

GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

February 14, 2011

Winning the budget debate

National survey on the budget and spending cuts

Democracy Corps



DEMOCRACY CORPS
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

Methodology and Overview

This presentation is based on a national survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps.

Democracy Corps surveyed 1000 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) February 7-9, 2011.

Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 3.1 percentage points at 95% confidence.

Key findings and action for budget debate

- **Improving climate creates opportunity to be heard – no longer the ugly polarized mood of 2010 – with 6 point congressional shift**
- **Must link budget to solving problems that improve the US economy – helping the middle class and eliminating special interest waste and spending**
- **While Democrats begin in a hole on the budget, the more the issue is debated, the more voters pull back from budget cuts – particularly the new Democratic base, unmarried women, younger, non-college, senior women, and suburban voters**
- **Strong messages and attacks in this survey**
- **Voters prefer a Democratic ambitious deficit reduction plan, but not when it includes Social Security reform. Social Security reform should stand on its own – disconnected from the deficit – to be more secure.**

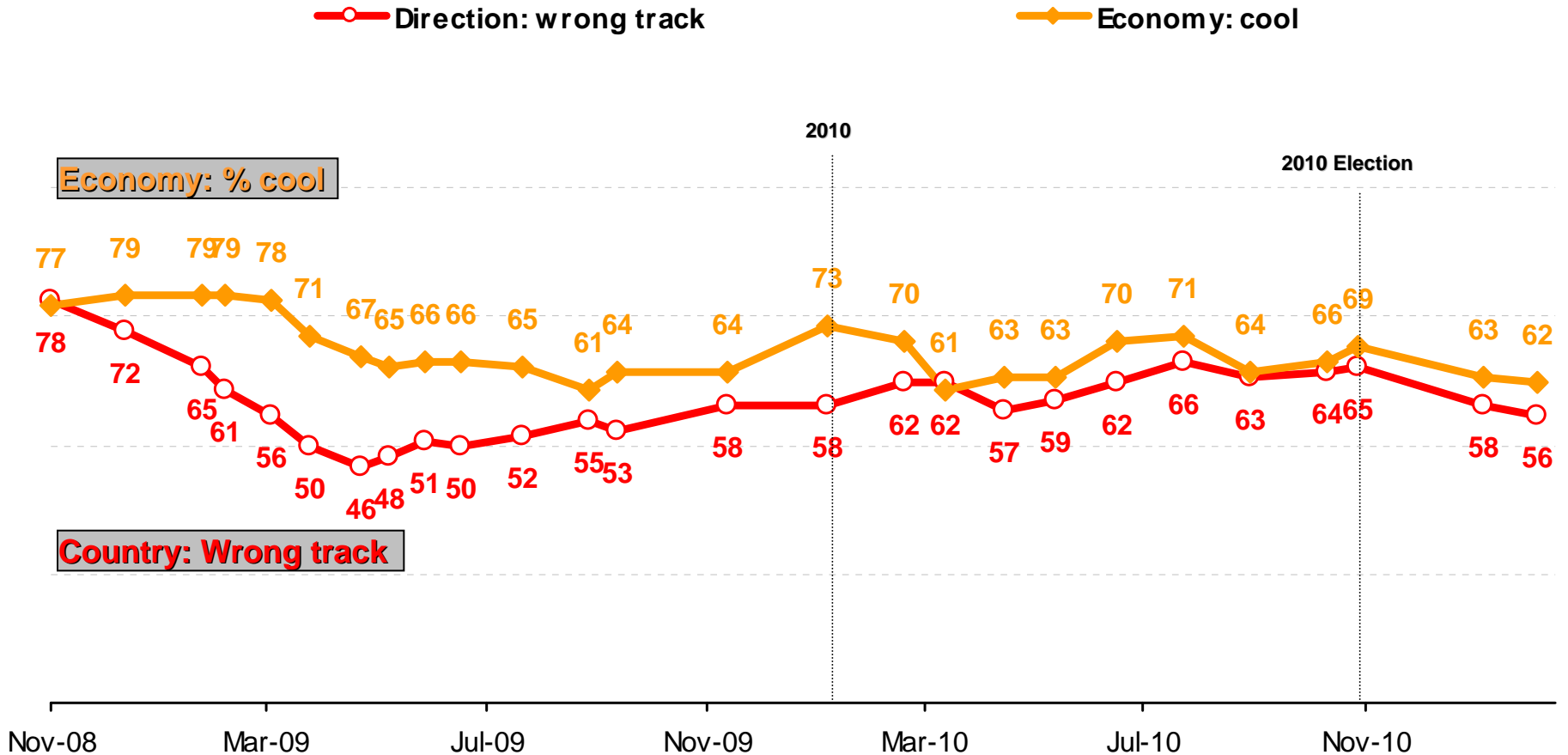
Message To Do's

- **Be serious about deficit and spending reductions. Critical to our economic well-being and creating American jobs.**
- **Clear that must start with waste, special interest subsidies and tax breaks, and demanding accountability, ending programs that don't deliver value.**
- **And in tough economic times, don't start with cutting those who can least afford it – middle class, working families with children and the elderly**
- **Focus in on the cuts in education, food safety, meals and energy for the elderly, Head Start and cuts to local government**

Improving public climate

It's the economy, stupid: parallel wrong track/cool economy

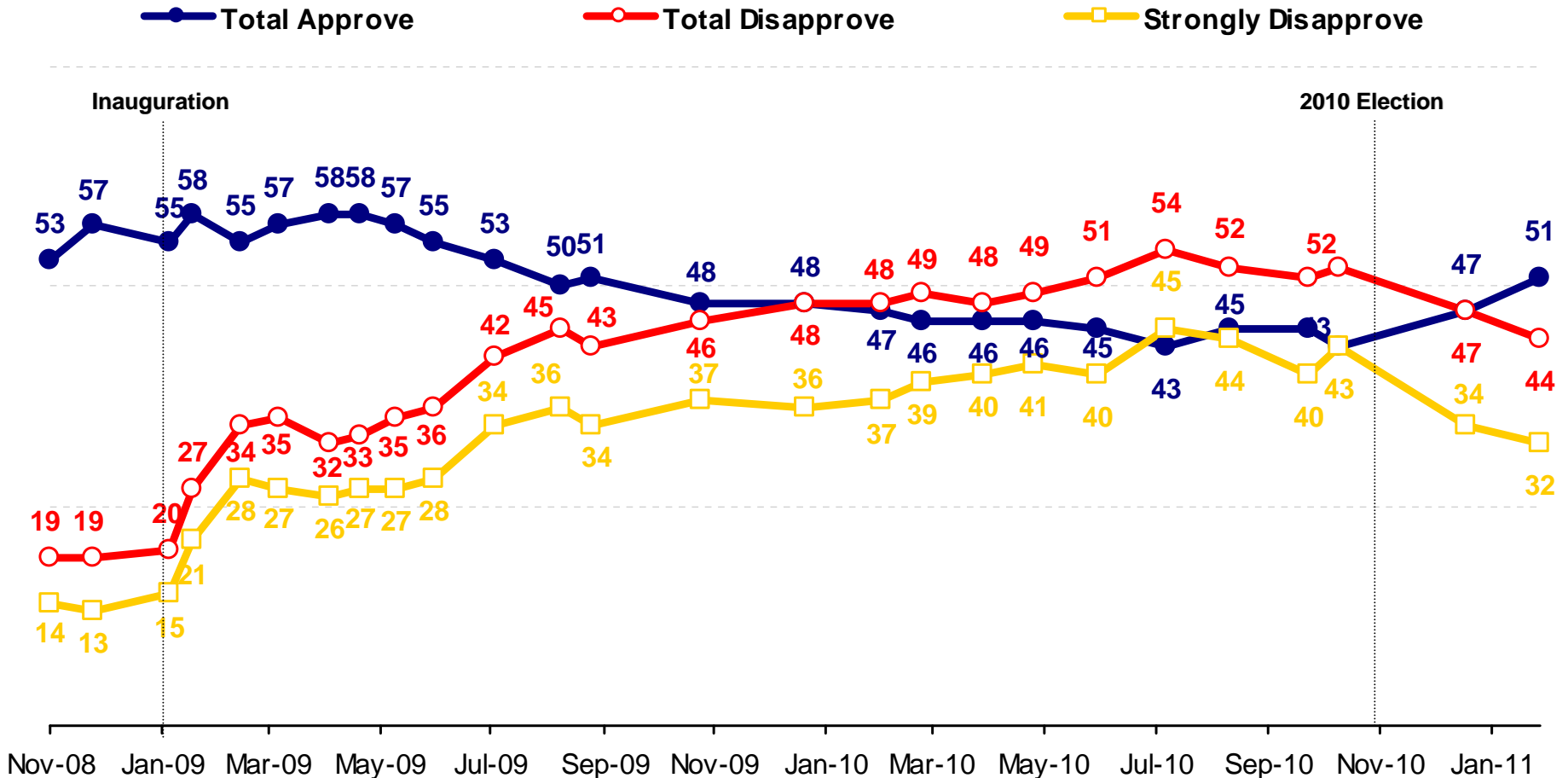
Generally speaking, do you think things in the country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



*Note: From full sample of 2008 voters, based on research for Citizen Opinion.

Obama approval: hits 50% mark + collapse of 'strong disapproval'

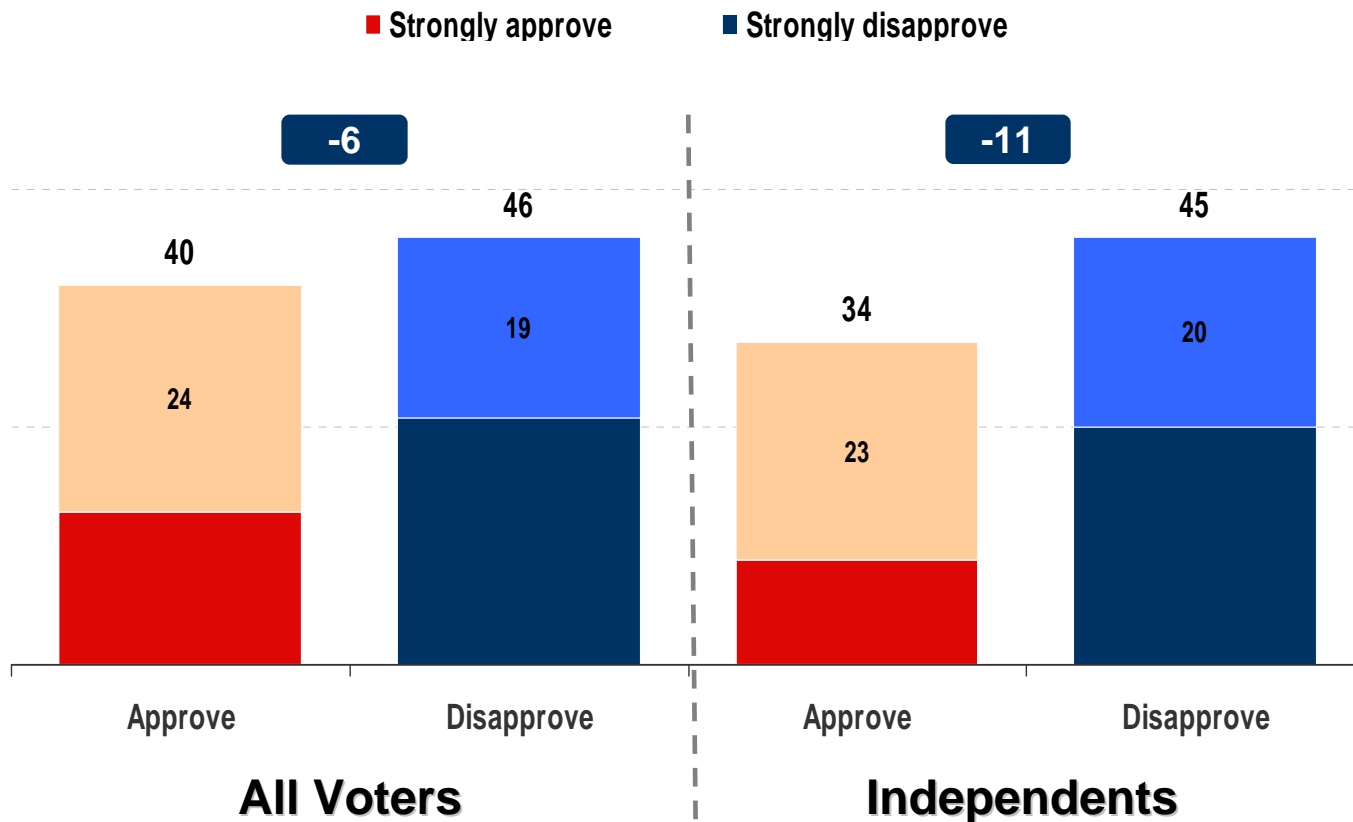
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?



