

Battleground Corruption Survey

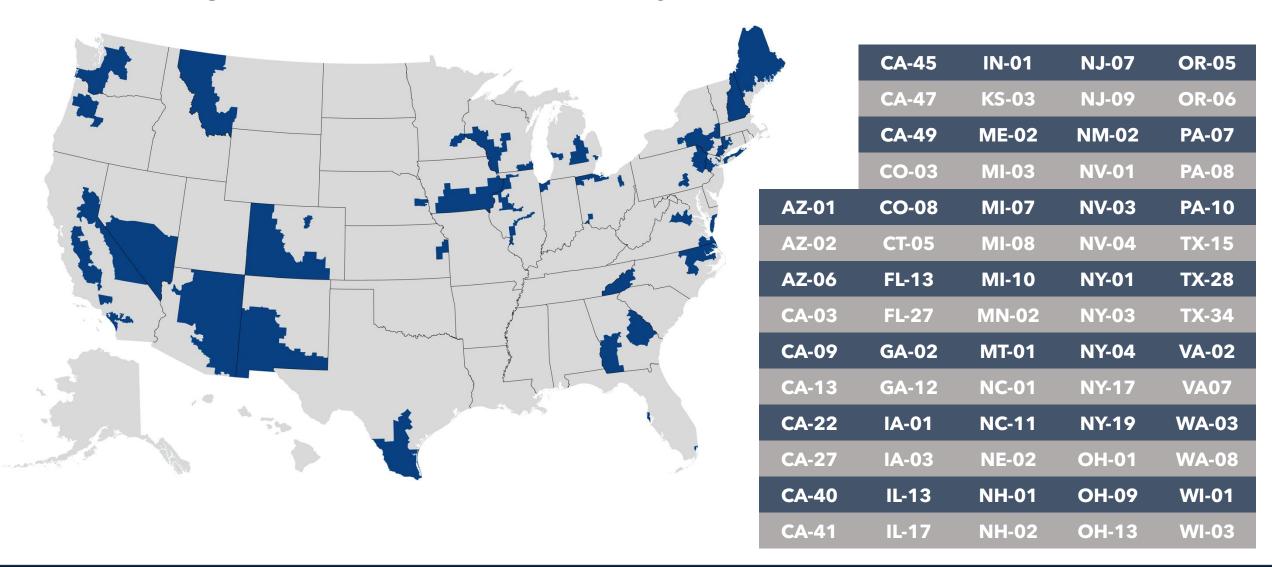
Methodology & Partners

Upswing Research & Strategy conducted a battleground survey Conducted on behalf of Accountable.US, Campaign Legal Center Action, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Court Accountability Action, End Citizens United and Public Citizen.

1,350 registered voters nationwide from December 18 - 23, 2024. We interviewed 1,000 registered voters nationwide with established quotas across demographic, partisan, and geographic variables to ensure the survey is representative of likely voters. We also conducted 150 additional interviews for Black and Hispanic voters and 50 additional interviews among AAPI voters.

The confidence interval overall is +/- 2.7% (+/- 6.7% among Black voters, 6.1% Hispanic voters and 10.8% among AAPI voters); the interval is higher among subgroups. In addition to quotas, the data is also statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age, and gender composition reflects that of the estimated likely voter universe.

Battleground Districts Surveyed

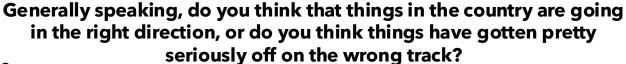


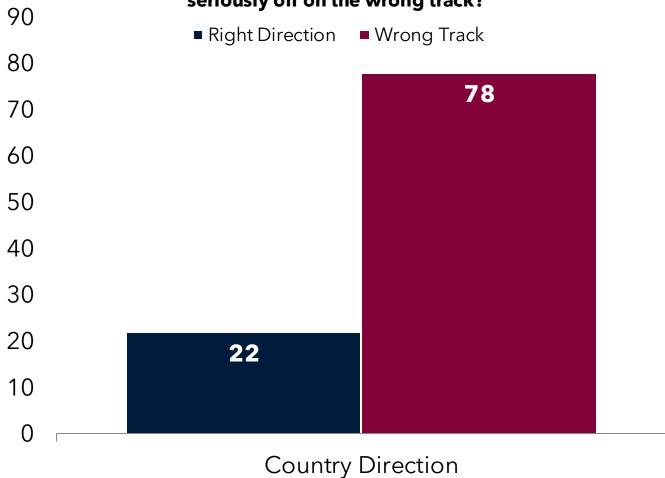
National Environment



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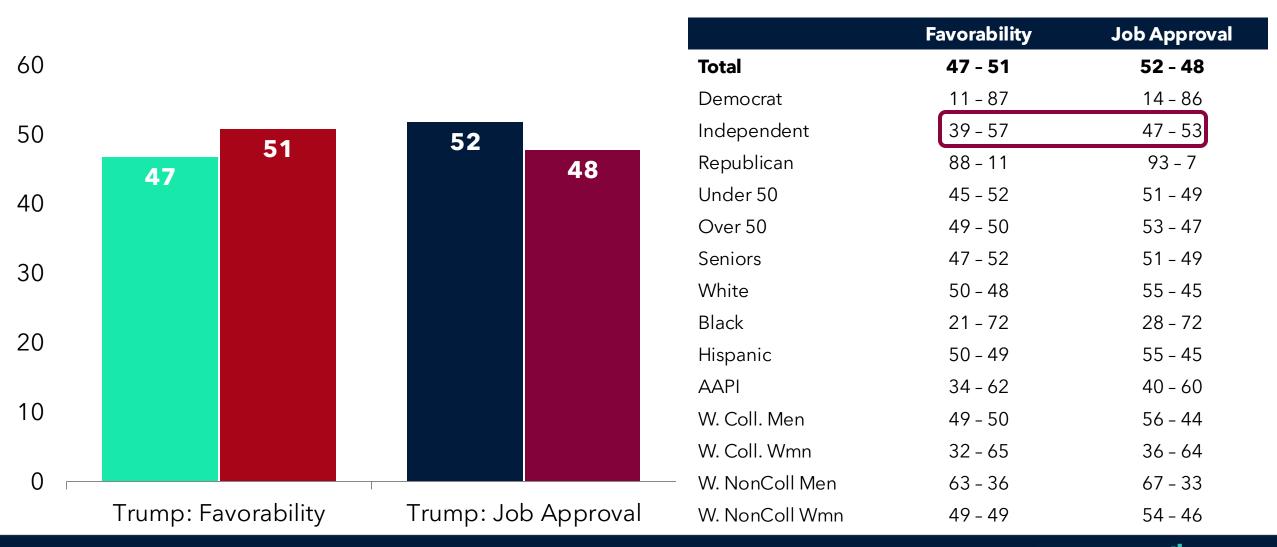
Despite a new administration on the horizon, views about the direction the country is headed are nearly uniformly bleak





	Right Direction	Wrong Track
Total	22	78
Democrat	23	77
Independent	19	81
Republican	25	75
Under 50	27	73
Over 50	17	83
Seniors	14	86
White	20	80
Black	30	70
Hispanic	28	71
AAPI	28	72
W. Coll. Men	21	79
W. Coll. Wmn	17	83
W. NonColl Men	24	76
W. NonColl Wmn	17	83

Trump's approval greater than his favorability across the board



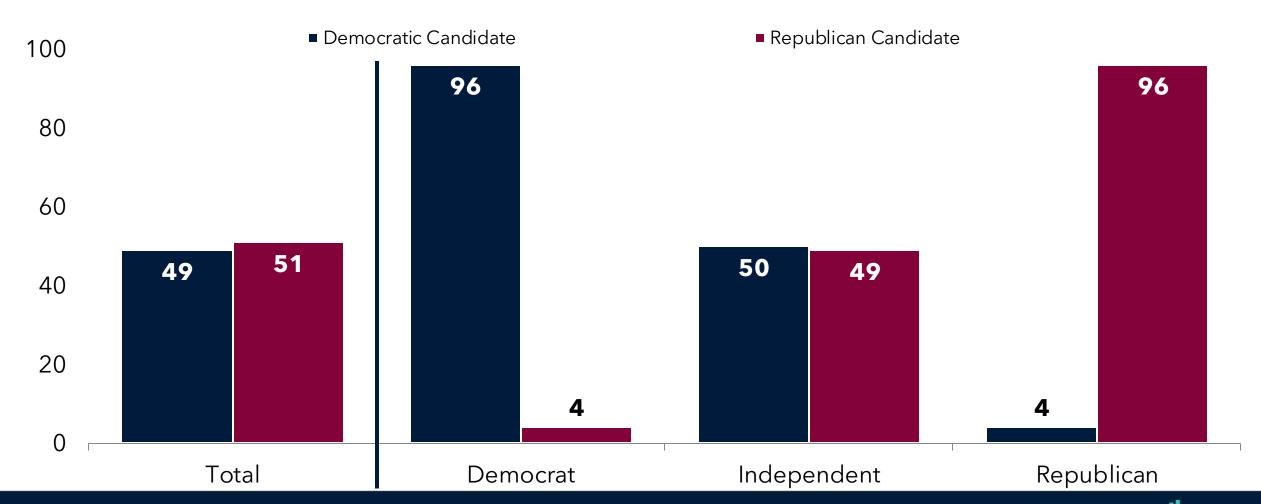


Voters either split on or view incoming Trump officials negatively, with RFK Jr. strongest; civil servants positively viewed but regulatory agencies underwater



