

GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

Getting to the strongest battle for the future

Report on Democracy Corps presidential narrative survey

October 15, 2012



DEMOCRACY CORPS
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

Methodology and Overview

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

The survey of 1000 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) nationwide was conducted from September 8 to 12, 2012.

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

Key Findings

- **Never forget how tough the economy is, and how that impacts the reactions to future plans and narrative. Almost 60 percent give the economy a negative rating. As a result, Romney still leads Obama by 2 points on the economy and narrows the race after hearing about future narrative and plans.**
- **Obama has the edge because voters more focused on future plans than past performance and respond to Obama's emphasis on the middle class.**
- **Voters want major changes to address jobs, government debt, and income inequality between richest and the rest of us. But they want to build on America's strengths – not move in a totally different direction. Obama gets it right when he says, "our problems can be solved."**
- **If people think Obama is merely trying to finish up the work of his first term, it is very problematic. Voters want major changes, building on our strengths.**
- **Voters want to take power away from Wall Street and Washington.**

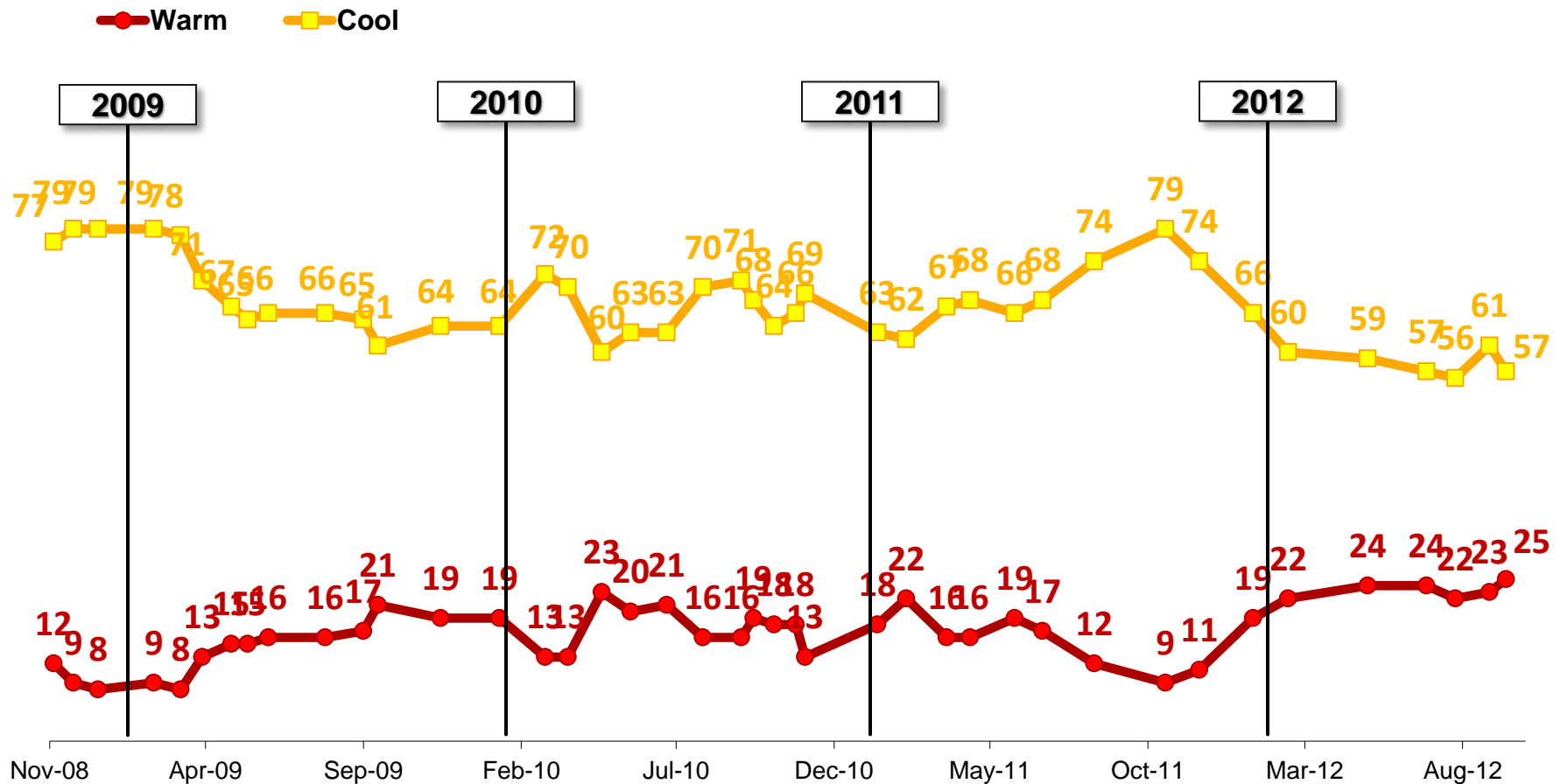
Key Findings

- **Obama's overall future narrative gets heard and maintains 5-point edge over Romney's.**
- **Obama making the case for prioritizing growth, building our economic capacity and investment over-short-term deficit reduction and taking a balanced approach with rich contributing more, has a major impact.**
- **Education and Medicare messages are strong.**
- **A message that is critical of global integration with China and the impact on the middle class and need to limit that trade is impactful – even as that issue is now being debated by presidential candidates.**
- **In these times, there is an audience for Romney's jobs message, focused on taking advantage of our oil, coal and gas reserves, giving kids skills, cutting the deficit and reducing taxes and regulations on small business. There is less interest in message about spending cuts and tax cuts.**
- **The economy will create continuing pressure to keep the race close but laying out bold future plans that build on America's strength can undergird support.**

