

Shaping the Business Narrative in **THE AGE OF DISRUPTION**

NEXUS SURVEY 2025

 **NARRATIVE** INSIGHTS

Intel, Nvidia, and the ‘Visible Hand’ of Trump Capitalism

By [Martin Baccardax](#)

Oct 03, 2025, 12:02 pm EDT

Updated Sep 24, 2025 - Politics & Policy

Trump slams Kimmel's return: "We're going to test ABC out on this"

BREAKING | BUSINESS

White House Creates Loyalty Rating System For 553 U.S. Companies—Here's What Trump Has Said In The Past

By [Antonio Pequeño IV](#), Forbes Staff. Pequeño is a breaking news reporter... [Follow Author](#)

POLITICO

K Street shudders as Trump demands a Microsoft exec's firing

The president's demand that Microsoft fire former Biden DOJ official Lisa Monaco has put C-suites and lobbying shops on high alert about who they hire.



Walmart DEI decision attracts boycott set for all August

August 6, 2025 by [Serenah McKay](#)

Aug 6, 2025 - Business

Trump bump makes American Eagle soar

CNN Business Markets Tech Media Calculators Videos

Trump tells Goldman Sachs CEO to hire a new economist after bank says consumers will pay bulk of tariff costs

AUG 12, 2025

ADMINISTRATION

White House claims credit after Cracker Barrel reverts logo

Donald J. Trump [@realDonaldTrump](#) · [Follow](#)



Health

Research tying Tylenol to autism lost in court. Then it won Trump's ear.

The pain reliever has been a mainstay for Kenvue, spun out of Johnson & Johnson in 2023.

September 25, 2025

9 min Summary 402



BANKS

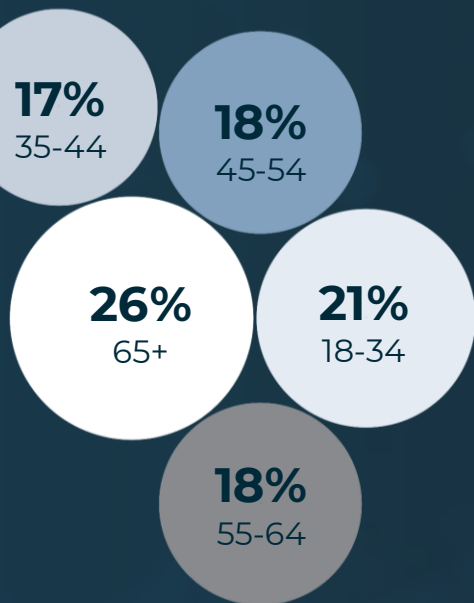
Elizabeth Warren Pushes Fed to Reinstate Wells Fargo's Asset Cap

By [Rebecca Ungarino](#) [Follow](#)

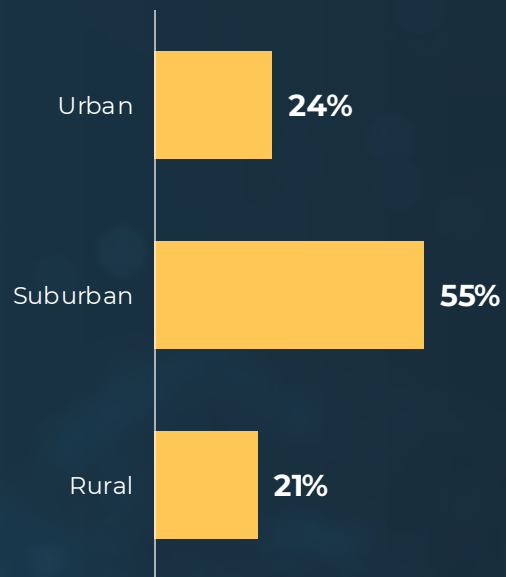
Updated June 06, 2025, 10:27 am EDT / Original June 05, 2025, 5:05 pm EDT

Respondent Demographics

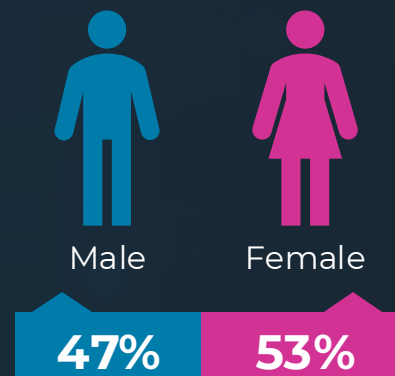
AGE



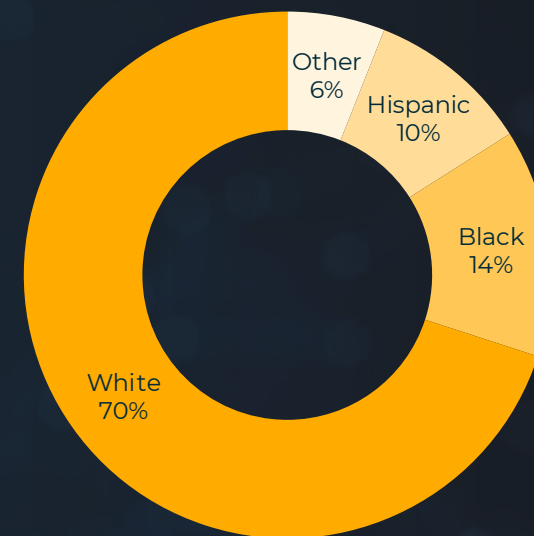
GEOGRAPHY



GENDER



RACE / ETHNICITY



10 45 min

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
WITH DC POLICY ELITES
AND INFLUENCERS

EDUCATION



NEXUS SURVEY 2025

DISRUPTIONS IMPACTING BUSINESS

KEY FINDING #1

In a Hyper-Political
Environment, Business is
on the Ballot

Politicians used to paint industries with a broad brush

POST-2006



Elizabeth Warren Pushed Obama to Crack Down on **Big Banks** with Fed Nominations

"The Bush-Cheney failed energy policies—simply more for **big oil** — won't work."

FORMER SENATOR HARRY REID (D-NV)

In other words, you're on your own, unless you're **big Pharma**.

FORMER REP. KUCINICH (D-OH)

POST-2016

"...the actions of **Big Tech** continue to divide the nation, undermine fundamental liberties, and distort the market."

SENATOR MIKE LEE (R-UT)

"I don't want our federal health agencies captured by **big pharma** or any other interests."

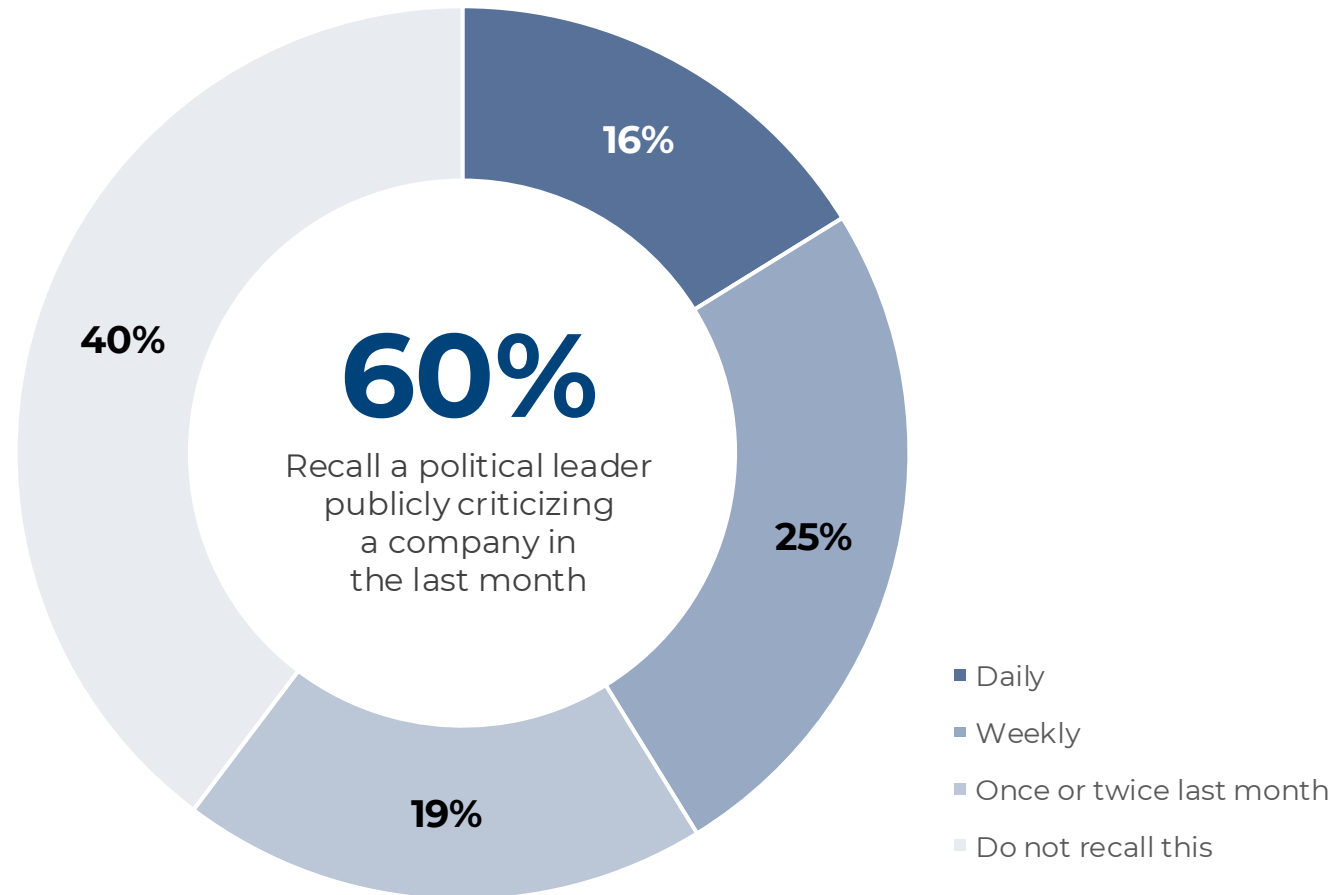
SENATOR RON JOHNSON (R-WI)



