

# **AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**2022 EDITION**

***SPONSORED BY GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
AND THE SOCIETY OF PRESIDENTIAL POLLSTERS***

Field Dates: September 8-9, 2022

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within the United States from **September 8 – 9, 2022** among **1,851 registered voters** by **HarrisX**.

The margin of error is **+/- 2.3 percentage points**.

Results were weighted for age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, income, locale, education, political party, and political ideology where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population.

## KEY FINDINGS

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There is uncertainty in our election system. A third of voters feel Biden was elected unfairly and almost half of Democrats acknowledge there were at least minor problems with counting votes.



Confidence in American institutions has remained stagnant under President Biden.



Voters are evenly split on whether Presidents Trump and Biden fostered national unity or created further divisions.



Majorities of voters say that most government institutions are increasingly becoming politicized.



Voters believe bipartisan governing is crucial, but also worry that the bipartisan system has broken down. Voters also say they want more checks and balances in the system, as half of voters say executive powers are being abused.

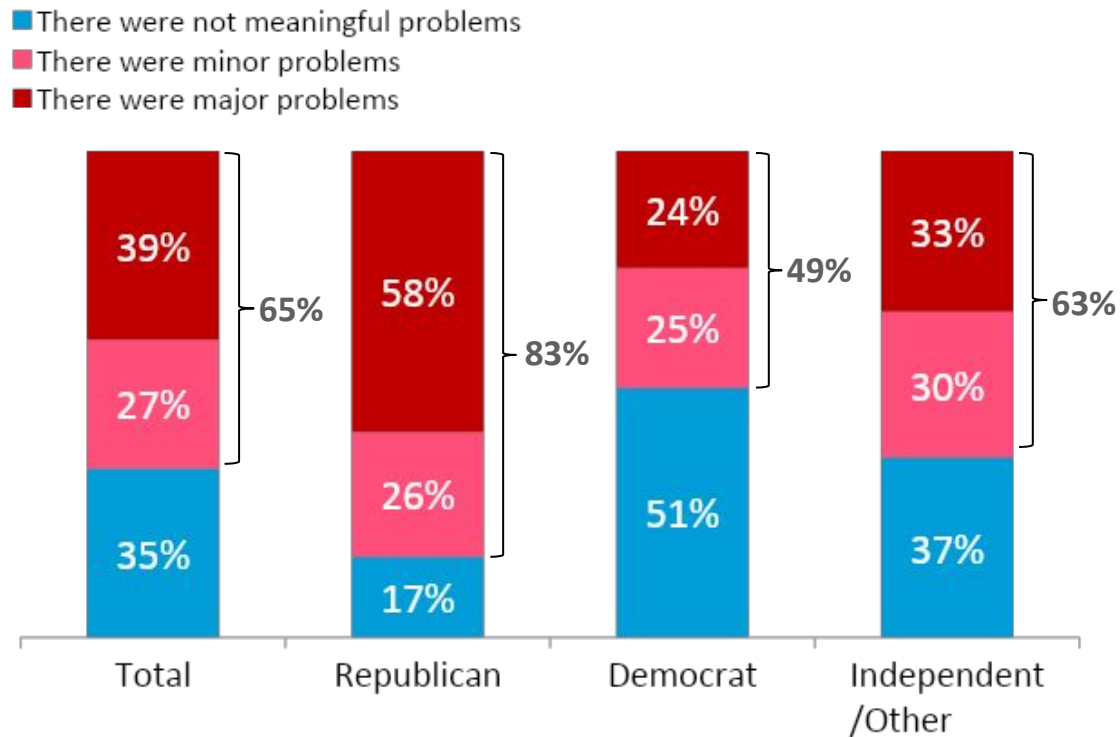
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## TWO THIRDS OF VOTERS SAY THERE WERE AT LEAST SOME PROBLEMS WITH COUNTING THE VOTES IN 2020; A THIRD STILL BELIEVE BIDEN'S ELECTION WAS UNFAIR

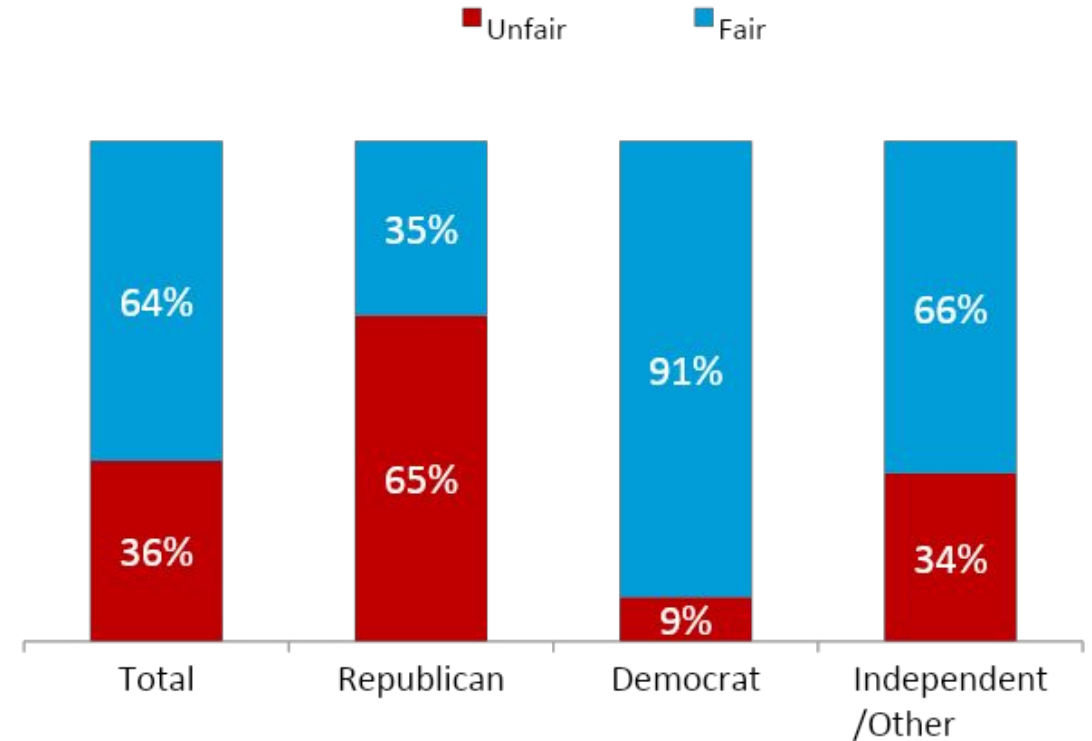
### How would you describe the process of counting the votes in the 2020 election? (By Party)

September 2022



### Do you think Joe Biden's election as president in 2020 was fair or unfair? (By Party)

September 2022



Base: Registered Voters (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

BT3. How would you describe the process of counting the votes in the 2020 election?

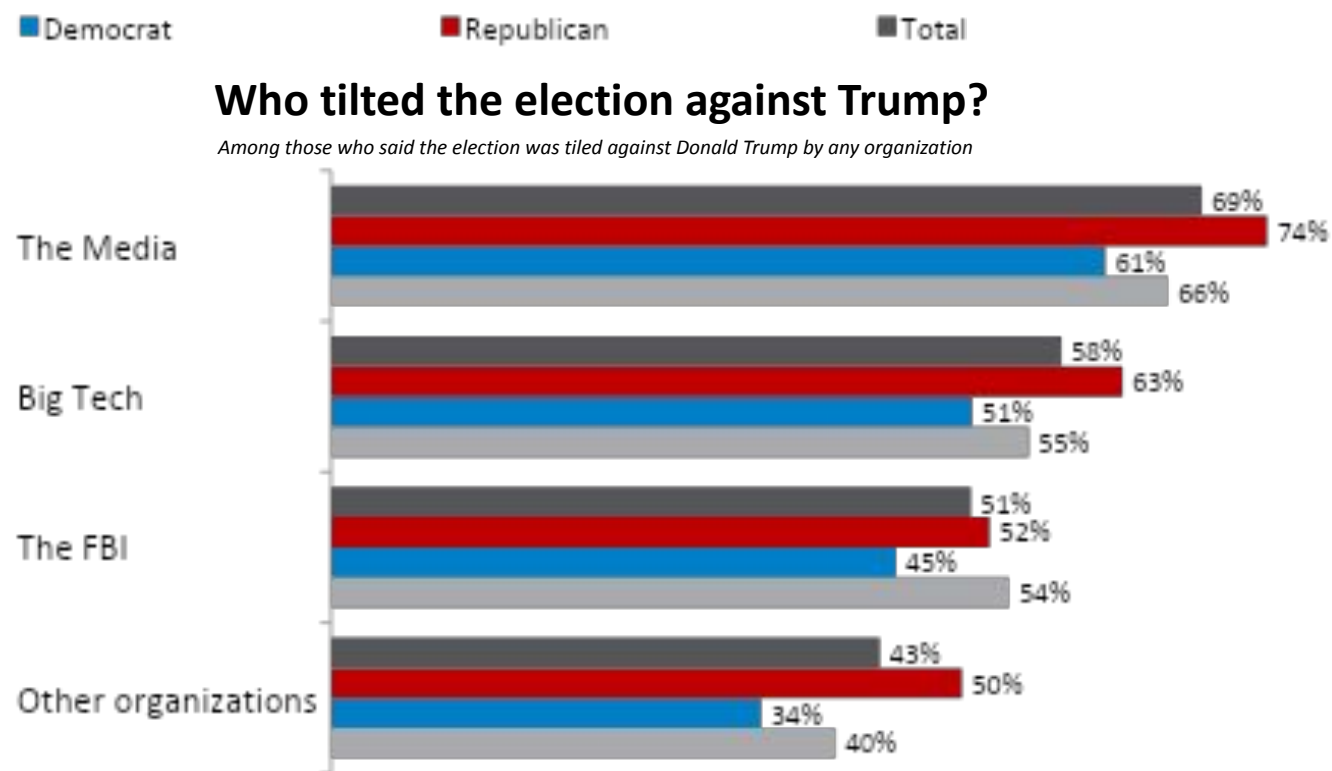
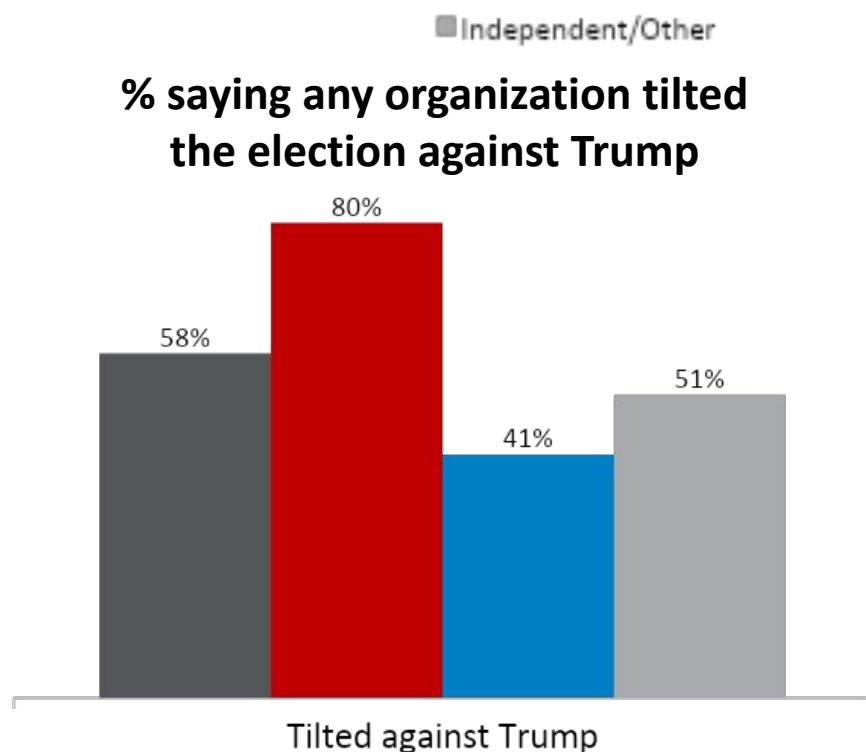
BT4. Do you think Joe Biden's election as president in 2020 was fair or unfair?



# A MAJORITY OF VOTERS SAY THE 2020 ELECTION WAS TILTED IN SOME WAY; THE MEDIA WAS THE GROUP MOST FREQUENTLY BELIEVED TO HAVE INFLUENCED THE ELECTION

**Do you think that the 2020 election was tilted against Donald Trump by big tech, the media, the FBI and other organizations or not tilted against Donald Trump?**

September 2022



Base: LHS Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484) RHS: Those who say the election was tilted against Trump Total (n=1,075), Republican (n=445), Democrat (n=378), Independent/Other (n=252)

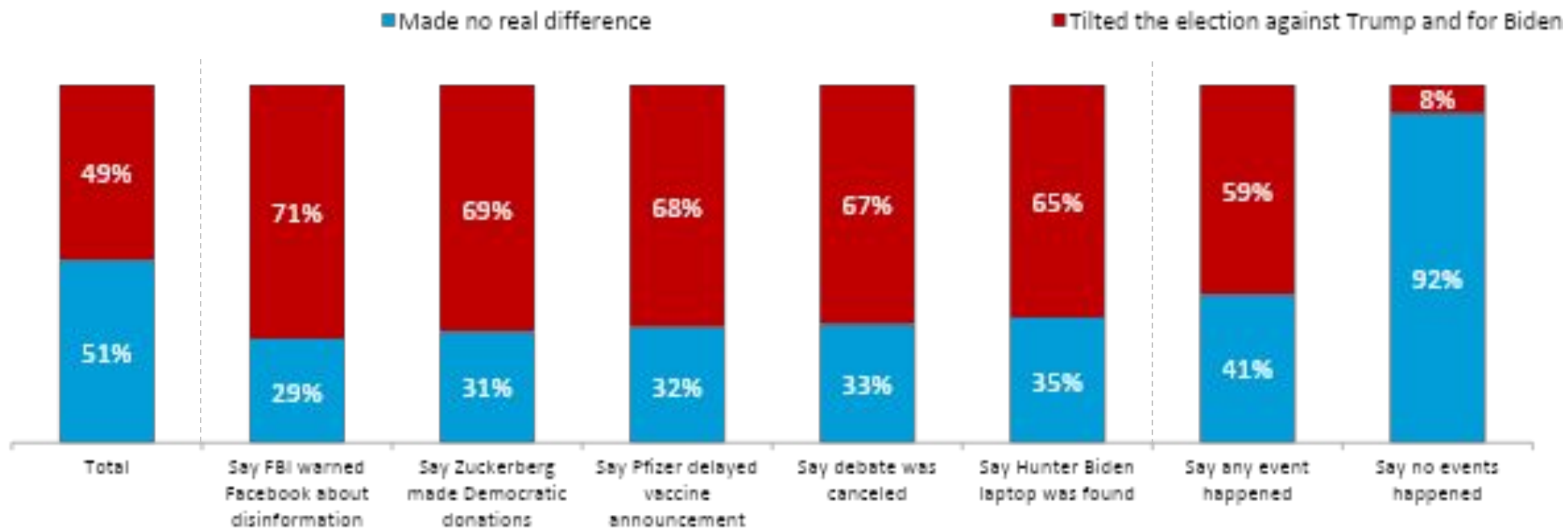
'MQ1. Do you think that the 2020 election was tilted against Donald Trump by big tech, the media, the FBI and other organizations or not tilted against Donald Trump?



