

Faith in Focus:

*Understanding religion and politics
to engage voters through values*



About this research

Survey goals

- **Confirm American voters' religious and spiritual practices and attitudes**
- **Establish the relative importance of religion/faith/spirituality in Americans' lives and voting behaviors**
- **Glean how Democrats and Republicans are seen as relating to people who believe in God**
- **Confirm voters' initial impressions of values-/faith-based language and acknowledge an opportunity for Democrats to communicate with voters using this language**

Methodology

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among 1,000 nationwide registered voters between September 2 and 7, 2025.

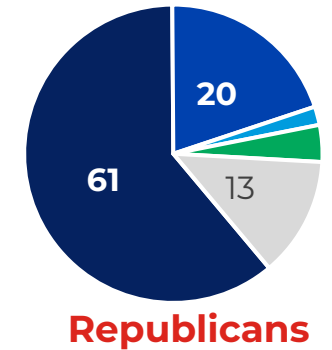
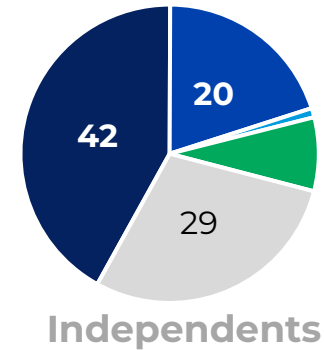
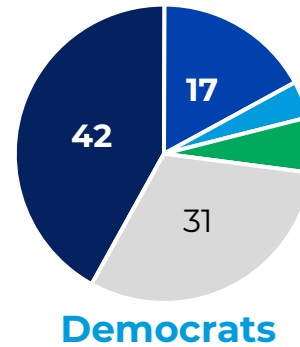
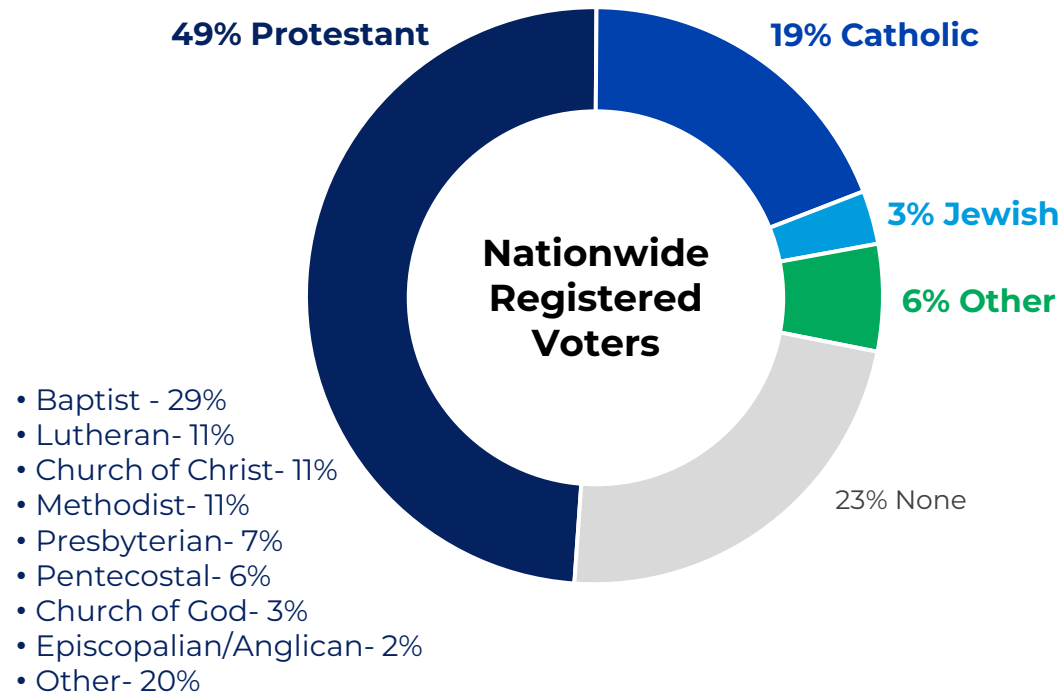
The survey was conducted online, recruiting respondents from a leading opt-in panel vendor.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.1%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

The American Religious Landscape

The majority of U.S. voters were raised in and currently practice a religion. When combining major groups, Christianity is the dominant tradition

What is your present religion, if any?

