

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

# Voters Push Back Against Big Money Politics

November 13, 2012



**DEMOCRACY CORPS**  
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

 **PUBLIC  
CAMPAIGN**  
**ACTION FUND**  
OF, BY, AND FOR THE PEOPLE.

# Methodology and Overview

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

**The survey of 1000 2012 presidential voters (1000 weighted) nationwide was conducted from November 6-7, 2012 – the night of and night after the election.**

**Survey results were weighted to reflect the National Exit Survey.**

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

**This presentation is part of a larger set of several unique election night surveys that Democracy Corps has partnered with a range of progressive groups.**

# Key Findings

- **Voters are deeply concerned that all of this money purchases influence in Congress and drowns out the voices of ordinary voters. When asked who has the most influence on Congressional votes, the views of constituents ranked at the bottom of the list, while 59 percent of voters said “special interest groups and lobbyists” and almost half (46 percent) said campaign contributors.**
- **As a result, Democrats and Republicans, Obama voters and Romney voters alike, are equally concerned about the level of spending in this year’s presidential campaign, and this survey finds unmitigated bi-partisan disdain for Super PACs.**
- **Among all 2012 voters, 61 percent give the current level of money in politics an unfavorable rating, including a nearly identical 62 percent of Obama voters and 60 percent of Romney voters.**
- **Seven in ten voters said there was more advertising in this election compared to past years and more than a quarter characterized it as “unhealthy for our democracy.”**
- **Two thirds (64 percent) of 2012 voters said that democracy was undermined in this election by big donors and secret money that control which candidates we hear about**

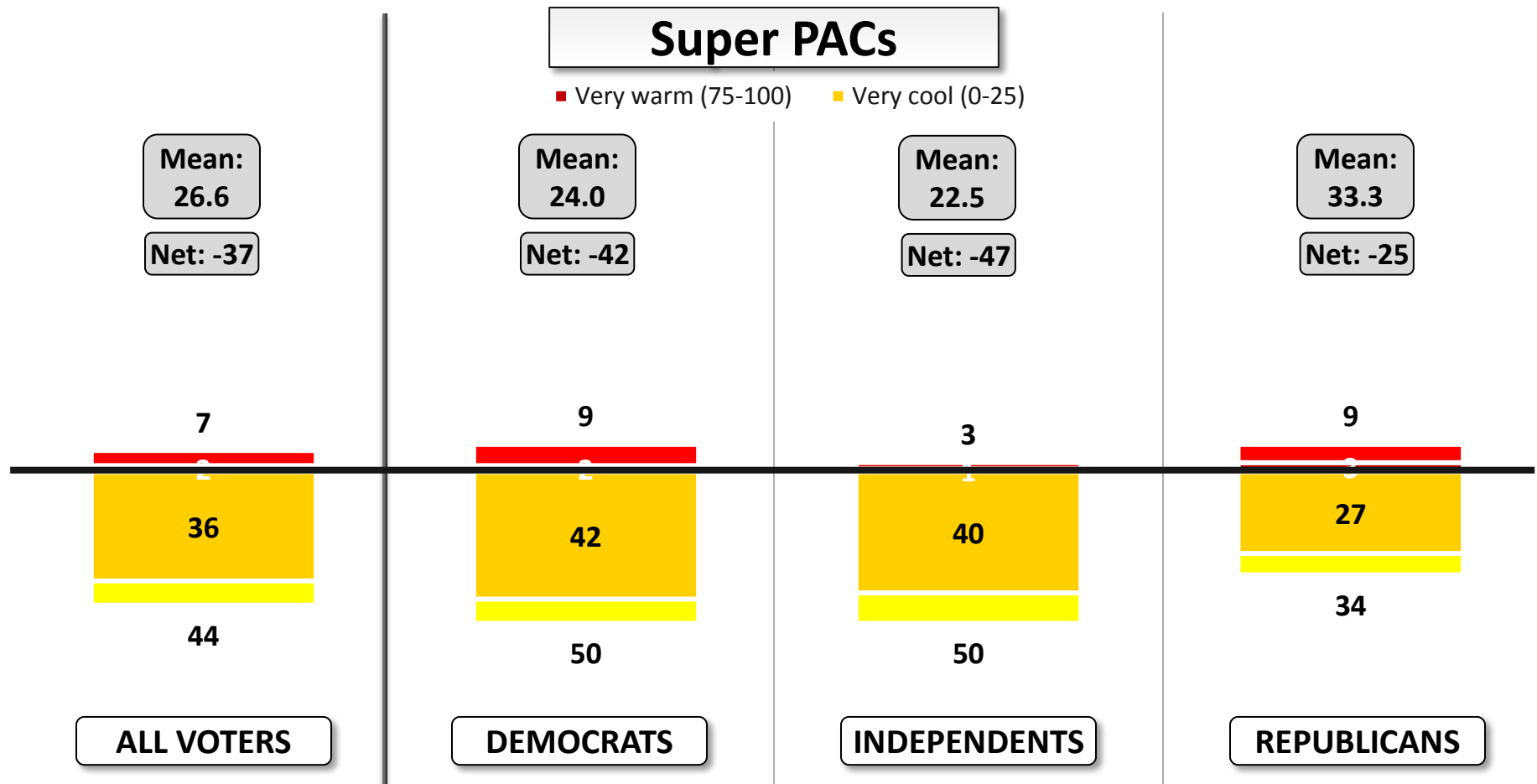
# Key Findings

- **Accordingly, more than three quarters (78 percent) say there needs to be reasonable limits on campaign spending. This survey finds strong majority support (56 percent) for a plan to replace the current system with one that relies on small contributions and public funding of campaigns.**
- **Voters give strong support across the board to a series of reforms like closing the revolving door (81%), increased disclosure of outside money (85%), and matching small donations with public funds (67%).**
- **The upshot is that small reforms no longer match the scale of the problem. Voters now want a fundamental overhaul, rather than modest changes, to the way elections are financed, particularly when they are provided information about the \$6 billion of campaign spending. Information produces majority support for some of the most sweeping changes with public matching funding.**

**Voters reflect on the most expensive  
election in history**

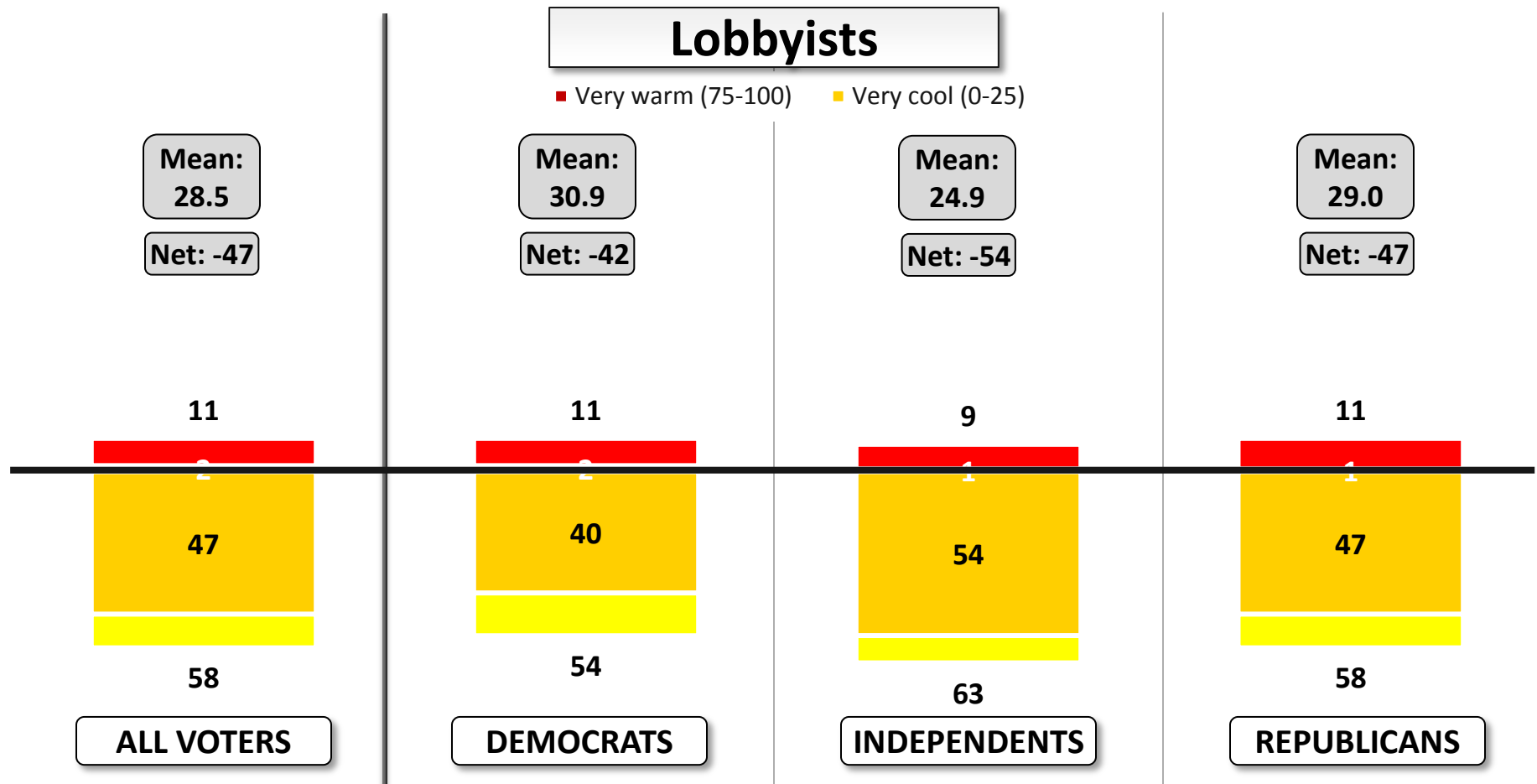
# Intense negativity toward PACs across all parties

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.



