

Key Findings

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- **Democrats can blunt GOP attacks on sanctuary cities and gangs by striking back on issues like health care where Republicans are vulnerable while driving a consistent narrative that GOP immigration policies are tearing apart families and hurting children.**
 - Without an effective response to these “sanctuary” attacks, Democratic campaigns risk losing a key sliver of **vulnerable voters** who are inclined to vote for a Democratic candidate this year but can be swayed by the sanctuary scare tactic to vote for Republicans instead.
 - At the same time, there is a segment of **backlash voters** who find these types of attacks distasteful and move away from Republican candidates in response.
 - Republican campaigns are betting that the **vulnerable voters** they can win over with “sanctuary” attacks outnumber the **backlash voters** that they might lose with this rhetoric.

What this means for campaigns: Democratic campaigns need an effective response to hold onto vulnerable voters in the face of these attacks. That will require an effective pivot to other issues, such as health care. Debating immigration policy is not the most effective tactic with vulnerable voters because this segment, by definition, disagrees with Democrats on immigration.

What this means for Democratic talkers: Influential Democrats on the Hill and in the media need to provide cover for Democratic campaigns by taking the offensive against Republican immigration policies. When Democratic campaigns are forced to pivot, these other voices need to present the Democratic side of the immigration debate and move national public opinion against Republican immigration policies.

Talking points for Democratic talkers

NOTE: This is guidance for Democratic talkers in order to bring the day-to-day immigration debate onto more favorable terrain for Democrats.

■ What to say about Republican immigration policies:

- Republicans' immigration policies are separating children from their parents. Their approach has led young children to be forcibly pulled out of their parents' arms and sent to shelters and detention centers hundreds of miles away. These families are often never reunited, causing lasting psychological harm for these children.
- Republicans' deport-everyone approach to immigration targets far too many immigrants who don't deserve to be deported, including immigrants who came here as children. This approach requires billions of dollars in new federal spending to round up and deport immigrants whether or not they've committed crimes and calls for immigration police to conduct armed raids of homes, businesses, and schools.

Talking points for campaigns under fire from sanctuary attacks

NOTE: This is guidance for campaigns who are being attacked with advertising about sanctuary cities and/or immigrant gangs like MS-13, and who need an effective response in order to hold on to voters who are vulnerable to being swayed by this rhetoric.

■ How to respond to your opponent:

- (My opponent) is attacking immigrants because he wants to divide us in order to gain power for himself and kickbacks for his donors. He is using these attacks as a distraction from what he's doing to give massive tax breaks to millionaires and big corporations that are paid for by taking away regular people's health care.
- We should spend fewer tax dollars on deportations and instead invest that money in public resources like infrastructure, health care, and education.

■ What to say about the attacks themselves:

- These attacks **divide** us against each other instead of bringing people together to solve problems.
- These attacks **distract** from more important issues, like health care and the economy.

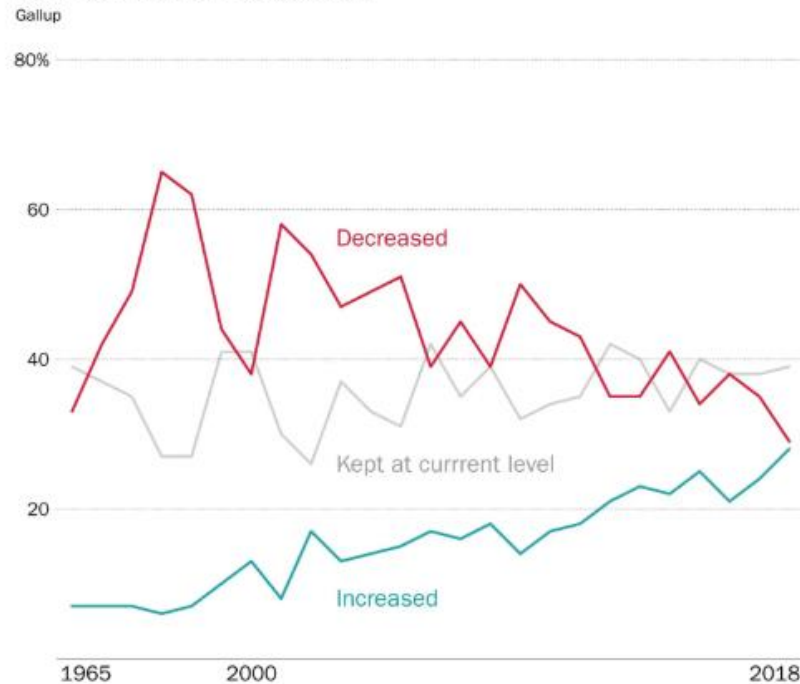
The Backstory: Why We're Here

Winning the debate nationally has never been the problem: Support for immigration, by a variety of metrics, is polling at record highs

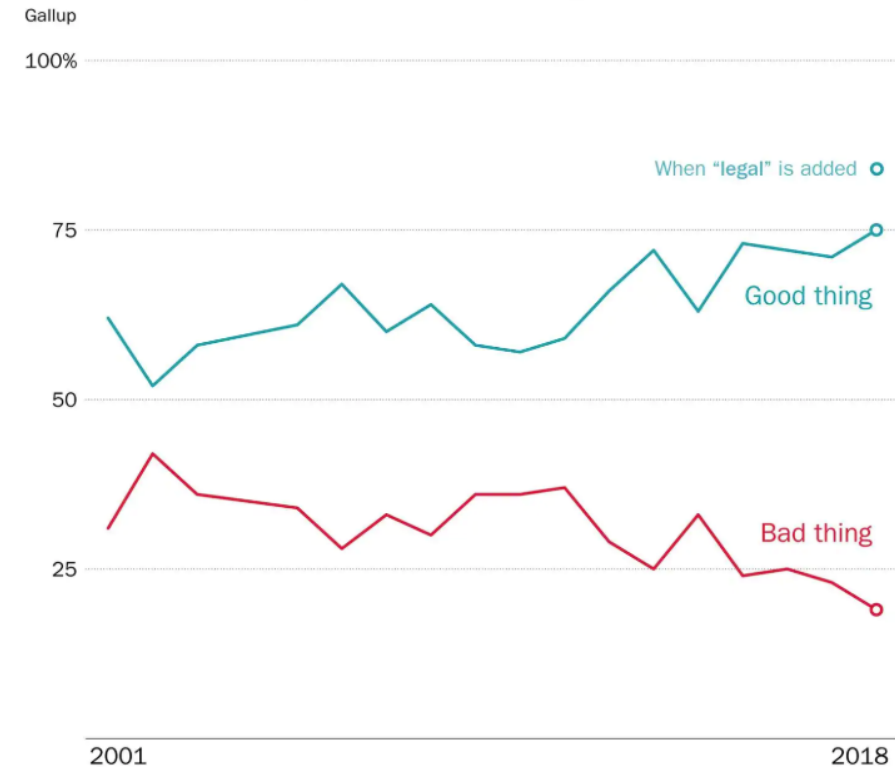
Politics • Analysis

Somehow in the Trump era, immigration has never had more popular support

Immigration should be...



