Getting the Message Right: How to Stop Trump's Proposed Cuts to Affordable Housing

May 19, 2017

Speakers

- Moderator: Elayne Weiss, National Low Income Housing Coalition

- Rebecca Vallas, Center for American Progress

- Jeremy Slevin, Center for American Progress

- Tiffany Manuel, Ph.D., Enterprise Community Partners

- Amy Clark, National Housing Conference

Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding
Working to ensure maximum federal resources for housing and community development

Center for American Progress
National Economic Survey and Message Guidance around Upcoming Budget Fight

May 2017

- Trump budget expected May 23; Congressional budgets in June (could slip)

- Expected to include major cuts to a range of critical programs for struggling families—including affordable housing—to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations

- <u>Agenda for today's presentation</u>
  - CAP's message research
  - How to talk about the budget
  - #HandsOff campaign

Quantitative Methodology

Figure 5

➢ Focus groups in Southfield, MI (white non-college women and African Americans) and Denver, CO (white non-college men and Hispanics) in January

➢ Online 'qual board' discussion among more than two dozen college-educated voters across the country (half Trump and half Clinton voters) Survey conducted April 8th – 13th, 2017

• Interviewed 1200 registered voters on landlines and cell phones 144 African American Registered Voters
132 Hispanic/Latino Registered Voters
427 White Non-College Graduate Registered Voters

399 White College Graduate Registered Voters

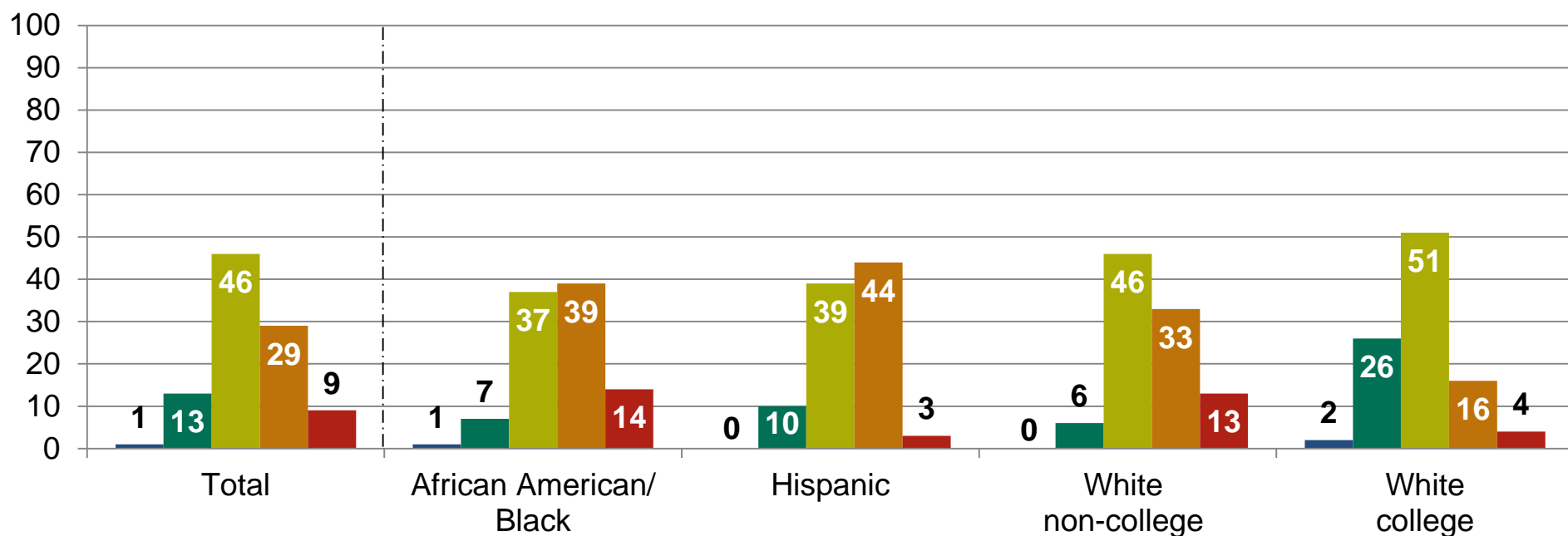➢ Overall margin of error: ±2.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval

Voter Characteristics

Figure 6

Figure 7

Q **Which of the following terms do you feel best describes you and your immediate household?**

Legend: ■ Wealthy ■ Upper-middle class ■ Middle class ■ Working class ■ Poor

	Wealthy	Upper-middle class	Middle class	Working class	Poor
Total	1	13	46	29	9
African American/Black	1	7	37	39	14
Hispanic	0	10	39	44	3
White non-college	0	6	46	33	13
White college	2	26	51	16	4

Figure 8

Q Thinking about your own family - both your immediate family living with you and your other close relatives like aunts, uncles, cousins and so on - as far as you know, is anyone in your family currently receiving government assistance for housing, health care, food, disability, or unemployment?

Legend:
- Yes, respondent
- Yes, immediate family
- Yes, close relatives
- No family receiving assistance

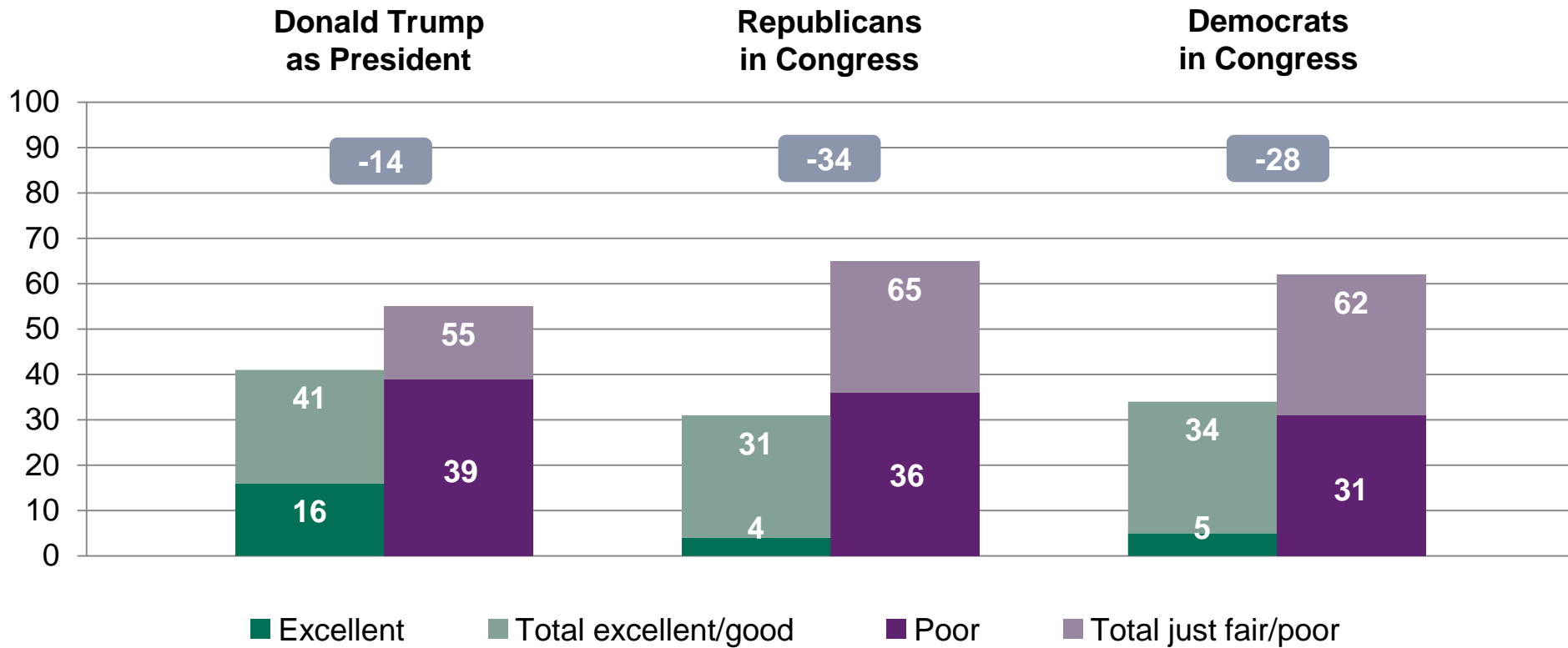|	Total	African American/Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
Yes, respondent	8	6	5	12	6
Yes, immediate family	9	8	9	10	8
Yes, close relatives	16	24	16	11	19
No family receiving assistance	69	63	70	71	69
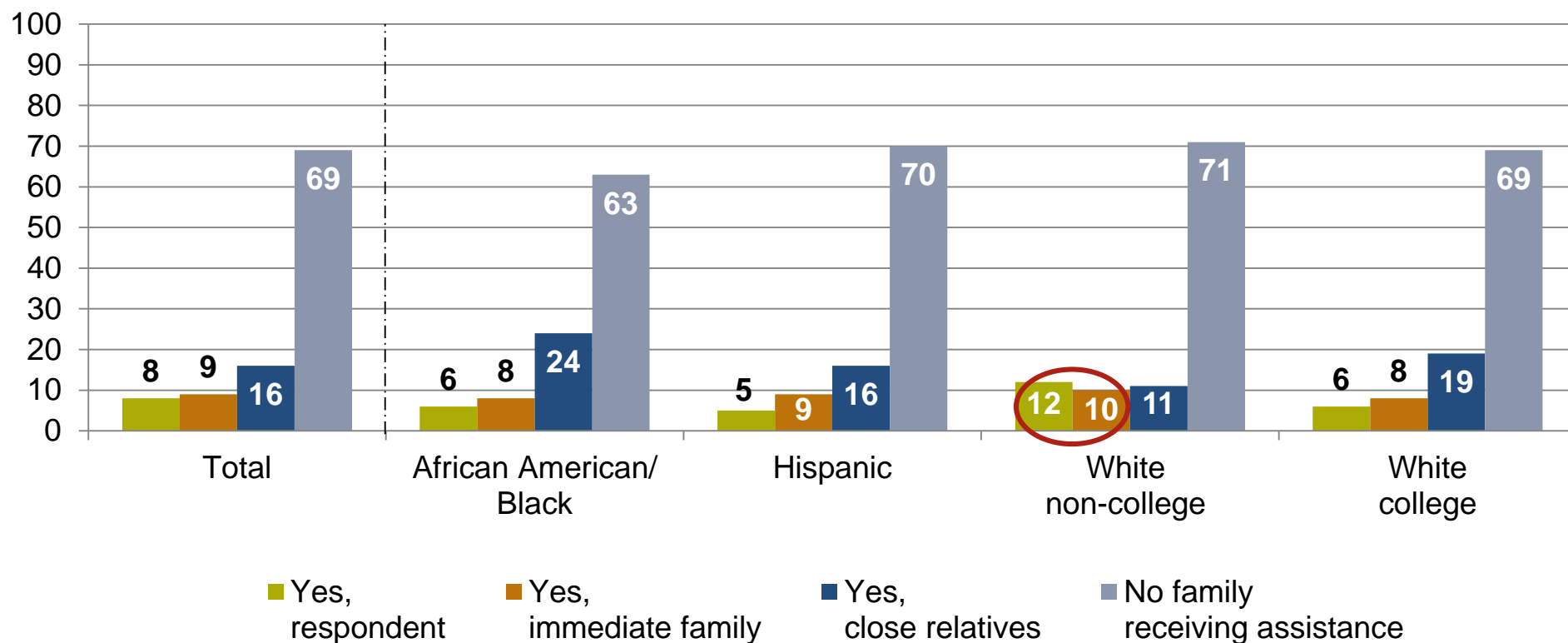
Political Environment

