



**ELON**  
UNIVERSITY

| Elon University Poll

**National Public Opinion Poll**

**U.S. Judicial System and court powers**

Poll dates: April 10-17, 2025



### KEY FINDINGS

Poll dates: April 10-17, 2025

Margin of error: +/- 3.58%



### President Trump job performance

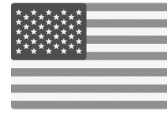
**47%** Disapprove **41%** Approve



### Executive orders and judicial rulings

**47%** President's executive orders have gone too far

**47%** Judicial rulings that block or delay executive actions have mostly been correct



### Balance of powers

**46%** Executive branch has too much power

**27%** Judiciary has too much power

**54%** President should not have the authority to ignore court rulings

**67%** Concerned about a constitutional crisis



### Confidence in U.S. Supreme Court

**51%** Great deal/fair amount of trust in the high court

**42%** Say the Supreme Court leans conservative (21% balanced, 12% liberal)



April 24, 2025

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A national poll conducted by Elon University reveals significant public concern about the balance of power between the executive branch and the courts, with 67% of Americans expressing concern about a potential constitutional crisis arising from conflicts between the branches.

The poll, which surveyed 1,000 American adults nationwide April 10-17, 2025, explored public opinions about the U.S. judicial system and the growing conflict between the Trump administration's use of executive orders and judicial rulings that delay or block those actions.

By April 22, the non-partisan law and policy journal, Just Security, had documented 206 legal challenges against Trump administration actions, and a tracking effort by the New York Times found that at least 98 judicial rulings had at least temporarily paused some of the administration's efforts.

#### **Trump approval and executive orders**

Three months into his presidency, Donald Trump's approval rating is declining, with 41% approving of his job performance and 47% disapproving. That compares with a 45% approval-41% disapproval rating in the February 2025 Elon University Poll. Public opinion is split on his executive actions:

- Overall, 47% of respondents believe President Trump's executive orders have mostly gone too far, while 36% believe they have mostly been correct. An overwhelming 83% of Democrats said Trump's orders have gone too far, while 73% of Republicans said Trump's actions have mostly been correct.
- In responding to a similar question, 47% said federal judges' rulings blocking or delaying Trump administration actions have mostly been correct, while 34% believe these rulings have mostly gone too far. The partisan split on this question was not quite as wide: 72% of Democrats said judicial actions have mostly been correct, while 55% of Republicans said the courts have gone too far.

#### **Balance of powers**

In assessing the powers of the three branches of government, only 10% said the current system of checks and balances is very effective, with 34% saying it is somewhat effective and 32% saying it is somewhat or very ineffective.

The largest group of respondents said the balance of power has tipped toward the executive branch:

- 46% of respondents believe the executive branch has too much power, compared with 27% who said the judiciary is too powerful and 19% who said the legislative branch has too much power.
- 79% of Democrats said the executive branch has too much power, while only 25% said the judiciary has too much power and only 17% said the legislative branch has too much power
- Republicans tended to say the powers of the three branches of government are in balance, with 67% saying the executive branch has the right amount of power, 58% saying the legislative branch has the right amount of power and 52% saying the judiciary as the right amount of power

The perception of an imbalance of power is underscored in views about a potential Constitutional crisis. A large majority (67%) said they are very or somewhat concerned that the executive branch and the courts may reach a point where neither side will back down, creating a crisis over who has the final say on an issue. Among Democrats, 88% expressed concern about a Constitutional crisis compared with 61% of Independents and 51% of Republicans.

(Continued on next page)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Presidential authority and impeachment

On questions of presidential authority to override courts:

- 54% of Americans believe the executive branch should not have authority to override or ignore court rulings it believes are bad for the country, while 24% believe it should have this power
- 40% of Republicans said the president should have the authority to ignore court rulings, compared with 33% who opposed that power; 78% of Democrats and 53% of Independents said the president should not be able to override the courts
- On impeachment, 37% believe Congress should impeach a president who does not obey a court order, 14% believe it should not, and 40% say it depends on the issue at stake
- Conversely, only 14% believe Congress should impeach federal judges who block executive actions, while 35% say no and 39% say it depends on the issue

### Presidential pardon power and immunity

On presidential powers:

- 42% believe presidents should have the power to pardon individuals convicted of federal crimes, while 33% disagree
- 46% oppose presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts, while 31% support it

### Executive orders targeting law firms

The poll addressed President Trump's executive orders penalizing law firms that represent clients challenging his policies. The penalties have included withholding government contracts and security clearances, and restricting access to government buildings.

- 50% of Americans believe these actions are an attempt to "intimidate lawyers into not opposing him," while 34% believe he is "trying to prevent abuse of the legal system by lawyers"

- The views split heavily along party lines, with 85% of Democrats seeing the president's orders as intimidation compared with just 19% of Republicans

### Trust in the Supreme Court

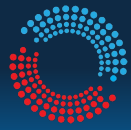
Americans were split on the question of whether they have confidence in the U.S. Supreme Court, with 51% saying they have a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in the high court and 49% saying they have little or no confidence. A strong majority of Republicans (72%) expressed some measure of confidence in the Supreme Court compared with only 35% of Democrats and 39% of Independents.

Across all demographics, Americans think the Supreme Court leans conservative, with only 21% saying the court is balanced, compared with 42% who think the court is conservative and only 12% who say it is liberal.

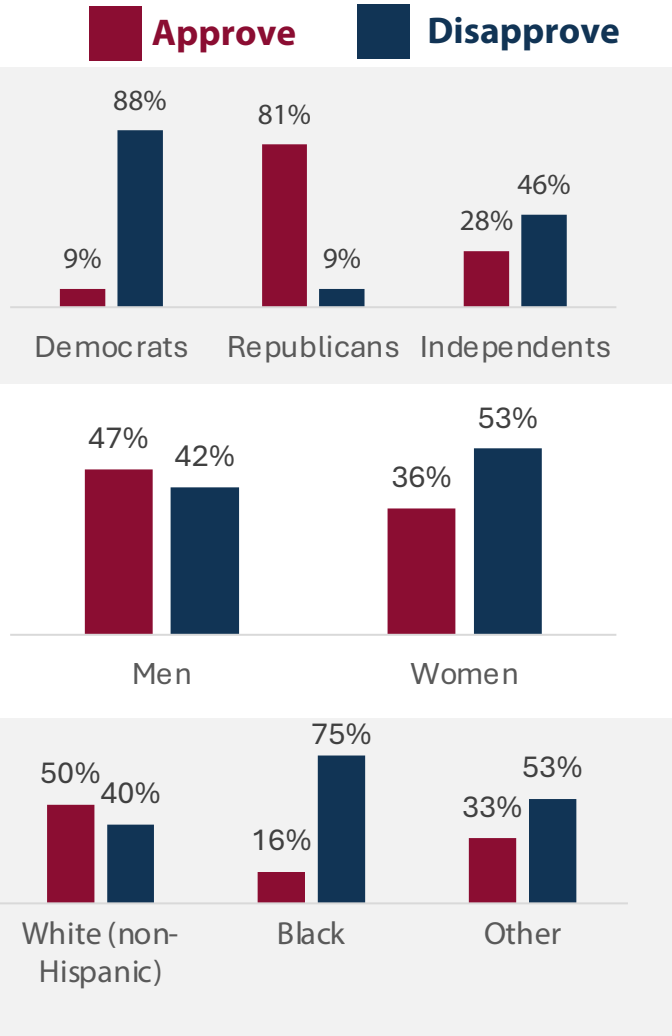
### Department of Justice

Overall, 69% of Americans said the president should not influence cases or daily operations of the Department of Justice compared with only 13% who said that kind of involvement by the president is proper. This principle is supported by large majorities of both Democrats (83%), Independents (65%) and Republicans (61%).