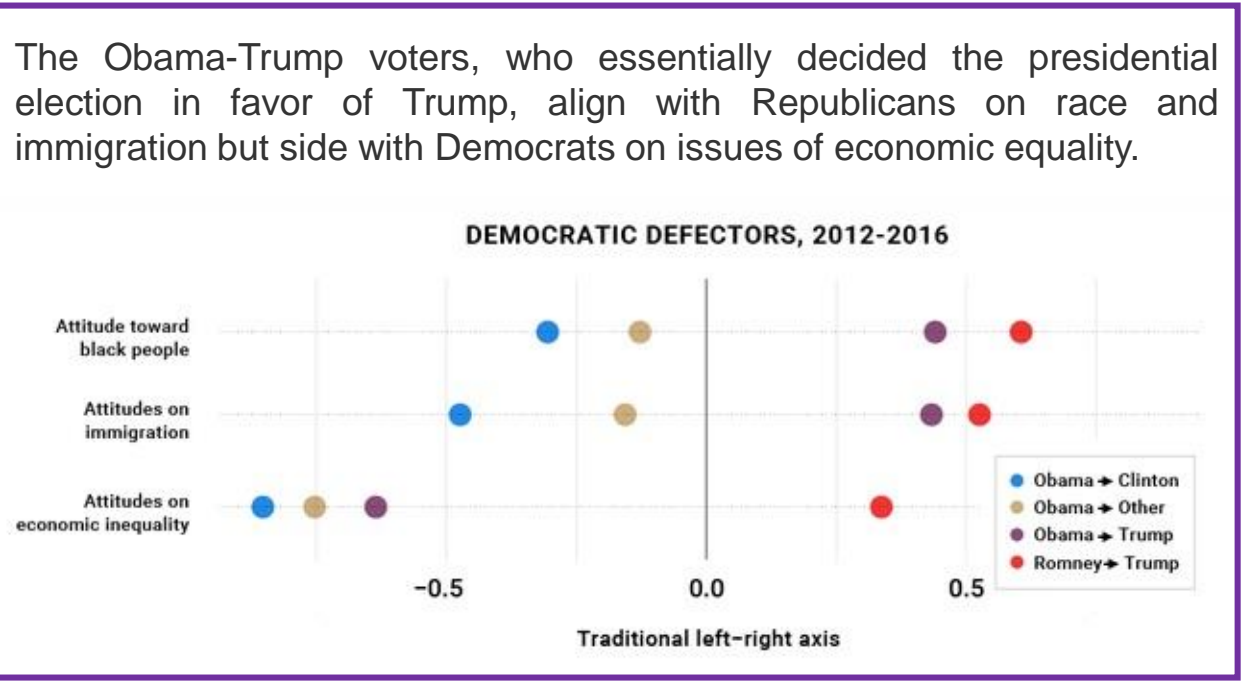
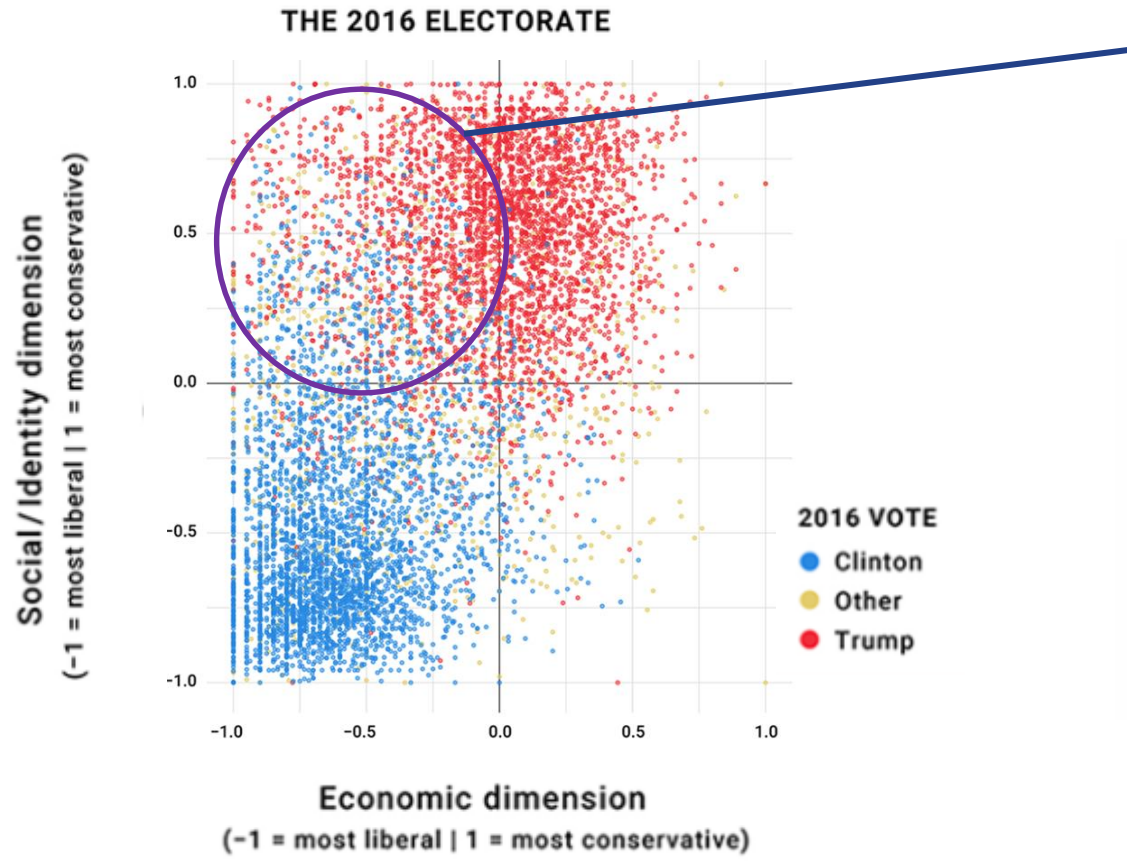
Is immigration a good or bad thing for the U.S.?



Sources: Washington Post, Gallup

The problem is how this issue intersects with the electorate: the wedge that explains immigration politics today centers around voters who are culturally conservative and economically liberal

Social issues and identity vs. Economic views



The Obama-Trump voters, who essentially decided the presidential election in favor of Trump, align with Republicans on race and immigration but side with Democrats on issues of economic equality.

The Goals of This Project

- Understand how immigration attacks, specifically on sanctuary cities, are mixing with political campaigns in 2018 – starting with the U.S. Senate race in Pennsylvania
- Identify the wedge group that we vulnerable with on these attacks and how to neutralize the attacks' efficacy
- Understand whether there is any opportunity to take advantage of backlash to the GOP on immigration
- Evaluate the best language and communications to achieve these goals

Project Methodology

Voters

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of **915 likely November 2018 voters in Pennsylvania** between June 14th to 19th, 2018.

The sample includes a base of 800 voters statewide and an oversample of voters who are from the Pittsburgh media market but outside of Allegheny County (“Outer Pitt DMA”). Overall, 205 voters in this region were interviewed.

Margin of error

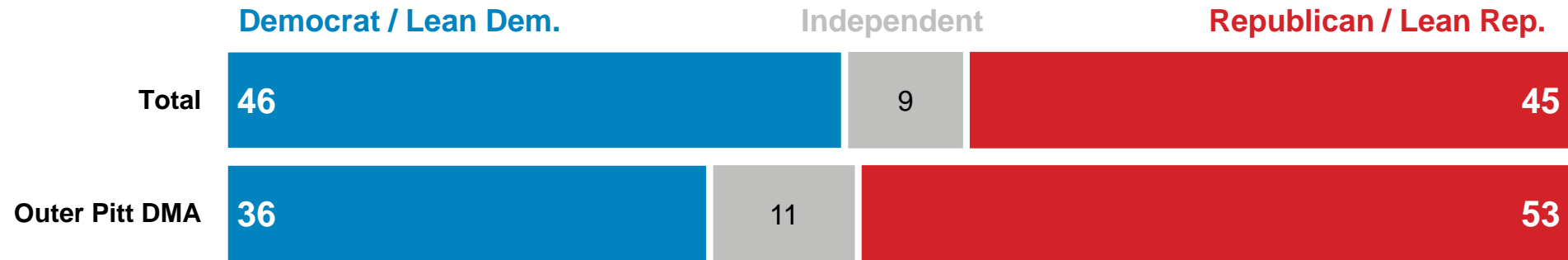
The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.5% for the statewide sample and +/- 6.8% for the Outer Pitt DMA oversample.

The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

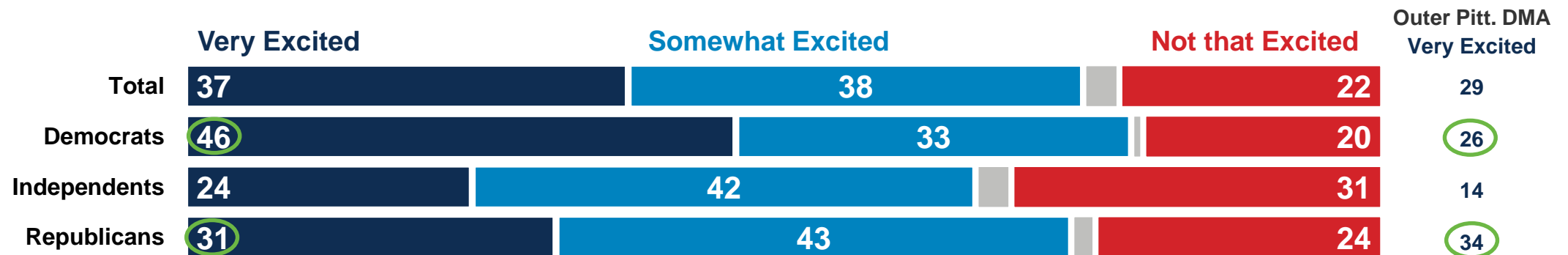
The Pennsylvania Political Environment

The state has an even partisan balance and a more enthused Democratic base overall, but the Outer Pitt DMA is much more GOP-friendly

