



**americansfor
gunsafety**

**Winning the Gun
Vote**

**Mark Penn/ Peter Brodnitz
Penn, Schoen, and Berland Associates
October 16, 2003**

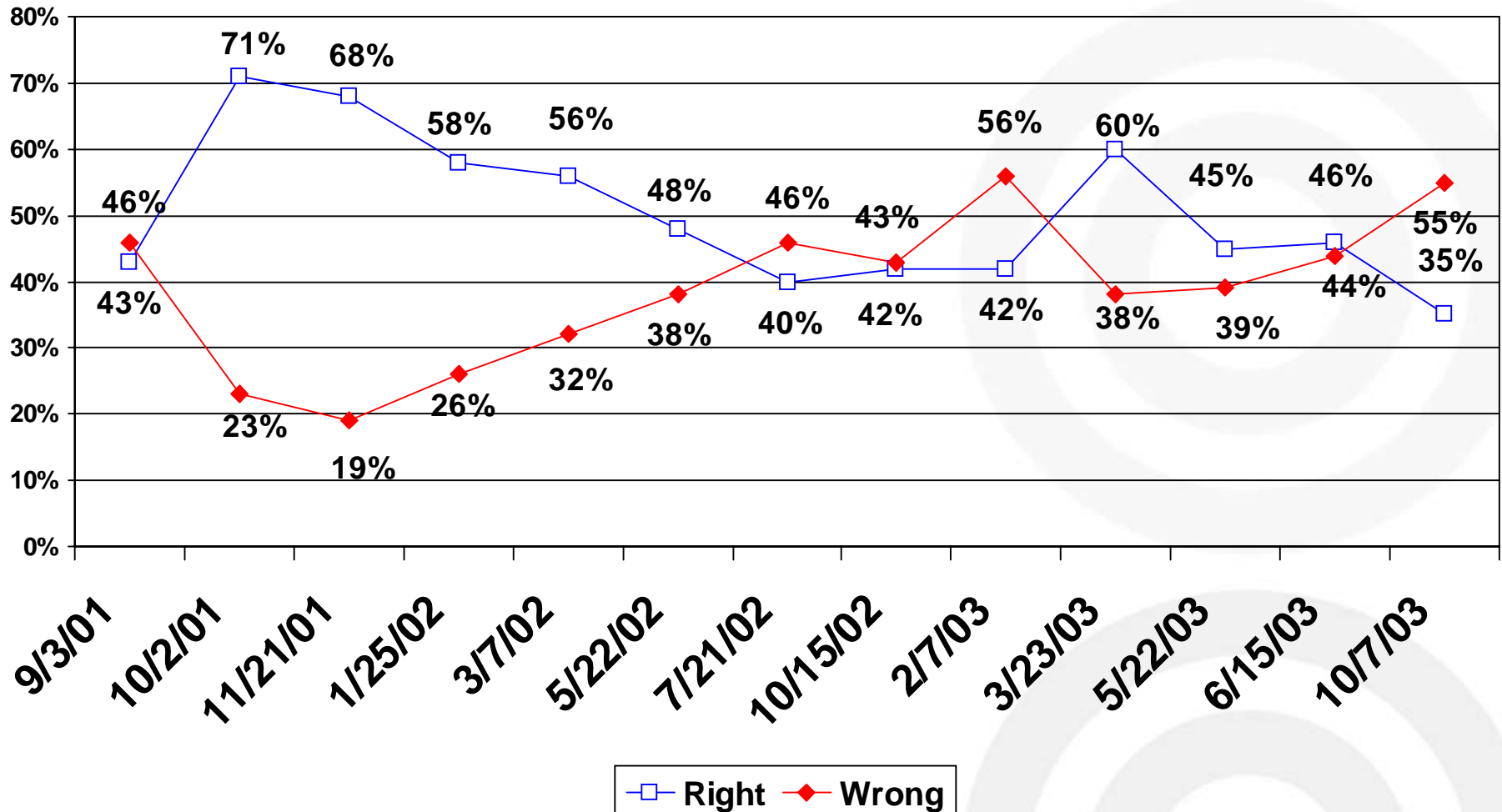


- **Americans widely believe that there is a right to bear arms but many – gun owners in particular - do not believe Democrats share this belief.**
- **As gun owners represent almost four in ten Americans this perception impedes efforts to create a durable Democratic majority.**
- **Silence is not the answer since Democrats who do not speak out on gun issues are presumed to oppose gun rights.**
- **By becoming both pro safety and pro gun rights, Democrats can do right on both the politics and policy and make a realignment of a sizeable portion of gun owners possible.**
- **These gains can occur without losing either Democratic base voters and while gaining among swing voters who reject the traditional GOP-backed alternative positioning.**

- **Penn Schoen & Berland Associates conducted 802 interviews on October 1-6, 2003 among likely 2004 presidential election voters. Margin of error for the entire sample is +/-3.46 at the 95th confidence interval and higher for subgroups.**

