

Restore Public Trust Congressional Oversight Survey Findings



Key Findings

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- **Americans are looking for more oversight of the Trump administration.** They believe that the administration is unusually corrupt and has numerous serious ethical issues, and that Congress hasn't done a good enough job in its role of holding the administration to account.
- **Oversight should be bipartisan.** Americans aren't looking to just one party for oversight – they don't believe it should be only the Democrats. Many believe that Republicans haven't done enough because they are interested in protecting the administration. And overall, Americans want to see the parties cooperate on providing oversight.
- **Investigate issues that affect regular people.** While Americans support investigating all the individual issues with the Trump administration asked about here, including those about perks and self-enrichment, the most powerful issues are those that tie into hurting or abusing regular taxpayers.

Lay of the Land

Methodology

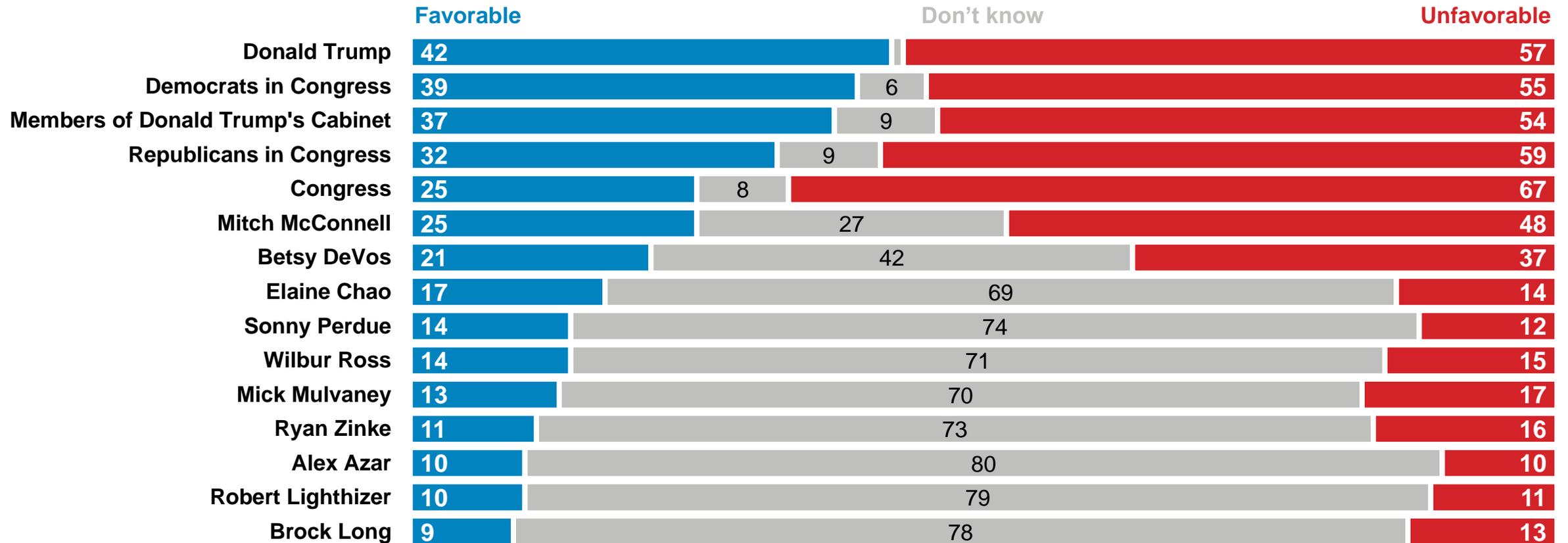
Global Strategy Group and GBA Strategies conducted an online survey of 1,011 registered voters nationwide from September 26th to 30th, 2018.

Sub-groups of focus include:

- Dem. partisans: Self-identified Democrats (46% of sample)
- Independents: Self-identified independents (16% of sample)
- Trump supporters: Voted for Trump in 2016 (41% of sample)
- Non-Trump GOP: Self-identified Republicans unfavorable toward Trump (7% of sample)

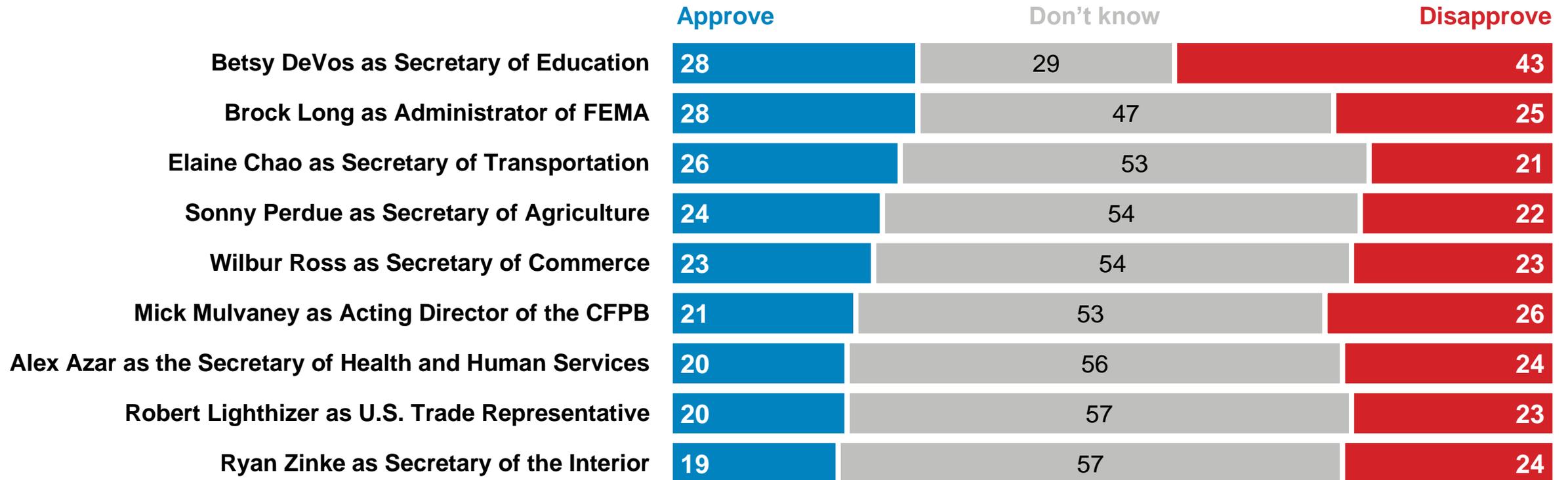
Members of Trump's cabinet are just as unpopular as he is, while individual members are less-defined; Congress and both parties are also deeply unpopular