Figure 9

Broad, Intense Dissatisfaction with DC Leadership

Figure 10

Q **How would you rate the overall performance of the following - excellent, good, not so good, or poor?**

	Donald Trump as President	Republicans in Congress	Democrats in Congress
Net	-14	-34	-28
Total just fair/poor	55	65	62
Total excellent/good	41	31	34
Poor	39	36	31
Excellent	16	4	5

■ Excellent   ■ Total excellent/good   ■ Poor   ■ Total just fair/poor

Figure 11

Q **Based on what you've heard so far, do you think President Trump's tax and spending proposals will help you and your family, hurt you and your family, or don't you think they will have an impact on you and your family?**
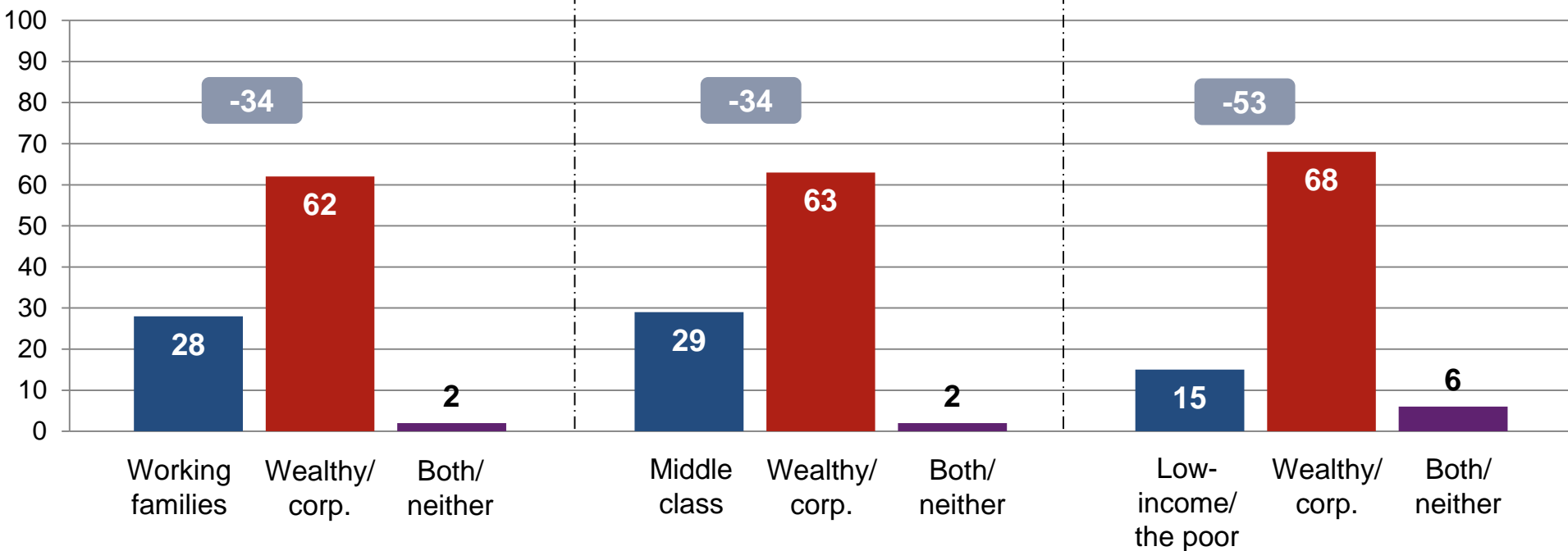

	Total	African American/Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
(net)	-12	-60	-17	+3	-5
Help you and your family	21	4	15	26	26
Hurt you and your family	33	64	32	23	31
No impact	36	28	42	38	35

■ Help you and your family   ■ Hurt you and your family   ■ No impact

Figure 12
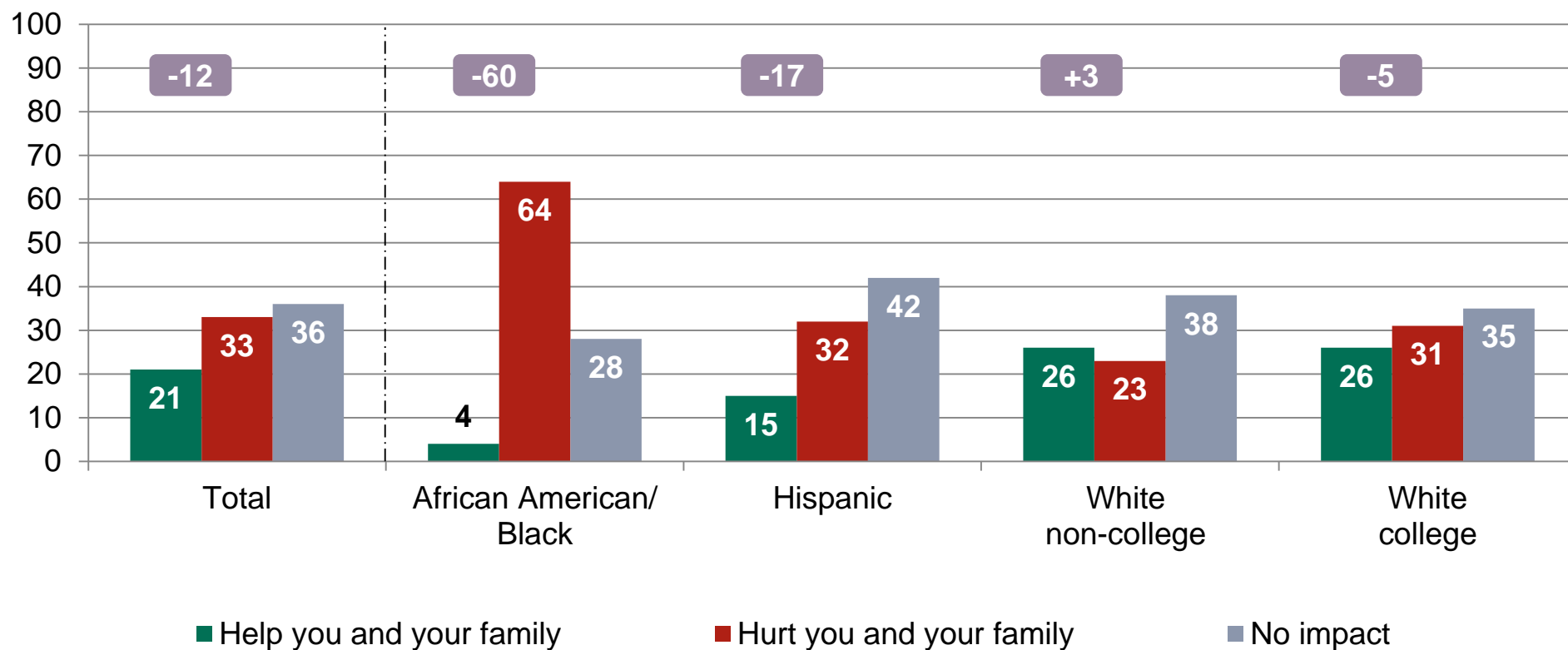
Q **Who do you think will benefit more from President Trump's tax and spending proposals –**

working families, or the wealthy and corporations? | **the middle class, or the wealthy and corporations?** | **low-income families and the poor, or the wealthy and corporations?**

	Working families	Wealthy/corp.	Both/neither	Middle class	Wealthy/corp.	Both/neither	Low-income/the poor	Wealthy/corp.	Both/neither
	28	62	2	29	63	2	15	68	6

