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# Passionate Education Voters Want Bold, Accelerated Education Change Immediately

September 16, 2020

# Methodology

This large-scale web survey of 3,000 registered voters, was conducted online August 4-11, 2020 from a voter-file sample.

- Unweighted Sample Sizes 3,000 Registered Voters in Arizona (500), Georgia (500), Iowa (500), Maine (300), Michigan (500), Montana (200), North Carolina (500).
  - **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** AZ (+5), GA (+5), NC (+3), IA (+3), MI (+1), ME (+3), MT (+11)
- Weighting: The final data were weighted to an effective sample of 1,400, with each state representing approximately 14% of the sample.
- The registered voter web survey is voter-file matched to produce a high-quality sample of real voters with the added advantage of known vote history. It is also well-suited for conducting experiments to test message strategies and executions.

*(Republican PVI advantage)(PVI – even)(Democratic PVI advantage)\*retiring/term-limited*

## Key Findings:

- The short-term debate on schools reopening is settled. Voters trust the recommendations of scientists and want to open schools on a case by case basis.
- But the intense school debate has created new consciousness about education, including the digital divide and internet access, racial and income inequality in the education system, and dealing with learning loss and adapting education to the new environment caused by the pandemic. Facing acute economic issues and job loss, they are looking to education to achieve greater equity.
- In close races, those that are won or lost by less than 5 percent of the vote, passionate education voters can make the difference on who is elected, based on whether the positions they take on education issues resonate with voters' immediate concerns. A solid majority (69 percent) of voters say they are much or somewhat more likely to vote for a Senate candidate who prioritizes education and has a clear agenda on education, including 21 percent who say much more likely. This 21 percent is still contested in this election and could be decisive in close races.

## Key Findings:

- The debate has the potential to dramatically grow the number of education voters who want to see a bold education agenda for 2021. When campaigns focus on education, as in this survey, the proportion saying education as a top issue in their vote jumps 10 points – from 13 to 23 percent – and that is particularly true in working-class states of Iowa, Maine, Michigan, and Montana.
- The education voters, this survey shows, are disproportionately African American women, white millennial women, Hispanic women, and white working-class women – a powerful mix.
- This survey also shows independent voters as highly contested on key issues and priorities where Democrats and Republicans are most polarized. They are more aligned with Republicans on schools opening and in their concerns about parents losing income, but more aligned with Democrats on addressing income and racial inequities in the education system as well as expanding access to affordable college.

## Key Findings:

- Voters now want a bold, accelerated education agenda, above all closing the digital divide and inequities around access to technology and infrastructure students need to succeed, and massive investment in technical and career education as well as lifetime education on the scale of the GI Bill. These big-picture proposals were meant for the future, but they respond to the issues voters are worried about now – one of the biggest findings in the survey.
- As President Trump proposes cutting public education funding, voters strongly support increased education spending. A 54 percent majority say the federal government spends too little on education right now, including 21 percent who say much too little. Additionally, 71 percent of voters say it is important for the next President and Congress to make education a top national priority, including 32 percent who say it is very important.
- This explosive juncture is creating voters willing to take direct action in support of education. Fully 15 percent would “definitely” get involved with an organization that works to elevate education as a national priority, including 5 percent who are strong education voters and also willing to take action. They are joined by others who were not particularly likely to support an education candidate for Senate but are still intensely interested in working on behalf of education themselves.

# **On schools opening: Trust scientists over the President**

# Public trusts scientists, and would open schools on a case by case basis

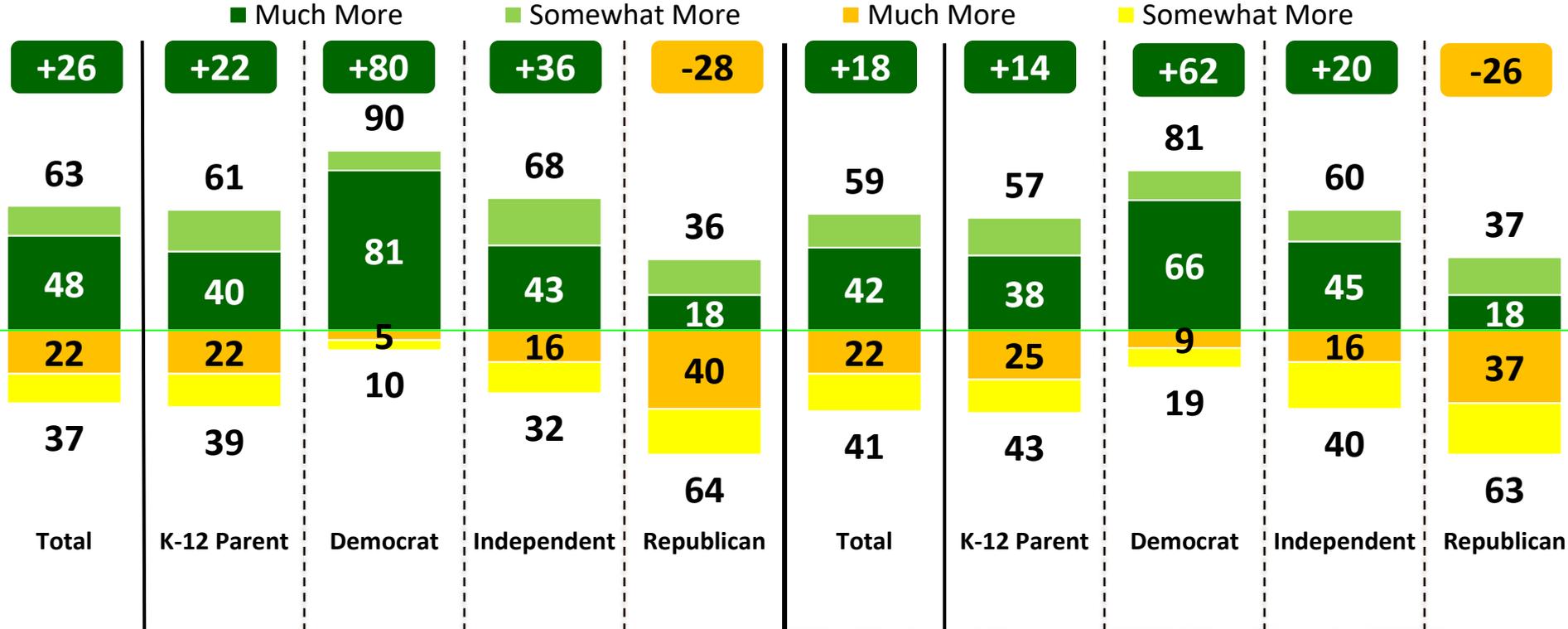
Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

I trust the recommendations of the scientific community to slow the number of infections by opening up the economy and schools on a case by case basis.

A first priority should be protecting the health of students and their families, even if that slows the economic recovery and means schools do not reopen this fall.

I trust President Trump who says we can't stay closed forever, and we must start broadly opening up our economies and schools

A priority should be getting schools to reopen this fall, which is central to economic recovery and getting parents back to work.



# Overwhelming support for funding public schools over charters and private

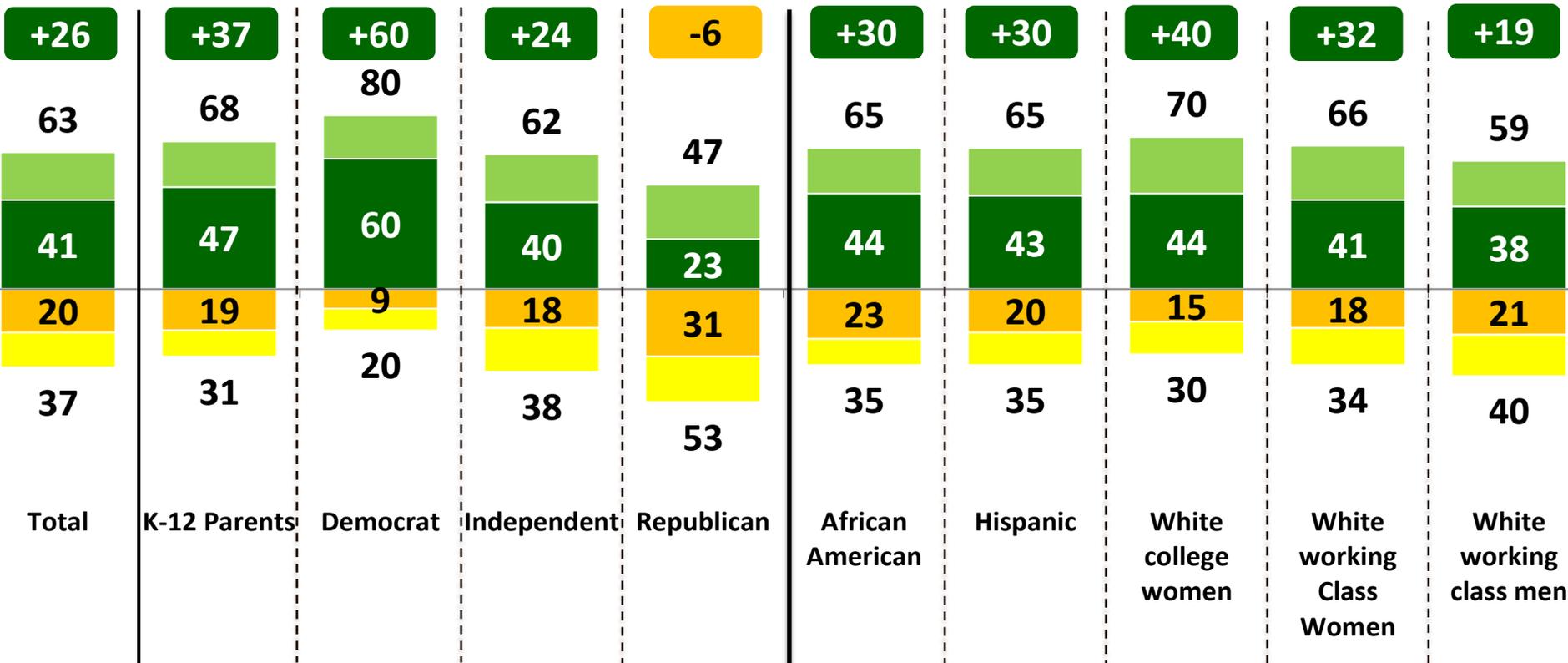
Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