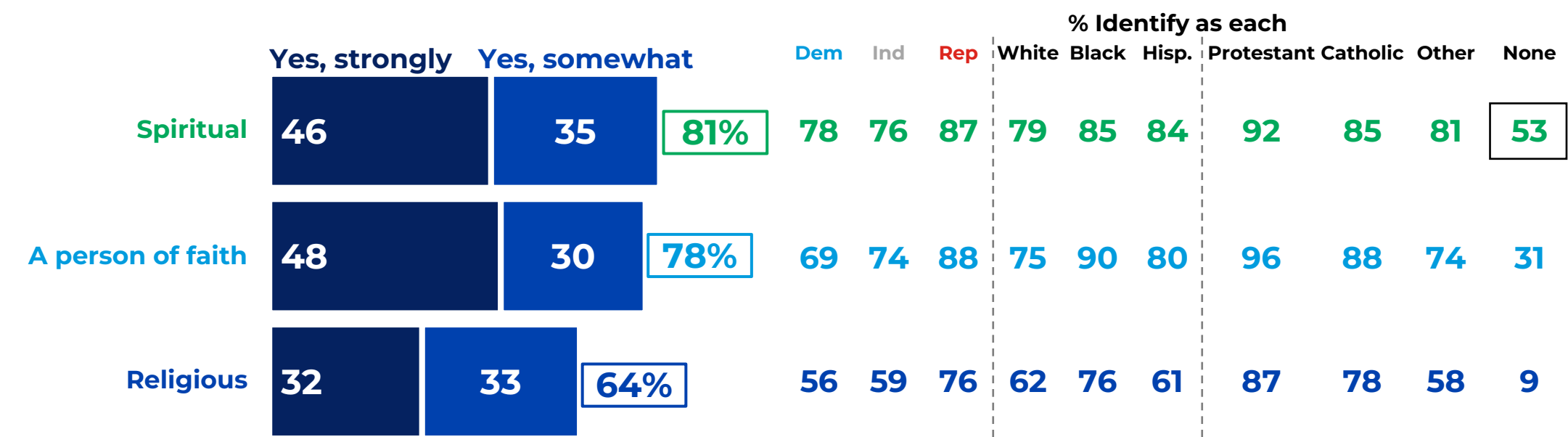


The vast majority of Americans were raised with some level of religious-based value system, well-before they became voters.

When asked what religious tradition voters were raised with, only 17% of voters report having been raised *without any* tradition. The remaining 83% grew up Protestant (52%), Catholic (25%), Jewish (3%), or something else (3%).

Two-thirds of voters say they are “religious,” but an even larger majority think of themselves as “spiritual” – including those who don’t subscribe to any faith

Do you personally identify as each of the following?

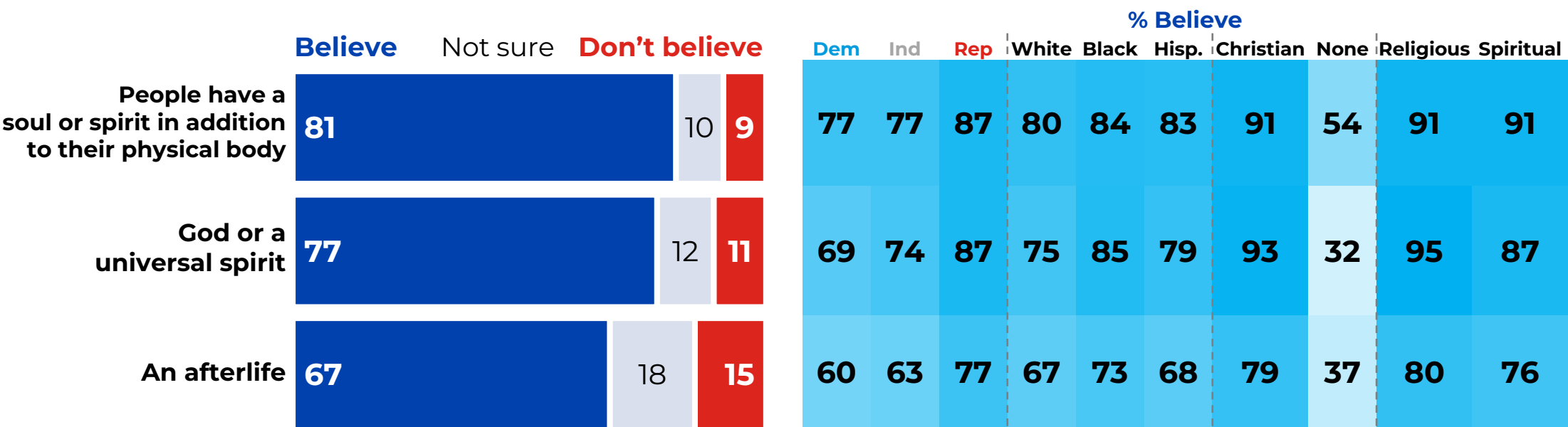


61% of U.S. voters self-identify with all three of these descriptions: spiritual, a person of faith, and religious.

