



WELCOME!

**A CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT EVENT
BY BRAVER ANGELS &
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE**

TOPIC: THE FEDERAL BUDGET
August 2025

- 1. Presentation of the results of a federal budget survey conducted among a representative sample of OH-7 and OH-13 residents**
- 2. Deliberating on the bipartisan policy recommendations**
- 3. Discussing this project and citizen engagement**

Survey Methodology

Sample Provided by:	QuantifyAI
Field Dates:	July 5 – August 13, 2025
Sample Size:	649 Adults OH-7 & OH-13 Combined OH-7: 326 OH-13: 323
Confidence Interval:	+/- 4%
Survey designed by:	University of Maryland's Program for Public Consultation

Weighting:

The sample was pre-stratified and weighted by age, gender, race, income, education, and home ownership to reflect the adult population of OH-7 and OH-13. The sample has a roughly equal distribution of Rs and Ds.

Survey Design

Respondents were given the opportunity to change spending:

Adjust spending levels for 34 areas of the discretionary budget, as well as Medicaid and SNAP (food stamps)

And change, adopt or remove taxes

Respondents were **shown in real-time the effect of their decisions on the 2024 budget deficit (\$1.9 trillion)**

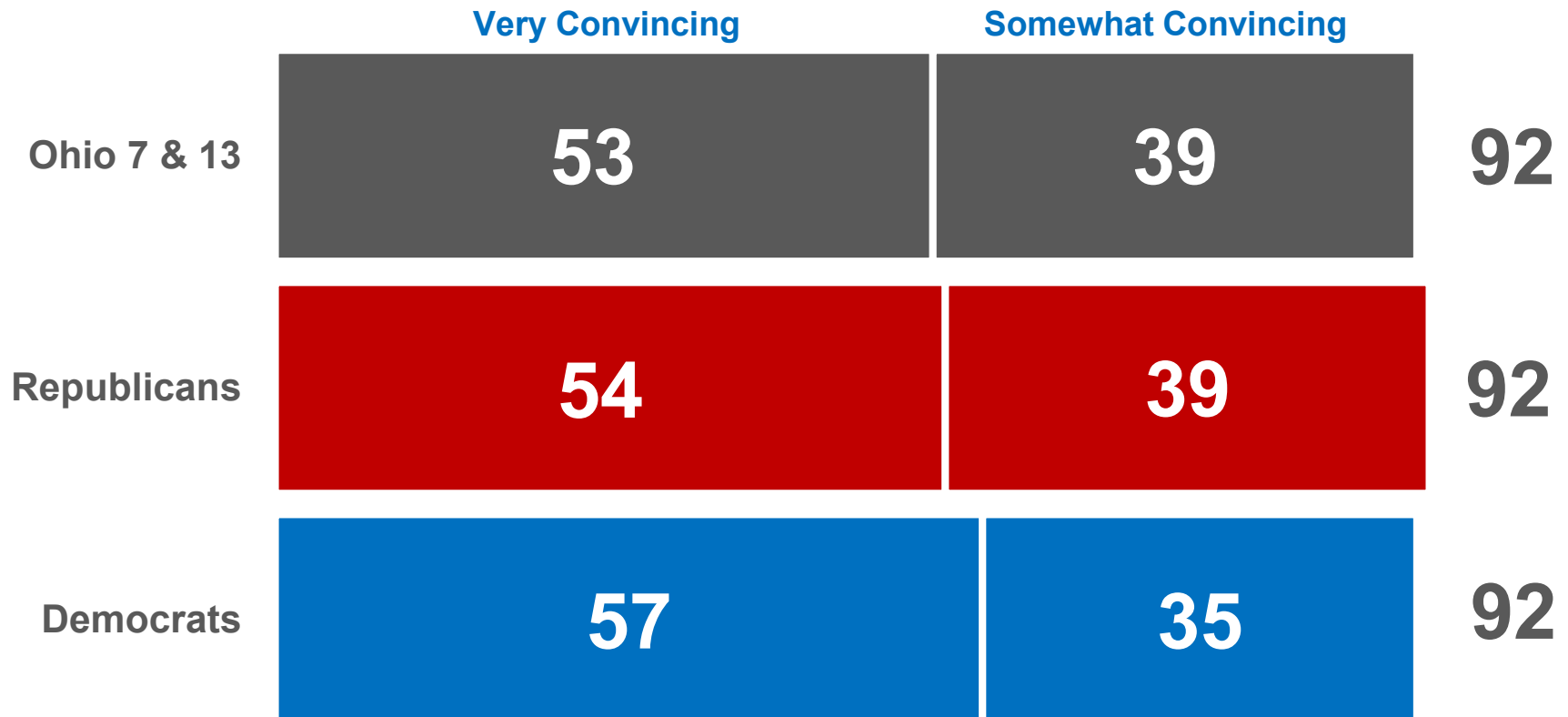
Respondents were also given **briefings and evaluated pro and con arguments** for each section, which were reviewed by experts on each side of the debate

PRO-CON ARGUMENTS: SPENDING

Prioritizing Reducing the National Debt

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

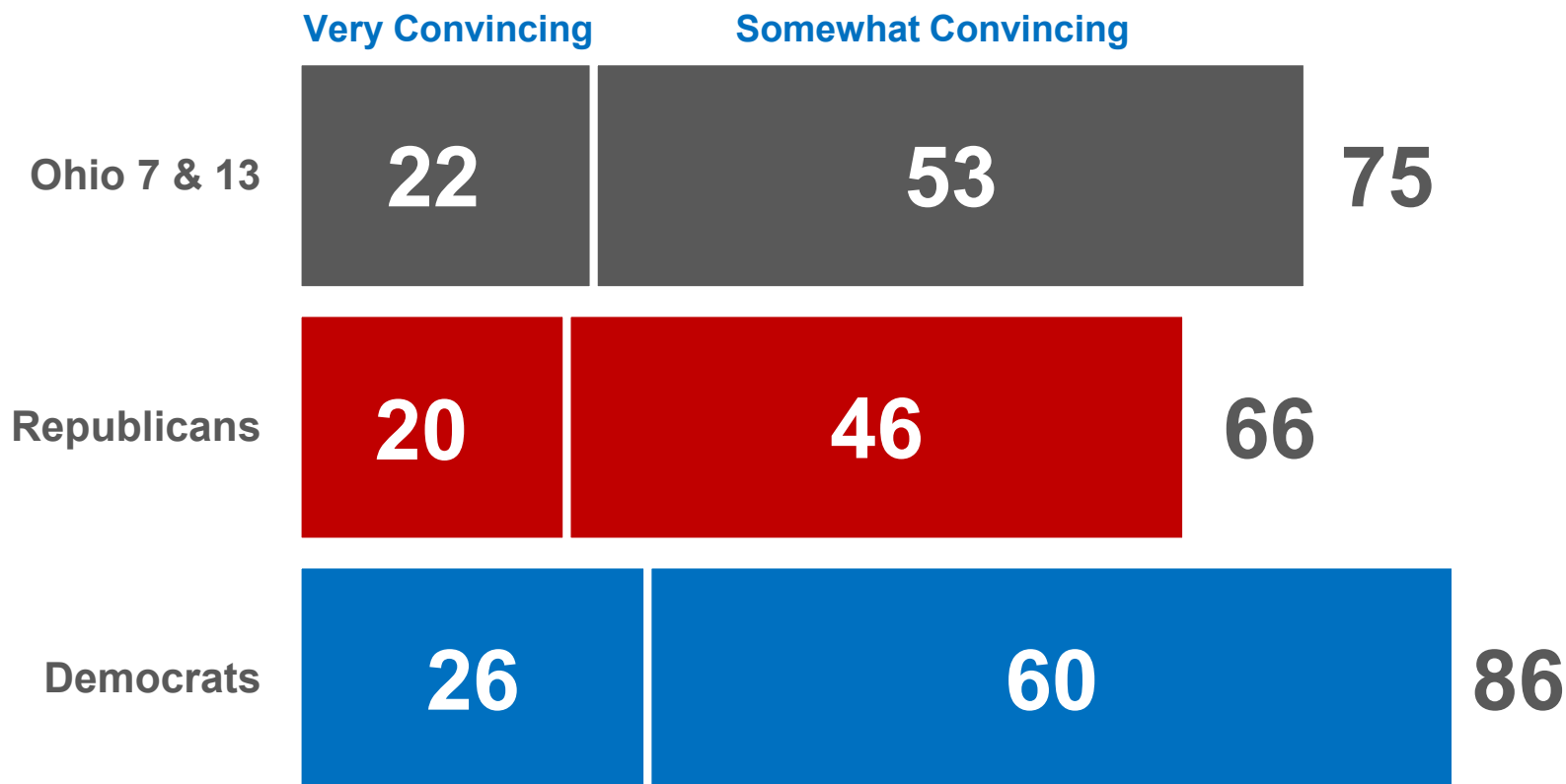
We have been running huge deficits for years now, putting the national debt on a path to unsustainable heights...



Prioritizing Reducing the National Debt

ARGUMENT AGAINST

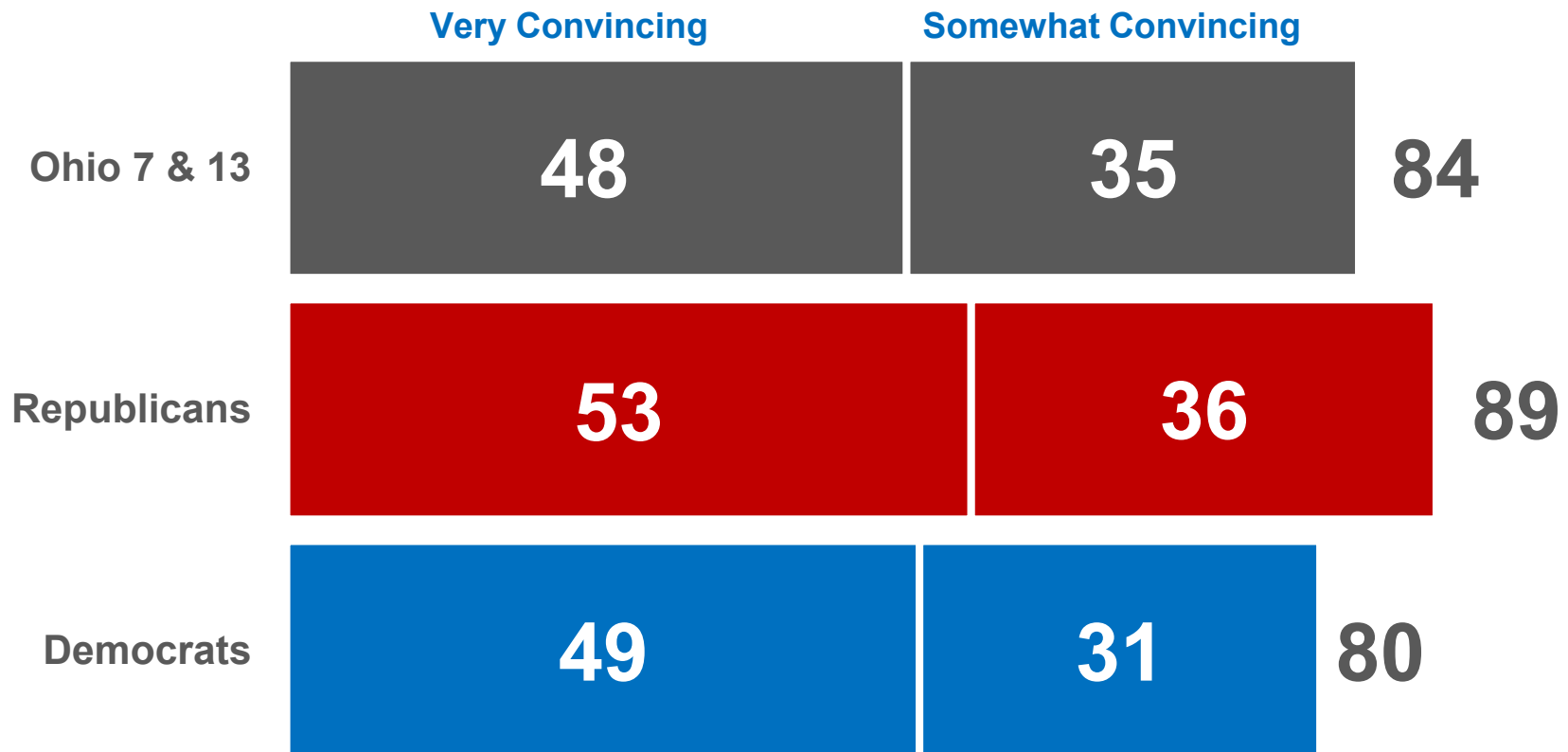
More important than reducing the deficit is for the government to continue making investments that ensure that the economy continues to grow...



