

navigating *the* *battleground

Friday, September 26, 2025

Views of a Potential
Government Shutdown in the
Congressional Battleground



IMPACT
RESEARCH

Methodology



Impact Research conducted a survey of N=1,500 likely 2026 general election constituents in 61 battleground congressional districts.



100% of interviews were conducted by text-to-web.



Interviews were conducted between September 18 – 21, 2025.



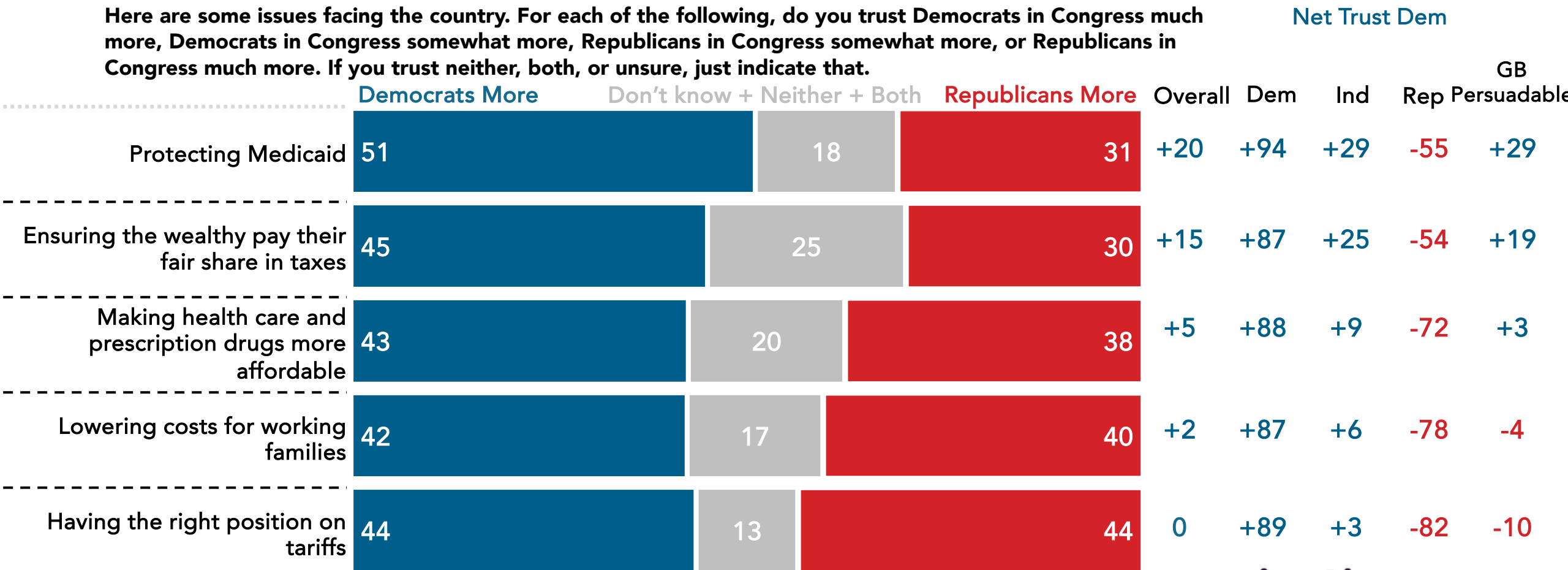
The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

Key Takeaways

- As a potential shutdown looms, Democrats in Congress have credibility on issues that are core to the government funding discussions. They are more trusted than Republicans in Congress on protecting Medicaid, making health care more affordable, and ensuring that the wealthy pay their fair share, and battleground constituents believe Trump's policies have driven up costs.
- A majority of battleground constituents have heard something about the government shutdown, but there is a lack of depth in their familiarity – just 21% of battleground constituents have heard a lot.
- Battleground constituents support holding the line against cuts to health care and the tariffs even if it means shutting down the government. They would rather this approach than proceeding with the cuts even if it means keeping the government open.
- A plurality of battleground constituents would blame Trump and Republicans in Congress if the government were to shutdown and they side with Democratic arguments to let the government shut down to protect funding for programs that matter to them.

