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Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

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Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

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“Working Families Agenda”
AFL-CIO Research
1/19/98

Fresh research shows that the economic situation of working people is mixed. Yes, wages are slowly getting better — but bills are high and it’s still hard to make ends meet. They worry about the rich getting richer while the rest of us are left behind. Participants in three out of four recent focus groups raised, without prompting, personal debt and increasing bankruptcies. They say too many people are living on credit and borrowed time.

Health care — affordability even more than quality and HMO problems — was the most often cited concern.

State of the Union

- Strong economy and bringing responsibility to gov’t spending are huge accomplishments of the Clinton administration — done with the help of Congress.
- But our new global economy presents challenges as well as opportunities. We must craft answers which protect our standard of living as we seek to extend prosperity around the world.
- Some have done better than others in this economy, however, and some have not been brought along. Income equality grew in the 80's and early 90's. While there has been some recent improvement, we must do better.
- This administration will devote it’s last three years to making our economy and our nation fairer for working families, so that everyone benefits from our strong economy...to address important issues that can prove again that a strong middle class is what makes America strong.

- Focus will be on important and fiscally responsible steps that improve health coverage, pensions, child care, and other family necessities.

- And ensuring the long-run health of, and confidence in, our uniquely effective Social Security system.
 - Today's there's a deficit of balanced information.
 - People need the facts about Social Security — the foundation of our retirement system that has largely eliminated poverty among the elderly, protects families of all ages against disability, and greatly reduces the dependency of the older generations on their children.
 - They need to know that the often used description of Social Security going broke in 2030, as if there would be no more money then, is a whopper of a lie.
 - They need to understand the options we have that will preserve and protect Social Security for all generations to come.
 - Above all, we need to be guided by the values that have made this nation great.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates

23% SS 750
23% debt
17% tax cut
17% invest
16% all
independents

Union
Surplus 35% SS

Americans' Views On Key National Issues

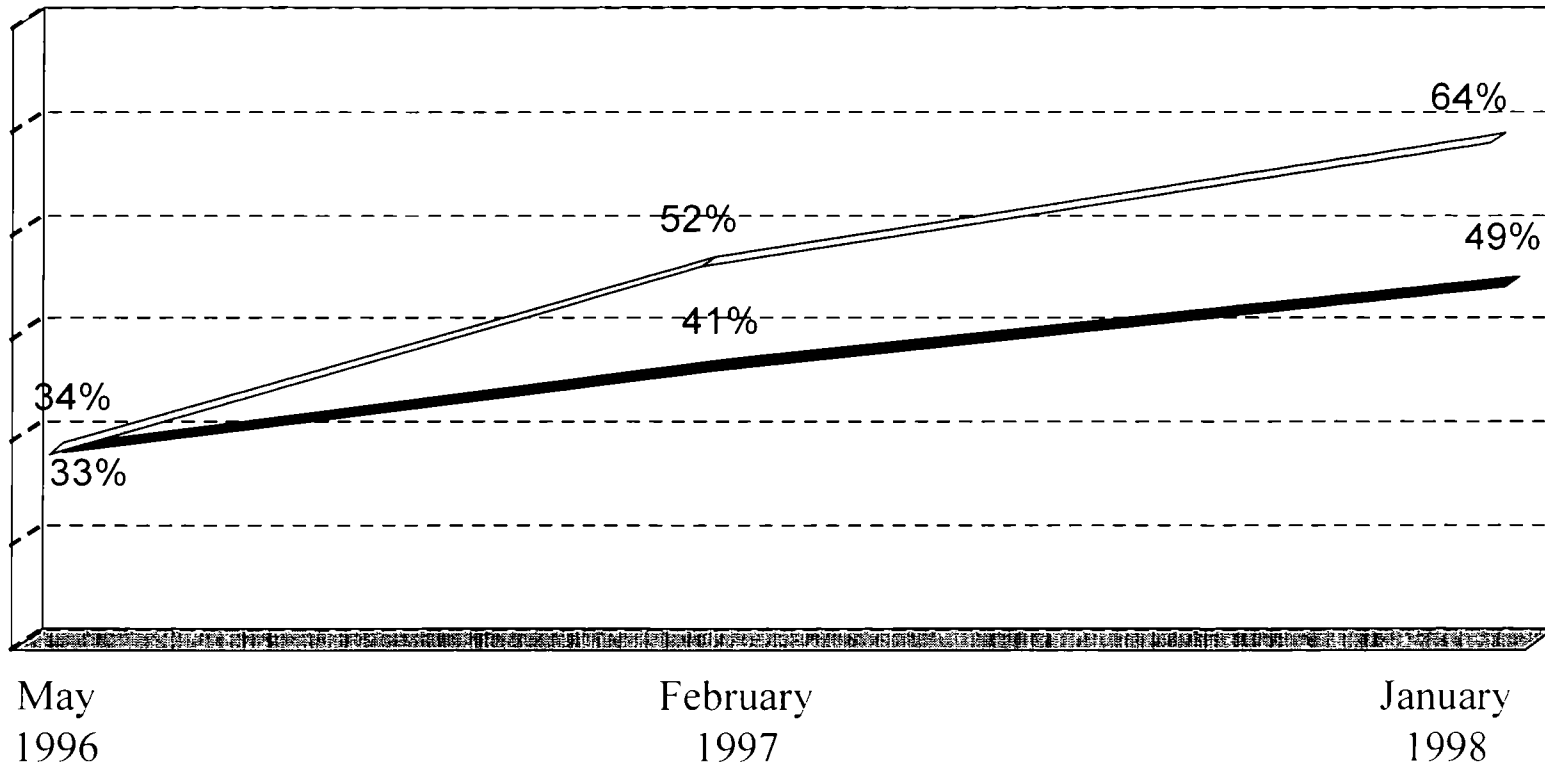
Nationwide survey among 1,002 general public and 622 union members

