

April 2017

# Post-Election Research: Persuadable and Drop-off Voters

Research findings prepared for Priorities USA  
by Global Strategy Group & Garin Hart Yang

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# Methodology

## 1 Focus Groups

GSG and GHY conducted two focus groups in Oak Creek, Wisconsin on January 26<sup>th</sup>, two in Southfield, Michigan on January 28<sup>th</sup>, and two in Tampa, Florida on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

In each set of groups, one group was conducted with Obama-Trump voters and one with turnout targets (millennials in WI & FL and African American voters in MI who voted for Obama but did not vote in 2016).

## 2 Obama- Trump Survey

GSG and GHY conducted a survey of 801 registered voters who voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and Barack Obama in 2012 from January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## 3 Drop-off Voter Survey

GSG and GHY conducted a survey of 803 registered voters nationwide from March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, conducting interviews with 401 midterm drop-off voters (voted for Clinton in 2016 but did not vote in 2014) and 402 presidential drop-off voters (voted for Obama in 2012 but did not vote in 2016).

# Understanding Drop-off and Persuadable Voters

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## Key Findings: Persuadable and Drop-off voters

**A key commonality between turnout voters and Obama-Trump voters is that they are struggling economically.**

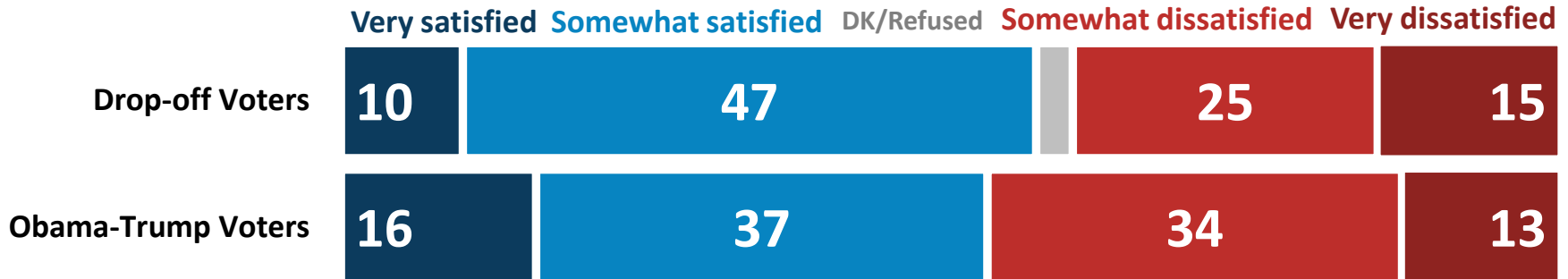
- Clinton and Democrats' economic message did not break through to drop-off or Obama-Trump voters, even though drop-off voters are decidedly anti-Trump.
- Drop-off voters already believe that Trump's policies will benefit the wealthy over other groups, but there is more work to be done to convince Obama-Trump voters that this is the case.
- Ensuring corporations pay their fair share of taxes, modernizing infrastructure, and increasing the development of renewable energy are seen as economically beneficial by both groups.

**Health care is a critical motivator for both Democratic drop-off voters and persuadable Trump voters.**

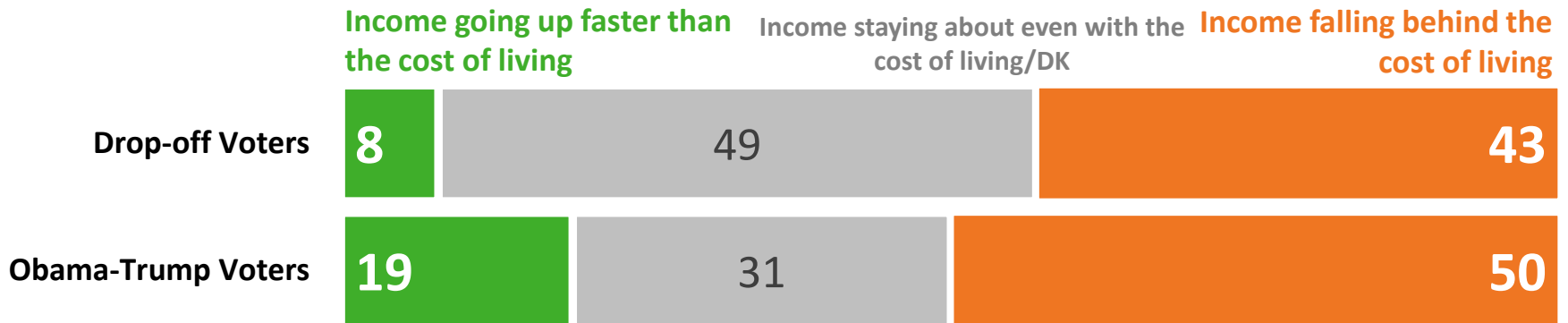
- Both groups identify cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and other healthcare programs as policies that would have a very bad effect on them personally.
- Among drop-off voters, items related to health care (increasing costs for seniors, cutting important programs, and millions of Americans losing coverage) are frequently rated as very major concerns.

# Both drop-off and Obama-Trump voters feel their income is falling behind the cost of living and few are very satisfied with the state of the economy

## How satisfied are you with the state of the US economy today?



## Income Relative to Cost of Living



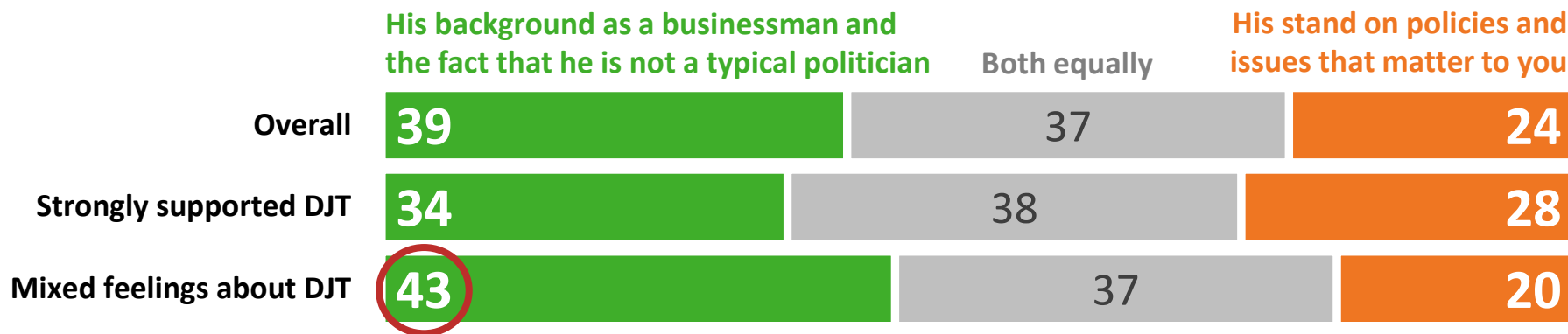
More presidential drop-off voters feel their income is falling behind the cost of living (46%), on par with Obama-Trump voters (50%).

