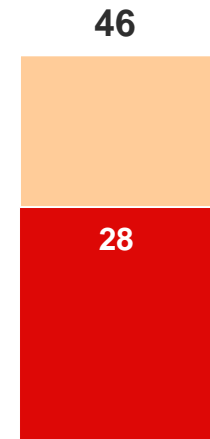
■ Much more likely



### Health care

President Obama and the Democrats promised lower health care costs, but did not deliver. Their plan will explode our deficit by one trillion dollars, raises taxes when people and businesses are struggling, and takes away the health care choices that should be made by individuals, not Washington bureaucrats. Businesses are not hiring people because they cannot afford the health care. We need to focus on reining in health care costs, which are driving the deficit and killing jobs.

■ Much more likely



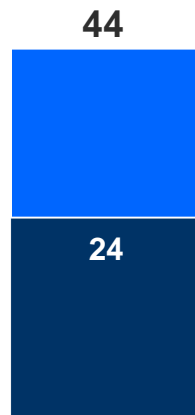
# Democratic messages grounded in the past and crisis – falter badly

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Handed a mess but working to get back

■ Much more likely

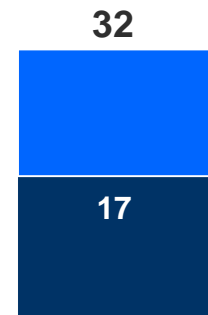
In January 2008, America was losing 750,000 jobs a month, the deficit was surging, banks were making irresponsible loans and the economy was on the brink of collapse. It will take years to get America back, but at least we are struggling to get America back on the right path with reduced deficits, the wealthiest paying their fair share of taxes, investing in education, innovation, and building to create jobs.



