



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

SURVEY ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

Maryland's 8th
Congressional District

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2019

SUPPORTED BY



Overview of Survey Topics

OFFSETTING THE INFLUENCE OF BIG CAMPAIGN DONORS

- **Increase the Influence of Small Donors**
 - Tax Credit for Small Donors
 - Government Matching Small Donations
- **Requiring Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations**
 - Require all individuals/organizations that donate/receive \$10,000+ for campaign-related activities to register with the FEC
 - Require corporations, unions and other groups report campaign related donations within 24 hours
 - FCC requiring public disclosure of big donors paying for TV radio ads in support of candidates or related to controversial public issues
 - President require federal contractors to publicly disclose donations to groups that spend money on campaign-related activities
- **Constitutional Amendment that Overturns Citizens United**

CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS IS ELECTED

- **Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission**
- **Ranked Choice Voting**
- **Multi-Member Districts**

Methodology

Conducted by: Program for Public Consultation

Field Dates: July 3-17, 2019

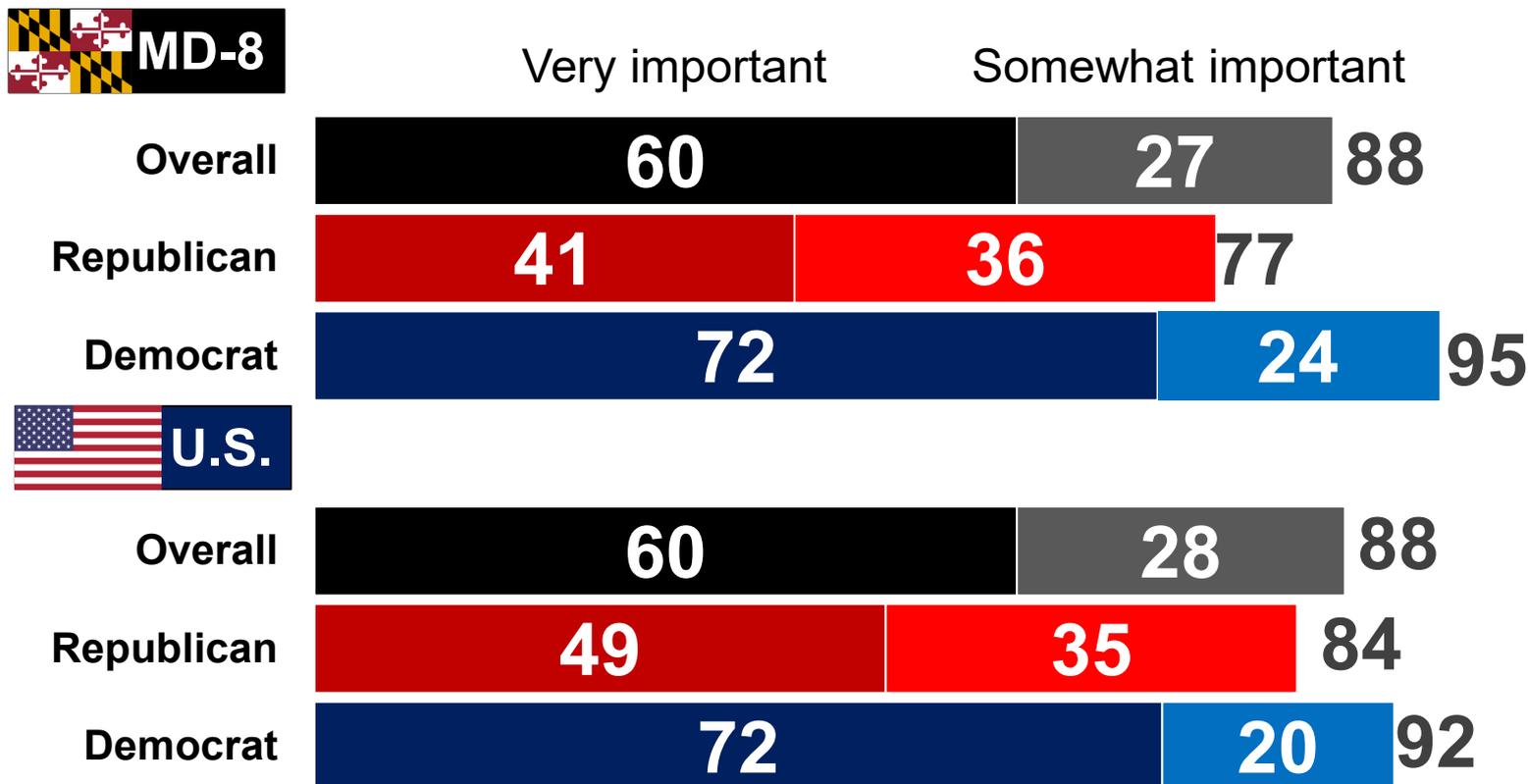
Sample Size: 600 Residents of
Maryland's 8th Congressional District

Weighting: The sample was weighted by age, education, gender and ethnicity using benchmarks for Maryland's 8th Congressional District that were obtained from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The partisan balance was weighted according to the distribution of registrations from the Maryland Board of Elections.

Offsetting the Influence of Big Campaign Donors

Importance of Issue

How important is the goal of reducing the influence of big campaign donors—including special interests, corporations and wealthy people—on the Federal government?



OFFSETTING THE INFLUENCE OF BIG CAMPAIGN DONORS

**Increase the Influence of
Small Donors**

Proposal: Tax Credit for Small Donors

When a citizen contributes up to \$50 to a specific candidate:

- half of the contribution would be refundable in the form of a tax credit
- limited to small donors, i.e. people whose total donations to that candidate are no more than \$300

Goal:

- more citizens will make donations
- small donors will make somewhat larger donations
- increase the total amount coming from small donors

PRO:

Tax Credit for Small Donors

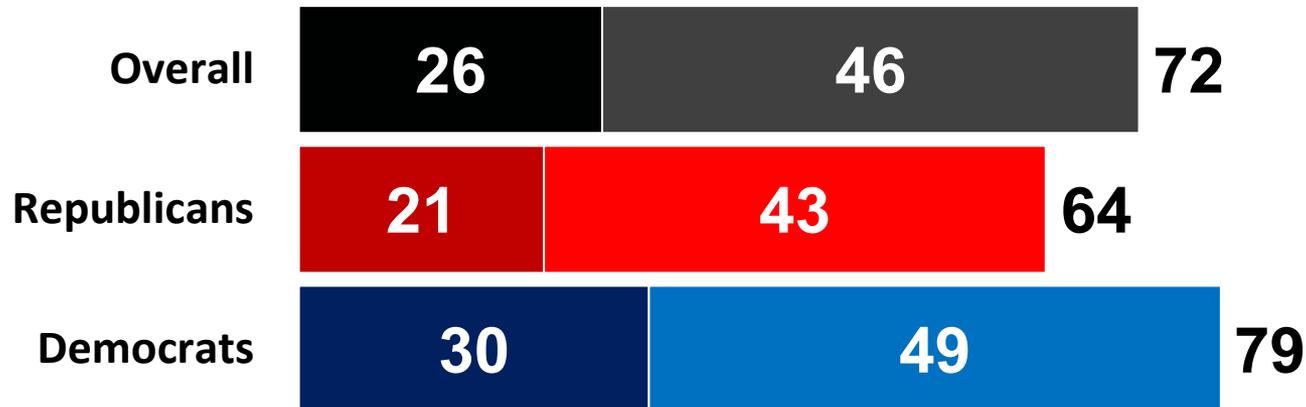
More small donors will reduce influence of large donors

Campaigns cost money. If we encourage many small donors and increase the portion of money coming from small donations, this can free candidates from reliance on a few large donors and make them less influential.

Congress will then be responsible to voters, not well-financed special interests. Candidates who do not want to be beholden to big donors will be more able to run for office and succeed.



Very Convincing Somewhat Convincing

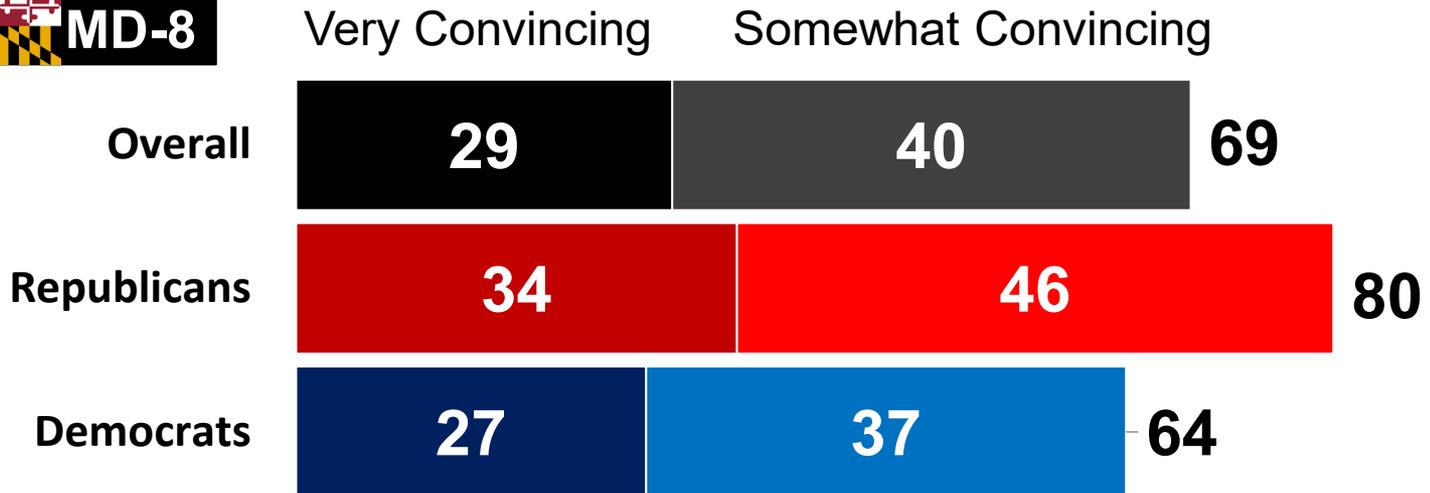


Tax Credit for Small Donors

Don't spend taxpayers' money; big donors will still have more influence

Giving away tax credits to increase the amount of money from small donors effectively spends government funds on election campaigns. This is not a good use of taxpayer money. Furthermore, it is not clear that it will even work.