Democrats In Congress Have Credibility On Issues, Like Medicaid And Lowering Costs, That Are Core To The Shutdown Debate

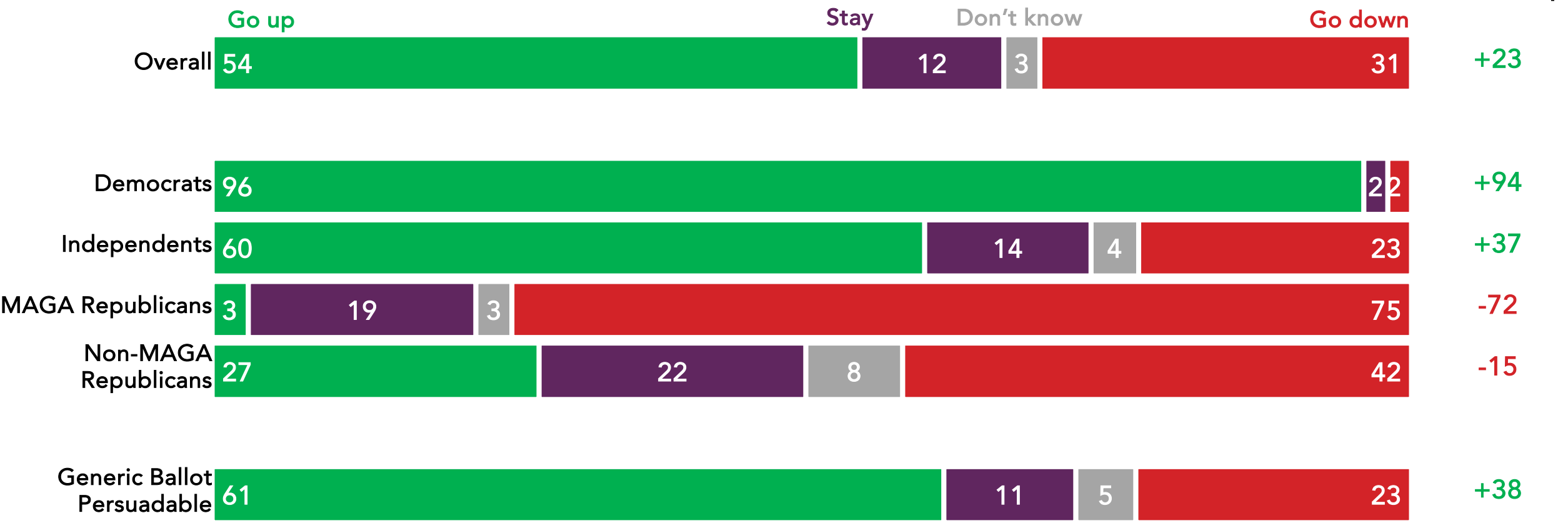
Here are some issues facing the country. For each of the following, do you trust Democrats in Congress much more, Democrats in Congress somewhat more, Republicans in Congress somewhat more, or Republicans in Congress much more. If you trust neither, both, or unsure, just indicate that.



“Generic ballot persuadable” are those who did not choose a Democratic or Republican candidate on who they would likely support for Congress in the 2026 election.
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For more info, visit navigatortresearch.org/battleground.

A Majority of Battleground Constituents Think Costs Have Gone Up Because Of Trump's Policies