The tough economic context

Tough economy, with no improvement in 2012

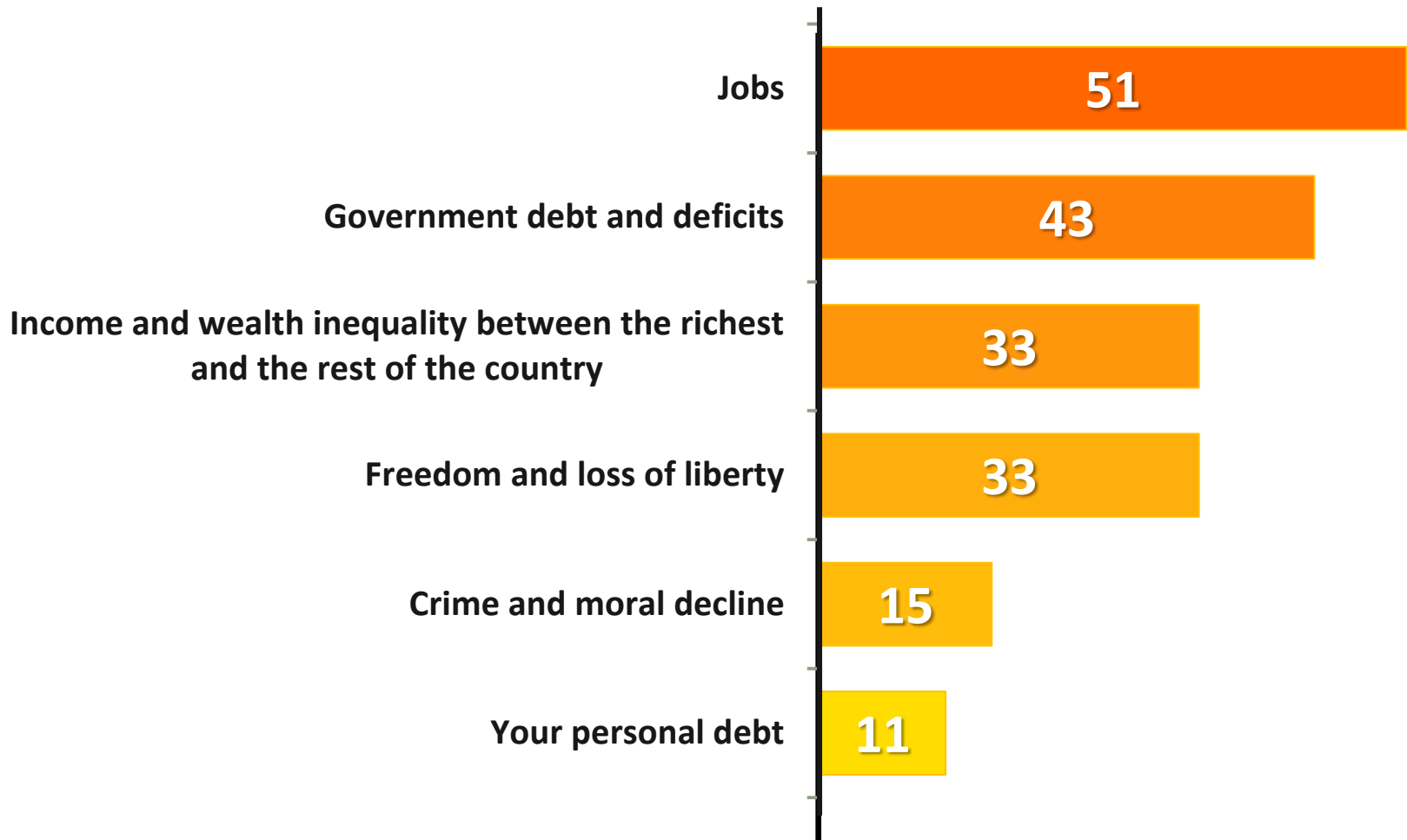
Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold... **The state of the economy.**



Jobs are number one priority

Which ONE of the following problems are you most concerned about?

Percent saying this is most concerning (top 2 concerns combined)

