



Support for Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Among Voters 65 and Older

August 2021



Lake Research Partners

Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY

LakeResearch.com

202.776.9066

**Celinda Lake
Jonathan Voss
Grant Hill**

Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this nationwide survey of N=800 people ages 65 and older likely to vote in the 2022 election. The survey was fielded online using an opt-in panel matched to the voter file, and was conducted June 16th-21st, 2021.
- Additionally, we interviewed oversamples of 100 people ages 65 and older likely to vote in the 2022 election who live in rural areas, and 100 seniors who identify as Democrats and indicate they are less likely to vote in the 2022 election (“low-propensity” Democrats).
- The data set was weighted slightly by age, gender, region, gender by region, type of area they live, and educational attainment; the rural senior oversample was weighted slightly by age to reflect the attributes of the modeled electorate. The rural senior oversample was weighted into the national sample to reflect its actual proportion in the modeled electorate.
- The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.5 percentage points.
- Funding for this research was provided by the Alliance for Retired Americans and Retired Americans PAC.

Key Findings

- Voters over the age of 65 overwhelmingly favor allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations, like the Department of Veterans Affairs already does. This crosses party lines and it also motivates low-propensity Democrats.
- Senior voters want the savings Medicare price negotiation to go toward expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits. This is especially true for seniors in rural areas.
- Across party lines, seniors have strongly favorable views toward Medicare. However, they have a more lukewarm rating of Medicare's performance dealing with prescription drug prices.
- This is a voting issue. Senior voters will reward candidates who favor Medicare negotiation and punish candidates who oppose it. Seniors would cross party lines on this issue, presenting both an opportunity for Democratic candidates who favor this proposal to win over voters, as well as a threat to Democratic candidates whose opposition to it would erode their base.
- Our strongest messages focus on affordability, position prescription drug corporations as blocking efforts at lowering prices and connect savings to benefits that seniors value like expanding coverage to include vision, dental, and hearing benefits.
- Opposition messages largely fall flat. The one vulnerability is in the industry innovation message which is contested terrain. Our values-based messages that focus on enabling people to afford the medicines they need outperform an innovation message and are made stronger by providing examples of public investment.

Messaging Recommendations

Lead with Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our strongest responses to their messages focus on affordability and ensuring that people can afford the lifesaving drugs they need.• Always bring the conversation back to affordability and focus each policy proposal on how it lowers the prices people pay and enables people to take the drugs their doctor prescribes.
Utilize Prescription Drug Corporations as a Villain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not let prescription drug corporations shift the blame. Center them as the barrier to policies that would lower prices.• Highlight the monopoly control they have to set prices.
Use Values over Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seniors support all of our policies. Messaging should focus on the outcome of lower prices that people pay. Avoid using statistics that obscure our powerful values.
Focus on Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight that savings can expand benefits to include vision, dental, and hearing.
Highlight Public Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reminding people that taxpayer funded research leads to many cures and medicines helps blunt the effectiveness of the industry's innovation.

Responding to Attacks

When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[AGENDA] Certain politicians in Washington want to take savings from lowering drug prices in Medicare and use it for their own agenda. Any savings should go back into Medicare.</p>	<p>Empowering Medicare to negotiate prices will lower prices and strengthen Medicare, enabling it to provide additional benefits like hearing, vision, and dental to America's seniors.</p>	<p>Lead with the payoff that centers lower prices from negotiation. Tell seniors that it will provide hearing, vision, and dental benefits.</p>
When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[INNOVATION] The scientists at America's pharmaceutical companies developed safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 in record time.</p> <p>If we want to develop cures and treatments for the next pandemic, whenever that is, we must protect future innovation and research to fuel new discoveries.</p>	<p>Most prescription drugs, including the COVID-19 vaccines, come from research & innovation that we all fund with taxpayer dollars through our National Institutes of Health.</p> <p>Our leaders must ensure medicines are affordable for everyone who needs them, because a life-saving vaccine does not work if people cannot afford it.</p>	<p>Remind voters the value of public research and connect it to the value of affordability. Providing examples of public research helps arguments.</p> <p>Innovation is contested space, and when used by industry it touches on strong values, but we can blunt its effectiveness by highlighting public research and focusing on affordability.</p>

Responding to Attacks

When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[CHINA] This radical plan will result in outsourcing American drug production to foreign countries like China. Americans rely on life-saving drugs. We should not rely on China to produce them.</p>	<p>No other country, including China, pays as much as we do for prescription drugs.</p> <p>Certain politicians are fearmongering about this plan to protect the prescription drug corporations that fund their campaigns.</p> <p>This plan will lower drug prices and keep drugs safe, effective, and affordable.</p>	<p>Keep the conversation focused on affordability.</p> <p>Call out this attack as fearmongering to protect prescription drug corporations.</p>
When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[SOCIALIST] These proposals are a socialist takeover of our health care system. They let government set prices and politicians make decisions instead of doctors. We need to encourage innovation and let doctors make decisions with their patients</p>	<p>Prescription drug corporations have monopoly control to set prices and keep them high, and it is morally wrong for them to profit at the expense of people who cannot afford lifesaving drugs.</p> <p>This plan lets the government negotiate prices so that people can afford the Rx drug their Dr's prescribe.</p>	<p>Keep focused on ensuring people can afford the drugs their doctors prescribe.</p>

Responding to Attacks

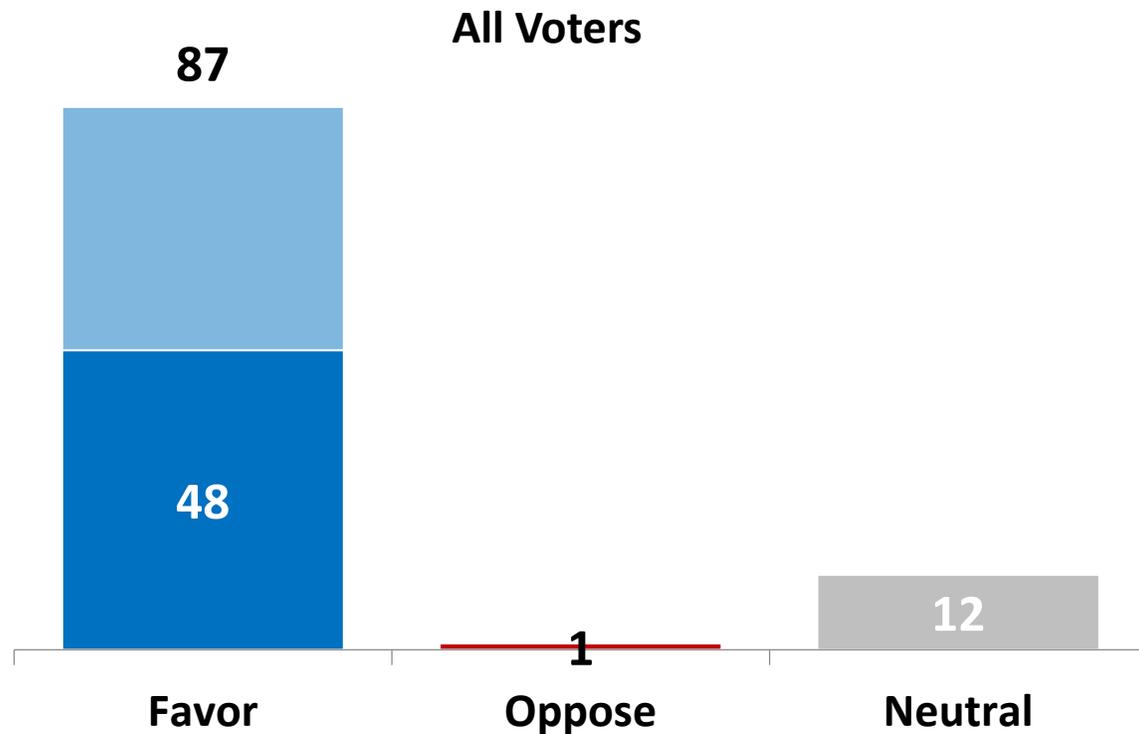
When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[SHIFTING BLAME] This plan misses the mark. We need to rein in the health care middlemen like hospitals, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers who jack up prices on prescription drugs to pad their profits, but this plan ignores the real problem.</p>	<p>Prescription drug corporations need to stop passing the buck. They have spent nearly \$100 million on lobbying in the last 3 months alone to attack this plan. They have monopoly power to set prices and raise them whenever they want.</p> <p>We need the government to stop drug corporations from price gouging, so people can afford the drugs they need to stay healthy.</p>	<p>Prescription drug corporations are a more effective villain, and we need to highlight them as the key barrier to lower prices.</p> <p>Democrats respond when we highlight their lobbying donations.</p>
When they say	Say:	Notes
<p>[KITCHEN SINK] This plan will destroy an estimated one million American jobs, cede American leadership in scientific innovation, and strangle the development of new treatments, while failing to address the broader challenges facing patients.</p>	<p>Prescription drug corporations will say anything to protect their profits.</p> <p>The truth is most of our prescription drugs come from research and innovation that we all fund with taxpayer dollars.</p> <p>We must ensure medicines are affordable for everyone who needs them, because a life-saving medicine does not work if people cannot afford it.</p>	<p>This is the opposition's weakest argument and unlikely to be utilized.</p> <p>Center affordability, position prescription drug corporations as the barrier to lower prices and connect with shared values.</p>



