

March 2026

Reimagining Capitalism Lab

Illinois Statewide Poll of Registered Voters

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RESEARCH

Methodology



Impact Research conducted an online survey of n=1200 registered voters in Illinois between February 20th and March 1st.



By sampling and weighting the demographic composition of the survey to the true population, this online survey is representative of Illinois' demographic composition.



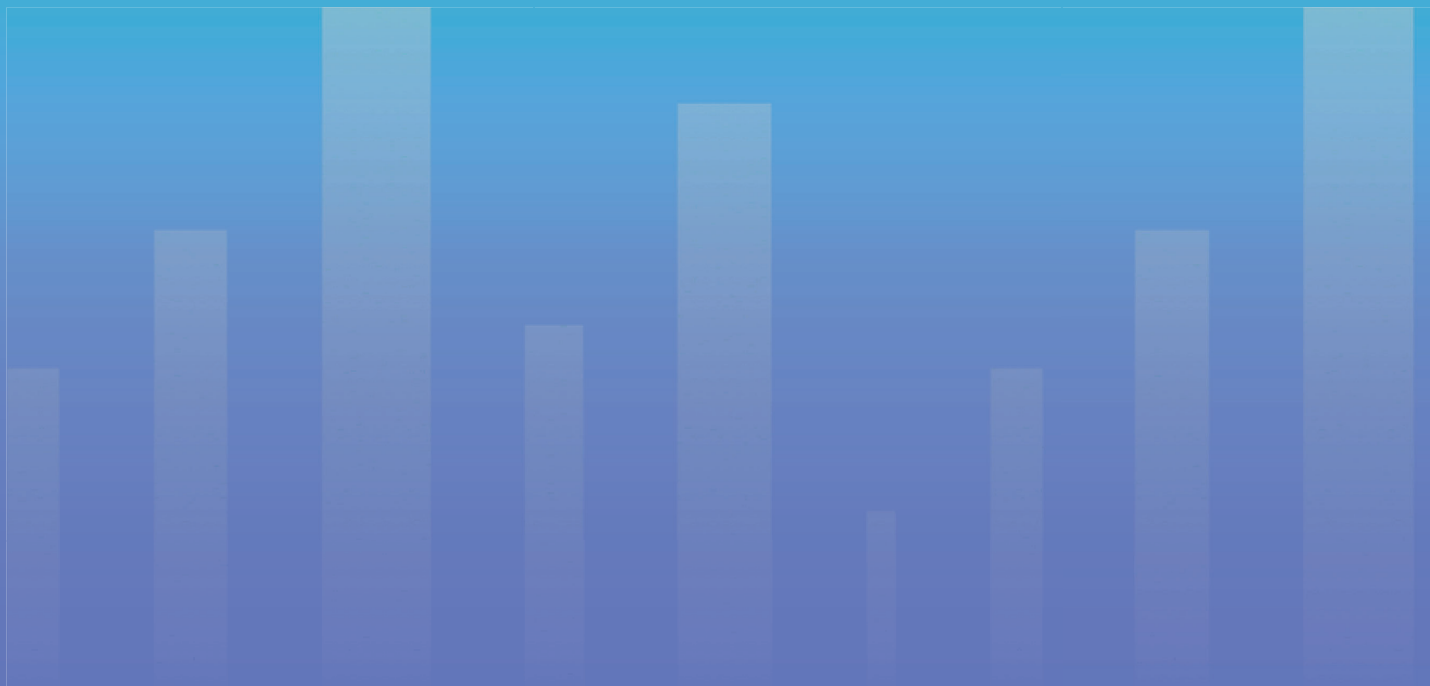
The credibility interval for a sample of this size is +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

Key Findings

- **Voters are very concerned about the cost of living.** Nearly three-quarters say that cost of living is creating financial strains, and voters are especially struggling to afford debt, food and groceries, utilities, and housing.
- **Voters feel that political and economic systems are stacked against them.** Strong majorities agree that the political and economic systems in the country are stacked against people like them. They are overwhelmingly concerned about the ability of our country's leaders to solve economic problems.
- **Voters are concerned about economic inequality.** Two-thirds agree that the ultra-rich shouldn't make so much money when many families struggle to make ends meet, and an even higher share are concerned that economic growth doesn't benefit everyone equally.
- **A majority want to rethink and reform capitalism to make it work better for Americans.** Asked to pick between capitalism and socialism, a majority selected capitalism while the remainder were split between socialism and don't know.
- **Every policy we tested had majority support, but especially popular were policies that get workers more money when companies do well.** The most popular were requiring stock sharing, tying CEO pay to worker pay, giving tax incentives to employee-owned companies, and requiring worker dividends.
- **Voters want leaders to pursue bold solutions.** A majority says elected officials should pursue bold ideas to help working families afford their basic needs and reduce economic inequality. In an open-ended question, voters positively describe elected officials who support policies to get workers more money as caring about people and supporting workers' rights.



THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

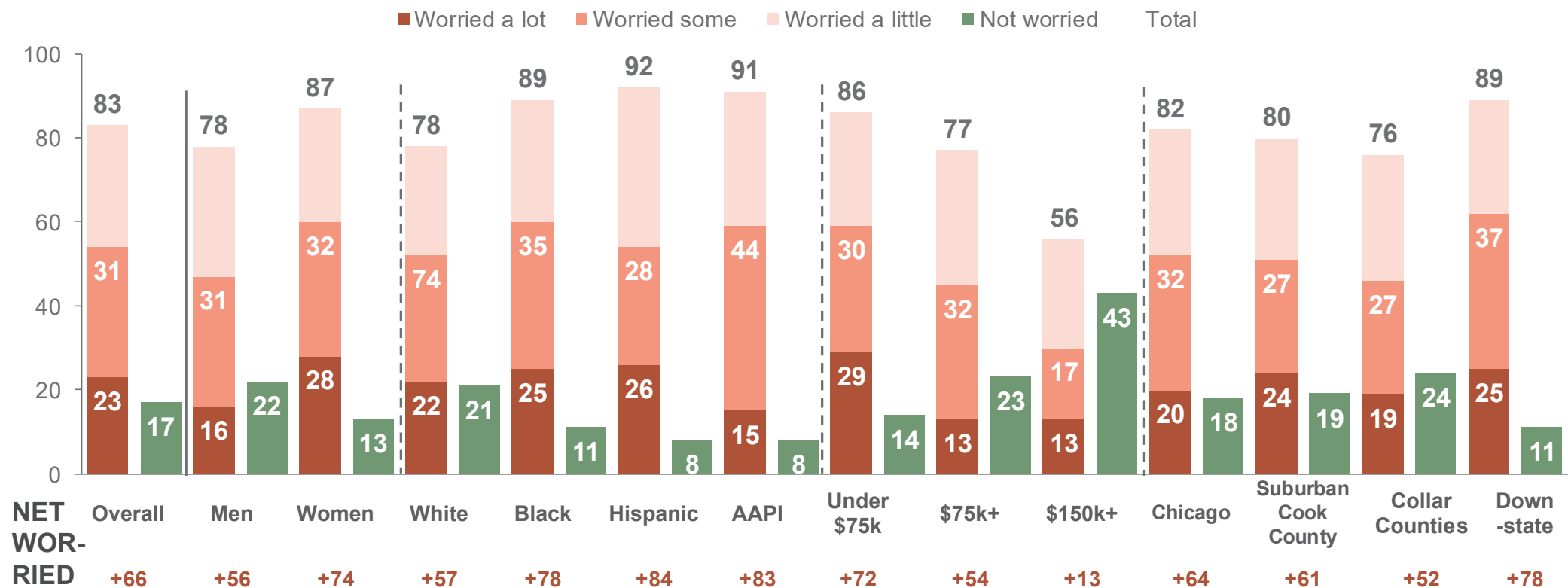


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2/3 of voters are worried about affording the essentials—including a majority of voters who make over \$150k per year.

Women, voters of color, voters making under \$75,000, and downstate voters are especially worried.

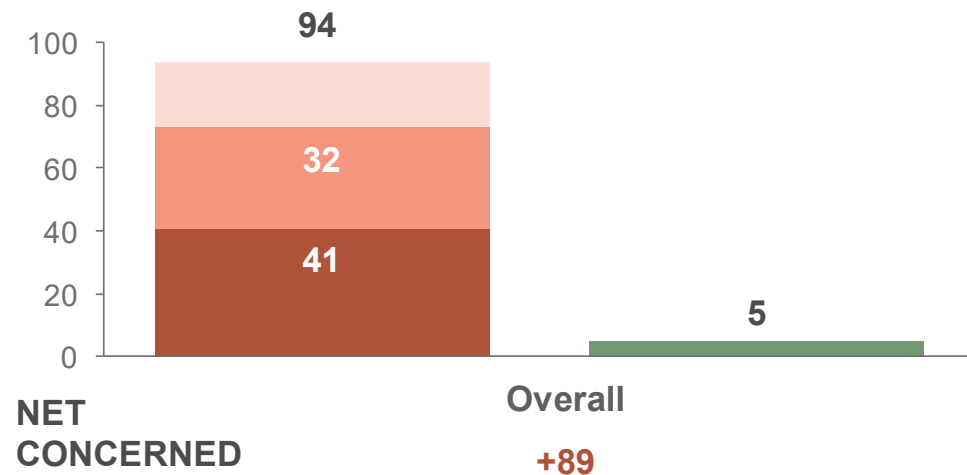
In the past 6 months, have you worried about affording the essentials you and your family need?



These economic concerns are consistent throughout the poll, with 90+ percent of voters saying they are concerned about the cost of living and the ability of families to afford basic goods.

