The Harris Poll

Harris Insights & Analytics LLC, A Stagwell Company

State of the Facts 2018

USA FACTS

PART 1 of 2

Summary of Results
September 2018

Objective and Methodology

USAFacts conducted the second annual State of the Facts survey in 2018 to revisit questions asked in 2017 about the current climate around news, information, and data that influence the American public and their decisions. The 2018 survey benchmarks shift in opinion one year later and adds questions about the changing landscape around usage and trust of data. The survey also explores the role of data in light of the 2018 midterms, and how Americans share data on social media.

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of USAFacts from June 30 – July 5, 2017 among 2,521 U.S. adults and from August 30 - Sept 4, 2018 among 2,501 U.S. adults. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, marital status, household size, income, employment, and education where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

Throughout the report arrows indicate significant changes at the 95% confidence level.

The margin of sampling error for full-base questions (n=2,501) is +/-2%. The Harris Poll does not ordinarily report on the "margin of error" since it is difficult to derive the total margin of error in survey research.

Executive Findings – Part 1 of 2

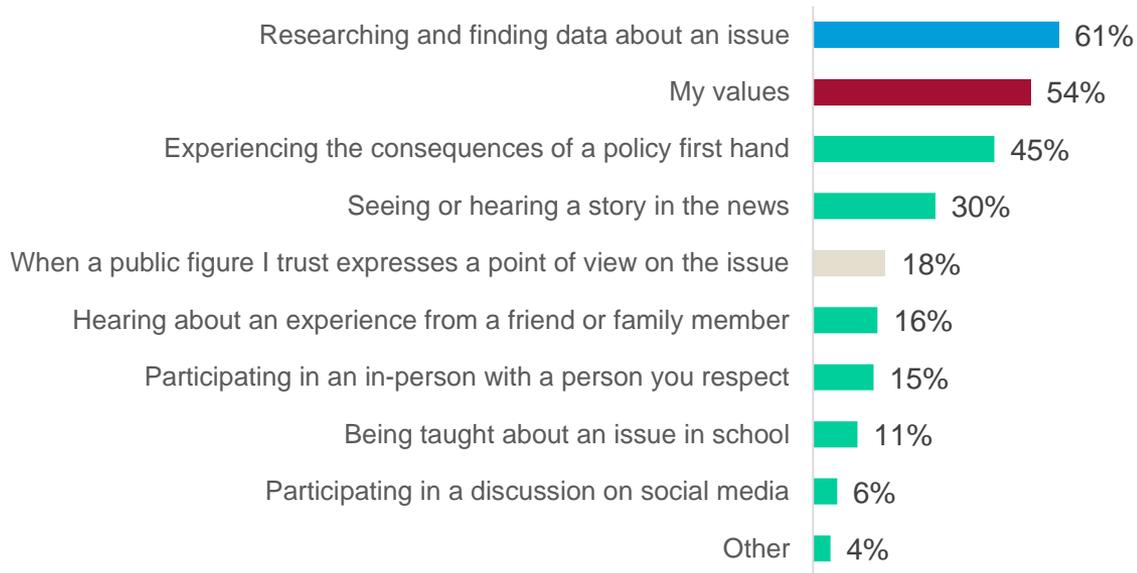| Headline	Supportive Findings
Midterms Voters want Data-driven Facts	• When forming an opinion on a policy issue or preparing for an election, a majority of Americans (61%) turn to data. • Yet, Americans express concern that election information could be tainted by bias, clickbait, or foreign influence. • Immigration, the economy, and healthcare top the list of most important midterm issues, even though almost four in ten Americans do not know their candidate's position on those issues. • 80% are interested in candidate positions alongside data on important election issues.

Midterm Elections

Data beats values: for Americans, opinions on policies are formed by researched data more than personal values

Surprisingly, only 6% of Americans say their discussions on Social Media help form policy opinions

Which of the following helps you form opinions on a policy issue?

