

Voter Attitudes Toward “Entitlement” Programs

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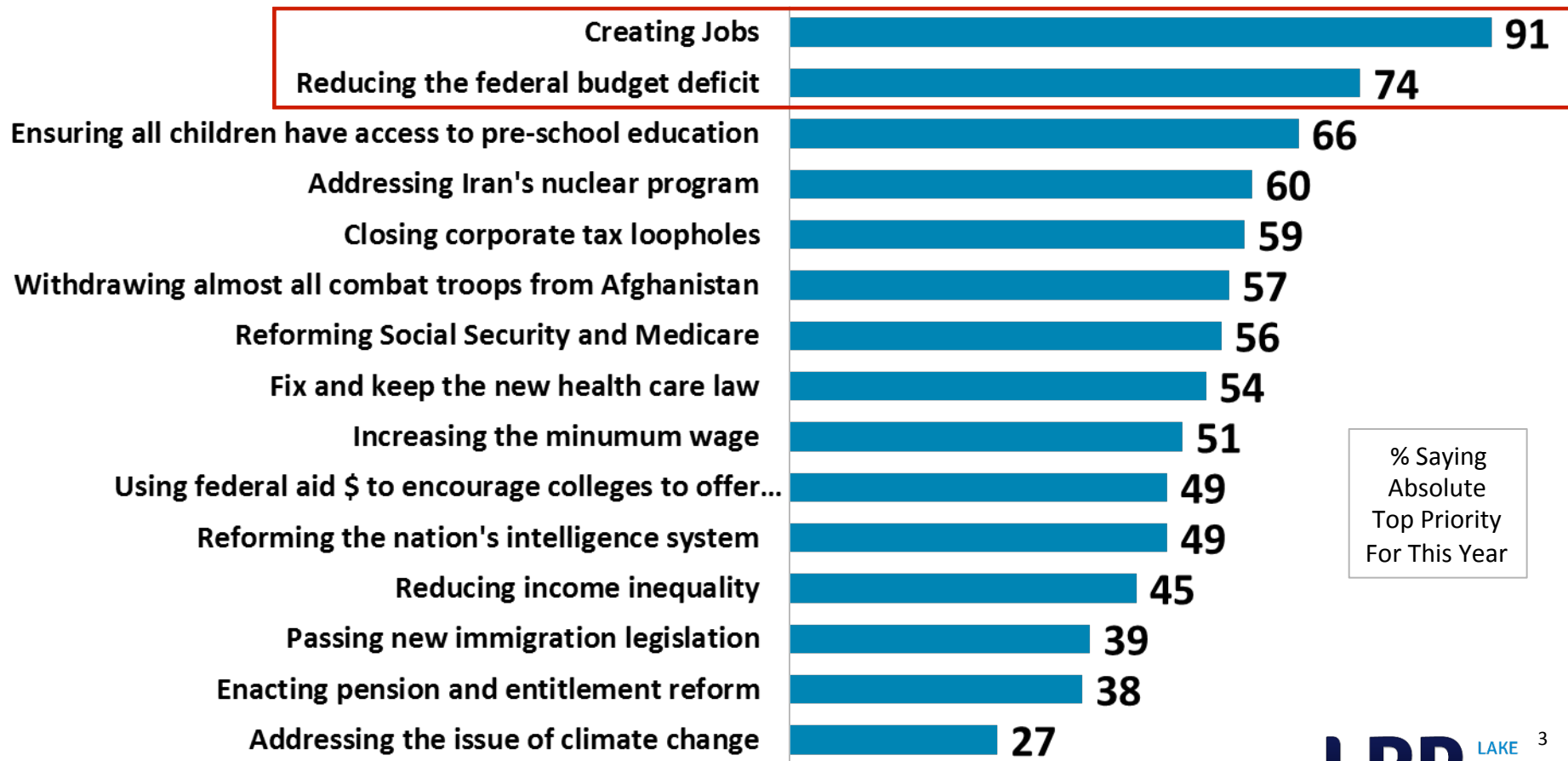
@jonovoss



Economic Context

Creating jobs and reducing the deficit are voters' top priorities for the Obama administration and this year's Congress.

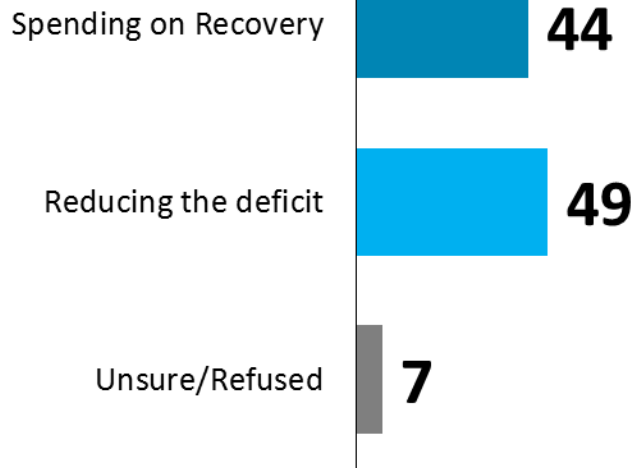
Should this be an absolute priority for the Obama administration and THIS year's Congress, is it something that can be delayed until next year, or something that should not be pursued?



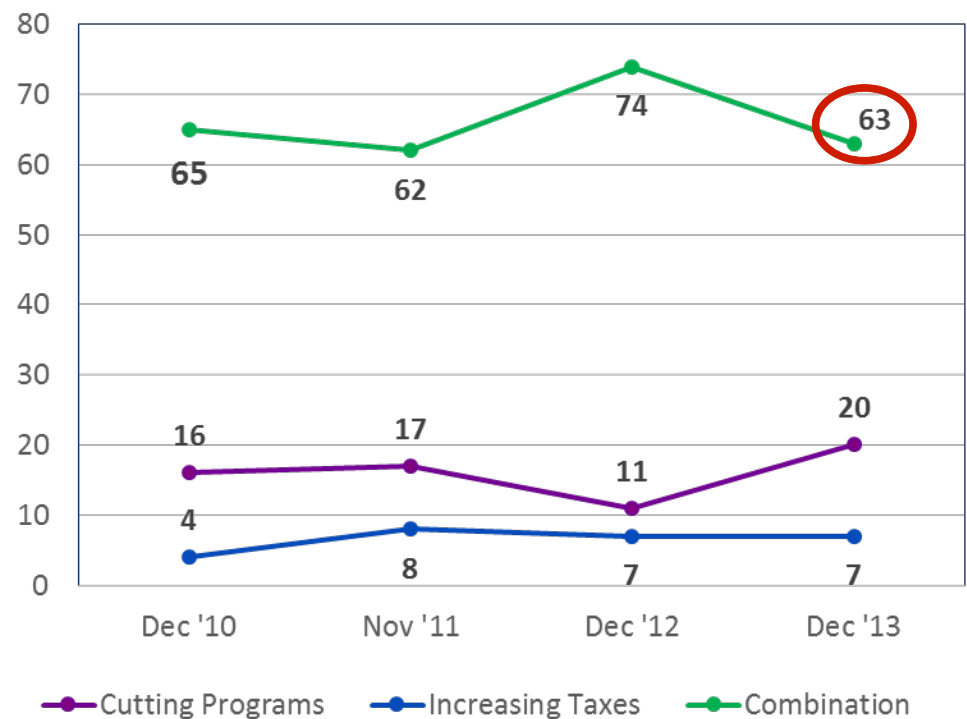
% Saying
Absolute
Top Priority
For This Year

Americans are split as to whether deficit reduction or spending on economic recovery should be a priority for the federal government. Nearly two-thirds prefer a combination of tax increases and spending cuts.

Priority for the Federal Government



Best Way to Reduce the Deficit



Pew Research Center, December 3-8 2013, N=1,024 adults nationwide.

If you were setting priorities for the federal government these days, would you place a higher priority on spending to help the economy recover, or a higher priority on reducing the budget deficit?

Voters prefer a mix of spending cuts and increased tax revenue from the wealthy and corporations.

In each pair, which approach do you prefer for dealing with the deficit?

A bill that only cuts spending with no increase in taxes



A bill that increases tax revenue from wealthy and corporations and cuts spending



+16

A bill that only cuts spending with no increase in taxes



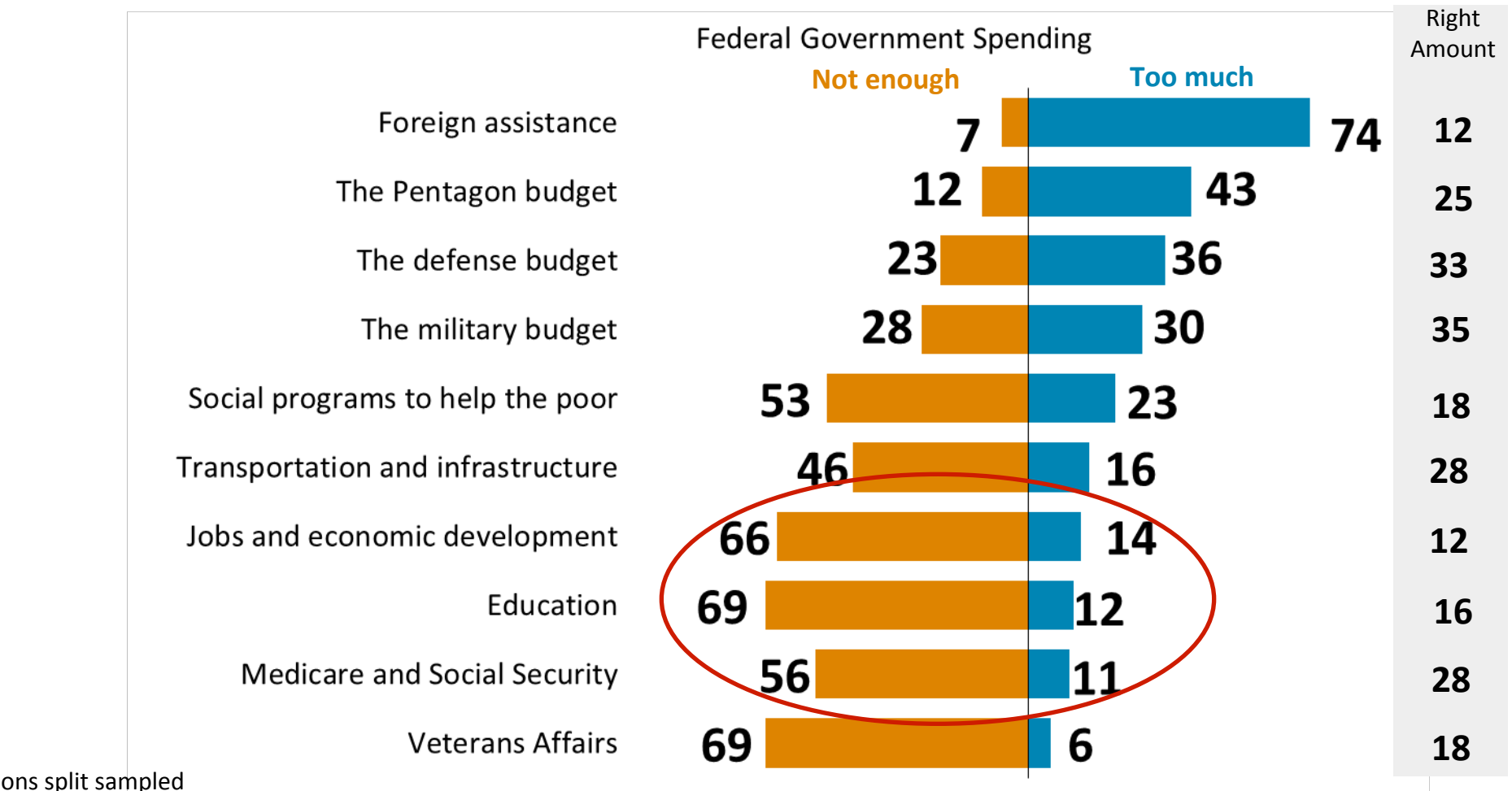
A bill that increases tax revenue from wealthy and corporations and does not cut spending