None of these terms were further defined in this survey and instead left to the interpretation of respondents (as other nationwide public polling has done) – though further research should look to uncover what characteristics and beliefs Americans associate with these terms/traits.

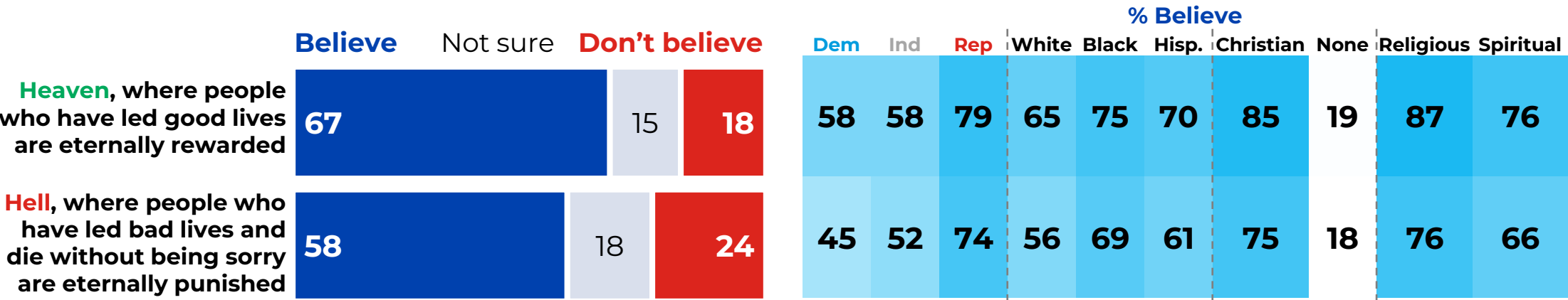
Across partisanship, most Americans hold the same core beliefs: people have a soul/spirit and there is a universal spirit/God

Do you believe in each of the following, or not?



A majority also believe in a heaven and hell, but attitudes vary sharply by partisanship

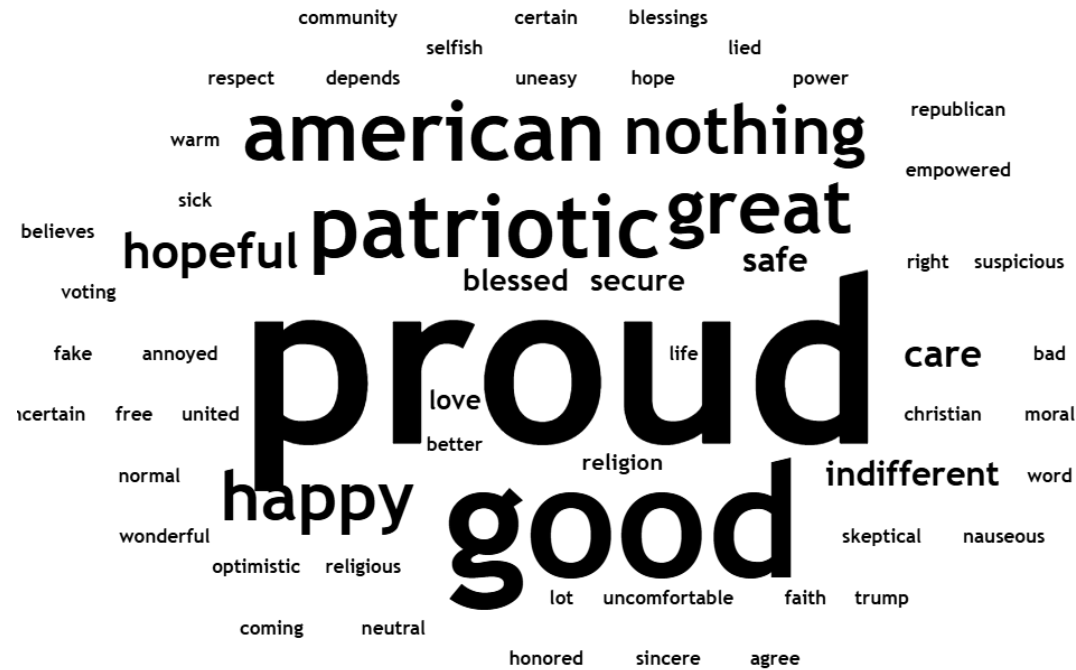
Do you believe in each of the following, or not?



“God bless America” invokes pride and patriotism first for the majority of U.S. voters

In one or two words, please complete the following sentence:

When candidates for office and elected officials use the phrase "God bless America," it makes me feel ____.