## THE MAJORITY OF VOTERS BELIEVE EACH EVENT THAT OCCURRED TILTED THE ELECTION TOWARDS BIDEN

**Do you think the previously mentioned events may have tilted the election against Donald Trump and for Joe Biden or do you think these events made no real difference?**

September 2022



Base: Total (n=1,851), FBI warned Facebook (n=973), Zuckerberg made donations (n=978), Pfizer delayed vaccine announcement (n=981), Debate was cancelled (n=877), Hunter Biden laptop was found (n=1,064), Any event happened (n=1,528), No events happened (n=323)

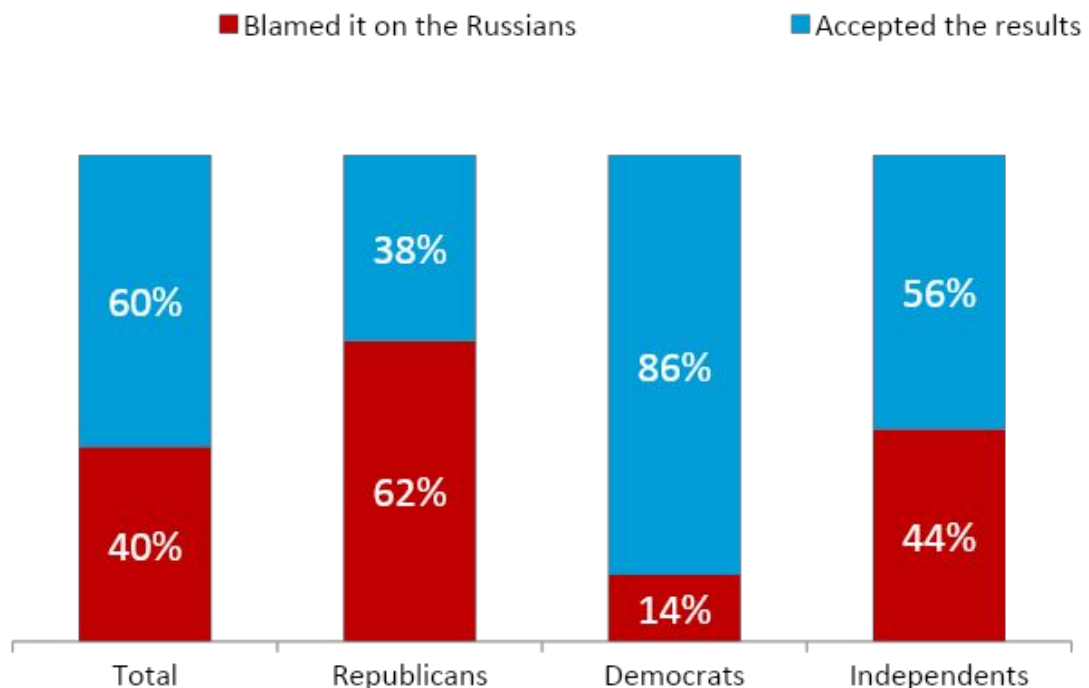
MQ3: Do you think the previously mentioned events may have tilted the election against Donald Trump and for Joe Biden or do you think these events made no real difference?



VOTERS, INCLUDING MAJORITIES OF ALL PARTIES, SAY TRUMP HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE 2020 ELECTION RESULTS. 2 IN 5 VOTERS STILL SAY CLINTON DIDN'T ACCEPT 2016 RESULTS EITHER.

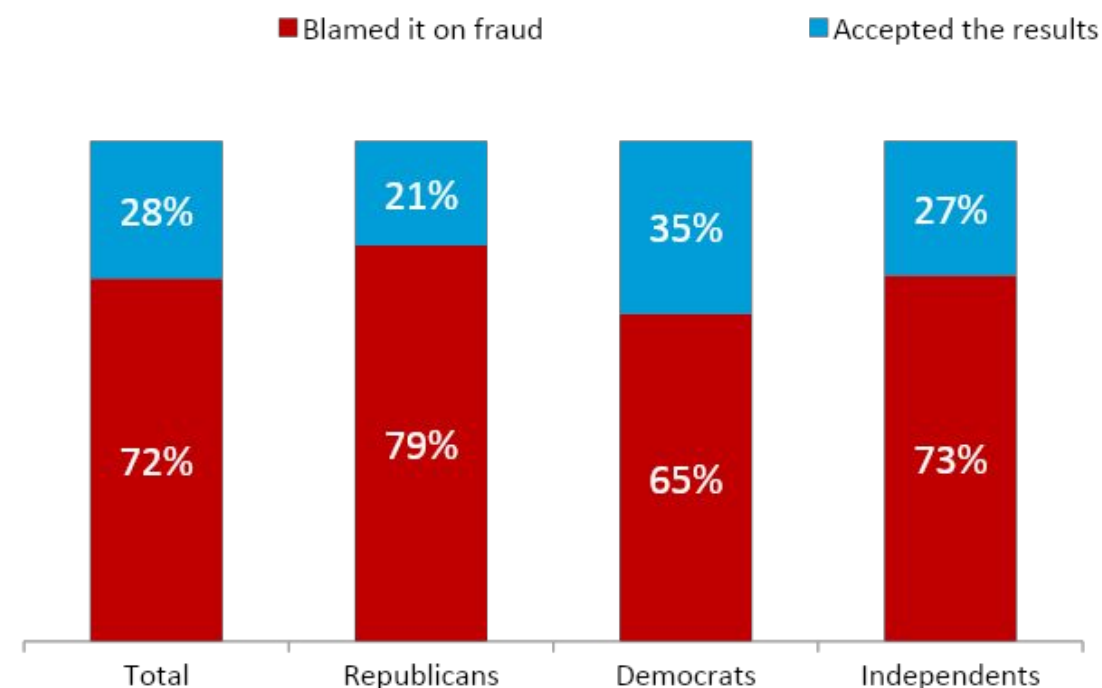
**Do you think that Hillary Clinton accepted the results of the 2016 election or did she blame it on the Russians?**

September 2022



**Do you think Donald Trump accepted the results of the 2020 election or did he blame it on fraud?**

September 2022



Base: Registered Voters (n=1,851)

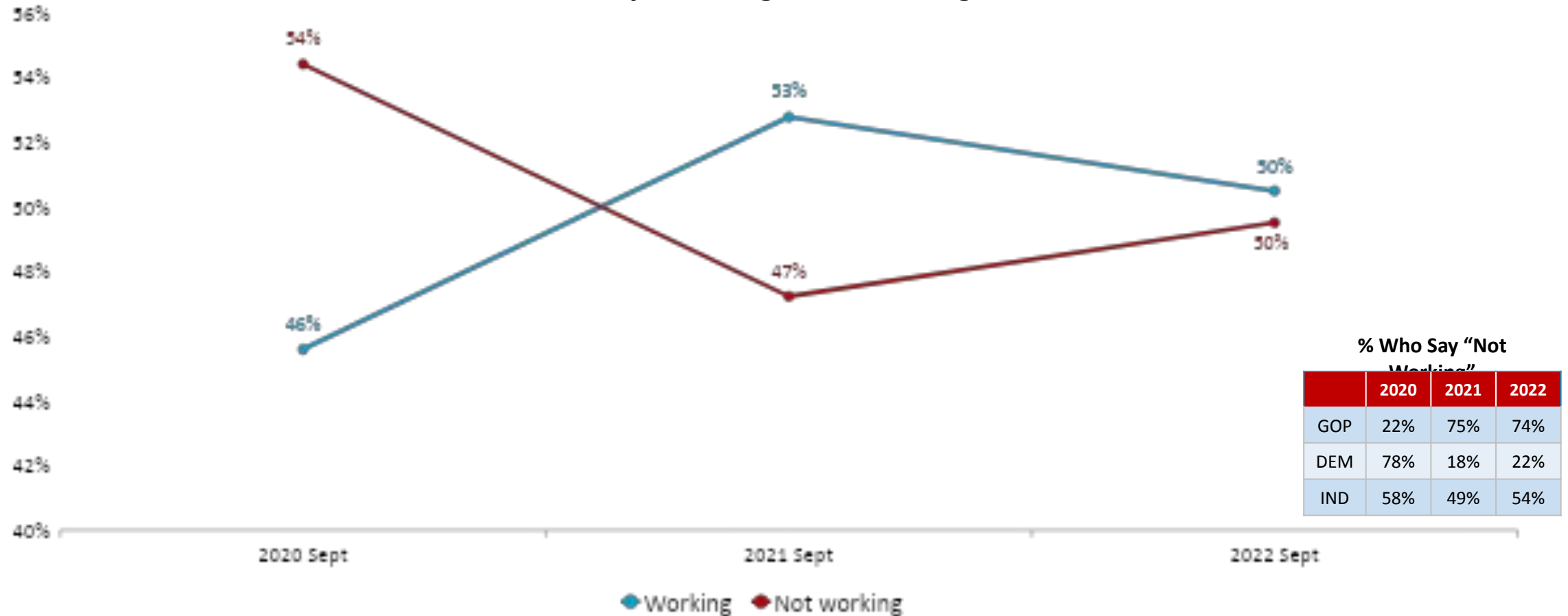
MQ4: Do you think that Hillary Clinton accepted the results of the 2016 election or did she blame it on the Russians?

MQ5: Do you think Donald Trump accepted the results of the 2020 election or did he blame it on fraud?



# VOTERS ARE SPLIT ON WHETHER THE PRESIDENCY IS WORKING AS AN INSTITUTION

## Presidency: Working / Not working



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

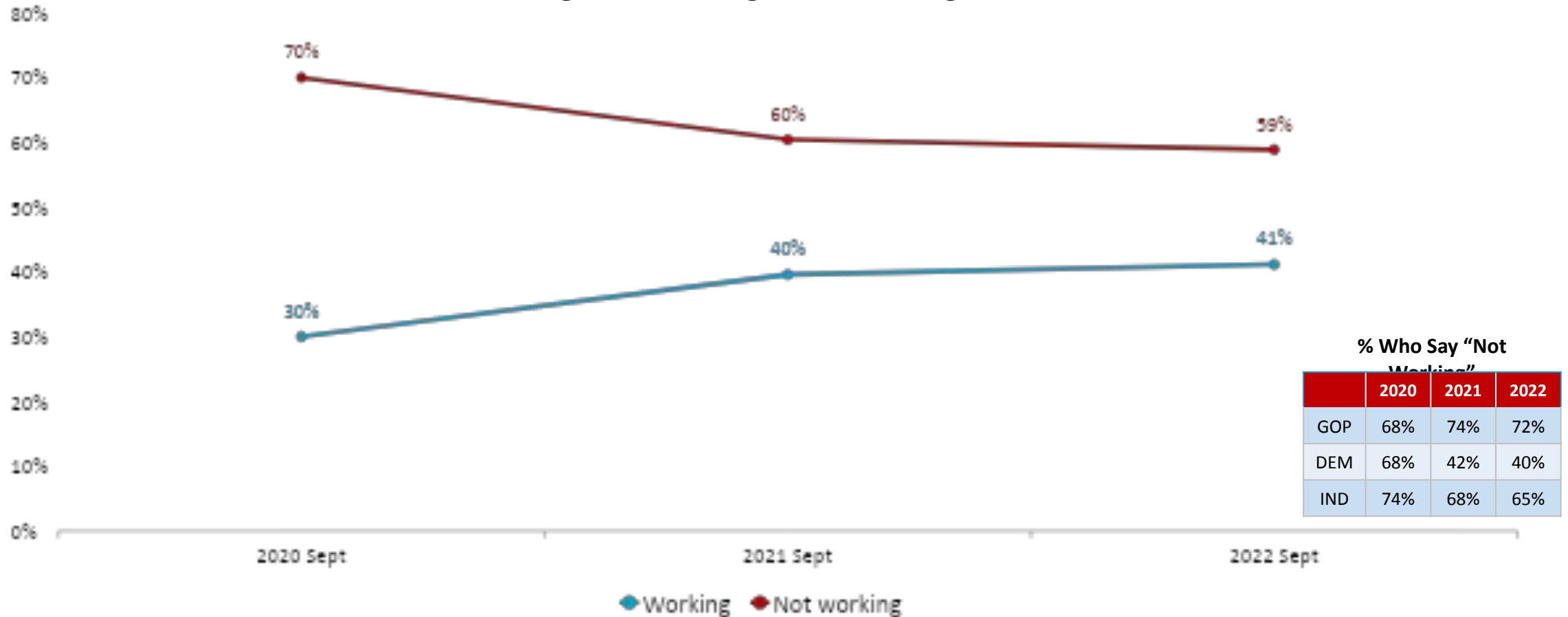
C1r1: Presidency – Regardless of whether you like the decisions or political ideology of each branch, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?





# A PERSISTENT 3 IN 5 MAJORITY OF VOTERS SAY CONGRESS IS NOT WORKING AS AN INSTITUTION

## Congress: Working / Not working

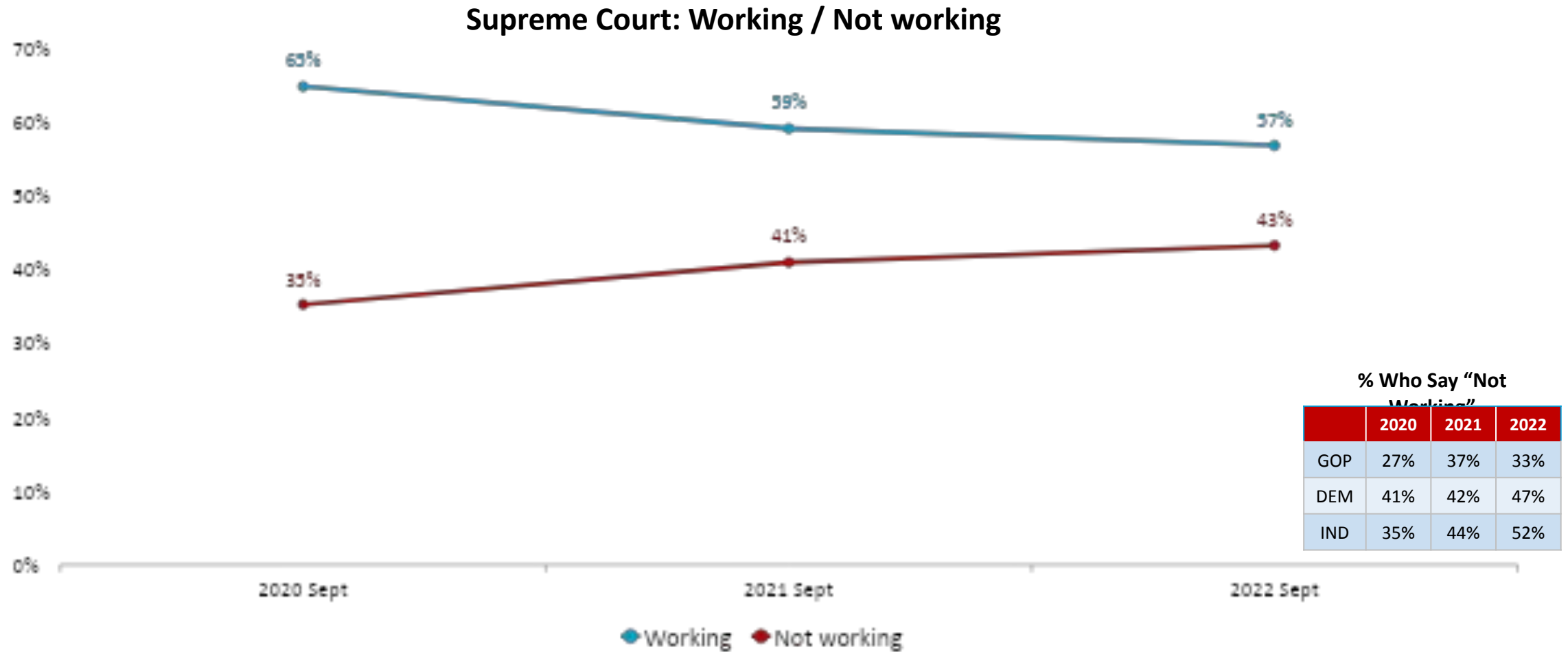


Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

'C1r2: Congress – Regardless of whether you like the decisions or political ideology of each branch, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?



