

Tracking The Recovery

Voters' Views on the Recession, Jobs, and the Deficit

*Key findings from survey among 802 registered voters
Conducted September 21 – 23, 2009 for the*



The vast majority of Americans believe the country is still in a recession, and rate the condition of the economy in negative terms.

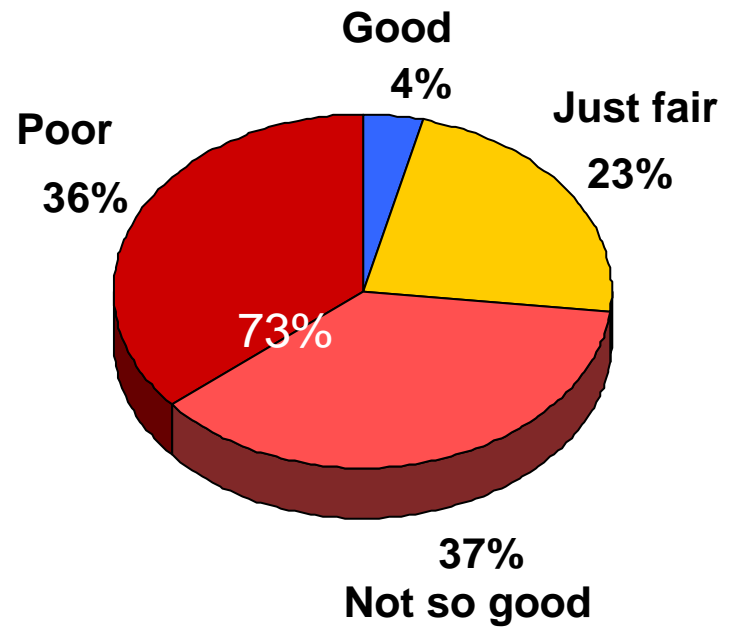
Is the recession pretty much over?

Yes

Not sure

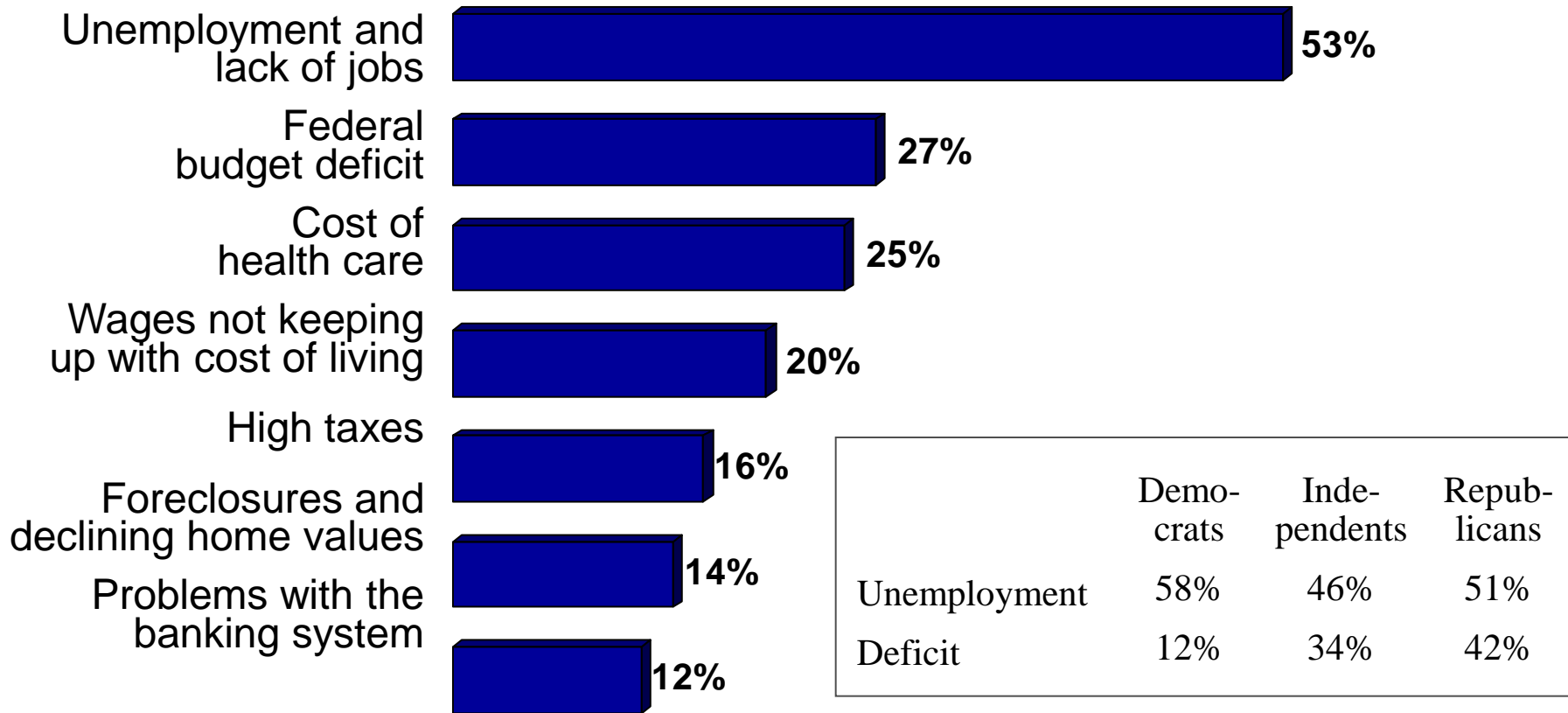
No, the country is still in economic recession

How would you rate the economic conditions?



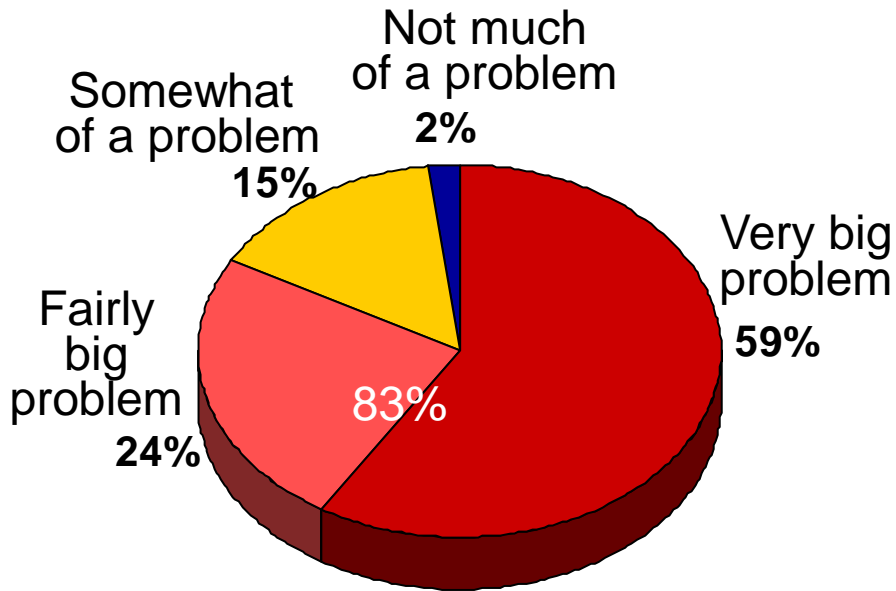
Unemployment and the lack of jobs remains the dominant problem on the economic agenda for voters across party lines.

