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THE THREE TESTS CEOS WILL FACE THROUGH THE 2026 MIDTERMS

ECHELON INSIGHTS

JULY 2026

THE THREE TESTS

With a possible **Democratic House** and **divided government** on the horizon in Washington, CEOs and business leaders will be judged by how they answer **three** defining questions.

1 THE PRICE TEST

Do you charge Americans fairly?

2 THE TRUST TEST

Whose side are you on?

3 THE CREDIBILITY TEST

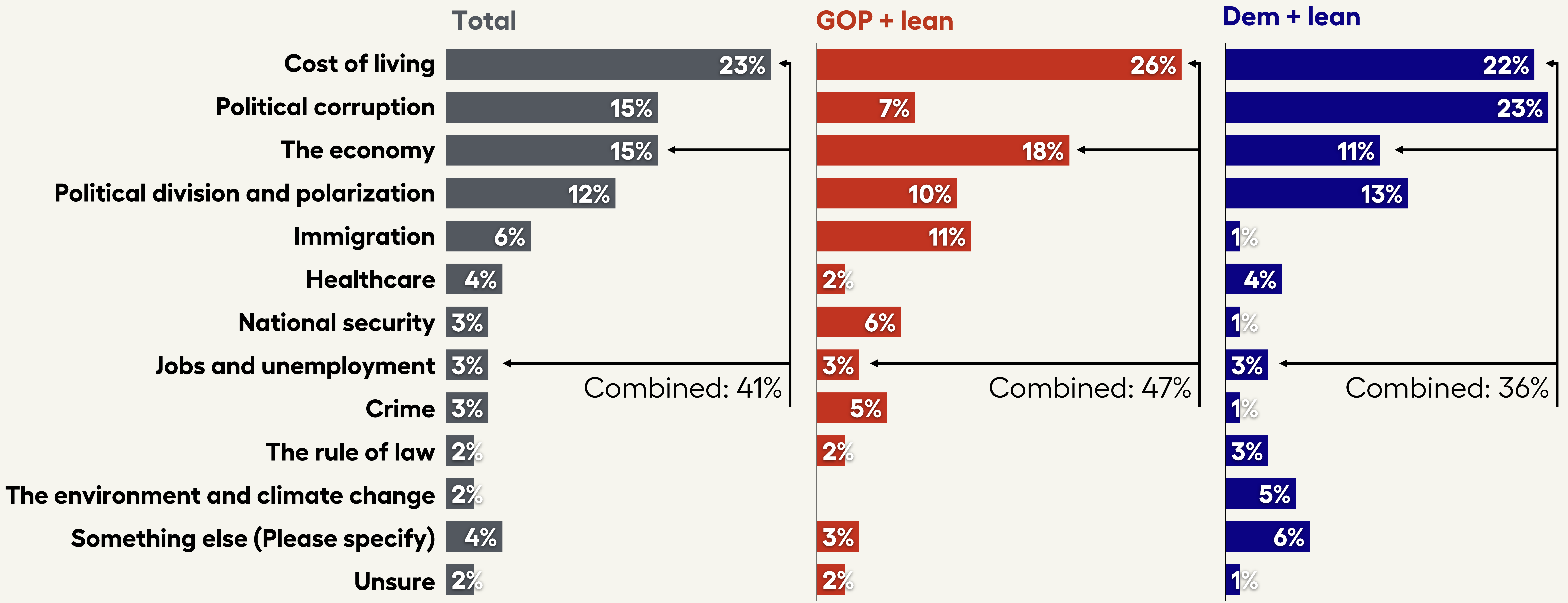
Will people believe you?

THE PRICE TEST

Do you charge Americans fairly?

AFFORDABILITY IS THE NATION'S TOP CONCERN

Cost of living, the economy, and jobs account for 41% of voters' top concerns.