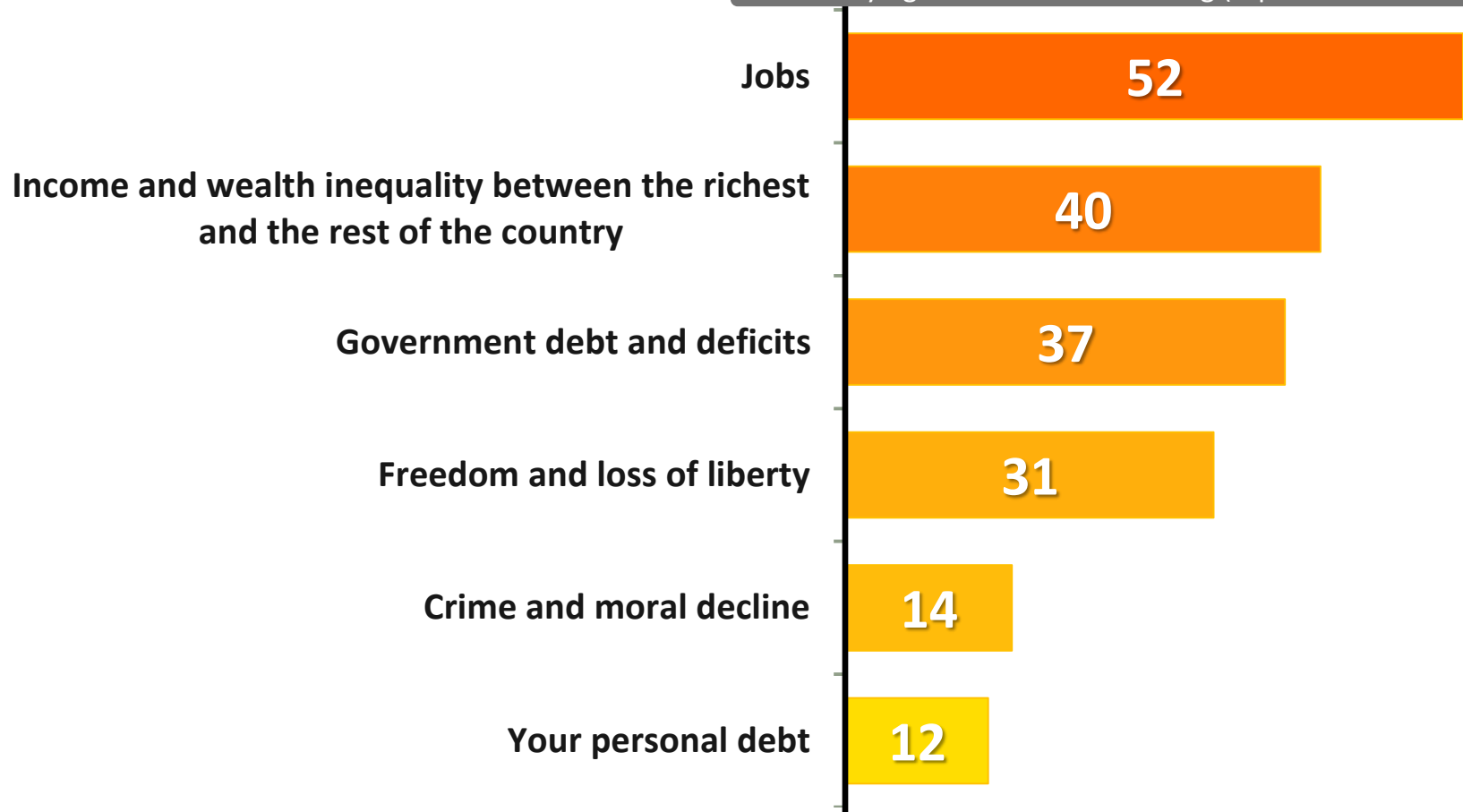


And Rising American Electorate as a whole

Which ONE of the following problems are you most concerned about? Which ONE of the following problems do you think is the SECOND most concerning?

Rising American Electorate

Percent saying this is most concerning (top 2 concerns combined)



**The public wants major changes but built
on our strengths**

In a tough economic environment, there is an appetite for big change

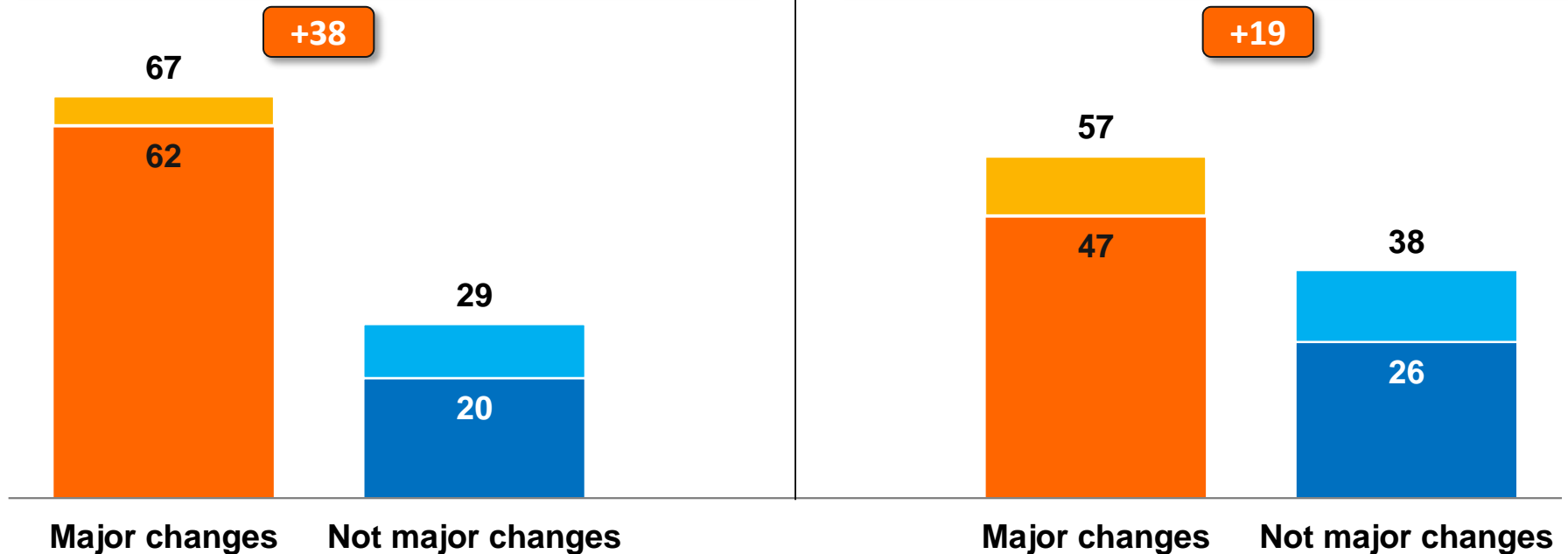
Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

We need to make major changes to solve America's problems.

We need changes, but not major ones, to solve America's problems.

We need to make major changes in the way we govern ourselves to solve America's problems.

We need changes, but not major ones, in the way we govern ourselves to solve America's problems.

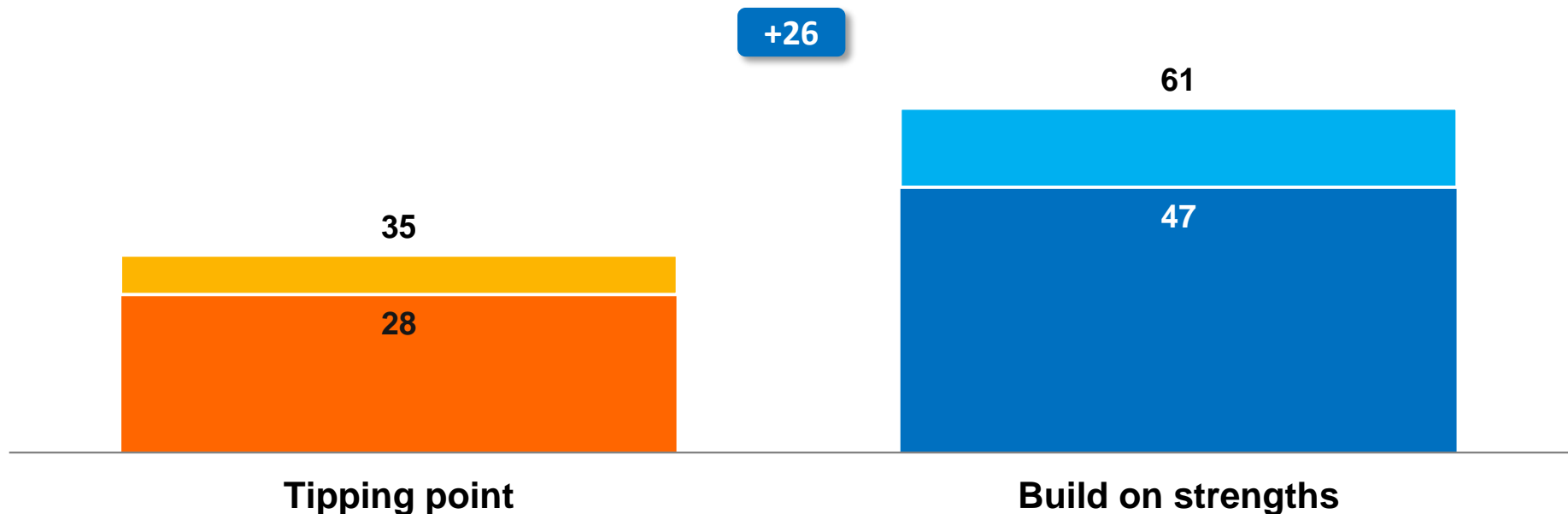


But change that builds on our strengths as a country

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.

