

June 2024

2024 Election in Michigan: Climate & Clean Energy Messaging

Findings and Recommendations from Poll and Focus
Groups of Registered Voters in Michigan

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Poll and Focus Group Methodology



Impact Research conducted a poll of N=900 registered voters in Michigan. The poll included a base sample of N=500 registered voters with oversamples of N=200 18-34-year-olds and N=200 Black voters



52% of interviews were completed via text-to-web and 48% via online panel. Interviews were conducted between May 15-20, 2024.



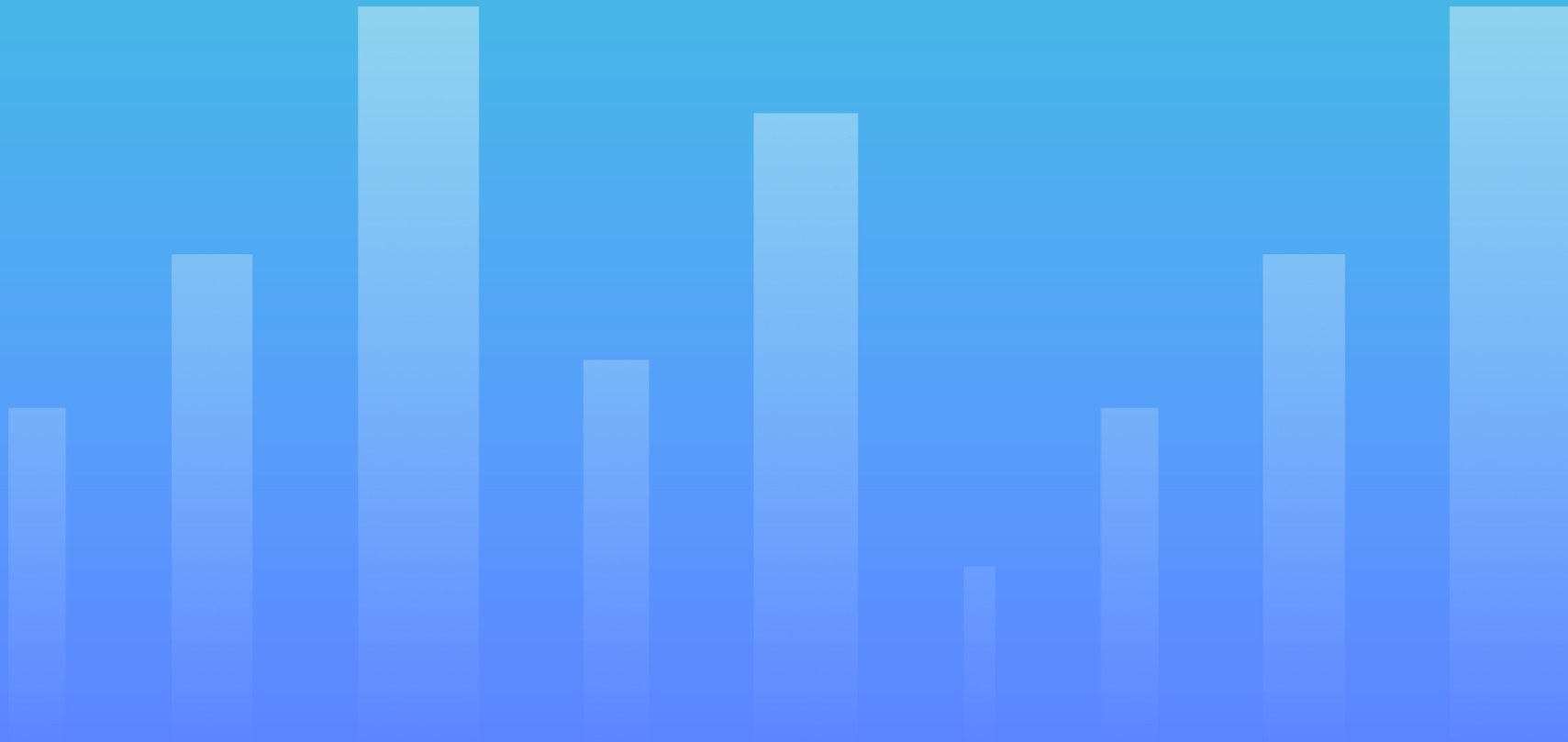
The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 4.4 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is larger.



This report also includes quotes from 3 focus groups among likely voters in Michigan conducted between April 10th and 16th. Two groups were conducted in person in Detroit with Black voters and voters under 35 and another group with white women was conducted online. All voters were persuadable in the presidential race and said climate change was at least somewhat important to their vote.



Key Findings & Strategic Recommendations



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Key Findings – State of the Race and Impact of Messaging

- **Trump leads narrowly in Michigan, with President Biden especially underperforming among voters under 35 and Black voters.** The president's margins among voters under 35 and Black voters are both about 25 points below his margins with them in 2020.
- **There is little awareness of Biden's accomplishments on climate and clean energy.** Consistent with what we heard in the focus groups, only one in five persuadable voters say they have heard a lot about the president's efforts to address climate change and expand clean energy.
- **Climate and clean energy messaging moved the vote margin toward Biden with our target audiences, especially with Black voters (+9) and voters under 35 (+5).** Among voters overall, the six-way vote margin improves by 2 points.
- **The president's job rating on climate and clean energy is underwater, but our messaging is able to boost it—especially among persuadable voters.** Messaging about Biden's climate record improves his approval rating by 6 points overall and by 27 points among those open to him but not currently supporting him (i.e., Biden's expansion targets).

Messaging and Targeting Recommendations

- **We must first build up Biden's positives by talking about his clean energy and climate accomplishments.** This must be followed by **contrast messaging** on Biden's positive climate record and Trump's destructive record on the issues.
- **Highlight Biden's record of protecting our health and access to clean water, and his active role in passing a historic climate and clean energy plan, while holding oil and gas companies accountable.** Combining the health/water message AND Biden's role in passing the most ambitious clean energy plan in U.S history is especially effective in moving the needle with Michigan voters.
- **Draw contrasts on public health and what Biden has accomplished vs. Trump's extremism, his close ties to Big Oil, and his harmful plans for a second term.** What Biden has done to protect our health and water represents a strong contrast with Trump's record of allowing polluters to pollute our air and water—especially with Flint still fresh in voters minds. In addition, the passage of Biden's historic climate plan compared to Trump's plans for a second term and his “deal” with Big Oil to give additional tax breaks are effective contrasts.
- **Target Independents under 35, Black Independents under 50, voters under 23, and Independent women.** These voters are especially likely to be persuadable. They are disproportionately located in the Detroit media market.

Most Effective Climate & Clean Energy Messages for Biden

Health OR Water

Biden understands that pollution from dirty energy sources puts our health at risk. That's why he strengthened the Clean Air and Water Acts, passed a law to replace 100 percent of lead pipes, and announced the first-ever limits on cancer-causing "forever chemicals" to protect drinking water.

OR

Biden awarded nearly \$150 million to upgrade drinking water infrastructure and replace unsafe lead pipes across Michigan and more than \$35 million to help remove new contaminants from the state's drinking water.

Passed Most Ambitious Plan

- Biden passed the most ambitious climate and clean energy plan in U.S. history. It triples the production of clean energy, cuts carbon pollution by up to 41% by 2030, and is projected to save Americans up to \$38 billion in electricity costs.

Oil and Gas Accountability

- Biden is holding oil and gas companies accountable by charging them for emitting dirty gas, going after greedy corporations who are increasing their profits by making us pay more, and requiring them to clean up hazardous oil wells that leak pollution into communities.

Most Effective Environmental Negatives on Trump

2nd Term “Dictator”/Repeal

- Trump says he would be a "dictator" on his first day in office. He says he wants to gut the Environmental Protection Agency, get rid of clean energy investments, and eliminate safeguards that protect our environment, clean air, and clean drinking water.

Corporate Polluters

- Trump allowed corporate polluters to pump chemicals into our water, even more pollution into our air, and then blocked efforts to hold polluters accountable,--leading to thousands of preventable deaths every year from respiratory problems, heart disease, and lung cancer.

Trump & Big Oil “Deal”

- Big Oil is funding Trump’s presidential and legal defense bills after Trump asked them to steer \$1 billion to him. Trump gave big oil company CEOs massive tax breaks as president and now he is promising to do even more to help Big Oil if he is re-elected.

Younger Black Independents and Independents under 35 are especially likely to be persuadable.

Our persuasion targets make up 15% of voters.

Highest % of Persuasion Targets (Biden Expansion or Trump Persuadable)

Overall	15
Black Independents <50	59
Independents <35	39
Independent women	35
Black Mothers	34
18-34 College educated	33
18-22	30

Highest % of Biden Expansion Targets (Those not currently supporting Biden in 6-way vote but open to moving to him)

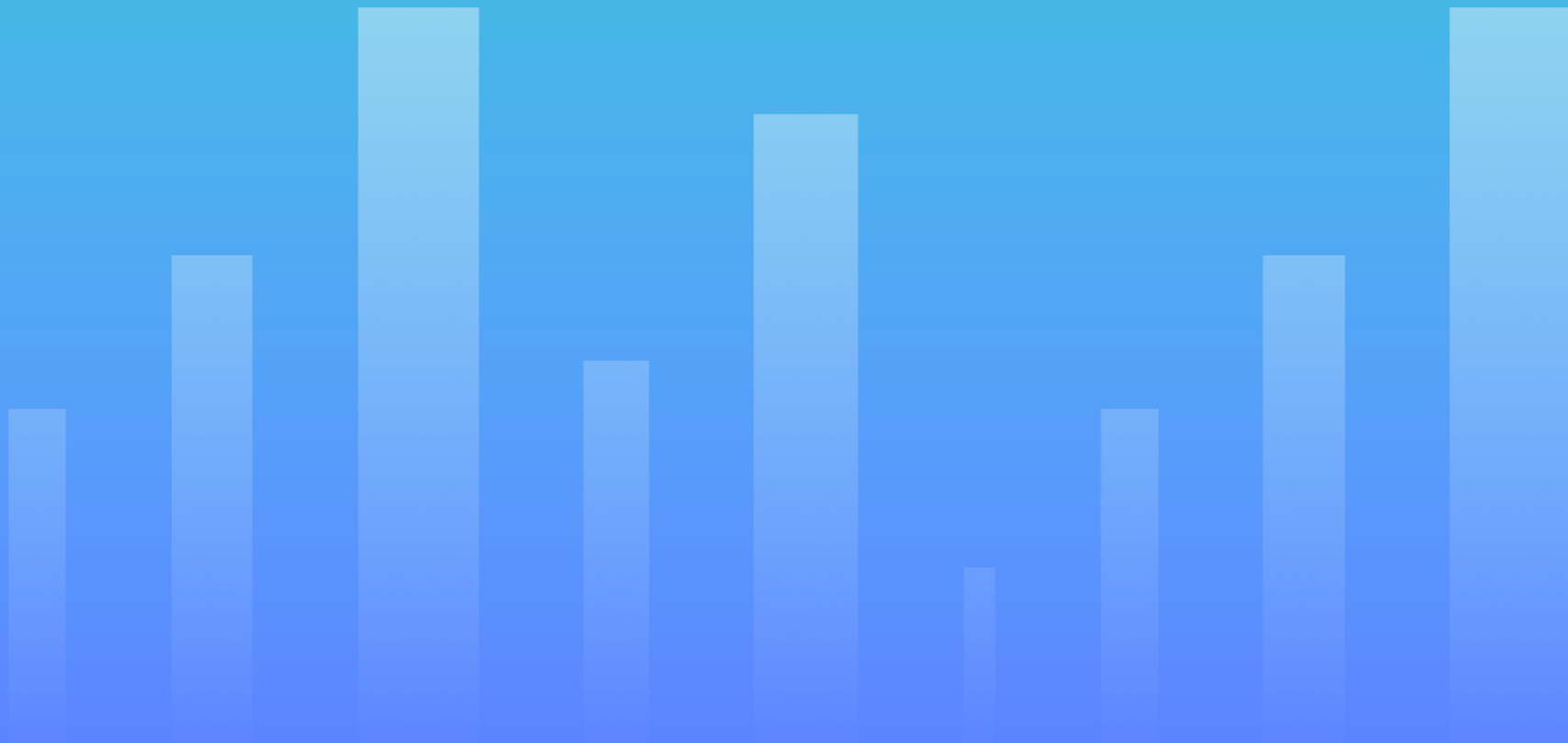
Overall	7
Black Independents <50	32
Independents <35	27
18-34 College educated	25
Black Mothers	24
18-22	22