Researching and finding data about an issue	61%
My values	54%
Experiencing the consequences of a policy first hand	45%
Seeing or hearing a story in the news	30%
When a public figure I trust expresses a point of view on the issue	18%
Hearing about an experience from a friend or family member	16%
Participating in an in-person with a person you respect	15%
Being taught about an issue in school	11%
Participating in a discussion on social media	6%
Other	4%

Registered Voters More Often use Research and Data to form Policy Opinions
Registered Voters – 63% | Non-Registered – 49%

Republicans More Likely to form Policy Opinions based on Their Values
GOP – 60% | DEM – 49% | IND – 55%

Older Americans More Likely to Trust Public Figures
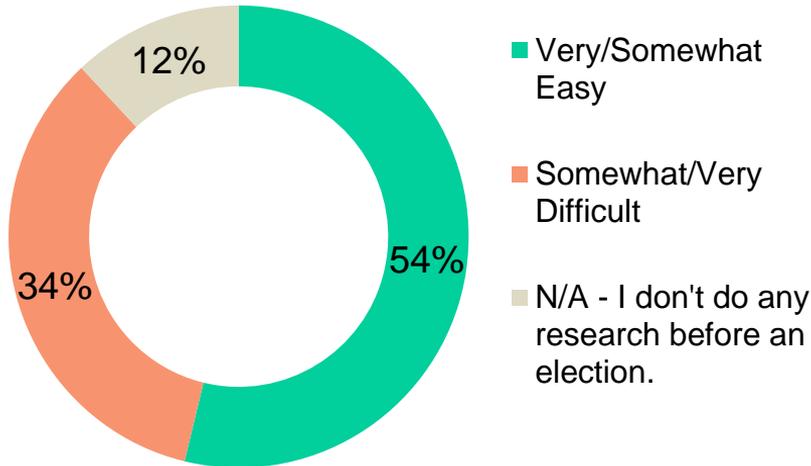Ages 18-49 – 12% | Ages 50+ – 25%

BASE: 2018 U.S. ADULTS (n=2501)
Q627A. Which of the following helps you form opinions on a policy issue? Please select up to three responses.

Election information: can be difficult to find, many concerned about bias

Nearly half of Americans have a difficult time finding information to inform their vote or don't bother looking it up at all, and there is lingering concern that information about elections are influenced by partisan sources

Before an election, how easy or difficult is it to find the information that you need to inform your vote?

- **12%**
- **54%**
- **34%**

- ■ Very/Somewhat Easy
- ■ Somewhat/Very Difficult
- ■ N/A - I don't do any research before an election.

How **Concerned** Are You That…

■ Very/Somewhat Concerned   ■ Not at all/Not very Concerned

Election Info is Influenced by Foreign Governments

| 62% | 38% |

Democrats More Likely
DEM – 79% | GOP – 45% | IND – 57%

Election Info is Created by Media Companies to Sell Ads

| 74% | 26% |

Election Info is Biased

| 80% | 20% |

Nearly half of Americans get information from cable news, but the vast majority find it is biased

Where do you get information about candidates and issues?	% say Source is Biased	Differences in Bias by Party GOP vs. DEM
Local TV News — 52%	48%	⬆ 58% vs. 36%
Network News — 44%	52%	⬆ 69% vs. 37%
Cable News — 44%	72%	⬆ 77% vs. 64%
Print — 38%	53%	⬆ 71% vs. 34%
Websites of print publications — 33%	55%	⬆ 73% vs. 40%
Social media — 26%	73%	70% vs. 73%
Digital-only news sources — 22%	65%	73% vs. 62%
Radio — 21%	57%	58% vs. 50%
E-mail newsletters — 13%	60%	61% vs. 64%
Podcasts — 7%	62%	47% vs. 72% ⬆
Other — 10%		

Arrows denote significant differences between GOP and DEM

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Younger Americans get information on candidates/issues from online sources, while older Americans more often use printed sources

	Use Source		Sees as Biased	
Very/Somewhat Likely to consider information factual if…	**18-49**	**50+**	**18-49**	**50+**
Local TV News	45%	60%	57%	40%
Network News	40%	49%	59%	45%
Cable News	41%	48%	73%	71%
Print	27%	51%	54%	53%
Websites of print publications	37%	27%	59%	49%
Social media	38%	13%	71%	81%
Digital-only news sources	27%	15%	66%	63%
Radio	23%	20%	62%	50%
E-mail newsletters	12%	14%	61%	60%
Podcasts	10%	2%	63%	* Low base

Top of mind, Americans say immigration, the economy, and healthcare are critical in the mid-term elections