Support for Medicare Drug Price Negotiation

Overwhelming majorities of seniors across party lines support Medicare drug price negotiation. This is a core value for seniors with no opposition.

Do you favor or oppose a proposal to allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations?

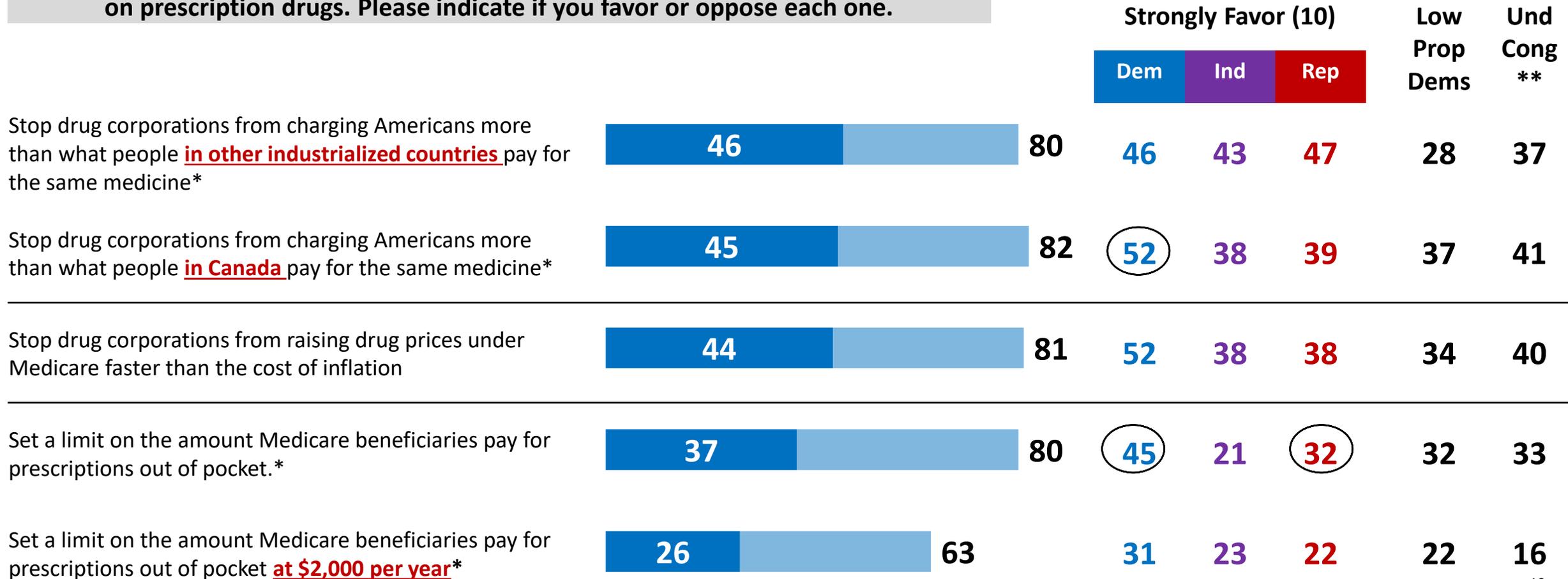


	Strong Favor	Total Favor	Total Oppose
Men	47	89	2
Women	49	86	0
Democrat ID	58	89	0
Independent ID	38	81	0
Republican ID	42	87	2
Low-prop Dems	26	84	6
Urban	46	86	1
Suburban	52	91	0
Rural	46	84	2
White	47	87	1
Black	53	84	1
Latinx	63	96	0

 Total favor (6-10)
 Strongly favor (10)

Proposals that explicitly focus on the price people pay find the strongest support.

Now you are going to read a series of other proposals being considered by Congress on prescription drugs. Please indicate if you favor or oppose each one.



*Split sampled

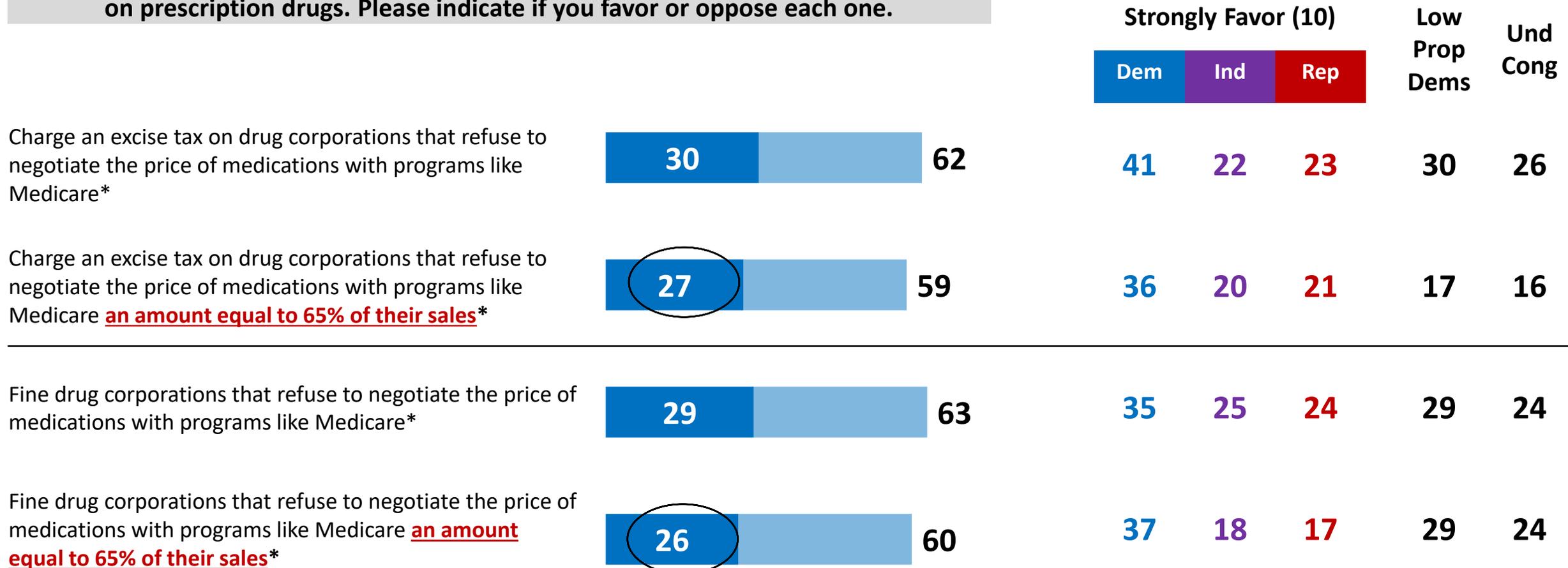
** Undecided on a generic Congressional ballot

Strongly Favor (10)

Total Favor (6-10)

Seniors favor charging an excise tax or fining drug corporations that refuse to negotiate but with weaker intensity. Specifying the level of tax/fine softens support further.

