



Critical Insights on Maine™

*The **Voice** of Maine*



Introduction

Background and Methodology

Background

- Each spring and fall, Digital Research, Inc. conducts the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion poll of registered voters in Maine. The survey regularly covers topics of interest to businesses, government, and the general public.
- *Critical Insights on Maine™* has been documenting the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of Maine’s residents for more than 25 years, making it the longest-running consistently-administered tracking survey in the Northeast.
 - In addition to general-interest items (the results of which are being provided to the public in this report), the survey includes a number of proprietary items for sponsoring entities, with results of those items released only to the sponsors of those questions.

Methodology

- This wave of the survey included a total of 650 respondents across the state who were surveyed by phone (300 respondents) or online (350 respondents) in March and April of 2023.
- All survey respondents were registered voters who live in Maine.
 - Final data reflect the demographics of the state’s population and were statistically weighted to ensure that those responding by phone or online had an equal impact on the overall results.
 - With a total sample of 650 respondents, results presented here have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- The entire survey took the average respondent 20 minutes to complete.

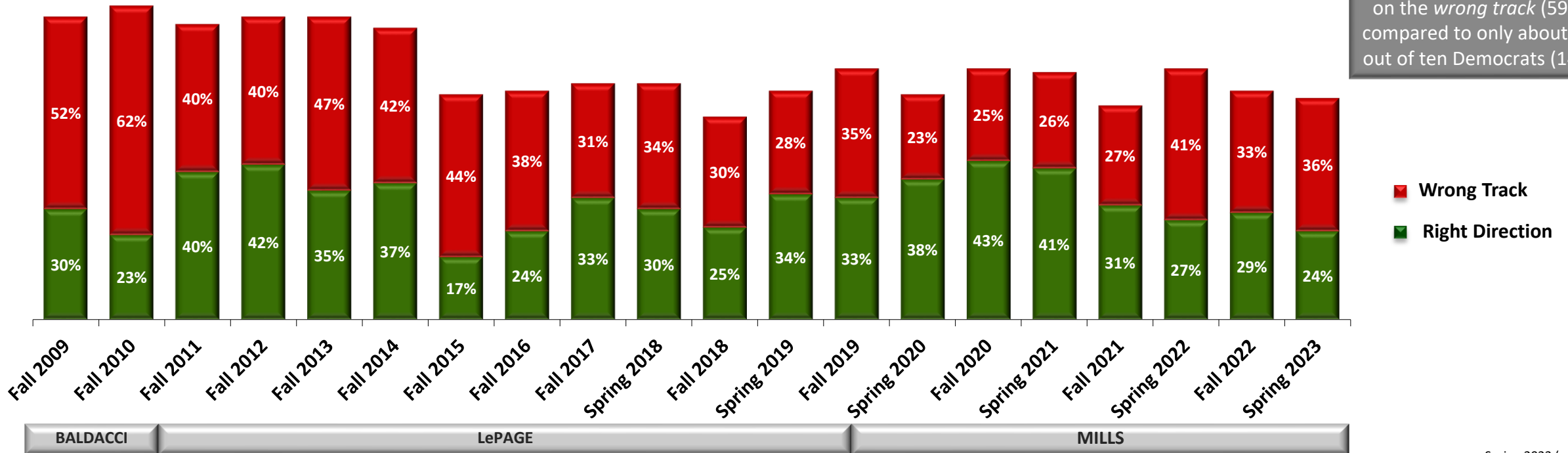
Views Towards the Direction of Maine and the Nation

One-quarter of surveyed voters in Maine believe the state is headed in the *right direction*, holding steady over the past year.

Direction of Maine

Those who believe Maine is on the right track are most likely – by far – to point to the governor as the reason for their positive opinion.

Democrats (44%) are much more likely than Republicans (8%) to feel the state is headed in the *right direction*.
 In fact, six out of ten Republicans feel the state is on the *wrong track* (59%), compared to only about one out of ten Democrats (14%).

