



## REPORT: THE CURIOUS CASE OF ELON MUSK, MAGA LOVE AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Elon Musk is a fascinating figure. His journey from leading Electric Vehicle visionary to MAGA White House co-pilot is a fascinating one.

As part of our annual November poll on voter attitudes about the partisan battle over EVs, we recently researched opinions about Elon.

In this report, we break out our new Elon Musk data in the **attached slide deck**.

### VIEWS OF ELON MUSK:

There are two big headlines in the data. First, as one might expect, Elon Musk has become a hugely polarizing figure. Simply put, Republicans have grown much fonder of him over the last year while Democrats, not big fans in November of 2023 to begin with, now overwhelmingly hold unfavorable opinions of Musk.

The second headline concerns Tesla, the company. Has Elon's new MAGA superhero status created headwinds in the EV market for Tesla? We believe the data shows it has.

Other interesting data points we found regarding Elon's fav/unfav rating include:

- Elon has a significant gender gap; he's net +17 points with men and net -9 with women.
- Opinions of Musk are related to voter opinion about the importance of combating climate change; he is far more popular with voters who say climate change is overhyped and not that big a deal compared to those who say climate change is a serious problem that must be addressed soon.

- Ironically, Elon is now more popular with people who drive gasoline (ICE) vehicles (net +5) than he is with people who drive EVs and Plug-in hybrids (net -7). He's also popular with pick-up truck drivers at net +18!

It's clear Elon has pulled off a real triple axel super flip here: from OG EV Deity to MAGA superstar.

Could Elon use his new fame as MAGA's co-pilot in the White House to have a positive impact on EV adoption by Republicans? This is a critical question to us here at the American EV Jobs Alliance, since our core mission is to develop effective messaging to break down the large partisan divide over EVs. If Elon could move GOP attitudes on EVs, it could have a huge impact: at the end of 2023 voters in our first National EVs and Politics poll reported Democrats were buying/leasing EVs at a rate 5x that of Republicans.

Could Elon Musk move that troublesome GOP needle? With his hostility to EV consumer subsidies, and the unwelcome market competition for Tesla that it helps create, the early answer is probably not. Elon seems focused on other things now and helping break down GOP hostility to EVs appears to be low on his priority list.

But some of our data indicates Musk might be having that effect nonetheless. In our annual national EV attitudes poll, we ask voters to agree or disagree with a series of value statements about EVs. On the statement "EVs are for people who see the world differently than I do", Republicans in November of 2023 – before the Presidential campaign – agreed with that statement 59% (agree) to 41% (disagree). Asked the same question in November of 2024 – after the election – Republicans now say 43% (agree) and 38% (disagree); a 14% new improvement.

## **WHAT ABOUT TESLA?**

There has been a lot in the news lately about Tesla's [shrinking market share](#) in Europe, the U.S. and around the world. The reasons for decline that are

complicated and beyond our scope, though our data does show clear hints that Tesla, like Elon Musk, has become highly politicized and is paying a price for it.

We tested favorable/unfavorable opinions on several large car brands: VW, Ford, and Toyota. Our poll found there was little difference in opinion about these well-known brands based on the partisan identity of the respondent. But when we tested Tesla as well as the general category of EV-centric car brands, the partisan gap between Republicans and Democrats as well as Harris and Trump voters on EV brands was enormous.

We also asked voters to self-categorize themselves into one of the three categories below, much like we do in political campaigns. Our goal was to be able to analyze the data through the lens of Pro-EV base voters, Anti-EV base voters and “Swing” voters who would consider an EV if certain fears and concerns were removed.

Our categories were:

- “I’m seriously thinking about buying an EV in the next year or so.” (20%)  
**BASE PRO-EV SEGMENT**
- “I may buy an EV once the bugs are worked out and prices are lower.” (45%) **EV SWING VOTERS**
- “I’ll probably never buy an EV.” (34%) **BASE ANTI-EV SEGMENT**

We then compared the favorable/unfavorable ratings of Ford, VW, Toyota and Tesla among the BASE PRO-EV SEGMENT (looking to buy in next year or so) Tesla had by far the highest unfavorable rating and easily the worst ratio of favorable to unfavorable opinion.

We invite you to review the full data deck attached to this summary memo.

*Poll details: 600 Sample. Voters with HH income of \$50K or higher. (This was to capture the vast bulk of the active new and used car marketplace. This sample*

*reflects approximately 2/3 of the total electorate in the Presidential Election.). Poll conducted by Dr. David Hill and Dr. Stephen White of [Hill Research Consultants](#).*

**ATTACHED: POLLING SLIDES**

RESEARCH REPORT



# The Curious Case of Elon Musk, MAGA and EVs: A National Post-Election Survey

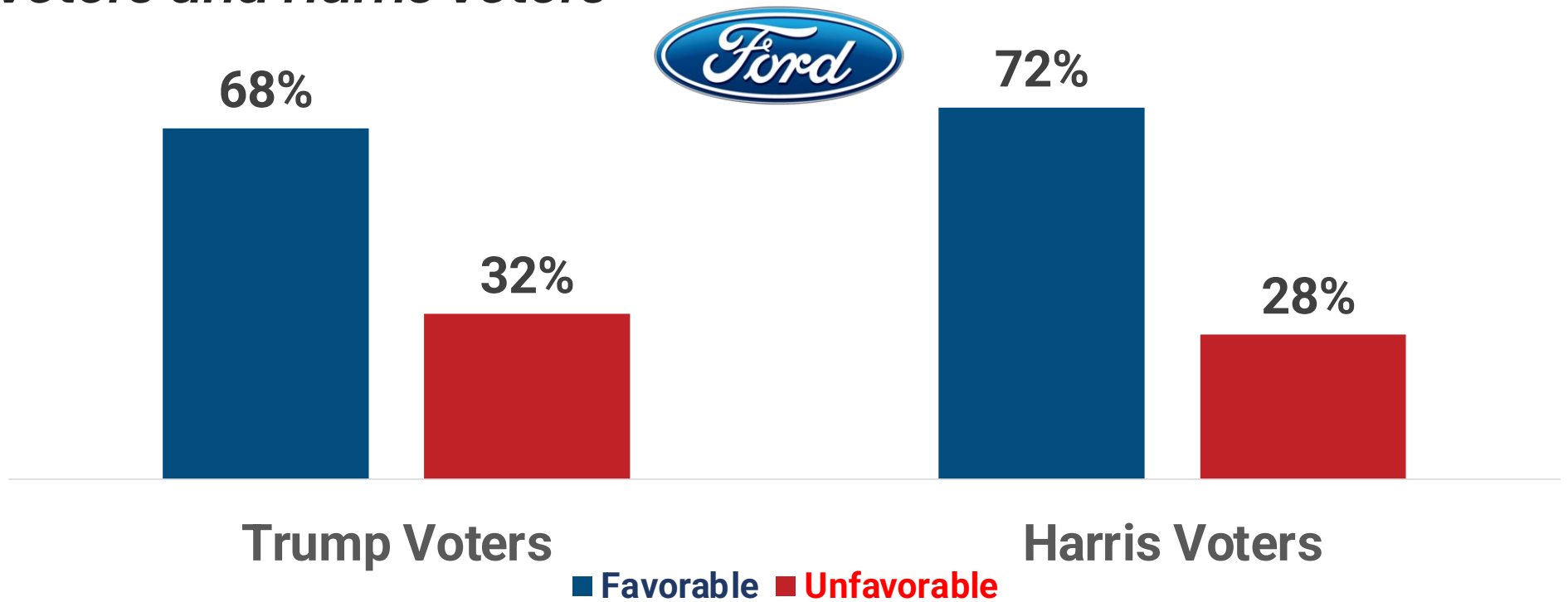


## Shortly After the 2024 Presidential Election, We Conducted a National Survey on Political Attitudes About Electric Vehicles:

- 600 Voters, with Family Incomes of \$50K a year or higher. Designed to Capture the New and Used Car Market and approx. 2/3 of Presidential Year Voters.
- The Research was Conducted by Dr. David Hill and Dr. Stephen White of the Nationally Respected Political Polling Firm Hill Research Consultants.

