



# Holding Oil Companies Accountable on Energy Prices

Findings from a national online survey of 1,200 registered voters  
April 10 to 15, 2023

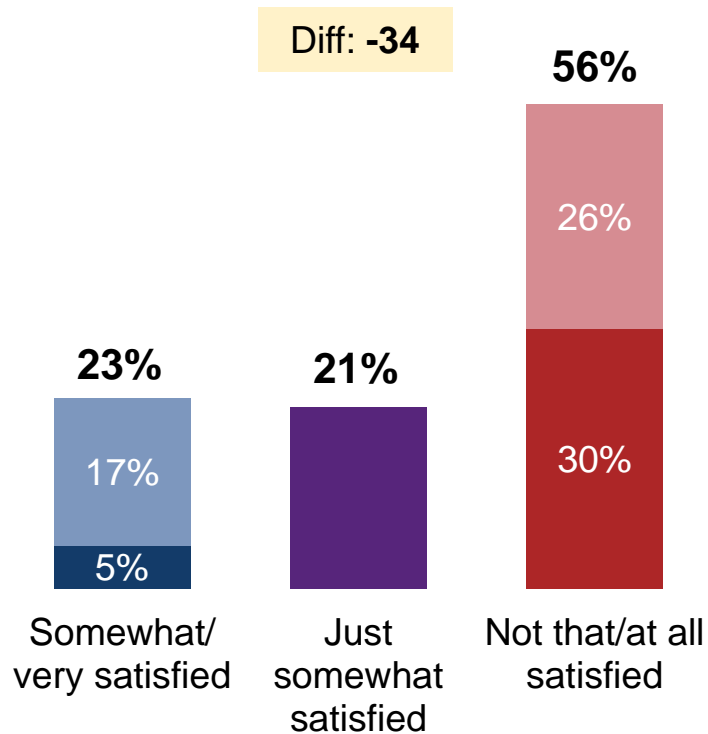


# Key Findings

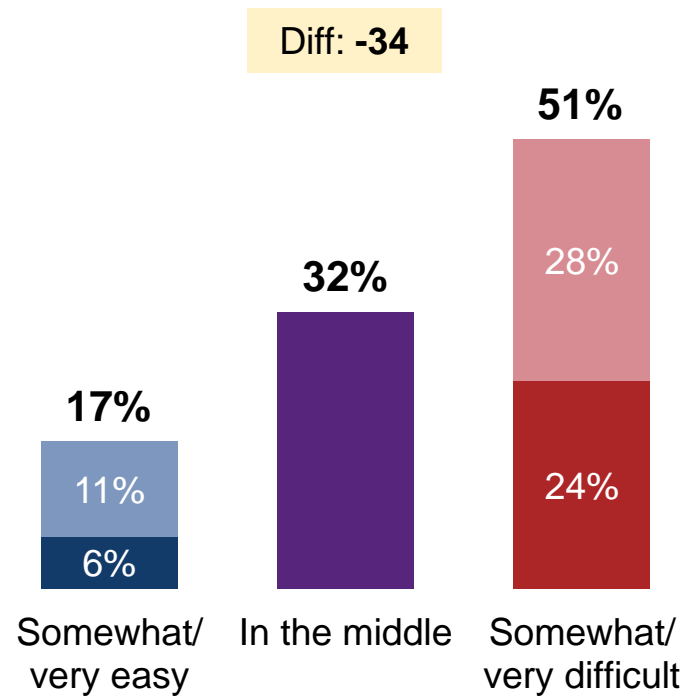
1. Anger about gas prices is down considerably from its peak, but **gas prices are still a concern** for Americans as they struggle to keep up with the cost of living.
2. Across party lines, **entities in the oil and gas industry (companies, CEOs, lobbyists) are viewed as part of the problem when it comes to energy costs**, as are Putin and Saudi Arabia (who should remain a part of the narrative about energy costs).
3. At the same time, people feel positive toward clean energy companies and **clean energy is seen as a part of the solution** for high energy costs. They support subsidies for clean energy but not for fossil fuels.
4. There is strong support across party lines for **cracking down on oil company price gouging** and broad support for a **windfall profits tax** on oil companies.
5. The **strongest messages against the oil companies speak to their record profits**, their use of these profits for stock buybacks, and the fact that they are taking taxpayer subsidies while making record profits.
6. We can **win the debate on energy costs by playing offense**. On a head-to-head basis, respondents prefer the congressional Democratic policy set over the congressional Republican approach – with independent respondents siding with Democrats in Congress by 69% to 31%. If you remove party labels, many Republican respondents prefer the Democratic congressional policy set.
  - Democrats in Congress want to crack down on price gouging by oil companies, tax the huge excess profits of oil companies, and expand energy production from clean energy sources.
  - Republicans in Congress want to expand oil drilling in U.S. oceans and wilderness areas and build more pipelines across the country for transporting oil and gas.

