

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

# Two Years after Citizens United, Voters Fed Up with Money in Politics

January 19, 2012



DEMOCRACY CORPS

CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

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CAMPAIGN**  
ACTION FUND  
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# Methodology and Overview

**This presentation is based on a national survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps and Public Campaign Action Fund.**

**1000 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) were interviewed from January 8-11, 2012.**

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

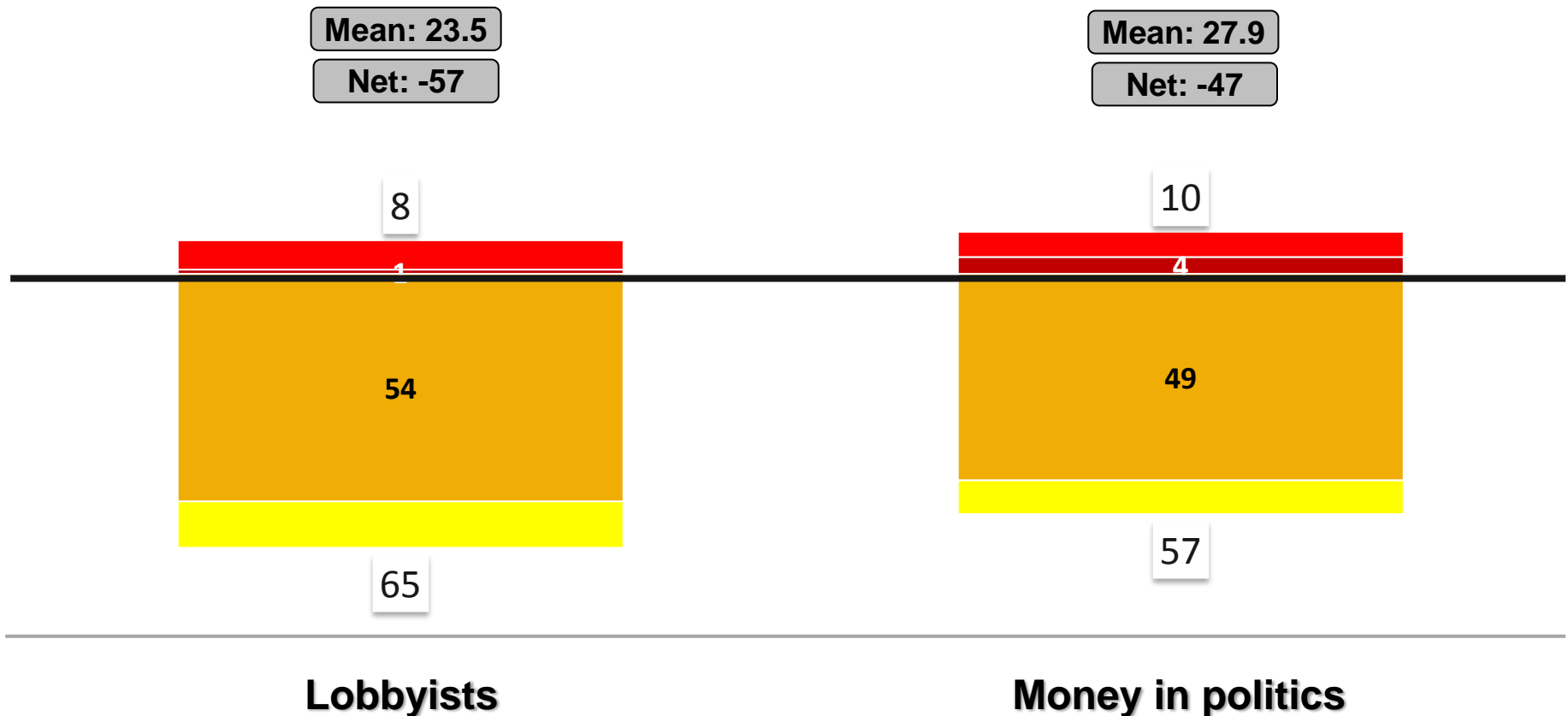
# **Dissatisfaction with the status quo, open to change**

- **Voters unhappy with the recent massive influx of money that has invaded the political system.**
- **Intense opposition to the Citizens United ruling, majority support for constitutional amendment reversing it.**
- **Campaign finance reform very important factor in people's votes – they want to see it addressed as a key election issue.**
- **Openness to public funding, but with emphasis on small donations with matching funds. Voters don't want to throw government money at the problem, they need specifics as part of hearing about public funding of elections**

# Dissatisfaction with the status quo: lobbyists, money in politics receive dismal ratings

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. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that person or organization. If you have no opinion or never heard of that person or organization, please say so.