America's problems are building up to a tipping point that could bring a totally new direction for our country.

Our country is experiencing many problems, but we can build on our strengths to get things back on track.



No shift to tipping point despite 4 years of crisis

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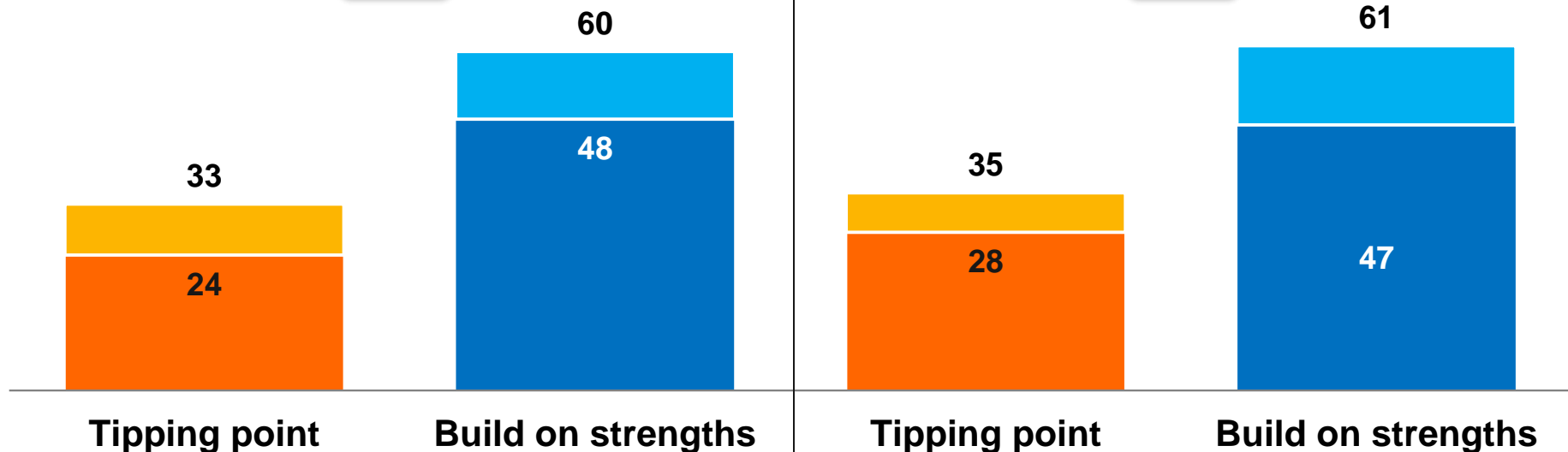
Our country is experiencing many problems, but we can build on our strengths to get things back on track.

June 2008

+27

Sept 2012

+26



Voters say will judge candidates by future plans, much more than past record

In deciding between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney in the election for president this November, what will mostly determine your vote: the past records of the candidates or their plans for the future?

What will mostly determine your vote?

+17

53

36

Plans for the future

Past records

½ say shift power away from Wall Street; ½ say shift away from federal to local communities

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.

We need to limit the power of Wall Street and the big banks if we are to make the changes the country needs.

We need to shift power from the federal government to states and local communities if we are to make the changes the country needs.