*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?"

Republicans in Congress: independents disapprove

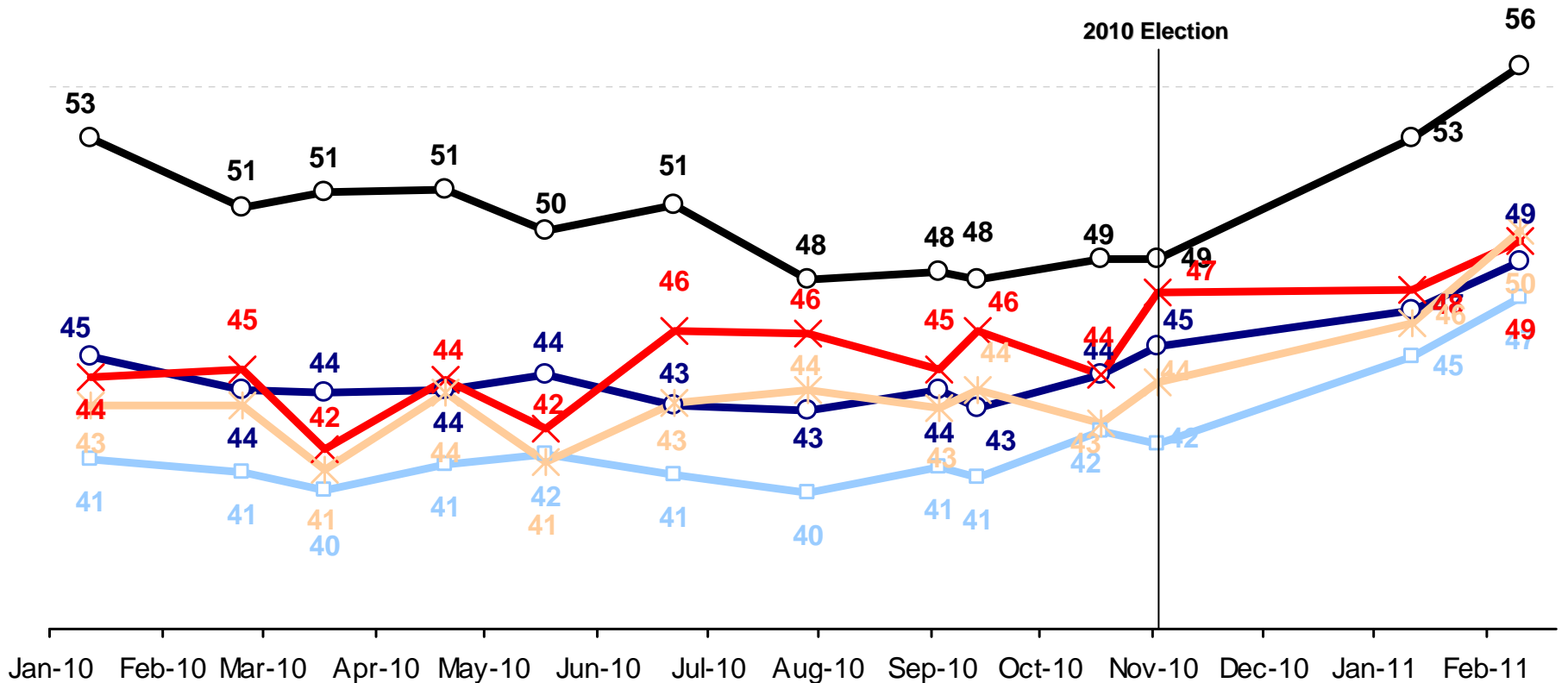
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Republicans in Congress are handling their job in charge of the House of Representatives?



Thermometers: all parties and president viewed more warmly

Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with 100 meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold.

- Barack Obama
- Democratic Party
- Democrats in Congress
- × Republican Party
- * Republicans in Congress



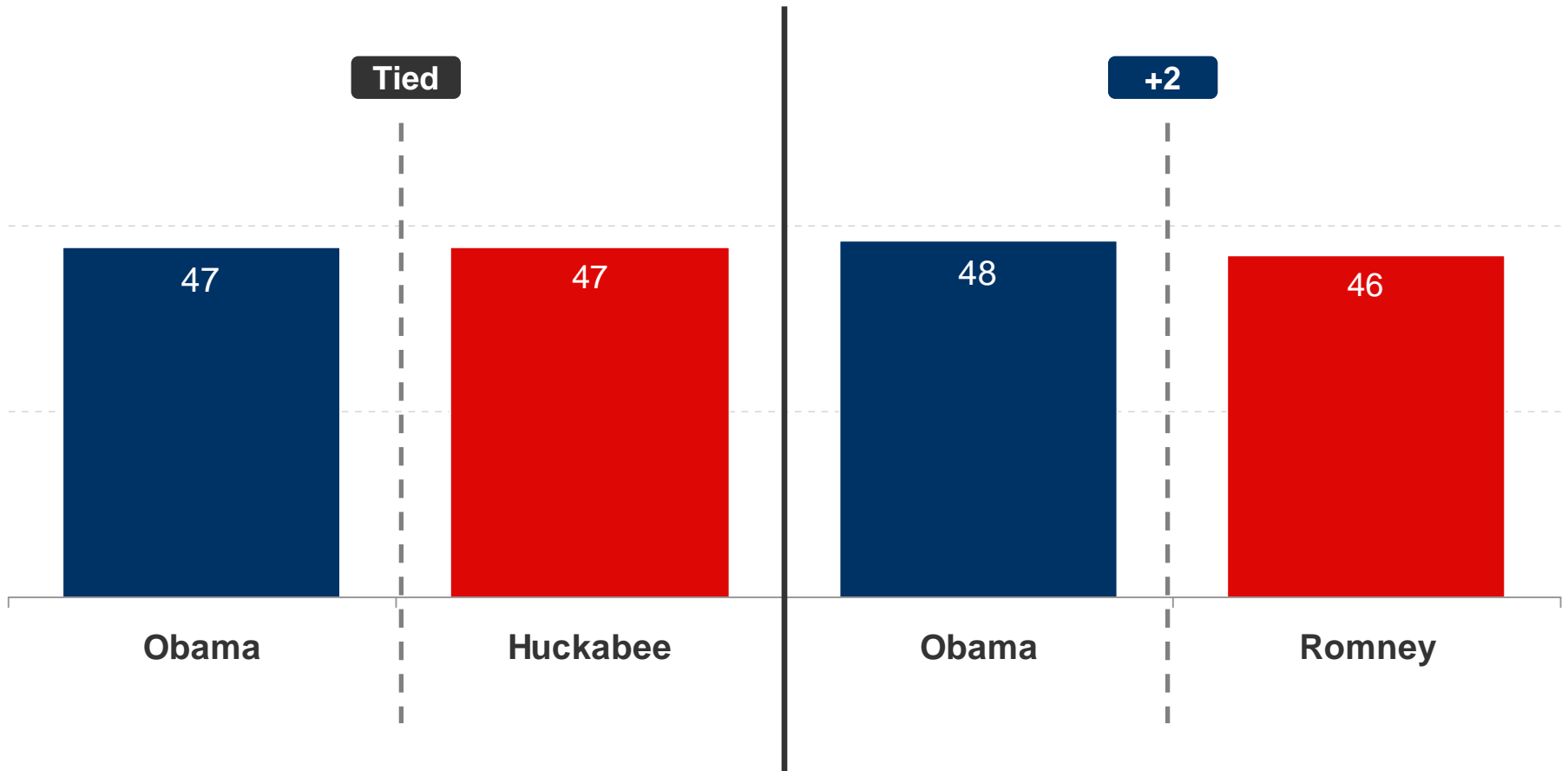
*Note: From Democracy Corps surveys conducted in the past year. Data represents MEAN ratings, likely voters

State of the Presidential Race: Obama leads Romney, ties Huckabee

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?