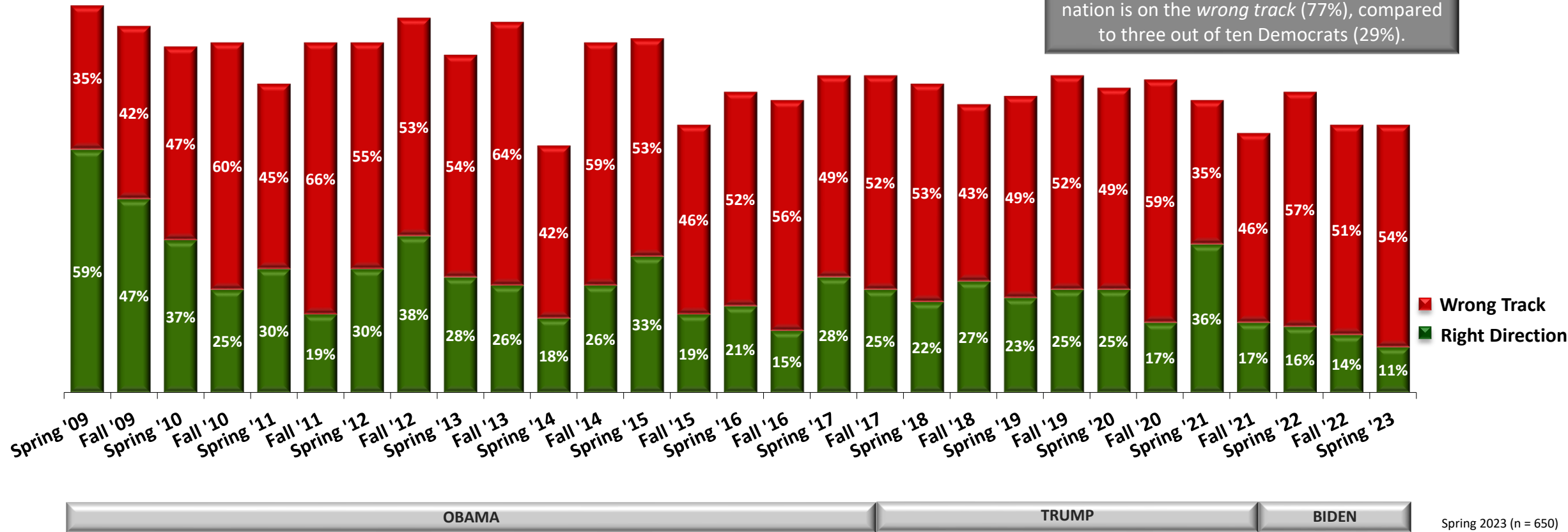


Spring 2023 (n = 650)

Just one out of ten Mainers believe the nation as a whole is heading in the *right direction* – holding steady over the past year but well below the long-term historical average. Just over half – 54% overall – believe the nation is on the *wrong track*.

Direction of the Nation

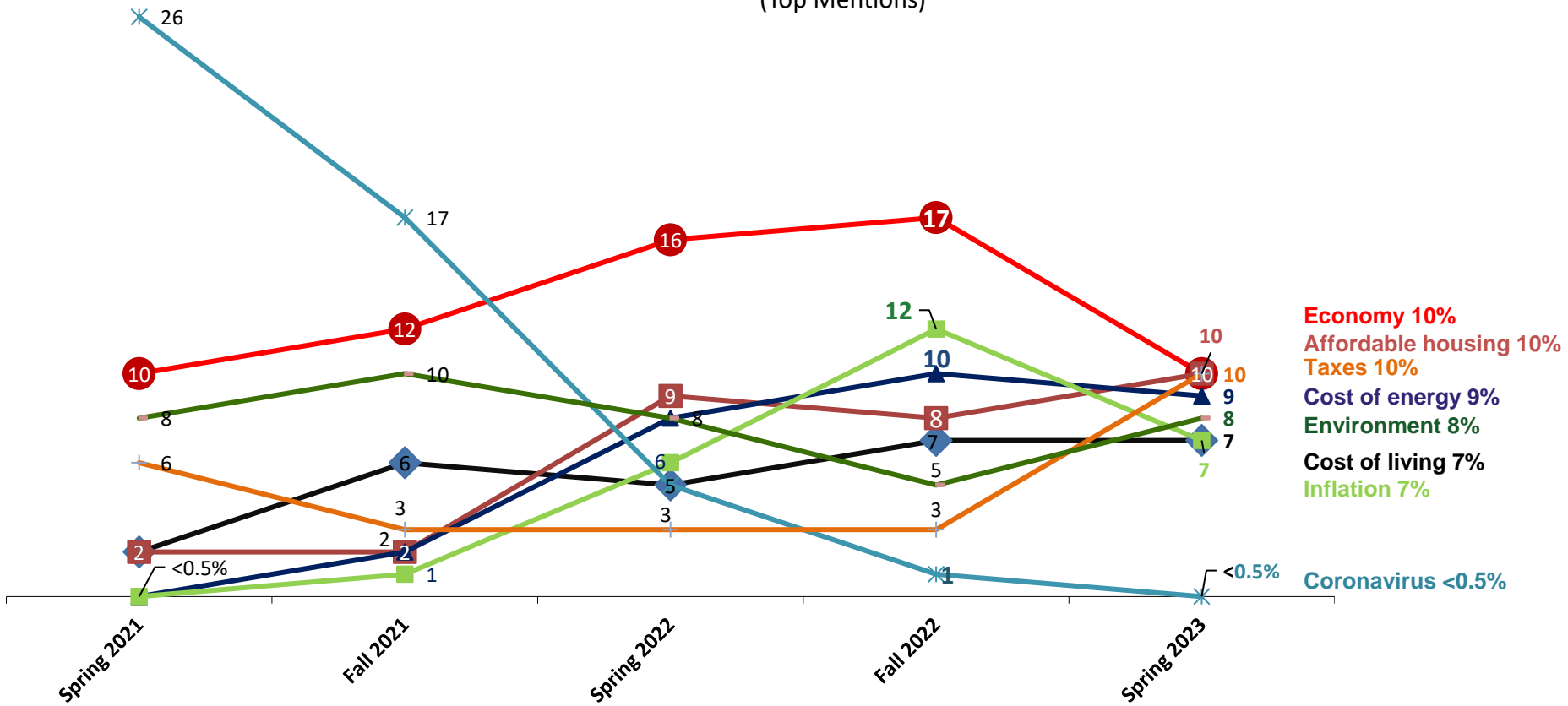
Democrats (20%) are much more likely than Republicans (3%) to feel the nation is headed in the *right direction*.
 Almost eight out of ten Republicans feel the nation is on the *wrong track* (77%), compared to three out of ten Democrats (29%).



In general, financial and economic issues are the most common concerns for Mainers, even without prompting. Only one non-economic concern – the environment – is top-of-mind for even a handful of voters.

Most Important Issues Facing Maine

Percentage naming each issue
(Top Mentions)



- Economy 10%
- Affordable housing 10%
- Taxes 10%
- Cost of energy 9%
- Environment 8%
- Cost of living 7%
- Inflation 7%

All items mentioned by more than 5% of participants in the spring of 2023 are shown (along with the coronavirus, which is shown for context).

Spring 2023 (n = 650)

When focused on economic issues, the high cost of living generally is the most common concern among Maine voters, followed by inflation, the price of oil and other utilities, and the cost of housing.

