



# Support for Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Among Voters 65 and Older

**August 2021**

# 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 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 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.

# All Seniors Favor Medication Drug Price Negotiation

- Seniors (voters over age 65) overwhelmingly favor allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations, like the Department of Veteran Affairs already does.
- Every single senior demographic strongly supports this proposal.
- An 87 percent majority of seniors, favor this proposal, including 48 percent who strongly favor (rate 10 on 0-10 scale) as well as 89 percent of Democratic seniors (58 percent rate 10), 87 percent of Republican seniors (42 percent rate 10), and 81 percent of independent seniors (38 percent rate 10).
- Seniors in rural areas also favor with strong intensity (84 percent favor, 46 percent rate 10).

# Where Savings from Lower Negotiated Drug Prices Should Go

- People want the savings from allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices to go toward expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits, especially seniors in rural areas.
- In a series of head-to-head tradeoffs, **most seniors consistently choose expanding coverage (56 percent)** over funding public research into new treatments and cures (15 percent) or making Medicare available to Americans starting at age 60 instead of 65 (9 percent).
- Among seniors in rural areas, **59 percent consistently choose expanding coverage** to include hearing, vision, and dental benefits. When considering each individual approach against another option:
- 71 percent of seniors prefer expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits while 12 percent prefer making Medicare available to Americans starting at age 60 instead of 65. Among seniors in rural areas, 74 percent prefer expanding coverage while 8 percent who prefer making Medicare available to Americans starting at age 60.
- 65 percent of seniors prefer expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits while 19 percent prefer funding public research into new treatments and cures. Among rural seniors, 67 percent prefer expanding Medicare coverage while 15 percent prefer funding public research.

# Views on Medicare and its Performance

- Across party lines, seniors have strongly favorable views toward Medicare. However, they have a more lukewarm rating of Medicare's performance in dealing with prescription drug prices.
- *Medicare favorability.* Overall, **86 percent of seniors** have a favorable impression of Medicare, including 91 percent of Democratic seniors, 85 percent of Republican seniors, and 79 percent of independent seniors.
- *Medicare Performance providing affordable health care.* A **73 percent majority** say Medicare is doing an excellent or good job providing affordable health care, including 81 percent of Democratic seniors, 71 percent of Republican seniors, and 56 percent of independent seniors.
- *Dealing with prescription drug prices.* Seniors rate Medicare more negatively in terms of dealing with prescription drug prices. **Just 46 percent** say Medicare is doing an excellent or good job, while 49 percent say it is doing a just fair or poor job. The drop off is across the board. By party, 48 percent of Democratic seniors say it is doing a just fair or poor job, as do 49 percent of Republicans, and 52 percent of independents.

# Medicare Drug Price Negotiation is a Voting Issue for Seniors

- 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 erode their base of support if they oppose it.
  - Overall, majorities across party lines would be more likely to vote for a candidate who favored allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices (73 percent more likely) and less likely to vote for a candidate who opposed this policy (67 percent less likely).
- This dynamic holds true when voters consider how they would respond to a Democratic candidate who favored or opposed this proposal and shows that a sizable portion of Republican seniors would vote for a Democrat who favored this proposal.
  - If a Democratic candidate favored allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices, 51 percent of seniors would be more likely to vote for them, including *78 percent of Democrats, 35 percent of independents, and 31 percent of Republicans* (29 percent of Republican men, and 33 percent of Republican women). Half of Republicans (51 percent) say it would make no difference in their vote, and 9 percent say they are unsure.
  - This 31 percent of Republican seniors who would vote for a Democrat underscores the importance of this issue, independent of partisanship and partisan loyalty.
  - If a Democratic candidate opposed, 55 percent of seniors would be less likely to vote for that candidate, including 60 percent of Democrats, 49 percent of Independents, and 53 percent of Republicans. Democratic seniors, including 56 percent of low-propensity Democrats, would abandon a Democratic candidate to punish them for their opposition on this.



# Medicare Drug Price Negotiation and Low-Propensity Democrats

- Medicare negotiation is powerful for persuasion and mobilization. It is an issue that can motivate low-propensity Democratic seniors who are more likely than others to name prescription drug prices as an important issue.
- Low-propensity Democrats (Democratic seniors who indicate lower levels of their likelihood to vote in 2022) are more likely than others to name prescription drug prices as a very important issue. A strong **84 percent** of low-propensity Democratic seniors say prescription drug prices are a very important issue (rate 8-10 on 0-10 scale of importance), compared to 75 percent of likely voter Democratic seniors, and 65 percent of all seniors.
- If a Democratic candidate favored allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices, **78 percent** of low-propensity Democrats would be more likely to vote for that candidate.
- If a Democratic candidate opposed allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices, **56 percent** of low-propensity Democrats would be less likely to vote for that candidate.