■ Very warm (75-100) ■ Very cool (0-25)

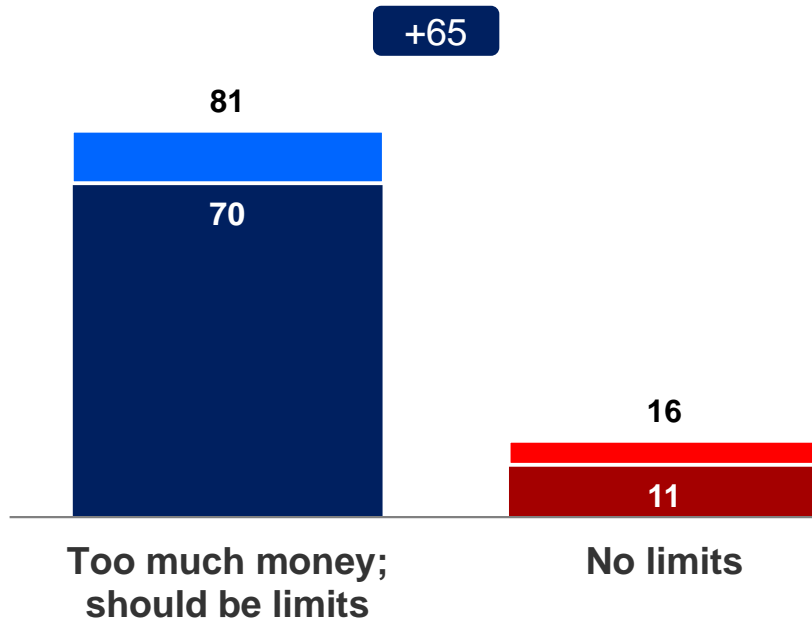


# Too much big money spent on campaigns; voters are fed up with secret money— it undermines democracy

*Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read 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.*

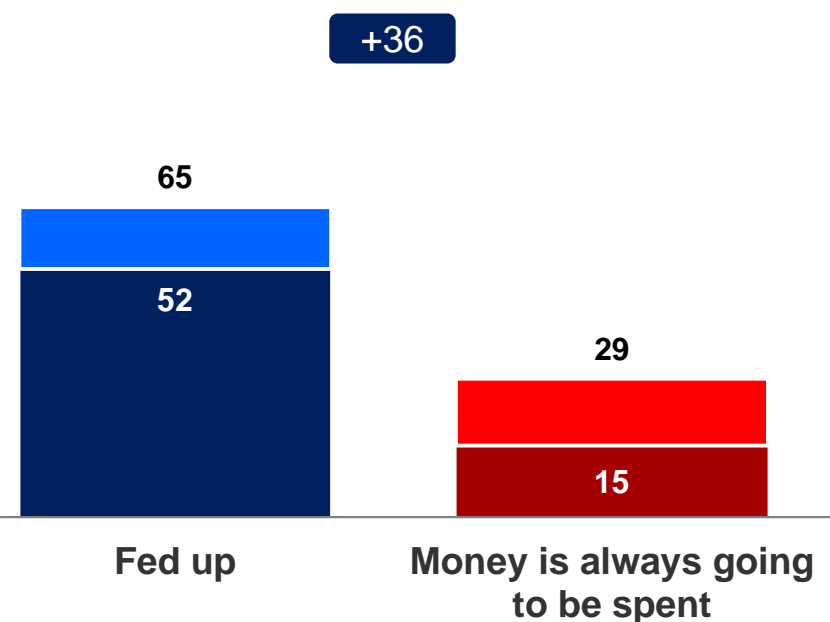
**STATEMENT 1:** There is too much big money spent on political campaigns and elections today and reasonable limits should be placed on campaign contributions and spending.

**STATEMENT 2:** Because electing our political leaders is one of the most important things we do as a nation, there should not be any limits on campaign contributions or spending.



**STATEMENT 1:** Given what I see in the presidential race, I am fed up with the big donors and secret money that controls which candidates we hear about. It undermines democracy.

**STATEMENT 2:** Money is always going to be spent in campaigns and at least all the candidates were able to get heard and voters got to decide in the end.