Top Economic/Financial Concerns

Percentage naming each issue
(Top Mentions)

Compared to last fall, Mainers are more likely to be concerned about inflation and the cost of housing but are less likely to be concerned about the cost of oil and utilities.

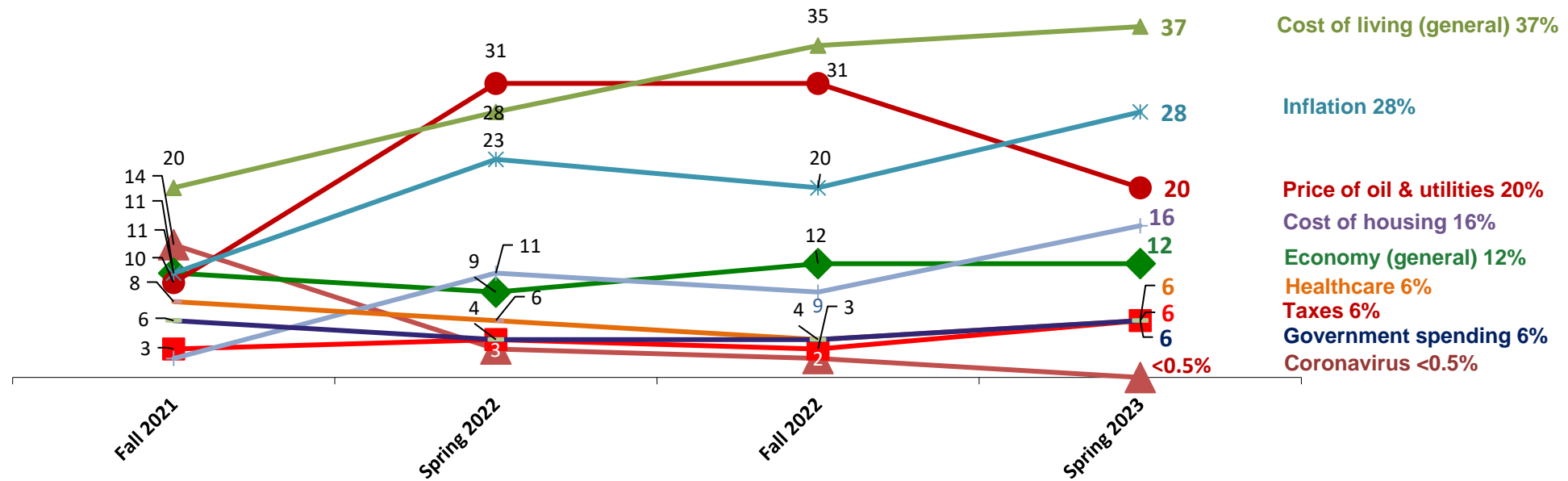
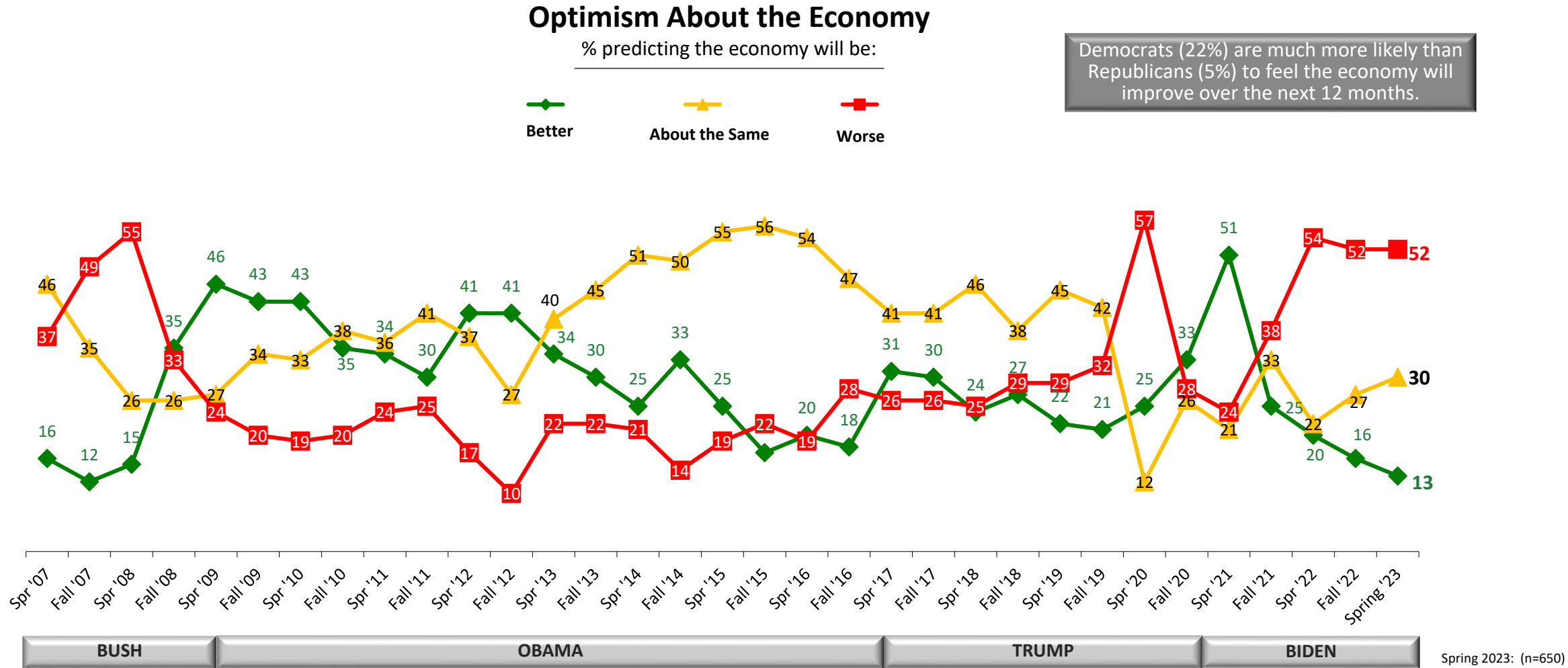


Chart shows issues mentioned by more than 5% of respondents in the spring of 2023 (along with the coronavirus, which is included for comparison)

Spring 2023 (n = 650)

Half of Mainers believe the economy will get worse over the next year.