**If we want to help students in underperforming schools, we should increase funding for public schools.**

**If we want to help students in underperforming public schools, we should allow more choices and public funds for families to send their kids to charter and private schools.**

■ Much More    ■ Somewhat More

■ Much More    ■ Somewhat More

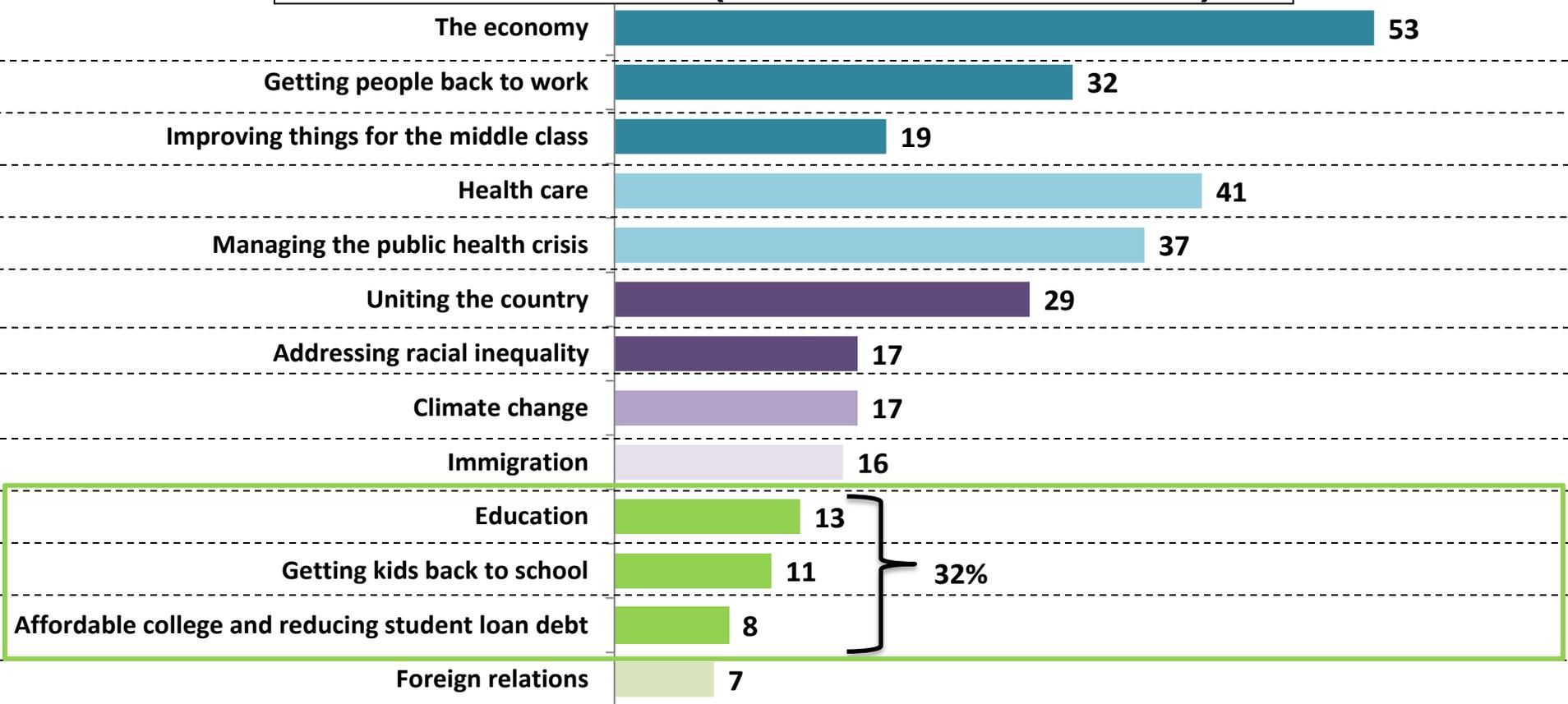


# Issues shaping current vote choice

# Economy and health care dominate the election issues, but this poll shows voters connect education to jobs and equity, and 32% still cite it as an issue

Now you will read a list of issues in this election. Please pick the top THREE that will be most important to you when voting in the election for president, Senate and Congress this year.

## VOTING ISSUES (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

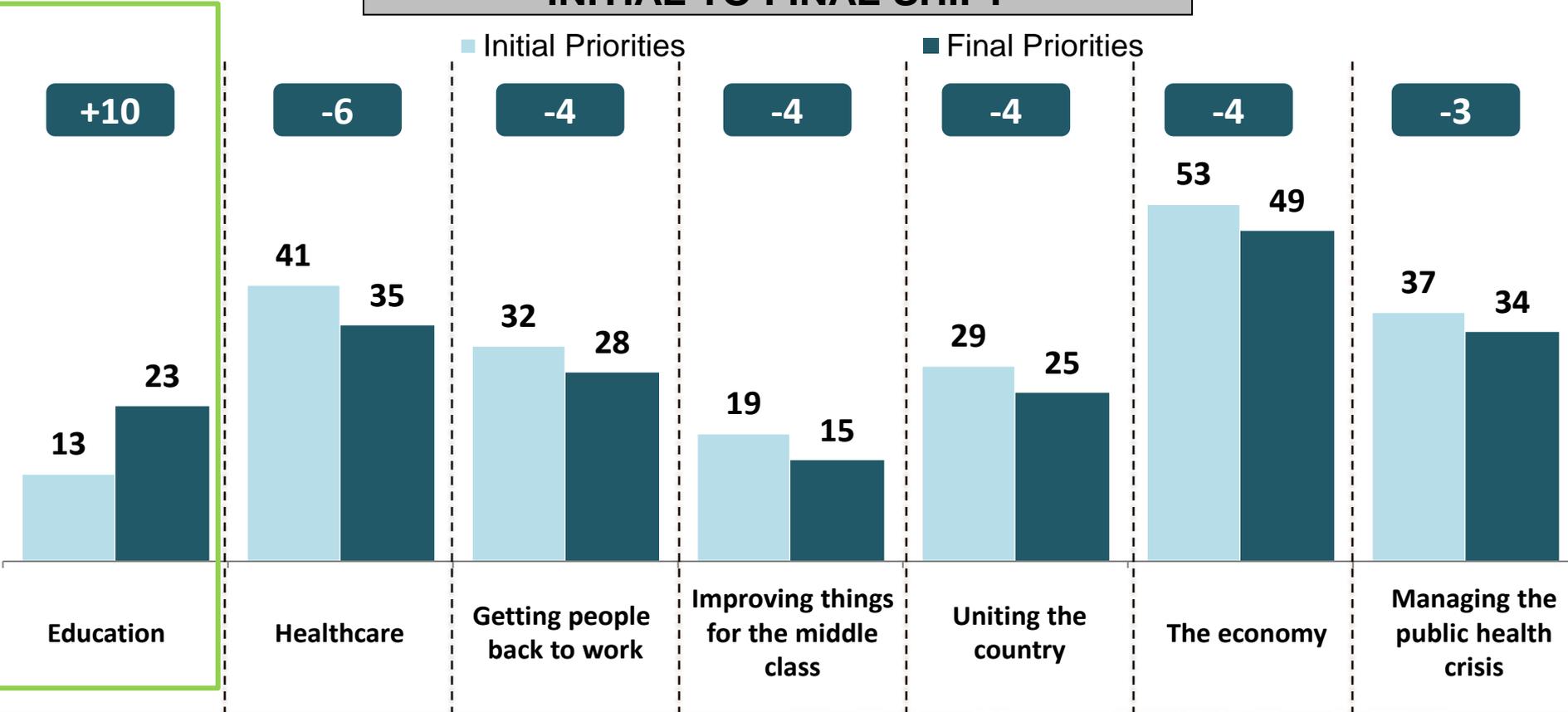


# Voters hearing about current education issues raises proportion choosing education by 10 points – a quarter can be education voters

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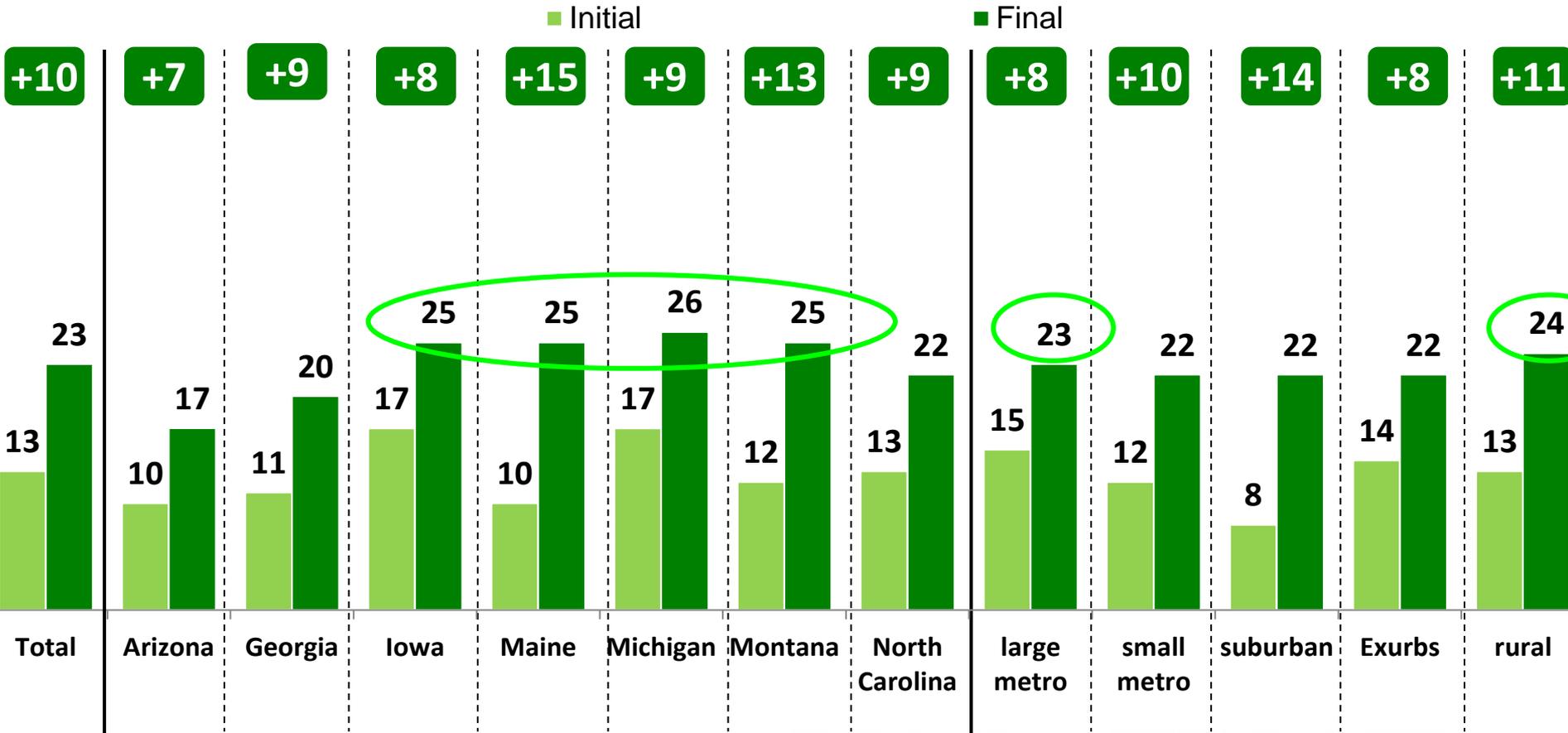
## VOTING ISSUES (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

