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The State of Play on Healthcare: *Opportunities for Offense*

*Key findings from nationwide survey among 1,035 likely voters
conducted June 11 to 17, 2018*

Overview of Key Findings

- 1. Healthcare continues to be the voters' top priority for the midterm elections, across party lines. When Democrats put healthcare front and center in their campaigns, they are connecting with what matters most to voters.**
- 2. Democrats have important advantages over Republicans on the issue of healthcare, but there is a need for Democrats to aggressively assert those advantages, as some of the worst aspects of Republican healthcare policy are not as top of mind for voters as they were last summer.**
- 3. Voters' healthcare priorities are driven by concerns about rising costs, with over three-quarters of voters saying the country is moving in the wrong direction on the cost of healthcare. Across party lines, voters are more focused on the cost of healthcare than on the number of Americans with health insurance coverage.**

Overview of Key Findings (continued)

4. **Specific healthcare priorities include: protecting Medicare for senior citizens, supporting policies to lower the cost of premiums, copays, and deductibles, making sure people with preexisting conditions can get affordable coverage, and cracking down on excessive increases in the cost of prescription drugs.**
5. **Democrats have large advantages on the issue of protecting people with preexisting conditions, and the Trump administration's support for the 20-state lawsuit to eliminate the current protections is an opportunity to both deepen the advantage and make it more current in the election debate.**
6. **The single most important thing Democratic candidates can say about themselves on the issue of healthcare is that they will take strong action to deal with the overpricing of prescription drugs (e.g., Medicare negotiation, review and rollback of excessive rates). Relief for high insurance costs (e.g., tax credits) also has significant appeal. Proposals for expanding coverage are less salient.**

Overview of Key Findings (continued)

7. **The most important points to make about Republicans are:**
 - **They in are the pocket of the health insurance industry and drug companies;**
 - **Their policies will raise healthcare costs for all Americans, especially people with preexisting conditions, people over the age of 50, and women;**
 - **They support massive cuts to Medicare and Medicaid to pay for their tax cut to corporate special interests; and**
 - **They have given gigantic tax cuts to the insurance companies and big drug companies, which continue to pad their profits while raising healthcare costs for average Americans.**

Overview of Key Findings (continued)

8. A clear majority of voters say they would be less likely to elect a Republican candidate who supports President Trump's efforts to sabotage and undermine the ACA, which is at a high point in terms of favorable opinions. However, voters also recognize that the ACA needs improvement, and the point of Democratic campaigns should not be to protect the Affordable Care Act per se, as much as it is to protect people's healthcare and make their healthcare affordable.

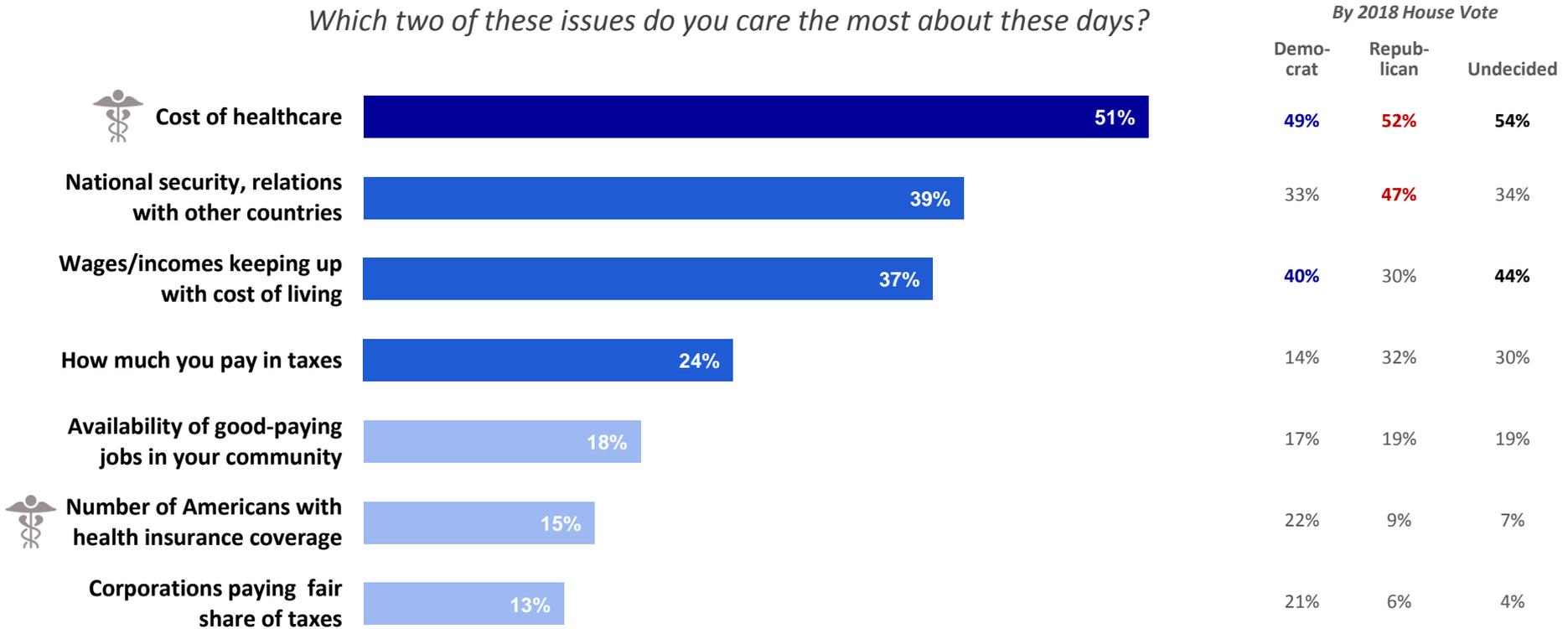
9. Voters' top-of-mind inclination is to blame Trump/Republicans far more than Democrats for increases in health insurance premiums, and they blame insurance companies as well. The instinct to blame Trump/Republicans rather than Democrats or the ACA itself can be deepened by: (1) tying Republicans to insurance and drug companies that got big tax cuts and still raise rates and prices, (2) emphasizing ways in which Trump has caused premiums to go up through his efforts to undermine the current law (e.g., short-term junk insurance plans, slashing outreach and time for open enrollment, and findings of non-partisan experts regarding Trump impact on rates).