Prior to a year ago, this level of economic pessimism had only been seen at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and the 2008 financial crisis.



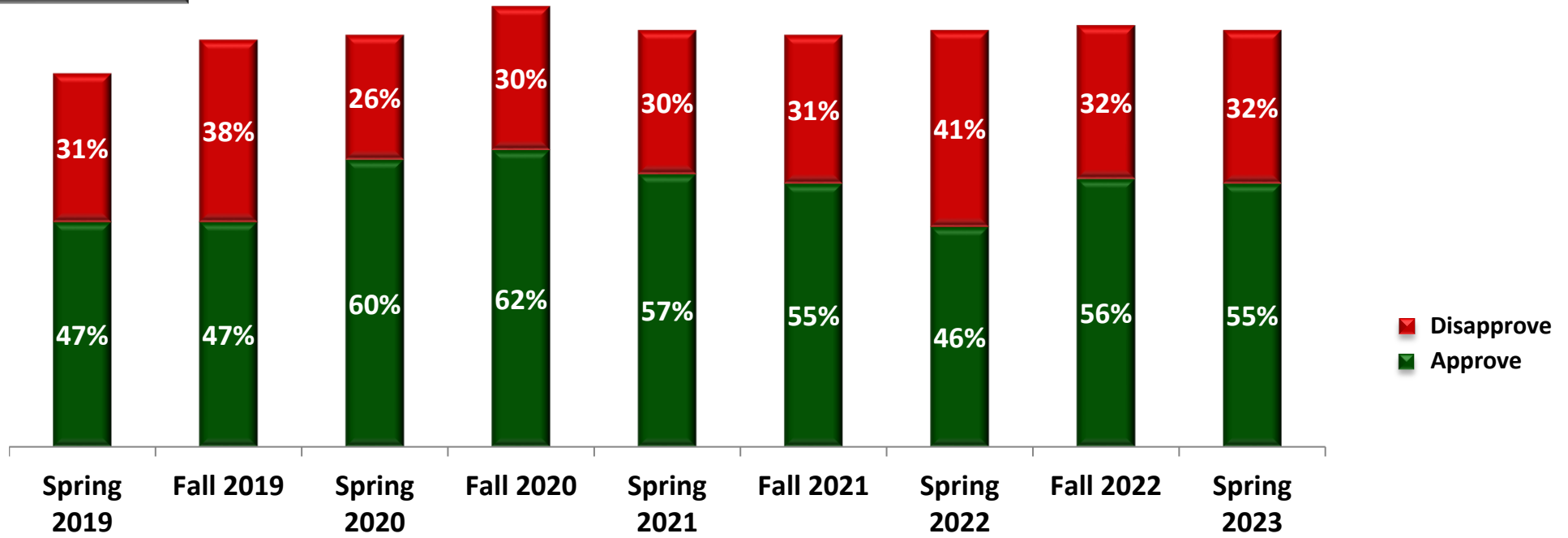
Opinions of Politicians

Almost six out of ten voters approve of Janet Mills's performance as governor, holding steady with her recent and long-term average.

Approval of Janet Mills

At least eight out of ten Democrats approve of the governor's performance (85%), compared to three out of ten Republicans (30%).

Across Paul LePage's tenure, between 31% and 47% of Mainers approved of his performance.



Spring 2023 (n=650)

Four out of ten constituents of Chellie Pingree approve of her performance, marking a noteworthy decline in her approval rating since the fall.

Four out of ten constituents of Jared Golden approve of his performance, in-line with his historical average.

