



# Findings from Polling of 18-29 Year Old Adults

September 2010

THE TARRANCE GROUP

ANZALONE LISZT  
RESEARCH  
POLLING • ANALYSIS • STRATEGY

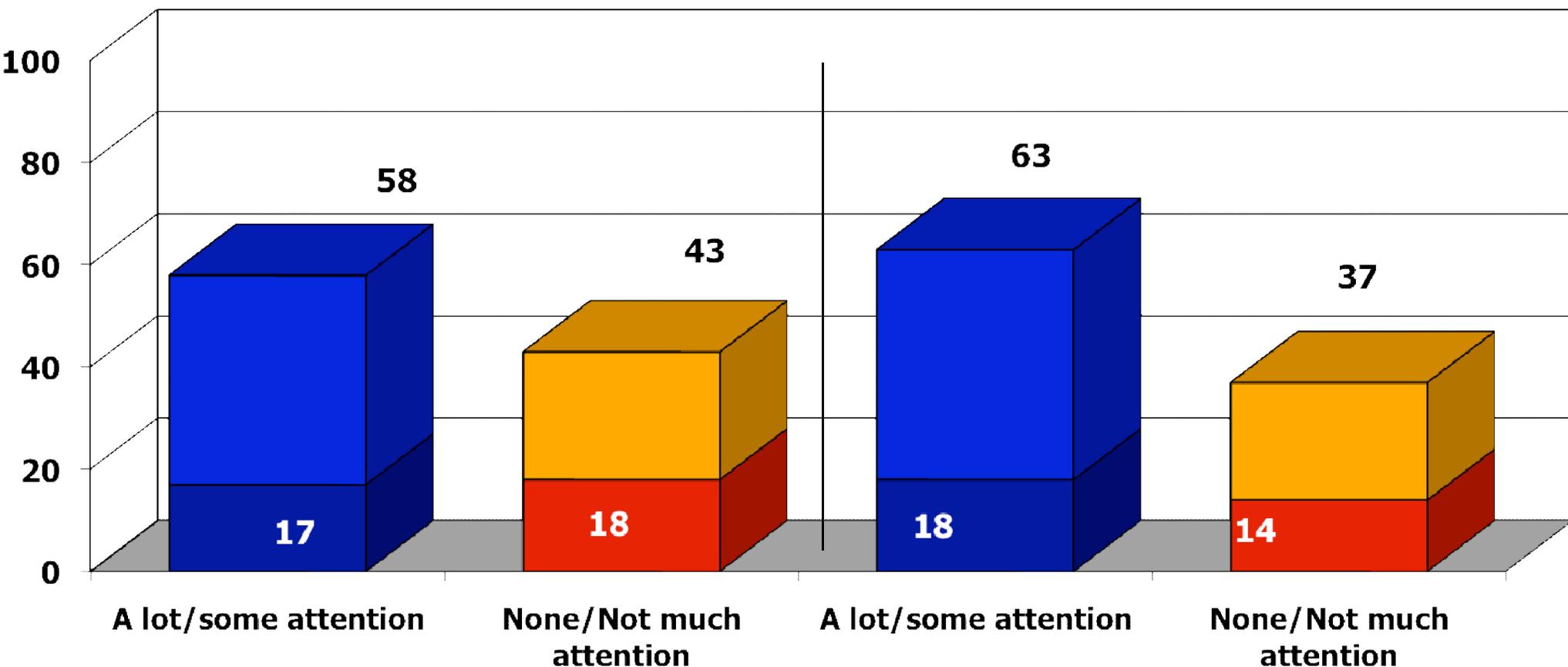
# METHODOLOGY

- The national survey was conducted August 24-30, 2010 and consisted of 700 phone interviews (500 landline and 200 cell phone) and 300 online interviews, for a total sample of 1,000 interviews with 18-29 year olds.
- The margin of error for the nationwide poll is 3.7%
- Five, 300 sample statewide polls were also conducted in Colorado, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania between August 25-September 6, 2010. These polls were conducted entirely online, with the exception of 100 landline interviews conducted in Colorado.

# LIKELIHOOD OF VOTING

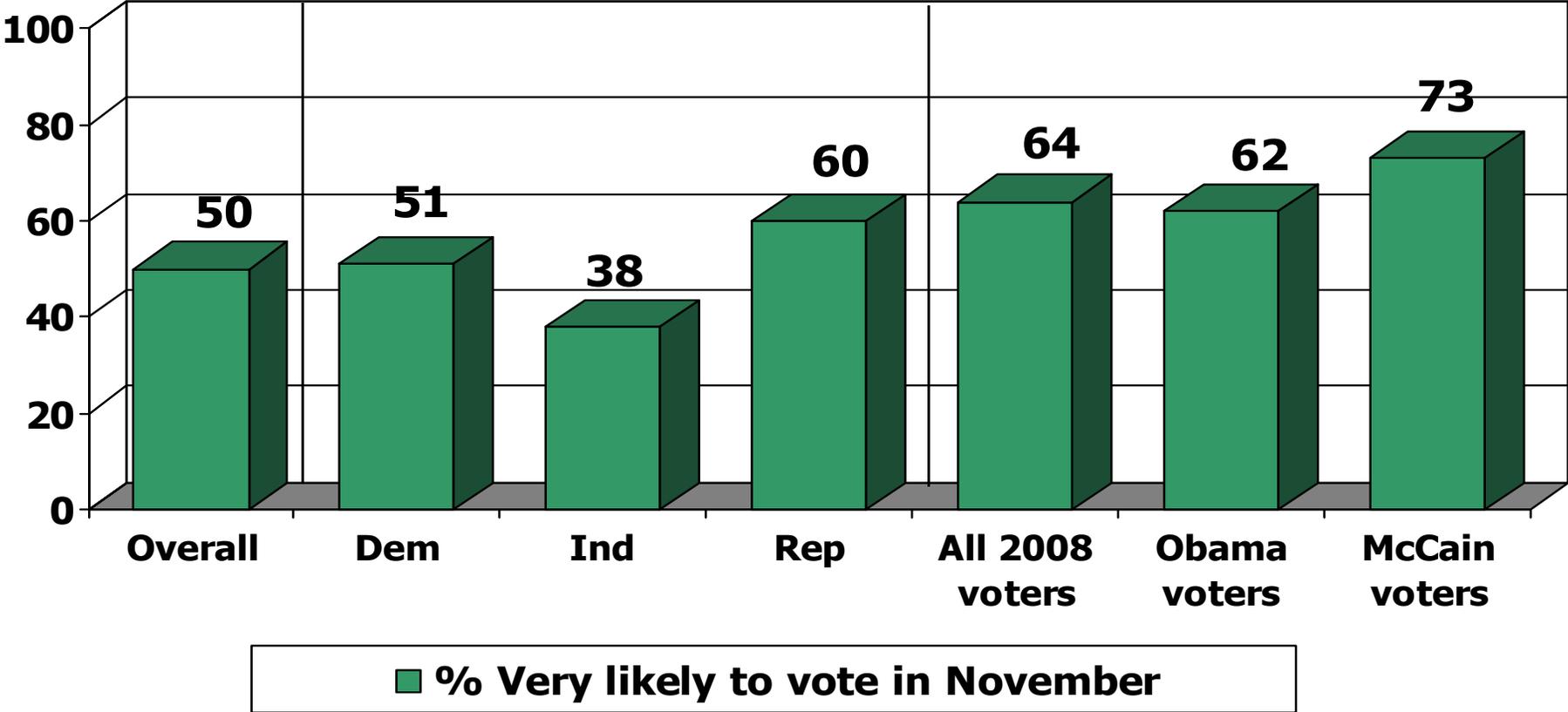
Compared to 2006, young voters are paying slightly less attention to the upcoming midterm elections, but still, a firm majority of 58% indicates that they are paying attention to the current campaign season.

