



# Protecting Democracy From Unlimited Corporate Spending

Results from a National Survey among 1,000 Voters  
on the Citizens United Decision  
Conducted June 6 – 7, 2010  
for



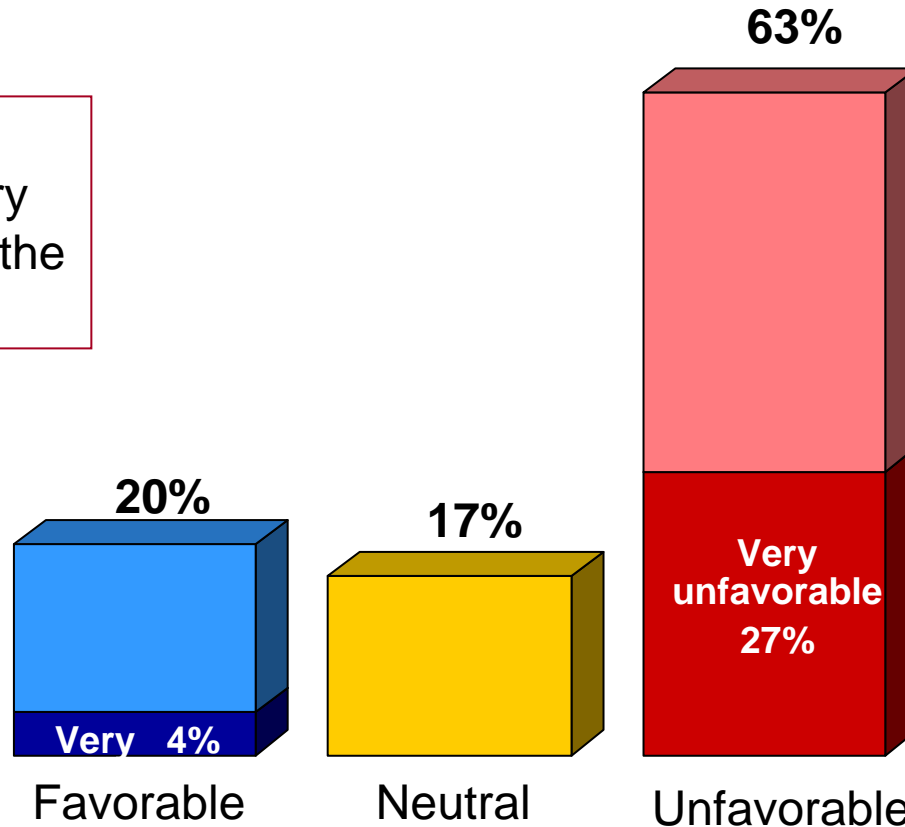
# Overview

- ◆ Voters see the extent of corporate influence in government as a serious problem.
- ◆ It speaks to a deep dissatisfaction with the current political system.
- ◆ Support for a Constitutional amendment limiting the amount corporations can spend is broad – and bipartisan.
- ◆ Indeed, Americans say they are more likely to cast their ballot for a candidate who supports an amendment.

# Americans are extremely unhappy with the current political system.

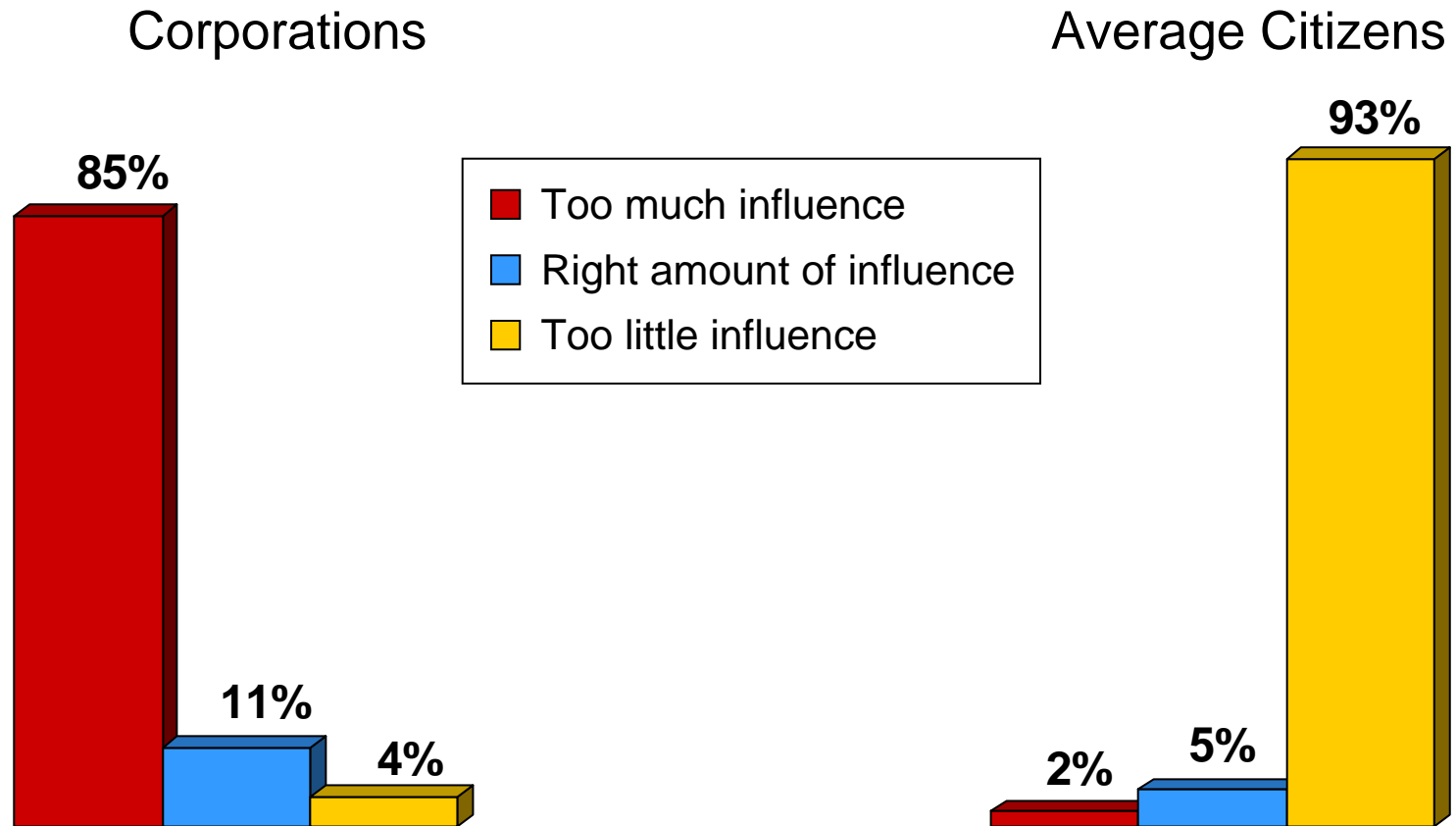
## Impressions of the Current Political System and How it Works

