

Gates Foundation

Case Study

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The 2023 Survey key findings indicate that Gates is generally in a strong position with its initiatives, garnering support from the American public

2

1

Americans see a role for philanthropic organizations to support primary actors in domestic and international issues.

- Respondents want different groups to take primary responsibility for the issue areas tested: for Education, it is local actors (teachers, school boards, local government); for Economic Opportunity, it is the U.S. government at all levels; for Global Health, it is the U.S. government collaborating with health experts; for Global Agriculture and Gender Equality, it is foreign governments and international organizations.
- While Americans don't think philanthropic and nonprofit groups have a **responsibility** like these other groups do, they welcome their work in these areas in a supporting role.

3

Of the international issues tested, Americans most fervently support strong U.S. involvement in the global health space.

- Americans want to see some U.S. involvement in the global agriculture and global gender equality spaces, but they prefer the U.S. take a leading role in the global health space, second only to health experts.
- Medical research and development is a top priority in the global health space, and there is a sense that the U.S. is uniquely situated to lead in that area.
- Americans directly connect global public health with their own lives and with U.S. security and success – at least partially due to the recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, U.S. work on combatting infectious diseases globally and pandemic preparation is a must have, not an option.

2

Americans want to see education improvements that are more closely tied to initiatives around economic opportunities.

- When it comes to education, respondents are most concerned with making sure students are well-equipped for financial and general life success after they finish school.
- They want to see improvement in career counseling, job training, and resources that can help develop skills and connect students with a good career.
- This area of need results in a lack of value being placed on education degrees, especially 4-year college.

4

Black, Latino, and young Americans are the strongest champions for domestic and (especially) international issue work.

- Consistently, Black, Latino, and 18-35 Americans are the most likely to strongly support work across the issue spaces, with Democrats, those in cities, and those with college degrees close behind.
- While white Americans support work in the education, economic opportunity, and global health spaces, there is a significant difference in how they view U.S. involvement in the global agriculture and gender equality space. White Americans are less likely to support work in those areas, perhaps because unlike global health, they don't see a direct connection to their own lives.

Economic Mobility Takeaways

- 1 The top two issues are the rising cost of living, and people's unpreparedness to deal with it (lack of education, skill development, and financial literacy).
- 2 As a result, participants inextricably link the issues of economic mobility and education. They want education to focus on preparing students for a successful financial future.
- 3 Participants think the government has a responsibility to help with economic mobility. Many think state and local governments are the best equipped to handle their communities' unique economic needs.

Education Takeaways

- 1 Generally speaking, participants think education and career pathways are extremely important, and one of the key factors in economic success.
- 2 Student choice is a key theme here. People want students to receive more options for pathways that are tailored to their unique experience and interests.
- 3 Skill development is paramount. At both high school and postsecondary levels, people prioritize job-specific skill training and foundational life skills.

On the Gates's Foundation's domestic initiatives, Americans generally show support and willingness to get involved. Economic issues and education are top level priorities for most, and Americans are especially interested in initiatives that look to help Americans deal with the rising cost of living, including through educational support intended to lead directly to good jobs.

Global Health Takeaways

- 1 There is widespread recognition of the need for global health improvements. Participants in the Latino and Asian focus groups are supportive of this work from the get-go.
- 2 There are two distinct reasons people support global health initiatives. The first is altruism – that the U.S. has a lot of resources at its disposal, and should use them to help others in need.
- 3 The second is for the U.S.'s own self-interest in a world that is growing rapidly more interconnected. This is driven by lessons from the COVID pandemic on how overseas health crises impact domestic wellbeing.

Food Scarcity and Climate Takeaways

- 1 Participants recognize global food scarcity issues, with nearly all acknowledging that climate change will exacerbate these problems.
- 2 Across demographic groups, there is strong consensus on the tangible impacts of climate change and the critical need for action, with many participants willing to engage personally.
- 3 Black, Latino, and Asian groups show strong support for U.S. efforts in addressing global climate and food scarcity, viewing it primarily through an altruistic lens, although climate action also carries self-interest implications.

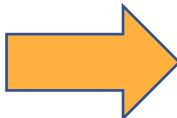
Americans have a more nuanced view of the Gates Foundation's international initiatives, with partisanship playing a role in how involved they want the U.S. to be around the globe. However, there is still generally strong support on initiatives such as pandemic and disease prevention (including through distributing vaccines), and sharing sustainable agriculture practices around the globe to combat climate change and food shortages.