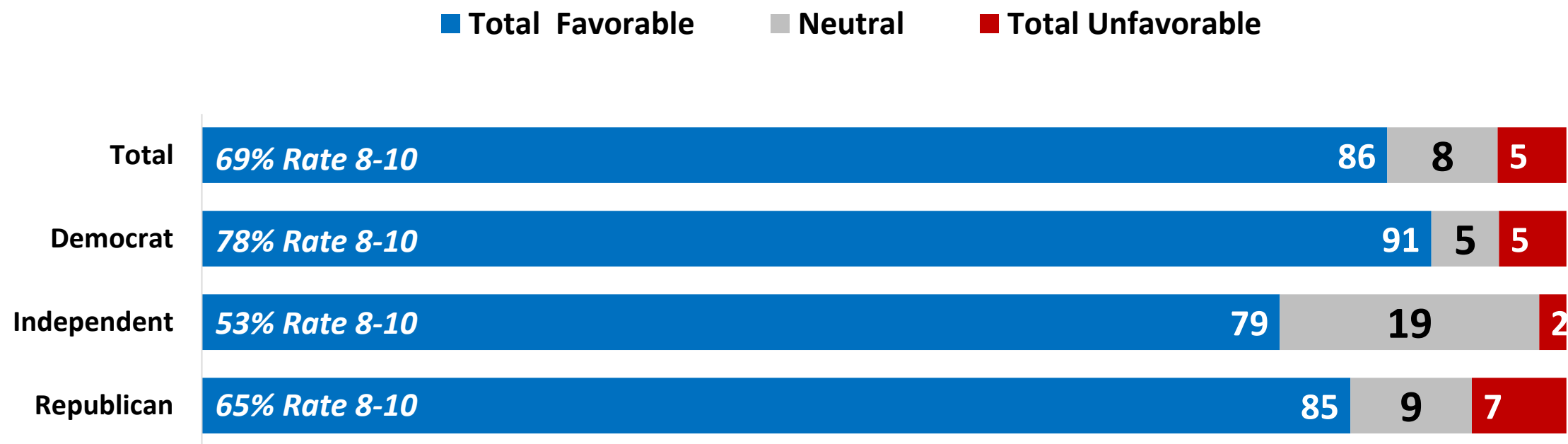




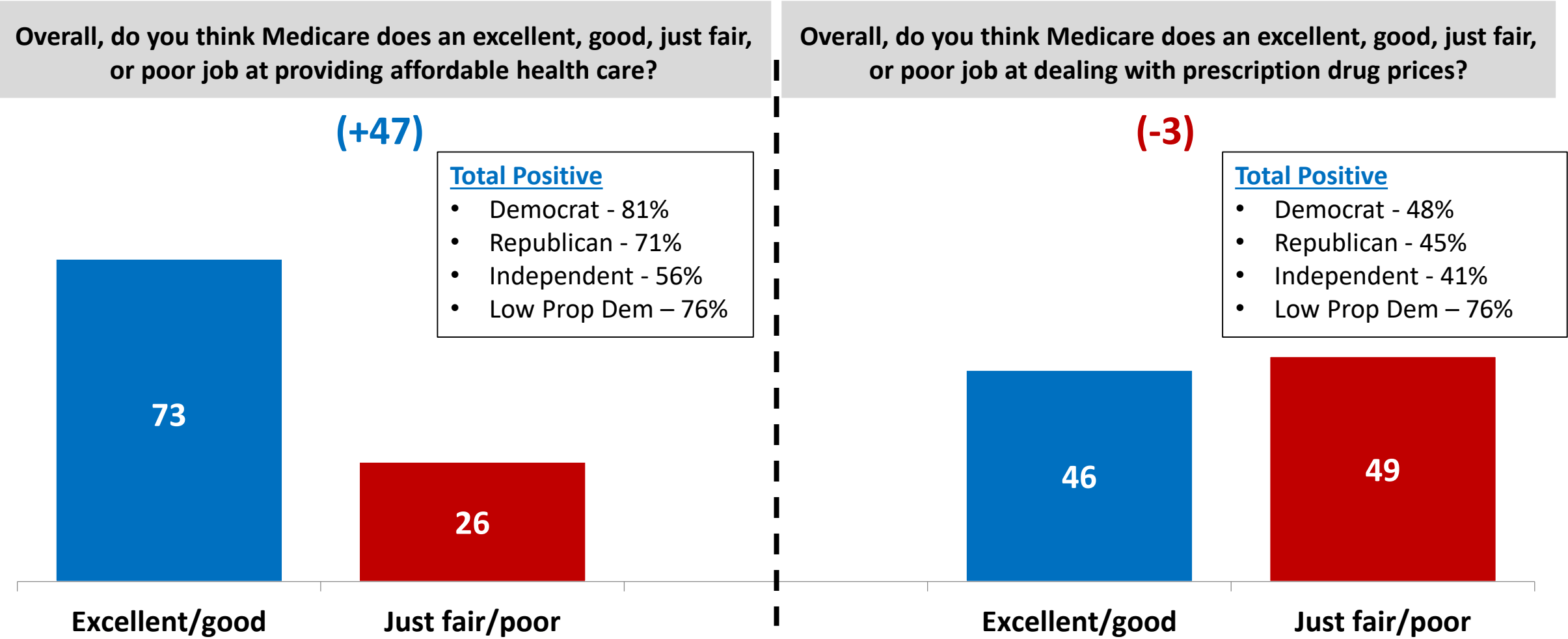
# Views Toward Medicare

# Seniors across party lines hold strongly favorable views toward Medicare

How favorable are you towards Medicare?