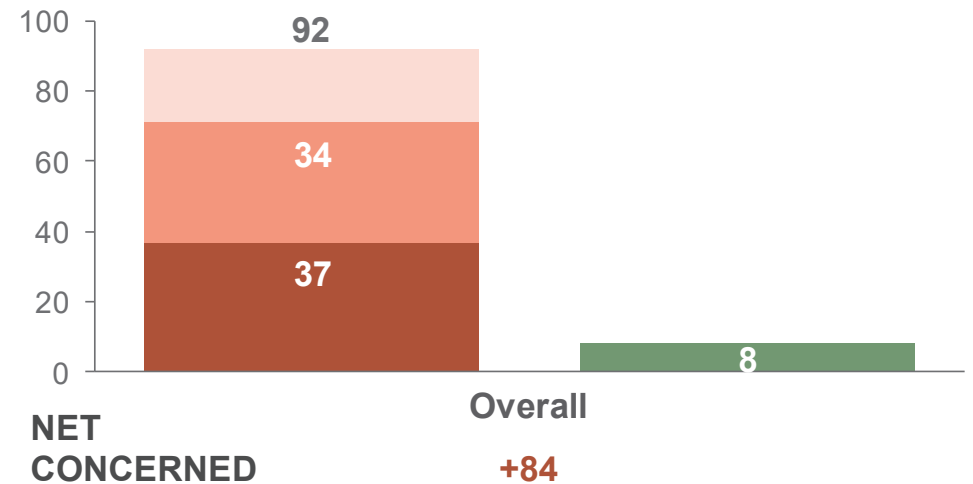
Which of the following best describes your situation when it comes to the cost of living?

- Cost of living is creating major financial strains
- Cost of living is creating minor financial strains
- Cost of living isn't a problem for me now, but it will be if costs keep going up
- I'm not concerned with costs of living



How concerned are you about the ability of families to afford basic goods like groceries, rent, health care, and education?

- Extremely concerned
- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not concerned



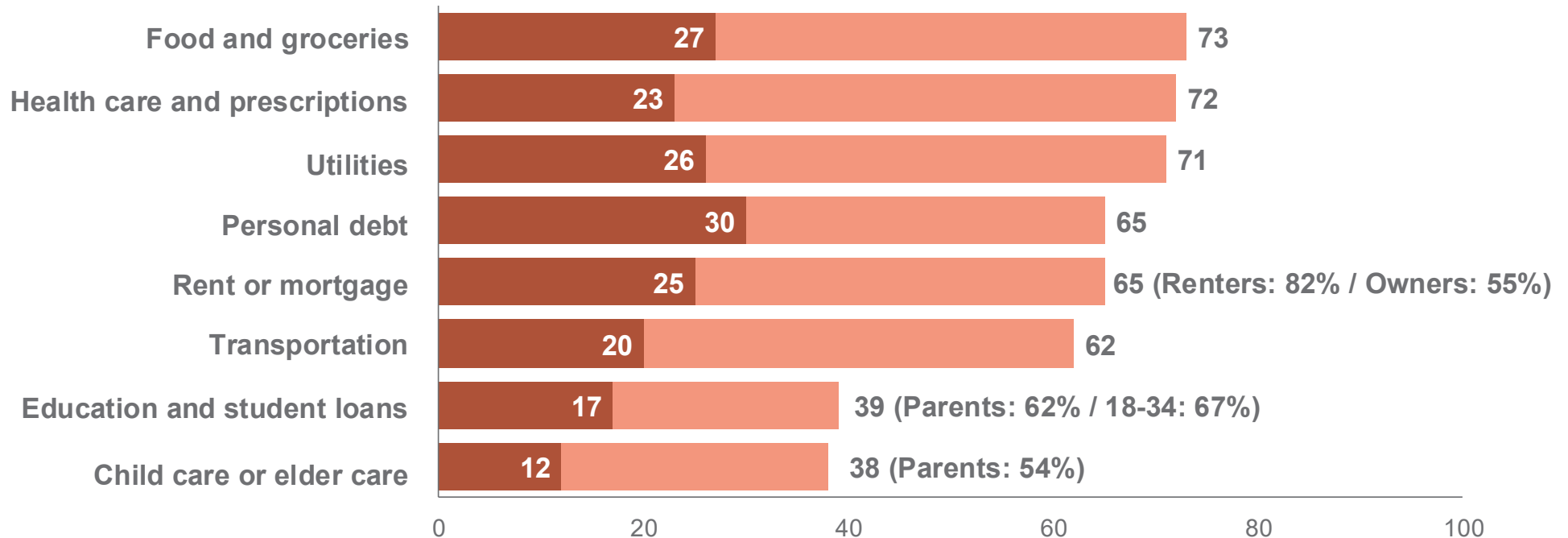
Voters are especially burdened by the costs of food and groceries, health care and prescriptions, and utilities.

Majorities of parents are burdened by education and child care costs. Renters are also feeling burdened.

Burden of Household Expenses

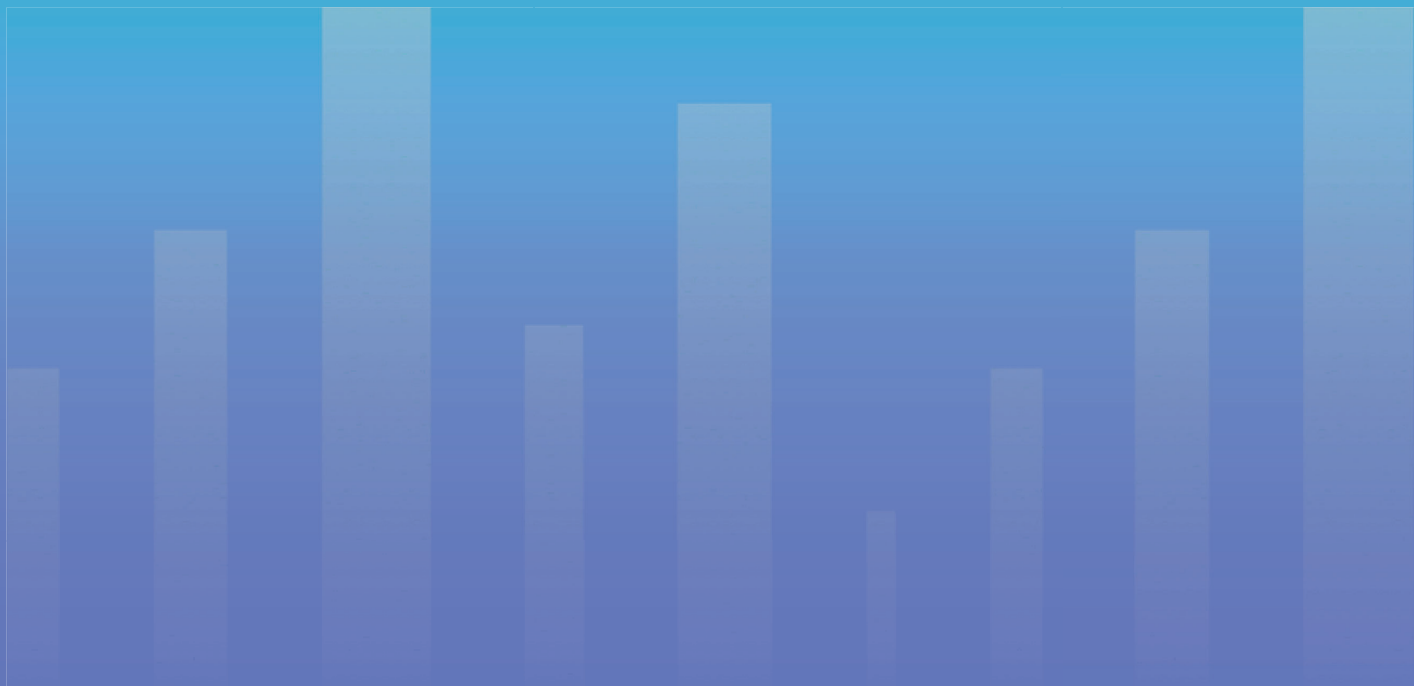
■ I am struggling to afford it now

■ I can afford it now, but I am concerned about affording it in the future



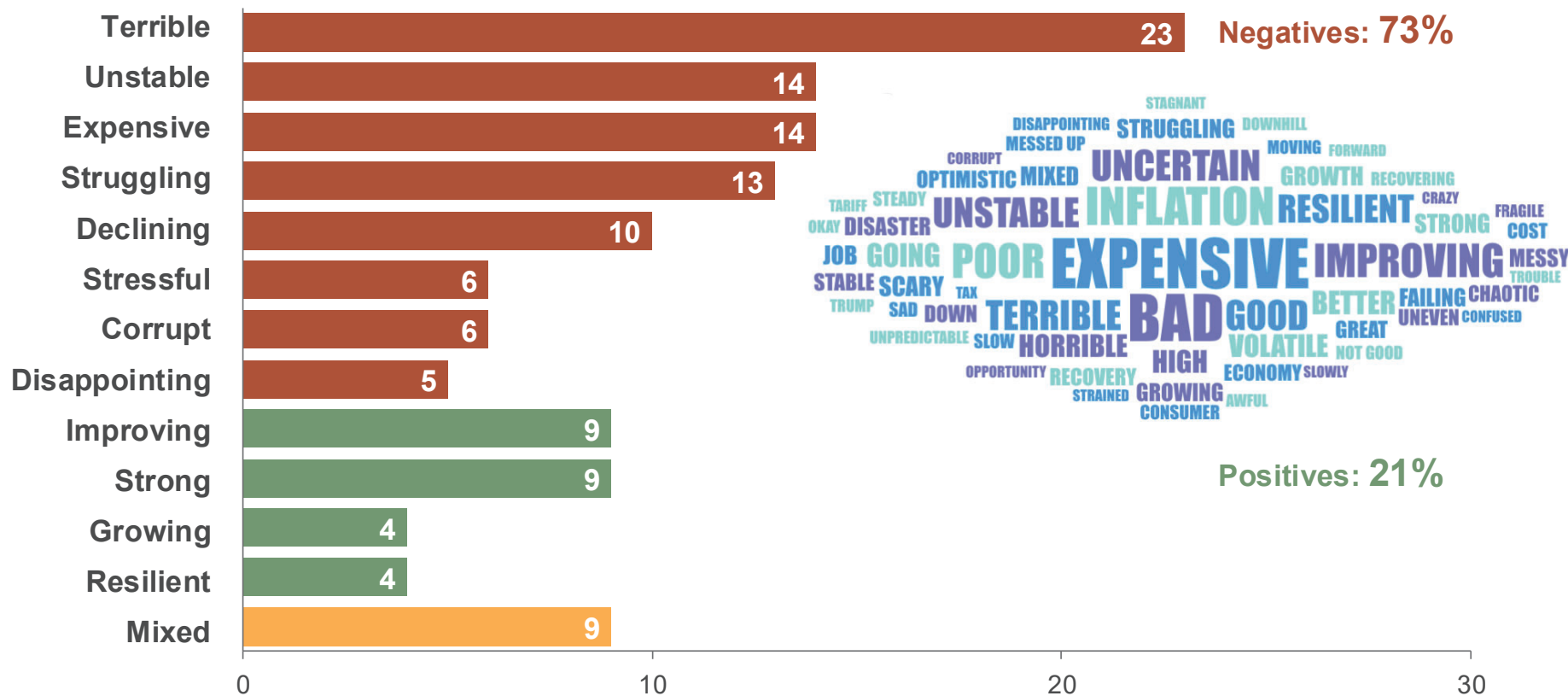


LOSS OF FAITH IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS



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If you could describe the current American economy in one word or phrase, what would it be? [OPEN-ENDED]