Now you are going to read a series of other proposals being considered by Congress on prescription drugs. Please indicate if you favor or oppose each one.



Strongly Favor (10) Total Favor (6-10)

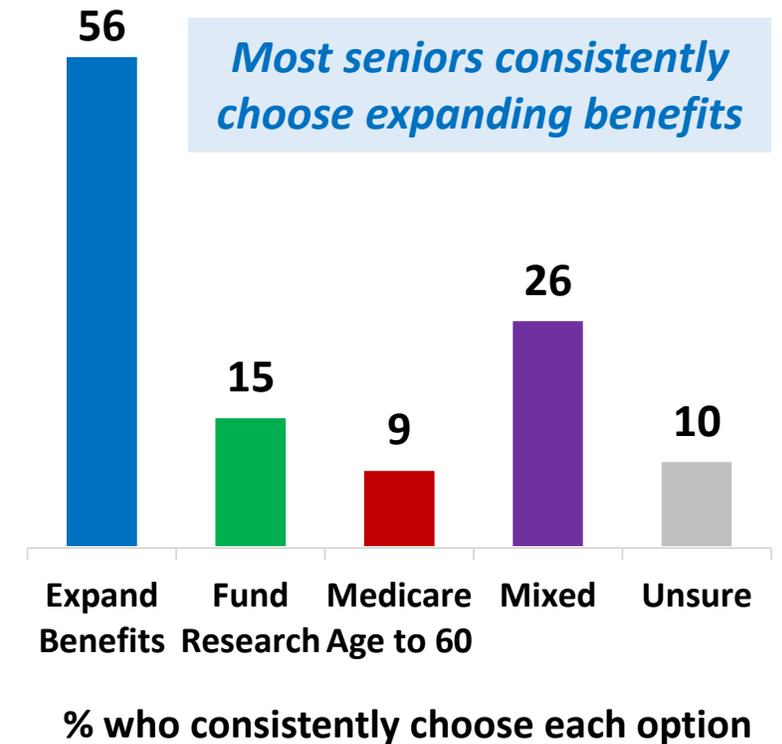
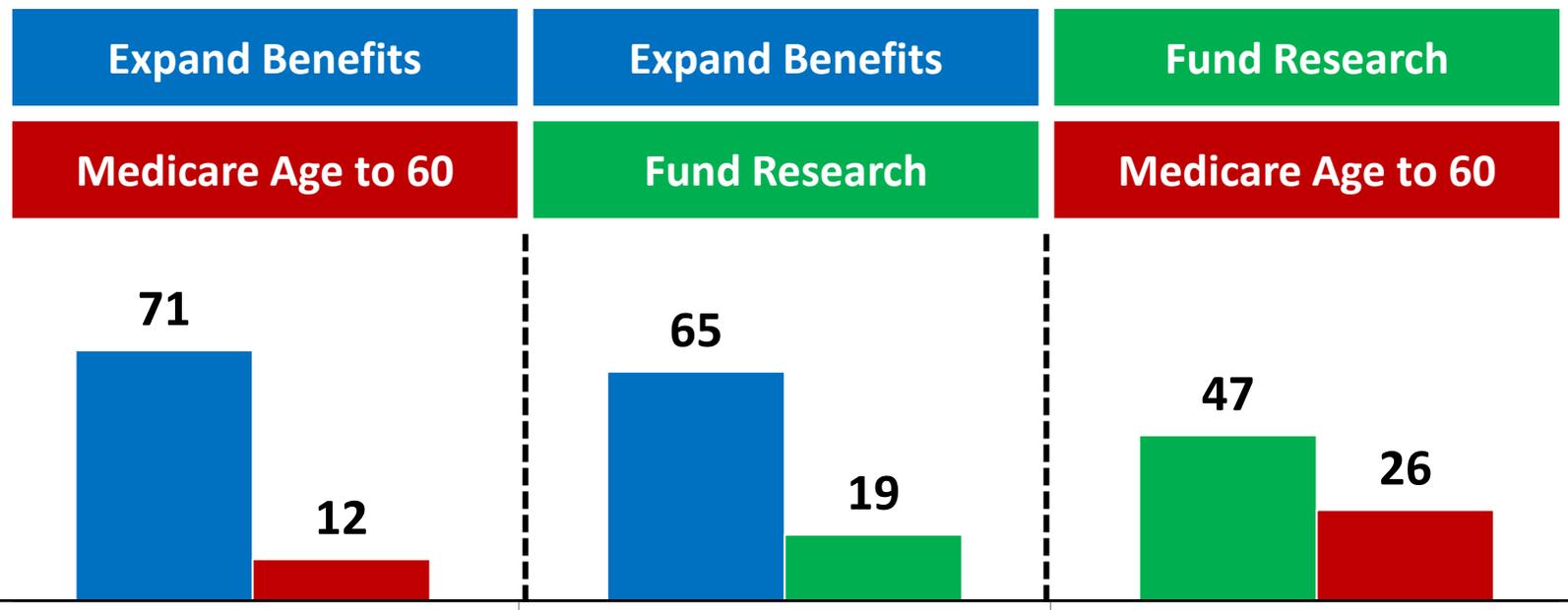
*Split sampled



Where Do Seniors Think Savings From Lower Medicare Drug Prices Should Go?

Seniors overwhelmingly prefer using savings to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits.

Experts say that if these proposals became law, taxpayers would save over \$450 billion in Medicare costs. Which of the following approaches to these savings do you support the most?*



*Full text of approaches:

Expand Benefits: "Expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits."

Fund Research: "Fund public research into new treatments and cures."

Medicare Age to 60: "Make Medicare available to Americans starting at age 60 instead of 65."

Seniors across demographics prefer using savings to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, vision, and dental benefits, particularly women and rural seniors.

Experts say that if these proposals became law, taxpayers would save over \$450 billion in Medicare costs. Which of the following approaches to these savings do you support the most?*

	Total	Gender		Area Live In			Party ID			Low-Prop Dems	Und Cong
		M	W	Urb	Sub	Rural	D	I	R		
Expand Benefits	56	53	59	53	56	59	58	50	57	47	52
Fund Research	15	15	14	16	16	11	11	15	18	12	15
Lower Medicare to 60	9	9	10	9	11	7	14	7	5	19	8
Mixed	26	29	24	26	26	27	21	34	29	26	26
Unsure	10	12	8	11	8	11	7	14	11	2	15