63% of voters feel things in the country are heading off on the wrong track



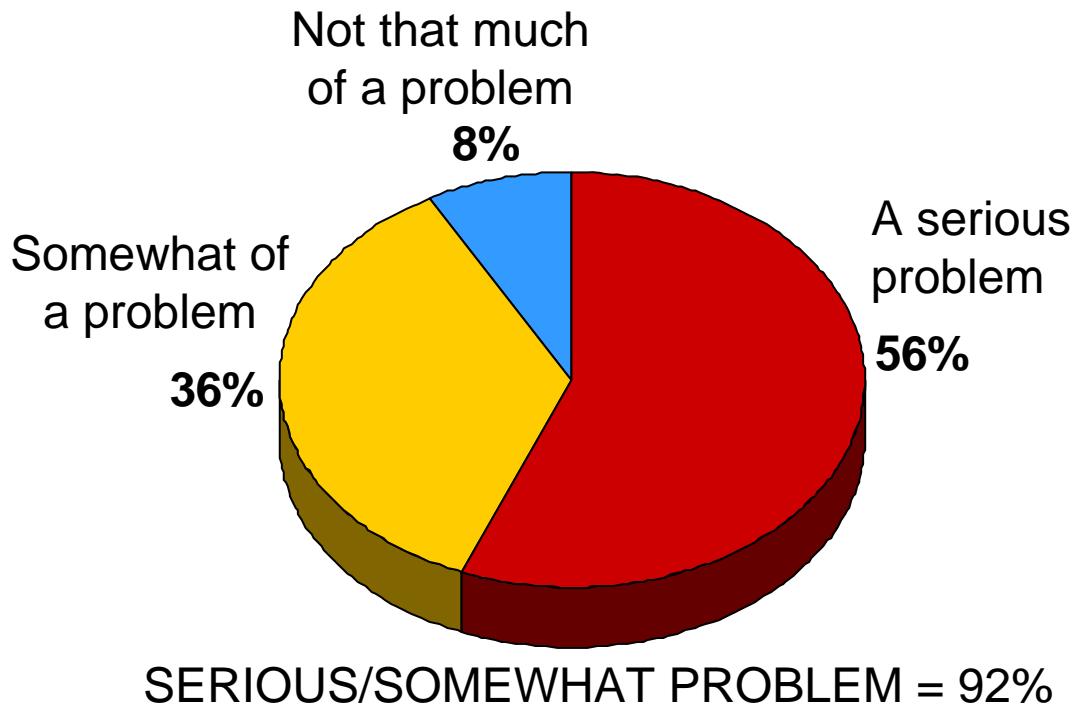
The belief that corporations already have too much influence while average citizens have too little is nearly universal.

## Influence of Corporations/Average Citizens over Political System



# Voters feel strongly that the amount of influence corporations have over the political system today is a problem.

*The amount of influence that corporations have over the political system today is:*

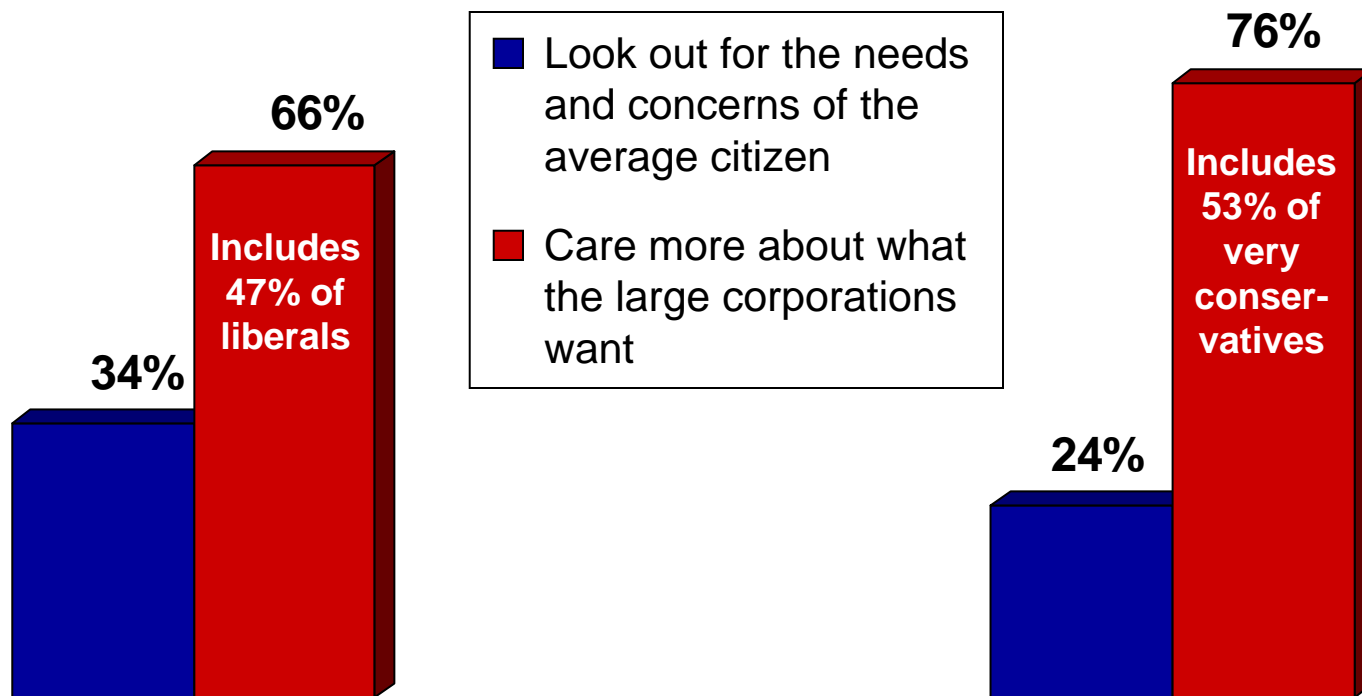


Serious Problem	
Democrats	65%
Independents	62%
Republicans	43%
Liberal	73%
Moderate	58%
Conservative:	
Somewhat	44%
Very	49%
White swing voters	55%
Certain 2010 voters	57%

