



Building blocks for winning the working class, again

New poll in 2022 Senate and House battleground

September 30, 2021

2022 Congressional, Senate, and gubernatorial battleground

METHODOLOGY & DEFINITION OF BATTLEGROUNDS

A battleground web poll of 1,000 registered voters was conducted July 22-26, 2021. The margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points.

4 South/Sunbelt States = AZ (+5), FL (+2), GA (+5), NV (+1)

7 Blue Wall States = MI (+1), ME (+3), MN (+1), NH (-), OH (+3), PA (-), WI (-)

13 Additional Frontline Congressional Districts:

- CA-39(+3), CA-45 (+3), CA-48 (+1), CA-49 (+4)
- NJ-03 (+3), NJ-05 (+1), NJ-07(+1), NJ-11 (-)
- TX-22 (+4), TX-24 (+2), TX-32 (+1)
- VA-02 (+1), VA-07 (+3)

**(Republican PVI advantage) (PVI – even) (Democratic PVI advantage)*



Web survey weighted to recent phone poll on cultural thermometers, and 2020 vote by white working class weighted to match Catalist analysis.

METHODOLOGY – KEY WEIGHTING STEPS

Weighting to phone polls: The web survey requires a recent phone survey that includes core demographic and ideological questions, including key thermometer measures, and is used to compare and apply political and cultural weights to the web survey results to offset bias of online sample.

- We first applied standard gender, region, race and age weights to match Catalist counts for registered voters in this battleground.
- We then weighted white college/non-college to match proportions from the Catalist 2020 election analysis (44% white non-college, 28% white college).
- We often weight web surveys to match the short phone survey as needed on ideology, and vote or presidential job approval—**after first weighting the cultural thermometers to match our phone survey. In this web survey, we weighted cultural measures halfway to the recent phone poll to offset cultural bias.**
- Additionally, after cultural weights, the recalled 2020 vote was weighted within working class women and white working class men, to match to Catalist post-election analysis—**ensuring we have the correct share of white non college, and the real recalled 2020 vote for both men and women.**



Building blocks:

- This first phase of the project for Democracy Corps, AFT and CVI suggests some striking new building blocks for constructing a strategy for Democrats running better with all working class voters.
- In this phase, Democracy Corps was concentrating on the white working class, EquisLabs on Hispanics and Latinos, and Hit Strategies on Blacks and Asian Americans, but the similarity of the responses of base and persuasion targets led us to throw out artificial barriers and be open to new building blocks.
- This poll started with Democrats having only a 2-point lead in the 2022 Senate and House battleground (unchanged from 2020) and Biden and the Democrats trailing Trump and the Republicans on the economy, making America safe, promoting hard work, handling immigration, crime, and China, yet ended up with Democrats surprisingly prevailing by 8-points. That happened even though these working class voters heard Trump's whole world view, as well as the attacks on Democrats on the police and crime, socialism and losing touch with working people. Why? What were the building blocks?

Building blocks:

- **Building block one** — recognizing that the overwhelming majority of *both* our diverse base and persuadable voters are working class, that is, they have never completed a four-year college degree. Fully 68 percent of Blacks are working class, 67 percent of millennials and GenZ voters, 69 percent of unmarried women, and 57 percent of white unmarried women. What the CVI calls the New American Majority of Blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans, millennials and Gen Z and unmarried women are two-thirds working class.
- **Building block two** — recognizing that both our diverse base and persuadable voters are living paycheck to paycheck, have very similar priorities for government and resent hardworking people no longer calling the shots in society and government. They both want government to offer more protections and higher pay for low-wage workers, and maintain the child tax credit, reduced health insurance premiums and prescription drug costs and better Medicare, and big corporations paying much more in taxes.
- **Building block three** — recognizing to motivate and persuade our base of Blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, millennials, and unmarried women, Democrats must help them get paid more by their employers, reduce their health care costs and help with the cost of raising kids and, and check the power of big corporations. Seven other initiatives rank higher for our base than addressing racial equities. Nonetheless, Democrats addressing them remains a moral imperative. Running on it serves Bannon and Trump, not our base. (This will be further assessed after research by EquisLabs and HIT Strategies.)



Key Findings:

- **Building block four** — *making the new expanded, monthly child tax credit a centerpiece of the Democratic agenda because it is very popular and shows that white working class voters under 50 years of age (not the older working class) and white parents may be very accessible to Democrats.*
- When described as a tax cut for every working family to deal with the high cost of raising kids and taxes, this wins intense support in our base but even more with the white working class under 50 and parents. Even when attacked as producing “new welfare queens,” it retains support with these voters. That it would be repealed by a new Republican Congress; and raise taxes, it is one of the strongest attacks with the white working class under 50, white parents and our winnable voters.
- **Building block five** — recognizing that persons with a disability are heavily represented in the white working class and rural areas, as is evident in every focus group we conduct. It is time to see them, and this poll shows they can be the next unmarried women. VPC/CVI came to realize that nearly 60 percent of the white unmarried women were working class and were moved by affordable health care, help with getting an education, and limiting the role of big money, more than work and family issues. And they are now base voters. With further research, can persons with a disability become part of the base?

Building blocks:

- **Building block six** — seeing that working people are much less likely to say they work at a plant or auto company, but are skilled independent contractors, own or work in a small business. So, our issue agenda included the PPP, grants for restaurants, and help for small businesses. Our message said, “we need a government that works for the middle class, working families, *small businesses* and the vulnerable that work hard.” Voters heard, Democrats fight for small businesses.
- **Building block seven** — prioritizing public safety, crime, with respect and funding for police, along with urgent reforms that bring better training and accountability— is a precondition for Democrats being successful in the midterms. The Democrat we tested said, “we must be for funding, not defunding the police” and “respect officers.” The Democrats are also unequivocal that abusive officers will be held accountable.
- The survey gave full voice to Trump’s view that “America has never been more at risk for those who made America Great. Crime in our Country is escalating at a pace we've never seen before. People are pouring through our Borders ... [And] we must act to save America and [that] means ensuring that we always keep America First. [We] teach the truth about our history, believe the men and women of law enforcement [and] respect our great American Flag.” But we move into an 8-point lead when voters hear we prioritize public safety and battle for the hard-working middle class, working families, small businesses and the vulnerable.

The starting 2022 challenge



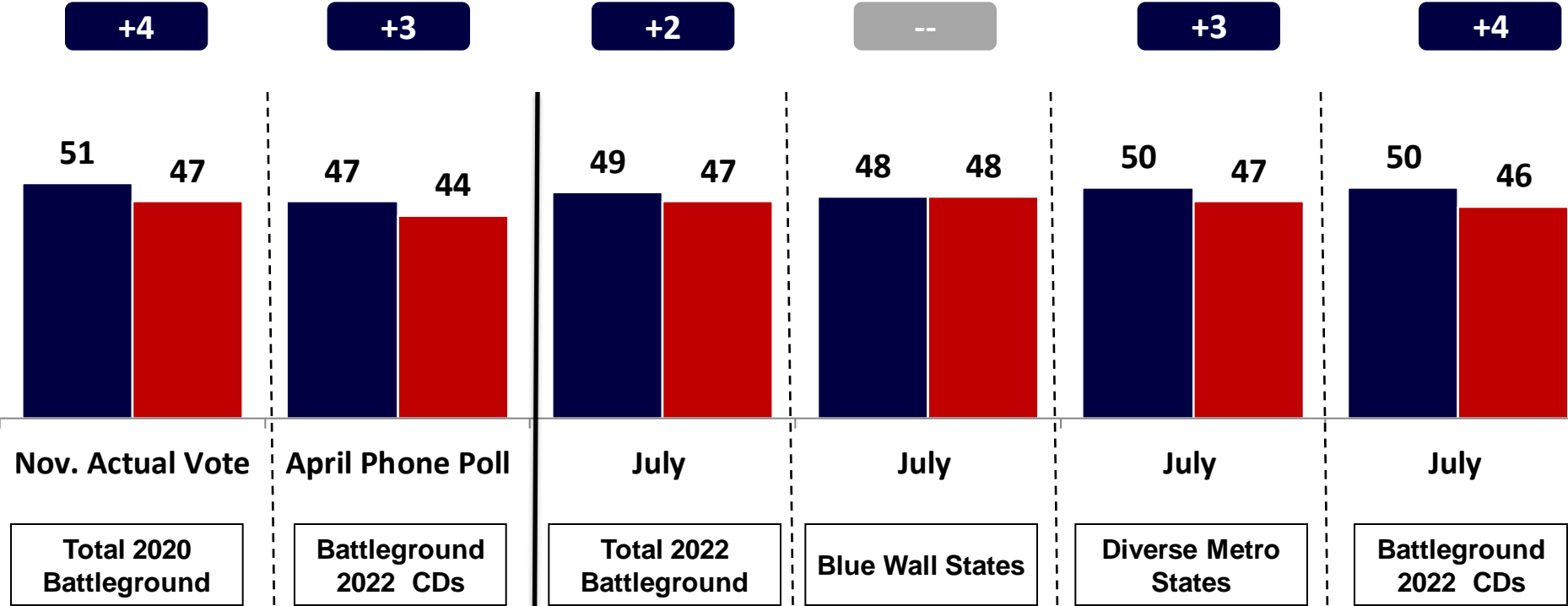
The Democrats begin with only 2-point lead, marginally down from 2020; 3-point edge in 2022 House battleground seats

Even though it is a long way off, thinking about the election for Congress in your district in November 2022, will you vote for – the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

