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# Tax the Rich Poll

Findings and Recommendations from a  
Nationwide Online Survey

March 28, 2019

# Survey Methodology

- A nationwide online survey of N=1,300 likely 2020 voters was conducted from March 15-20, 2019 . It included n=1,000 voters nationwide, an n=100 oversample of persuadable Independents, and n=100 oversamples in both Iowa and Wisconsin.
- Persuadable Independents (N=365) were defined as voters who both identify as Independents and are not sure whether they will support Donald Trump or the Democratic nominee in 2020.
- As the survey was conducted online, all the respondents have access to the Internet via a computer or a smartphone. Because it was conducted online, there is not a margin of error.

# **POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

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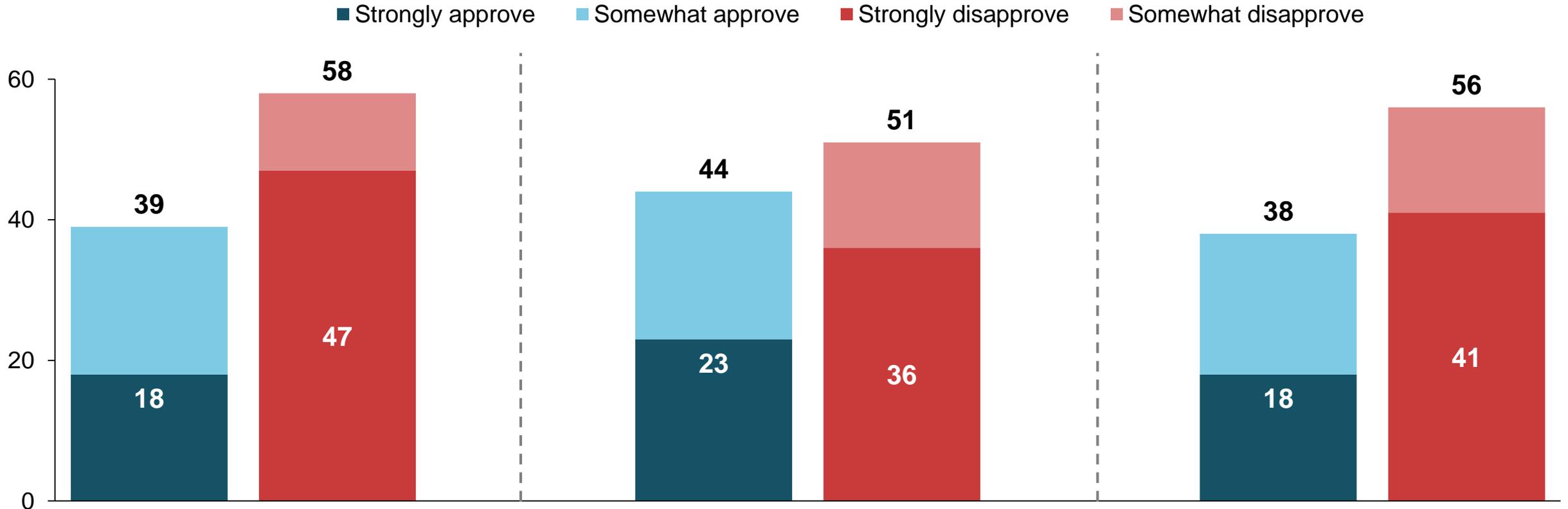
# Trump's job rating stands at 39%. He does a bit better on the economy, but no better on taxes.

The gap between Trump's overall rating and his rating on the economy is biggest with men 50+

Trump Job Rating: Overall

Trump Job Rating: The Economy

Trump Job Rating: Taxes



Approve-Disapprove

- 19

- 7

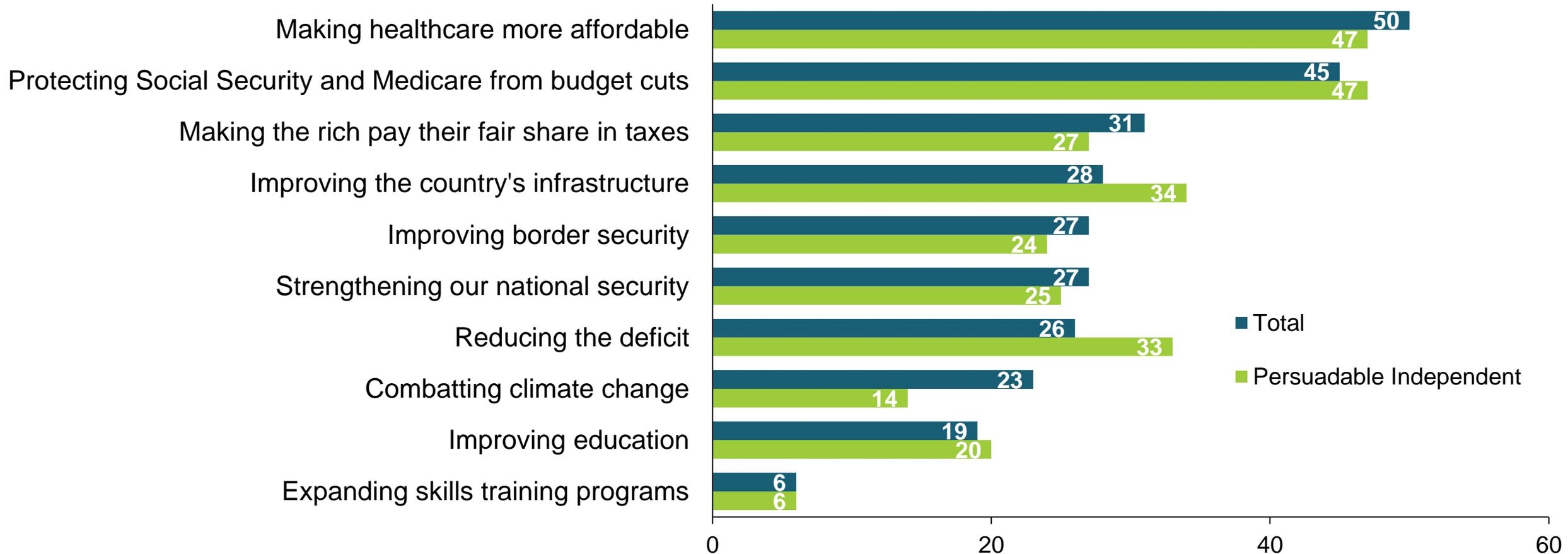
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Making healthcare more affordable and protecting Social Security and Medicare from budget cuts clearly emerge as the top two issue priorities.

“Making the rich pay their fair share in taxes” emerged as the third most important issue overall.

**Issue Priorities**  
*(Top 3 choice % combined)*

*Which of the following do you think should be the three biggest issue priorities for our country right now?*



