

# *Message Testing:* *Flash Poll Insights*

April 27-28  
Survey Results

*April 2025*

# Methodology

This survey was executed by The Harris Poll among a nationally representative sample of 2,513 U.S. adults conducted online from April 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Results are weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, marital status, household size, income, employment, education, political party, and political ideology where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 1.9 pts on a 95% confidence level.

Respondents for this poll are recruited through opt-in, web-panel recruitment sampling. Recruitment occurs through a broad variety of professional, validated respondent panels to expand the sampling frame as wide as possible and minimize the impact of any given panel on recruiting methods.

	N Size
<b>Target Shopper</b> <i>Makes a purchase at least a few times a month</i>	<b>753</b>
<b>Non-Target Shopper</b> <i>Once a month / less than once a month</i>	<b>1699</b>
<b>Traditional Republican</b> <i>Identifies as a traditional, non-MAGA Republican</i>	<b>1090</b>
<b>MAGA Republican</b> <i>Identifies as a MAGA Republican</i>	<b>473</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	<b>889</b>
<b>Independent</b>	<b>802</b>
<b>LGBTQ+ consumers</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Established Couples</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Busy Parents</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Kid-Free Midlifers</b>	<b>568</b>



# Executive Summary

Over the last 12 hours, we went into the field with an independent flash poll to quickly assess what messaging would be most credible and convincing in response to opting-out of continued support of the Equality Act. The goal of this test was to provide directional feedback for any reactive statements we would make.

## Key Takeaways from the Data

- The majority believe companies should stick to business issues, but there is a political divide amongst Republicans and Democrats
- The most effective messages focus on consumer benefit and avoid increased politicization:
  - This holds true regardless of political affiliation and loyalty to Target.
- Communications should also articulate the commitment to inclusive workplaces and diversity.
  - There is room to acknowledge the importance of the widely supported issue included within the Equality Act.
  - While the net impact on the perception of Target opting out is positive, there is a significant minority (25%) for whom this decision will have a negative impact:
    - Negative impact is higher among Democrats, LGBTQ+ consumers, and younger consumers.



# Preface

*All respondents were shown the following prior to the data in this report:*

*The next few questions relate to the Equality Act. The Equality Act is a proposed U.S. law that would provide consistent, nationwide protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It would ensure LGBTQ+ individuals are explicitly protected under federal law in areas such as employment, housing, education, public accommodations, and credit.*

*For additional context, the Equality Act includes specific protections such as:*

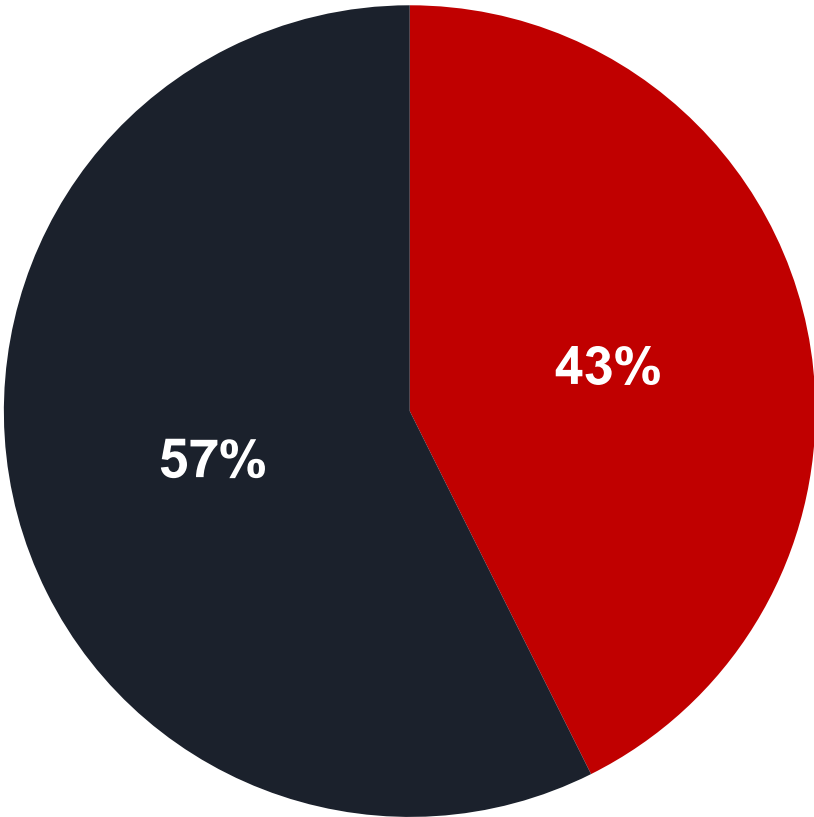
- *Prohibiting employers from firing or refusing to hire someone for being LGBTQ+.*
- *Banning landlords from refusing to rent or sell a home to someone for being LGBTQ+.*
- *Allowing individuals to use bathrooms or locker rooms of the gender they identify with.*
- *Stopping banks and credit companies from turning someone down for a loan or financial help because they are LGBTQ+.*
- *Allowing transgender students to play on school sports teams that match the gender they live as.*
- *Requiring religious organizations to follow the same LGBTQ+ non-discrimination rules as other institutions, without special exceptions for religious beliefs.*
- *Prohibiting public places like restaurants and stores from denying entry or service to someone because they are LGBTQ+.*



