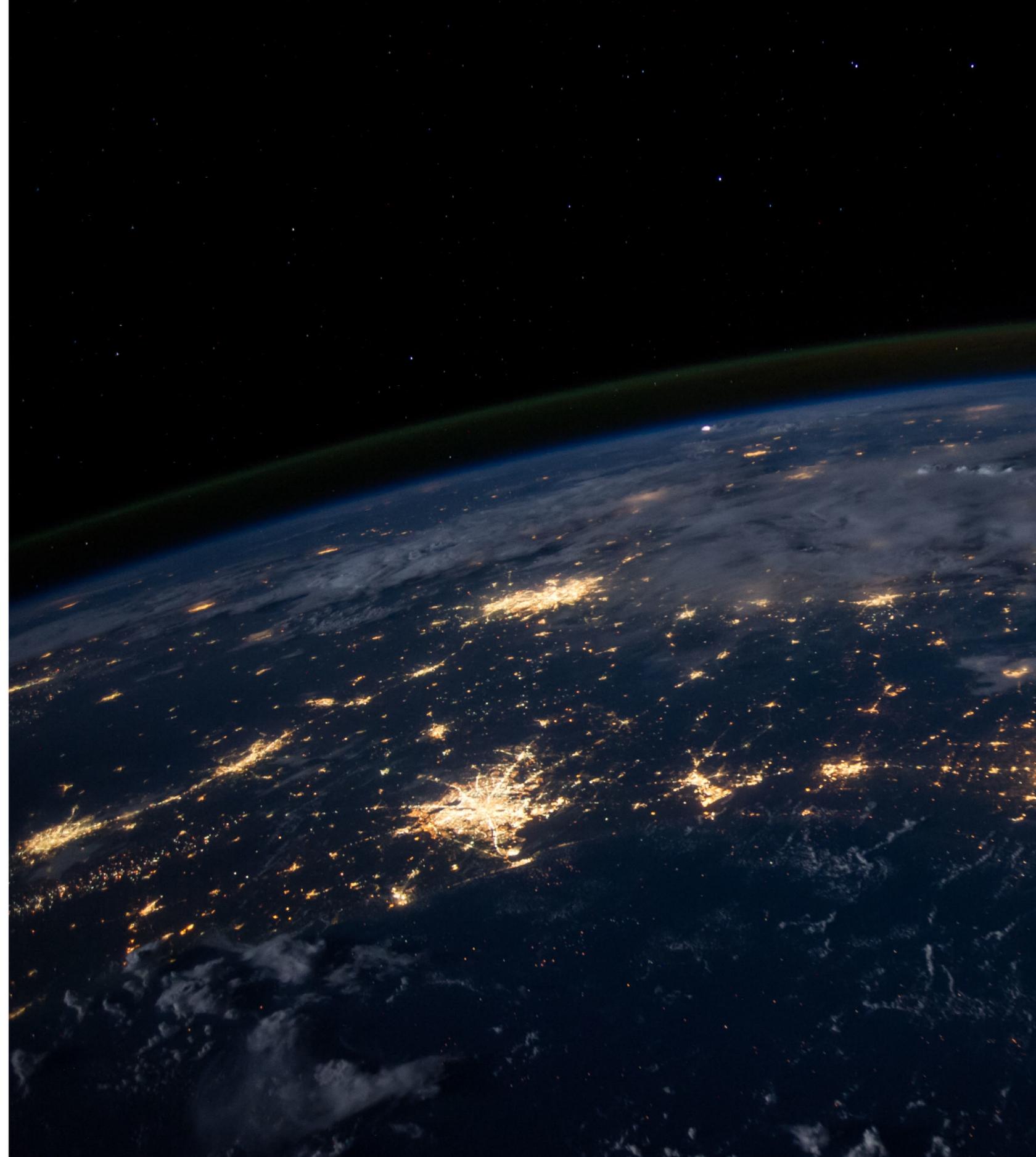




# **Survey of Young Conservatives on Climate Change and Clean Energy**

American Conservation Coalition  
January 2024 Survey Research



# About the Research

Online survey of N=1,045, with a base sample of 835 18-35-year-old conservative self-identified registered voters and an additional oversample of 210 18-35-year-old conservative registered voters in rural areas for a total of 505 in rural areas in the sample.