However, despite the solid levels of support for the Gates Foundation's work that we saw in the 2023 survey and 2024 focus groups, we expect that the election of the Trump Administration will bring roadblocks in each of Gates's key areas.

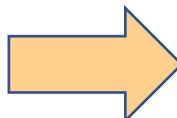
Gates Foundation Initiatives, with potential roadblocks posed by the Trump Administration

Gates Foundation Initiatives

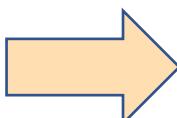
Economic Mobility – Helping Americans combat the rising cost of living and build generational wealth



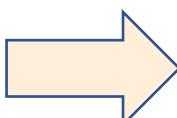
Education – Increasing access to higher education for all Americans, and making sure education sets up Americans for economic success



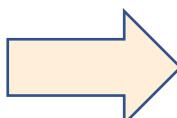
Global Health – Working on pandemic prevention and vaccine distribution for children worldwide



Food Scarcity – Developing and sharing environmentally-friendly agriculture practices to combat climate change



Global Issues Generally



Concerning Trump Administration Actions

Trump's Tariffs Would Boost Inflation, Shrink the Economy, CBO Finds

Trump's tariff plan amounts to a \$3 trillion tax hike, and American households would see their costs go up by an average of \$1,560

PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Education Takes Action to Eliminate DEI

JANUARY 23, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Education has taken action to eliminate harmful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, including references to them in public-facing communication channels and its associated workforce. These actions are in line with President Trump's ongoing commitment to end illegal discrimination and wasteful spending across the federal government. They are the first step in reorienting the agency toward prioritizing meaningful learning ahead of divisive ideology in our schools.

Related Content

[U.S. Department of Education Announces Incoming Trump-Vance Senior Appointees](#)

The U.S. Education Department announced a team of senior-level political appointees who will support President Trump's vision to empower parents in their children's education and restore a focus on teaching knowledge and skills students need to succeed.

JANUARY 23, 2025

Outbreaks of deadly illnesses could follow if anti-vaccine messages continue, doctors fear

Pediatricians worry about a fallout from former President Trump's vocal endorsement of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Trump Reverses Climate Policies on First Day in Office

JAN 23, 2025

The president pulled out of the Paris climate agreement and declared an "energy emergency" to expedite permitting.

US friends and foes buckle up for new 'America first' era

By Peter Apps

January 23, 2025 8:28 PM EST · Updated an hour ago



HIT's research with Gates backs up the idea that the election of Donald Trump will pose difficulties for at least some of Gates's initiatives on multiple levels:

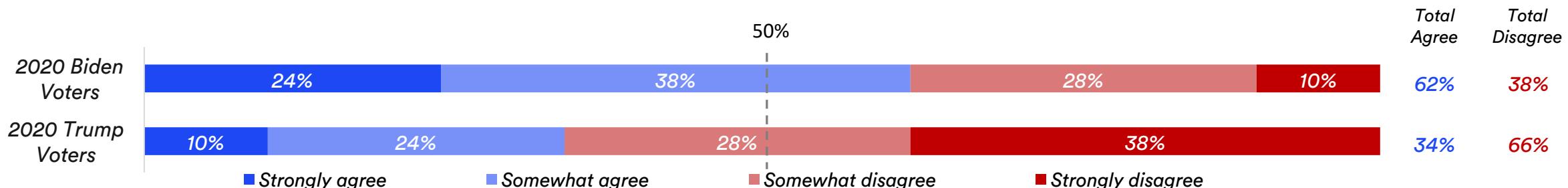
- Policy that will make it more difficult to achieve intended outcomes (ex. Tariffs that will raise the cost of living, and a general focus on the wealthy that will impede economic mobility; dismantling the Department of Education)
- A lack of government involvement in initiatives as the Trump Administration shifts priorities elsewhere
- The increased proliferation and mainstream acceptance of certain conservative attitudes that are opposed to the Gates Foundation's initiatives (examples:
 - Belief in the “personal responsibility” narratives that looks down on “handouts” and says “economic mobility” is up to the individual;
 - Shifting goals around education, with increased focus on controlling what is taught and decreased focus on expanding education opportunity;
 - An American-first mindset that looks down on giving our resources to help others globally
 - A view on health that is anti-vaccine and promotes the idea that our response to the 2020 pandemic was overblown

The next few slides feature findings that show that these conservative attitudes were already prominent in the 2023 survey, resulting in lack of support on Gates's initiatives that frankly we expect will continue to grow both from the Trump Administration and conservatives in the American public.