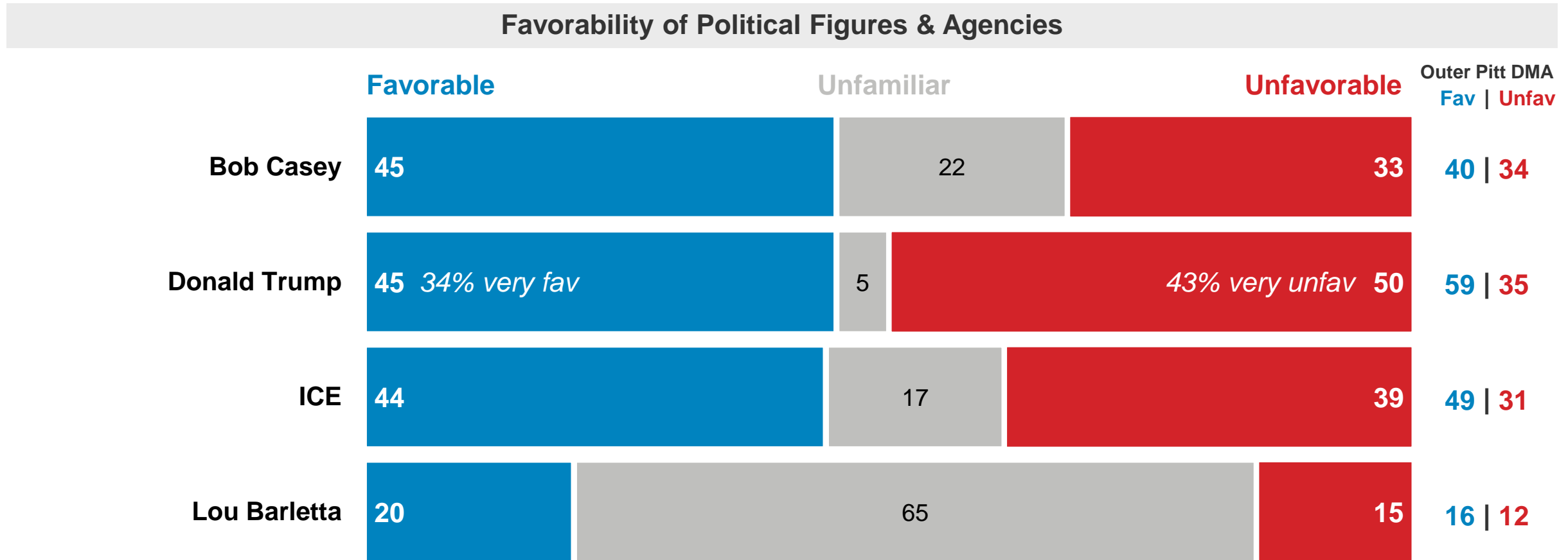
Party Affiliation



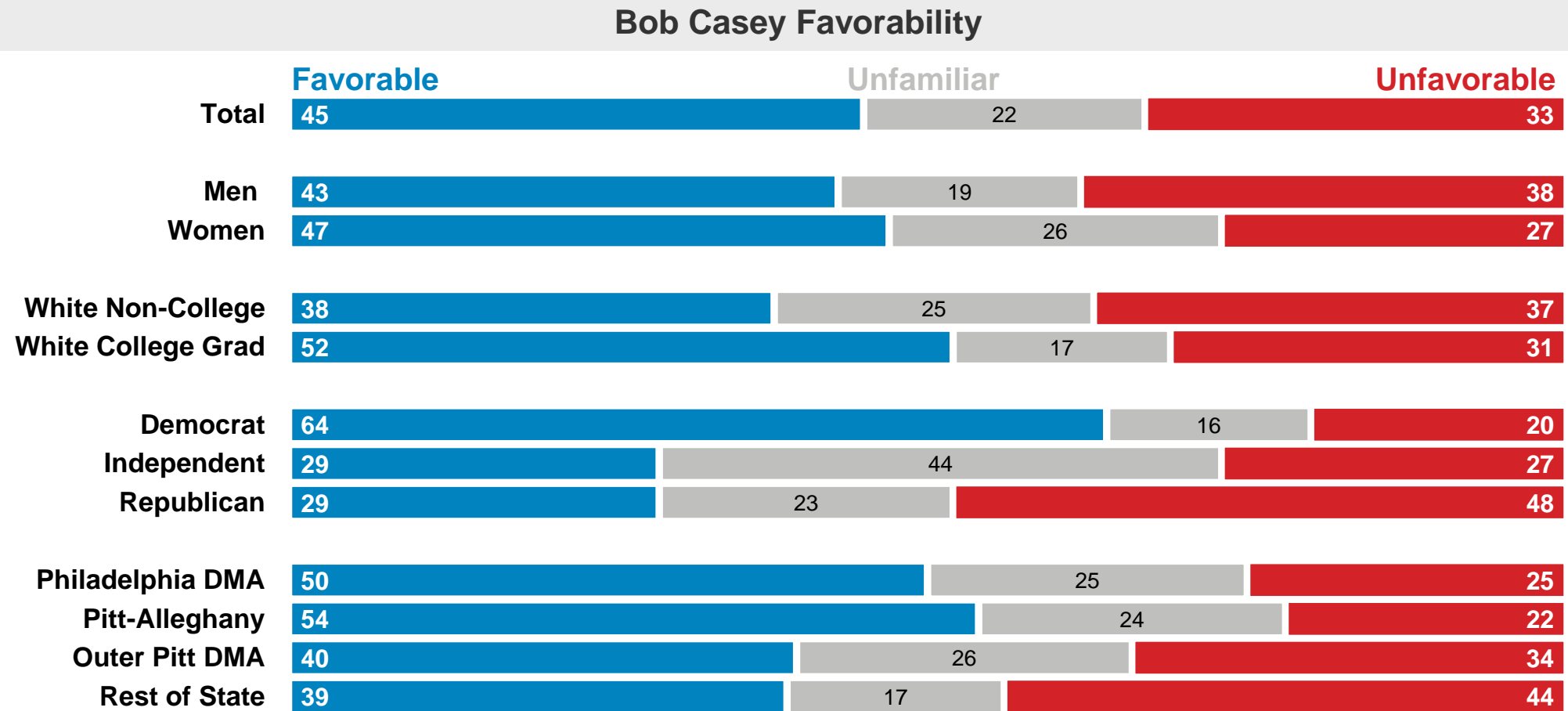
How excited are you to vote in the November election for US Senate?



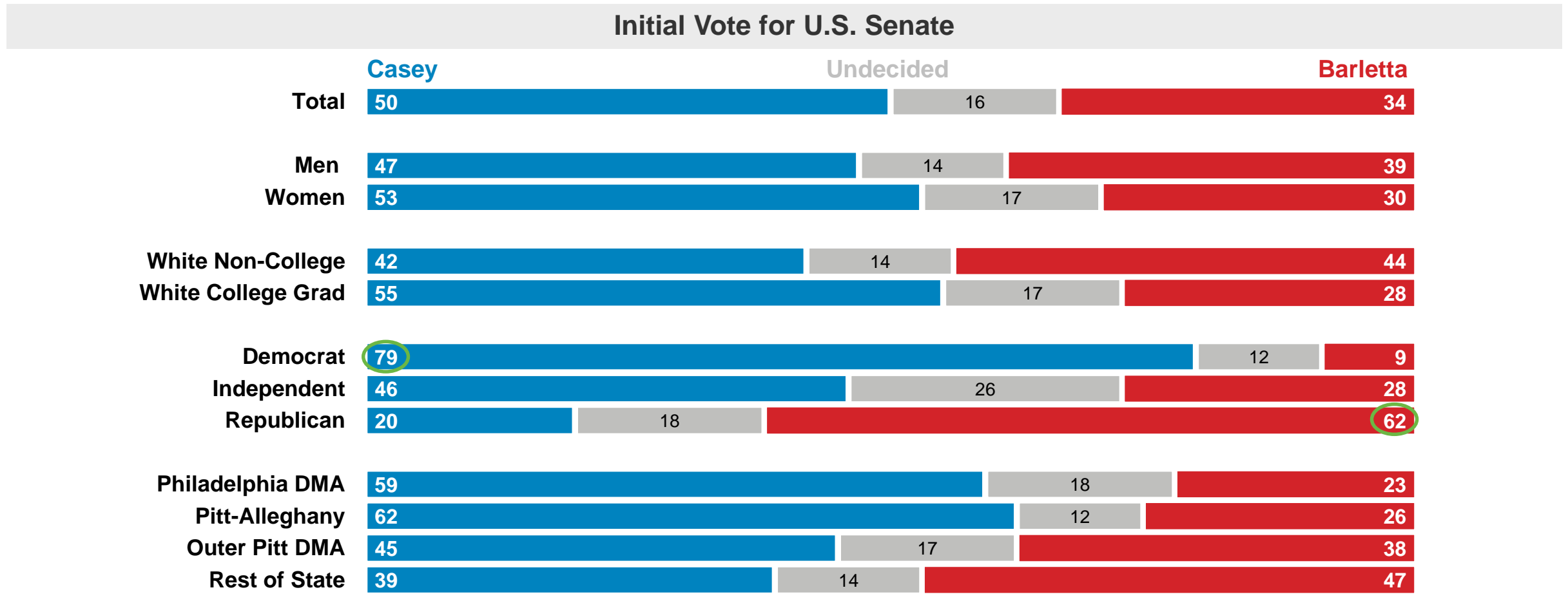
Casey has a mostly positive reputation, while voters are divided on Trump and ICE; Barletta is little-known at this point