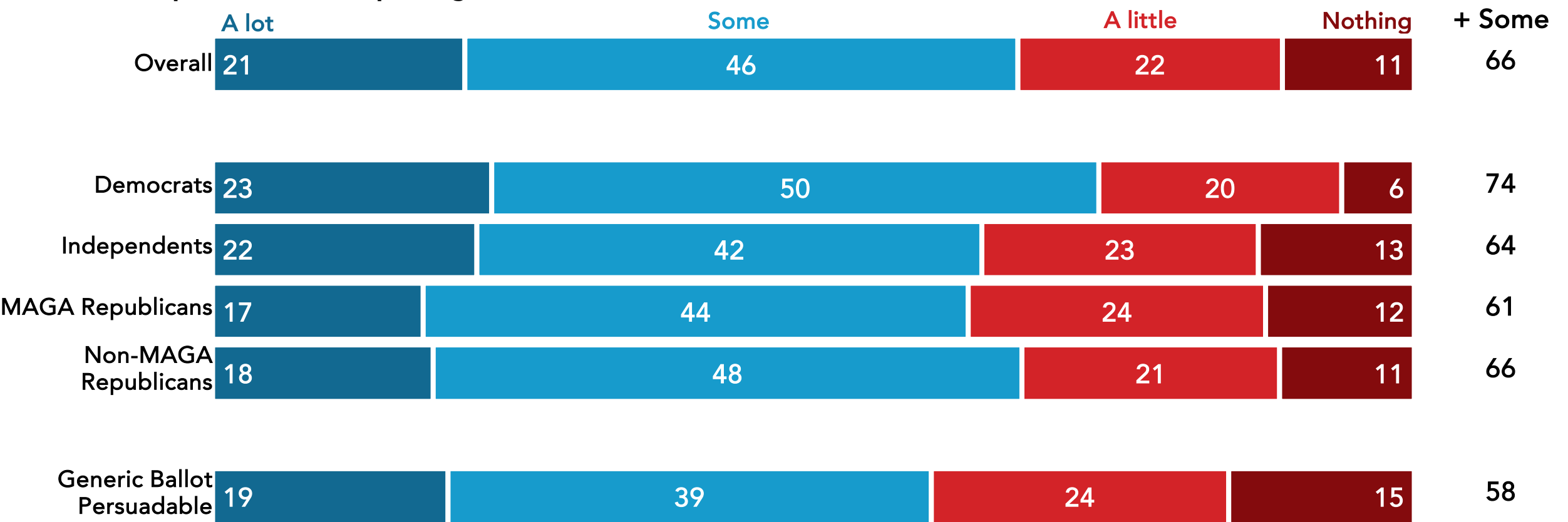
Do you think Trump's policies are making costs: Net Go Up



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A Majority of Battleground Constituents Have Heard About the Potential Government Shutdown, But Only 21% Have Heard A Lot

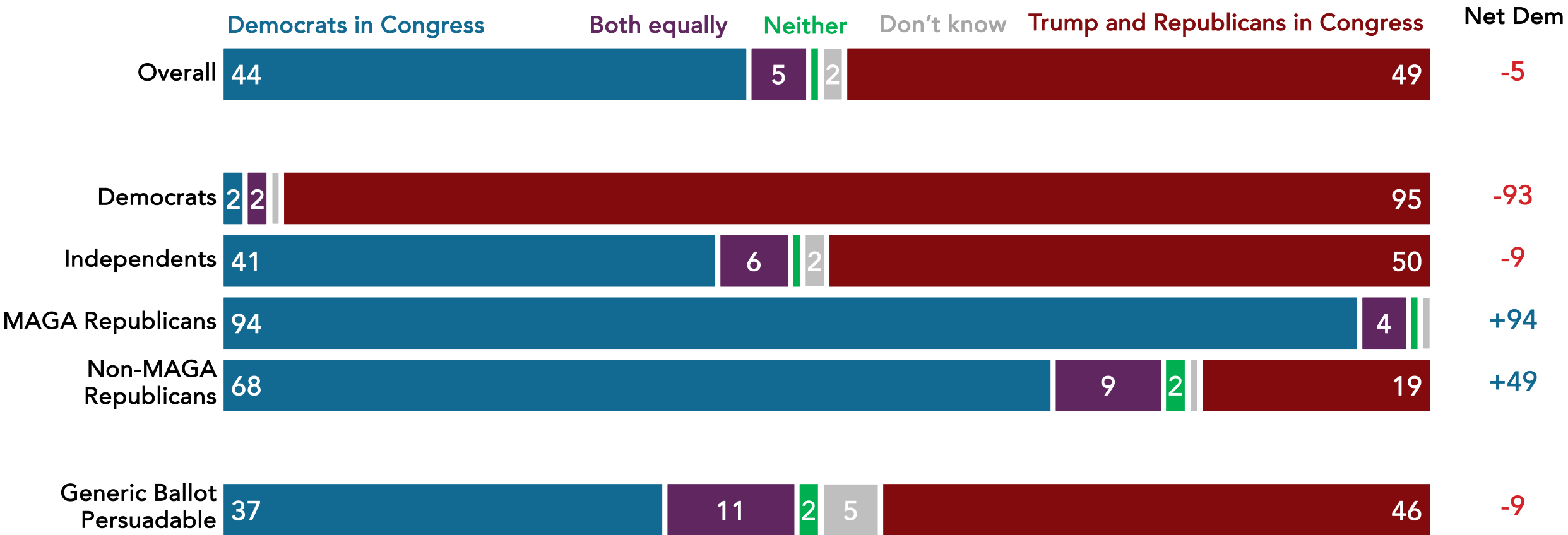
How much have you read, seen, or heard in recent weeks about a potential government shutdown this fall if Congress cannot pass their annual spending bills?