+3

45

36

Limit Wall Street

48

38

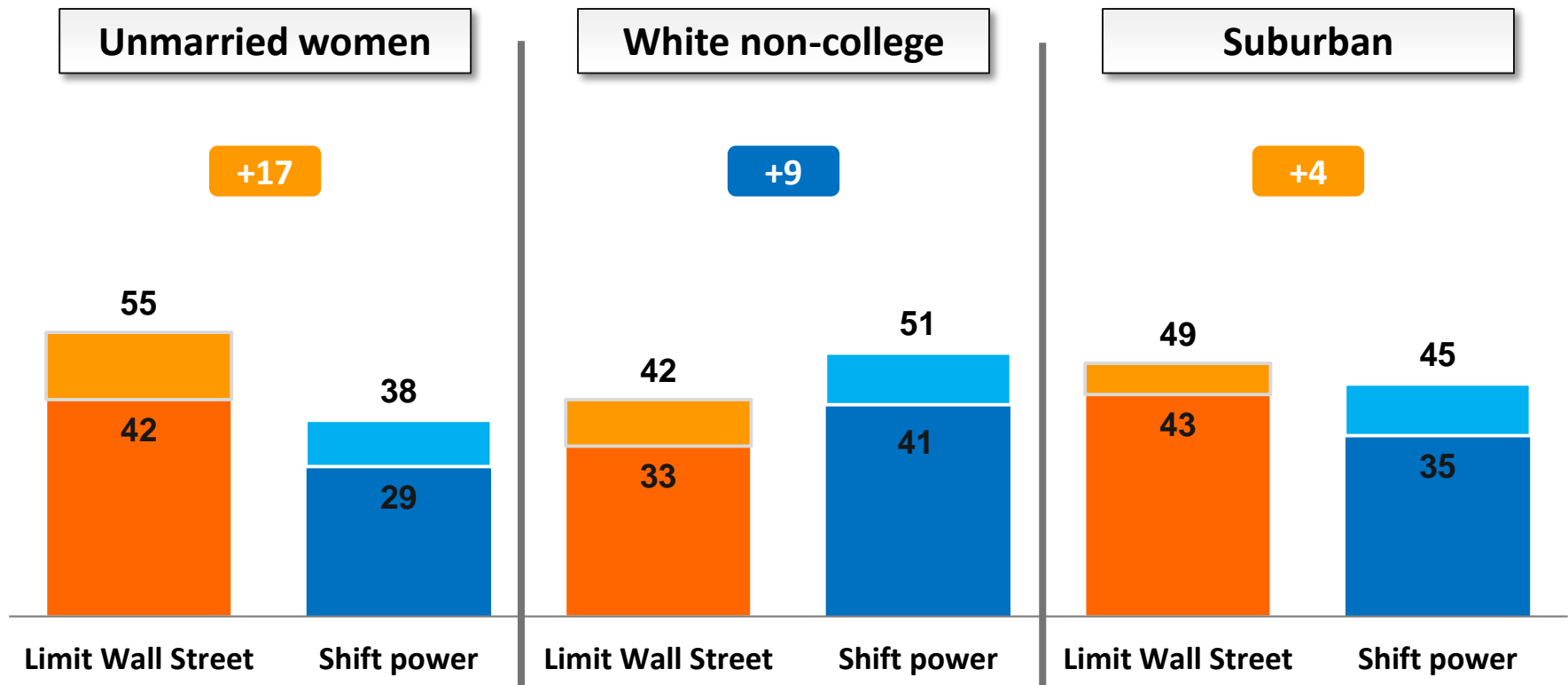
Shift power

Unmarried women want to limit Wall Street; white non-college voters lean more towards shifting power from the federal government

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Future narratives and policy choices

Obama and Romney campaign future narratives from conventions

Barack Obama

No one said this would be easy, but our problems can be solved. And I'm asking you to rally around a set of goals for your country - goals in manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit; a real, achievable plan that will lead to new jobs, more opportunity, and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. We can choose a future where we export more products and outsource fewer jobs, where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone pays their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules.

Mitt Romney

Today, for the first time, most Americans now doubt that our children will have a better future. This was supposed to be a time when families could put aside a little more for retirement or college, small businesses could hire more, and our nation could start paying down our debt. It's what you deserved, but didn't get. I am running for president to help create a better future, where everyone who wants a job can find one, seniors can have a secure retirement, and every child can get a good education.

Obama future narrative scores better, but reflects vote and no intensity advantage

Now I'm going to read you two statements, one from Barack Obama and one from Mitt Romney. After I read both statements, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

■ Obama strongly

■ Romney strongly

No one said this would be easy, but our problems can be solved. And I'm asking you to rally around a set of goals for your country - goals in manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit; a real, achievable plan that will lead to new jobs, more opportunity, and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. We can choose a future where we export more products and outsource fewer jobs, where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone pays their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules.

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+4

50

43

Obama

46

41

Romney

Obama hopeful, future narrative stronger than message focused on daunting problem, corruption, and decline.

Now I'm going to read you two statements, one from Barack Obama and one from Mitt Romney. After I read both statements, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

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I want to be frank about what's at stake. We have been consumed with recovering from the crash, but the bigger, more daunting problem is the corruption of our democracy and decline of the middle class. But we are capable of much more. If we embrace an energy and industrial revival we can build a resurgent America.

Today, for the first time, most Americans now doubt that our children will have a better future. This was supposed to be a time when families could put aside a little more for retirement or college, small businesses could hire more, and our nation could start paying down our debt. It's what you deserved, but didn't get.

50

+4

46

43

41

Obama

Romney

46

+4

50

39

39

Obama

Romney

Within tipping point context, most impactful messages say: strongly invest in future economic capacity, deficit later; and limit China impact

Now I want you to imagine it is the last night of the Democratic National Convention. Barack Obama is giving his speech, outlining the bold policies he thinks the country needs to pursue in the next four years. He says, "We are on the verge of an industrial renaissance that will build American prosperity and create more middle class jobs." I will now read you more of what he says. After I read each statement, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement.

(GLOBALIZATION) Our global integration with China and other Asian economies hurts middle class Americans and our economic future. They manipulate their currencies and don't pay their workers a living wage. So, we need to limit our trade and investment with these countries so we're not vulnerable to the ups and downs of the global economy, and increase wages of working Americans so everyone can earn a living wage.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree

41

68

(DEBT/INVESTMENT) Our principle economic challenge is not the deficit but our hesitation to strongly invest in our future economic capacity. Trillions of dollars of capital is idle and millions are unemployed, and that's wrong. We need to put this money and people back to work right now rebuilding our nation's energy, transportation, and water systems. This is the best way to grow the economy and reduce our debt burden.

38

64

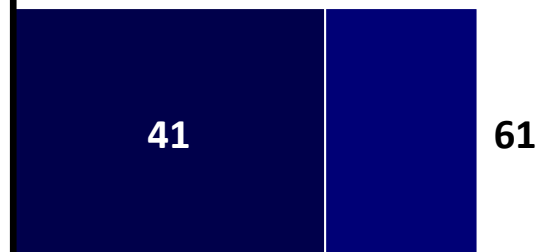
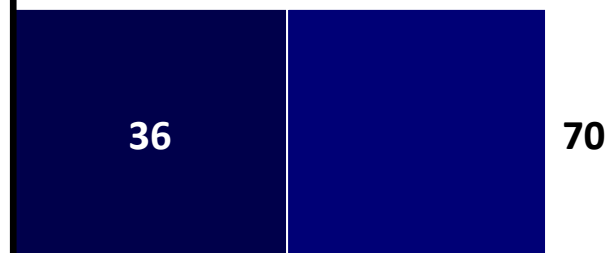
Breaking up power in Wall Street and Washington gets broad agreement, but less impactful

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(DECENTRALIZATION) Too much power is held in Washington and on Wall Street, which are unaccountable to people. We need a new fiscal compact which gives communities control over how they meet their needs and advance their own economic development. Break up the big banks and move political power back to individuals, families and neighborhoods to help them take control of rebuilding, modernizing and training our people.