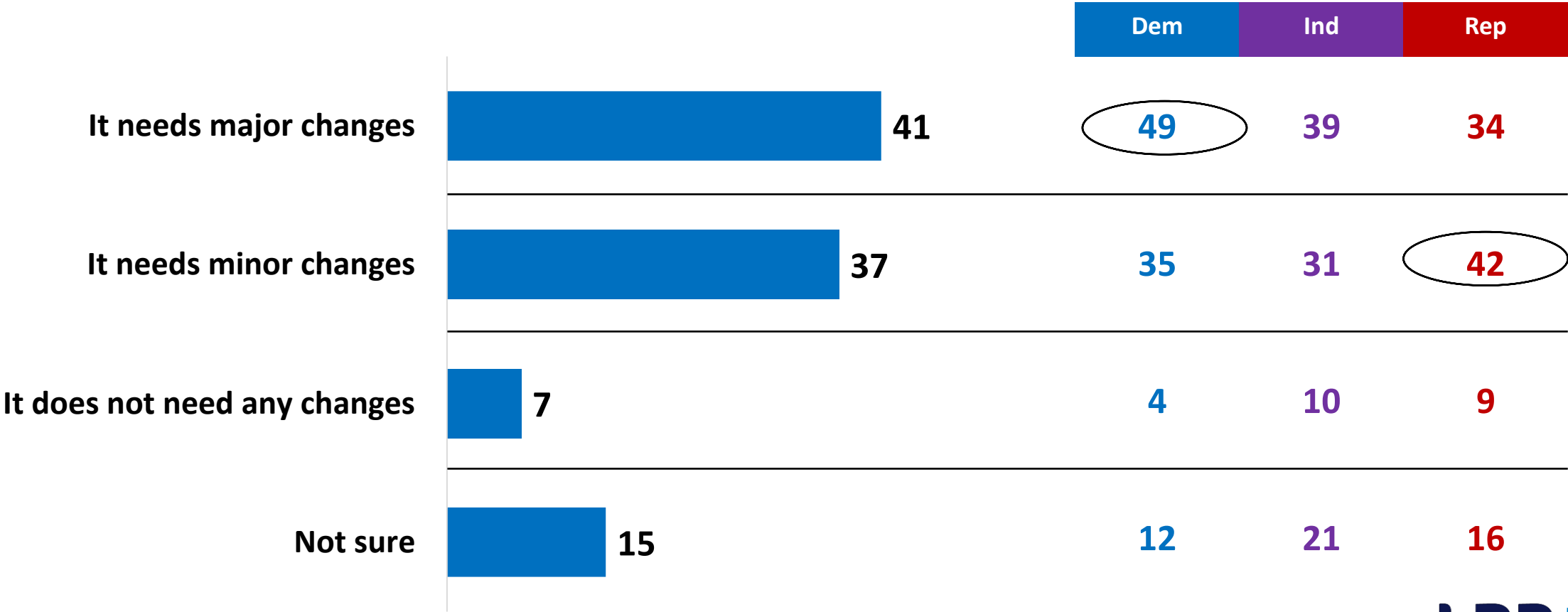


Seniors across party lines approve of Medicare’s ability to provide affordable health care. Their handling of prescription drugs draws lower approval, with the exception of low-propensity Democrats.



Almost 80 percent of seniors believe Medicare needs either major or minor changes in how it deals with prescription drug prices. Democrats are more likely to say Medicare needs major changes.

When it comes to potential changes to how Medicare deals with prescription prices, which of the following is closest to your opinion?

