



# CONSUMER VIEWS ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS SURVEY

July 2021



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# KEY FINDINGS

# Key Findings

**Three in four voters age 50+ take at least one prescription medication,** and more than half overall are at least somewhat concerned about affording prescription drugs for themselves or their family over the next few years. A full 19% said they would not fill a prescription that their doctor had given them. Cost is the top reason for people deciding *not* to fill a prescription provided by their doctor.

**Two-thirds believe that the prices of medications in the United States are higher than in other countries.**

**Voters overwhelmingly agree that this year, it is important for the president and Congress to agree on solutions to lower prescription drug prices.** Successful government negotiations with drug companies for the COVID-19 vaccine has made many voters more likely to agree that the government should negotiate for lower prices for other drugs.

**Support for various proposals to lower prescription drug prices is very high,** with agreement across the ideological spectrum that Medicare should be allowed to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices. Voters across party lines would view a member of Congress *more favorably* if they supported legislation to lower prescription drug prices.



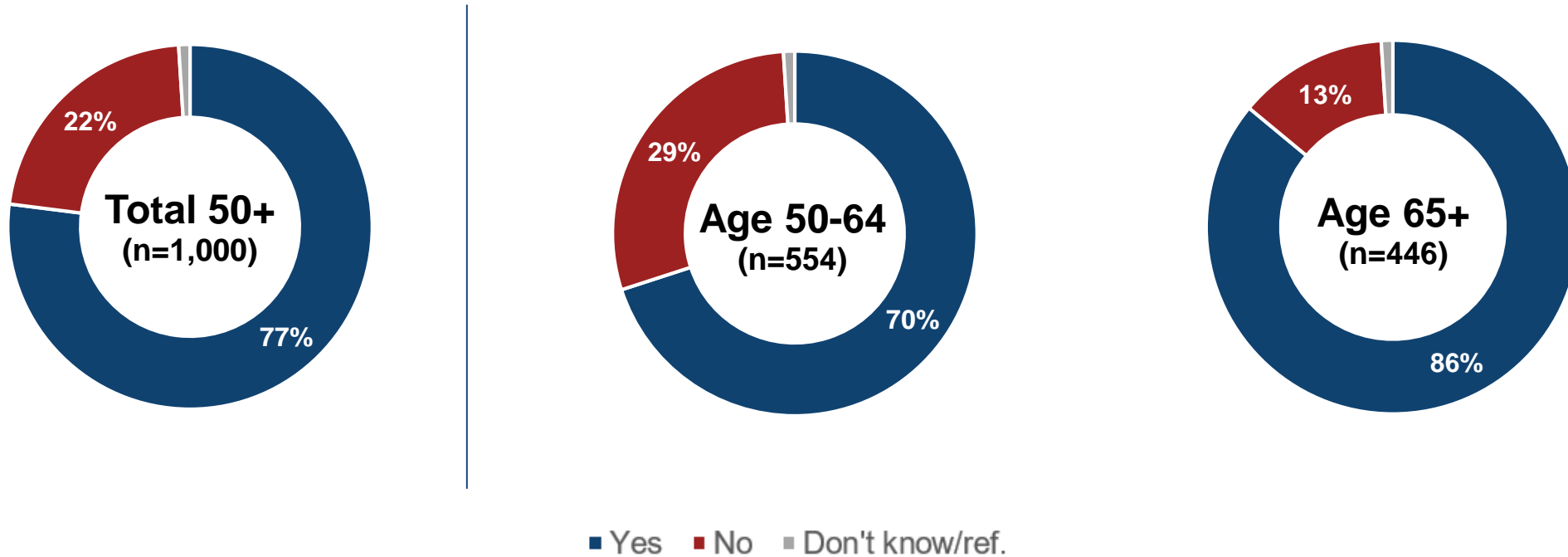


# PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE AND PERCEPTIONS

# Most registered voters 50-plus take prescriptions regularly.

Regular prescription drug use significantly increases with age, with the majority (86%) of those age 65 and older regularly taking at least one prescription medication.

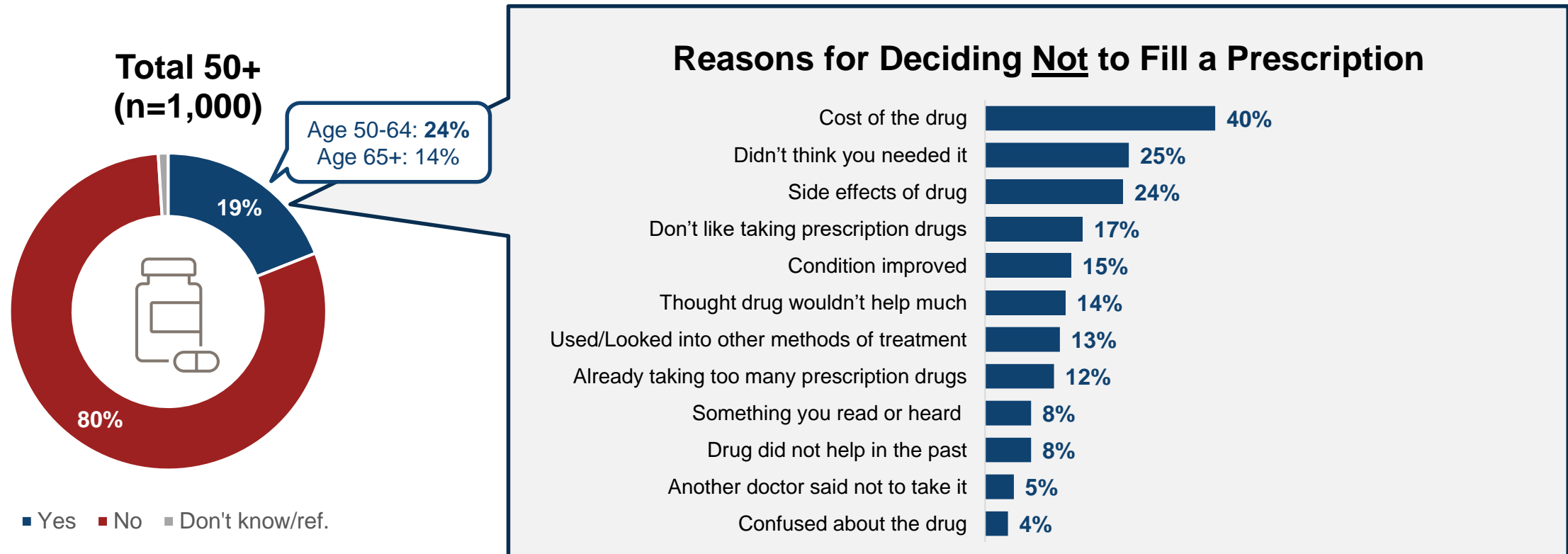
## Regular Prescription Drug Use, by Age



Q1. Do you currently take prescription medication on a regular basis, for example daily, weekly, or monthly? (Base: All respondents)

# In the past two years, one-fifth decided not to fill a prescription.

Cost is the primary reason for deciding not to fill a prescription, in addition to a variety of other reasons (e.g., didn't think it was needed, side effects of the drug, etc.).



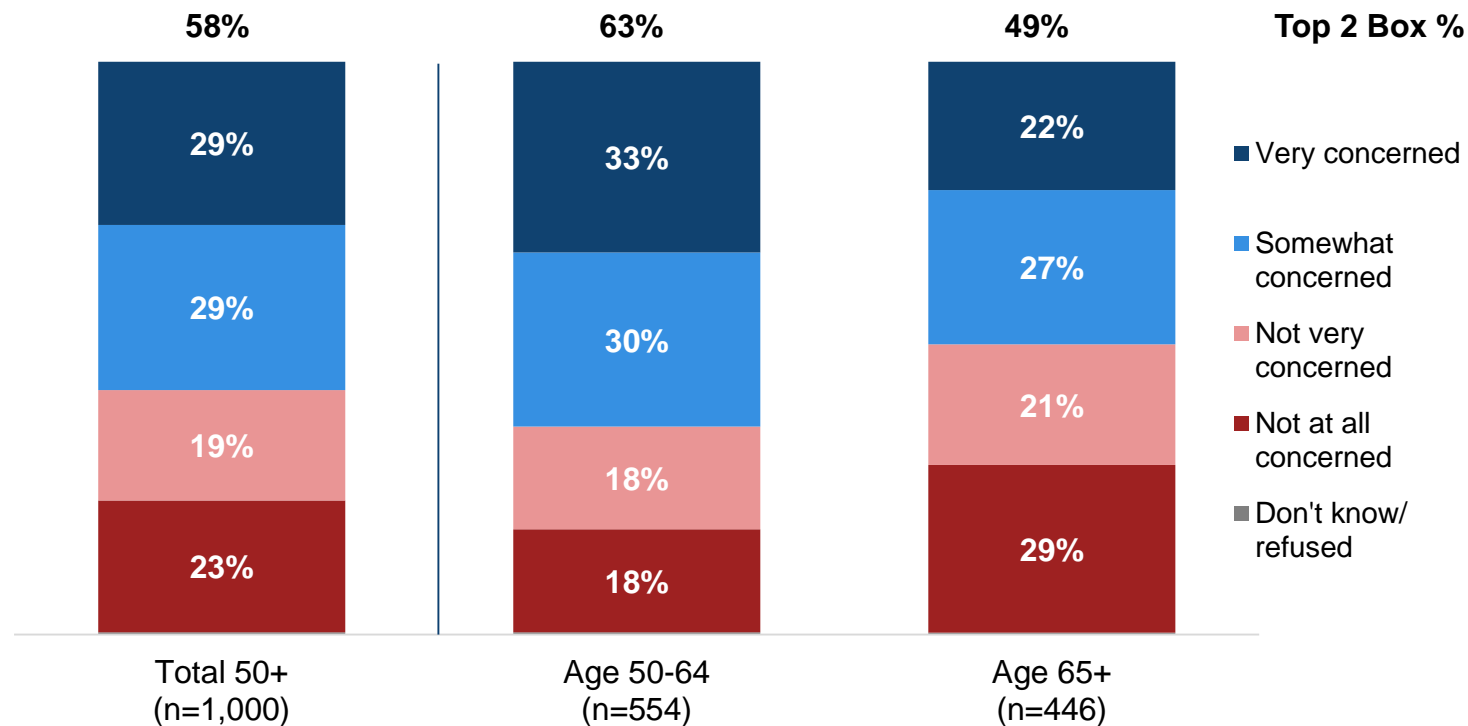
Q2. In the last two years, did you ever decide not to fill a prescription that your doctor had given you? (Base: All respondents)

