



Medicare, Social Security & The Deficit

Findings from a national survey of likely
2012 voters.

National Committee to Preserve Social
Security and Medicare

September 2011



AMERICAN VIEWPOINT[®]

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Survey Methodology

- Lake Research Partners and American Viewpoint designed and administered this survey which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 800 likely voters nationwide. The survey was conducted September 8 - 12, 2011.
- Telephone numbers were drawn from a voter file sample. The sample was stratified geographically based on the proportion of voters in each region. Data were weighted slightly by party identification, age, and region to reflect the attributes of the actual population. The margin of error for the overall survey is +/- 3.5%. It is higher among subgroups. Due to rounding some of the numbers will not always add to 100%.

Key Findings

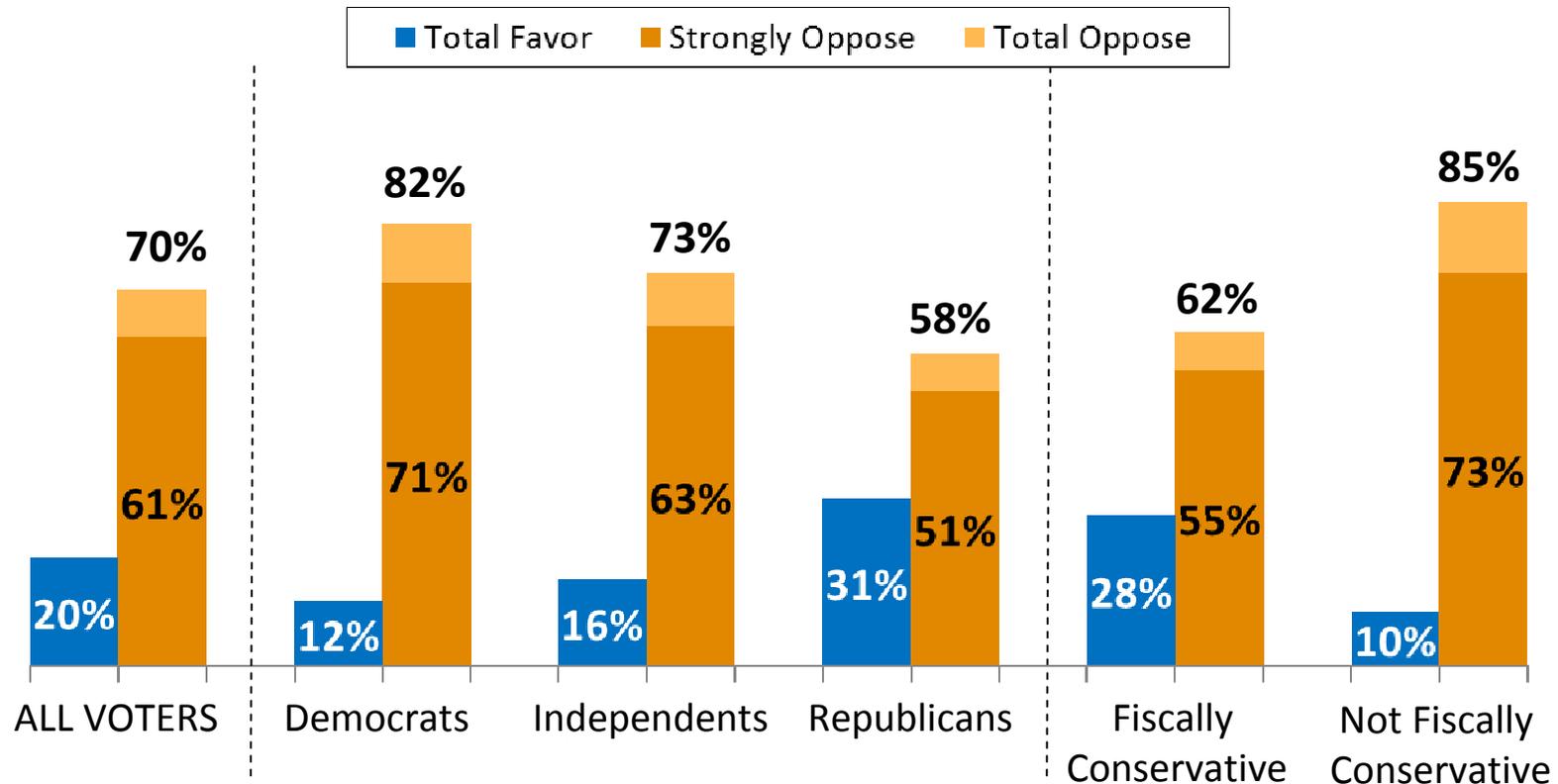
- **Voters continue to overwhelmingly oppose cuts to Social Security and Medicare as a way to reduce the deficit. By a 50 point margin, they oppose including cuts to these programs as part of a potential Super Committee proposal (70 percent oppose, 20 percent support).**
- **Opposition to these cuts remains strong across party lines as 82 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of Independents, and 58 percent of Republicans oppose including cuts to Social Security and Medicare in the proposal.**
 - **They would punish members of Congress and President Obama for supporting such cuts, and reward each for opposing them.**
- **Consistent with past research, voters oppose several proposals to change Social Security and Medicare by wide margins:**