Q. If you had to choose just one, which would you say is the biggest issue facing the country today?

ACROSS PARTY LINES, VOTERS WANT CEOS TO MAKE PRODUCTS MORE AFFORDABLE

	Total	GOP + lean	Dem + lean
Costs are too high / Make things more affordable	25%	26%	27%
Comments about greed, wealth, and inequality (Stop being greedy, Share wealth, Your pay and profits shouldn't be as high)	23%	14%	30%
Pay employees more / Pay fairly	13%	12%	16%
You are disconnected from ordinary American life	12%	10%	13%
Treat your employees better	12%	15%	9%
Prioritize American jobs / Don't outsource / Don't replace people with AI	7%	11%	3%
Do more to support communities / people that need help	5%	5%	6%
Pay your fair share in taxes	3%	2%	5%
Stay out of politics / Stop catering to Trump	3%	2%	3%
Other	9%	11%	6%
Nothing	3%	3%	2%
Unsure	4%	5%	4%

Q. If you could tell all CEOs of American businesses one thing you wish they knew about life in America today, what would it be?

THE AFFORDABILITY STORY IS CLEAR.

But what you may have missed is Americans' growing skepticism.

54% of voters with household incomes below $75k say the **American Dream is NOT achievable** for most Americans.

15% identify political corruption as the nation's biggest issue.

23% cite corporate greed and excessive profits as a top message for CEOs.

ALL THIS POINTS TO SOMETHING DEEPER THAN JUST ECONOMIC FRUSTRATION.

THE TRUST TEST

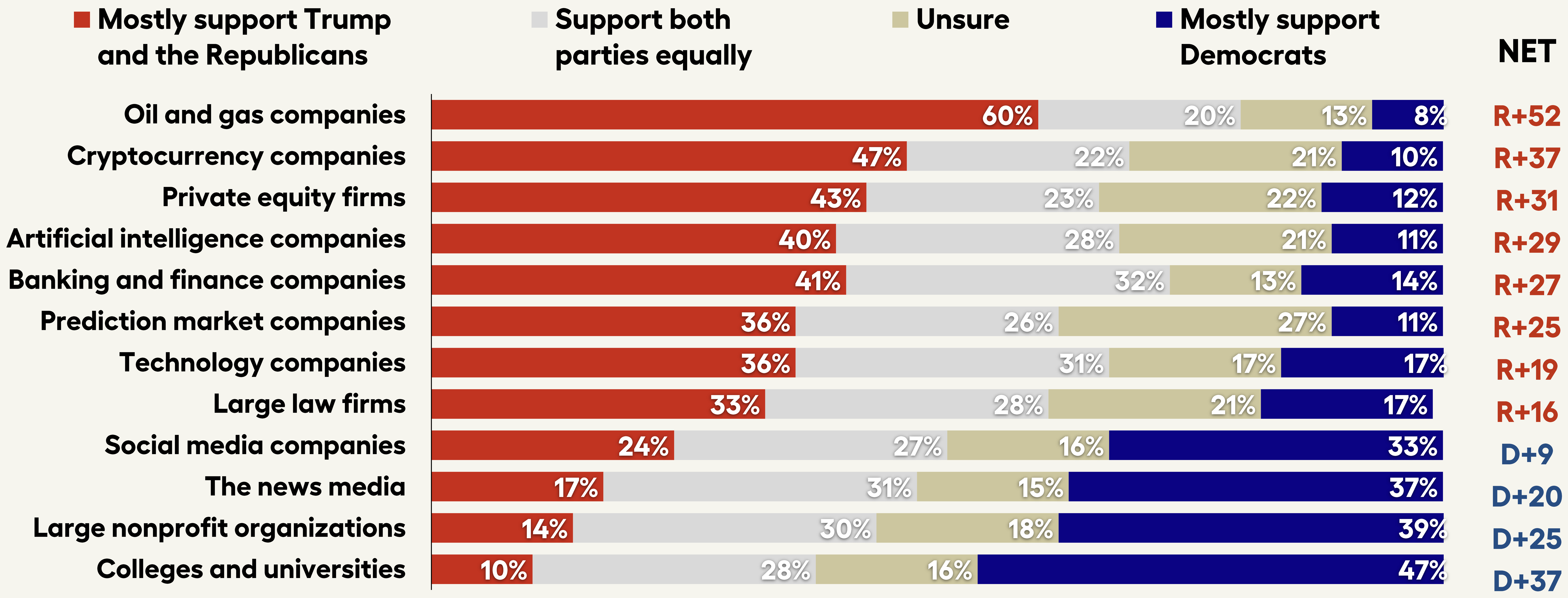
Whose side are you on?

NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF VOTERS SAY BUSINESSES SHOULD STAY POLITICALLY NEUTRAL

Businesses should stay neutral and focus on serving their customers	Unsure	Businesses should take a public stance in line with their values
65%	8%	27%

Q. When it comes to political and social issues, which of the following comes closest to your view of how businesses should behave?