Trump's claims that Democrats have used the Department of Justice and judicial processes against him are only believed by 38% of poll respondents, while 43% think his assertions are wrong. There is a wide partisan split on this issue, with 75% of Republicans believing Trump's claims compared with only 9% of Democrats.



TOPIC: Presidential approval



**Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as President of the United States?**

Approve

41%

Disapprove

47%

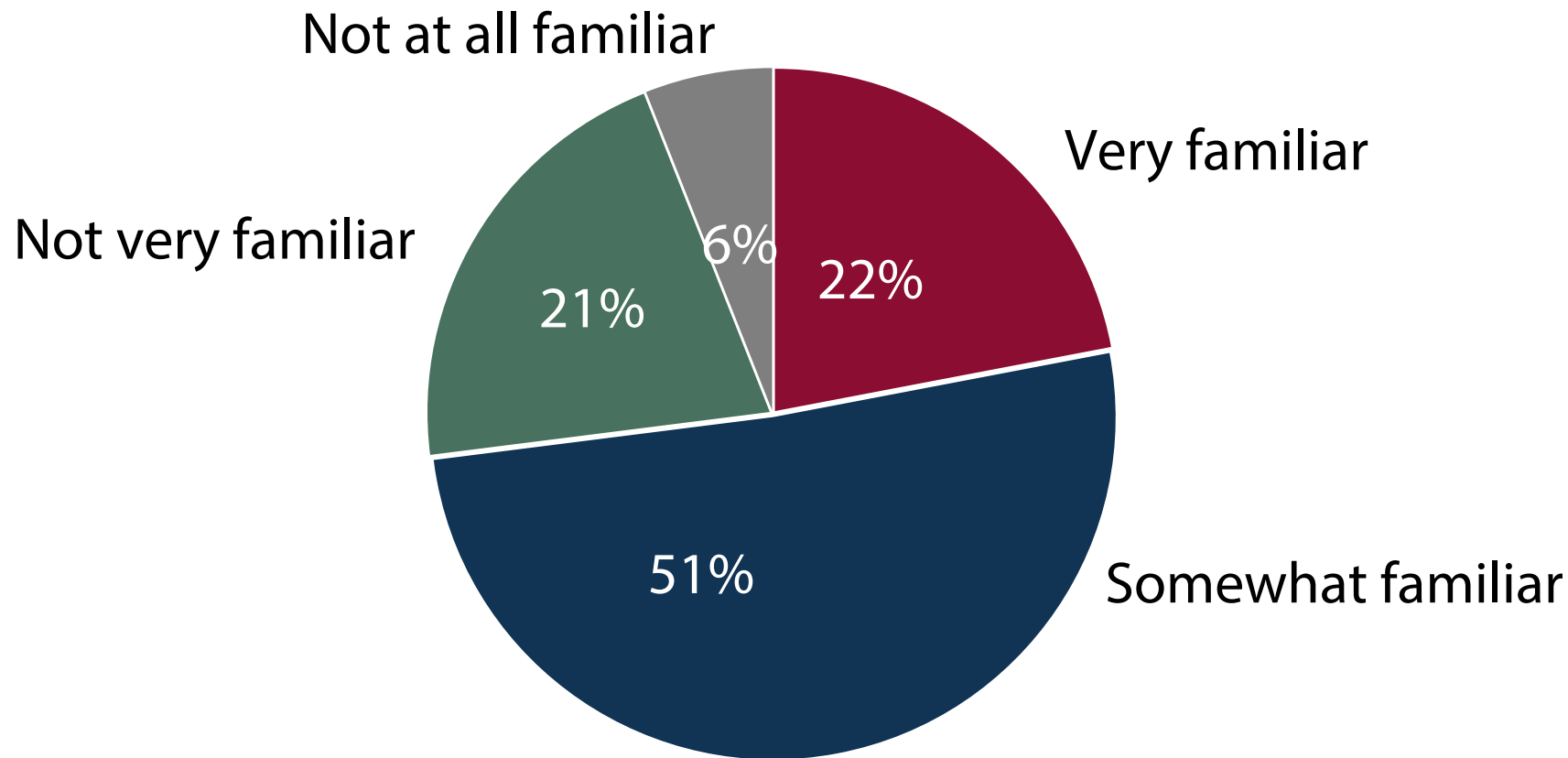
Unsure

11%



TOPIC: Court familiarity

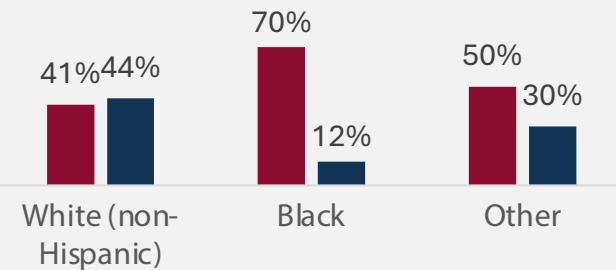
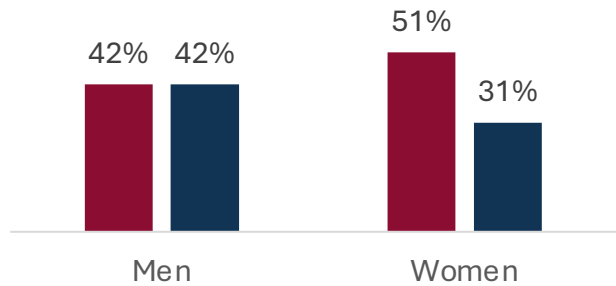
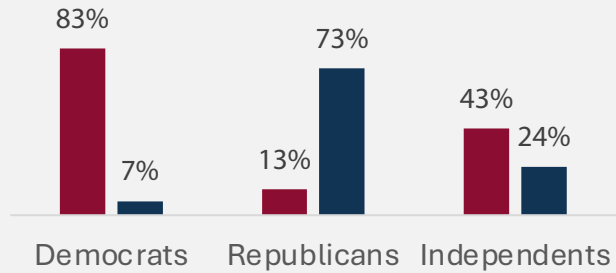
**How familiar are you with the U.S. court system, including the Supreme Court, federal courts and state courts?**





### TOPIC: Executive orders

**Gone too far** **Mostly correct**



Overall, which statement is closer to how you feel about the executive orders and administrative actions that President Trump has issued in his first weeks in office?