### INITIAL TO FINAL SHIFT



# Shift toward education is substantial in each state, but reaches highest levels in working class areas that embrace the economic and equity frames

## VOTING ISSUES - EDUCATION INITIAL TO FINAL SHIFT BY STATE



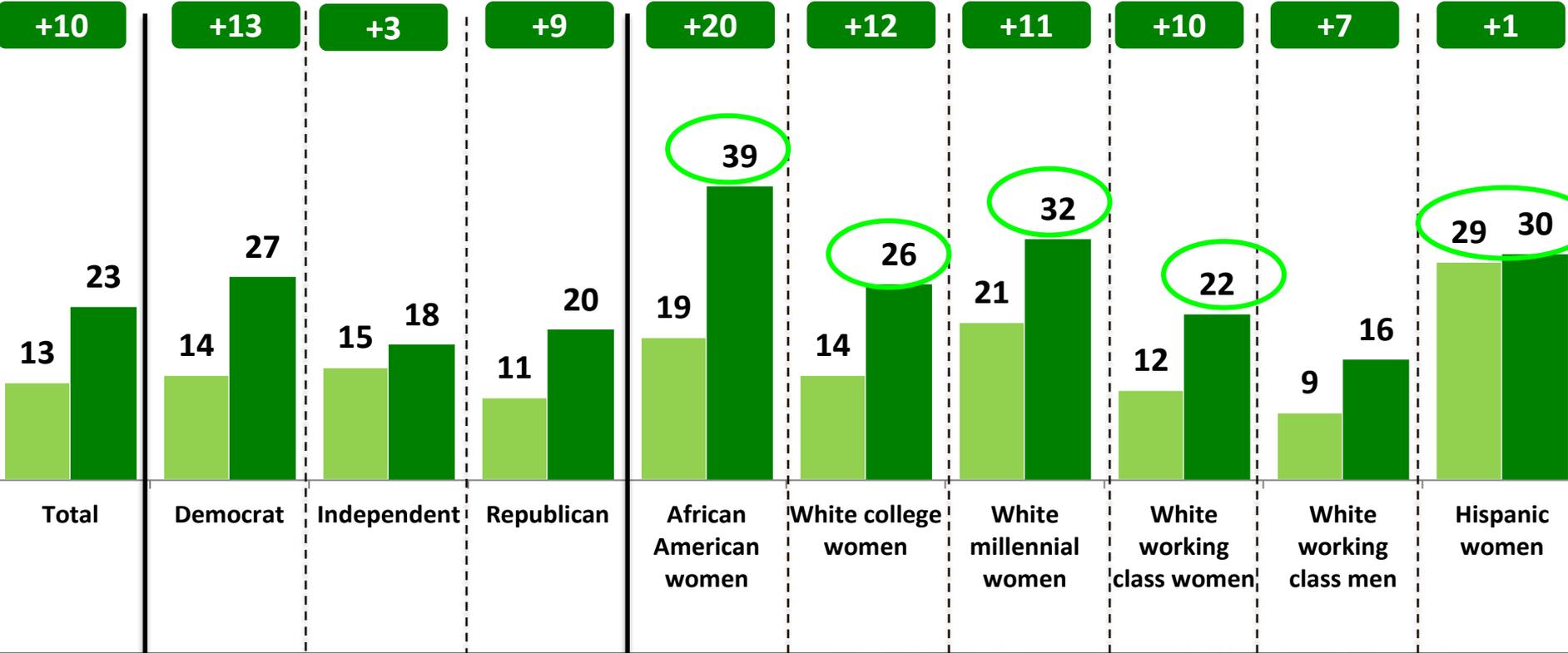
# The shift is driven by women, especially African American women, Hispanic women, white millennial women, and also from white working class women

Now you will read a list of issues in this election. Please pick the top THREE that will be most important to you when voting in the election for president, Senate and Congress this year.

## VOTING ISSUES - EDUCATION

### INITIAL TO FINAL SHIFT

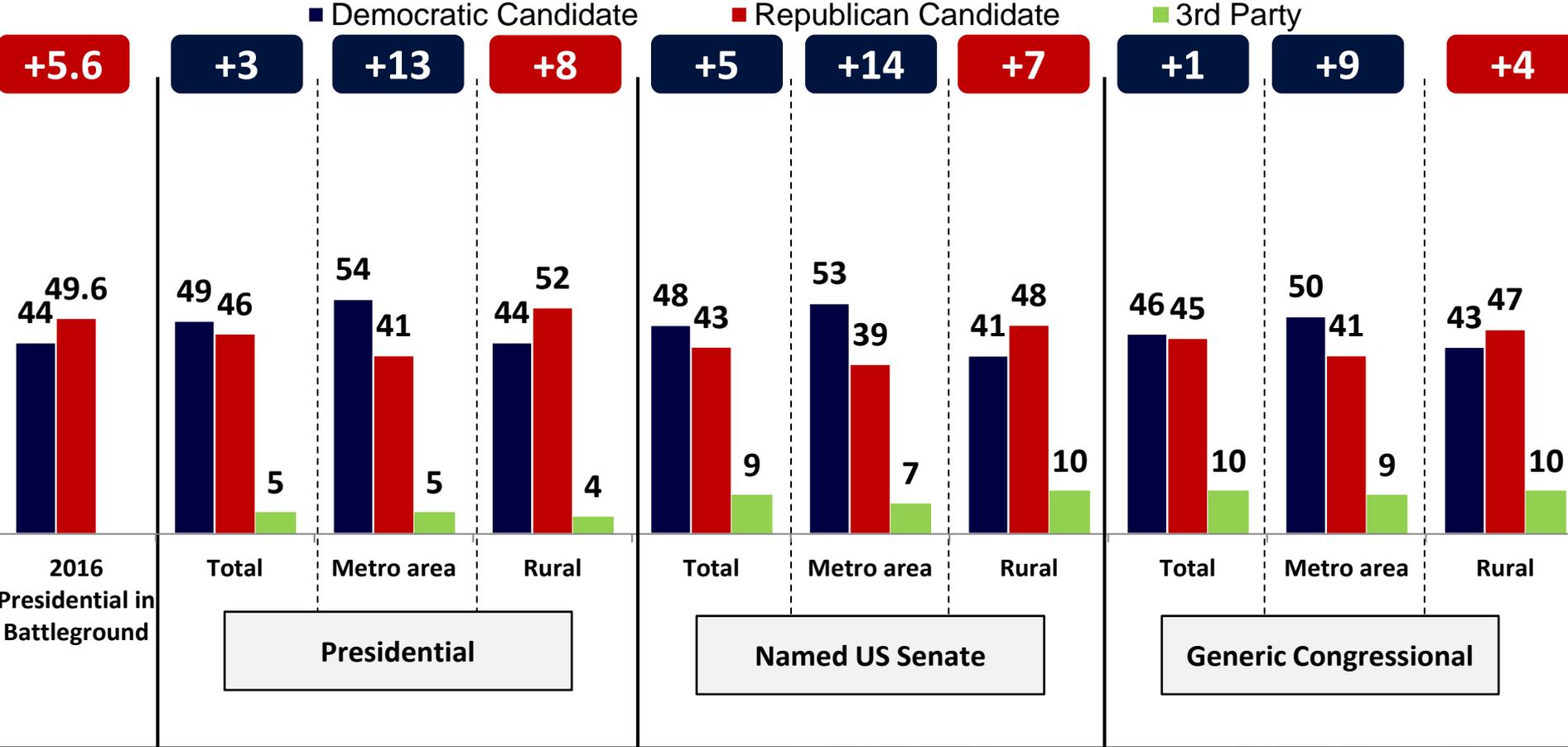
■ Initial ■ Final



# Political Context

**Democrats hold fragile lead across the board, driven by the cities. Rural working-class areas are still contested and will be decisive.**