**Attention to November Elections: 2010 vs. 2006**



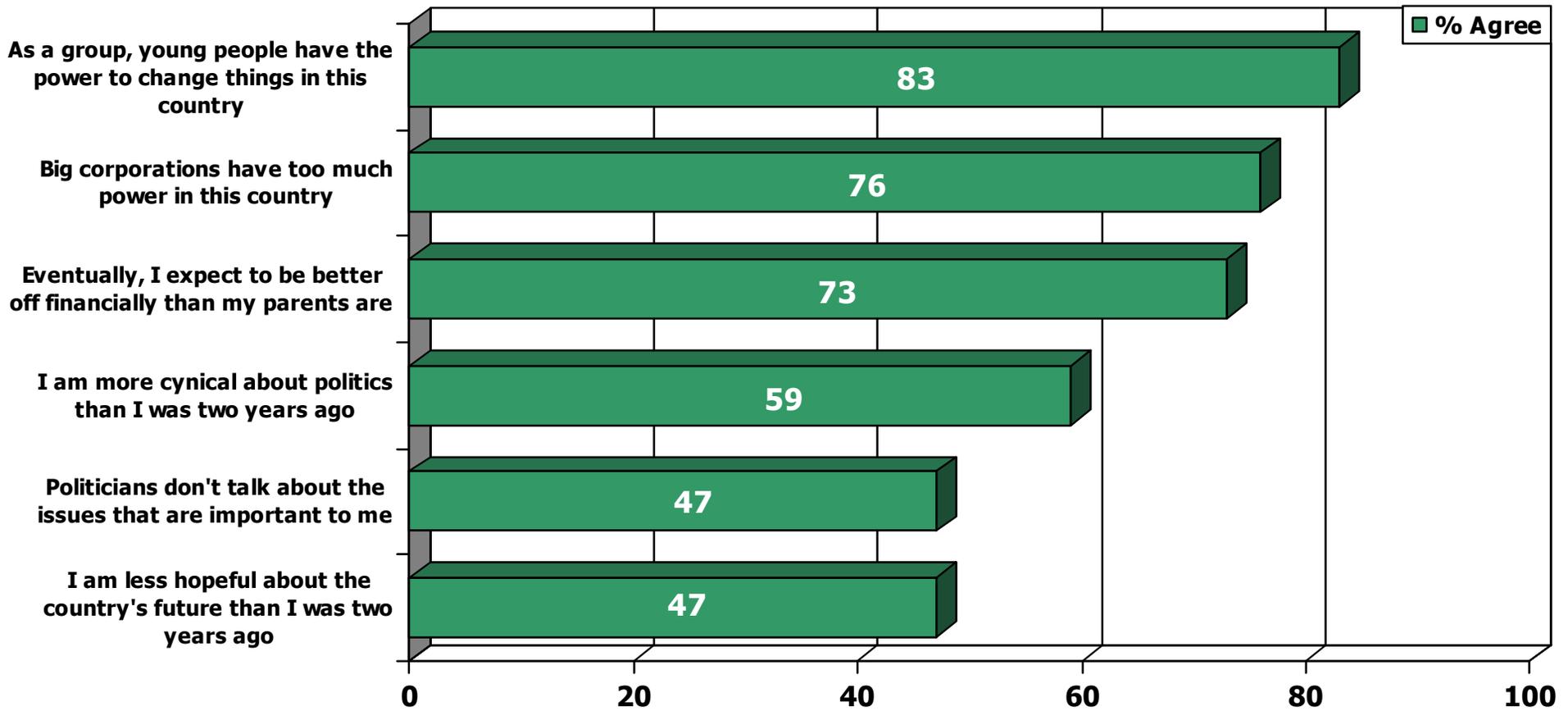
Half of these adults say that they are very likely to vote this November, and when you add the somewhat likely, a full 77% are likely to vote. Among, those who voted in 2008, nearly two-thirds (64%) of indicate that they are very likely to vote again this cycle, with 90% saying they are likely to vote overall. Republicans appear to be more energized, as 73% of McCain voters (compared to 62% of Obama voters) and 60% of Republicans (compared to 51% of Democrats) indicate that they are very likely to vote. Enthusiasm is lower among Independents, as just 38% indicate that they are very likely to go to the polls on election day.

**Likelihood of Voting: % Very Likely by Party and 2008 Vote**



Though nearly 60% say that they are more cynical about politics than they were two years ago and over three-quarters (76%) say big corporations have too much power, young adults are still optimistic about the country and their ability to bring change. More than four in five (83%) still believe that young people have the power to change things in this country, nearly as high as the 89% who held that belief two years ago. Likewise, less than half agree that they are less hopeful about the country's future than they were two years ago. They are also optimistic about their own future, with 73% believing that they will be better off financially than their parents.

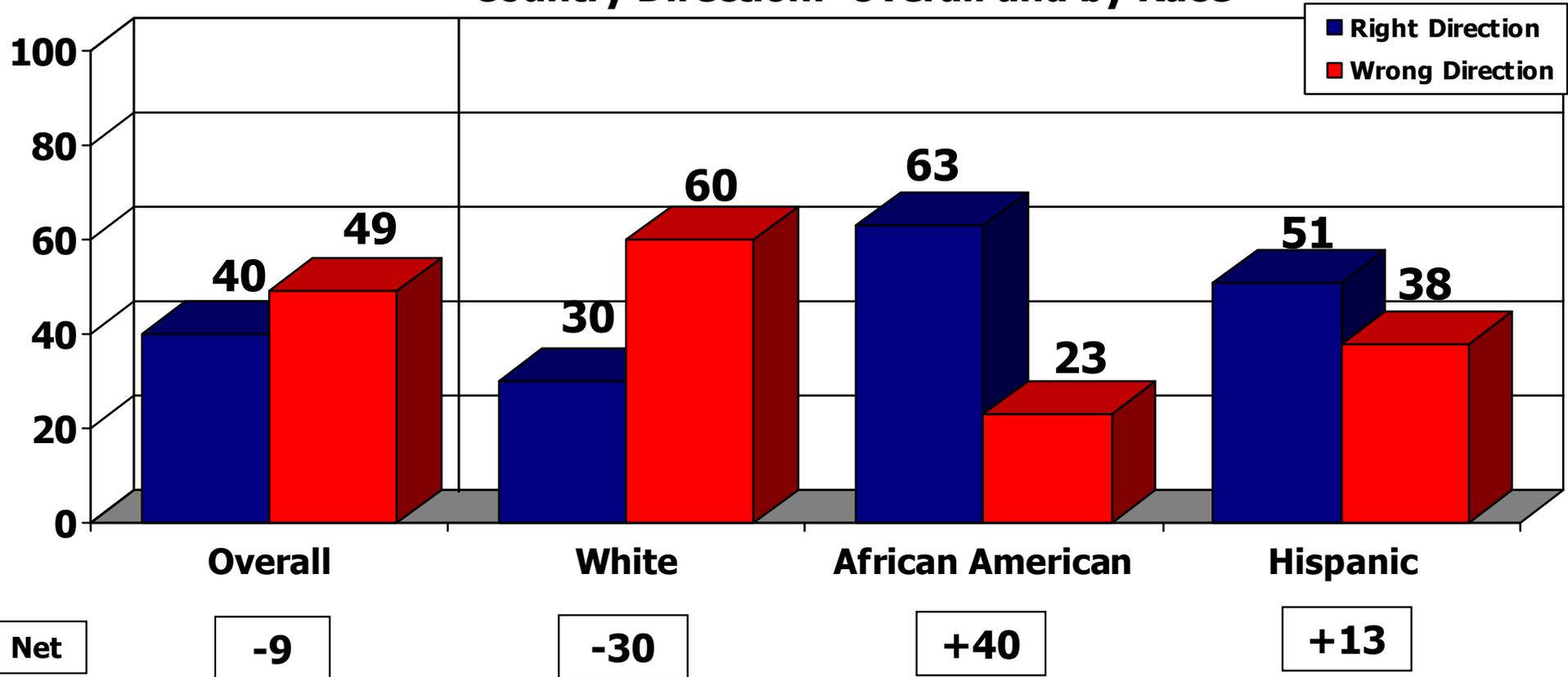
### Views on Politics and the Future



# ISSUES AND CONCERNS

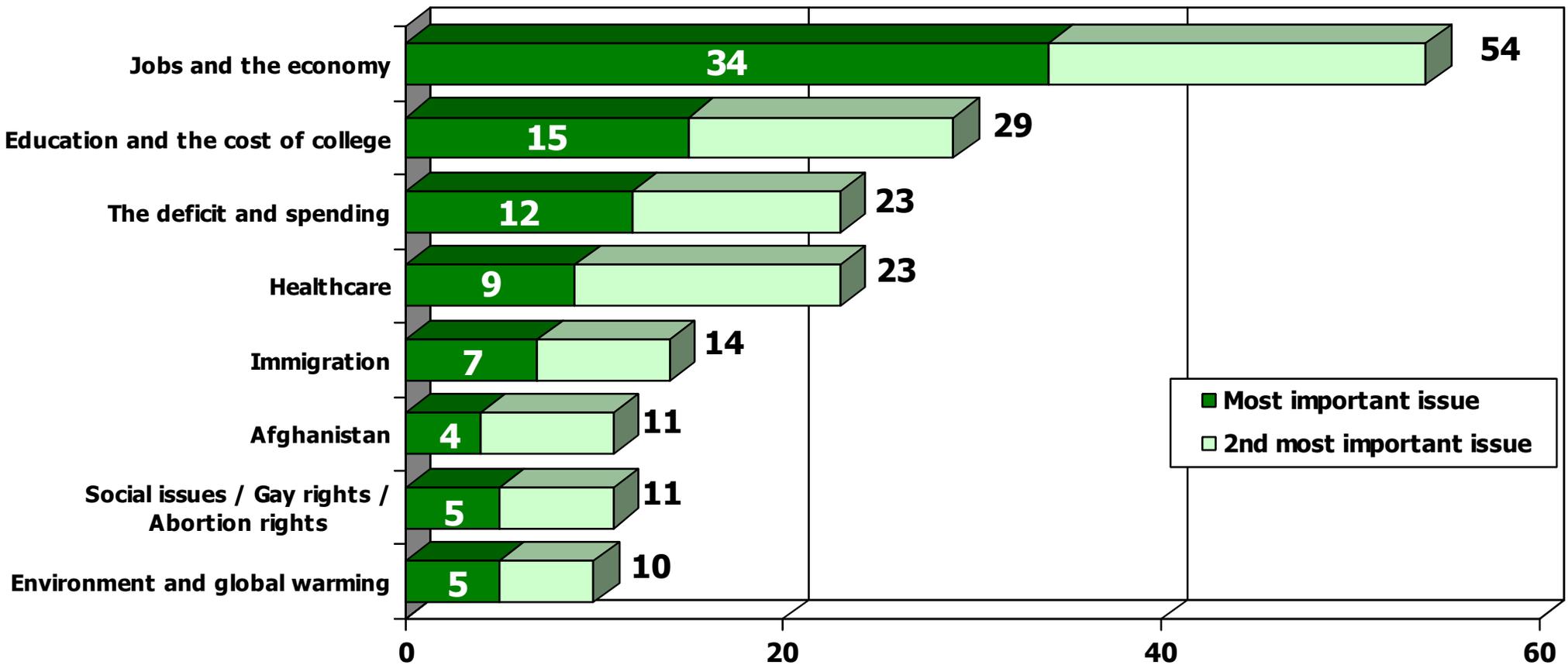
A plurality of adults under 30 believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction (49% wrong / 40% right), but they are not quite as pessimistic as older Americans. Much of this is due to the larger share of minorities among 18-29 year olds, as they are more upbeat about the country's current path, while younger whites believe it is headed in the wrong direction by a 2:1 margin (60% wrong / 30% right).