Mostly gone too far

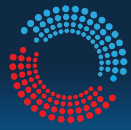
47%

Mostly been correct

36%

Unsure

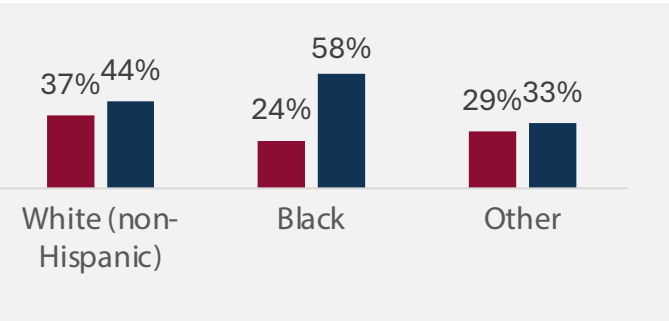
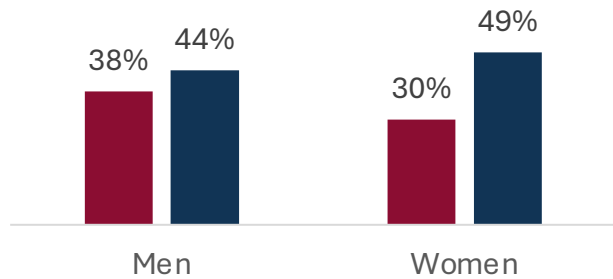
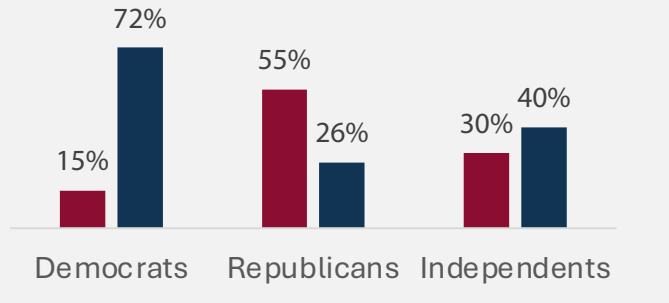
17%



### TOPIC: Judicial rulings

**Overall, how do you feel about the rulings of federal judges to block or delay executive orders or other actions taken by the Trump administration?**

**Gone too far** **Mostly correct**



Mostly gone too far

34%

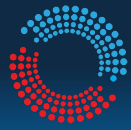
Mostly been correct

47%

Unsure

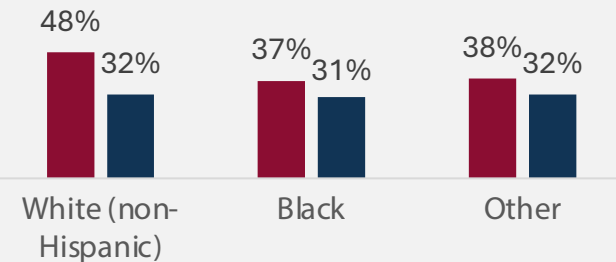
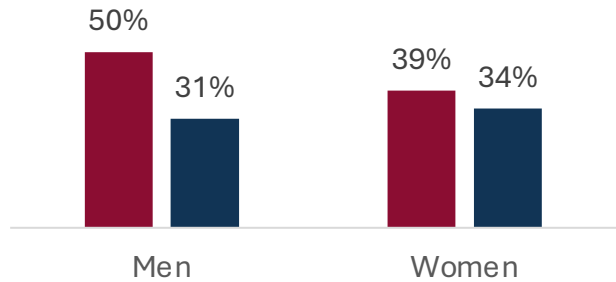
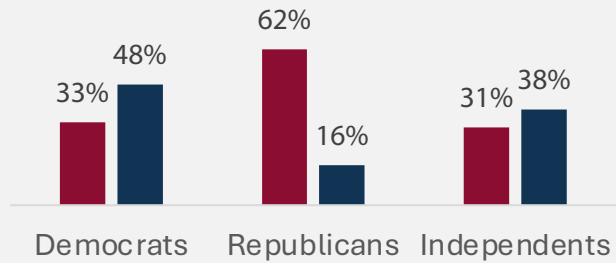
20%





### TOPIC: Checks and balances

**Effective** **Ineffective**



**How effective is the current system of checks and balances in the U.S. government in balancing the powers of Congress, the Courts and the President?**