# Obama-Trump Voters In Depth

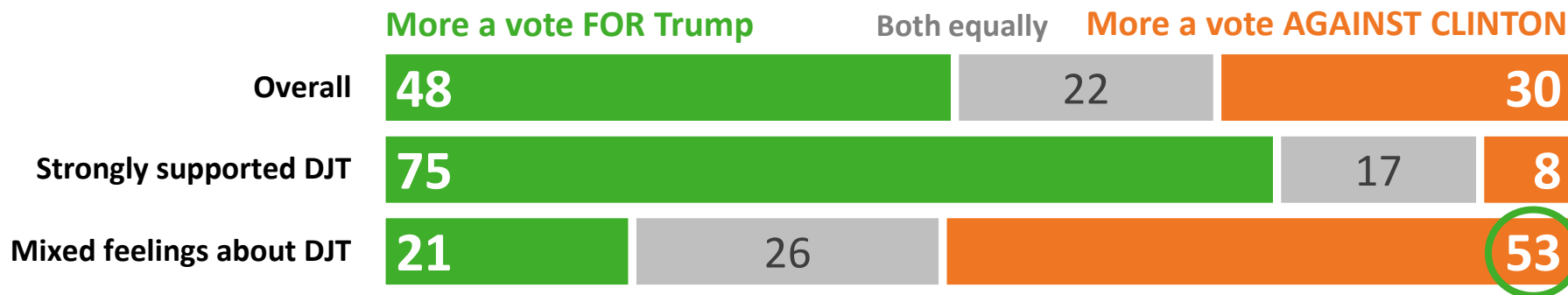
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# Obama-Trump voters were drawn to Trump more on his business persona than on his issue stands – especially ambivalent Trump backers

Which of the following was more important to you in deciding to vote for Donald Trump?

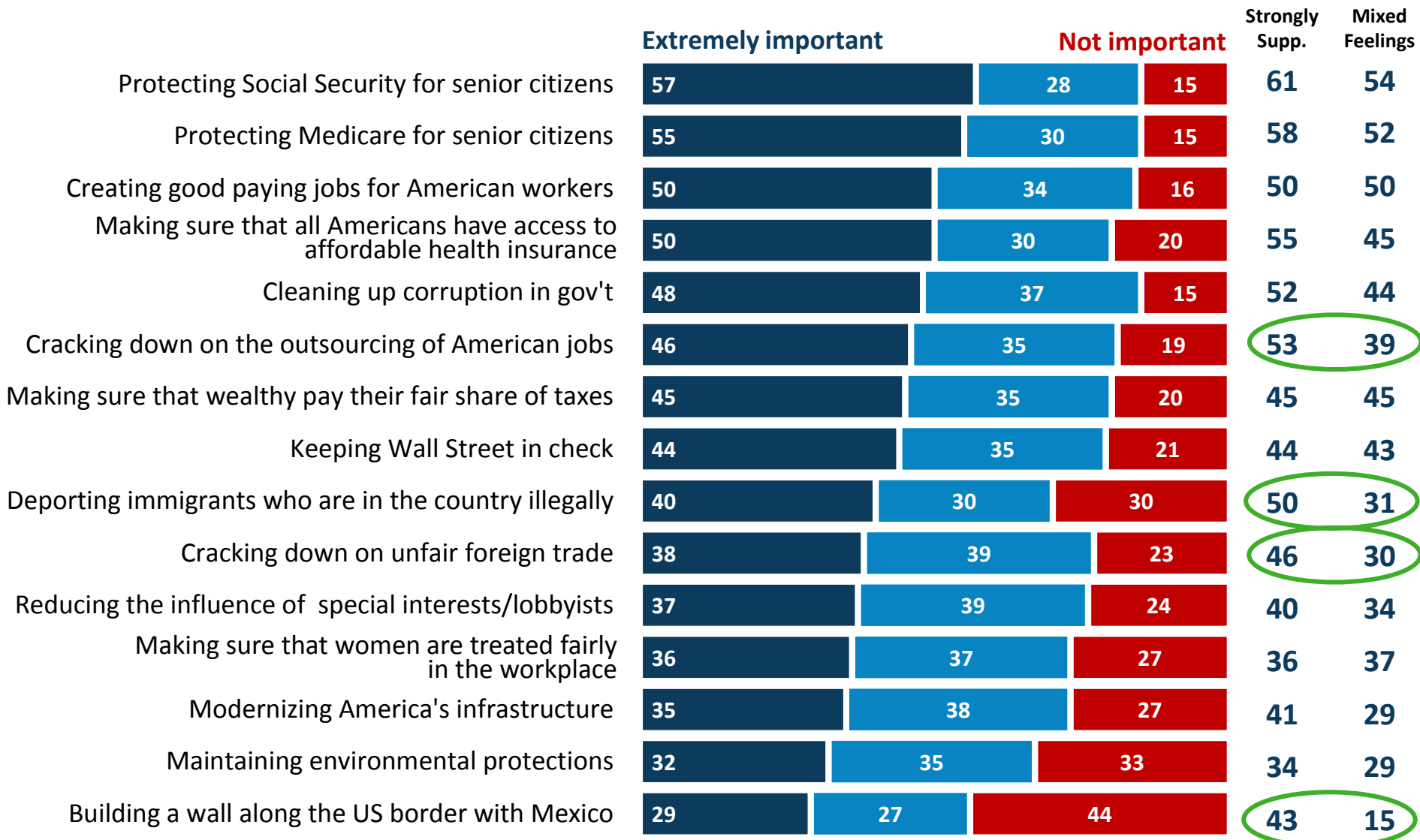


Would you say that your vote for president was more a vote FOR Donald Trump, more a vote against Clinton, or both equally?



# Trump supporters prioritize Social Security, Medicare, and jobs – but only strong supporters prioritize immigration and trade

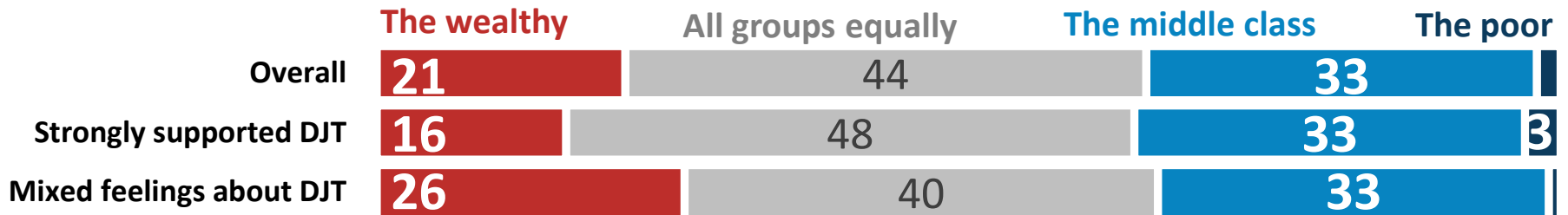
## Priorities for the President and Congress





# Persuadable voters believe Trump will help the middle class over the wealthy, but don't feel the same about Congressional Republicans

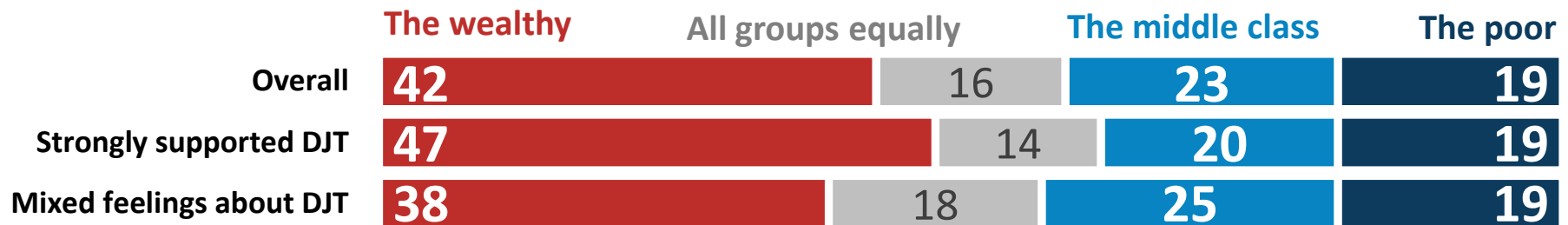
Do you think Donald Trump's economic policies will favor....?