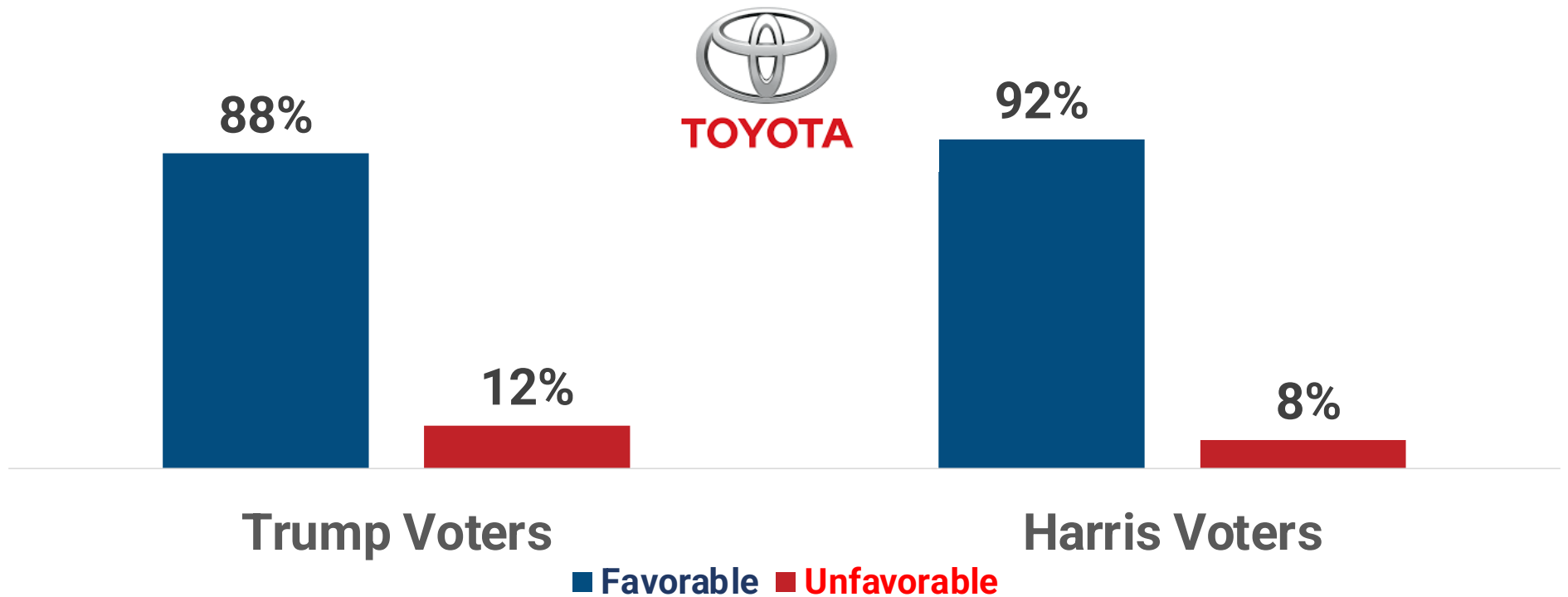
**We Started by Testing Several Leading  
Automotive Brands, Comparing Opinions from  
Consumers Aligned to Each Political Party**