-34 | -34 | -53

Debates On Poverty, Government Assistance

Figure
13

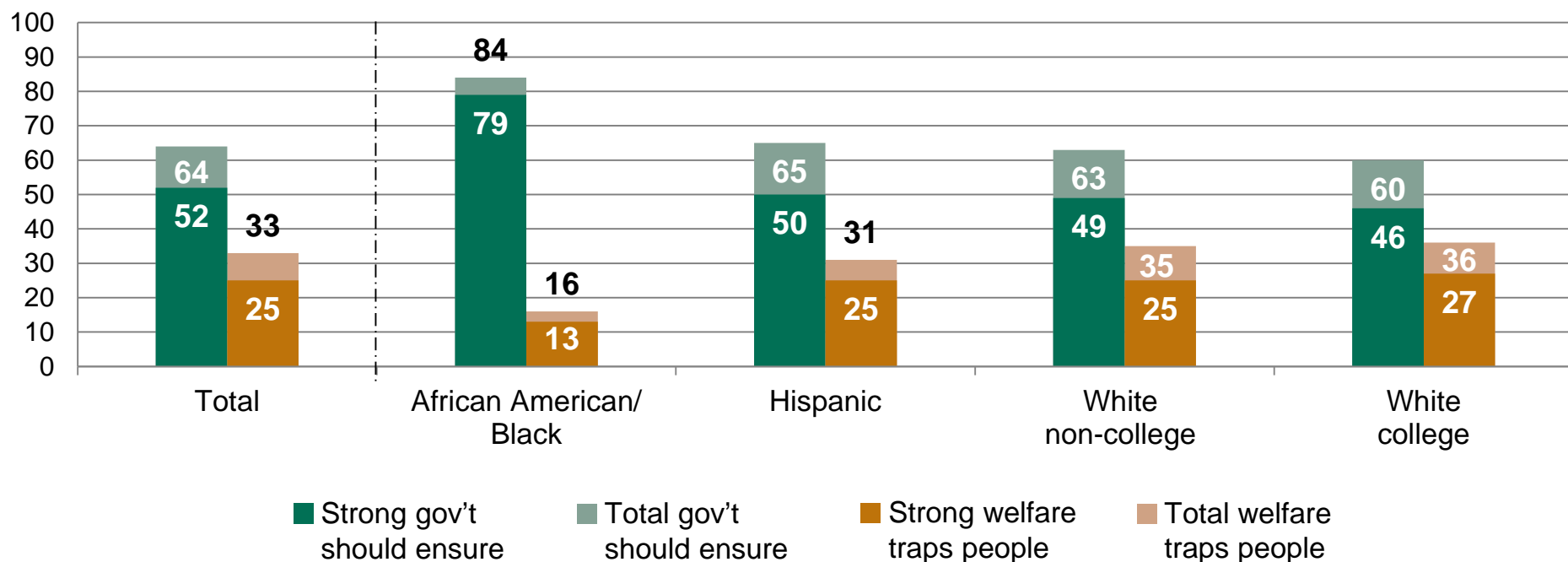# Majority Strongly Prefers Basic Living Standards Message

Figure 14

Q Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read both statements, please tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

The government should ensure that all families have access to basic living standards like health care, nutrition, and housing if their wages are too low or they can't make ends meet.

Welfare programs trap people in poverty by leaving them dependent on the government and penalizing work.

Legend:
- ■ Strong gov't should ensure
- ■ Total gov't should ensure
- ■ Strong welfare traps people
- ■ Total welfare traps people

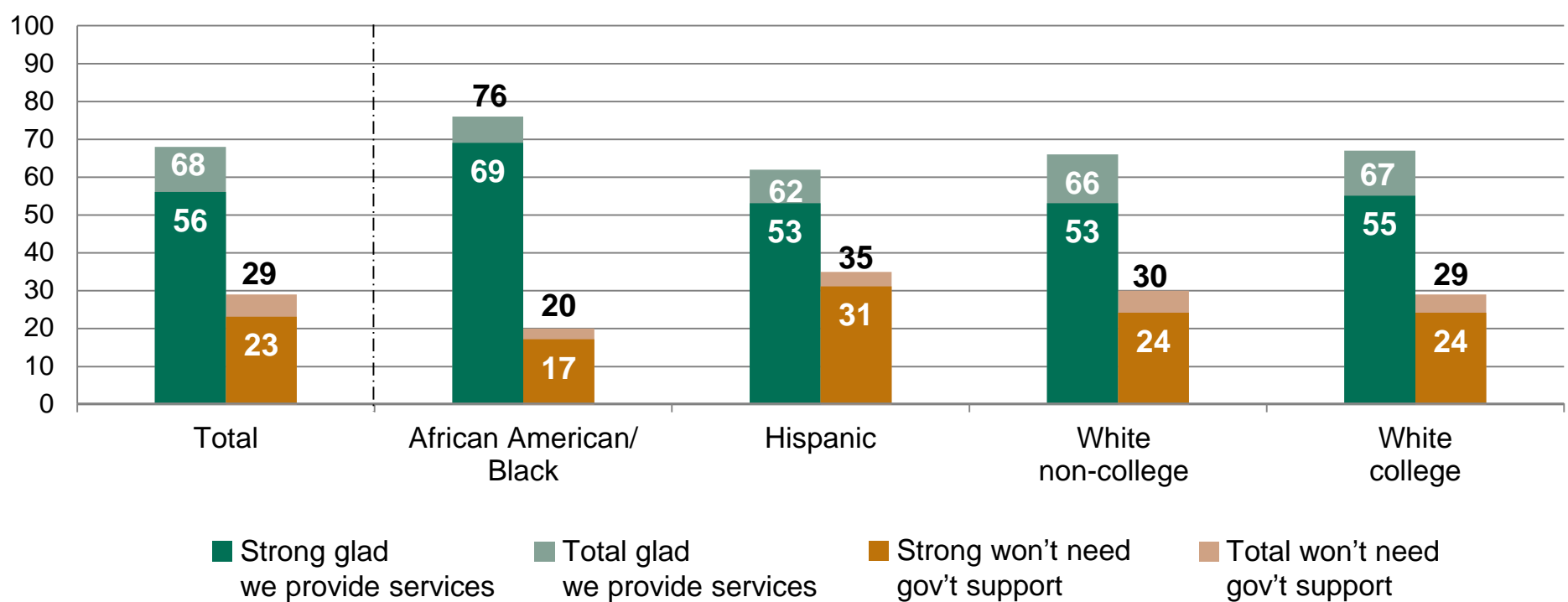|	Total	African American/Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
Total gov't should ensure	64	84	65	63	60
Strong gov't should ensure	52	79	50	49	46
Total welfare traps people	33	16	31	35	36
Strong welfare traps people	25	13	25	25	27

Broad Majorities Want Assurance 'For When Times Get Tough'

Figure 15

Even if I may not need them now, I'm glad our society provides government services to ensure basic living standards for when times get tough.

I don't envision ever being in a position where I would need or want to use the health care, nutrition, housing, or income support offered by the government.
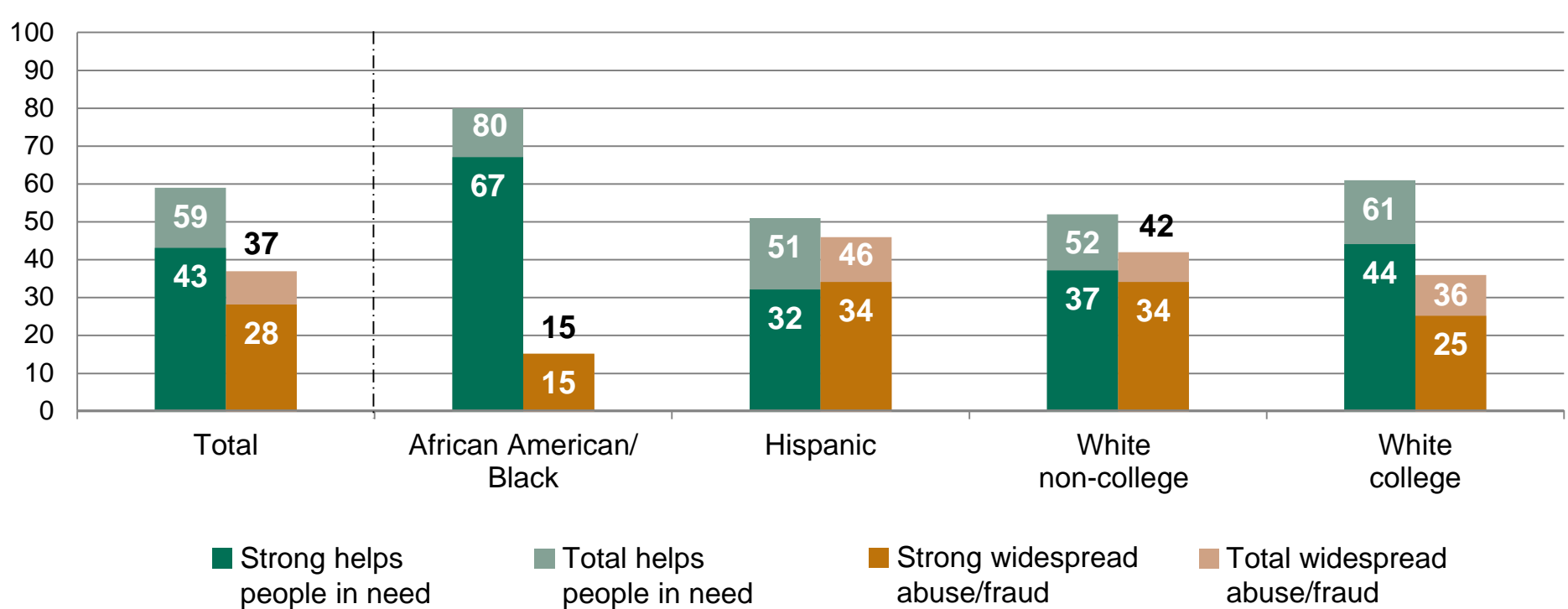

	Total	African American/Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
Total glad we provide services	68	76	62	66	67
Strong glad we provide services	56	69	53	53	55
Total won't need gov't support	29	20	35	30	29
Strong won't need gov't support	23	17	31	24	24

Legend:
- ■ Strong glad we provide services
- ■ Total glad we provide services
- ■ Strong won't need gov't support
- ■ Total won't need gov't support

Hispanic, White Non-College Most Likely to Side with Abuse Narrative

Figure 16

While there are certainly some cases of fraud and abuse, in general, government assistance programs work as intended and do help people genuinely in need.