January 7-11, 1998

Conducted on behalf of the AFL-CIO

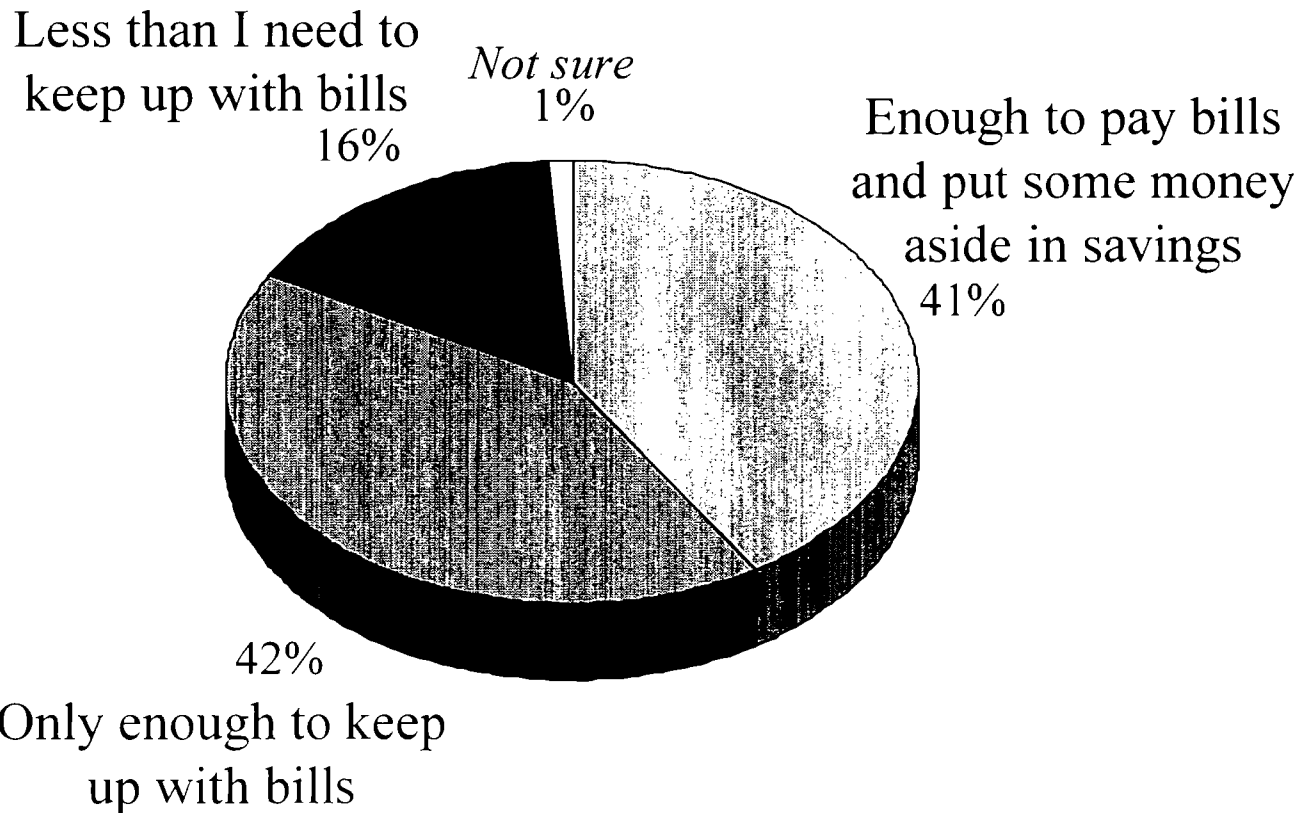
A More Positive Economic Climate

- Public very/somewhat satisfied with country's economic situation
- Public hopeful/confident about achieving own financial goals