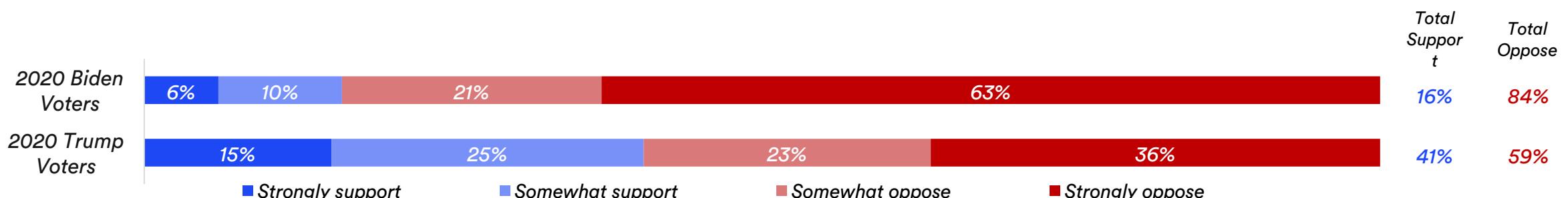
There are major differences in the opinions of Biden voters vs Trump voters on Gates's domestic initiatives – on education, Trump voters downplay the effects of racism in education, and are more supportive of book bans; on economic mobility, Trump voters are much less supportive of the government getting involved to “increase economic opportunities for all Americans to get ahead”

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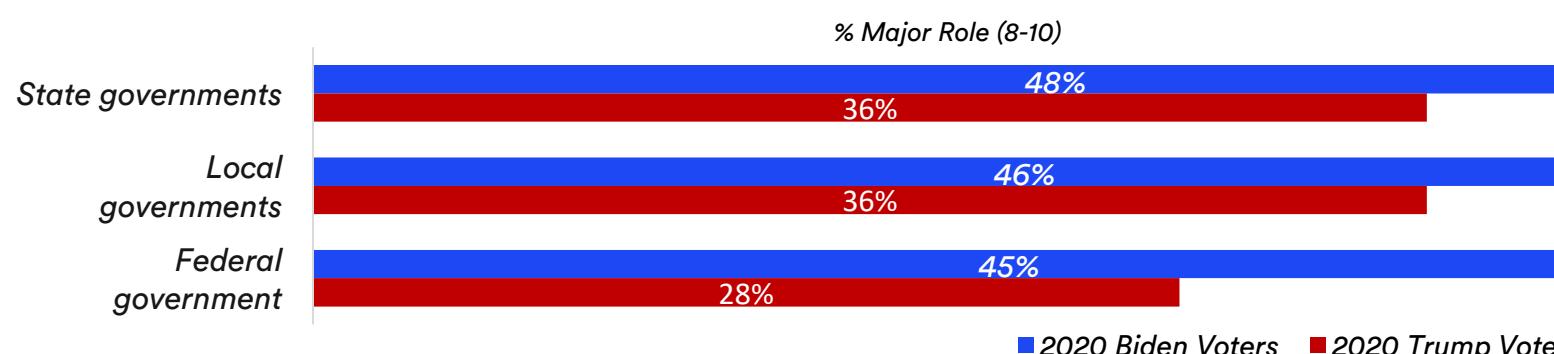
Q18. Generally speaking, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: For far too many students in my community, racism is serving as an obstacle to a quality education?



Q19. Do you support or oppose the policy of banning books from school libraries and curriculums?