- Field Dates: January 12–16, 2024
- MOE - Full Sample:  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points | MOE - Rural:  $\pm 4.7$  percentage points
- Definitions:
  - *Conservative*: Either described themselves as conservative or described themselves as moderate or unsure when asked about their ideology but then said they have conservative views on social or economic issues.
  - *Rural*: Described the area where they live as a small town (population under 50,000 people) or a rural or country area.



More detailed information about the methodology is provided at the end of the report deck.

# Key Findings

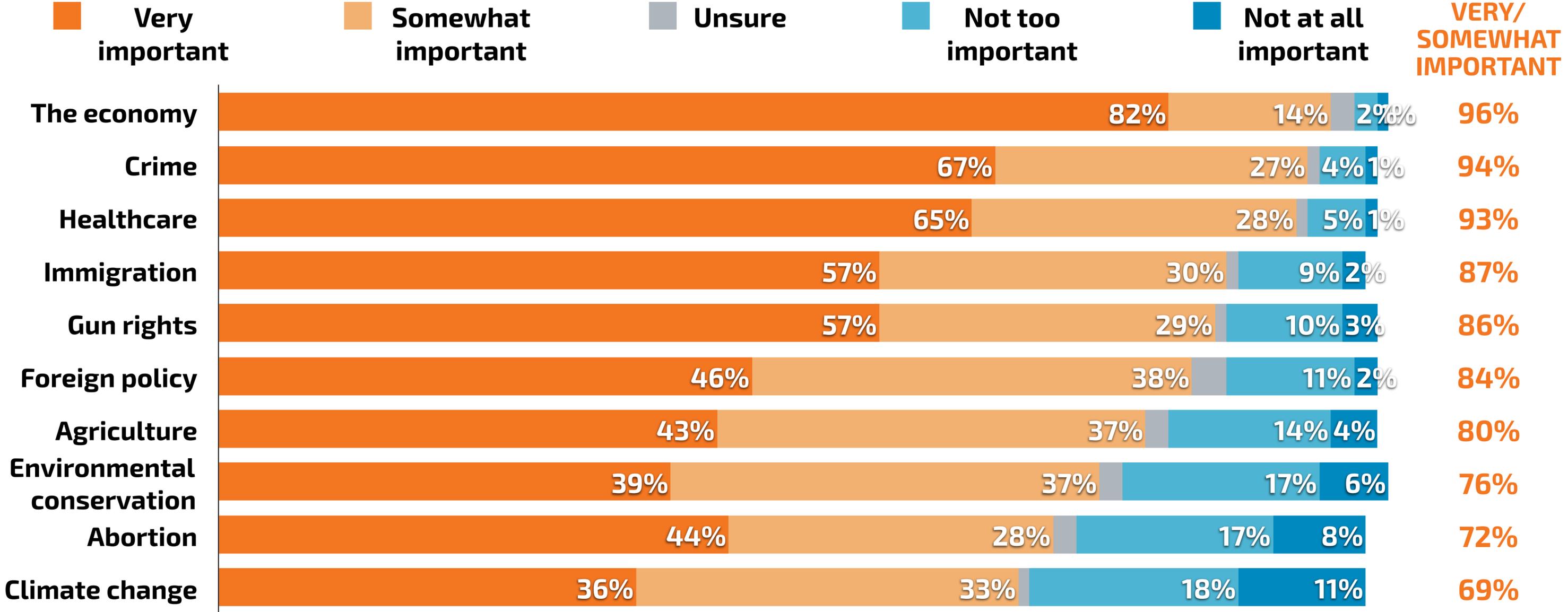
- **Young conservatives believe climate change is happening, and most think mankind is playing a role in that change.**
- **The majority think climate change is an important issue to address, but connecting the issue to high priority issues like the economy — and showing that climate policies take economic concerns into account — is key.**
- **Talking about climate as part of a broader agenda to protect the environment brings a slightly larger coalition to the table** — while many young conservatives want to see climate addressed, even more say they want the environment protected.
- **Young conservatives view clean energy as an “and” not an “or” proposition.** They want to see more clean energy without it coming at the expense of other forms of domestic energy production.
- **They want Republicans to care about climate change and take action in a way that balances economic and environmental concerns**, and are much more willing to support candidates who adopt that view than candidates who deny climate change is happening.