# Opinion on role of companies split along party lines

Would you prefer that companies take positions on issues and legislation like the Equality Act, which involves the rights of gay and trans people, or would you prefer that companies stick to issues that just relate to their specific industry and to the running of their business?

- Companies should take positions on issues and legislation like the Equality Act
- Companies should stick to issues that just relate to their specific industry and to the running of their business



	Take Positions	Stick To Business
Target Shopper	48%	52%
Target Non-Shopper	40%	60%
Busy Parents	52%	48%
Kid-Free Midlifers	42%	58%
Established Couples	52%	48%
LGBTQ+	58%	42%
Democrat	64%	36%
Independent	44%	56%
MAGA Republican	40%	60%
Traditional Republican	40%	60%



# Set 1: Messages Tested

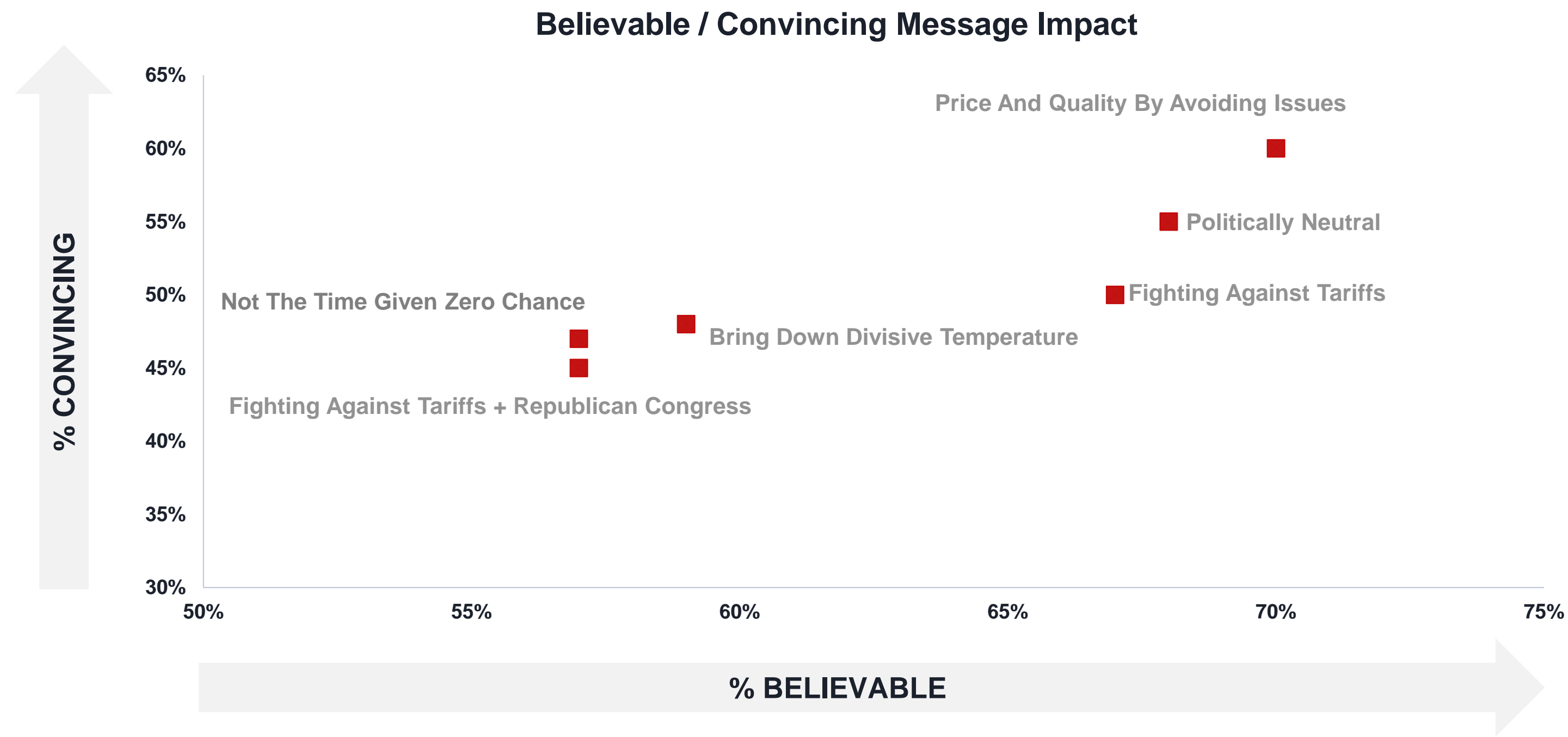
## Abbreviated Message

Price And Quality By Avoiding Issues	We believe in welcoming all consumers with great prices and quality merchandise, and we believe that mission is best served by avoiding getting involved in the social and political issues of the day, no matter how appealing the cause.
Politically Neutral	We are sticking now to taking positions on issues that directly relate to the retail industry and are otherwise going to remain politically neutral.
Fighting Against Tariffs	We are fighting for consumers now to prevent tariffs that would raise prices for their customers.
Bring Down Divisive Temperature	We are sticking now to taking positions on issues that directly relate to the retail industry to bring down the divisive temperature of the nation.
Not The Time Given Zero Chance	We believe this is not the time to press the Equality Act, which involves the rights of gay and trans people, because there is presently a Republican Congress, and there is zero chance of its passage.
Fighting Against Tariffs + Republican Congress	We are fighting for consumers now to prevent tariffs that would raise prices for its customers and avoid divisive fights that have no chance of passage with a Republican Congress.





# Strongest messages focus on core business and avoiding politics



BASE: GENERAL PUBLIC (N=2,513);  
Q7. How believable is this statement? / Q8: Does this statement make you more convinced or less convinced of the decision of a company to opt out of the Equality Act?



# Set 2: Full Message Text Tested

## Abbreviated Message

Dedicated to fostering inclusivity; focus on what we do best: retail	We are fully dedicated to fostering inclusivity for everyone—our team members, guests, and supplier partners alike. We've decided to focus on what we do best: retail. We're getting back to basics and working to make our company the best it can be.
Committed to an inclusive environment; fighting over legislation in DC that won't pass is our role; our focus is making our workplaces free from discrimination	We are absolutely committed to an inclusive environment for all – all team members, all guests, and all supplier partners. Fighting over legislation in Washington that won't pass is not the role of our company. Our focus going forward is making our workplaces free from discrimination of any form where everyone, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, ability, or nationality, feels a sense of belonging.
Decided not to take positions on legislation that does not directly relate to the retail industry; focus on lessening the impact of tariffs; deliver great products and value to our customers	We have decided not to take positions on legislation that does not directly relate to the retail industry and to focus first and foremost on lessening the impact of tariffs while continuing to deliver great products and value to our customers and welcoming and inclusive work and shopping environment.
Dedicated to making everyone feel included; encourage policymakers to take fresh start; focus on ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience	We are dedicated to making everyone feel included—our team members, guests, suppliers, and the 2,000 communities we're proud to serve. This proposed legislation has been debated in Washington for nearly a decade without being passed, under different presidents and different members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. We would encourage policymakers to take a fresh start, and we're going to redouble our focus on what we can control – and that's ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience for everyone regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or nationality and working to deliver great value and style for our customers.