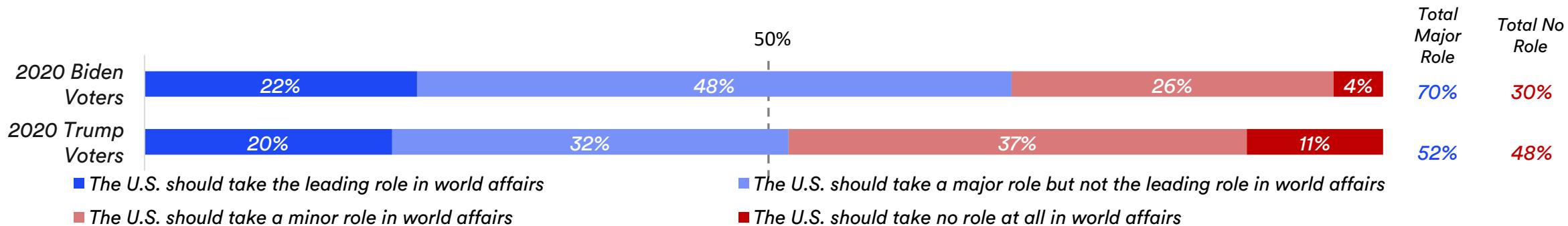
Q22. Please indicate how much of a role you think each of the following groups should play in increasing economic opportunities for all Americans to get ahead on a scale of 0 to 10, where a 0 means no role, 5 means somewhat of a role, and a 10 means a major role.



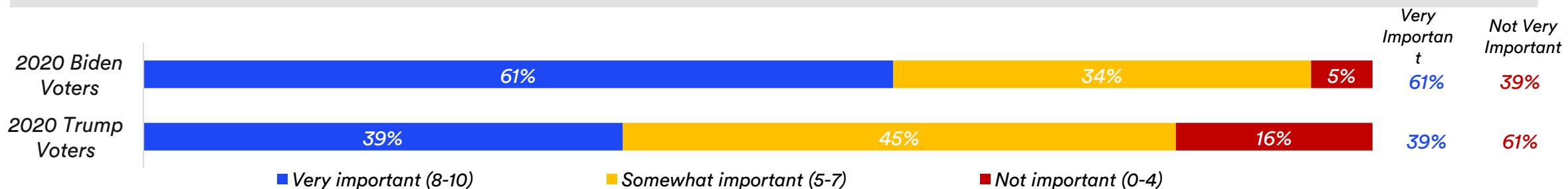
In global issues, nearly half of Trump voters take a fully isolationist stance on U.S. involvement in world affairs, and in particular, they place much less importance on global health work, especially when it comes to vaccines



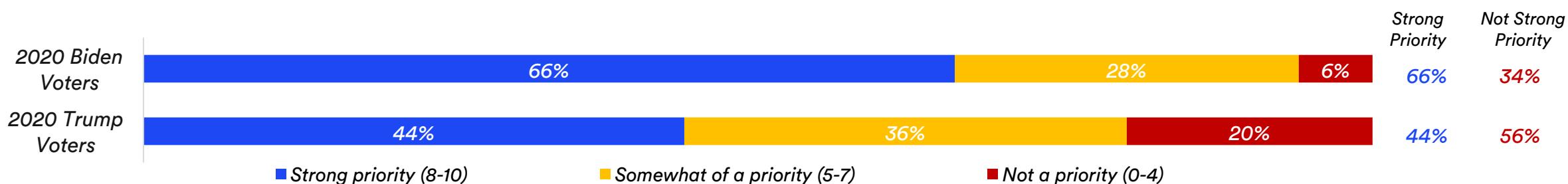
Q24. What role do you think the United States should play in trying to solve international problems?



Q28. In your opinion, how important is it to address the spread of infectious diseases and viruses outside of the United States? Please select a number from 0 to 10, where a 0 means not important at all, a 5 means somewhat important, and a 10 means very important.



Q29. "Providing access to routine vaccines for vulnerable children:" Please indicate how much of a priority you consider that issue on a scale from 0 to 10, where a 0 means not a priority at all, a 5 means somewhat of a priority, and a 10 means a strong priority.

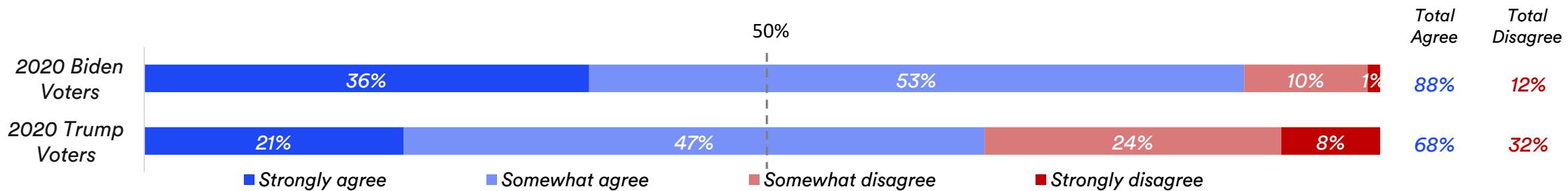


As a result of both an “America first” outlook and alternative opinions on things like vaccines and climate change, Trump voters are much less likely to support U.S. involvement in either the global health or global food scarcity spheres