Limiting the Size of the Federal Government

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

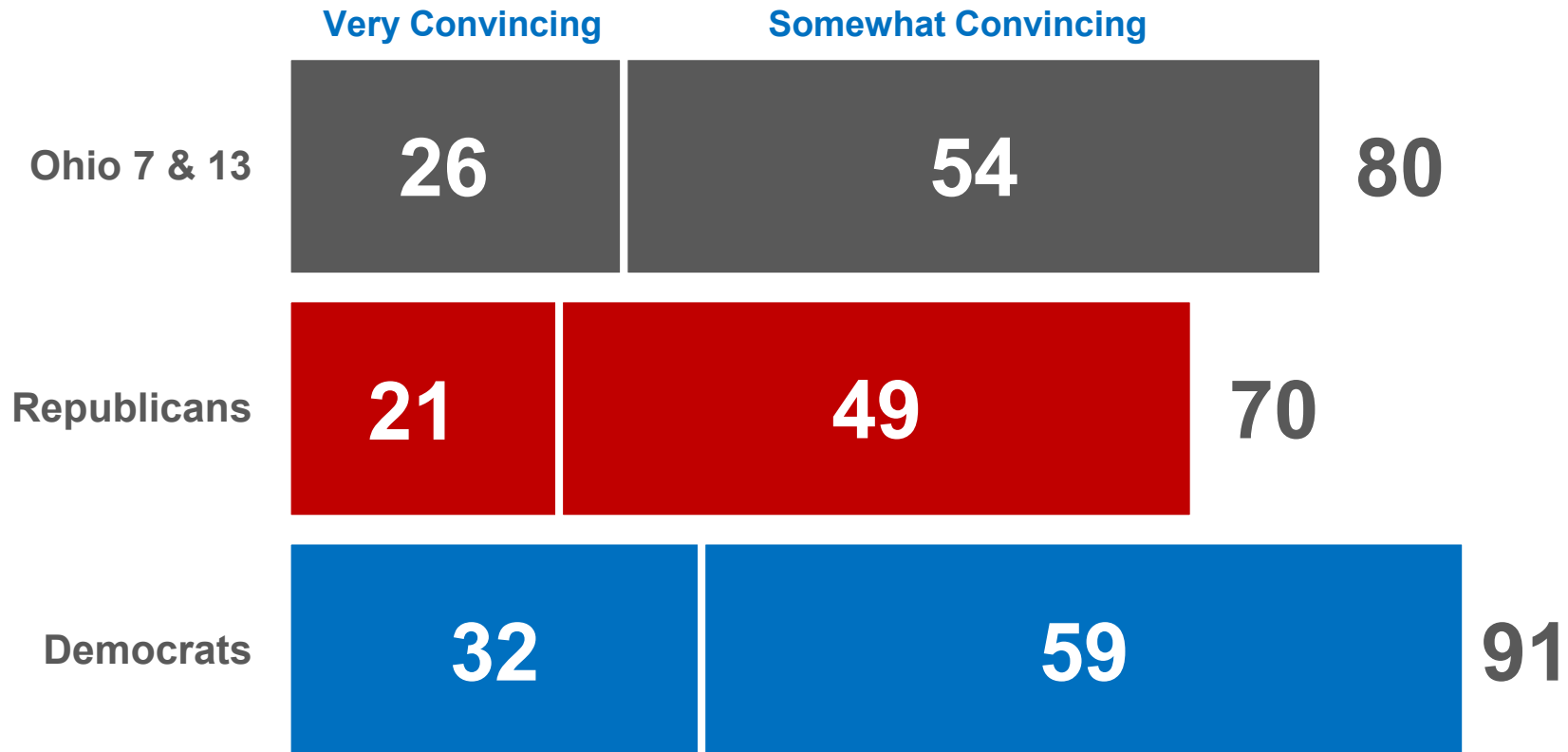
Too often, people think government is the solution, when it really is the problem...



Limiting the Size of the Federal Government

ARGUMENT AGAINST

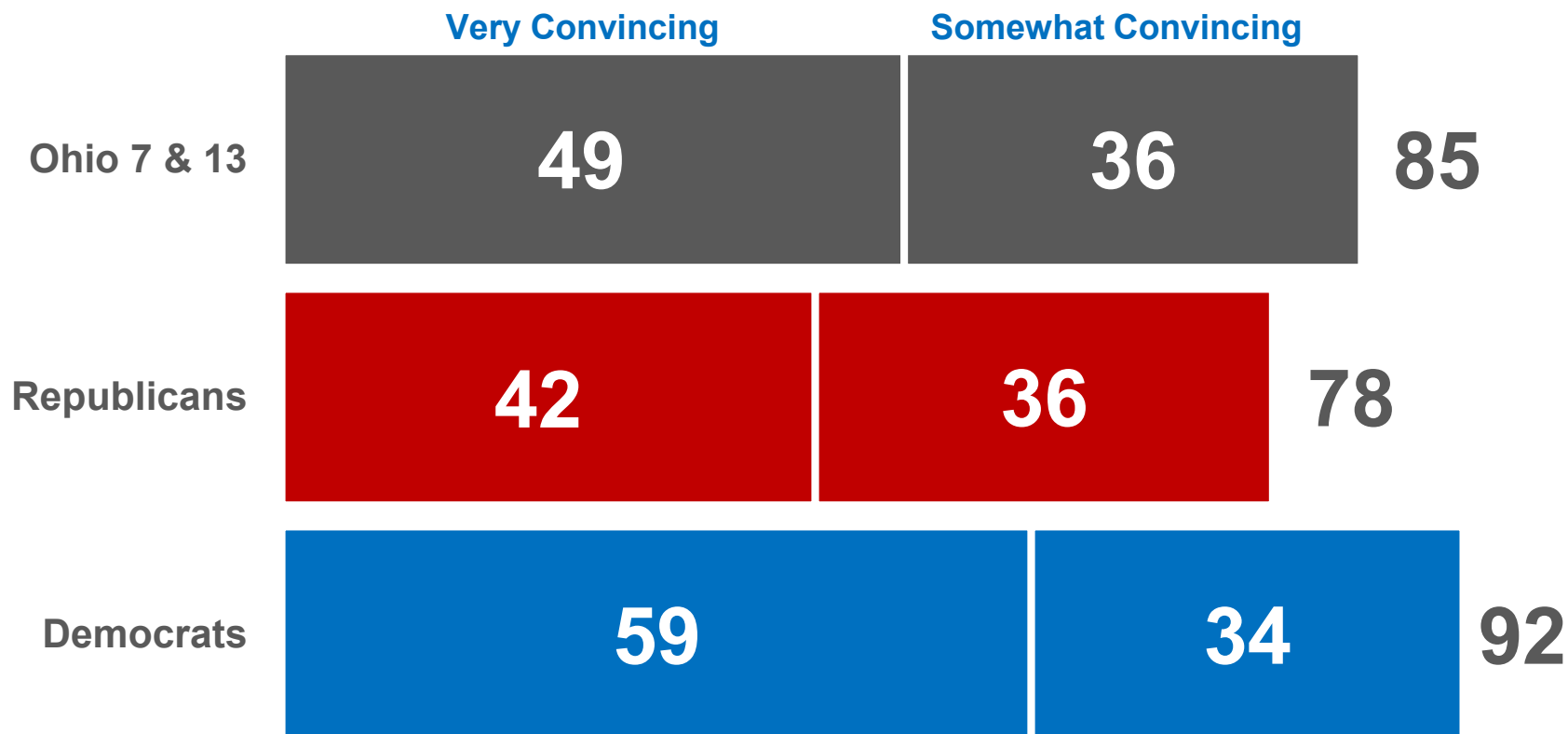
We shouldn't just cut government for its own sake. As a share of the economy, the federal government is at about the average for the last four decades...



Increasing Spending on Public Investments

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

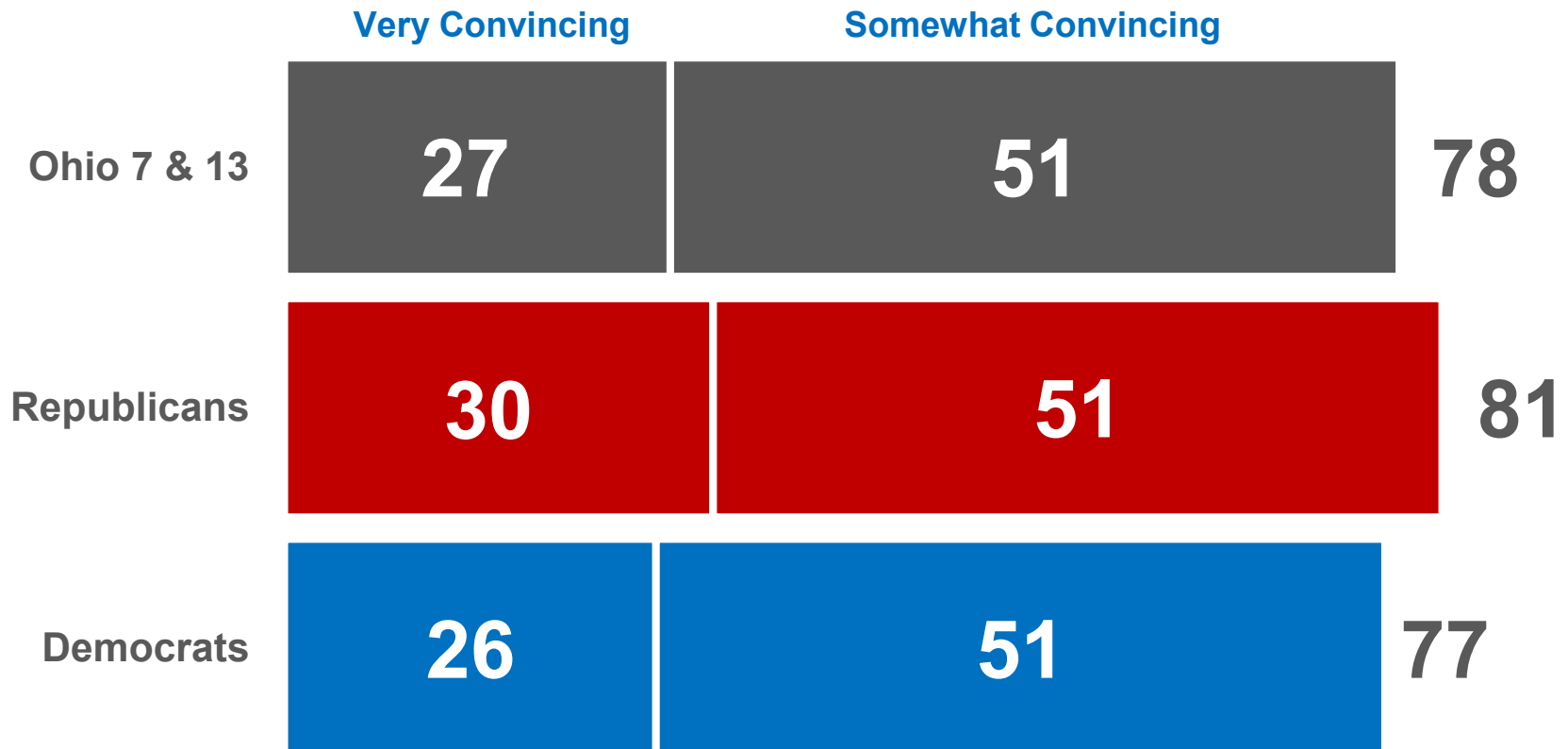
When making up a budget, we must not scrimp on investing in the future, because such investments bring big returns later on...