Q3. What were the reasons you didn't fill your prescription? Please select all that apply. (Base: All respondents who decided not to fill a prescription (n=194))

# High levels of concern around affordability of prescription drugs

Registered voters age 50 to 64 are more likely than those age 65 and older to express concern about being able to afford prescriptions (63% very or somewhat concerned vs. 49%).

### Concern About Affordability of Prescriptions, by Age



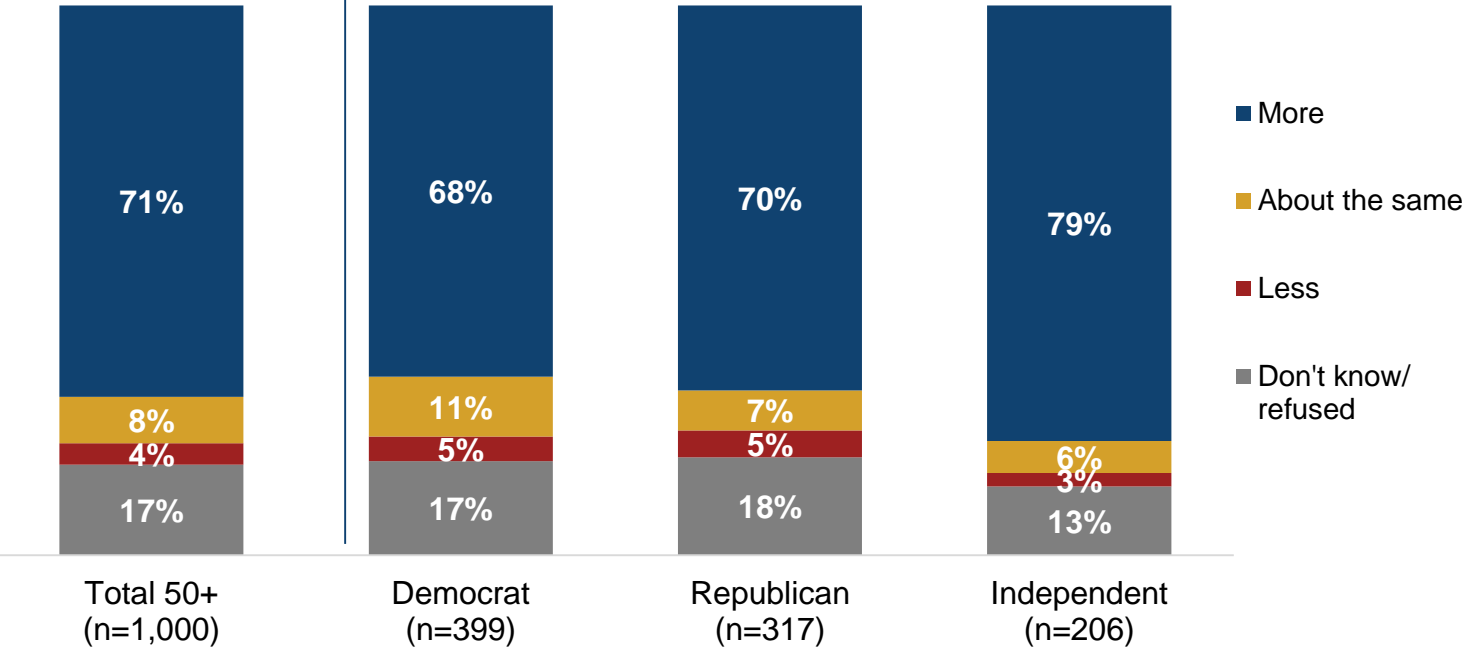
Q4. Thinking about the next few years, how concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of prescription medication you or a family member may need? (Base: All respondents)



# Across the ideological spectrum, voters believe U.S. consumers pay more for the same prescription drugs.

Independent voters are more likely than Democrats and Republicans to believe that U.S. consumers pay more for the same prescription drugs (79% vs 68% and 70%).

**Perceived Cost of Drugs Versus Other Countries, by Political Party**

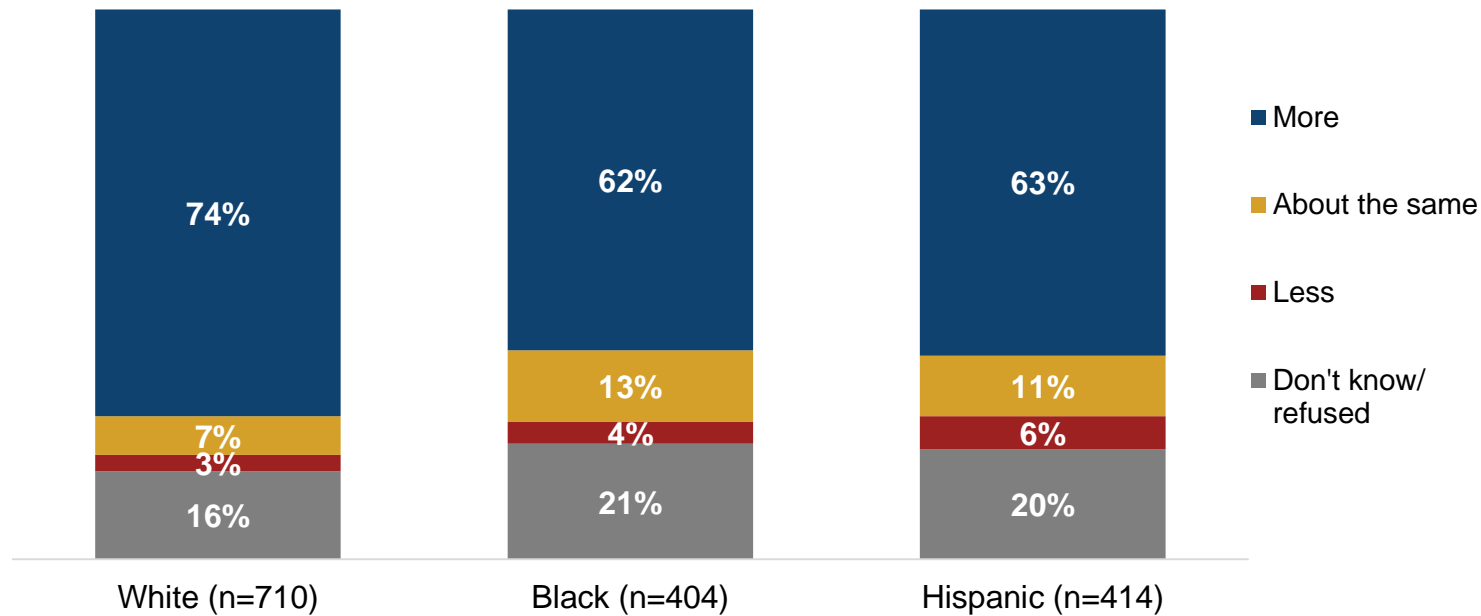


Q5. From what you may know, or had to guess, do consumers in the United States pay more, the same or less for the same drugs than consumers in other countries (such as the United Kingdom, France, and Italy)?  
(Base: All respondents)

# Similarly, voters in all racial/ethnic groups believe U.S. consumers pay more for the same drugs than consumers in other countries do.

Yet, white voters are more likely than Black or Hispanic voters to believe that U.S. consumers pay more (74% vs. 62% and 63%).