# Voters see Democrats and Republicans both as part of the problem.

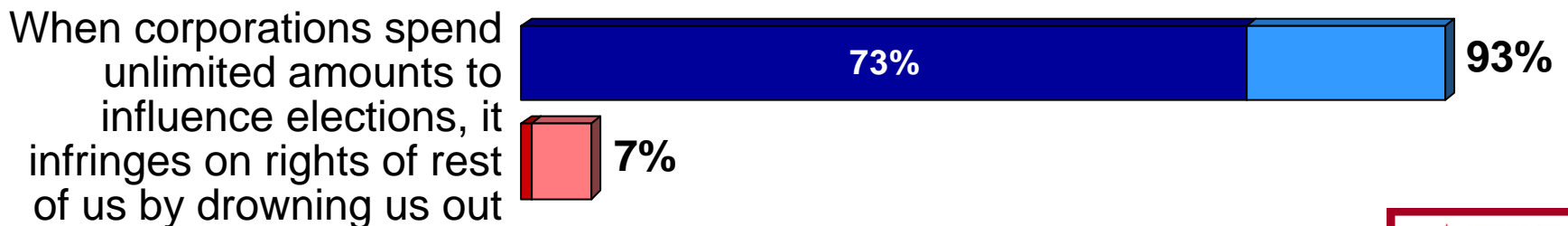
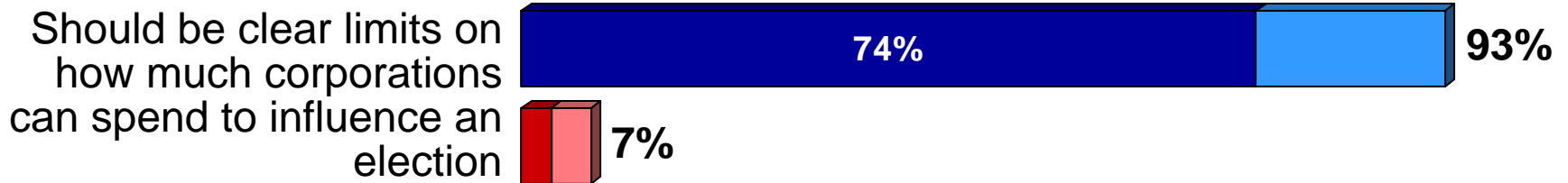
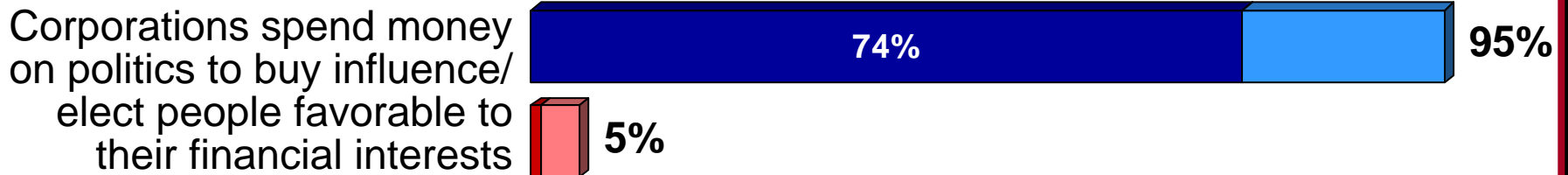
## Democrats in Congress