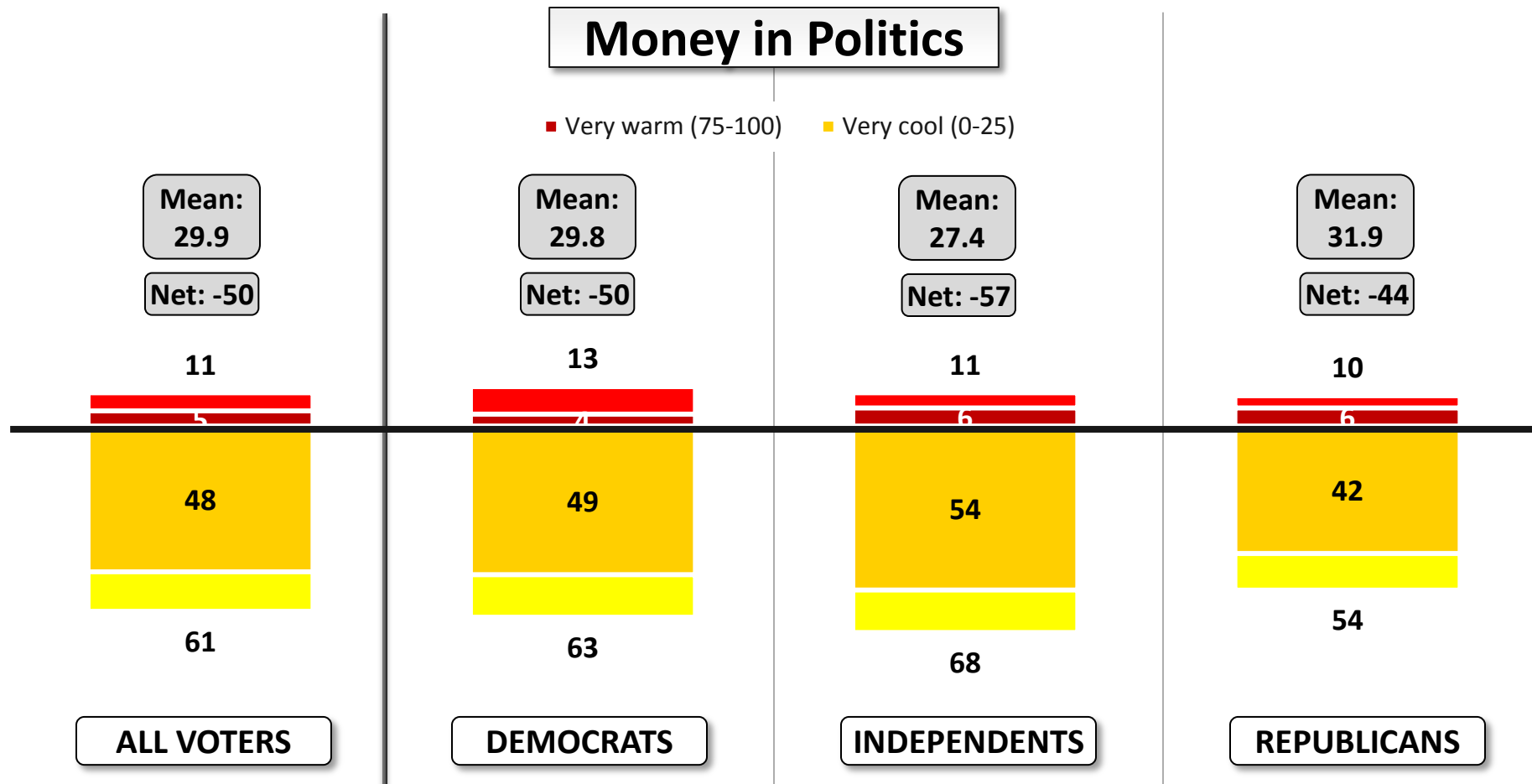
# All voters intensely negative toward lobbyists, especially independents

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# All voters negative about money in politics; very little difference between partisans

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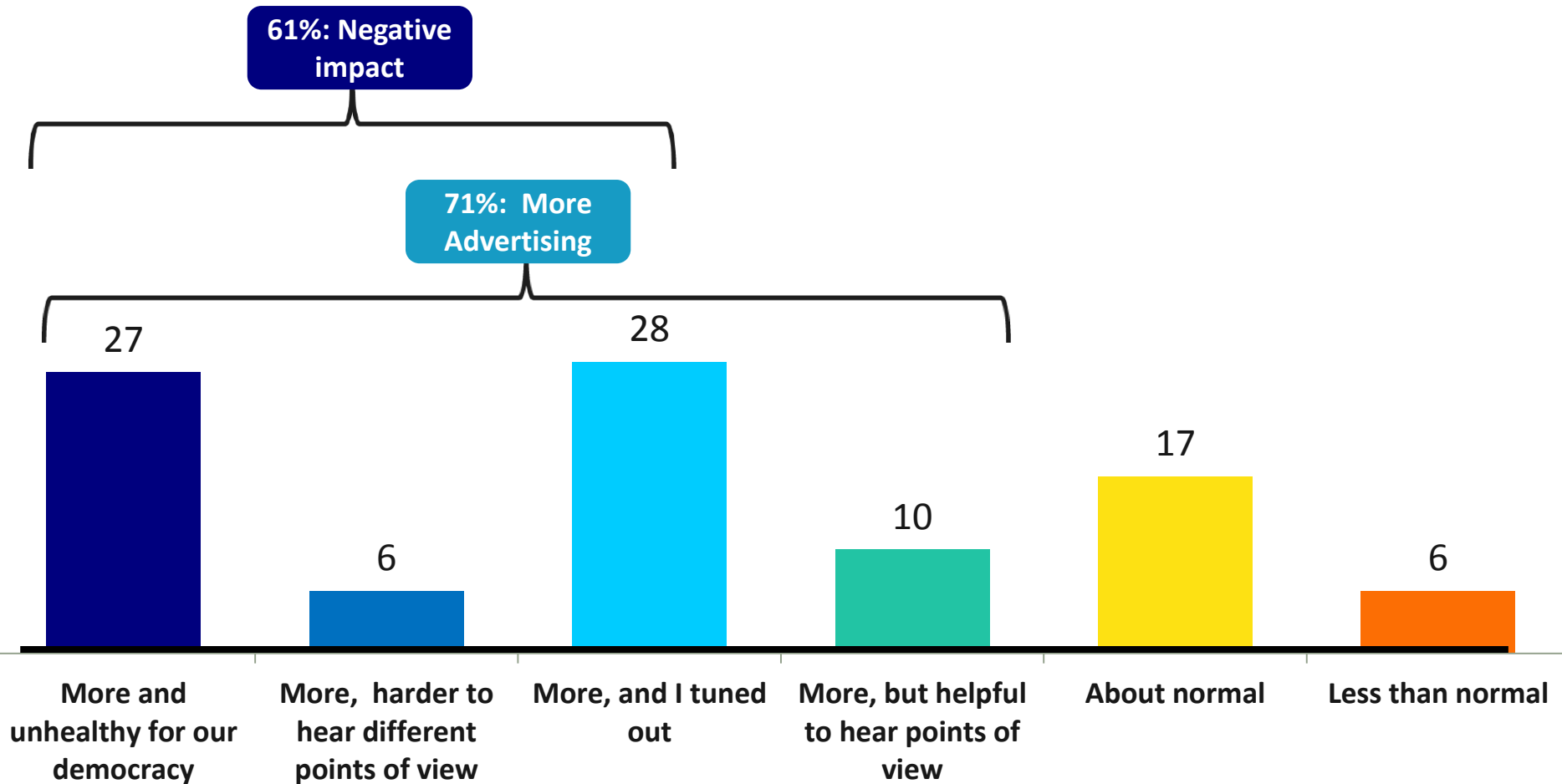


# Driven by huge amounts of spending in campaign – more than a quarter saying it was bad for democracy

*How would you characterize the level of advertising by the campaigns and outside groups in this election?*