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Medicare, Social Security, and the Social Safety Net

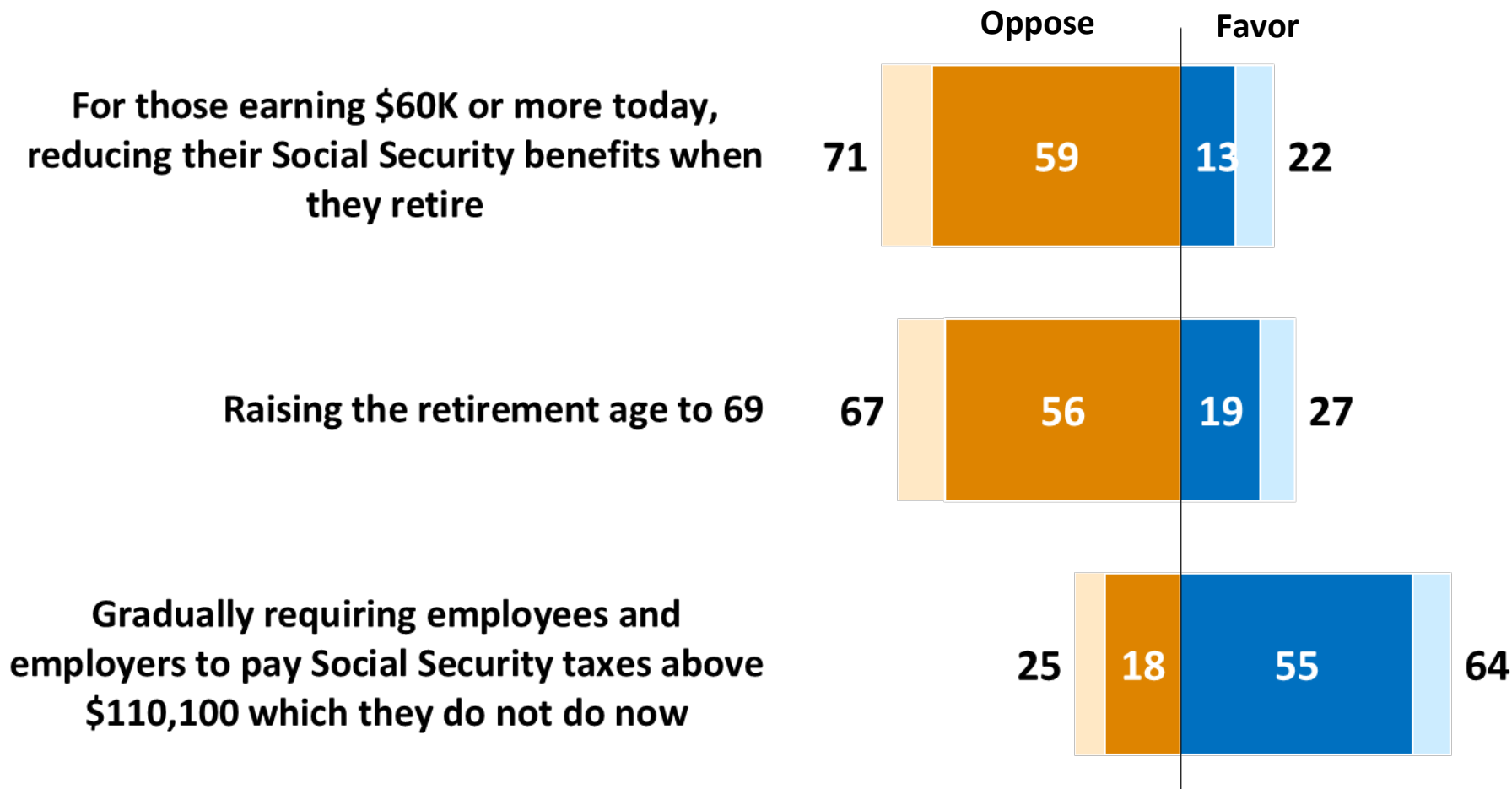
There is actually public support for spending more on Medicare and Social Security, with more than half of all Americans saying we are not spending enough. Barely one in ten say we are spending too much.



Please tell me if you think the federal government spends too much, not enough, or spends about the right amount on each of the following?

Voters strongly oppose proposals that would reduce Social Security benefits, and strongly support increasing the cap on Social Security for higher income earners.

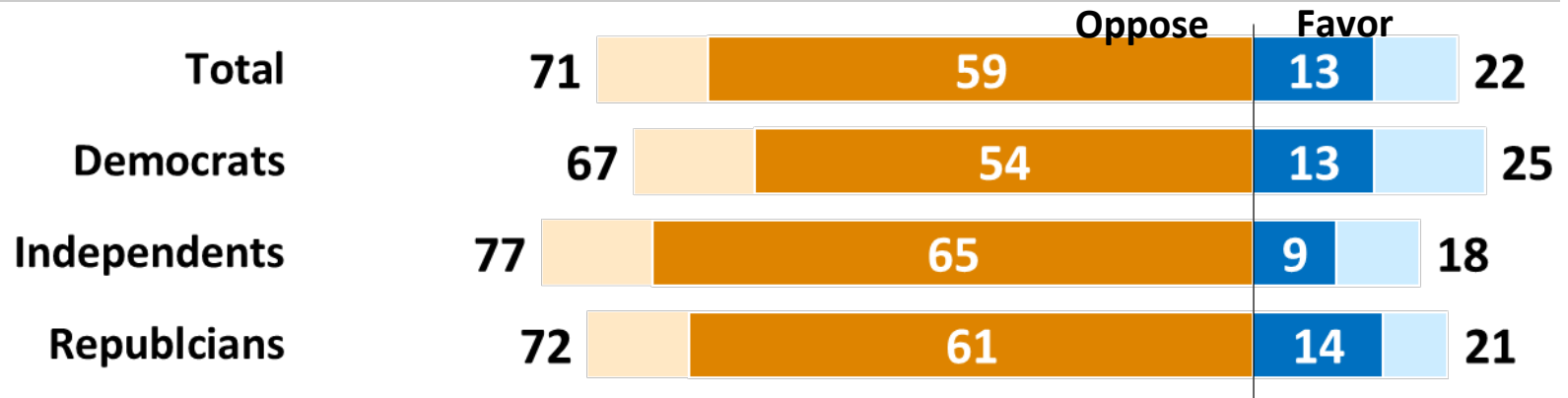
Possible Changes to Social Security



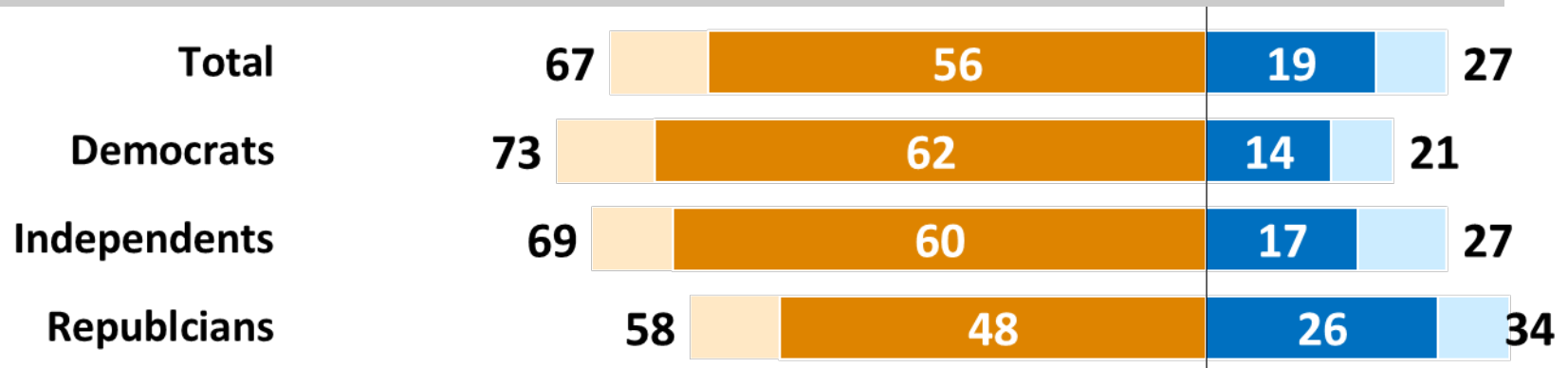
Darker colors indicate intensity

Voters across party lines strongly oppose means testing and raising the retirement age to 69.

SOCIAL SECURITY: For those earning \$60K or more today, reducing their Social Security benefits when they retire.



