



HARVARD Kennedy School

INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

Executive Summary

**Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes Toward
Politics and Public Service
34th Edition**

Harvard Public Opinion Project

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INTRODUCTION

Conceived by two Harvard undergraduate students during the winter of 1999, Harvard Kennedy School's Institute of Politics (IOP) Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service began in 2000 as a national survey of 18- to 24- year old college undergraduates. Over the last 18 years, this research project has grown in scope and mission, as this report now includes an analysis of 18- to 29- year olds on a broad set of longitudinal and current events issues.

The first survey of N=800 college undergraduates was completed in the Spring of 2000 and all interviews were conducted over the telephone; since that time, 33 subsequent surveys have been released. Over this period, a number of modifications have been made to the scope and methodology in order to ensure that sampling methods most accurately capture the view of the population of young adults in a manner that will be useful to both the Institute of Politics and the broader research and political communities.

- In 2001, the survey was expanded from N=800 to N=1,200 college students in order to capture a more robust sample of the undergraduate population.
- In 2006, the survey expanded to N=2,400 interviews, as we began interviewing members of the 18- to 24- year-old cohort who were not currently attending a four-year college or university. In addition, because of changing uses of technology among younger Americans, in 2006 the survey moved from a telephone poll to a survey that was administered online.
- In 2009, we expanded our scope a third time to include the population of young adults aged 18 to 29. While we will continue to report on the attitudes and opinions of U.S. college students, this change in our research subject was made to allow for better and more direct comparisons to the broader set of election and general public opinion research tracking data, which tends to track the 18- to 29-year-old demographic group. Our fall political tracking surveys will include samples of N=2,000, while the spring semester's research will be more in-depth and include as many as N=3,000 interviews. All of our interviews are conducted in English and Spanish. Harvard Kennedy School IOP surveys utilize RDD and Address-Based Sampling (ABS) frames and are administered online using GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks).

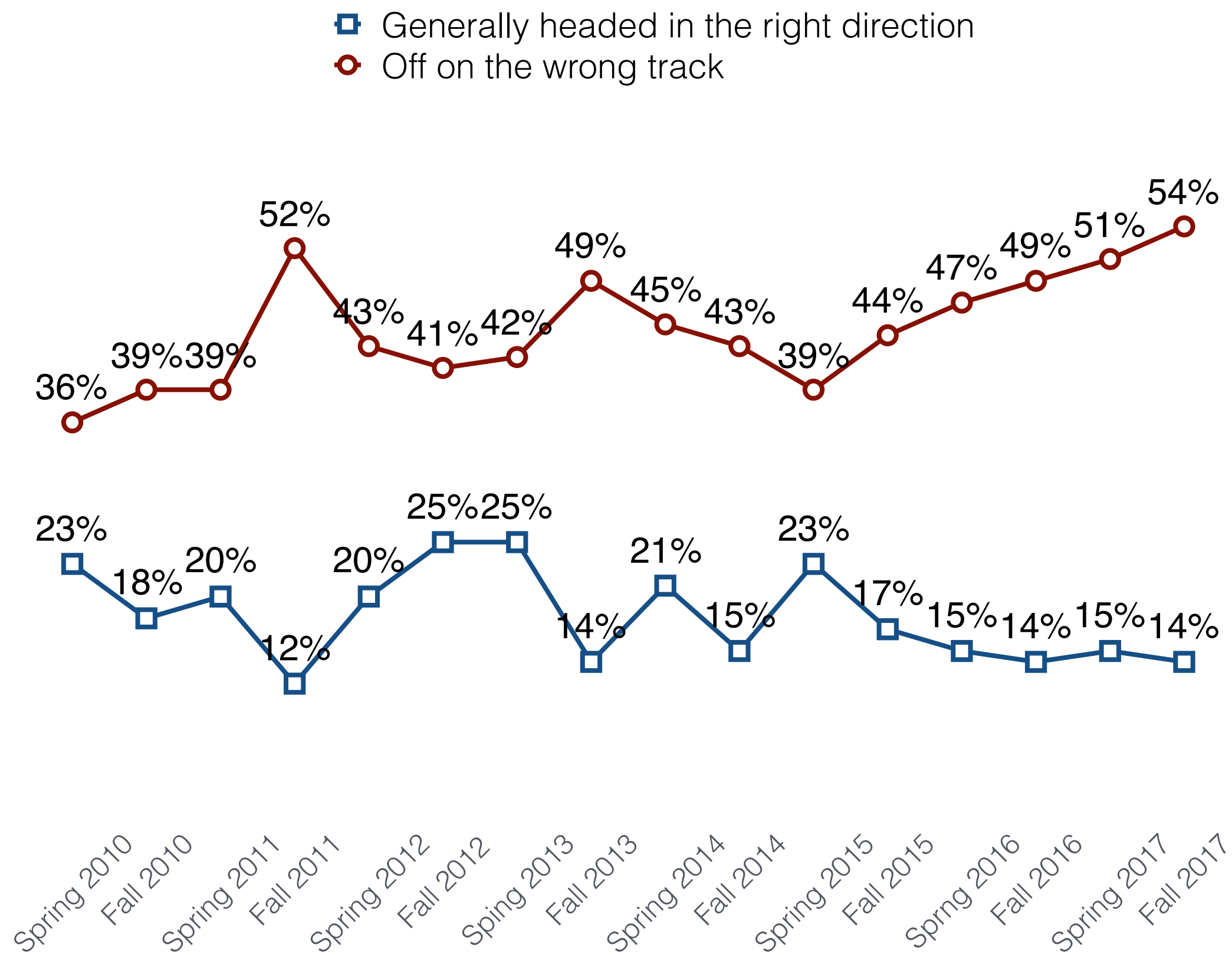
The interviewing period for this survey of N=2,037 18- to 29- year olds was October 31 to November 10, 2017. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 3.05 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. During the interviewing period, major media stories included coverage of a terrorist attack that killed 8 and injured 11 on a New York City bike path, former DNC Chair Donna Brazile's book release and her claims that the Democratic primary was "rigged" for Hillary Clinton, Kevin Spacey accused of sexual assault, female lawmakers alleging harassment by colleagues in the House, assault on Senator Rand Paul by his neighbor, the arrest of 11 Saudi Arabian princes by their government, a mass shooting in a Sutherland Springs, Texas church that left 26 dead, details of the GOP tax plan were released, victories by Democrats in the Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial elections, Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore accused of sexual encounter with a woman when she was 14 and he was 32, Louis C.K. accused of sexual conduct by multiple women, and a meeting in Vietnam when President Trump said that he believed Vladimir Putin's denials that he meddled in the 2016 election.

Harvard Kennedy School IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe supervised the study group of undergraduates. As always, the Harvard Public Opinion Project would like to thank IOP Acting Director Bill Delahunt, Executive Director Amy Howell, Director of Communications Chazy Dowaliby, Strategic Advisor Lois Romano and Mary Cappabianca, Communications Specialist for their insight and support over the course of this and all IOP projects.

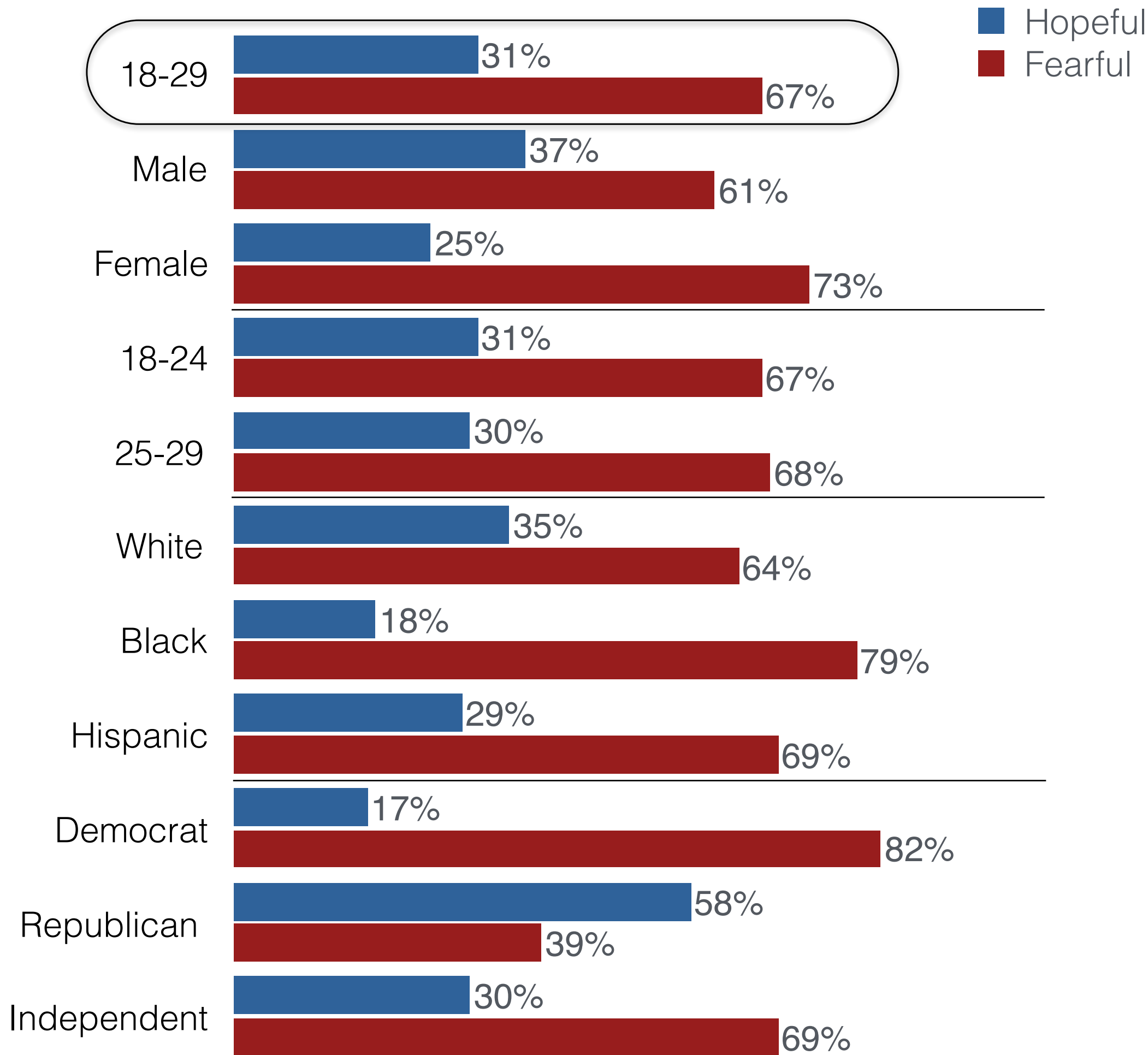
I. DIRECTION OF THE NATION, MIDTERM ENTHUSIASM, VIEWS OF PRESIDENT TRUMP, THE PARTIES & CONGRESS

01: 14% OF YOUNG AMERICANS BELIEVE WE'RE GENERALLY HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION; AT THIS MOMENT, FEAR OUTPACES HOPE, 67% - 31%