# The backdrop: A difficult economic environment in which many struggle to keep up with costs.

*How satisfied are you with the economic situation for you and your family today?*



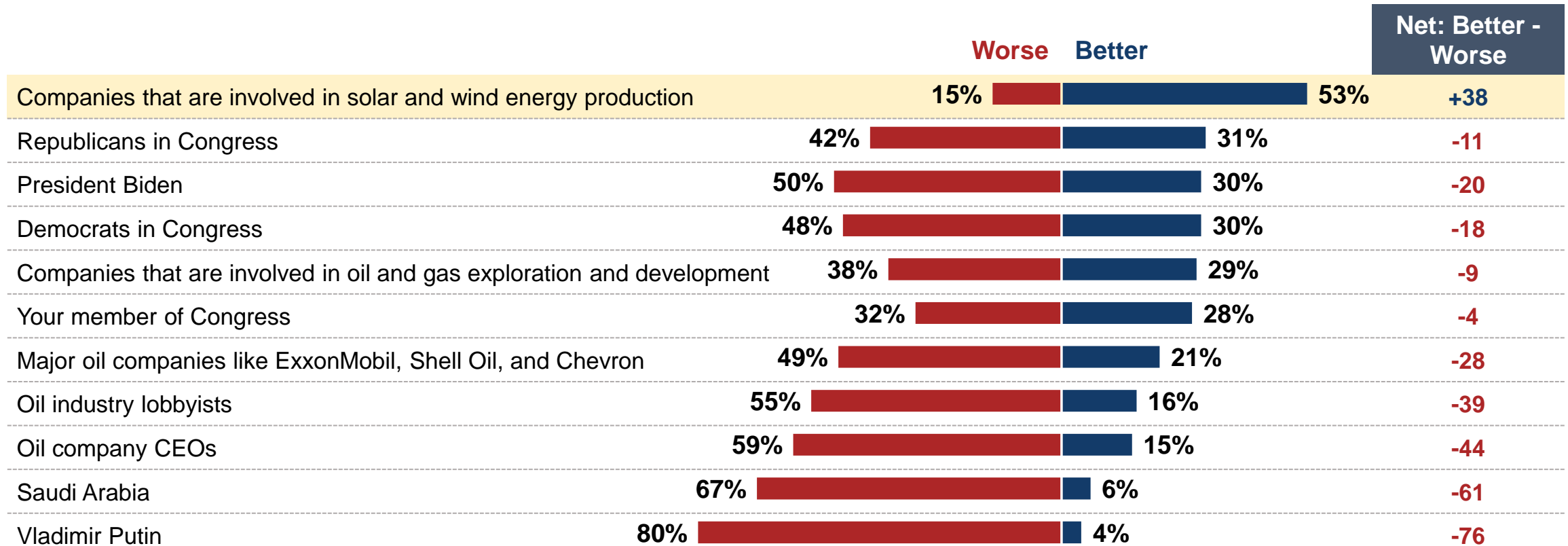
*How easy or difficult is it for you to keep up with the cost of living today?*



	Net "Difficult"
Democrats	-21
Independents	-43
Republicans	-44
Less than \$25k	-59
\$25-50k	-45
\$50-75k	-39
\$75-125k	-29
More than \$125k	+7

# Clean energy producers stand out as playing a positive role on energy prices, while all other actors get a net-negative response.