■ Democratic House Candidate

■ Republican House Candidate

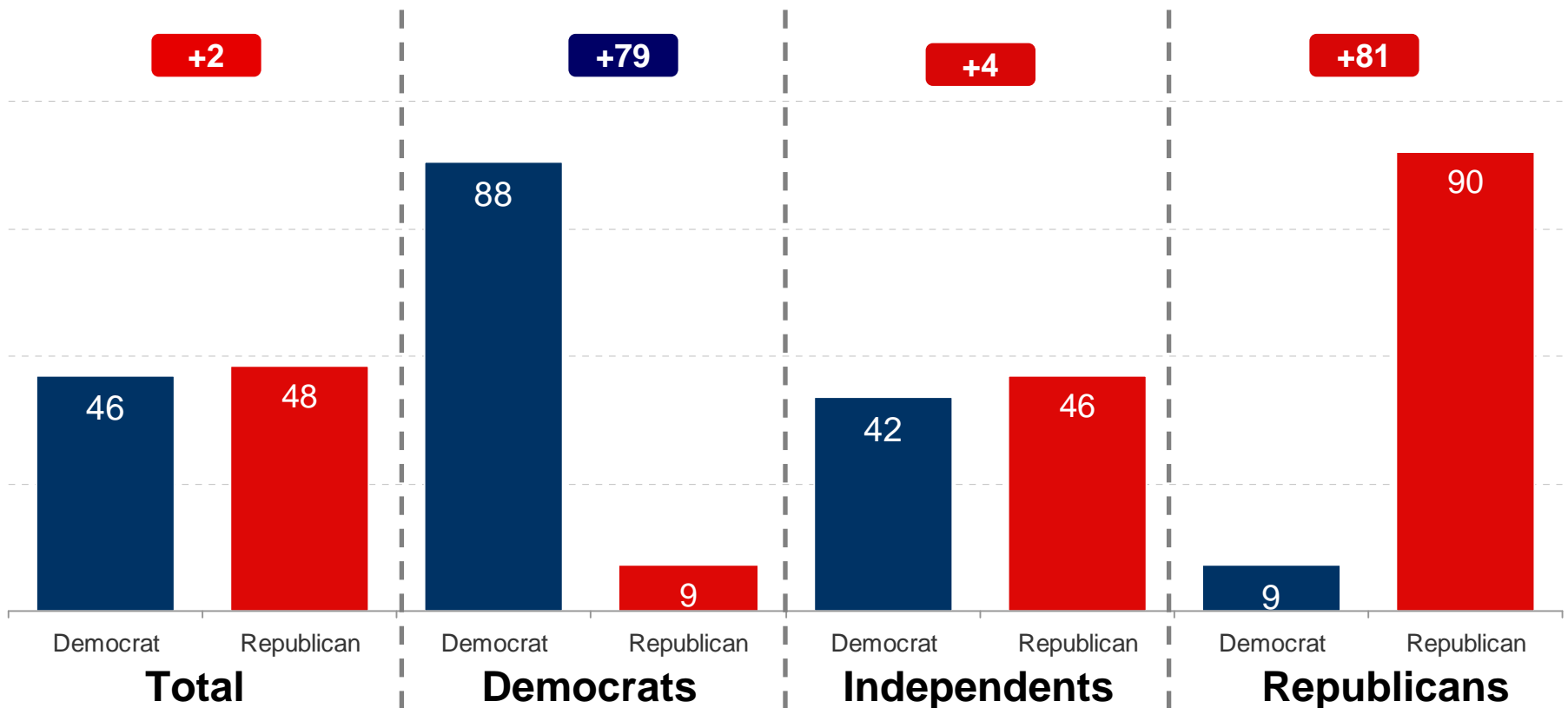


Congressional vote: All voters

*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)?**

■ Democratic House Candidate

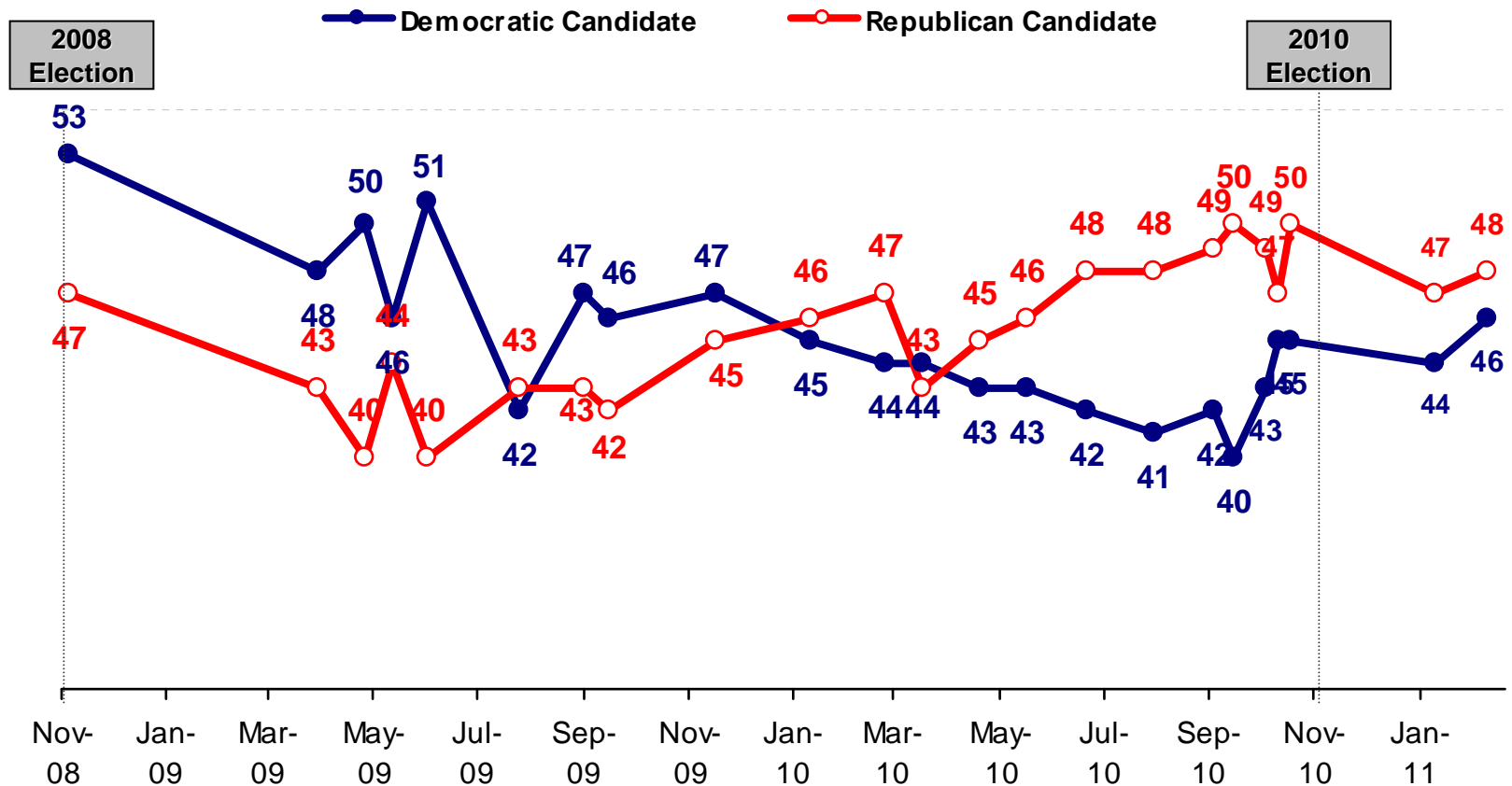
■ Republican House Candidate



* 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 as generic.