*Data reflects calculating consistency across all three questions

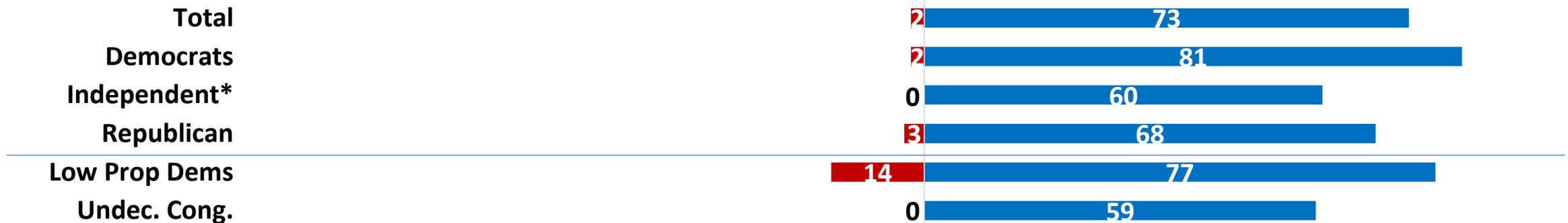


Medicare Drug Price Negotiation is Politically Salient for Seniors

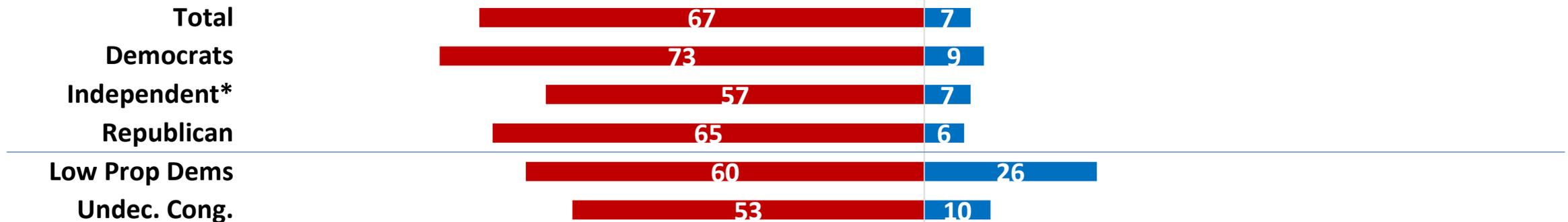
Seniors would reward a candidate who supported Medicare negotiating lower drug prices and punish one who opposed it.

If a candidate for Congress SUPPORTED Medicare negotiation, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate?

■ More Likely ■ Less Likely



If a candidate for Congress OPPOSED Medicare negotiation, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate?



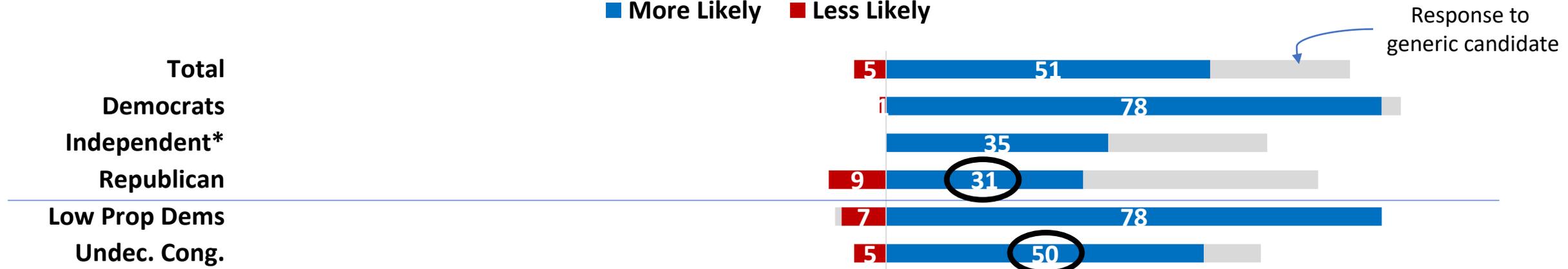
Split sampled questions

*Small Sample Size

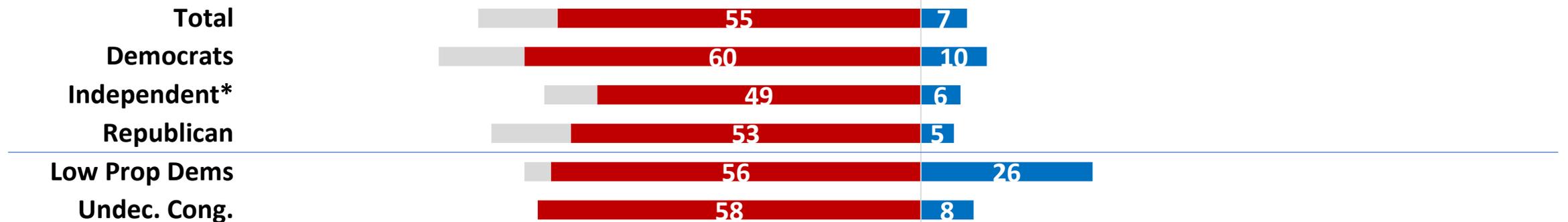
Nearly 1 in 3 Republicans and half of undecided seniors would be more likely to vote for a Democratic candidate who supported Medicare drug price negotiation.

If a **Democratic** candidate for Congress SUPPORTED Medicare negotiation, would that make you more/less likely to vote for that candidate?

■ More Likely ■ Less Likely



If a **Democratic** candidate for Congress OPPOSED Medicare negotiation, would that make you more/less likely to vote for that candidate?

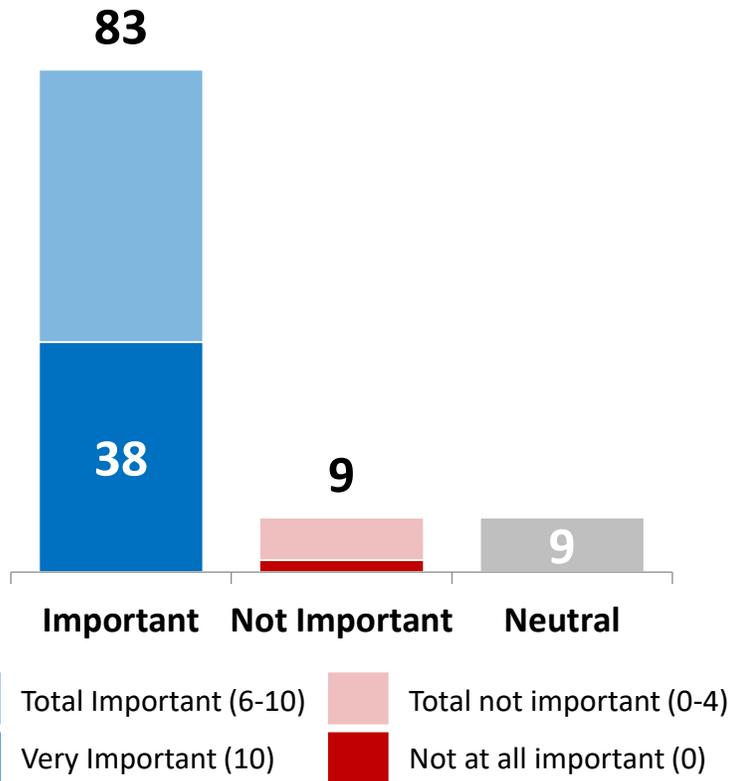


Split sampled questions

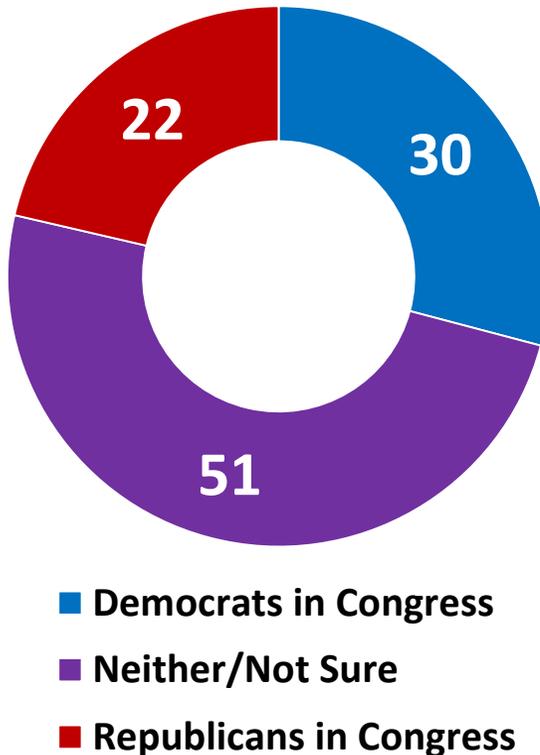
*Small Sample Size

Prescription drug prices are an important issue for seniors, and they currently do not think either party is doing a “better” job on lowering prices. Majorities would reward a Democratic candidate who supported drug price negotiation and punish one who opposed it.