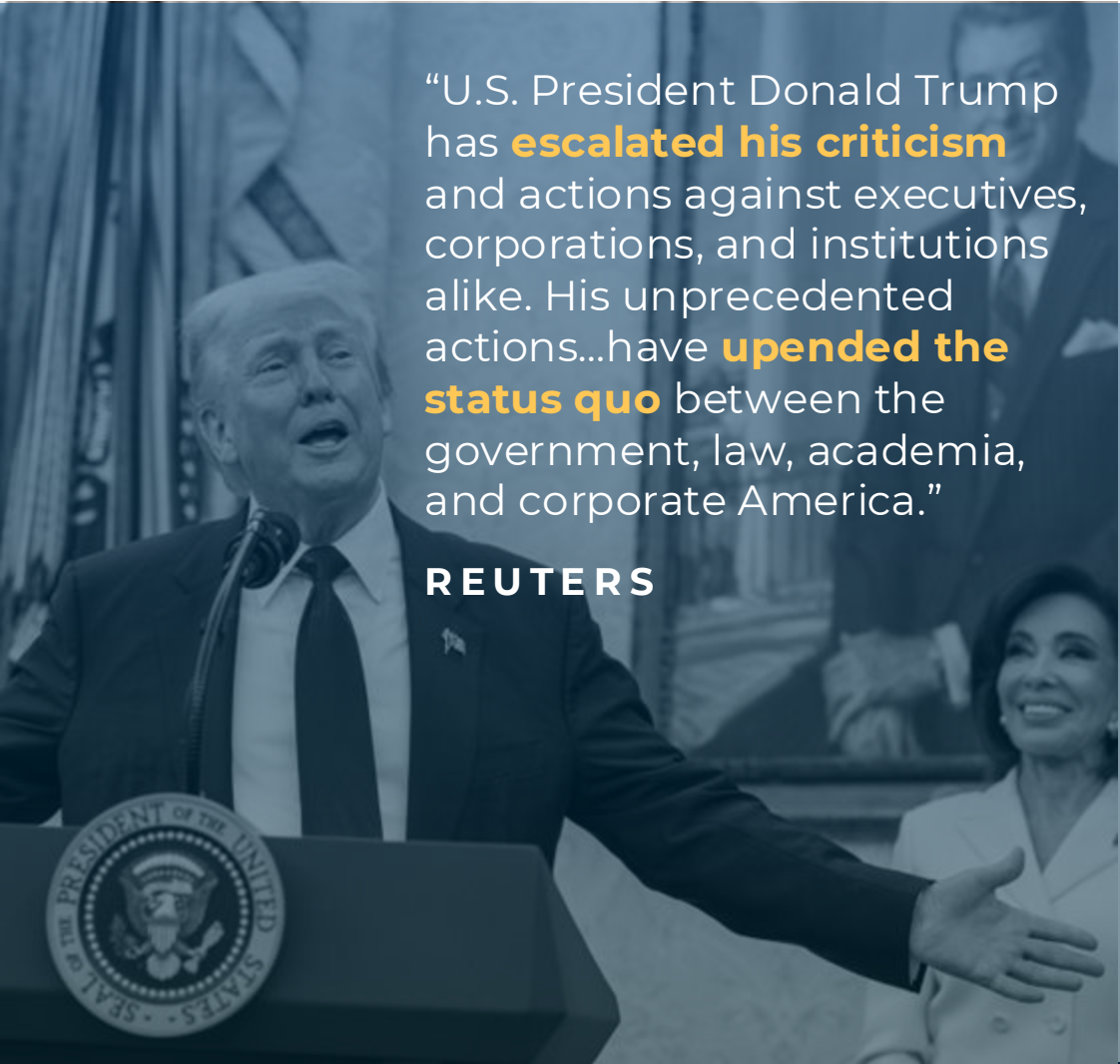
Now, **name-checking** specific corporations happens daily...



How many times in the last month do you recall news or social media about a political leader publicly criticizing a specific company?



And it isn't a passing trend that can be waited out



“U.S. President Donald Trump has **escalated his criticism** and actions against executives, corporations, and institutions alike. His unprecedented actions...have **upended the status quo** between the government, law, academia, and corporate America.”

REUTERS



“If any California university signs this radical agreement, **they’ll lose billions in state funding** — including Cal grants — instantly. California will not bankroll schools that sell out their students, professors, researchers, and surrender academic freedom.”

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM (D-CA)



“We will subpoena the Department of Justice, but also private actors who have done these drug deals with the administration. College campuses, entertainment companies, law firms. **And, so, accountability is coming.**”

REP. ERIC SWALWELL (D-CA)

Looking ahead to 2026 and 2029...

POLICY **INSIDER** SENTIMENT

Business will be a convenient villain again — profits, layoffs, prices — all of that will be part of the campaign narrative.

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, MALE, REPUBLICAN

The 'free market' language isn't playing the same way anymore; **both sides are rebranding capitalism.**

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY, MALE, DEMOCRAT

You'll hear both sides trying to sound tough on big business, but in different ways — Republicans on 'woke capitalism,' Democrats on fairness.

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, FEMALE, DEMOCRAT

Polarization makes it easy for candidates to score points by naming companies. It's not going away.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, FEMALE, DEMOCRAT

CAMPAIGN 2028



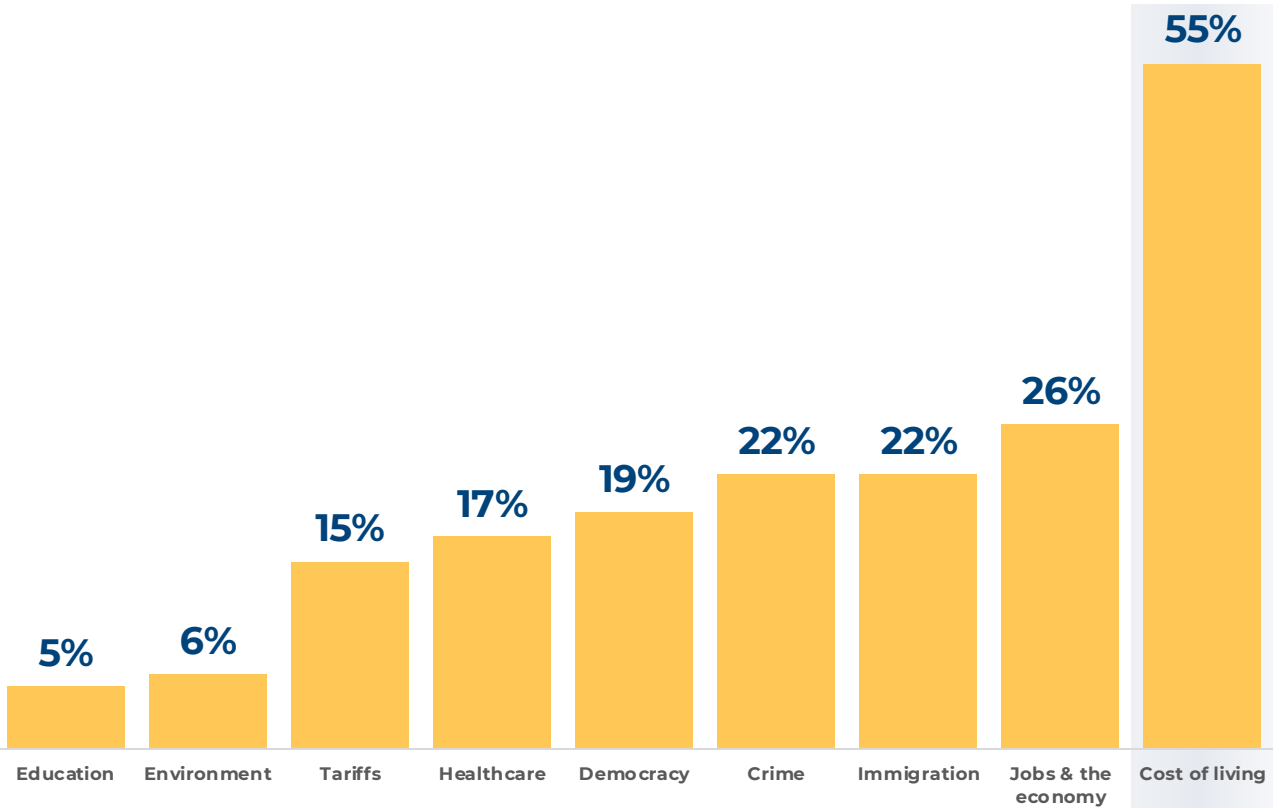
KEY FINDING #2

Americans are
Redefining What
“Pro-Business” Means

Affordability concerns are linked to economic security and national resilience



What would you say are the most important issues facing the country today? Select up to 2.