Highest % of Trump Persuadables (Soft supporters of Trump or those open to moving to him)

Overall	10
Black Independents <50	47
Black mothers	28
Independent women	27
Independents <35	26
18-34 College educated	24

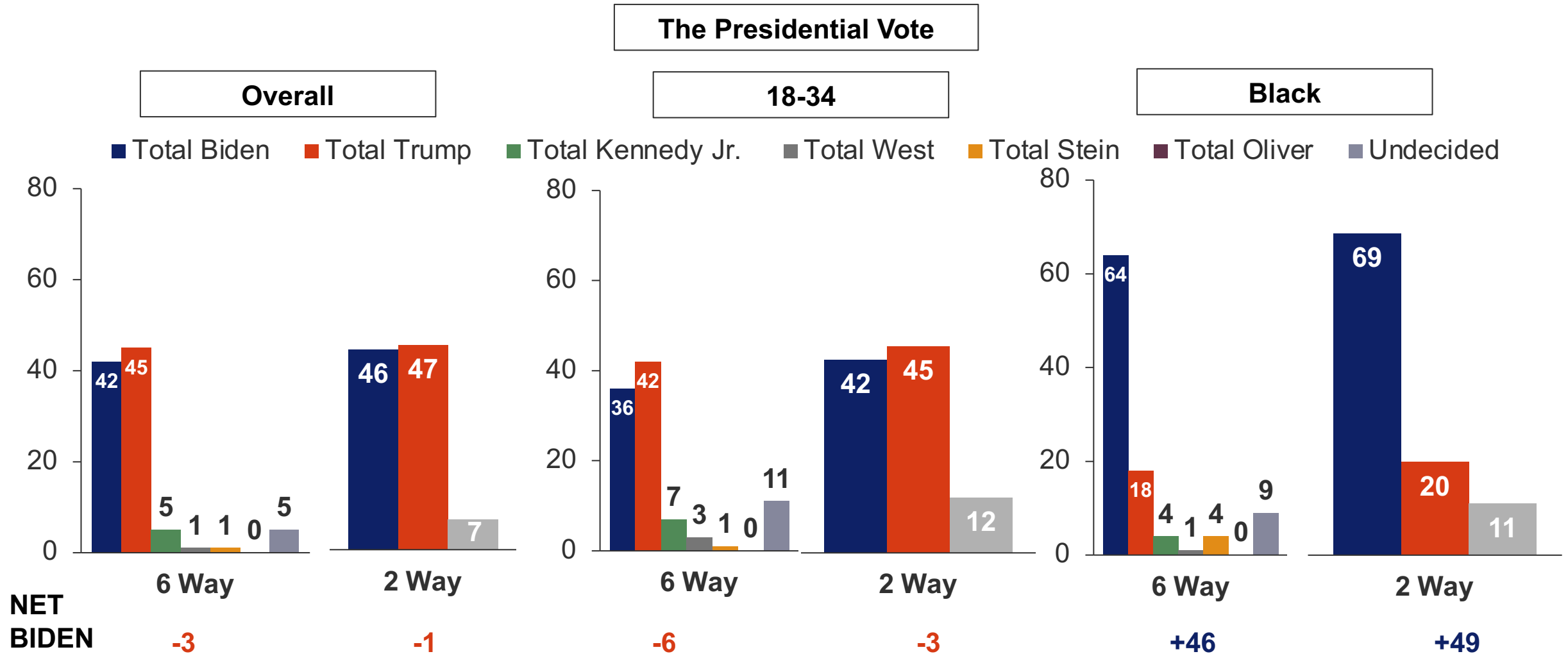


Political Environment: Landscape and Vote Movement



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Biden trails by 3 points in the multi-candidate vote and by 1-point in the 2-way in Michigan.



President Biden is currently underperforming his 2020 performance in Michigan among voters under 35 (especially younger Black voters), younger Independents, and Black men.

	Biden Vote	Trump Vote	3 rd Party/Und	NET Biden	Biden -2020*
Overall	42	45	12	-3	-8
Democrats	91	5	5	+86	-7
Independents	29	42	29	-13	-16
Republicans	4	91	4	-87	-1
18-34	36	42	22	-6	-18
18-26	36	38	25	-2	-18
27-34	36	46	19	-10	-18
35-49	42	45	12	-3	-10
50-64	41	48	11	-7	-4
65+	49	45	6	+4	-1
White	38	50	11	-12	-6
Black	64	18	18	+46	-18
W 18-34	33	45	22	-11	-16
AA 18-34	49	31	21	+18	-40

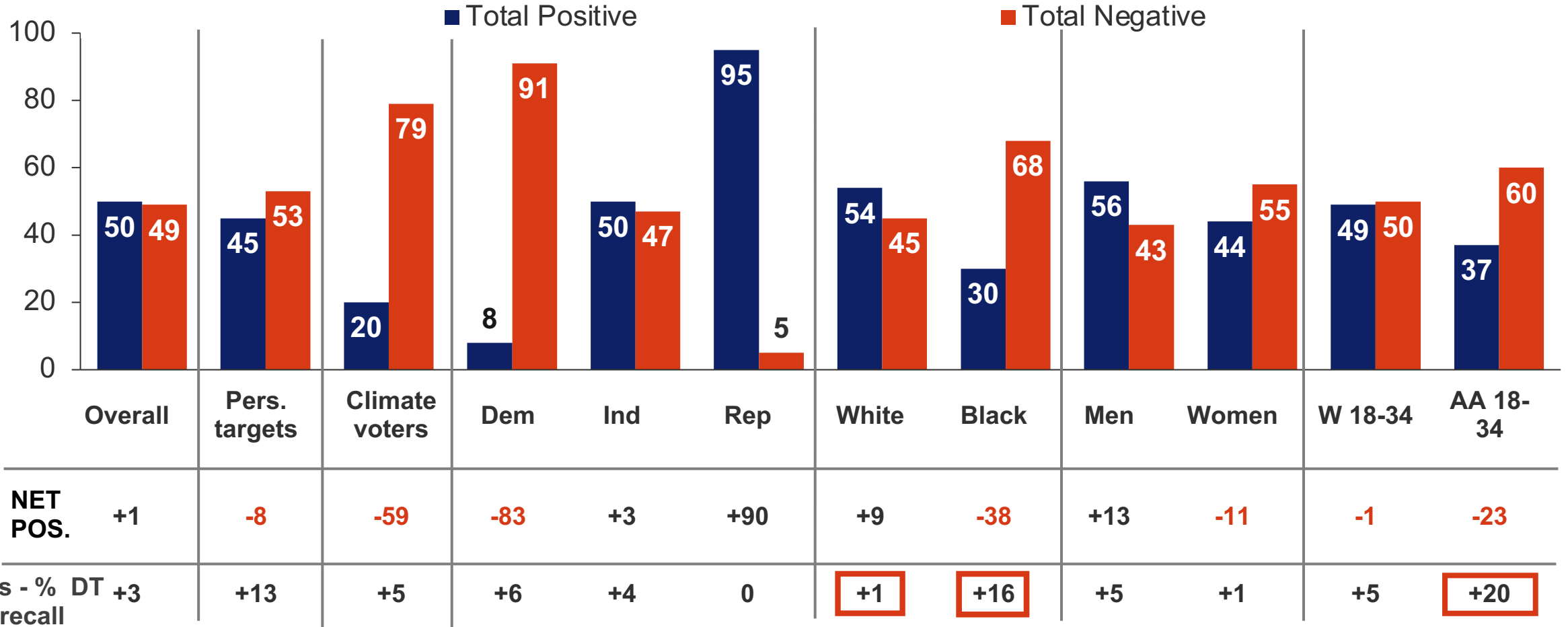
	Biden Vote	Trump Vote	3 rd Party/Und	NET Biden	Biden -2020*
Men	37	49	15	-12	-9
Women	47	41	12	+6	-8
Black Men	60	21	20	+39	-22
Black Women	69	14	17	+55	-14
18-34 Men	28	50	22	-22	-18
18-34 Women	45	33	23	+12	-17
Ind. Men	26	45	29	-19	-18
Ind. Women	34	35	31	-1	-16
Ind. <50	22	40	38	-18	-29
Ind. 50+	37	44	20	-7	-2
Detroit MM	45	41	15	+4	-8
Grand Rapids MM	44	45	10	-1	-5
Flint MM	34	57	9	-23	-6

*2020 #s are based on recall in this poll.

Trump's retrospective job approval has improved since 2020 - his current rating is way above 2020 vote share among Black voters, especially Black voters under 35.