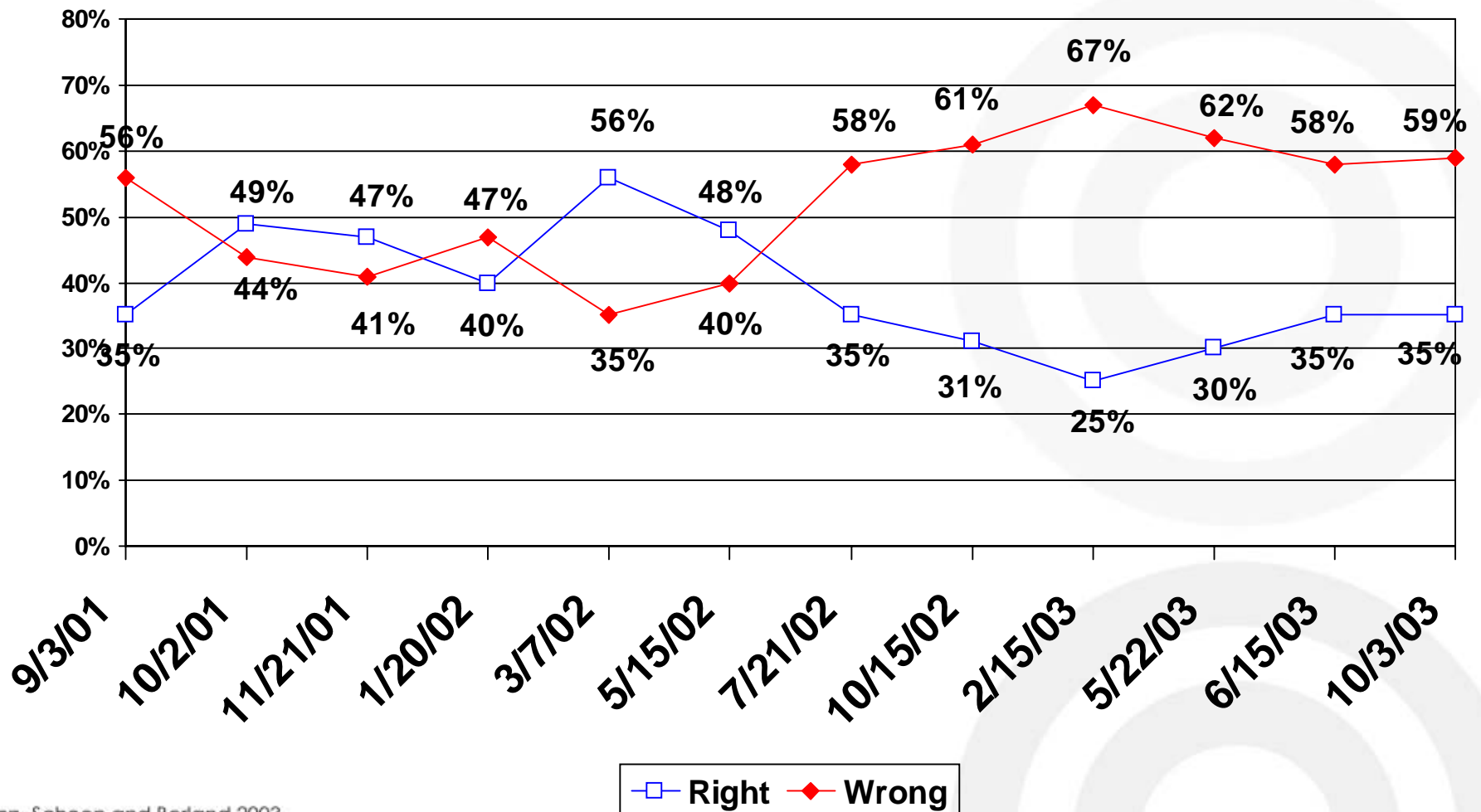
Direction of Country

In general, do you think our country is on the right track or off on the wrong track?



Direction of Economy

In general, do you think the country's economy is on the right track or off on the wrong track?





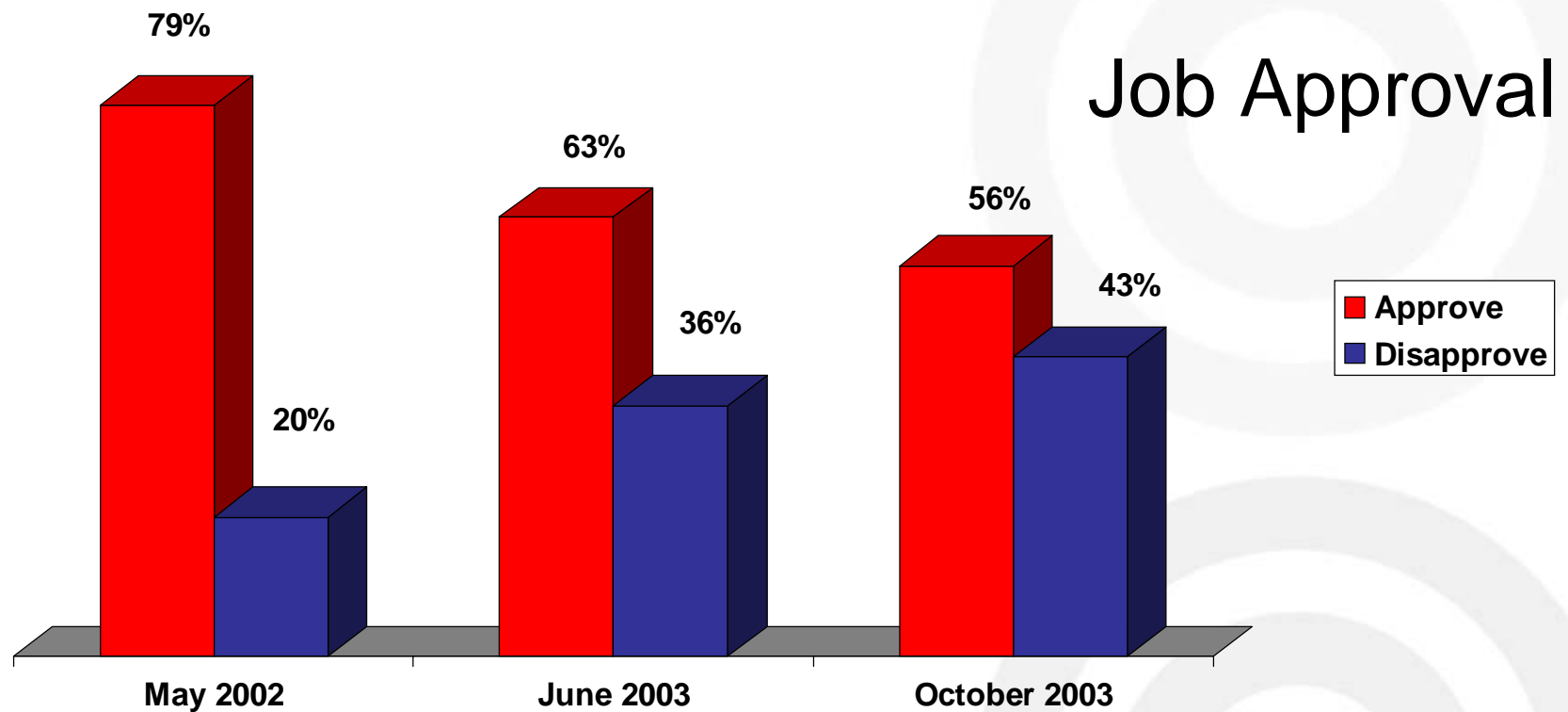
Most Important Issue

What is the most important issue facing the country?	All %
Economy / Jobs	41
Iraq/Saddam Hussein/War	16
Fighting terrorism	6
Balance the budget	4
Healthcare	4
Education	4
Other domestic issues (specify)	4
Morality/Family Values	2
Other foreign policy issues (specify)	2
Safety / Security / Homeland/ national security	2
Preserving Medicare	1
Preserving Social Security	1
Taxes	1
Abortion	1
Immigration	1
India/Pakistan/ Nuclear Weapons	1
Government/politicians: Bush / Democrats, etc.	1
Peace / World peace	1
Don't Know / No Response	5