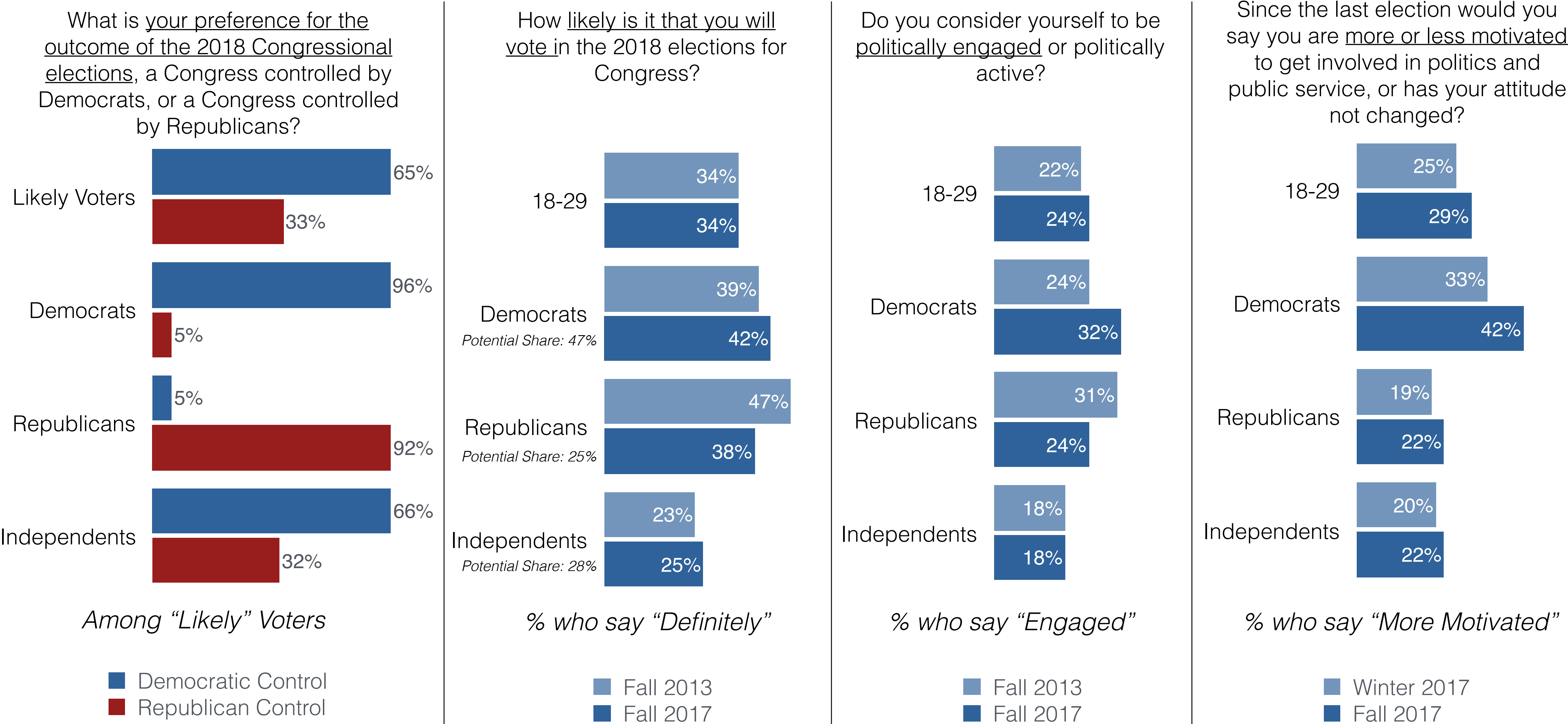
All in all, do you think that things in the nation are ...?



At this moment, would you say that you are more hopeful or fearful about the future of America?

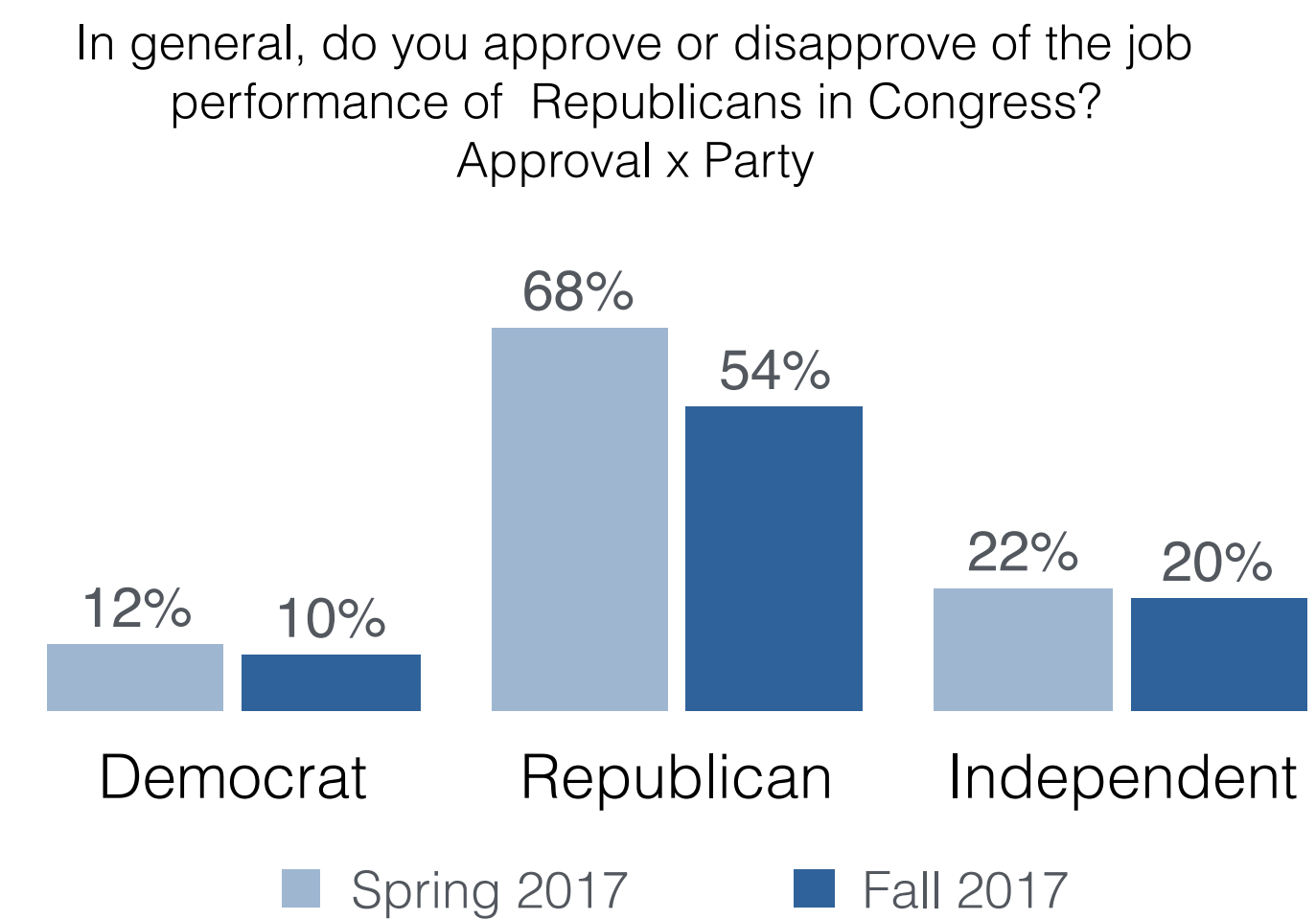
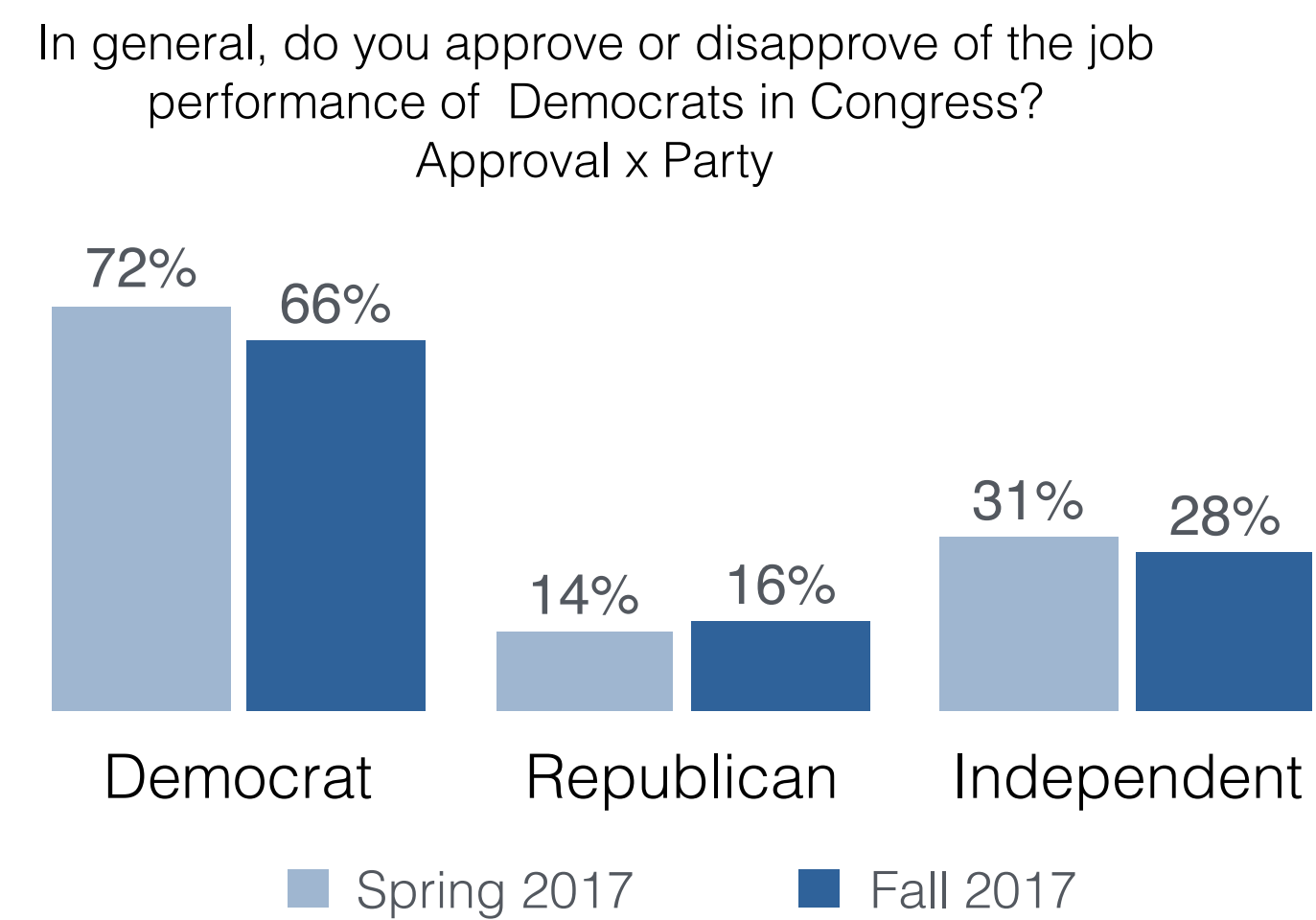
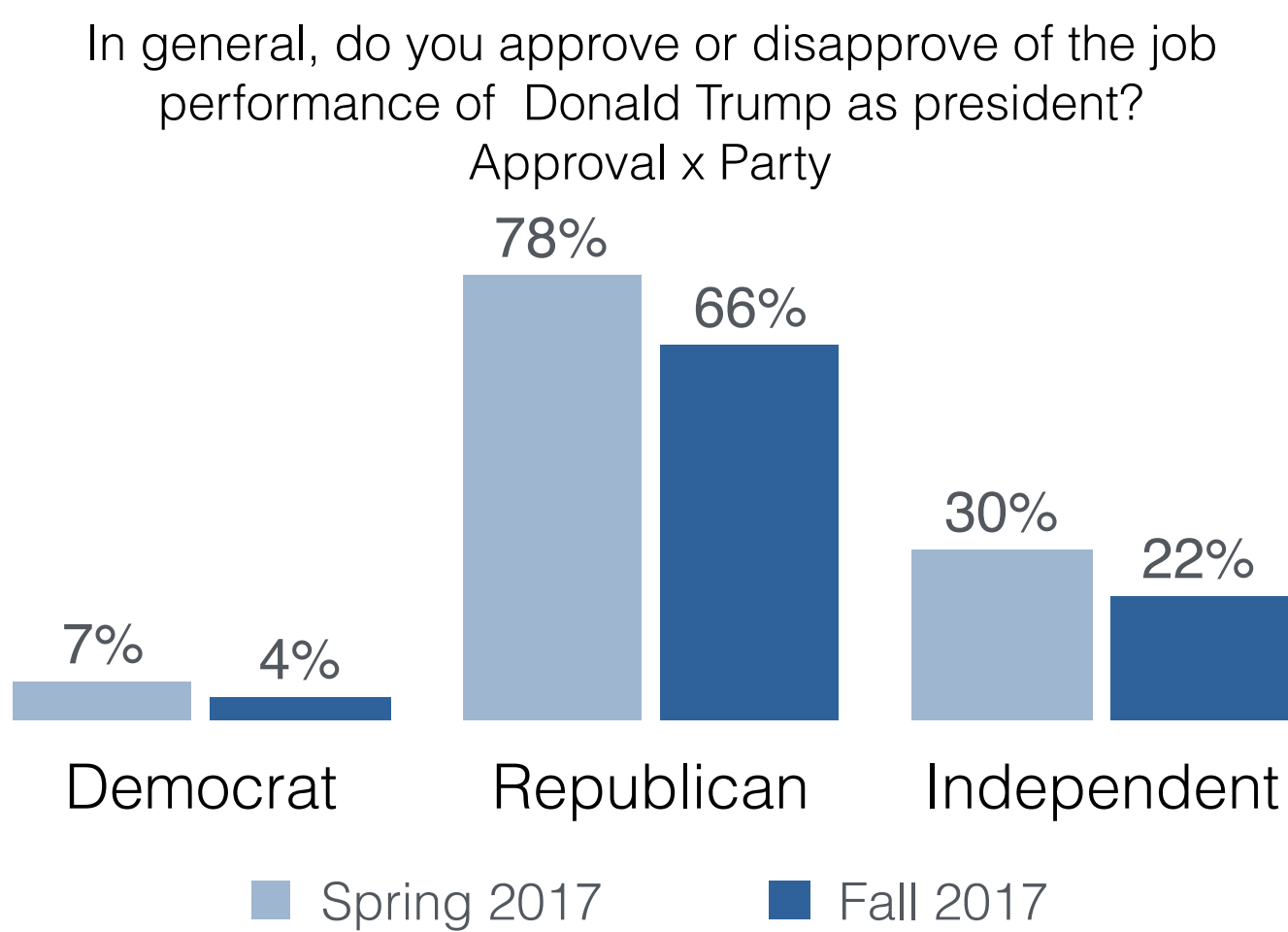
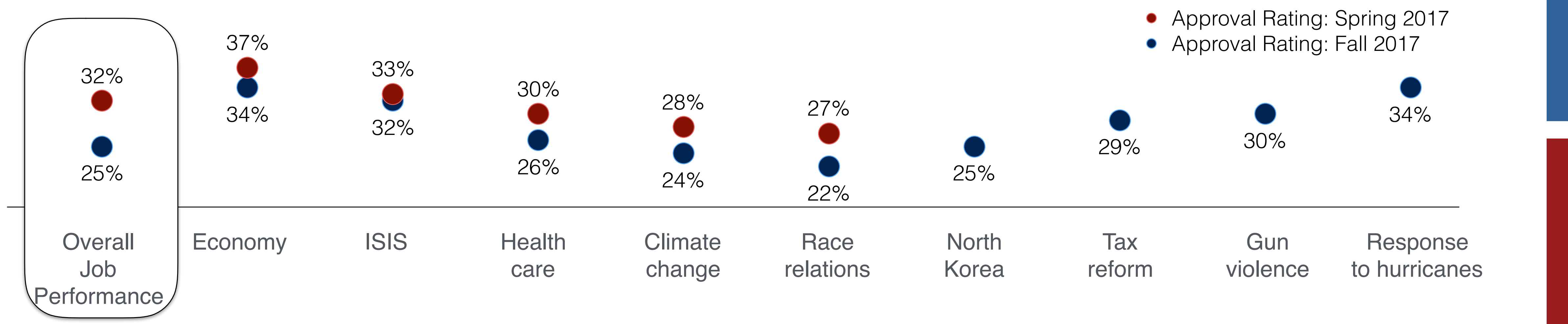