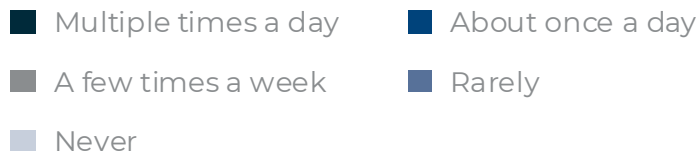
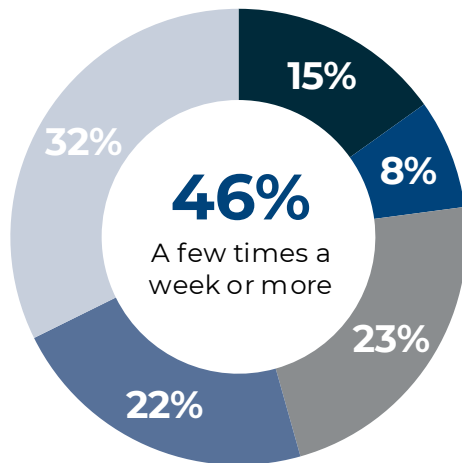
% Support	TOTAL	DEM	IND	GOP
Keeping jobs and production in the United States, even if prices rise	81%	71%	78%	92%
Bringing jobs and production back to the U.S., even if prices rise	79%	69%	75%	91%

Americans are utilizing transformative technologies, but distrust the companies developing them

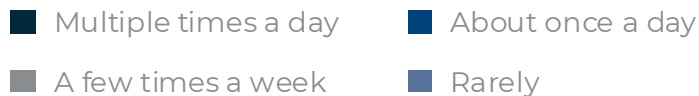
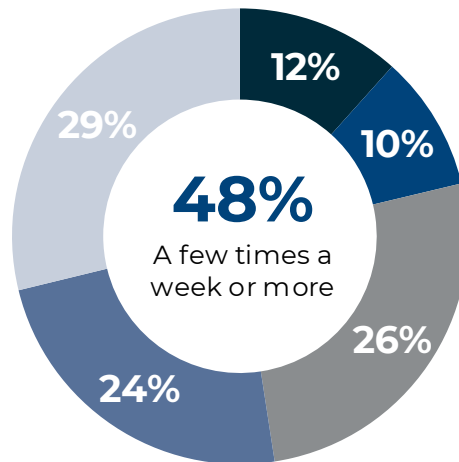


How often do you use AI such as MS Copilot, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, etc. for your personal life / work?

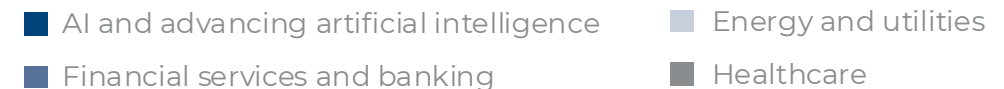
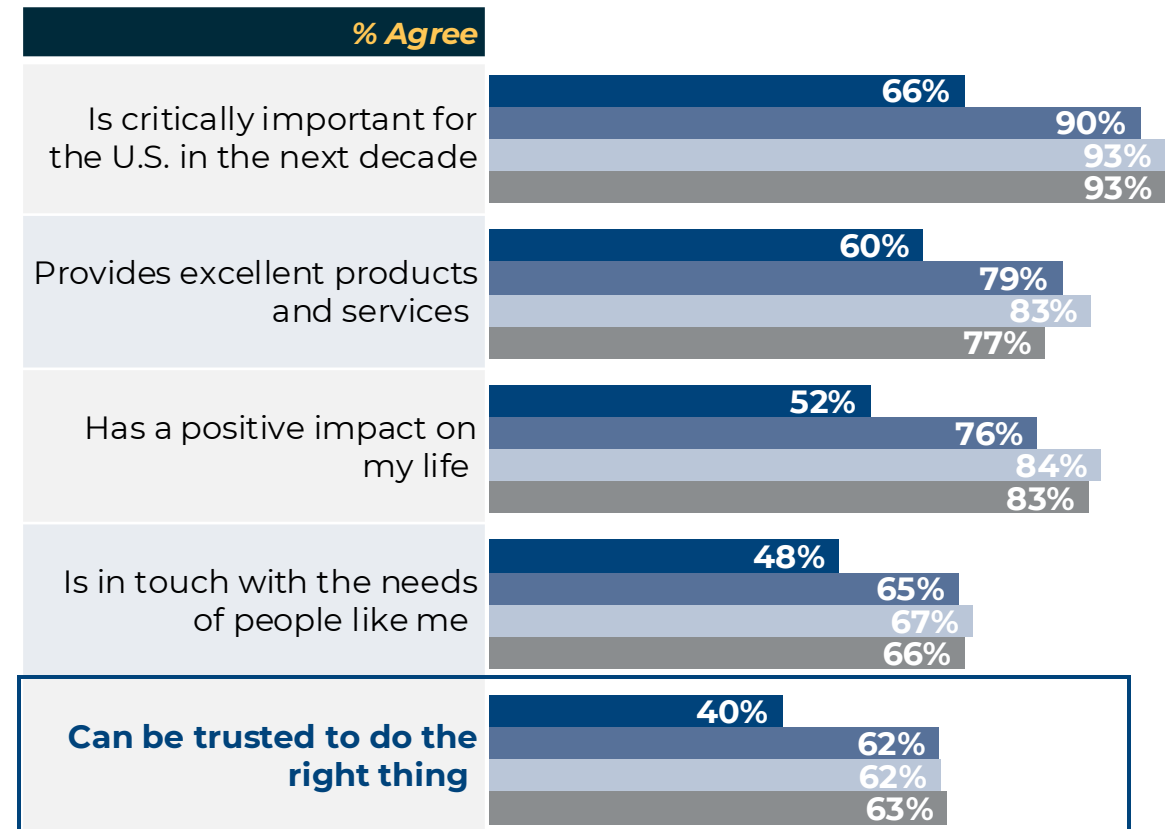
WORK AI USAGE



PERSONAL AI USAGE



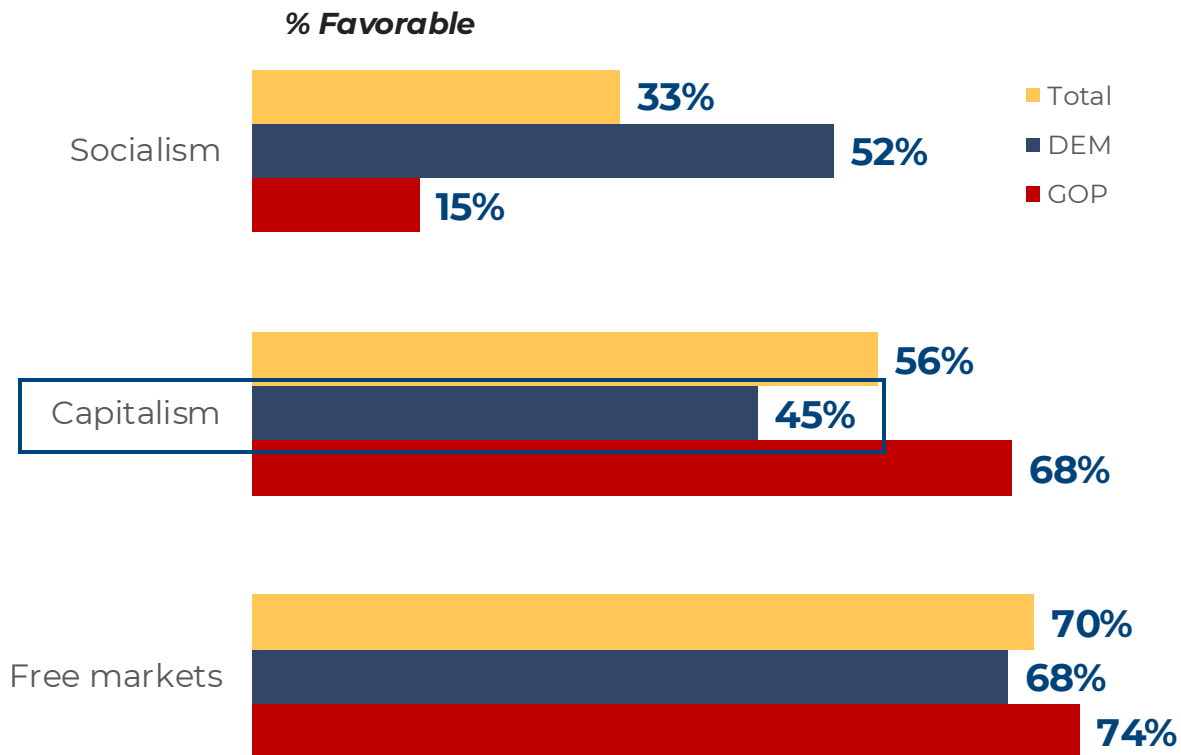
Please rate how much you agree with each of the following statements for each industry.



Views of capitalism are losing steam, even among Republicans



Below are terms that describe different approaches to economic policy. Please indicate your overall opinion of each. If you are unsure or don't have enough information please say so.



