

Restoring Trust through Classical Principles

Research to Support Messaging Toolkits

In Partnership with:



WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR LAW & LIBERTY

July 16, 2026



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Background

WILL is developing a messaging toolkit to support individuals and organizations advancing center-right policy, including communicators, policymakers, and the media.

To inform this effort, WILL undertook a public opinion research initiative focused on populist-leaning conservatives in Wisconsin. Grounded in core principles such as the rule of law, federalism, free markets, respect for opposing viewpoints, and trust in democratic institutions, the research examined which language, themes, and frames most effectively resonate with this audience.

The study explored sources of trust and distrust in elections and democratic institutions, including whether information about institutional safeguards can rebuild confidence; attitudes toward federal versus local control and political and civic institutions; and responses to economic populist arguments related to tariffs, price controls, and government intervention. It also assessed views on accountability, corruption, executive power, civic norms, and media trust to better understand broader democratic attitudes and the factors that drive political engagement.



Research Objectives + Methodology

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify messaging themes and language that can re-engage populist-leaning conservatives in Wisconsin and inform a future communications toolkit.
2. Examine sources of trust and distrust in elections and democratic institutions, and test whether information about safeguards can rebuild confidence.
3. Explore attitudes toward federalism, local versus federal control, and trust in political and civic institutions.
4. Test economic populist frames related to tariffs, price controls, and government intervention to see which arguments resonate most.
5. Assess views on accountability, corruption, executive power, civic norms, and media trust to understand broader democratic attitudes and engagement drivers.

POPULIST STATEMENTS

(MUST AGREE WITH 3 TO PARTICIPATE)

1. People who run this country care more about protecting their own power than helping people like me
2. Politicians and experts hide the truth from ordinary people when making and promoting their actions and decisions
3. Most major institutions—like the government, big corporations, the media, and universities—are run by people who don't really care about people like me and can't be trusted to do what's right
4. Ordinary people understand what is best for this country better than so called experts do
5. I don't trust politicians of either party – they are more loyal to people in their social class than to those who share their political views
6. The political system is rigged so that people like me don't stand a fair chance

MODE



- Quantitative Mixed-mode (online and phone)
 - Length: 20 minutes
 - Field dates: April 17 – May 4, 2026
 - n=250
- Qualitative online bulletin boards
 - 3 days
 - Field dates: February 24-26
 - n=27

AUDIENCE



- Wisconsin resident, 18+ Registered Voter
 - Strong Republican, Republican or Lean Republican
 - Populist
 - Mix of demographics

Executive Summary

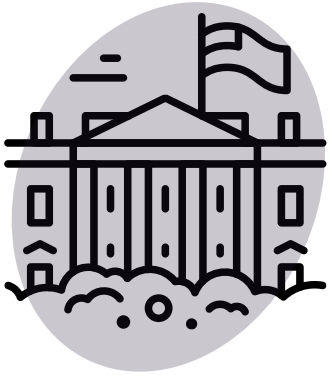
Politics and Civic Engagement



- Cost of living and the economy are the top concerns across all Wisconsin Republicans
- 40% self-identify as MAGA. They are distinct in terms of:
 - Prioritizing immigration, abortion, election integrity and housing affordability as top concerns in Wisconsin
 - They are civically active signing petitions, contacting representatives, and volunteering and are also digitally engaged, following candidates and posting about issues on social media.
 - They vote primarily out of candidate support and issue-driven concern, not just civic duty.
 - Among MAGA nonvoters, the top barriers are inconvenience and the belief that their vote wouldn't matter – suggesting mobilization opportunities.

Executive Summary

Trust and Institutional Outlook



- President Trump is a polarizing figure, even among conservatives – 60% of MAGA trust him “a great deal” compared to 20% among all conservatives.
- Trust in Governor Evers, national media and local media remains very low.
- Government corruption is seen through dual lens – both taxpayer waste and preferential treatment – with most respondents saying, “both equally.”

Federalism, Process and Reform



- Roughly two-thirds support further empowering the President and enacting term limits.
- MAGA respondents also strongly favor requiring elected lawmakers to approve major regulations.
- Concern about executive overreach is higher for the Wisconsin Governor (70%) than for the President (62%).

Executive Summary

Election Confidence and the SAVE Act



- Election fairness perceptions shifted dramatically from 2020 (70% MAGA “unfair”) to 2024 (82% MAGA “fair”), but confidence in future elections remains moderate (64% overall, 60% MAGA).
- The SAVE Act enjoys overwhelming support with minimal pre-to-post shift – confidence was already high (85% overall, 92% MAGA).
- Bipartisan election observers and local safeguards (chain of custody, public machine testing, audits) are the most trust-building measures
- Citizenship-based voting arguments are overwhelmingly convincing – 87% of MAGA find “if you’re not a citizen, you shouldn’t vote” persuasive.

Economic Populism and Free Markets



- MAGA respondents strongly favor federal control of tariffs but resist government involvement in most consumer prices.
- Free-market arguments land strongest when framed around small business harm from overregulation (73%) and special interests benefiting from government involvement (72%).

Executive Summary

What Language Works



- Strongest positive language:
 - Photo ID to vote (90)
 - Preventing illegal voting (82)
 - Citizenship verification (80)
 - Free speech (76)
 - Accountability (74)
- Strongest negative language:
 - Unelected agencies making decisions (-47)
 - Rigged system (-46)
 - Government picking winners and losers (-33)
- Election integrity language resonates broadly across age groups, with “photo ID to vote” earning near-universal support (89-94% across age groups)

Messaging Framework

Overarching Position

A commitment to fair and consistent rules, our established systems and laws, and respect for diverse opinions is essential to Wisconsin’s bright future.

Common Values

Wisconsinites want the same basics — safe communities, honest government, and opportunity for their kids.

Pillar-Based Messaging and Language Themes

In order of audience receptivity

Trust in Democratic Institutions	Rule of Law	Respect for Opposing Views	Free Markets	Federalism & Local Control
Use Voter ID as a gateway to explain other safeguards. Focus on concrete, visible processes — chain of custody, public machine testing, bipartisan observers, post-election audits. Confidence comes from verification, not just reassurance.	Frame checks and balances as protection for when the other side is in power — not as opposition to current leadership. Concern about executive overreach is higher for Gov. Evers (70%) than the President (62%); use that as the entry point. Pressure governing bodies to act rather than bypass them.	Don't name the other side. Lead with shared values — safe communities, honest government, opportunity for kids. Free speech as a universal protection resonates strongly Avoid anything that sounds like lecturing.	Never lead with abstract free market theory — it doesn't land. Instead anchor in small businesses and working families. Always acknowledge economic pain first. Special interests as the winners of government intervention is highly persuasive.	Local trust is high and genuine — build on it. Frame federal overreach as unelected agencies making decisions that affect your community. Speed of accountability is a strong argument: local officials live with the consequences. Note that immigration and AI regulation are exceptions where this audience prefers federal control.

Messaging Construction

Element	Description	Example
1. End-state/Vision	What are we driving toward and why does it matter? Frame this emotionally and concretely. What does Wisconsin look like when this works?	Wisconsin is a state that takes care of its people. There is growth and opportunity for all here.
2. Values/Principles	The classical conservative values that get us to that end-state. Keep these brief and connected to the end-state.	To maximize opportunity, we must make sure decisions are made by the people, not politicians, and that overregulation doesn't stifle small, local businesses.
3. Proof or process	What specific steps, safeguards, or reforms demonstrate that the principles are real? This is where credibility lives.	We can do that by cutting unnecessary red tape, empowering local decision-makers, and ensuring small businesses have the freedom and flexibility to grow, hire, and innovate.
4. Civility	An explicit acknowledgment that different views are welcome. This is not optional — it signals respect and distinguishes this approach from tribal politics.	Wisconsin's strength lies in the diversity of its people, businesses, and viewpoints, and that diversity will continue to drive growth if we allow it to thrive.

Messaging Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Use action-oriented terms rather than abstract concepts.	Use technical jargon or detailed economic analysis.
Use Voter ID as an introduction to other democratic process safeguards to build trust in elections.	Dismiss cynicism outright.
Frame reform in accountability.	Frame reform in grievance-based language (like “rigged system.”)
Anchor economic arguments in small businesses and working families, specifically the harm of regulation and government involvement.	Minimize the economic pain being felt by Wisconsinites.
Engage non-voters through issue-driven outreach, highlighting their ability to create impact through participation.	Start with get-out-the-vote language before connecting on the importance of fixing key issues.
Emphasize the shared values and stakes in outcomes.	Exacerbate the “us vs. them” narratives.

DETAILED FINDINGS

POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

There is an Optimistic Vision for Wisconsin

People in Wisconsin have high hopes for their state's future, focusing on economic opportunity, community well-being, and preserving what makes the state special.



Affordability and Cost of Living

People want housing, insurance, and everyday expenses to become more manageable.

I hope Wisconsin becomes a cheaper and safer place to live. I also wish to see this state become more free—less regulations, less taxation, and less government oversight. – Male, 31, non-MAGA Republican



Preserving Nature and Rural Character

Many value Wisconsin's natural beauty and rural identity. They want to protect forests, farmland, and small-town life while preventing overdevelopment.

"I hope Wisconsin can stay a nature based mostly rural state. There is so much natural beauty in our state, and so many natural resources, that need to be protected and preserved, but also shared and enjoyed, and promoted." – Female, 43, non-MAGA Republican



Unity and Trust in Government

Several expressed concern about division and loss of faith in leadership. They hope for stronger community bonds and government they can trust.

"My vision for the state is the same as my vision for the country. I hope and pray that most will embrace unity and realize at the end of the day we are ALL having a human experience and instead of trying to make life hard for everyone why not try to make life as enjoyable as possible for all" – Male, 50, MAGA Republican



Community Care and Social Support

People hope Wisconsin continues supporting vulnerable populations—elderly residents, low-income families, and those needing special services. Some want to revive small farms and local manufacturing.

"I hope Wisconsin continues to care for its people. We have such a fabulous diverse mix of people and I hope we continue to celebrate that." – Female, 44, non-MAGA Republican



Education and Workforce Development

Respondents want stronger schools and training and worry Wisconsin is falling behind, especially in technical jobs.

"I'd hope for strong public schools and good jobs in both small towns and cities." – Male, 20, non-MAGA Republican

Economic Growth and Jobs

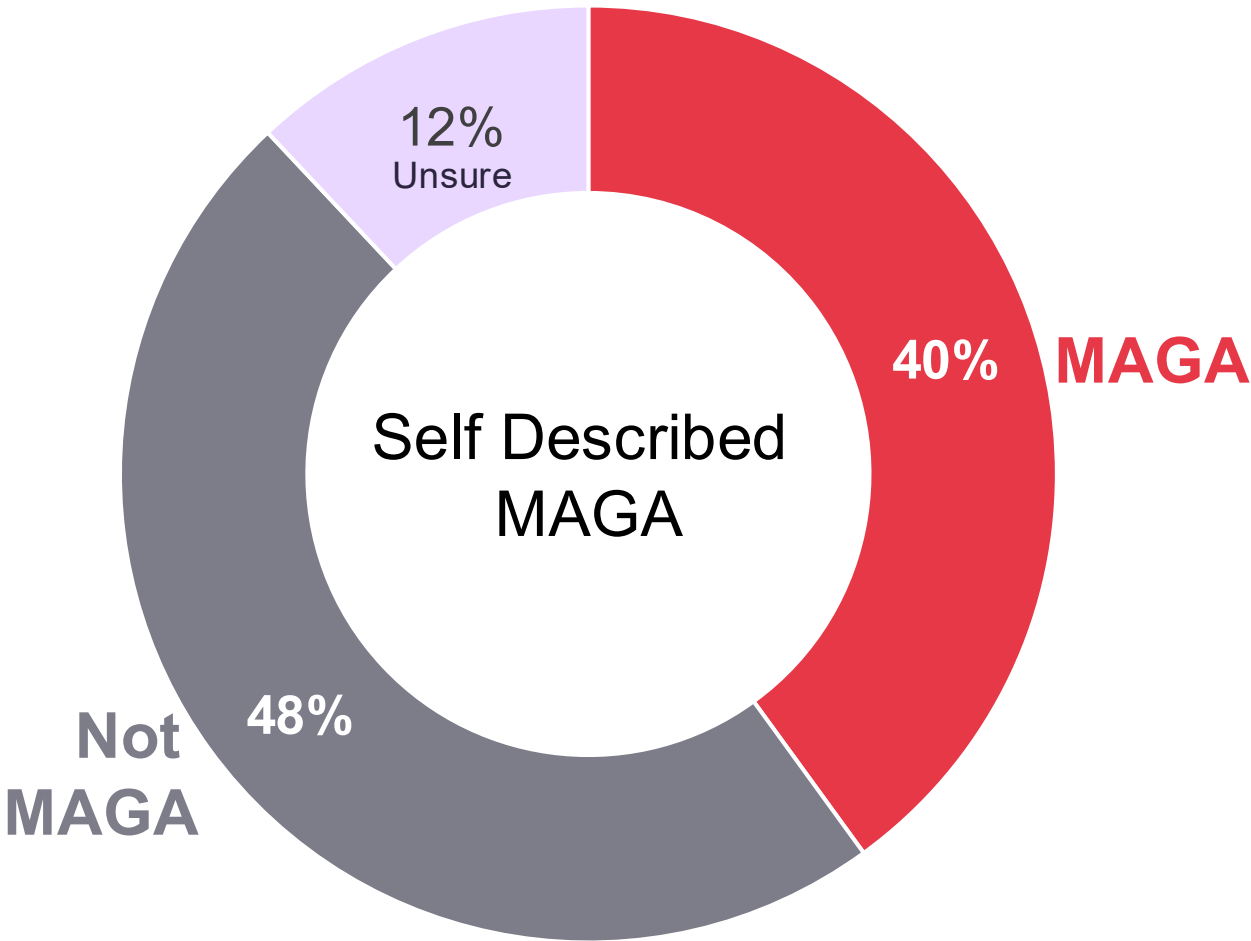
Many want Wisconsin to attract better employment opportunities and higher wages. Some want to revive small farms and local manufacturing.

"I hope it looks more like Indiana or Iowa. I think those two are very well run midwestern states with fair representation of its constituents. I want to see lower taxes, improved job markets and higher wages" – Male, 20, non-MAGA Republican

"Wisconsin's future looks great with Amazon and the multiple data centers going in. I think my vision of the state is to grow as a tech hub for the Midwest." – Male, 52, non-MAGA Republican

When you think about Wisconsin's future, what do you hope it looks like? What's your vision for the state?