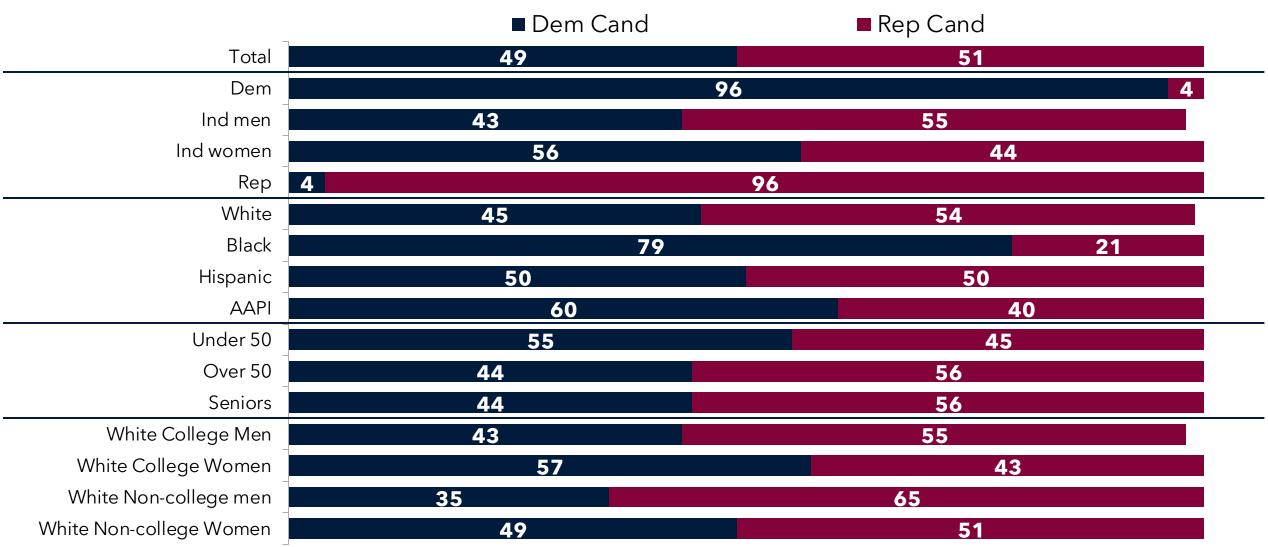
Independents split on generic ballot

It's a long way off, but thinking about the general election for Congress in November 2026, if the election were held today, for whom would you vote?





Dems struggling with classic persuasion targets white college men and white non-college women; indies split along gender lines



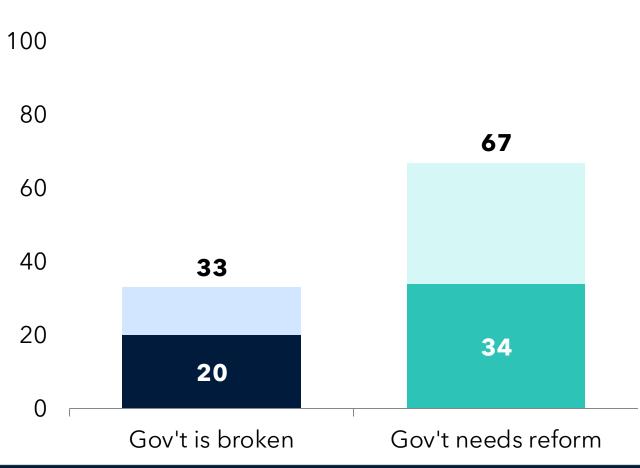
Federal Government



Americans demand reform; critical groups believe gov't fundamentally broken

The federal government in this country is fundamentally broken. We need to completely overhaul it and start over.

The federal government in this country needs reform. We need to make improvements to it over time to make it work better for regular Americans.

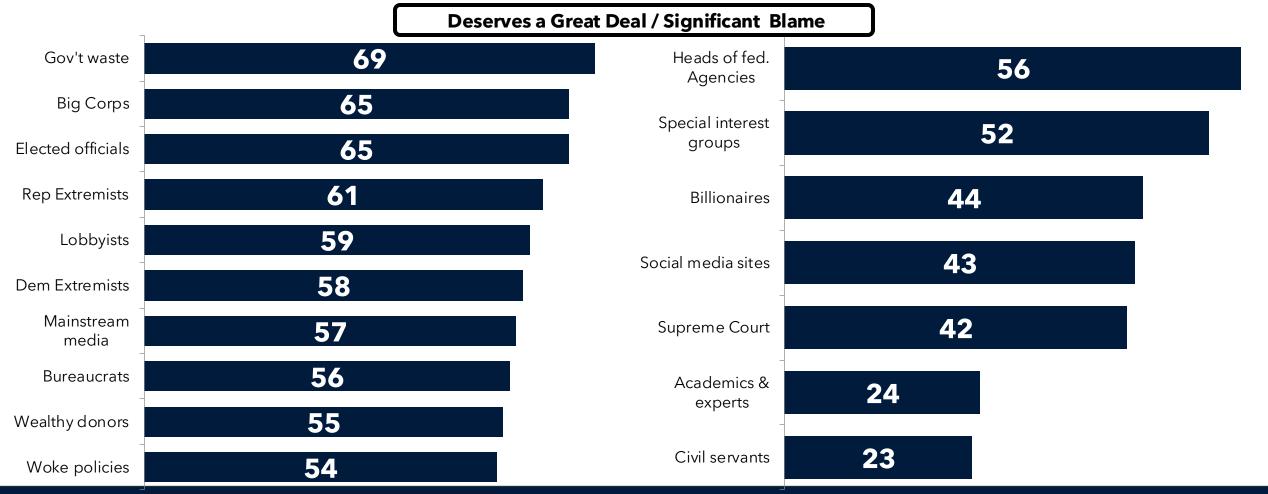


	1 st Statement - 2 nd Statement
Total	33 - 67
Democrat	24 - 76
Independent	33 - 67
Republican	42 - 58
Under 50	36 - 64
Over 50	30 - 70
Seniors	27 - 73
White	32 - 68
Black	39 - 61
Hispanic	40 - 60
AAPI	20 - 80
White College Men	27 - 73
White College Women	27 - 73
White Non-college Men	43 - 57
White Non-college Women	31 - 69

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Government waste, big corporations and elected officials garner most blame; wealthy donors more concerning than "billionaires"

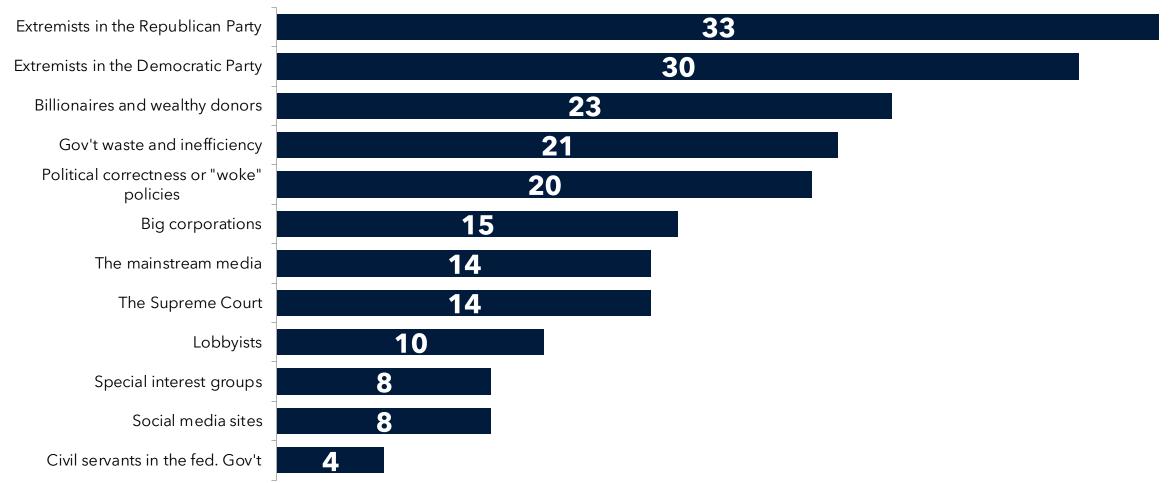
Now you are going to read a list of names, groups, organizations, and ideas that some people blame for the federal government not working. For each, please select how much blame you give each one for the federal government not working for regular people.