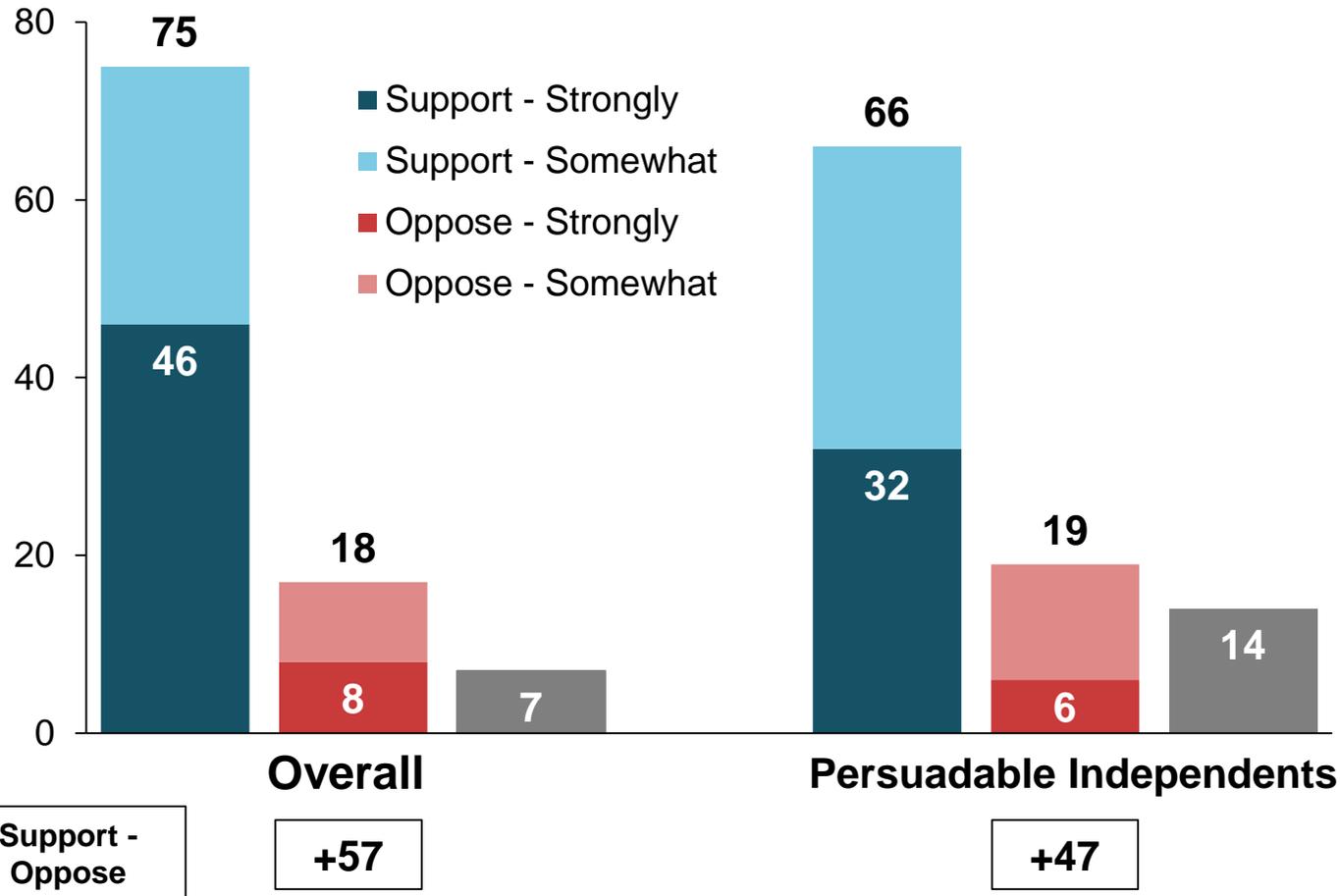
# **VIEWS ON TAXING THE RICH**

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# Support for raising taxes on the rich is broad and intense.

Support is most intense with liberals, Democrats, union members and voters of color.

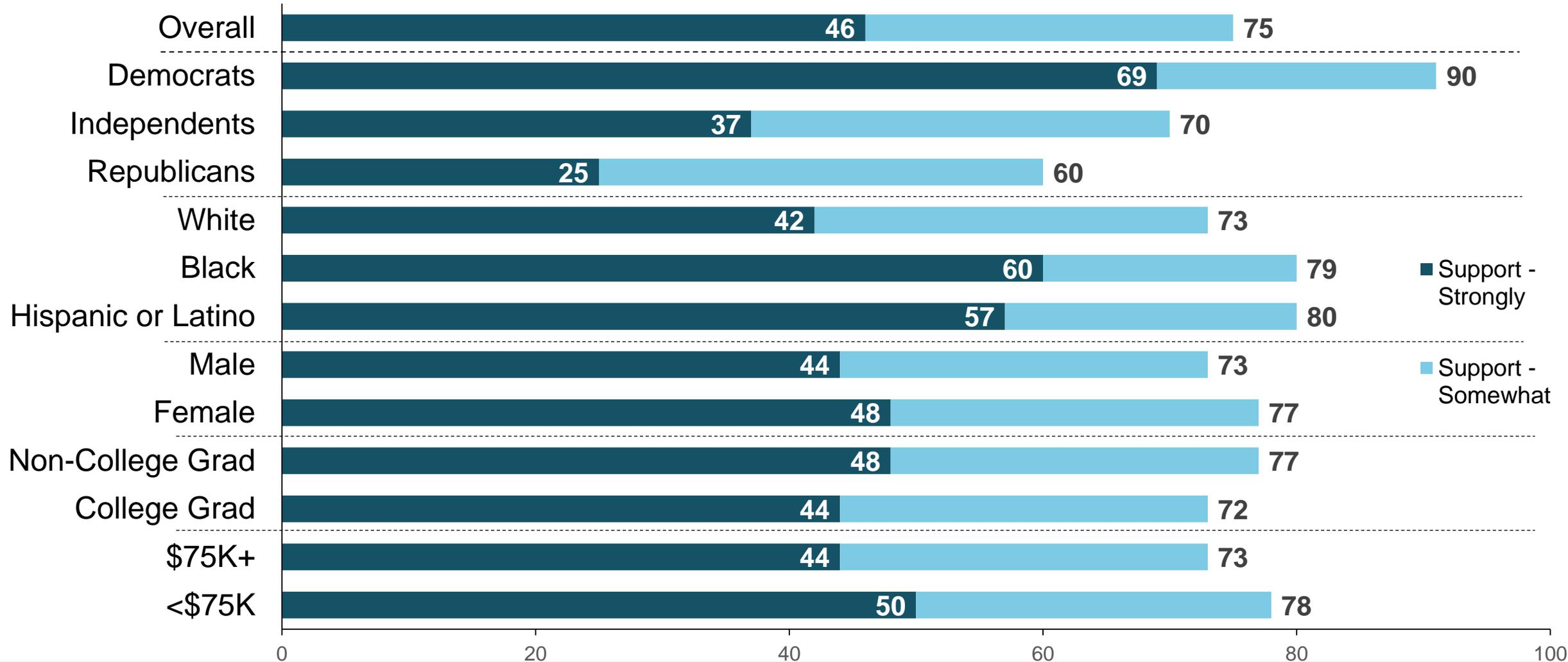
Do you support or oppose raising taxes on the rich?



Strongest Supporters (% Strongly Support)	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>46</b>
Liberals	76
Democratic Men	74
Democrats with college degree	74
Union members	62
Black or African American	60
Hispanic or Latino	57
Income < \$25k	57
18-29	55

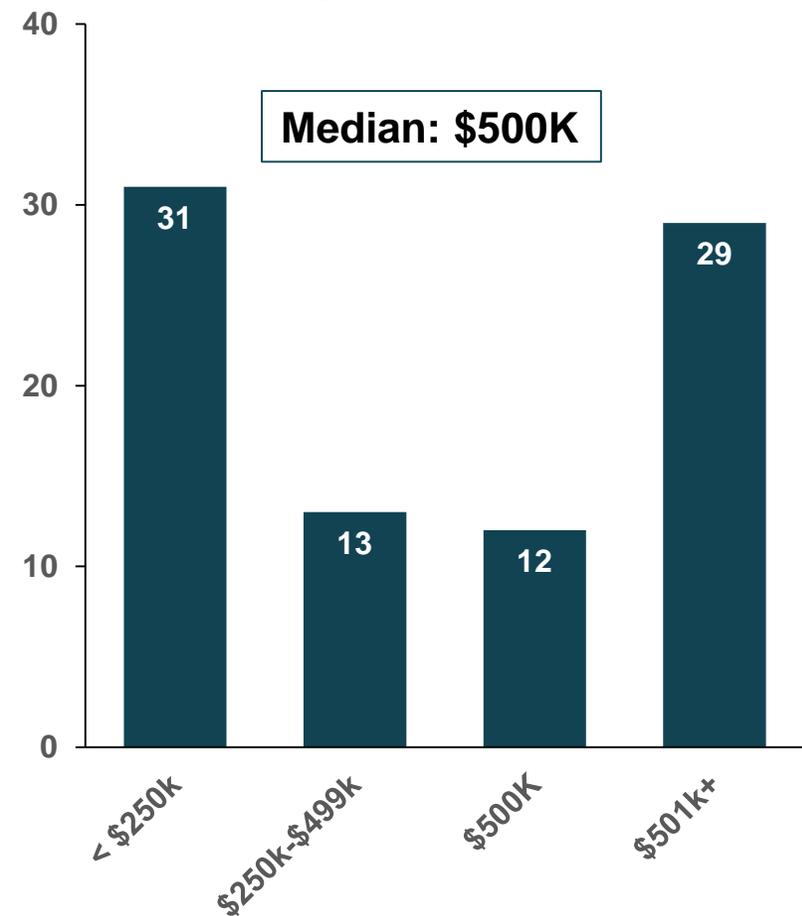
There is broad support for raising taxes on the rich across partisan and demographic lines. Even 60% of Republicans support it, and high-income voters are nearly as supportive as low-income voters.