Increasing Spending on Public Investments

ARGUMENT AGAINST

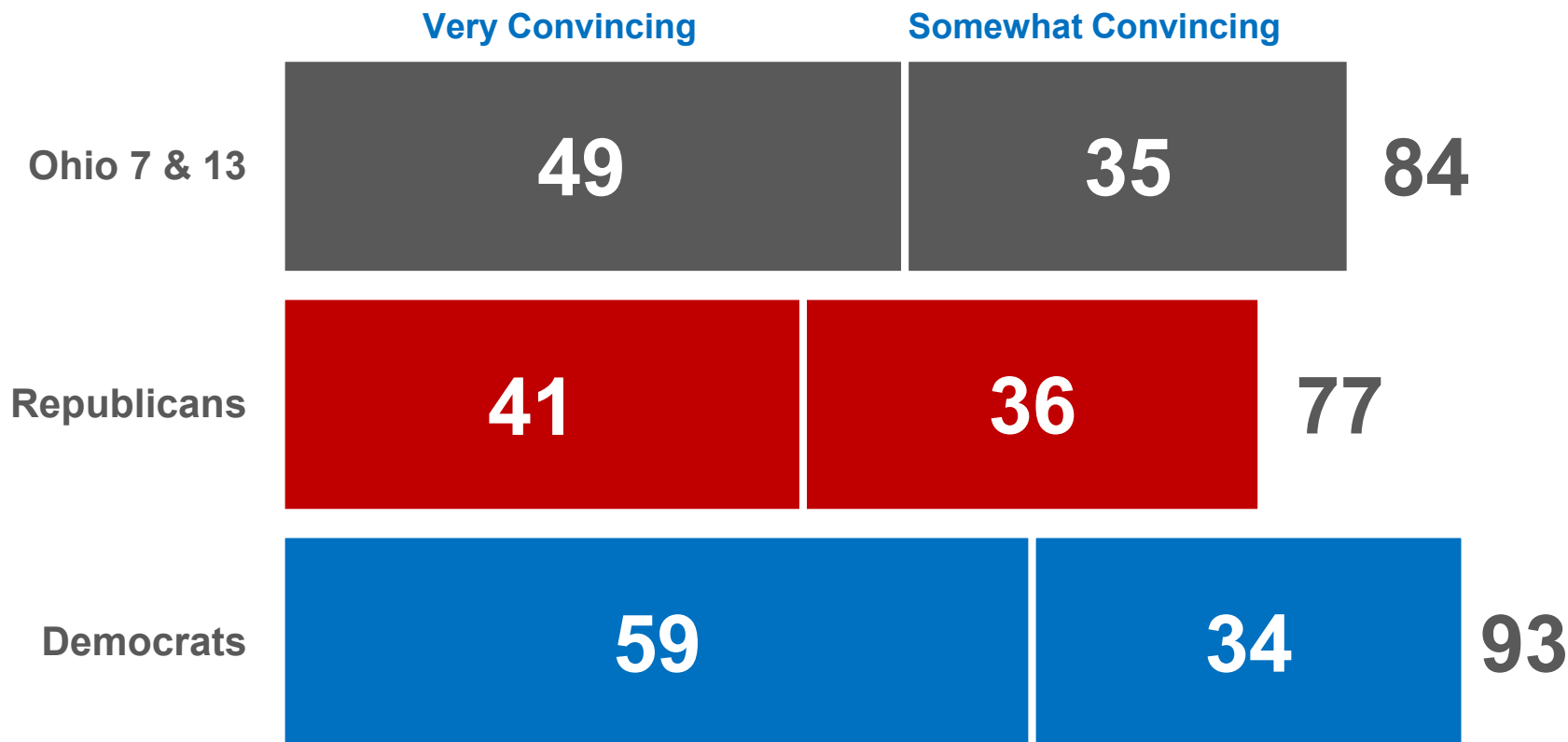
Investment in the future is important, but the private sector is much better at it than government...



Reducing Spending on Defense

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

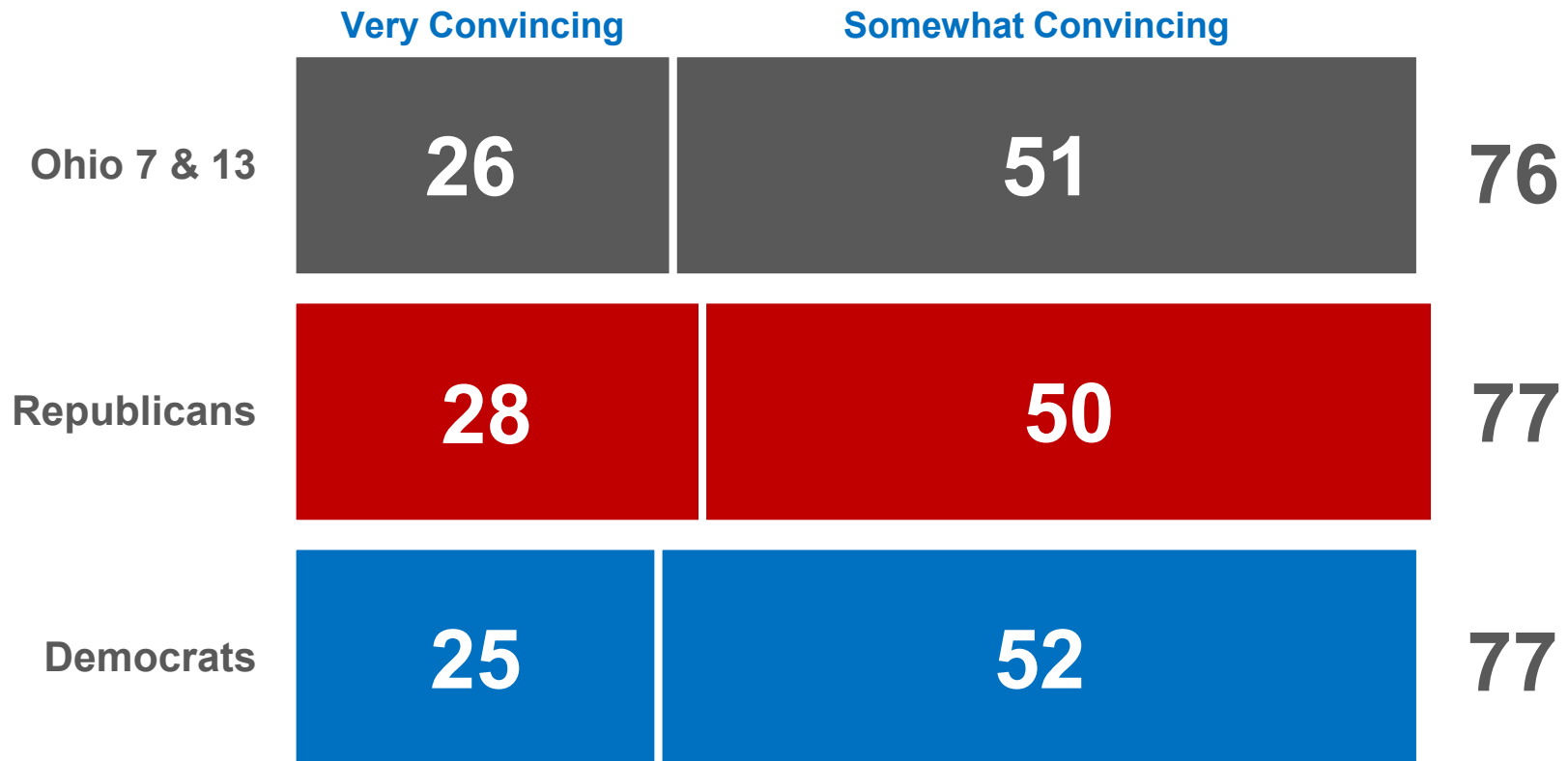
The Pentagon keeps thinking we need to be the world's policeman, leading us to have this huge defense budget...



Increasing Spending on Defense

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

America is threatened by hostile forces in many corners of the world. We should have the ability to quickly project overwhelming military power anywhere...



DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

34 areas of spending, presented with their 2024 budget.
For each area respondents set their own spending levels.

Major spending categories:

- Transportation
- Federal Law Enforcement
- Scientific and Medical Research
- Foreign Aid
- Foreign Relations
- Environment and Conservation
- Energy
- Housing
- Job Training
- Education
- Farming
- National Defense
- Veterans

**What spending
changes were
recommended by
majorities of both
Republicans and
Democrats?**

R & D Agreement On <u>Increasing</u> Spending		
	Rs	Ds
Subsidies for small farmers	71%	62%
Veterans: medical care, home loans, education	59%	71%
Air Travel and Railroads	56%	70%
Highways: building, maintaining, safety standards	55%	65%
Science: support for basic and applied research	54%	76%
Homeland Security: terrorist threats and disasters, border protection, TSA, immigration	53%	57%
Special education for students with disabilities	52%	78%
Mass Transit: Amtrak; setting and enforcing safety standards	51%	67%
Job Training: retraining unemployed workers, helping them find jobs	51%	53%

R & D AGREEMENT ON DECREASING SPENDING

Majorities of Republicans and Democrats did NOT agree on any decreases to spending.

Bare majorities of Republicans decreased:

- Foreign development aid (51%)
- Subsidies for agricultural corporations (51%)

Among Democrats, no spending area was decreased by a majority.

NOTE ON DEFENSE SPENDING

2024 Budget: \$860 billion
(the largest discretionary spending item)

No majority recommended increasing or decreasing

Decrease

Keep same

Increase

Ohio 7&13

46

9

45

Republicans

40

11

48

Democrats

47

6

47

MEDICAID & SNAP

Medicaid

In 2024, spending was \$608 billion.

What do you think federal spending on Medicaid should be for 2025?

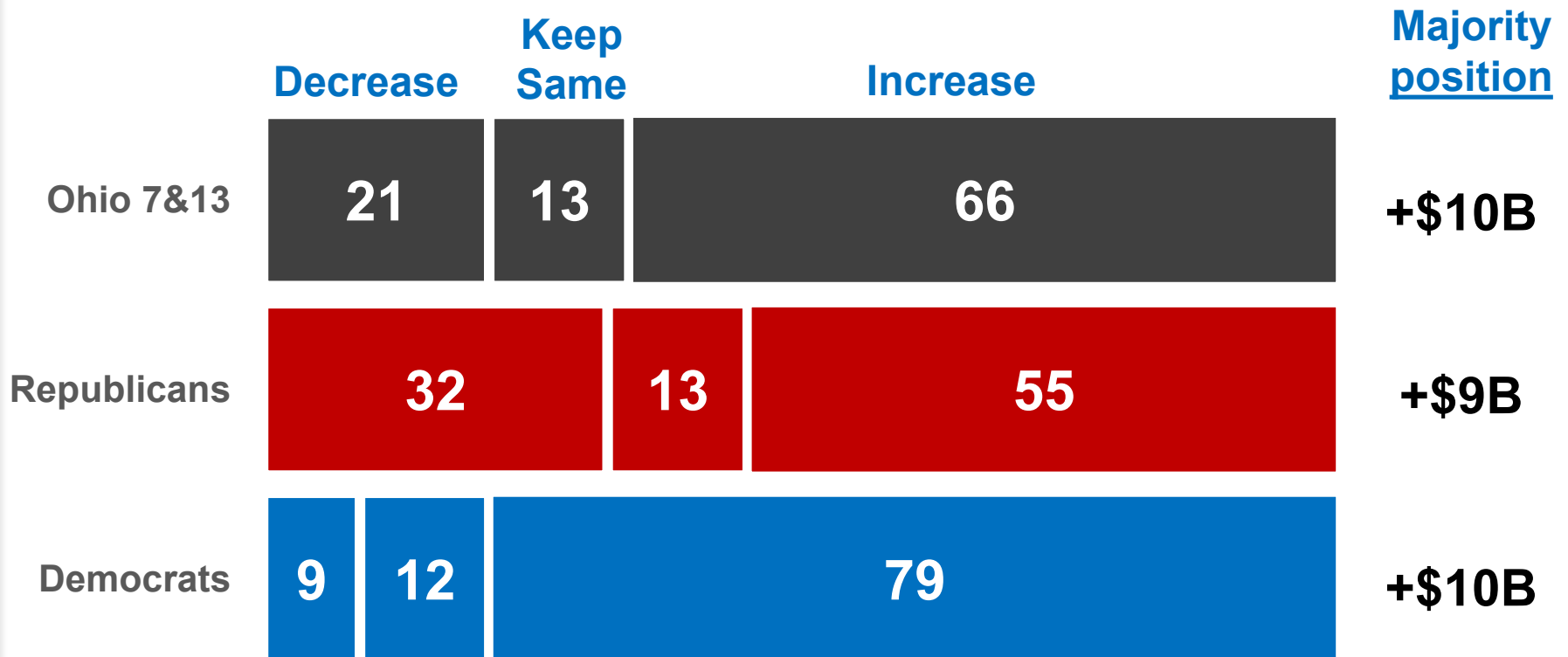


Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

In 2024, spending was \$100 billion.