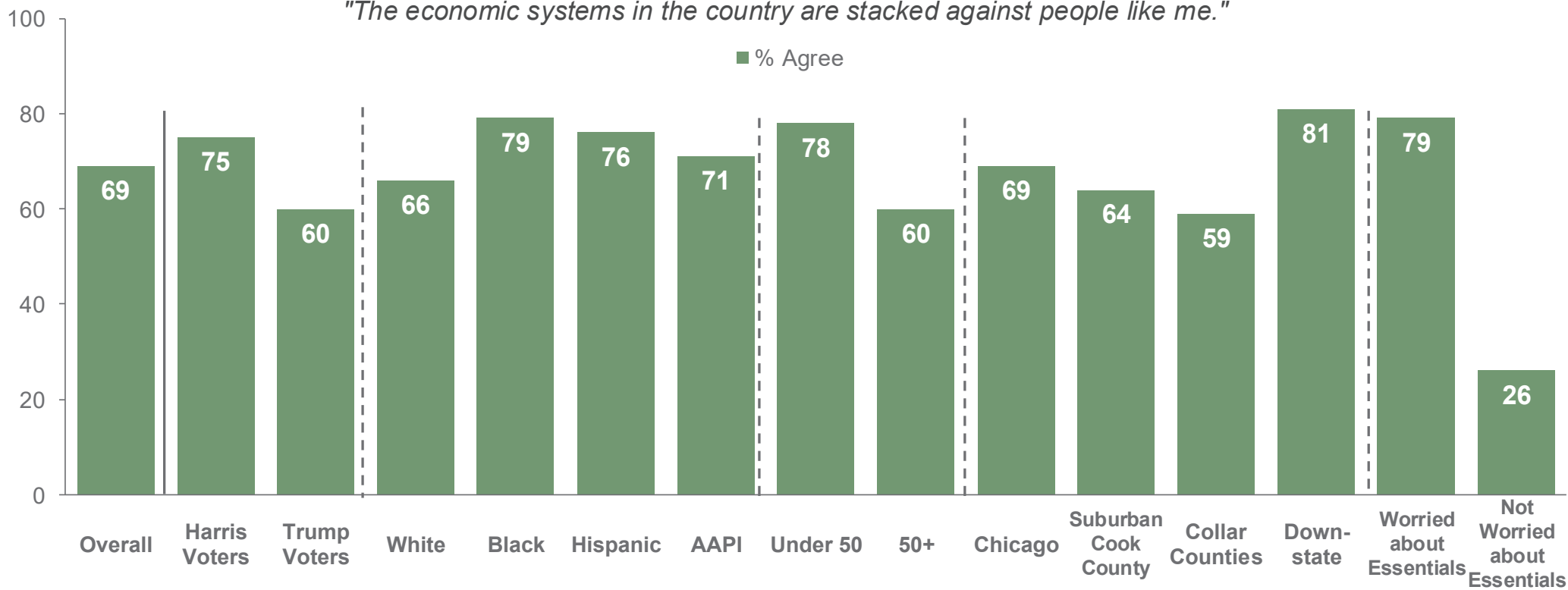
Two-thirds of voters agree that the economic systems in the country are stacked against people like them.

Women, voters of color, younger voters, downstate voters, and voters worried about affording the essentials are most likely to agree.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"The economic systems in the country are stacked against people like me."

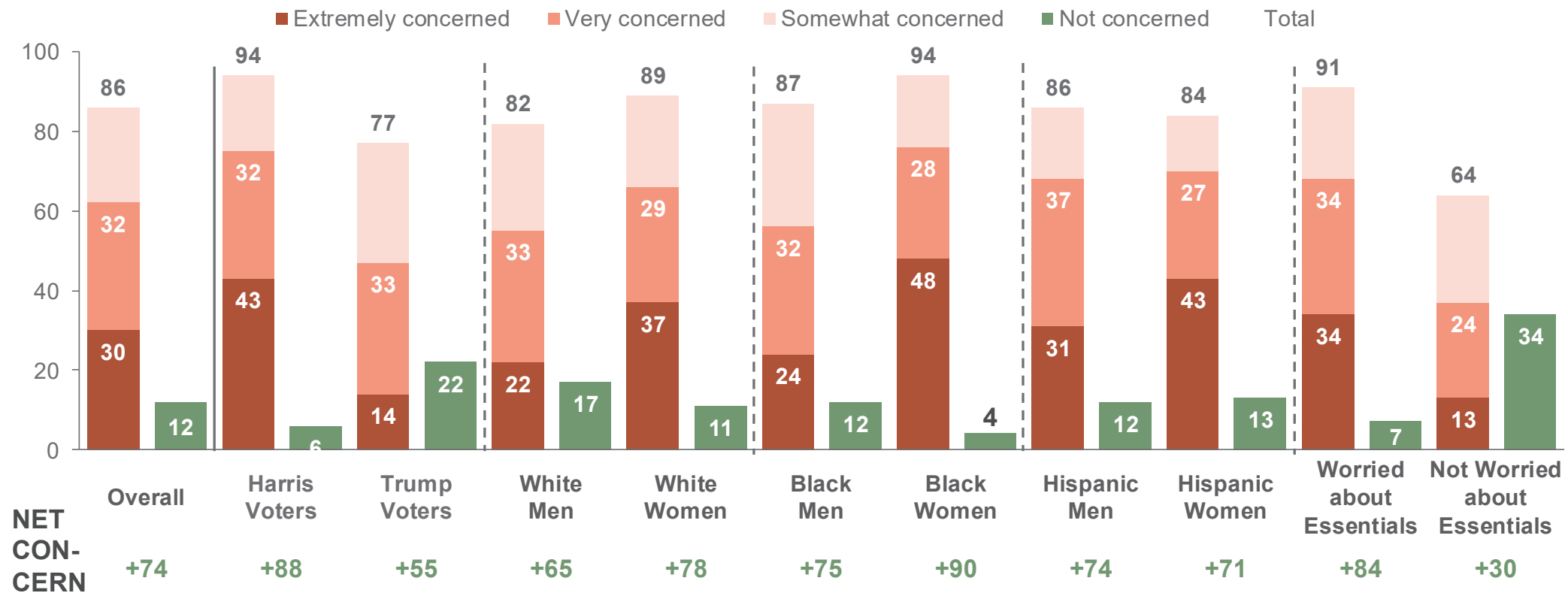
■ % Agree



More than 4 in 5 voters are concerned that economic growth doesn't benefit everyone equally.

Women, voters of color, and voters who are worried about affording the essentials are especially concerned.

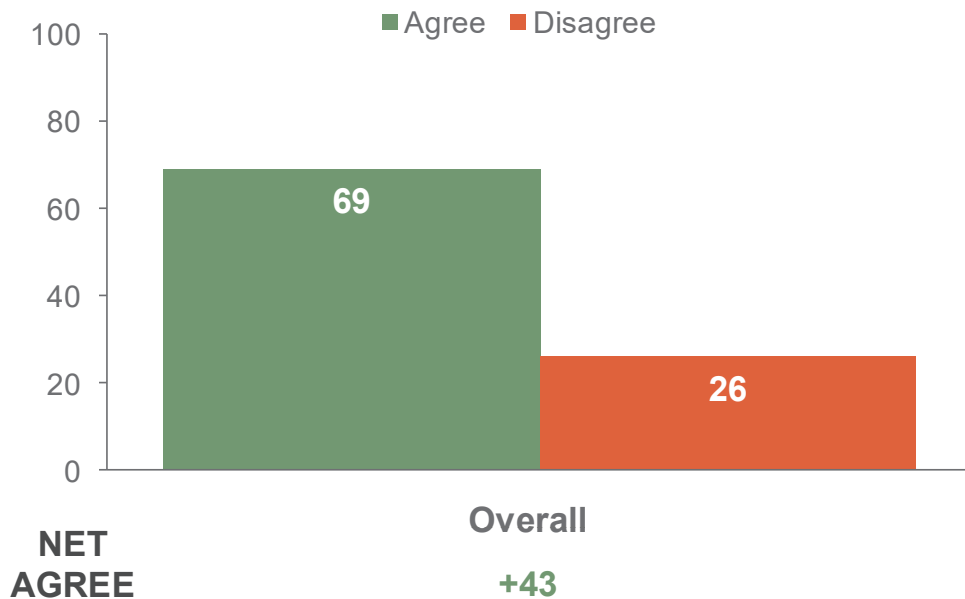
How concerned are you that economic growth doesn't benefit everyone equally?



Two-thirds of voters are concerned about how much money the ultra-rich are making, though support is a little lower when there's a statement option about how rich people work hard.

