

**GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER** RESEARCH

# Mixed Economic Message

Report on the state of the economy and economic narratives

February 23, 2012



DEMOCRACY CORPS  
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

# Methods and Economic Narrative Testing

**This presentation is based on a national survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps.**

**1000 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) were interviewed from February 11-14, 2012.**

**Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 3.1 percentage points at 95% confidence.**

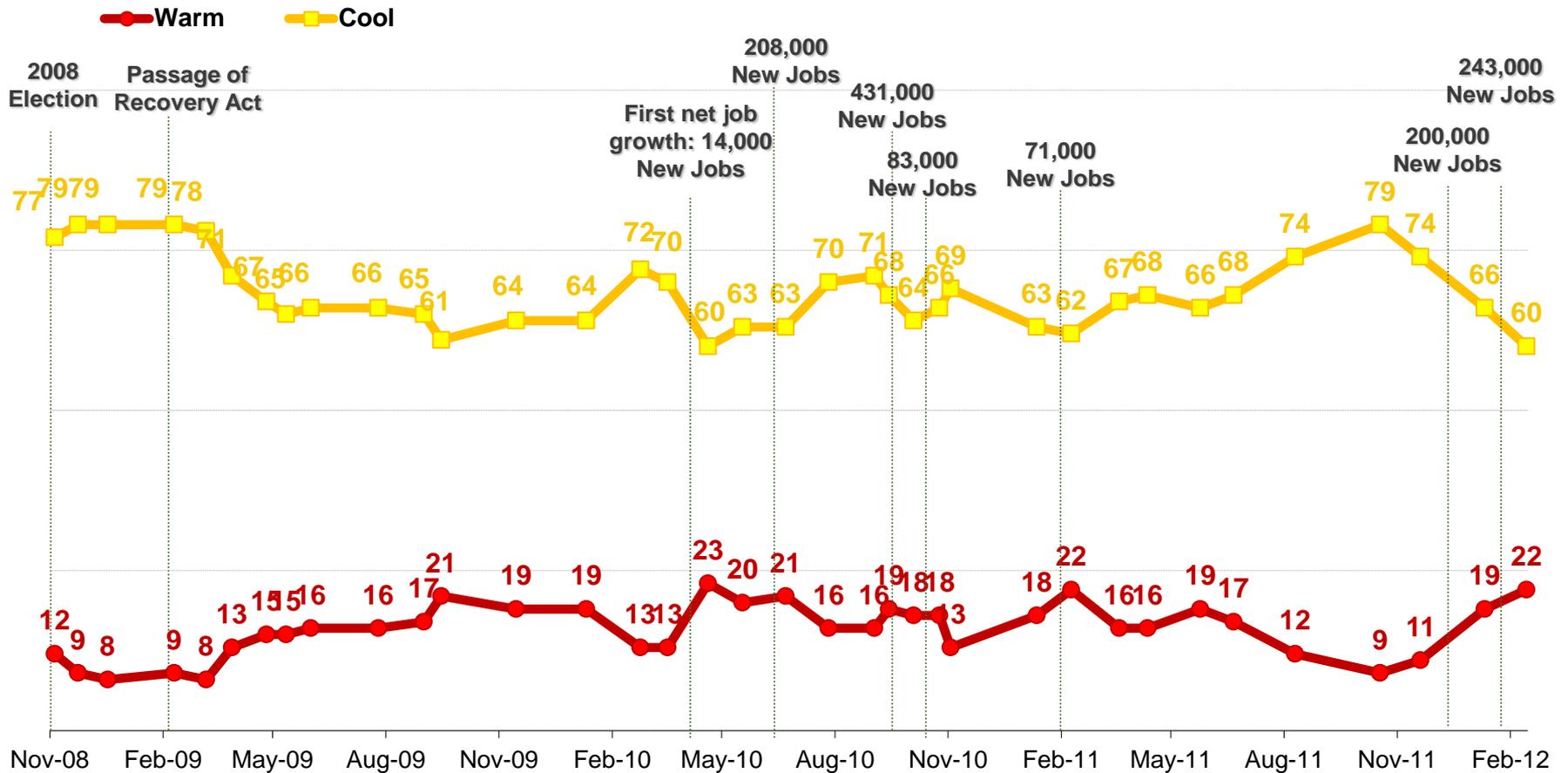
- *In this exercise, we tested two middle class frameworks; the first framed Obama's economic program as one that would create middle class opportunity to achieve overall economic growth and the second framed Obama's economic worldview as a "fair shot" for the middle class. We test two other frameworks which talk about progress: one centered on jobs and the other on the state of the country, "America is back."*

# **Voters see macro but no micro or political gains on economy**

- **Macro-economic climate and outlook improving**
- **But on a personal level, there has been no change since last summer on key economic indicators – loss of a job, reduced wages/benefits**
- **Majority still believes we are not heading in the right direction and need a change**
- **No change on which party trust to handle the economy**
- **Republicans grow out of touch on taxes**

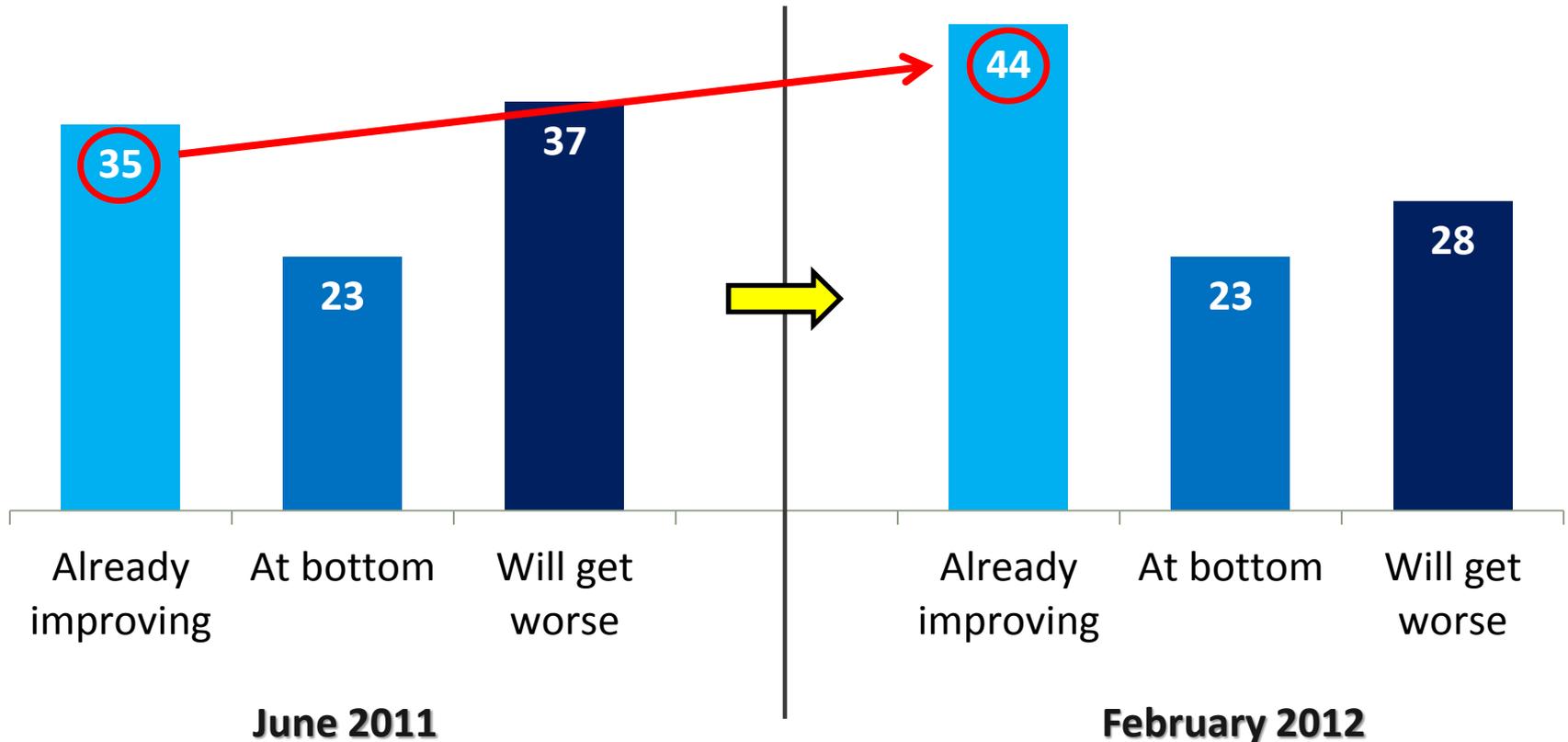
# Economic climate improves but less than a quarter positive about economy

Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold... **The state of the economy.**



# Big rise since last summer in perception that macro economy improving

*Now, thinking about the nation's economy, do you believe the economy has already bottomed out and is starting to improve, is at the bottom but is not yet getting any better or has not yet bottomed out and will still get worse?*



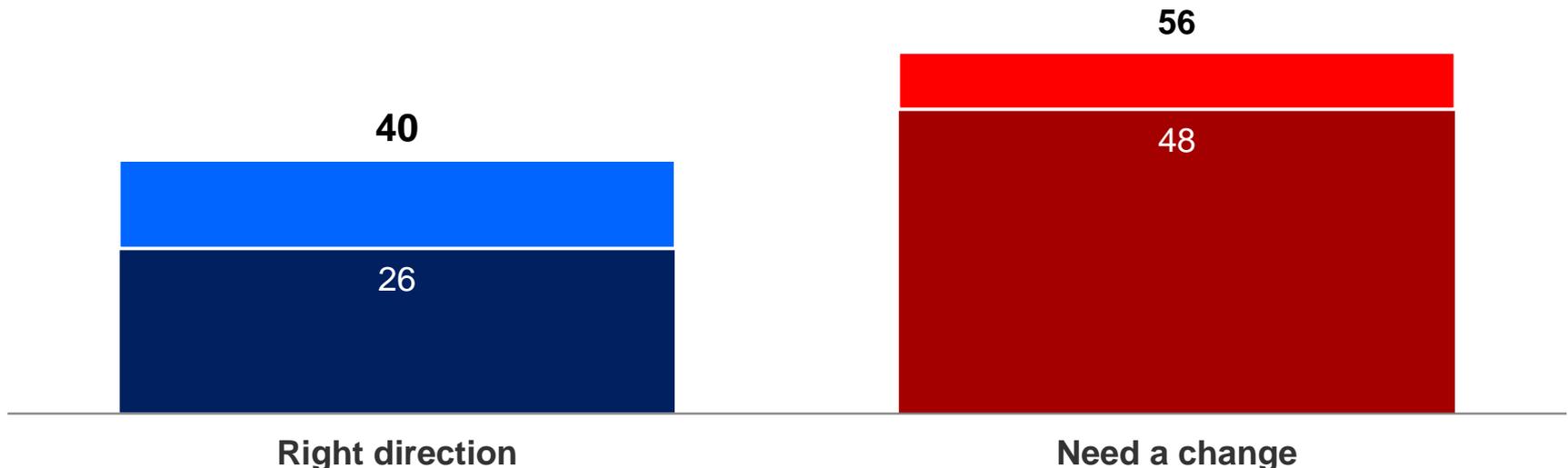
# But not close to being there yet – majority believes economy not moving in the right direction and need a change

Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me whether the **FIRST** statement or the **SECOND** statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

**STATEMENT 1:** I'm beginning to think the economy is moving in the right direction and we shouldn't be doing things that disrupt the recovery.

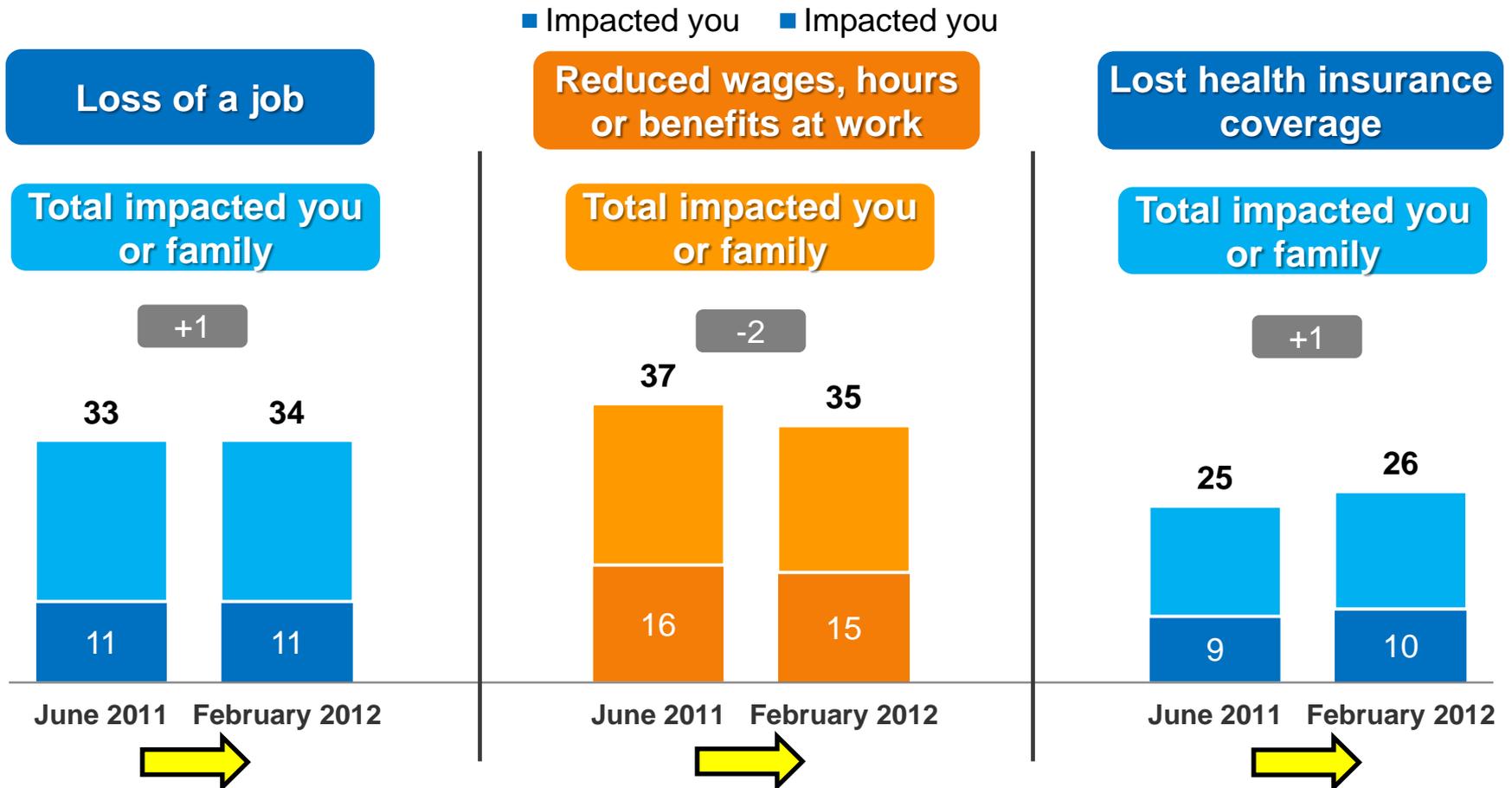
**STATEMENT 2:** The economy is not moving in the right direction and we need a change.