## Republicans in Congress



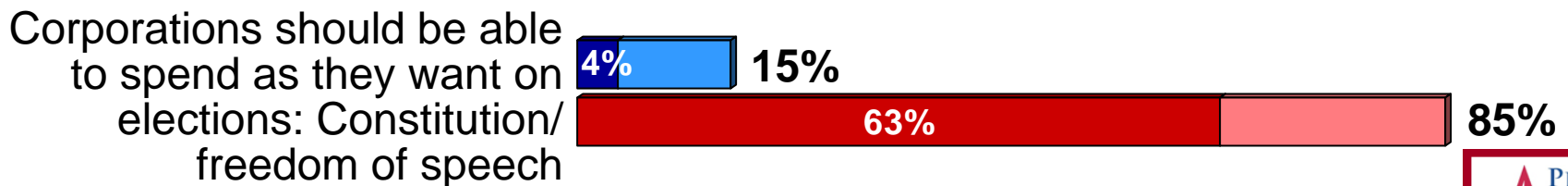
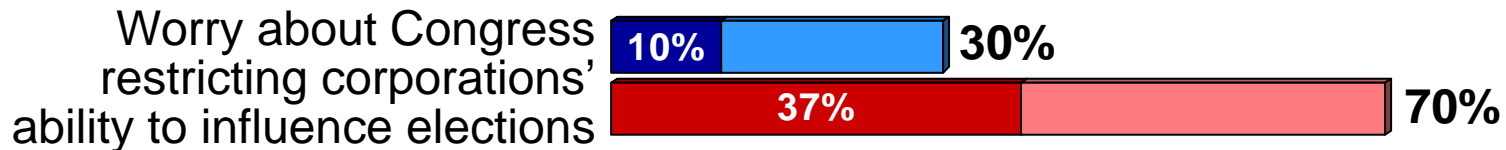
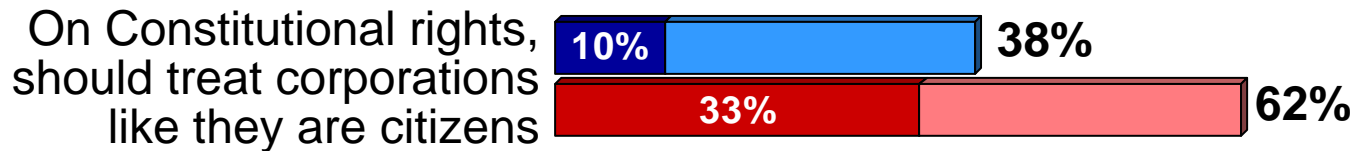
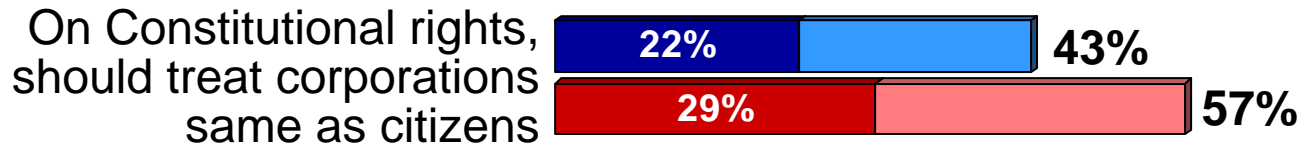
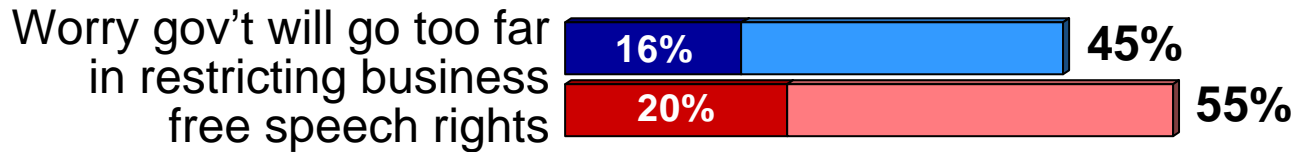
# Americans feel that corporate political spending is about buying influence, not about free speech.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



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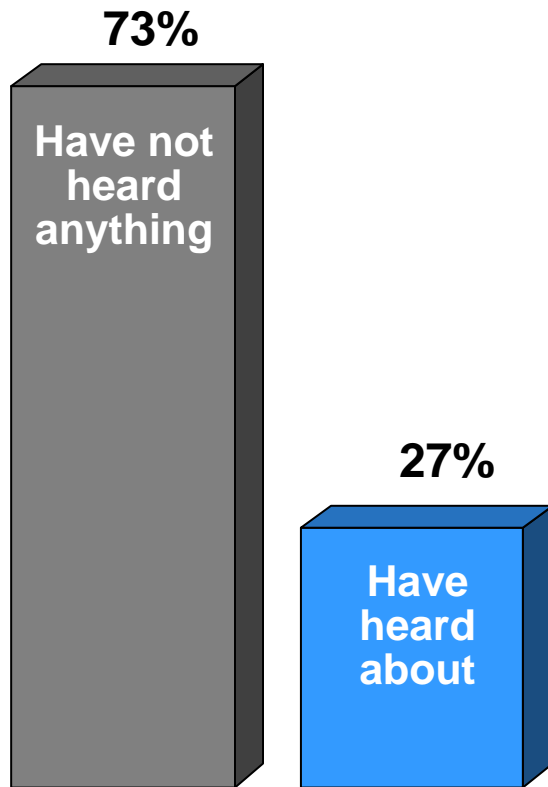
■ Strongly agree   
 ■ Somewhat agree   
 ■ Somewhat disagree   
 ■ Strongly disagree