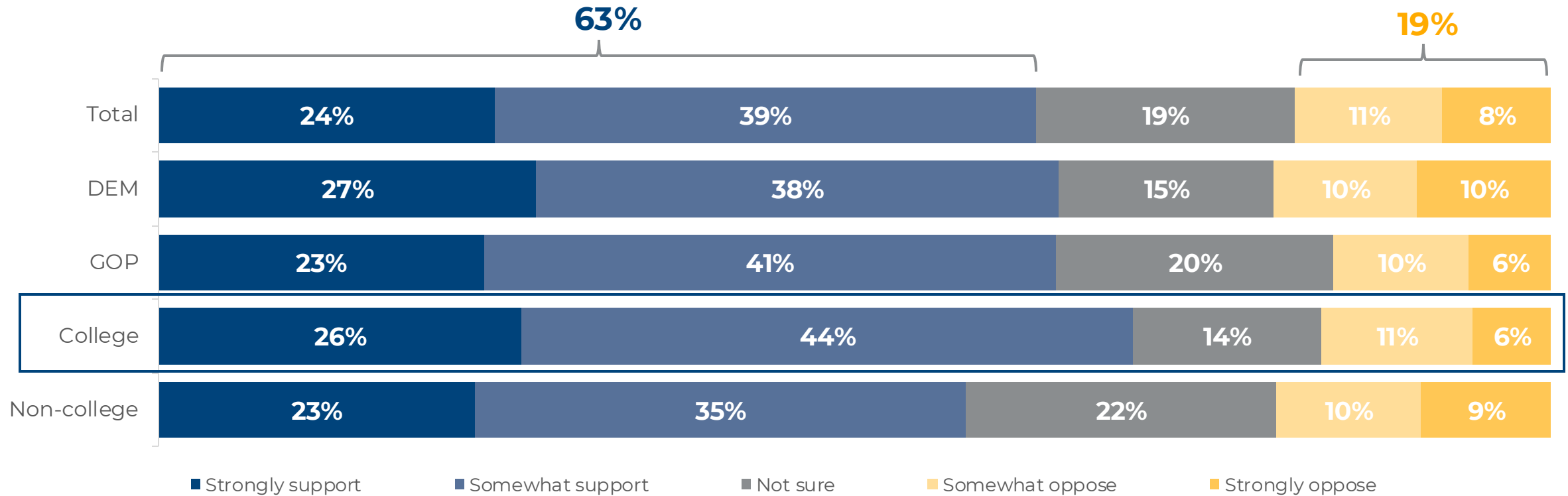
Do you approve or disapprove of the **federal government owning a stake** or shares of stock in private companies in the following sectors?

		Federal government owning a stake		
Industry		Approve	Not sure	Disapprove
Tech / AI		28%	16%	56%
Energy		33%	17%	50%
Healthcare		30%	16%	54%
Financial services		20%	16%	65%
Food & beverage		21%	17%	63%
Real estate		17%	17%	66%

6 in 10 support a type of “new capitalism,” driven by college-educated Americans



Some people talk about ‘new capitalism’ as a shift from focusing only on shareholder profits to a model where companies balance profitability with responsibilities to employees, customers, communities, and society as a whole. Do you support or oppose new capitalism as an approach for U.S. economic policy?



KEY FINDING #3

Businesses Should Prepare for Their Spotlight Moment

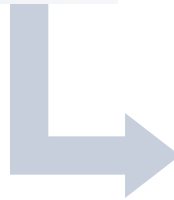
Companies need to know the story, script, and stage



“Corporate America has to learn to speak a new language — one that informs shareholders and customers about the effects from tariffs while avoiding reaction from Trump on social media or a threat from him or his administration to punish or investigate a company...”

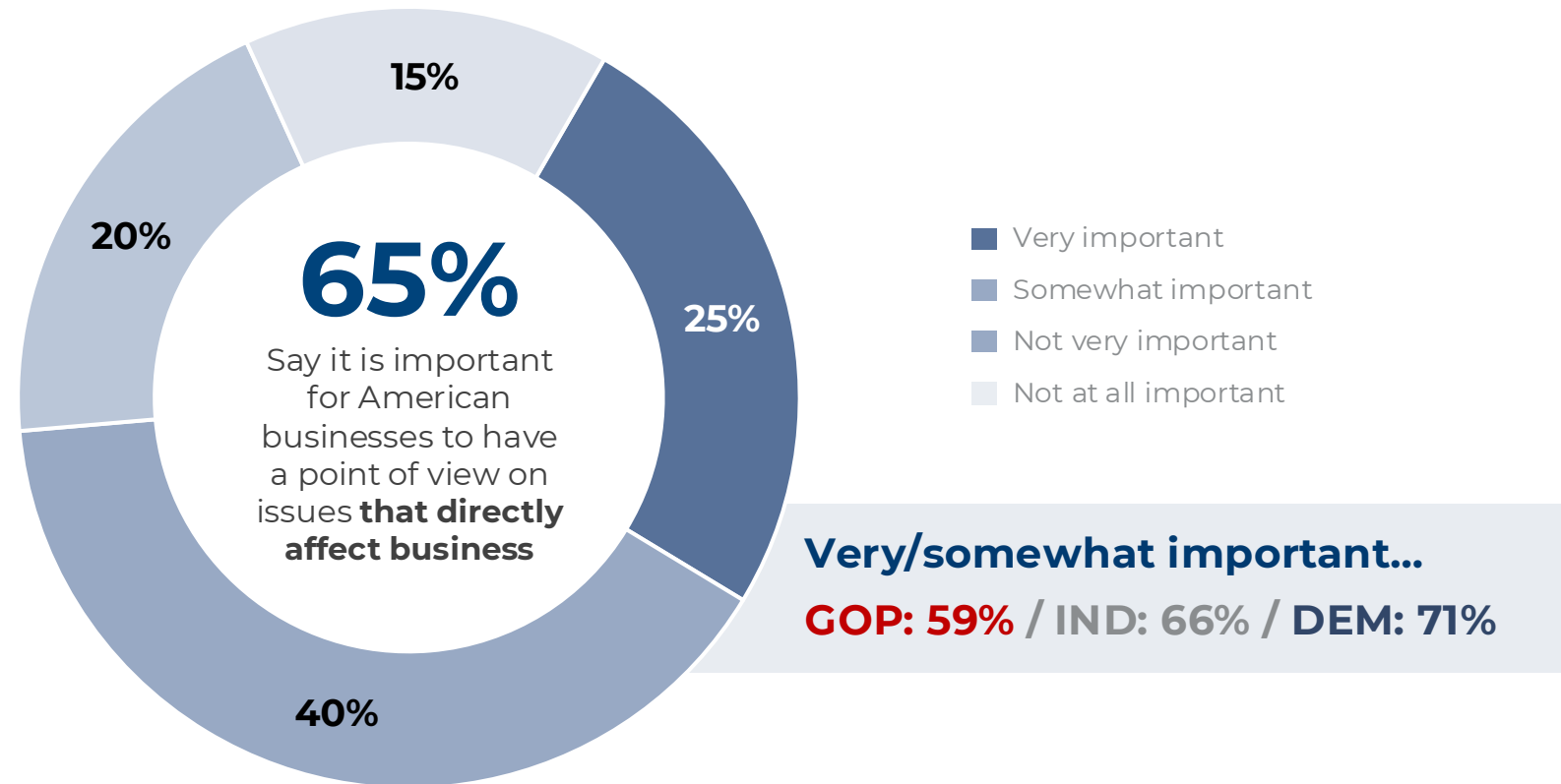


Verizon capitulates to Trump Administration, cutting all DEI programs



Newsom Regulator Threatens Verizon-Frontier over DEI

Engagement strategies must reflect the reality that business is entrenched in the political landscape



“**The business of business is to do business.** Not to necessarily weigh in on every social debate that might not be relevant to their business.” – *Director, Female, Independent*

Authenticity is rooted in your value proposition, core services, and employees



If you had to prioritize, which of the following areas would you say American businesses should focus more on...



DEM	IND	GOP
38%	50%	58%
31%	25%	17%
12%	9%	11%
5%	7%	7%
8%	3%	3%
3%	3%	3%

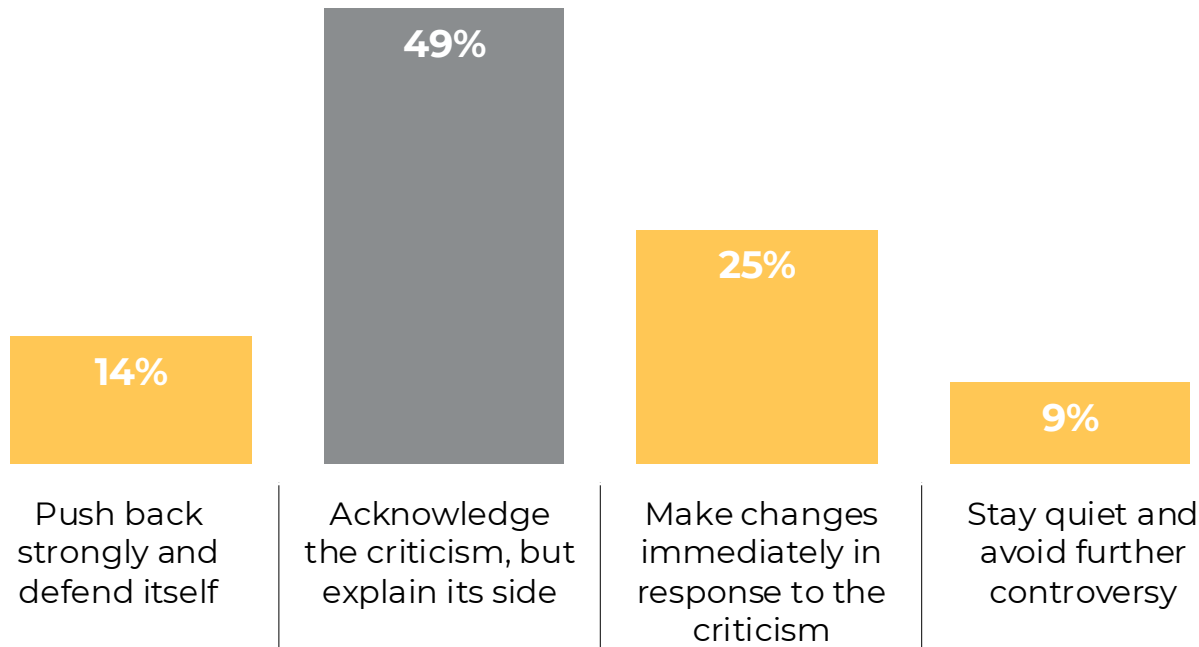
Saying nothing is also not an option – speak up, speak clearly, and engage when it's expected