+16



# Little change in key personal economic impact indicators since last June

*I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it.*



# People do not see labor market improvements

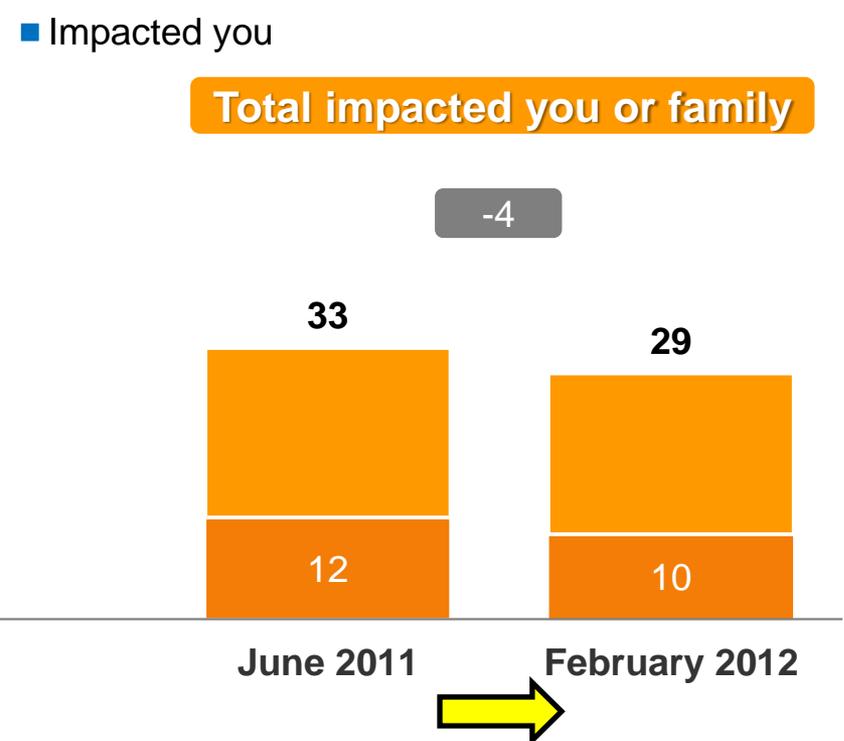
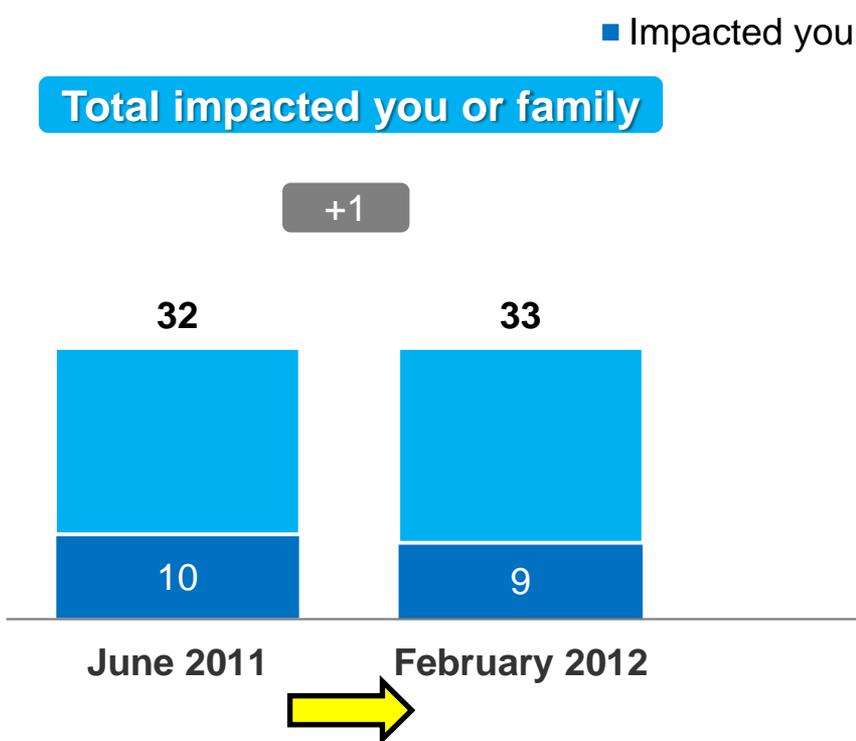
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## Got a new job

