



MERCURY
ANALYTICS

**DEEPLY DIVIDED NATION.
OR ARE WE?**

**WE HAVE IT COMPLETELY
WRONG.**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

In the days immediately after the 2022 US midterm elections, a national voter research study was launched to understand how US registered voters feel about the current state of politics in the US, how much they value unity and collaboration between opposing political parties, and their reactions to a proposed “Unity Pledge”, which would commit a political candidate to run on a platform of civility and greater bipartisanship.

This study focused on registered voters in the US, with demographic quotas set to ensure a nationally representative sample. A total of 1108 registered voters were recruited by professional sample providers between November 9th and 10th, 2022. As a result, the study exposes the views of the electorate just after voting in the midterm election.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Today, the US appears to be hopelessly divided. In an environment in which many would agree that the media reports with bias and supports news pundits who frequently point fingers and say that one side is trying to save the country while the other is trying to ruin it, extreme political representatives on both sides regularly attack those they disagree with and avoid talking about the issues or providing substance.

Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, have always had disagreements, yet in the past they respected each other and worked together.

Both sides want the best for America – they just have different views of what that looks like and how we should get there. There was a time when politicians of all party affiliations found ways to accomplish big things by doing the hard work of respecting each other, blending ideas and working together.



President Ronald Regan (R), Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill (D), and Vice-President George H. W. Bush (R)

The study shows that American voters overwhelmingly favor a return to civility and a return to collaboration and unity, even though we politically disagree on many issues. Candidates that embrace these principals are more likely to get support from 90%+ of their party's registered voters.

- **Almost 9 in 10** registered voters overall believe it is "extremely" or "very" important for our elected officials to act respectfully toward one another and work cooperatively to solve the challenges facing our country.
- **Fewer than 4 in 10** registered voters think that the US Congress is functioning well in terms of delivering its mission – and only **1 in 10** think it is functioning "very well". Just 56% of Democrats indicate that Democratic Members "almost always" or "often" act respectfully and work cooperatively with Republican Members, compared to only 37% of Republicans who think their Members act respectfully towards Democrats.
- **7 in 10** Republican, Democratic and Independent registered voters agree with the statement: "The divisions that exist between Republicans and Democrats are bad for America. I want to see Republicans and Democrats working together again solving our problems."
- And finally, **9 in 10** registered voters overall indicating that they would be "much" or "somewhat" more likely to support a political candidate that signed and endorsed the Unity Pledge.

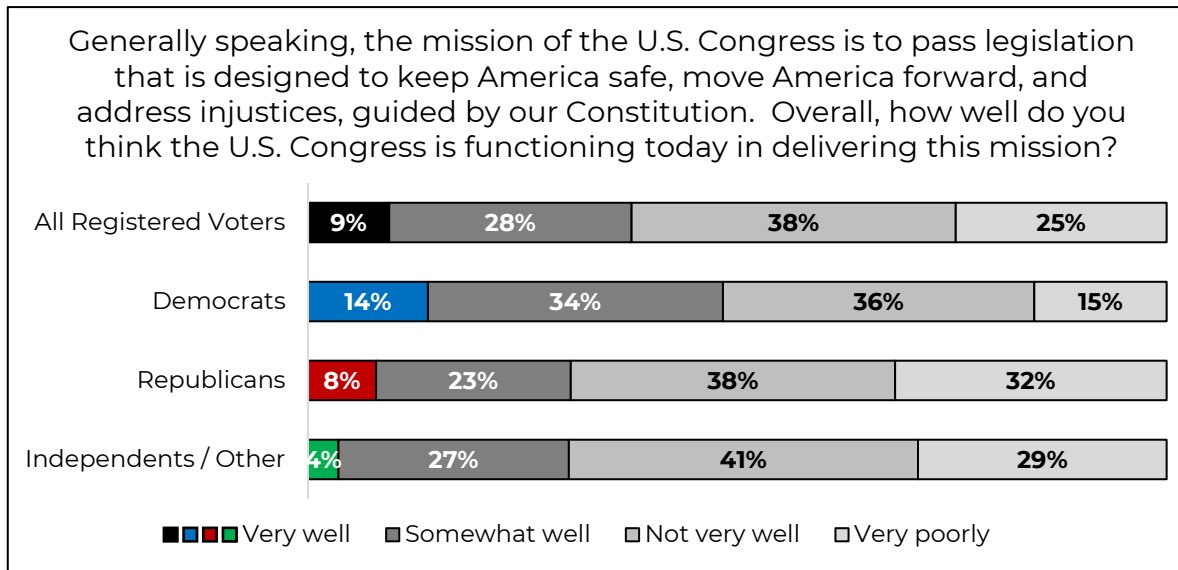
Today, representatives from the extremes of both parties dominate the air waves by talking the loudest, driving anger, and appealing only to their core base. Magnified by political leaning media, these extreme voices appear to represent the majority. However...