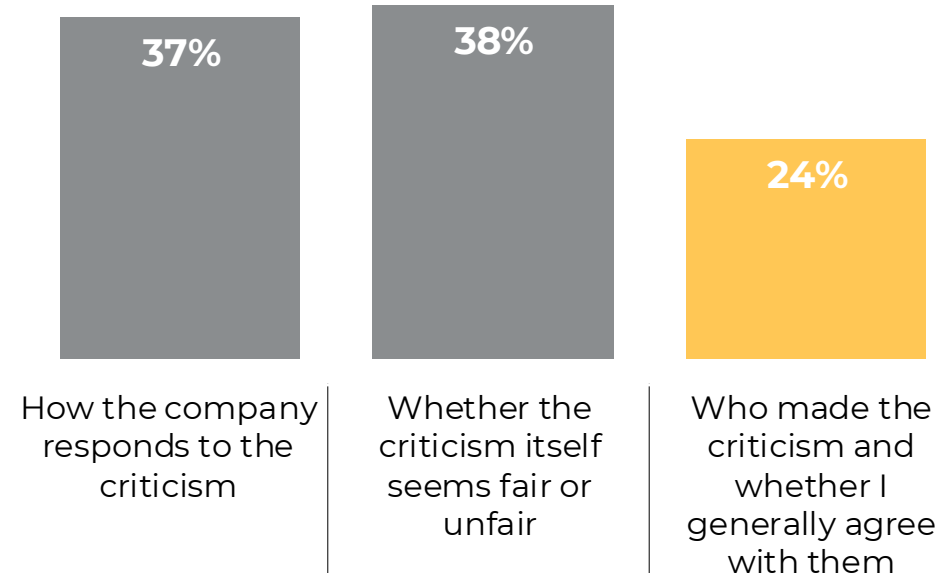
If a political leader publicly criticizes a company – for example, over its prices, treatment of workers, or political positions – what do you most want to see from the company?

If a company is publicly criticized by a political leader, which do you think matters more for your view of that company?

HOW SHOULD A COMPANY RESPOND TO POLITICAL CRITICISM?



WHAT MATTERS MORE FOR YOUR VIEW OF A POLITICALLY CRITICIZED COMPANY?



Silence = Surrender

POLICY **INSIDER** SENTIMENT

You can't control if you get called out. **You can control how you answer.**

POLICY LEAD, MALE, REPUBLICAN

Once your name is in the speech, it's a national story. You can't sit it out.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, MALE, REPUBLICAN

A defensive posture just feeds the story. **The public wants you to sound confident and matter-of-fact.**

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, MALE, REPUBLICAN

Pushback isn't about fighting the politician. It's about showing the public you have a legitimate side.

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, MALE, REPUBLICAN

If you don't respond, **you leave the narrative entirely to your critics.**

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, FEMALE, DEMOCRAT

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POLICY PERSPECTIVES

AI-generated CEOs. Moment-to-moment insights.

In a real-time dial test, Americans reacted as AI-generated CEOs delivered messages across four topics, revealing which messages persuade, resonate, and move opinion.



KEY FINDING #4

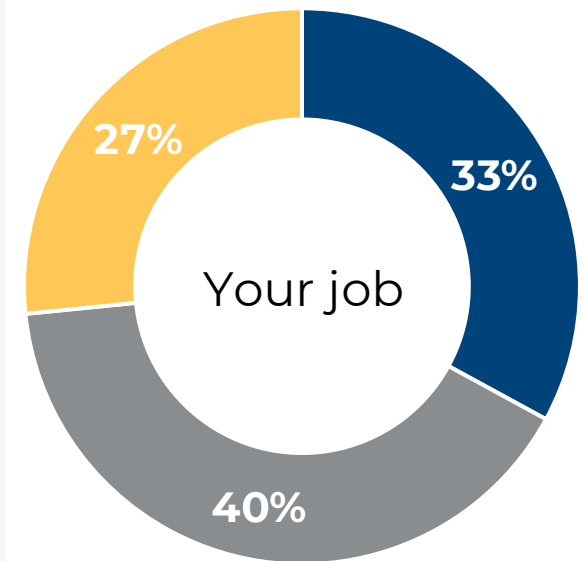
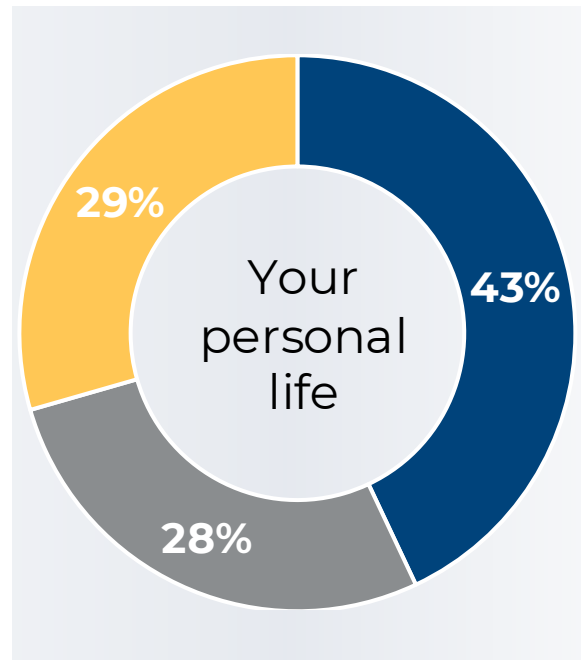
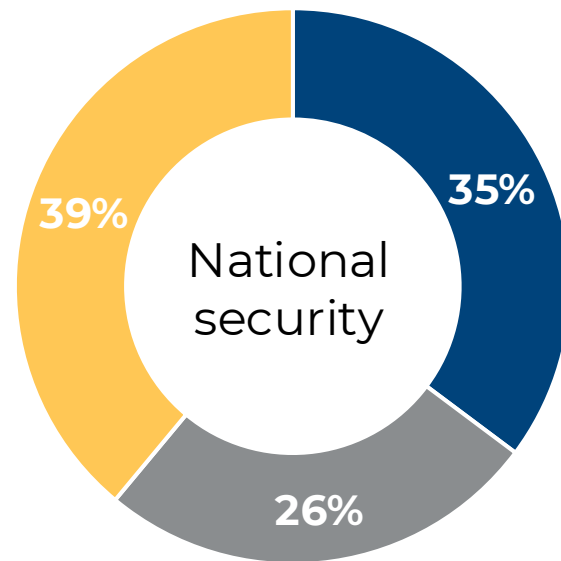
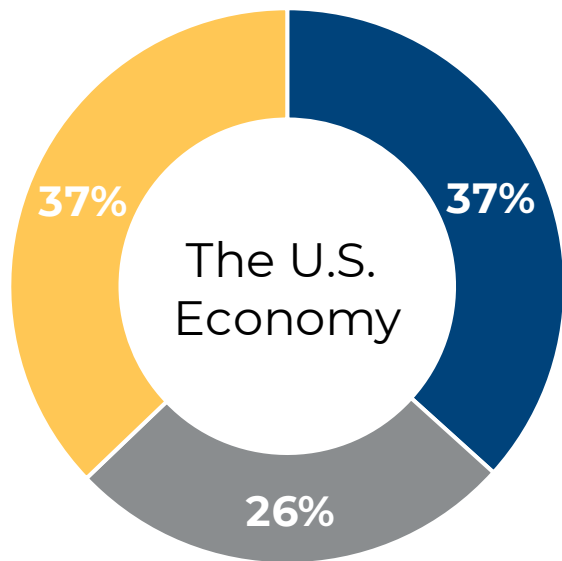
Americans See AI's Upside for Themselves, but Not for Society

Americans are divided on AI's national impact, but see personal promise



In general, do you believe AI will have a more positive or more negative impact on the following in the next decade?

Americans are optimistic about AI's role in their daily lives but uneasy or unclear about its effect on jobs, the economy, and national security.