*Are the following people/groups making things better or worse for consumers when it comes to energy prices?*



# In fact, clean energy companies are the only group that people across party lines view as being a positive force for energy prices.

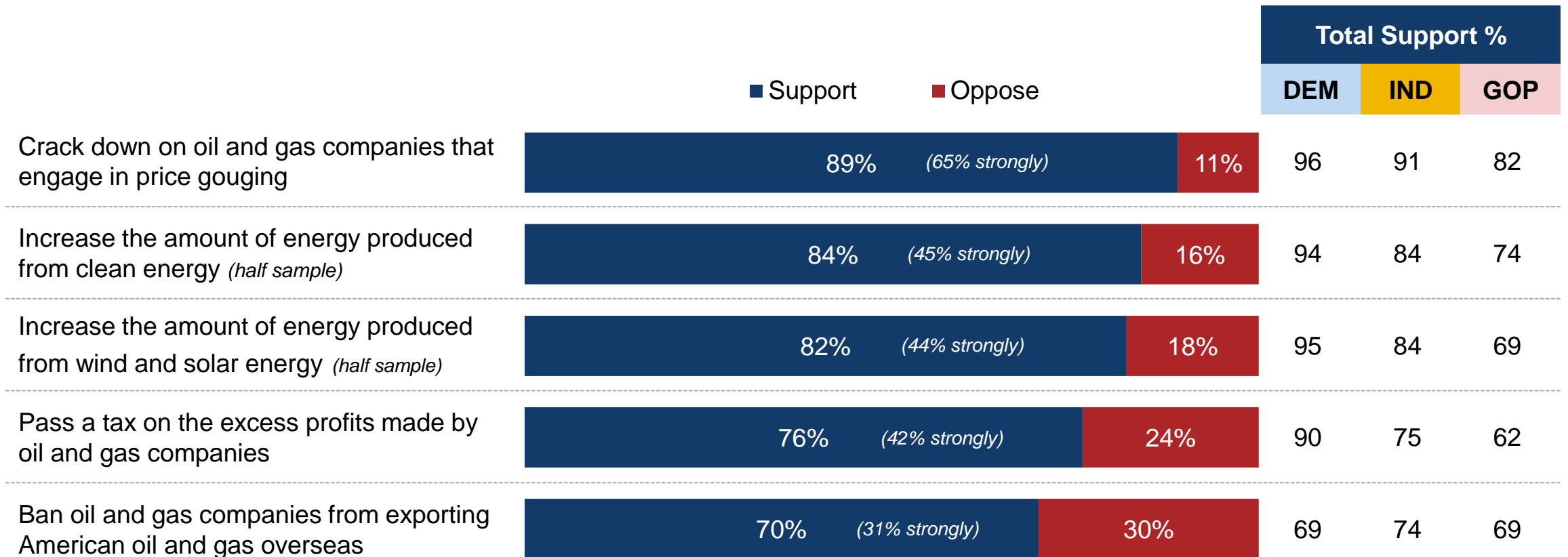
*Are the following people/groups making things better or worse for consumers when it comes to energy prices?*

**NET: Better - Worse**

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Companies that are involved in solar and wind energy production	+66	+26	+13
Republicans in Congress	-60	-28	+45
President Biden	+50	-48	-81
Democrats in Congress	+50	-50	-77
Companies that are involved in oil and gas exploration and development	-28	-20	+14
Your member of Congress	+10	-32	-10
Major oil companies like ExxonMobil, Shell Oil, and Chevron	-44	-43	-9
Oil industry lobbyists	-47	-45	-29
Oil company CEOs	-57	-51	-29
Saudi Arabia	-57	-54	-66
Vladimir Putin	-79	-70	-73

# There is strong and bipartisan support for policies that hold oil and gas companies accountable and expand clean energy.