SNAP provides monthly food credits averaging \$187 per person to low-income individuals and families, with eligibility based on income and work requirements.

What do you think federal spending on SNAP should be for 2025?



**What were the effects of all the
spending changes
recommended by majorities?**

NET SPENDING CHANGES MADE BY MAJORITIES

Overall: Ohio 7 & 13

+ \$40B

Republicans

+ \$22B

Democrats

+ \$64B

**R & D
Agreement**

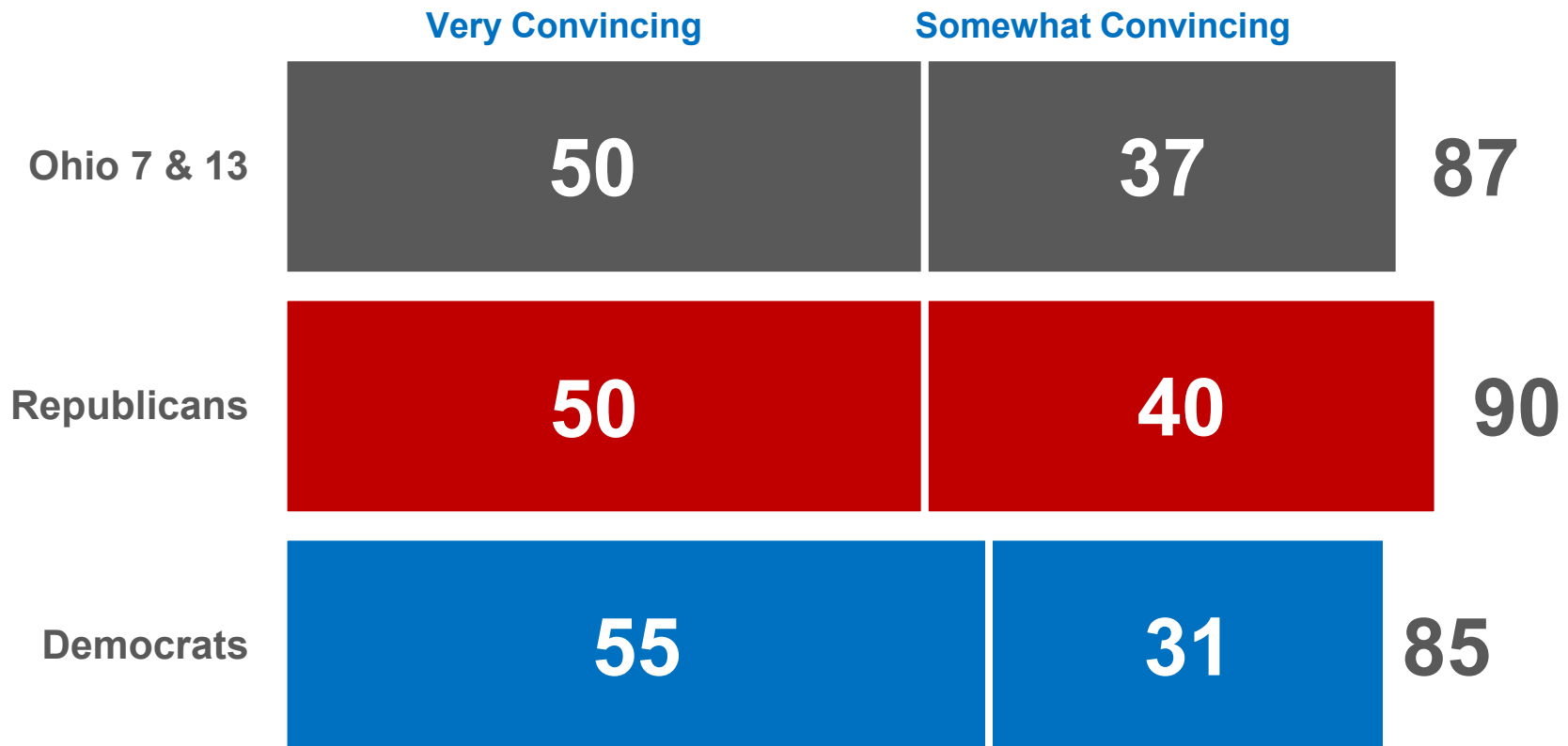
+ \$21B

PRO-CON ARGUMENTS: TAXES

Reducing Taxes

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

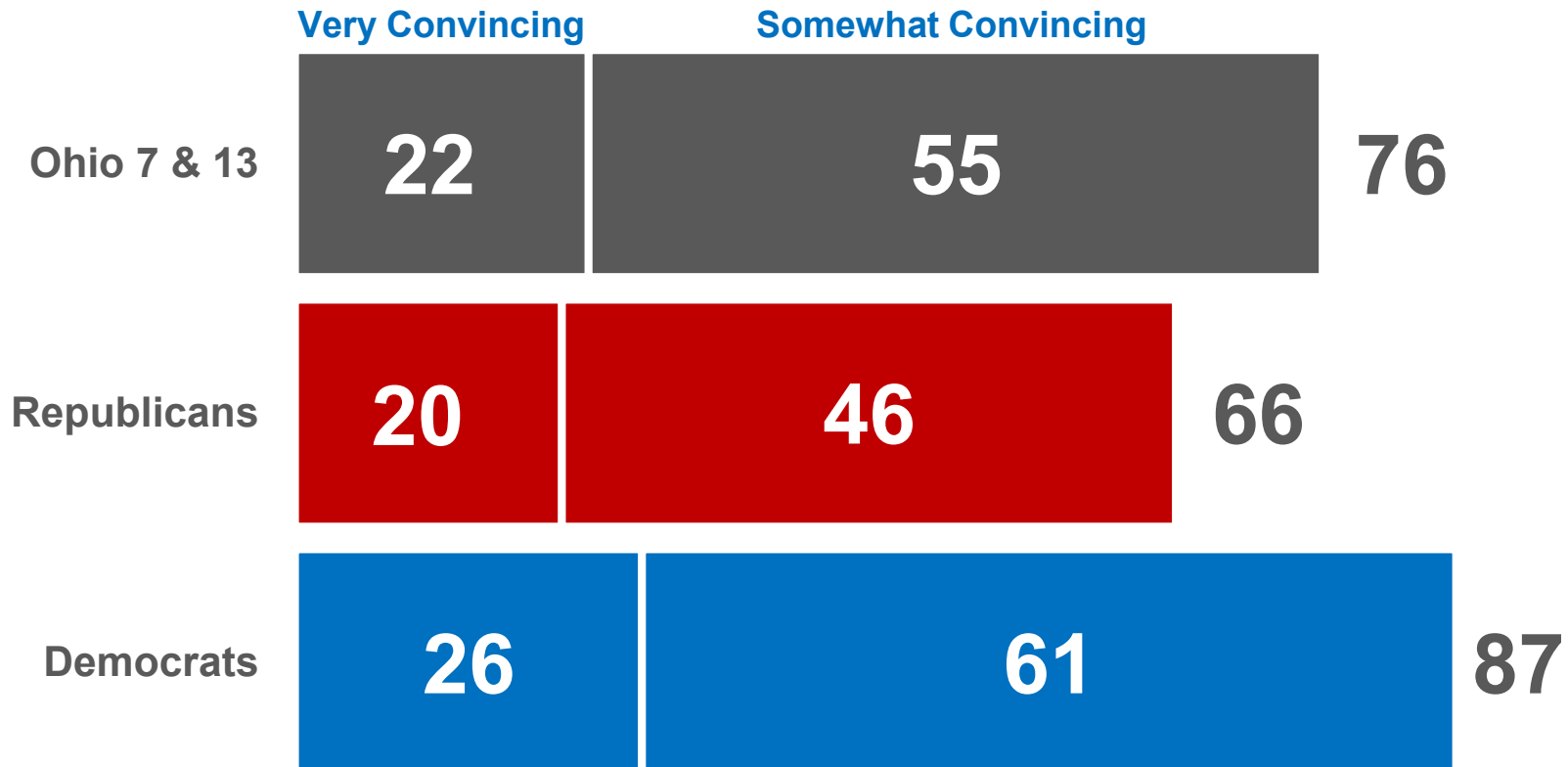
For the economy to grow, it is important to reduce tax rates... Lower tax rates will energize the economy...



Reducing Taxes

ARGUMENT AGAINST

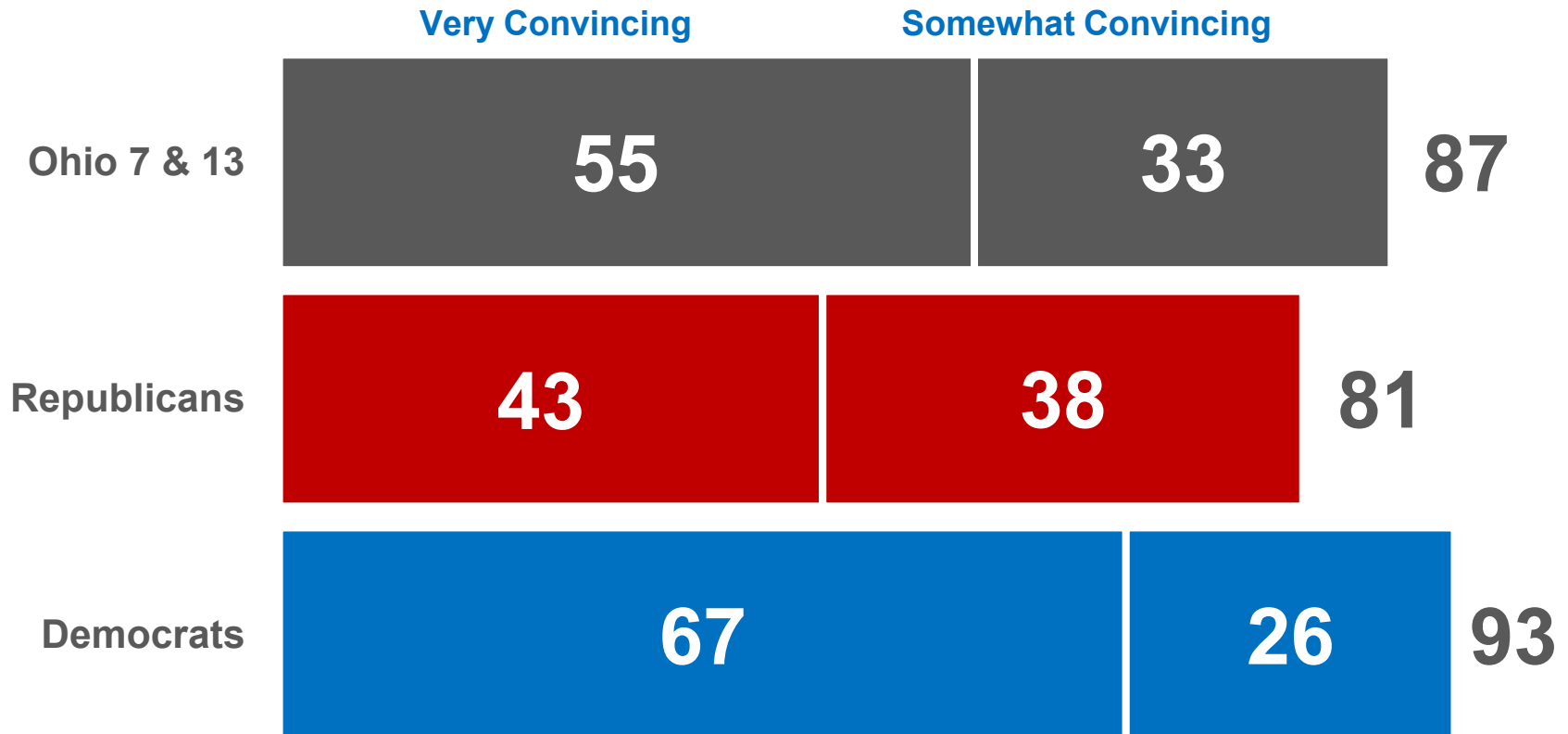
It is unwise and shortsighted to cut taxes when we have a major deficit... It is a myth that lower taxes always help the economy...