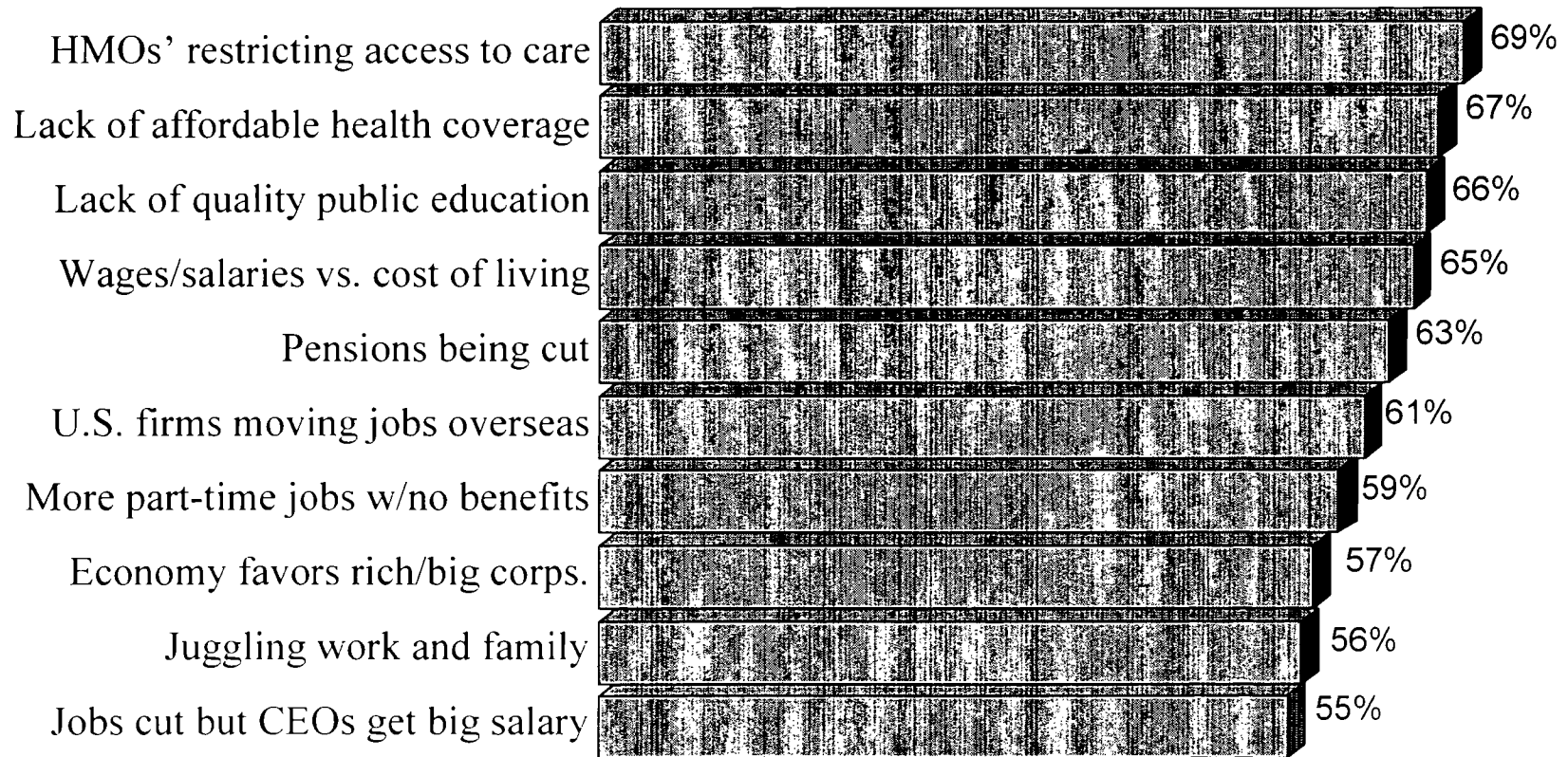
Still, Only Two In Five People Are Able To Put Money Aside

My family income is:

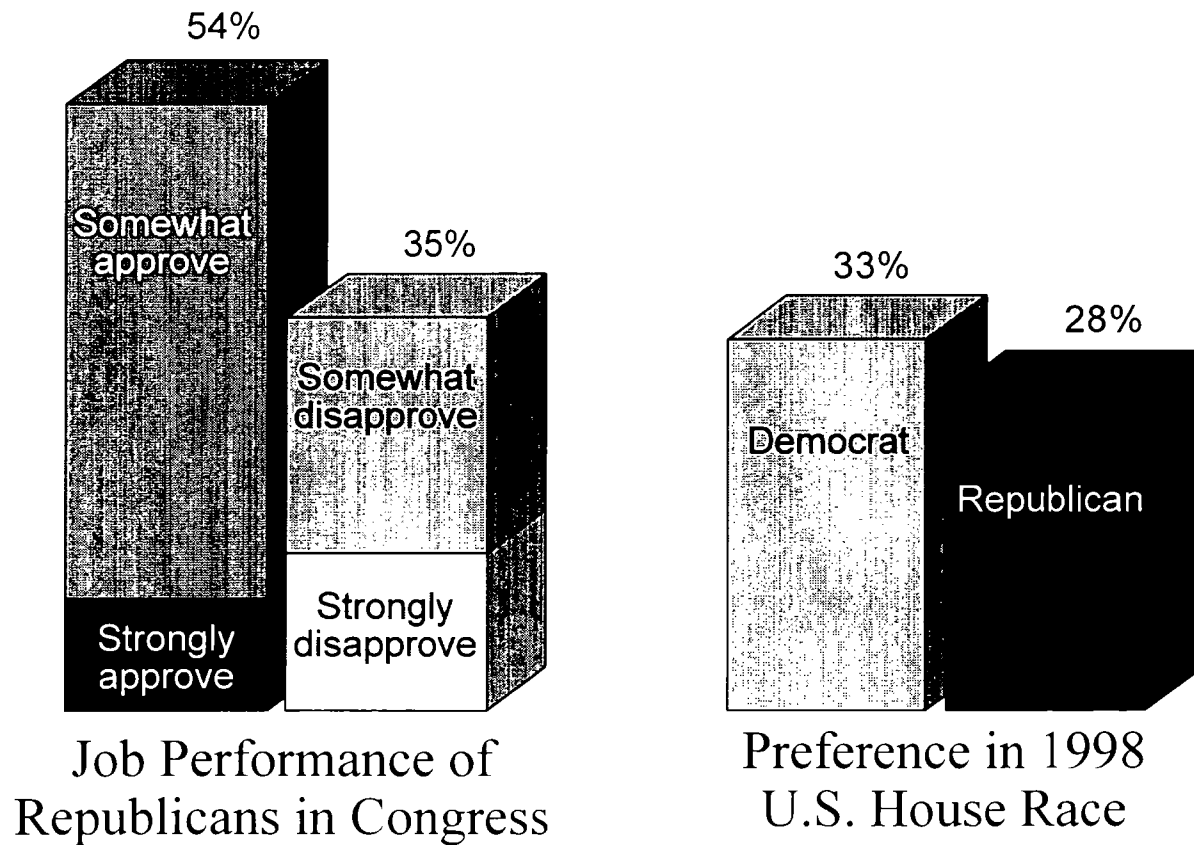


Top Concerns: Health Care, Education, Wages, Pensions

■ Serious problem: 8-10 on 10-point scale



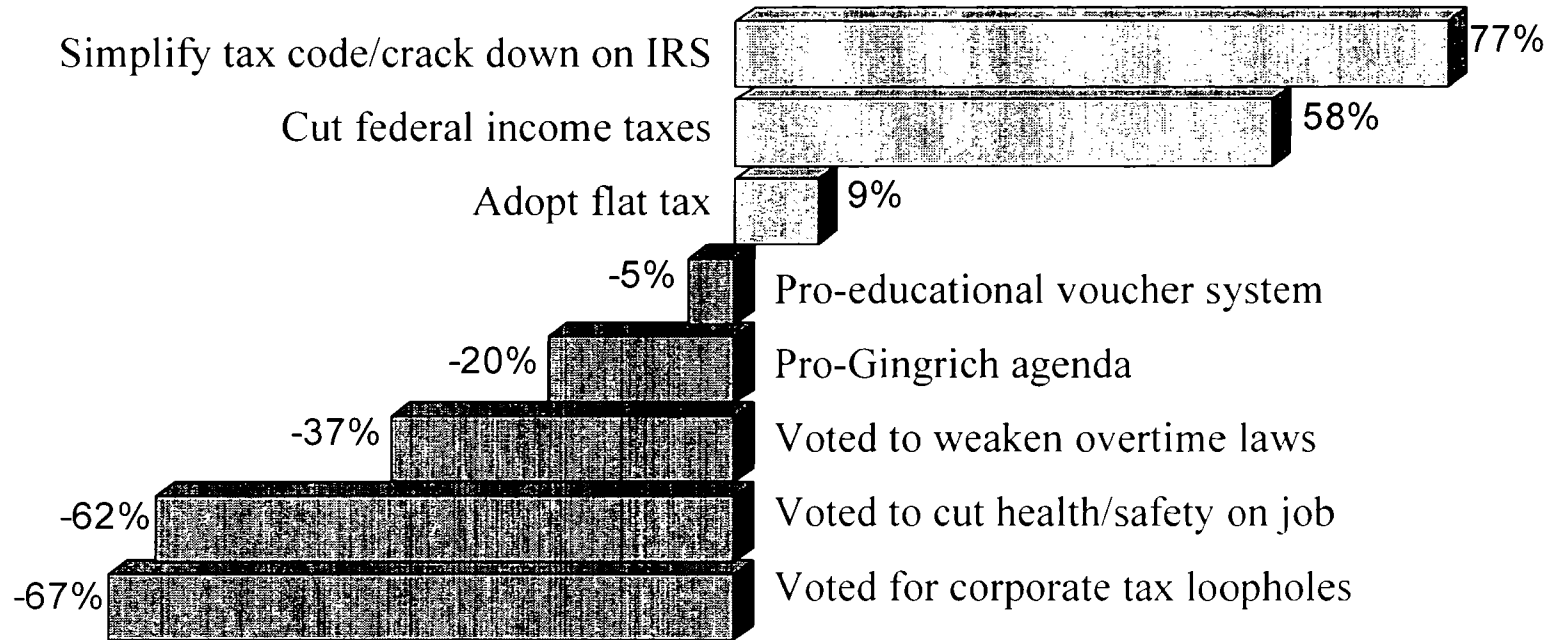
Public Approval Of GOP Congress High, But Democrats Lead In Generic Race