Which one or two of these are the most important economic problems facing the country?



More than 80% of voters see unemployment as a big problem today. While Americans foresee some decline in the severity of unemployment, more than 60% believe unemployment will still be a big problem in a year.

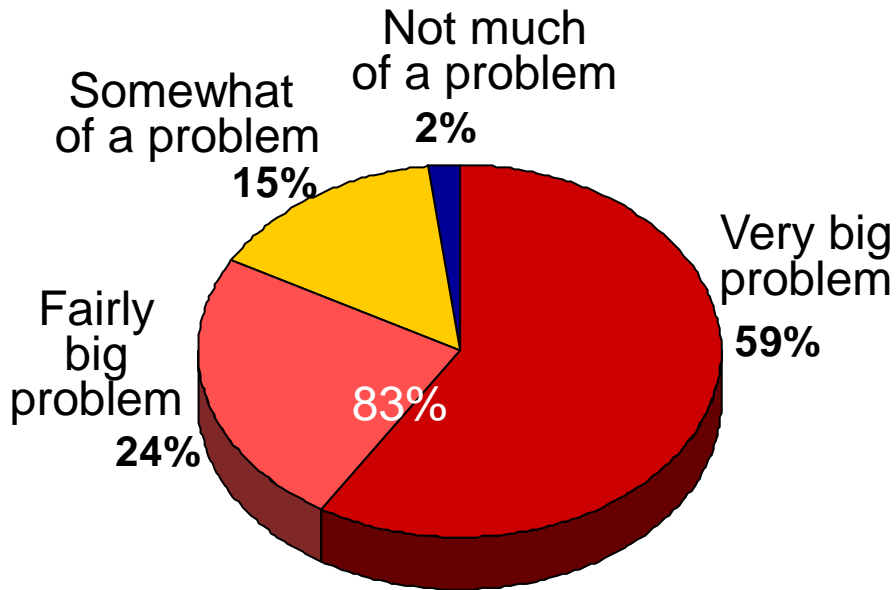
How big a problem is unemployment today?



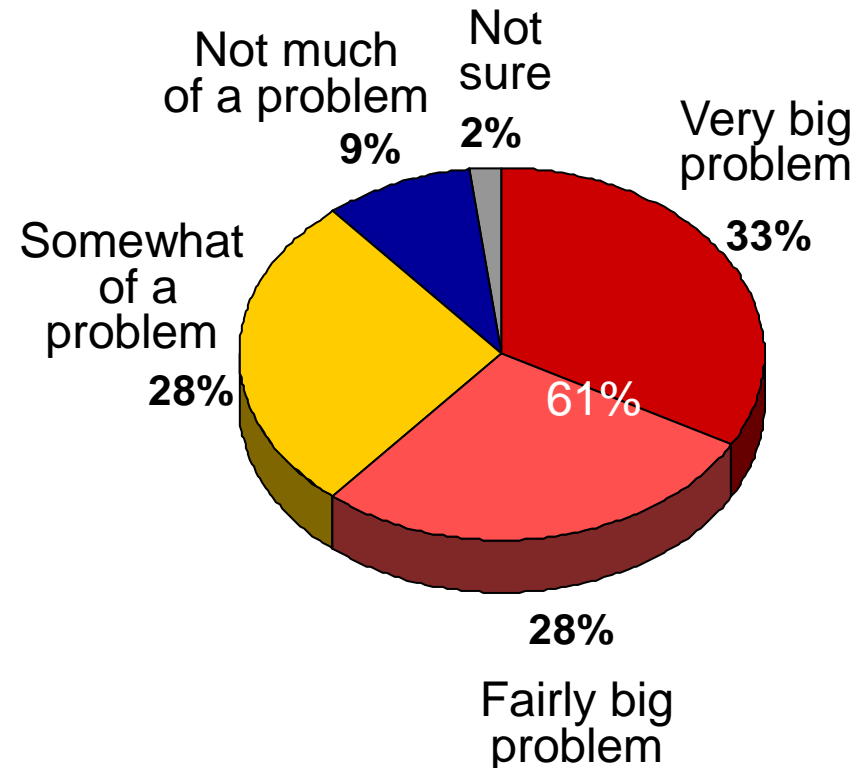
Very big problem

Whites	58%
African Americans	68%
Hispanics	61%
Non-retired income:	
Under \$50K	60%
\$50K – \$75K	54%
\$75K – \$100K	56%
Over \$100K	55%
Live in rural area	68%

How big a problem is unemployment today?



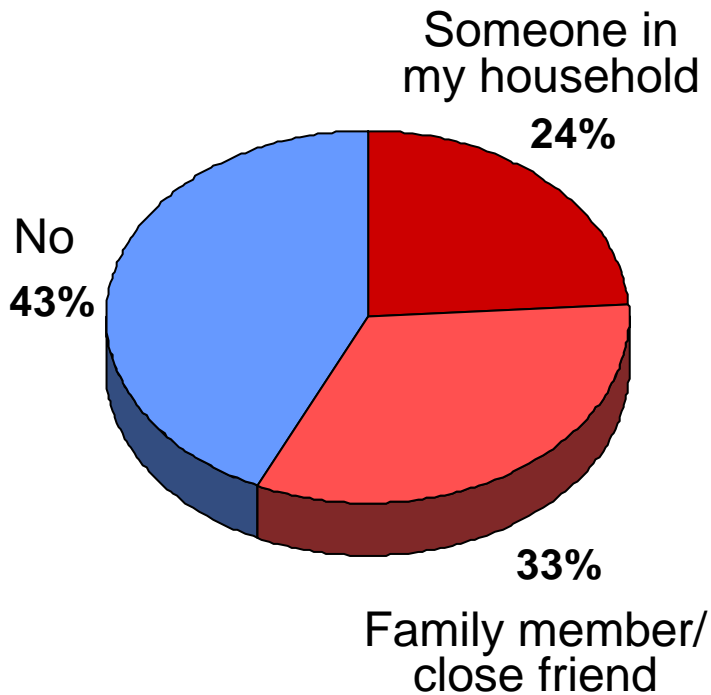
How big a problem will unemployment be in a year?