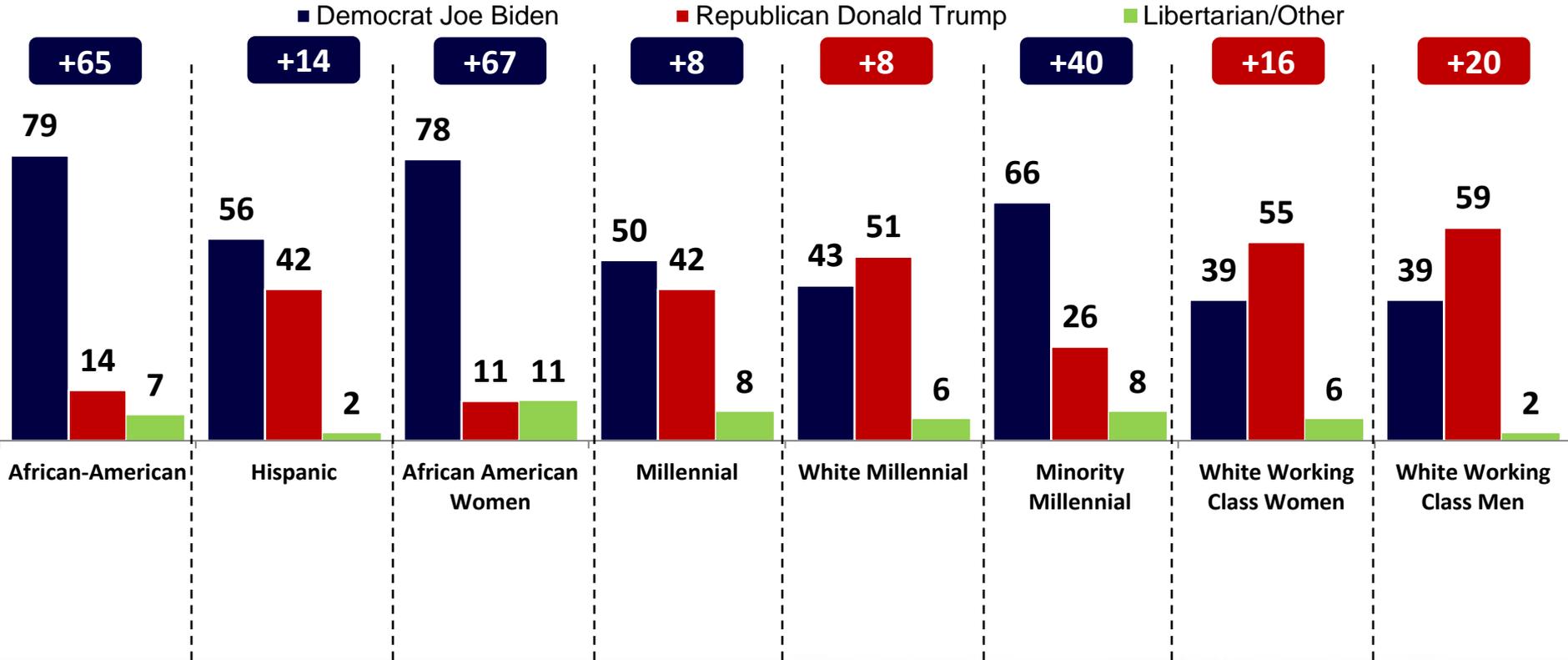
**PRESIDENTIAL, HOUSE & US SENATE BALLOTS**  
**BATTLEGROUND**



# Biden getting wide margins with much of the Democratic base, but they are still far from consolidated, with many voting third party

Thinking about the election for President in 2020, who would you vote for if the candidates were -- (ROTATE TRUMP AND BIDEN, KEEP AMASH LAST) Democrat Joe Biden, Republican Donald Trump, or the Libertarian candidate?

## 2020 PRESIDENTIAL: BIDEN V. TRUMP RISING AMERICAN ELECTORATE

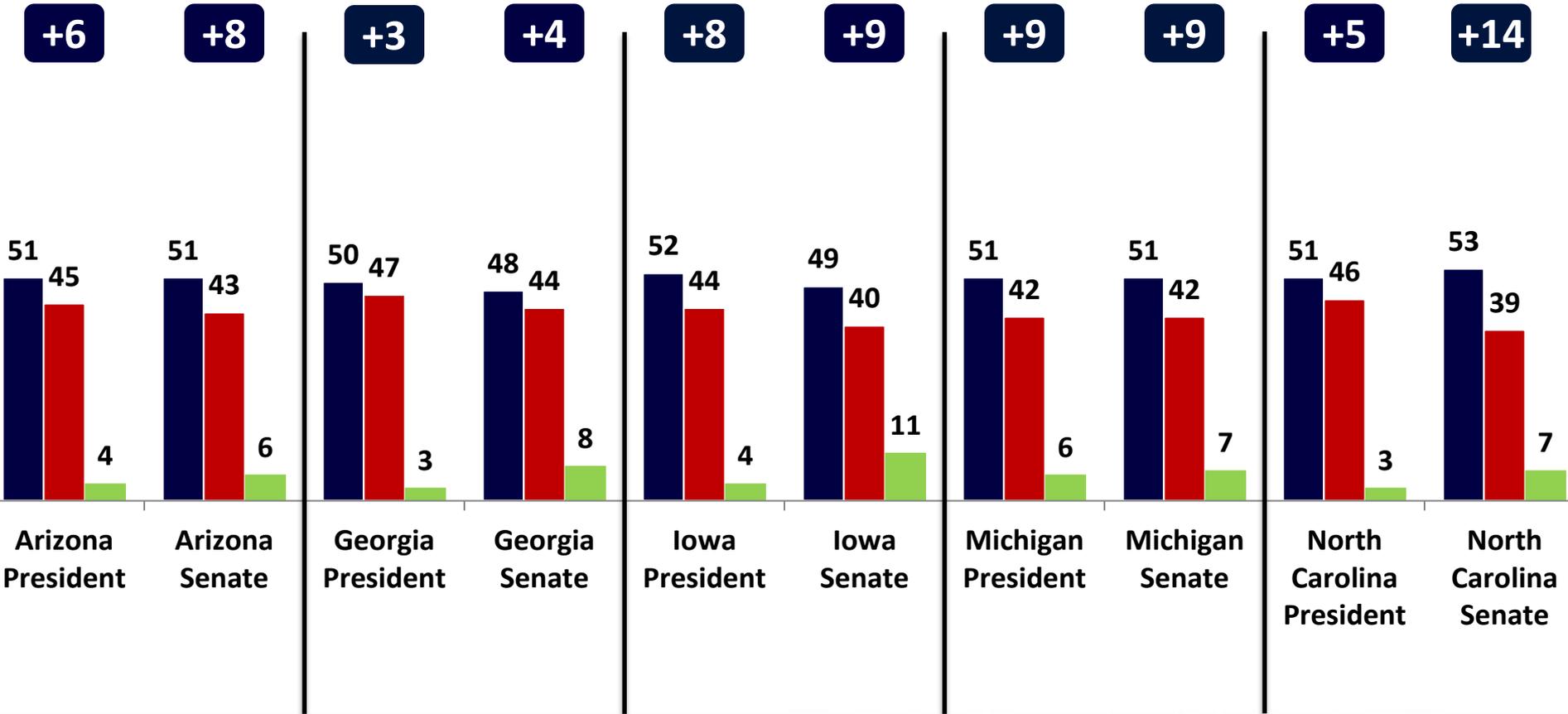


# Voters more polarized in presidential race, but most Senate races remain more contested with higher 3<sup>rd</sup> party vote

## PRESIDENTIAL AND US SENATE BALLOTS

### BATTLEGROUND

■ Democratic Candidate   ■ Republican Candidate   ■ 3rd Party

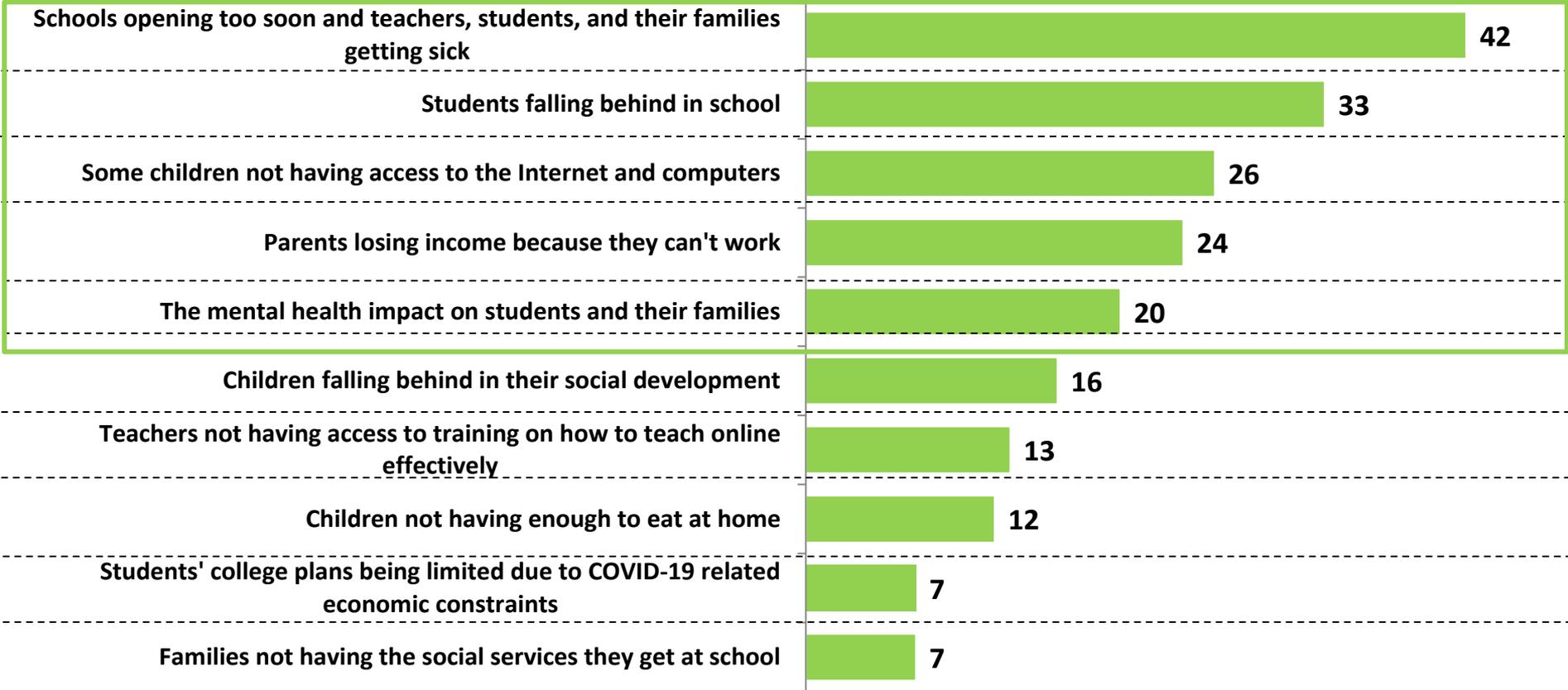


# Education priorities in the pandemic and “long-term”

# The top concern is health and safety, but pandemic brings out worries over students fall behind, Internet, lost income, and mental health problems