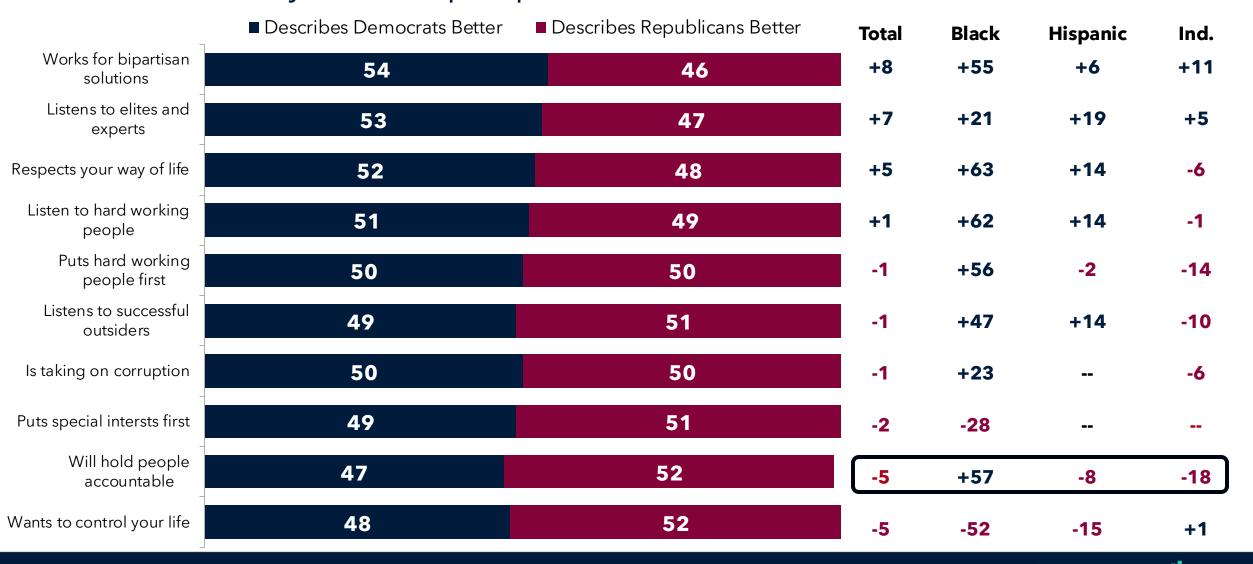
Voters blame extremists; wealthy donors and gov't waste bigger problem than big corporations

From the people, groups, organizations, and ideas you just read through, what TWO do you blame MOST for the federal government no longer working on behalf of regular people?



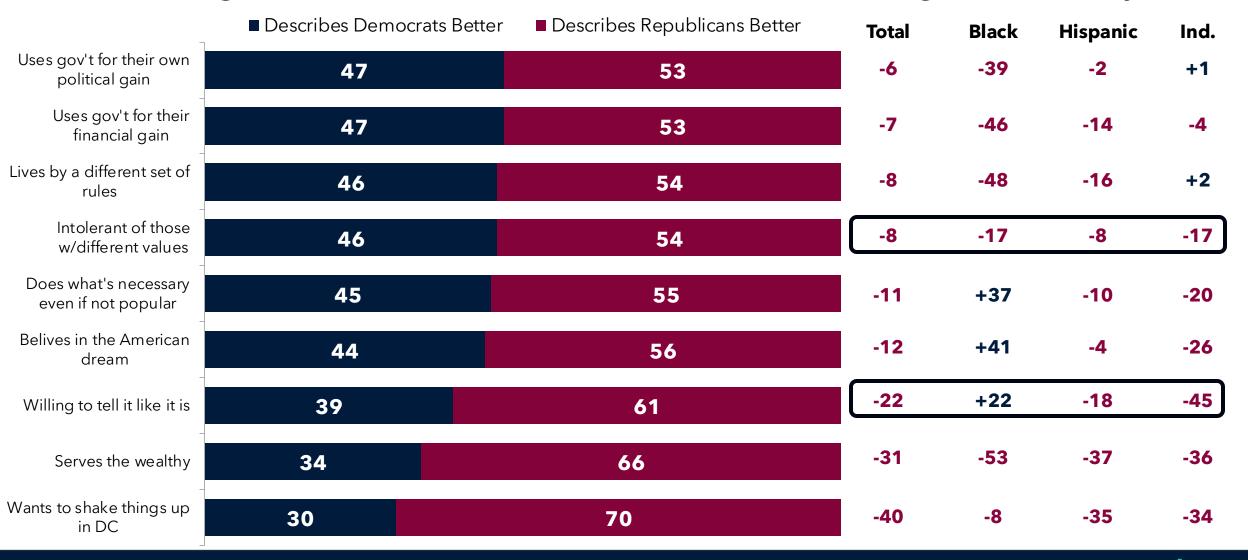


Democrats viewed as bipartisan and respecting people's way of life but less likely to hold people accountable

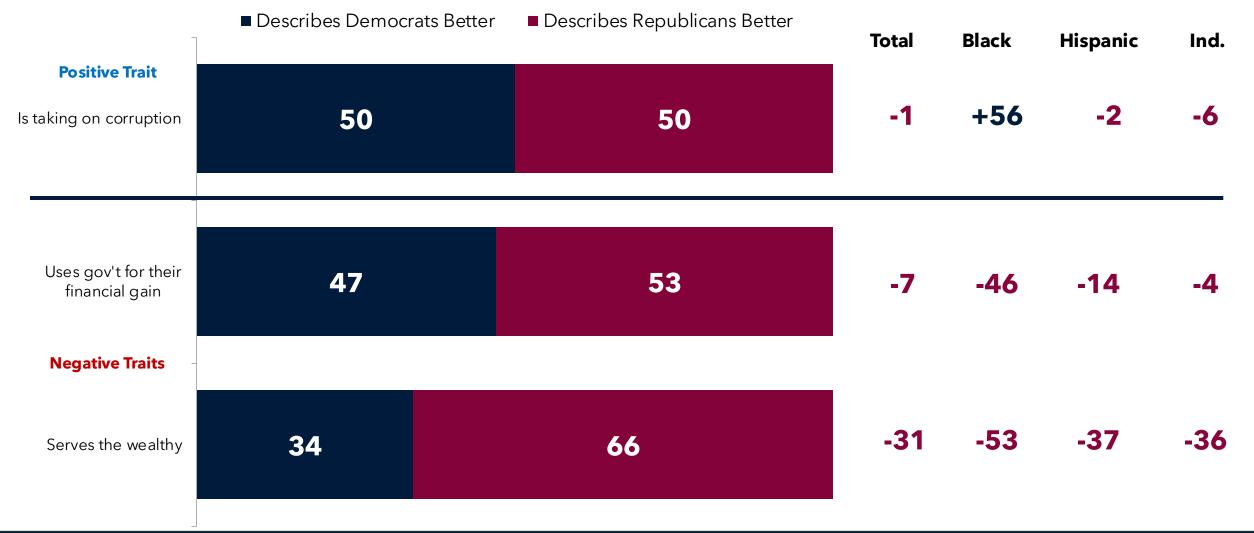




But Republicans earn high marks on wanting to shake things up, believing in the American dream as well as serving the wealthy



Neither party has an advantage on taking on corruption, but voters believe Republicans use gov't for financial gain and serve the wealthy

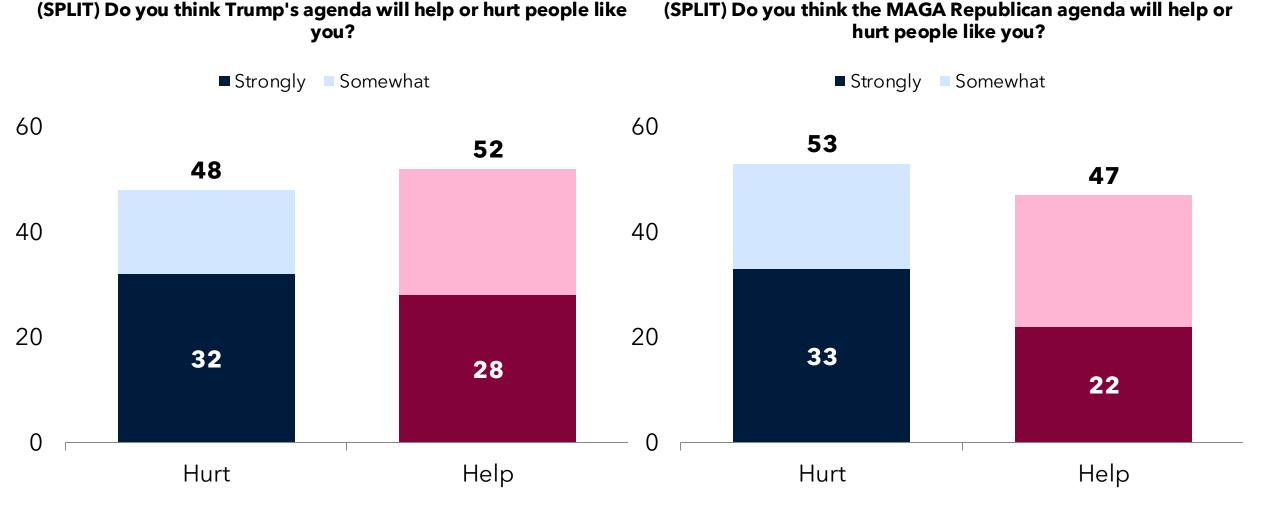


Trump and MAGA Agenda





Trump himself showing signs of resilience; broader MAGA agenda more harmful

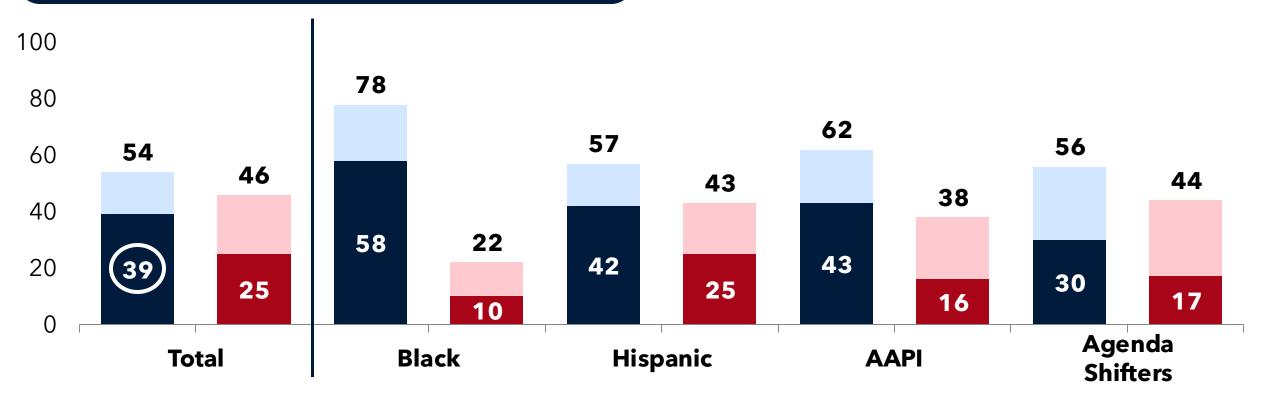




Voters believe Musk and Ramaswamy will use DOGE to line their own pockets

Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy will use the Department of Government Efficiency in ways that benefit themselves and put money in their own pockets.