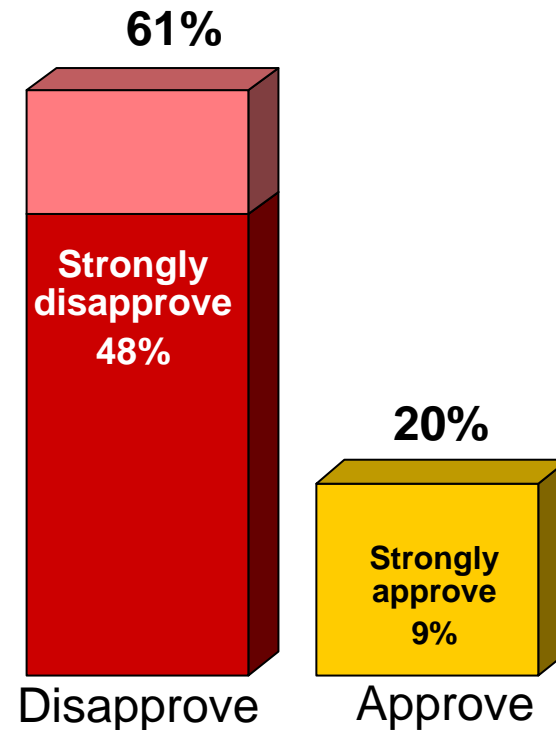


# Just 27% of voters have heard of Citizens United decision, but those who have overwhelmingly disapprove.

Awareness of Citizens United Supreme Court Decision

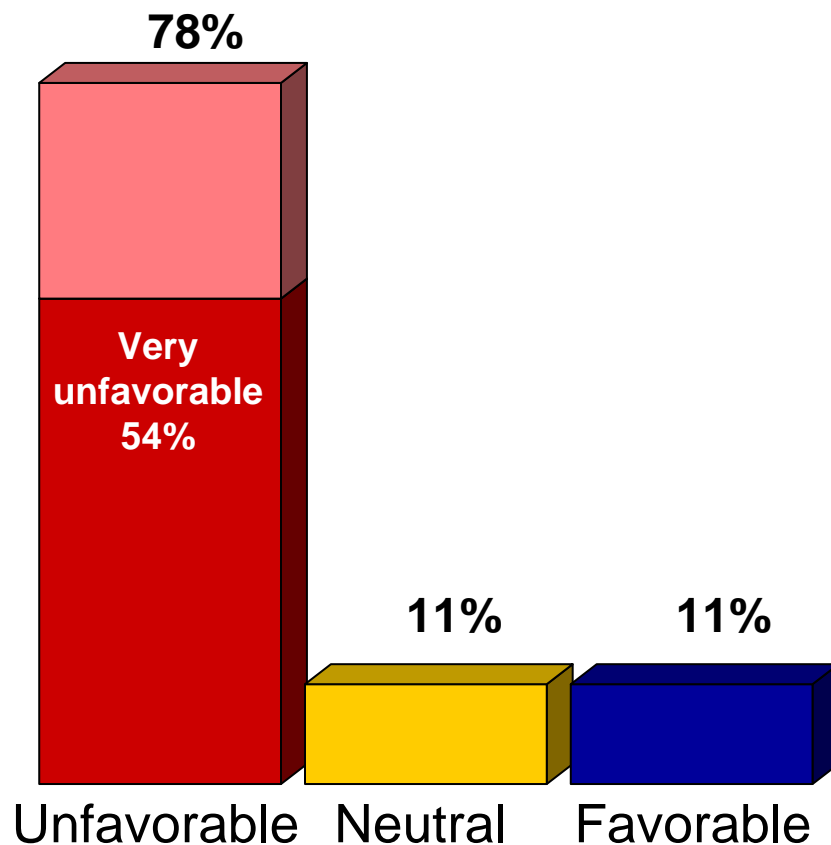


Support for Citizens United Supreme Court Decision



When given a description of Citizens United, more than three in four are unfavorable.

## Informed Reaction to Citizens United Supreme Court Decision

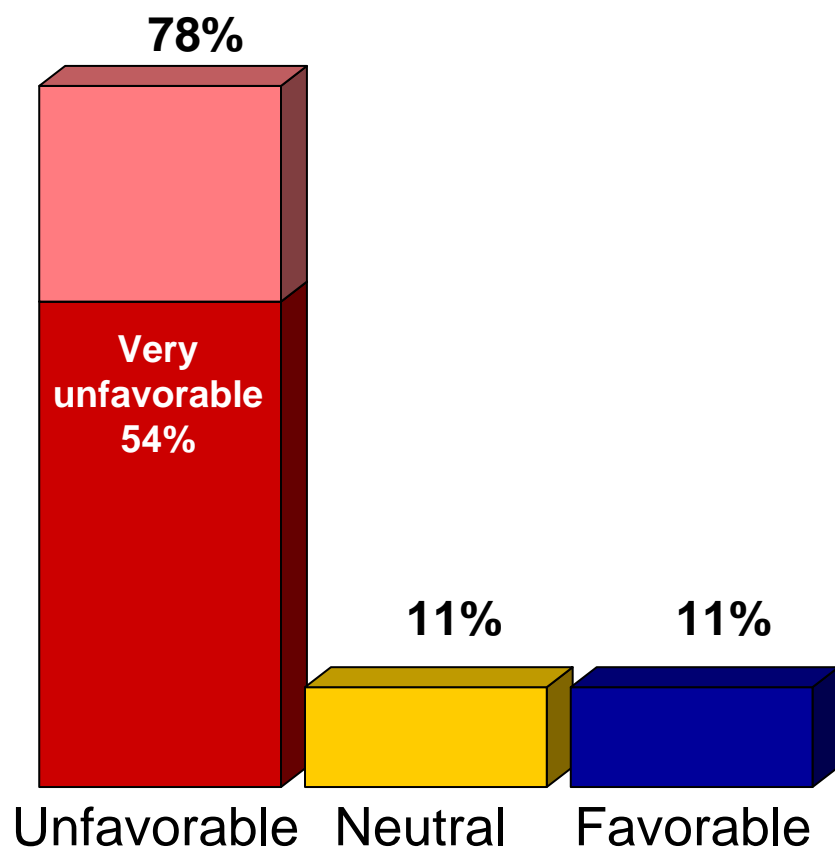


“In the Citizens United case, the Supreme Court ruled in a five to four decision to overturn laws that Congress had passed limiting the amount that corporations could spend to influence the outcome of elections. The majority of justices said that corporations have the same rights as individuals under the Constitution, and that limiting the amount corporations could spend on elections would be a violation of their freedom of speech. As a result, corporations now are able to spend unlimited amounts to influence the outcome of elections.”