2022 CONGRESSIONAL VOTE

■ Democrat

■ Republican



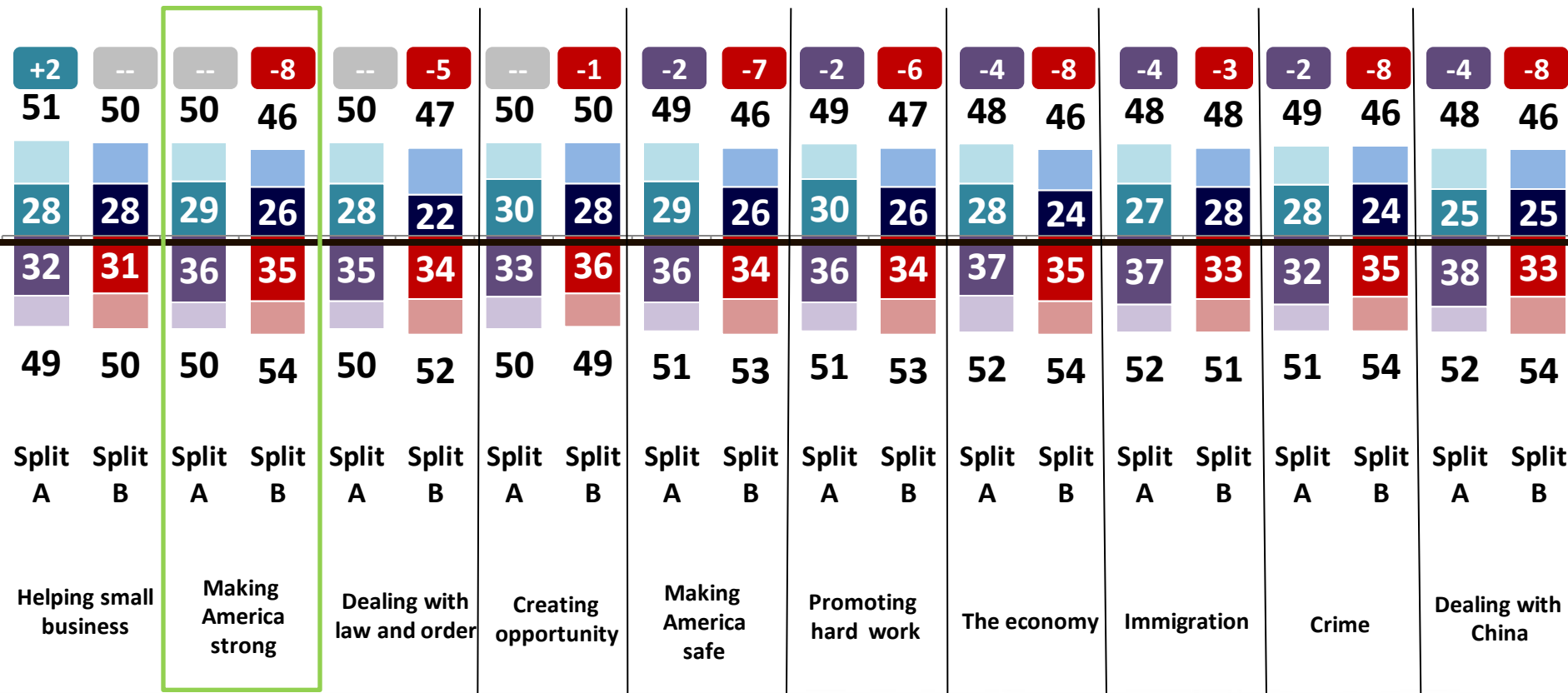
Biden and Democrats pulled down on hard work, the economy, immigration, crime & law and order, making America safe, strong, & China

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think (SPLIT A) Joe Biden and the Democrats or Donald Trump and the Republicans/ (SPLIT B) the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with handling that issue.

TRAITS – SPLIT A/B COMPARISON

■ Biden/Dem much better

■ Trump/Rep much better



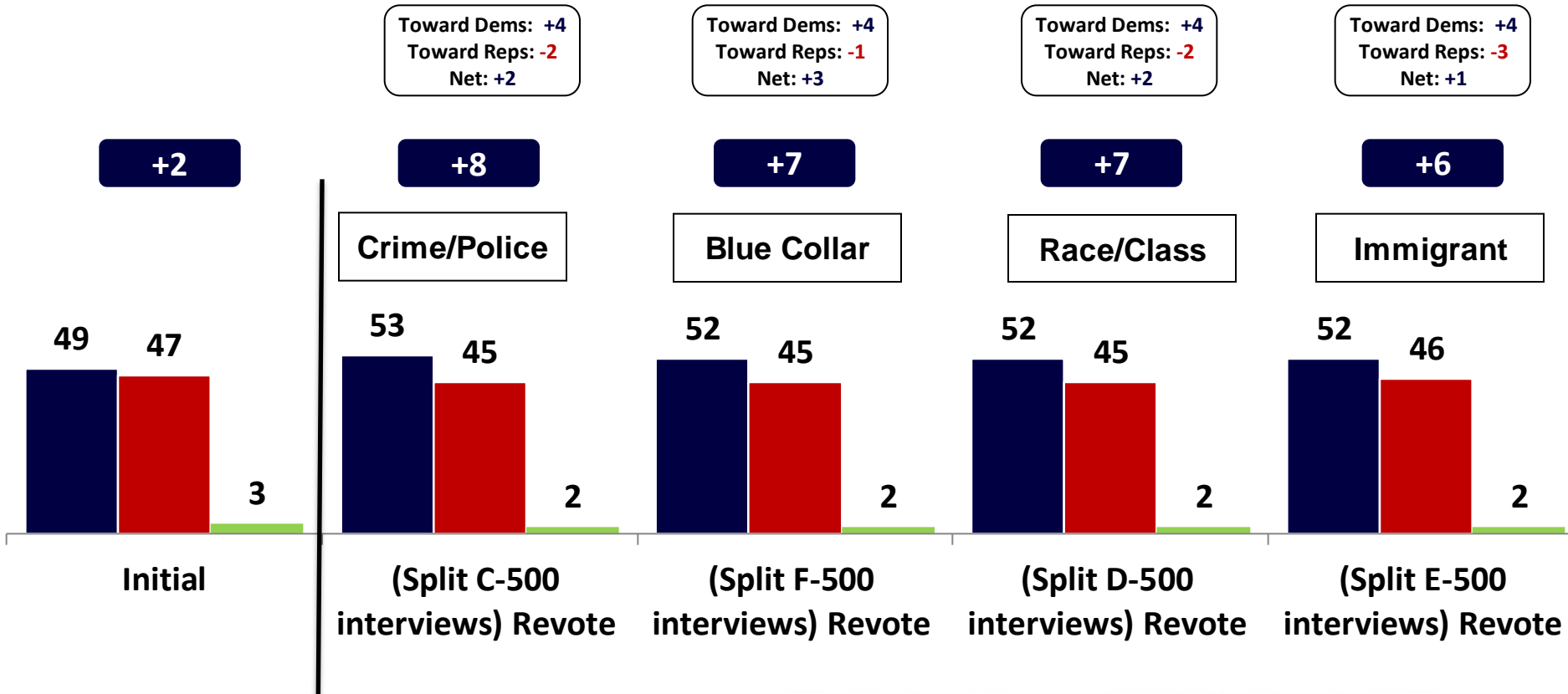
Split A, n=500; Split B, n=500

Yet at the end of the survey, the strongest message tests put Democrats in 8-point lead. What produced that?

Even though it is a long way off, thinking about the election for Congress in your district in November 2022, will you vote for – the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

2022 CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT SHIFT

■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ 3rd Party/Other



**Building block one:
both base & targets are working class**

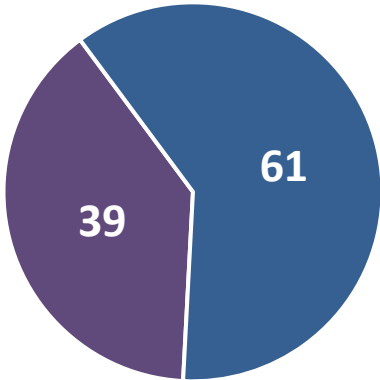


Both our base and target persuasion targets are overwhelmingly working class

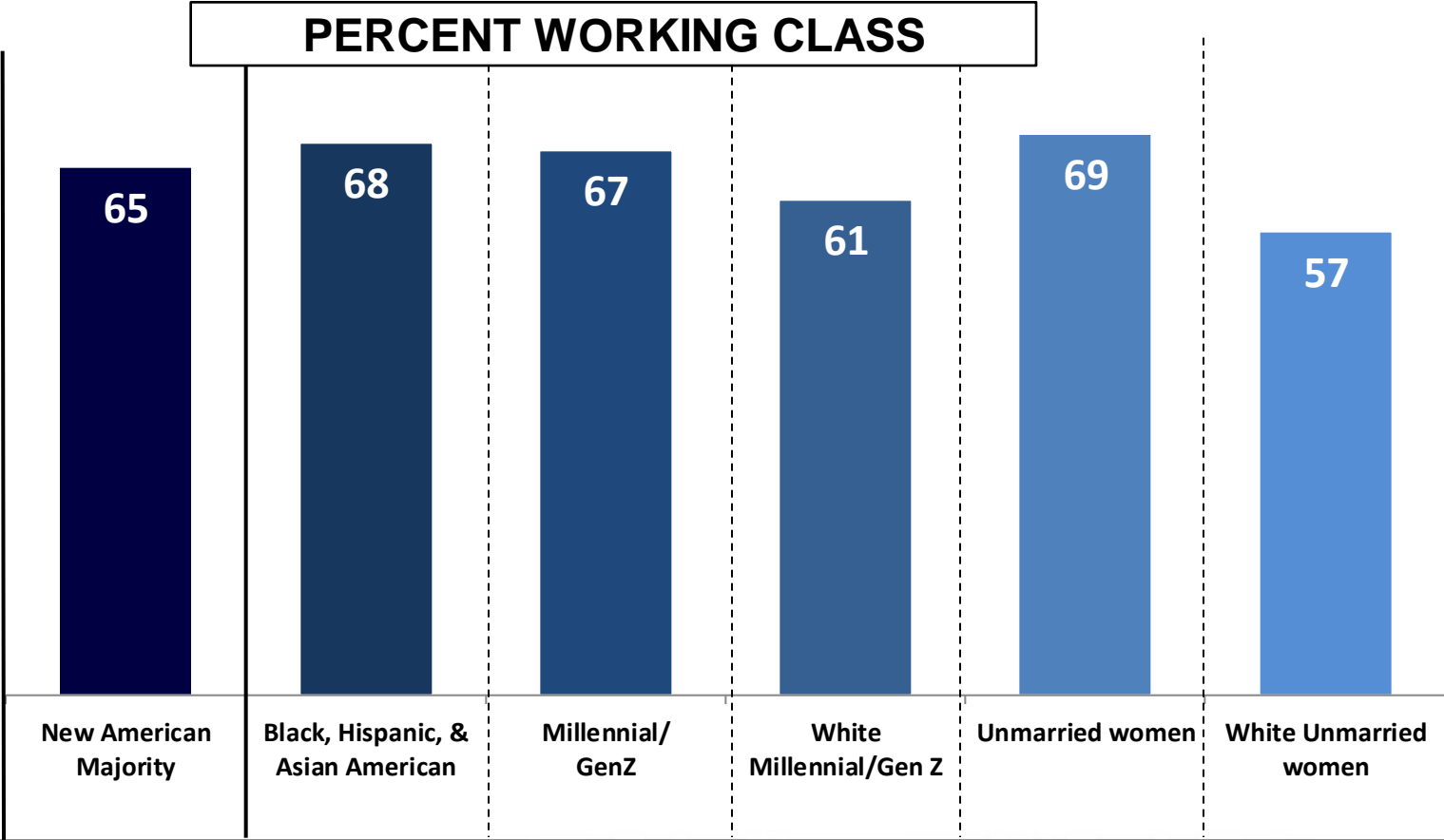
What is the last year of schooling that you have completed?

- College graduate
- Working class

PERCENT WORKING CLASS



Education



**Building block two:
both our base and targets have like priorities**



Voters moved by impact of Biden-Democratic agenda, especially health care costs, taxing corporations, helping workers get higher pay, & child tax credit

Here is a list of things President Biden and the Democrats in Congress are doing. Which THREE are most important for you?