Congressional race: Near parity

*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)?**

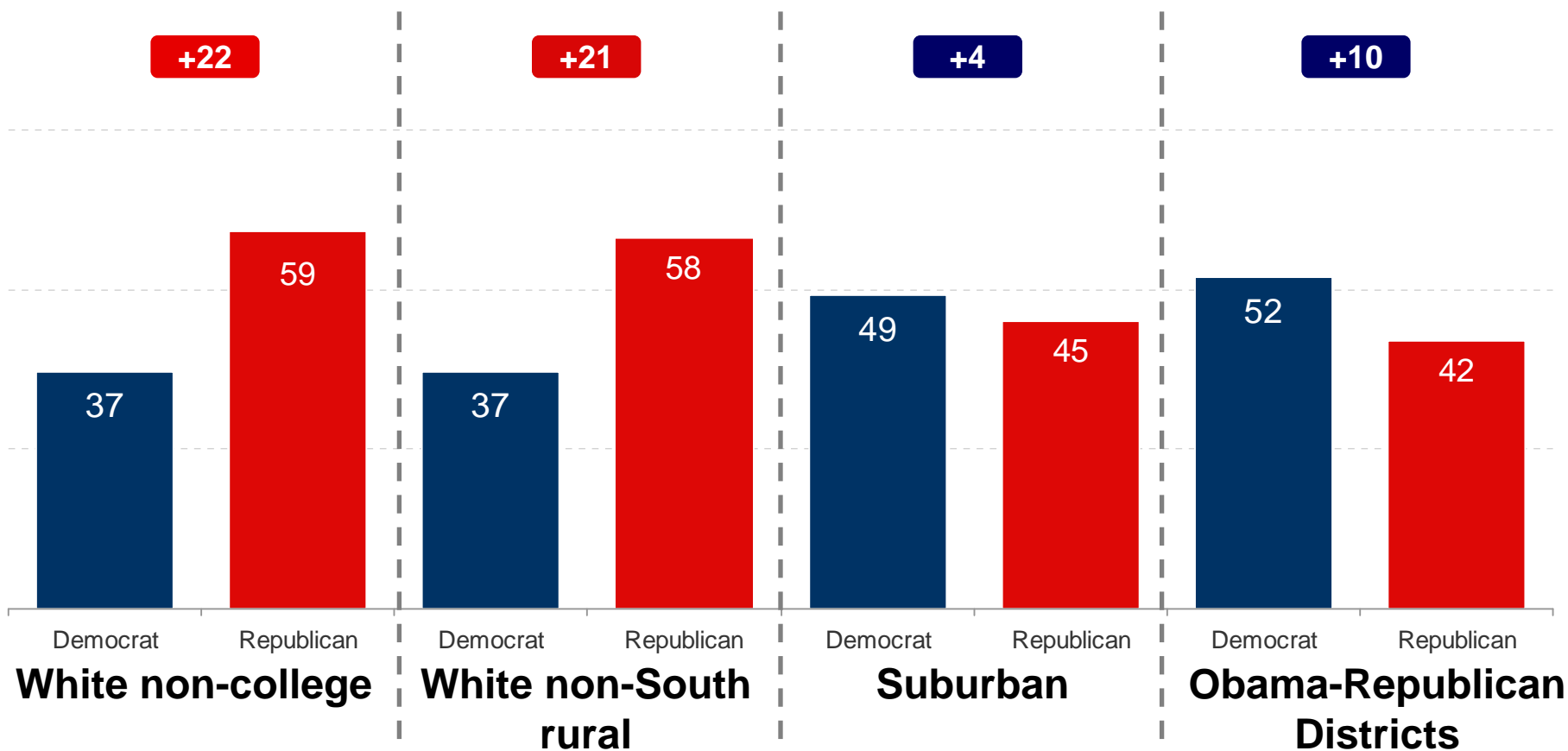


Congressional vote: swing voters

*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)?**

■ Democratic House Candidate

■ Republican House Candidate

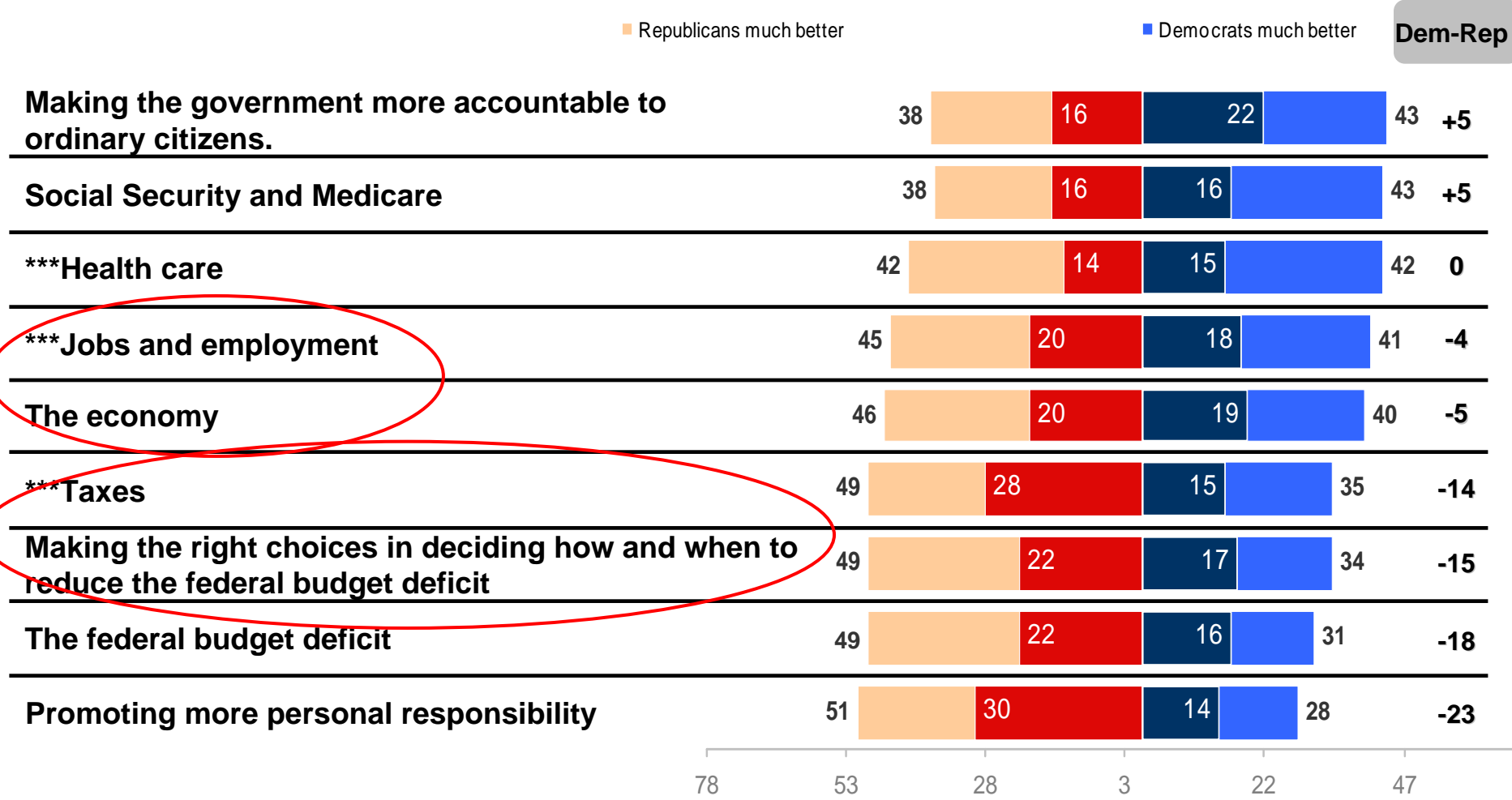


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Starting in the hole

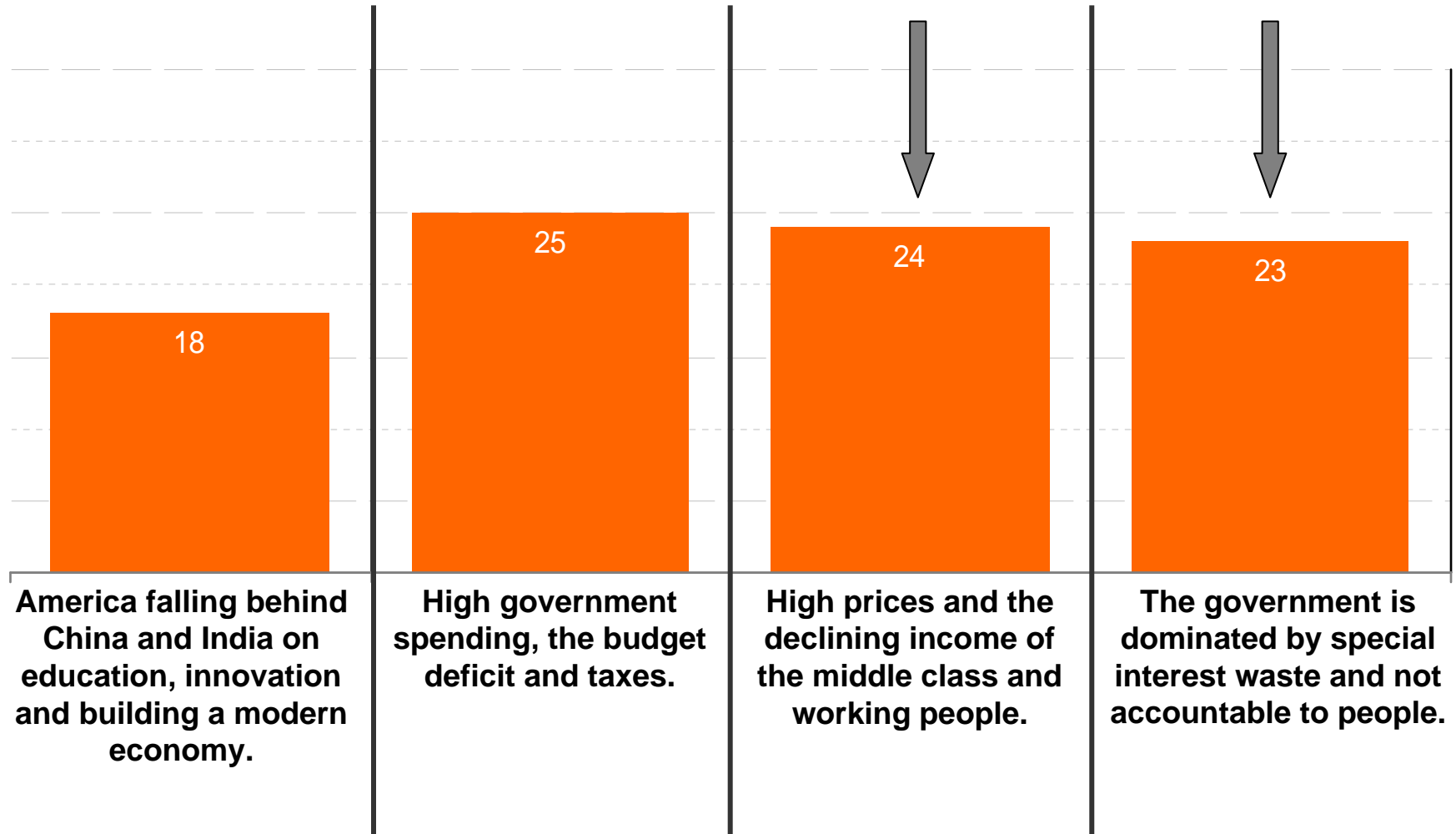
Better job on issues: Democrats still trail on economy and budget

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.



Most important economic problem: must link to problem

As you know unemployment is still high, but tell which ONE of the following problems is most important to address to have a better economy?

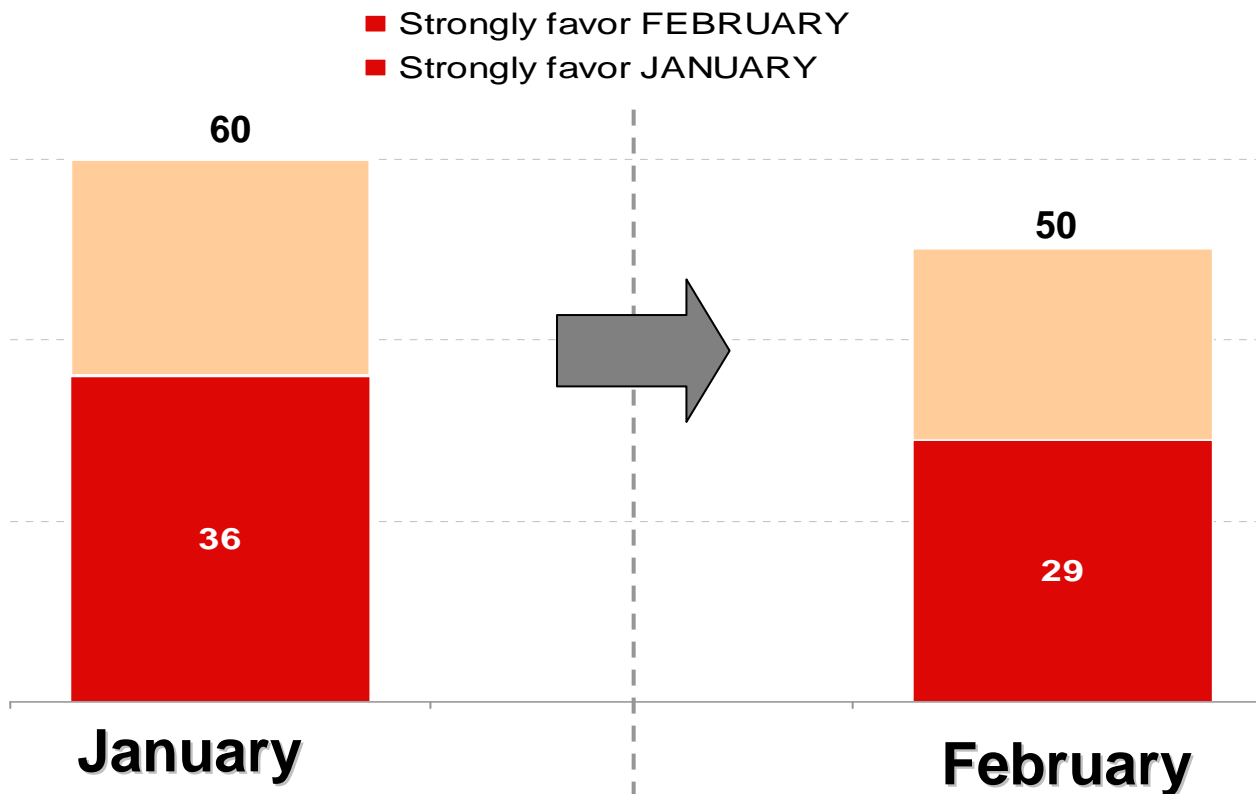


Debate moves voters away from budget cuts

Support for Republican budget cuts drops 10 points in month

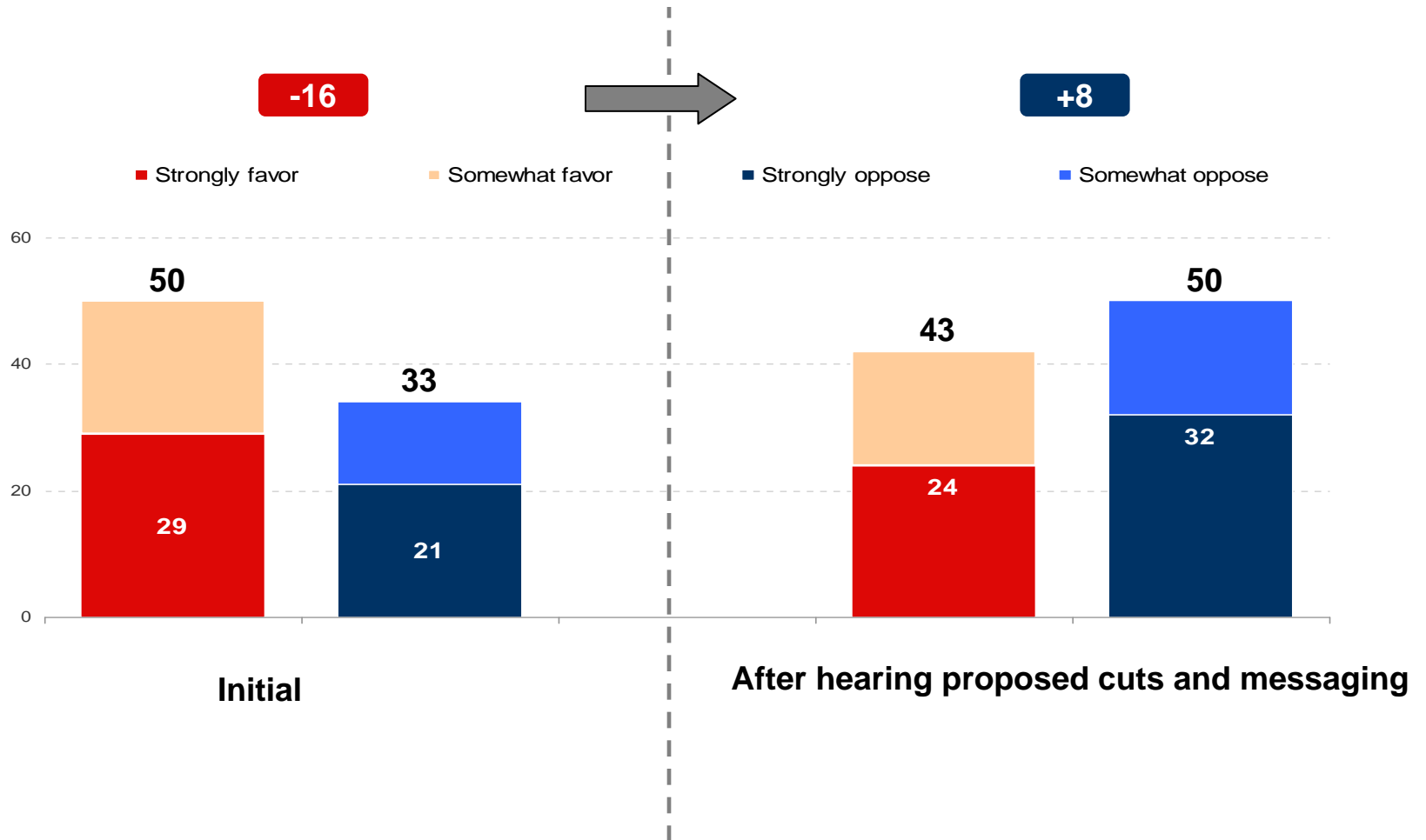
The Republicans will cut the federal government spending back to before Obama was president, which will cut one-hundred billion dollars in spending from the current year's budget alone

Let me ask something different. The Republicans in the House of Representatives will pass a budget that cuts 32 billion dollars from domestic programs this year. From what you know, do you favor or oppose this plan to cut spending by 32 billion dollars?