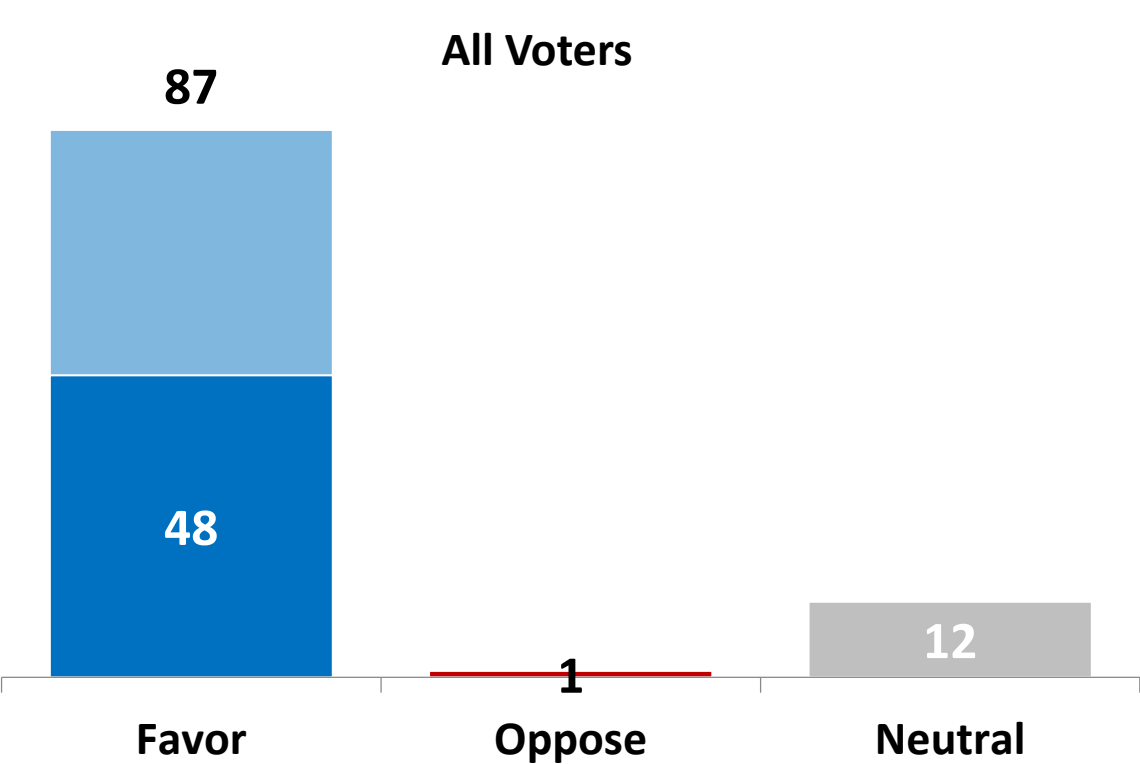




# Support for Medicare Drug Price Negotiation

# 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)

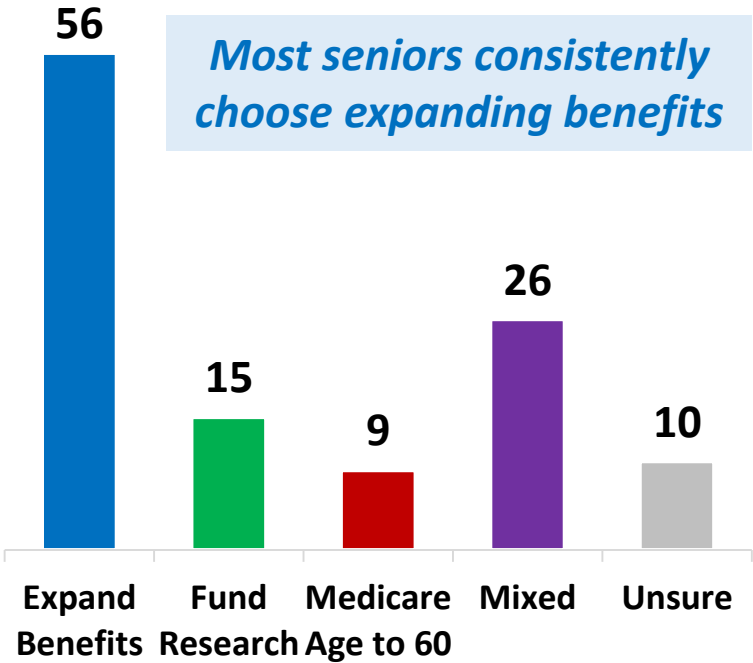
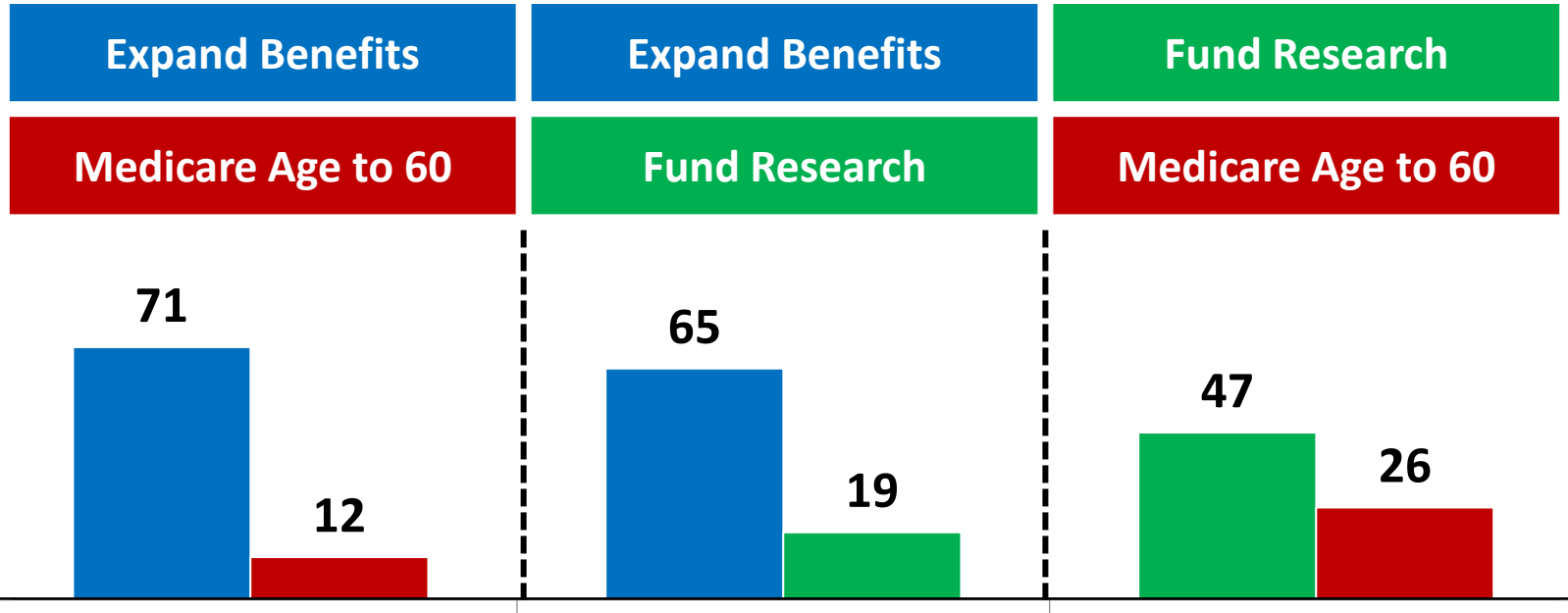


