



STATE OF THE FACTS POLL

FULL REPORT PREPARED FOR USAFACTS
JULY 2017



METHODOLOGY

USAFacts approached The Harris Poll to conduct research in support of its newly launched website.

This survey was conducted online within the United States between **June 30 – July 5, 2017** among **2,521** members of the **U.S. general public.**

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, marital status, household size, income, employment, and education 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.

KEY FINDINGS

In general the poll shows a public obsessed with facts, typically turning to the national media and now social media for information, but seeing widespread bias in the information they receive.

- Americans are numbers junkies and 88% prefer facts and figures to anecdotes. And usually prefer to get information in analyzed or written form over raw data.
- They turn most often to national news media for information but 57% of millennials look to social media first. They generally report satisfaction with the information especially from think tanks.
- But 3 out of 4 adults see most of the information they receive about government revenues and expenditures as biased.
- Social media, the dominant source of information for young adults, is seen as empty of factual information by 60%.

And Americans have little trust in the data they see from state, local or federal governments, and yet they overwhelmingly believe their elected officials should use more data from the government in their decision making.

A majority see Americans using different facts as more of a cause of problems in the U.S. than people having different beliefs.

- Eighty-nine percent (89%) say people only believe facts that fit their beliefs.

Despite widespread skepticism, 90% of Americans see data as critical to believing information. Non-partisan sourcing is also seen as critical.

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) believe a single source of information is critical to an informed debate.

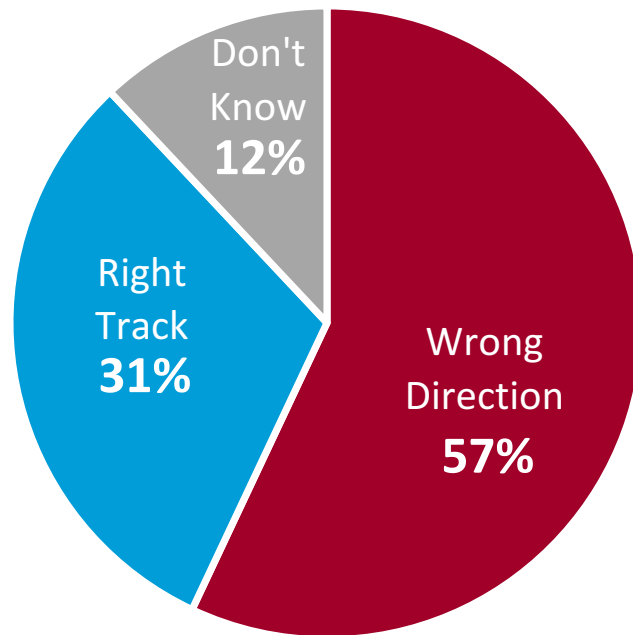
KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

- Forty-two percent have used government web sites to look up information.
- Demand is highest for information related to economic issues, followed by government and political information and a desire to know where their money is going.
- Key areas of interest include:
 - Healthcare, including Medicare
 - Economy and jobs
 - Taxes
 - Social Security
- Most want national information, but some key topics for local analysis include education, housing, jobs and infrastructure.
- People want information generally on the nation but are interested in how they personally compare to others.

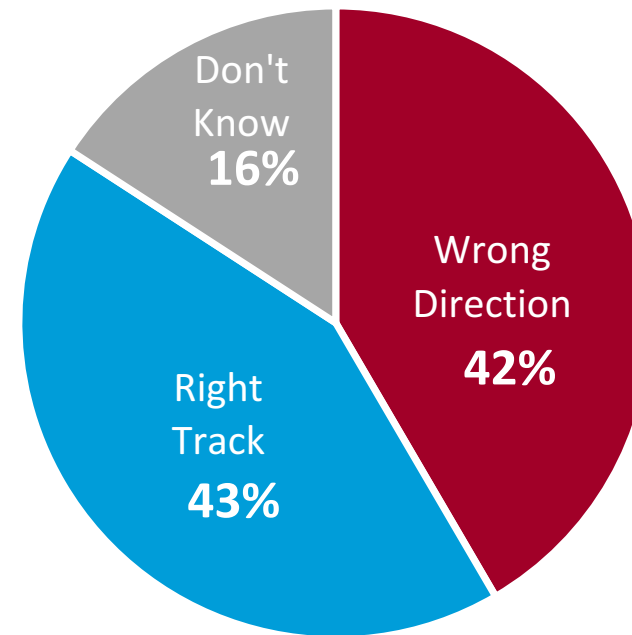
THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THE NATION IS HEADED DOWN THE WRONG TRACK AND ARE SPLIT ON THEIR VIEWS OF THE ECONOMY

DIRECTION OF NATION AND ECONOMY

Direction of the Nation



Direction of the Economy



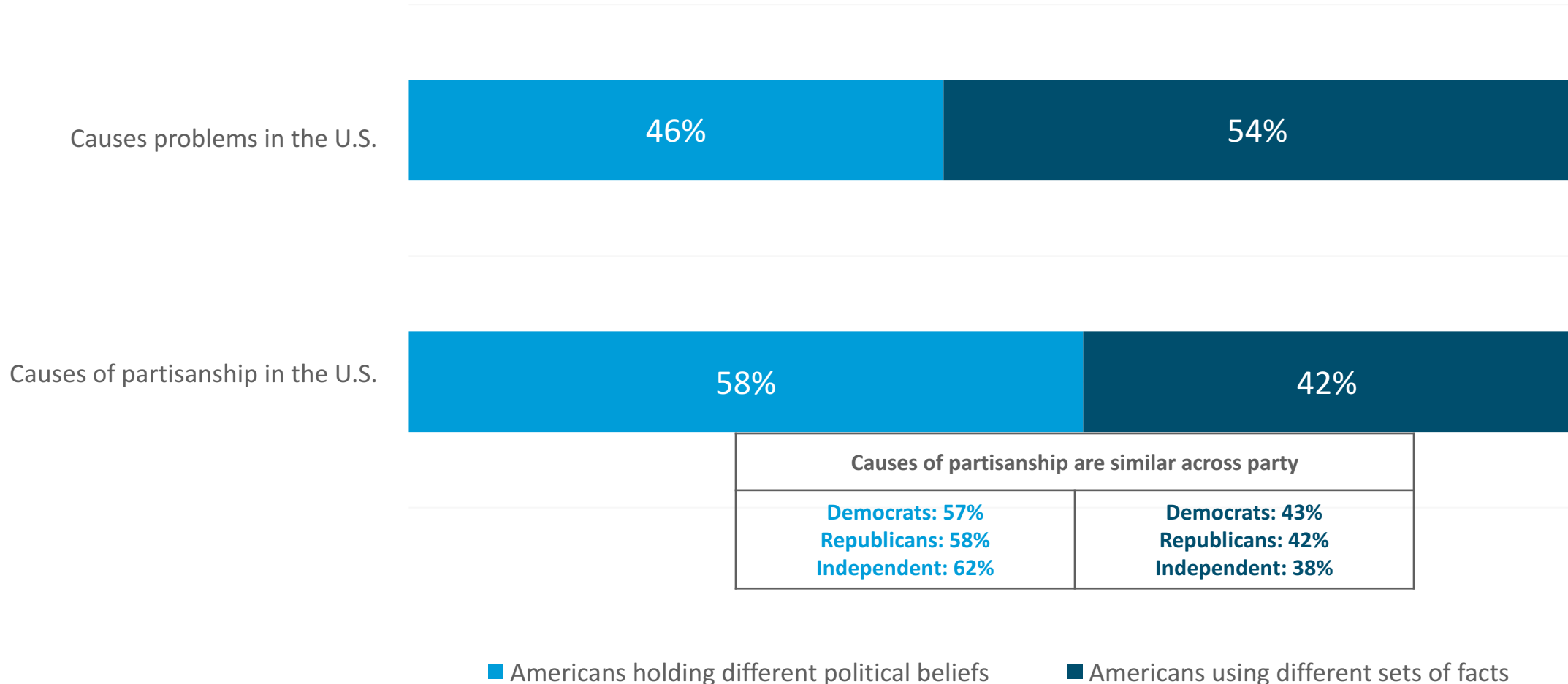
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q604. Do you think things in the nation are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?

Q605. Do you think the economy in the United States is on right track or wrong track?