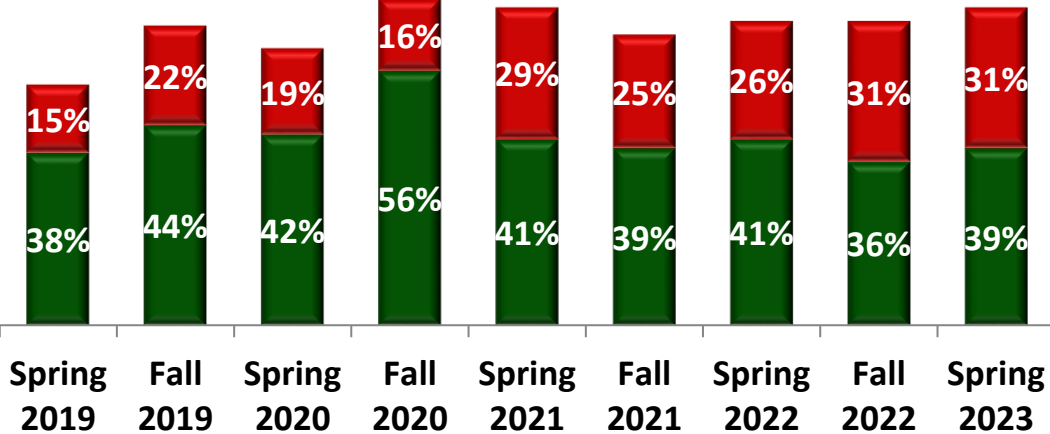
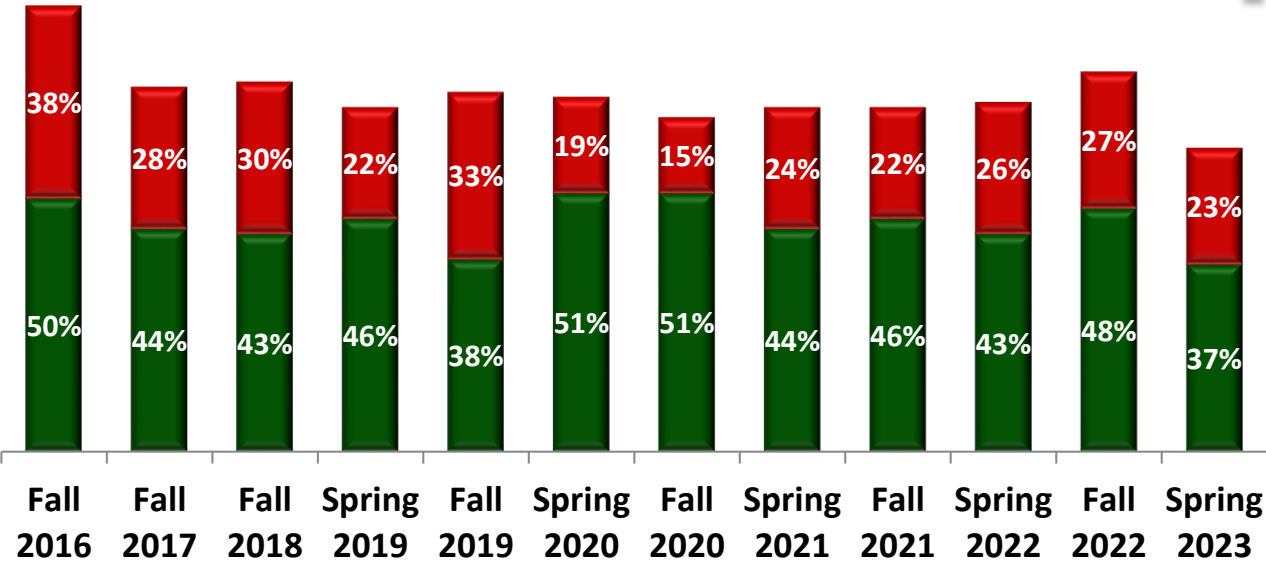
Approval of Congressional Representatives

(Among those in the respective districts)

Chellie Pingree

Disapprove (Red)
Approve (Green)

Jared Golden



Two out of three Democrats in the first congressional district approve of Chellie Pingree’s performance (64%), compared to 15% of Republicans.

Six out of ten Democrats (63%) and almost three out of ten Republicans (26%) approve of Golden’s performance in office.

Among Democrats, support for Pingree has decreased slightly since the fall, while support for Golden has increased.

Spring 2023 (n=325)

Spring 2023 (n=325)



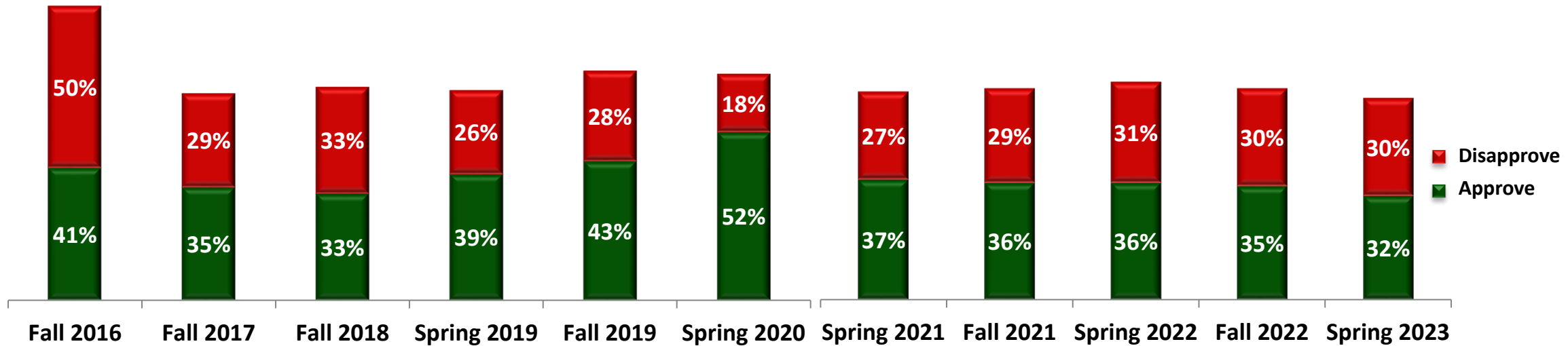
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Chellie Pingree/Jared Golden is handling her/his job as Representative in the U.S. Congress?

Participants could also select response options of “Not sure” and “Prefer not to say.” The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

One-third of voters in Maine approve of the state legislature's performance, holding close to the historical average.

Approval of the State Legislature

Just over half of Democrats in Maine now approve of the legislature's performance (55%), compared to just under two out of ten Republicans (16%).



