National Policy Survey

Findings and Recommendations from the National Policy Survey

March 2015



Methodology

ALG conducted a survey of n=1,202 national likely 2016 voters, including an oversample of n=401 battleground voters and n=800 lowa Democratic caucus-goers. Live telephone interviews were conducted using professional interviewers, including 30% of all interviews conducted via cell phone (15% for lowa sample). Interviews were collected February 20-25, 2015. Respondents were selected at random, and interviews were apportioned geographically based on expected turnout.

Expected margin of sampling error is +/- 2.90% for the national sample, +/- 4.90% for the battleground sample, and +/- 3.46% for the lowa Democratic caucus sample at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

LAY OF THE LAND

Two-thirds of voters believe the economy is improving, but they are not feeling the impact in their lives. This lack of economic progress in their own life helps explain why 58% say they are not feeling more secure financially, despite the sense the economy is improving.

67% say the economy is getting better

53%
say they are staying where they are financially, not getting ahead / falling back

58%
say they are not feeling more financially secure

*Data from BSG national poll January 17-21, 2015

We need an economic agenda that addresses the big problems middle class families are facing, like stagnant incomes and the rising cost of expenses, big and small.

GROWING THE ECONOMY

- Creating new jobs and opportunities
- Helping small businesses grow and create jobs, including cutting regulations and taxes

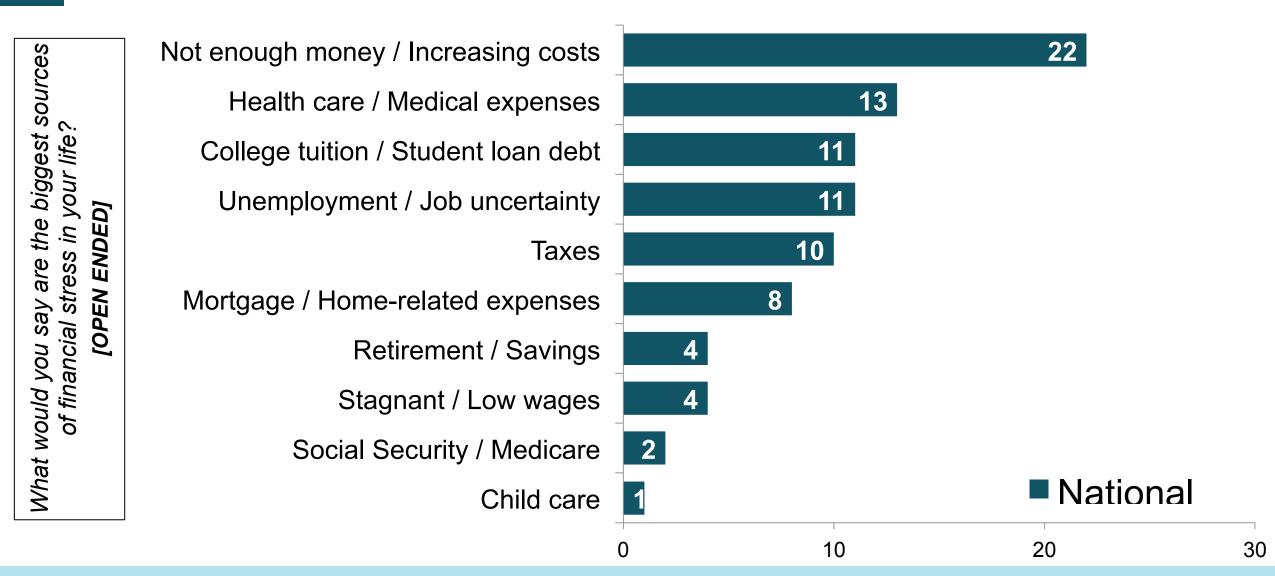
INCREASING INCOMES AND REDUCING COSTS

- Cutting taxes for middle class families
- Reducing healthcare premiums and co-pays and negotiating lower drug prices for seniors
- Equal pay for equal work

