



# Eye on the Economy

VOTER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S ECONOMY

# Key Findings

## THE ECONOMY OVERALL

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Voters remain pessimistic on the U.S. economy and the **deep negativity that emerged over a year ago largely persists**. Today, 7 in 10 rate the economy as poor, a majority believe the economy has gotten worse in the last year, and few believe it will get better in the year ahead. **Majorities continue to believe a recession is likely, though likelihood has decreased**, and voters remain mixed on how long a potential recession would last.

While the nationwide outlook is dire, **voters are less pessimistic when it comes to their local economies** and how they view the U.S. economy relative to other leading economies across the globe.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

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Over the course of the year, **voters' perceptions about their own personal finances have significantly worsened**. Since January, there has been a 10-point increase in voters saying they are concerned about their personal financial situation. However, **many are more hopeful about the future**; by a net+4 voters say their personal finances will be better next year.

Inflation dominates voters' outlook on the economy and their own situation, but there is nuance: **wages keeping up with the cost of living is a growing concern, but at the core of this is the cost of groceries**. Today, voters are most concerned with affording groceries, 8 in 10 say the cost of groceries have gotten worse in the last year, and a quarter of voters say they are not able to afford them (a net-12 shift since January).

## WHAT VOTERS WANT

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Voters are largely skeptical of evidence that the economy is improving, **but they do believe we are at record-low unemployment and see that as convincing evidence the economy is improving**.

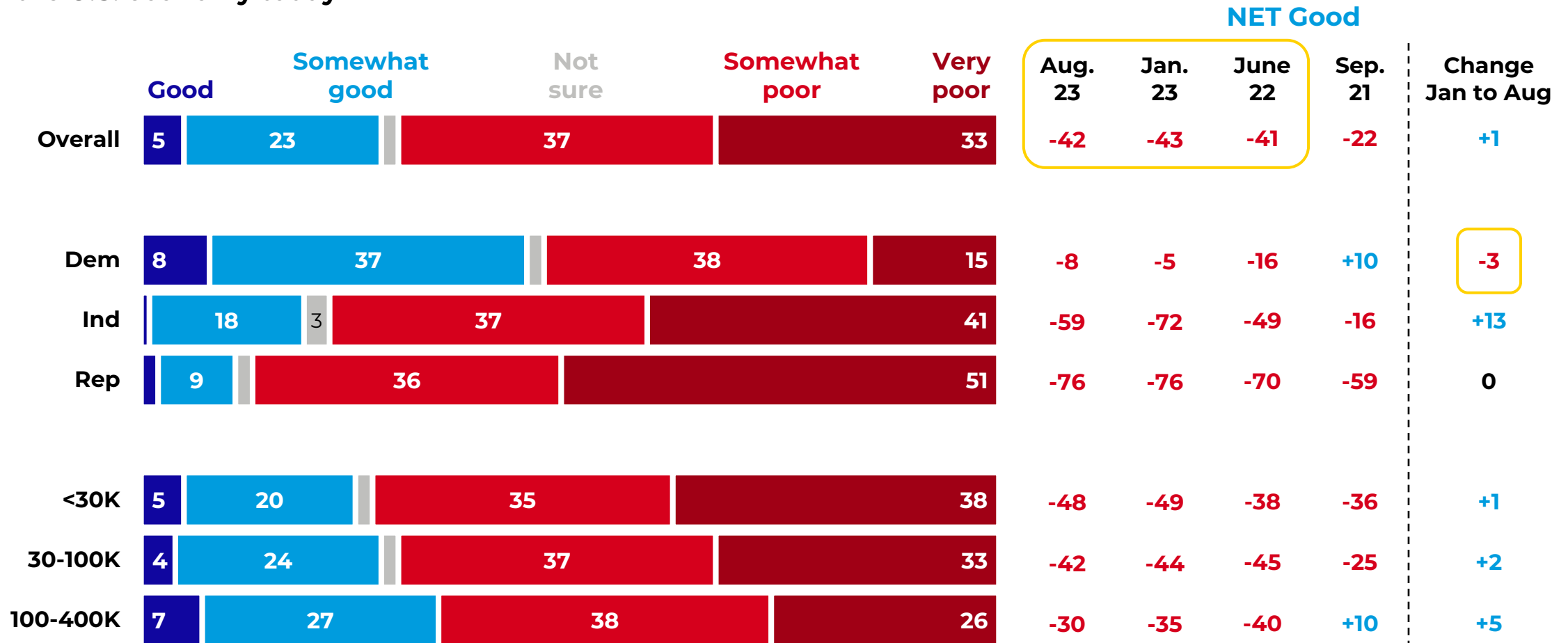
An overwhelming majority of voters say their income is not keeping up with inflation – and while wages rising would impact their lives – far **more believe decreasing prices would have a positive impact on their lives**.

Voters' aspirations differ from conventional wisdom. After paying bills, **voters prioritize having disposable income to put into savings or spend on things like restaurants** more than they prioritize buying a home or sending a child to college.



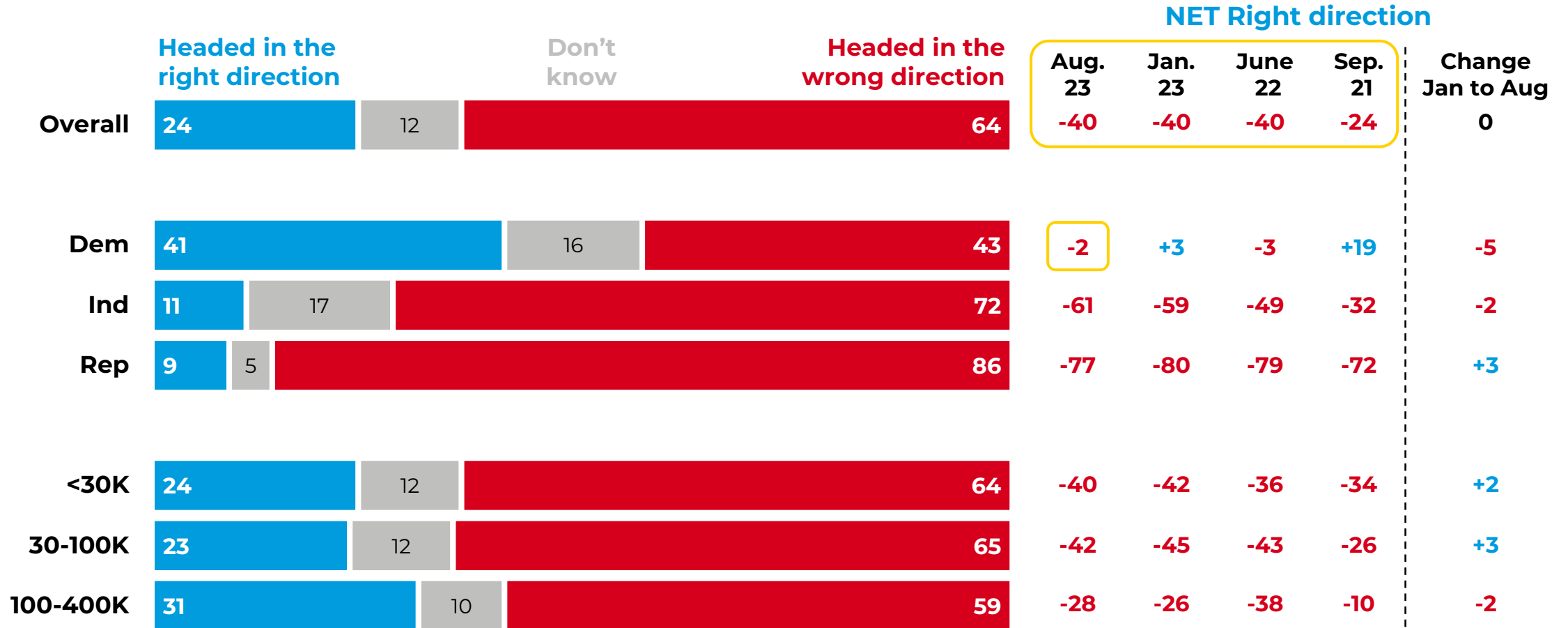
# Negative views of the U.S. economy have remained steady for over a year; Independents have grown less negative since January