# VOTERS CONTINUE TO REPORT THE SUPREME COURT IS WORKING AS AN INSTITUTION



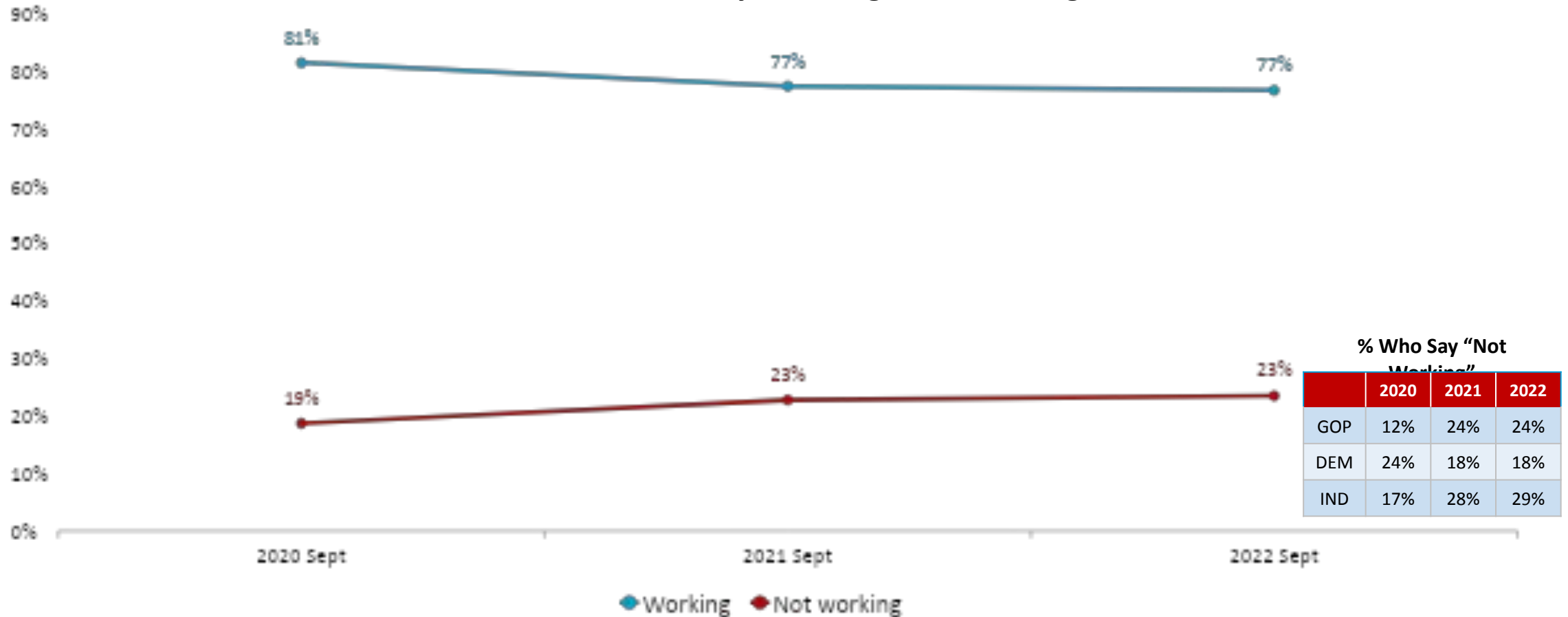
Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

'C1r3: Supreme Court – Regardless of whether you like the decisions or political ideology of each branch, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?



## STRONG MAJORITIES OF VOTERS ACROSS ALL PARTY IDS SAY THE MILITARY IS WORKING

### Armed forces/U.S. Military: Working / Not working



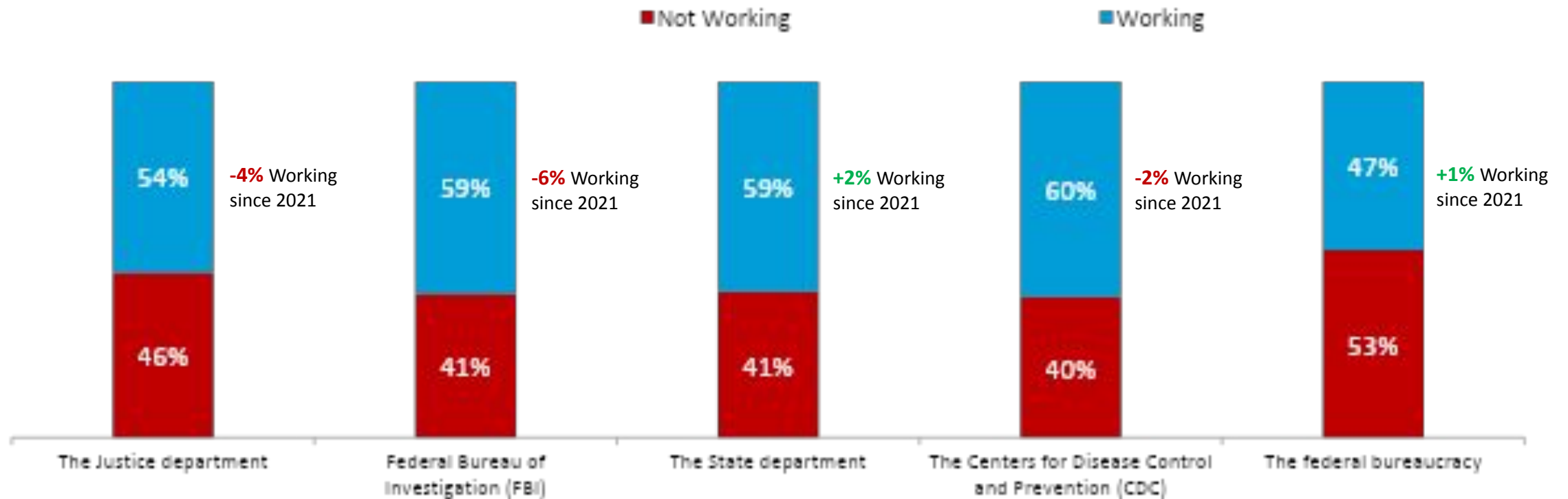
Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

'C1r4: Armed forces/U.S. Military- Regardless of whether you like the decisions or political ideology of each branch, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?

# FEWER VOTERS SAY THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND THE FBI ARE WORKING COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

Regardless of whether you like the decisions made, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?

September 2022



Base: Registered Voters (September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

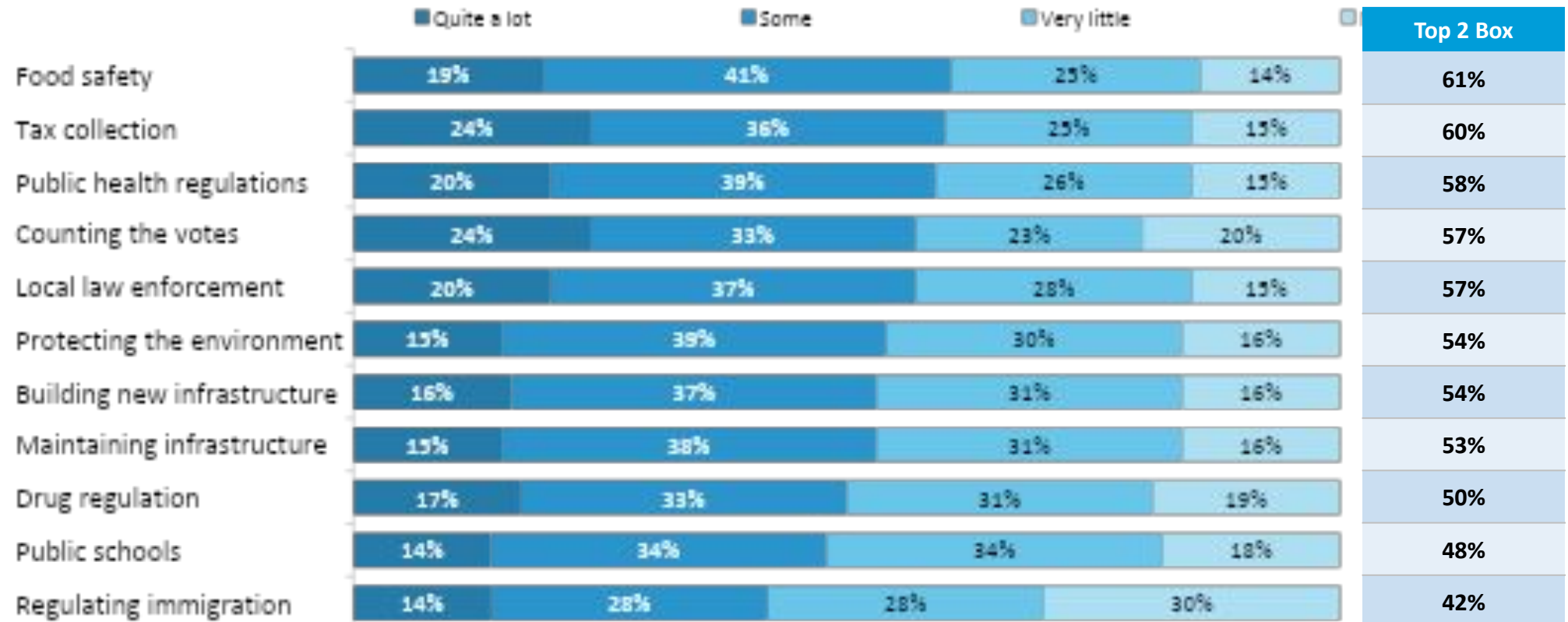
C1. Regardless of whether you like the decisions or political ideology of each branch, do you believe that the each of the following is working or not working as an institution?



# MOST VOTERS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT TO FULFILL ITS ROLE ACROSS ALL AREAS EXCEPT FOR DRUG REGULATION, PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND IMMIGRATION

How much confidence do you have in the government to fulfill its role in the following areas?

September 2022



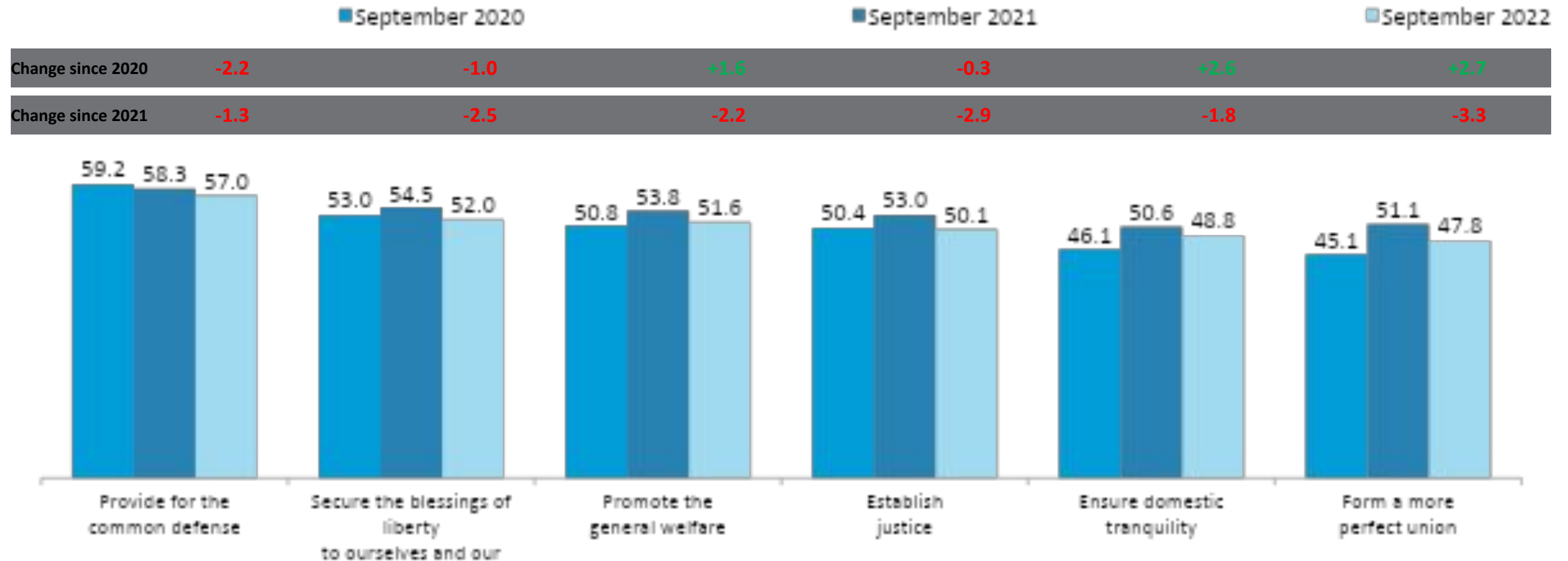
Base: Registered Voters (September 2022 n=1,851)

Qrole: How much confidence do you have in the government to fulfill its role in the following areas



# VOTERS HAVE THE MOST CONFIDENCE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE. CONFIDENCE OVERALL HAS DROPPED FROM LAST YEAR.

**Confidence in the federal government, including the President, Congress, and the federal courts, achieving goals from the preamble of the United States Constitution (Showing Average)**



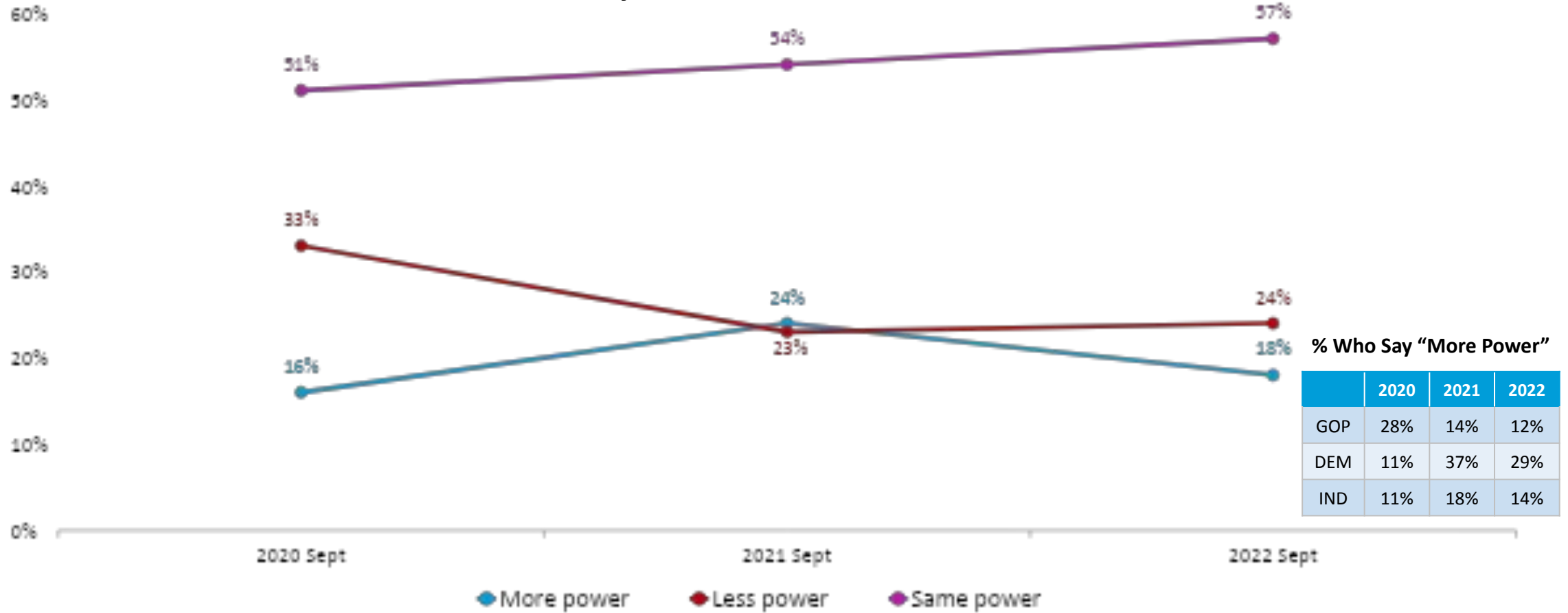
Base: Registered voters (September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

CON1-CON6: The preamble of the United States Constitution states the goals of the national government. I am going to read you some statements from this preamble. For each one, please tell me on a scale of zero to one hundred where zero means "no confidence" and one hundred means "total confidence" how much confidence you have that the federal government, including the President, Congress, and the federal courts, is achieving this goal.