### Support for Raising Taxes on Rich

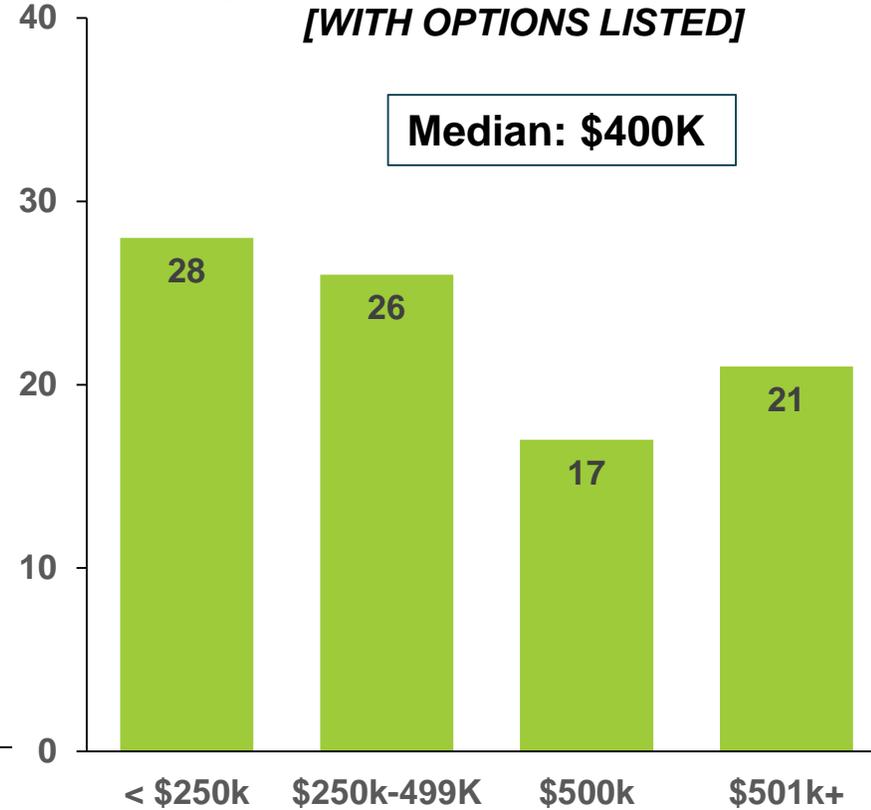


\$400-\$500K is the median annual income voters consider to be rich. However, voters believe total assets are a much better metric than annual income for determining whether someone is rich.

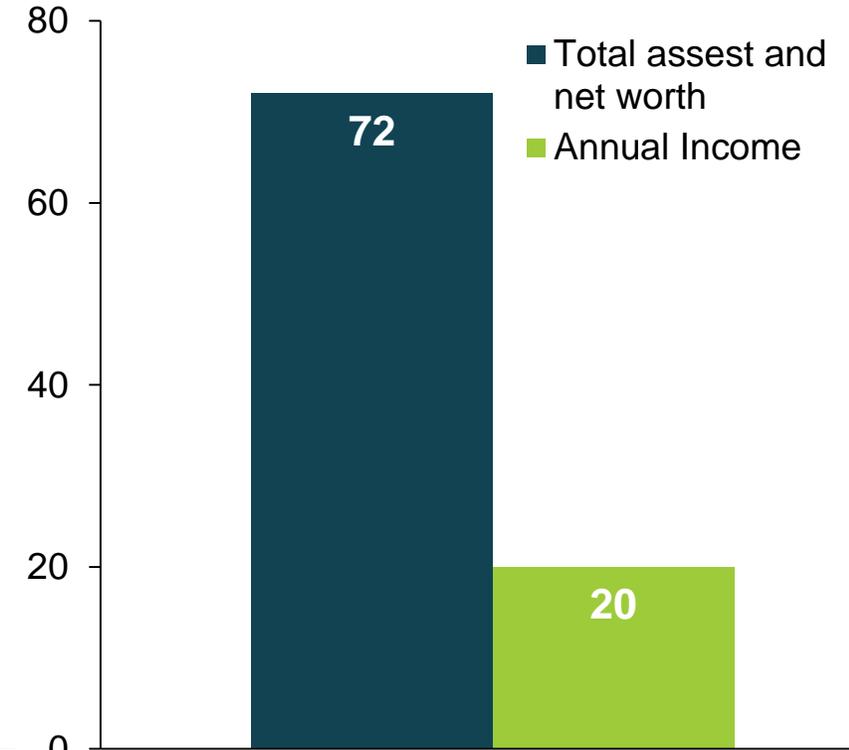
At what level of annual income per year do you consider someone to be "rich"?  
[OPEN-ENDED]



From the annual income levels below, please select the LOWEST income level PER YEAR that you would consider someone to be 'rich'.  
[WITH OPTIONS LISTED]



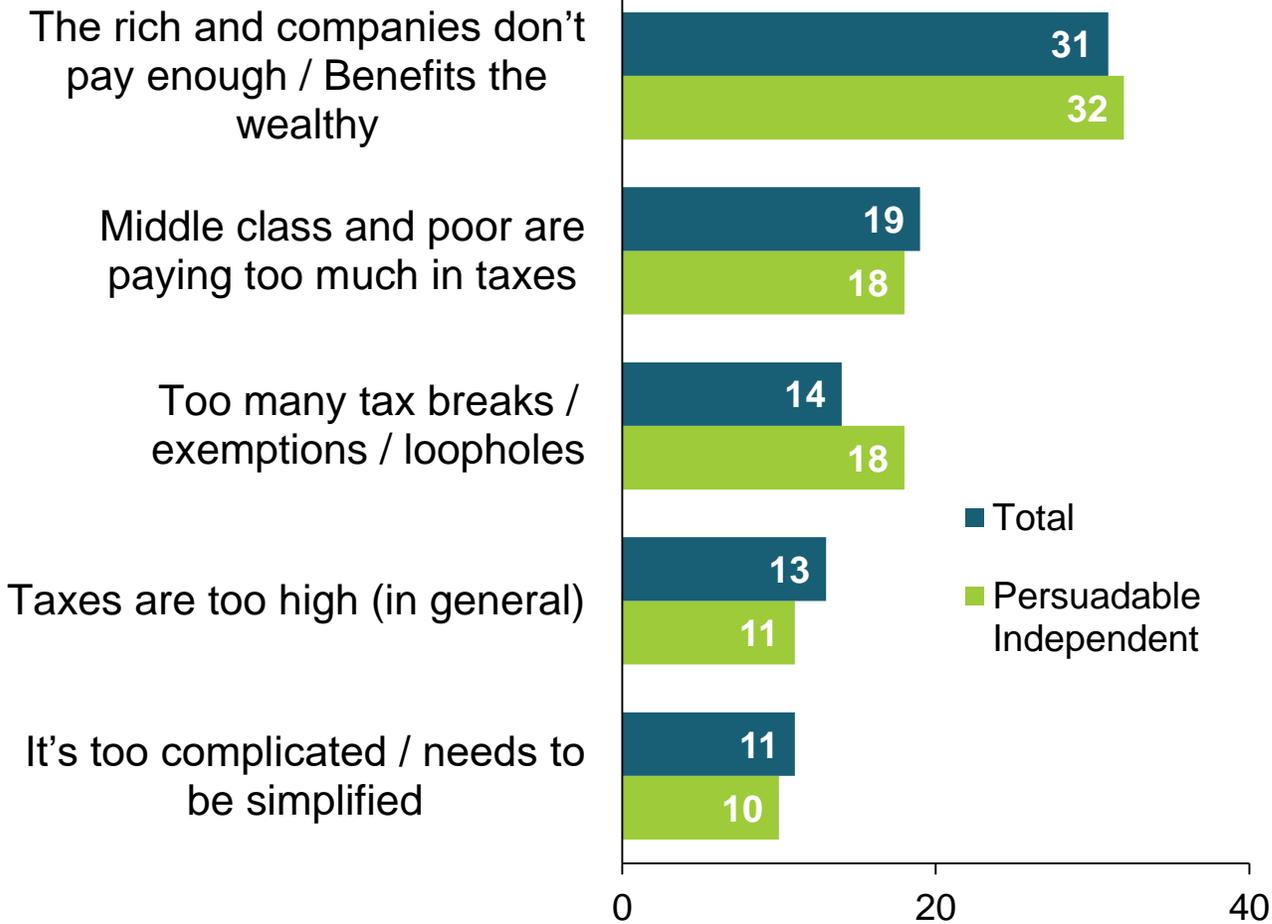
Which of the following do you consider more important when determining whether someone is 'rich'?