## State of the U.S. economy today



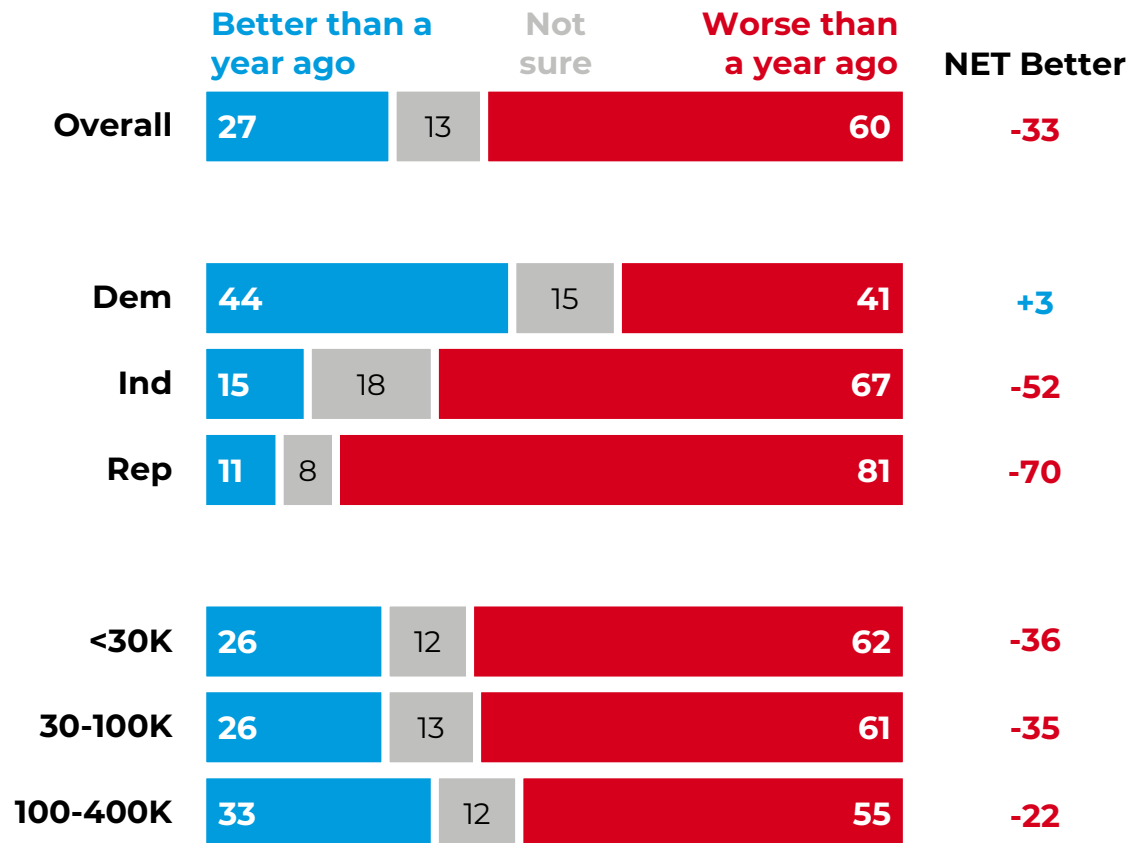
# A majority of voters continue to see the economy as headed in the wrong direction, including a plurality of Democrats