## Don't go back, and started to bring economy back

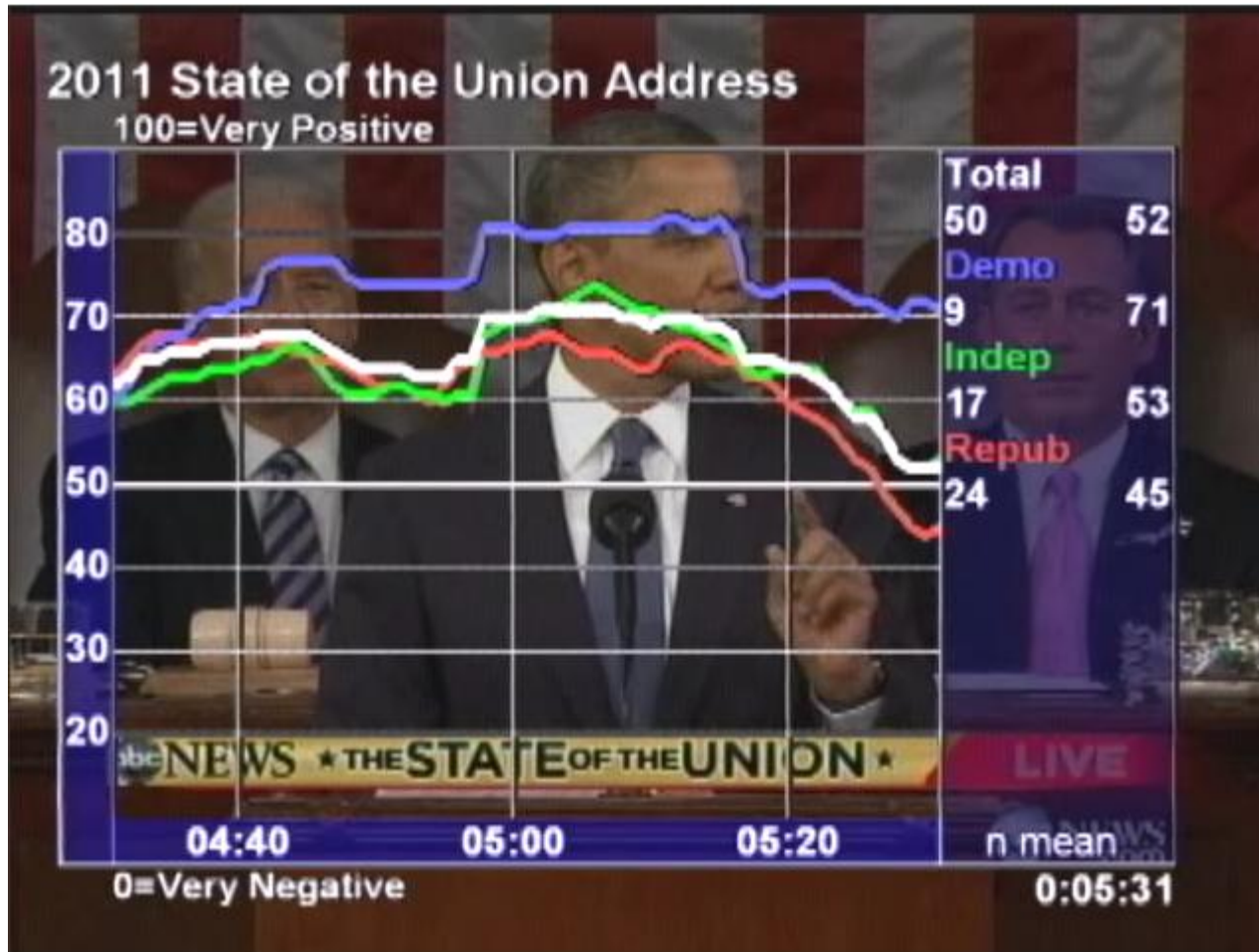
■ Much more likely

Republicans hope you forget. It was their policies that hurt middle class incomes, lost 8 million jobs and put us in the hole. They obstructed every effort to help get us out. The Recovery Act has started to bring the economy back and we've curbed Wall Street abuse. And now they want to go back to same policies that caused the mess in the first place. America has to move forward.



\*Note: "Don't go back" message is from the Democracy Corps/CAF Post election survey, Nov. 2-3, 2010

## Claims of progress cause dials to drop



*We are poised for progress. Two years after the worst recession most of us have ever known, the stock market has come roaring back. Corporate profits are up. The economy is growing again.*

\*Note: This is from dial testing done during the 2011 State of the Union address.

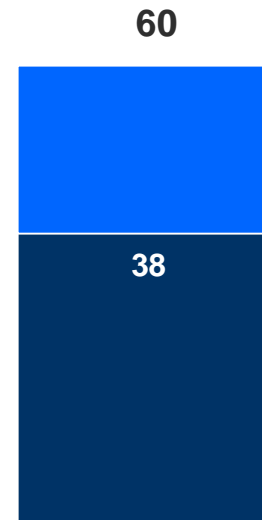
## But can marginalize politics of the past and embrace future

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

### Old politics

Half the country blames George Bush for the state of the economy and the other half blames Barack Obama. But that blame game will not help create new jobs. We face immense economic problems that will take years to solve. We need to start working together to reduce spending and the deficit and ask the richest to pay their fair share of taxes. We need to support education, innovation and new American industries.

■ Much more likely



# Messages on China/American jobs and middle class strongest

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Nationalism

America needs to get back to creating American jobs and growing the middle class. China will soon be the largest economy, owning trillions of our debt. Our leading export is jobs, even as we reward companies that outsource jobs. We have to get American companies to expand in America. We have to invest in American education, innovation and new industries that grow American jobs.

■ Much more likely



## Middle class

The biggest problem we face is the decline of the middle class. The middle class has been smashed and struggles to keep up with the rising costs of gasoline, college education and health care. We need to help small businesses, help people who work hard with education and training and protect middle class programs like Medicare, and invest in innovation and new energy to create the middle class jobs of the future.

■ Much more likely



# Reform message powerful and precondition; inequality also strong

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Reform

■ Much more likely

Washington is dominated by big banks, big donors and corporate lobbyists. So politicians rush to bailout Wall Street. Big oil keeps its tax breaks and companies still get breaks for exporting jobs. The middle class won't catch a break until we confront the power of money and the lobbyists. Expose their meetings, clean out tax loopholes, and limit donations. Getting the economy back for the middle class starts with changing politics.



## Inequality

■ Much more likely

Today, the richest 400 people have more wealth than the bottom 155 million people combined. Most of the 400 use loopholes to pay a lower tax rate than the middle. That's not right We should scrap nearly all the tax loopholes for the rich, push up tax rates for those over \$250,000 back to the levels under Bill Clinton and add a millionaire's surcharge. The hard work of the middle class should be rewarded.



## Strongest messages to energize Democrats

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

➤ **Inequality**

**Much more likely: 66%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 81%**

Today, the richest 400 people have more wealth than the bottom 155 million people combined. Most of the 400 use loopholes to pay a lower tax rate than the middle. That's not right. We should scrap nearly all the tax loopholes for the rich, push up tax rates for those over \$250,000 back to the levels under Bill Clinton and add a millionaire's surcharge. The hard work of the middle class should be rewarded.

➤ **Old Politics**

**Much more likely: 59%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 83%**

Half the country blames George Bush for the state of the economy and the other half blames Barack Obama. But that blame game will not help create new jobs. We face immense economic problems that will take years to solve. We need to start working together to reduce spending and the deficit and ask the richest to pay their fair share of taxes. We need to support education, innovation and new American industries.

➤ **Help**

**Much more likely: 58%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 79%**

People are still hurting and need help. This is not the time to allow people to lose their homes and savings. We have helped the big banks but we need to help Main Street too. Let's help people get back on their feet with job training and education for people displaced by the current economy and extending, not cutting health clinics and health care for working families.



## Strongest messages to reach the new Obama voters (Rising American Electorate)

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

➤ **Old Politics**

**Much more likely: 49%**

**Much/smwat more likely: 71%**

Half the country blames George Bush for the state of the economy and the other half blames Barack Obama. But that blame game will not help create new jobs. We face immense economic problems that will take years to solve. We need to start working together to reduce spending and the deficit and ask the richest to pay their fair share of taxes. We need to support education, innovation and new American industries.