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY

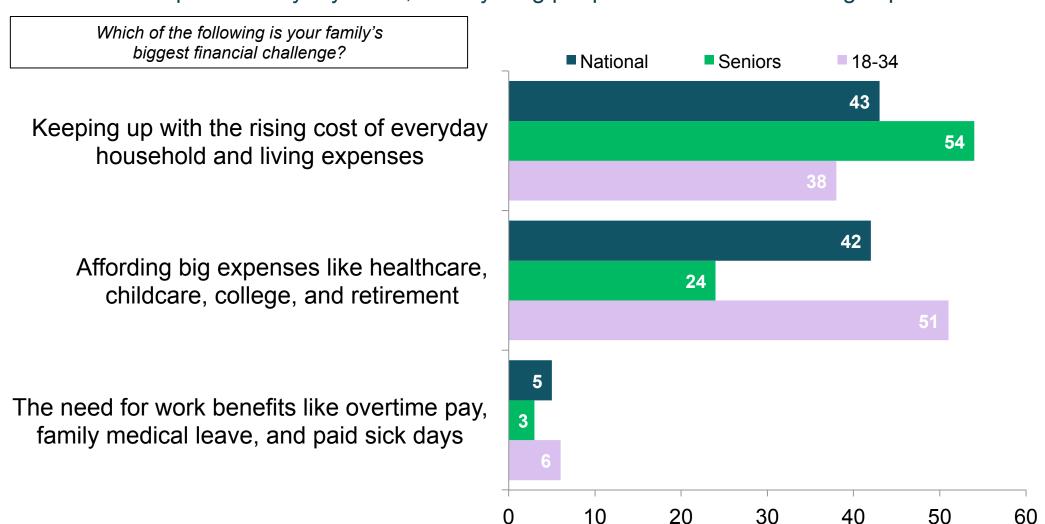
- Making college more affordable
- Improving K-12 education
- Job training to gain new skills

As we work to develop an agenda that will make help every American family feel the benefits of a growing economy, it is important to remember that they're getting squeezed in many different ways.



What people need is more money in their pockets. Whether we're talking about everyday expenses or big-ticket items. they're a higher priority than getting new benefits.

Seniors need help with everyday costs, while young people are worried about big expenses.





POLICY TESTING

Middle class tax cuts and helping people afford college are the top things people care about. New benefits are a lower priority.

Creating new policies to raise take home pay, including cutting taxes for the middle class



Creating new policies to raise wages and salaries, including profit sharing, expanded overtime pay and raising the minimum wage



Making sure families have more help with the cost of childcare, paid family medical leave, and earned sick days

Making sure families an afford college to prepare their kids for today's good jobs

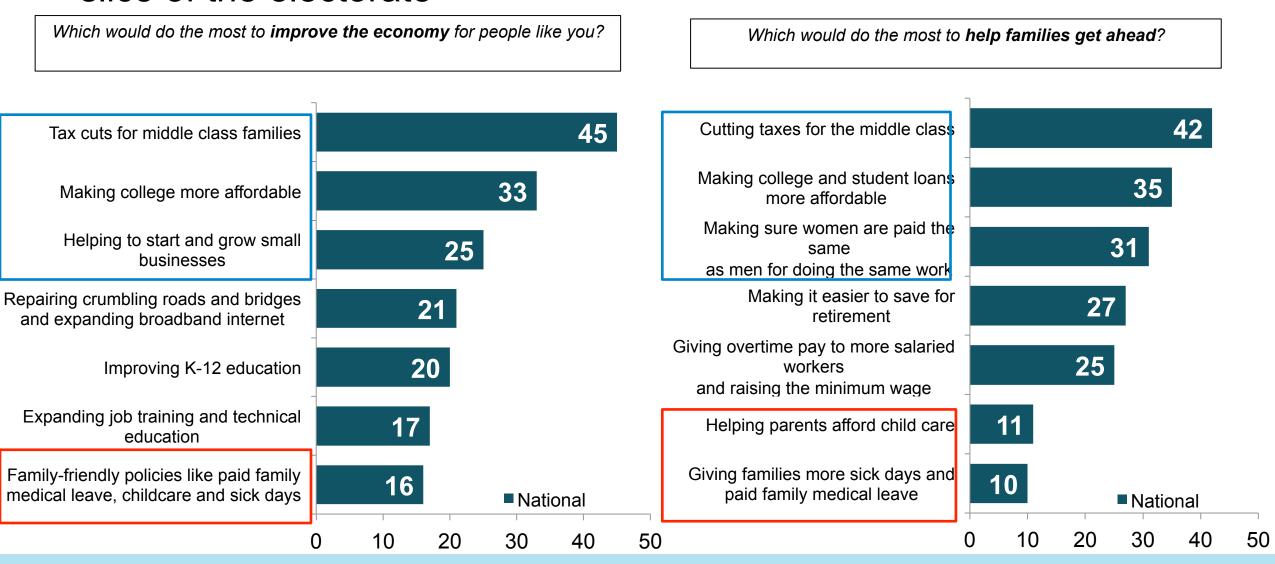


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Making sure families have more help with the cost of childcare, paid family medical leave, and earned sick days