Registered Voters



Democrats

(including independent learners)



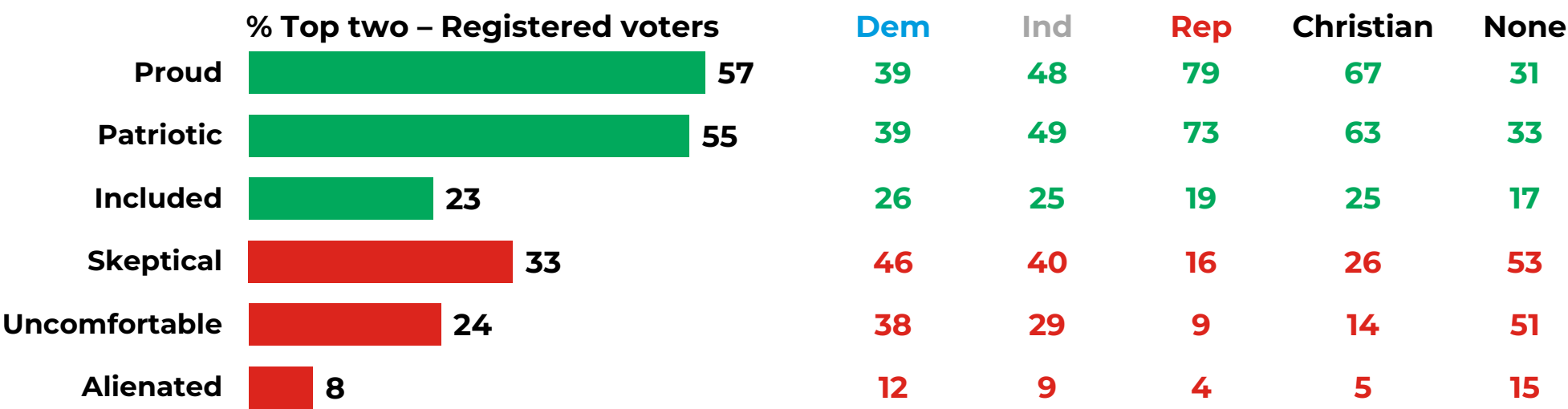
Republicans

(including independent learners)

When given the opportunity to consider “God bless America” negatively, some Democrats take it – but many express pride and patriotism

Choose the word that best completes the same sentence for you. And then choose the next-best.

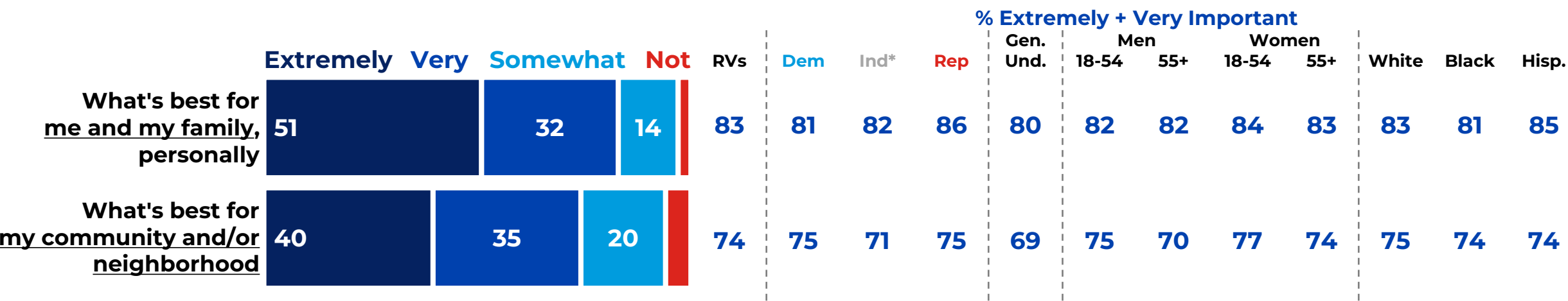
When candidates for office and elected officials use the phrase "God bless America," it makes me feel _____.



The Impact of Faith-based Values on Voting Behavior

Individual, family, community priorities always come first in the voting booth

Below are some different considerations people may take into account when voting.
How important is each to you when voting?