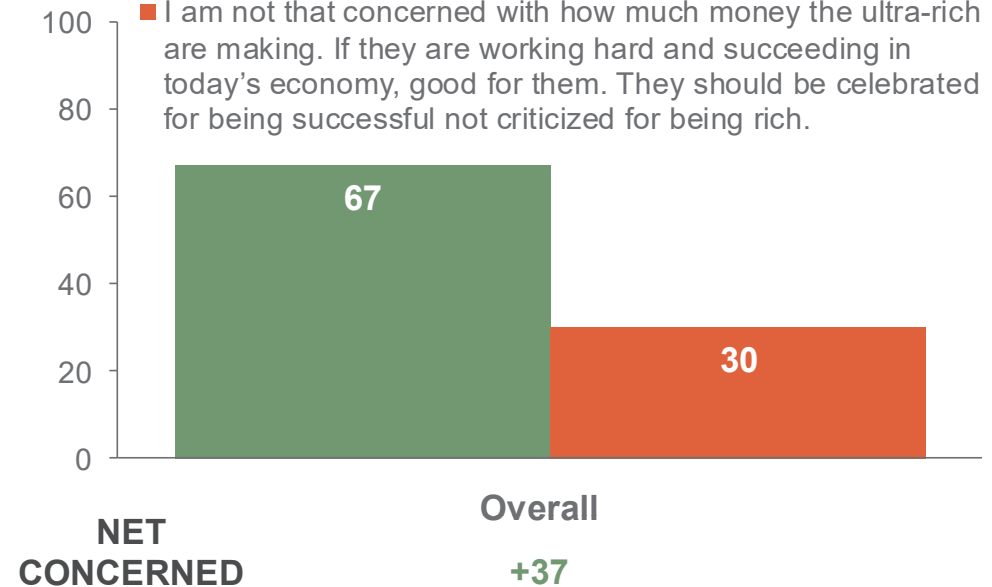
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"The ultra-rich shouldn't make so much money when many families struggle to make ends meet"



Which comes closest to your point of view?

- The ultra-rich earn way too much money today. At a time when too many families are struggling to make ends meet, today's billionaires are earning too much at the expense of working people.
- I am not that concerned with how much money the ultra-rich are making. If they are working hard and succeeding in today's economy, good for them. They should be celebrated for being successful not criticized for being rich.



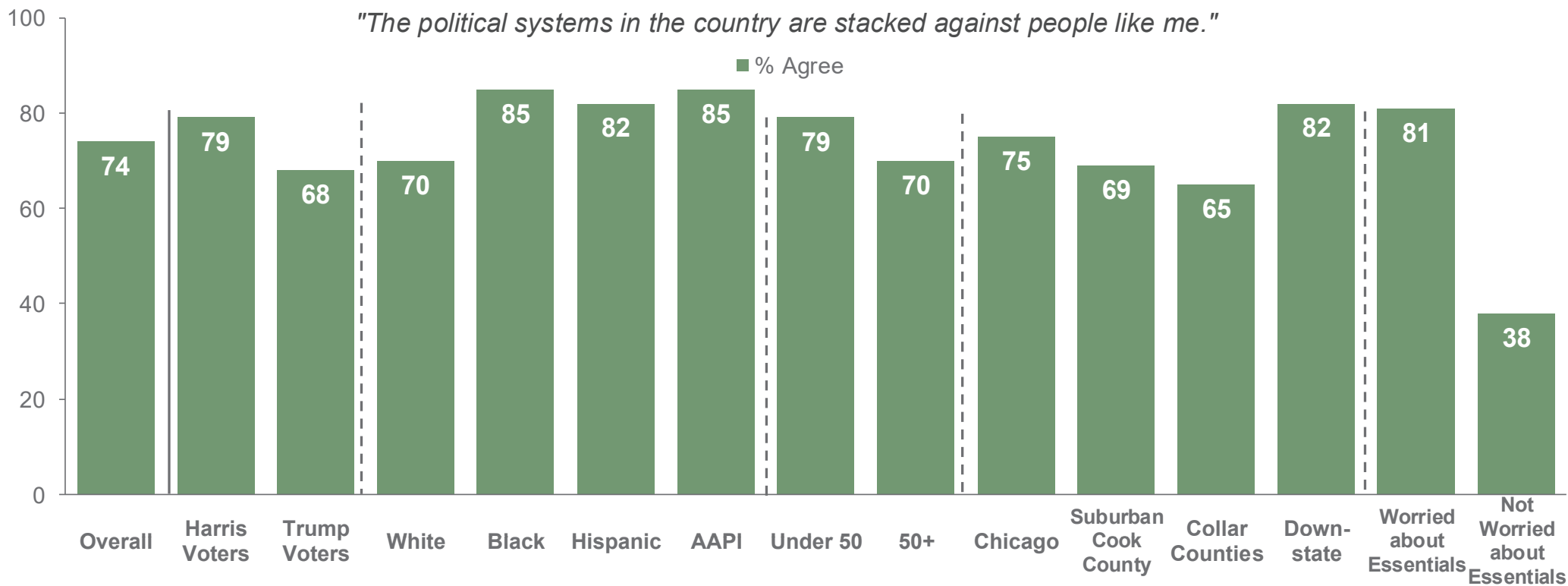
Nearly three-quarters of voters agree that the political systems in the country are stacked against people like them.

Voters of color, younger voters, Downstate voters, and voters who are worried about affording the essentials are especially likely to agree.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"The political systems in the country are stacked against people like me."

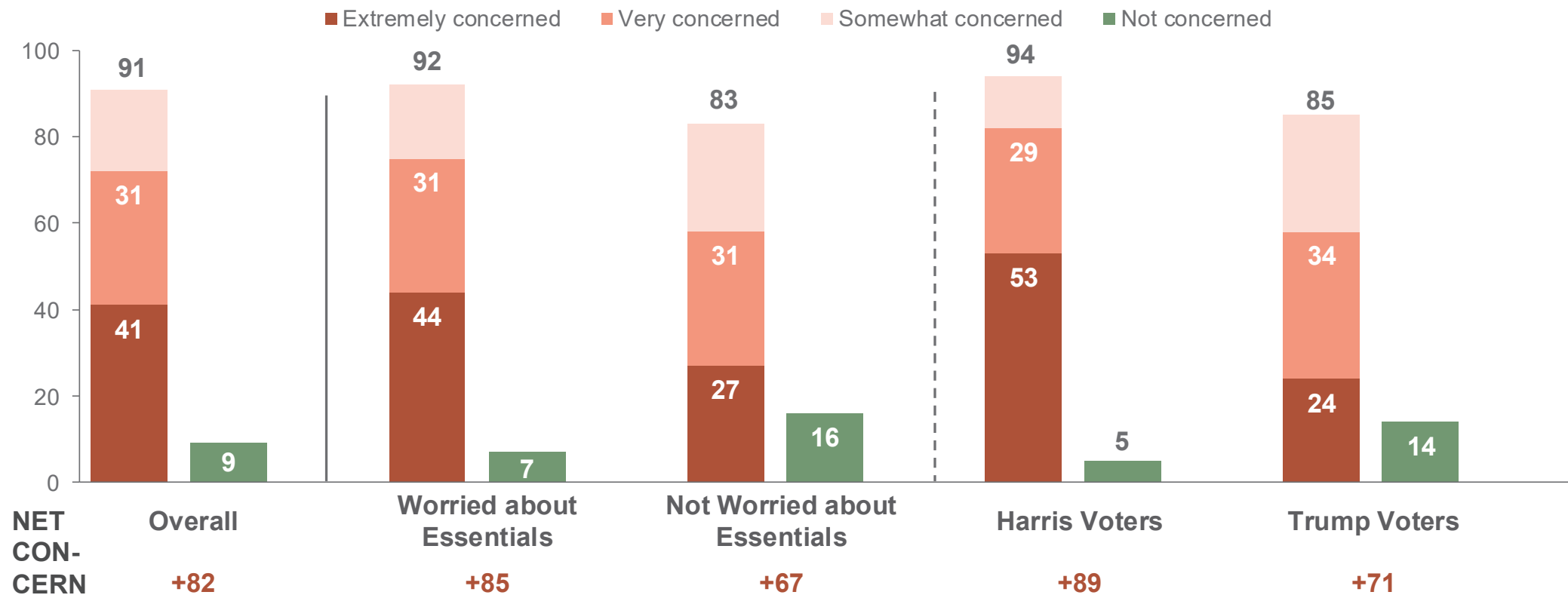
■ % Agree



9 in 10 voters are concerned about the ability of our country's leaders to solve economic problems.

Concern is high across all major demographic groups but slightly lower with voters who aren't worried about affording the essentials and voters who supported Trump in 2024.

How concerned are you about the ability of our country's leaders to solve economic problems?



By a double-digit margin, voters say young people today will have fewer economic opportunities than they've had.

Black voters are the only major subgroup to say young people will have more opportunities.