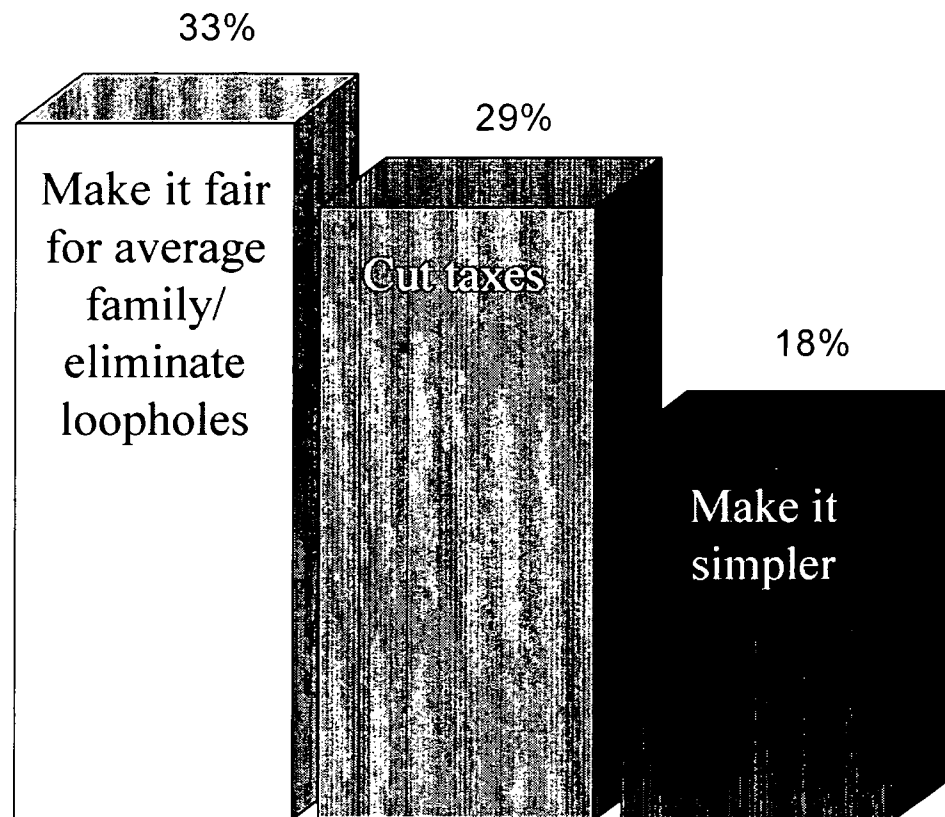
** Among union members, Democrat leads by 49% to 16%.*

GOP's Strengths And Vulnerabilities Among The Public

*(% differential: more likely minus less likely to support
Congressional candidate taking this position)*