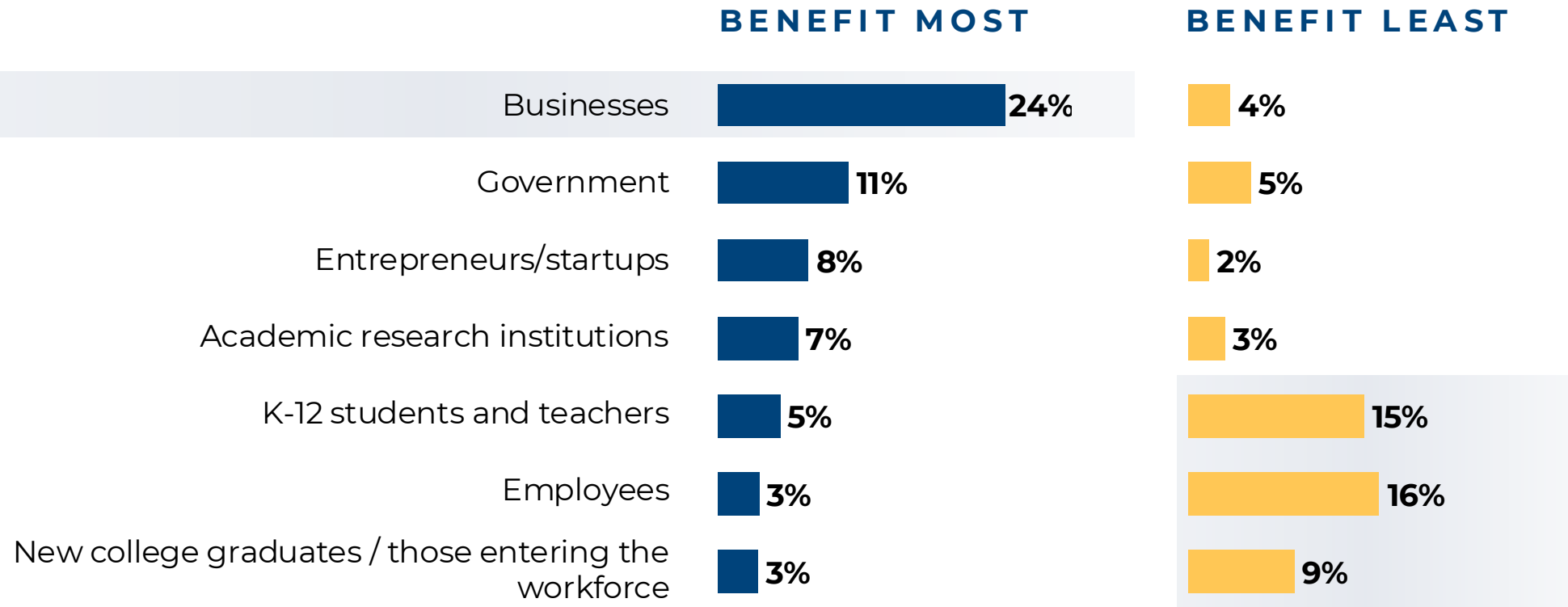


■ More positive ■ More negative ■ Not sure

AI is seen as primarily benefiting businesses



Who do you think benefits the *MOST* from advances in artificial intelligence (AI)?
Who do you think benefits the *LEAST* from advances in artificial intelligence (AI)?



CEO VOICE:

Prudent and measured leadership wins on AI

WHAT TONE & APPROACH DO AMERICANS PREFER?



57%



43%

WHAT MESSAGING RESONATES?

“we're using AI to help people to do what people do best”

“move forward carefully and thoughtfully”

“adapt in a smart way, responsible way”

WHAT TO AVOID...

“AI may transform the workplace”

“lead to new possibilities”

“AI is about empowering people-not replacing them”

KEY FINDING #5

In Financial Services,
Messages on Stability Beat
Innovation Every Time

Economic anxiety means Americans worry more about tomorrow than plan for next year

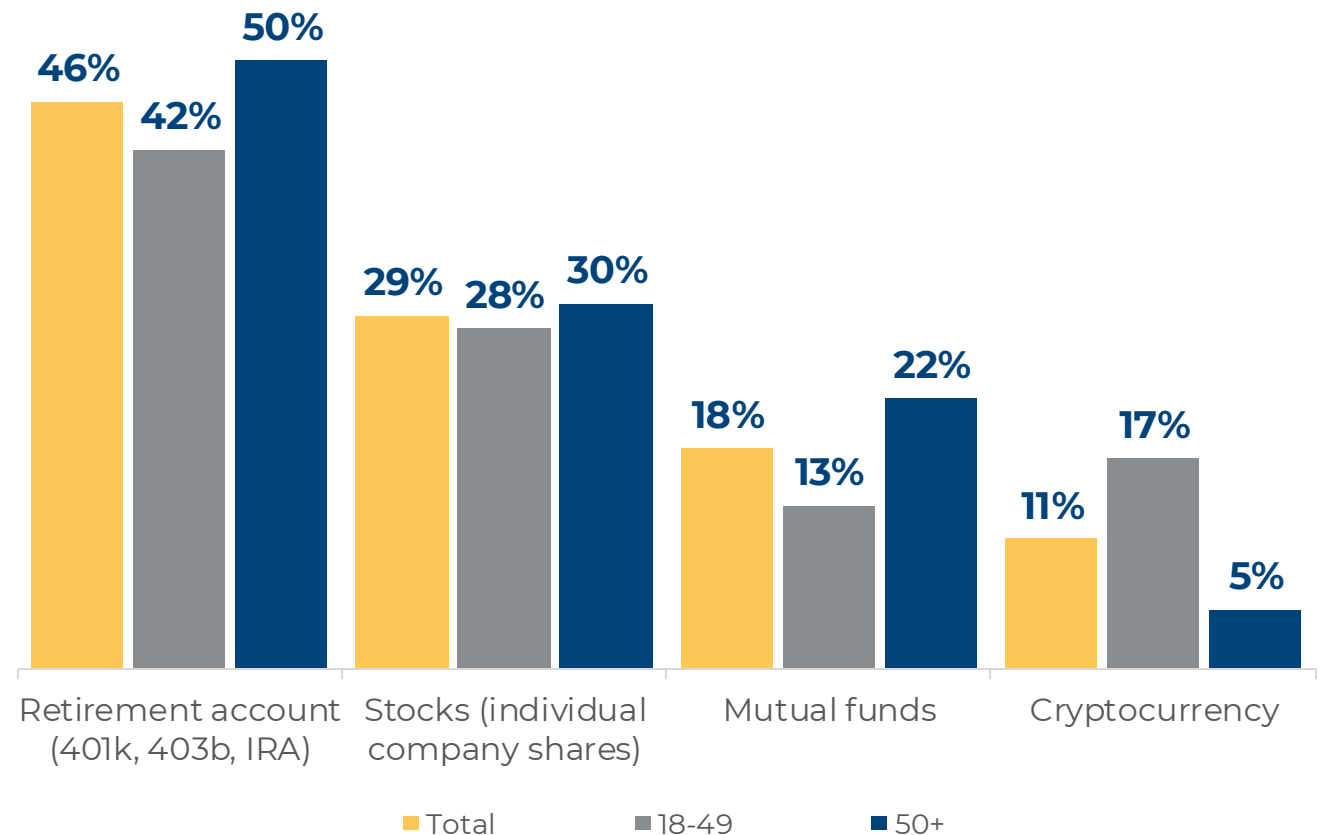
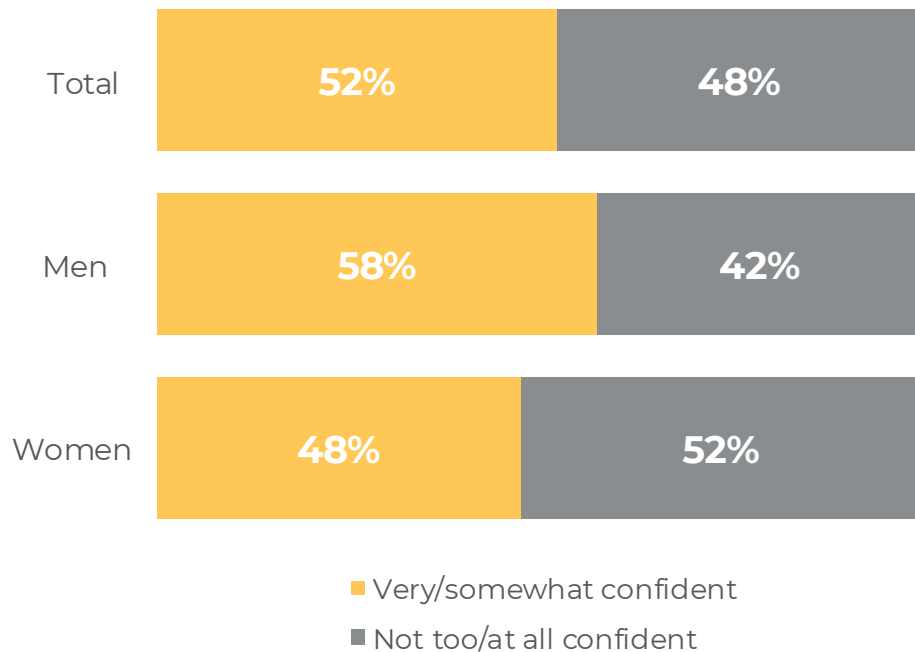


How confident are you that you will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement?



Which of the following financial accounts or investments do you currently have active? Please select all that apply.

CONFIDENCE IN RETIREMENT



CEO VOICE:

Stability beats innovation every time

WHAT TONE & APPROACH DO AMERICANS PREFER?



73%



27%

WHAT MESSAGING RESONATES?

“diversification in finances”

“every American needs access”

“balance”

“protecting against risk”

“financial security”

WHAT TO AVOID...

“the financial landscape is changing fast”

“new age of the American economy”

“moves first”