Do you think Congressional Republicans' economic policies will favor....?



Do you think Congressional Democrats' economic policies will favor....?



# As we start to move voters away from Trump, we have a solid base of Obama-Trump voters to target in our efforts

Have the things you have seen, read, or heard recently made you feel more confident, or less confident, that Donald Trump will do a good job?

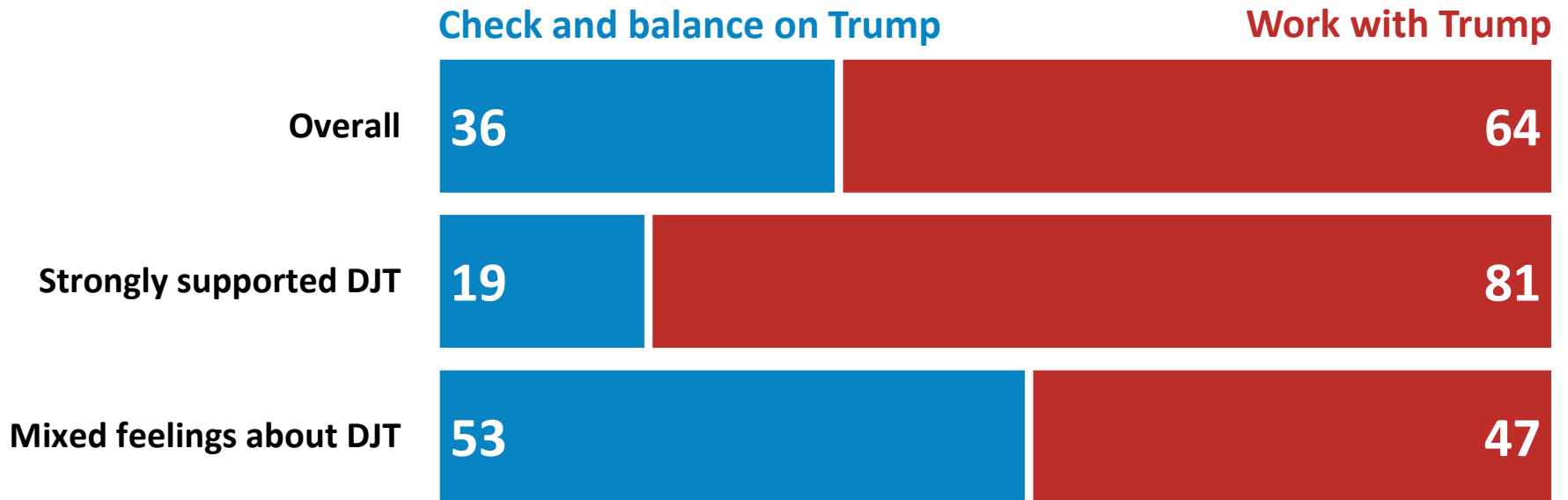


Do you have confidence, or doubts, that Donald Trump will do a good job as president?



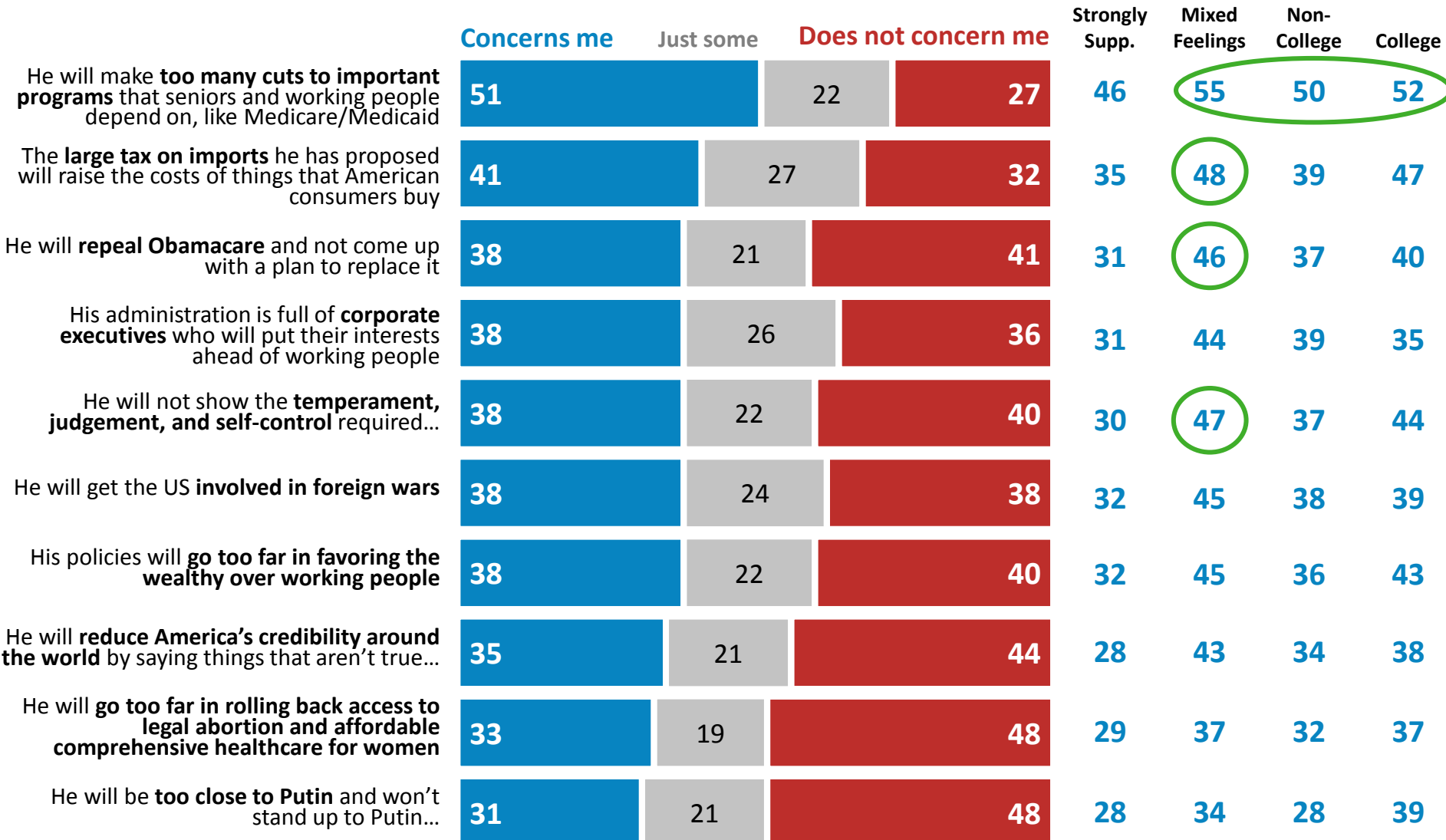
# Weak supporters in particular seek Congressional leadership that will act as a check against Donald Trump

When it comes to electing people to Congress, would you prefer to elect?