Bigger proposals that cover more people and address the major challenges they face resonate more than proposals that hit a smaller slice of the electorate



What's essential to strengthen the economy and help families like theirs get ahead? It's better education and college affordability, equal pay, healthcare costs, and helping small businesses. Note that when we *narrow* tax cuts to just families with children they don't test as well.

PROPOSALS – INDIVIDUAL TEST: TOP TIER % Absolutely essential to strengthen our economy / help families and people like you get ahead	National
Passing equal pay laws to guarantee women the same pay as men for doing the same work	55
Improving K-12 education	55
Reducing healthcare costs like co-pays and deductibles	49
Making college more affordable, through grants, scholarships, and lower student loan rates	47
Helping small businesses grow and create jobs by cutting taxes and red tape	46
Job training and apprenticeship programs that give people the skills they need for better jobs	44
Cutting taxes for middle class families with children	43

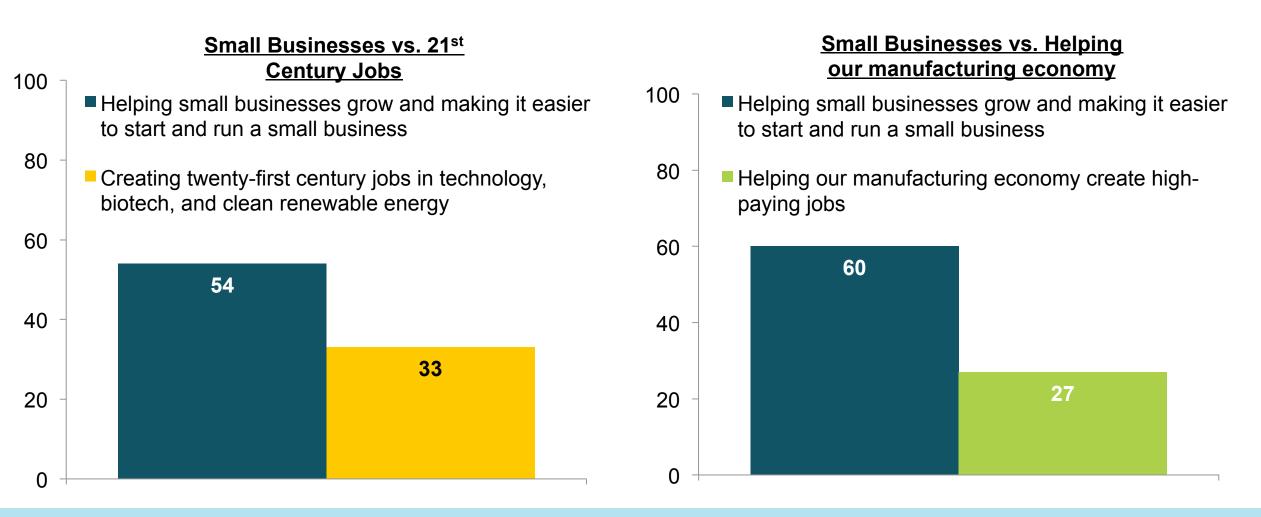
Policies that focus on smaller, more targeted audiences, are less resonant.

PROPOSALS – INDIVIDUAL TEST: 2 ND TIER % Absolutely essential to strengthen our economy / help families and people like you get ahead	National
Early childhood education and pre-kindergarten to give kids the early learning they need and to reduce child care costs for parents	38
Changing overtime rules so everyone making less than fifty thousand dollars a year gets overtime pay when they work over forty hours a week	37
Making sure all workers can earn paid sick days	36
Raising the minimum wage to twelve dollars and fifty cents an hour	35
Family medical leave insurance so that everyone can take time off to care for a new child or sick relative	32
Expanding a tax credit to help parents afford child care costs	28