# Where Do Seniors Think Savings From Lower Medicare Drug Prices Should Go?



# 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

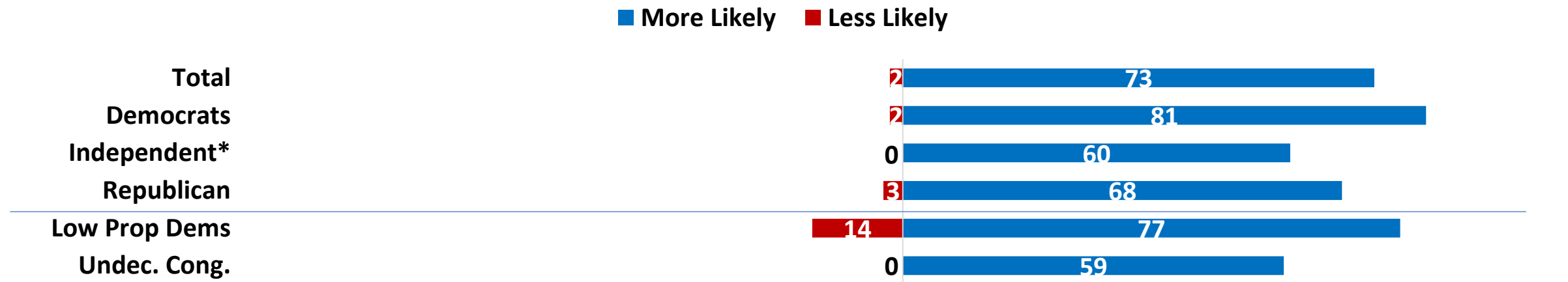
\*Data reflects calculating consistency across all three questions



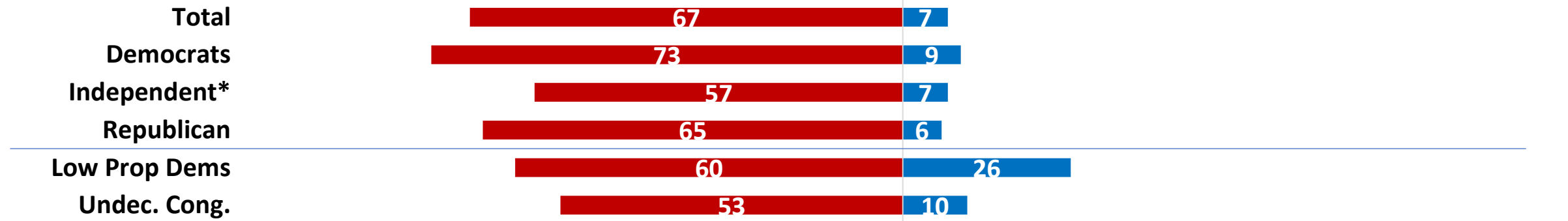
# Medicare Drug Price Negotiation is Politically Salient for Seniors

