

# Research on Economic and Political Instability in Midwestern Factory Towns

Findings From a Survey of 600 Likely Voters Plus an Oversample of 100 Diverse Young Voters  
in Industrial Counties Across 6 Midwestern States

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# Table of Contents

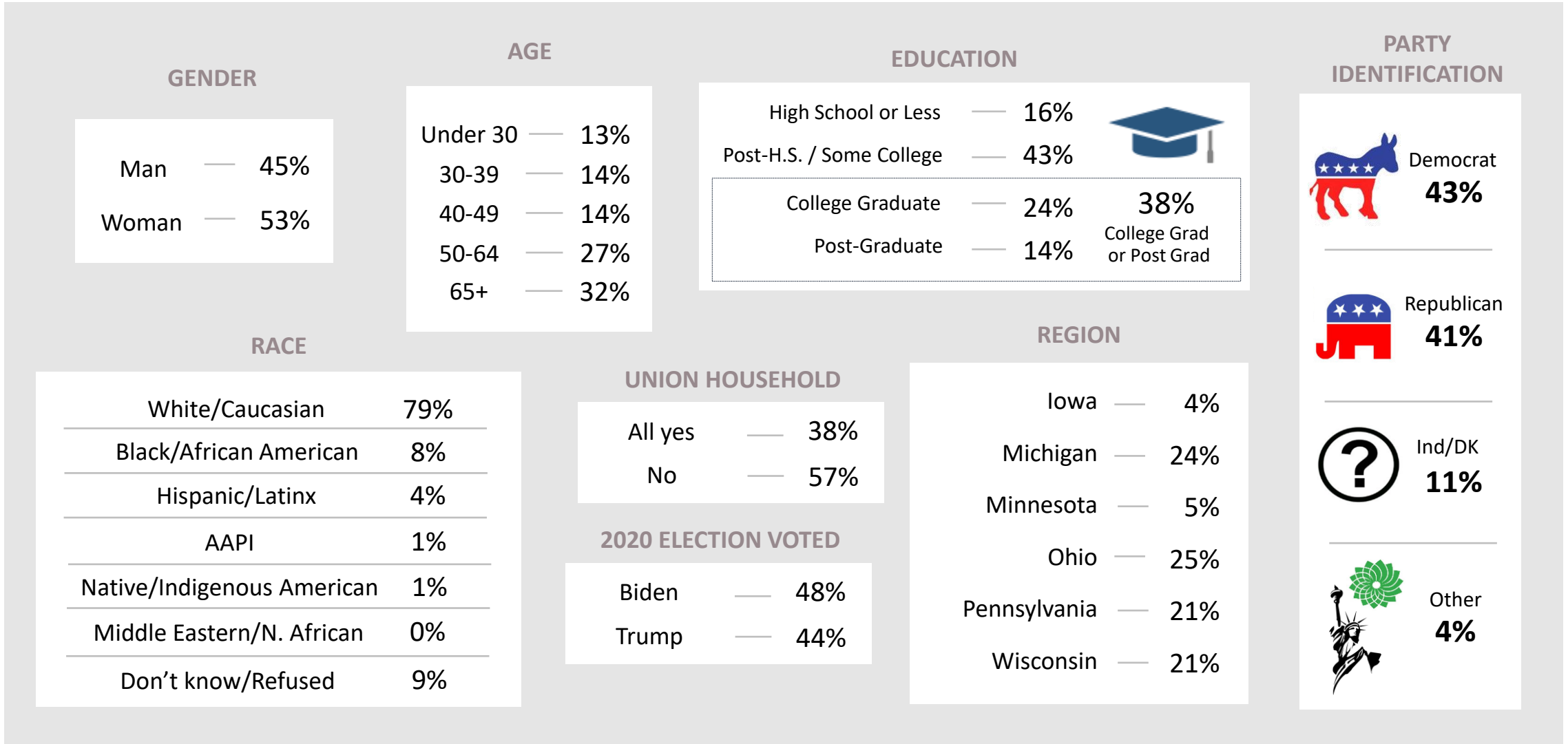
	Methodology	3
	Demographics	4
	Key Findings	5
	Favorabilities	12
	Initial Ballots	18
	Comparing the Parties	28
	Economic Issues	33
	Messaging	42
	Other Key Attitudes & Behaviors	67

# Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by live telephone interview and text to online.
- The survey reached a total of 600 likely voters, plus an oversample of 100 diverse, young (age 18-34) voters across 24 counties that contain small to medium industrial cities (Factory Towns):
  - Dubuque, Wapello, Woodbury - Iowa
  - Bay, Calhoun, Genesee, Kalamazoo, Saginaw - Michigan
  - Blue Earth, St. Louis - Minnesota
  - Mahoning, Marion, Montgomery, Stark, Trumbull - Ohio
  - Erie, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Northampton - Pennsylvania
  - Brown, Manitowoc, Marathon, Outagamie, Racine, Winnebago - Wisconsin
- The survey was conducted February 13-20, 2024.
- Data were weighted slightly by gender, age, state, state by gender, race, education level, and party identification to reflect the demographic composition of likely voters across the target counties.
- The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 4.0%.

# Demographics of Likely Voters in Industrial Counties Across IA, MI, MN, OH, PA, & WI

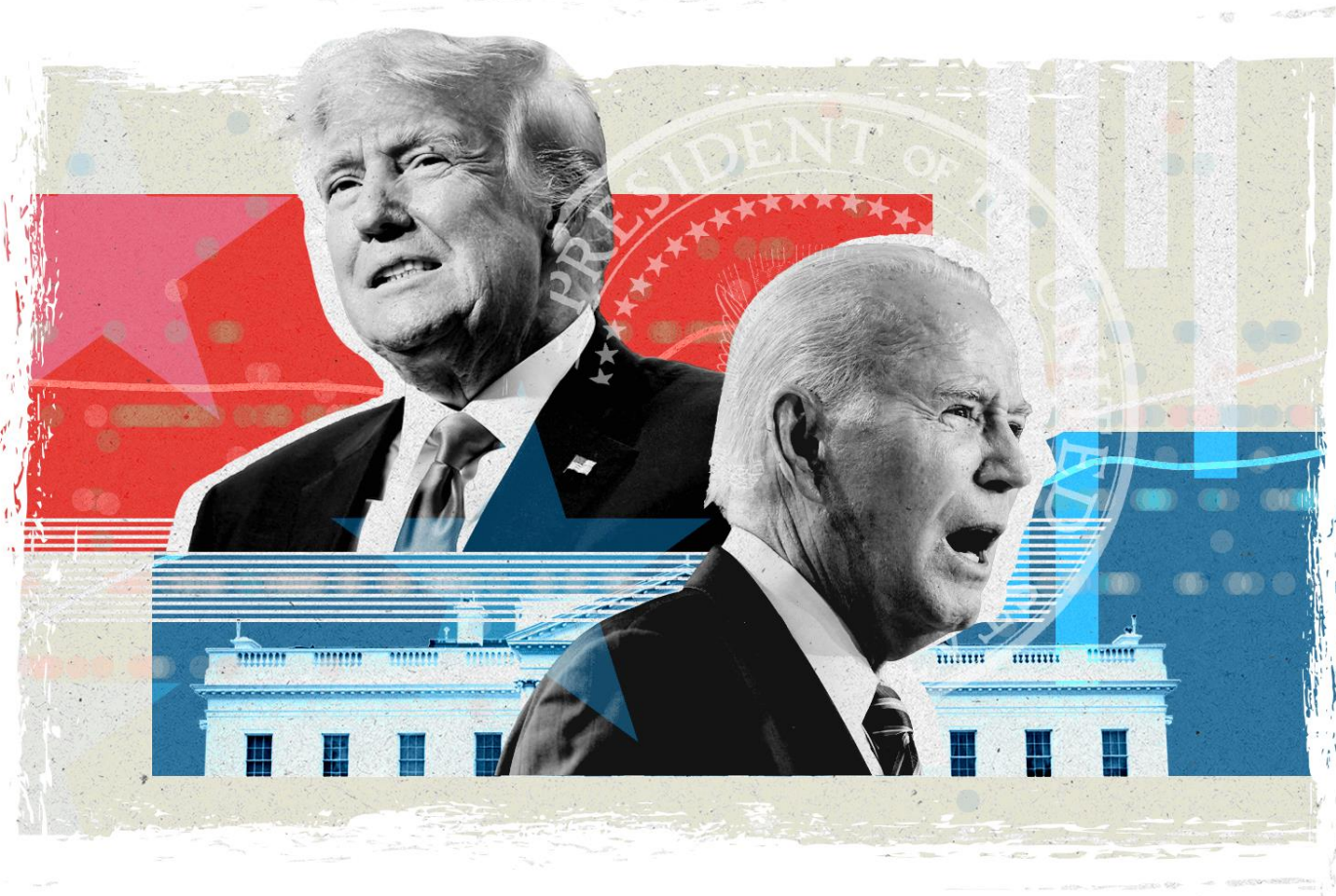
Voters are largely white, majority women, mostly older and non-college educated, and closely split on party identification



Percentages do not always add up to 100 due to rounding and/or non-response

# Key Findings: 2024 Election

- **The 2024 Presidential ballot pitting Biden against Trump and the 2024 generic Congressional ballot are both very close in these Factory Towns.**
  - Both ballots are toss-ups, with **Biden tied with Trump** and **running slightly behind a generic Congressional Democrat**. The presidential ballot has not moved since the end of 2022 despite Biden's favorability declining.



- **Factory Towns voters are closely split in their party affiliation** – 43% self-identified Democrats, 41% self-identified Republicans, and 9% independents
- **Trump and Biden are both unpopular**, but Biden is now slightly more unpopular than Trump – a reversal of the dynamics that we saw at the end of 2022. **12% of voters are double haters**
- **Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania Factory Towns are closely divided but lean Democratic**, while **Ohio Factory Towns are the least favorable** for Democrats by a wide margin.
  - **Iowa and Minnesota Factory Towns currently have the most favorable environment** for Democrats of these six states, though the sample size for this group is small.

# Key Findings: Economic Hardships

- **Factory Towns voters have experienced significant hardships** in their lives that impact their worldviews.
  - The personal hardships that have impacted these voters the most are **having to take on major caregiving responsibilities** and **having to work multiple jobs to make ends meet** – both of which roughly two thirds of these voters or their families/friends have experienced.
- **These voters blame both corporate greed and the government for economic hardship in their communities.** Notably, they mostly do not respond to right-wing talking points blaming immigrants and welfare recipients.
  - The number one reason for hardship, with the highest intensity by a wide margin, is **the wealthiest 1% rigging the rules. Corporations using record profits for CEO bonuses** rather than higher wages is also highly salient.
  - However, Factory Towns voters are also feeling squeezed by **high taxes on the middle class** – this is the most important reason on average – and many, particularly independents, **blame the government for inflation.**



# Key Findings: Comparing The Parties

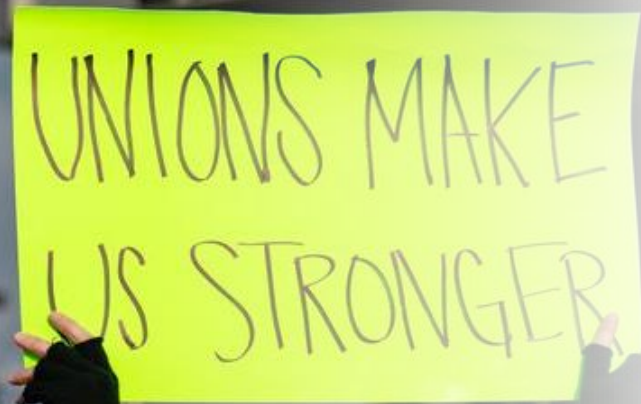
- The most salient negative perception of Democrats in the Factory Towns is that **Democrats are obsessed with LGBT transgender issues instead of focusing on kitchen table economic issues**. Voters decisively **blame Democrats, rather than Republicans, for focusing on LGBT issues**. Even Democratic voters share this perception to an extent.
  - **Factory Towns voters rate Democrats far more poorly on being obsessed with LGBT issues specifically than “culture war” issues generally**, which they see both parties as culpable on. Democrats are also deteriorating on this dimension in other data.
  - Democrats are also rated poorly by Factory Towns voters for **having no economic plan, or an economic plan that helps others but not their own families**, and for being **weak**. Intensity has declined on these negative perceptions since last year, but they still present major challenges that Democrats need to address to be competitive in these Factory Towns.
- Republicans have a different but also significant weakness on the economy: they are viewed as **for the wealthy and elite and on the side of corporations and CEOs, not regular people**.
  - Importantly, voters’ **negative perceptions of Republicans on these dimensions have intensified in the past year**.
  - Factory Towns voters are negative towards CEOs and even more so towards wealthy corporations. **Wealthy corporations are the most powerful villain**.
  - Voters in Wisconsin respond intensely to the language of Republicans being **on the side of wealthy corporations and CEOs**, while voters in Michigan and Pennsylvania respond more negatively to Republicans **working for the wealthy, not the people**.



# Key Findings: Economic Messaging

- Democrats have messaging that works in Factory Towns – **economic messaging on Democrats’ vision of cracking down on corporate abuses and creating good jobs** so that hard-working families can thrive resonates with these voters.
  - **The Democratic Economic message is competitive with a Republican Culture War message and significantly outperforms a Republican Economic message**, though the dynamic varies by state and is largely driven by wide margins in Ohio. In Michigan and Wisconsin, the Democratic economic message remains stronger against the Republican culture war message, and in Pennsylvania they are similar.
  - **This is a shift from the dynamics we saw at the end of 2022, when the Republican Culture War message was much weaker across the board**, reflecting in part voters’ growing perception that Democrats are driving the culture war on LGBT issues. The Democratic Economic message may not have enough kitchen table components such as health care and retirement to compete effectively.

**[DEM ECONOMIC 2024]** A Democratic candidate says: Corporate CEOs have hurt our communities by shipping jobs overseas, cutting wages and benefits, wage theft, and union busting. Now they are jacking up prices while they hold our wages down and pay themselves billions. We can create good jobs and lower prices by cracking down on corporate price gouging and wage theft, making wealthy corporations pay the taxes they owe, cutting prescription drug prices, and investing in manufacturing here at home, so that hard-working families thrive, not just the wealthy few.



UNIONS MAKE  
US STRONGER



# Key Findings: Economic Messaging

- Voters in these Factory Towns also respond very well to a version of **the Democratic economic message emphasizing a strong middle class, retirement – a very important issue in Factory Towns – anti-corporate populism, trade, jobs, and manufacturing.**
  - **They are not as receptive to a new Democratic message tying in the economy with broader issues,** rather than a pointed focus on the economy. **The economic message is key to Factory Towns.**
  - Part of this effect is likely caused by familiarity bias. We have also seen the new Issue Frame message have a positive impact on swing suburban voters in other recent research, but **it is not as oriented towards the key core economic issues in these Factory Towns.**
- A **populist middle-class economic message** that centers these issues – **retirement, jobs, trade, and manufacturing** – holds up best against the Republican Immigration & Crime attack, which is not a winning message. Mentioning **Social Security** and **Medicare** – popular economic programs that voters trust Democrats on – is also key.
- Again, we see **differences by state** – the Strong Middle-Class message is driven by its strength in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, particularly Wisconsin, while Issue Frame message is actually more effective than Strong Middle-Class in Michigan and Ohio.



**[DEM STRONG MIDDLE CLASS]** A Democratic candidate says: To grow the American economy, we need a strong middle class. Because when the middle class does well, everyone does better. For too long, certain politicians have gutted programs we depend on while protecting corporations that rip off families. We need leaders who will grow the economy from the middle out by lowering costs through cracking down on corporate greed, protecting vital programs like Social Security and Medicare, and investing in the American people by bringing back manufacturing and good union jobs to the U.S.