A MAJORITY BELIEVES RELIANCE ON DIFFERENT FACTS IS MORE TO BLAME FOR PROBLEMS IN THE US TODAY THAN DIFFERENT POLITICAL BELIEFS

POLITICAL BELIEFS VS. FACTS



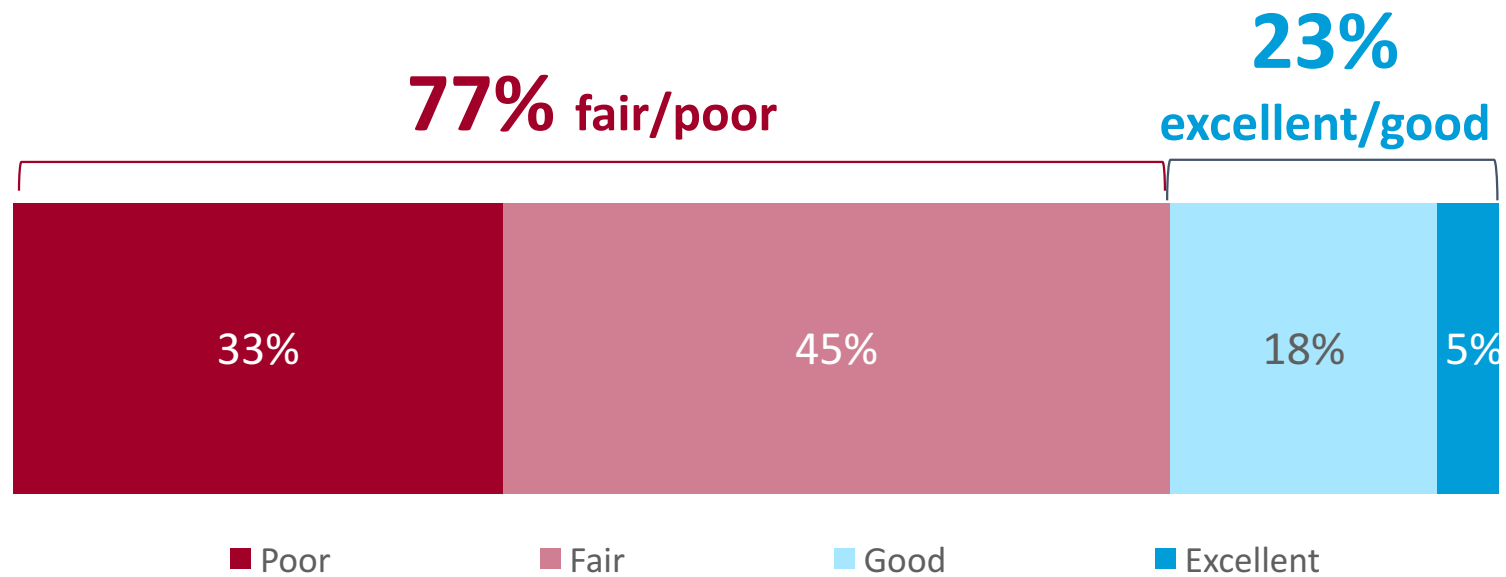
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q624. Which do you believe is a bigger cause of partisanship in the United States today?

Q625. Which do you believe causes more problems in the United States today?

THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS FIND CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE U.S. TO BE EITHER FAIR OR POOR

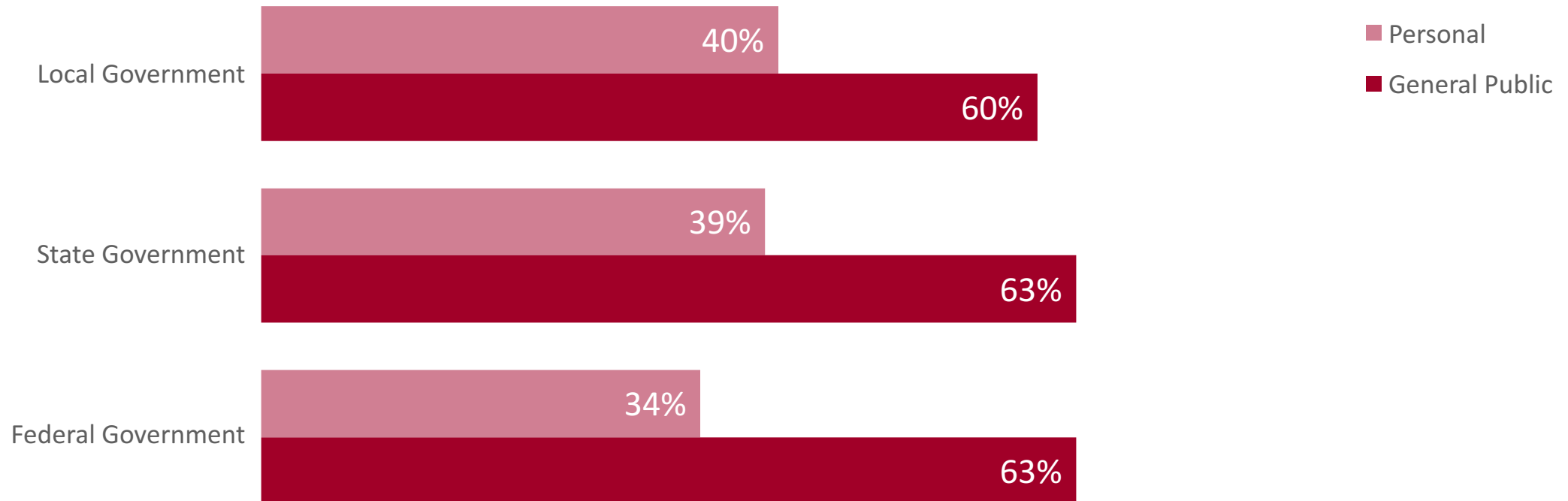
VIEWS ON CIVIC EDUCATION



AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT OTHERS ARE MORE UNINFORMED ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT THAN THEMSELVES

HOW INFORMED THE PUBLIC IS ON THE GOVERNMENT

(% Saying Very or Somewhat Uninformed)



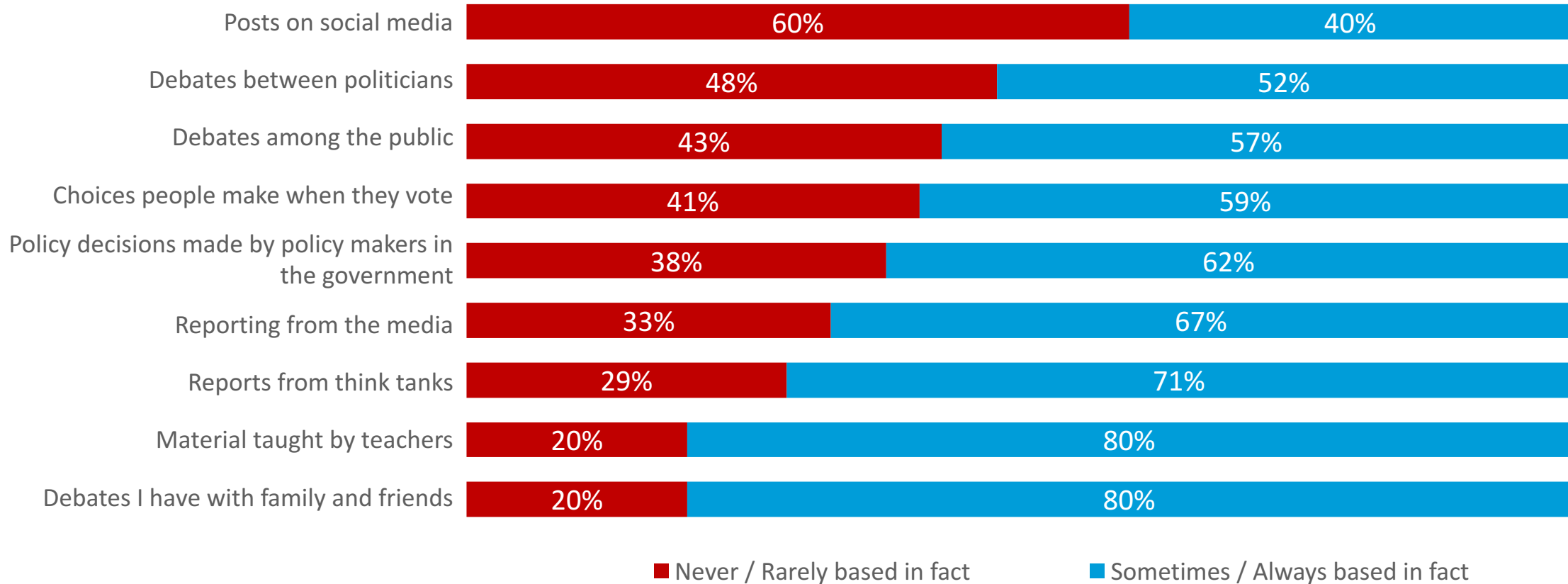
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q607. How informed are you personally about the actions and expenditures of each of the following?