There is widespread abuse and fraud of welfare programs by poor people and those looking to avoid work.
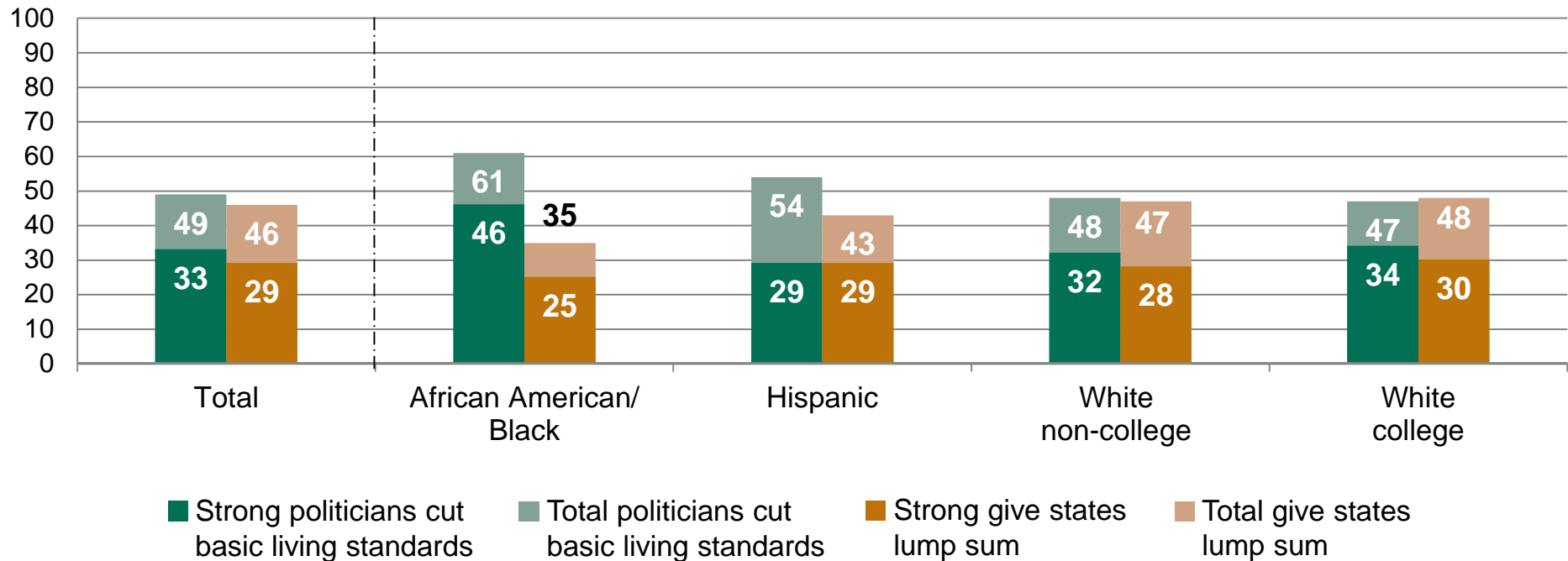
Legend:
- Strong helps people in need
- Total helps people in need
- Strong widespread abuse/fraud
- Total widespread abuse/fraud

	Total	African American/Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
Total helps people in need	59	80	51	52	61
Strong helps people in need	43	67	32	37	44
Total widespread abuse/fraud	37	15	46	42	36
Strong widespread abuse/fraud	28	15	34	34	25

White Voters Split in Debate Against Core Ryan Message

Figure 17

When politicians talk about streamlining programs like nutrition assistance and affordable housing, they are really just talking about cutting basic living standards that help people struggling to make ends meet. These efforts really just shift costs to the states and force them to either raise taxes or start reducing food assistance, health care, and housing for their most vulnerable residents.

We need to break down the federal bureaucracy of 92 separate anti-poverty programs and instead give states one sum of money, with the flexibility to work with private non-profit groups and individual caseworkers assigned to each recipient to develop custom plans, with accountability, for each person to lift themselves out of poverty permanently.

Legend:
- Strong politicians cut basic living standards
- Total politicians cut basic living standards
- Strong give states lump sum
- Total give states lump sum

Category	Strong politicians cut basic living standards	Total politicians cut basic living standards	Strong give states lump sum	Total give states lump sum
Total	33	49	29	46
African American/Black	46	61	25	35
Hispanic	29	54	29	43
White non-college	32	48	28	47
White college	34	47	30	48