*Thinking about education and schools in your state during the coronavirus crisis, which TWO of the following do you think are the most urgent issues facing students and their families? -*

## EDUCATION PRIORITIES IN PANDEMIC



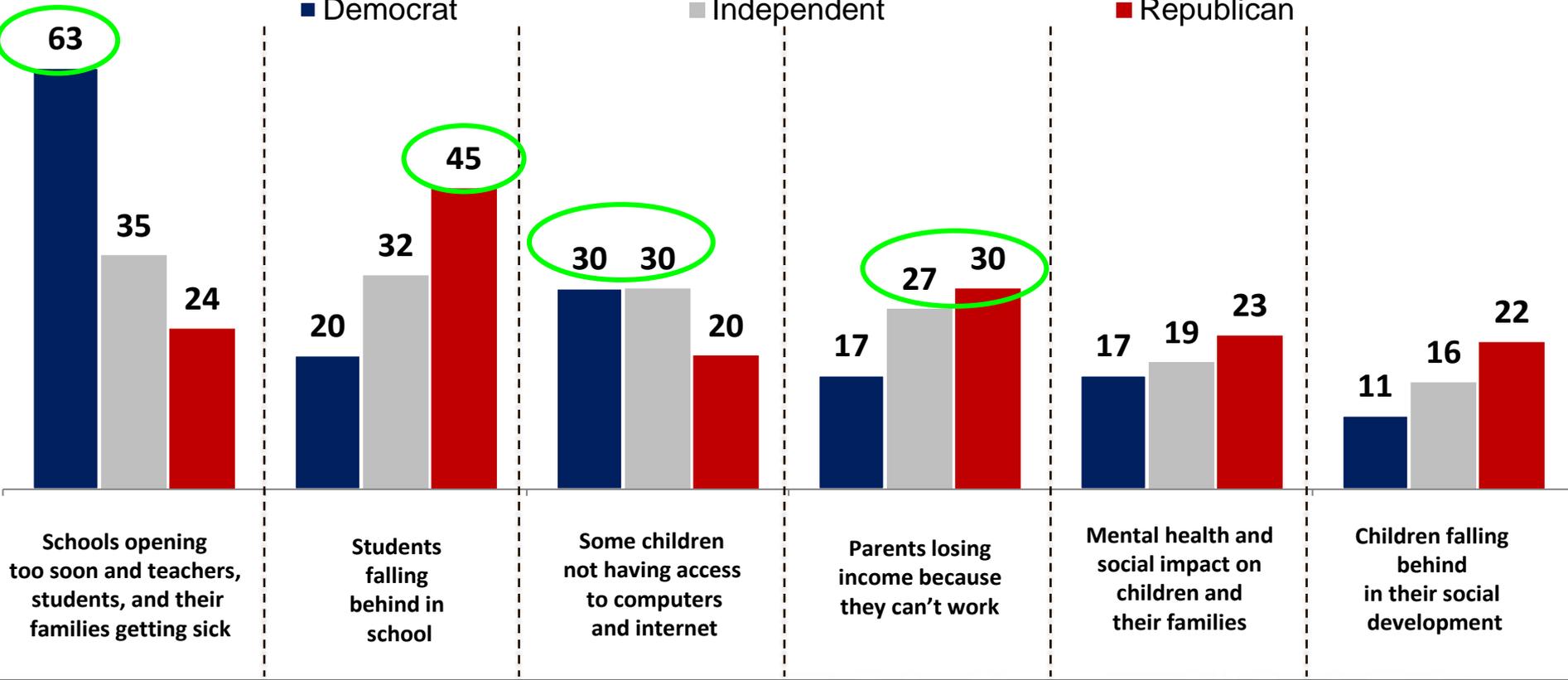
# Voters divide along partisan lines, with much more intensity among Democrats and Republicans on opening schools, and independents split

Thinking about education and schools in your state during the coronavirus crisis, which TWO of the following do you think are the most urgent issues facing students and their families?

## EDUCATION CONCERNS IN PANDEMIC

### PARTY ID

■ Democrat      ■ Independent      ■ Republican

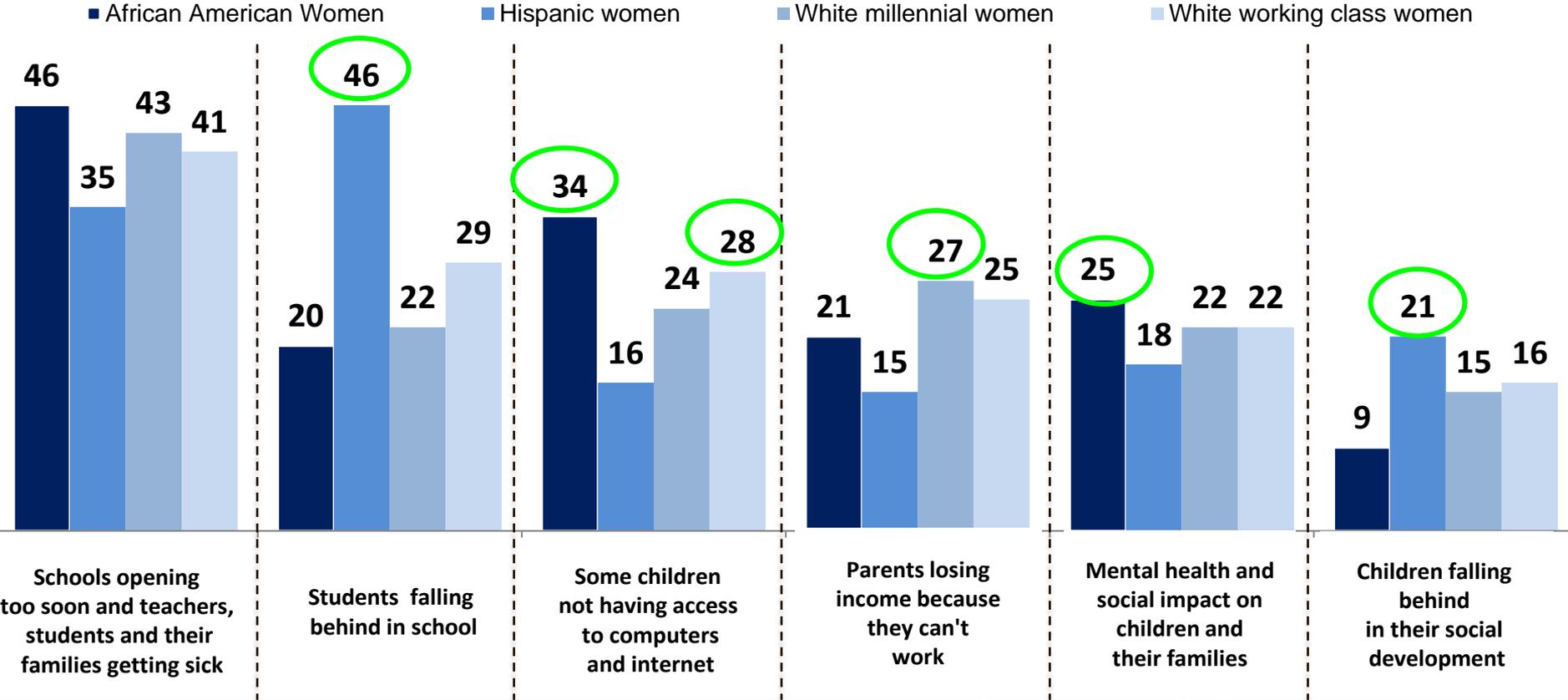


# Safety is the top concern among women who move on education issues; much more variance in concerns over other issues, framed by personal experience

Thinking about education and schools in your state during the coronavirus crisis, which TWO of the following do you think are the most urgent issues facing students and their families?

## EDUCATION CONCERNS IN PANDEMIC

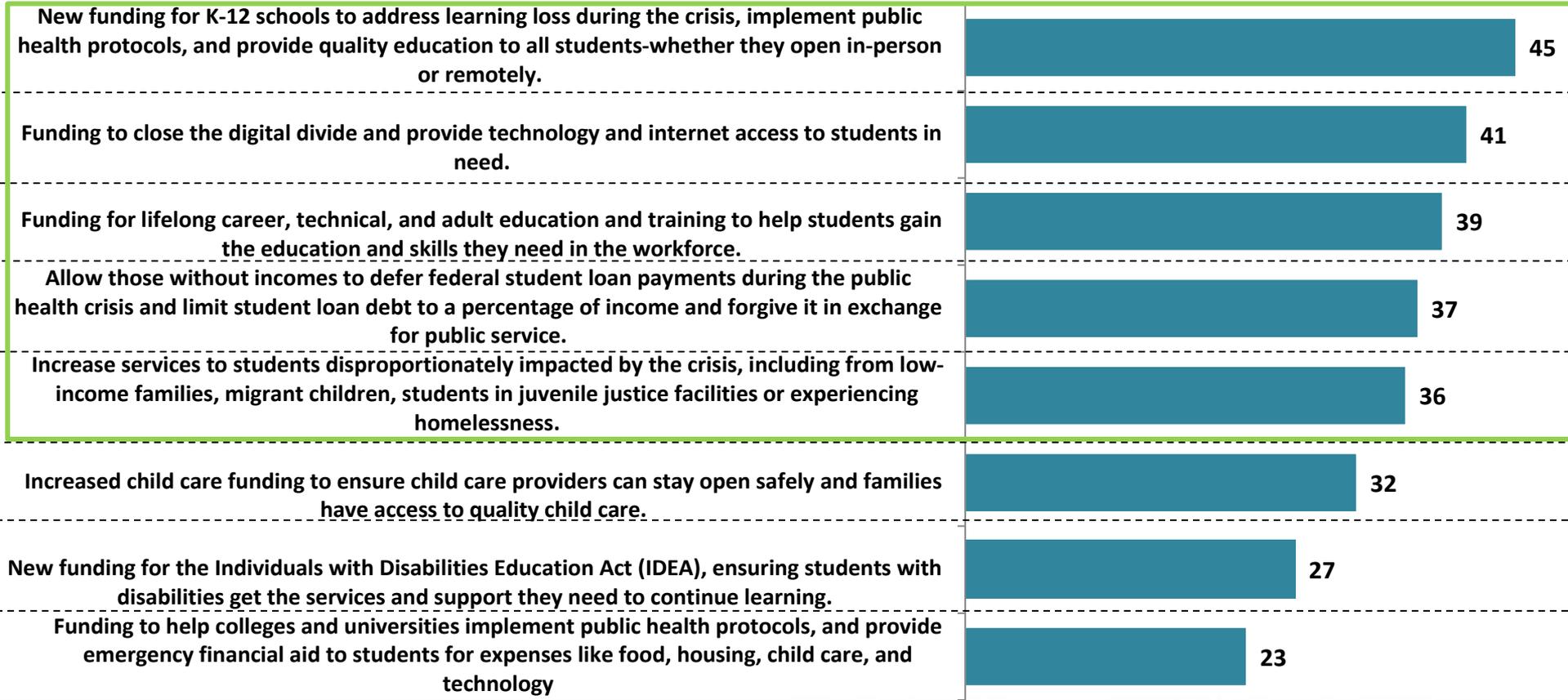
### CORE EDUCATION MOVERS



# Strongest support for government response to keep kids safe and learning, followed by addressing income and infrastructure inequities

