

From: [Gordon, Robert \(DHHS\)](#)
To: [Pohl, Zack](#); [Huls, JoAnne](#)
Subject: FW: FYI comms info
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 10:45:00 AM
Attachments: [FrankLuntz.PPT 11-30.pptx](#)

In case of interest. JoAnne, thought you'd like this from Luntz's piece:

- The "P's" are particularly powerful and impactful: *pandemic* (rather than *coronavirus*), *protocols* (rather than *edicts, rules, mandates, etc.*), *protection* (rather than *safety*), *personal responsibility* (rather than *government control*), and *peace of mind* (rather than *security*).

From: Gordon, Robert (DHHS)
Sent: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 10:41 AM
To: Darling, Darice (DHHS) <DarlingD1@michigan.gov>; Khaldun, Joneigh (DHHS) <KhaldunJ@michigan.gov>
Subject: FYI comms info

A few more resources:

<https://publichealthcollaborative.org/resources/infographic-what-steps-are-taken-to-ensure-that-vaccines-are-safe/>

<https://www.covidcollaborative.us/content/vaccine-treatments/coronavirus-vaccine-hesitancy-in-black-and-latinx-communities>

The attached from Frank Luntz is also interesting.

Robert Gordon
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CHANGING THE COVID CONVERSATION

Obtained via MIFCOA by Judicial Watch, Inc.



A lexicon for communicating the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic



de Beaumont
BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES™

WHAT WE DID

- The de Beaumont Foundation partnered with Frank Luntz to identify effective ways to convey information about COVID-19 to all Americans, including resistant audiences.
- Conducted a nationwide survey of 1,100 registered voters from across the country, Nov. 21-22, 2020. This included an oversample of 300 African Americans.
- Surveyed a representative sample of the nation's demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, education, and income
- Tested specific words, sentences, phrases, and attributes Americans need to hear to change their behavior and stop the spread of the coronavirus.



Dr. Frank I. Luntz

THE KEY TO COVID COMMUNICATION

- It's not just about the consequences of failure. It must also be about the benefits of success.
- You need to communicate that you are taking a "fact-based approach." There can't be even a hint of politics.
- Your protocols are endorsed (and should be delivered) by trusted researchers and medical & public health professionals rather than (untrustworthy) politicians.



KEY FINDINGS

- The results of this national survey don't reveal a partisan divide. It's a chasm. In every possible way, Democrats and Republicans think differently and act differently.
- One area of agreement is the desire for local control. People have the most faith in public health officials delivering local/localized solutions. Avoid references to the federal government whenever possible.
- Our leading science, medical, and health experts have a higher degree of trust than anyone else. Let them do the talking whenever possible. Even popular politicians are less credible, as are corporate executives.
- The initial goal is to "stop the spread," but the ultimate goal is to "eliminate and eradicate the virus." It's similar to the difference between treatments (good) and cures (better). If you want people to take appropriate actions, focus on the end goal ("back to normal"), not just the process.



KEY FINDINGS

- Personalize, humanize, and individualize the pandemic and its consequences – because that’s what Americans do. So before talking about reopening the economy and schools, emphasize the shared goal of returning to “normal.”
- The “P’s” are particularly powerful and impactful: *pandemic* (rather than *coronavirus*), *protocols* (rather than *edicts, rules, mandates, etc.*), *protection* (rather than *safety*), *personal responsibility* (rather than *government control*), and *peace of mind* (rather than *security*).
- Give people a reason to comply beyond it’s good for them. Remind them that it’s good for their families and it will speed up the return to a healthy economy.



WARNINGS

- Be very careful about letting politics or partisanship slip into your messaging. Everyone is looking for it ... and it will kill your credibility. Make sure your language is entirely neutral and that it repeatedly emphasizes “every” and “all.”
- Many Republicans refuse to follow guidelines because they argue the science keeps changing. It’s up to you to communicate – at the outset – that the science is settled.



21 COVID WORDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

personal responsibility	peace of mind
fact-based	a return to normal
a human approach	the science is settled
you deserve	pandemic (not coronavirus)
our best researchers/medical experts	public (not govt) health agencies
because your life really matters	no exceptions/no excuses
access to medical breakthroughs	protocols
eliminate and eradicate the pandemic	essential healthcare workers
our mission/my commitment	a healthier, happier you
stop the spread	local control/decision-making
even one infection can cause an outbreak	



COVID WORDS TO USE & LOSE

Words to USE	Words to LOSE
the pandemic	the coronavirus
eliminate/eradicate the virus	defeat/crush/knock out the virus
social distancing	physical distancing
an effective/safe vaccine	a vaccine developed quickly
protocols	orders/imperatives/decrees
face masks	facial coverings
essential workers	frontline workers
personal responsibility	national duty
a stay-at-home order	a government lockdown/shutdown
public health agencies	government health agencies

WORDS THAT WORK

What our leaders need to say to save lives:

*We all want a **return to normal**, and we all want the economy and our schools to open. And we also want to **protect** our family and friends from the **pandemic**.*

*Our **finest medical researchers** are clear: If we fail, there will be even worse **consequences** for our families and our economy.*

*We all have a personal responsibility to **slow the spread of the pandemic** and **eliminate** the virus as quickly as possible.*

*Therefore, it's imperative that we take an **effective, fact-based approach** ... by doing things like wearing face masks and practicing **social distancing**.*

*Let's do what needs to be done **now** so we can return to a **strong economy** and **normal day-to-day activities**.*



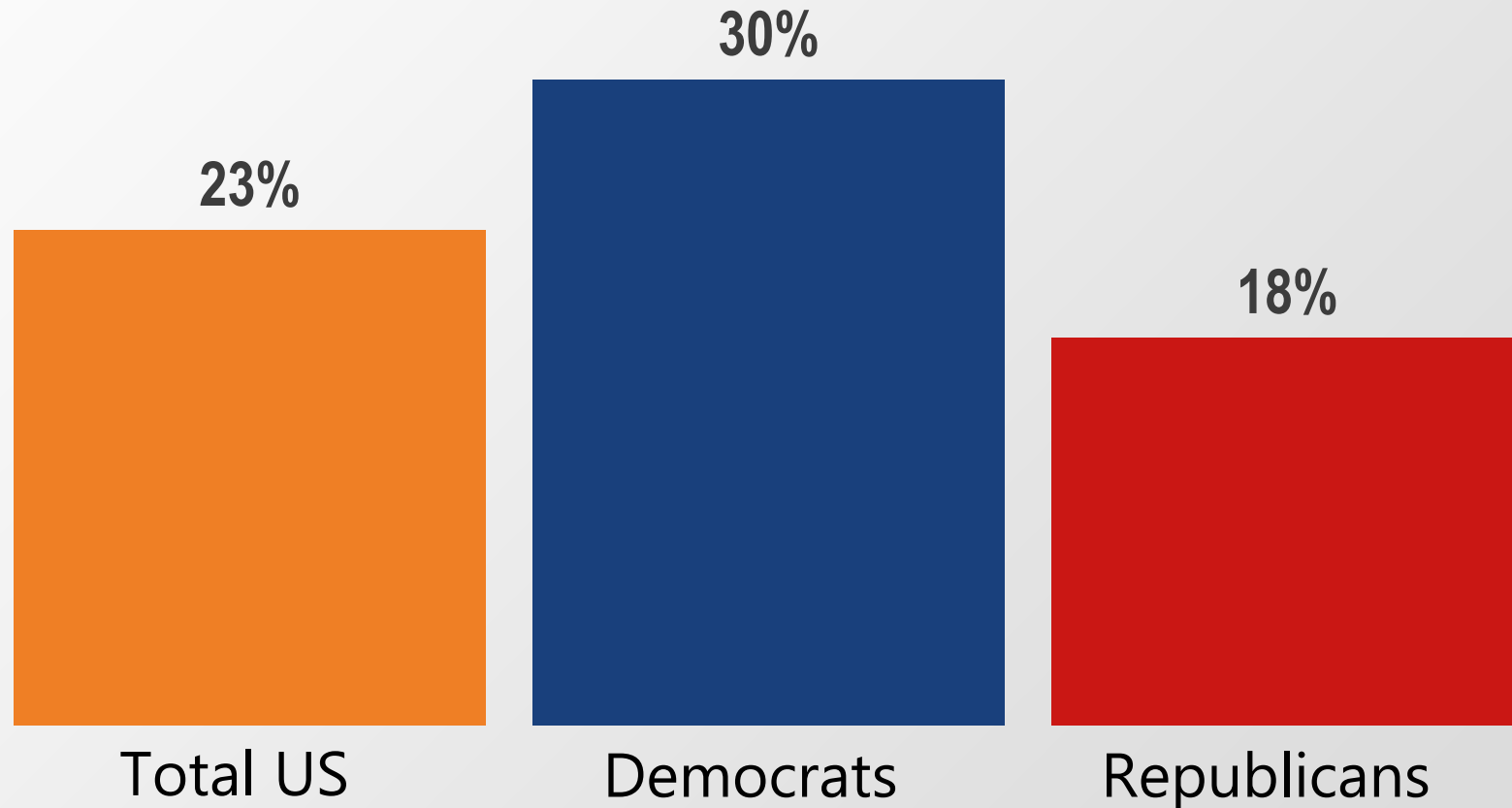
THE PARTISAN DIVIDE

INSIGHT #1

- To no surprise, Republican voters are much more skeptical of the virus and its impact than Democrats or the broader public. Some of this is because of life (and death) experiences.
- Conversely, Republicans are much more afraid of a shutdown/lockdown and its already significant impact on the economy.
- If you are to shift personal behavior among all Americans, you have to change your communication to all Americans. You need to show that doing the right thing now means a faster economic recovery.

