# Critical Insights on Maine™

*The Voice of Maine*

Digital Research DRI inc
Unique Perspectives in Marketing Research

**Spring 2024**
Public Report of Findings

# About Critical Insights on Maine™

# Introduction

**Background**

- Each spring and fall, Digital Research, Inc. (DRI) conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion poll of registered voters in the state, that covers a variety of topics of interest to business leaders, policymakers, and the public at large.

- *Critical Insights on Maine™* has been documenting the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of Maine's residents for more than 25 years, making it the longest-running consistently-administered tracking survey in the Northeast.

  - In addition to general-interest items (the results of which are released to media outlets through this report), the *Critical Insights on Maine™* survey also serves as a vehicle for interested parties to include proprietary questions in the poll, the results of which are provided only to the sponsoring entities.

**Methodology**

- The current round of the poll included a total of 609 participants across the state who were surveyed by phone (300 respondents) and online (309 respondents) in April of 2024 (April 8th to April 30th).

  - All survey participants were required to be registered voters in Maine.

  - Final data reflect the demographic make-up of Maine's voting population and were statistically weighted to appropriately balance results according to gender, age, level of education, geographic region of residence, and voter registration profile (see Sample Profile on page 4).

  - With a total sample of 609 participants, the results discussed here have an associated sampling error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

- The entire survey took the average participant less than 15 minutes to complete – including both the general-interest questions reported here, as well as proprietary items included on behalf of sponsoring entities.

Digital Research inc. DRI

# Sample Profile

- Data in this report has been weighted to reflect the make-up of the state's voting population. The sample has been balanced according to gender, age, level of education, geographic region of residence, and voter registration profile.

| Gender Identification | |
|---|---|
| Female | 50% |
| Male | 49% |
| Non-binary/Other | 1% |
| Prefer not to answer | <1% |

| Self-Reported Age | |
|---|---|
| Under 35 | 24% |
| 35-44 | 16% |
| 45-54 | 14% |
| 55-64 | 20% |
| 65 or over | 27% |

| Educational Attainment | |
|---|---|
| Less than a four-year college degree | 65% |
| Four-year college or more | 34% |

| Congressional District | |
|---|---|
| One | 50% |
| Two | 50% |

| Self-Reported Party Registration | |
|---|---|
| Democrat | 35% |
| Republican | 30% |
| Other* | 6% |
| Unenrolled | 28% |
| Prefer not to answer/Don't know | 2% |

*Includes Green Independent, Libertarian, No Labels, or some other party not listed.*

- Party affiliation data is shown for the total sample; some variation is seen by Congressional District, in accordance with current registration information made available by the Office of the Secretary of State.

# Polling Results

# Views on the
# Direction of Maine and the Nation

# Only about one-quarter of voters surveyed in the Spring of 2024 believe Maine is headed in the _right direction_, holding steady with results observed over the past year.
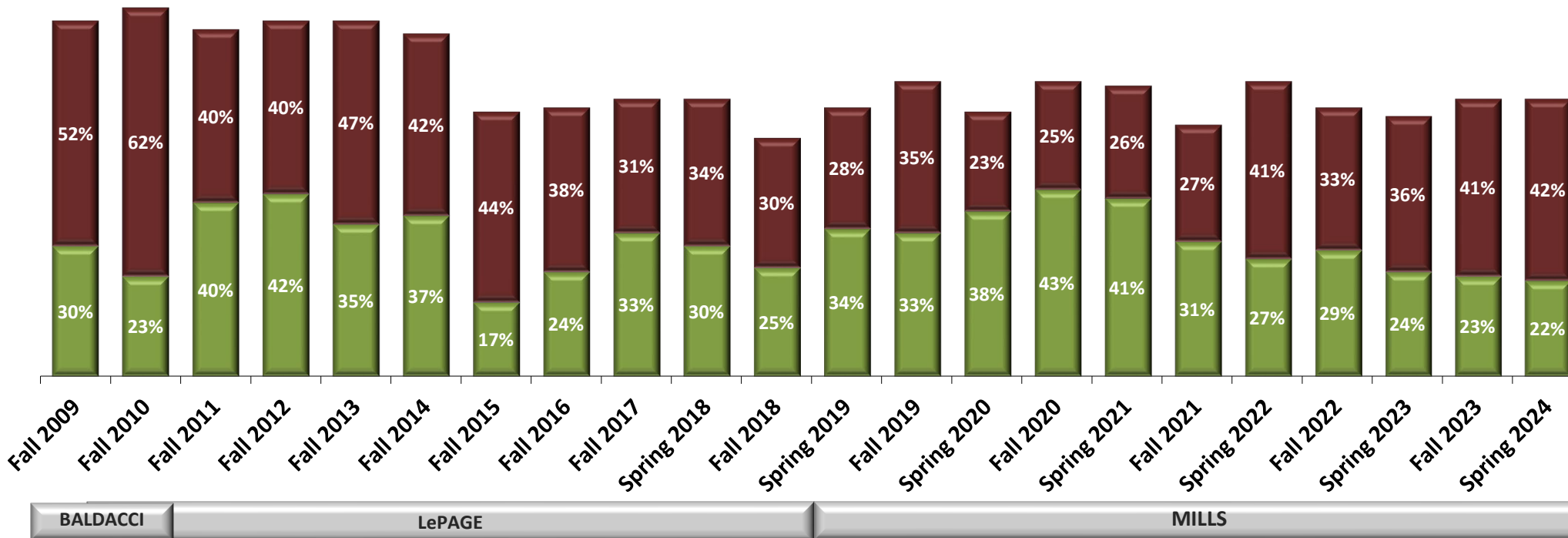
## Direction of Maine

> Views on the direction of the state tend to vary widely according to a person's reported level of education, with favorable views on Maine's direction increasing significantly along with residents' level of educational attainment.
> .
> As seen in the past, those who believe Maine is on the right track are most likely point to Governor Mills's leadership as the reason for their favorable opinion, a position held almost equally by Democrats and those politically unenrolled.



| Year | Wrong Track | Right Direction |
|---|---|---|
| Fall 2009 | 52% | 30% |
| Fall 2010 | 62% | 23% |
| Fall 2011 | 40% | 40% |
| Fall 2012 | 40% | 42% |
| Fall 2013 | 47% | 35% |
| Fall 2014 | 42% | 37% |
| Fall 2015 | 44% | 17% |
| Fall 2016 | 38% | 24% |
| Fall 2017 | 31% | 33% |
| Spring 2018 | 34% | 30% |
| Fall 2018 | 30% | 25% |
| Spring 2019 | 28% | 34% |
| Fall 2019 | 35% | 33% |
| Spring 2020 | 23% | 38% |
| Fall 2020 | 25% | 43% |
| Spring 2021 | 26% | 41% |
| Fall 2021 | 27% | 31% |
| Spring 2022 | 41% | 27% |
| Fall 2022 | 33% | 29% |
| Spring 2023 | 36% | 24% |
| Fall 2023 | 41% | 23% |
| Spring 2024 | 42% | 22% |

**BALDACCI**    **LePAGE**    **MILLS**

In an illustration of continued polarization among Maine residents, almost three-quarters of Republicans believe the state is on the _wrong track_ (73%), compared to just two–in-ten Democrats (19%).

The 73% reflects an increase of ten percentage points since the Fall measurement, when 62% of GOP voters expressed this sentiment.

■ Wrong Track
■ Right Direction

Spring 2024: (n=609)

_All in all, do you think things in Maine are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?_

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Mixed." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.
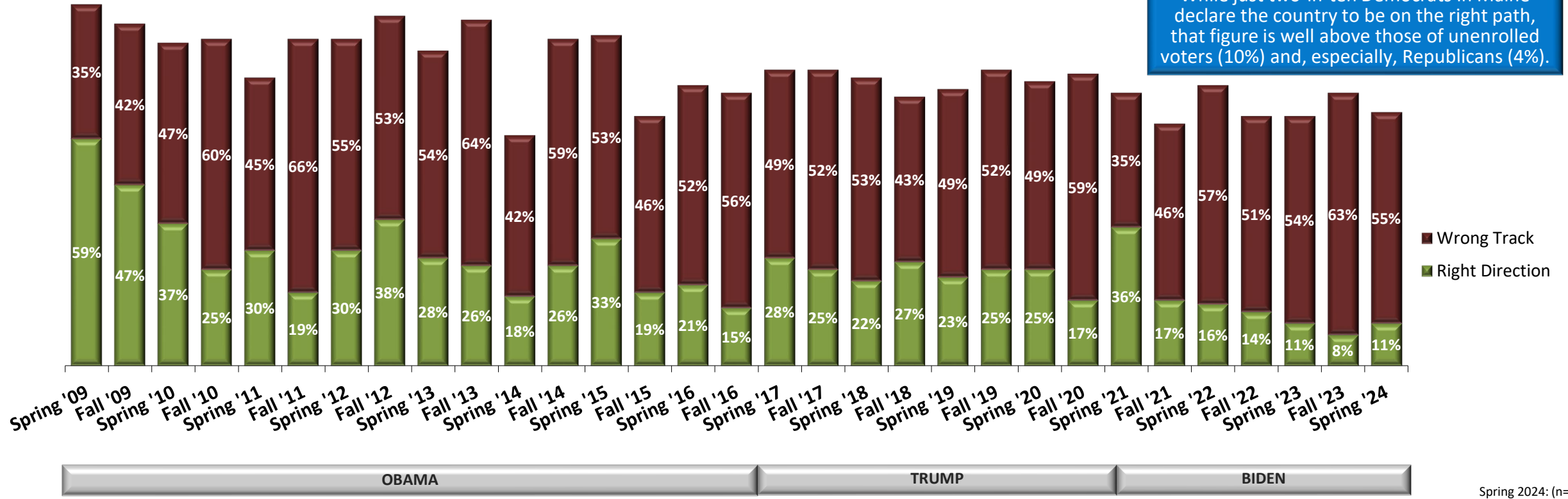
After hitting a near historic high in the Fall at 63%, the proportion of Maine people who believe the nation is on the _wrong track_ has declined to 55% (but is still a bit above the historical average). Still, just one-in-ten feel the nation is heading in the _right direction_.

**Direction of the Nation**

| | Wrong Track | Right Direction |
|---|---|---|
| Spring '09 | 35% | 59% |
| Fall '09 | 42% | 47% |
| Spring '10 | 47% | 37% |
| Fall '10 | 60% | 25% |
| Spring '11 | 45% | 30% |
| Fall '11 | 66% | 19% |
| Spring '12 | 55% | 30% |
| Fall '12 | 53% | 38% |
| Spring '13 | 54% | 28% |
| Fall '13 | 64% | 26% |
| Spring '14 | 42% | 18% |
| Fall '14 | 59% | 26% |
| Spring '15 | 53% | 33% |
| Fall '15 | 46% | 19% |
| Spring '16 | 52% | 21% |
| Fall '16 | 56% | 15% |
| Spring '17 | 49% | 28% |
| Fall '17 | 52% | 25% |
| Spring '18 | 53% | 22% |
| Fall '18 | 43% | 27% |
| Spring '19 | 49% | 23% |
| Fall '19 | 52% | 25% |
| Spring '20 | 49% | 25% |
| Fall '20 | 59% | 17% |
| Spring '21 | 35% | 36% |
| Fall '21 | 46% | 17% |
| Spring '22 | 57% | 16% |
| Fall '22 | 51% | 14% |
| Spring '23 | 54% | 11% |
| Fall '23 | 63% | 8% |
| Spring '24 | 55% | 11% |

OBAMA | TRUMP | BIDEN

Spring 2024: (n=609)

_All in all, do you think things in the nation are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?_
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Mixed." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

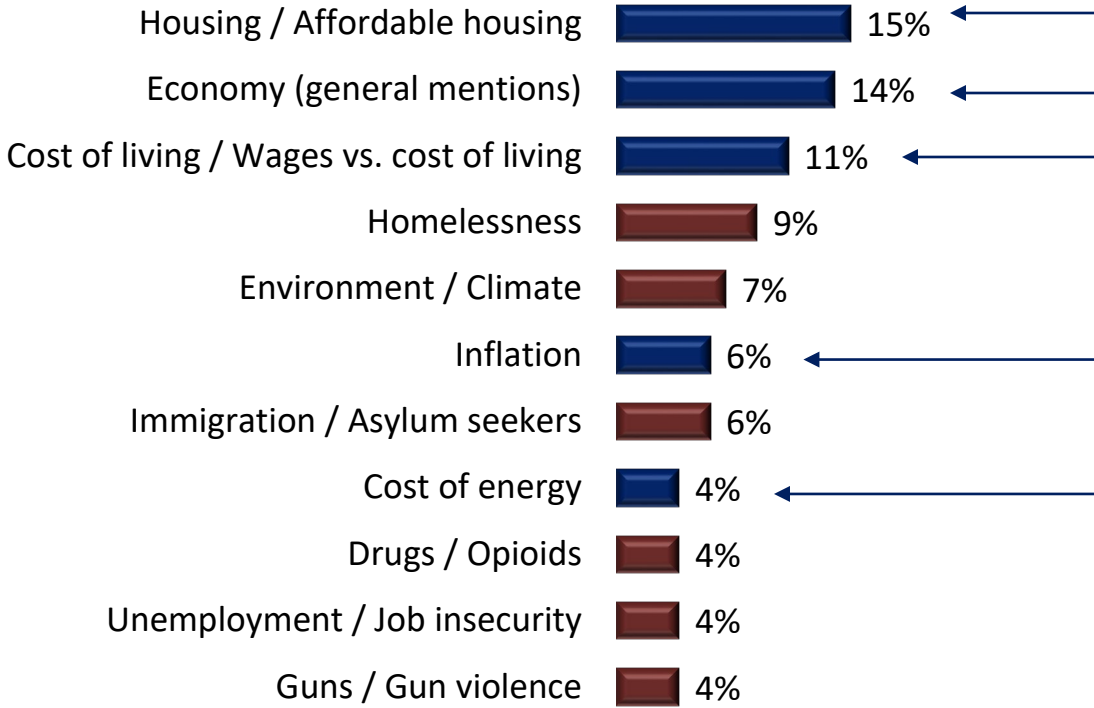Digital **Research** inc **DRI**

8

# Financial and economic worries – led by housing-related issues – continue to form a top tier of concerns for Maine voters. Non-economic and societal issues do emerge, but financial concerns continue to weigh on the minds of Maine people.