Casey is above water across the electorate's major demographic breaks and media markets



Casey enjoys a wide early lead, due in large part to a big advantage in partisan consolidation over Barletta

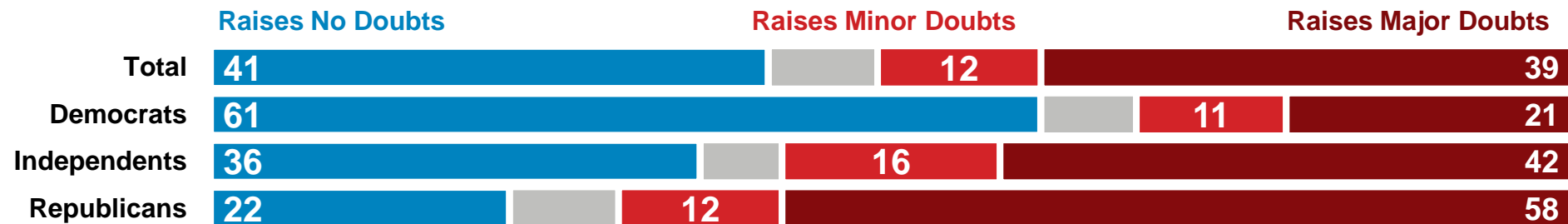


The Race for Senate & Sanctuary Attacks

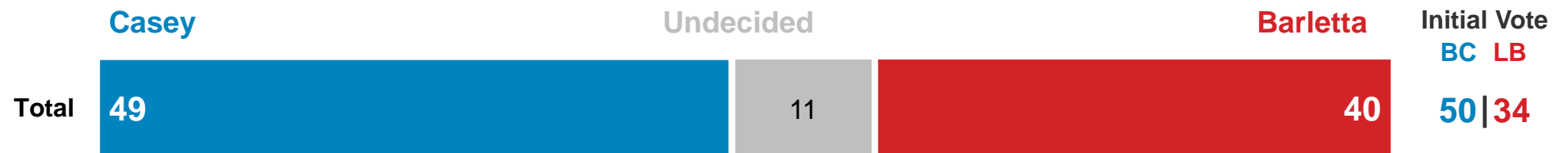
The race becomes far more competitive after a simulated sanctuary city attack against Casey

Does this raise doubts for you about voting for Bob Casey, or does it raise doubts?

Republican Lou Barletta is leading the fight in Congress for stronger borders and against sanctuary cities. But Democrat Bob Casey has repeatedly sided with Washington liberals to put criminal illegal immigrants ahead of the safety of Pennsylvania families. Casey voted to protect sanctuary cities like San Francisco that refuse to cooperate with immigration officials and create a safe haven for criminals and MS-13 gang members who are in our country illegally.

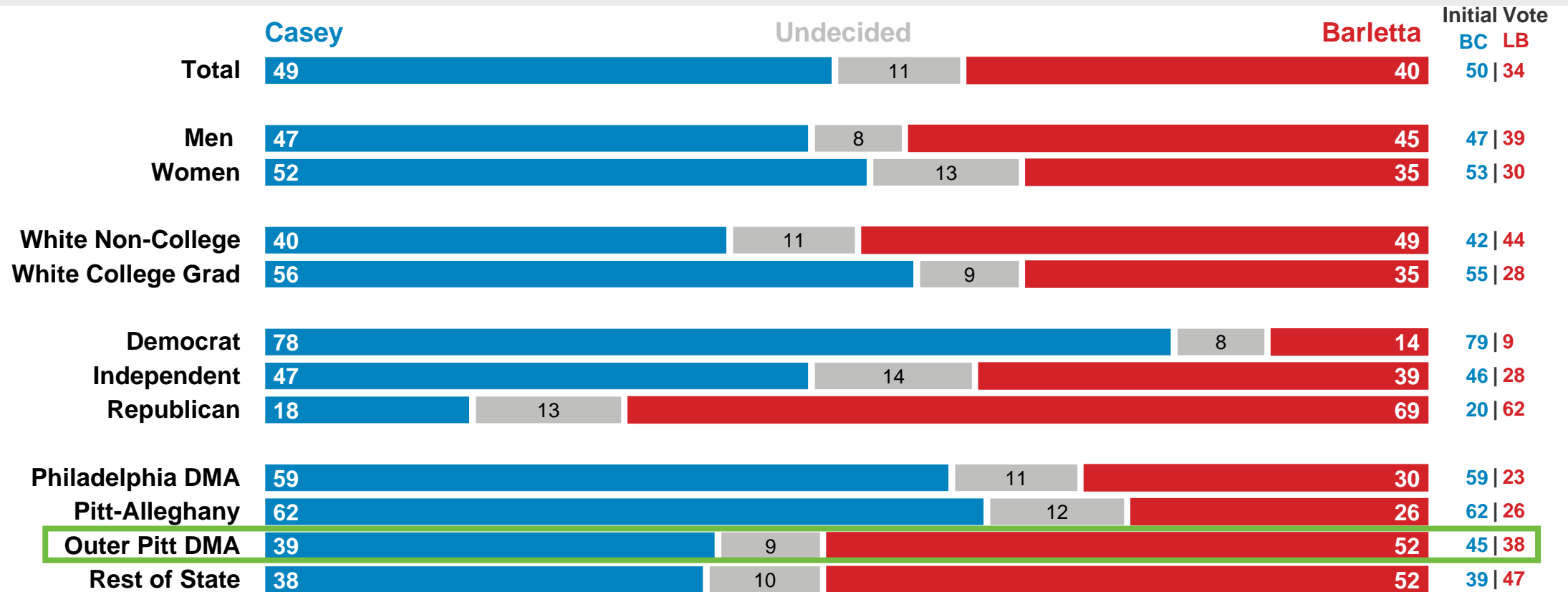


Vote for U.S. Senate – After Sanctuary City Attack on Casey



The sanctuary city hit is particularly potent in the outer Pittsburgh DMA

Vote for U.S. Senate – After Sanctuary City Attack on Casey



Casey risks losing a chunk of his support in response to the immigration debate, but there is also an important “backlash” segment that moves against Barletta

Target Groups in the U.S. Senate Election



Base Democrat

Vote for Casey initially, or undecided but more likely to vote Casey*, and not in the “vulnerable” or “backlash” groups

Vulnerable

Begin as Casey voters (or undecided voters who aren’t considering Barletta) but move away from Casey in response to immigration messaging

Backlash

Begin as Barletta voters (or undecided voters who aren’t considering Casey), but move away from Barletta in response to immigration messaging