Taxes for Higher Incomes

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

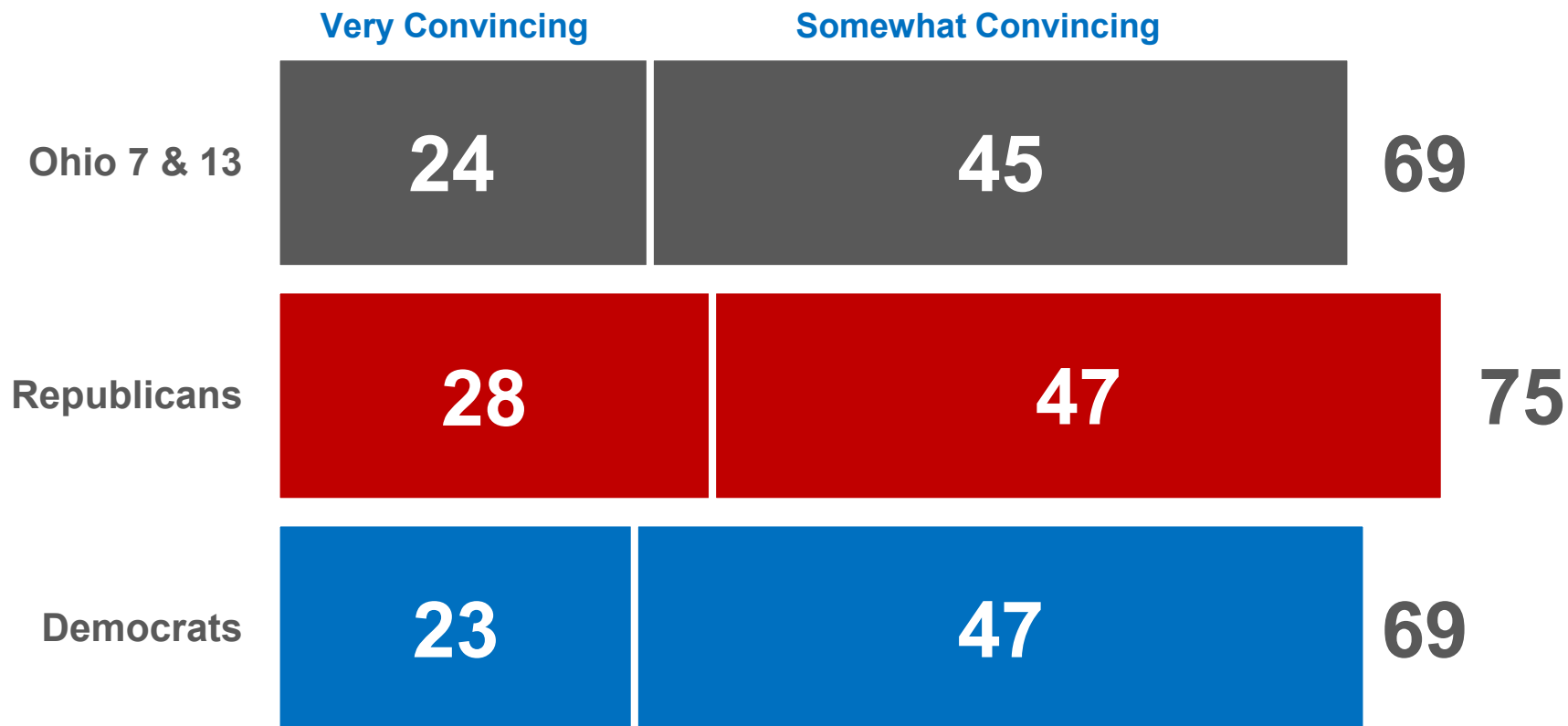
Over the last several decades, the wealth of most Americans has barely grown at all. Meanwhile, the wealth of the people in the top brackets has grown by leaps and bounds...



Taxes for Higher Incomes

ARGUMENT AGAINST

The people at the top already pay a lot... people with high incomes play an important role in the economy...



REVENUES

**CHANGING
EXISTING TAXES**

In 2018 the government enacted tax reductions...

Options:

- Reduce them below the current rates
- Keep the current rates
- Go back to the higher 2017 rates
- Increase them above the 2017 rates

Income Tax Rates

**Raise taxes back to 2017 rates
for income:**

\$80-100k

Ohio 7&13
Republicans
Democrats

57

51

66

\$100-200k

66

62

73

\$200-500k

75

68

84

**\$500k-
\$1 million**

80

73

87

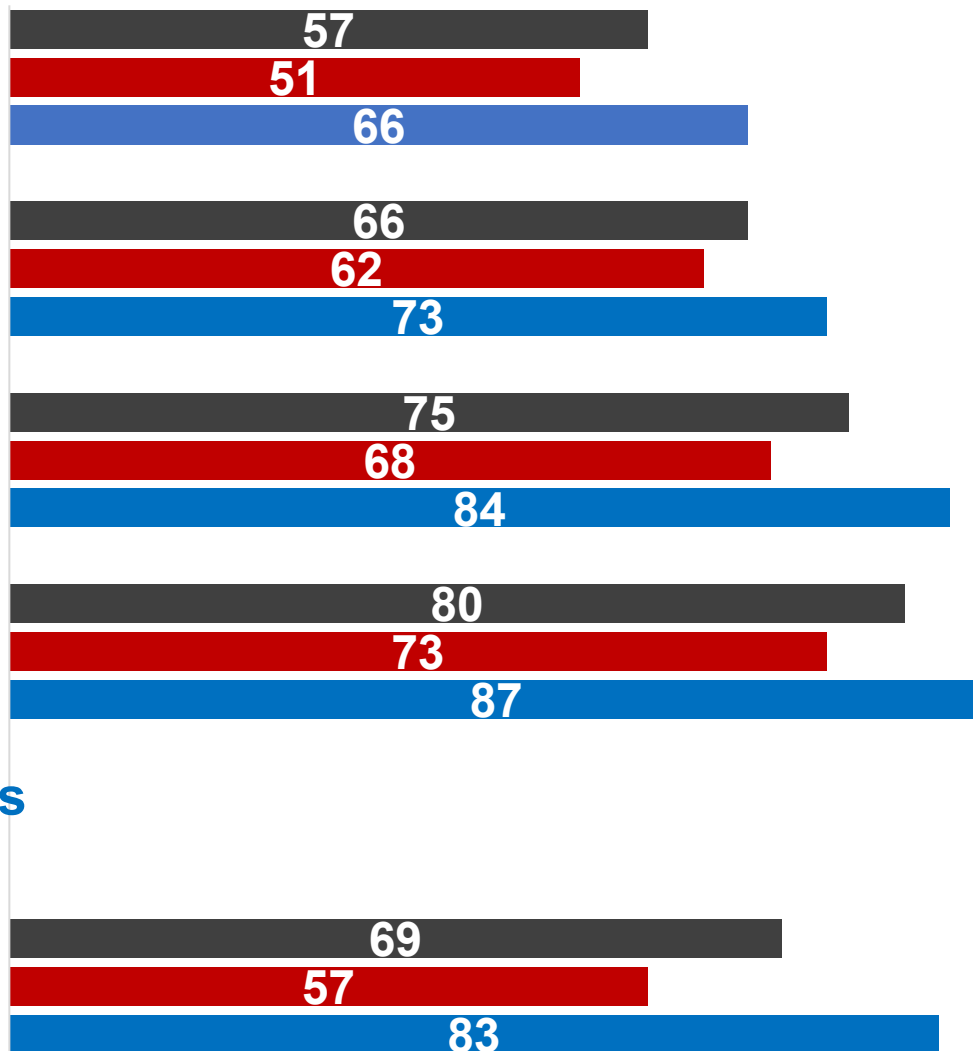
**Raise taxes above 2017 rates
for income:**

**\$1 million
and over**

69

57

83



Capital gains and dividends are taxed differently – often less – than income from wages or salaries.

Options:

- Raise taxes on capital gains and dividends, by taxing them same as ordinary income
- Keep taxes the same

Capital Gains & Dividends

**Tax earnings as ordinary income
for people with income:**

\$200-500k

Ohio 7&13

66

Republicans

65

Democrats

67

**\$500k -
\$1 million**

76

73

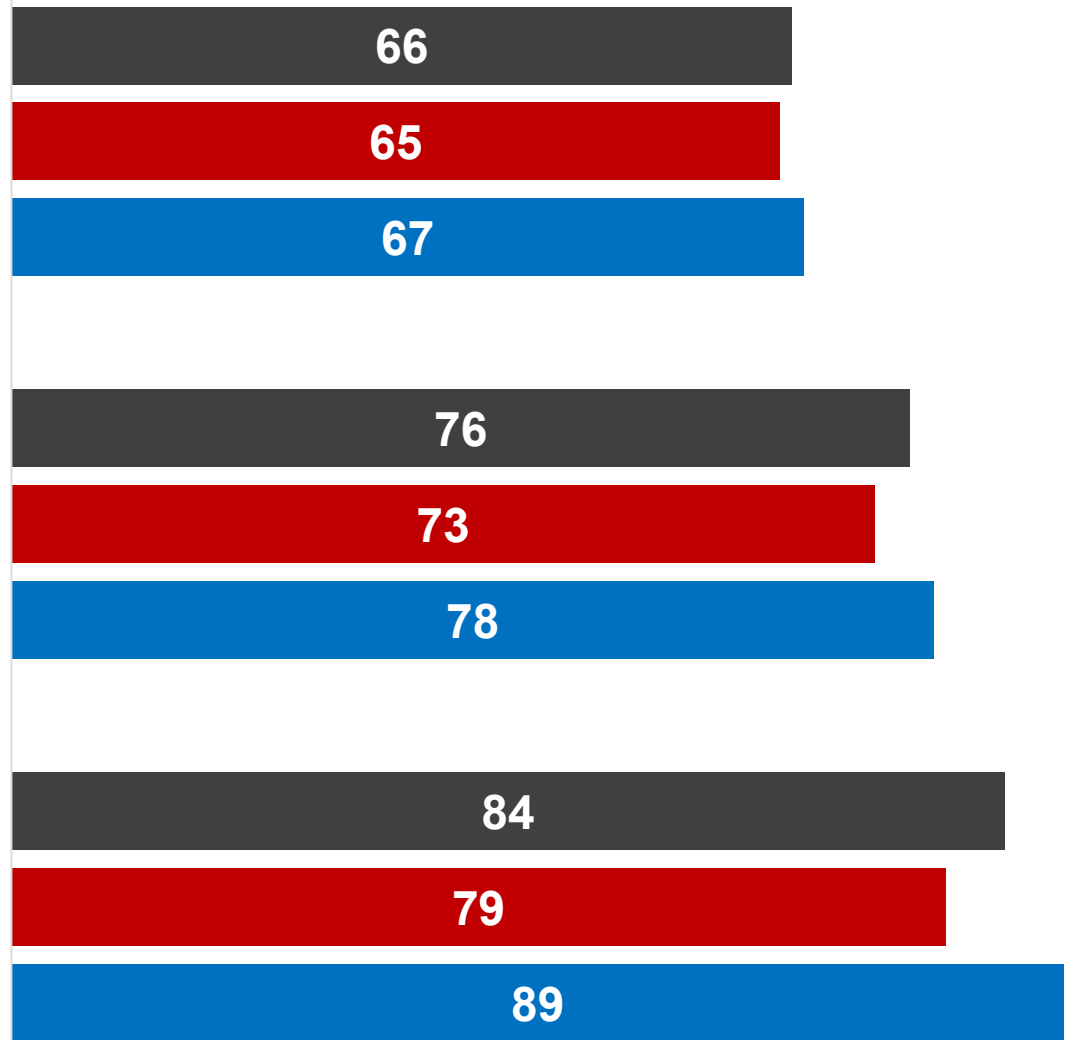
78

**\$1 million
and over**

84

79

89



Estate tax is a tax on inherited wealth.

In 2009, it applied only to inherited wealth over \$3.5 million for individuals and \$7 million for couples, with a top tax rate was 45%.