# Unfavorable reaction to Citizens United cuts across partisan and ideological lines.

## Informed Reaction to Citizens United Supreme Court Decision

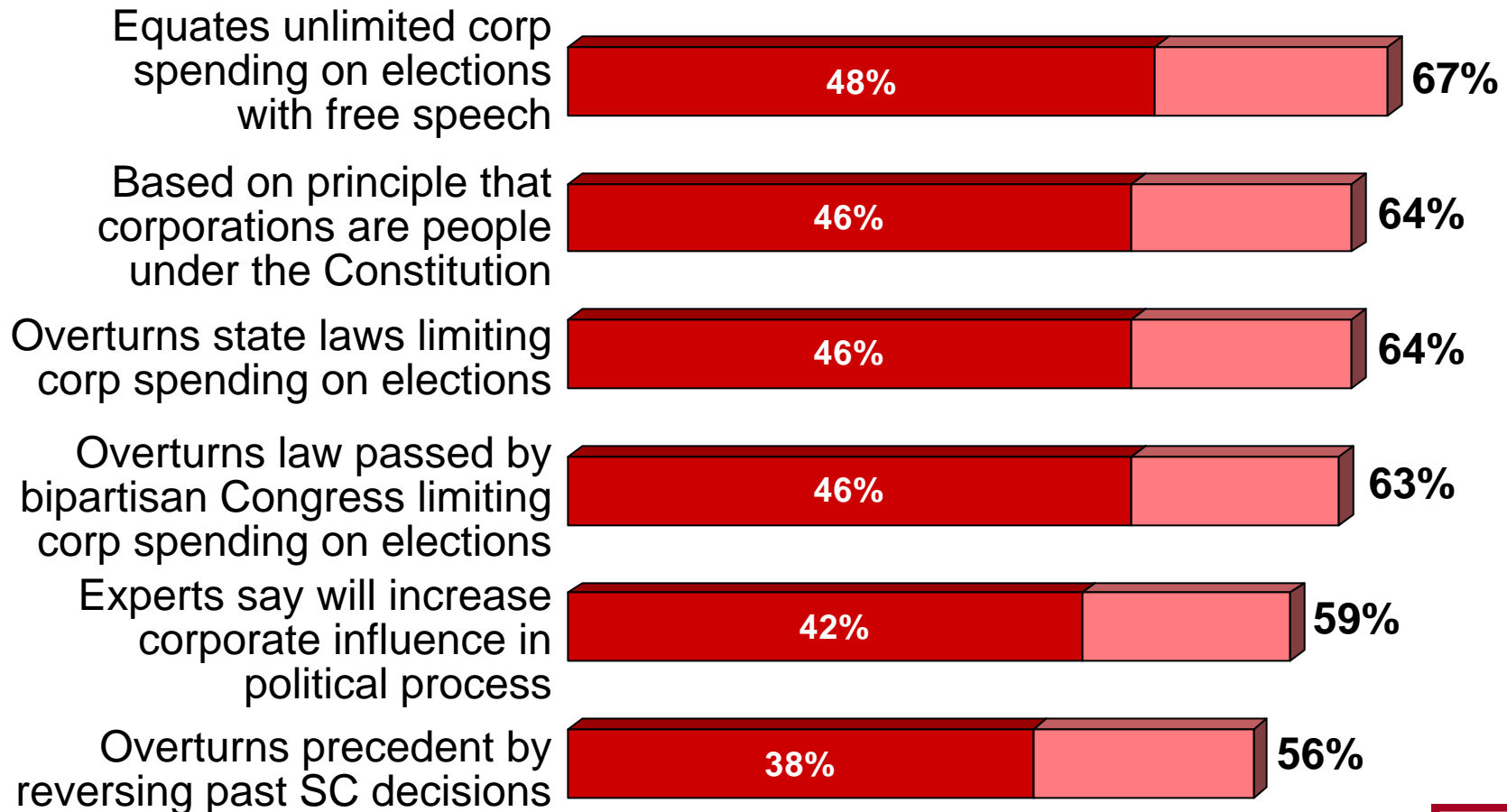
All Voters



	Unfavorable		Favorable
	Total	Very	
Democrats	85%	62%	6%
Independents	78%	57%	13%
Republicans	68%	43%	17%
Liberal	92%	72%	3%
Moderate	80%	55%	7%
Conservative:			
Somewhat	67%	41%	21%
Very	66%	46%	23%

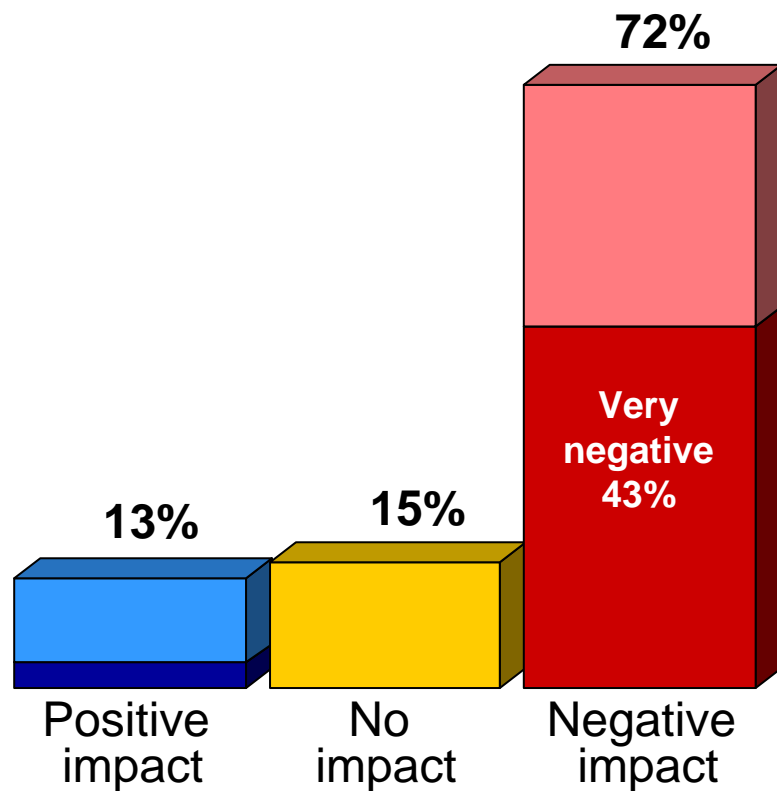
# Americans have equally unfavorable reactions to specific aspects of the decision.

■ Have very unfavorable reaction to this    ■ Have somewhat unfavorable reaction

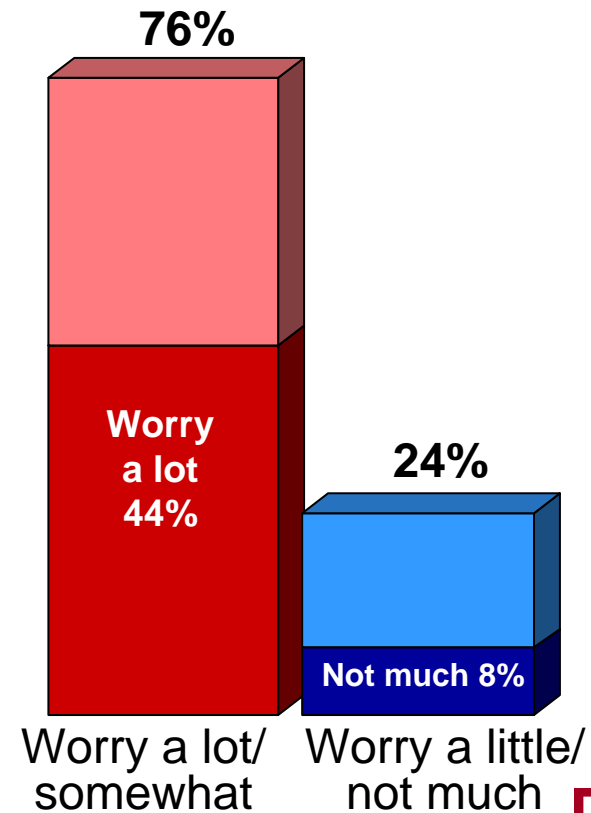


# Most expect the decision will have a negative impact and worry it will give corporations too much influence at the expense of citizens.