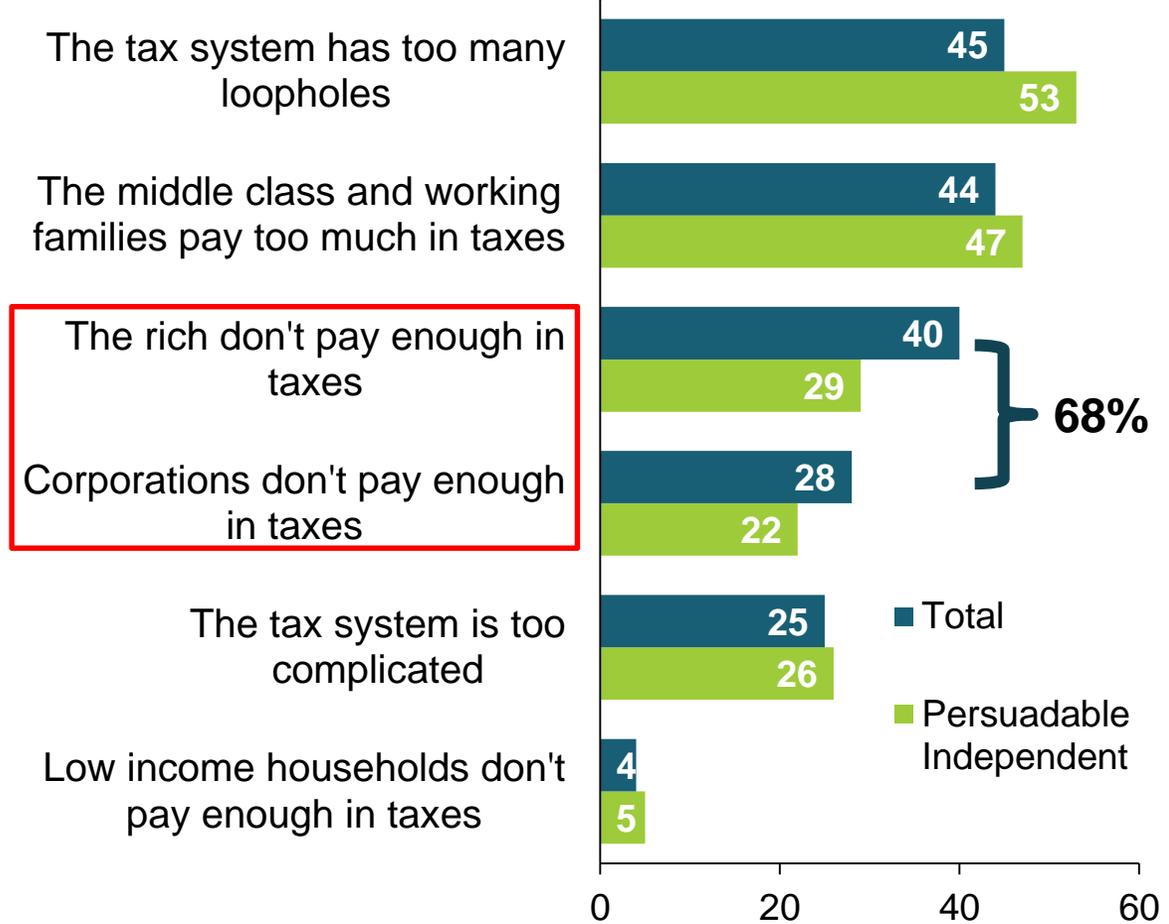
The rich and corporations not paying enough in taxes clearly emerges as the biggest problem with our tax system. The middle class paying too much and too many loopholes are seen as the next biggest problems.