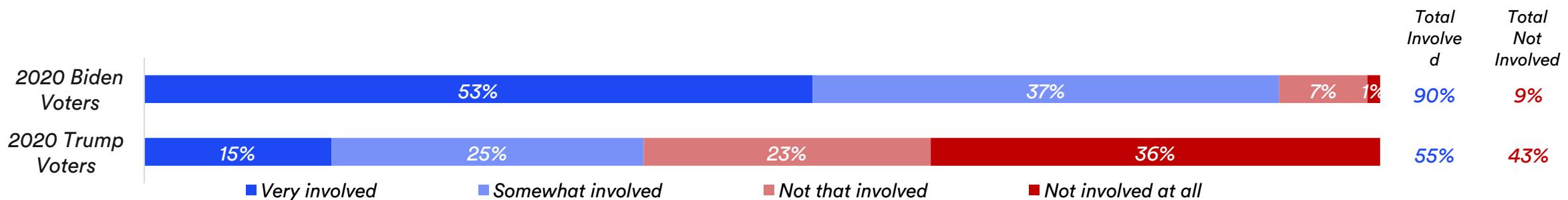
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Q32. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The United States should provide more funding for programs and institutions that focus on improving global public health, especially for children and impoverished communities?



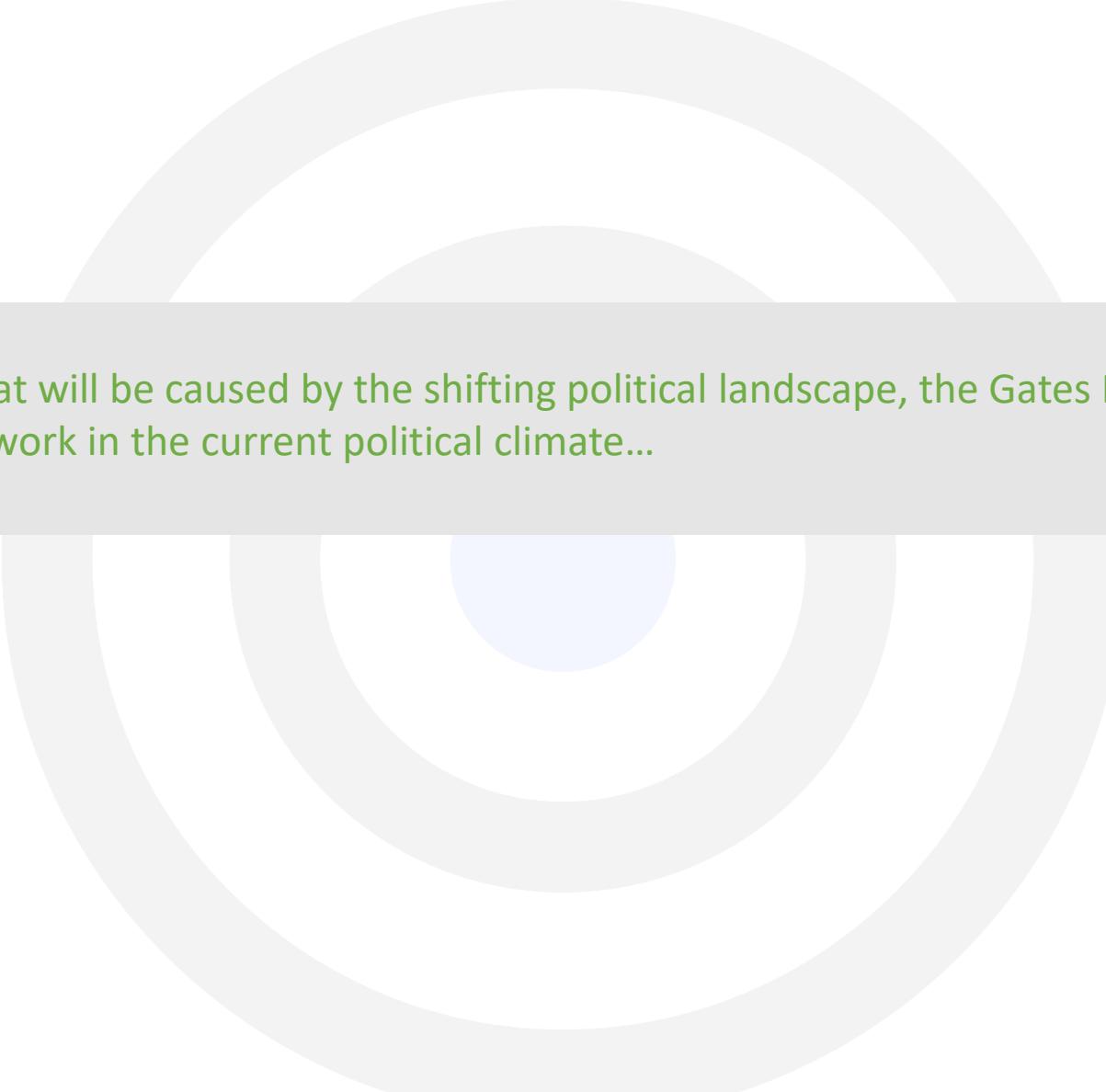
Q37. How involved do you think the United States should be in combating climate change and its adverse effects on farmers and food production globally?