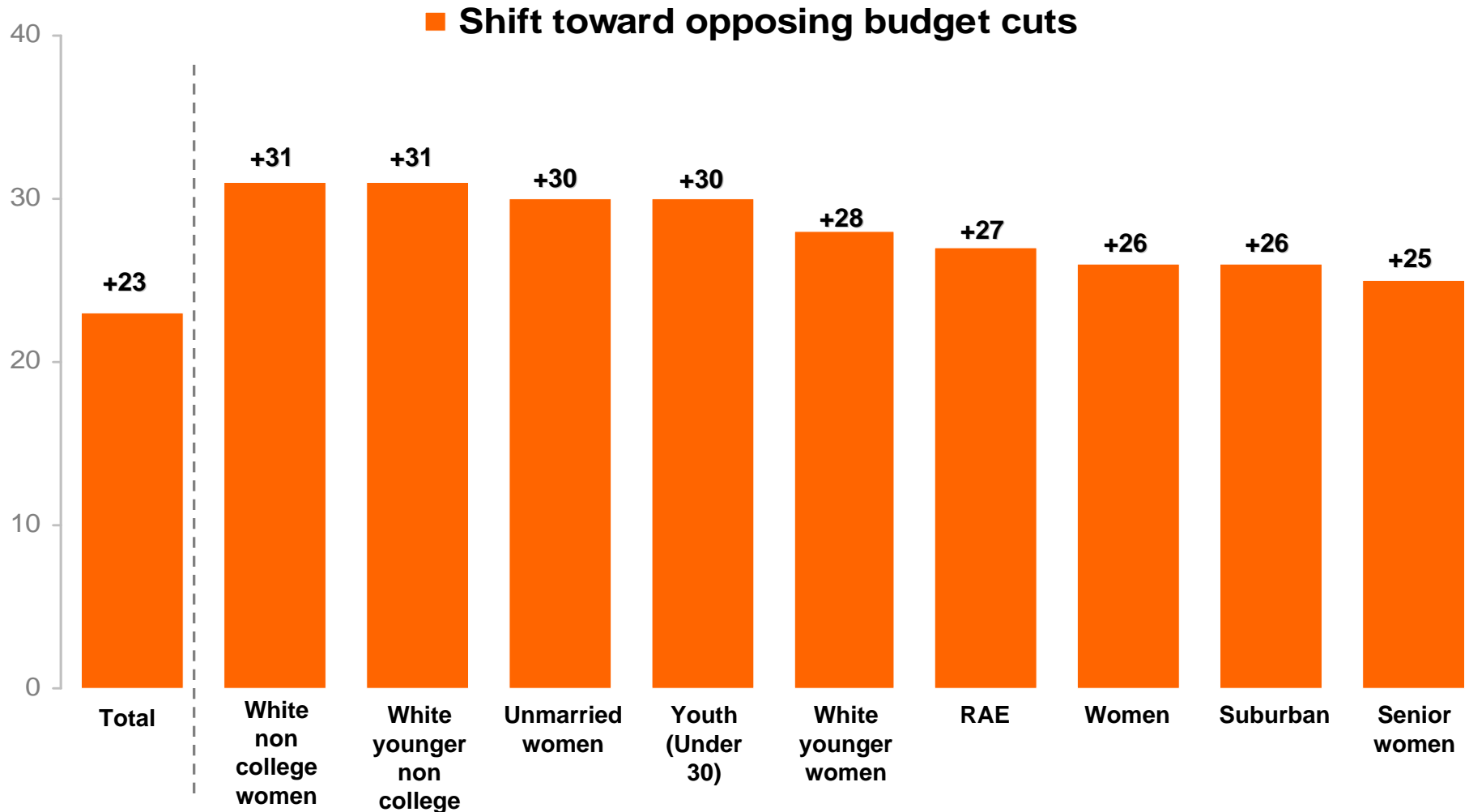
Dramatic change after hearing context (in tilted experiment)

The Republicans in the House of Representatives will pass a budget that cuts 32 billion dollars from domestic programs this year. From what you know, do you favor or oppose this plan to cut spending by 32 billion dollars?



Budget cuts: groups shift against the cuts – RAE, young, and women

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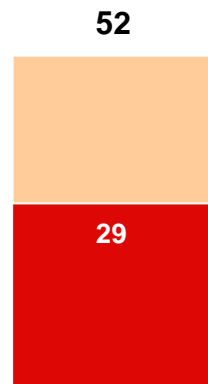
Republican messages on budget cuts

Now let me read you some statements that Republicans have made about their proposed cut in federal spending. After each statement please tell me whether it makes you MUCH MORE LIKELY, SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY, JUST A LITTLE MORE LIKELY, NO MORE LIKELY or LESS LIKELY to support their budget to cut federal spending.

Obama spending & borrowing kills jobs (message with biggest effect)

President Obama's spending spree failed to create jobs and plunged us deeper into debt. Ordinary citizens must live within their means. And so must the government. Washington's spending spree is over. Endless borrowing kills jobs and jeopardizes our future. We must act now to restrain government and restart America's engine of economic growth.

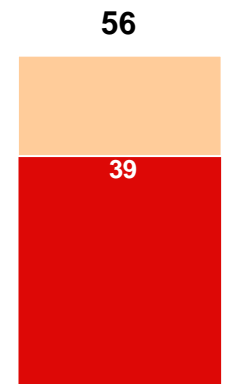
■ Much more likely



Burden on Future Generations

We must restore fiscal discipline in Washington. This is imperative. We face the crushing burden of debt that will grow to catastrophic levels in the years ahead. On this path, the federal government will double in size during our children's lifetimes, leaving them crippled by debt and taxes. If we do not act now, the next generation will inherit the stagnant economy of a third rate country.

■ Much more likely



Message framework for budget debate

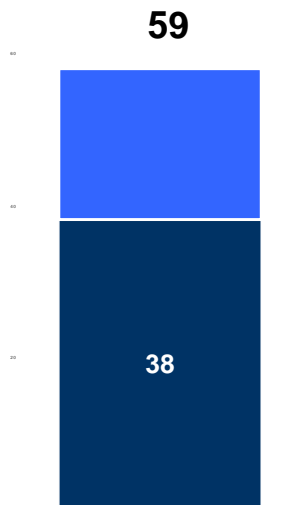
Reassurance messages: start with waste, ending subsidies and loopholes & streamline

Now let me read you some things that Democrats are saying on the deficit and spending. After each statement please tell me whether it makes you MUCH MORE CONFIDENT, SOMEWHAT MORE CONFIDENT, JUST A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT, NO MORE CONFIDENT or LESS CONFIDENT in the Democrats.

Cut waste, lose loopholes and subsidies, accountability to people

■ Much more confident

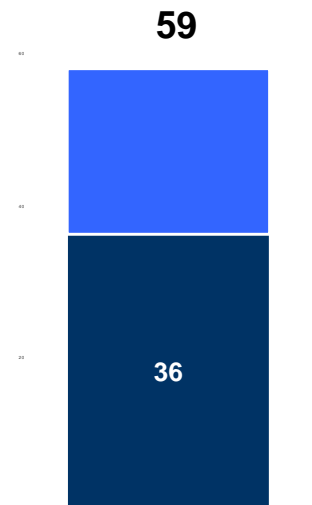
We must start by cutting wasteful and unnecessary spending, but before we cut middle class programs, we need to close tax loopholes, end subsidies for oil companies, and make government more accountable to people, not the special interests that dominate Washington.



Cut waste, streamline government

■ Much more confident

We have to cut programs that are wasteful and outdated. We should start by restructuring and streamlining government services and federal agencies to eliminate redundancy, inefficiency, and waste.



Reassurance messages: Personal responsibility and making sure government programs are achieving results

Now let me read you some things that Democrats are saying on the deficit and spending. After each statement please tell me whether it makes you MUCH MORE CONFIDENT, SOMEWHAT MORE CONFIDENT, JUST A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT, NO MORE CONFIDENT or LESS CONFIDENT in the Democrats.

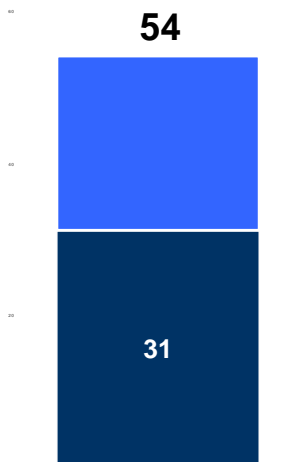
Personal responsibility and no bailouts for shipping jobs overseas

Measure government programs' progress

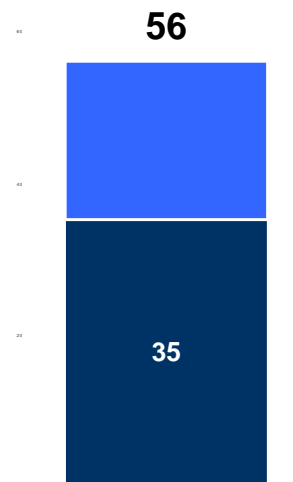
■ Much more confident

■ Much more confident

We will get this budget right if we help those who work hard and played by the rules and insist on personal responsibility from everyone. Less money for bailouts and subsidies for CEOs that ship jobs overseas and less easy credit for people who borrow and spend beyond their means.



The first thing we need to do is make sure taxpayers are getting their money's worth by requiring every government program to be measured to see if it is achieving results. Then we can end programs that don't work, and concentrate on the ones that do.



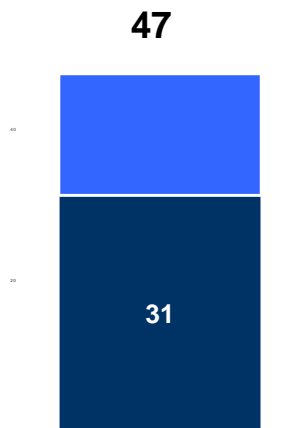
Democratic frameworks increase opposition to budget cuts

Let me read you some statements the Democrats are making about the budget cuts. After each statement please tell me whether it makes you MUCH LESS LIKELY, SOMEWHAT LESS LIKELY, JUST A LITTLE LESS LIKELY, NO LESS LIKELY or MORE LIKELY to support these budget cuts.

Tough economic times, don't start with those who can least afford them

■ Much less likely

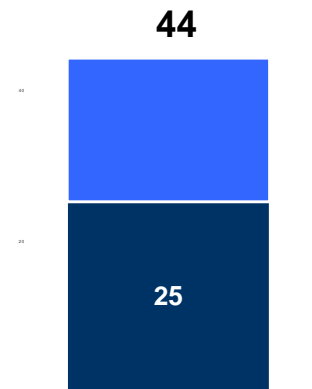
In these tough economic times, these budget cuts hit those who can least afford it - working families with children and the elderly. It slashes help with childcare and Head Start, cuts scholarships to college, and cuts health care benefits for seniors.



Don't leave the breaks for top 2 percent while slashing for middle class

■ Much less likely

This budget maintains all the tax breaks for the top 2 percent and special deals for corporate lobbyists that increase spending and the deficit, while slashing education and student loans that help the middle class and struggling families.



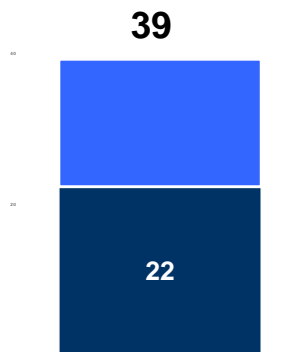
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Cuts worsen job situation

With unemployment over 9 percent, these budget cuts make the job situation worse. They lay off tens of thousands of teachers and cut our support for education and training, cut support for science and technology and radically cut transportation and clean energy projects key to future jobs.

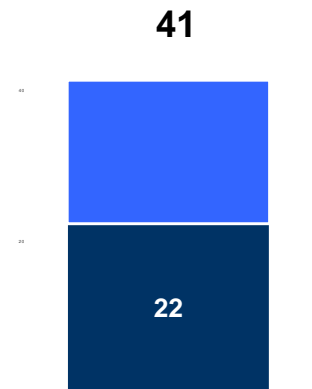
■ Much less likely



Hurts state and local governments

This budget passes the bill to state and municipal governments. The costs will be passed down and result in rising property and sales taxes as state and local governments will have to foot the bill.