## Most Important Issues Facing Maine
### Percentage naming each issue
### (Top Mentions)

| Issue | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Housing / Affordable housing | 15% |
| Economy (general mentions) | 14% |
| Cost of living / Wages vs. cost of living | 11% |
| Homelessness | 9% |
| Environment / Climate | 7% |
| Inflation | 6% |
| Immigration / Asylum seekers | 6% |
| Cost of energy | 4% |
| Drugs / Opioids | 4% |
| Unemployment / Job insecurity | 4% |
| Guns / Gun violence | 4% |

**Economic-related concerns account for nearly half of responses from Maine voters when asked to identify the most important issue facing the state.**

Concerns about housing are even more common among Democrats (22%). Environmental concerns (10%) and issues around guns and gun violence (8%) are also more common mentions among Democrats.

Articulated concerns about immigration issues and asylum seekers are significantly more common among Republicans in Maine (14%).
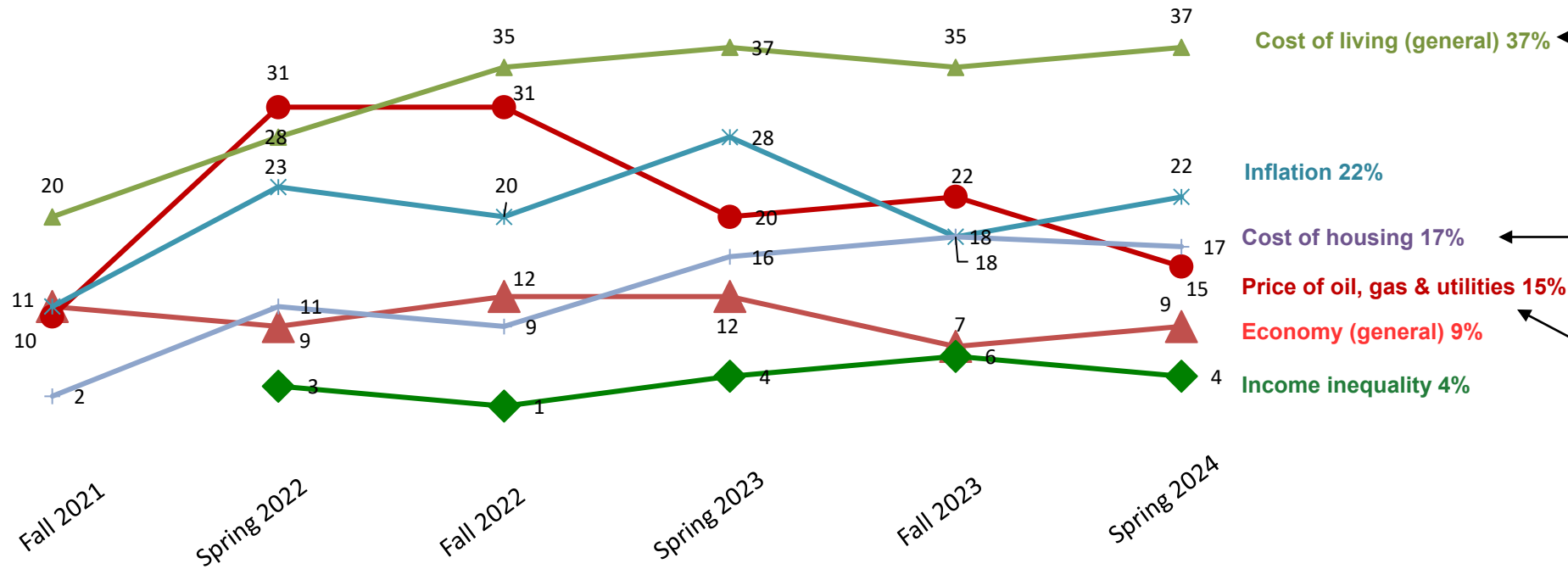
Interestingly, those who are registered, unenrolled voters are the most likely to cite homelessness as a chief issue facing Maine.

\* All items mentioned by at least 4% of participants in the current round of measurement are shown.

Spring 2024: (n=609)

*In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Maine today?*
(Asked without prompts).

Digital Research inc DRI

9

# When asked to focus on <u>economic issues</u> specifically, the high cost of living continues to be the most common concern among Maine people, followed by concerns about inflation and worries about the cost of housing.

## Top Economic/Financial Concerns

Percentage naming each issue
(Top Mentions)



Cost of living (general) 37%

Inflation 22%

Cost of housing 17%

Price of oil, gas & utilities 15%

Economy (general) 9%

Income inequality 4%

Concern about the cost of living continues to cut across all demographic and socio-political groups.

Concern about housing-related issues is more common in CD1, and among Democrats.

Concern about the cost of fuel and utilities also cuts across all demographic and socio-political groups.

Fall 2021 — Spring 2022 — Fall 2022 — Spring 2023 — Fall 2023 — Spring 2024

*As you think about the next 6 months, what economic or financial situations concern you the MOST?*
(Asked without prompts).

Digital Research inc DRI

# While four-in-ten Mainers still believe the economy will get worse over the next year, this finding reflects a decline in the level of pessimism seen over the past two years.
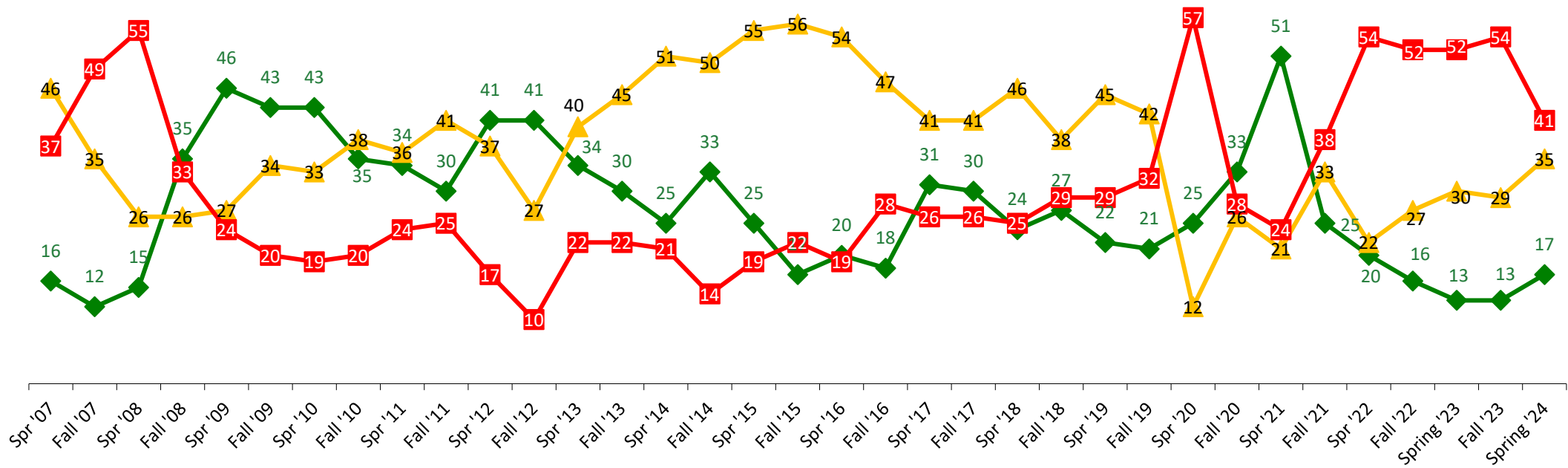
**Both Democrats (23%) and unenrolled voters (21%) are each much more likely than Republicans (8%) to claim the economy will improve over the next 12 months.**

## Optimism About the Economy
% predicting the economy will be:

- ◆ Better
- ▲ About the Same
- ■ Worse

**Optimism about the future of the economy tends to vary widely according to a person's age, with favorable views increasing significantly along with residents' reported age (24% of those age 65+ feel the economy is improving).**
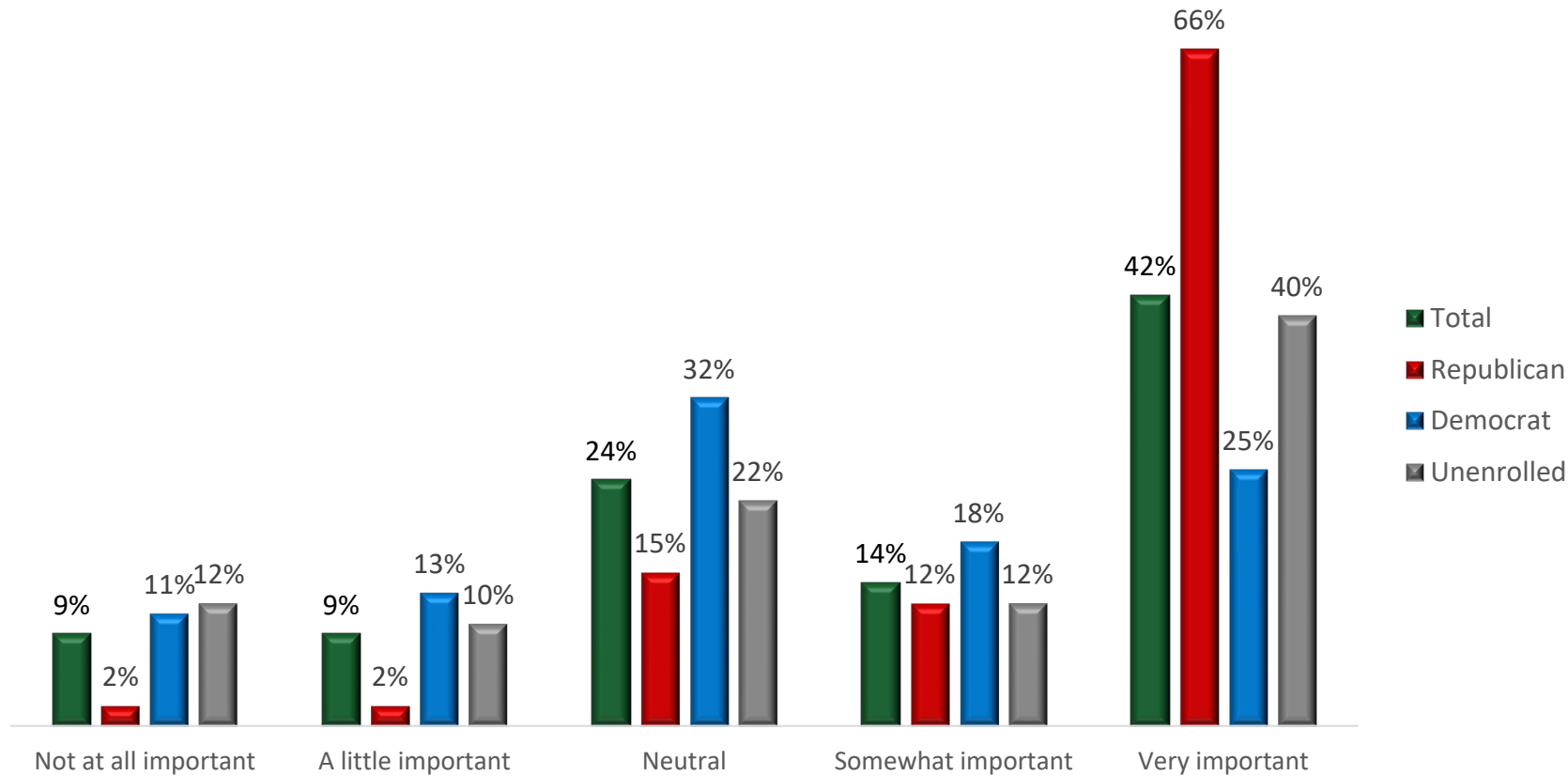


BUSH     OBAMA     TRUMP     BIDEN

Spring 2024: (n=609)