## Impression of Ford: *No Difference Between Trump voters and Harris voters*

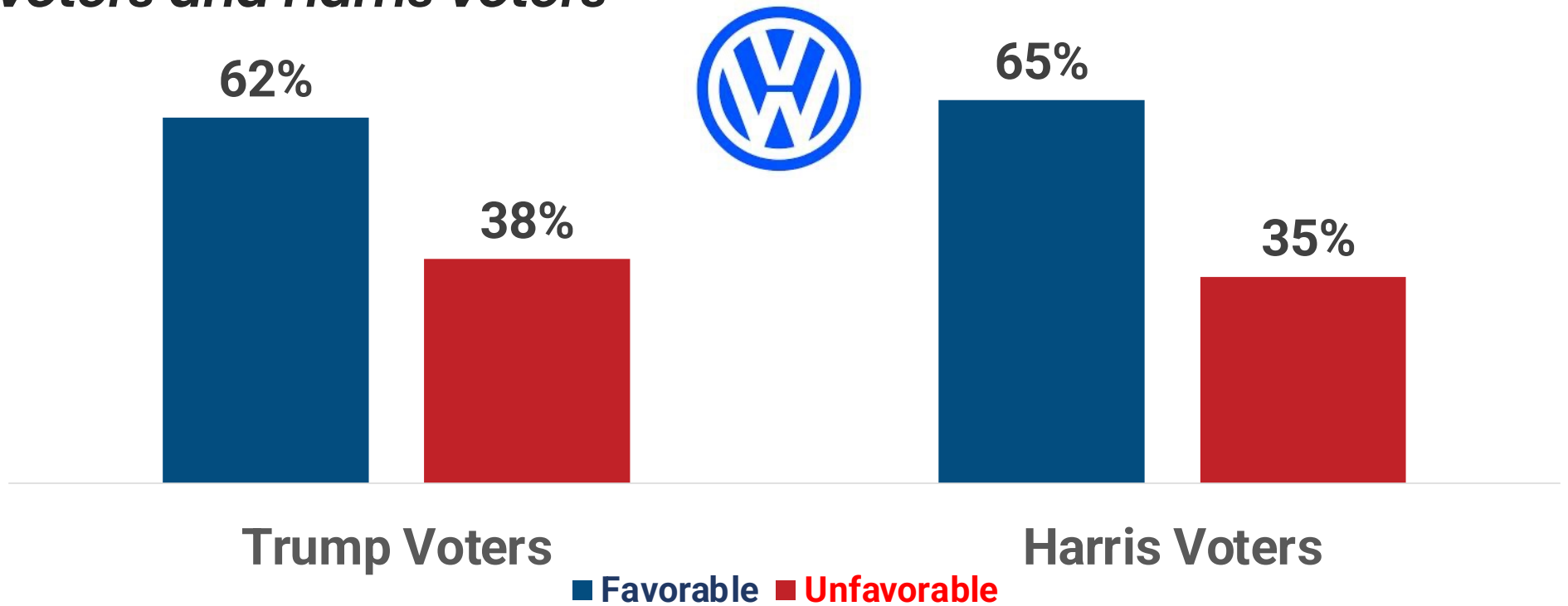




## Impression of Toyota: *No Difference Between Trump voters and Harris voters*



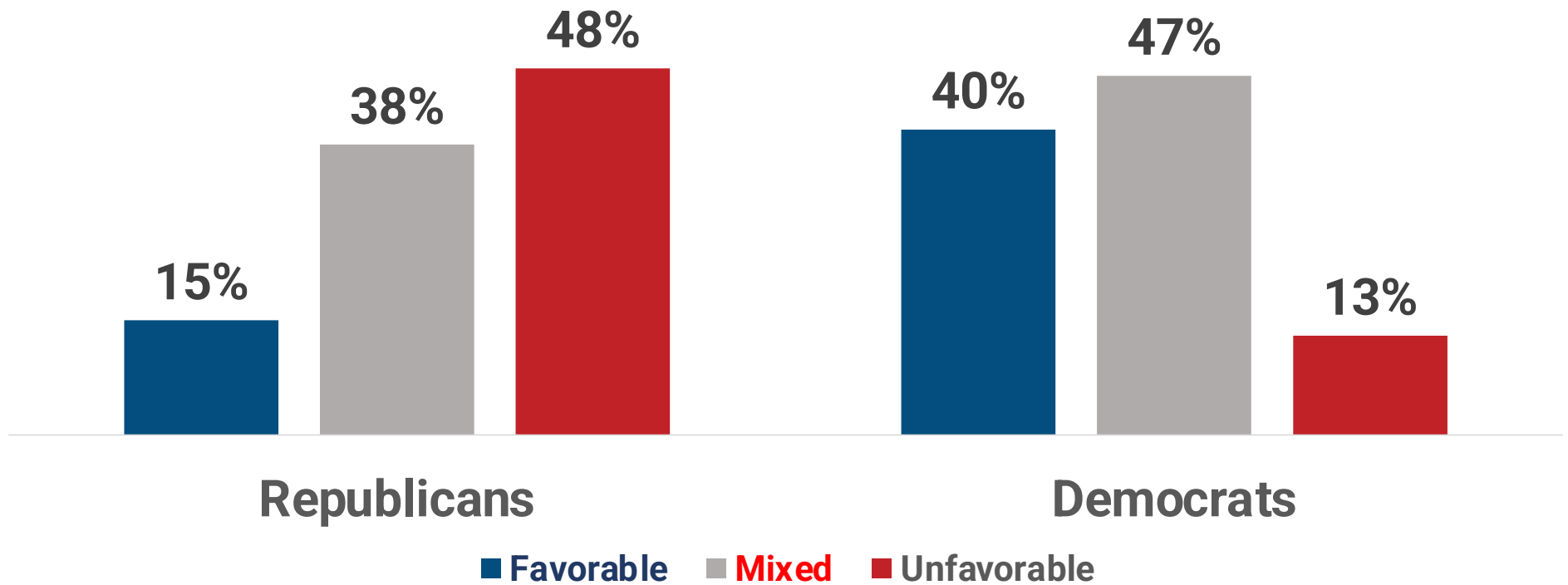
## Impression of VW: *No Difference Between Trump voters and Harris voters*



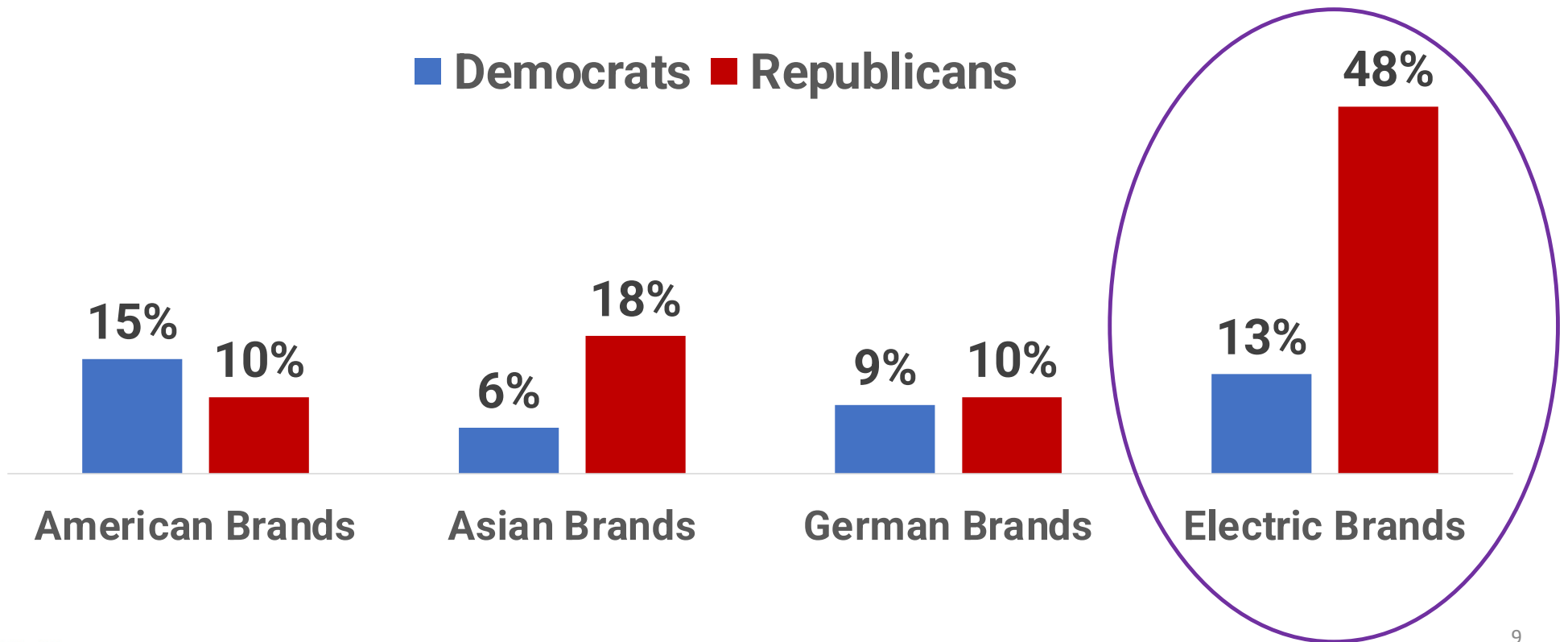
**We Found Almost No Partisan Difference  
Among American, Japanese and German  
Brands like VW, Ford and Toyota.**