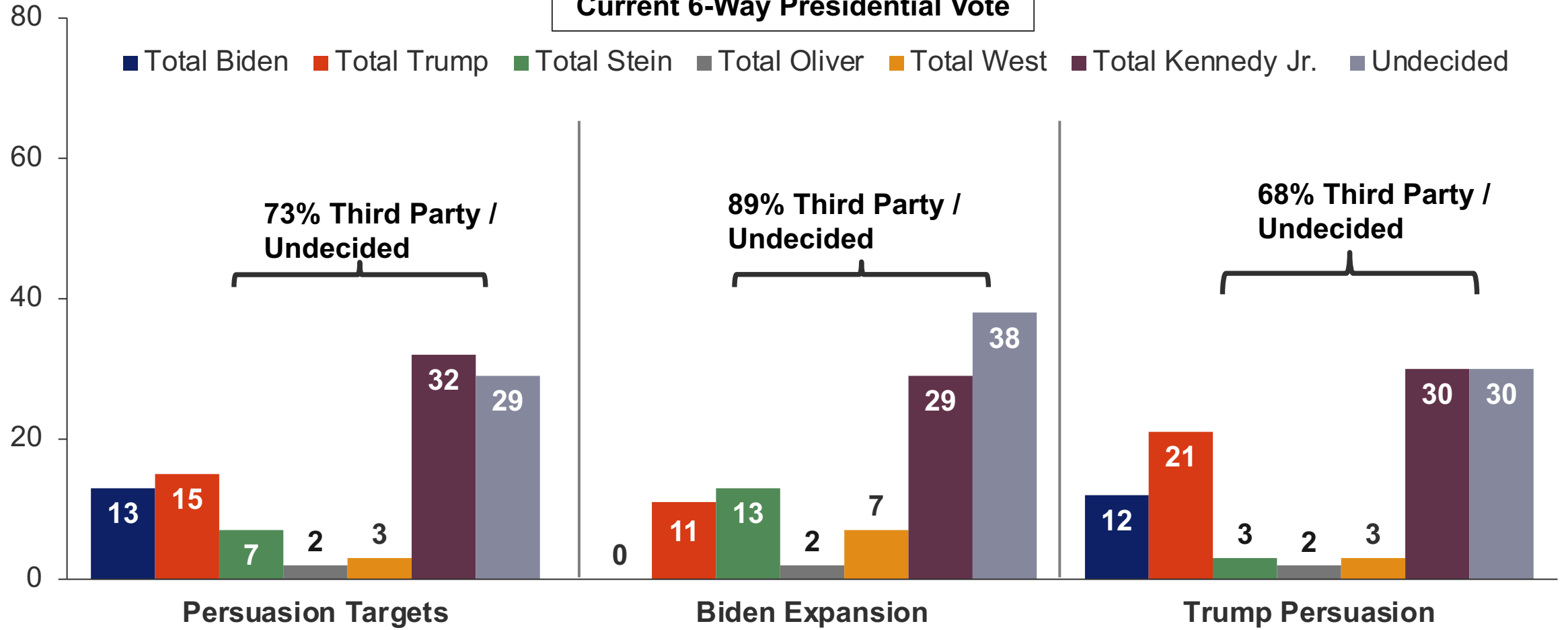
Among white voters, his approval rating is basically no higher than his 2020 vote share.

Trump Job Rating



Right now, persuadables are overwhelmingly voting third party or undecided. The president needs to win about 55% of our persuasion targets to win Michigan.

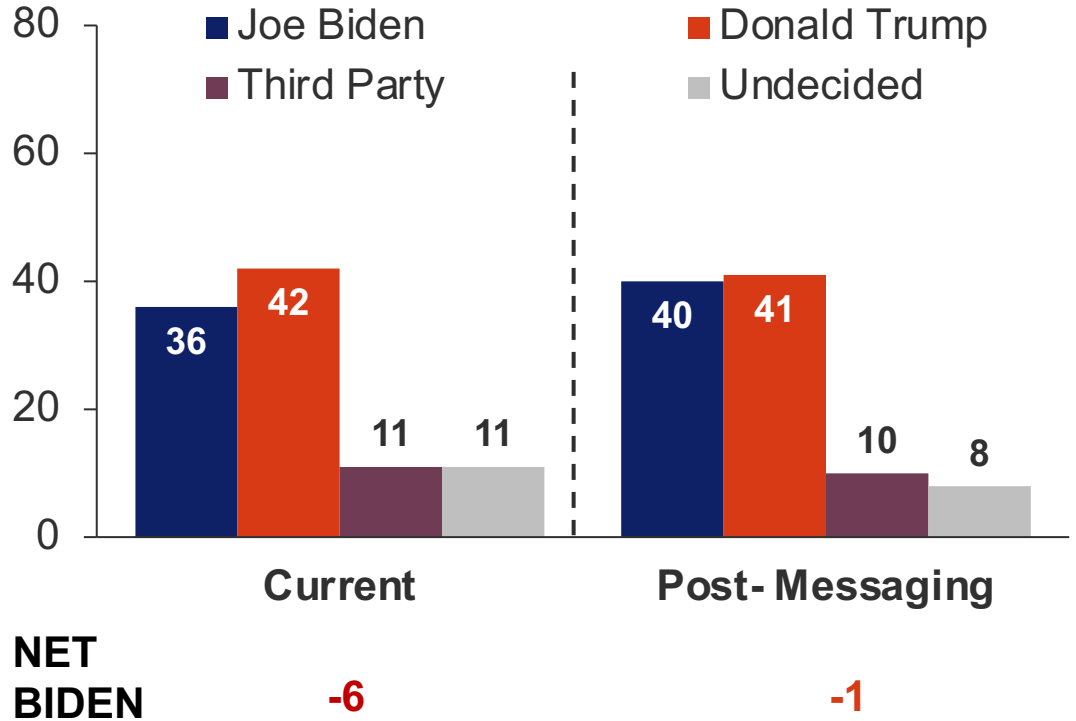
Current 6-Way Presidential Vote



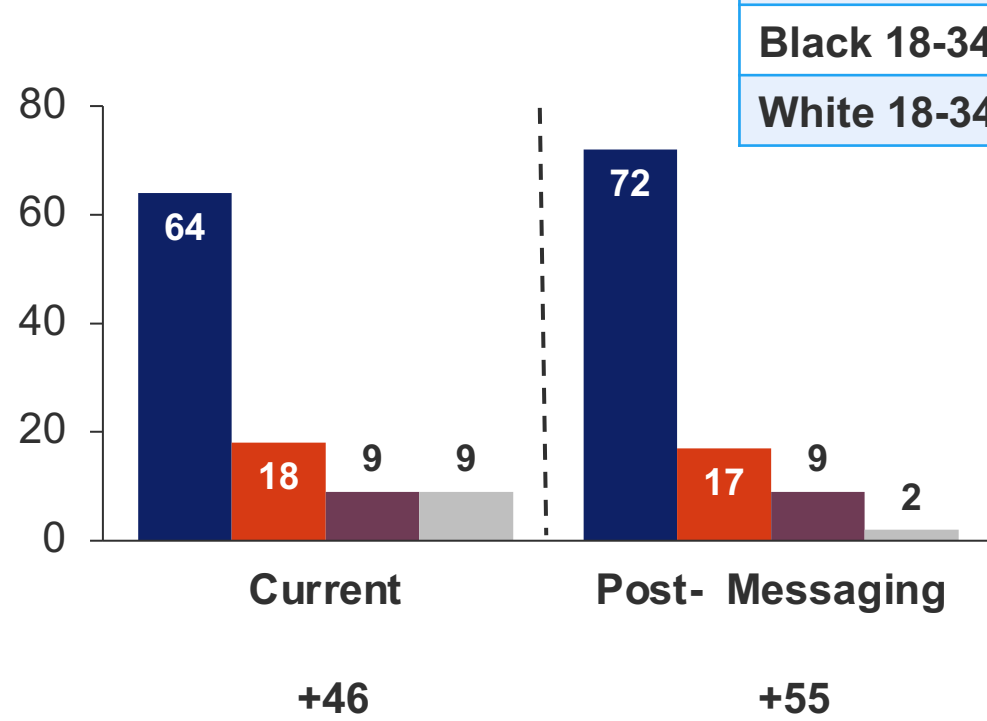
Climate and clean energy messaging moved our target audiences toward President Biden—especially voters under 35 (+5) and Black voters (+9).