Q608. How informed do you think the general public is about the actions and expenditures of each of the following?

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ARE SEEN AS RARELY BASED IN FACT, AND DEBATES BETWEEN POLITICIANS ARE SEEN AS BASED IN FACT BY ONLY HALF

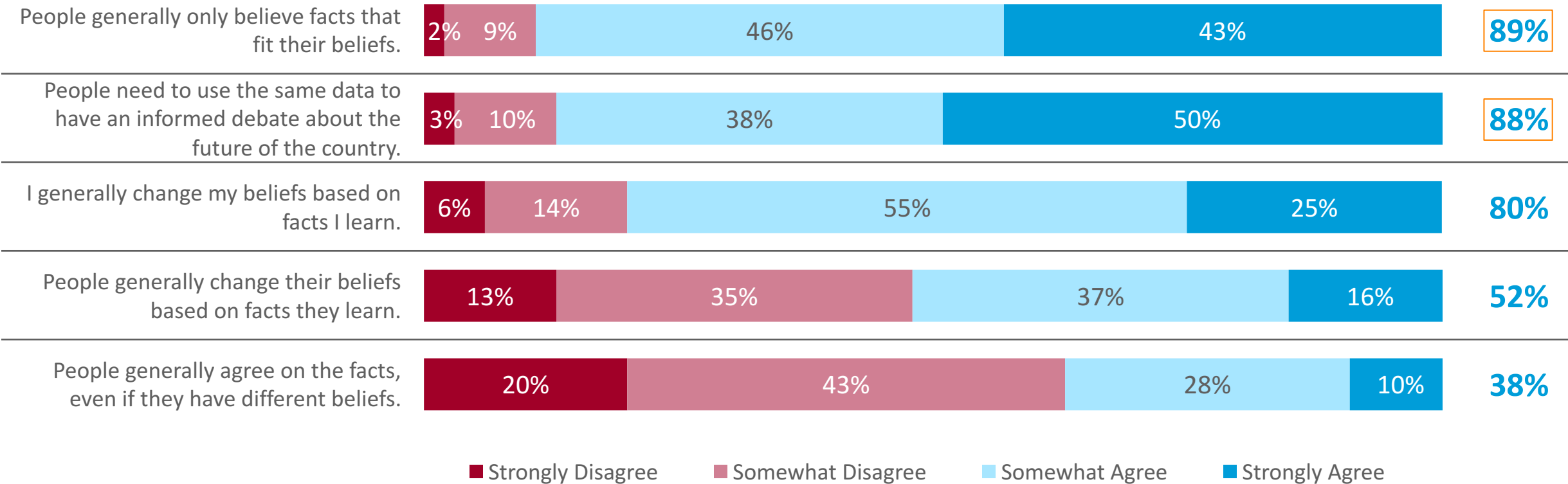
FREQUENCY OF BEING BASED IN FACT



AMERICANS AGREE THAT PEOPLE ONLY BELIEVE THE FACTS THAT FIT THEIR BELIEFS AND THAT USING THE SAME DATA IS NECESSARY FOR INFORMED DEBATES

VIEW ON FACTS AND INFORMATION

Agree

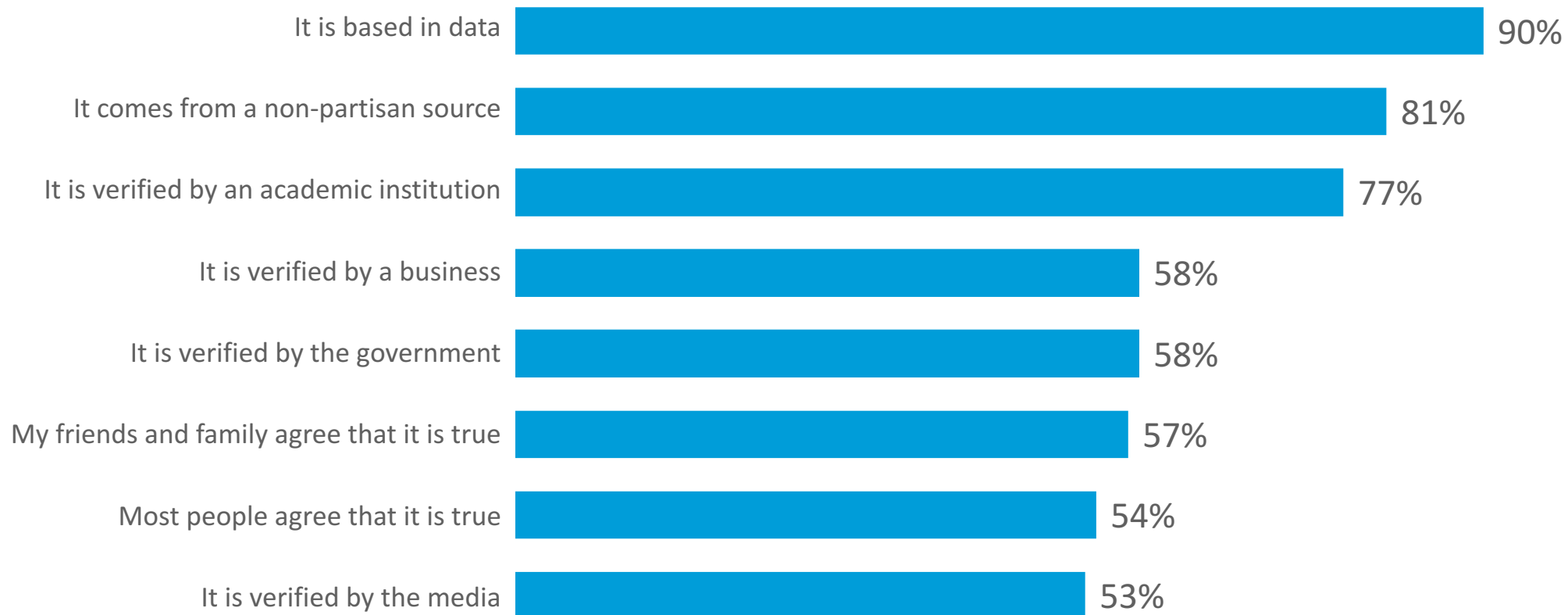


Views differentiate among Democrats and Republicans by 1% or less

THE OVERWHELMING CONSENSUS IS THAT FOR INFORMATION TO BE FACTUAL IT MUST BE BASED IN DATA

LIKELIHOOD INFORMATION IS FACTUAL

(% Saying Very or Somewhat Likely)



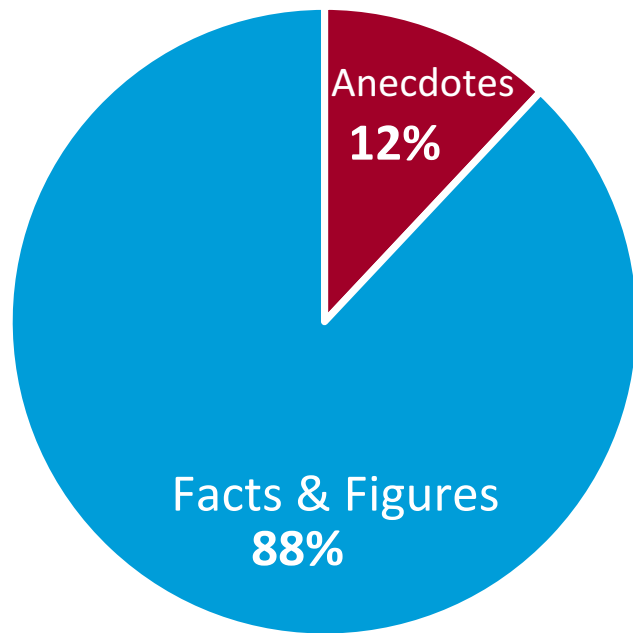
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q627. How likely would you be to consider information factual if...?