(MEDICARE EXPANSION) Making major changes in Medicare. Their plan will now cover dental, vision and hearing aids and the age a person can enroll in Medicare was dropped from 66 to 62 years.

41



(LOWER HC PREMIUMS) Mandates no one pays more than 8 percent of their income for health insurance on the exchanges, lowering premiums for first time since Obamacare. And government will negotiate will lower prescription drug prices.

36



(CORPORATE TAX) Big corporations will pay a minimum tax of 15 percent in all countries, so they don't relocate to tax havens. They've raised the top tax rate for the biggest corporations and will give the IRS money to target big corporations paying no taxes.

36



(MIN WAGE/LABOR PROTECTIONS) Raised the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$15.00 an hour and are pushing to strengthen public and private sector unions and help all workers bargain successfully for wage increases and stop losses in salary, such as employers not paying overtime or forcing off-the-clock work.

33



(CHILD TAX CREDIT) Barring any tax increase for anyone earning under \$400,000, and its expanded child tax credit is a big middle class tax cut for families with kids earning up to \$150,000.

30



(INFRASTRUCTURE JOBS) Proposed a big new infrastructure investment so America leads the transition from fossil fuels to renewables. It helps US car makers lead in electric vehicles, building a half million charging stations. It funds thousands of jobs plugging abandoned wells and reclaiming mines. And millions of jobs installing solar and wind power.

29



(MORE K-12 FUNDING) Provide billions to state and local schools to open safely in the fall and an historic one third increase in funding for K-12 public education.

24



(SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS) \$25 billion in grants to tens of thousands of restaurants so they can decide how to spend their money and rescue more small businesses.

21



(PAID FAMILY LEAVE) They have begun paid medical and family leave, rescued the child care industry with the raised \$3,000 child care tax credit that reduces child care expenses for a family by \$14,800.

19



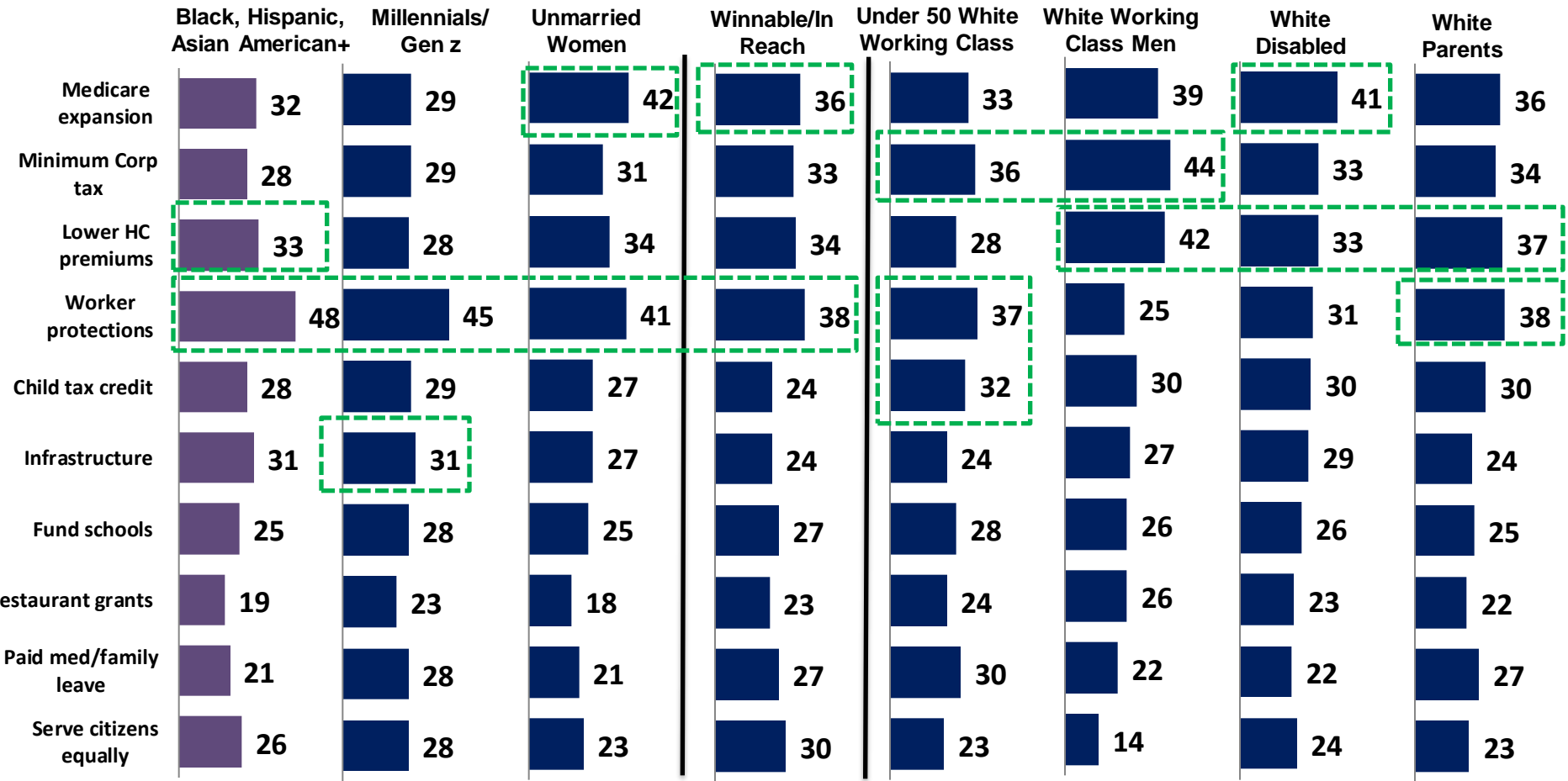
(SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY) For many decades, some government agencies didn't provide services to all citizens equally. Now, Black farmers are getting grants, millions of housing vouchers are targeted to minority communities, the infrastructure law removes all lead pipes, and there is increased funding for Black, tribally-controlled colleges, and Hispanic institutions.

19



Both diverse base and targets prioritize lowered health care costs & Medicare, taxing corporations, higher pay for workers, & child tax

Here is a list of things President Biden and the Democrats in Congress are doing. Which THREE are most important for you?



Strongest attacks on Republicans: McConnell's gridlock stopping Biden, half live paycheck to paycheck while corporations don't pay fair share & repeal CTC and raise taxes

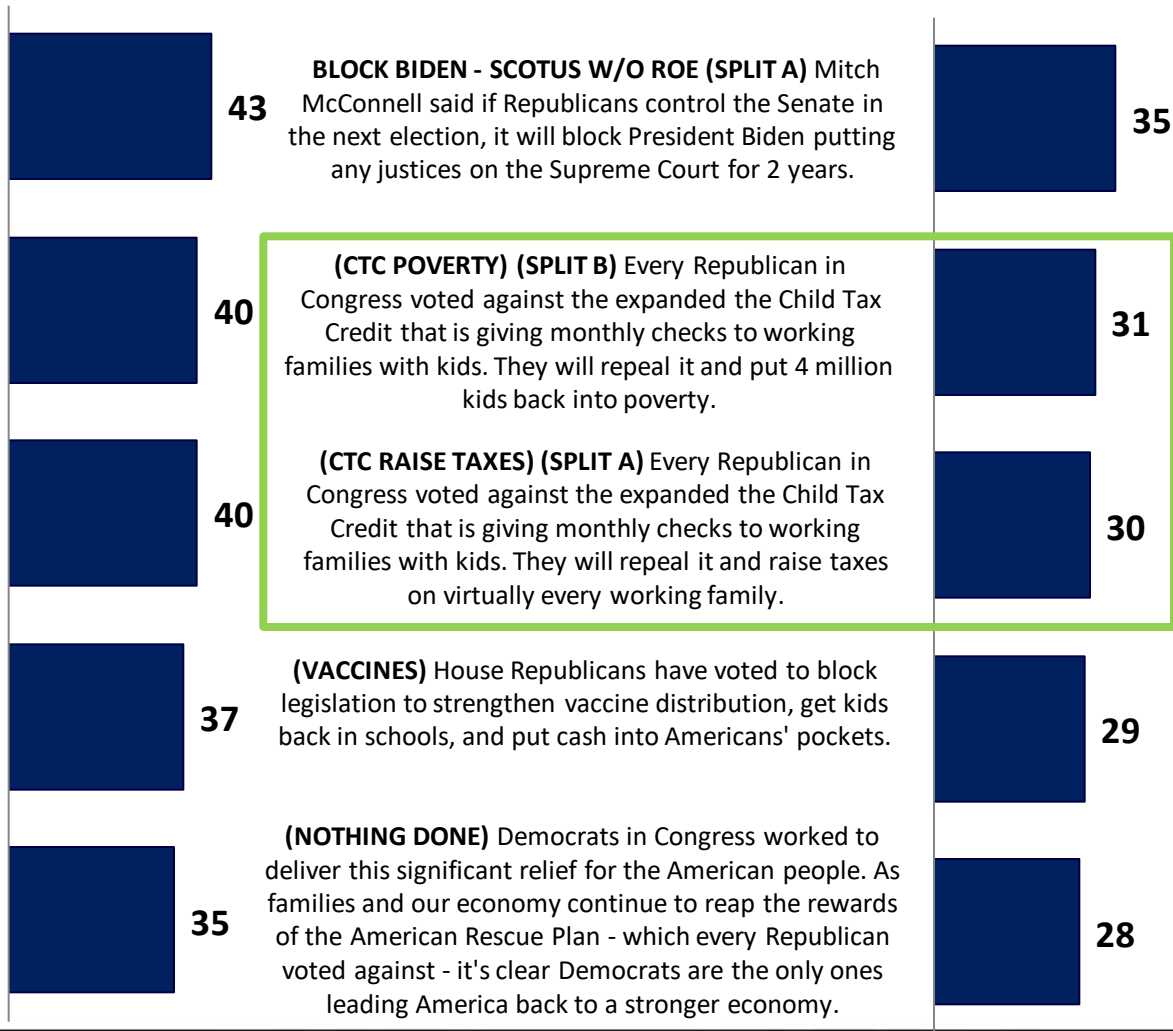
(GRIDLOCK) Mitch McConnell said publicly, "One-hundred percent of our focus is on stopping this new Biden administration." Republicans winning control means total gridlock and nothing happening for people.

(TRICKLE DOWN) Republicans have told us that if we just cut taxes for the wealthy and corporations, working people will share in the prosperity. But half of our people live paycheck to paycheck. Trickle-down economics simply doesn't work, and it's time for corporations to finally pay their fair share in taxes.

(BLOCK BIDEN - SCOTUS W/ROE) (SPLIT B) Mitch McConnell said if Republicans control the Senate in the next election, it will block President Biden putting any justices on the Supreme Court for 2 years and that means overturning Roe v. Wade and the right to legal abortions.