**Country Direction: Overall and by Race**



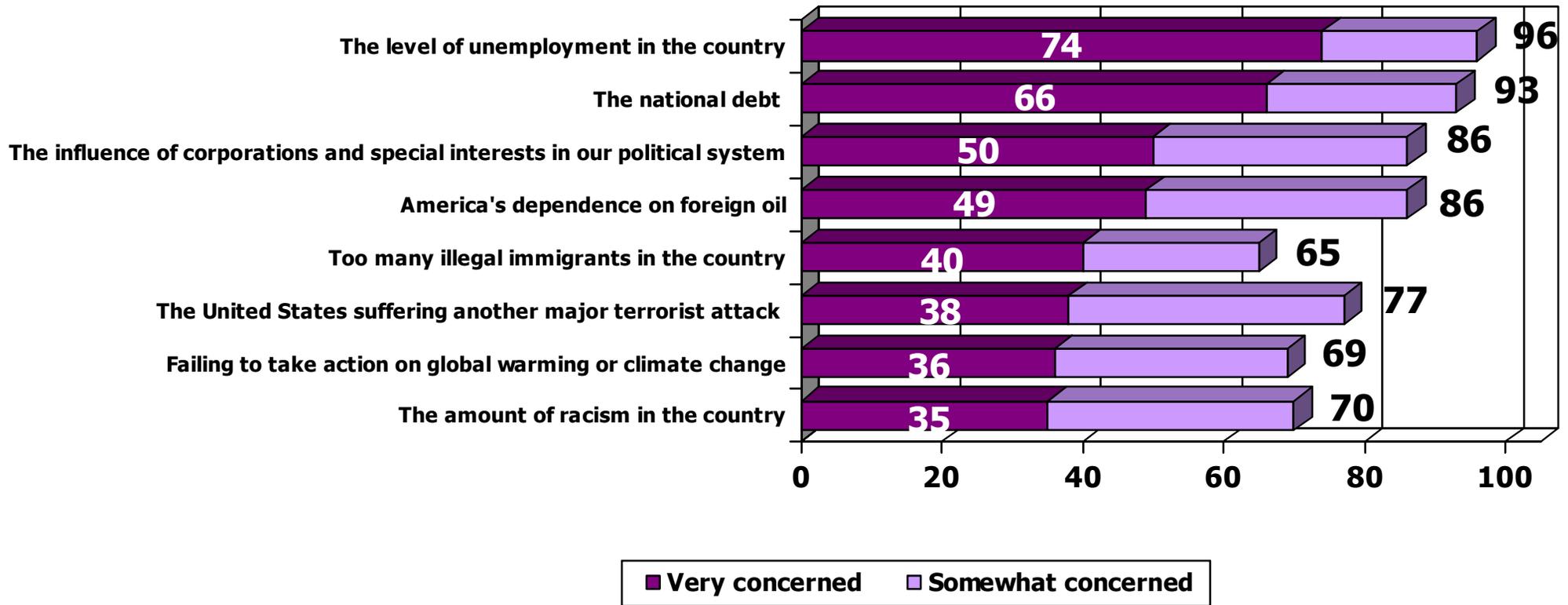
When we asked these young adults to choose the most important two issues from a list of twelve ranging from healthcare to race relations to energy policy, the economy and jobs clearly emerged as the dominant issue across every demographic group, with over half of 18-29 year olds overall identifying it as one of their top two issues. The second most frequently cited issue – education and the cost of college – finished well behind, with 29% naming it as one of their top two issues, followed by the deficit and spending and healthcare.

### Most Important Issue for Politicians to Address



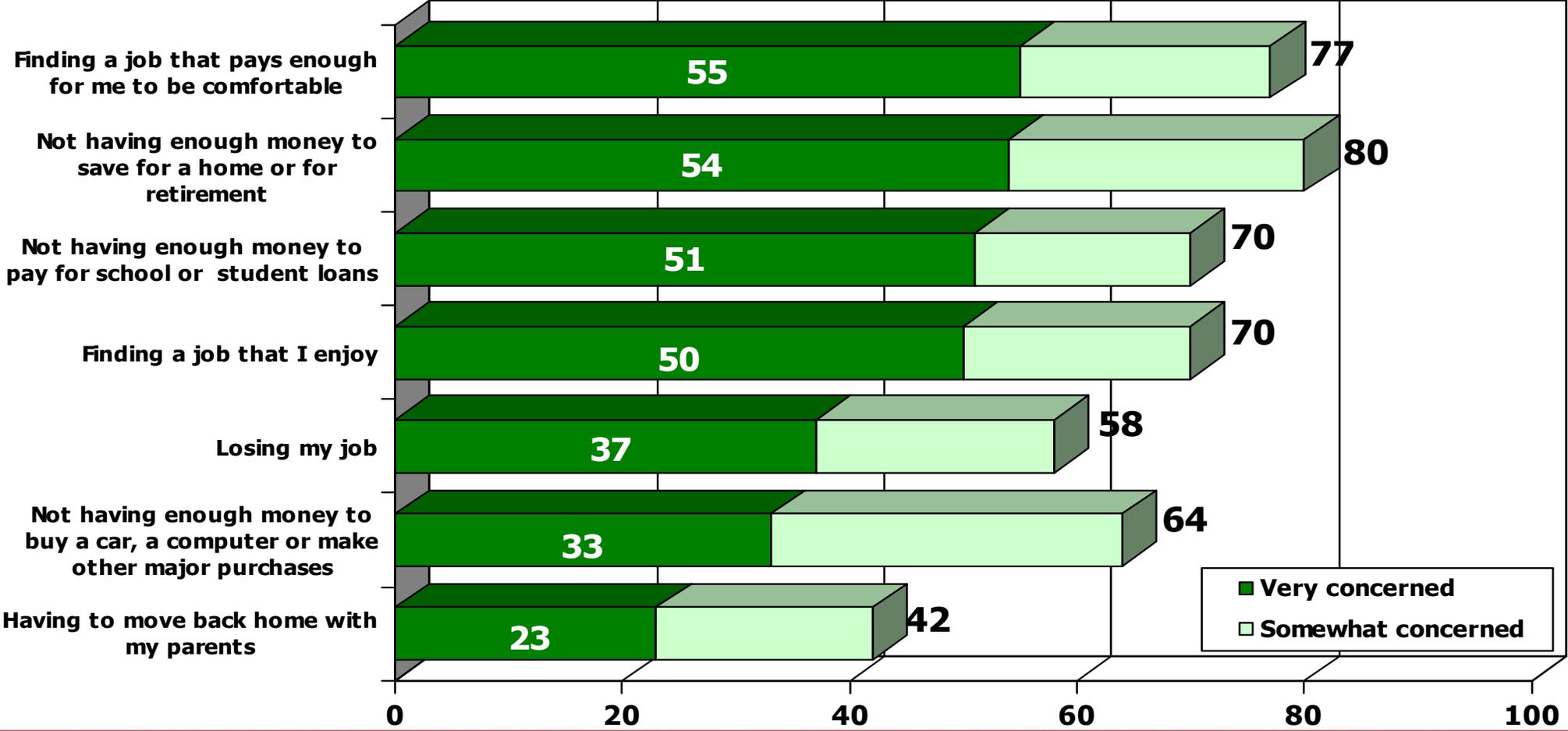
When asked about concerns at the national level, the nation's unemployment rate was the dominant issue, with nearly three-quarters of young adults very concerned (74%). The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates young people ages 16 to 24 have twice the unemployment rate as the rest of the country, and their anxiety is clearly showing here. Falling closely behind was fears over the national debt, which two-thirds cited as a serious concern (66%). Corporate influence in our political system and the country's dependence on foreign oil were also major worries, with half very concerned. Failing to take action against global warming, illegal immigration, racism and terrorism were also sources of anxiety, but generated less intensity.