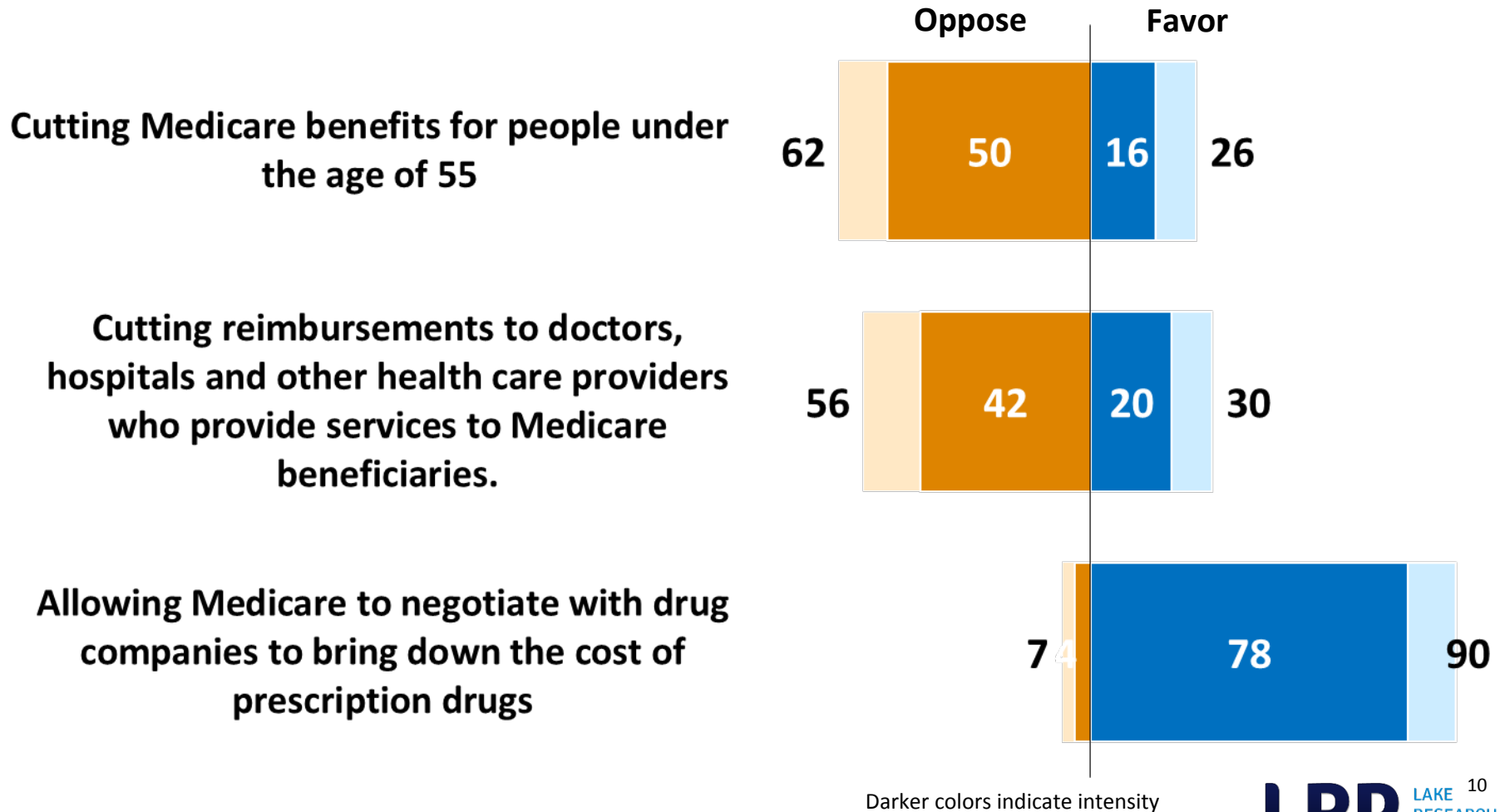
SOCIAL SECURITY: Raising the retirement age to 69



Darker colors indicate intensity

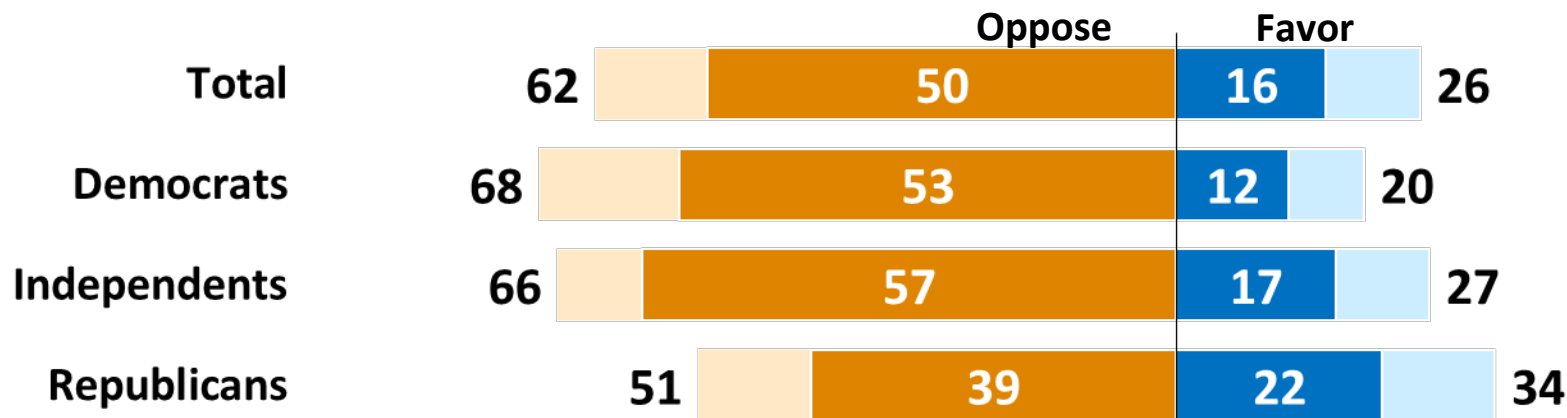
Voters overwhelmingly want Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, and strongly oppose cutting benefits or reimbursements to doctors.

Possible Changes to Medicare

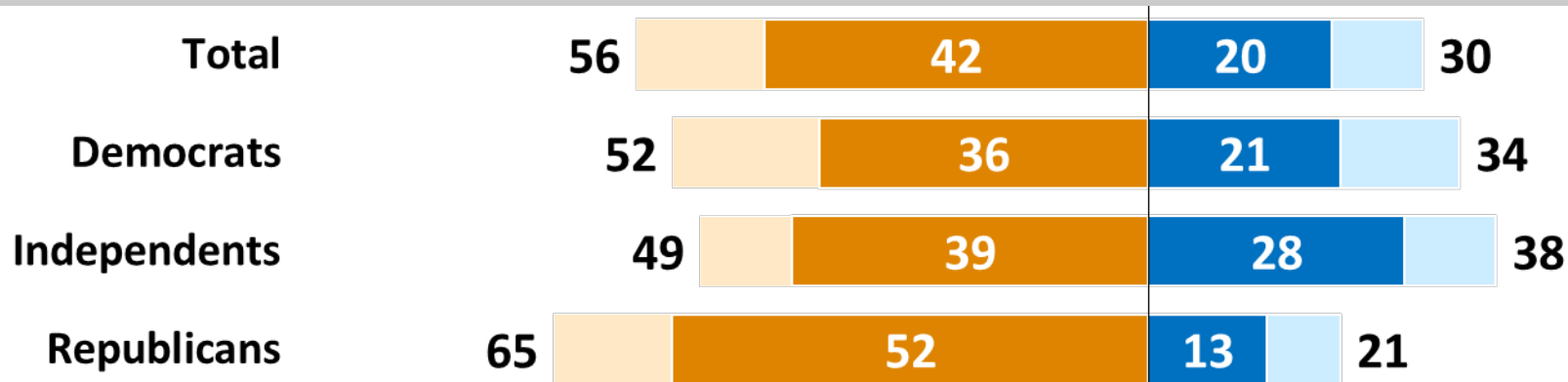


Voters across party lines oppose cutting benefits to those under 55 and reimbursements to health providers.

MEDICARE: Cutting Medicare benefits for people under the age of 55



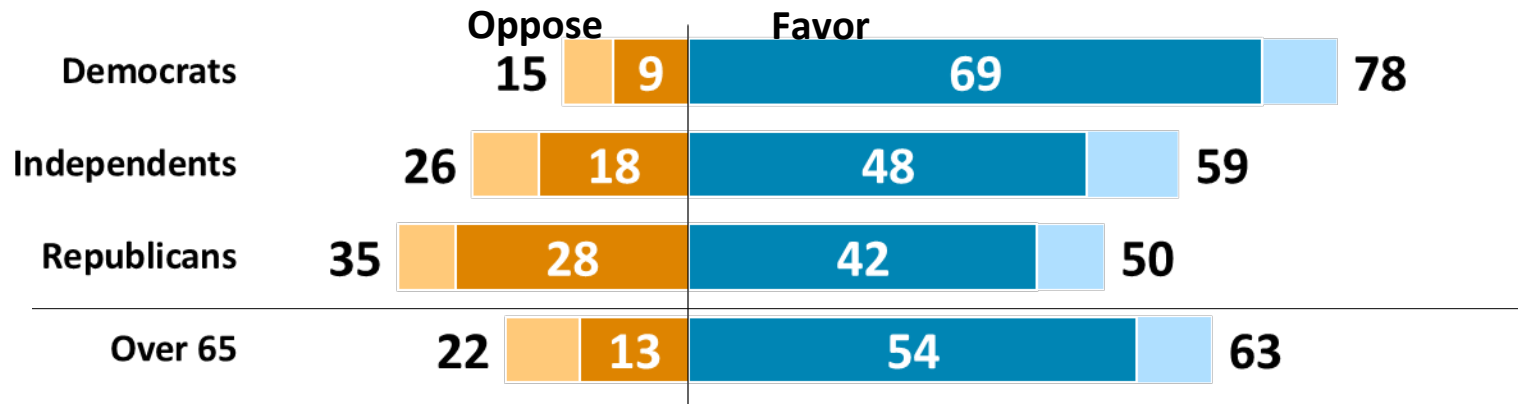
MEDICARE: Cutting reimbursements to doctors, hospitals and other health care providers who provide services to Medicare beneficiaries.