*Congress has proposed major new laws to deal with the pandemic and the economic crash and education. Please pick the THREE you would favor the most.*

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



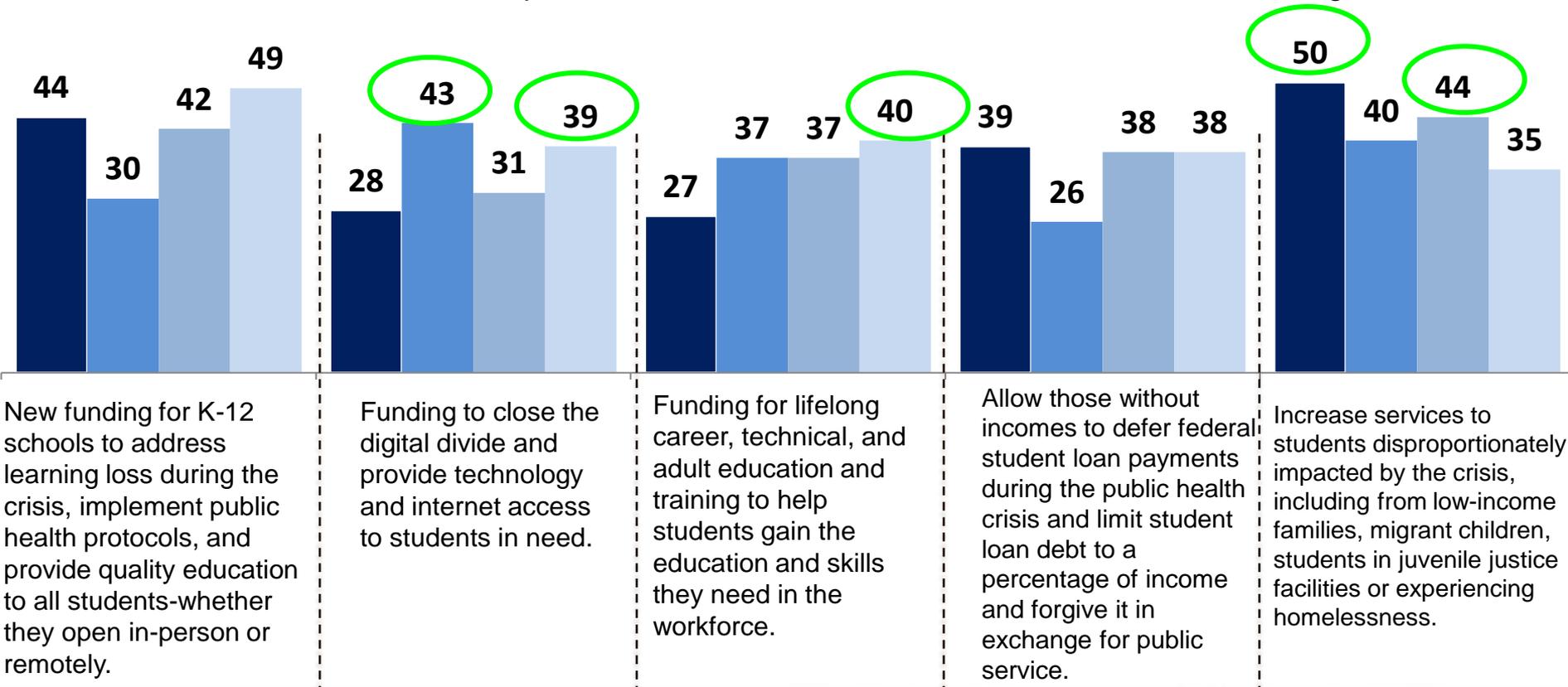
# Addressing inequality in education resonates across all base women, but with important variation in where that should be focused

Congress has proposed major new laws to deal with the pandemic and the economic crash and education. Please pick the THREE you would favor the most.

## EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### CORE EDUCATION MOVERS

■ African American women ■ Hispanic women ■ White millennial women ■ White working class women



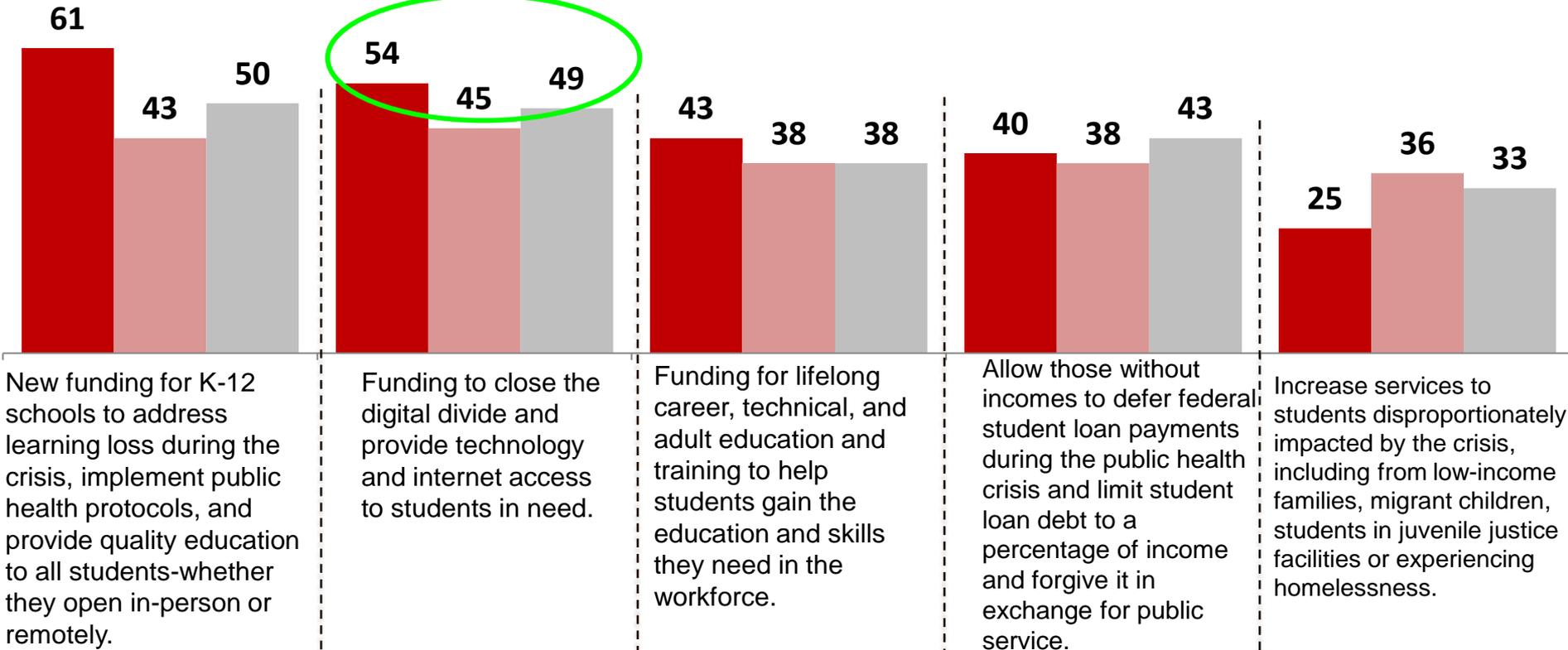
# Strong support across the board for funding to adapt to at-home learning and closing the digital divide.

Congress has proposed major new laws to deal with the pandemic and the economic crash and education. Please pick the THREE you would favor the most.

## EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### PERSUADABLE EDUCATION MOVERS

■ Republican ■ White working class men ■ Independent

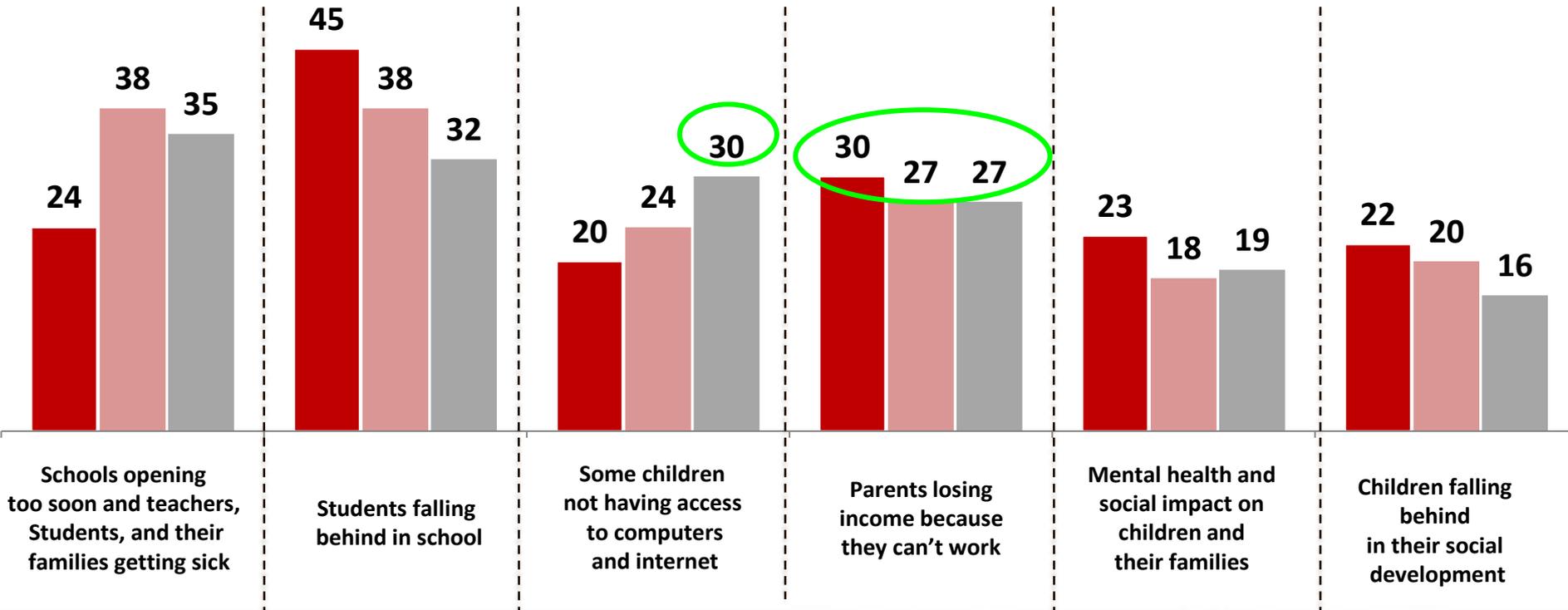


# Republicans, working class men, and independents differ on safety and falling behind, but more aligned on economic impact

(Thinking about education and schools in your state during the coronavirus crisis, which TWO of the following do you think are the most urgent issues facing students and their families?)