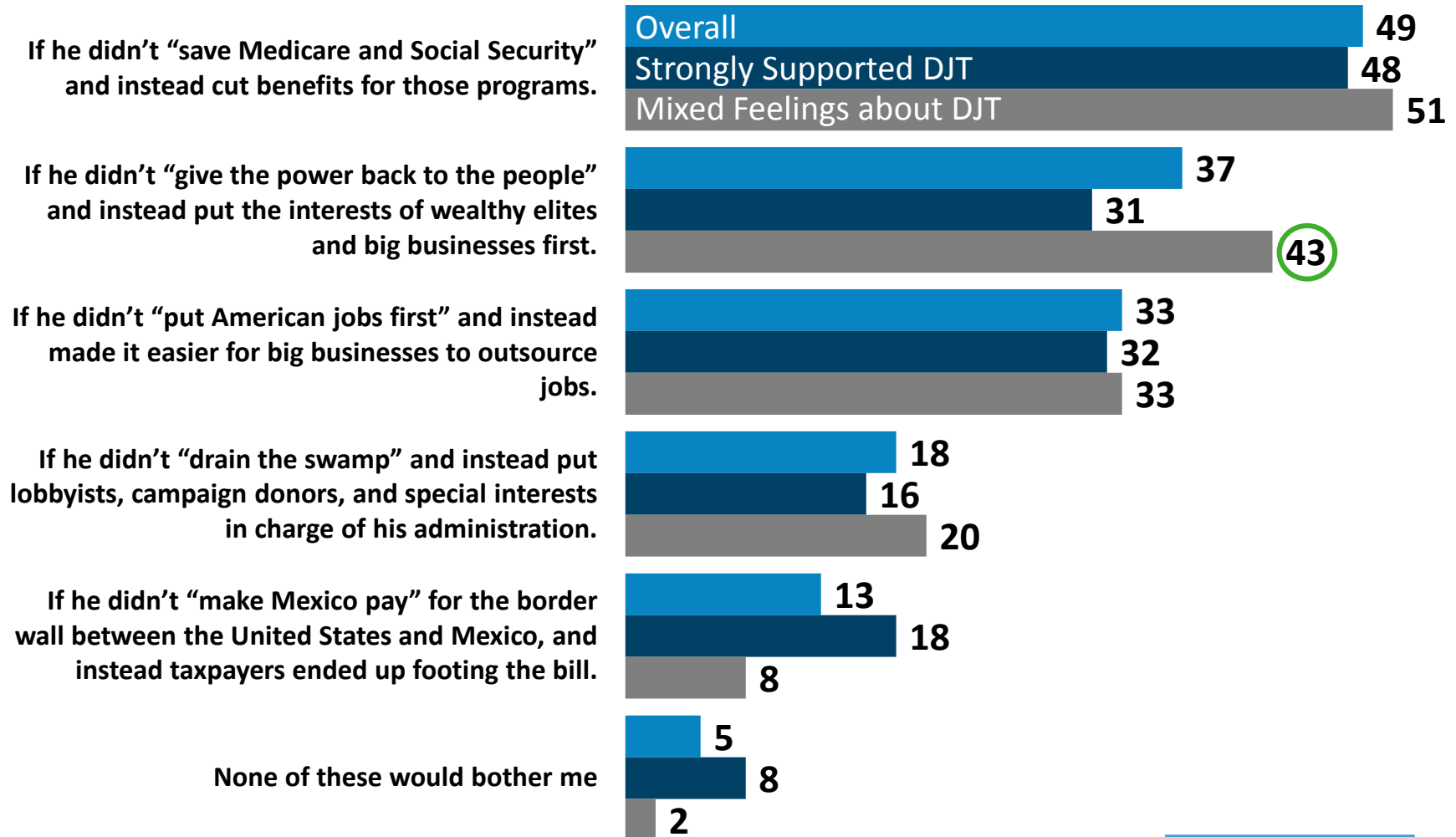
# Cutting benefits, driving up consumer costs, and repealing Obamacare without replacing it are especially concerning to cautious supporters

## Trump Concerns



# To win back cautious Trump supporters, we should tie Trump to GOP policies that put the interests of the wealthy/businesses before the middle class and programs they rely on such as Medicare and Social Security

Which one or two of the following outcomes from Trump's term as president would bother you the most?

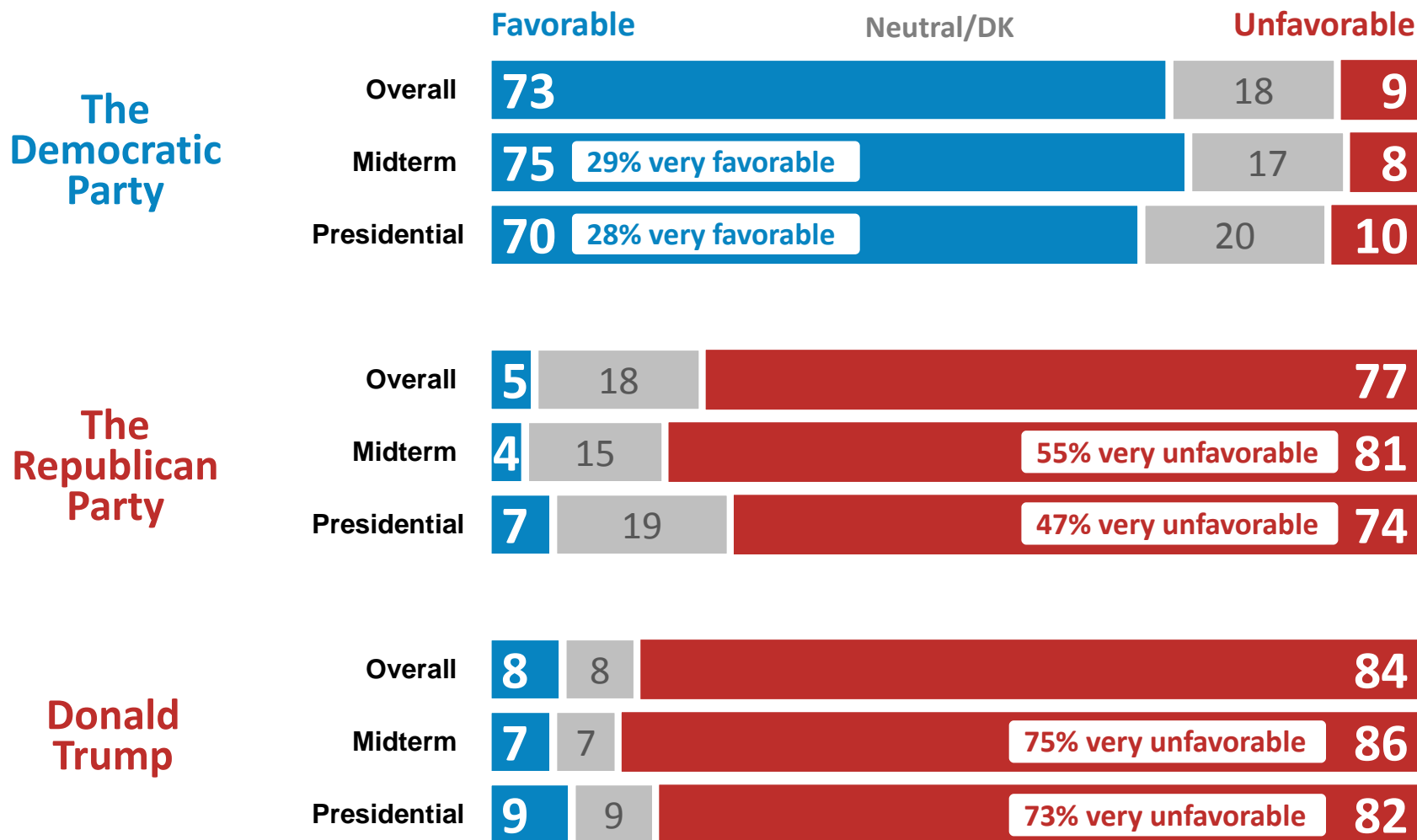


# Drop-off Voters In Depth

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# Democratic-leaning drop-off voters have favorable opinions of their party and are very unfavorable to Trump and the GOP