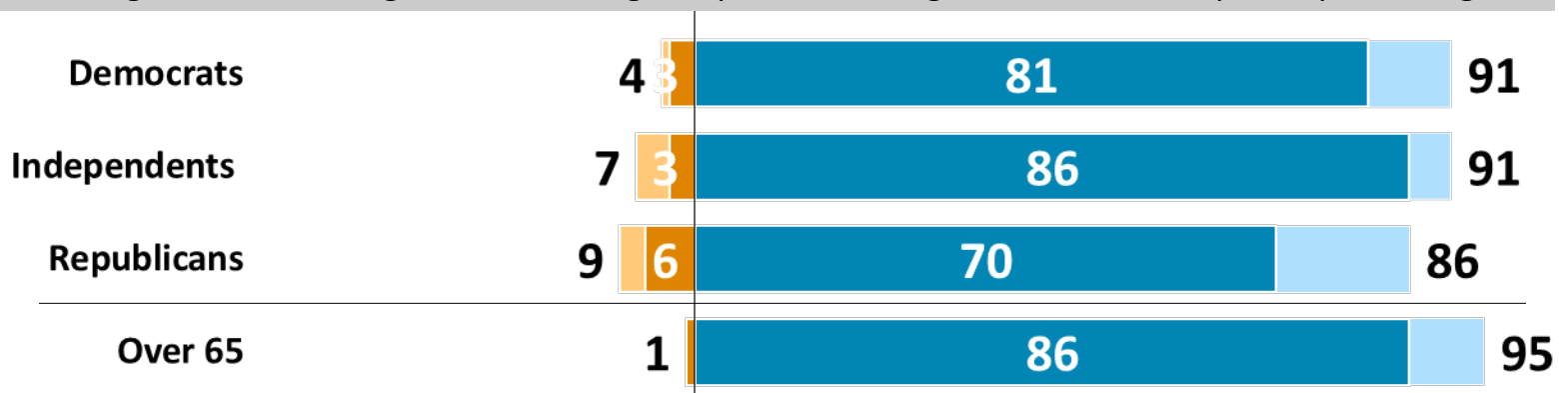
Darker colors indicate intensity

Strong majorities across party lines want to raise the cap on Social Security taxes, and allow Medicare to negotiate with drug companies.

SOCIAL SECURITY: Gradually requiring employees and employers to pay Social Security taxes on all wages above \$110,100 which they do not do now.



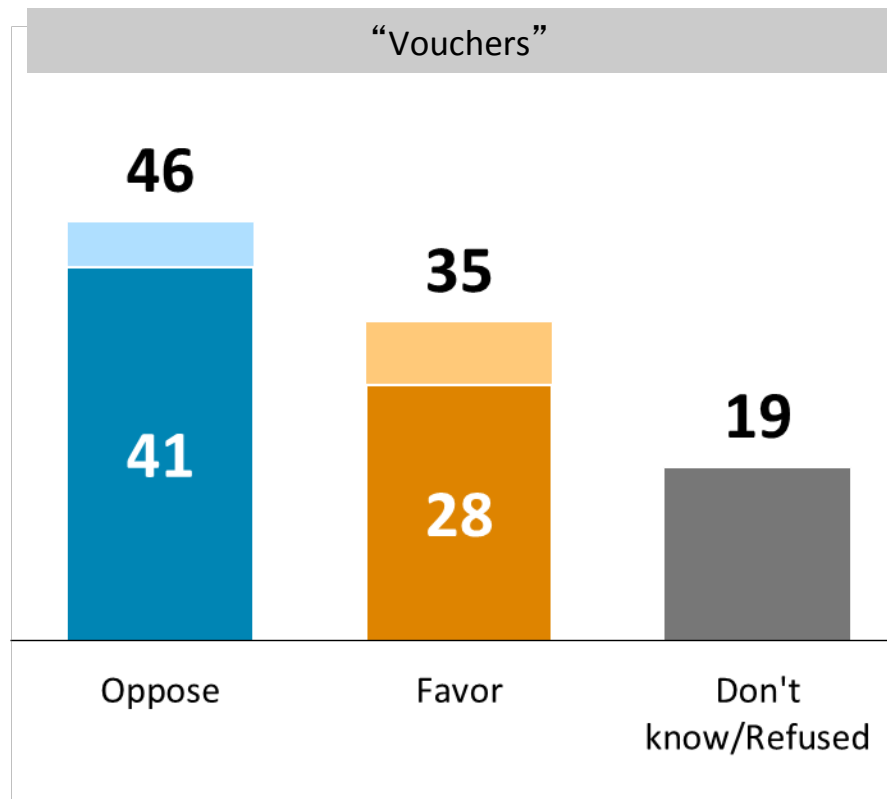
MEDICARE: Allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug companies to bring down the cost of prescription drugs.



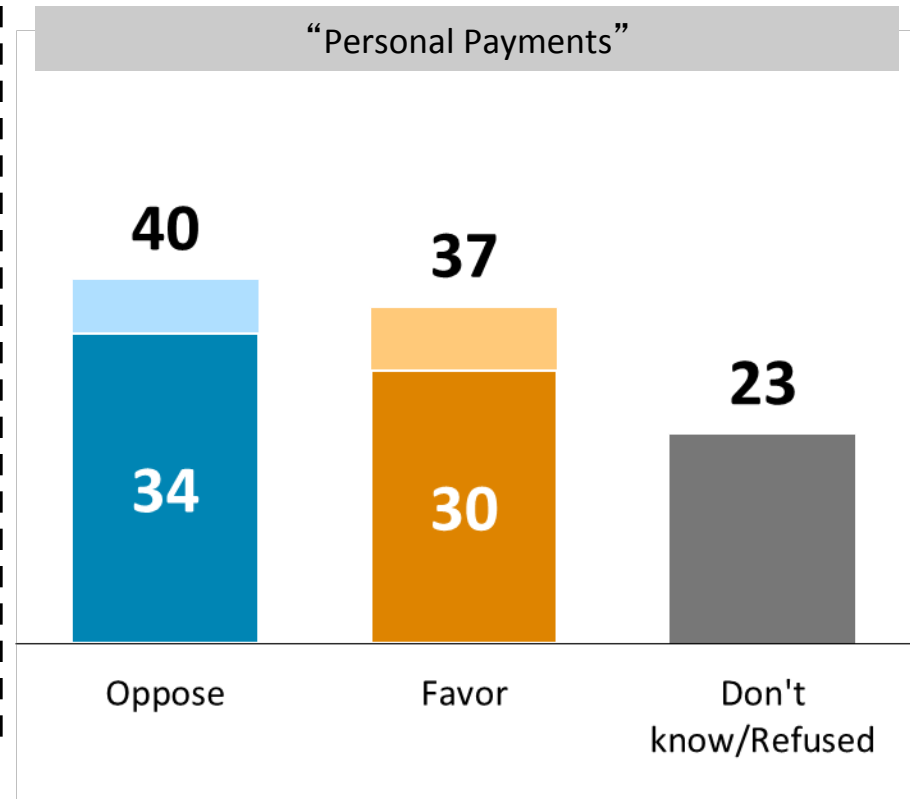
In 2012, voters opposed the Ryan budget proposal to change Medicare, with opposition to vouchers.

The budget would change Medicare for those under age 55 by giving them [vouchers/personal payments] to purchase private insurance plans or the option to stay in traditional Medicare, but not immediately affect Medicare for current beneficiaries or people over 55. Do you favor or oppose this plan?

“Vouchers”

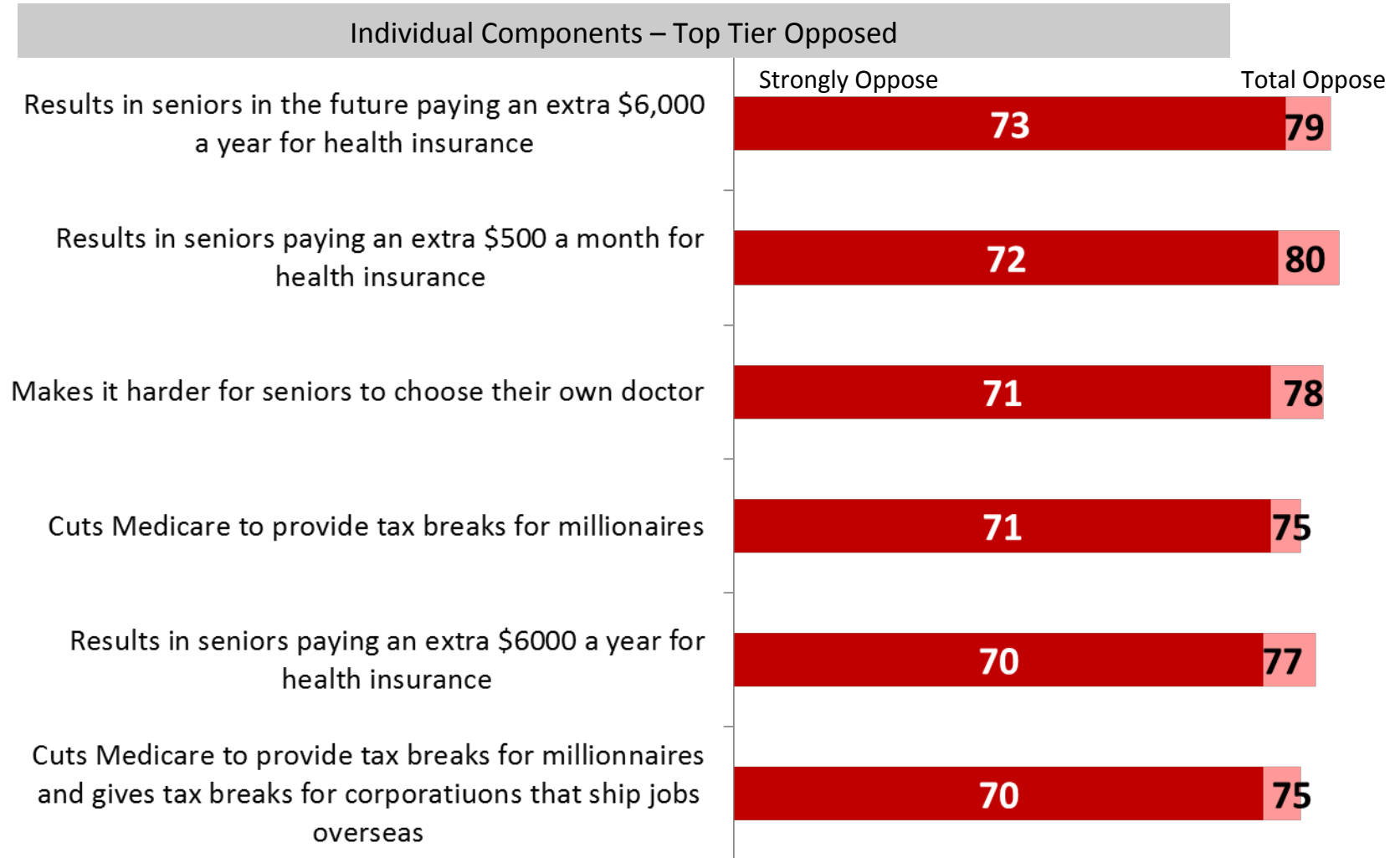


“Personal Payments”



The budget being discussed would change Medicare for those under age 55 by giving them [Left Side: vouchers][Right side: personal payments] to purchase private insurance plans or the option to stay in traditional Medicare, but not immediately affect Medicare for current beneficiaries or people over 55. Do you favor or oppose this plan? [IF CHOICE] And is that strongly or not so strongly?