## EDUCATION CONCERNS IN PANDEMIC PERSUADABLE EDUCATION MOVERS

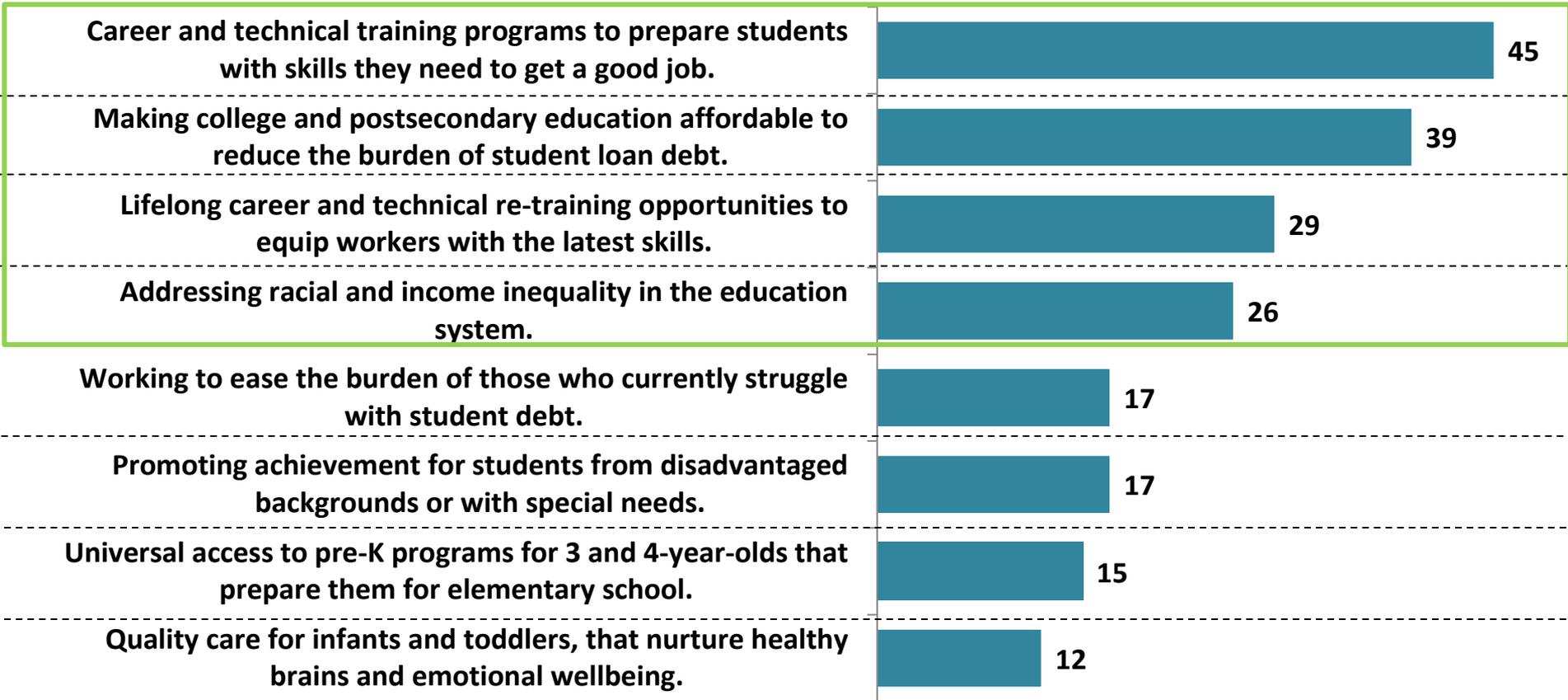
■ Republican      ■ White working class men      ■ Independent



# Skills and training, from K-12 through career, dominate the top tier of important issues along with affordable college

*Looking toward the future, beyond the coronavirus pandemic, please select the TWO education issues you think are most important for the next president and congress to address*

## URGENT EDUCATION PRIORITIES

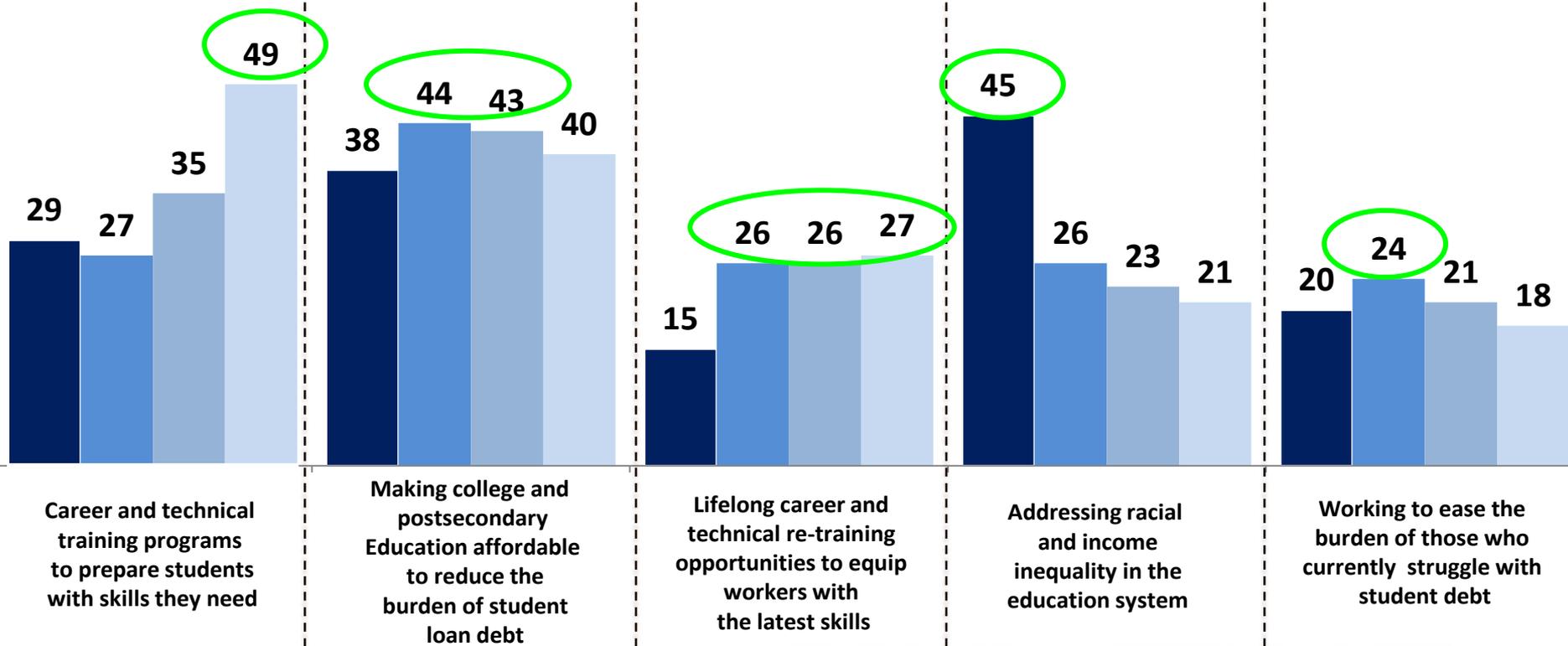


# College affordability is important to women who move on education, and strong focus on inequality among African American, particularly older women

Looking toward the future, beyond the coronavirus pandemic, please select the TWO education issues you think are most important for the next president and congress to address

## URGENT EDUCATION AGENDA CORE EDUCATION MOVERS

■ African American women ■ Hispanic women ■ White millennial women ■ White working class women



