



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Americans on Net Neutrality

**A National Survey
of Registered Voters**

April 2018

Methodology

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough

Method: Administered online to a probability-based sample selected from a larger panel recruited by telephone and mail.

Margin of Error: +/-3.1%

Sample: 997 registered voters

Fielding Dates: March 9 – 23, 2018

INITIAL BRIEFING

Internet Service Providers (or ISPs) are companies like Verizon or Comcast that give customers access to the internet. Under the current regulations, ISPs are required to:

- provide customers access to all websites on the internet.
- provide equal access to all websites without giving any websites faster or slower download speeds.

ISPs are not allowed to:

- charge websites to provide faster download speed for those who visit their website.
- charge customers, who use the internet, an extra fee to visit specific websites.

The proposal is to remove these regulations. However, ISPs would be required to disclose any variation in download speeds or blocking any websites.

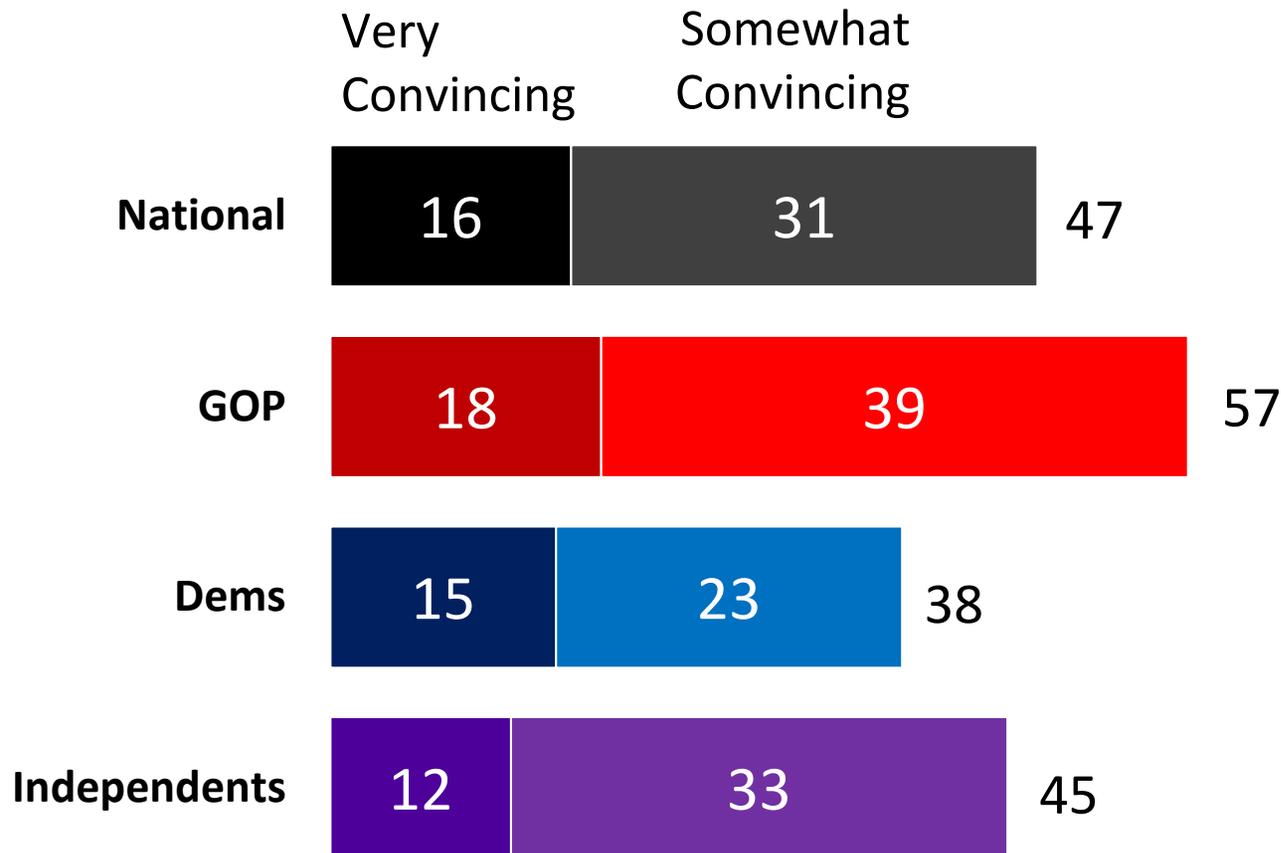
REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Pro Argument:

These rules restricting ISPs are unnecessarily heavy-handed and stifle innovation. There is little evidence that restrictive rules are required, but there is evidence that they are holding back the development of the internet in the United States, which is lagging behind other developed countries. Companies with websites do not have access to the cutting-edge download speeds that could upgrade the quality of their services. It is time to free up ISPs to bring internet service in the US to a whole new level. If ISPs can do this, they can also provide lower cost internet service for other consumers and provide internet service to more areas. As long as ISPs are required to disclose any variation in download speeds or website blocking, the market will make sure that the ISPs do not overreach.