# Key Findings: Additional Messaging

- **The strongest of a set of messages focused more specifically on Democrats' policies and priorities is one geared towards *Retirees*, by a substantial margin.**
  - **This message puts Medicare and Social Security front and center** – these are very popular programs that are particularly important in these Factory Towns, and they have the distinction of being an area of economic policy that Democrats have a clear advantage on. It also has a populist tone.
  - A very populist **Trade** message and a message focused on Democrats' **IRA Healthcare** actions round out the top three. **Trade is a key issue in Factory Towns and health care is another core economic issue where Democrats have an advantage** that should be centered in messaging. **Health care** messaging has also repeatedly been strong in our research and others'.
  - These message perform very well across demographic groups and are statistically tied as the top three messages among independents and weak partisans.
  - **In Factory Towns, it is critical to focus on economic issues. However, these voters are overwhelmingly pro-abortion rights.** There is no need to hide from abortion, but this is not the first issue to lead with among these voters.
- These voters continue to think their neighbors are voting Republican, despite leaning net Democratic in party identification themselves. **Democrats need to be communicating with these voters to counter social pressure and to provide a permission structure for voting Democratic.**



# Best Additional Democratic Messages

**[RETIREEES]** Working Americans have paid into Social Security and Medicare our entire lives, but some politicians want to cut these programs to pay for tax breaks for wealthy corporations and CEOs. We need leaders who will fight for working families' economic well-being, by closing loopholes in the tax code that allow wealthy corporations like Amazon and Chevron to pay zero federal taxes and allow the wealthy to pay less in Social Security taxes, so we can ensure secure retirement for all.

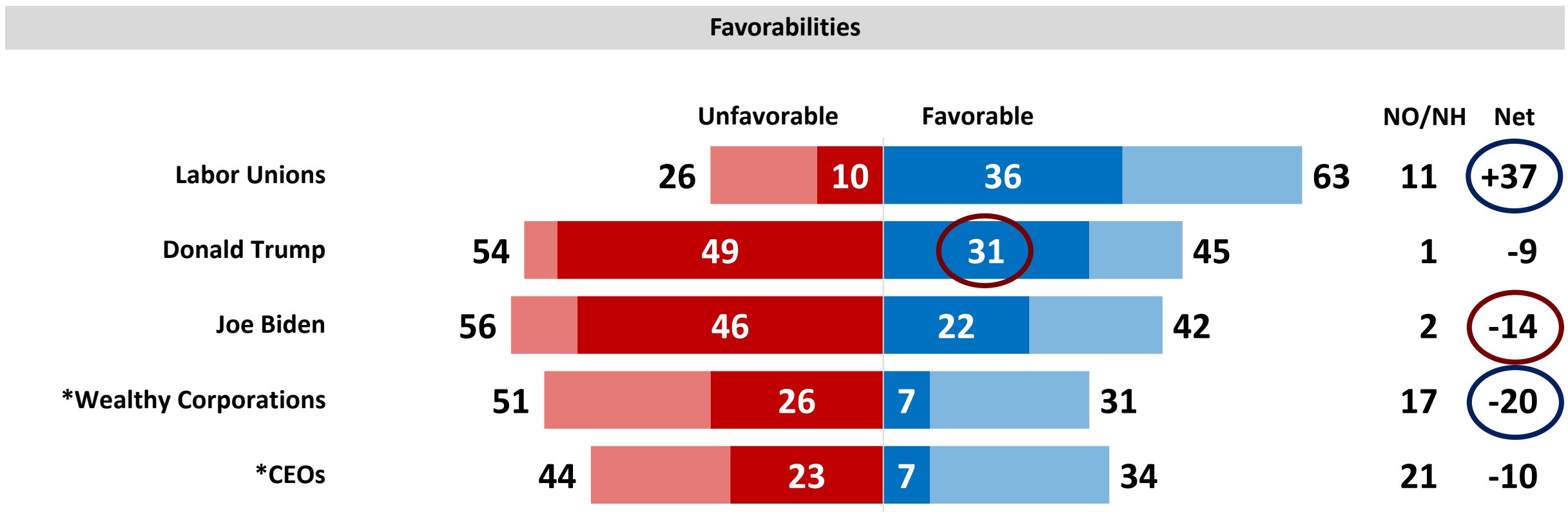
**[TRADE]** Global trade deals were supposed to bring us good jobs and lower prices, and instead they sent our jobs overseas and gave us higher prices and lower wages. We need to crack down on price gouging and get tough on the Chinese government, invest in our infrastructure including highways, broadband, and clean water, and strengthen supply chains. We need leaders who will reduce our dependence on foreign manufacturing, build things here at home, and invest in American workers and good union jobs.

**[IRA HEALTH CARE]** The Inflation Reduction Act builds on the Affordable Care Act by lowering health premiums for working families, saving 13 million Americans an average of \$800 per year. It also allows Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, which is estimated to reduce spending on prescription drugs by \$100 billion over 10 years, prevents wealthy drug companies from increasing prices above the level of inflation, and caps the price of insulin now.

# Favorabilities



Donald Trump and Joe Biden are both unpopular among factory towns voters, with underwater favorability ratings, but Biden's net favorability is worse than Trump's by a few points. Negative intensity far outweighs positive intensity for both candidates. Negative intensity is slightly higher for Trump than Biden, but Trump's positive intensity is also significantly higher. CEOs and wealthy corporations are both viewed unfavorably, but wealthy corporations more so, while labor unions are viewed very favorably.



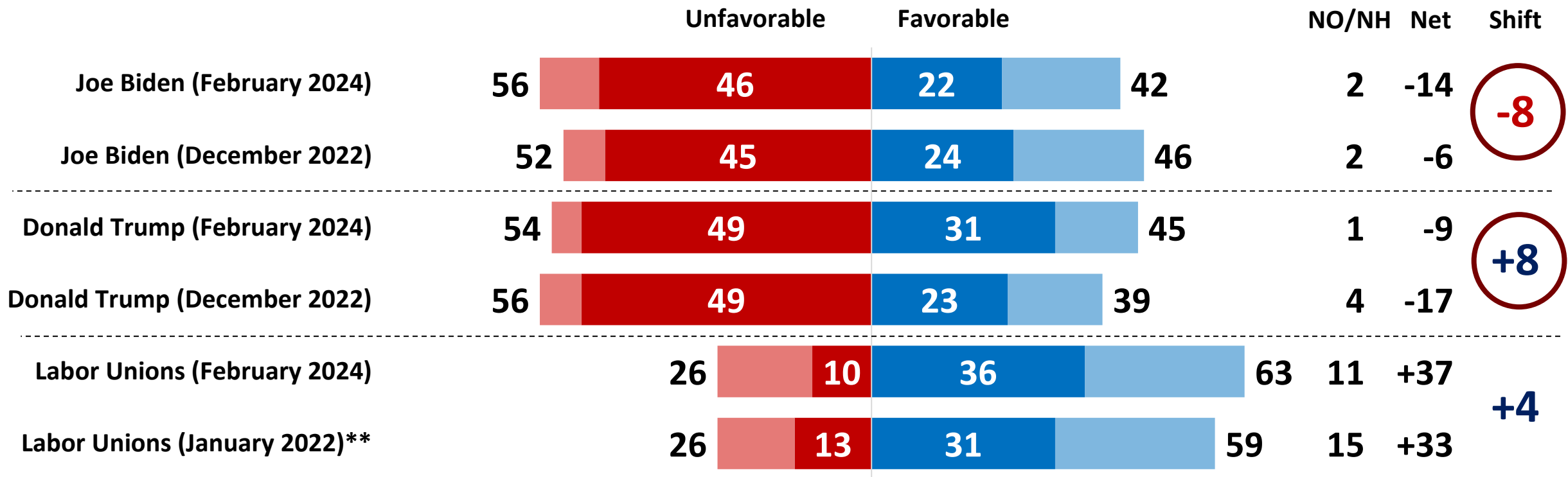
\*Split-Sampled

Q4. Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures and organizations. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of them {6}, or if you don't know enough about them to have an impression {5}, just say so and we will move on.



Biden's net favorability has declined by eight points since the end of 2022, while Trump's has improved by eight points (from a low point nationally after the 2022 election). Labor unions are also viewed slightly more favorably than they were at the end of 2022.

Favorabilities: Time Series



\*\*Set of counties has changed

Q4. Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures and organizations. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of them {6}, or if you don't know enough about them to have an impression {5}, just say so and we will move on.



Biden maintains high favorability ratings among Democrats in Factory Towns, but he is viewed unfavorably among independents and weak partisans by a wide margin – Trump is doing better with this group. Reflecting the partisan pattern, Biden is fairly strong among people of color, especially younger POC, but loses white voters, especially white men who are non-college educated. Biden outperforms Trump in union households.

### Favorabilities: Candidates by Demographics

Net Favorability (% Favorable – % Unfavorable)	Total	Race		Race/Age <sup>+</sup>		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC	POC <35 <sup>+</sup>	POC 35 <sup>+</sup>	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non- Coll	Coll	White Non- Coll	Non- Coll M	Non- Coll W	Yes	No
Donald Trump	-10	-8	-38	-51	-29	-17	-17	+6	-14	-89	-6	+69	0	-26	+8	+9	-7	-15	-6
Joe Biden	-13	-18	+28	+35	+23	-16	-2	-29	-4	+70	-37	-89	-17	-4	-28	-26	-9	-9	-17

\*Split-Sampled

<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

**Q4.** Now I'd like to ask you about some public figures and organizations. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of them {6}, or if you don't know enough about them to have an impression {5}, just say so and we will move on.

Wealthy corporations are viewed more negatively than CEOs, except among Republicans and non-college educated voters, particularly women, who still view CEOs quite negatively. Wealthy corporations is clearly the stronger language to use with our audiences, though notably the difference is much greater among men, particularly young men, people of color, and those in union households. Framing CEOs as greedy or wealthy CEOs of wealthy corporations may work well.

Favorabilities: Unions, Corporations & CEOs by Demographics

Net Favorability (% Favorable – % Unfavorable)	Total	Race		Race/Age <sup>+</sup>		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/ Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC	POC <35 <sup>+</sup>	POC 35 <sup>+</sup>	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non- Coll	Coll	White Non- Coll	Non- Coll M	Non- Coll W	Yes	No
Labor Unions	+37	+37	+58	+73	+48	+38	+53	+17	+41	+83	+22	-6	+39	+35	+36	+25	+48	+50	+30
CEOs*	-10	-10	-14	-25	-5	-24	-28	+10	-4	-34	-6	+14	-14	-5	-14	-12	-15	-15	-7
Wealthy Corporations*	-20	-16	-40	-63	-24	-56	-29	0	-2	-49	-25	+18	-10	-34	-3	-12	-5	-17	-23

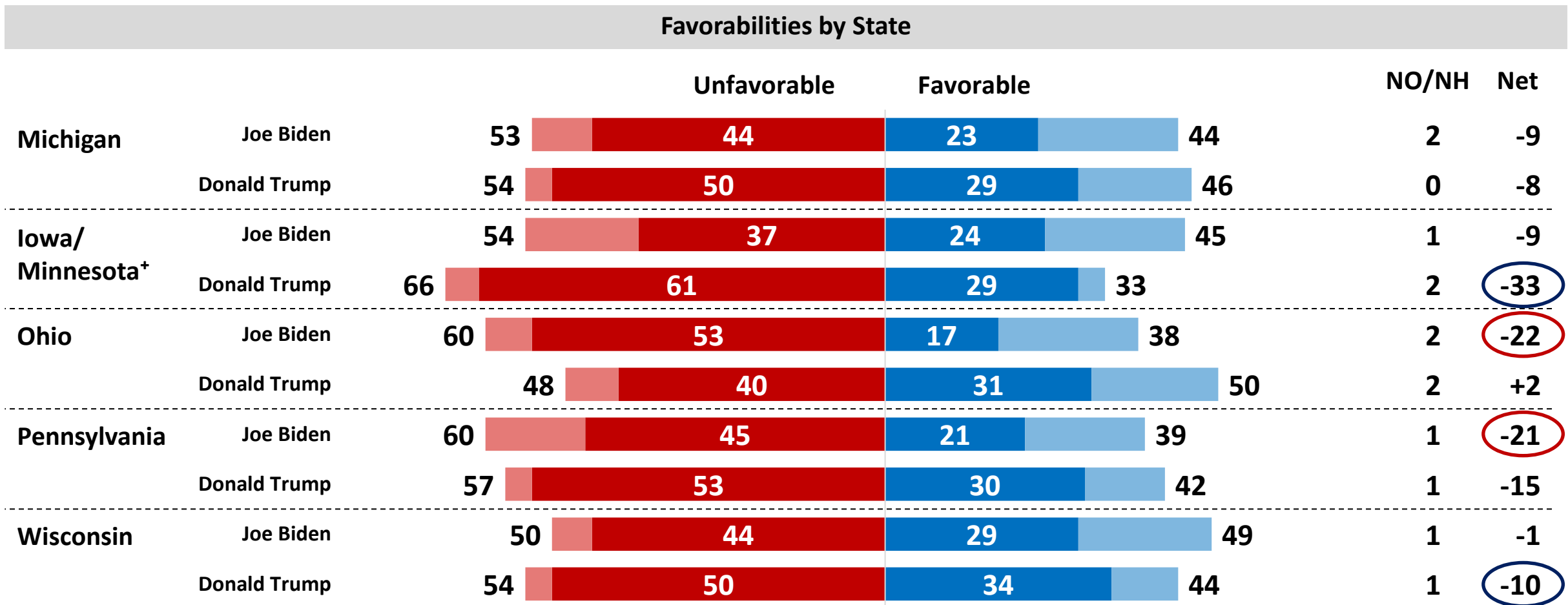
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Trump's net favorability is significantly worse than Biden's in Wisconsin and in Iowa/Minnesota. Biden's is worse in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and the two are roughly equal in Michigan. Across the board, intensity towards Trump is higher in both directions.



<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

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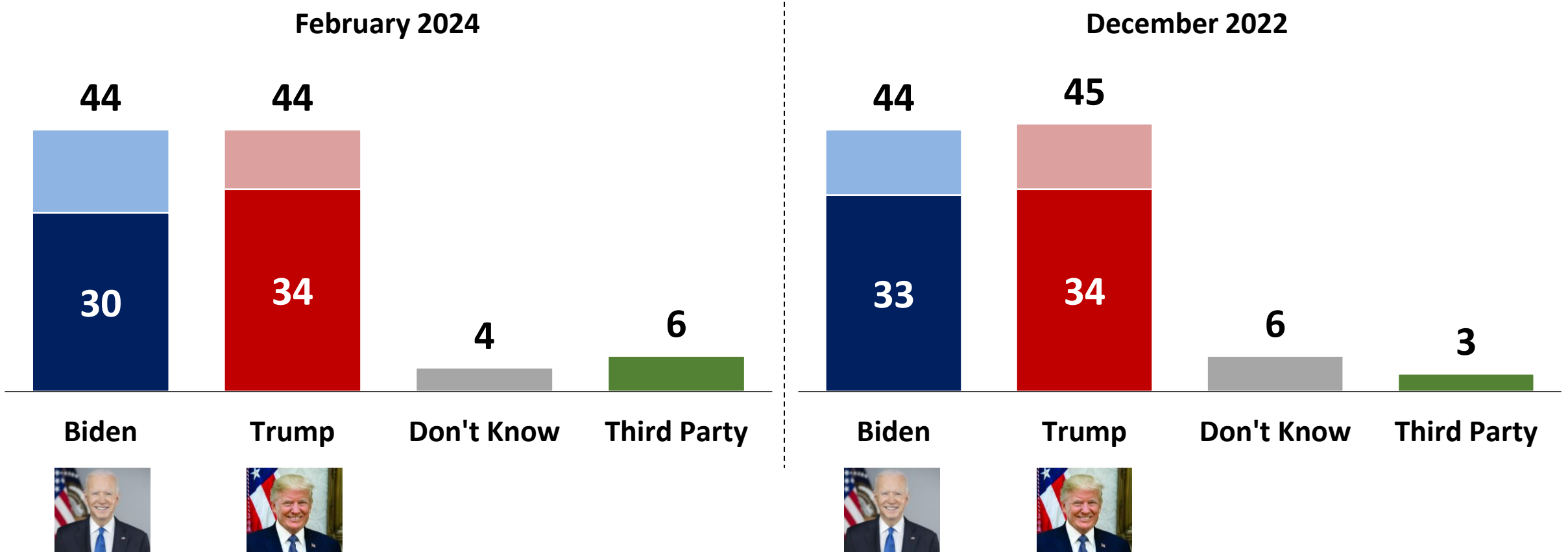




# Initial Ballots

Biden and Trump are currently tied among Factory Towns voters. There is essentially no change in the ballot since the end of 2022, despite favorability shifts, though Biden has lost a few points in intensity of support.