02: DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF CONGRESS PREFERRED 2:1; DEMOCRATS MORE ENGAGED, REPUBLICANS LESS SO, COMPARED TO 2014 MIDTERM CYCLE; MOTIVATION AMONG DEMOCRATS +9 SINCE JANUARY

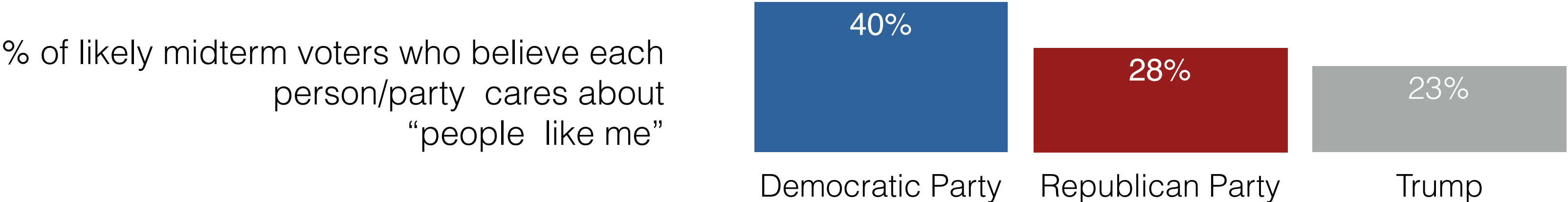
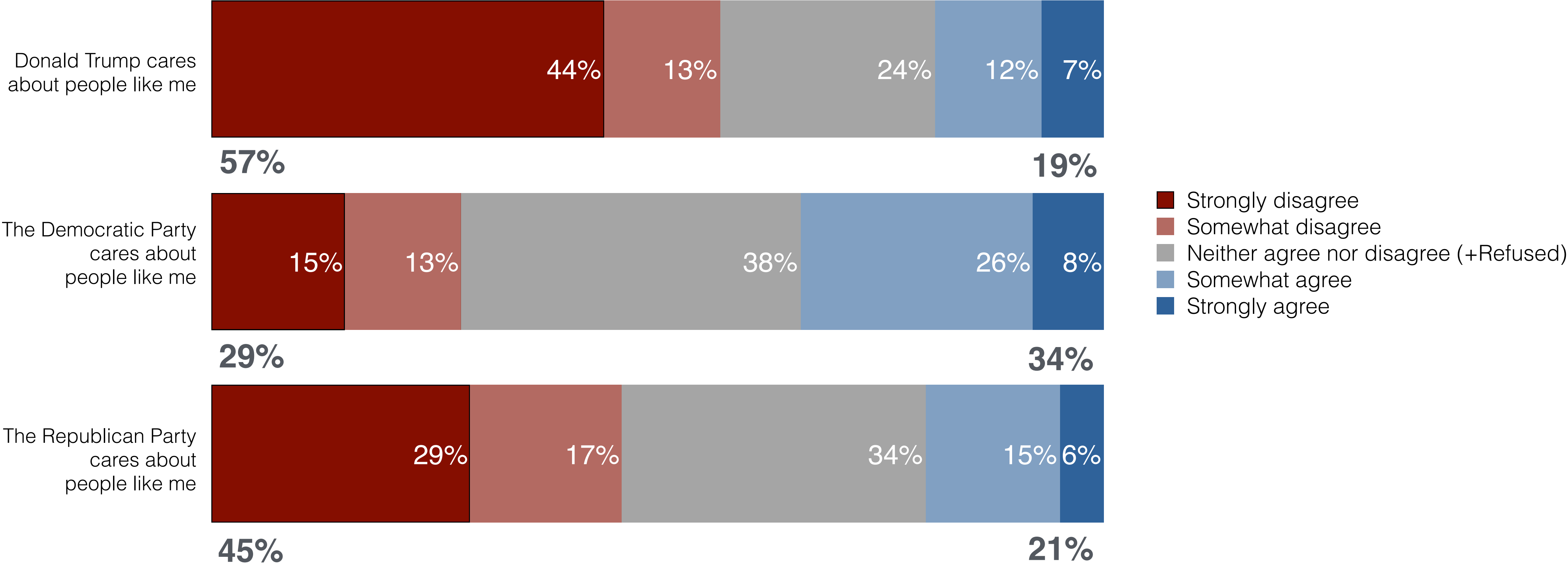


03: PRESIDENT TRUMP JOB APPROVAL DOWN 7 SINCE SPRING TO 25%; AMONG YOUNG REPUBLICANS, TRUMP DOWN 12 POINTS & DOWN 8 AMONG INDEPENDENTS

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of Donald Trump as president?
Now thinking specifically about Donald Trump, do you approve or disapprove of the way he is handling the following issues?



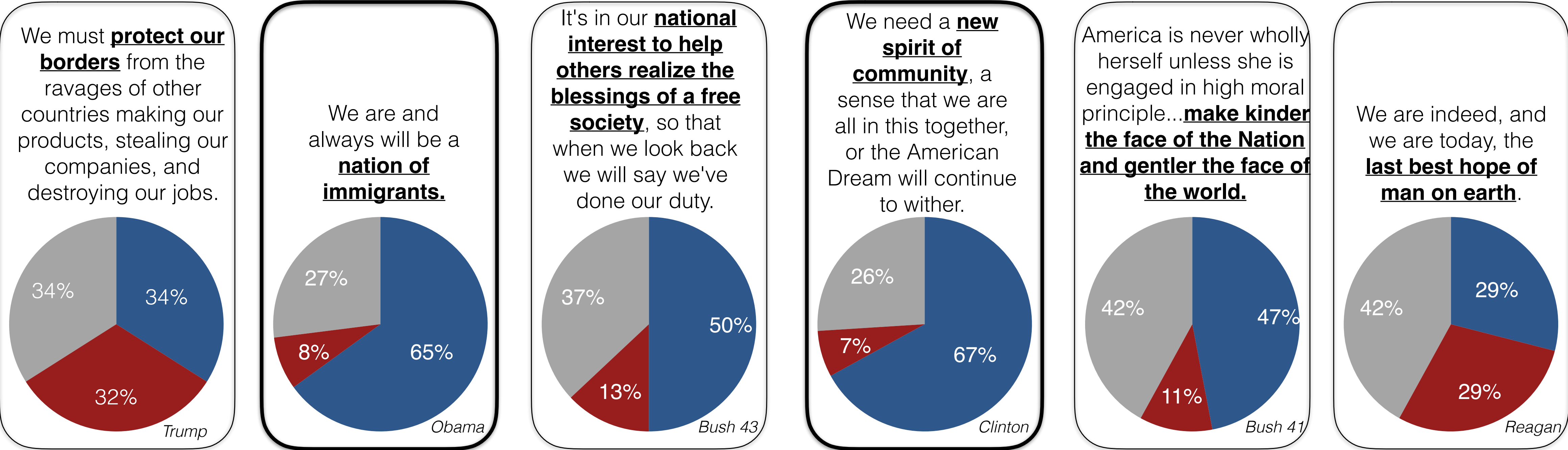
04: DESPITE DEMOCRATIC ADVANTAGES, ONLY 34% AGREE PARTY CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE THEM; 21% BELIEVE SAME IS TRUE FOR REPUBLICAN PARTY & 19% FOR PRESIDENT



II. AMERICAN VALUES & OUR MOST SERIOUS THREATS

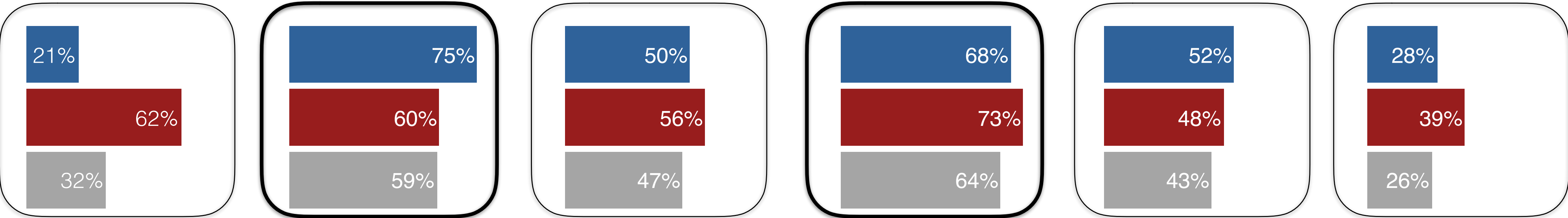
05: AMERICA AS A ‘NATION OF IMMIGRANTS,’ DEFINED BY A SPIRIT THAT ‘WE’RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER,’ SPEAKS TO YOUNG AMERICANS

Below is a list of statements about America. Do you agree or disagree with these statements?