**61%: Negative impact**

**71%: More Advertising**



# Two thirds believe current system “undermines democracy”

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

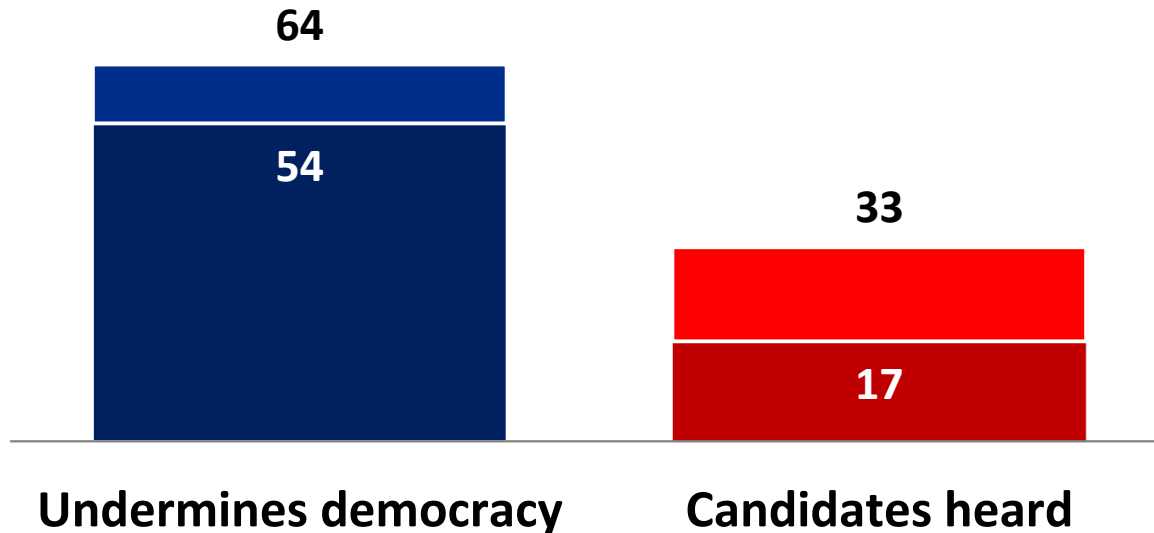
**Given what I saw in the presidential race during this election, I am fed up with the big donors and secret money that control which candidates we hear about. It undermines democracy.**

**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.**

■ Undermines strongly

■ Candidates heard strongly

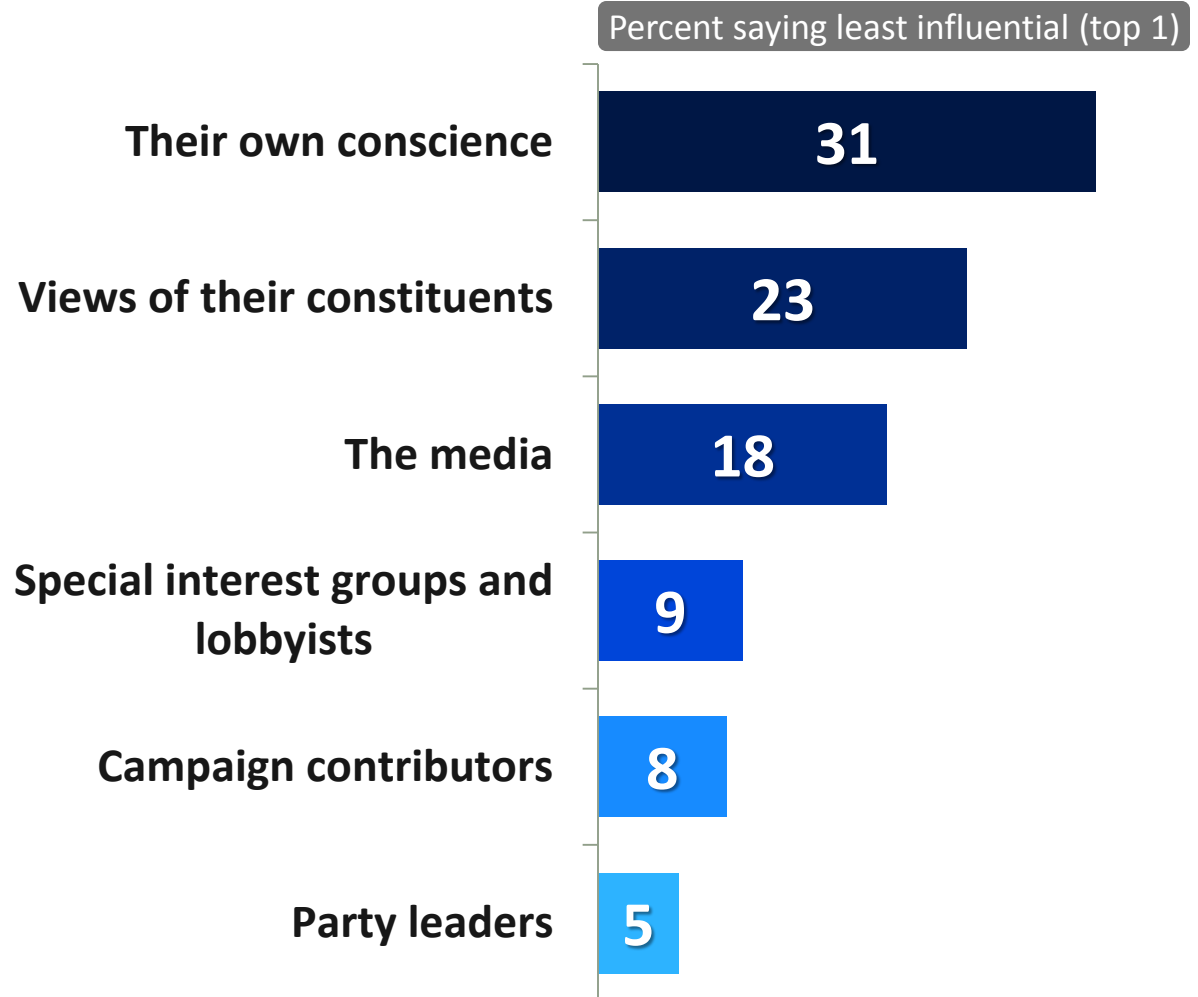
**+31**



# Views of constituents vie for least influential

*Now I'm going to read you some various people and organizations that might influence how members of Congress vote. Which one do you think has the least influence on how members of Congress vote?*

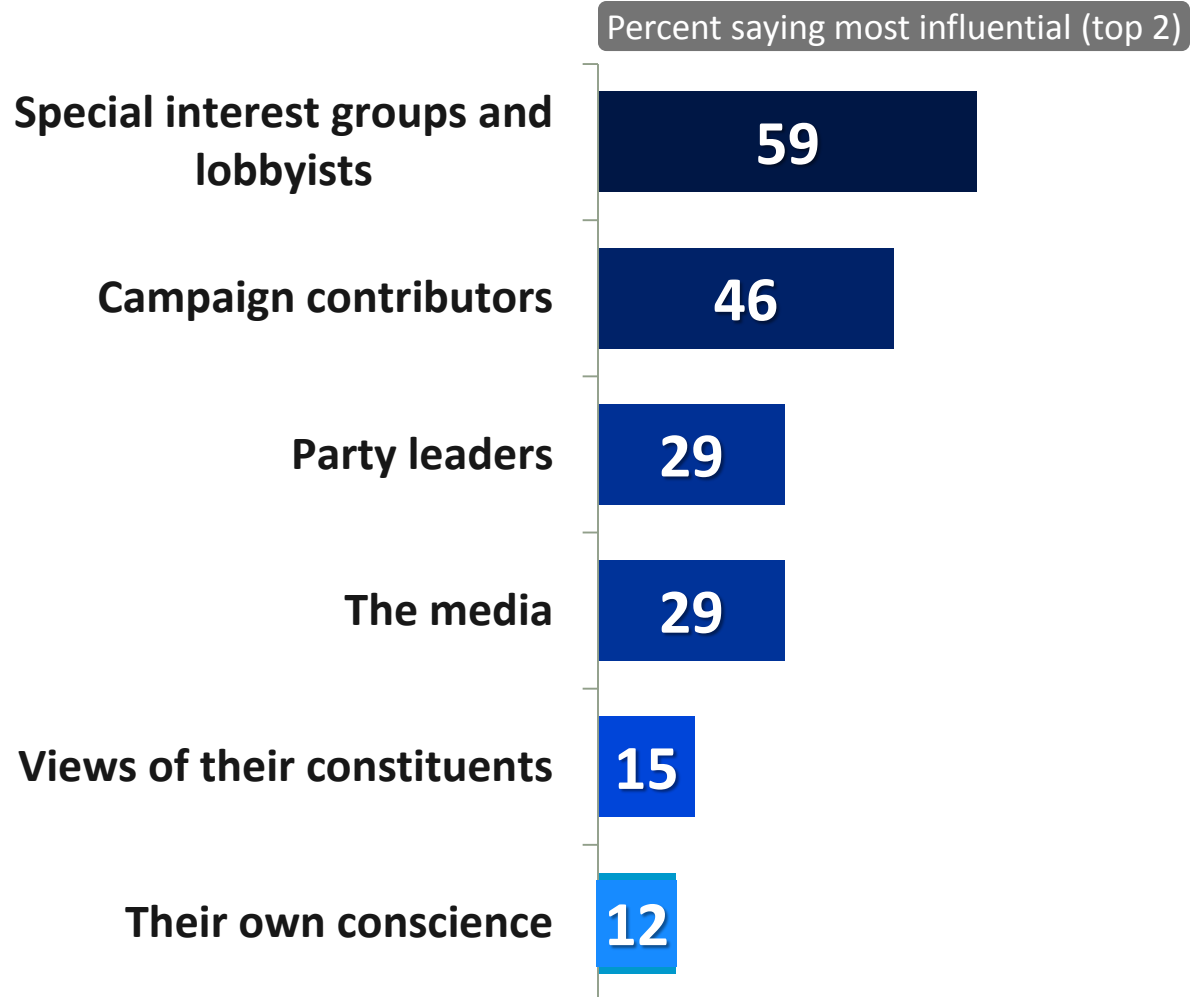
**Of the following,  
which one do you  
think have the  
LEAST influence  
on how members  
of Congress vote?**