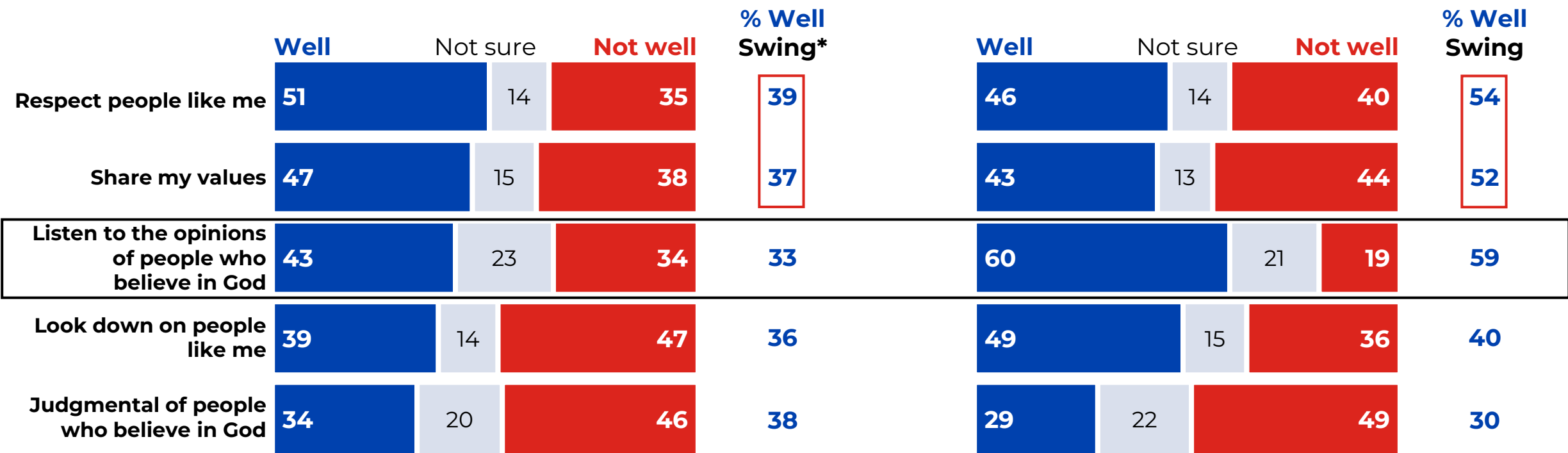
Among less-partisan and undecided voters, religious and class backgrounds are more important than party

Below are some different considerations people may take into account when voting.
How important is each to you when voting?

	Extremely Very Somewhat Not				RVs	Dem	Ind	Rep	% Extremely + Very Important		Men		Women		White	Black	Hisp.
									Gen. Und.*		18-54	55+	18-54	55+			
My political identity/ Party affiliation	22	25	29	23	48	54	28	46	18		47	49	44	51	45	55	56
My gender	26	19	18	37	44	49	36	42	33		43	36	50	47	40	58	56
My religious or spiritual beliefs	24	19	19	37	44	34	38	55	34		47	40	43	44	41	59	48
My socioeconomic status (i.e. financial or class background)	18	22	30	31	40	44	41	35	32		47	28	48	31	37	49	54
My sexual orientation	23	17	15	46	39	38	32	43	29		46	44	36	33	36	50	50
My age	20	19	27	34	39	42	37	36	33		44	40	33	40	34	49	56
My racial or ethnic background	18	17	21	44	35	40	30	32	24		45	32	33	31	26	63	56

Democrats have an opportunity to speak to people of faith, especially swing voters, as a way to underscore shared values and mutual respect

How well does each describe Democratic candidates for office and elected officials?
 How well does each describe Republican candidates for office and elected officials?



Survey experiments tested language that recalls religious values to understand how values resonate with the larger electorate

FAITH-BASED FRAMES

[CHRISTIAN]

[BIBLE]

[IMAGE OF GOD - DEMOCRACY]

[EQUAL - DEMOCRACY]

[CREATION - CLIMATE CHANGE]

[EARTH - CLIMATE CHANGE]

[COMMUNITY - GOVERNMENT]

[SOLIDARITY - CRIMINAL JUSTICE]

[GOLDEN RULE - IMMIGRATION]

[COMPASSION - SAFETY NET]

[HONOR - SOCIAL SECURITY]

[PEACEMAKERS - GVP]

Tested in head-to-head contests against “a Republican who identifies as Christian” to measure Democratic performance (particularly compared to the generic ballot) as well as in a Max Diff exercise to understand relative appeal, overall and with key groups

A Democrat who identifies as Christian

A Democrat whose conscience and values are informed by teachings found in the Bible

A Democrat who believes we are all made in God’s image, created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy

A Democrat who believes we are all created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy

A Democrat who believes it’s our moral obligation to care for God’s creation and be stewards of our planet

A Democrat who believes it’s our responsibility to care for the Earth and be stewards of our planet

A Democrat who values community and believes we should work together to improve the way our government serves all of us, instead of focusing on political differences that sow division

A Democrat who values solidarity within our communities and believes we should work together to achieve social justice and reform our criminal justice system

A Democrat who believes in the Golden Rule - to look out for and love our neighbors as ourselves - and so believes we should welcome and protect immigrants

A Democrat who believes social programs should lead with compassion and generosity to help the vulnerable, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and shelter the homeless

A Democrat who upholds the Commandment to honor our mothers and fathers and believes we should protect benefits for seniors

A Democrat who knows the power of prayer - but also that faith without works is dead- and believes we are called to be peacemakers to rid our communities of suffering, including that caused by gun violence