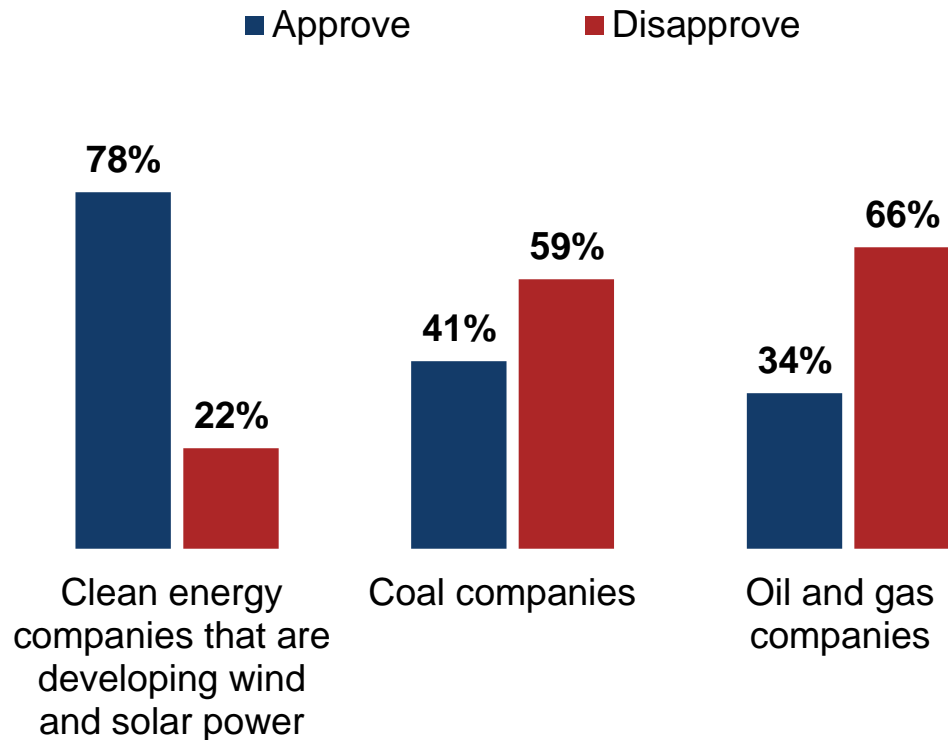
*Do you support or oppose this step leaders could take to lower energy prices?*





# An overwhelming majority of Americans backs government subsidies for clean energy companies and opposes subsidies to fossil fuels.

*Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government giving tax breaks and subsidies to...?*



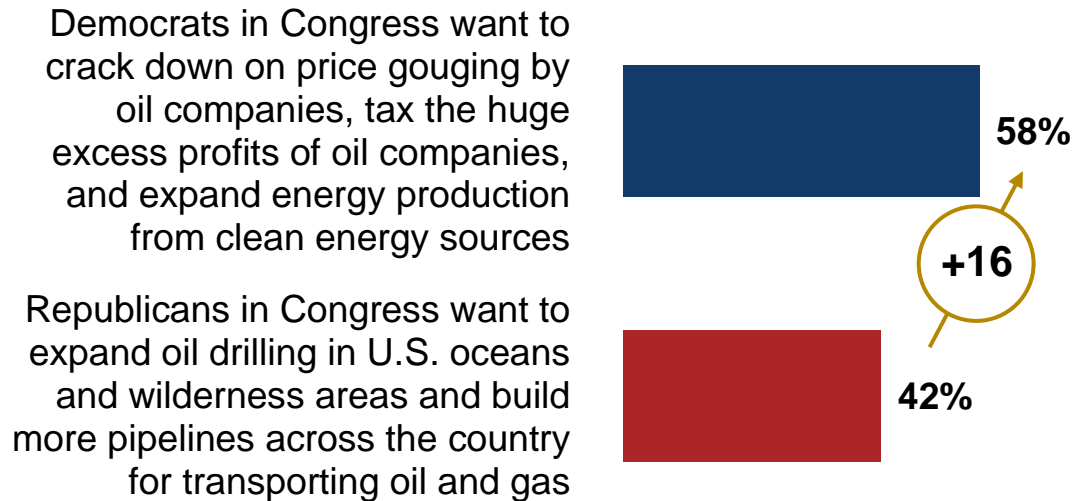
	% Approve Clean energy companies	% Approve coal companies	% Approve oil/gas companies
Democrats	91	24	20
Independents	80	40	34
Republicans	64	58	47