*Now think about the future of the economy. In the next 12 months, do you think the economy will be…?*
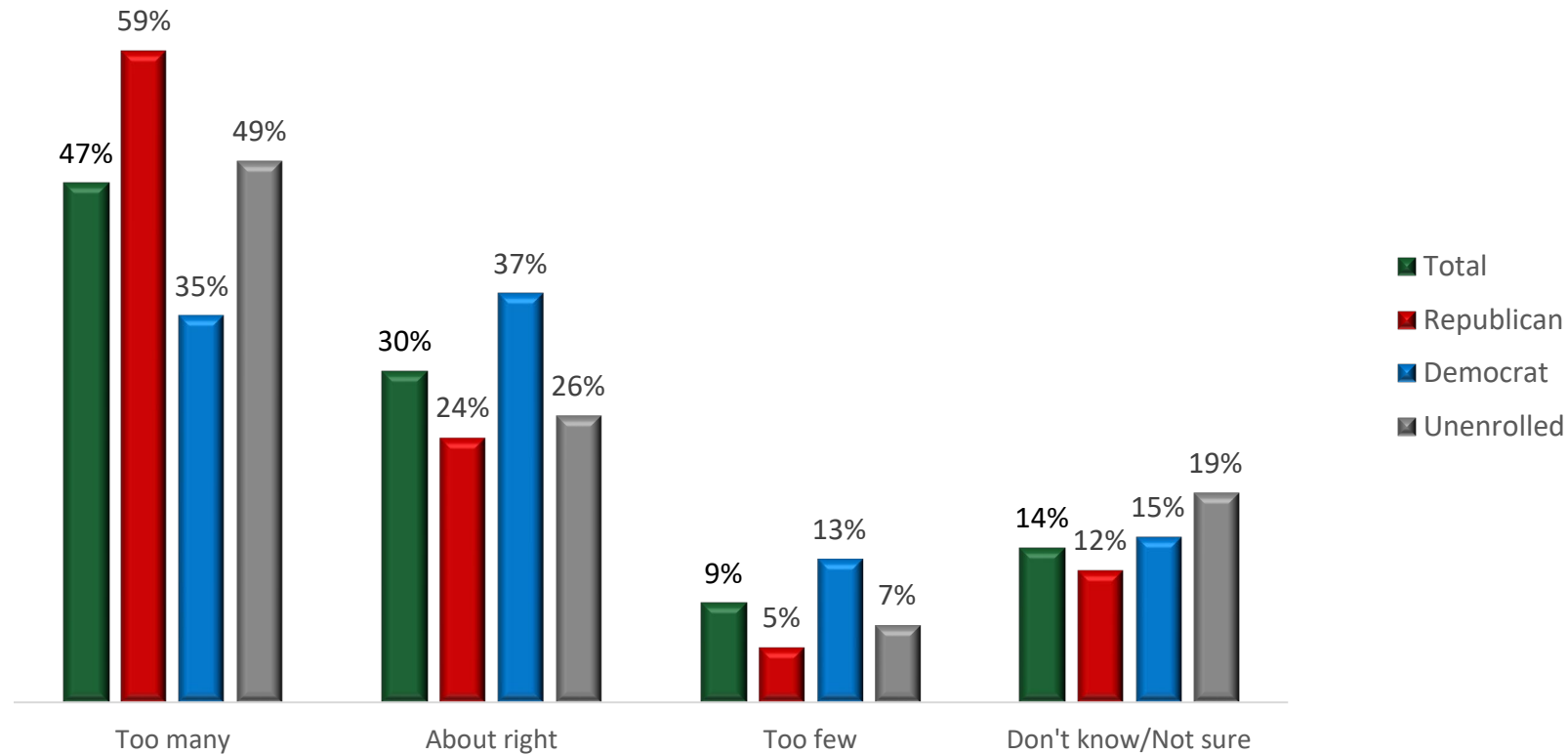
# Views on
# Topical Issues in the U.S. and Maine

# Immigration

# When asked to consider the issue of immigration and its importance to them personally, a strong majority of Maine voters see the issue as being either "very important" (42%) or "somewhat important" (14%).



Chart legend:
- Total
- Republican
- Democrat
- Unenrolled

Chart data:

| | Total | Republican | Democrat | Unenrolled |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not at all important | 9% | 2% | 11% | 12% |
| A little important | 9% | 2% | 13% | 10% |
| Neutral | 24% | 15% | 32% | 22% |
| Somewhat important | 14% | 12% | 18% | 12% |
| Very important | 42% | 66% | 25% | 40% |

- **The salience of immigration as an issue clearly falls along party lines, with Maine Republicans being *significantly* more likely than both Democrats and unenrolled voters to say the issue is "very important."**
- **In Maine, the relevance of immigration is also tied to voters' reported age, with voters age 45+ seeing it as much more important than do younger voters.**
- **While the issue holds at least some relevance across all groups examined in the poll, data suggests an incremental increase in the salience of the issue among a less highly-educated segment of the population.**

*Broadly, there has been quite a bit of attention in the country about the issue of immigration.*
*Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means very important, how important of an issue is immigration to you personally?*
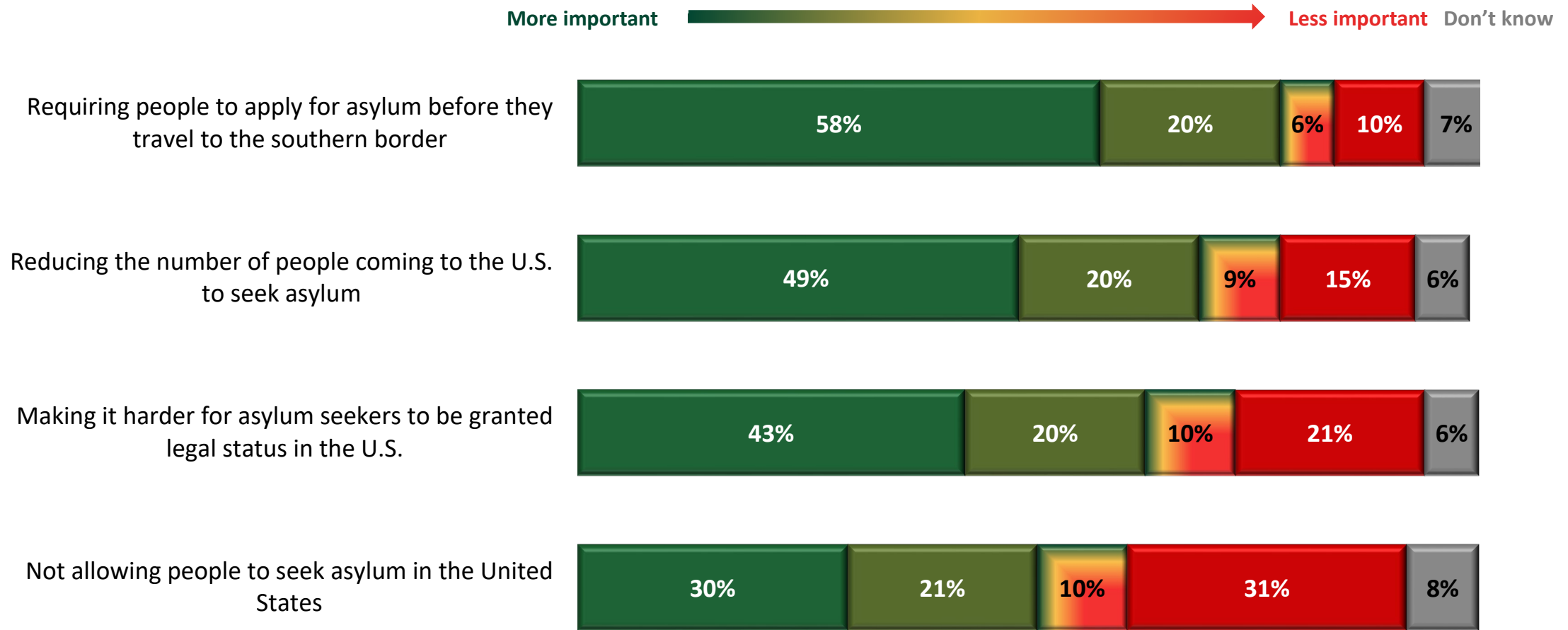
# In considering the number of immigrants that lawfully establish U.S. residency each year, half of Maine voters believe that current level of immigration is too high.



Legend:
- Total (dark green)
- Republican (red)
- Democrat (blue)
- Unenrolled (gray)

Too many: 47% (Total), 59% (Republican), 35% (Democrat), 49% (Unenrolled)
About right: 30% (Total), 24% (Republican), 37% (Democrat), 26% (Unenrolled)
Too few: 9% (Total), 5% (Republican), 13% (Democrat), 7% (Unenrolled)
Don't know/Not sure: 14% (Total), 12% (Republican), 15% (Democrat), 19% (Unenrolled)

- Perspectives on the appropriateness of the current level of lawful immigration suggests some alignment between Republicans and unenrolled voters, with similar proportions of each group seeing the current level of legal immigration being too high.

- By contrast, Democrats are more likely than other groups to see the level of legal immigration as being about right, though it should be noted that this proportion is similar to the number of Democrats who consider current levels to be excessive.

- As observed with the overall importance of immigration as an issue for Maine people, views on the level of legal immigration also appears tied to voters' reported age (voters age 45+ are much more likely to see the number of people establishing residency as being too high; meanwhile, younger voters are more likely to be unsure as to the right number of legal immigrants).

*Recent immigration figures indicate that each year, more than 1 million people from other countries lawfully become permanent U.S. residents through immigration. Do you believe that 1 million immigrants legally entering the U.S. is too many, about the right number, or too few?*
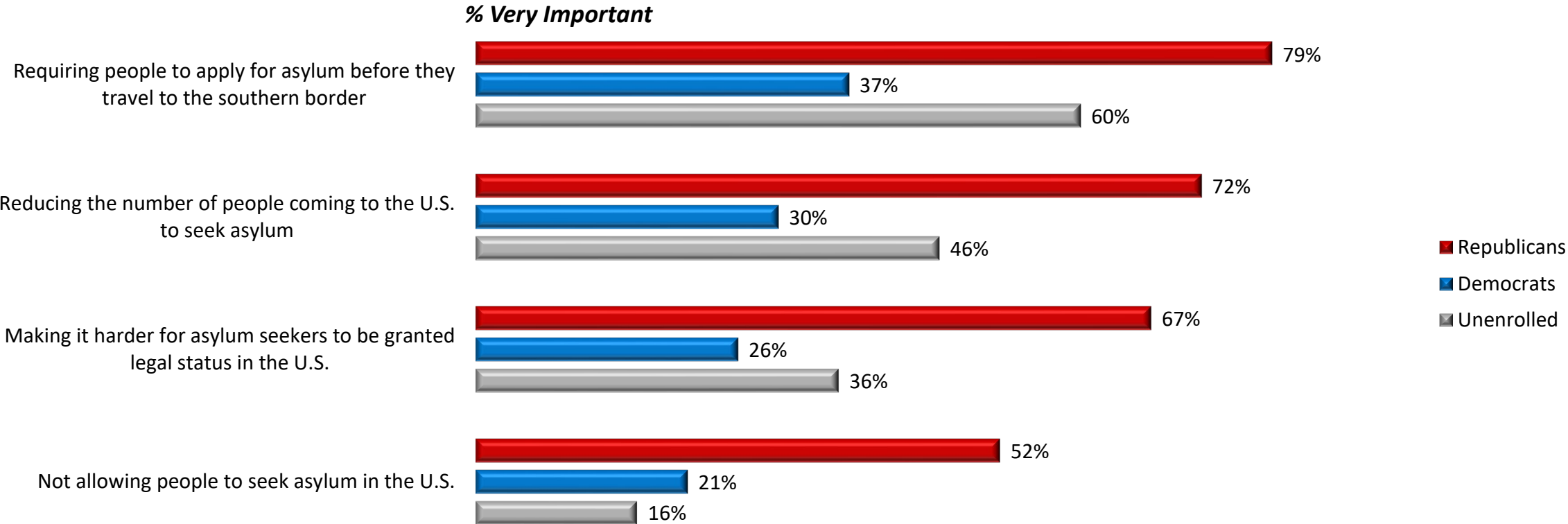
15

In considering the immigration issue of seeking political asylum in the U.S., Mainers generally agree that requiring <u>application for asylum status</u> before entering the country is important (58%). There is substantially less agreement on the importance of reducing numbers of asylum seekers or making it more difficult to qualify for the status. Mainers are split on the importance of not allowing people to seek asylum in the U.S.

**More important** ➝ **Less important** Don't know

| | More important | | | Less important | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Requiring people to apply for asylum before they travel to the southern border | 58% | 20% | 6% | 10% | 7% |
| Reducing the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum | 49% | 20% | 9% | 15% | 6% |
| Making it harder for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S. | 43% | 20% | 10% | 21% | 6% |
| Not allowing people to seek asylum in the United States | 30% | 21% | 10% | 31% | 8% |