Favorability of Public Figures and Groups



Aside from DeVos, who gets poor marks, Americans generally don't know enough about individual administration officials to rate their performance

Approval of Trump Administration Officials



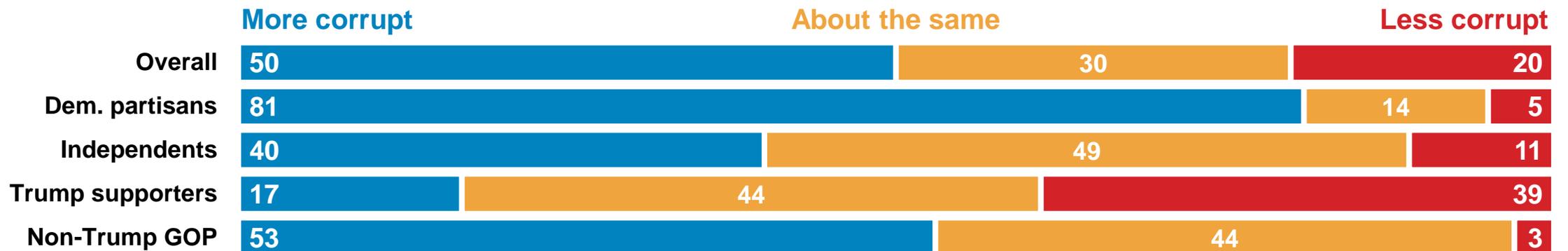
Corruption in the Trump Administration

Americans believe that the Trump administration is unusually corrupt – even some Republicans believe so

How serious is the administration's corruption problem?

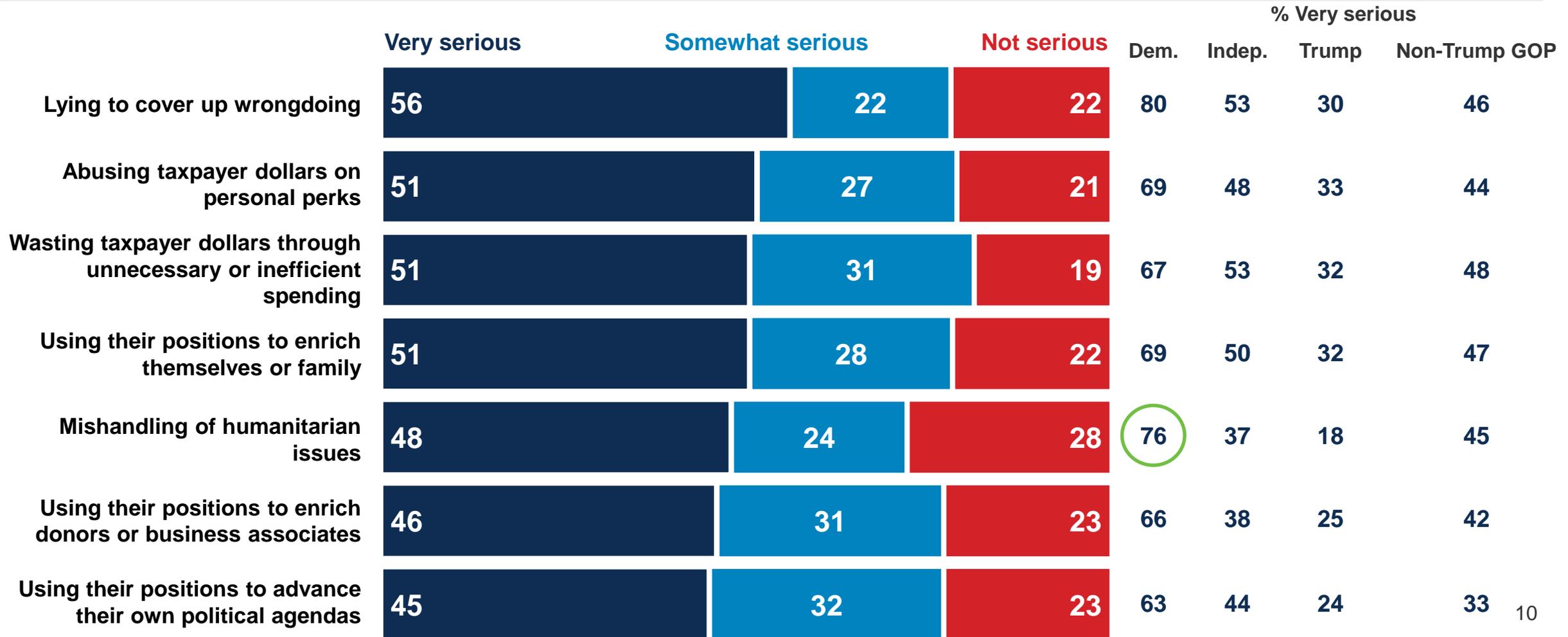


Compared to previous administrations, are senior officials in the administration today...