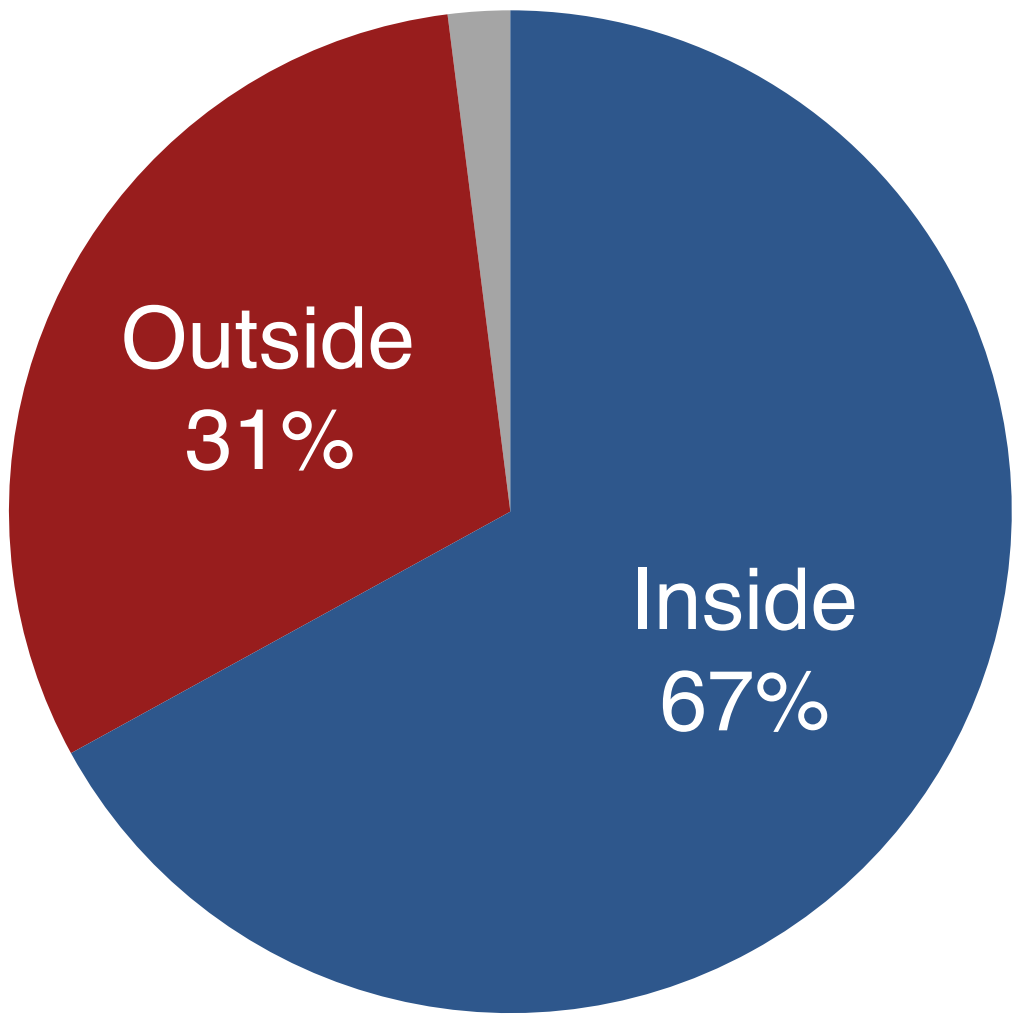
Emphasis and reference to author of quote added

Agree Disagree Neutral + Refused



06: BY MORE THAN 2:1, YOUNG AMERICANS BELIEVE GREATEST THREATS COME FROM INSIDE THE COUNTRY; HACKERS & ISIS CONSIDERED VERY SERIOUS THREAT BY 3X AS MANY PEOPLE AS NORTH KOREA

Do you believe the greatest threat to America comes from forces inside, or outside, our country?



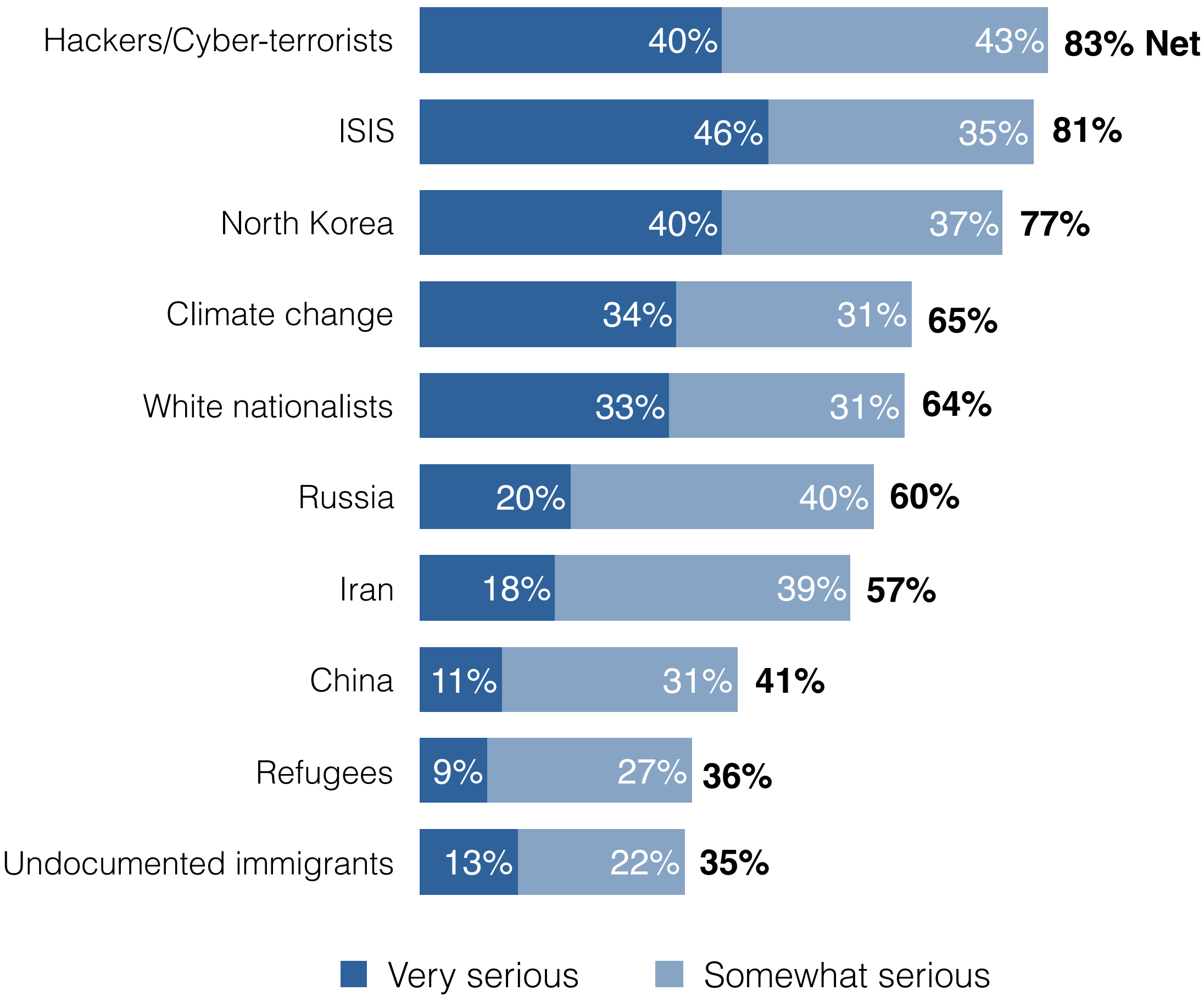
What do you believe is the greatest threat to America today?

“A division between the nations people. An inability to bridge the gap across our perceived differences.”

“A loss of a sense of national unity, duty, and honor. We’ve been driven so far to extremes in this country and have become selfish as a population, and it’s time to return to common sense.”