Social Security:	Medicare:
•Means testing: 72% oppose, 21% favor	•Raising eligibility age: 57% oppose, 39% favor
•Changing the COLA formula: 66% oppose, 22% favor	•Increasing co-pays: 56% oppose, 36% favor
•Raising the retirement age: 65% oppose, 30% favor	•Cutting reimbursements: 65% oppose, 23% favor
- **Voters overwhelmingly approve of raising the cap on Social Security wages above \$106,000 (71 percent favor, 21 percent oppose), which is consistent with what we have seen in past research.**
- **When asked to choose between tax increases on the top 2 percent of income earners or cuts to Social Security and Medicare as a way to reduce the deficit, 94 percent of Democrats, 82 percent of independents, and 64 percent of Republicans prefer tax increase on the top 2 percent of income earners.**

Including cuts to Medicare and Social Security in the Committee proposal is a non-starter.

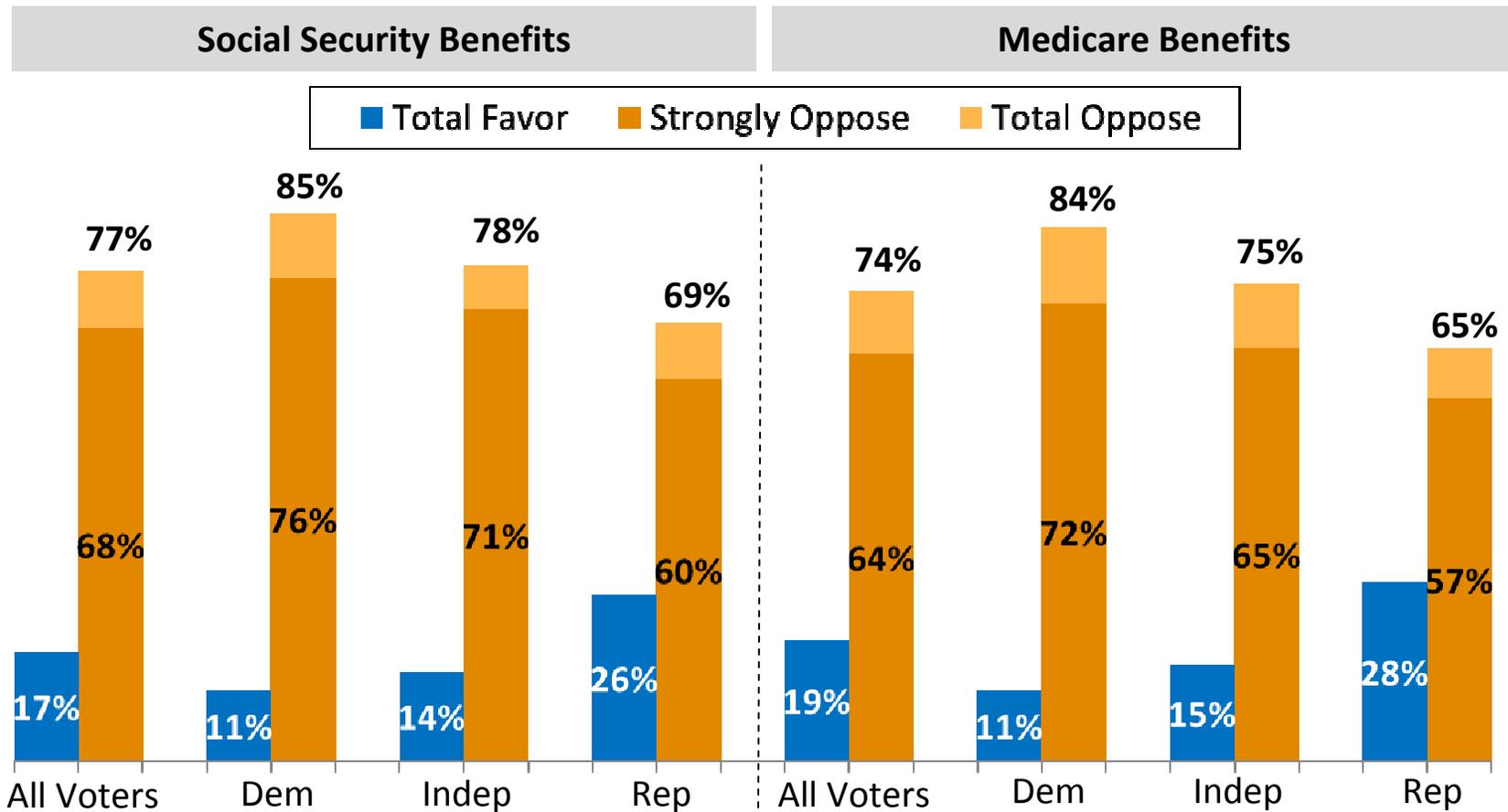
This fall, Congress will likely vote on a proposal that will cut at least one point two trillion dollars in Federal spending across a number of programs over the next 10 years. It will likely include cuts to Medicare and Social Security. Do you favor or oppose including cuts to Medicare and Social Security to such a proposal? (If favor or oppose – And is that strongly or not so strongly?)