Americans believe that cover-ups, abuse of taxpayer dollars, and self-enrichment are the most serious problems in the Trump administration; strong Democratic partisan base intensity on humanitarian issues

How serious do you think the following problems are in the Trump administration?



Voters believe that lying to cover up wrongdoing is the highest priority for Congress to investigate

Issues that should be investigated by Congress ranked by priority

| Total | Dem. | Indep. | Trump | Non-Trump GOP | |
|---|------|--------|-------|------------------|--|
| Mean score on 1-7 scale with 7 being "highest priority" | | | | | |
| 4.6 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 5.0 | Senior administration officials lying to cover up wrongdoing |
| 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.3 | Senior administration officials wasting taxpayer dollars through unnecessary or inefficient spending |
| 4.1 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.1 | Senior administration officials using their government positions to enrich themselves or family members |
| 4.1 | 3.8 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 3.7 | Senior administration officials abusing taxpayer dollars on personal perks like private flights and expensive hotels |
| 3.9 | 4.6 | 3.6 | 2.9 | 4.3 | Senior administration officials' mishandling of humanitarian issues like the separation of immigrant families and disaster relief after Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico |
| 3.6 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 3.6 | Senior administration officials using their government positions to enrich campaign donors or business associates |
| 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.1 | Senior administration officials using their government positions to advance their own political agendas |

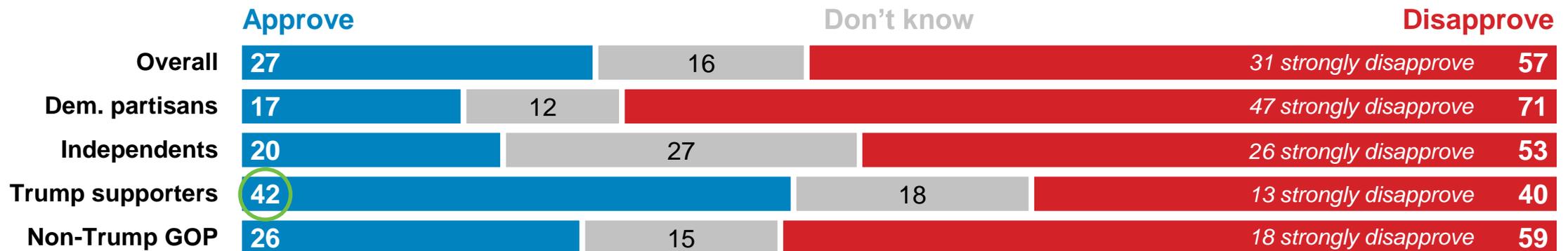
Congressional Oversight of the Trump Administration

Americans believe it is Congress's responsibility to conduct oversight of the administration, and see it is failing at that job

Should Congress be responsible for conducting oversight on senior officials in the presidential administration?

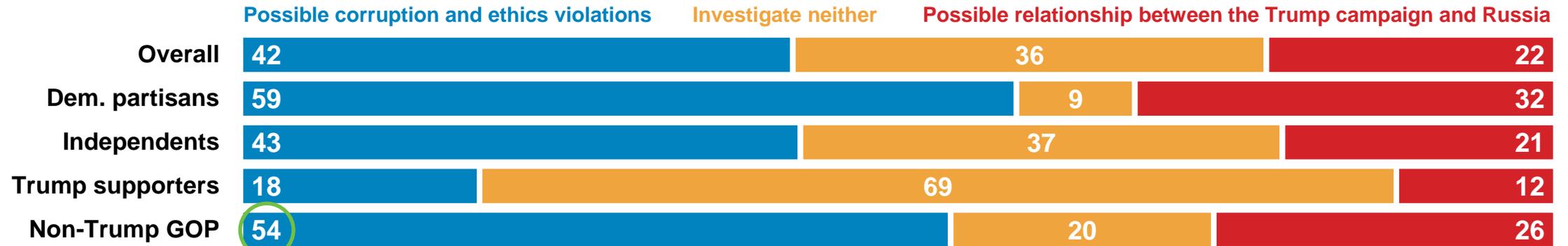


Do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing to conduct oversight of the Trump administration?