The white focus group, made up of a majority of conservatives, also reinforced the notion that conservatives are not as supportive of some of Gates's initiatives, especially when it comes to global issues. These dynamics are likely to grow with Trump leading the way on being the loudest in the room and promoting "America First" rhetoric

White Focus Group

- **Group dynamics:** The White focus group was dominated by conservative voices opposed to U.S. aid, citing personal responsibility and preferring domestic resource allocation. While roughly half of the white group was more supportive of the Gates Foundation's work, they were frequently drowned out by the louder voices in the group.
- The sentiment towards global initiatives was summed in the Global Agriculture/Climate section of the discussion. When asked to rate the priority of agriculture initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa, a member of the group responded: "Sub-Saharan Africa? Holy lord. Yeah, whatever."



Despite the roadblocks that will be caused by the shifting political landscape, the Gates Foundation will also have new opportunities for its work in the current political climate...



Changing Condition

1

Uncertainty in the economic and education spheres as the Trump Administration enacts economic policy that focuses on the wealthy, and education policy that focused on conservative values.

2

The federal government may shift its focus away from the Gates Foundation's initiatives as they pursue other policy in the domestic sphere, and narrow their work in the global sphere.

3

Some Americans may continue to be less supportive of, or antagonistic to, some of the Gates Foundation's initiatives, following the tone set by conservative leaders

Opportunity

Americans are going to need initiatives that connect them with economic mobility and education opportunities more than ever. The Gates Foundation has an opportunity to become a trusted leader in this field, and fill in areas where the government fails.

The Gates Foundation can deepen partnerships with state and local governments on domestic issues, and foreign governments and international organizations on global issues. Again, Gates can be a U.S. leader in international efforts in areas where the federal government fails.

The opposite will be true as well. Americans who are concerned about the Trump Administration are actively looking for ways to get involved, let their voices be heard, and make change. While Gates may lose the support of conservatives who were already lukewarm on some of these initiatives, moderates and liberals (identified as Gates's "base" in the survey research) will be MORE likely to support Gates and take action in the current political climate.

Potential Research Phases



<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 3</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Do a thorough accounting of exactly how the Trump Administration's policies will affect the Gates Foundation's ongoing and upcoming initiatives, both domestic and abroad. This information will inform all of the subsequent research.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Re-survey the American public to see exactly how attitudes towards Gates's initiatives have shifted since the 2024 election, including whether Trump supporters have lessened support and whether those who dislike Trump grow their support as a potential avenue to make change.</i><i>Get a baseline reading on how Americans view the Gates Foundation, to strategize how to promote Gates as a leader in both domestic and global issues.</i>	<p><i>Talk with Americans in focus groups to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Figure out how best to message around Gates's initiatives to maximize support</i><i>Understand the wants and needs of Gates's core base in order to most effectively mobilize them and get them involved in initiatives</i><i>Position Gates as a leader on key issue areas that the federal government is not paying enough attention to. Create a dual narrative that can appeal to those actively looking to push back against some of the Trump Administration's actions, as well as those who simply want better outcomes on things like the economy, education, and health.</i>