Overwhelmingly, voters see the country going in the wrong direction when it comes to the cost of healthcare.



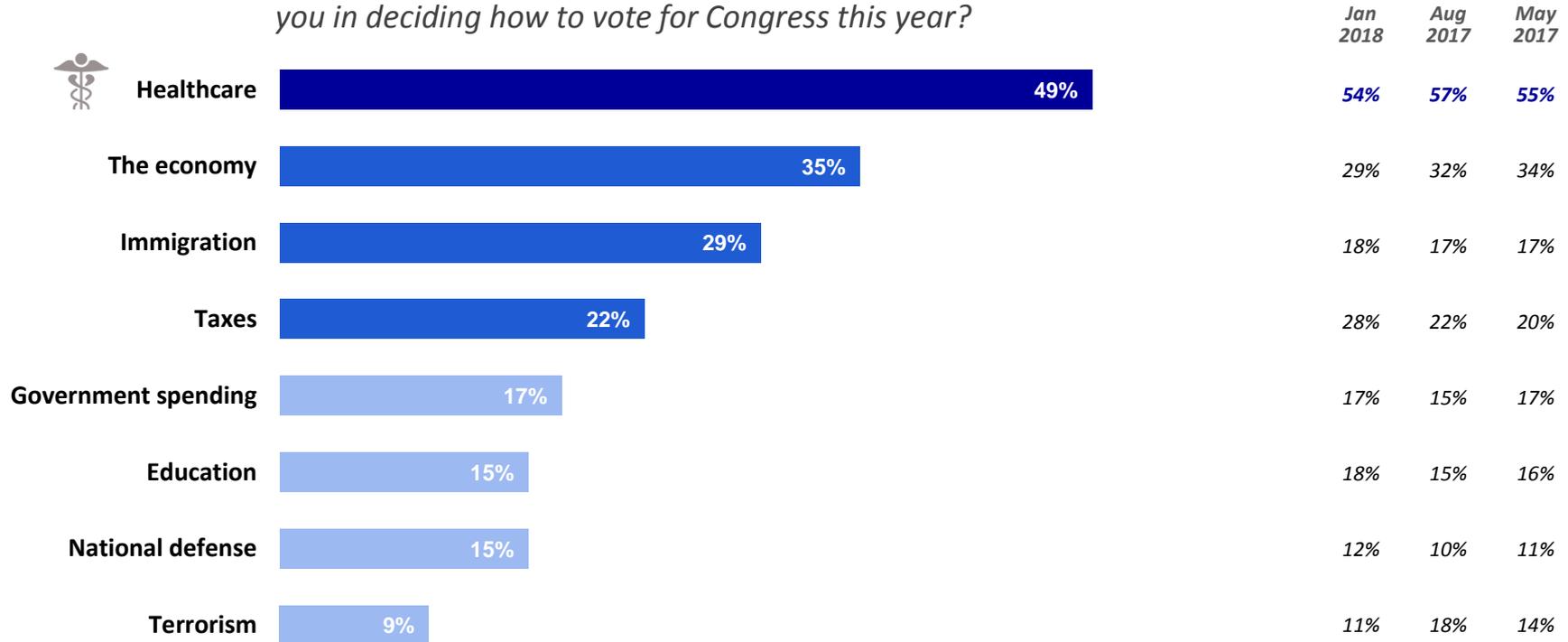
The cost of healthcare is a dominant concern for voters across parties.