# What does influence? Alarming number say elected officials beholden to special interests

*Now I'm going to read you some various people and organizations that might influence how members of Congress vote. Of the following, which TWO do you think have the most influence on how members of Congress vote?*

Of the following,  
which two do you  
think have the  
**MOST** influence  
on how members  
of Congress vote?



# Negative view of influence on Congress cuts across party lines, whether voted for Democratic or Republican representative

*Now I'm going to read you some various people and organizations that might influence how members of Congress vote. Of the following, which TWO do you think have the most influence on how members of Congress vote?*

Special interest groups  
and lobbyists

60

Campaign contributors

46

Party leaders

28

The media

26

Views of their  
constituents

14

Their own conscience

13

**Voted for Cong. Democrat**

Special interest groups  
and lobbyists

58

Campaign contributors

45

Party leaders

29

The media

33

Views of their  
constituents

15

Their own conscience

11

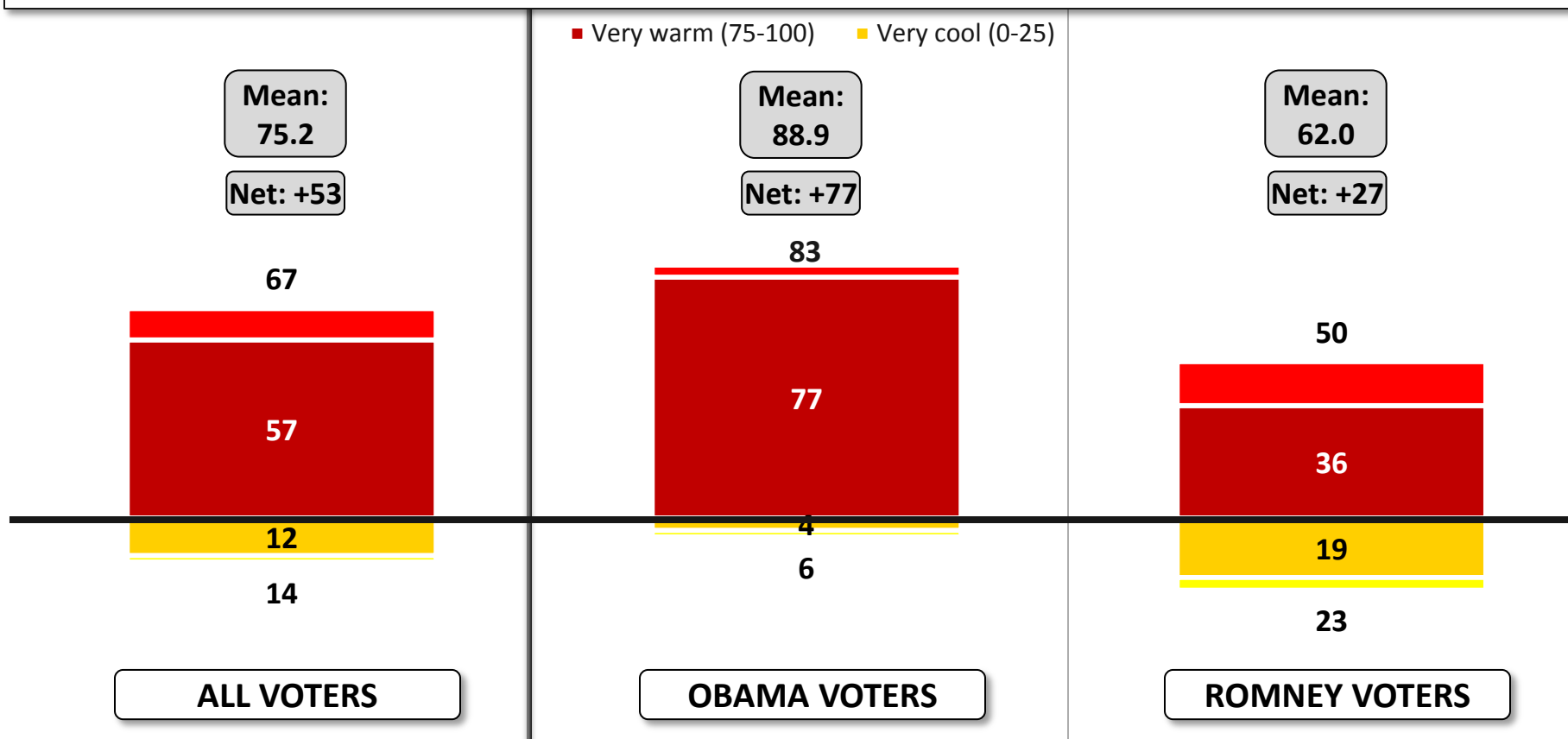
**Voted for Cong. Republican**

**Strong support for range of policies to limit the influence of money in politics**

# Two thirds of all voters, including half of Romney voters, support plan to open up voting process to make sure all voters can vote

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.

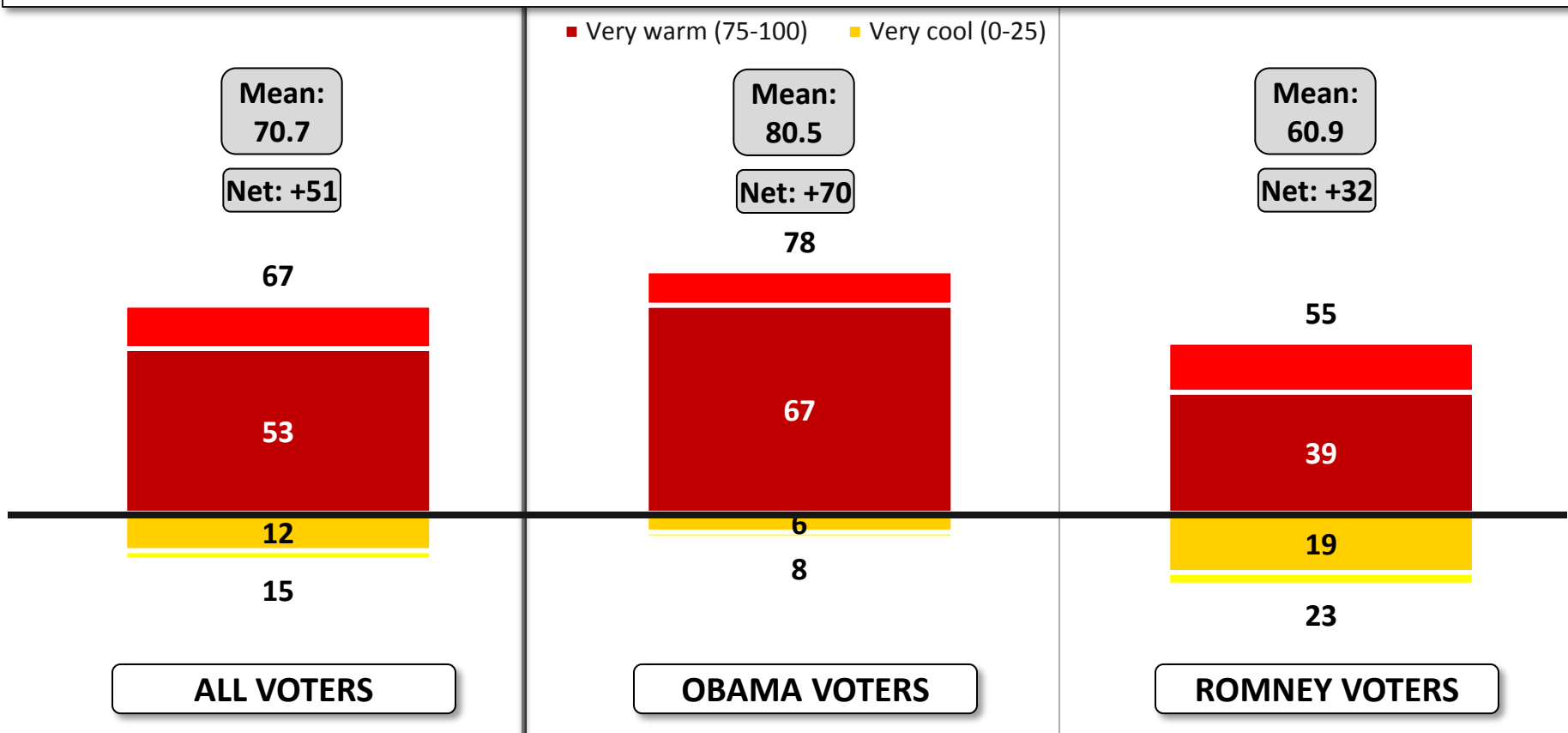
## A plan to cut red tape from the voting process to make sure all eligible voters can vote



# Two thirds of all voters, including majority of Romney voters, support plan to extend early voting for all

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.

