

**GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
SOCIETY OF PRESIDENTIAL POLLSTERS**

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND POWER SURVEY FINDINGS

Field Dates: September 4-7, 2020

SURVEY METHOD

This survey was conducted online within the United States from **Field Dates: September 4-7, 2020** among **1,907 registered voters** by HarrisX.

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, marital status, household size, income, employment, education, political party, and political ideology where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

KEY FINDINGS

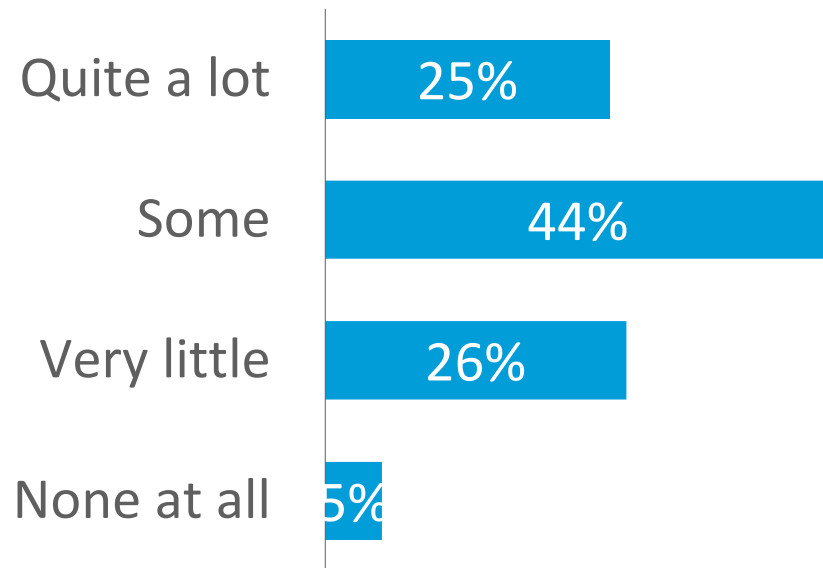
- Voters are down in the dumps about today but believe in America's future.
- Americans endorse checks and balances and bipartisanship as the right approach to governing over one party rule. Would keep filibuster as important check on power.
- Congress seen as the institution failing the most while Supreme Court receives approval for its approach and major decisions. Growing power of leadership over committees blamed for the breakdown of accomplishments.
- View of the presidency largely along partisan lines today but majorities see overreach in executive orders by presidents of both parties. Voters believe president should have power of pardon but wonder if Justice Department should report to the courts.

KEY FINDINGS

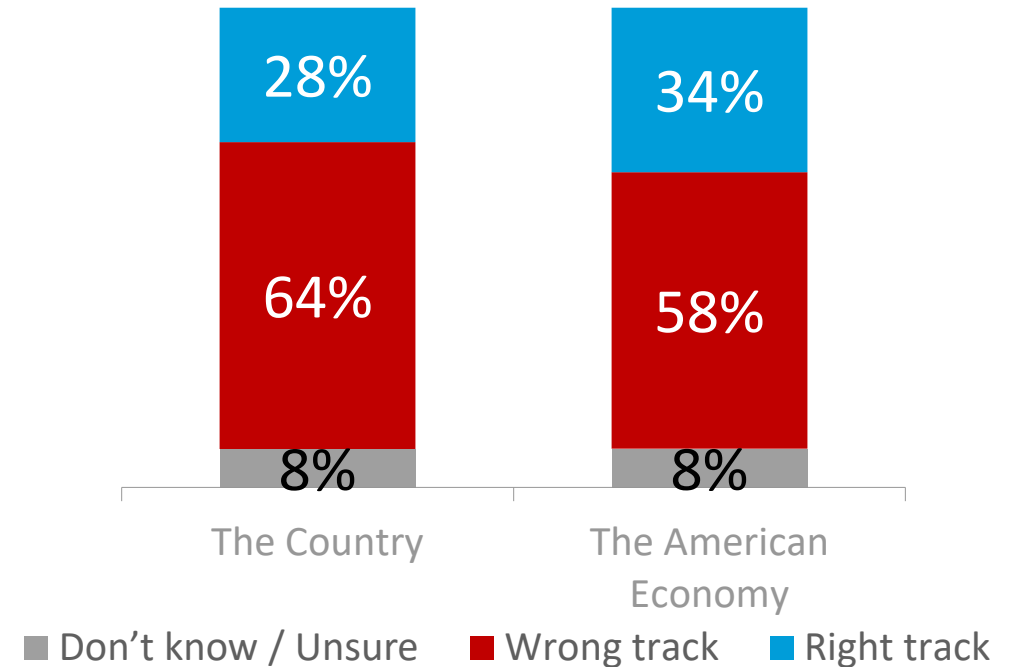
- Voters say Supreme Court judges should serve for fixed terms or retirement age, not for life.
- Only higher-level judges should be able to make nationwide orders, not district court judges.
- Americans re-affirm importance of the first amendment freedoms while divided on the second amendment.
- Hispanics and those from smaller minorities show highest belief that the aims of our constitution are being met.
- Overall voters want the system to work as intended rather than face massive overhaul as they want a system that promotes unity through give and take.

MOST VOTERS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES DESPITE THE CURRENT BELIEF THAT THE COUNTRY IS OFF ON THE WRONG TRACK

How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States?



In general, do you think the following is on the right track or is it off on the wrong track?



BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

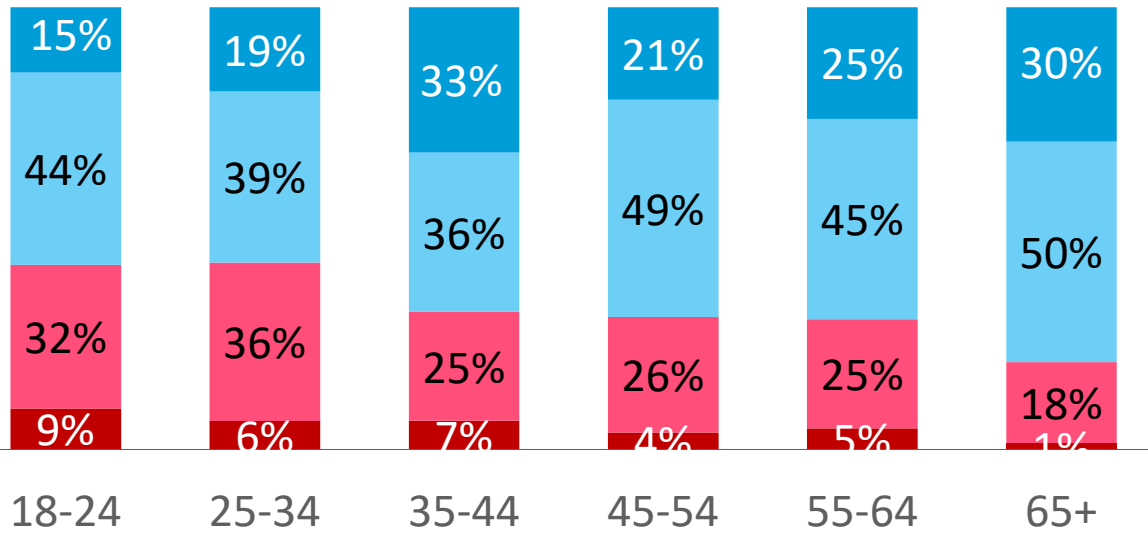
TG1: How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States?

QM1: In general, do you think the country is on the right track or is it off on the wrong track?

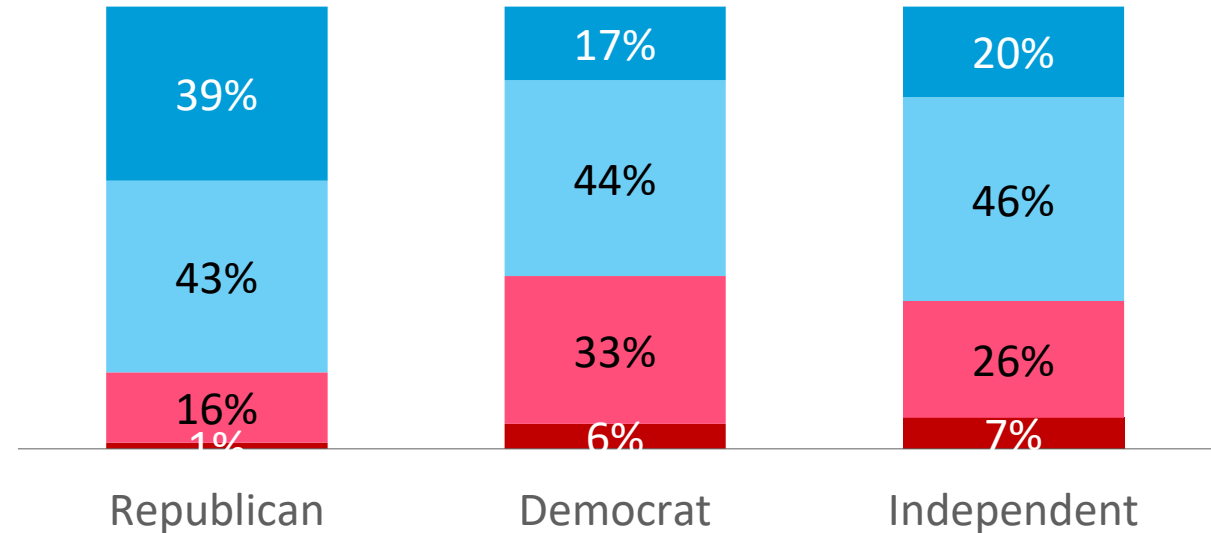
QM2: In general, do you think the American economy is on the right track or is it off on the wrong track?

MOST VOTERS, NO MATTER THE AGE OR PARTY IDENTIFICATION, HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States? (By Age)



How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States? (Political Party)



■ Quite a lot ■ Some ■ Very little ■ None at all

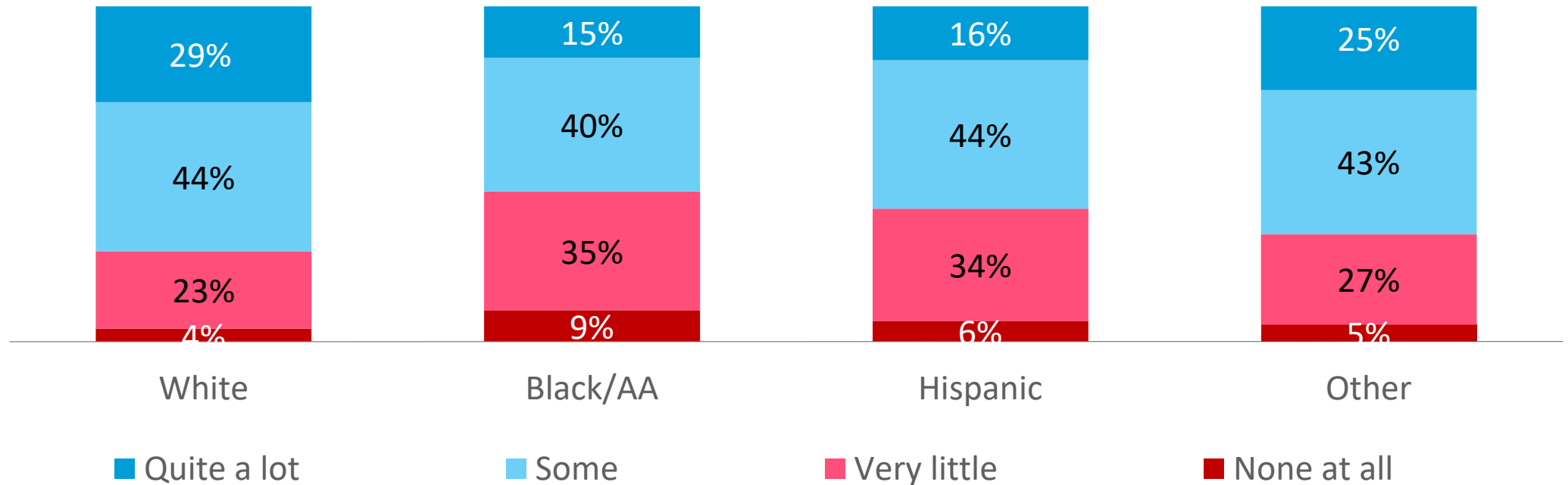
■ Quite a lot ■ Some ■ Very little ■ None at all

BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

TG1: How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States?