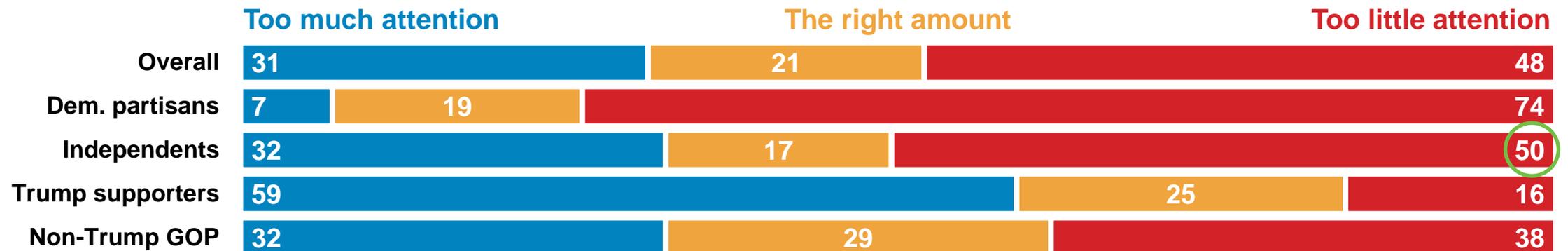


And they believe ethical lapses in the administration are getting too little attention, and want them prioritized by Congress over the Russia investigation

Which of these should be a higher priority for Congressional investigation?



Is Congress paying too much, too little, or the right amount of attention to ethics violations in the administration?

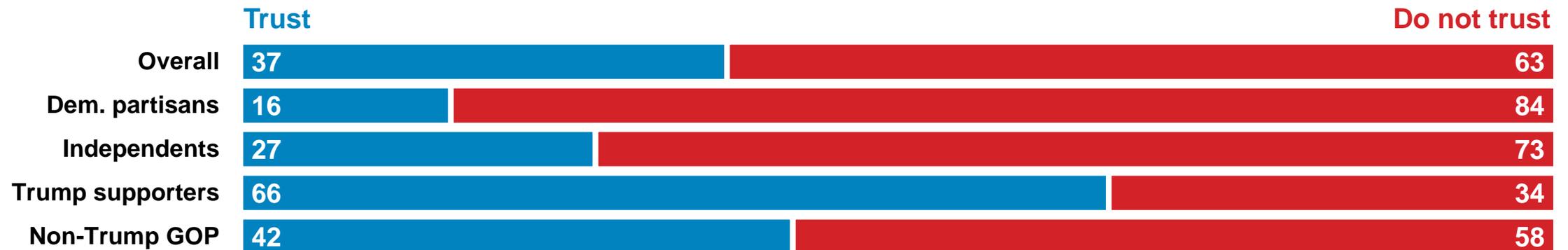


Americans are more inclined to trust the opposition party to hold the administration accountable – driven by self-identified Democrats

Do you trust Democrats in Congress to conduct oversight on senior officials in the presidential administration?

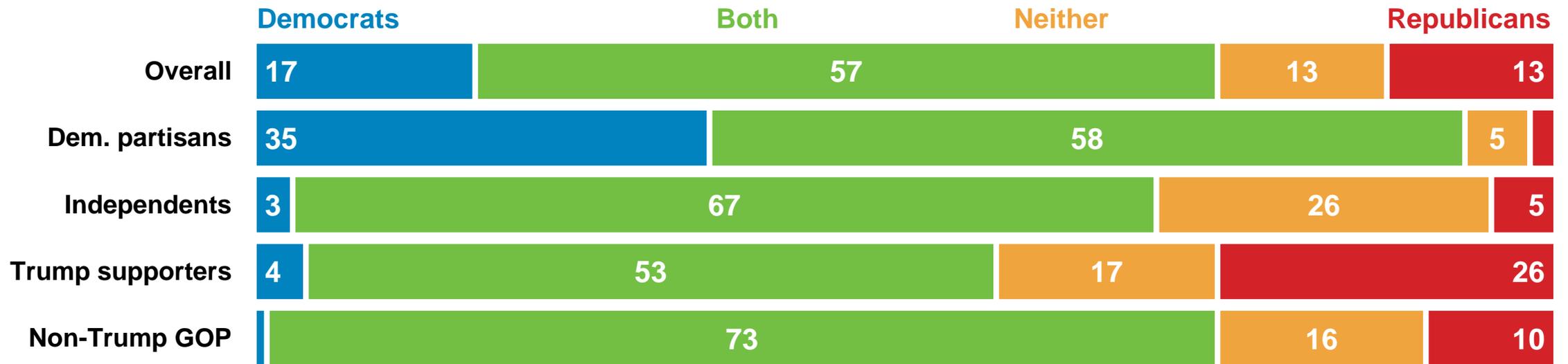


Do you trust Republicans in Congress to conduct oversight on senior officials in the presidential administration?