(TAXES) Our tax system is too complicated and inefficient. It must be simpler and fairer. We should eliminate the tax breaks that keep the wealthy from paying taxes but hurt working Americans. No American making less than 100,000 dollars a year should pay more than 10 percent in taxes. We can replace lost revenue with a new financial transaction tax on Wall Street transactions and with a sales tax, which will strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree



Putting money to work and argument that globalization hurts the middle class are strongest in driving support for Obama

<u>Dependent Variable: Openness to supporting Obama</u>					
Independent Variables: Obama Bold Messages	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	Z	P-value	
Initial Presidential Vote	2.92	0.66	4.76	0	
Obama approval	2.73	0.56	4.86	0	
(DEBT/INVESTMENT) Our principle economic challenge is not the deficit but our hesitation to strongly invest in our future economic capacity. Trillions of dollars of capital is idle and millions are unemployed, and that's wrong. We need to put this money and people back to work right now rebuilding our nation's energy, transportation, and water systems. This is the best way to grow the economy and reduce our debt burden.	1.74	0.26	3.72	0	
Party Identification	1.62	0.25	3.2	0.001	
(GLOBALIZATION) Our global integration with China and other Asian economies hurts middle class Americans and our economic future. They manipulate their currencies and don't pay their workers a living wage. So, we need to limit our trade and investment with these countries so we're not vulnerable to the ups and downs of the global economy, and increase wages of working Americans so everyone can earn a living wage.	1.35	0.18	2.31	0.021	
R-Squared = 0.60					

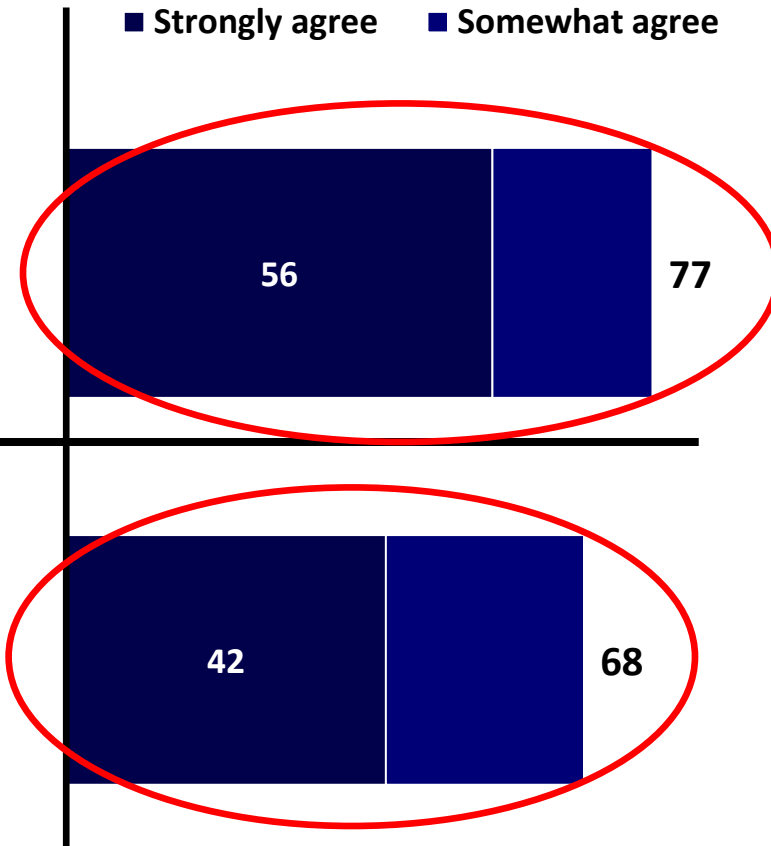
In context of building on America's strengths, education and economic growth biggest impact

Now, I want you to imagine it is the last night of the Democratic National Convention. Barack Obama is giving his speech, outlining the policies he thinks the country needs to pursue in the next four years. He says, "America must stand up and fight for a future where middle class families can strive for the American dream." I will now read you more of what he says. After I read each statement, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement.

(EDUCATION) A world-class education is the surest path to finding a good job and making it into the middle class. We need to maintain education spending, not cut it. Let's make college more affordable by keeping student loan interest rates low and improving access to community colleges. And let's make teaching a more attractive career choice, with good salaries, training, and support through the Race to the Top Program.

(ECONOMIC GROWTH) I'm committed to reducing our spending and deficits, but in a balanced way in which the wealthiest pay their fair share. We're not going to grow our economy from the top down. Let's start with the middle class, who are the engine of our economy, by investing in natural gas, manufacturing and auto industries, which provide good-paying jobs and make our economy more competitive globally.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree



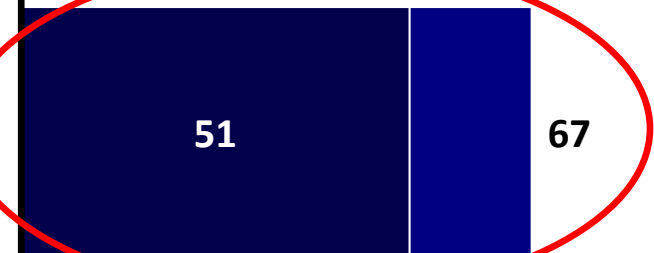
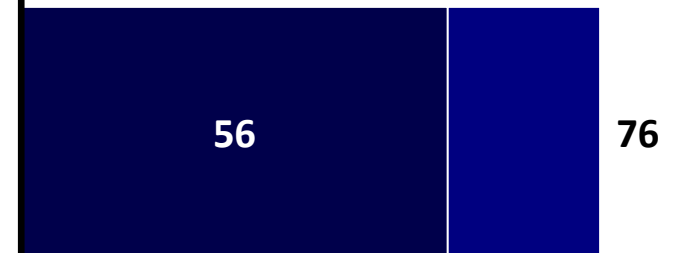
Obama's Medicare message also scores well

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(MEDICARE AND RETIREMENT) All seniors, not just a privileged few, should be able to retire with dignity and security. Instead of privatizing Medicare and Social Security to give more tax cuts to millionaires, let's protect benefits for seniors. Let's lower the costs of prescriptions and cut out waste and abuse to strengthen these vital programs, without cutting benefits for seniors who've paid in their whole life.