## Direction of U.S. economy

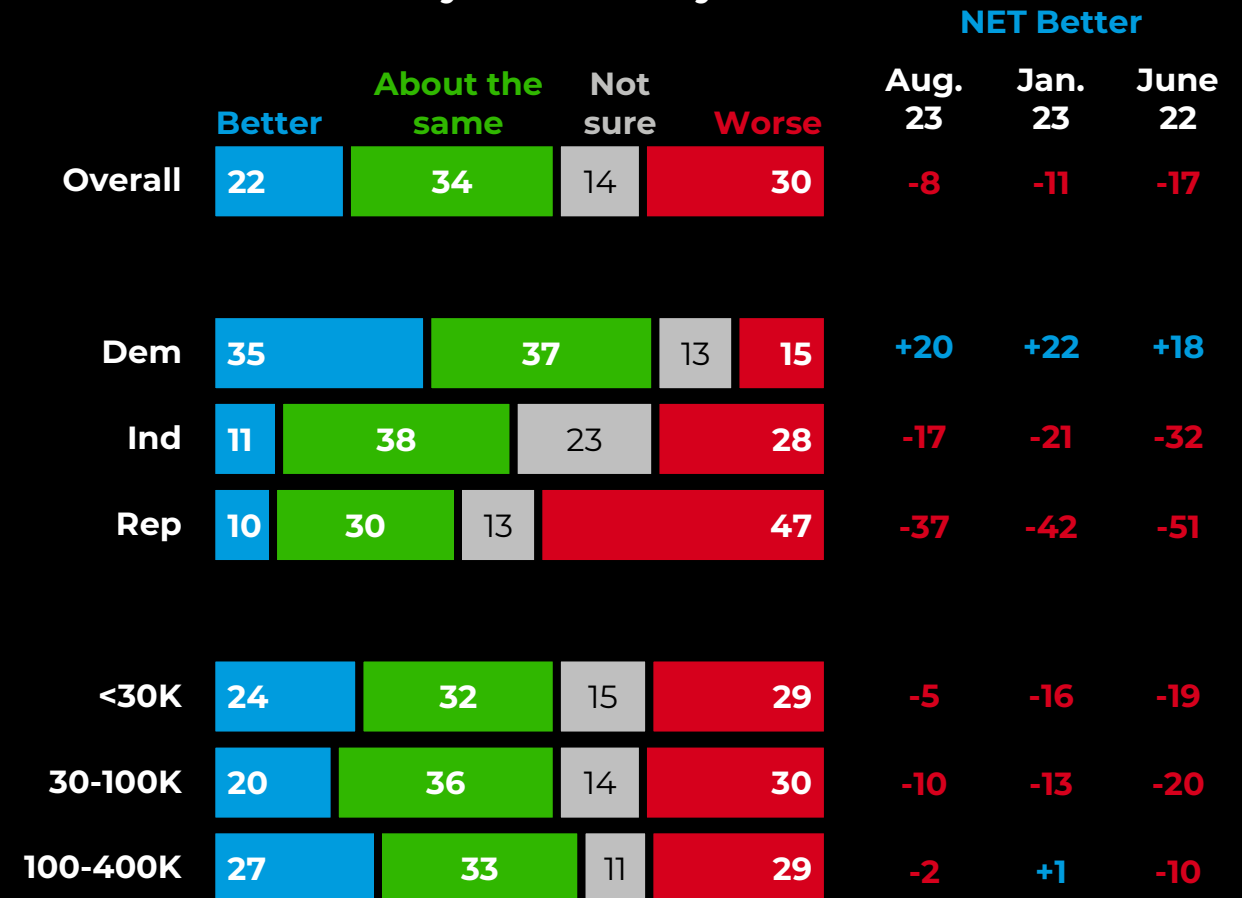


# Voters believe the economy is worse than a year ago, and few see it getting better in the next year

## U.S. Economy better or worse than a year ago



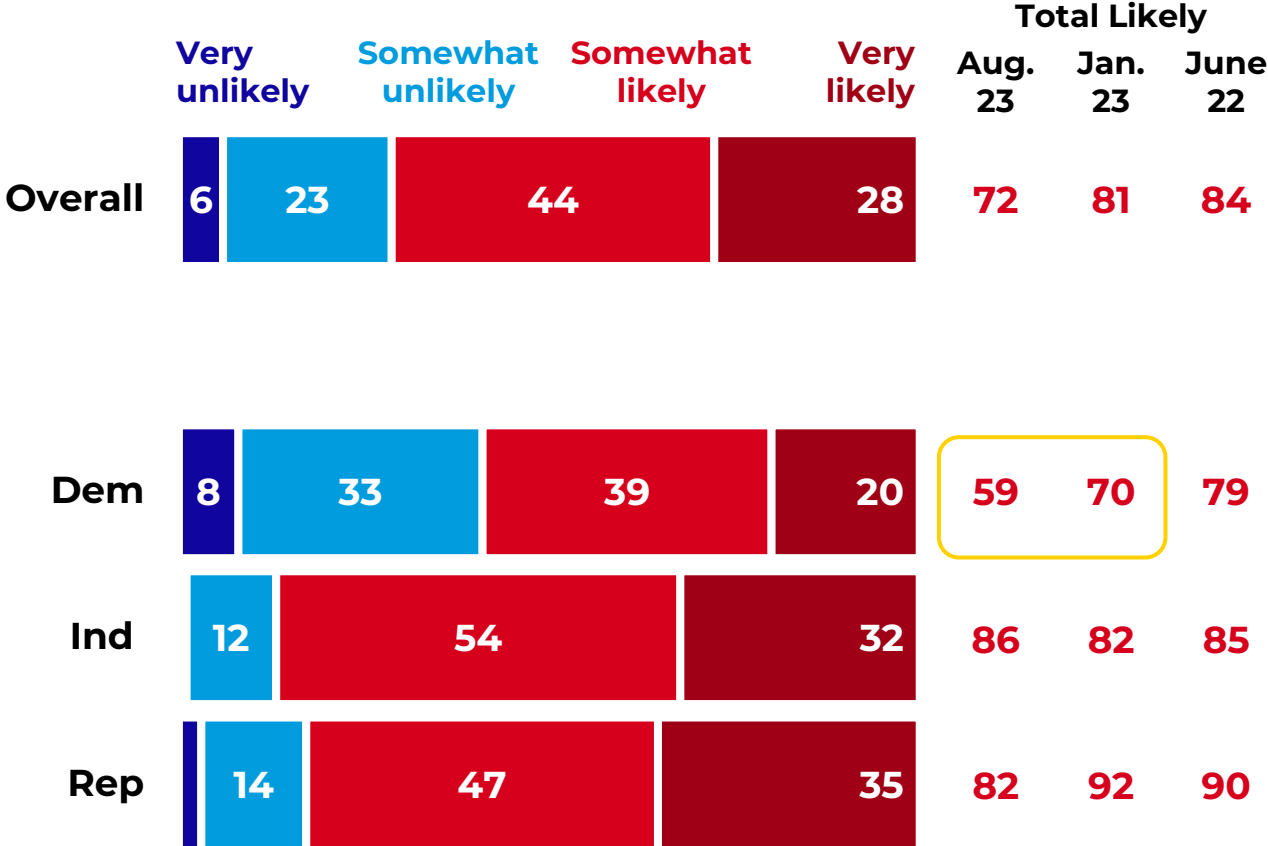
## State of U.S. economy in the next year



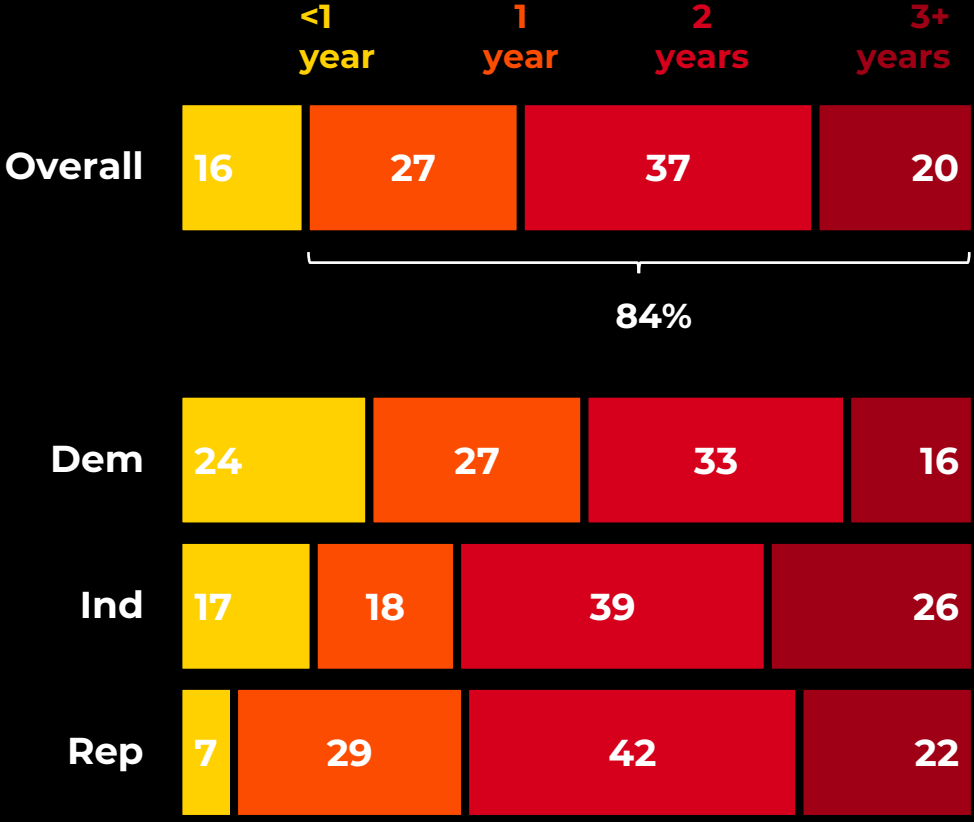


# Majorities continue to believe a recession is likely, though likelihood has decreased, and voters remain mixed on how long a potential recession would last

Likelihood that U.S. enters recession in next year



Perceived length of a potential recession



Since Jan, perceived length of <1 year has grown overall (+3) and independents (+11)

# While inflation continues to dominate the economic issues voters find most important, there is growing concern with wages keeping up with the cost of living and the national debt