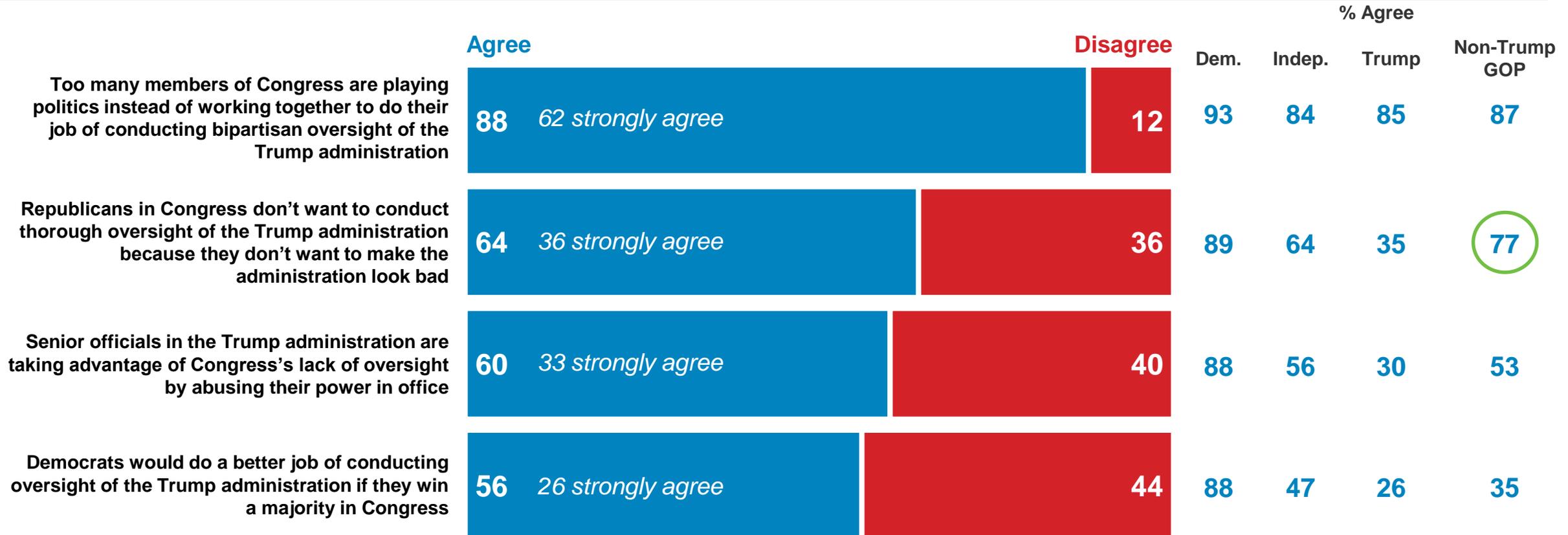
Americans of all political stripes believe that oversight needs to be a bipartisan responsibility

Which party should be conducting oversight of the presidential administration?



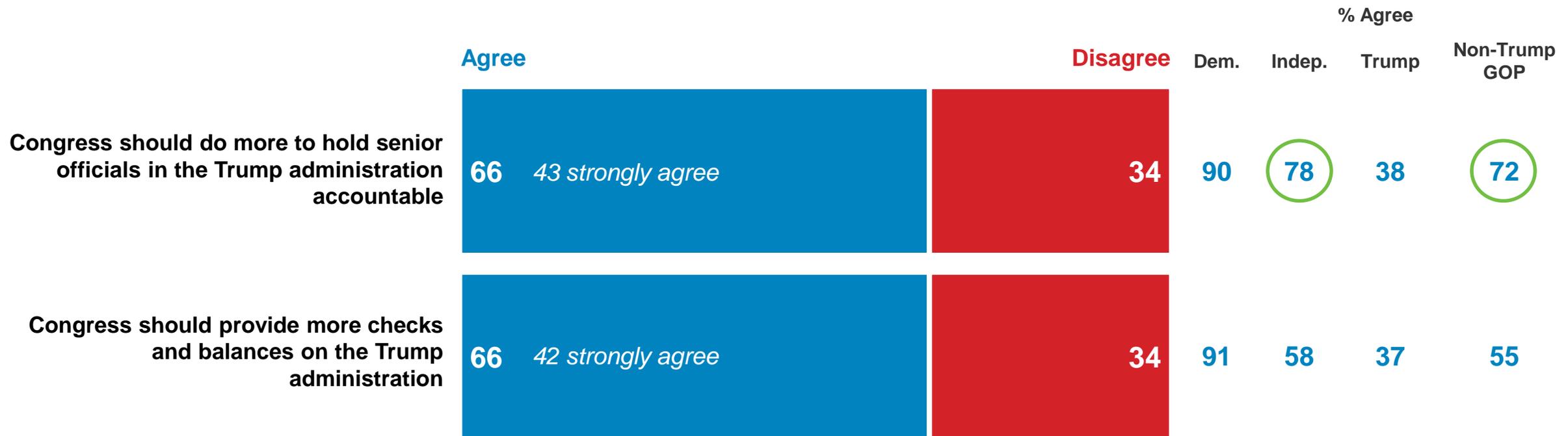
Americans believe Congress has failed to provide adequate oversight, and they are more inclined to attack Republicans for lack of oversight than praise Democrats for their potential

Statements About Congressional Oversight of the Trump Administration



“Accountability” language is stronger among independents and non-Trump Republicans than providing “checks and balances”

Statements About Congressional Oversight of the Trump Administration



Oversight Priorities

Wide majorities, including a majority of Trump supporters, want to see specific ethical issues investigated by Congress