Very/somewhat effective

44%

Very/somewhat ineffective

32%

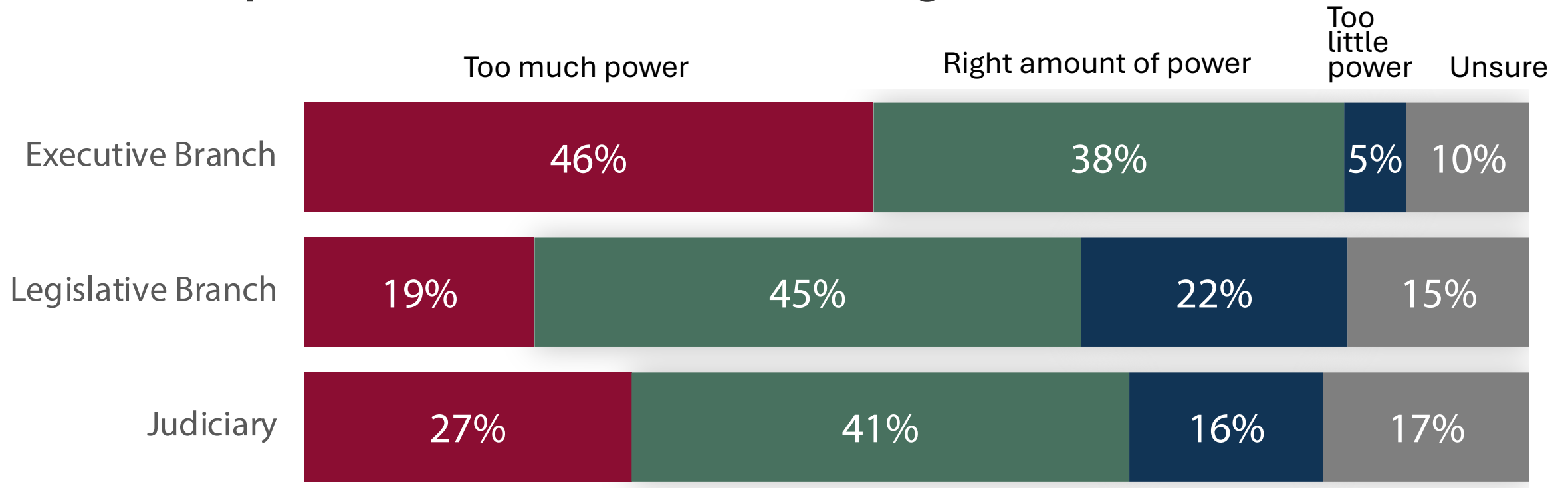
Neither effective nor ineffective

23%



TOPIC: Checks and balances

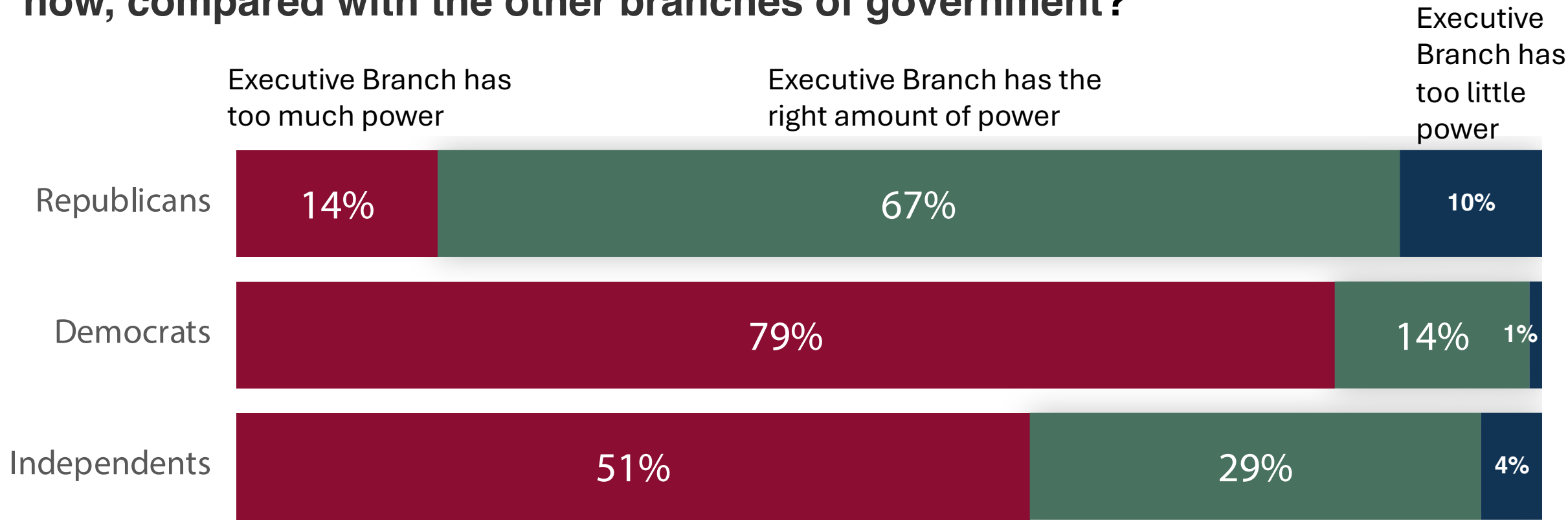
**How much power do you feel each of the branches of government has now, compared with the other branches of government?**

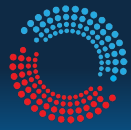




TOPIC: Checks and balances

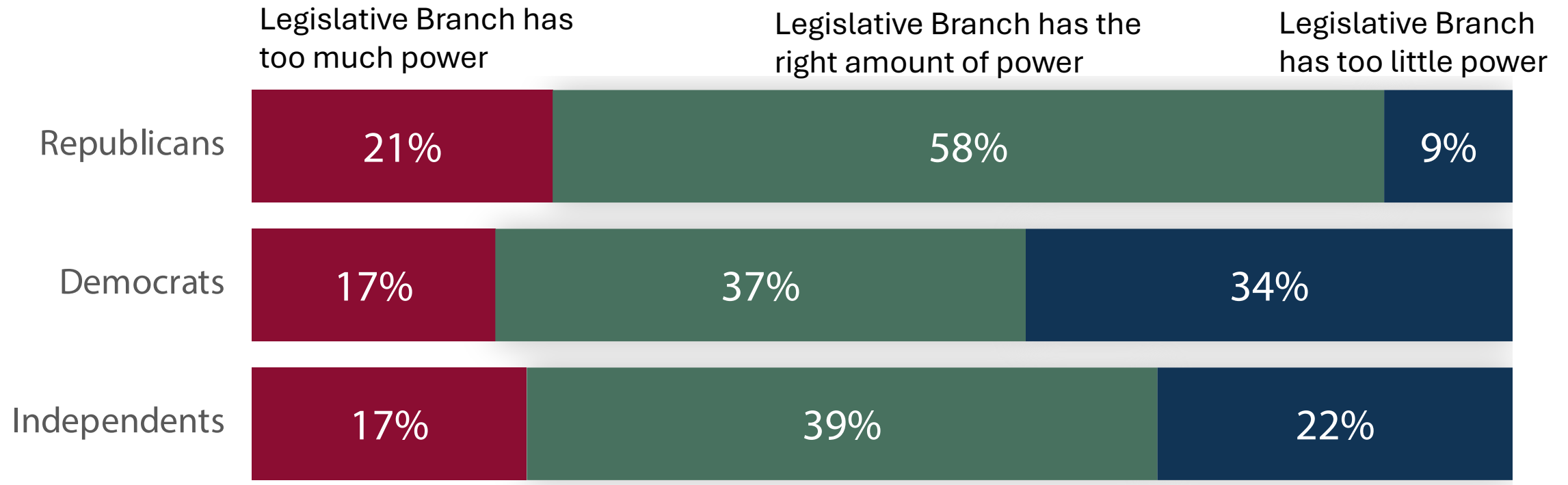
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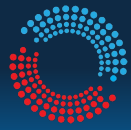




TOPIC: Checks and balances

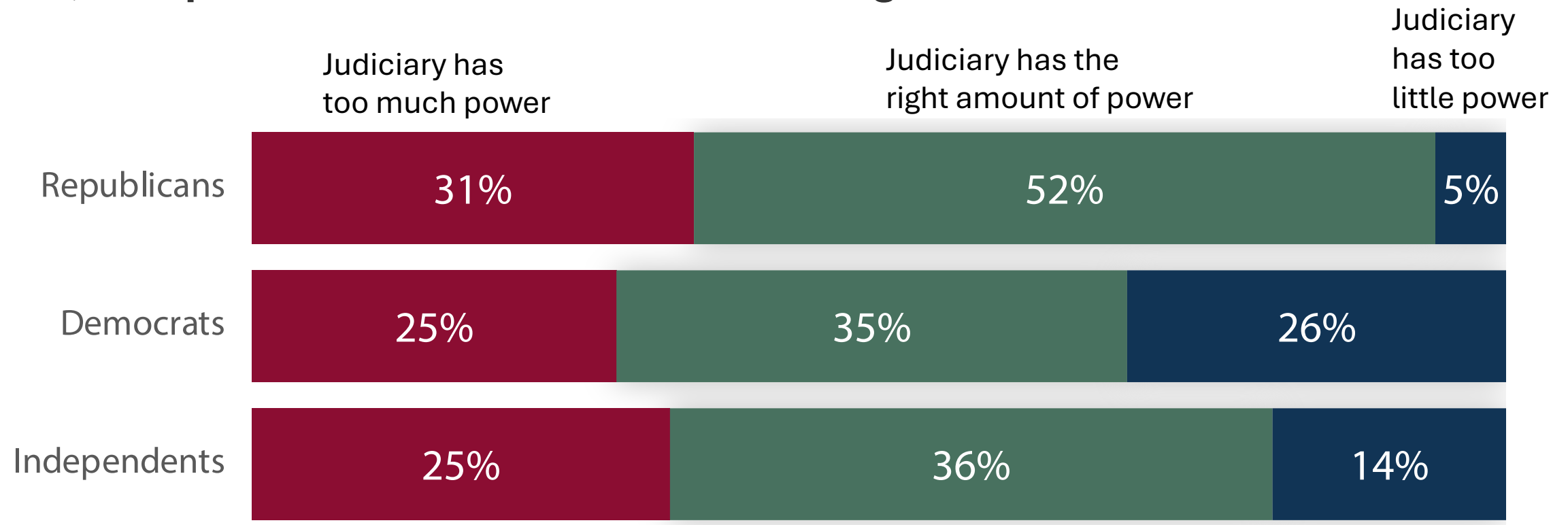
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TOPIC: Checks and balances