Initial 2024 Presidential Ballot: Time Series

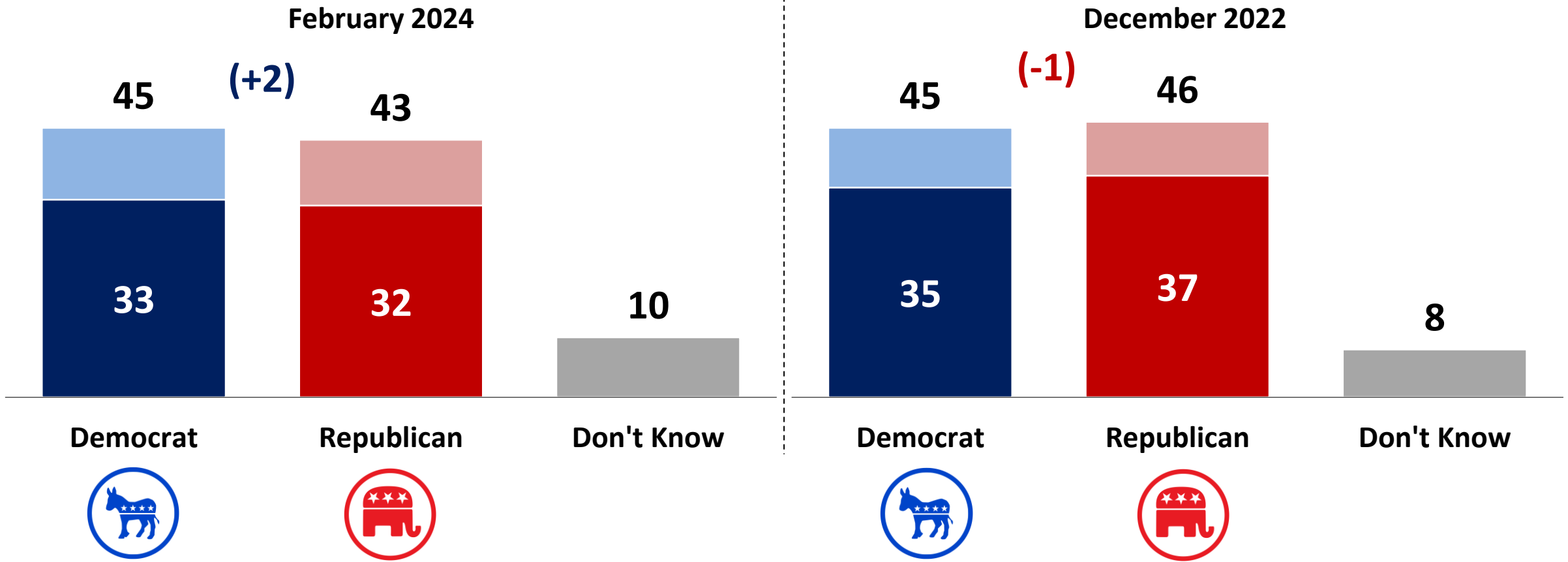


Q5. [T] And if the 2024 election for President were held today, and the candidates were: [ROTATE] Democrat Joe Biden or Republican Donald Trump For whom would you vote, or are you undecided? [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support [CANDIDATE] strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well, if the election was held today and you had to decide, toward whom do you lean?

Biden – Not-so-strong/lean  
 Biden – Strong  
 Trump – Not-so-strong/lean  
 Trump – Strong

The congressional ballot is very close. It has shifted a few points in favor of Democrats relative to the end of 2022, giving them a slight edge. Both parties have lost a few points in strong support over the past year, but Republicans have lost more.

Initial 2024 Congressional Ballot: Time Series



Q6. [T] And if the 2024 election for your member of Congress were held today, would you vote for: [ROTATE] The Democratic candidate or The Republican candidate Or are you undecided? [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support [CANDIDATE] strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well, if the election was held today and you had to decide, toward whom do you lean?

Democrat – Not-so-strong/lean  
 Democrat – Strong  
 Republican – Not-so-strong/lean  
 Republican – Strong

Biden and Democrats share a base of support among people of color, particularly younger POC, younger voters in general, particularly younger women, college educated voters, and of course, Democrats. Older women and union voters also lean towards Biden and the Democrats.

Democrats, independents, people of color, and non-college women have shifted away from Biden and congressional Democrats over the past year, while younger men, non-college men, and college educated voters have shifted towards them. Older men shifted away from Biden but towards Democrats while older women shifted away from both. Biden’s loss of ground among independents and POC is particularly dramatic.

## Presidential & Congressional Ballot: Time Series

	Presidential Ballot		Congressional Ballot	
	Net Biden – Trump	2022-2024 Biden Support Shift	Net Dems – Reps	2022-2024 Dem Support Shift
Total	0	0	+2	+2
White	-3	+6	-3	+4
POC	<b>+36</b>	-16	<b>+36</b>	-7
POC <35+	<b>+46</b>	-	<b>+54</b>	-
POC 35+*	<b>+29</b>	-	<b>+23</b>	-13
Men Under 50	+8	+28	+11	+25
Women Under 50	+11	0	+12	-11
Men Over 50	-18	-12	-19	+5
Women Over 50	+3	-8	+5	-8
Democrat	<b>+83</b>	-8	<b>+88</b>	-4
Independent w/ Weak	-11	-31	-12	-18
Republican	-81	+4	-85	+4
Non-College	-7	-7	-5	-1
College	+14	+17	+13	+8
White Non-College	-17	-3	-14	+1
Non-College Men	-17	+2	-15	+9
Non-College Women	0	-15	+1	-13
Union Household	+5	+1	+4	-4
Non-Union	-3	+1	0	+4

\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

**Biden is running slightly ahead of Congressional Democrats among older people of color and Republicans.**

Biden is Running Ahead of Congressional Dems Among...		
Demographic	% of Electorate	Presidential – Congressional Difference in Biden Support
POC 35+	9	+6
Republican	41	+4

**Congressional Democrats are running ahead of Biden among Democrats, younger people of color, particularly younger men, white non-college voters, and non-union voters.**

Biden is Running Behind Congressional Dems Among...		
Demographic	% of Electorate	Presidential – Congressional Difference in Biden Support
POC <35	6	-8
Democrats	43	-5

**Biden vs. The Generic Dem**  
 Presidential Congressional



	Net Biden – Trump	Net Dems – Reps	Presidential – Congressional Difference
Total	0	+2	-2
White	-3	-3	0
POC	+36	+36	0
POC <35+	+46	+54	-8
POC 35+*	+29	+23	+6
Men Under 50	+8	+11	-3
Women Under 50	+11	+12	-1
Men Over 50	-18	-19	+1
Women Over 50	+3	+5	-2
Democrat	+83	+88	-5
Independent w/ Weak	-11	-12	+1
Republican	-81	-85	+4
Non-College	-7	-5	-2
College	+14	+13	+1
White Non-College	-17	-14	-3
Non-College Men	-17	-15	-2
Non-College Women	0	+1	+1
Union Household	+5	+4	+1
Non-Union	-3	0	-3

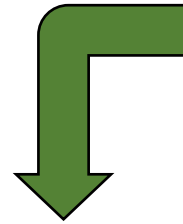


\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Younger voters, especially people of color and men, are much more conflicted on Biden than on their congressional votes. College educated voters are also more likely to be undecided or voting third party in the Presidential.

Older voters are more conflicted on the congressional than the Presidential.

Significant numbers of independents are undecided or considering voting third party.



Biggest Third Party/Undecided Voting Blocs			
Demographic	% of Electorate	Presidential Third Party/Undecided %	Congressional Undecided %
Ind w/ Weak	22	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>
POC <35	6	<b>15</b>	2
POC 35+	9	5	<b>12</b>
College Educated	38	<b>14</b>	8
Non-Coll Women	xx	9	<b>14</b>
Men 50+	25	10	<b>13</b>
Women 50+	32	11	<b>15</b>

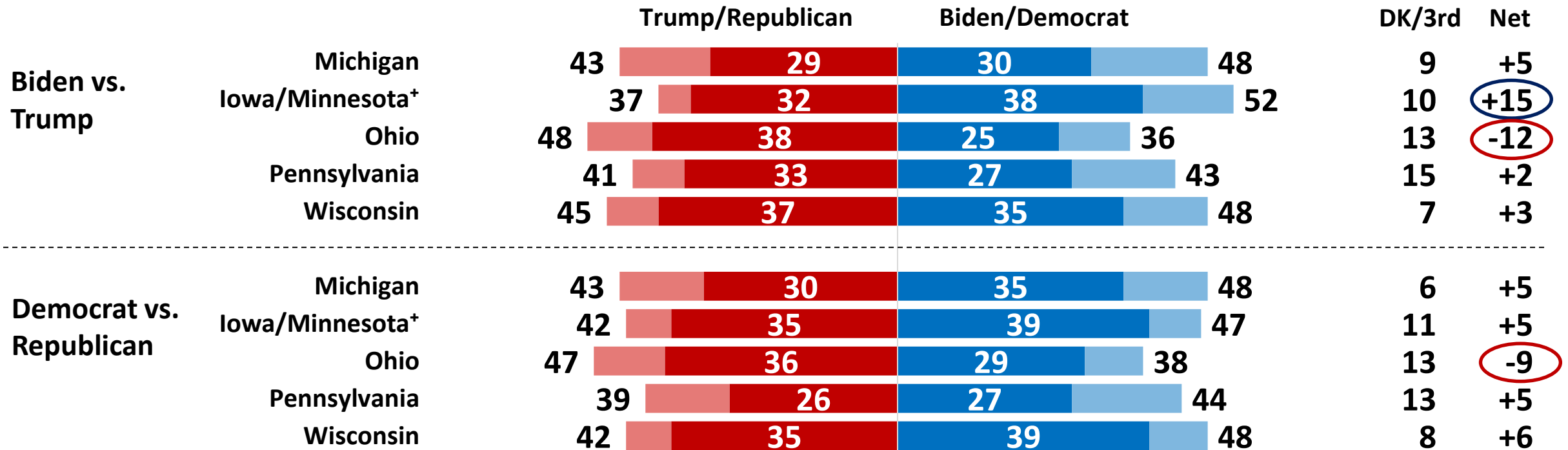
## Who is Voting Third Party?

	Presidential Ballot		Congressional Ballot	
	Net Biden – Trump	Third Party/Undecided	Net Dems – Reps	Undecided
Total	0	10	+2	10
White	-3	10	-3	9
POC	<b>+36</b>	8	<b>+36</b>	8
POC <35+	<b>+46</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+54</b>	2
POC 35+*	<b>+29</b>	5	<b>+23</b>	<b>12</b>
Men Under 50	+8	<b>12</b>	+11	2
Women Under 50	+11	8	+12	6
Men Over 50	-18	10	-19	<b>13</b>
Women Over 50	+3	11	+5	<b>15</b>
Democrat	<b>+83</b>	9	<b>+88</b>	5
Independent w/ Weak Republican	-11	<b>24</b>	-12	<b>21</b>
Non-College	-7	8	-5	10
College	+14	<b>14</b>	+13	8
White Non-College	-17	8	-14	9
Non-College Men	-17	7	-15	7
Non-College Women	0	9	+1	<b>14</b>
Union Household	+5	9	+4	8
Non-Union	-3	11	0	11

\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Biden leads Trump significantly in Iowa/Minnesota Factory Towns (note sample size is small), and by a few points in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. He trails significantly in Ohio. A generic Democratic congressional candidate leads by 5-6 points in every state except Ohio, where Democrats trail significantly.

Initial 2024 Presidential Ballot by State



<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

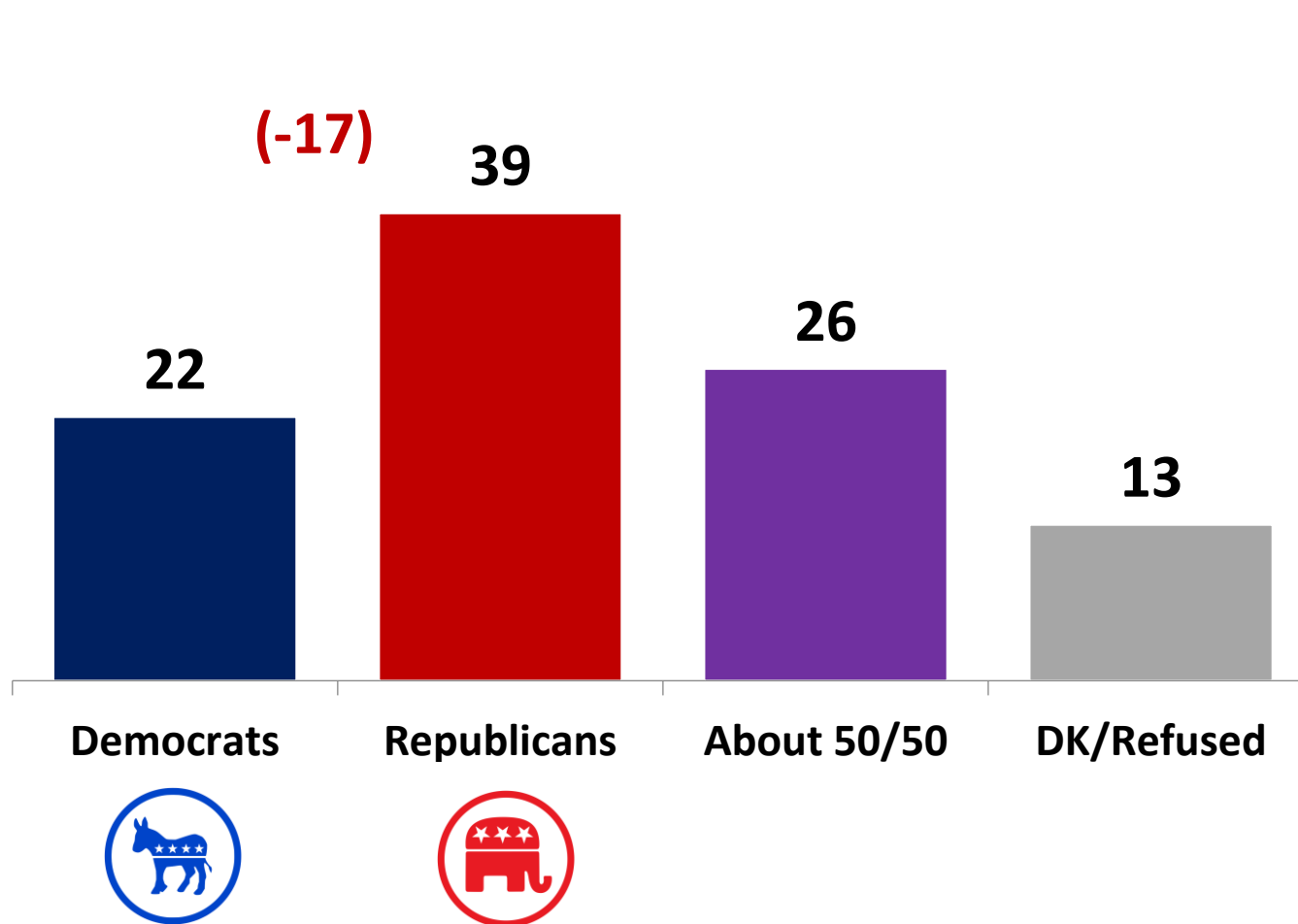
Q5/6. And if the 2024 election for President/your member of Congress were held today, and the candidates were: [ROTATE] Democrat Joe Biden/The Democratic candidate or Republican Donald Trump/The Republican candidate For whom would you vote, or are you undecided? [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support [CANDIDATE] strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well, if the election was held today and you had to decide, toward whom do you lean?





A plurality of Factory Towns voters think that their neighbors vote more for Republicans than Democrats, despite a relatively even split in party identification among these voters themselves. Voters' perceptions of how their neighbors vote reflect their own party affiliations, but still tend to favor Republicans. Independents think Republicans are much more dominant in their circles.