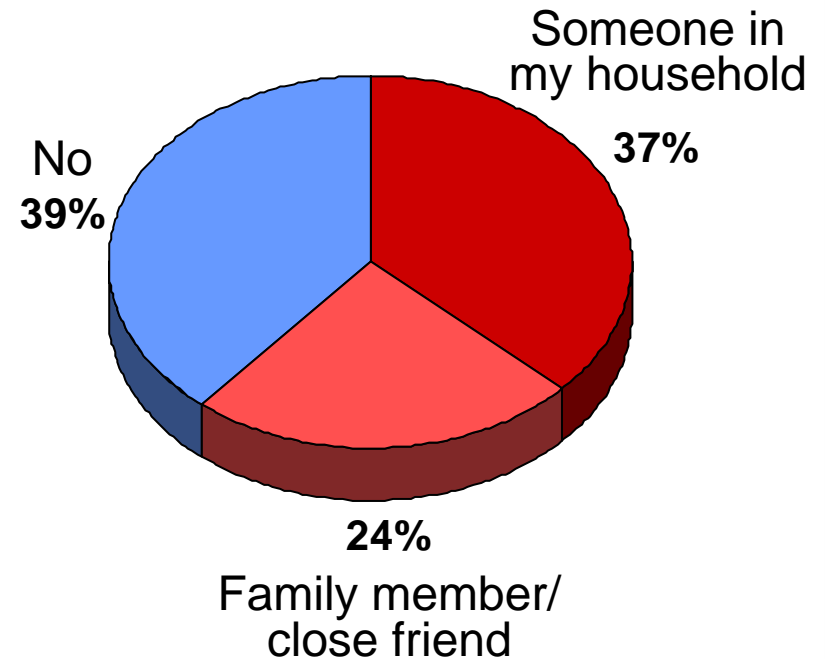
→ Non-college men, independents, and rural voters are most pessimistic that unemployment will remain a very big problem.

This recession is personal to Americans: 57% of voters are close to someone who has been laid off; 61% are close to someone who has had their hours or pay cut. And 44% of households have experienced one or the other in the past year.

Are you close to anyone who has been laid off?



Are you close to anyone who has had hours or pay cut?



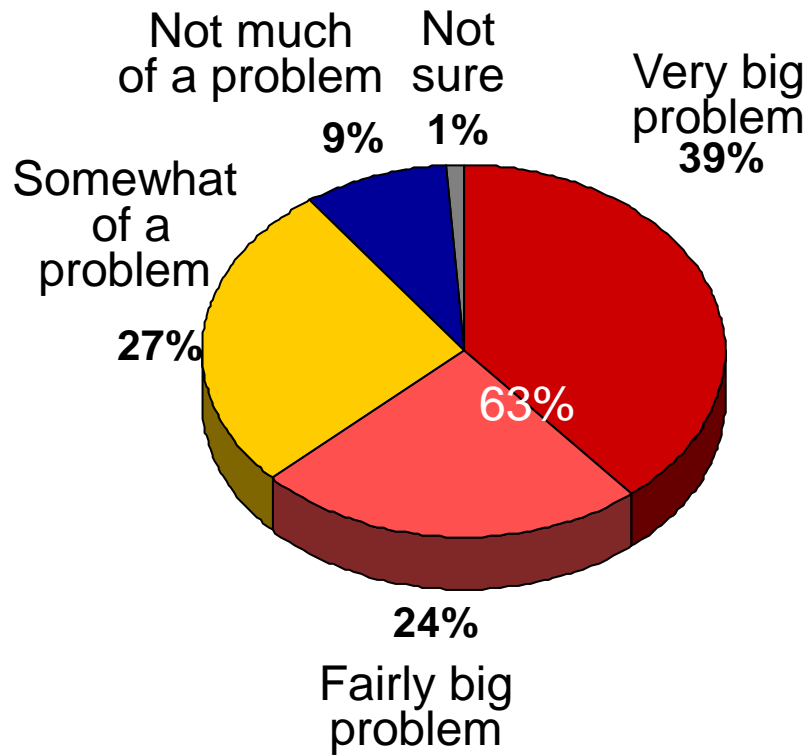
Having someone in the household personally affected by the recession reaches high into the income strata and has an especially strong impact among voters under 35 and Hispanics:

<u>All voters</u>	<u>44%</u>
Non-retired income:	
Under \$50K	64%
\$50K – \$75K	50%
\$75K – \$100K	47%
Over \$100K	43%
Age 18 to 34	57%
Hispanics	54%
Democrats	44%
Independents	43%
Republicans	43%

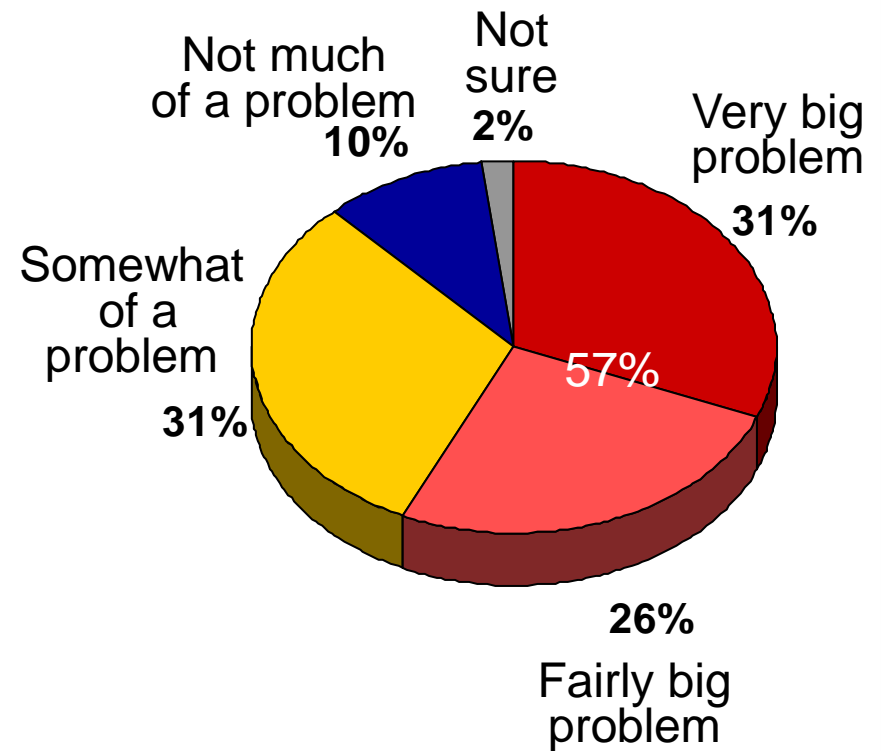
Stagnant wages are seen as a less dire immediate problem than loss of jobs, but 63% of voters say they are a big problem, with little improvement in sight for the next year.

How big a problem is/will be wages and salaries not keeping up with the cost of living?