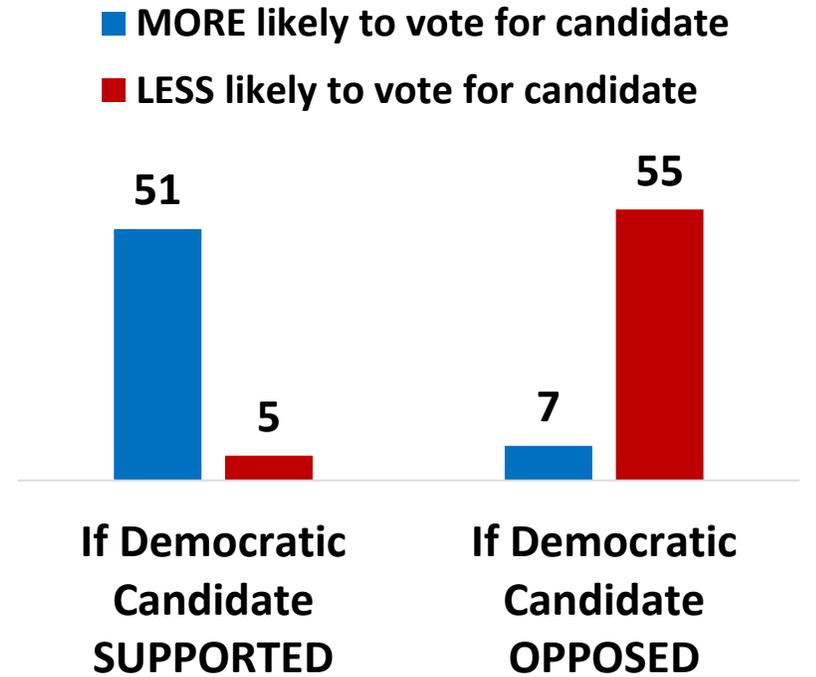
How important is the issue of prescription drug prices to you personally?



Please indicate who you think is doing a better job of handling the issue of lowering prescription Drug Prices:



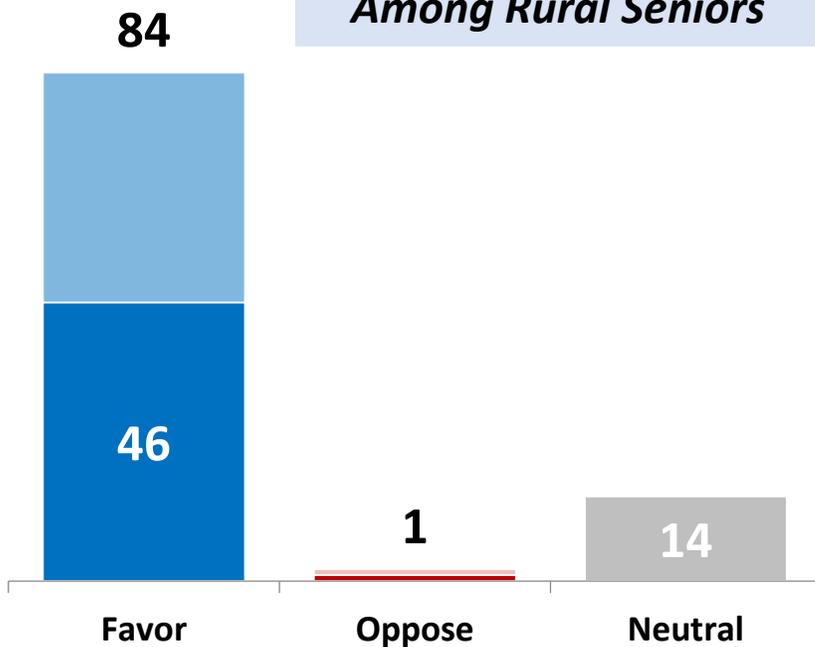
If a **Democratic** cand. for Congress [supported/opposed] Medicare negotiation, would that make you more/less likely to vote for that candidate?



Seniors in rural areas favor drug price negotiation with strong intensity. This is a voting issue for rural seniors.

Do you favor or oppose a proposal to allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations?

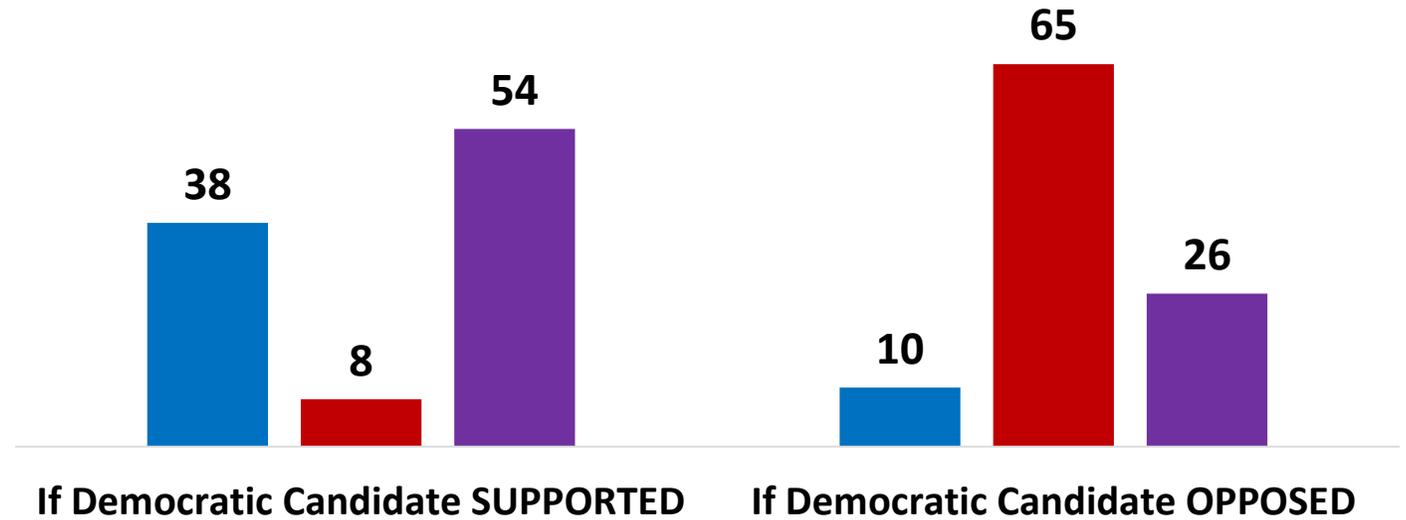
Among Rural Seniors



■ Total favor (6-10)
■ Strongly favor (10)
■ Total oppose (0-4)
■ Strongly oppose (0)

If a **Democratic** candidate for Congress [supported/opposed] Medicare negotiation, would that make you more/less likely to vote for that candidate?

■ MORE Likely to Vote for
 ■ LESS likely to Vote for
 ■ Make no difference/Not Sure



Among Rural Seniors

Messaging



Full Text of Opposition Messages

[Agenda] Certain politicians in Washington want to take savings from lowering drug prices in Medicare and use it for their own agenda. Any savings should go back into Medicare.

[Protect Innovation w/ Competition] The scientists at America's pharmaceutical companies developed safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 in record time. If we want to develop cures and treatments for the next pandemic, whenever that is, we must protect future innovation and research and increase competition to fuel new discoveries.

[Protect Innovation w/o Competition] The scientists at America's pharmaceutical companies developed safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 in record time. If we want to develop cures and treatments for the next pandemic, whenever that is, we must protect future innovation and research to fuel new discoveries.

[China] This radical plan will result in outsourcing American drug production to foreign countries like China. Americans rely on life saving drugs. We should not rely on China to produce them.