Which two of these issues do you care the most about these days?



Healthcare remains the most frequently selected voting issue.

Which two of the following issues will be the most important to you in deciding how to vote for Congress this year?

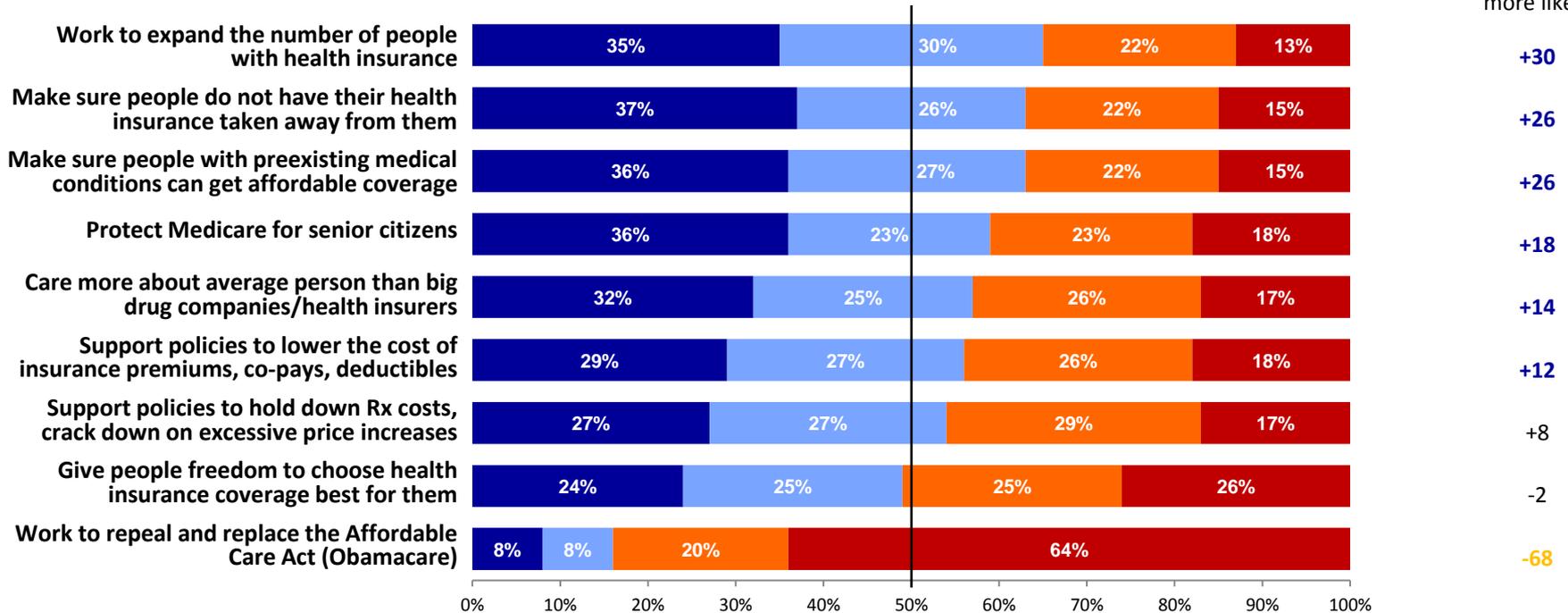


Democrats have a large advantage on key healthcare priorities.



Net Democrats more likely

Which party do you think is more likely to do each of these?