*There has been quite a bit of attention paid to issues at the U.S. southern border, where people are crossing to gain entry into the United States, sometimes to seek asylum from their home country of origin. Please tell me how important, if at all, each of the following are for the United States: very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important.*
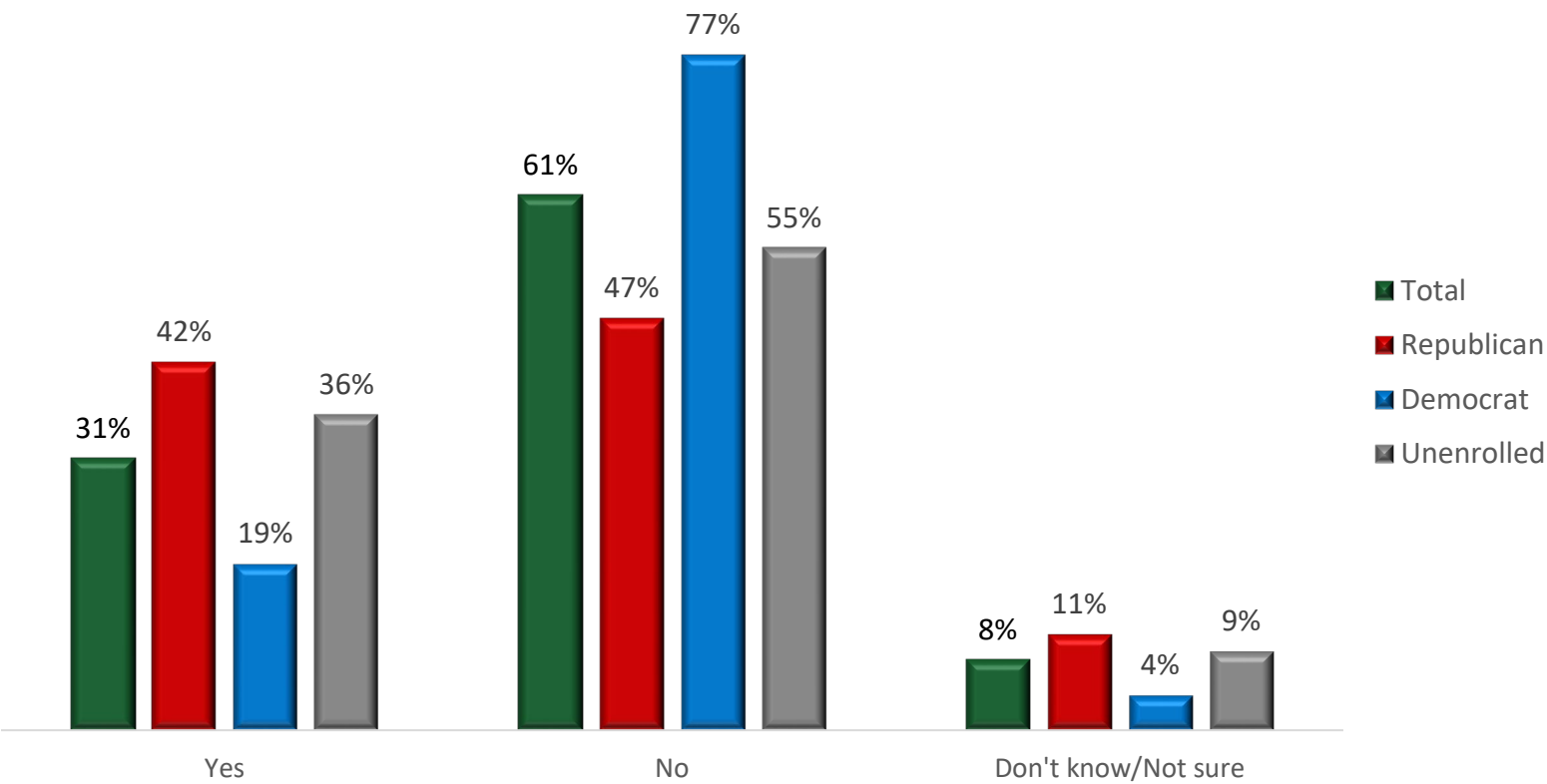
# The stated importance assigned to various aspects of asylum-seeking is quite partisan across all measures, with Republicans assigning significantly higher levels of importance than Democrats to each issue.

- **An area where some alignment is seen is in requiring applications for asylum before coming to the southern border, where attitudes of unenrolled voters appear more similar to those of Republicans.**

*% Very Important*

**Requiring people to apply for asylum before they travel to the southern border**
- Republicans: 79%
- Democrats: 37%
- Unenrolled: 60%

**Reducing the number of people coming to the U.S. to seek asylum**
- Republicans: 72%
- Democrats: 30%
- Unenrolled: 46%

**Making it harder for asylum seekers to be granted legal status in the U.S.**
- Republicans: 67%
- Democrats: 26%
- Unenrolled: 36%

**Not allowing people to seek asylum in the U.S.**
- Republicans: 52%
- Democrats: 21%
- Unenrolled: 16%

Legend:
- Republicans
- Democrats
- Unenrolled

*There has been quite a bit of attention paid to issues at the U.S. southern border, where people are crossing to gain entry into the United States, sometimes to seek asylum from their home country of origin. Please tell me how important, if at all, each of the following are for the United States: very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important.*
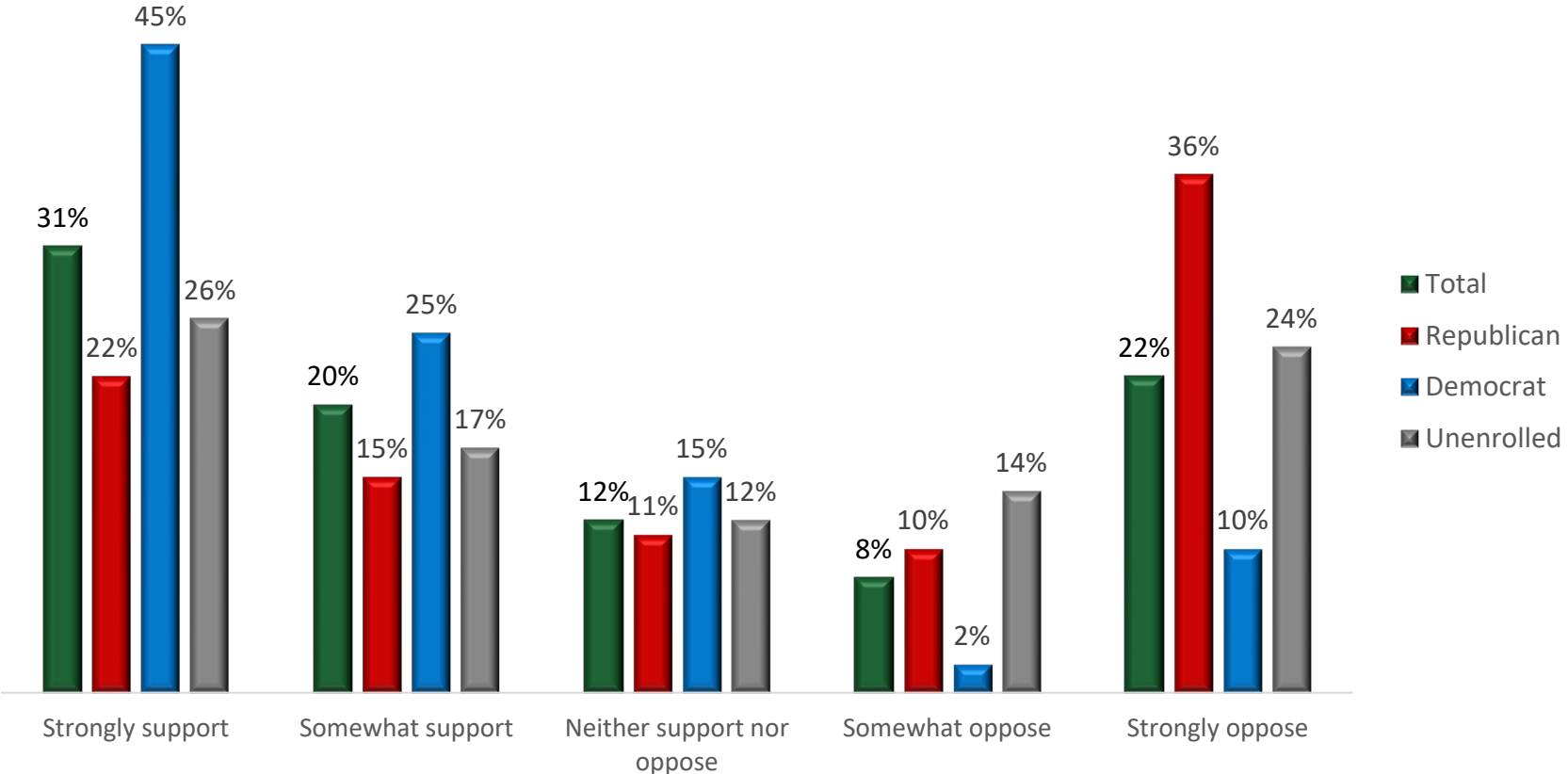
# While only about one-third of Maine voters claim to have been personally impacted by those seeking asylum in the U.S., both Republicans and unenrolled voters report higher levels of perceived impact.



**Legend:**
- Total
- Republican
- Democrat
- Unenrolled

**Yes**
- Total: 31%
- Republican: 42%
- Democrat: 19%
- Unenrolled: 36%

**No**
- Total: 61%
- Republican: 47%
- Democrat: 77%
- Unenrolled: 55%

**Don't know/Not sure**
- Total: 8%
- Republican: 11%
- Democrat: 4%
- Unenrolled: 9%

- **While just two-in-ten Democrats in Maine feel that they've been impacted personally by this issue, claims are much higher for Republicans (42%) and unenrolled voters (36%).**

*In Maine, have you been personally impacted by border crossings and people entering the United States, sometimes to seek asylum?*

Digital Research inc DRI

18

# Feelings about a state-level office aimed at supporting the integration of immigrants into Maine are a bit mixed, with half supporting the concept and three-in-ten opposing it.

**Chart:** Support/oppose for a state-level office (Total, Republican, Democrat, Unenrolled)

| | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Neither support nor oppose | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 31% | 20% | 12% | 8% | 22% |
| Republican | 22% | 15% | 11% | 10% | 36% |
| Democrat | 45% | 25% | 15% | 2% | 10% |
| Unenrolled | 26% | 17% | 12% | 14% | 24% |

- **Perspectives on the concept of this office reflect the partisan division, with seven-in-ten Democrats supporting the idea, while nearly half of Republicans and almost four-in-ten unenrolled voters oppose it.**

- **While reactions to the idea of the establishment of this office are varied overall, further analysis indicates that support for the office appears very much linked to education, with the greatest support coming from those Mainers with higher levels of education; meanwhile, support tends to be at least directionally lower among Maine residents with less than a college degree.**
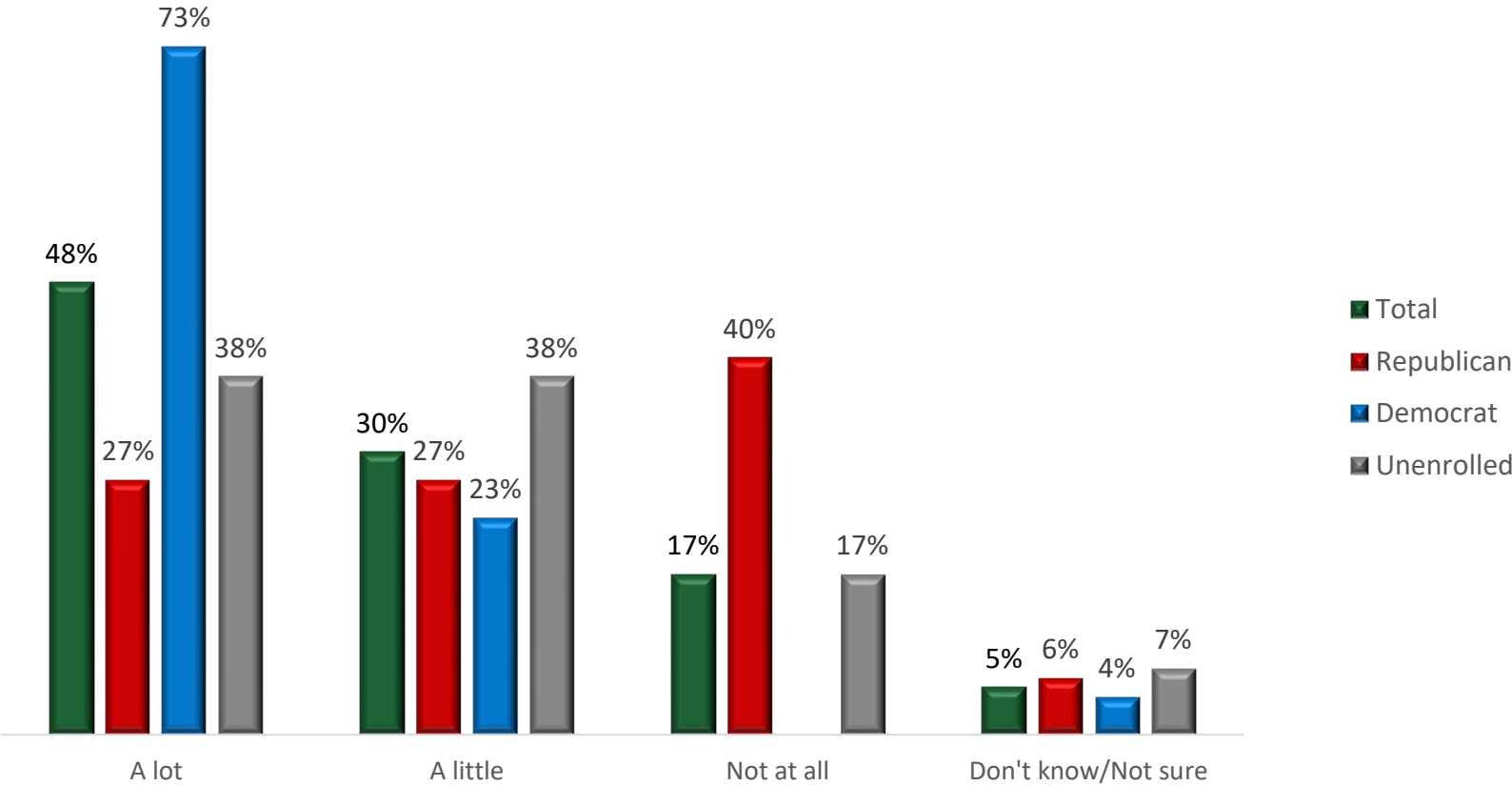
*In recent years, as people seeking asylum have arrived in Maine, cities and towns in the state have had difficulty housing and integrating these new arrivals into the community as they await hearings on their asylum status and possible permanent residency. As has been done in other states, Maine has proposed the establishment of a state-level office to help communities better integrate immigrants and coordinate available resources at the local, state, and federal levels. To what extent would you support or oppose such an office to assist these new arrivals in Maine?*

# Climate

# A majority of Maine voters polled believe they were personally impacted by the severe storms that hit the state over the past six months.

