

# Restore Public Trust Congressional Oversight Survey Findings



# Methodology

Global Strategy Group and GBA Strategies conducted an online survey of 1,011 registered voters nationwide from September 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 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)

Global Strategy Group is a research and public affairs firm based in New York, with offices throughout the country.

GBA Strategies, based in Washington, D.C., offers expertise in public opinion research and strategic consulting.

# 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.

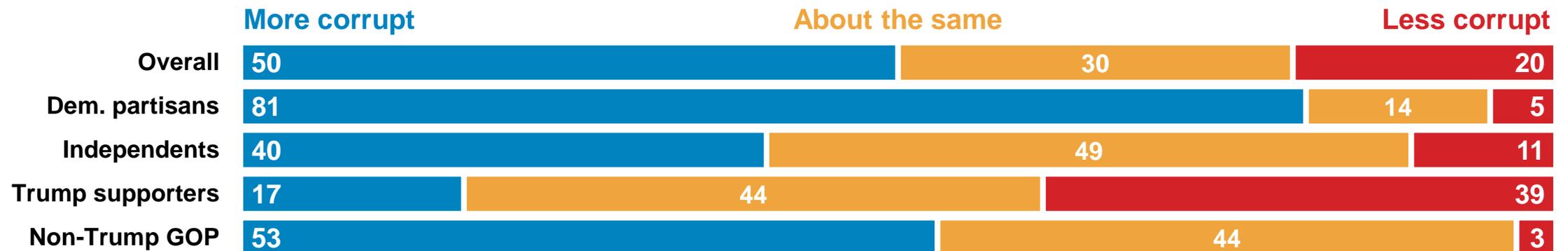
# Corruption in the Trump Administration

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

## How serious is the administration's corruption problem?

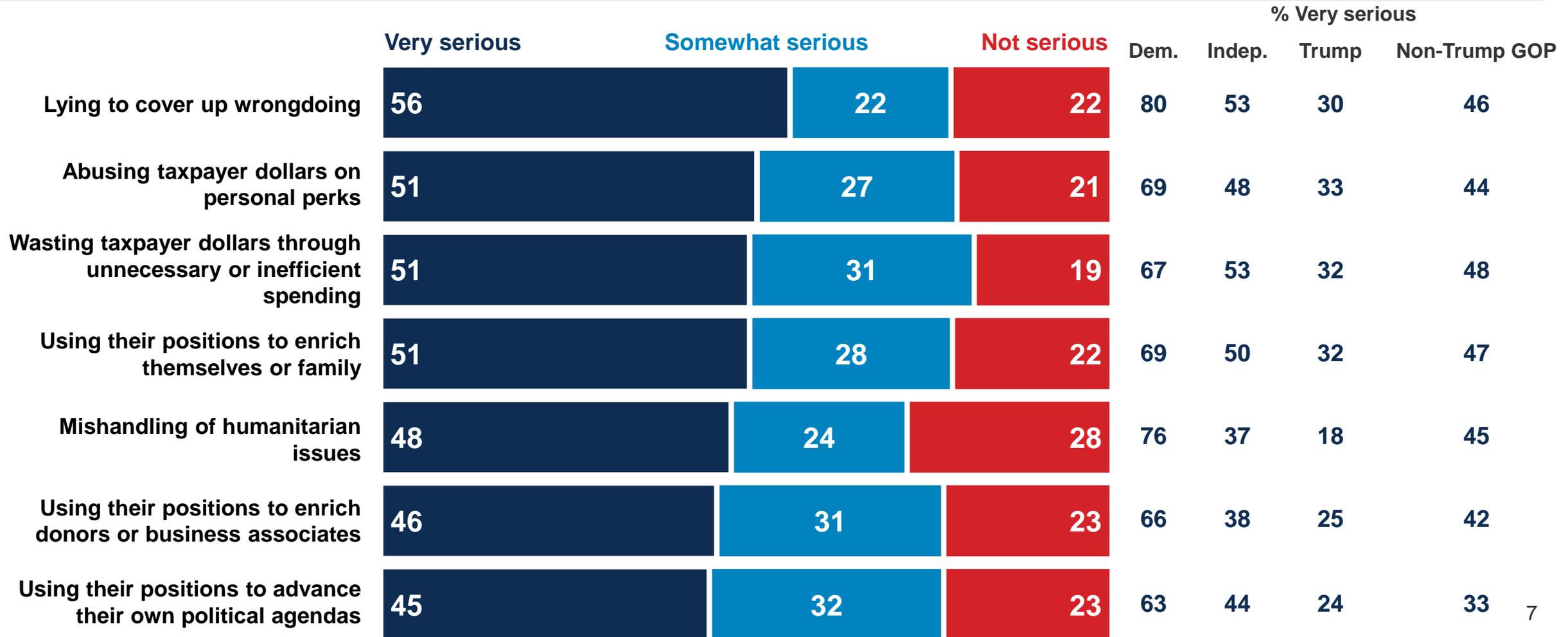


## Compared to previous administrations, are senior officials in the administration today...



# And they believe that cover-ups, abuse of taxpayer dollars, and self-enrichment are the most serious problems in the Trump administration