### Neighbors' Perceived Vote Choices



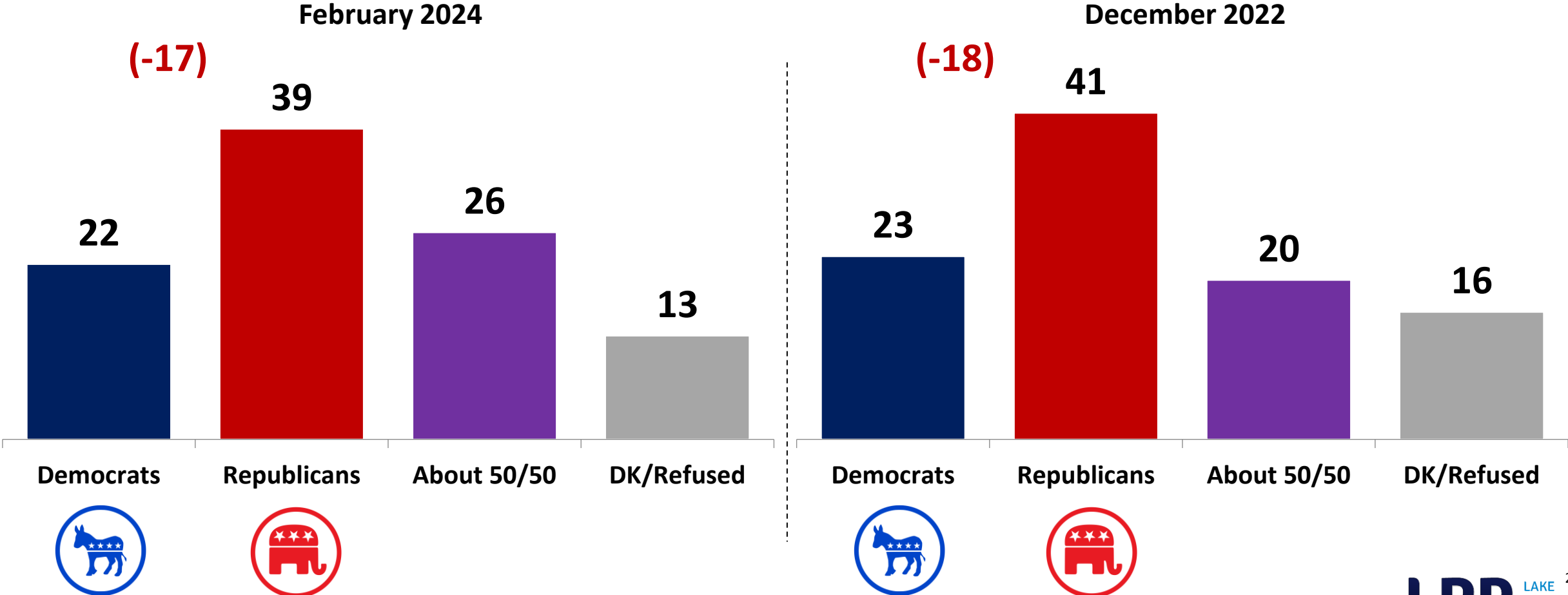
Demographics	Democrat	50-50	Republican
Total	22	26	39
White	19	27	41
POC	43	23	29
POC <35+	40	31	25
POC 35+*	45	17	32
Men Under 50	25	29	39
Women Under 50	33	24	39
Men Over 50	15	23	42
Women Over 50	19	28	33
Democrat	32	28	27
Independent w/ Weak	14	34	33
Republican	11	23	55
Non-College	23	24	39
College	22	29	40
White Non-College	18	26	42
Non-College Men	24	25	40
Non-College Women	23	25	37
Union Household	23	26	42
Non-Union	21	27	38

\*N<100

Q21. [T] Do you think your neighbors vote more for [ROTATE] \_Democrats or \_Republicans Or do you think it's about 50/50? [IF DON'T KNOW] Well if you had to guess, what do you think?

There has been little movement in how these voters perceive their neighbors voting since 2022 – evidence of greater need for communication with these voters to break through the Republican echo chamber and provide a permission structure for voting Democratic.

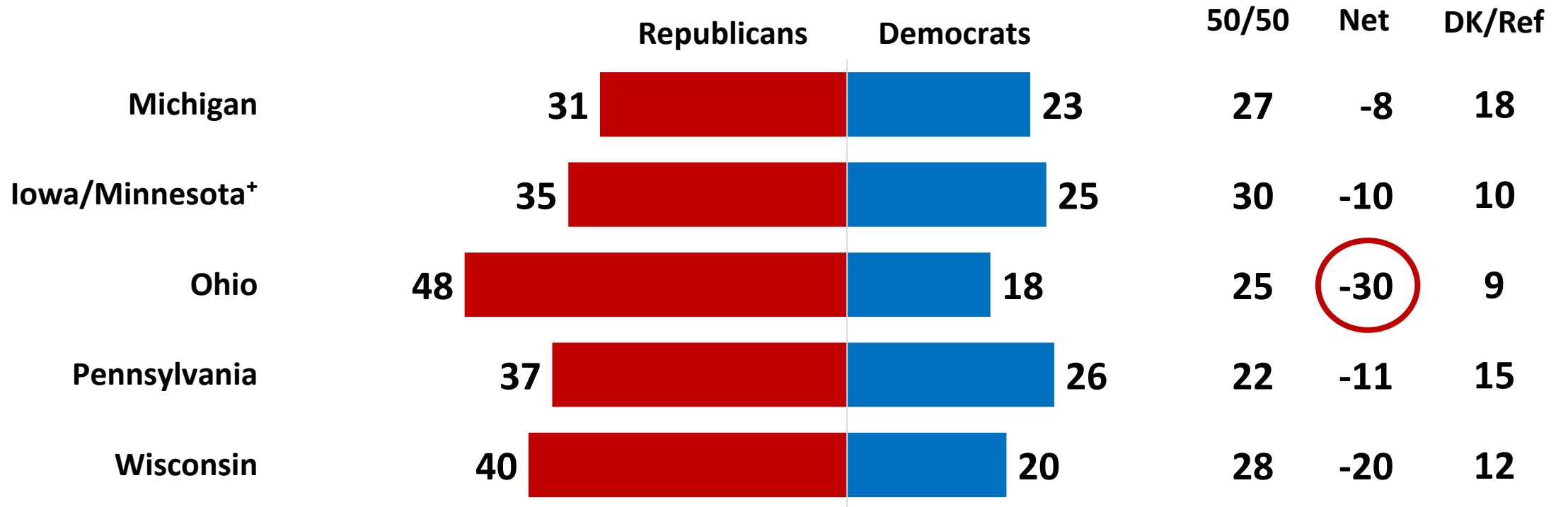
Neighbors' Perceived Vote Choices



Q21. [T] Do you think your neighbors vote more for [ROTATE] \_Democrats or \_Republicans Or do you think it's about 50/50? [IF DON'T KNOW] Well if you had to guess, what do you think?

Factory Towns voters in every state think that their neighbors vote more for Republicans than Democrats, but the margin is smallest Michigan and very large in Ohio.

Neighbors' Perceived Vote Choices by State



<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

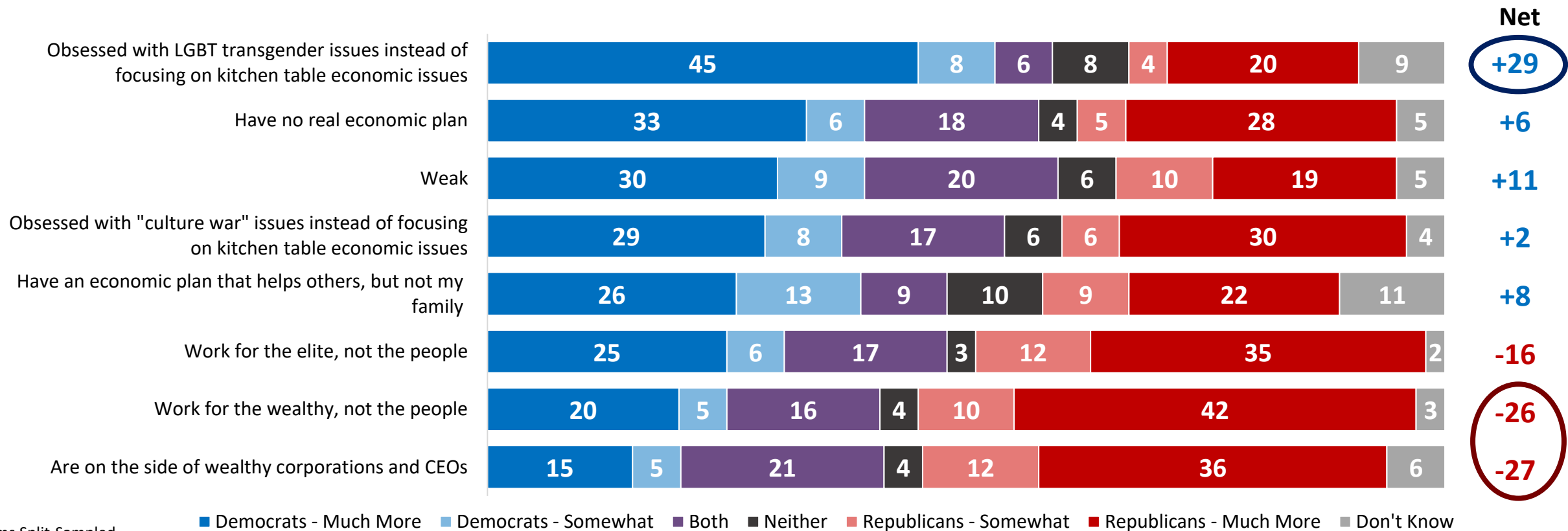
Q21. [T] Do you think your neighbors vote more for [ROTATE] \_Democrats or \_Republicans Or do you think it's about 50/50? [IF DON'T KNOW] Well if you had to guess, what do you think?



# Comparing the Parties

Voters are much more likely to view Republicans than Democrats as being on the side of wealthy elites and corporations. They are more likely to view Democrats as being weak and having no economic plan or an economic plan that helps others, but not their family. They are closely split on which party is more obsessed with culture war issues generally, but they overwhelmingly view Democrats as being more obsessed with LGBT/transgender issues specifically.

### Negative Perceptions of Parties



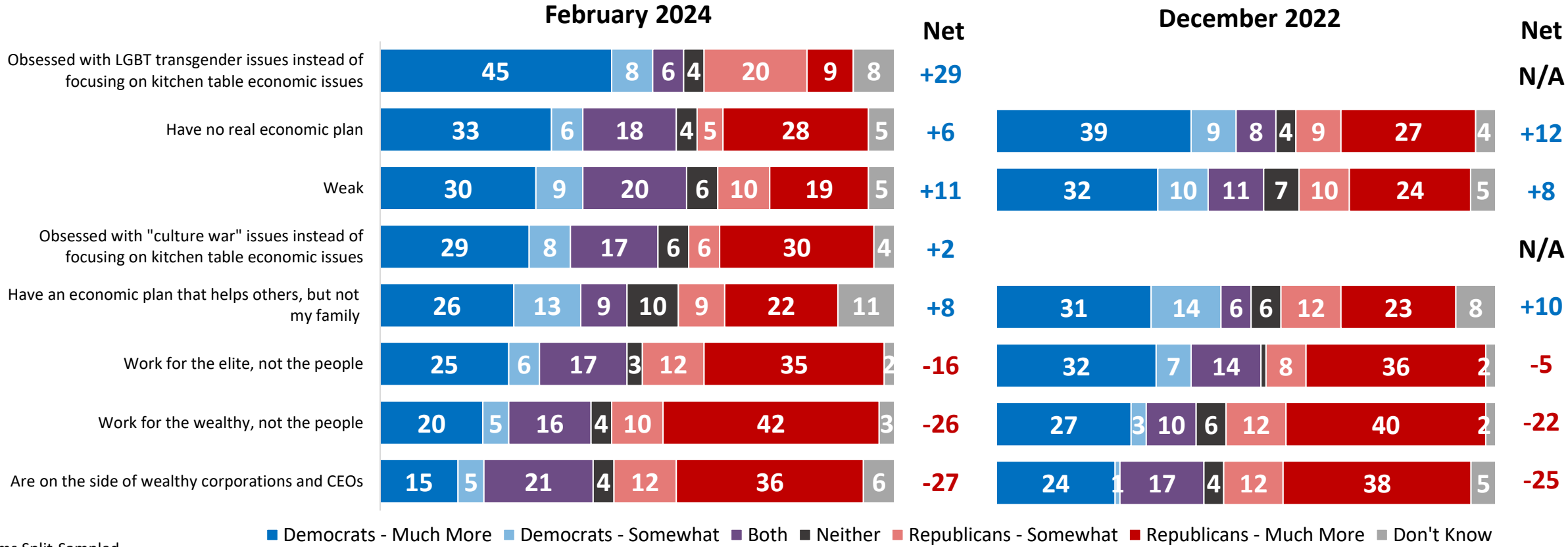
All Items Split-Sampled

Q7. [T\*] Now here are some different phrases people have used to describe politicians who are Democrats or Republicans. For each one, please tell me whether you think it better describes the [ROTATE] Democrats or Republicans [IF CHOICE] And do you think that describes the [Democrats/Republicans] much more or only somewhat more?

Positive # = Democrats Worse  
Negative # = Republicans Worse

# Factory Towns voters see Democrats as slightly less poor on the economy than in 2022 and are also less likely to view Democrats as on the side of the wealthy, corporations, and elite. While these are promising shifts, perceptions of Democrats being weak and focusing on gender rather than economic issues raise concerns.

## Negative Perceptions of Parties: Time Series



All Items Split-Sampled

Q7. [T\*] Now here are some different phrases people have used to describe politicians who are Democrats or Republicans. For each one, please tell me whether you think it better describes the [ROTATE] Democrats or Republicans [IF CHOICE] And do you think that describes the [Democrats/Republicans] much more or only somewhat more?

Positive # = Republicans Worse  
 Negative # = Democrats Worse

Across the board, voters see Republicans as being on the side of wealthy corporations and CEOs. A few groups, including younger men, Democrats, and college educated voters, prefer the language of “for the wealthy, not the people” – these can likely be combined effectively. Across the board, Democrats’ biggest weakness is being seen as obsessed with LGBT transgender issues instead of economic issues. This is a major weakness among independents, who also view Democrats as worse on economic issues across the board.

**Negative Perceptions of Parties by Demographics**

Negative Perceptions of Parties Net Dem – Rep	Total	Race		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non-Coll	Coll	White Non-Coll	Non-Coll M	Non-Coll W	Yes	No
Obsessed with LGBT transgender issues instead of focusing on kitchen table economic issues	+29	+27	+24	+14	+35	+47	+21	-26	+40	+88	+42	+6	+46	+49	+38	+25	+30
Have no real economic plan	+6	+13	-36	+12	-15	+21	+2	-54	+21	+62	+8	+4	+18	+28	-5	-1	+7
Weak	+11	+10	-6	+6	+22	+19	0	-41	+18	+60	+16	-4	+21	+25	+8	+11	+7
Have an economic plan that helps others, but not my family	+8	+9	+3	+12	+10	+23	-1	-12	+10	+32	+14	-2	+17	+20	+12	+6	+13
Obsessed with “culture war” issues instead of focusing on kitchen table	+2	+1	-2	-6	+2	+14	-4	-55	+21	+57	+3	+1	+2	+15	-4	-1	+6
Work for the elite, not the people	-16	-11	-57	-17	-39	+6	-19	-85	-14	+46	-11	-22	+1	+9	-24	-25	-7
Work for the wealthy, not the people	-26	-26	-40	-45	-31	-3	-29	-87	-15	+41	-14	-47	-12	-15	-12	-17	-32
Are on the side of wealthy corporations and CEOs	-27	-23	-54	-24	-56	-13	-21	-79	-14	+16	-28	-28	-19	-8	-40	-39	-16

All Items Split-Sampled

Q7. [T\*] Now here are some different phrases people have used to describe politicians who are Democrats or Republicans. For each one, please tell me whether you think it better describes the [ROTATE] Democrats or Republicans [IF CHOICE] And do you think that describes the [Democrats/Republicans] much more or only somewhat more?

Positive # = Democrats Worse  
 Negative # = Republicans Worse

Across states the patterns are the same – Michigan is an outlier in that voters do not differentiate between “culture war” issues generally and LGBT transgender issues. In Wisconsin, voters actually see Republicans as more focused on culture war issues generally, but rate Democrats as more focused on LGBT issues by a large margin. The language of being on the side of wealthy corporations and CEOs works better against Republicans in Ohio and Wisconsin, while being for the wealthy, not the people, works better in Michigan and Pennsylvania.

### Negative Perceptions of Parties by State

Negative Perceptions of Parties Net Rep – Dem	Total	State			
		MI	OH	PA	WI
Obsessed with LGBT transgender issues instead of focusing on kitchen table economic issues	+28	+14	+32	+26	+42
Have no real economic plan	+6	+4	+14	-9	+3
Weak	+10	-5	+10	+18	+24
Have an economic plan that helps others, but not my family	+9	-6	+19	+13	+14
Obsessed with “culture war” issues instead of focusing on kitchen table	+2	+16	0	0	-15
Work for the elite, not the people	-16	-1	-9	-23	-36
Work for the wealthy, not the people	-26	-32	-20	-36	-9
Are on the side of wealthy corporations and CEOs	-27	-17	-24	-16	-47

All Items Split-Sampled

Q7. [T\*] Now here are some different phrases people have used to describe politicians who are Democrats or Republicans. For each one, please tell me whether you think it better describes the [ROTATE] Democrats or Republicans [IF CHOICE] And do you think that describes the [Democrats/Republicans] much more or only somewhat more?