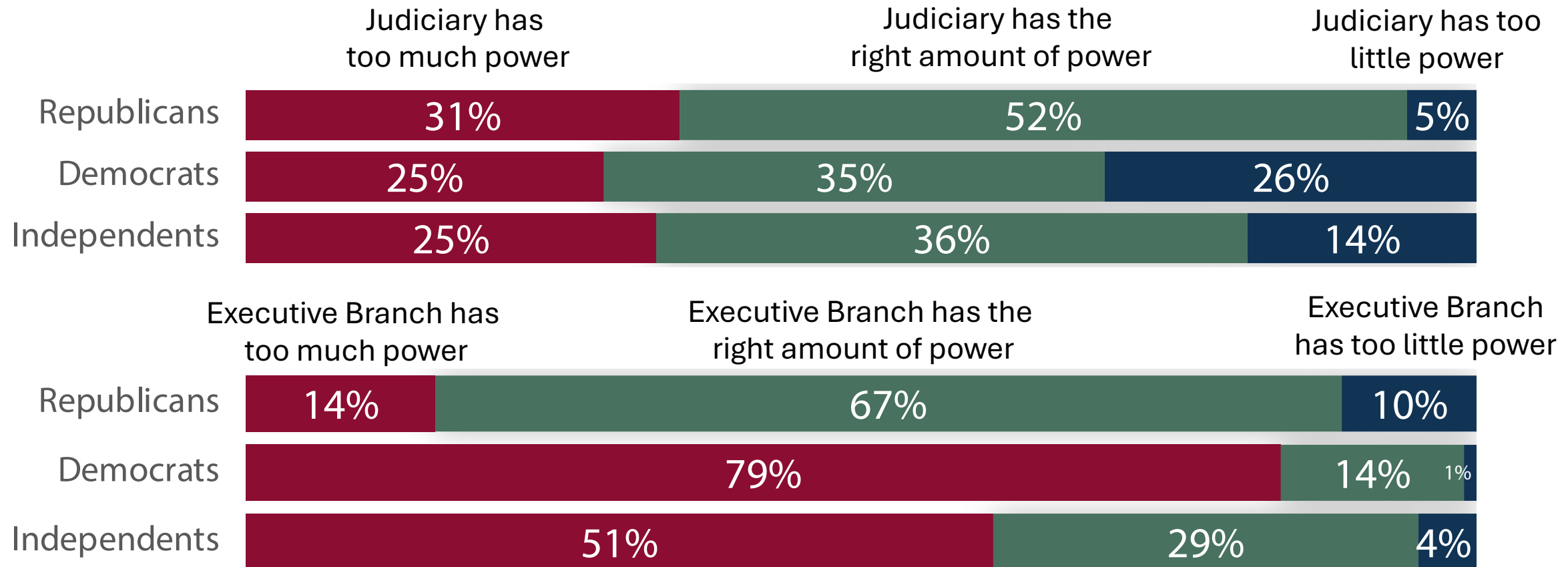
### How much power do you feel each of the branches of government has now, compared with the other branches of government?





TOPIC: Checks and balances

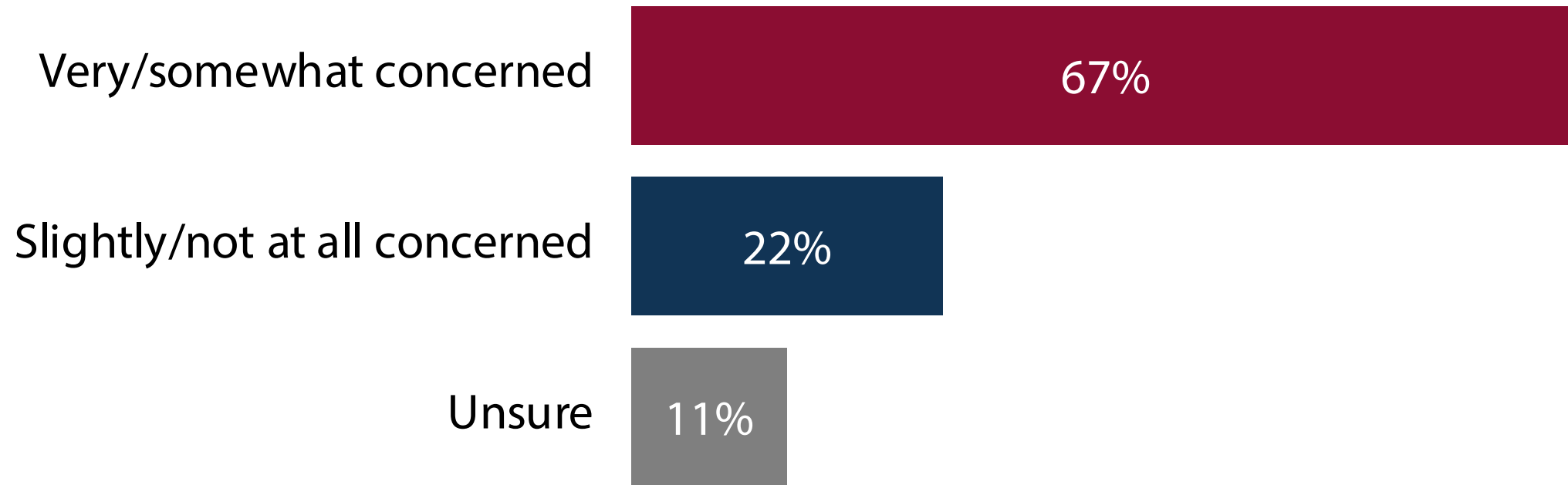
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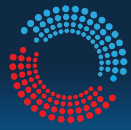




TOPIC: Constitutional crisis

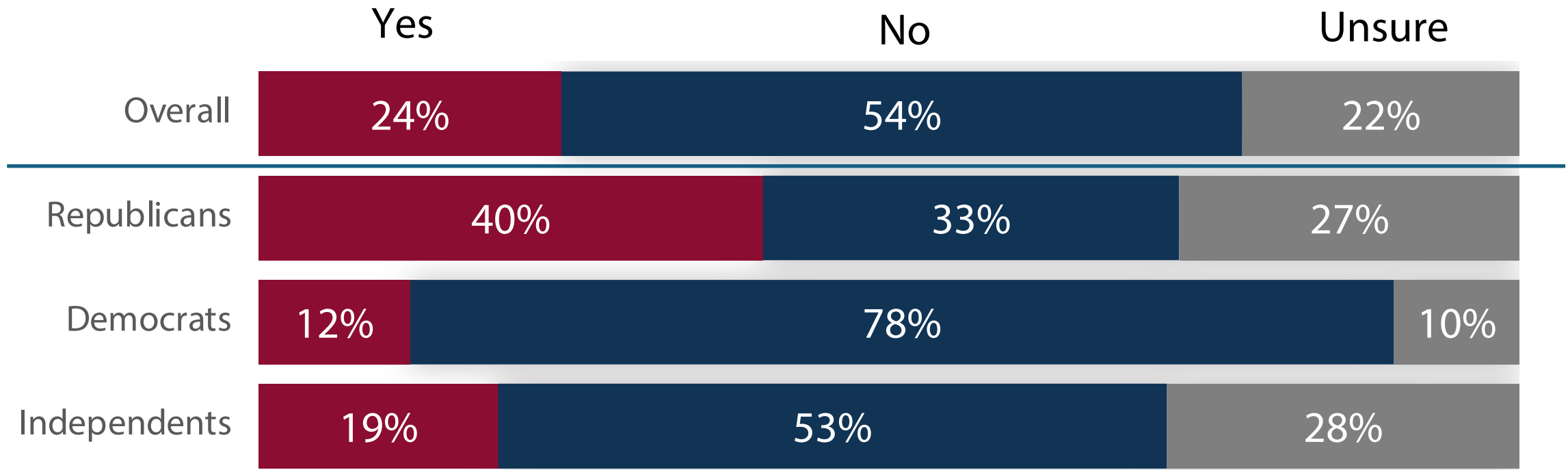
**How concerned are you, if at all, about a situation in which the executive branch and the courts strongly disagree over their constitutional powers and neither side backs down—creating a crisis over who has the final say?**