Profile of Wisconsin Conservatives

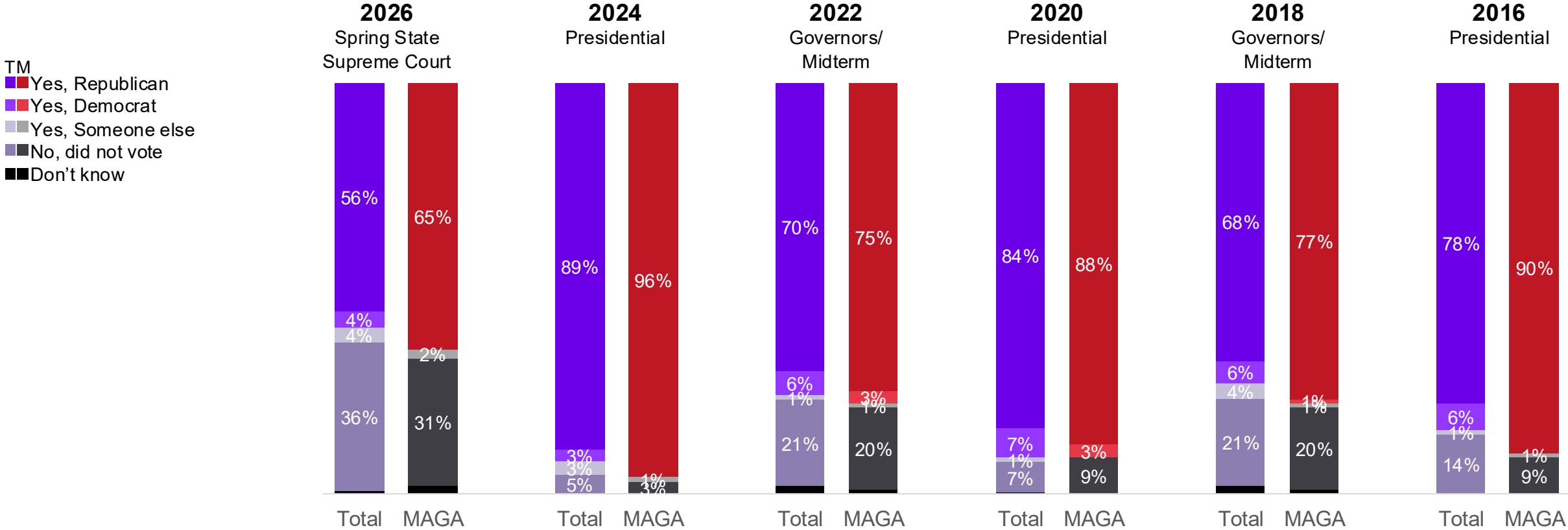


TOTAL		MAGA		
51%	49%	55%	45%	Gender
				Male
				Female
14%	46%	8%	50%	Age
40%		42%		18-30
				31-54
				55+
7%	20%	11%	18%	Region
9%	12%	11%	13%	Northern
				Central
				Eastern
				Western
16%	37%	19%	28%	Southern
				Southeastern
27%	33%	30%	33%	Education
39%		37%		HS and less
				GED/Some college/Assoc
				College grad+
32%	35%	36%	29%	Income
				<\$50K
				\$50K-\$100K
31%		32%		\$100K+

*Shading indicates at least +3% Above Total

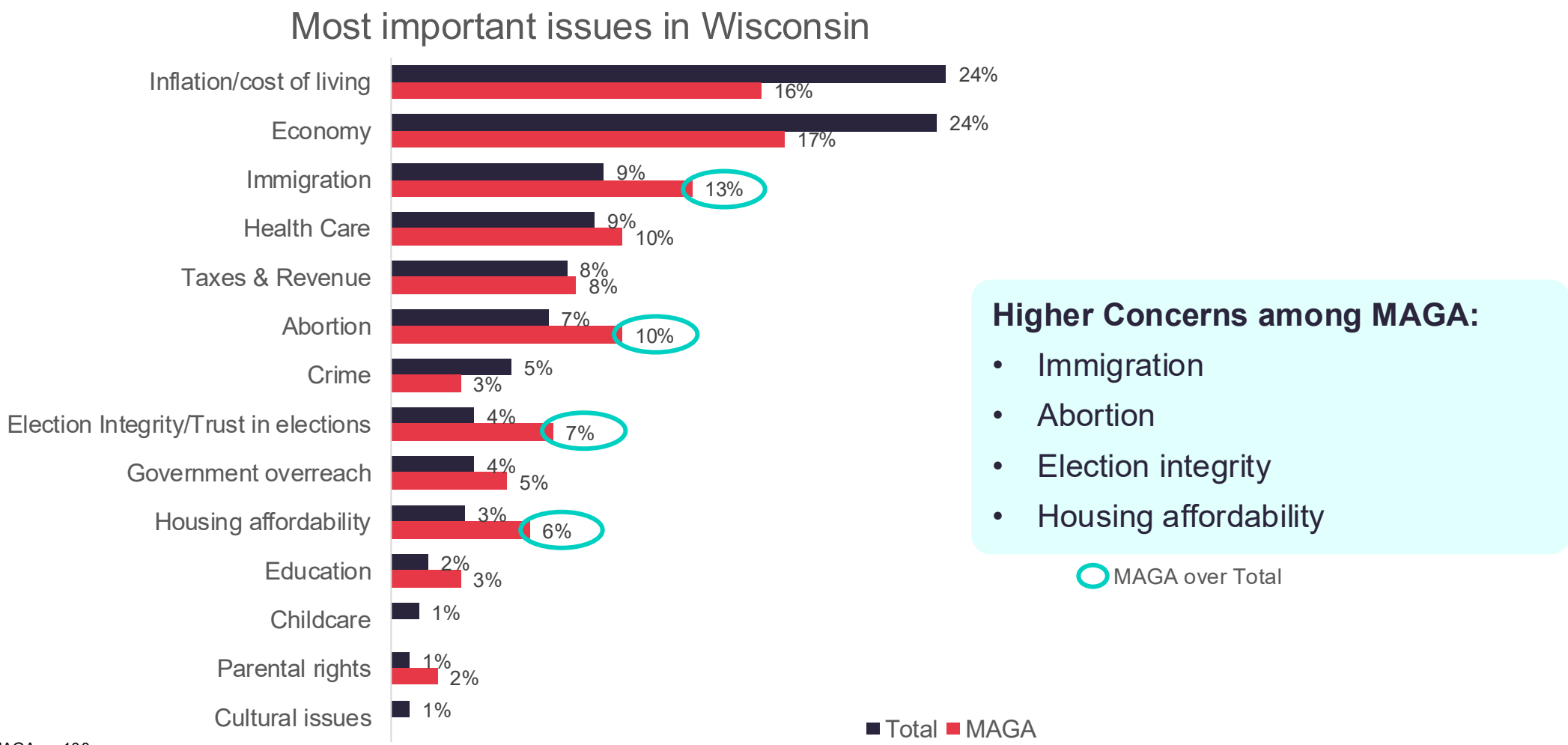
BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q145. Would you consider yourself MAGA?

MAGA Voters Turn Out Strong in Presidential Years, With Near-Universal Republican Support in 2024.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q145. Would you consider yourself MAGA?

Overall, top concerns are cost of living and the economy, however immigration and abortion are larger concerns for MAGA.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q202. When you decide who to vote for, which issues do you think the most about?

MAGA Wisconsinites are most active in signing petitions and contacting their local/state representatives, but half are unengaged civically.

Civic Participation	Total	MAGA
Signed a petition about a social issue/cause	22%	25%
Contacted my local/state political representative about a social/policy issue	20%	23%
Attended a political event in-person	14%	15%
Organized/participated/volunteered in a community project/campaign	13%	18%
Attended a public meeting about social/policy issues in person	12%	14%
Wrote a letter about a social/policy issue to the editor of a publication	5%	4%
Served on a committee of a local organization	5%	6%
Was an active member of a group to influence policy or government	5%	7%
Organized/participated in a community initiative	4%	4%
Was an active member of a political party	3%	4%
Ran for or held political office	3%	3%
Made a speech about social/policy issues to a public audience	2%	4%
Served as an officer of a club or organization that benefits an issue/cause	2%	4%
Called into a live news broadcast to talk about a social/policy issue	2%	2%
Worked for a political party	2%	2%
None of the above	50%	50%

*Shading indicates at least +5% Above Total

BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100

Q150. In the past year, have you participated in any of the civic activities listed below? Please select all that apply.

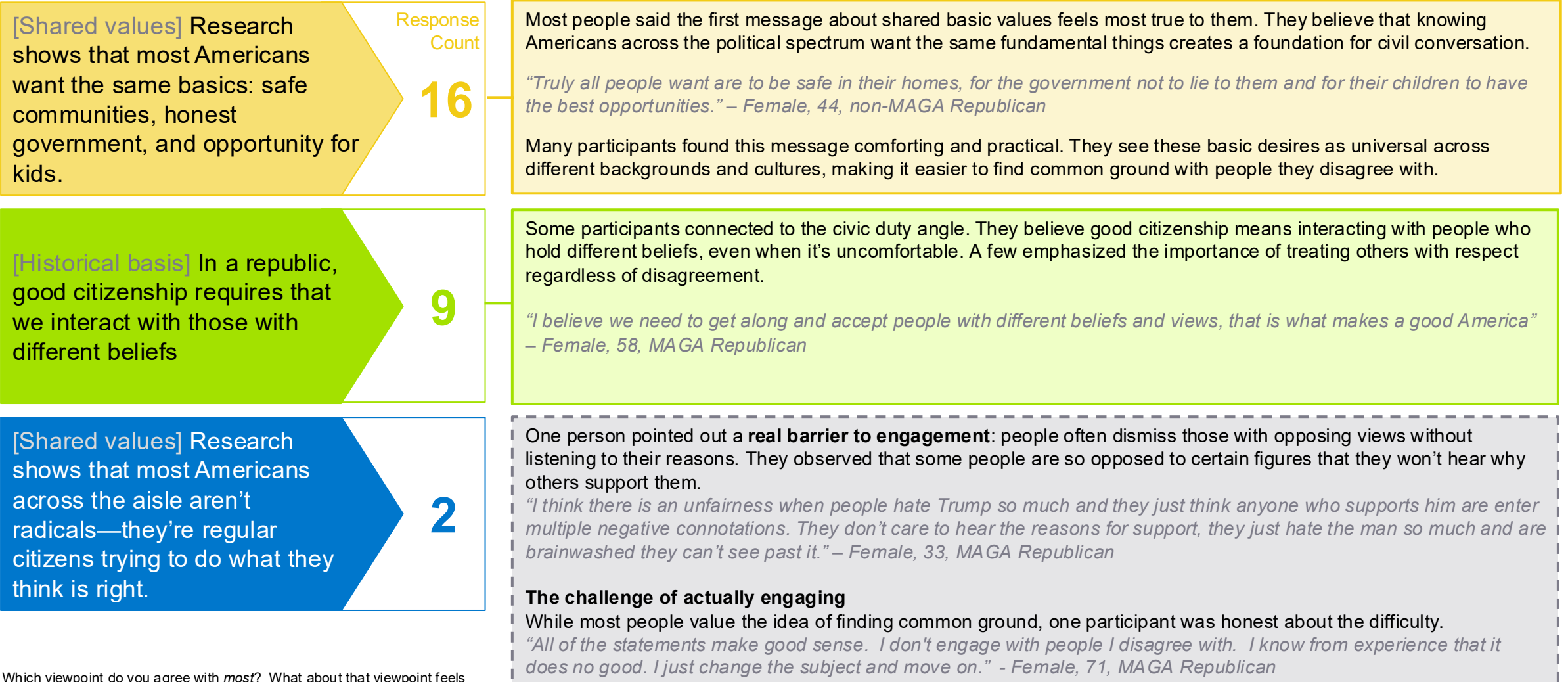
Online engagement is higher, particularly among MAGA Wisconsinites.

Online Participation	Total	MAGA
Shared or reposted content about social or political issues on social media	23%	24%
Posted a comment about social/political issues to social media an online forum or blog	20%	25%
Followed a political candidate, organization, or issue-focused group online	20%	30%
Signed an online petition related to social or political issues	18%	18%
Joined an online group or community focused on social or political issues	16%	18%
Attended a public meeting about social/policy issues online	10%	8%
Attended a political event online	10%	12%
Created original content expressing views on social or political issues	9%	11%
Participated in an online discussion, town hall, or Q&A with public officials or candidates	8%	7%
Volunteered online for a political campaign or social cause	7%	6%
Donated money online to a political candidate, party, or advocacy organization	4%	4%
None of the above	40%	38%

*Shading indicates at least +5% Above Total

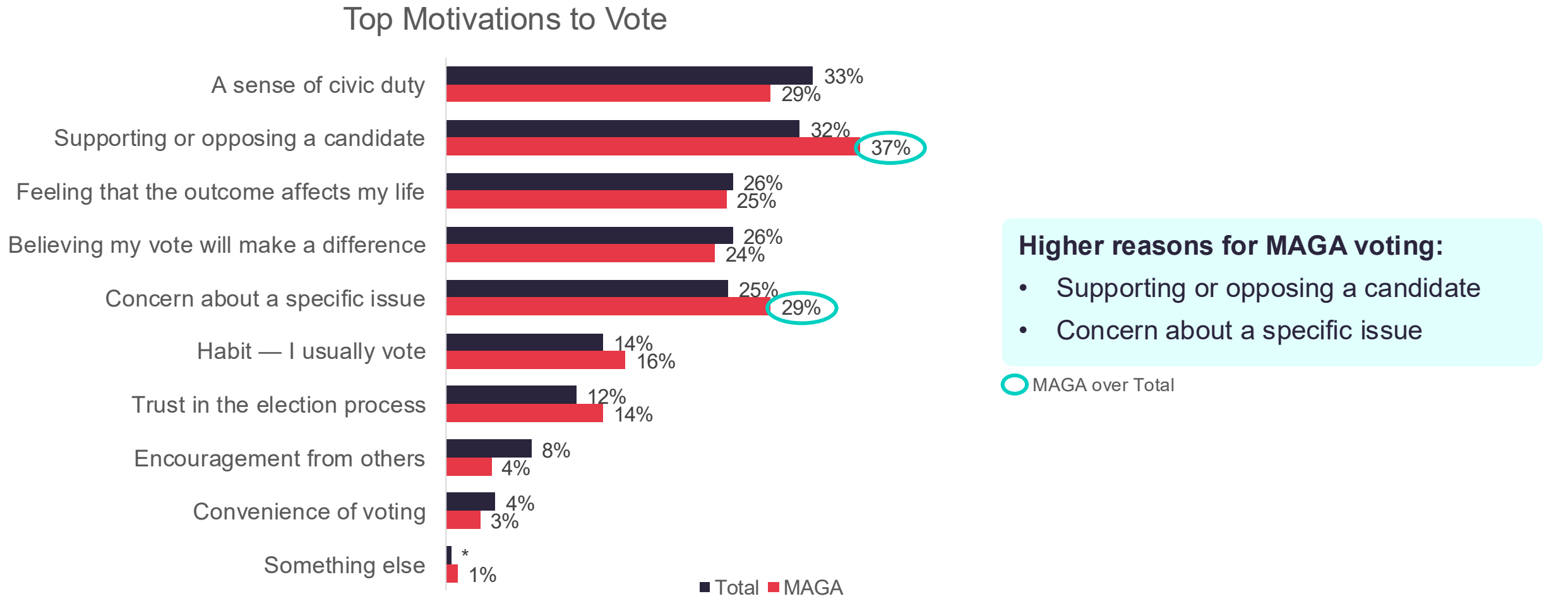
What Affects Willingness to Engage?

Overall, the message about shared basic values resonates most because it reminds people that despite political differences, Americans want similar things for themselves and their families.