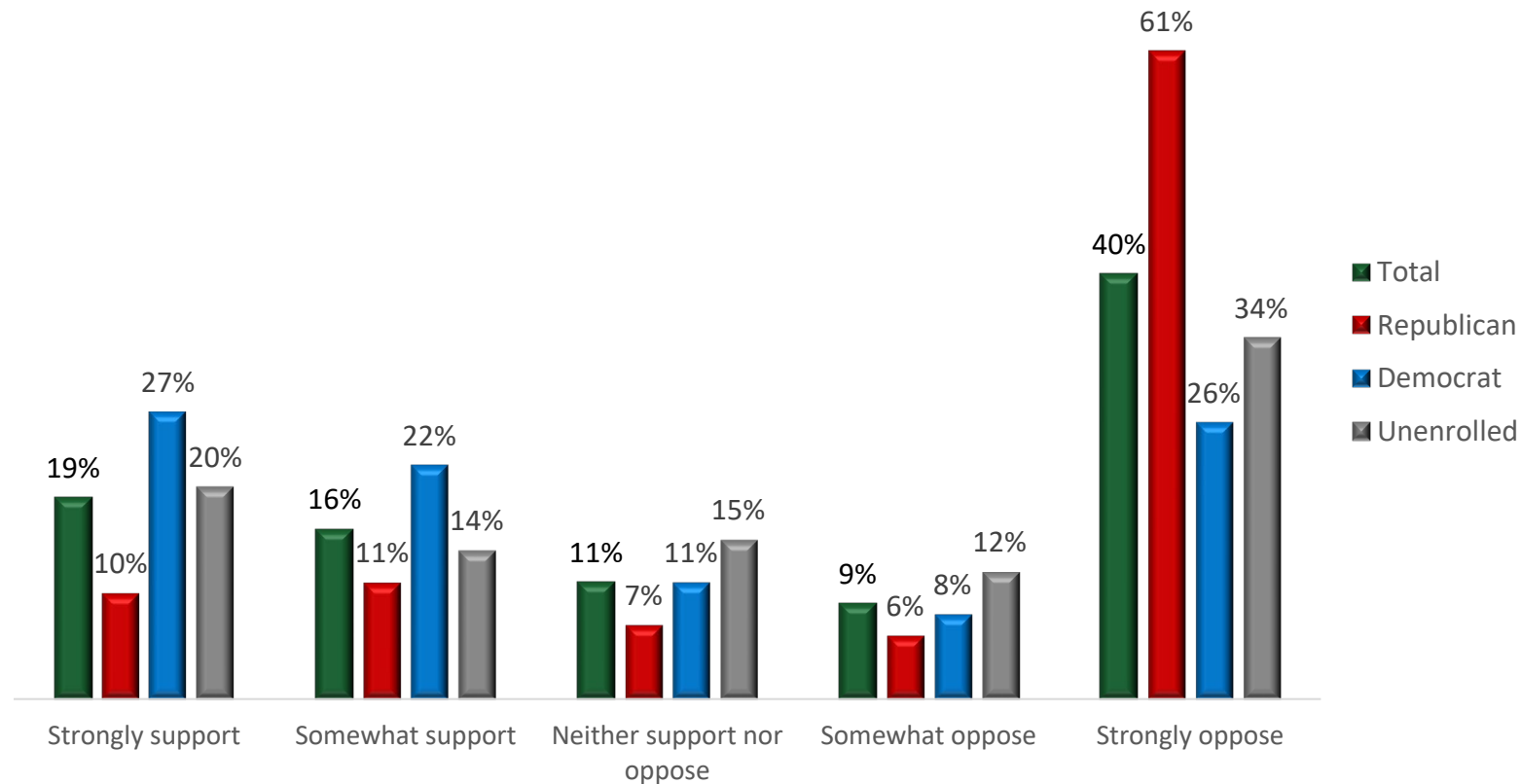**Not Sure**
**1%**

**No**
**28%**

**Yes**
**70%**
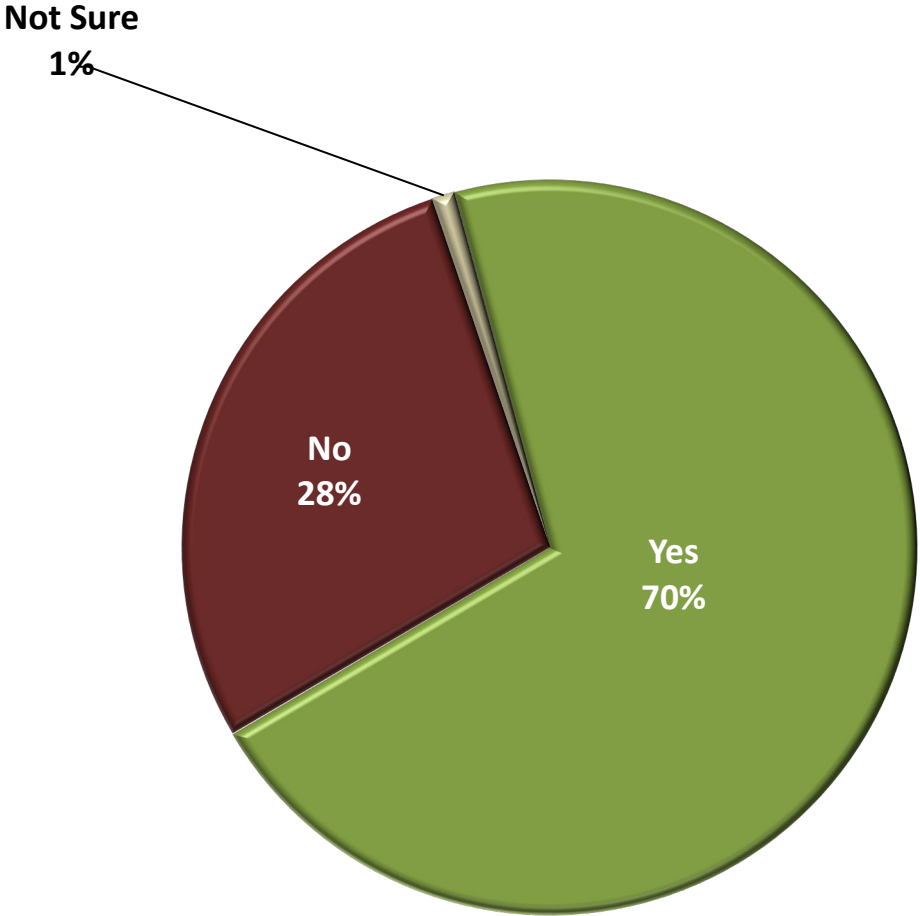
- In examining results according to different groups of Maine voters, it is interesting to see that perceived impact is not a partisan issue, with equal proportions of Democrats, Republicans, and unenrolled voters (all 70%) each claiming to have been affected by the December and January storms.
- While majorities of residents of each Congressional District claim to have been affected, reported impact is significantly more common among those in the 1st Congressional District (76%).
- Demographically, men and younger people are more likely to claim impact.

*Digital Research inc DRI*

*Maine has recently experienced intense storms, flooding and other weather events that caused significant damage to many parts of the state. Have you personally been impacted by the recent severe weather events in Maine?*

21

# Almost eight-in-ten Maine voters believe climate change had at least some role in the severity of the recent storms that hit the state.

**A lot**
- Total: 48%
- Republican: 27%
- Democrat: 73%
- Unenrolled: 38%

**A little**
- Total: 30%
- Republican: 27%
- Democrat: 23%
- Unenrolled: 38%

**Not at all**
- Total: 17%
- Republican: 40%
- Unenrolled: 17%

**Don't know/Not sure**
- Total: 5%
- Republican: 6%
- Democrat: 4%
- Unenrolled: 7%

Legend:
- Total
- Republican
- Democrat
- Unenrolled

- While there was marked consistency across political affiliations about being impacted by the severe storms that hit Maine, perspectives on the role played by climate change in the severity of the storms is dramatically different.
- While virtually all Democrats feel climate change impacted the severity of the storms (including fully 73% who believe it contributed "a lot"), only about half of Republicans feel it had any impact on severity and another 40% claim that climate change did not affect things at all.

# "Clean Car" policies, sometimes called the "California Standard," receive a very mixed reaction from Maine voters, with a large majority of Republicans staunchly opposed and even Democrats expressing some polarized views about the issue.



Chart legend:
- Total (green)
- Republican (red)
- Democrat (blue)
- Unenrolled (gray)

| | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Neither support nor oppose | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 19% | 16% | 11% | 9% | 40% |
| Republican | 10% | 11% | 7% | 6% | 61% |
| Democrat | 27% | 22% | 11% | 8% | 26% |
| Unenrolled | 20% | 14% | 15% | 12% | 34% |

- When asked to consider the prospect of new clean car policies in Maine and a requirement for sales of more zero-emission vehicles, only about one-third of Maine voters generally support this type of regulation.

- While support for clean car policies is significantly more robust among Democrats, it should be noted that only 49% of self-reported Democrats support the measure; meanwhile, fully two-thirds of Republicans oppose these standards, including 61% who "strongly oppose."

- Among other subgroups, younger voters appear more open to "Clean Car" standards, with older voters significantly more opposed; while more highly educated residents are more likely to voice support, those without a college degree are more likely to be in strong opposition.

*Some U.S. states have adopted climate-focused standards that will boost requirements for the percentage of new cars sold in those states that are zero-emission vehicles. Zero-emission vehicles include things like electric vehicles (or "EVs"), fuel cell vehicles, and some plug-in hybrid models. These standards are sometimes called "clean car" policies. If clean car policies were to be adopted in Maine, this would boost requirements for the percentage of new cars sold in the state that are zero-emission vehicles and would also limit the number of new gasoline powered vehicles sold in Maine. To what extent would you support or oppose this policy?*
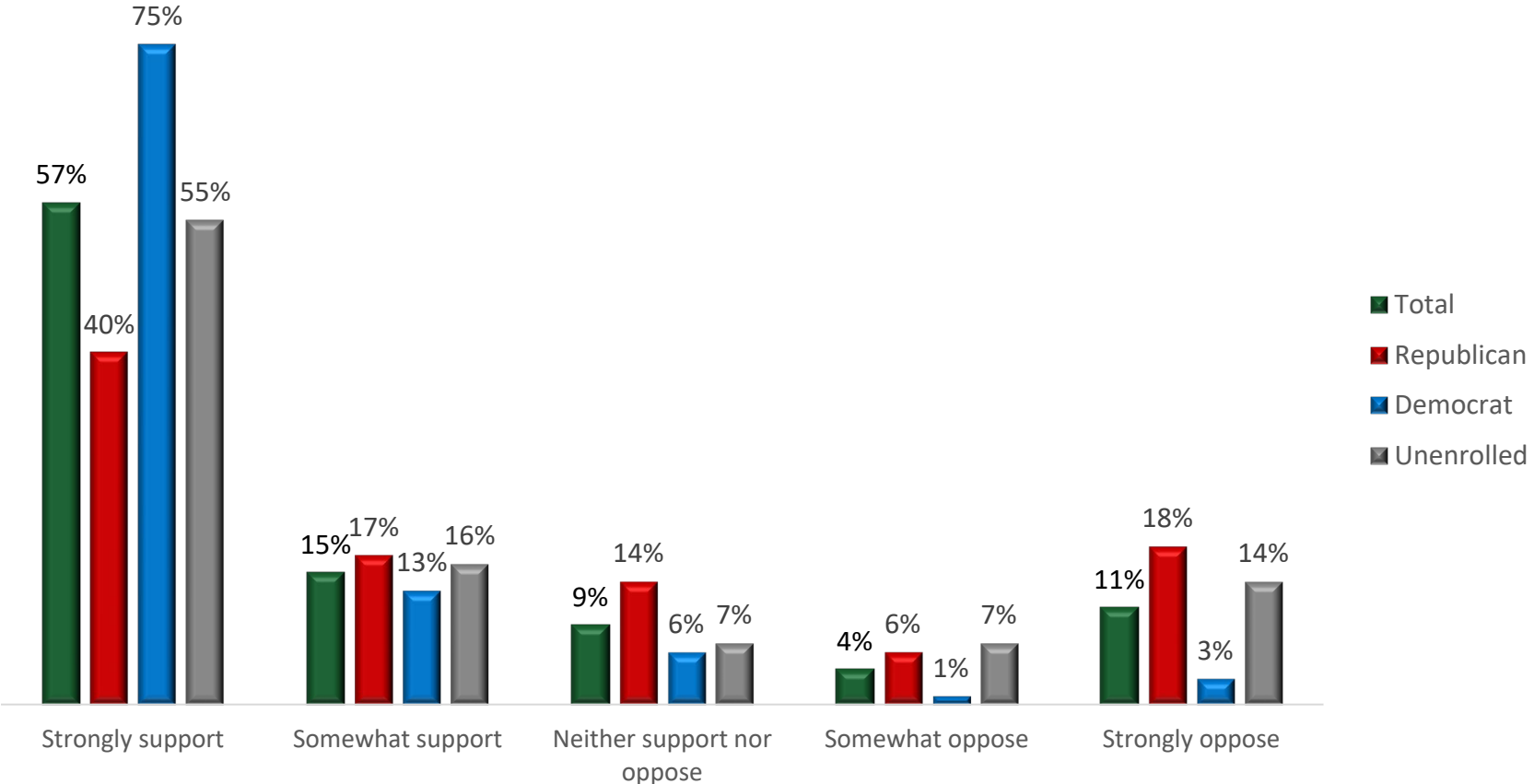
# Guns and Gun Safety

# Close to half of Maine voters support stricter regulations around firearm sales, with some notable divides along party lines.