# Context

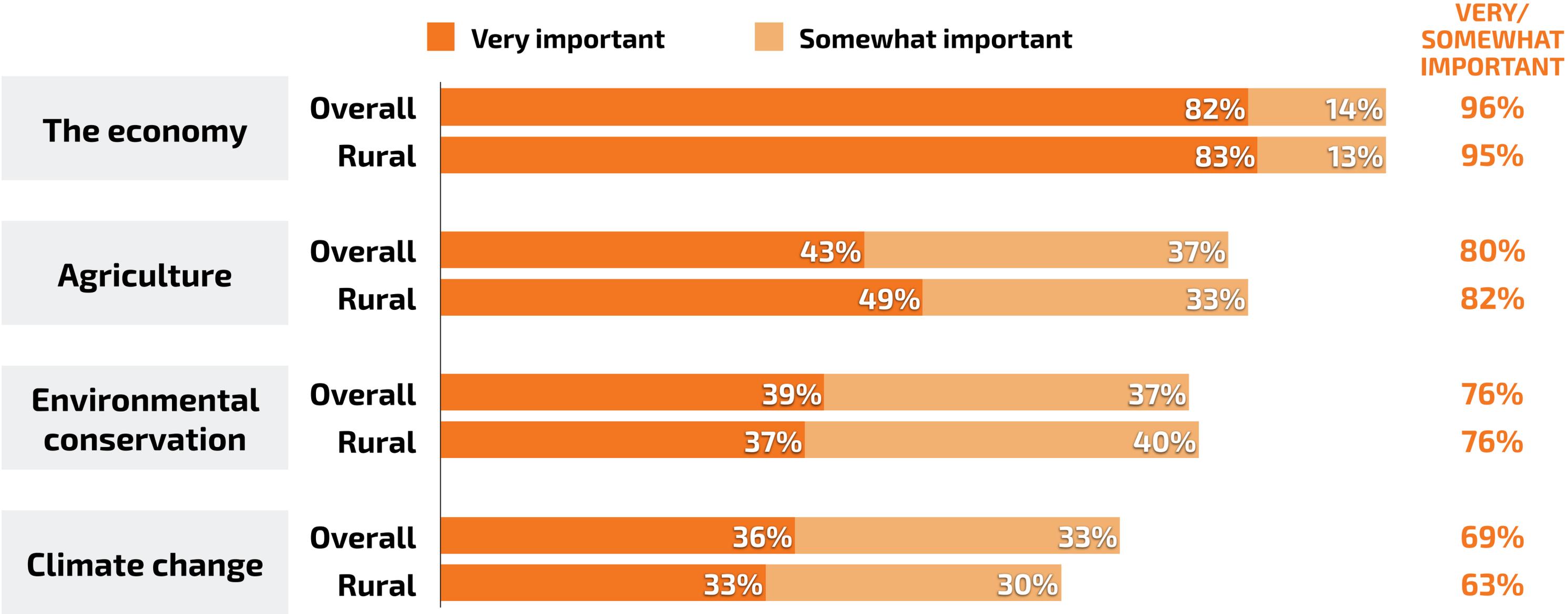


# Most young conservatives see climate change as important, though it trails behind top voting issues like the economy



Q. How important to you, if at all, will each of the following issues be when you are considering who to vote for in the 2024 elections?

# Other issues that may be affected by climate change are seen as more important than climate change itself – connecting them could raise the priority level