### National Concerns



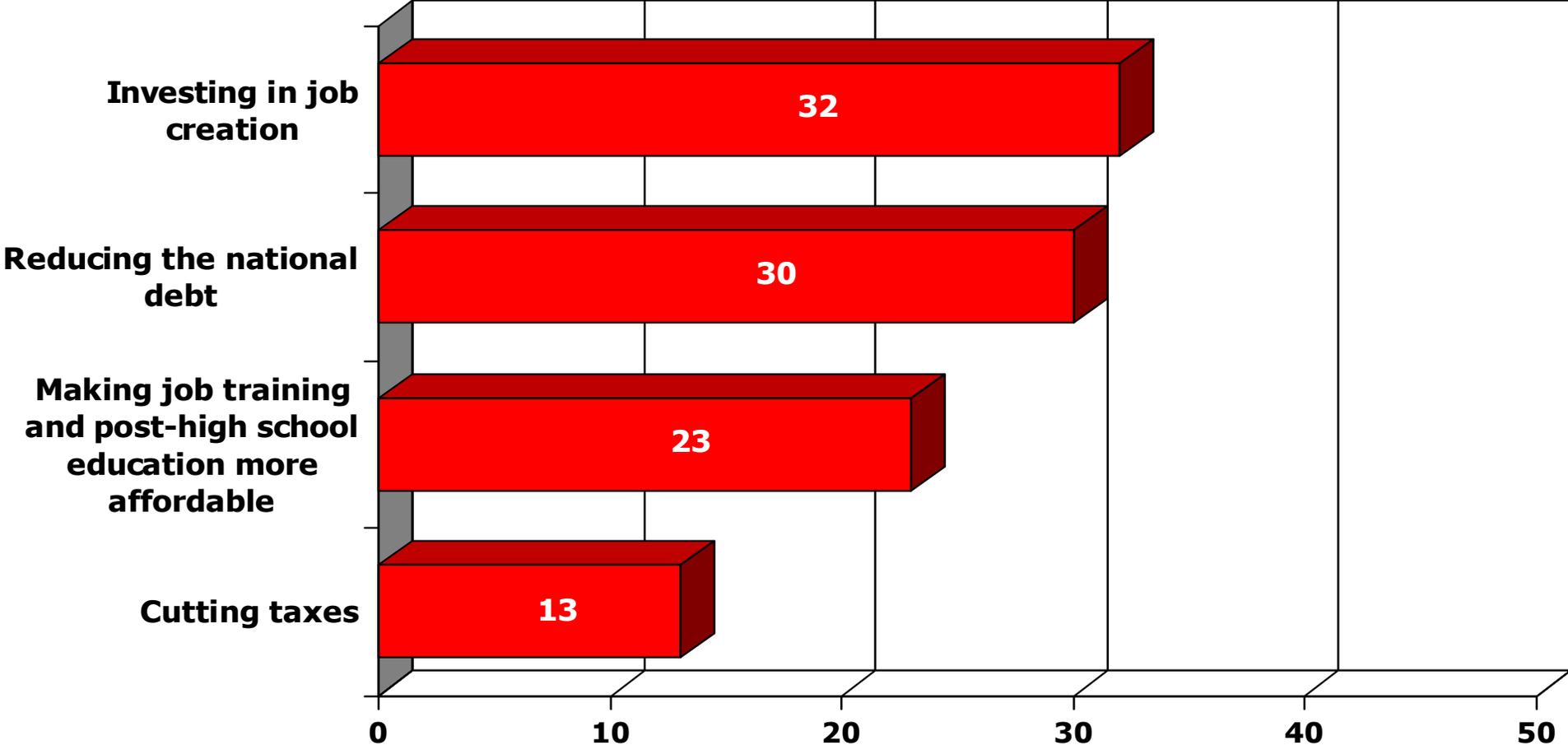
When digging in to economic concerns, they are optimistic about their long term financial success but the tough economy has made 18-29 year olds anxious about their ability to find a job that will allow them to live comfortably, save for a home or retirement, pay off their student loans or that will allow them to enjoy work. At least half of these young adults are very concerned about these prospects, with at least 70% expressing some concern over them. Losing their job or not having enough to make major purchases also concern a strong majority, though are not as intense as the others.

### Personal Economic Concerns



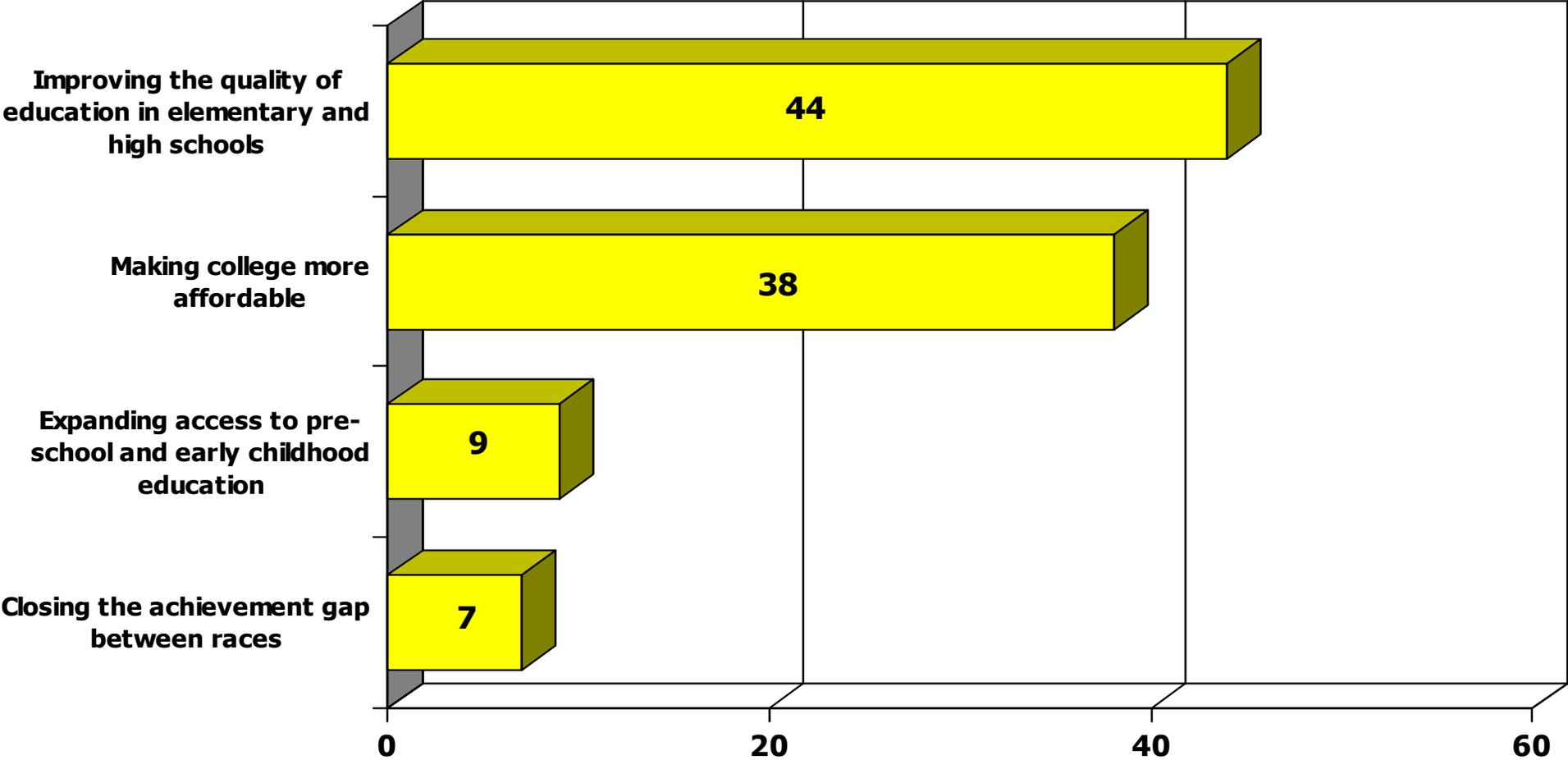
When posed with four options of what the current focus of our economic policy should be, investing in job creation and reducing the debt emerged as bigger priorities than making education more affordable or cutting taxes. Among whites, job creation and the national debt were particularly dominant, while minorities preferred job creation first and foremost, while giving equal weight to the debt and making education and job training more affordable.