Today



A year from now



Those with the lowest incomes and less education are most likely to see wages not keeping up with the cost of living as a big problem.

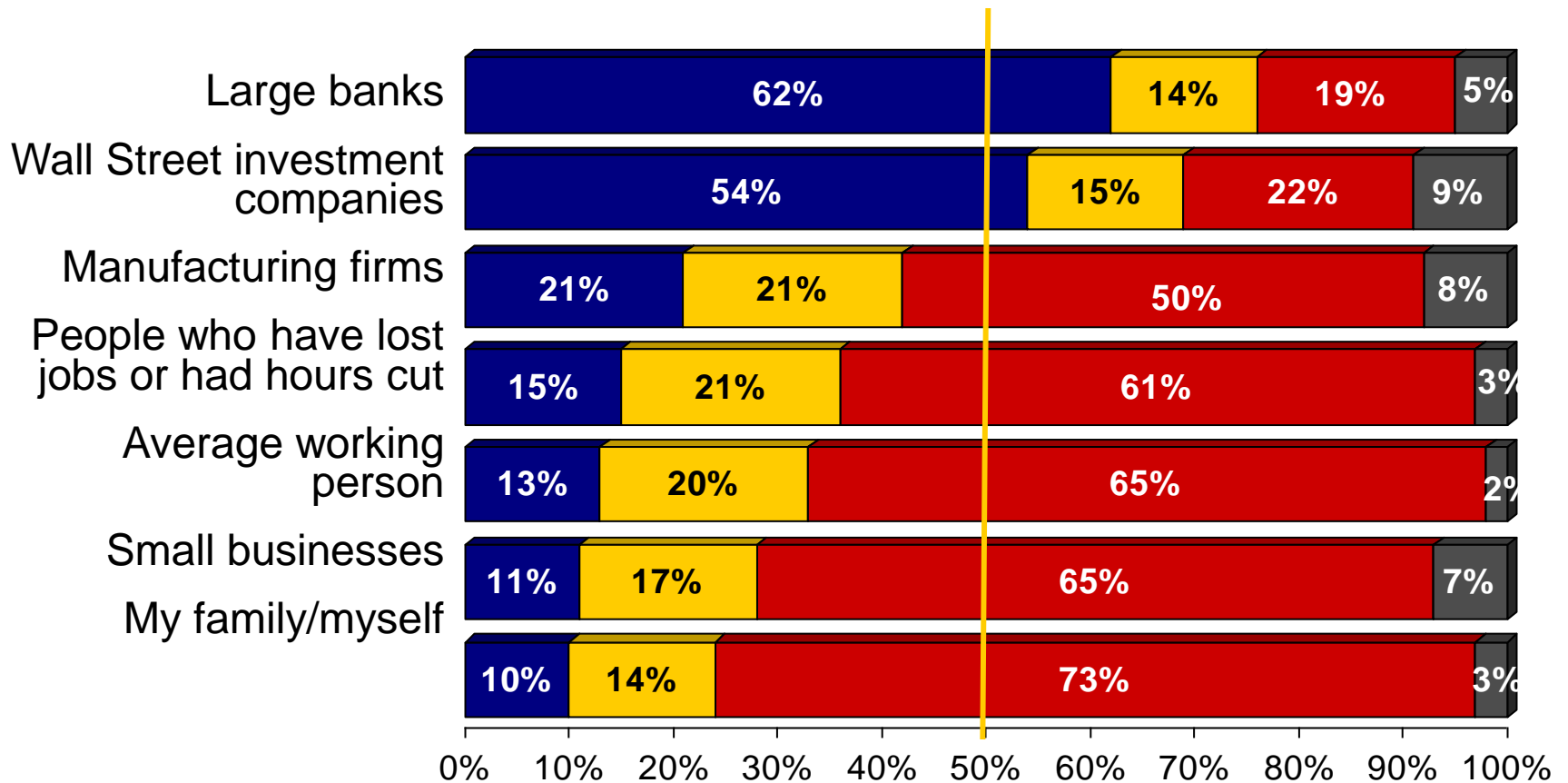
% saying wages and salaries not keeping up with cost of living is a very big problem today:

<u>All voters</u>	<u>39%</u>
Non-retired income:	
Under \$50K	55%
\$50K – \$75K	37%
\$75K – \$100K	28%
Over \$100K	19%
High school/less	49%
Some college	45%
College graduates	25%

Large majorities of voters see the government's economic policies as helping banks and Wall Street, but few see themselves or average working families in general as benefiting.

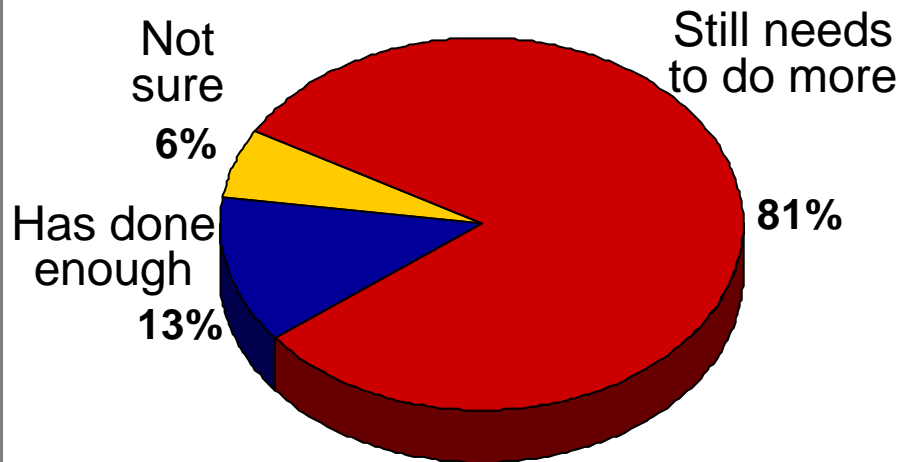
How much has each of the following been helped by the government's economic policies?