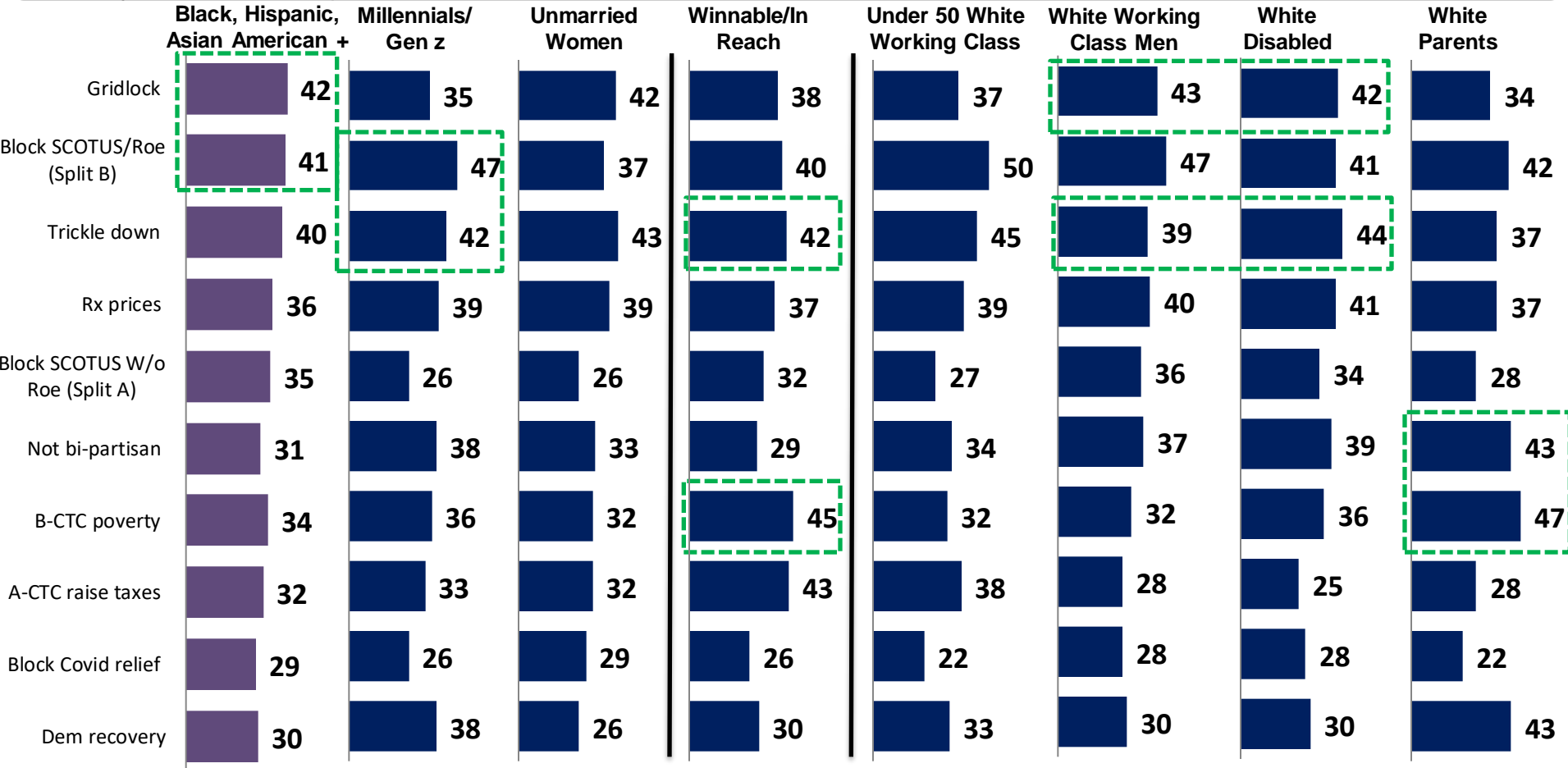
(RX PRICES) Republicans voted against allowing the government to negotiate lower prescription drug prices. Instead of rallying around patients and protecting their rights, they buy into the drug industry line that cutting into drug profits could harm the innovation of new medicines and cures.

(NOT BIPARTISAN) Democrats have tried to get support for a bi-partisan infrastructure bill, a bi-partisan investigation of the January 6th insurrection, and a bi-partisan election reform bill, but McConnell said, he will block Republicans supporting any of them. There will be no bi-partisan cooperation.



Republicans vulnerable with both base and working class targets on McConnell gridlock, SC ending Roe, trickle down and repealing CTC

Now you will read some things Democratic critics are saying about the Republicans in Congress. Please pick the THREE that raise the most doubts in your mind about Republicans.



The biggest reason vote shifted at the end? Plans for lower health care premiums, make corporations pay more tax and help workers with higher pay

Biden Policies

(LOWER HC PREMIUMS) Mandates no one pays more than 8 percent of their income for health insurance on the exchanges, lowering premiums for first time since Obamacare. And government will negotiate will lower prescription drug prices.

(CORPORATE TAX) Big corporations will pay a minimum tax of 15 percent in all countries so they don't relocate to tax havens. They've raised the top tax rate for the biggest corporations and will give the IRS money to target big corporations paying no taxes.

(MIN WAGE/LABOR PROTECTIONS) Raised the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$15.00 an hour and are pushing to strengthen public and private sector unions and help all workers bargain successfully for wage increases and stop losses in salary, such as employers not paying overtime or forcing off-the-clock work.

(PAID FAMILY LEAVE) They have begun paid medical and family leave, rescued the child care industry with the raised \$3,000 child care tax credit that reduces child care expenses for a family by \$14,800.

(SOCIALISM) Democrats are for socialism and no longer represent the working people of America. These socialist policies didn't work in Cuba or Venezuela - they won't work in America either.

(INFRASTRUCTURE/SMALL BUSINESS) The last thing America needs right now is a multitrillion dollar partisan progressive spending spree under the guise of "infrastructure." Democrats have been paying people to stay home for months and now wonder why small businesses are facing a labor crisis.

(BORDERS) Democrats just advanced a spending bill that decreases funding for Customs and Border Patrol as the border crisis worsens by the day. Law enforcement at the border need more resources to keep our country safe, not less.

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Attack Messages



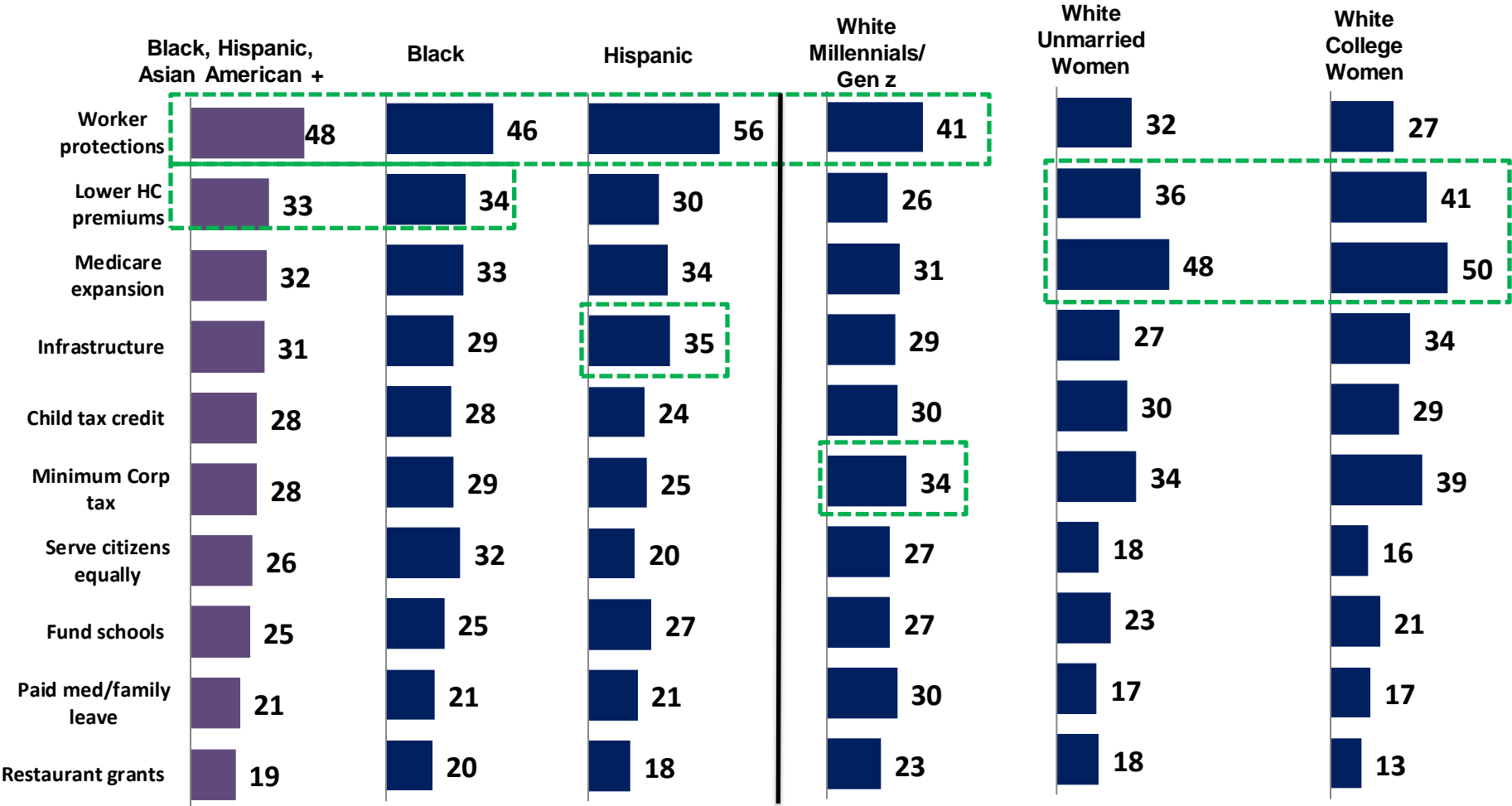
Building block three:

**base moved by agenda with concrete help that hits elites,
well ahead of racial equities initiative**



Our diverse base prioritizes helping workers get better pay, affordable health care, & corporations a higher tax; racial equity lower priority

Here is a list of things President Biden and the Democrats in Congress are doing. Which THREE are most important for you?