# VOTERS ARE FINE WITH THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENCY

## Presidency: More/Same/Less Power



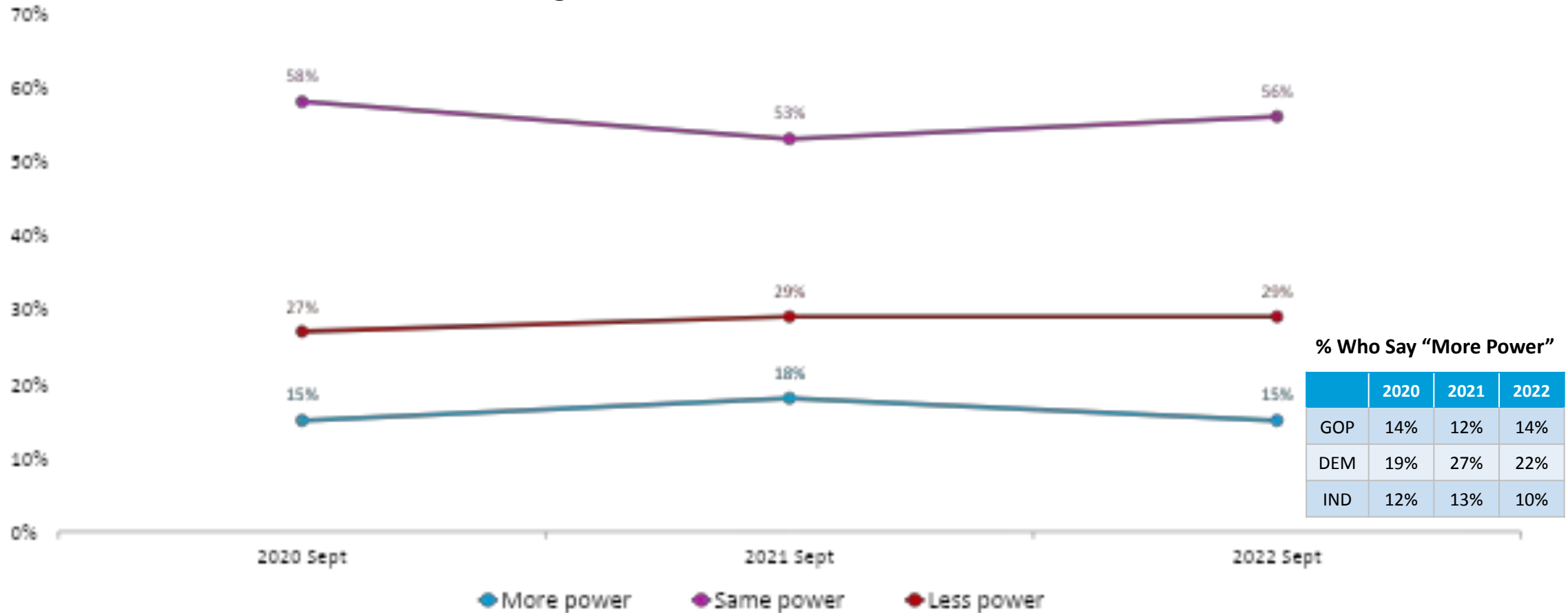
Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

'C2r1: Presidency – In general, do you think each of these institutions, regardless of who is leading them at any given moment, should have more power, less power, or the same power as now?



# A MAJORITY WOULD KEEP THE POWER OF CONGRESS THE SAME TOO

## Congress: More/Same/Less Power



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

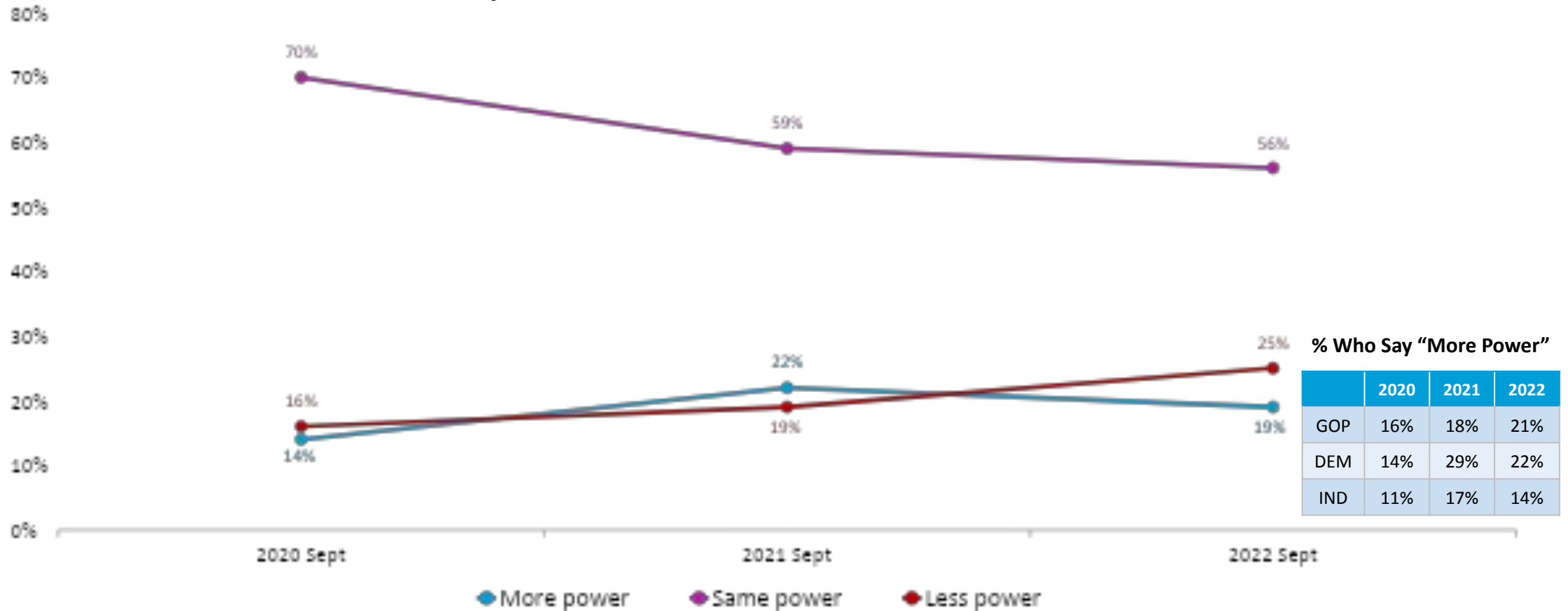
'C2r2: Congress – In general, do you think each of these institutions, regardless of who is leading them at any given moment, should have more power, less power, or the same power as now?





# VOTERS INCREASINGLY SAY THE SUPREME COURT SHOULD HAVE LESS POWER

## Supreme Court: More/Same/Less Power



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

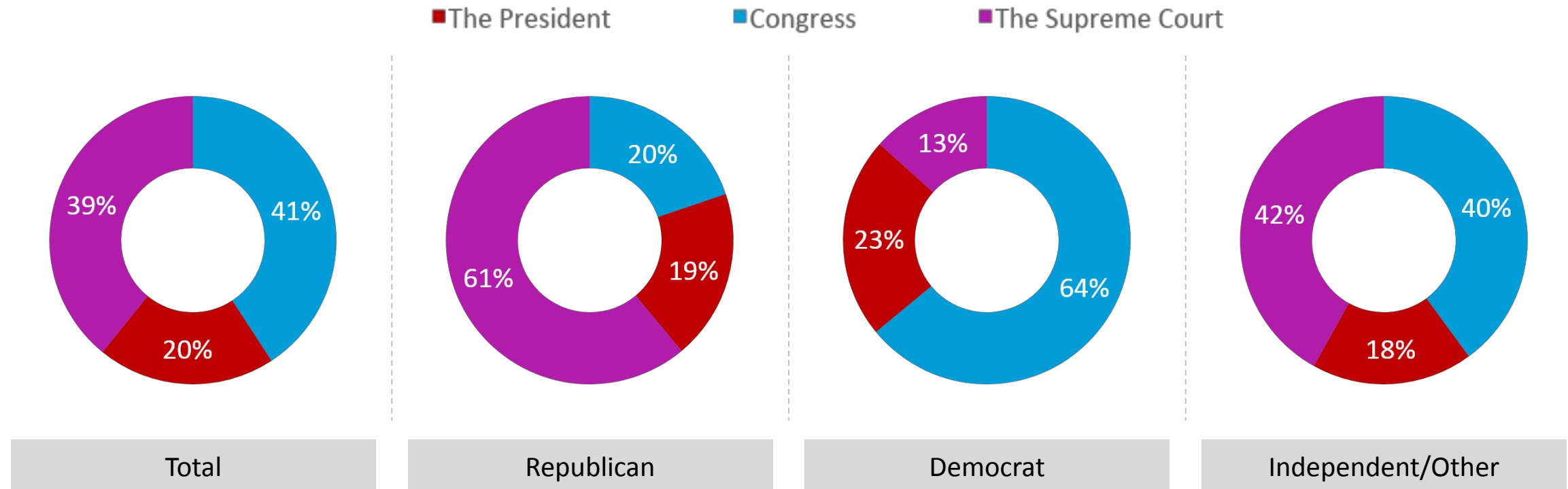
'C2r3: Supreme Court – In general, do you think each of these institutions, regardless of who is leading them at any given moment, should have more power, less power, or the same power as now?



# REPUBLICANS SAY THE SUPREME COURT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT, WHILE DEMOCRATS FAVOR CONGRESS. INDEPENDENTS ARE SPLIT.

**Which part of the federal government do you think is the most effective at doing their job, the President, Congress or the Supreme Court? (By Party)**

September 2022



Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

GW4. Which part of the federal government do you think is the most effective at doing their job, the President, Congress or the Supreme Court?



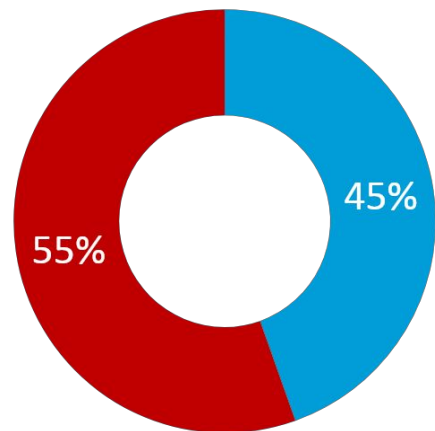
# VOTERS, REPUBLICANS, AND INDEPENDENTS OPPOSE ADDING NEW MEMBERS TO THE SUPREME COURT WHILE DEMOCRATS ARE IN FAVOR

**Do you favor or oppose a plan from some Democrats to add 4 new members to the Supreme Court and have them picked by the Biden administration? (By Party)**

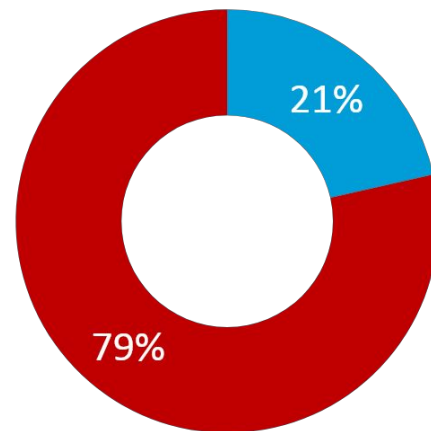
September 2022

■ Favor

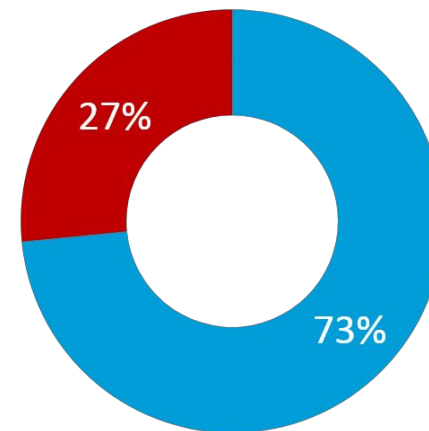
■ Oppose



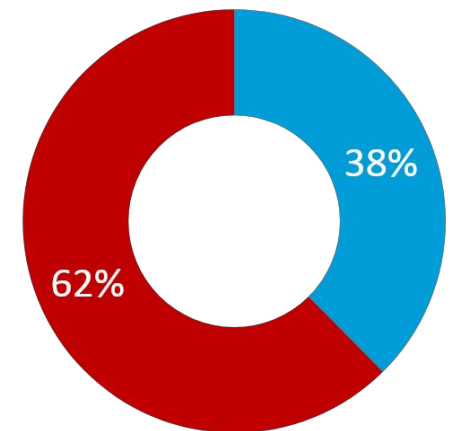
Total



Republican



Democrat



Independent/Other

Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

C14D: Do you favor or oppose a plan from some Democrats to add 4 new members to the Supreme Court and have them picked by the Biden administration?



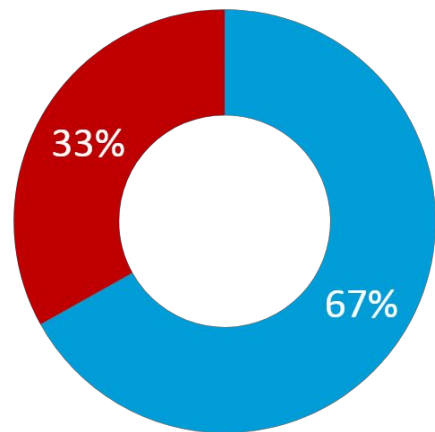
# MOST VOTERS WANT TO KEEP THE FILIBUSTER IN PLACE

The filibuster requires bipartisan support for major legislation by requiring 60 votes to pass legislation in the senate. Do you favor keeping the filibuster or want to eliminate it? (By Party)

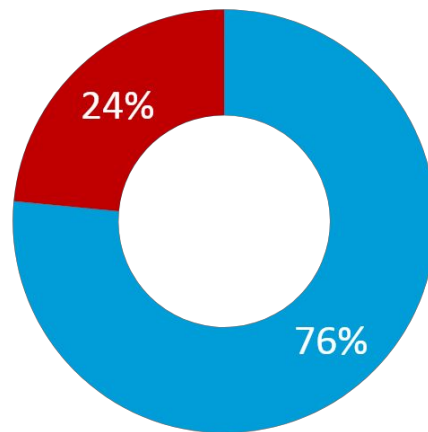
September 2022

■ Keep the filibuster

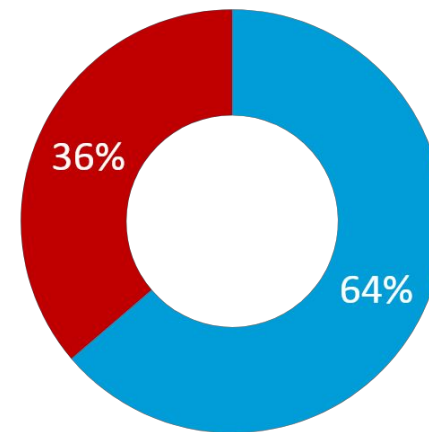
■ Eliminate it



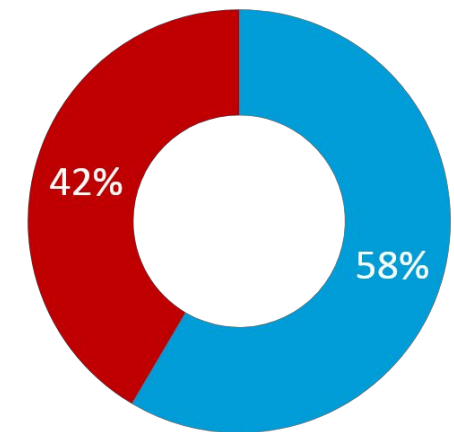
Total



Republican



Democrat



Independent/Other

Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

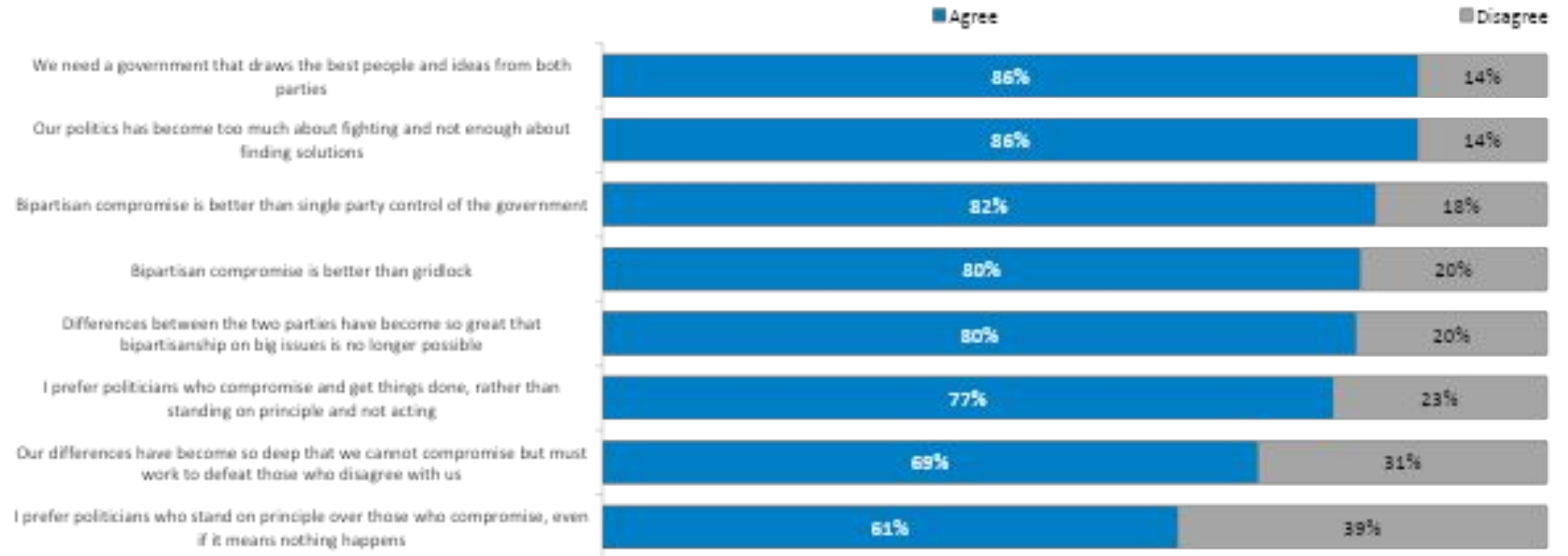
C14C: The filibuster requires bipartisan support for major legislation by requiring 60 votes to pass legislation in the senate. Do you favor keeping the filibuster or want to eliminate it?