### Perceived Cost of Drugs Versus Other Countries, by Race/Ethnicity



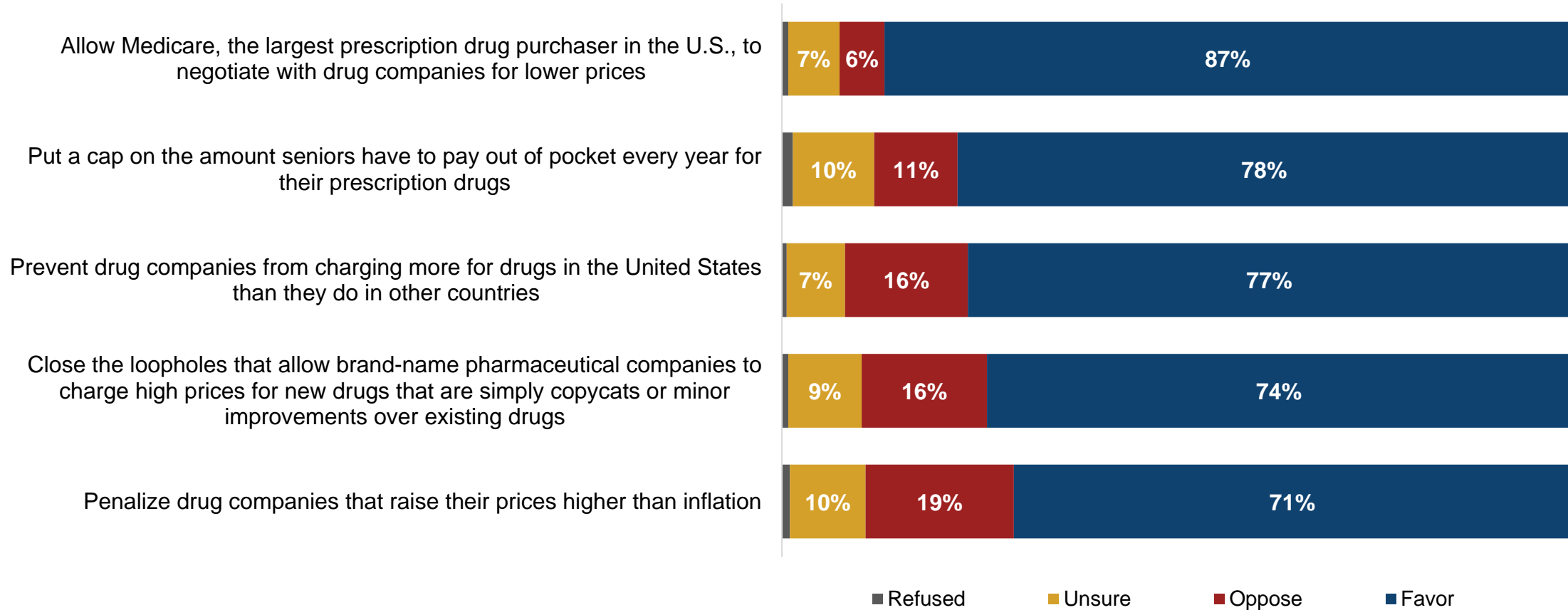
Q5. From what you may know, or had to guess, do consumers in the United States pay more, the same or less for the same drugs than consumers in other countries (such as the United Kingdom, France, and Italy)?  
(Base: All respondents)



## POLICY AND INNOVATION

# Majority support allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug companies on price, with strong support for other proposals.

## Support for Proposals To Lower Prescription Drug Prices



Q6. The following are proposals that have been made to lower the prices of prescription drugs. Please indicate whether you would favor or oppose each. If you are unsure, please indicate that.  
 (Base: All respondents)

# Support is consistently high across party lines for all five legislative proposals...

## Support for Proposals to Lower Prescription Drug Prices, by Political Party (Percent 'Favor')

<i>By Political Party</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Independent</b>
	<i>n=1,000</i>	<i>n=399</i>	<i>n=317</i>	<i>n=206</i>
Allow Medicare, the largest prescription drug purchaser in the U.S., to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices	87%	88%	85%	89%
Put a cap on the amount seniors have to pay out of pocket every year for their prescription drugs	78%	80%	74%	77%
Prevent drug companies from charging more for drugs in the United States than they do in other countries	77%	78%	75%	77%
Close the loopholes that allow brand-name pharmaceutical companies to charge high prices for new drugs that are simply copycats or minor improvements over existing drugs	74%	74%	75%	76%
Penalize drug companies that raise their prices higher than inflation	71%	73%	66%	71%

Q6. The following are proposals that have been made to lower the prices of prescription drugs. Please indicate whether you would favor or oppose each. If you are unsure, please indicate that.  
(Base: All respondents)

# ...with minor variations in support seen across racial/ethnic groups.

## Support for Proposals To Lower Prescription Drug Prices, by Race/Ethnicity (Percent ‘Favor’)

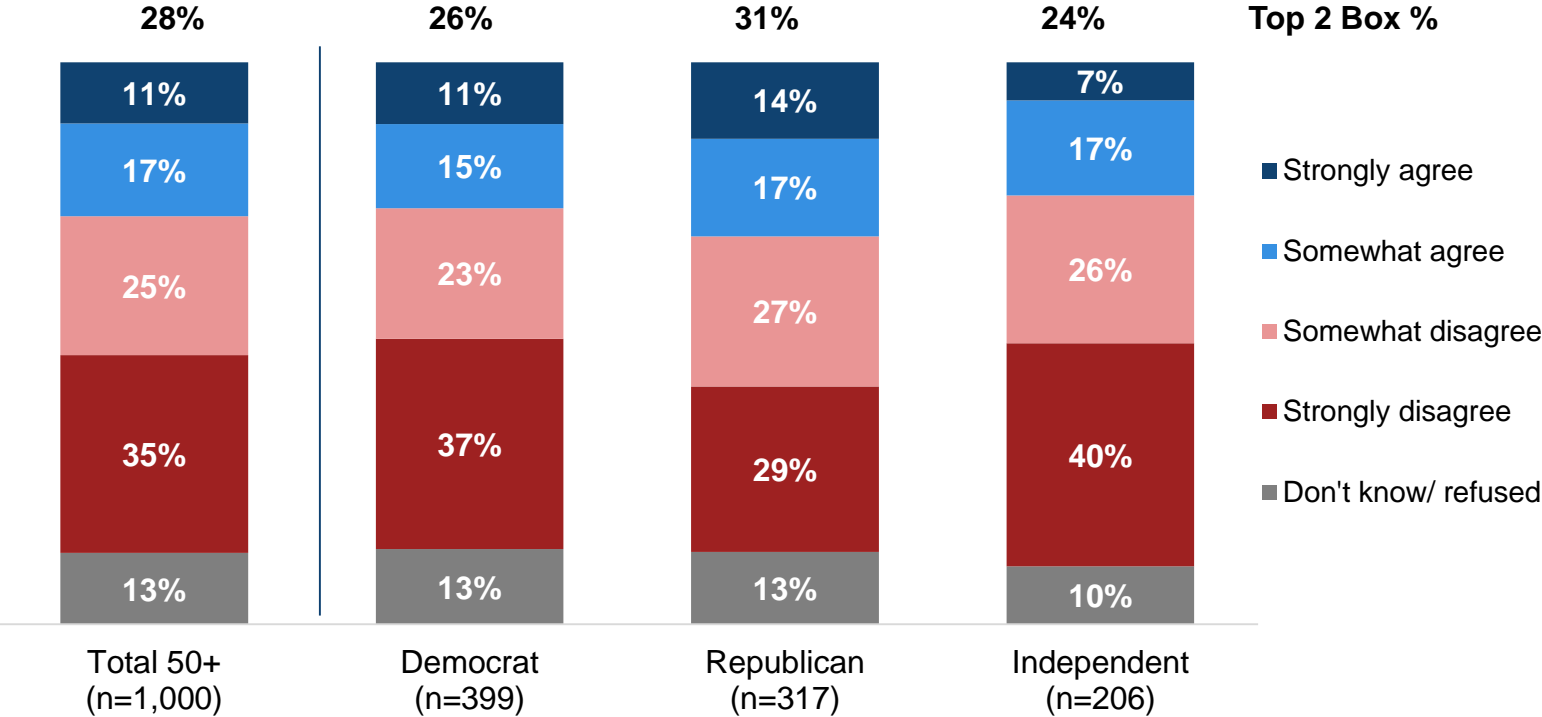
<i>By Race/Ethnicity</i>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
	<i>n=710</i>	<i>n=404</i>	<i>n=414</i>
Allow Medicare, the largest prescription drug purchaser in the U.S., to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices	87%	82%	84%
Put a cap on the amount seniors have to pay out of pocket every year for their prescription drugs	78%	81%	77%
Prevent drug companies from charging more for drugs in the United States than they do in other countries	78%	76%	80%
Close the loopholes that allow brand-name pharmaceutical companies to charge high prices for new drugs that are simply copycats or minor improvements over existing drugs	76%	69%	76%
Penalize drug companies that raise their prices higher than inflation	71%	73%	75%

Q6. The following are proposals that have been made to lower the prices of prescription drugs. Please indicate whether you would favor or oppose each. If you are unsure, please indicate that.  
(Base: All respondents)

# Less than one-third of voters believe innovation will suffer if Medicare negotiates for lower prices...

Independents are more likely than Republicans to disagree with this statement (66% of Independents strongly or somewhat disagreeing with this statement, versus 56% of Republicans).