EVEN AMONG DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS THERE IS CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States? (By Race)

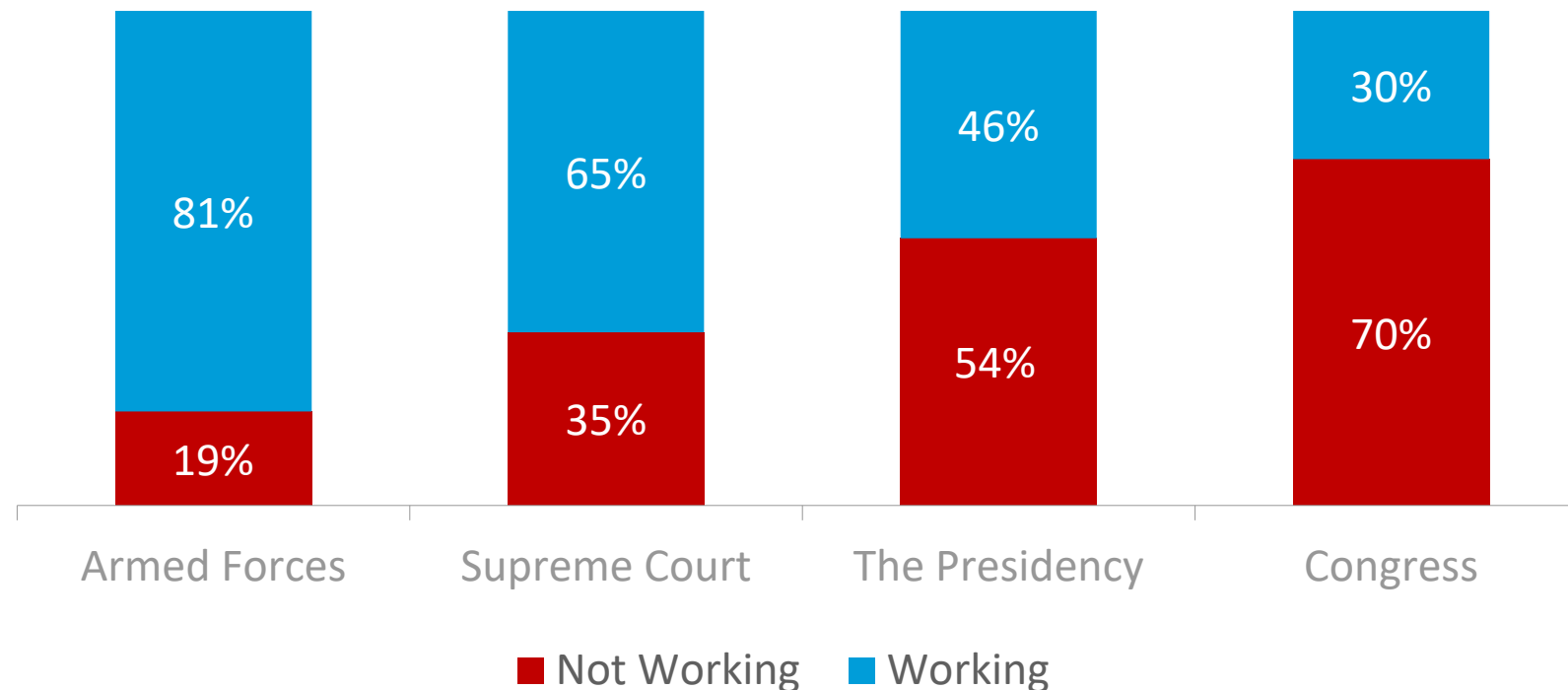


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

TG1: How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States?

WHILE MOST VOTERS FEEL THAT THE PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS ARE NOT WORKING, THEY FEEL THAT THE SUPREME COURT AND THE MILITARY ARE WORKING

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?



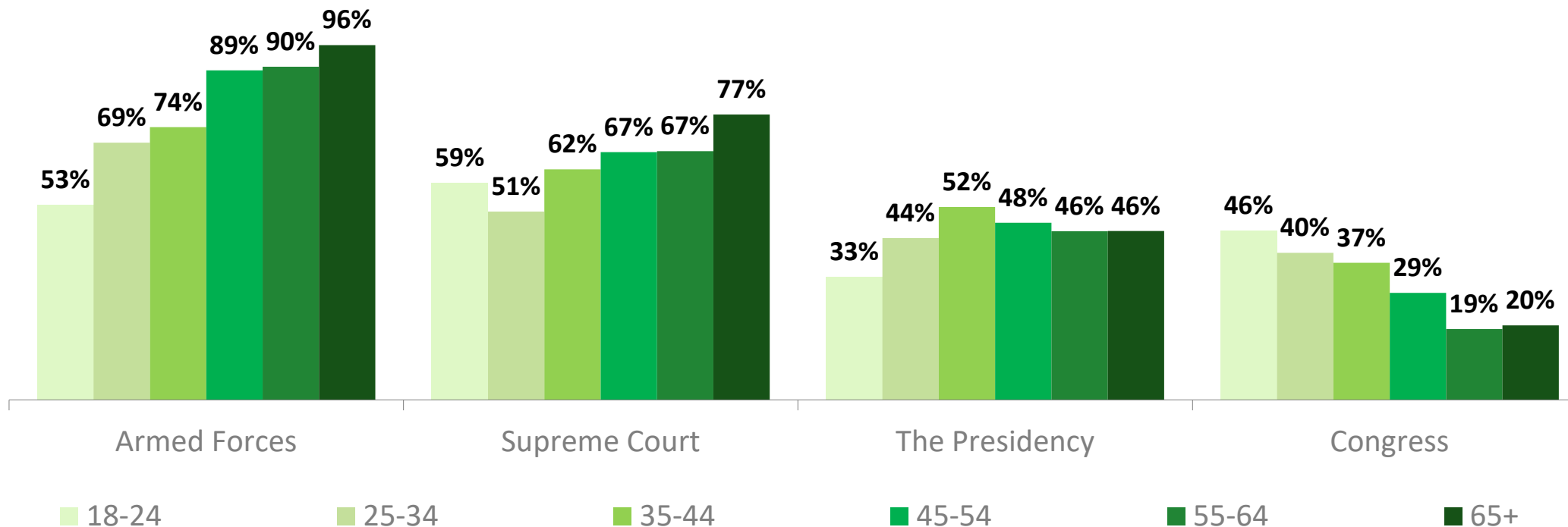
BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

C1r1: Presidency C1r2: Congress C1r3: Supreme Court C1r4: Armed Forces

NEARLY ALL OLDER VOTERS (96%) BELIEVE THAT THE ARMED FORCES ARE WORKING AS AN INSTITUTION, WHILE ONLY ABOUT HALF (53%) OF YOUNGER VOTERS BELIEVE THE SAME

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? (% Working by Age)



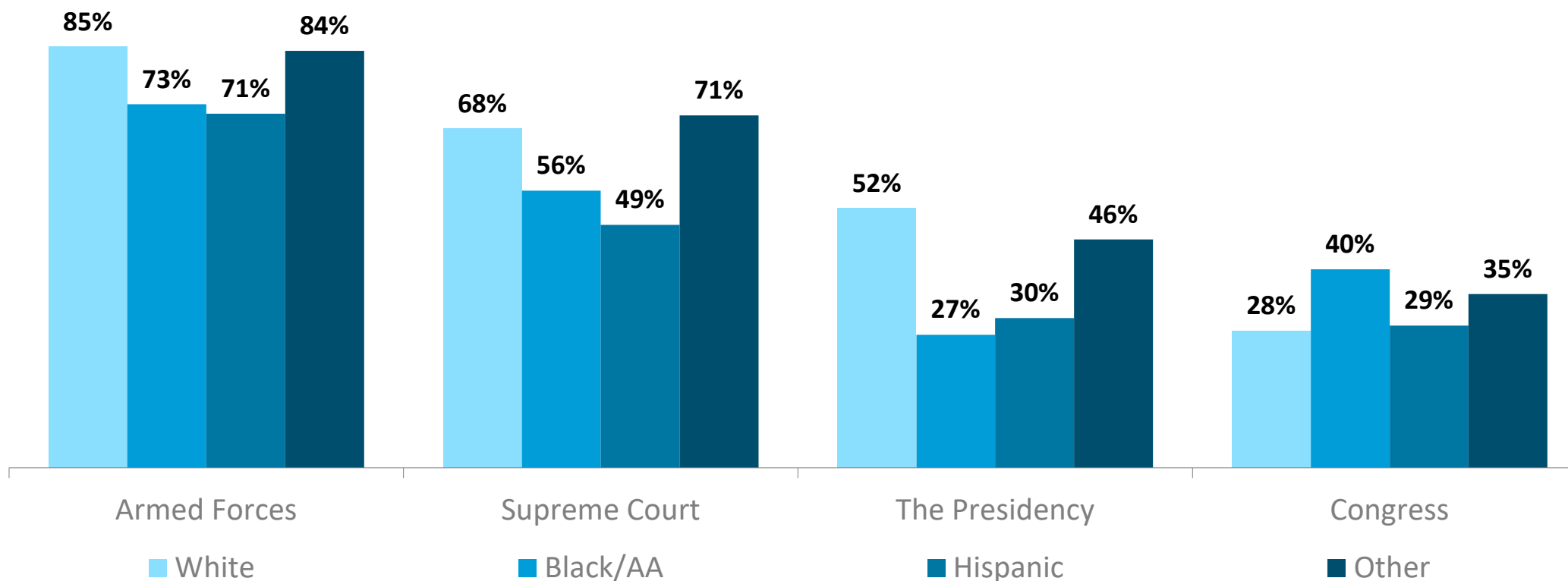
BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

C1r1: Presidency C1r2: Congress C1r3: Supreme Court C1r4: Armed Forces

MOST WHITE VOTERS FEEL THAT THE PRESIDENCY IS WORKING AS AN INSTITUTION WHILE BLACK VOTERS TEND TO SEE CONGRESS WORKING BETTER THAN THE 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? (% Working by Race)



