

US Voter Attitudes on Trade

Conducted on behalf of Alliance for Trade Enforcement

May 2021



Methodology

AFTE Trade Survey

Main survey was fielded March 19 – April 7, 2021

Oversamples were surveyed April 8 – April 26, 2021

- N = 1,000 registered voters surveyed online.
- Quotas were set so that the sample is nationally representative by gender, age, ethnicity, education, census region, and political party affiliation.
- Oversamples of 100 registered voters in Texas, Oregon, South Carolina, and Nevada.



Agreement with Trade Enforcement Statements

% Strongly Agree

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

	Total	Republican	Democrat
The US must hold countries accountable for the commitments they make in trade agreements	60%	66%	55%
It is important for the US to be a global leader in high-tech industries	57%	59%	56%
The federal government should prevent other countries from stealing US businesses' ideas and inventions	56%	67%	48%
It is important for the US to maintain an advantage over competing countries and markets in technology, ingenuity, and innovation	53%	59%	49%
Foreign governments need to set clear rules for US businesses to operate successfully abroad	50%	53%	49%
Lawmakers failing to defend US innovators abroad threatens US national security	49%	57%	43%
US economic growth depends on exporting goods and services	46%	45%	46%
International trade helps create US jobs	41%	35%	46%
US companies face many barriers abroad, even in countries where we have trade agreements in place	36%	44%	30%
US companies face trade barriers that keep American-made products and services from competing fairly in the global marketplace	35%	44%	28%
Foreign barriers to trade are harmful to US businesses and workers	32%	36%	28%
Eliminating foreign trade barriers would be good for the US economy	28%	29%	28%



Statements that generate the strongest agreement emphasize foreign accountability and US leadership, in relatively broad terms.

Republican voters are more likely to endorse many of the statements regarding trade, with one notable exception: Democratic voters are more likely to agree strongly that international trade creates US jobs.

Importance of US Policymakers Priorities Around Foreign Trade Issues

% Very Important

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

	Total	Republican	Democrat
Protecting American intellectual property	67%	71%	65%
Protecting American innovation	67%	72%	64%
Protecting American creativity	65%	67%	65%
Ensuring foreign countries keep the promises they made in trade agreements with the US	64%	67%	63%
Ensuring that trading partners fulfill the obligations that they already have made in existing trade agreements with the US	62%	66%	58%
Creating a fair, level playing field for US business to compete in foreign markets	60%	63%	59%
Ending unfair foreign trade practices that keep US goods and services out of foreign markets	56%	58%	55%
Enforcing foreign countries'/markets' trade commitments to the US	56%	60%	52%
Expanding US access to global markets	55%	54%	58%
Free and open trade for US companies	55%	55%	55%



The word “protecting” appears in the top 3 ranked items.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to rate several priorities as very important, but the overall ranking of priorities does not differ substantially by party affiliation.

Foreign Governments Using Trade Barriers and Practices Against US Companies

(% Major Problem)

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

	Total	Republican	Democrat
Seizing patents, copyrights, and other intellectual property without the inventor's permission	65%	68%	63%
Ignoring US intellectual property and copyright laws	65%	69%	62%
Deliberately making it difficult for US companies to secure local intellectual property protections	59%	63%	56%
Paying less than fair market value for US goods and services	55%	57%	53%
Imposing tariffs on US goods and services	49%	55%	44%
Requiring US companies to store data on servers located in those foreign countries	49%	52%	45%
Setting the price of US goods and services	46%	49%	43%
Offering subsidies to domestic companies to give them a leg up on their US competitors	44%	50%	39%