Impact of Messaging on 6-Way Vote Margin

Voters 18-34

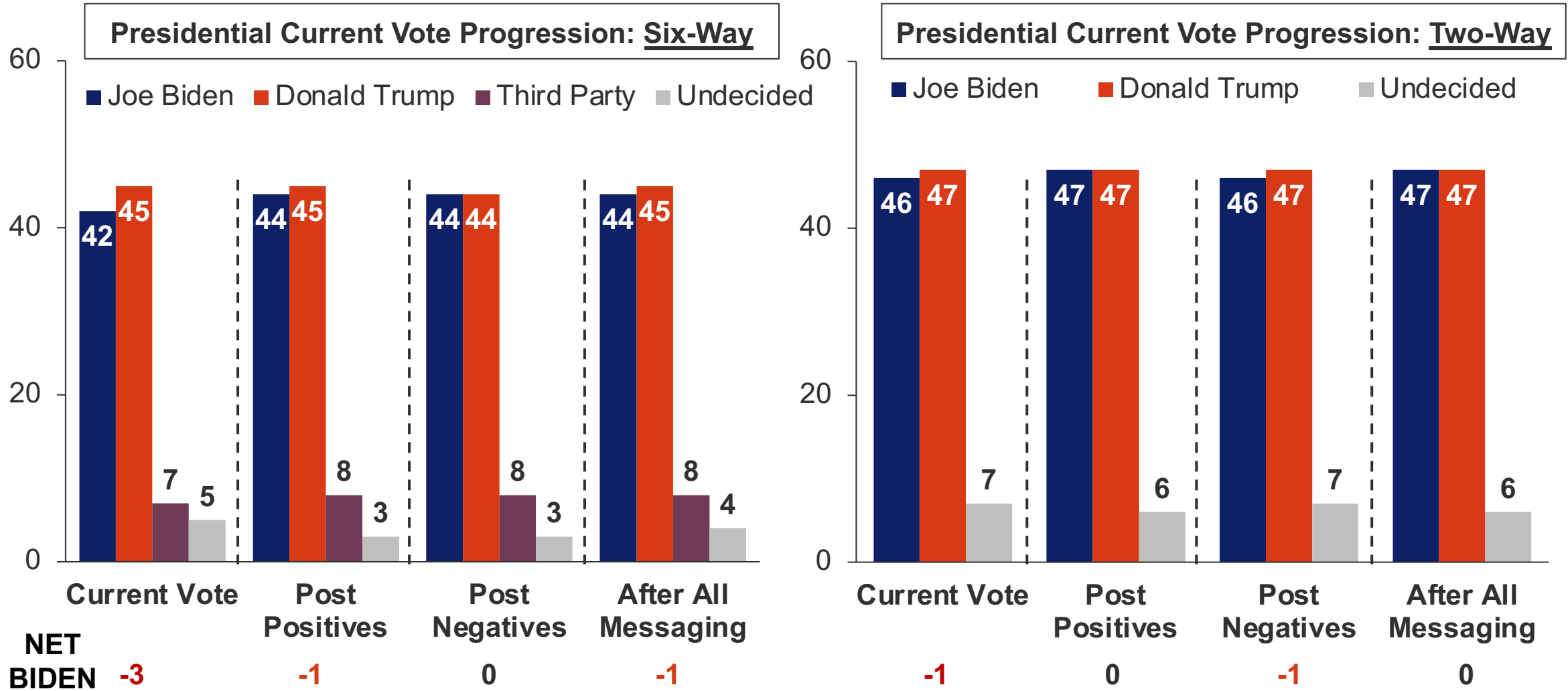


Black Voters



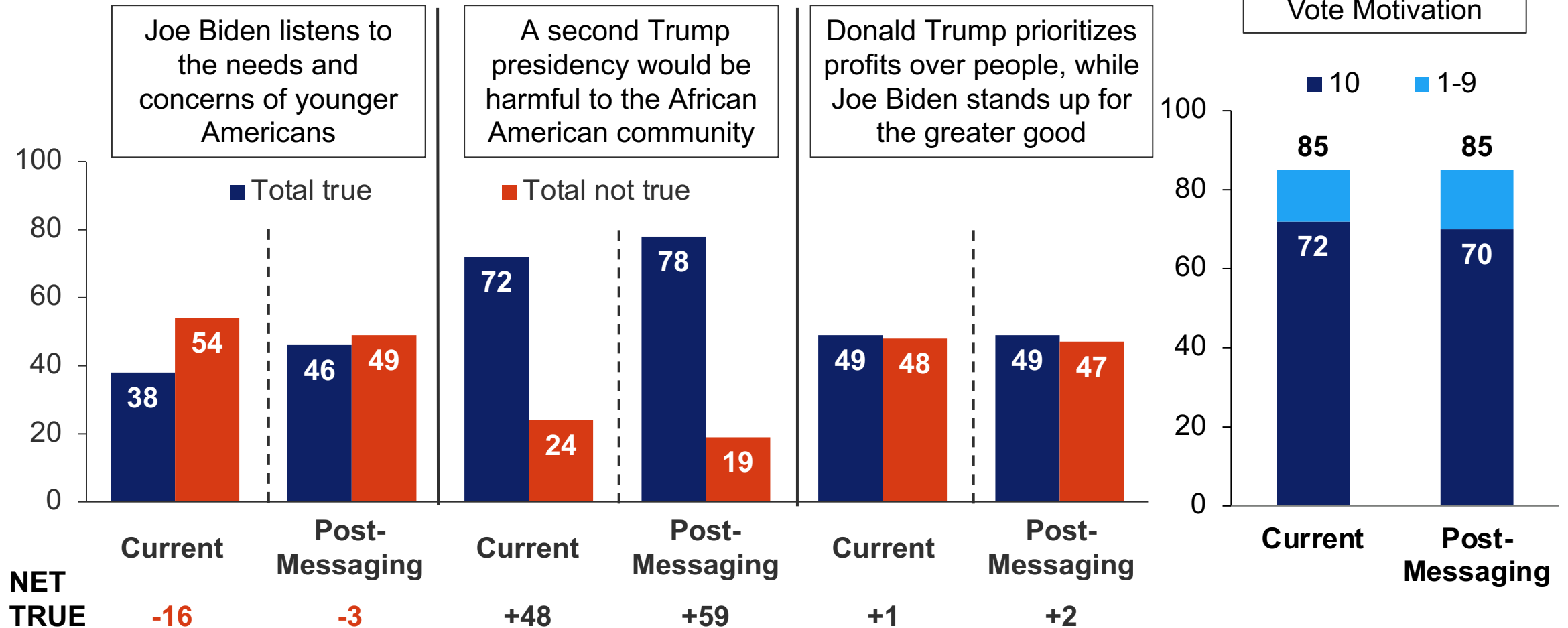
Biggest Subgroup Vote Gains (Net)	
Overall	+2
18-22	+12
Black Men	+12
Black 18-34	+11
White 18-34	+4

The margin moved by 2 points in the multi-candidate vote and by 1-point in the two-way among voters overall.



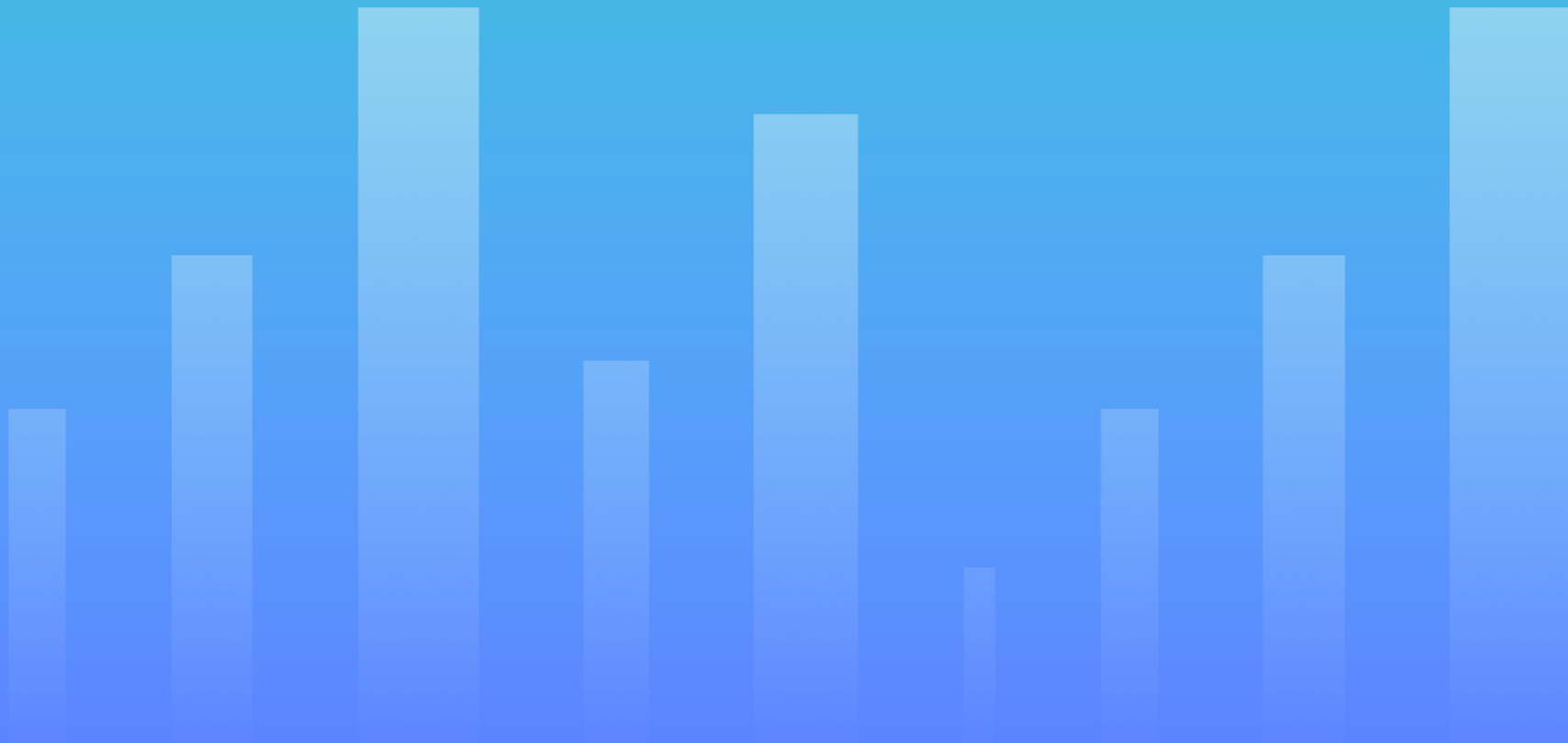
After messaging, young voters are more likely to agree that Biden listens to their needs and Black voters are more likely to agree that a second Trump presidency would be harmful to their community.

Impact of Messaging on Other Metrics





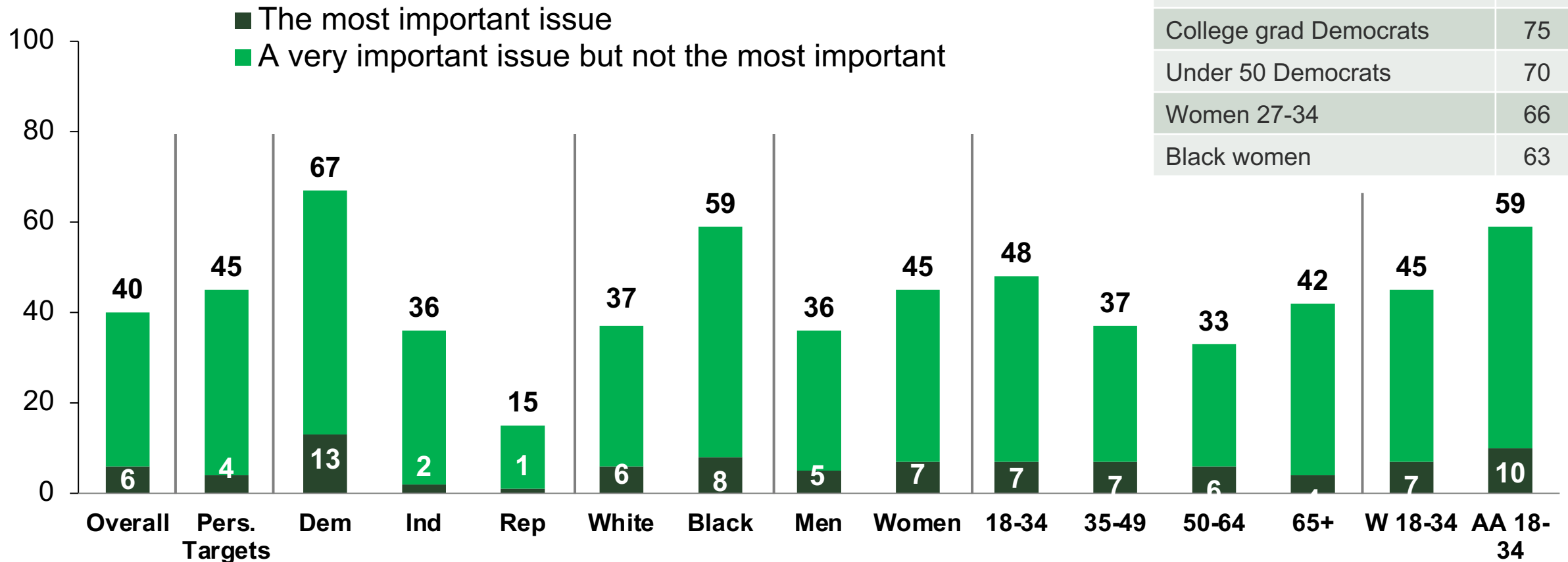
Baseline Perceptions of Biden's and Trump's Climate Records



40% of Michigan registered voters say that climate and clean energy are very important to their presidential vote this year

Liberals, college grad Democrats and younger Democrats are most likely to be climate voters.

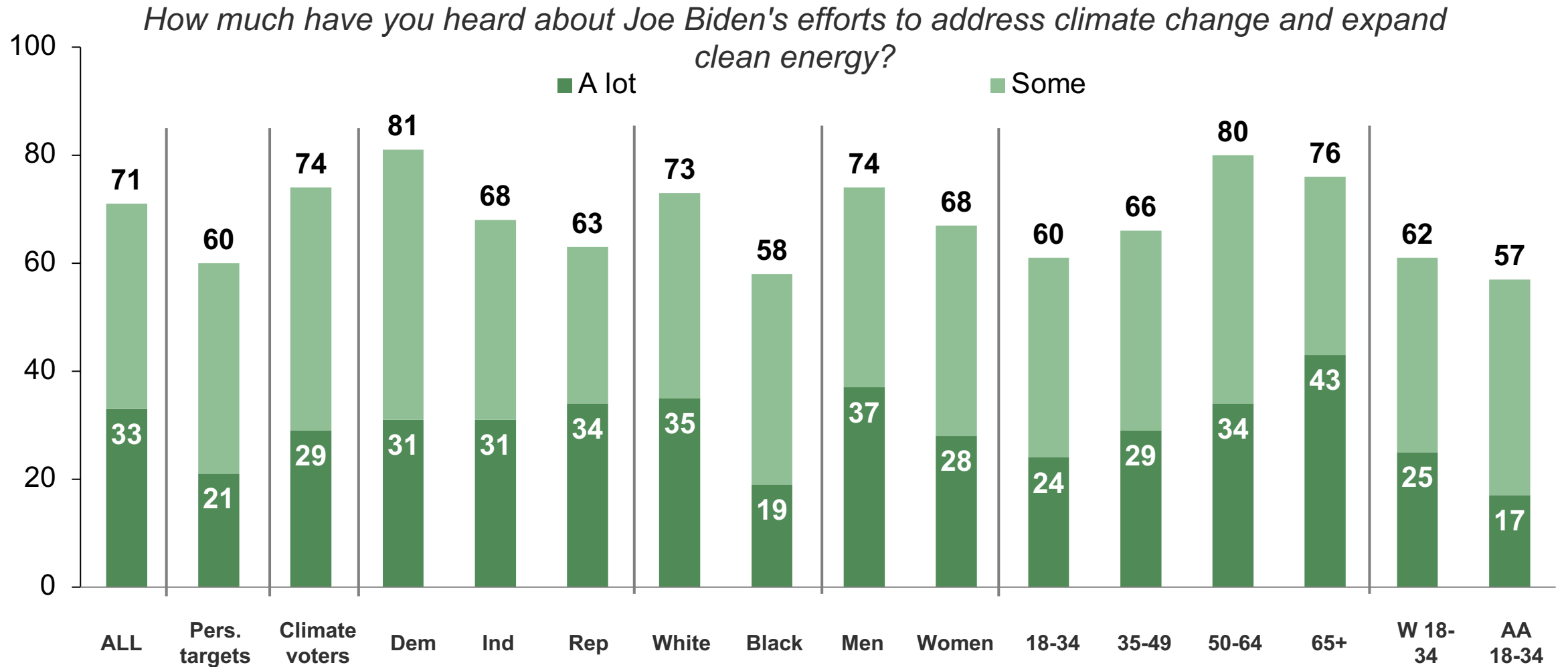
Importance of Climate Change and Clean Energy to Presidential Vote