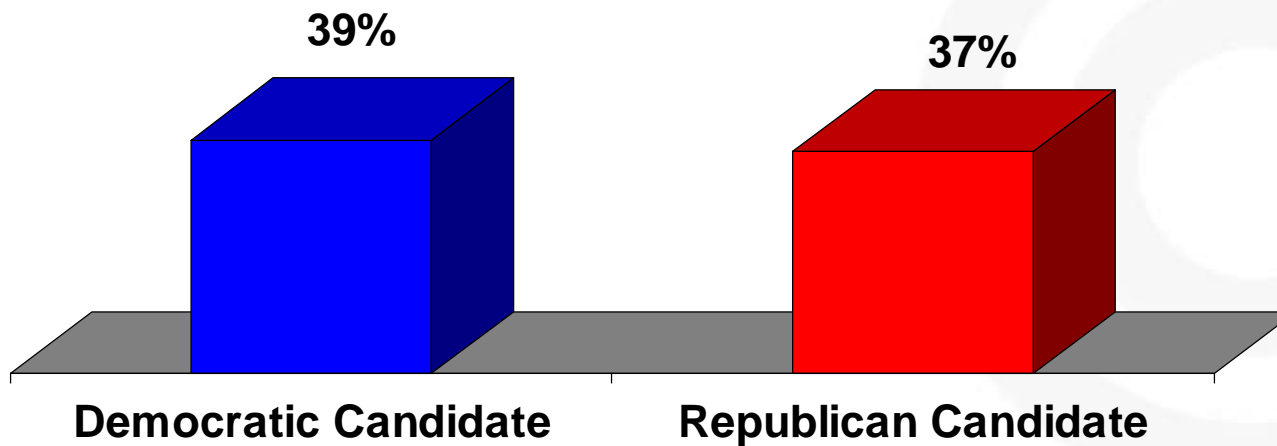
Bush Favorability and Approval

Favorability	Favorable/ Unfavorable	Very Favorable
Bush	53/44	25



Congress: Democrat or Republican

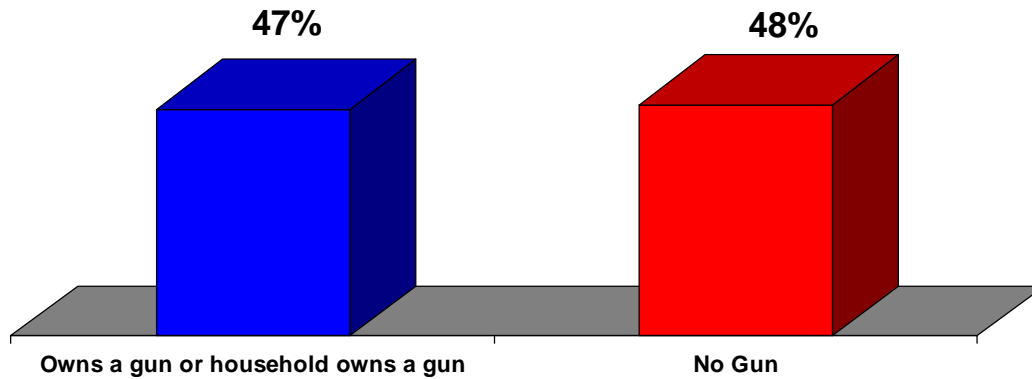
If the election for Congress were held today and the candidates were a Democratic or Republican candidate for whom would you vote?



	All	Gun Owners	Red State	Blue State	Gun Swing
Democratic Advantage	2	-10	-1	5	-29

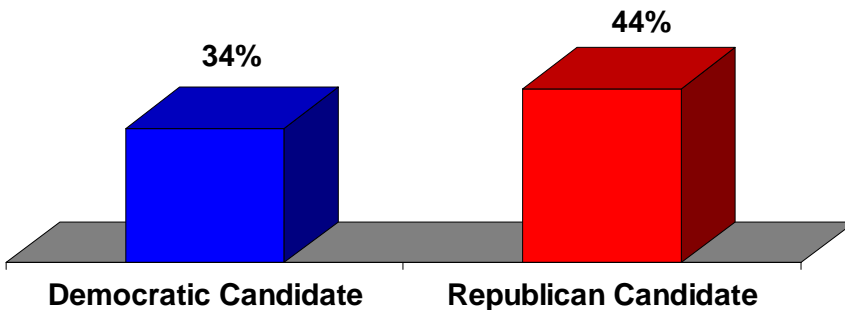
Gun Owner Profile

Do you own a gun or does someone in your household own a gun?

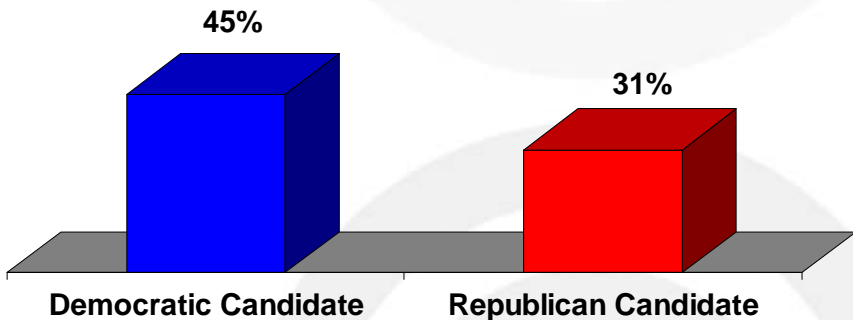


% Self/Household own a gun:	
All:	47%
Red State:	53%
Blue State:	39%

**Congressional Ballot:
Gun Owner (37%)**



**Congressional Ballot:
Non Gun Owner (48%)**





Gun Owners (37% of Voters)

Income:

- 37% of people with incomes of <\$35,000 own a gun
- 42% of people with incomes of \$35,000 - \$60,000 own a gun
- 39% of people with incomes of \$60,000+ own a gun

Where they live:

- 32% of people in Urban areas own a gun
- 33% of people in Suburban areas own a gun
- 51% of people in Rural areas own a gun

On the issues:

- 52% are pro-life/ 45% pro-choice. (vs. 46% of all Americans are pro-life, 48% pro-choice).
- 70% oppose same-sex marriage (vs. 57% of all Americans).
- 79% support prayer in schools (vs. 75% of all Americans).
- 51% attend religious services daily or weekly (vs. 49% of all Americans)
- 34% of “Gun Swing” voters own a gun

Who They Are

- We tested support for a “Republican who supports 2nd Amendment rights” Vs. Democratic candidates who represent different positions on the issue of gun rights.
- By shifting from silence or a pro-gun control position to a position that emphasizes both gun safety and gun rights, there is a dramatic increase in support for the Democrat.
- Overall, 21% of voters swing toward the Democrat through this testing process. These represent the “gun swing” voter shown throughout this analysis.



The Gun Swing (21% of voters)

Demographics

- 53% are Independent
- 47% own or household owns a gun
- 89% White (Gen pop = 79% White)
- 37% have college or greater education (vs. 36% of all Americans)

Values

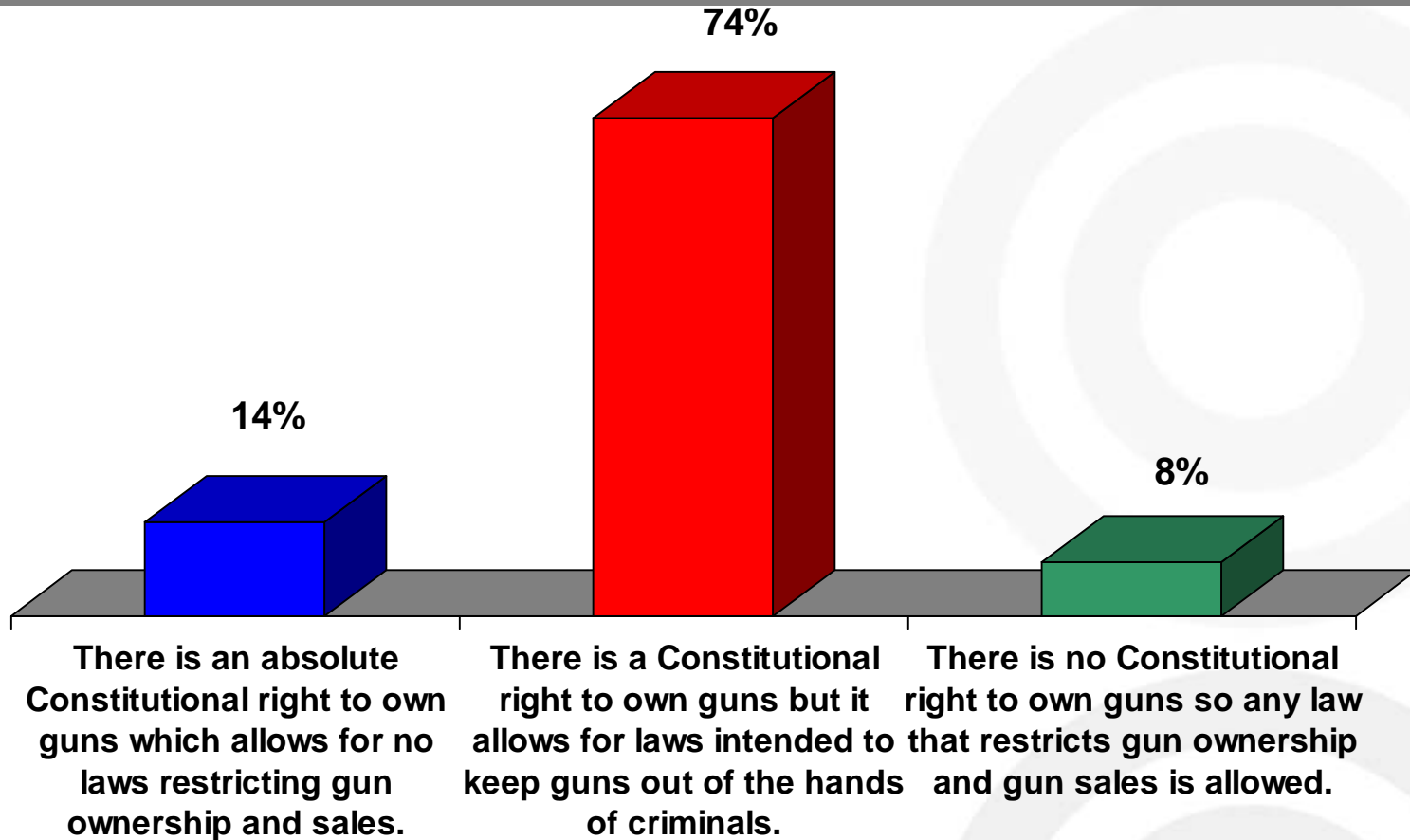
- 47% are pro-life/ 46% pro-choice. (vs. 46% of all Americans are pro-life, 48% pro-choice).
- 51% oppose same-sex marriage (vs. 57% of all Americans).
- 79% support prayer in schools (vs. 75% of all Americans).
- 51% attend religious services daily or weekly (vs. 49% of all Americans)