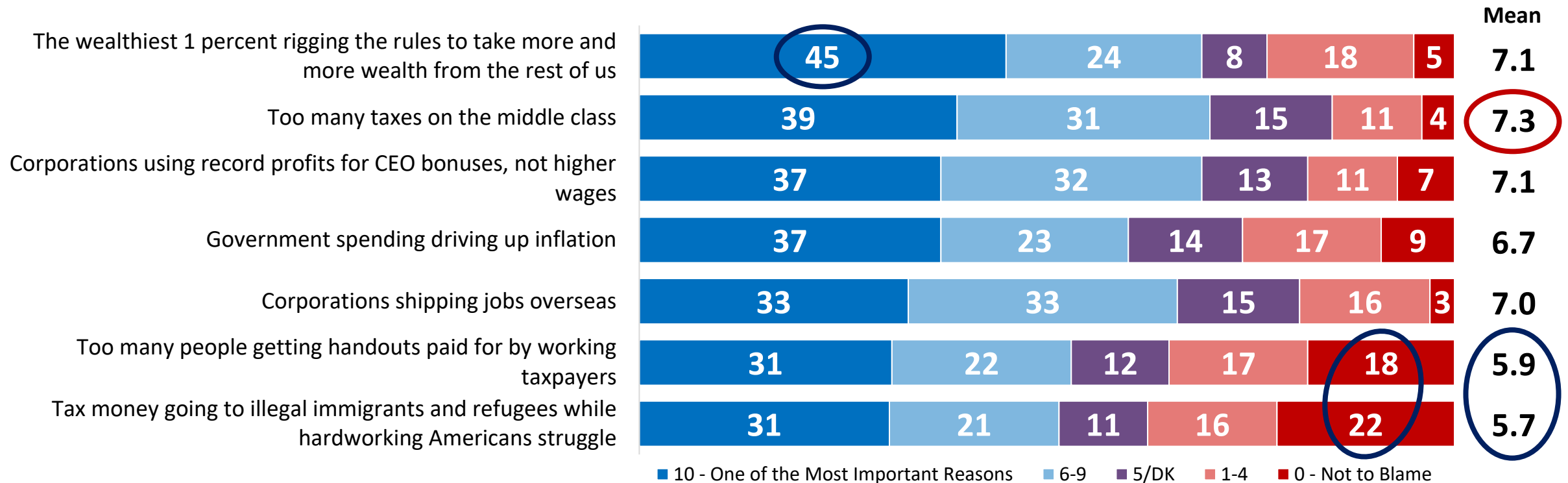
Positive # = Democrats Worse  
Negative # = Republicans Worse



# Economic Issues

**Factory Towns voters blame a combination of corporate greed and government actions for economic hardship. The top reason, by a large margin, is the wealthiest 1% rigging the rules. Many also blame corporations using profits for CEO bonuses rather than wages. But they are also feeling squeezed by high taxes on the middle class and tend to blame government spending for driving up inflation. Too many people getting handouts and tax money going to immigrants are polarizing – while some rank them high, many say these factors are not to blame at all.**

### Reasons for Economic Hardship (Tier 1)

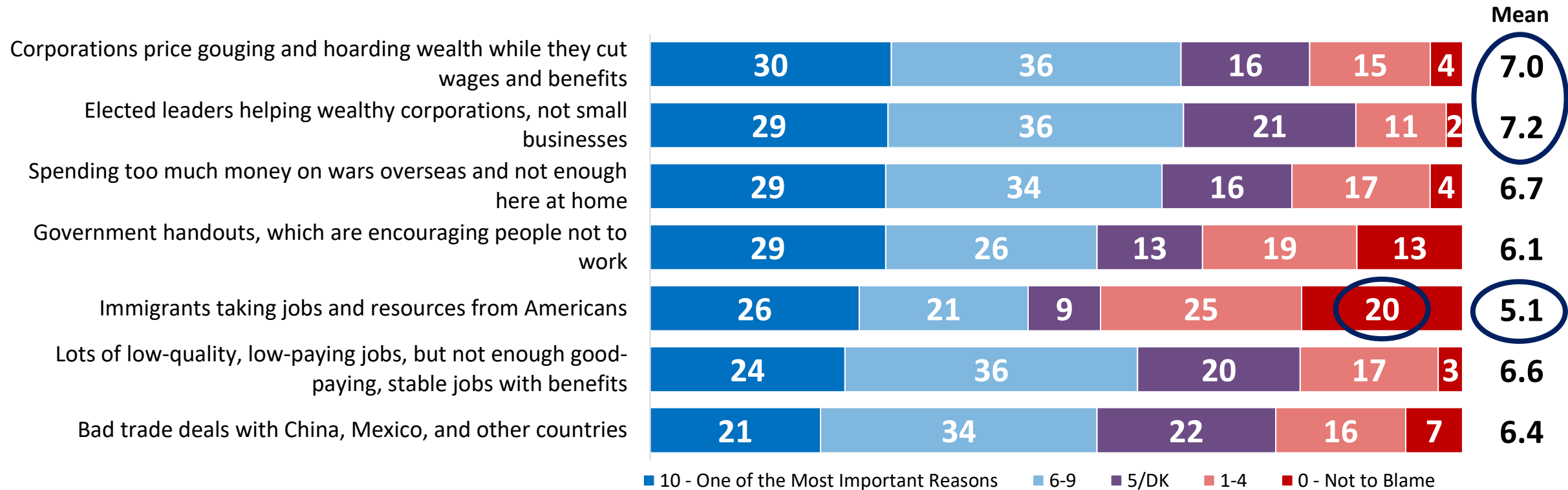


All Items Split-Sampled

**Q12.** [T\*] There may be many different reasons that people experience economic hardship. Here are some different things people have said are to blame for the economic hardships facing communities like yours. For each one, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how much it is to blame for economic hardship in your local area, where 10 means it is one of the most important reasons for economic hardship in your area, and 0 means it is not at all to blame. [RANDOMIZE ROWS]

Corporate price gouging and hoarding wealth and elected leaders helping wealthy corporations have lower intensity but are still viewed as overall important reasons for hardship. As we have continually seen, Factory Towns voters largely do not blame immigrants for taking jobs and resources from Americans. Low-quality, low-paying jobs and bad trade deals do not pop this year as major reasons for hardship.

### Reasons for Economic Hardship (Tier 2)



All Items Split-Sampled

Q12. [T\*] There may be many different reasons that people experience economic hardship. Here are some different things people have said are to blame for the economic hardships facing communities like yours. For each one, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how much it is to blame for economic hardship in your local area, where 10 means it is one of the most important reasons for economic hardship in your area, and 0 means it is not at all to blame. [RANDOMIZE ROWS]

The wealthiest 1% rigging the rules and corporate price gouging have both risen in importance as reasons for economic hardship in the minds of factory towns voters since December 2022. Immigrants taking jobs and resources from Americans has also risen significantly but remains at the low end of salience. Bad trade deals has declined somewhat, and too many taxes has declined slightly, but is still the number two reason overall. Corporations shipping jobs overseas is mixed.

### Reasons for Economic Hardship: Time Series\*

Reasons for Economic Hardship	February 2024		December 2022		Shift	
	Mean	% Rate 10	Mean	% Rate 10	Mean	% Rate 10
The wealthiest 1 percent rigging the rules to take more and more wealth from the rest of us	7.1	45	6.6	31	+0.5	+14
Too many taxes on the middle class	7.3	39	7.5	41	-0.2	-2
Corporations using record profits for CEO bonuses, not higher wages	7.1	37	-	-	-	-
Government spending driving up inflation	6.7	37	-	-	-	-
Corporations shipping jobs overseas	7.0	33	7.4	29	-0.4	+4
Too many people getting handouts paid for by working taxpayers	5.9	31	-	-	-	-
Tax money going to illegal immigrants and refugees while hardworking Americans struggle	5.7	31	-	-	-	-
Corporations price gouging and hoarding wealth while they cut wages and benefits	7.0	30	6.3	26	+0.7	+4
Elected leaders helping wealthy corporations, not small businesses	7.2	29	-	-	-	-
Spending too much money on wars overseas and not enough here at home	6.7	29	-	-	-	-
Government handouts, which are encouraging people not to work	6.1	29	6.2	32	-0.1	-3
Immigrants taking jobs and resources from Americans	5.1	26	4.2	15	+0.9	+11
Lots of low-quality, low-paying jobs, but not enough good-paying, stable jobs with benefits	6.6	24	-	-	-	-
Bad trade deals with China, Mexico, and other countries	6.4	21	7.0	27	-0.6	-6

All Items-Split-Sampled

Q12. [T\*] There may be many different reasons that people experience economic hardship. Here are some different things people have said are to blame for the economic hardships facing communities like yours. For each one, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how much it is to blame for economic hardship in your local area, where 10 means it is one of the most important reasons for economic hardship in your area, and 0 means it is not at all to blame. [RANDOMIZE ROWS]

The wealthiest 1% rigging the rules has the strongest intensity regardless of union status, race, or education level, and is a top reason for hardship among most groups, driven by Democrats. The right-wing anti-immigrant frame mostly resonates with Republicans – independents don't buy it, but they do tend to blame government spending and taxes.

### Reasons for Economic Hardship by Demographics (Intensity – Rate 10)

Men < 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (50%)</li> <li>Corporations using profits for bonuses (49%)</li> </ul>	POC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (66%)</li> <li>Corps. shipping jobs overseas (57%)</li> </ul>	Non-College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (53%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (48%)</li> </ul>	Dem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (66%)</li> <li>Corporations using profits for bonuses (57%)</li> </ul>
Women < 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many handouts (47%)</li> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (45%)</li> </ul>	White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (41%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (37%)</li> </ul>	College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (33%)</li> <li>Corporations using profits for bonuses (32%)</li> </ul>	Ind/DK w/ Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Govt. spending (50%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (42%)</li> </ul>
Men 50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Govt. spending (38%)</li> <li>Taxes going to illegal immigrants (37%)</li> </ul>	Union HH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (48%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (42%)</li> </ul>	White Non-College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (49%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (46%)</li> </ul>	Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many handouts (63%)</li> <li>Taxes going to illegal immigrants (62%)</li> </ul>
Women 50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (53%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (48%)</li> </ul>	Non-Union HH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealthiest 1% rigging (40%)</li> <li>Too many taxes (38%)</li> </ul>	Non-Coll Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many taxes (52%)</li> </ul>		

All Items Split-Sampled

Q12. [T\*] There may be many different reasons that people experience economic hardship. Here are some different things people have said are to blame for the economic hardships facing communities like yours. For each one, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how much it is to blame for economic hardship in your local area, where 10 means it is one of the most important reasons for economic hardship in your area, and 0 means it is not at all to blame. [RANDOMIZE ROWS]

The agenda does not differ much by state. The wealthiest 1% rigging the rules is the top reason for economic hardship across states. Too many taxes, the government driving up inflation, and corporations shipping jobs overseas also register high on the list across the board. Pennsylvania is more focused on price gouging, potentially reflecting the aggressive messaging in the senate race.

### Reasons for Economic Hardship by State

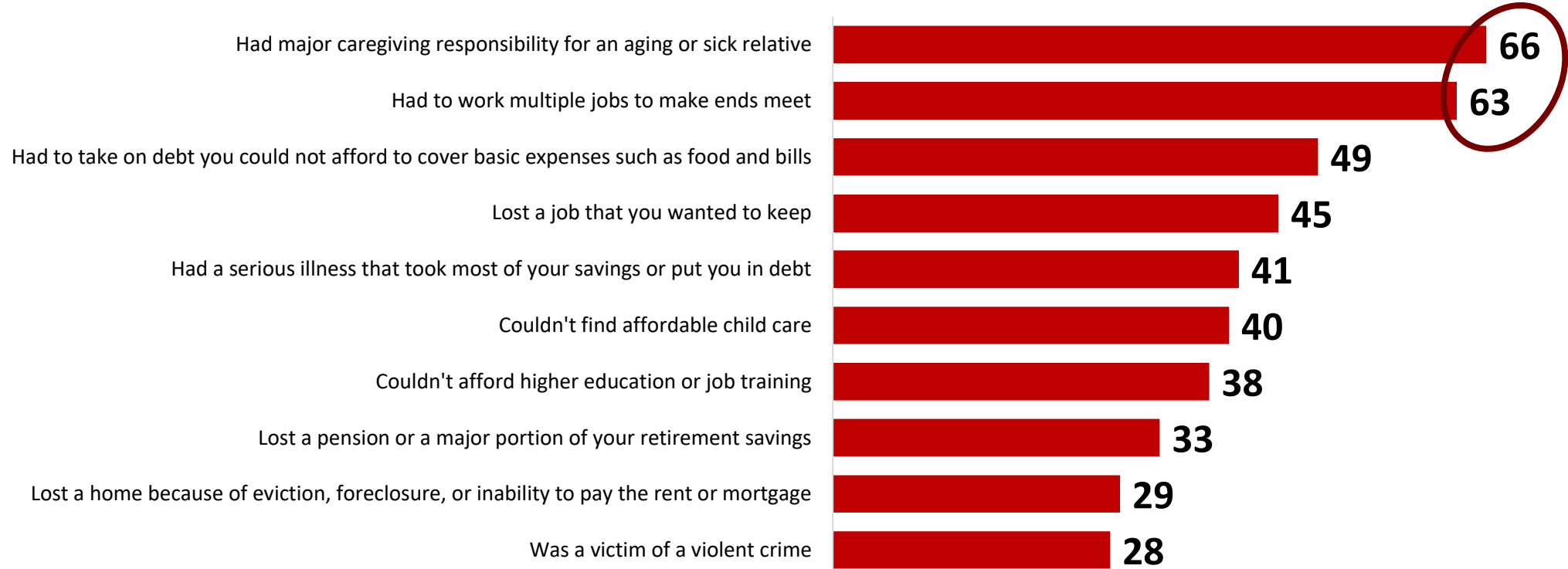
Reasons for Economic Hardship	Total		State							
			MI		OH		PA		WI	
	Mean	Rate 10	Mean	Rate 10	Mean	Rate 10	Mean	Rate 10	Mean	Rate 10
The wealthiest 1 percent rigging the rules to take more and more wealth from the rest of us	<b>7.1</b>	<b>45</b>	6.9	<b>42</b>	7.1	<b>39</b>	7.1	<b>49</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>48</b>
Too many taxes on the middle class	<b>7.3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7.3</b>	36	<b>7.4</b>	43
Corporations using record profits for CEO bonuses, not higher wages	<b>7.1</b>	<b>37</b>	6.5	36	<b>7.6</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7.2</b>	35	<b>7.4</b>	42
Government spending driving up inflation	6.7	<b>37</b>	6.9	<b>42</b>	6.4	30	6.6	<b>37</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>45</b>
Corporations shipping jobs overseas	<b>7.0</b>	33	<b>7.3</b>	37	7.1	31	6.8	33	6.8	27
Too many people getting handouts paid for by working taxpayers	5.9	31	5.1	22	5.9	29	6.1	34	6.7	42
Tax money going to illegal immigrants and refugees while hardworking Americans struggle	5.7	31	5.4	29	5.6	31	5.2	30	6.6	42
Corporations price gouging and hoarding wealth while they cut wages and benefits	<b>7.0</b>	30	6.8	34	6.8	26	<b>7.6</b>	36	6.5	23
Elected leaders helping wealthy corporations, not small businesses	<b>7.2</b>	29	<b>7.1</b>	34	<b>7.4</b>	22	7.0	29	6.8	24
Spending too much money on wars overseas and not enough here at home	6.7	29	6.9	25	6.8	27	7.1	33	6	33
Government handouts, which are encouraging people not to work	6.1	29	6.6	33	5.9	25	6.4	28	5.4	28
Immigrants taking jobs and resources from Americans	5.1	26	5.4	21	5.3	25	5.6	30	4.2	22
Lots of low-quality, low-paying jobs, but not enough good-paying, stable jobs with benefits	6.6	24	6.7	28	6.7	28	<b>7.2</b>	25	6.1	17
Bad trade deals with China, Mexico, and other countries	6.4	21	6.8	23	6.4	21	6.0	18	6.4	29

All Items Split-Sampled

**Q12.** [T\*] There may be many different reasons that people experience economic hardship. Here are some different things people have said are to blame for the economic hardships facing communities like yours. For each one, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 how much it is to blame for economic hardship in your local area, where 10 means it is one of the most important reasons for economic hardship in your area, and 0 means it is not at all to blame. [RANDOMIZE ROWS]

The most common personal hardships experienced by Factory Towns voters are having major caregiving responsibilities for a sick or aging relative and working multiple jobs to make ends meet – more than six in ten have directly experienced this or are close with someone who has. Many other hardships are familiar to over four in ten voters including taking on debt they can't afford, losing a job, and serious illness taking their savings.