# Set 2: Full Message Text Tested (cont'd)

## Abbreviated Message

Dedicated to fostering inclusion; provisions that need refinement; focusing on running a great business that brings joy and value	We are dedicated to fostering inclusion for our team members, guests, suppliers, and the 2,000 communities we proudly serve. The proposed legislation contains extreme provisions that need refinement, and we hope Congress revisits it. In the meantime, we're getting back to basics to make our company the best retailer for everyone, providing incredible products at the best value.
Dedicated to making everyone feel welcome; encourage a fresh start; focus on what we can control: diverse, inclusive workforce	We are dedicated to making everyone feel welcome, including our team members, guests, suppliers, and the 2,000 communities we're proud to serve. This proposed legislation has been debated in Washington for nearly a decade without being passed, under different presidents and different members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. We would encourage policymakers to take a fresh start, and we're going to redouble our focus on what we can control – and that's ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience for everyone regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, ability, or nationality.
Committed to an inclusive environment; fighting in DC that won't pass is not our role; encourage fresh start; focus on ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience	We are absolutely committed to an inclusive environment for all – all team members, all guests, and all supplier partners. Fighting over legislation in Washington that won't pass is not the role of our company. This proposed legislation has been debated in Washington for nearly a decade without being passed, under different presidents and different members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. We would encourage policymakers to take a fresh start, and we're going to redouble our focus on what we can control – and that's ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience for everyone regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or nationality and working to deliver great products and value for our customers.
Dedicated to making everyone feel welcome; legislation will not pass; get back to basics	We are dedicated to making everyone feel welcome, including our team members, guests, suppliers, and the 2,000 communities we're proud to serve. With a Republican Congress, this legislation will not pass. We are going to get back to basics, focusing on running a great business that brings joy to everyday life.
Committed to an inclusive environment; encourage a fresh start; focus on what we can control: diverse, inclusive workforce	We are absolutely committed to an inclusive environment for all – all team members, all guests, and all supplier partners. This proposed legislation has been debated in Washington for nearly a decade without being passed, under different presidents and different members of Congress from both sides of the aisle. We would encourage policymakers to take a fresh start, and we're going to redouble our focus on what we can control – and that's ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience for everyone regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, ability, or nationality.



# Messages around business focus bring together opinions across party lines

Does this statement make you more convinced or less convinced of the decision of a company to opt out of the Equality Act?