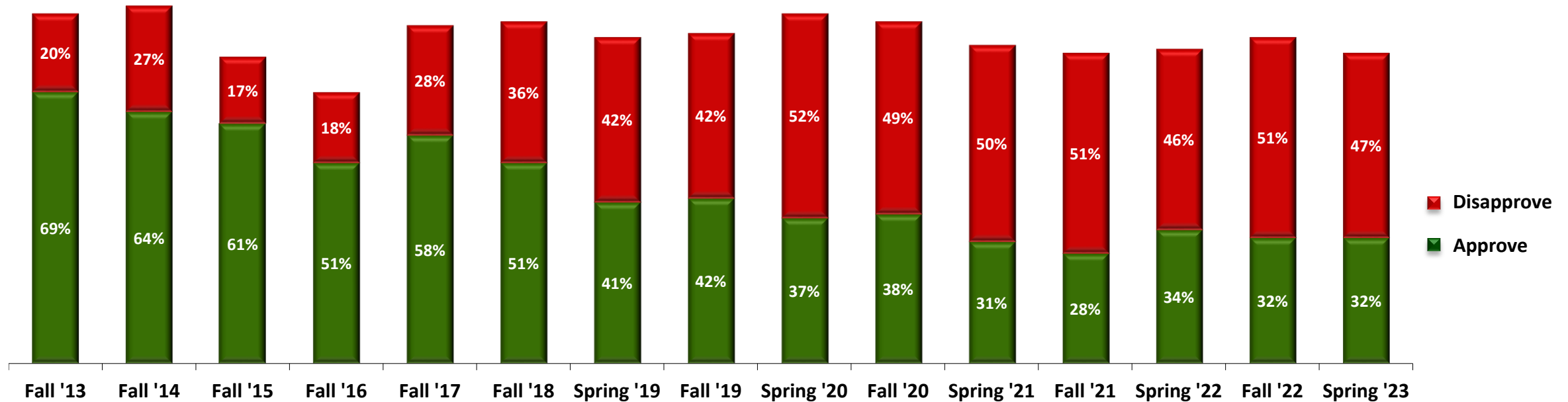
Spring 2023 (n=650)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the current Maine state legislature is doing its job?

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

One-third of voters currently approve of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator – on par with her recent average.

Approval of Senator Susan Collins



Spring 2023 (n=650)

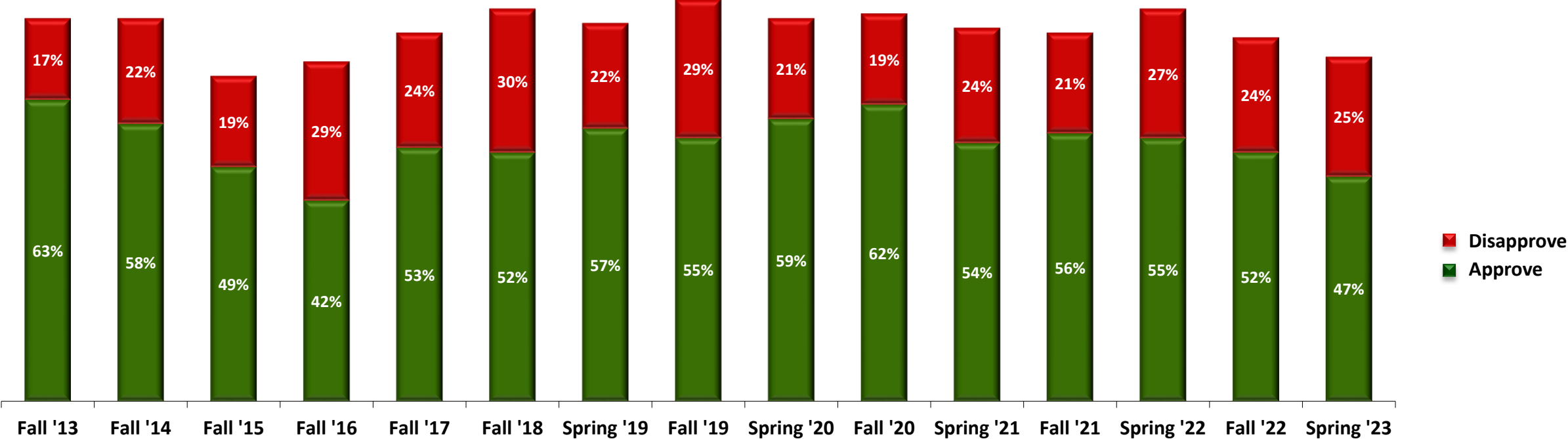
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Susan Collins is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

Roughly half of voters approve of the job Angus King is doing as U.S. Senator, holding close to his long-term average.

Approval of Senator Angus King

Senator King's approval rating continues to be highest among Democrats (74%, vs. 25% of Republicans), with a balance that has held very steady over time.



Spring 2023 (n=650)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Angus King is handling his job as U.S. Senator?

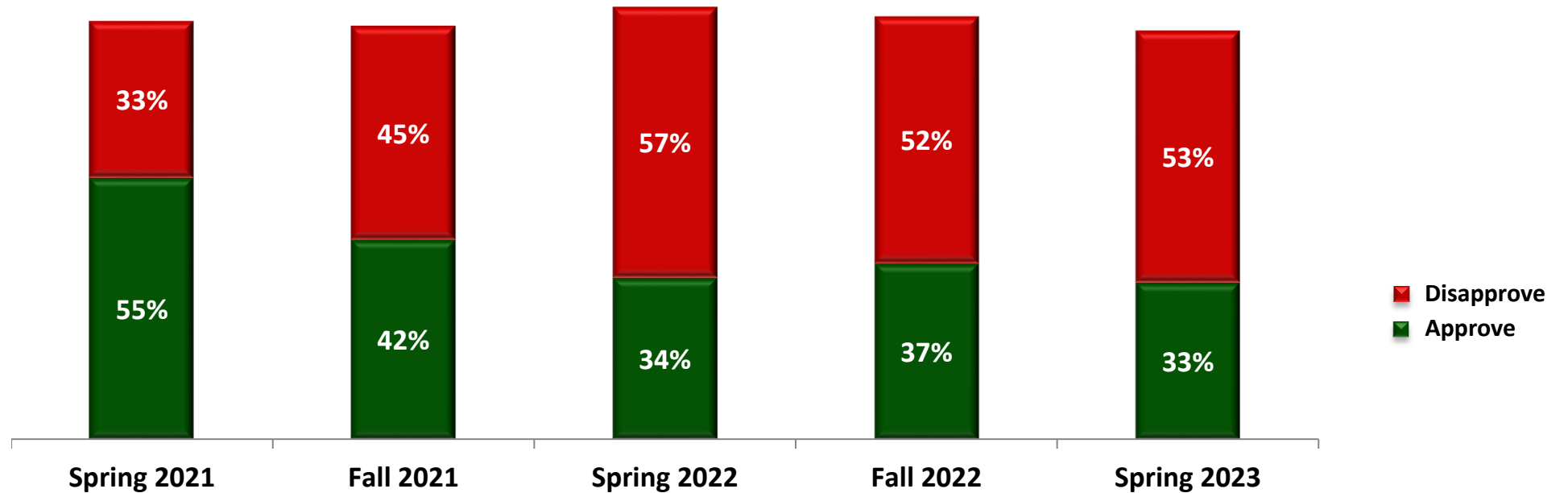
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