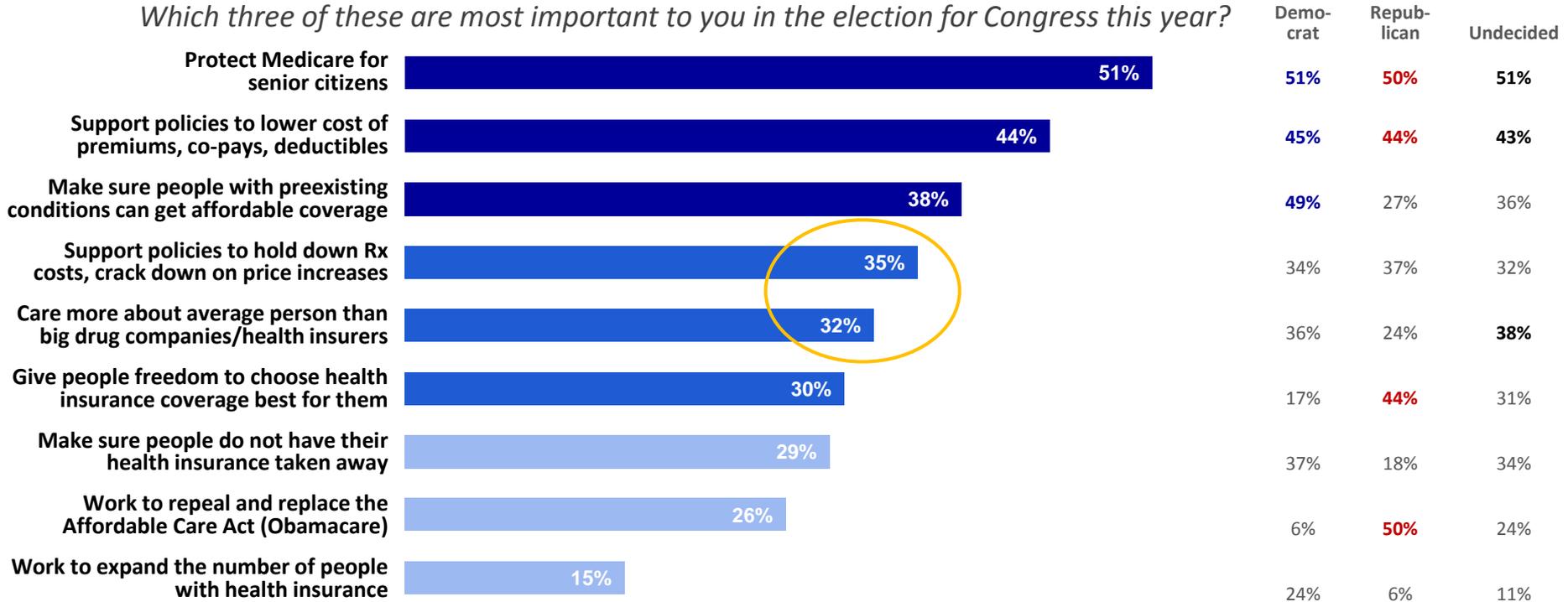


On healthcare overall, voters trust Democrats more than Republicans by 55% to 45%

Voters' top healthcare priorities are protecting Medicare, lowering costs, and ensuring affordable coverage for pre-existing conditions.

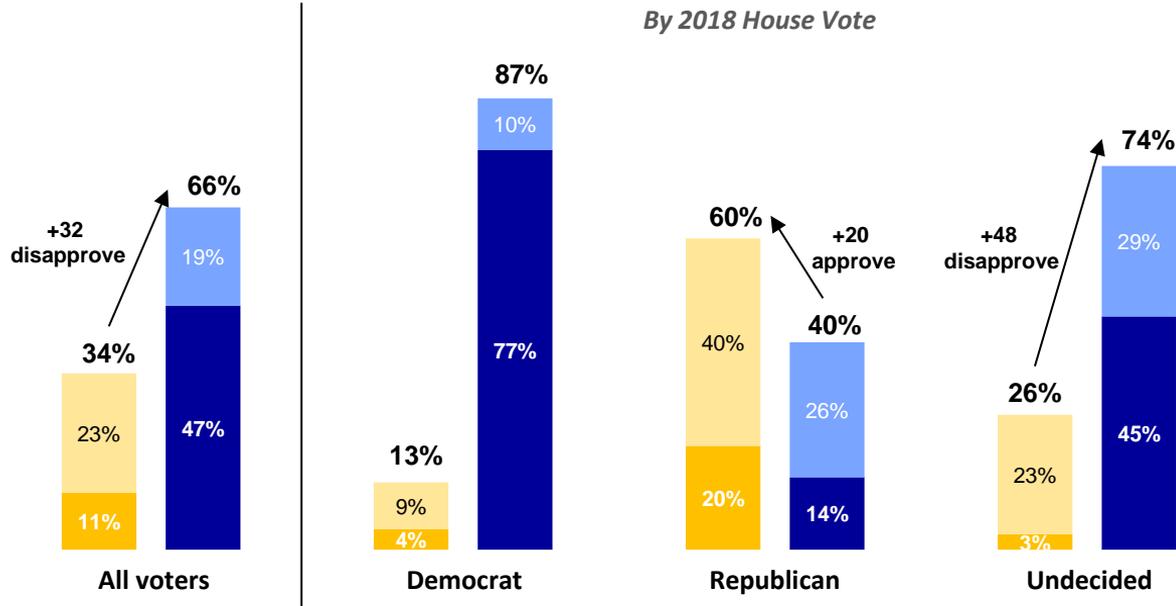
Which three of these are most important to you in the election for Congress this year?