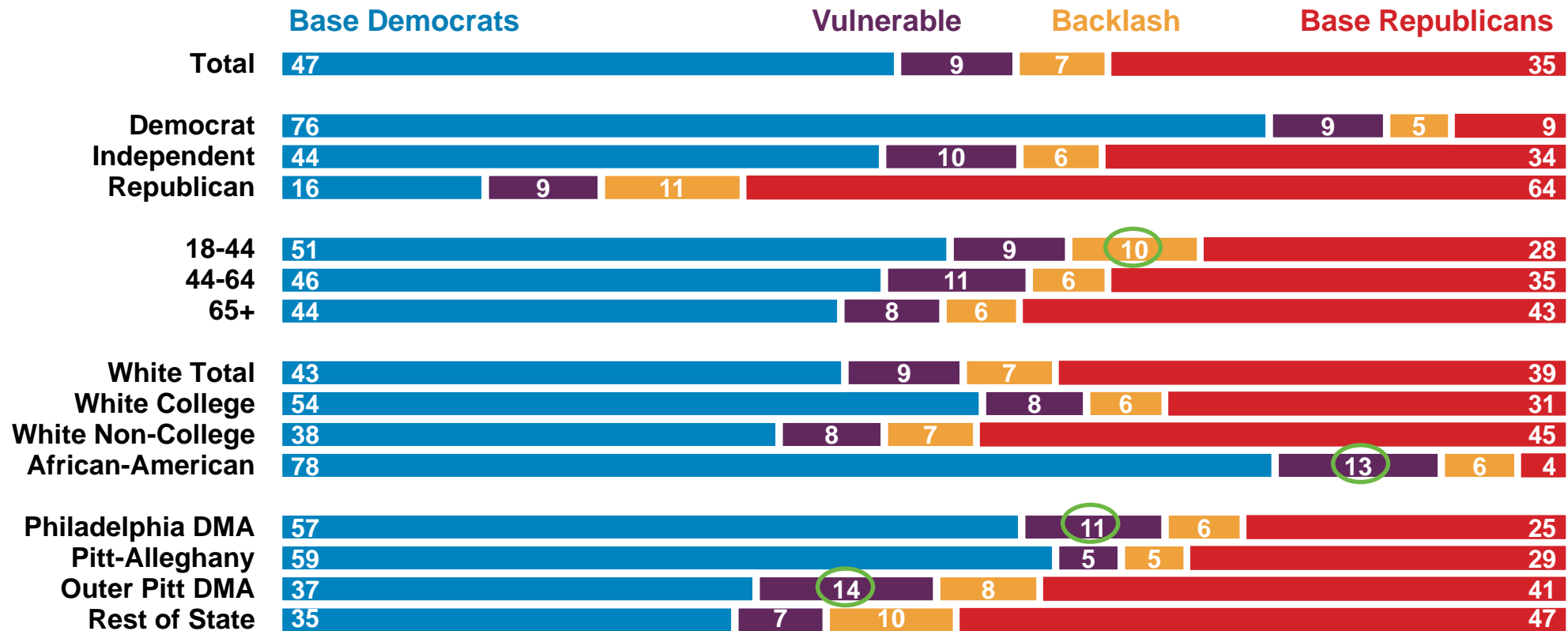
Base Republican

Vote for Barletta initially, or undecided but more likely to vote Barletta*, and not in the “vulnerable” or “backlash” groups

**Note: Undecided voters’ likelihood of voting for each candidate are based primarily on which candidate(s) they say they are considering. Undecided voters who are not considering only one candidate were then allocated based on other variables (primarily their partisan affiliation).*

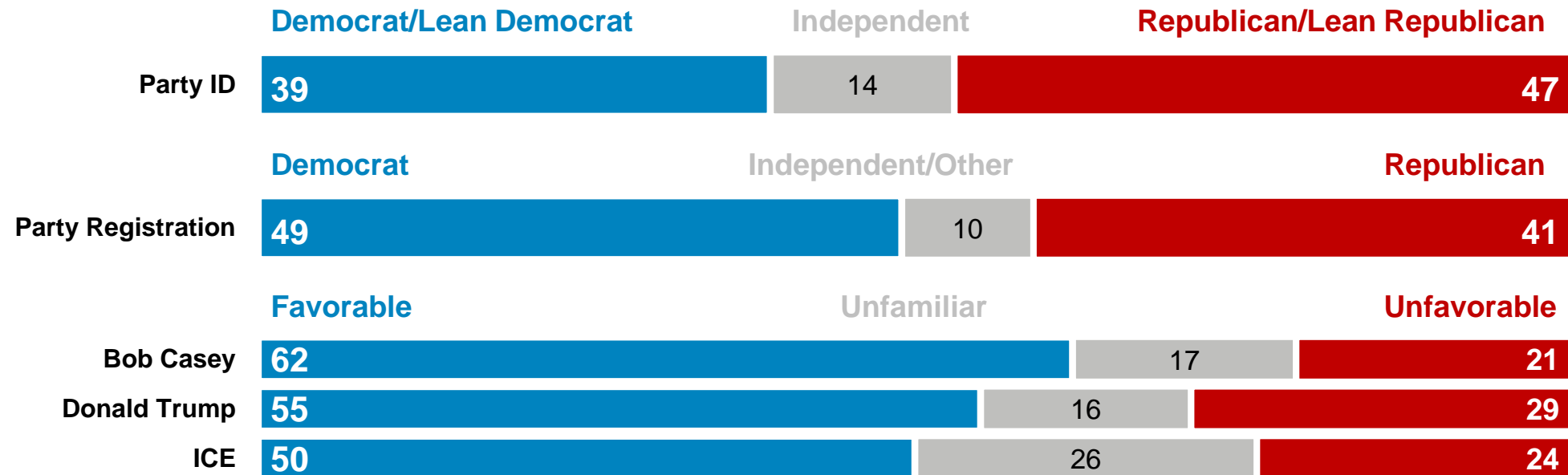
The “vulnerable” voters who Casey risks losing on immigration are most concentrated in the outer Pittsburgh DMA, but also represent significant segments in the Philly DMA and within the African-American electorate

Target Groups by Region/Demographics



“Vulnerable” voters are far more GOP-leaning than their party registration would suggest, but have a particular affinity for Casey

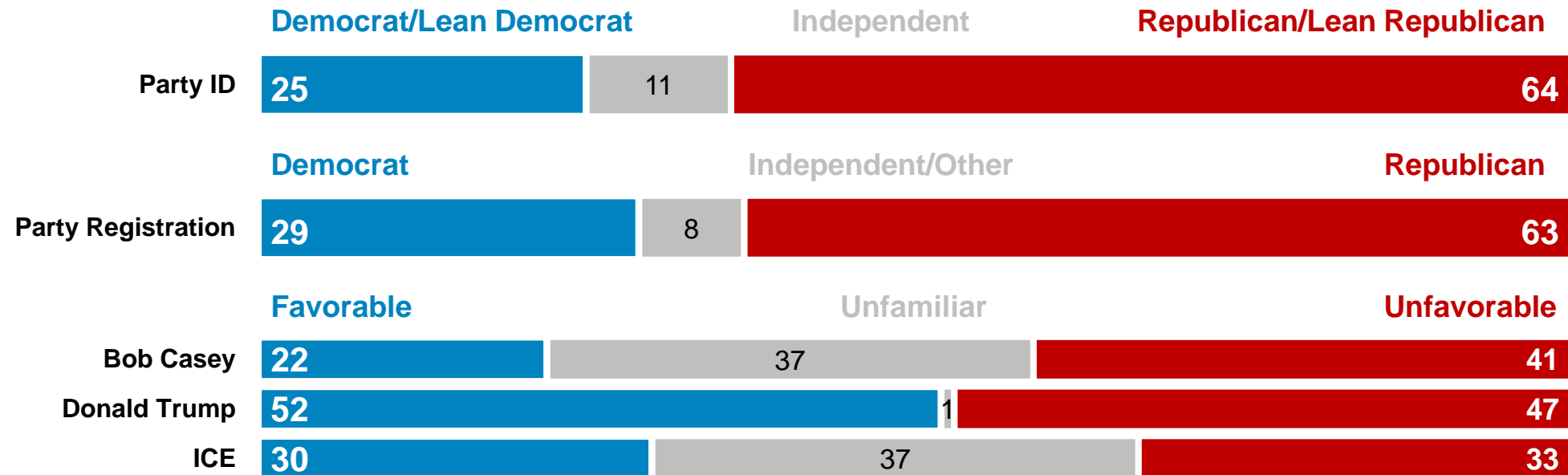
Attitudinal Profile of Vulnerable Voter Segment



Roughly **two in five (41%) vulnerable voters watch FOX News weekly**, compared to just 23% of Casey voters on average

“Backlash” voters are overwhelmingly Republican, but on the fence about Trump and ICE