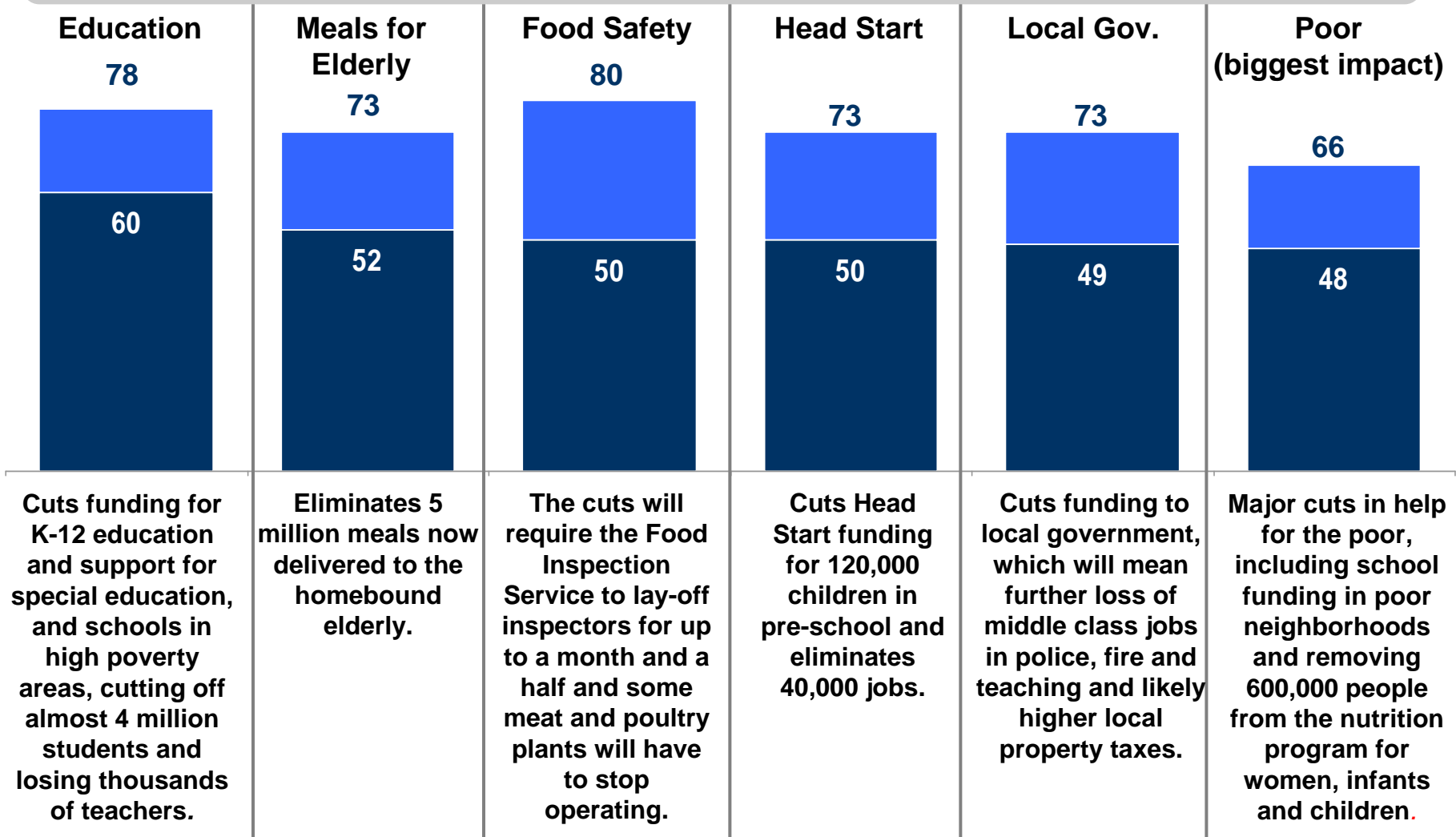
■ Much less likely



The budget cuts: voters don't like them

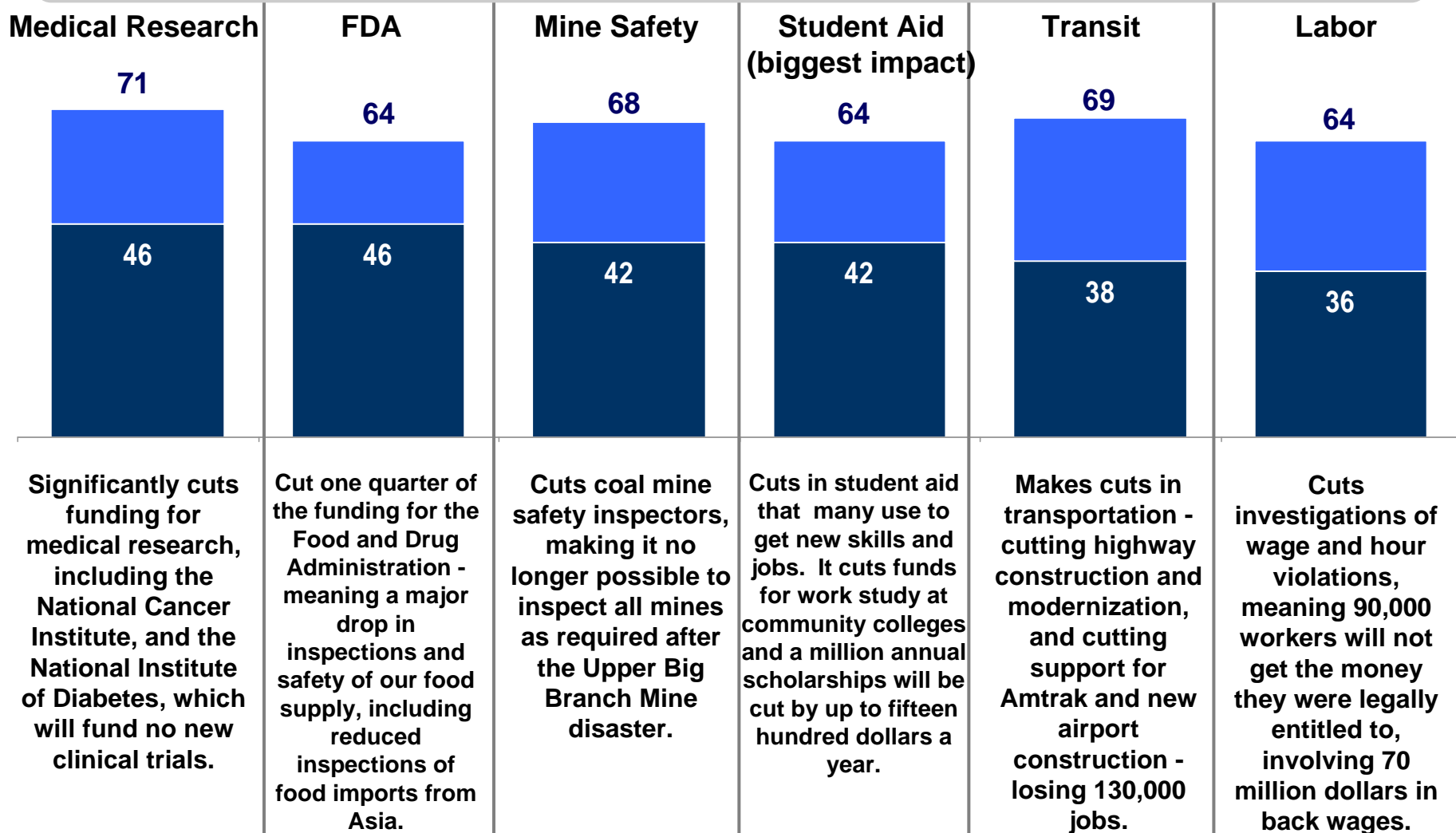
Unpopular cuts: 60 percent strongly oppose education; ½ elderly & food

Now I am going to read you some of the specific spending cuts proposed in the House Republicans' budget for this year. After I read each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.



Also unpopular: medical research, FDA and student aid

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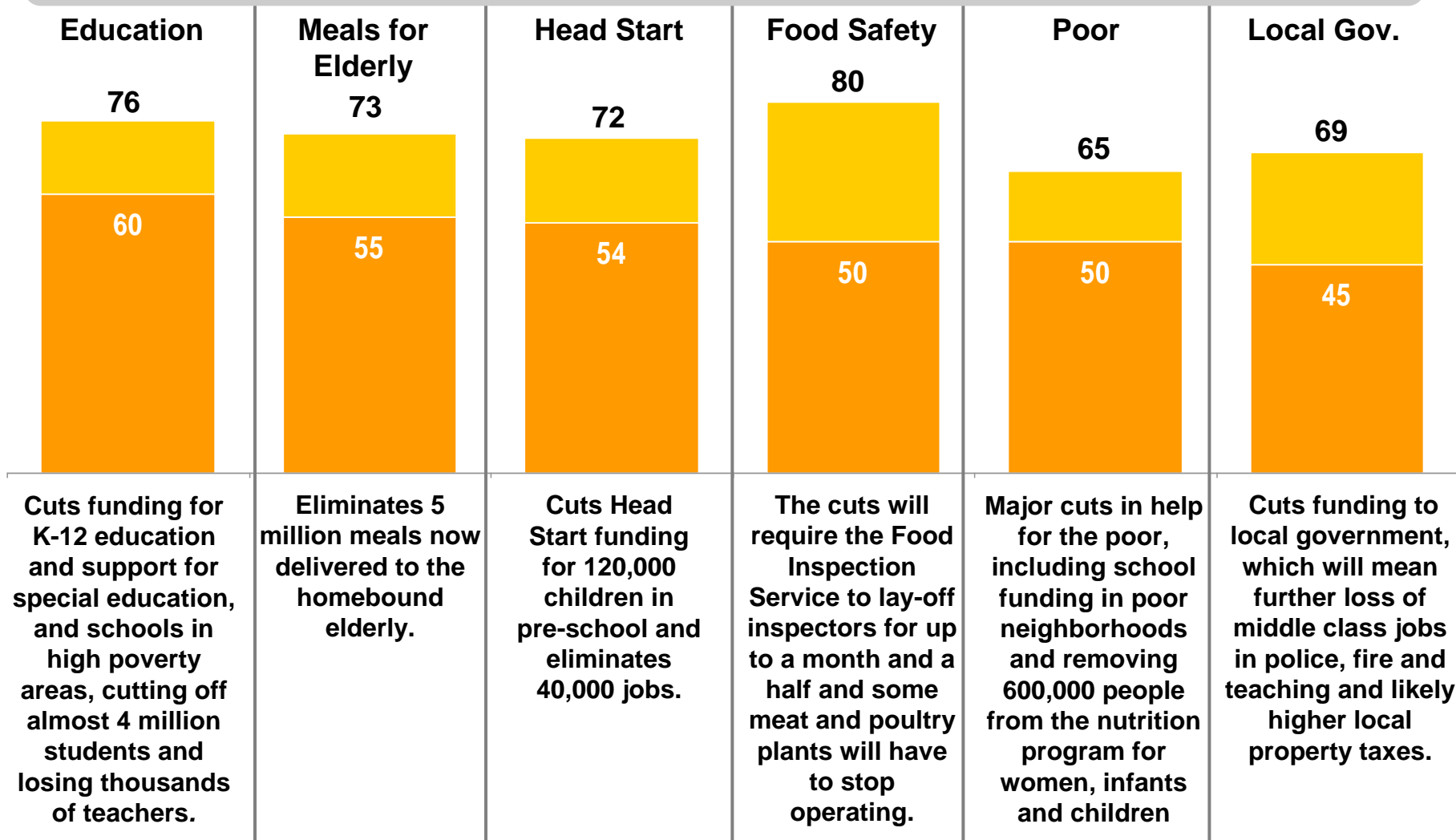


Cuts for the poor and student aid and work study has biggest impact on support for budget cuts

Effect on opposition to Republican budget						
	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	P > z	95% conf interval.		z
It makes major cuts in help for the poor	3.851	0.899	0.000	2.437	6.085	5.770
Some of the biggest cuts are in student aid	3.696	0.903	0.000	2.290	5.967	5.350
<i>Party ID</i>	3.478	0.975	0.000	2.007	6.025	4.450
It cuts back the coal mine safety inspectors	1.942	0.560	0.022	1.103	3.418	2.300
R-Square = .61						

Strong opposition to cuts among Independents

Now I am going to read you some of the specific spending cuts proposed in the House Republicans' budget for this year. After I read each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.



Cuts funding for K-12 education and support for special education, and schools in high poverty areas, cutting off almost 4 million students and losing thousands of teachers.

Eliminates 5 million meals now delivered to the homebound elderly.

Cuts Head Start funding for 120,000 children in pre-school and eliminates 40,000 jobs.