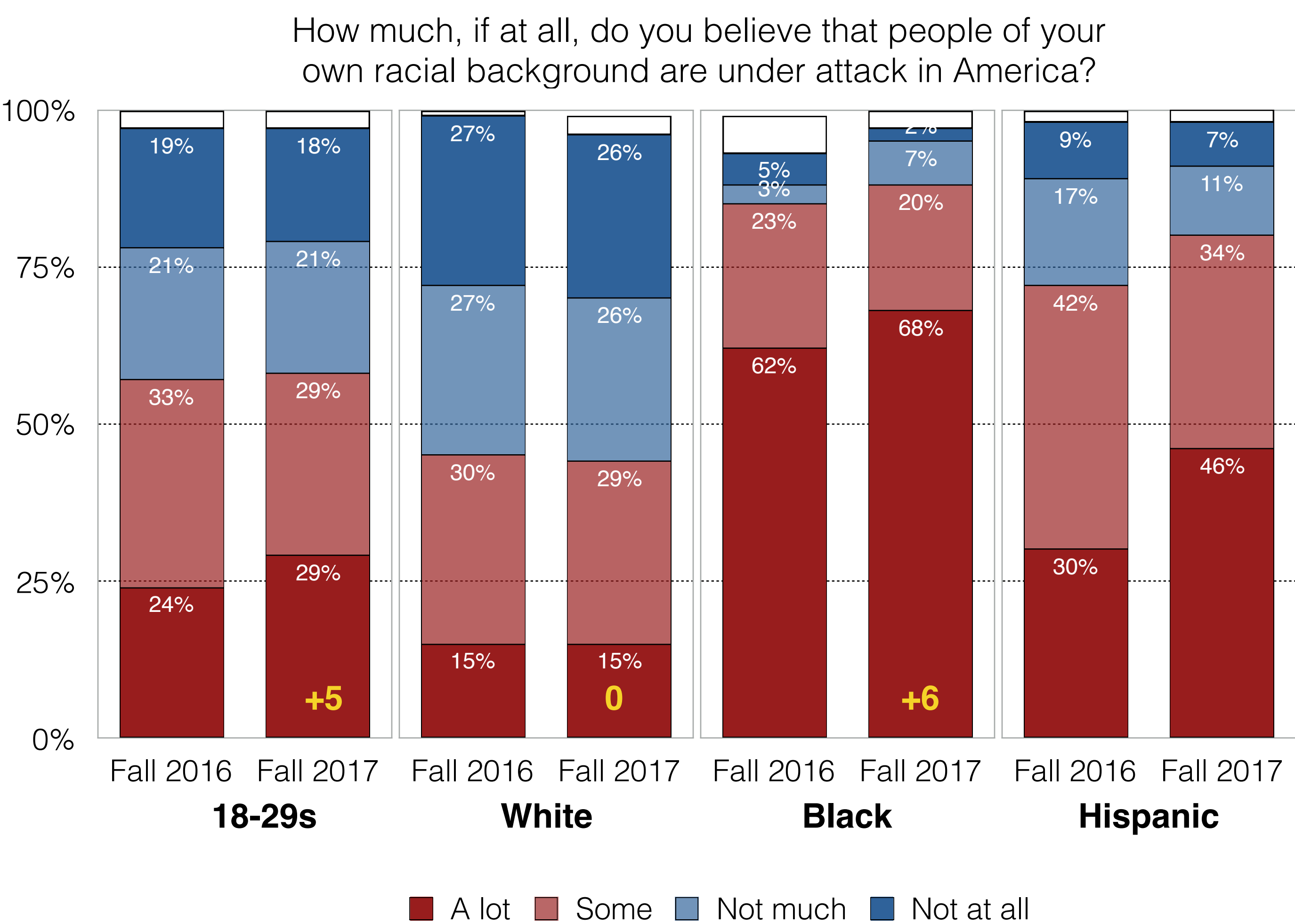
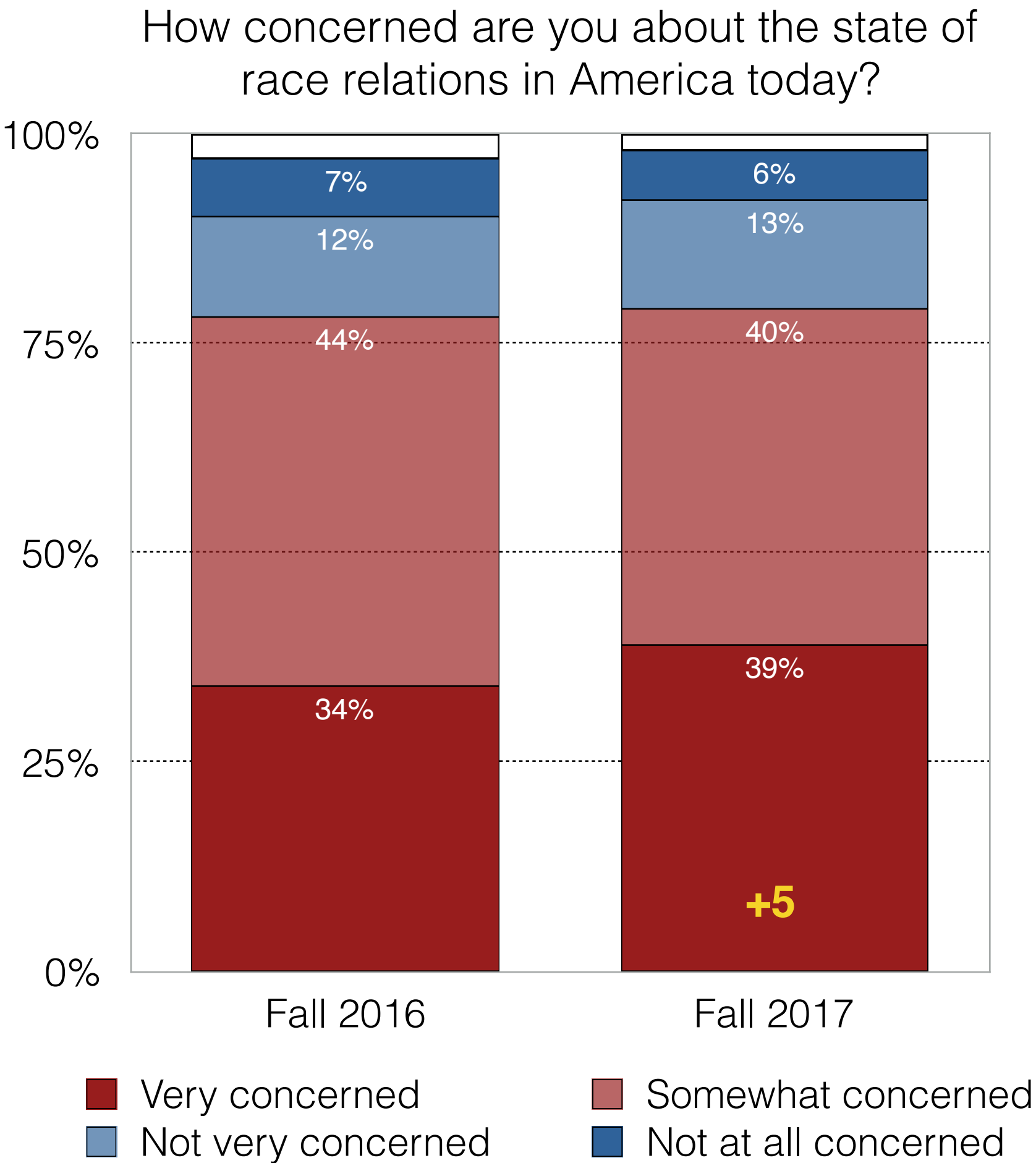
“People without hope.”

How serious a threat to America do you consider each to be?



III. RACE RELATIONS

07: 79% OF YOUNG AMERICANS CONCERNED ABOUT STATE OF RACE RELATIONS TODAY; 68% OF BLACKS & 46% OF HISPANICS BELIEVE THEIR RACE IS UNDER ATTACK A LOT IN AMERICA, 15% OF WHITES FEEL SAME WAY

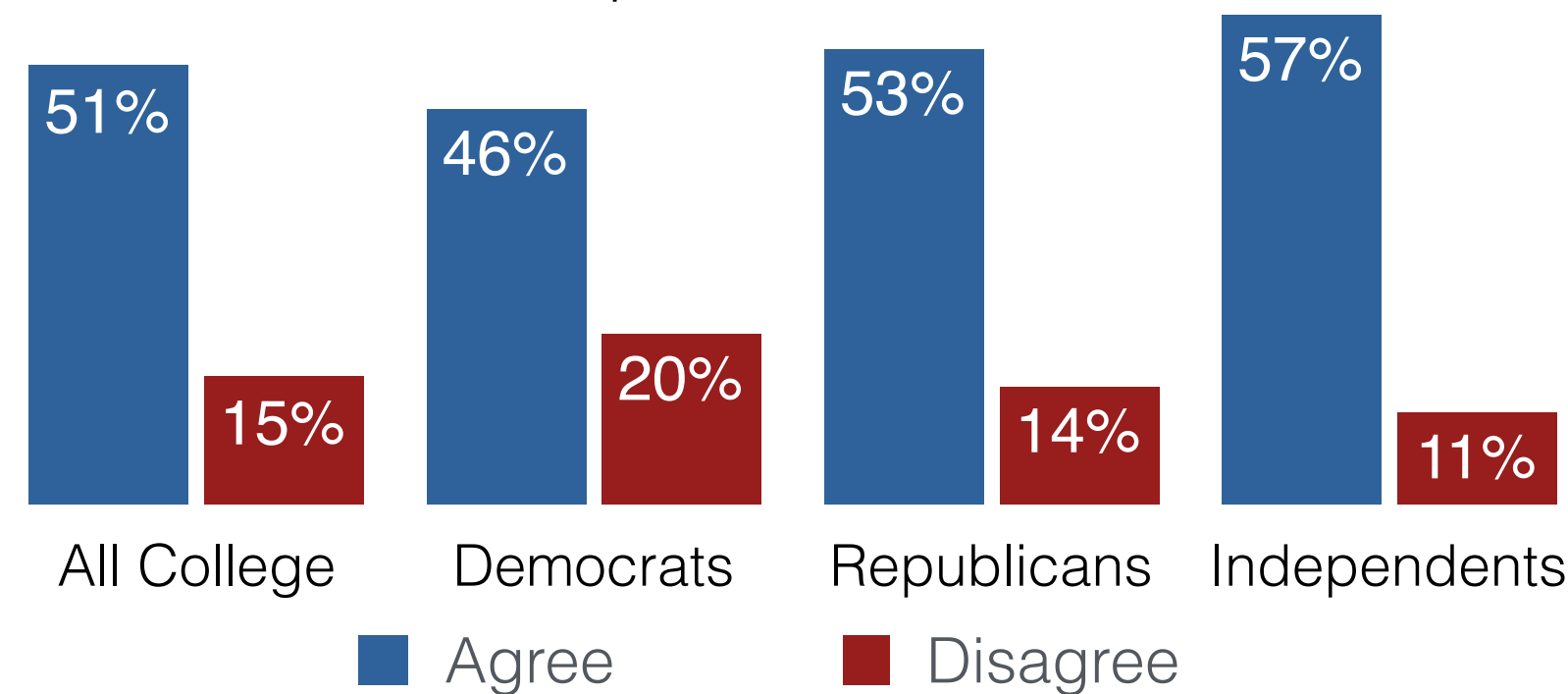


IV. SPEECH ON CAMPUS, REGULATION & ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

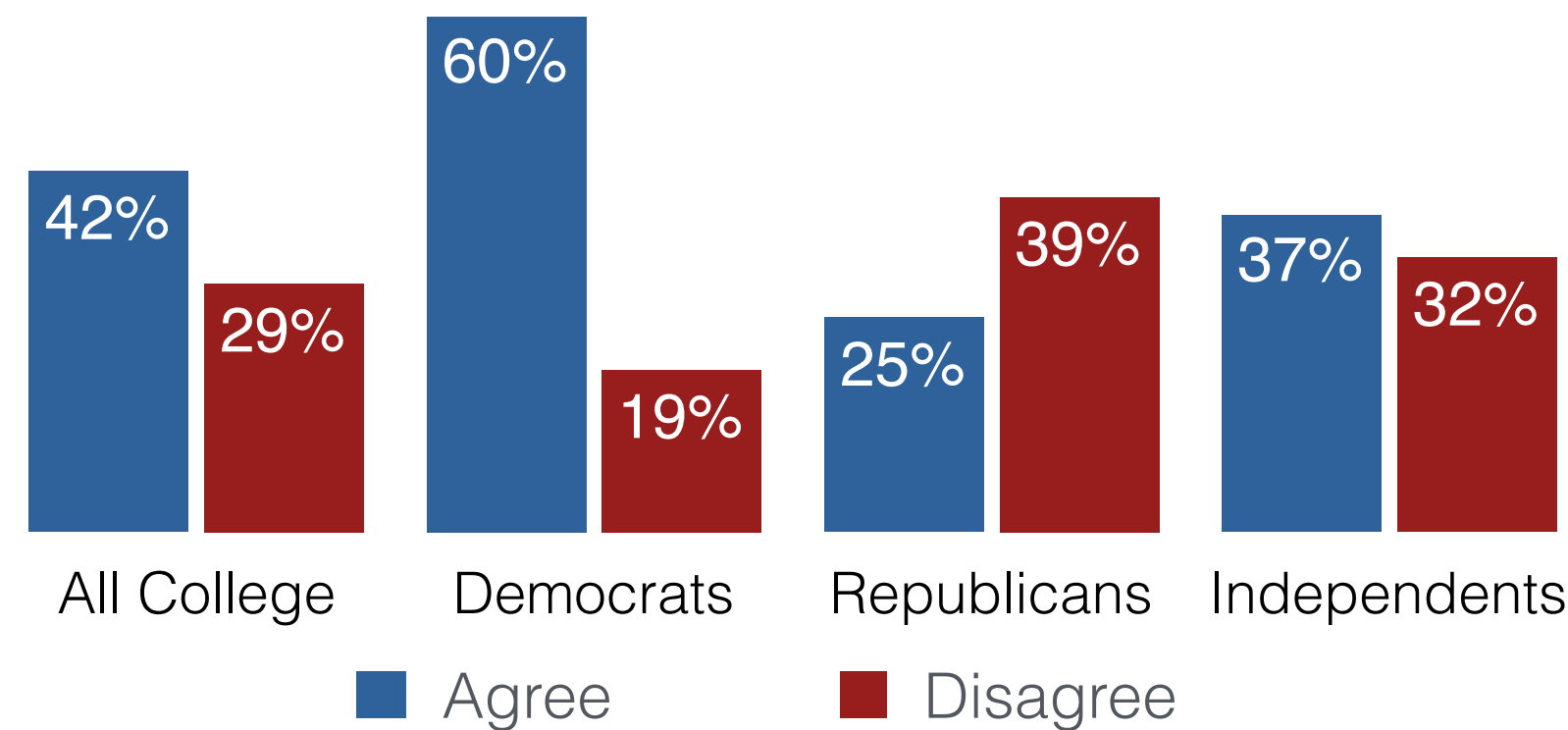
08: ACROSS PARTIES, STUDENTS SUPPORTIVE OF BRINGING HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS TO CAMPUS; REPUBLICANS FAR LESS COMFORTABLE SHARING OPINIONS — SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BELIEVED TO HAVE OBLIGATION TO REGULATE FAKE NEWS