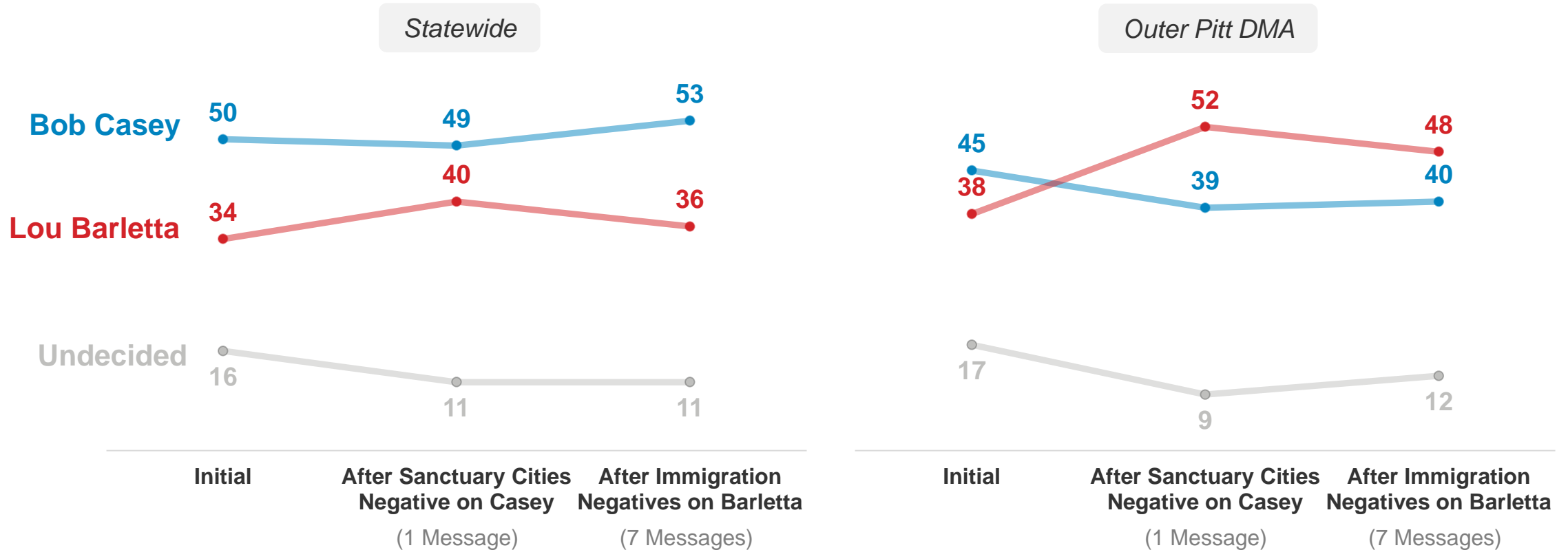
Attitudinal Profile of Backlash Voter Segment



Just one-third (33%) of backlash voters watch FOX News weekly, compared to 63% of Barletta voters on average

Casey restores his statewide lead after we hit back against Barletta for his own immigration policies, but it takes much more messaging from our side

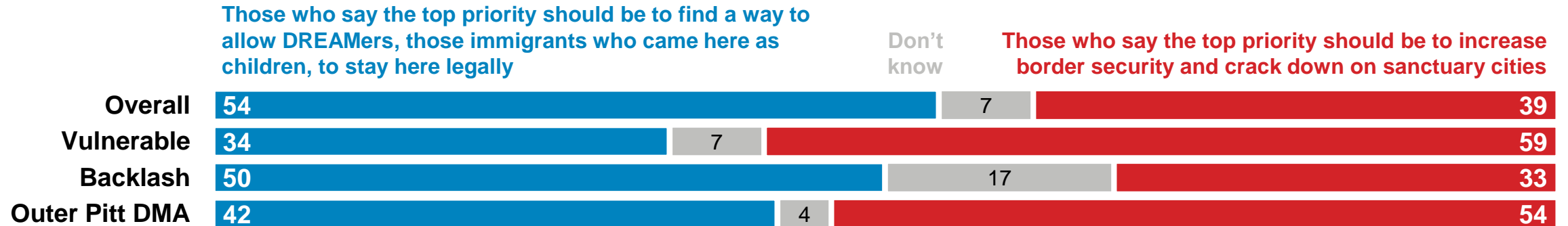
Vote Movement in Race for U.S. Senate



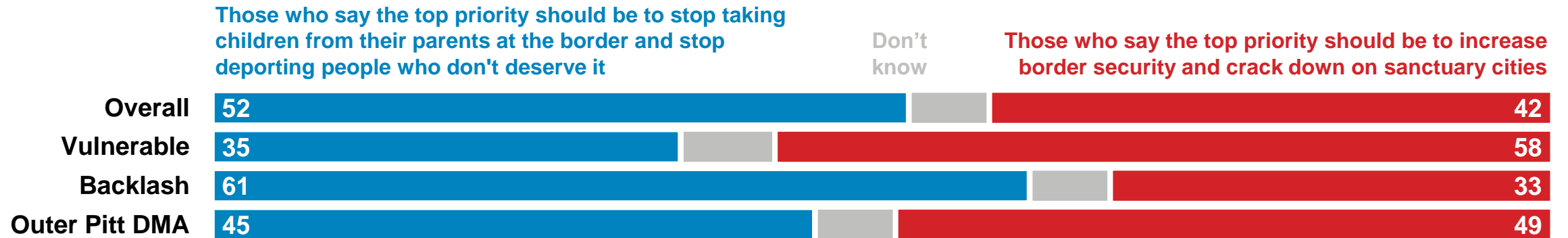
Communications & Strategy

While voters writ large are on our side on immigration, electorally important groups take the opposing view

On the issue of immigration, who do you agree with more?



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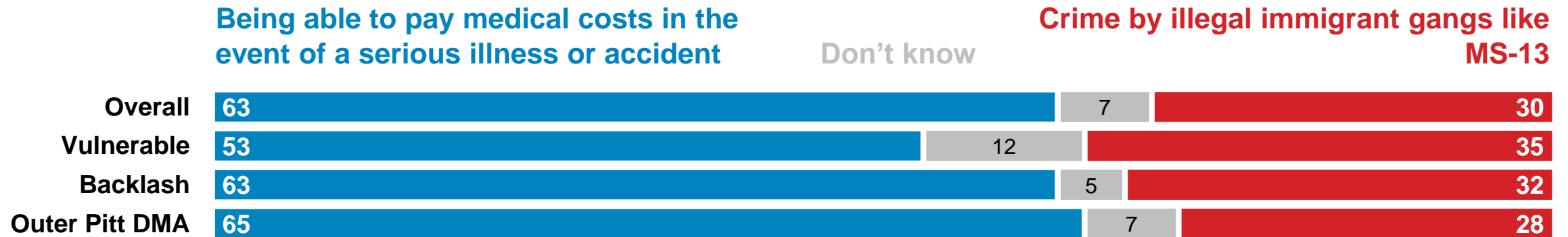


Effective pivoting will be key to canceling out the damage from “sanctuary” attacks

If you had to choose the one you are MOST concerned about?



If you had to choose the one you are MOST concerned about?



Barletta is relatively less vulnerable on immigration, as Barletta's anti-immigrant views rank far down on the list of voters' concerns about him

Which of the following concerns you the most about voting for Bob Casey? That Bob Casey...

	Overall	Vulnerable	Backlash
...supports sanctuary city laws that have made us less safe	26	24	13
...voted against the tax relief bill that has put more money in people's pockets	17	34	26
...supported Obama's coal-killing policies	9	8	10
...sided with extreme liberals to block key national security appointments	9	7	21

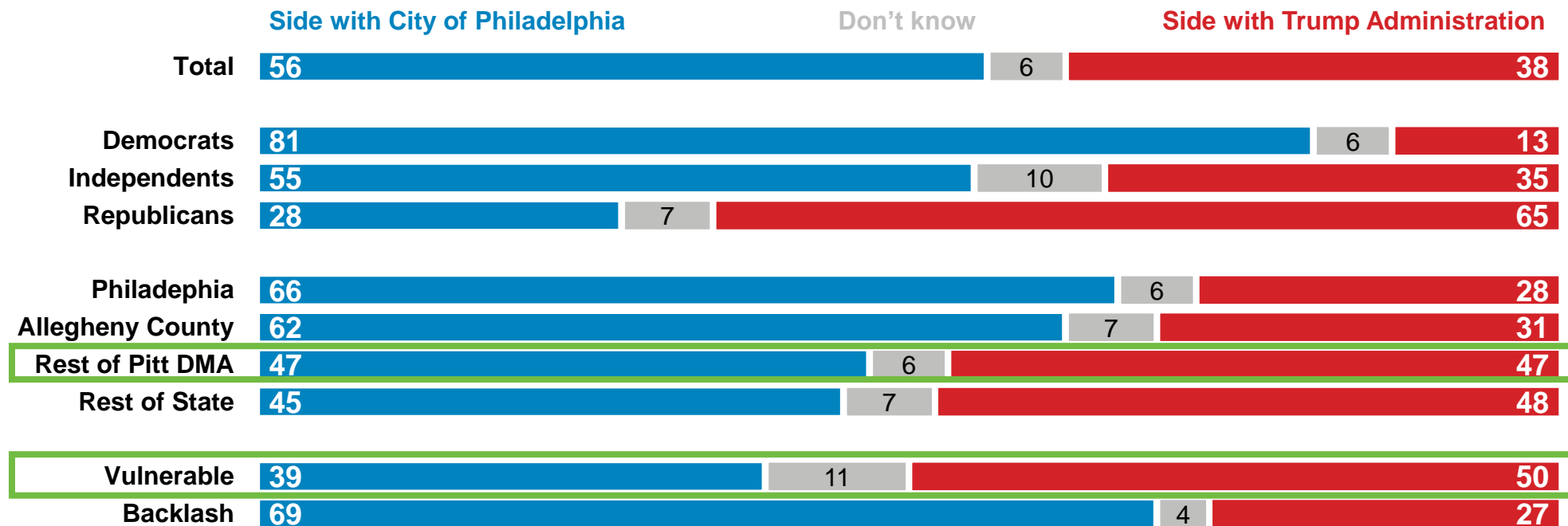
Which of the following concerns you the most about voting for Lou Barletta? That Lou Barletta...