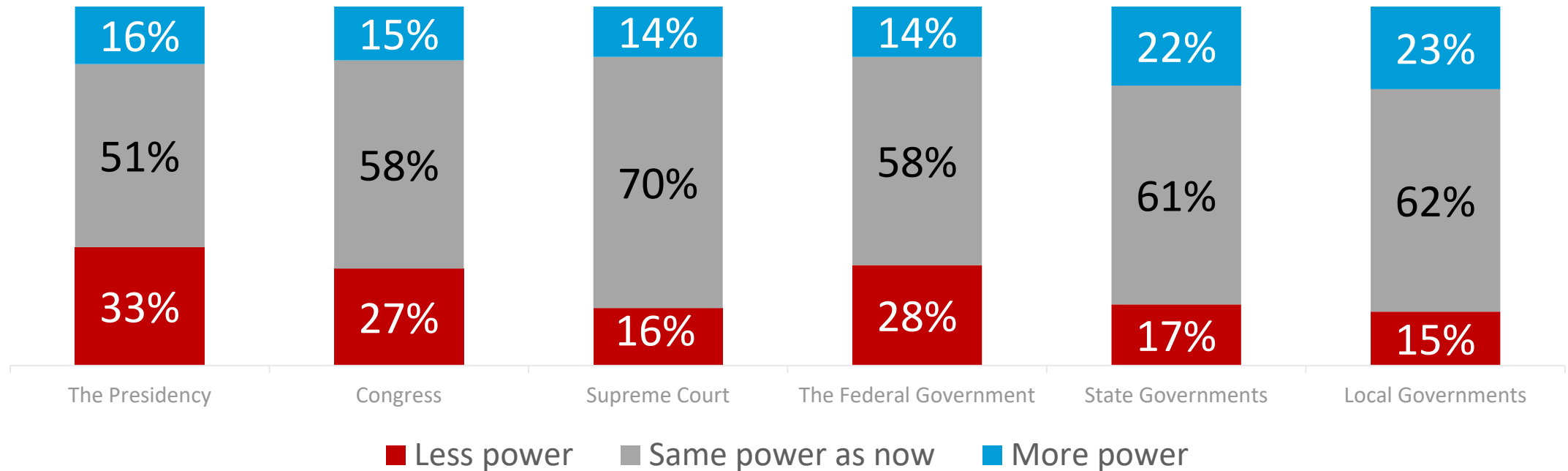
BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

C1r1: Presidency C1r2: Congress C1r3: Supreme Court C1r4: Armed Forces

MOST VOTERS THINK THAT INSTITUTIONS AND LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF POWER AS THEY HAVE NOW

In general, do you think each of these institutions/levels of Government, regardless of who is leading them at any given moment, should have more power, less power, or the same power as now?



BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

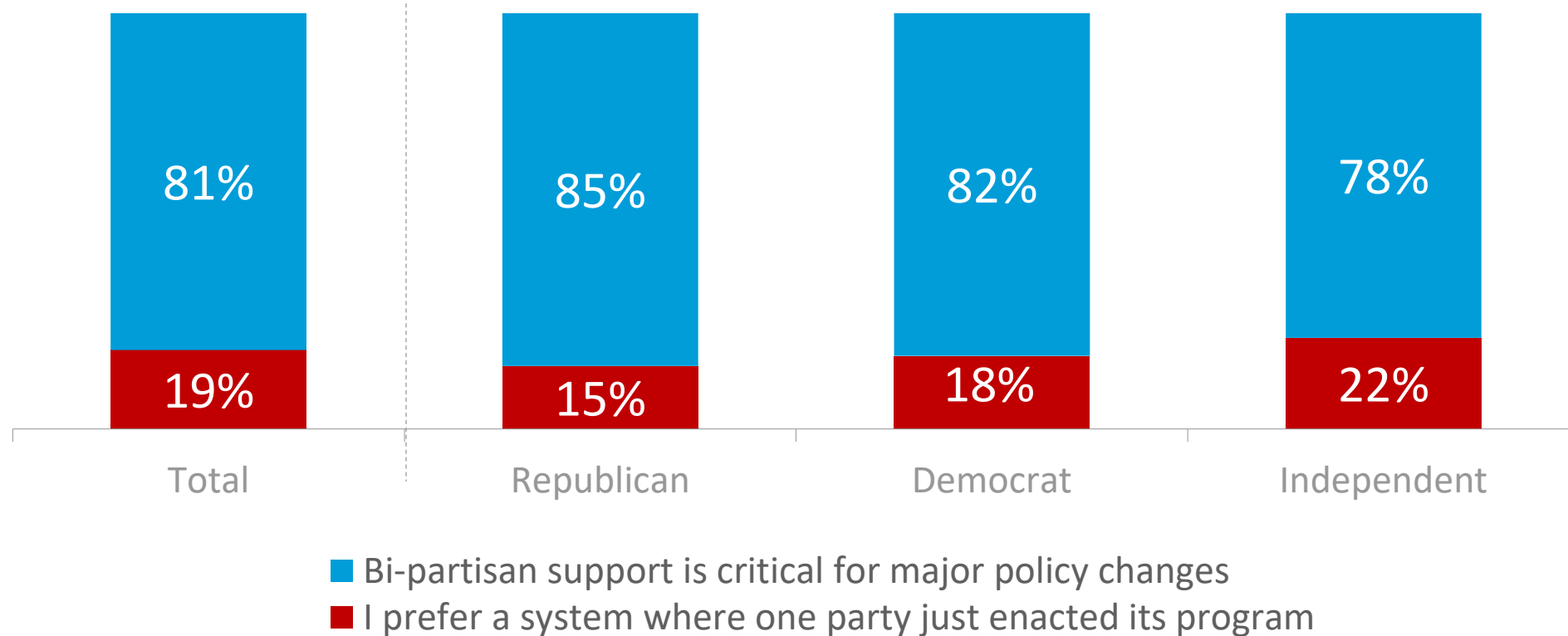
C2r1: Presidency C2r2: Congress C2r3: Supreme Court

In general, for each of these levels of government, regardless of who is leading them at any given moment, should have more power, less power, or the same power as now?

C2Xr1: The federal government C2Xr2: State governments C2Xr3: Local governments

MOST VOTERS, REGARDLESS OF PARTY BELIEVE THAT BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT IS CRITICAL FOR MAJOR POLICY CHANGES

Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program? (By Political Party)

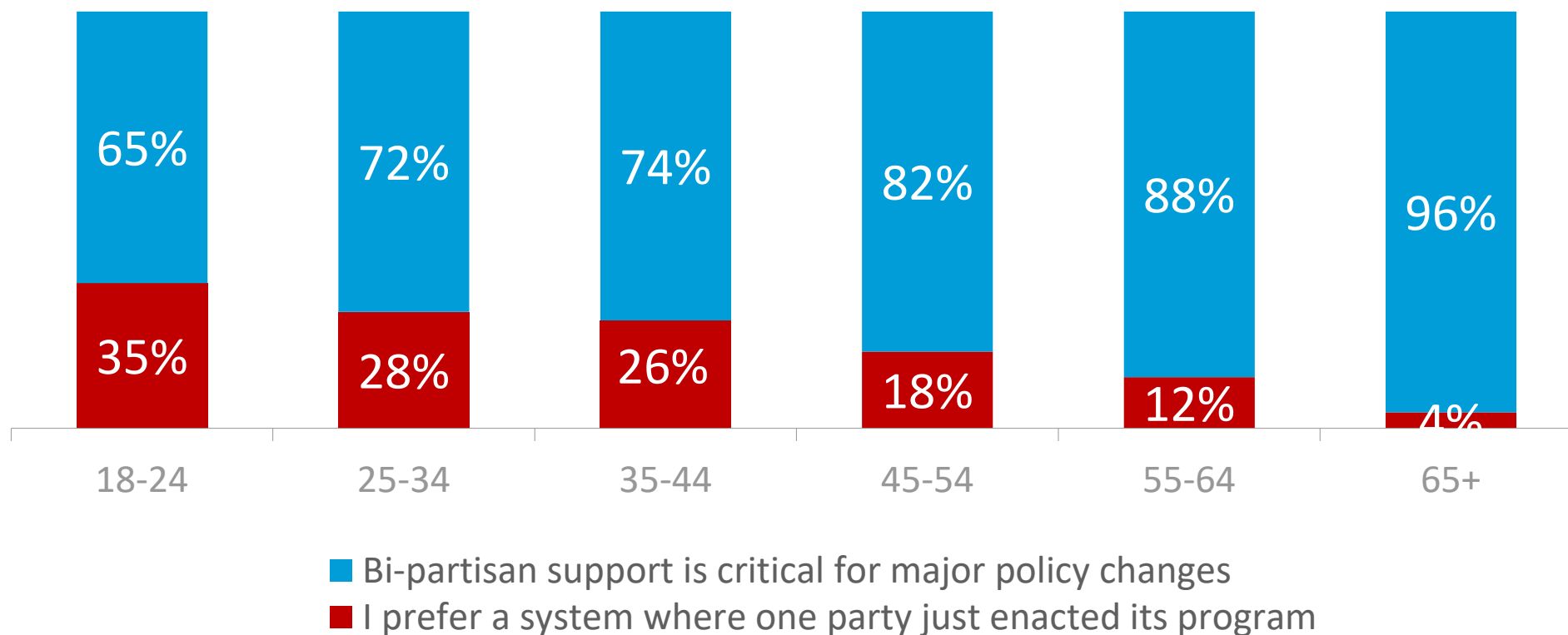


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C3: Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program?

OLDER VOTERS ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO THINK THAT BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IS CRITICAL FOR MAJOR POLICY CHANGES, WHILE YOUNGER VOTERS PREFER ONE PARTY SYSTEMS

Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program? (By Age)

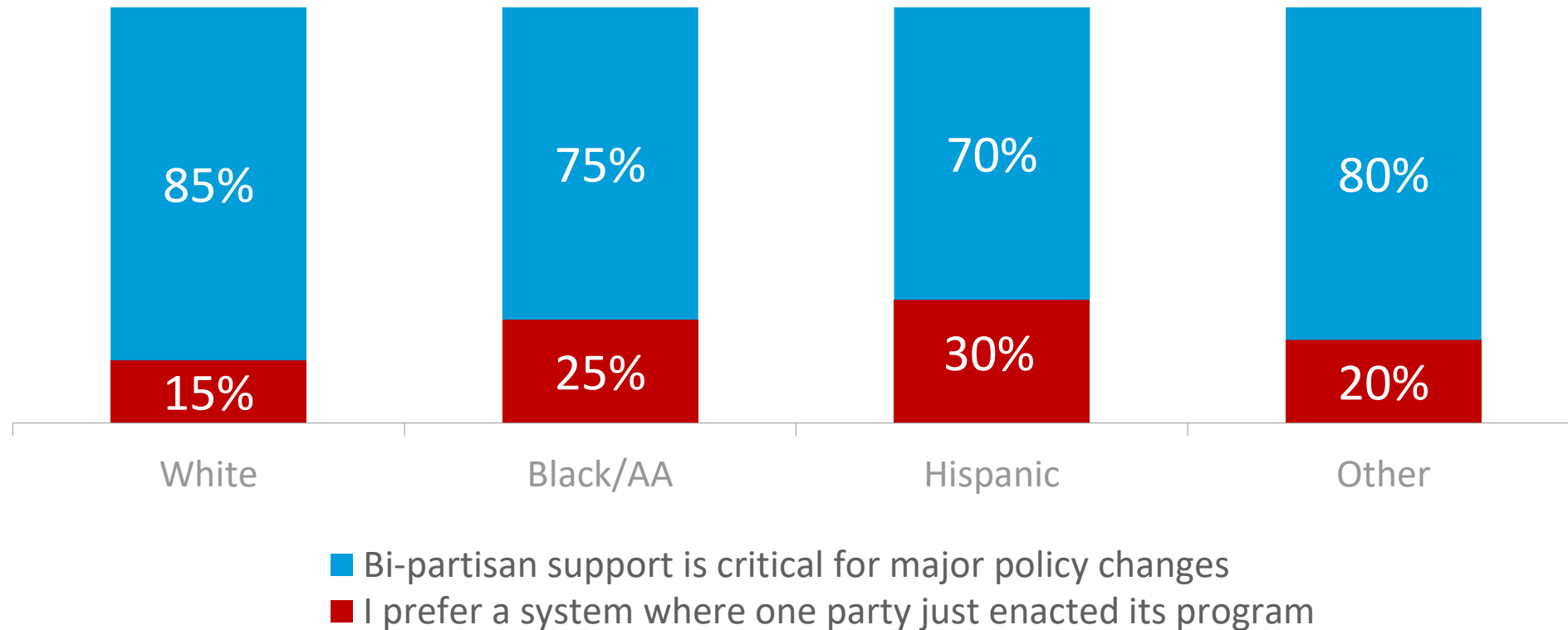


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C3: Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program?