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Half of Battleground Constituents Would Blame Trump And Republicans In Congress If The Government Were To Shutdown

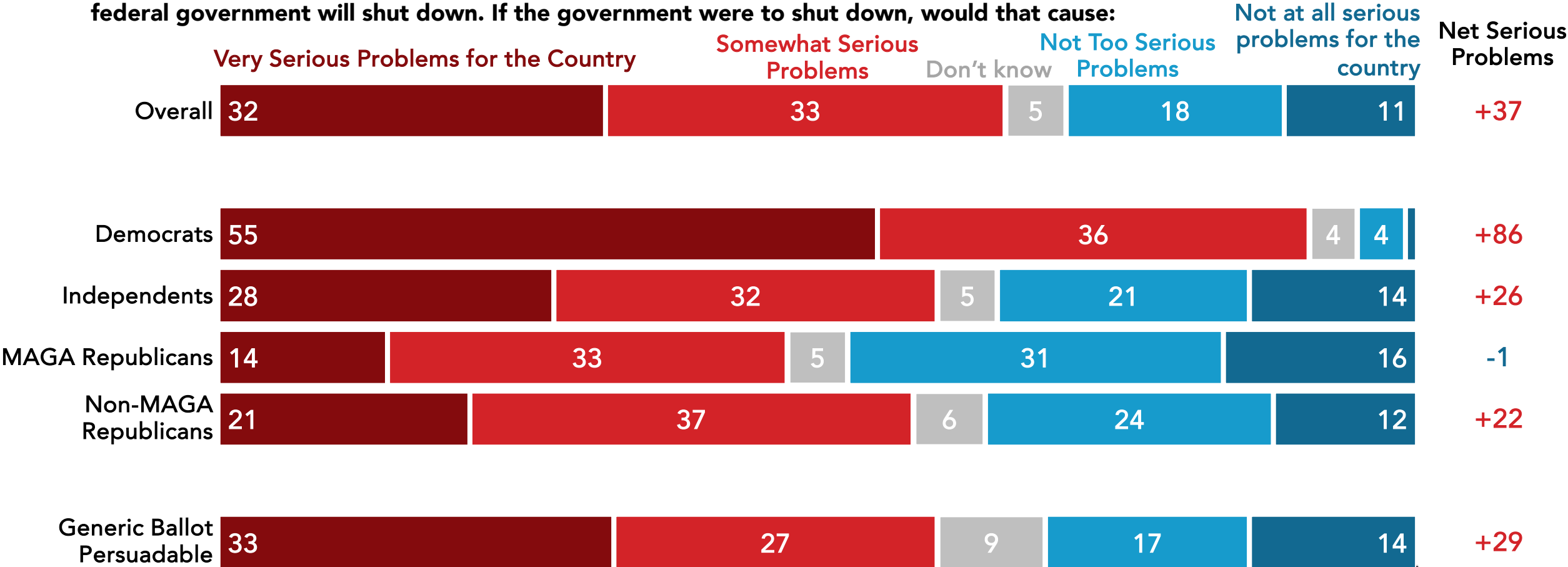
If the government were to shut down in the coming months, who would you blame the most?