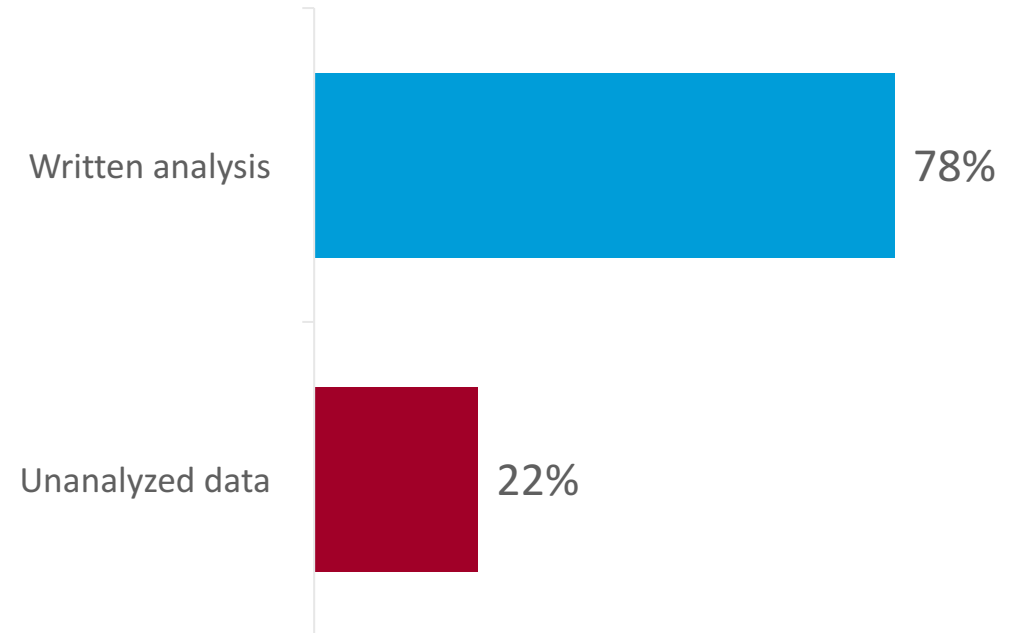
AMERICANS STRONGLY PREFER FACTS AND FIGURES OVER ANECDOTES, HOWEVER WOULD LIKE THAT INFORMATION ANALYZED FOR THEM

BELIEFS VS. FACTS

Interest in Facts vs. Anecdotes



Government Revenue, Expenditures, and Outcomes



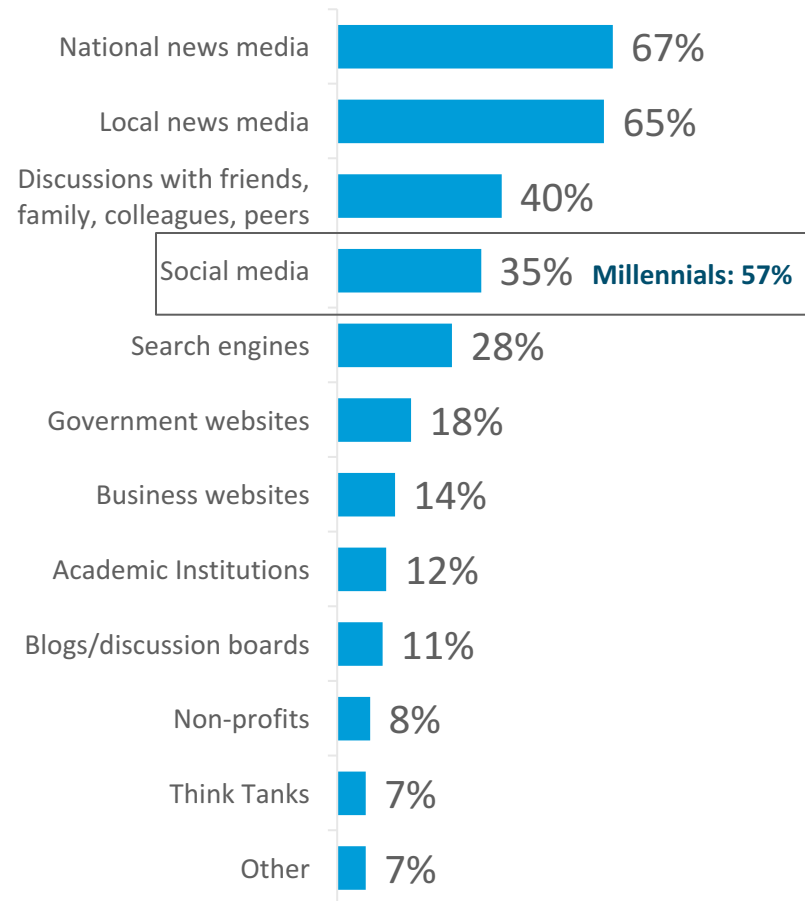
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q610. Are you generally the kind of person who likes [ROTATE: facts and figures on the country and your government] or someone who is more interested in [ROTATE: stories and anecdotes]?

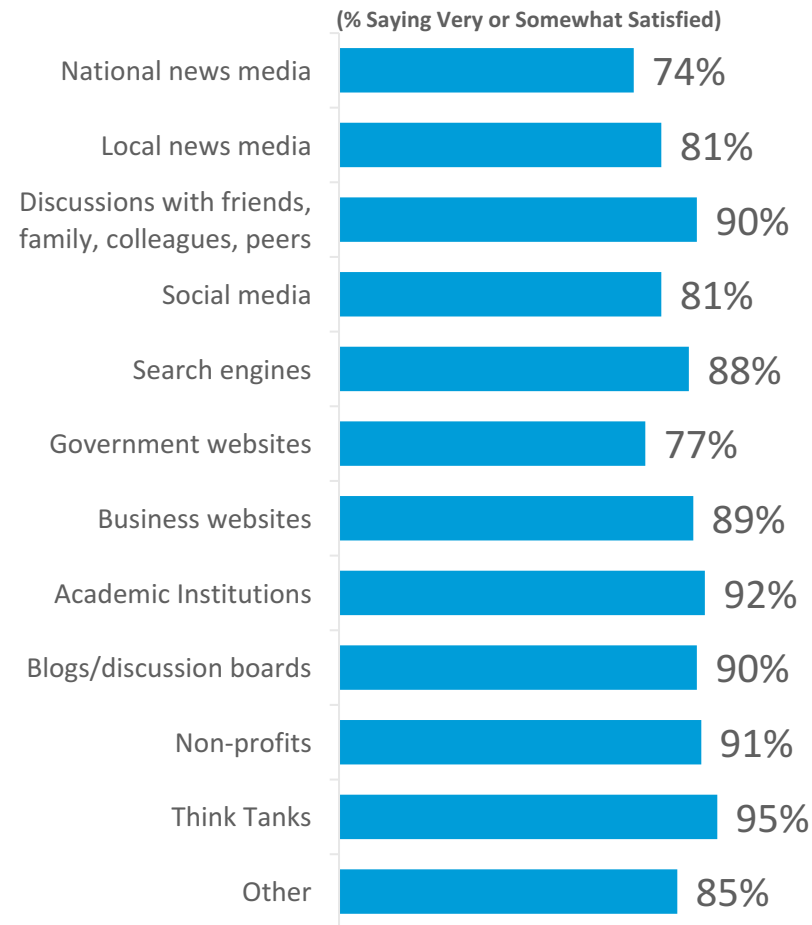
Q613C. Which of the following interests you more?

THE PUBLIC IS MOST LIKELY TO TURN TO THE MEDIA FOR INFORMATION

Sources Relied On For Govt. Information



Satisfaction with Source



Websites Utilized For Information



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q607A. Which of the following sources do you rely on for information about the government (federal, state, or local)?