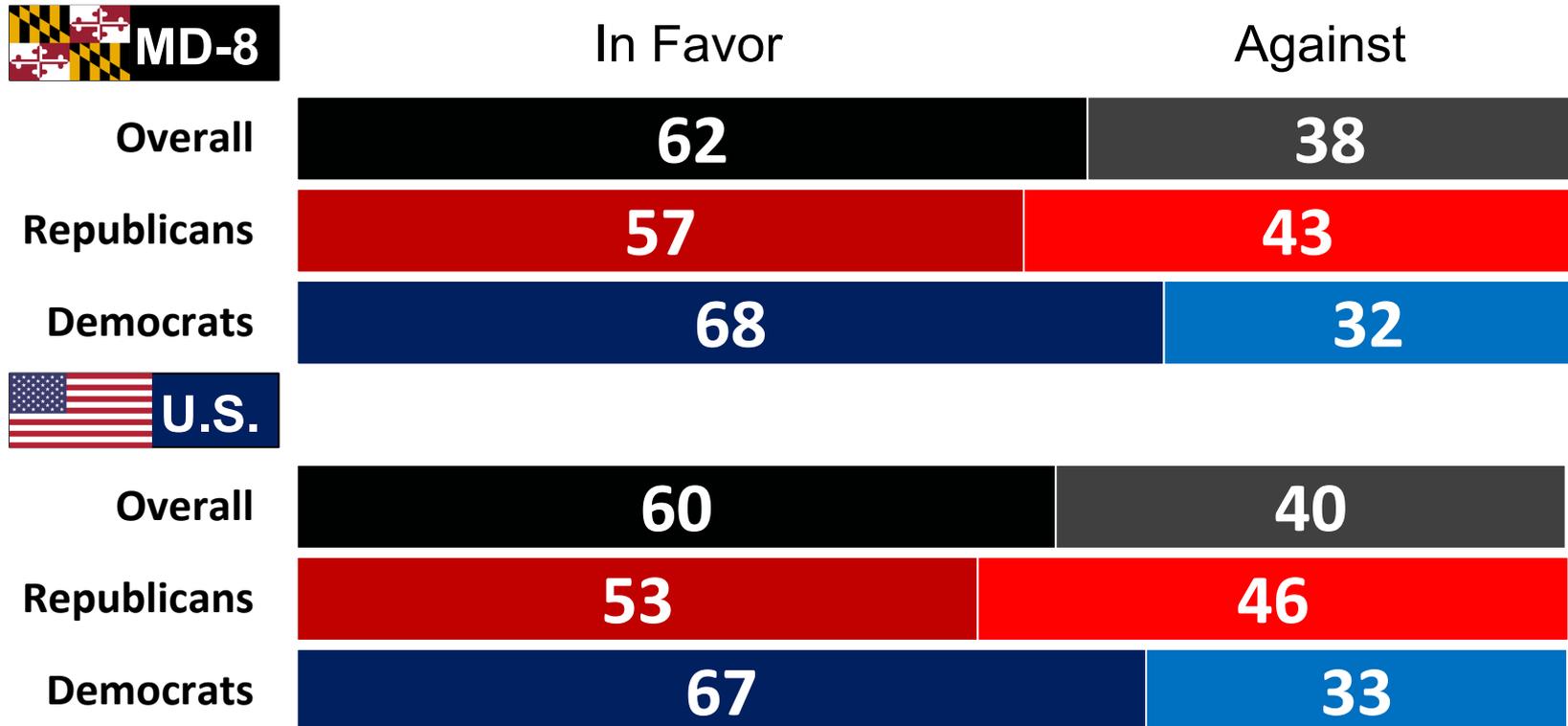
Big donors will still have a lot more influence than small donors, even if the small donors are more numerous or are able to give a little bit more than they are now.



Tax Credit for Small Donors

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

When a citizen contributes up to \$50 to a specific candidate, half of the contribution would be refundable in the form of a tax credit. This would be limited to small donors, which would be people whose total donations to that candidate are no more than \$300.



Government Matching Small Donations

Another Proposal

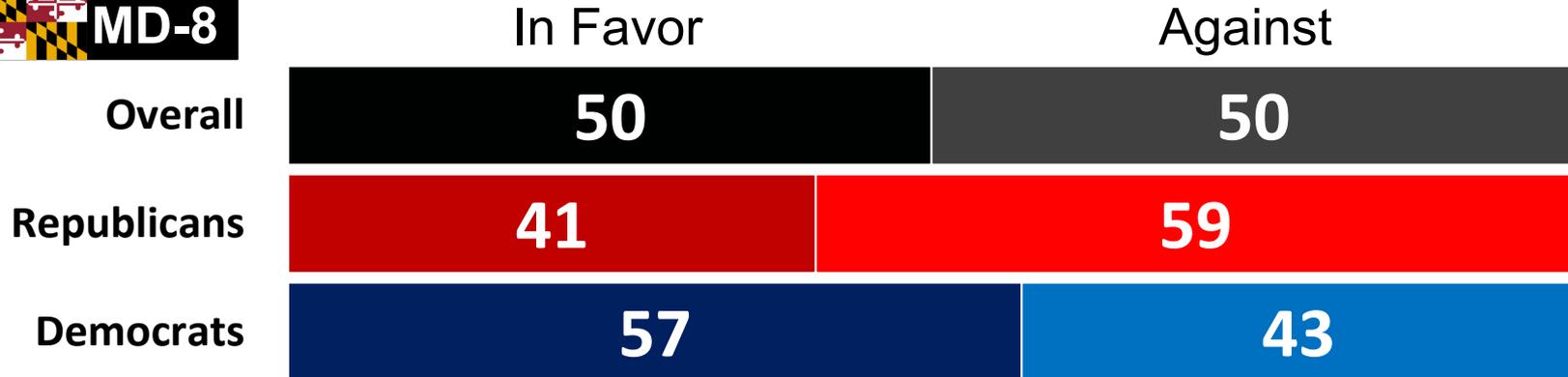
- Candidate must first agree not to take any donations over \$1,000
- The government will match 6 to 1 all donations up to \$150

For example, if someone were to make a donation of \$100, the government would provide \$600.

Government Matching Small Donations

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Candidate must first agree not to take any donations over \$1,000. Then, the government will match 6 to 1 all donations up to \$150.



OFFSETTING THE INFLUENCE OF BIG CAMPAIGN DONORS

**Requiring Greater
Public Disclosure Of
Campaign-Related
Donations**

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

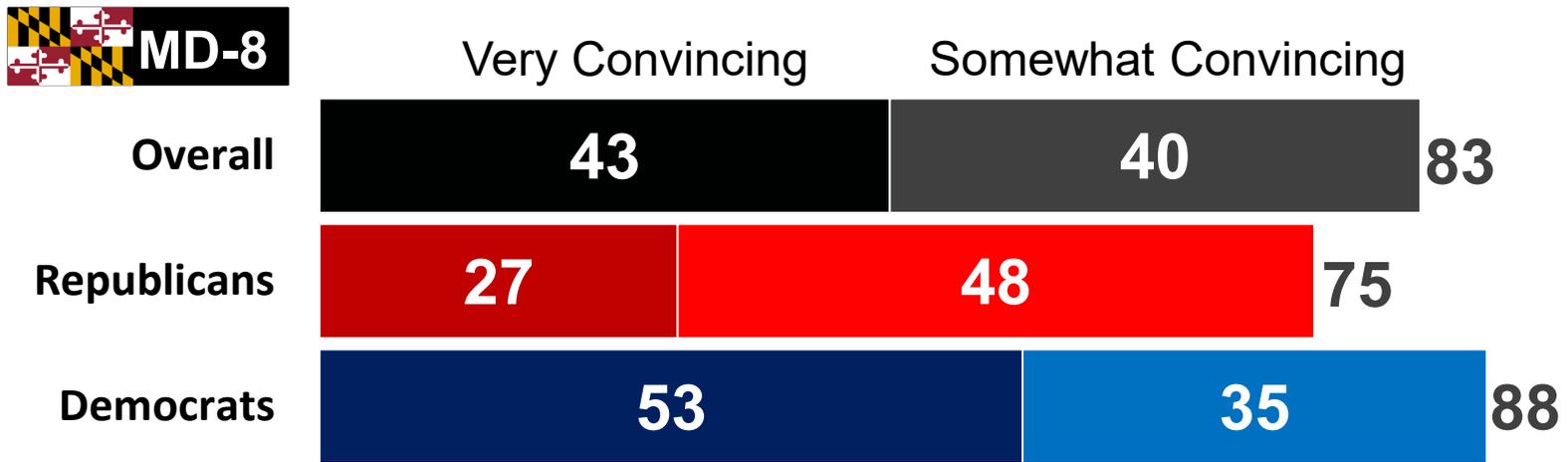
- There are donations that can be made anonymously to certain organizations that can support candidates and political causes. Critics call this ‘dark money.’
- With U.S. Supreme Court’s “Citizens United” decision, no longer any limits on such donations.
- Since then, the amount of such anonymous donations has gone up dramatically.
- There are a number of proposals for requiring that such donations be publicly disclosed.

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Makes it harder to use donation to get influence

When campaign-related donations are fully disclosed, it makes it more difficult for elected officials to do favors, taking actions that serve the interests of the donor, rather than the common good. If the donation is disclosed, the public, the media, and watchdog groups can question whether an action was a favor in exchange for a donation.

This will create political costs for the elected official, as well as discourage donors from seeking favors through donations.



Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Voters can see candidates' potential allegiances

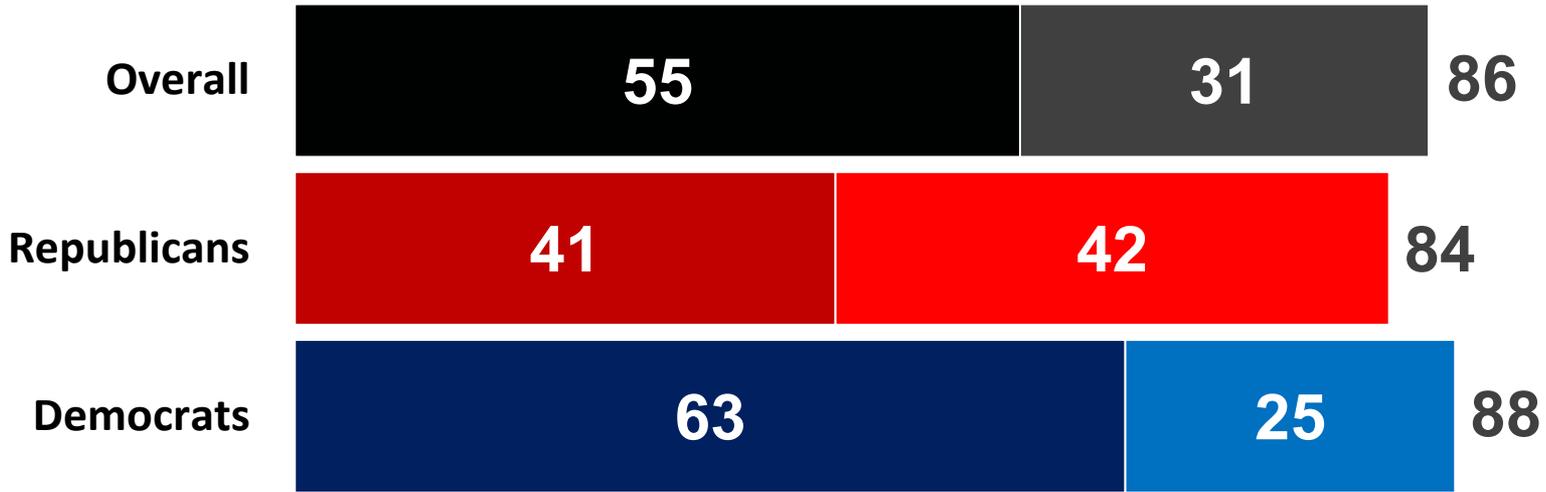
When judging a candidate, people have a right to know who is providing money in support of the candidate.

Voters can get a better sense of the allegiances that the candidate might have and the interests they might support.



Very Convincing

Somewhat Convincing

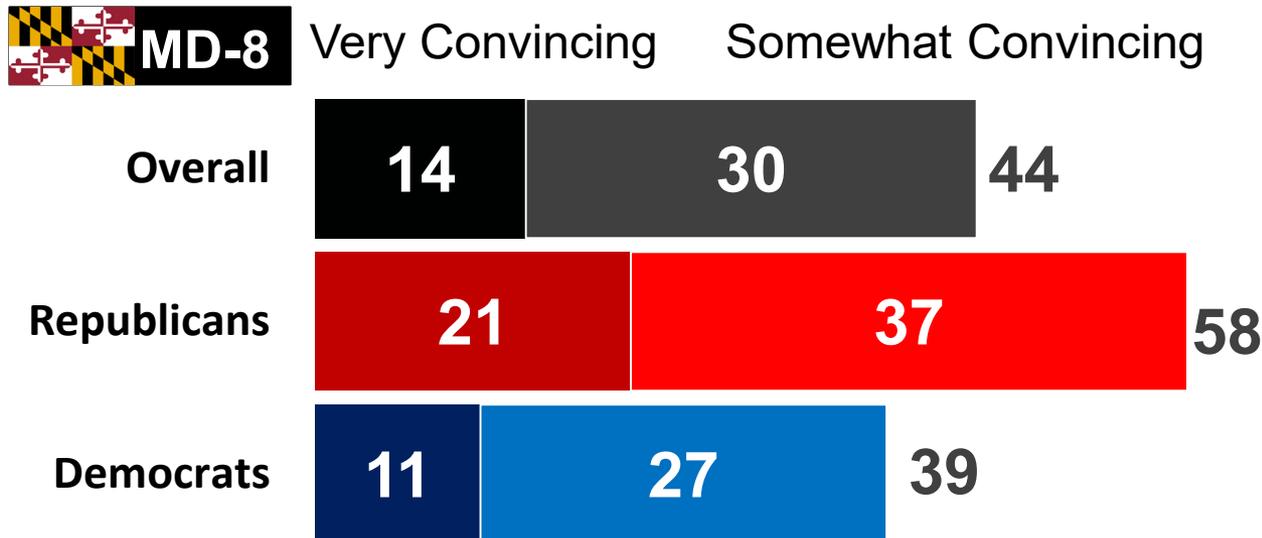


Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Donations are free speech, disclosure can lead to false accusations

Making a campaign donation has been established by the U.S. Supreme Court as a basic right as part of the principle of free speech. If every donation is subject to public scrutiny, it can lead to claims that it was basically a bribe, when in fact it might not be at all.

People may also get harassed or threatened for making donations. This will discourage people from making such donations, including completely legitimate ones.

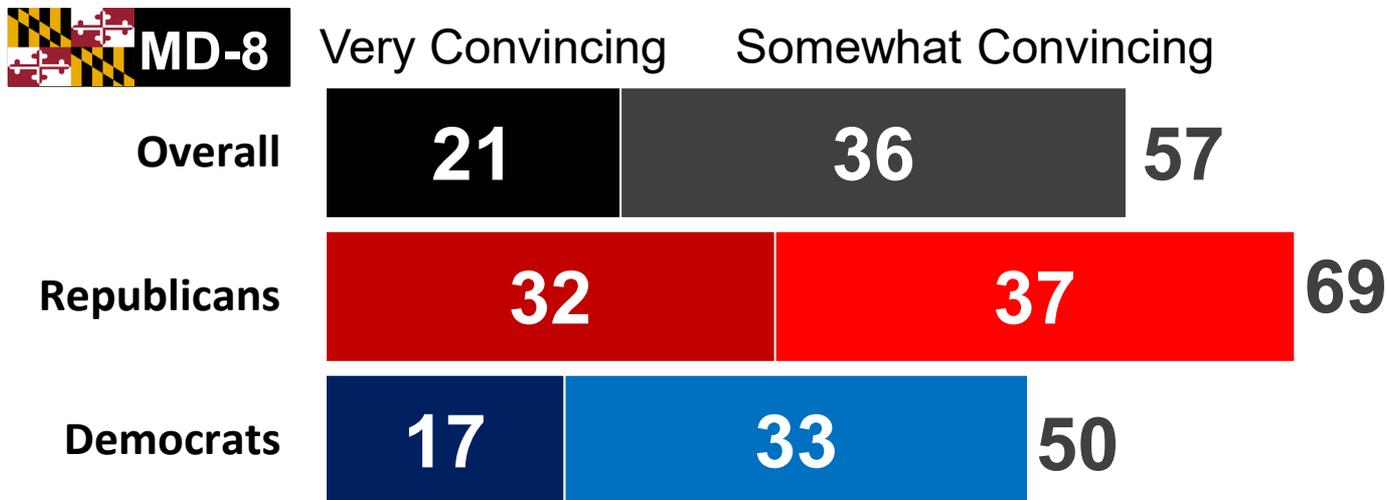


Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Requirements won't be effective; Member can deny influence

Public disclosure is not going to prevent elected officials from doing favors in exchange for financial support. Even if elected officials are, in fact, taking a position to serve the interests of a donor (in exchange for support), the officials can simply say that they think the position is the right one – and there's no way to prove they don't think that.

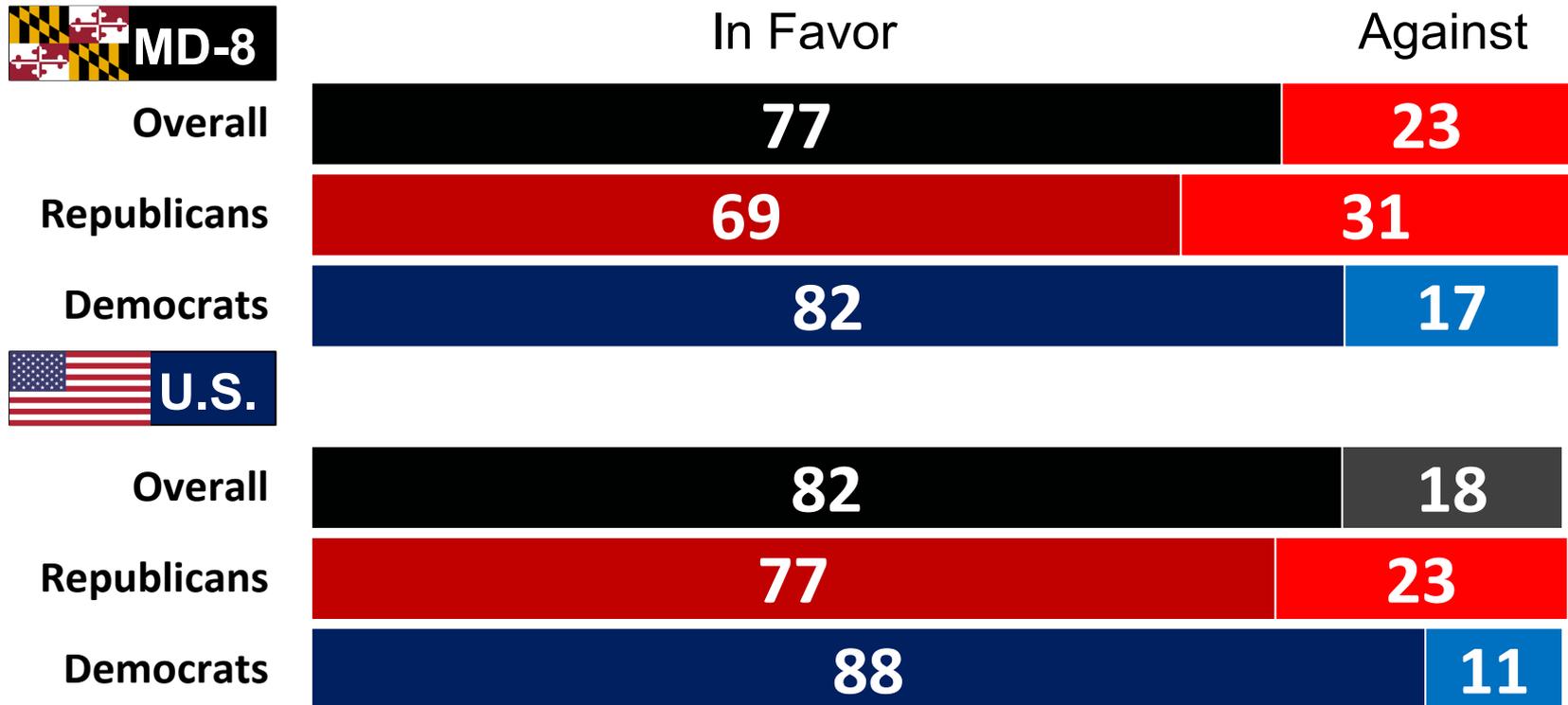
Furthermore, in some cases the politician may genuinely support the position. Disclosure will not clarify what's really going on.



Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Require that all individuals or organizations that donate or receive a total of \$10,000 or more for campaign-related activities promptly register with the FEC and have their name and the amount of the donations listed on the Commission's website.



Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Proposal 2

Currently, when corporations, unions, and other groups spend money on campaign-related activity, such as running a TV ad that is supportive of a candidate, they do not have to report it.

This proposal would require that, these groups:

- report this spending, within 24 hours, to their shareholders and members
- make this information available to the public on their websites
- report it to the FEC

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Require corporations, unions and other groups report campaign related donations within 24 hours, make the information available to the public on their websites, and report it to the FEC



In Favor

Against

Overall

78

21

Republicans

74

26

Democrats

79

20



Overall

85

14

Republicans

83

17

Democrats

88

11

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Proposal 3

Currently, when significant donors spend money on campaign-related activity, such as running a TV ad that is supportive of a candidate, they do not have to report it.

This proposal says that the Federal Communications Commission would require the public disclosure of the names of significant donors in paying for TV or radio ads in support of candidates or related to controversial public issues.

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The Federal Communications Commission would require the public disclosure of the names of significant donors in paying for TV or radio ads in support of candidates or related to controversial public issues



MD-8

In Favor

Against

Overall

79

21

Republicans

70

30

Democrats

82

17



U.S.

Overall

81

18

Republicans

74

25

Democrats

89

11

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

Proposal 4

Let's suppose Congress does not pass the proposal described above. Here is an action that could be taken by the President to require greater disclosure.

As you may know, some federal contractors are big campaign donors.

Greater Public Disclosure of Campaign-Related Donations

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The President could require federal contractors to publicly disclose their donations to groups that spend money on campaign-related activities.

	In Favor	Against
 MD-8		
Overall	79	21
Republicans	79	22
Democrats	79	21
 U.S.		
Overall	85	14
Republicans	84	15
Democrats	89	10

OFFSETTING THE INFLUENCE OF BIG CAMPAIGN DONORS

**Constitutional Amendment
that Overturns
Citizens United**

Constitutional Amendment that Overturns Citizens United

Some people think:

- these proposals for campaign finance reform are not adequate to counter the influence of big donors;
- Congress should directly limit all forms of campaign-related donations.

For Congress to do this, however, would require a new Constitutional amendment, which would override the Supreme Court's past decisions on this subject, including 'Citizens United'.

Passing any Constitutional amendment is quite challenging. It requires ratification by two thirds of Congress and three quarters of all states.

Such an amendment has been proposed in both houses of Congress. It has two parts, which we will consider one at a time.

Constitutional Amendment that Overturns Citizens United

Part 1

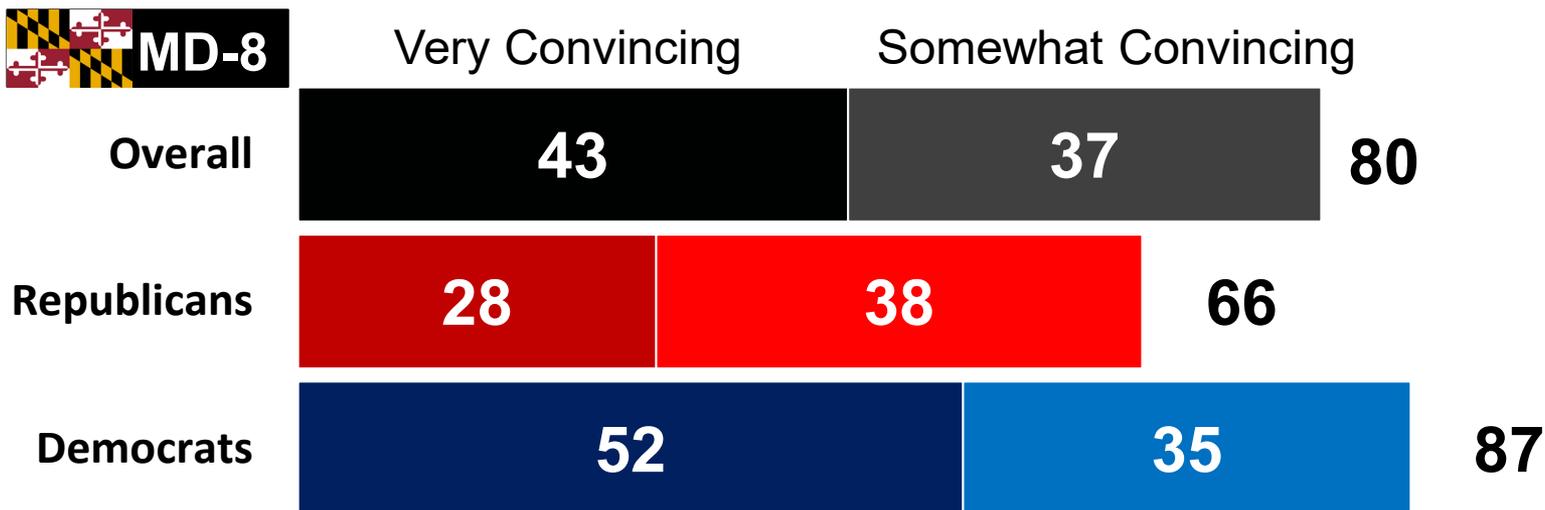
Congress and the states may regulate and set reasonable limits on the raising and spending of money by candidates and others seeking to influence elections.

Constitutional Amendment

1. Congress May to Regulate Campaign Financing

Since Citizens United, flood of money drowning out ordinary voters

Clearly, we cannot go on letting people and organizations use the cover of the First Amendment to allow what is essentially bribery of Members of Congress. Since the recent Supreme Court decision to allow unlimited contributions, there has been a flood of money pouring into organizations seeking to influence elections. The rich should not have more influence just because they have more money. They are drowning out the voice of most ordinary voters. The Founders would be horrified by the amount of money in elections and this is just the kind of problem that they established the Constitutional amendment process to address. Congress should be able to set reasonable limits on political spending.



CON:

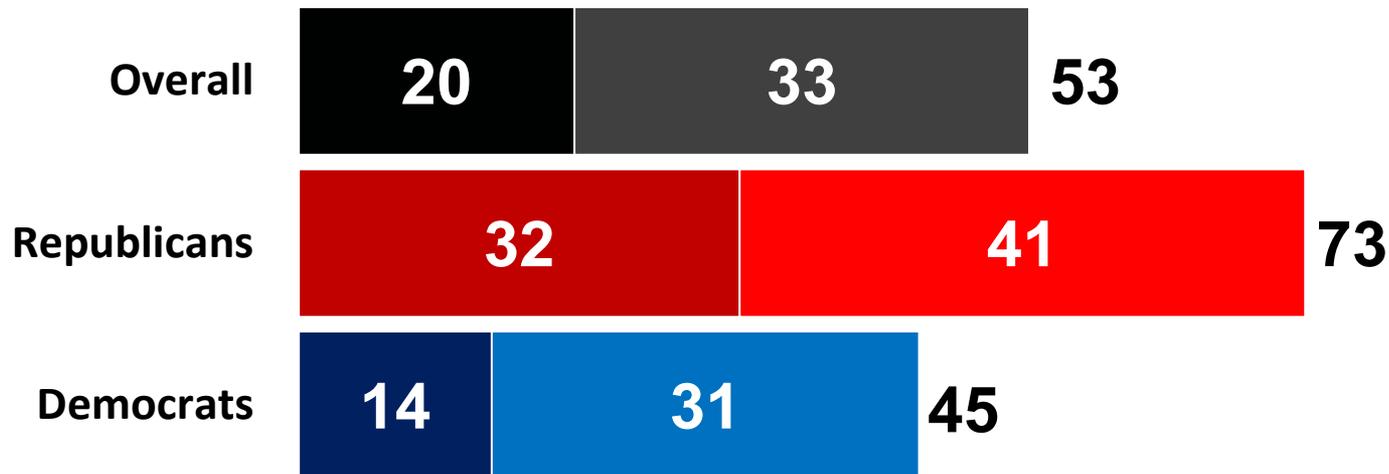
Constitutional Amendment

1. Congress May Regulate Campaign Financing Should not limit speech or tamper with the Constitution

This proposal is an end run around Constitutional principles—practically an attempt to repeal the First Amendment. If people want to spend money making their views heard about a candidate, the government should not have the right to stop them. Should we assume that the government knows what the right amount of free speech is? Real freedom of speech is often inconvenient for somebody. You can't just pick and choose where you want it to apply. Tampering with the Constitution is a risky idea. Once you start limiting some forms of speech it becomes a slippery slope toward more and more limits on our freedoms.



Very Convincing Somewhat Convincing



Constitutional Amendment that Overturns Citizens United

Part 2

In writing campaign finance laws, Congress would have the right to treat corporations and other organizations differently from 'natural persons.'

This would allow Congress to restrict or even prohibit corporations and other organizations from spending money to influence elections.

2. Congress May Treat Corporations Differently

Constitution meant to protect individuals, not corporations

A corporation should not have the same rights as a person. The idea that it is a group of people expressing their point of view is a fallacy. All of the people who are part of the corporation do not necessarily share a single point of view. A corporation is created to perform a function or to make money. It does not have the right to vote. Pursuing political influence through campaign-related donations in the service of a corporation's goals is not something the Constitution was ever meant to protect. If the individuals associated with a corporation want to express a point of view or donate to a campaign, they are still free to do so.