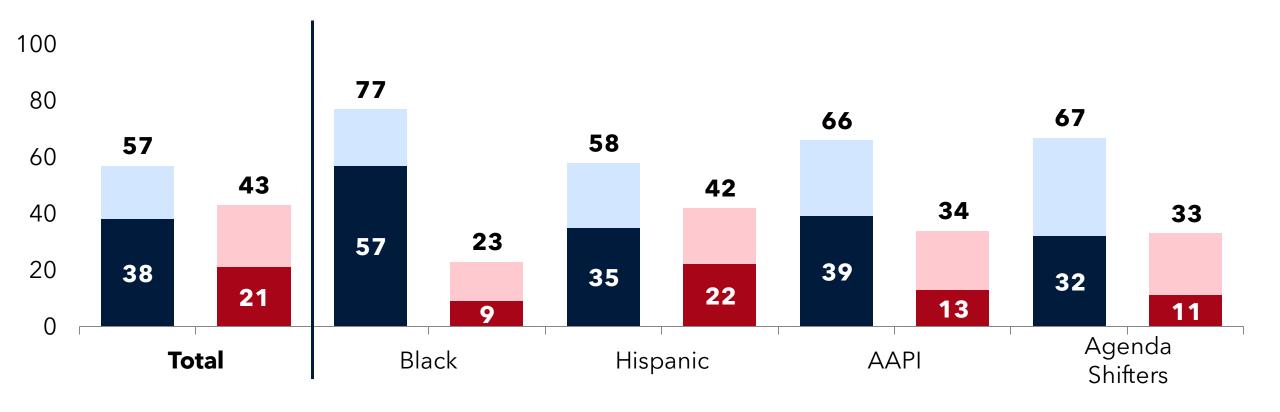
Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy will use the Department of Government Efficiency in ways that benefit the American people.



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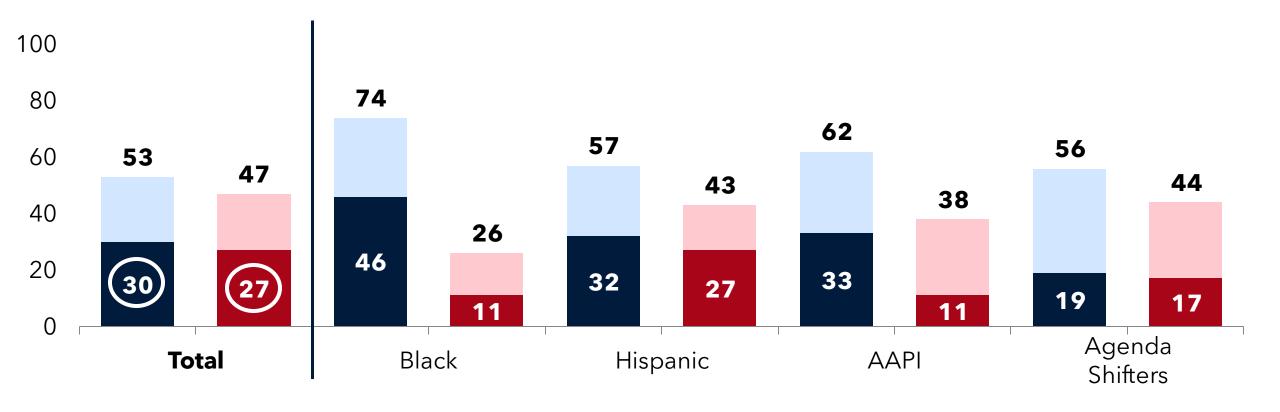
Voters trust current federal agencies over Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy

I trust civil servants in federal agencies over Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to make sure the government serves the public I trust Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy over civil servants in federal agencies to make sure the government serves the public.



They trust federal agencies over the Trump Administration, but by less, largely reflecting views of Trump

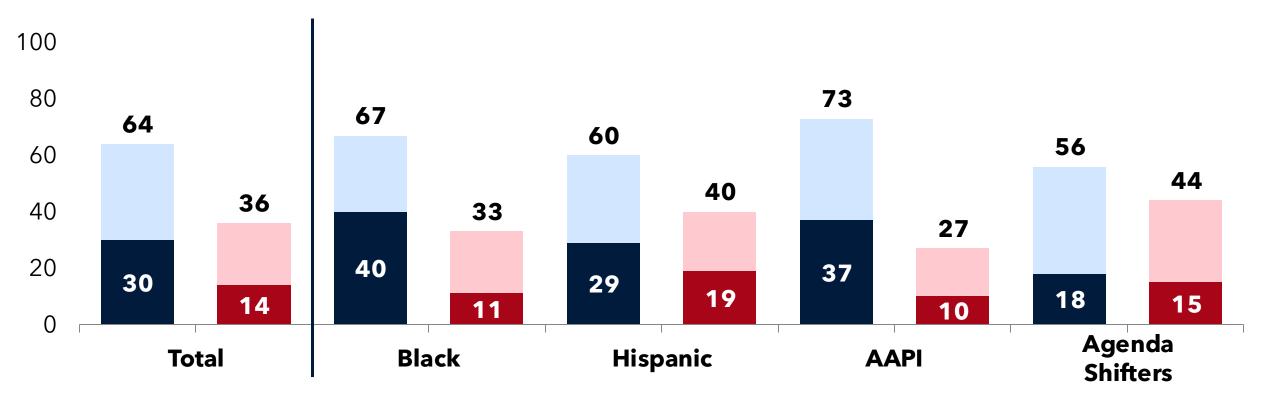
I trust civil servants in federal agencies over the Trump Administration to make sure the government serves the public I trust the Trump Administration over civil servants in federal agencies to make sure the government serves the public.



Strong belief that experts throughout the government help improve the lives of Americans and should remain independent

The experts in government agencies, like engineers, economists, and scientists, help improve lives in America and shouldn't be overruled by politicians.

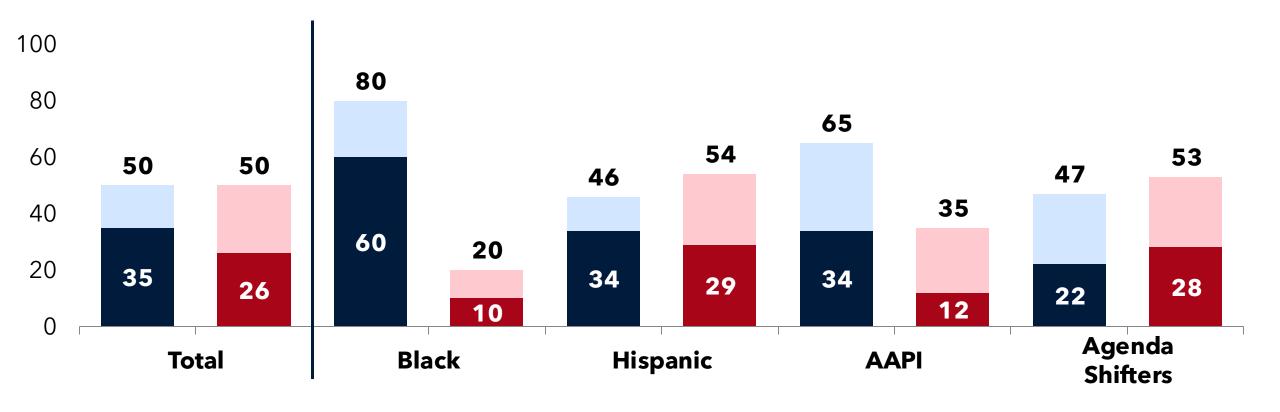
The experts in government agencies, like engineers, economists, and scientists, need to be more accountable to elected leaders



Voters recall Trump's tax bill more fondly than the 2018 cycle

Trump's tax bill from his first term was a giveaway to the very wealthy and corporations and harmed the middle class