**Biggest problem with the U.S. tax system**

**OPEN-ENDED**

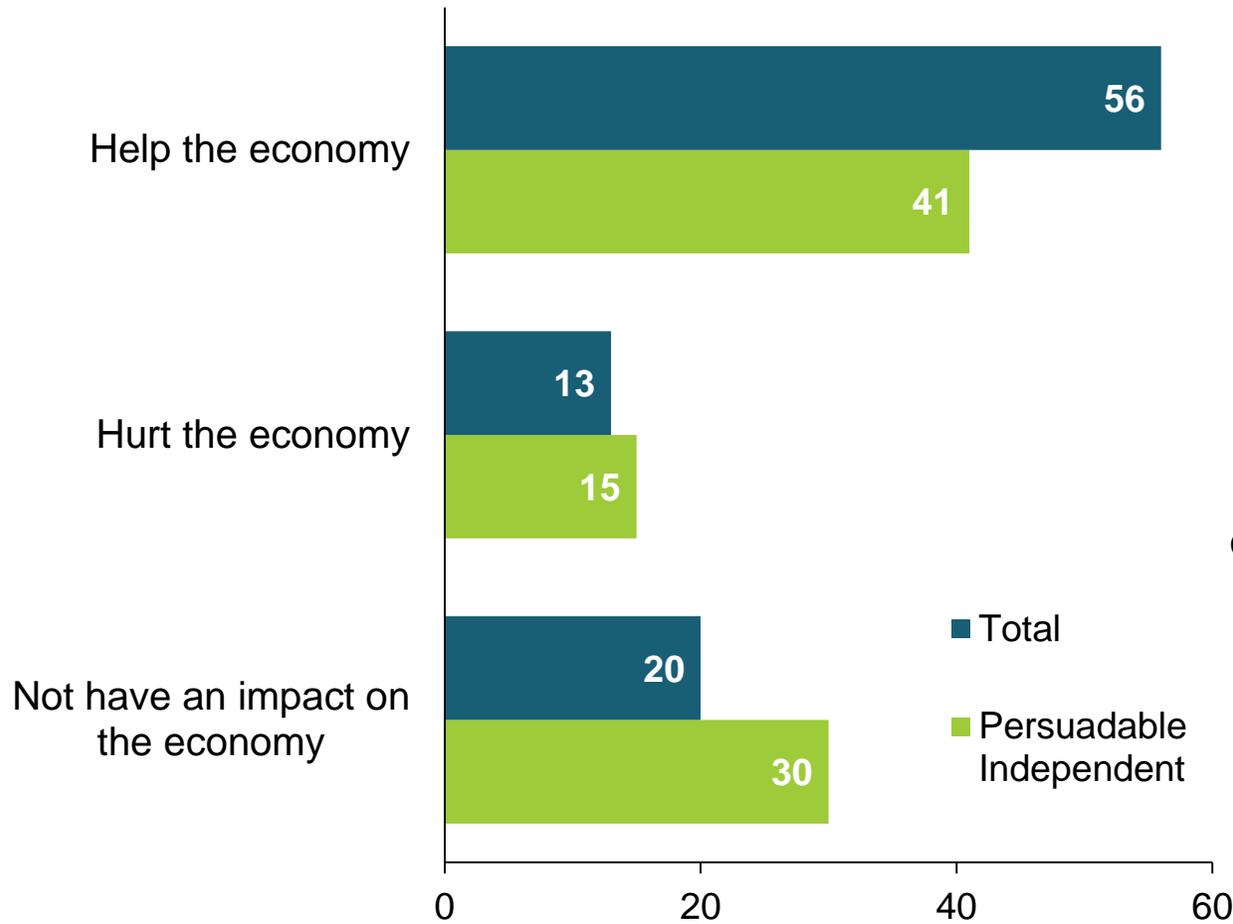


**WITH OPTIONS LISTED**

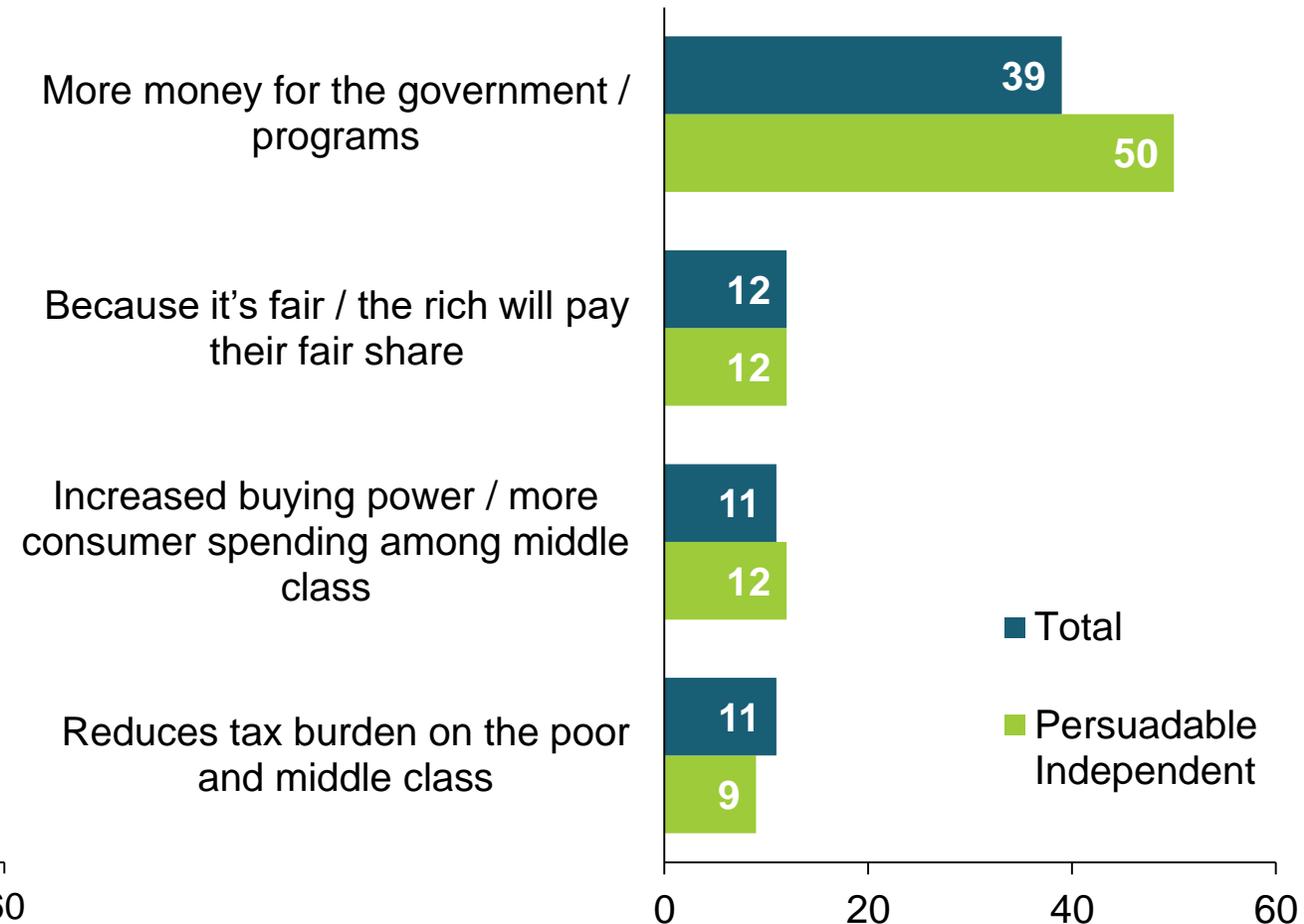


A majority of voters believe raising taxes on the rich would help the economy, while only 13% believe it would hurt. That the revenue could be used to provide more funding to key priorities clearly emerges as the biggest reason higher taxes on the rich would help the economy.

*Do you think raising taxes on the rich would help the economy, hurt the economy, or not impact the economy?*

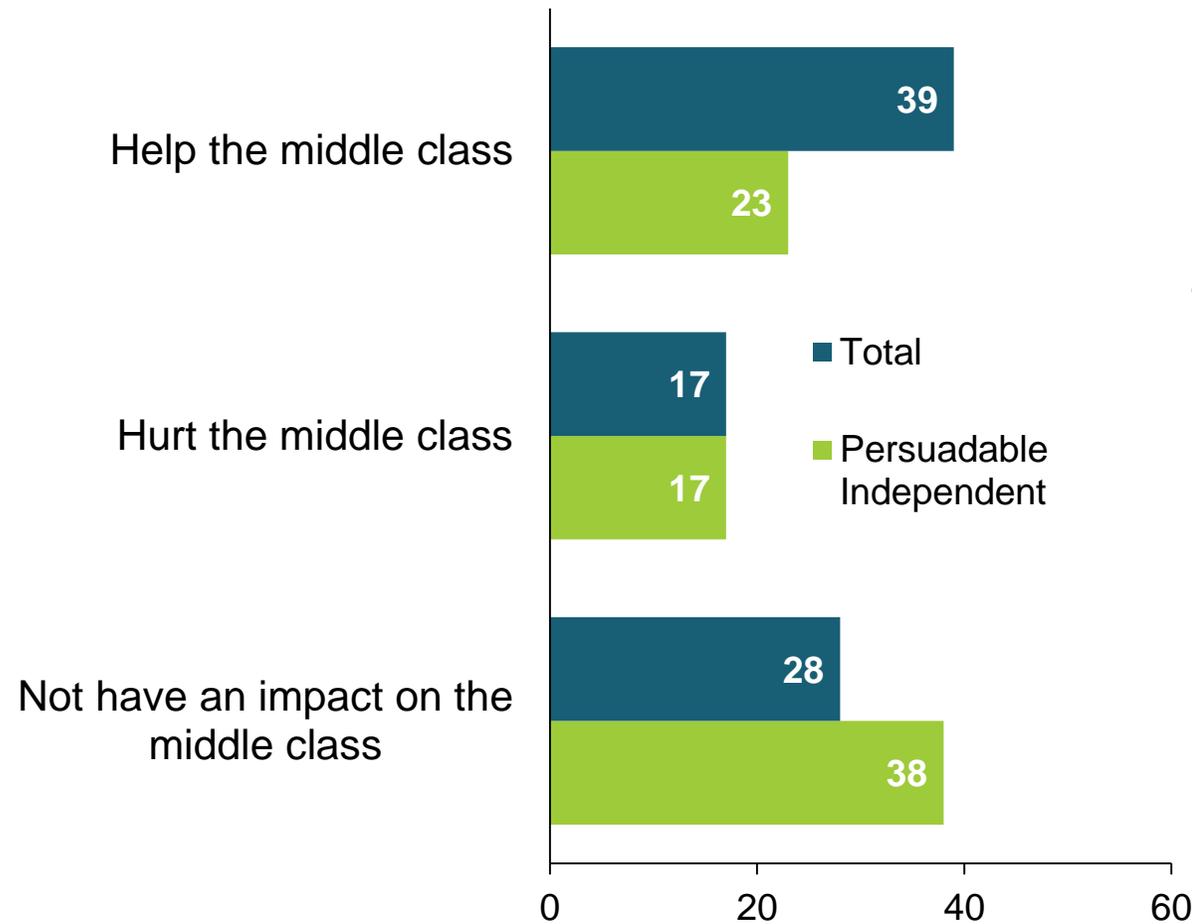


*How do you think raising taxes on the rich would help the economy? [OPEN-ENDED]*