Very Convincing

Somewhat Convincing

Overall

46

34

80

Republicans

29

42

71

Democrats

56

29

85

Constitutional Amendment

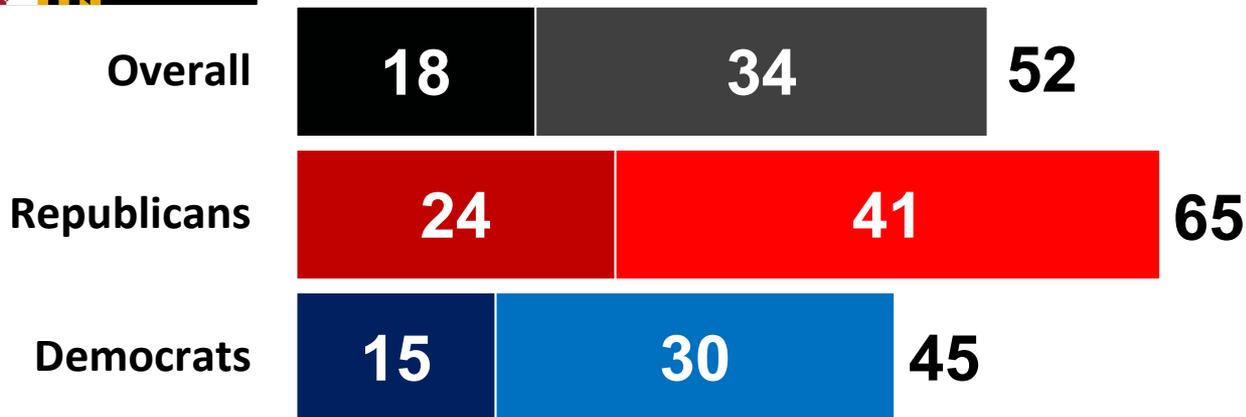
2. Congress May Treat Corporations Differently

Citizens should have right to come together as a corporation and promote their views, like individuals

People have the right to come together and become shareholders in a corporation. As shareholders they have a shared interest in the goals of the corporation. Thus, the corporation should have the same rights of free expression as do the individual shareholders. The fact that they are also seeking to make money should not make any difference. Making a Constitutional amendment that would restrict the freedom of shareholders to act together would subvert the underlying principles of the Constitution. Furthermore, some of the corporations that would be limited by this law are nonprofit corporations that serve good causes and should not be prevented from making their voice heard.



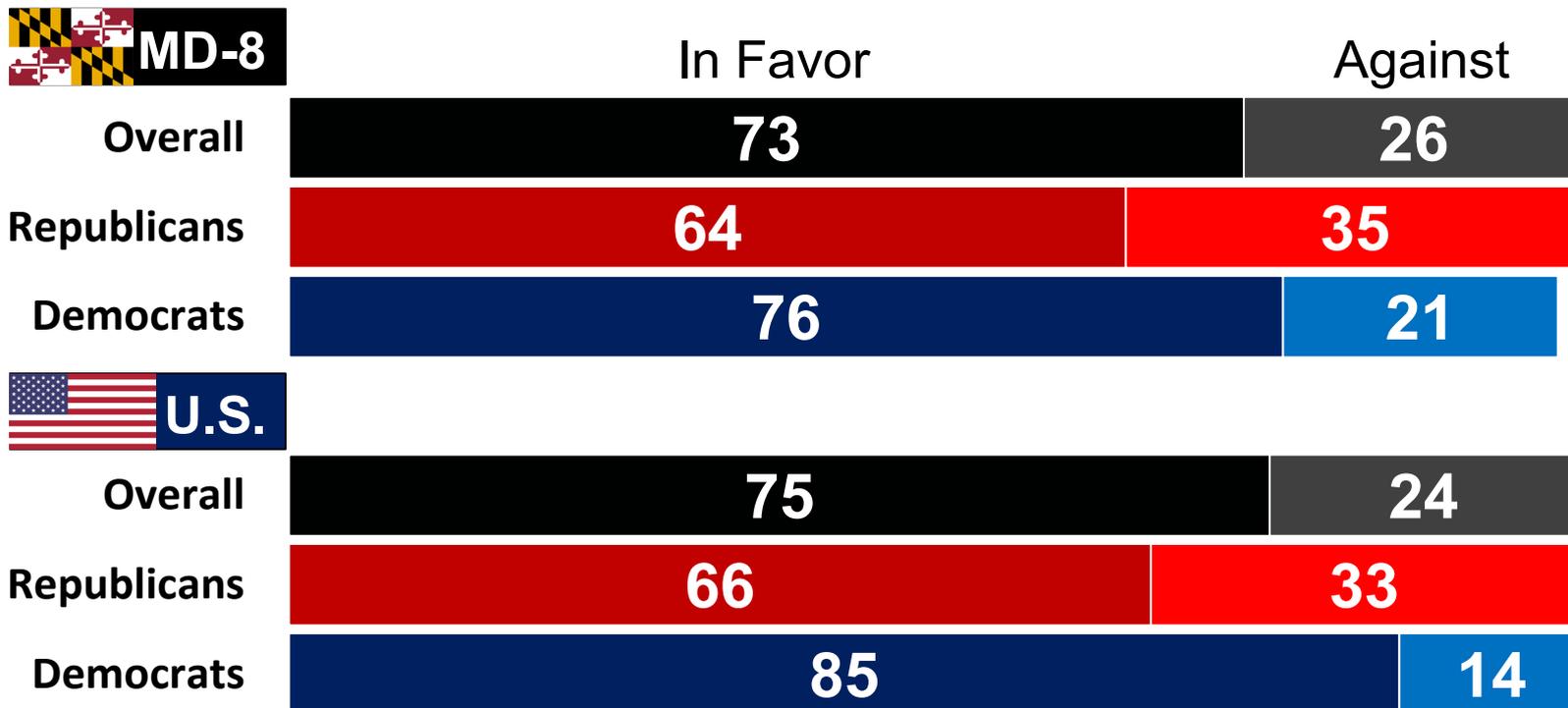
Very Convincing Somewhat Convincing



Constitutional Amendment that Overturns Citizens United

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Would you recommend that your Members of Congress vote in favor of or against a Constitutional Amendment allowing Congress to directly regulate campaign financing and treat corporations differently than individuals?



CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS IS ELECTED

**Congressional
Redistricting By Citizen
Commission**

Congressional Redistricting

Another debate in Congress is about how the districts for the House of Representatives of the US Congress are designed.

- Usually redistricting is done by state legislatures.
- There are concerns that the dominant party in state legislatures try to design districts that favor their party i.e. gerrymandering.

Congressional Redistricting

Proposal

Have the shape of Congressional districts set by a commission of citizens within each state. The commissions would:

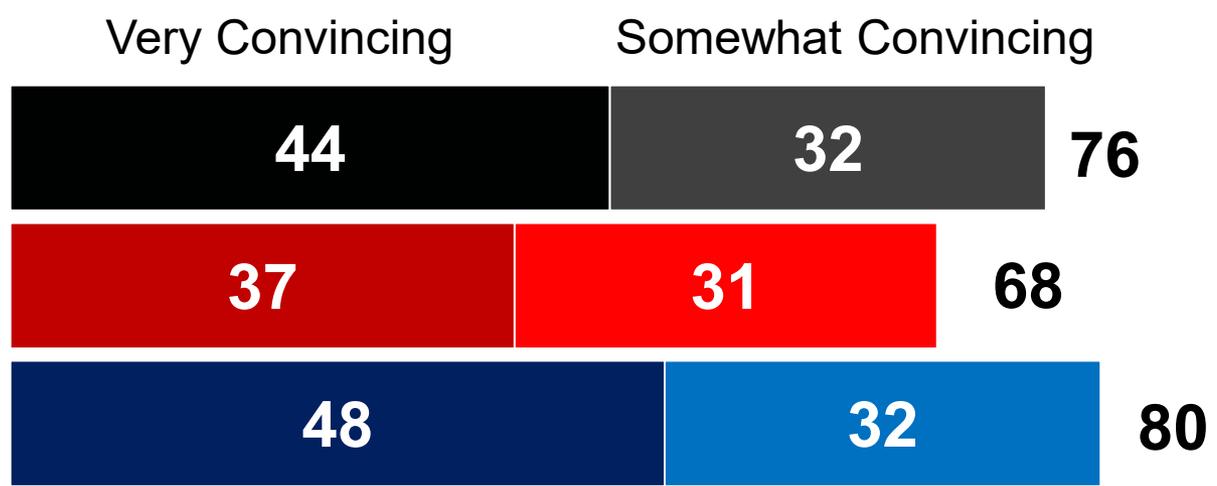
- commit to designing districts in a way that is geographically natural and compact without creating a favorable distribution for either party
- be comprised of one third Republicans, one third Democrats, and one third independents, and reflect the balance of the state according to gender, race, ethnicity and the geographic areas of the state.

Decisions on the shape of districts would be made by a majority of the commission members that includes at least one member from both parties and an independent.

Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission

Districts don't reflect real partisan balance in state; unfair

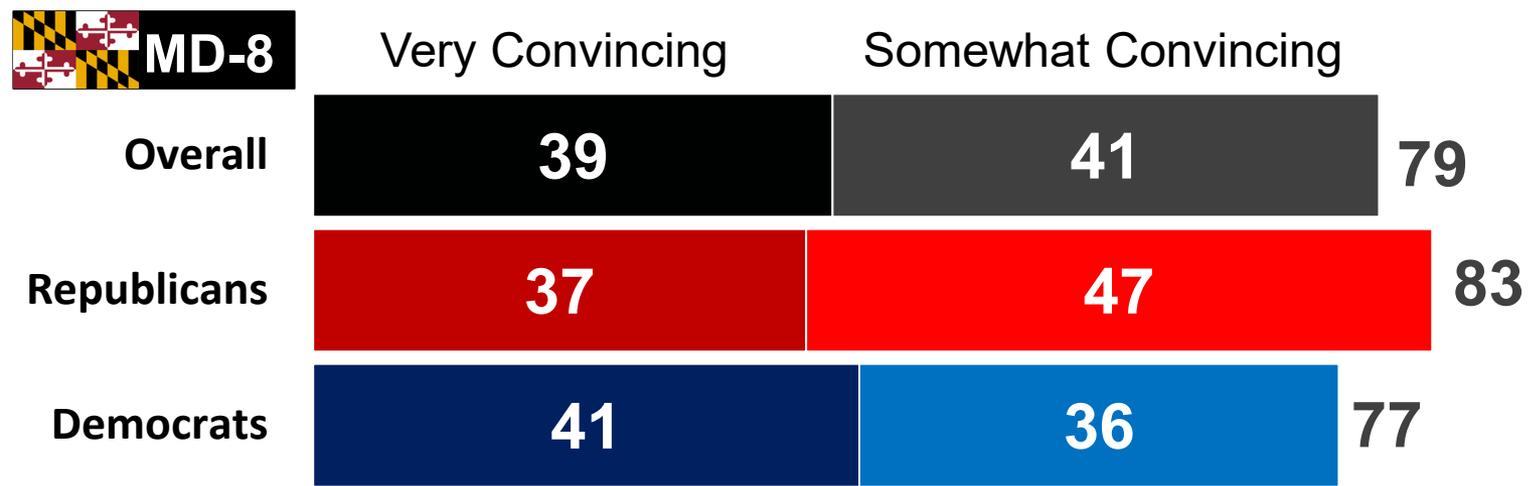
When one party has control of the redistricting process, they tend to make great efforts to ensure that their party wins more districts, often creating weirdly shaped districts. The representatives from a particular state can be completely or almost completely from one party, though this does not reflect the real partisan balance in the state. This means that voters from the party not in control of the legislature get less representation in Congress, even though they may live in an area of the state where they are a majority.



Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission

Citizen commissions more likely to design districts that reflect voters, produce less partisan Members

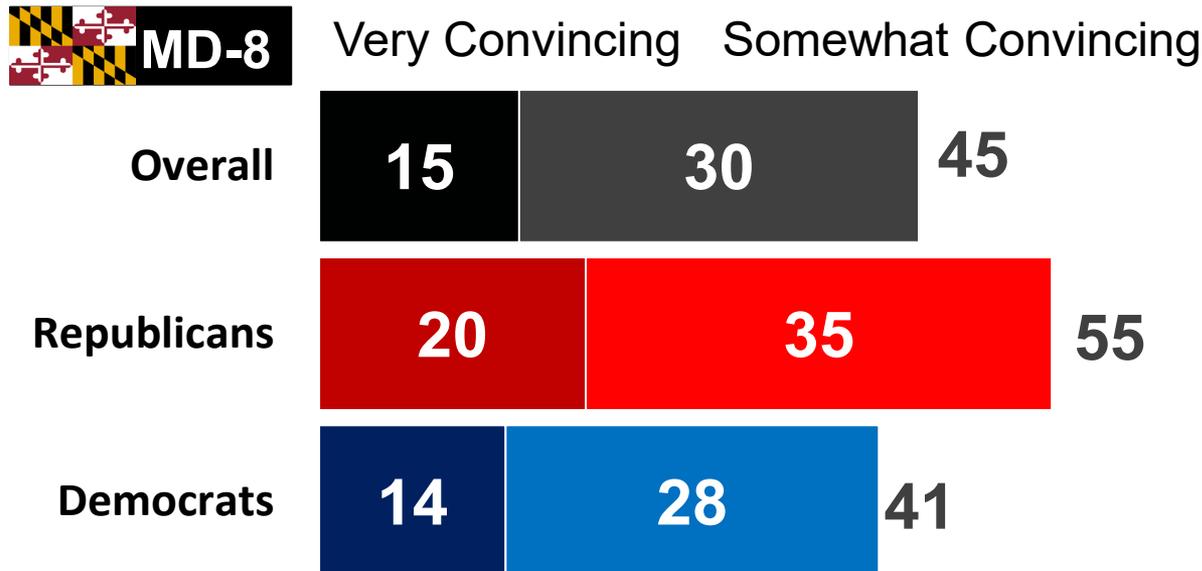
When partisan politicians use gerrymandering to create safe districts for their party, the general election is not competitive, so the only really important election is the primary of the majority party in the district. Candidates who only need to appeal to the views of primary voters tend to be more ideologically extreme and, when in Congress, are less likely to find common ground with the other party. When nonpartisan commissions of citizens design districts, the districts are more likely to be competitive between the parties; candidates are more likely to appeal to and be responsive to the whole district, and are less partisan in Congress.



Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission

Violation of state rights to choose how they make districts

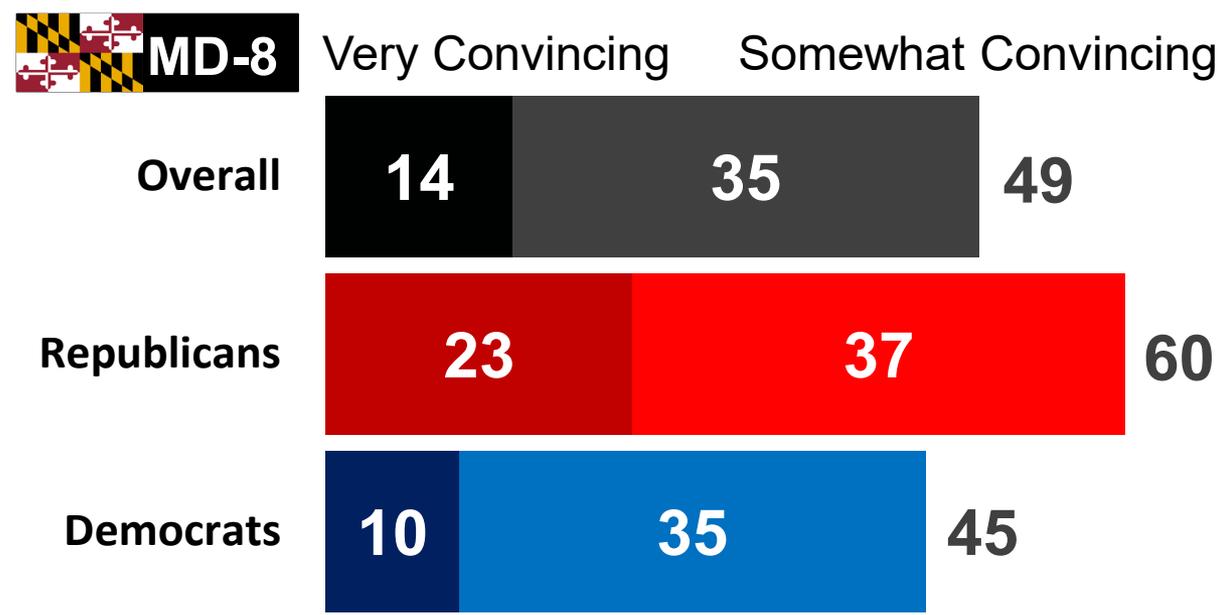
The federal government should not step in and tell the states how to design their Congressional districts. Doing so overrides the state legislatures that have been elected by and are accountable to the people. Giving the authority to redistrict to unelected citizen commissioners actually takes power away from the people.



Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission

A lot of effort for little or no gain

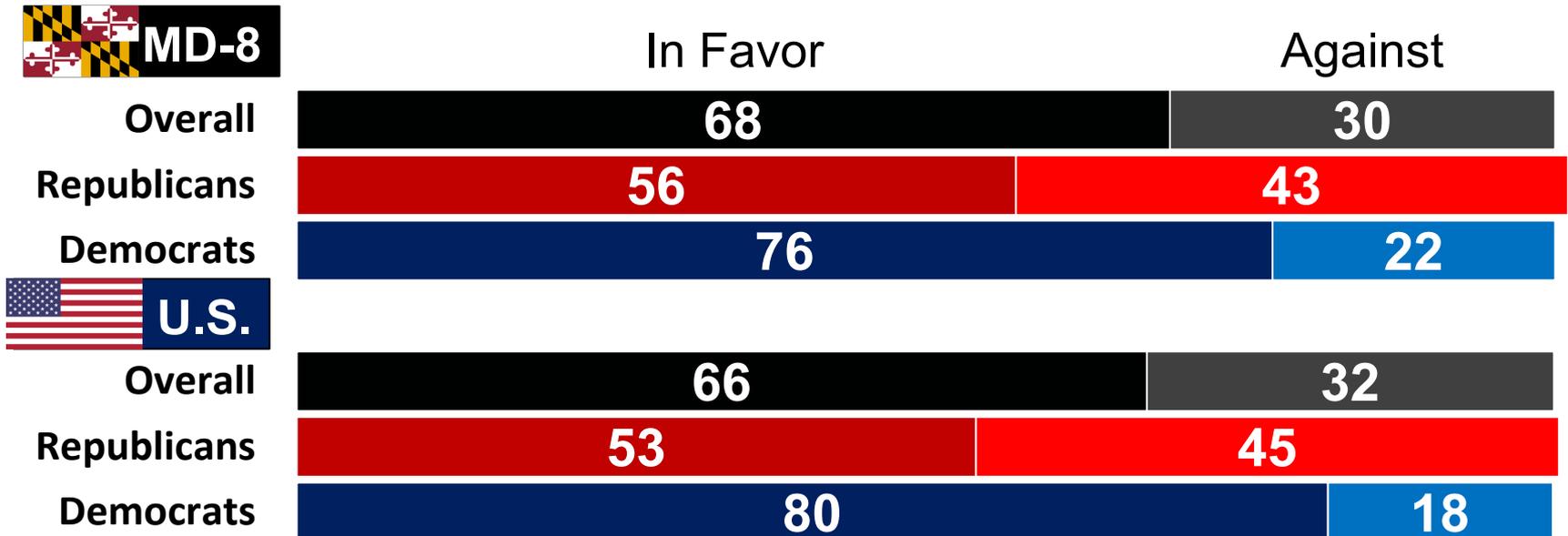
The way citizen commissions draw the lines will not necessarily lead to more competitive districts. People increasingly cluster in areas with others who are of the same party. So, whatever the citizen commission does, the districts are still likely to be dominated by one party. This will all be a lot of effort with no real gain.



Congressional Redistricting by Citizen Commission

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The shape of Congressional districts would be set by a commission of citizens within each state which would: 1) be committed to designing districts in a way that is geographically natural and compact without creating a favorable distribution for either party; 2) be comprised of 1/3 Republicans, 1/3 Democrats, and 1/3 independents; and 3) reflect the balance of the state according to gender, race, ethnicity and the geographic areas of the state. Decisions on the shape of districts would be made by a majority of commission members that includes at least one member from both parties and an independent.



CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS IS ELECTED

Ranked Choice Voting

Ranked Choice Voting

A new way of electing Members of Congress when there are more than two candidates.

Proponents say this method addresses the following two issues:

- difficult for independent and third-party candidates to get traction. Voters afraid they'd be throwing away their vote.
- with three or more candidates, the winner may not have anywhere near a majority of votes and might even be opposed by the majority of voters.