Habitat

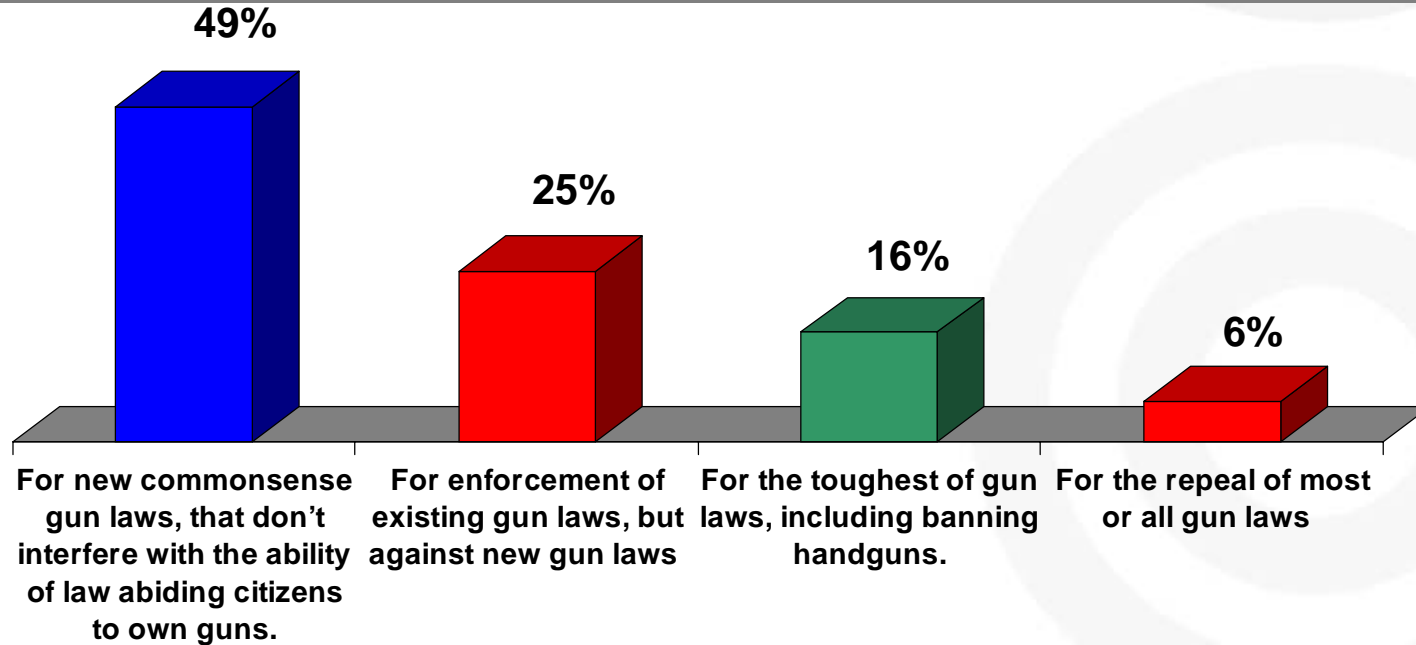
- The Gun Swing includes 21% of Urban Voters, 22% of Suburban voters and 18% of Rural voters.

Constitutional Right?

Which of the following statements comes closest to your point of view?



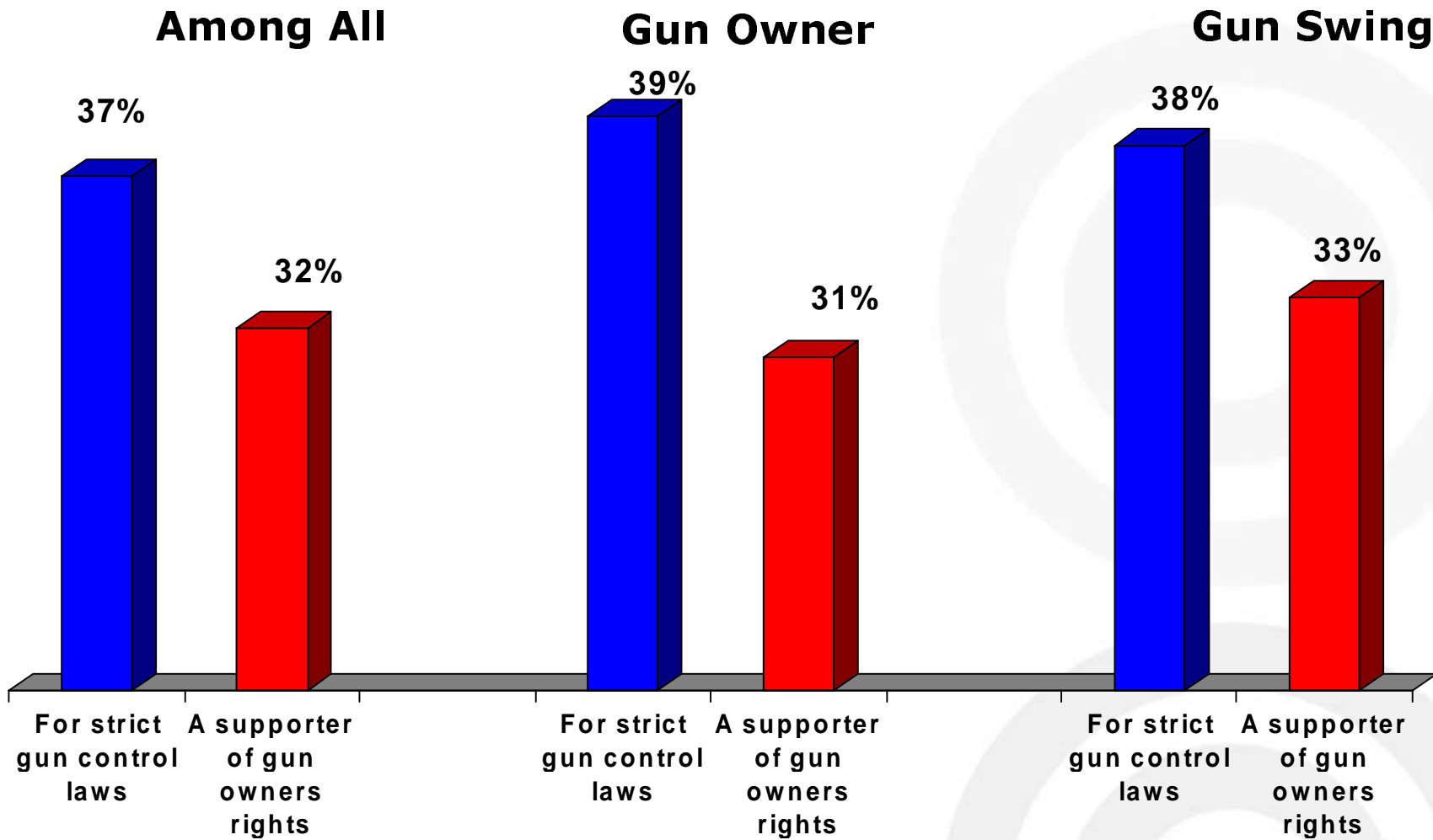
Would you say you are . . .