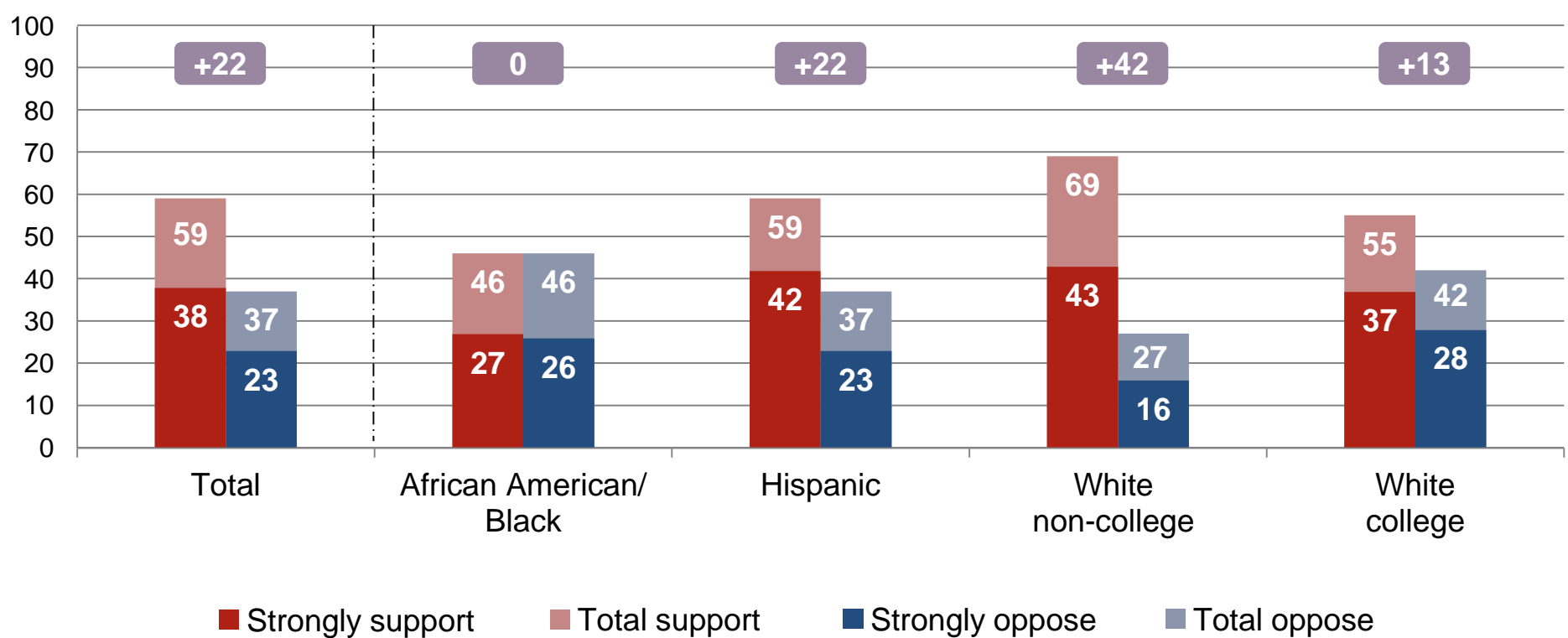**Trump Budget Proposals**

Figure 18

Support for Trump Budget Outline Below 60 Percent at Outset

Figure 19

Q Would you support or oppose an economic plan to increase spending on our military and homeland security and to cut taxes across the board, including income taxes on individuals and corporate taxes?
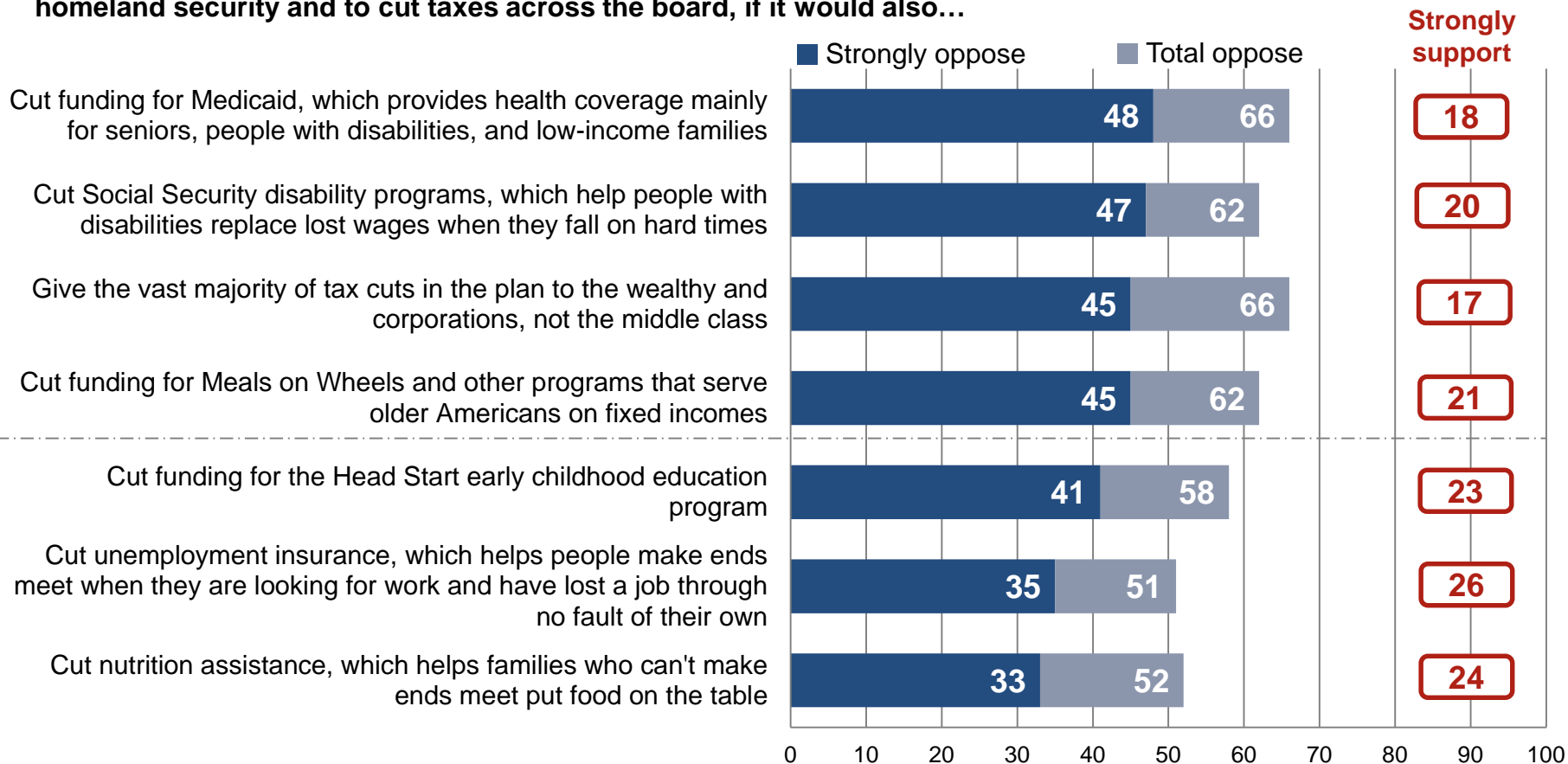

Legend: Strongly support | Total support | Strongly oppose | Total oppose

Group	+/-	Strongly support	Total support	Strongly oppose	Total oppose
Total	+22	38	59	23	37
African American/Black	0	27	46	26	46
Hispanic	+22	42	59	23	37
White non-college	+42	43	69	16	27
White college	+13	37	55	28	42

Figure 20

Majority of Those In Support Abandon Proposal After Tradeoffs

Q

[THOSE WHO SUPPORT PLAN] And would you support this plan to increase spending on our military and homeland security and to cut taxes across the board, if it would also…

Legend: ■ Strongly oppose   ■ Total oppose   **Strongly support**

Proposal	Strongly oppose	Total oppose	Strongly support
Cut funding for Medicaid, which provides health coverage mainly for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families	48	66	18
Cut Social Security disability programs, which help people with disabilities replace lost wages when they fall on hard times	47	62	20
Give the vast majority of tax cuts in the plan to the wealthy and corporations, not the middle class	45	66	17
Cut funding for Meals on Wheels and other programs that serve older Americans on fixed incomes	45	62	21
Cut funding for the Head Start early childhood education program	41	58	23
Cut unemployment insurance, which helps people make ends meet when they are looking for work and have lost a job through no fault of their own	35	51	26
Cut nutrition assistance, which helps families who can't make ends meet put food on the table	33	52	24

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Majority Opposition To Trump Budget with Both Sets of Pay-For's

Figure 21

Q

As you might know, President Trump recently proposed a budget plan for next year that increases spending on defense and a border wall by $54 billion and pays for these increases with significant cuts to other areas including scientific and health research, environmental protection, public broadcasting, and the State Department.

Based on what President Trump has outlined so far, would you say that you support or oppose his overall plan for the federal budget?

Q
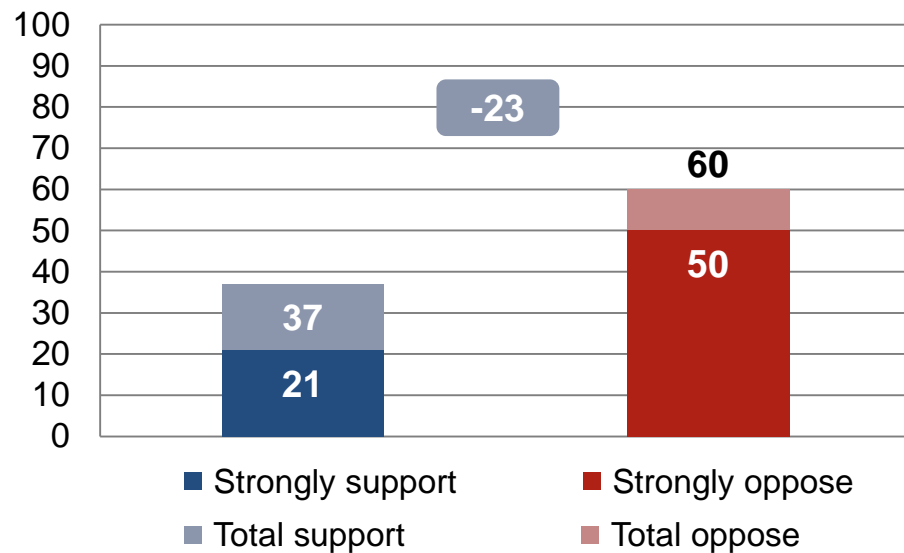
As you might know, President Trump recently proposed a budget plan for next year that increases spending on defense and a border wall by $54 billion and pays for these increases with significant cuts to health care, affordable housing, home heating assistance, nutrition assistance for children, and job training.

Based on what President Trump has outlined so far, would you say that you support or oppose his overall plan for the federal budget?

Left chart:
- -23
- Total oppose: 60
- Strongly oppose: 50
- Total support: 37
- Strongly support: 21

Legend: ■ Strongly support ■ Strongly oppose ■ Total support ■ Total oppose

Right chart:
- -19
- Total oppose: 58
- Strongly oppose: 50
- Total support: 39
- Strongly support: 22

Legend: ■ Strongly support ■ Strongly oppose ■ Total support ■ Total oppose
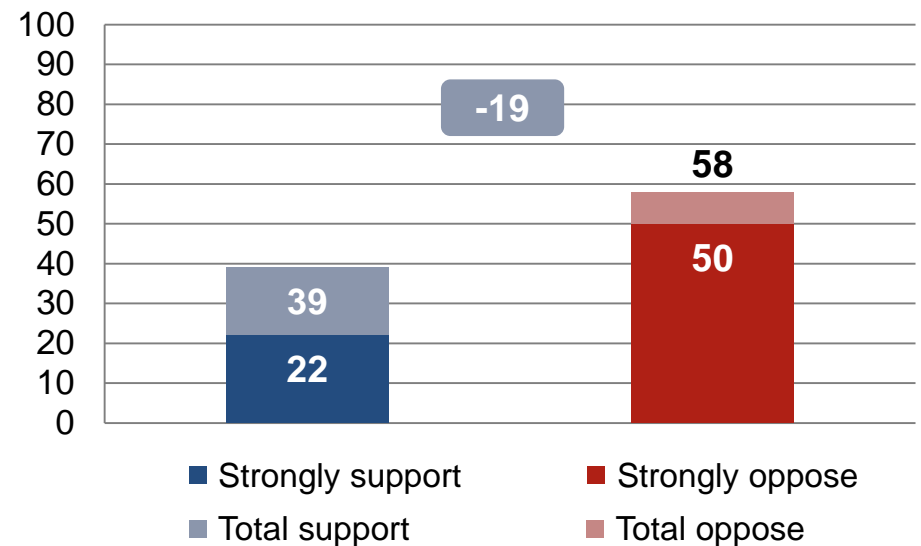
Effective Messages

Figure 22

Figure 23

'Oppose & Propose' Most Effective Attack on Trump/GOP Budget

Q

Now let me read you a few more statements about the budget proposed by President Trump / Republicans in Congress. For each statement, please tell me whether it is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the proposed budget.

Reason to Oppose

■ Very convincing   ■ Total convincing

(OPPOSE AND PROPOSE) Instead of cutting people's access to basic living standards like Trump's / the Republican plan does, we should enact stronger policies to create jobs, raise wages, invest in education, and give people a chance at a better future. Rather than taking away opportunities, we need strong new investments in our families, our workers, and our infrastructure.