## Expected Impact of Citizens United Decision on Political System



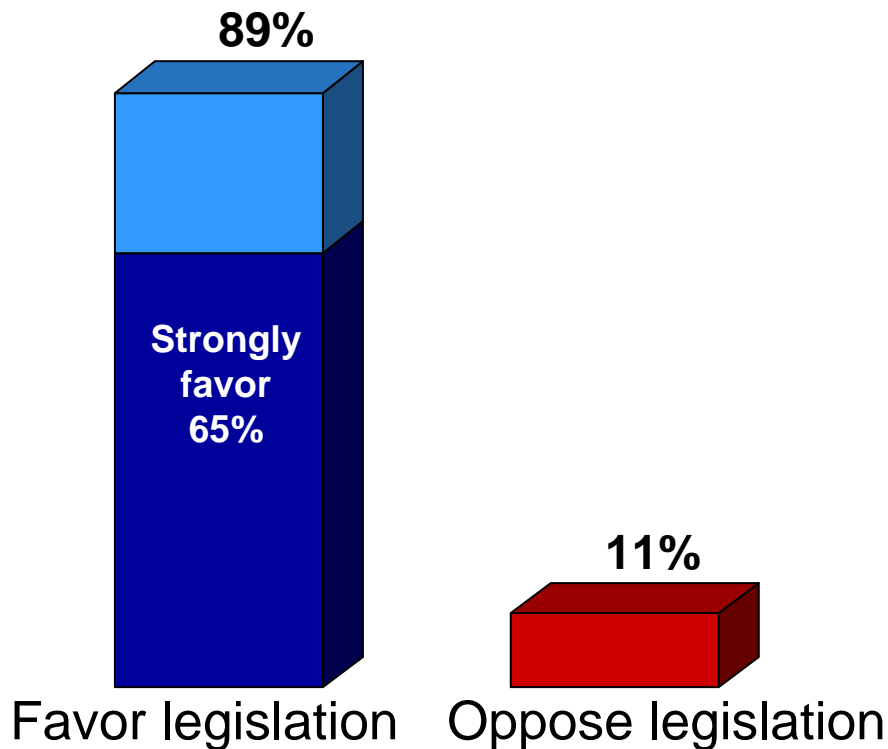
## Worry that Decision Gives Corporations Too Much Influence over Gov't



# There is strong – and broad – support for legislation requiring greater disclosure by corporations.

*Congress is considering legislation that would require greater disclosure by corporations of their spending to influence elections, including requirements that ads say which corporations paid for them.*

All Voters



Favor Legislation	
Democrats	91%
Independents	91%
Republicans	87%
Liberal	95%
Moderate	89%
Conservative:	
Somewhat	88%
Very	87%

# However, few voters feel disclosure is enough.

*What should Congress do about the Citizens United Decision?*

	<b>All Voters</b>	Demo- crats	Inde- pendents	Repub- licans
Congress should not take any further action	<b>8%</b>	3%	6%	14%
Congress should pass a law requiring full and immediate disclosure of corporate spending on elections	<b>30%</b>	29%	33%	31%
<b>Just requiring disclosure of corporate spending does not go far enough; Congress also should find a way to place limits on how much corporations can spend to influence the outcome of elections</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>55%</b>

# Voters are much more concerned about Congress not going far enough than about Congress going too far.

## *Which concerns you more?*

Congress won't go far enough to keep corporations from having too much influence



82%

Congress will go too far in restricting corporations' legitimate free speech rights to participate in elections



18%

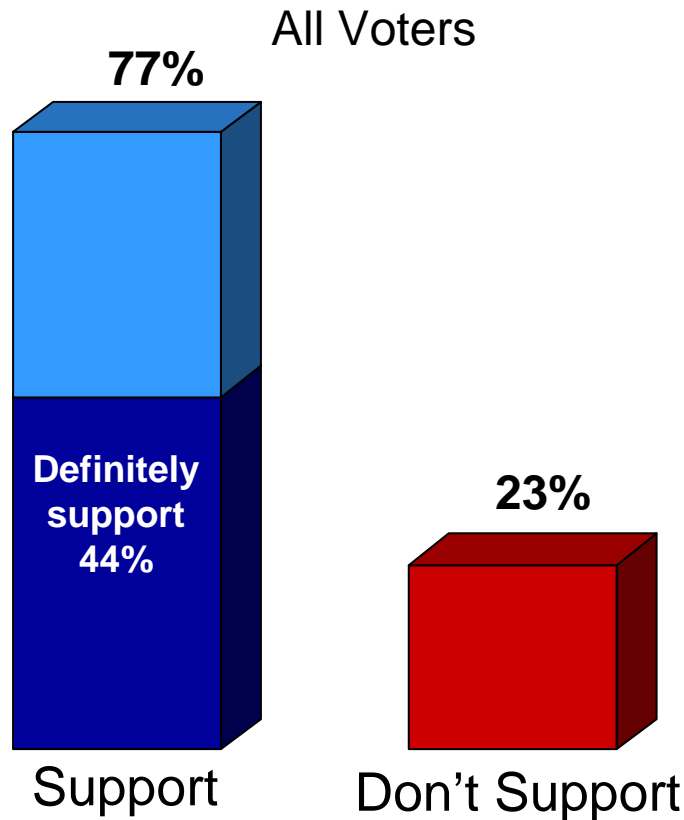
### Concerned Congress Won't Go Far Enough

Democrats	94%	Liberal	98%
Independents	82%	Moderate	87%
Republicans	68%	Somewhat conservative	68%
		Very conservative	67%



# More than three in four voters say Congress should support a Constitutional amendment if needed to limit the amount corporations can spend.