### Most Important Aspect of Economic Policy to Address



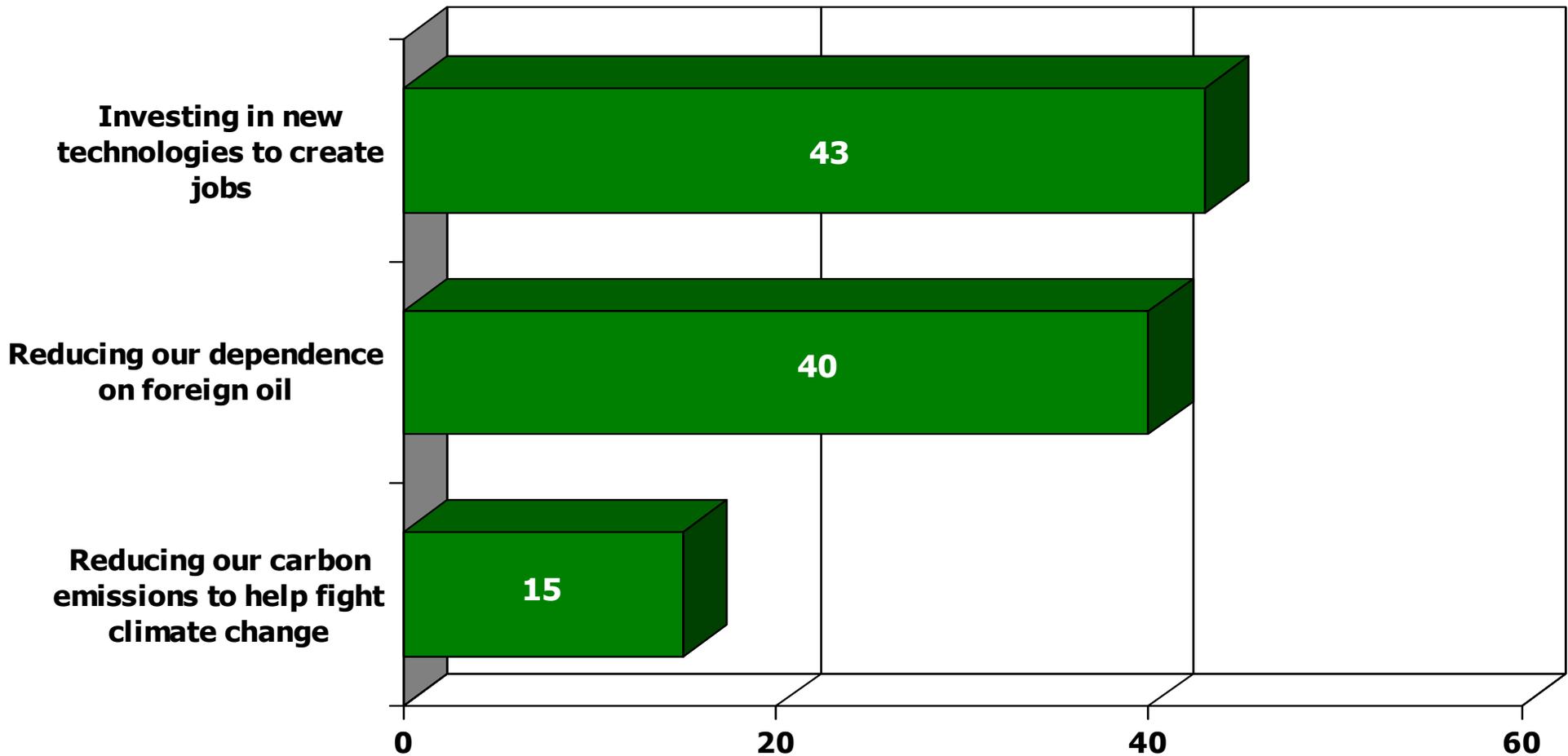
Despite their considerable concern over being able to pay for school and their student loans, young adults say that when it comes to education policy, our biggest priority should be improving the quality of education in elementary and high schools. This was particularly true among whites and those not currently in college, while those in college and minorities were more likely to focus on college affordability. Closing the achievement gap between the races finished below the other three options not only overall, but among African Americans and Hispanics as well.

### Most Important Aspect of Education Policy to Address



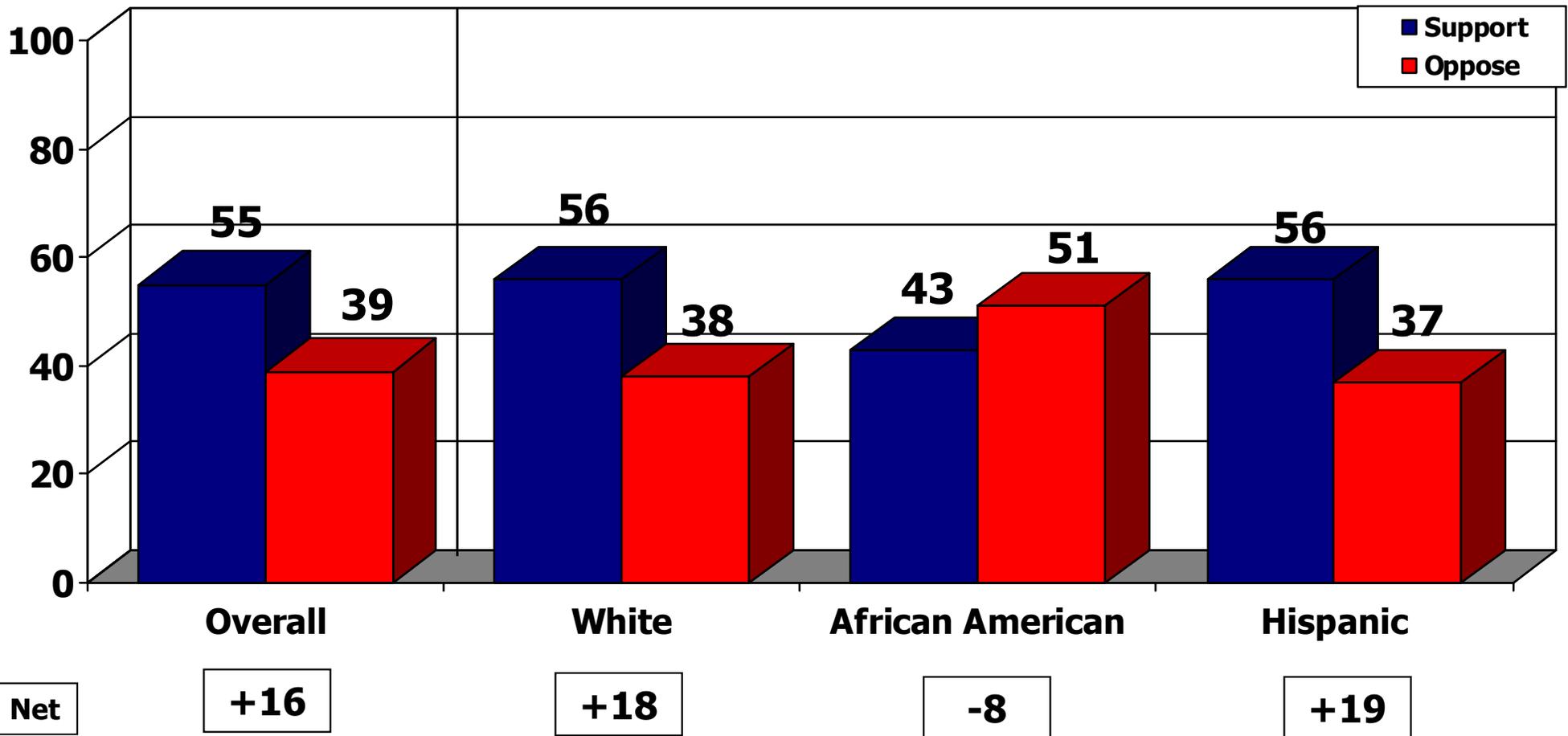
When it comes to what the focus of our energy policy should be, investing in new technologies to create jobs and reducing our dependence on foreign oil were clearly preferred to focusing on combating climate change, both overall and across demographic groups. Reducing our dependence on foreign oil was most popular among whites, while African Americans and minorities were more likely to focus on new investments to create jobs.

### Most Important Aspect of Energy Policy to Address



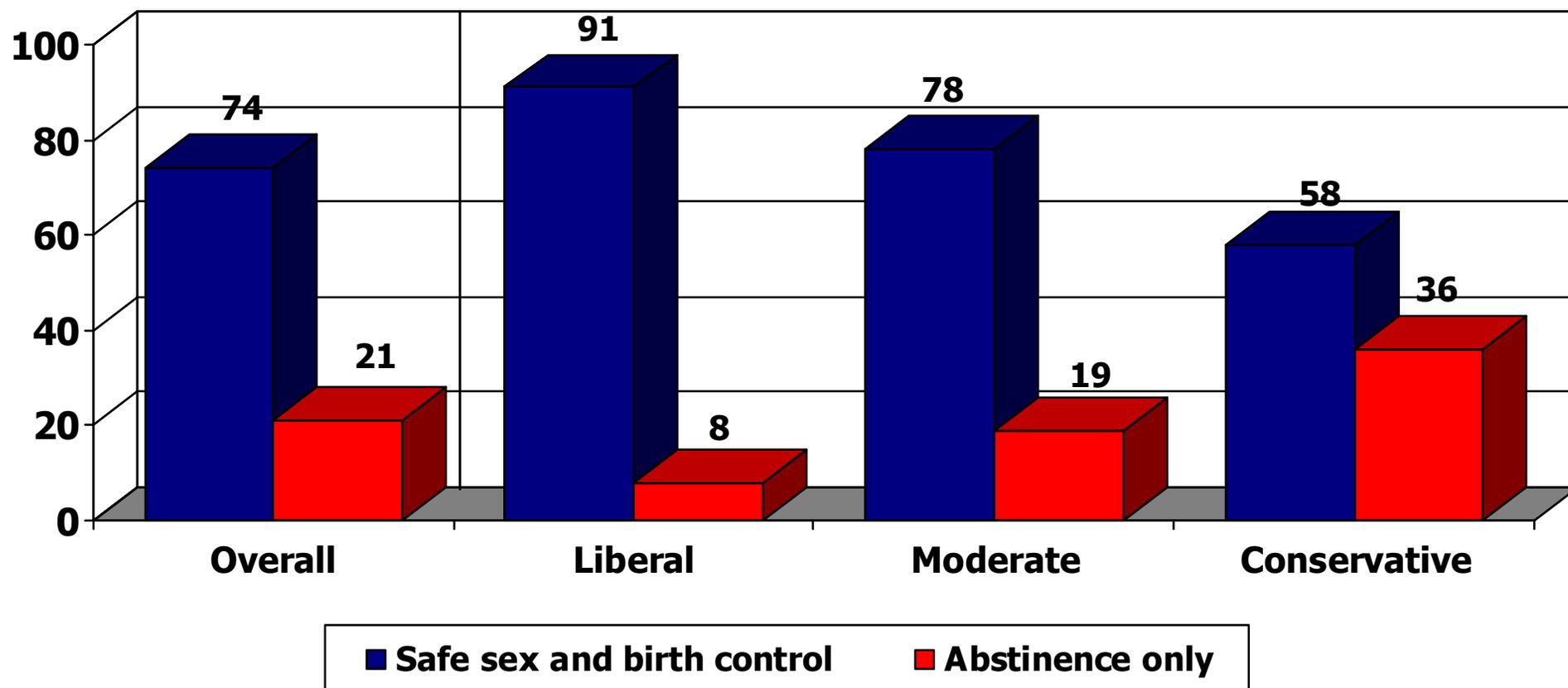
A strong majority of these young adults support legalizing gay marriage (55%). Hispanics are just as supportive of legalization as whites, but a narrow majority of African Americans are opposed. Democrats and Independents are also very supportive, though Republicans are against legalization by a more than 2:1 margin.