Legend:
- **Total** (green)
- **Republican** (red)
- **Democrat** (blue)
- **Unenrolled** (grey)

**More strict:** Total 46%, Republican 25%, Democrat 69%, Unenrolled 41%

**Less strict:** Total 14%, Republican 19%, Democrat 5%, Unenrolled 20%

**Kept as they are:** Total 36%, Republican 54%, Democrat 22%, Unenrolled 33%

**Don't know/Not sure:** Total 4%, Republican 3%, Democrat 3%, Unenrolled 5%
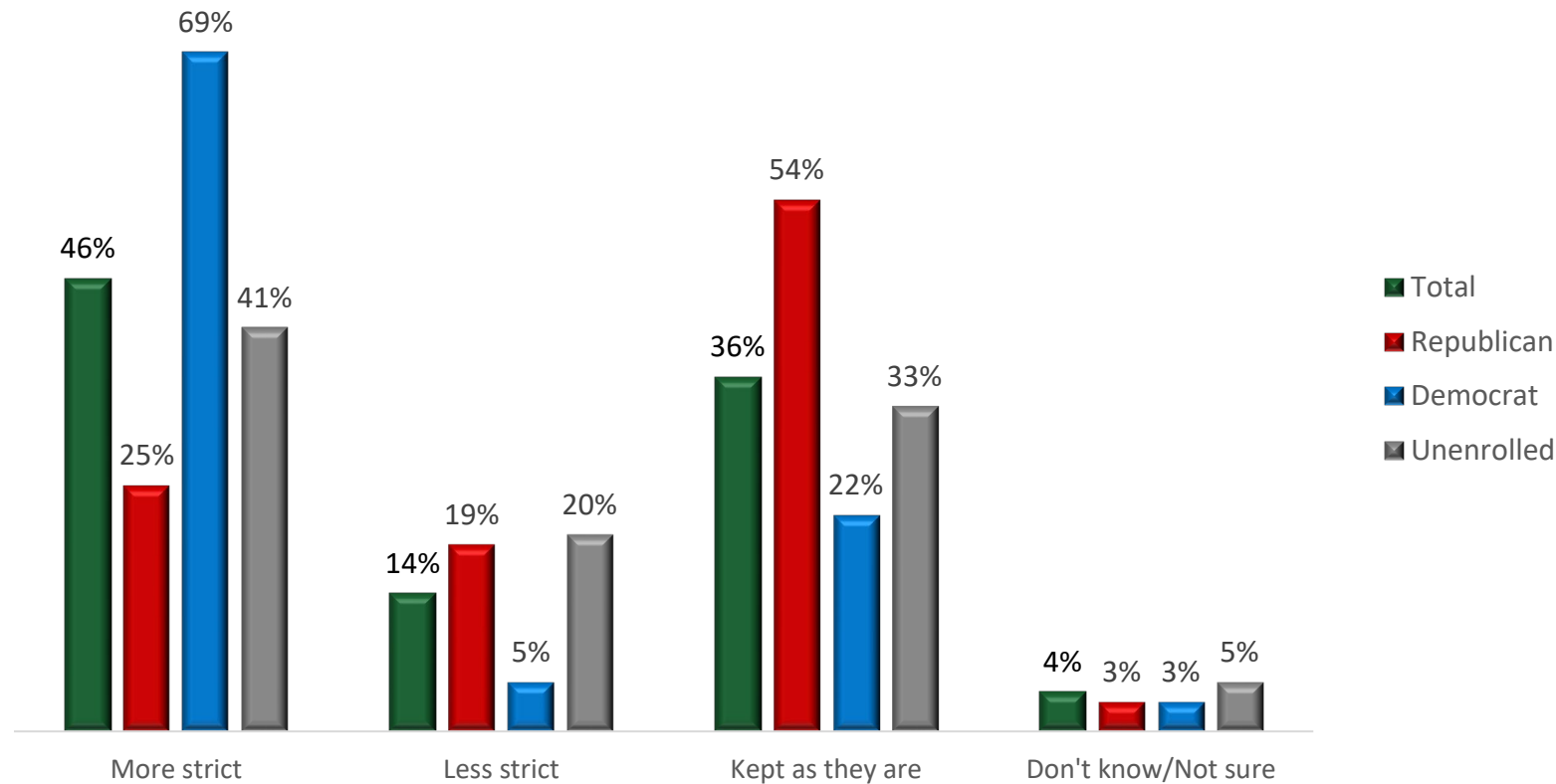
- **While stricter gun sale laws are supported by nearly seven-in-ten Democrats (69%), support is significantly lower among unenrolled voters (41%) and, especially, Republicans (25%).**

- **Support for stricter regulations is more robust in the First Congressional District (54%). Only about a third of CD2 voters support stricter regulations (37%).**

- **Support for greater restrictions is higher among women and more highly-educated voters. Support is also higher in both the youngest (<35) and the oldest age groups (65+).**

- **While more relaxed laws are supported by only 14% of voters (principally Republicans and unenrolled voters), a sizable bloc of Maine people do endorse simply keeping the status quo, particularly men, Republicans, and CD 2 voters.**

*In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms in Maine should be made more strict, less strict or kept as they are now?*

25

Digital Research inc **DRI**

# Three-quarters of Maine voters – including nearly six-in-ten who expressed strong support – favor extreme risk protection orders, sometimes known as "red flag" laws.



**Legend:**
- Total
- Republican
- Democrat
- Unenrolled

| | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Neither support nor oppose | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 57% | 15% | 9% | 4% | 11% |
| Republican | 40% | 17% | 14% | 6% | 18% |
| Democrat | 75% | 13% | 6% | 1% | 3% |
| Unenrolled | 55% | 16% | 7% | 7% | 14% |

- In the Legislative session in Maine only recently adjourned, "red flag" legislation never advanced to a full vote, yet these poll results show support for these kind of laws across the political spectrum, from Democrats (88% support), to unenrolled voters (71%), to Republicans (56%).

- While sometimes cast as a somewhat partisan issue with strong opposition in some more rural parts of the state, support is robust among voters in both the 1st (79%) and the 2nd (66%) Congressional Districts.

- Demographically, support is particularly strong among women and among older Mainers, and also generally increases along with educational attainment.

*In general, what is your level of support or opposition to "red flag laws"?*

*These are laws that would allow law enforcement officers to temporarily take away guns if they feel a gun owner may harm themselves or others.*

Digital Research inc **DRI**

# Views on Political Figures

# Just under half of Maine voters approve of the way Governor Mills is handling her job, consistent with data collected in the Fall of 2023, but down from a year ago.

**Job Approval for Governor Janet Mills**
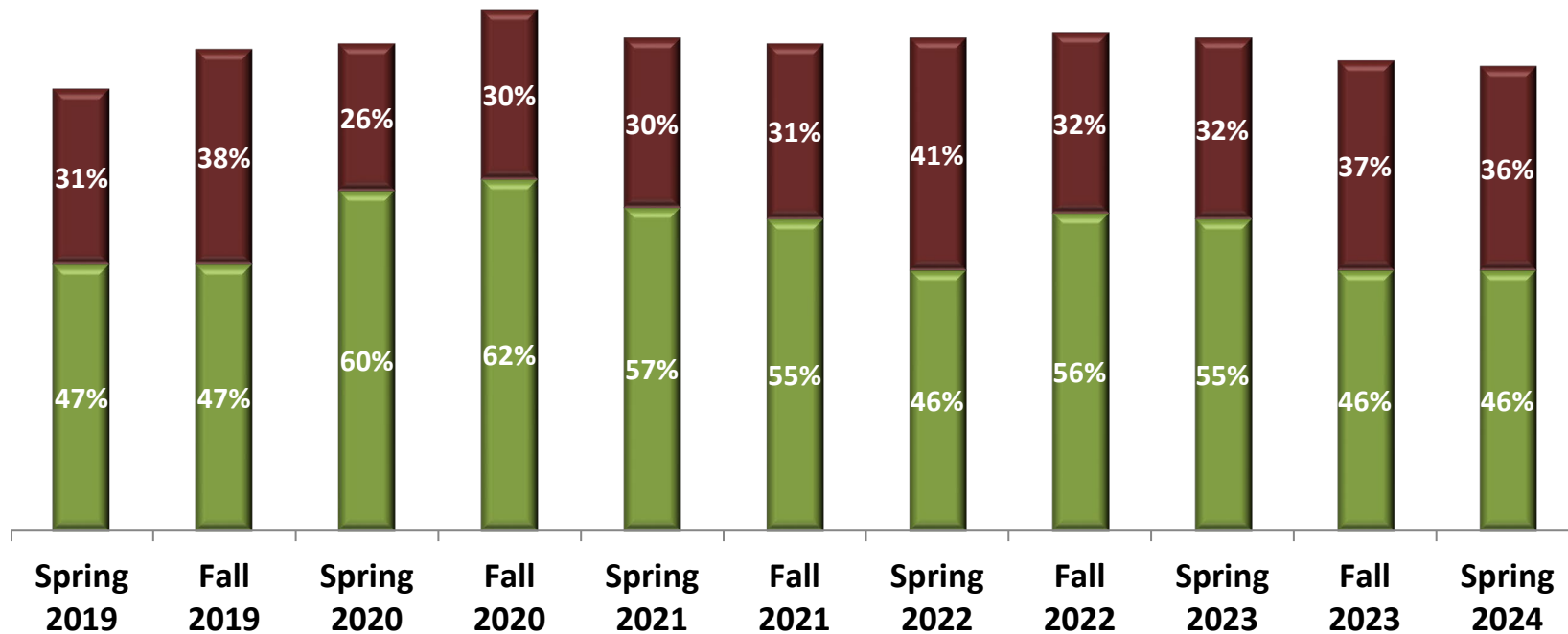
While her current approval rating is a bit lower than the historical numbers for Governor Mills (53%, on average), it remains well ahead of the results for her predecessor. Across Paul LePage's time in office, the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey reported approval ratings between 31% and 47%.

Consistent with past results, nearly eight-in-ten Democrats approve of Governor Mills's job performance (77%), compared to fewer than two-in-ten Republicans (18%).

In line with these party-line differences, Governor Mills does better with voters in the First Congressional District (55% approve) and is viewed less favorably in the more conservative Second CD (36% approve).

The Governor does especially well with older residents, age 65+ (54% approve), as well as with more highly-educated residents holding a college degree (57%).

| | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disapprove | 31% | 38% | 26% | 30% | 30% | 31% | 41% | 32% | 32% | 37% | 36% |
| Approve | 47% | 47% | 60% | 62% | 57% | 55% | 46% | 56% | 55% | 46% | 46% |

■ Disapprove
■ Approve

*Digital Research inc DRI*

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Janet Mills has been handling her job as governor?*
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.
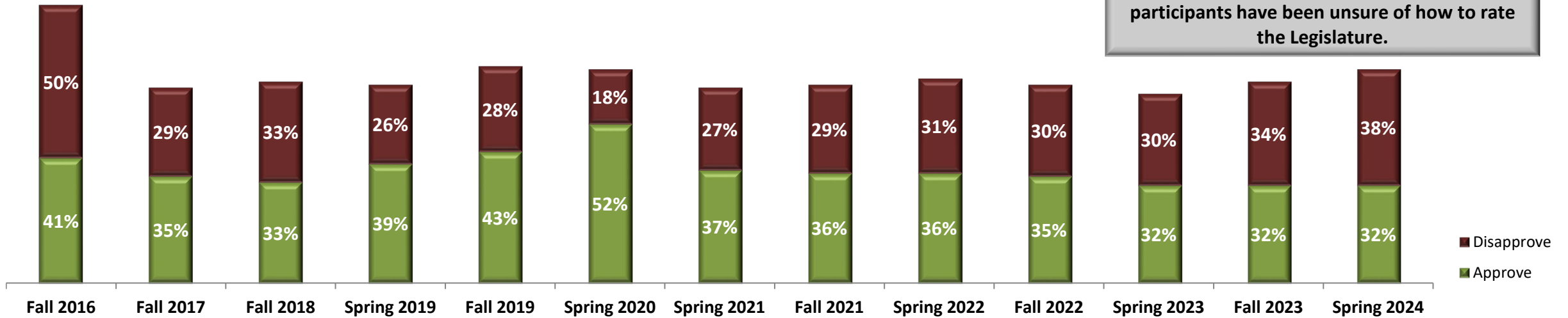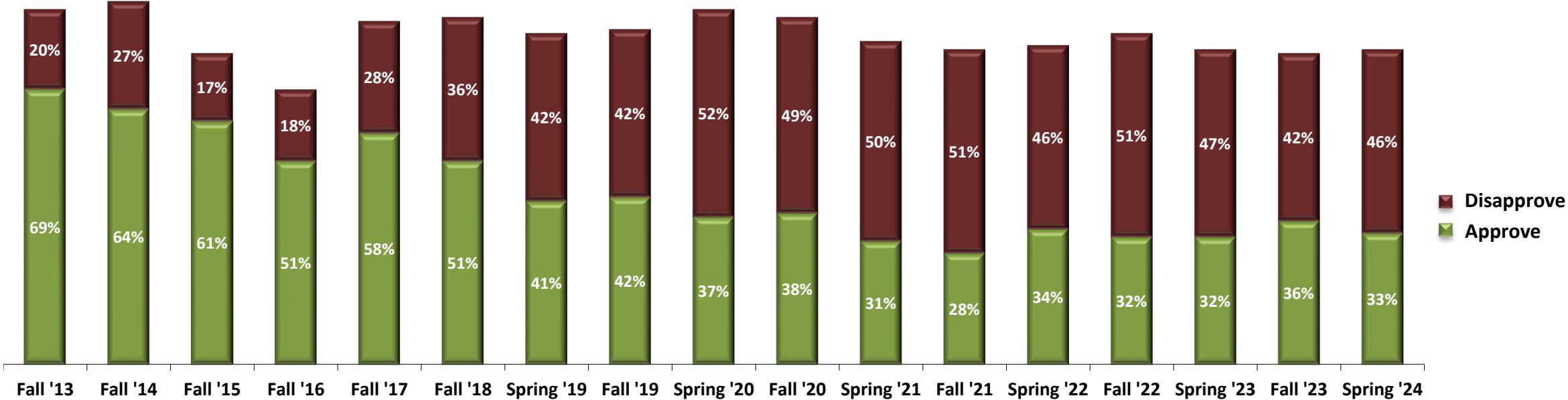
# One-third of voters approve of the job performance of the Maine State Legislature. This is consistent with measurements over the past several polling cycles.