TYPICAL-DEMOCRAT FRAMES

[EQUITY - BIG GOV’T]

[PRIVILEGE - SYSTEMS]

[LET LIVE - LGBTQ]

Tested in the same Max Diff exercise to understand relative appeal compared to “faith-based” framing

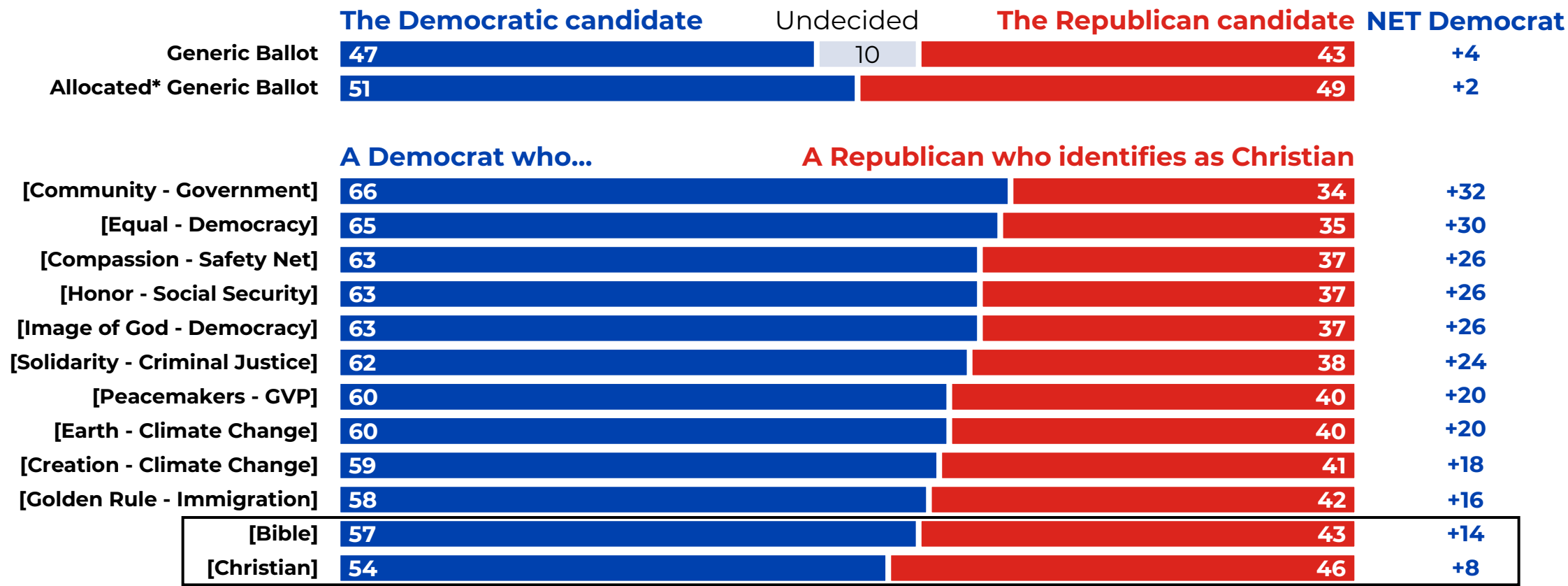
A Democrat who believes in finding equitable solutions to our biggest problems that best serve vulnerable and underserved communities, including supporting the unhoused and addressing food and housing insecurity

A Democrat who believes we need to acknowledge and reshape the systems of power, privilege, and oppression that harm and suppress communities of color and those of lower socioeconomic status

A Democrat who believes we should treat people as we wish to be treated, and live and let live, which includes loving, accepting, and affirming members of the LGBTQ community

Framing a Democrat with religion helps overperform the generic ballot significantly, and the value behind positions expands that lead further

If the general election for Congress were held today, for which candidate would you vote?



Values-based language improves a Democrat's chances with tough groups. There's no harm done (and potentially some benefit) with the Democratic base

If the general election for Congress were held today, for which candidate would you vote?