# 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?



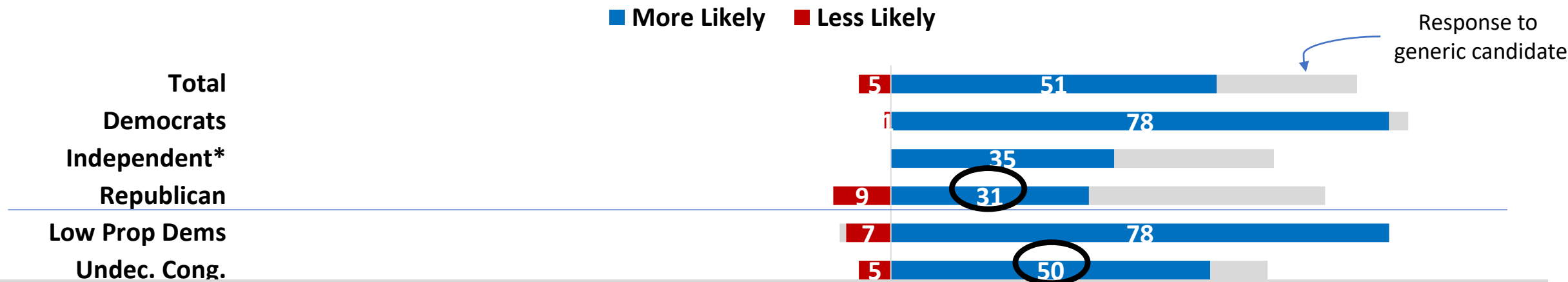
If a candidate for Congress OPPOSED Medicare negotiation, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate?



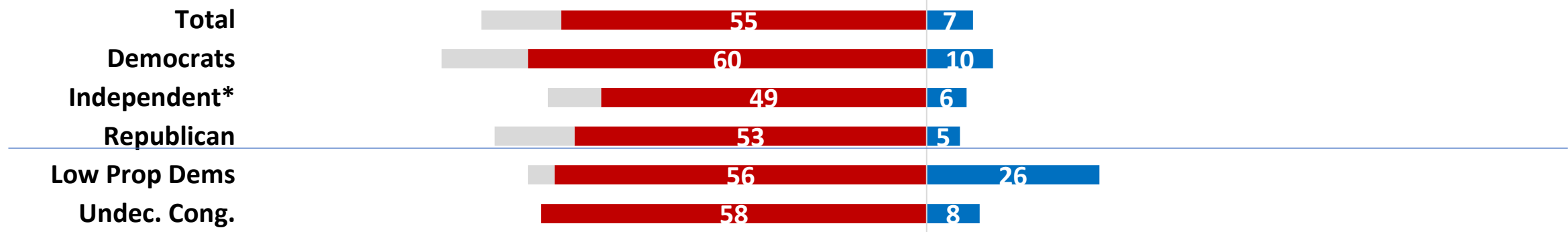
Split sampled questions  
\*Small Sample Size

# 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?



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

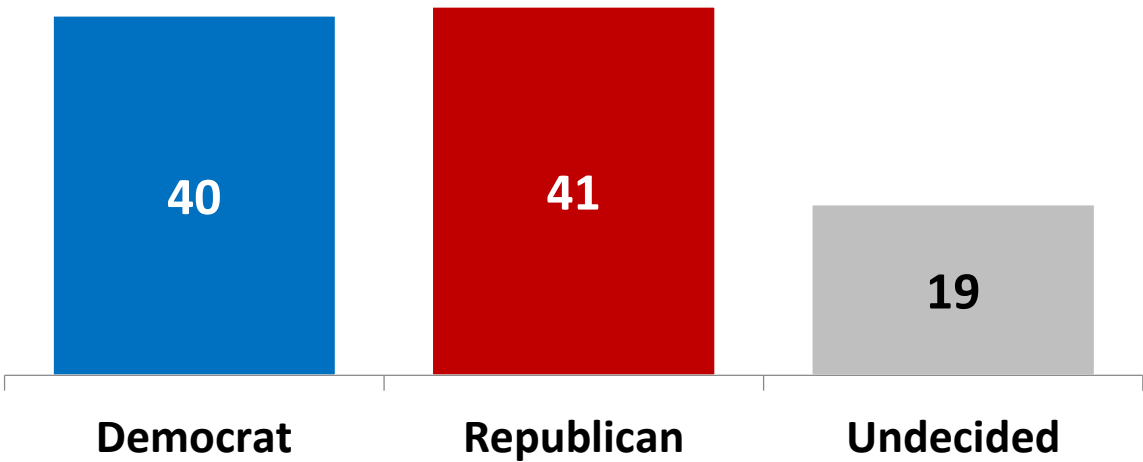
# Political Context



# Seniors divide evenly in the generic Congressional ballot, with nearly 1 in 5 currently undecided.

If the 2022 election for Congress were held today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate in your district, the Republican candidate, or are you undecided?