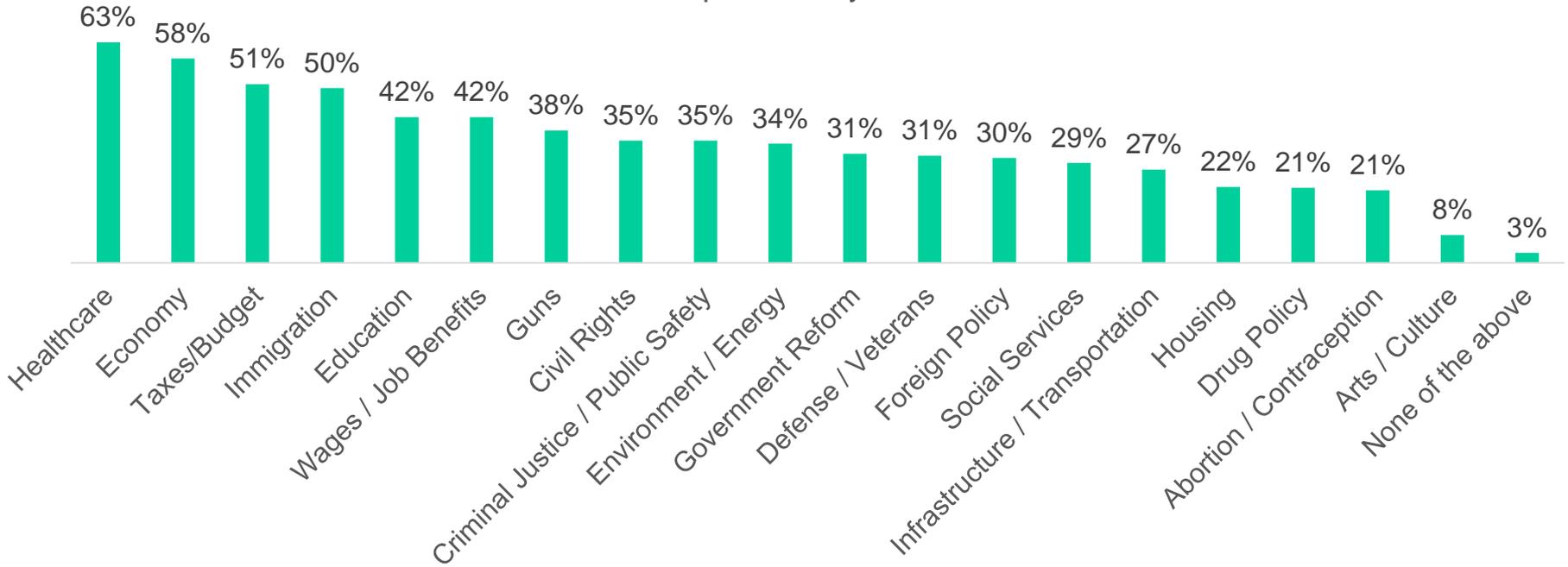## Most Important Mid-Term Issues
(Unaided – Open Ended Question)

Top Concerns

Issue	Percentage
Immigration	17%
Economy	16%
Healthcare	14%
Taxes	9%
Education	8%
Democrats winning	7%
Government Reform	7%
Wages	7%
Criminal Justice	5%
Environment	5%
Morality	5%

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Even aided these same issues bubble to the top

At least half of Americans say Healthcare, Economy, Taxes/Budget, and Immigration are important to them
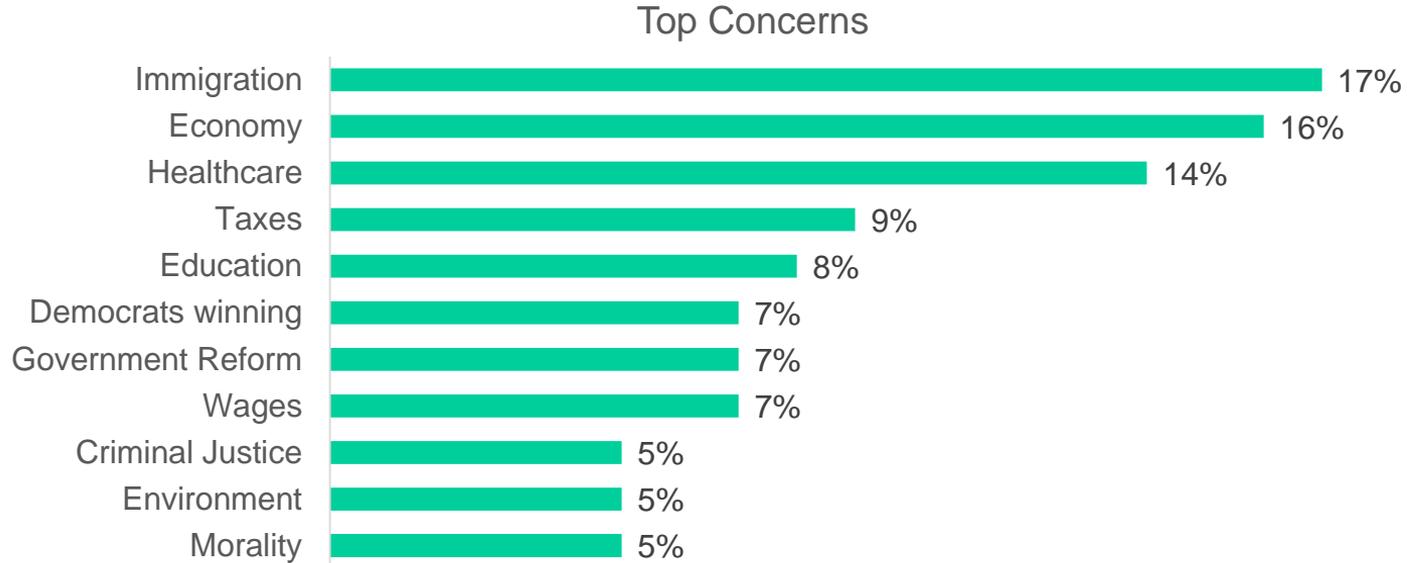
When thinking about the mid-term elections, which of the following issues are most important to you?

Issue	Percentage
Healthcare	63%
Economy	58%
Taxes/Budget	51%
Immigration	50%
Education	42%
Wages / Job Benefits	42%
Guns	38%
Civil Rights	35%
Criminal Justice / Public Safety	35%
Environment / Energy	34%
Government Reform	31%
Defense / Veterans	31%
Foreign Policy	30%
Social Services	29%
Infrastructure / Transportation	27%
Housing	22%
Drug Policy	21%
Abortion / Contraception	21%
Arts / Culture	8%
None of the above	3%

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Top 8 midterm issues

Ranked by Importance

Taxes/Budget

• Americans find Taxes/Budget to be among the most important midterm issues, but are less informed on the issue

Education & Wages/Job Benefits

• Americans find Education & Wages/Job Benefits to be among the most important midterm issues, but are unaware of their candidates' position on the issue

	Midterm Election Issues		
Midterm Issue	Importance	Informed on Issue	Know Candidate's Position on Issue
Healthcare	63%	73%	59%
Economy	58%	72%	60%
Taxes/Budget	51%	64%	58%
Immigration	50%	73%	65%
Education	42%	66%	55%
Wages/Job Benefits	42%	67%	55%
Guns	38%	73%	62%
Civil Rights	35%	67%	59%

Important but uninformed, taxes/budget should be a midterm focus
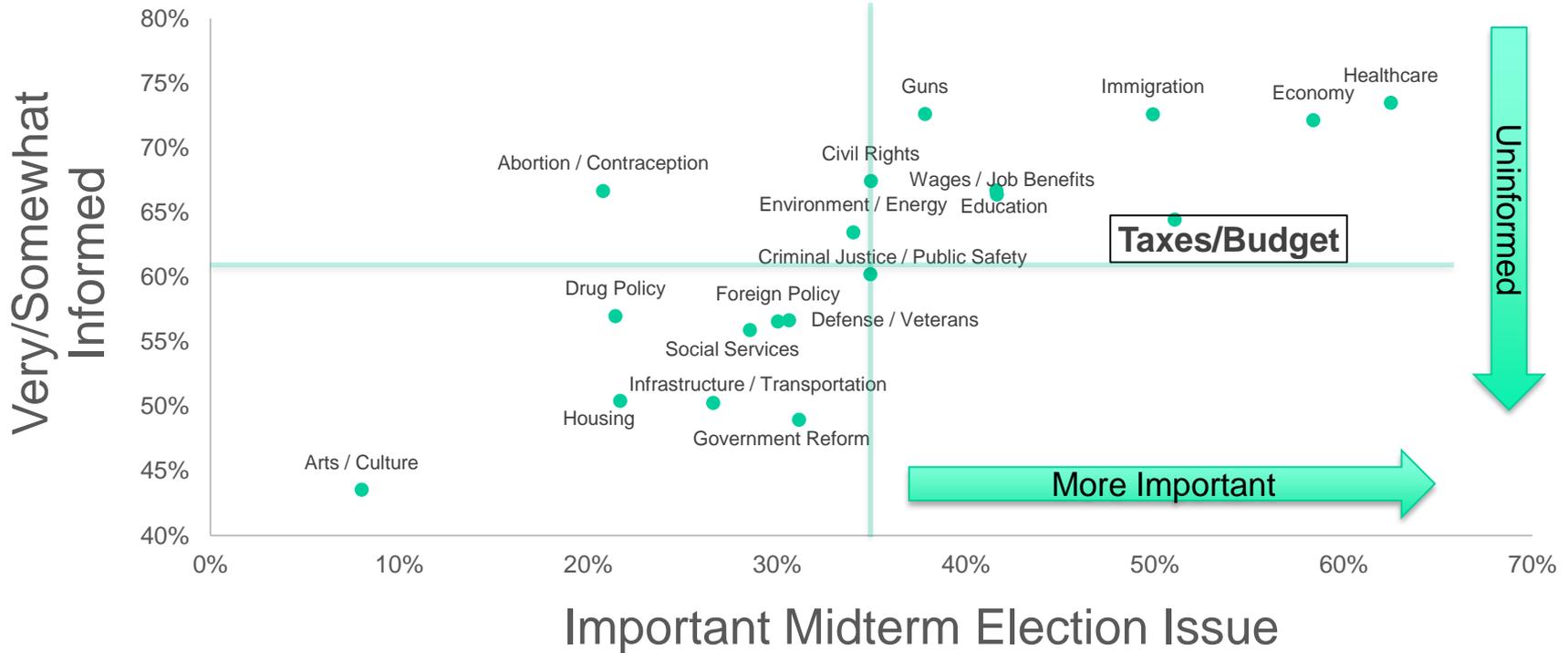
Scatter plot — Y-axis: Very/Somewhat Informed (40% to 80%); X-axis: Important Midterm Election Issue (0% to 70%). Arrows: "Uninformed" (pointing down) and "More Important" (pointing right).

Data points: Guns, Immigration, Economy, Healthcare (~72–74%); Civil Rights, Abortion / Contraception, Wages / Job Benefits, Education (~66–68%); Environment / Energy (~64%); Taxes/Budget (~64%); Criminal Justice / Public Safety (~60%); Drug Policy, Foreign Policy, Defense / Veterans (~56–57%); Social Services; Infrastructure / Transportation, Housing (~50%); Government Reform (~49%); Arts / Culture (~44%).