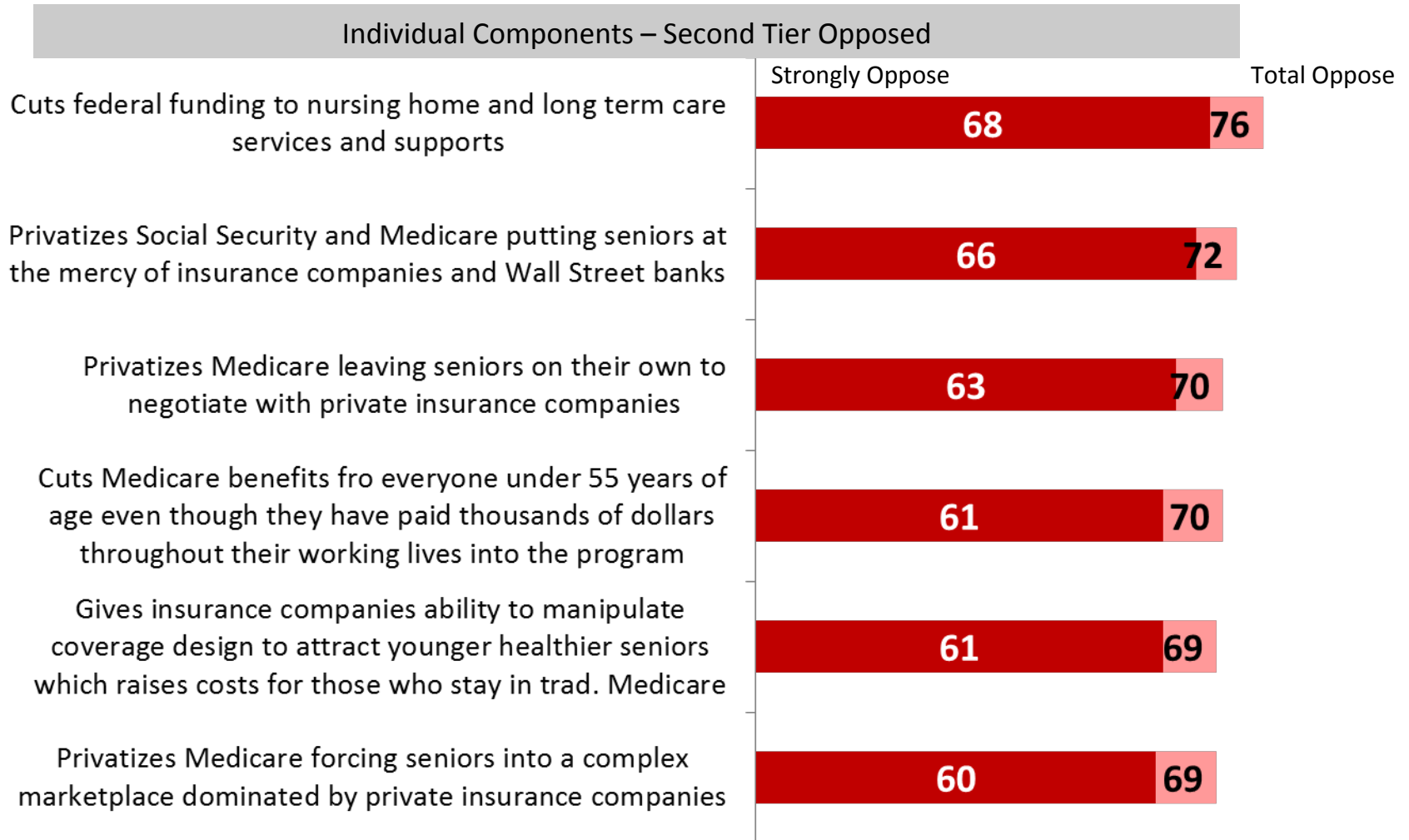
Voters oppose components of the plan: increased costs for seniors now and in the future, harder to choose your own doctor, and cuts Medicare to provide tax breaks for millionaires.



*All questions asked of half of sample

Now I am going to read you a series of components that are part of the budget proposal that would make changes to Medicare and other legislative proposals. After I read each, please tell me if you favor or oppose it. **[READ ITEM]** Do you favor or oppose this? **[IF CHOICE]** And is that strongly or not strongly?

Voters also strongly oppose privatizing the system, allowing insurance companies to manipulate coverage, cutting benefits for younger people, and cutting nursing home care.



*All questions asked of half of sample

Now I am going to read you a series of components that are part of the budget proposal that would make changes to Medicare and other legislative proposals. After I read each, please tell me if you favor or oppose it. **[READ ITEM]** Do you favor or oppose this? **[IF CHOICE]** And is that strongly or not strongly?

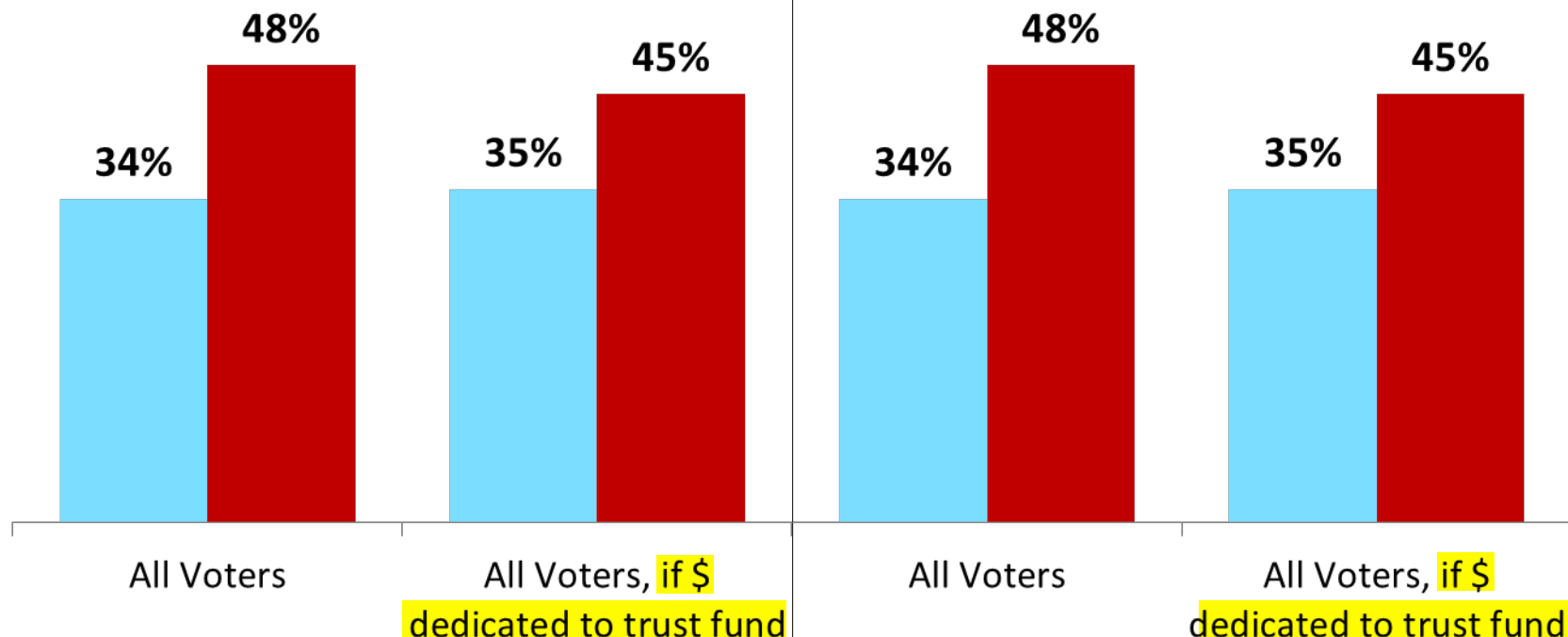
While voters are reluctant to pay more in taxes to avoid cuts to Social Security or Medicare themselves...

How willing would you be to personally pay more in taxes... (1 to 7 scale)*

To Avoid Cuts To Social Security?

To Avoid Cuts To Medicare?