	RVs	NET Democratic candidate										
		Dem	Ind*	Rep	Gen. Und.	Men		Women		White	Black	Hisp.
Generic Vote	+4	+94	+14	-89	-	18-54	55+	18-54	55+	-10	+57	+20
Allocated Generic Vote	+2	+98	+8	-92	-	-2	-18	+14	+14	-10	+60	+22
<i>A Democrat who... vs. A Republican who identifies as Christian</i>												
[Community - Government]	+32	+98	+64	-42	+64	+30	+6	+44	+40	+20	+74	+46
[Equal - Democracy]	+30	+96	+70	-46	+62	+26	+4	+48	+36	+18	+78	+48
[Compassion – Safety Net]	+26	+96	+66	-52	+68	+22	-2	+42	+38	+14	+78	+48
[Honor – Social Security]	+26	+94	+58	-52	+62	+24	+2	+36	+34	+12	+76	+44
[Image of God – Democracy]	+26	+92	+66	-54	+54	+20	0	+40	+34	+10	+80	+50
[Solidarity – Criminal Justice]	+24	+96	+56	-58	+54	+16	+2	+40	+30	+10	+80	+42
[Peacemakers - GVP]	+20	+94	+48	-58	+44	+12	+2	+34	+30	+6	+74	+44
[Earth – Climate Change]	+20	+96	+44	-64	+42	+18	-8	+32	+28	+6	+74	+44
[Creation – Climate Change]	+18	+94	+48	-64	+36	+14	-8	+30	+30	+4	+68	+46
[Golden Rule – Immigration]	+16	+92	+52	-68	+50	+20	-10	+30	+22	+2	+70	+48

While values-based language improves a Dem's position across the electorate, it especially interests less-political, center-right women and younger voters

Swing voter profile



Voters most likely to be swing are:

Less conservative, right-leaning voters...

- Non-conservative Republicans (59% are swing)
- Non-MAGA Republicans (51%)
- White moderates (52%)

Especially, center-right women...

- Republican women (45%)
- Non-college women (39%)

and younger voters.

- White 18-54 (42%)
- Women 18-54 (42%)
- Christians 18-54 (42%)

Voters who don't consistently vote for a Democrat or a Republican for Congress lean right on their self-described party identification.

- Swing voters are made up of mostly Republicans: 24% are Democrats, 27% are independents, and 49% are Republicans.

Swing voters are also more likely to say that politics isn't important to their personal identity.

- Three-quarters (74%) of partisan base voters say politics is important to their personal identities, and 68% of oppo voters say the same. Meanwhile, only 55% of swing voters say it's important, further underscoring the importance of engaging them with less-partisan, more values-based language.

Emphasizing values of community, equality, and compassion are MOST appealing and perform as good as or better than “typical Dem” language

Max Diff Analysis: Most appealing types of Democrat

A Democrat who...	RVs	Dems	Inds	Reps	Swing	Swing States	White	Black+ Hisp.
[COMMUNITY - GOVERNMENT] ...values community and believes we should work together to improve the way our government serves all of us, instead of focusing on political differences that sow division	10.9	10.2	12.3	10.0	11.0	10.3	11.8	8.8
[EQUAL - DEMOCRACY] ...believes we are all created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy	10.6	10.5	10.9	9.6	11.0	10.7	10.8	9.4
[EQUITY - BIG GOV'T] ...believes in finding equitable solutions to our biggest problems that best serve vulnerable and underserved communities, including supporting the unhoused and addressing food and housing insecurity	10.3	13.4	10.1	7.4	10.0	9.5	9.6	12.1
[COMPASSION - SAFETY NET] ...believes social programs should lead with compassion and generosity to help the vulnerable, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and shelter the homeless	10.0	12.2	10.2	7.4	10.3	9.8	10.1	9.3
[IMAGE OF GOD - DEMOCRACY] ...believes we are all made in God's image, created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy	6.6	4.5	5.7	9.6	6.7	7.2	6.5	7.3
[SOLIDARITY - CRIMINAL JUSTICE] ...values solidarity within our communities and believes we should work together to achieve social justice and reform our criminal justice system	6.4	6.7	6.2	5.7	6.6	6.4	6.2	6.9
[PRIVILEGE - SYSTEMS] ...believes we need to acknowledge and reshape the systems of power, privilege, and oppression that harm and suppress communities of color and those of lower socioeconomic status	6.1	8.4	6.0	4.0	5.6	6.1	5.7	7.1
[HONOR - SOCIAL SECURITY] ...upholds the Commandment to honor our mothers and fathers and believes we should protect benefits for seniors	5.6	3.5	5.5	8.2	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.4

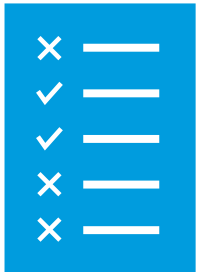
Of the three faith-based frames that emerge as the most appealing types of Democratic candidate, none are outwardly religious and inspire no backlash with base groups; but each do a good job of invoking the value behind Democratic policies (and perform as well as or even better than other “typical-Democrat” language). While these lanes may not strike the right tone for primary contests or resonate as clearly on a national level, candidates seeking to appeal to **undecided, split-ticket, or Republican voters, and in areas with large shares of religious voters** should venture into incorporating similar language in their communications for **general electorate audiences**, particularly if seeking to moderate the national party brand.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations



A majority of voters across the political spectrum practice a religion (mostly Christianity - Catholic or Protestant) and share common beliefs. Well-before they were voters, the majority of Americans were raised in a religious tradition, with the predominant tradition being a Christian one. Fewer than one-in-five were not, and fewer than a quarter of U.S. voters currently don't identify with any religion ("Nones"). A majority of these religious "Nones" even consider themselves to be "spiritual" and **believe that people have a soul or spirit – a core belief they share with Christians and other religious Americans.** A phrase like "God bless America" doesn't turn off the majority of Americans; in fact, it makes them feel good – proud and patriotic.