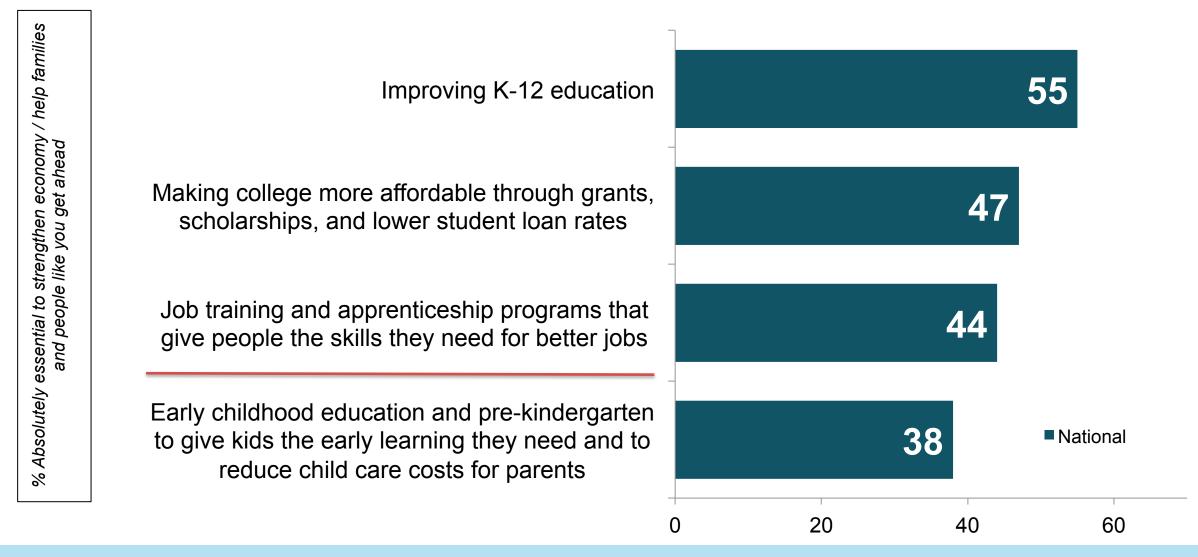
How do we grow the economy and create new jobs?

In voters' minds, growing the economy starts with small businesses, not high tech or manufacturing

And which do you think would do more to improve the economy?



Education means opportunity. Priorities like K-12, college affordability, and job training are more important than Pre-K, which touches a smaller universe.

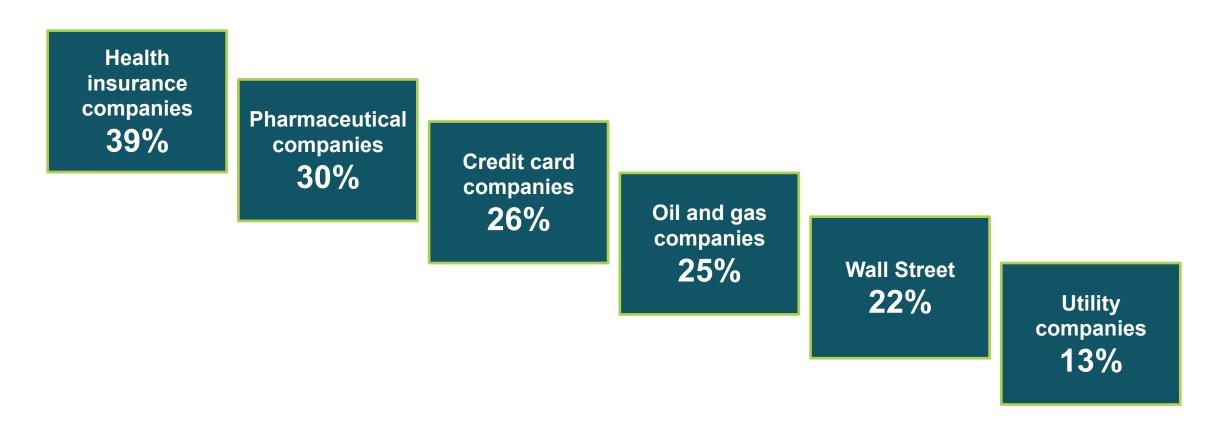


BAD ACTORS

Voter anger is not all about Wall Street

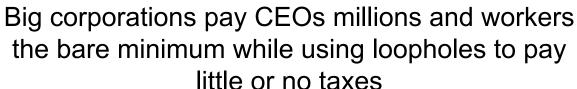
The companies people feel take the most advantage of everyday Americans are health insurers and drug companies. That's who needs more accountability.