Support for Investigation of Individual Issues

| | Support | | Oppose | | % Support | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------|--------|-------|----------|
| | Support | Strongly Support | Oppose | Strongly Oppose | Dem. | Indep. | Trump | Shifters |
| Zinke using taxpayer money to take private planes and trying to spend over \$139,000 to upgrade his office doors | 78 | 49 strongly support | 22 | 11 strongly oppose | 90 | 80 | 64 | 72 |
| Allegations that Ross engaged in insider trading | 76 | 43 strongly support | 24 | 13 strongly oppose | 91 | 84 | 59 | 75 |
| Mulvaney taking campaign contributions from the payday lending industry then joining forces with them to stop consumer protections for borrowers | 76 | 45 strongly support | 24 | 13 strongly oppose | 89 | 84 | 61 | 73 |
| Whether Chao knew about the large-scale fraud committed by Wells Fargo while she made millions of dollars serving on its board of directors | 76 | 47 strongly support | 24 | 13 strongly oppose | 90 | 84 | 59 | 74 |
| DeVos attempting to block attorneys general and others from investigating student loan servicers like Navient for making it harder for students to pay back their loans | 75 | 47 strongly support | 25 | 13 strongly oppose | 91 | 78 | 56 | 71 |
| Mulvaney asking the White House to exempt his friend and campaign donor's business from new Trump Administration trade tariffs | 74 | 44 strongly support | 26 | 12 strongly oppose | 89 | 81 | 54 | 69 |
| Ross's initial refusal to sell off his financial holdings, after promising the OGE in writing that he would sell them off to avoid conflicts of interest | 73 | 40 strongly support | 27 | 17 strongly oppose | 88 | 75 | 57 | 63 |
| DeVos potentially profiting from her new proposed rule changes that benefit the for-profit college industry in which her family invests | 73 | 44 strongly support | 27 | 13 strongly oppose | 90 | 76 | 54 | 65 |
| Mulvaney dropping investigations into predatory lenders that donated to his campaigns | 73 | 40 strongly support | 27 | 17 strongly oppose | 88 | 77 | 54 | 68 |
| Whether Chao has implemented policies benefiting donors to Sen. McConnell | 72 | 40 strongly support | 28 | 18 strongly oppose | 89 | 76 | 55 | 66 |
| Azar putting multiple people in senior positions who reject evidence, and are unqualified to oversee multi-million-dollar health programs | 72 | 44 strongly support | 28 | 14 strongly oppose | 88 | 81 | 51 | 69 |
| Mulvaney weakening fair lending laws and appointing a man who authored racist and offensive blog posts to oversee the laws' enforcement | 72 | 42 strongly support | 28 | 16 strongly oppose | 90 | 77 | 51 | 61 |
| Whether the international shipping business owned by Chao's family is financially benefiting from policies and programs she has helped implement | 71 | 37 strongly support | 29 | 12 strongly oppose | 87 | 79 | 53 | 65 |

Support for investigating violations of the Emoluments Clause, while high, falls below support for investigating issues that impact the American people more directly

Support for Investigation of Individual Issues

| | Support | | Oppose | | % Support | | | |
|--|---------|---------------------|--------|--|-----------|--------|-------|----------|
| | | | | | Dem. | Indep. | Trump | Shifters |
| Whether Lighthizer is financially benefiting from any of the trade deals he is negotiating | 71 | 37 strongly support | 29 | | 88 | 78 | 50 | 66 |
| Kraninger refusing to release documents concerning her role in the government's response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico | 71 | 43 strongly support | 29 | | 89 | 72 | 49 | 67 |
| Whether Azar is being truthful about his agency's role in delaying release of children in its custody who were separated from their families at the border | 71 | 45 strongly support | 29 | | 90 | 77 | 48 | 68 |
| Whether Chao is giving pref. treatment to companies on whose boards she has served | 71 | 35 strongly support | 29 | | 87 | 76 | 53 | 67 |
| Whether Perdue is giving preferential treatment to companies and individuals that donated to his past political campaigns | 71 | 33 strongly support | 29 | | 87 | 74 | 54 | 67 |
| Allegations that Long used gov't vehicles for personal travel home and brought aides with him, improperly spending taxpayer dollars on hotel rooms | 70 | 36 strongly support | 30 | | 86 | 71 | 52 | 60 |
| The Ed. Dept. awarding a loan debt collection contract to a company once tied to DeVos | 70 | 40 strongly support | 30 | | 88 | 74 | 49 | 63 |
| The administration's possible mishandling of disaster relief in response to Hurricane Maria, the major hurricane that hit Puerto Rico in 2017 | 70 | 45 strongly support | 30 | | 89 | 74 | 45 | 66 |
| Zinke lifting protections for public lands across the country, opening them up to private development by special interests | 70 | 40 strongly support | 30 | | 87 | 75 | 50 | 57 |
| The administration separating immigrant families and still not reuniting them after federal courts ordered them to reunite the families | 69 | 48 strongly support | 31 | | 88 | 71 | 47 | 58 |
| Whether Perdue's businesses are benefiting from policies he has helped implement | 69 | 32 strongly support | 31 | | 88 | 71 | 48 | 59 |
| Zinke meeting with the chairman of Halliburton, an energy company that Zinke is involved with regulating, about a private real estate deal | 68 | 36 strongly support | 32 | | 85 | 70 | 48 | 53 |
| Whether the Trump family's hotels and other businesses are violating the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution by accepting payments from foreign governments | 64 | 41 strongly support | 36 | | 88 | 73 | 35 | 58 |

The administration is given negative marks for its handling of the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico (39 approve/50 disapprove).

Issues for investigation fall into two buckets – and those tied to the self-interest of regular taxpayers have more intense support for investigation

Support for Investigation of Individual Issues – Top by Group

Hurt Taxpayers/Real People

[Zinke - Waste] Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke using thousands of dollars of taxpayer money to take private planes and trying to spend over \$139,000 to upgrade his office doors **(49% strongly)**

[Family Separation] The administration separating immigrant families and still not reuniting them **(48%)**

[Chao - Wells Fargo] Whether Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao knew about the large-scale fraud committed by Wells Fargo while she made millions of dollars serving on its board of directors **(48%)**

[DeVos - Loan Servicers] Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos attempting to block state attorneys general and others from investigating student loan servicers like Navient for making it harder for students to pay back their loans **(47%)**

[Puerto Rico] The administration's possible mishandling of disaster relief in response to Hurricane Maria **(45%)**