AMERICANS FROM ALL POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES WANT A RETURN TO CIVILITY AND COOPERATION IN GOVERNMENT

RATING CONGRESS' PERFORMANCE

Fewer than **4 in 10** registered voters think that the US Congress is functioning well in terms of delivering its mission – and less than **1 in 10** think it is functioning “very well”.

- Democrats are more positive about Congress' performance, with 49% rating the delivery of its mission “very” or “somewhat” well, while Republicans and Independents are less positive (only 31% rate it “very” or “somewhat” well).



Why do you think the U.S. Congress is functioning [“very well”/“somewhat well”] well in delivering this mission? (n418)

“The US is still launching policies ahead of the rest of the world: it has combated injustices, for example, with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, there are still ways to go. Additionally, in recent years divisions in America has hindered the Congress.” - Republican

“Well I think there’s always checks and balances because the two parties don’t agree so in that sense they are working together.” - Democrat

“Times have changed and people have changed since the constitution was written. I believe that there have been some appropriate changes.” – Independent / Other

Why do you think the U.S. Congress is functioning [“not very well”/“very poorly”] in delivering this mission? (n690)

“I think that the U.S. Congress is functioning very poorly because of all the illegal aliens flooding our borders, all he drugs coming across our borders and trafficking women and children. They can stop it but they have not.” - Republican

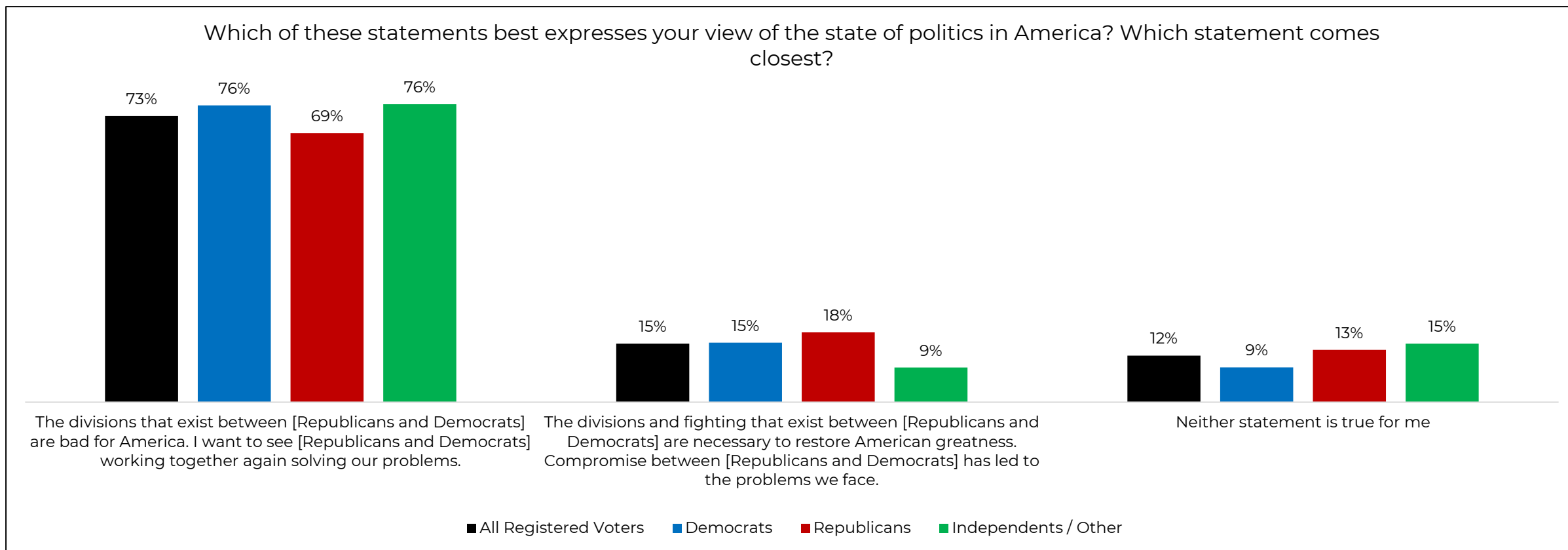
“because we still face many issues that are harming our state such as gun violence, terrorism, job inflation, climate control, cyber bullying,” - Democrat