Support For Committee Proposal That Includes Cuts to Social Security and Medicare



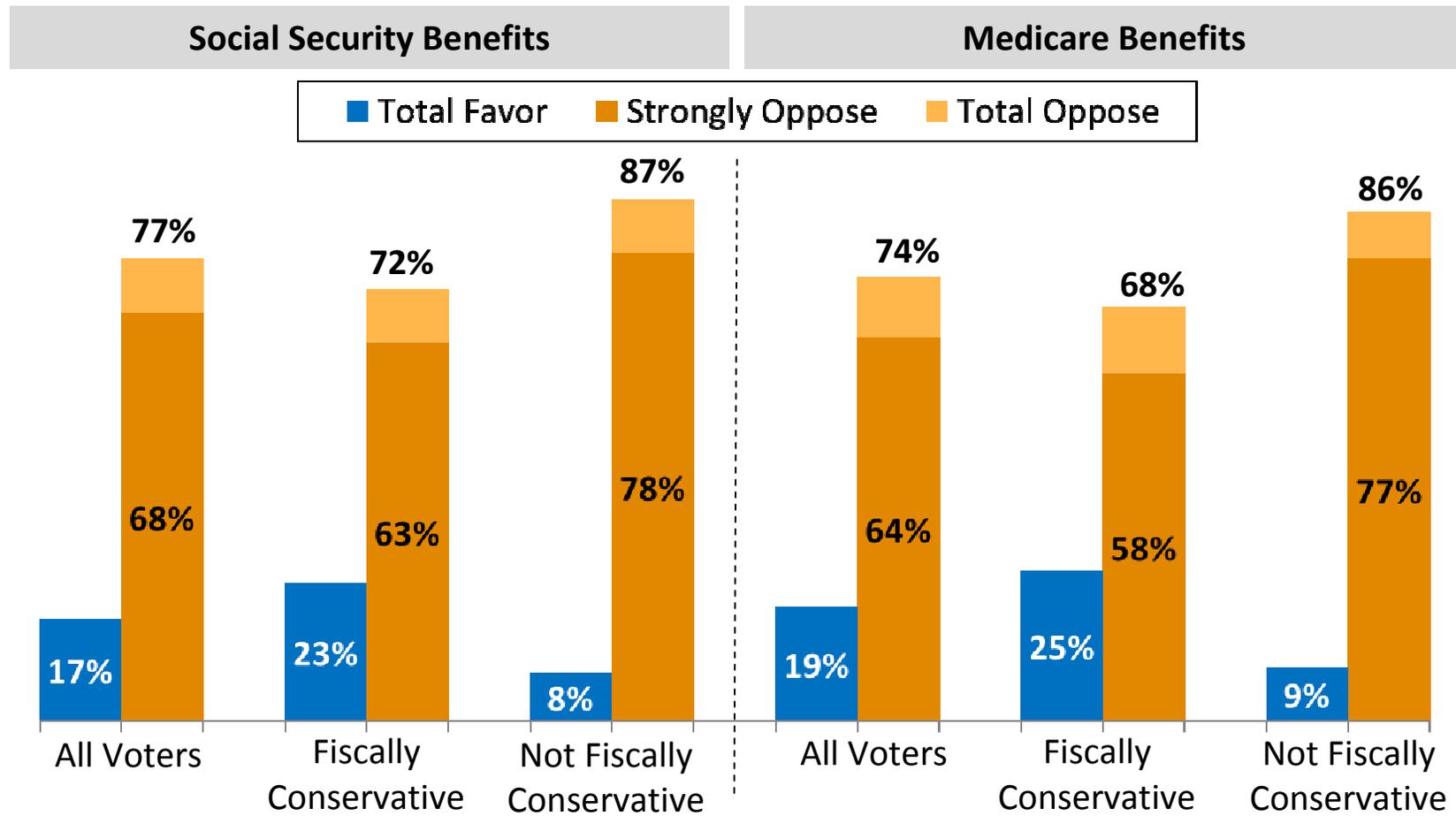
Across party lines large majorities of voters strongly reject cutting Social Security or Medicare benefits to reduce the deficit.

Do you favor or oppose cutting SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE benefits to reduce the deficit? (If Favor or Oppose – And is that strongly or not so strongly?)