By 2018 House Vote



The Republican lawsuit that would invalidate the ACA’s community-rating provisions could deepen the GOP’s vulnerability on pre-existing conditions and other forms of insurance discrimination.

Do you approve or disapprove of the actions of the Trump Justice Department in supporting this lawsuit?



Information prior to question:

20 Republican state attorneys general have filed a lawsuit to overturn and eliminate the part of the Affordable Care Act that requires health insurance companies to cover people with preexisting medical conditions without charging them more for their coverage. The lawsuit would overturn and eliminate parts of the law that protect women and people over the age of 50 from being charged more for their coverage.

Normally, the U.S. Department of Justice would defend federal laws against this type of lawsuit, but instead, the Trump Justice Department went to court and agreed that these protections should be repealed. If the Trump administration succeeds, insurance companies will once again be able to deny coverage or charge higher premiums for up to 130 million Americans with a preexisting condition.

The most important things Democrats can say and do proactively on healthcare involve cracking down on the high cost of prescription drugs.

Learning this about a Democratic candidate for Congress would make me MORE FAVORABLE toward him/her:

- 85%** Would **require Medicare to negotiate with drug companies** for lowest possible prices
- 77%** Would give middle-class taxpayers income **tax credit for premiums, deductibles, co-pays**
- 75%** Would **require drug companies to justify any large Rx cost increases**, give government the authority to deny excessive increases

- 73% Would hold the pharmaceutical industry accountable for its role in promoting opioid use and creating the opioid addiction crisis
- 69% Would give middle-class taxpayers income tax credit for premiums, deductibles, co-pays, paid for by rolling back some recent tax cuts for insurance industry and big drug companies
- 66% Wants to keep what works in the ACA and make improvements in it
- 61% Favors allowing people over age 55 to buy into Medicare

- 51% Wants to replace the ACA with single-payer healthcare system like Medicare for All, under which everyone would receive their health insurance through the government
- 41% Wants to replace the ACA with single-payer healthcare system, under which everyone would receive their health insurance through the government

Tying Republicans to drug and insurance money is powerful.

Learning this about a Republican candidate for Congress would make me LESS FAVORABLE toward him/her:

78% Accepts large contributions from the health insurance industry and drug companies

74% Supports making large cuts to Medicaid

59% Supports President Trump/Trump administration's efforts to sabotage and undermine the ACA

55% Would take away Medicaid coverage from people who do not meet a work requirement

53% Wants to completely repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act

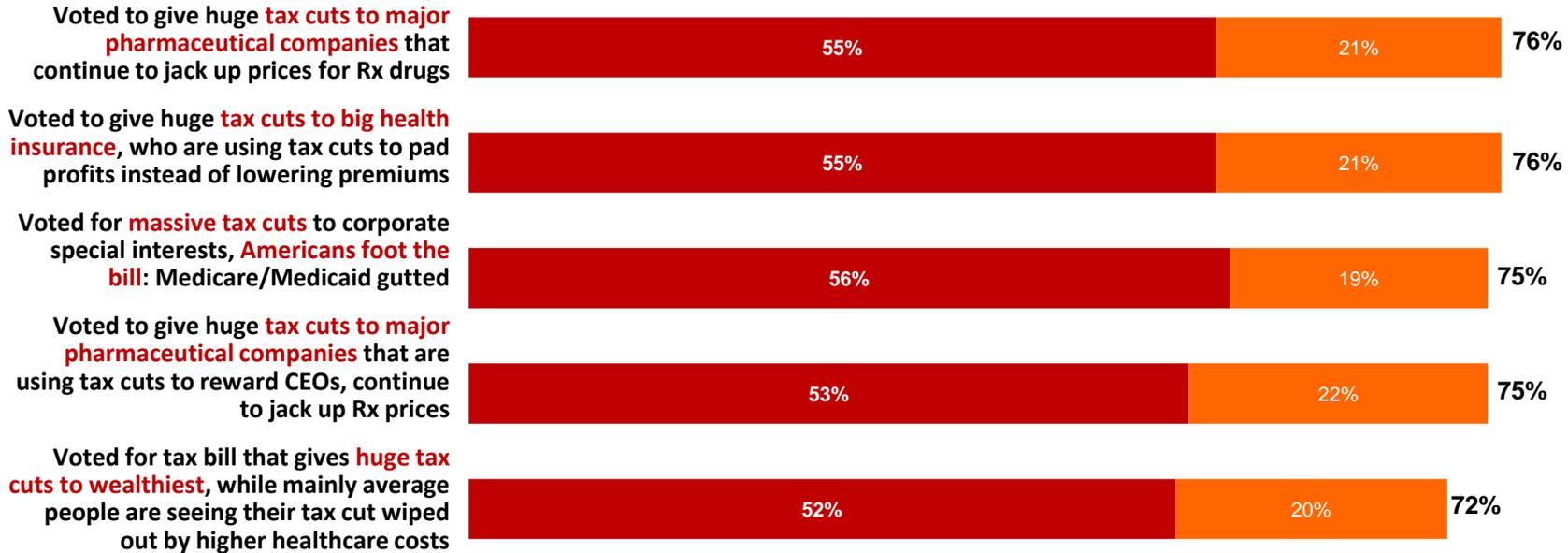
52% Wants to completely repeal the Affordable Care Act