## Rejoined the job market and began to look for work again

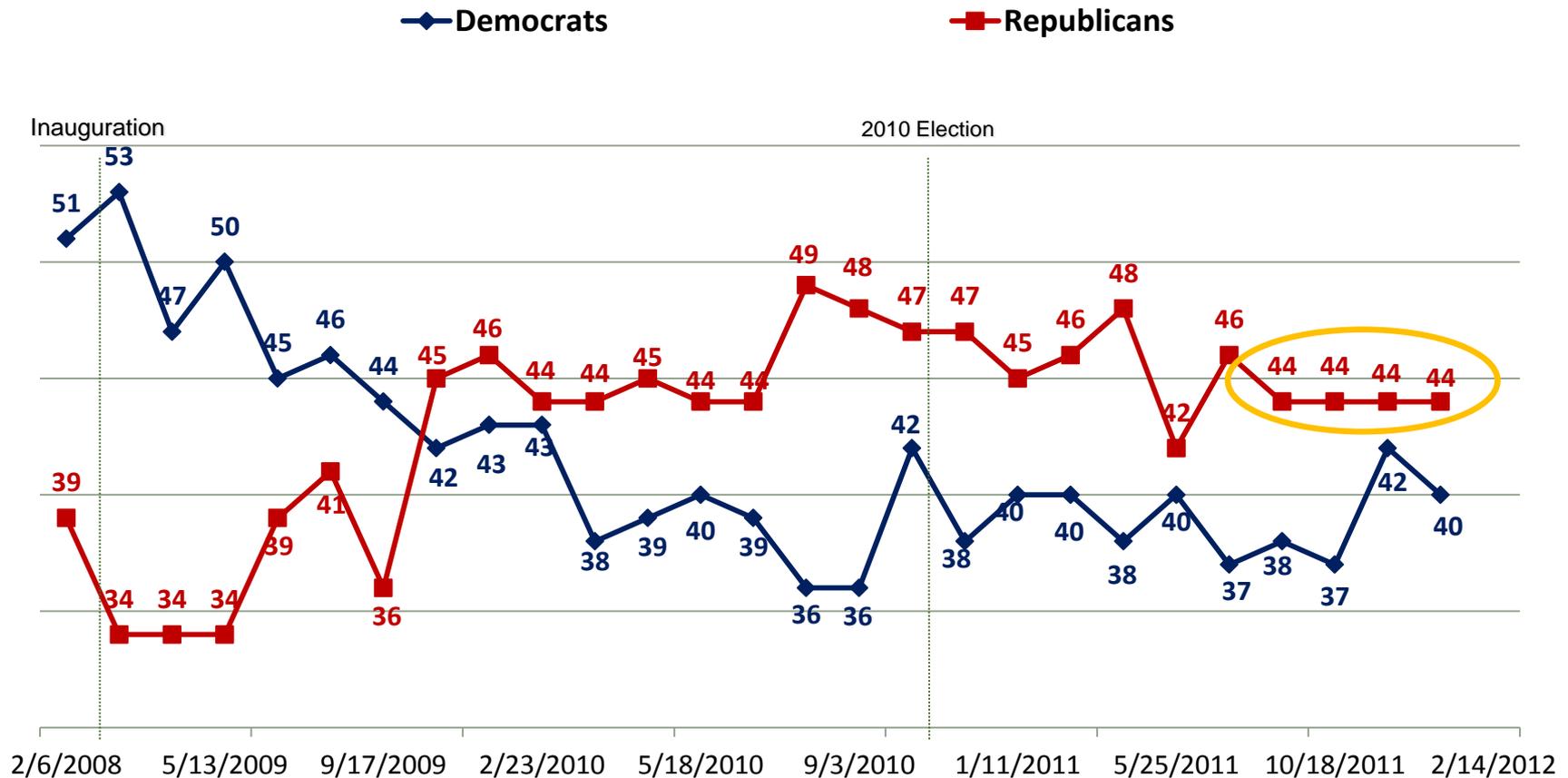
### Total impacted you or family

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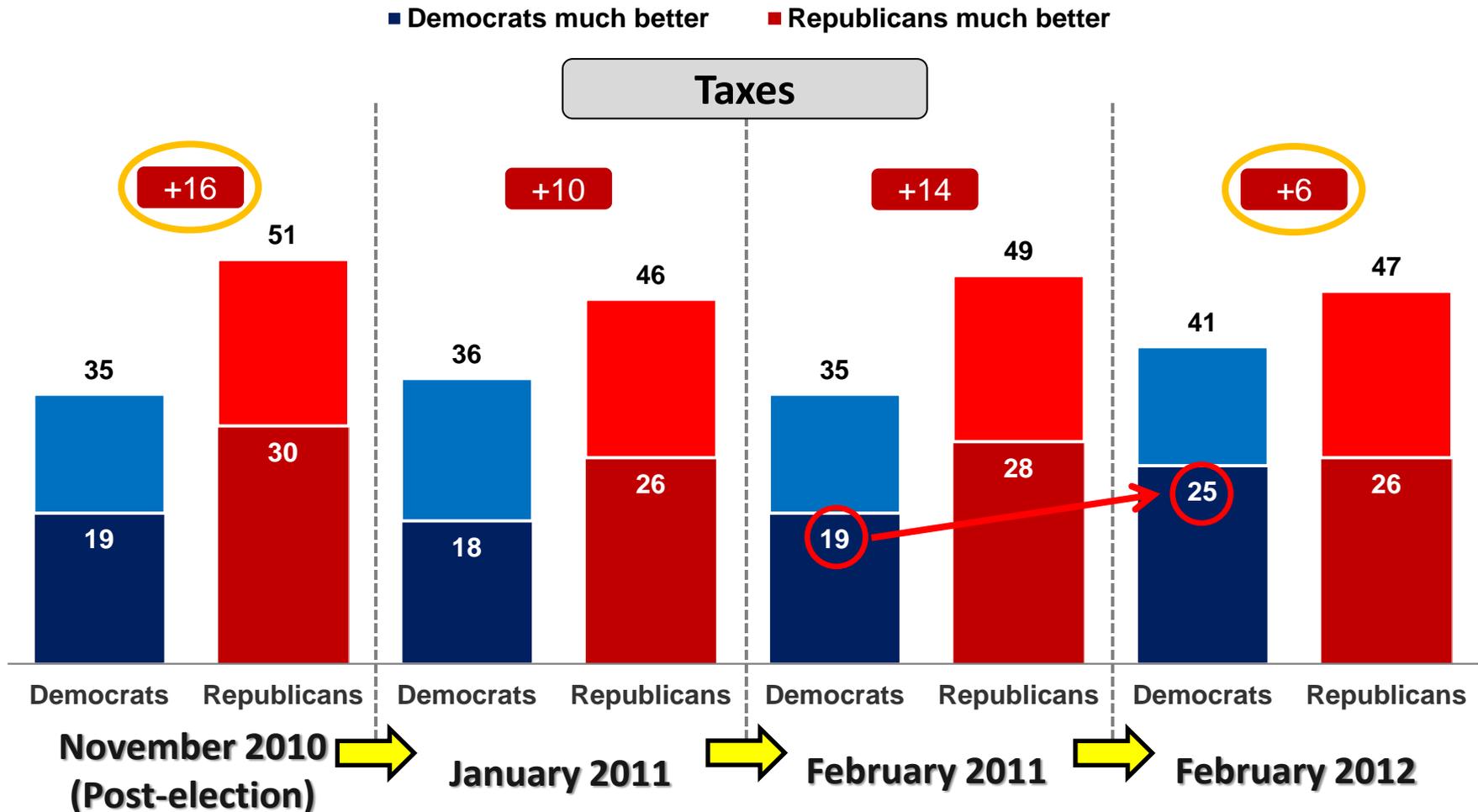
# Republican hold lead on handling economy, while Democrats default to 40 percent

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue. If you do not know, just tell me and we will move on to the next item... **the economy**.



# Democrats gaining major ground in tax debate: 10 points since 2010 election

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue... Taxes.



# Economic messages

- **The best Democratic messages highlighting economy for middle class beat the best Republican messages, reflecting Kansas speech**
- **But big warning signs: “America is back” and “progress on jobs” are dangerously weak as messages**

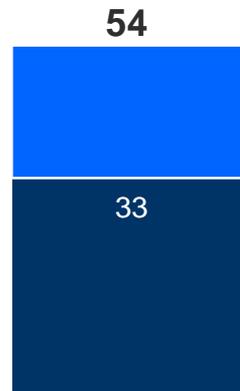
# Middle class messages are strong

*Now, please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Middle class - economy

**This is a make-or-break moment for the middle class, and for all those who are fighting to get into the middle class. Because what's at stake is whether this will be a country where working people can earn enough to raise a family, build a modest savings, own a home and secure their retirement. We need to keep taxes low for the middle class, support innovation, help small businesses and really commit to education and training for people who work hard.**

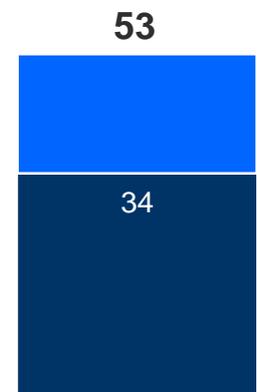
■ Much more likely



## Middle class - fairness

**This is a make-or-break moment for the middle class, and for all those who are fighting to get into it. We have to be a country where working people can earn enough to raise a family, build a modest savings, own a home and secure their retirement. And we succeed when everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same rules. So asking billionaires like Warren Buffett to pay their fair share of taxes is not class warfare, it's just common sense.**

■ Much more likely



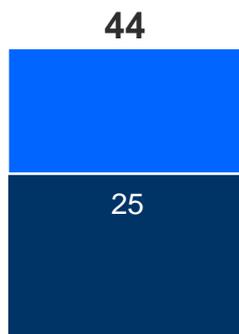
# Progress on jobs and America is back are potentially disastrous

*Now, please imagine that Barack Obama or a Democratic leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Progress on jobs

In 2009, we were losing 750,000 jobs a month. Our biggest banks and auto companies were on the brink of pulling down the whole economy. But we righted the ship. We did not tip into a Great Depression. And over the last 22 months, businesses have created more than 3 million jobs, the most since 2005 and more manufacturing jobs than since the 1990s. We still have a long way to go but we have restored hope and possibility to the economy.