	Gun Owners	Red State	G. Swing
For new commonsense gun laws, that don't interfere with the ability of law abiding citizens to own guns.	52	49	48
For enforcement of existing gun laws, but against new gun laws	33	32	28
For the toughest of gun laws, including banning handguns.	4	9	16
For the repeal of most or all gun laws	7	5	3

Democrats are presumed to be Anti-Gun

If a Democrat doesn't talk about guns would you assume they are...





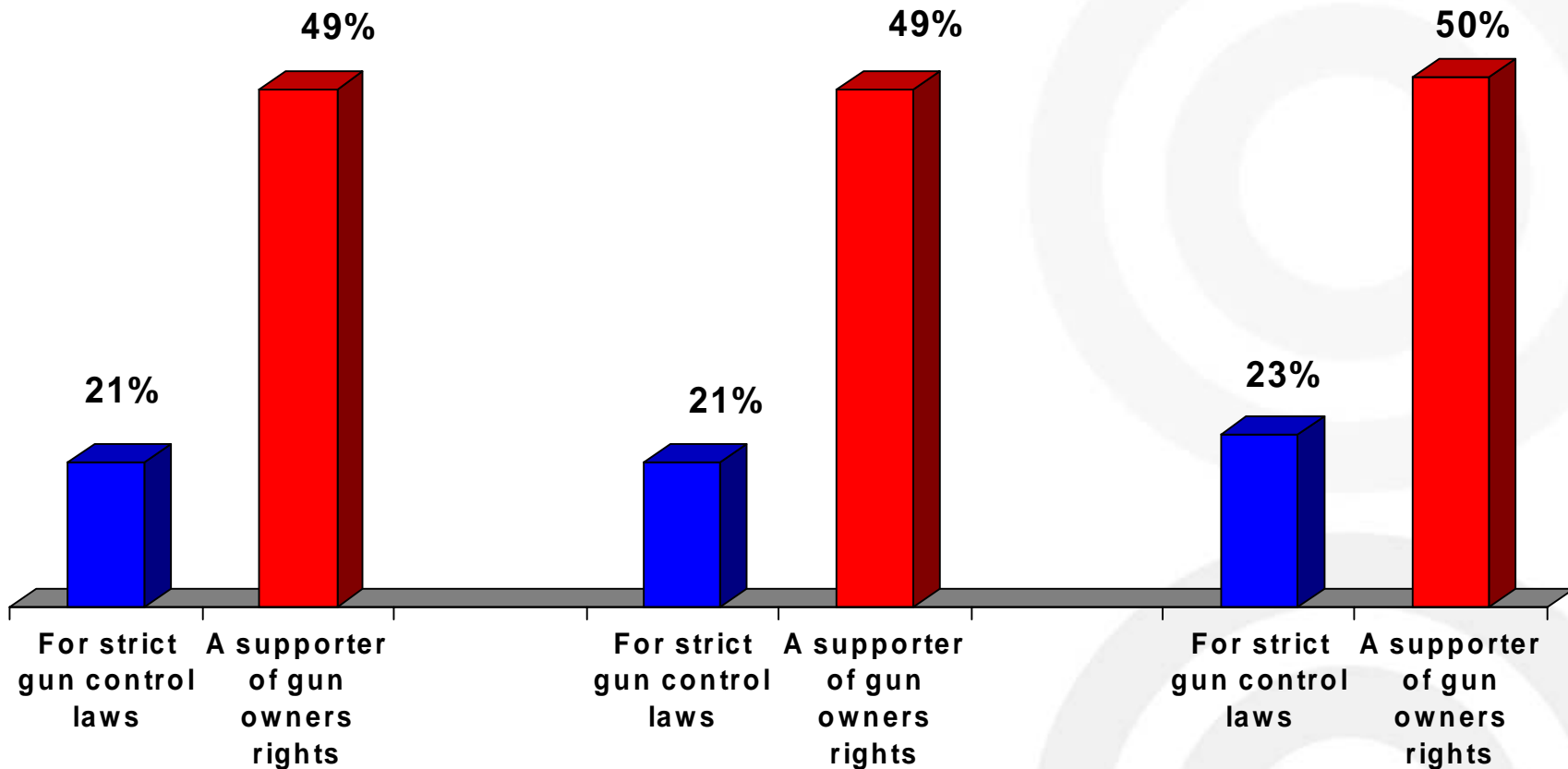
Republicans are identified with Gun Owners Rights

If a Republican doesn't talk about guns would you assume they are...

Among All

Gun Owner

Gun Swing



- Almost half of gun owners oppose Democrats because they assume they support “gun control.”

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each one.	Agree/Disagree	
	All	Gun Owners
I do not like to vote for Democratic candidates because they usually support gun control.	31/57	45/47
I do not like to vote for Republican candidates because they usually oppose common sense gun laws.	33/58	28/67



Democratic Gun Attributes

Does this statement apply much more to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?		Gun Owners	Red State	Gun Swing
	% Applies more to Democrats			
Wants to pass new gun control laws.	39%	47	39	29
Wants to ban guns.	38%	43	33	35
Wants to restrict gun rights.	38%	41	34	43
Does not respect gun owners and their values.	27%	39	26	20
Blames law abiding gun owners for the crime problem.	25%	36	29	7
Understands your way of life.	18%	10	20	5
Opposes all gun laws even if they are reasonable.	7%	7	5	6
Plays politics with guns.	4%	21	13	18