51% Supports the healthcare policies of President Trump and the Trump administration

34% Voted to eliminate the penalty that people were required to pay if they did not purchase health insurance (60% more favorable)

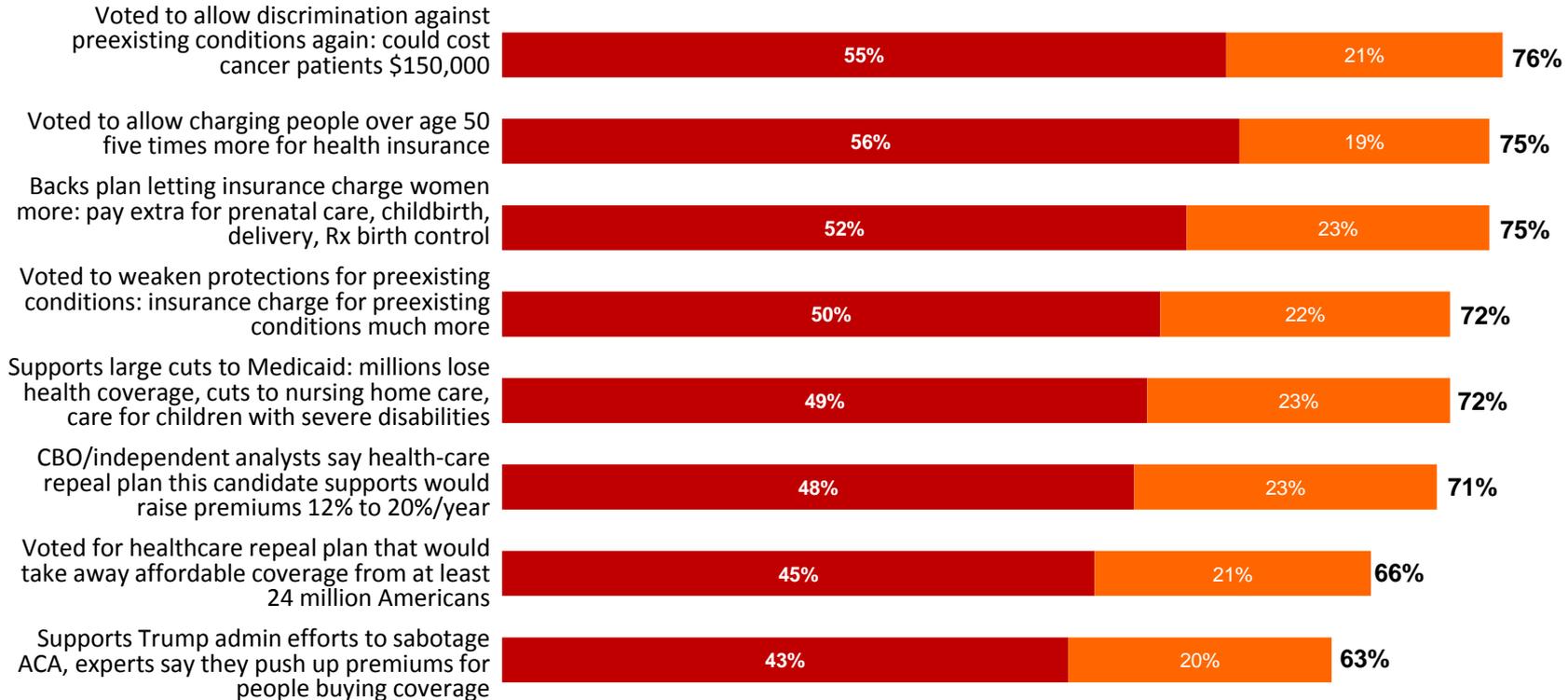
Many of the best healthcare negatives against Republicans include ties to the tax bill.