All Voters



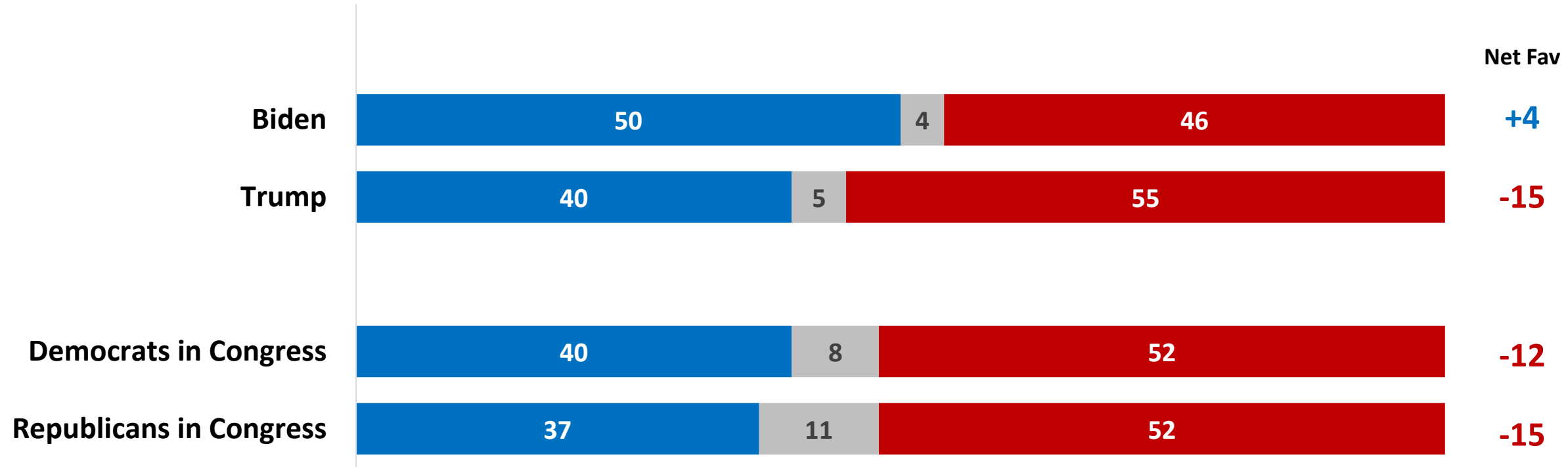
	Democrat	Republican	Undecided
Men	36	44	20
Women	43	38	18
Democrat ID	88	1	15
Independent ID	15	15	67
Republican ID	4	82	14
Low-prop Dems	84	0	16
Urban	47	33	19
Suburban	44	39	17
Rural	28	49	22



# President Biden remains above water among Seniors, while Trump and members of Congress from both parties are net unfavorable.

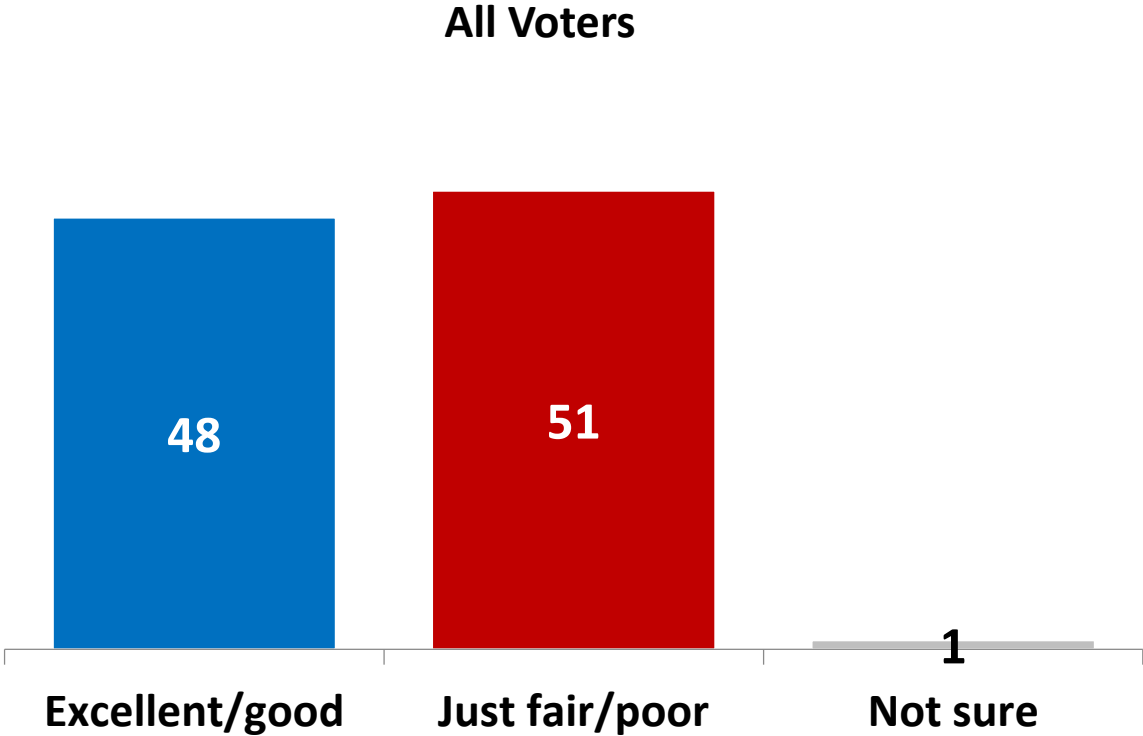
How favorable are you to each of the following?