One-third of voters in Maine approve of Joe Biden's performance as president, holding at a low point since his election.

For comparison, over the course of his final two years in office, 38% of Maine voters approved of Donald Trump's performance.

Approval of Joe Biden

Just 9% of Republicans in Maine approve of Joe Biden's performance, compared to 67% of Democrats.



Spring 2023 (n=650)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

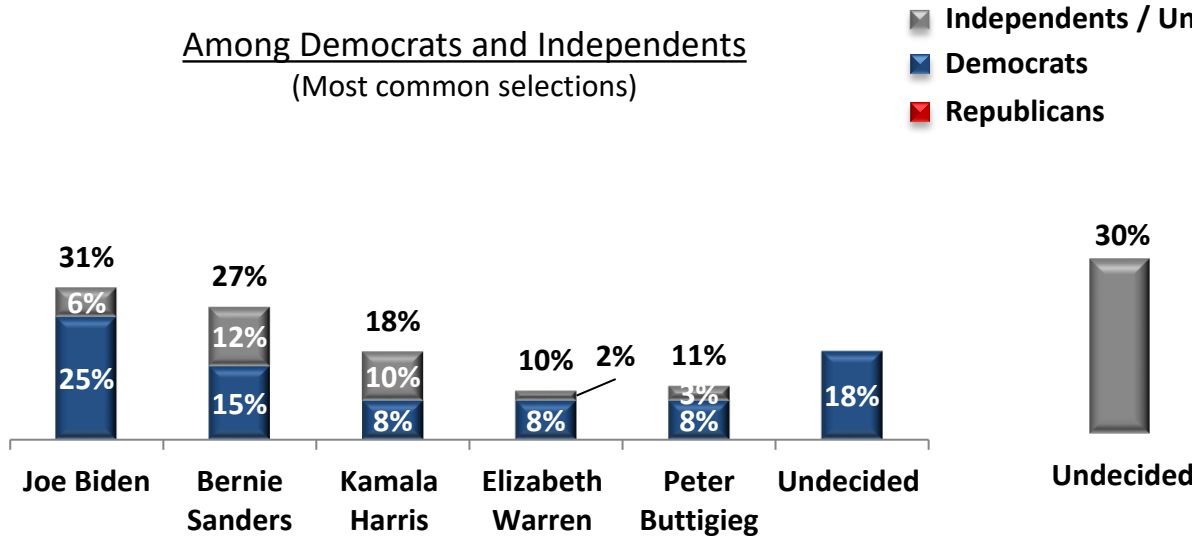
Participants could also select response options of "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say." The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

2024 Voting Intentions

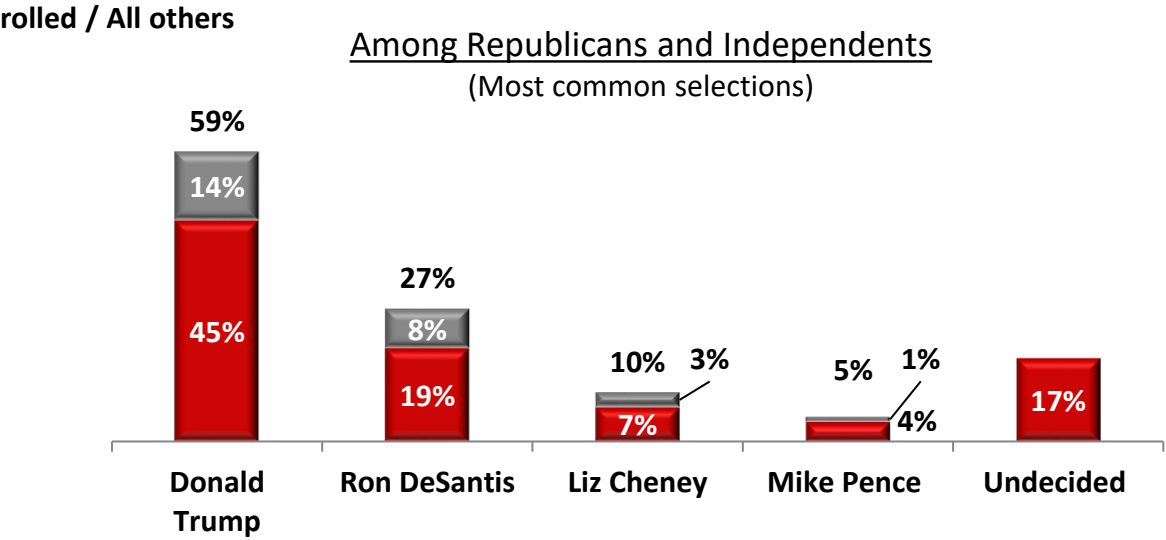
Among Maine Republicans, Donald Trump has a commanding lead across 8 potential candidates, with nearly half of Republicans saying they would vote for him (45%) in a primary setting. Among Democrats, Joe Biden has a less commanding lead, garnering 25% of the vote in his party. Voters not affiliated with either party are particularly likely to be undecided.