**But Next, We Tested EV-Only Brands...**

## Opinion of Electric Car Brands (*60 pt difference!*)

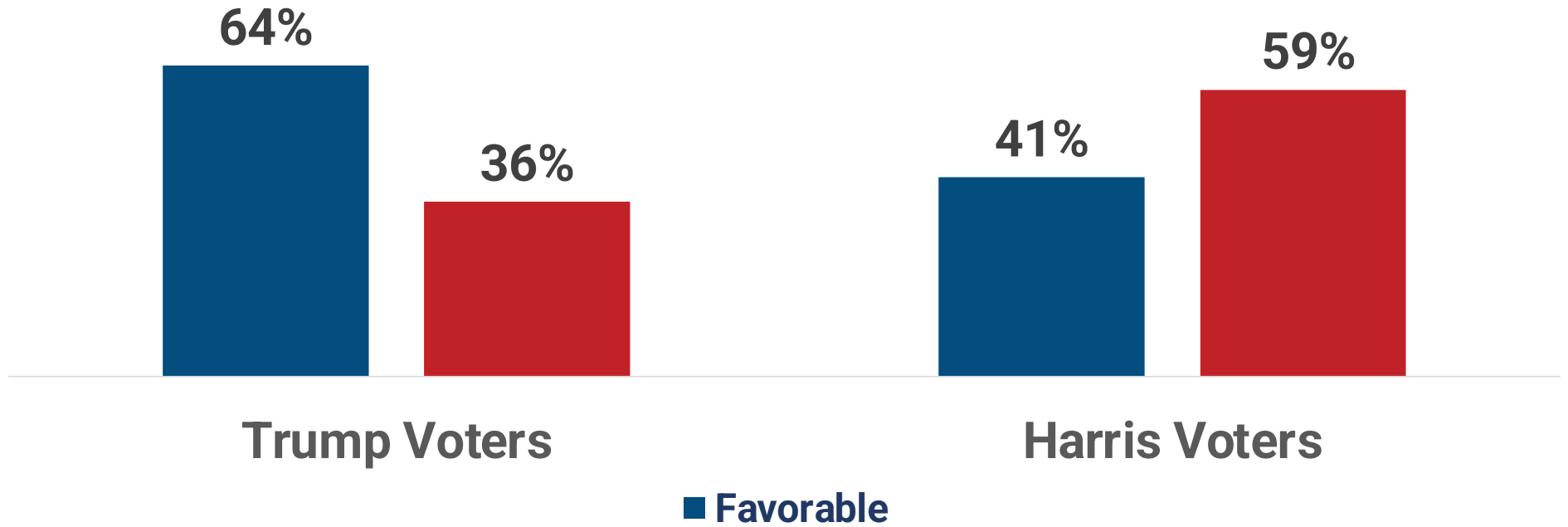


## “Mostly Unfavorable” Ratings by Brand Category:





# Impression of:

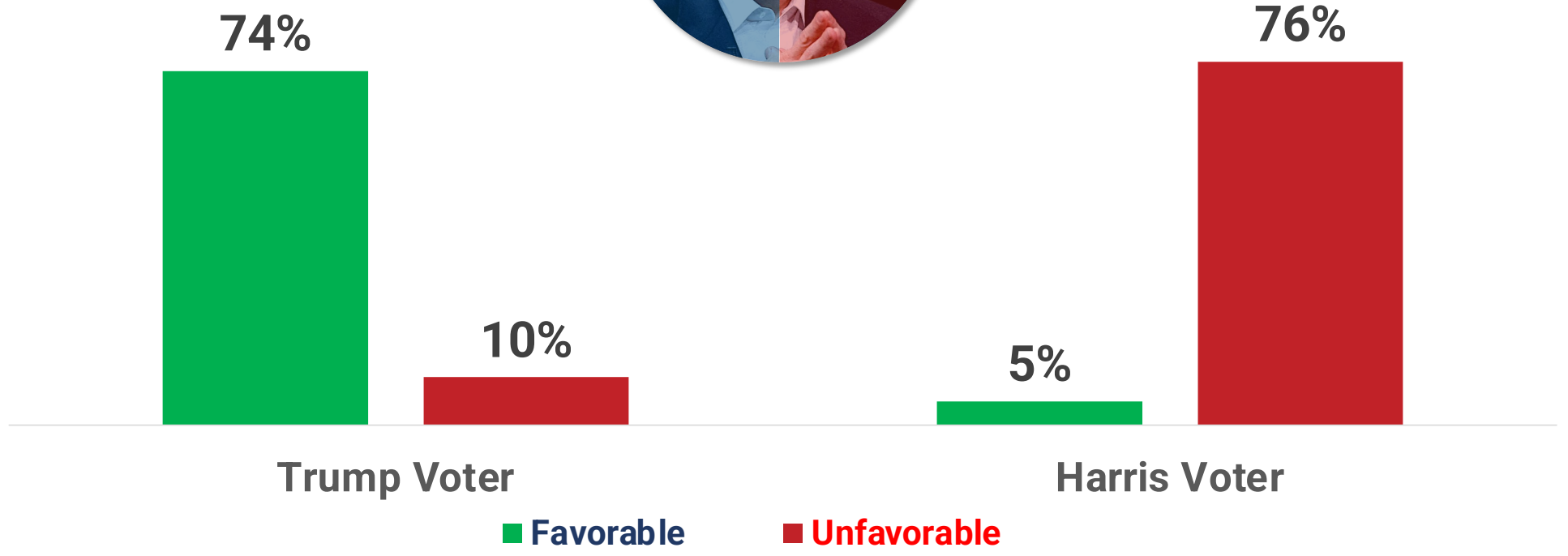




## Then We Tested Opinions About Elon Musk



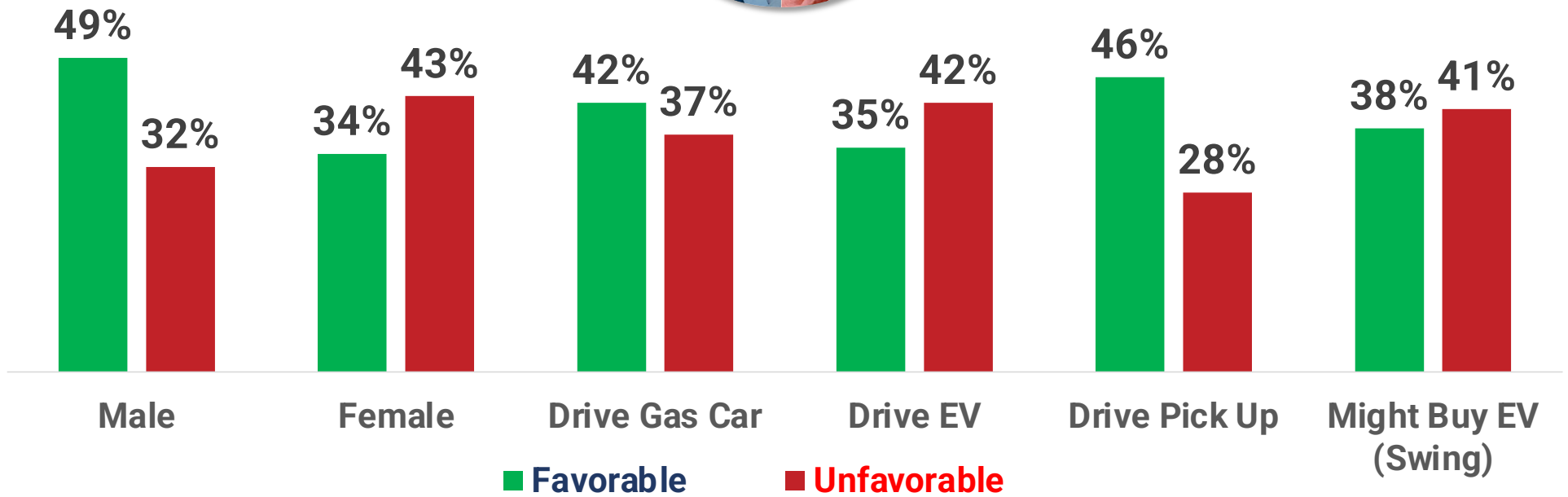
# Opinion of Elon Musk







# Opinion of Elon Musk



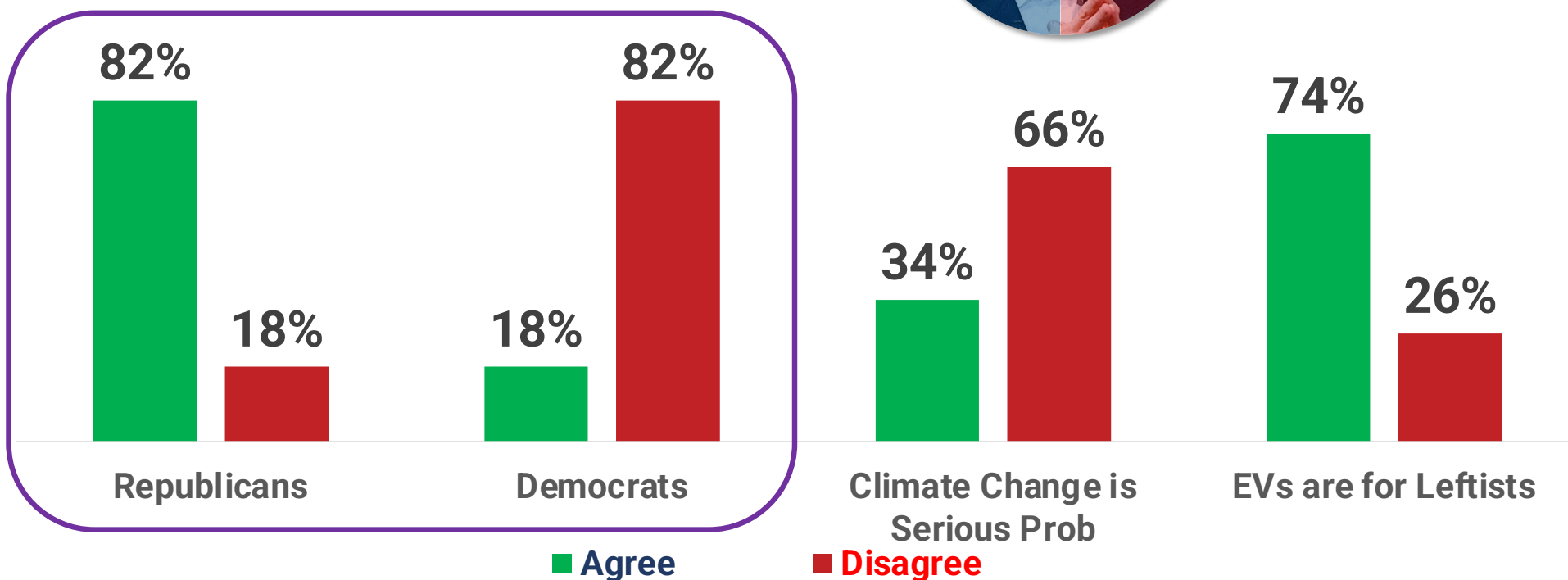
## Not Only is Elon Musk Extremely Polarizing by Party:

- He has a 26-point gender gap and is 9 point “net negative” with women.
- He is a 7 points net negative with EV/PHEV drivers.
- Among our EV “Swing” voters (consumers who say they may buy an EV *once EV prices are lower and all the bugs are worked out*) Elon is net negative by 3 points.
- Conversely, Elon is net positive + 5 points with gas vehicle drivers and net positive + 18 points with pick-up drivers.

## We Also Asked People if They Thought Elon Musk Was a “Good Ambassador for EVs”:

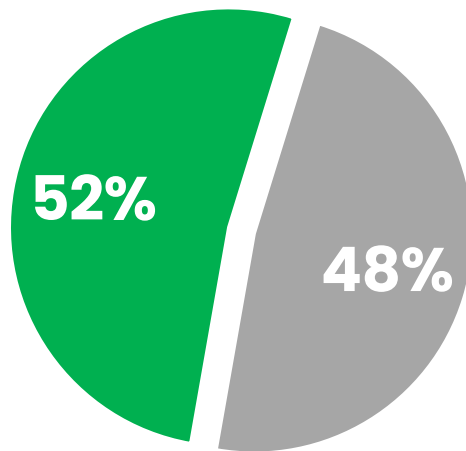
- Huge Partisan Difference.
- Huge Difference based on the respondent’s view of climate change: *Is it a Serious Problem or Overhyped.*

# Agree/Disagree: Elon Musk is Good Ambassador for EVs:



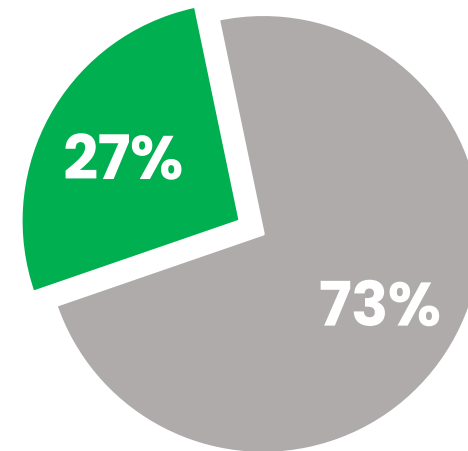
## Agree/Disagree: "EVs are for people who see the world differently than I do."

### Fav Elon Musk:



■ Agree ■ Disagree

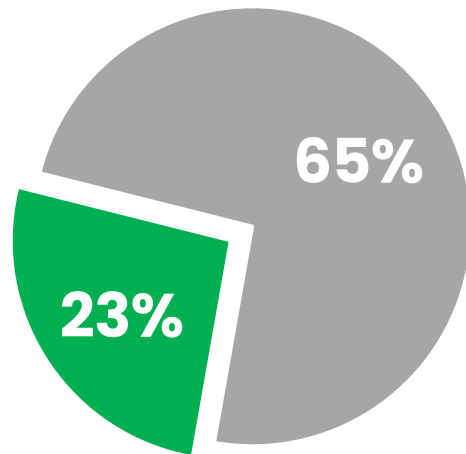
### Unfav Elon Musk:



■ Agree ■ Disagree

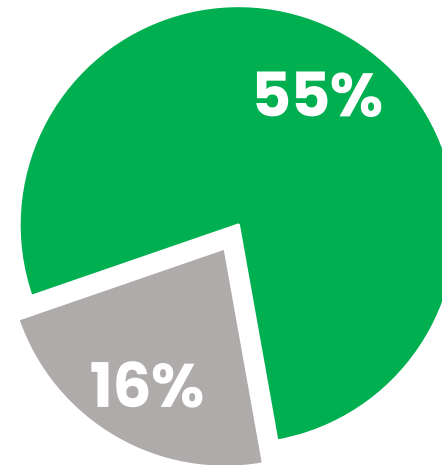
## Agree/Disagree: "Climate Change is Real and EVs Can Help"

**Fav Elon Musk:**



■ Agree ■ Disagree

**Unfav Elon Musk:**



■ Agree ■ Disagree

# What Does this Massive Political Polarization over Elon Musk Mean for Tesla?

This was not an in-depth marketing study on Tesla, but we did ask people to self-categorize themselves into one of three categories:

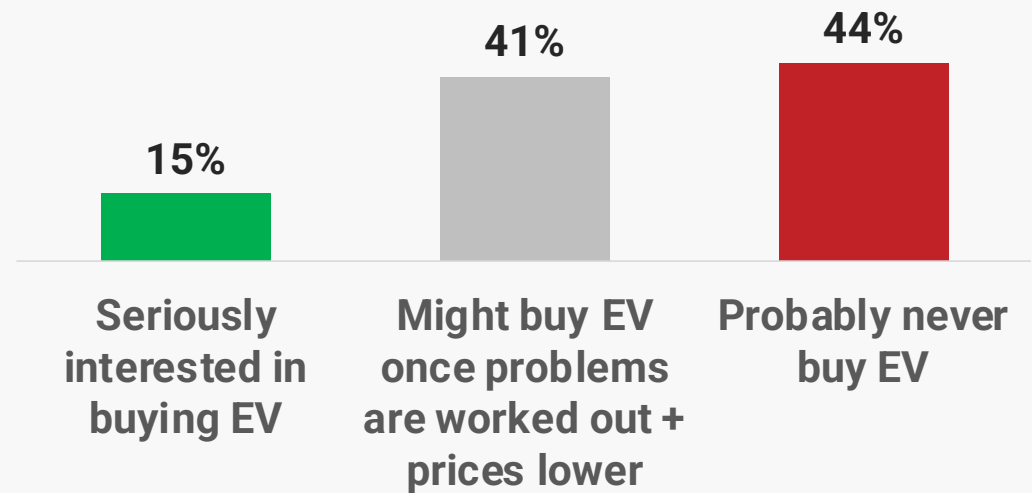
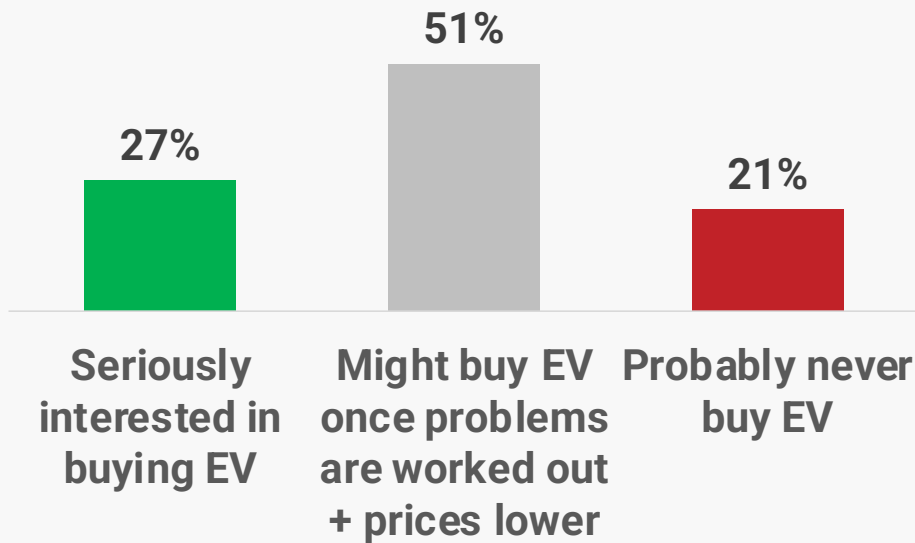
- *"I am seriously interested in buying an EV in the next year or so."* (20%) – **Pro-EV Base Consumers**
- *"I may buy an EV once all the bugs are worked out and prices are lower."* (40%) – **EV "Swing" Consumers**
- *"I'll probably never buy an EV."* (34%) – **Base Anti-EV Consumers**