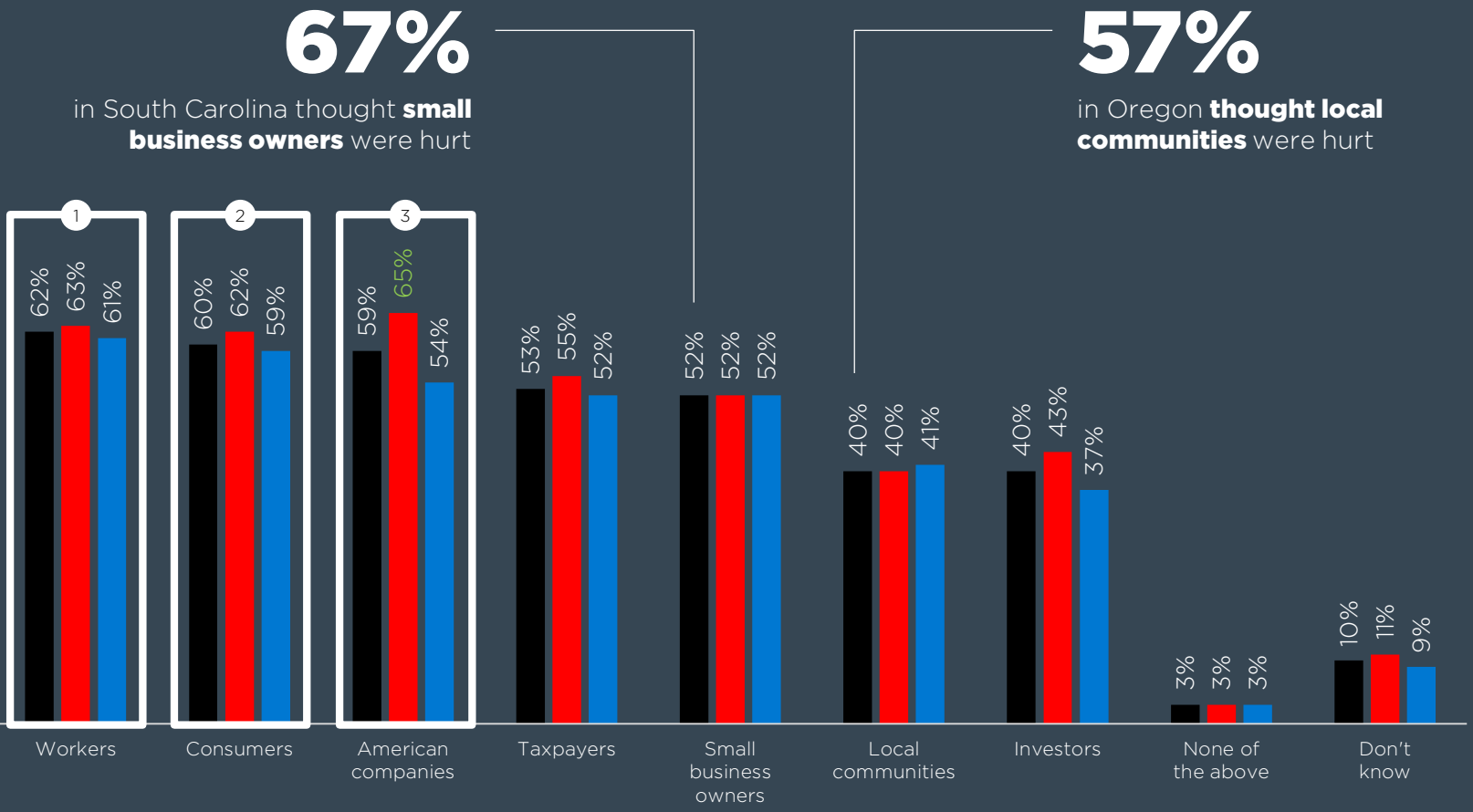


A majority of both Republicans and Democrats consider unauthorized seizures of IP, violations of US IP law, and inadequate local IP protections to be trade barriers that represent major problems.

Those Hurt the Most by Unfair Foreign Trade Practices

(Select All That Apply)

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation



When asked which constituencies are hurt by unfair foreign trade practices, voters most often cited:

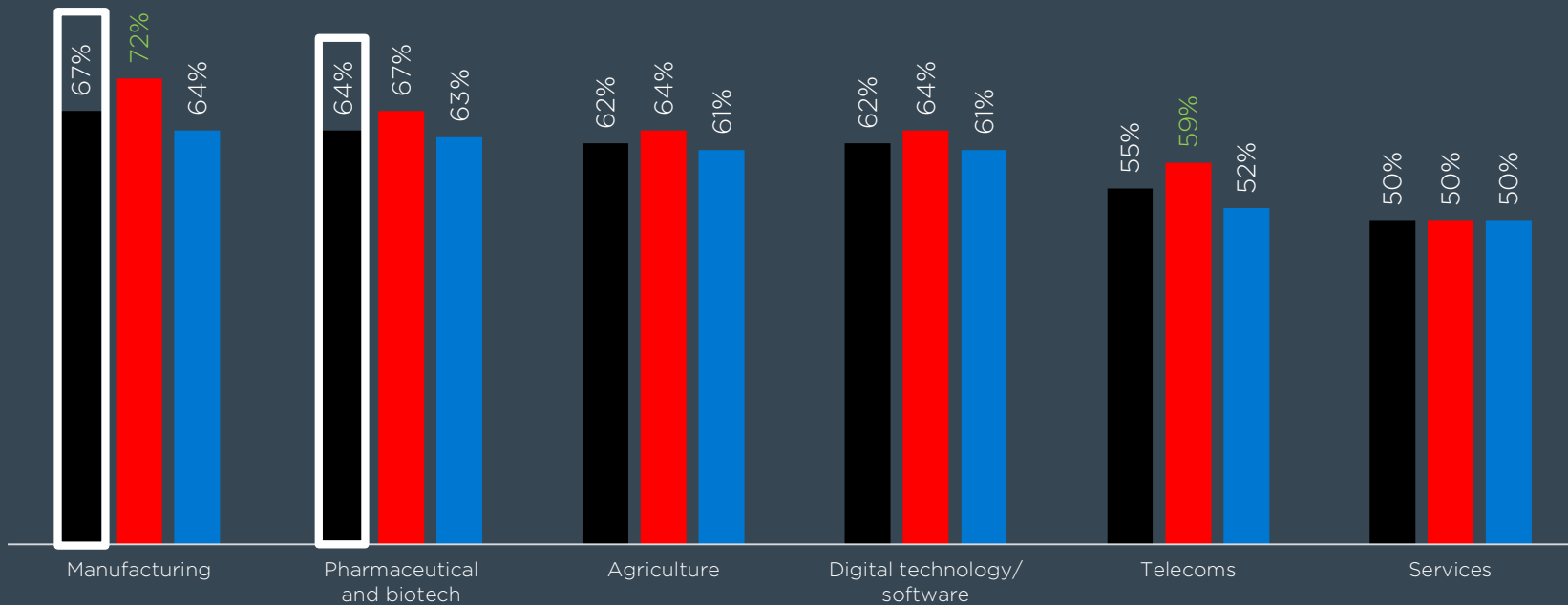
- 1 **Workers**
- 2 **Consumers**
- 3 **American companies**

Protecting Industries From Unfair Foreign Trade Practices

(% Very Important)

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

■ Total ■ Republican ■ Democrat



67% (nearly two-thirds) of respondents think it is very important to protect the manufacturing industry.

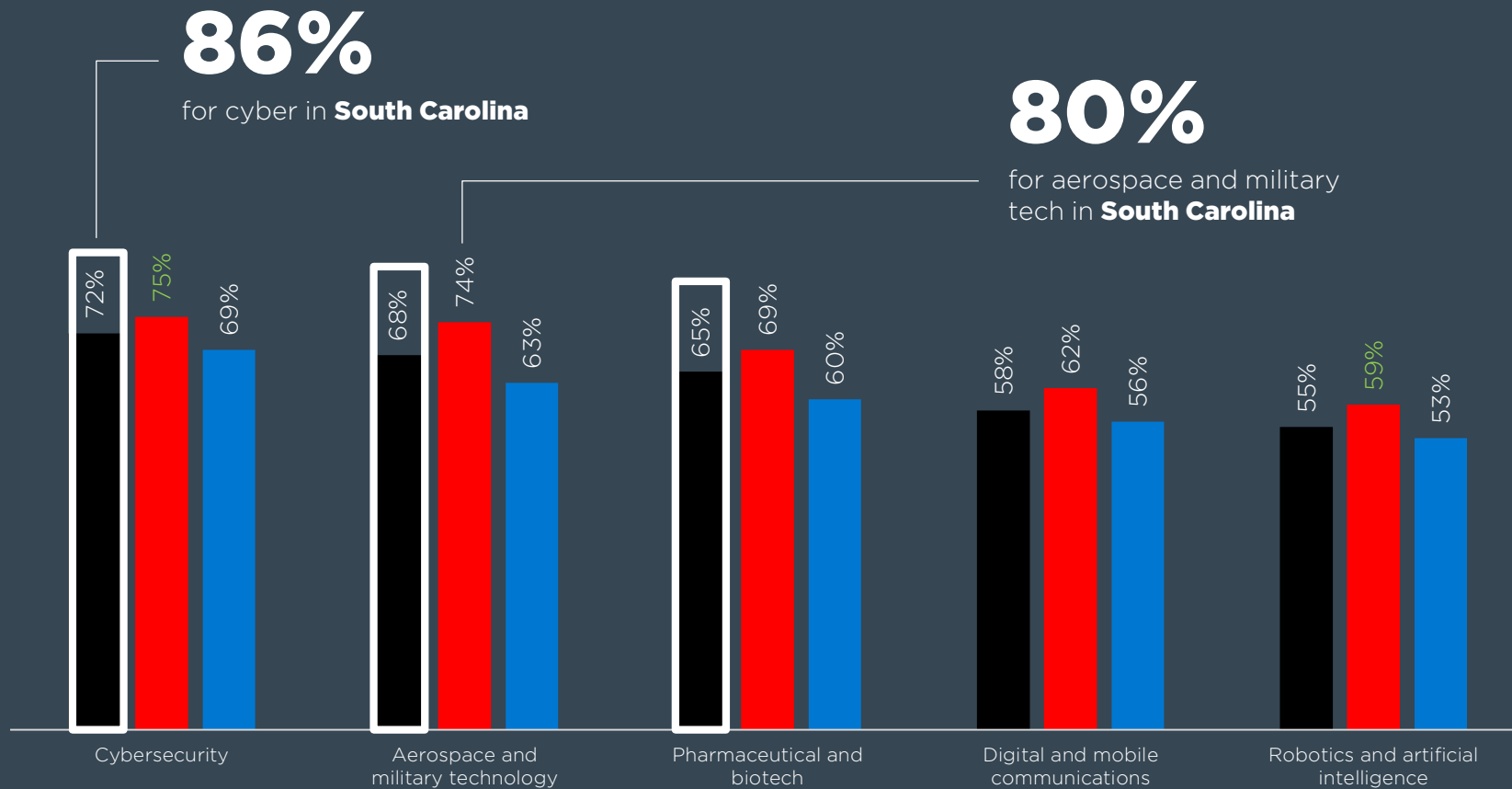
64% feel the same way about the pharmaceutical/biotech industry.