Highest % Very Important	
Overall	40
Liberals	78
College grad Democrats	75
Under 50 Democrats	70
Women 27-34	66
Black women	63

Only a third of registered voters in Michigan have heard "a lot" about President Biden's climate action and clean energy efforts.

Less than 30% of climate voters, persuasion targets, Black voters, or voters under 35 have heard a lot.



The lack of awareness of Biden's accomplishments on climate change and clean energy was evident in the focus groups as well.

"I don't know if I've ever heard either candidate ever really talk about climate change." – 35-49 Black Woman

"I know he supports EV infrastructure, but other than that the messaging isn't strong enough to tell what he's accomplishing." – 18-34 Black man

"It says most ambitious climate agenda, if it is important, why haven't a lot of people heard of this?"

-18-34 White Woman

"I heard something about natural gas, but they weren't making a big hoopla about it" – 18-34 Black man

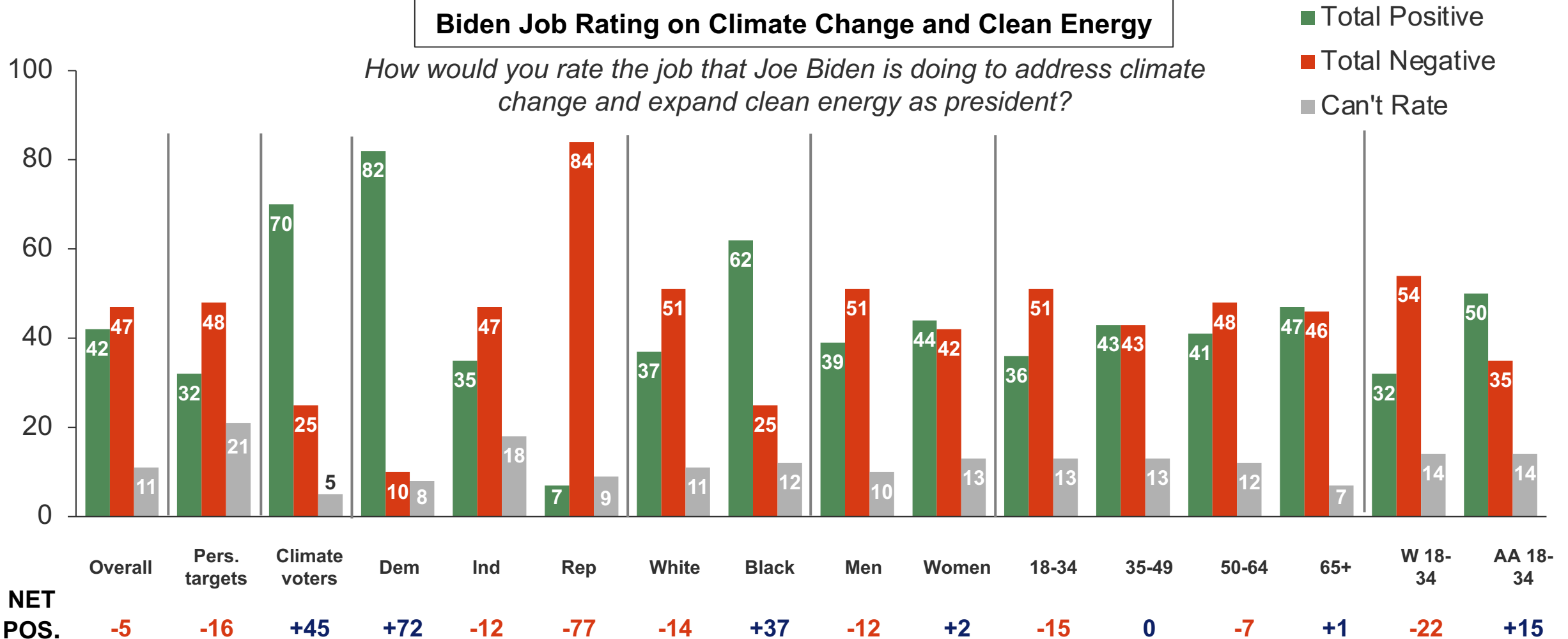
"I'm not sure the Democratic team has delivered on some of the climate things they wish they could" -35-49 White Woman

11% of voters are unsure about Biden's climate record which gives us an opportunity to boost his ratings.

Biden's job rating on climate change and clean energy is narrowly underwater due to the lack of awareness.

Biden Job Rating on Climate Change and Clean Energy

How would you rate the job that Joe Biden is doing to address climate change and expand clean energy as president?



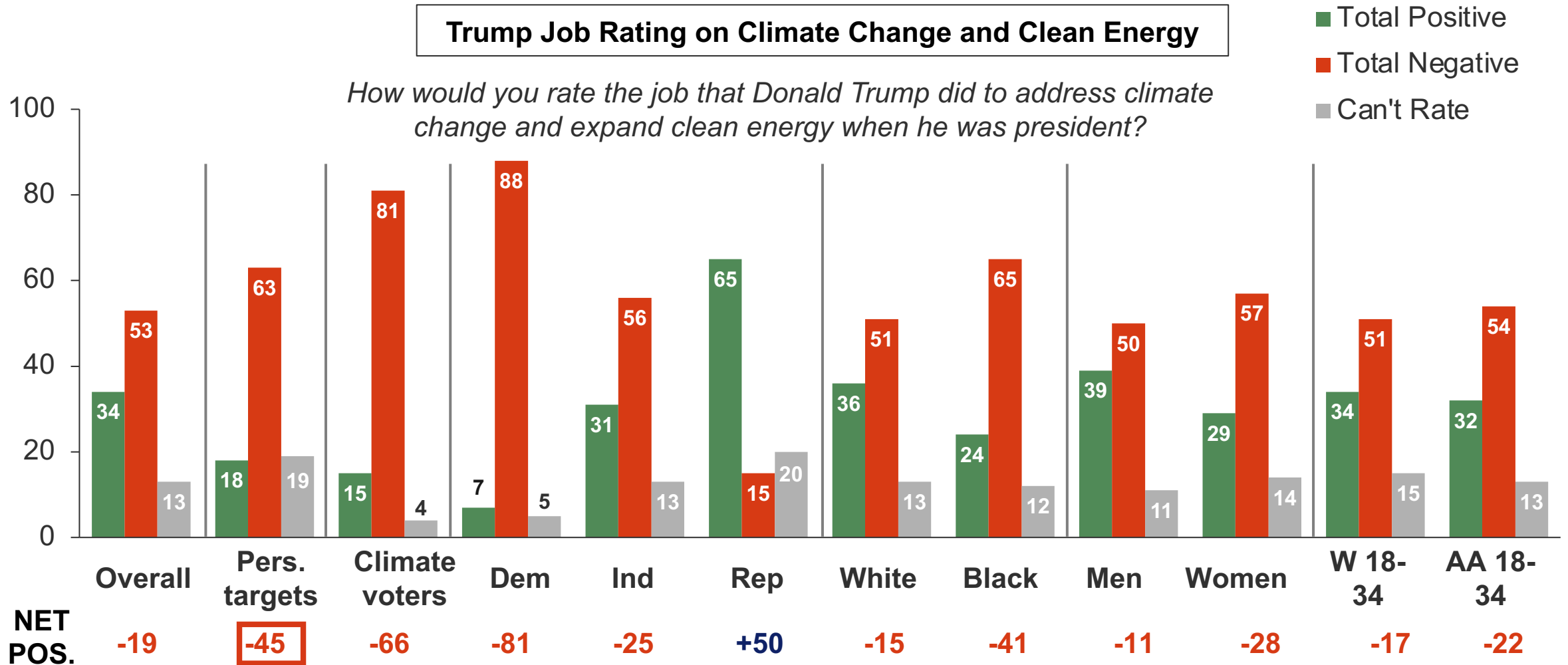
■ Total Positive
■ Total Negative
■ Can't Rate

Voters rate Trump's handling of climate change and clean energy negatively by 19 points.

He is 45 points underwater on the issue with our persuasion targets.

Trump Job Rating on Climate Change and Clean Energy

How would you rate the job that Donald Trump did to address climate change and expand clean energy when he was president?