# Key Finding: Democrats in Congress have a more compelling narrative on energy prices.

*Without partisan cues, a significant number of Republican respondents (46%) actually prefer the Democratic congressional approach.*

## PARTISAN CUES:

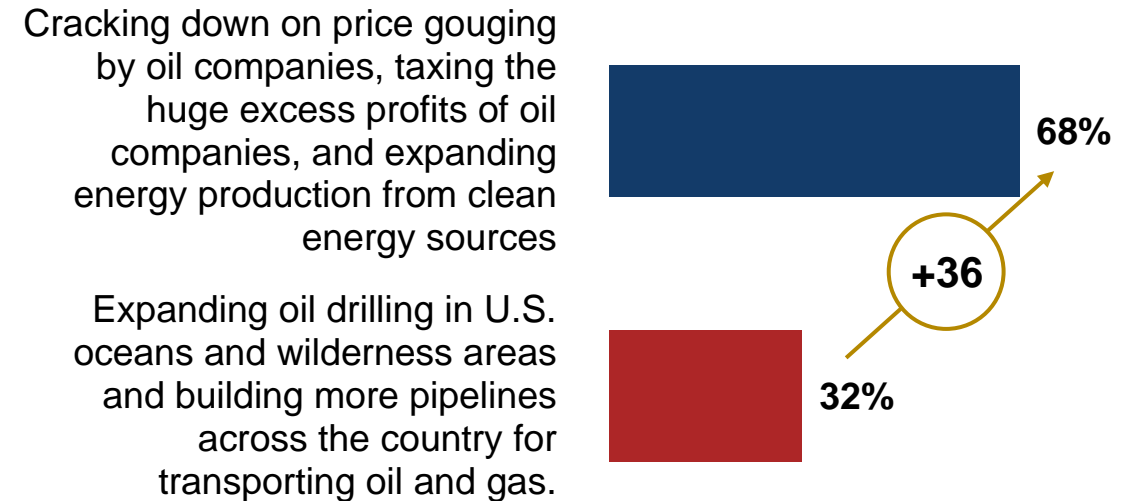
*Which of the following approaches do you agree with more?*



Democrats **+84** | Independents **+37** | Republicans **-58**

## NON-PARTISAN:

*Which of the following approaches to dealing with energy prices do you agree with more?*