# THERE IS A STRONG CONSENSUS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS BEST WHEN WORKING TOWARDS BIPARTISAN COMPROMISE

## Agreement with statements on bipartisanship

September 2022

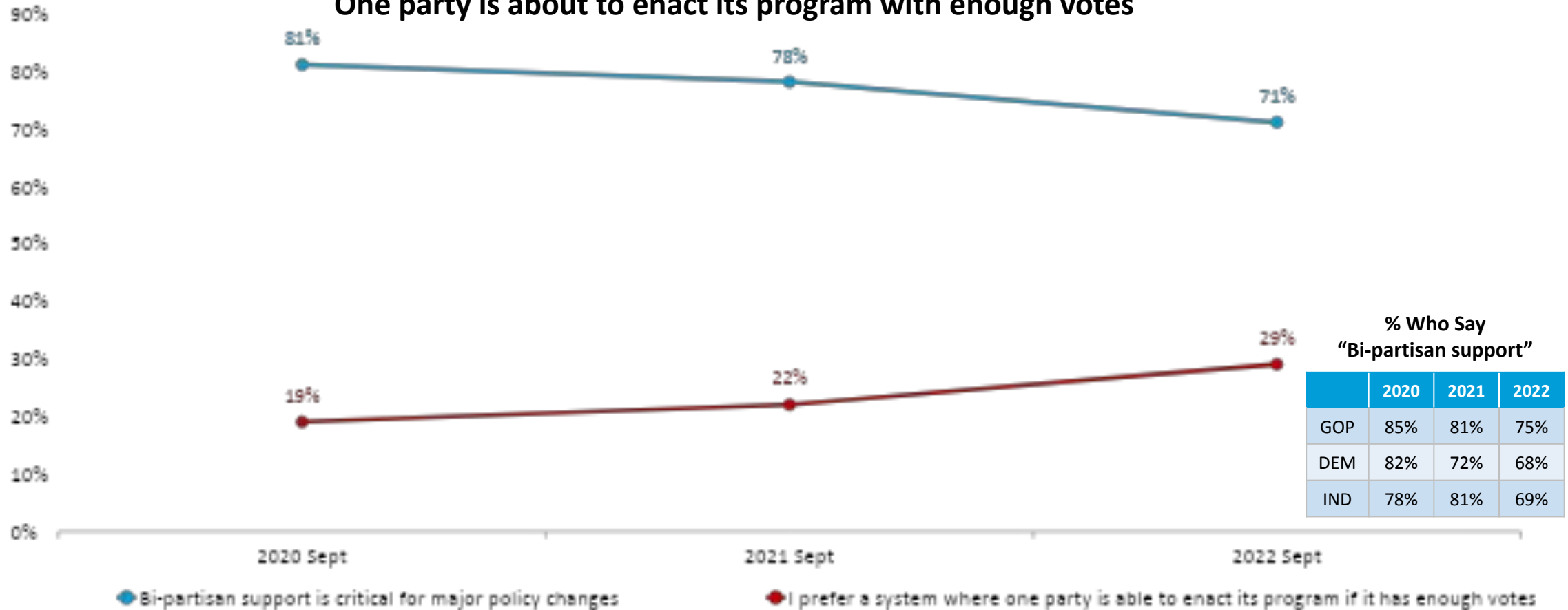


Base: Registered Voters (n=1,851)

GW7r: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

# MAJORITIES OF VOTERS ACROSS PARTIES STILL PREFER BIPARTISANSHIP

**System preference: Bi-partisan support necessary for major policy change/  
One party is about to enact its program with enough votes**



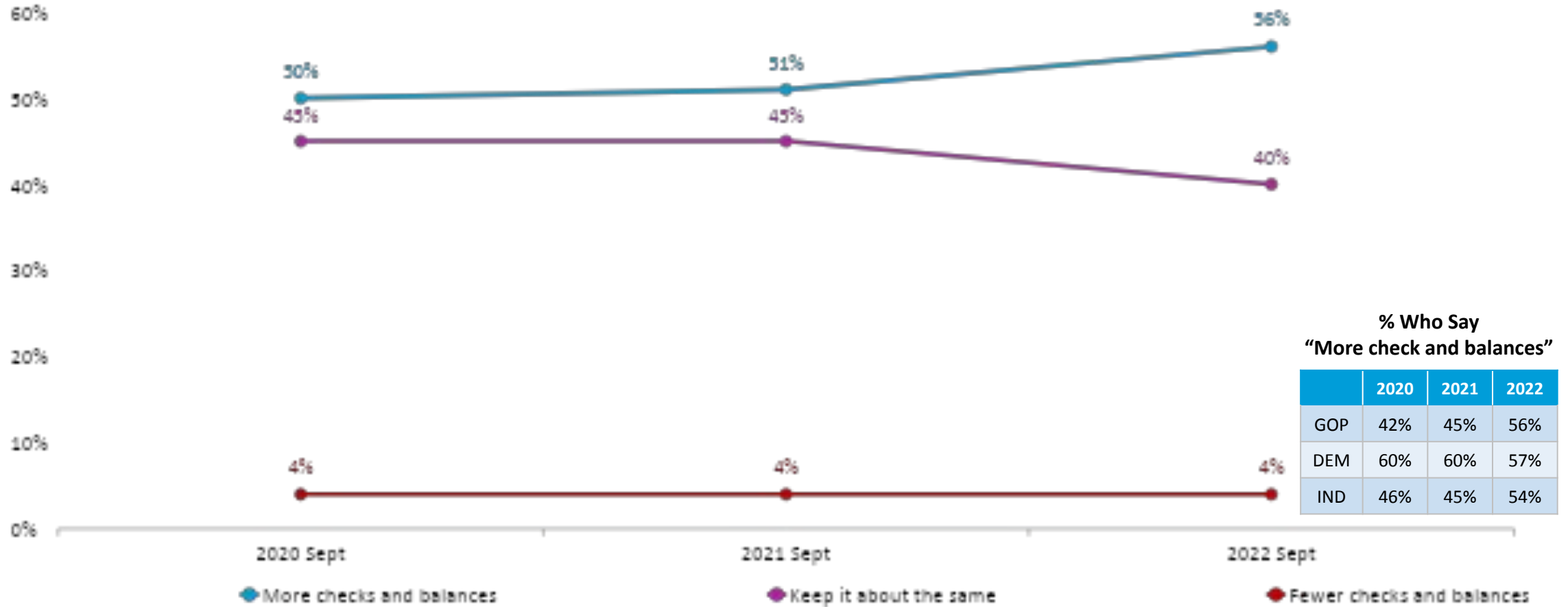
Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

C3: 2020, 2021: Do you think that bipartisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program?

C3: 2022 (Language changed): Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes, or would you prefer a system where one party is able to enact its program if it has enough votes?

# IN 2022, OVER HALF OF VOTERS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM WANT MORE CHECKS AND BALANCES

Need more, fewer, or the same amount of checks and balances?

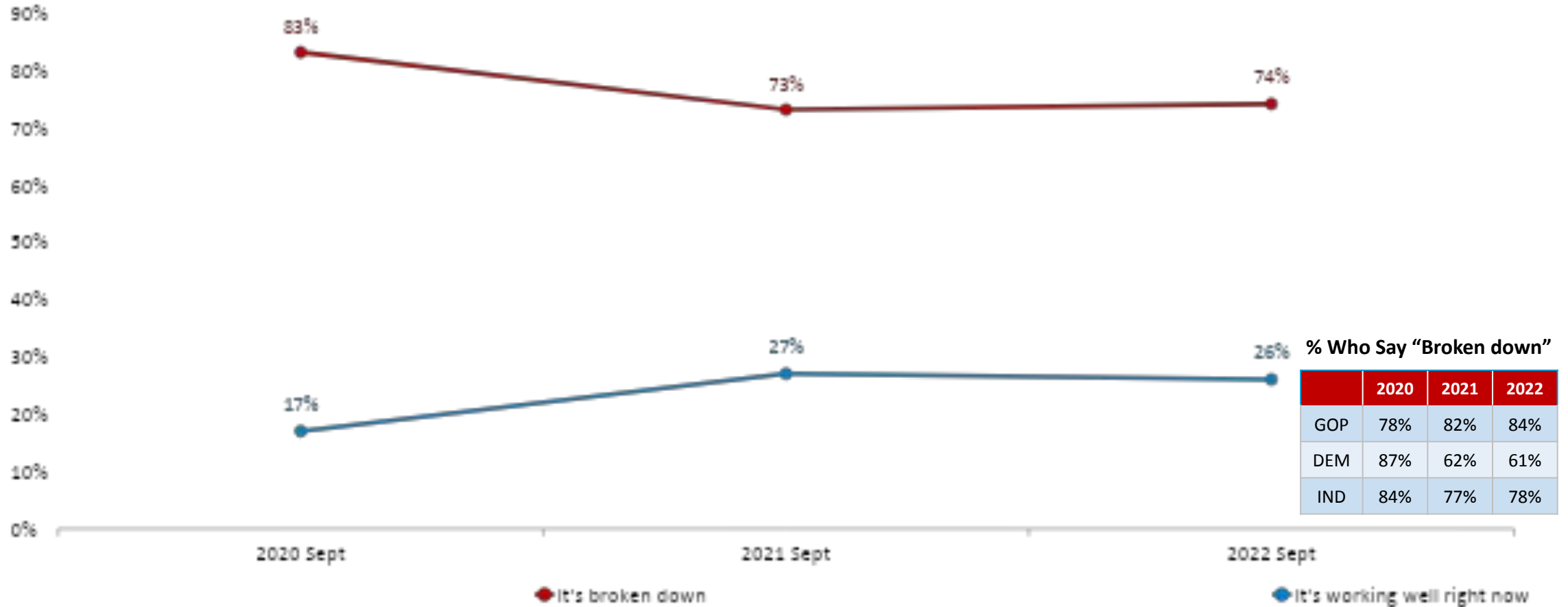


Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

C4: The constitution has a system of checks and balances – do you think we need more checks and balances in the system, fewer checks and balances or keep it about the same? by BANNER

# VIEWS ON BIPARTISAN GOVERNING ARE UNCHANGED FROM LAST YEAR

Is the bipartisan system of governing broken or working?



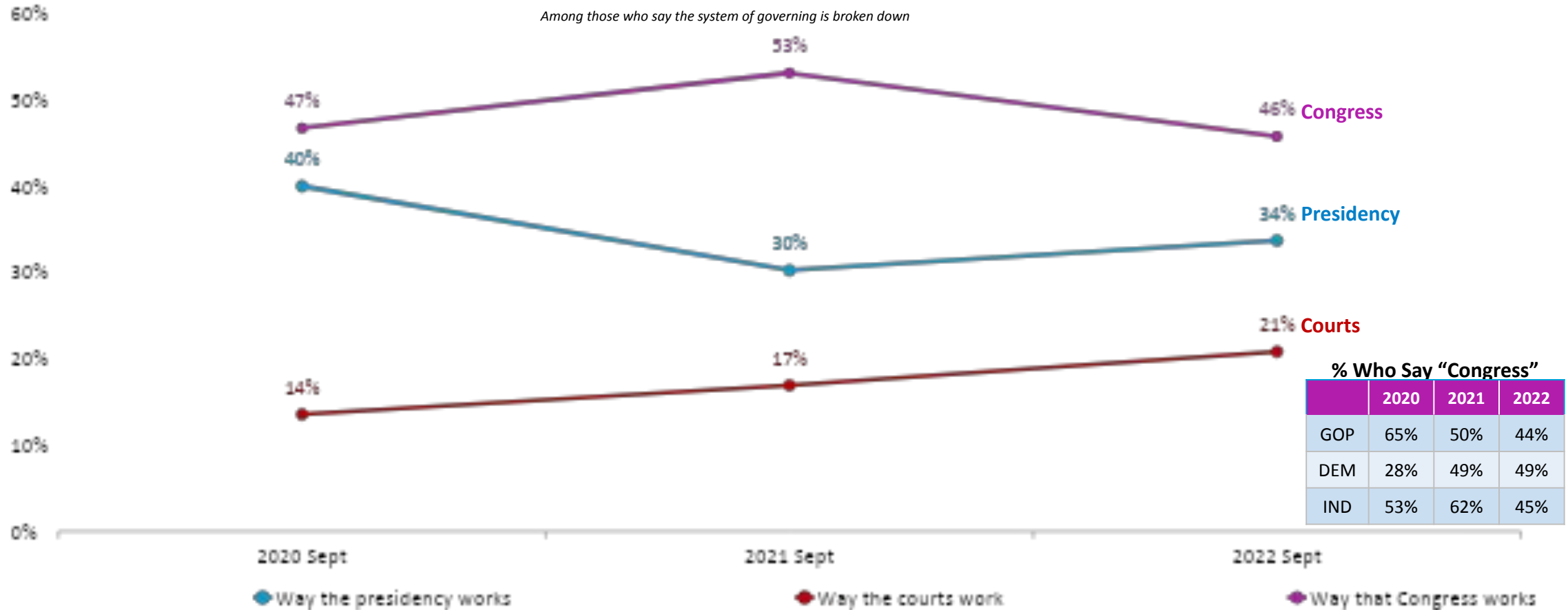
Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)  
 C5: Do you think the bipartisan system of governing has broken down or is working well right now?