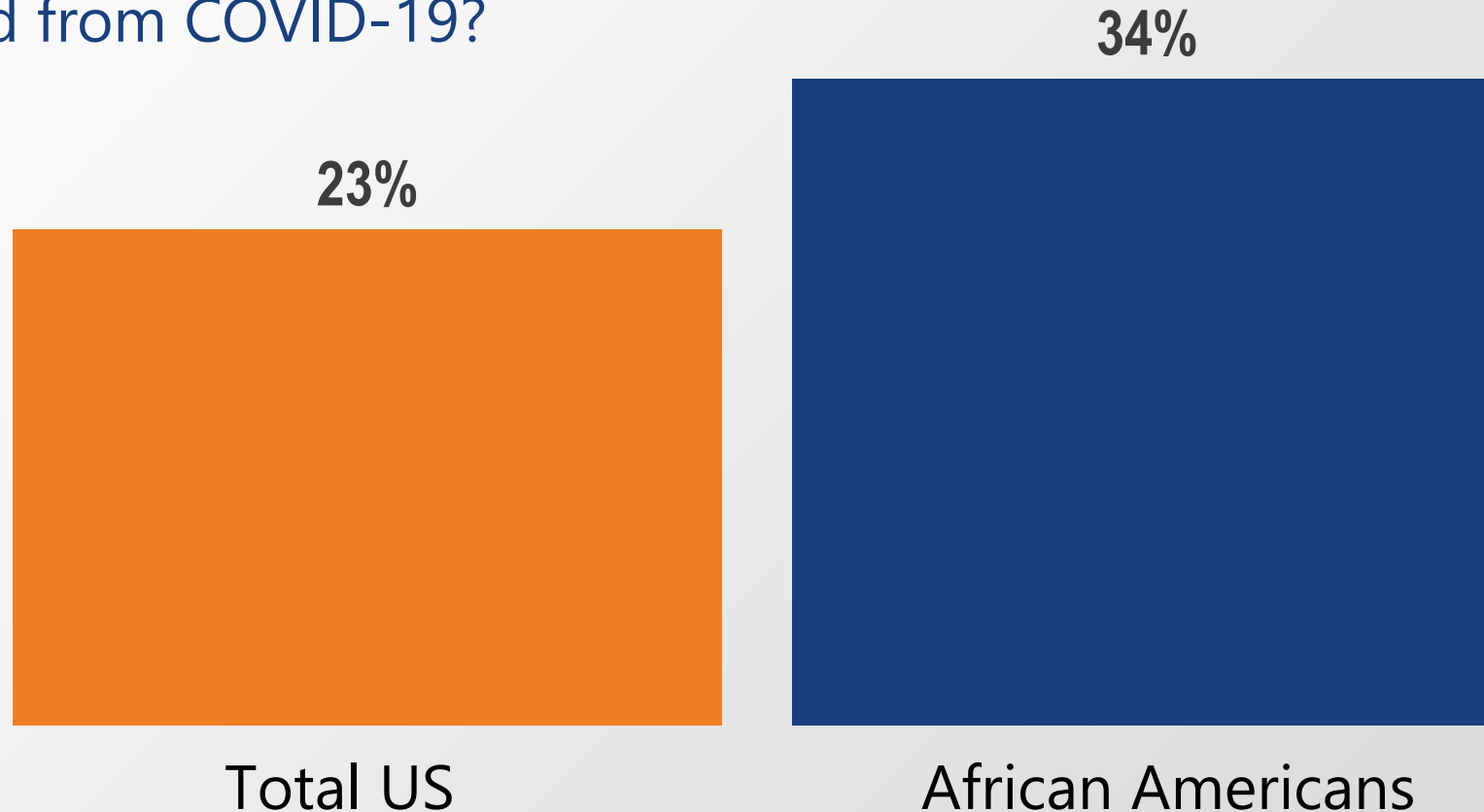
THERE'S A PARTISAN DIVIDE ON DEATH...

Do you personally know someone close to you who has died from COVID-19?



...AND A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON AFRICAN AMERICANS...

Do you personally know someone close to you who has died from COVID-19?



Obtained via Filantia.com by Judicial Watch, Inc.

NOTHING SCARES GOPERS MORE THAN AN IRS AUDIT ... EXCEPT TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID

Assuming you file your taxes and had taken a COVID-19 test, which would scare you more -- getting a letter/email telling you that...?

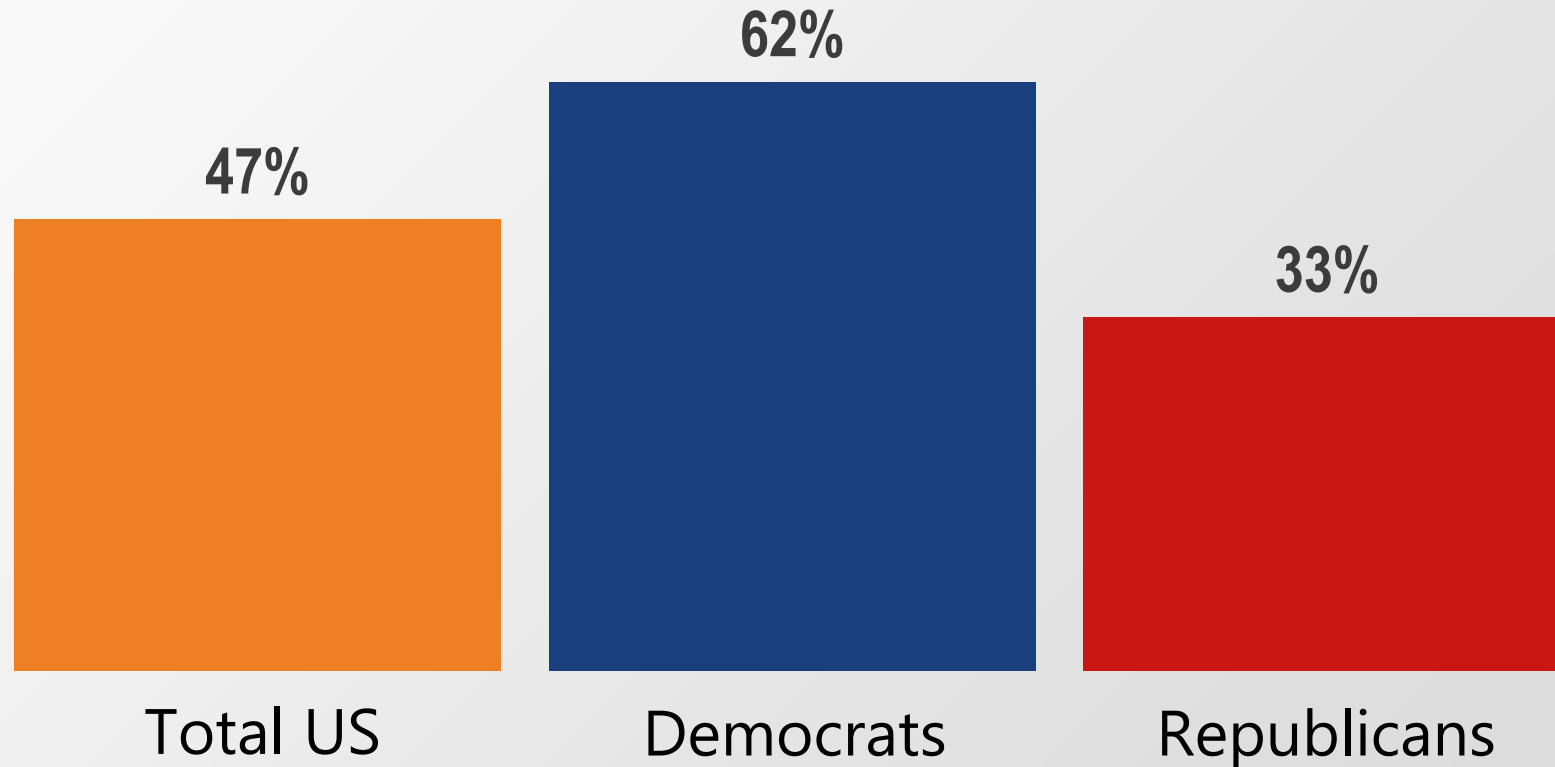
Total	Dem	GOP	
62%	66%	53%	You've tested positive for COVID-19.
38%	34%	47%	You're being audited by the IRS.



THE PARTISAN GAP IS BEYOND STAGGERING... REPUBLICANS ARE JUST NOT AFRAID

Obtained via MI FOIA by Judicial Watch, Inc.