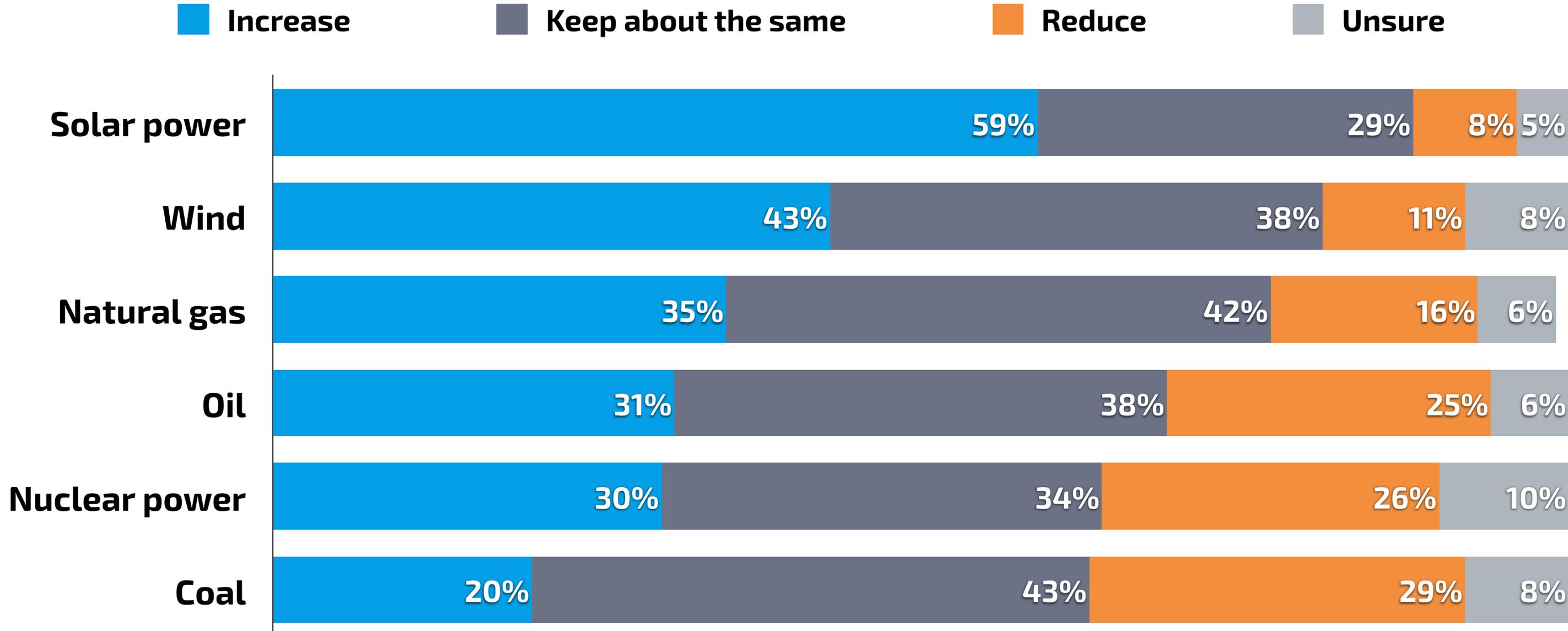


Q. How important to you, if at all, will each of the following issues be when you are considering who to vote for in the 2024 elections?