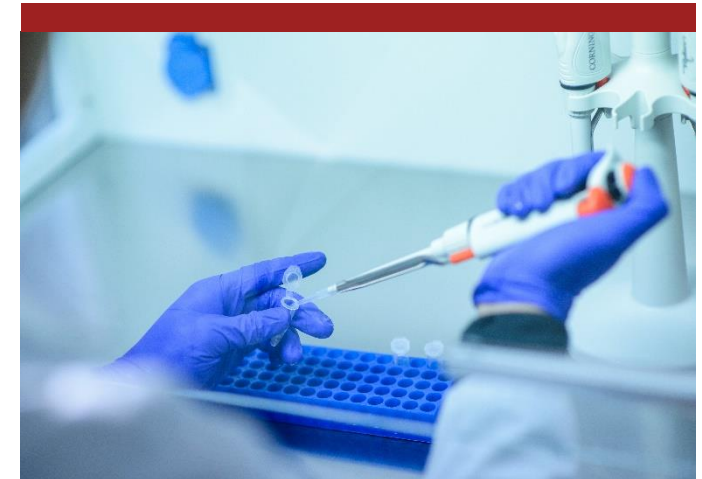
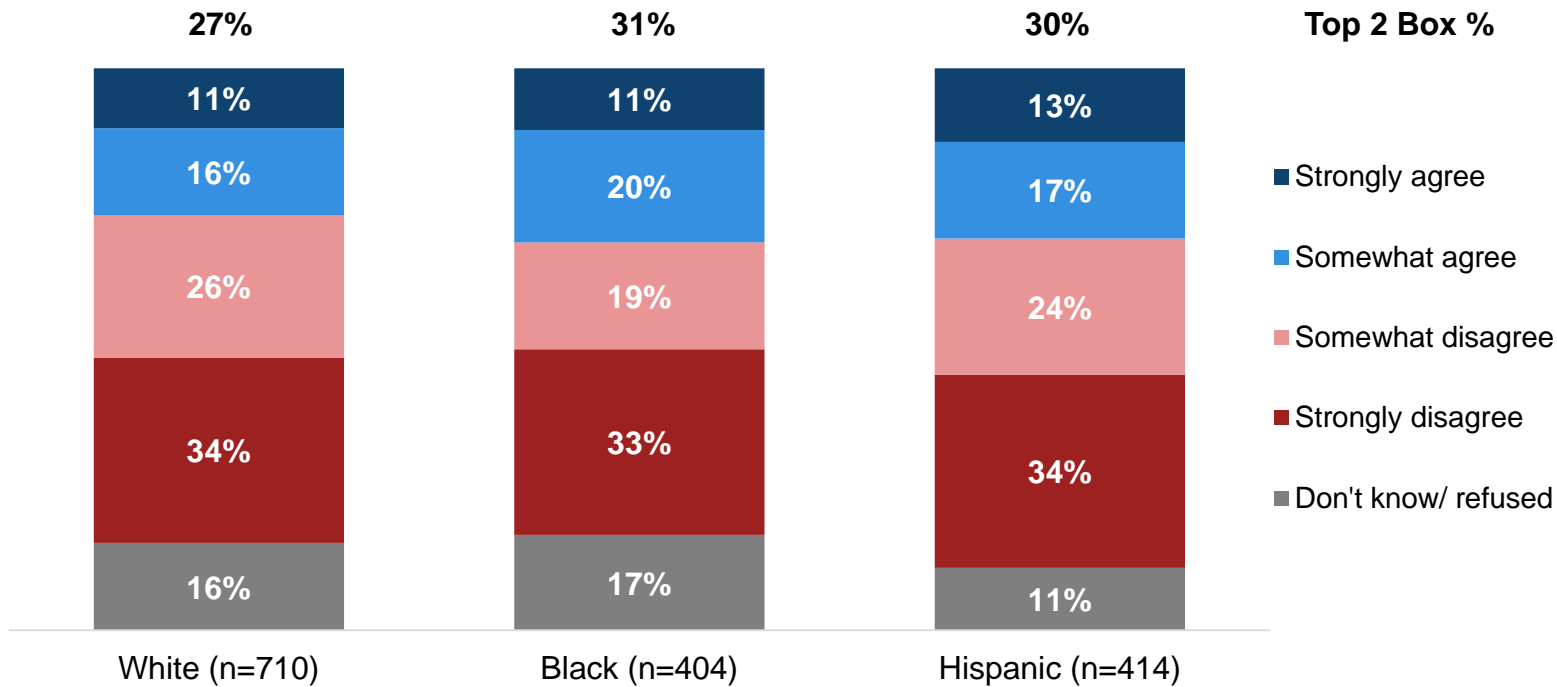
**Agreement that 'Innovation Will Suffer if Medicare Negotiates For Lower Prices'**



Q7. Some people say that if Congress passes legislation to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower prices, innovation will suffer, making it harder to get lifesaving drugs to market. Do you agree or disagree? (Base: All respondents)

# ...with similar views across racial/ethnic groups.

## Agreement that 'Innovation Will Suffer if Medicare Negotiates For Lower Prices'



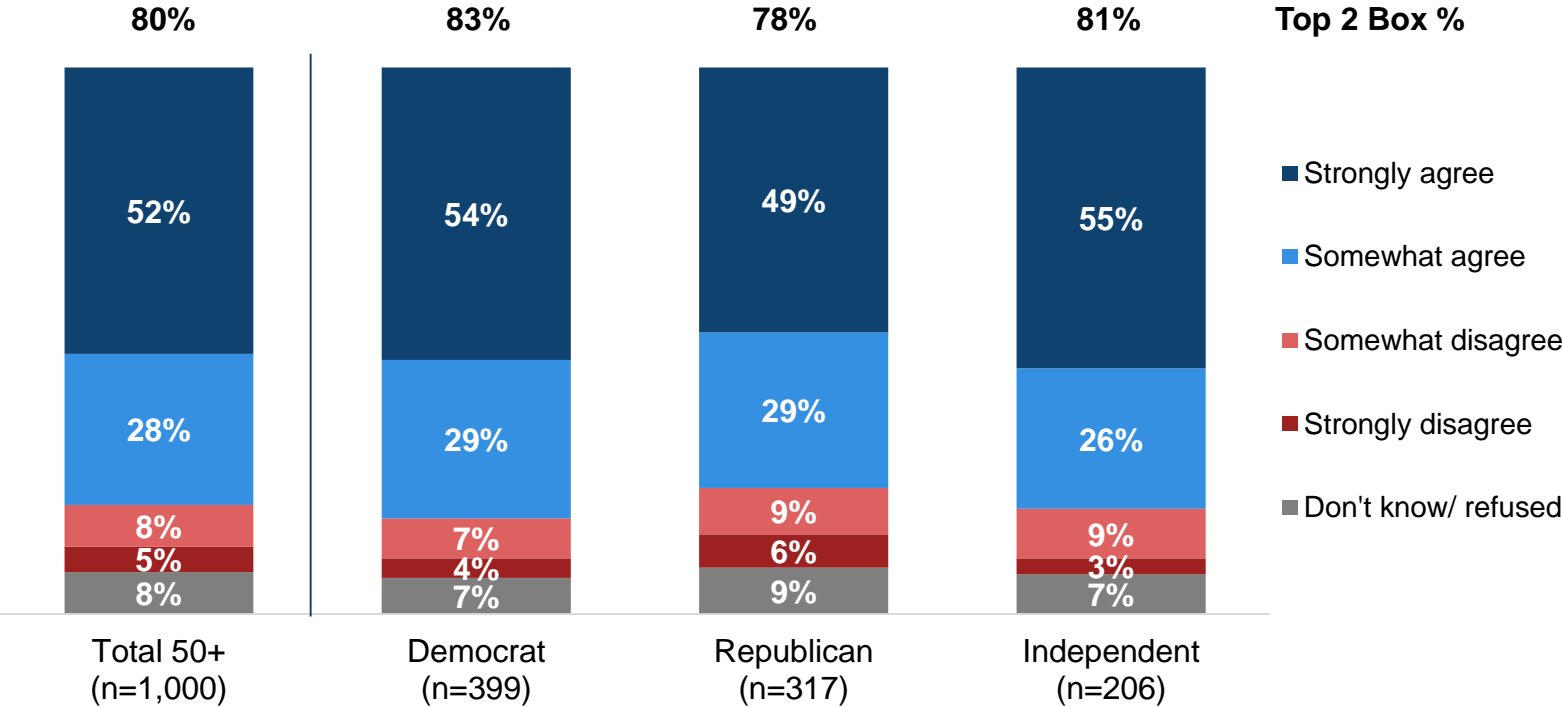
Q7. Some people say that if Congress passes legislation to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower prices, innovation will suffer, making it harder to get lifesaving drugs to market. Do you agree or disagree? (Base: All respondents)



# Majority agrees that drug prices can be lowered without affecting innovation.

Half strongly agree with this statement, with little variation across political parties.