■ 5 to 7 Willing ■ 1 to 3 Not Willing

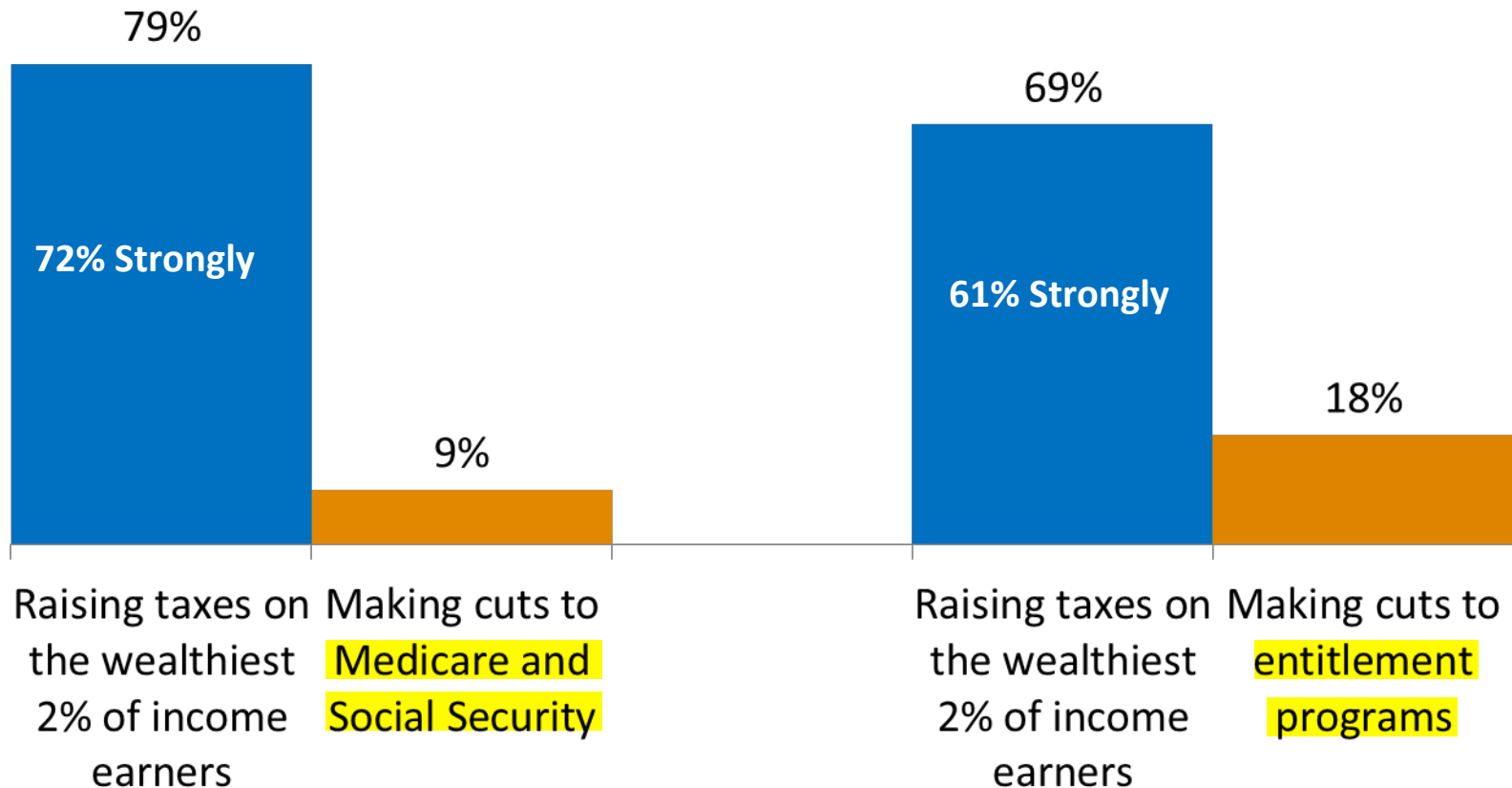


Among voters over 65, Democrats, African Americans, and Latinos, there is a notable increase in the proportion of those who say they are very willing (rate a 7) to pay more personally when the money is dedicated to a trust fund.

*Split sampled question

...They strongly approve raising taxes on the wealthiest 2% of income earners.

And which of the following ways to reduce the deficit do you prefer? (Among All Voters)

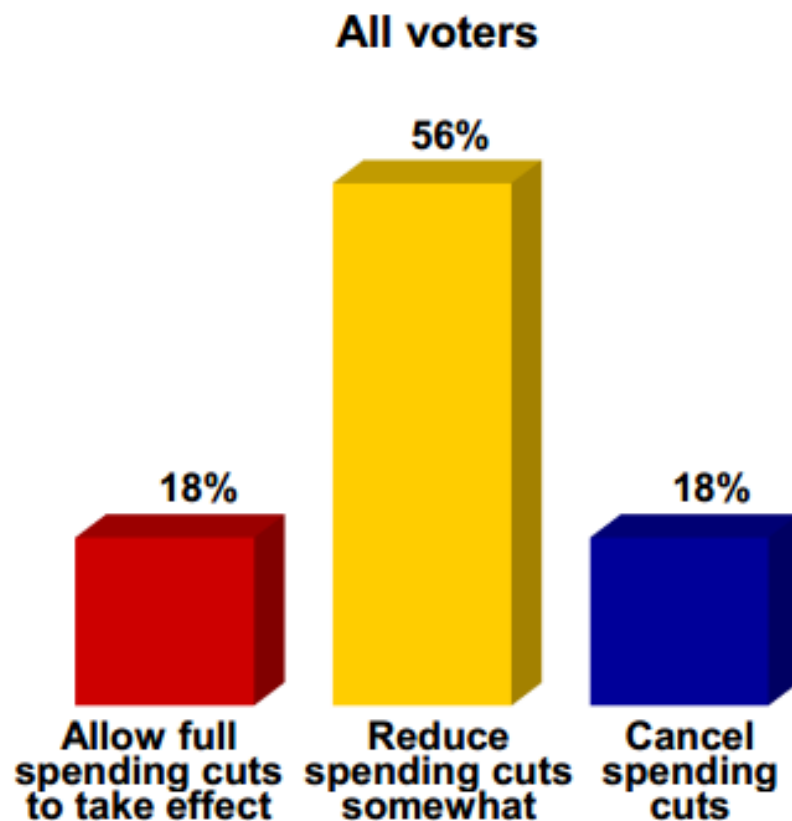


*Split sampled question

Sequester Cuts

Voters Want the Sequester Reduced, But Not Cancelled

In the coming year, the automatic spending cuts will reduce domestic and military spending by \$110 billion if Congress takes no action. Which is the best way for Congress to deal with these automatic spending cuts?



Voters Favor Replacing Automatic Cuts with Revenue

In each pair, which approach for dealing with the automatic spending cuts do you prefer?

Reduce the spending cuts by 50% and replace them with new tax revenue from the wealthy and corporations



Allow the full spending cuts to take effect



↑
+26

Cancel the spending cuts and replace them with new tax revenue from the wealthy and corporations



Allow the full spending cuts to take effect

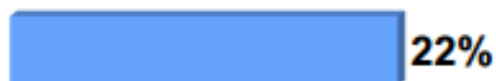


↑
+16

Overwhelming Opposition to Entitlement Cuts

Which approach for dealing with the automatic spending cuts do you prefer?

Avoid spending cuts this year, paid for by reducing spending on Medicare and Social Security in future years



Allow the full spending cuts to take effect



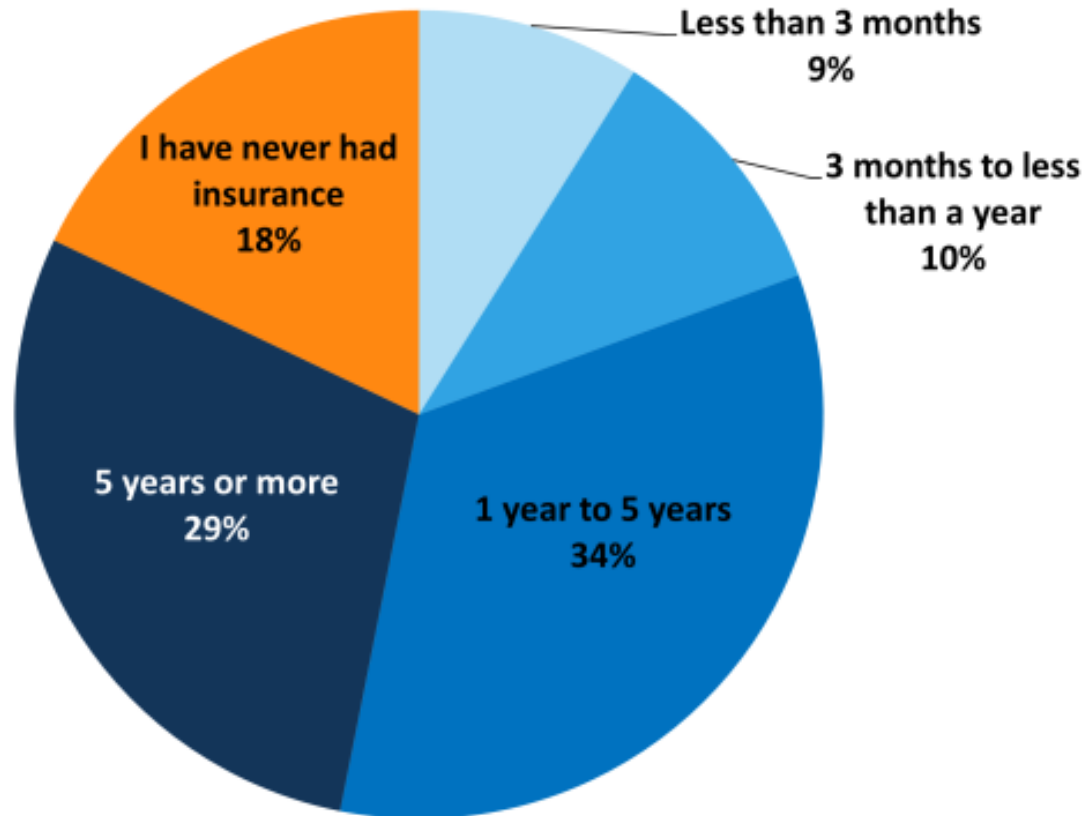
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- To replace sequester: 70% prefer revenue, 12% prefer cuts in SS/Medicare.
- 85% oppose asking seniors to pay more for Medicare.
- 83% oppose cutting Medicaid health coverage.
- 67% oppose reducing Social Security COLA.
- Call "entitlements" by their real name: Voters favor cutting "spending on entitlements" by 17 points, but oppose cuts in "spending on Social Security and Medicare" by 65 points.

Medicaid and Health Care Reform

Length of Time without Coverage, Among Currently Uninsured Adults

How long have you been uninsured?



NOTE: Includes uninsured adults ages 19-64.

SOURCE: 2013 Kaiser Survey of Low-Income Americans and the ACA.



Many uninsured Americans are still unsure about key ACA provisions.