Republican Gun Attributes

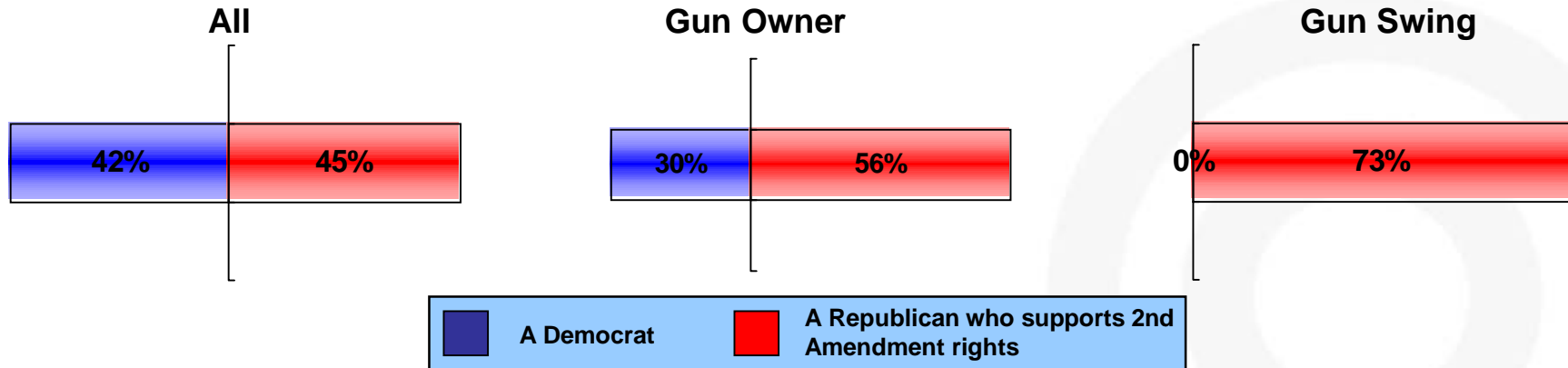
Does this statement apply much more to the Democratic Party or to the Republican Party?		Gun Owners	Red State	Gun Swing
	% Applies more to Republicans			
Is too closely tied to the NRA.	42%	40	41	34
Supports the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms.	40%	51	44	38
Is tough on criminals.	35%	37	38	50
Is too closely tied to the gun control lobby.	11%	-2	7	21
Will enforce the existing gun laws.	10%	7	14	21



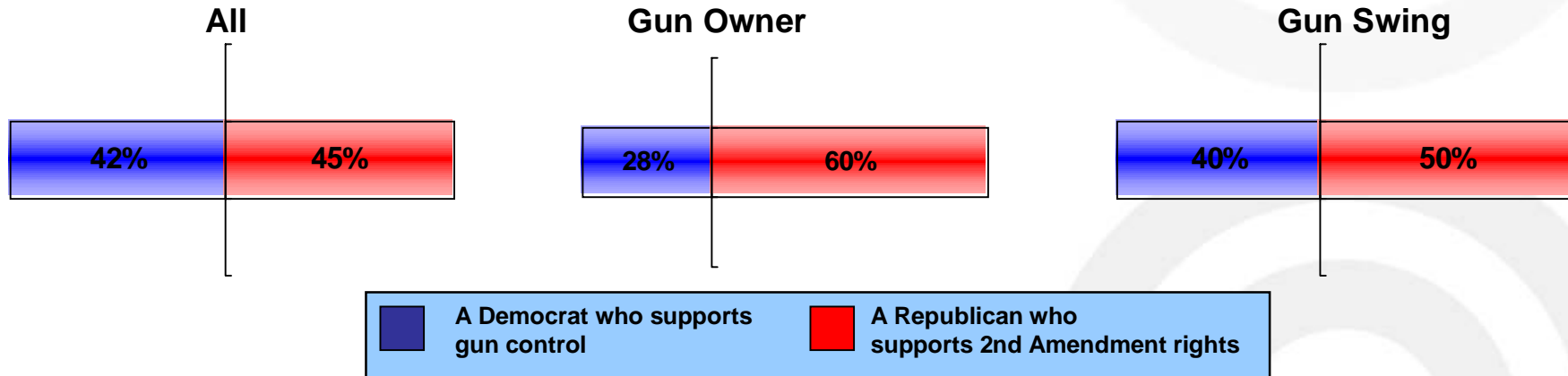
Silent or Gun Control Democrat Loses to 2nd Amendment Republican

Which type of candidate are you most likely to support?

Gun Silent Democrat



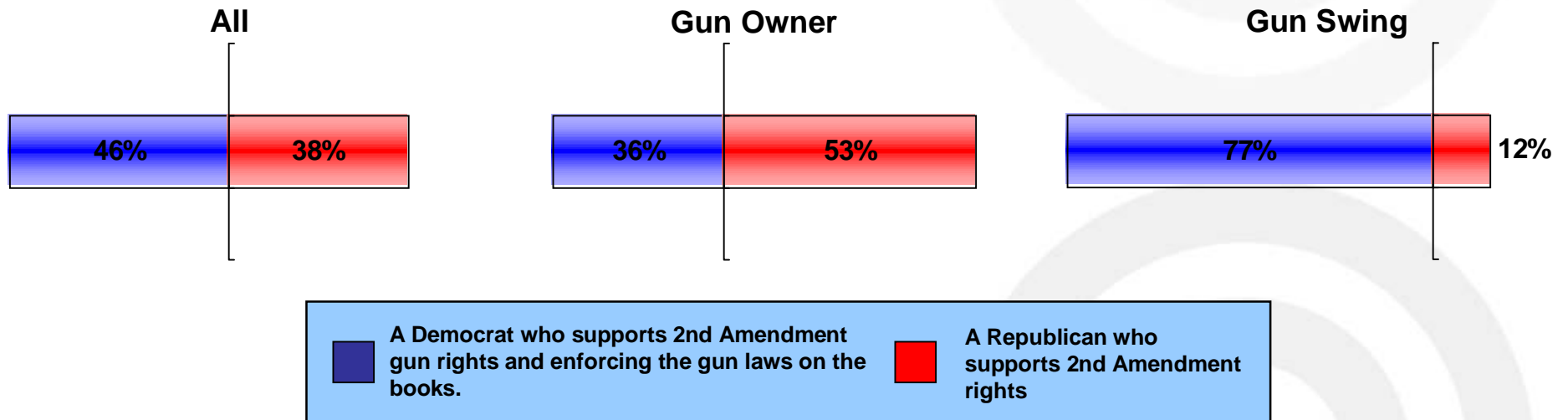
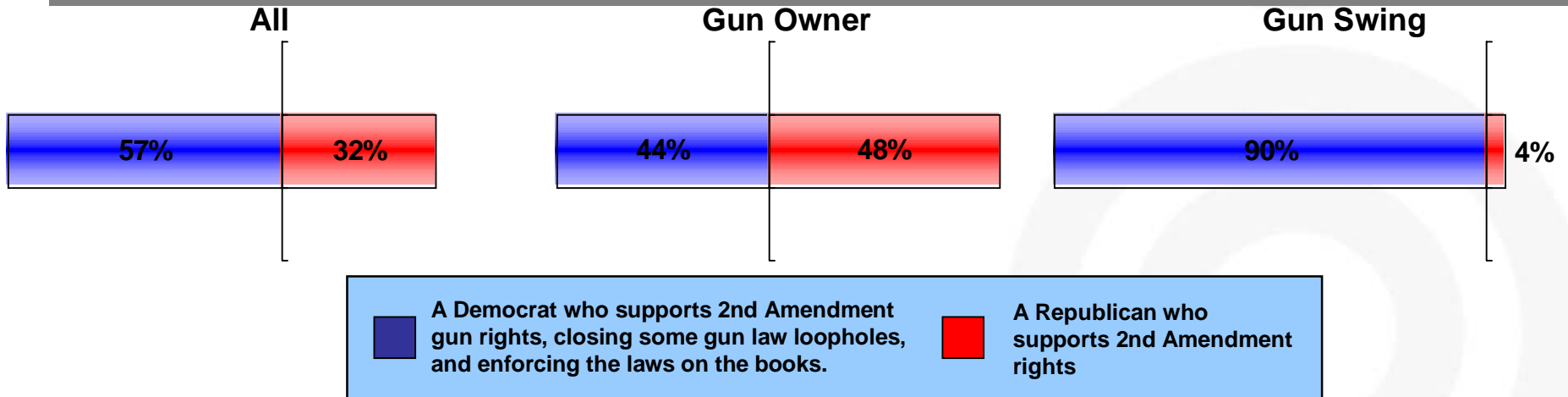
Gun Control Democrat