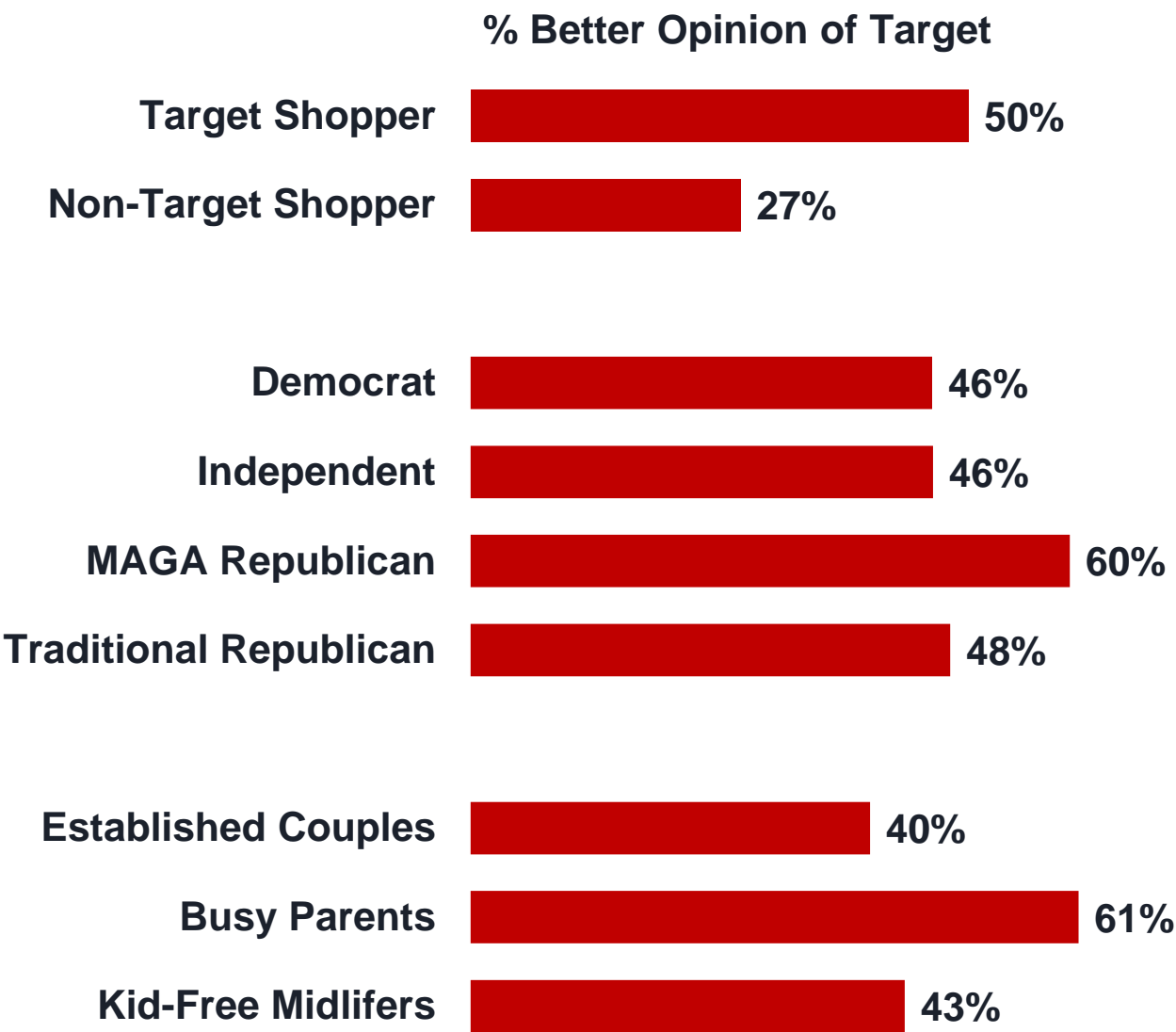
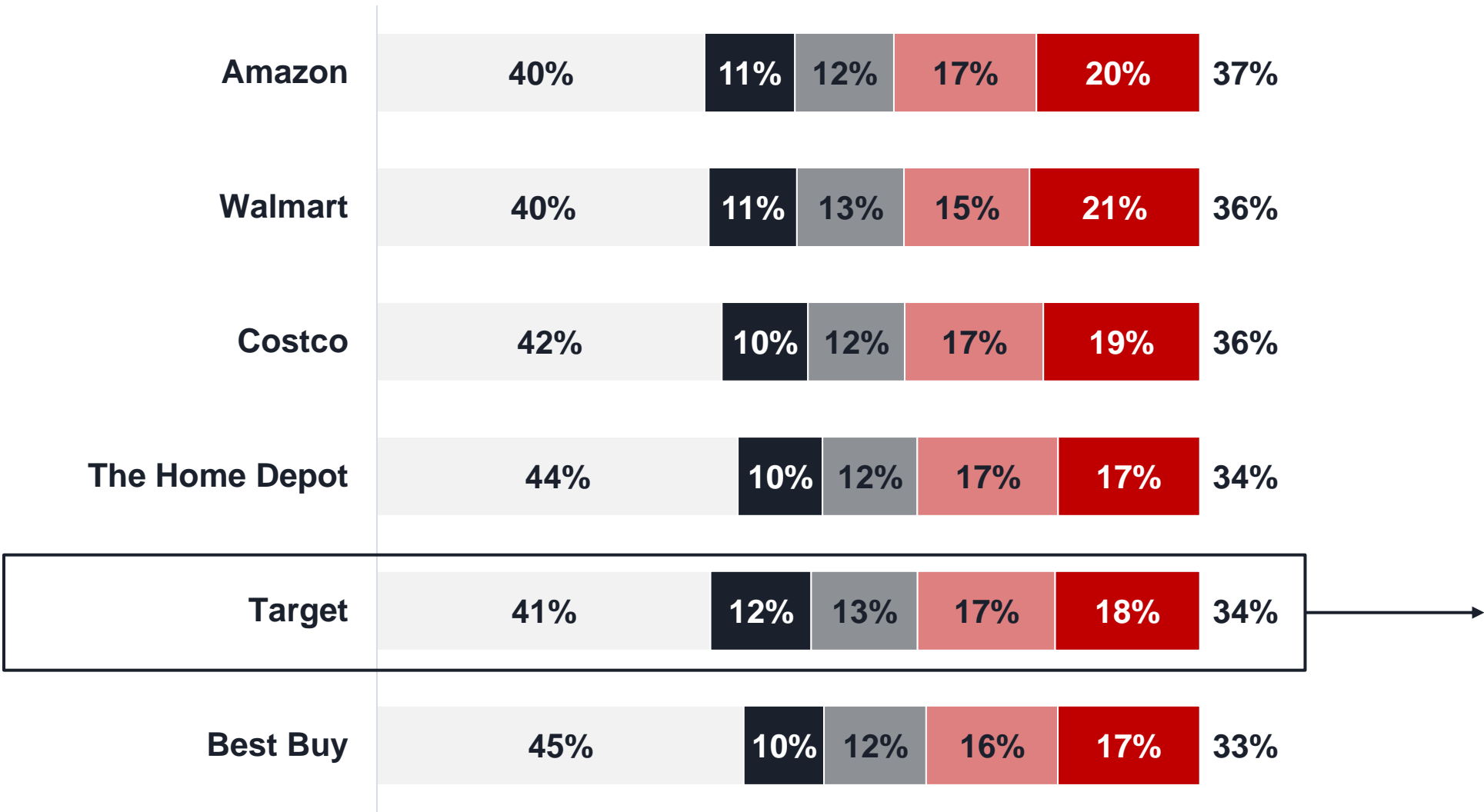
Message	All Consumers	Target Shopper	Non-Target Shopper	Democrat	Independent	MAGA GOP	Trad GOP	Busy Parents	Kid-Free Midlifers	Established Couples	LGBTQ+
Dedicated to fostering inclusivity; focus on what we do best: retail	59%	67%	56%	71%	61%	72%	61%	73%	60%	56%	63%
Committed to an inclusive environment; fighting over legislation in DC that won't pass is our role; our focus is making our workplaces free from discrimination	56%	62%	53%	68%	57%	64%	56%	74%	57%	56%	60%
Decided not to take positions on legislation that does not directly relate to the retail industry; focus on lessening the impact of tariffs; deliver great products and value to our customers	56%	65%	52%	59%	65%	72%	66%	76%	55%	64%	50%
Dedicated to making everyone feel included; encourage policymakers to take fresh start; focus on ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience	56%	66%	51%	72%	59%	67%	61%	79%	51%	67%	58%
Dedicated to fostering inclusion; provisions that need refinement; focusing on running a great business that brings joy and value	55%	62%	51%	58%	60%	67%	63%	70%	51%	48%	67%
Dedicated to making everyone feel welcome; encourage a fresh start; focus on what we can control: diverse, inclusive workforce	55%	61%	52%	63%	56%	67%	56%	72%	53%	44%	61%
Committed to an inclusive environment; fighting in DC that won't pass is not our role; encourage fresh start; focus on ensuring a diverse, inclusive workforce and shopping experience	55%	60%	52%	59%	54%	63%	59%	70%	51%	46%	56%
Dedicated to making everyone feel welcome; legislation will not pass; get back to basics	53%	61%	48%	64%	57%	67%	57%	76%	56%	52%	53%
Committed to an inclusive environment; encourage a fresh start; focus on what we can control: diverse, inclusive workforce	53%	60%	51%	58%	59%	60%	61%	71%	52%	50%	49%