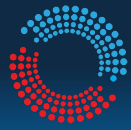


TOPIC: Ignoring the courts

**Should the executive branch (including the President) have authority to override or ignore court rulings that it believes are bad for the country?**

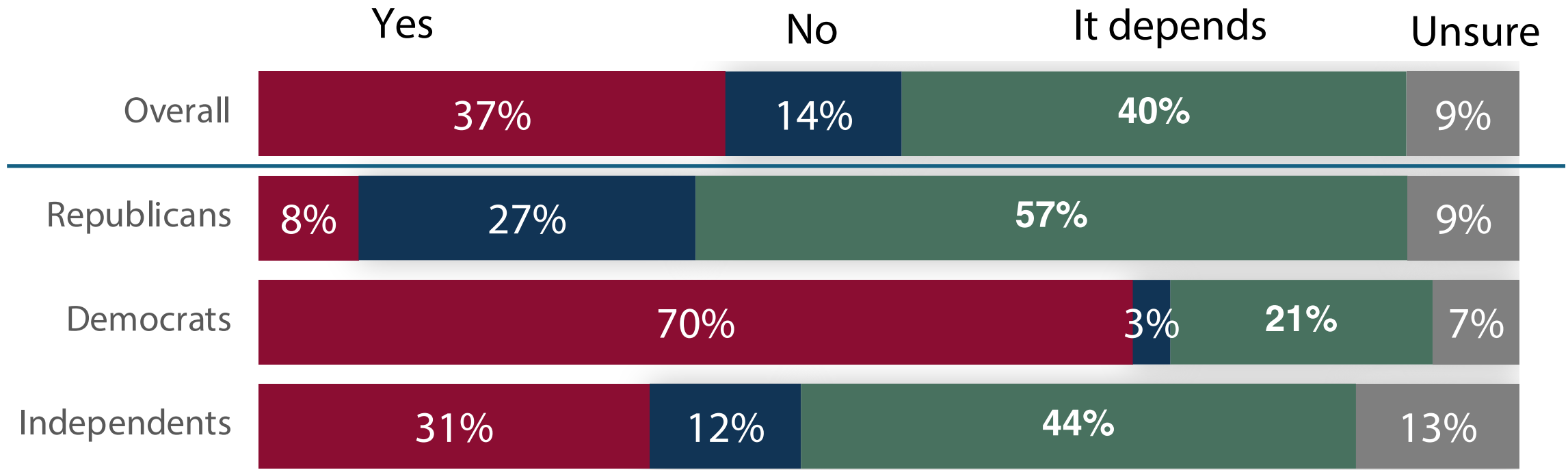






TOPIC: Impeachment

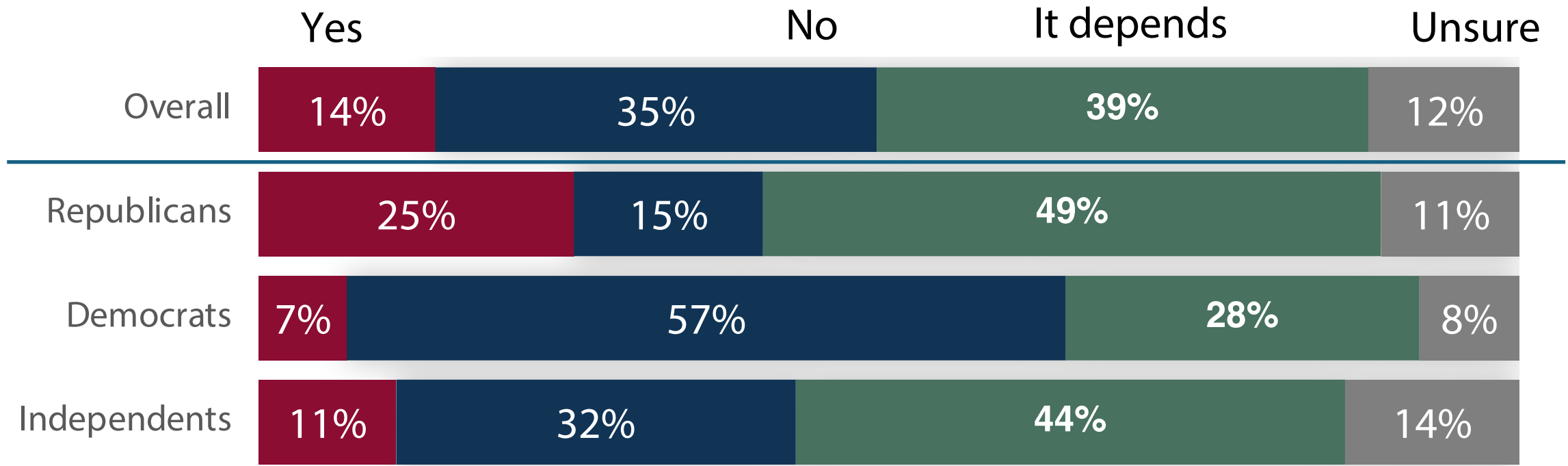
### Should Congress impeach a President who does not obey a court order?