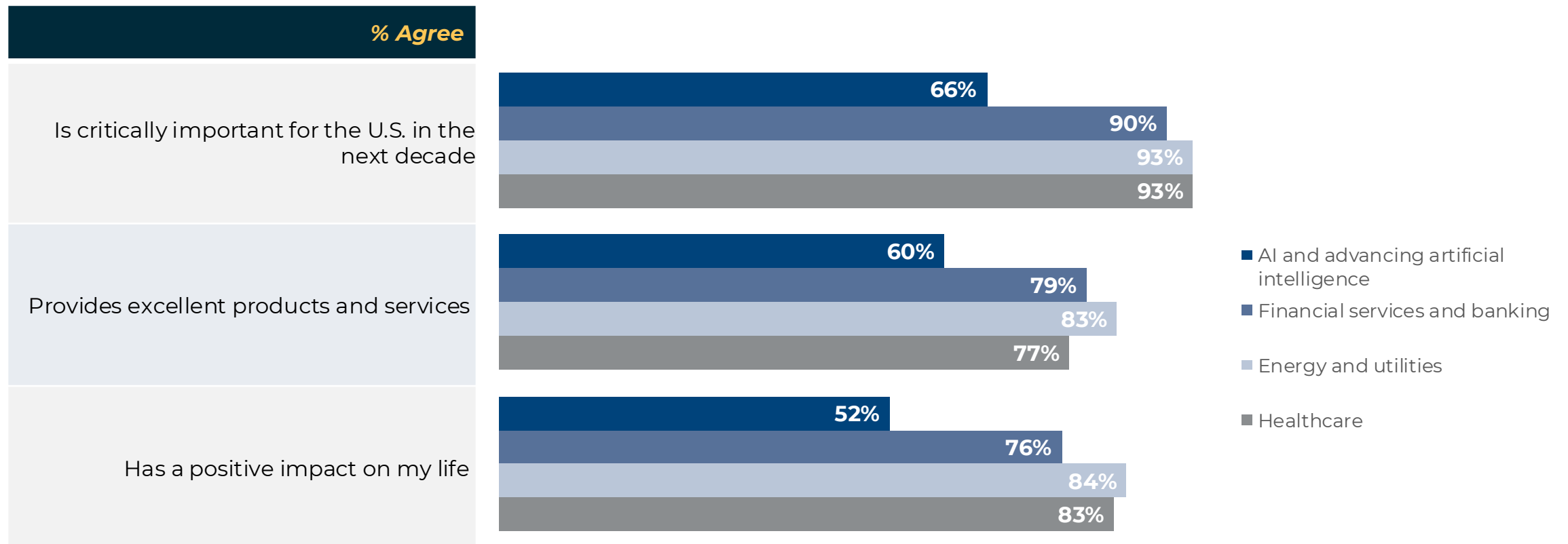
KEY FINDING #6

Energy is a Historically
Partisan Issue with a
Bipartisan Path Forward

Energy sector is perceived more positively than other major industries



Please rate how much you agree with each of the following statements for each industry.

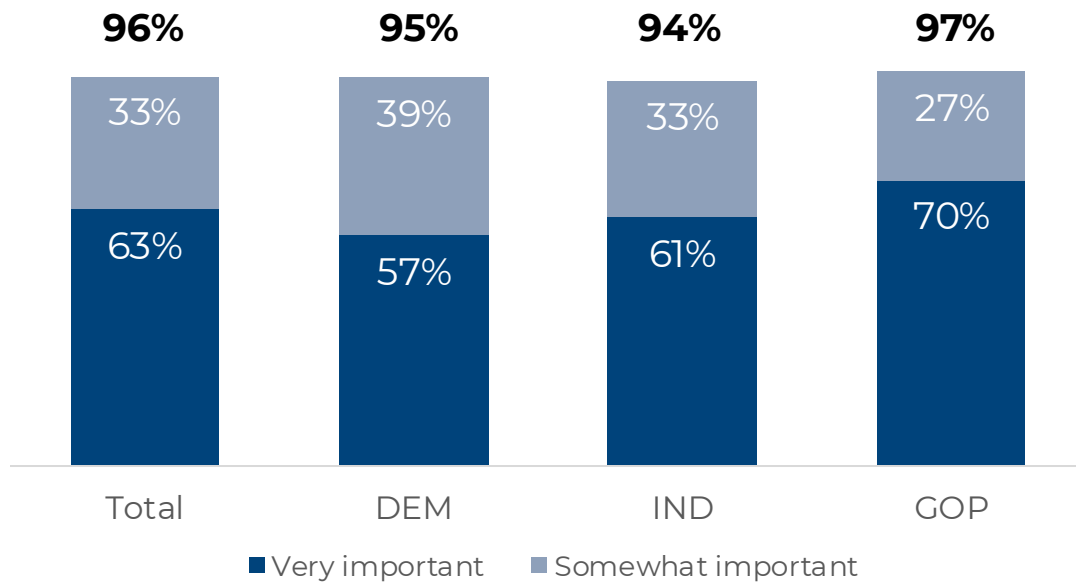


Americans agree on two priorities



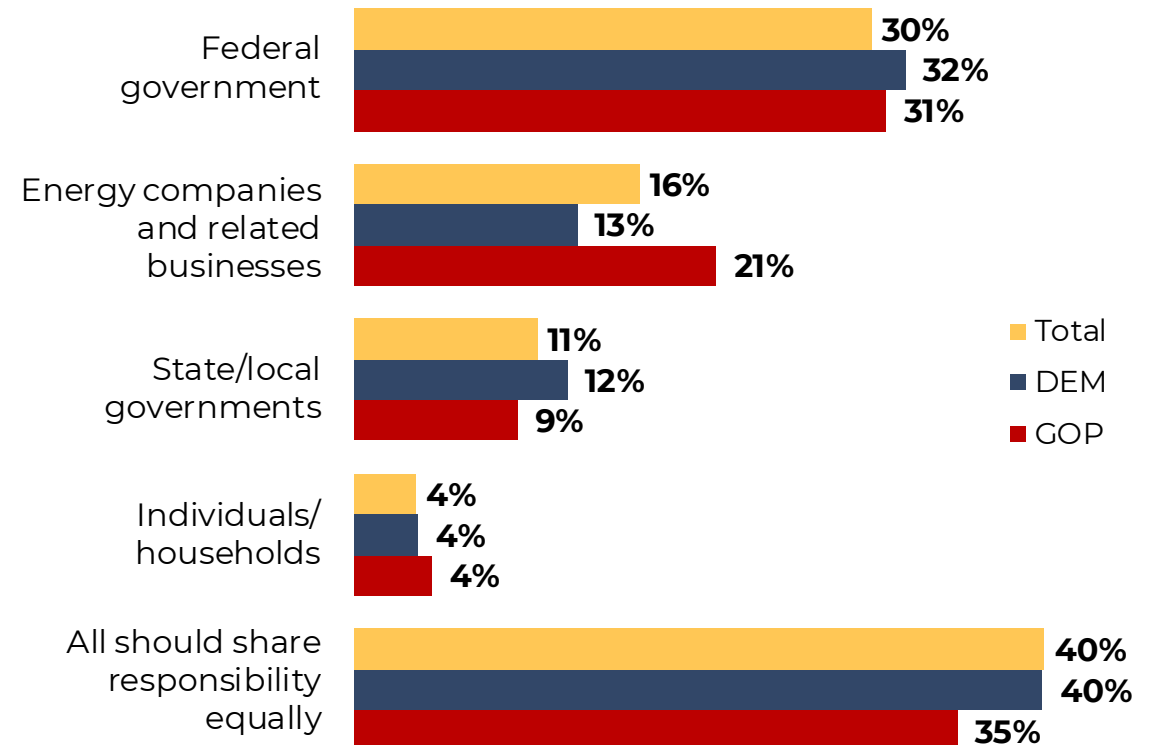
How important is U.S. energy independence, that is production and reliability of our own energy sources, for America's economic strength and national security?

IMPORTANCE OF U.S. ENERGY INDEPENDENCE



Who should take the lead in addressing America's long-term energy and environmental challenges?

GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP IS THE NEW BASELINE



But views on the future of energy divide the electorate across party & generational lines

E&ENews
by POLITICO

Climate change dropped from list of U.S. security threats

The Guardian

More than 40 Trump administration picks tied directly to oil, gas and coal, analysis shows

The Washington Post

Climate policy should involve building stuff

E&ENews
by POLITICO

Dems toy with 'all of the above' on energy as GOP embraces fossil fuels



Thinking about priorities for energy policy in the next decade, which comes closest to your view even if neither is exactly right?

ENERGY POLICY PRIORITIES

Focus on Reducing Demand
& Energy Conservation

Focus on Expanding U.S.
Energy Supply

38%

Total

62%

45%

Democrats

55%

30%

Republicans

70%

46%

18-49

54%

32%

50+

68%

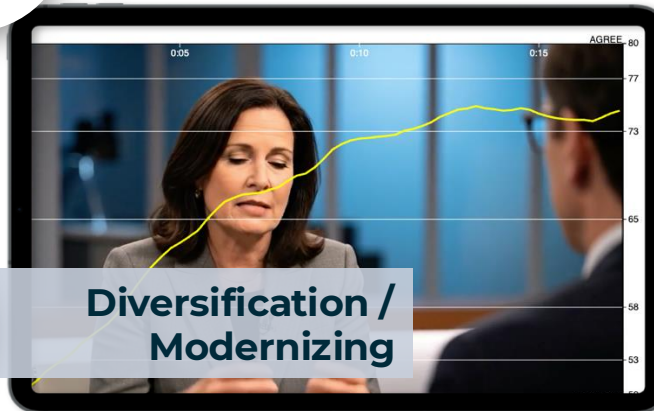
CEO VOICE:

Lead with shared values; don't pick sides

WHAT TONE & APPROACH DO AMERICANS PREFER?



56%



44%

WHAT MESSAGING RESONATES?

“produce more of our own energy”

“diverse, resilient, and innovative energy”

“affordable, reliable energy”

“national security and energy independence”

WHAT TO AVOID...

“when the stakes are this high”

“power America for generations”

“need to continue making strides in the energy transition”

“CEOs don’t need to pick a team — **they need to sound like they’re on America’s team.**” – *Public Policy Lead, Male, Republican*

KEY FINDING #7

Affordability is the
Prescription for Teetering
Perception of Healthcare

Americans feel good about *their* healthcare but not healthcare more broadly

The New York Times

Get Ready for Higher Health Insurance Premiums Next Year

Kiplinger

"Now, over 300 rural hospitals are bracing for immediate closure. That might include your local hospital."