Rights and Responsibilities Democrat almost ties among gun owners and wins with 57% Overall

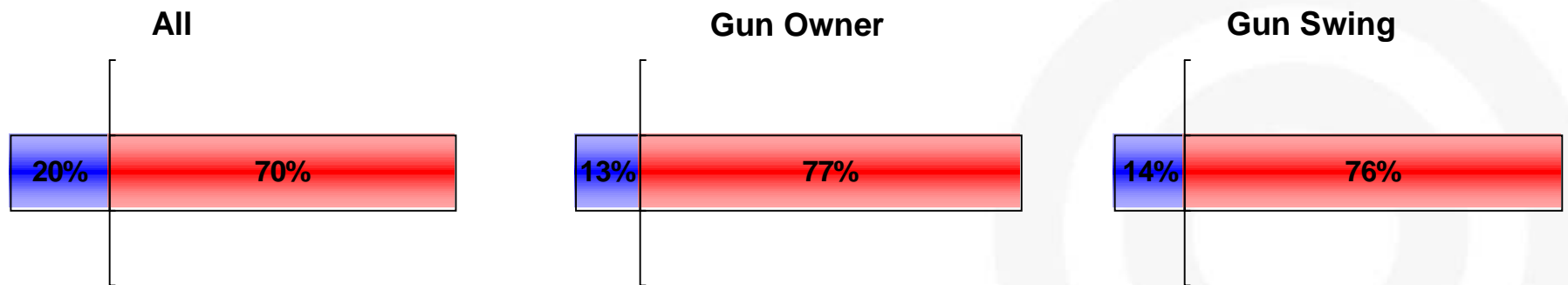
Which type of candidate are you most likely to support?





Gun Safety Democratic Preferred to Gun Control Dem.

Gun Control vs. Gun Safety



A Democrat who supports Gun Control



A Democrat who supports gun safety



Swings and Gun Owners Support Safety Policies

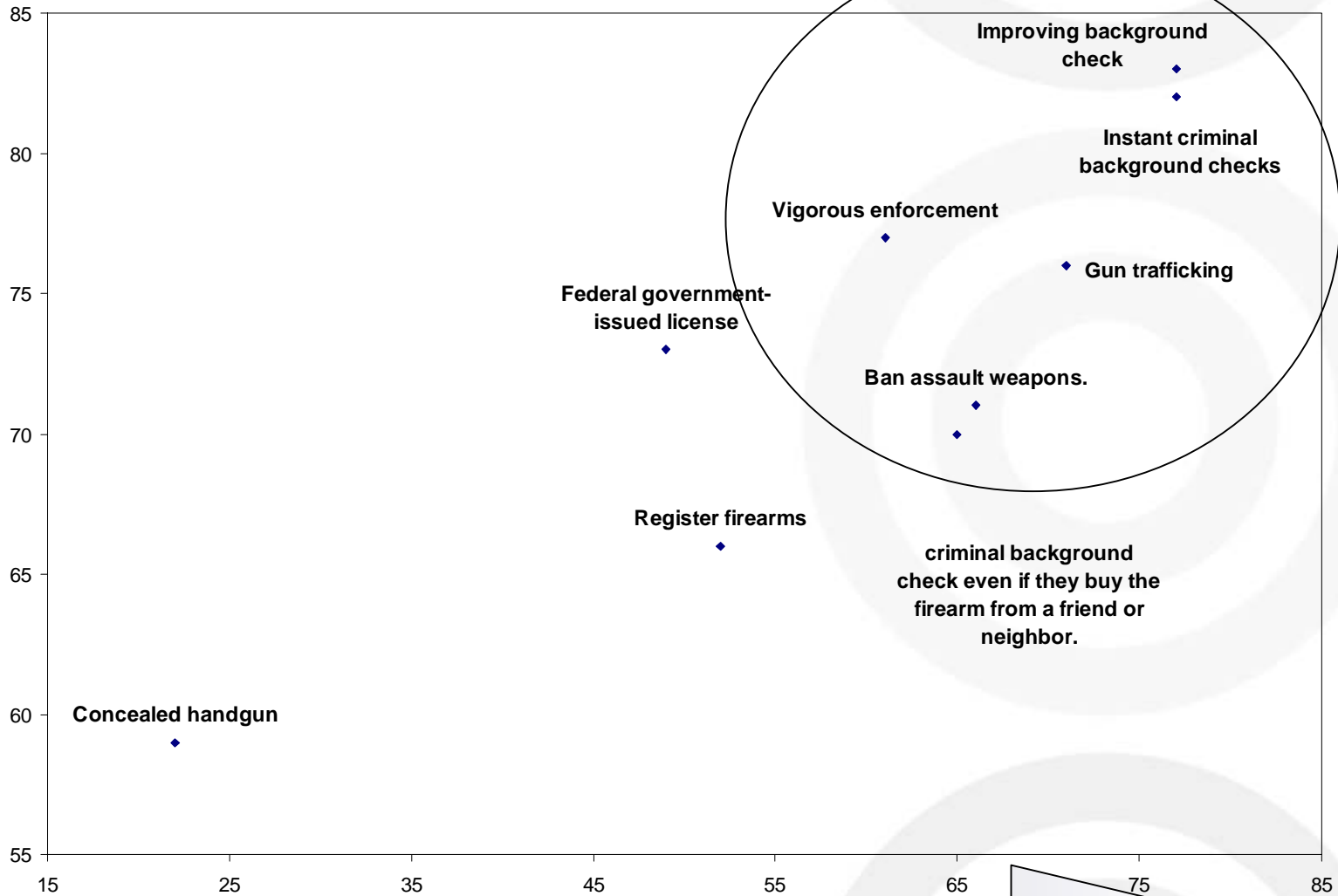
I am going to list several proposals that could be considered by the United States Congress. For each one, tell me if you support or oppose Congress passing each type of proposal.	All		Gun Owner	Red State	Gun Swing
	Strongly Support %	Support/ Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Strongly Support %	Strongly Support %
Improving the background check system to make gun buyer criminal background checks faster and more accurate.	77	92/7	75	75	80
Requiring instant criminal background checks for all firearms sales at gun shows.	77	90/9	74	77	80
Making gun trafficking a crime with penalties as serious as drug trafficking.	71	86/12	68	68	67
Renewing the law that bans assault weapons.	66	77/21	55	68	68
Requiring anyone who purchases a firearm to undergo a criminal background check even if they buy the firearm from a friend or neighbor.	65	79/21	50	60	69
Vigorously enforcing all of the federal gun laws already on the books.	61	85/11	62	56	58
Requiring individual gun owners to register their firearms with the federal government.	52	67/30	34	47	47
Requiring all gun owners to obtain a federal government-issued license to show that they know how to handle a firearm.	49	70/28	32	44	49
Providing gun manufacturers and dealers immunity from lawsuits over the misuse of their products.	34	52/42	48	34	38
Making it easier for people to carry a concealed handgun to protect themselves.	22	43/54	41	26	18



Gun Measures Are Consistent with 2nd Amendment Support

I am going to read a few proposals and for each one, please tell me whether you believe a Democratic elected official could support the proposal and still be a strong supporter of the 2nd Amendment right to own a gun.	<i>Democrat: Can still be a strong supporter of the second amendment right to own a gun</i>			
	All	Gun Owner	Red State	Gun Swing
Improving the background check system to make gun buyer criminal background checks faster and more accurate.	83	89	85	88
Requiring instant criminal background checks for all firearms sales at gun shows.	82	80	83	90
Vigorously enforcing all of the federal gun laws already on the books.	77	81	78	72
Making gun trafficking a crime with penalties as serious as drug trafficking.	76	77	74	77
Requiring all gun owners to obtain a federal government-issued license to show that they know how to handle a firearm.	73	67	71	78
Renewing the law that bans assault weapons.	71	67	72	77
Requiring anyone who purchases a firearm to undergo a criminal background check even if they buy the firearm from a friend or neighbor.	70	59	66	70
Requiring individual gun owners to register their firearms with the federal government.	66	51	62	65
Making it easier for people to carry a concealed handgun to protect themselves.	59	67	61	53

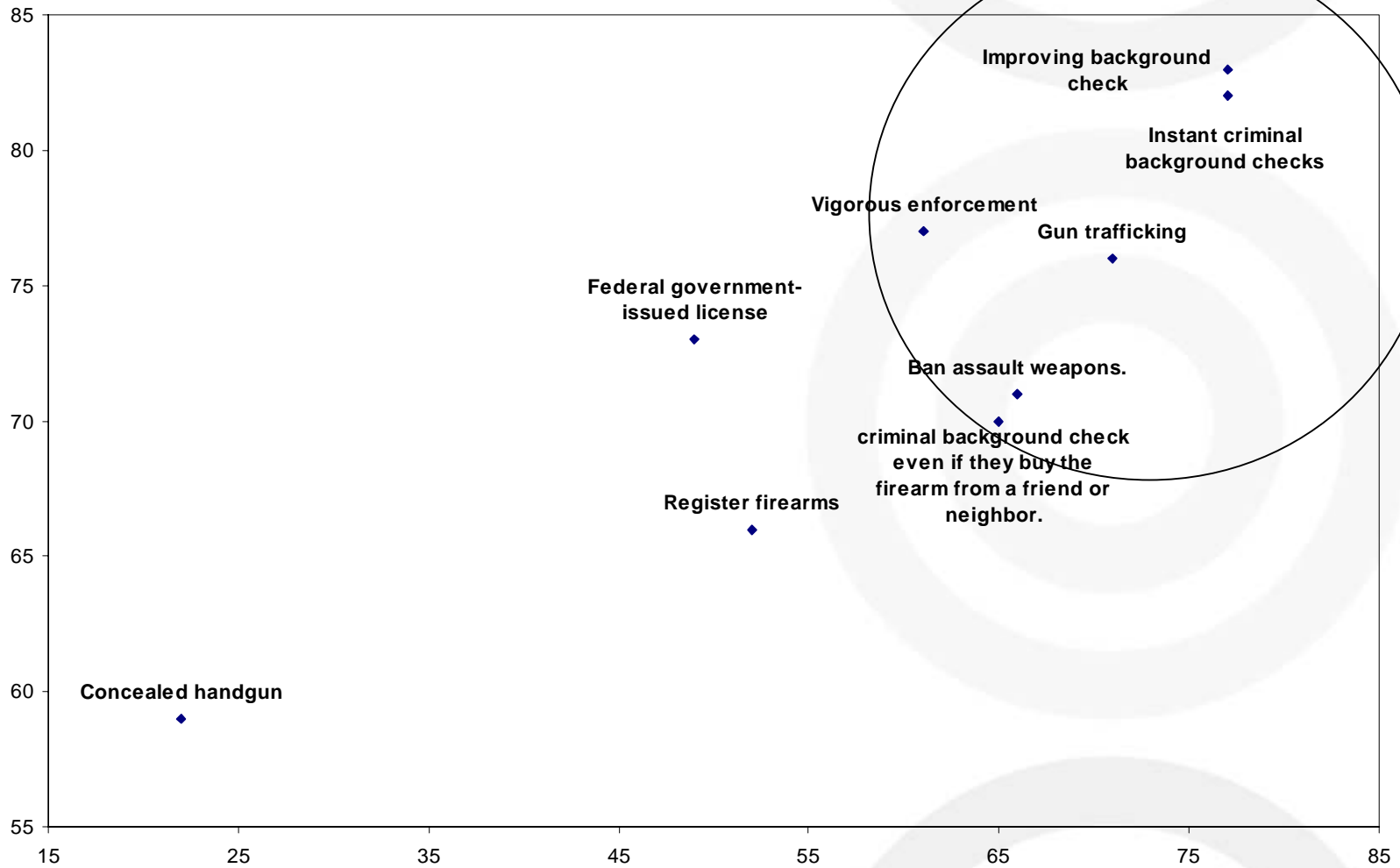
Dem Perceived to Support 2nd Amendment



Strongly Support Policy

Gun Swing

Dem Perceived to Support 2nd Amendment



Strongly Support Policy



Gun Safety Messages Have Broad Appeal

○ Rights and responsibilities message is most effective.

I am going to read to you statements that a Democratic candidate for Congress could make. For each one, tell me if that statement would make you more or less likely to vote for that candidate.	All		Gun Own	Red State	Swing
	Very Likely %	Likely/ Unlikely %	Likely/ Unlikely %	Likely/ Unlikely %	Likely/ Unlikely %
Our gun rights come with the responsibility to keep them out of the hands of criminals terrorists and children.	67	89/9	85/11	89/9	93/4
I support gun safety measures like criminal background checks on all sales at gun shows and tough enforcement of existing gun laws.	61	87/11	85/12	89/10	90/9
Only 578 out of 138000 people who lied on the criminal background check form that is required to buy a gun were prosecuted. We need to get serious and crack down on people who try to buy guns illegally.	57	87/10	88/12	88/11	80/19
I agree with President Bush that we need to renew the ban on assault weapons.	55	78/20	70/26	75/21	83/14
I take a back seat to no one in support of second amendment rights but I also support requiring criminal background checks at gun shows and continuing the ban on assault weapons.	51	83/13	83/16	86/11	80/16



Messages: Republican Weakness

- Several core GOP messages are rejected by key voter groups.

Message Text	All		Suburban Men	Suburban Women	Rural Men	Rural Women
	Much More Likely	Likely/ Unlikely	Likely/ Unlikely	Likely/ Unlikely	Likely/ Unlikely	Likely/ Unlikely
I am against closing the so-called gun show loophole because we already have enough gun laws and the fact is that criminals don't obey gun laws they break them.	33	47/47	46/48	29/60	64/35	40/53
I am opposed to renewing the ban on assault weapons because criminals rarely use these guns and the ban infringes on the gun rights of law abiding gun owners.	22	33/61	37/57	21/72	37/60	23/71
I believe that Second Amendment rights are absolute and do not allow for restrictive gun laws like the ban on assault weapons or background checks at gun shows.	21	34/60	41/58	30/63	33/55	20/73