BUT VOTERS ALREADY PERCEIVE INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS TO BE BIASED…



	Mostly support Trump and the Republicans	Support both parties equally	Unsure	Mostly support Democrats	NET
Oil and gas companies	60%	20%	13%	8%	R+52
Cryptocurrency companies	47%	22%	21%	10%	R+37
Private equity firms	43%	23%	22%	12%	R+31
Artificial intelligence companies	40%	28%	21%	11%	R+29
Banking and finance companies	41%	32%	13%	14%	R+27
Prediction market companies	36%	26%	27%	11%	R+25
Technology companies	36%	31%	17%	17%	R+19
Large law firms	33%	28%	21%	17%	R+16
Social media companies	24%	27%	16%	33%	D+9
The news media	17%	31%	15%	37%	D+20
Large nonprofit organizations	14%	30%	18%	39%	D+25
Colleges and universities	10%	28%	16%	47%	D+37

Q. In general, do you think each of the following are more likely to support…?
Note: Due to split sampling, half of the items were shown to half of the sample (n=527 or n=474).

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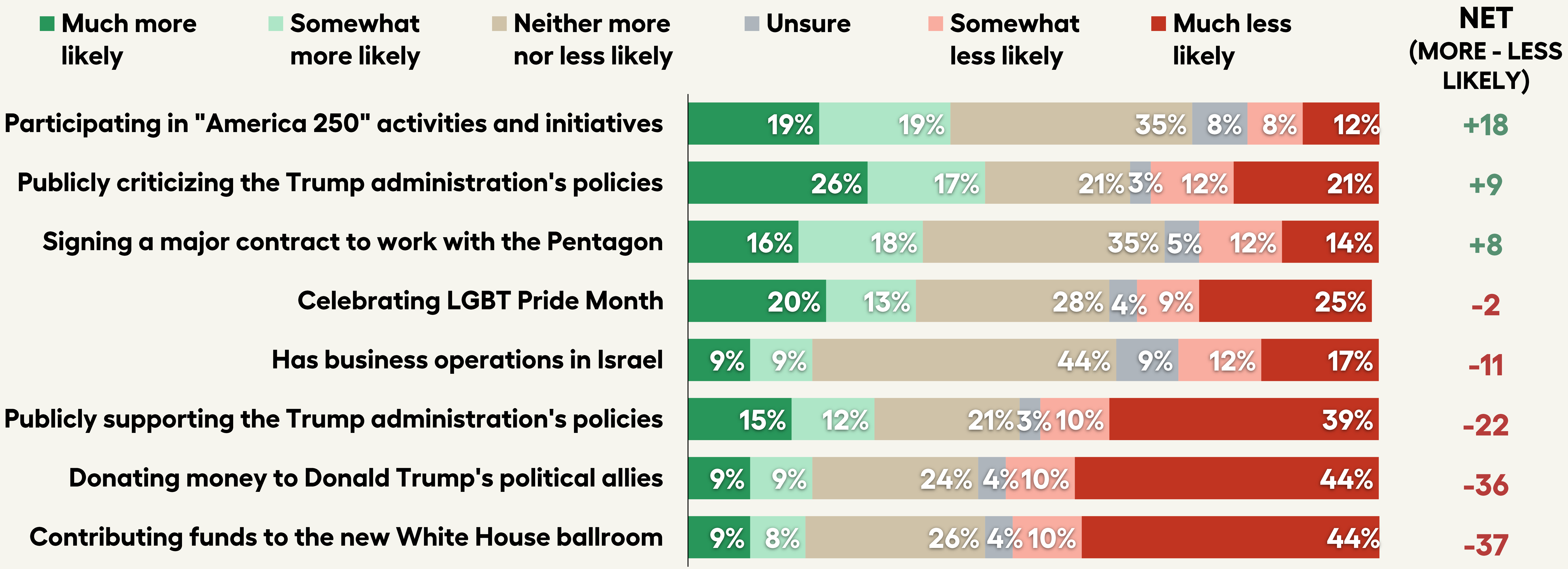
… AND TO TOP IT OFF, CORPORATE SUPPORT FOR TRUMP’S PRIORITIES CARRIES PERCEIVED RISK



Q. For each of the following actions by a company, please indicate whether it would make you more or less likely to support that company.