## Favorability of the Political Parties



Many voters who decided not to vote last minute offered excuses for their behavior, while those who decided not to vote in advance felt ambivalent or negative toward both candidates

### Timing of Decision to Not Vote & Reason for Not Voting (Presidential Drop-off Voters)

Decided not to vote in advance of Election Day

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“I did not like either candidate”

“I think both candidates were not a good fit for president”

“I felt everyone was voting the same way I was in my area so I felt it didn’t matter”

“I voted for Bernie Sanders in the primary; I couldn’t support Clinton for the general election”

“It makes no difference”

“Neither candidate was trustworthy”

Some of both

25

Decided not to vote at the last minute

39

“I couldn’t get off work in time to vote”

“I didn’t receive my absentee ballot”

“Tired of voting for the lesser of two evils”

“I wanted more time to think about Trump and Clinton”

“I got sick and could not vote”

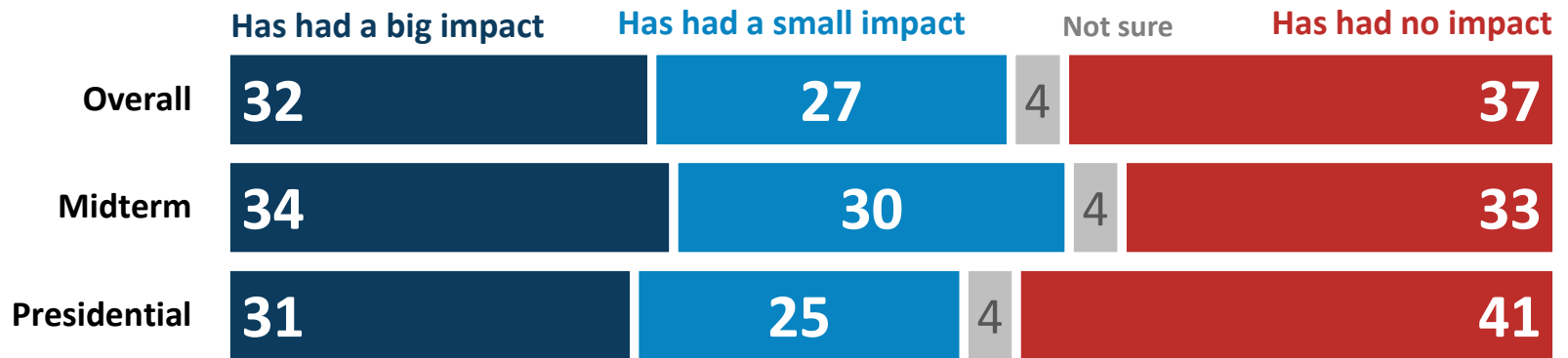
“The polls were too busy and I could not vote”

“I was having trouble walking and I heard that the lines were long”



# Drop-off voters – including midterm drop-off voters – say the 2018 elections will have a bigger impact on their lives than Trump’s election in 2016