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A Third Of Battleground Constituents Thinks A Government Shutdown Would Cause Very Serious Problems For The Country

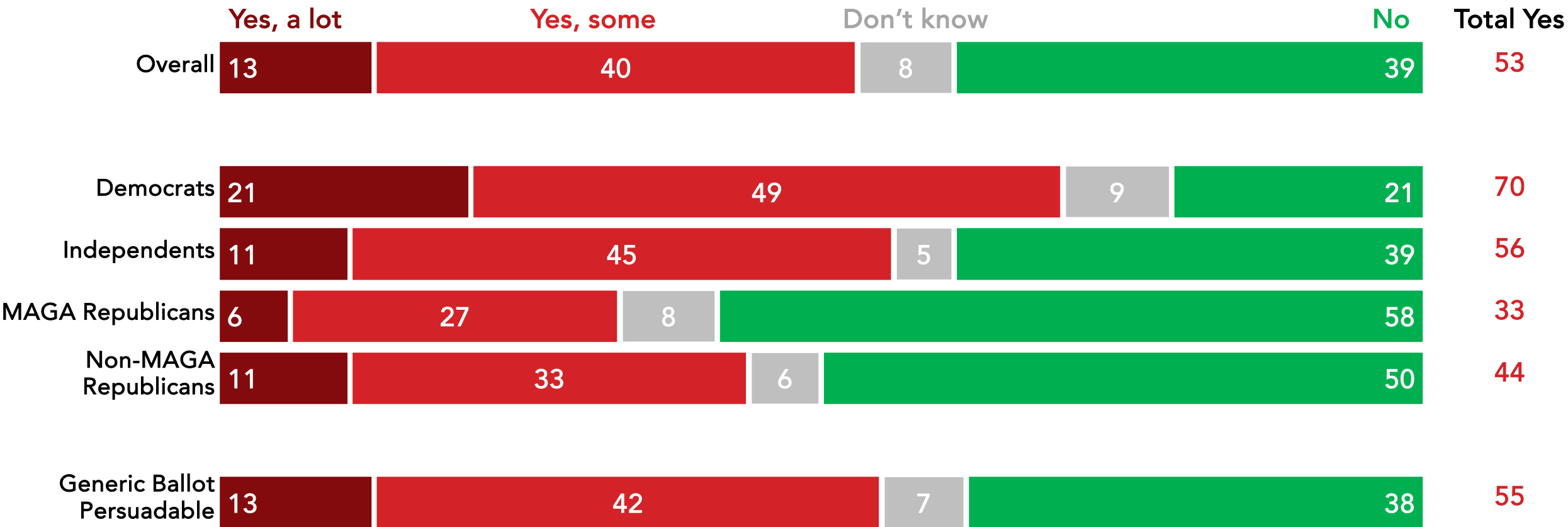
By the end of September, Congress must pass legislation to fund the federal government. If Congress fails to do this, the federal government will shut down. If the government were to shut down, would that cause:



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Battleground Constituents Think They Will Be Personally Impacted By A Government Shutdown, But The Intensity Is Low

From what you know, do you think a government shutdown will impact you personally?