### Support for Legalizing Gay Marriage: Overall and by Race



When 18-29 year olds are asked to choose whether they believe teaching about safe-sex and birth control or abstinence-only in schools is the best approach to reducing teen pregnancy, they side resoundingly with safe-sex and birth control (74% to 21%). This position spans ideologies, with even 58% of conservatives siding with safe-sex and birth control.

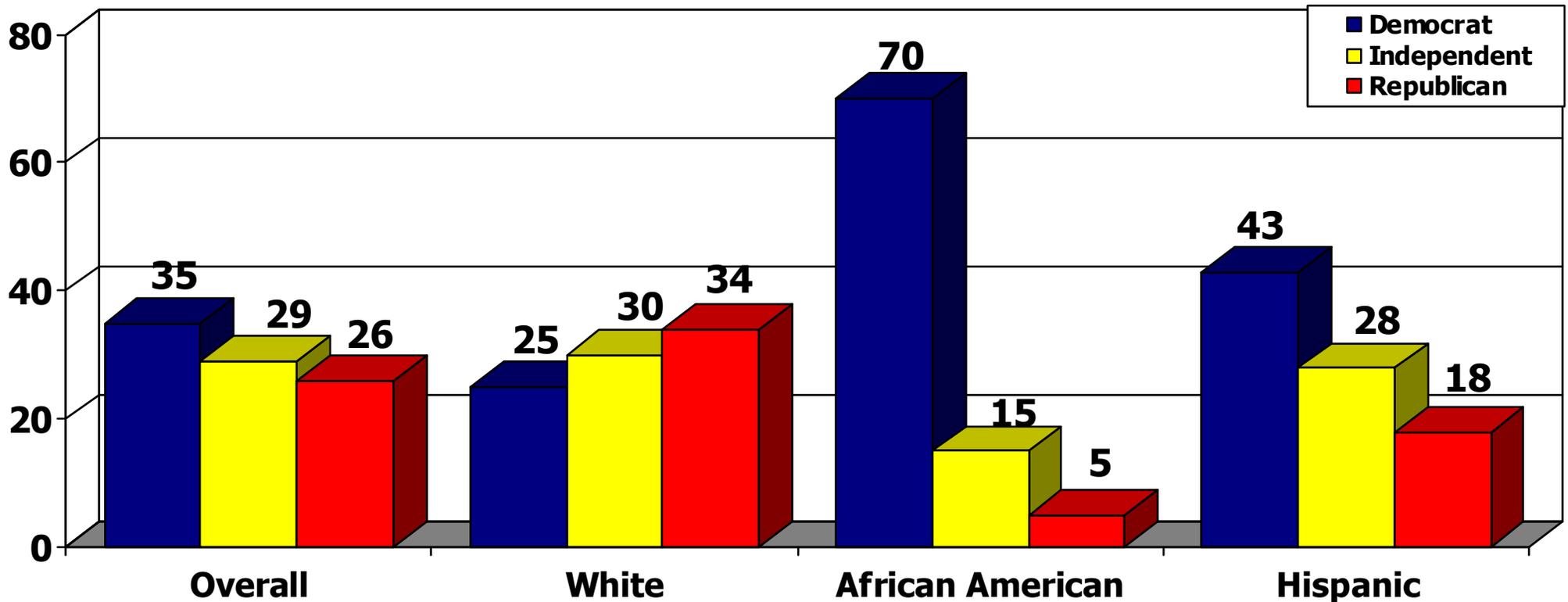
### Best Approach to Reducing Teen Pregnancy: Teaching Safe Sex vs. Abstinence Only



# VIEWS OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND FIGURES

Democrats now hold a 9-point advantage on party identification (35% to 26%), which is down from the 18-point edge they held over Republicans on party ID (41% to 23%) in 2008. Most of this decline is due to whites moving towards Republicans. Whites now identify with Republicans by a 9-point margin (34% to 25%), while younger African Americans and Hispanics are still solidly Democratic.

### Party Identification: Overall and by Race



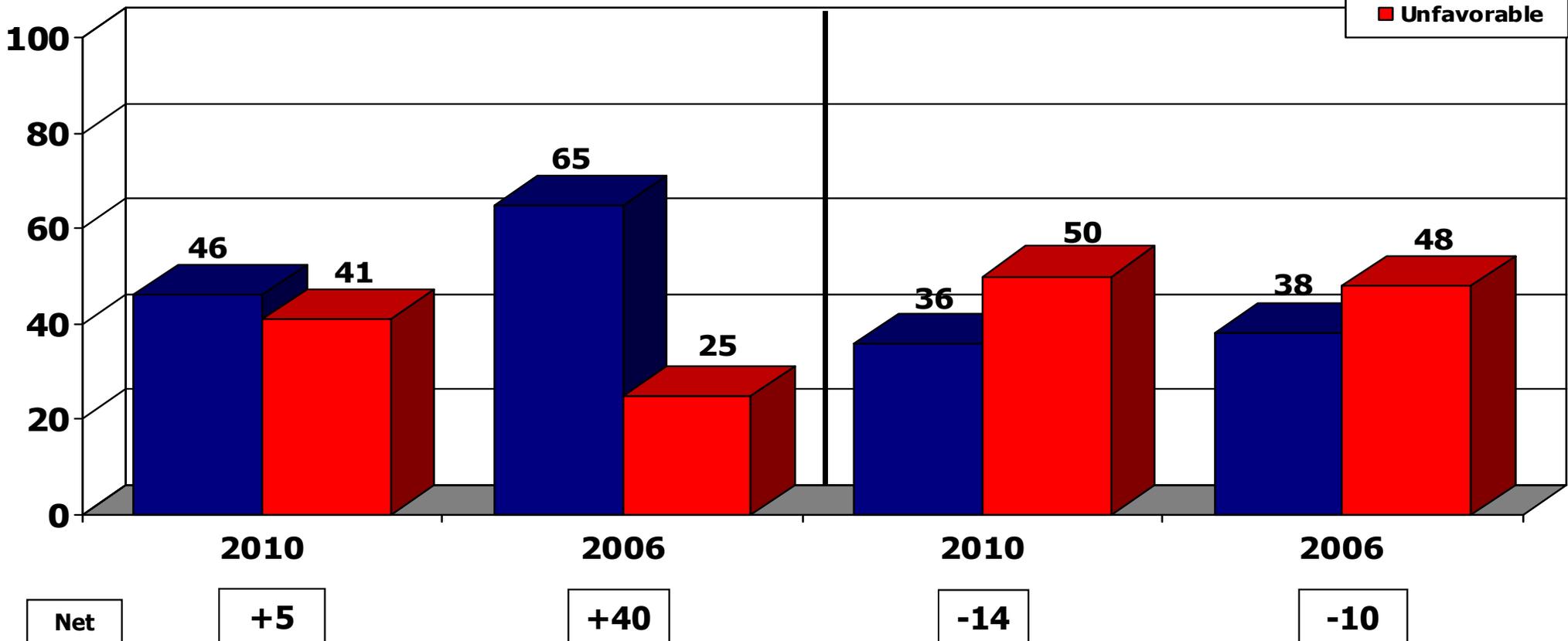
Young adults still rate the Democratic party more favorably (46% to 41% unfavorable) than the Republican party (36% favorable to 50% unfavorable), though the Democrats' current advantage represents a steep decline from the previous midterm elections in 2006 (65%). The Republicans' favorability meanwhile has been virtually unchanged.