## Impact of Trump Presidency

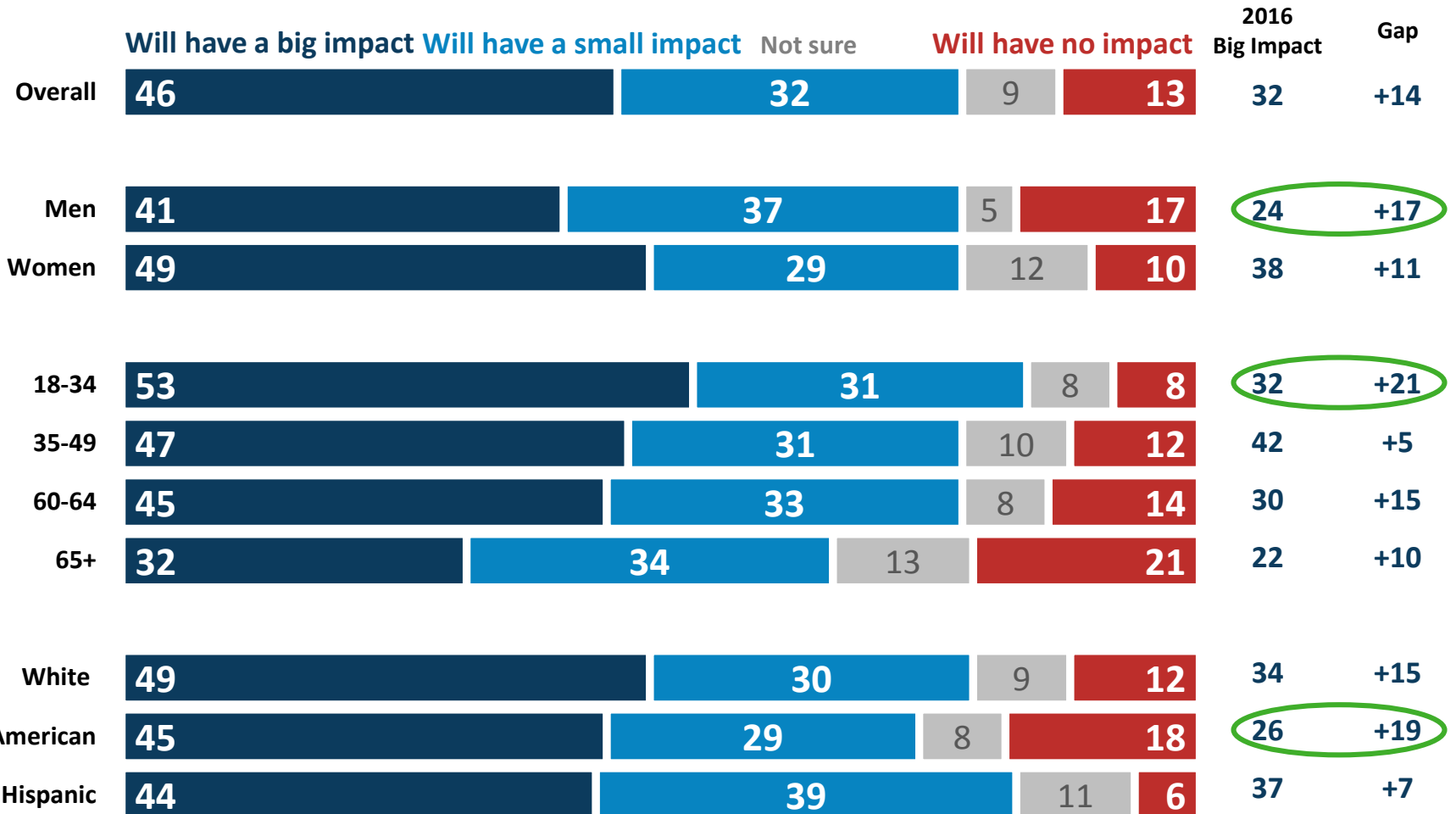


## Impact of 2018 Election



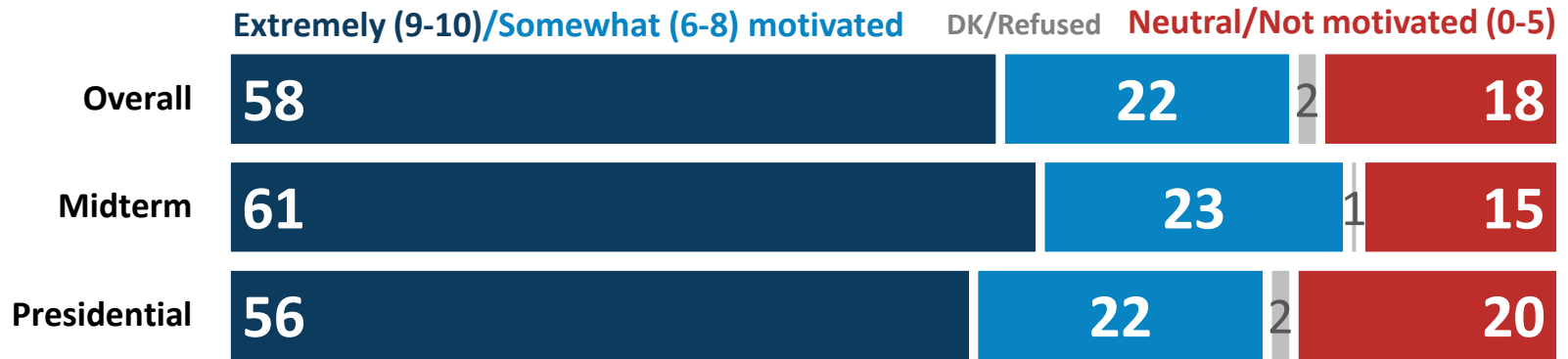
# Groups that feel the impact of the 2016 election less strongly – men, millennial voters, and African American voters – also recognize what is at stake in 2018

## Impact of 2018 Election

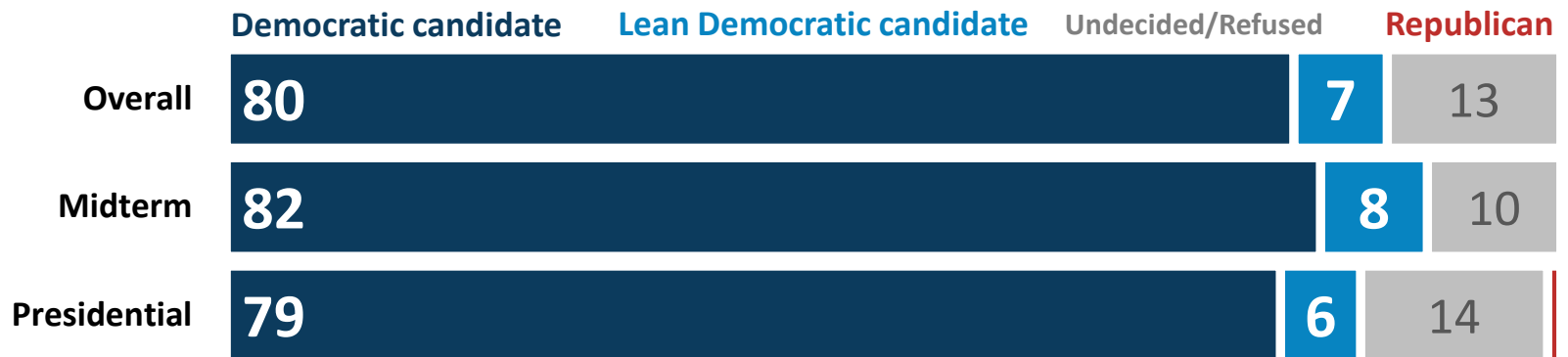


# Midterm drop-offs are slightly more motivated and enthusiastic about voting than presidential drop-offs, though both favor Democrats in a generic ballot for Congress

## Motivation/Enthusiasm about Voting

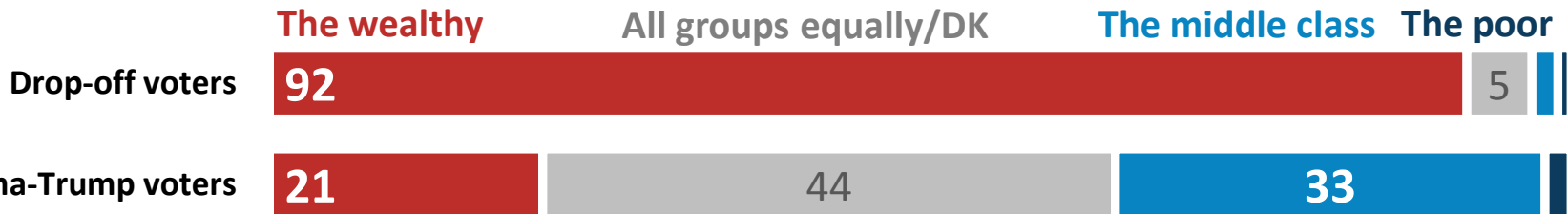


## Generic Ballot for Congress



# Unlike Obama-Trump voters, drop-off voters overwhelmingly believe that Trump and Republicans' policies favor the wealthy over other groups

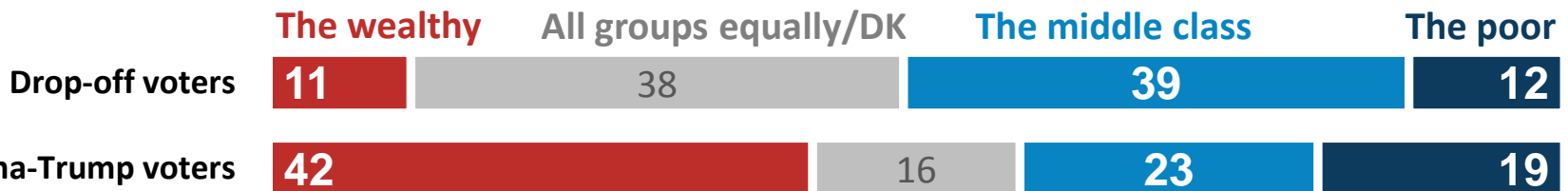
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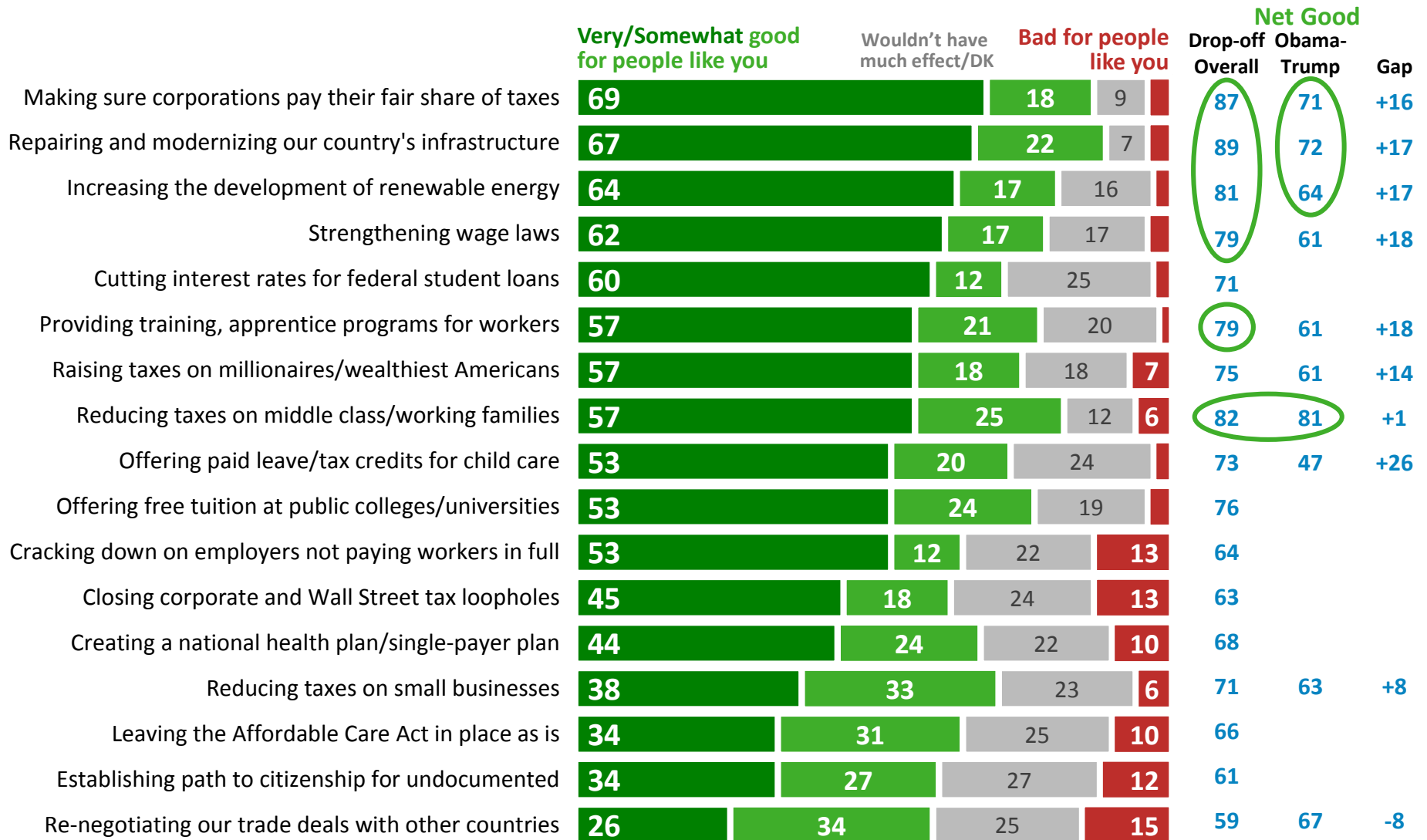