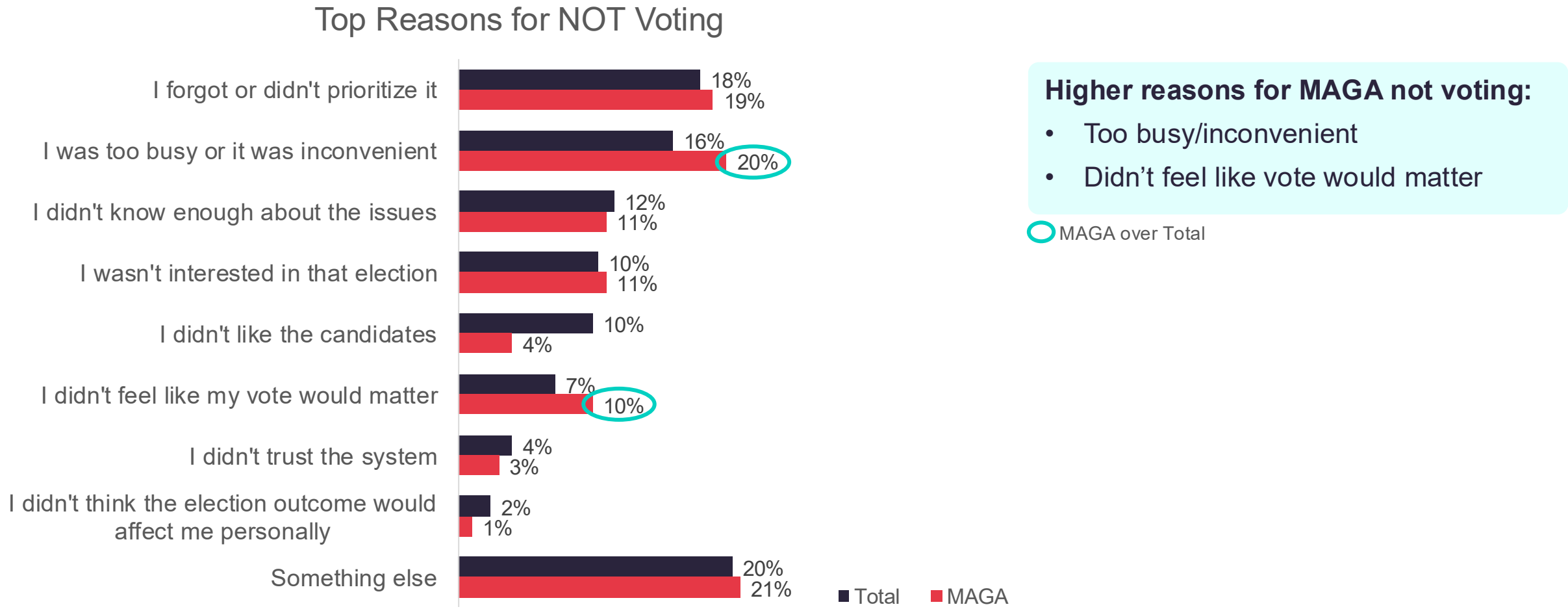
Which viewpoint do you agree with *most*? What about that viewpoint feels more convincing to you? Why do you feel that way?

While civic duty is the top overall motivator for voting, MAGA Wisconsinites are more strongly driven by candidate support and concern about specific issues.



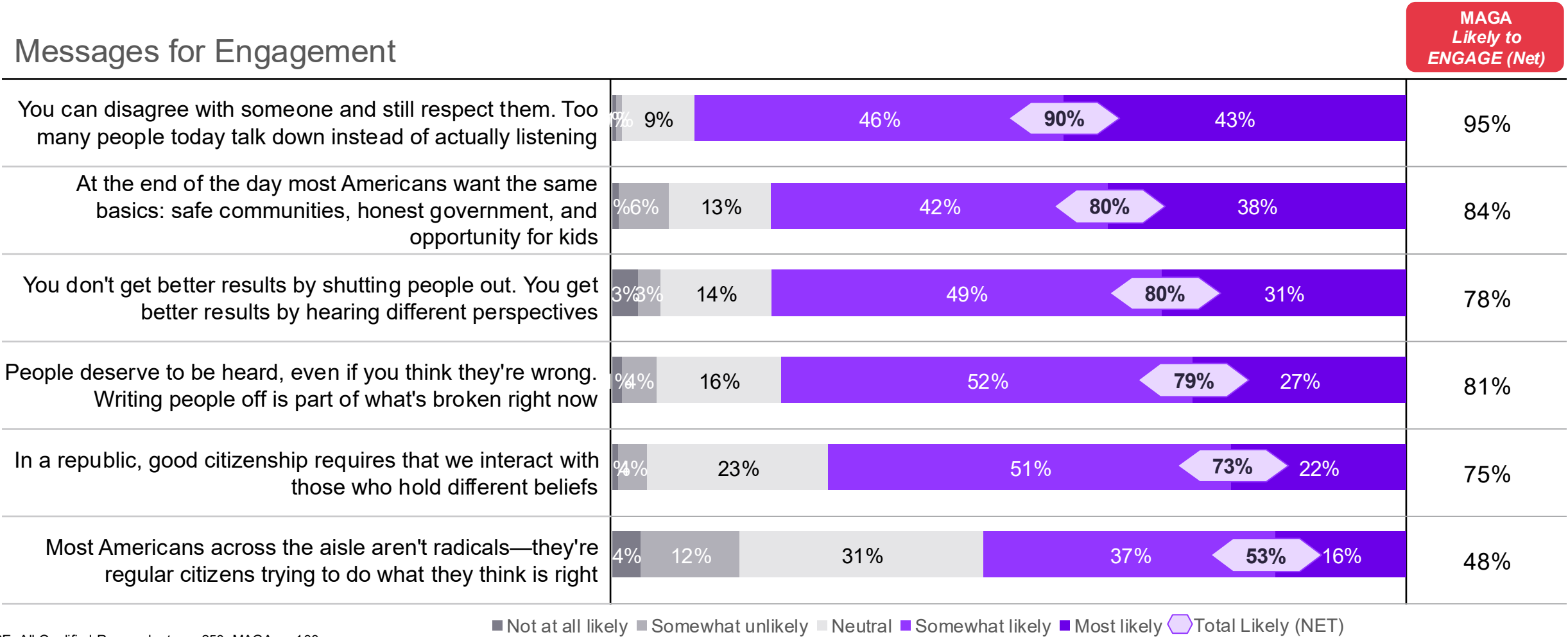
BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q170. Which of the following most motivates you to vote in an election? (Select up to 2)

A wide mix of reasons keep conservatives from voting.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q165. Thinking about the last election you did NOT vote in, what was the primary reason for not voting?

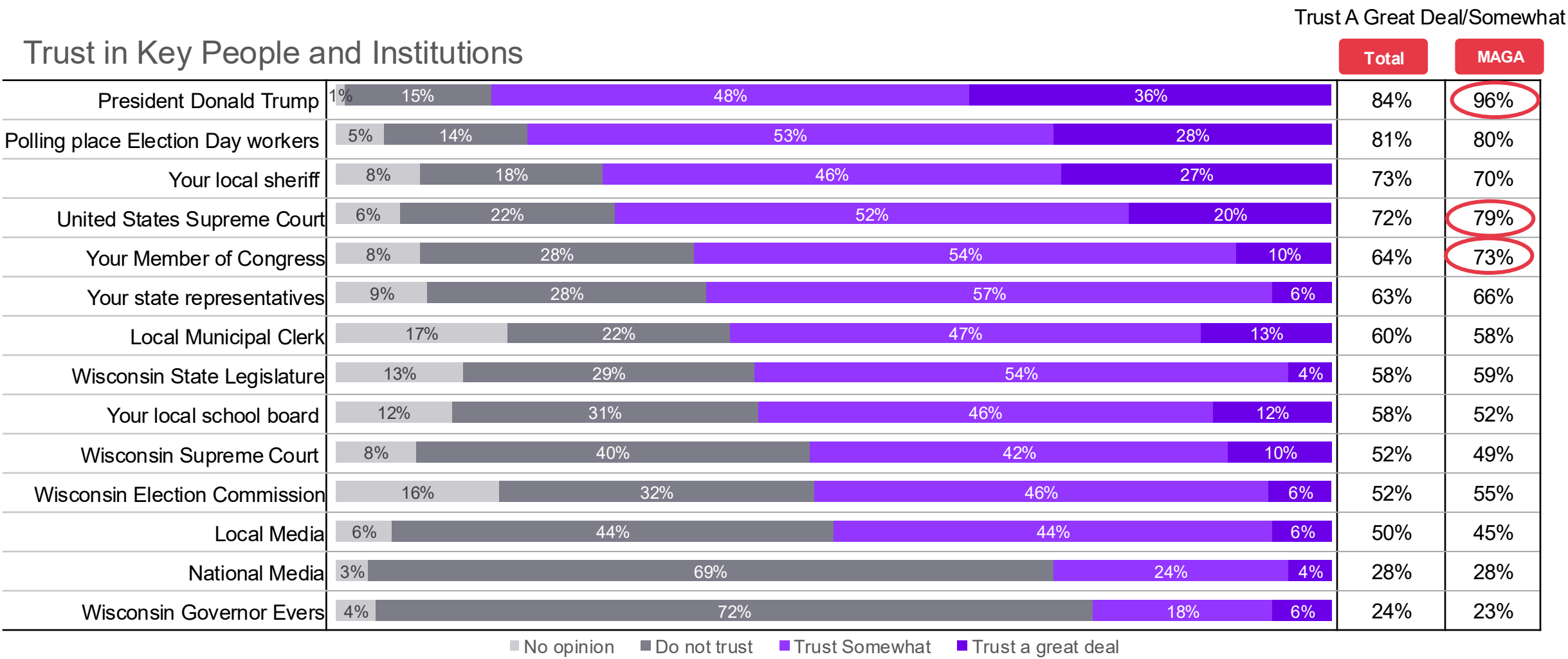
Respectful disagreement and shared values drive cross-partisan engagement, but fewer see those on the other side as rational actors.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q250. Would this message make you more willing to engage with someone you strongly disagree with?

TRUST AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK

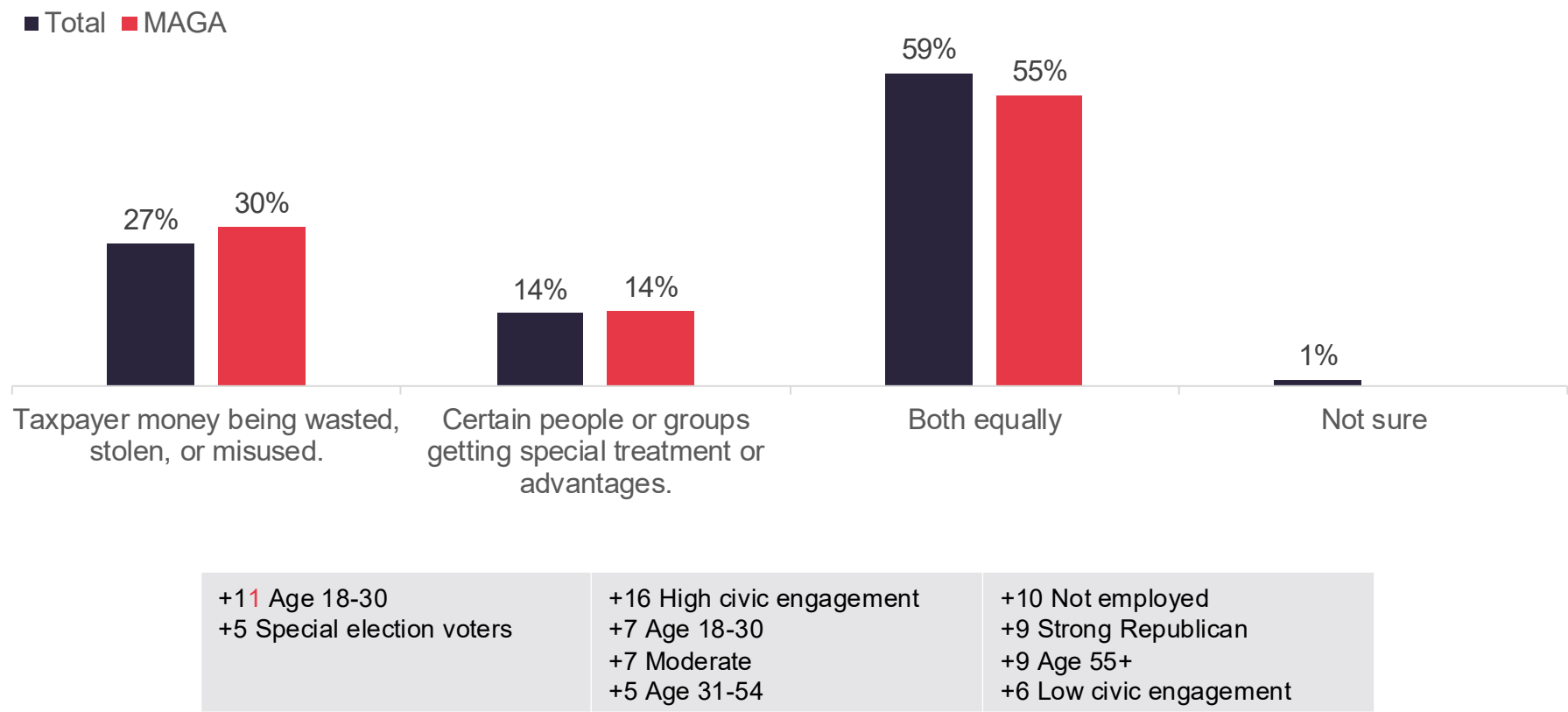
There is more trust in President Trump than local institutions, particularly among MAGA



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q203. How much trust do you have in each of the following?

Government corruption is seen as both taxpayer waste and preferential treatment.

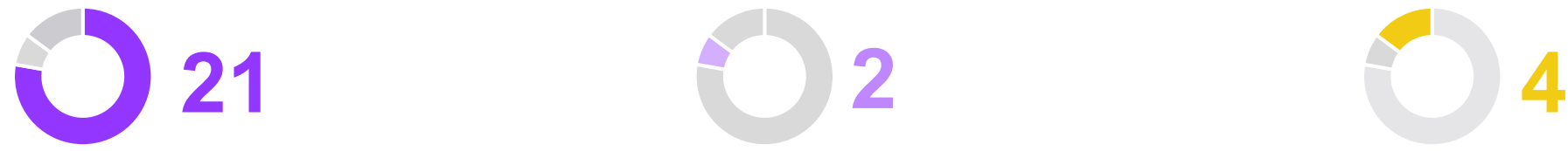
Corruption in Government is...



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250
Q302. Which of the following statements better describes how you feel about corruption in government?

Trust in Levels of Government

People trust those closest to them most, and they want all government to operate with the same transparency and accountability they see in local leadership.



Local	State	Federal
Why Local Government Is Trusted Most • More “Dialed in” to what their constituents want - Officials live in the same community they serve, so they face direct consequences for poor decisions. • Accessible – more opportunity for personal interactions with representatives • Smaller scale: Less bureaucracy means fewer hands involved in decisions and fewer opportunities for corruption. • Transparency: Local meetings and decisions are easier to attend and understand. • Self-interest alignment: Even officials with self-interest tend to want their own town to succeed. <i>“The people on the local government are directly affected and therefore make more rational decisions” – Female, 22, non-MAGA Republican</i> <i>“I feel local government is smaller and more transparent. I feel local gov has more to lose if they do poorly at their job. They live in the jurisdictions that they are serving so if they are failing their local community they literally have to live with the ramifications of their decisions.” – Female, 44, non-MAGA Republican</i>		What Local Government Can’t Handle Large-scale issues like national policy, major infrastructure, and broad regulations fall outside local control. However, they express frustration that higher levels of government often make decisions that affect local communities without proper input.