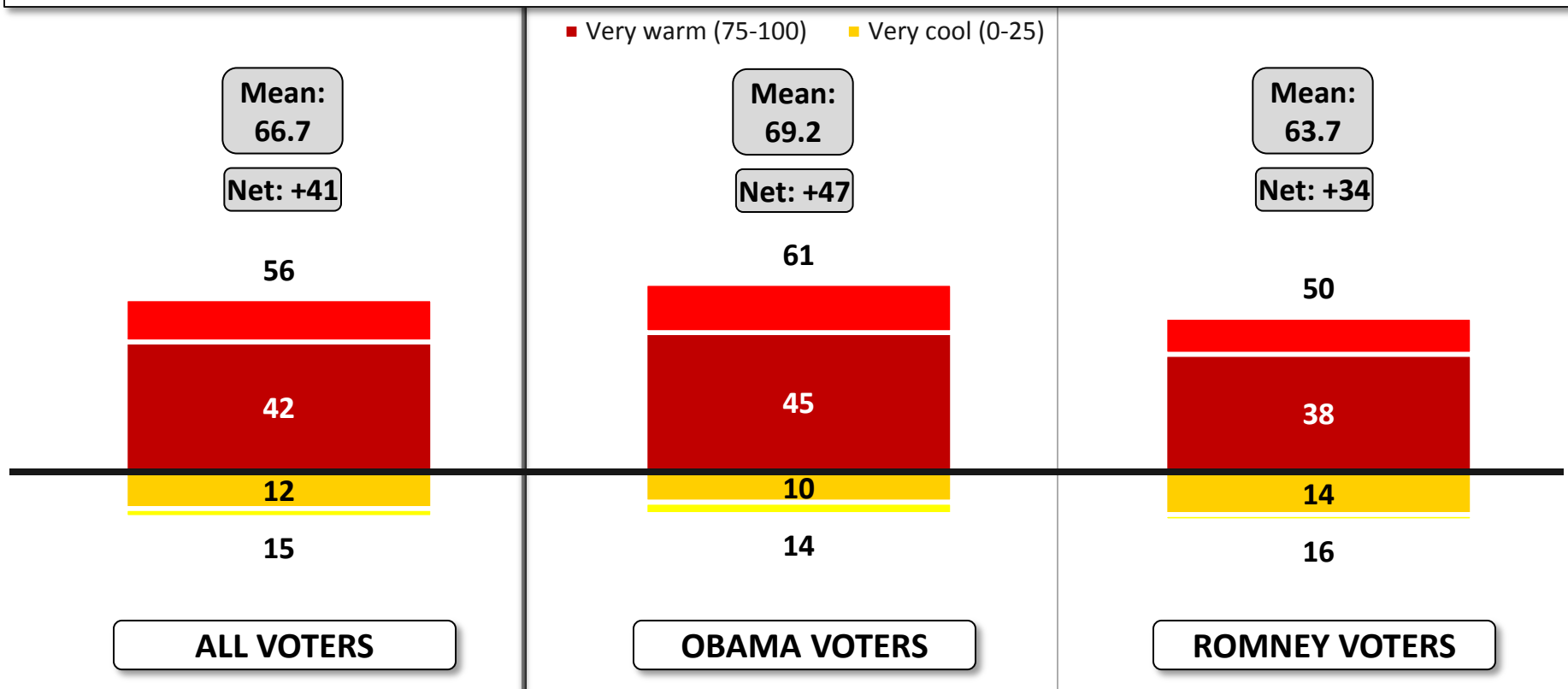
## A plan to modernize voter registration and to extend early voting for all voters



# And strong support to replace current system small contributions and limited public 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. 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.

**A plan to replace the current campaign finance system of large private contributions with one that relies on small contributions and limited public funds**