43   72

(TRUMP PROMISE) President Trump promised in his campaign that he would protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and not put working people in harm's way. Yet Trump's / the Republican budget plan threatens these very programs and cuts basic living standards for these people, while doing nothing to help with jobs or wages. President Trump should honor his pledge and reject a plan that punishes working families.

33   61

(VALUES) We have a moral obligation to assist the most vulnerable in our society, but Trump's / congressional Republicans' plan does the exact opposite. It cuts vital programs like disability assistance, mental health services, job training, and even Meals on Wheels for seniors to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations.

35   57

(WORK REASSURANCE) The costs of education, housing, health care, and food are just too high for many people, even those who are working. Nearly eighty percent of adults on Medicaid live in a household where at least one adult is employed, and most are employed full time. Trump's / the Republican plan punishes working families while doing nothing to lower costs or help people find higher paying jobs.

28   57

(TRADITIONAL PROGRESSIVE MESSAGE) The social safety net lifts millions out of poverty every year, and the best way to protect the most vulnerable in our country is by increasing government assistance, not slashing it. Low-income tax credits, food stamps, unemployment insurance and other antipoverty programs dramatically reduce poverty and help protect the most vulnerable.
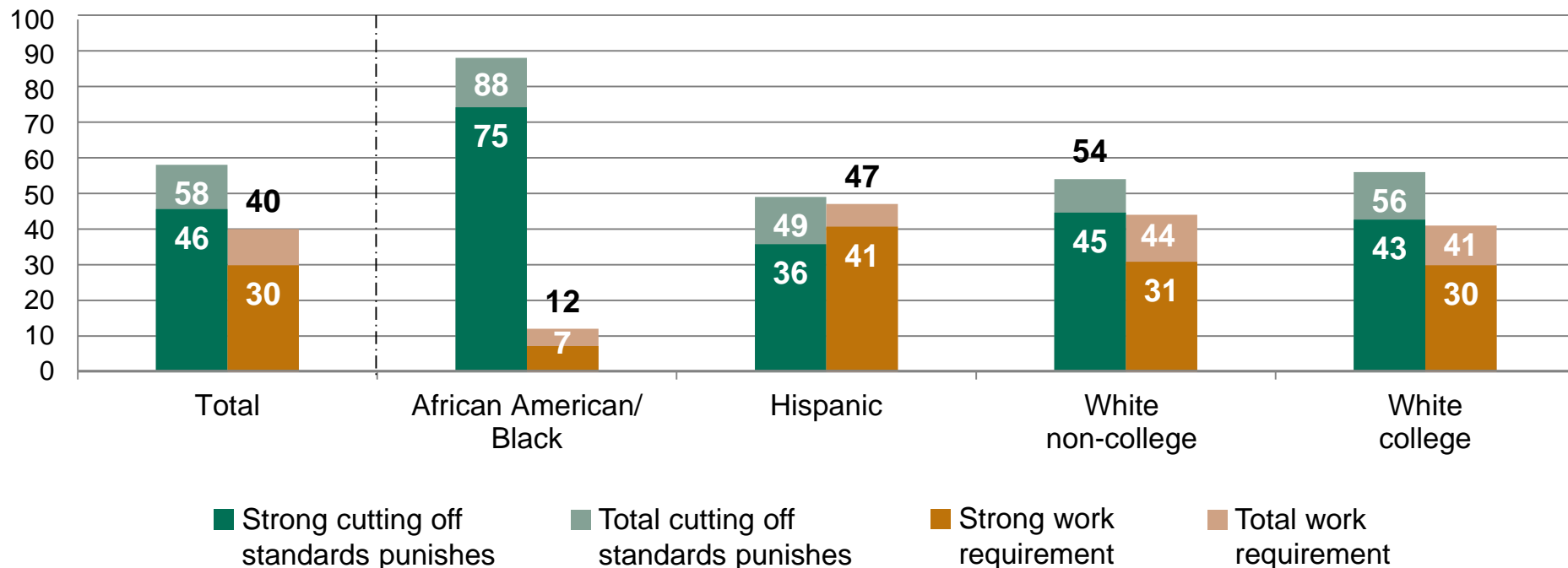
22   56

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100
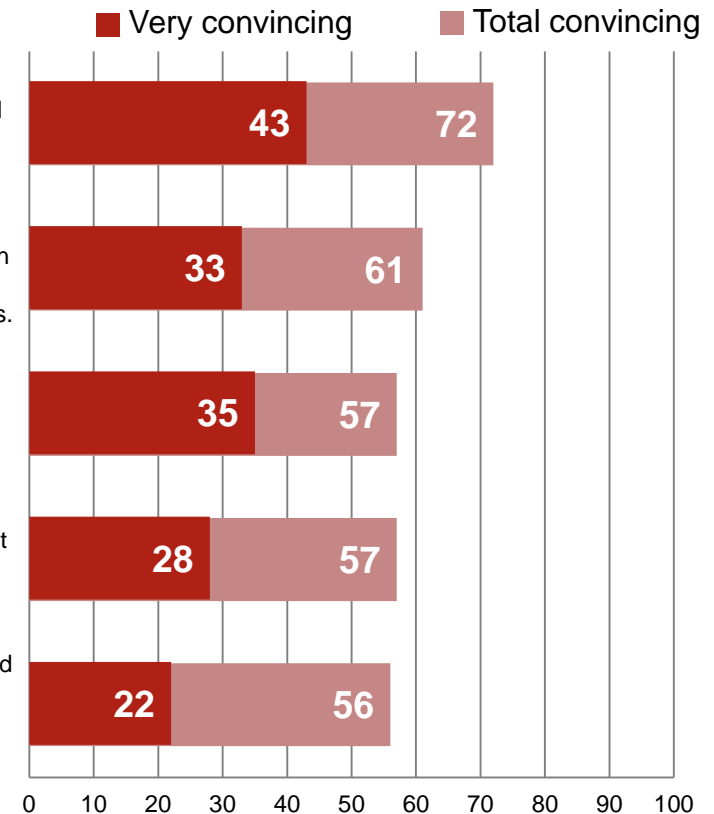
Oppose & Propose Wins Work Requirements Debate

Figure 24

Cutting off people's basic living standards by taking away their health care, affordable housing, and disability support only makes it harder for them get back on their feet. Rather than punishing people who are already facing economic hardship, Congress should instead focus on policies that help create jobs and boost wages.

Requiring people who receive government assistance to find work is critical to promote self-sufficiency, prevent abuse and dependency, and ensure that benefits are going to those truly in need. Work requirements protect taxpayers and help lift up individuals trapped in a cycle of poverty.

	Total	African American/ Black	Hispanic	White non-college	White college
Total cutting off standards punishes	58	88	49	54	56
Strong cutting off standards punishes	46	75	36	45	43
Total work requirement	40	12	47	44	41
Strong work requirement	30	7	41	31	30

Legend:
- Strong cutting off standards punishes
- Total cutting off standards punishes
- Strong work requirement
- Total work requirement

Progressive Policy Solutions

Figure 25

Jobs Proposals Lead Battery of Broadly Popular Proposals

Figure 26

Q

Now, I'm going to read you some other policy solutions that have been proposed to address the challenges facing people who can't make ends meet and now turn to government assistance programs. For each one, please tell me whether you would support or oppose that particular policy solution.
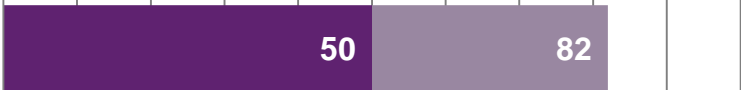
Legend: ■ Strongly support ■ Total support

Top Tier

Proposal	Strongly support	Total support
For workers who lose their jobs to foreign competition, automation, or relocation, provide a salary and tuition to receive hands-on training in new skills and technology needed to fill available jobs in their communities.	50	87
If individuals receiving government assistance to make ends meet can't find work, the government should hire them directly to work providing community service or rebuilding our roads, bridges, and schools.	50	82
Enact basic family-friendly policies including paid family and medical leave and paid sick days.	51	80
Ensure that all young people aged twenty-five or under are placed in a job, an apprenticeship, or enrolled in continuing education toward a specific vocation within four months of registering for unemployment or leaving the education system.	43	76
Help first-time homebuyers by offering low-interest rate mortgages and direct funds to help them make a down payment on a home.	45	75
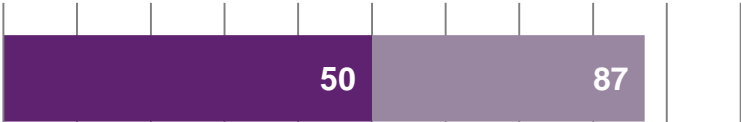
Scale: 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Less Intensity for Second Tier, but Still Broad Popularity

Figure 27

2nd Tier Policy Solutions

■ Strongly support   ■ Total support

Policy	Strongly support	Total support
Invest in American entrepreneurs by providing interest-free loans to start their own businesses in distressed and high-unemployment regions of the country.	37	73
Strengthen overtime protections so workers either receive extra pay when they work more than forty hours a week or can spend more time with their families, and so companies can't cut jobs and spread the work over those who remain.	39	71
Increase the federal minimum wage to $12 dollars an hour and make sure it rises with inflation.	46	65
Expand rental assistance for all low-income families spending more than half of their income on rent each month.	33	65
Increase the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour and make sure it rises with inflation.	40	58

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Democratic Policy Proposals Popular Across Party Lines

Figure 28

Democrat

Strongly support   Total support

Provide salary & tuition to workers who lose jobs to foreign competition/automation/relocation — 61 — 94

Paid family/medical leave & sick days — 72 — 93

Increase minimum wage to $12 — 72 — 89

Independent

Provide salary & tuition to workers who lose jobs to foreign competition/automation/relocation — 44 — 85

Government hire those who can't find work directly — 44 — 77

Paid family/medical leave & sick days — 47 — 75

Republican

Provide salary & tuition to workers who lose jobs to foreign competition/automation/relocation — 42 — 81

Government hire those who can't find work directly — 49 — 79

Ensure people under 25 are placed in job/apprenticeship/vocational ed — 39 — 72

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

- Voters don't expect Trump, GOP to march in lockstep. Budget is a key opportunity to show whose side Trump is really on.