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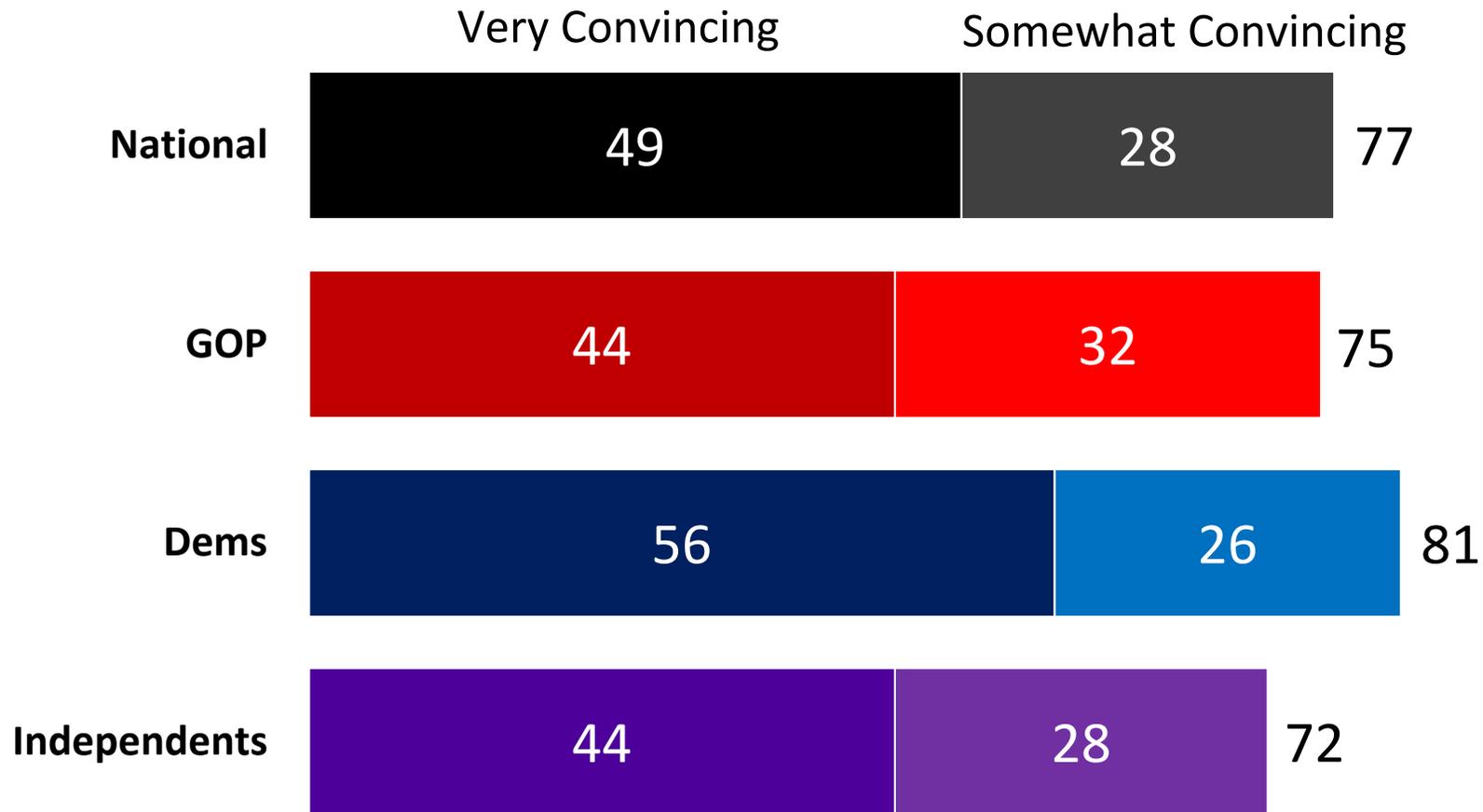
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Con Argument:

This proposal is basically giving ISPs a license to steal from consumers. Even though they do not create websites themselves, they could charge their consumers for access without any of it going to the websites. The ISPs would become like cable companies charging ever-higher fees for access. This would drive up costs for consumers and make it harder for websites to get the necessary traffic to be profitable. While the big website companies could pay to provide faster download speeds, it would give them a leg up, driving their smaller competitors out of business. ISPs could block access to websites for any reason they choose—for political reasons or to block any criticism of their service. Many ISPs provide content, and they could block access to their competitors. All of this would undermine innovation on the internet and hamper economic growth while enriching the ISPs.