Building block four:

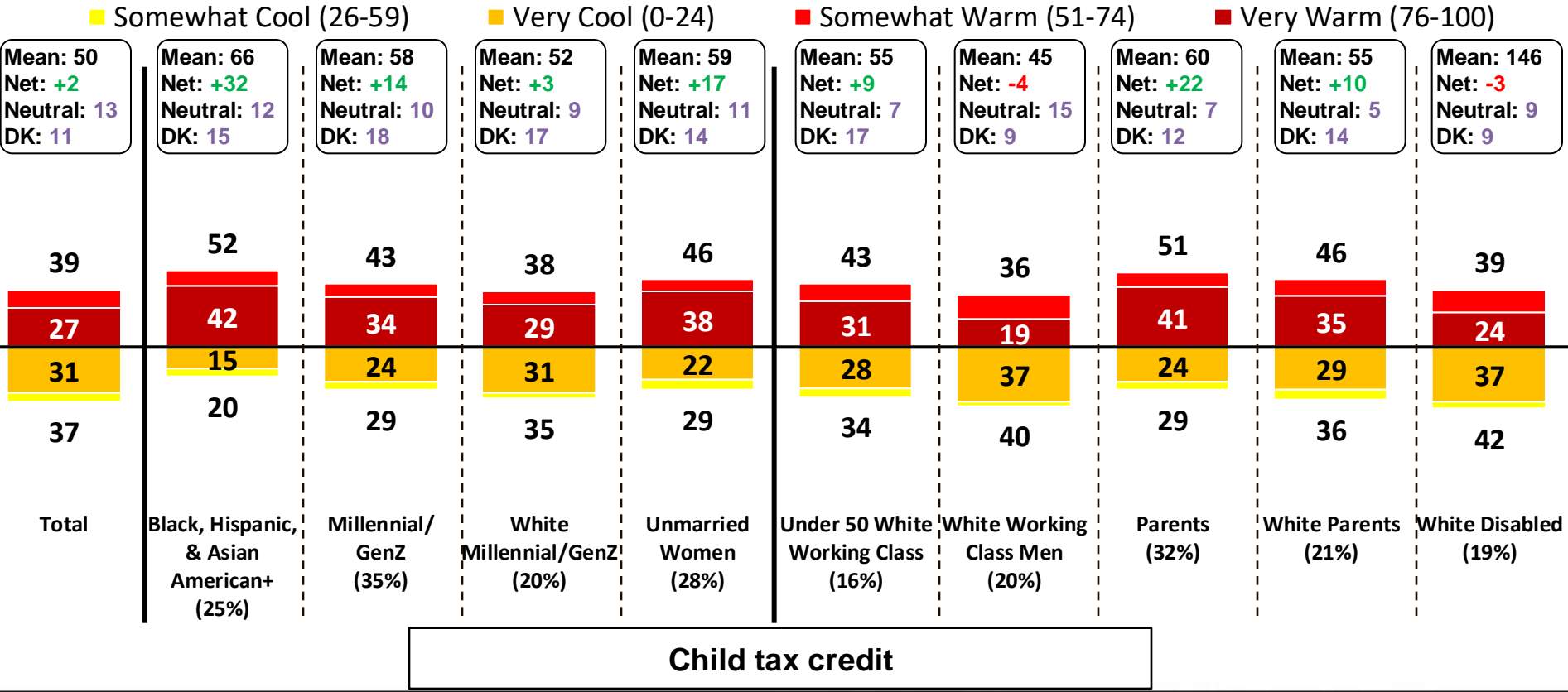
CTC brings out white working class under 50 open to Democrats



CTC gets warm reaction from base of Blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans, unmarried women & millennials/Gen Z, but also white working class under 50 & parents

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

THERMOMETERS 2022 BATTLEGROUND

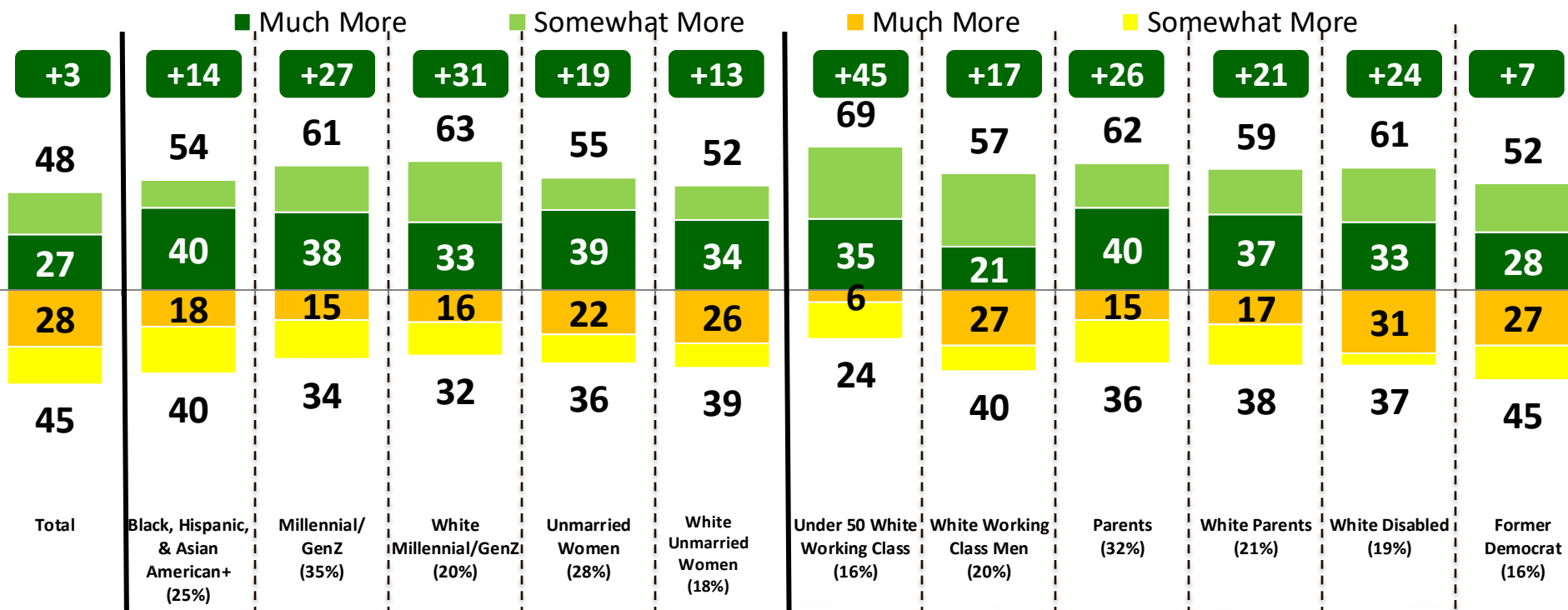


When described as a tax cut for every working family to deal with high costs and taxes, wins dramatic support in base but even more in working class groups – despite attack

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

(SPLIT A) I like the new expanded child tax credit that is deposited monthly into each family's bank account, \$300 if they have kids under 6 and \$250 if they have kids 6 to 17 years old. It is the largest ever single-year tax cut for families with children and helps virtually every working family with kids deal with the high cost of raising kids, buying essentials and paying taxes.

(SPLIT A) I don't like the expanded child tax credit that is a big increase in spending and the federal deficit. It would make children dependent on the government and many parents would turn down work.



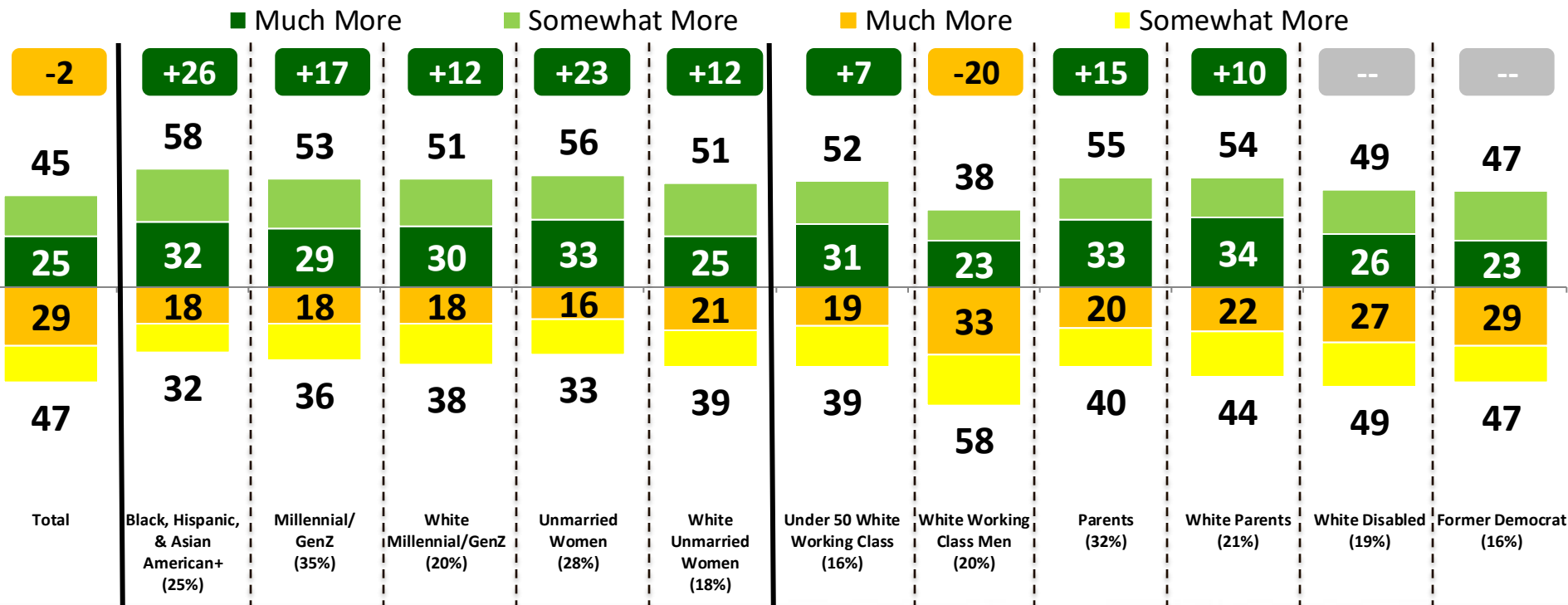
Split A, n=500

Closely contested if say, "new welfare queens," but expanded Child Tax Credit still wins with white parents and younger white working class

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

(SPLIT B) I like the new expanded child tax credit that is deposited monthly into each family's bank account, \$300 if they have kids under 6 and \$250 if they have kids 6 to 17 years old. It is the largest ever single-year tax cut for families with children and helps virtually every working family with kids deal with the high cost of raising kids, buying essentials and paying taxes. It helps the hard-working class and middle class who live on the edge financially and cuts child poverty in half.

(SPLIT B) I don't like the expanded child tax credit that is a big increase in spending and the federal deficit. It would make children dependent on the government and many parents would turn down work. It is going to lead new "welfare queens," living off the government.