← Region Counts →		
11	Southeastern	3
5	Central	
3	Eastern	
2	Southern	1
1	Northern	
1	Western	

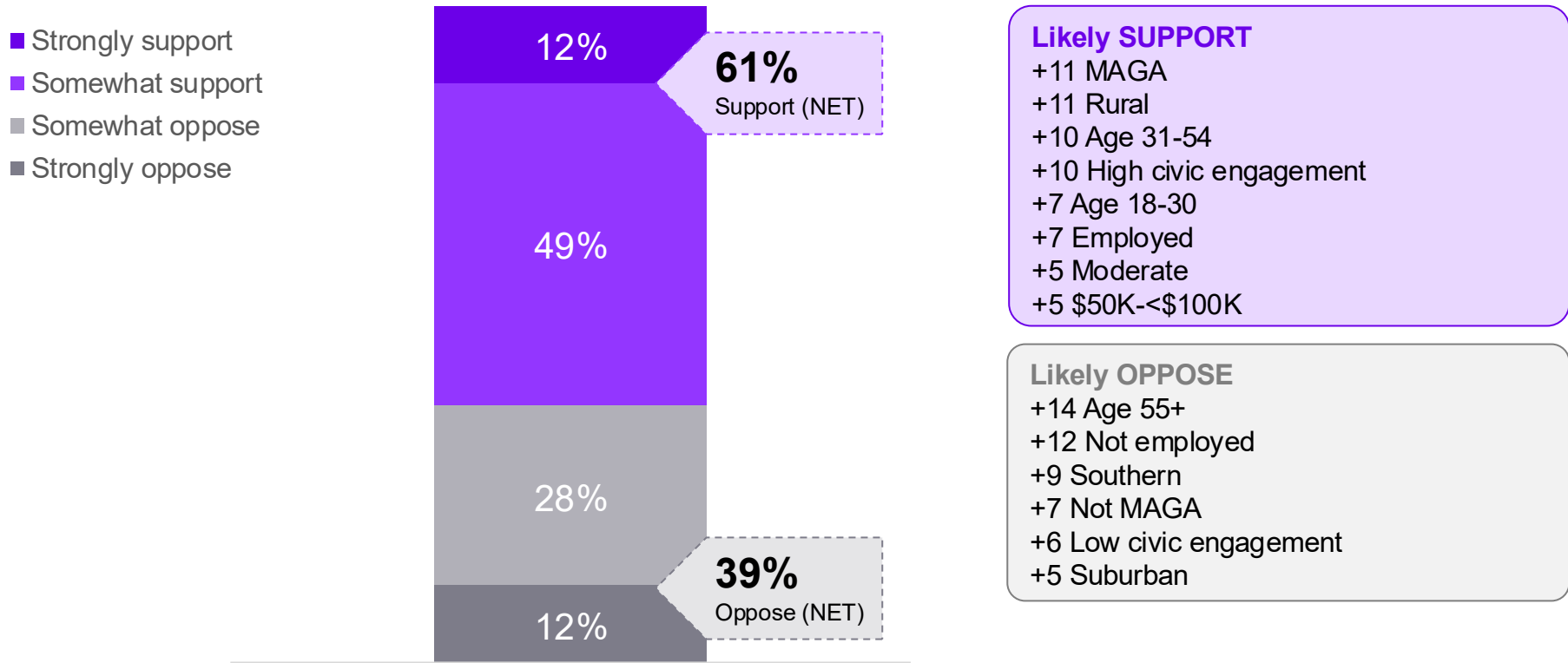
How to Improve Decision-Making • Increase accountability: Make officials answer directly to constituents more often. • Reduce outside influence: Limit lobbyist and donor influence on decision-making. • Improve transparency: Share more information about how and why decisions are made. • Involve communities: Include local voices in decisions that affect them, even when made at higher levels.

Which level of government do you trust more to make good decisions? Why? What decisions do you feel **can’t** be made at your most trusted level of government? Why? What could be done to make those decisions better even if where they are made can’t be changed?

FEDERALISM, PROCESS, AND REFORMS

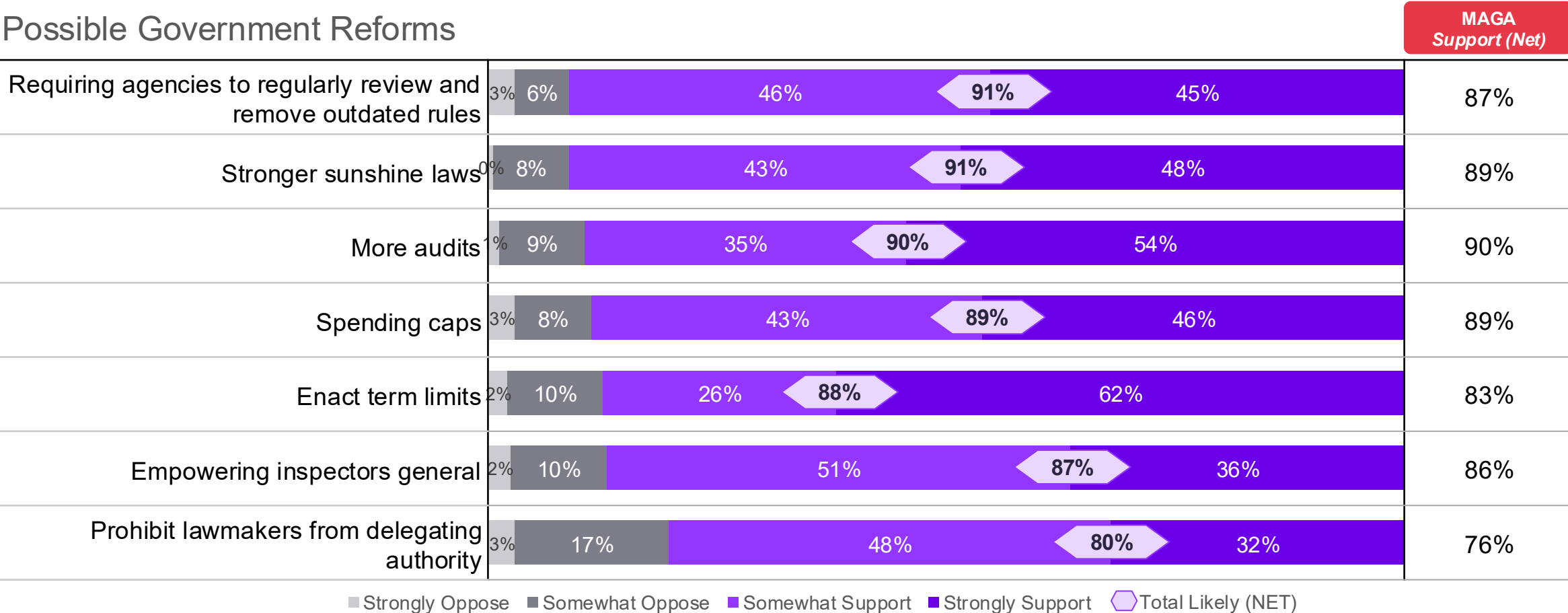
About two-thirds of the respondents support further empowering the President - most likely supporters are MAGA, middle-aged, and rural with high civic engagement.

Support for further empowering the President



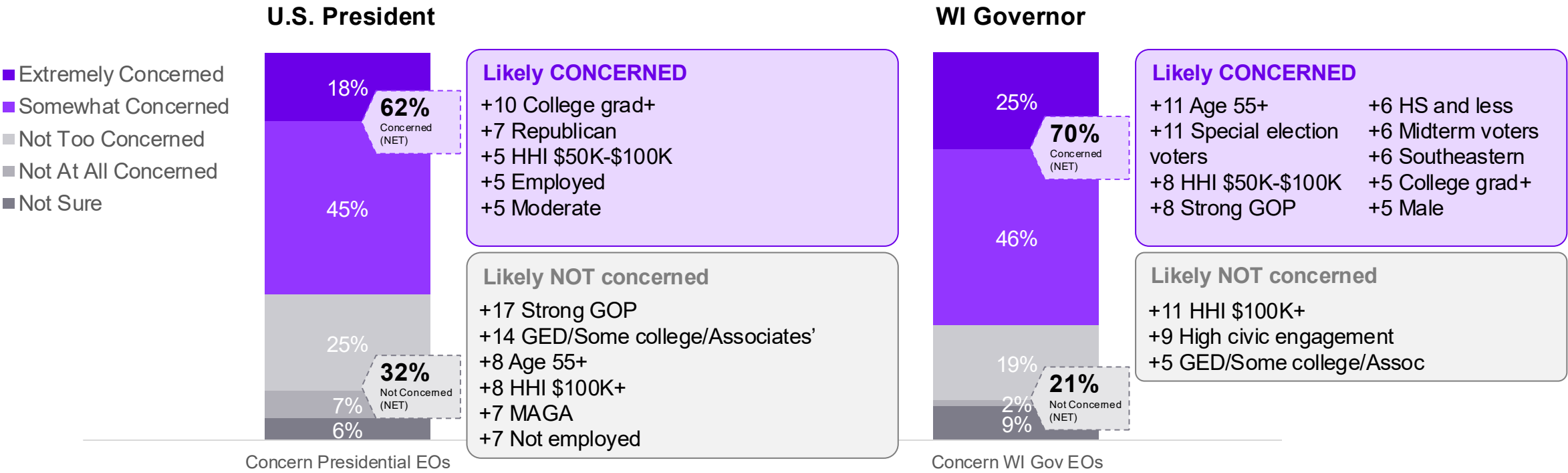
BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250
Q352. Political power shifts often. In the last 25 years, the presidency has flipped between parties five times. Given that reality, how supportive are you of further empowering the President, regardless of party?

Government reforms are generally popular among Wisconsin conservatives and MAGA.



Respondents are more concerned about governors using executive power to bypass processes than presidents.

Concern About Executive Power



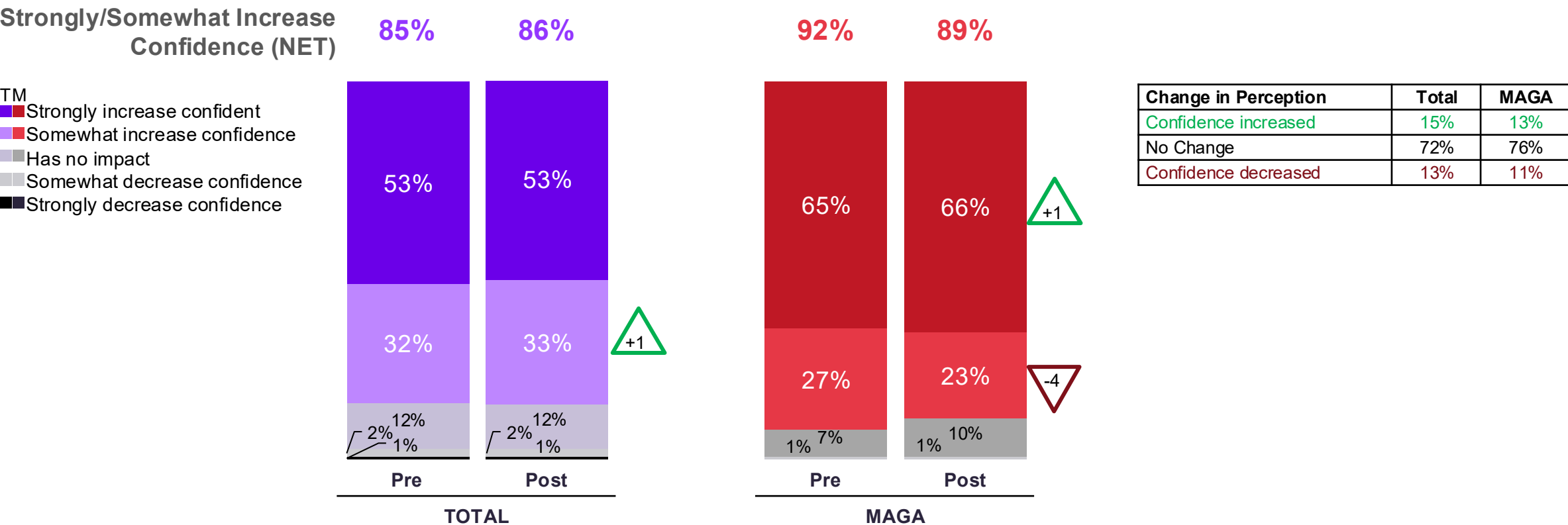
BASE: SPLIT SAMPLE A: n=125
Q601. Presidents can issue Executive Orders which direct national executive branch agencies (such as the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, etc.) on how to implement or enforce existing laws. How concerned are you that Executive Orders bypass national established process and procedure?

BASE: SPLIT SAMPLE B: n=125
Q602. Wisconsin Governors can issue Executive Orders which direct state executive branch agencies (such as the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, etc.) on how to implement or enforce existing laws. How concerned are you that Executive Orders bypass established process and procedure in Wisconsin?

SAVE ACT

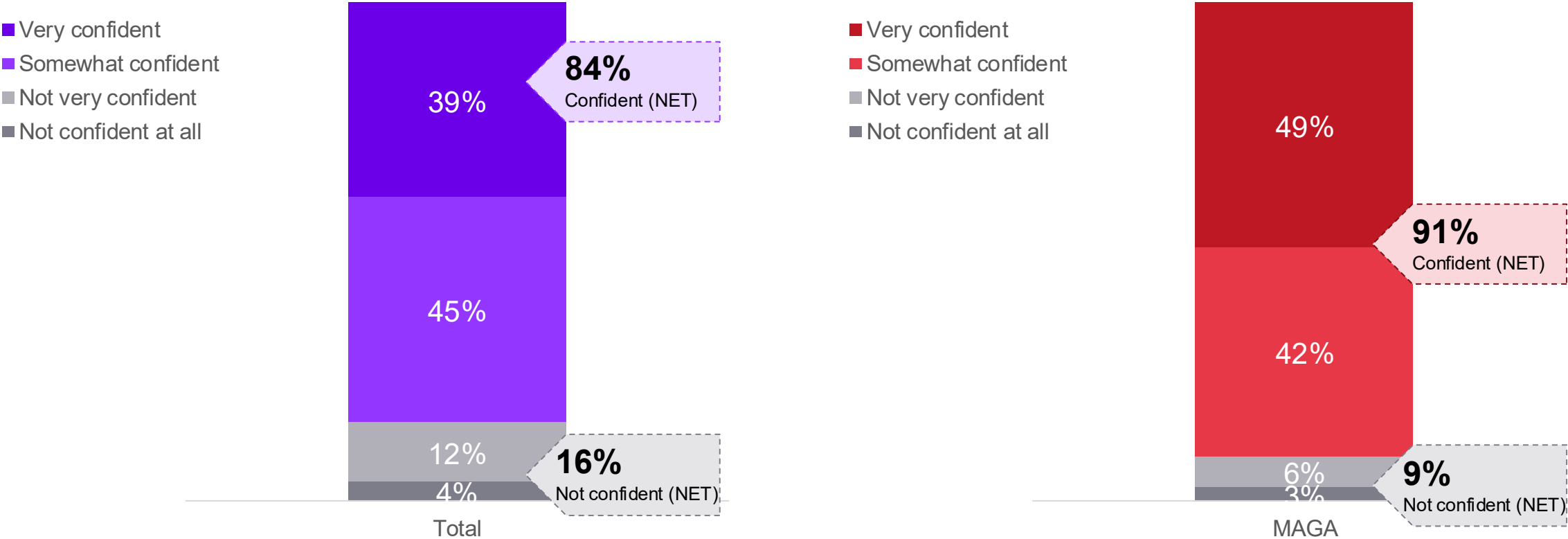
The SAVE Act enjoys overwhelming support, with little shift between pre and post exposure — confidence was already high.