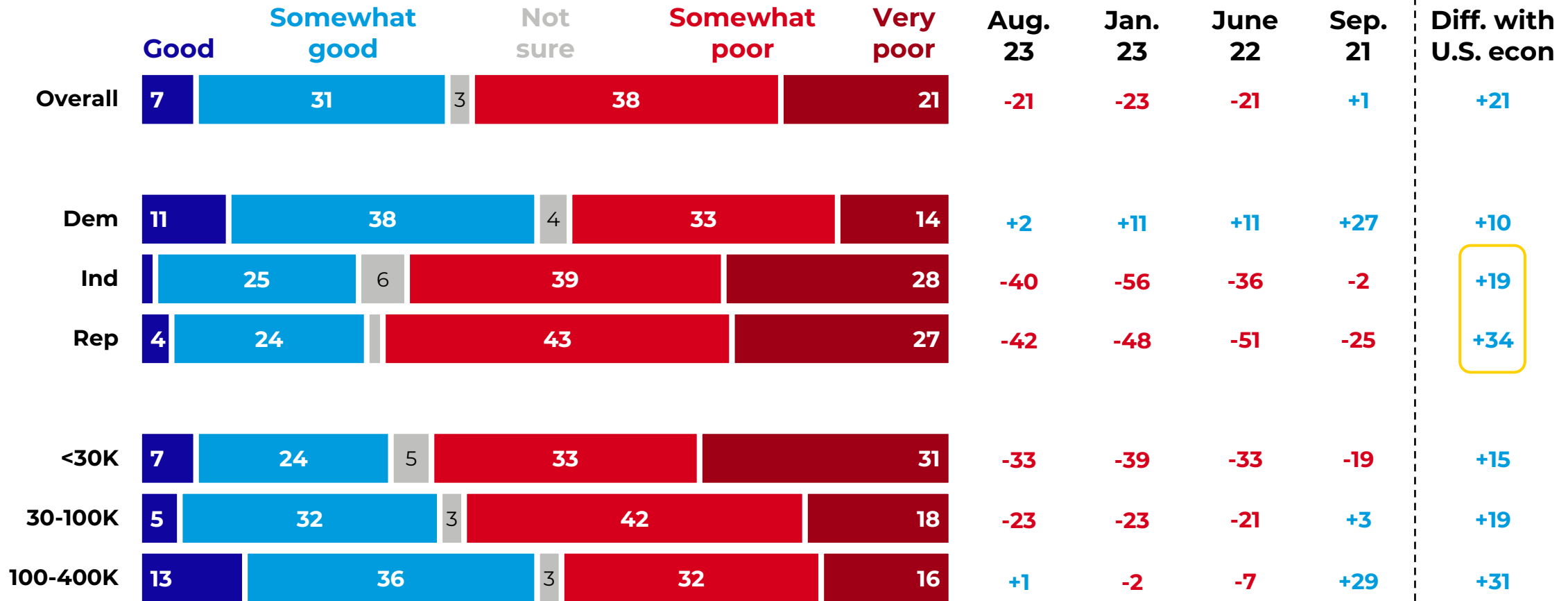
Most important issues facing economy today (top three)

		Total			Jan. 23	Change Jan to Aug
		Dem	Ind	Rep		
Inflation	71	60	75	82	75	-4
Wages keeping up with the cost of living	52	52	50	53	45	+7
National debt	31	17	23	48	24	+7
Health care costs	27	30	29	24	27	0
Corporate greed	24	30	26	15	21	+3
Poverty	21	23	30	17	24	-3
Income inequality	20	32	17	7	17	+3
Supply chain disruptions	15	16	11	14	25	-10
Labor/worker shortages	14	14	11	15	16	-2
Unemployment	13	13	15	13	14	-1
Fluctuations in the stock market	6	6	5	6	10	-4
Other		3	4	5	2	-2