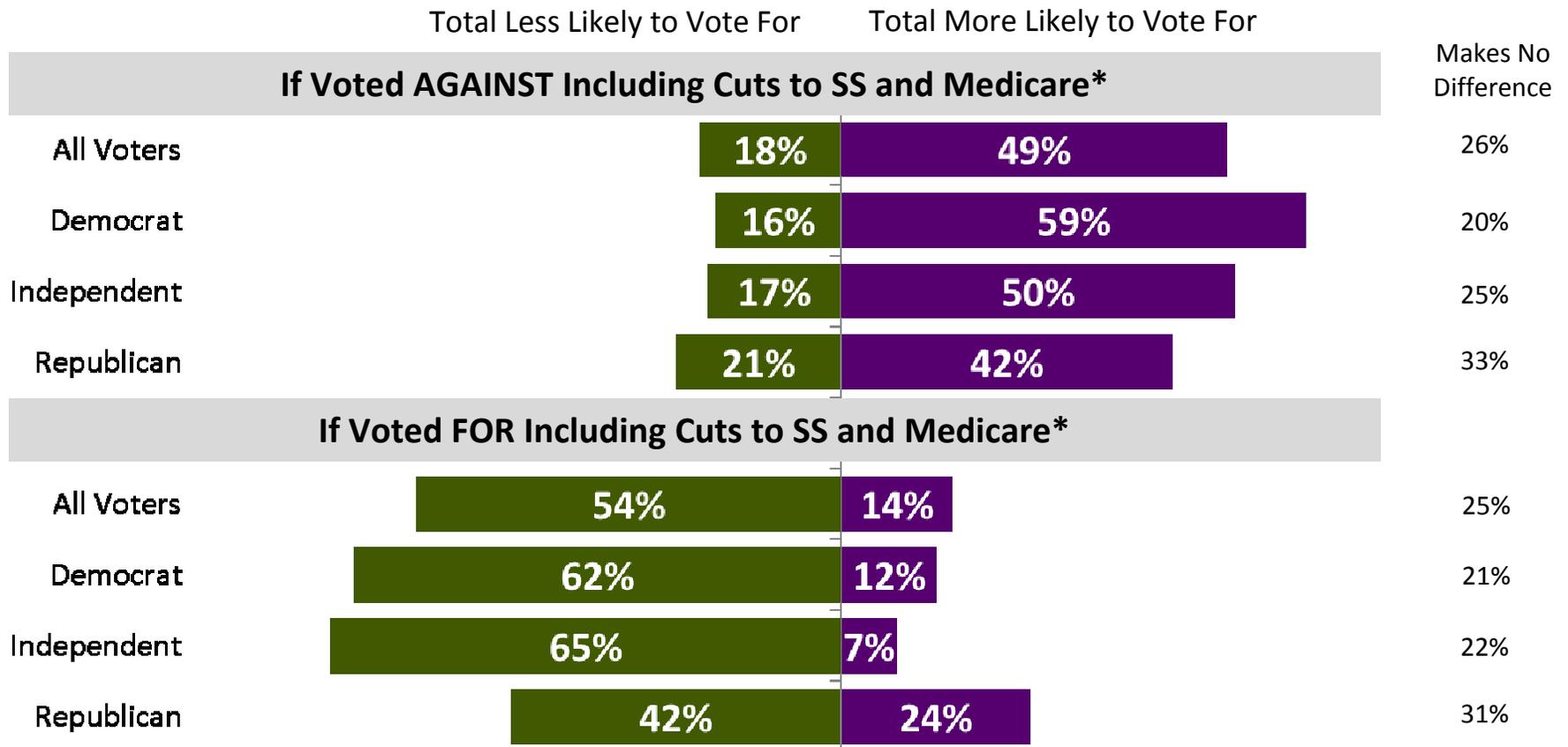
Self-described fiscally conservative voters strongly oppose cutting Social Security or Medicare benefits to reduce the deficit.

Do you favor or oppose cutting SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE benefits to reduce the deficit? (If Favor or Oppose – And is that strongly or not so strongly?)