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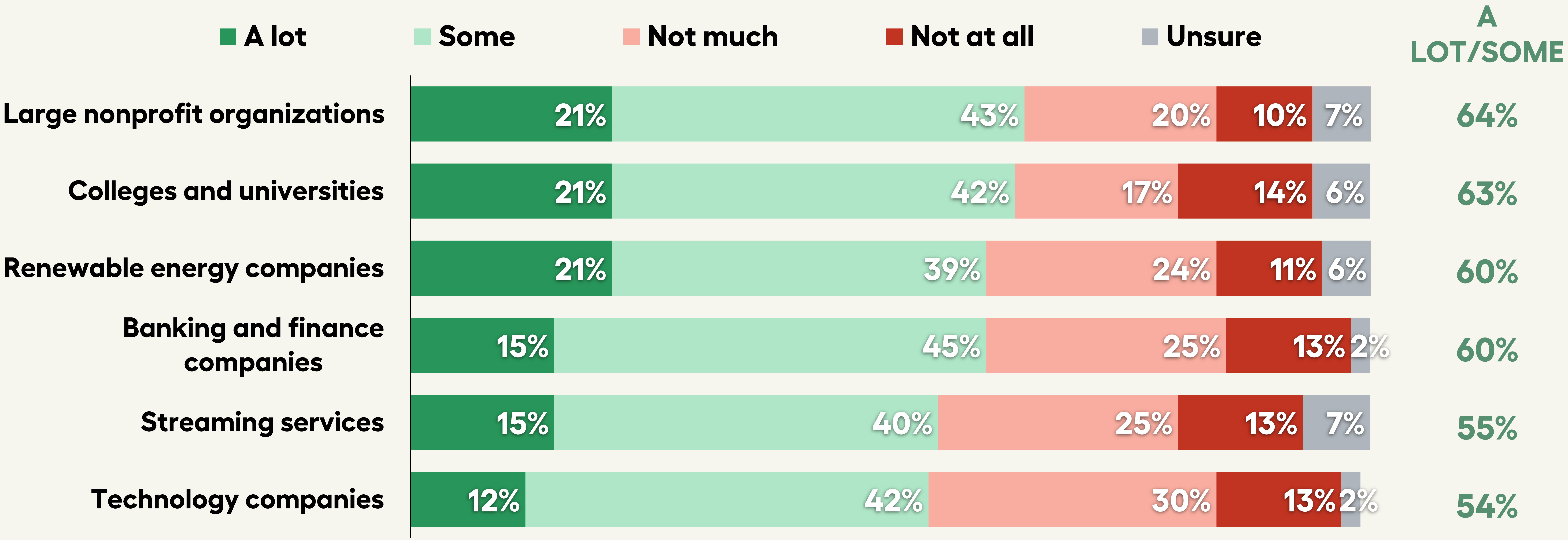
AND WHILE SOME SECTORS ARE TRUSTED…