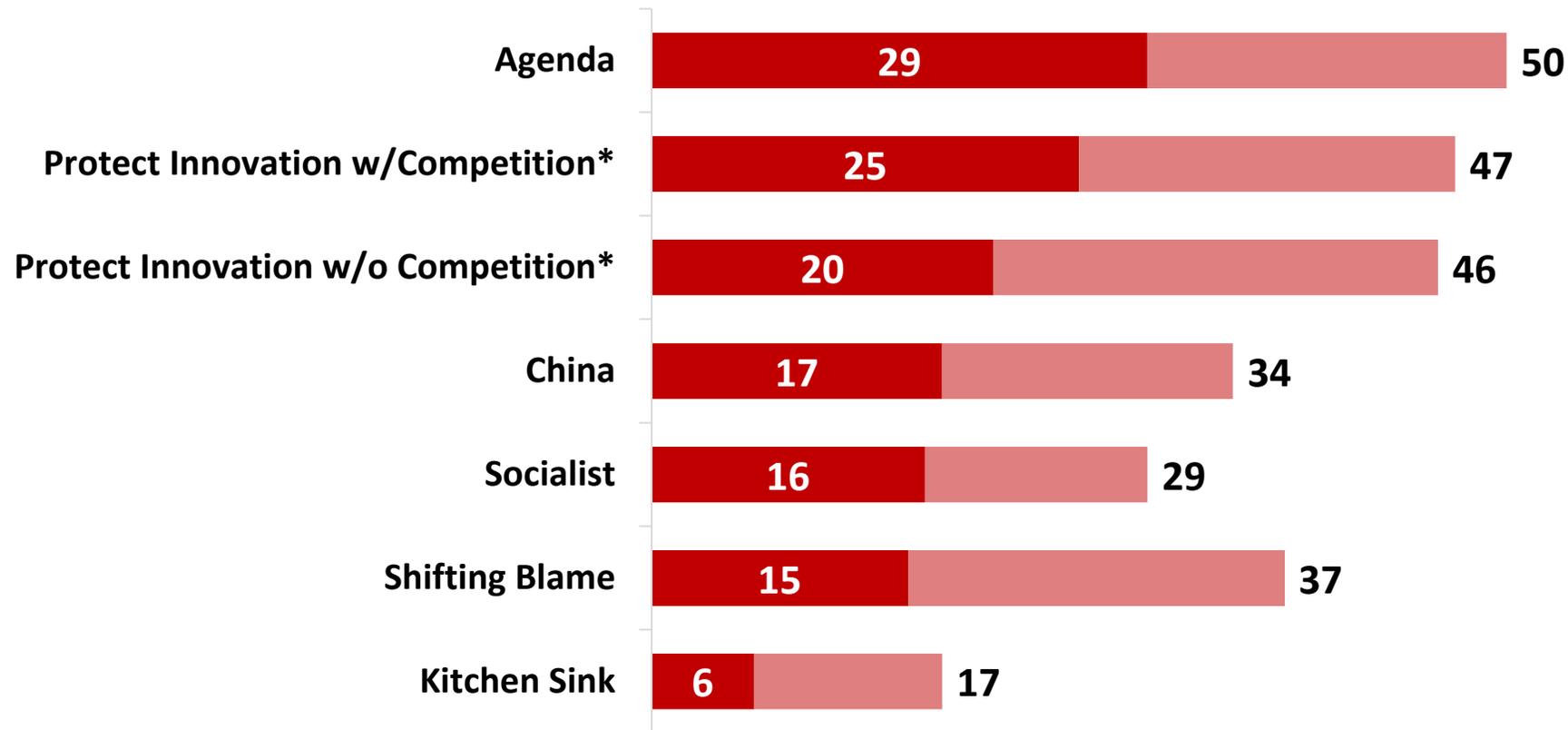
[Socialist] These proposals are a socialist takeover of our health care system. They let government set prices and politicians make decisions instead of doctors. We need to encourage innovation and let doctors make decisions with their patients.

[Shifting Blame] This plan misses the mark. We need to rein in the health care middlemen like hospitals, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers who jack up prices on prescription drugs to pad their profits, but this plan ignores the real problem.

[Kitchen Sink] This plan will destroy an estimated one million American jobs, cede American leadership in scientific innovation, and strangle the development of new treatments, while failing to address the broader challenges facing patients.

Seniors do not find opposition messaging convincing. The strongest argument, “Agenda,” is a rehash of past messaging attacking politicians from using savings to further their own agenda rather than back into Medicare.

How convincing is each statement to you personally?



 Somewhat Convincing
 Very Convincing

*split sampled

Opposition messages are not persuasive to seniors across demographics

How convincing is each statement to you personally?

% Very Convincing	Total	Gender		Area Live In			Party ID			Low-Prop Dems	Und Cong
		M	W	Urb	Sub	Rural	D	I	R		
Agenda	29	30	29	25	30	31	24	28	34	29	24
Protect Innovation W/ Competition*	25	21	28	28	24	23	22	**	29	**	25
Protect Innovation W/O Competition*	20	22	18	16	22	20	22	**	18	**	12
China	17	13	21	16	16	20	9	11	27	9	12
Socialist	16	13	19	15	15	19	8	16	24	19	12
Shifting Blame	15	14	16	14	16	16	14	13	18	19	9
Kitchen Sink	6	5	8	6	6	7	3	6	9	12	4

*Split sampled

** Sample size too small for analysis

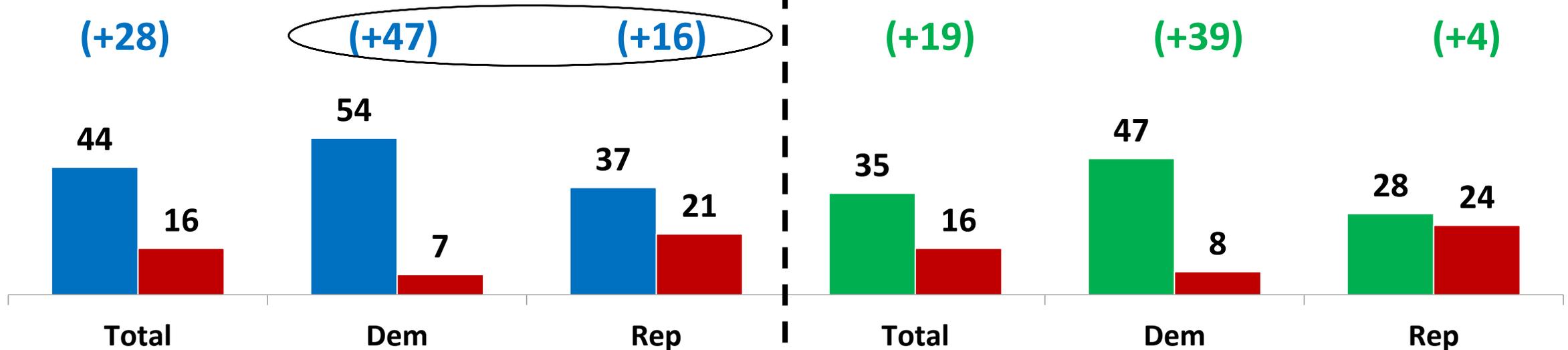
Responding to “Agenda”: Lead with the payoff that centers lower prices from negotiation. Tell seniors that it will provide hearing, vision, and dental benefits.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

Certain politicians in Washington want to take savings from lowering drug prices in Medicare and use it for their own agenda. Any savings should go back into Medicare.

Empowering Medicare to negotiate prices will lower prices and strengthen Medicare, enabling it to provide additional benefits like hearing, vision, and dental to America’s seniors.

Certain politicians are trying to mislead Americans about these policies. The truth is that empowering Medicare to negotiate prices will lower prices and strengthen Medicare, enabling it to provide additional benefits like hearing, vision, and dental to America’s seniors.