Democrats **+77** | Independents **+48** | Republicans **-8**



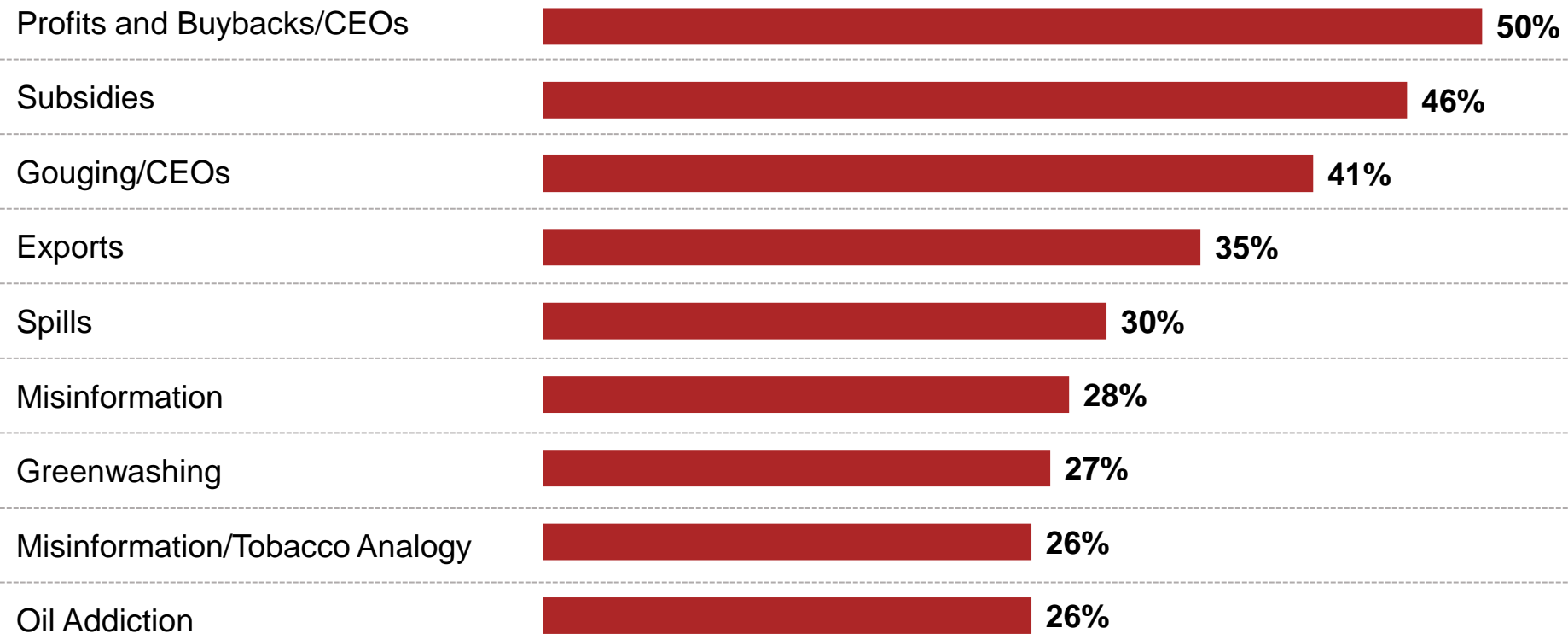
# Calling out the specifics of profiteering and record of toxic pollution raises major concerns about big oil companies.

These are the top messages out of 11 criticisms against big oil tested.

		Total Very/Fairly Big Concerns %	Very Big Concerns %
<b>Profits and Buybacks/CEOs</b>	Big oil companies made over \$400 billion in profits in 2022, a new record for the industry. Exxon alone made over \$55 billion in profits last year. All while Big oil CEOs pocketed hundreds of millions in pay. But instead of giving people relief by lowering gas prices, they passed the profits on to their shareholders with stock buybacks and dividends.	72	51
<b>Gouging/CEOs</b>	CEOs of big oil companies are using worldwide inflation and Russia's invasion of Ukraine as excuses to increase their prices and keep them high. While U.S. consumers and the rest of the world are suffering from decreased oil and gas supplies, the oil company CEOs are jacking up their prices to increase profits.	73	50
<b>Subsidies</b>	Big oil companies have been getting tens of billions of dollars in subsidies from taxpayers for decades. But when inflation is soaring and the American people most need relief, these companies make it worse. In fact, they intentionally keep their prices high.	71	47
<b>Spills</b>	The toxic pollution from the train derailment in Ohio shows what can happen when big companies working with dangerous substances are left to their own devices. Big oil companies have been reckless in their safety standards for decades, leading to giant oil spills that have done enormous damage to water quality, wildlife, the environment, and local economies.	70	44