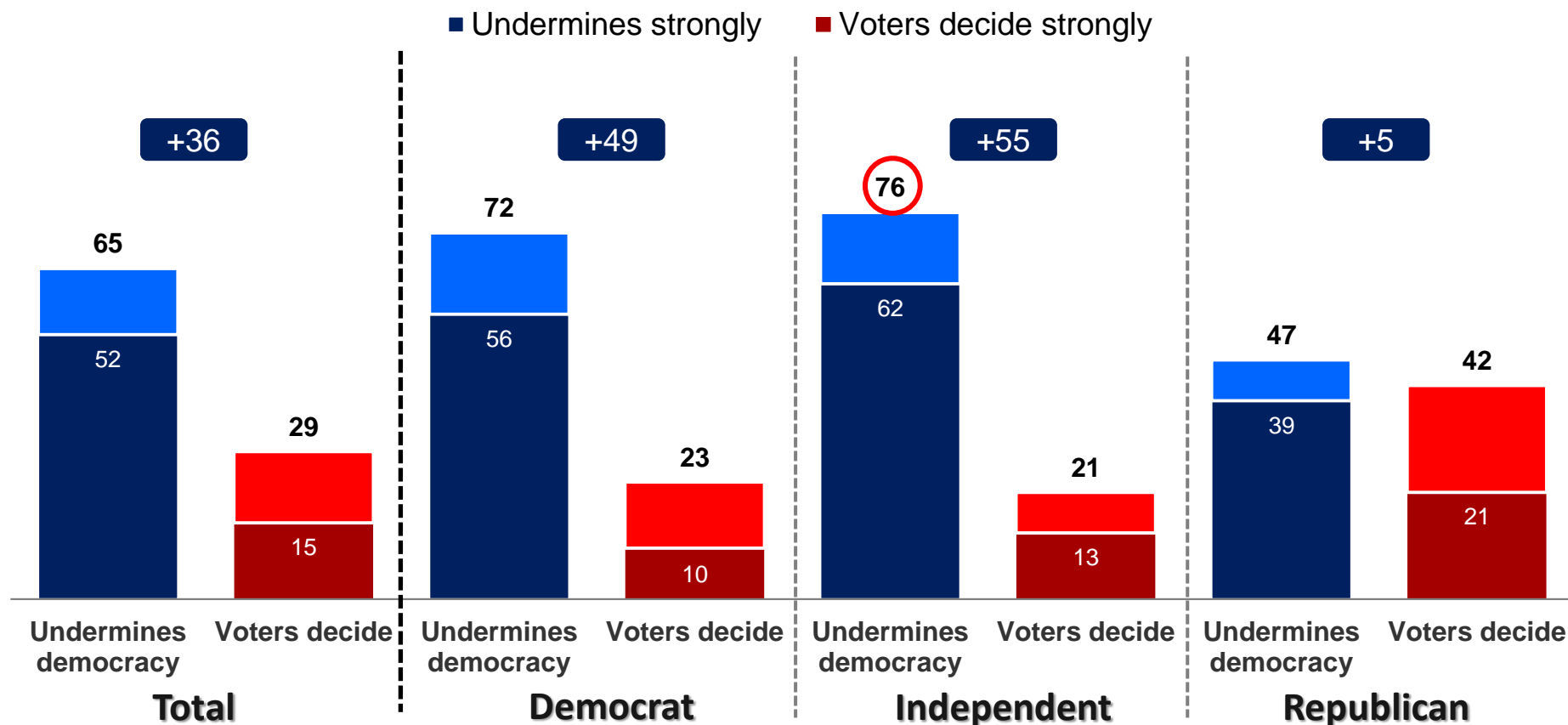


# Presidential race has independents especially fed up

Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read 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.

**STATEMENT 1:** Given what I see in the presidential race, I am fed up with the big donors and secret money that controls which candidates we hear about. It undermines democracy.

**STATEMENT 2:** Money is always going to be spent in campaigns and at least all the candidates were able to get heard and voters got to decide in the end.

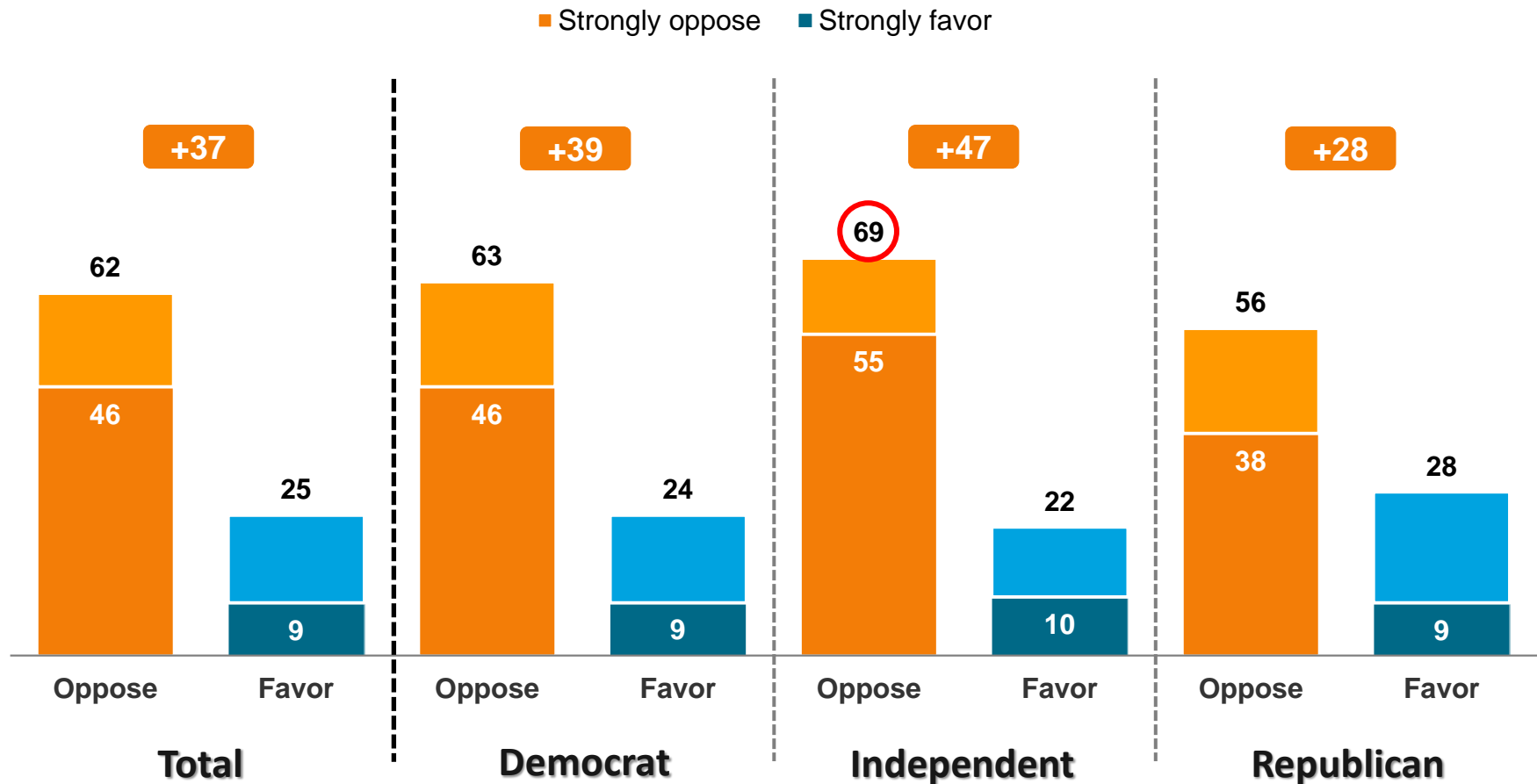


# **Two years out: Citizens United extremely unpopular**

- **Opposition to Citizens United runs across partisanship**
- **Strong support, especially among independents, for a constitutional amendment reversing Citizens United**