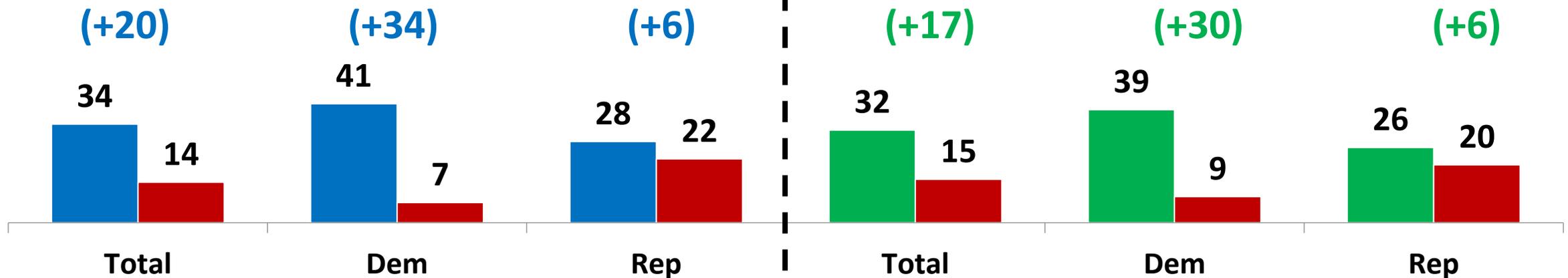
Responding to “Protect Innovation”: Remind voters the value of public research and connect it to the value of affordability. Providing examples of public research helps arguments.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

The scientists at America’s pharmaceutical companies developed safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19 in record time. If we want to develop cures and treatments for the next pandemic, whenever that is, we must protect future innovation and research to fuel new discoveries.

Most prescription drugs, including the COVID-19 vaccines, come from research & innovation that we all fund with taxpayer dollars through our National Institutes of Health. Our leaders must ensure medicines are affordable for everyone who needs them, because a life-saving vaccine does not work if people cannot afford it

Most prescription drugs, including the COVID-19 vaccines, come from research and innovation that we all fund with taxpayer dollars. Our leaders must ensure medicines are affordable for everyone who needs them, because a life-saving vaccine does not work if people cannot afford it



The industry's innovation message is still an effective argument.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

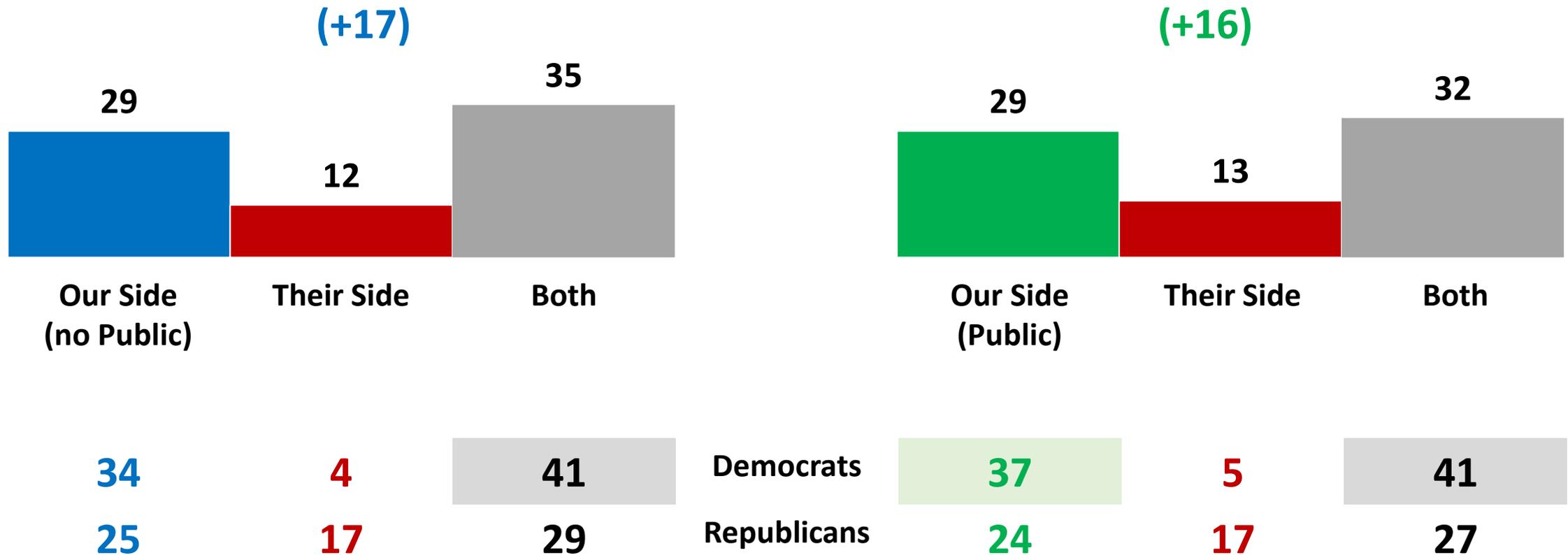
America's innovative biopharmaceutical industry makes advances in treatments and cures possible, like the breakthroughs in COVID-19 vaccines which stem from a collaborative system that seeks scientific discovery. But these proposals to cut drug costs would reduce competition and greatly slow innovation. We need to build on what we learned this past year and lower the barriers between medical breakthroughs and the patients who need them. And that means pursuing common sense, patient-centered reforms that make medicines more affordable and protect research and development into new cures and treatments

We all want the best health for our families. But a cure only works if people can afford it. Right now, prescription drug corporations have monopoly power to set prices high and raise them anytime they want, putting treatments out of reach for people who cannot afford the price. We need our leaders to put people's health over corporate profits by empowering the government to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, limiting price hikes, and capping out of pocket costs so that people can afford the lifesaving drugs they need.

We all want the best health for our families. But a cure only works if people can afford it. Right now, prescription drug corporations have monopoly power to set prices high on drugs that our tax dollars developed and raise them anytime they want, putting treatments out of reach for people who cannot afford the price. We need our leaders to put people's health over corporate profits by empowering the government to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, limiting price hikes, and capping out of pocket costs so that people can afford the lifesaving drugs they need.

Against their innovation agenda, we win focusing on affordability, but this is contested space, and pluralities of seniors say “both,” especially Democrats.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?



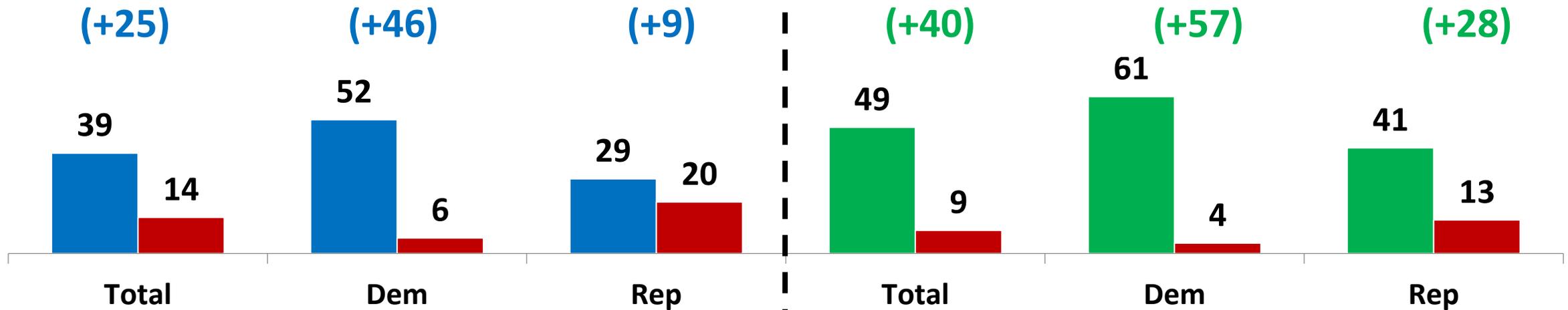
Responding to “China”: Keep the conversation focused on affordability. Call out this attack as fearmongering to protect prescription drug corporations.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

This radical plan will result in outsourcing American drug production to foreign countries like China. Americans rely on life-saving drugs. We should not rely on China to produce them.