“The country is almost as divided as during the civil rights era, gun violence and crime is out of control, and rights for everyone but white men are being eroded” – Independent / Other

ARE DIVISIONS BAD OR ARE THEY NECESSARY?

Overall, **7 in 10** registered voters want Republicans and Democrats to work together and indicate that their view of the state of politics in America is best described by the statement: *“The divisions that exist between Republicans and Democrats are bad for America. I want to see Republicans and Democrats working together again solving our problems.”* vs *“The divisions and fighting that exist between Republicans and Democrats are necessary to restore American greatness. Compromise between Republicans and Democrats has led to the problems we face.”*

- Almost **5 times** the number of Republicans, Democrats and Independents want both parties to work together versus stay divided.



FROM VOTERS... WHY?

What are the most important reasons that you want Republicans and Democrats to work together? (n810)

“I think that everyone has been elected by the people to represent them and they need to do their jobs for the people not for their party” – Republican

“I believe the only way to enact legislation that benefits everyone is through cooperation between Democrats and Republicans.” – Republican

“I think having two parties at polar ends makes political warfare more of a priority with politicians than actually solving any problems we have.” – Democrat

“Continued division will only lead to civil war, and this country doesn't need another such conflict.” – Democrat

“because if they dont real progress will not happen, we are one people unto seperate democraes. the fighting back in forth is like children and the house around them can not be productive with the distraction” – Independent / Other

“Because we are all part of the same Country, we have to come up with solutions for every single person who lives here.” – Independent / Other

What are the most important reasons that you believe Republicans and Democrats should not try to work together? (n166)

“There is no compromise on subjects as benefits for those who REFUSE to work. No compromise on Illegal Immigration. No compromise on Socialism and Communism in this country. No compromise on killing the unborn.” – Republican

“Compromise on some issues is simply not possible given the divide in beliefs” - Republican

“Because the Republicans cares nothing about the United States people. They just want to keep arguing and fighting and giving themselves outrageous raises, while we all suffer.” – Democrat

“I don't think it's possible for a lot of the most pressing matters, because of how directly opposed a lot of each party's views are.” - Democrat

“Because the Democrats are not interested in what most of the people want. That are turning America into a socialist country.” –Independent / Other

“The republicans always go back on their promises and are too extreme.” – Independent / Other

How do you think Republicans and Democrats should treat each other? (n132)

“We should understand each other's own differences and beliefs and agree to disagree. We don't have to be "united" but fighting amongst ourselves is also unwanted.” - Republican

“with respect and accept the fact that people may disagree with your ideas since each party has its own core platform. there is not need to insult or cut down the other group.” – Republican

“Treat each other with respect because there is no side that is absolutely right or absolutely wrong. There are good and bad in both parties and some policies are good while others not so good from either party.” – Democrat

“Each side needs to recognize their own faults before they critique the other.” - Democrat