[Mulvaney - Payday Lawsuit] CFPB Acting Director Mulvaney taking tens of thousands of dollars in contributions from the payday lending industry then joining with them in court to stop consumer protections for payday loan borrowers **(45%)**

Perks or Self- or Associate-Enrichment Alone

[Mulvaney - Tariffs] CFPB Acting Director Mick Mulvaney asking the White House to exempt his friend and campaign donor's business from new Trump Administration trade tariffs **(44% strongly)**

[DeVos - For-Profit Colleges] Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos potentially profiting from her new proposed rule changes that benefit the for-profit college industry in which her family invests **(44%)**

[Ross - Insider Trading] Allegations that Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross engaged in insider trading by profiting off of a stock market investment he made after learning about financial reporting before the general public **(43%)**

[Emoluments] Whether the Trump family's hotels and other businesses are violating the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution by accepting payments from foreign governments **(41%)**

[Chao - McConnell Donors] Whether Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao has implemented policies and programs benefiting campaign donors to her husband, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell **(40%)**

[DeVos - Debt Collectors] The Education Department awarding a student loan debt collection contract to a company once tied to DeVos **(40%)**

Due to intensity among Dem. partisans, investigating the family separation policy is the highest priority; awareness of the cabinet member isn't essential for the issue to be important to investigate

Support for Investigation of Individual Issues – Forced Choice Exercise

Respondents saw items in sets of four, which were shown in randomized orders and combinations for each respondent. The percentages indicate how often each item was chosen as the highest priority when it appeared.

Overall Dem. Indep. Trump Shifters

% highest priority

| Overall | Dem. | Indep. | Trump | Shifters | |
|---------|------|--------|-------|----------|--|
| 41 | 58 | 35 | 25 | 40 | [Family Separation] The administration separating immigrant families and still not reuniting them after federal courts ordered them to reunite the families |
| 35 | 45 | 22 | 26 | 40 | [Azar - Child Separation] Whether Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar is being truthful about his agency's role in delaying the release of children in its custody who were separated from their families at the border, which could lead to damaging long-term effects for the children |
| 34 | 27 | 41 | 40 | 39 | [Zinke - Waste] Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke using thousands of dollars of taxpayer money to take private planes and trying to spend over \$139,000 to upgrade his office doors |
| 32 | 32 | 34 | 31 | 40 | [DeVos - Loan Servicers] Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos attempting to block state attorneys general and others from investigating student loan servicers like Navient for making it harder for students to pay back their loans |
| 32 | 42 | 28 | 21 | 32 | [Puerto Rico] The administration's possible mishandling of disaster relief in response to Hurricane Maria, the major hurricane that hit Puerto Rico in 2017 |
| 31 | 24 | 40 | 33 | 36 | [Chao - Wells Fargo] Whether Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao knew about the large-scale fraud committed by Wells Fargo while she made millions of dollars serving on its board of directors |
| 30 | 23 | 42 | 36 | 30 | [Mulvaney - Payday Lawsuit] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Acting Director Mick Mulvaney taking tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from the payday lending industry then joining forces with them in court to stop consumer protections for payday loan borrowers |
| 30 | 32 | 33 | 26 | 31 | [Azar - Unqualified Staff] Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar putting multiple people in senior positions who reject evidence, including some who doubt the effectiveness of birth control, and are unqualified to oversee multi-million-dollar health programs |
| 30 | 27 | 27 | 36 | 35 | [Ross - Insider Trading] Allegations that Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross engaged in insider trading by profiting off of a stock market investment he made after learning about financial reporting before the general public |
| 28 | 42 | 17 | 14 | 20 | [Emoluments] Whether the Trump family's hotels and other businesses are violating the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution by accepting payments from foreign governments |
| 26 | 28 | 25 | 28 | 27 | [Zinke - Protections] Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke lifting protections for public lands across the country, opening them up to private development by special interests |
| 26 | 27 | 18 | 26 | 24 | [Kraninger - Puerto Rico] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Nominee Kathy Kraninger refusing to release documents concerning her role in the government's response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico |
| 24 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 16 | [Long - Government Resources] Allegations that FEMA Administrator Brock Long used government vehicles for personal travel home and brought aides with him, improperly spending taxpayer dollars on hotel rooms |

While voters support Congress investigating allegations of rewarding donors and associates, they are seen generally as lower priorities

Support for Investigation of Individual Issues – Forced Choice Exercise

Overall Dem. Indep. Trump Shifters
% highest priority

Respondents saw items in sets of four, which were shown in randomized orders and combinations for each respondent. The percentages indicate how often each item was chosen as the highest priority when it appeared.