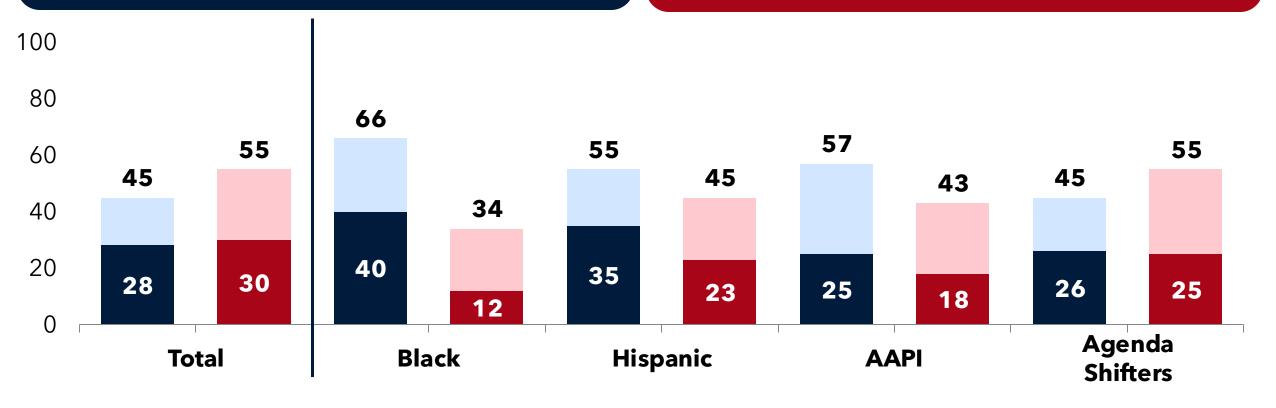
Trump's tax bill from his first term cut taxes on American companies and the middle class to create a stronger economy



And believe now is not the time to raise taxes and the tax cuts should be extended

Trump's 2018 tax cuts were a giveaway to the rich and until we guarantee Social Security for every hardworking American, we shouldn't extend Trump's tax cuts

Trump's 2018 tax cuts for American companies and the middle class should be extended, now isn't the time to raise taxes on anyone



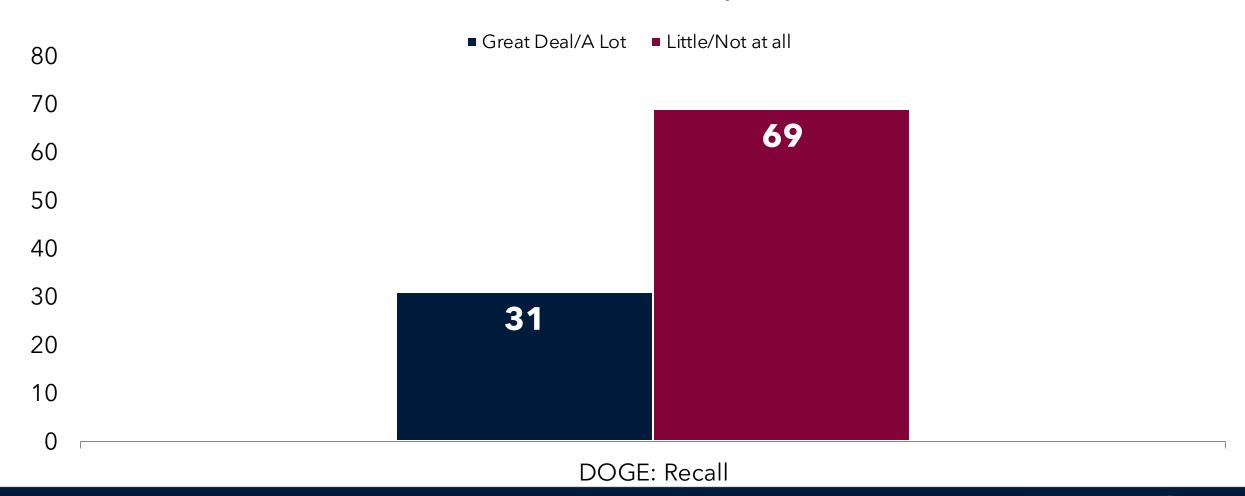
DOGE



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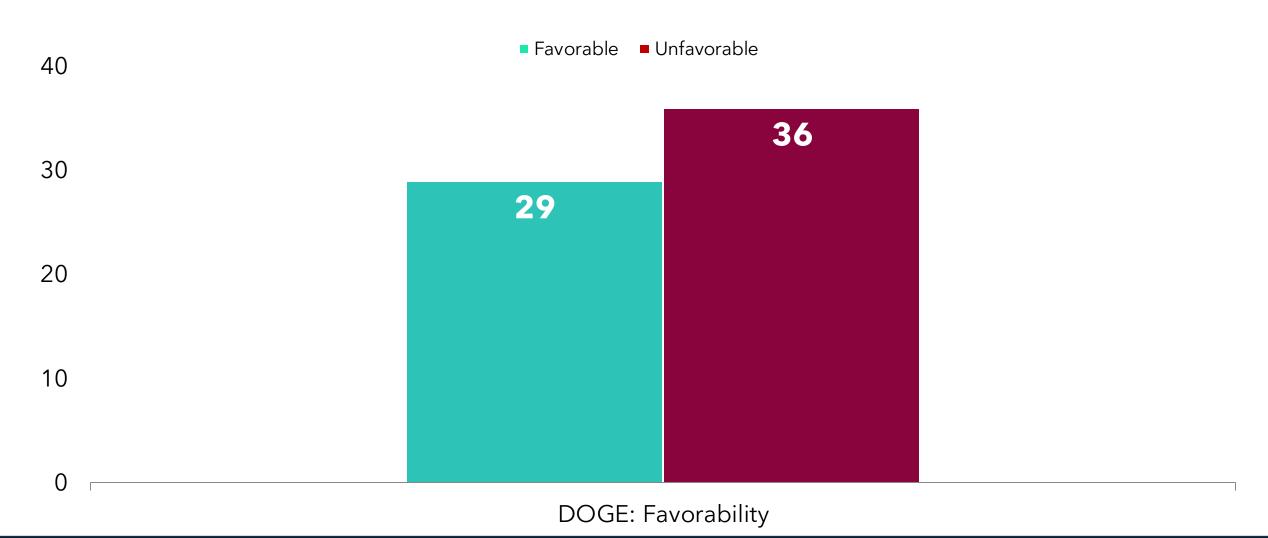
Most voters haven't seen much about the Department of Government Efficiency

Now let's do something a little different. What have you seen, read, or heard lately about DOGE, otherwise known as the Department of Government Efficiency?



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Initial impressions lean negative across the board outside of Republicans



After learning more, most voters view DOGE favorably

President-elect Donald Trump has promised to start the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, an advisory board led by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. This advisory board is not officially part of the federal government but will provide advice to the Trump Administration on how to make government more efficient.

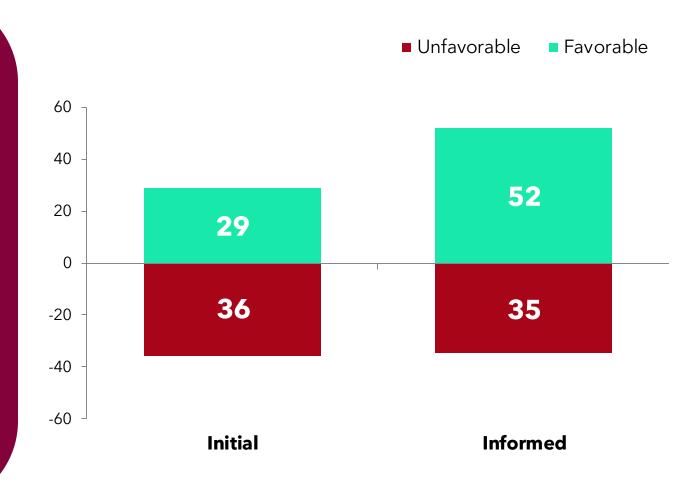
DOGE will serve two primary functions: (1) it will highlight ways to cut costs in the federal government, and (2) it will limit the power of unelected government bureaucrats who have immense power to create new regulations and red tape while hiding behind civil service that prevents real accountability.

First, DOGE will do a comprehensive review of these regulations by unelected bureaucrats to identify which regulations hinder government efficiency. Then they will present them to President Trump to determine which to cut. DOGE also intends to work with embedded appointees in agencies to identify the minimum number of employees required at an agency for it to perform its constitutionally permissible and statutorily mandated functions and make cuts accordingly.

DOGE will also help identify drastic cuts in the federal budget. For example, it will help end federal overspending by taking aim at the \$500 billion plus in annual federal expenditures that are unauthorized by Congress or being used in ways that Congress never intended, from \$535 million a year to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and \$1.5 billion for grants to international organizations to nearly \$300 million to progressive groups like Planned Parenthood.

DOGE will also address government contracts because many federal contracts have gone unexamined for years. Large-scale audits conducted during a temporary suspension of payments would yield significant savings.

Musk and Ramaswamy have suggested their cuts could slash \$2 trillion from the federal budget, reduce federal agencies from 400 to 100, and cut the number of federal employees by 75%. It will also cut the national debt.