WHILE ALL RACES PRIMARILY BELIEVE THAT BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT IS CRITICAL FOR MAJOR POLICY CHANGES, BLACK AND HISPANIC VOTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO PREFER ONE PARTY SYSTEMS THAN WHITE VOTERS

Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program? (By Race)

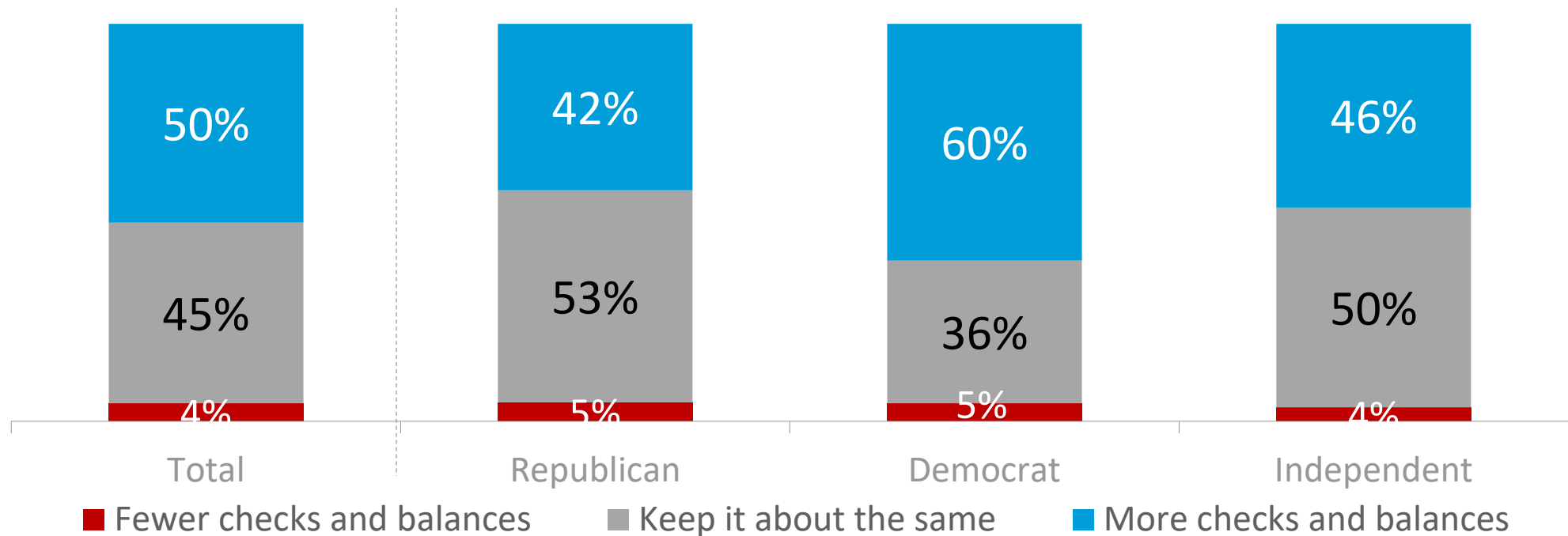


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C3: Do you think that bi-partisan support is critical for major policy changes or would you prefer a system where one party just enacted its program?

HOWEVER, HALF OF VOTERS BELIEVE THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE SYSTEM

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 Political Party)

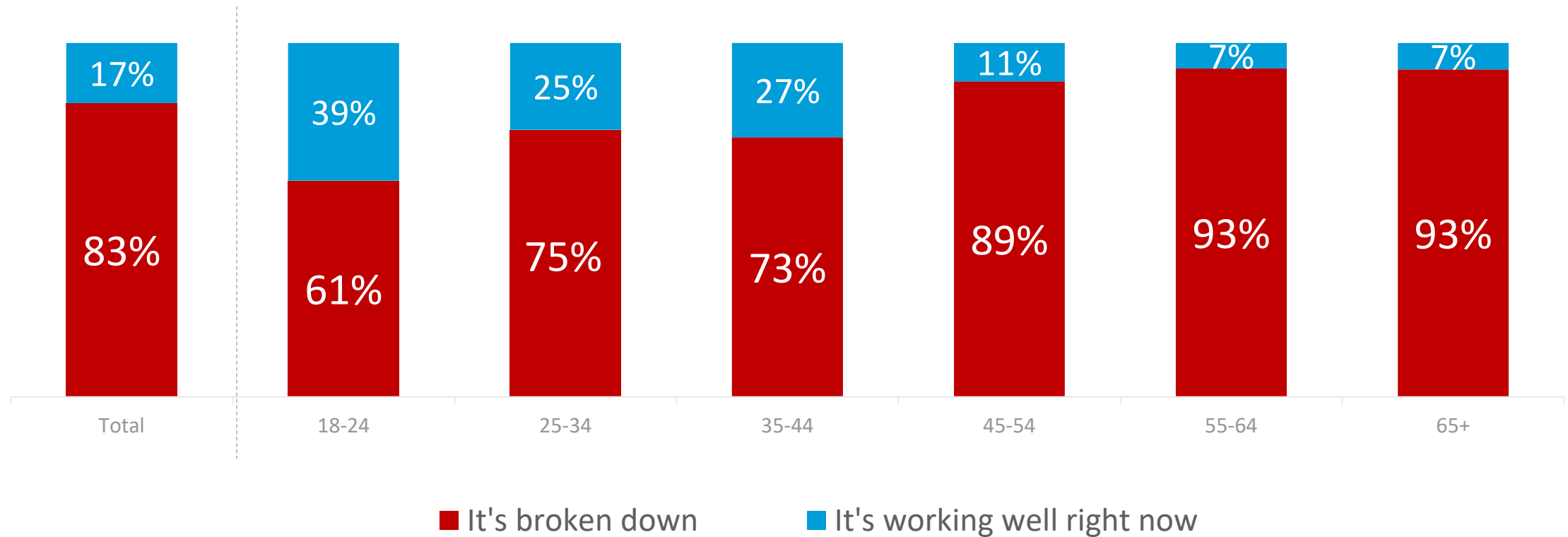


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

DESPITE BELIEVING THAT BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT IS CRITICAL FOR MAJOR POLICY CHANGES, MOST VOTERS DO NOT THINK THE BI-PARTISAN SYSTEM IS WORKING WELL RIGHT NOW

Do you think the bipartisan system of governing has broken down or is working well right now? (By Age)

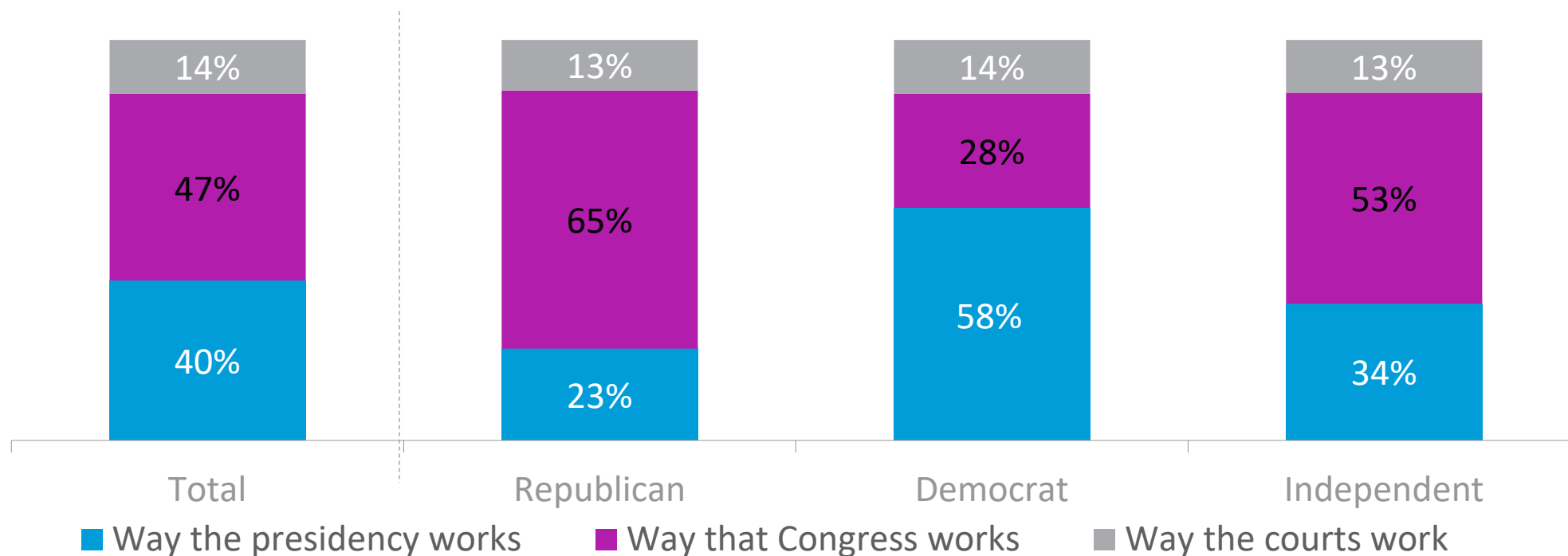


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C5: Do you think the bipartisan system of governing has broken down or is working well right now?

REPUBLICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK THAT THE PROBLEMS STEM FROM THE WAY CONGRESS WORKS, WHILE DEMOCRATS ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK THAT THE PROBLEM STEMS FROM THE PRESIDENCY

**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?
(By Political Party)**

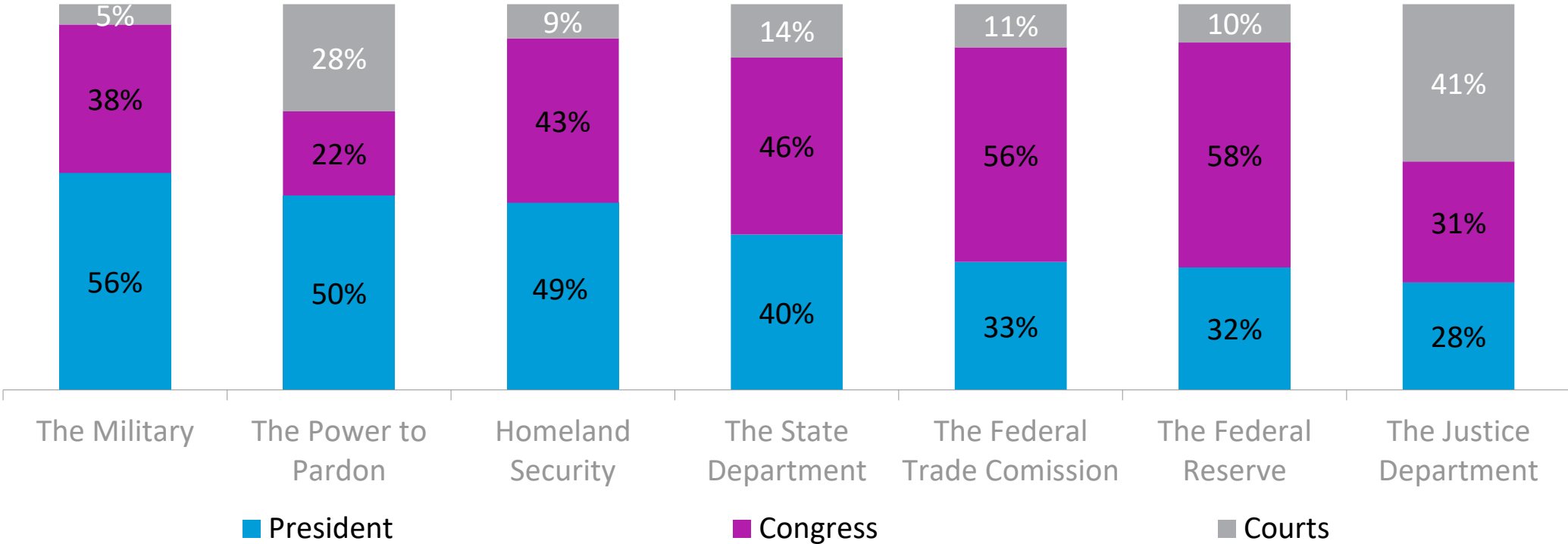


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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?

MOST VOTERS BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT OR CONGRESS SHOULD HOLD CONTROL OVER MAJOR INSTITUTIONS, EXCEPT FOR THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, WHICH THEY BELIEVE SHOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE COURTS

Who should control each of these institutions or exercises of power - the president, congress, or the courts?



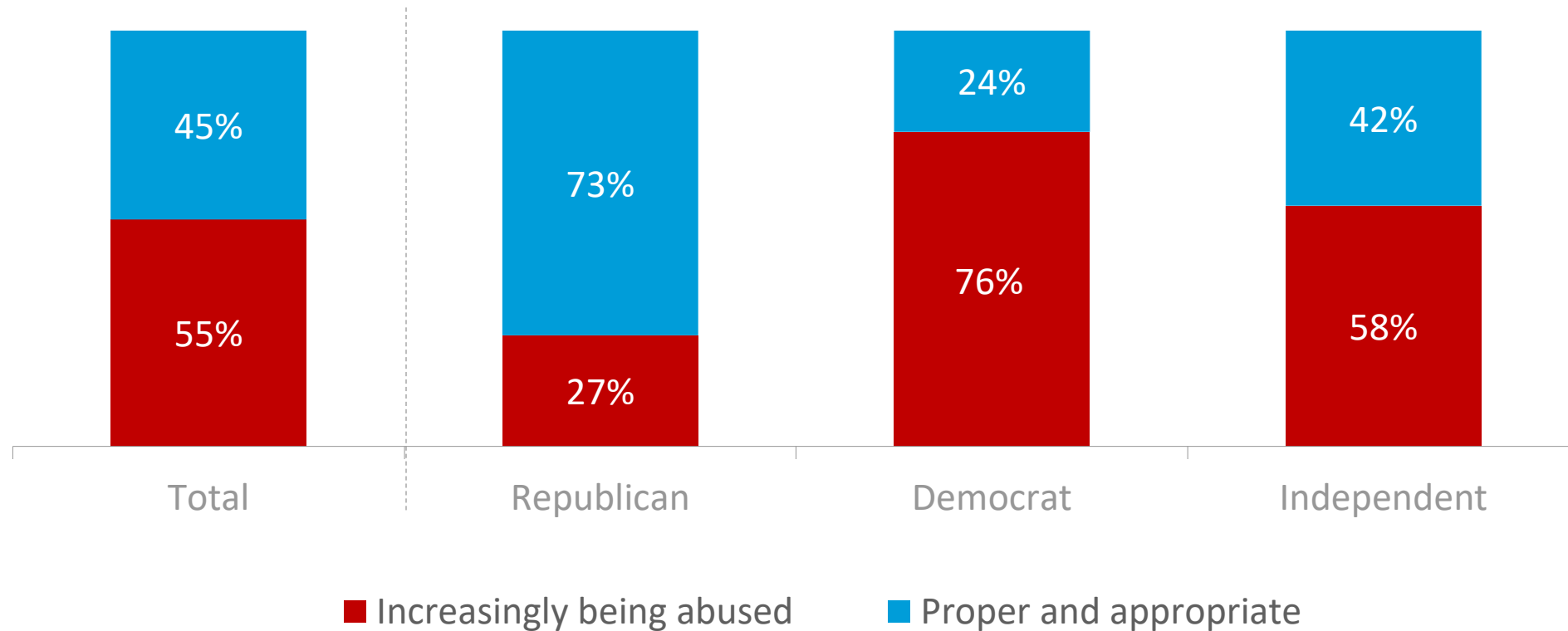
BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

Who should control each of these institutions or exercises of power - the president, congress, or the courts?

C8r1: The military C8r2: The Justice department C8r3: Homeland Security C8r4: The Federal Reserve C8r5: The Federal Trade Commission C8r6: The State Department C8r7: The power to pardon

MOST VOTERS BELIEVE THAT THE USE OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY ABUSED

Do you think that the use of executive orders by presidents is generally proper and appropriate or is increasingly being abused? (By Political Party)

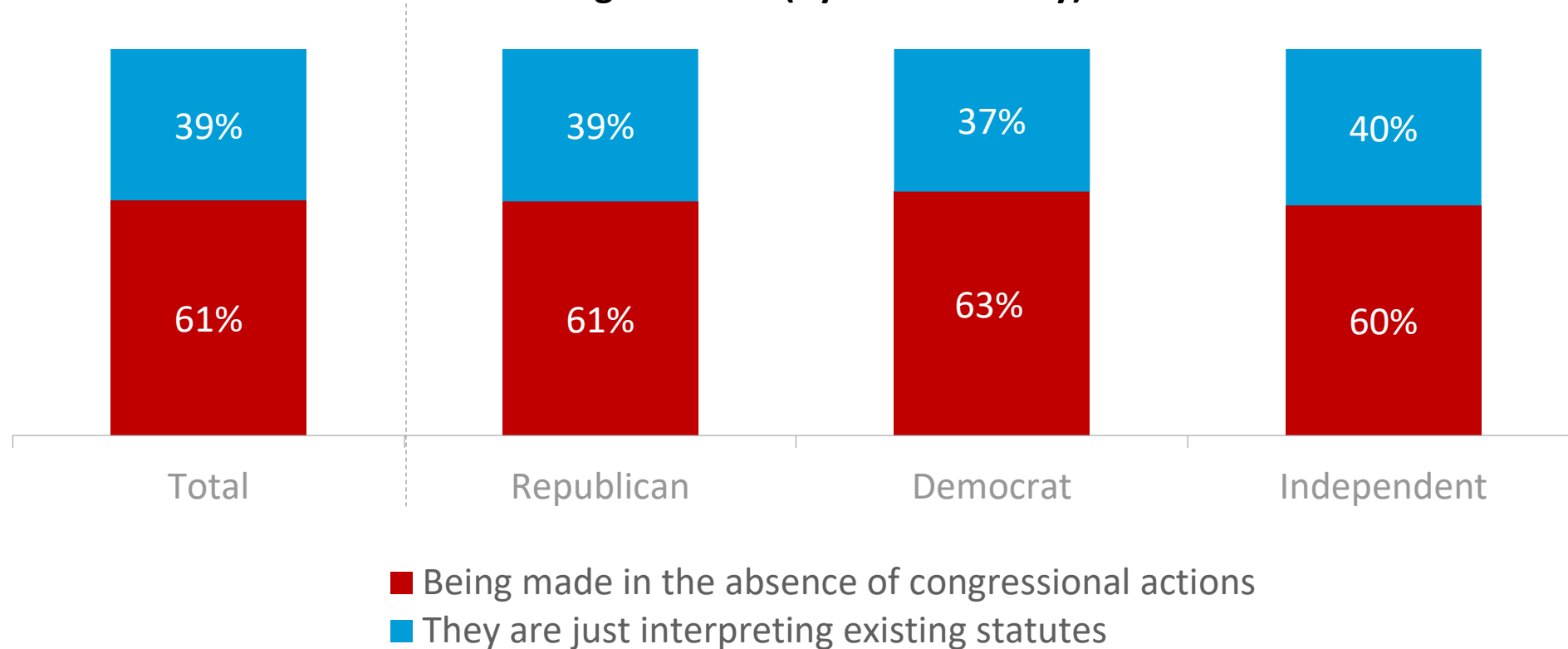


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C9: Do you think that the use of executive orders by presidents is generally proper and appropriate or is increasingly being abused?

VOTERS AGREE THAT DESPITE PARTY DIFFERENCES THAT LEGISLATION IS BEING MADE IN THE ABSENCE OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

Do you think legislation is now being made by the administrative departments in the absence of congressional actions or are administrative departments just interpreting existing statutes? (By Political Party)

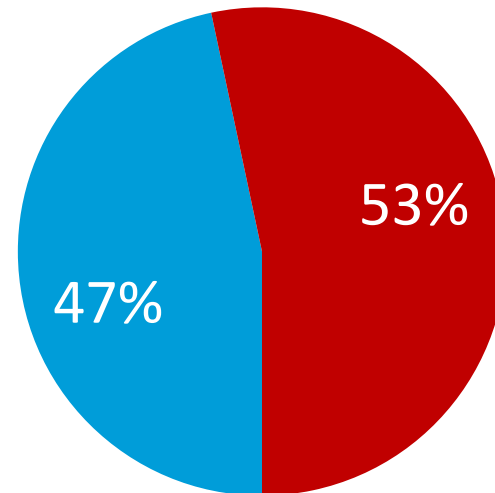


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C9: Do you think that the use of executive orders by presidents is generally proper and appropriate or is increasingly being abused?

VOTERS DISAGREE WITH OBAMA'S USE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ON DACA, AND BELIEVE THAT THE ORDER WAS INAPPROPRIATE

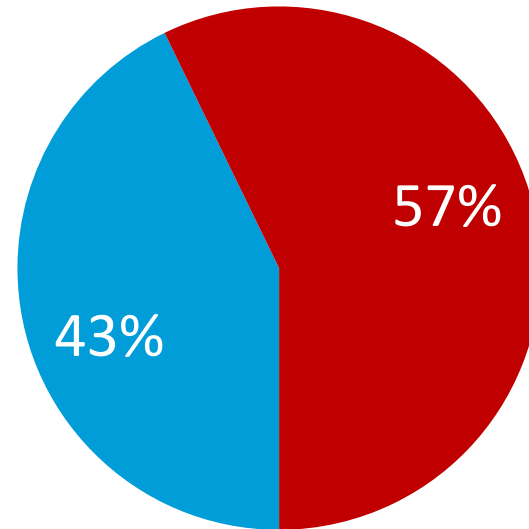
Was Barack Obama's executive order granting amnesty to DACA recipients a proper use of an executive order or should he have waited for Congress to decide the matter?