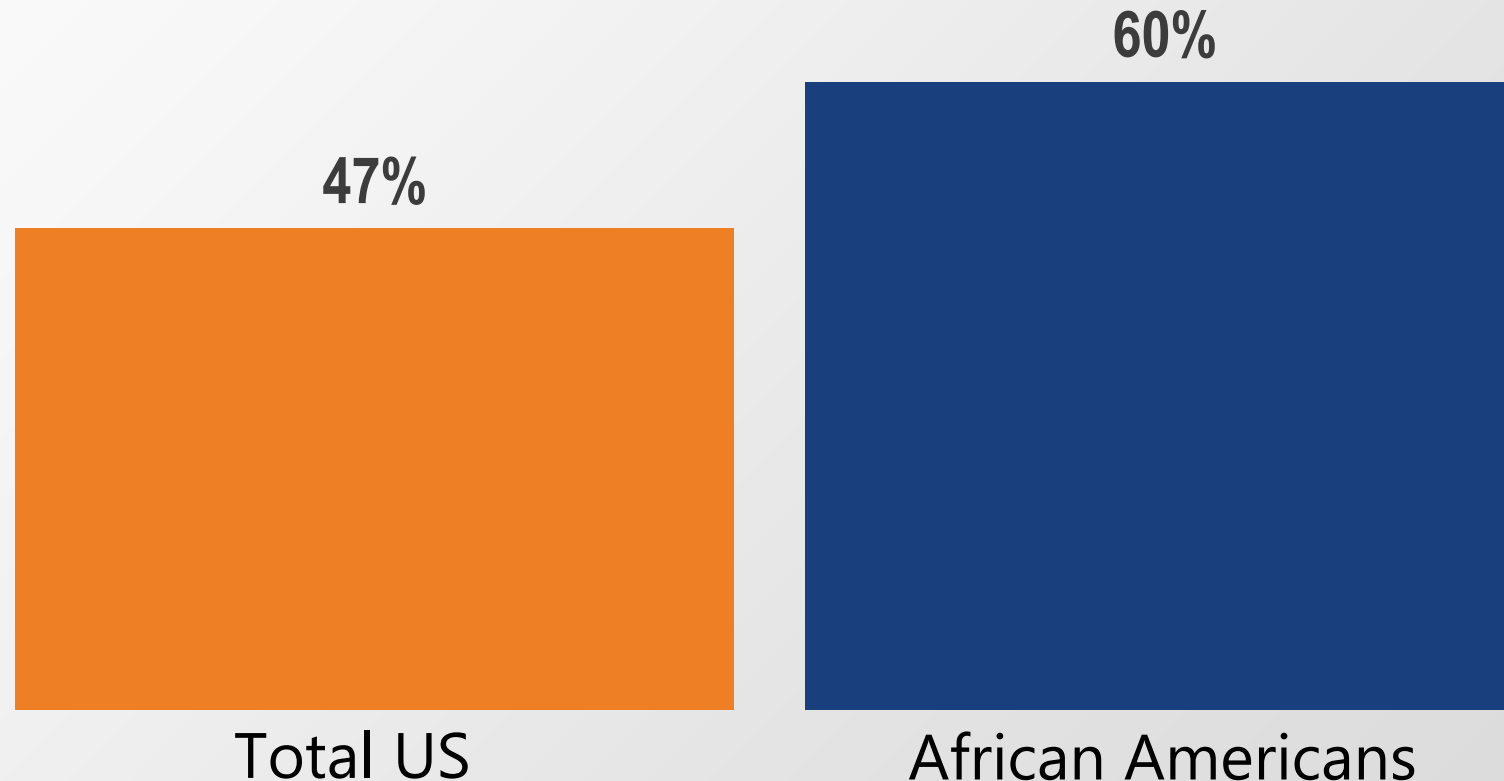
Overall, how serious is the current situation with COVID-19? (% who say "extremely serious")



Obtained via MI FOIA by Judicial Watch, Inc.

BLACK AMERICANS SEE COVID MORE SERIOUSLY THAN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

Overall, how serious is the current situation with COVID-19?
(% who say "extremely serious")



WARNING #1

- It's more than President Trump telling his supporters that the worst is over and/or help is on the way. The messaging from public health experts, governors, and the White House itself is missing the mark – and so it is failing to motivate millions of Americans who do not realize they are in jeopardy.

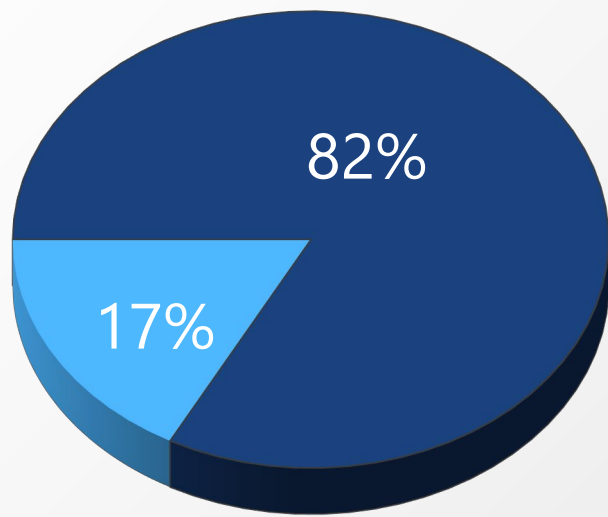
INSIGHT #2

- Voters are more interested in supporting leaders for acting on COVID than punishing them -- especially swing voters. Despite vocal criticism from President Trump, President-elect Joe Biden was rewarded, not punished, for "staying in his basement" for two months.

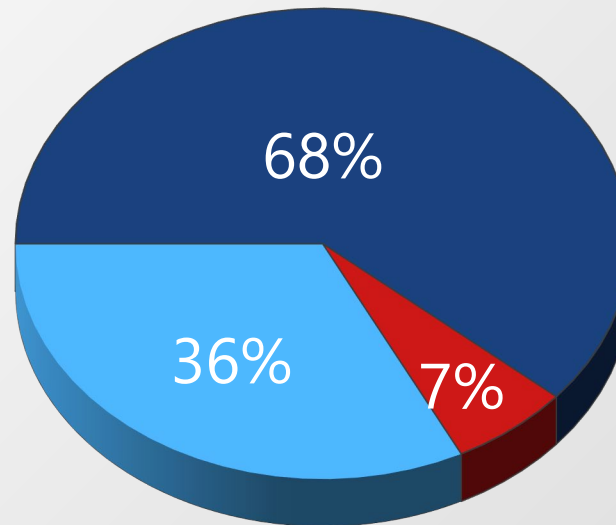
(Watch what's happening to Governor Gavin Newsom because he didn't follow procedures he recommended for others.)

THE POLITICAL DOWNSIDE FOR SUPPORTING COVID-19 MEASURES IS NON-EXISTENT

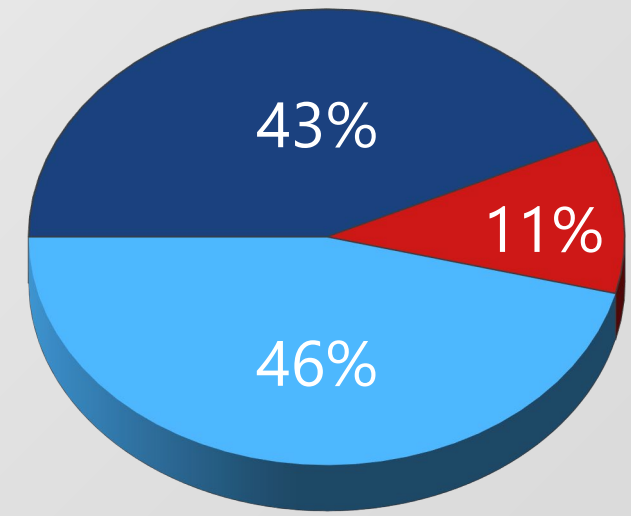
Would you be... to vote for a member of Congress in an election if they encouraged you to take steps to stop the spread of COVID-19?