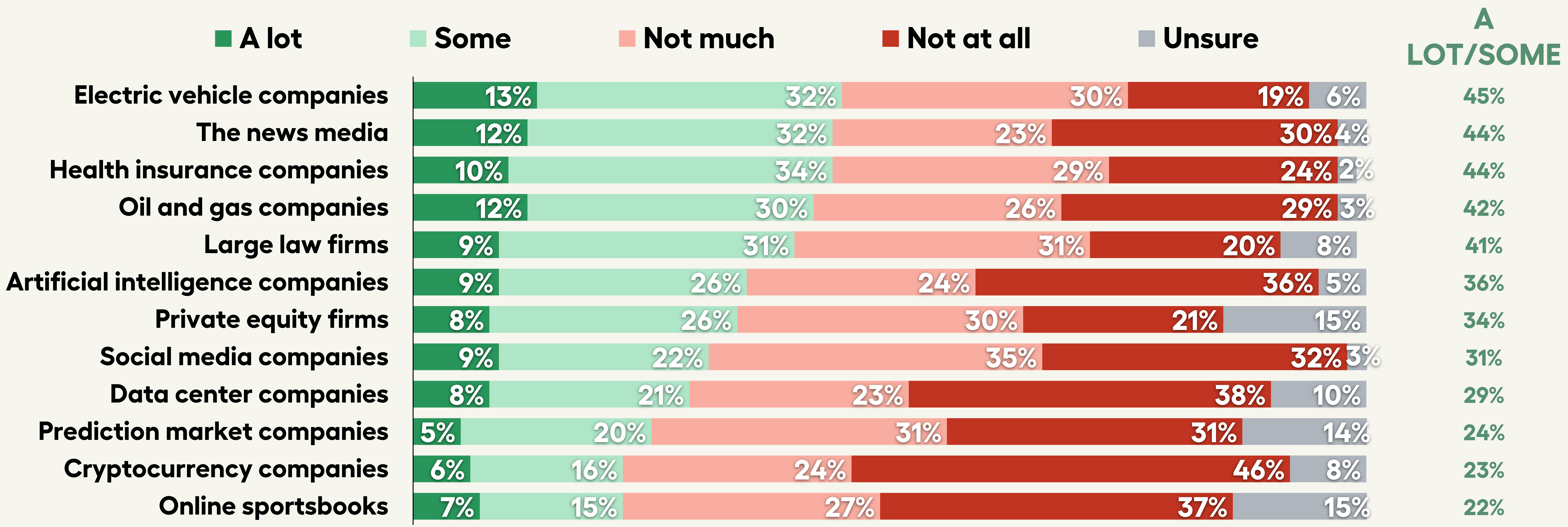


Q. How much do you trust each of the following to act in the best interests of the American public?

Note: Due to split sampling, half of the items were shown to half of the sample (n=503 or n=498).

...OTHER SECTORS ARE NOT

Emerging industries have not yet earned people's trust, while some legacy industries have clearly lost it.



Q. How much do you trust each of the following to act in the best interests of the American public?

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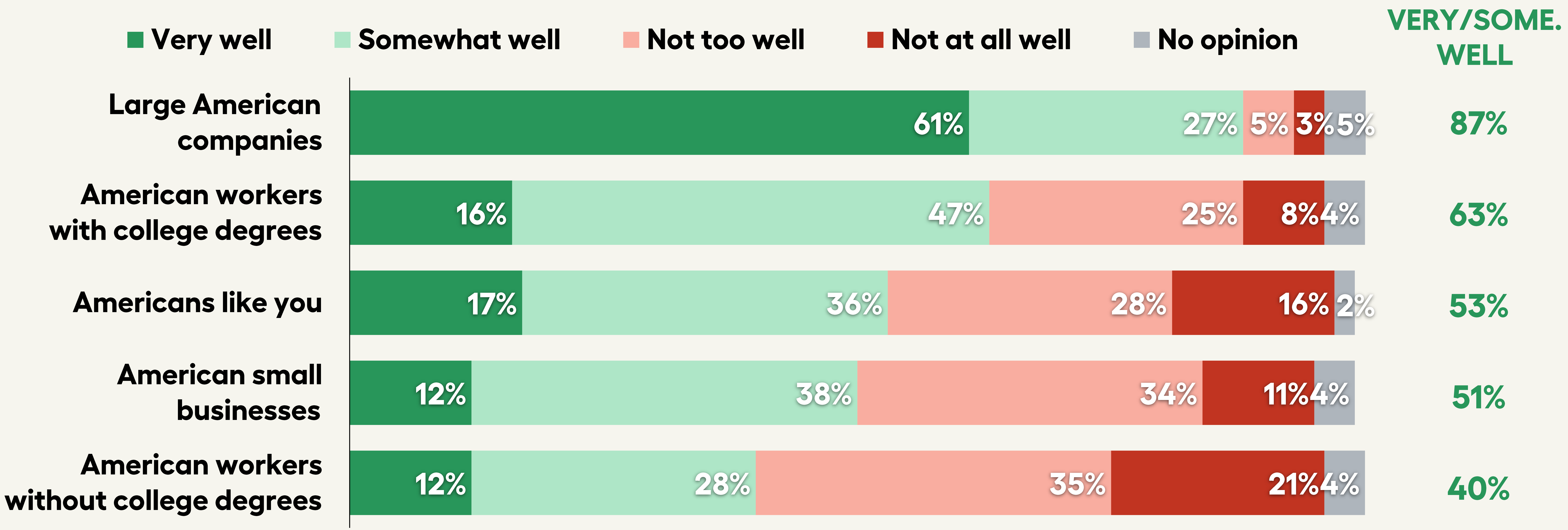
THE CREDIBILITY TEST

Will people believe you?