(TAX MILLIONAIRES) Instead of cutting taxes for millionaires, we should keep taxes low for middle class families and ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more. We should make sure millionaires are not paying lower rates than the middle class, and keep tax breaks that benefit the middle class like the home mortgage deduction and child tax credit, but close loopholes allowing millionaires to shield their income in off-shore tax havens.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree



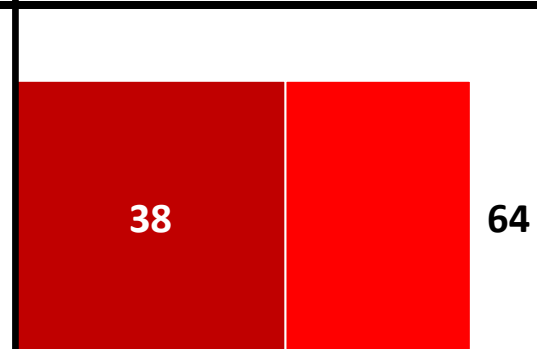
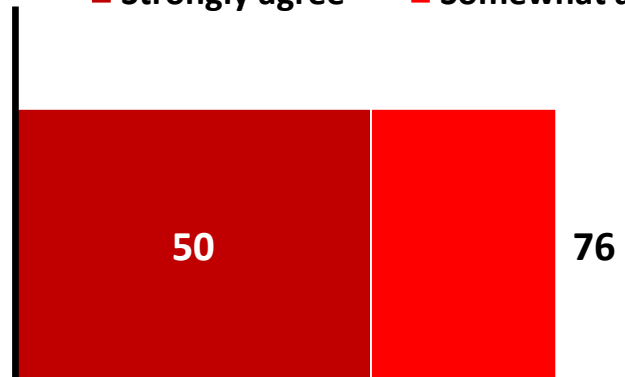
Romney's 5-point plan gets high scores; and tax reform attractive

Now, I want you to imagine it is the last night of the Republican National Convention. Mitt Romney is giving his speech, outlining the policies he thinks the country needs to pursue in the next four years. He says, "We face a debt crisis that threatens our future. I want to restore the values that made us great." I will now read you more of what he says. After I read each statement, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement.

(5 POINT PLAN) We need a plan to create 12 million new jobs. Let's take advantage of our oil, coal and gas reserves to become energy independent. Let's give the children of today the skills they need to be successful tomorrow, giving every student a choice to attend a good school. Forge new trade agreements, cut the deficit, and reduce taxes and regulations on small businesses.

(TAX REFORM) Our tax code has high rates on a narrow base. That discourages entrepreneurship, risk-taking and saving by the middle class and small businesses. We cannot raise taxes on the middle class. Instead, let's overhaul our complicated individual tax code by cutting rates 20 percent across the board, narrowing loopholes, and making the tax code simpler and fairer.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree



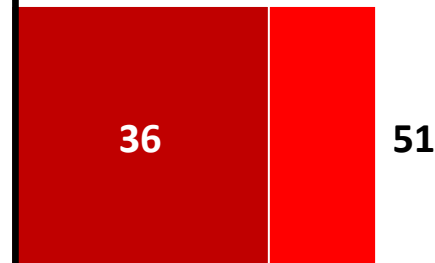
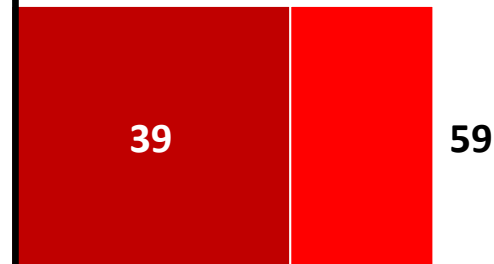
Romney's spending and tax cuts and corporate relief proposals much less supported

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(SPENDING/ENTITLEMENTS) Our government can't keep spending more than it takes in. We must make dramatic cuts, including reforming Medicaid by giving states the flexibility to solve their own problems, and let future seniors choose between traditional Medicare or private insurance plans that keep decisions between patients and doctors. We need to cut spending and reform entitlements to get our budget back on a path to balance.

(TAXES/REGULATION) High taxes and costly regulations discourage work, entrepreneurship, savings, and investment. We should reduce our high corporate tax rate and switch to a territorial tax system to make our businesses more competitive globally and encourage them to create more jobs in the US. Get rid of job-killing regulations like Obamacare and Wall Street reform.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree

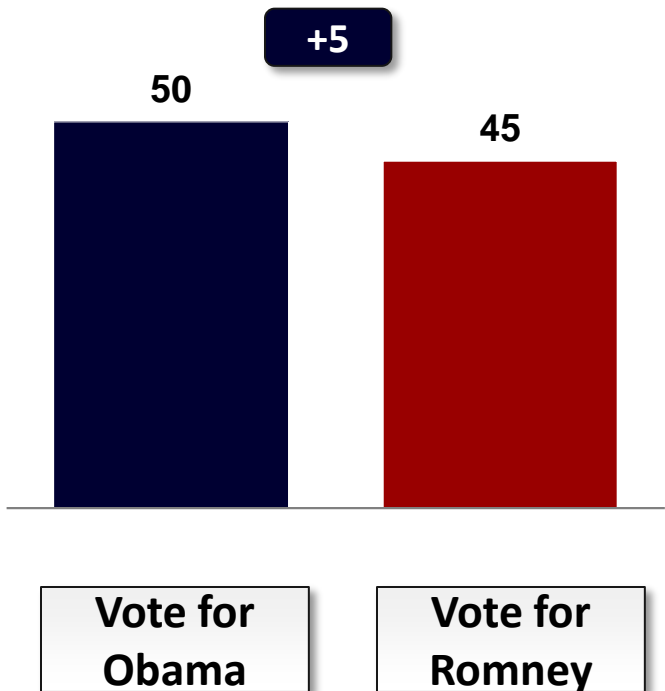


**After hearing plans for the future,
possible to sustain support**

The debate about future plans leaves 5-point race unchanged

Thinking about the presidential election in November, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?