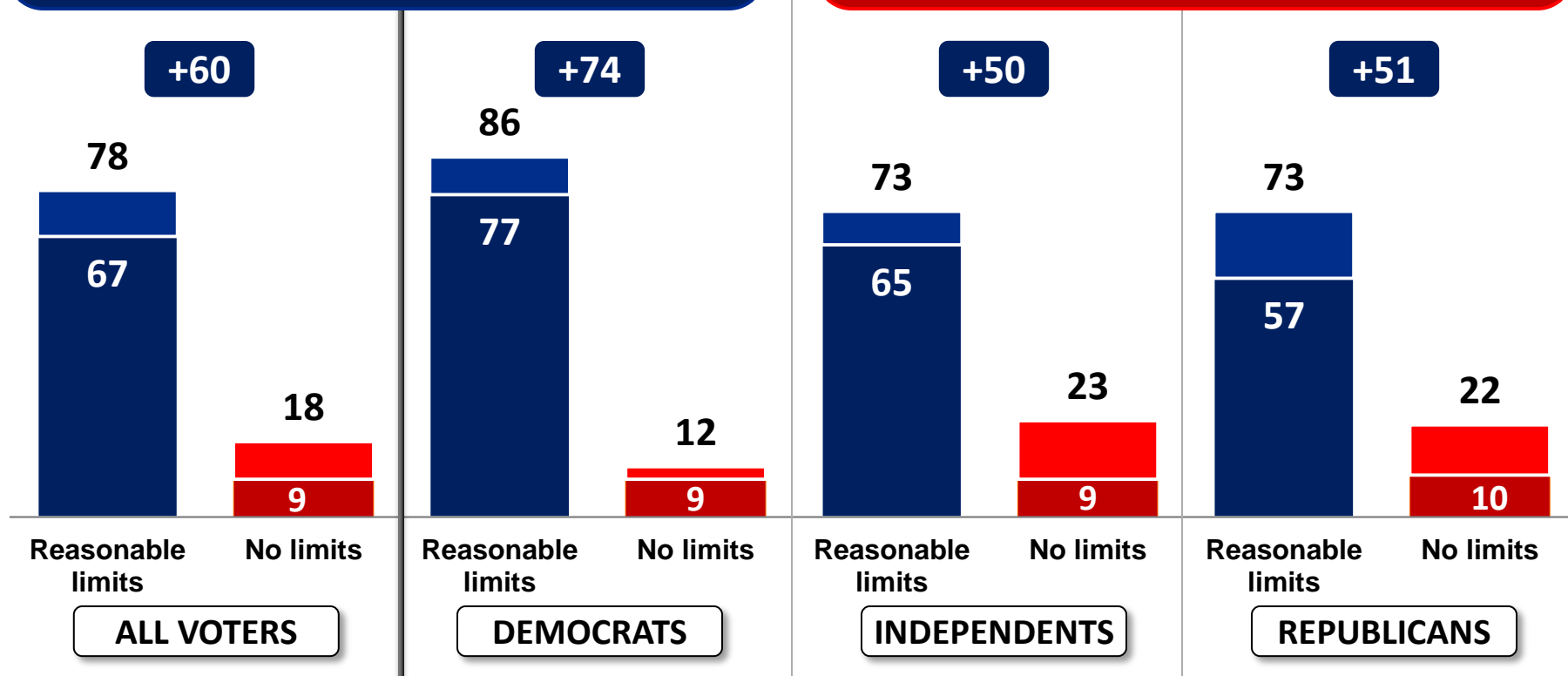


# Strong majorities of all parties want limits on contributions and spending

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

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

**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.**



# The context of this election is powerful: knowing amount of money spent increases voters' desire for major change

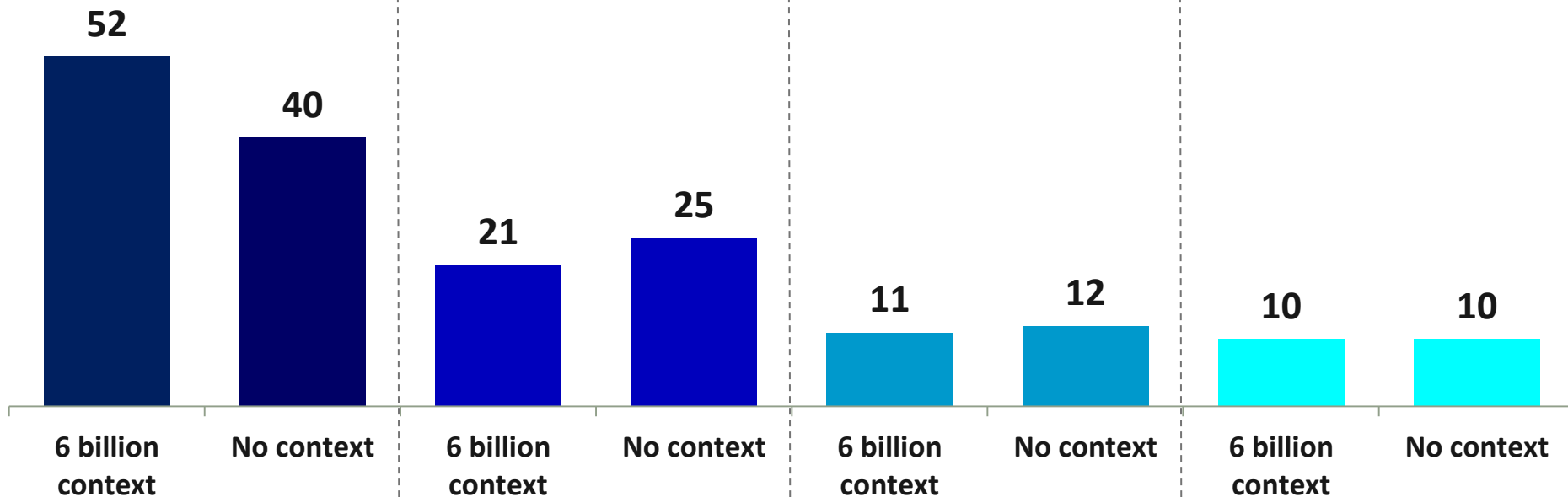
*Now for something a little different. In this election, more than six billion dollars were spent to elect the President and Congress. Which of the following comes closest to your view of how we should address money in politics?*

**Overhaul the way elections are paid for by replacing large donations with small donations and limited matching public funds, strict enforcement of election laws, and disclosure of outside spending.**

**Make modest reforms like increased disclosure of outside spending.**

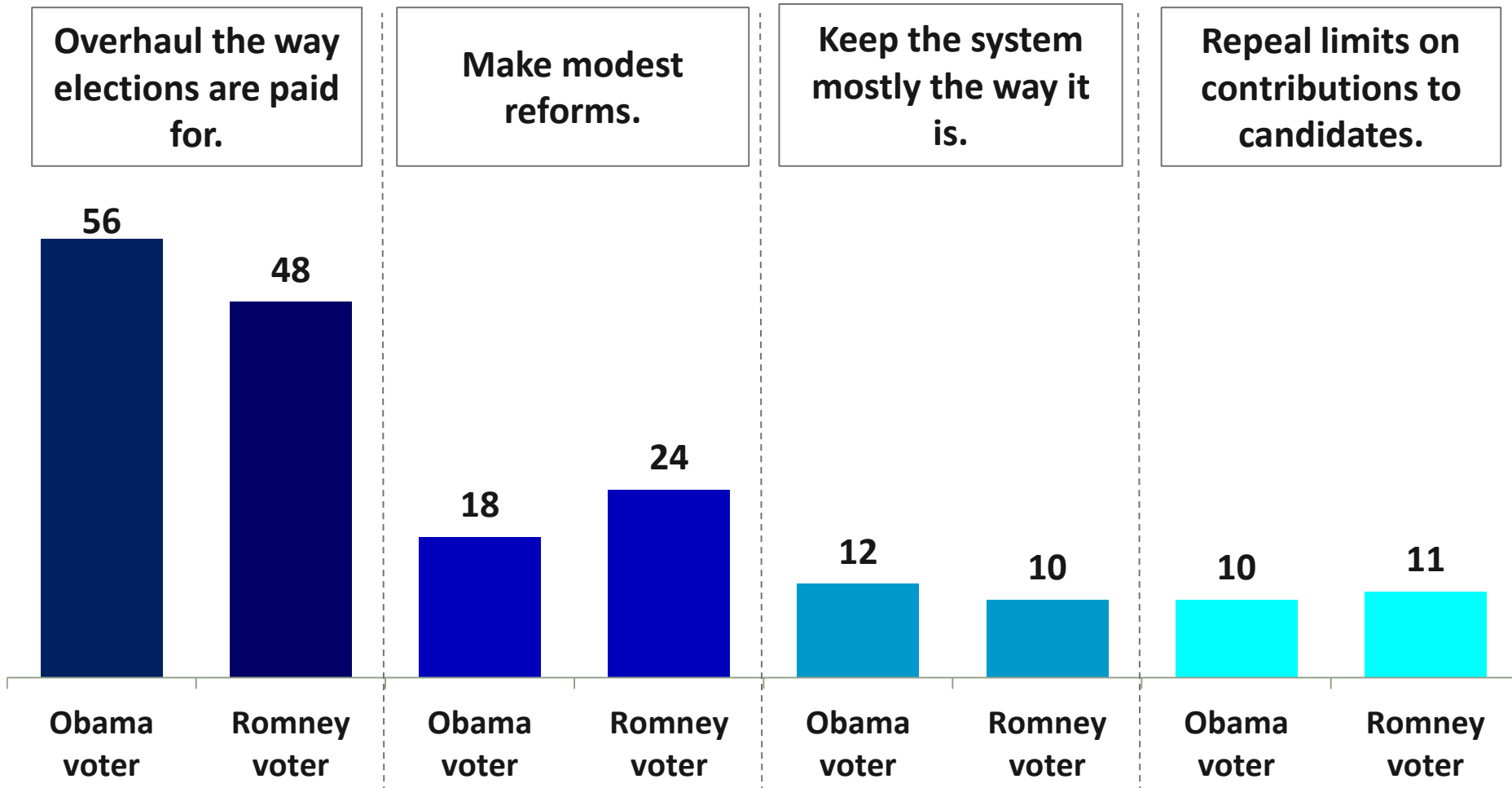
**Keep the system mostly the way it is.**

**Repeal limits on contributions to candidates.**



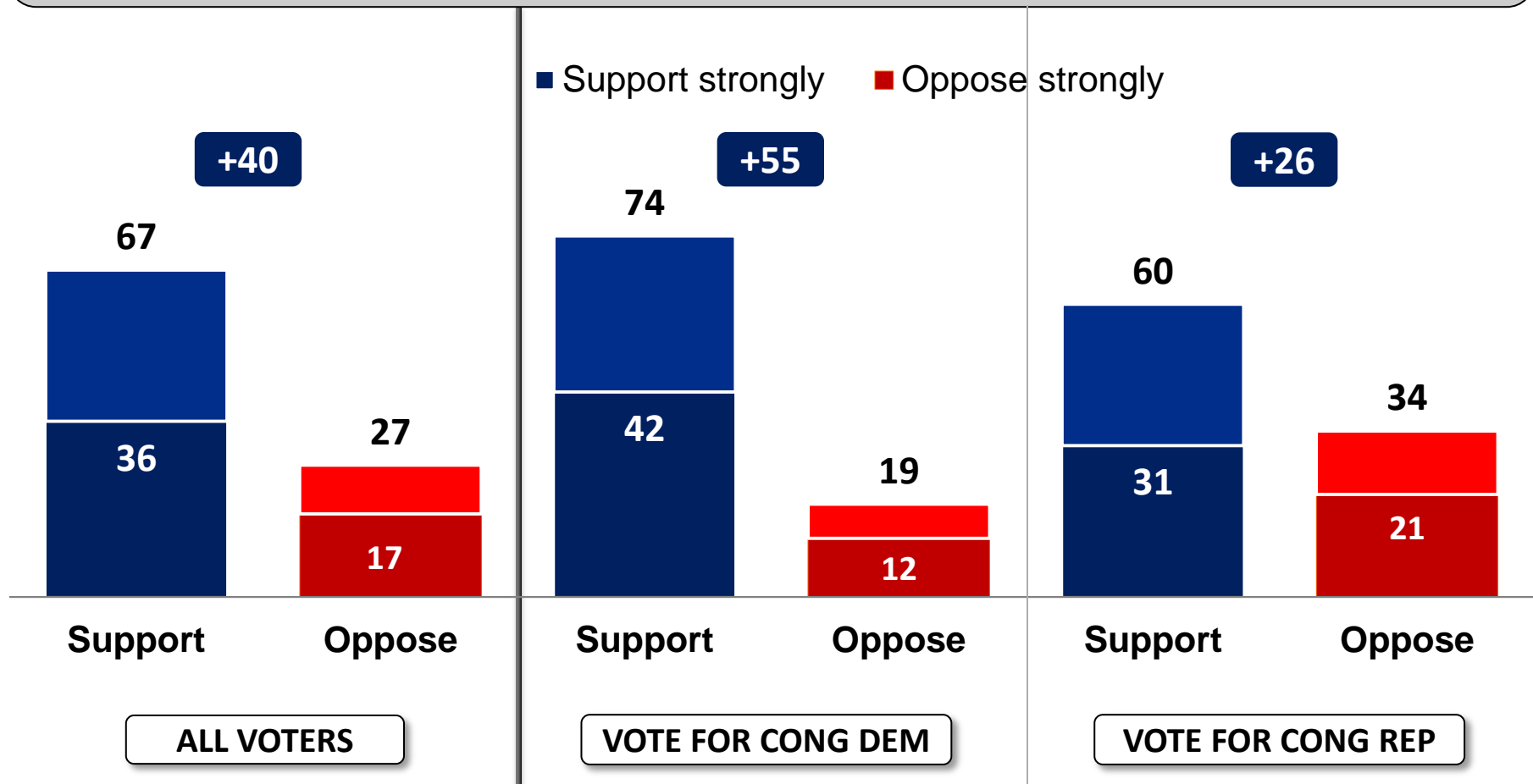
# Strong support for overhauling the way campaigns are financed, among both Obama and Romney voters