- Avoid pity/charity. Proposed cuts to health care, housing, education, and nutrition are proposals that will affect "you and your family" and "threaten your family's economic security."

- *Safety net* is an unfamiliar term for many voters. Use **basic living standards**, or **the basics**—these terms resonate.

- Avoid jargon, acronyms, program names (with exceptions). Use kitchen-table terms: ***programs that enable families to keep a roof over their heads…***

- Name villains and highlight tradeoffs: ***slashing affordable housing to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations.***

- Disability is an especially powerful lens, spurring outrage even among Trump voters.

- Resistance alone is not enough. Progressives gain more when they **oppose and propose** by putting big ideas on jobs, wages, and economic security on the table as alternatives to Trump budget proposals. *This approach even beats GOP work requirements message.*

- ## What is Hands Off?

  - A national campaign dedicated to preventing cuts to affordable housing, Medicaid, disability benefits, nutrition assistance and other basic living standards in the upcoming budget fight

  - Launches next week around Trump budget release (expected 5/23)

  - Core goals:

    - Put a face on GOP proposed cuts
    - Show members of Congress that these cuts have political consequences

Center for American Progress

Center for Community Change

National Council on La Raza

National Women's Law Center

The Arc of the United States

NETWORK

Stand Up America

Coalition on Human Needs

SEIU

AFSCME

Social Security Works

Indivisible

OFA

- How can I get involved?
  - Use the #HandsOff hashtag when discussing cuts in the Trump/Congressional budgets
  - Encourage your followers to share their stories using the #HandsOff Hashtag
  - Direct followers to HandsOff.org to share their story starting next week

I'm telling Trump and Congress: #HandsOff cuts to Meals on Wheels to pay for tax cuts for millionaires.

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Center for American Progress
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Getting the Message Right:
How to Stop Trump's Proposed Cuts to Affordable Housing

Tiffany Manuel, PhD

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DrTiffanyManuel

Reframing the Public Conversation:
Affordable Housing, Opportunity and Community Development

www.EnterpriseCommunity.org

HOUSING MESSAGE BACKFIRES

The Mobility, Personal Responsibility and Self-Makingness Backfire

Buy the house you can afford or move. Stop making poor decisions and asking me to pay for them.

The Separate Fates and Zero-Sum Thinking Backfire

This issue has nothing to do with me. It's not my responsibility to solve other people's problems.

The NIMBY and Natural Segregation Backfire

Who wants to live next to poor people? I worked to get out of that ghetto.

The Thin Understanding of Cause and Effect Backfire

What has changed? Why is this happening to so many people these days?

The Facts Don't Fit the Frame Backfire

Most people I know are doing pretty OK. These data don't sound right to me.

The Crisis and Fatalism Backfire

So, you're saying we have to address poverty and change the housing market? Good luck! How can we ever hope to change issues this big?

10 Specific Redirections You Can Implement Today

2. Explain How Systems Shape Outcomes

3. Tell the Story of US

4. Powerfully Connect Housing to Community Issues

1. Start with Why

5. Connect Cause & Effects of Housing Insecurity

8. Focus on Solutions/ What Works

7. Future Orientation

9. Avoid the term "Housing"

6. Where You Live Affects You

10. Widen Range of Visible Stakeholders

Making the Case:
Frequency of Key Narrative Elements in Media and Housing Industry Materials
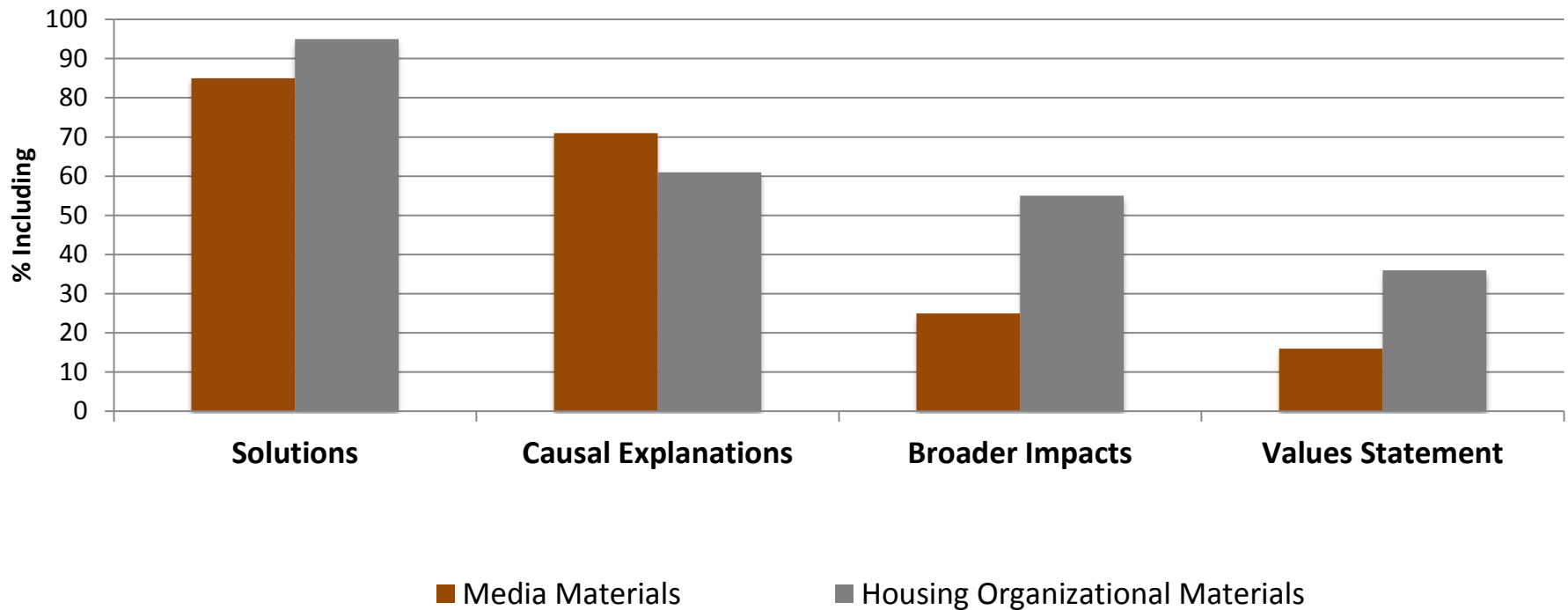
Source: O'Neil, M., Volmert, D., Kendall-Taylor, N. (2016). *Not Telling the Whole Story: Media and Organizational Discourse about Affordable Housing.* FrameWorks Institute.

More than 11 million renter households are severely ~~cost burdening~~ cost burdened – paying 50% or more of their incomes for housing

IT'S A TRAP!

The Mobility Personal Responsibility, and Self-Makingness Backfire

Buy the house you can afford or move. Stop making poor decisions and asking me to pay for them.

Redirection:
You know, our paychecks are not getting bigger but the rents are…pushing many of our neighbors out of our community. Many of the neighbors who are leaving have been long-time residents of this community – who have watched their children grow up here, gone to church here, played with their children in our parks – and now, after making those contributions – they are being edged out. We can do better!

Why It Works:
- Redirects attention away from a problem of individual agency and defines the problem as structural; causal explanation

America has an affordable housing crisis. You might not know [from] our national dialogue. We don't like to talk about poverty, and homelessness and lack of opportunity.

IT'S A TRAP!

So, you're saying we have to address poverty and change the housing market? Good luck! How can we ever hope to change issues this big?

Redirection:
In Denver, we are a "can-do" city! We are building a new reality for our people, a new future for our children, a new model of healthy communities and providing great places to live – no matter how much money you have in your wallet! That starts with providing quality homes for people who need it.

Why It Works:
-    Value message – American pragmatism; increases agency; future orientation; optimistic; universal benefits

Greg and Latisha met a little over 4 years ago and fell in love. They ha~~ve~~ed t~~~~ support~~ ~~ach other ever since. Greg and Latisha are homeless on the streets of Detroit.

IT'S A TRAP!