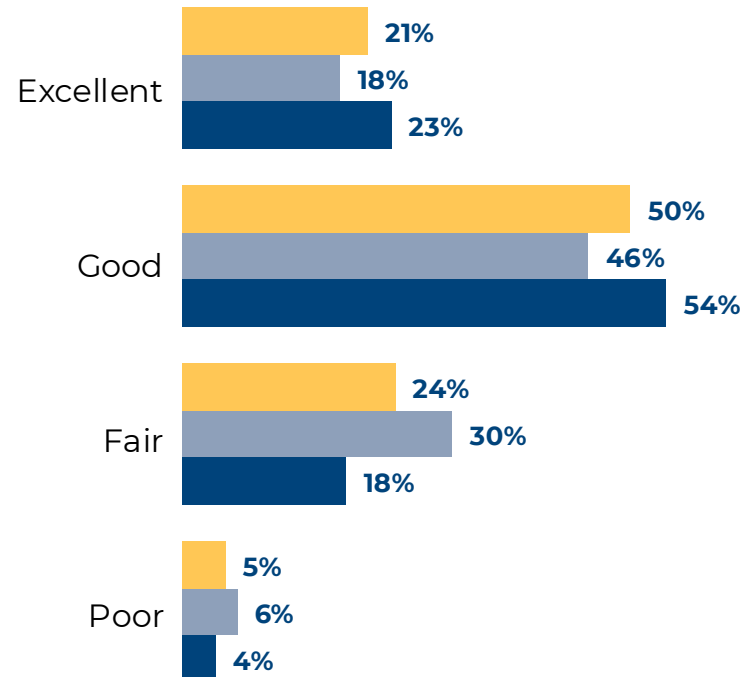
abc NEWS

Looming health insurance spikes for millions are at the heart of the government shutdown

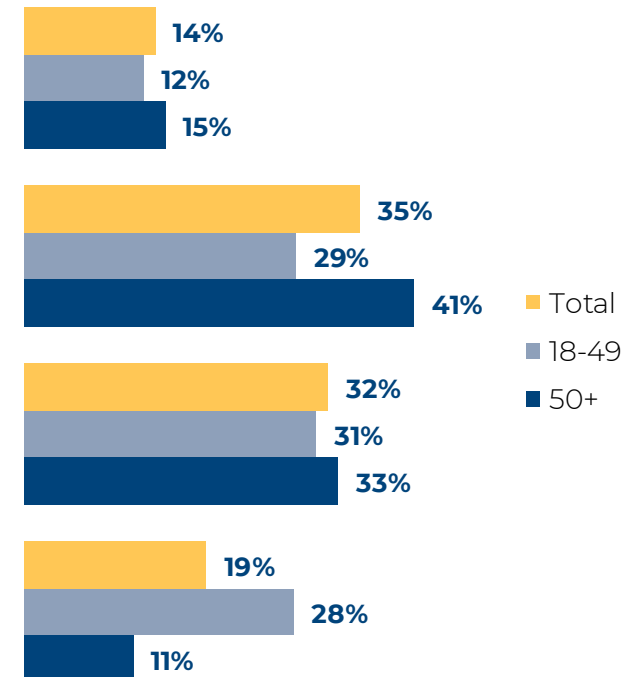


How would you rate your own health care experiences in the last year?
How would you rate the U.S. health care system compared to other countries of the world?

PERSONAL HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES



U.S. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OVERALL



Importance of the U.S. leading in medical innovation is slipping among younger Americans



Would you agree or disagree with the statement: The U.S. leads the world in medical innovation, and keeping that edge is vital to our nation's success in the next decade.

POLITICO

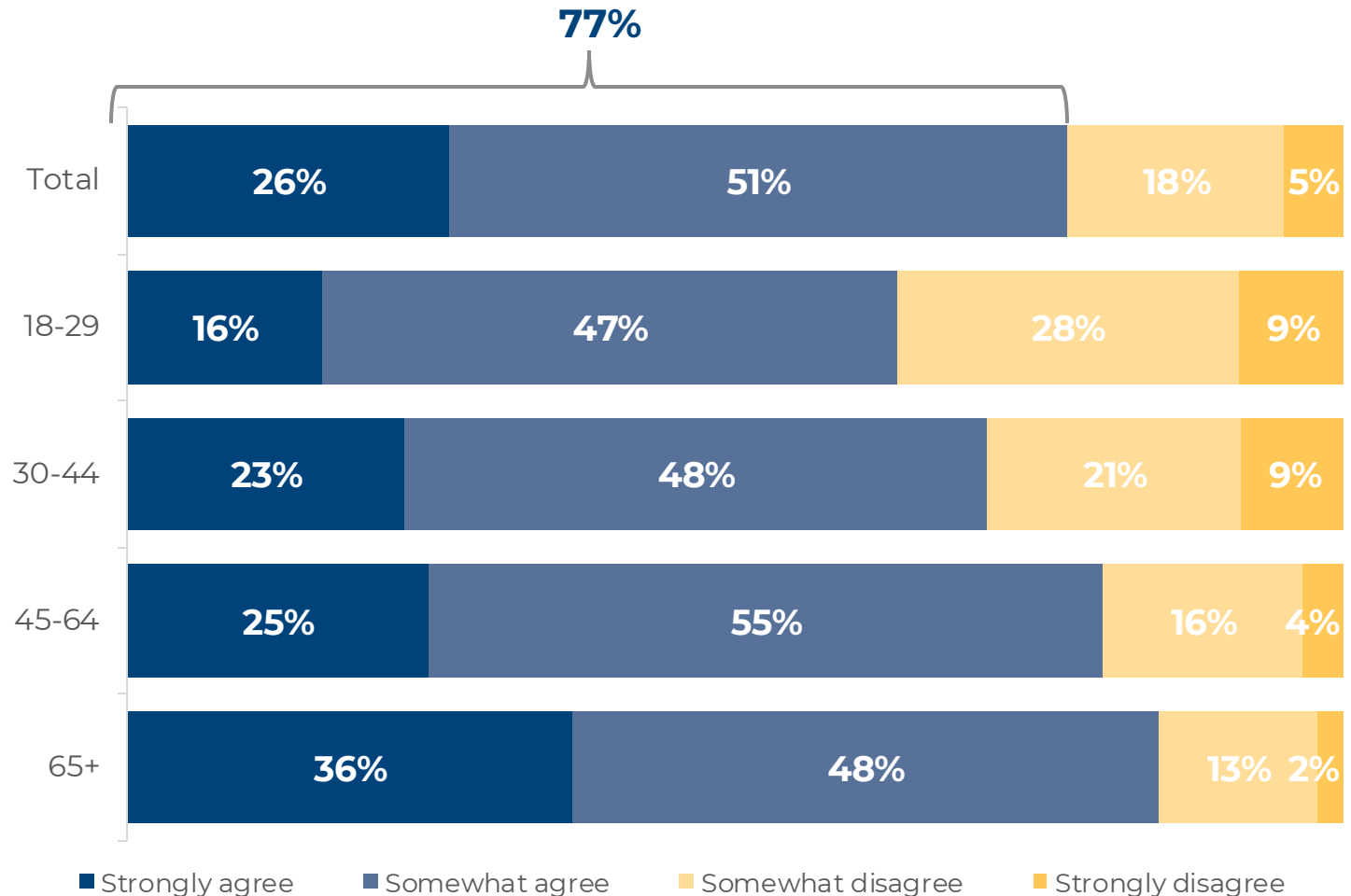
Gen Z skips the biotech arms race

AXIOS

More pharma giants embrace direct-to-consumer sales

Forbes

Drug Companies Are Embracing Direct-To-Consumer Sales. That's A Win For Patients



CEO VOICE:

Prioritize healthcare affordability

WHAT TONE & APPROACH DO AMERICANS PREFER?



72%



28%

WHAT MESSAGING RESONATES?

"Too many Americans are one medical bill away from financial ruin."

"make care affordable – more transparency"

"accessible, reliable, and built to serve"

WHAT TO AVOID...

"smarter use of technology"

"medical breakthroughs – new cures, medical technologies, cutting edge surgeries"

NEXUS SURVEY 2025

RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Takeaways



EMPHASIZE SECURITY & STABILITY

Americans living through disruption are craving reassurance and are more comfortable with gradual change. "Innovation" and "transformation" messaging will not resonate.



STAY AUTHENTIC TO YOUR BRAND

Authenticity is rooted in your business offerings and core services. Americans want companies focused on these areas, not weighing in on every social debate. Stay true to what you do best.



ALIGN WITH TEAM AMERICA

Position yourself on the side of American workers and shared prosperity. "Team America" and "Team Employee" messages unite rather than divide.



LEAD WITH YOUR PEOPLE

In an era of "new capitalism," Americans expect companies to balance profitability with responsibilities to employees and communities. Messages emphasizing worker well-being resonate across the political spectrum.

Ask Yourself...

1

DO YOU HAVE A STORY THAT'S DURABLE?

2

DOES YOUR STORY RESONATE WITH ALL OF YOUR
STAKEHOLDERS?

3

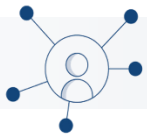
ARE YOU SEEDING YOUR STORY *TODAY* IN PREPARATION FOR
YOUR MOMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT?

Prepare & Position



PRIORITIZE MULTIPLE AUDIENCES

In a hyper-political environment, a silver bullet message is unlikely. Having the language to speak authentically to stakeholders across the political spectrum – now, in the run-up to the midterms, and after 2028 – is critical.



BUILD A STRONG BENCH

Invest early on in third-party validators, messengers, and aligned groups who can credibly reinforce your position when the stakes are high.



KICK THE TIRES ON CORE MESSAGES

Before crises emerge, confirm that core messages pertaining to your business resonate with the public (consumers across the country) and those holding the pen (decisionmakers in DC).



ENSURE YOUR STORY IS WELL-ESTABLISHED

Guard against unpredictable call-outs by ensuring your story is clear and well-established across owned channels, earned media, and paid advertising.



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Mark Keida

mkeida@narrativestrategies.com

THANK YOU

NEXUS SURVEY 2025