Opponents of the bill say these issues are not significant enough to warrant overhauling the way that Members of Congress are elected.

Ranked Choice Voting

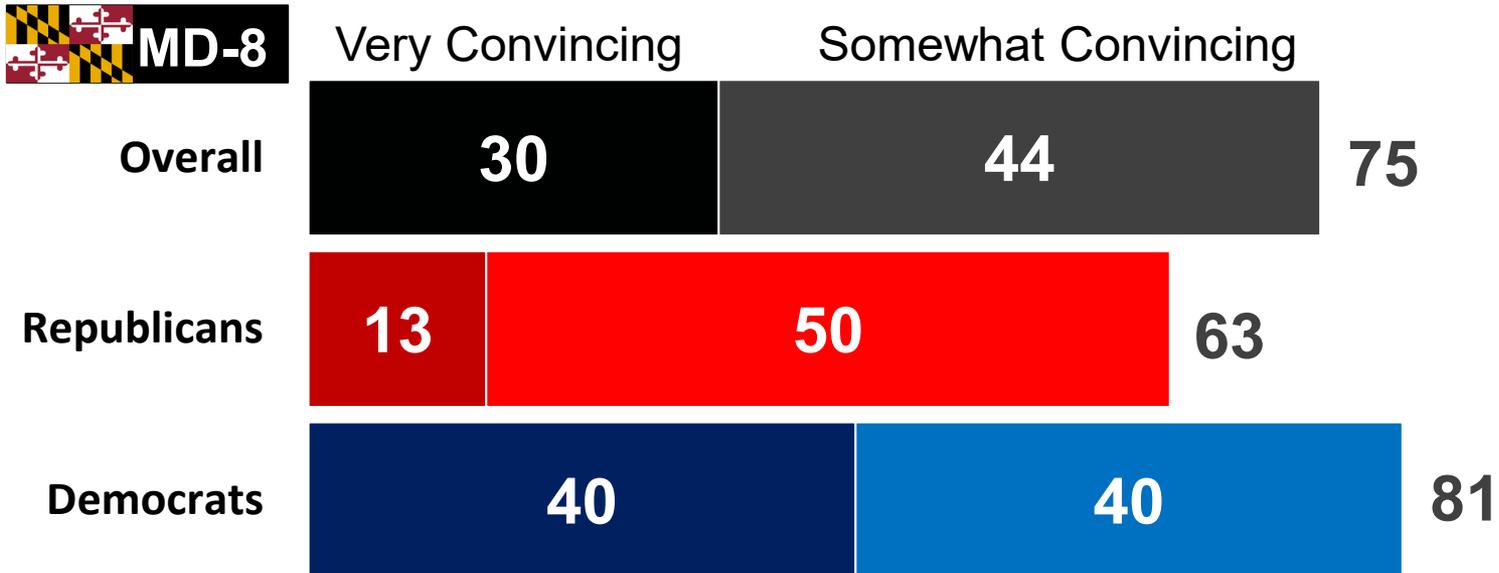
Voters select not only their most preferred candidate, but also their second choice, third-choice and so on. The winner is then selected as follows:

1. All the first-choice voters are counted and if any candidate gets the majority he or she is the winner.
2. If no candidate gets a majority based on voters' first choice, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is removed from the race. Those who gave that candidate their first-choice vote, then have their votes redirected to their second choice. This may result in a candidate getting a majority and being declared the winner.
3. If there is still not a majority, the process of eliminating the lowest candidate and redirecting their votes is repeated until a candidate has a majority and is declared the winner.

Ranked Choice Voting

Current system can result in less popular candidate winning

In the current system, a candidate can win even without a majority of votes – in fact a majority might actually oppose that candidate. Candidates with a small following can become a spoiler, taking votes away from a popular candidate, and enabling a less popular candidate to win. Ranked choice voting would ensure that the candidate elected is, in fact, the most popular candidate.

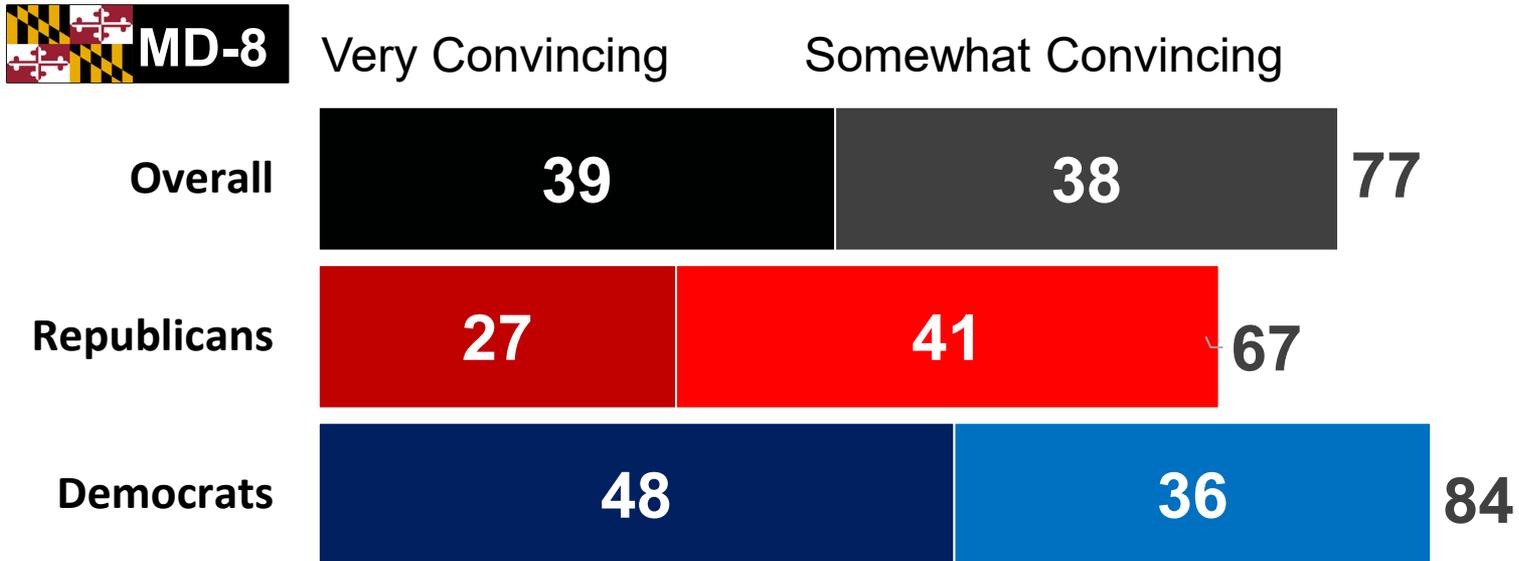


Ranked Choice Voting

Makes it possible for independent or 3rd party candidates to compete

This system makes it possible for voters to vote for the candidate they most support, including an independent or third-party candidate, without worrying they'll be throwing away their vote.

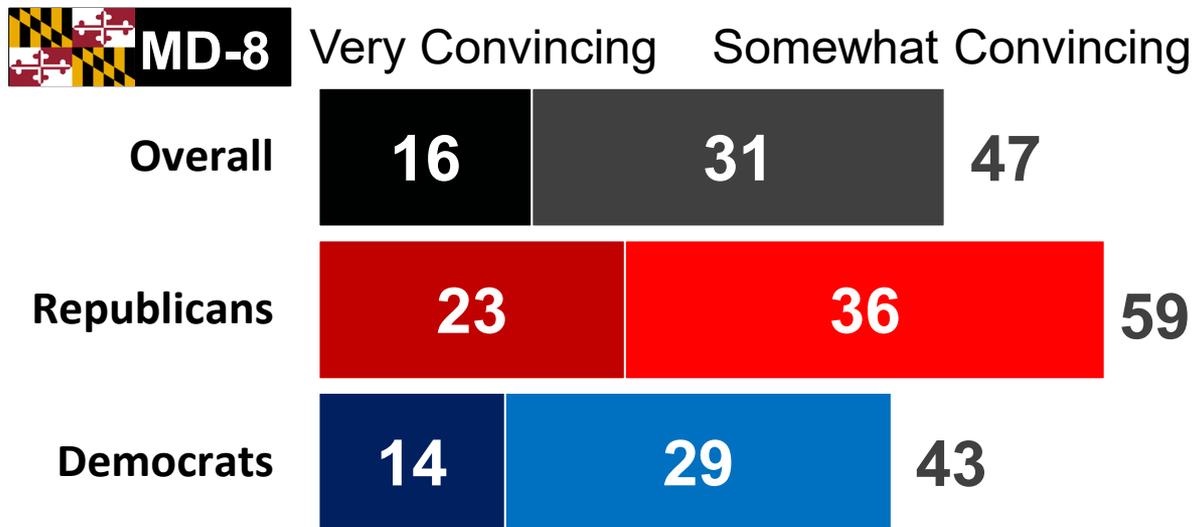
They'll know that their second preference will be counted if their first choice is not popular enough to win.



Ranked Choice Voting

Present system works fine, RCV is too complicated, unlikely to help 3rd party candidates

Our system of elections has worked for more than two centuries. This new method is too complicated, will cost the taxpayers a lot of money, strain our vote counting system, and dramatically delay the final announcement of the winners. While in principle this system could help a third party or independent candidate, it is so unlikely that they could actually win that it is really not worth all the trouble.