### Difficult Experiences (I, someone in my family, or a close friend experienced)



**Q17.** [T\*] Now I'd like to ask you about some difficult experiences or challenges some people have faced. Again, these responses are completely anonymous. For each one, please respond if you, someone in your family, or a close friend has experienced that challenge personally. You can give more than one answer if more than one apply. If you don't have any family or close friends who have had that experience and you have not had it yourself, just say so.

Major caregiving responsibilities and working multiple jobs are common problems across the board. Having major caregiving responsibility is particularly relevant for older women and older voters of color, white non-college voters, and union voters. Working multiple jobs is much more common among younger voters across the board. Voters of color, and particular those over 35, are more likely than others to have personal experiences with many of these challenges.

### Difficult Experiences by Demographics

Men < 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple jobs (73%)</li> </ul>	POC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple jobs (71%)</li> <li>Take on debt to cover expenses (64%)</li> </ul>	Non-College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (69%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (66%)</li> </ul>	Dem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (67%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (66%)</li> </ul>
Women < 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple jobs (76%)</li> </ul>	White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (67%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (63%)</li> </ul>	College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (65%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (62%)</li> </ul>	Ind/DK w/ Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (59%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (65%)</li> </ul>
Men 50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (62%)</li> </ul>	POC <35+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple jobs (70%)</li> </ul>	White Non-College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (71%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (65%)</li> </ul>	Rep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (67%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (60%)</li> </ul>
Women 50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (71%)</li> </ul>	POC 35+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (77%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (72%)</li> <li>Take on debt to cover expenses (71%)</li> </ul>	Non-Coll Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple jobs (64%)</li> </ul>	Union HH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (71%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (67%)</li> </ul>
				Non-Coll Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (72%)</li> </ul>	Non-Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major caregiving (65%)</li> <li>Multiple jobs (62%)</li> </ul>

\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Q17. [T\*] Now I'd like to ask you about some difficult experiences or challenges some people have faced. Again, these responses are completely anonymous. For each one, please respond if you, someone in your family, or a close friend has experienced that challenge personally. You can give more than one answer if more than one apply. If you don't have any family or close friends who have had that experience and you have not had it yourself, just say so.



The most common difficult experiences are consistent across state – having to take on major caregiving responsibilities and having to work multiple jobs to make ends meet are the top two in every state. Close to half in every state have seen themselves, family, or close friends taking on debt they could not afford.

**Difficult Experiences by State**

Difficult Experiences “I, someone in my family, or a close friend experienced”	Total	State				
		MI	IA/MN <sup>+</sup>	OH	PA	WI
Had major caregiving responsibility for an aging or sick relative	66	57	56	72	63	75
Had to work multiple jobs to make ends meet	63	63	57	67	62	63
Had to take on debt you could not afford to cover basic expenses such as food and bills	49	51	45	55	44	48
Lost a job that you wanted to keep	45	46	42	44	47	42
Had a serious illness that took most of your savings or put you in debt	41	40	41	44	37	41
Couldn't find affordable child care	40	37	32	40	40	49
Couldn't afford higher education or job training	38	36	30	39	42	39
Lost a pension or a major portion of your retirement savings	33	27	27	36	30	43
.Lost a home because of eviction, foreclosure, or inability to pay the rent or mortgage	29	30	30	32	24	30
Was a victim of a violent crime	28	34	23	24	28	29

<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

**Q17.** [T\*] Now I'd like to ask you about some difficult experiences or challenges some people have faced. Again, these responses are completely anonymous. For each one, please respond if you, someone in your family, or a close friend has experienced that challenge personally. You can give more than one answer if more than one apply. If you don't have any family or close friends who have had that experience and you have not had it yourself, just say so.



# Messaging

# 2024 Original Message Test:

**[DEM ECONOMIC 2024]** A Democratic candidate says: Corporate CEOs have hurt our communities by shipping jobs overseas, cutting wages and benefits, wage theft, and union busting. Now they are jacking up prices while they hold our wages down and pay themselves billions. We can create good jobs and lower prices by cracking down on corporate price gouging and wage theft, making wealthy corporations pay the taxes they owe, cutting prescription drug prices, and investing in manufacturing here at home, so that hard-working families thrive, not just the wealthy few.

**[REP CULTURE WAR 2024\*]** A Republican candidate says: Common sense Americans want to protect the values that make our country great. But today, our American way of life – where you work hard, play by the rules, and raise your children with strong values – is under attack. Liberals are pushing a woke agenda and support teaching our children to hate our country and their families and grooming our children to be transgender in school. We need to protect our children, our family values, and our way of life.

**[REP ECONOMIC 2024\*]** A Republican candidate says: Biden and the Democrats are out of touch and don't understand this economy is not working for hardworking taxpayers. They're throwing away our taxpayer dollars on foreign wars, causing gas prices to skyrocket. They won't stand up to China on trade policy. They close down energy production and pipelines here, driving gas prices up even more. Their out-of-control spending has caused the highest inflation we've seen in decades, hitting regular working class Americans hardest, and they want to raise our taxes to pay for it.

# 2022 Original Message Test:

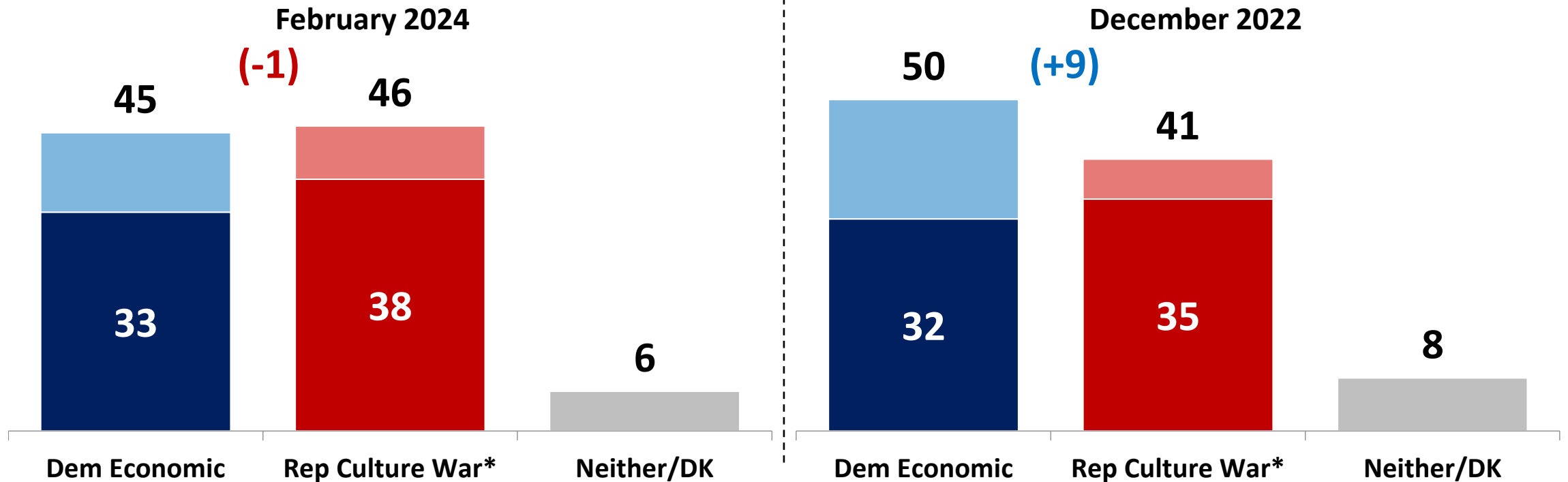
**[DEM ECONOMIC 2022]** Corporate CEOs have hurt our communities by laying off workers, shipping jobs overseas, cutting wages and benefits, and union busting. Now they are jacking up prices while they hold our wages down and pay themselves billions. We can create good jobs and lower prices by cracking down on corporate price gouging and wage theft, making wealthy corporations pay the taxes they owe, and investing in manufacturing here at home, so our economy benefits all of us, not just the wealthy few.

**[REP CULTURE WAR 2022\*]** Common sense Americans want to protect the values that make our country great. But today, our American way of life – where you work hard, play by the rules, and raise your children with strong values – is under attack. Liberals are pushing a woke agenda and support teaching our children to hate our country and their families and grooming our children to be transgender in school. We need to protect our children, our family values, and our way of life.

**[REP ECONOMIC 2022\*]** Biden and the Democrats are destroying our economy. They've launched a war on American energy, shutting down domestic oil and gas production, costing us jobs, and causing gas prices to skyrocket, while we beg dangerous foreign dictators in Russia and the Middle East to supply us with energy. Their out-of-control spending has also caused the highest inflation we've seen in decades, hitting regular working-class Americans hardest, and they want to raise our taxes to pay for it.

The *Democratic Economic* answer to the *Republican Culture War* attack still ties it. However, compared to the end of 2022, our *Democratic Economic* message is now performing slightly worse against the *Republican Culture War* message. These results reflect Factory Towns voters' view that Democrats are pushing LGBT and gender issues at the expense of economic issues – even when it's Republicans bringing up LGBT issues in our messaging simulation, voters blame Democrats. This year, the messages were also explicitly partisan, while last year they were not.

Dem Economic vs. Rep Culture War Message: Time Series



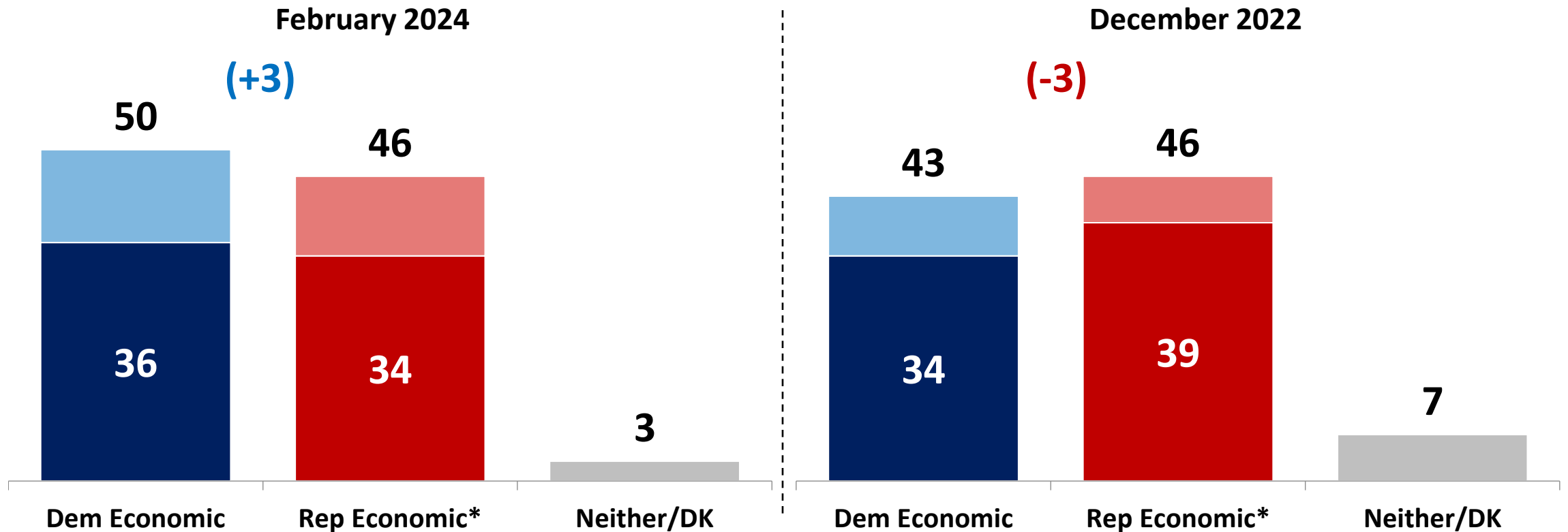
\*Split-Sampled



Q8. SSC: [T\*] Now I'm going to read you two different statements. Imagine different candidates for office are saying these. Please tell me which candidate you would be most likely to vote for, based on these statements only. [ROTATE] [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support that candidate strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well if you had to decide, which way do you lean?

At the same time, the *Democratic Economic* message is now beating the *Republican Economic* message, and we need to keep pushing that.

Dem Economic vs. Rep Economic Message: Time Series



\*Split-Sampled



Q9. SSD: [T\*] Now I'm going to read you two different statements. Imagine different candidates for office are saying these. Please tell me which candidate you would be most likely to vote for, based on these statements only. [ROTATE] [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support that candidate strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well if you had to decide, which way do you lean?

Overall, Democrats, people of color, younger women, and college educated voters are inclined to pick the Democrats regardless of message.

The only groups for whom the *Democratic Economic* message performs better against the *Republican Culture War* message are women, particularly older women and non-college women, and union voters.

The *Democratic Economic* message performs better against the *Republican Economic* message for most groups, and notably by a large margin among young and non-college men. The difference is also more pronounced among white non-college voters, people of color, non-union voters, and Democrats.

The *Democratic Economic* message may not have enough kitchen table, health care, and retirement components for women and people of color.

## Who Prefers Culture War vs. Econ Message?

	Net Dem Econ – Rep Culture War	Net Dem Econ – Rep Econ	Dem Econ Performance Against: Culture War vs. Econ
Total	-1	+3	-4
White	-4	0	-4
POC	+30	+43	-13
Men Under 50	-4	+45	-49
Women Under 50	+15	+8	+7
Men Over 50	-23	-19	-4
Women Over 50	+6	-7	+13
Democrat	+80	+91	-11
Independent w/ Weak	-9	-4	-5
Republican	-86	-78	-8
Non-College	-8	-4	-4
College	+14	+17	-3
White Non-College	-22	-8	-14
Non-College Men	-28	+2	-30
Non-College Women	+4	-11	+15
Union Household	+10	-1	+11
Non-Union	-8	+4	-12

Positive # = Dem Econ stronger against Rep Culture War message

Negative # = Dem Econ stronger against Rep Economic message

Since December 2022, voters across almost all demographic groups have shifted away from the *Democratic Economic* message when it is up against the *Republican Culture War* message. The losses are particularly large among independents, white non-college men, and non-union voters. The only groups with positive shifts are college educated voters and union voters.

More groups have shifted towards Democrats when they are up against the *Republican Economic* message. The most dramatic shift is among young men, but there is also a large shift among older men, and white non-college men. Interestingly, women, especially younger non-college women, independents, people of color, and union voters have shifted away from Democrats.