Among College Students Only
n=465

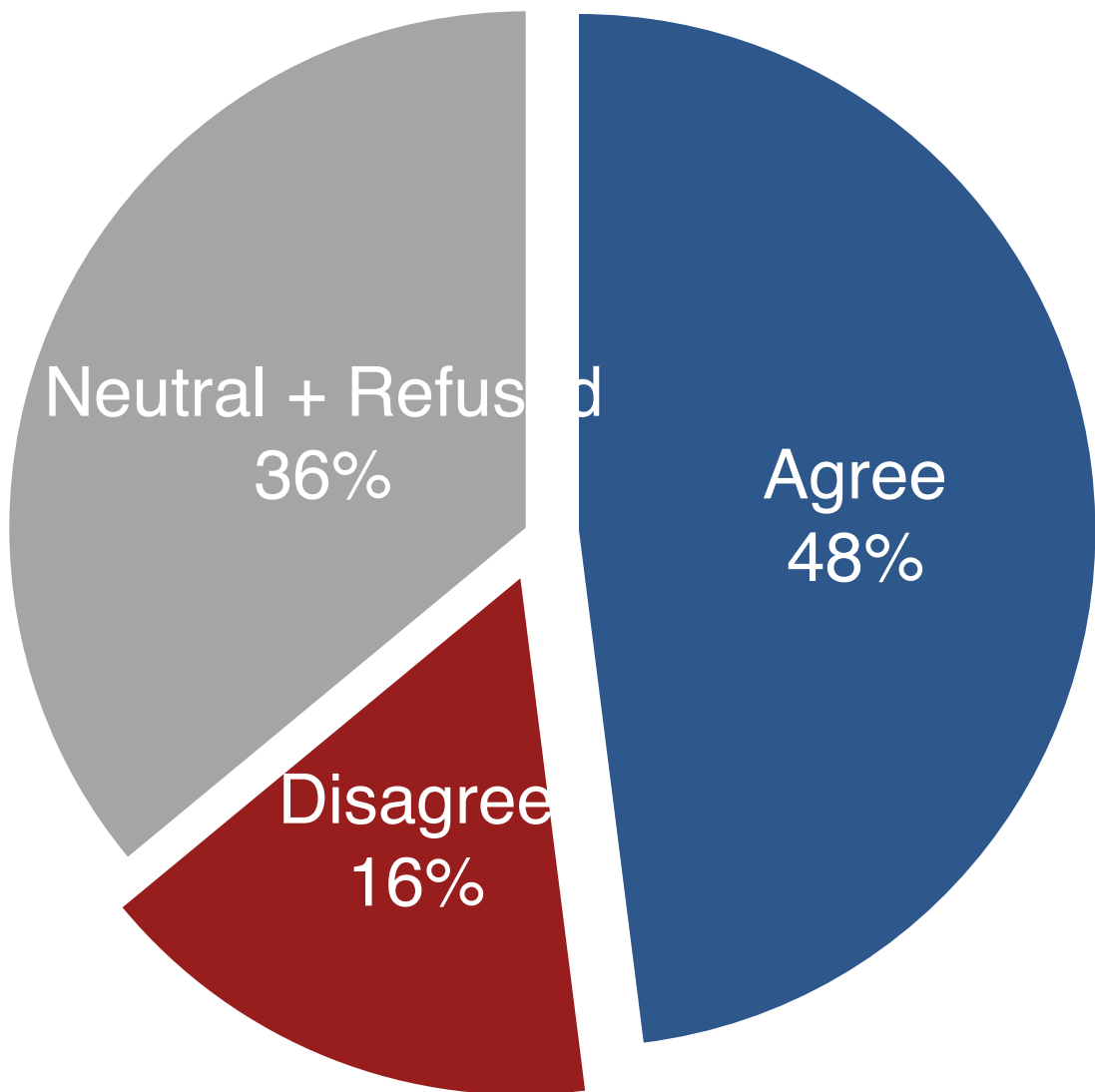
Providing an opportunity for college students to hear highly controversial speakers adds value to the educational experience.



I feel comfortable sharing my political opinions at my college without fear of censorship or negative repercussions.



Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have an obligation to regulate fake news.



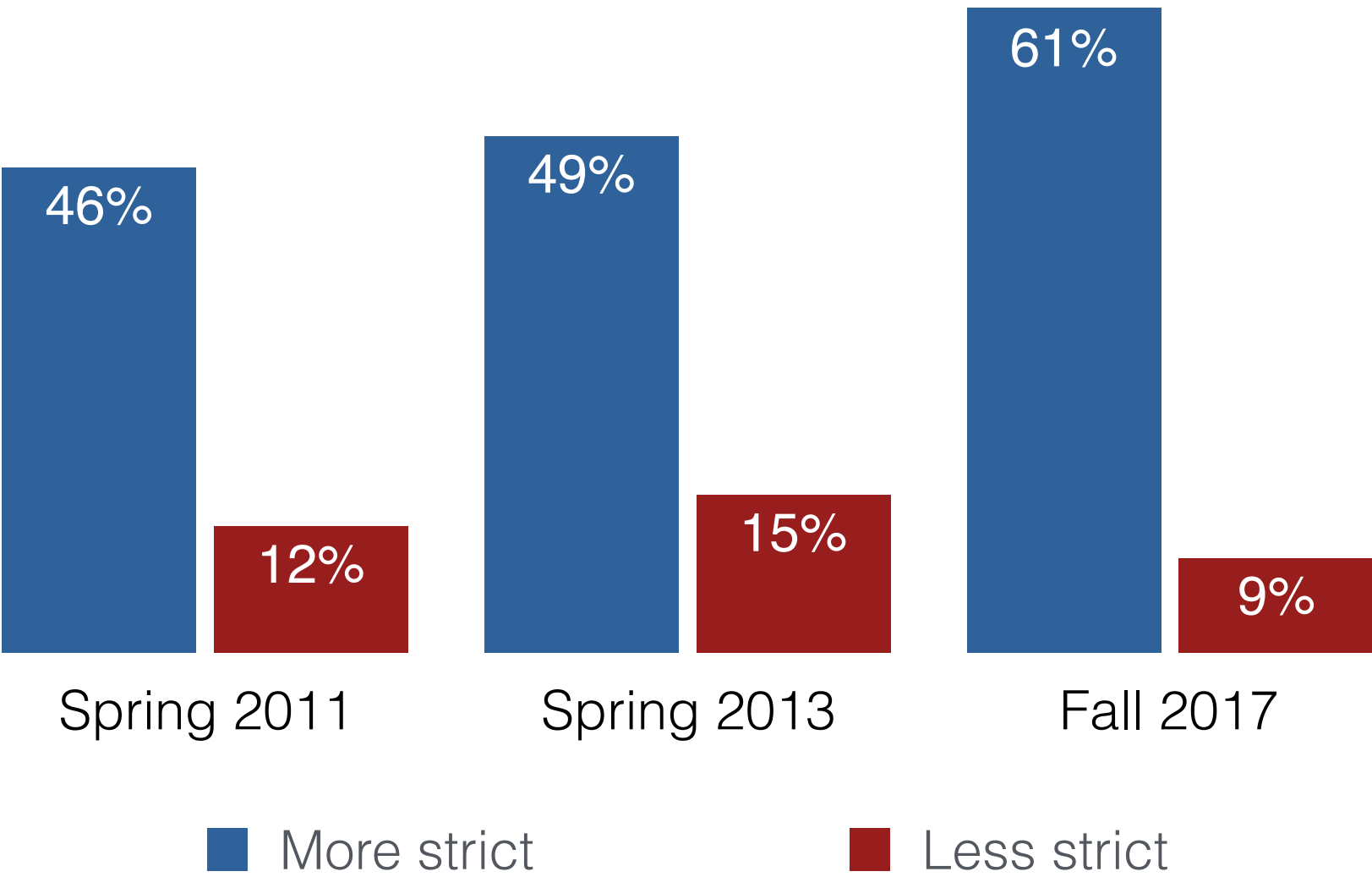
% who agree Facebook, Twitter, YouTube have obligation to regulate fake news x Party



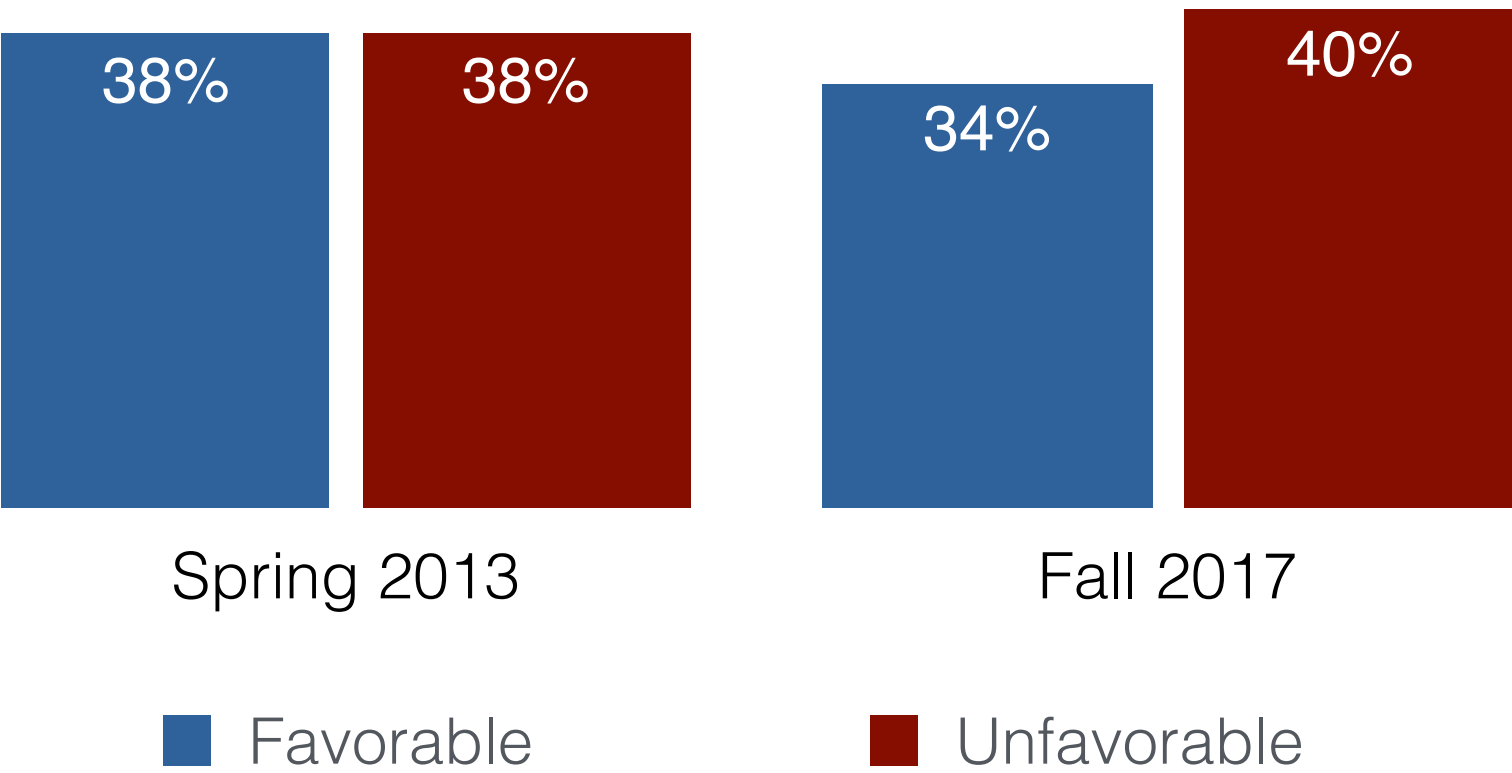
V. POLITICAL ISSUES: GUN CONTROL, CLIMATE CHANGE, NATIONAL ANTHEM, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & HEALTH CARE