# Opposition to Citizens United decision bridges partisanship – near 70 percent of independents oppose

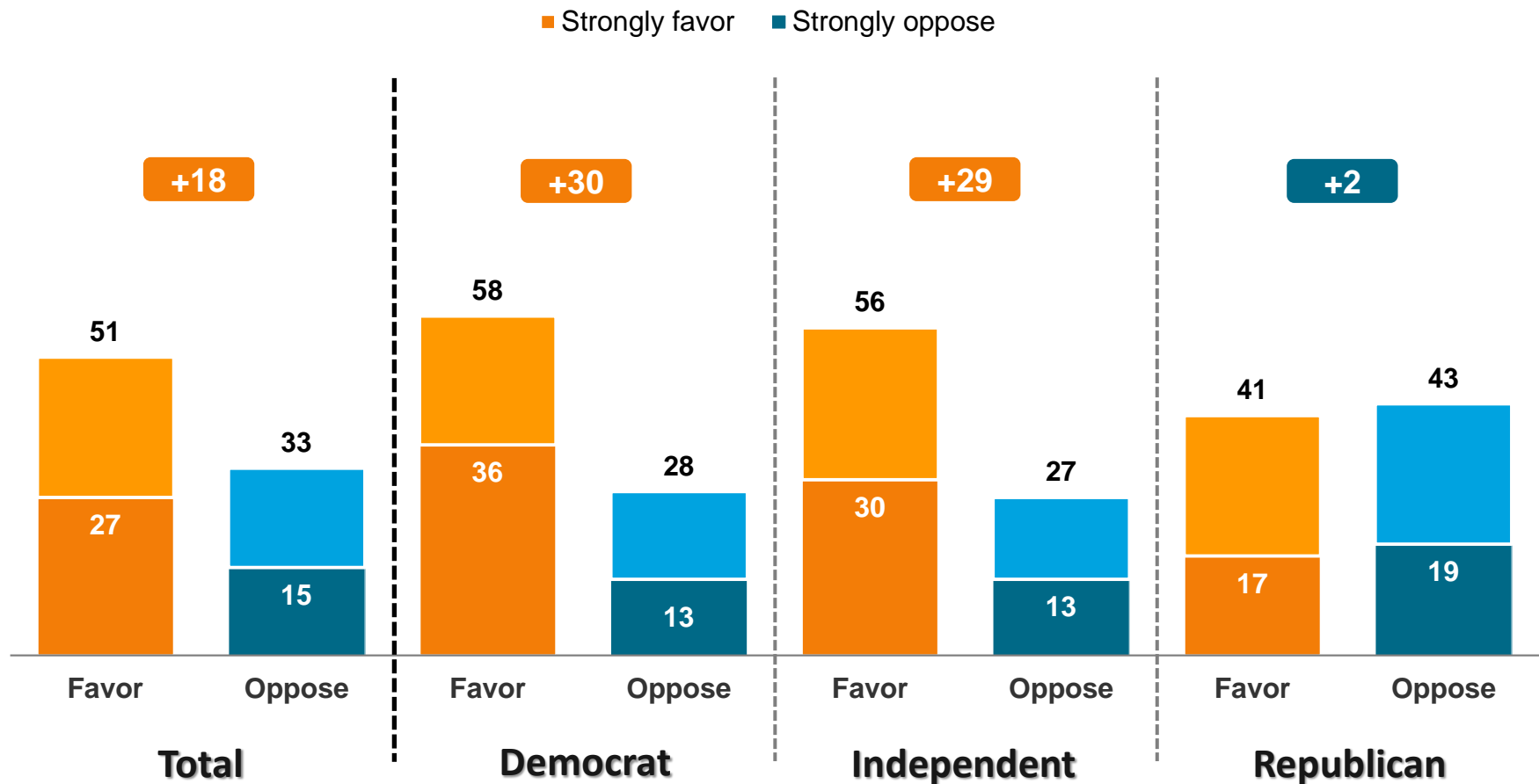
Now let me read you some information. In 2010, the Supreme Court decided in a case commonly referred to as *Citizens United* that corporations and unions can spend unlimited amounts of money to directly support or oppose political candidates. Before the ruling, corporations and unions could not. From what you know, do you favor or oppose of this Supreme Court ruling?





# Majority support for a constitutional amendment to reverse Citizens United

*Some people have called for a variety of constitutional amendments to reverse the Citizens United decision and address political spending. A common proposal would state that corporations are not people and would allow for limits on what wealthy individuals and interest groups could contribute to or spend on campaigns. From what you know, would you favor or oppose this constitutional amendment?*



# **Open opportunity to win this issue**

- **Voters think campaign finance reform should be an issue this election**
- **Almost 2-to-1 say it is a very important factor in their vote**
- **Candidates that embrace reforming Washington can win voters**
- **Open to reform – support for small donations with matching funds**
- **Voters not supportive of idea of government just giving away money to candidates**

# Campaign finance reform a very important issue for politicians to address; two-thirds say would be influential in vote

*Now thinking about the elections for President and Congress this November, how important is it to you for candidates to address the issue of campaign finance reform -- very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?*

■ Very important      ■ Not at all important

+56

77

37

21

5

Important

Not important

*Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read 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.*

**STATEMENT 1:** Reducing the influence of money in politics and special interest lobbyists is a very important factor in my vote.