# Views on Energy Sources

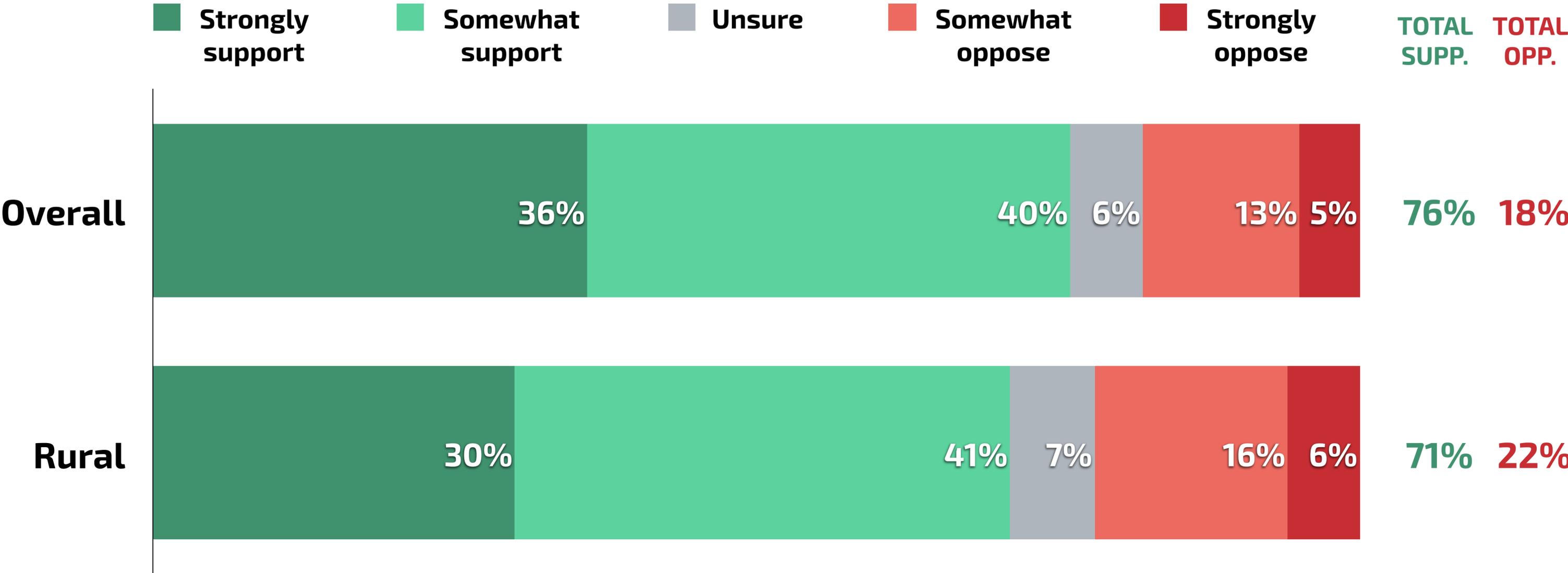


# Young conservatives are most interested in increasing solar and wind energy production, but don't necessarily want to reduce use of oil or coal



Q. Do you think the United States should increase, keep the about the same amount, or reduce domestic energy production from each of the following sources?

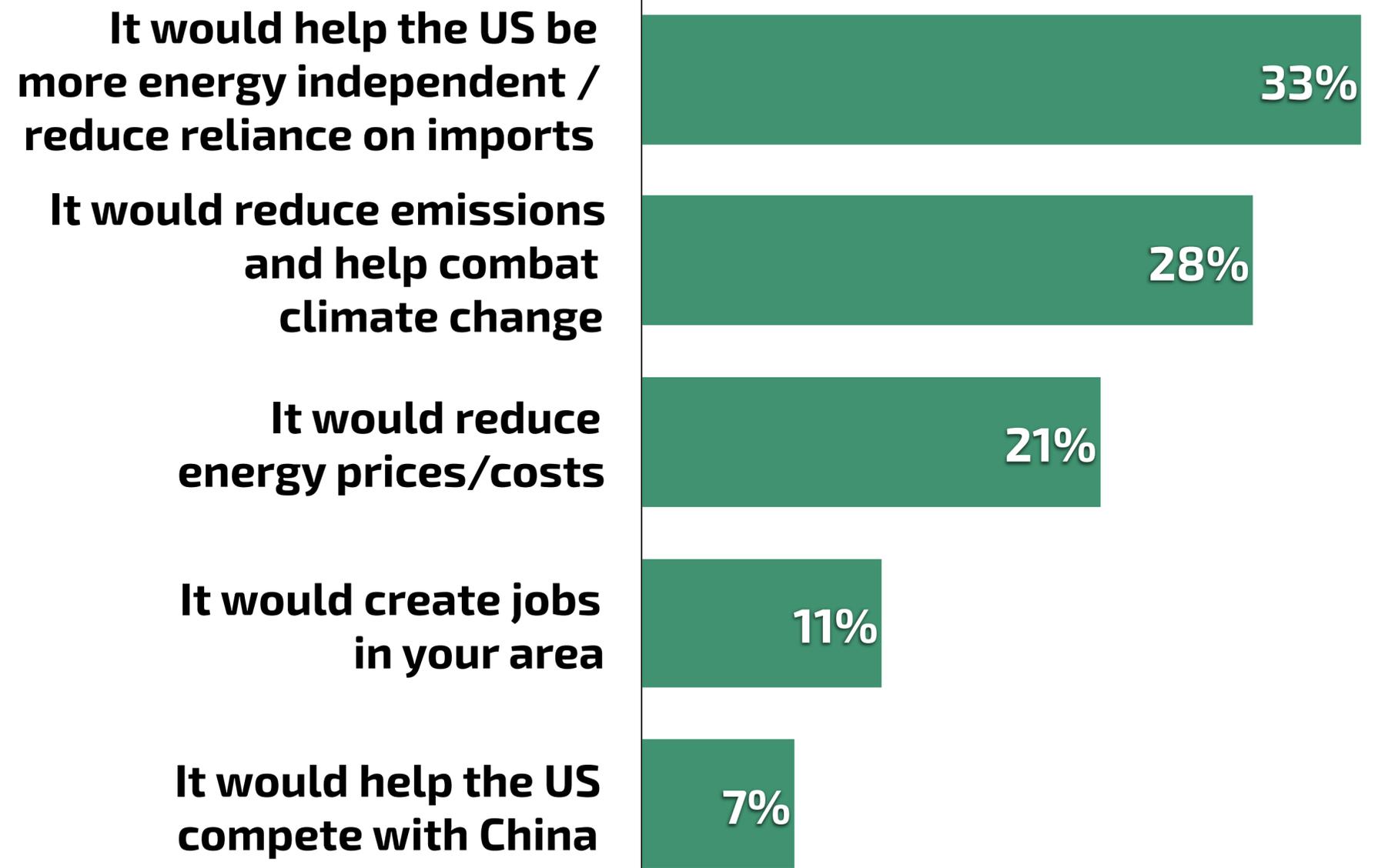
# Still, more than 7 in 10 support shifting toward clean energy



Q. Overall, would you support or oppose the United States shifting to produce more of its domestic energy using “clean energy” sources and reduce its use of fossil fuels?