Faith has an impact on voting behavior, as Americans bring their values to the voting booth, just as (if not more so than) they carry their partisan identities. Religious and spiritual beliefs are in a tier of importance right alongside political identity, with a strong plurality of voters overall saying they are extremely or very important. Notably, independents and undecided voters say these beliefs are more important than partisan cues. Given that partisanship is inherently less of a motivator for independents and undecideds, communicating with them (and, as a result, winning general election races on the margins) requires **fewer partisan cues and more community-based, economic-focused, and values-infused language that speaks more directly to their built-in beliefs and real-life, everyday concerns.**



Democrats have an opportunity to engage swing voters with faith-based language to demonstrate their values, communicate respect, and win. This research concludes that voters are drawn most to Democrats who explain their positions through the lens of shared values. Doing so encourages support across the electorate – but particularly less-conservative, white, younger, and women voters. **Particularly highlighting common values of community, equality, and compassion are effective ways to engage center-right voters and make even more inroads with traditional Democratic coalitions.**

Thank You



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Appendix: Full Max Diff Analysis

Max Diff Analysis: Most appealing type of Democrat

A Democrat who...	RVs	Dems	Inds	Reps	Swing	Swing States	White	Black+ Hisp.
[COMMUNITY - GOVERNMENT] ...values community and believes we should work together to improve the way our government serves all of us, instead of focusing on political differences that sow division	10.9	10.2	12.3	10.0	11.0	10.3	11.8	8.8
[EQUAL - DEMOCRACY] ...believes we are all created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy	10.6	10.5	10.9	9.6	11.0	10.7	10.8	9.4
[EQUITY - BIG GOV'T] ...believes in finding equitable solutions to our biggest problems that best serve vulnerable and underserved communities, including supporting the unhoused and addressing food and housing insecurity	10.3	13.4	10.1	7.4	10.0	9.5	9.6	12.1
[COMPASSION - SAFETY NET] ...believes social programs should lead with compassion and generosity to help the vulnerable, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and shelter the homeless	10.0	12.2	10.2	7.4	10.3	9.8	10.1	9.3
[IMAGE OF GOD - DEMOCRACY] ...believes we are all made in God's image, created equal, have dignity, and deserve to be represented in our democracy	6.6	4.5	5.7	9.6	6.7	7.2	6.5	7.3
[SOLIDARITY - CRIMINAL JUSTICE] ...values solidarity within our communities and believes we should work together to achieve social justice and reform our criminal justice system	6.4	6.7	6.2	5.7	6.6	6.4	6.2	6.9
[PRIVILEGE - SYSTEMS] ...believes we need to acknowledge and reshape the systems of power, privilege, and oppression that harm and suppress communities of color and those of lower socioeconomic status	6.1	8.4	6.0	4.0	5.6	6.1	5.7	7.1
[HONOR - SOCIAL SECURITY] ...upholds the Commandment to honor our mothers and fathers and believes we should protect benefits for seniors	5.6	3.5	5.5	8.2	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.4
[GOLDEN RULE - IMMIGRATION] ...believes in the Golden Rule - to look out for and love our neighbors as ourselves - and so believes we should welcome and protect immigrants	5.3	5.9	5.4	4.1	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.5
[EARTH - CLIMATE CHANGE] ...believes it's our responsibility to care for the Earth and be stewards of our planet	5.2	4.7	5.6	4.9	5.2	5.3	5.5	4.5
[PEACEMAKERS - GVP] ...knows the power of prayer - but also that faith without works is dead- and believes we are called to be peacemakers to rid our communities of suffering, including that caused by gun violence	4.5	3.6	4.6	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.0	5.8
[LET LIVE - LGBTQ] ...believes we should treat people as we wish to be treated, and live and let live, which includes loving, accepting, and affirming members of the LGBTQ community	4.5	6.7	4.3	2.6	3.4	4.1	4.7	4.0
[CREATION - CLIMATE CHANGE] ...believes it's our moral obligation to care for God's creation and be stewards of our planet	4.1	2.6	4.3	5.5	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.6
[BIBLE] ...(whose) conscience and values are informed by teachings found in the Bible	3.5	1.4	3.1	7.7	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.6
[CHRISTIAN] ...identifies as Christian	3.1	1.5	2.6	6.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.9