Repealing CTC (with higher tax) one of highest doubts on new Congress for white parents & white working class under 50; with poorer, for winnables

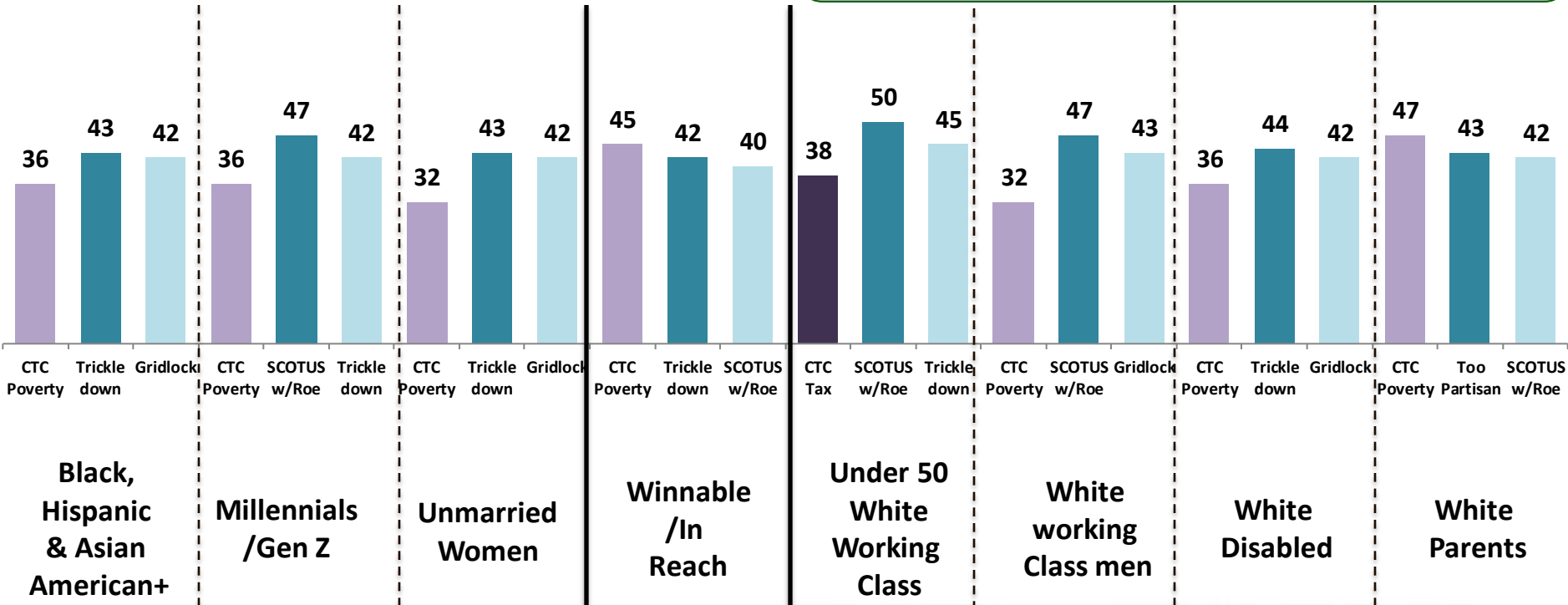
Now you will read some things Democratic critics are saying about the Republicans in Congress. Please pick the THREE that raise the most doubts in your mind about Republicans.

(SPLIT A) CTC LOWERS TAXES:

Every Republican in Congress voted against the expanded the Child Tax Credit that is giving monthly checks to working families with kids. They will repeal it and raise taxes on virtually every working family.

(SPLIT B) CTC CUTS POVERTY:

Every Republican in Congress voted against the expanded the Child Tax Credit that is giving monthly checks to working families with kids. They will repeal it and put 4 million kids back into poverty.



Building block five:

**persons with a disability heavily working class &
newly open to Democratic agenda**

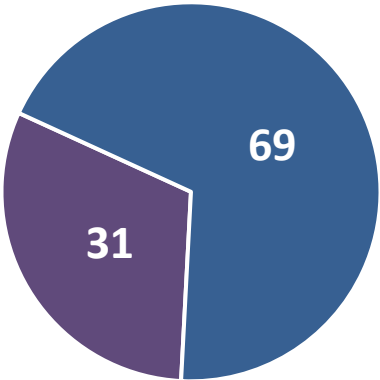


Nearly 70 % of those with disabilities are working class; and highest concentration among white Millennials/GenZ, white workers & parents, & working class men

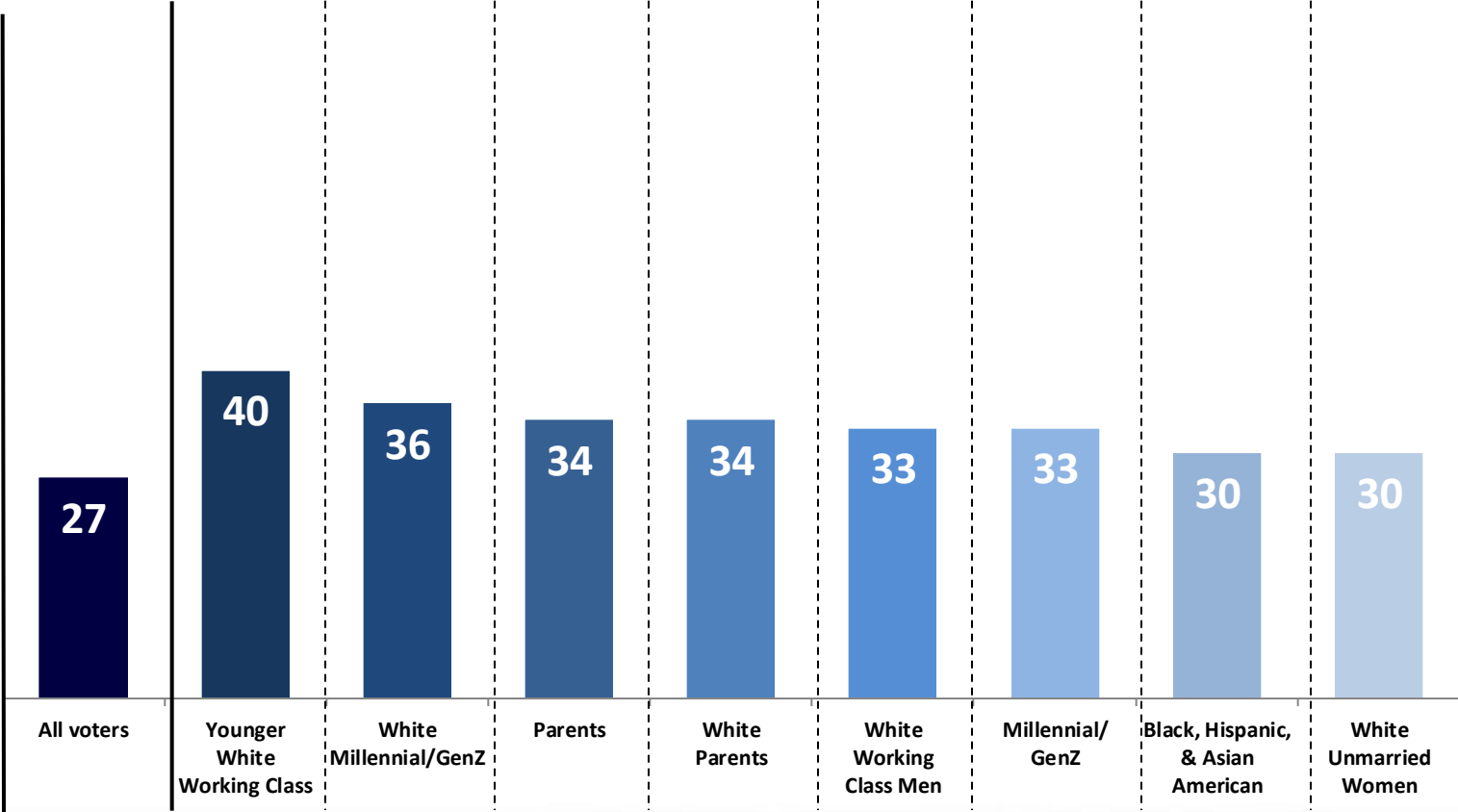
A disability can be a physical, cognitive, sensory, mental health, chronic pain or another condition that is a barrier to everyday living. Do you, a family member, or a close friend have a disability?

PERCENT WITH DISABILITY

- College graduate
- Working class



Education



Building block six:

**many in working class are independent
contractors, own or work in a small business**



Maybe most work as independent contractors, own or work in a small businesses, and so do their kids who have stayed; more work in hospitals than factories.

I am a hair stylist and I own my own private salon. Business has been affected but thank God, it's coming back. (PA woman, Trump voter)

I live with my husband in the Youngstown areas. We both quit our corporate positions to open a micro dairy and become goat farmers. [...] My issues are basically, I'm building a business, I haven't changed anything except wearing a mask in public when I have to. (OH woman, Trump voter)

I was the quality control and facilities manager for a manufacturing company, but I was laid off due to COVID. I try to do everything I can. I've been learning to be a better investor and running small business side gigs and getting a lot of home improvement done. (WI man, Trump voter)

In the long run it'll help everyone because the lower class is getting trade jobs. My husband is a plumber. Our whole lifeblood is built on the trades. I have two brothers-in-law who are electricians. Many of our friends are in the trade and it's hard work and you can make a living. By doing this, you're raising that whole group of people up. Then, they're getting to be at the level this whole other group is. Now you elevate a huge, huge group of people (PA woman, Biden voter)

In our area, I bookkeep on the side and he [her husband] happens to own a trucking company. A lot of paper mills are closed down and they need to get them rolling again because no one can afford to pay for this plywood and lumber. It's almost like they're setting us up for failure. (WI woman, Trump voter)

My husband is a plumber. Our whole lifeblood is built on the trades. I have two brothers-in-law who are electricians. Many of our friends are in the trade and it's hard work and you can make a living. (PA woman, Trump voter)

Strong response to plan, especially health care, small business, and child care

[DISPLAY HANDOUT #1] I am going to show and read a list of some things the current government just enacted. I want you to pick three that you like the most and send them in the private chat.

\$25 billion in grants to tens of thousands of restaurants so they can decide how to spend their money and rescue more small businesses.

26 votes

Reopened health insurance exchanges so 800,000 could newly enroll and mandated no one pays more than 8.5% of their income for health insurance, which lowered premiums for first time since Obamacare.

25 votes

Getting \$80 billion to the states so schools could re-open in 100 days and \$39 billion to help childcare providers reopen and stay afloat.