Dem



Swing

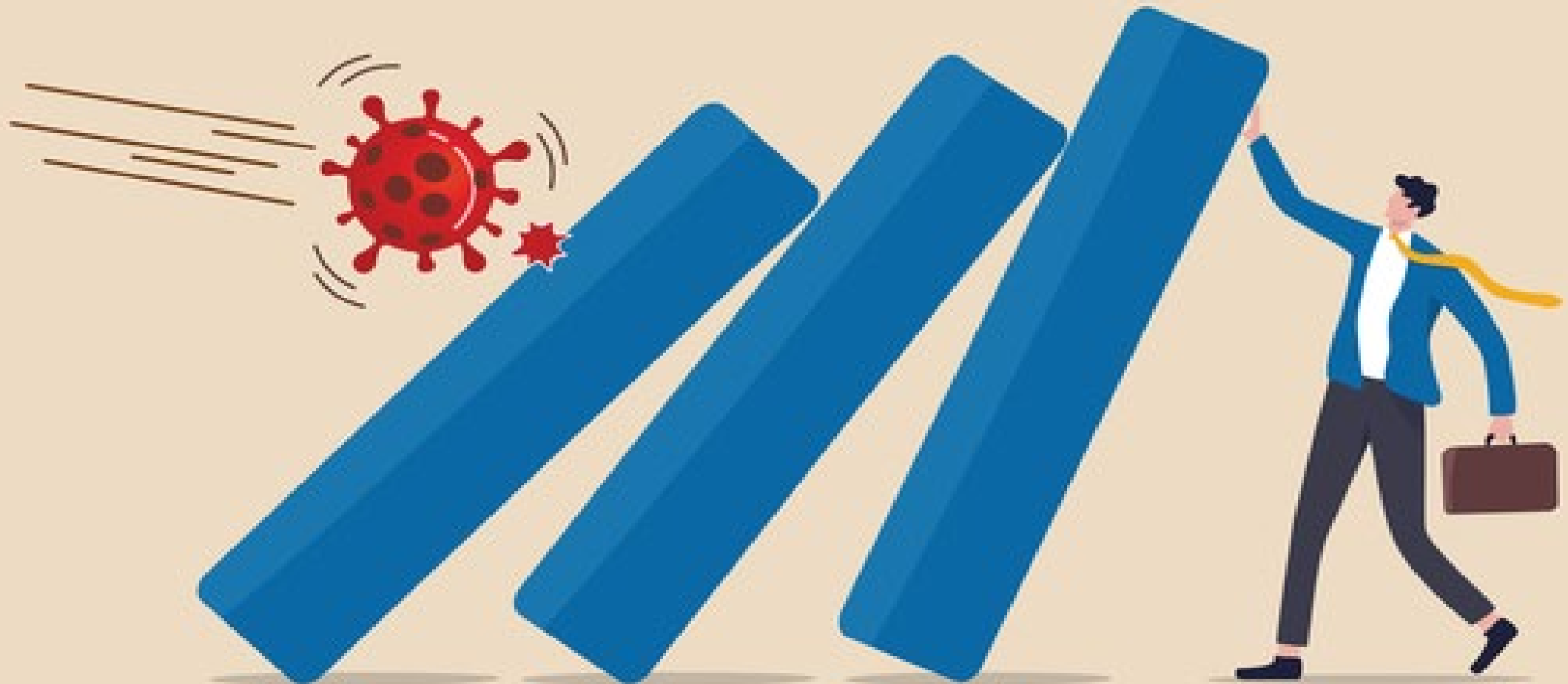


GOP

More likely Less likely No change

STRATEGIES, SOLUTIONS, AND SPOKESPEOPLE

Obtained via MFOIA by Judicial Watch, Inc.



INSIGHT #3

- Republicans want to keep opening up, while Democrats think we should close down a bit more. That's why language is so important. Without the right messaging, you will never close the divide and achieve consensus.
- You need to continually anchor your pandemic language balancing between the economy and health. While we acknowledge health is the more persuasive of the two, ignoring economic anxiety is to ignore about 40% of America.

THERE'S NO AGREEMENT ON THE PATH FORWARD

What should our strategy and approach be with COVID-19 right now?

	Dem	GOP	
	10%	5%	Keep America closed until a vaccine is ready, no matter how long it takes
	15%	4%	Close everything now until the virus is under control
⇒	29%	18%	Close the country down a little more since the virus has gotten worse
	14%	11%	Keep whatever is open now open and keep whatever is closed now closed
	19%	29%	Continue to open America now but slowly
⇒	13%	32%	Open everything now/learn to live with the virus

ALMOST EVERYONE PRIORITIZES HEALTH/SAFETY ...BUT NOT EVERYONE!

Thinking about the impact of coronavirus on the country, are you more concerned about...?

Total	Dem	GOP	
73%	88%	49%	The health and safety of the nation much/somewhat more
28%	12%	51%	The national economy much/somewhat more

ALMOST EVERYONE PRIORITIZES HEALTH/SAFETY ...BUT NOT EVERYONE!

Thinking about the impact of coronavirus on the country, are you more concerned about...?

Total	African Americans	
73%	82%	The health and safety of the nation much/somewhat more
28%	18%	The national economy much/somewhat more

INSIGHT #4

- Health officials, nationally and locally, have the greatest impact in their decision-making. There are only two trusted organizations and people -- the CDC and Dr. Anthony Fauci. No one else is close. And don't forget to utilize survivors of COVID as well.
- Conversely, the FDA ranks dead last, which may be a problem when a vaccine is ready for distribution.
- Congress also lacks credibility.

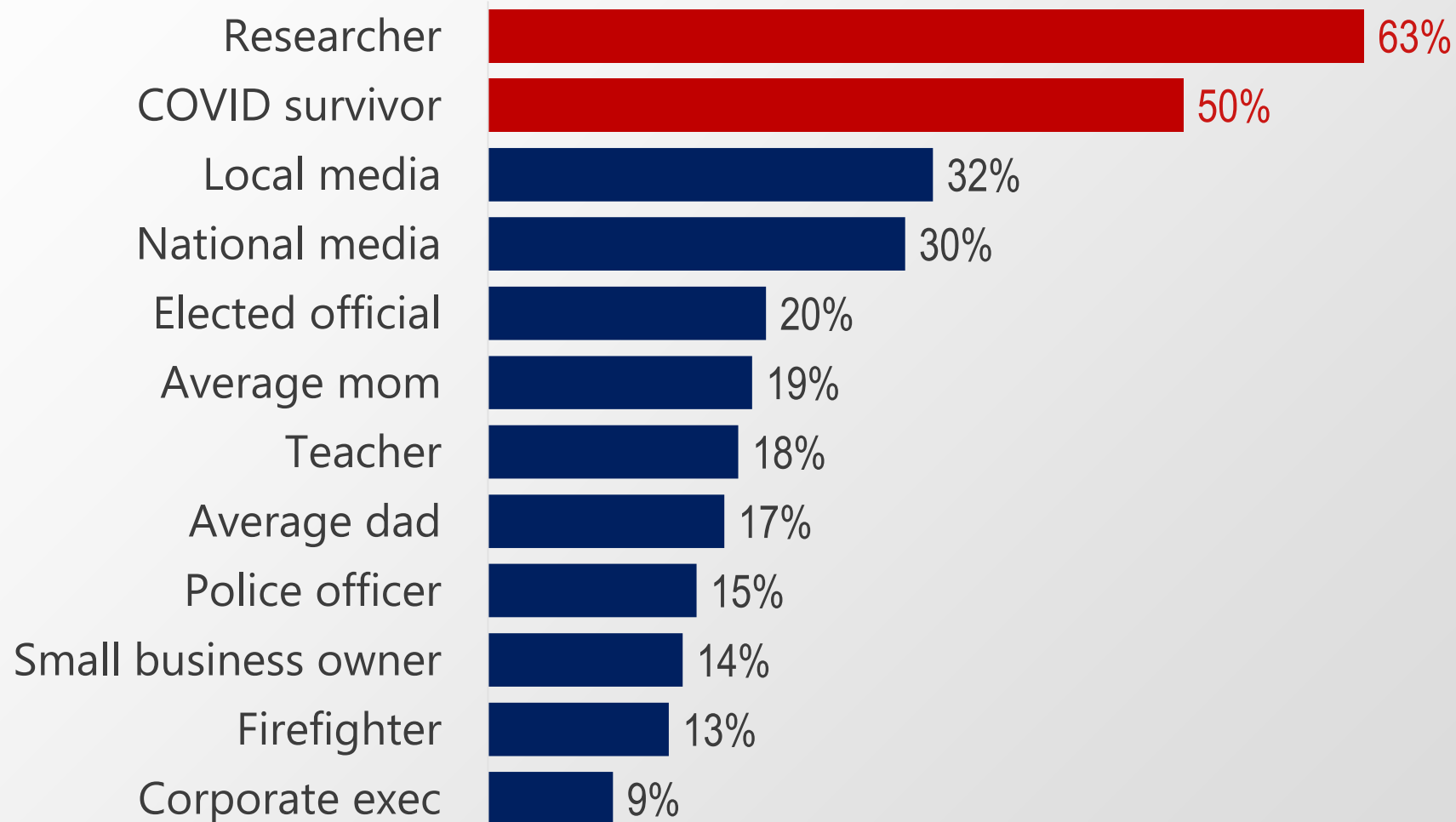
COVID DECISIONS SHOULD COME FROM MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS

Who should have the ultimate responsibility to decide whether we need more or fewer requirements to address the coronavirus?

Total	
35%	The nation's highest-ranking medical and public health officials
28%	Your state's highest ranking medical and public health officials
26%	President Trump
26%	Governors
23%	President-elect Biden
23%	You, yourself
13%	Your mayor or city/town leader
10%	The Supreme Court
9%	The state legislatures
6%	Congress

BEST MESSENGERS: RESEARCHERS AND SURVIVORS

Other than a doctor/nurse/public health official, who would you trust MOST in calling for ways you personally can contain COVID-19?



THE CDC'S DEMISE AS A CREDIBLE ACTOR HAS BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED

Whom are you most likely to trust regarding COVID-19?

Total	
40%	the CDC
38%	Dr. Anthony Fauci
22%	your local health official
22%	the White House Coronavirus Task Force
21%	the National Institutes of Health
18%	the World Health Organization (WHO)
16%	the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services
14%	the Surgeon General
10%	the FDA

THE TWO GROUPS THAT MATTER MOST: COVID AT-RISK AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS

At a time like this whom do you believe federal government should be MOST focused on protecting right now?

Total	Dem	GOP	
56%	56%	58%	Americans most vulnerable to COVID-19
49%	55%	46%	America's healthcare workers
33%	28%	31%	America's families
17%	17%	20%	America's workers
13%	11%	13%	America's taxpayers
12%	12%	12%	America's small businesses
10%	8%	11%	America's students

INSIGHT #5

- President-elect Joe Biden is fond of calling measures like mask-wearing a patriotic act or a national calling. That's not how the public see it. A much better reason is to appeal to personal responsibility:

"It's not just about you. It's about your family, your friends, and the people you care about most. You're keeping them safe, and they're keeping you safe."