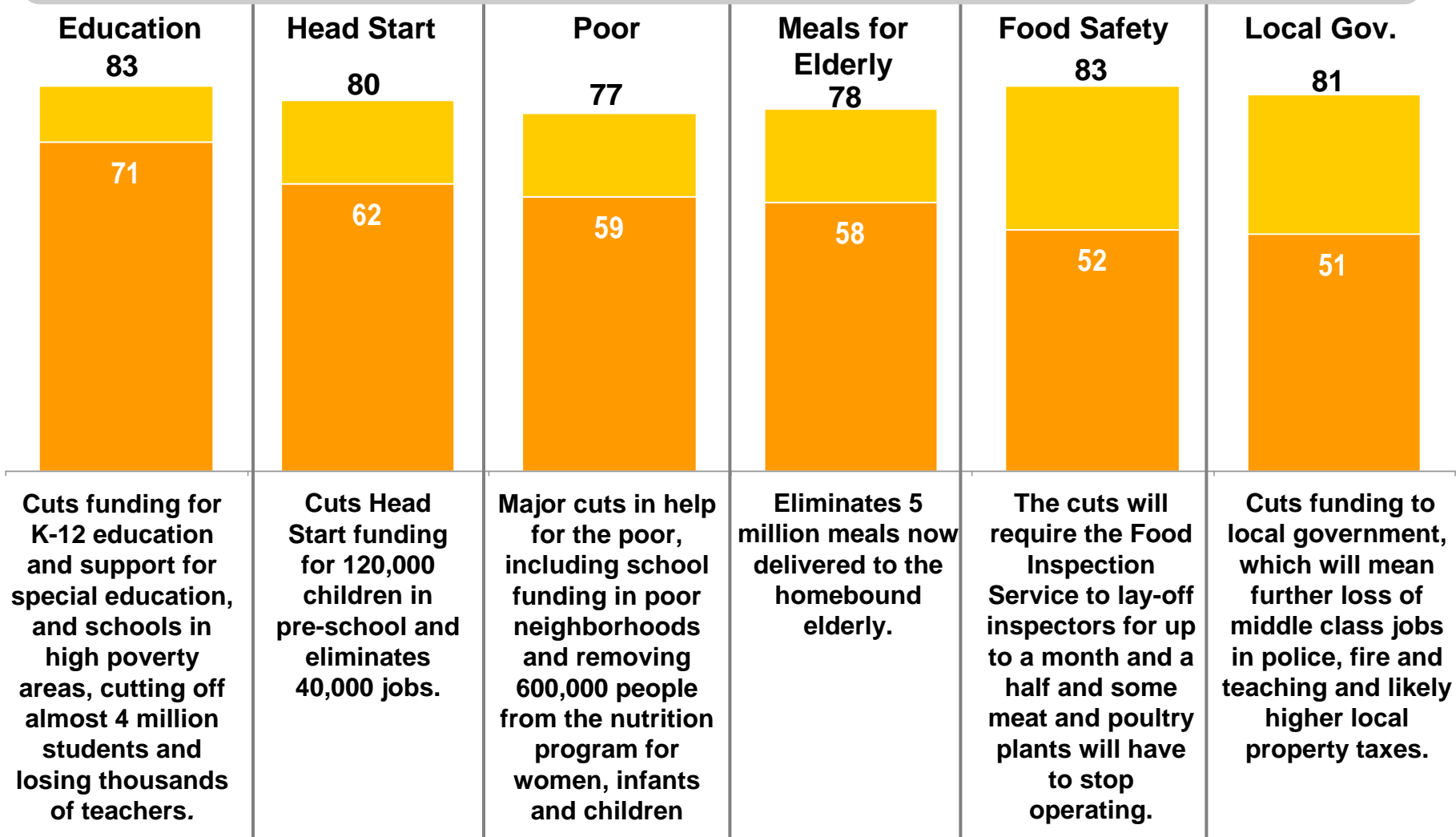
The cuts will require the Food Inspection Service to lay-off inspectors for up to a month and a half and some meat and poultry plants will have to stop operating.

Major cuts in help for the poor, including school funding in poor neighborhoods and removing 600,000 people from the nutrition program for women, infants and children

Cuts funding to local government, which will mean further loss of middle class jobs in police, fire and teaching and likely higher local property taxes.

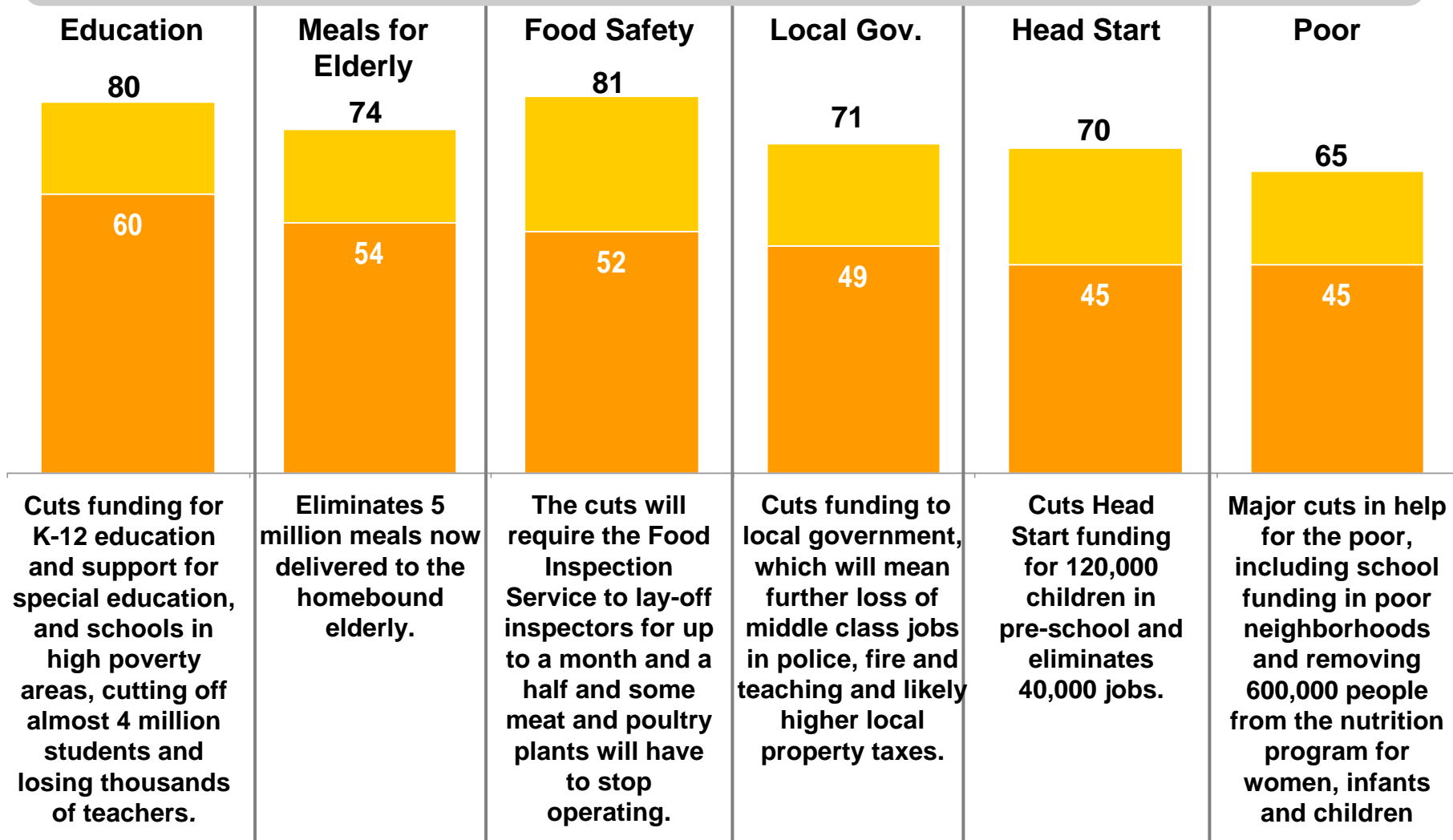
Opposition to cuts: Unmarried women

Now I am going to read you some of the specific spending cuts proposed in the House Republicans' budget for this year. After I read each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.