# VOTERS ARE INCREASINGLY BLAMING THE COURTS FOR BIPARTISAN GOVERNING BREAKING DOWN, BUT MORE STILL BLAME CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY

## Is this the fault of how the presidency, courts, or congress works?

*Among those who say the system of governing is broken down*



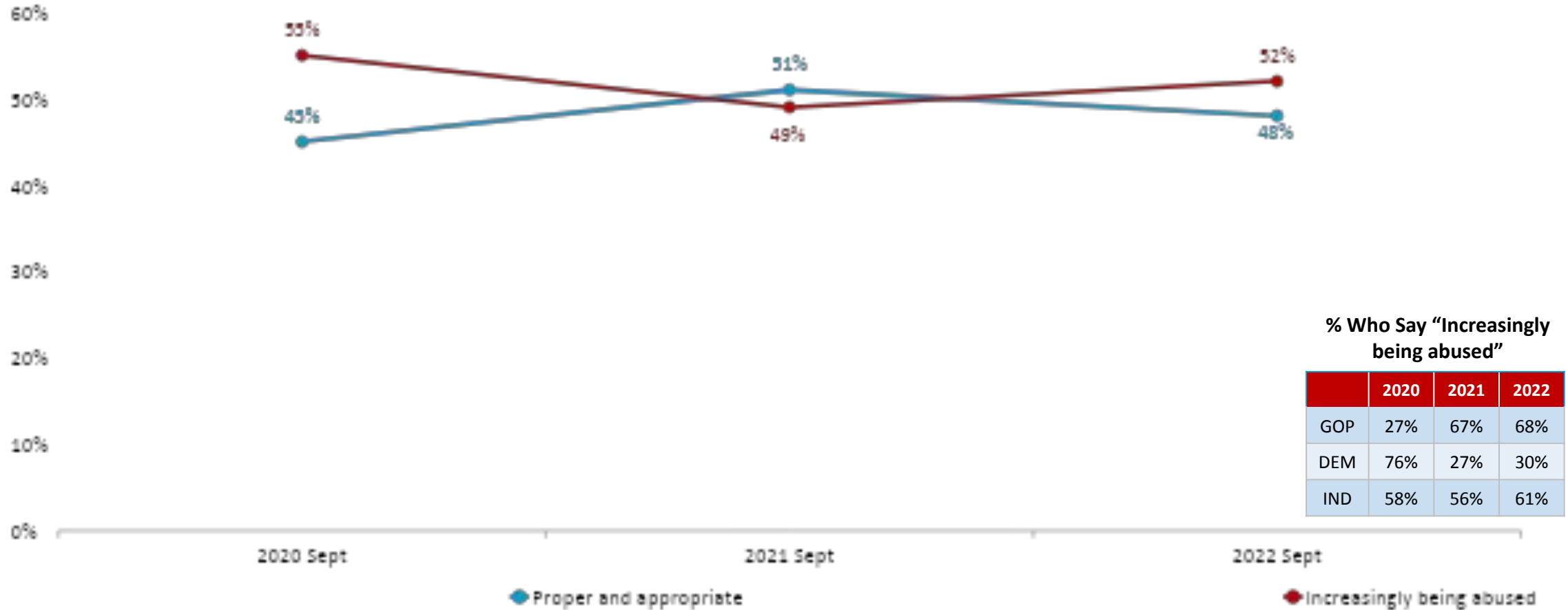
Base: Registered Voters who say the system of governing is broken down (September 2020 n=1,601; September 2021 n=1,355; September 2022 n=1,326)

C6: Do you think that is primarily the result of problems with the way the presidency works, the way the courts work, or the way that congress works?



# HALF OF VOTERS SAY EXECUTIVE ORDERS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING ABUSED

Use of Executive Orders by Presidents: Proper and appropriate/ increasingly being abused



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)  
 C9: Do you think that the use of executive orders by presidents is generally proper and appropriate or is increasingly being abused?

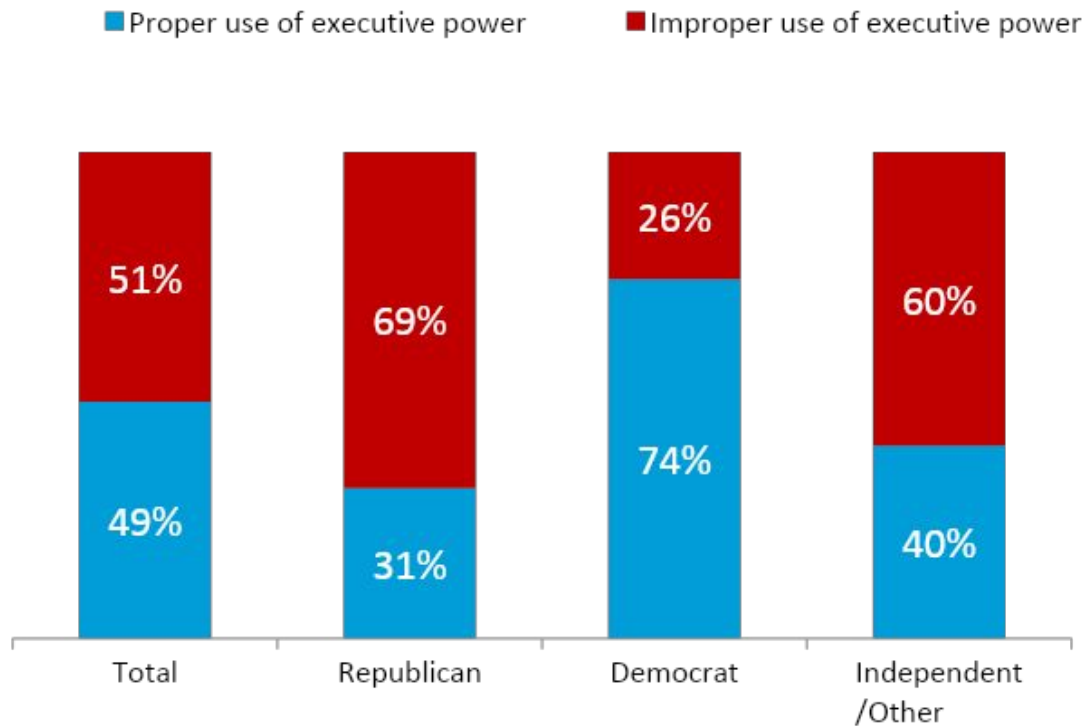


# VOTERS ARE ALSO SPLIT ON ELIMINATING STUDENT DEBT. MOST REPUBLICANS AND INDEPENDENTS BELIEVE IT TO BE AN IMPROPER USE OF EXECUTIVE POWER, BUT 3 IN 4 DEMOCRATS DISAGREE.

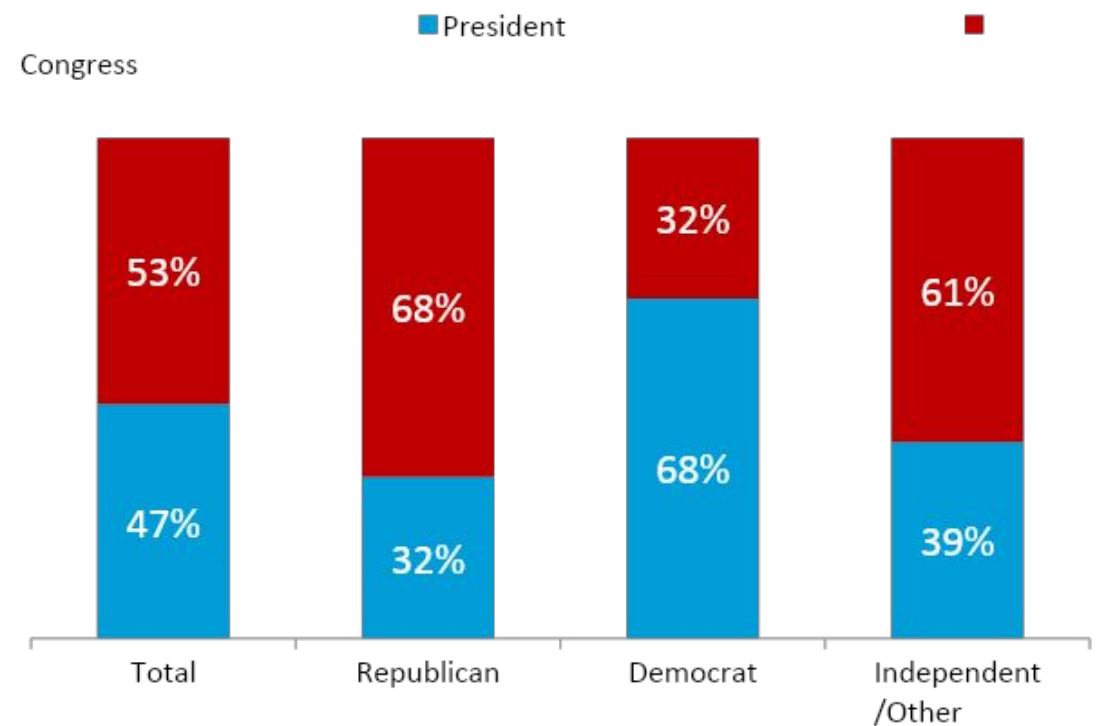
**Was the executive order eliminating up to \$500 billion of student debt a proper or improper use of executive power? (By Party)**

**Should the power to excuse debt on a mass basis should reside with the president or only by an act of congress? (By Party)**

September 2022



September 2022



Base: Registered voters (n= 1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

MQ6. Do you think the executive order eliminating up to \$500 billion of student debt was a proper or improper use of executive power?

MQ7. Do you think that the power to excuse debt on a mass basis should reside with the president or only by an act of congress?



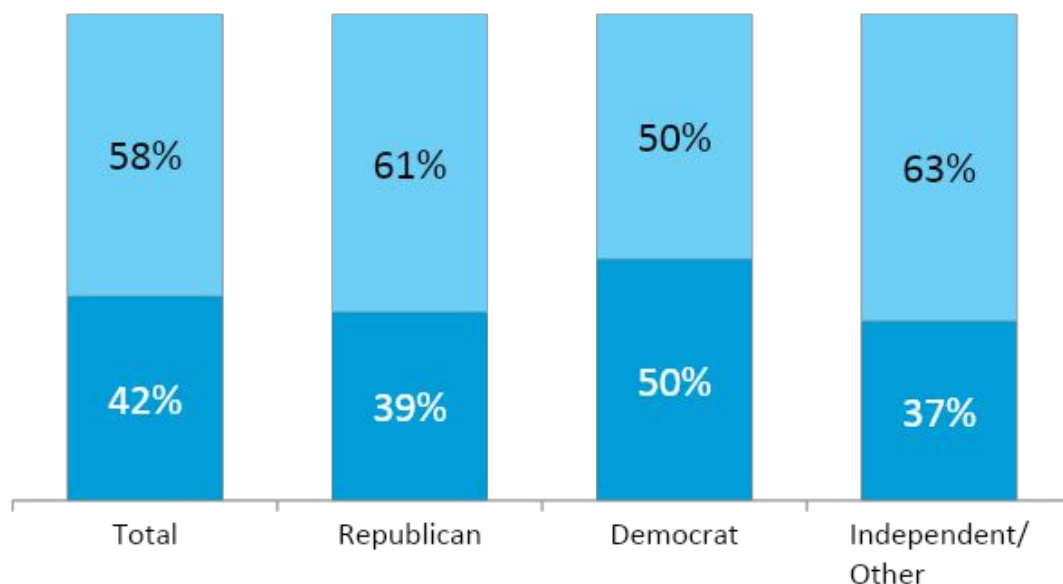
# A MAJORITY OF VOTERS BELIEVE REGULATING CARBON AND CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIRES NEW LEGISLATION

**Is regulating carbon and climate change by the EPA just interpreting older statutes or does it require new legislation addressing the problem? (By Party)**

**Should the president be able to take actions that restrict drilling for mining/fossil fuels or should it require congressional approval? (By Party)**

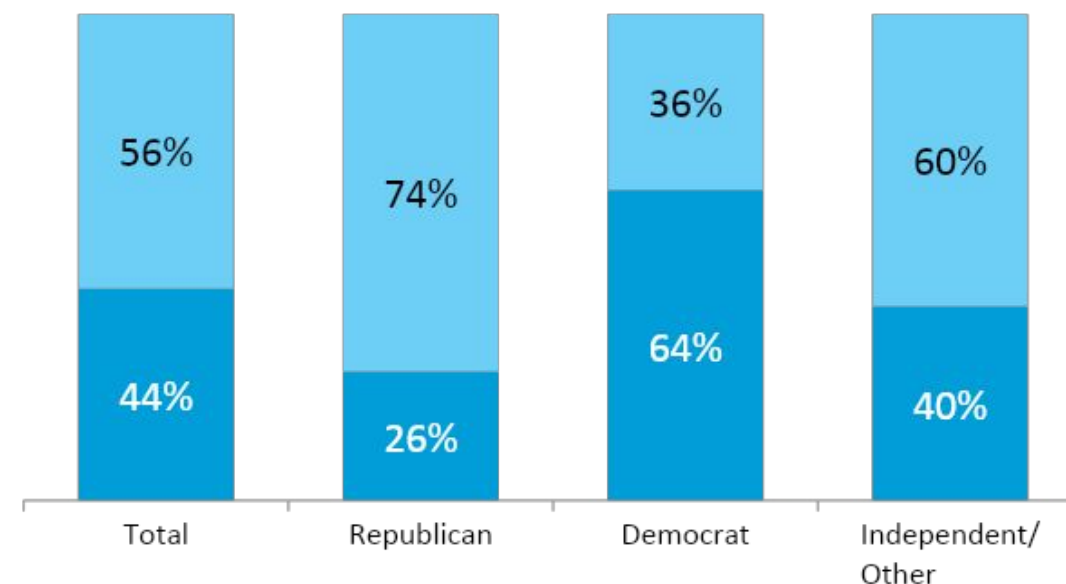
September 2022

- Can be fairly described as just interpreting older statutes
- Requires new legislation explicitly addressing the problem



September 2022

- President should be able to restrict drilling and permits for fossil fuels by executive order
- Should require explicit congressional authorization



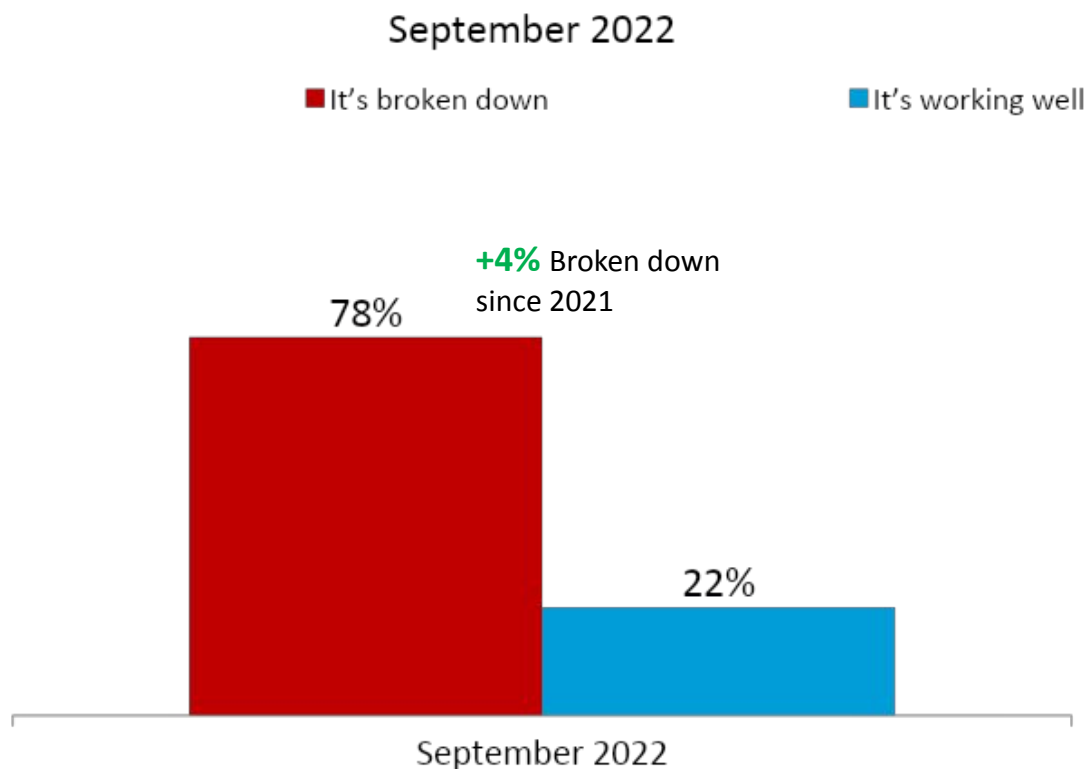
Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

MQ8. Do you think regulating carbon and climate change by the EPA can be fairly described as just interpreting older statutes from before climate change was known as a problem or requires new legislation explicitly addressing the problem?