Americans believe education & wages/job benefits are important, but do NOT know their candidates' positions on these issues
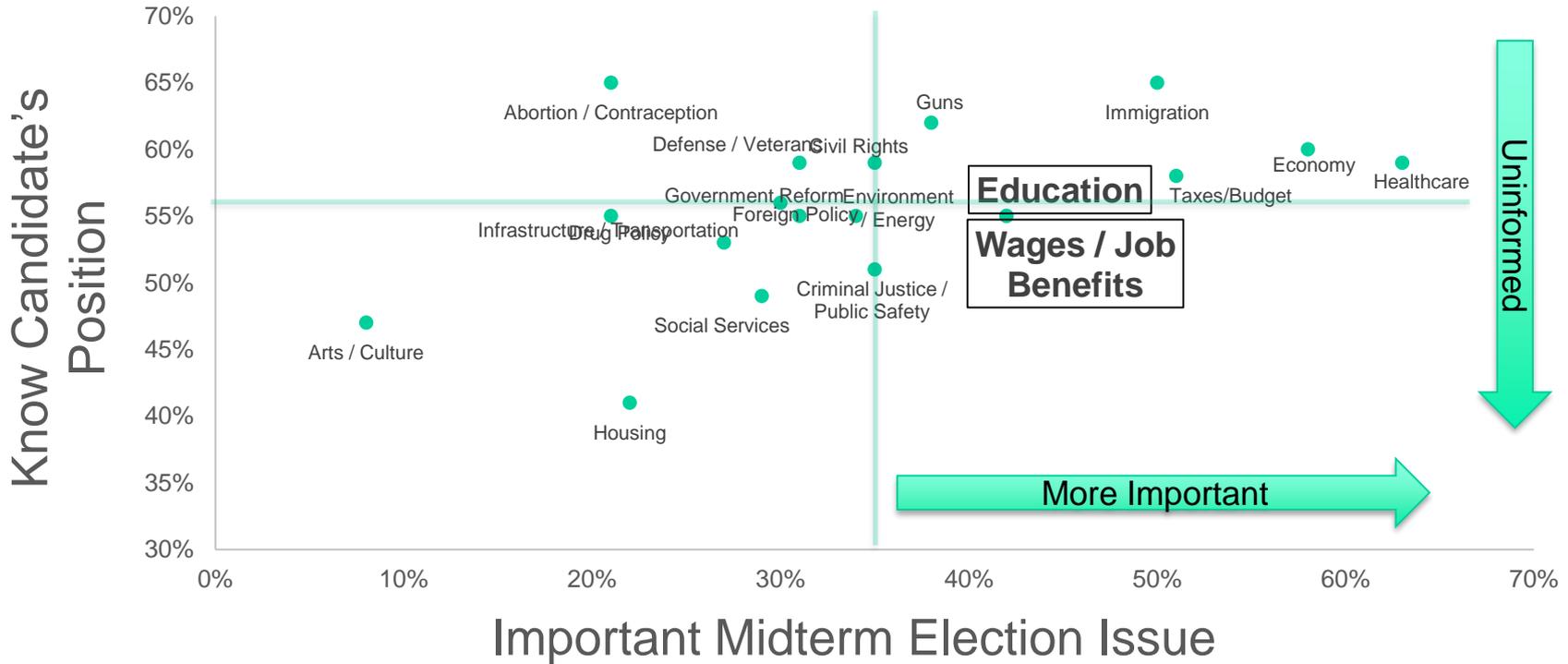
Scatter plot with Y-axis "Know Candidate's Position" (30% to 70%) and X-axis "Important Midterm Election Issue" (0% to 70%). Data points labeled: Abortion / Contraception, Defense / Veterans, Civil Rights, Guns, Immigration, Government Reform, Environment / Energy, Economy, Healthcare, Education, Taxes/Budget, Foreign Policy, Infrastructure / Transportation, Drug Policy, Wages / Job Benefits, Criminal Justice / Public Safety, Social Services, Arts / Culture, Housing. Arrows labeled "Uninformed" (pointing down) and "More Important" (pointing right).

About half of Americans say they know who is running in their district

However, most Americans are undecided

Do you know the congressional district you live in?

| 53% | 47% |

Do you know who is running for Senate in your state?

| 61% | 39% |

■ Yes   ■ No

Do you know who is running for Congress in your district?

| 54% | 46% |

Younger Americans Less Often know who is Running for Congress in their District
Ages 18-49 – 46% | Ages 50+ - 63%

Do you already know who you will be voting for in Congress in the midterm elections?

I do not plan on voting 14%

Yes 46%

No 40%
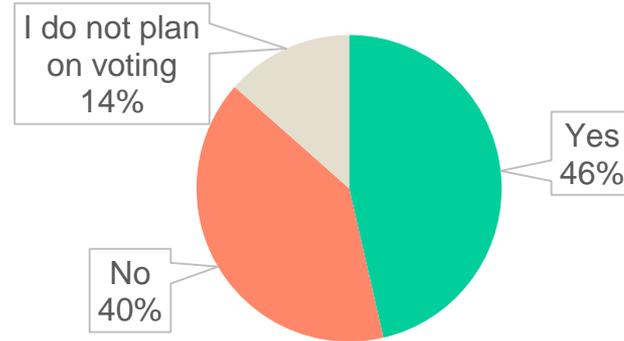
Independents are Least Likely To Know who they are Voting For
Independents – 51%
(Dem – 38%, Rep – 35%)

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Americans believe they use data to inform their vote more than others