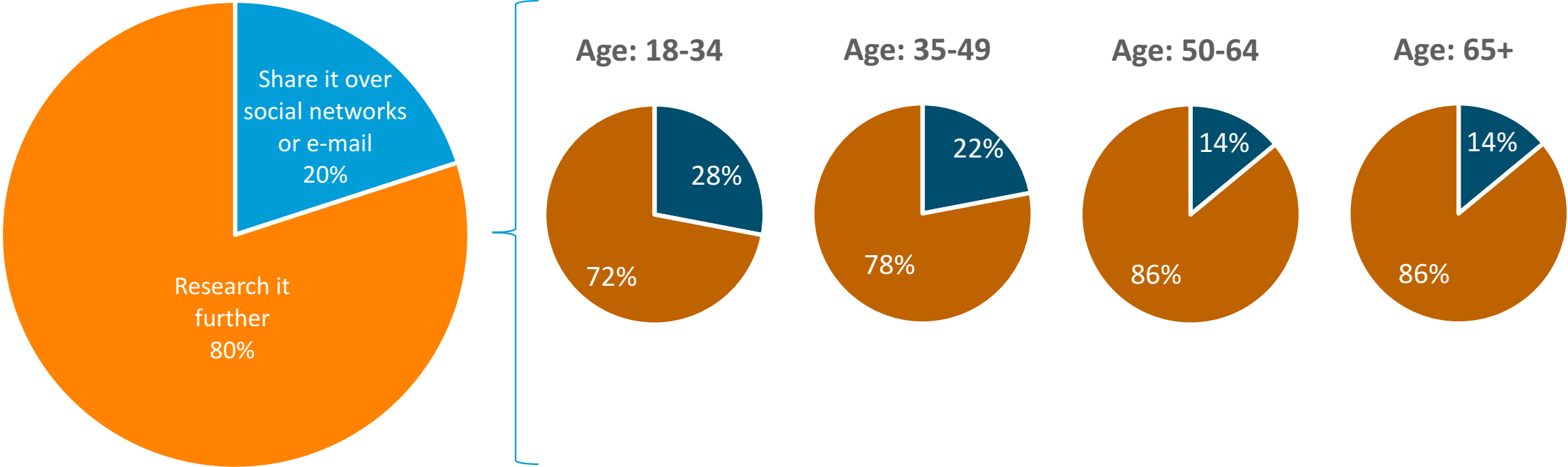
Q607B. How satisfied are you with the information you receive about the government from each source?

Q607C. What websites do you specifically visit to get information about the government?

MILLENNIALS FOCUS IN ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND ARE QUICKER THAN OTHER GENERATIONS TO SHARE IT

INFORMATION SHARING

When Finding Something Interesting you...

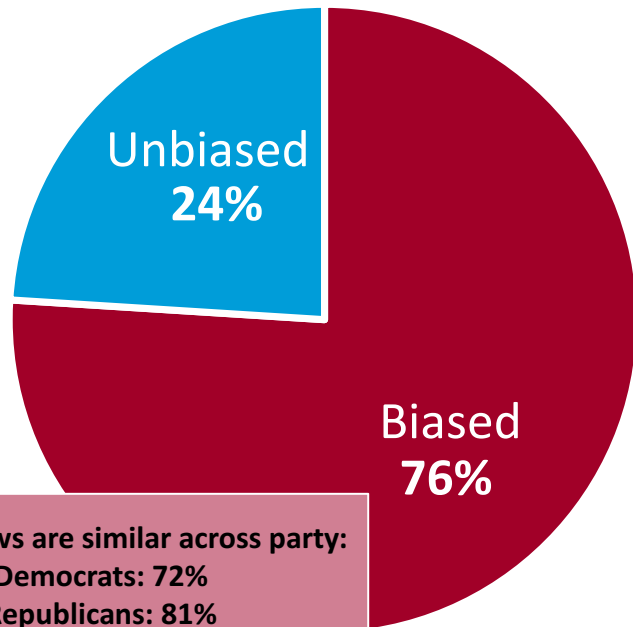


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)
Q613D. When you find something interesting online, what are you more likely to do?

MOST PEOPLE VIEW THE INFORMATION THEY COME ACROSS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT AS BIASED

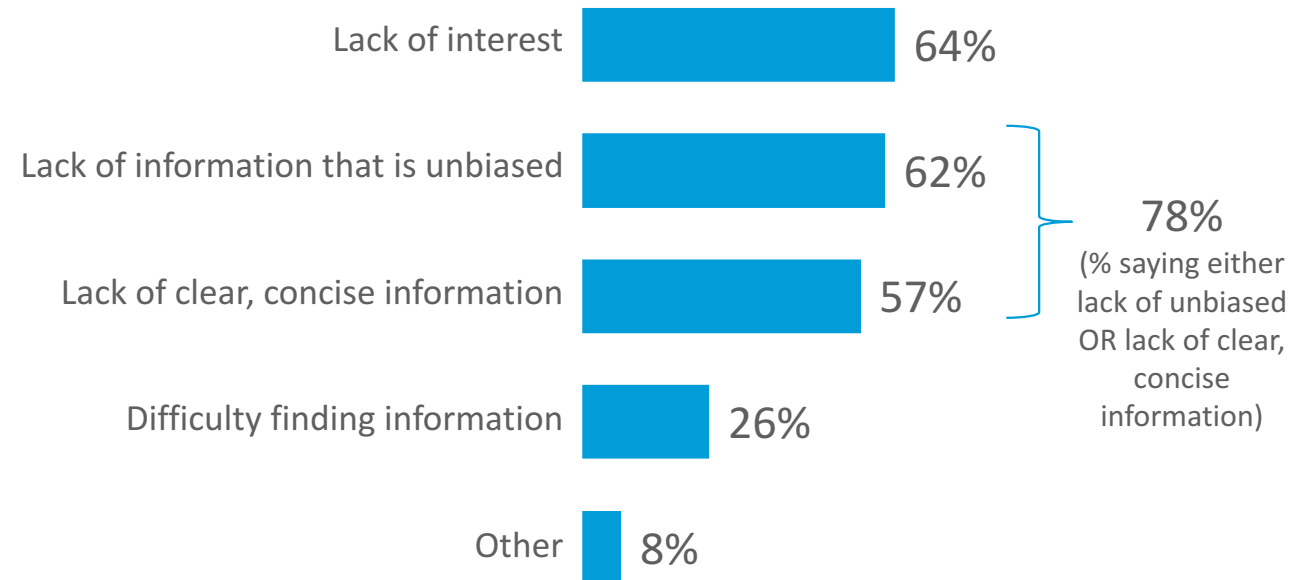
CAUSES FOR BEING UNINFORMED

Information Received Regarding Government, Expenditures, and Outcomes



Biased views are similar across party:
Democrats: 72%
Republicans: 81%
Independent: 76%

Main Reasons People Could be Uninformed About Government Actions and Expenditures



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

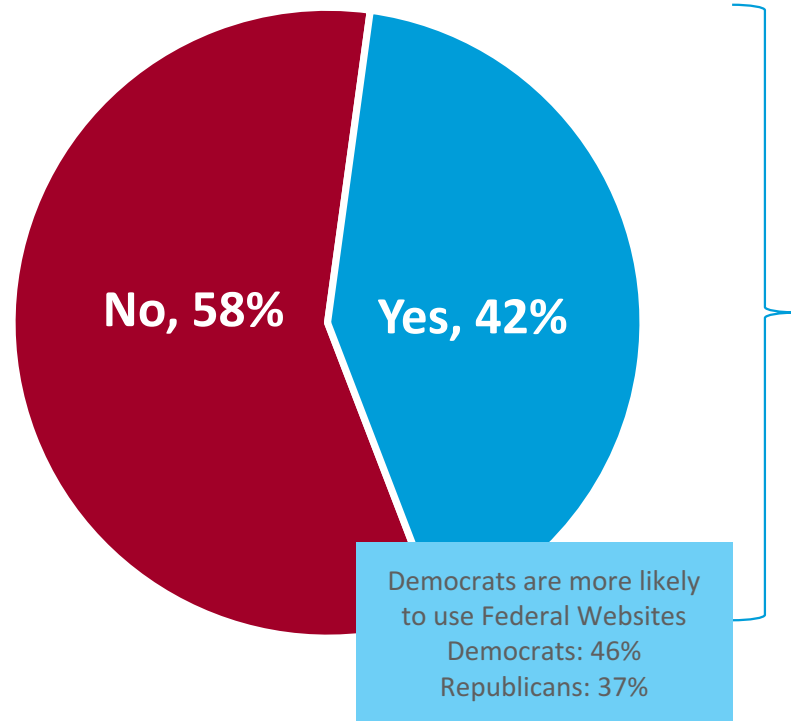
Q618. In general is most of the information you come across about the government, its expenditures and the outcomes of its programs today...?