**STATEMENT 2:** Reducing the influence of money in politics and special interest lobbyists is not a very important factor in my vote.

■ Important factor strongly      ■ Not important factor strongly

+31

63

54

32

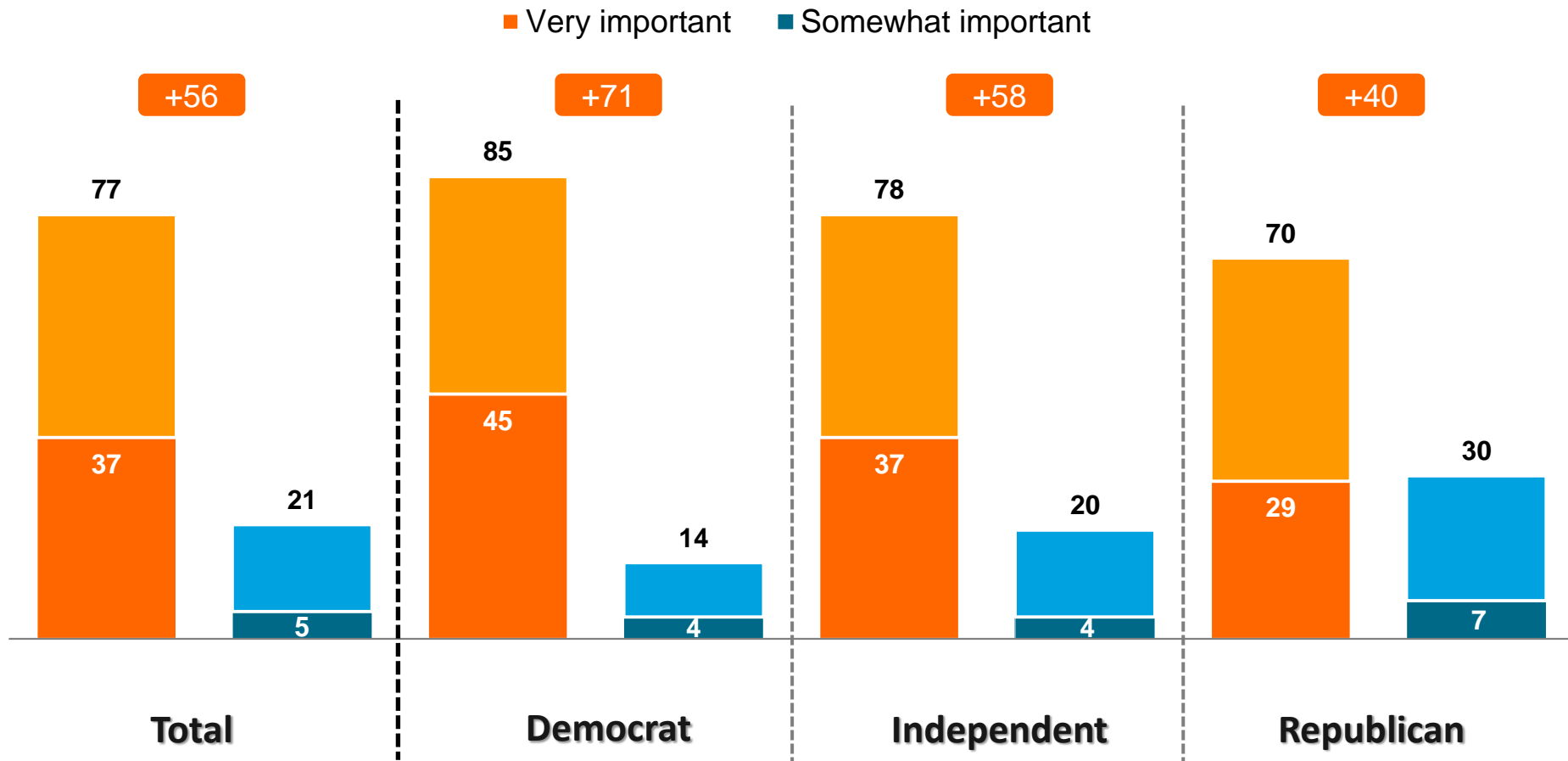
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Important factor in vote

Not important factor

# Candidates addressing campaign finance reform is seen as important across parties

Now thinking about the elections for President and Congress this November, how important is it to you for candidates to address the issue of campaign finance reform -- very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