# While still poor, voters' opinions on their local economy continues to fair better than national perceptions

State of the local economy in your area today

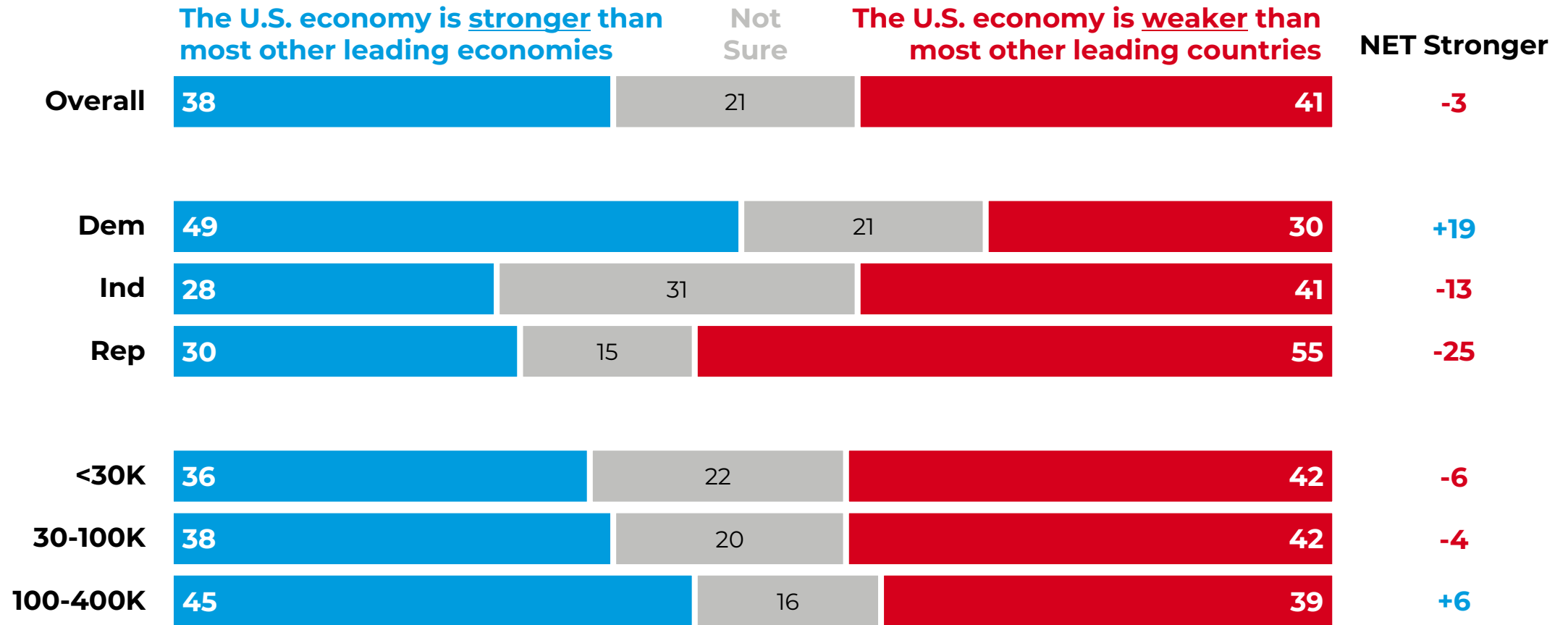
NET Good





# Voters are less negative about the U.S. economy when compared to other leading economies

U.S. economy: stronger or weaker than most other leading economies

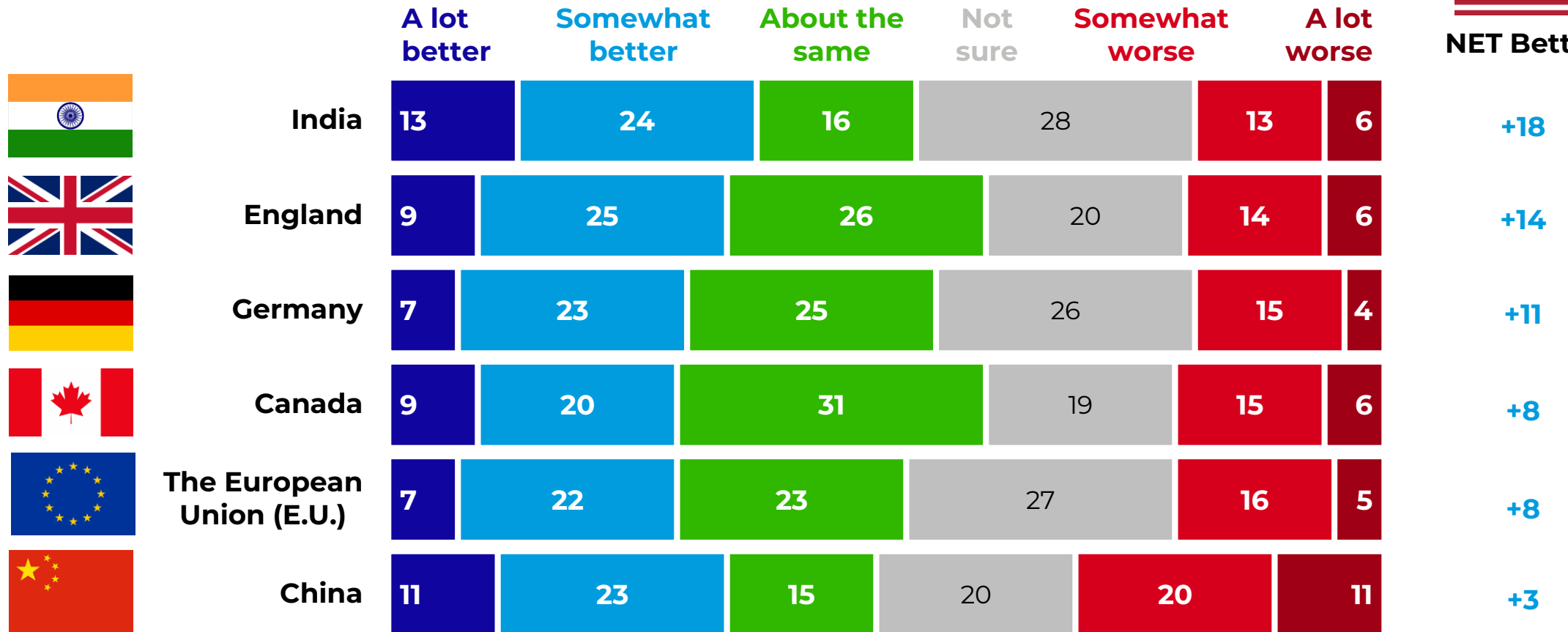


# Voters believe the U.S. economy is doing better than the economies of other major countries

U.S. economy today: better or worse than economy of...