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



# Americans 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

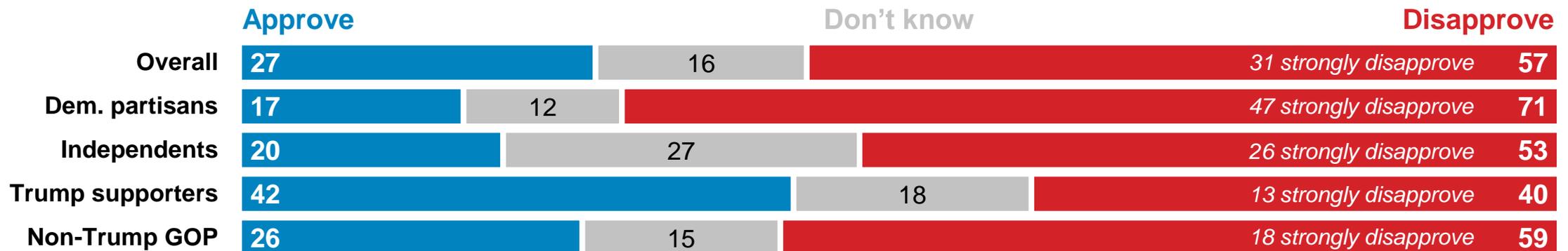
# Congressional Oversight of the Trump Administration

# 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?

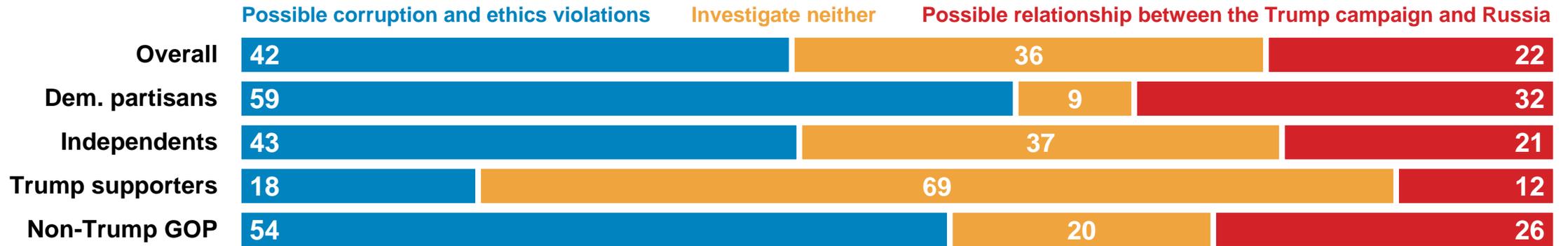


## Do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing to conduct oversight of the Trump administration?

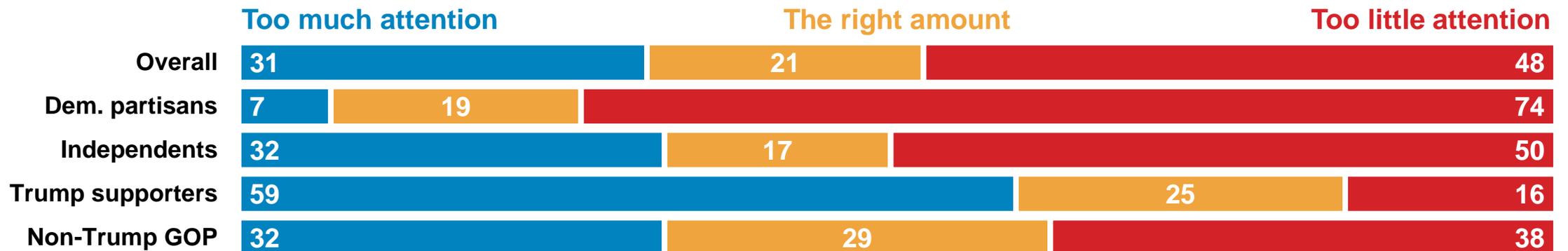


# And they believe ethical lapses in the administration are getting too little attention, and want them prioritized by Congress

## 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?



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

Which party should be conducting oversight of the presidential 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	11 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	22 strongly oppose	87	79	53	65

# 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%)**

### 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%)**

**[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%)**

Conclusions

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- **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.
- **Attitudes toward the administration tend to line up with how Americans 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.

# Thank You

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