**Job Approval For Maine State Legislature**

Just under half of Democrats in Maine approve of the legislature's performance (48%), compared to only two–in-ten Republicans (17%).

With Democratic majorities in the Legislature for several years now, it is not surprising to see fully 57% of Republicans disapproving of the its performance.

While nearly all voters polled in the Fall 2016 baseline offered a rating of the Legislature, since that time about three-in-ten survey participants have been unsure of how to rate the Legislature.

| | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disapprove | 50% | 29% | 33% | 26% | 28% | 18% | 27% | 29% | 31% | 30% | 30% | 34% | 38% |
| Approve | 41% | 35% | 33% | 39% | 43% | 52% | 37% | 36% | 36% | 35% | 32% | 32% | 32% |

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way the current Maine state legislature is doing its job?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.
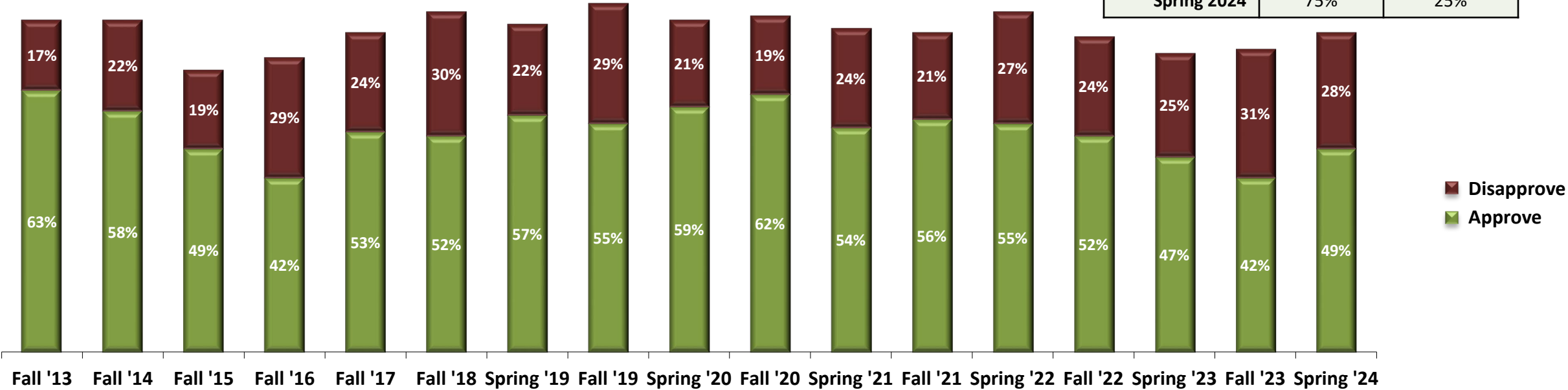
Digital Research inc DRI

# Job approval ratings for Senator Collins remain mired in the low-to-mid-30% range, with disapproval numbers approaching close to half of Maine voters.

Notably, Senator Collins's current approval numbers are remarkably consistent – albeit modest – across all political affiliations.

| Democrat | Republican | Unenrolled |
|----------|------------|------------|
| 34% | 31% | 34% |

Senator Collins does quite well with voters age 55 to 64 (52% approve), while 35% of voters under the age of 35 say "Don't know" when asked to rate the Senator's work and just 20% approve.

## Job Approval for U.S. Senator Susan Collins



| | Fall '13 | Fall '14 | Fall '15 | Fall '16 | Fall '17 | Fall '18 | Spring '19 | Fall '19 | Spring '20 | Fall '20 | Spring '21 | Fall '21 | Spring '22 | Fall '22 | Spring '23 | Fall '23 | Spring '24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disapprove | 20% | 27% | 17% | 18% | 28% | 36% | 42% | 42% | 52% | 49% | 50% | 51% | 46% | 51% | 47% | 42% | 46% |
| Approve | 69% | 64% | 61% | 51% | 58% | 51% | 41% | 42% | 37% | 38% | 31% | 28% | 34% | 32% | 32% | 36% | 33% |

■ Disapprove
■ Approve

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator?*
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Digital **Research** inc **DRI**

30

# Roughly half of voters polled approve of the job Angus King is doing as a U.S. Senator, rebounding to levels seen in the Spring 2023 poll.

King polls particularly well among First District voters (where 57% approve of his job performance), as well as among older residents, age 65+ (58%).

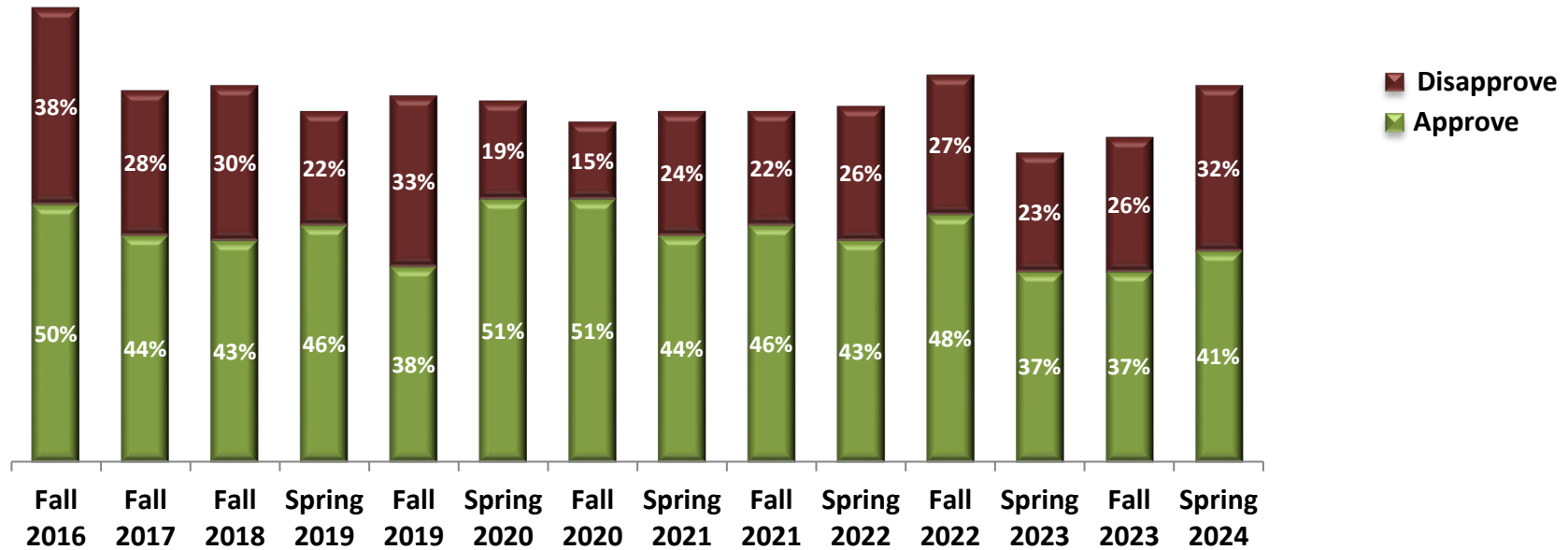The recent unevenness in Senator King's approval rating can be tied to some fluctuations over time among Republicans.

| | Democrat | Republican |
|---|---|---|
| **Fall 2022** | 72% | 31% |
| **Spring 2023** | 74% | 25% |
| **Fall 2023** | 73% | 19% |
| **Spring 2024** | 75% | 25% |

## Job Approval for U.S. Senator Angus King

| | Fall '13 | Fall '14 | Fall '15 | Fall '16 | Fall '17 | Fall '18 | Spring '19 | Fall '19 | Spring '20 | Fall '20 | Spring '21 | Fall '21 | Spring '22 | Fall '22 | Spring '23 | Fall '23 | Spring '24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disapprove** | 17% | 22% | 19% | 29% | 24% | 30% | 22% | 29% | 21% | 19% | 24% | 21% | 27% | 24% | 25% | 31% | 28% |
| **Approve** | 63% | 58% | 49% | 42% | 53% | 52% | 57% | 55% | 59% | 62% | 54% | 56% | 55% | 52% | 47% | 42% | 49% |

Spring 2024: (n=609)

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Angus King is handling his job as U.S. Senator?*
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

# Four-in-ten 1ˢᵗ Congressional District constituents of Rep. Chellie Pingree approve of her performance – in a return to levels seen in polling two years ago, when 43% approved of her work.

## Job Approval for U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree
### (Among voters in the First Congressional District*)

| | Fall 2016 | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disapprove** | 38% | 28% | 30% | 22% | 33% | 19% | 15% | 24% | 22% | 26% | 27% | 23% | 26% | 32% |
| **Approve** | 50% | 44% | 43% | 46% | 38% | 51% | 51% | 44% | 46% | 43% | 48% | 37% | 37% | 41% |

*Spring 2024: (n=303)

> **Consistent with past polls, six-in-ten Democrats in the District approve of Rep. Pingree's performance (63%), compared to 15% of Republicans; job approval from unenrolled voters stands at 36%.**
> **Notably, while Rep. Pingree polls well with older voters age 55+, sizable blocs of younger voters say they "Don't know" when asked to assess her job performance.**

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Chellie Pingree is handling her job as Representative in the U.S. Congress?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

# Following a sharp drop in the fall of 2023, almost four-in-ten of Rep. Jared Golden's constituents in the 2nd Congressional District now approve of his performance.

**Job Approval for U.S. Rep. Jared Golden**
(Among voters in the Second Congressional District*)



Legend:
- ■ Disapprove
- ■ Approve

| | Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 | Fall 2020 | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disapprove | 15% | 22% | 19% | 16% | 29% | 25% | 26% | 31% | 31% | 35% | 32% |
| Approve | 38% | 44% | 42% | 56% | 41% | 39% | 41% | 36% | 39% | 27% | 36% |

*Spring 2024: (n=305)

---
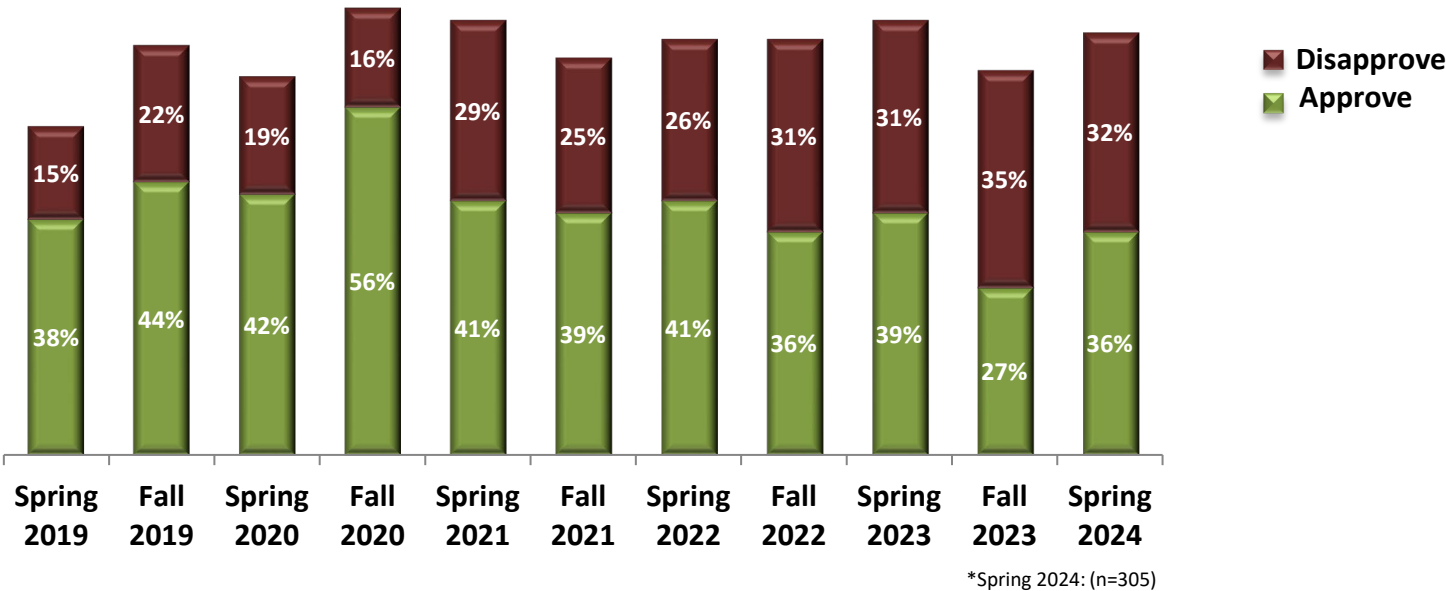
**Support for Rep. Golden has rebounded sharply among Democrats in the current poll (60%), following a dramatic drop in the Fall poll.**
**Across recent measurements, Golden's approval numbers have held steady among Republicans (24%) and unenrolled voters (29%).**
**Rep. Golden does particularly well with women, and among voters age 65+.**

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jared Golden is handling his job as Representative in the U.S. Congress?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

33

Digital **Research** inc **DRI**

# Just one-third of Maine voters currently approve of President Biden's job performance. Biden's job performance numbers have been mired in low-to-mid-30's range for the last two years.

While not entirely surprising, the President's current job approval numbers are an indication of political polarization.

| Democrat | Republican | Unenrolled |
|----------|------------|------------|
| 61% | 7% | 29% |

The President's job performance approval increases along with the age of voters, with the highest approval scores (46%) coming from those age 65+.

Scores are also linked to educational attainment, with the highest approval ratings coming from those with the highest levels of educational attainment and the lowest scores from those with less than a college degree.