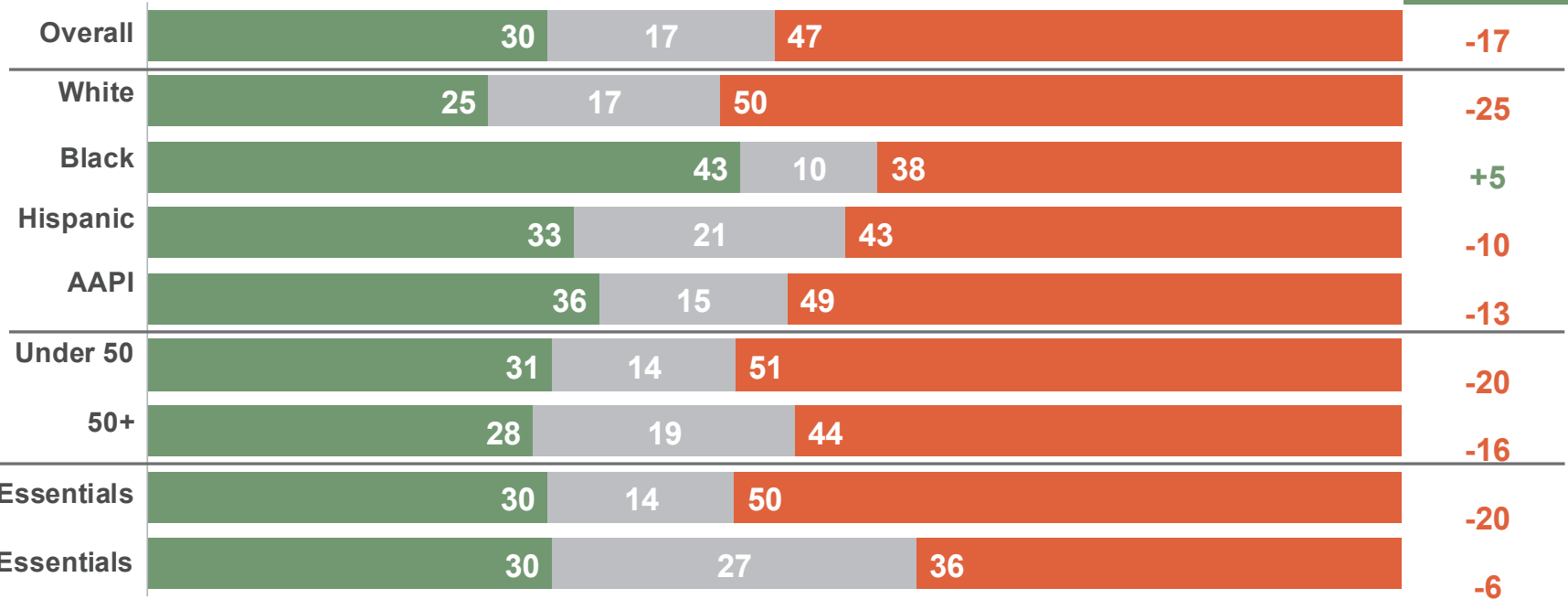
Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if none are exactly right?

■ Young people today will have MORE economic opportunities than I've had

■ Young people today will have ABOUT THE SAME amount of economic opportunities as I've had

■ Young people today will have FEWER economic opportunities than I've had

NET MORE



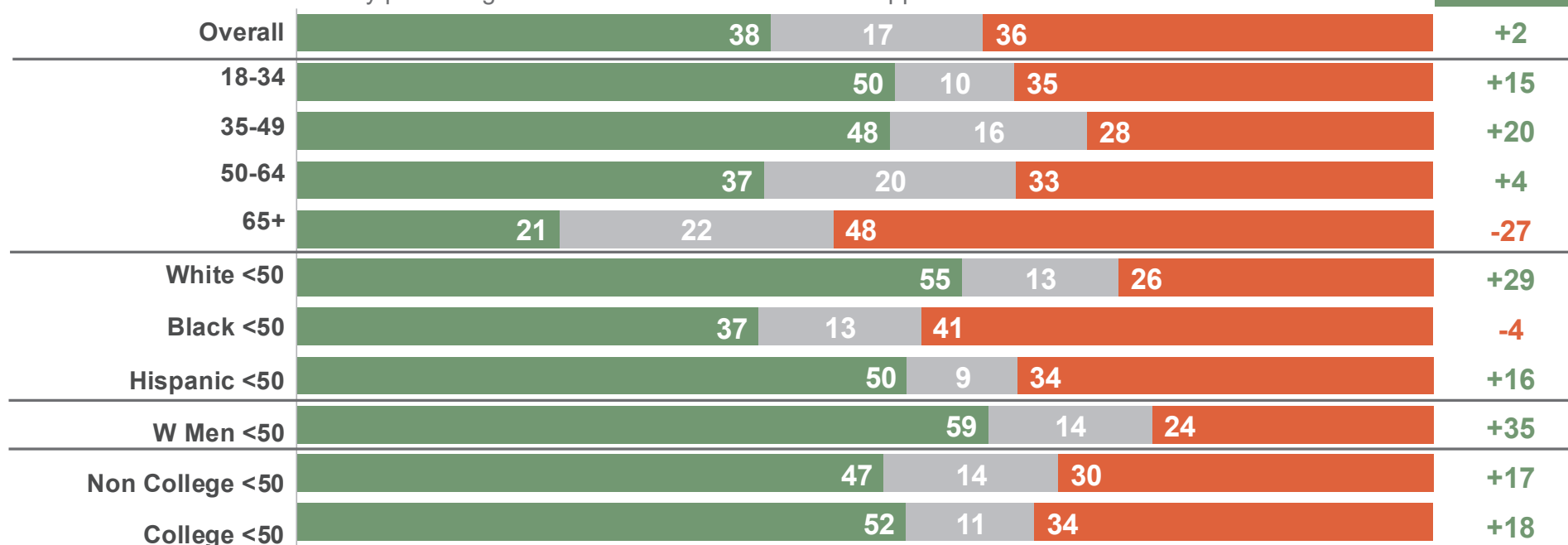
Younger voters feel worse off than their parents economically, while older voters feel better off than their parents.

This sentiment of economic decline is particularly powerful among whites under 50 and younger white men. It's just as common among college and non-college younger people.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if none are exactly right?

- My parents' generation had MORE economic opportunities than I've had
- My parents' generation had ABOUT THE SAME amount of economic opportunities as I've had
- My parents' generation had FEWER economic opportunities than I've had

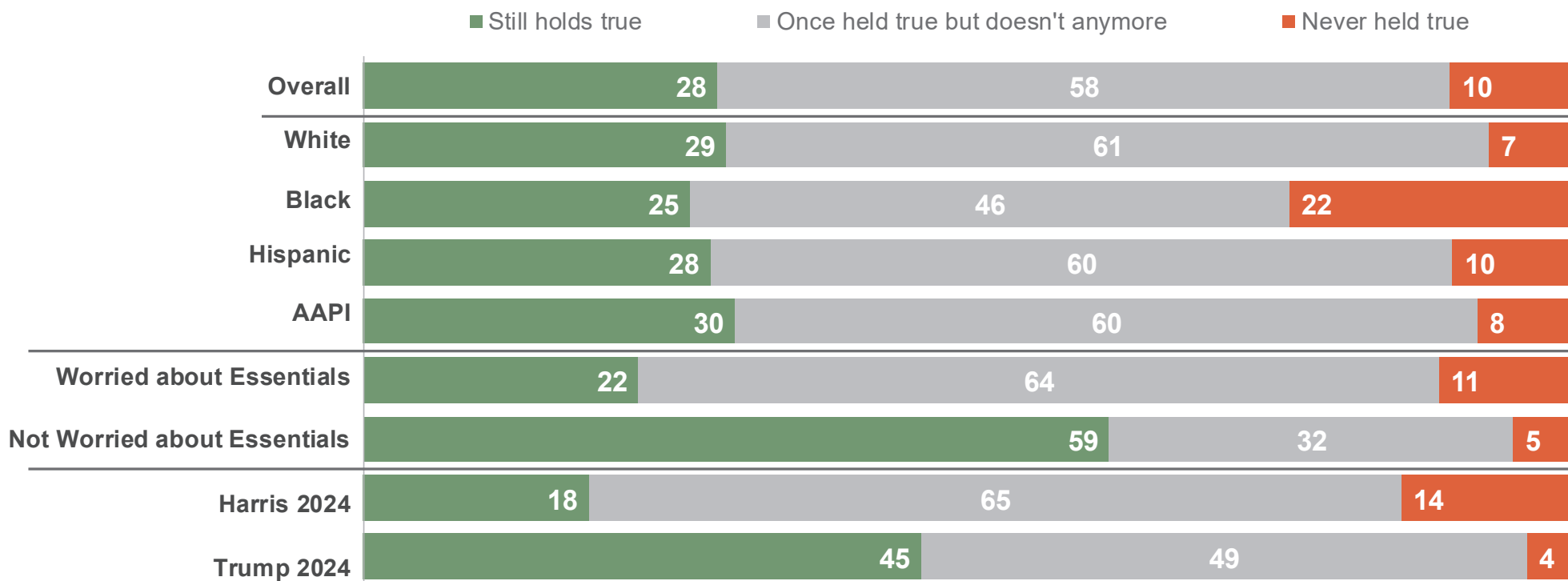
NET MORE



A majority of voters say the American Dream once held true but doesn't anymore. Very few say it never held true.

Voters who aren't worried about affording the essentials and Trump voters are most likely to say it still holds true while Black voters are most likely to say it never held true.

Do you think the American Dream—the promise that if you work hard, you'll get ahead—still holds true, once held true but does not anymore, or never held true?