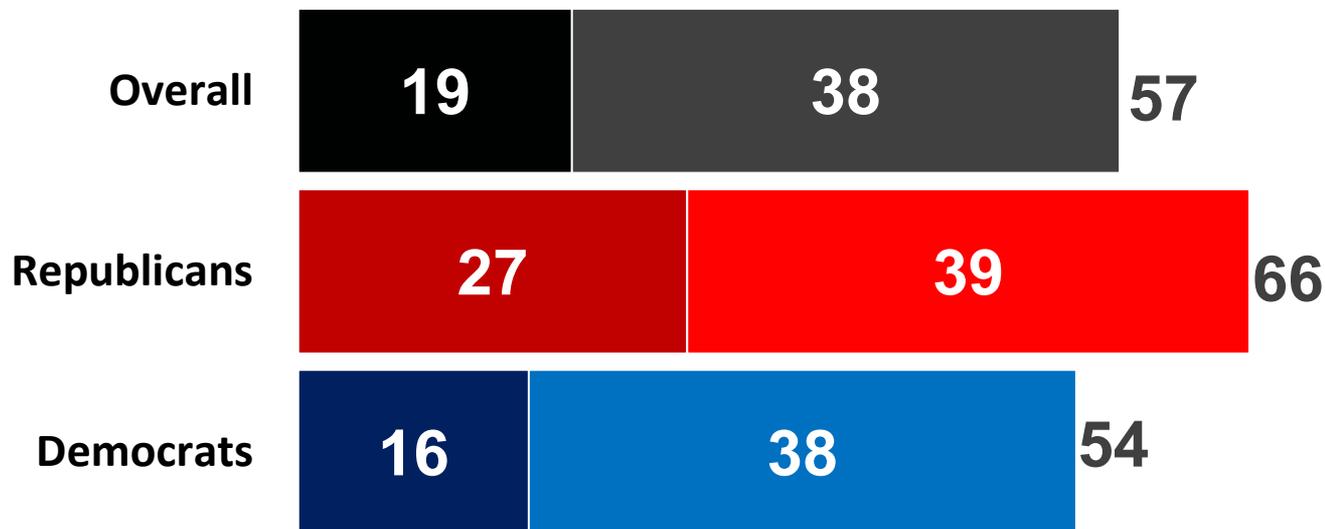
Ranked Choice Voting

Voters may get confused and not vote;
will undermine confidence in whole election

Explaining this new method to voters will be very challenging. People may get confused and this might discourage them from voting. There will be more doubts about the accuracy of the outcomes, leading to more demands for recounts. People will end up having less confidence in the final results, weakening the legitimacy of our democratic system.



Very Convincing Somewhat Convincing



Ranked Choice Voting

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

Voters select not only their most preferred candidate, but also their second choice, third choice and so on. The winner is then selected as follows: 1) All the first-choice votes are counted and if any candidate gets the majority, he or she is the winner. 2) If no candidate gets a majority based on voters' first choice, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is removed from the race. Those who gave that candidate their first-choice vote, then have their votes redirected to their second choice. This may result in a candidate getting a majority and being declared the winner. 3) If there is still not a majority, the process of eliminating the lowest candidate and redirecting their votes is repeated until a candidate has a majority and is declared the winner.



Overall

In Favor

66

Against

33

Republicans

54

46

Democrats

73

27



Overall

55

43

Republicans

46

52

Democrats

64

34

CHANGING THE WAY CONGRESS IS ELECTED

Multi-Member Districts

Multi-Member Districts

A current bill in Congress proposes a new way of structuring districts in the US House of Representatives.

Proponents say this proposal addresses two issues:

- In some states, all of their Members of Congress are from one party, even though a very large portion of the population identifies with the other party
- Independents and third-party candidates have little chance of getting elected

Multi-Member Districts

Proposal

States would still have the same number of House Members, but they would be elected by all of the state's voters and represent the whole state.

For example, for a state with five Congressional districts, on the ballot there would be at least five Republicans and five Democrats, as well as possible independent and third-party candidates.

Research has been done on what the likely effect would be election results would more closely mirror the partisan balance of the state.

For example, Connecticut is a state in which all five House seats are currently held by Democrats and Oklahoma is one in which all five House seats are currently held by Republicans.

The proposed system would likely result in 1-2 Republicans being elected in Connecticut and 1-2 Democrats in Oklahoma.

Multi-Member Districts

**Minority party voters be represented more;
Congress would more accurately reflect their District**

Right now, in some states, people who are part of the minority party have no representation in Congress, even though they are a substantial portion of the population. Using this new system would make it more likely that people from both parties would have at least one Member from their party representing their concerns. In many cases, independents are the swing voters and are likely to vote for candidates from more than one party. With multiple choices, even partisan voters are more likely to choose someone from the other party, an independent or a third-party candidate. The elected Members from that state would more accurately mirror the partisan balance in their state, making Congress more accountable.



Very Convincing Somewhat Convincing

Overall



Republicans



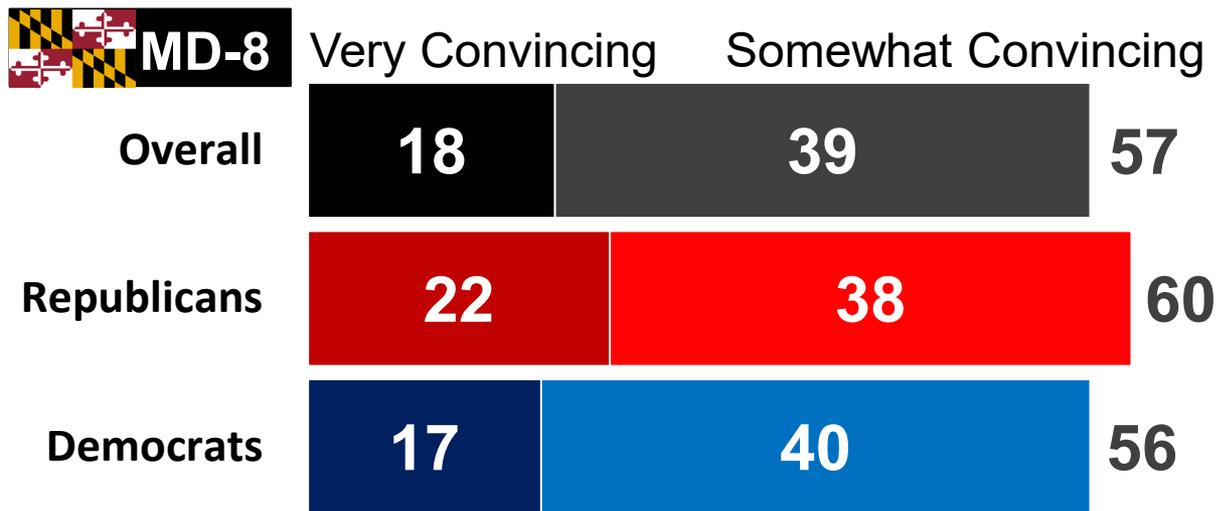
Democrats



Multi-Member Districts

Too complicated, hard for voters, districts too big

This idea is too complicated and requires too much from voters. They would have to get to know many more candidates than they do now. That would probably discourage some people from even trying to vote. With so many candidates to choose from, more people would be making uninformed decisions. The people who would put in the time and effort to get to know so many candidates, are more likely to be highly partisan. It would just make districts too big. These members would be more distant and less accessible to the people just like Senators. Overall, it could have all kinds of problems that people have not even considered.

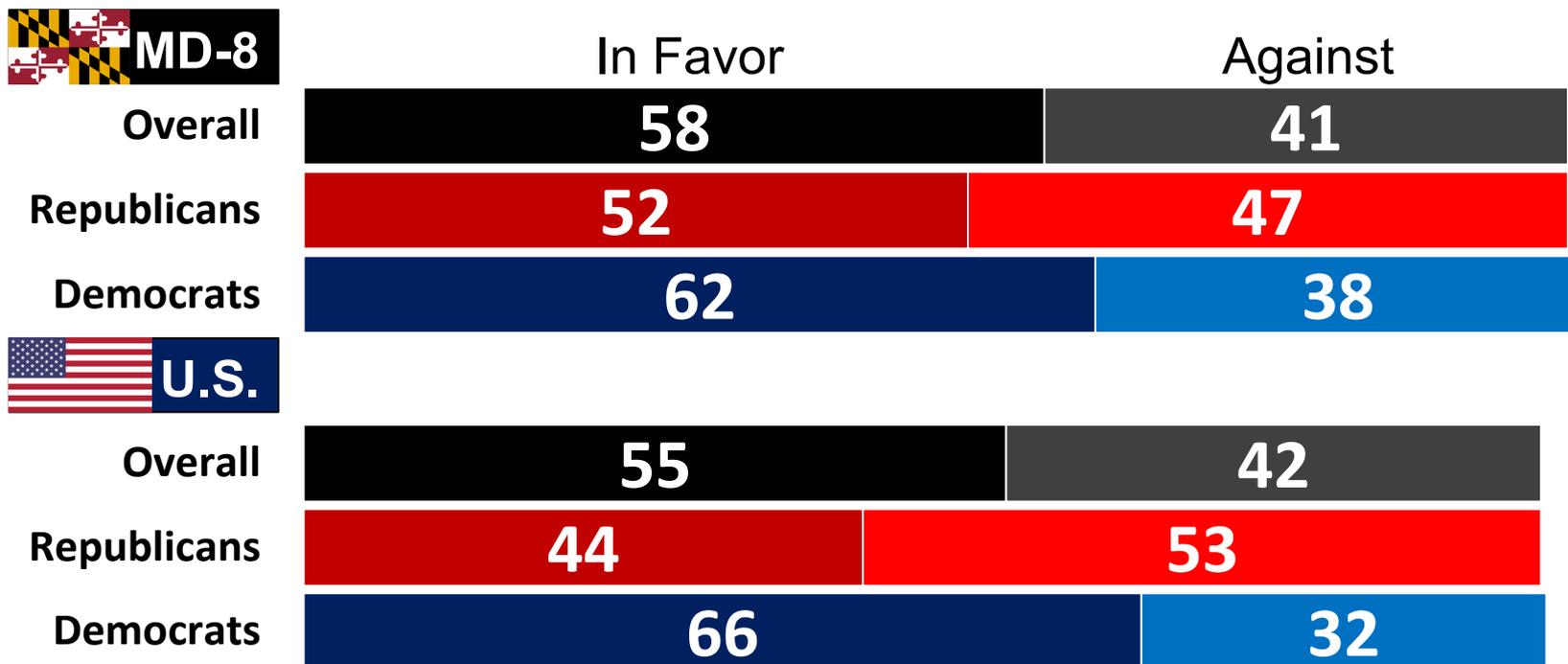


Multi-Member Districts

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

In a state with five or fewer Congressional districts, the state would still have the same number of House Members, but they would be elected by all of the state's voters and represent the whole state.

For states with more than five districts, the state would keep the same number of House Members, but the districts would be redesigned to be larger and have 3-5 Members each. The 3-5 House Members would be elected by all of the voters in these larger districts.





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

SURVEY ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

Maryland's 8th
Congressional District

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2019

SUPPORTED BY