# When It Comes To Electric Vehicles, Which Best Describes You?

 78% Democrats are open to EVs

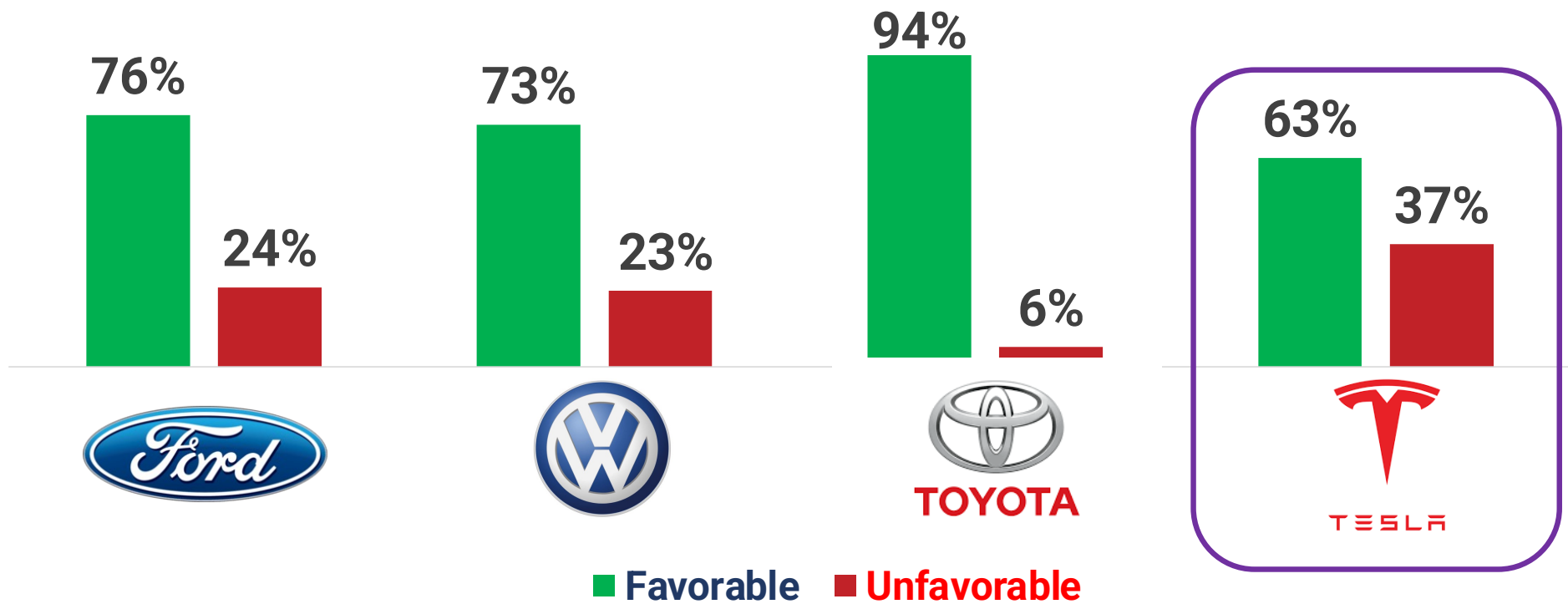
 56% Republicans are open to EVs



**Among the 20% of Total Respondents Saying They Were Seriously Interested in Buying an EV in the Next Year or So... Tesla's Favorable/Unfavorable Ratio was *by Far the Worst* of the Brands Tested.**

*(This was by no means all the brands in the EV market, or even the strongest, but as a point of comparison about Tesla's growing headwinds it is revealing.)*

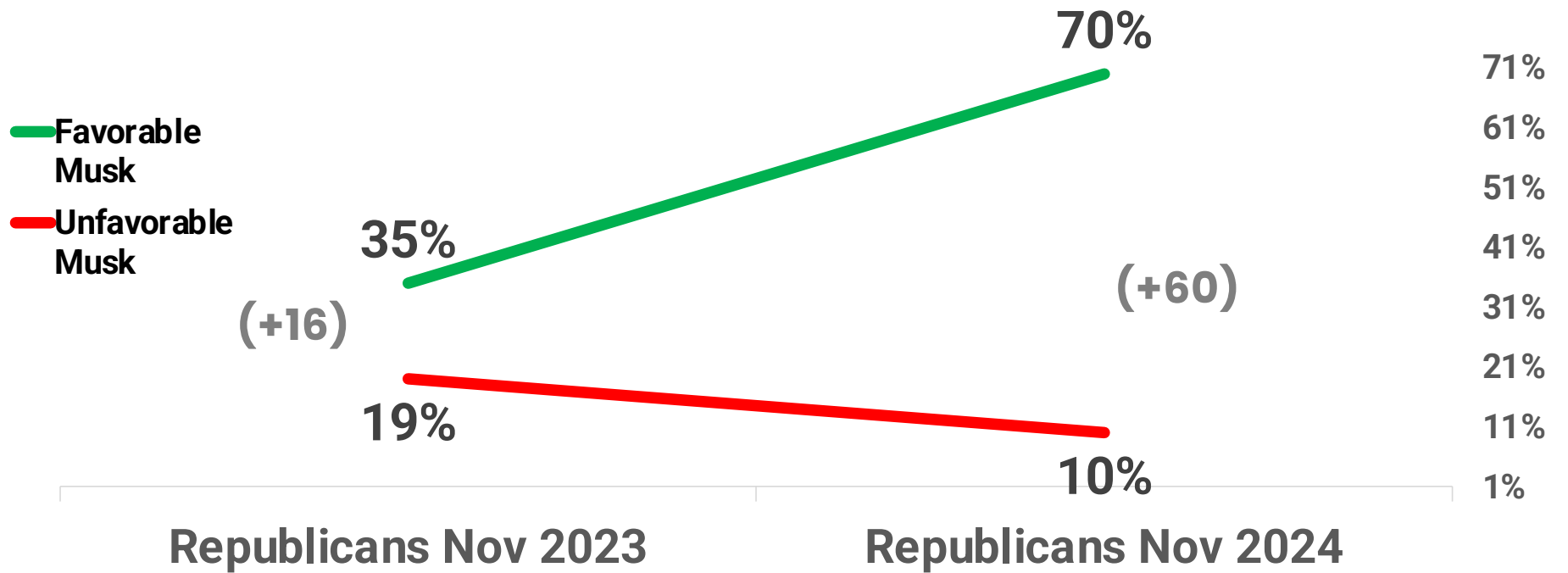
## Looking to Buy an EV in Next Year (20%):