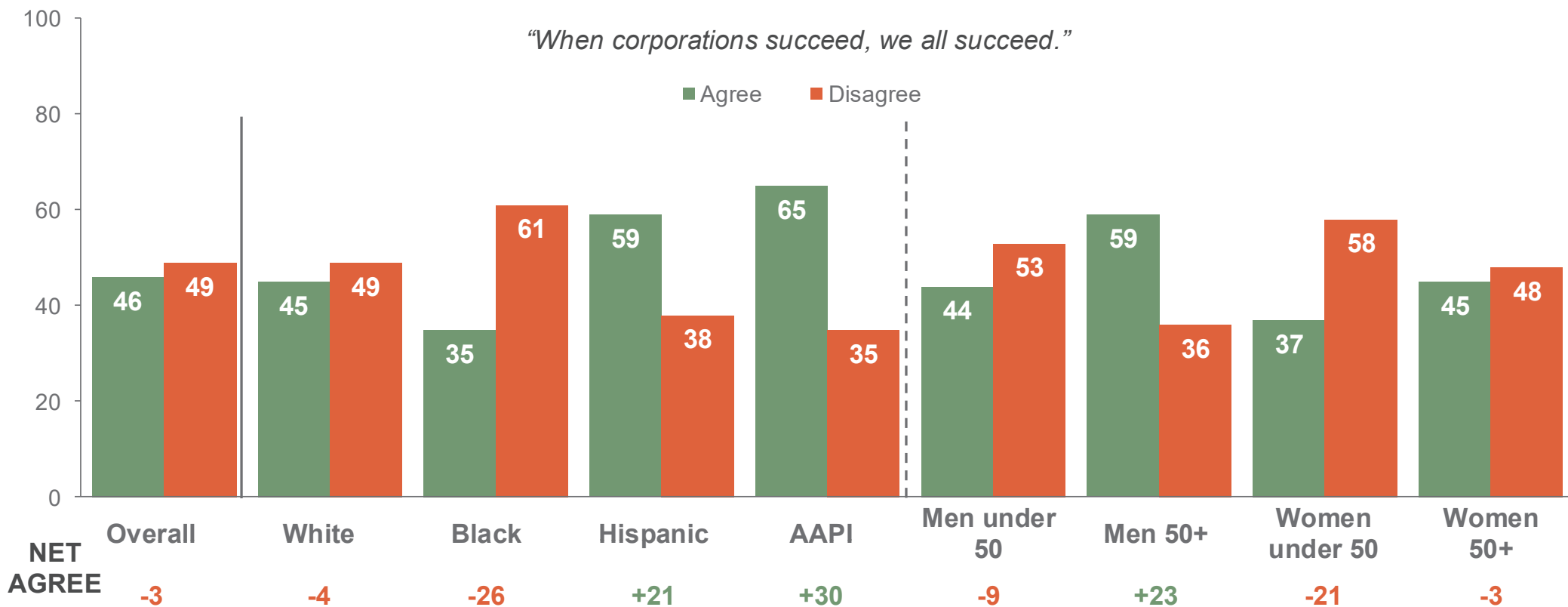


Voters overall are split on the statement “when corporations succeed, we all succeed.”

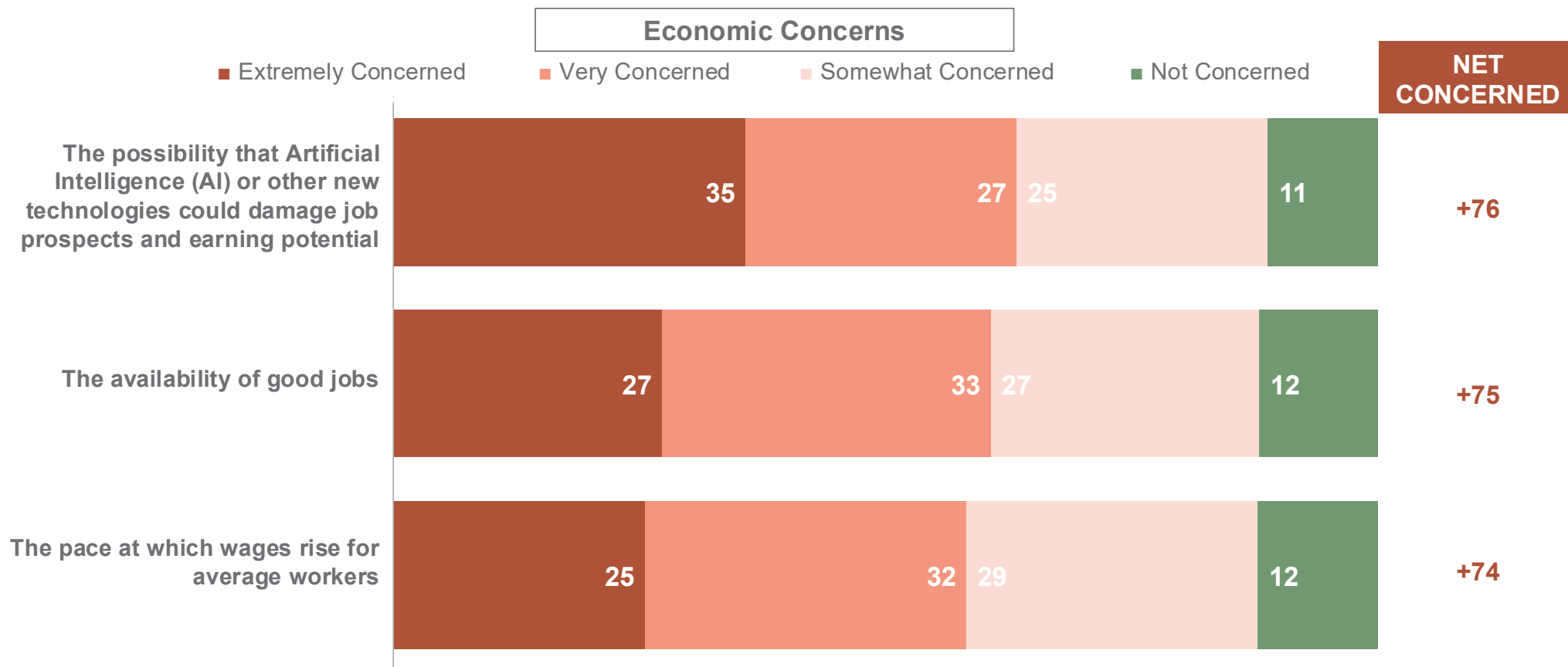
Hispanic and AAPI voters and men 50 and over agree while other subgroups disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“When corporations succeed, we all succeed.”

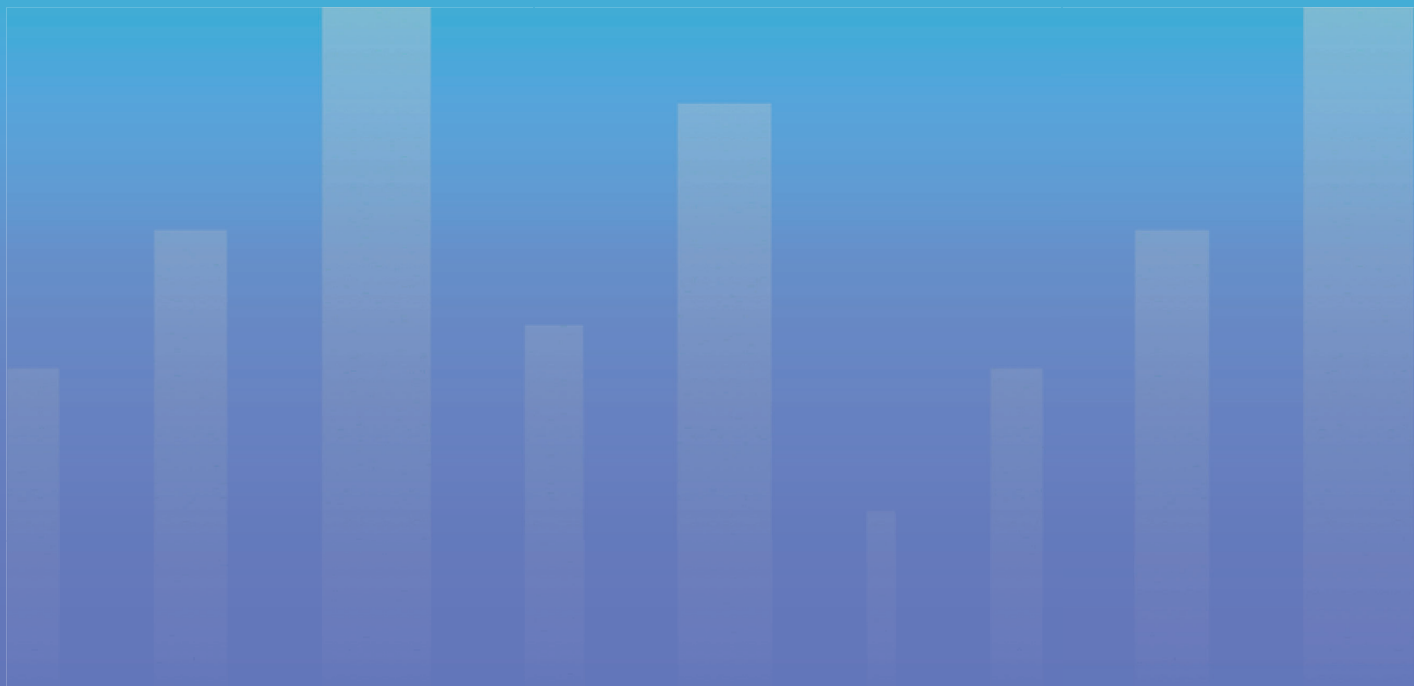


Voters are concerned about job prospects and earning potential, including new threats from AI as well as longer standing worries around wages and job availability.