Most appealing parts of DOGE are making the government more efficient, cutting costs and limiting bureaucratic power

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Favorability increases across the board except among Democrats

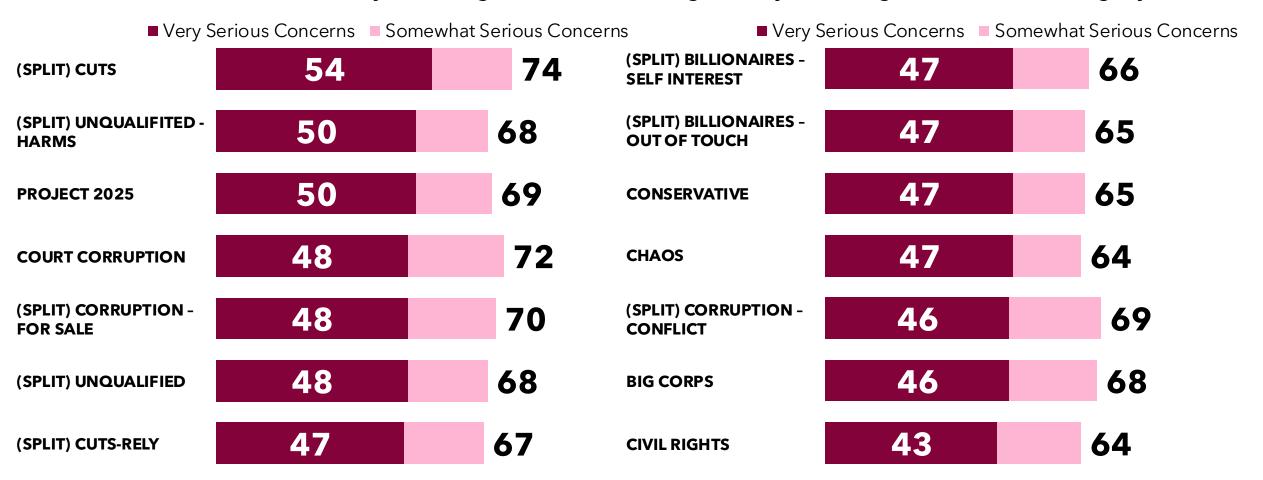
DOGE: Favorability	Initial	Informed
Total	29 - 36	52 - 35
Democrats	12 - 49	21 - 65
Independent Men	38 - 38	54 - 33
Independent Women	16 - 37	47 - 36
Republicans	47 - 23	84 – 8
Under 50	25 - 36	48 - 39
Over 50	33 - 36	57 - 31
Seniors	32 - 38	56 - 33

Only Black voters continue to view the department negatively

DOGE: Favorability	Initial	Informed
Total	29 - 36	52 - 35
White	30 - 35	56 - 33
Black	21 - 43	27 - 55
Hispanic	29 - 37	53 - 38
AAPI	18 – 39	44 - 32
White College Men	43 - 34	65 - 31
White College Women	23 - 42	43 - 44
White Non-College Men	37 - 40	60 - 31
White Non-College Women	21 - 28	53 - 31

All negative thematics resonate intensely

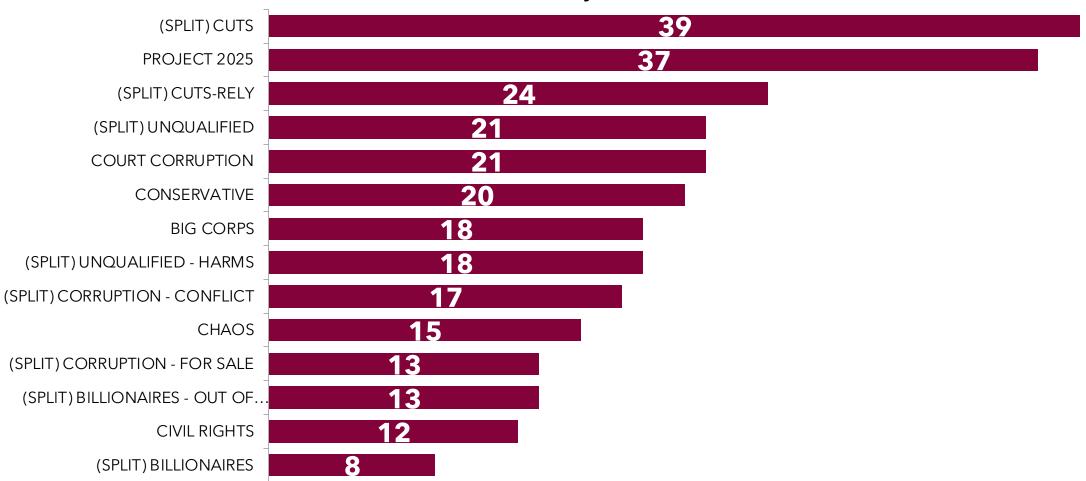
Below are a few descriptions that could be used to describe the Trump Administration Transition and DOGE. After each one, please indicate whether the statement is very concerning, somewhat concerning, not very concerning, or not at all concerning in your mind.



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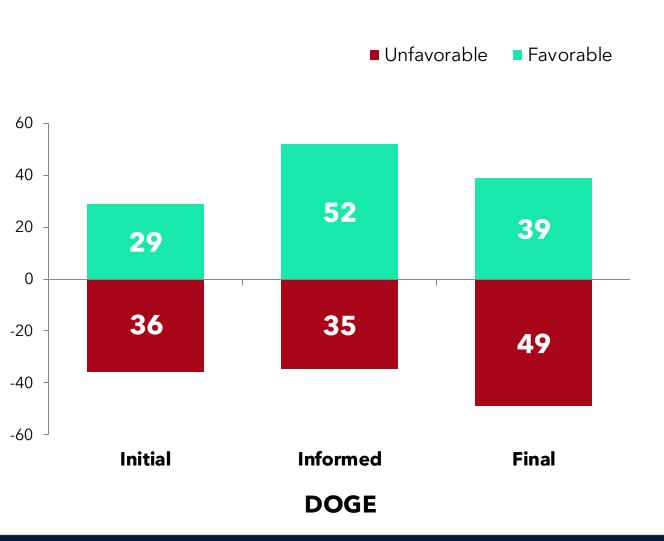
Cutting vital programs gutting checks and balances still top list; billionaires are least effective

Thinking about the statements you just read, which TWO raised the most concerns about the Trump Administration Transition and DOGE in your mind?



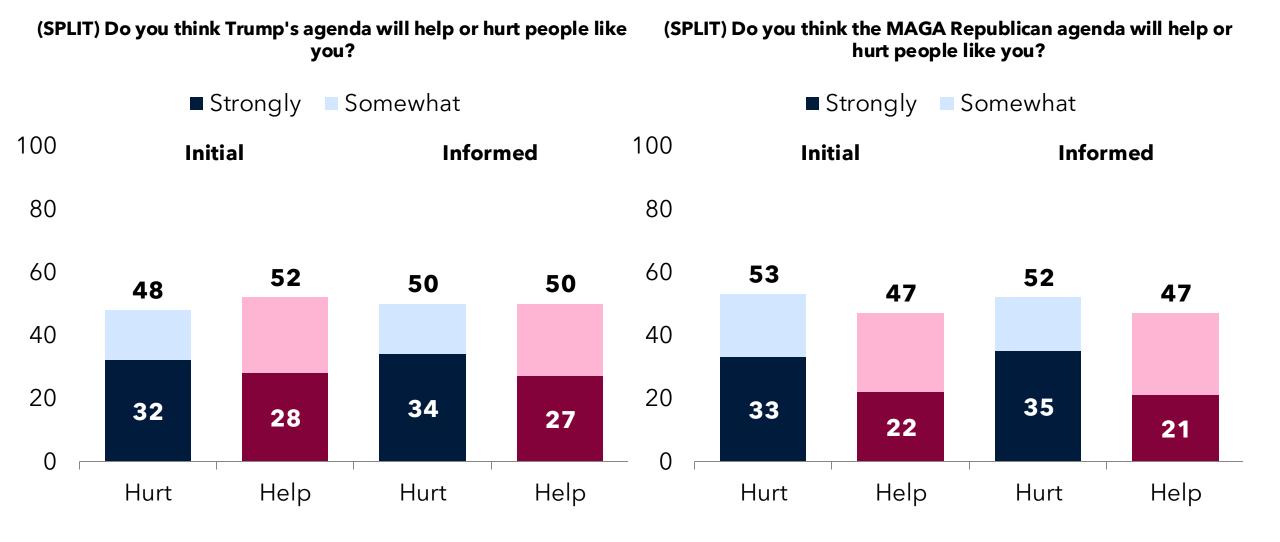


After messaging, unfavorable rating grows to highest levels



DOGE: Favorability	Initial	Informed	Final
Total	29 - 36	52 - 35	39 - 49
Democrat	12 - 49	21 - 65	10 - 78
Independent	27 - 37	50 - 34	35 - 53
Republican	47 - 23	84 - 8	69 - 17
Under 50	25 - 36	48 - 39	34 - 55
Over 50	33 - 36	57 - 31	44 - 43
Seniors	32 - 38	56 - 33	44 - 45
White	30 - 35	56 - 33	41 - 47
Black	21 - 43	27 - 55	20 - 66
Hispanic	29 - 37	53 - 38	41 - 48
AAPI	18 - 39	44 - 32	27 - 59
White Coll. Men	43 - 34	65 - 31	51 - 40
White Coll. Wmn	23 - 42	43 - 44	29 - 61
White NonColl Men	37 - 40	60 - 31	49 - 39
White NonColl Wmn	21 - 28	53 - 31	34 - 50

Negative messaging shifts sentiment nominally





Growth among independent women in believing the Trump agenda will hurt people

Hurt - Help	Trump	Agenda	MAGA	Agenda
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
Total	48 - 52	50 - 50	53 - 47	52 - 47
Democrats	86 - 14	85 - 15	87 - 13	90 - 10
Independent Men	51 - 49	51 - 49	44 - 54	42 - 55
Independent Women	54 - 46	67 - 33	62 - 38	61 – 39
Republicans	9 - 91	10 - 90	18 - 82	13 - 86
Under 50	51 - 49	54 - 46	56 - 44	56 - 44
Over 50	45 - 55	46 - 54	50 - 49	48 – 51
Seniors	45 - 55	47 - 53	54 - 46	52 - 48

As well as among Black voters and white non-college women

Hurt - Help	Trump Agenda		MAGA Agenda	
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
Total	48 - 52	50 - 50	53 - 47	52 - 47
White	45 - 55	47 - 53	51 - 49	49 - 51
Black	70 - 30	76 - 24	74 - 26	75 - 25
Hispanic	48 - 52	48 - 52	52 - 48	54 - 46
AAPI	52 - 48	55 - 45	60 - 37	65 - 35
White College Men	44 - 56	43 - 57	43 - 55	35 - 63
White College Women	60 - 40	55 - 45	63 - 37	67 - 32
White Non-College Men	37 - 63	38 - 62	42 - 58	43 - 57
White Non-College Women	46 - 54	52 - 48	54 - 46	52 - 48

III Key Takeaways

Trump has built good will. Trump is still enjoying his highest ratings of his public life. He's the most popular public figure we tested, any mention of him mutes the opposition's response, and we fail to move his standing throughout the survey. He's still in the transition honeymoon stage, but he is more Teflon Don than he has ever been.