Which of the following do you feel takes the most advantage of everyday Americans and needs the most accountability?



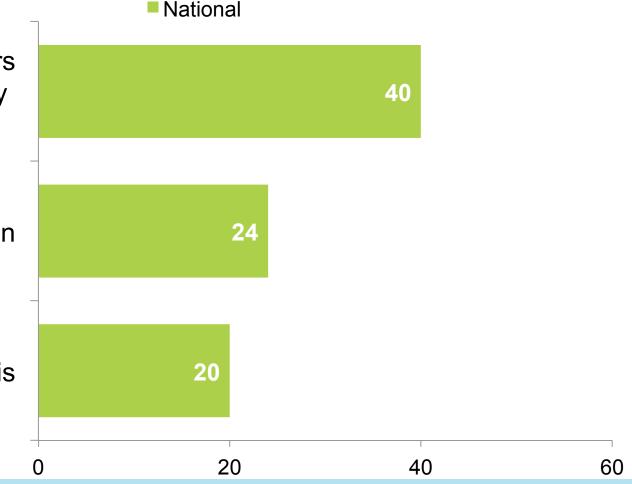
Big corporations and their CEOs are more resonant bad guys than Wall Street or the wealthy.





Wall Street wrecked the economy, got a taxpayer-funded bailout, and has never been held accountable

The wealthy game the system, get big tax breaks, and are the only ones benefiting in this economy





WHERE DO TRADE & DEBT FIT INTO OUR ECONOMIC AGENDA?

We face headwinds on trade. Voters believe foreign trade agreements are more likely to hurt the U.S. economy, and more likely to cost jobs than create them.

38%

Foreign trade agreements mainly help the U.S. economy by opening up new markets to export American products which creates jobs

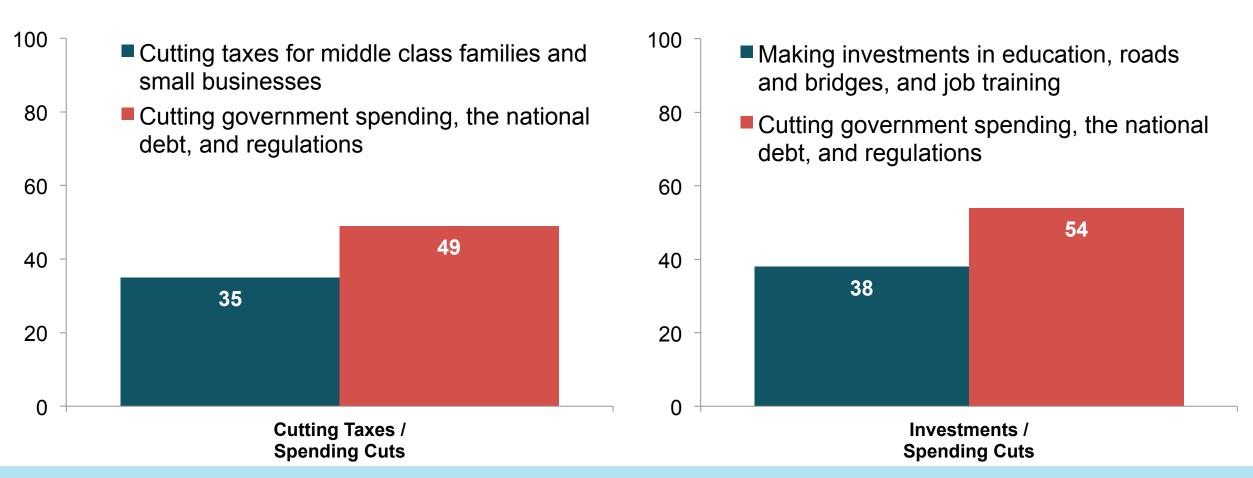
51%

Foreign trade agreements mainly hurt the U.S. economy by shipping jobs overseas to countries with lower labor costs