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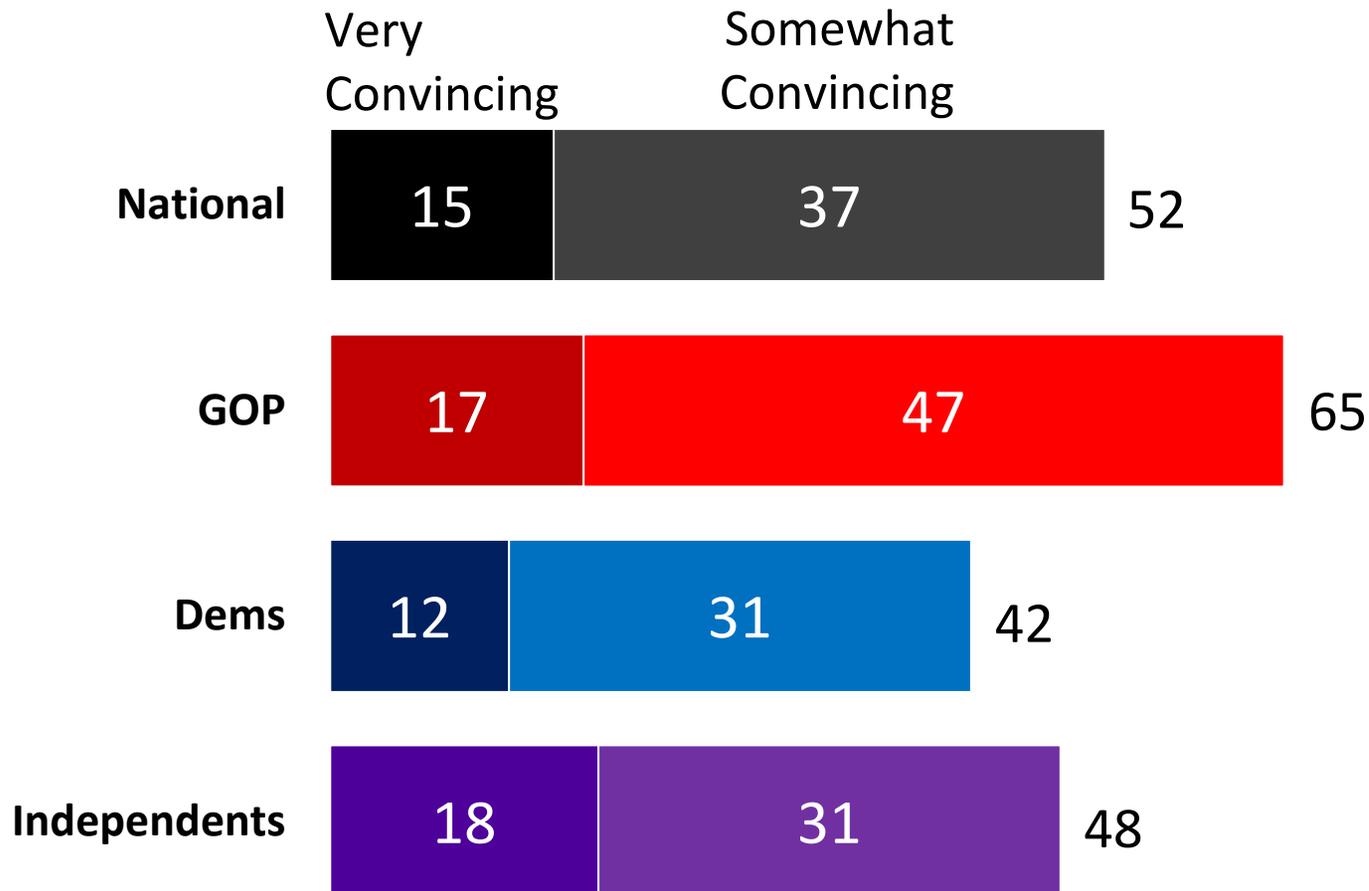
REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Pro Argument:

Concerns that advocates have about net neutrality are overblown and fail to recognize a key fact. That is, once the FCC repeals the recent rules for FCC regulation of the internet, it will revert to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to take responsibility for ensuring that ISPs do not engage in anti-competitive and unfair practices. The FTC will require that any changes in the service they provide will be fully disclosed. With these protections, we will be able to count on the competition of the market to ensure that ISPs provide the service that consumers want.

REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

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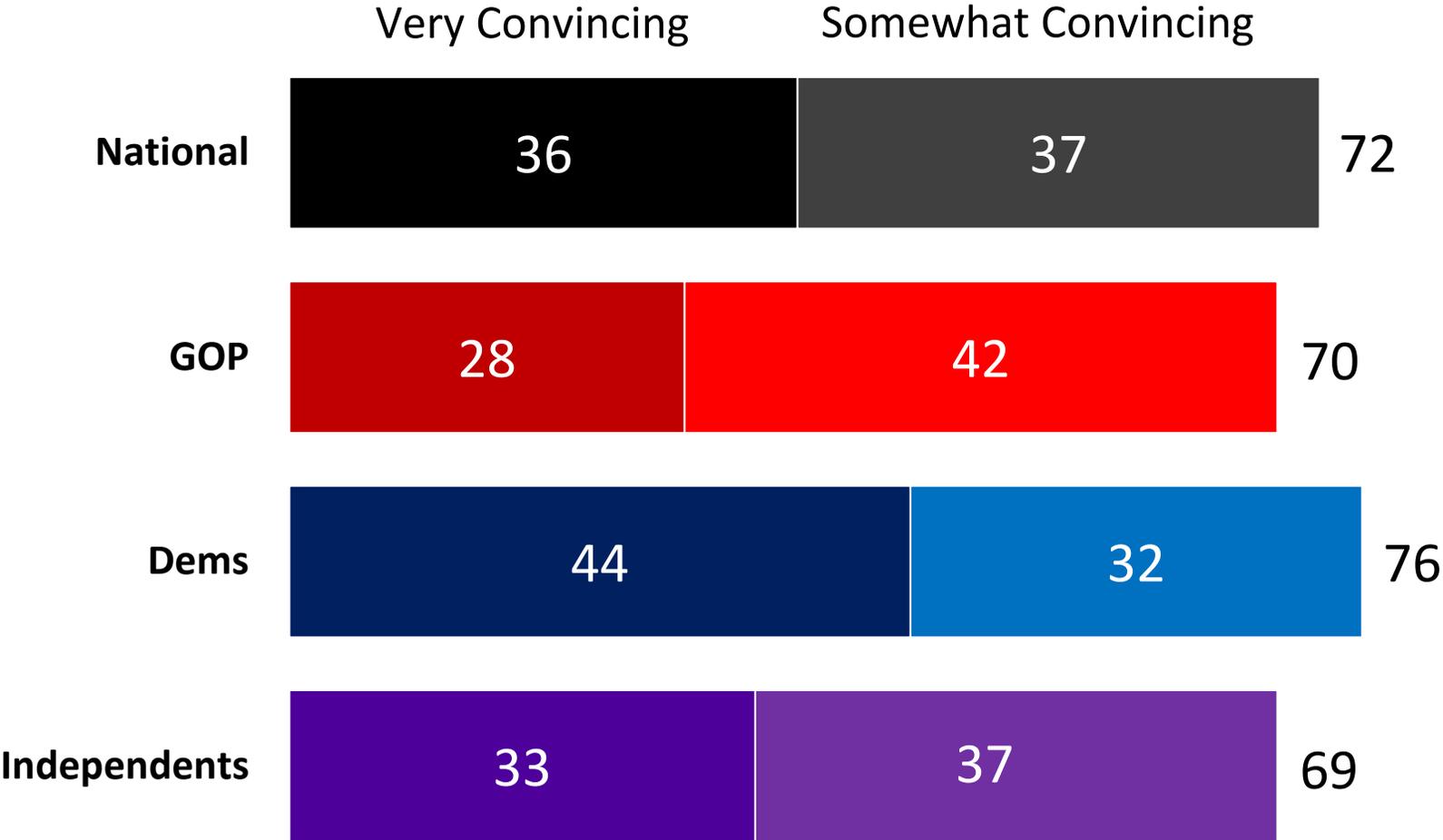
REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Con Argument:

Giving the FTC jurisdiction over ISPs would not prevent them from setting up fast and slow lanes on the internet by offering different download speeds at different prices or charging for access to certain websites. It would only require they disclose they are doing so. Further, the FTC cannot police the long standing carriers like Verizon and AT&T. Last, we cannot count on market competition to ensure that customers get what they want--a full 58% of American households only have access to one high-speed broadband ISP and, thus, there is no competition. And even if there is another ISP, it is unlikely it would voluntarily forego the right to charge for access to certain websites.

REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Con Argument:



REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Final Recommendation:

So, in conclusion, do you favor or oppose the proposal to give Internet Service Providers the freedom to:

- provide websites the option to give their visitors the ability to download material at a higher speed, for a fee, while providing a slower download speed for other websites
- block access to certain websites
- charge their customers a fee to gain access to certain websites provided these practices are disclosed to customers.

REPEALING NET NEUTRALITY REGULATIONS

Final Recommendation:

