

## Asian American Survey

Findings from a Survey of 700 Asian American Voters nationwide plus 100 each in FL, NV, VA, and IL

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# Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and conducted this telephone survey of 713 registered Asian American voters nationwide, with oversamples of 100 voters in Florida, Nevada, Virginia, and Illinois.
- Interviews were conducted April 5-15, 2012. Sampling error is +/- 3.7%.
- Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn randomly from voter files. The sample was stratified geographically by region based on the proportion of voters in each region. The data were weighted by gender, age, region, and race/ethnicity.

# Asian Americans and their growing importance as part of the electorate

- **Asian Americans are an important and fast growing group.** According to the census, they are the fastest growing group in the population, having grown by 46% since 2000 for Asian alone or in combination with another race. More than 17 million people today identify as Asian American.
  - In some states, Asian Americans have become significant parts of the population. In Hawaii, Asian Americans currently make up more than half (57%) of the population. California's population includes 15% Asian Americans.
  - The geographic diversity of Asian Americans is growing, too. The highest growth rates have been in non-traditional gateway cities and states, including Nevada, which was the fastest growing, and states in the south, such as Georgia and North Carolina.
  - The largest ethnicities within the Asian American population are Chinese (4 million), Filipinos (3.4 million) and Indians (3.2 million).
  - Asian Americans are expected to comprise 9% of the U.S. population by 2050.
- **Despite their growing presence in the United States, Asian Americans have been largely untapped politically.** While we have seen Asian American governors, mayors, Congress members, and Senators in the past decade, Asian Americans lag behind in terms of their political participation and visibility. **But Asian Americans can make a significant difference in American politics if they are engaged and mobilized.**
- **Between 2004 and 2008, the rate of voting among Asian Americans increased by 4%, from 44% to 48%.** This survey indicates another likely increase of Asian American voting in 2012. 83% said they are almost certain to vote this November, and 50% said they were more enthusiastic about voting than usual.

# While Asian Americans indicate a strong preference for Democratic candidates, neither party has fully engaged these voters.

- **Both Democrats and Republicans have largely ignored this group of voters.** Only 23% of Asian Americans say they have been contacted by the Democratic party in the past two years and 17% by the Republican party.
- **Today, Asian Americans as a bloc tend to be loyal Democrats, identifying largely with the Democratic Party.** A majority voted for President Obama in 2008 and currently support him in 2012. Romney is supported by only 13% of Asian Americans, but many don't have an impression of him yet.
  - Even though Asian Americans have been loyal to Democrats, they can't be taken for granted. There is room to grow with independents. They have also not been engaged by either party to participate more in the political process.
  - If their preference for President Obama remains strong, Asian Americans could provide the margin of victory in states which have significant Asian American populations, such as Virginia, Florida, Illinois, California, and Nevada.
- While most Asian American voters speak English well, a majority also speak another language at home. More in-language assistance would improve voter participation, particularly among Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese Americans over age 50.
- Asian Americans say the Democratic party is doing a better job than Republicans on a number of issues, including values, but a significant number say that there is no difference between the parties or aren't sure. Neither party can take these voters for granted, and both have work to do.

## Who Asian American Voters Are

Asian American voters are spread out across the country, though 2 in 5 live in California. They are younger than the general population, tend to speak another language at home, and most were born outside the United States.

# Demographics of registered Asian American voters

## Language Spoken At Home:

- Just English – 27%
- Mandarin – 13%
- Korean – 12%
- Hindi – 12%
- Other – 12%
- Vietnamese – 11%
- Cantonese – 7%
- Tagalog – 7%
- Hmong – 1%

## Race:

- Chinese – 21%
- Indian – 19%
- Filipino – 17%
- Korean – 14%
- Vietnamese – 11%
- Other – 8%
- Japanese – 6%

## Gender:

- Male – 48%
- Female – 52%

## Marital Status:

- Married – 66%
- Single – 20%
- Unmarried with partner – 3%
- Separated/divorced – 2%
- Widowed – 5%

## Kids under 18:

- Yes – 30%
- No – 65%

## Age:

- Under 30 – 17%
- 30-39 – 18%
- 40-49 – 20%
- 50-64 – 25%
- 65 and over – 16%

## Education:

- HS or less – 22%
- Some college – 21%
- College graduate – 38%
- Post-graduate – 14%

## Party Identification:

- Democrat – 53%
- Republican – 16%
- Independent – 21%

## Voting Pattern:

- Democratic – 54%
- Republican – 15%
- Independent – 21%

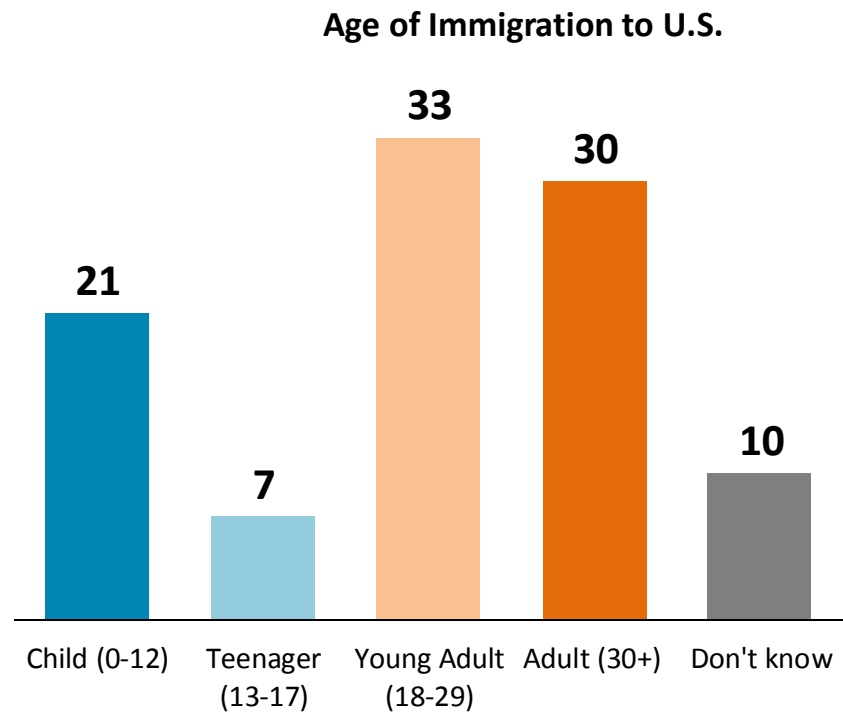
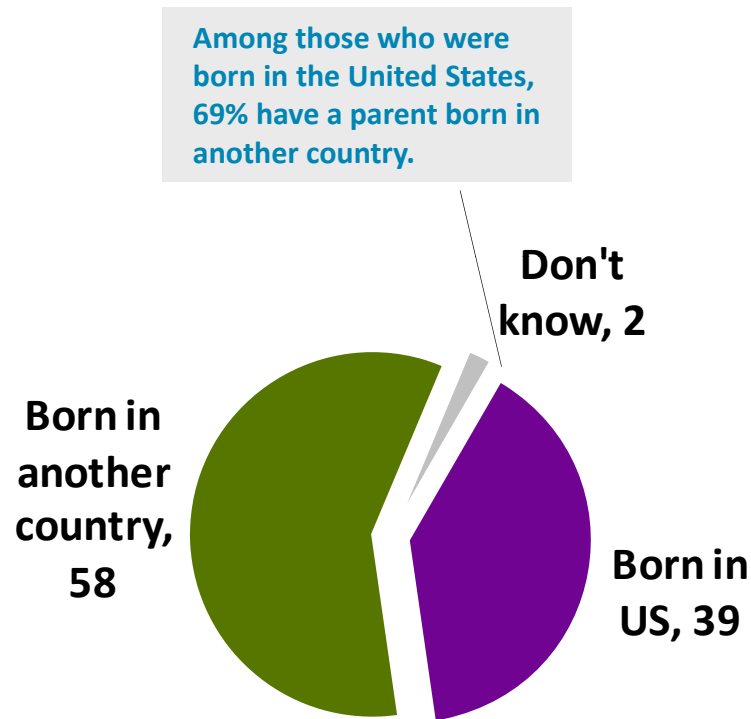
## Region:

- California – 39%
- Other West – 15%
- Midwest – 8%
- South Central – 9%
- South Atlantic – 13%
- Northeast – 15%

## Employment Status:

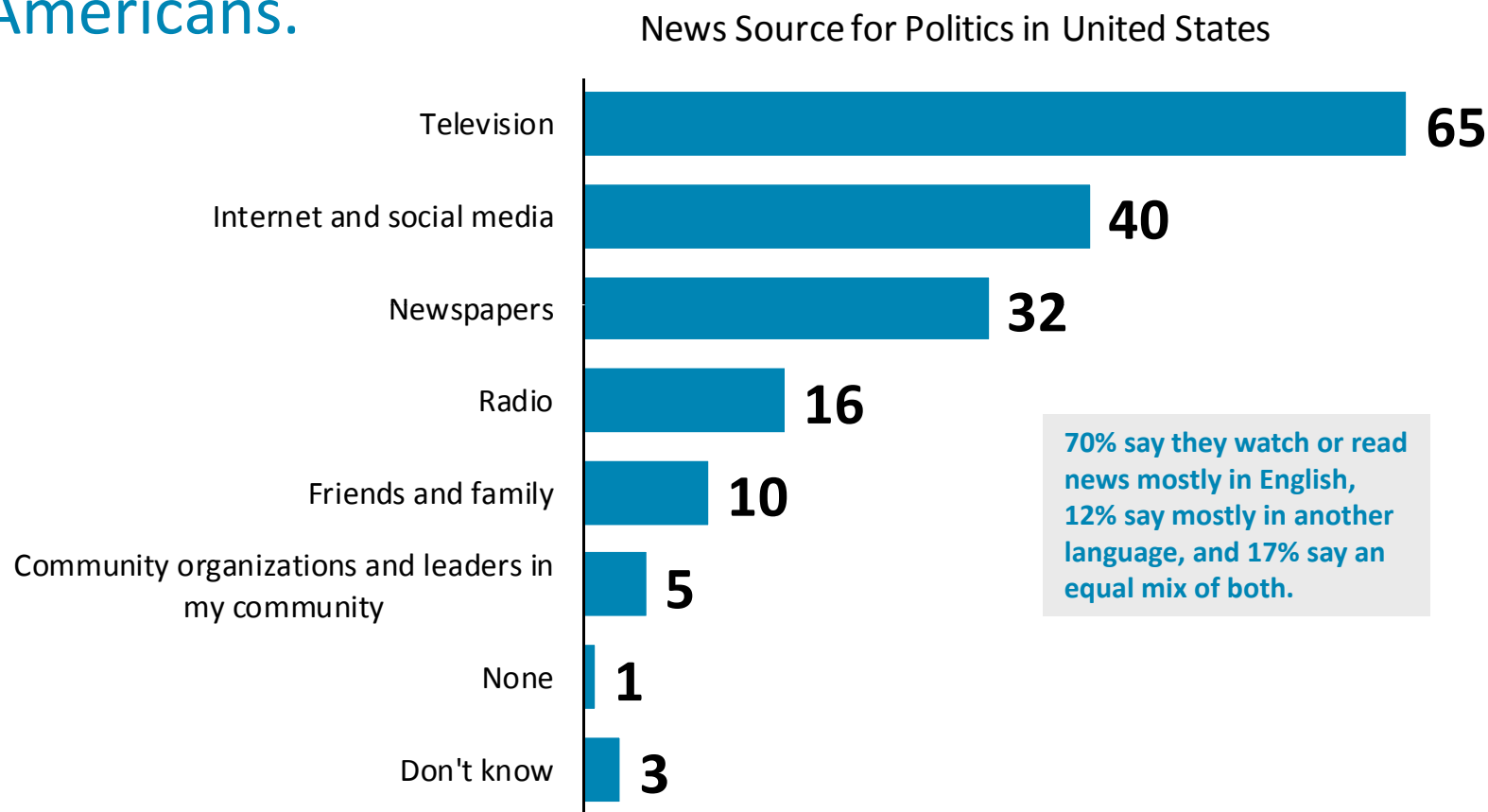
- Employed full time – 54%
- Employed part time – 11%
- Unemployed – 6%
- Retired – 17%
- Homemaker – 6%

Most Asian American voters were born outside the US, and of those, most immigrated as adults. Of those who were born in the US, two-thirds have parents born outside the US.



Were you born in the United States or were you born in another country?  
If born in another country: How old were you when you moved to the United States?  
If born in US: Was either your mother or father born in a country other than the United States?

While most Asian American voters use TV as a news source, 40% use internet and social media. Newspapers are also used by one third of Asian Americans.



Thinking about news, which of the following sources would you say you use to get news about politics in the United States?

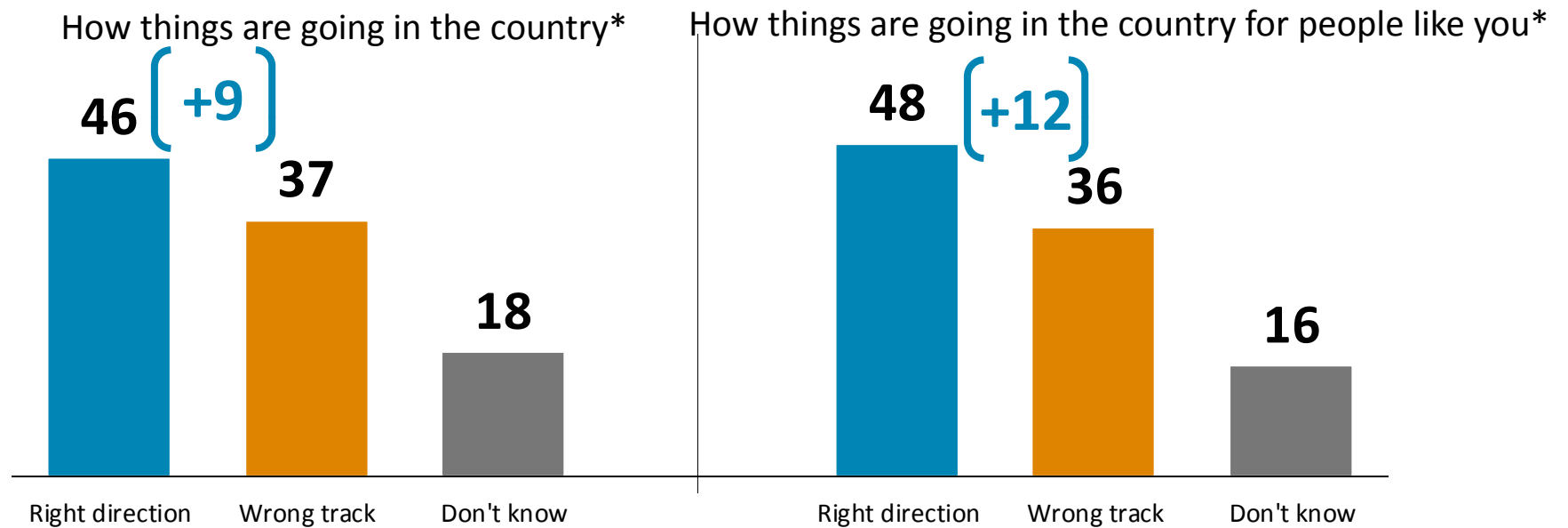


## How Asian Americans Feel About the United States

Similar to the general population, Asian Americans have negative views of the economy, though they tend to think the country is moving in the right direction. Though they like President Obama, they are split on his job performance.

# Asian Americans generally feel that things are going in the right direction, with little distinction made for the country overall and people like themselves.

Direction of Country

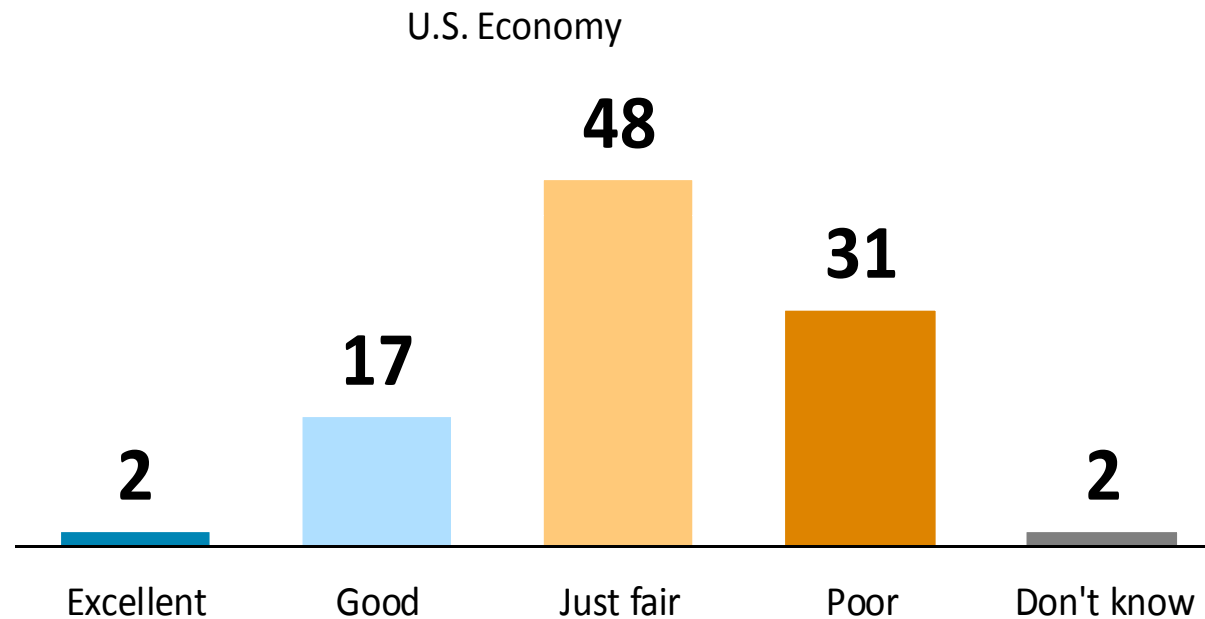


A recent survey by Ipsos/Reuters of 1,044 adults nationwide from April 12-15 showed that 35% of the general population believes we are on the right direction, 60% on the wrong track. Asian Americans are more positive than the general population overall.

\*Asked of half the sample

Thinking about how things are going in the country, do you feel things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?  
 Thinking about how things are going in the country for people like you, do you feel things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

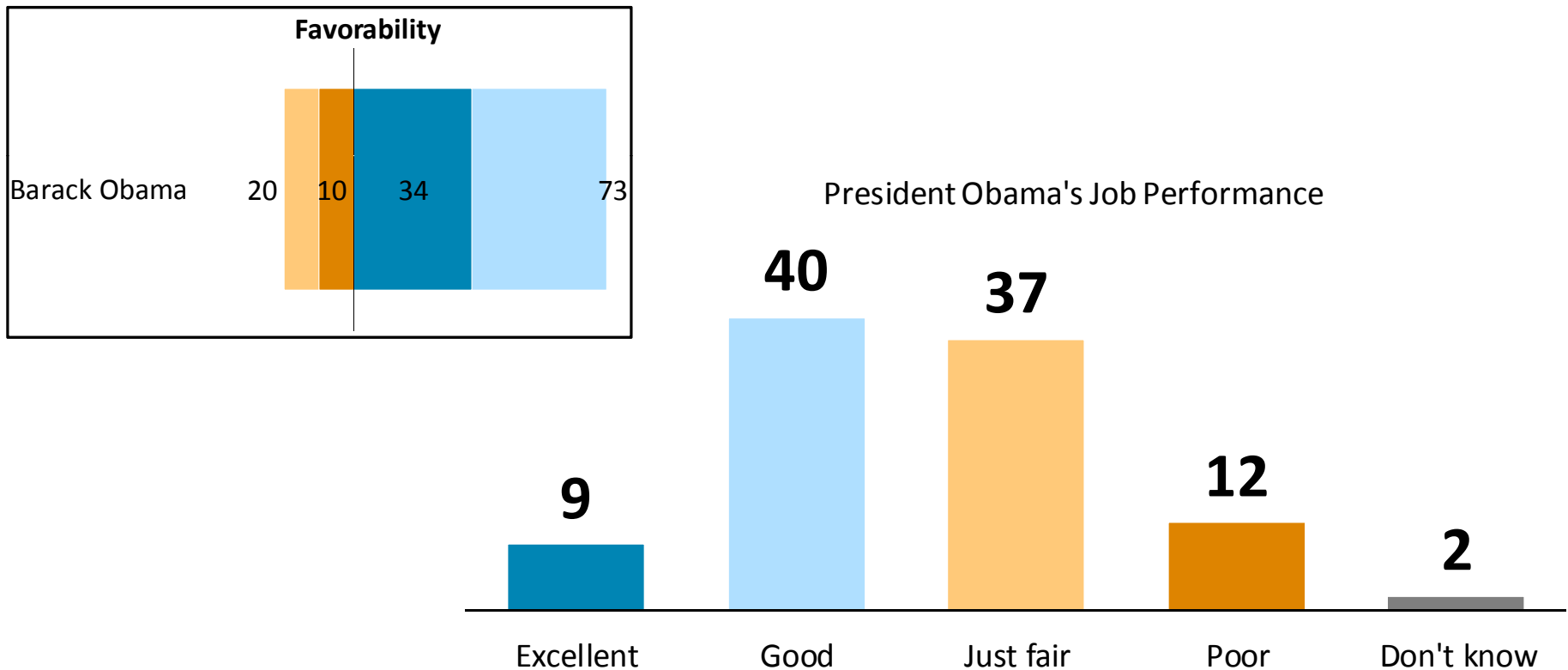
Like the general population, Asian Americans have lukewarm to negative perceptions about the economy today.



A recent Gallup Daily tracking survey of more than 3,000 adults nationwide from April 9-15 showed that 15% of the general population rates economic conditions as excellent or good while 40% say they are poor.

How would you rate how the U.S. economy is doing right now—would you say it is excellent, good, just fair, or poor?

Despite Obama's personal favorability (73% view him favorably), Asian Americans are split on his job performance. This difference between Obama's favorability and performance is seen among all voters, but is more dramatic among Asian Americans.



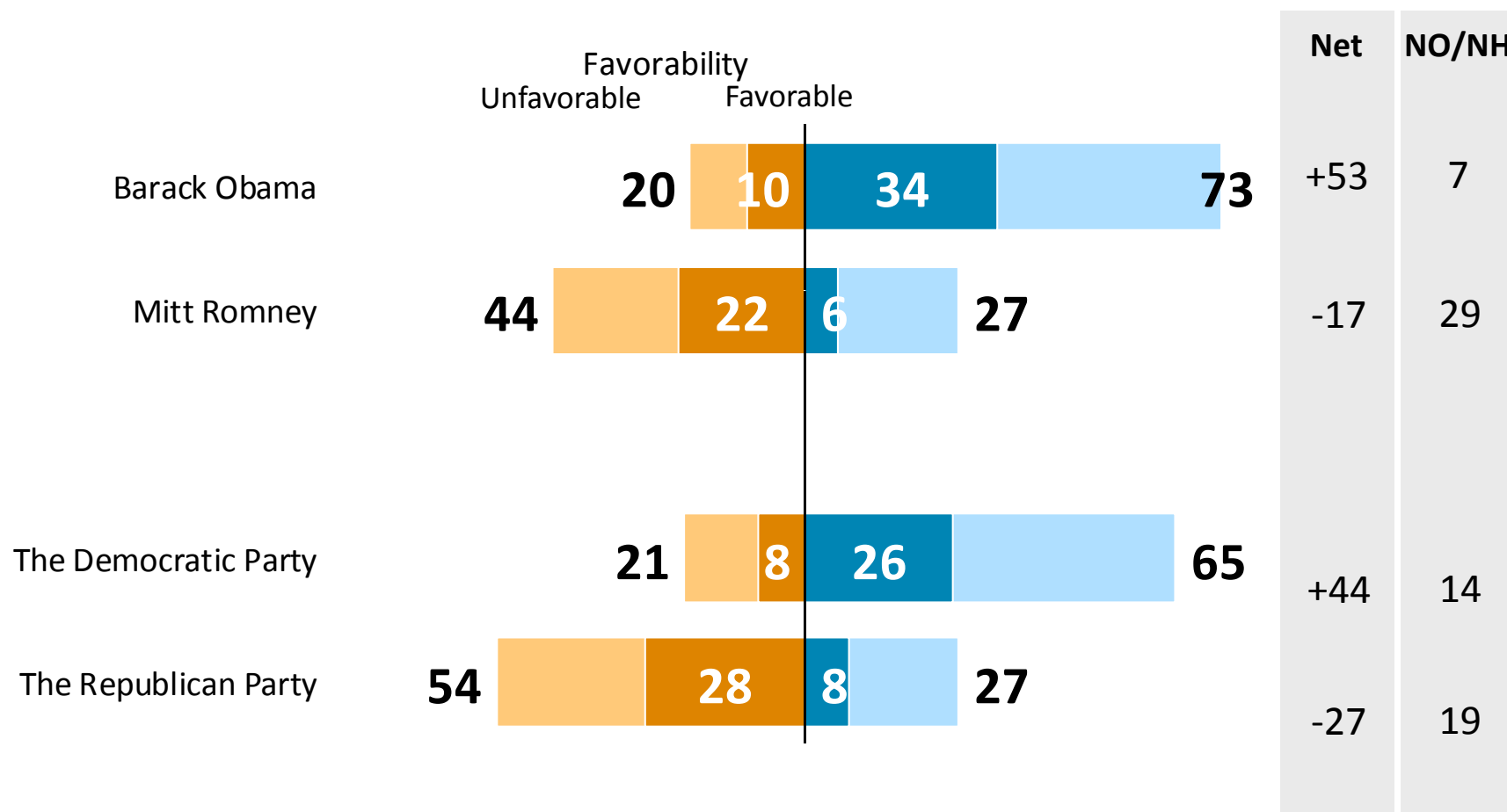
How would you rate the job being done by Barack Obama as President? Is he doing an excellent, good, just fair, or poor job?

## Asian Americans and their Political Attitudes

53% of Asian Americans identify as Democrats while 16% identify as Republicans, and 31% identify as independents or refuse to identify with either party. Asian Americans tend to prefer the Democratic Party on issues and Democrats over Republicans in elections.

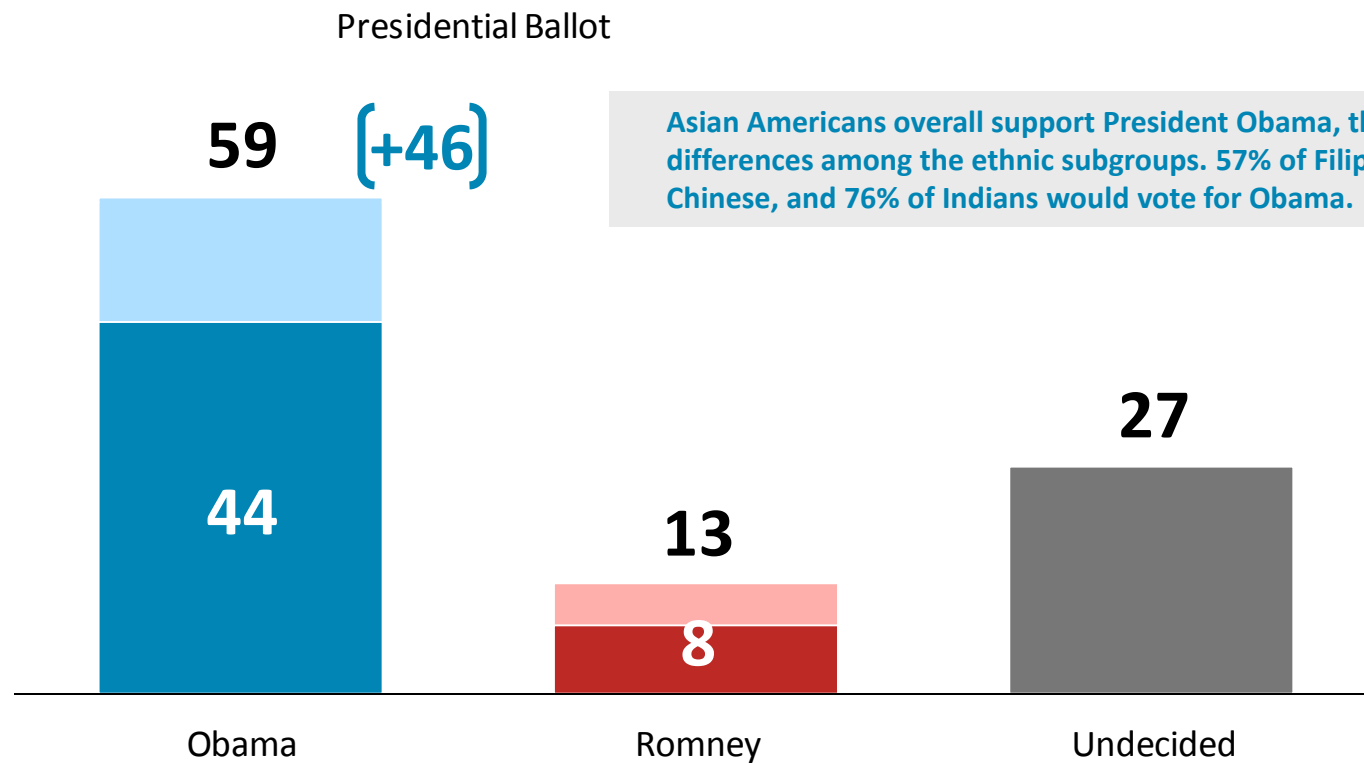


Obama is seen very favorably by Asian Americans, and the Democratic Party is seen almost as favorably. Nearly 3 in 10 either never heard of or have no opinion of Mitt Romney, leaving room to define him to Asian Americans.



Now I'd like to ask you about some people and organizations who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each, please tell me whether you have a VERY favorable, SOMEWHAT favorable, somewhat UNFAVORABLE, or VERY unfavorable impression. If you haven't heard of them [6], or if you don't know enough about them to have an impression [5] or if you haven't heard of the group or institution [6], just say so, and we will move on.

Asian Americans clearly favor Obama over Romney, with nearly 6 in 10 supporting the President. However, 27% are undecided.

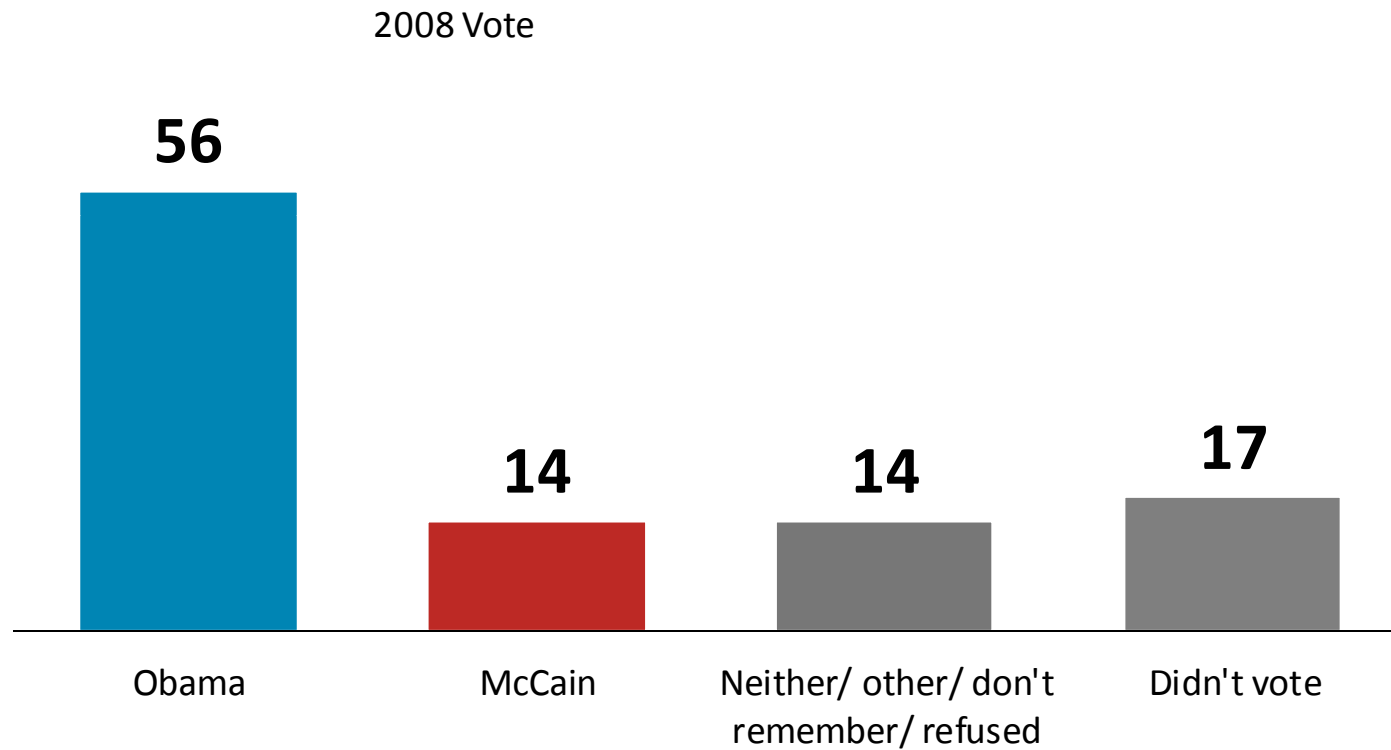


Asian Americans overall support President Obama, though we see differences among the ethnic subgroups. 57% of Filipinos, 68% of Chinese, and 76% of Indians would vote for Obama.

\*Asked of 630 respondents. 83 received a similar question on Obama vs. Santorum before he dropped out.

Assuming Mitt Romney is the nominee for the Republican party, if the election for President was held today and the candidates were: President Barack Obama, Democrat and Former Governor Mitt Romney, Republican, for whom would you vote, or are you undecided?

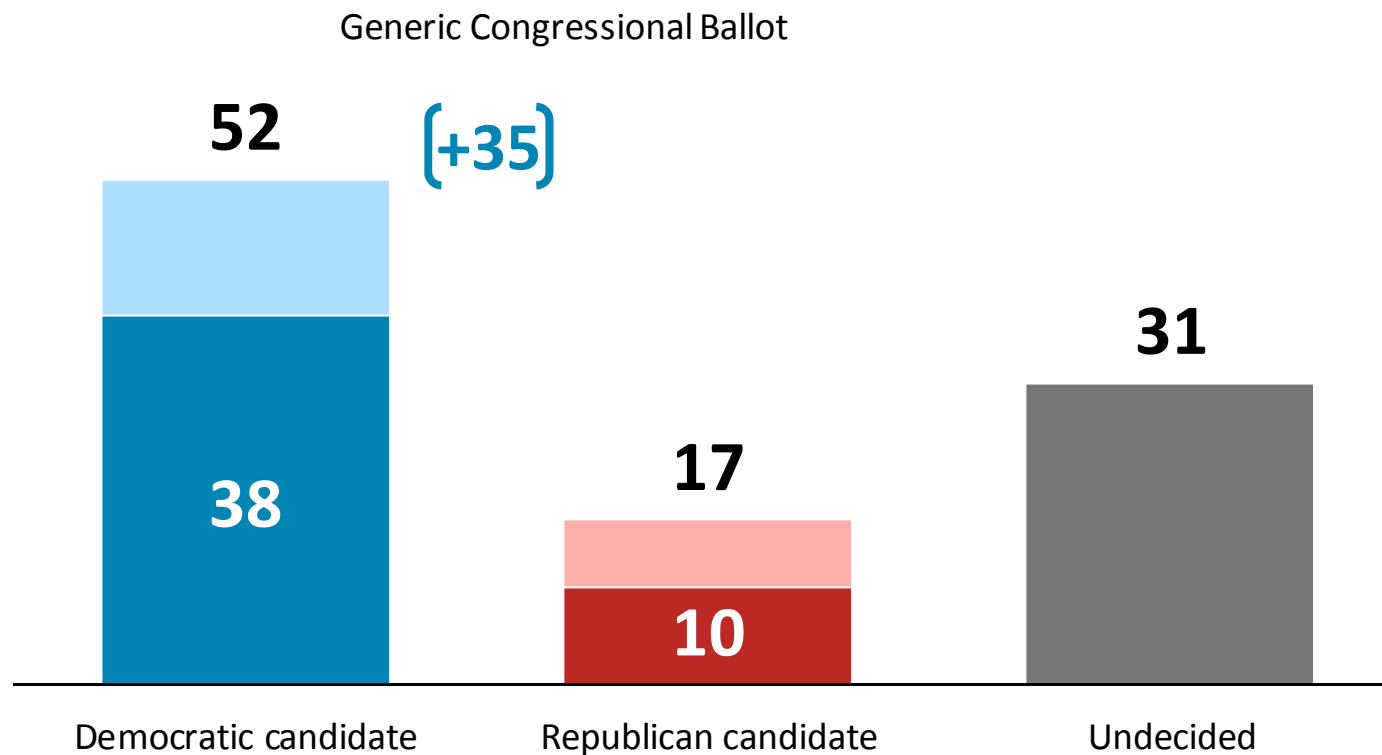
In 2008, a majority of Asian Americans voted for Obama.



Thinking about past elections, did you get a chance to vote in the 2008 presidential election? If so, did you vote for Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain?

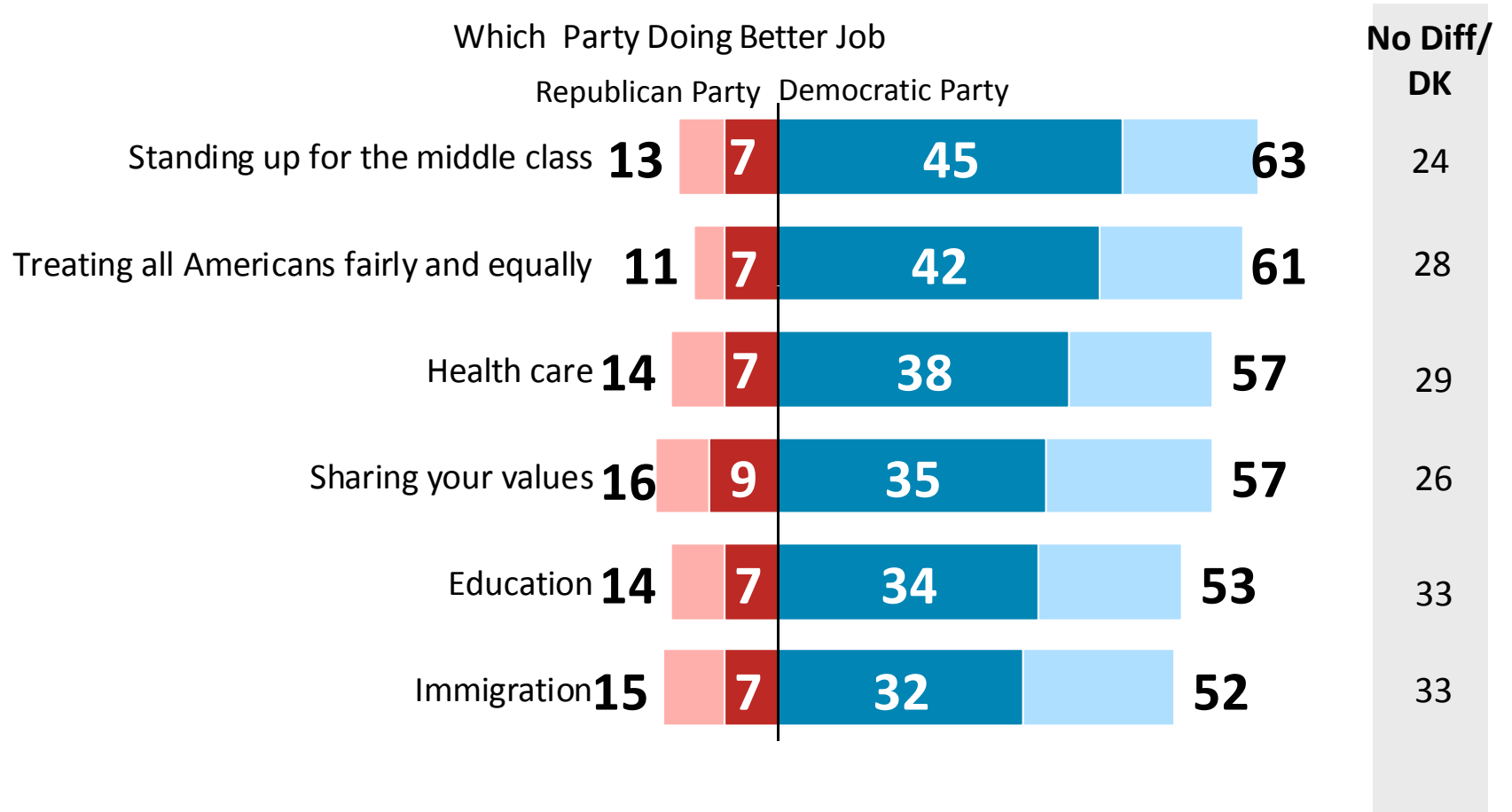


While Republicans do slightly better at the congressional than presidential level, a majority of Asian Americans would vote for the Democratic candidate. Still, with a third undecided, this generic ballot indicates that there is room for persuasion among Asian Americans.



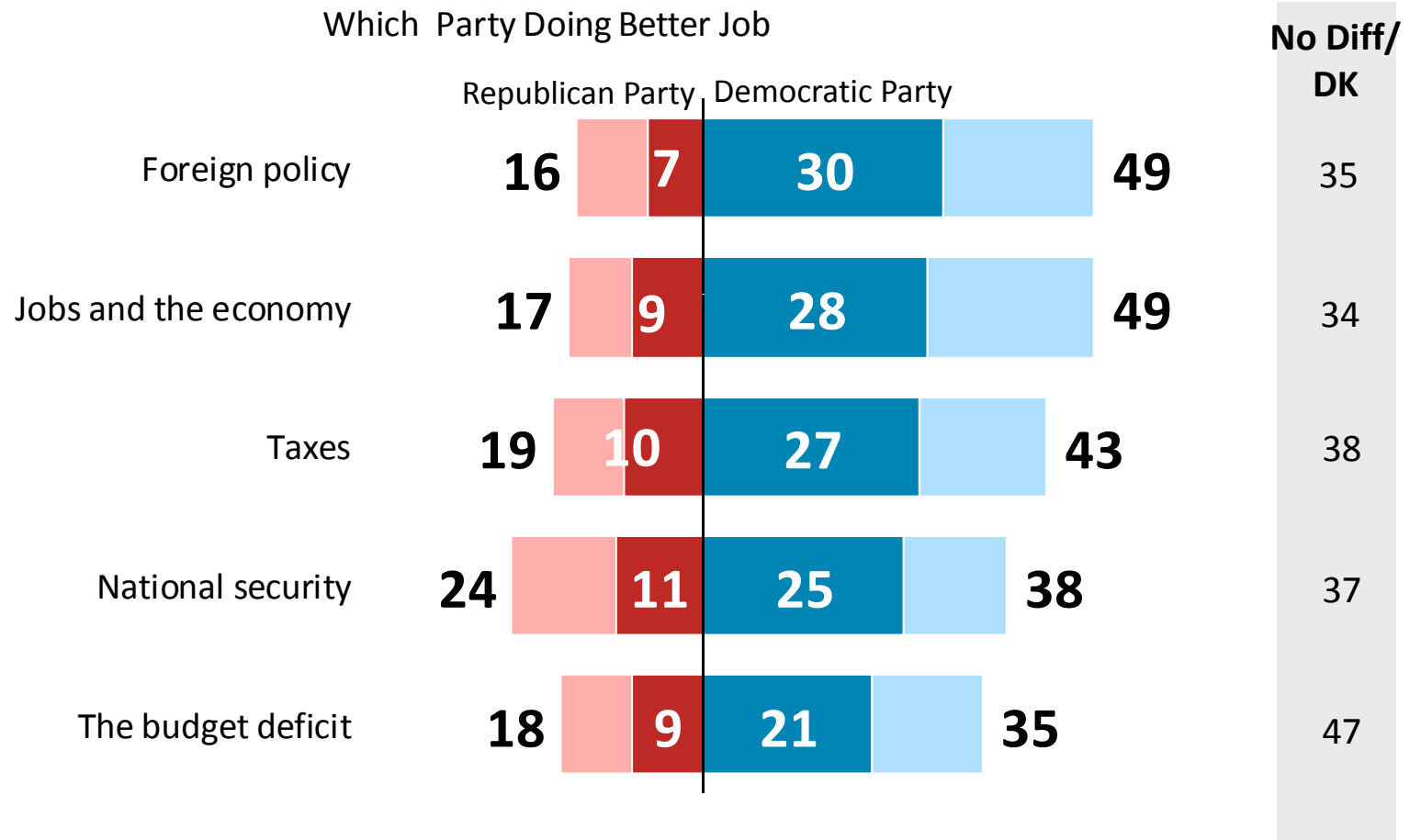
And if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you vote for: the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district, or are you undecided?

On values and fairness, Asian Americans say the Democratic Party is much better than the Republican party. Democrats also have the advantage on health care, education, and immigration.



Now I'd like to ask you about some issues that might be important in the election. For each, please tell me whether you think the Democratic Party or the Republican party is doing a better job with this issue, or is there is no difference. Do you feel the Democratic Party or the Republican Party is doing a better job with this issue? Is that a MUCH better job or SOMEWHAT?

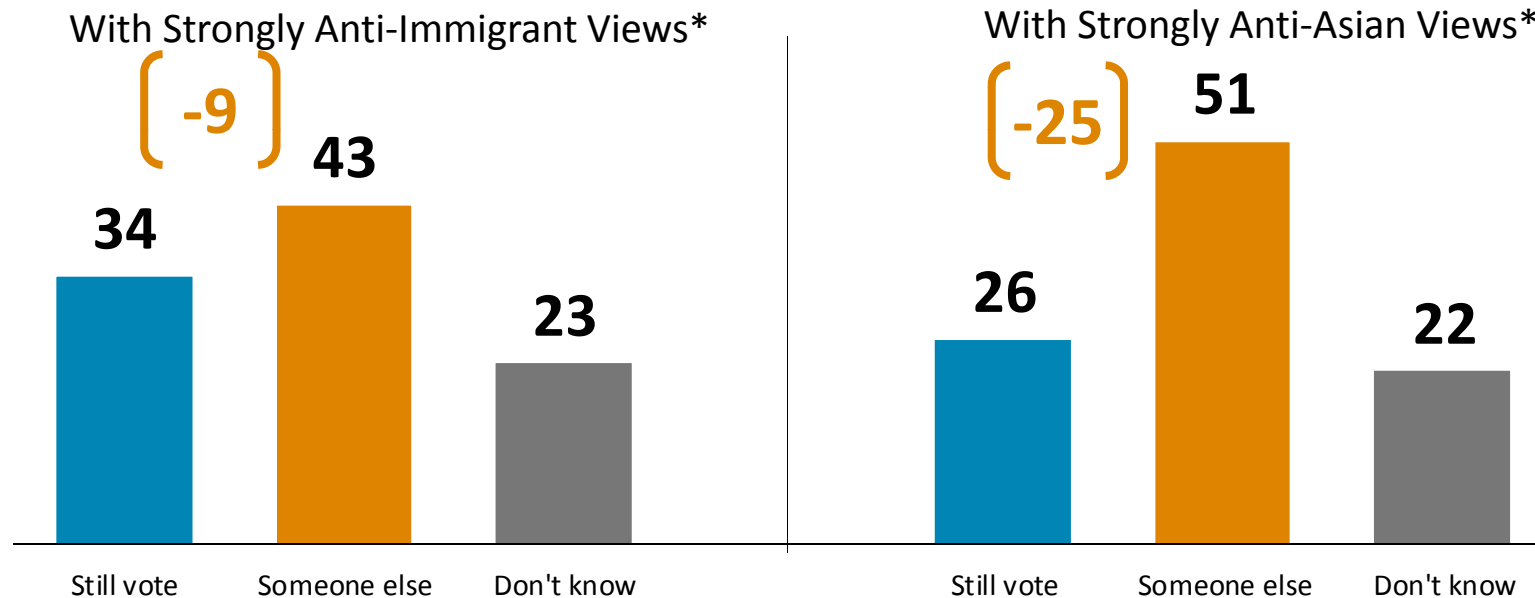
However, a significant number of Asian Americans aren't sure who's doing the better job or say there's no difference. On economic issues, they are less sure but still favor the Democrats.



Now I'd like to ask you about some issues that might be important in the election. For each, please tell me whether you think the Democratic Party or the Republican party is doing a better job with this issue, or is there is no difference. Do you feel the Democratic Party or the Republican Party is doing a better job with this issue? Is that a MUCH better job or SOMEWHAT?

Asian Americans turn strongly against a candidate who expresses anti-Asian views even if they agree on other issues. A majority say they would vote for someone else, while they are more split if the candidate expressed anti-immigrant views.

Vote For a Political Candidate



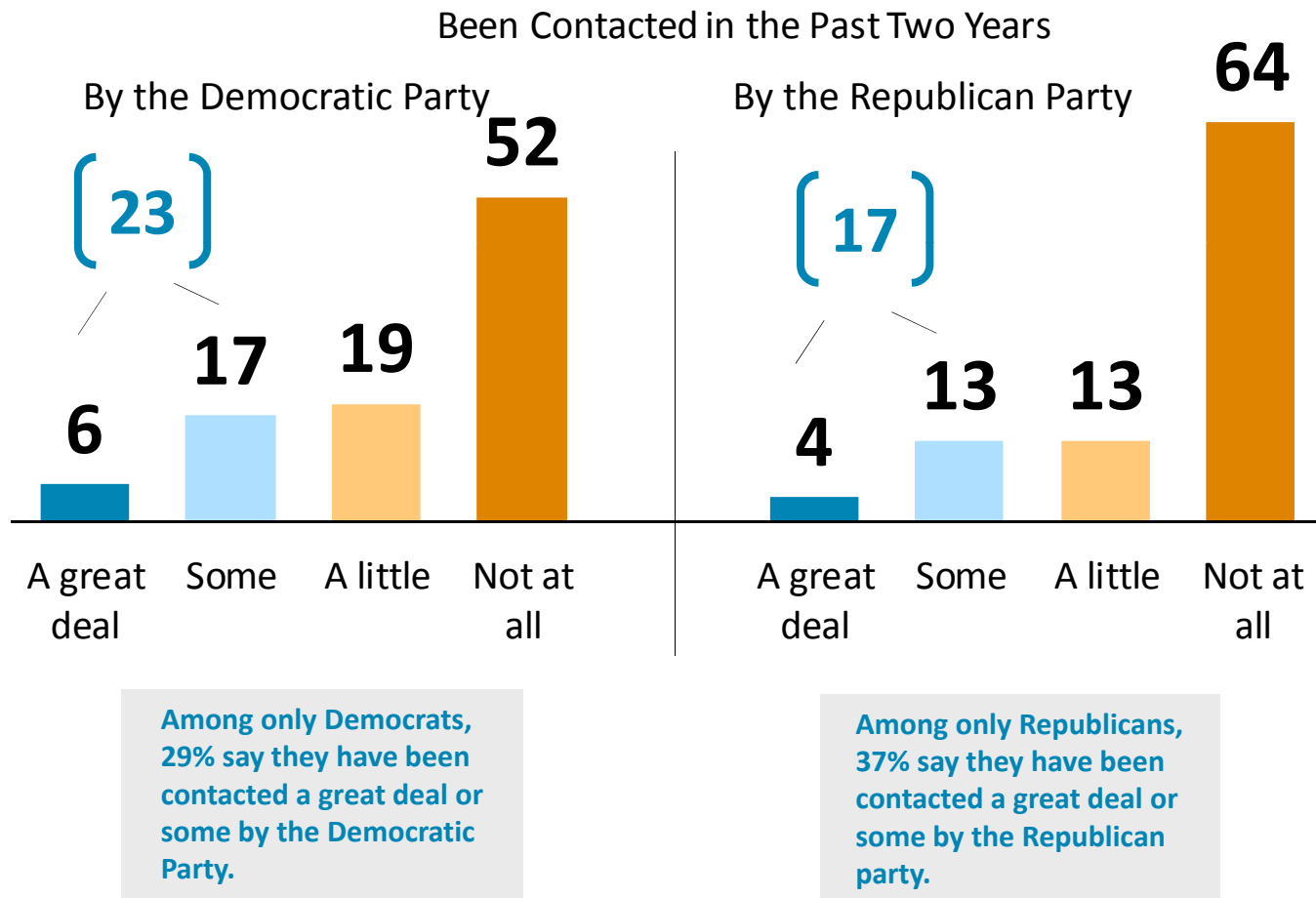
\*Asked of half the sample

On another subject, if a political candidate expressed strongly anti-immigrant views, but you agreed with him or her on other issues, would you still vote for that candidate, or would you vote for someone else?  
On another subject, if a political candidate expressed strongly anti-Asian views, but you agreed with him or her on other issues, would you still vote for that candidate, or would you vote for someone else?

## Engaging Asian Americans

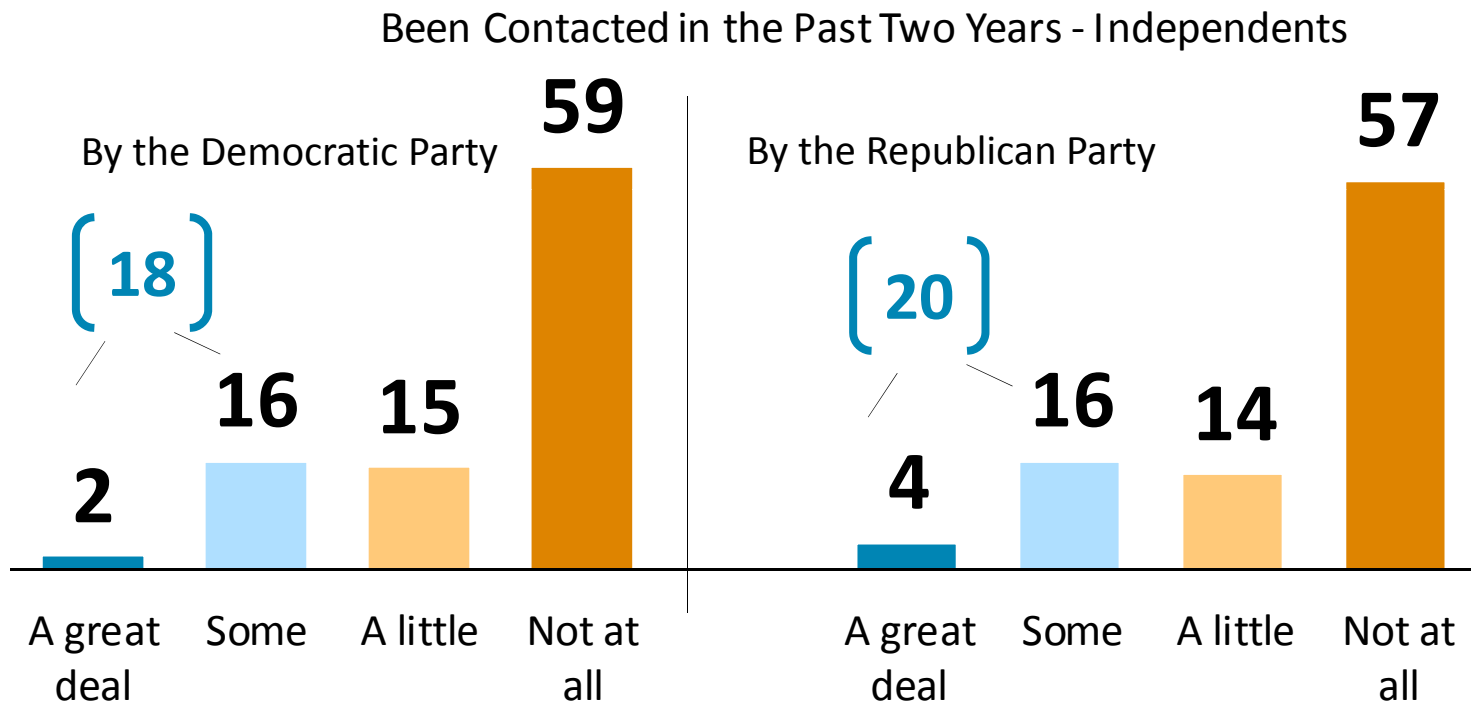
Getting more Asian Americans involved in the process will be critical. This is a rapidly growing community that has barely been contacted by either party.

Asian Americans have been a largely untapped voting bloc. The parties have not been reaching out to them, even those that belong to their party.



Have you been contacted by the Democratic party/Republican party in the past two years a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?

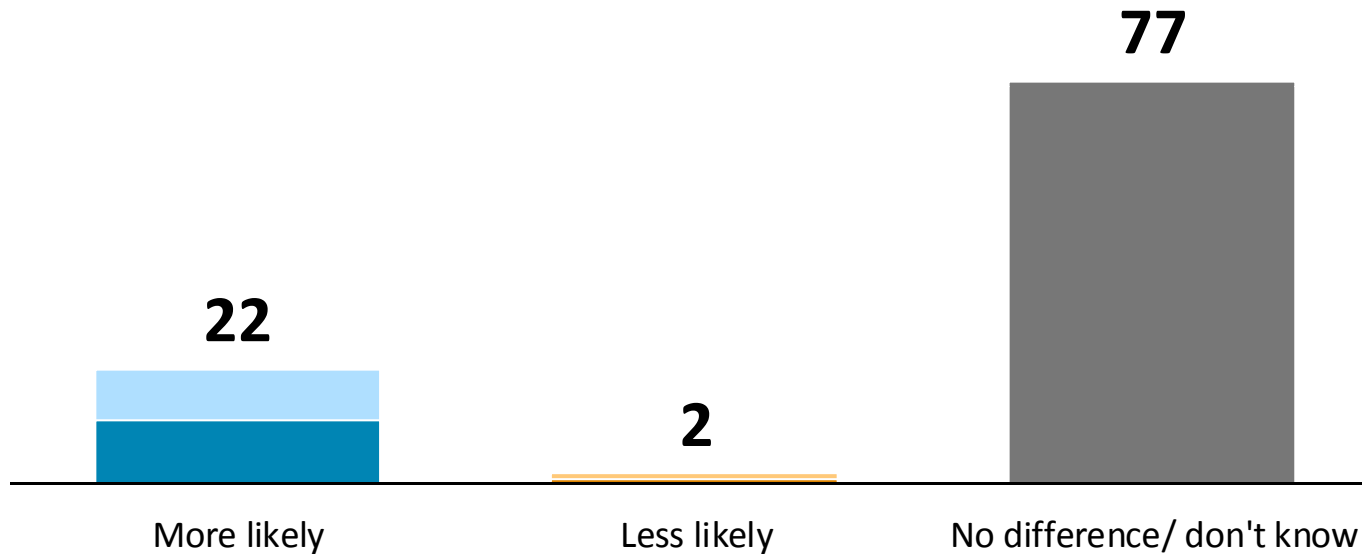
Self-identified independents, usually a prime target for outreach, have barely been contacted by either party.



Have you been contacted by the Democratic party/Republican party in the past two years a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?

More than a fifth of respondents who speak another language say they would be more likely to vote if they had in-language assistance.

In-Language Assistance More/Less Likely to Vote\*

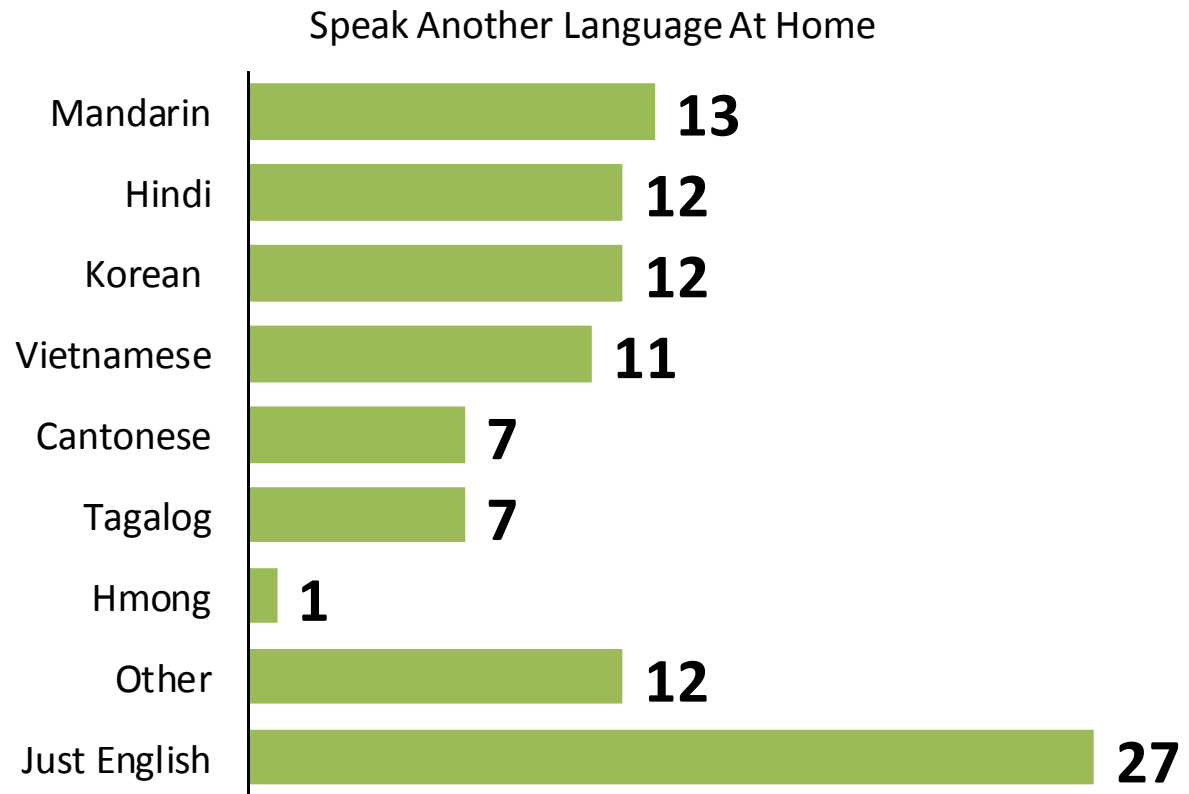


\*Asked of 521 respondents who took the survey in another language or say they speak another language at home

For future elections, would in-language assistance make you more or less likely to vote in elections, or would it make no difference?

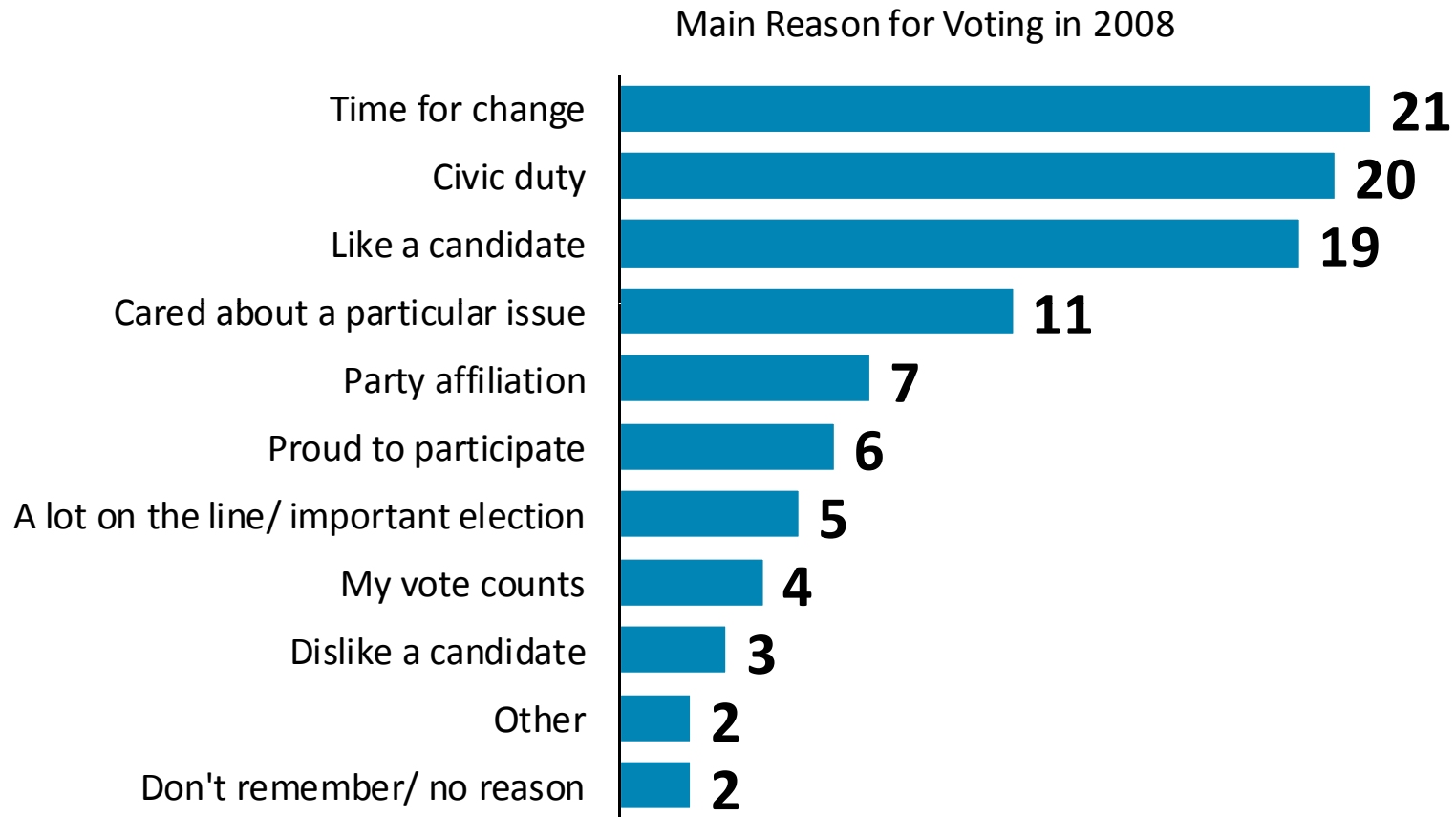


# Three of four Asian American voters said they speak another language at home.



Changing topics, like many people, do you speak a language other than English at home? If so, which language?

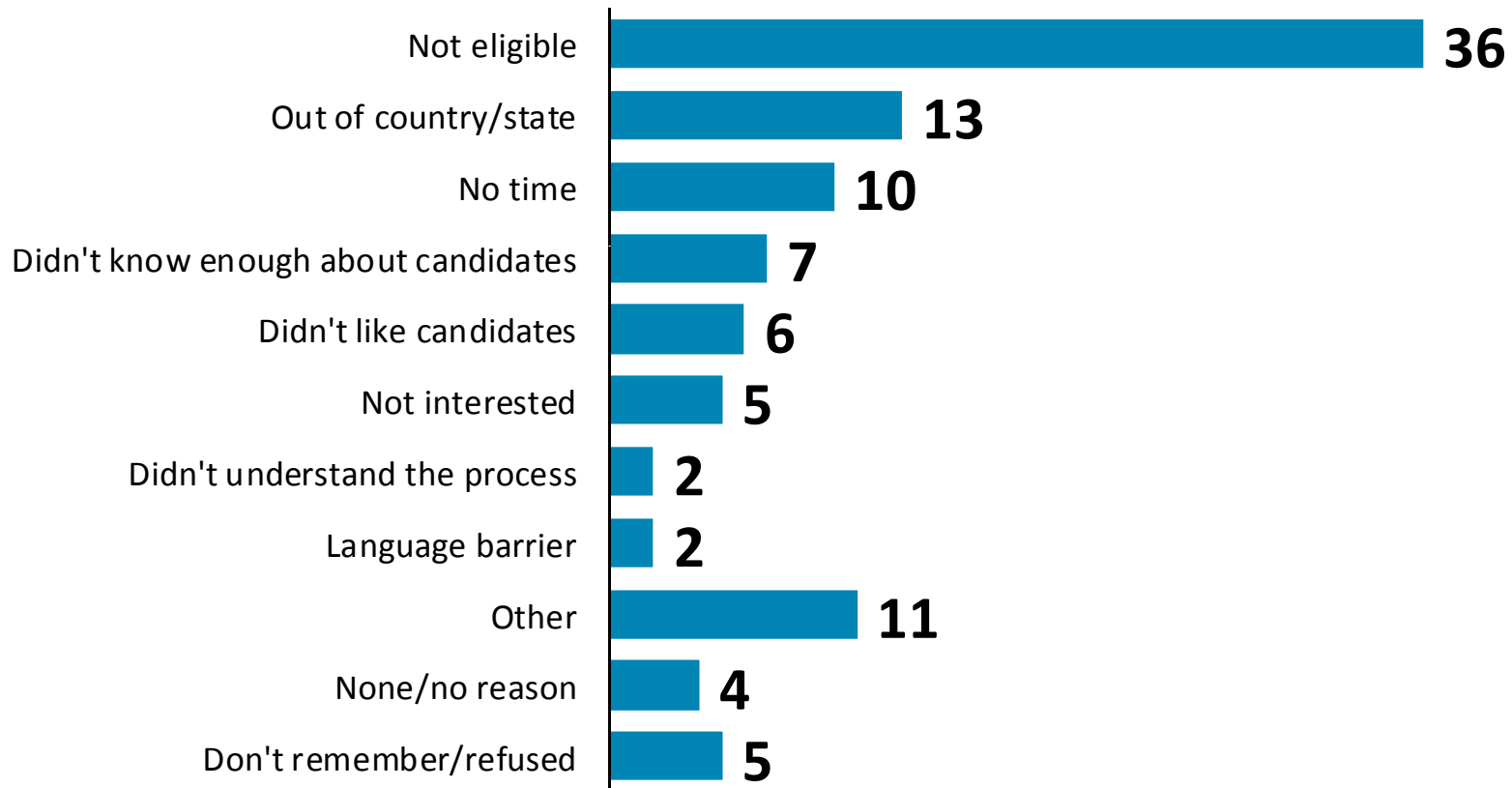
Most Asian Americans say their reason for voting last time was because it was time for a change, their civic duty, or they liked a particular candidate.



What would you say your main reason was for voting in 2008?

# Reasons vary for why some Asian Americans did not vote, but it's clear there is room for engagement.

Main Reason for Not Voting in 2008



What would you say your main reason was for voting in 2008?

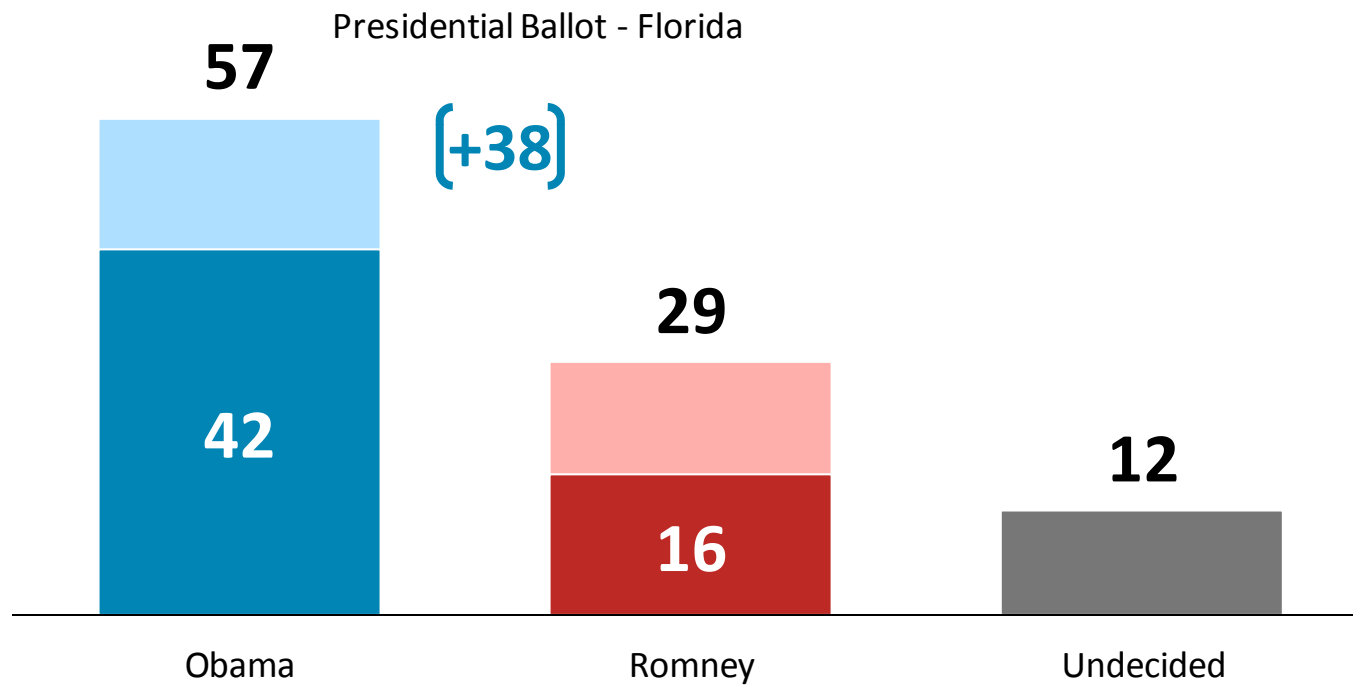
## Asian Americans and their Potential Impact

Asian Americans' strong support of a candidate could make a difference in the electoral outcome, if they are effectively engaged to turn out and vote. Although Democratic-leaning, Asian Americans have historically voted on the basis of the individual candidates and issues. And about a third of Asian Americans are independents or don't identify with a party, and they have also not been engaged by either party to participate more in the political process.



Asian Americans in Florida give Obama a 38 point lead over Romney. That would provide a 33,000 vote margin for Obama if there is a similar turnout pattern as 2008.

88,000 Asian Americans voted in the November 2008 election of 8,453,000 total voters in Florida.

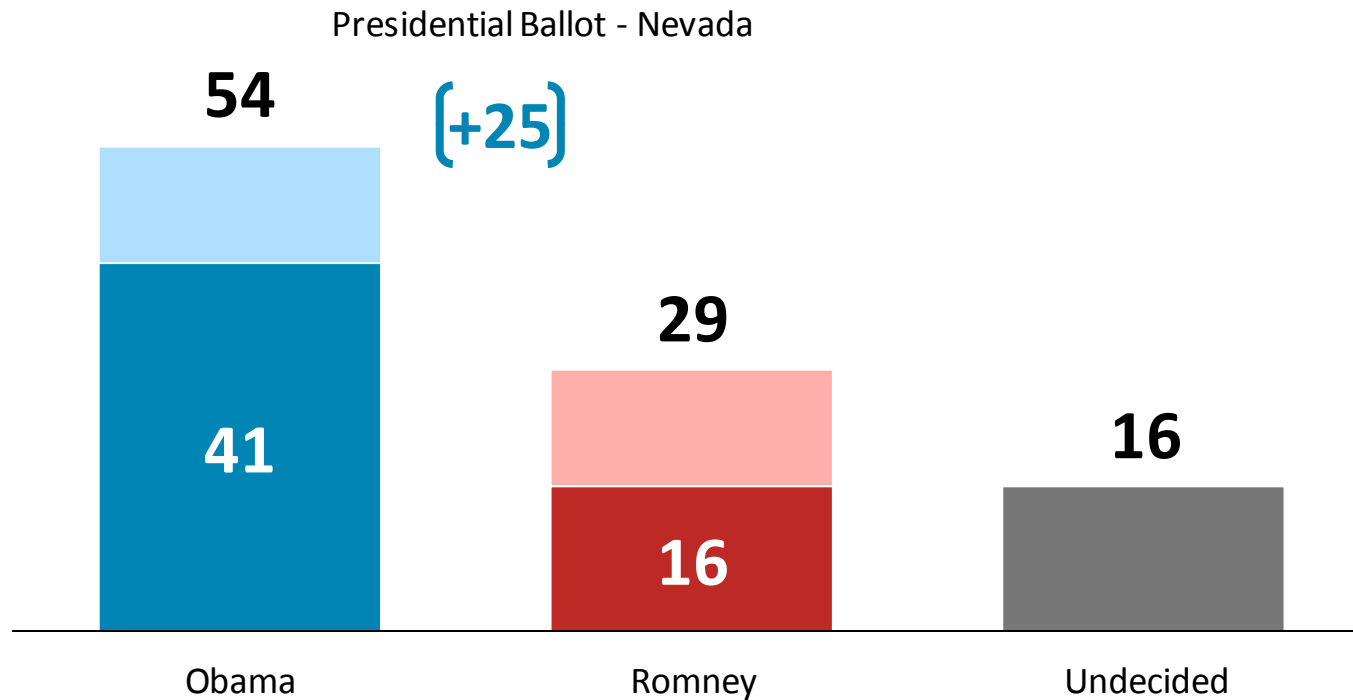


\*Asked of 114 respondents

Assuming Mitt Romney is the nominee for the Republican party, if the election for President was held today and the candidates were: President Barack Obama, Democrat and Former Governor Mitt Romney, Republican, for whom would you vote, or are you undecided?

Similarly, in Nevada, Asian Americans could give Obama a 9,000 vote advantage over Romney, based on a 25 point lead for Obama and assuming similar turnout to 2008.

35,000 Asian Americans voted in the November 2008 election of 970,000 total voters in Nevada.

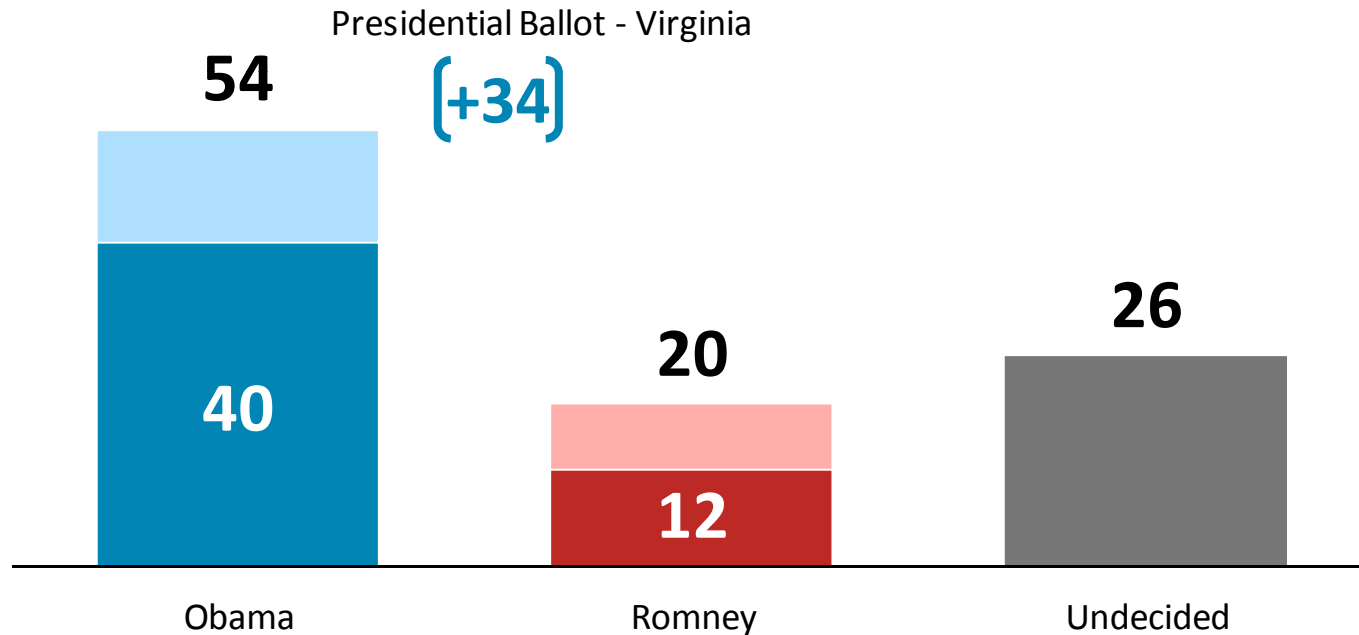


\*Asked of 105 respondents

Assuming Mitt Romney is the nominee for the Republican party, if the election for President was held today and the candidates were: President Barack Obama, Democrat and Former Governor Mitt Romney, Republican, for whom would you vote, or are you undecided?

In Virginia, if we experience similar turnout as 2008, we could see a 47,000 vote margin for Obama from the Asian American community.

136,000 Asian Americans voted in the November 2008 election of 3,753,000 total voters in Virginia.



\*Asked of 117 respondents

Assuming Mitt Romney is the nominee for the Republican party, if the election for President was held today and the candidates were: President Barack Obama, Democrat and Former Governor Mitt Romney, Republican, for whom would you vote, or are you undecided?

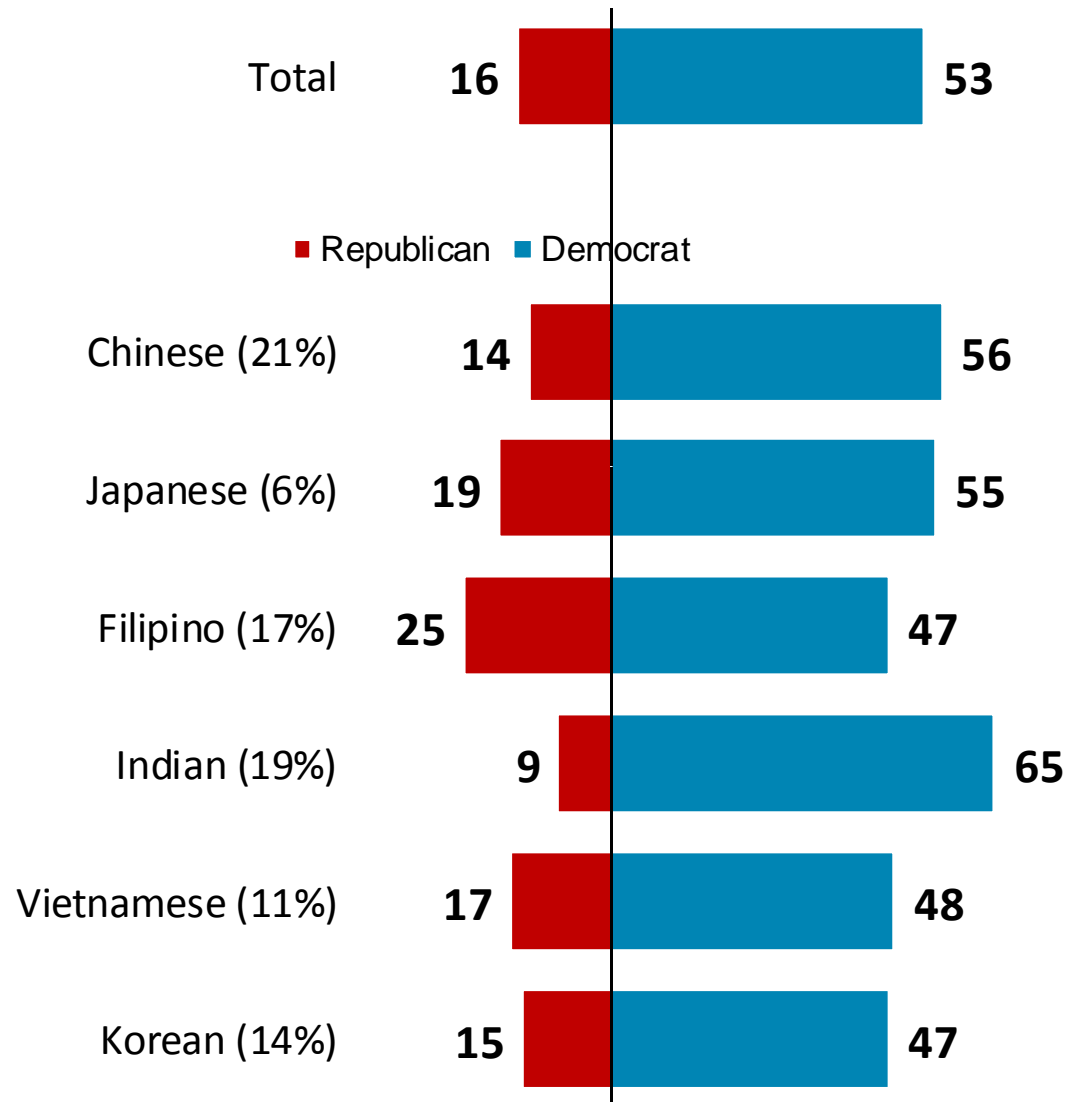
## Appendix

Following are select questions broken out by ethnic groups.



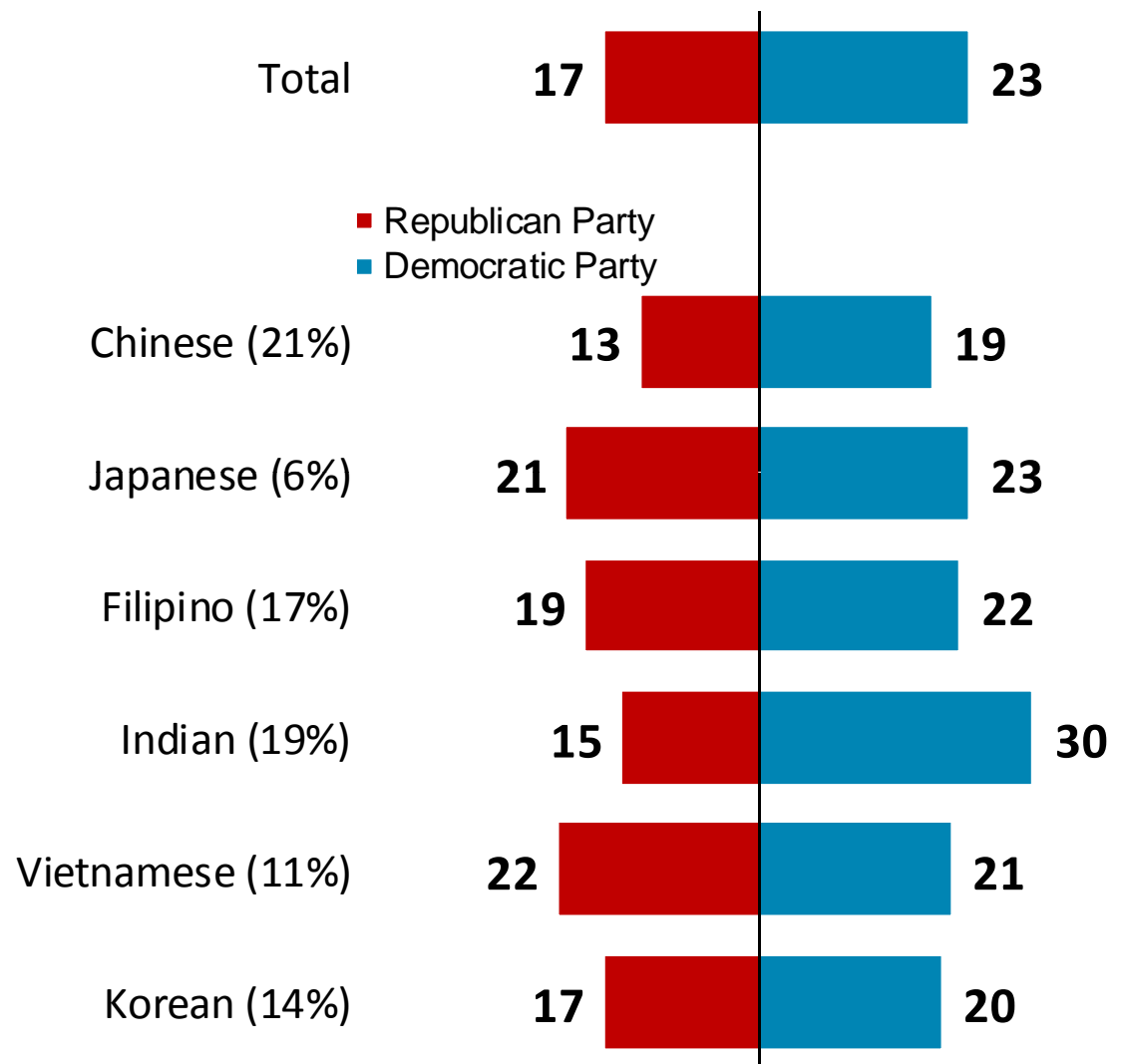
Indian Americans are most likely to identify as Democrats, while Filipinos are the most Republican (though a plurality still identify with the Democratic party).

### Party Identification



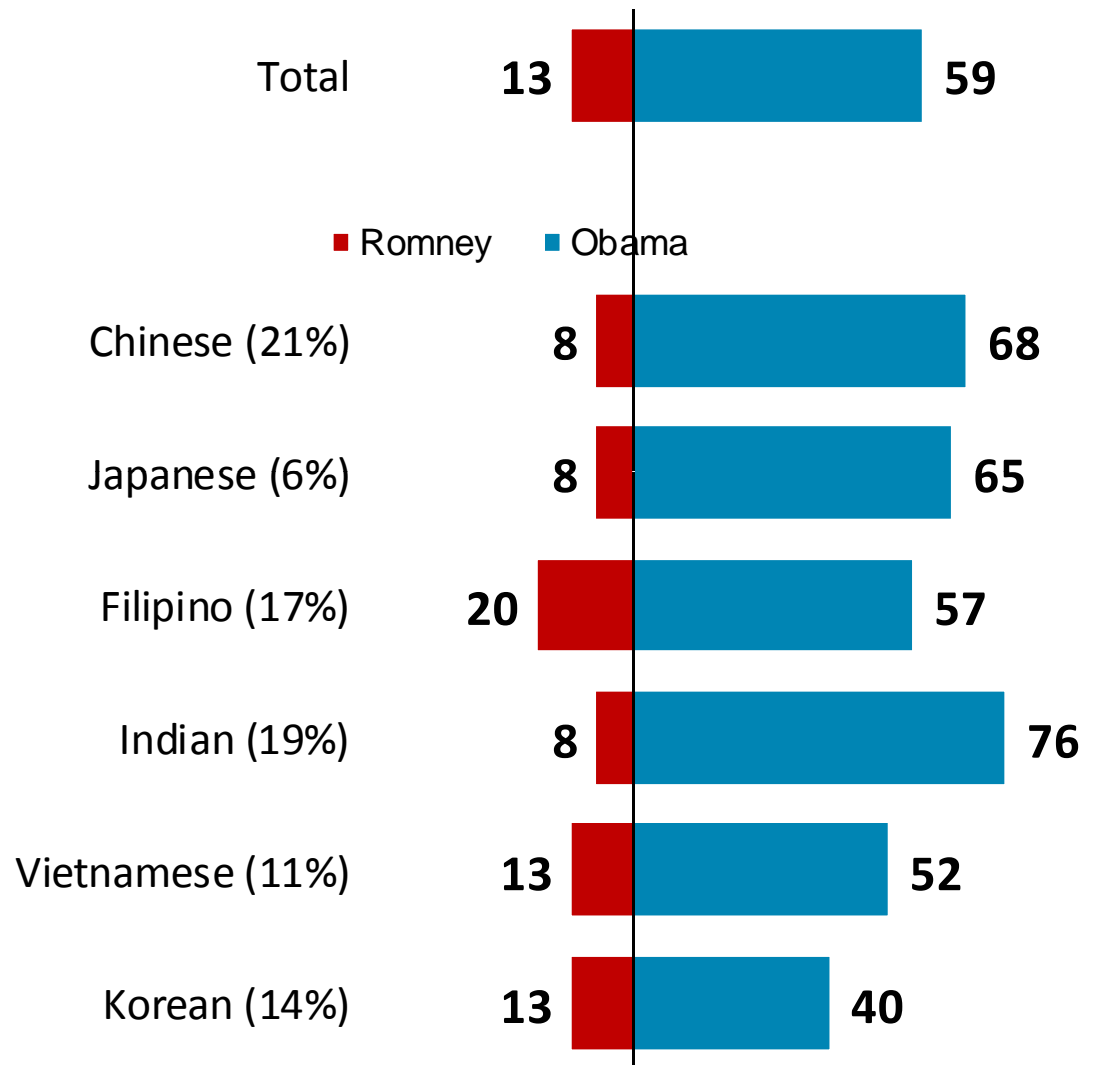
Indian Americans report in higher numbers having been contacted a great deal or somewhat by the Democratic Party. Vietnamese and Japanese Americans are highest in reporting being contacted by the Republican party a great deal or somewhat.

Contacted By Either Party a Great Deal/Somewhat

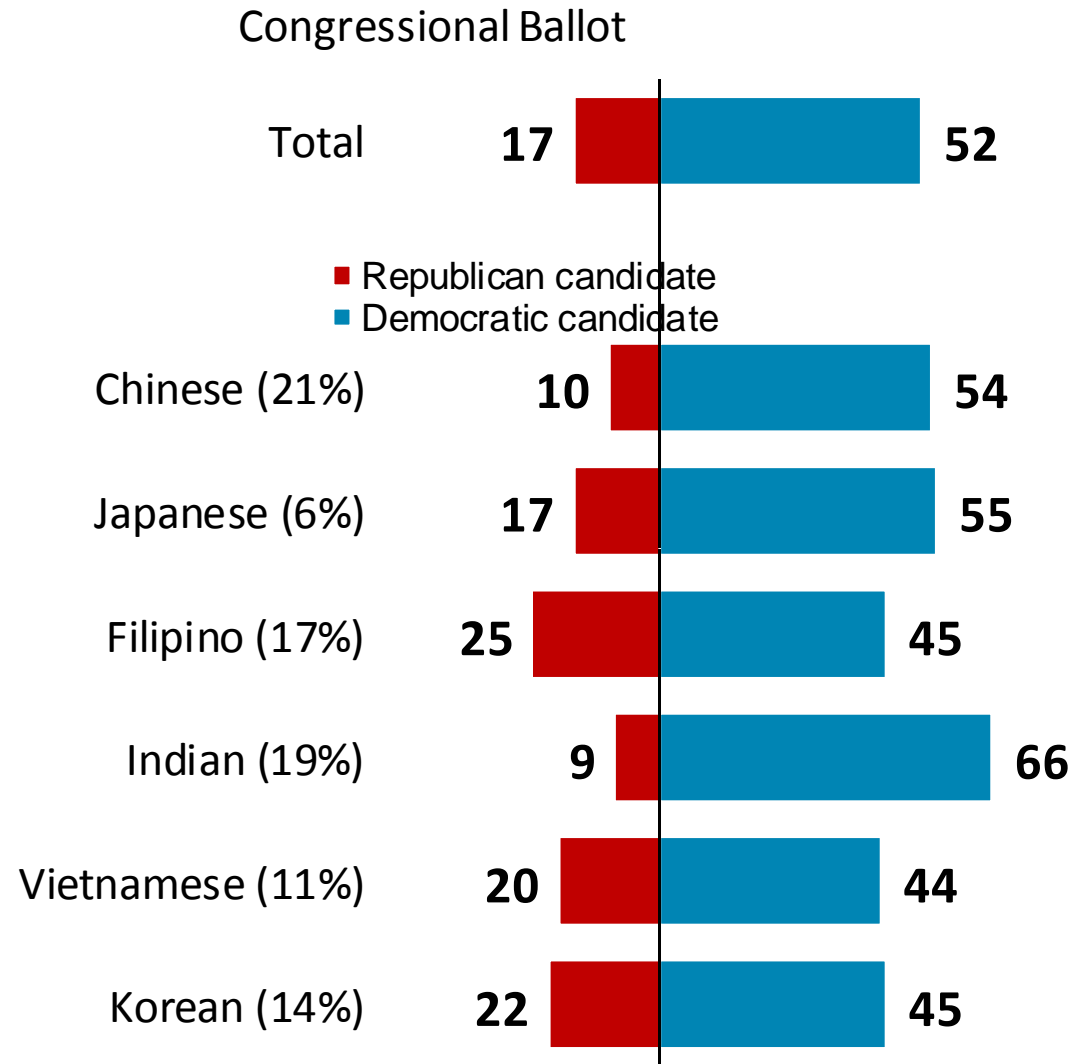


More than three in four Indian Americans say they will vote for Obama this November. Obama has support from a majority of ethnic groups, except Koreans, among whom a significant number are undecided.

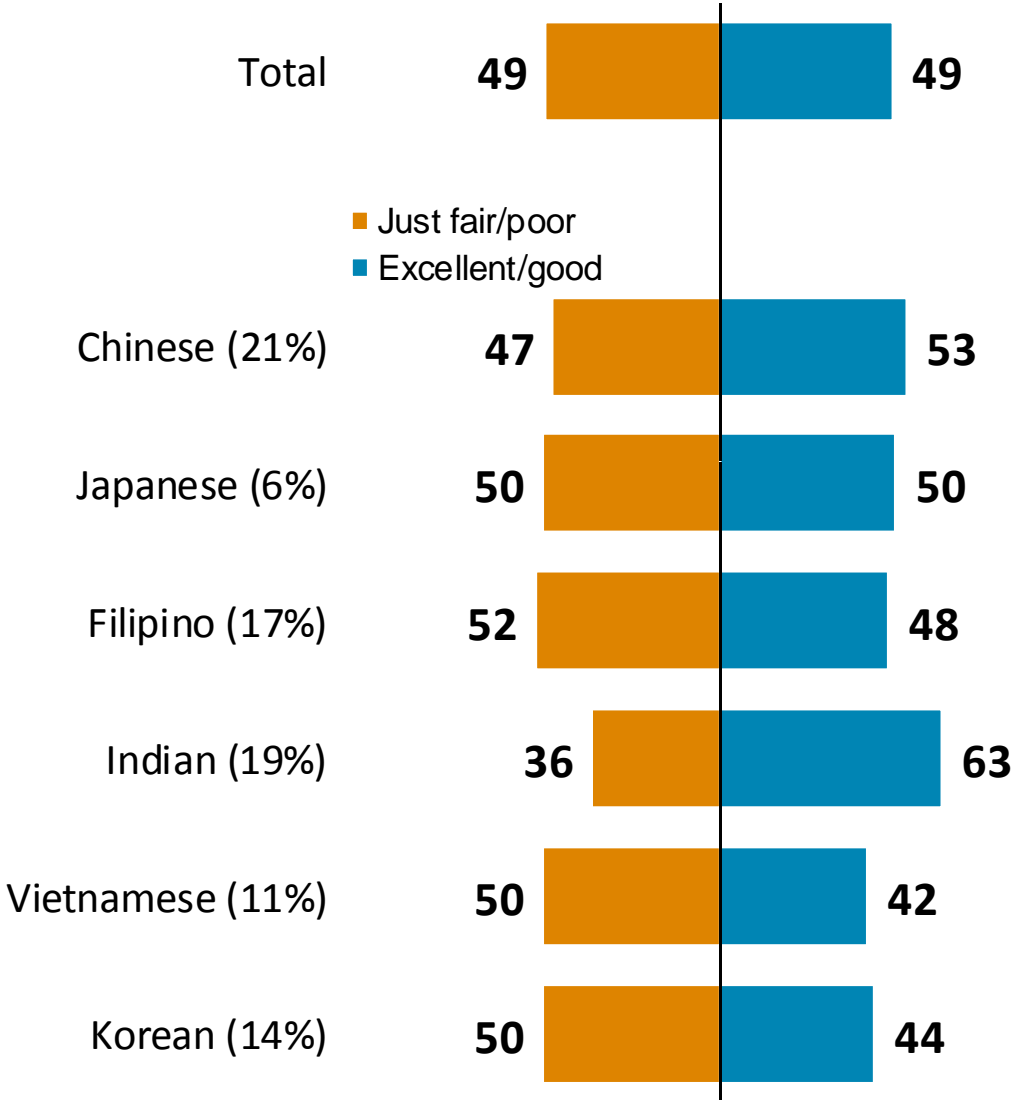
### Presidential Ballot



Similar to the presidential ballot, Indian Americans report high levels of support for the Democratic congressional candidate. However, the Democratic candidate only gets plurality support from Filipino Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Korean Americans.

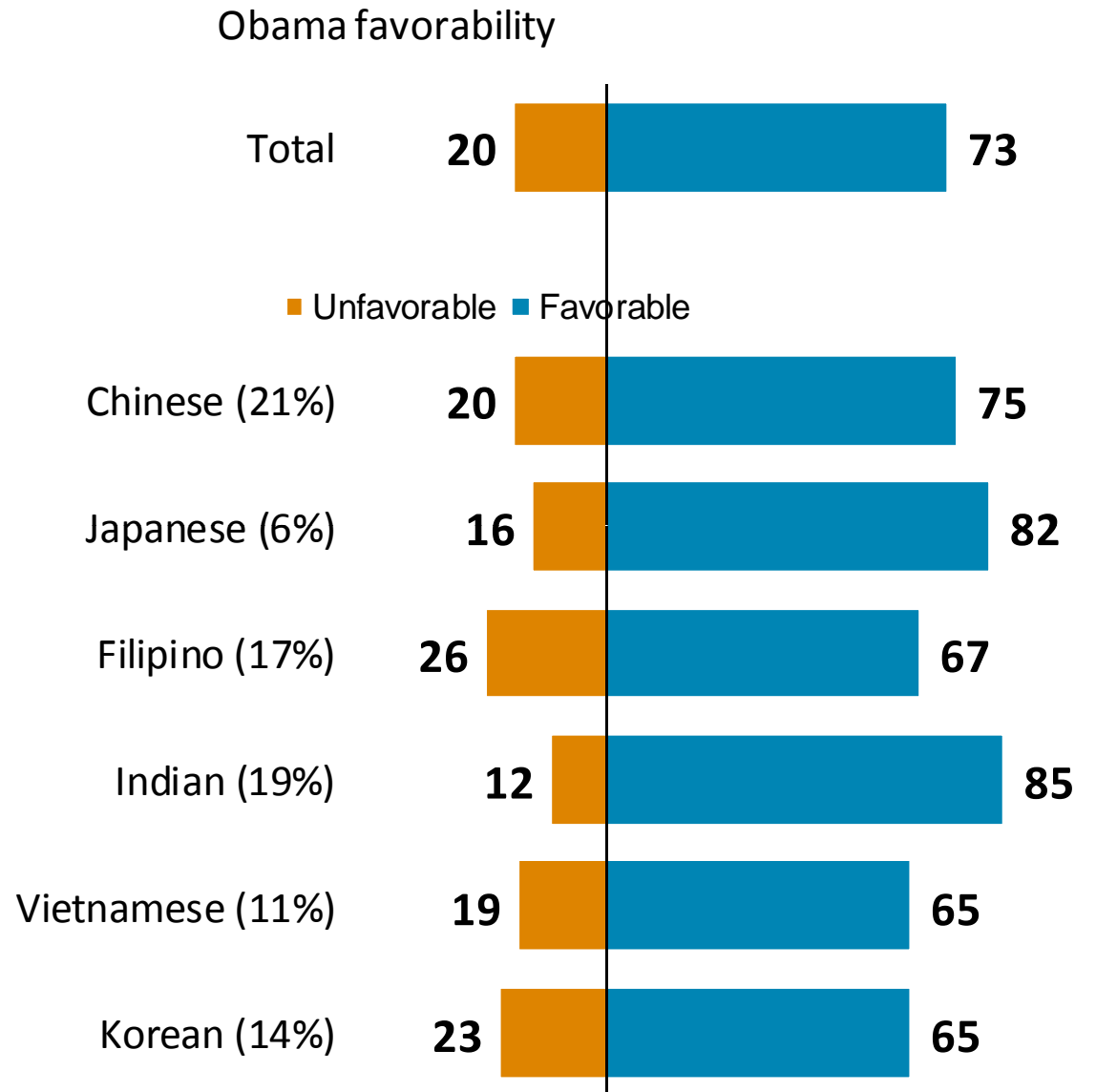


Obama job performance

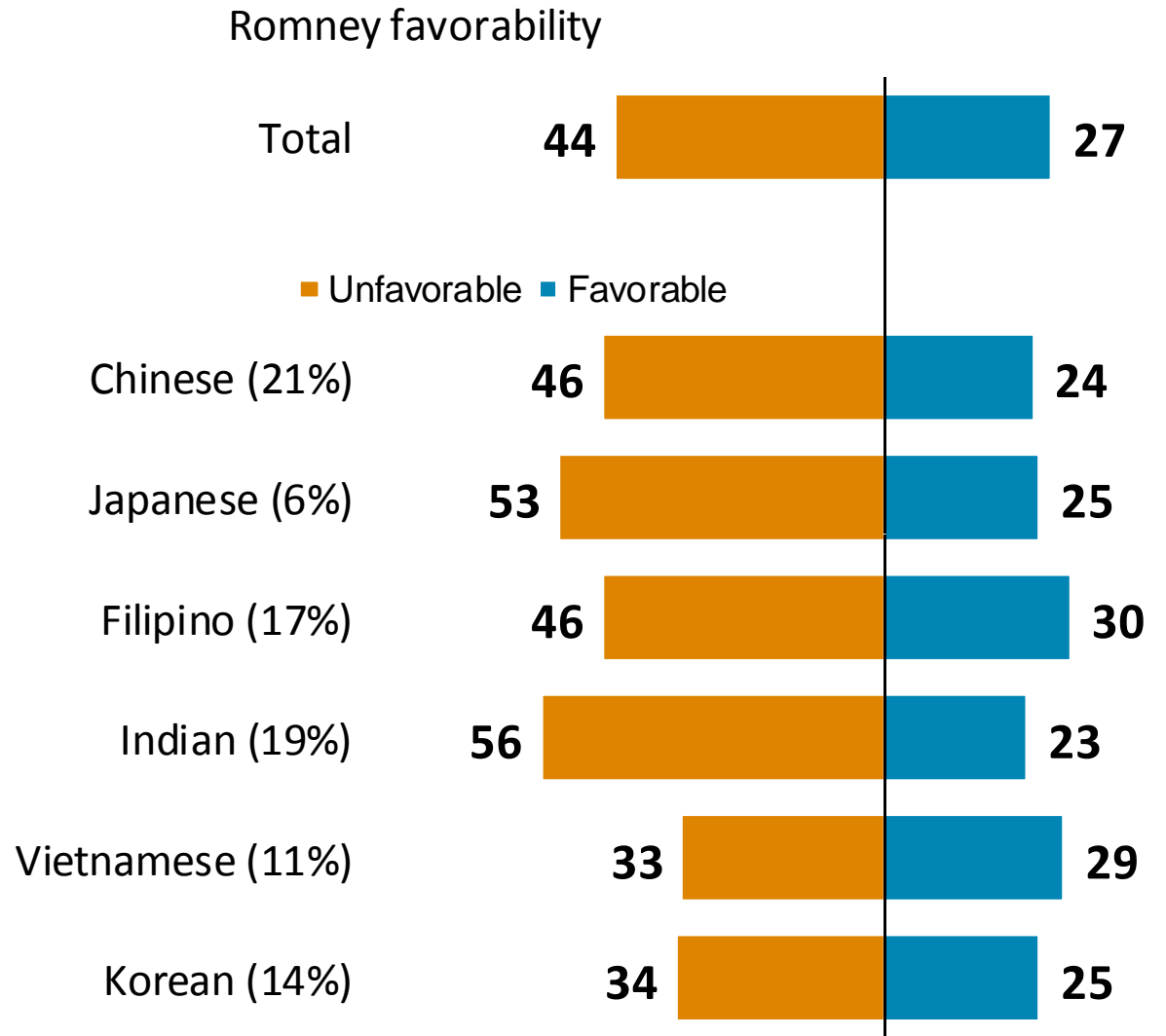


Indian Americans are the most satisfied with Obama's job performance.

Two-thirds or more of every ethnic subgroup feels favorably towards Obama, with Japanese Americans and Indian Americans the highest.

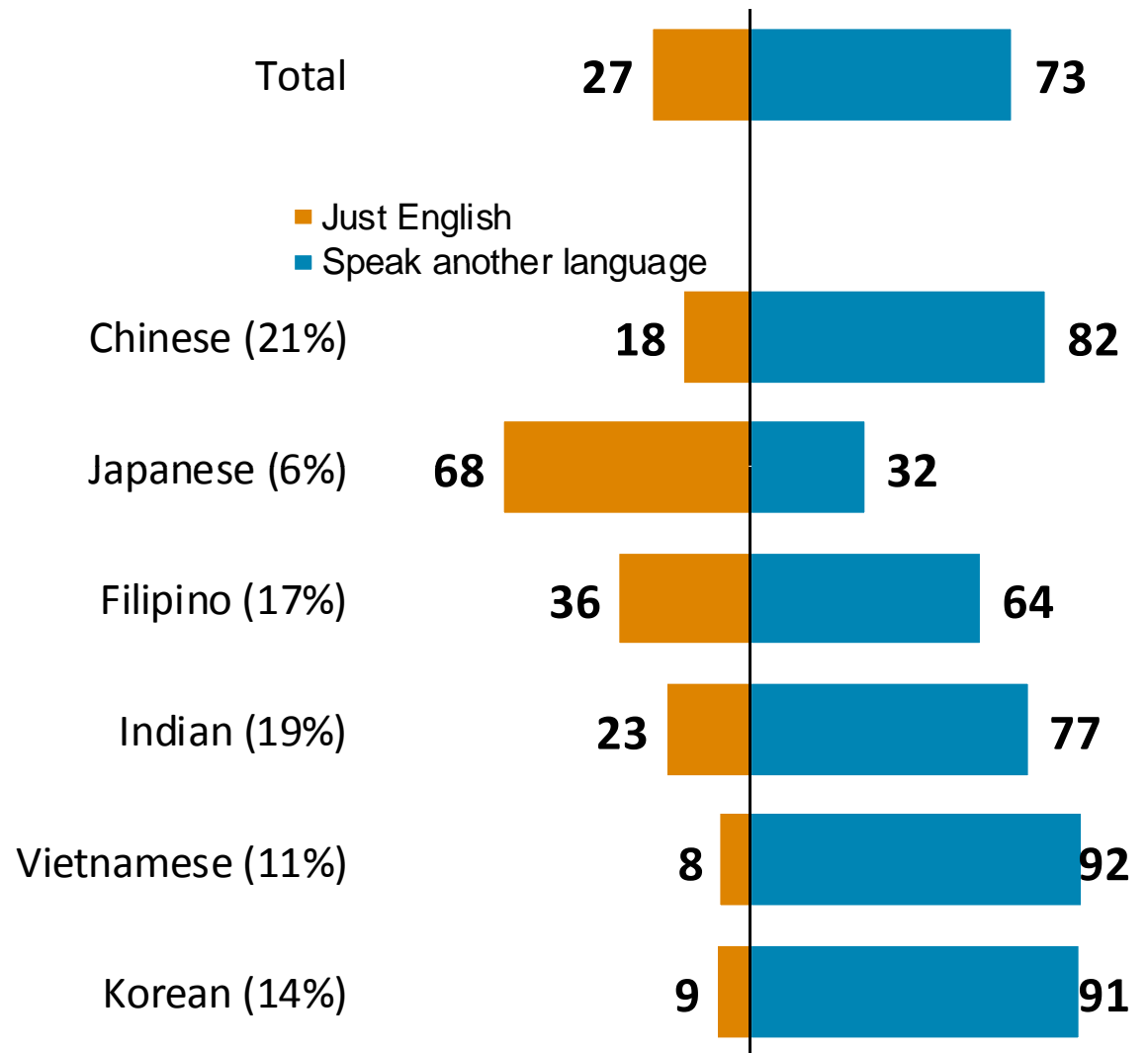


Filipino Americans and Vietnamese Americans feel most favorably towards Romney, but majorities of Japanese Americans and Indian Americans feel unfavorably towards him.



Reflecting the diverse history of Asian Americans, nearly all Vietnamese Americans and Korean Americans report speaking a second language, while more than two-thirds of Japanese Americans don't.

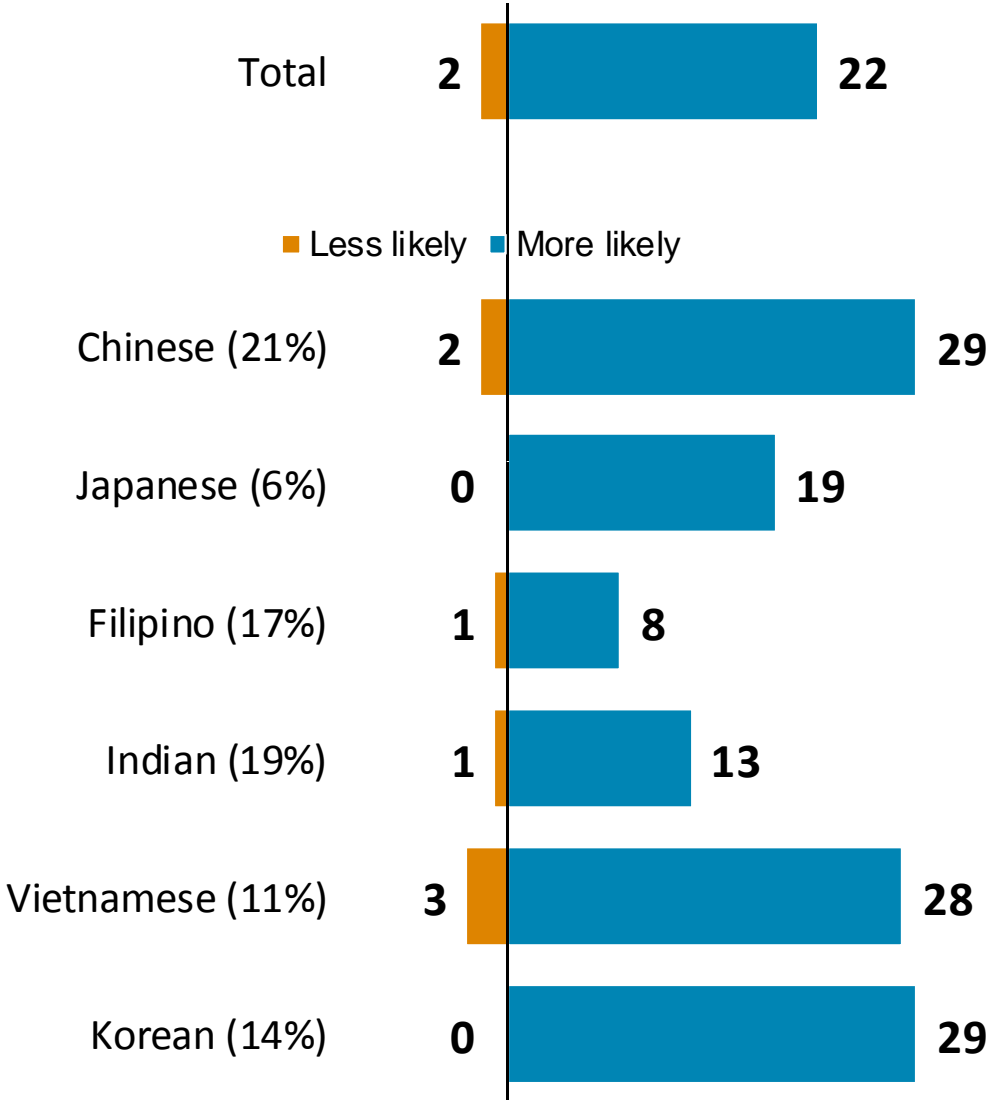
### Speak Second Language



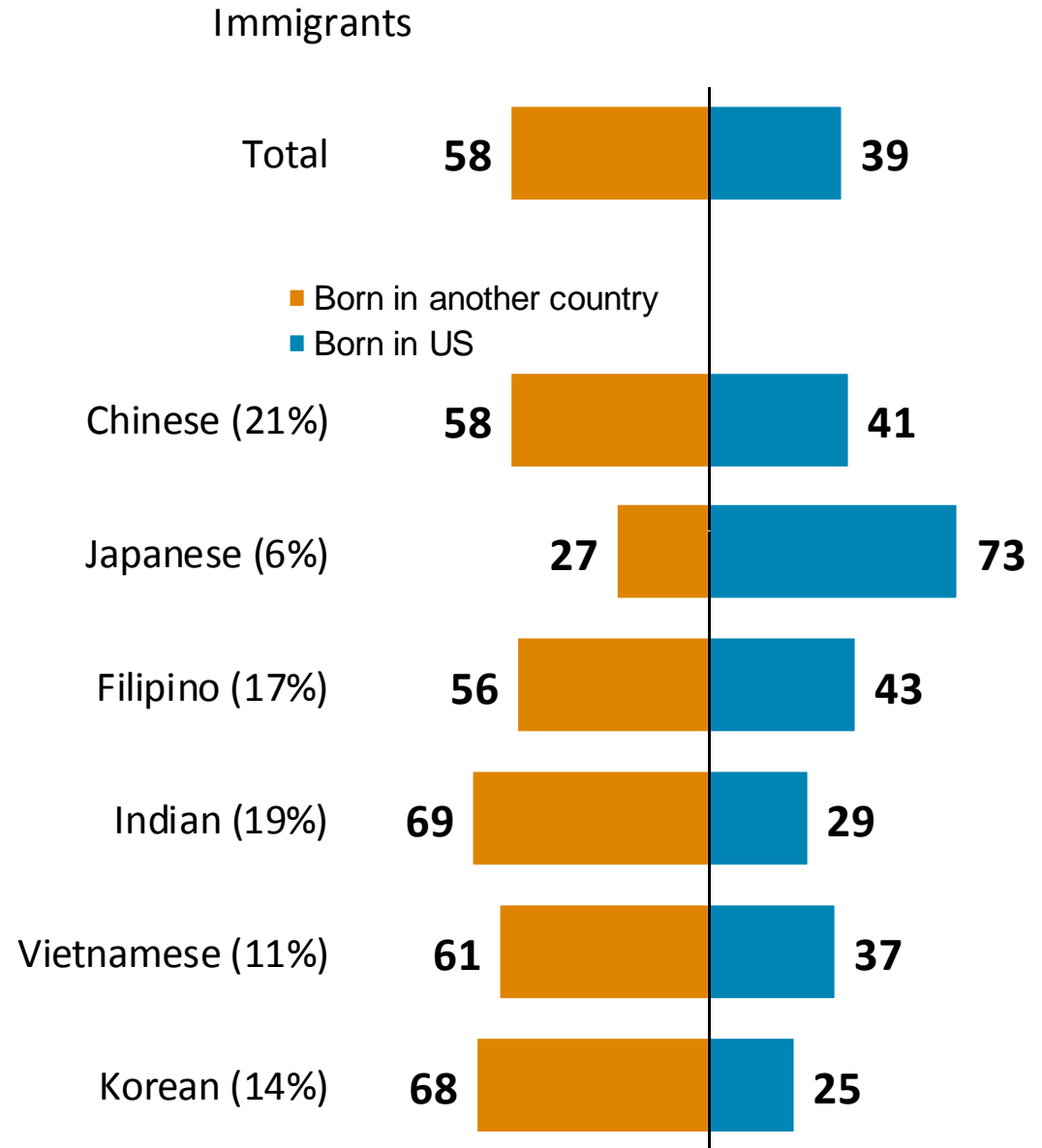


### Likelihood of In-Language Assistance in Voting

In-language assistance would improve the likelihood of voting for significant portions of the Chinese American, Korean American, and Vietnamese American populations.



Japanese Americans are most likely to have been born in the United States, while Indian Americans and Korean Americans are most likely to have been born in another country.





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