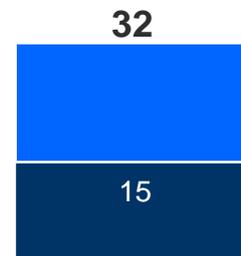
■ Much more likely



## America is back

America is back. Anyone who tells you that America is in decline or that our influence has waned doesn't know what they're talking about. The United States is back to leading the world in innovation, smart manufacturing and creating the new technologies of tomorrow. After 10 years of war and occupation, America's reputation in the world has been restored. We are a beacon again for democracies and aspiring democracies.

■ Much more likely



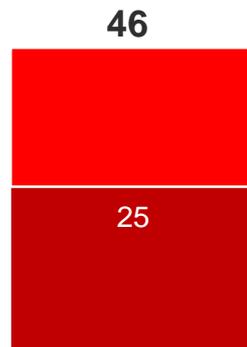
# And Democratic middle class messages beat strongest Republican frames

*Now, please imagine that a Mitt Romney or a Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?*

## Free enterprise and individualism

For our parents, America was the land of opportunity. Small businesses and entrepreneurs were encouraged not impeded. We must rebuild the foundations of the American economy on the principles of free enterprise, hard work, and individualism. We will do this by reducing taxes, cutting spending, and eliminating regulations that prevent our businesses from making money and creating jobs.

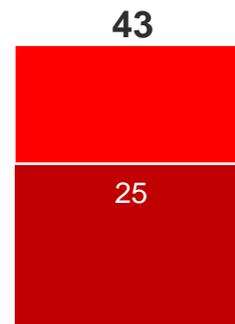
■ Much more likely



## Republican choice

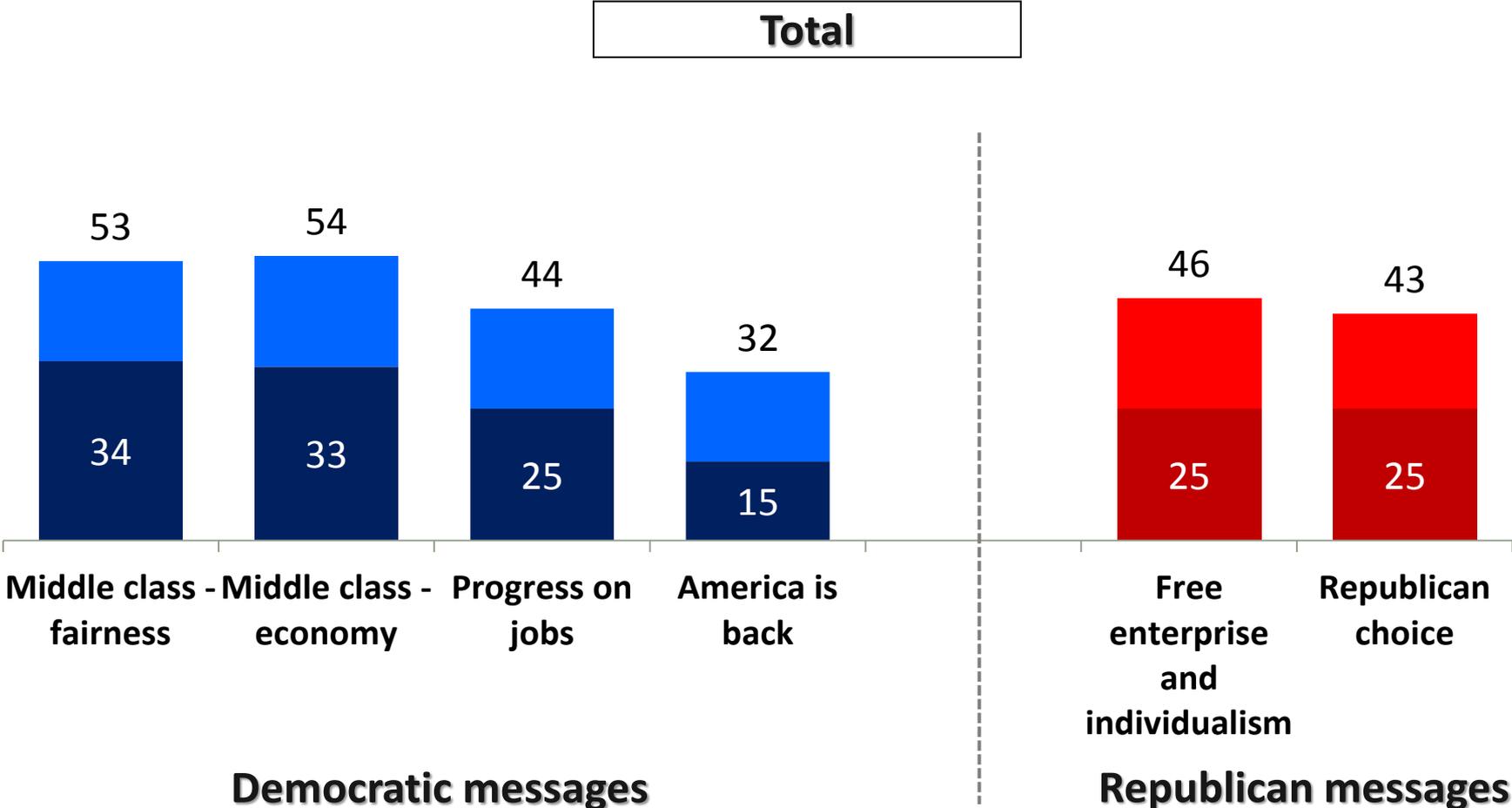
President Obama's policies have failed and now he wants to raise taxes and increase spending. We can't keep moving down the wrong direction. Washington doesn't understand how to achieve growth and prosperity. We need to return to the policies that have served our nation well in the past: cut spending, reduce taxes and regulations to give our economy back to those who do know how to create prosperity--businesses, entrepreneurs, and hard working families.

■ Much more likely



# Middle class-future-oriented messages dominate; other messages much weaker

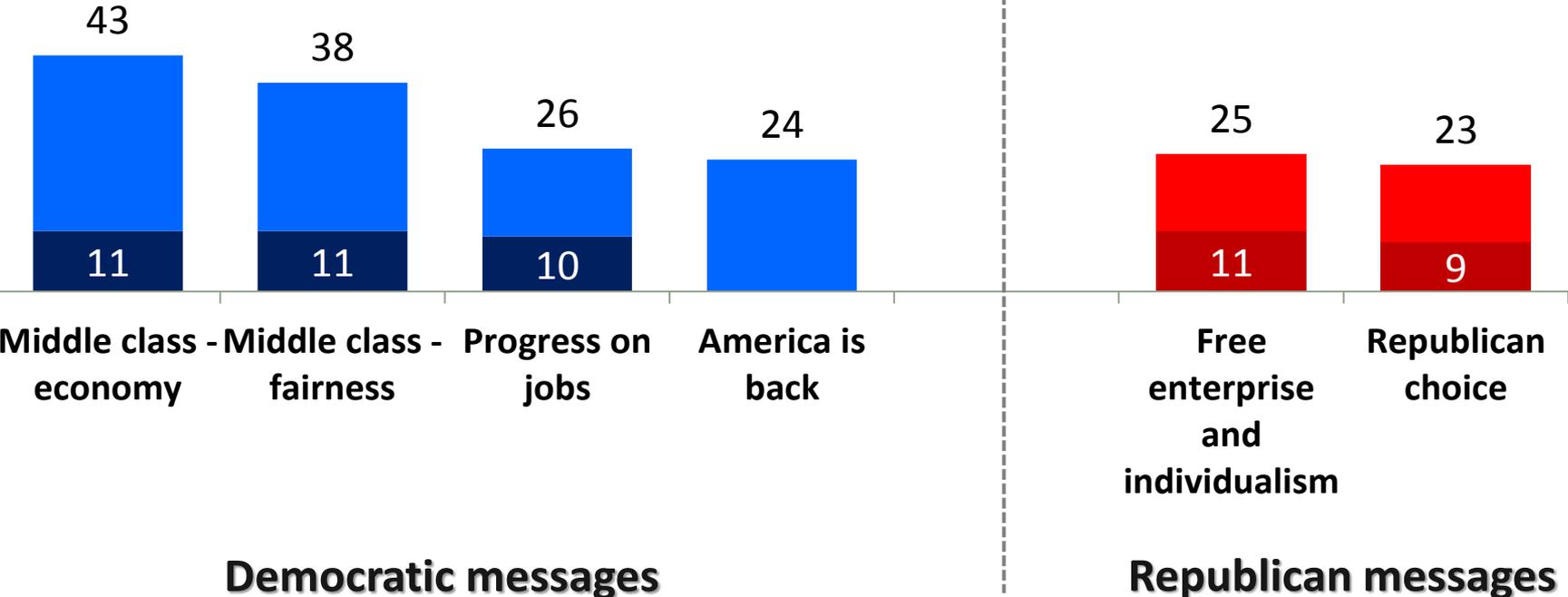
Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?