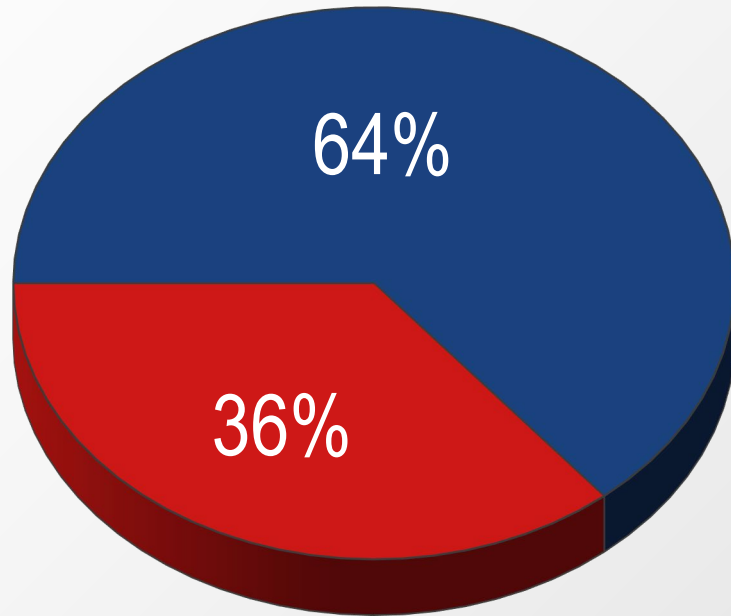
INDIVIDUALIZE AND PERSONALIZE MASK-WEARING TO GET BUY-IN

What is the MOST convincing and compelling reason to wear a mask in public?

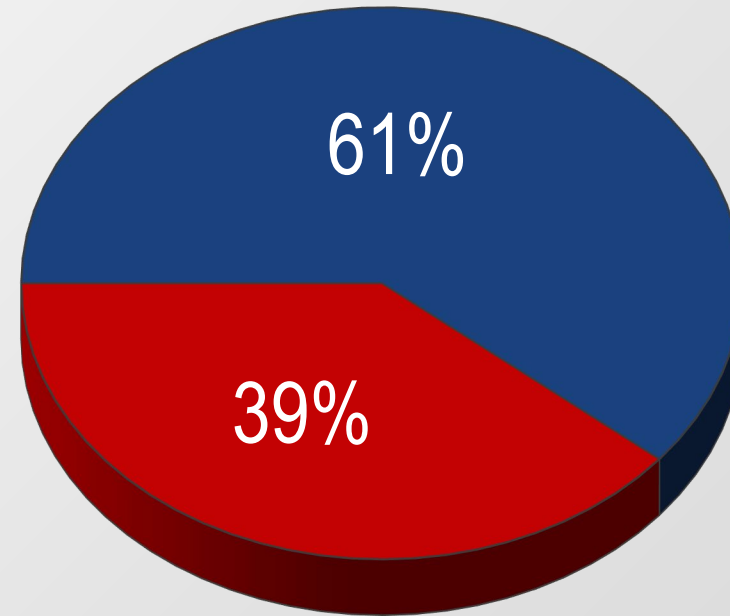
Total	
42%	To keep your family safe and healthy
40%	To keep yourself safe and healthy
38%	To keep everyone you come in contact with safe and healthy
26%	To keep America safe and healthy
20%	To keep your neighborhood/community safe and healthy
17%	To keep your state safe and healthy
17%	None of these are convincing and compelling

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY VS. NATIONAL DUTY

Are efforts to combat the spread of the coronavirus more of a... ?



Total



Swing Voters

■ Personal responsibility

■ National duty

INSIGHT #6

- We asked respondents to tell us what they thought were the most important actions they could take to protect themselves. We tested a litany of measures people are taking or have been recommended. The sustained effort to raise mask wearing in the public eye has had a meaningful and measurable impact.

MOST ACCEPTED MEASURES

Which do you think is MOST sensible, responsible, and impactful? (ranked)

Total	Dem	GOP	
59%	63%	57%	Wearing a face mask in public
42%	42%	41%	Engaging in "social distancing"
33%	39%	29%	Staying at home as much as possible
30%	25%	31%	Frequently washing your hands/using hand sanitizer
26%	26%	27%	Avoiding public crowds



LEAST ACCEPTED/PRIORITIZED

Which of the following do you think is MOST sensible, responsible, and impactful?
(ranked)

Total	Dem	GOP	
12%	16%	12%	Complying with official state policies
10%	11%	8%	Getting tested immediately if you've come into contact with someone who has COVID-19
10%	6%	8%	Keeping personal gatherings to 10 people or less
9%	14%	6%	Not meeting in person for family events and holidays like usual



LEAST ACCEPTED/PRIORITIZED

Which of the following do you think is MOST sensible, responsible, and impactful?
(ranked)

Total	Dem	GOP	
9%	13%	7%	Not going to indoor bars/restaurants
8%	11%	7%	Purchasing medical supplies (masks, gloves, sanitizer, etc.)
8%	9%	6%	Meeting with people virtually like on "Zoom" rather than in-person
7%	8%	4%	Avoiding public transit/rideshare
6%	6%	7%	Complying with businesses and health officials for contact tracing
4%	5%	6%	Buying more goods and services online rather than in-person
9%	2%	17%	None of these, I will not change my behavior



INSIGHT #7

- Public health leaders need to do a MUCH better job explaining how our understanding of the virus has evolved – as it should have. You'll need to celebrate the "exceptional" and "superior" American scientists, medical professionals, and researchers. This may not sit well with some of your colleagues, but it will work.
- If you want Republican buy-in, you must make the case that the science is settled and that everyone now agrees. Moreover, while the vaccine will be effective, it will still take months to supply it to those who need it. Keep focused on delivering a better future...right now.

SPEAK TO THE CONSEQUENCES... THEY HAVEN'T GONE AWAY

Why do we need to continue to take measures against the coronavirus even though it has lasted as long as it has?

Dem	GOP	
40%	35%	Because COVID-19 is highly infectious, one infection can quickly grow into an outbreak that could shutter a neighborhood, community, or entire city.
28%	14%	We understand that people are tired, but public health measures are not the enemy - they are the roadmap for a faster and more sustainable recovery.
17%	38%	Scientists and medical professionals are developing and preparing to distribute a safe and effective vaccine that will help us return to normal day-to-day activities.
16%	13%	Public health policy measures are in place to prevent crippling surges and make re-opening possible.

NOTE REPUBLICAN SKEPTICISM OF THE SCIENCE & DEMOCRATIC SKEPTICISM OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

What would make you NOT take individual precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Dem	GOP	
28%	41%	The jury is still out how we should best combat the virus, as health recommendations have changed over time
40%	33%	If public officials themselves are not following the precautions they've recommended or mandated
30%	21%	It is too financially difficult on my family
23%	26%	Compliance is a slippery slope for further erosion of personal freedoms
12%	20%	The government has been too restrictive
24%	9%	It's too difficult for my work
12%	15%	I don't believe the virus is severe and these measures are needed
17%	14%	If people around me were not taking these precautions or pressuring me to adopt them

THE BEST ARGUMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING: PANDEMIC PREP

What is the MOST convincing and compelling reason to support greater taxpayer investment in funding public health efforts?

Total	
38%	Better preparation to address future pandemics and major health crises (45% Democrats, 40% Republicans)
31%	Greater access to healthcare for everyone regardless of their background
22%	A greater ability to ensure public spaces are safe with clean air and water
21%	Reduced cost or free vaccine disbursement for every American who wants one
21%	Access to an unbiased source of information about health free from politics
19%	Speeding up the approval process for medications and inspections
19%	More effective, efficient, and accountable health officials
12%	Less reliance on outside contractors for services who may charge more money
17%	None of these are convincing

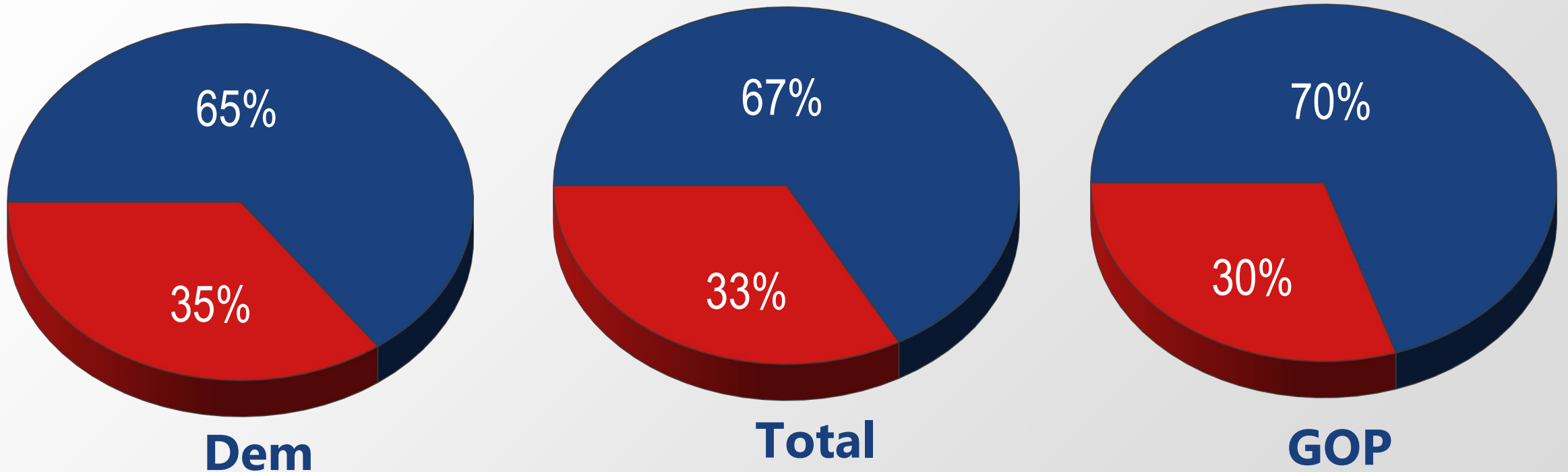
LANGUAGE: THE WORDS TO USE & LOSE

INSIGHT #8

- Language really does matter.
- In this case, always refer to agencies as “*public health*” rather than “*government health*.” It’s the best way to overcome skepticism with anything related to government.
- What follows is an entire litany of what resonates...and what alienates.