09: UNLIKE THE AFTERMATH OF NEWTOWN AND AURORA, SUPPORT FOR STRICTER GUN CONTROL INCREASED POST- LAS VEGAS MASSACRE

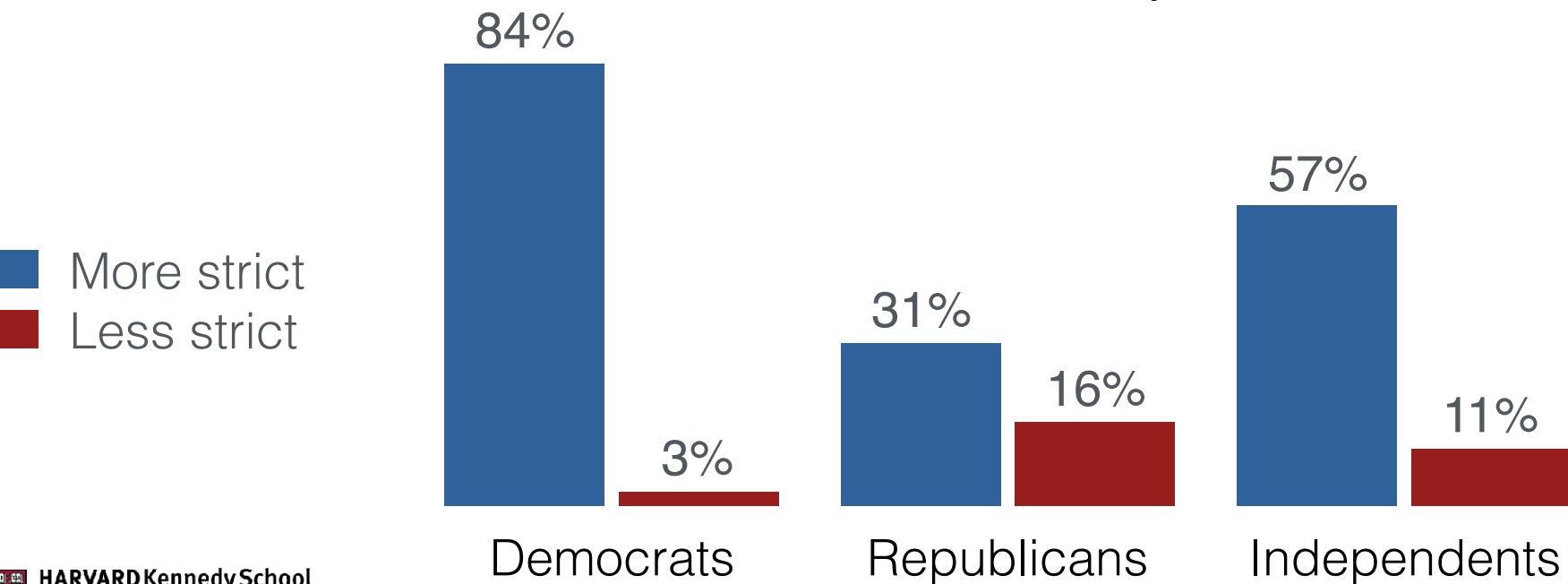
In general, do you think gun control laws should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?



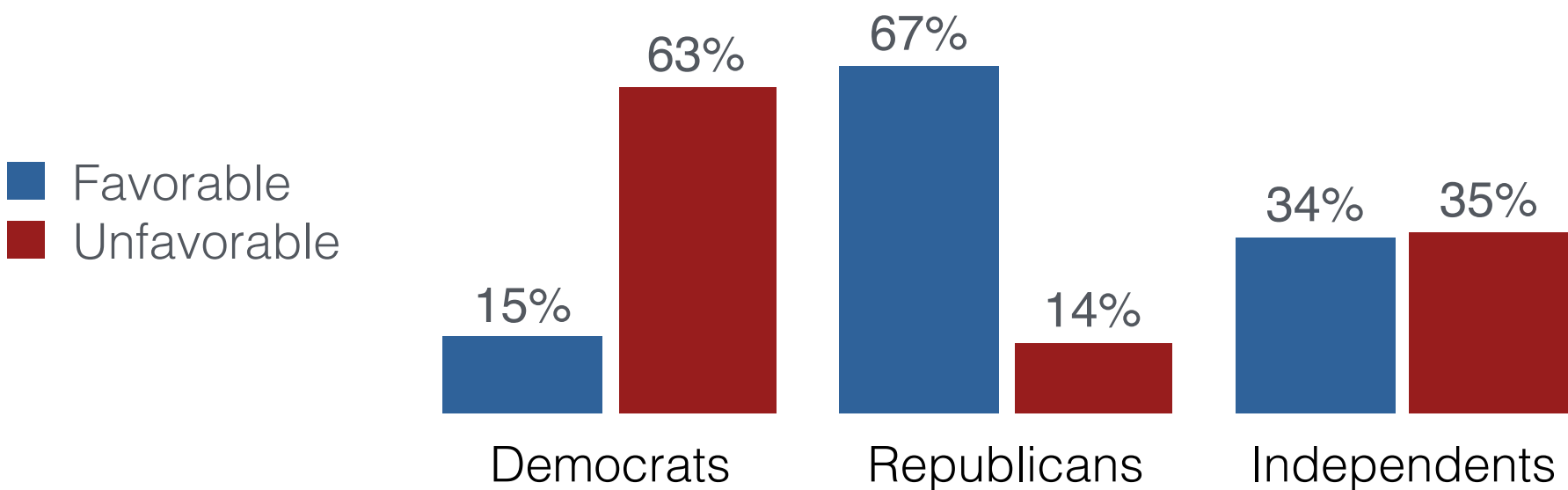
Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the National Rifle Association?



In general, do you think gun control laws should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?
x Party

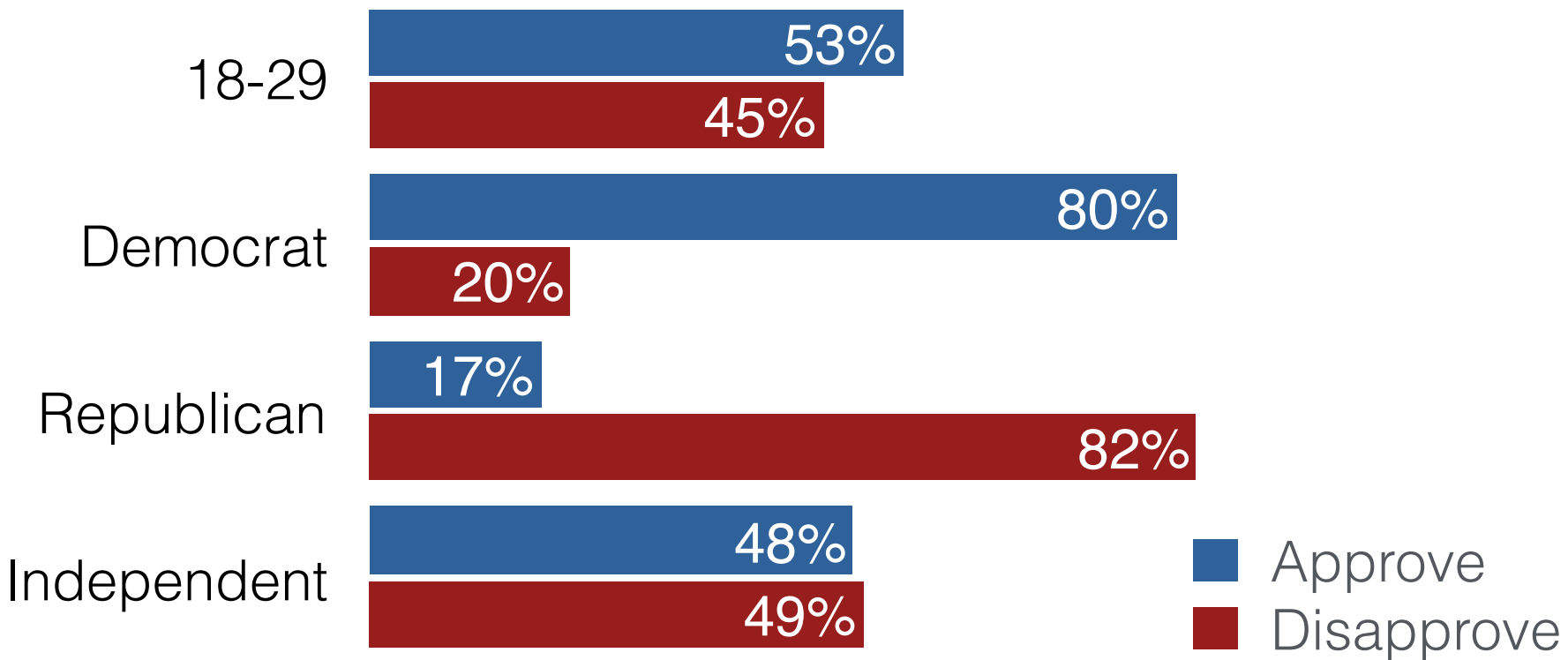


Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the National Rifle Association?
x Party