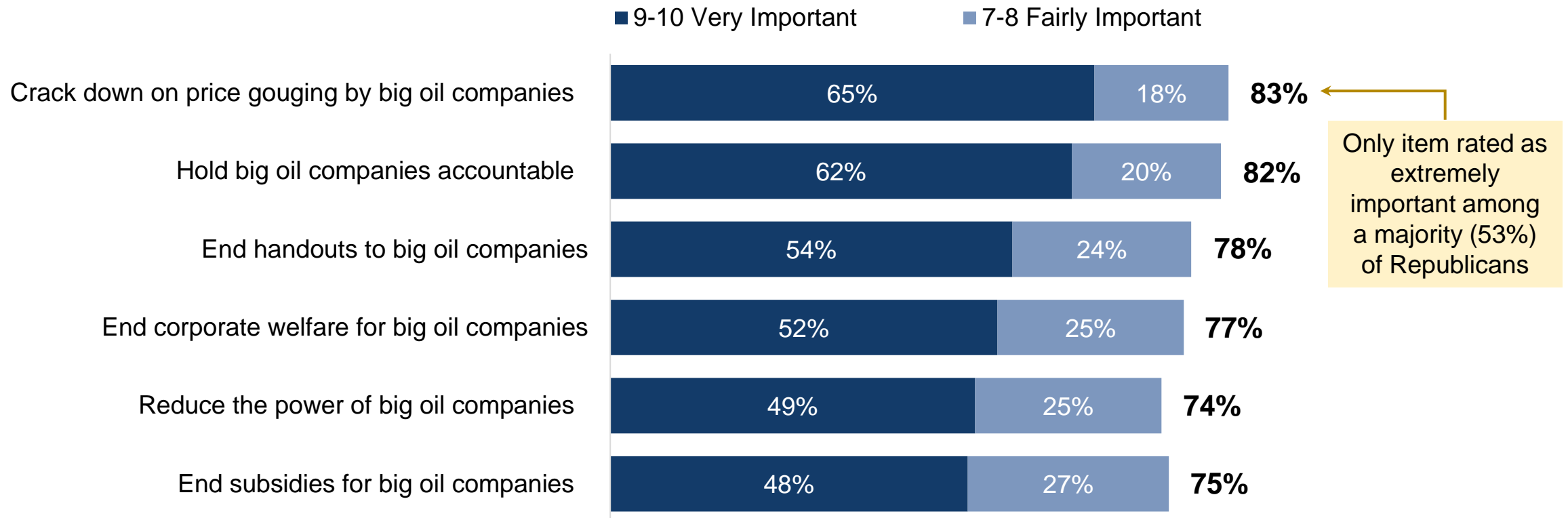
# Criticisms about profiteering and corporate greed rise to the top.

Top Criticisms (three chosen)



# “Price gouging” and “accountability” are important lanes for us.

*On a scale from 0 to 10, how important do you think it is that Congress does each?*



# Our strongest hits against Republicans in Congress call out their efforts to please big oil donors by weakening environmental protections.

*Gives very big concerns about GOPers' in Congress relationship with oil companies*

<b>Safety</b>	The train derailment in Ohio is just the latest example of disasters that happen when big industry gets its way. Republicans in Congress are weakening environmental and public health protections to please their big oil company donors, while the rest of us pay the cost.	46
<b>Loosening Regs</b>	Republicans in Congress go out of their way to protect the interests of big oil companies, usually at the expense of everyday Americans. They block any efforts to require oil drilling operations to be safe for workers and the environment; they fight to continue giving away taxpayer money to these hugely profitable companies; and they refuse to hold oil companies accountable when there is a giant spill due to a company cutting corners.	44
<b>EJ</b>	Republicans in Congress block efforts to expand clean energy, take millions of dollars in donations from big oil companies, and look the other way while those same companies pollute the air and water in lower-income communities across the United States.	43
<b>Doing their Bidding</b>	Republicans in Congress do the bidding of the oil industry. Whether it's weakening environmental protections, opening up untouched wilderness and ocean areas to huge drilling operations, or giving oil companies big tax breaks, Republicans in Congress put big oil companies first.	41
<b>Clean Energy</b>	Clean energy is expected to be one of the biggest drivers of jobs and economic growth over the coming decade, but Republicans in Congress oppose investments in clean energy, which helps keep us addicted to coal, oil, and gas.	38