24 votes



Building block seven:

**prioritizing public safety, respect and
funding police with reform – precondition for success
that bring better training and accountability**



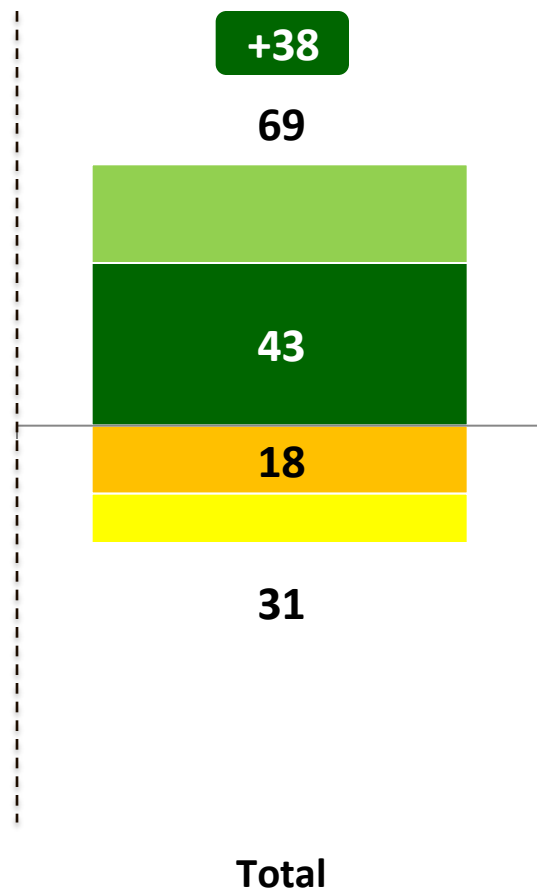
Prioritizing crime, respect police, fund not defund combined with better training and accountability dominates Trump narrative on police and crime

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

(ACCOUNTABILITY POLICE/CRIME) We have an obligation to make sure everyone can live in a safe community. Preventing crime and protecting our communities is a top priority, and we need to help our cities have the police forces and resources they need to protect their communities. It is a tough job, and they should be respected. We should fund, not defund the police. At the same time, we also need urgent reforms to address policing issues that are at the forefront of our national conversation, including better training and accountability to prevent excessive use of force and racial profiling that singles out Blacks or Latinos. Our common need for reduced crime and security should unite, not divide us.

(TRUMPIAN POLICE/CRIME) The latest police reform bills passed by the Congress are driven by activists and impose one-size-fits-all Washington mandates on local law enforcement and increase after-the-fact second guessing that undermines their ability to do their job quickly and effectively, which creates a hesitation that threatens the safety of our families, communities, and officers. These attacks on law enforcement are not real reform. And they are causing the men and women in uniform who keep our communities safe to leave the profession and are responsible for the wave of crime we are seeing nationwide.

■ Somewhat More ■ Much More
■ Somewhat More ■ Much More



Split C, n=500

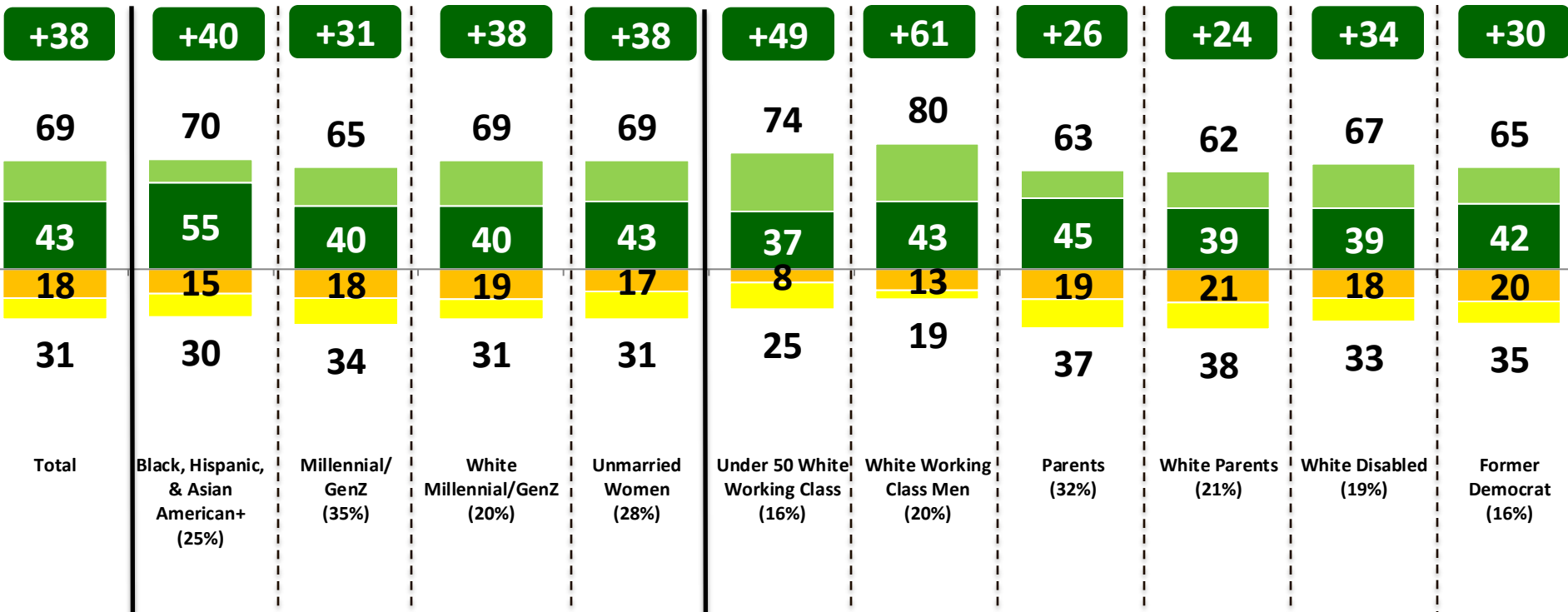
Democrats prioritizing crime and reform gets most intense support from Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian Americans, millennials, white working class, and Democrats

(Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?)

Accountability Police/Crime

Trumpian Police/Crime

■ Much More ■ Somewhat More ■ Much More ■ Somewhat More



Election message choice tested

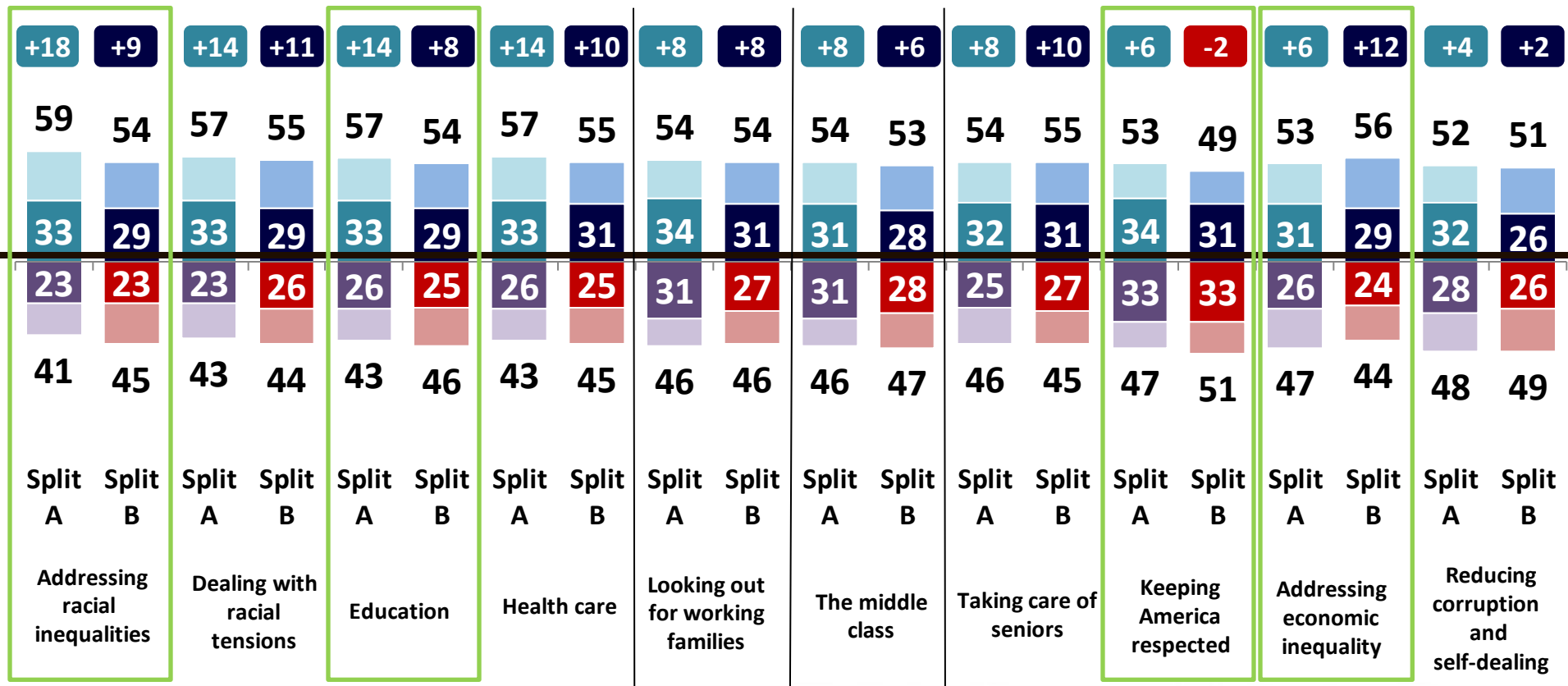


Potential Democratic margin pushed up by Democrats' standing on race, education, health care, working families, and middle class & inequality

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think (SPLIT A) Joe Biden and the Democrats or Donald Trump and the Republicans/ (SPLIT B) the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with handling that issue.

TRAITS – SPLIT A/B COMPARISON

■ Biden/Dem much better ■ Trump/Rep much better



Split A, n=500; Split B, n=500

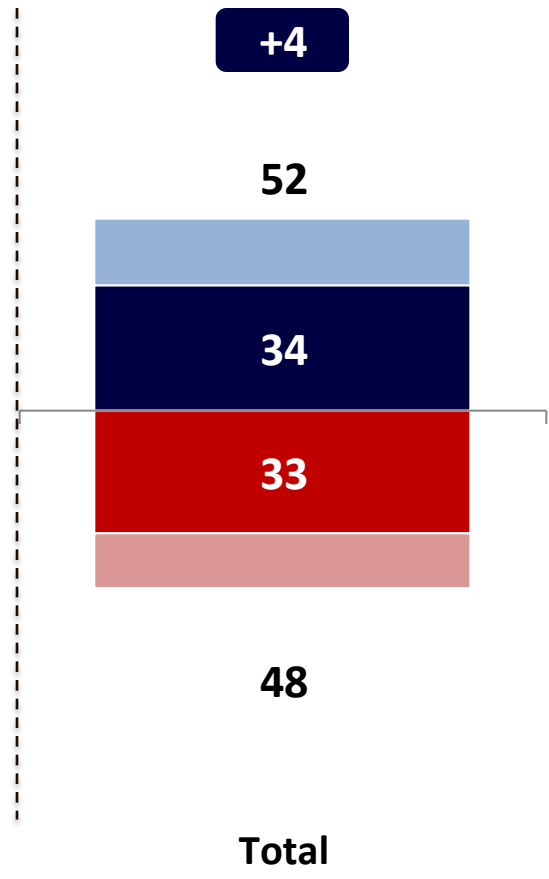
Democrats look out for middle class, working families, small businesses and vulnerable defeats the GOP by 4 points – double initial margin – but need more

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

(DEMOCRATIC FRAME) The Democrats say, in the richest country on the planet, half our people live paycheck to paycheck. That's why we need a government that looks out for the middle class, working families, small businesses, and the vulnerable who work hard. They don't need a government that jumps for the top 1 percent and biggest corporations. Those corporations must pay their fair share so we can invest in education, job creating infrastructure, helping small businesses, childcare, reduced drug and health care costs, and lower taxes for working families. With the gap growing between rich and poor, government should bend over backwards for those who work hard so America can grow the middle class again.