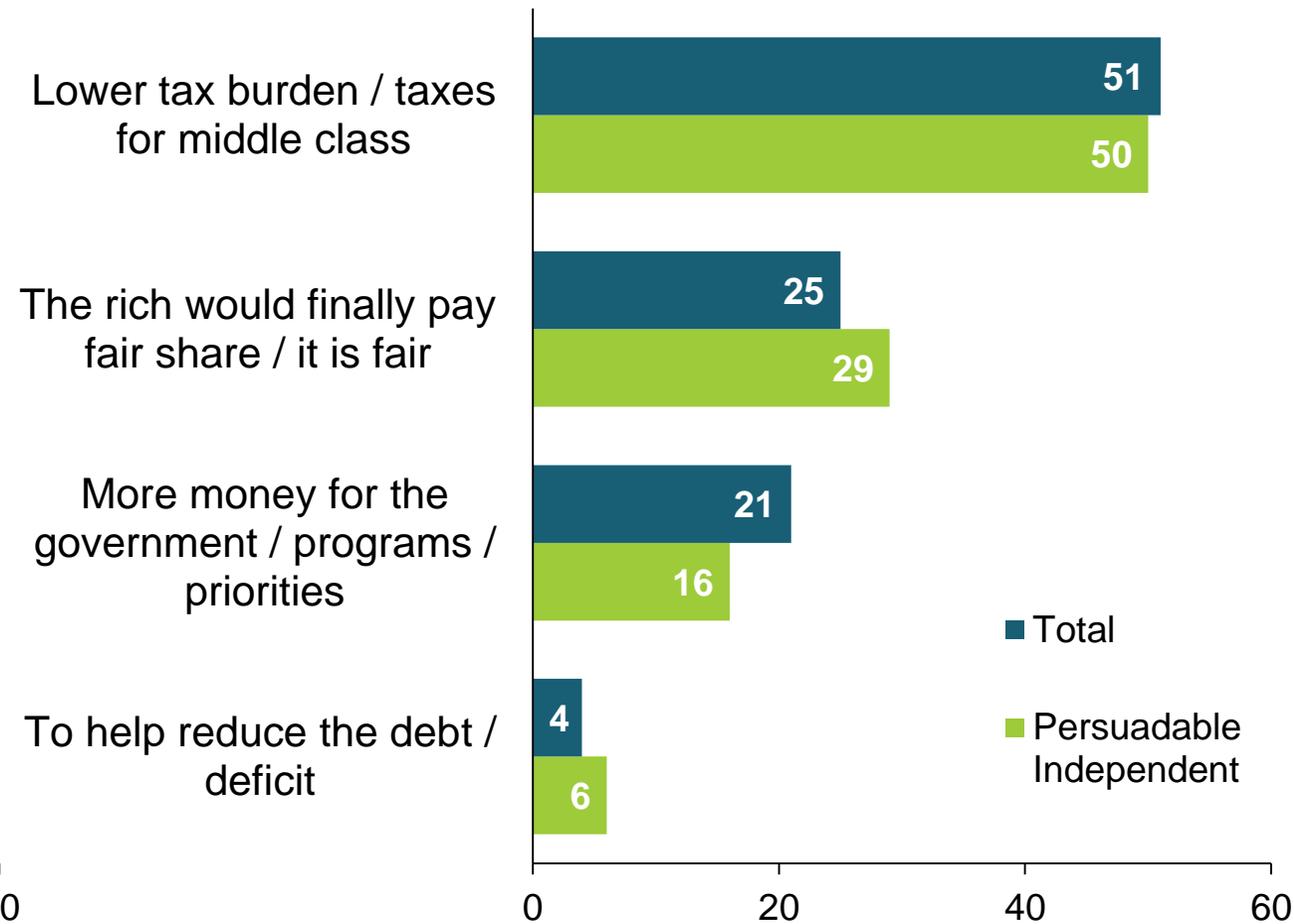


# Voters are less convinced that raising taxes on the rich would help the middle class, though a plurality believes that it would. The main reason it is seen as helping is by reducing the tax burden on the middle class.

*Do you think raising taxes on the rich would help the middle class, hurt the middle class, or not impact the middle class?*



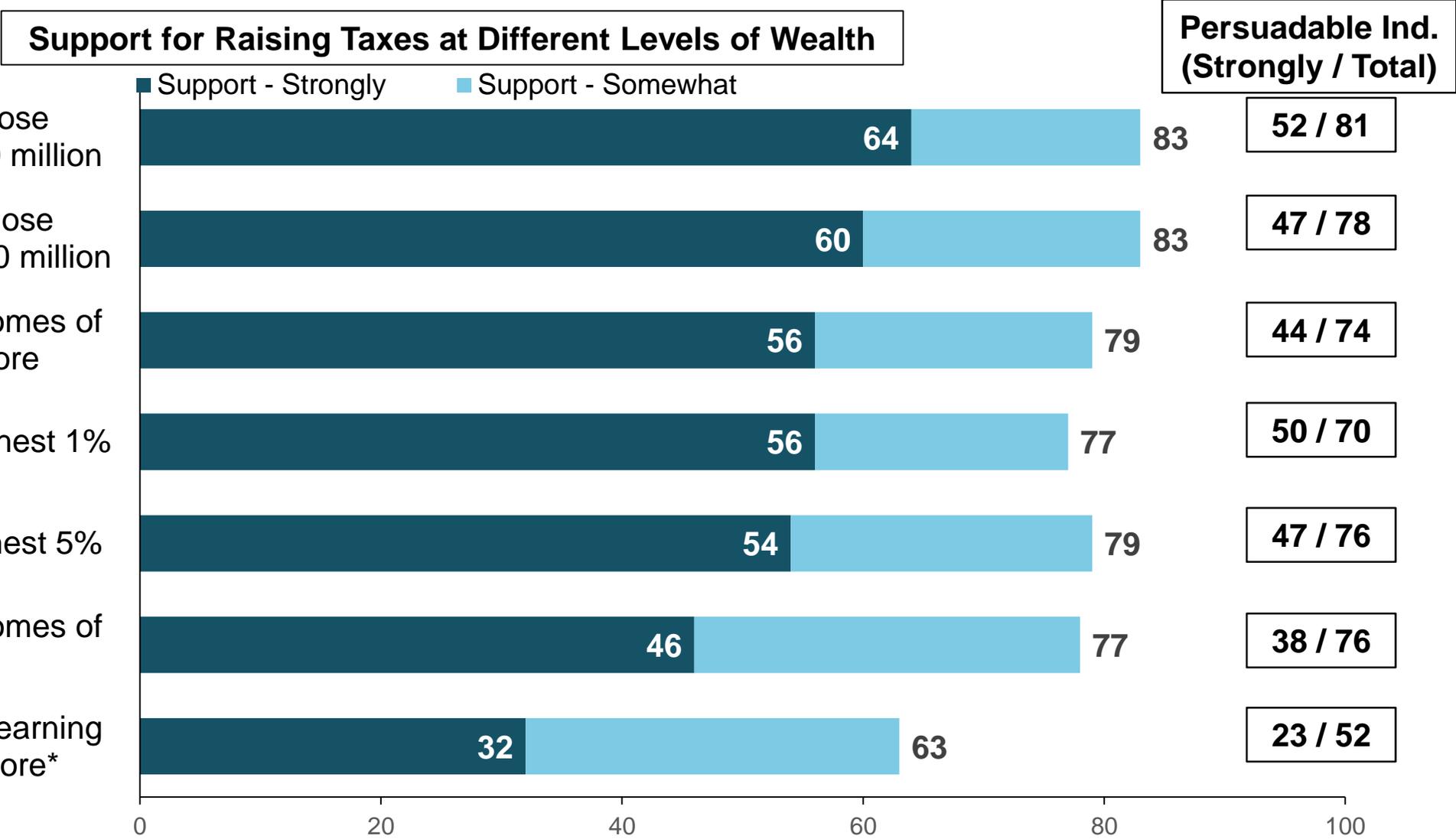
*How do you think raising taxes on the rich would help the middle class?*