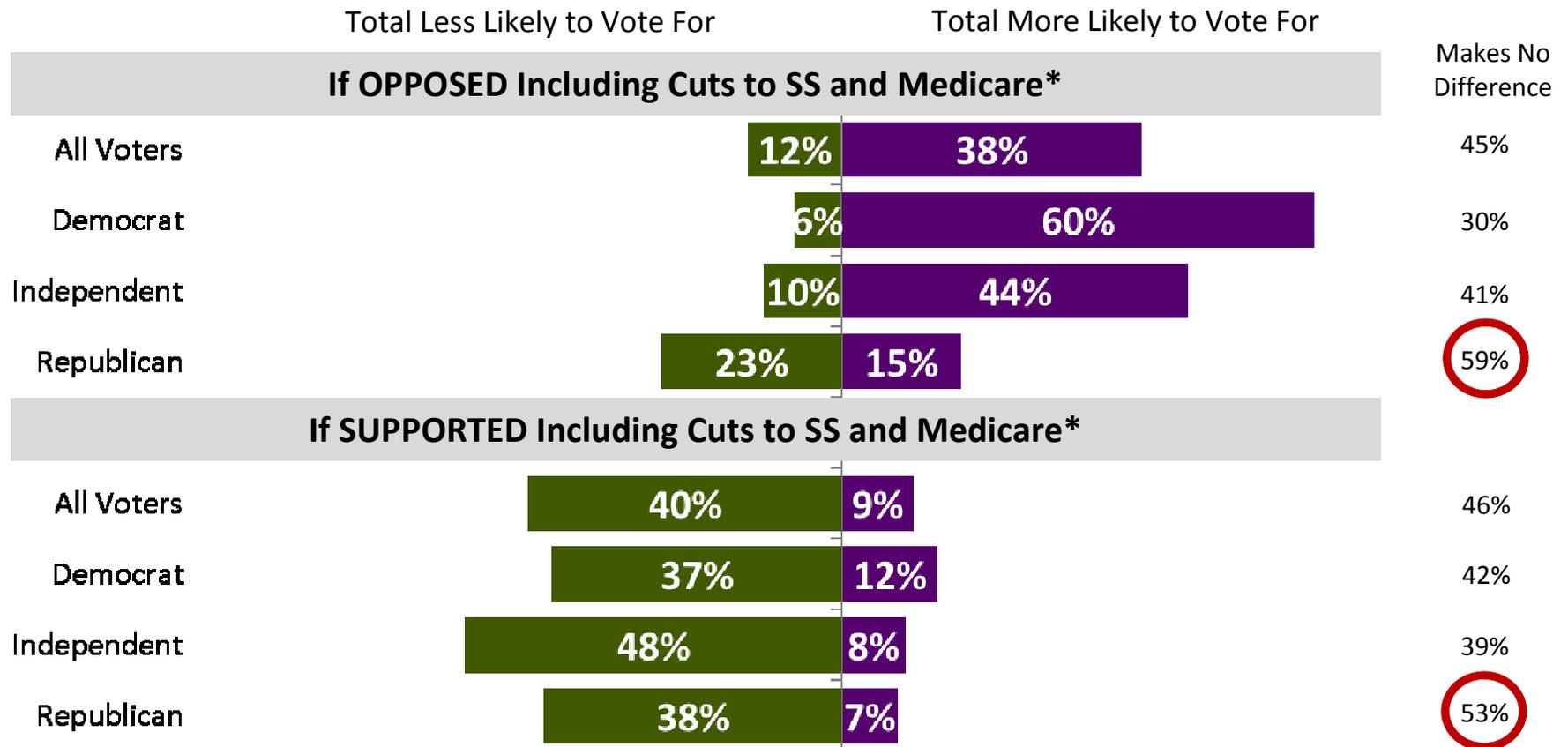
Voters would reward their Member of Congress for voting against including Social Security and Medicare cuts to the proposal, and punish them for voting for it.

*And if your member of Congress VOTED FOR/VOTED AGAINST including cuts to Social Security and Medicare in this proposal, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for your Member of Congress, or would it not make a difference to you?**