During the great recession, Americans had to live on a budget

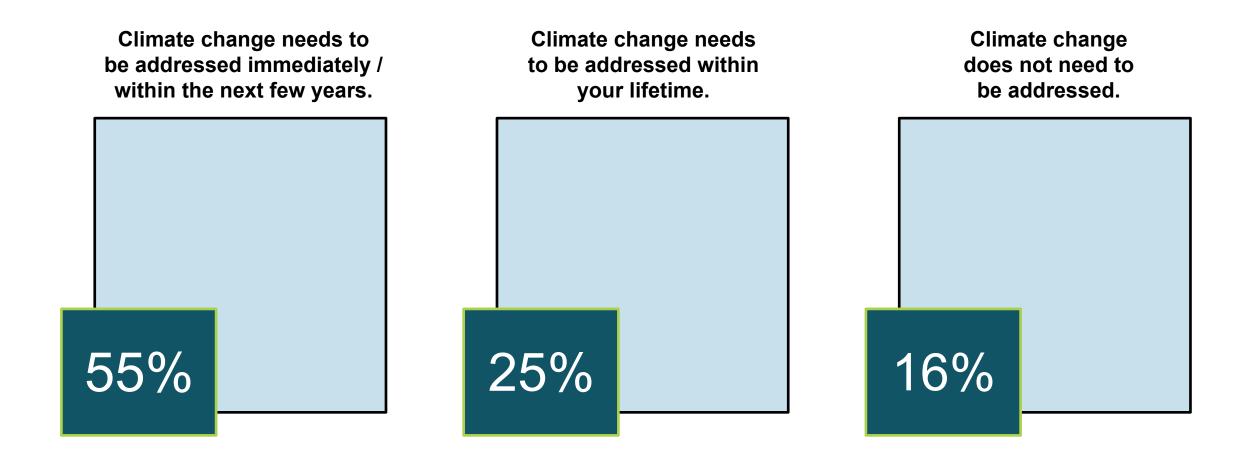
They're sensitive to the increases during government spending and the national debt under Obama, and we're going to need a deeper look at how we can be credible on fiscal issues.

Which do you think would do more to strengthen the economy?



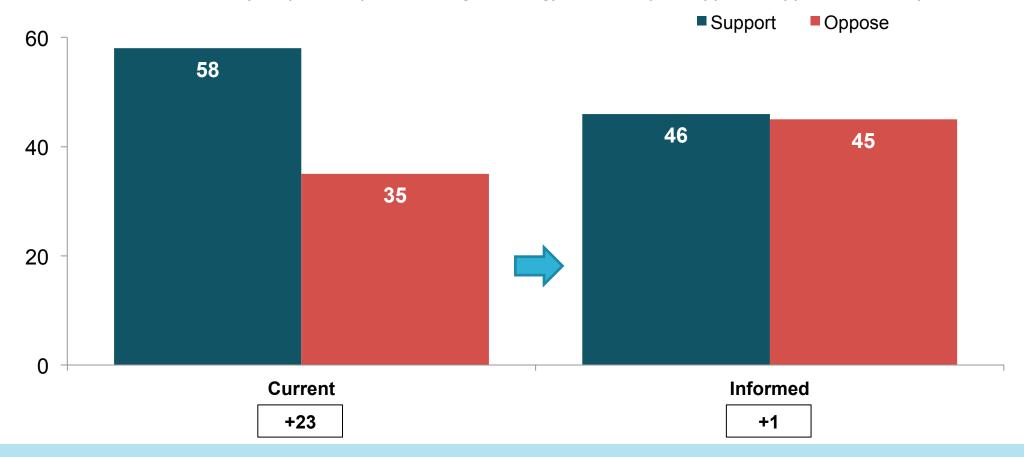
BIG PROPOSALS

A majority (55%) want climate change within the next few years, while just 41% want it addressed on a longer timeline.



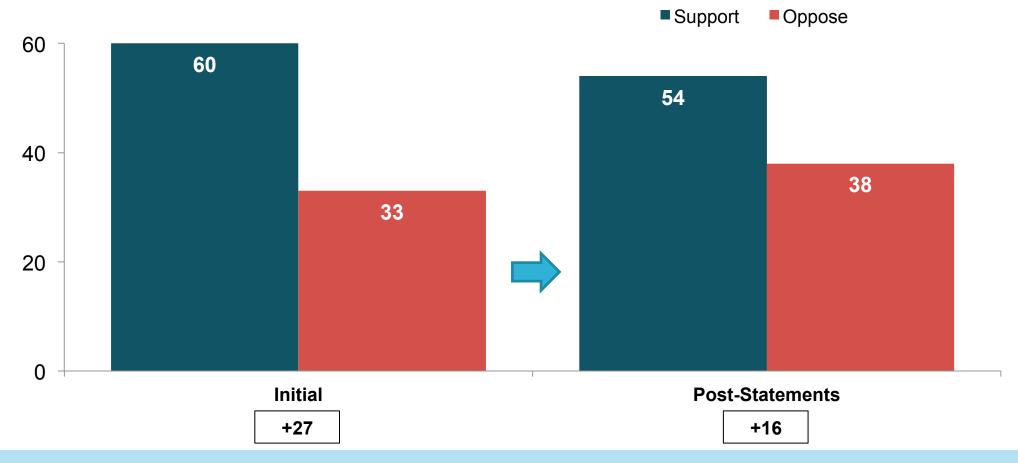
Unfortunately, while we start out with 58% support for a carbon tax + rebate, support falls when we test arguments for and against it. We end up dead even (46% support / 45% oppose).