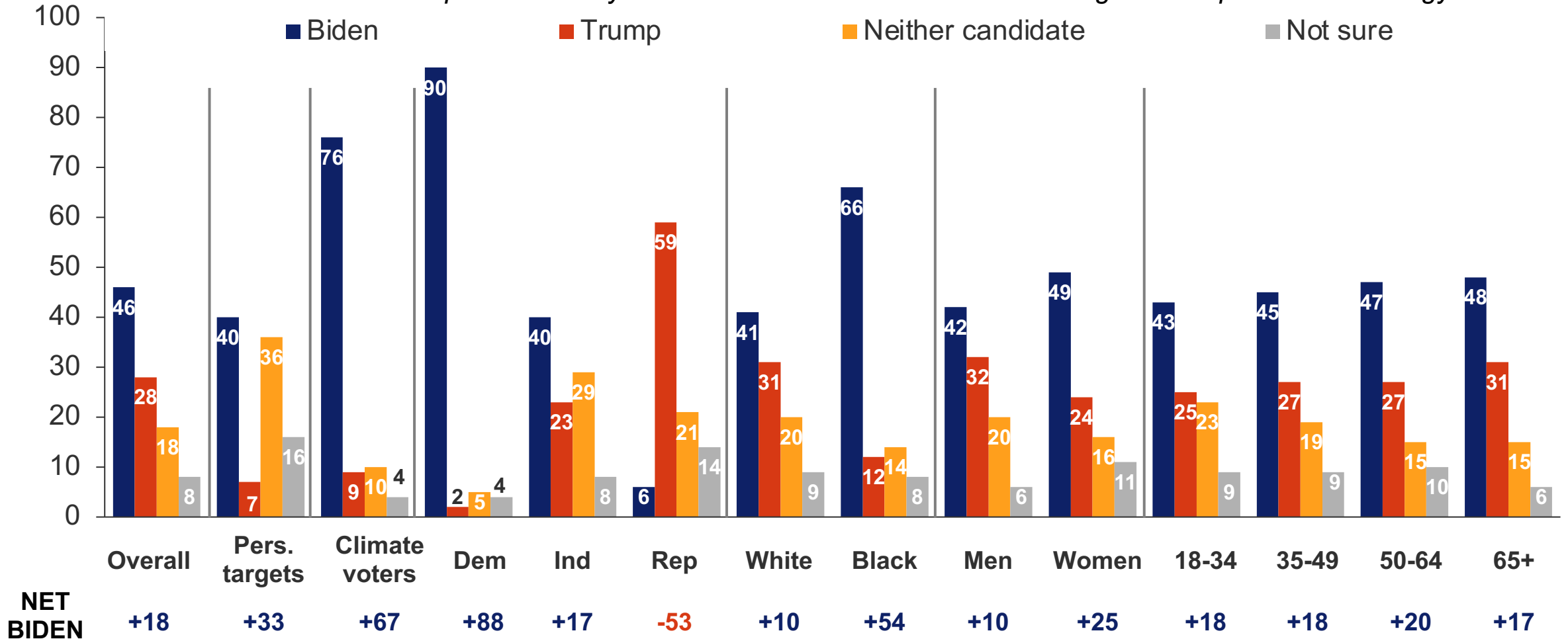



■ Total Positive
 ■ Total Negative
 ■ Can't Rate

Voters trust Biden over Trump on climate and clean energy but over a quarter of voters are on the fence.

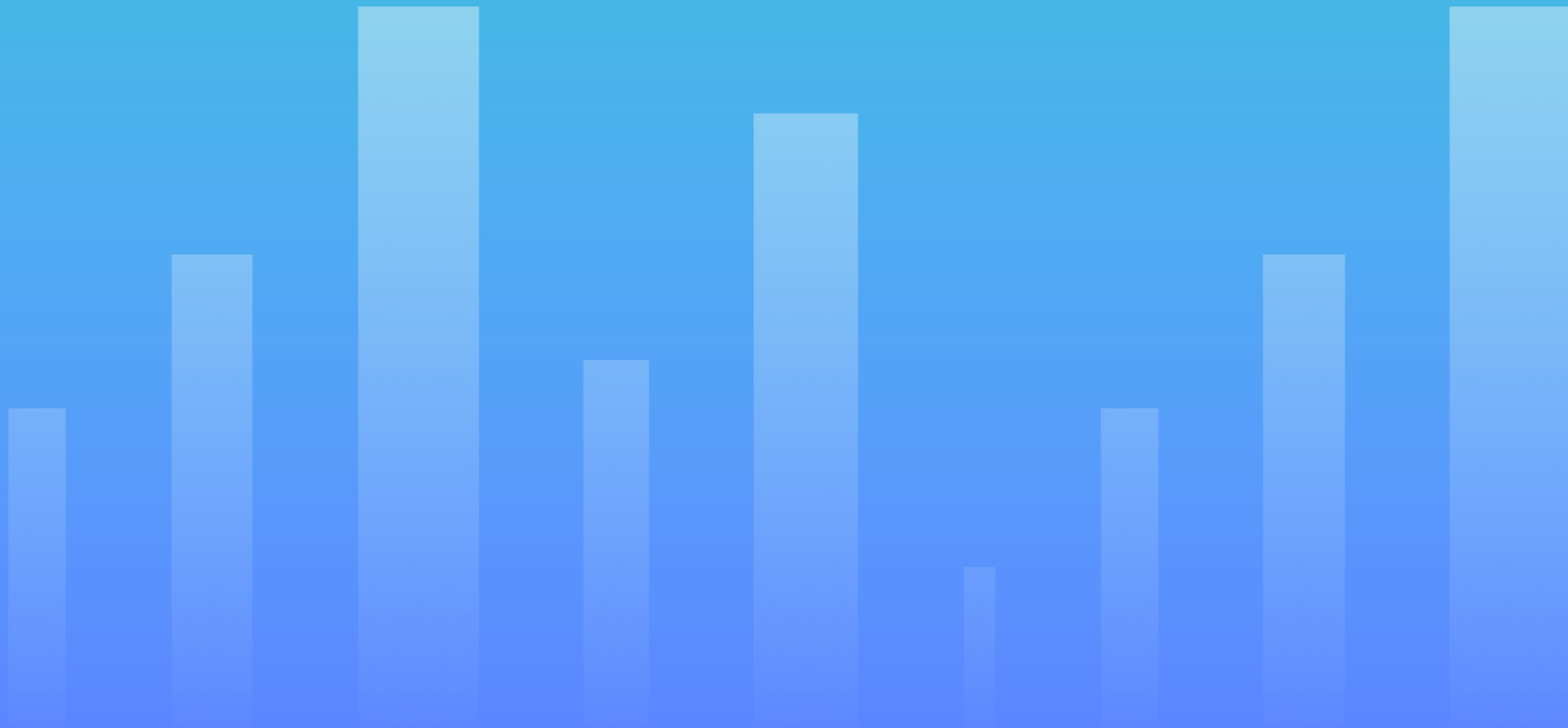
52% of our persuasion targets don't give an advantage to either candidate on the issue.

Which candidate for president do you trust more to address climate change and expand clean energy?





Making the Case for Biden: Positive Messaging on Climate and Clean Energy



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Biden’s record on protecting our health, our water, holding oil and gas companies accountable and his passing of the most ambitious climate and clean energy plan in U.S. history are the top messages among persuadable voters.

Biden Environmental Messages – Top Tier % Top Three Most Important	Pers. Targets	Biden Expansion	Biden Climate JR Gain*	Climate Voters	Low Motivation Biden	18-34	Black
[HEALTH] Biden understands that pollution from dirty energy sources puts our health at risk. That’s why he strengthened the Clean Air and Water Acts, passed a law to replace 100 percent of lead pipes, and announced the first-ever limits on cancer-causing “forever chemicals” to protect drinking water.	51	53	51	50	35	48	45
[WATER] Biden awarded nearly \$150 million to upgrade drinking water infrastructure and replace unsafe lead pipes across Michigan and more than \$35 million to help remove new contaminants from the state’s drinking water.	46	49	45	39	68	46	48
[PASSED MOST AMBITIOUS PLAN] Biden passed the most ambitious climate and clean energy plan in U.S. history. It triples the production of clean energy, cuts carbon pollution by up to 41% by 2030, and is projected to save Americans up to \$38 billion in electricity costs.	35	40	47	57	41	44	33
[OIL AND GAS ACCOUNTABILITY] Biden is holding oil and gas companies accountable by charging them for emitting dirty gas, going after greedy corporations who are increasing their profits by making us pay more, and requiring them to clean up hazardous oil wells that leak pollution into communities	35	48	38	35	38	33	41

The effectiveness of these messages was consistent with reactions to them in the focus groups, especially given Flint, which was brought up organically by several participants.

“We have Flint here. It’s a hot button issue, so we’re very much interested in having investment.” – 35-49 Black Man

“What stuck with me was that Biden was punishing and fining corporations for pollution spillage, so if that’s true, I wasn’t really aware of that.” – 35-49 White Woman

“Knowing the history of Detroit, a lot of cities still have pipes 50, 60, 70, 80 years old. And when they come out of the ground you can see it, and the water that’s coming through, and you’re supposed to drink it.” – 18-34 Black Man

“Tripling the production of clean energy and cutting carbon pollution” [is especially important] – 50-64 White Woman

“I think we need [more clean energy], and I actually think that should have probably ramped up long ago” – 50-64 White Woman

“Somebody drilled it into my head about how dangerous it is for the water infrastructure to not be replaced and fixed, so just hearing that anything was being done and going toward it was good to me.” – 18-34 Black Woman

Other messages were not as important among persuadable or climate voters in Michigan.

Biden Environmental Messages – Lower Tier % Top Three Most Important	Persuasion Targets	Biden Expansion	Climate Voters
[CLEAN ENERGY] Biden’s clean energy plan will bring more than \$21.5 billion in clean energy investments to Michigan by 2030, which is already sparking private sector investment and creating more than 20,000 jobs.	31	28	36
[ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE] Biden passed the most ambitious environmental justice plan in U.S. history to reduce air and water pollution in order to prevent asthma, cancer, and birth defects in Black, Latino, and low-income communities.	29	26	32
[ENERGY EFFICIENCY] Michigan received more than \$200 million for consumer home energy rebates thanks to Biden’s programs, which will help some low-income households save an average of 43% on home energy bills.	27	25	18
[CONSERVATION] Biden stopped new oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to protect the natural habitat and work toward its goal of protecting 30% of public lands and waters by 2030.	27	26	21
[ELECTRIC VEHICLES] Biden invested in bringing supply chains back home to produce more electric vehicles and batteries here in the United States, which will help rebuild Michigan’s auto industry and create new jobs.	20	16	14

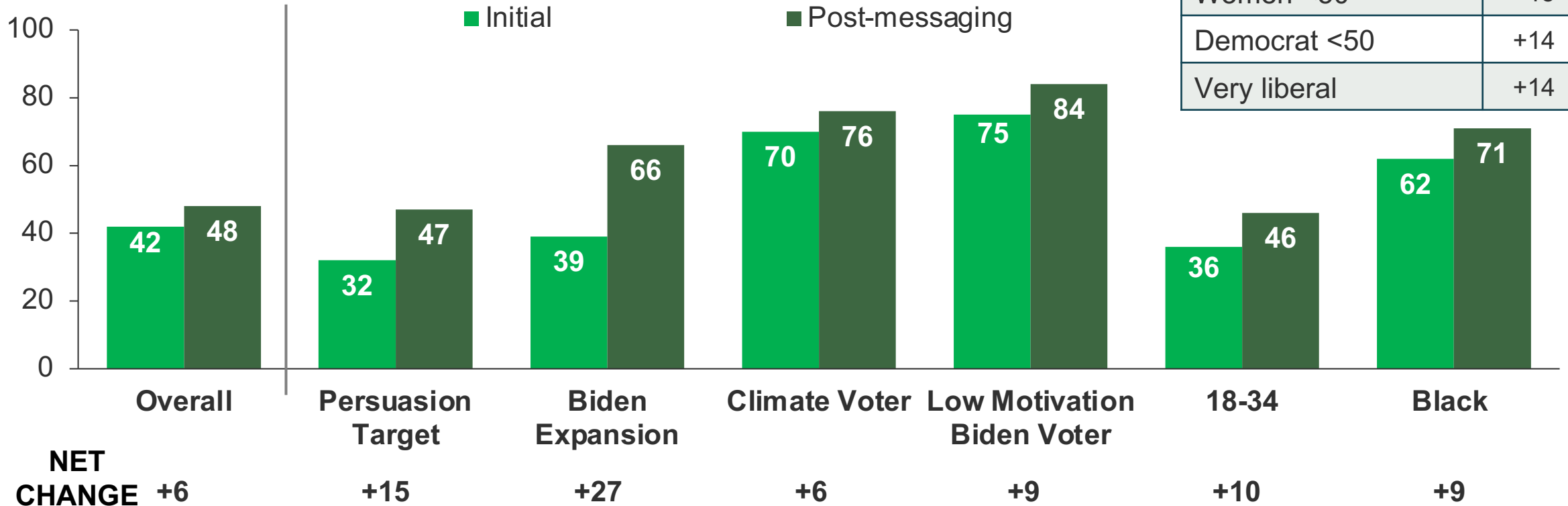
Pairing the message on Biden’s ambitious climate and clean energy actions with the messages on health and water, is our most effective combination – with both with persuadable and climate voters.