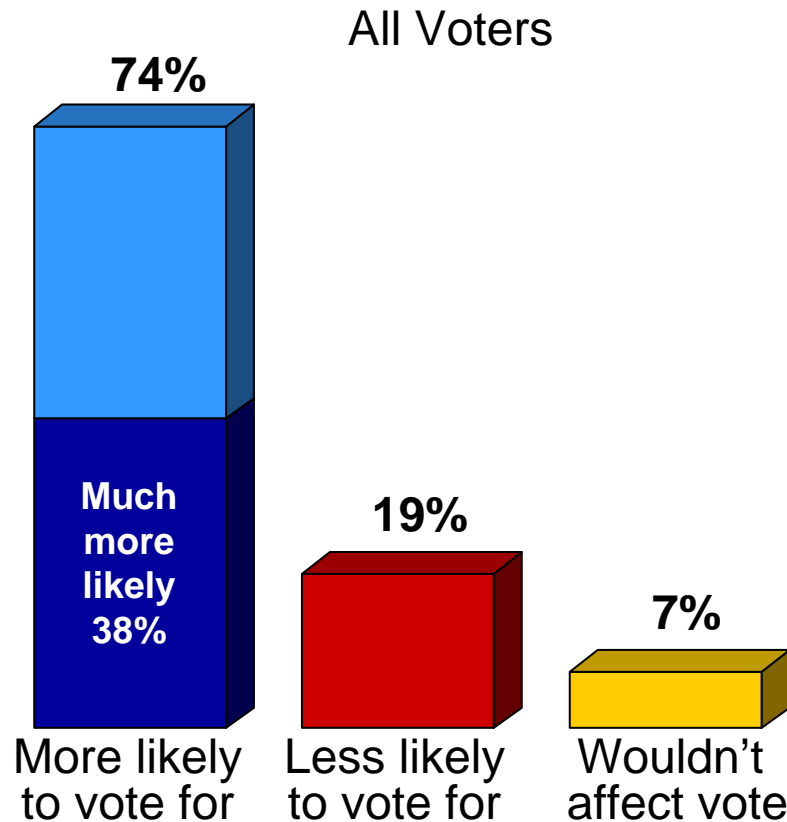
*Restoring the authority of Congress to limit the amount U.S. corporations can spend to influence elections might require a Constitutional amendment: Should Congress support such an amendment?*



	Should Support	
	Total	Definitely
Democrats	84%	49%
Independents	75%	48%
Republicans	69%	36%
Liberal	84%	53%
Moderate	82%	46%
Conservative:		
Somewhat	65%	34%
Very	69%	41%

# More than three in four voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who signs a pledge to support a Constitutional amendment if needed.

*Suppose a candidate for Congress pledged to support a Constitutional amendment to limit corporate spending on elections: how would that affect your likelihood of voting for that candidate?*



## More Likely to Vote For

	Total	Much More
Democrats	82%	43%
Independents	71%	42%
Republicans	68%	31%
Liberal	83%	50%
Moderate	75%	37%
Conservative:		
Somewhat	69%	32%
Very	69%	33%

In a head-to-head vote, two-thirds of Americans would choose the candidate who supports an amendment.

*For which Congressional candidate would you be more likely to vote?*

Candidate who opposes a Constitutional amendment to limit corporate spending on elections

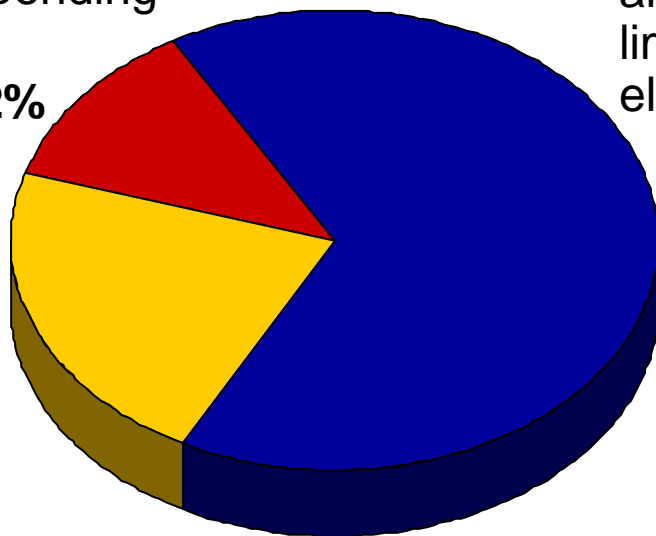
Candidate who pledges to support a Constitutional amendment if necessary to limit corporate spending on elections

This issue wouldn't affect my vote

12%

66%

22%



# Strong messages are available for supporters of an amendment.

*% who strongly agree (9-10 ratings on zero-to-ten scale)*

- 55%** Letting big corporations spend unlimited amounts on elections is a threat to our democracy, because corporations will spend whatever it takes to get their way and elect people who will side with them.
- 48%** We are supposed to be a government of, by, and for the people, but under the Supreme Court's decision equating corporations with people we are becoming a government of, by, and for the corporations.
- 44%** Many of our problems in America are the result of big corporations and those with money having too much influence over the political system. It is time to change that, even if it takes a Constitutional amendment to limit the amount of money that is spent on elections.
- 41%** If someone has a consistent record of siding with corporations over consumers, workers, and the environment, they should not be put on the Supreme Court.
- 41%** The Founding Fathers included provisions for amending the Constitution so we could deal with flaws in the system and address threats to our democratic values, and this is a time when we should consider amending the Constitution to protect our democracy.
- 40%** The justices who took the corporations' side in the Citizens United case left us no choice other than to consider a Constitutional amendment, because we cannot sit by and let big corporations hijack our elections and democracy.

# Reasons to oppose an amendment get much less traction with voters.

## *% who strongly agree (9-10 ratings on zero-to-ten scale)*

- 15% Under our system, the Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting and applying the Constitution, and we should not be passing Constitutional amendments just because we disagree with a decision.
- 12% The only people who want to amend the Constitution to limit how much corporations can spend on elections are liberals and labor unions, and see this as an opportunity for them to gain an unfair advantage.
- 12% Free speech is a fundamental right in America, and we should not let Congress restrict the free speech of corporations by limiting how much corporations can spend on elections.