Those who don't use data don't need it, don't vote, or don't trust it

Personally use Data

Yes
61%

No
39%
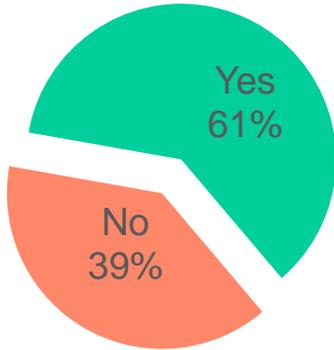
Other People use Data

No
52%

Yes
48%
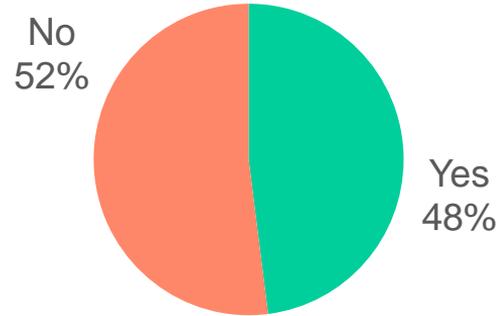
"I don't trust it"

"I feel that it is biased information"

"I have all the information I need from national ads"
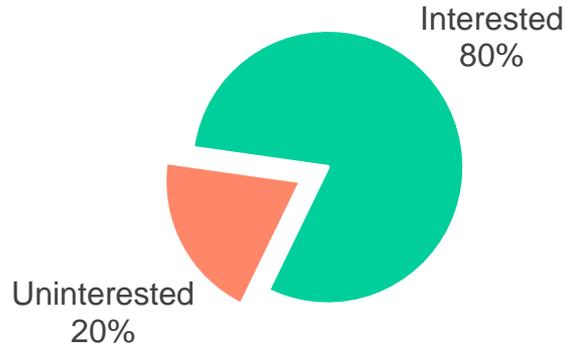
"Just don't have the time or resources"

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Americans overwhelmingly want data to help choose candidates, and they support candidates explaining positions with data

Interest in Candidate Positions alongside Data about Important Election Issues

Interested 80%

Uninterested 20%

Voting Intent for **Unknown Political Candidate** If Used Data

| 20% | 43% | 6% | 2% | 29% |

- Much more likely
- Somewhat more likely
- Somewhat less likely
- Much less likely
- It wouldn't impact my likelihood to vote for them
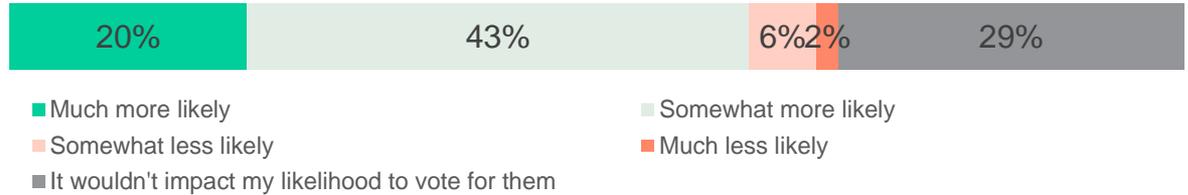
Voting Intent for **Congressional Candidate** If Used Data

| 29% | 38% | 3% | 1% | 28% |

Registered voters more "sensitive" to candidate's use of data
Much/somewhat more likely to vote for candidate
Unknown Candidate: | Their Congressman:
Registered voters: 66% | Registered voters: 71%
Not registered: 45% | Not registered: 49%

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Only about 1/3 of Americans think their Member of Congress or Senator use data to explain their positions on important issues

My Representative

My Senator

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DEMOGRAPHICS

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
18-24	11%	11%
25-34	18%	18%
35-44	16%	16%
45-54	18%	17%
55-64	17%	17%
65+	20%	20%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
Male	48%	48%
Female	52%	52%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
Less than HS degree	6%	8%
HS degree to less than 4 year college degree	61%	58%
4 year college degree or more	33%	33%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
White	65%	63%
Black or African American	12%	12%
Hispanic	15%	15%
Other	8%	10%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
Less than $75k	51%	48%
$75k+	43%	44%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
Yes	88%	85%
No	11%	13%
Don't know	1%	2%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
Conservative	29%	31%
Moderate	38%	34%
Liberal	26%	24%
Don't know	7%	10%

	Total 2017	Total 2018
Base	2521	2501
DEMOCRAT	40%	39%
REPUBLICAN	31%	31%
Independent	24%	23%

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