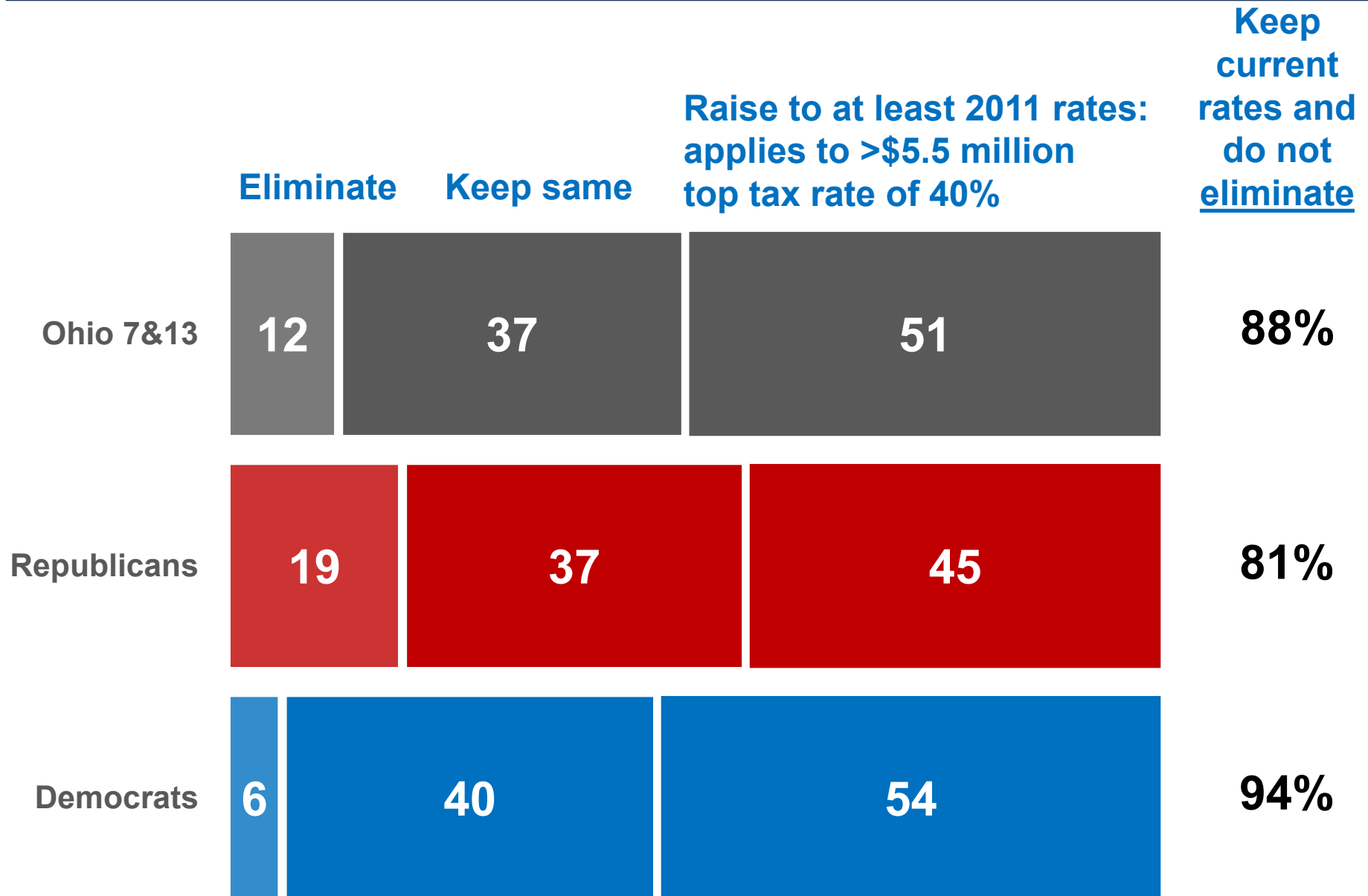
In 2011, it was changed so it applied only to inherited wealth over \$5.5 million (\$11 million for couples), with a top tax rate of 40%.

In 2018, it was changed so it only applied to inherited wealth over \$14 million (\$28 million for couples).

Options:

- Eliminate it
- Keep the current rate
- Raise it back to 2011 levels
- Raise it back to 2009 levels

Estate Tax



Tax on their profits (income minus spending)

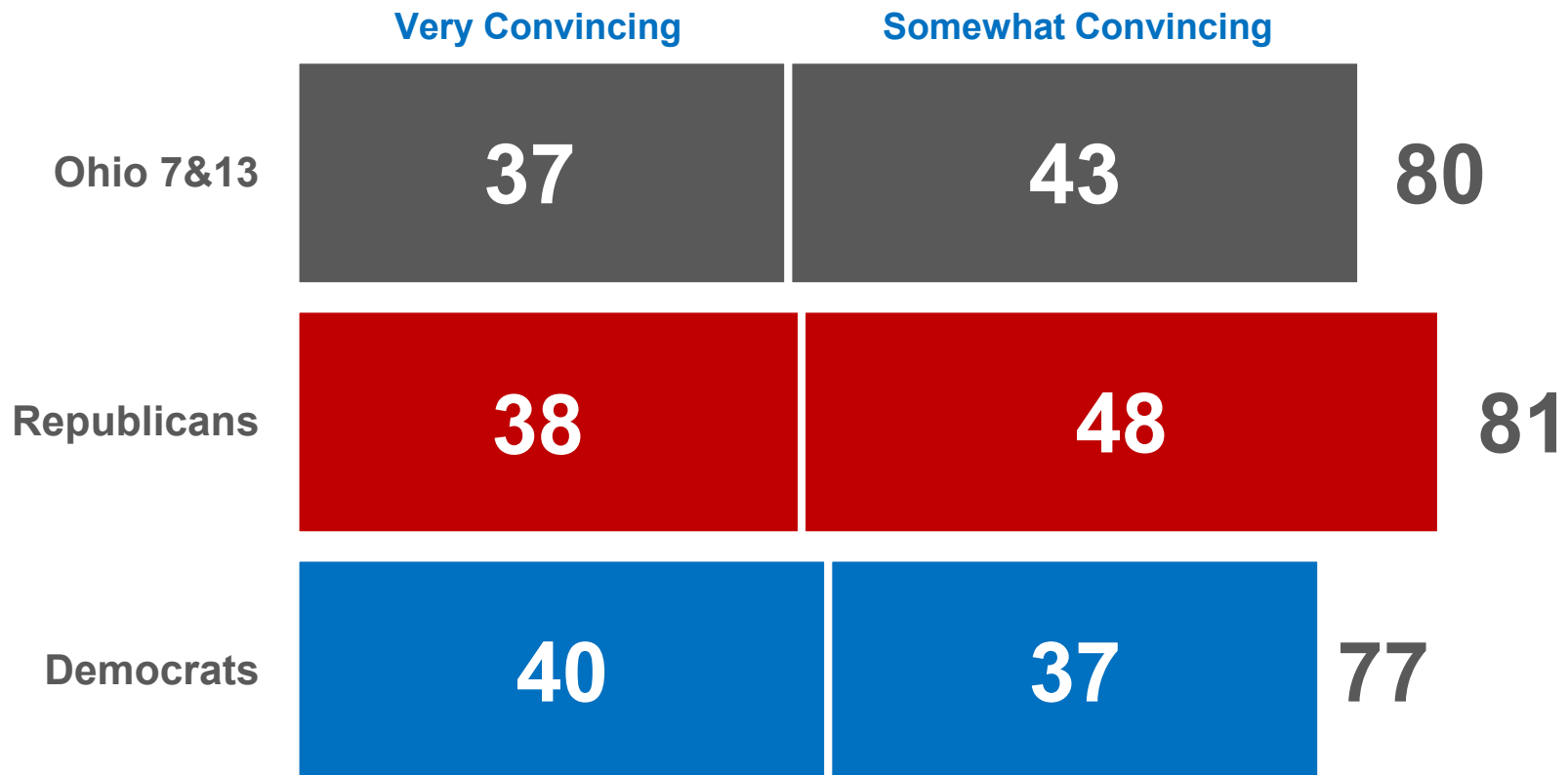
Rates have been steadily decreased since 1950s when the top rate was 50%

In 2018, it was changed to a flat rate of 21%

Lowering the Corporate Tax Rate

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

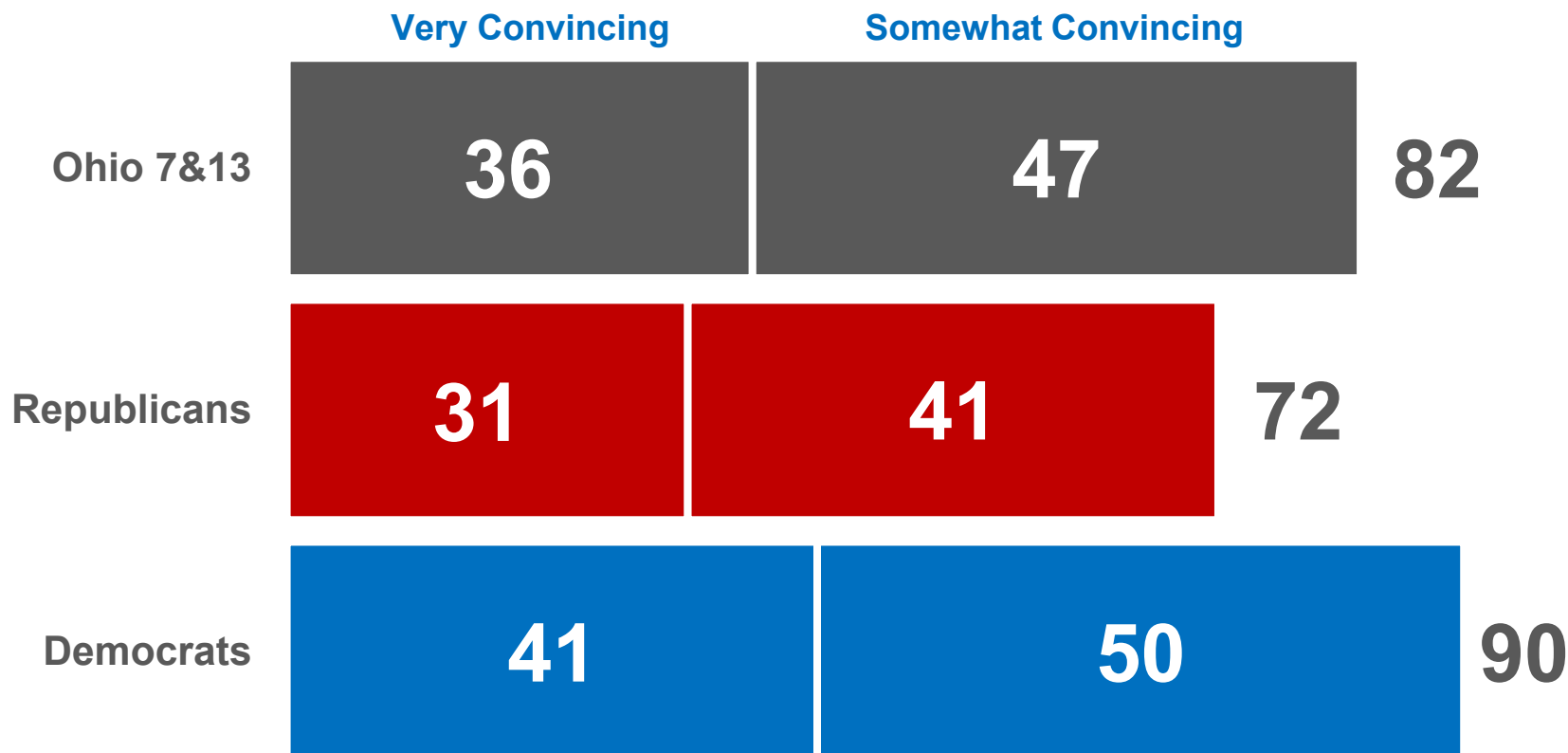
Lowering the corporate tax rate will boost economic growth...