	Overall	Vulnerable	Backlash
...stands with the NRA in opposing new gun safety laws even after so many mass school shootings	21	20	25
...voted for the health care repeal which spikes costs and strips coverage for people with pre-existing conditions	17	23	19
...holds the same anti-immigrant views as Donald Trump	15	10	12
...voted to give huge tax breaks to donors + corporations that back his campaigns	15	12	17

A debate on sanctuary cities through the lens of Philly vs. Trump works in our favor overall, but not among key electoral groups

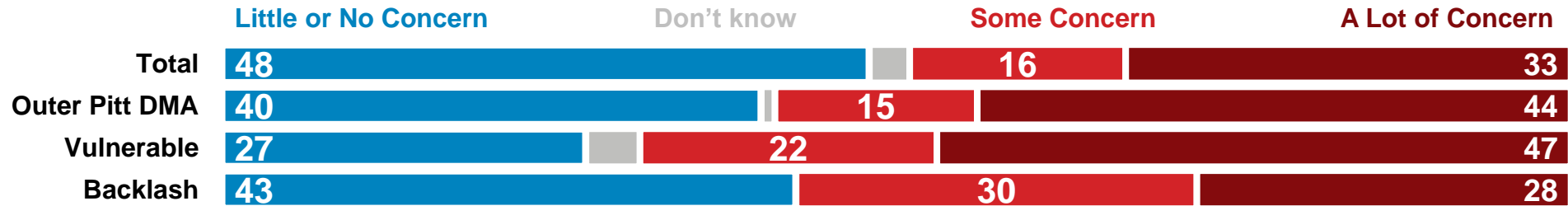
Philadelphia vs. Trump Administration on Sanctuary Cities

As you may know, the city of Philadelphia recently won a lawsuit against the Trump administration over the issue of sanctuary cities. The Trump administration threatened to take federal funding away from Philadelphia if the city's local police didn't assist in federal immigration enforcement, but the court ruled that the federal government couldn't take funding away from Philadelphia in response to its immigration policies.



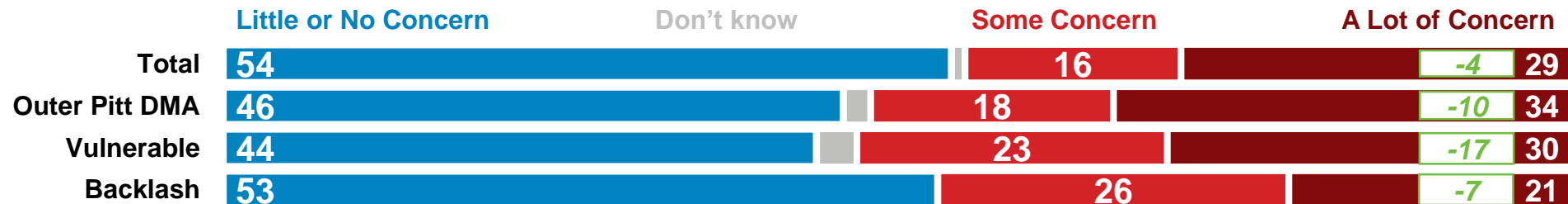
Misunderstanding is clearly a factor behind some “sanctuary” concerns, as clarification mitigates concerns among key groups

Initial Concern About Sanctuary Cities



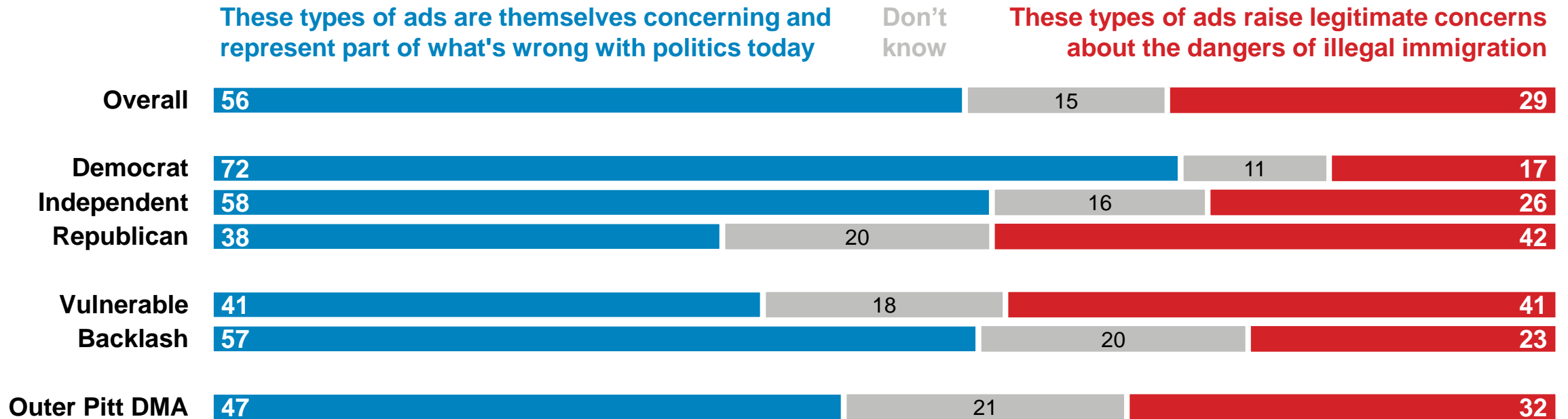
Concern After Statement Explaining Sanctuary Cities

Some people say that the term "sanctuary cities" is misleading. It does not mean that immigration laws are not enforced in these cities. It simply means that local police departments do not use local tax dollars to assist the federal government in rounding up undocumented immigrants. Local police still arrest anyone who commits a crime and federal immigration agents still enforce immigration laws in these cities.



Most voters say sanctuary attacks are part of what's wrong with politics, rather than raising legitimate concerns, but "vulnerable" voters are split

On the issue of immigration, who do you agree with more?



Just **29% of voters** recall seeing ads claiming Democrats are protecting illegal immigrant gangs, including lower numbers from the vulnerable (18%) and backlash (22%) audiences

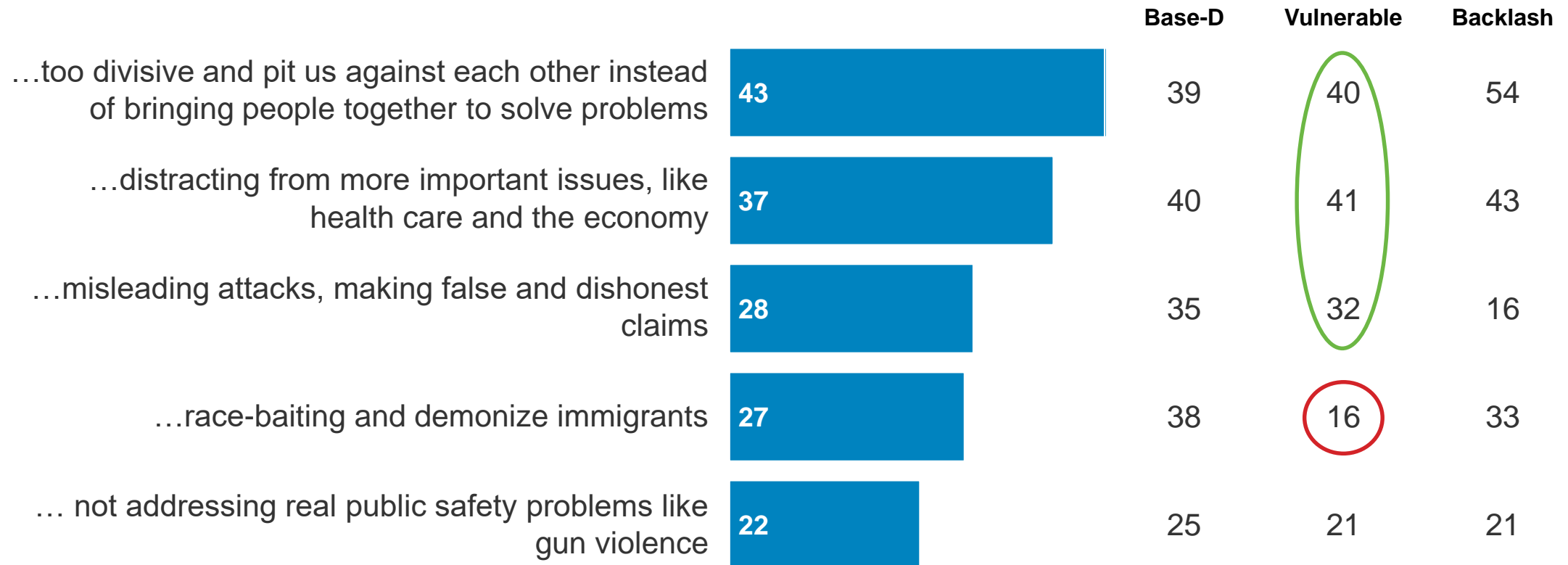
Messaging against Barletta on families and mass deportation is most convincing with the Democratic base and backlash voters, but pivoting to populist Democratic messaging is more effective with vulnerable voters