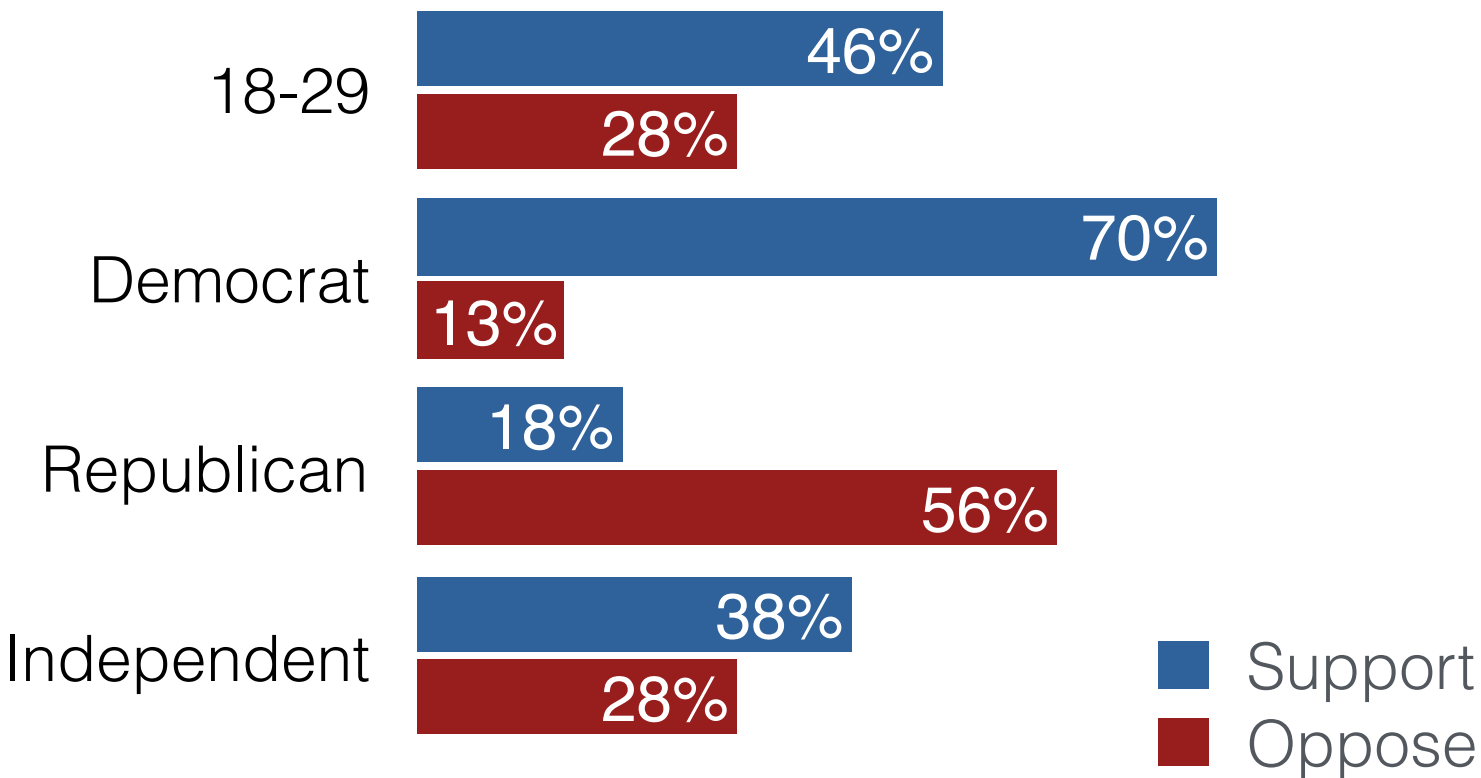


10: MAJOR SPLITS BY PARTY ON DECISION TO KNEEL DURING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, SINGLE PAYER & VIEWS TOWARD GLOBAL WARMING

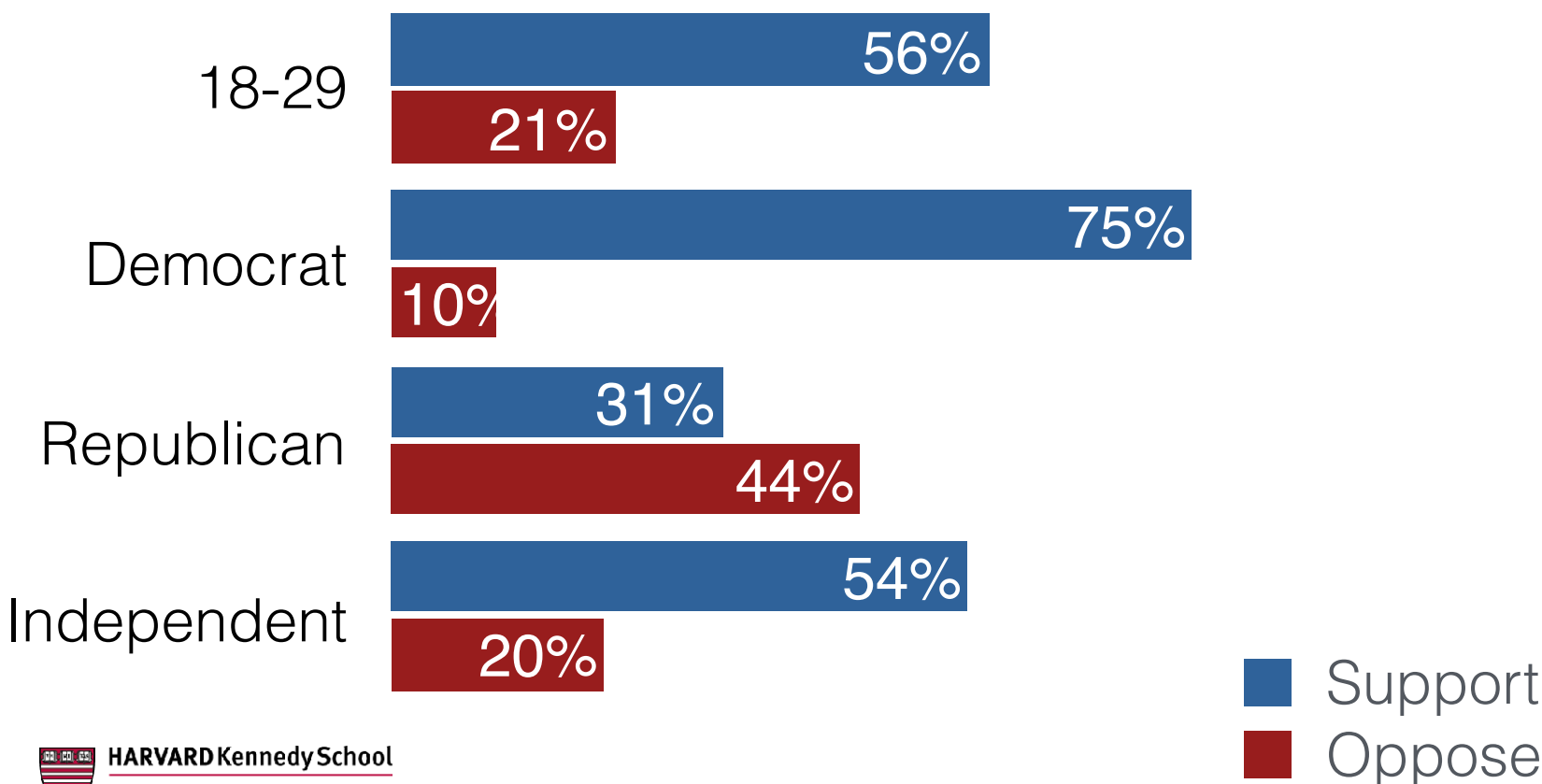
Do you approve or disapprove of some professional athletes' decision to kneel during the National Anthem?



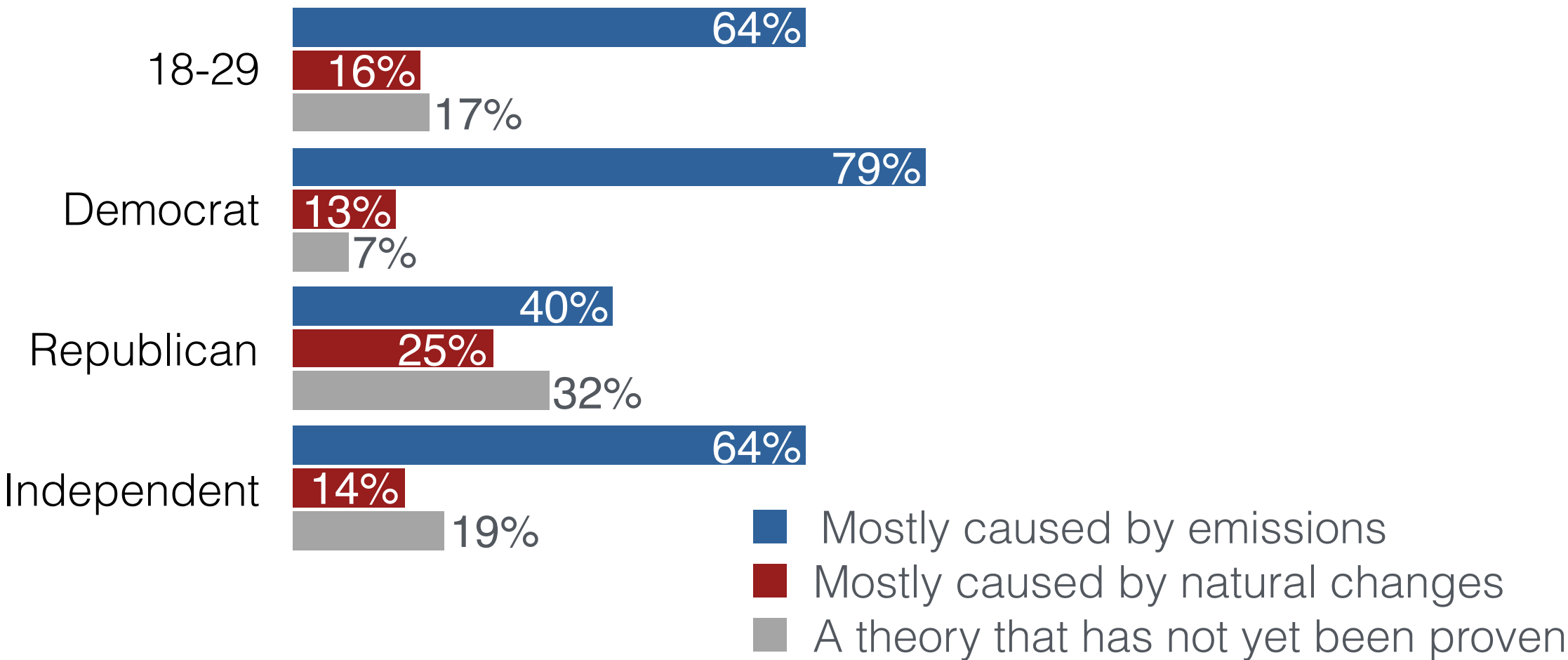
Do you support or oppose race-based affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of African American and Hispanic students on college campuses?



Do you support or oppose Single Payer Health Care (also referred Medicare for all) where the federal government would cover all the health care expenses of individuals?



Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of global warming?



HARVARD PUBLIC OPINION PROJECT

The Institute of Politics at Harvard Kennedy School (IOP) was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP's mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis to inspire them to consider careers in politics and public service. The Institute oversees the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum, one of the world's premier arenas for political speech, discussion, and debate, and runs a fellowship program offering a unique opportunity for political practitioners to spend semesters at Harvard and interact with students. The IOP also offers dozens of paid internships for eight to ten weeks during the summer; a nonpartisan, quarterly journal written and run entirely by undergraduates; and a unique, nationwide survey project of young adults' political views.

Students are offered wide-ranging opportunities, including internships and conferences intended to provide opportunities for interaction with the people who shape politics and public policy. The IOP does not offer formal courses or degree-granting programs; instead, it provides avenues for practical experience and encourages students to examine critically and think creatively about politics and public issues. For more information, including past results of these polls, please visit us online at www.iop.harvard.edu.

Institute of Politics team members who worked on this project include:

John Della Volpe
Director of Polling, Institute of Politics

Chazy Dowaliby
Director of Communications, Institute of Politics

Bill Delahunt
Acting Director, Institute of Politics

Amy Howell
Executive Director, Institute of Politics

The Student Chair of the Harvard Public Opinion Project Committee is Erik Fliegauf '19. Student members of the committee are: Amal Abdi '20, Dustin Chiang '19, Wesley De Silvestro '21, Sonya Jacobs '18, Myer Johnson-Potter '20, Michael Kassabian '19, Teddy Landis '20, Katherine Liu '19, Christopher MacMaster '19, William Matheson '21, Olivia McGinnis '21, Luke Minton '20, Dhruv Mohnot '21, Rachel Nadboy '20, Sewon Park '21, Stefan Petrovic '19, Trey Sexton '19, Isabel Slavinsky '20, Claire Sukumar '20, Lauren Thorsett '18, Miguel Undurraga '19, Chris Vassallo '20, Anna Vaynrub '21, Hannah Warntjes '18 and Samuel Zwickel '21.



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