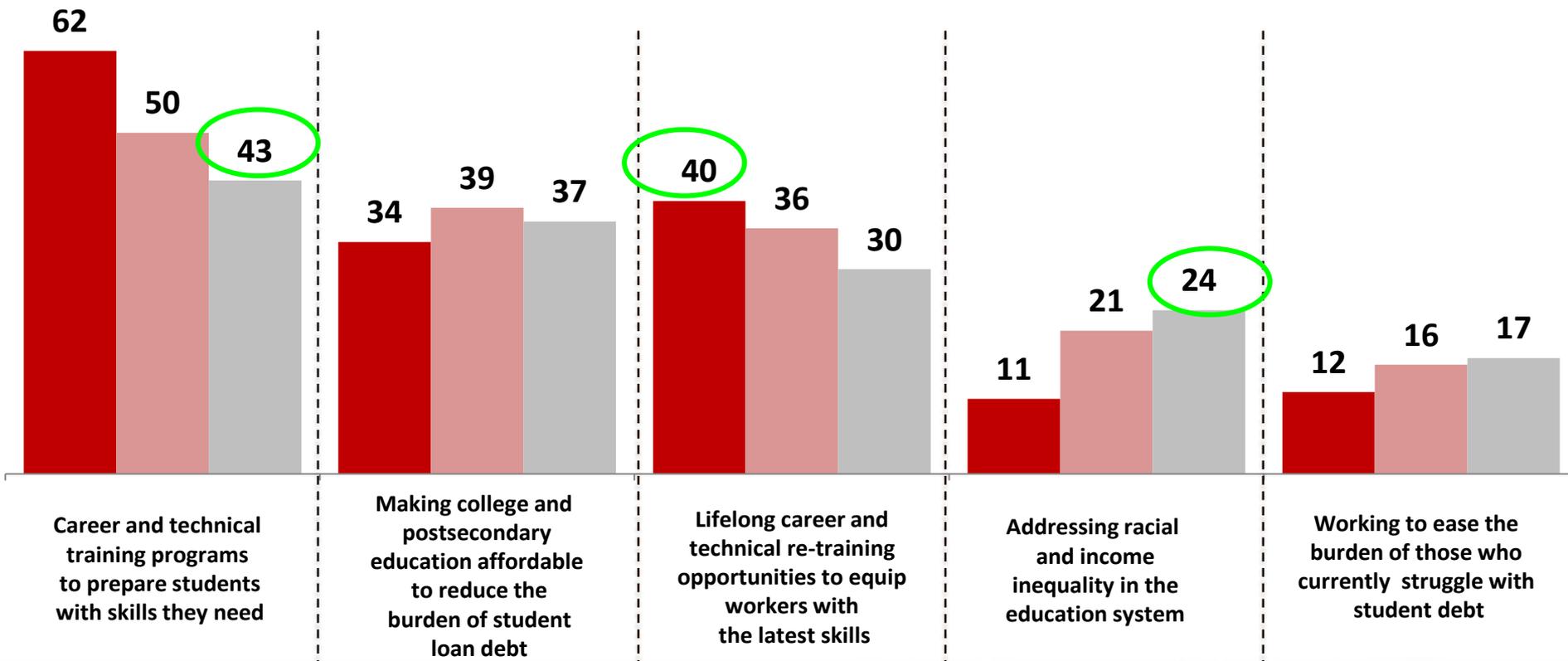
# Skills and workforce development really resonates with Independents. Republicans more responsive on re-training, and Independents on equity.

Looking toward the future, beyond the coronavirus pandemic, please select the TWO education issues you think are most important for the next president and congress to address

## URGENT EDUCATION AGENDA

### PERSUADABLE EDUCATION MOVERS

■ Republican ■ White working class men ■ Independent



# Top immediate reforms are redesign K-12, bridge digital divide, and with high unemployment, a massive re-training program on the scale of the GI Bill

*Let's say you wanted America to improve its current economic and healthcare challenges and overcome national polarization through big changes in the education system. Which THREE of the proposals below would you choose? -*

## TOP 3 BIG EDUCATION IDEAS

Redesign the pre-K and k-12 experience so it includes strong components of problem solving, academics, the arts, mental and physical health, living skills, civics, and community activities, integrated into in-school and out of school experiences, based on the best research.



Expand affordable internet access to all Americans to the necessary education and training materials and services including, and provide appropriate hardware and software as needed, so that people have access to the learning, training and services they need throughout their lives.



Recognize that this is the highest unemployment rate on record and use this opportunity to retrain America for the future. And just like the Congress did for returning GIs in WWII, create a massive re-training program for the 52 million unemployed or 30 million collecting benefits.



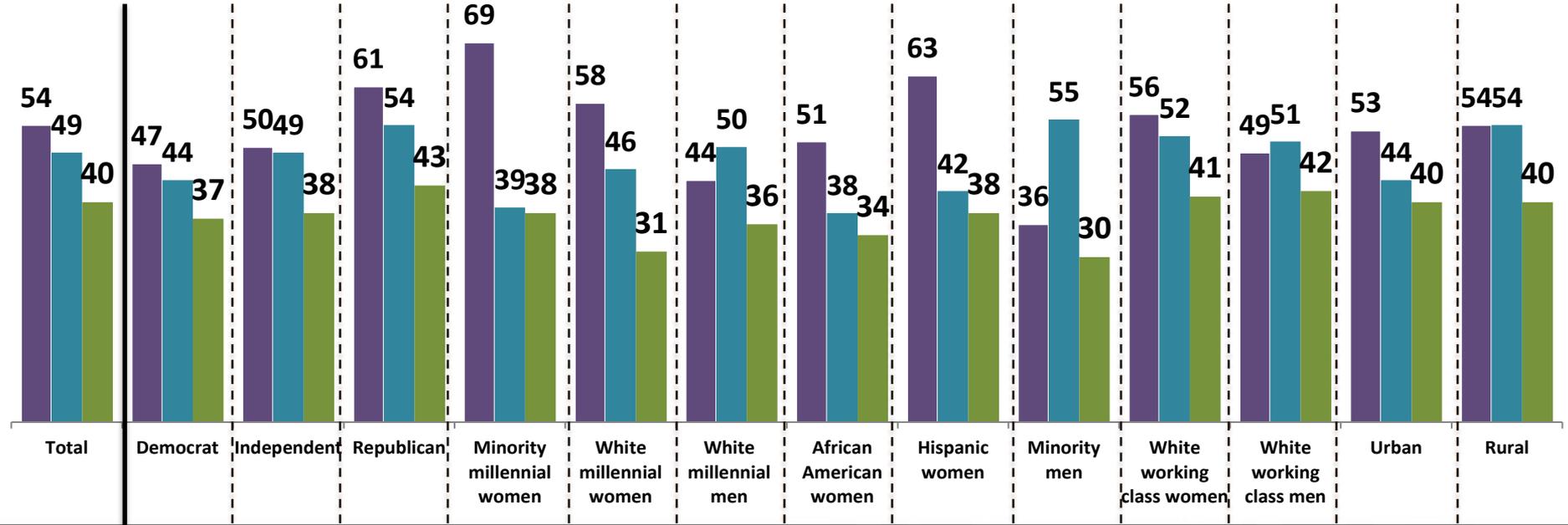
# Education reforms that invest in human potential, skills and workforce development, and equity have broad appeal across partisan lines

Let's say you wanted America to improve its current economic and healthcare challenges and overcome national polarization through big changes in the education system. Which THREE of the proposals below would you choose?

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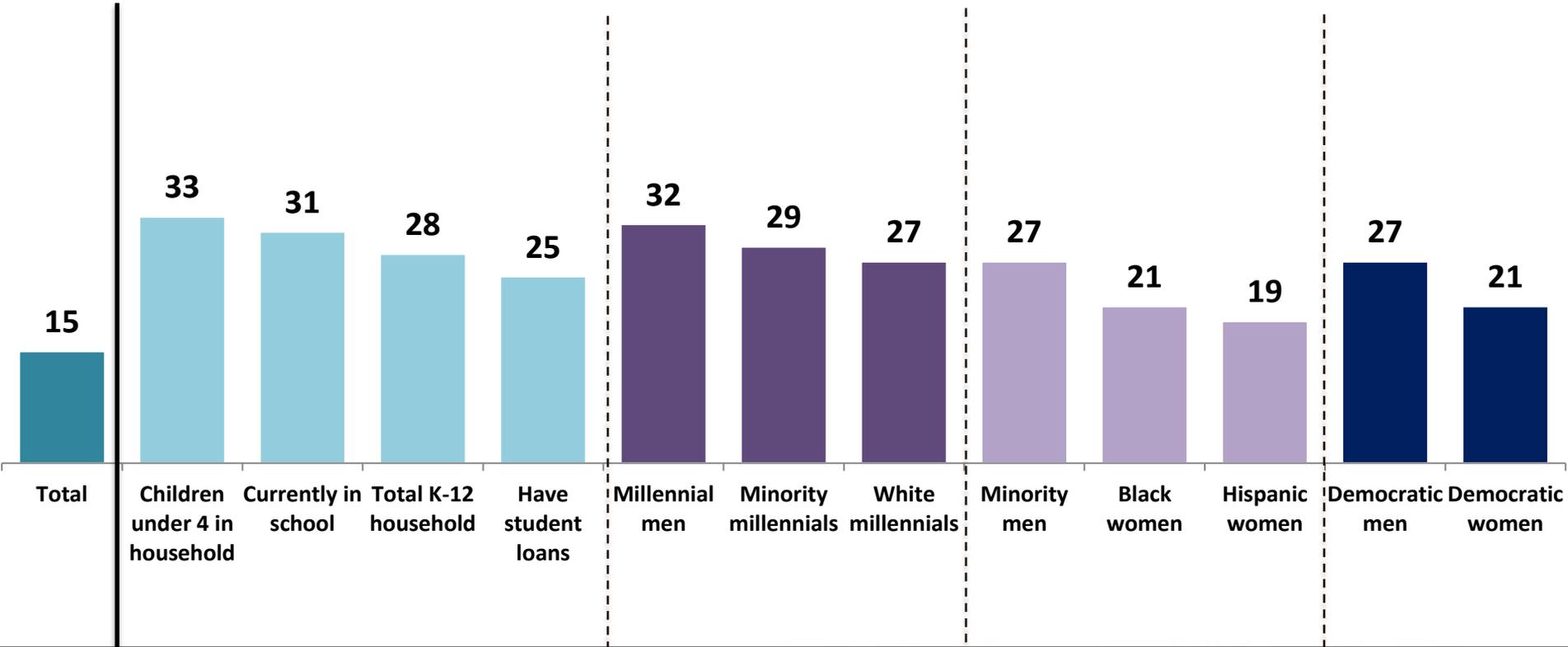
# Grassroots

# Voters most likely to get involved in a movement to make education a national priority are disproportionately young with strong relationship to system

Would you personally consider becoming involved with an organization that works to elevate education as a national priority?

## POTENTIAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT

% WOULD DEFINITELY GET INVOLVED



# CONTACT US



## DEMOCRACY CORPS

1440 G Street. NW  
Floor 10  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 250 3645

[www.democracycorps.com](http://www.democracycorps.com)

## GREENBERG RESEARCH

1440 G Street NW  
Floor 10  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 499 6901

[www.greenbergresearch.com](http://www.greenbergresearch.com)

## EDUCATION CHAMPIONS

Press Contact: Anthony Perez  
Email: [aperez@rabengroup.com](mailto:aperez@rabengroup.com)  
Phone: 714-623-2650

<https://edchampions.org/>