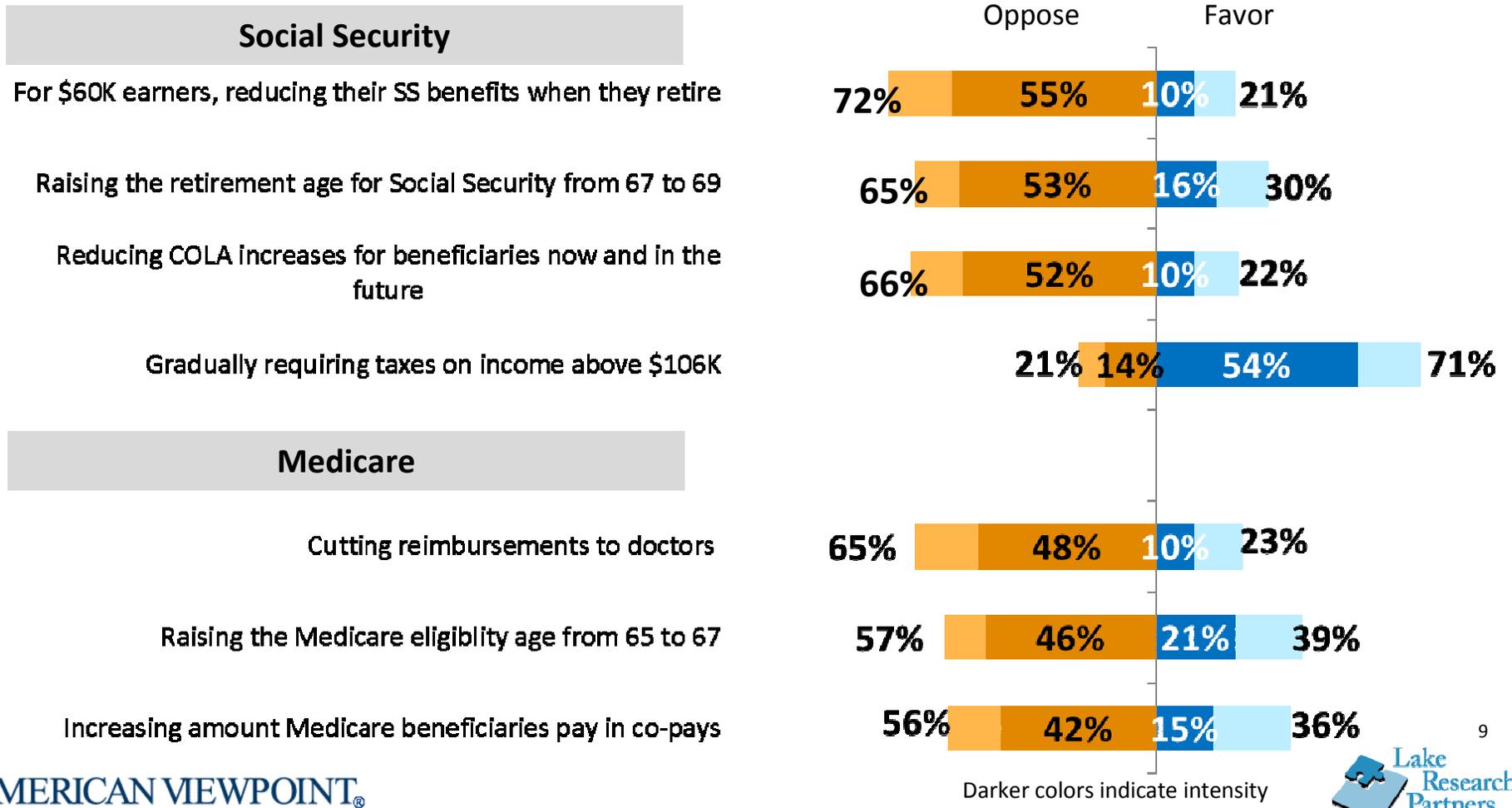
Independent Voters are more likely to punish President Obama for supporting including cuts to Social Security and Medicare, while his stance makes no difference for the majority of Republicans.

And if President Obama *OPPOSED/SUPPORTED* including cuts to Social Security and Medicare in this proposal, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for President Obama, or would it not make a difference to you?*



As we have seen before, voters reject proposals to alter Social Security and Medicare, but support raising Social Security's cap on wages.

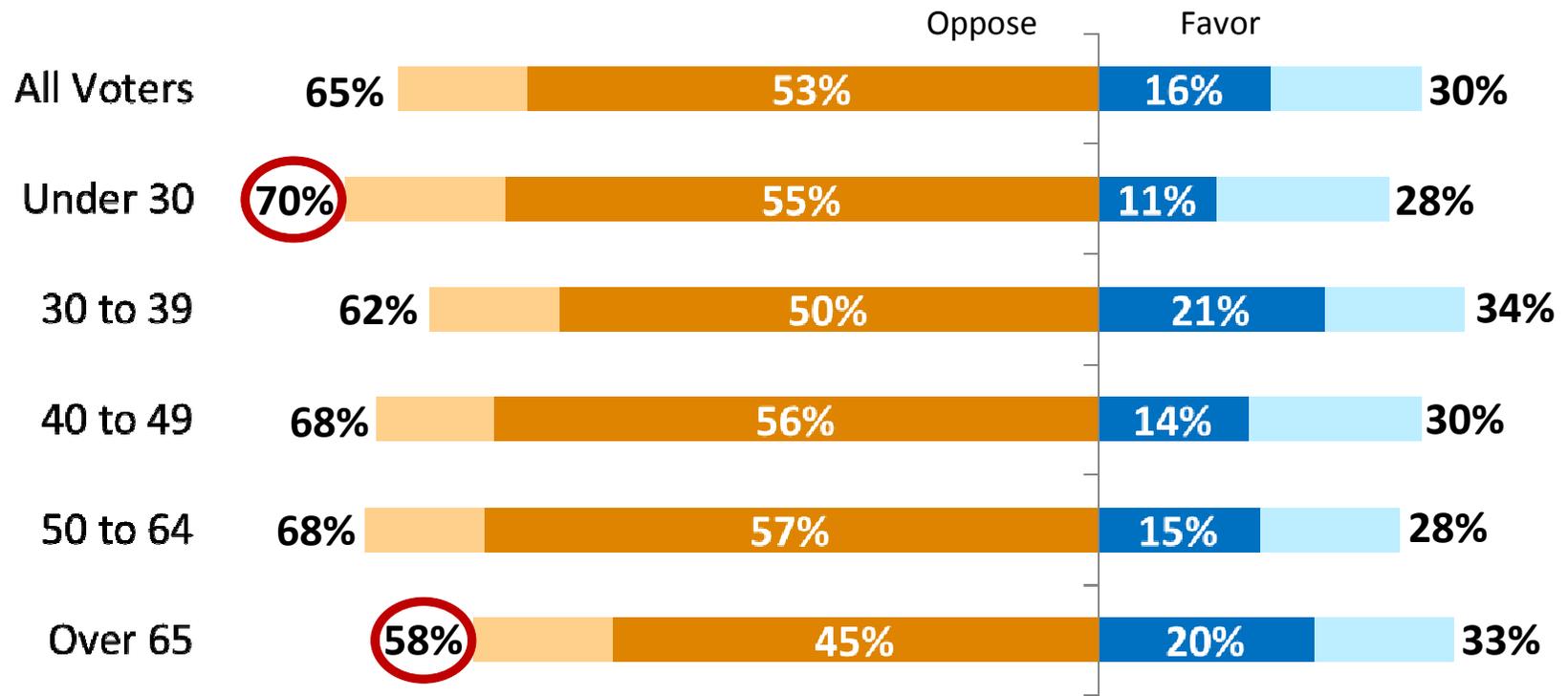
Now I am going to read you a list of specific proposals that might be in the final bill Congress votes on in the fall to reduce the federal deficit. After I read each proposal, please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal.