■ Gives me VERY MAJOR doubts about GOP candidate ■ Gives me FAIRLY MAJOR doubts



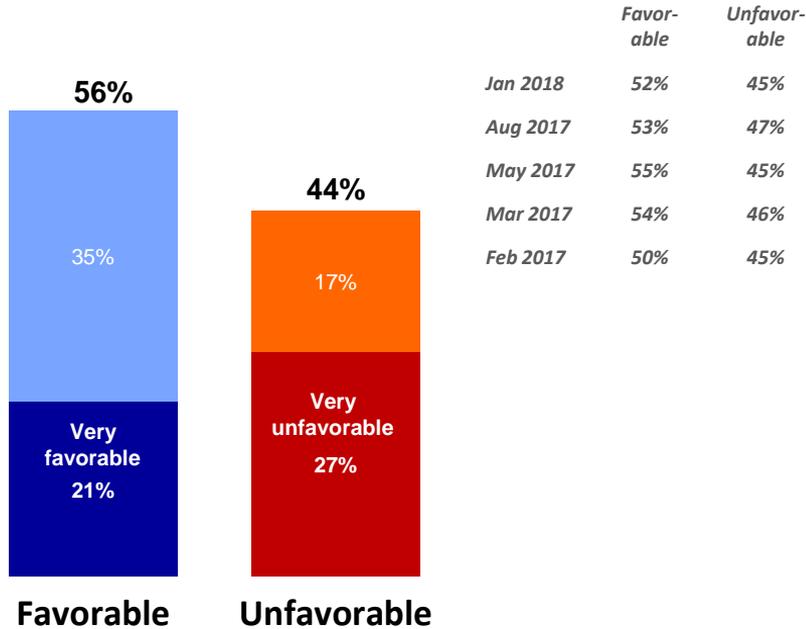
Other powerful negatives against Republicans come from the GOP repeal bills, but these facts need to be refreshed for voters.

■ Gives me VERY MAJOR doubts about GOP candidate ■ Gives me FAIRLY MAJOR doubts



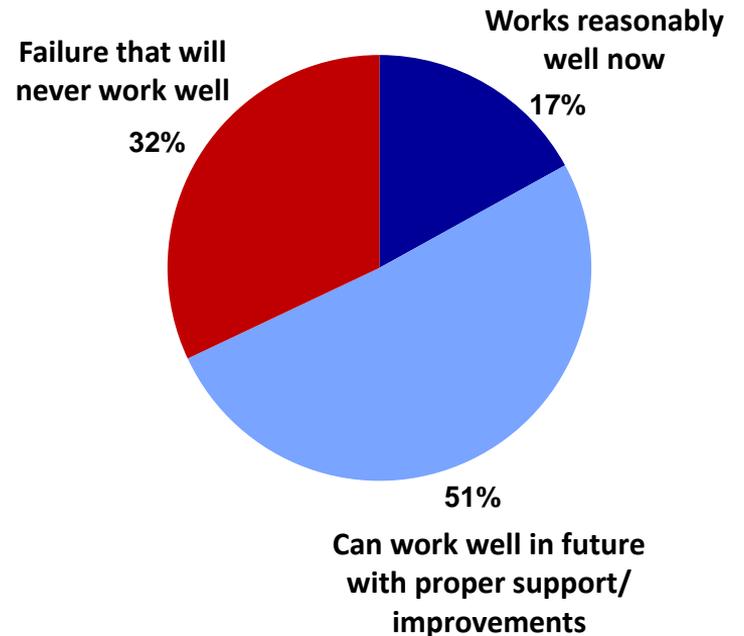
Voters are favorable to the ACA by a 12-point margin, but most say it needs support and improvement to work well.