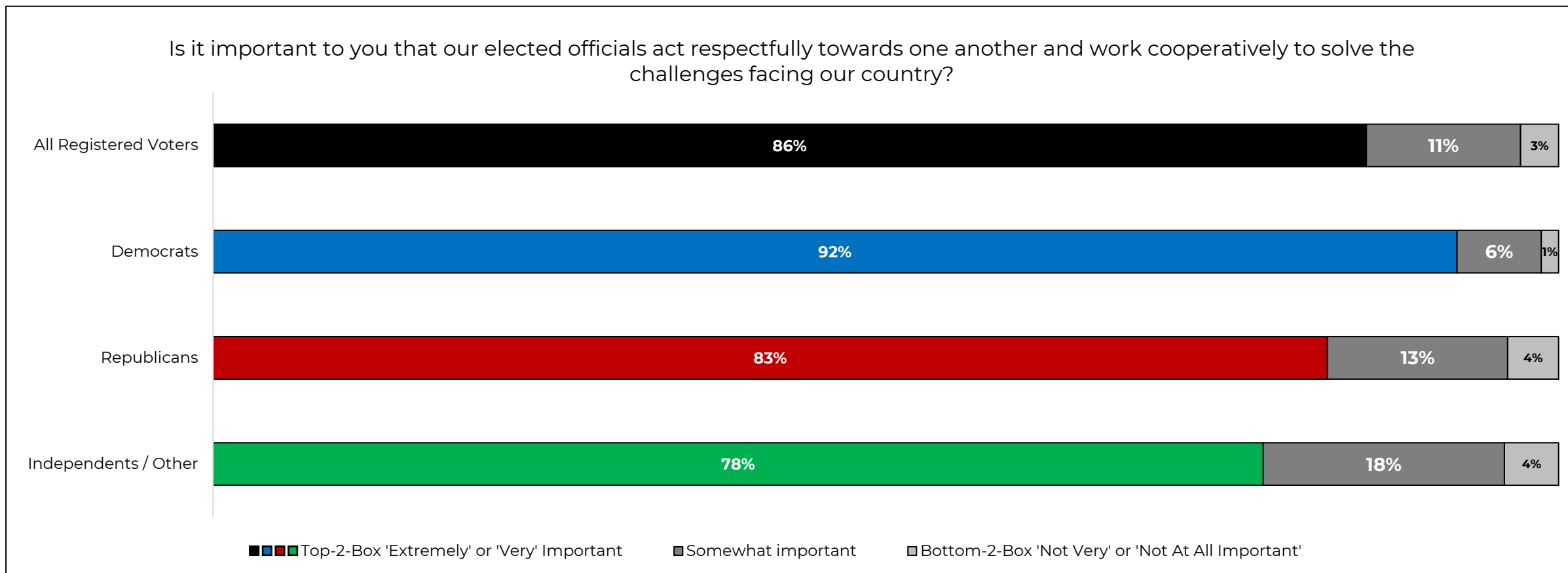
“With kindness. Stop the name-calling. And stop the lying.” – Independent / Other

“They should treat each other with respect.” – Independent / Other

IS UNITY IMPORTANT TO VOTERS?

86% of registered voters overall believe it is “extremely” or “very” important for our elected officials to act respectfully toward one another and work cooperatively to solve the challenges facing our country, approximately **8 times** the number of participants that view it as “Not very” or “Not at all” important.

- Democrats place the most importance on Unity, with 92% indicating that respect and cooperation from elected officials is “extremely” or “very” important, followed by Republicans (86% “extremely” or “very” important), and then Independents (78% “extremely” or “very” important).



HOW DO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ACT?