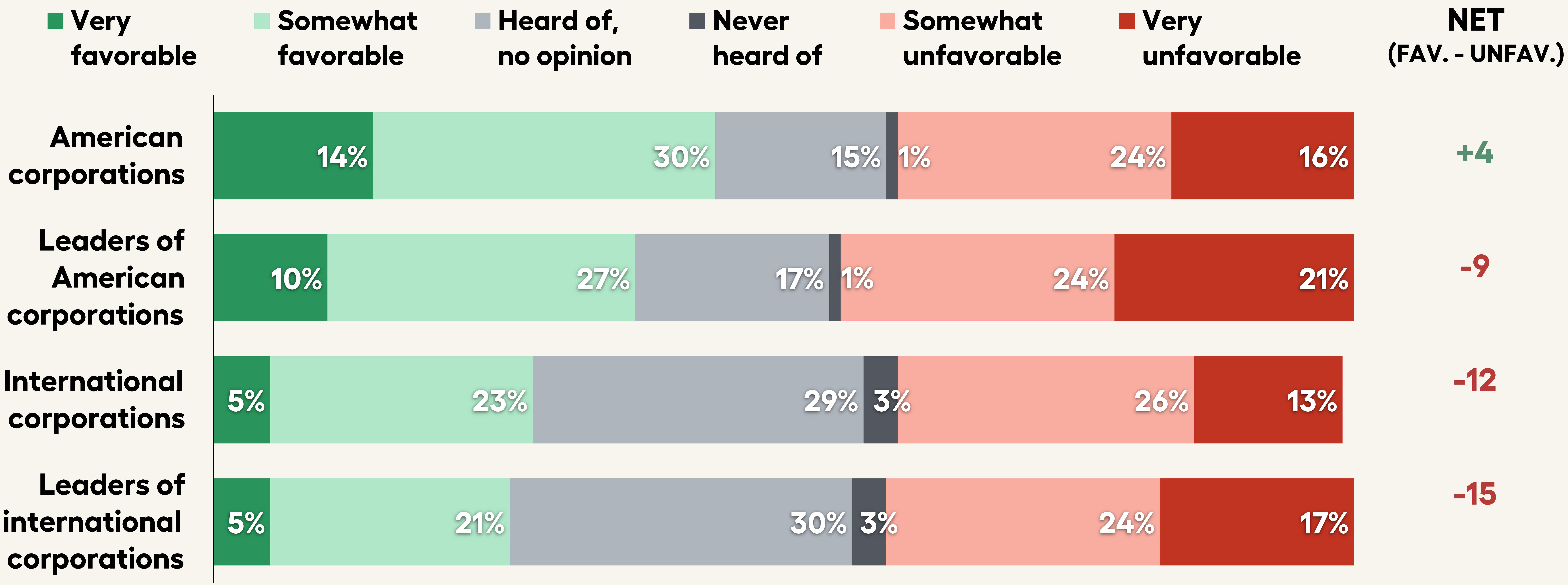
MOST BELIEVE THE SYSTEM WORKS FOR BIG COMPANIES, AND LESS SO FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Q. How well do you think the US economic system works for each of the following?

CORPORATE LEADERS FACE A CREDIBILITY GAP

Corporate leaders have a net favorability rating of -9, compared with +4 for American companies.



Q. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of each of the following?

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR CEOS

PREPARE NOW

The questions voters, consumers, and employees will ask are crystallizing.

Prepare for every scenario before political and stakeholder pressure intensifies post-election.

KNOW YOUR ANSWERS

Every company should be prepared to answer three questions:

Do you charge Americans fairly?

Whose side are you on?

Will people believe you?

DON'T CHASE THE MOMENT

Political conditions will continue to change.