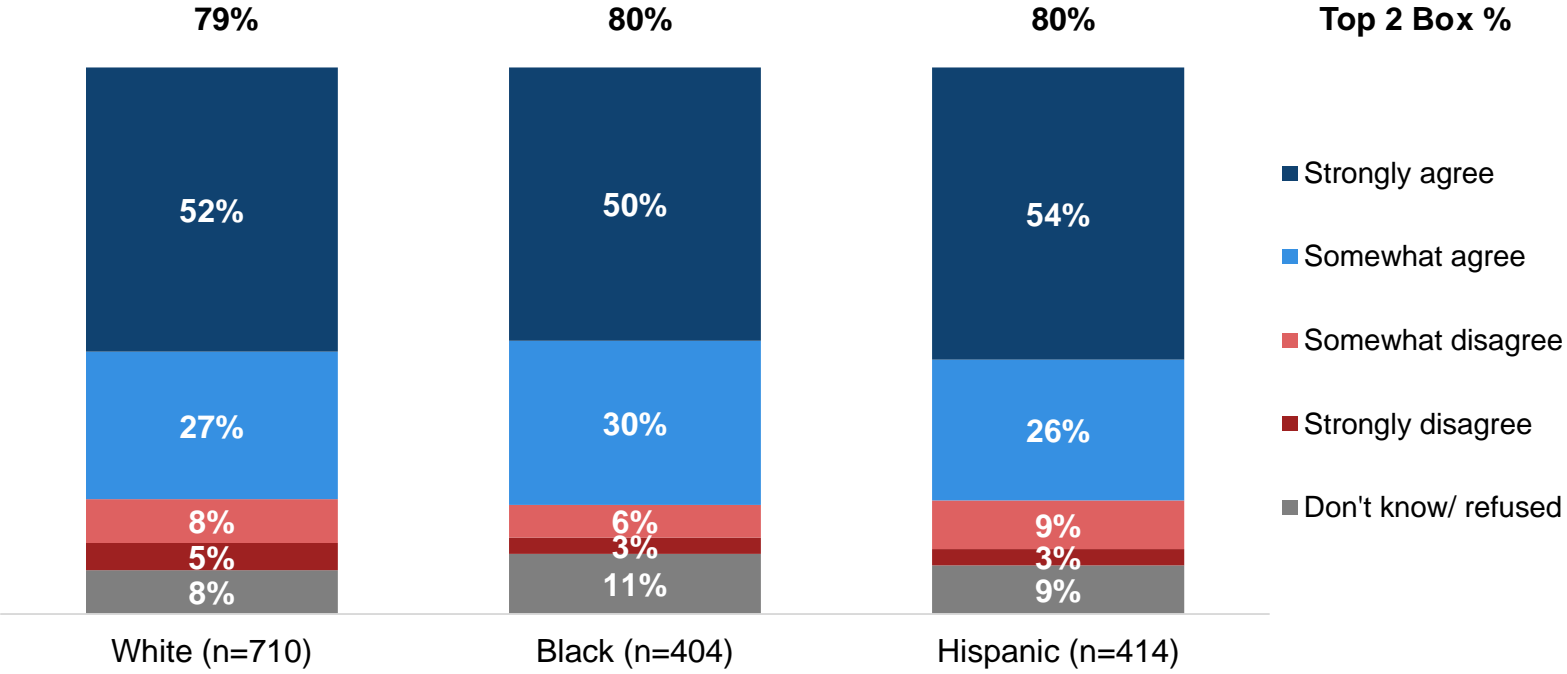
**Agreement That 'Drug Prices Can Be Lowered Without Harming Innovation Of New Medicines'**



Q8. Some people say that drug prices in the U.S., which are 3 times higher than those in other countries, can be lowered without harming innovation of new medicines. Do you agree or disagree?  
(Base: All respondents)

# ...and there is little variation in agreement across racial/ethnic groups.

## Agreement That 'Drug Prices Can Be Lowered Without Harming Innovation Of New Medicines'

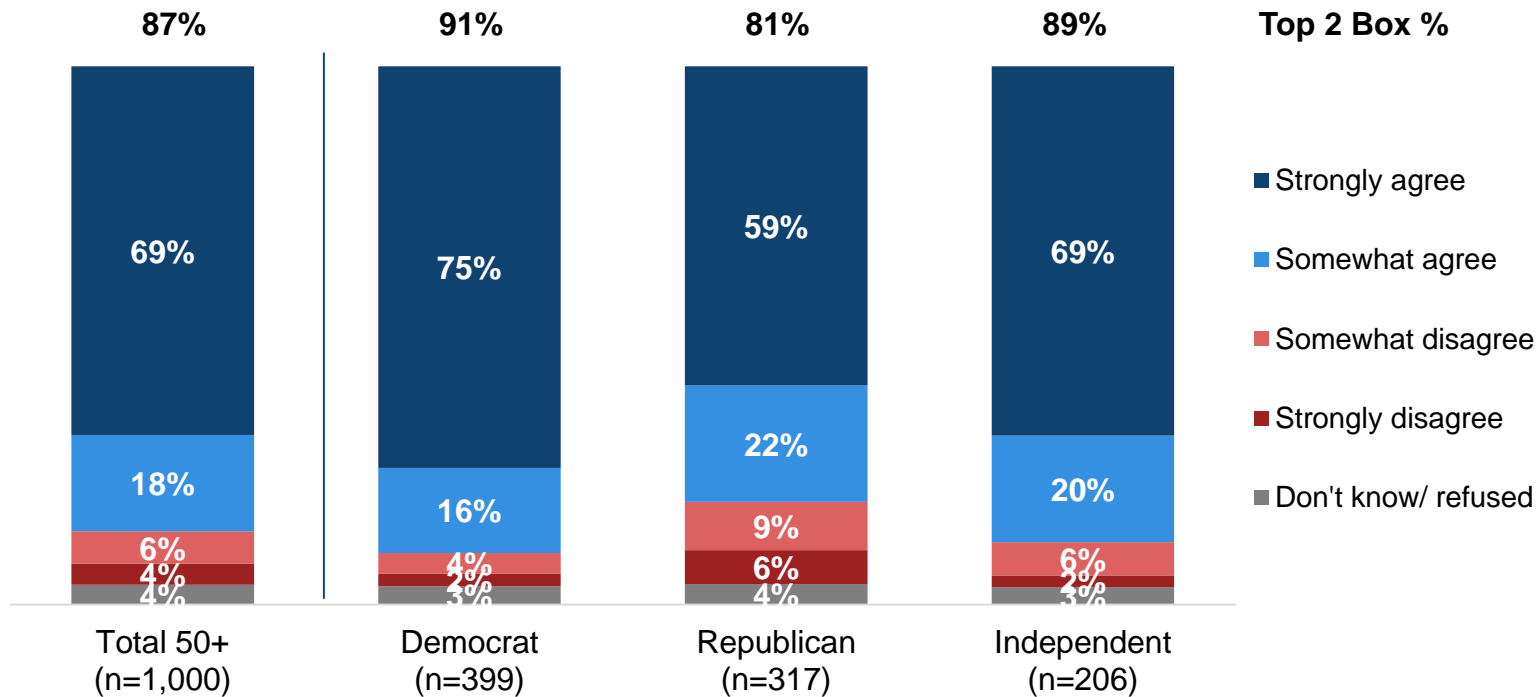


Q8. Some people say that drug prices in the U.S., which are 3 times higher than those in other countries, can be lowered without harming innovation of new medicines. Do you agree or disagree?  
(Base: All respondents)

# Strong agreement that Congress needs to take action to lower Rx prices.

Agreement is higher among Democrats than among Republicans (75% strongly agree vs. 59%).

**Agreement That 'Congress Needs To Take Action To Lower Drug Prices'**

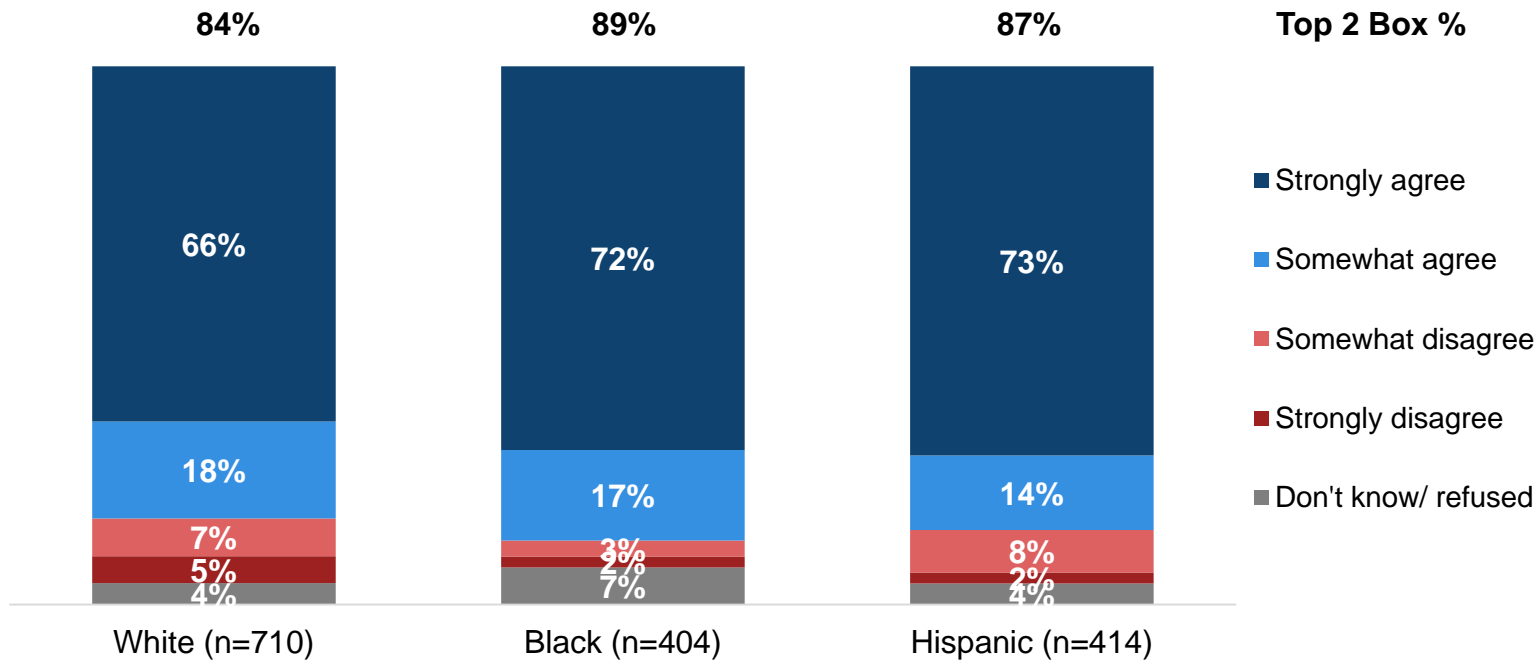


Q9. Some people say Congress needs to take action to lower drug prices because some people can't afford to buy medicine and pay for other necessities. Do you agree or disagree? (Base: All respondents)

# Consistent agreement that Congress needs to take action to lower Rx prices.

Agreement is higher among Black and Hispanic voters than among White voters (72% and 73% strongly agree vs. 66%).