# Straight middle class message strongest with independents

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

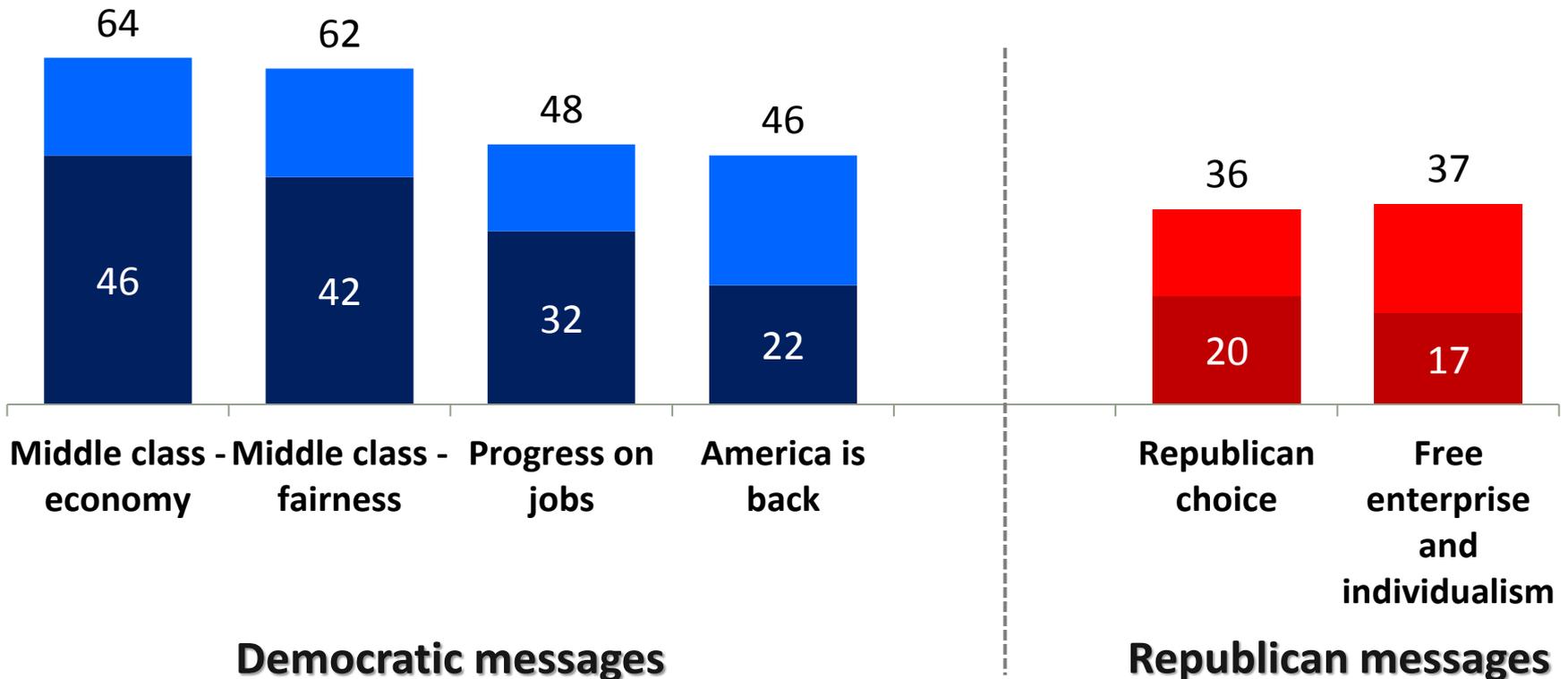
## Independents



# Rising American Electorate

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

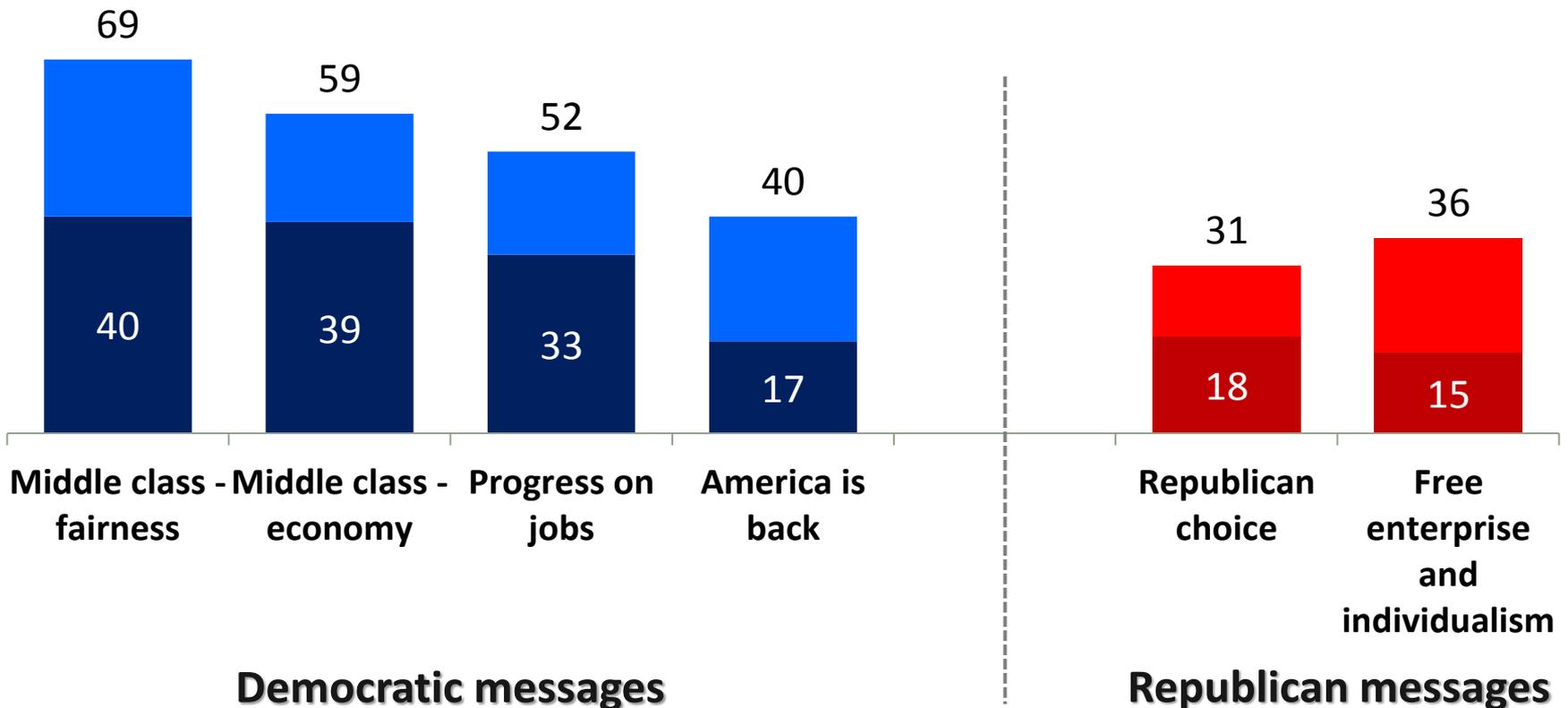
## Rising American Electorate



# Unmarried women

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