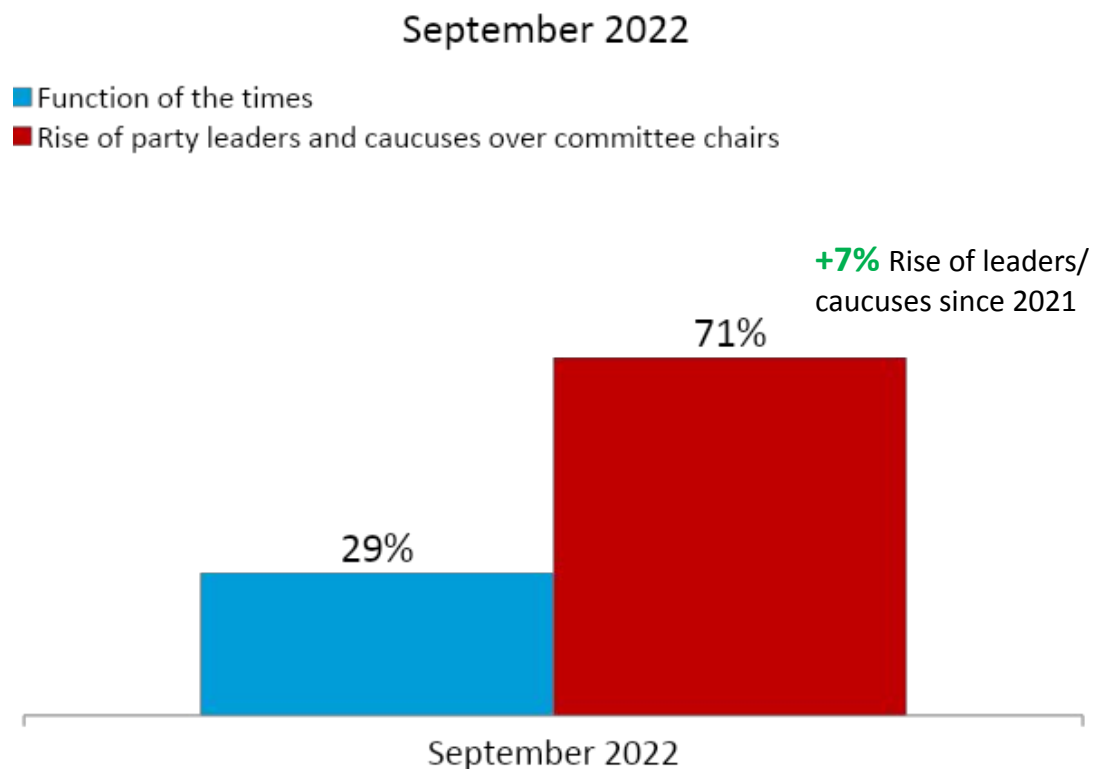
MQ9. Do you think that the president should by executive order be able to take actions that restrict drilling and permits for mining and refining fossil fuels or should that require explicit congressional authorization?

# VOTERS BLAME THE BREAKDOWN OF BIPARTISANSHIP ON THE RISE OF PARTY LEADERS AND CAUCUSES

**Do you think that the system of creating bipartisan legislation in Congress has broken down or is working well?**



**Is that primarily just a function of the times or the rise of the party leaders and caucuses over committee chairs?**



Base: C12 Registered voters (September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n= 1,851), BASE: C13 It's broken down (September 2021 n=1,365; September 2022 n=1,381)

C12: Do you think that the system of creating bipartisan legislation in Congress has broken down or is working well?

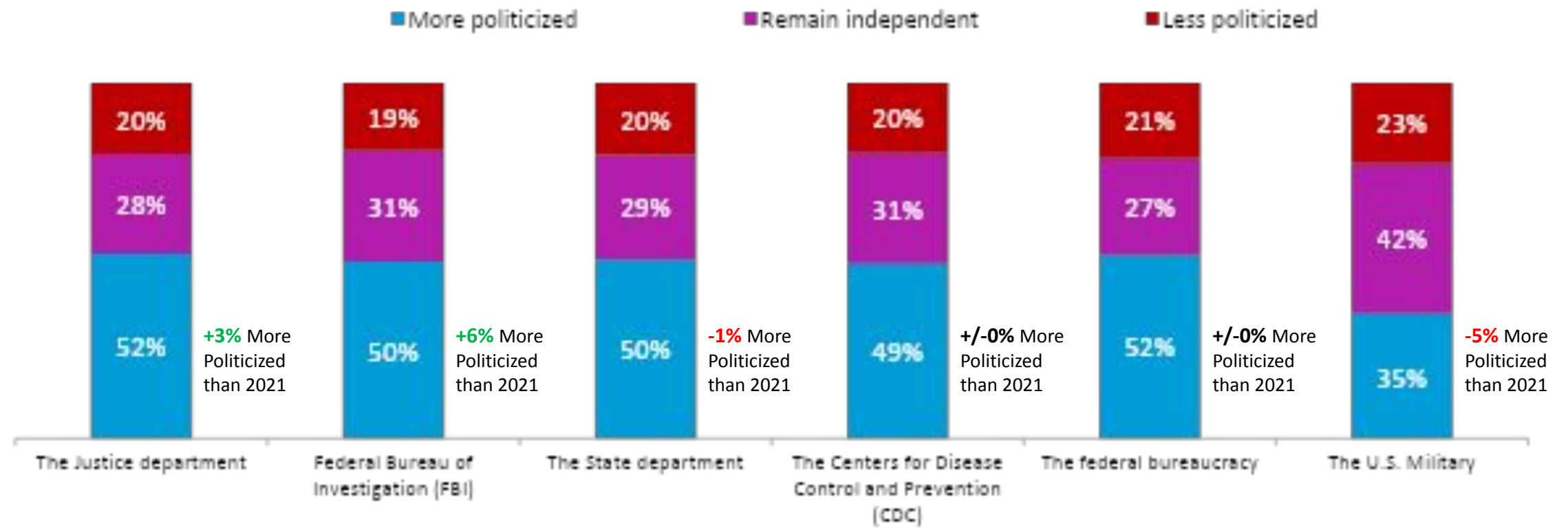
C13: Is that primarily just a function of the times or the rise of the party leaders and caucuses over committee chairs?



# PLURALITIES BELIEVE EACH INSTITUTION ASIDE FROM THE U.S. MILITARY IS BECOMING MORE POLITICIZED

## Do you think that each of these institutions are becoming more politicized or less politicized, or do they remain independent?

September 2022



Base: Registered Voters (September 2021 n=1,803, September 2022 n=1,851)

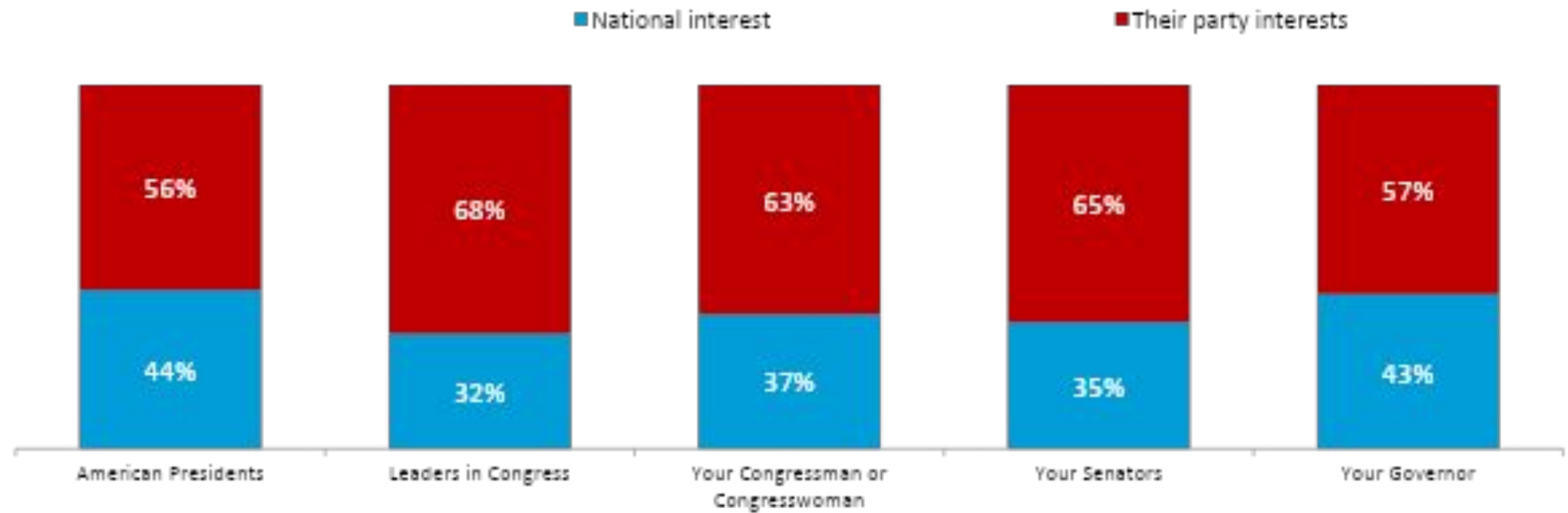
C7C: Do you think that each of these institutions are becoming more politicized or less politicized, or do they remain independent?



# PARTISAN INTERESTS DOMINATE: EACH LISTED LEADER IS BELIEVED TO PRIMARILY SERVE THEIR PARTY CAUCUS RATHER THAN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

## Do different leaders mostly answer to the national interest or their party caucus?

September 2022



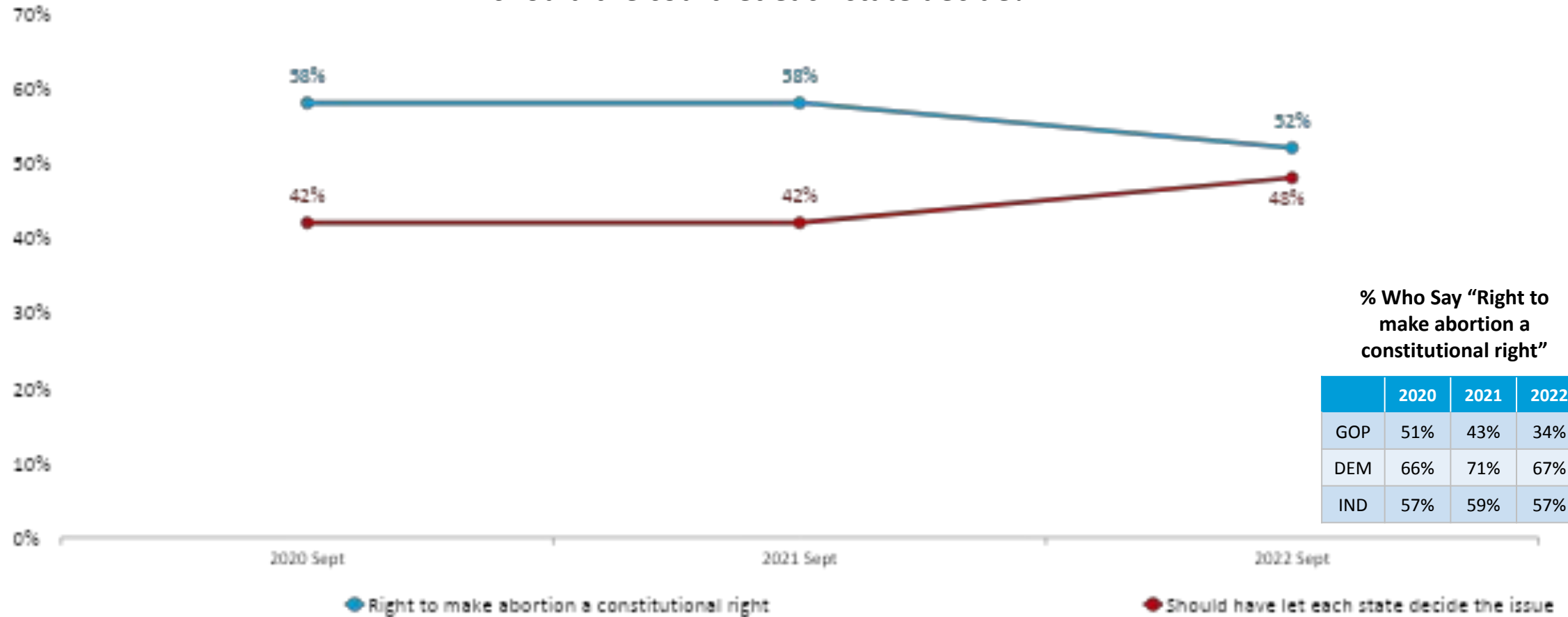
Base: Registered Voters (n=1,851)

D1N-D6N: Do/does \_\_\_ mostly answer to the national interest or do they mostly answer to the members of their party caucus?



# A SLIGHT BUT SHRINKING MAJORITY SAYS THE SUPREME COURT WAS RIGHT TO MAKE ABORTION A CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL RIGHT

**Was the Supreme Court right to make abortion a constitutional right or should the court let each state decide?**



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

C20: 2020, 2021: Do you think the supreme court was right to make abortion a constitutional right or should the court have let each state decide the issue?

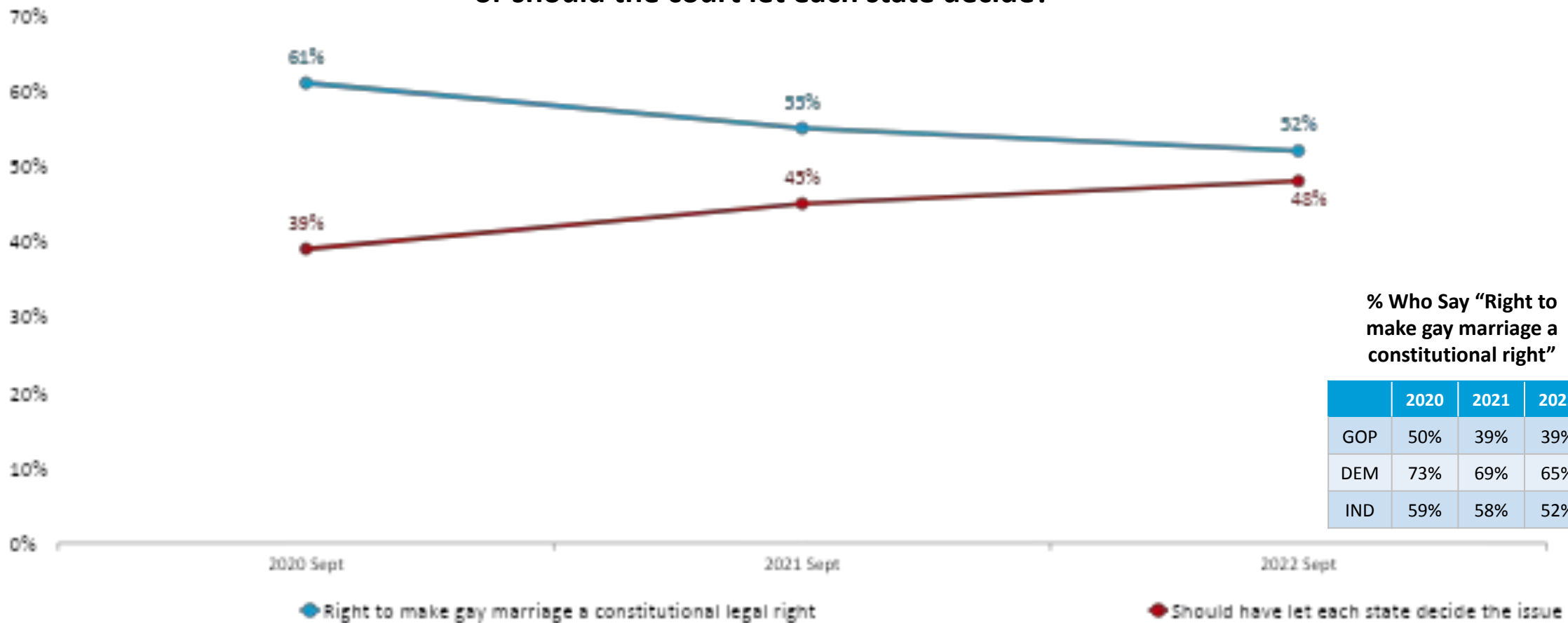
C20: 2022: (Language changed) Do you think the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade was right to make abortion a constitutional legal right or should the court have let each state decide the issue?