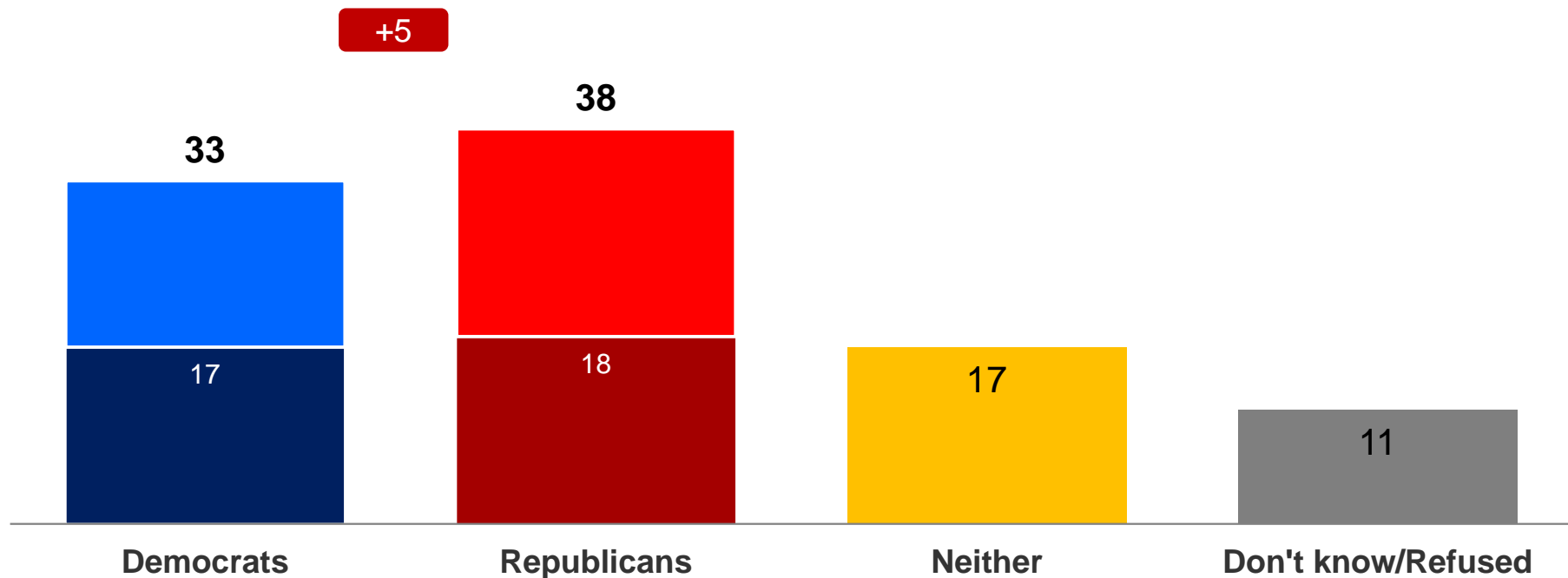


# Neither party owns this issue

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... **cleaning up the mess in Washington.**