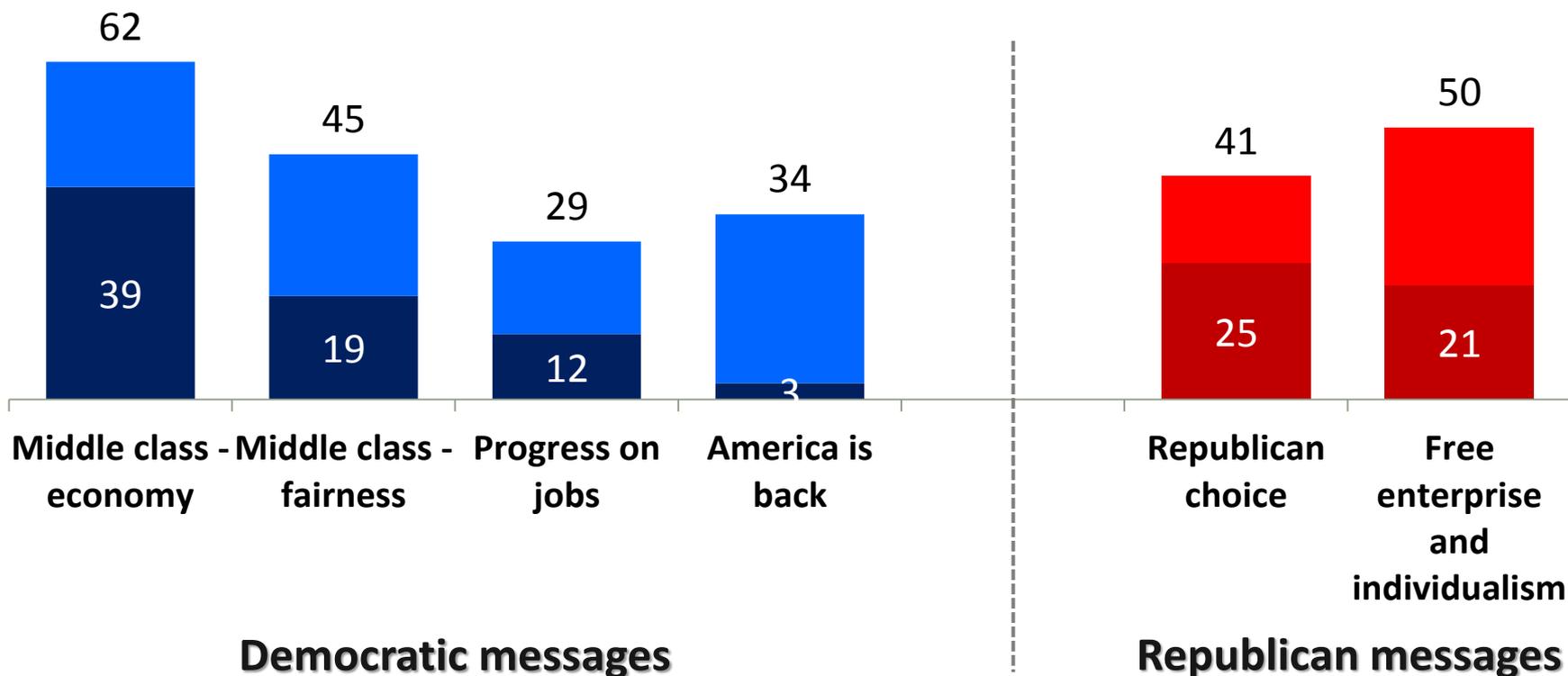
## Unmarried women



# Youth

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

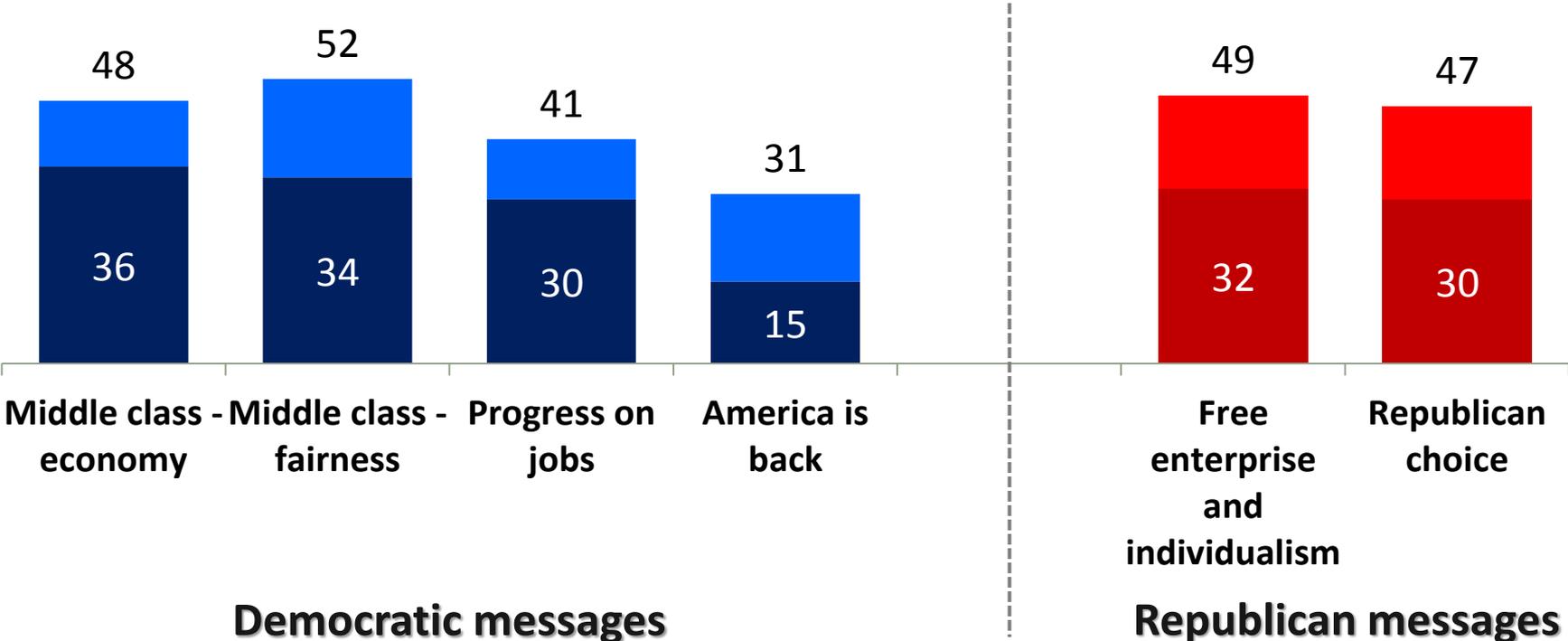
## Youth



# White seniors

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

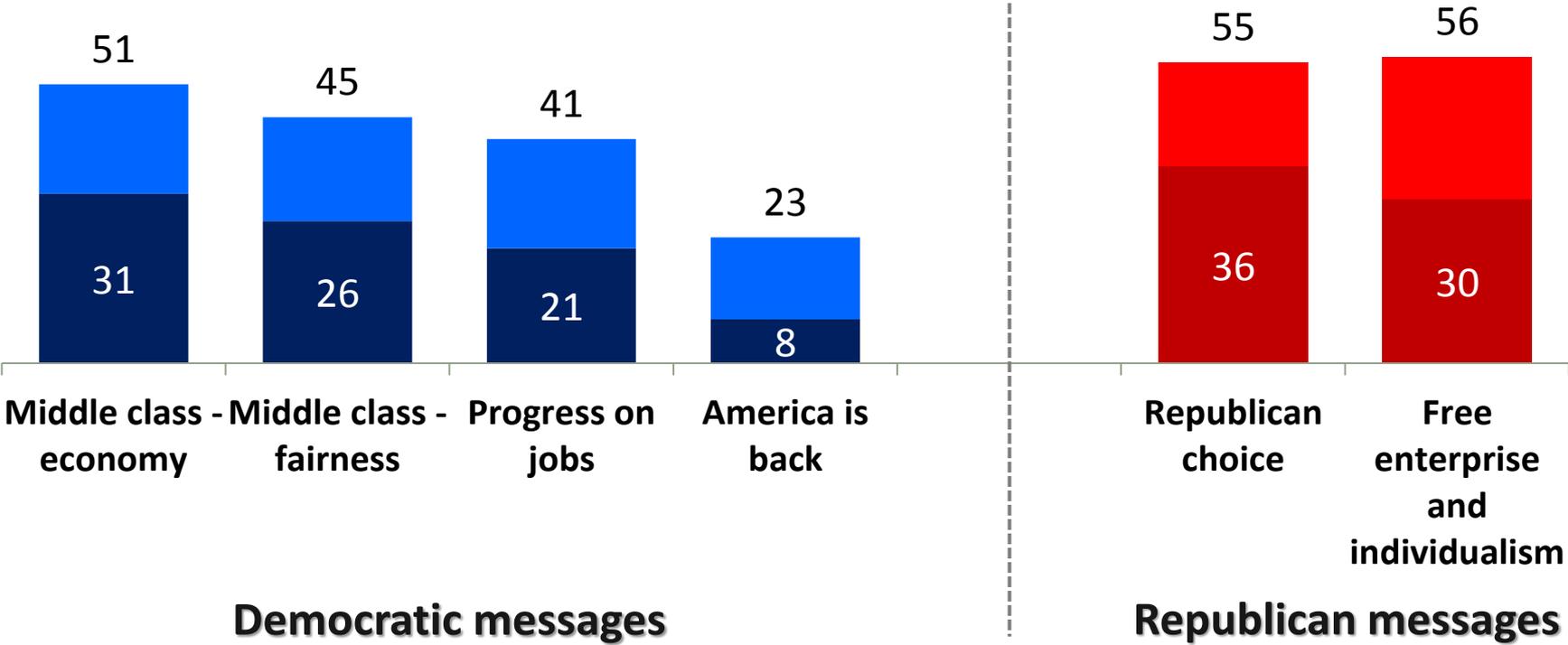
## White seniors



# White non-college

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

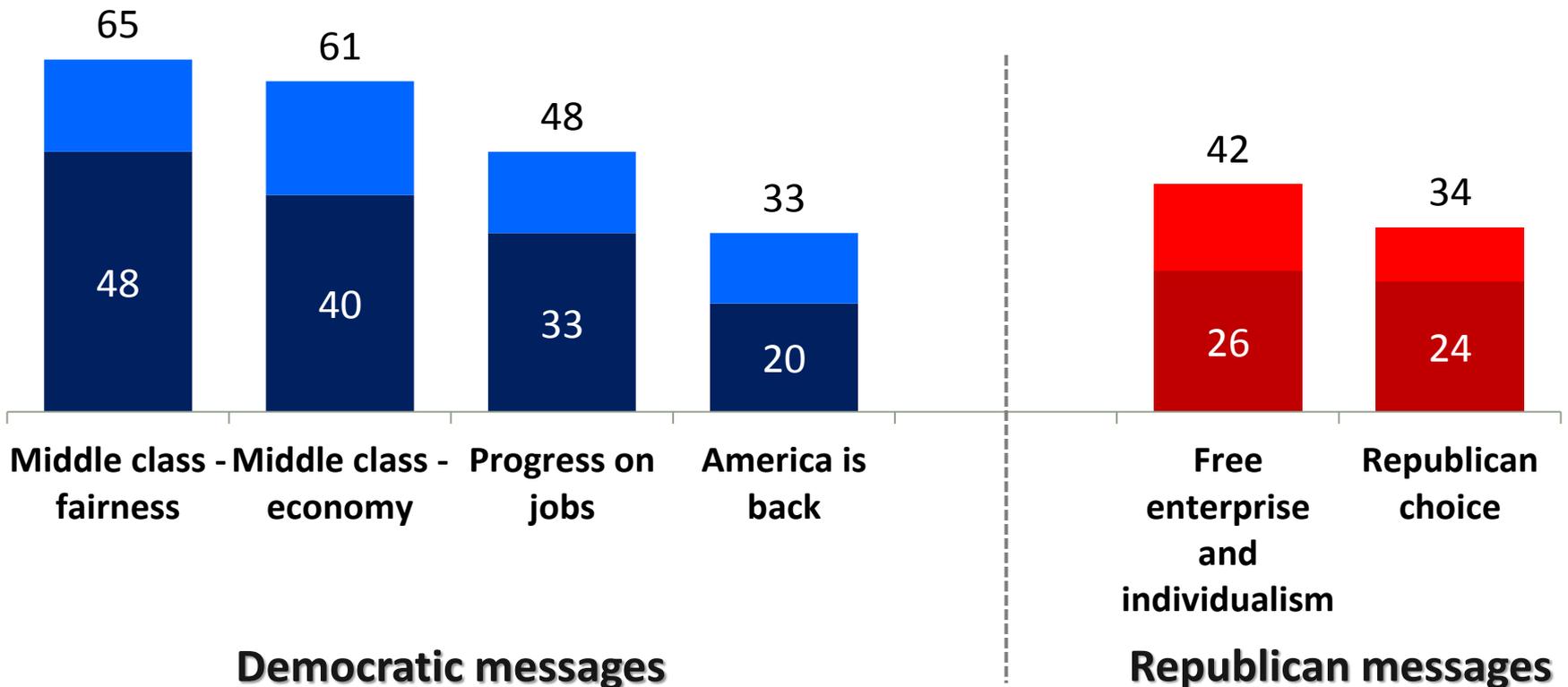
## White non-college



# Suburban

Now, please imagine that a Barack Obama/Mitt Romney or a Democratic/Republican leader in Congress made the following statements about the economy. After hearing each statement, are you much more likely to support this Democrat/Republican, somewhat more likely, just a little more likely, no more likely or less likely to support them?

## Suburban



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