*Now for something a little different. In this election, more than six billion dollars were spent to elect the President and Congress. Which of the following comes closest to your view of how we should address money in politics?*



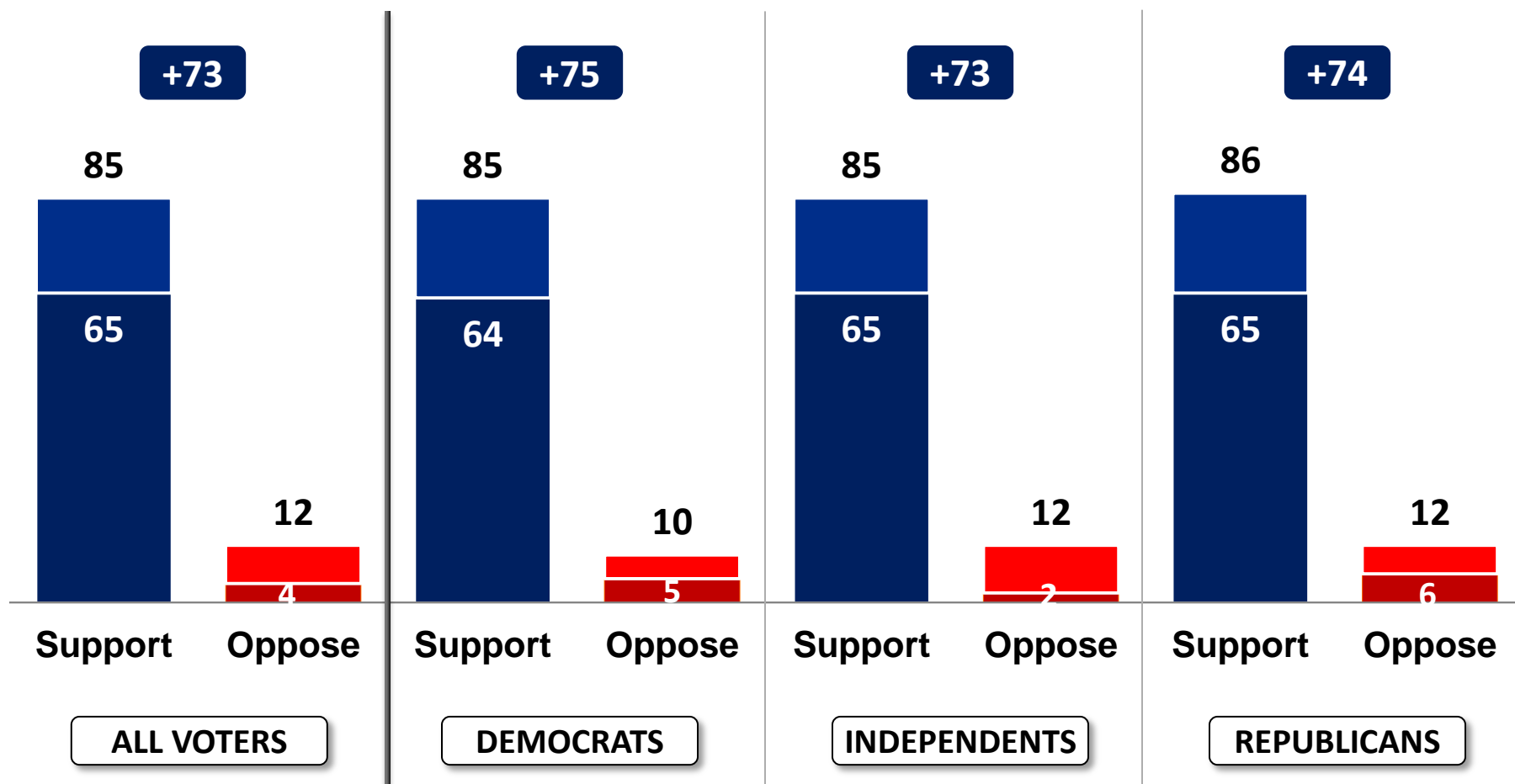
# Majority of those who voted for Democrats and Republicans support plan to keep money close to home

*Allow candidates for Congress the option of having the small donations from people in their home state matched with public funding as long as candidates took no contributions above 100 dollars.*



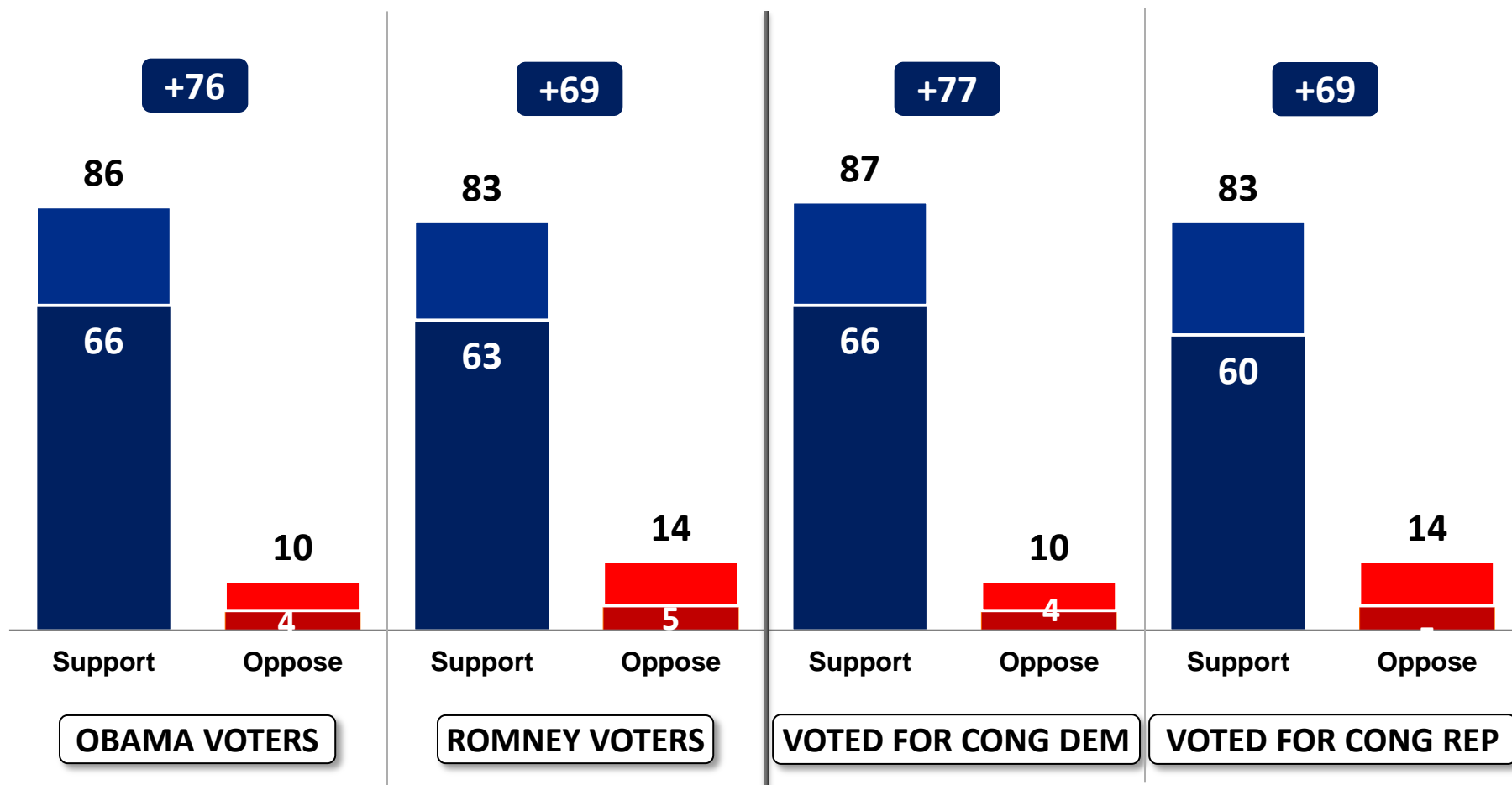
# Uniform desire across parties to see transparency on spending from outside groups