➤ **Middle Class**

**Much more likely: 44%**

**Much/smwat more likely: 70%**

The biggest problem we face is the decline of the middle class. The middle class has been smashed and struggles to keep up with the rising costs of gasoline, college education and health care. We need to help small businesses, help people who work hard with education and training and protect middle class programs like Medicare, and invest in innovation and new energy to create the middle class jobs of the future.

➤ **Help**

**Much more likely: 44%**

**Much/smwat more likely: 65%**

People are still hurting and need help. This is not the time to allow people to lose their homes and savings. We have helped the big banks but we need to help Main Street too. Let's help people get back on their feet with job training and education for people displaced by the current economy and extending, not cutting health clinics and health care for working families.

## Strongest messages to reach Independents

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

➤ **Old Politics**

**Much more likely: 31%**

**Much/smw more likely: 56%**

Half the country blames George Bush for the state of the economy and the other half blames Barack Obama. But that blame game will not help create new jobs. We face immense economic problems that will take years to solve. We need to start working together to reduce spending and the deficit and ask the richest to pay their fair share of taxes. We need to support education, innovation and new American industries.

➤ **Nationalism**

**Much more likely: 26%**

**Much/smw more likely: 54%**

America needs to get back to creating American jobs and growing the middle class. China will soon be the largest economy, owning trillions of our debt. Our leading export is jobs, even as we reward companies that outsource jobs. We have to get American companies to expand in America. We have to invest in American education, innovation and new industries that grow American jobs.

➤ **Reform**

**Much more likely: 25%**

**Much/smw more likely: 47%**

Washington is dominated by big banks, big donors and corporate lobbyists. So politicians rush to bailout Wall Street. Big oil keeps its tax breaks and companies still get breaks for exporting jobs. The middle class won't catch a break until we confront the power of money and the lobbyists. Expose their meetings, clean out tax loopholes, and limit donations. Getting the economy back for the middle class starts with changing politics.

## Strongest messages to reach white non college voters

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

➤ **Old Politics**

**Much more likely: 36%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 60%**

Half the country blames George Bush for the state of the economy and the other half blames Barack Obama. But that blame game will not help create new jobs. We face immense economic problems that will take years to solve. We need to start working together to reduce spending and the deficit and ask the richest to pay their fair share of taxes. We need to support education, innovation and new American industries.

➤ **Nationalism**

**Much more likely: 32%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 55%**

America needs to get back to creating American jobs and growing the middle class. China will soon be the largest economy, owning trillions of our debt. Our leading export is jobs, even as we reward companies that outsource jobs. We have to get American companies to expand in America. We have to invest in American education, innovation and new industries that grow American jobs.

➤ **Reform**

**Much more likely: 32%**

**Much/smwt more likely: 50%**

Washington is dominated by big banks, big donors and corporate lobbyists. So politicians rush to bailout Wall Street. Big oil keeps its tax breaks and companies still get breaks for exporting jobs. The middle class won't catch a break until we confront the power of money and the lobbyists. Expose their meetings, clean out tax loopholes, and limit donations. Getting the economy back for the middle class starts with changing politics.

## Strongest messages to reach suburban voters

*Please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic member of Congress made this statement describing what is happening with the economy. After hearing this, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

➤ **Reform**

**Much more likely: 42%**

**Much/smwrt more likely: 66%**

Washington is dominated by big banks, big donors and corporate lobbyists. So politicians rush to bailout Wall Street. Big oil keeps its tax breaks and companies still get breaks for exporting jobs. The middle class won't catch a break until we confront the power of money and the lobbyists. Expose their meetings, clean out tax loopholes, and limit donations. Getting the economy back for the middle class starts with changing politics.

➤ **Nationalism**

**Much more likely: 41%**

**Much/smwrt more likely: 69%**

America needs to get back to creating American jobs and growing the middle class. China will soon be the largest economy, owning trillions of our debt. Our leading export is jobs, even as we reward companies that outsource jobs. We have to get American companies to expand in America. We have to invest in American education, innovation and new industries that grow American jobs.

➤ **Middle class**

**Much more likely: 38%**

**Much/smwrt more likely: 61%**

The biggest problem we face is the decline of the middle class. The middle class has been smashed and struggles to keep up with the rising costs of gasoline, college education and health care. We need to help small businesses, help people who work hard with education and training and protect middle class programs like Medicare, and invest in innovation and new energy to create the middle class jobs of the future.

# GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

## Washington, DC

10 G Street NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002

Ph: 1 202 478 8300  
Fax: 1 202 478 8301

## Seattle

1608 North 49th Street  
Seattle, WA 98103

Ph: 1 206 295 5880

## London

405 Carrington House  
6 Hertford Street  
London, UK W1J7SU

Ph: +44 (0) 207 096 5070  
Fax: +44 (0) 207 096 5086

## Buenos Aires

25 de Mayo 611. Piso 4, Oficina 3  
C1002AMB, Ciudad de Buenos Aires  
Argentina

Ph: +54 11 59175355



DEMOCRACY CORPS  
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