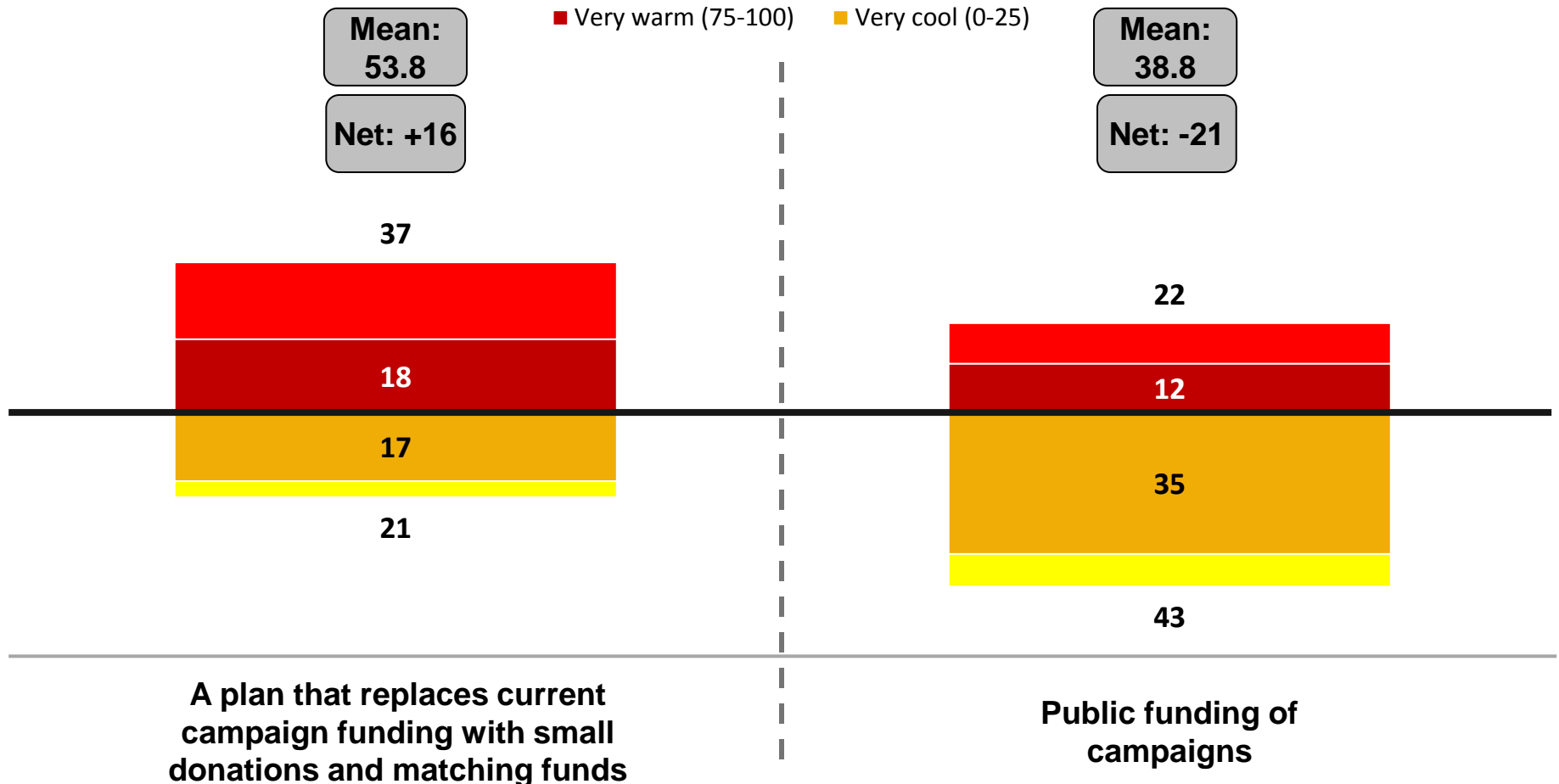
## Cleaning up the mess in Washington

■ Democrats much better ■ Republicans much better ■ Neither ■ Don't know/Refused



# Voters embrace reform with details, but not public funding without conditions or specifics

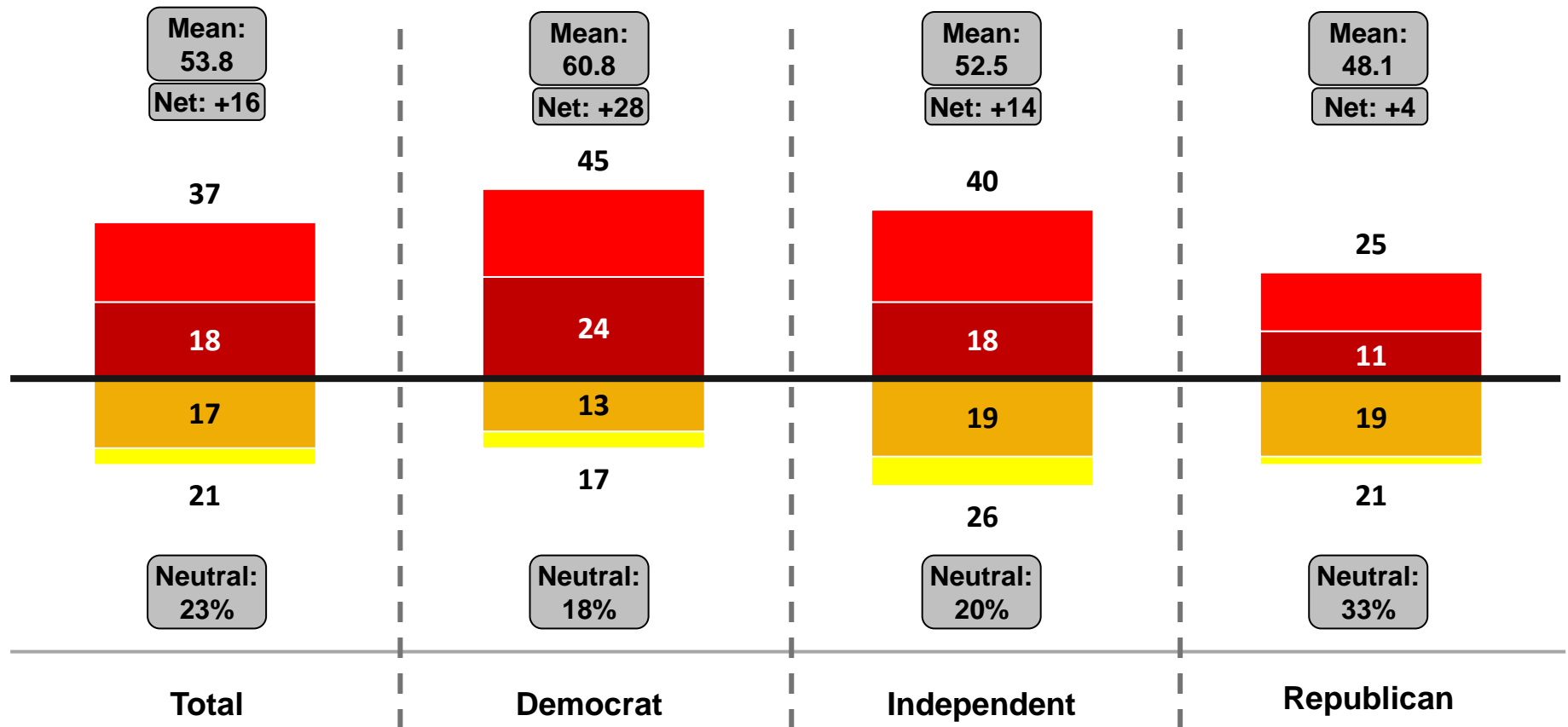
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# Independents warm to replacing current system with small donations and matching funds

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. **A plan that replaces current campaign funding with small donations and matching funds...**

■ Very warm (75-100) ■ Very cool (0-25)