Overall Opinion of the ACA



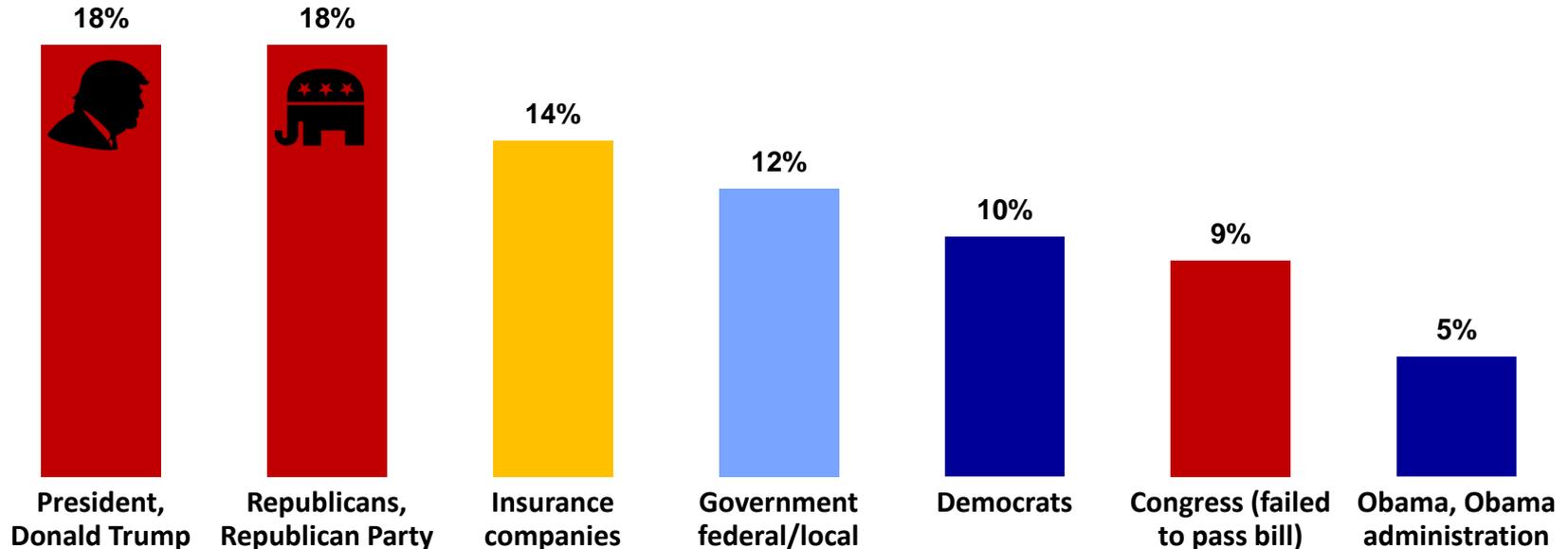
	Favorable	Unfavorable
Jan 2018	52%	45%
Aug 2017	53%	47%
May 2017	55%	45%
Mar 2017	54%	46%
Feb 2017	50%	45%

Assessment the of ACA



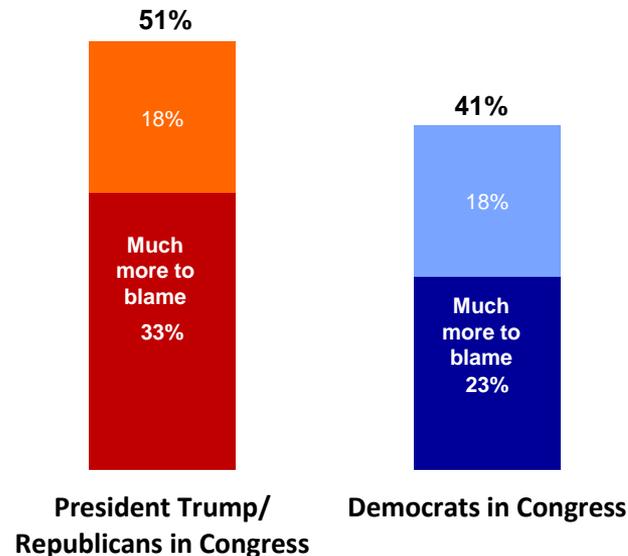
The most common top-of-mind reaction to higher premiums is to blame Trump and the Republicans—far fewer blame Democrats.

There are news reports that several insurance companies will ask for large premium increases later this year for plans they offer to individuals and small businesses on the healthcare exchanges. If these large premium increases occur, who will you blame or hold responsible?



After back-and-forth on who is to blame for premium increase, more voters blame Trump and GOP than Democrats.

After reading what the two sides say, who do you think will be more to blame if there are large increases in premiums for plans that individuals and small businesses buy on the health insurance exchanges?



Statements prior to question:

DEMOCRATS: “From his very first day in office . . . **President Trump has worked to sabotage and repeal the Affordable Care Act** . . . made it harder for people to sign up for coverage by **cutting the open enrollment period in half and slashing funding for public outreach** about enrollment by 90%. Now, with the support of congressional Republicans, he is **promoting the sale of short-term junk insurance plans that don’t provide essential coverage and exclude people with preexisting conditions**. . . . Trump and congressional Republicans will cause premiums to rise . . . by an average of 18%. Even Trump’s first secretary of health says that the sabotage efforts of Trump and Republicans in Congress are a major cause of double-digit insurance premium increases this year.”

REPUBLICANS: “Health insurance premiums have skyrocketed ever since the Democrats pushed through Obamacare—and even if you can find an Obamacare plan with affordable premiums, it has high deductibles and co-pays . . . imposes so many government mandates on health insurance—forcing people to buy more coverage than they want, instead of letting people choose the coverage they want on the free market. . . . Democrats refuse to work with President Trump to replace Obamacare with a new and better healthcare law, and Democrats even refused to support compromise efforts to help stabilize the health insurance markets and reduce costs by 40%.”