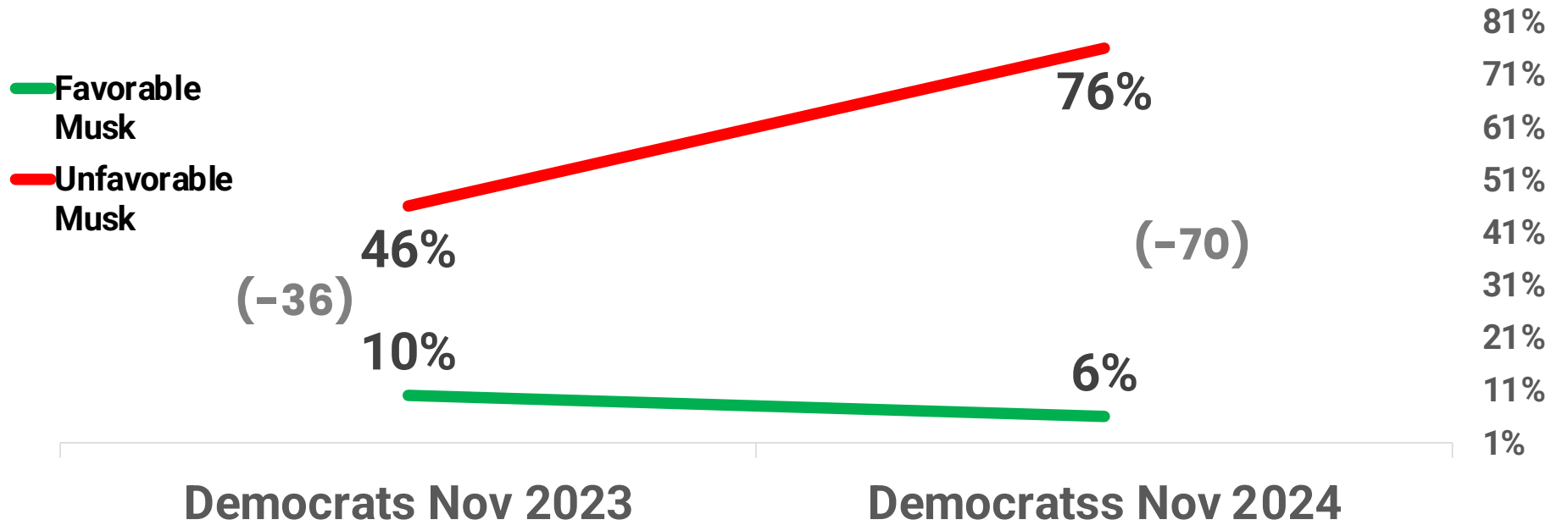
**Republicans Have Warmed to Musk Over the Last Year,  
While Democrats Have Become Even More Hostile.**

**Timeline: From November 2023, to November 2024  
(Post-election)**

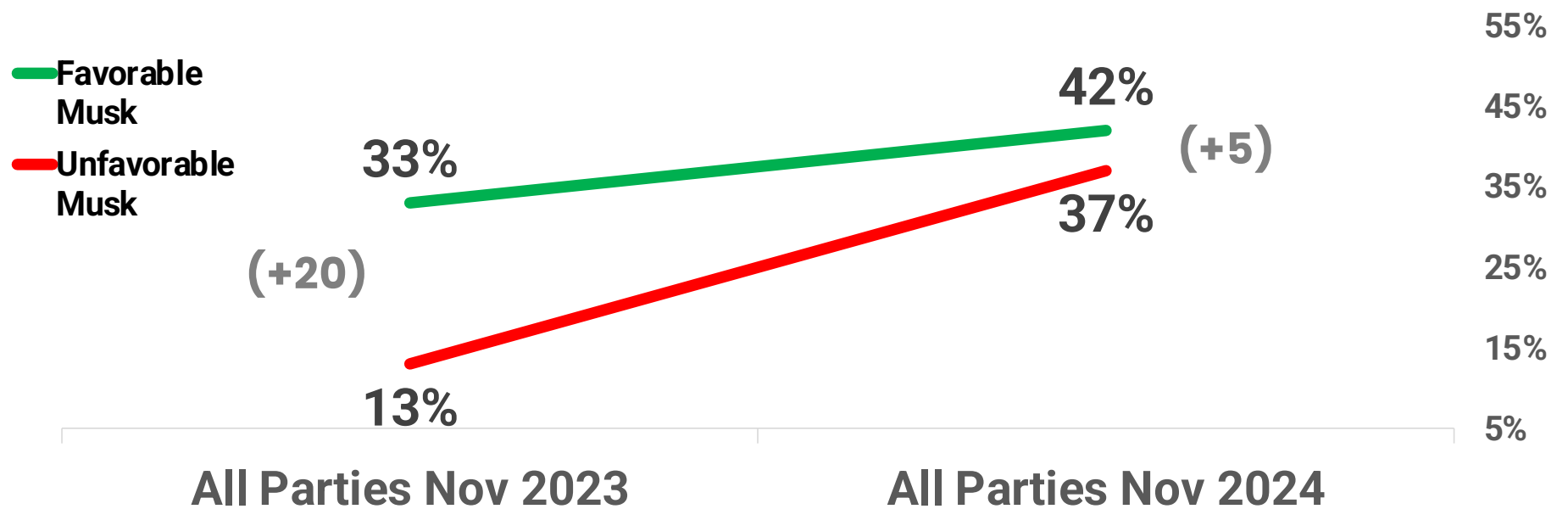
# Fav/Unfav with Republicans: Elon Musk



# Fav/Unfav with Democrats: Elon Musk



## Fav/Unfav with All Parties: Elon Musk



## Could Elon Be Nixon to China and Move EV-Hostile Republicans?

Over the last year, Elon's numbers have plunged to full Bond Villain status with Democrats, but they have soared with Republicans. Could Elon's new MAGA God image help move Republicans to embrace EVs?

- The GOP shift over the last year to thinking highly of Elon has improved his numbers with respondents who sat they "Are Seriously Thinking of Buying an EV in the Next Year or So", albeit with high unfavorables.
- The numbers on the key cultural test of people agreeing with the statement "EVs are for people who see the world differently than I do" have also increased, significantly.