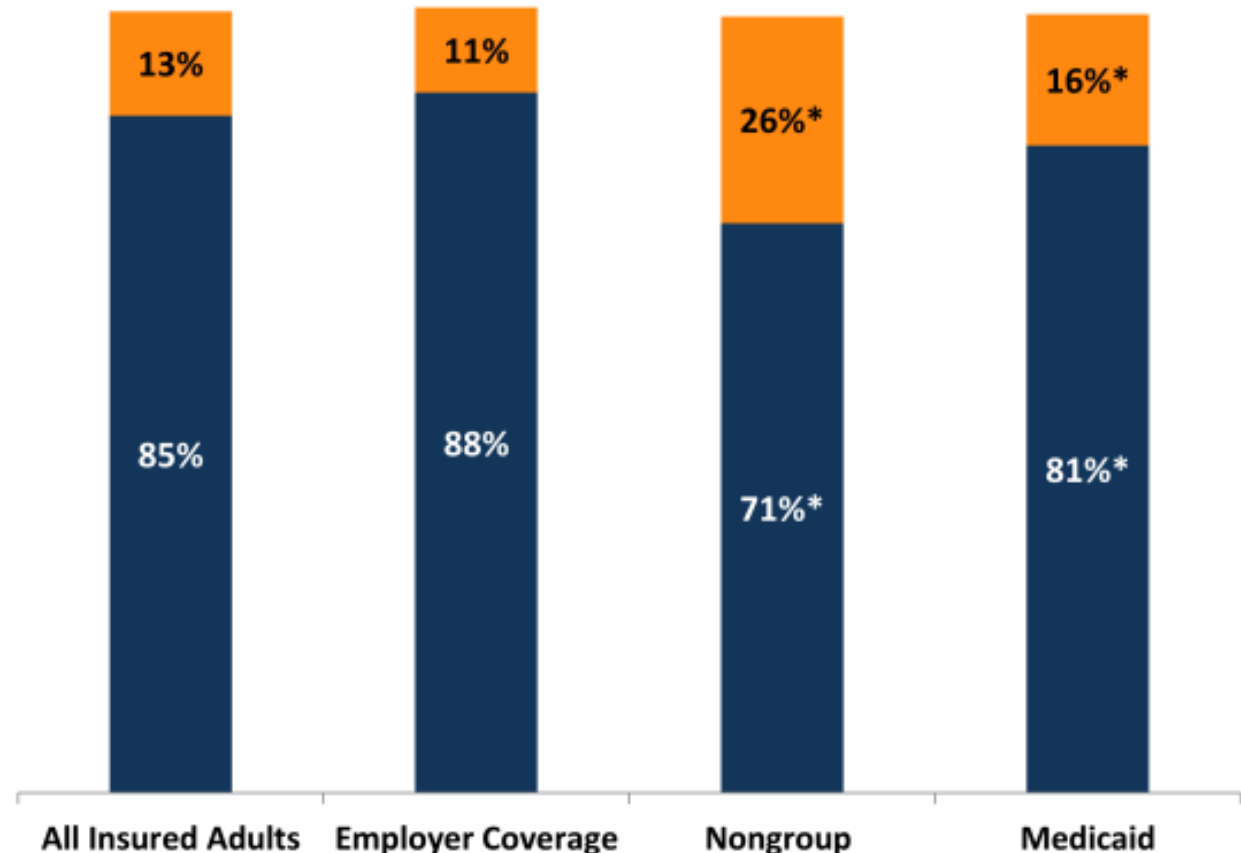
Awareness Of Key ACA Provisions Among The Uninsured

AMONG THE UNINSURED AGES 18-64: To the best of your knowledge, would you say the health reform law does or does not do each of the following?	CORRECT	INCORRECT	
	Yes	No	DK/ Refused
Require nearly all Americans to have health insurance or else pay a fine	66%	24%	10%
Provide financial help to low and moderate income Americans who don't get insurance through their jobs to help them purchase coverage	57	32	11
Give states the option of expanding their existing Medicaid program to cover more low-income, uninsured adults	49	33	19

Rating of Health Insurance Coverage among Insured Adults, by Insurance Coverage

Share saying they rate their coverage as:

- Not so good or Poor
- Excellent or Good



NOTE: Includes insured adults ages 19-64. May not sum to 100% because responses of Don't Know or Refused are not included.

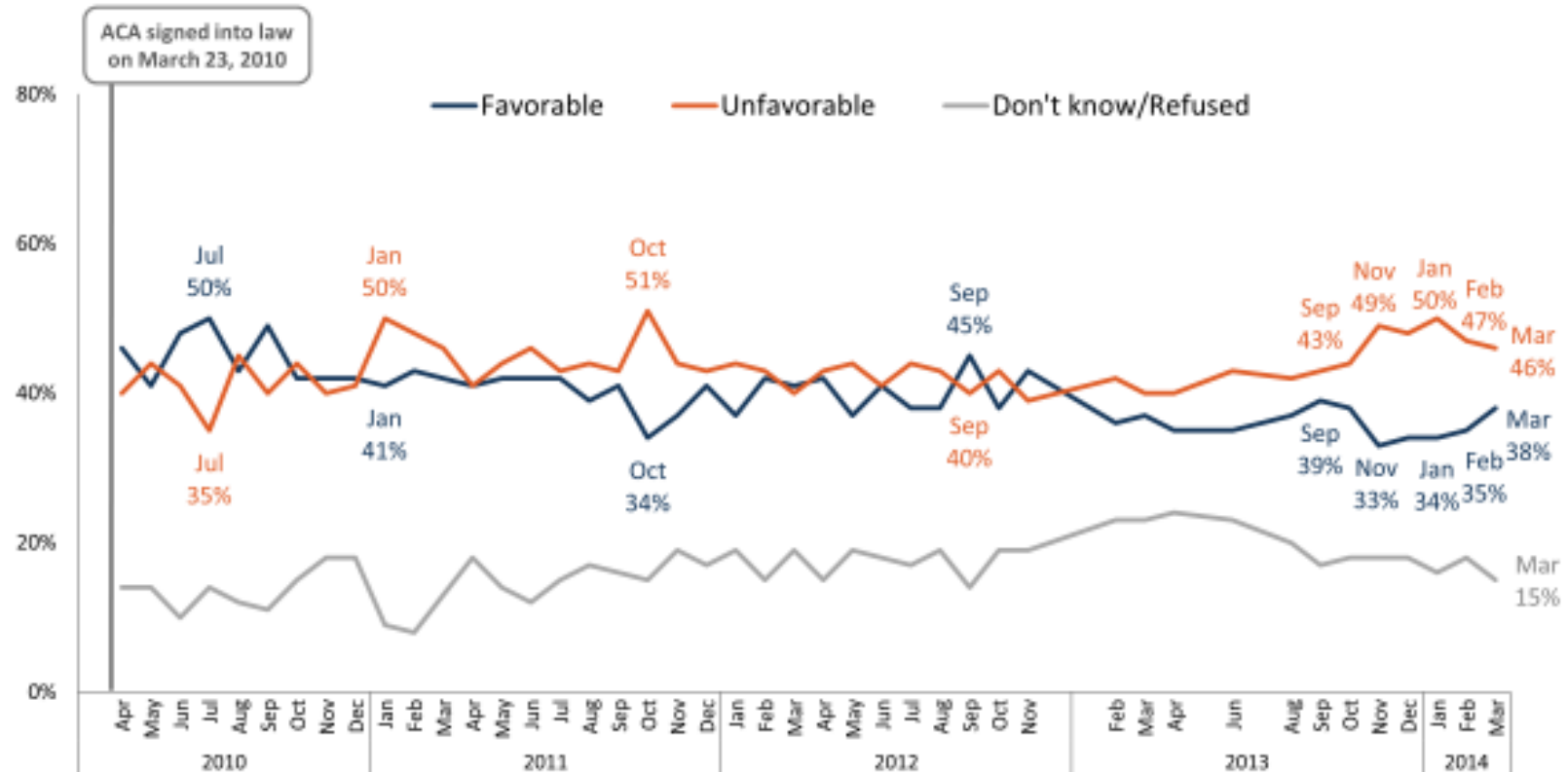
*Estimate statistically significantly different from employer coverage estimate at the 95% confidence level.

SOURCE: 2013 Kaiser Survey of Low-Income Americans and the ACA.



ACA Opinion Still Tilts Negative, But Narrowing Since January

As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

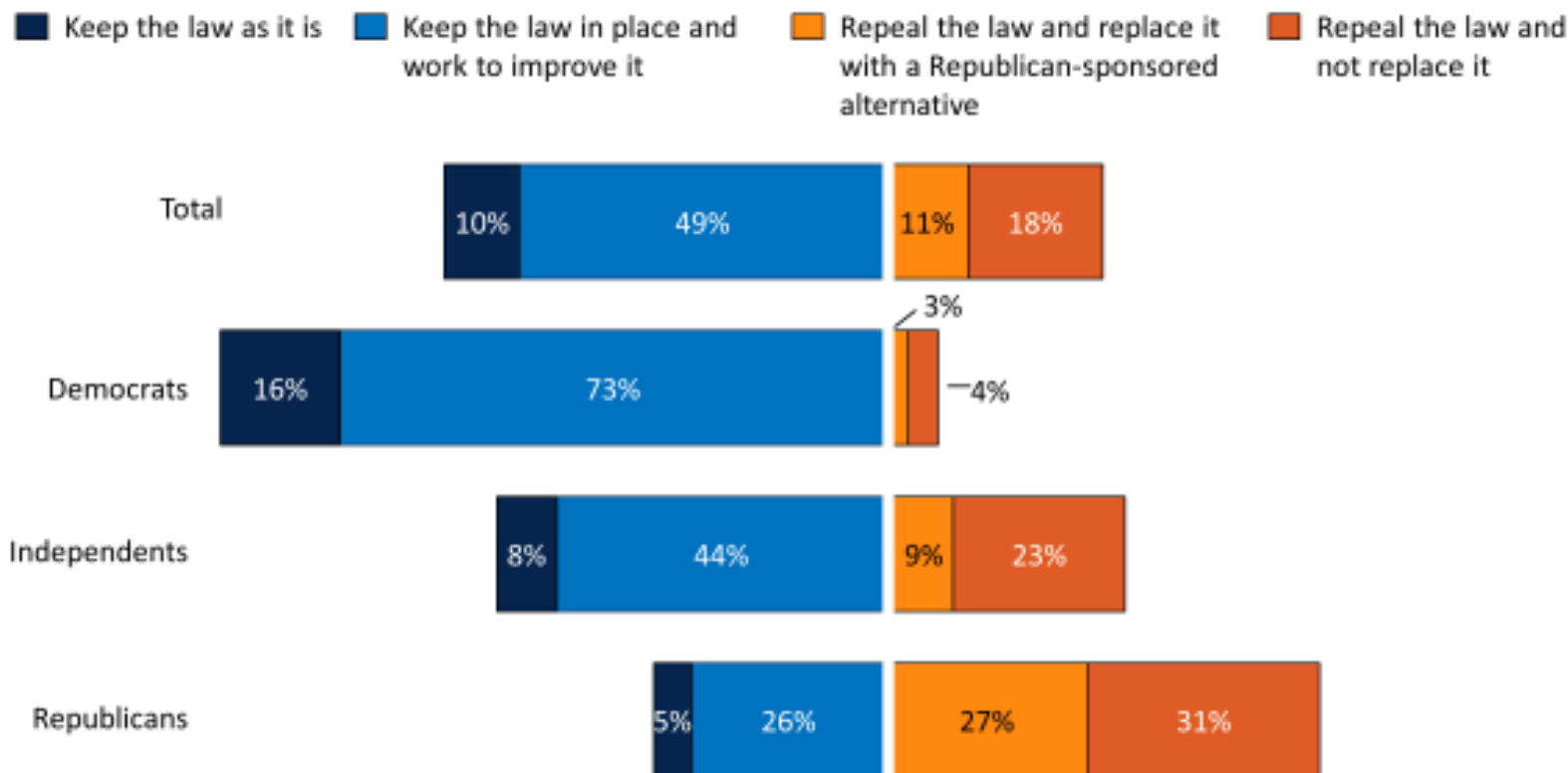


SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Polls



Half Want Congress To Keep Law And Improve It

What would you like to see Congress do when it comes to the health care law?