TOPIC: Impeachment

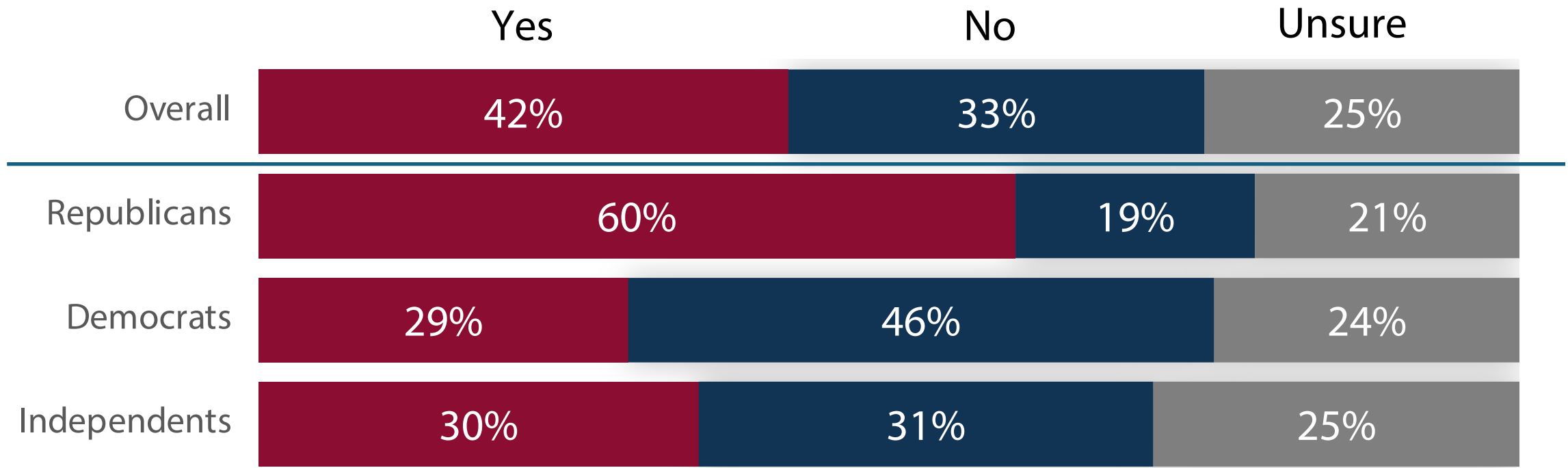
### Should Congress impeach federal judges who make rulings that block executive orders and other actions by the President?

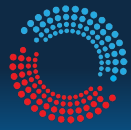




TOPIC: Presidential pardons

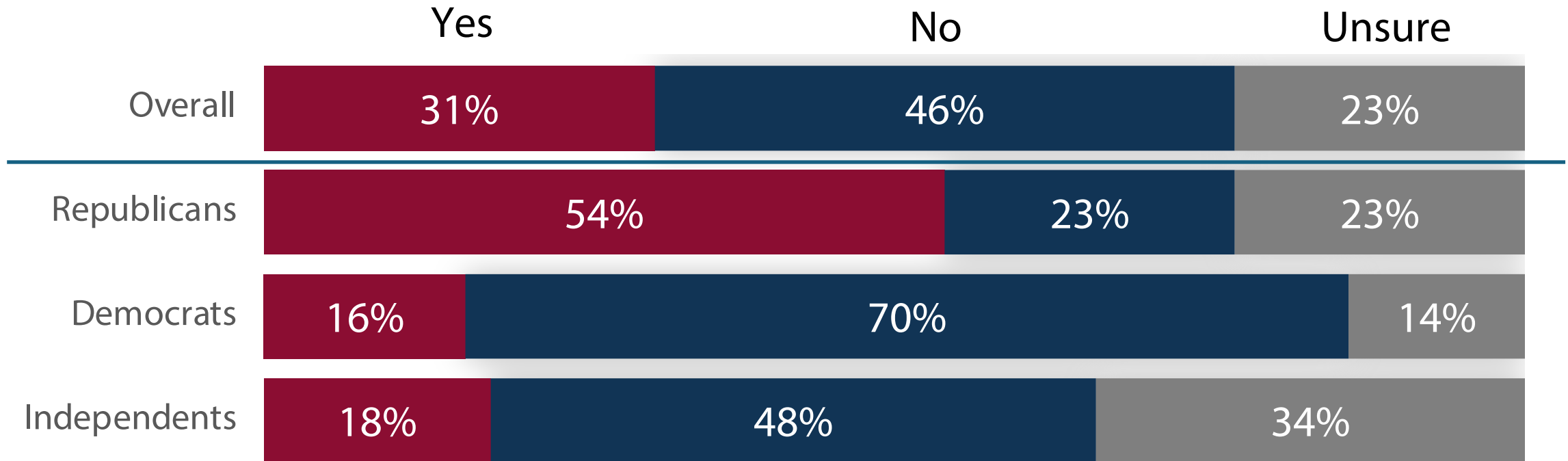
### Should the President have the power to pardon individuals convicted of federal crimes?

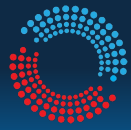




TOPIC: Presidential immunity

**Last year, the Supreme Court ruled that under the Constitution, the president has absolute immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts they perform as President. Should presidents have this immunity from prosecution for actions taken while in office?**





TOPIC: Law firm penalties

**President Trump has issued executive orders penalizing some law firms that represent clients challenging his policies and actions. The penalties include withholding government contracts and security clearances, and restricting access to government buildings. Which of these statements most closely matches your opinion about his actions against law firms?**