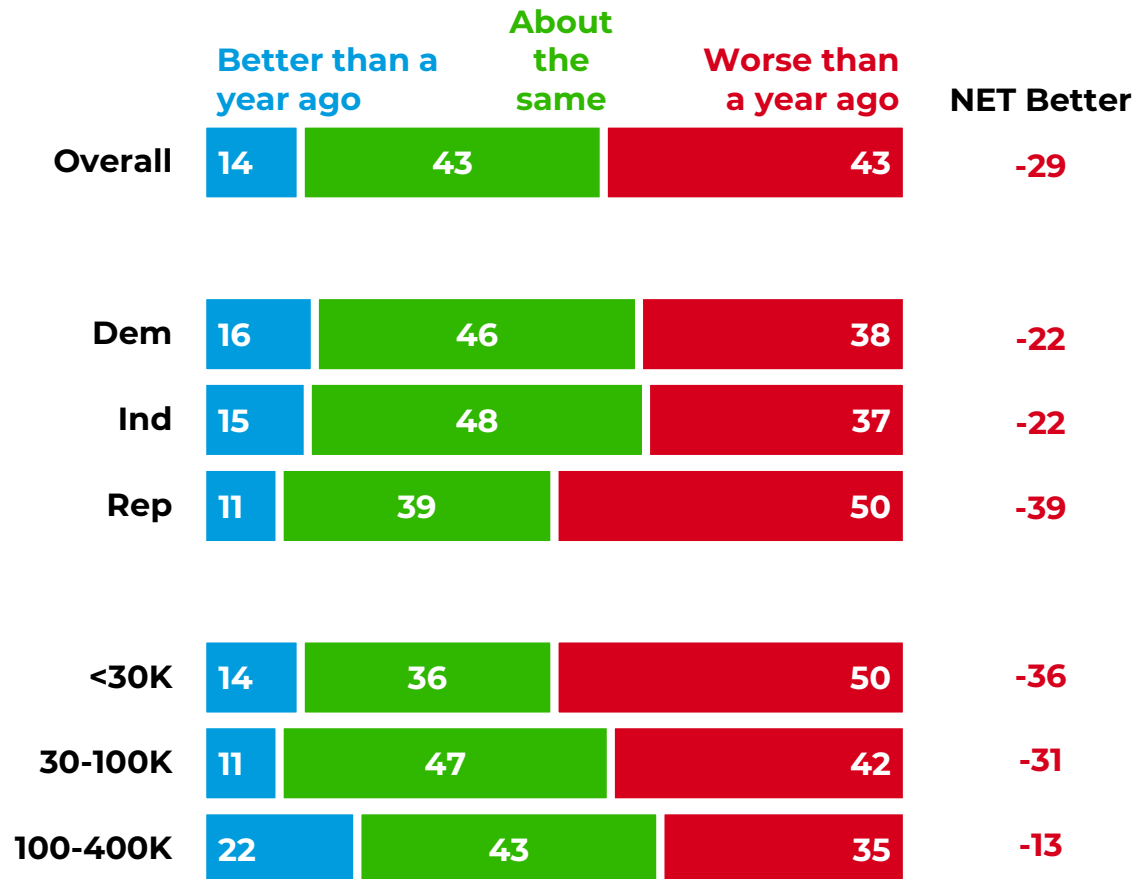


NET Better

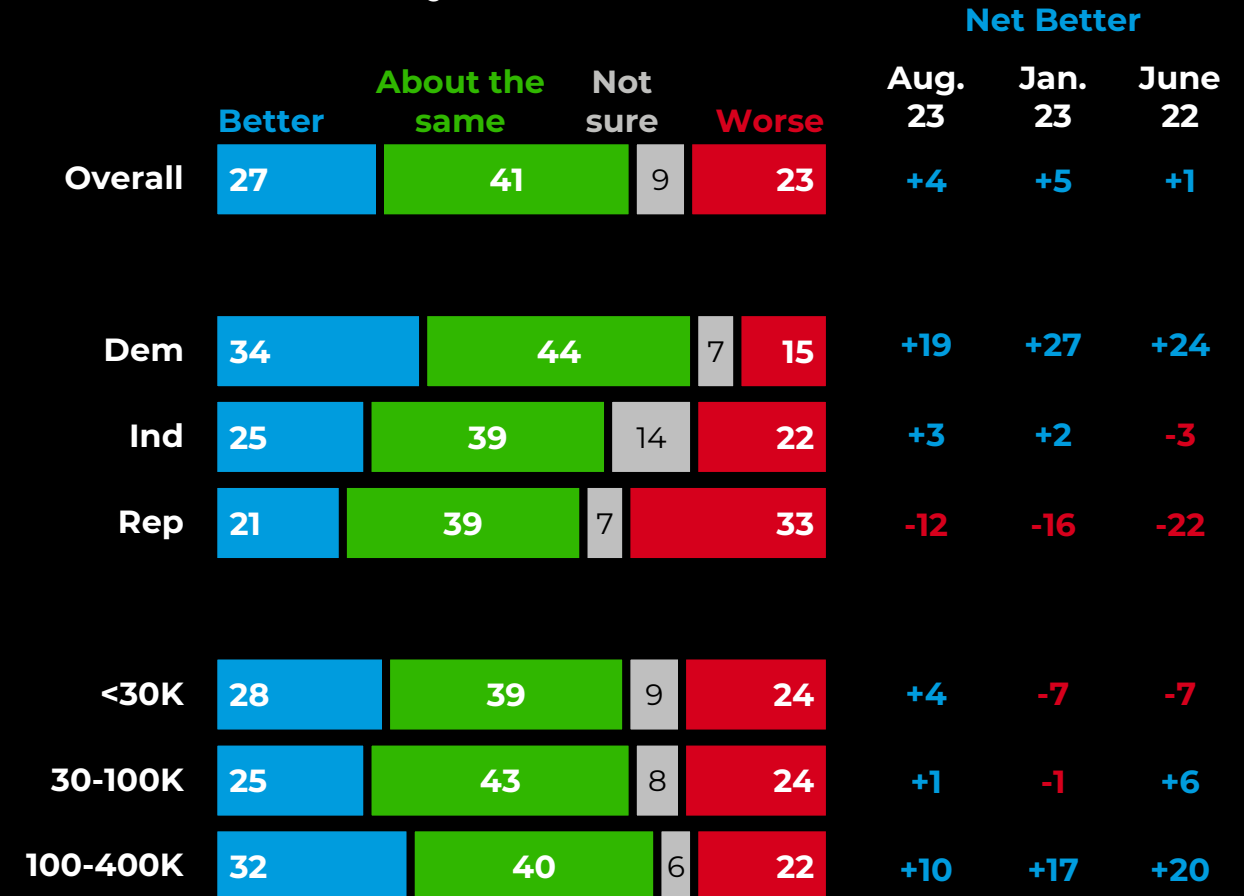


# Few voters say their personal finances have improved since last year, but many are hopeful that they will a year from now

## Personal finances a year ago



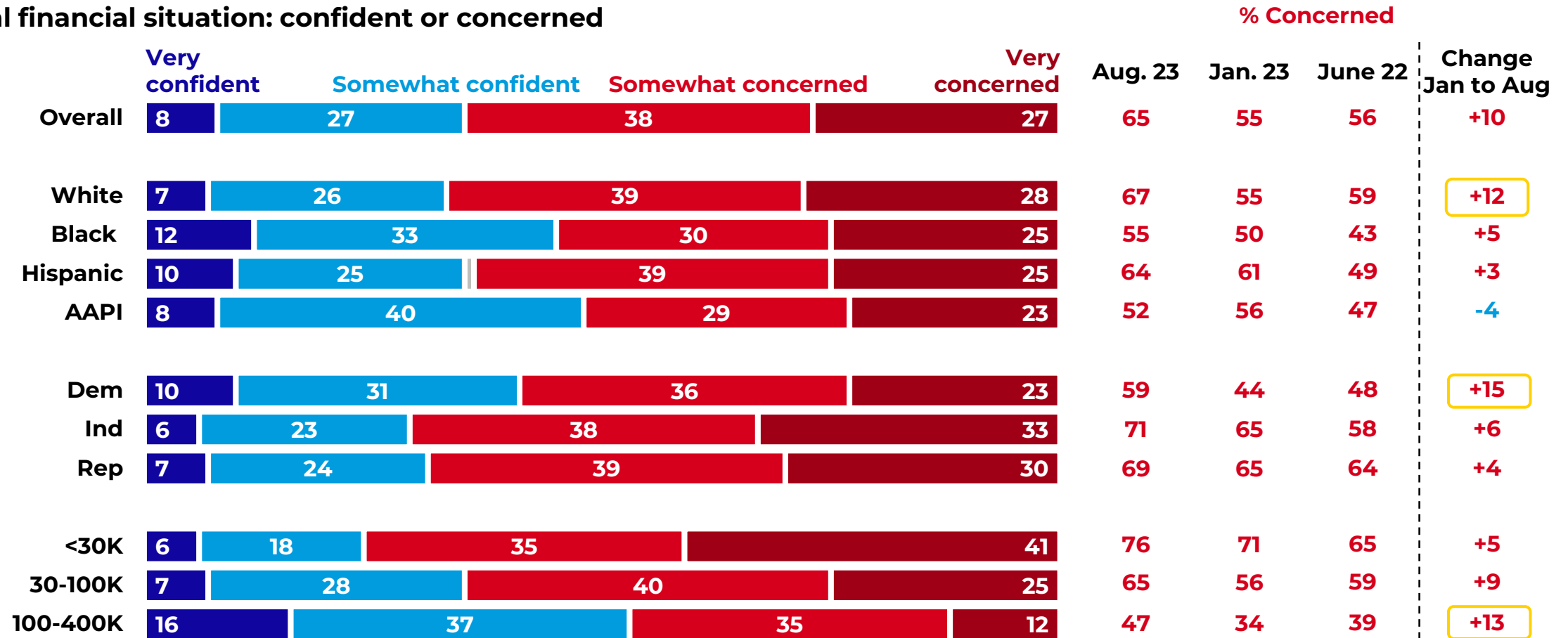
## Personal finances a year from now





# Over the course of 2023, voters have grown more concerned about their personal finances, particularly Democrats and white voters

## Personal financial situation: confident or concerned



# Groceries are a singular area of concern for voters; working class and voters of color are concerned with housing

Rising Costs: Most concerned about affording (top two)

		White	Black	Hisp.	Total AAPI	Working class	Middle class	Better off*
Groceries	60	59	66	64	37	62	62	37
Housing	36	33	46	40	54	46	34	26
Utilities like heating and electricity	34	36	33	27	27	39	32	26
Gasoline	30	32	21	33	20	27	31	33
Health care	25	24	21	27	40	18	26	38
None of these	8	8	7	5	11	4	8	20

On a separate question, a vast majority of voters say that the **cost of groceries have gotten worse in the last year** (84% Worse, 14% Better).



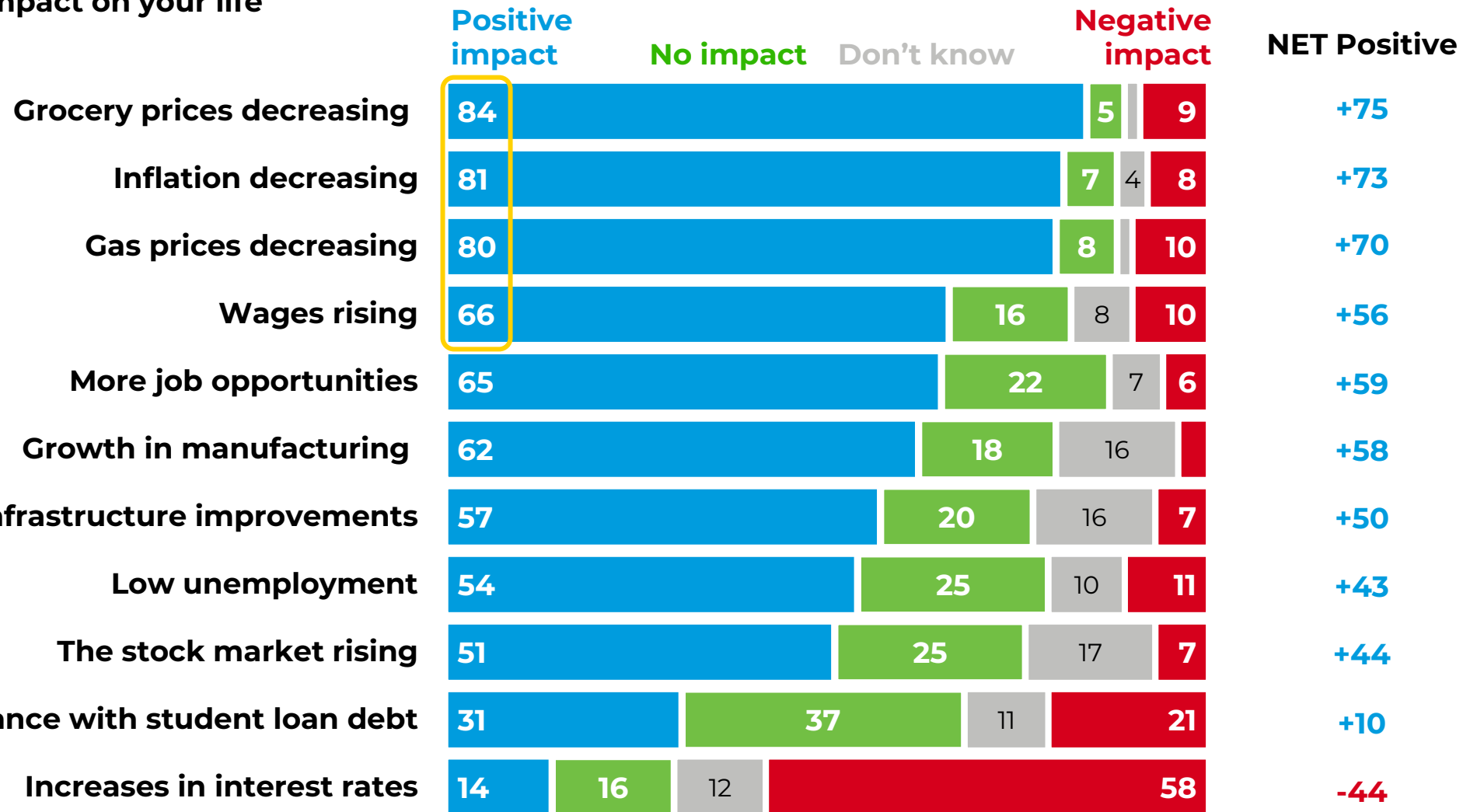
# While most voters can afford basic necessities, there is a growing inability to do so; half of voters cannot afford to eat at restaurants and majorities are unable to go on vacation or save long-term