## Job Approval for President Biden

| | Spring 2021 | Fall 2021 | Spring 2022 | Fall 2022 | Spring 2023 | Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disapprove | 33% | 45% | 57% | 52% | 53% | 59% | 57% |
| Approve | 55% | 42% | 34% | 37% | 33% | 30% | 32% |

■ Disapprove
■ Approve
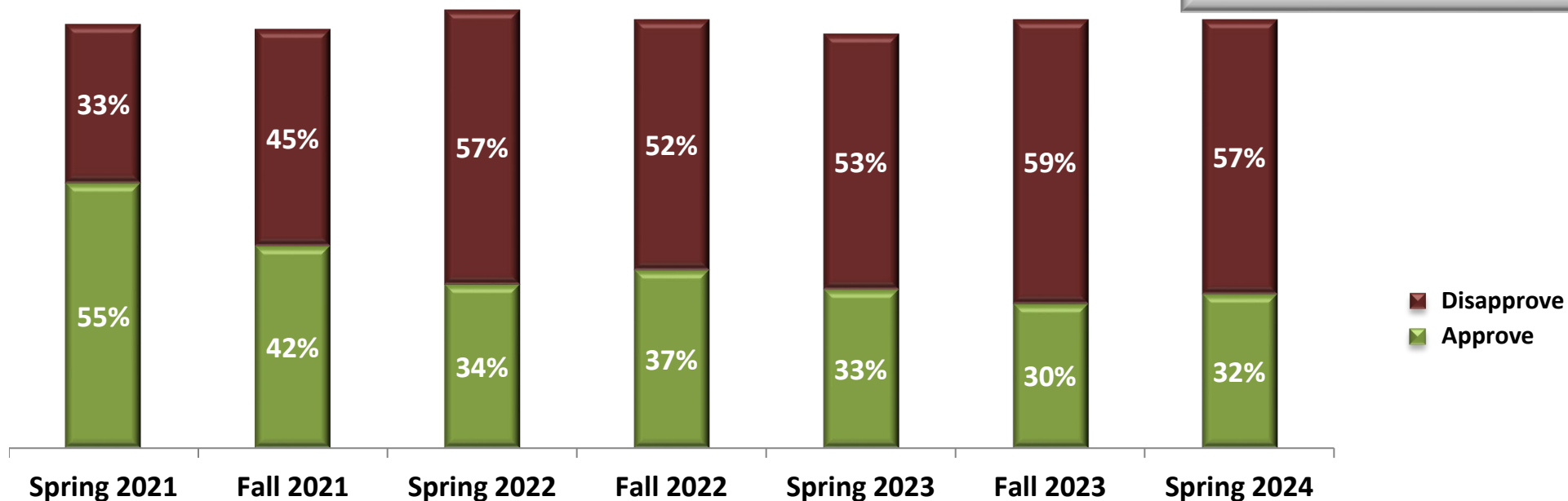
Spring 2024: (n=609)

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Digital Research inc DRI

When considering his administration in retrospect, approval of Donald Trump's job as President has increased slightly since the Fall of 2023. In both the Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024 waves of *Critical Insights on Maine™*, Trump's retrospective approval exceeds Biden's current approval.

## Post-Presidency Job Approval for Donald Trump



| Fall 2023 | Spring 2024 |
|-----------|-------------|
| 53% (Disapprove) | 49% (Disapprove) |
| 38% (Approve) | 43% (Approve) |
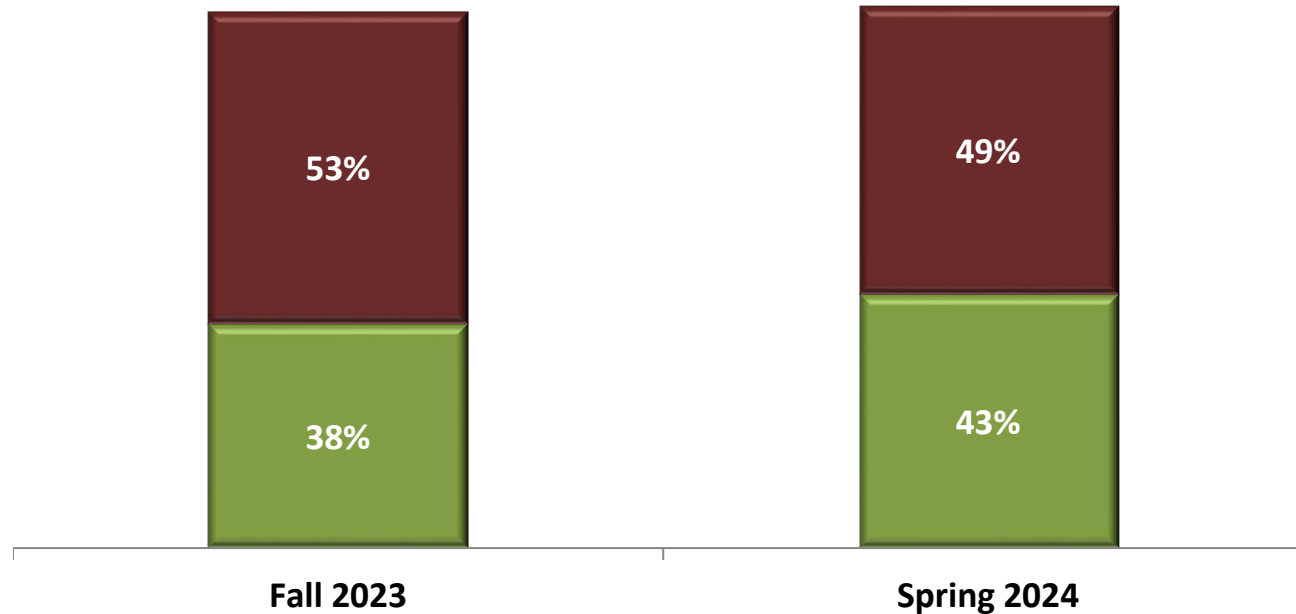
Not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority of Republicans look back and approve of Donald Trump's job while in office, while just a handful of Democrats express similar sentiments.

Retrospective job approval numbers among unenrolled voters reflect the broader sentiments of voters overall, at 43% approval.

| Democrat | Republican | Unenrolled |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| 12% | 81% | 43% |

■ Disapprove
■ Approve

Spring 2024: (n=609)

*Looking back, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump did his job as President when he was in office?*

# Three-in-ten voters in Maine approve of Vice President Harris's job performance, a slight uptick from the Fall findings.

**Job Approval for Vice President Harris**

Fall 2023:
- 59% (Disapprove)
- 24% (Approve)

Spring 2024:
- 51% (Disapprove)
- 31% (Approve)
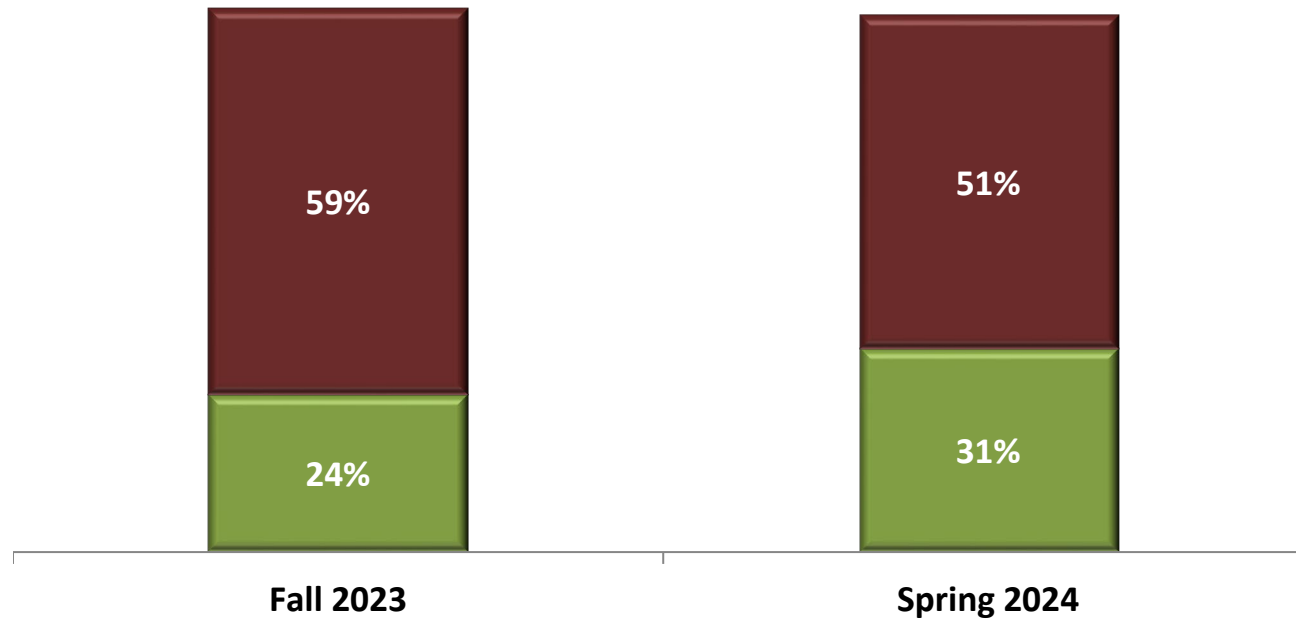
Vice President Harris's current approval numbers are in alignment with President Biden's, in the low 30% range.

Similar to the President, Vice President Harris scores better in the 1st CD (39%) and among older and more well-educated voters.

| Democrat | Republican | Unenrolled |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 54% | 10% | 27% |

■ Disapprove
■ Approve

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Kamala Harris is doing her job as Vice President?*

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

# Races – U.S. Senate and President

# Ranked Choice Voting will be employed in the November election for U.S. Senate. However, Angus King secures a majority of the raw vote (57%), eliminating the need for the Ranked Choice process.

- Participants in the online portion of the current round of the *Critical Insights on Maine*™ tracking survey took part in a replication of the ranked choice voting process. The anticipated ballot (given announced candidates at the time of the poll) was recreated online and integrated into the survey, with participants provided the same instructions for ballot completion and candidate ranking as would be employed this coming November.

**Sample Ranked Choice Ballot**

| To rank your candidate choices, fill in the circle by clicking that option: | U.S. Senator | 1st Choice | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice | 4th Choice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • In the 1st column for your 1st choice for President<br>• In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice for President, and so on.<br>**Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.** | Costello, David<br>Democrat | O | O | O | O |
| | King, Angus<br>Independent | O | O | O | O |
| **Fill in/select no more than one circle for each candidate or column.** | Kouzounas, Demi<br>Republican | O | O | O | O |
| To rank a write-in candidate, type the person's name in the write-in space and select the circle for the ranking of your choice. | Write-in<br>_____ | O | O | O | O |

Despite the presence of a Democratic candidate on the expected ballot in November, Angus King garners first place rankings from fully 74% of Democrats in the polling sample, as well as from 61% of unenrolled voters.

King does well in both Congressional Districts, particularly the 1st District, where he captures fully 63% of the first choice candidate rankings.

While GOP candidate Demi Kouzounas does secure first choice rankings from 65% of Republicans (28% overall among all voters), this level of support is not enough to trigger a runoff with Angus King.

Of particular note is the 31% of Republican voters that actually rank Sen. King as their first choice.

With Angus King securing first choice votes from a large majority of Democrats, it is not surprising to see candidate David Costello garnering only 12% of the first choice preference overall, including just 22% from Democrats.

Spring 2024: n=309 (online only)

*And below is how the ballot might look for U.S. Senate in November when ranked choice voting will be used. We'd again like you to fill out the ranked choice ballot as you would if you were voting and the election were being held today.*

Digital Research inc DRI

# The poll suggests a tight presidential race upcoming this Fall. In the absence of Ranked Choice Voting, Trump might be expected to carry Maine by a single percentage point. Ranked Choice Voting turns the tables, as more off-party candidate votes go to Biden.

- With the sample ballot including expected and announced candidates at the time of the poll, the 2024 Presidential ballot was also recreated online and integrated into the survey, with participants provided the same instructions for ballot completion and candidate ranking as would be employed this coming November.

**Sample Ranked Choice Ballot**

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the circle by clicking that option:

- In the 1st column for your 1st choice for President
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice for President, and so on.

Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.

Fill in/select no more than one circle for each candidate or column.

To rank a write-in candidate, type the person's name in the write-in space and select the circle for the ranking of your choice.

| President | 1st Choice | 2nd Choice | 3rd Choice | 4th Choice | 5th Choice | 6th Choice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Biden, Joesph R. Democrat | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Kennedy, Robert F. Independent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Stein, Jill Independent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Trump, Donald Republican | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| West, Cornel Independent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Write-in _____ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 | Round 4 | Round 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Biden** | 40% | 41% | 41% | 42% | 51% | ✓ |
| Kennedy | 10% | 11% | 11% | 15% | -- | |
| Stein | 6% | 6% | 6% | -- | -- | |
| **Trump** | 41% | 41% | 42% | 43% | 49% | |
| West | 1% | 1% | -- | -- | -- | |
| Write-in _____ | 4% | -- | -- | -- | -- | |

While a cluttered field of candidates prevents likely major party nominees Biden and Trump from achieving a majority through several rounds of the ranked choice voting process, the reapportionment of independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s votes provides President Biden with a slim advantage over Donald Trump in the final tally.

Spring 2024: n=309 (online only)

*And below is how the ballot might look for President of the United States in November when ranked choice voting will be used. We'd again like you to fill out the ranked choice ballot as you would if you were voting and the election were being held today.*

**For more information about the poll, please contact:**

**Kevin Fay**

**Director, Digital Research, Inc.**

Kevin.Fay@DigitalResearch.com

**172 Commercial Street Portland, ME 04101 | (207) 985-7660 | www.DigitalResearch.com**