There is currently a proposal to reduce the amount of carbon pollution released into our air by putting a carbon pollution tax on companies that extract or import fossil fuels like oil, coal and natural gas. The money raised would be used provide a refund check for fifteen hundred dollars a year per family to offset higher energy costs. Do you support or oppose a carbon pollution tax?

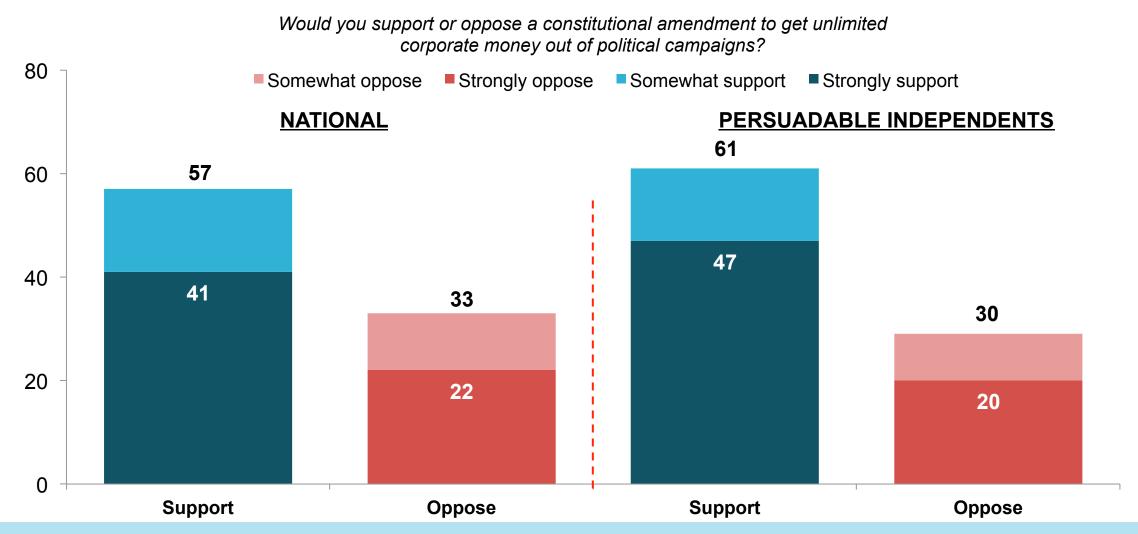


Family medical leave holds up a little better in the face of opposition than the carbon tax does. We start with 60% support (even though we included an explanation of the payroll tax), and after the statements for and against, we're still at majority support (54%).

As you may know, Congress is considering creating a new family and medical leave program that would guarantee all workers a portion of their usual pay when they need to take time off from their job to treat a serious health problem, care for a family member with a serious health problem or care for a new baby. This new paid family and medical leave program would be funded with a new payroll tax paid by workers of about a dollar fifty per week each for the average worker.



A majority support a constitutional amendment on money in politics. There's strong intensity behind the support, especially among persuadable independents.



We need an economic agenda that is big and broad:

- People think the economy is improving but they're not sharing in the benefits
- Voters are still getting squeezed hard because their incomes aren't keeping up with the costs of both everyday and big ticket items.
- They're gravitating towards proposals that are <u>broad</u> and <u>simple</u>. Educating them about more complicated proposals to put money in their pockets takes time and money. Right now they're defaulting to what they know, e.g. broad-based middle class tax cuts.
- Additional income is a higher priority right now than additional benefits, though the additional benefits remain popular.