BASE: PERSONALLY OR BELIEVES THE PUBLIC IS UNINFORMED (n=1973)

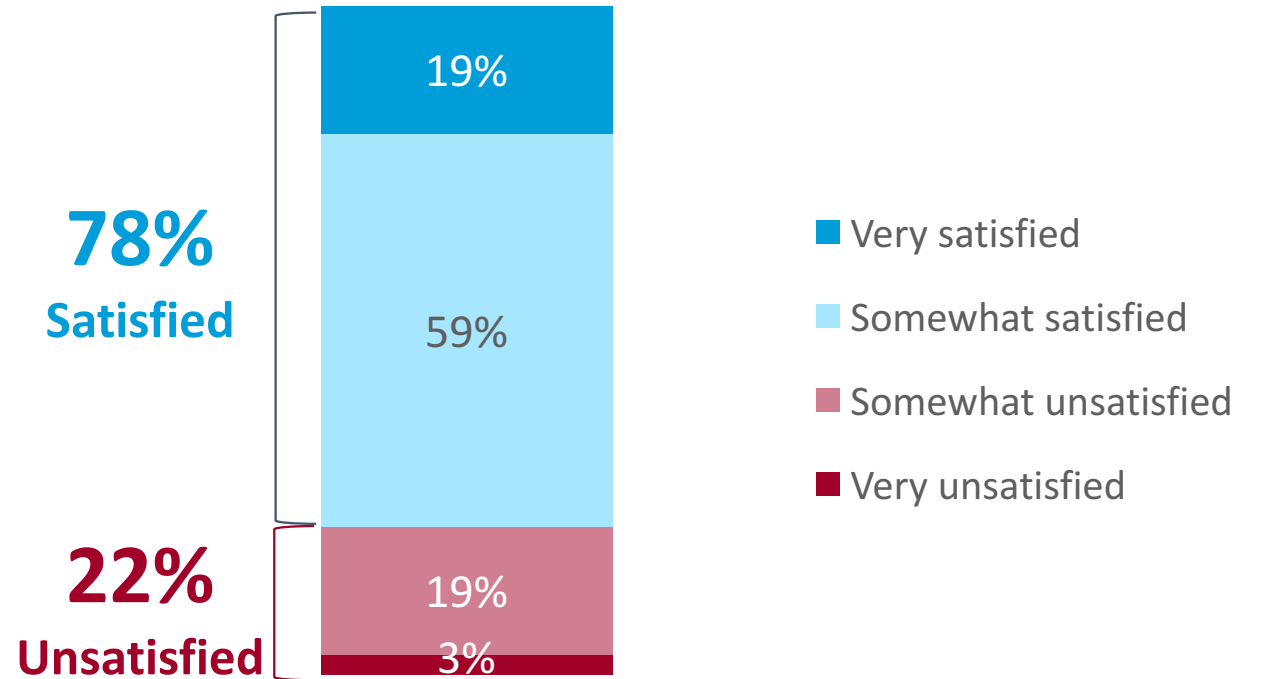
Q609. What are the main reasons people could be uninformed about the actions and expenditures of their government?

MORE THAN 4 IN 10 AMERICANS HAVE USED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SITES TO LOOK UP INFORMATION AND ARE SATISFIED WITH THEM

Used Federal Government Website



Satisfaction with Federal Government Website



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q636A. Have you used the federal government websites (e.g. Census Bureau, White House, Centers for Disease Control) site to look up information?

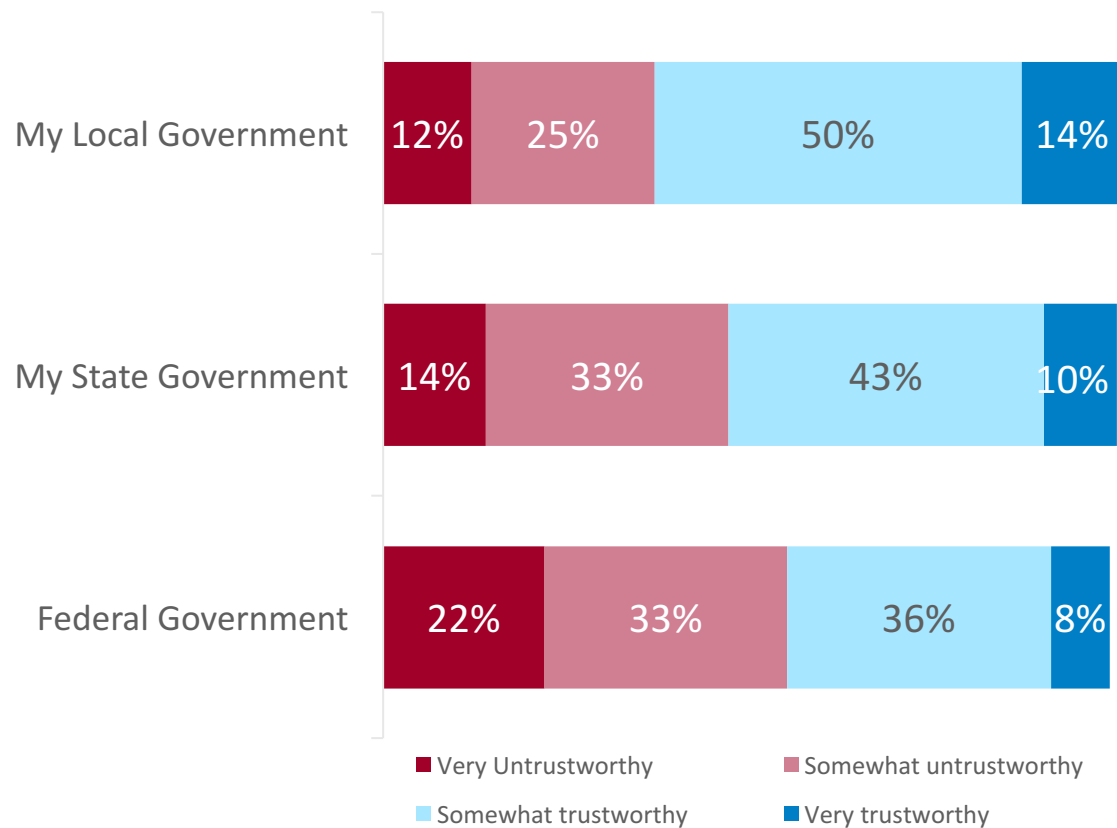
BASE: HAVE USED GOVERNMENT SITES (n=1060)

Q636B. How satisfied are you with the federal government websites?

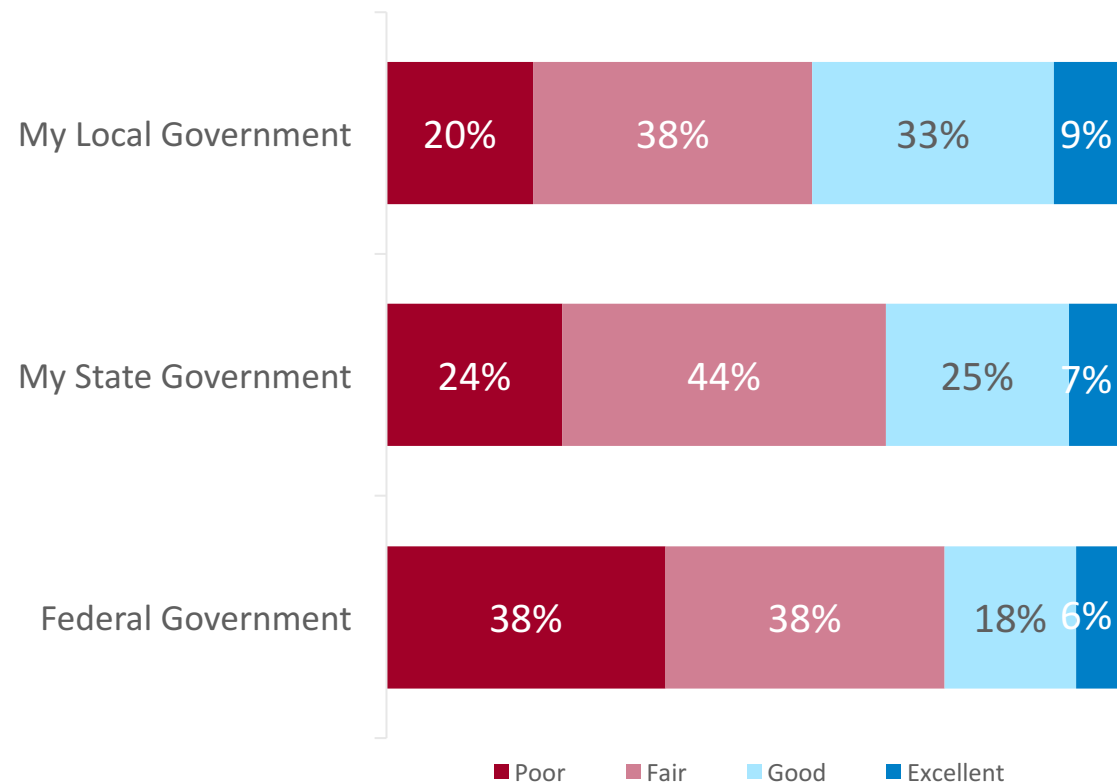
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS VIEWED AS BETTER THAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AT PRESENTING TRUSTWORTHY, CLEAR, AND UNBIASED INFORMATION