Do you think Congressional Democrats' economic policies will favor....?



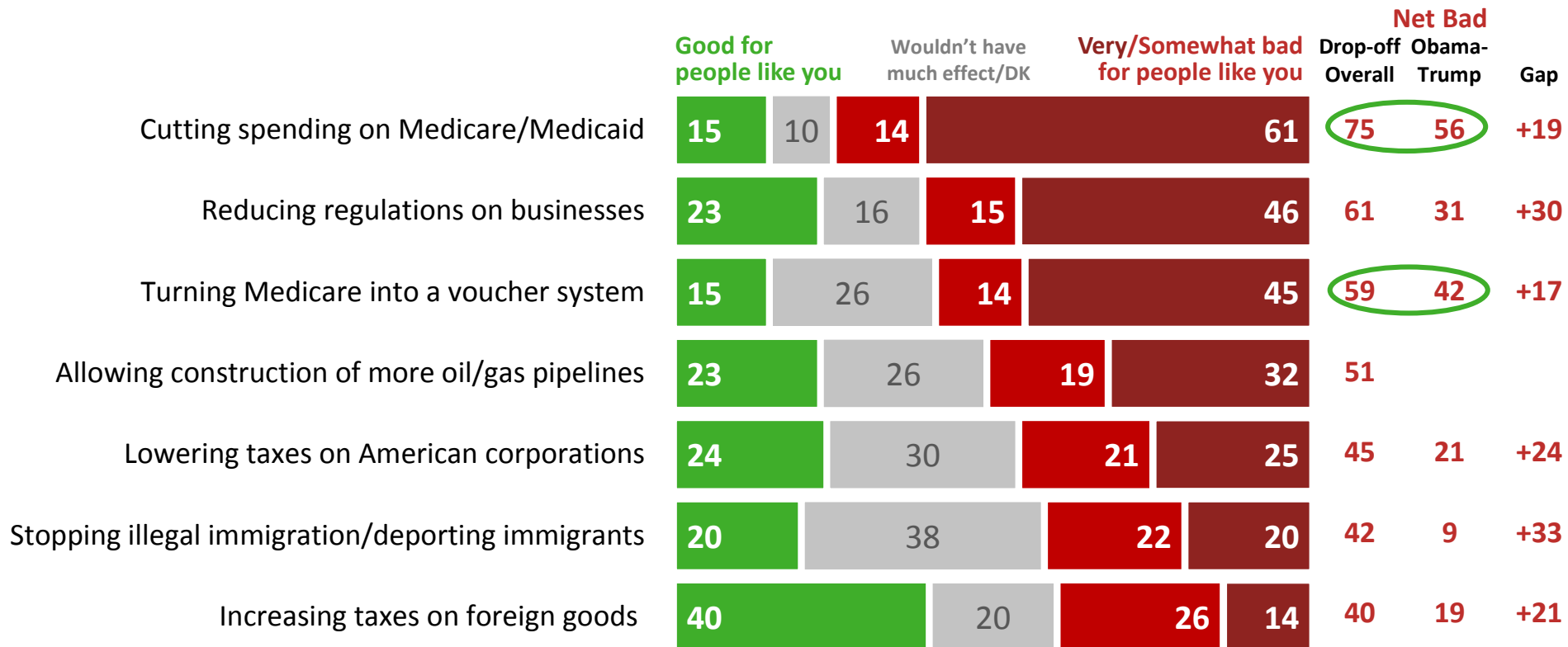
# Making sure corporations pay their fair share and strengthening infrastructure, wage laws, and renewable energy are seen as economically beneficial