Presidential Vote

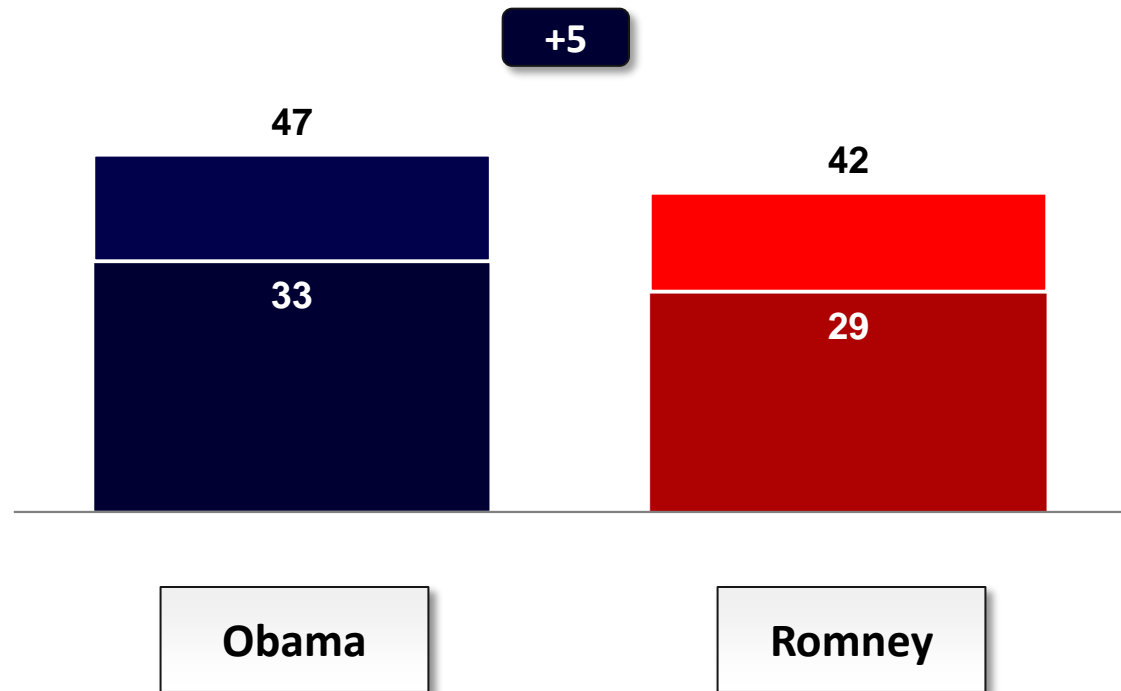


Now, thinking about what you just heard, would you now very seriously consider supporting Barack Obama/Mitt Romney for president, seriously consider supporting Barack Obama/Mitt Romney, possibly consider supporting Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or would you not consider supporting Barack Obama/Mitt Romney for president?

Consider Supporting Candidate

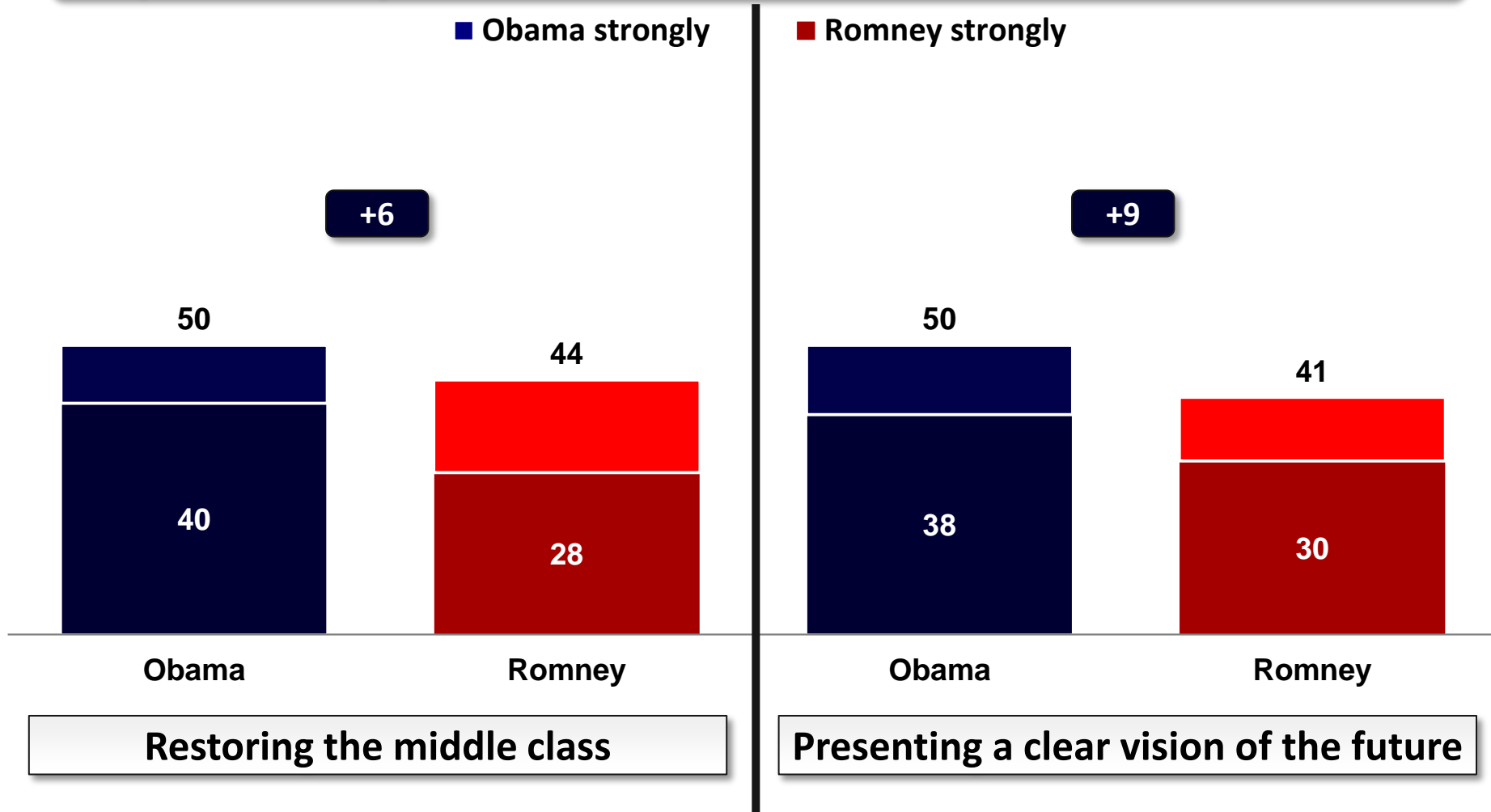
■ Obama very seriously

■ Romney very seriously



Obama leads on restoring the middle class and vision of the future

Now I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think Barack Obama or Mitt Romney would do a better job with this issue.



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