■ Helped a lot/a fair amount
 ■ Helped just some
 ■ Helped very little/not at all
 ■ Not sure

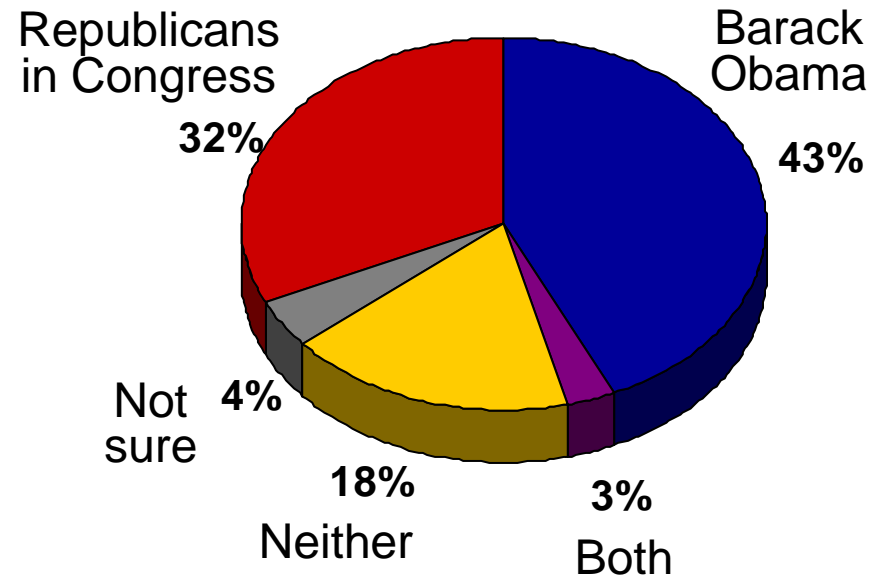


Overwhelmingly, Americans say the Obama Administration still needs to do more to deal with the loss of jobs. The plurality of voters trust Obama more than Republicans in Congress to deal with the economy.

Has the Obama administration done enough to deal with unemployment?

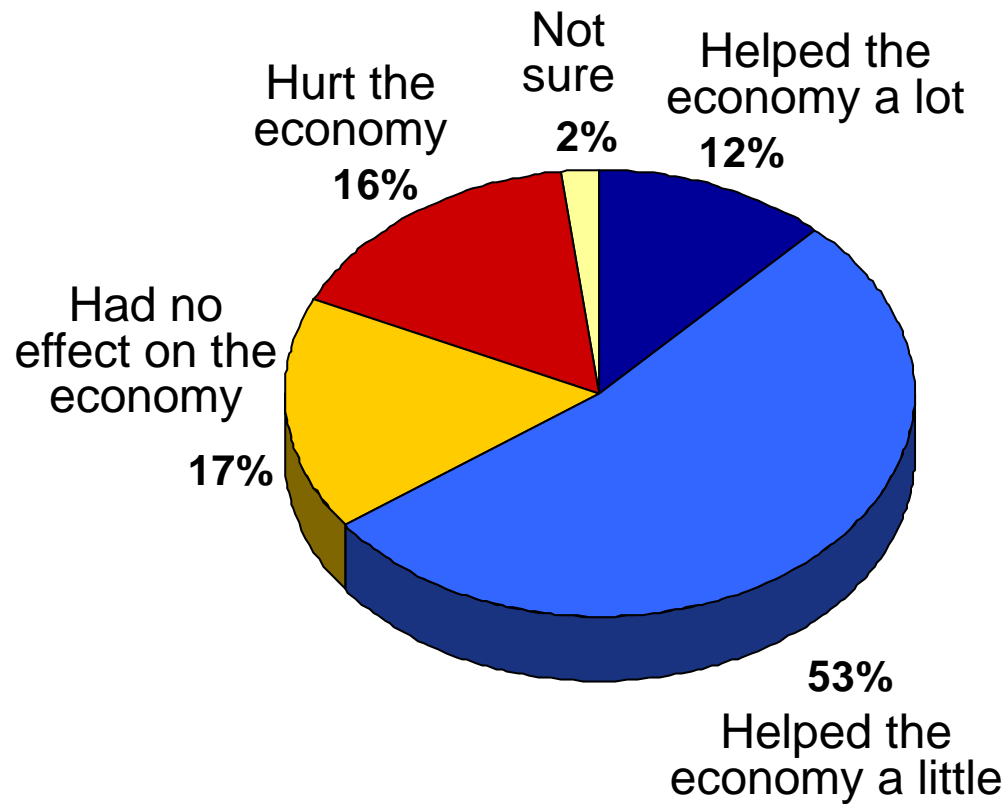


Whom do you trust more to have the right economic policies?



Two-thirds of voters say that the recovery bill has had a positive impact – but that it has helped a little rather than a lot.

Do you think the economic recovery bill has helped or hurt the economy?