PRE-POST SHIFT: To what extent, if at all, would the SAVE Act affect your confidence in election outcomes?



Passage of the SAVE Act would lift national election confidence to 84% overall and 91% among MAGA respondents.

Confidence in national elections, if the SAVE Act was passed

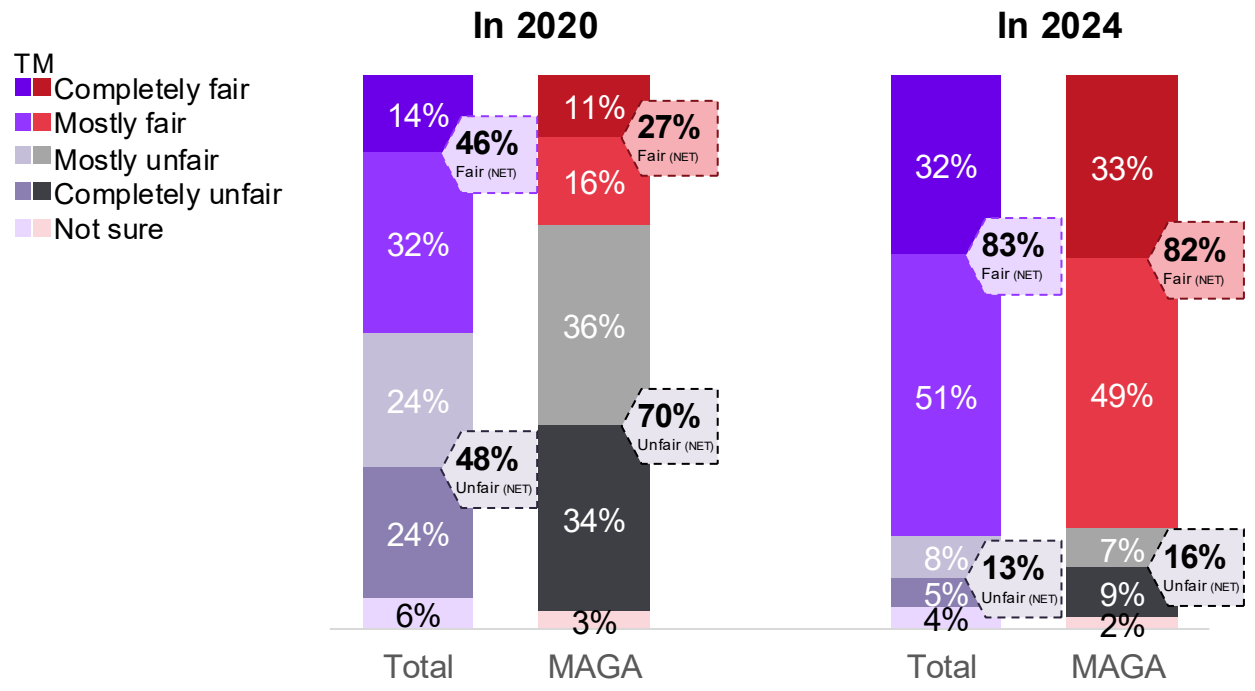


BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q406. If the SAVE Act was passed, how confident are you that future national elections will be conducted fairly?

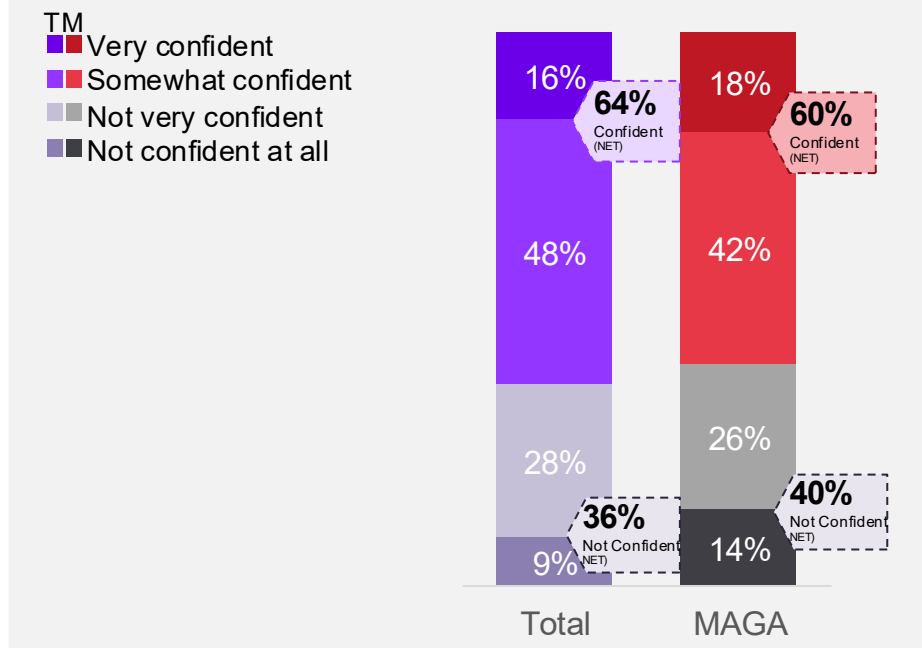
ELECTION FAIRNESS

Views on election fairness shifted sharply from 2020 to 2024, but confidence in future elections remains moderate.

How fair do you believe the Presidential Election was?



How confident are you that future national elections will be conducted fairly?



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q401. How fair do you believe the 2020 Presidential Election was?
Q402. How fair do you believe the 2024 Presidential Election was?
Q405. How confident are you that future national elections will be conducted fairly?

Reasons for Confidence in Elections

Seeing and understanding the safeguards in place boosts confidence in election results.

Less Confident

Those not confident in US elections are uncertain about the validity of the results. Several people use words like fraud, rigged, and scam when thinking about elections.

“Sometimes it’s a popularity contest and other times it seems like the media tries to paint the picture they want the majority to believe regardless to the truth. Unfortunately, the corruption has been exposed so many times in the form of rigged elections, ballot boxes and individuals voting that have been deceased for over 10 years.” – Male, 50, Southeastern

Corruption is a recurring theme. Multiple participants mention corruption, manipulation, and dishonesty as central to how they view the election process. The sense is that the system itself cannot be trusted.

More Confident

Not everyone is pessimistic. A few people focus on the positive aspects of voting and democracy.

“I have worked the polling process so I have seen how everything works behind the scenes. I have seen the manual counting of ballots and the computer process also.” – Female, 44, Eastern

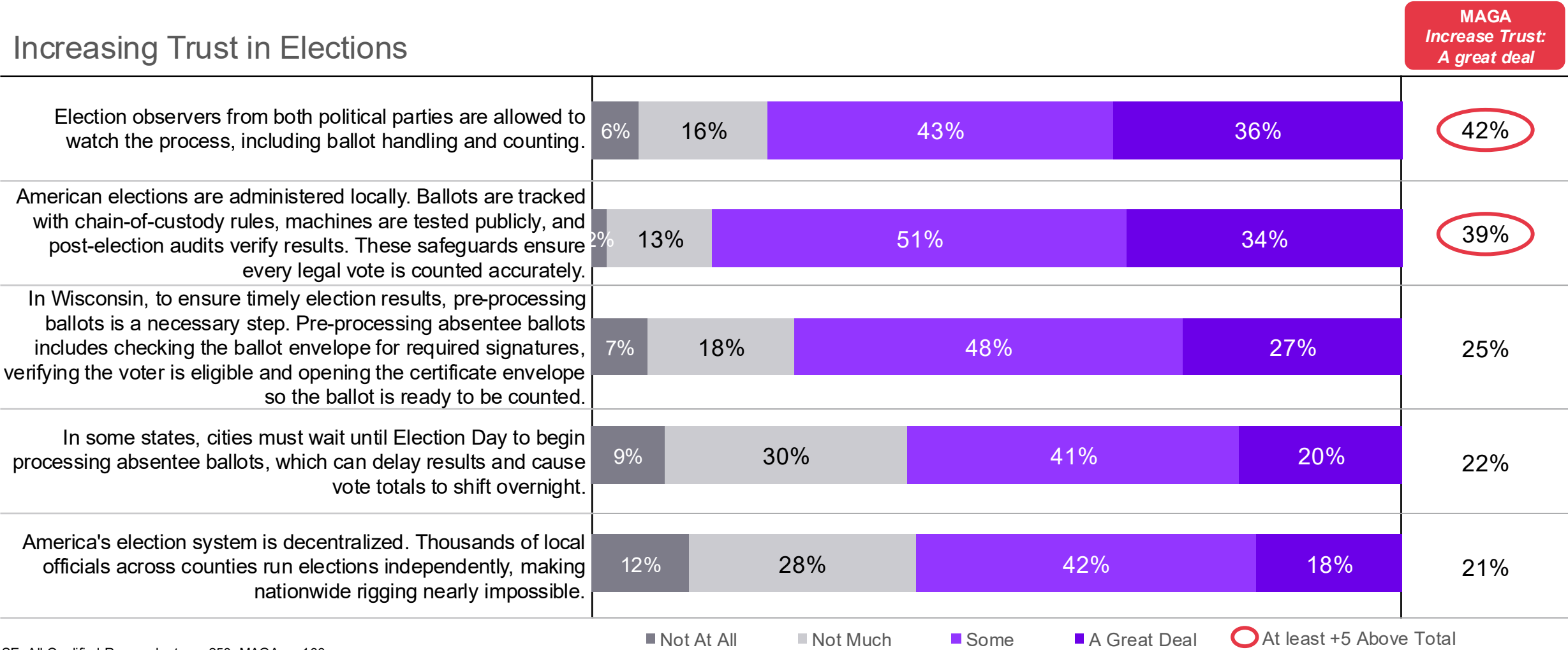
“I think the system is built to mitigate almost all of this corruption. Of course, what comes to mind, especially in recent elections, is the possibility of people using stolen social security numbers to vote. While each vote is counted, some votes may be fraudulent.” – Male, 31, Eastern



People highlight the importance of voting and citizen participation as core to the system, even if they have concerns about how it functions.

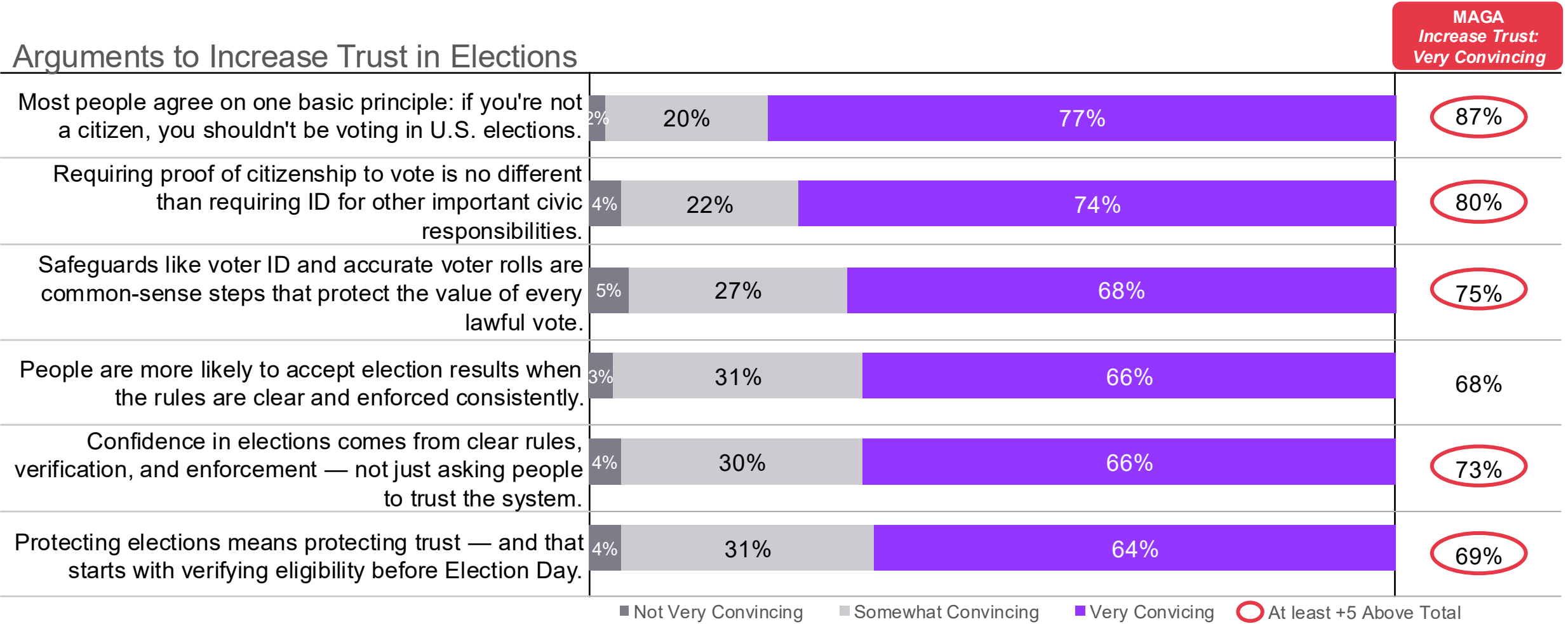
How confident are you that votes are counted accurately in U.S. elections?

Bipartisan election observers and local safeguards do the most to build trust — especially among MAGA respondents.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q410. How much would the following statements increase your trust in elections?

Citizenship-based voting requirements are overwhelmingly convincing, with majority of MAGA finding the core arguments persuasive.