We are in an elite vs. non-elite era. The near unanimity about the direction the country is headed, the dislike for politicians across the spectrum, and the sizeable minority who say we should burn it all down shows that the country is fully in an elite vs. non-elite era of public sentiment. While experts are still respected, voters are a little more discerning about what that means and who it includes, which necessitates credentialing experts rather than using a "just trust us" approach.

Strong distaste for bureaucracy. Bureaucratic terms invoke a pretty negative response from voters in this survey. This is some of the strongest support for cutting government waste we've seen in a long time. Just reading a description of DOGE worsens opinions of federal agencies from their already underwater position.

Messages focused on corruption connected to how it will harm Americans are among the strongest. One of the strongest themes throughout the survey is how strong corruption arguments work against the Administration, the courts, and extra-governmental bodies like the DOGE committee and caucus.

Q1 Strategic Recommendations

Consider a strategy that targets the administration rather than just Trump. With punches against Trump being difficult to land, we may want to consider targeting members of the Administration and advisors to Trump, too. We are not suggesting ignoring Trump, but we should be trying to erode trust and heighten skepticism against these people as they slowly introduce themselves to the public.

Don't defend "the Government" at all costs. While we would need qualitative data to confirm this, it does seem like Trump and the Republicans have cast the Democrats as defenders of the status quo because they defend the government. Progressives have to admit there are improvements to be made in government, otherwise officials and candidates on the left will not be taken seriously by voters who are very skeptical of government generally.

Communicate on corruption early. Because neither party has an advantage on corruption, but voters are primed to believe Republicans are more likely to engage in corrupt activities, we need to communicate on this early and aggressively.

Connect corruption to harms. This is not a novel recommendation, but it is the most important one. Simply stating the corruption only goes so far. We have to show how that corruption is manifesting in ways that harm voters - cuts to vital programs, weakened regulations, favor for special interests are all harms we can highlight.

Continue to highlight how Musk's actions benefit him. Musk is an important target considering his outsized influence in the administration. We should be highlighting conflicts of interest and how he is using government to benefit himself especially vis-à-vis the billions in government contracts he has.

Q1 Strategic Recommendations

Develop a strategy for Black and Hispanic voters; they are persuaded by Trump's burn it all down message. Black and Hispanic voters, as well as younger voters of all races, are much more skeptical of government. They're more likely to say we need to tear it all down and start over. We have to start catering a message to them that shows how we can make government work for them, not just how Trump is screwing them. They're currently the biggest groups giving Trump the benefit of the doubt above their partisanship.

The billionaire message does not work in isolation. While voters do not trust billionaires or CEOs, that fact alone is not enough to persuade voters. We should incorporate them into corruption messages, but their wealth is not a strong enough attack in isolation.

Thank you





Appendix: Full Text of Messages

DOGE Messages

(SPLIT) (UNQUALIFIED-HARMS) Donald Trump's cabinet appointees are unqualified and will put the American people at risk. Trump appointed a WWE wrestling executive who wants to end public schools as secretary of Education. He nominated talk show host Dr. Oz, who scammed seniors, to lead Medicare. And he even appointed Robert F Kennedy Jr., whose promotion of vaccine conspiracies in the country of Samoa led to 83 deaths, most of them children, to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

(PROJECT 2025) The Trump Administration is putting Project 2025 into action, promising to close the Department of Education, restrict access to abortion, raise costs on the middle class, and get rid of the checks and balances that protect Americans from corruption and government overreach. Trump put Russ Vought, the chief author of Project 2025, in charge of drafting the national budget. Vought is now working to gut checks and balances by eliminating the independence of agencies like the FBI and firing civil servants like engineers and scientists, so no one can stop him from imposing his dangerous and unpopular agenda on regular Americans

(COURT CORRUPTION) Multiple right wing Supreme Court justices have been caught accepting extravagant gifts and luxury vacations from billionaires with business before the Court which have been called "bribes" by independent observers. These justices, in turn, have ruled repeatedly in their favor. Now many of these same billionaires stand to profit enormously from DOGE's plans to eliminate federal regulations that protect clean air and water, workers' compensation, and consumer rights. And they can count on these right-wing Supreme Court justices to rule in their favor to gut these federal protections

(SPLIT) (CORRUPTION-FOR SALE) Donald Trump is selling the rights to every position he takes to the highest bidder and hardworking Americans will pay the price. The oil and gas lobby spent \$75M on Trump's campaign, now he's paying them back by putting an oil executive in charge of the Energy Department who will jack up Americans' bills. The Administration will override civil servants to help their donors at Americans' expense by doing things like giving banks more control to rip off customers, and by letting companies start dangerous mining that could poison our water. Trump is even considering stopping Medicare from negotiating lower prices with drug companies

(SPLIT D) (CUTS) Millions of Americans rely on critical programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security every day. Instead of cutting actual waste or Federal bureaucracy, DOGE and MAGA Republicans in Congress have proposed historic cuts to Medicaid that would cause millions to lose their health insurance, cuts to programs like SNAP that help poor Americans buy groceries and are refusing to strengthen Social Security. Analysts estimate that health insurance premiums for a family of four would jump nearly \$1,000 per month under their plan



Appendix: Full Text of Messages

DOGE Messages

(SPLIT) (CUTS-RELY) The DOGE plan would cut 75% the federal civil service. This would grind the government to a halt and make it harder for FEMA to help when natural disasters strike, for the Department of Justice to hold companies accountable when they break the law, and even process Social Security checks and tax refunds. Trump's DOGE will also leave America without rules to protect us from unsafe drinking water, discrimination at work, or fraudulent business practices that rip off consumers. Instead of cutting actual waste, DOGE will gut the services Americans rely on, all to benefit the wealthy insiders who are behind the plan

(SPLIT) (UNQUALIFIED) Donald Trump's cabinet appointees are unqualified for the jobs they're being appointed to. Trump appointed a WWE wrestling executive to lead the Department of Education, nominated a talk show host who sold 'magic' weight loss pills, Dr. Oz, to lead Medicare, and nominated a former Congresswomen with no background in our national security agencies, Tulsi Gabbard, as Director of National intelligence. He even appointed Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who has promoted vaccine conspiracies and questions settled science, to lead the Department of Health and Human Services

(SPLIT) (BILLIONAIRES-SELF INTEREST) Donald Trump's cabinet is on track to be the richest in American history. Just 8 cabinet members and advisors are worth over \$383 billion dollars and spent over \$300M to elect him. These billionaires will put themselves and their ultra wealthy friends ahead of the rest of us, and make policy decisions that impact our healthcare, the banking industry and the environment. The world's richest man, Elon Musk, has been given a wide range of power as an outside advisor on DOGE to cut federal agencies that have oversight into billionaires' businesses, including his own

(SPLIT) (BILLIONAIRES-OUT OF TOUCH) Donald Trump's cabinet is on track to be the richest in American history. Just 8 cabinet members and advisors are worth over \$383 billion dollars. These billionaires will make policy decisions that impact our healthcare, the banking industry and the environment despite being completely out of touch with the lives and struggles of regular Americans



Appendix: Full Text of Messages

DOGE Messages

(CONSERVATIVE) Donald Trump is planning an extreme conservative takeover at all levels of government. He has appointed Christian nationalists to positions of power who will limit Americans personal freedoms and are ready to punish behavior they believe is anti-Christian. Their plans will disrupt the American way of life and discriminate against Americans for who they marry, where they come from, and if they choose to have an abortion. The Trump administration is on track to be the most conservative in our lifetime and take us backwards

(CHAOS) Trump will bring back the chaos and division of his first term. He announced he would pardon the rioters who stormed the Capitol on January 6th. He is preparing to use the military to deport immigrants, rounding up people who have American children and have been living and working in their communities for decades. And Trump is appointing unqualified people to his cabinet who have major conflicts of interest. Trump will sow chaos while he pushes a dangerous agenda that will harm the American people