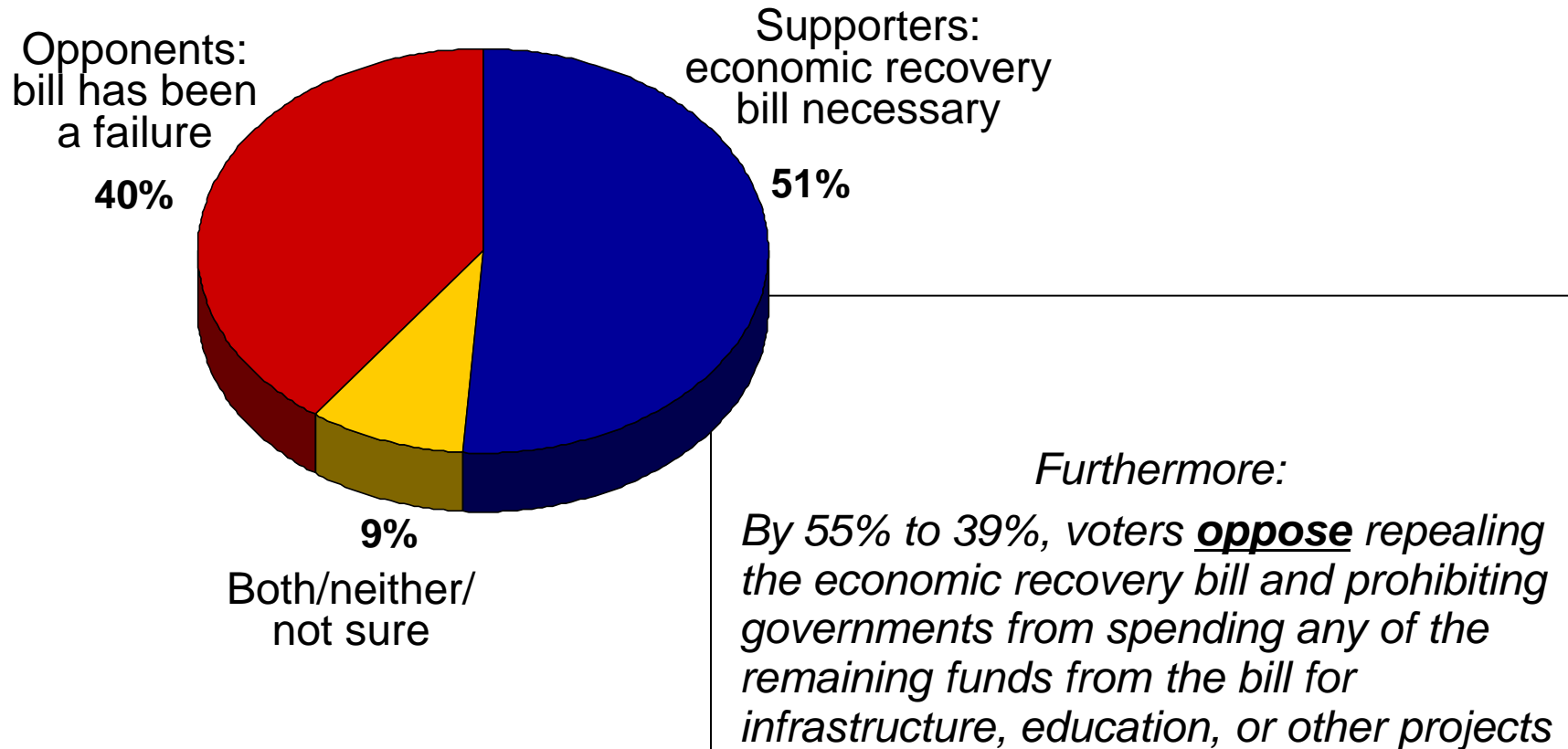


In back and forth debate, a majority agree that the recovery bill/stimulus package was necessary and worthwhile, and 55% oppose the idea of freezing further spending from the bill. These attitudes split along predictably partisan lines.

SUPPORTERS of the economic recovery bill say that at the start of this year, our economy was in serious trouble, and economists agreed that failing to act could have led us into a depression like we had in the 1930s. The recovery bill has helped put more than one million Americans to work, is making essential long-term investments in our economy, and will create another two to three million jobs when it is completed. Unemployment is still far too high because of the terrible recession Obama inherited when he took office, but the recovery bill was a worthwhile step in starting to turn the economy around, and we would be much worse off today if we had done nothing at all.

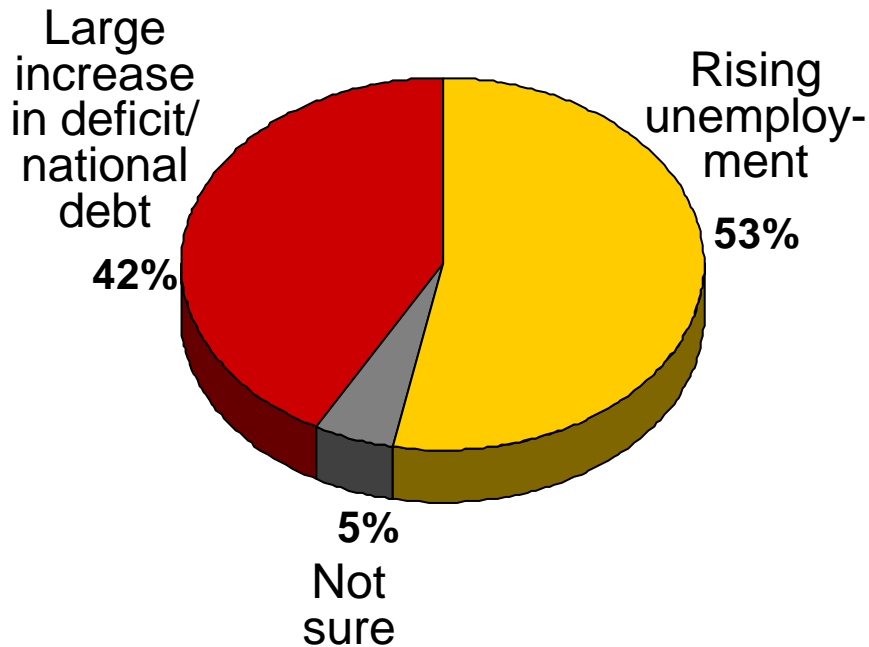
OPPONENTS say the economic stimulus bill has been a failure. Despite spending over hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money, unemployment is much higher today than when the bill passed. Too much of the money from this bill is going to government programs that have nothing to do with creating jobs. Increasing government spending and increasing the deficit is not the right way to create jobs and strengthen the economy, and the bill should never have been passed in the first place.

With whom do you agree more?

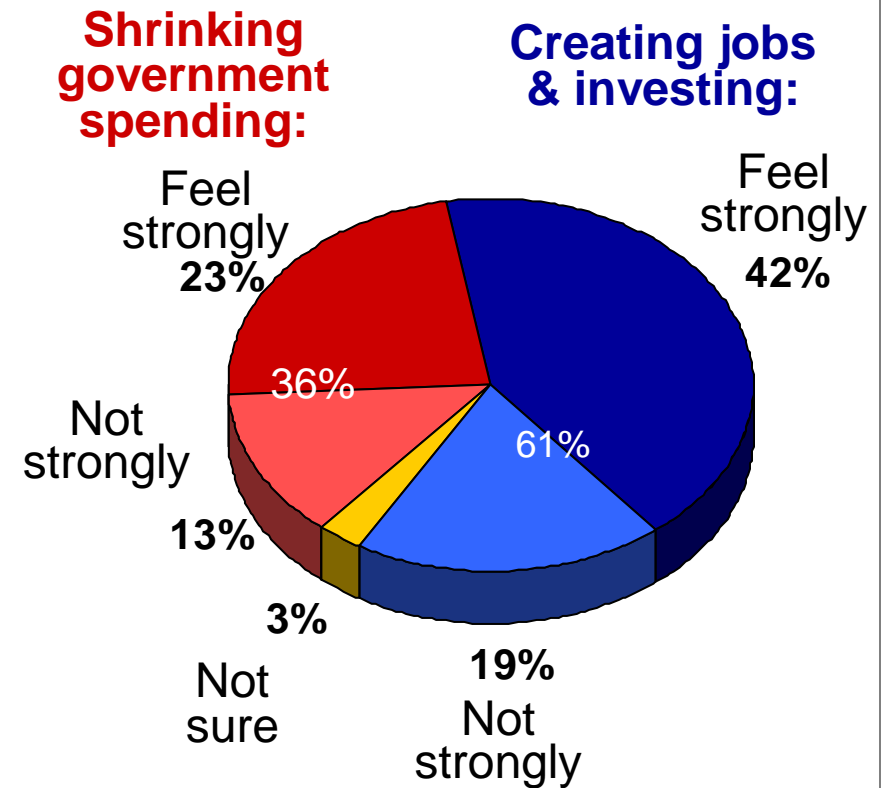


Voters see rising unemployment as a bigger problem than the growth of the federal budget deficit. By a large margin, they believe the focus for improving the economy should be on creating good jobs, and investing in education and energy independence, rather than shrinking government spending to reduce the deficit.

Which concerns you more about the economy?