Voting Intentions in a Presidential Primary in 2024

Among Democrats and Independents
(Most common selections)



Among Republicans and Independents
(Most common selections)



A total of 30% of voters not registered as Democrats or Republicans are not sure who they would vote for when provided a list of potential candidates from both parties.

Additional Dems

- Amy Klobuchar 4%
- Cory Booker 3%
- Gavin Newsom 2%
- Jared Polis 1%
- Marianne Williamson 1%

Additional Reps

- Nikki Haley 3%
- Mike Pompeo 1%
- Chris Sununu 1%
- Vivek Ramaswamy 1%

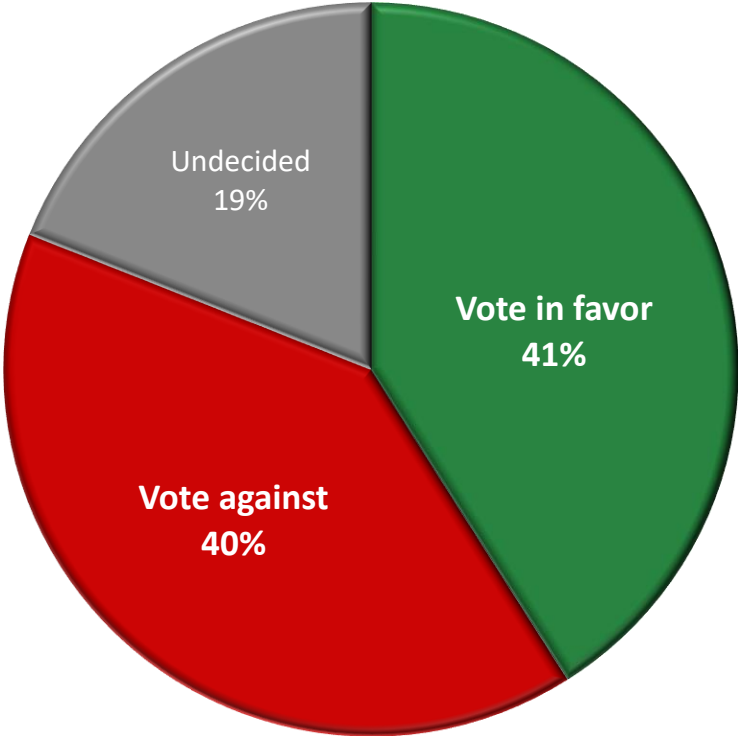
Democrats (n=202) Independents / Unenrolled / All others (n=256) Republicans (n=192)

Assuming everyone I'm about to list ran in a primary for president in 2024, at this point, who do you think you would vote for?

Voters are evenly divided about whether Maine should create a customer-owned power company, with four out of ten saying they would be most likely to vote in favor of the referendum that creates it (41%) and four out of ten saying they would vote in opposition of that referendum (40%).

Support for a Ballot Initiative “To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit, Customer-owned Utility”

“Do you want to create a new quasi-governmental power company governed by an elected board to acquire and operate existing for-profit electricity transmission and distribution facilities in Maine?”*



Spring 2023 (n=650)

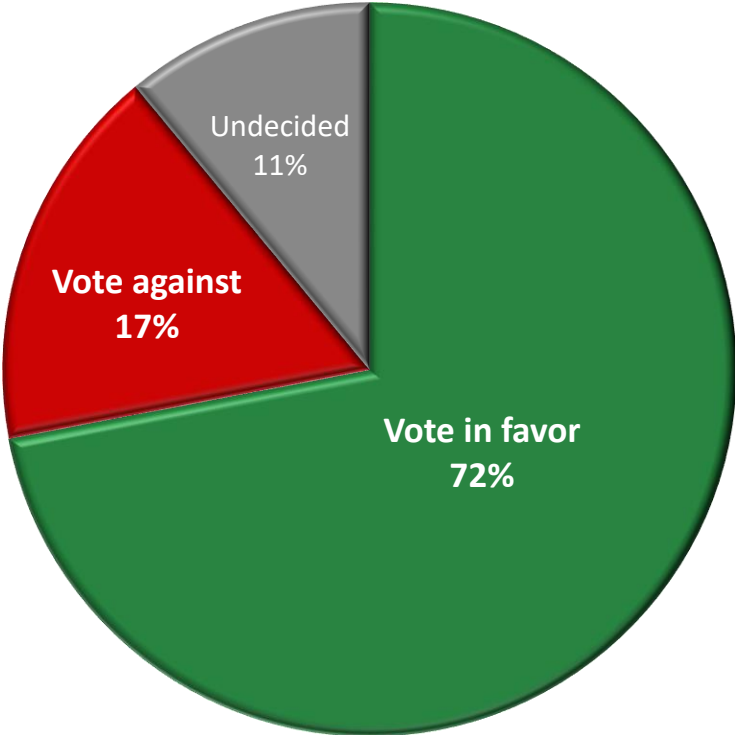
Given everything you know about the initiative, if you were to vote on the referendum today, would you vote in favor of it or against it?

*While surveying was taking place, the Secretary of State removed the term “quasi-governmental” from the ballot question.

A large majority of voters in Maine – seven out of ten overall – would vote in favor of a ballot initiative that prohibited campaign spending by foreign governments to influence voters in Maine.

Support for a Ballot Initiative “To Prohibit Campaign Spending by Foreign Governments and Promote an Anticorruption Amendment to the United States Constitution”

“Do you want to ban foreign governments and entities that they own, control, or influence from making campaign contributions or financing communications for or against candidates or ballot questions?”



Spring 2023 (n=650)



To learn more about this survey and its findings, contact:
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