Voter ID Laws Have Most Awareness

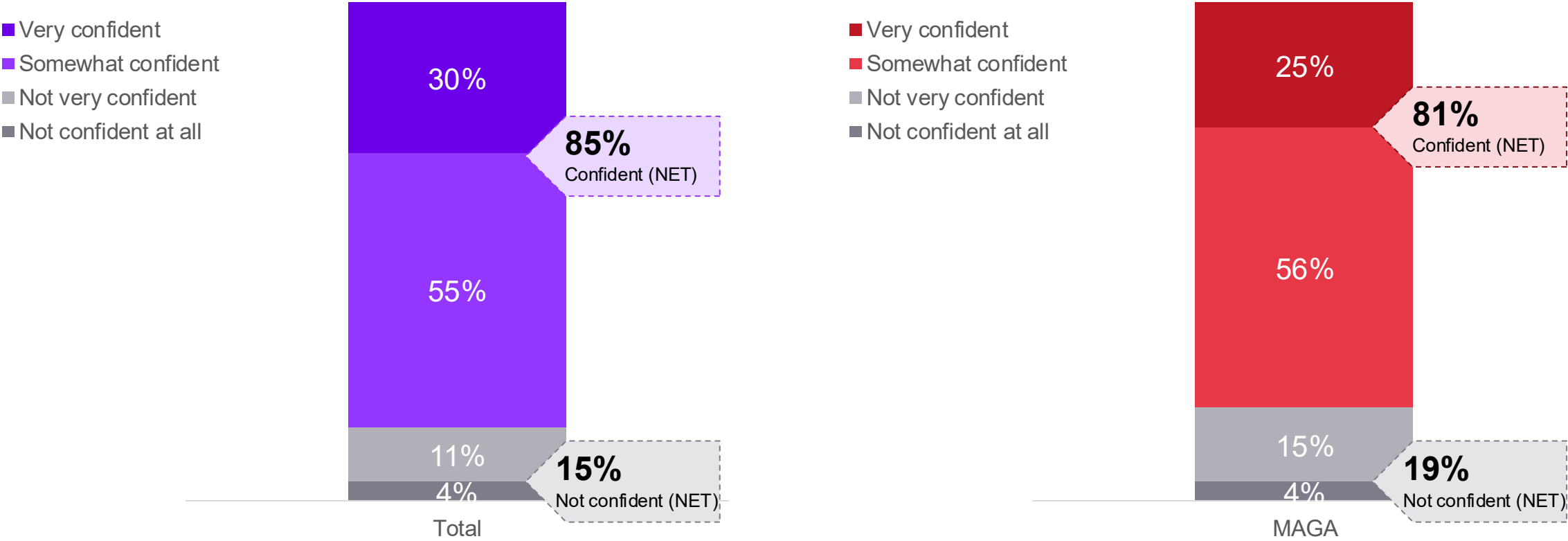
Qualitative Phase Findings

In qualitative research, Wisconsin safeguards aside from Voter ID laws have low awareness.

	Response Count: Aware of Safeguard Out of 27 total respondents
Wisconsin law requires most voters to present an approved photo ID when voting in person or requesting an absentee ballot.	24
Absentee ballots must be requested by the voter, issued by a municipal clerk, and returned either by mail or personal delivery as authorized by law.	16
Voting machines are tested publicly before elections.	13
Wisconsin elections are conducted primarily on hand marked paper ballots, which serve as the official, auditable record of voter intent.	13
Statutes require ballots to be secured at all times, including sealed containers, controlled access, and documentation when ballots are moved or counted.	13
All voting equipment used in Wisconsin must be approved and certified by the Wisconsin Elections Commission and meet state and federal standards.	12
Wisconsin maintains a single, statewide electronic voter registration system (WisVote)	9
Voting audits after elections are open to the public.	8
Statutes govern the programming, sealing, storage, and transport of voting equipment, including documentation of access and custody.	7
Wisconsin law guarantees public access to observe voting, absentee processing, central count, and recounts, subject to rules that protect voter privacy and order.	6
After elections, a random set of ballots is hand counted to verify results.	5

Confidence in local elections is broadly strong, though MAGA respondents are slightly less assured than the overall population.

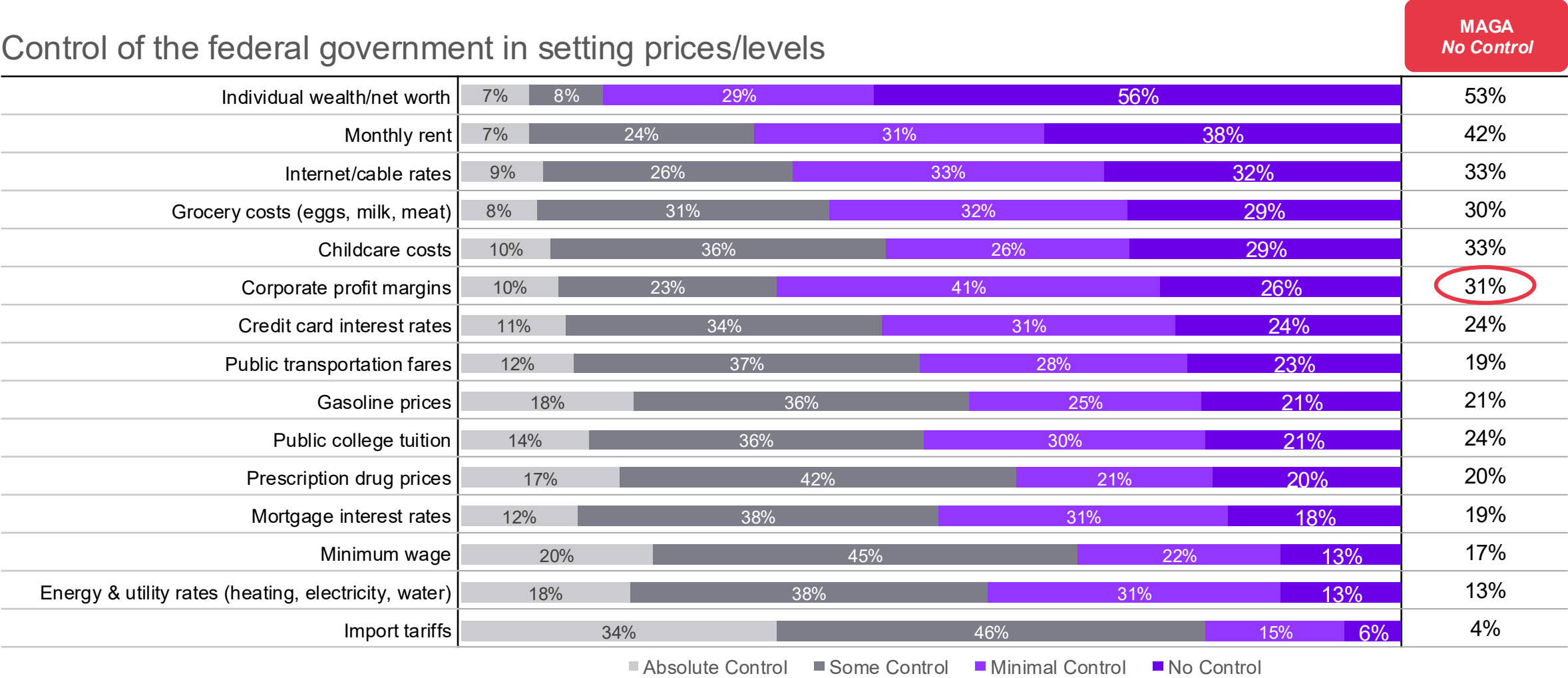
Confidence in local elections, if the SAVE Act was passed



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q408. How confident are you that your local elections will be conducted fairly?

ECONOMIC REGULATION

A sizeable number of conservatives and MAGA believe there is some benefit of government price regulation.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q450. How much control should the federal government have on setting prices/levels for each of the following?

Capping Vs Setting Prices

Most people view price-setting and price caps as distinct policies, even if the practical importance of that distinction differs from person to person. A minority, however, treats them as functionally equivalent—both as mechanisms of government control that constrain pricing.

Setting Prices

Many participants describe setting prices as when a business chooses an amount they feel is profitable and reasonable.

VS.

Capping Prices

Capping prices, by contrast, is seen as putting a legal limit on how high prices can go.

“When I think of setting prices I think of coming up with an amount that you feel is profitable and reasonable. When I think about capping consumer prices I think about setting a limit that this price can’t go above” – Male, 50, MAGA Republican

“Setting means that the government is actually choosing the price of something capping simply means that they will not allow pricing to go over a certain limit.”- Female, 43, non-MAGA Republican

“Setting a price means the price is fixed at that amount, while a cap means it can’t exceed that price but can float around beneath it.” – Male, 56, non-MAGA Republican

Why This Matters

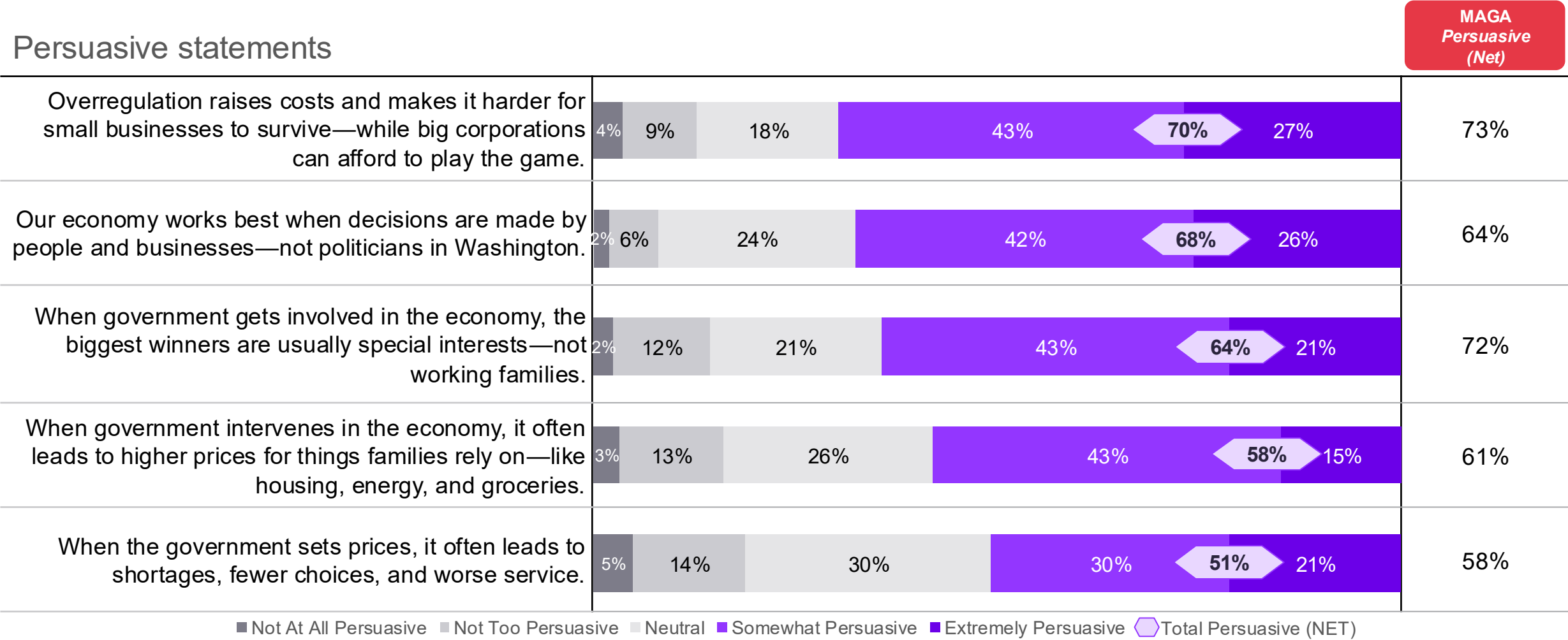
The difference matters because capping allows more flexibility. One person noted that capping is less intrusive on small businesses since prices can still move within the limit. Another explained that setting prices doesn’t account for inflation or changing conditions, while caps allow for adjustments.

Government Control Perspectives

When it comes to whether government should control prices at all, views split. Some believe government control prevents price gouging and protects people from unfair costs. Others think the market should decide prices through competition, with government stepping in only for essentials like prescriptions or utilities where people have no real choice.

Is setting prices the same or different than capping consumer prices? Why?

Free-market arguments land strongest when framed around small business harm and special-interest advantages.

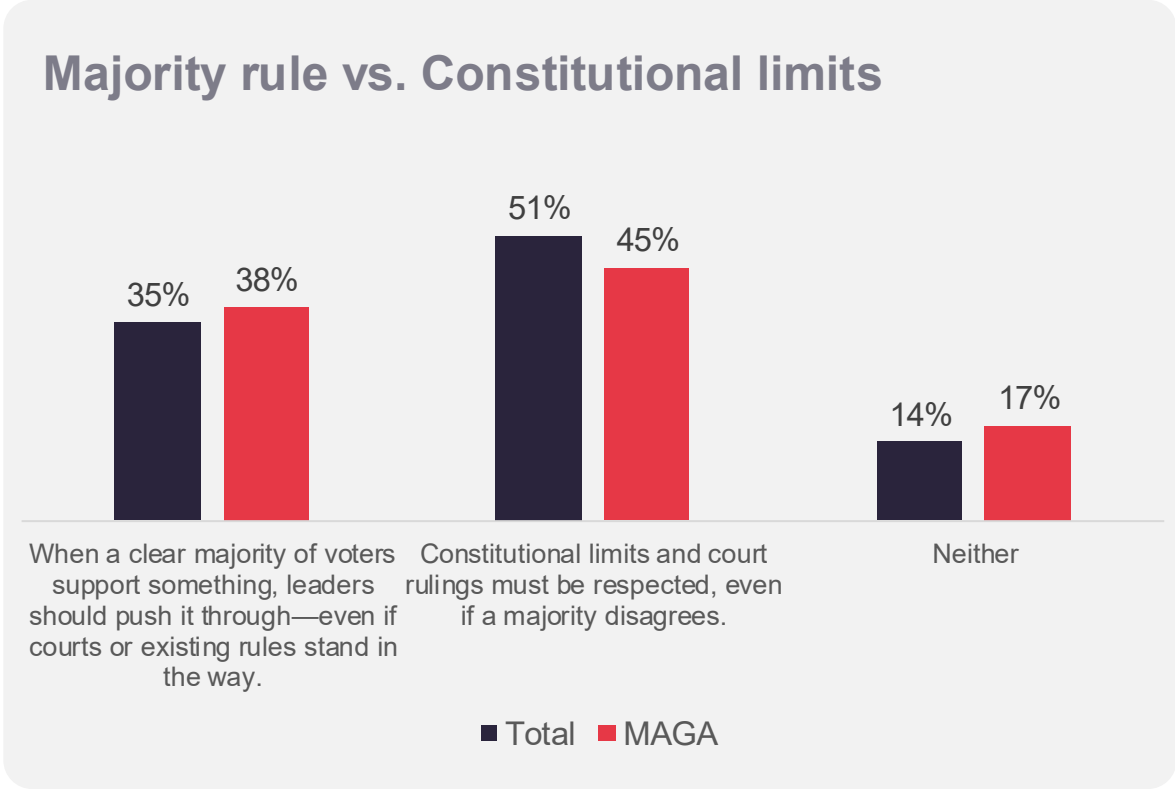
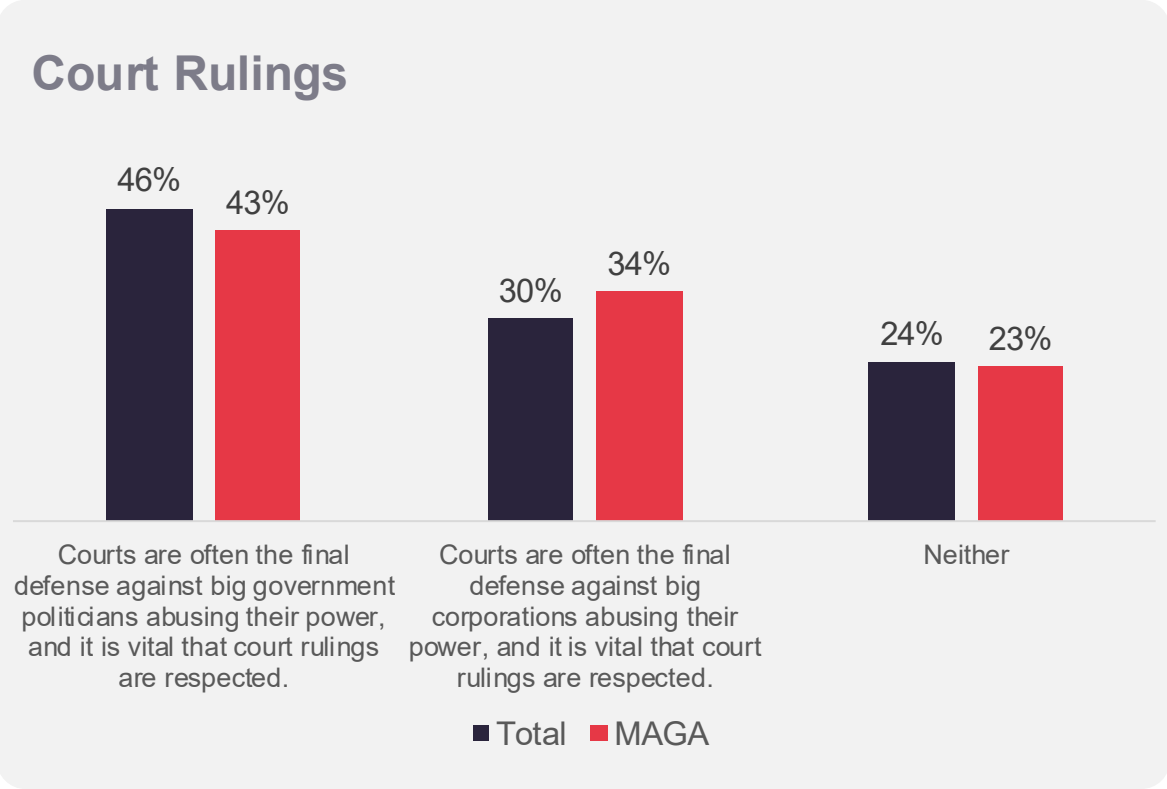


BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q451. Please rate each statement below on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “not at all persuasive” and 5 means “extremely persuasive.”