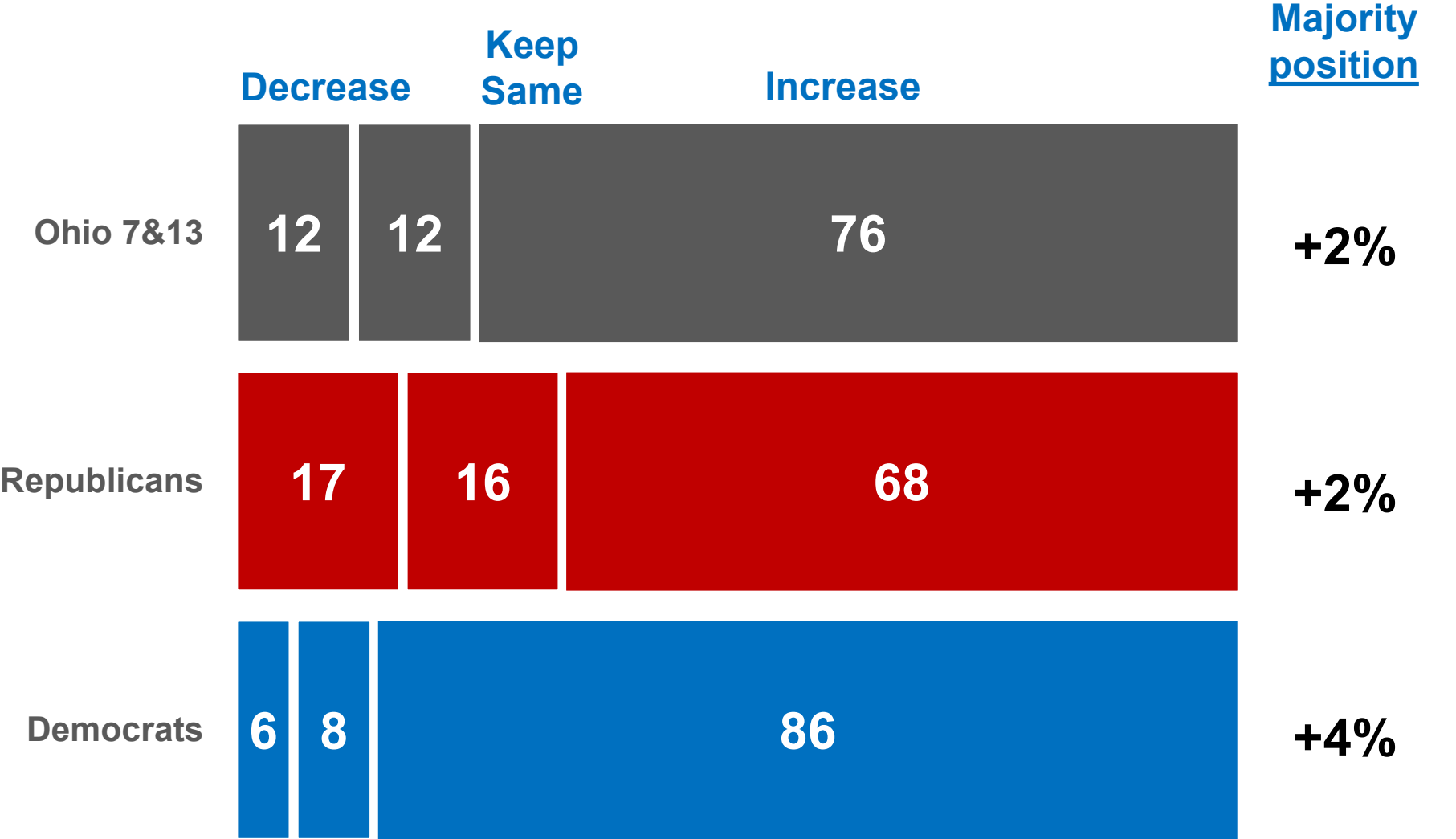
Raising the Corporate Tax Rate

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Large corporations and their owners have grown wealthier, while the government deficit has grown larger...



CORPORATE TAX RATE



REVENUES

**ADOPTING
NEW TAXES**

Wealth Tax

Proposal to impose a tax of:

- 2% on the amount of wealth over \$50 million, and
- 3% on the amount of wealth over \$1 billion.

The 2% tax would affect about 120,000 households.

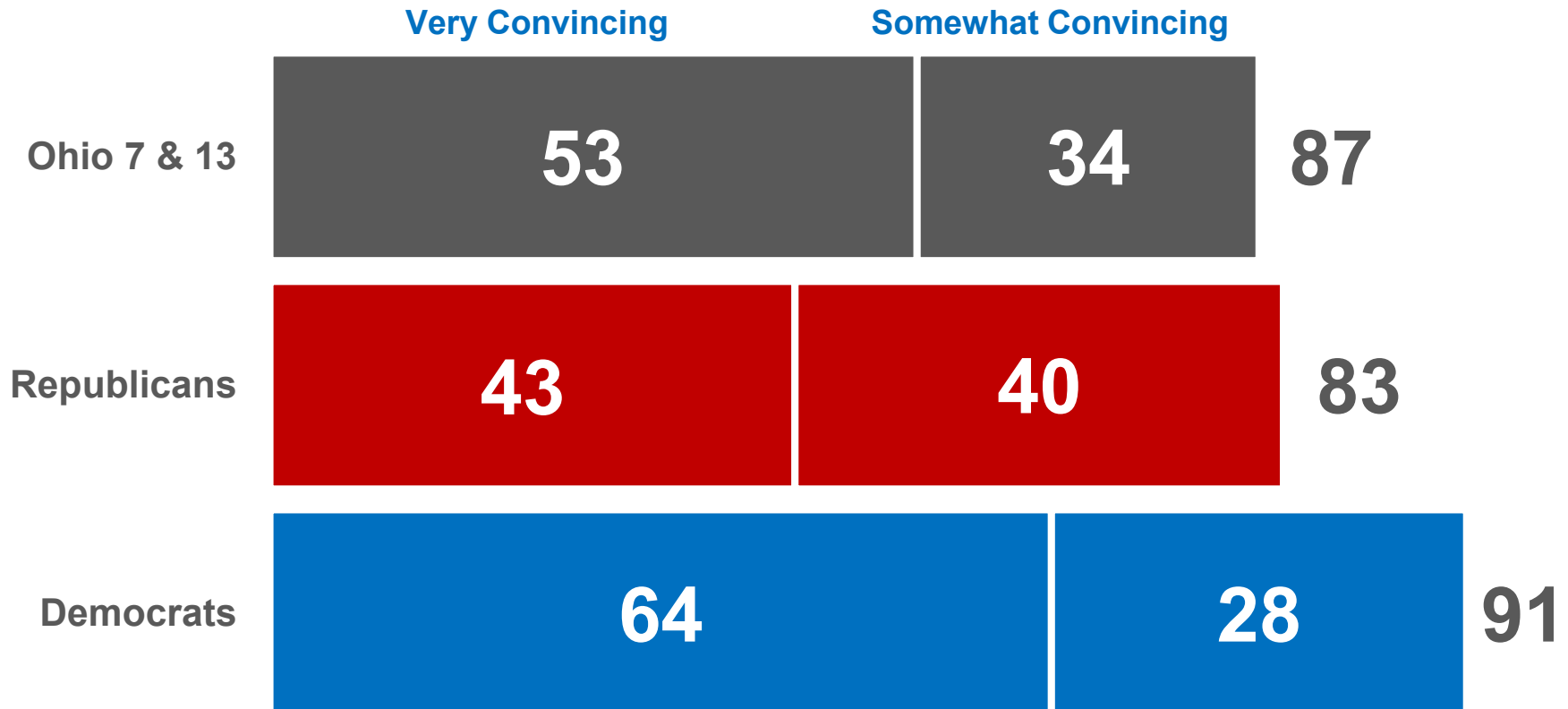
The 3% tax would affect about 800 households.

Raise \$200 billion in revenues.

Wealth Tax

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

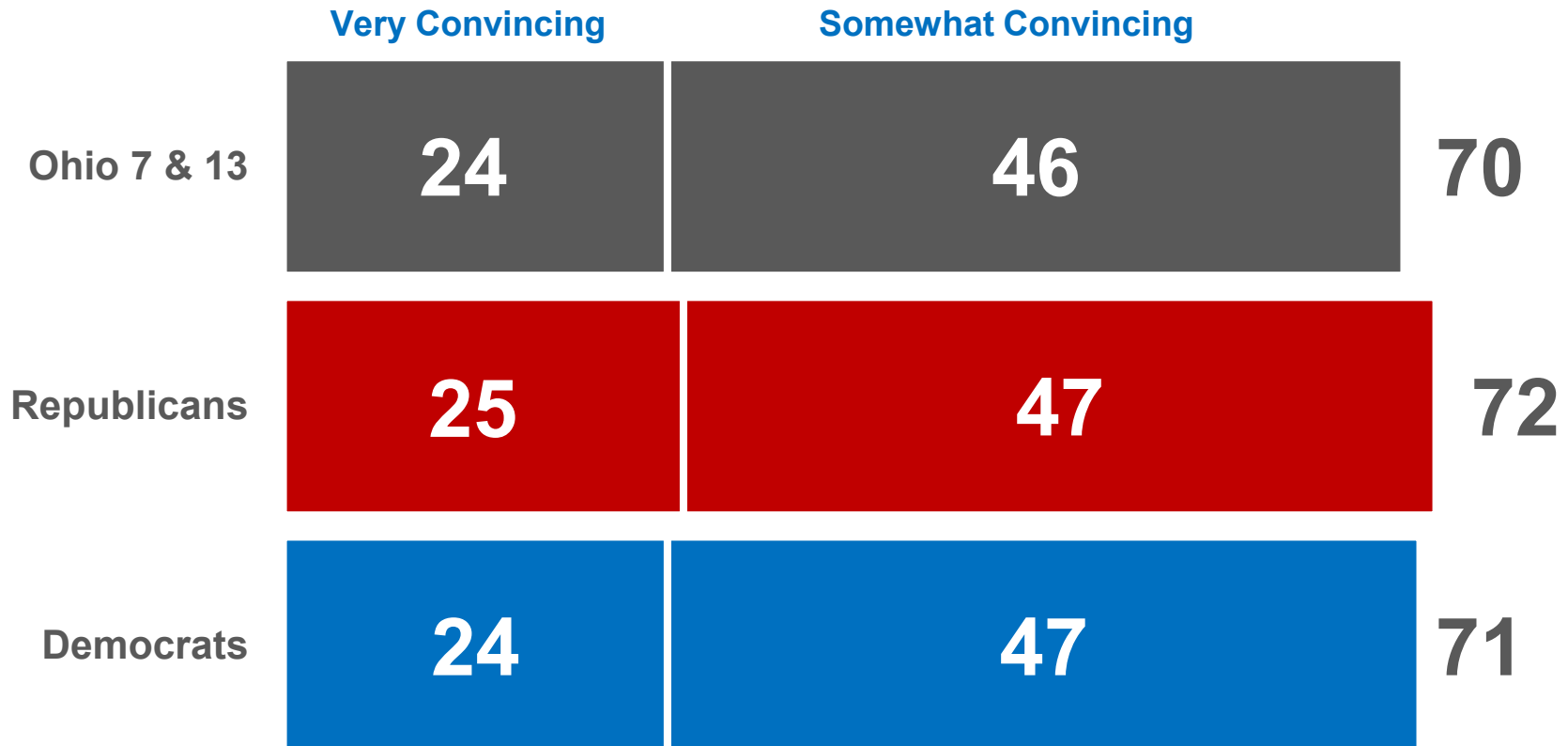
The ultra-rich benefit the most from our economy, so they should pay their fair share. But in fact, billionaires pay lower tax rates than many workers...



Wealth Tax

ARGUMENT AGAINST

A wealth tax punishes the successful, who already contribute more in total taxes than everyone else. It will discourage investment and job creation...



Wealth Tax

Impose an extra annual tax of 2% on wealth over \$50 million, and 3% on wealth over \$1 billion.