Best Biden Environmental Message Combinations % Top Three Most Important	Biden Expansion	Climate Voters
[HEALTH + PASSED MOST AMBITIOUS PLAN]	81	81
[WATER + PASSED MOST AMBITIOUS PLAN]	76	81
[WATER + OIL AND GAS]	73	63
[HEALTH + WATER]	70	70
[HEALTH + OIL AND GAS]	68	62
[PASSED MOST AMBITIOUS PLAN + OIL AND GAS]	67	81

The positive messages increase Biden's approval rating on climate change and clean energy by +6 points, and by +27 with those he most needs to win over.

The positive messaging was especially effective with Indy women and women under 50.

Impact of Messaging on Biden Climate and Clean Energy Job Rating
(% Positive)



Biggest Subgroup Gains	
Overall	+6
Indy women	+16
Women <50	+15
Democrat <50	+14
Very liberal	+14



Making the Case against Trump: Negative Messaging on Trump's Environmental Record and Future Plans



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The top negatives on Trump focus on his record allowing corporations to pollute our air and water, and his destructive plans for a second term.

A message on him selling out to big oil also raises significant concerns.

Trump Environmental Negatives – Top Tier % Top Choice / % Top Three Most Concerning	Persuasion Targets	Trump Persuasion	Trump Climate JR Loss*	Climate Voters	Low Motivation Biden	18-34	Black
[2ND TERM “DICTATOR”/REPEAL] Trump says he would be a "dictator" on his first day in office. He says he wants to gut the Environmental Protection Agency, get rid of clean energy investments, and eliminate safeguards that protect our environment, clean air, and clean drinking water.	35 / 58	30 / 51	51 / 72	52 / 73	45 / 63	42 / 66	48 / 69
[CORPORATE POLLUTERS] Trump allowed corporate polluters to pump chemicals into our water, even more pollution into our air, and then blocked efforts to hold polluters accountable,--leading to thousands of preventable deaths every year from respiratory problems, heart disease, and lung cancer	18 / 61	17 / 59	17 / 53	10 / 62	16 / 62	13 / 57	12 / 62
[TRUMP & BIG OIL “DEAL”] Big Oil is funding Trump’s presidential and legal defense bills after Trump asked them to steer \$1 billion to him. Trump gave big oil company CEOs massive tax breaks as president and now he is promising to do even more to help Big Oil if he is re-elected.	18 / 40	25 / 46	6 / 32	6 / 25	9 / 28	12 / 34	11 / 36

* Voters who shift to disapprove of Trump’s job performance post-messaging.

These messages bolstered voters existing perceptions about Trump and how he put himself ahead of what is best for the country.

*“He’s for profit, not people.” –
18-34 Black Woman*

*“He’s pro-business. He doesn’t care
about the environment.” – 35-49 White
Woman*

*“I just think he’s not
very concerned with
peoples well-being
overall” – 18-34 Black
Man*

*“He showed us what he would do,
he pulled out of the Paris Climate
Accords” – 18-34 Arab American
Man*

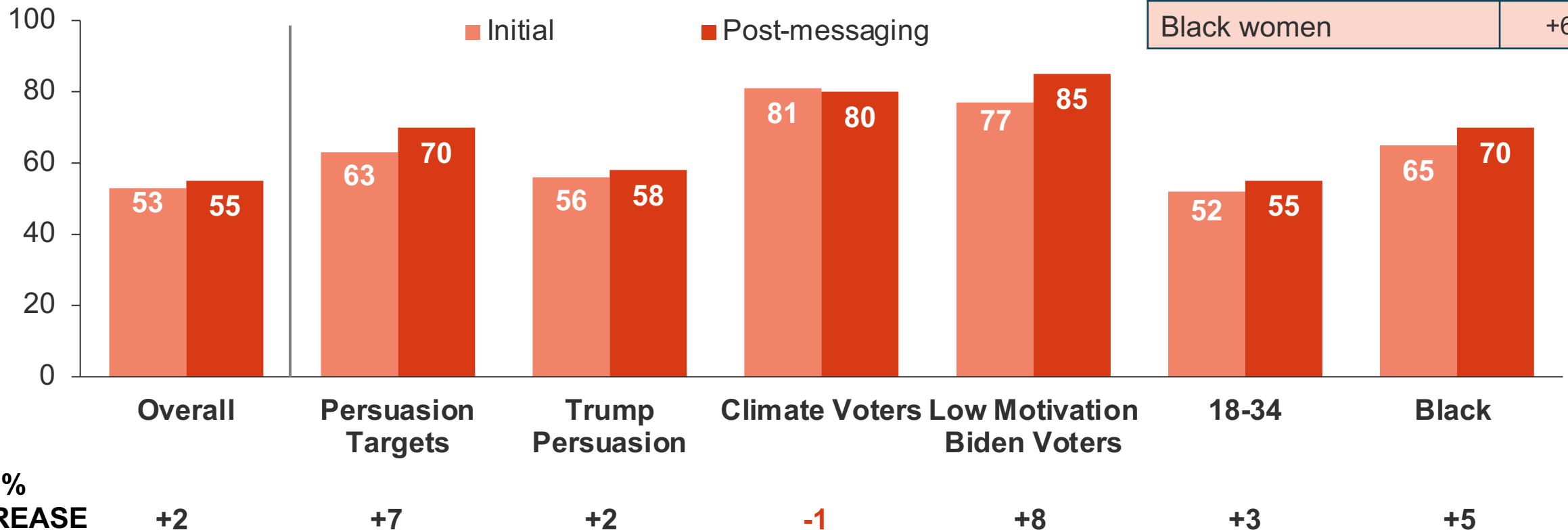
While other negative-Trump messages can be effective in their right context, they were not as important in Michigan

Trump Environmental Negatives – Lower Tier <i>% Top Choice / % Top Three Most Concerning</i>	Persuasion Targets	Trump Persuasion	Climate Voters	Black
[EQUITY] Trump’s decision to allow polluters to spew more pollution into our air is particularly harmful to Black, Latino, and low-income communities, who already experience more extreme heat and higher asthma rates than wealthy white communities.	3 / 35	4 / 44	2 / 27	6 / 38
[ROLLBACKS] As president, Trump put climate deniers and former oil and coal lobbyists in charge of protecting our environment. They rolled back more than one hundred environmental safeguards, putting our health and climate at risk so big corporations could make more money	7 / 32	5 / 25	7 / 37	7 / 32
[INVESTMENTS IN BIG OIL] Trump has had major investments in Big Oil companies, so it’s no surprise that Trump put oil company lobbyists in charge of protecting the environment or gave Big Oil CEOs massive tax breaks. In a second term, Trump would be looking out for himself	6 / 25	6 / 30	2 / 11	4 / 18
[CLIMATE DENIAL PARIS AGREEMENT] Trump has the worst record on climate change of any modern president. He says climate change is a “hoax,” and as president, he pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Agreement	7 / 24	6 / 21	17 / 45	6 / 24
[CLEAN ENERGY MANUFACTURING + CHINA] Trump wants to repeal support for clean energy manufacturing, threatening dozens of new electric and battery projects and over 20,000 new jobs. He let China get a huge head start in the clean energy race, and now when we’re making a comeback he wants to let China win it	6 / 22	6 / 24	4 / 20	6 / 21

The negative messages on Trump had less impact on his job rating than the positives had on Biden's, especially among persuasion audiences – to move voters, contrast is more effective than only negatives.

Younger Black voters were most impacted by the Trump negatives.

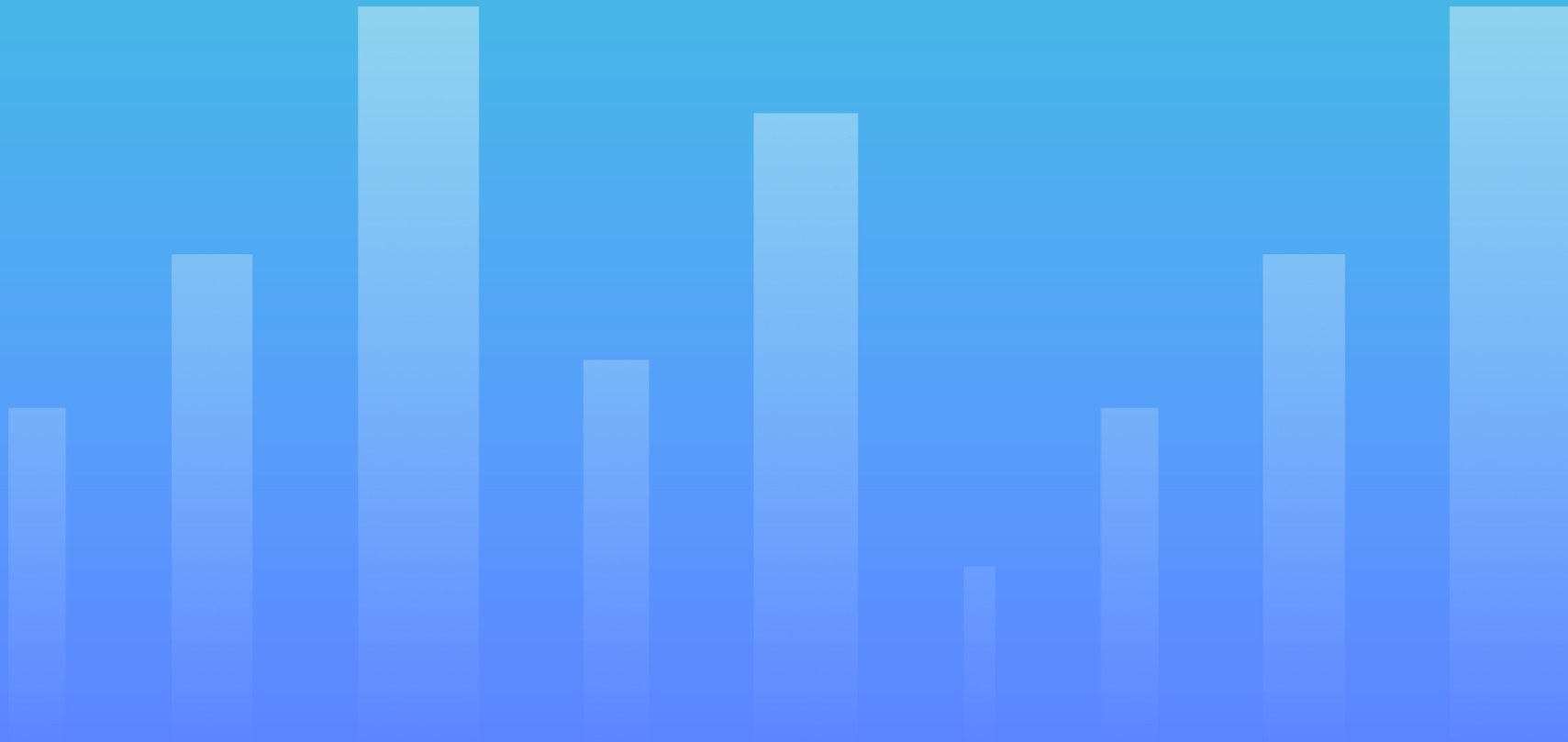
Impact of Messaging on Trump Climate and Clean Energy Job Rating
(% Negative)