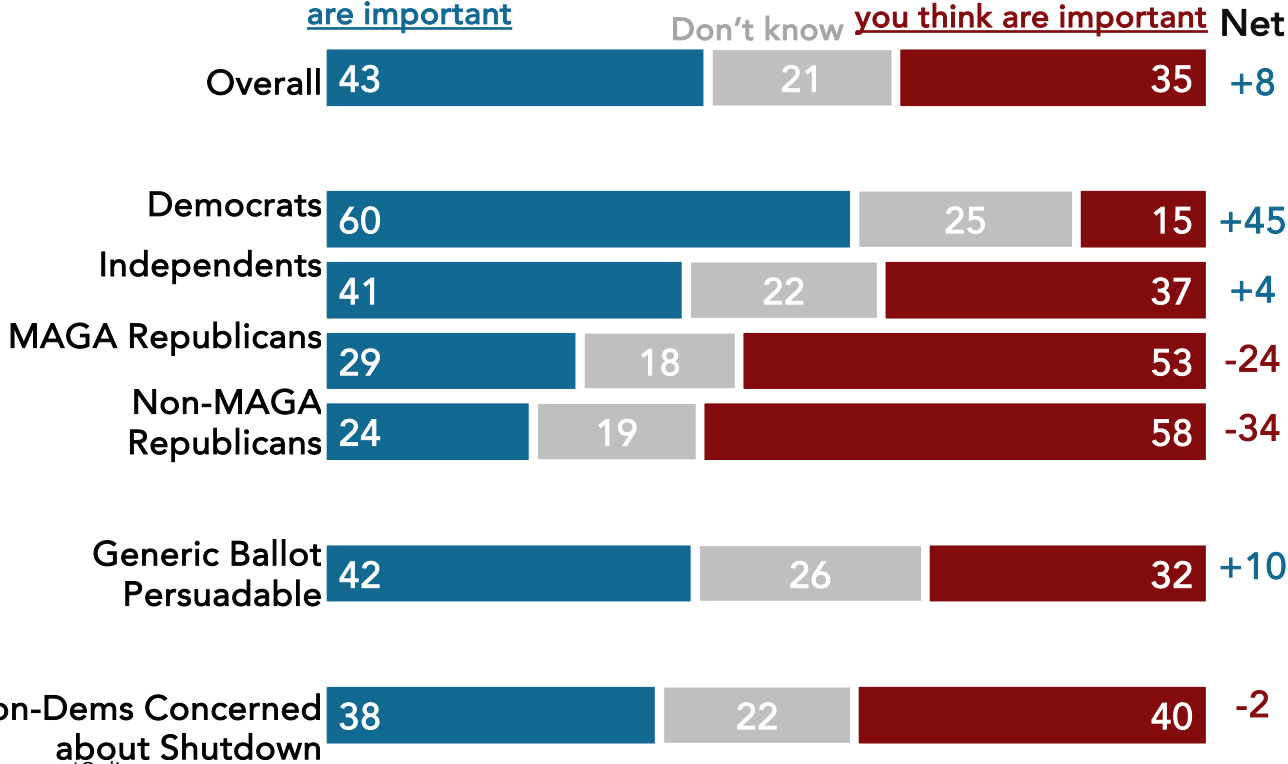
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Battleground Constituents Support Shutting Down The Government By The Widest Margin When Health Care And Tariffs Are Included

Which of the following comes closer to your opinion?*

Congress should let the government shut down to hold the line against funding cuts for programs you think are important

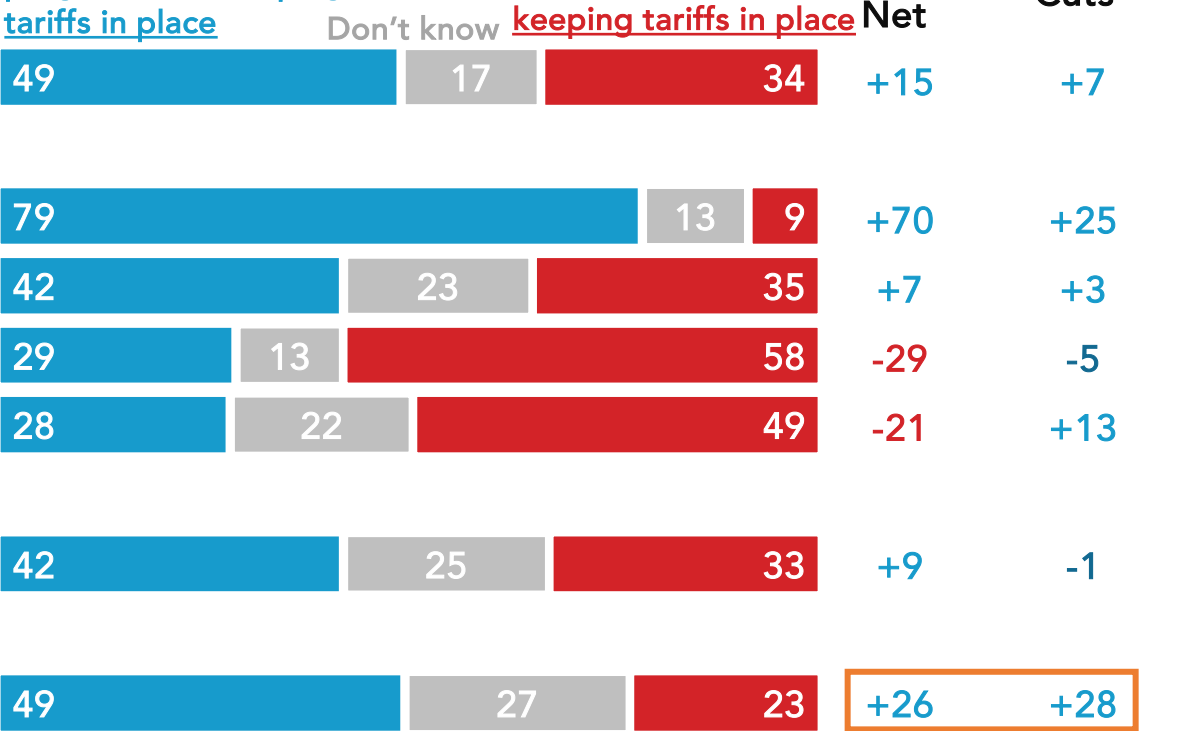
Congress should pass a bill to keep the government open, even if it means funding cuts for programs you think are important