### Shift in Party Favorability Since 2006

The Democratic Party

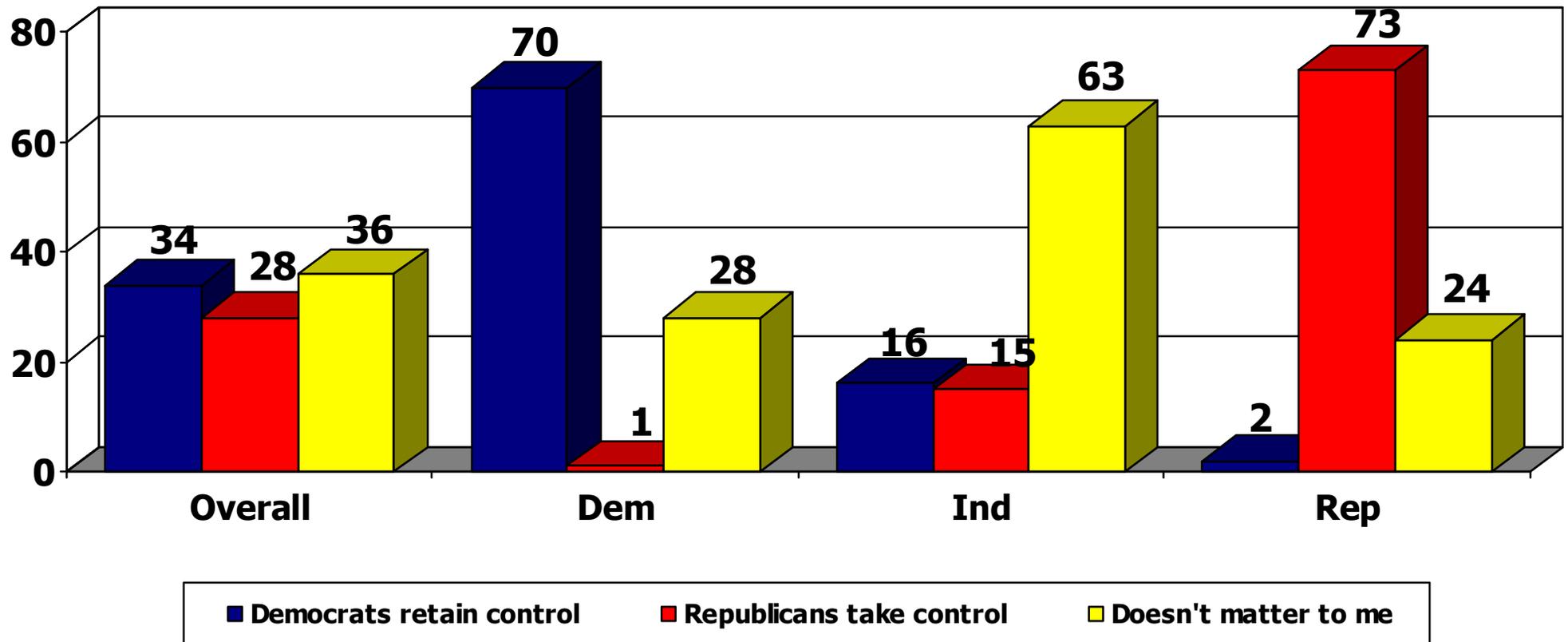
The Republican Party

■ Favorable  
■ Unfavorable



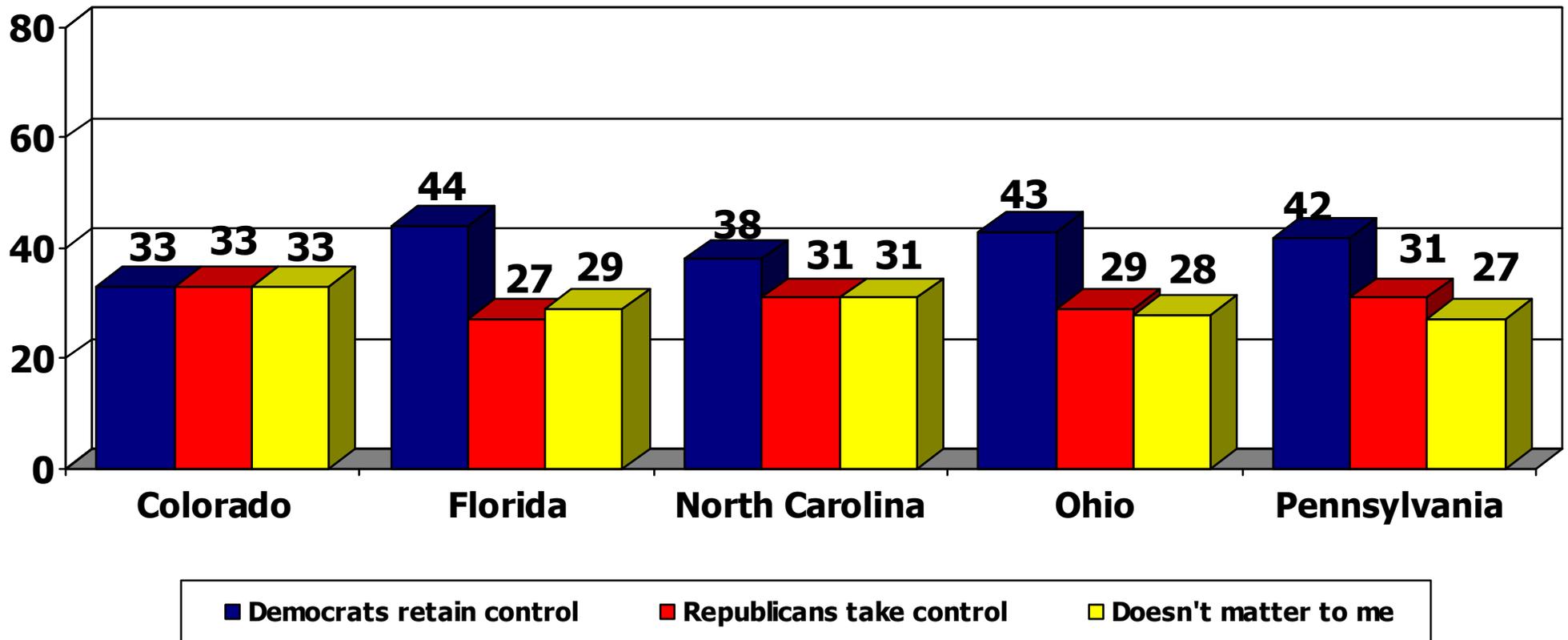
When asked whether they would prefer Democrats to keep control of Congress or for Republicans to assume the reigns, a plurality of 18-29 year olds say that they don't really care. While those who identify with a party clearly express a preference, nearly two-thirds of Independents say they are indifferent to which party is in control.

### Preferred Control of Congress: Overall and by Party



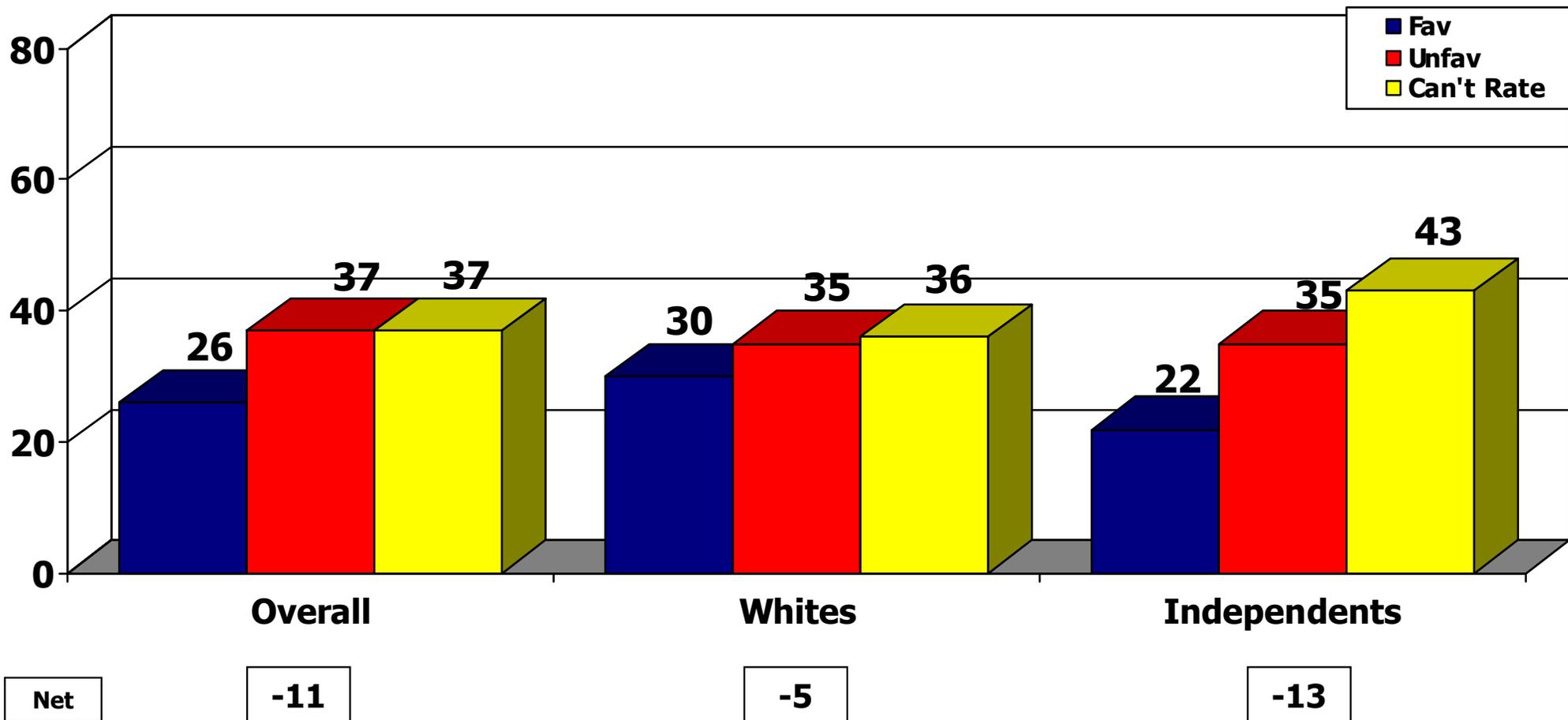
Democrats fared a little better in separate polling conducted in five states, with solid pluralities preferring that they maintained control in four out of the five states. Still, in no state did a majority prefer the Democrats to retain control, and in Colorado, young adults were evenly split.