## Agreement That 'Congress Needs To Take Action To Lower Drug Prices'

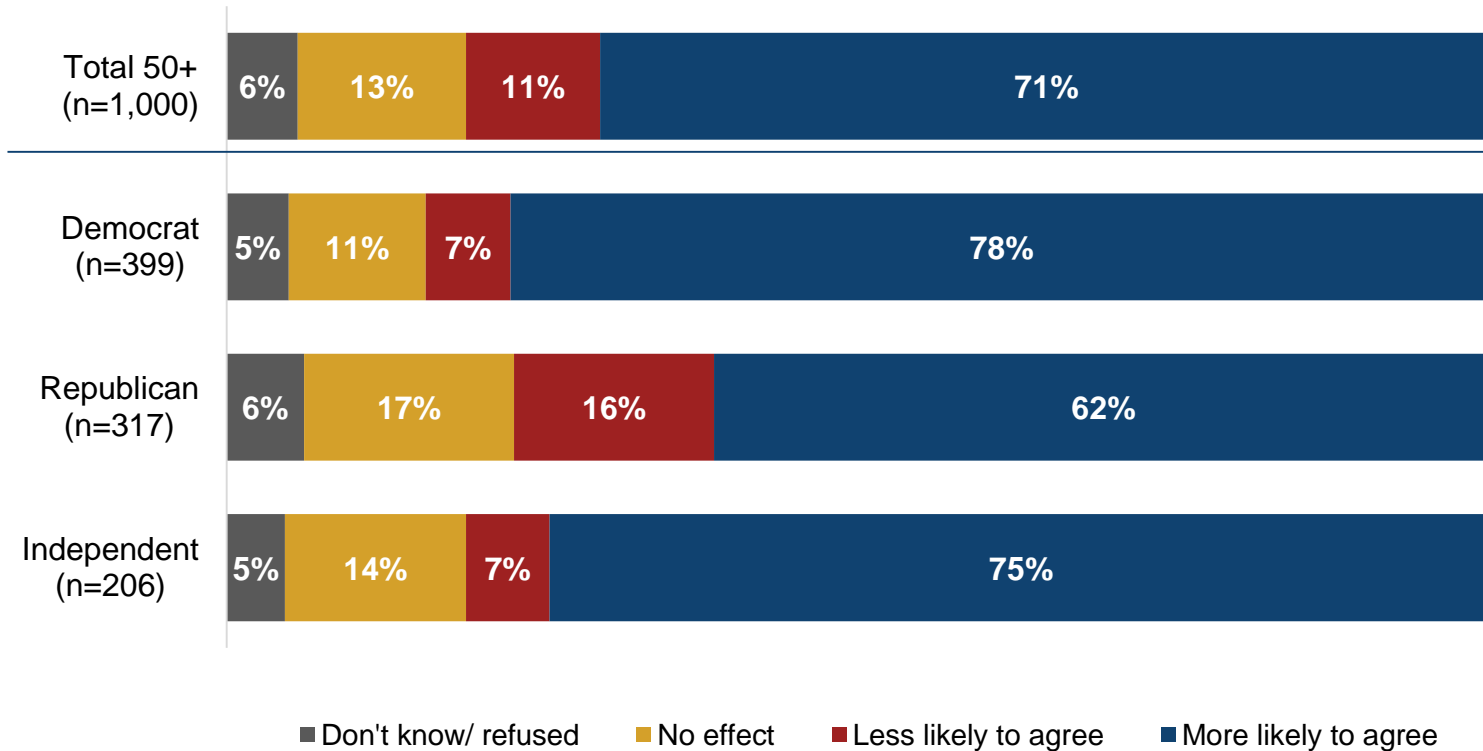


Q9. Some people say Congress needs to take action to lower drug prices because some people can't afford to buy medicine and pay for other necessities. Do you agree or disagree?  
(Base: All respondents)

# Successful COVID-19 vaccine negotiations increase voters' agreement that government should negotiate for lower prices for other drugs.

This agreement is higher among Democrats (78%) and Independents (75%) than among Republicans (62%).

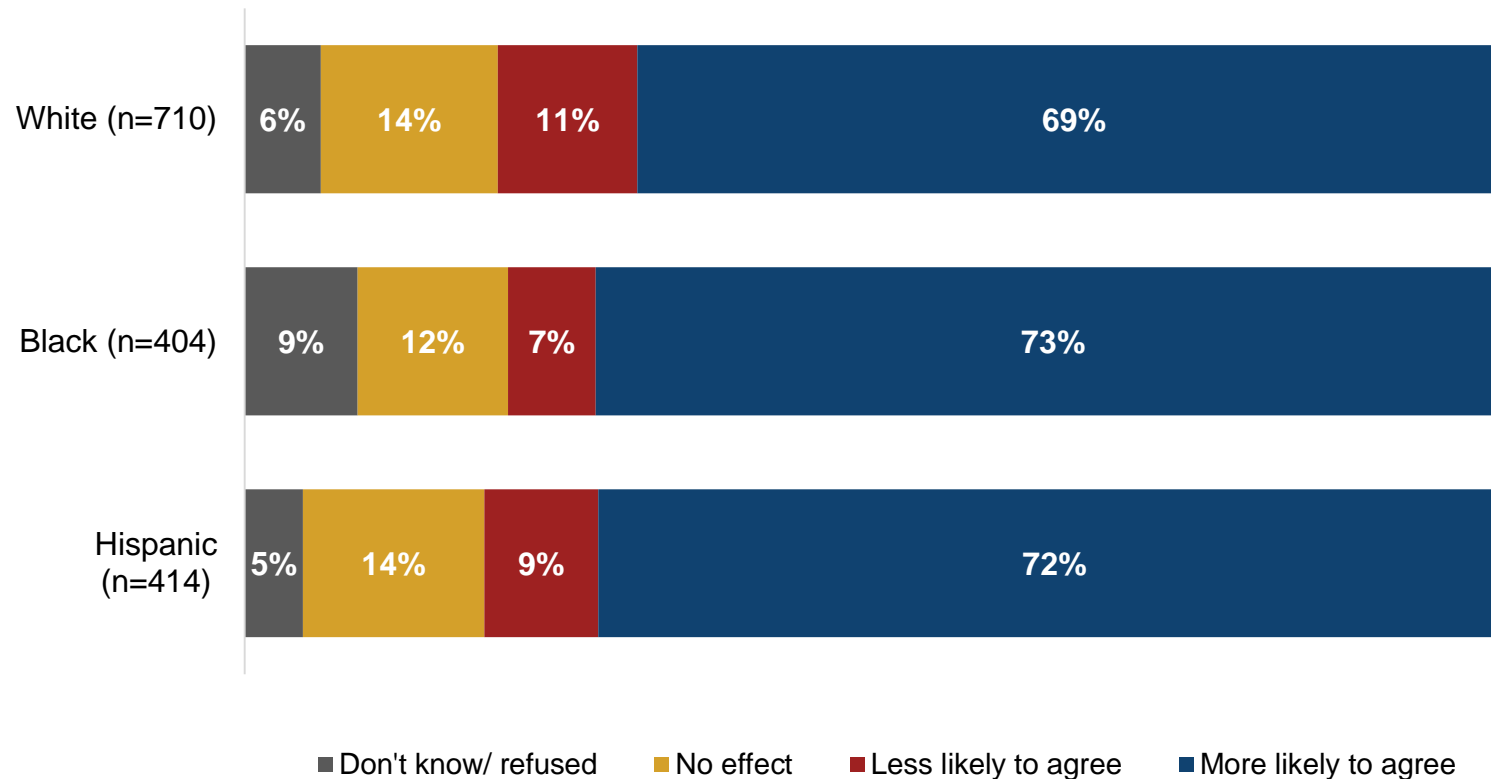
**Impact Of Successful COVID-19 Vaccine Negotiations On Agreement That Government Should Negotiate Price For Other Drugs**



Q10. The U.S. government just successfully negotiated with drug companies on the price for the COVID-19 vaccine. Does that make you more or less likely to agree that the government should negotiate for lower drug prices for people on Medicare?  
(Base: All respondents)

# Across racial/ethnic groups, seven in ten say recent successful COVID-19 vaccine negotiations made them more likely to agree that the government should negotiate for lower prices for other drugs.