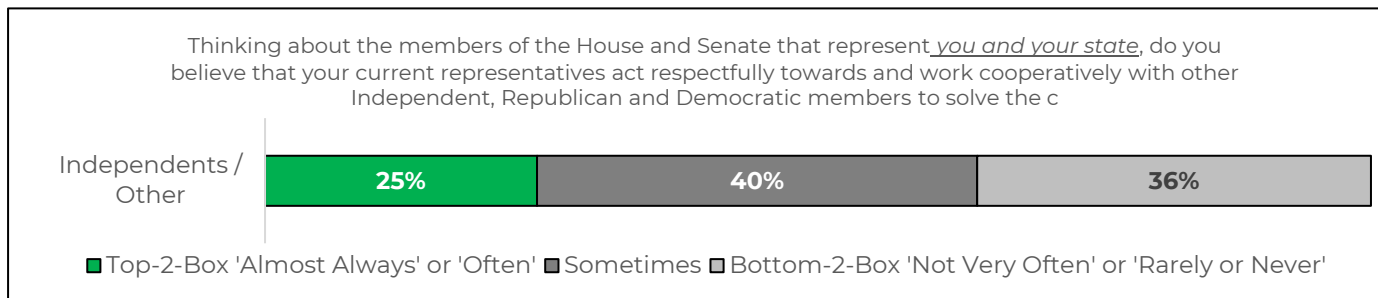
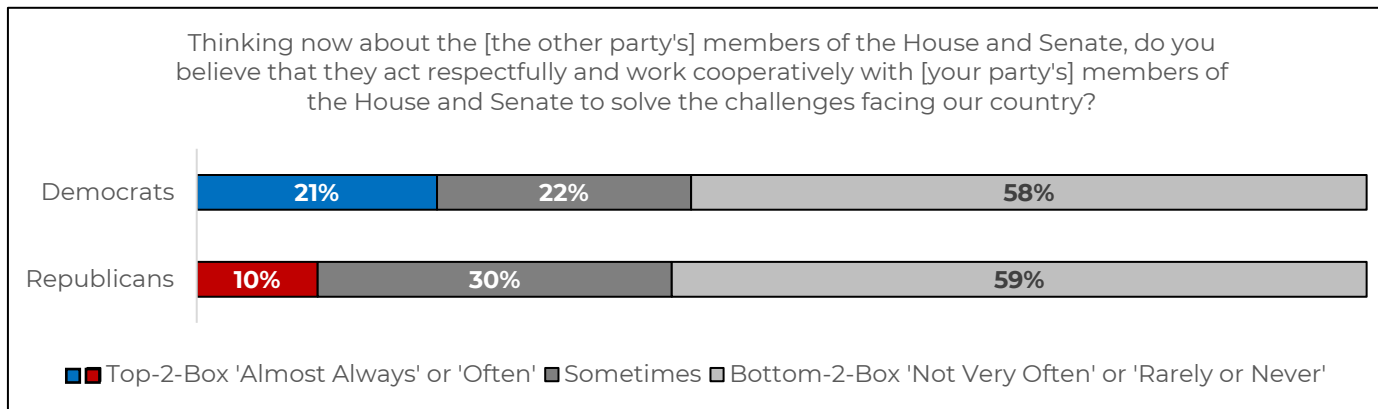
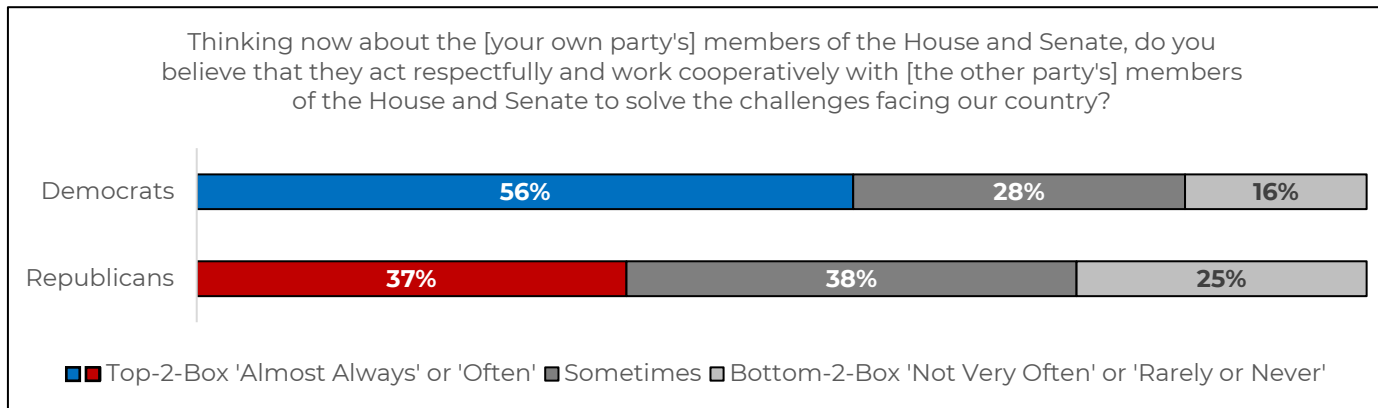
Democrats view their party representatives to be more respectful and cooperative than Republicans' view their own party's members.