Which of the following comes closer to your opinion?*

Congress should let the government shut down to hold the line against funding cuts for health care programs and keeping tariffs in place

Congress should pass a bill to keep the government open, even if it means funding cuts for health care programs and keeping tariffs in place



*Split
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Republican Arguments To Blame Democrats Fail To Move The Needle Against Democratic Framing About Costs

Republicans say Democrats are playing reckless politics and are threatening to collapse the economy by taking us into a shutdown. After four years of Biden and the Democrats’ wasteful spending policies that drove up inflation, Republicans are finally trying to get the economy back on track and get the deficit under control. They say that Democrats are totally unwilling to negotiate and would rather inflict more pain on the American people by shutting the government down to score points.

Compromise

Democrats say they have been trying to work with Republicans to come to an agreement on a reasonable budget that looks out for working people and keeps the government open, but Republicans have been unwilling to work with them. Democrats refuse to sign off on any bill that continues to gut Medicaid and increases costs for working people through higher health care premiums and tariffs. If Republicans refuse to work with them on these common sense fixes, then Republicans are choosing to shut down the government in order to protect tax breaks for the rich and cuts to the rest of us.

Hardline

Democrats say that Republican policies are hurting working people by driving up costs and forcing millions off of their health care. Democrats refuse to sign off on any bill that continues to gut Medicaid and increases costs for working people through higher health care premiums and tariffs. If Republicans refuse to work with them on these common sense fixes, then Republicans are choosing to shut down the government in order to protect tax breaks for the rich and cuts to the rest of us.

After learning more, if the government were to shut down in the coming months, who would you blame the most?*

Trump and Republicans in Congress: 48%

Democrats in Congress: 45%

Net Democrats: -3

Trump and Republicans in Congress: 49%

Democrats in Congress: 45%

Net Democrats: -4

*Split
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Appendix: Congressional Districts Included In Sample

Dem Incumbent			Rep Incumbent - Harris	Rep Incumbent - Trump		
CA-09	NM-02	TX-28	NE-02	AK-01	IA-01	OH-15
CA-13	NV-01	TX-34	NY-17	AZ-01	IA-02	PA-07
CA-27	NV-03	VA-07	PA-01	AZ-02	IA-03	PA-08
CA-45	NV-04	WA-03		AZ-06	KY-06	PA-10
CA-47	NY-03			CA-22	MI-04	TN-05
CT-05	NY-04			CA-40	MI-07	TX-15
IN-01	NY-19			CA-41	MI-10	VA-01
ME-02	NY-22			CO-08	MO-02	VA-02
MI-08	OH-09			FL-07	NJ-07	WI-01
NC-01	OH-13			FL-13	OH-07	WI-03
NJ-09	OR-05			FL-27	OH-10	

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About Navigator and Navigating the Battleground

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. **Navigator** is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. **Navigating the Battleground** is a project designed to understand messaging nuances in different types of battleground geographies, led by pollsters from Impact Research along with an advisory committee, including: Jessica Floyd, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

Impact Research conducted public opinion surveys among a sample of 1,500 likely 2026 general election voters from September 18–21, 2025. The survey was conducted by text-to-web (100 percent). Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of the 61 congressional districts included in the sample across a variety of demographic variables. The margin of error for the full sample at the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 2.5 percentage points. The margin for error for subgroups varies and is higher.

For Press inquiries contact:

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To learn more about Navigator
or Navigating the
Battleground:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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