US Leadership in Specific Industry Sectors

(% Very Important)

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

■ Total ■ Republican ■ Democrat



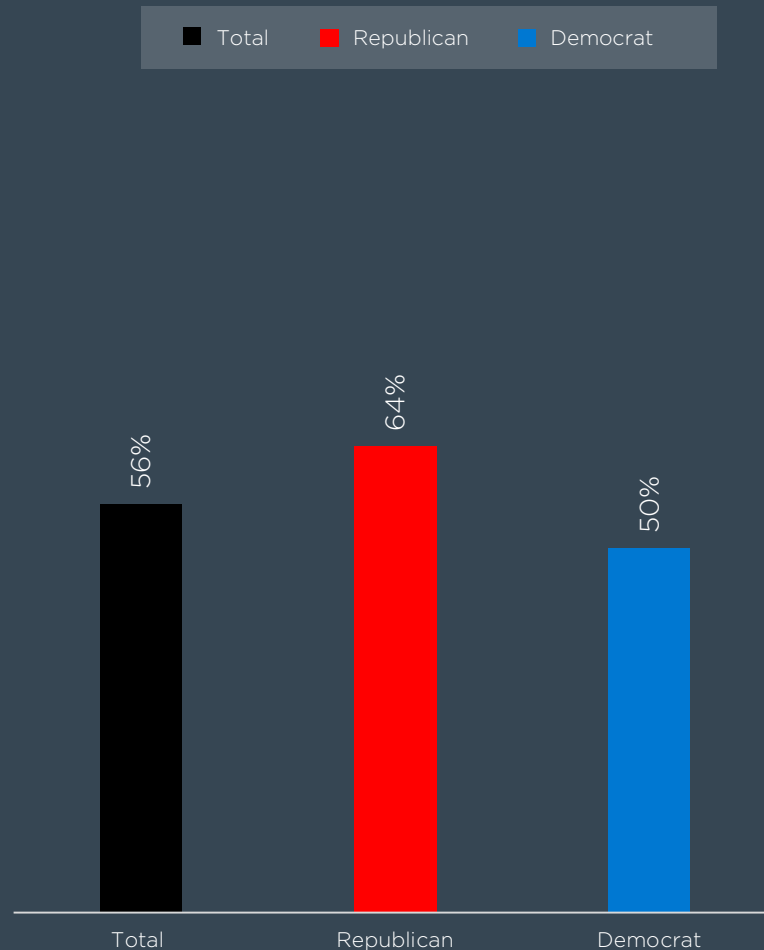
72% of respondents feel it is very important for the US to lead in cybersecurity.

68% say US leadership is very important in aerospace and military technology.

65% have the same opinion about the pharmaceutical and biotech sector.