■ It was a proper use of an executive order ■ He should have waiting for Congress to decide the matter

VOTERS SAY KEEPING THE FILIBUSTER IS CRITICAL TO BIPARTISANSHIP

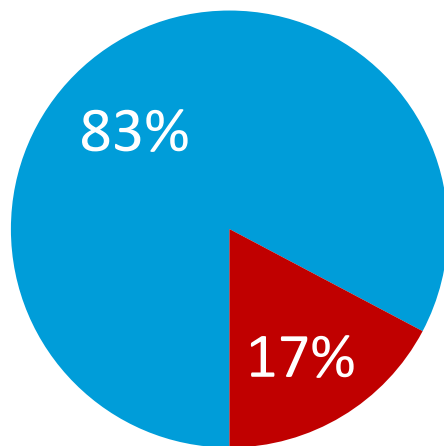
To improve Congress would you get rid of things like the filibuster that requires 60 votes and bi-partisanship to approve most legislation or would you strengthen processes that require bi-partisan support?



- Get rid of things like the filibuster that requires 60 votes and bi-partisanship to approve most legislation
- Strengthen processes that require bi-partisan support

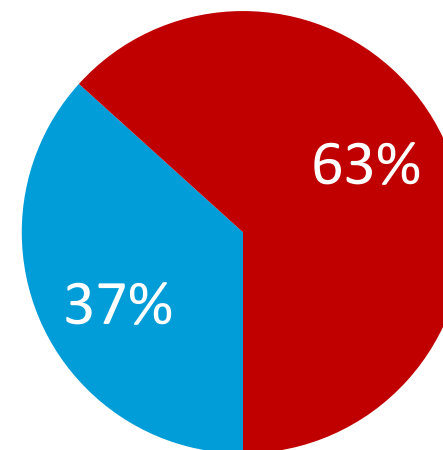
MOST WHO BELIEVE THE BI-PARTISAN LEGISLATION SYSTEM IS BROKEN DOWN ALSO THINK THAT THIS IS DUE TO THE RISE OF PARTY LEADERS AND CAUCUSES OVER COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Do you think that the system of creating bi-partisan legislation in Congress has broken down or is working well?



■ It's broken down ■ It's working well

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



■ Function of the times
■ Rise of party leaders and caucuses over committee chairs

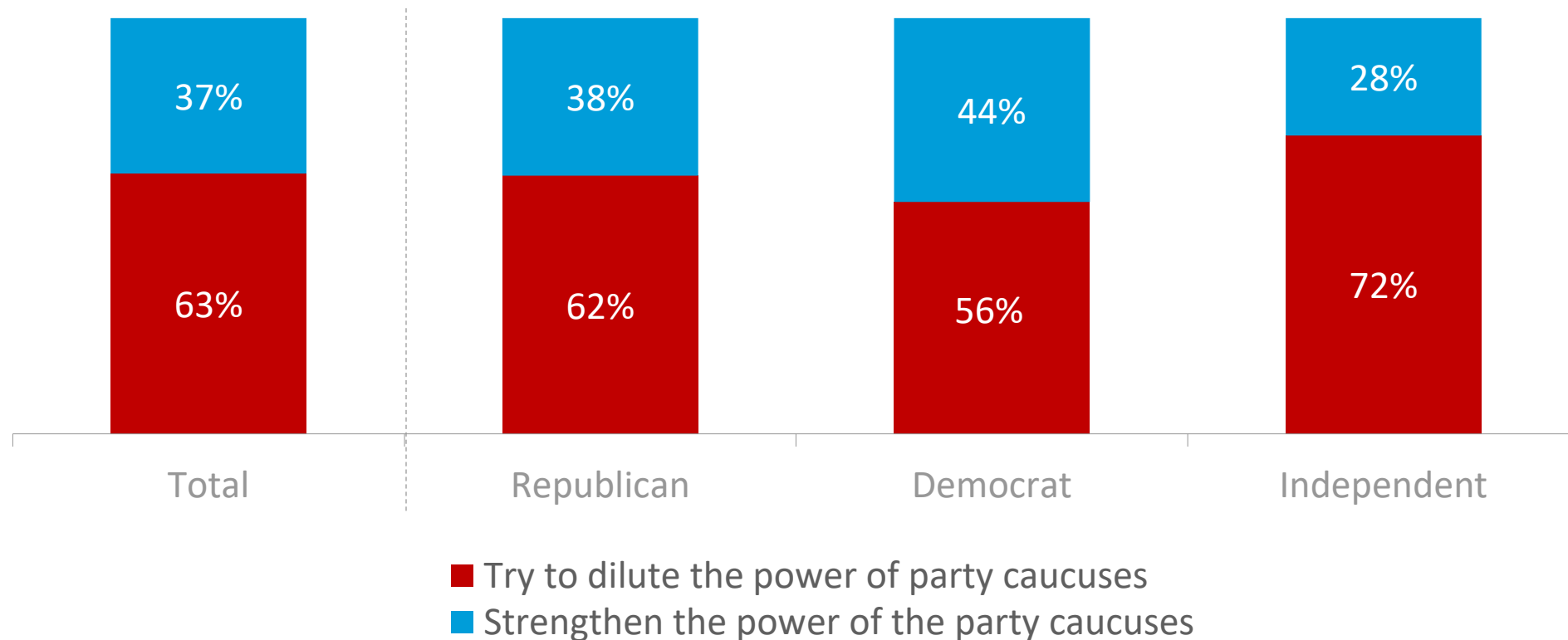
BASE: C12 = Is Broken down (n=1582), Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C12: Do you think that the system of creating bi-partisan 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?

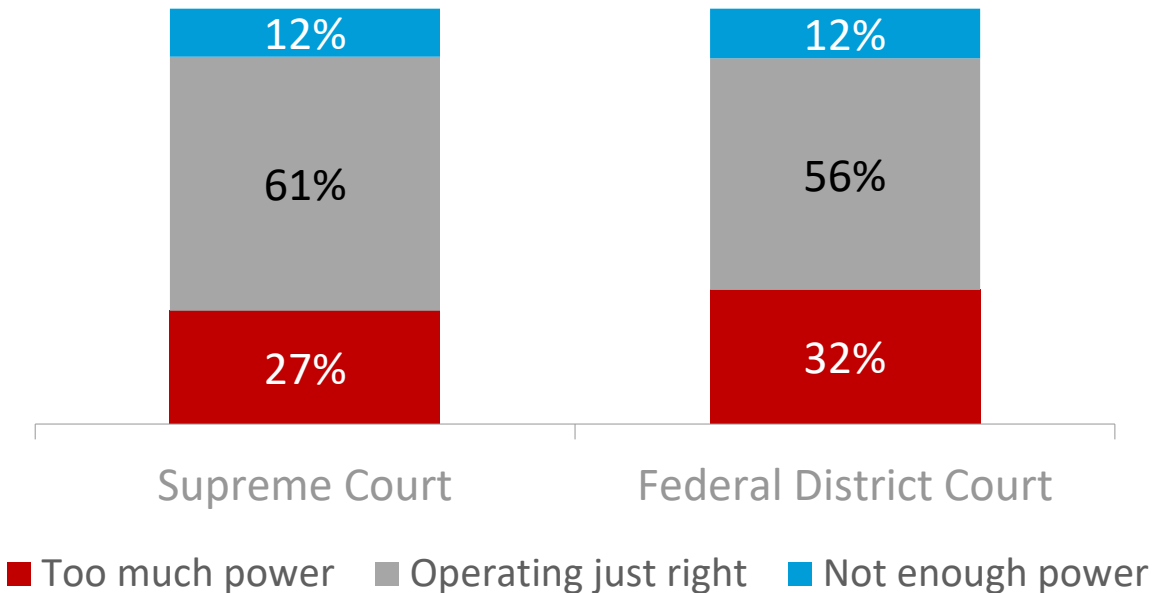
TO IMPROVE CONGRESS, MOST VOTERS WOULD TRY TO DILUTE THE POWER OF PARTY CAUCUSES

To improve Congress would you strengthen the power of the party caucuses or would you try to dilute the power of party caucuses? (By Political Party)

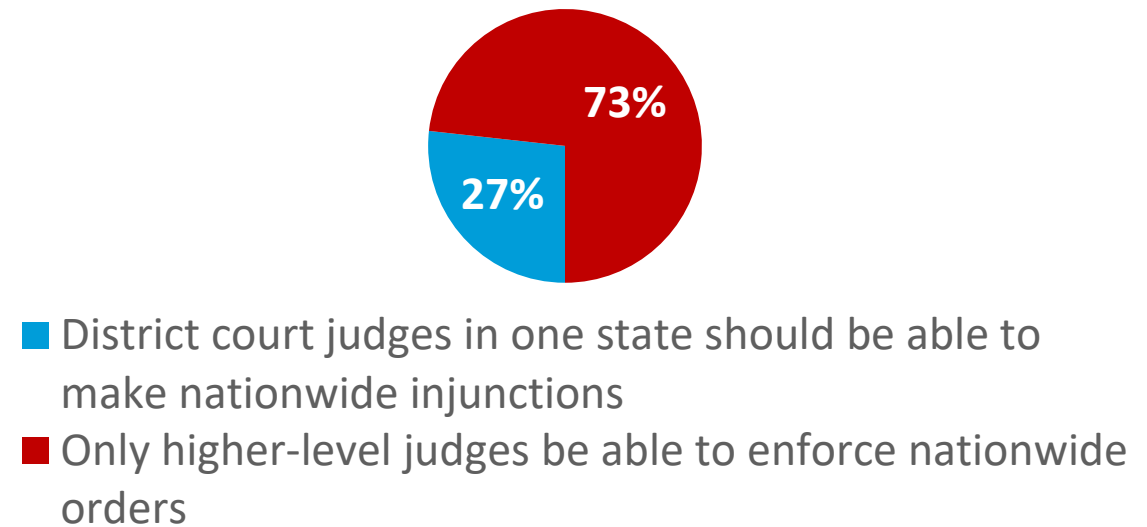


MOST VOTERS BELIEVE THAT SUPREME COURT JUDGES ARE OPERATING JUST RIGHT, AND THAT HIGHER-LEVEL JUDGES ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO SHOULD ENFORCE NATIONWIDE ORDERS

Have [the following] judges been asserting too much power, not enough power or operating just right?



Do you think district court judges in one state should be able to make nationwide injunctions or should only higher-level judges be able to enforce nationwide orders?



BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

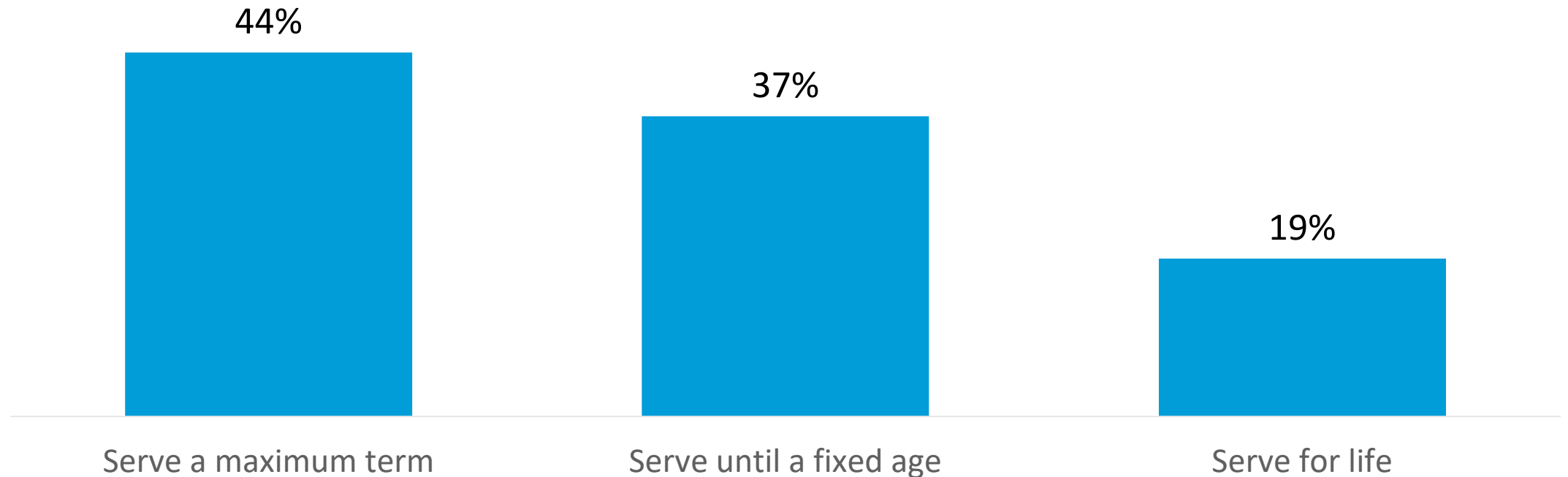
C16: Have federal district court judges been asserting too much power, not enough power or operating just right?

C17: Have supreme court judges been asserting too much power, not enough power or operating just right?

C18: Do you think district court judges in one state should be able to make nationwide injunctions or should only higher-level judges be able to enforce nationwide orders?

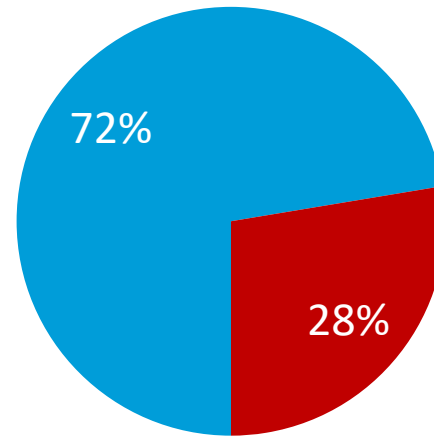
MOST VOTERS THINK THAT SUPREME COURT JUDGES SHOULD SERVE A MAXIMUM TERM, OR AT LEAST UNTIL A FIXED AGE

Should Supreme court judges serve for life as now, until a fixed age like 85, or a maximum term of something like 18 years?



MOST VOTERS AGREE THAT WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCING OF FIRST AMENDMENT FREEDOMS

The first amendment of the constitution provides for freedom of speech, religion and the press. Do you think we need to strengthen enforcing the first amendment freedoms or should we be defining more areas of speech and religious practice that can be...



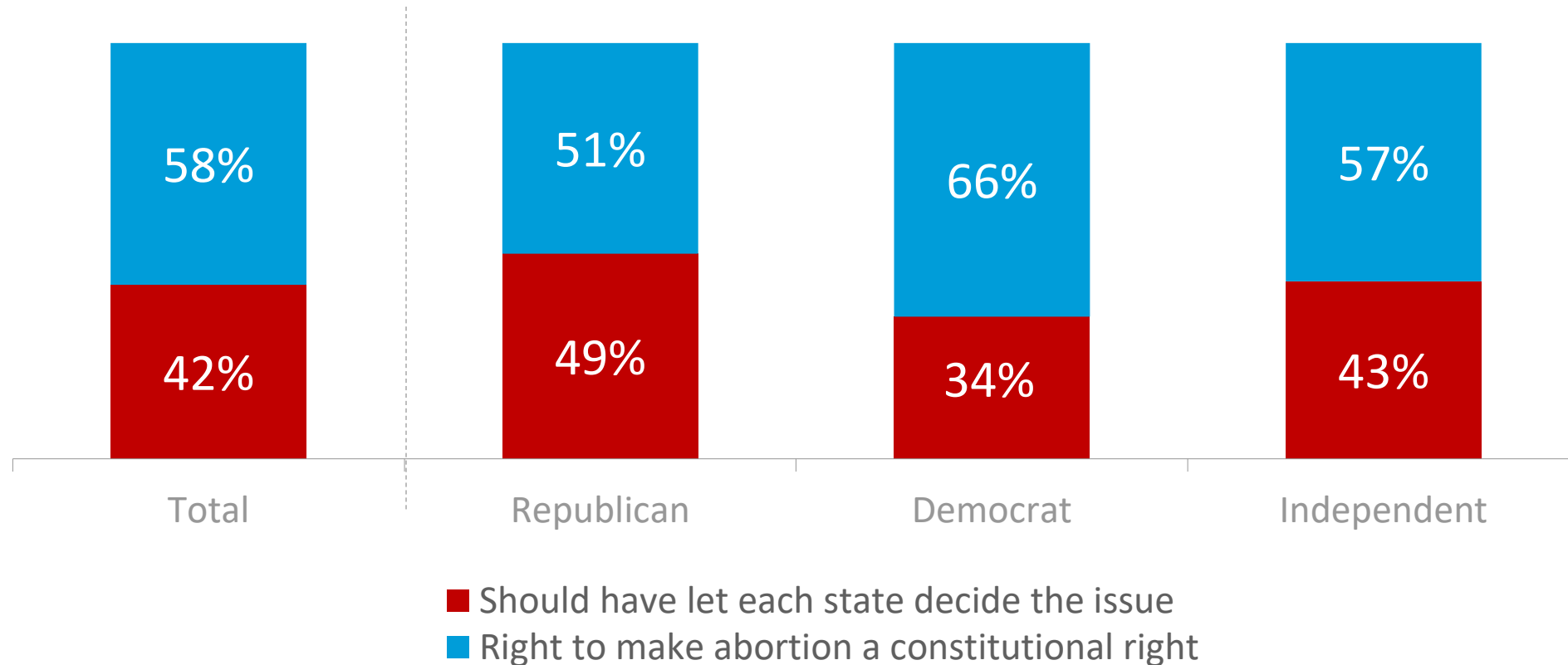
- Strengthen enforcing the first amendment freedoms
- Define more areas of speech and religious practice that can be limited or banned

BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C22: The first amendment of the constitution provides for freedom of speech, religion and the press. Do you think we need to strengthen enforcing the first amendment freedoms or should we be defining more areas of speech and religious practice that can be limited or banned?

VOTERS OVERALL AGREE THE SUPREME COURT WAS JUSTIFIED IN MAKING ABORTION A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT, MANY REPUBLICANS BELIEVE THAT THE COURT SHOULD HAVE LET EACH STATE DECIDE ON THEIR OWN

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? (By Political Party)

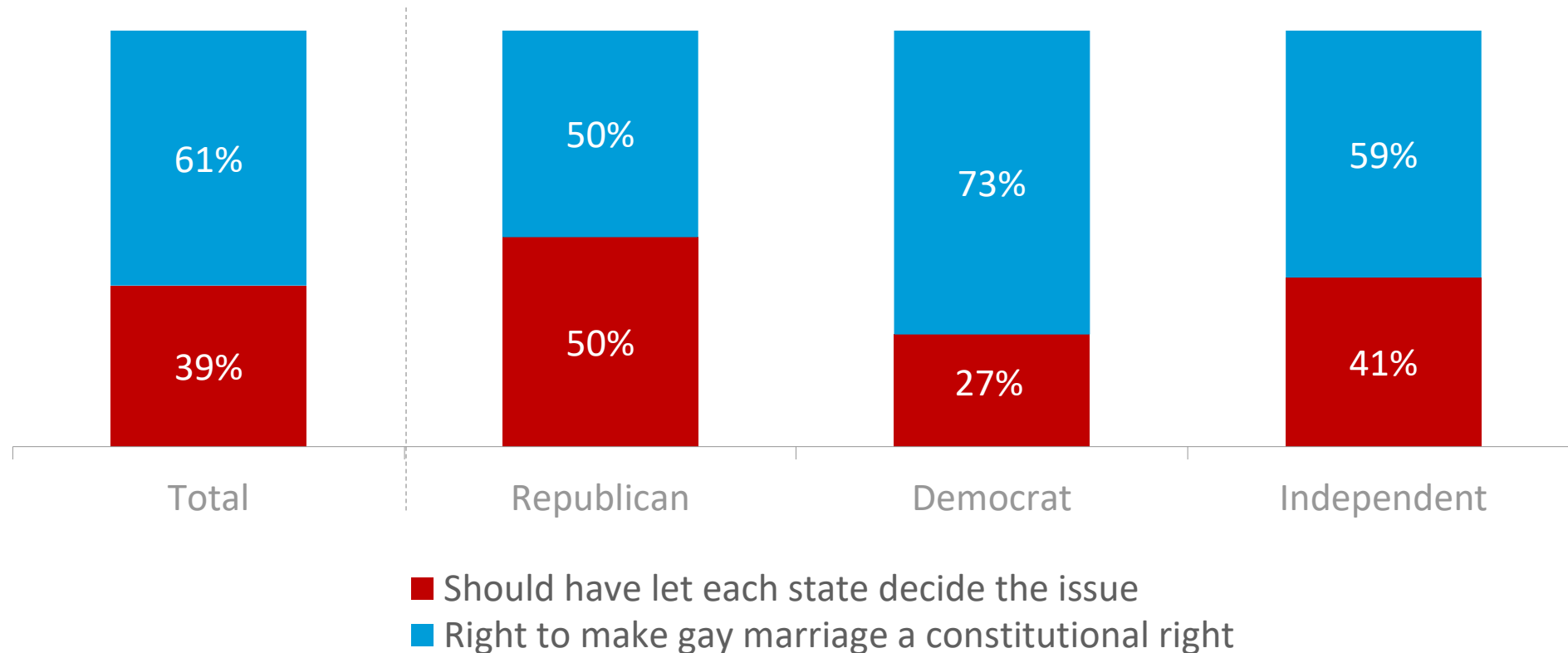


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C20: 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?

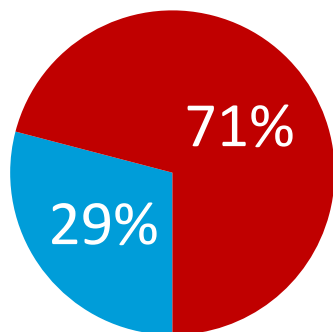
MOST DEMOCRATS BELIEVE THE SUPREME COURT WAS RIGHT TO MAKE GAY MARRIAGE A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT, BUT REPUBLICANS ARE SPLIT ON THIS ISSUE

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? (By Political Party)



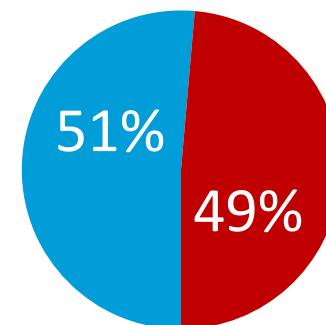
THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN TO BUY GUNS IS CONSIDERED A HIGHER PRIORITY FOR MOST VOTERS THAN TO PASS GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

Do you think that religious groups that express opposition to gay marriage should be labeled as hate groups or should their rights to hold such views be protected?