# Net impact slightly better; risks among key audiences

Now, what if I were to tell you that the company that decided to opt out of publicly pledging support for the Equality Act was any of the following? Indicate whether this would change your opinion of the company for the better, for the worse, or would have no impact:

Indifferent   Much worse   A bit worse   A bit better   Much better   Much + Bit Better



# Women, younger consumers more likely to respond negatively

Now, what if I were to tell you that the company that decided to opt out of publicly pledging support for the Equality Act was any of the following? Indicate whether this would change your opinion of the company for the better, for the worse, or would have no impact:

	Total	Men	Women	18 to 24	25 to 34	Democrats	LGBTQ+
Better	34%	37%	31%	37%	40%	30%	30%
Worse	25%	21%	29%	28%	29%	42%	44%
Indifferent	41%	42%	39%	35%	32%	29%	26%

BASE: FAMILIAR WITH COMPANY (TARGET N=2455); ALL SUBGROUPS AMONG TARGET SHOPPERS OTHER THAN TARGET NON-SHOPPER  
Q12. Now, what if I were to tell you that the company that decided to opt out of publicly pledging support for the Equality Act was any of the following?  
Indicate whether this would change your opinion of the company for the better, for the worse, or would have no impact:



# Recommendations

1. All communications should be **reactive only**; we do not need to proactively start this conversation.
2. We should focus on narratives that align with the core mission of **delivering products and value to consumers, commitment to inclusive and diverse workplaces**, and acknowledgement of **support for the widely accepted elements of the Equality Act**.
3. We should **be prepared for a negative response**, especially amongst advocacy groups or those that will use this as a further proof point of our DEI rollback to stoke already burning flames. **Our reaction here should be rooted in rational, business-based reasoning**.
4. Our monitoring and social listening should be activated to help track the trends of the conversation and predict what could come next.



*Thank* you!