Negative Immigration Messages for Barletta

Total	Base-D	Vulnerable	Backlash	
<i>% Raises Major Doubts</i>				
52	82	35	58	Families Lou Barletta supports policies that are separating children from their parents. Barletta's approach has led young children to be forcibly pulled out of their parents' arms and sent to shelters and detention centers hundreds of miles away. These families are often never reunited, causing lasting psychological harm for these children and putting unnecessary additional pressure on the overburdened foster care system.
49	79	31	52	Deportations Lou Barletta's deport-everyone approach to immigration targets far too many immigrants who don't deserve to be deported, including immigrants who came here as children. Barletta's approach requires billions of dollars in new federal spending to round up and deport immigrants whether or not they've committed crimes and calls for immigration police to conduct armed raids of homes, businesses, and schools.
48	78	33	49	Values The way that Lou Barletta talks about immigration goes against American values and the principle of treating everyone equally under the law. Our country was founded as a nation of immigrants where we accept people who want to come here, work hard, and contribute, but Barletta wants to turn us against immigrant communities just because of what they look like and where they're from
48	75	44	47	Distraction Lou Barletta attacks immigrants because he wants to pit us against each other in order to gain power for himself and kickbacks for his donors. Barletta uses these attacks as a distraction from what he's doing to give massive tax breaks to millionaires and big corporations that are paid for by taking away regular people's health care.
45	72	36	42	Guns Lou Barletta is blaming immigrants for crime and violence while ignoring the biggest public safety issue facing America, which is gun violence. Barletta consistently sides with the gun lobby to oppose even the most common sense gun safety laws to reduce the risk of mass shootings, such as universal background checks on gun purchases.
44	73	30	44	Resources Lou Barletta's immigration policies threaten public safety by taking tax dollars and local police resources away from more important priorities, like catching dangerous criminals, keeping our communities safe, and improving the quality of life for working people. Instead, Barletta wants to force local police to devote their limited resources to rounding up and detaining immigrants.
43	73	28	36	Economy Lou Barletta's immigration policies hurt our economy. We're better off economically when immigrant and American workers stand together for better wages and working conditions, but Barletta wants to deport people even if they are paying taxes, helping to create jobs, filling jobs that make our economy stronger, and paying into the Social Security system.

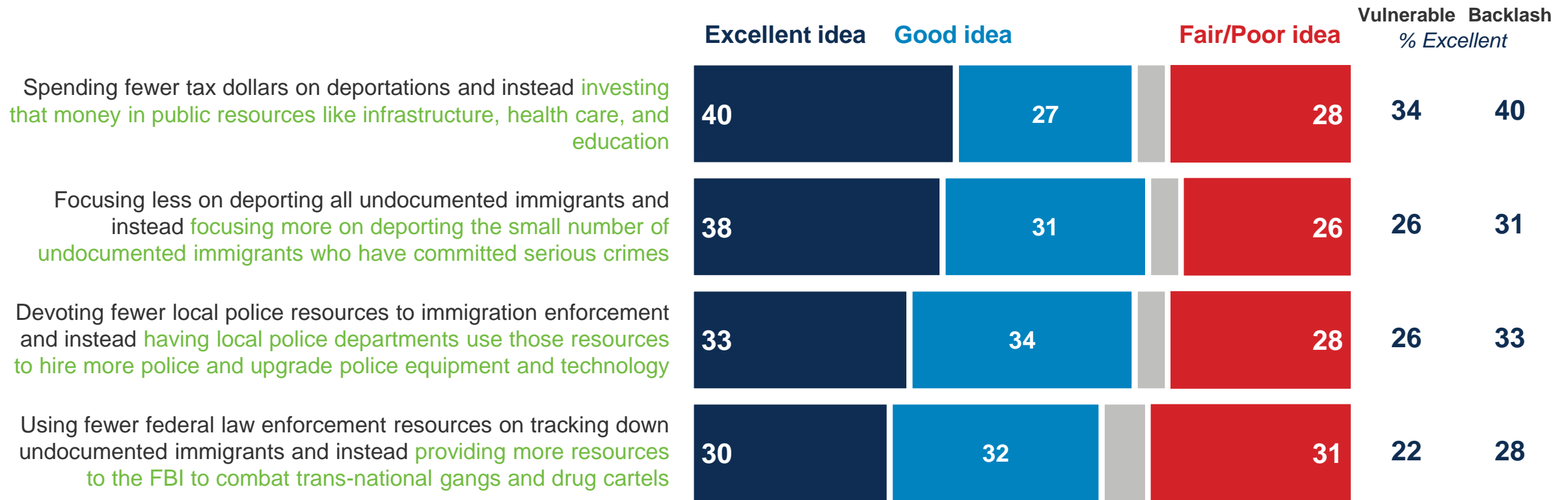
Broader messaging about sanctuary hits should focus on how they are divisive and misleading while distracting from more important priorities

Which of these concerns you most about attacks tying Democrats to illegal immigrant gangs? That they are...



Vulnerable voters respond better to the idea of diverting immigration enforcement funding to other public resources (including health care) than to law enforcement

Below is a list of things that Democrat Bob Casey supports relating to public safety. For each, please tell me if you think it is an...



Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions & Recommendations

- **As Trump did in 2016, there remains a clear path for Republicans to effectively weaponize the issue of “sanctuary cities” against Casey.**
 - We can win the debate at the “topline” level but wedge groups remain a problem
- **Successful counterpunching against sanctuary city messaging will require some level of neutralization, along with a strong pivot to more favorable terrain.**
 - Effective pivoting – but not ignoring – is the key to combatting “sanctuary” hits. Democrats are better positioned to win debates over health care, taxes, corruption, populism, and guns over getting “tough” on immigration with key swing groups.
 - It’s harder to win back the types of “vulnerable” voters who move away from us on sanctuary by directly debating the merits on immigration.
 - The impact of the “sanctuary” may be dulled somewhat with education on the issue. As we have seen in other research, many voters misunderstand what “sanctuary” cities are, and some basic information to rebut the notion that they are the lawless places depicted in negative advertising could be effective.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- **While we should continue to explore the most effective language in future research, it benefits us to point out that sanctuary attacks are dividing Americans and a distraction being used by politicians to cover up their bad behavior.**
 - Voters, including the “vulnerable” group we risk losing, are troubled by notions that campaigns would use the issue to “divide and pit us against each other” rather than bringing people together to solve problems.
 - It’s important to note it’s about dividing Americans against each other (and not dividing Americans and undocumented immigrants).
 - Voters also dislike that these attacks distract from important issues like health care, taxes, and corruption.
 - Focusing on harsh policies of mass deportation and family separation are effective at ginning up the Democratic base and persuading backlash voters. But this is less effective among vulnerable voters.
 - Language that sanctuary attacks are “misleading” also resonates, and the effectiveness of this should be parsed further in future research, especially given how much confusion everyday voters have about sanctuary policies.
 - We should continue to test versions of the “distraction” argument in future polling and digital testing, honing in on:
 - *What is the best pivot? Misleading, divisive, distracting*
 - *What is the best ending? Health care, Tax breaks for big corporations (pay to play), corruption, local issues*

Thank You

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