Note: None of these/they should do something else (VOL.) and Don't know/Refused answers not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted March 11-17, 2014)



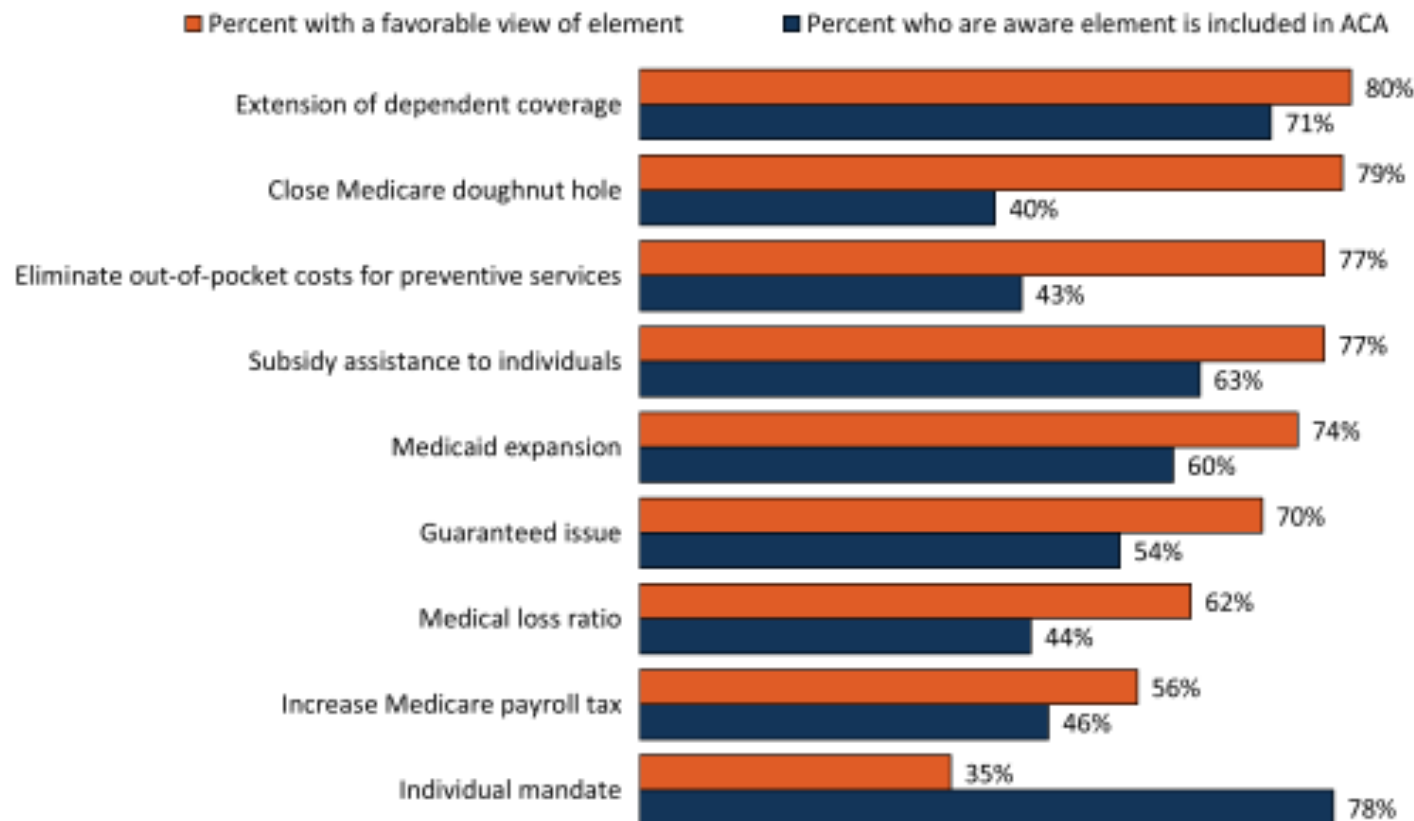
Many ACA provisions remain popular across party lines.

Percent who say they have a FAVORABLE opinion of each provision of the law	Total Public	Dem	Ind.	Rep.
Extension of dependent coverage	80%	87%	76%	76%
Close Medicare “doughnut hole”	79	89	75	73
Subsidy assistance to individuals	77	89	74	65
Eliminate out-of-pocket costs for preventive services	77	81	76	75
Medicaid expansion	74	89	69	62
Guaranteed issue	70	74	70	69
Medical loss ratio	62	68	64	54
Increase Medicare payroll tax on upper income	56	77	54	33
Individual mandate/penalty	35	56	31	16

Note: Question wording abbreviated. For full question wording, see survey topline.

For Most ACA Provisions, Awareness Lags Behind Favorability (Individual Mandate Is Exception)

Percent who say they have a favorable opinion of each of the following and percent who say they are aware each is included in the health reform law:



NOTE: Items asked of separate half samples. Response wording abbreviated. See topline for complete wording.

SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 11-17, 2014)



Effective Messaging

Messaging Advice on Social Safety Net Programs

Reforming programs, not cutting them



Say that we make needed changes; we don't cut programs. People want to know that programs are efficient and effective and being utilized responsibly.

Protecting the vulnerable from harmful cuts



Humanize the debate: Children, seniors, disabled, and working families. Though remember, in today's economy, everyone feels like they are vulnerable.

Providing *temporary* assistance while people get back on their feet, become self sufficient



Citing facts about program efficiency and integrity, does not adequately answer voters' concerns around abuse.

- ➔ Concede some abuse.
- ➔ Pivot to the fact that programs are temporary, efficient, and effective.
- ➔ Remind them of the people helped by the program.

Stress:
participants' responsibility
(they are working)

programs' accountability
(benefits families/indiv. who most need them)

People do not like lifetime recipients but they do like flexibility because of economic uncertainty. We do not win a fight on abuse given voters' perceptions and their deeply held beliefs around abuse.

Ryan's Medicare Plan Offers Important Contrast

It will **end traditional Medicare**, privatize it, and leave you on your own with insurance companies.



Use insurance companies as a villain, and clarify this plan would end Medicare, not protect it. Remind voters that insurance companies bought this plan with their political contributions.

It will make it **harder for seniors to choose their own doctors**.



Go on offence on “choice” by focusing on the plans impact on seniors’ ability to choose their own doctors.

It will **raise seniors’ costs** for preventive care and prescription drugs.



Voters have real concern for increased costs in this economy. Put Ryan’s backers on the defensive for being willing to raise costs on seniors.

Social Security Messaging

Social Security and Medicare are paid for and earned by working Americans.



People know they pay for Social Security and Medicare and they work hard for it.

They belong to the people who have worked hard and paid into the programs, not to the politicians in Washington.



Congress has not been popular recently.

Cutting Social Security or Medicare would hurt middle class Americans who have paid into each their entire working lives,



People feel in this economy they cannot provide retirement security on their own.

and violates the guaranteed promise made to all Americans.



Support for Social Security and Medicare has been and continues to be cross-generational.

Congress must keep its hands off Social Security and Medicare.



Voters find it illogical to “cut” programs in order to “save” them.

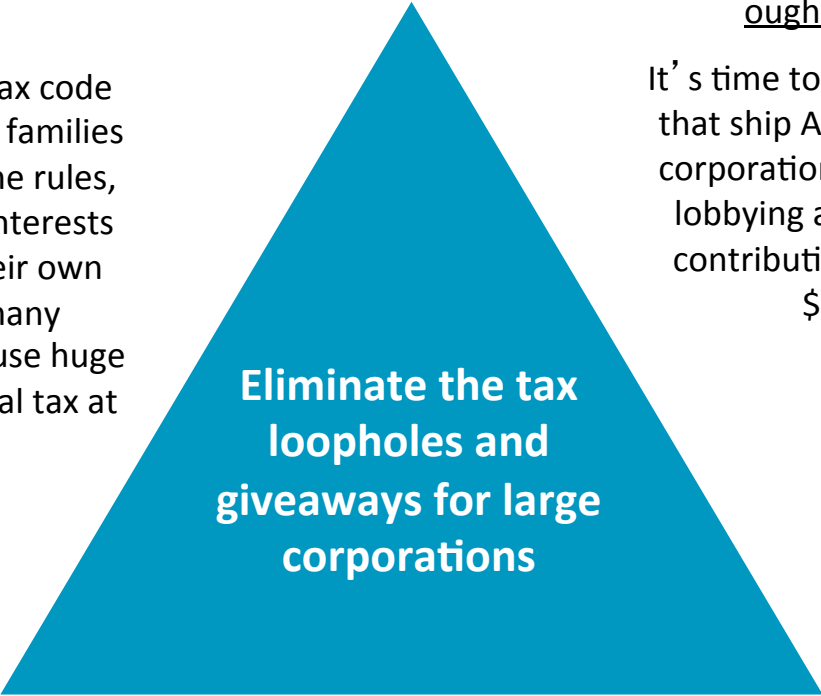
Message Triangle—Corporate Taxes

Fairness: Large corporations should pay their fair share

It's time we overhauled our tax code so that it's fair to middle class families who work hard and play by the rules, not just the wealthy special interests who rewrite the rules for their own benefit. It's wrong that many profitable large corporations use huge tax loopholes to pay no federal tax at all.

Patriotism: If you do well *in* America, you ought to do well *by* America.

It's time to end tax breaks for companies that ship American jobs overseas. Thirty corporations spent over \$476 million on lobbying and \$22 million on campaign contributions to Congress and dodged \$10.6 *billion* in taxes.



**Eliminate the tax
loopholes and
giveaways for large
corporations**

It's time to invest in America:

Washington politicians should stop wasting tax dollars on tax loopholes for the wealthy special interests and the wrong priorities while shortchanging the investments we need in America for our future, like education, job training, research and development, protecting seniors, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure like roads and bridges, and reducing the deficit. We should level the playing field for small businesses by using tax revenue from large corporations to create incentives for small businesses to create jobs here at home.

LRP

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Strategy • Precision • Impact



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