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RATING OF GOVERNMENT DATA RECEIVED

Trustworthiness of Statistical And Financial Information From...



Rating of Clear, Unbiased Statistical And Financial Information From...



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q611. How trustworthy is the statistical and financial information from each of the following?

Q612. How would you rate each of the following at presenting clear, unbiased statistical and financial information?

AMERICANS SAY THEY WOULD HAVE GREATER TRUST IN ELECTED OFFICIALS IF THEY RELIED MORE ON GOVERNMENT DATA IN MAKING DECISIONS

RELIANCE ON GOVERNMENT DATA WOULD IMPROVE TRUST IN...

(% Saying Improve A lot, Somewhat, or A Little)



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q628. If all elected officials relied more on government data to make decisions, would it improve your trust in them?

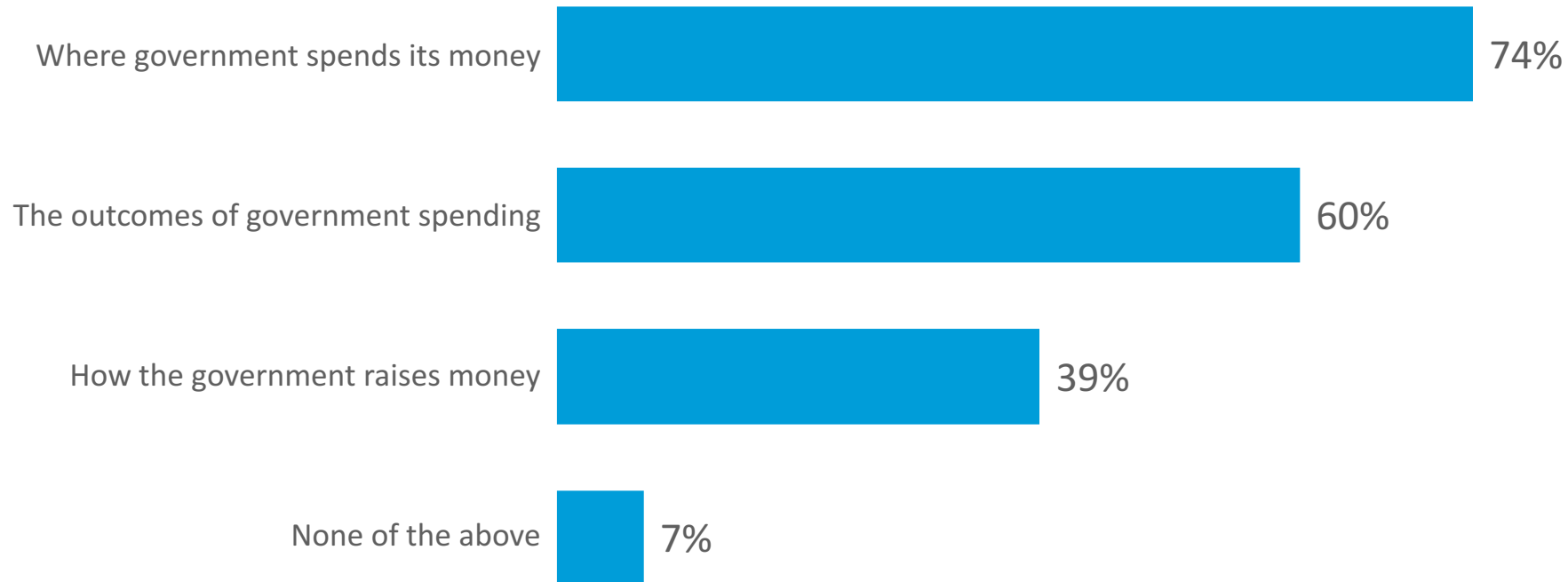
Q629. If political parties relied more on government data for their public debates, would it improve your trust in them?

Q631. If think tanks relied more on government data in their reporting, would it improve your trust in them?

Q630. If the media relied more on government data in their reporting, would it improve your trust in them?

AMERICANS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN WHERE GOVERNMENT SPENDS ITS MONEY AND THE OUTCOMES OF THAT SPENDING

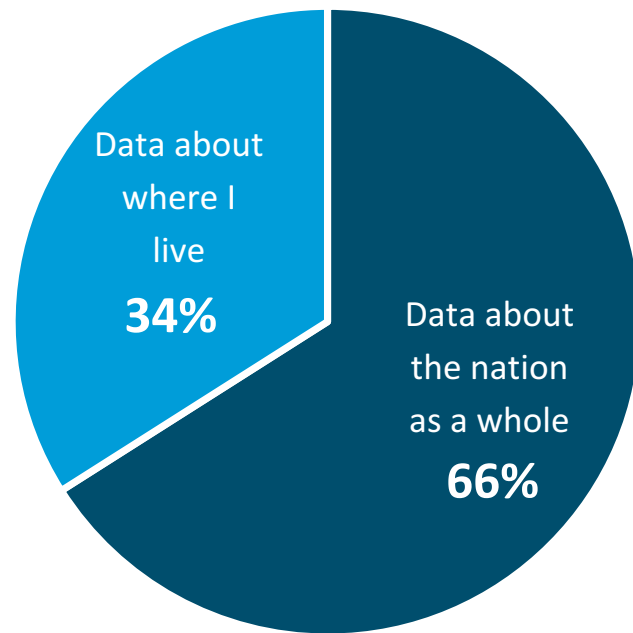
IMPORTANCE IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING



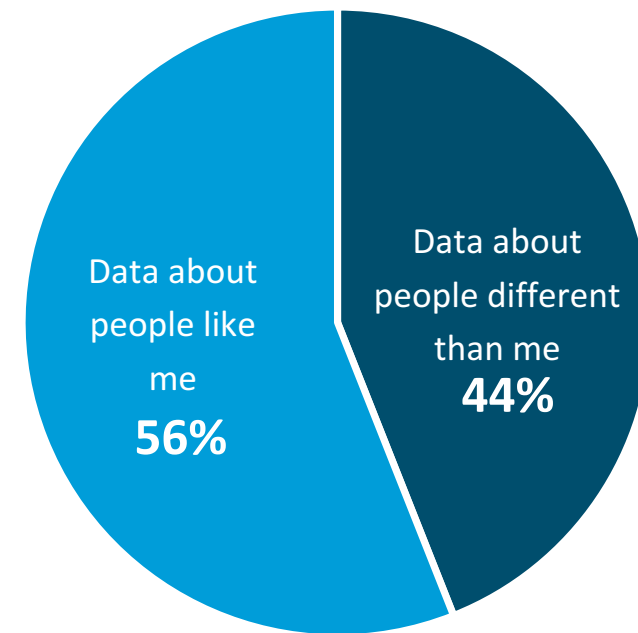
AMERICANS PREFER NATIONAL INFORMATION OVER LOCAL AND ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PEOPLE LIKE THEMSELVES THAN PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