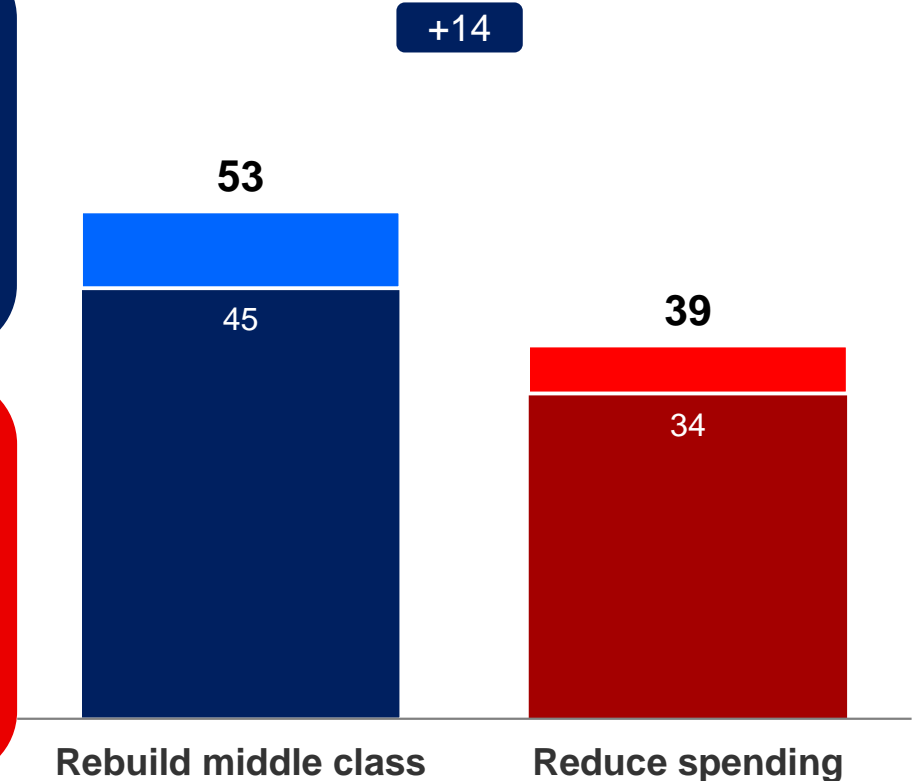


# Middle class message defeats spending and deficits message

*Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read 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.*

**STATEMENT 1:** Our number one priority is to rebuild the middle class. We should invest in education, protect Medicare and Social Security, end wasteful corporate subsidies and ask the rich to pay their fair share. We need our economy and our government to work for the middle class again.

**STATEMENT 2:** Our number one priority is to reduce the deficit and the size of government. We can't spend our way to prosperity. We can only create jobs if we get our spending and debt under control. Remove the overhang of debt and uncertainty so the job creators can get our economy back to work.



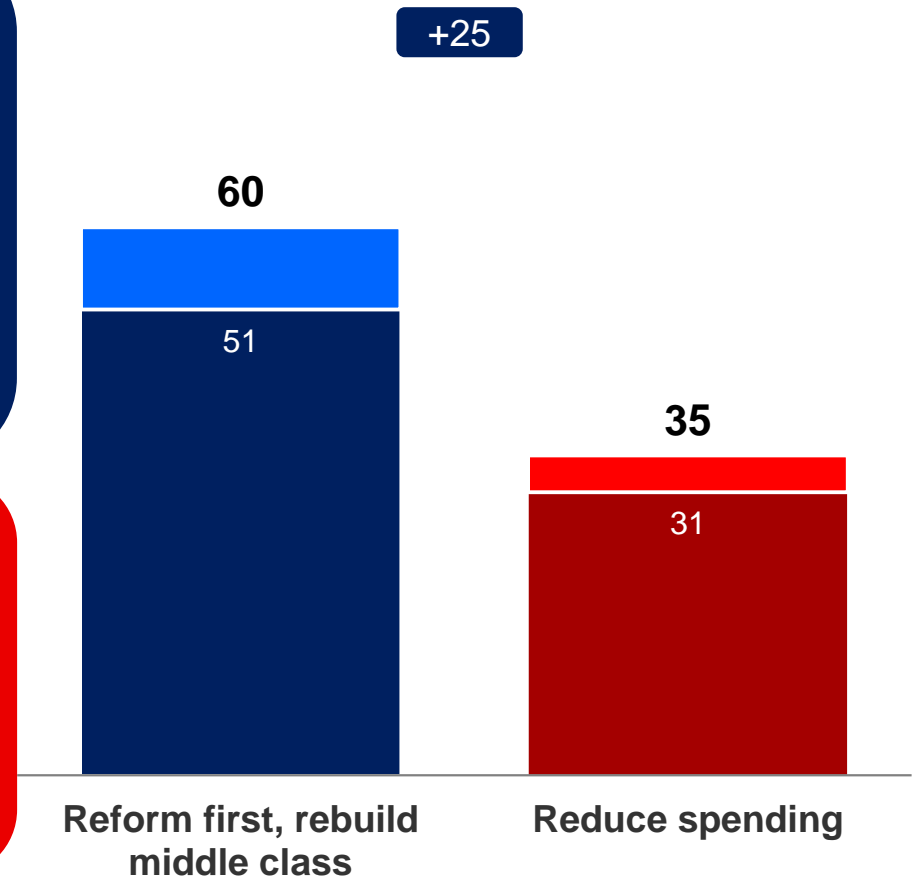


# Adding reform to the middle class statement increases support to 60 percent

Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read 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.

**STATEMENT 1:** *The middle class won't catch a break unless we start by reducing the influence of big banks, big donors and corporate lobbyists.* Then, we need to invest in education, protect Medicare and Social Security, end wasteful corporate subsidies and ask the rich to pay their fair share. We need our economy and our government to work for the middle class again.

**STATEMENT 2:** Our number one priority is to reduce the deficit and the size of government. We can't spend our way to prosperity. We can only create jobs if we get our spending and debt under control. Remove the overhang of debt and uncertainty so the job creators can get our economy back to work.



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