SAY “PUBLIC,” NOT “GOVERNMENT”

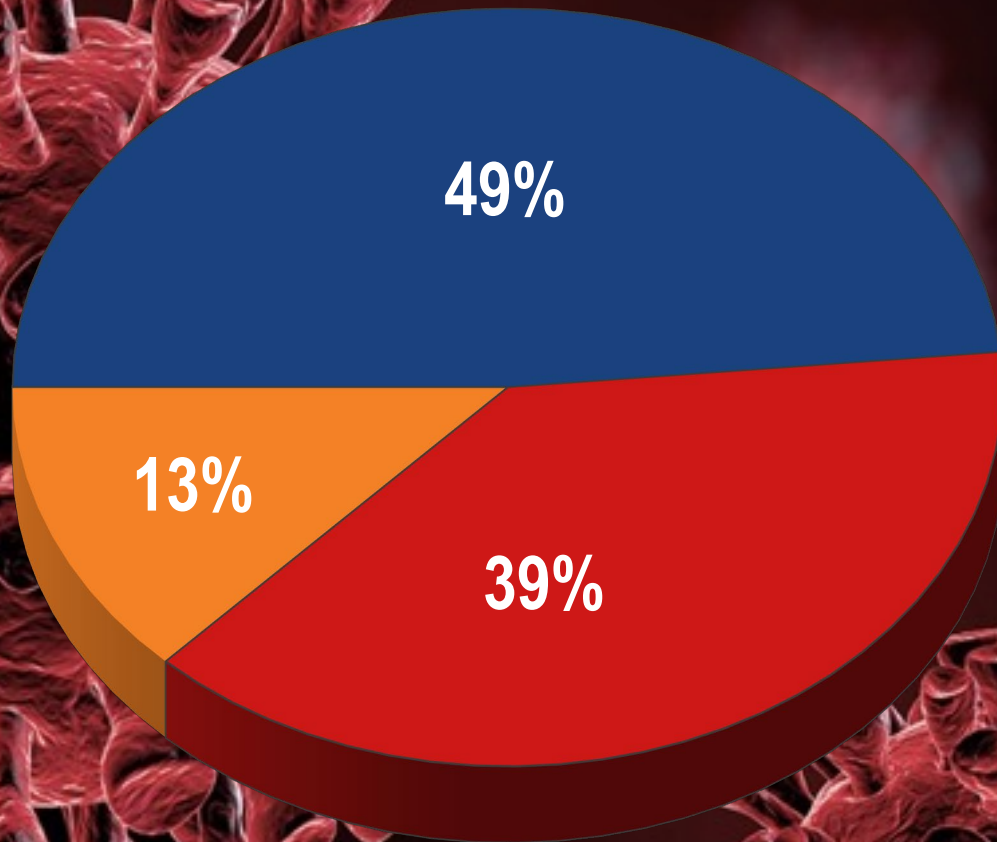
Would you be more likely to trust and support taxpayer dollars going to...“health agencies” or “government agencies”?






■ Public ■ Government

CALL IT “THE PANDEMIC”

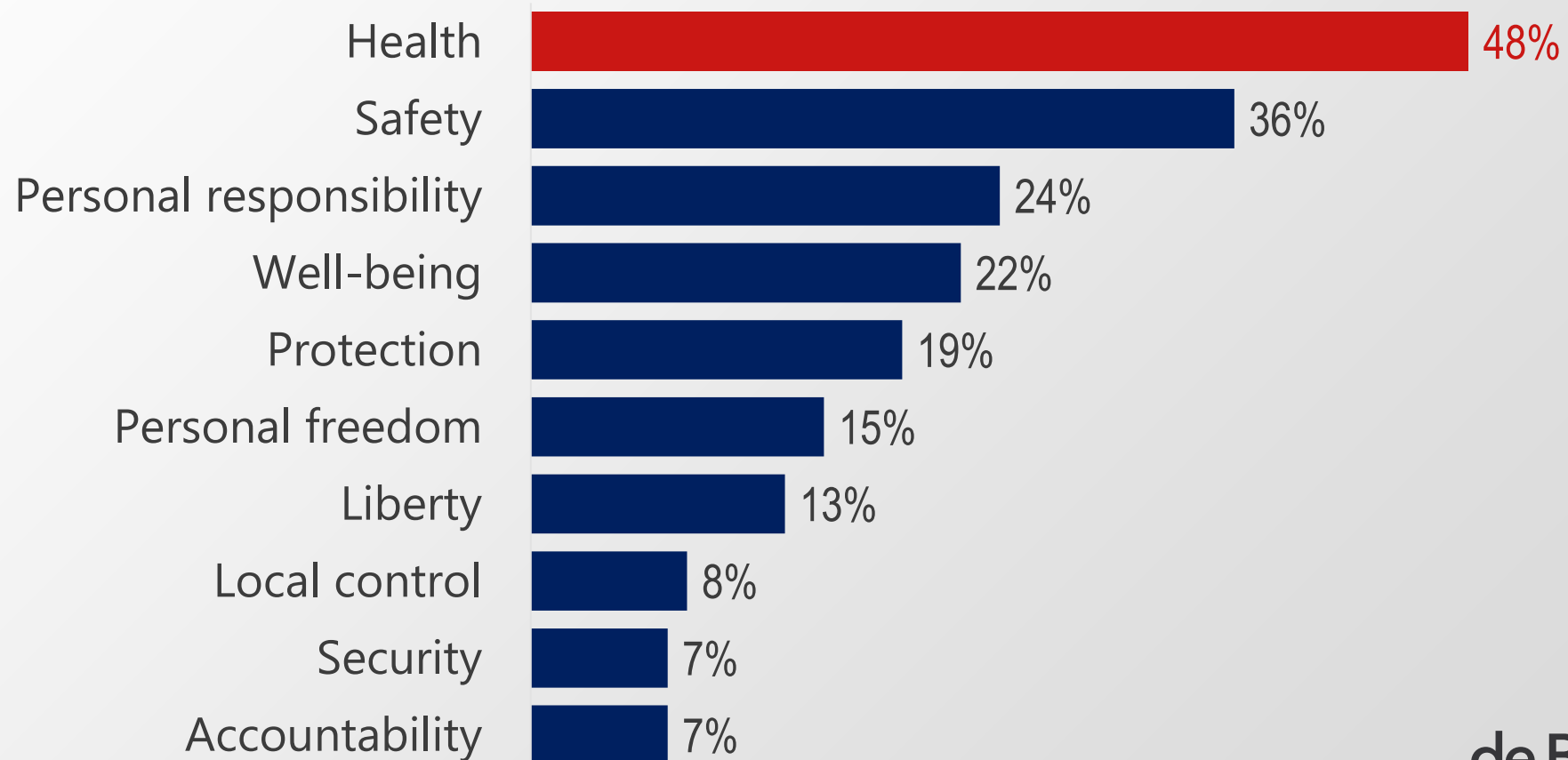
Which do you feel is more significant, serious, and scary?



-  The pandemic
-  The coronavirus
-  COVID-19

LANGUAGE SHOULD CENTER AROUND “HEALTH”; NOTHING ELSE COMES CLOSE

Which is more important to you regarding COVID-19?