- When asked to evaluate the behavior of their own party's Members of Congress, 56% of Democrats indicate that Democratic Members "almost always" or "often" act respectfully and work cooperatively with Republican Members, compared to only 37% of Republicans who think their Members act respectfully and cooperate with Democrats.

When rating each other, Democrats and Republicans both view the other party's behavior toward their members very negatively, with 3 in 5 indicating Members of the opposing party respect and cooperate "not very often" or "rarely or never".

- 21% of Democrats say that Republican Members are "almost always" or "often" respectful and cooperative versus only 10% of Republicans positively rating Democratic members.

Independents are split – 25% think their members are respectful "almost always" or "often", 40% think they act this way sometimes, and 36% think they act respectfully "not very often" or "rarely or never".



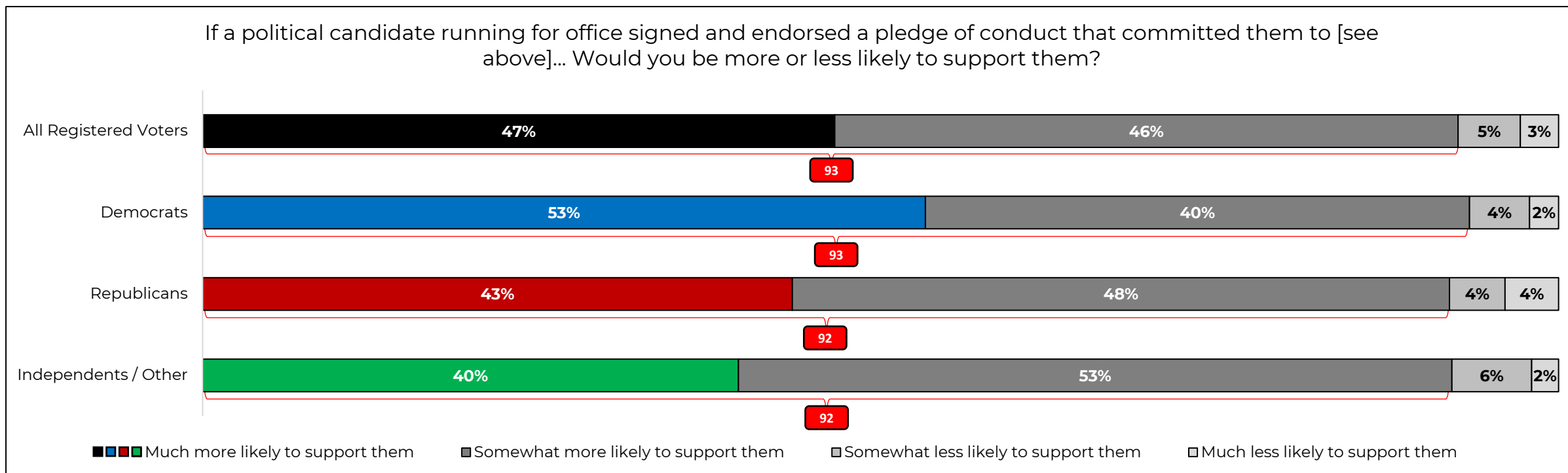
WOULD VOTERS SUPPORT A PLEDGE OF UNITY?