# Top reasons for supporting a shift toward clean energy include energy independence and combating climate change

*Among the 76% who support a shift toward clean energy, the main reason is . . .*

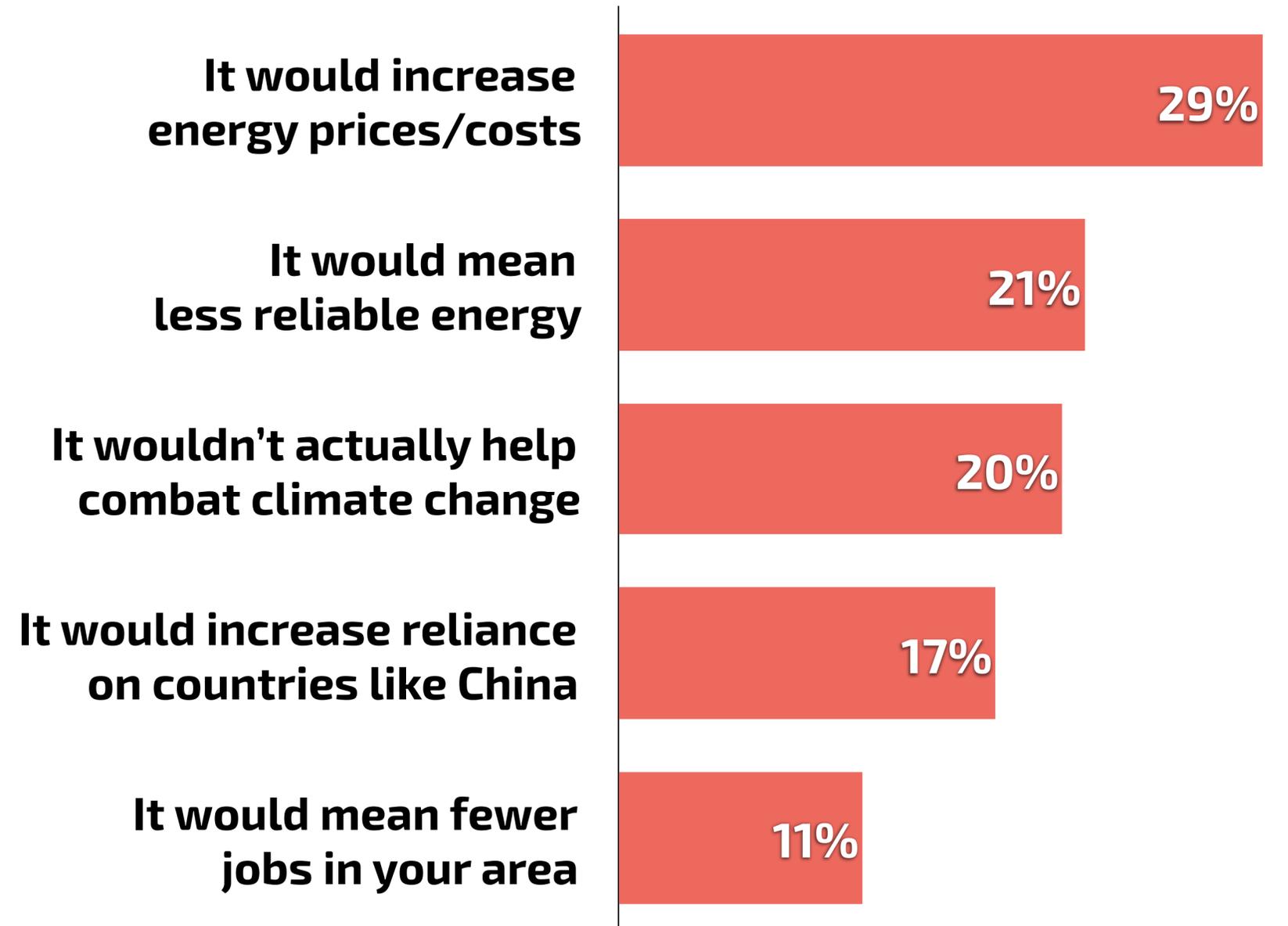


Q. What is the main reason you support the United States producing more of its domestic energy using “clean energy” sources and reducing its use of fossil fuels?  
Note: This question was asked of those who indicated that they support producing more domestic energy using clean energy sources and reducing use of fossil fuels (n=779). Responses for “other reason” are not shown in the chart.