CHECKS AND BALANCES

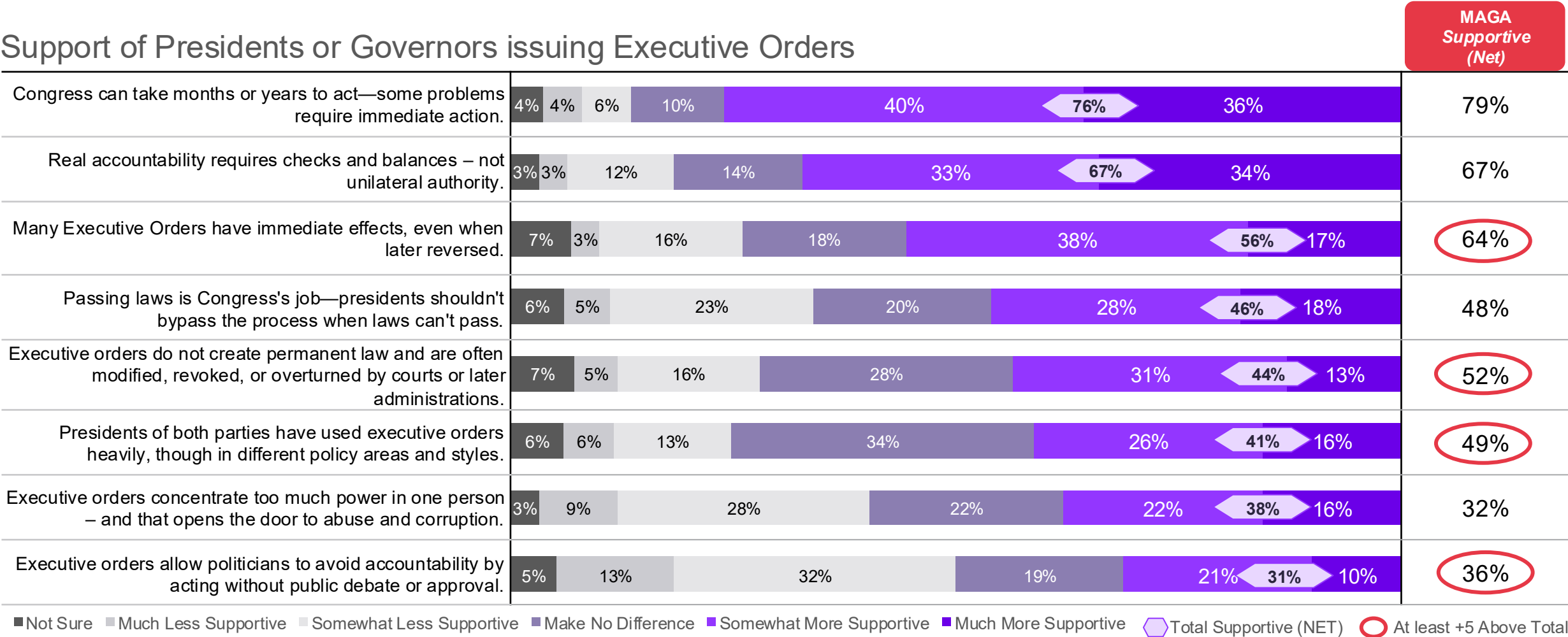
Respondents see courts as a check on government overreach more than corporate power, and a majority uphold constitutional limits over majority rule.

Which statement resonates more with you?



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q603/Q604. Which statement resonates more with you?

Urgency drives support for executive orders, but checks-and-balances arguments resonate strongly with MAGA respondents.



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q610. For each of the following statements, indicate if it makes you more or less supportive of Presidents or Governors issuing Executive Orders.

Concerns about Gubernatorial overreach are framed in terms of the current governor.

What is your biggest concern about the power the Governor of Wisconsin has to issue Executive Orders and Emergency declarations?

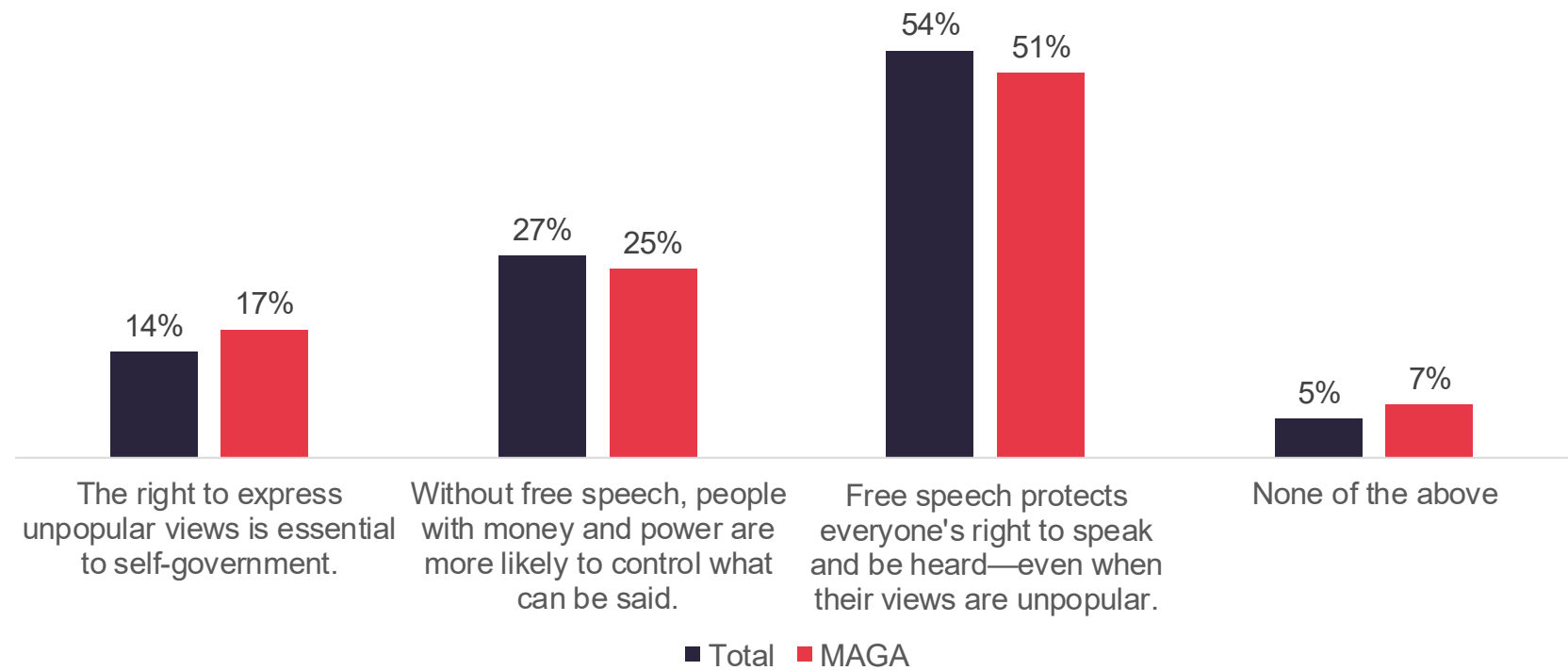
Executive overreach 20%	Respondents express deep concern that the Governor holds too much concentrated power that can override the legislature and the will of the people, with fears about unchecked authority, misuse of veto powers, and emergency declarations that bypass normal democratic processes without adequate safeguards or time limits.	<i>"That he uses his own political power to get essentially what he wants without working with the legislature or listening to the people."</i>
Decision and accountability 18%	Respondents worry that gubernatorial decisions may be made hastily or without proper consideration of the broader public interest, reflecting distrust in the decision-making process and concerns about unilateral actions that favor certain groups, lack transparency, and sidestep collective governance and legislative involvement.	<i>"Most concerning issue is the potential to sidestep elected representatives during critical decisions"</i>
Transparency and oversight 13%	Respondents are concerned about the erosion of checks and balances in the executive order process, emphasizing the need for greater honesty, legislative approval, and public referendums to ensure accountability and prevent the Governor from acting without proper oversight.	<i>"A key concern is that emergency powers let Tony Evers act quickly without full legislative approval, which can limit checks and balances if used for too long or too broadly."</i>
Public impact and rights 7%	Respondents fear that executive actions may negatively impact ordinary citizens' rights and freedoms, with concerns that policies favor certain groups over others, restrict personal liberties (such as during COVID-19), ignore public opinion, and fail to serve the best interests of working families and everyday people.	<i>"If they are abused by the government to limit people's rights and freedoms"</i>
Political and partisan 6%	Respondents express frustration that the Governor's executive orders are driven by partisan ideology rather than the needs of all Wisconsin residents, with many perceiving a liberal bias that does not represent the largely rural and conservative population outside of major urban areas.	<i>"He doesn't do what is best for the whole state, he does what is best for his party and his voters"</i>
Leadership and competency 3%	Respondents question the Governor's ability to effectively lead and govern, expressing personal distrust, dissatisfaction with his character and competence, and concern that he is out of touch with the realities facing Wisconsin citizens and susceptible to outside influences like special interest lobbyists.	<i>"My biggest concern is that Governor Tony Evers has no clue what is happening in his own state. He is totally ineffective and has to have others tell what him right and wrong."</i>
Other 27%	Respondents express a wide range of concerns including uncertainty about the Governor's use of power, worries about economic impacts like taxes and cost of living, references to COVID-19 mandates, and general distrust or apathy—with some stating they have no concerns or don't know enough to form an opinion.	<i>"There are too many that I can't choose just one. I do not trust anyone in government or politics"</i>

BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250

Q620. What is your biggest concern about the power the Governor of Wisconsin has to issue Executive Orders and Emergency declarations?

“Free speech protects everyone” is the strongest argument overall with subtle differences among MAGA.

Which argument best supports protecting free speech for views you dislike?



BASE: All Qualified Respondents: n=250; MAGA: n=100
Q700. Which argument best supports protecting free speech for views you dislike?

WORD EQUITY

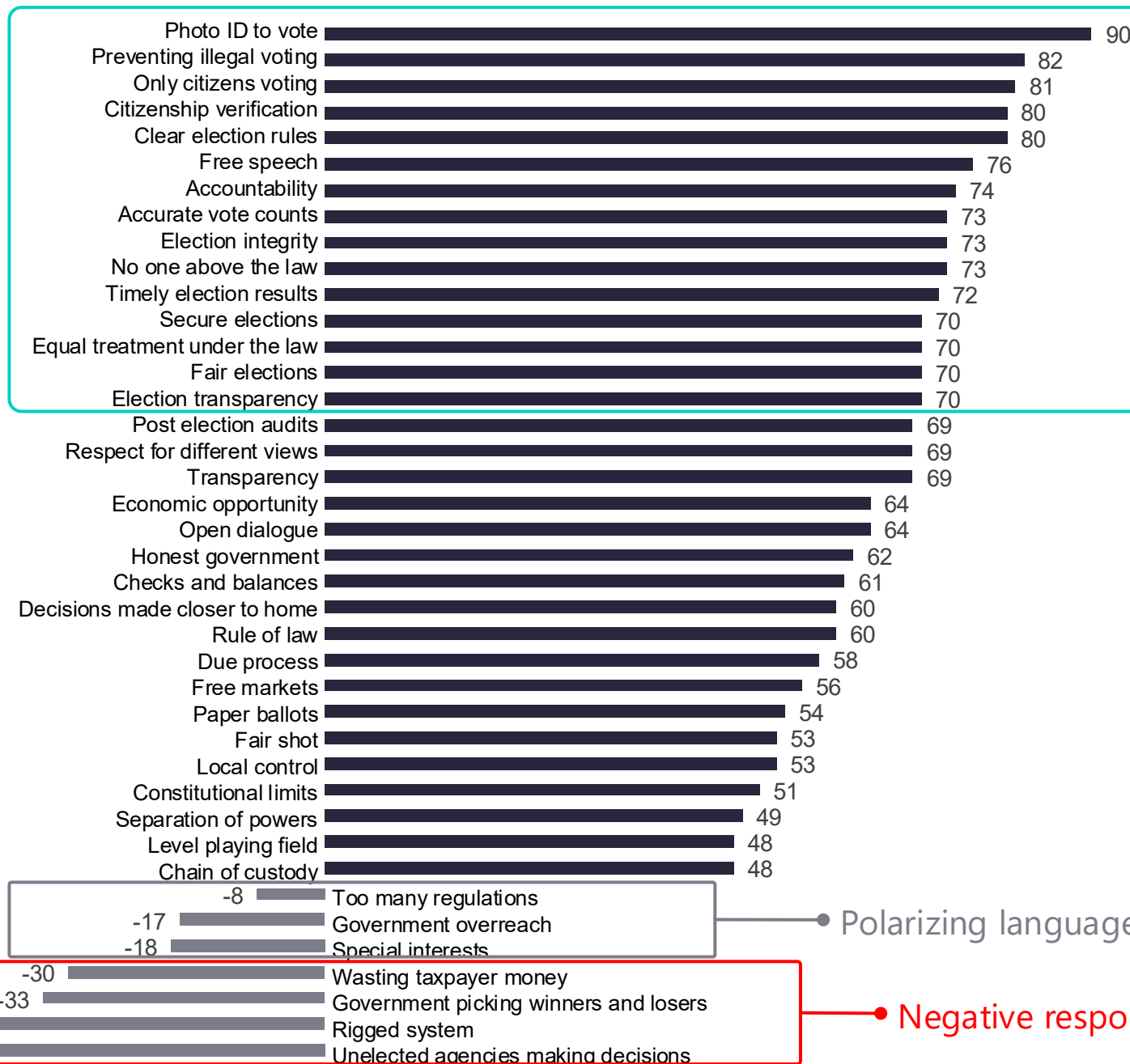
Narrows in on the best specific words and phrases to use to convey an overall theme. Scores range from -100% (perfect negative equity) to +100% (perfect positive equity).