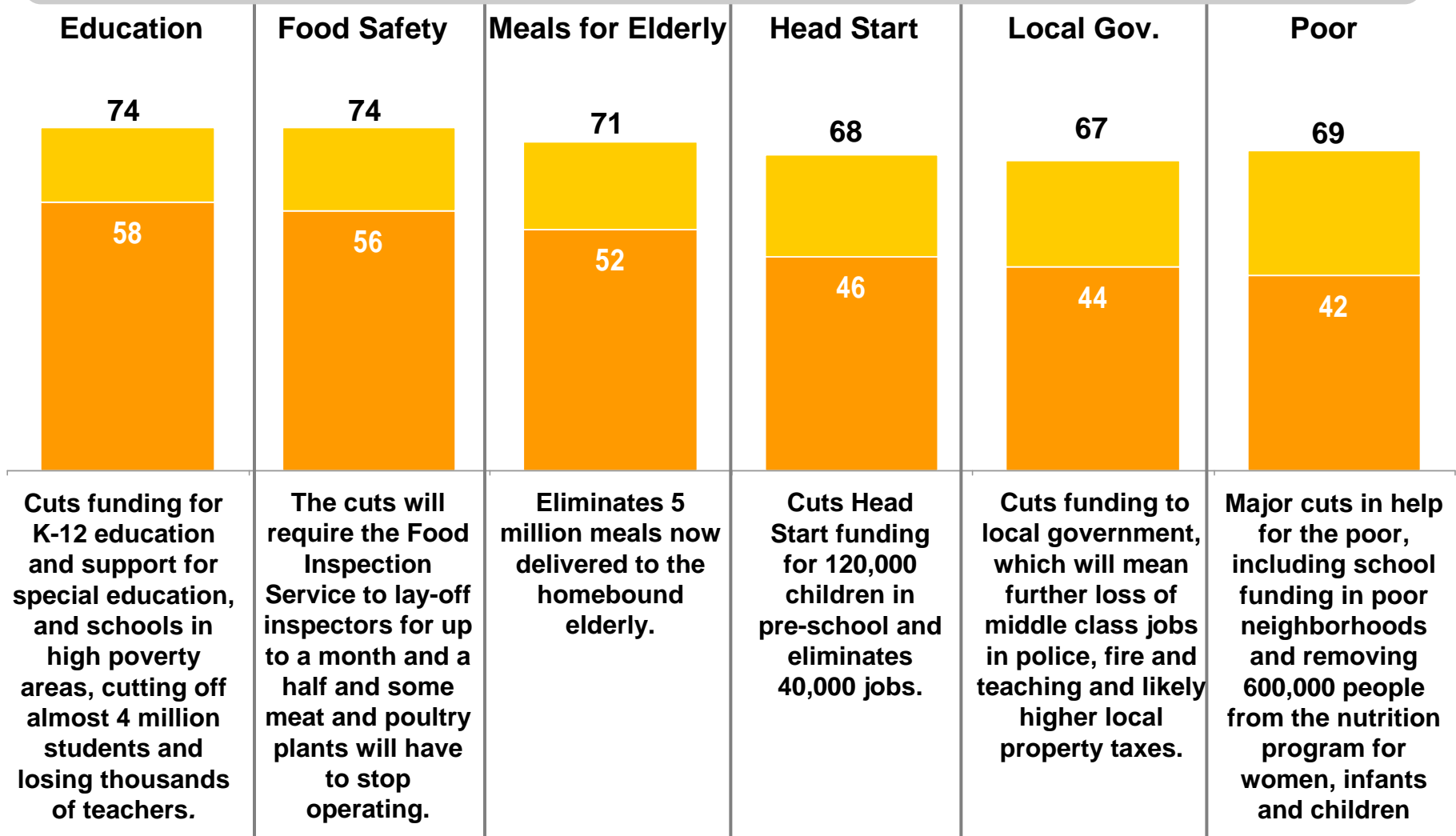
Opposition to cuts: White non-college

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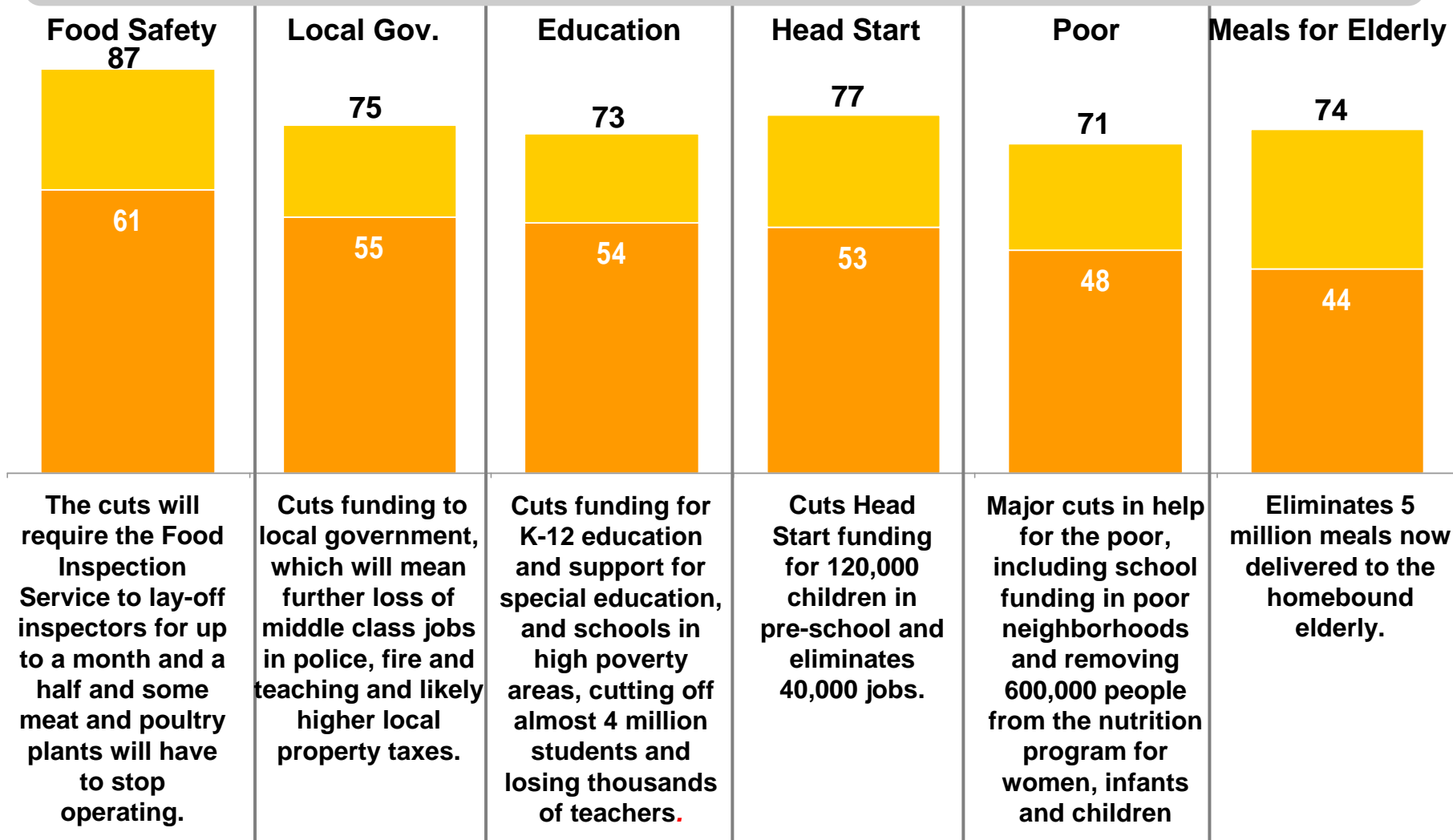
Opposition to cuts: White seniors

Now I am going to read you some of the specific spending cuts proposed in the House Republicans' budget for this year. After I read each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.



Opposition to cuts: Suburban

Now I am going to read you some of the specific spending cuts proposed in the House Republicans' budget for this year. After I read each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.



The cuts will require the Food Inspection Service to lay-off inspectors for up to a month and a half and some meat and poultry plants will have to stop operating.

Cuts funding to local government, which will mean further loss of middle class jobs in police, fire and teaching and likely higher local property taxes.

Cuts funding for K-12 education and support for special education, and schools in high poverty areas, cutting off almost 4 million students and losing thousands of teachers.

Cuts Head Start funding for 120,000 children in pre-school and eliminates 40,000 jobs.

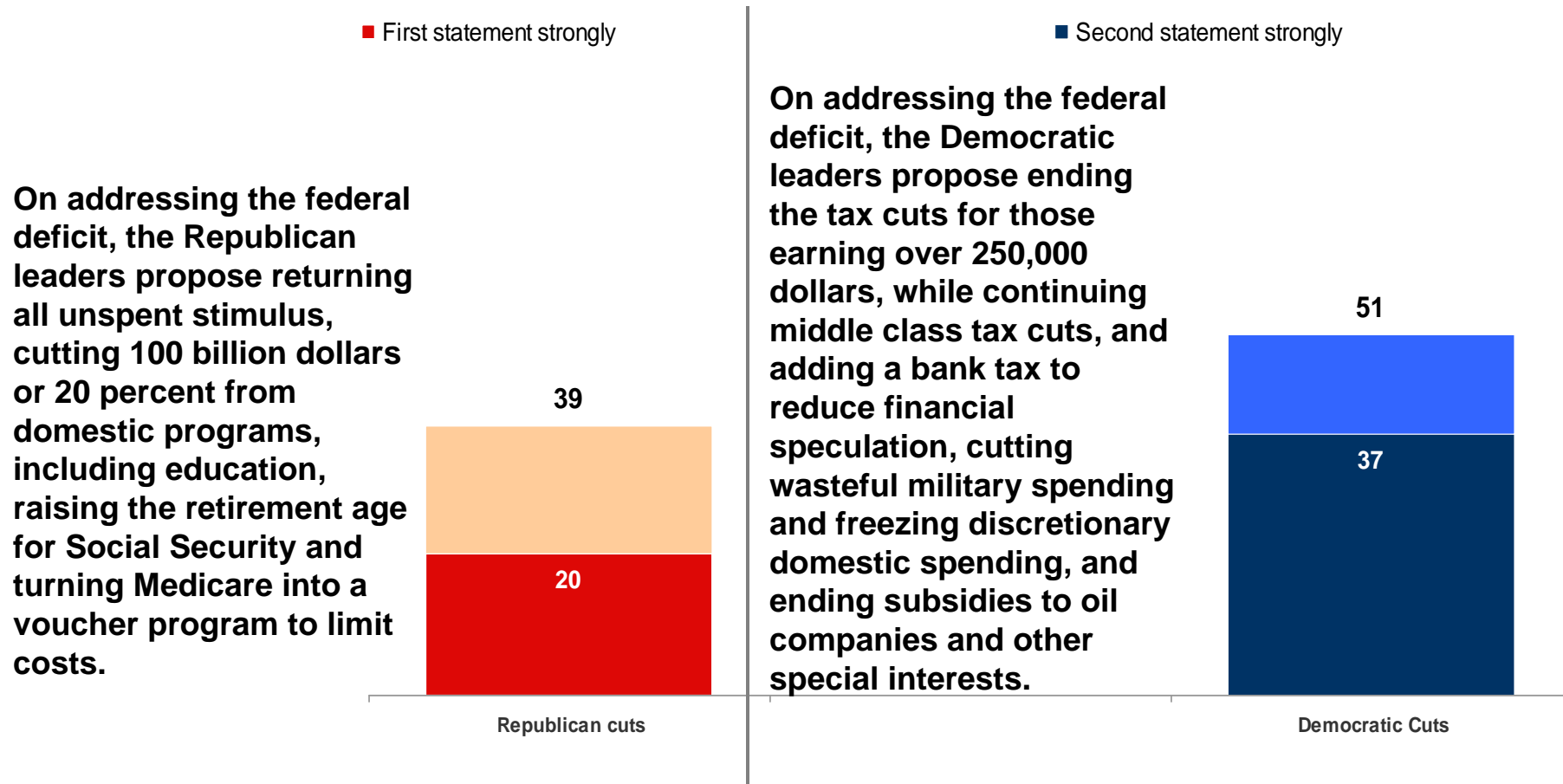
Major cuts in help for the poor, including school funding in poor neighborhoods and removing 600,000 people from the nutrition program for women, infants and children

Eliminates 5 million meals now delivered to the homebound elderly.

Big choices on long-term deficit reduction

Democrats can win the big debate over long-term deficits

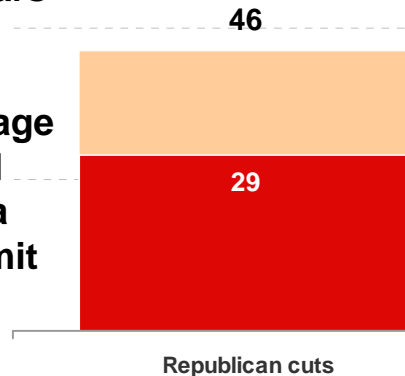
Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements about Democratic and Republican policy priorities on different issues. After each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.



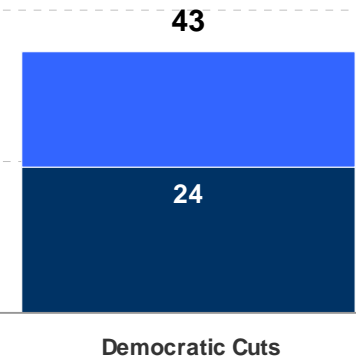
But Democrats lose advantage when propose Social Security changes

Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements about Democratic and Republican policy priorities on different issues. After each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

First statement: On addressing the federal deficit, the Republican leaders propose returning all unspent stimulus, cutting 100 billion dollars or 20 percent from domestic programs, raising the retirement age for Social Security and turning Medicare into a voucher program to limit costs.



On addressing the federal deficit, the Democratic leaders propose ending the tax cuts for those earning over 250,000 dollars, while continuing middle class tax cuts, and adding a bank tax to reduce financial speculation, cutting wasteful military spending and freezing discretionary domestic spending, and ending subsidies to oil companies and other special interests. They would also raise the retirement age for Social Security to 70.



Message to do's

Message To Do's

- **Be serious about deficit and spending reductions. Critical to our economic well-being and creating American jobs.**
- **Clear that must start with waste, special interest subsidies and tax breaks, and demanding accountability, ending programs that don't deliver value.**

What works the best:

"We must start by cutting wasteful and unnecessary spending, but before we cut middle class programs, we need to close tax loopholes, end subsidies for oil companies, and make government more accountable to people, not the special interests that dominate Washington."

- **Link to the state of the economy: In these tough economic times, don't start by cutting those who can least afford it – the middle class folks trying to educate themselves, working families with children and the elderly.**

What works the best:

"In these tough economic times, these budget cuts hit those who can least afford it - working families with children and the elderly." It slashes funding for K-12 education, Head Start, college aid and work study, food safety inspectors, and cuts meals on wheels and energy assistance for homebound elderly.

The cuts mostly strongly opposed by voters. In tough economic times...

(EDUCATION) It cuts funding for K-12 education and support for special education, students with disabilities and schools in high poverty areas, cutting off almost 4 million students and losing thousands of teachers. It cuts student aid and work study that many use to get new skills and jobs.

(MEALS FOR ELDERLY) It eliminates 5 million meals now delivered to the homebound elderly.

(FOOD SAFETY) The cuts will require the Food Inspection Service to lay-off all its inspectors for up to a month and a half and without inspectors, some meat and poultry plants will have to stop operating.

(HEAD START) It cuts Head Start funding for 120,000 children in pre-school and eliminates 40,000 jobs.

(LOCAL GOV) It cuts funding to local government, which will mean further loss of middle class jobs in police, fire and teaching and likely higher local property taxes.

(POOR) Major cuts in help for the poor, including school funding in poor neighborhoods and removing 600,000 people from the nutrition program for women, infants and children and cutting support for work study.

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