## 2022-2024 Shifts by Message:

Economic  
Vs. Culture War

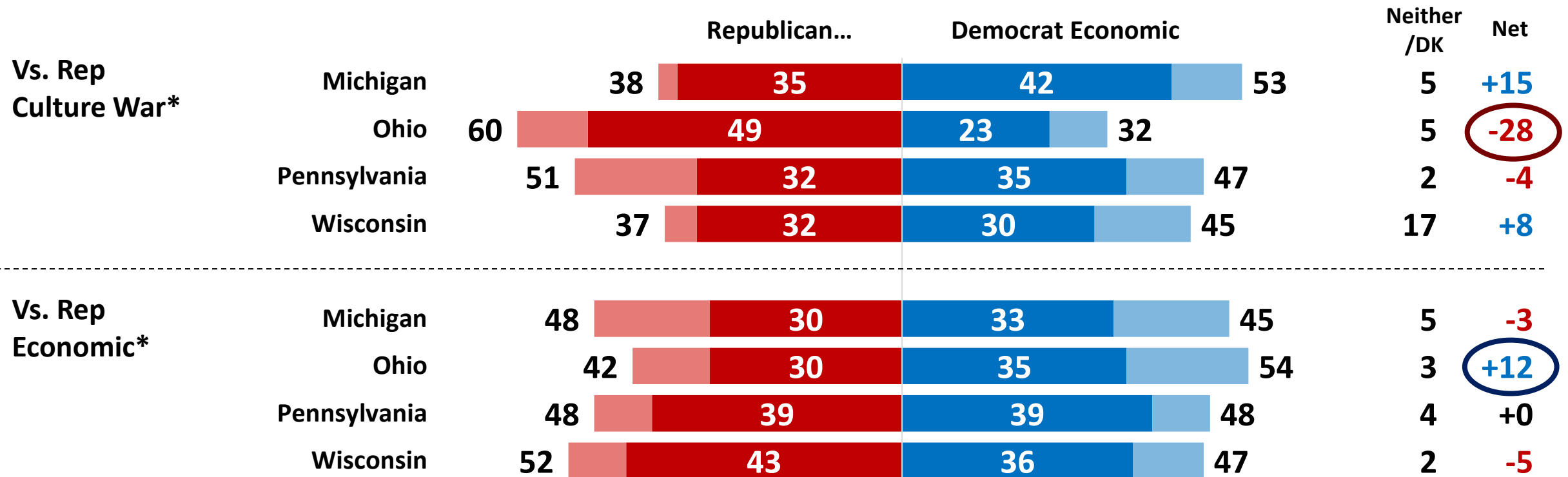
Economic  
Vs. Economic

	Net Dem Econ – Rep Culture War	2022-2024 Shift	Net Dem Econ – Rep Econ	2022-2024 Shift
Total	-1	-11	+3	+7
White	-4	-9	0	+9
POC	+30	-15	+43	-11
Men Under 50	-4	-4	+45	+59
Women Under 50	+15	-15	+8	-23
Men Over 50	-23	-14	-19	+19
Women Over 50	+6	-13	-7	-16
Democrat	+80	-7	+91	+13
Independent w/ Weak Republican	-9	-28	-4	-16
Non-College	-8	-19	-4	+7
College	+14	+5	+17	+10
White Non-College	-22	-25	-8	+16
Non-College Men	-28	-32	+2	+42
Non-College Women	+4	-12	-11	-25
Union Household	+10	+3	-1	-7
Non-Union	-8	-21	+4	+10



The strength of the *Republican Culture War* message and the weakness of the *Republican Economic* message in this survey is largely due to wide margins among Ohio Factory Towns voters. The *Democratic Economic* message remains stronger against the *Republican Culture War* message in Michigan and Wisconsin and the two Republican messages perform similarly in Pennsylvania.

### Original Message Test by State



\*Split-Sampled

Q8/9. SSC/D: [T\*] Now I'm going to read you two different statements. Imagine different candidates for office are saying these. Please tell me which candidate you would be most likely to vote for, based on these statements only. [ROTATE] [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support that candidate strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well if you had to decide, which way do you lean?



# 2024 New Message Test:

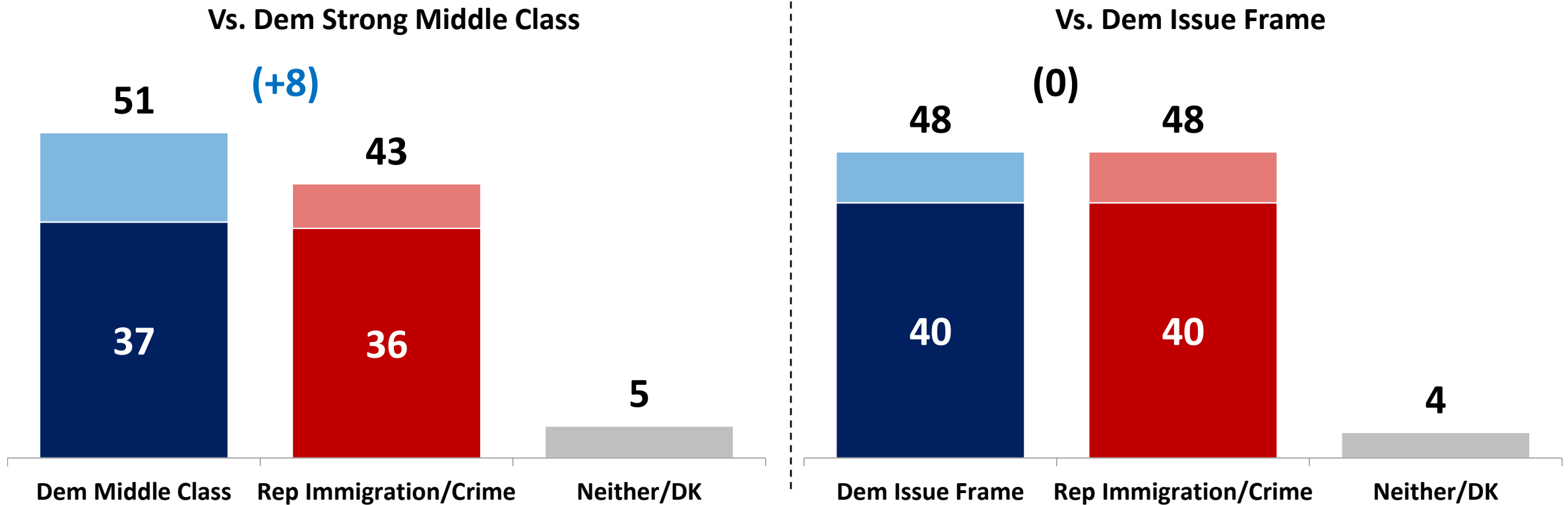
**[REP IMMIGRATION/CRIME]** A Republican candidate says: Everyday Americans want to protect the values that make our country great. But our way of life – where you work hard, raise your children right, and respect America – is under attack by Biden and the Democrats. We need leaders who fight for hardworking Americans, not give handouts to illegals and people who don't want to work. We need to cut taxes, crack down on crime, and stop big government spending so our small businesses can grow and our families can prosper.

**[DEM STRONG MIDDLE CLASS\*]** A Democratic candidate says: To grow the American economy, we need a strong middle class. Because when the middle class does well, everyone does better. For too long, certain politicians have gutted programs we depend on while protecting corporations that rip off families. We need leaders who will grow the economy from the middle out by lowering costs through cracking down on corporate greed, protecting vital programs like Social Security and Medicare, and investing in the American people by bringing back manufacturing and good union jobs to the U.S.

**[DEM ISSUE FRAME\*]** A Democratic candidate says: We need leaders who care about our whole lives – from putting food on the table to seeing our kids grow up happy to having clean air to breathe and safe places to live. It's time we have leaders who will rewrite the rules, demanding corporations pay what they owe and wages are raised, so that Americans can earn a good living and have a good life – with the education and healthcare, housing and jobs that every family needs.

The *Republican Immigration & Crime* message is significantly weaker against the *Democratic Strong Middle-Class* message – which beats it by 8 points – than the new *Democratic Issue Frame* message, which it ties. Intensity on both sides is a few points higher when voters hear the *Issue Frame* message. Again, these messages explicitly reference party.

Rep Immigration/Crime Vs. Dem Message



\*Split-Sampled



Q10/11. SSE/F: [T\*] Now I'm going to read you two different statements. Imagine different candidates for office are saying these. Please tell me which candidate you would be most likely to vote for, based on these statements only. [ROTATE] [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support that candidate strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well if you had to decide, which way do you lean?

## Who Prefers Strong Middle Class vs. Issue Frame Message?

Overall, Democrats, people of color, younger voters, college educated voters, and union voters are inclined to pick the Democrats regardless of message.

The only group for whom the *Democratic Issue Frame* message performs better against the *Republican Immigration & Crime* message is Democrats – our base likes this message, but it is weaker with persuadable voters.

The *Democratic Strong Middle-Class* message performs better against the *Republican Immigration & Crime* message for most groups, but by a particularly large margin among independents and people of color.

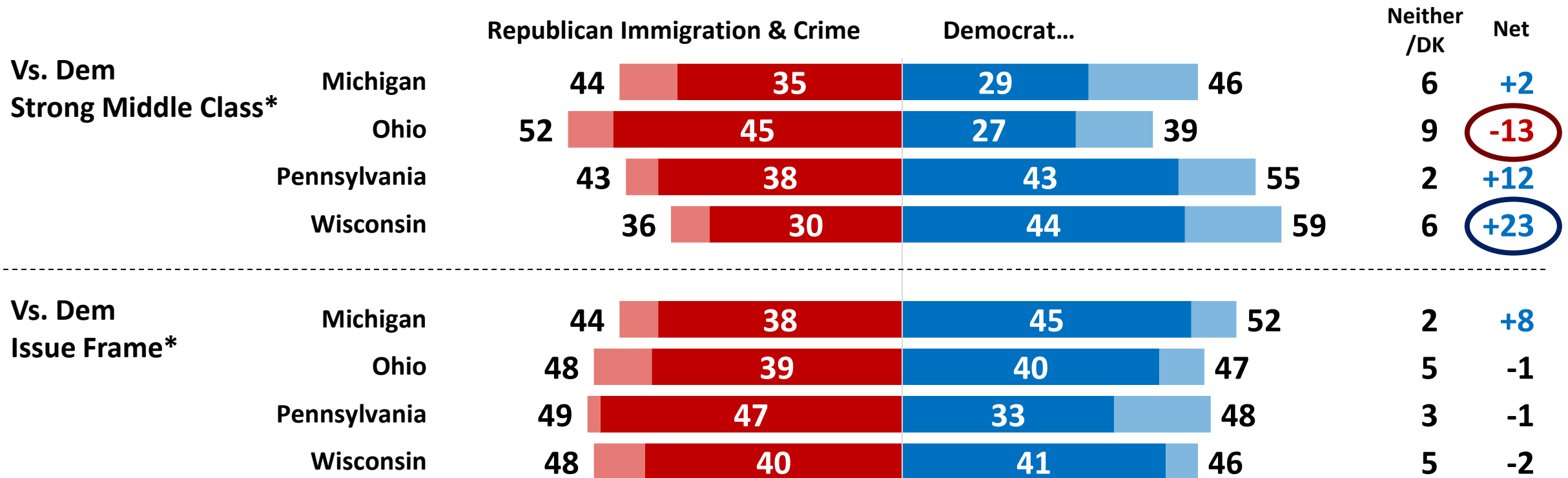
	Net Dem SMC – Rep Immigration /Crime	Net Dem IF – Rep Immigration/ Crime	Rep Immigration/Crime Performance Against: Strong Middle Class vs. Issue Frame
Total	+8	0	+8
White	+2	0	+2
POC	<b>+52</b>	+15	<b>+37</b>
Men Under 50	<b>+21</b>	+14	+7
Women Under 50	<b>+22</b>	+16	+6
Men Over 50	-15	-22	+7
Women Over 50	+7	-2	+9
Democrat	<b>+86</b>	<b>+90</b>	-4
Independent w/ Weak	+14	-18	<b>+32</b>
Republican	-76	-84	+8
Non-College	+1	-8	+9
College	<b>+23</b>	+17	+6
White Non-College	-12	-10	-2
Non-College Men	-10	-26	+16
Non-College Women	+5	+2	+3
Union Household	+5	+5	0
Non-Union	+9	-2	+11

Positive # = Dem Middle Class stronger  
Against Rep Immigration/Crime message

Negative # = Dem Issue Frame stronger  
against Rep Economic message

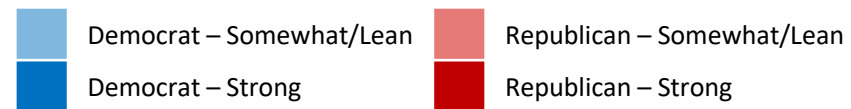
Again, while sample sizes are smaller, we see differences in message patterns by state. The strength of the *Democratic Middle-Class* message is driven by its strength in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, particularly Wisconsin, where it performs very strongly against the *Republican Immigration & Crime* message. The *Issue Frame* message is actually stronger than *Strong Middle-Class* in Michigan and Ohio.

### New Message Test by State



\*Split-Sampled

Q10/11. SSE/F: [T\*] Now I'm going to read you two different statements. Imagine different candidates for office are saying these. Please tell me which candidate you would be most likely to vote for, based on these statements only. [ROTATE] [IF CHOICE:] Would you say you support that candidate strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED:] Well if you had to decide, which way do you lean?



# Additional Democratic Messages: Tier 1

**[RETIREES]** Working Americans have paid into Social Security and Medicare our entire lives, but some politicians want to cut these programs to pay for tax breaks for wealthy corporations and CEOs. We need leaders who will fight for working families' economic well-being, by closing loopholes in the tax code that allow wealthy corporations like Amazon and Chevron to pay zero federal taxes and allow the wealthy to pay less in Social Security taxes, so we can ensure secure retirement for all.

**[TRADE]** Global trade deals were supposed to bring us good jobs and lower prices, and instead they sent our jobs overseas and gave us higher prices and lower wages. We need to crack down on price gouging and get tough on the Chinese government, invest in our infrastructure including highways, broadband, and clean water, and strengthen supply chains. We need leaders who will reduce our dependence on foreign manufacturing, build things here at home, and invest in American workers and good union jobs.

**[IRA HEALTH CARE]** The Inflation Reduction Act builds on the Affordable Care Act by lowering health premiums for working families, saving 13 million Americans an average of \$800 per year. It also allows Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, which is estimated to reduce spending on prescription drugs by \$100 billion over 10 years, prevents wealthy drug companies from increasing prices above the level of inflation, and caps the price of insulin now.

**[INFRASTRUCTURE]** The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and CHIPS Act are creating good-paying union jobs – an average of 1.5 million jobs per year for the next 10 years – by investing hundreds of billions into rebuilding America's roads, building manufacturing plants here, expanding access to clean drinking water, and ensuring every American has access to high-speed internet. It is also investing in upgrading our ports and airports to strengthen supply chains, improve U.S. competitiveness, and prevent disruptions that cause inflation.

**[NEXT GENERATION]** We need leaders who will fight for working people and an economy that works for our families' well-being, not an economy that only works for wealthy corporations and CEOs. By cracking down on corporate wage theft, pollution, and tax evasion, we can invest in a future with clean air and water, an end to gun violence, mental health treatment, and quality education, apprenticeships, and job training, so our children can grow up in safe communities with access to good jobs and opportunities.

# Additional Democratic Messages: Tier 2

**[CLEAN MANUFACTURING VISION]** The Inflation Reduction Act is bringing hundreds of billions in investment in good-paying clean energy and manufacturing jobs, making America a leader in clean steel, aluminum, cement, and more—supporting local economies and strengthening supply chains. But we can take it further, with more investment into rebuilding local infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and rails, ensuring clean air and drinking water for our children, and bringing good-paying union jobs with benefits back to our communities.

**[T] [POPULIST]** Democrats want to crack down on wealthy corporations and CEOs who are hurting our economy and working people by illegally price gouging, shipping jobs overseas, cutting and even stealing workers' wages and benefits, and evading taxes. We can create good jobs and lower prices, including on prescription drugs, by making wealthy corporations pay the taxes they owe, and investing in manufacturing here at home, so our economy benefits all of us, not just the wealthy few.

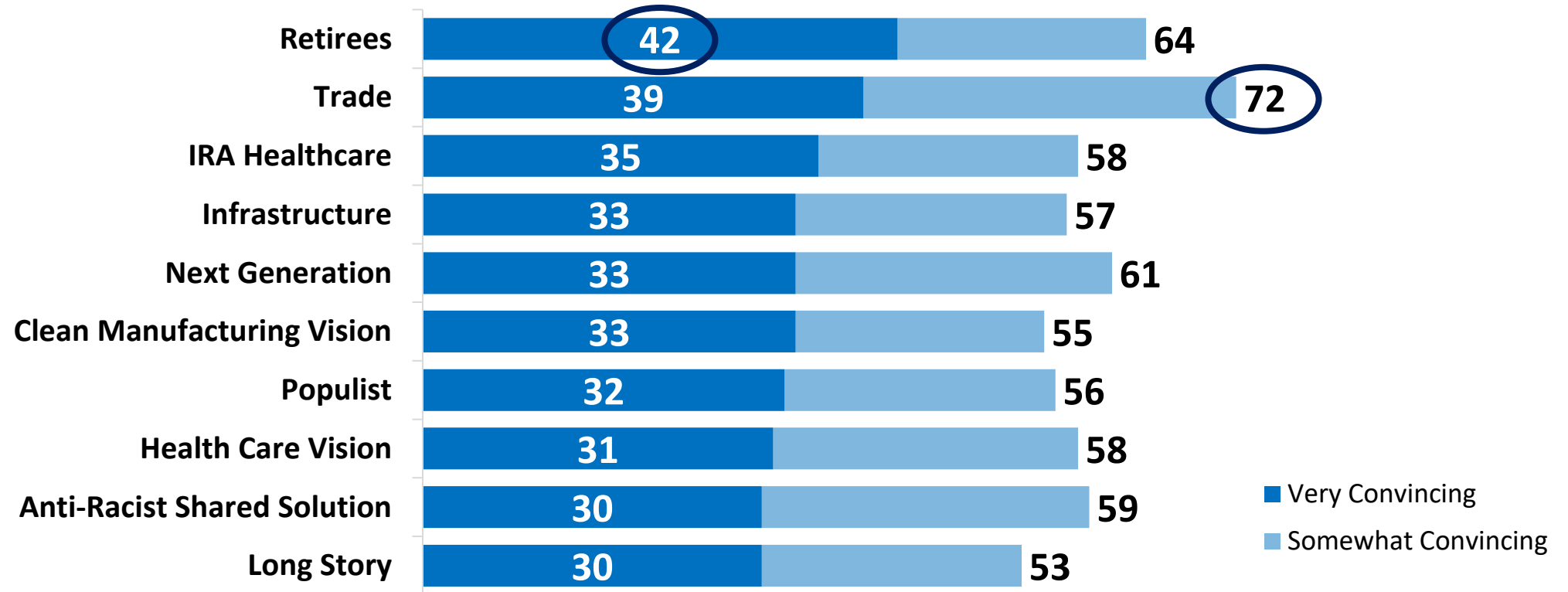
**[HEALTH CARE VISION]** Biden's historic Inflation Reduction Act made it possible for Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, preventing wealthy drug companies from increasing prices above the level of inflation, and capping prescription drug costs for people on Medicare. But that's not enough. We can lower prescription drug prices and make health care affordable for all families, not just those on Medicare. We need to expand affordable health care to stop families from going bankrupt.