*Scores below -25% to +25% are considered neutral or highly polarizing. **Scores below -70% or above +70% are considered very strong.***

Scores -50% to -70% or +50% to +70% are considered strong.

Q800. There are many words and phrases used when discussing democracy and day-to-day life in America. We are going to have you consider a lot of those different words and phrases. For each of the following, please indicate whether you have a positive, negative or neutral feeling.

Word Equity Scores

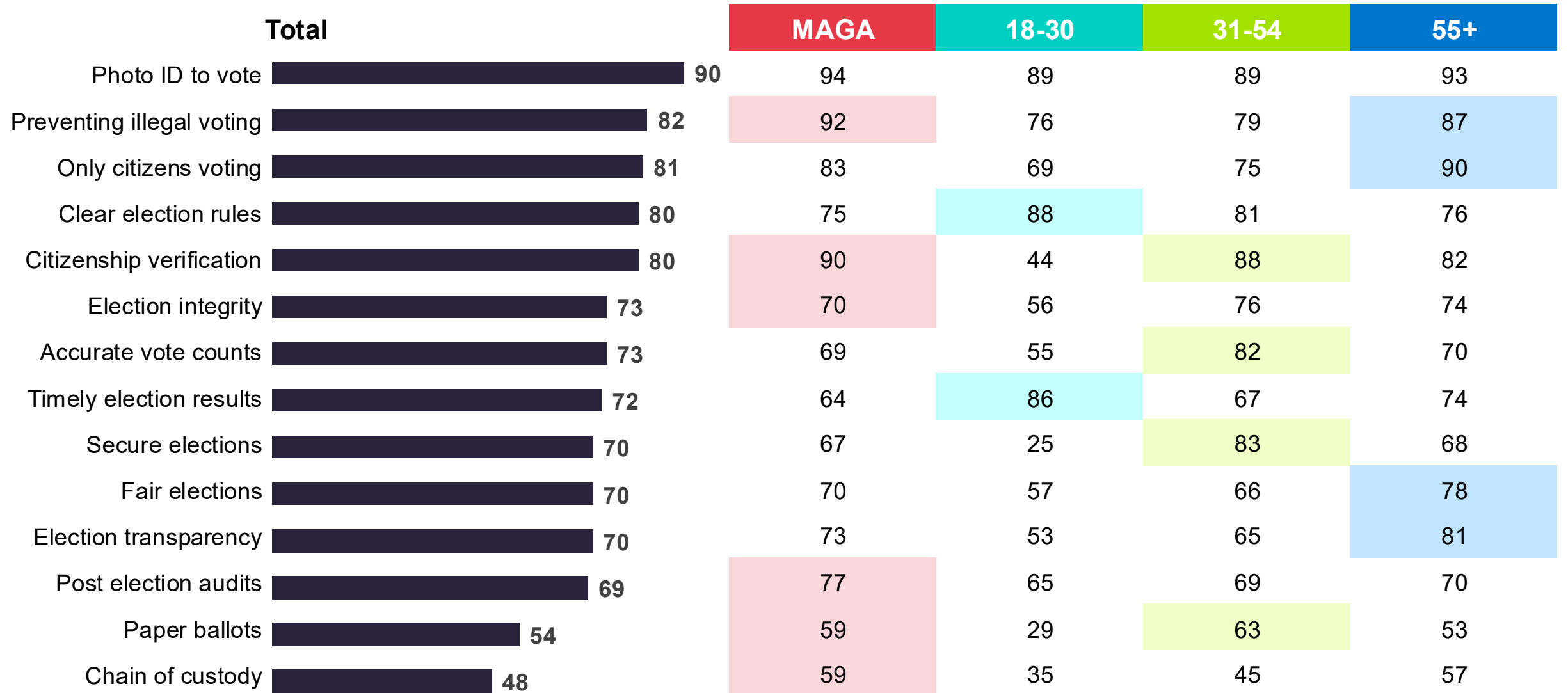


Very strong positive response

Polarizing language

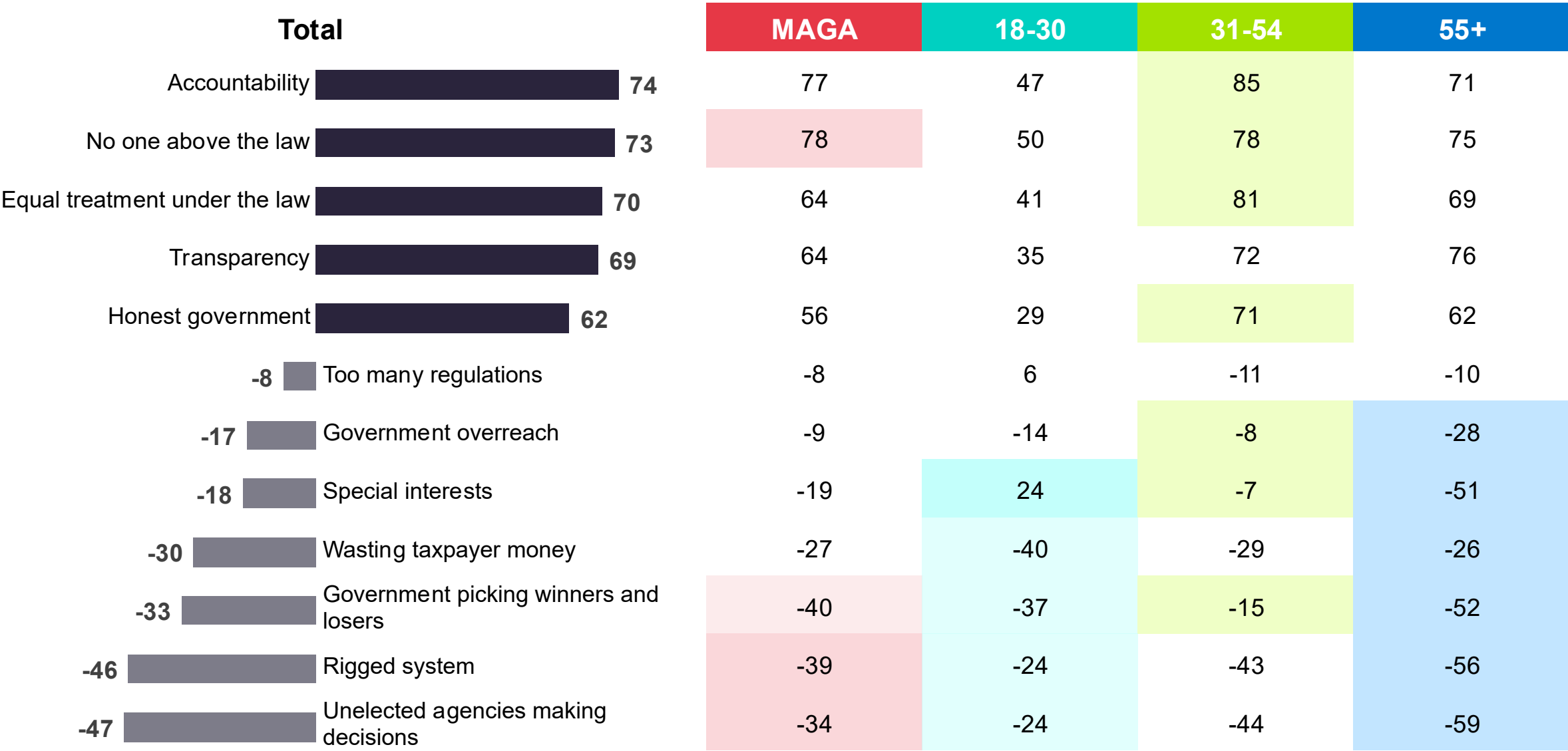
Negative response

The Language of *Election Integrity*



*Shading indicates at least +5% Above Total

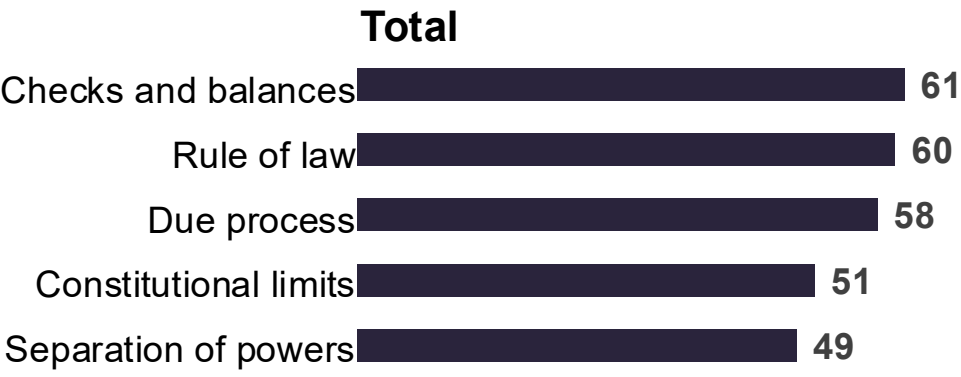
The Language of *Government*



*Shading indicates at least +/- 5% Above Total

The Language of *American Values*

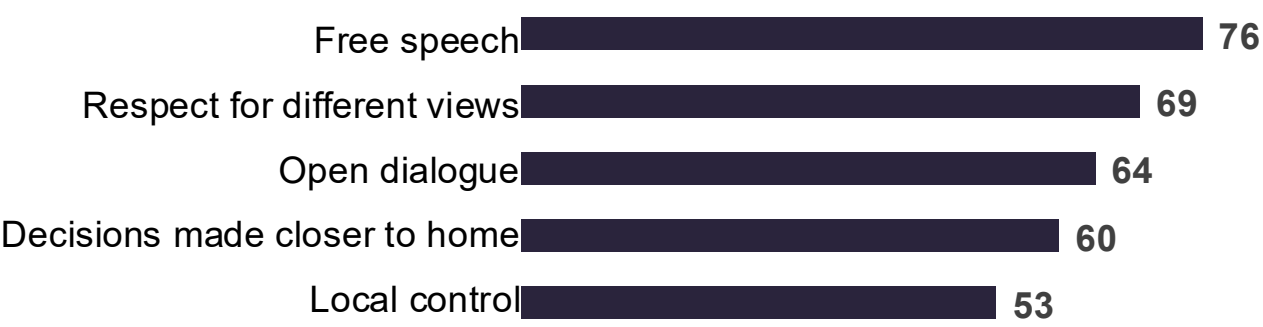
Constitutional Principles



Economic Principles



Democratic Values



MAGA	18-30	31-54	55+
80	29	53	78
70	50	57	67
67	28	59	69
51	47	31	78
39	50	44	55
72	53	73	58
67	28	50	73
47	67	54	47
57	40	50	48
86	77	75	77
75	59	71	69
69	29	68	69
70	50	53	70
56	59	53	51

*Shading indicates at least +5% Above Total

Demographics

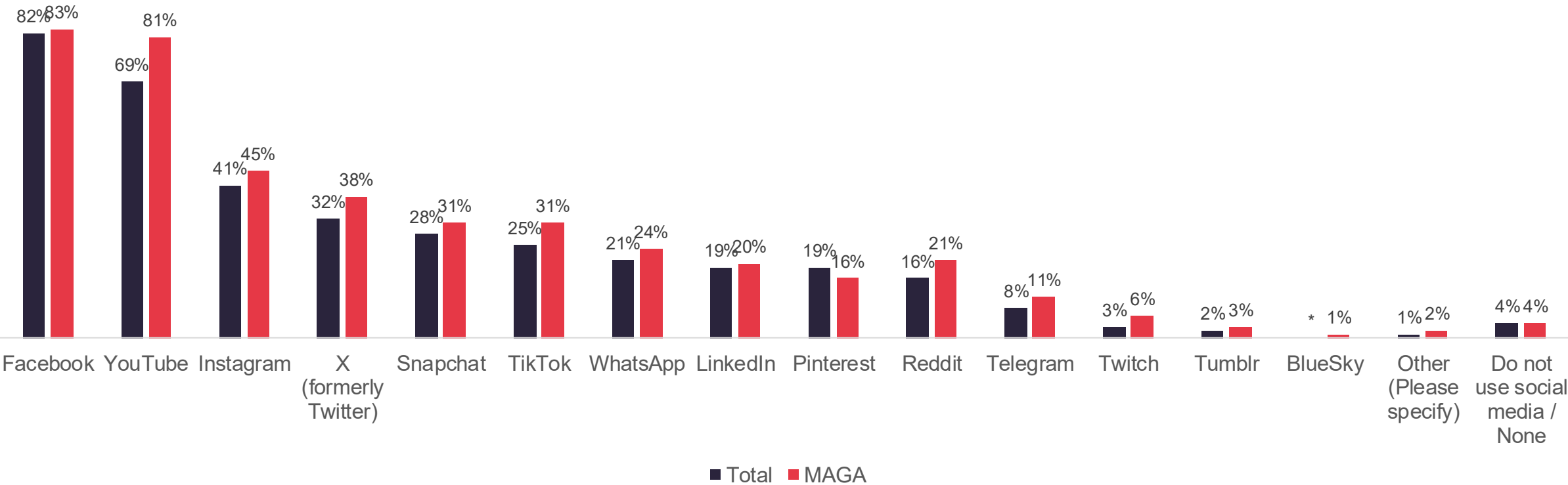
Demographics

		TOTAL (n=250)	MAGA (n=100)
Gender	Male	51%	55%
	Female	49%	45%
Age	18-34	14%	8%
	35-54	46%	50%
	55+	40%	42%
Region	Northern	7%	11%
	Central	9%	11%
	Eastern	20%	18%
	Western	12%	13%
	Southern	16%	19%
	Southeastern	37%	28%
Urbanicity	Urban	29%	32%
	Suburban	34%	24%
	Rural	37%	44%
Income	<\$50K (NET)	32%	36%
	\$50K < \$100K (NET)	35%	29%
	\$100K+ (NET)	31%	32%
	Don't know / Not sure	*	-
	Refused / Decline to answer	2%	3%

		TOTAL (n=250)	MAGA (n=100)
Education	High school and less (NET)	27%	30%
	GED/Some college/Assoc (NET)	33%	33%
	College grad+ (NET)	39%	37%
Employment	Full-time	45%	52%
	Part-time	8%	6%
	Self-employed	7%	5%
	Not employed, looking	4%	4%
	Not employed, not looking	*	-
	Not employed, unable	7%	9%
	Retired	22%	21%
	Student	2%	2%
	Stay home spouse/partner	5%	1%
Ethnicity	Hispanic	4%	2%
	White	89%	90%
	Black/African American	4%	3%
	Asian	1%	1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	2%
	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	*	1%
	Multi-Race	1%	1%

Social Media Usage

Social media platforms visited regularly



BASE: All Qualified Respondents
Q901. Which of the following social media platforms do you visit regularly (at least once a week)?

Political Demographics

		TOTAL (n=250)	MAGA (n=100)
Ideology	Conservative	64%	80%
	Moderate	36%	20%
	Liberal	-	-
	Don't know	-	-
Party ID	Strong Republican	28%	46%
	Republican	61%	48%
	Independent	11%	6%
MAGA Self-identify	Yes	40%	100%
	No	48%	-
	Unsure	12%	-