Lawmakers Should Defend Domestic Innovators to Ensure China Doesn't Outpace The US

(% Strongly Agree)



A majority strongly agree that lawmakers should help ensure China doesn't outpace the US in:

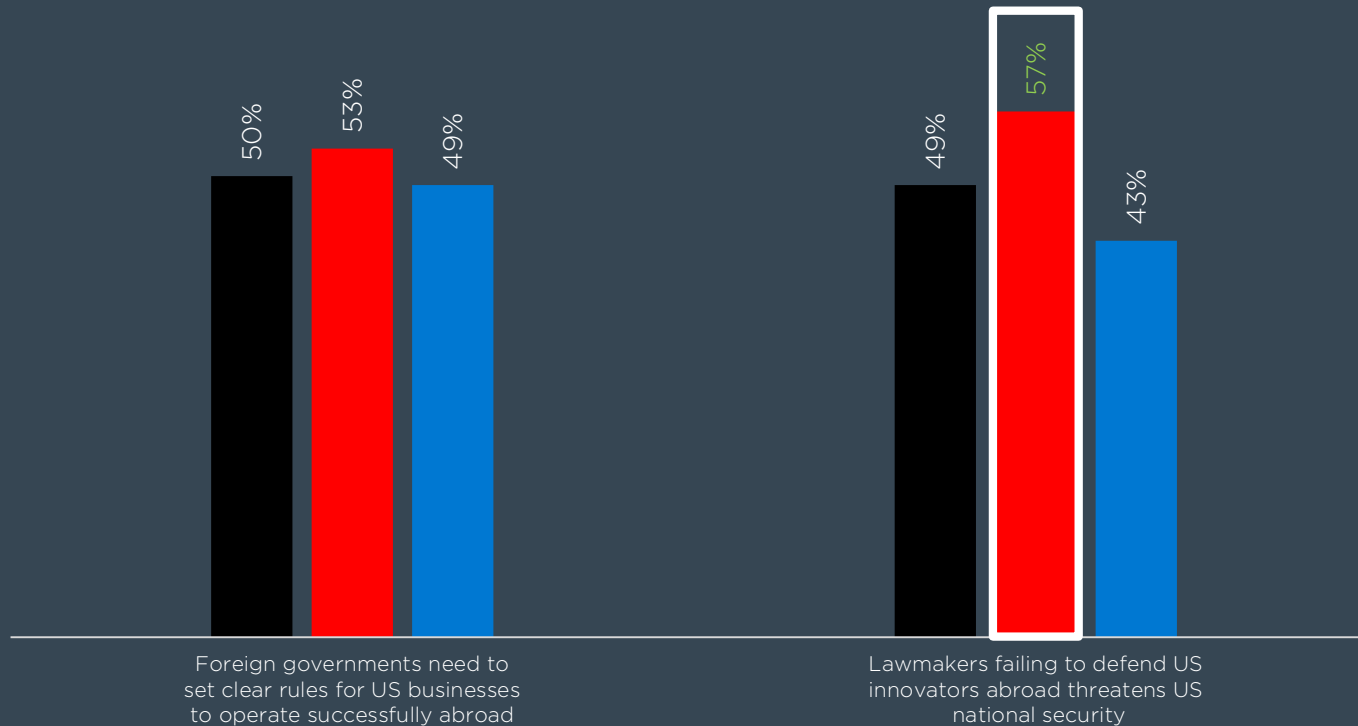
- **Science**
- **Technology**
- **Medicine**

Support for Government Action

(% Strongly Agree)

Numbers indicate significant differences by party affiliation

■ Total ■ Republican ■ Democrat



Republicans are more likely than Democrats to feel that failing to defend US innovators is a threat to national security.

Key Takeaways



Statements About Trade

- The statements that generate the strongest agreement (majority strongly agree) emphasize foreign accountability and US leadership, in relatively broad terms.
- Statements that make more specific claims about the importance of foreign trade to the US economy and jobs are somewhat weaker.
- However, it is noteworthy that the word “Protecting” appears in the top 3 ranked items.

Policy Priorities

- Respondents didn't differentiate sharply among government policy priorities, with top box scores ranging only from 55% to 67%.
- Manufacturing, biotech and pharma score very high on the list of industries people consider important to protect.

Foreign Barriers to Trade

- A majority of both Republicans and Democrats consider unauthorized seizures of IP, violations of US IP law, and inadequate local IP protections to be trade barriers that represent major problems.



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