# A SLIGHT BUT SHRINKING MAJORITY ALSO SAYS THE SUPREME COURT WAS RIGHT TO MAKE GAY MARRIAGE A CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL RIGHT

**Was the Supreme Court right to make gay marriage a constitutional right or should the court let each state decide?**



Base: Registered Voters (September 2020 n=1,907; September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

C21: 2021/2020: Do you think the supreme court was right to make gay marriage a constitutional right or should the court have let each state decide the issue?

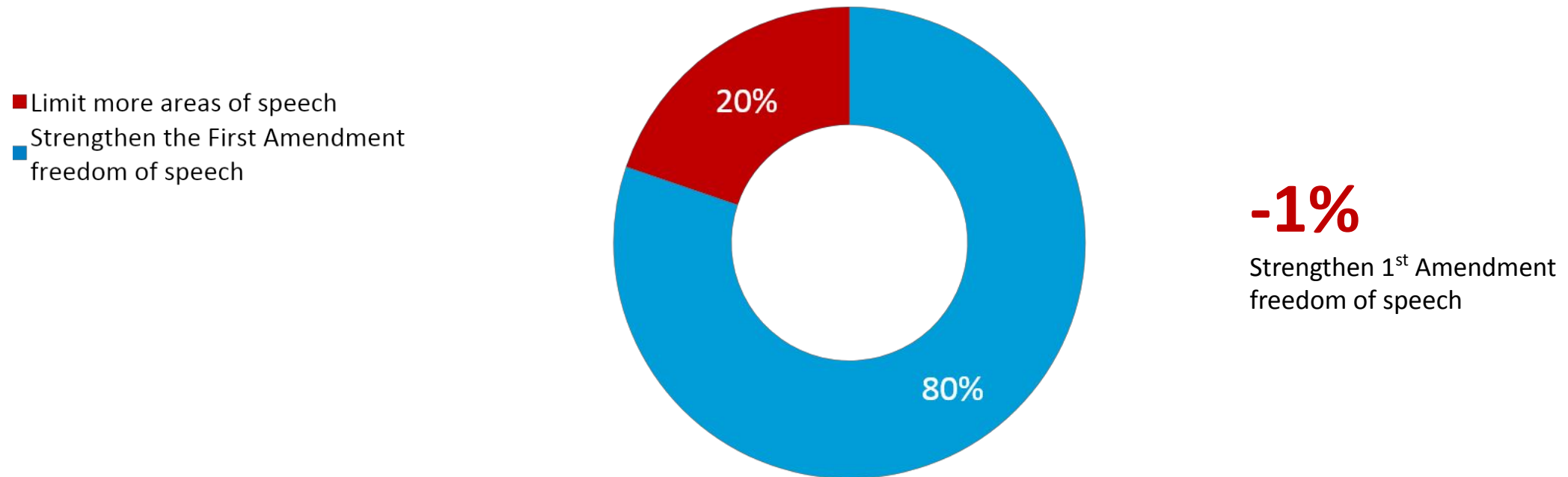
C21: 2022 (language changed): Do you think the Supreme Court was right to make gay marriage a constitutional legal right or should the court have let each state decide the issue?



# MOST VOTERS AGREE THAT WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT'S PROVISION FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH

**Do you think we need to strengthen these First Amendment freedoms, or should we be limiting more areas of speech?**

September 2022



Base: Registered voters (September 2021 n=1,803; September 2022 n=1,851)

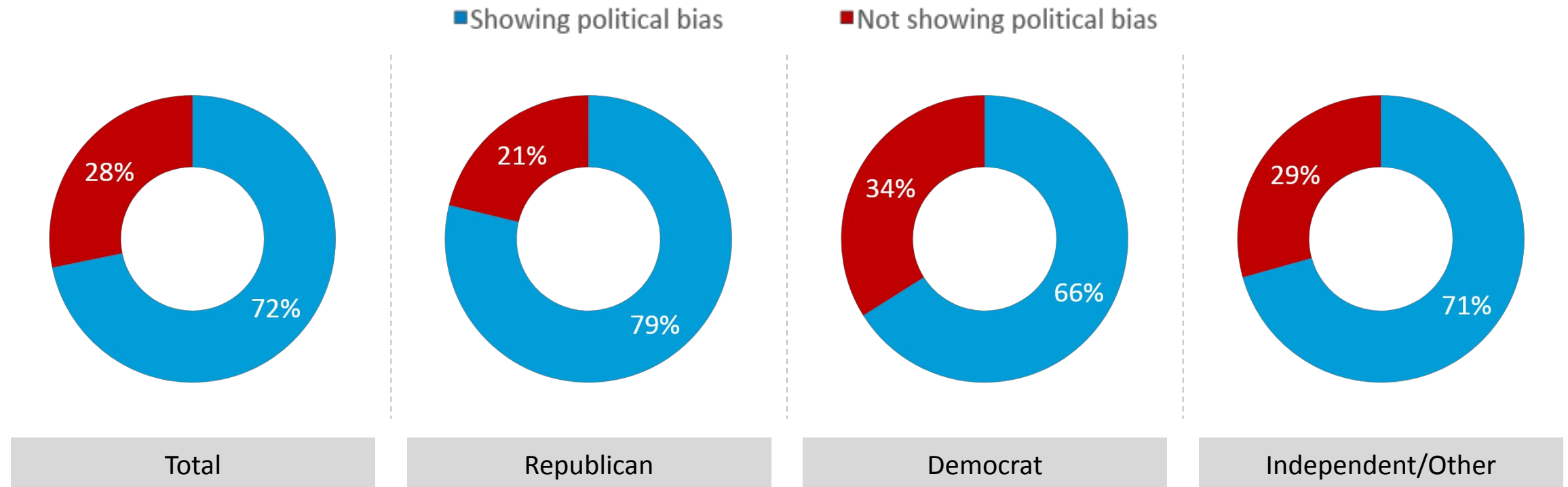
C22: The First Amendment of the Constitution provides for freedom of speech and the press. Do you think we need to strengthen these First Amendment freedoms, or should we be limiting more areas of speech?



# STRONG MAJORITIES ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM THINK BIG TECH COMPANIES ARE SHOWING POLITICAL BIAS

**Do you think the Big Tech companies are showing political bias in their actions or not showing political bias in their actions? (By Party)**

September 2022



Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

MQ10. Do you think the Big Tech companies are showing political bias in their actions or not showing political bias in their actions?

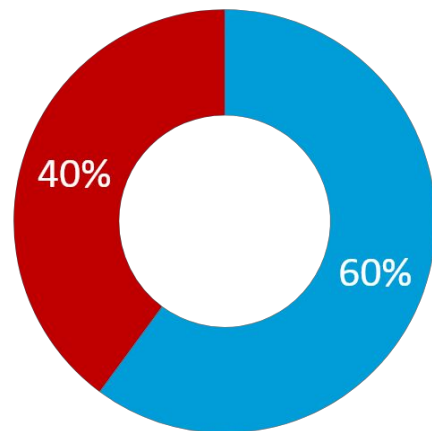


3 IN 5 VOTERS THINK BIG TECH PLATFORMS SHOULD PROVIDE POSTERS WITH FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS, SIMILAR TO A TOWN SQUARE. DEMOCRATS AND INDEPENDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK PRIVATE COMPANIES CAN CHOOSE TO BAN USERS.

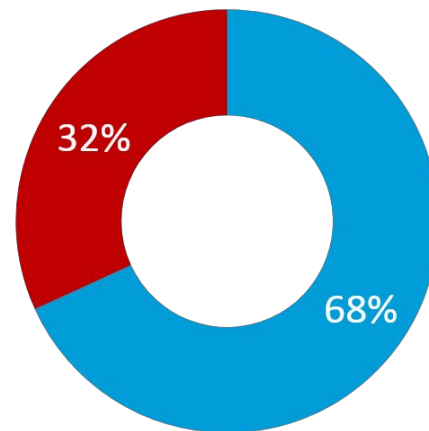
**Do you think that Big Tech platforms should provide posters with the rights of the First Amendment or are those platforms private companies that should be able to ban users at will? (By Party)**

September 2022

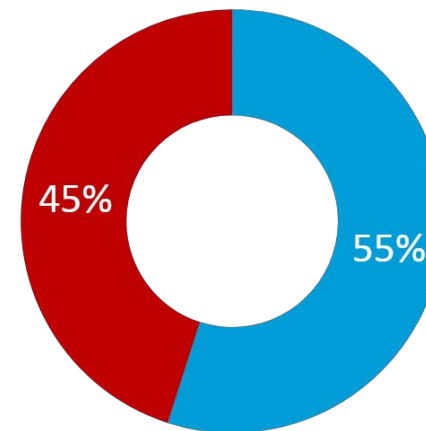
- They are private companies and should be able to ban users
- Tech platforms are like town squares and should provide First Amendment rights



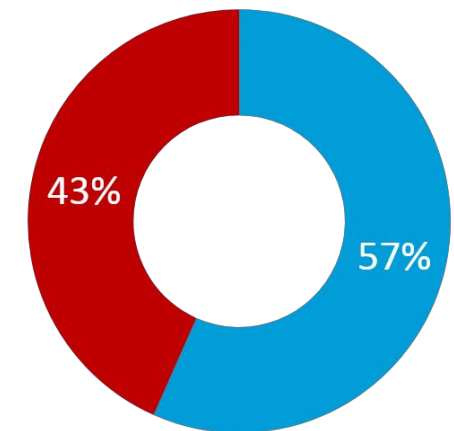
Total



Republican



Democrat



Independent/Other

Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

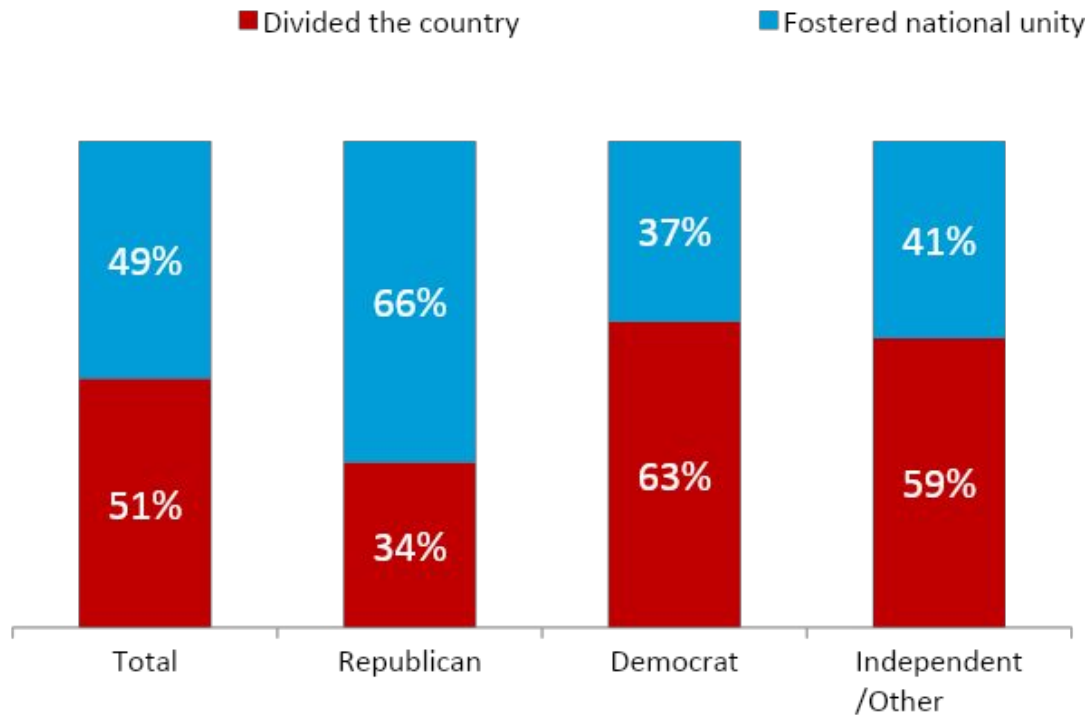
MQ12. Do you think that Big Tech platforms are like the town square today and should provide posters with the rights of the First Amendment or are those platforms private companies that should be able to ban users at will?



# VOTERS ARE SPLIT ON WHETHER TRUMP AND BIDEN FOSTERED UNITY OR DIVIDED THE COUNTRY. INDEPENDENTS ARE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY TO SAY BIDEN FOSTERED UNITY.

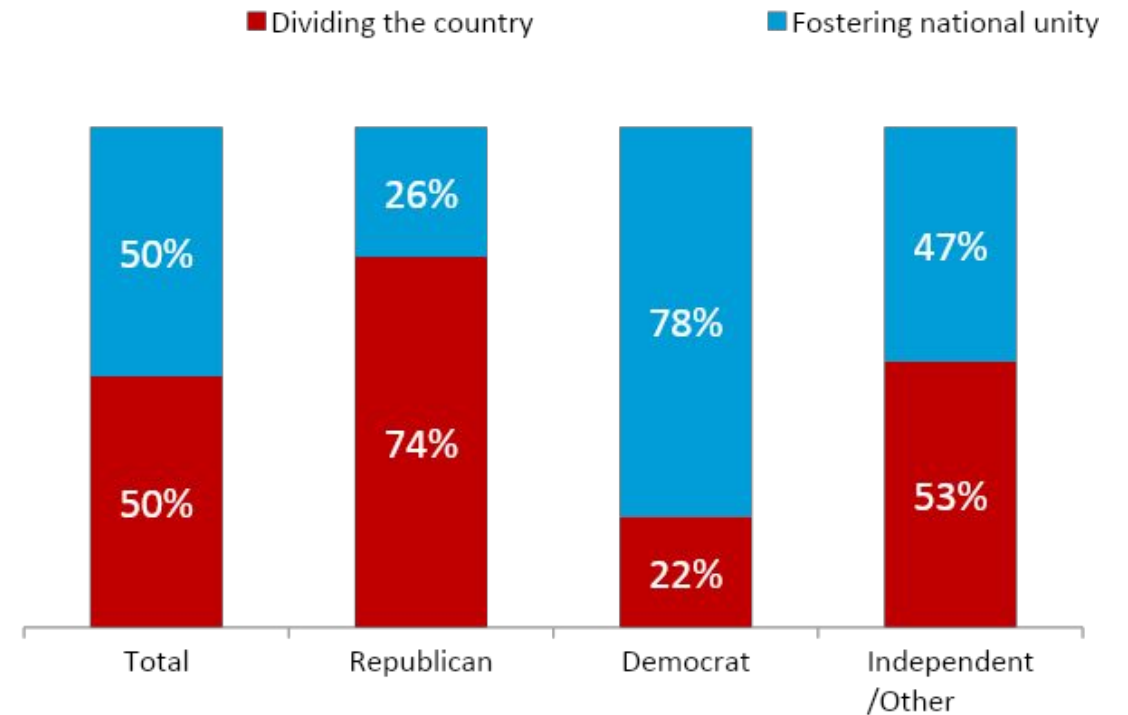
**Did President Donald Trump foster national unity or divide the country more? (By Party)**

September 2022



**Is President Joe Biden fostering national unity or dividing the country more? (By Party)**

September 2022



Base: Total (n=1,851), Republican (n=535), Democrat (n=832), Independent/Other (n=484)

MQ15. Did President Donald Trump foster national unity or divide the country more?

MQ16. Is President Joe Biden fostering national unity or dividing the country more?

## KEY FINDINGS

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There is uncertainty in our election system. A third of voters feel Biden was elected unfairly and almost half of Democrats acknowledge there were at least minor problems with counting votes.



Confidence in American institutions has remained stagnant under President Biden.



Voters are evenly split on whether Presidents Trump and Biden fostered national unity or created further divisions.



Majorities of voters say that most government institutions are increasingly becoming politicized.



Voters believe bipartisan governing is crucial, but also worry that the bipartisan system has broken down. Voters also say they want more checks and balances in the system, as half of voters say executive powers are being abused.

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