## Economic Policy Effects



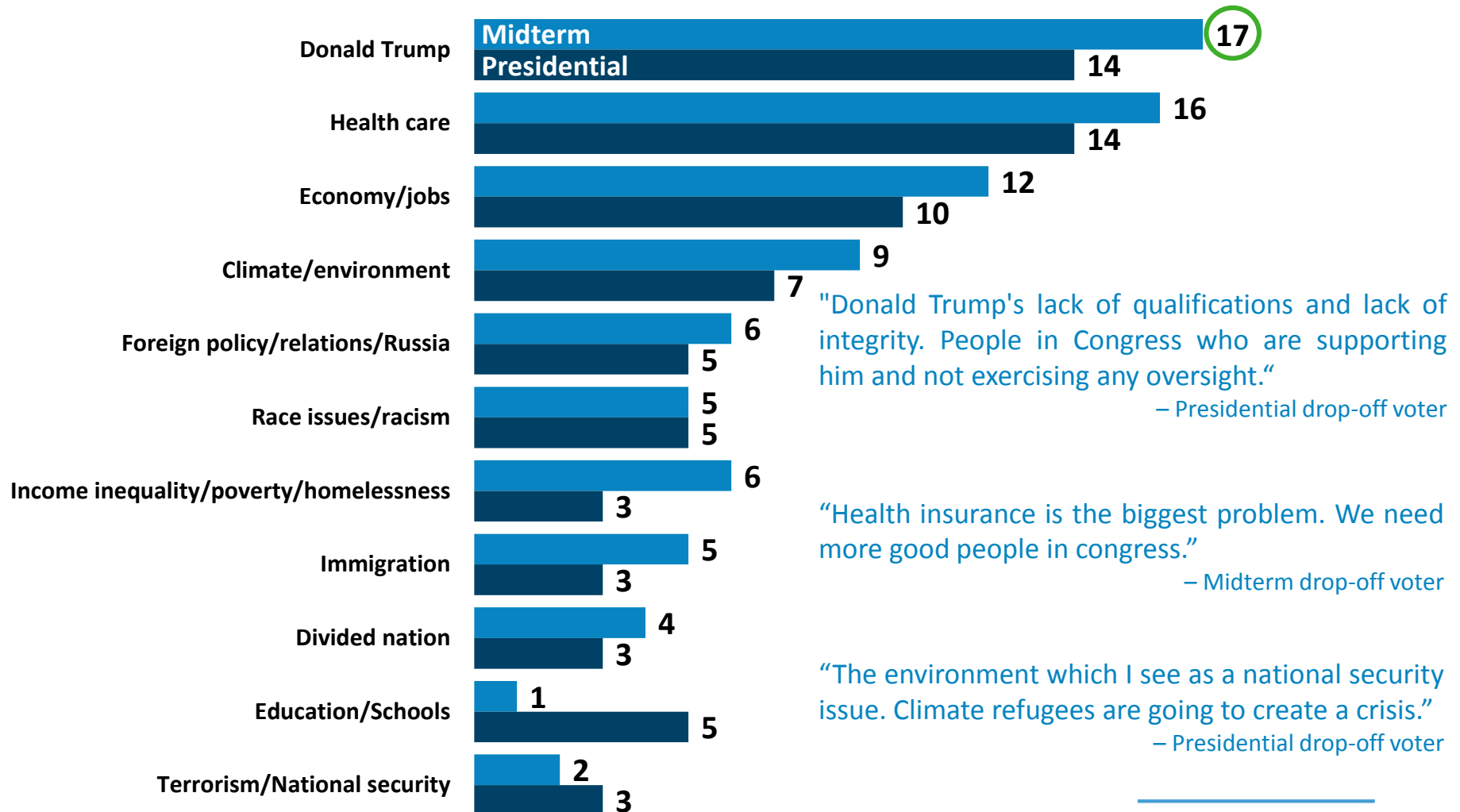
# Cutting spending on Medicare and Medicaid, reducing regulations on businesses, and turning Medicare into a voucher system are seen as the least beneficial economic policies

## Economic Policy Effects



# Drop-off voters are deeply unfavorable to Donald Trump and volunteer his presidency as the most important issue facing the country today

## Most Important issue Facing the Country Today (OPEN END)



"Donald Trump's lack of qualifications and lack of integrity. People in Congress who are supporting him and not exercising any oversight."

– Presidential drop-off voter

"Health insurance is the biggest problem. We need more good people in congress."

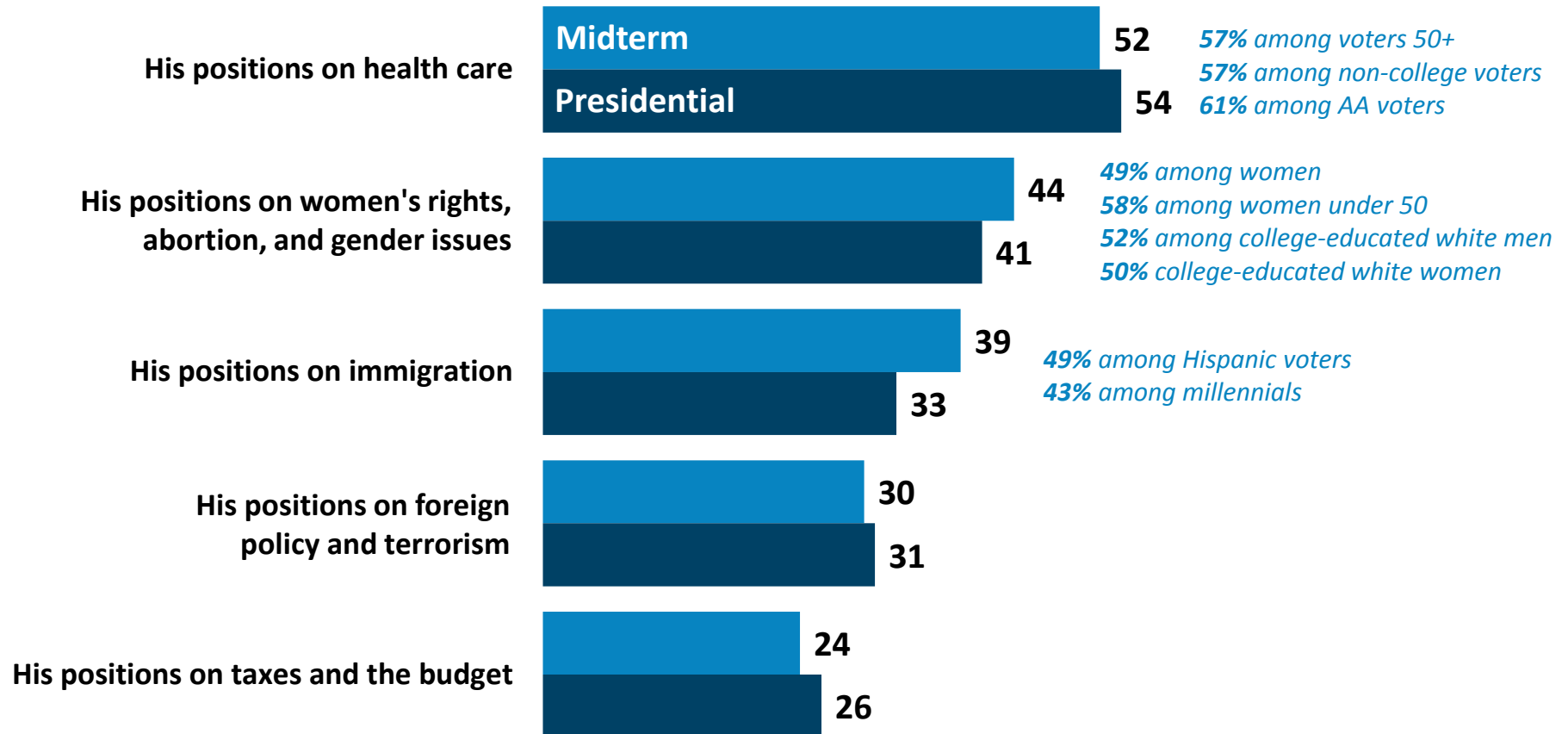
– Midterm drop-off voter

"The environment which I see as a national security issue. Climate refugees are going to create a crisis."

– Presidential drop-off voter

# Of Trump's main issue positions, Trump's health care policies are the most concerning to drop-off voters

Which two, if any, are the most concerning to you personally about Donald Trump and his administration?





# Reaching Persuasion & Turnout Targets

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## Four Key Points on How to Reach Target Voters

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- 1. Social Media feeds, especially Facebook, came up as a critical source of news across all focus groups, persuasion and turnout.**
- 2. Strong Obama-Trump voters consume a greater amount of partisan news than soft Obama-Trump voters.**
  - 55% of strong supporters are regular talk radio listeners (vs. 36% of soft supporters)
  - 43% of strong supporters list Fox News as a key sources (vs. 34% of soft supporters)
- 3. Strong Obama-Trump voters are also much more “tuned in” than soft supporters and turnout targets**
  - 36% of strong supporters follow DC news very closely vs. 19% of soft supporters
- 4. Obama-Trump voters were more skeptical than average focus group respondents and didn’t open up until we told them they were among fellow Trump voters.**