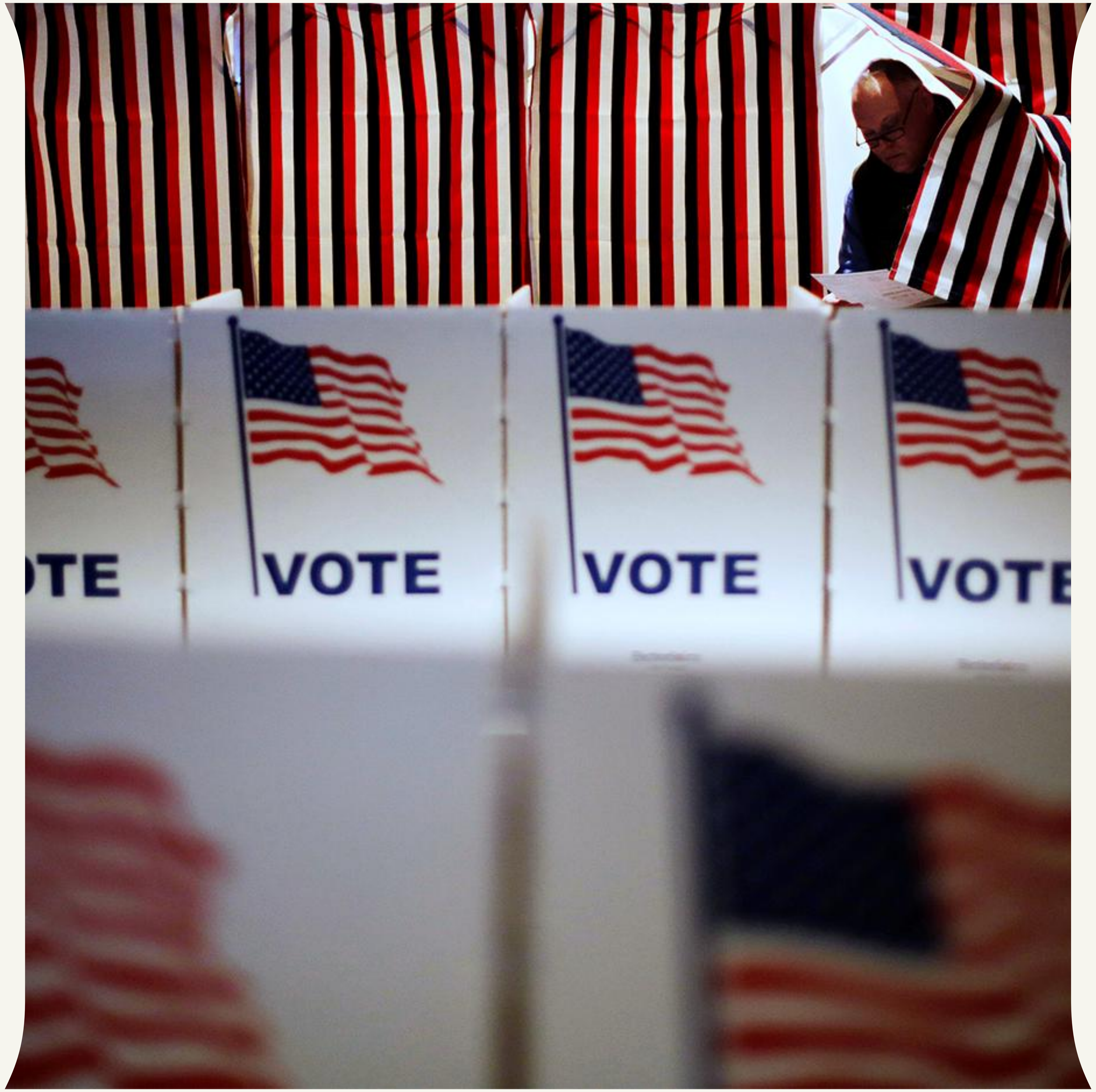
Companies and corporate leaders that react to every election or news cycle risk losing credibility. **Long-term trust is built through consistency, not constant course correction.**

DON'T CHASE THE PENDULUM. WATCH THE PIVOT. AMERICANS' FUNDAMENTAL EXPECTATIONS OF BUSINESS ARE SHIFTING.

METHODOLOGY

This survey, fielded in collaboration with Echelon Insights, explores the views of 1,001 registered voters nationwide on key issues. The survey was conducted online and weighted to **reflect the 2026 likely electorate.**

- **Fielded:** June 25–28, 2026 (English, online)
- **Sample:** Online, matched to a national voter file to verify registration status
- **Quality controls:** Duplicate prevention, reCAPTCHA, attention checks
- **Weighting:** Census, CPS, and voter file data by demographics and party affiliation
- **Margin of error:** ±3.5 percentage points



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