HEALTH IS THE TOP ATTRIBUTE, BUT SAFETY MATTERS MUCH MORE TO AFRICAN AMERICANS

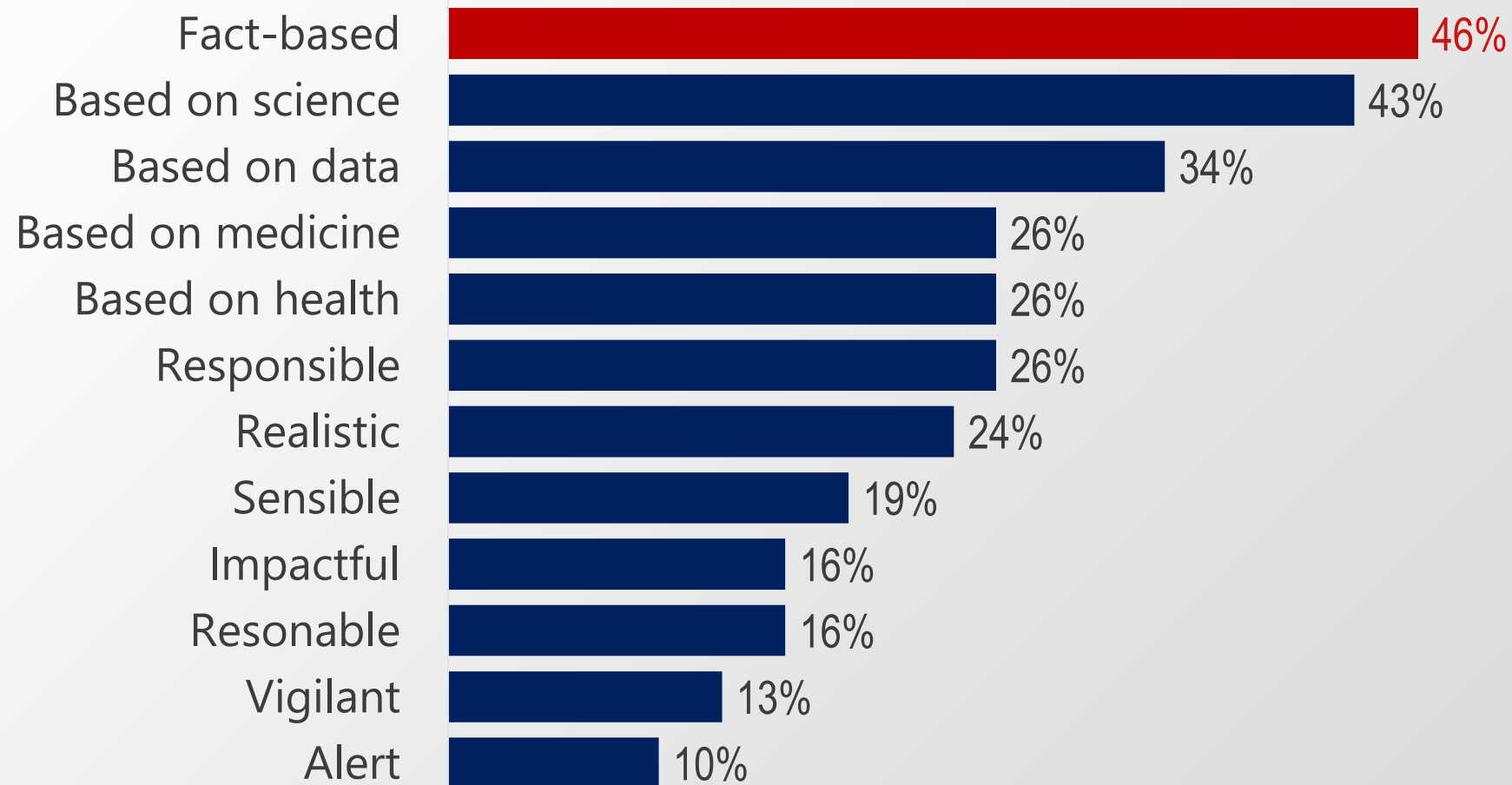
Which is more important to you regarding COVID-19?

All	AA	
48%	54%	Health
36%	48%	Safety
24%	15%	Well-being
23%	17%	Personal responsibility
18%	25%	Protection
16%	8%	Personal freedom
12%	6%	Liberty
8%	9%	Accountability
8%	11%	Security
7%	6%	Local control



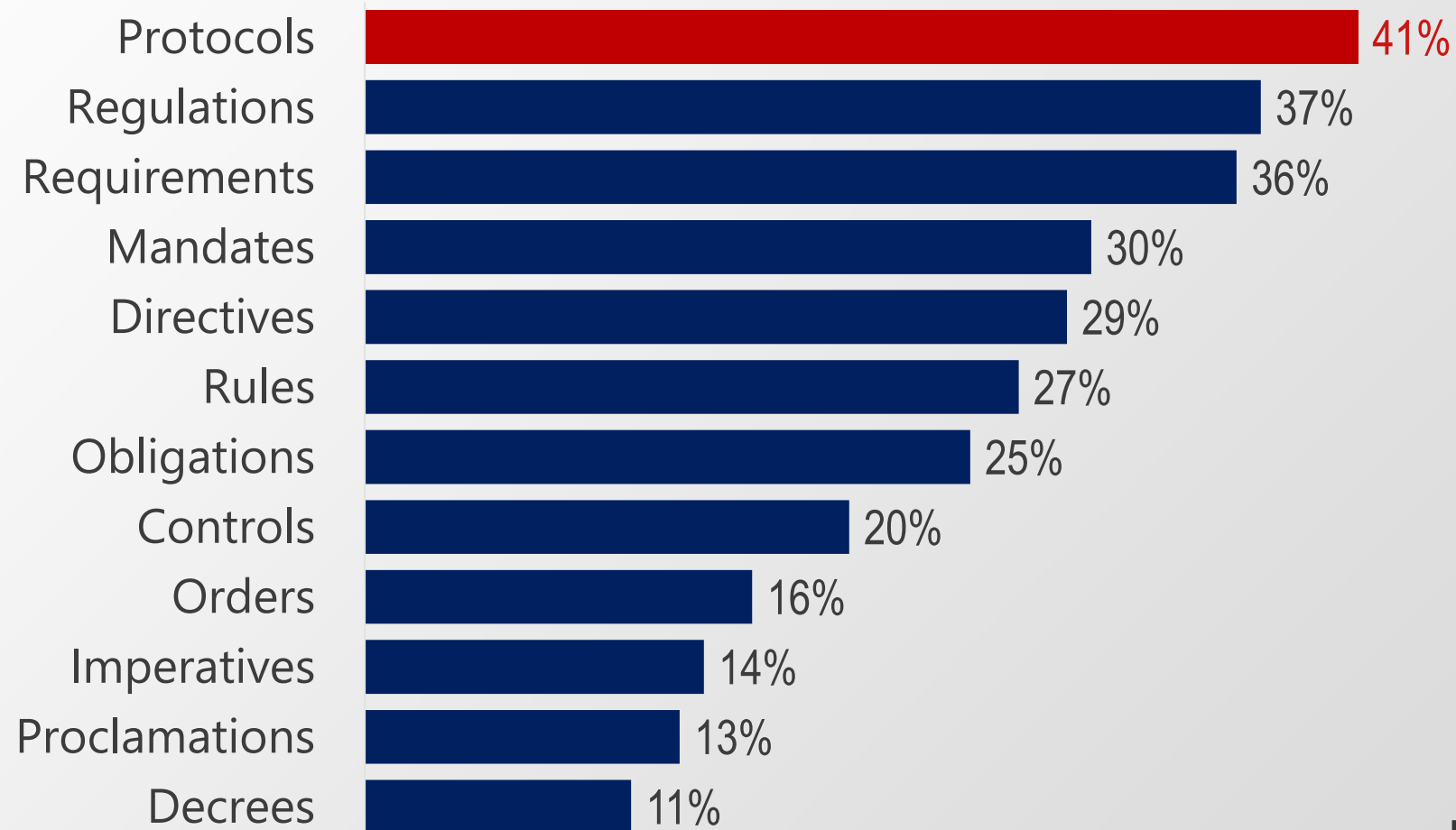
COVID-19 POLICYMAKING SHOULD BE "FACT-BASED" AND "BASED ON SCIENCE"

Which is most important to you from to policies to address COVID-19?



“PROTOCOLS” APPEAL ACROSS PARTISAN LINES

When it comes to the rules and regulations required to address COVID-19, gives you the MOST positive reaction?



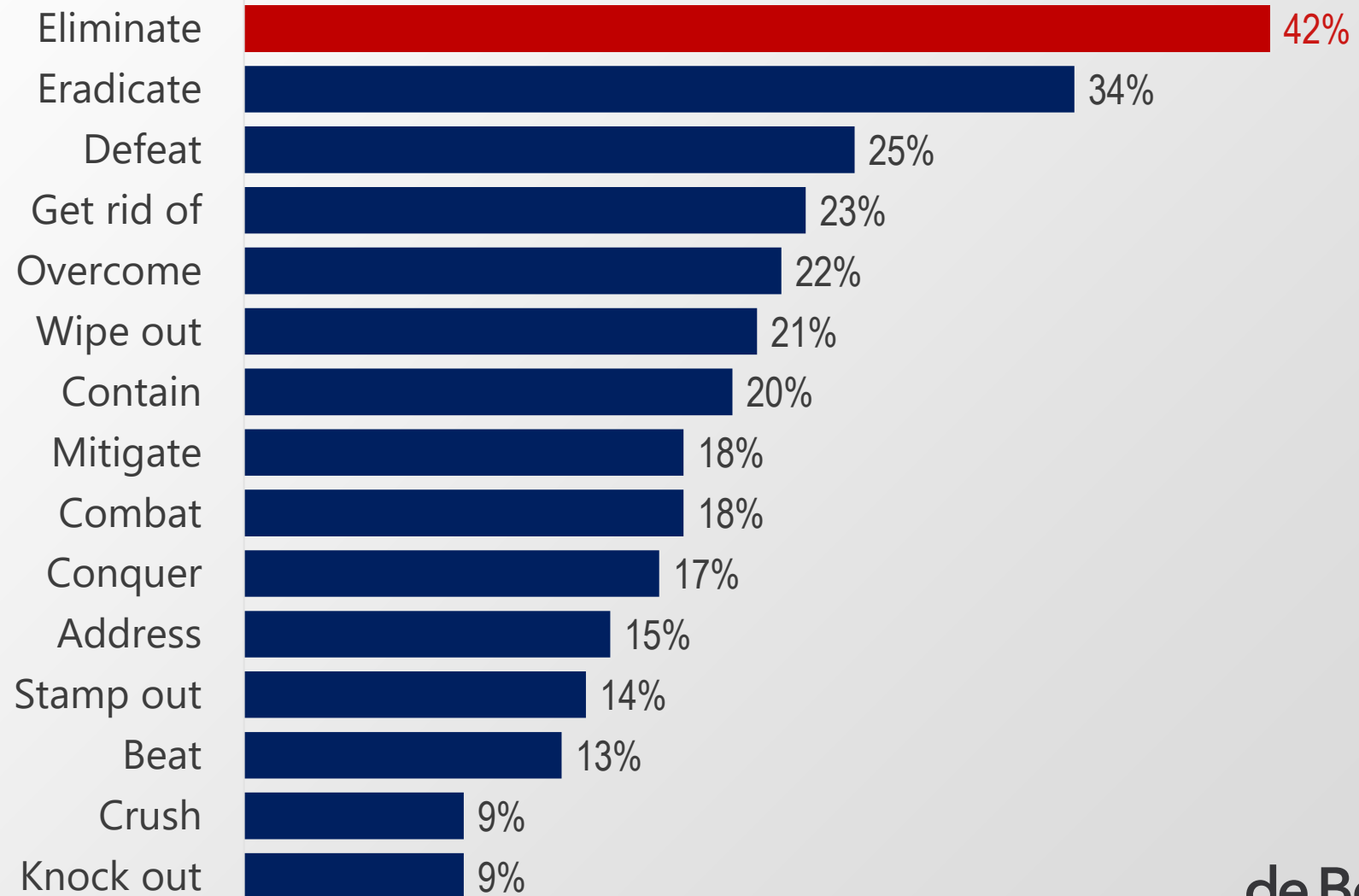
THERE IS CLEAR LANGUAGE THAT WORKS; "LOCKDOWN" WAS A FATAL MISTAKE...