He is trying to prevent abuse of the legal system by lawyers

34%

He is trying to intimidate lawyers into not opposing him

50%

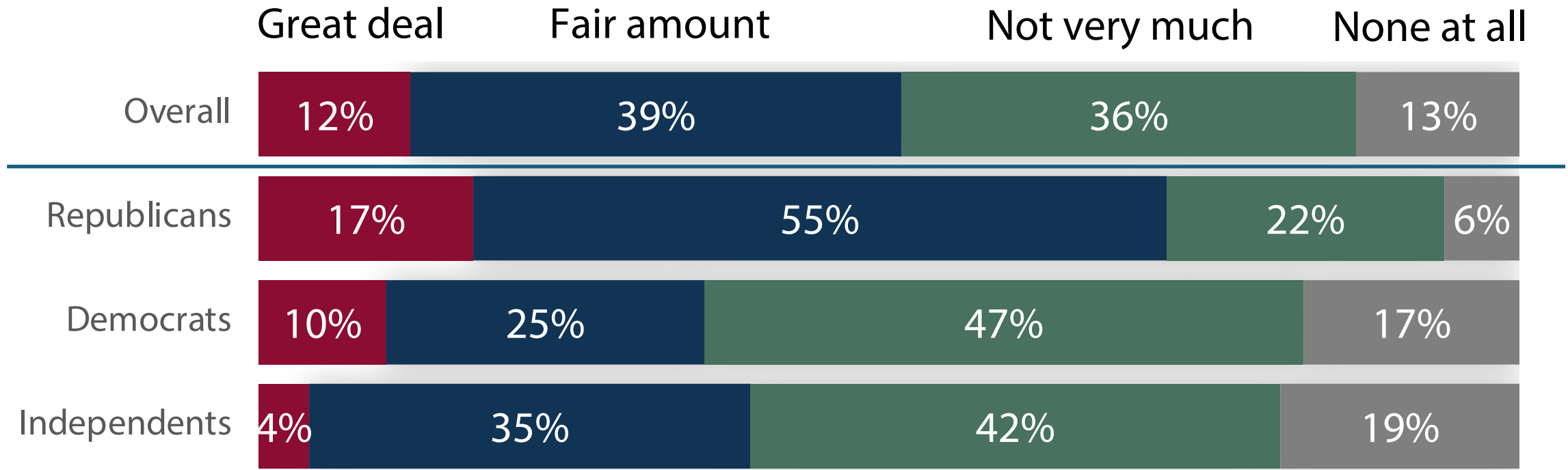
Neither of these statements

16%



TOPIC: Supreme Court

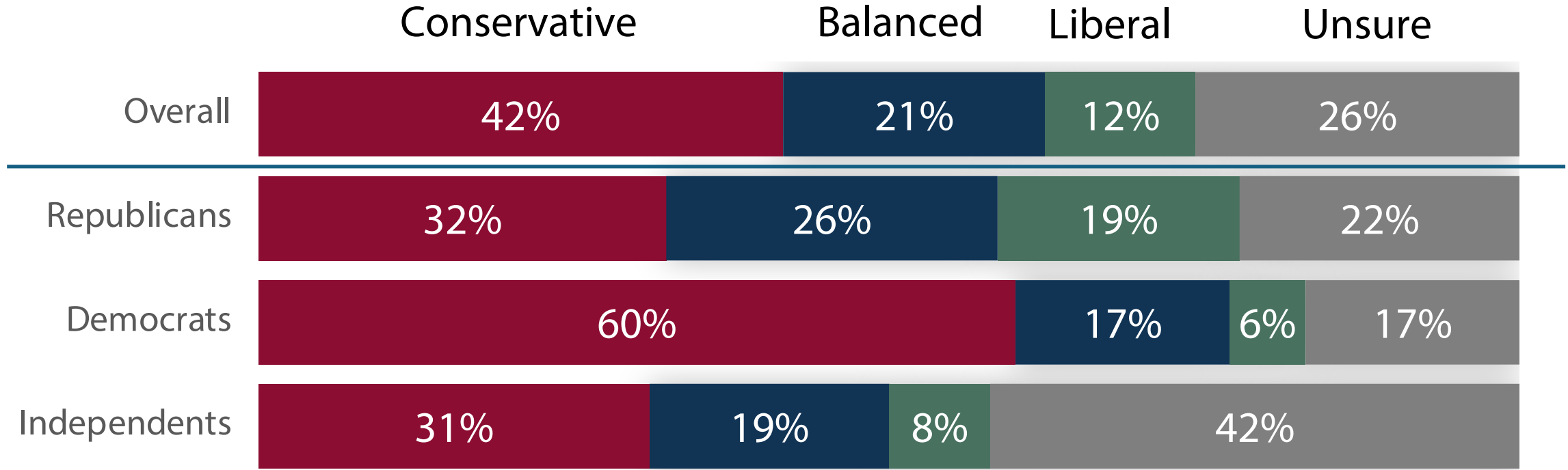
### How much trust and confidence do you have at this time in the U.S. Supreme Court?

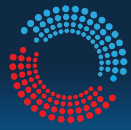




TOPIC: Supreme Court

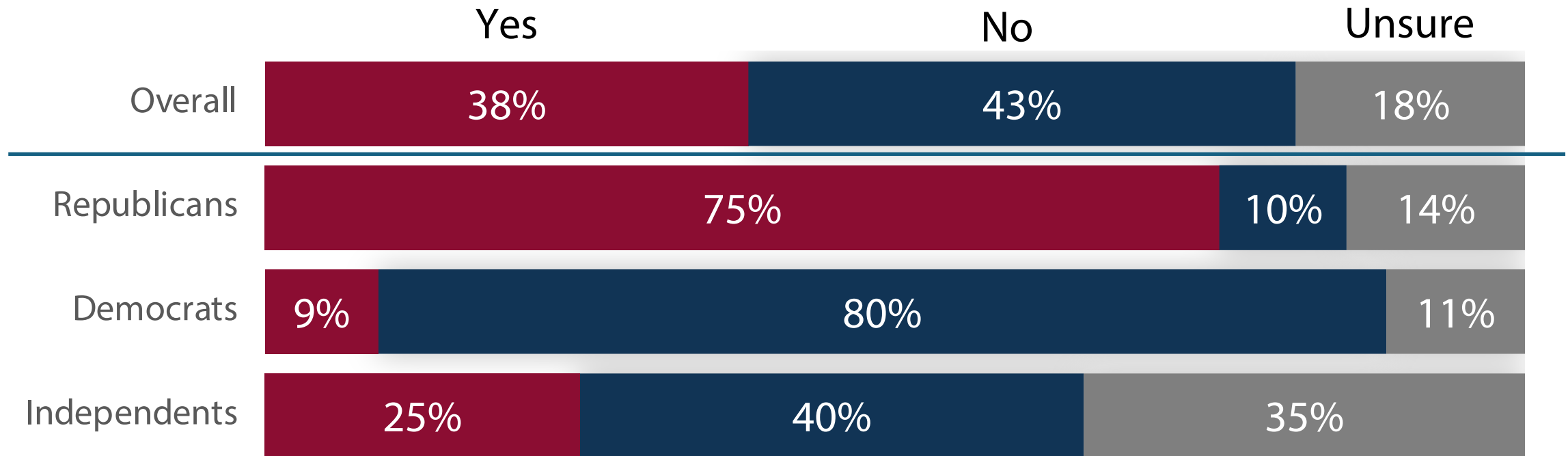
### How does the current Supreme Court lean politically?



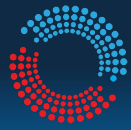


TOPIC: Department of Justice

**Do you believe claims that the Department of Justice and the judicial process has been unjustly used by Democrats against Donald Trump?**







TOPIC: Department of Justice

### Which statement best reflects your view of the proper relationship between the President and the Department of Justice?

The President should set general priorities but not influence specific cases and daily operations of the Department of Justice

69%

The President should significantly influence specific cases and daily operations of the Department of Justice

13%

Unsure

18%



### METHODOLOGY

Sponsoring organization and questionnaire design: Elon University Poll

Fieldwork: YouGov

Interview dates: April 10-17, 2025

Release date: April 24, 2025

Target population: U.S. adults, age 18 and older

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of error: +/-3.58 % (adjusted for weights)

Survey mode: Online, web-based survey, self-administered with online panels

Panelists: This poll utilizes a non-probability sample. All YouGov panelists have been active panelists for 30 days or longer.

YouGov interviewed 1,149 respondents from North Carolina who were then matched down to a sample of 1,000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The sampling frame is a politically representative "modeled frame" of US adults, based upon the American Community Survey (ACS) public use microdata file, public voter file records, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration supplements, the 2020 National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll, and the 2020 CES surveys, including demographics and 2020 presidential vote.

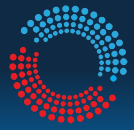
The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and home ownership. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

The weights were then post-stratified on 2020 and 2024 presidential vote choice as well as a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (2-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.

Data Quality checks: We used three attention checks, one open end, one grid item and one multiple select. We used all three in combination when cleaning the data removing anyone who failed two or more attention checks. We also removed the top 2% of speeders and skippers from the data.

Critical Mass for Crosstabs: All crosstabs must have at least 60 unweighted respondents per column in order to report their results. Every crosstab result reported in the release appears in the crosstabs.

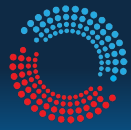
Transparency: The Elon University Poll is a charter member of the Transparency Initiative, a program created by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2014 to educate polling firms on ways to better share how they collect and interpret their information. The Elon Poll's voluntary participation in this initiative signifies a willingness to clearly state in its reports how questions were asked, in what order, who funded the poll and then conducted it, and a definition of the population under study, among other details.



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional methodology and poll topline information is available on the Elon Poll website:

[www.elon.edu/elonpoll](http://www.elon.edu/elonpoll)



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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