Ability to take personal actions	NET Able		Aug. 23	Jan. 23	June 22	Change Jan to Aug
	Able	Not able				
Afford groceries	75	25	+50	+62	+58	-12
Meet your basic expenses and pay your bills	74	26	+48	+56	+56	-8
Afford the cost of my mortgage or rent payment	73	27	+46	+54	-	-8
Afford the cost of gas	69	31	+38	+44	+14	-6
[If non-retired] Find and keep a good-paying job	66	34	+32	+36	+38	-4
Afford health care premiums and copays	65	35	+30	+36	+38	-6
Pay down debt	53	47	+6	+12	+20	-6
[If parent] Find affordable child care	50	50	0	+4	+26	-4
Afford going out to restaurants	50	50	0	+10	+16	-10
[If non-retired] Pay for things like additional job training or education to advance your career	35	65	-30	-18	-10	-12
[If non-retired] Save for long-term goals like college or retirement	34	66	-32	-14	-6	-18
Pay for luxuries like vacation	32	68	-36	-28	-22	-8

# An overwhelming majority of voters say their income is not keeping up with inflation, however, far more believe decreasing prices would have a positive impact on their lives than wages rising

Positive or negative impact on your life

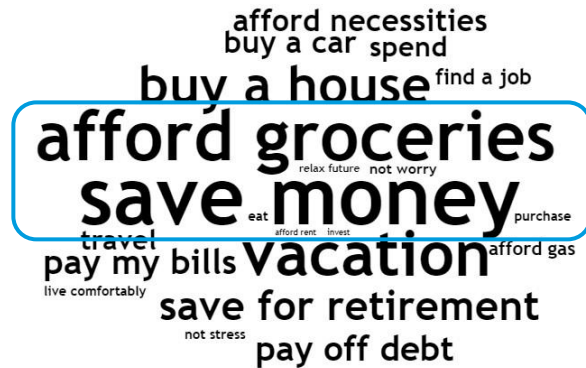
On a separate question, an overwhelming majority of voters say that **their income is not keeping up with inflation.** (19% Yes, 71% No, 10% Not sure).



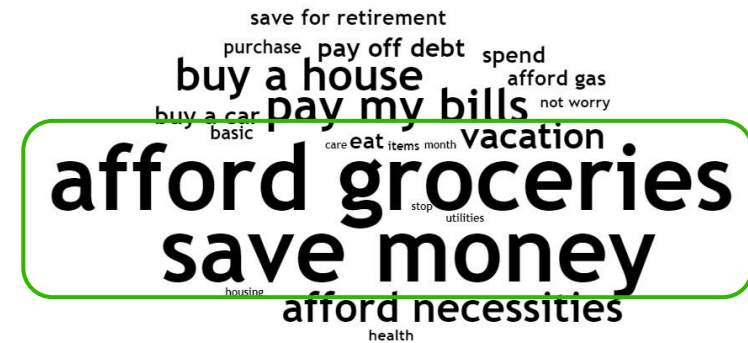
# When thinking about a better economy, voters imagine being able to save, affording groceries, and going on vacations

Finish the sentence: If the U.S. economy was better, I would be able to \_\_\_\_\_.