While you may not like any of them, which of these will you tolerate the most?

Total	Dem	GOP	
47%	48%	45%	A stay-at-home order
19%	16%	23%	Aggressive restrictions
15%	17%	11%	A lockdown
10%	9%	12%	A government order
9%	10%	9%	Government controls

AMERICANS WANT INTENSITY, BUT NOT OVER-CAFFEINATION

What should be the goal of our COVID-19 policies? We want to...the virus.

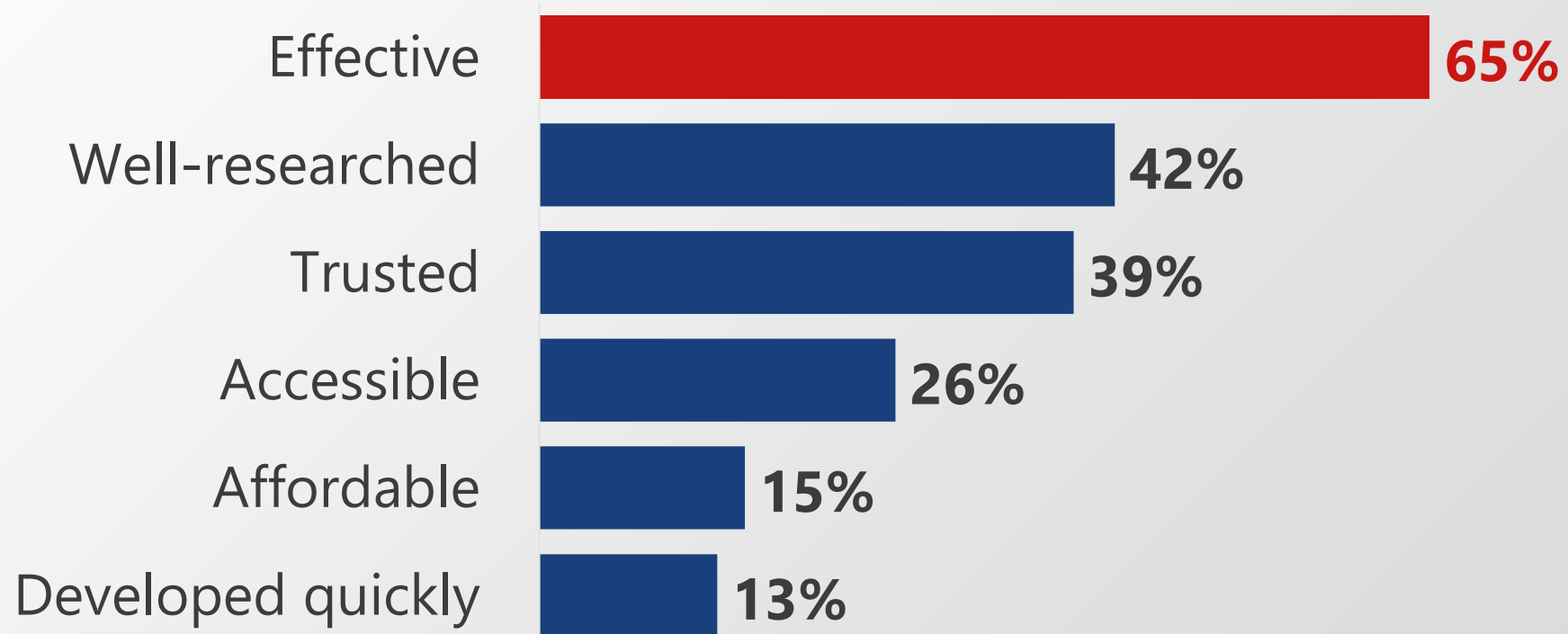


WARNING #3

- The warlike language used by some Republican leaders is a mistake. There are much more effective ways to talk efforts to address COVID. It's assumed that GOP followers like it. They don't.

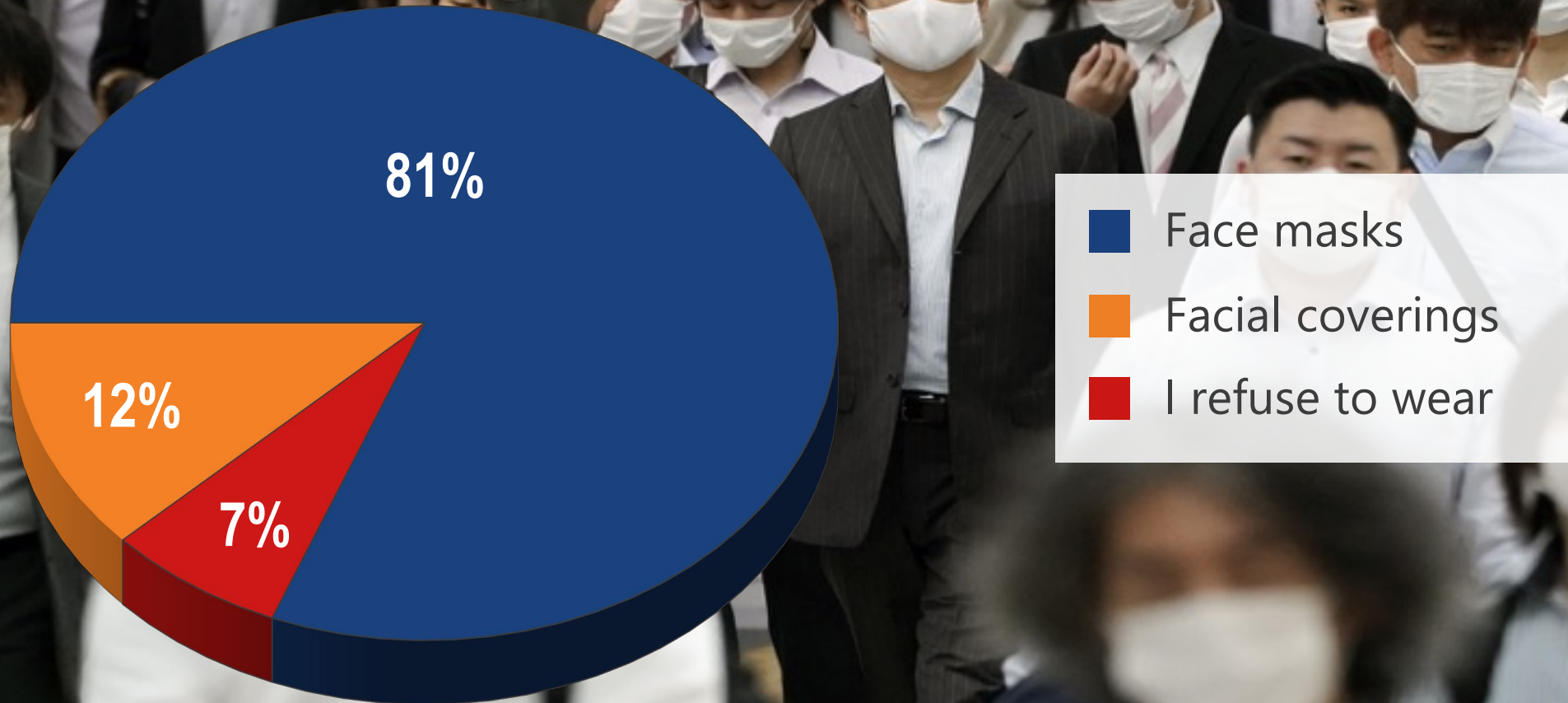
AMERICANS WANT A VACCINE THAT WORKS ABOVE ALL ELSE, NOT ONE THAT'S RUSHED

Other than safety, when thinking about a vaccine for COVID-19, is it MOST important to you that it is...?



ONLY CALL THEM FACE MASKS!!!

If recommended to you by leaders you trusted, would you be more willing to wear...in public places to reduce the spread of COVID-19?



*"It's not what you say.
It's what people hear."*

Dr. Frank I. Luntz

<http://debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation>



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