Biggest Subgroup Gains	
Overall	+2
Black <50	+9
Independent <50	+7
Black women	+6



Messaging Recommendations



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Messaging and Targeting Recommendations

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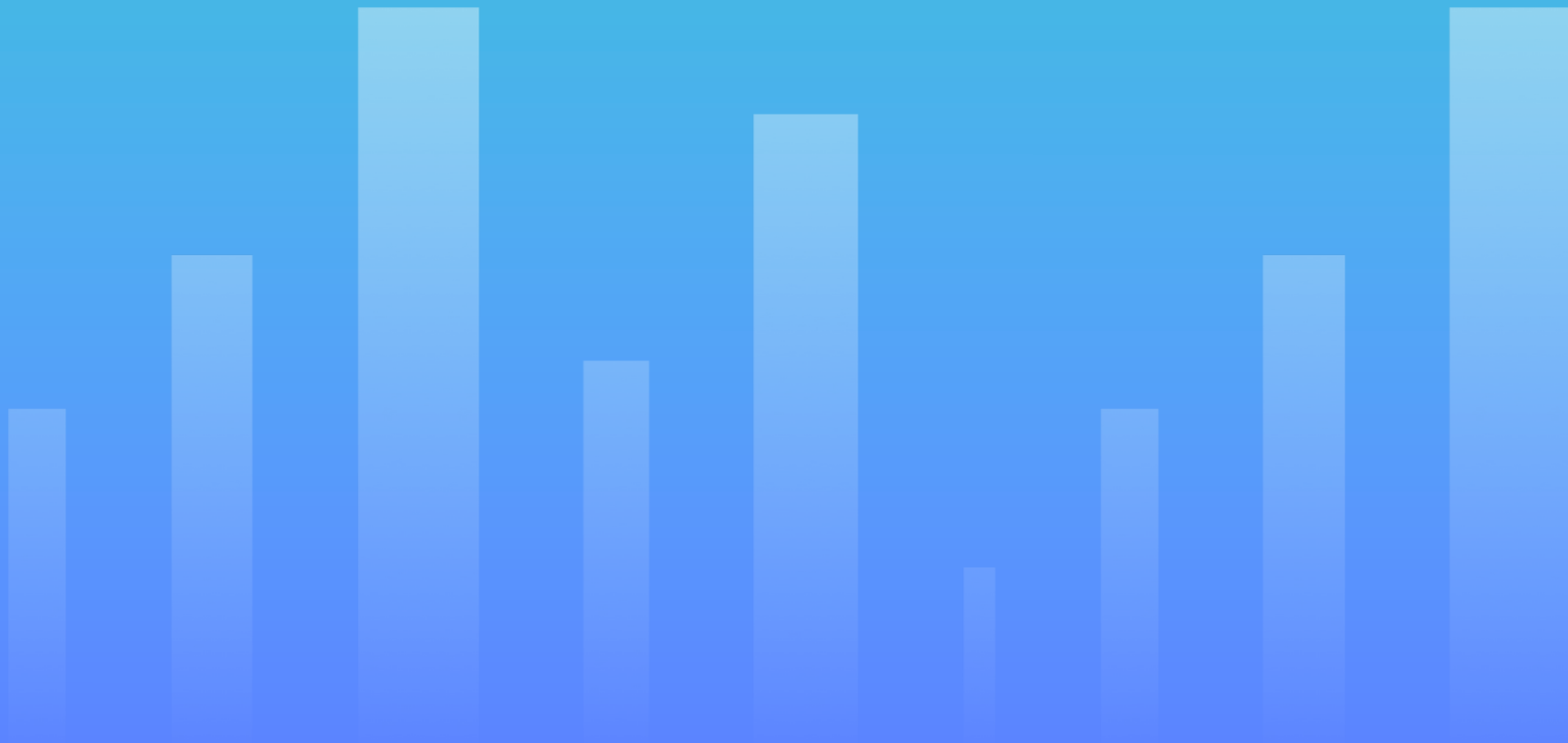
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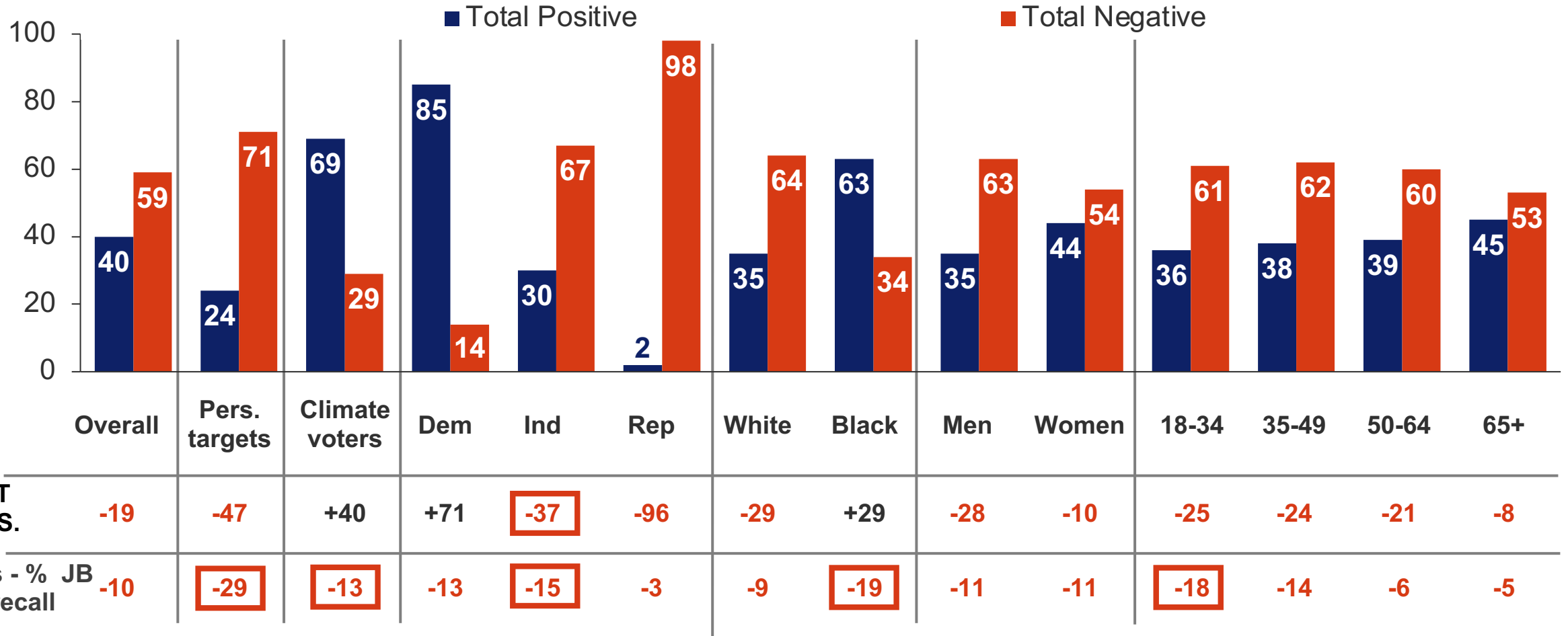


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Biden's approval rating is holding up well among Democrats but is 37 points underwater with Independents.

There is room to grow with climate voters as well.

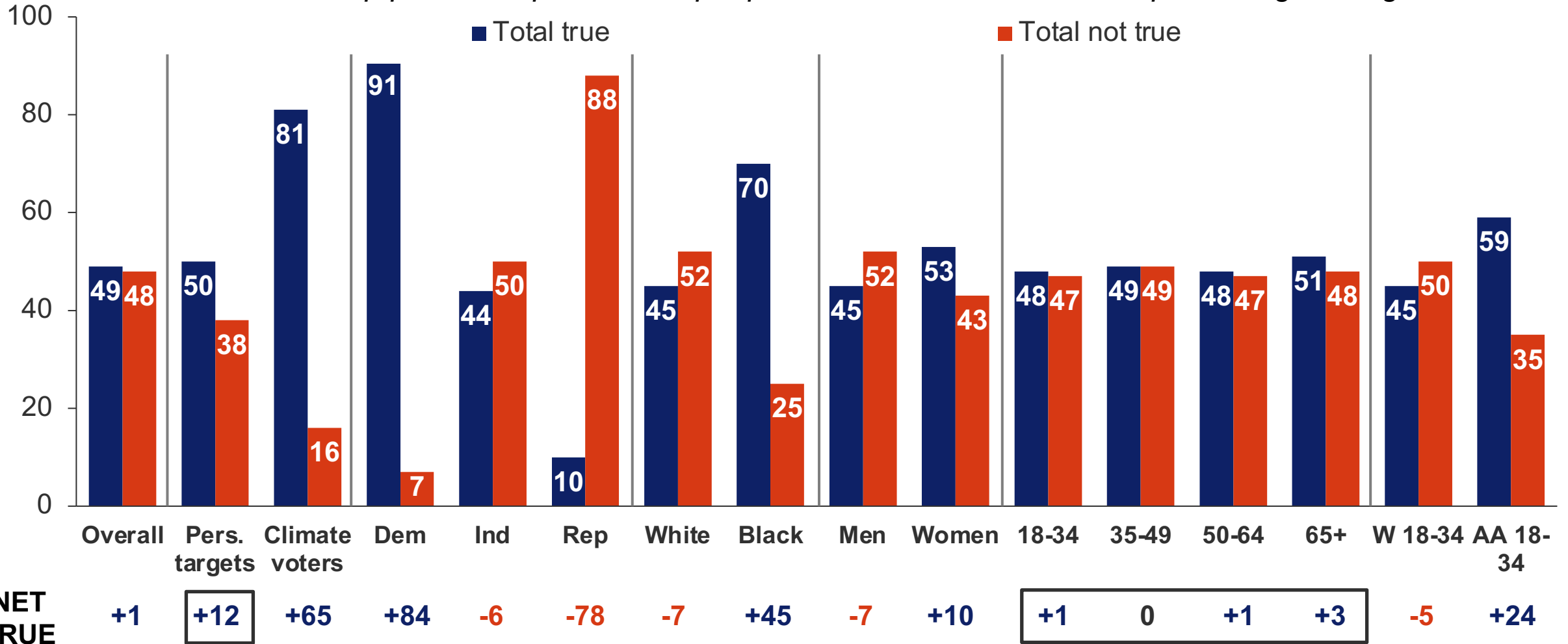
Biden Job Rating



A plurality of voters agree that Trump prioritizes profits while Biden stands up for the greater good.

Biden's advantage grows to 12 points among persuasion targets. There is no difference by age.

Donald Trump prioritizes profits over people, while Joe Biden stands up for the greater good.



Trump supporters, White voters, and voters 50 and over are most motivated to vote. There are significant motivation gaps by partisanship, race, and age.

Black voters under 35 and 3rd Party voters are the least motivated to vote.