# **SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC TAX PROPOSALS**

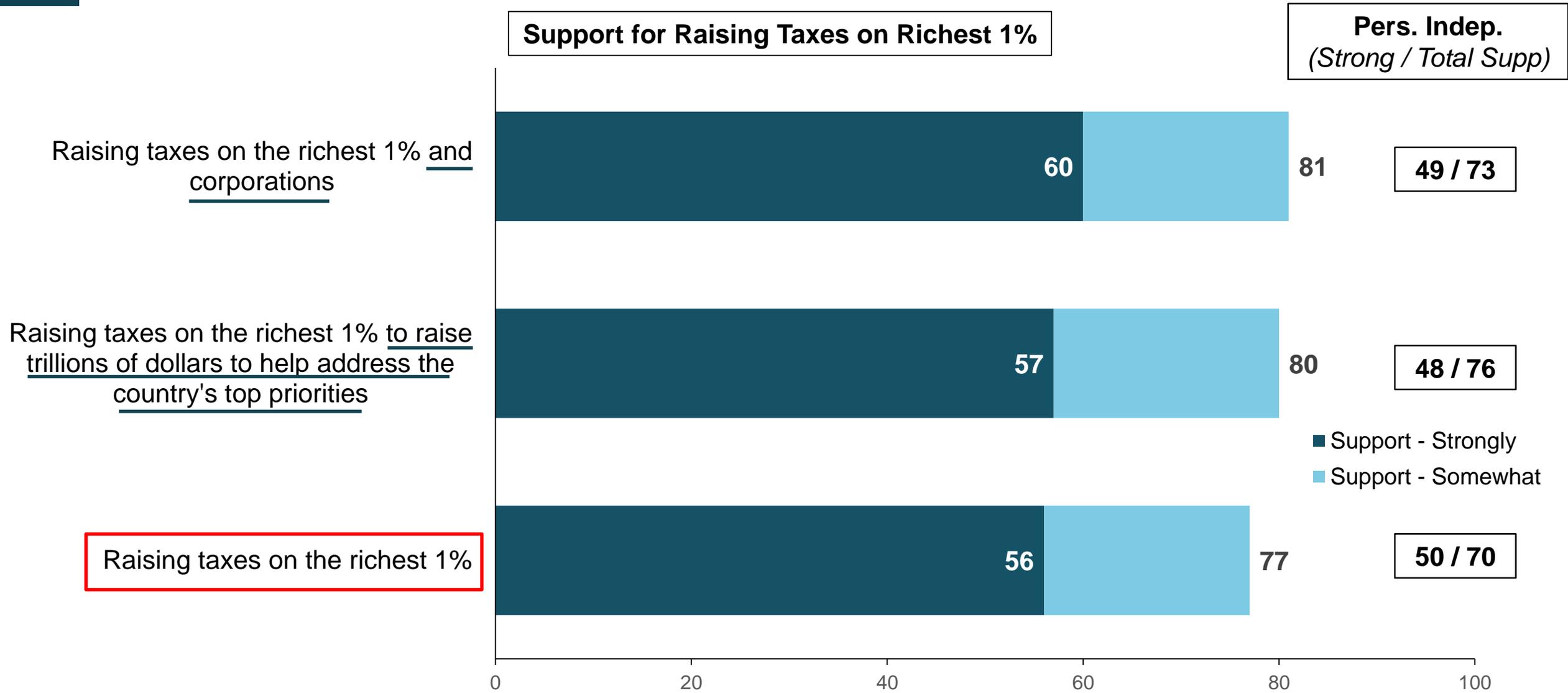
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There is broad support for raising taxes on anyone earning \$250K or more. Proposals based on household wealth generated the most support, followed by the richest percentiles. Raising taxes on those with a household wealth of \$10 million or the richest 5% generates as much support as proposals that impact much wealthier households.



\*Support for raising taxes on those earning \$250K or more was 3 points higher (66%) when voters saw it before proposals at higher income levels

Support for raising taxes on the richest 1% is so strong that adding references to raising taxes on corporations or referencing how the money would be used increases support only slightly. These additions likely would have had a larger impact if paired with raising taxes on those earning \$250K+.



# MESSAGING

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Messages focused on making the rich pay their fair share, protecting funding for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, and investing in priorities like healthcare, education and infrastructure were the most effective of the ten messages tested on raising taxes on the rich. The “fair share” and “Debt/Medicare/SS” messages were most effective with persuadable voters.

<b>Most Effective Messages for Raising Taxes on the Rich</b> <i>(% Top Choice / % Top 3 Choice)</i>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Persuadable Ind.</b>	<b>Gainers*</b>
<p>[FAIR SHARE] The rich take advantage of many tax loopholes, leaving the rest of us to pick up the tab, even as they’ve gotten richer. We need to raise taxes on the rich so they pay their fair share, and make our tax system fairer for working families.</p>	<p><b>21 / 55</b></p>	<p><b>24 / 58</b></p>	<p><b>22 / 60</b></p>
<p>[DEBT/MEDICARE/SOC SEC] The recent tax cuts for the rich increased the debt by nearly 2 trillion dollars and put funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security at risk. We need to raise taxes on the rich to make sure these programs are protected.</p>	<p><b>22 / 50</b></p>	<p><b>21 / 52</b></p>	<p><b>23 / 51</b></p>
<p>[INVEST IN PRIORITIES] Raising taxes on the rich will allow us to invest in key priorities such as improving education, lowering healthcare costs and repairing and upgrading our infrastructure, such as our crumbling roads, bridges and tunnels.</p>	<p><b>15 / 46</b></p>	<p><b>13 / 40</b></p>	<p><b>15 / 43</b></p>

\*"Gainers" refers to those who shifted to support or became more supportive of raising taxes on the rich post-messaging. Their partisan and demographic makeup is similar to voters overall.

# Other Messages Tested in Support for Raising Taxes on the Rich

## *Ranked by % Top 3 Choice*

[THEY CAN AFFORD IT] The richest 1% now own nearly 40% of the nation's wealth. The rich can afford to pay more in taxes to give back to the country that has given them so much.

[BROKEN PROMISE] Working Americans were sold a promise that lowering taxes for so-called "job creators" would lead to increased investment and better paying jobs. Instead, the rich used those tax breaks to make themselves richer. It's time for them to give the taxpayers their money back.

[OUTSOURCING & PROFIT SHIFTING] The recent tax cuts encourage corporations to outsource jobs by lowering the tax rate on offshore profits. We need to make sure corporations pay their fair share by taxing offshore profits at the same rate as profits here at home.

[INCOME INEQUALITY] Income inequality in the U.S. is now at its highest level in decades. We need to raise taxes on the rich in order to reduce income inequality so that middle- and lower-income Americans can share in more of our country's growth.