Younger voters are more likely to oppose raising the retirement age than seniors are.

Now I am going to read you a list of specific proposals that might be in the final bill Congress votes on in the fall to reduce the federal deficit. After I read each proposal, please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal.

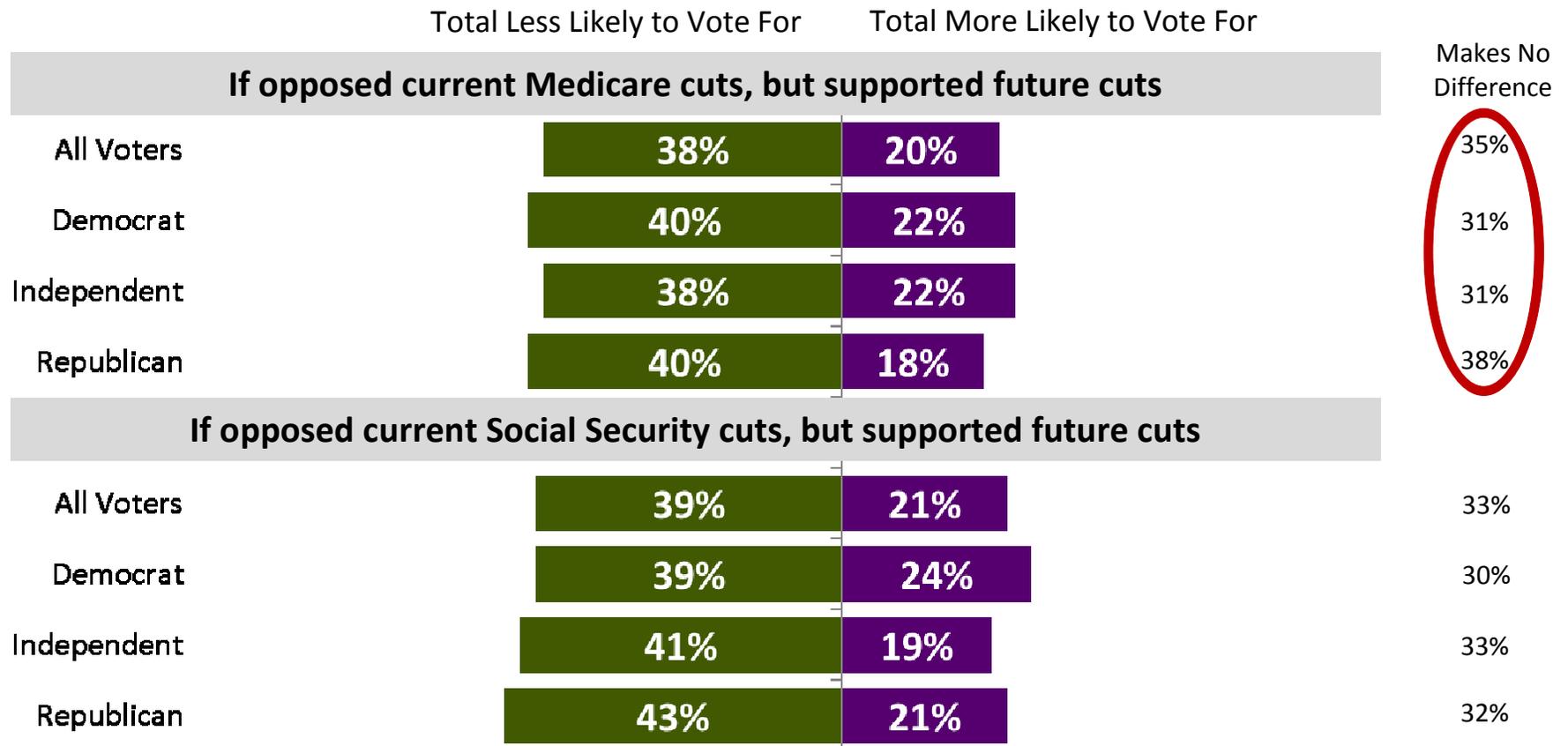
Raising the retirement age for Social Security from 67 to 69. (Shown by Age)