(REPUBLICAN FRAME) The Republicans say, the choice in this election is clear. Republicans in congress will follow the track record that created the strongest economy and lowest unemployment rate in generations prior to the pandemic, while Democrats will continue to propose more taxing and spending that will destroy jobs, undermine economic growth, and force the middle class to foot the bill.

■ Somewhat More ■ Much More
 ■ Somewhat More ■ Much More



Middle class message strong with base and wins white unmarried women, white working class under 50, parents and disabled

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Democratic Frame: A government for hard working middle class, small businesses and the vulnerable

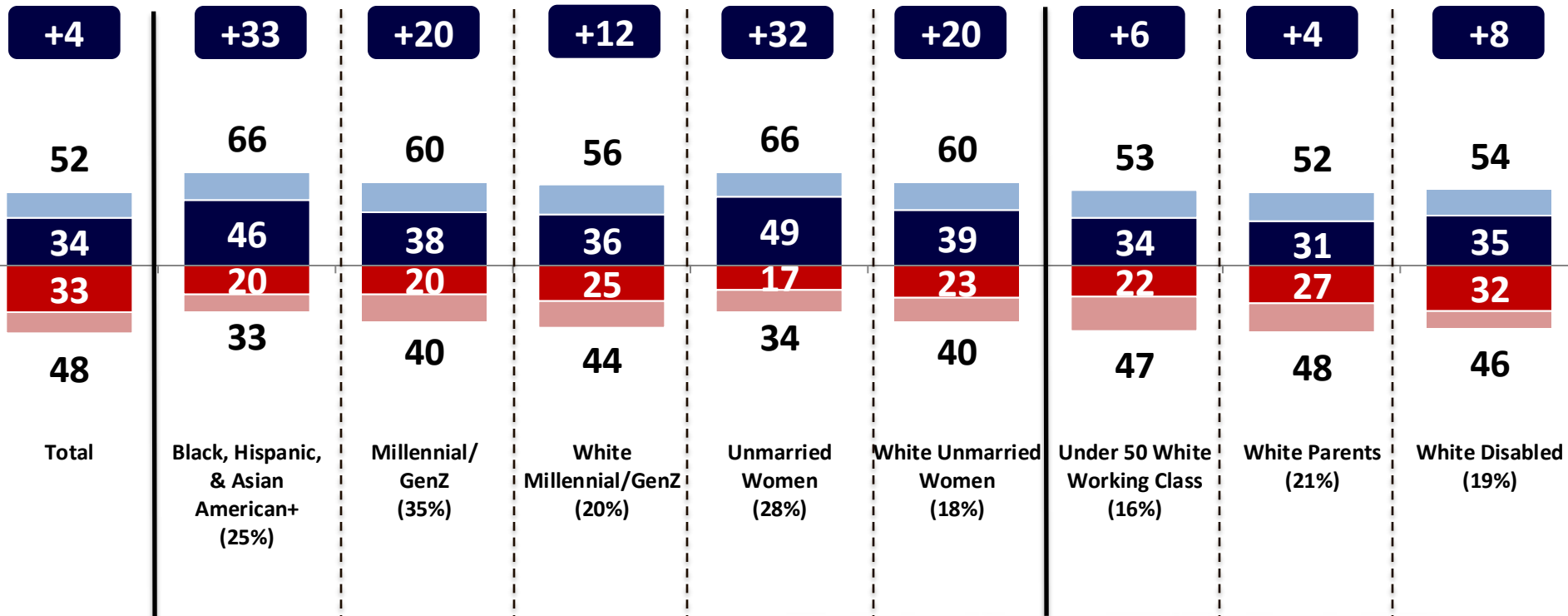
Republican Frame: Republicans strong economic record and Democrats higher taxes and more spending

■ Much More

■ Somewhat More

■ Much More

■ Somewhat More

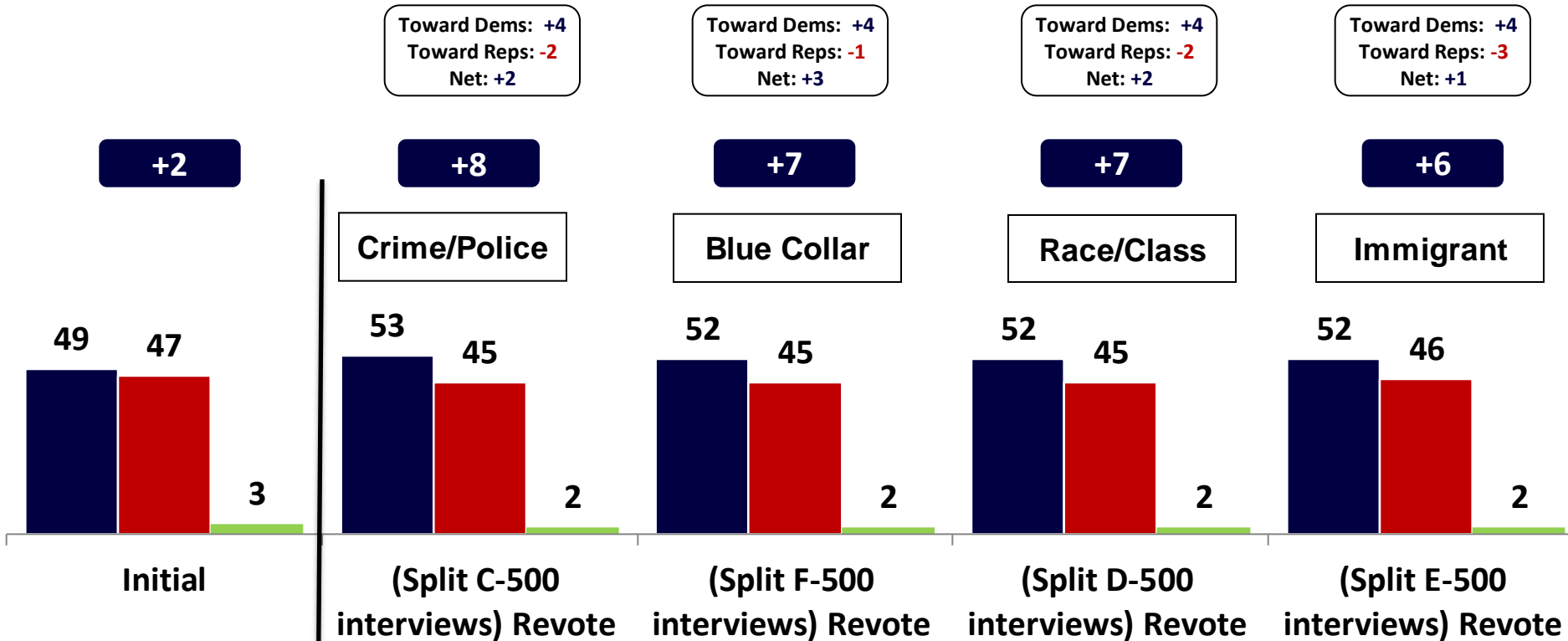


Democrats move to their biggest margin when combine crime a priority with middle class message choice

Even though it is a long way off, thinking about the election for Congress in your district in November 2022, will you vote for – the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

2022 CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT SHIFT

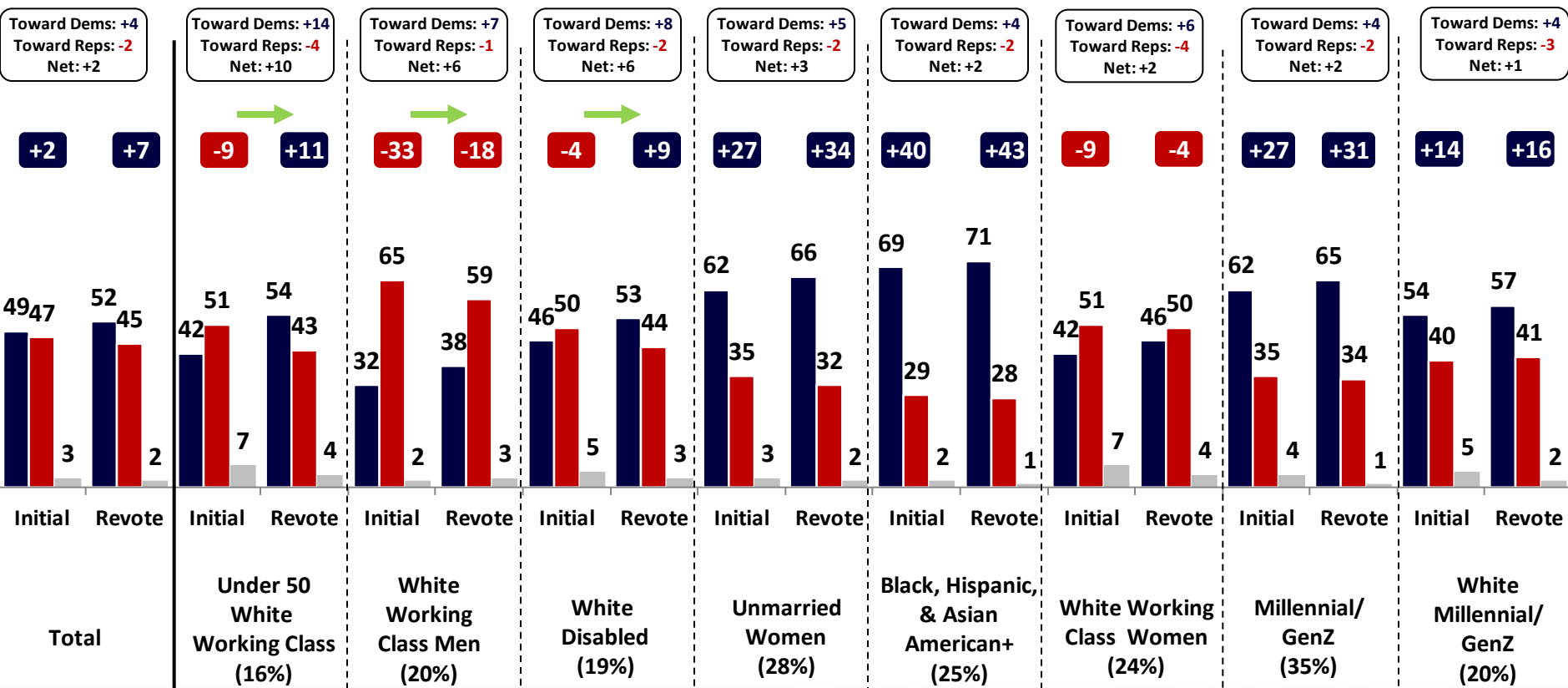
■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ 3rd Party/Other



Messaging produces big shift with younger white working class & men, the unmarried and voters with disabilities

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