- Labeled as hate groups
- Their rights to hold such views should be protected

The second amendment protects the right to bear arms. Do you think that we need to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to buy guns or is it more important to pass gun control legislation that regulates gun ownership?



- Protect the right of law-abiding citizens to buy guns
- More important to pass gun control legislation that regulates gun ownership

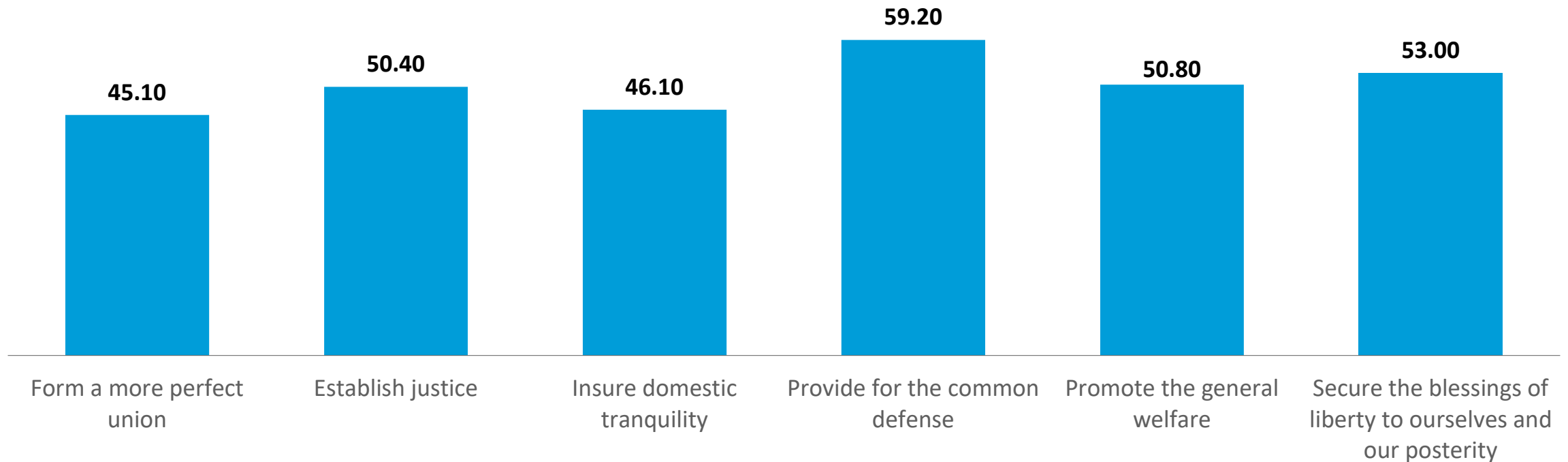
BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

C23: Do you think that religious groups that express opposition to gay marriage should be labeled as hate groups or should their rights to hold such views be protected?

C24: The second amendment protects the right to bear arms. Do you think that we need to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to buy guns or is it more important to pass gun control legislation that regulates gun ownership?

VOTERS HAVE A MODERATE LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ACHIEVING THE GOALS THAT ARE OUTLINED THE PREAMBLE OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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”...

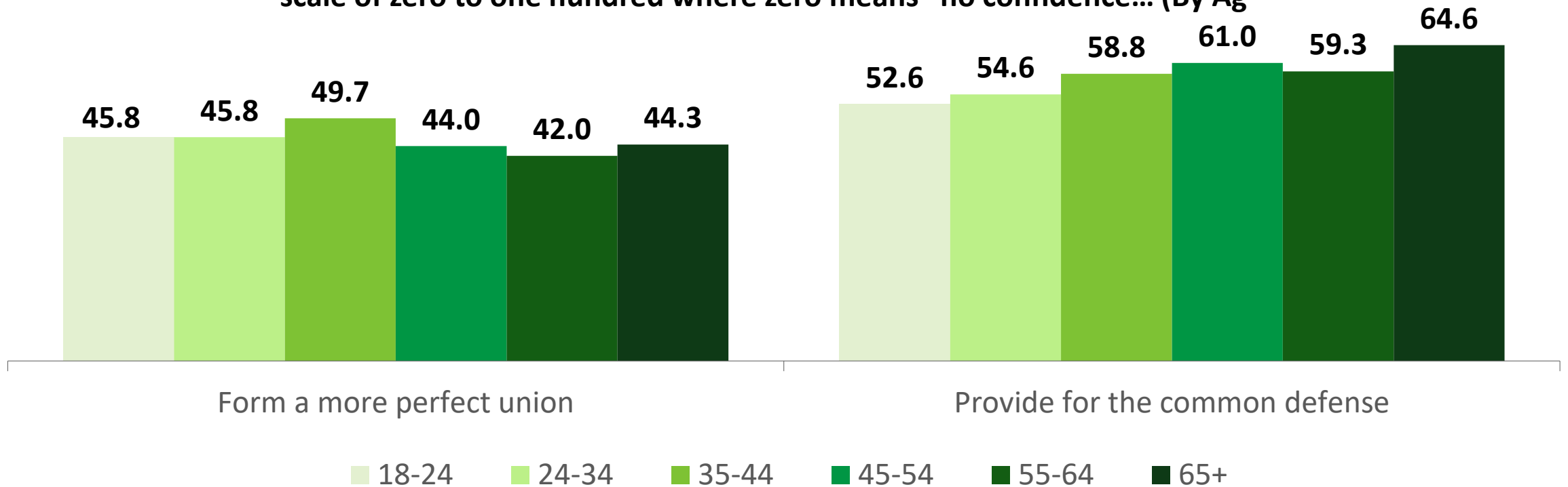


BASE: Registered Voters (n=1,907)

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. Here is the first one...

MOST VOTERS, REGARDLESS OF AGE, BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS BEST ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF “PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE” BUT UNDERACHIEVE MOST ON “FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION”

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... (By Ag

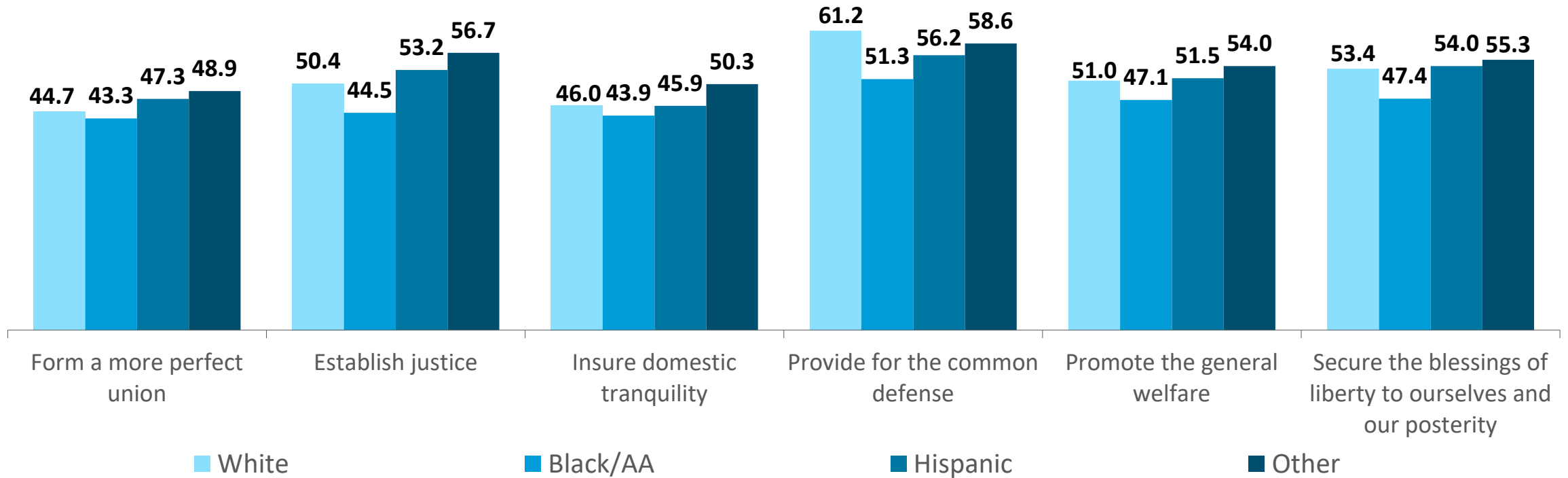


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HISPANIC AND SMALLER MINORITY GROUPS HAVE THE MOST CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOALS OUTLINED IN THE PREAMBLE OF THE CONSTITUTION ARE BEING ACHIEVED

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... (By Ra

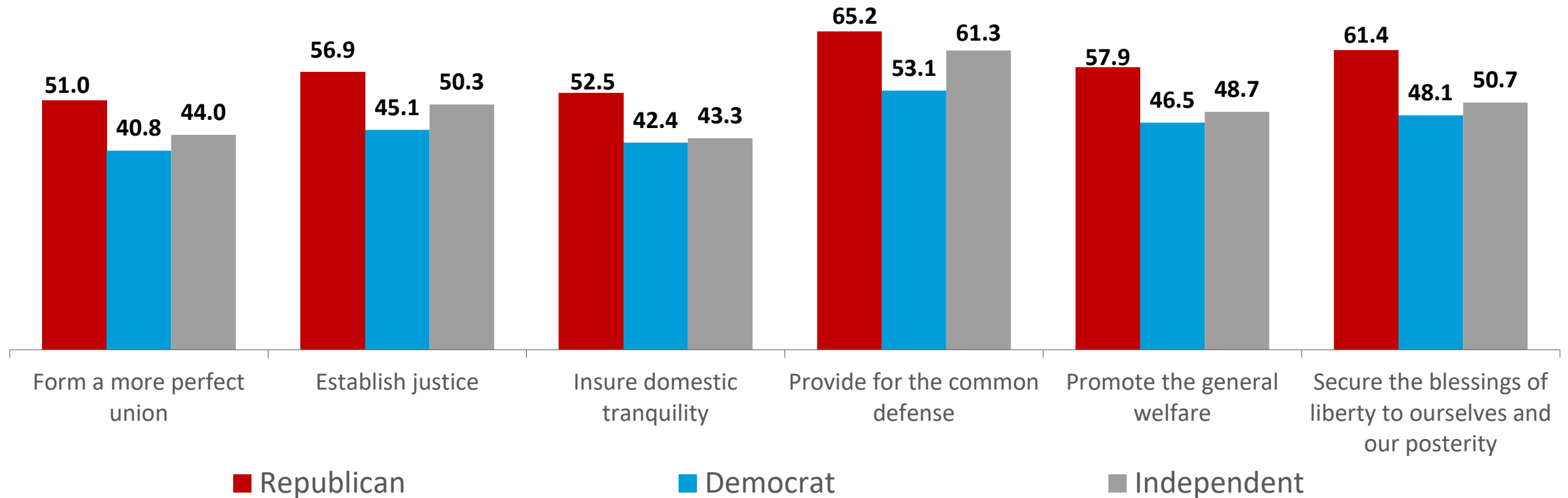


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REPUBLICANS SHOW MORE CONFIDENCE THAT THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT ARE ACHIEVING THE GOALS

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