Darkener colors indicate intensity

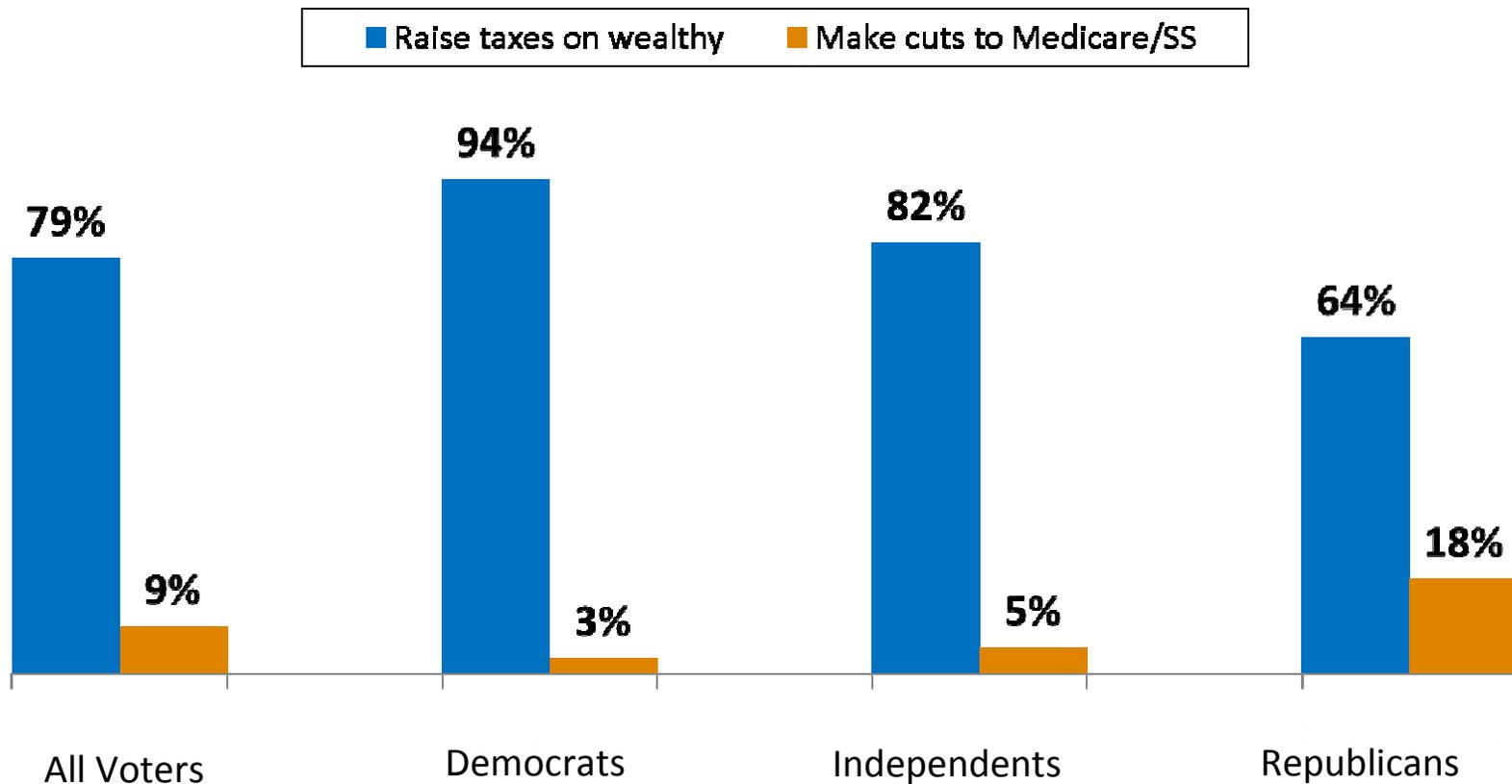
Protecting current beneficiaries does little to assuage voters who would punish their member of Congress for cutting benefits for future retirees, but a more tenuous opposition reflects room for opinion to change.

If your member of Congress opposed cuts to Social Security/Medicare benefits for current retirees, but supported cuts to benefits for future retirees, would you be more or less likely to vote for them, or would it not make a difference?



Across party lines voters favor raising taxes on the wealthy by wide margins over making cuts to Medicare and Social Security.

And which of the following ways to reduce the deficit do you prefer?*





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