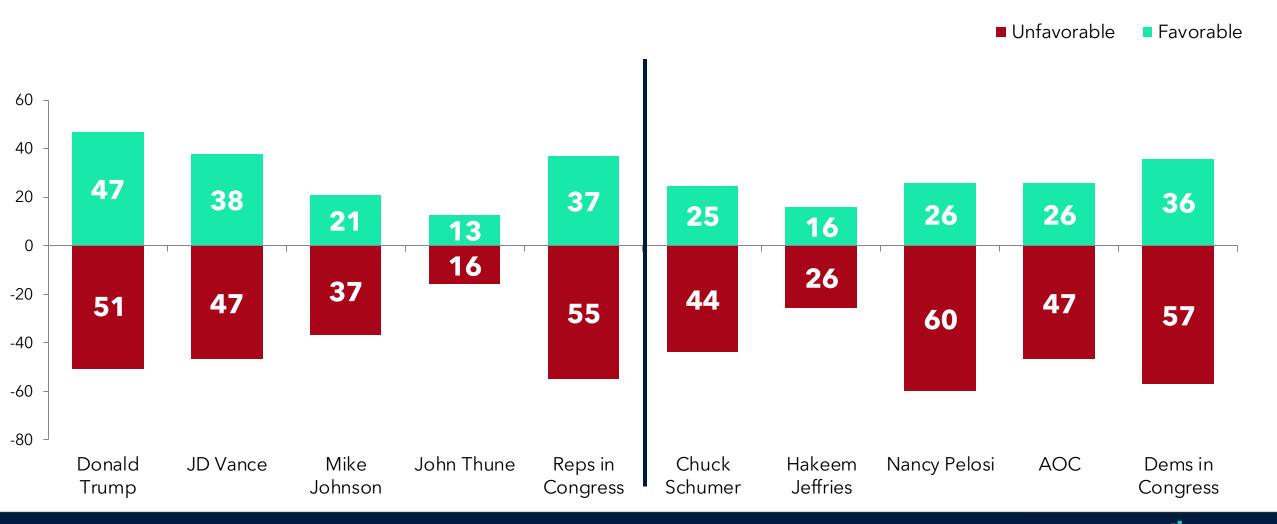
(SPLIT) (CORRUPTION-CONFLICT) Donald Trump has appointed corporate CEOs to lead government agencies where they can directly profit from their power at the expense of regular Americans and eliminate agencies that would hold them accountable. Elon Musk says that he will use DOGE to end rules on businesses he owns and review government contracts despite earning billions from them. Trump also put a Wall Street banker in charge of the Treasury Department and an oil and gas executive as the head of the Energy Department. These appointees will use their power to help maximize their companies' profits and force hard working Americans to foot the bill

(BIG CORPS) Trump has appointed corporate CEOs and banking executives to some of the highest positions of the federal government, the same CEOs and banking executives that have made billions of dollars off price gouging everyday American people. The last time big corporations had this much power, they created the housing crisis, sent America into a recession, and rolled back consumer protections that caused healthcare, pharmaceutical, banking, and other costs to skyrocket just so they could make more money

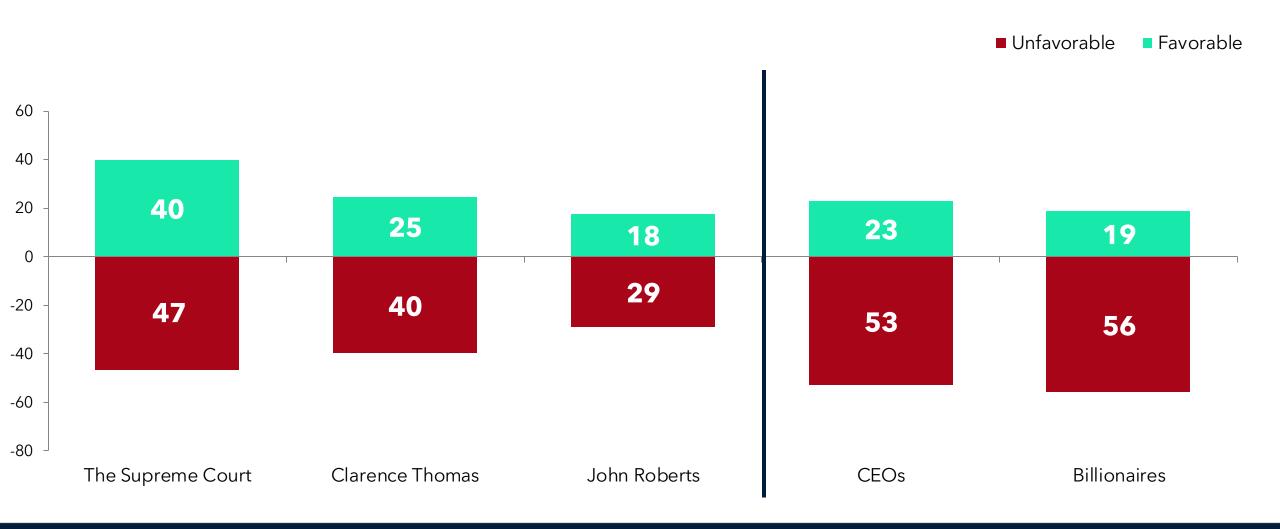
(CIVIL RIGHTS) Trump has promised to end DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) policies at schools and government agencies. Trump will reverse the Biden administration's civil rights initiatives and eliminate civil rights officials that have helped protect Americans from discrimination based on their race, religion and more. Without these offices, veterans, people with disabilities, pregnant moms, and older Americans will have no one in the federal government to turn to when they face illegal discrimination



Voters have overwhelmingly negative view of politicians on both sides; largely split on Trump



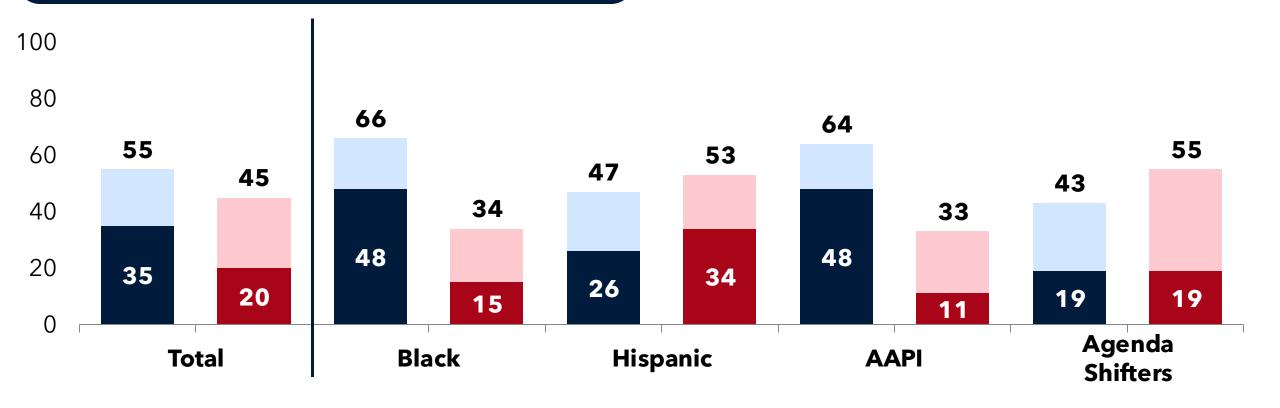
Supreme Court slightly underwater; CEOs and billionaires disliked





Tariffs on foreign goods will drive up the prices of goods we consume in the U.S. and make it harder to export things we make to other countries, harming the American economy

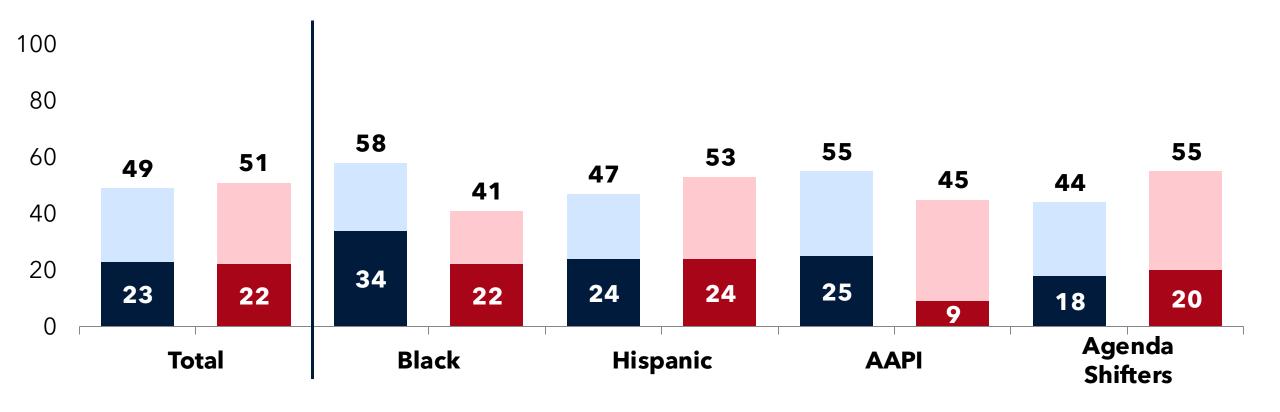
Tariffs on foreign goods will encourage more products to be made in America and improve the American economy.



Voters evenly divided on whether civil servants should be independent or if we need outside experts from the private sector

We need civil servants in the federal government to be independent of politics when they run and set the rules for government programs so work for the public

We need a fresh perspective from outside experts and the private sector to help run and set the rules for government programs, so they work for the public.





Only Congress and the President should be allowed to make policy decisions in America

The Supreme Court should change policies when they disagree with Congress or the President.