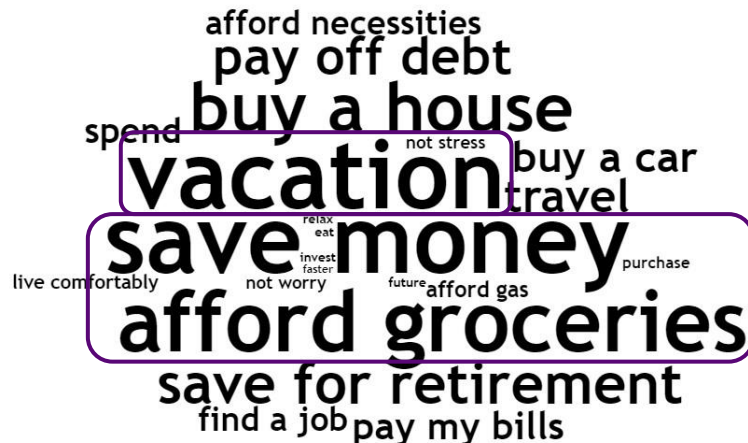
## Overall



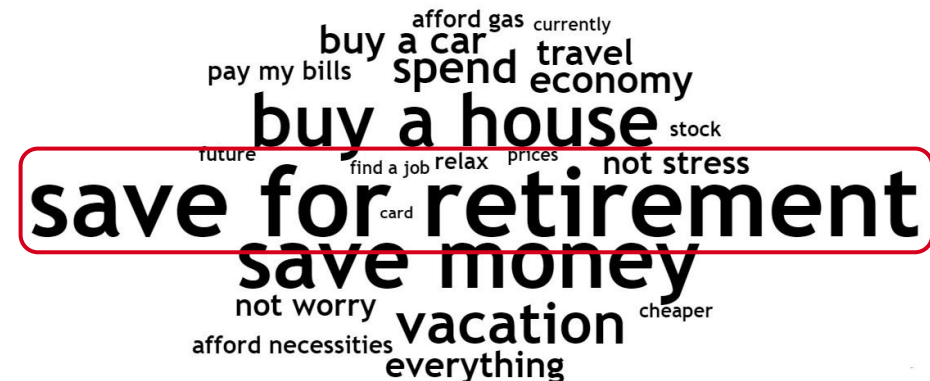
## Working Class



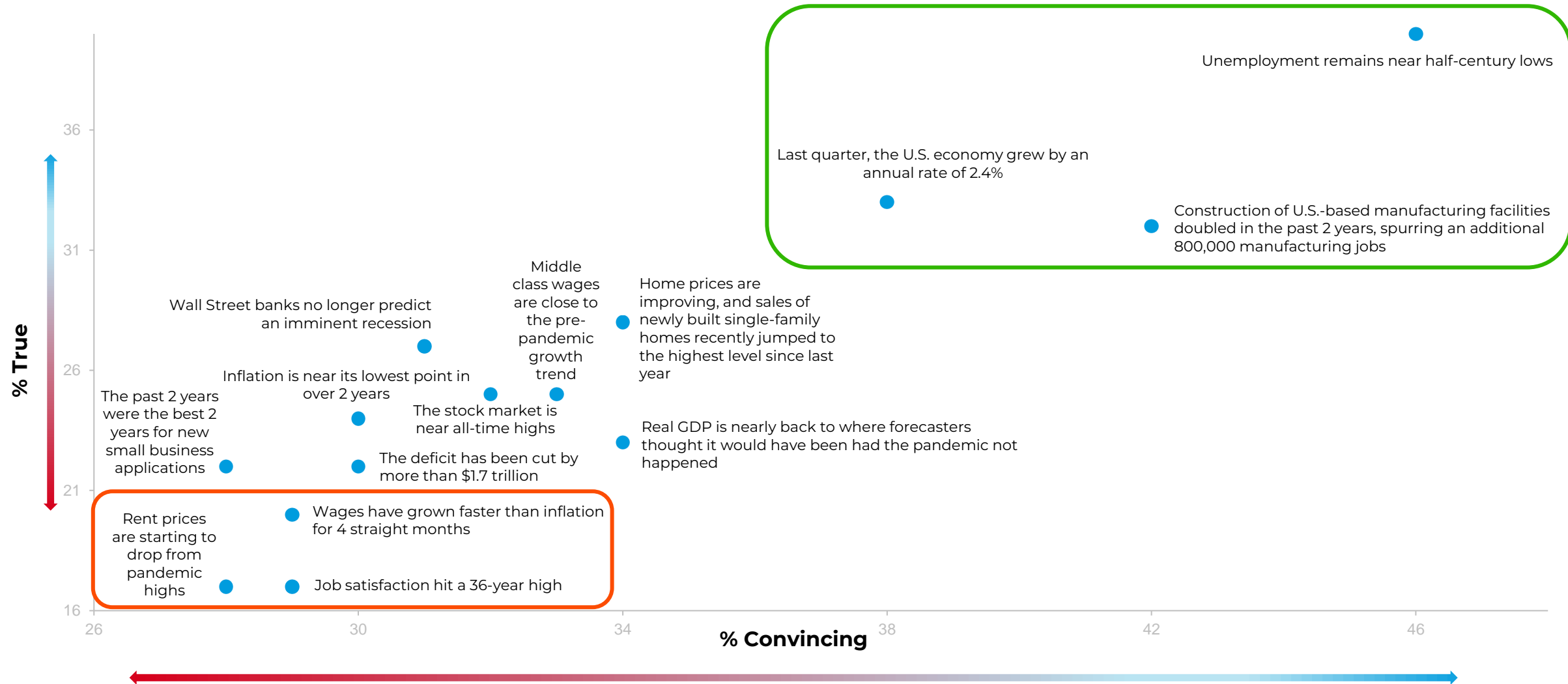
## Middle Class



## Better Off

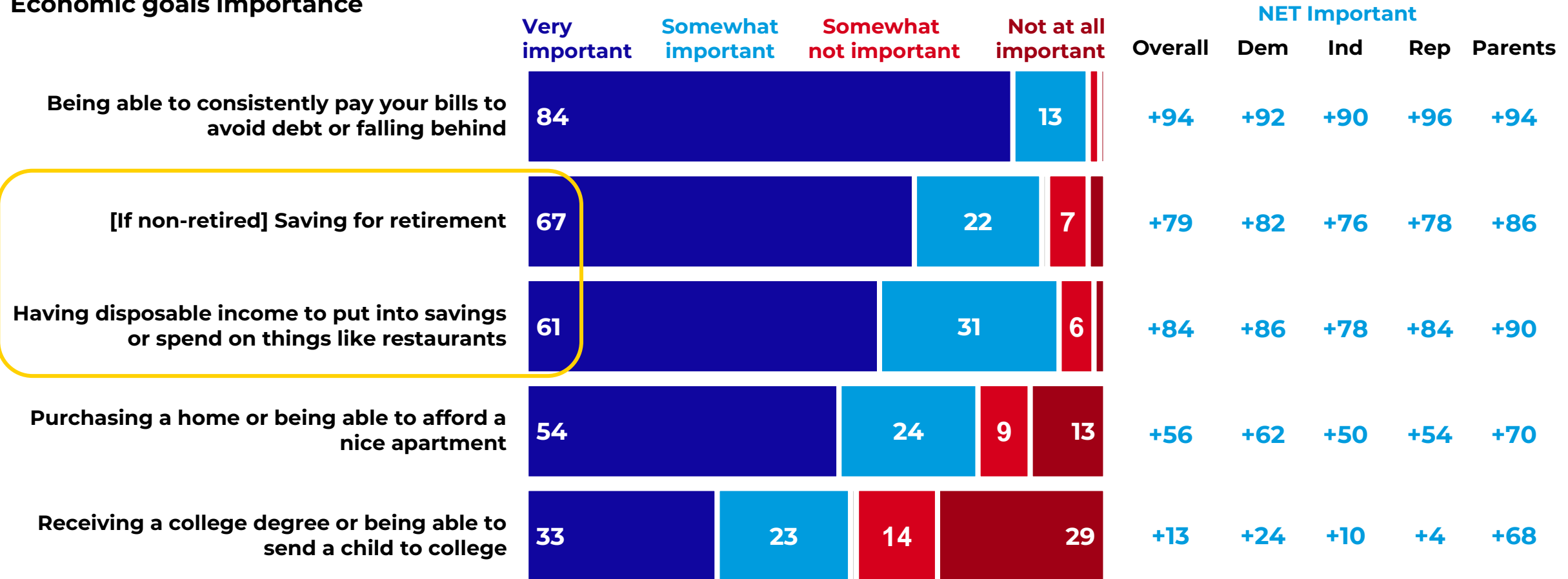


# Proof points about economic growth, unemployment and increase in manufacturing jobs are each most convincing and perceived to be true



# Voters prioritize having disposable income to put into savings or go out to restaurants more than they prioritize buying a home or sending a child to college

## Economic goals importance



# What It Means

- **Perceptions of the economy continue to remain poor.** Despite well-documented improvements to the economy over the last year (from outside sources), voters remain deeply negative and view the economy equally as poor today as they did one year ago. Over the course of the year, voters' perceptions about their own personal finances have worsened.
- **Inflation is a nuanced issue.** For many, the rising cost of groceries is the underlying concern when it comes to inflation. While wages rising would have a positive impact on their lives, far more believe costs simply going down would provide more benefits.
- **Voters' actual economic aspirations may differ from conventional wisdom.** Voters prioritize having disposable income to put into savings or spend on things like restaurants more than they prioritize buying a home or sending a child to college.
- **Signs of hope exist.** Voters' find record-low unemployment as a convincing reason to believe the economy is improving. While few voters say their personal finances have improved since last year, nearly twice as many believe their finances will be better next year.



# About this study

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Global Strategy Group's *Eye on the Economy* research series – now in its third year – explores voters' ever-changing perceptions of the economy, personal financial challenges, and the government's impact in the eyes of voters.

GSG's *Eye on the Economy* reports are available on our website: [globalstrategygroup.com](https://globalstrategygroup.com)

## Methodology

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Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among **1,000 registered voters nationwide between August 24 – 27, 2023** and has a confidence interval of +/- 3.1%. The survey included an oversample to reach 100 AAPI registered voters. Margin of error on subgroups is greater.

The survey was conducted online, recruiting respondents from a leading opt-in panel vendor.

# Thank You

We are interested in your feedback! Please send questions or comments to:



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