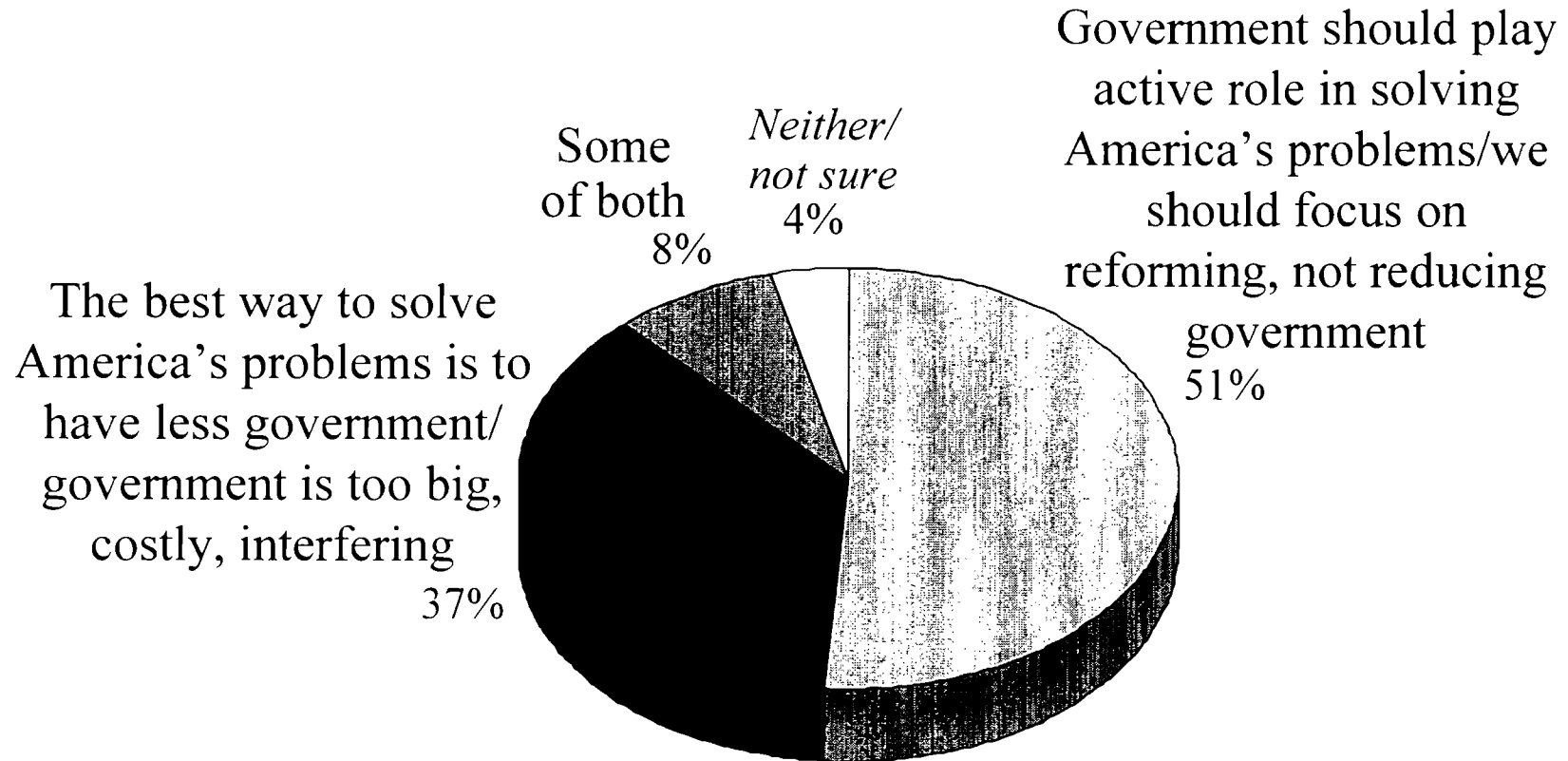
Fairness Is Public's Biggest Tax Priority



Most Important Goal for Income Tax System

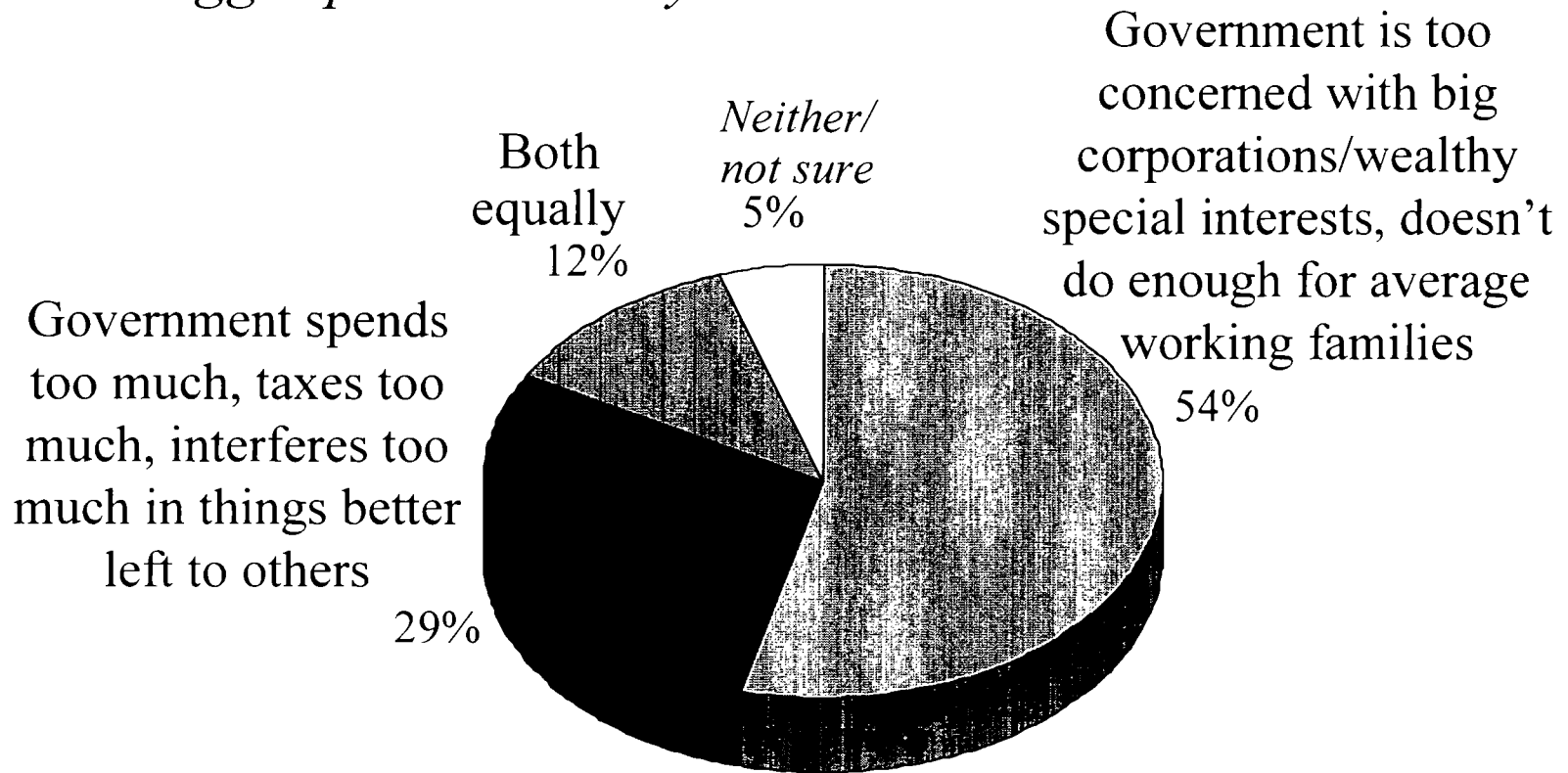
** Cutting taxes is low priority for budget surplus, behind investing in trust funds and paying down debt.*