| Overall | Dem. | Indep. | Trump | Shifters | |
|---------|------|--------|-------|----------|--|
| 24 | 24 | 32 | 22 | 28 | [Mulvaney - Tariffs] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Acting Director Mick Mulvaney asking the White House to exempt his friend and campaign donor's business from new Trump Administration trade tariffs |
| 23 | 23 | 19 | 25 | 19 | [DeVos - For-Profit Colleges] Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos potentially profiting from her new proposed rule changes that benefit the for-profit college industry in which her family invests |
| 23 | 21 | 24 | 28 | 30 | [Ross - Divestment] Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross's initial refusal to sell off his financial holdings when he was appointed, after promising the Office of Government Ethics in writing that he would sell them off to avoid conflicts of interest |
| 22 | 21 | 24 | 21 | 20 | [Mulvaney - Fair Lending] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Acting Director Mick Mulvaney weakening fair lending laws and appointing a man who authored racist and offensive blog posts to oversee the laws' enforcement |
| 21 | 16 | 24 | 26 | 20 | [Mulvaney - Donors] Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Acting Director Mick Mulvaney dropping investigations into predatory lenders that donated to his past political campaigns |
| 21 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 20 | [DeVos - Debt Collectors] The Education Department awarding a student loan debt collection contract to a company once tied to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos |
| 20 | 13 | 26 | 26 | 18 | [Chao - Shipping Business] Whether the international shipping business owned by Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao's family is financially benefiting from policies and programs she has helped implement |
| 18 | 13 | 21 | 25 | 19 | [Lighthizer - Steel] Whether U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer is financially benefiting from any of the trade deals he is negotiating |
| 17 | 14 | 19 | 20 | 11 | [Perdue - Self Interest] Whether Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue's personal or family businesses are benefiting from policies and programs he has helped implement |
| 17 | 13 | 18 | 19 | 14 | [Chao - McConnell Donors] Whether Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao has implemented policies and programs benefiting campaign donors to her husband, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell |
| 16 | 12 | 12 | 21 | 20 | [Chao - Corporate Boards] Whether Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao is giving preferential treatment to companies on whose corporate boards she has served |
| 15 | 12 | 10 | 19 | 9 | [Perdue - Donors] Whether Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue is giving preferential treatment to companies and individuals that donated to his past political campaigns |
| 14 | 14 | 12 | 15 | 10 | [Zinke - Land Deal] Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke meeting with the chairman of Halliburton, an energy company that Zinke is involved with regulating, about a private real estate deal |

After hearing about the potential investigations, a sizeable number of Americans become more likely to disapprove of Congress's performance in oversight

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing to conduct oversight of the Trump administration?



Base

Always disapprove

Shifters (13%)

Initially approve of Congress's oversight or don't know, move to disapprove

Negative Movers (15%)

Initially disapprove of Congress's oversight or don't know, move to approve; or initially disapprove and move to approve

Oppo

Always approve

Independents (19%)

Women 18-54 (17%)

Non-college-educated women (17%)

Hispanic Americans (16%)

Self-identified Republicans (19%)

Trump voters (18%)

College-educated men (18%)

Older men 55+ (18%)

Shifters are more likely than Americans overall to be reachable on social media (39% vs. 27% overall), and the sites they most use are Facebook (73%), Youtube (49%), Instagram (34%), and Twitter (23%). However, a majority still say they get news from television (63%).

6% of Americans don't know throughout.

3% of Americans initially approve, move to don't know.

Conclusions

Conclusions

- **Americans believe there is a real corruption problem in the Trump administration.** The public believes that corruption in the administration is serious, more pervasive than in past administrations, and receiving too little attention from Congress. In fact, Americans believe that bad actors in the administration are deliberately taking advantage of lax Congressional oversight in order to abuse their power.
- **Americans believe Congress is failing in its oversight responsibility, and that oversight requires a concerted bipartisan effort.** While Democrats are more trusted than Republicans for oversight on the administration, neither party is overwhelmingly trusted on its own. Americans believe that it is the responsibility of both parties to put politics aside and work together to hold the administration accountable.
- **Individual senior officials in the administration are not well-known, and attitudes toward the administration therefore tend to line up with how voters feel about Trump as an individual.** This leads to a clear political polarization in how the public views issues of oversight and accountability, with Trump supporters more resistant to Congressional investigation of the administration. Trump supporters are far less likely to acknowledge corruption problems in the administration than GOP-leaning audiences who don't like Trump personally. Nonetheless, when presented with specific areas of possible investigation, broad majorities believe that Congress should look into them.

Conclusions

- **The most important issues to investigate are those that have caused real harm to the public.** When forced to rank the most important topics for Congress to investigate, immigrant family separation rises to the top. The next tier of priorities includes Ryan Zinke's waste of taxpayer dollars on personal perks, Betsy DeVos's attempts to block investigations into student loan servicers, the administration's handling of the Hurricane Maria response in Puerto Rico, Elaine Chao serving on Wells Fargo's board while the company was defrauding customers, and Mick Mulvaney trying to block his donors in the payday lending industry from new consumer protection regulations.

While majorities support Congress investigating allegations of rewarding donors and business associates, Americans are less likely to prioritize investigating personal perks or self-enrichment when that behavior doesn't involve the waste of taxpayer resources or have a clear tie to a predatory industry.

How to Talk to Voters About Oversight

- The Trump administration is **lying to cover up wrongdoing** and **wasting taxpayer dollars**.
- Too many members of Congress are **playing politics instead of working together** to do their job of conducting **bipartisan oversight** of the Trump administration. We need to focus on **holding them accountable**.
- We need to investigate the administration for abuses like senior officials **using taxpayer dollars on luxury personal perks**, and the administration joining forces with predatory industries like student loan servicers and payday lenders **against everyday Americans**.

How to Talk to the Democratic Base About Oversight

- The Trump administration is an **unusually corrupt humanitarian disaster** and is **lying to cover up their wrongdoing**.
- **Both parties** should be holding the administration accountable – but the **Republicans are too busy playing political games to provide oversight** and the **administration is taking advantage** by abusing their power.
- Oversight should start with **accountability for human tragedies like child separation** – and the fact that the administration **lied about it and still hasn't reunited all families** – and the **mishandling of disaster relief** in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

Thank You

New York

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