### Impact Of Successful COVID-19 Vaccine Negotiations On Agreement That Government Should Negotiate Prices For Other Drugs

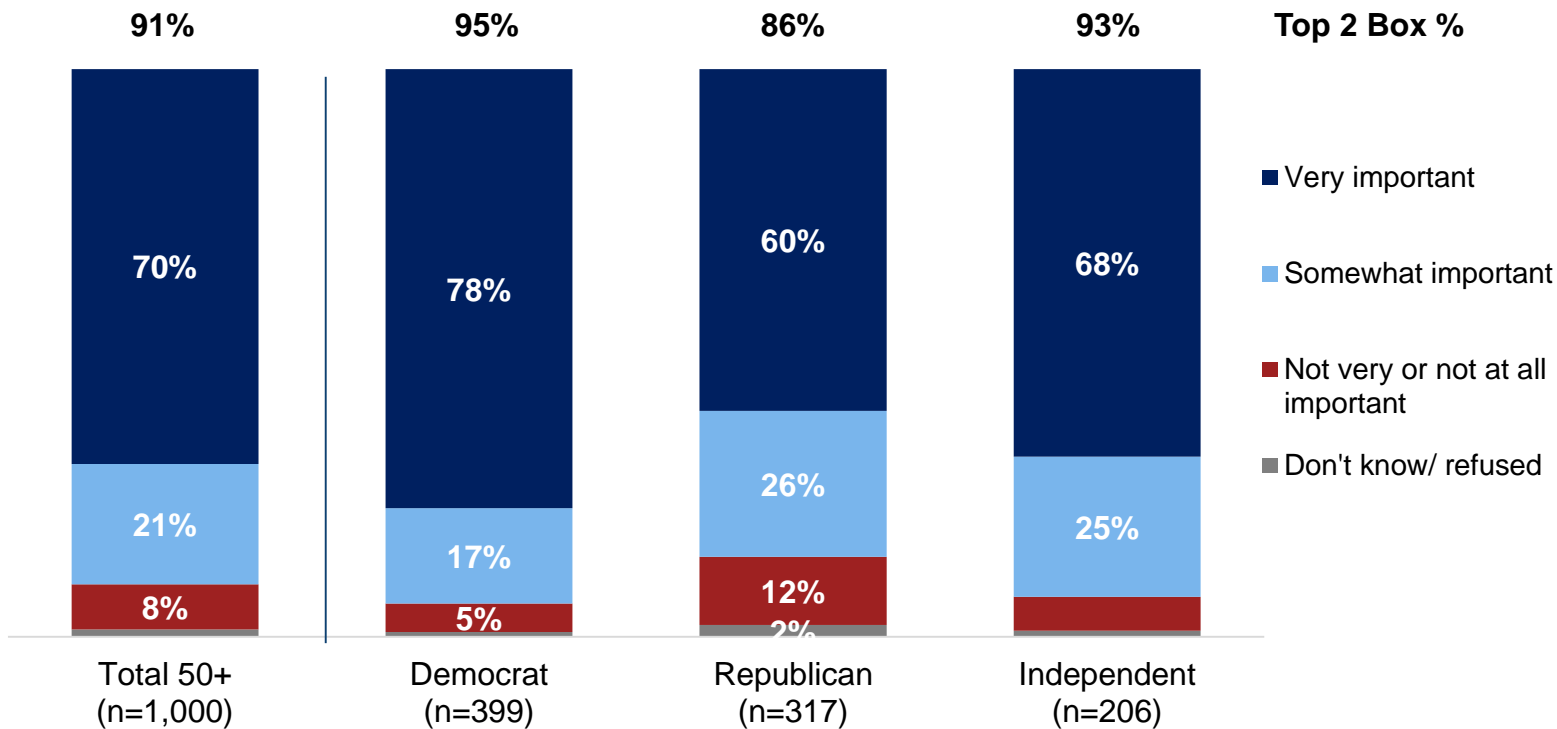


Q10. The U.S. government just successfully negotiated with drug companies on the price for the COVID-19 vaccine. Does that make you more or less likely to agree that the government should negotiate for lower drug prices for people on Medicare?  
(Base: All respondents)

# Voters underscore importance of having Presidential/Congressional agreement on lowering Rx drug prices this year.

Democrats (78%) are more likely than Independents (68%) or Republicans (60%) to feel this is very important.

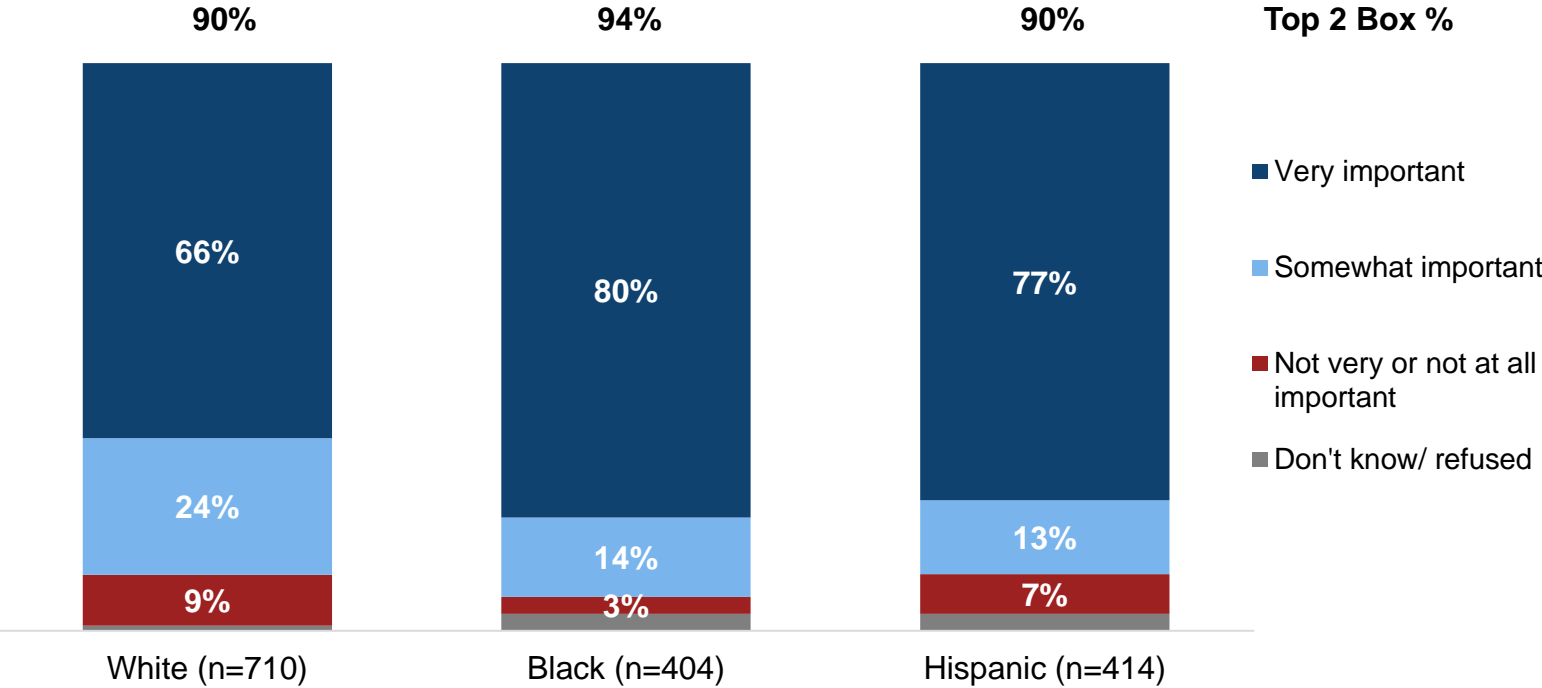
**Importance Of Government Agreeing On Solutions To Lower Drug Prices This Year, by Political Party**



Q11. How important is it for the president and Congress to agree on solutions to lower prescription drug prices this year? (Base: All respondents)

# Black and Hispanic voters are more likely than White voters to feel Presidential/Congressional agreement this year is very important.

Importance Of Government Agreeing On Solutions To Lower Drug Prices This Year, by Racial/Ethnic Group



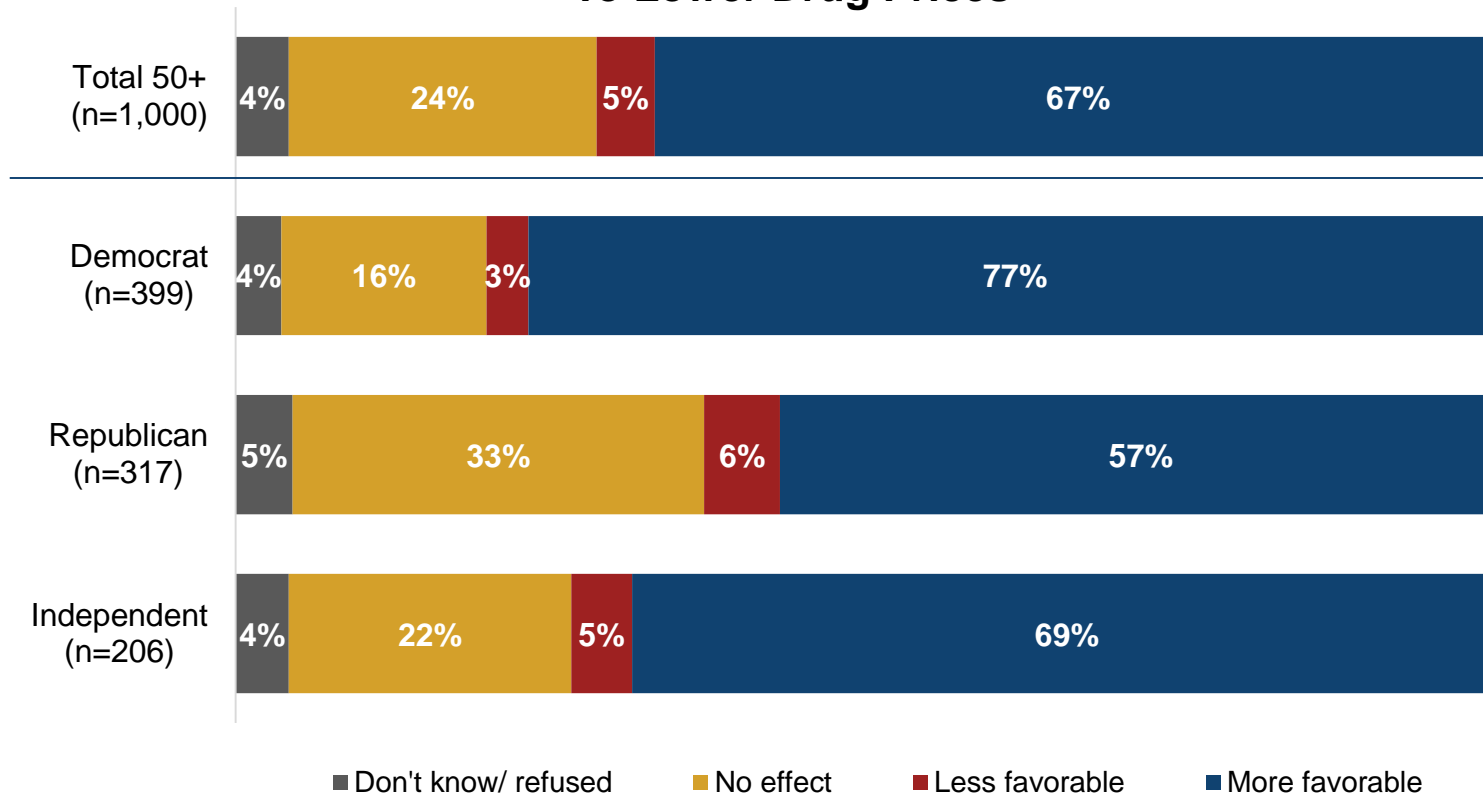
Q11. How important is it for the president and Congress to agree on solutions to lower prescription drug prices this year? (Base: All respondents)