FAVOR

Ohio 7&13

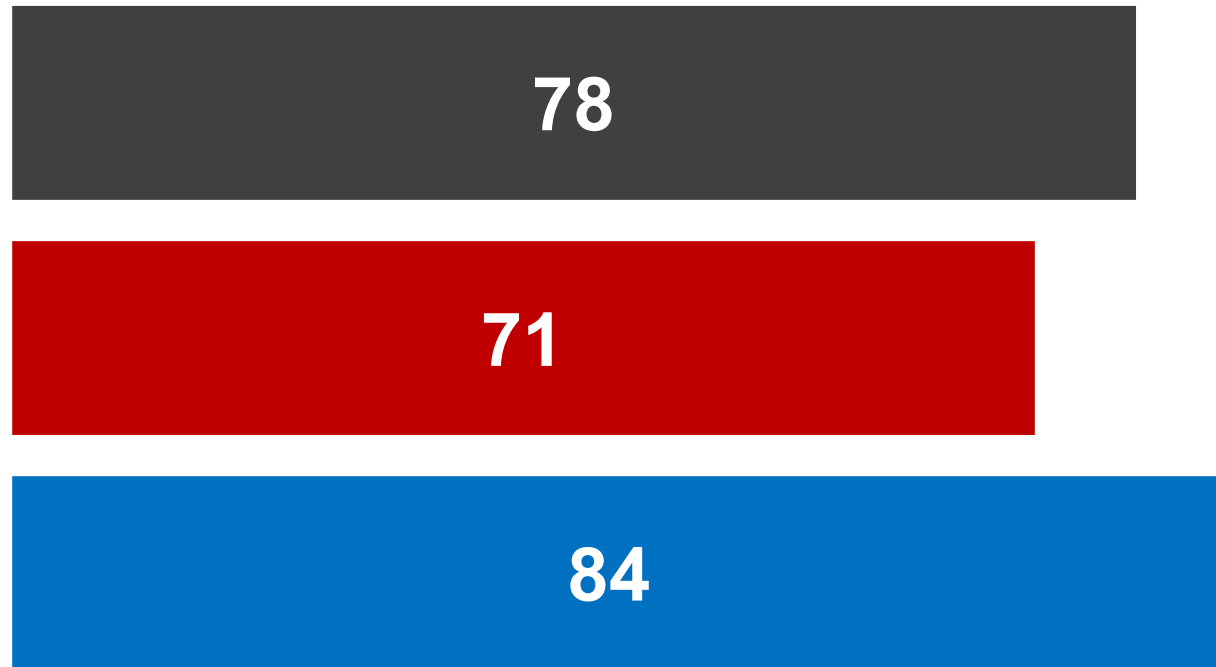
78

Republicans

71

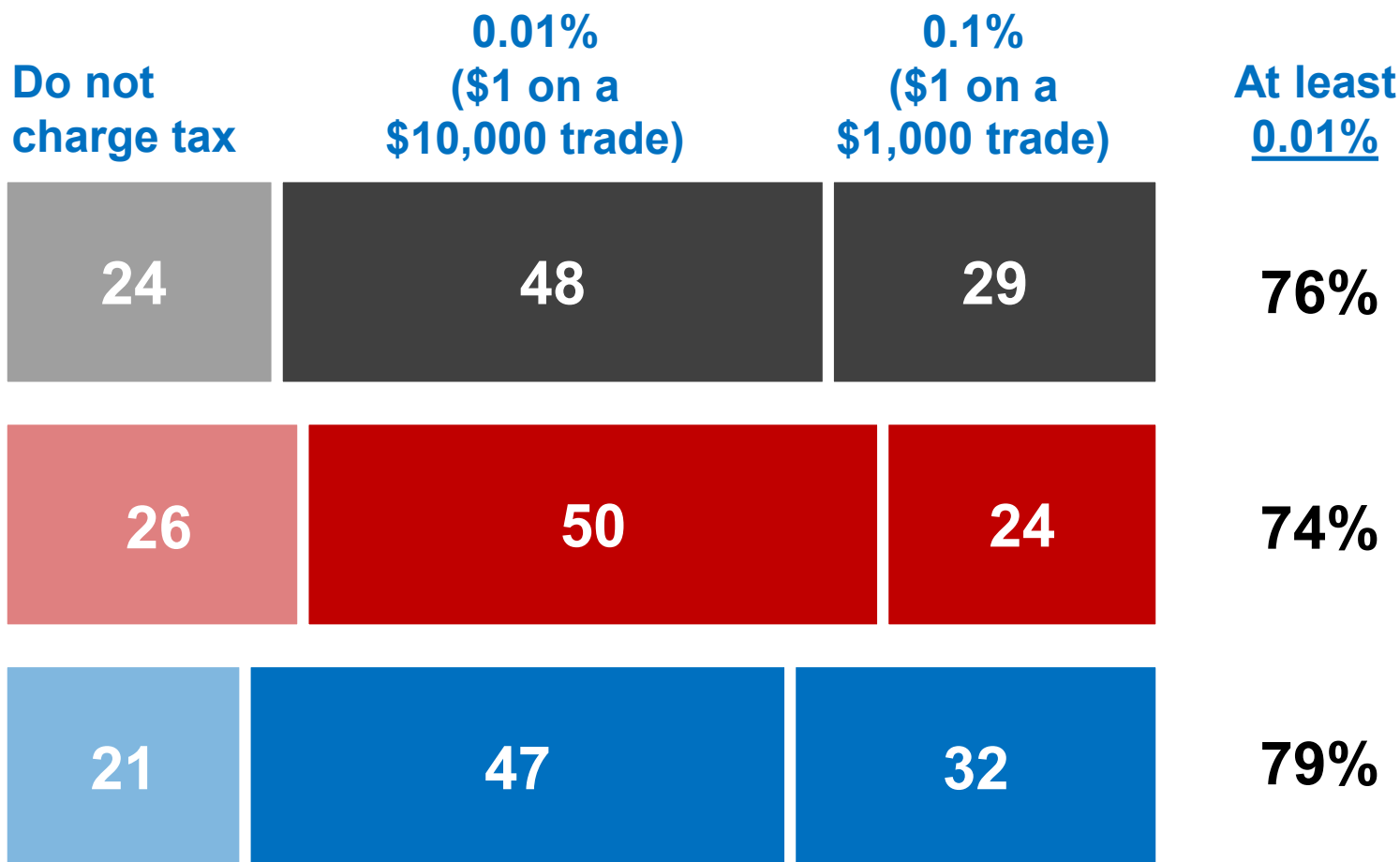
Democrats

84



Financial Transactions Tax

Tax on each trade of a stock, bond or derivative by a percent of the value being traded.



REVENUE

**TAX-RELIEF
MEASURES**

Eliminate Taxes on Overtime Pay

If a person makes \$20 an hour, and they work overtime, they receive \$20 PLUS an additional \$10 an hour. Under this proposal, they would not pay income tax on that extra \$10.

This proposal would reduce revenues by about \$60 billion.

FAVOR

Ohio 7&13

59

Republicans

64

Democrats

55

Eliminate Taxes on Tips

Many workers in the service industry earn tips as part of their income. For some, especially workers in restaurants, tips make up a significant amount of their income.

This proposal would reduce revenues by about \$7 billion.

FAVOR

Ohio 7&13

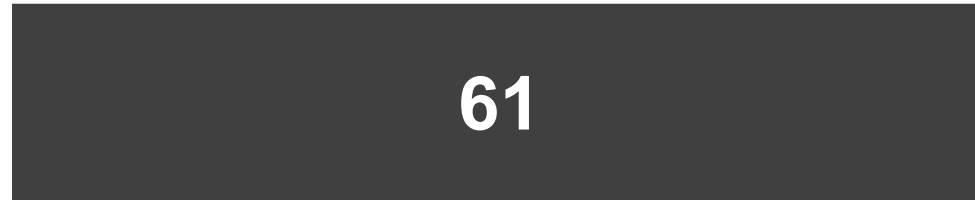
61

Republicans

67

Democrats

55



What were the effects on the deficit of all the revenue changes recommended by majorities?

NET REVENUE CHANGES MADE BY MAJORITIES

Overall: Ohio 7 & 13

+ \$967B

Republicans

+ \$841B

Democrats

+ \$1,111B

**R & D
Agreement**

+ \$841B

What were the effects on the deficit of all the budget changes recommended by majorities?

TOTAL REDUCTION TO THE CURRENT DEFICIT (of \$1.9 trillion) BY MAJORITIES

	Overall OH-7 and OH-13	Republicans	Democrats	R & D Agreement
	\$927B	\$819B	\$1,047B	<u>\$820B</u>

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

What are your reactions to the budget made by OH7/13 residents?

Would you say that you:

- **Endorse the budget made by OH7/13**
- **Endorse it with reservations, or**
 - **Reject it**

How acceptable would it be if your Congressperson voted for this budget?

HEARING FROM EACH GROUP

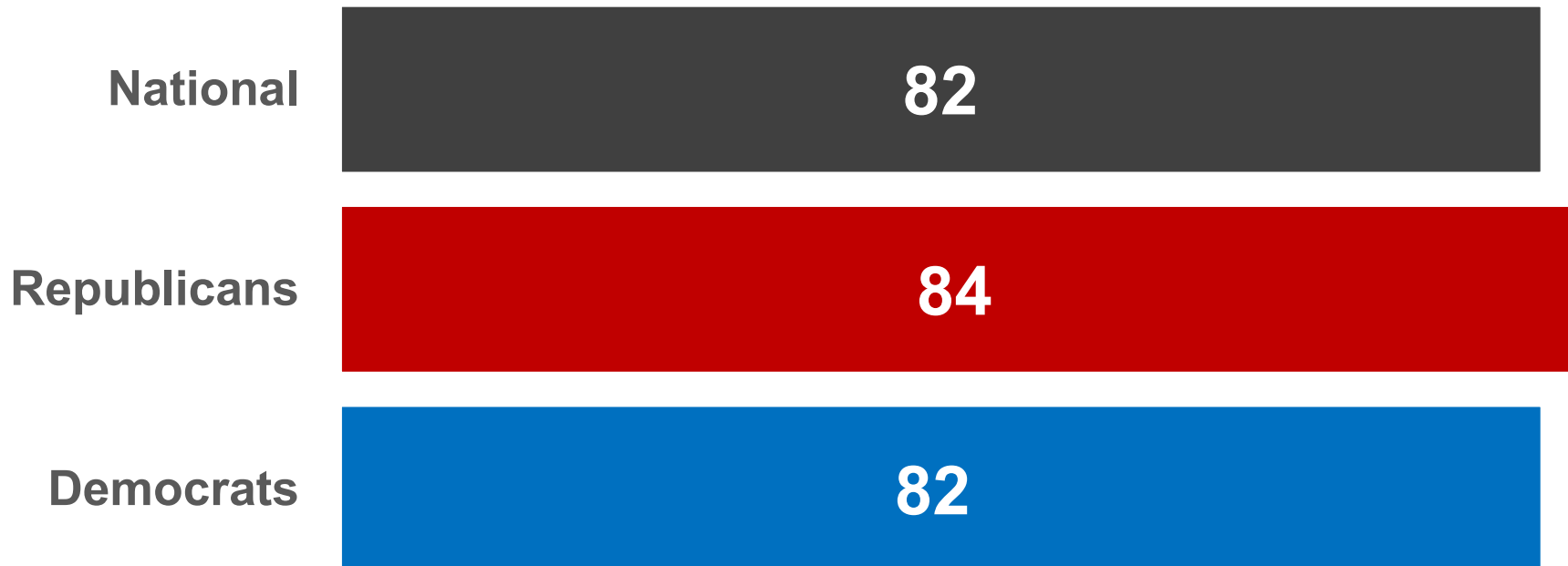
Reactions to the budget made by OH7/13 residents

Whether you endorse these budget recommendations, have reservations, or reject them

Whether you would find it acceptable for your Congressperson to vote for this budget

THE PROBLEM: DISSATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT

How many Americans say that Members of Congress take into account the views of the majority of their constituents **LESS** than they should?



SOLVING THE PROBLEM: A NEW METHOD FOR DEMOCRACY

- 1. Learn what policy solutions the majority of the public recommends, by conducting a survey of a representative sample of citizens**
- 2. Have people deliberate on the majority's recommended policy solutions, by hosting an in-person Citizen Engagement event**
- 3. Have people decide whether they want to endorse the majority's policy recommendations**

A NEW METHOD FOR DEMOCRACY

4. Communicating to our elected officials:

- a) findings of the survey**
- b) in-person deliberations and policy endorsements**
- c) the desire for Congress to take the views of the majority into account more when making decisions**

Who is doing the communicating?

- a) Braver Angels**
- b) Voice of the People**
- c) You and the public**

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

- 1. What are your thoughts about this project, as a new way for public opinion to inform the decisions of elected officials?**
- 2. Is there anything about this format you would like to see changed?**

MORE TO COME!

Check your email for instructions on contacting your Members to communicate:

- **the results of this project**
- **your views on this project and elected officials listening to the majority**

Stay tuned for more citizen engagement activities by subscribing to Braver Angels and VOP

We hope to see you again!