DEMAND FOR REFORMING CAPITALISM

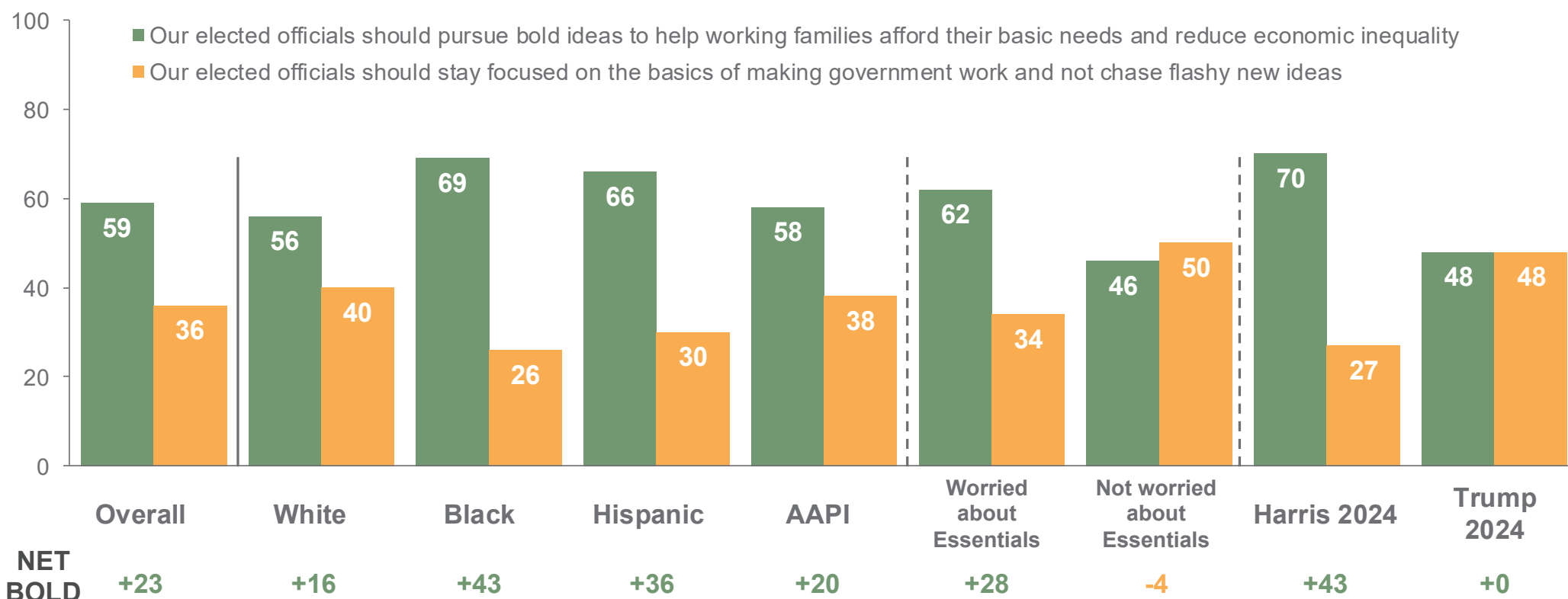


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6 in 10 voters want elected officials to pursue bold ideas to help families afford basic needs and reduce inequality.

Voters who aren't worried about the essentials and Trump voters are split, with around half wanting elected officials who focus on the basics instead of flashy new ideas.

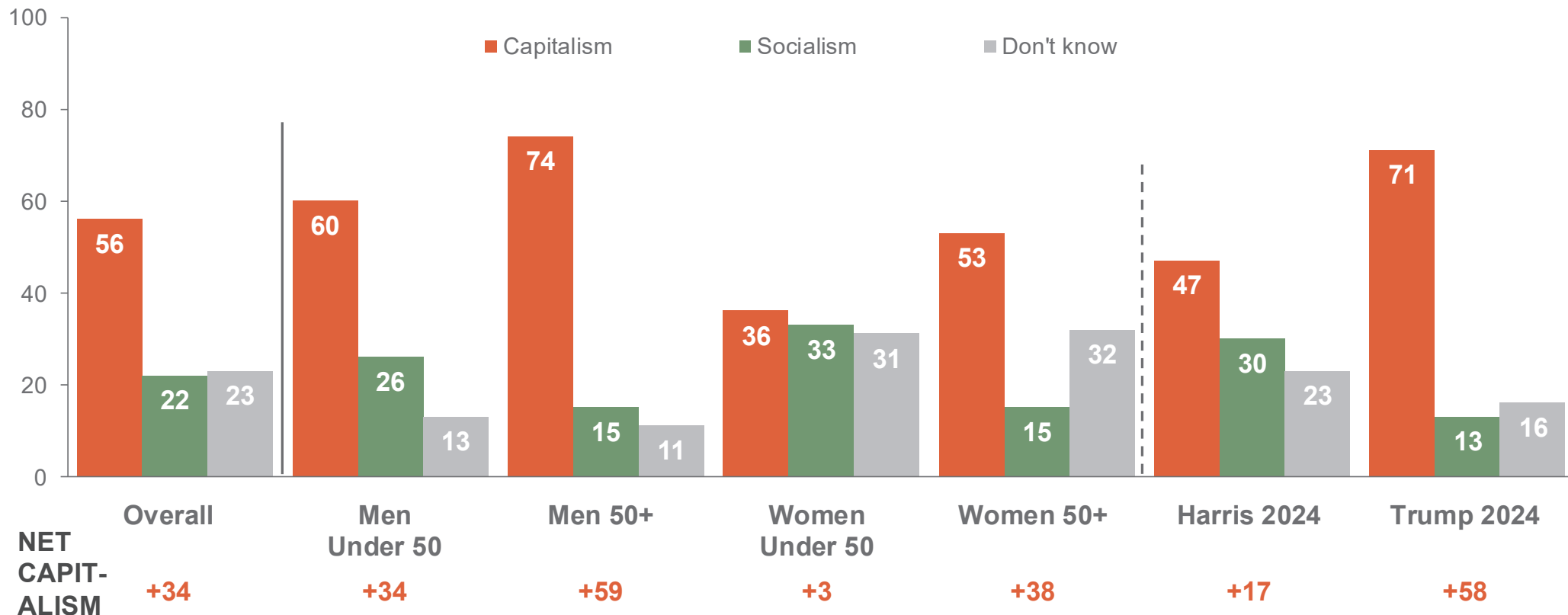
Which of the following comes closer to your point of view?



A majority of voters prefer capitalism, with a quarter preferring socialism and a quarter saying they don't know.

Trump voters and men 50+ are most supportive of capitalism while younger women are split in their views.

Which of the following would you prefer the US have as an economic system?

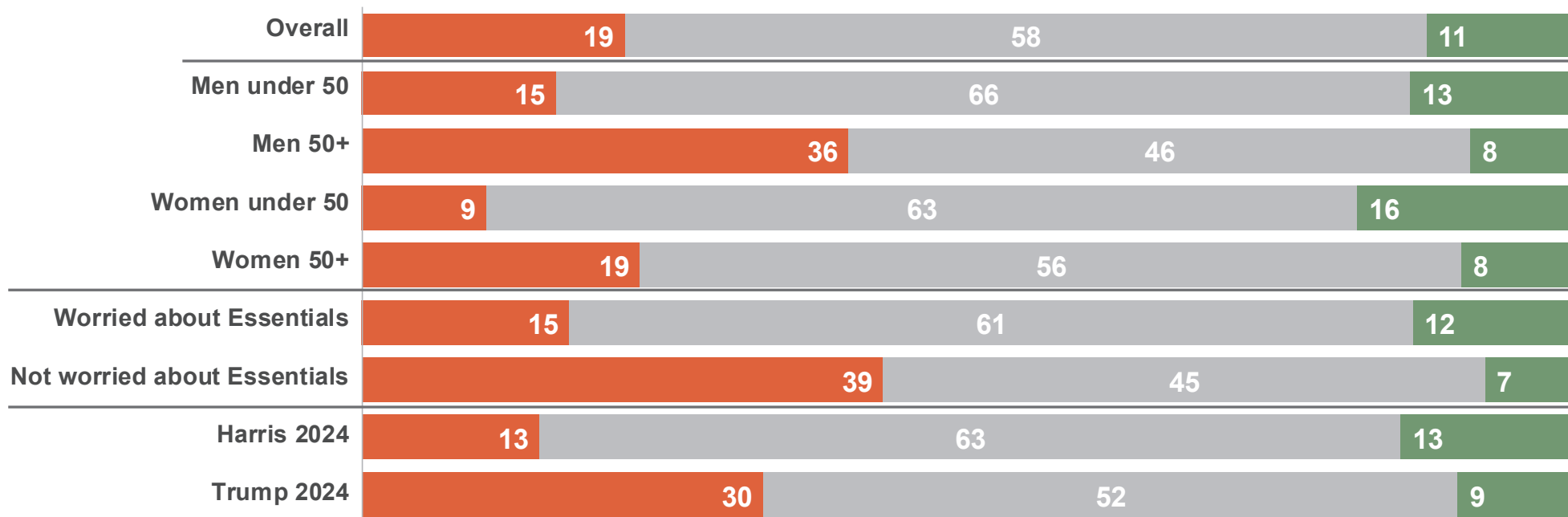


Majorities of voters agree that we need to rethink and reform capitalism to make it work better for Americans.

This is the most common answer across subgroups and transcends race, age, gender, and 2024 vote.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if none are exactly right?

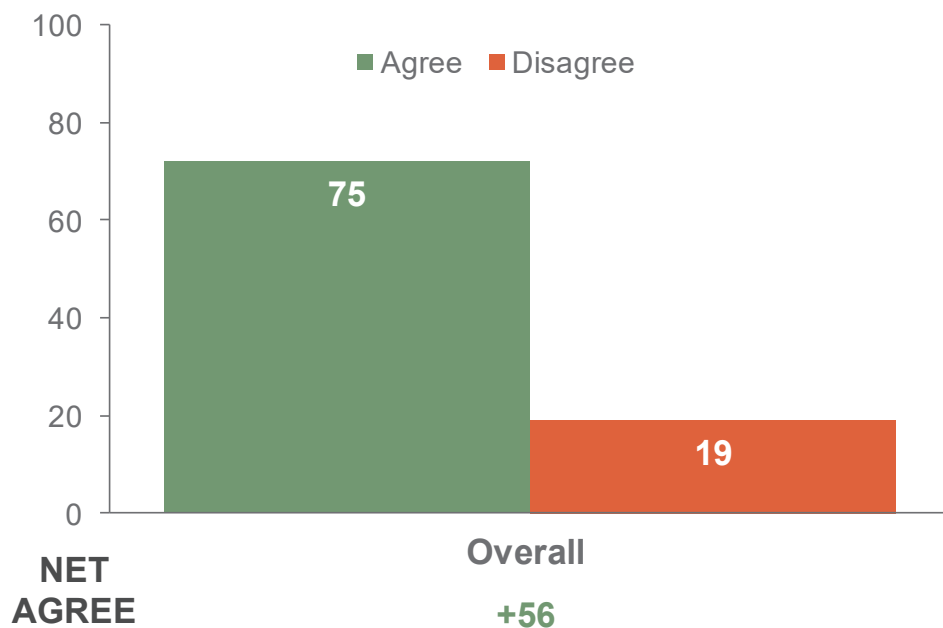
- We shouldn't make major changes to our capitalist system
- We need to rethink and reform capitalism to make it work better for Americans
- We need to throw out capitalism and move to a socialist economy in America



3 in 4 voters agree that capitalism has become too focused on making a few people rich and that we are at risk of political extremism if we can't make it work better for more Americans.