The Separate Fates and Zero-Sum Thinking Backfire

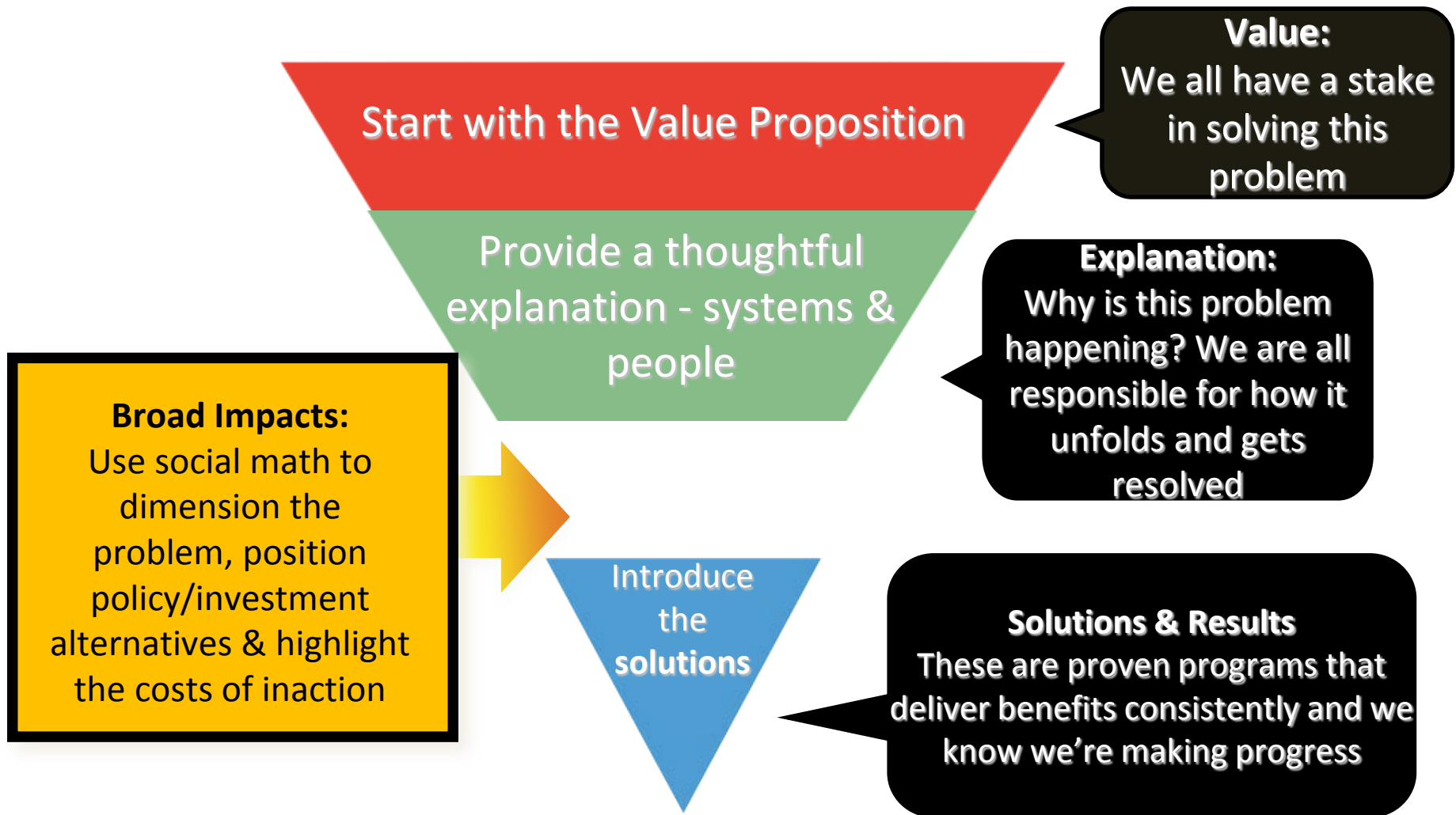This issue has nothing to do with me. It's not my responsibility to solve other people's problems.

Redirection:
The prosperity of our region depends deeply on the smart investments we make to ensure that the people who work here, have a place to call home here. Every dollar we spend to help a homeless person find a home, returns back to us 100 times over in costs savings. And best of all, these homes actually create jobs for everybody! *(+ stories of community)*

Why It Works:
- Story of Us
- Moves away from charity as the value and as the motivation for action
- Takes advantage of the connection between housing and jobs

Making the Case:
Starts with a Compelling Value Proposition

Start with the Value Proposition

Value:
We all have a stake in solving this problem

Provide a thoughtful explanation - systems & people

Explanation:
Why is this problem happening? We are all responsible for how it unfolds and gets resolved

Broad Impacts:
Use social math to dimension the problem, position policy/investment alternatives & highlight the costs of inaction

Introduce the solutions

Solutions & Results
These are proven programs that deliver benefits consistently and we know we're making progress

Tiffany Manuel, PhD

DrTiffanyManuel

www.EnterpriseCommunity.org

ABOUT NHC

The National Housing Conference educates decision makers and the public about housing policies and practices to move housing forward together.

NHC convenes and collaborates with our diverse membership and the broader housing and community development sectors to advance our policy, research and communications initiatives to effect positive change at the federal, state and local levels.

NATIONAL
HOUSING
CONFERENCE

Frames

noun

the lenses through which people view and receive information.

Frame with housing values

- Opportunity

- Independence

- Home

- Security

- Choice

- Stability

- Dignity

- Reward for work

- Fairness

- Safety

Discussing the role of government

- Mission and purpose

- Systems and structures

- Citizen-manager thinking

Tell landscape stories

- **Stories about individuals** cause your audience to focus on the person, not the problem: *What should she have done differently to prevent this problem?*

- **Landscape stories** show systems and structures to create a fuller picture of the problem– and solutions.

- Looking at the landscape helps you **discover new voices** that can deliver your message.

NATIONAL
HOUSING
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Evidence (and caveats)

- **Few of us think in numbers,** so to be understood evidence needs to be made visual, simplified or compared to real-life objects or experiences

- **Being wrong feels bad…** so we interpret new facts so that they support what we already believe

- **Beware moving goalposts**: How much evidence is enough?

David Monniaux © 2003

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Anatomy of a message

5%

15%

80%

- Problem statement
- Values
- Solutions
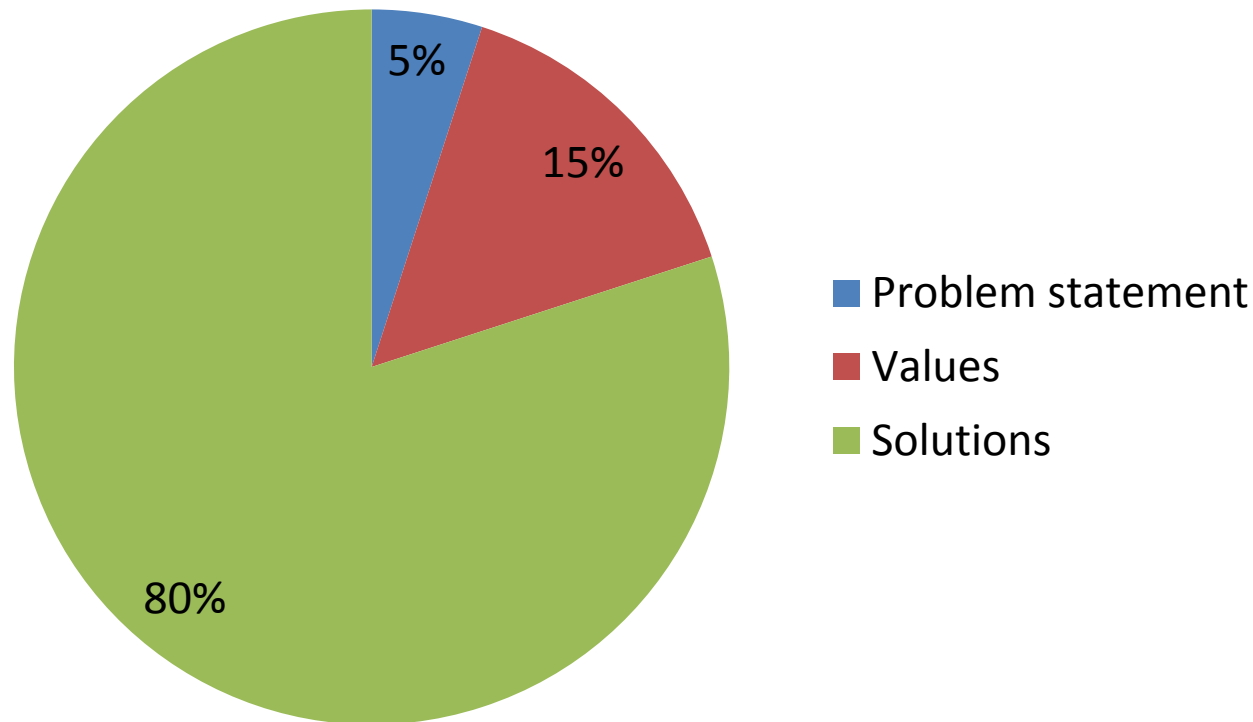
Putting it all together:
Housing intersections

- Understand what your MoC cares about

- Locate the connection between housing and the priority issues

- Create a message

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Go further

- Framing and Messaging Toolkit: www.nhc.org/framing-messaging-toolkit

- Solutions for Housing Communications plenary recordings: www.nhc.org/communications-2017

Background: Why Framing Matters

Are you having the conversation with your audience you hope to? Do your conversations ever go sideways? Do you ever wonder how your audience is hearing the words you say? Framing your issues differently may be the help you need.

In communicating about our issue as advocates, it's important to understand how our audience hears the information we present. Cognitive science research tells us that people's brains are working relentlessly to connect the information we give them to stories they already know. We know our brains are constantly encountering and taking in new information, and that we experience that information through a filter of cultural models, knowledge, lived experiences, myths, stereotypes and more. All of these things affect how we interpret the world. To communicate more effectively about our issues, first we have to understand how we're being heard through our audience's filters.

Frames are mental structures that help people understand the world, based on particular cues from outside themselves that activate assumptions and values they hold within themselves.
— Berkeley Media Studies Group