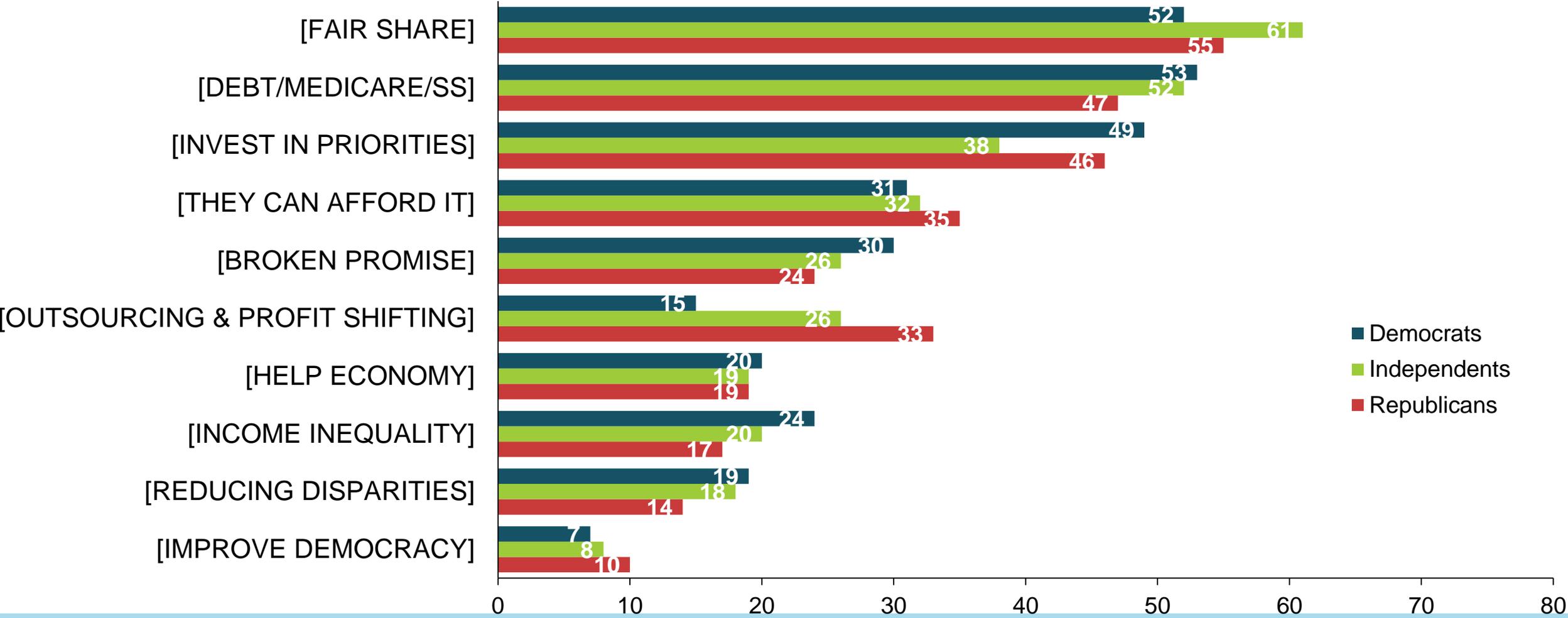
[HELP ECONOMY] Raising taxes on the rich will help grow our economy for everyone because right now, our tax system rewards the rich for hoarding profits. This increases inequality and blocks real opportunity for everyday people, while starving the middle-class of much needed investments and protections.

[REDUCING DISPARITIES] As the gap between the rich and everyone else has grown over the past decade, economic disparities along gender, racial and regional lines have grown even more. We need to raise taxes on the rich to reduce these disparities and level the playing field for all Americans.

[IMPROVE DEMOCRACY] Raising taxes on the rich will help our democracy and make Washington less dysfunctional by reducing the amount of money the rich can spend to influence our politics.

These three messages were the most effective across partisan lines, and with all major demographic groups as well.

**Pro-Tax the Rich Messages by Partisanship**  
**% Top 3 Choice**



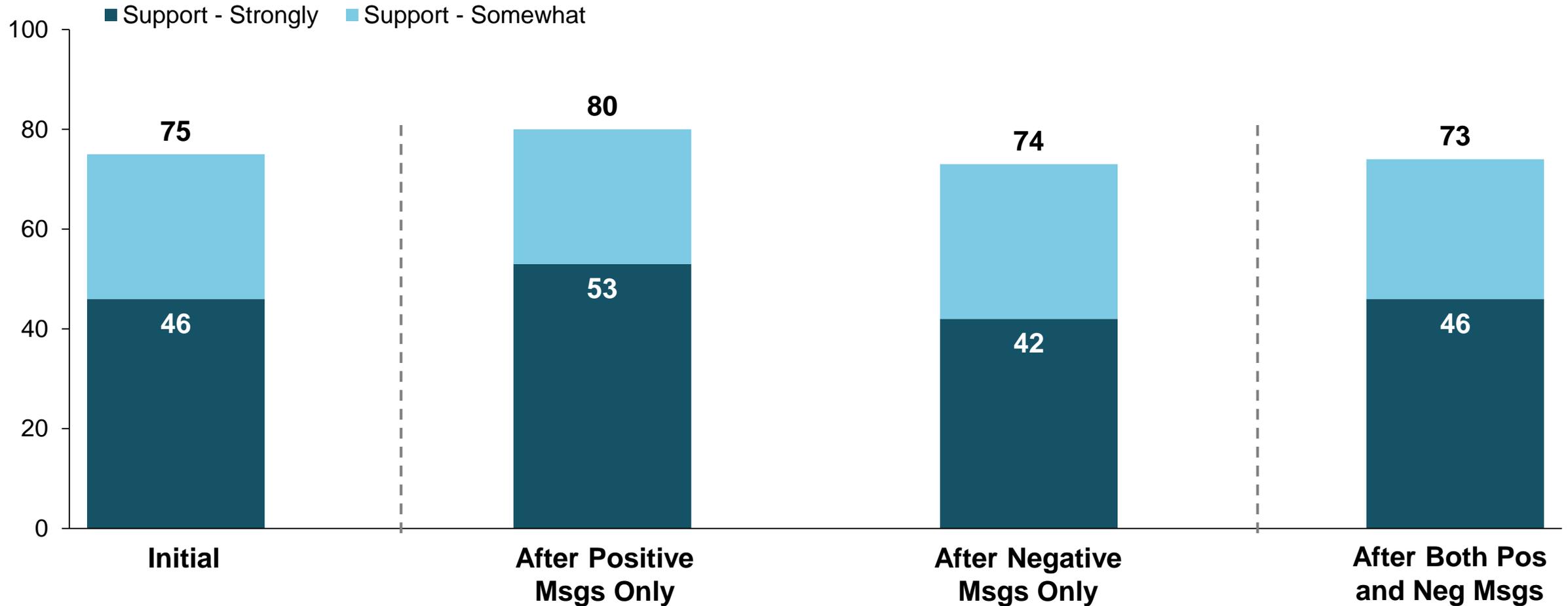
\*Text for messages other than top three included in appendix

# All five messages opposed to raising taxes on the rich fell flat, with none getting traction with more than a fifth of voters.

Messages <b>OPPOSING</b> Raising Taxes on the Rich <i>(% Much less likely to support)</i>	Total	Persuadable Ind.
[RAISE TAXES ON YOU TOO] When politicians claim they will raise taxes on the rich, you should watch your wallet. The truth is that they will also raise taxes on average working people and you will end up paying more in taxes.	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
[HURT ECONOMY] Raising taxes on the rich will hurt our economy by increasing the burden on thousands of small business owners. Higher taxes on small business owners will mean fewer jobs and lower wages for American workers.	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
[WASTEFUL SPENDING] Raising taxes on the rich will just lead to bigger government and more wasteful government spending. Taxes in the U.S. are high enough already. Instead of raising taxes on job creators, we should focus on reducing government waste and spending our tax dollars more effectively.	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>
[PUNISHING SUCCESS] Raising taxes on the rich would unfairly punish people for their success. We should be doing more to encourage and reward hard work.	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>
[RICH PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE] America's tax system has many problems, but the rich not paying enough is not one of them. The richest 3% of Americans earn 29% of the nation's income but pay 51% of all income taxes.	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

Support for raising taxes on the rich is so strong that even after voters hear *only* negative messages, support barely declines at all. We are near our ceiling of support for raising taxes on the rich, so we should not expect to increase support much more.

### Impact of Messaging on Support for Raising Taxes on the Rich



# Most Effective Messaging to Make Case for Raising Taxes on Rich

## Lead Message for All Audiences

The rich take advantage of many tax loopholes, leaving the rest of us to pick up the tab, even as they've gotten richer. We need to raise taxes on the rich so they pay their fair share, and make our tax system fairer for working families.

## Additional Message for Voters under 50 and Voters of Color

Raising taxes on the rich will allow us to invest in key priorities such as improving education, lowering healthcare costs and repairing and upgrading our infrastructure, such as our crumbling roads, bridges and tunnels.

## Additional Message for White Voters 50+

The recent tax cuts for the rich increased the debt by nearly 2 trillion dollars and put funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security at risk. We need to raise taxes on the rich to make sure these programs are protected.

## Potential Combined Message for All

The rich take advantage of many tax loopholes, leaving the rest of us to pick up the tab. We need to raise taxes on the rich so they pay their fair share, and make our tax system fairer for working families. Raising taxes on the rich will allow us to invest in key priorities, such as lowering healthcare costs, improving education and protecting Medicare and Social Security from budget cuts.