# Most voters 50-plus would be more favorable to a member of Congress who supports legislation to lower drug prices.

This is particularly true among Democrats: Three-quarters (77%) would be more favorable to a member of Congress that supported this type of legislation (significantly higher than Independents (69%) or Republicans (57%)).

## Favor For Members of Congress That Support Legislation To Lower Drug Prices

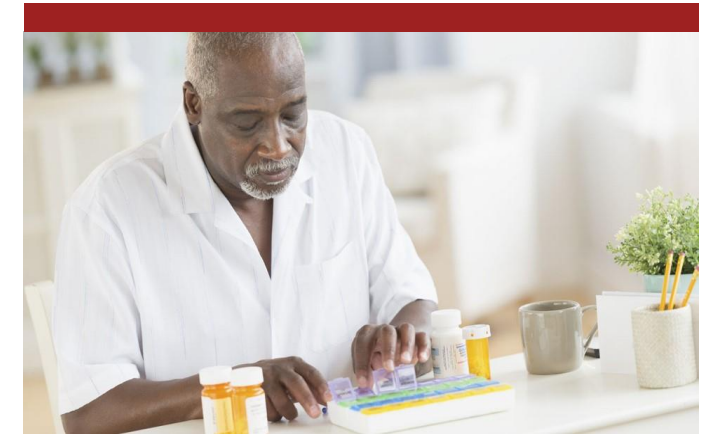
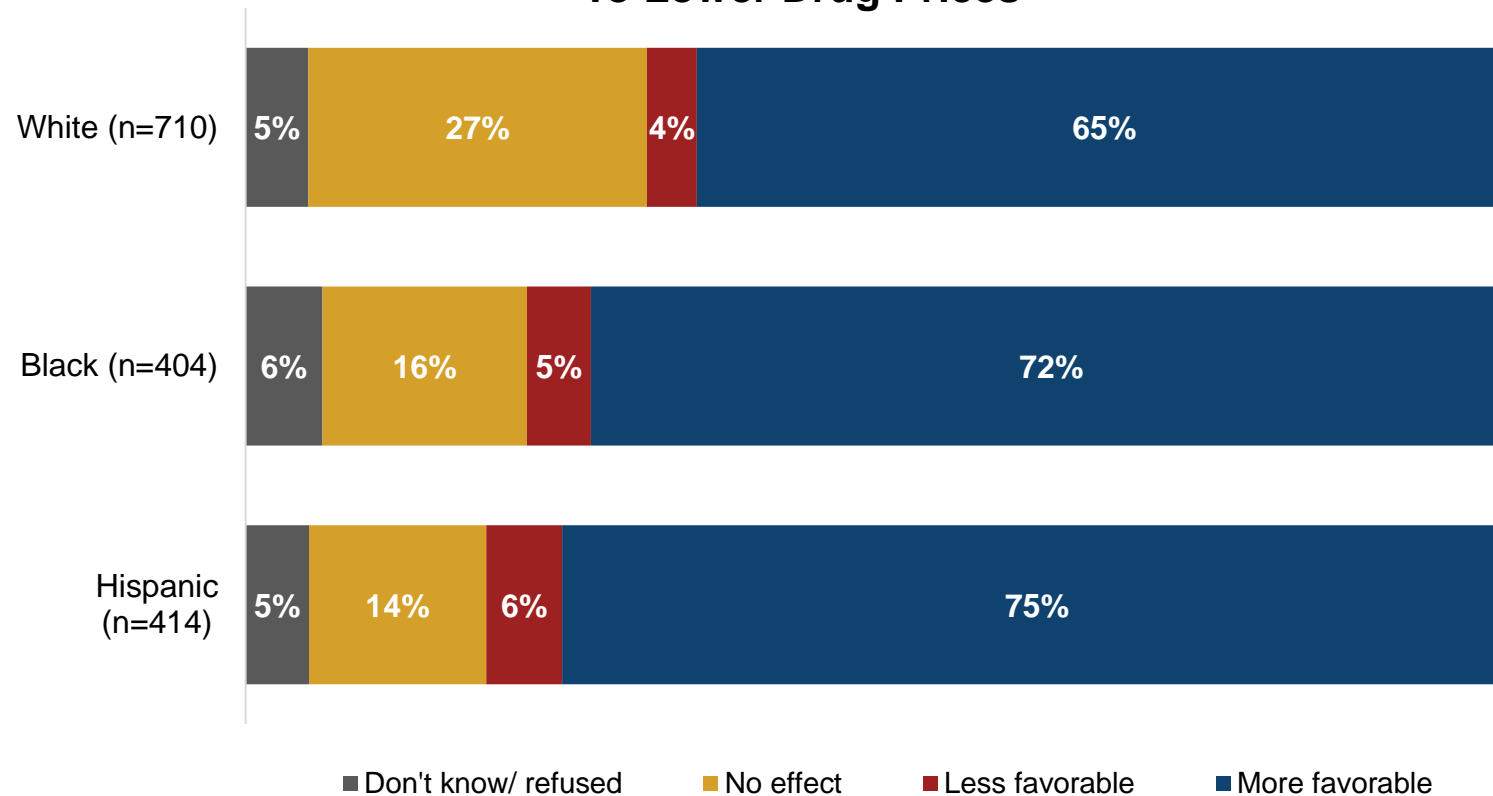


Q12. Would you be more or less favorable to a member of Congress that supported legislation to lower prescription drug prices, or would it have no effect on your opinion? (Base: All respondents)

# Black and Hispanic voters would be more favorable to a member of Congress who supports legislation to lower drug prices.

White voters also say they would be favorable to a member of Congress who supported legislation to lower prescription drug prices, although by a lower percentage.

### Favor For Members of Congress That Support Legislation To Lower Drug Prices



Q12. Would you be more or less favorable to a member of Congress that supported legislation to lower prescription drug prices, or would it have no effect on your opinion? (Base: All respondents)



# IMPLICATIONS

# Implications

High prescription drug prices affect most U.S. voters age 50 and older, many of whom take medications regularly or are concerned about affording prescription drugs for their family over the next few years.

Voters are united in agreement that Congress should take action to lower prescription drug prices, with an overwhelming number of voters feeling that it is important for the president and Congress to agree on solutions this year.

The majority agree that drug prices can be reduced without harming innovation, and many voters would be more likely to favor a member of Congress who supported legislation to lower prescription drug prices.

Regardless of political party, support is high for a variety of proposals that would aim to lower prescription drug prices, particularly those allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to lower drug prices for Medicare recipients.





## METHODOLOGY

# Methodology

- **Objectives:** To explore the use of prescription drugs and concerns relating to prescription drugs among United States voters age 50 and older
- **Methodology:** Phone, nationally representative survey
- **Sample:** U.S. registered voters age 50 and older (60% via landline telephones and 40% via cell phones); n=1,605
  - Base sample: n=1,000
  - Oversamples: n=404 African Americans; n=414 Hispanic/Latinos
- **Interviewing Dates:** June 1, 2021 – June 13, 2021
- **Language:** Interviews conducted in English and Spanish
- **Weighting:** Data weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education according to 2019 5-year U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) estimates
- **Questionnaire length:** 9.6 minutes (average)
- **Confidence Intervals:**  $\pm 3.1\%$

**Note:** Some percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding or the use of multiple response question formats.



# About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation's largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

# About ANR Market Research Consultants

ANR is a full-service market research firm founded in 1978. It has a full-time staff of twelve people and a part-time staff of thirty-five. As a Virginia SWaM-certified small business, ANR is managed by executives age 50+ and also employs multiple professional staff age 50+. Its corporate offices, located in Richmond, Virginia, include a state-of-the-art focus group facility. ANR specializes in business and consumer research to determine attitudes and opinions, advertising effectiveness, organization image and awareness, market positioning and new product development. Its clients span a variety of industries, including state and federal government, health care, communications, finance, manufacturing, retail, travel, tourism, real estate development, and education. For more information, visit [www.anr.com](http://www.anr.com).



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