■ Total Favorable    ■ Neutral    ■ Total Unfavorable



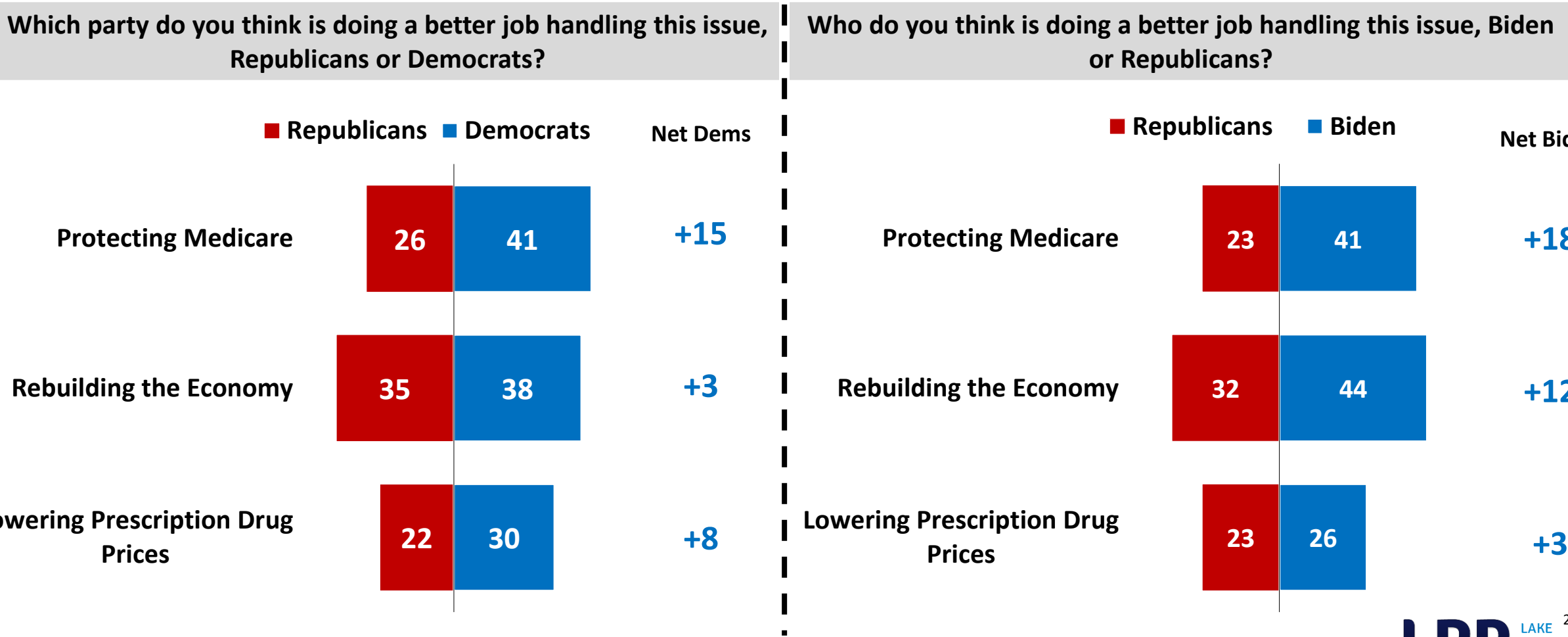
# Overall, 48% of seniors say President Biden is doing an excellent or good job.

Overall, do you think Joe Biden is doing an excellent, good, just fair, or poor job as President?



	Excellent/ good	Just fair/poor	Net Positive
Men	43	57	-14
Women	53	46	+7
Democrat ID	92	8	+84
Independent ID	46	54	-8
Republican ID	10	89	-79
Low-prop Dems	82	17	+65
Urban	54	46	+8
Suburban	52	47	+5
Rural	39	61	-22
Undecided on Cong	47	51	-4

Seniors see President Biden and the Democrats doing a better job than Republicans across issues. Democrats in Congress have a marginally larger advantage over Biden on lowering prescription drug prices.





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