Certain politicians are fearmongering about this plan to protect the prescription drug corporations that fund their campaigns. This plan will lower drug prices and keep drugs safe, effective, and affordable

No other country, including China, pays as much as we do for prescription drugs. Certain politicians are fearmongering about this plan to protect the prescription drug corporations that fund their campaigns. This plan will lower drug prices and keep drugs safe, effective, and affordable



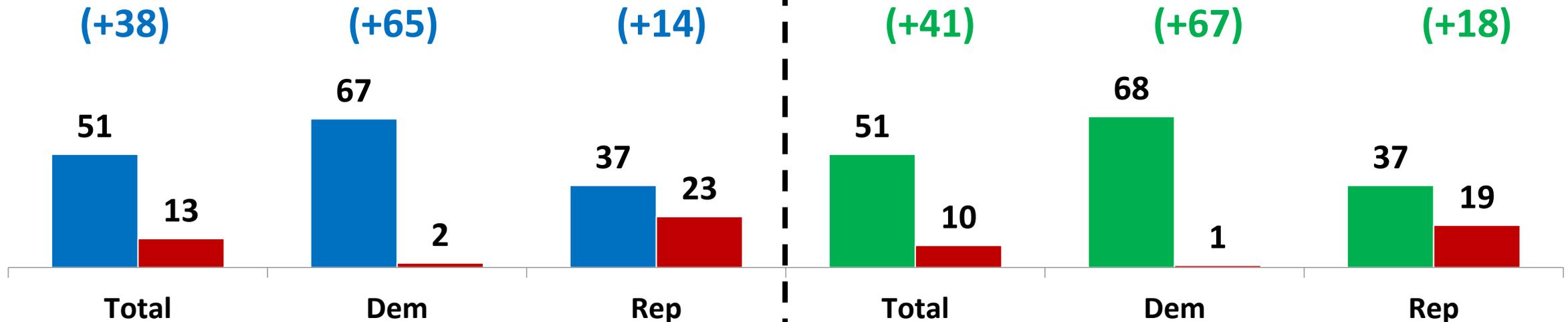
Responding to “Socialist”: Keep focused on ensuring people can afford the drugs their doctors prescribe.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

These proposals are a socialist takeover of our health care system. They let government set prices and politicians make decisions instead of doctors. We need to encourage innovation and let doctors make decisions with their patients.

It is morally wrong for prescription drug corporations to profit at the expense of people who cannot afford lifesaving drugs. This plan lets the government negotiate lower prices so that people can afford the medicines their doctors prescribe.

Prescription drug corporations have monopoly control to set prices and keep them high, and it is morally wrong for them to profit at the expense of people who cannot afford lifesaving drugs. This plan lets the government negotiate prices so that people can afford the Rx drug their Dr's prescribe.



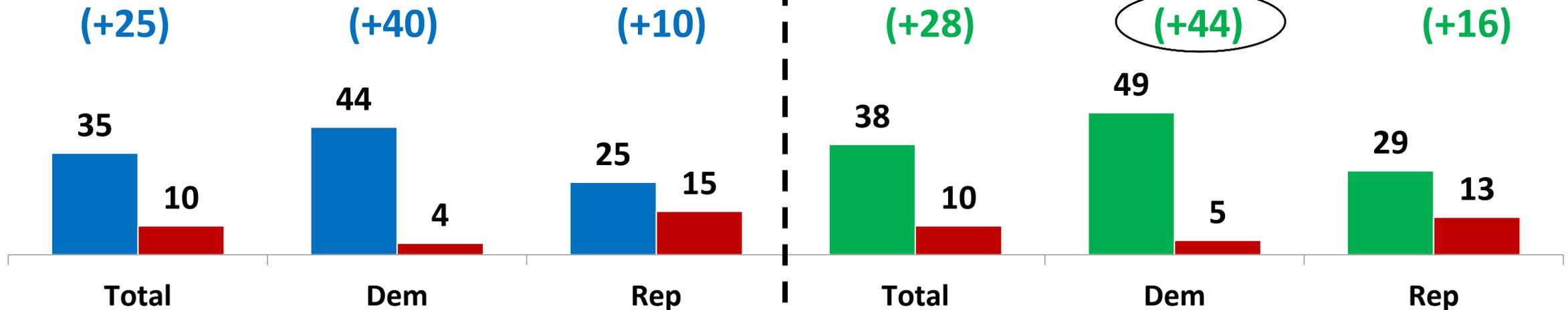
Responding to “Shifting Blame”: Prescription drug corporations are a more effective villain than health care middlemen, and we need to highlight them as the key barrier to lower prices. Democrats respond when we highlight their lobbying donations.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

This plan misses the mark. We need to rein in the health care middlemen like hospitals, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers who jack up prices on prescription drugs to pad their profits, but this plan ignores the real problem.

Prescription drug corporations need to stop passing the buck. They have monopoly power to set prices and raise them whenever they want. We need the government to stop drug corporations from price gouging, so people can afford the drugs they need to stay healthy

Prescription drug corporations need to stop passing the buck. They have spent nearly \$100 million on lobbying in the last 3 months alone to attack this plan. They have monopoly power to set prices and raise them whenever they want. We need the government to stop drug corporations from price gouging, so people can afford the drugs they need to stay healthy



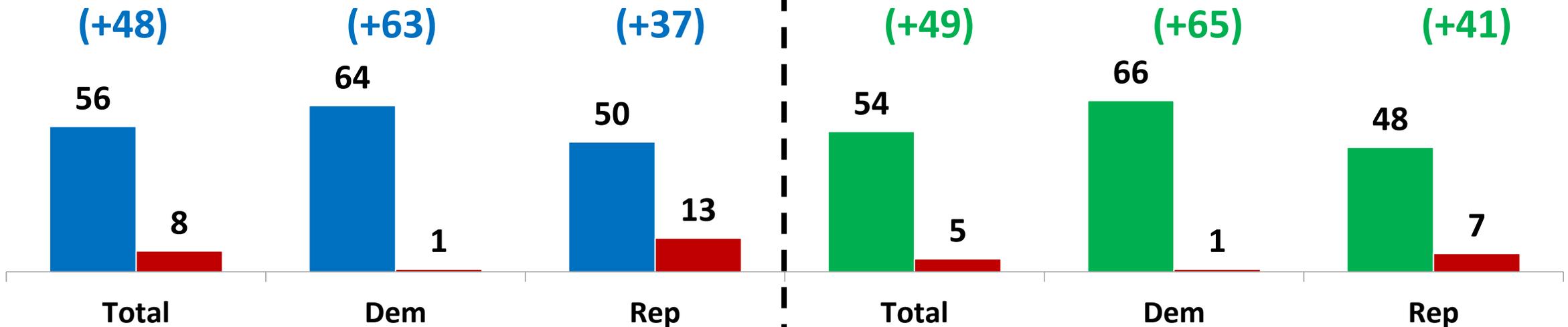
Responding to “Kitchen Sink”: This is the opposition’s weakest argument and is unlikely to be utilized. Center affordability, position prescription drug corporations as the barrier to lower prices, and connect with shared values.

Which statement is closer to your opinion?

This plan will destroy an estimated one million American jobs, cede American leadership in scientific innovation, and strangle the development of new treatments, while failing to address the broader challenges facing patients.

Prescription drug corporations have been rigging the rules for decades. They spent a record amount lobbying congress this past year, nearly \$100 million in the last 3 months alone attacking this plan, while making record profits. We need to end their monopoly control to set prices and empower Medicare to negotiate lower prices for America’s seniors.

Prescription drug corporations will say anything to protect their profits. The truth is most of our prescription drugs come from research and innovation that we all fund with taxpayer dollars. We must ensure medicines are affordable for everyone who needs them, because a life-saving medicine does not work if people cannot afford it



LRP LAKE RESEARCH PARTNERS

Strategy · Precision · Impact



Washington, DC | Berkeley, CA | New York, NY

LakeResearch.com

202.776.9066

Celinda Lake

clake@lakeresearch.com

Jonathan Voss

jvoss@lakeresearch.com

Lindsey Buttel

lbuttel@lakeresearch.com

Grant Hill

ghill@lakeresearch.com