**[ANTI-RACIST SHARED SOLUTIONS]** No matter what we look like or where we call home, most people want what's best for our families. But a handful of politicians here and abroad try to get and hold onto power by stoking fear against people in other countries. Working people in the United States and across the world should join together to reject division and demand solutions to our shared challenges, like corporate price gouging and climate change. That's how we ensure a better future for families everywhere.

**[LONG STORY]** Working people in this country have been getting screwed for decades now. Union busting, wages going down, and the rich getting richer while not paying taxes. It's just a start, but Biden's policies are starting to make a difference – unions are winning some victories, insulin prices are coming down, roads and bridges are getting fixed. Our problems aren't going to be solved overnight, but we can turn the tide if we have a president who will fight for us.

The most successful issue message for Democrats is focused on *Retirees*, which gets very high intensity and has broad reach. The second-best message overall is on *Trade* – this message has very broad reach and also gets high intensity. There is also a solid second tier of messages that have moderate intensity and reach.

### Additional Democratic Messages



All Messages Split-Sampled

Q13. [T\*] Now I am going to read you some additional information from Democrats about the legislation they have passed and their goals going forward. Please tell me whether each statement I read is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT TOO convincing, or NOT AT ALL convincing reason to vote for Democrats. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so. [RANDOMIZE]



The *Retirees* message is a top message across the board. In particular, it is strong among Democrats, and interestingly, young women. The *Trade* message also scores high across demographics, but a bit less so among Democrats. *Trade* is stronger than Democratic messages typically are with Republicans and is also the top message among people of color, older women, non-college voters, and union voters. The *IRA Healthcare* message is not quite as strong overall due to its weakness among Republicans, but it is a top message among Democrats and independents. It performs particularly well among people of color and younger women.

### Additional Democratic Messages: Demographics

Additional Dem Messages % Very Convincing	Total	Race		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC+	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non-Coll	Coll	White Non-Coll	Non-Coll M	Non-Coll W	Yes	No
Retirees	42	41	49	45	51	31	42	75	28	14	46	37	44	43	47	44	39
Trade	39	36	54	45	34	26	48	59	28	24	47	27	45	46	47	49	30
IRA Healthcare	35	32	54	31	43	32	33	70	27	4	37	32	34	37	38	43	28
Infrastructure	33	29	51	39	39	27	29	65	16	6	37	28	32	33	39	41	27
Next Generation	33	34	36	41	29	26	35	64	22	5	30	41	28	30	28	37	33
Clean Manufacturing Vision	33	33	38	38	23	26	39	62	25	5	30	38	27	29	31	35	32
Populist	32	29	53	31	40	26	32	63	20	7	36	27	32	34	37	37	27
Health Care Vision	31	31	31	37	21	27	36	59	26	3	27	37	26	26	27	31	30
Anti-Racist Shared Solution	30	27	44	37	26	24	30	53	25	3	27	34	23	20	31	30	30
Long Story	30	29	38	26	21	25	41	56	24	5	31	28	29	22	37	30	29

All Messages Split-Sampled

Q13. [T\*] Now I am going to read you some additional information from Democrats about the legislation they have passed and their goals going forward. Please tell me whether each statement I read is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT TOO convincing, or NOT AT ALL convincing reason to vote for Democrats. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so. [RANDOMIZE]

*Retirees* is the strongest message in every state except Michigan, where *Trade* tops it. Across all the states *Trade* is a strong message, though in Wisconsin *Retirees* beats it out by a significant margin. In Michigan *Trade* is one of the top messages, but *Next Generation* and *Clean Manufacturing Vision* also perform disproportionately well there.

### Additional Democratic Messages by State

Additional Dem Messages % Very Convincing	Total	State			
		MI	OH	PA	WI
Retirees	42	31	41	43	56
Trade	39	38	38	41	45
IRA Healthcare	35	30	33	34	39
Infrastructure	33	29	35	32	41
Next Generation	33	39	36	26	26
Clean Manufacturing Vision	33	38	27	30	31
Populist	32	27	33	36	37
Health Care Vision	31	34	26	23	41
Anti-Racist Shared Solution	30	32	26	31	28
Long Story	30	31	25	29	35

All Messages Split-Sampled

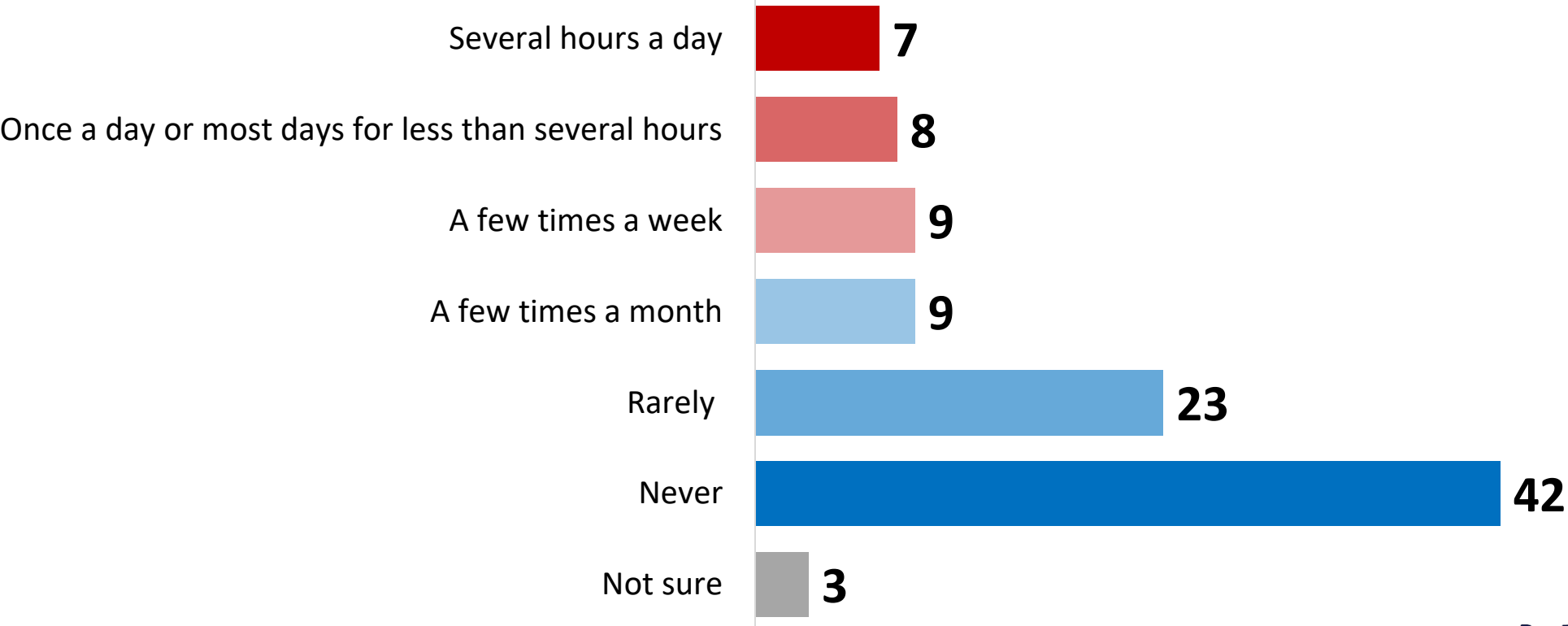
Q13. [T\*] Now I am going to read you some additional information from Democrats about the legislation they have passed and their goals going forward. Please tell me whether each statement I read is a VERY convincing, SOMEWHAT convincing, NOT TOO convincing, or NOT AT ALL convincing reason to vote for Democrats. If you are not sure how you feel about a particular item, please say so. [RANDOMIZE]



# Other Key Attitudes & Behaviors

A plurality of Factory Towns voters – over four in ten – never watch Fox News, and another quarter only watch it rarely. About a third watch it at least a few times a month, including roughly a quarter who are weekly viewers.

Fox News Viewership



Q16. How often do you personally watch Fox News?

Older voters are much more likely than younger voters to watch Fox News regularly, though this pattern does not hold for voters of color. Within some communities of color there is a threat of right-wing inroads among young men. Non-college educated voters are also more likely to watch Fox News, and though independents don't tend to be frequent watchers, most at least watch once in a while. Republicans watch Fox the most.

Fox News Viewership by Demographics

Fox News Viewership	Total	Race		Race/Age		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/ Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC	POC <35+	POC 35++	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non-Coll	Coll	White Non-Coll	Non-Coll M	Non-Coll W	Yes	No
Several hours a day	7	8	5	2	7	0	2	12	11	3	7	13	10	3	11	9	10	9	7
Daily or most days	8	9	5	3	6	2	4	9	12	2	9	16	9	7	10	8	9	7	9
A few times a week	9	9	8	13	5	11	5	13	6	4	9	15	10	7	11	15	8	10	8
A few times a month	9	9	10	9	11	9	10	11	8	9	4	11	9	9	9	11	7	7	11
Rarely	23	20	27	36	20	28	26	23	19	22	31	17	24	20	22	23	26	23	21
Never	42	42	43	34	49	50	51	27	40	57	36	26	36	52	36	31	38	43	43

\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Factory Towns voters in Iowa and Minnesota are watching Fox News at least on occasion with the greatest frequency – only a third never watch Fox News. Pennsylvania voters watch Fox News daily with the great frequency – one in ten watch daily. Wisconsin voters watch Fox News the least – nearly half never do.

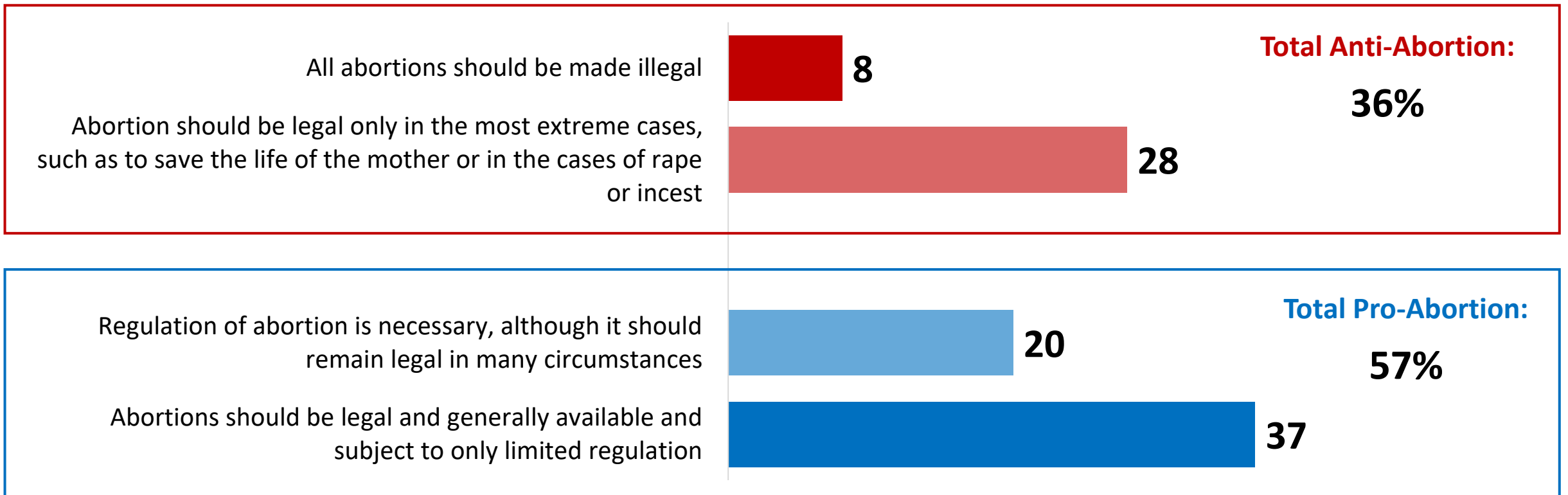
**Fox News Viewership by State**

Fox News Viewership	Total	State				
		MI	IA/MN <sup>+</sup>	OH	PA	WI
Several hours a day	7	5	7	7	10	8
Daily or most days	8	6	11	10	8	6
A few times a week	9	8	1	12	7	12
A few times a month	9	12	21	7	10	2
Rarely	23	27	24	18	24	21
Never	42	42	35	42	39	46

<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

A majority of Factory Towns voters are generally pro-abortion rights, including nearly four in ten who think it should be subjected to only limited regulation. Only 8% think abortion should be completely illegal.

### Abortion Stance



**Not Sure: 4%**

Across the board Factory Towns voters have pro-abortion rights views. The only group that is majority anti-abortion are Republicans. Independents are mixed but lean towards supporting abortion rights – a majority think abortion should remain legal in most circumstances including a third who think it should be generally available with only limited regulation.

Abortion Stance by Demographics

Abortion Stance: Abortion Should Be...	Total	Race		Race/Age		Gender/Age				Party Identification			Education (/Race)			Education/ Gender		Union HH	
		White	POC	POC <35+	POC 35++	M <50	F <50	M 50+	F 50+	Dem	Ind w/ Weak ID	Rep	Non- Coll	Coll	White Non-Coll	Non- Coll M	Non- Coll W	Yes	No
Net Pro – Anti	+21	+19	<b>+37</b>	<b>+34</b>	<b>+39</b>	<b>+32</b>	<b>+31</b>	+15	+10	<b>+71</b>	+20	-36	+12	<b>+34</b>	+7	+14	+11	+13	+26
Generally available	37	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>	11	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	29	<b>35</b>	29	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
Some regulation necessary	20	21	19	22	16	14	23	21	22	22	21	17	22	19	22	19	24	19	22
Only for extreme circumstances	28	<b>30</b>	18	17	19	26	25	28	<b>32</b>	11	26	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>	25	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	30	27
Always illegal	8	8	11	13	9	6	6	9	10	2	8	16	11	6	11	9	11	12	7

\*N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Q29. Now I'm going to read you a question on a different topic. I'm going to read four statements. Listen carefully, then please tell me which of them is closest to your own view.



Across all states, Factory Towns voters are more pro-abortion than anti. Iowa and Minnesota are the least intensely pro-abortion, but over two-thirds of voters still believe that abortion should be legal at least in most circumstances, including three in ten who think it should be legal in almost all circumstances. Ohio is the least pro-abortion, but the pro-abortion side still outnumbered the anti-abortion side by 12 points.

**Abortion Stance by State**

Abortion Stance: Abortion Should Be...	Total	State				
		MI	IA/MN <sup>+</sup>	OH	PA	WI
Net Pro – Anti	+21	+18	<b>+39</b>	+12	+24	+22
Generally available	37	<b>40</b>	31	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>
Some regulation necessary	20	15	<b>37</b>	18	22	20
Only for extreme circumstances	28	28	24	29	25	30
Always illegal	8	9	5	11	9	6

<sup>+</sup>N<100 – caution on split-sampled questions

Q29. Now I'm going to read you a question on a different topic. I'm going to read four statements. Listen carefully, then please tell me which of them is closest to your own view.

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