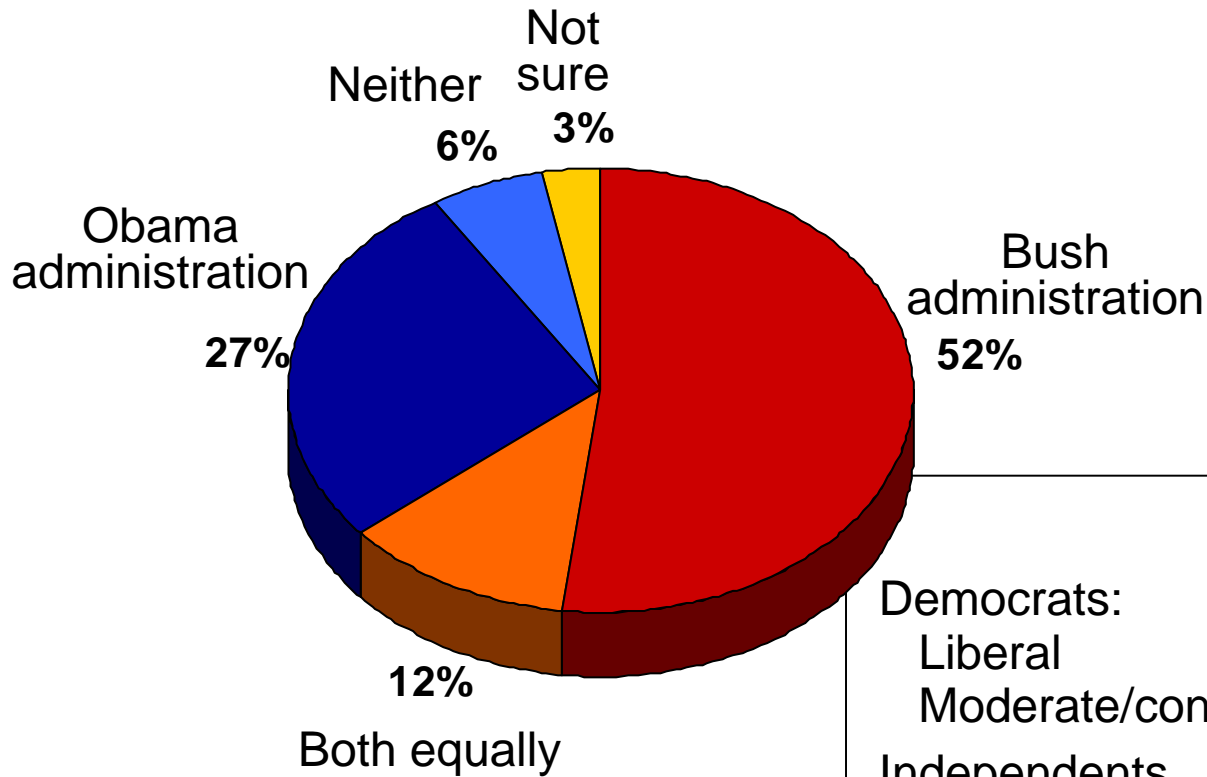


Which should be the focus for improving the economy?



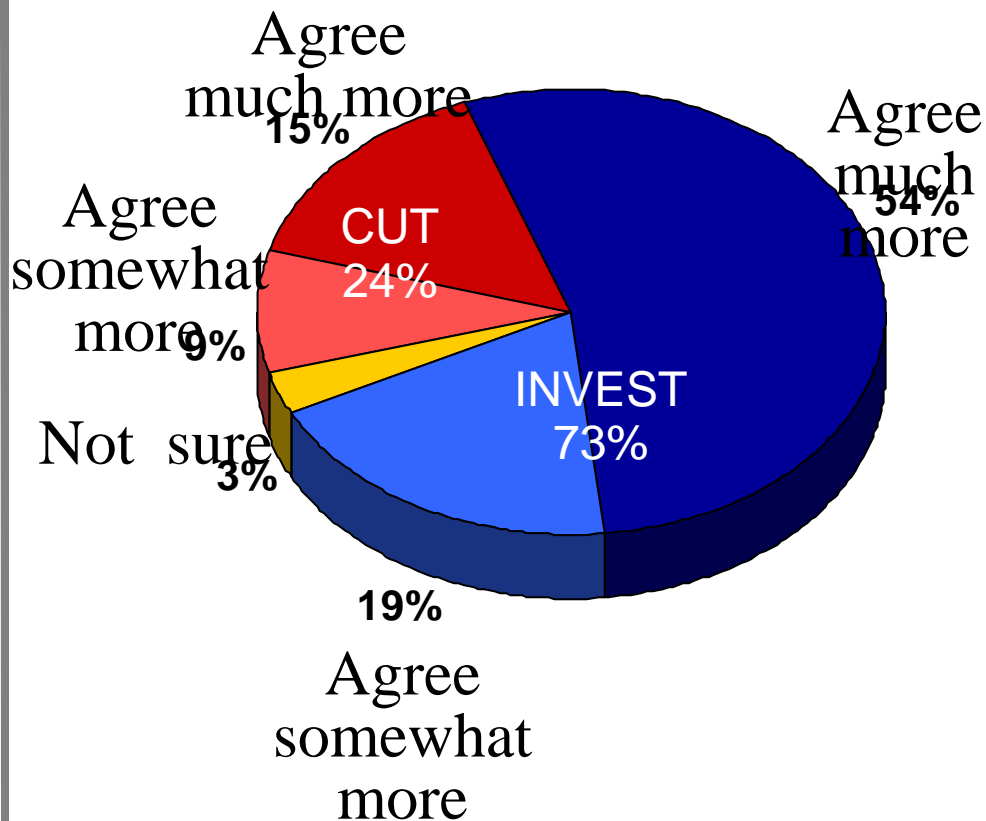
Voters understand the deficit is a legacy of the Bush Administration rather than a product of the Obama Administration, and overwhelmingly concur with the principle that we need to invest in jobs because “we cannot solve the deficit problem without getting people back to work and getting our economy growing again.”

Who is more responsible for creating our current federal budget deficit?



	Bush	Obama
Democrats:		
Liberal	88%	7%
Moderate/conservative	78%	9%
Independents	45%	27%
Republicans:		
Not very conservative	19%	46%
Very conservative	10%	59%

Which statement about the federal budget deficit do you agree with more?