Public Believes Government Has Role To Play



Populist Message Trumps Anti-Government View

The bigger problem today is:



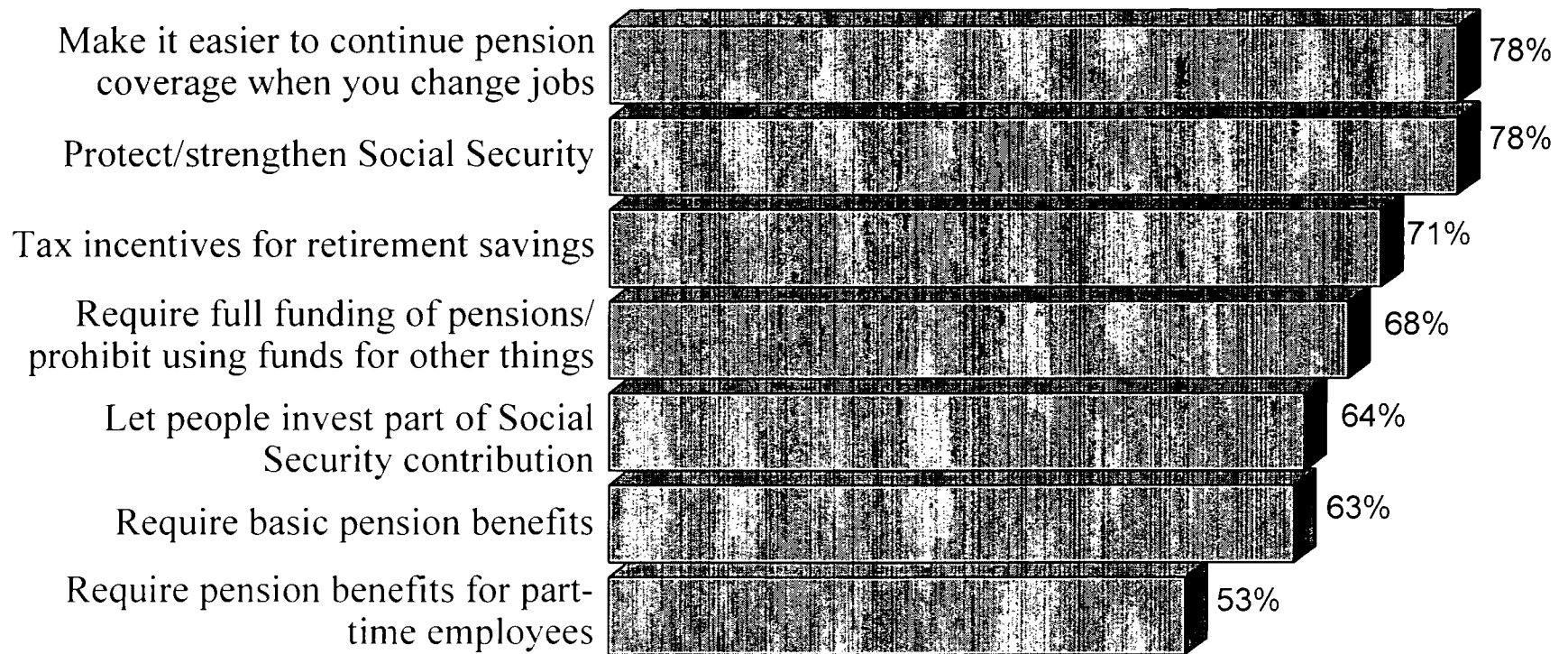
** Democrats have a 12-point advantage (44 points among union members) on "looking out for the economic interests of people like you."*

Americans' Views on Issues/January 1998

Q.18a

A Broad Array Of Retirement Security Initiatives Are Popular

☐ Strongly support this proposal



The Public And Social Security

- ➔ By 67% to 28%, Americans prefer to **fix** Social Security by strengthening its financial condition, rather than **replace** it with a system based on individual investments (*age 18 to 34: 65% to 32%*).
- ➔ People want more options for tax-advantaged retirement savings, but as a supplement to Social Security.
- ➔ Key elements of Social Security to preserve: guaranteed monthly income that can never be lost; keep seniors out of poverty.
- ➔ Women voters are especially committed to strengthening Social Security, and more strongly oppose privatization.