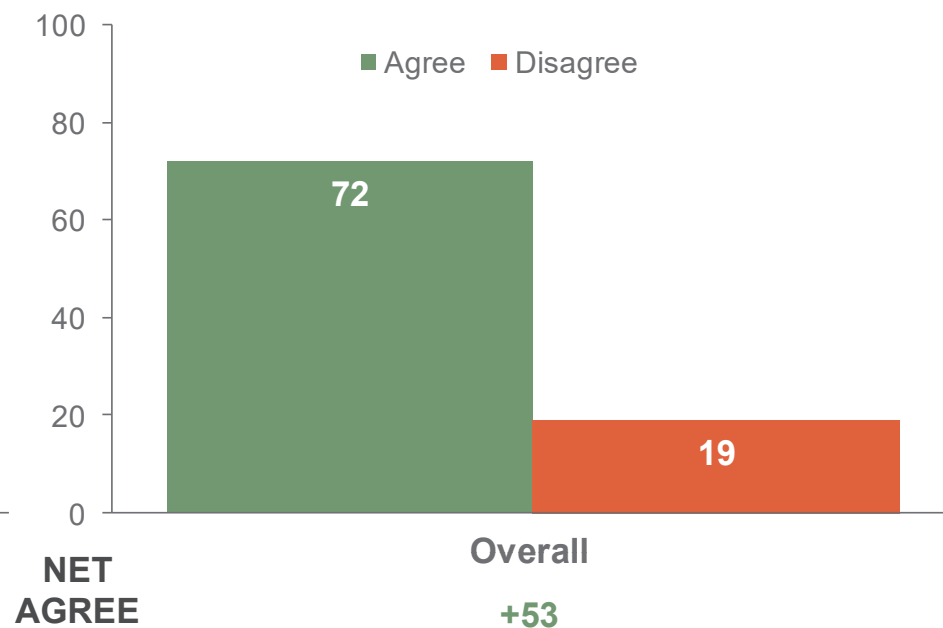
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Capitalism made America the richest country in the world, but now it's too focused on making a small number of people very rich and outsourcing our jobs to make them even more



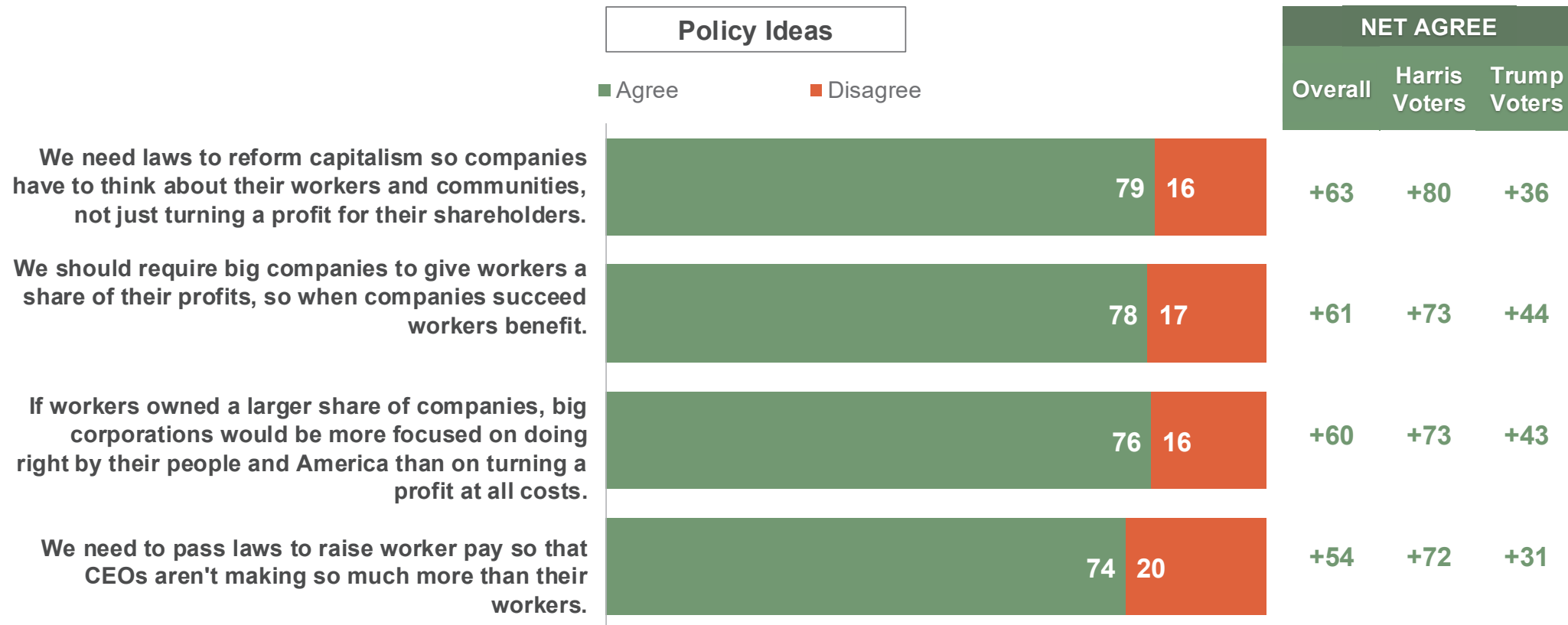
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

If we can't make capitalism work better for more Americans, we're at risk of our country turning toward tyranny and political extremism.

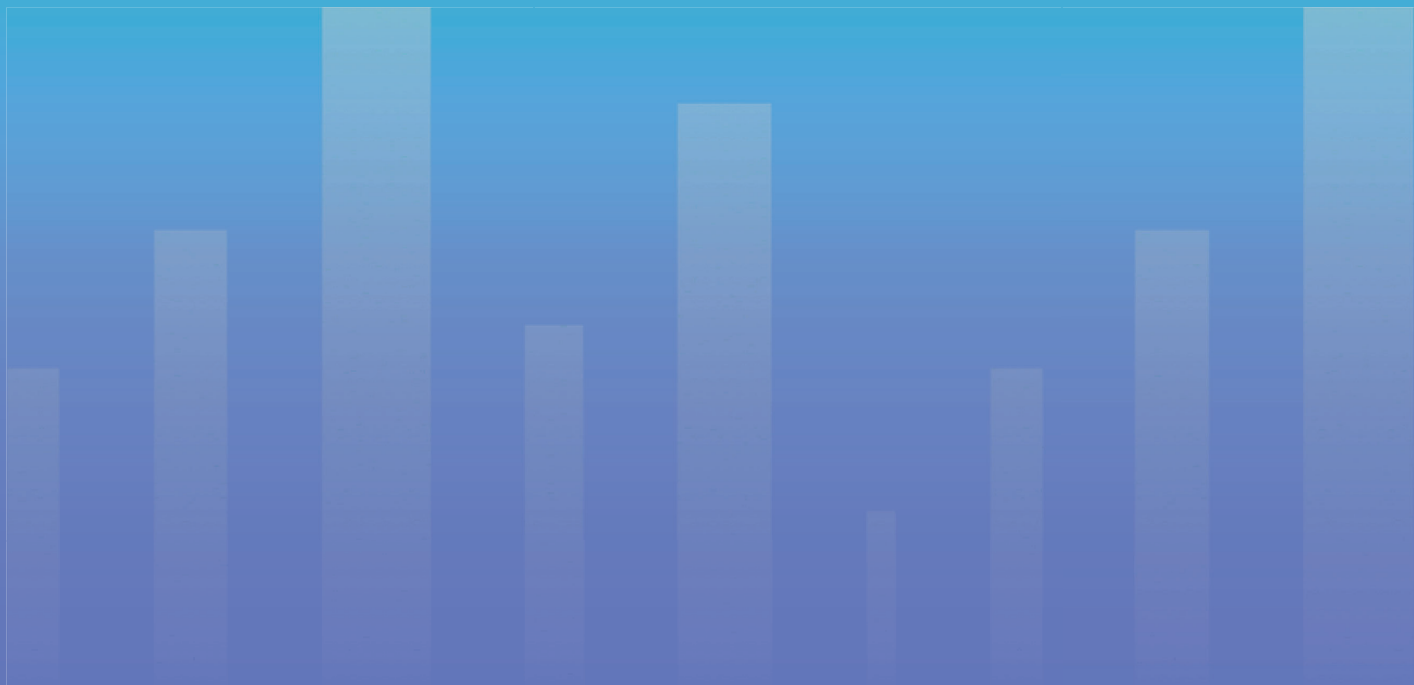


Three-quarters of voters want companies to have to do better by their workers.

Again, this idea transcends people's 2024 vote.



RECOMMENDATIONS



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Recommendations

- **Highlight the universality of economic challenges.** Strong majorities—including a majority of voters who make over \$150k per year—worry about affording the essentials that they and their families need. This is a challenge for voters across demographic groups and should continue to be the top priority for elected officials.
- **Talk about changing capitalism to fix it for workers, rather than getting rid of it.** Most Illinois voters are capitalist but also believe our system needs real changes to work for people like them. That should be a space we live in.
- **Share bold solutions, not small changes around the edges.** Voters are unsatisfied with the status quo and are ready to reward leaders who pursue bold ideas to address income inequality.
- **Advance popular policy solutions to tie company success to worker success.** Requiring stock sharing, tying worker pay to CEO pay, giving tax incentives to employee-owned companies, and giving worker dividends are pro-capitalism enough to appeal to capitalists and pro-worker enough to appeal to socialists.
- **Lean into the value of work and making work pay with a pro-worker message.** Illinois voters believe they are working hard and should benefit from that more than they are. The items that poll best talk about workers getting their fair share, while payments to everyone (regardless of work) were less popular.