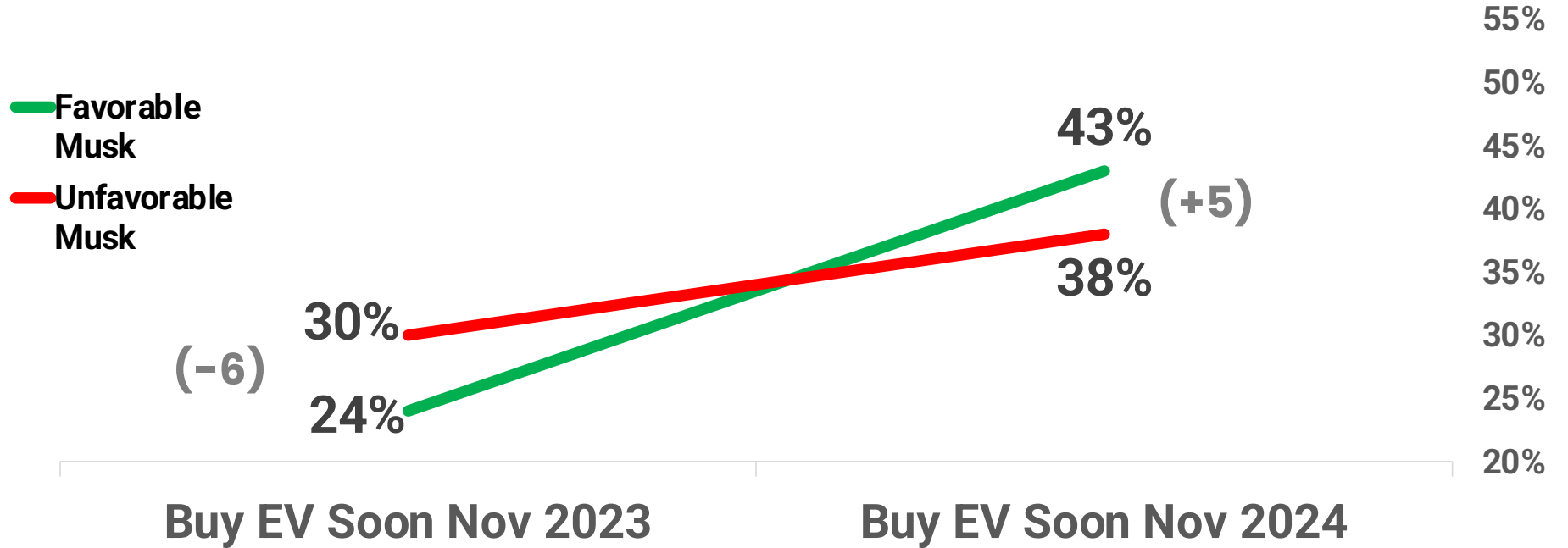
Last year, Democrats were buying EVs at rate 5x of Republicans. No bigger obstacle exists to mass EV adoption than the "Red Wall." The key to wider EV adoption is selling more EVs to Republicans. Elon has the standing and the tools to help with this mission, but with Donald Trump still a fierce EV critic, we think it is unlikely. Still, Republicans are creeping toward greater EV acceptance and willing or not, Elon's journey to MAGA may have helped that. But *meanwhile the Elon-driven Tesla Headwinds problem among non-Republican consumers is clearly growing.*





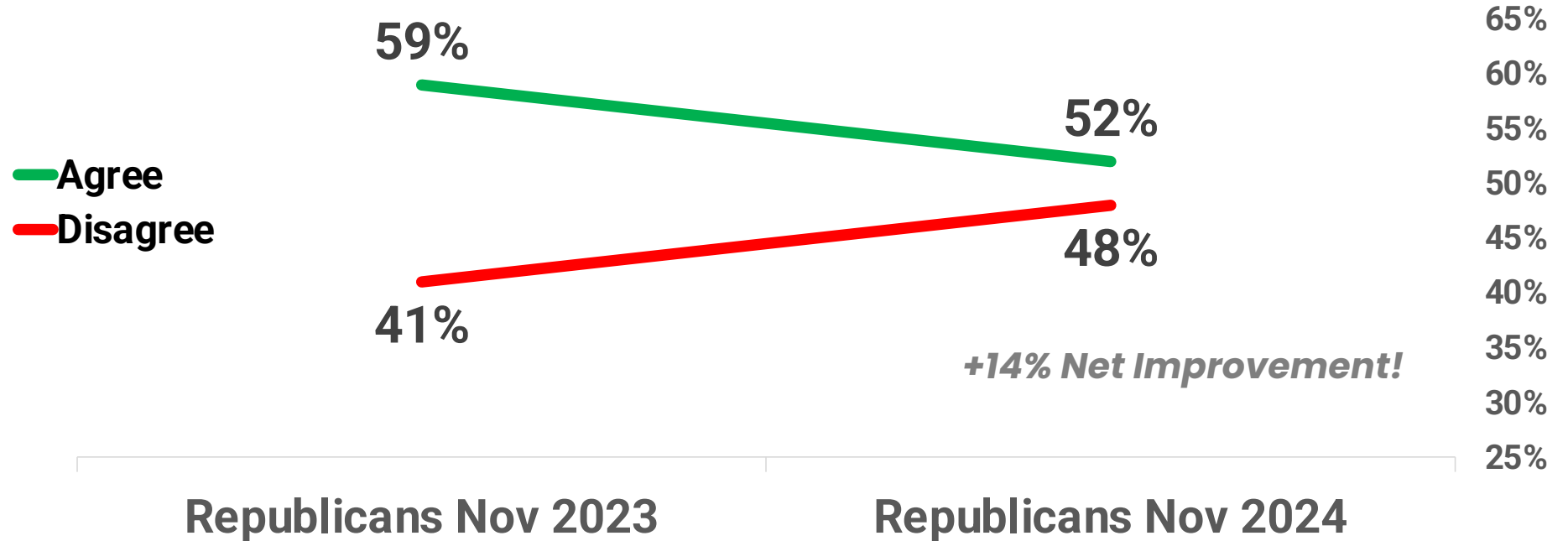
Culture

# Musk Fav/Unfav with Looking to Buy EV Soon



Culture

# Agree/Disagree: “EVs are for People that See the World Differently than I Do”





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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ BRIDGING THE EV DIVIDE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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# Introduction & Mission

The EV Politics Project was founded by experienced Republican political consultants who are Electric Vehicle owners and highly frustrated with the growing EV bashing from Republican politicians. We believe EVs are very good for America and our Democratic allies. We are waging a campaign-style effort to effectively counter the toxic level of politics-driven Electric Vehicle bashing we expect to see during the 2024 election and beyond.

Like any campaign, we started with a national poll to better understand the strikingly different ways that Republicans and Democrats view EVs. **Our goal is to create effective messaging to better define EVs to Republican leaning consumers.**

This presentation will review a top-level summary of that data.



## Mike Murphy (Founder)

Top campaign strategist for John McCain, Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger (CA), Mitt Romney (MA), Jeb Bush (FL), John Engler (MI), Christie Whitman (NJ) and many more Senators, Governors and Members of Congress. Veteran of five Republican Presidential campaigns.

# The Team



**Mike Murphy**  
Founder & CEO

Mike is one of the Republican Party's most successful political media consultants, having handled strategy and advertising for more than 26 successful Gubernatorial and Senatorial campaigns. Murphy has worked on five GOP Presidential campaigns and has advised foreign leaders in Europe and Latin America. In 2020 he served as a key strategist for Republican Voters Against Trump.



**Dr. David Hill**  
Senior Research Advisor

Dr. Hill has served numerous top Republican candidates across the nation, including over a dozen Senators and Governors. In addition, Hill has polled for more than 100 successful ballot measures across the nation. Hill's work also transcends the political world, as Fortune 100 and top-tier governmental and non-governmental organizations have sought his research skills.



**Joe Sacks**  
Executive Director

Joe is a political strategist and previously a senior staffer to former Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo. Joe has worked on multiple successful Gubernatorial, Senatorial, and Congressional campaigns. He's also played a strategy role in a half-dozen successful statewide ballot measures.

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## How to overcome the biggest obstacle to electric vehicles

A Republican politico wants to save electrification from politics

A cartoon illustration showing a caricature of a Republican politician with glasses and a microphone, standing next to a large, grumpy elephant. They are positioned in front of an "EV CHARGE" station with a lightning bolt icon.

MAGAZINE

POLITICS

## Opinion | Why Republicans Will Regret Their Crusade Against Electric Cars

New polling suggests that stance is a political loser in 2024.

A photograph of a Tesla Supercharger station. Two white Tesla Model 3 cars are parked at the charging stations. A yellow warning sign is visible in the background.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## Trump vows to undo Biden's electric vehicle policies

The former president's latest attempt to win auto workers' votes came in a video that accused his successor of imposing "crippling mandates" on the industry.

A photograph of Donald Trump speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit and a red tie, and is pointing his right hand towards the camera.



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