*Require corporations, unions, and non-profit groups to disclose their sources of spending when they participate in elections.*



# Strong among all voters – Obama, Romney and Congressional Democrats and Republicans

*Require corporations, unions, and non-profit groups to disclose their sources of spending when they participate in elections.*

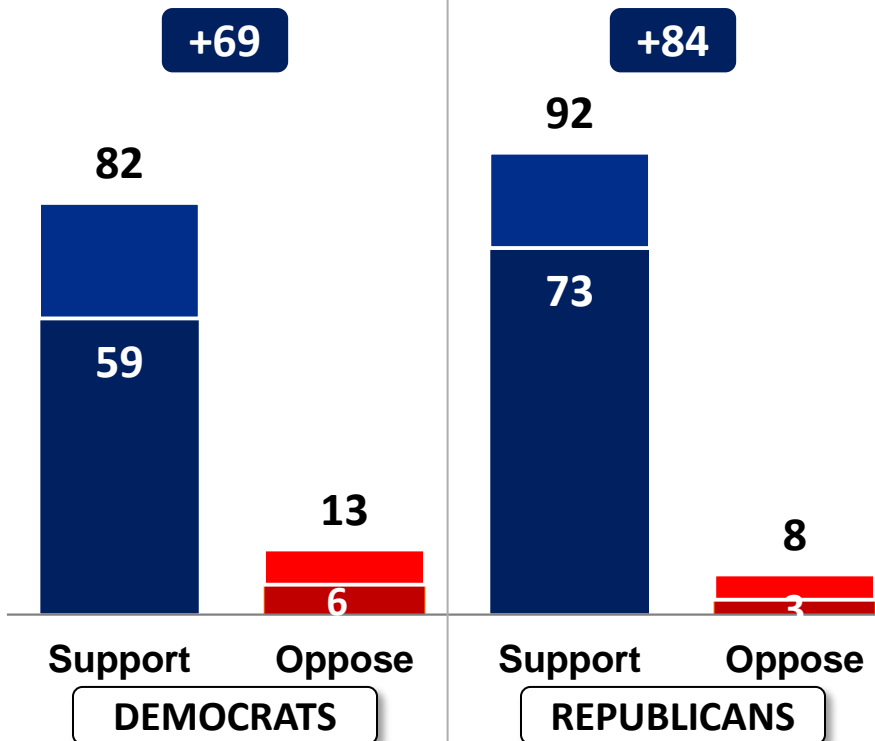


# Majorities of both partisans support disclosure with and without unions and corporations, but predictable differences along party lines

Require corporations, unions, and non-profit groups to disclose their sources of spending when they participate in elections?

## With Unions

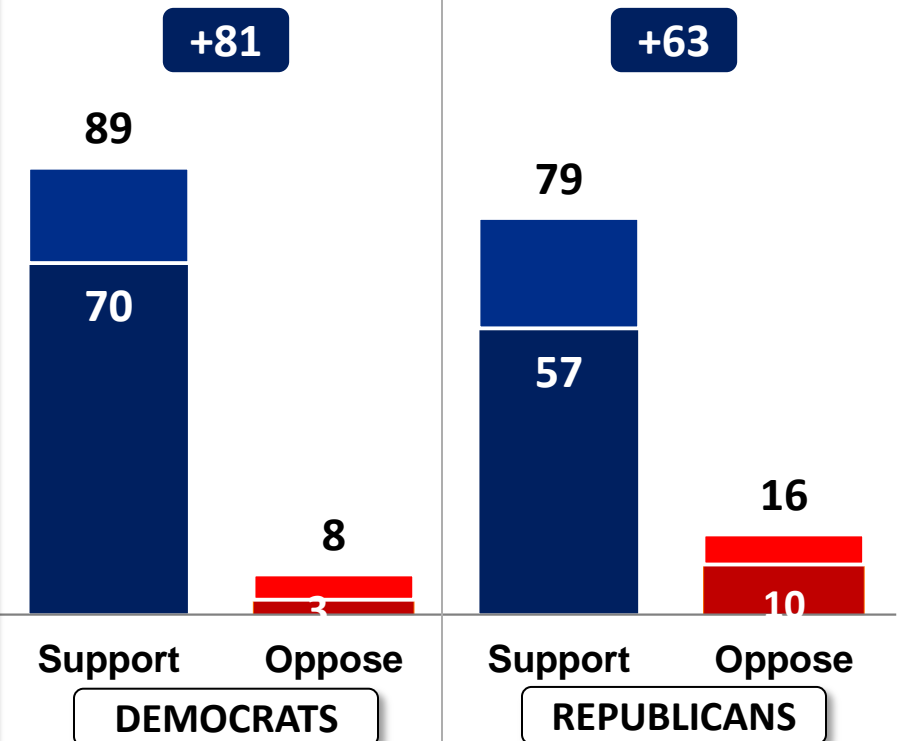
■ Strongly



Require corporations and non-profit groups to disclose their sources of spending when they participate in elections?

## Without Unions

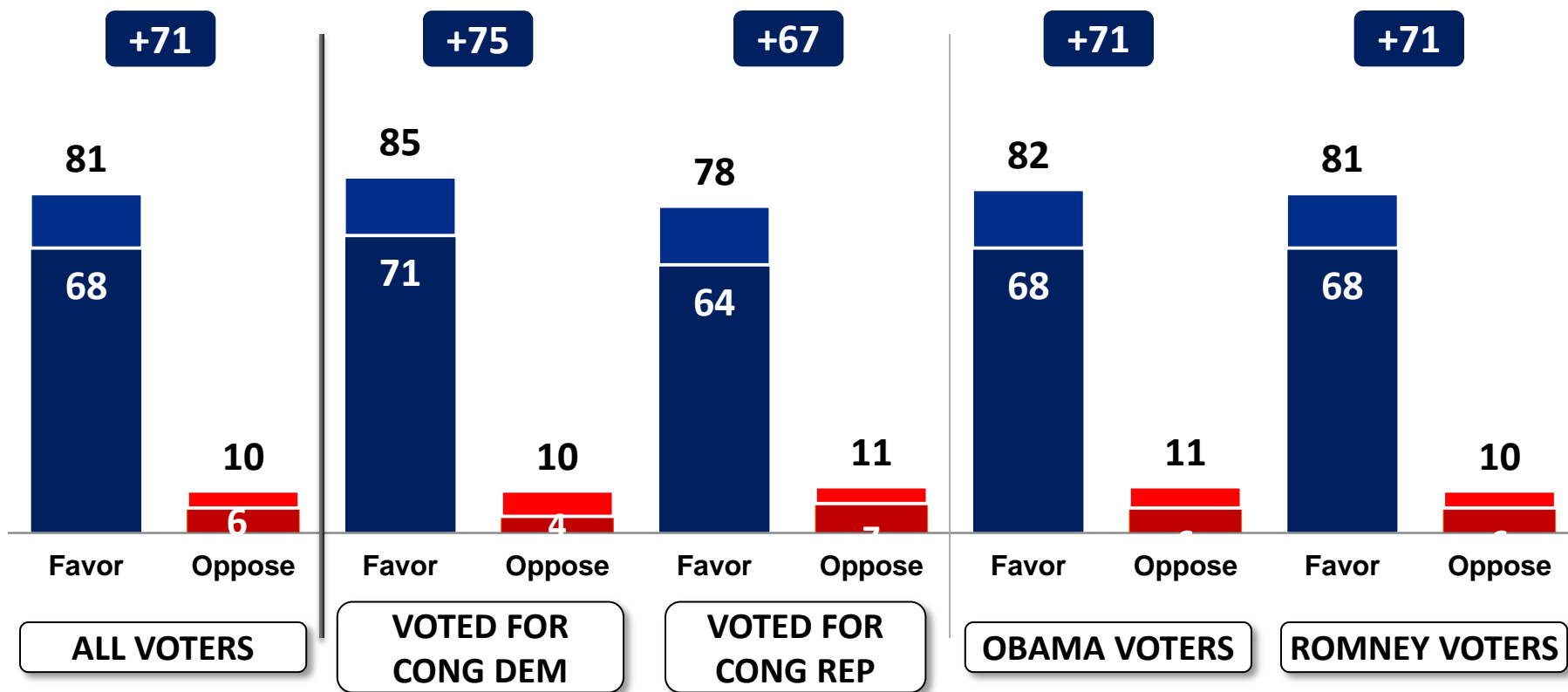
■ Strongly



# Overwhelming support for efforts to stop the “revolving door” of lobbying

*Now, looking ahead to the kinds of policies that the U.S. might enact in the next few years, I'm going to read you a list of them and for each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose that policy.*

**Clean up lobbyists, and prevent government staff from cashing in on their connections in the private sector by closing the revolving door between the government and lobbying firms.**



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