Americans' Views on Issues/January 1998

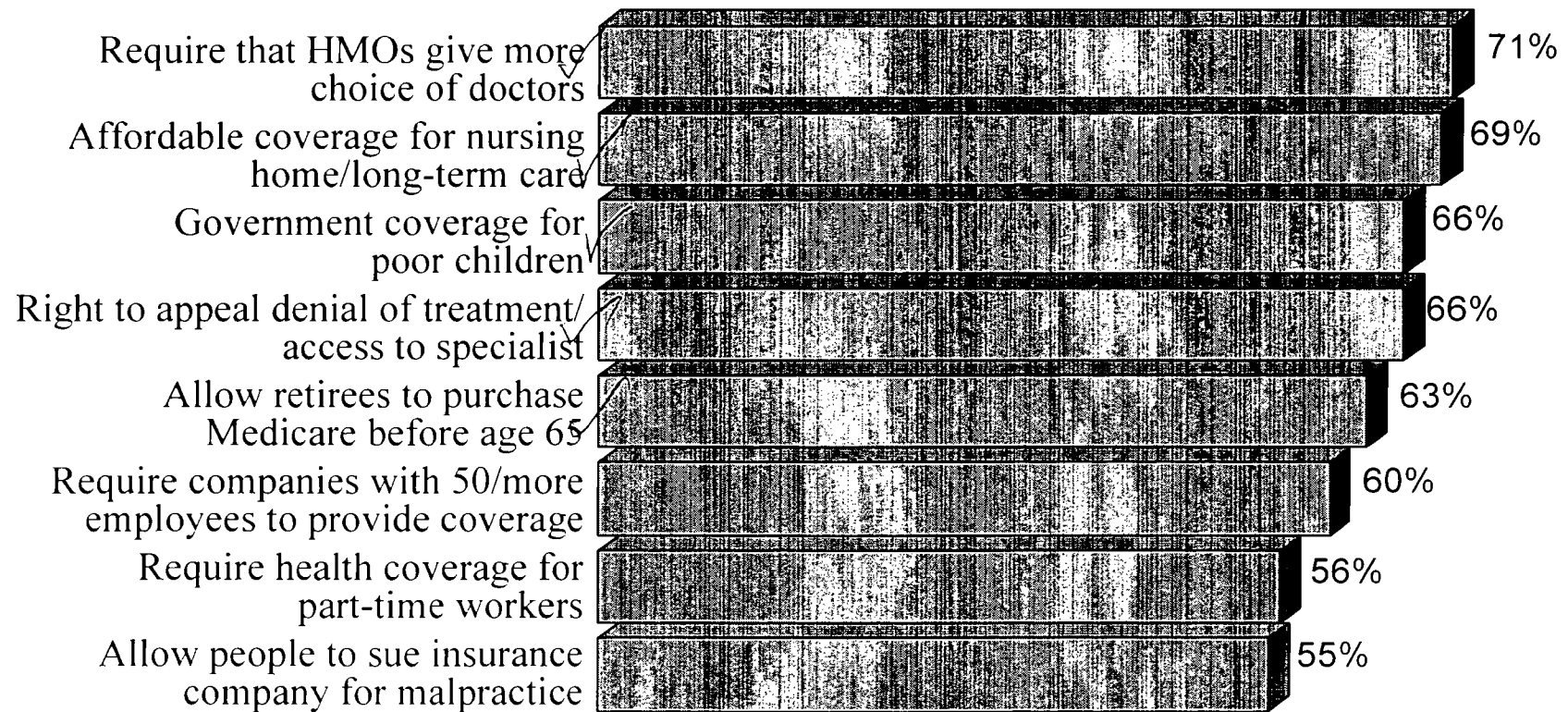
Health Care Environment

- ➔ The public expresses a mixed view of the system, but satisfaction is up since 1994 (46% satisfied).
- ➔ Affordability is the top concern (45%), well ahead of coverage (16%), choice (9%), and quality (7%).
- ➔ People are more negative toward “health insurance companies” (48%) than HMOs (41%).
- ➔ There is strong support (66%) for employer mandate, up 11% since 1994.

Americans' Views on Issues/January 1998

Public Support For Health Care Proposals

Strongly support this proposal



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Other Proposals That Garner Strong Support Among The Public

Strongly support this proposal