LOCAL VS. NATIONAL INFORMATION

Regional Similarities



Cultural Similarities

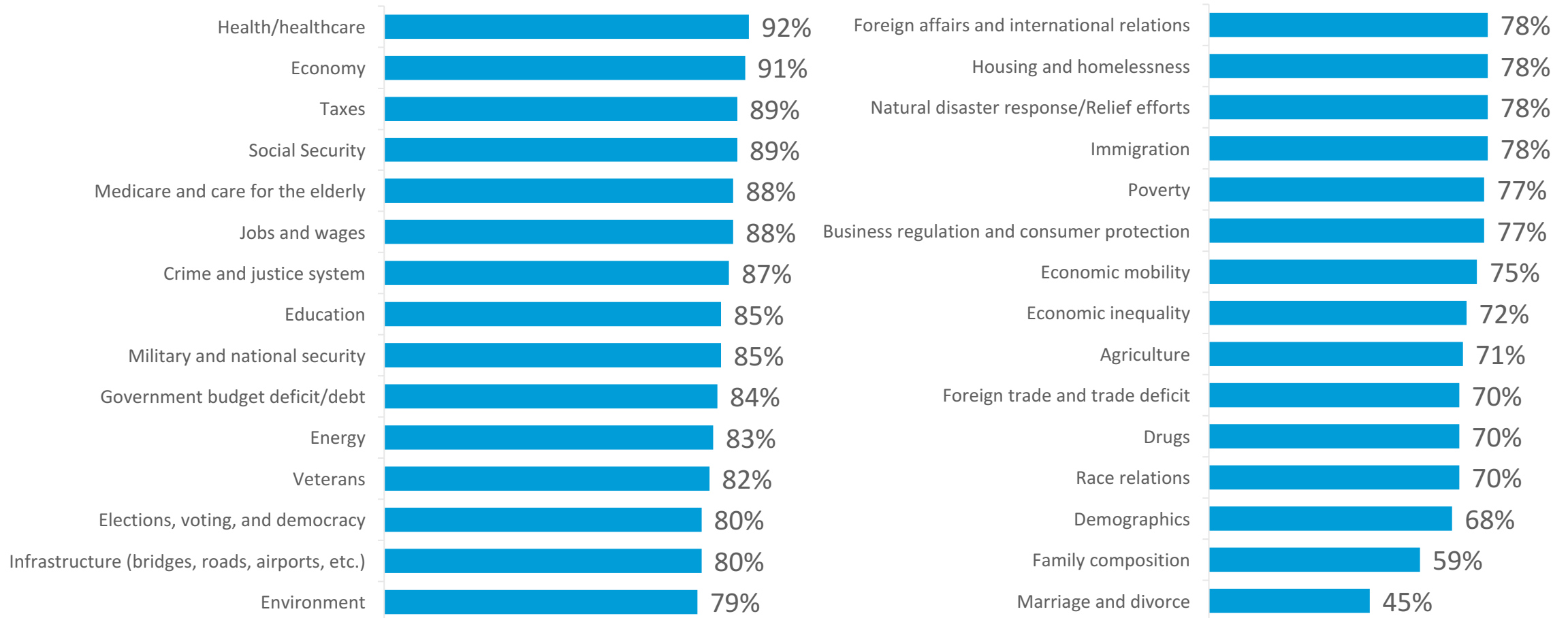


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)
Q613A. Which of the following interests you more?
Q613. Which of the following interests you more?

TOPICS OF HIGHEST INTEREST ALIGN WITH 2016 CAMPAIGN ISSUES

Interest in Information on Topics

(% Saying Very or Somewhat Interested)



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q616. For each of these areas, please indicate how interested you are in data and information about the government's actions and the outcomes of its programs?

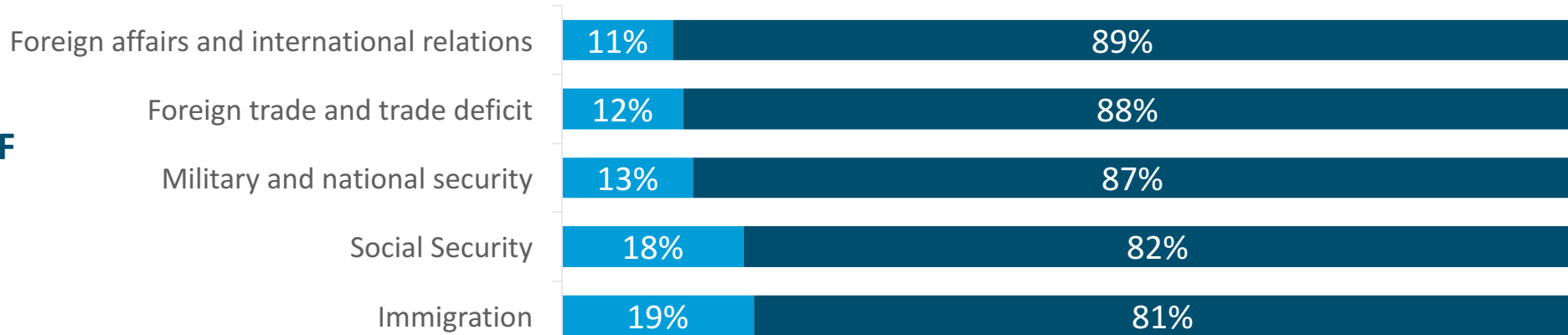
INTEREST IN LOCAL VS. NATIONAL INFORMATION VARIES GREATLY BY TOPIC

LOCAL VS. NATIONAL INTEREST

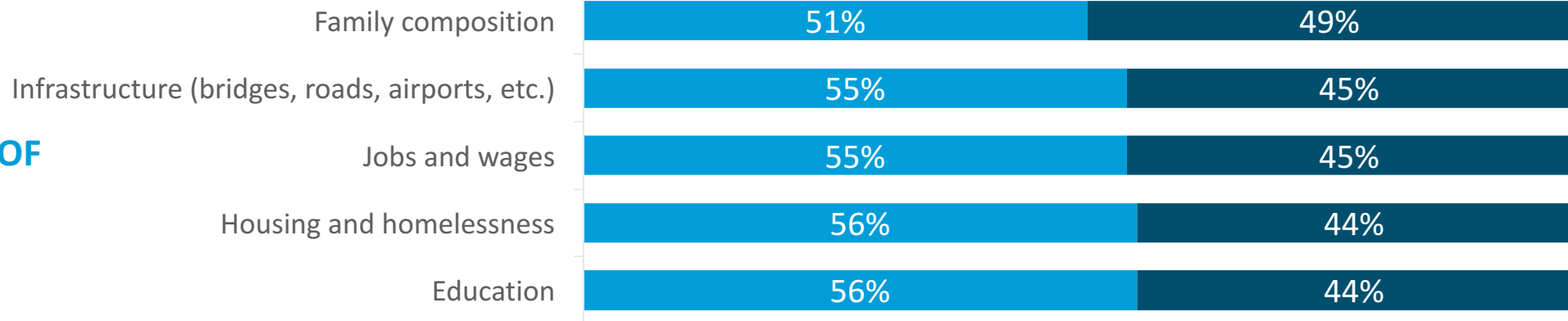
Local vs. National Interest

(Among those who say they are very + somewhat interested in the topic)

TOP AREAS OF INTEREST NATIONALLY



TOP AREAS OF INTEREST LOCALLY



■ Local ■ National

BASE: INTERESTED IN TOPIC (VARIES)

Q617A. For each of the areas you are interested in, would you rather see local or national information?

DEMOGRAPHICS

	<i>Base</i>	<i>n=2521</i>
AGE		
18-34		29%
35-49		25%
50-64		26%
65+		20%
SEX		
Male		48%
Female		52%
EDUCATION		
Less than high school degree		24%
High school degree to less than 4 year college degree		18%
4 year college degree or more		53%
INCOME		
Less than \$75K		51%
\$75K or More		43%

	<i>Base</i>	<i>n=2521</i>
RACE/ETHNICITY		
White		65%
Black/African American		12%
Hispanic		15%
Asian or Pacific Islander		4%
Mixed race		0%
Other		1%
Decline to Answer		1%

	<i>Base</i>	<i>n=2521</i>
REGISTERED TO VOTE		
Yes		88%
No		11%
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
Conservative		29%
Moderate		38%
Liberal		26%
Don't know		7%
POLITICAL PARTY		
Democrat		40%
Republican		31%
Independent		24%
LOCALE		
Urban		30%
Suburban		51%
Rural		19%