Response to the Unity Pledge, shown on the right, was overwhelmingly positive, with **over 90%** of registered voters from all parties indicating that they would be “much” or “somewhat” more likely to support a political candidate that signed and endorsed the Unity Pledge.

- **Less than 10%** of voters of any party would be “somewhat” or “much” less supportive of a candidate who signed and endorsed the pledge.

UNITY PLEDGE FOR CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

- I will clearly communicate how I feel about an issue without insulting other legislators that I disagree with
- I will negotiate hard for those things I feel strongly about, but work with other legislators who feel differently to find compromises, even if the compromises include some issues that I do not agree with
- I endorse the statement that “I am an American 1ST. I am a [BASED ON PARTY “Republican/Democrat/Independent”] 2nd.”

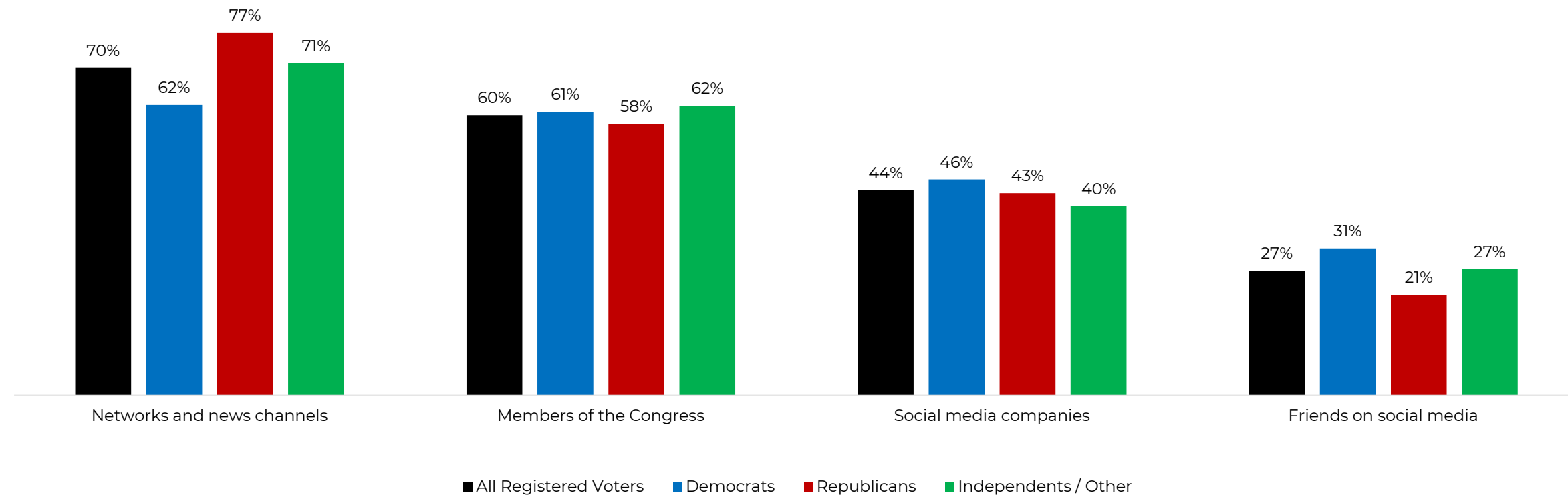


WHO IS CAUSING ANGER & DIVISION?

When asked to rank the reasons why Republicans and Democrats appear to be angry and divided, “Networks and news channels” were ranked #1 and #2 most frequently and emerged as the top driver of anger and divisiveness (70% overall), followed closely by “Members of the Congress” (60%).

- Social media, while blamed frequently by the news media and Members of the Congress, were not the primary drivers

And finally, there are many reasons why Republicans and Democrats appear to be very angry and divided from one another. Please rank the reasons shown below in order from the most important reason to the least important reason.
(% Ranked 1 or 2)



**THE CRY FOR
UNITY IN
AMERICA**