### Preferred Control of Congress: By State



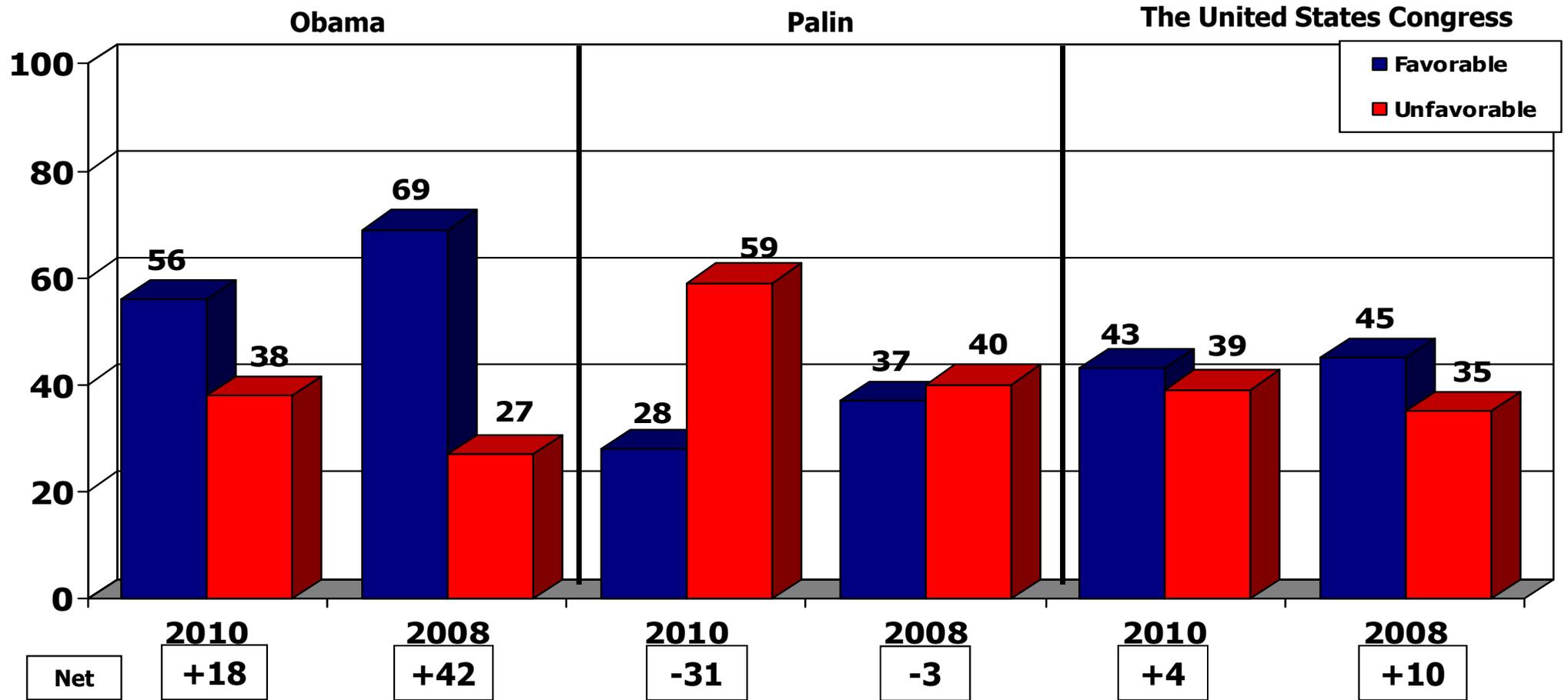
Despite all its attention in the press, over a third of young adults (37%) are not familiar enough with the Tea Party to rate it. Those that do rate it do so negatively by an 11-point margin (37% to 26%), with both whites and Independents viewing it unfavorably.

### Tea Party Favorability



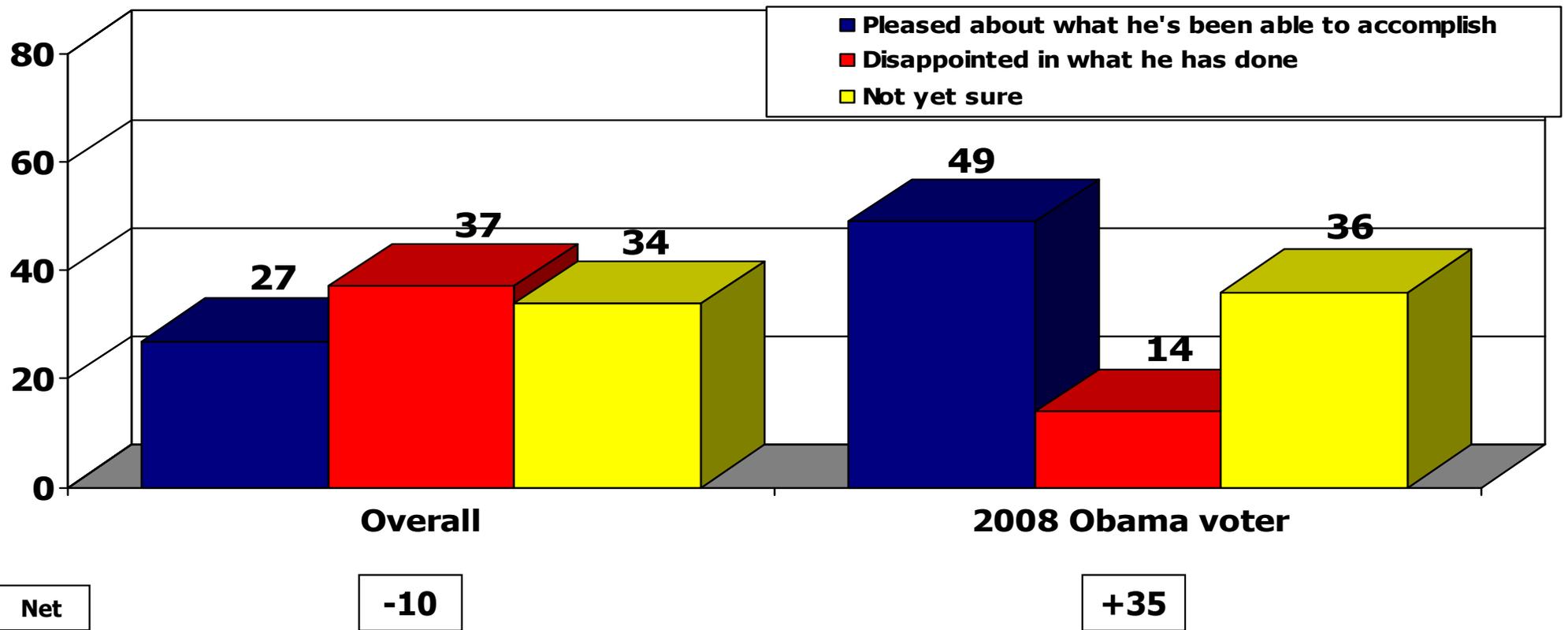
Views of President Obama and Sarah Palin have both significantly eroded since September of 2008. However, Obama still earns strong ratings with these young adults rating him favorably by an 18-point margin (56% to 38%). Palin, meanwhile, is now viewed negatively by a more than 2:1 margin (28% to 59%). Interestingly, Millennials do not seem to be nearly as critical of Congress as older Americans, as a plurality rates it positively (43% to 39%), with views basically unchanged since September 2008.

### Shift in Favorability Since 2008



After over 18 months in office, 18-29 year olds have mixed feelings on President Obama's performance in office. A plurality of 37% say they are disappointed in what he has done, but nearly as many (34%) say that they have not yet decided. Those who voted for him give him much more favorable views, but even among this audience, less than half are happy with what he has accomplished (49% pleased).

### Rating Obama's First Two Years in Office



In three of the five states that we polled in, young adults' ratings of President Obama's job performance track closely with his ratings nationally. But two states emerge as exceptions: Colorado and Florida. Obama performs relatively well in the latter, with those under 30 in the state satisfied with what he's done by an 8-point margin (42% pleased to 34% disappointed). It appears that the President may have his work cut out for him among younger adults in Colorado however, as they say they are disappointed in him by a 19-point margin (27% to 46% disappointed).

### Rating Obama's First Two Years in Office