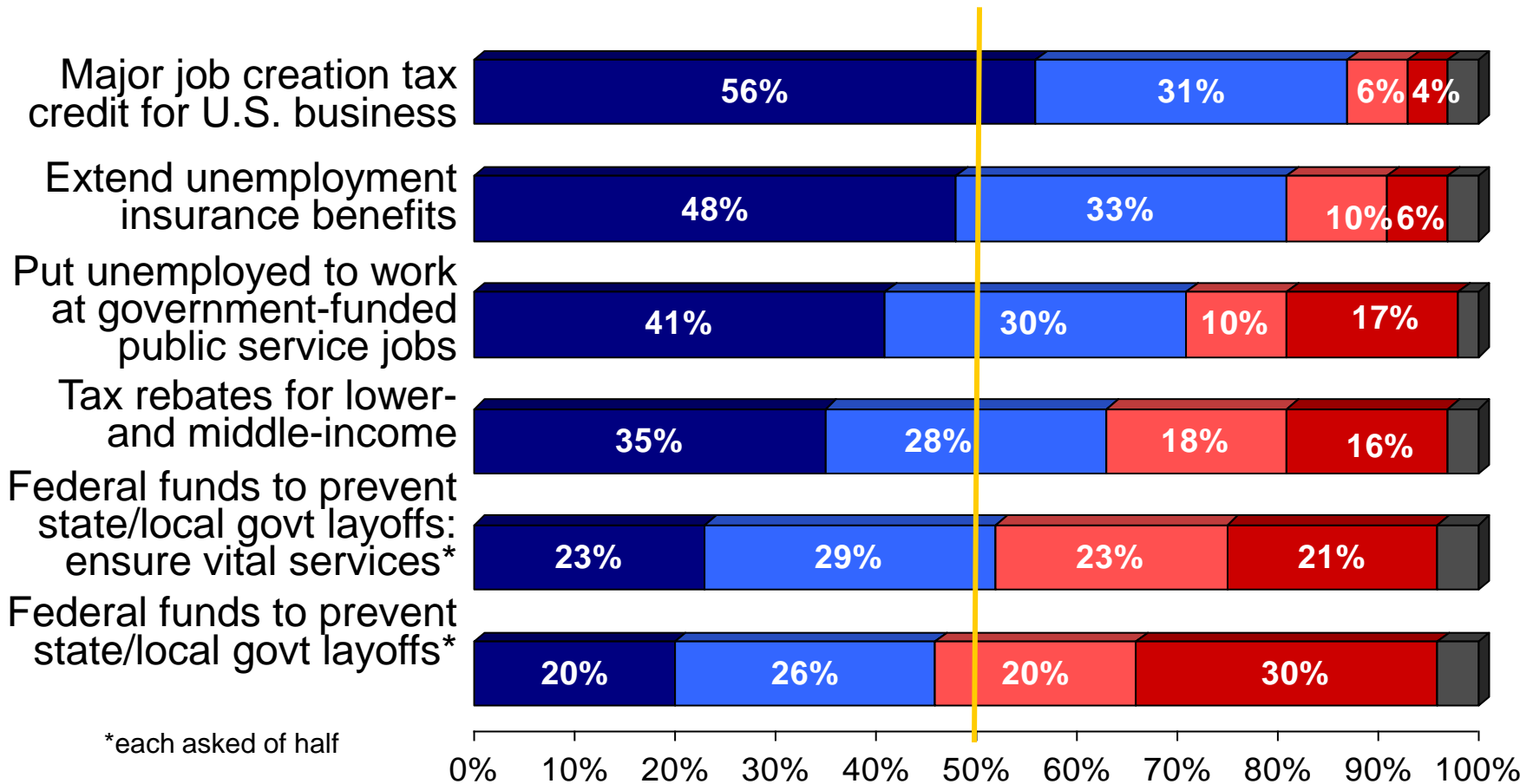
INVEST The federal budget deficit is an important problem, but we need to deal with it in a way that allows us to **invest in job creation, education, and energy independence**, because we cannot solve the deficit problem without getting people back to work and getting our economy growing again.

CUT The growing federal budget deficit is the biggest economic threat we face today, and it would be better for our country in the long run if we focus on **cutting government spending and reducing the deficit**, rather than investing in job creation, education, and energy independence.

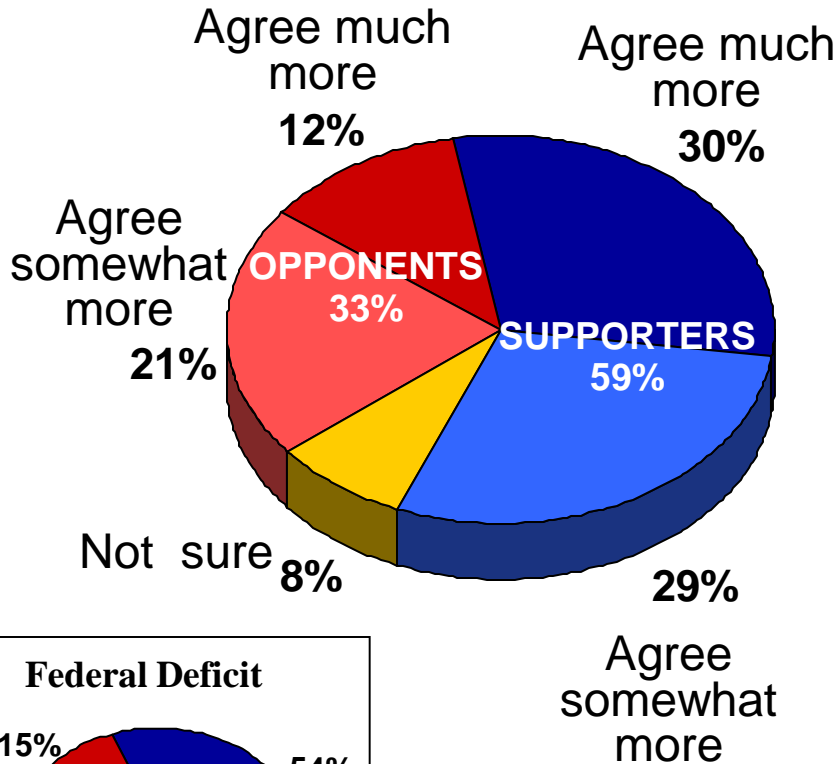
Voters support a number of measures to create jobs and deal with the impact of unemployment – giving particularly broad and deep support to a job creation tax credit. There also is solid support for extending unemployment benefits and putting unemployed people back to work at public service jobs.

Support for Specific Economic Proposals

■ Strongly favor
 ■ Somewhat favor
 ■ Somewhat oppose
 ■ Strongly oppose
 ■ Not sure



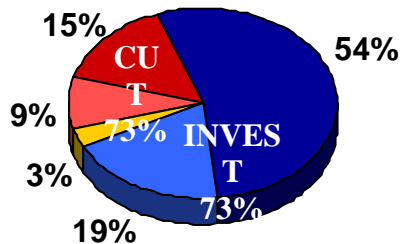
Which statement about tax credits to companies that create jobs do you agree with more?



SUPPORTERS: it will create two to three million new jobs at a time when unemployment is rising and 15 million Americans are already out of work. Giving the private sector an incentive to create new jobs is the right way for government to strengthen the economy.

OPPONENTS: with the federal deficit already over \$1 trillion, we just can't afford the cost of this \$50 billion tax credit plan. The economy has already started to recover, and more government spending will do more harm than good.

Federal Deficit



	Supporters	Opponents
Democrats	74%	19%
Independents	47%	43%
Republicans	48%	45%

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Steven Pearlstein

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The Washington Post

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GENERATING A ROBUST RECOVERY Q&A