**Among those who oppose shifting toward clean energy and reducing use of fossil fuels, energy costs are a top concern**

**Among the 18% who oppose a shift toward clean energy, the main reason is . . .**

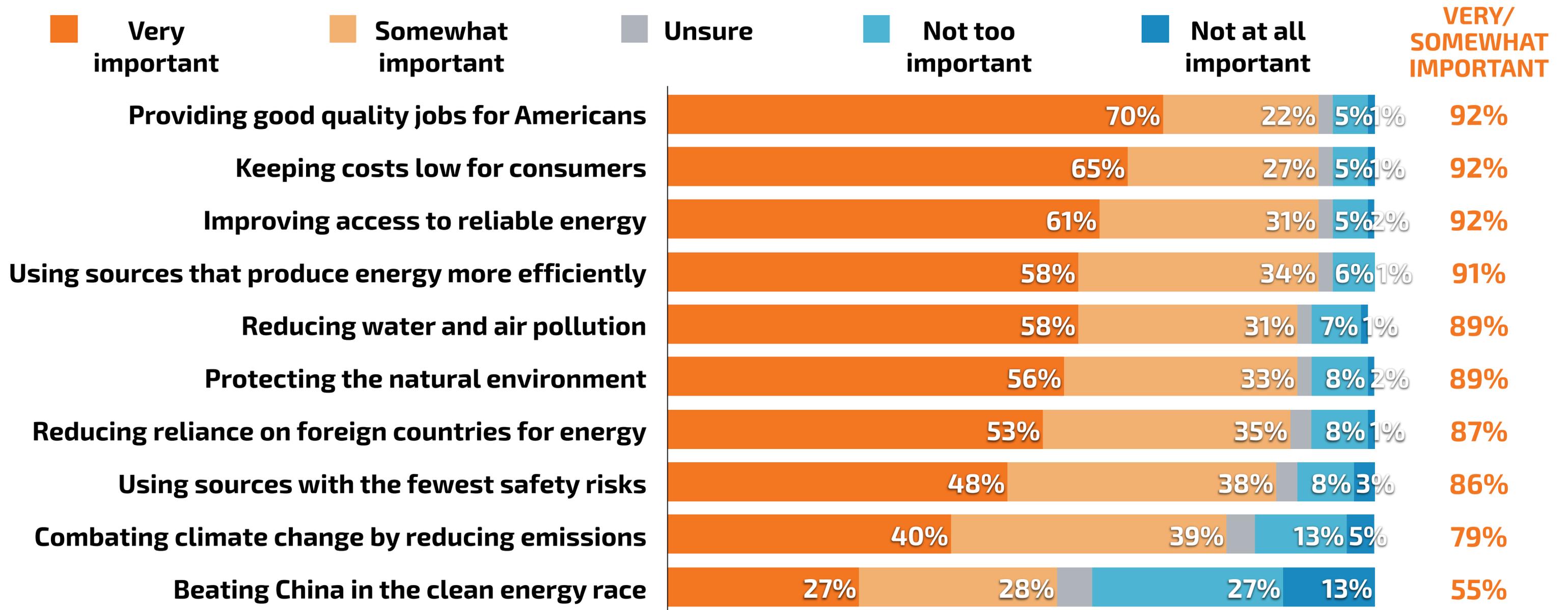


Q. What is the main reason you oppose the United States producing more of its domestic energy using “clean energy” sources and reducing its use of fossil fuels?

Note: This question was asked of those who indicated that they oppose producing more of its domestic energy using clean energy sources and reducing use of fossil fuels (n=197). Responses for “other reason” are not shown in the chart.



# Young conservatives say jobs, costs, and reliability should be the most important factors in energy decisions, but most care about environmental issues too



Q. When making decisions about which energy sources to use, how important do you think each of the following goals should be for the United States?

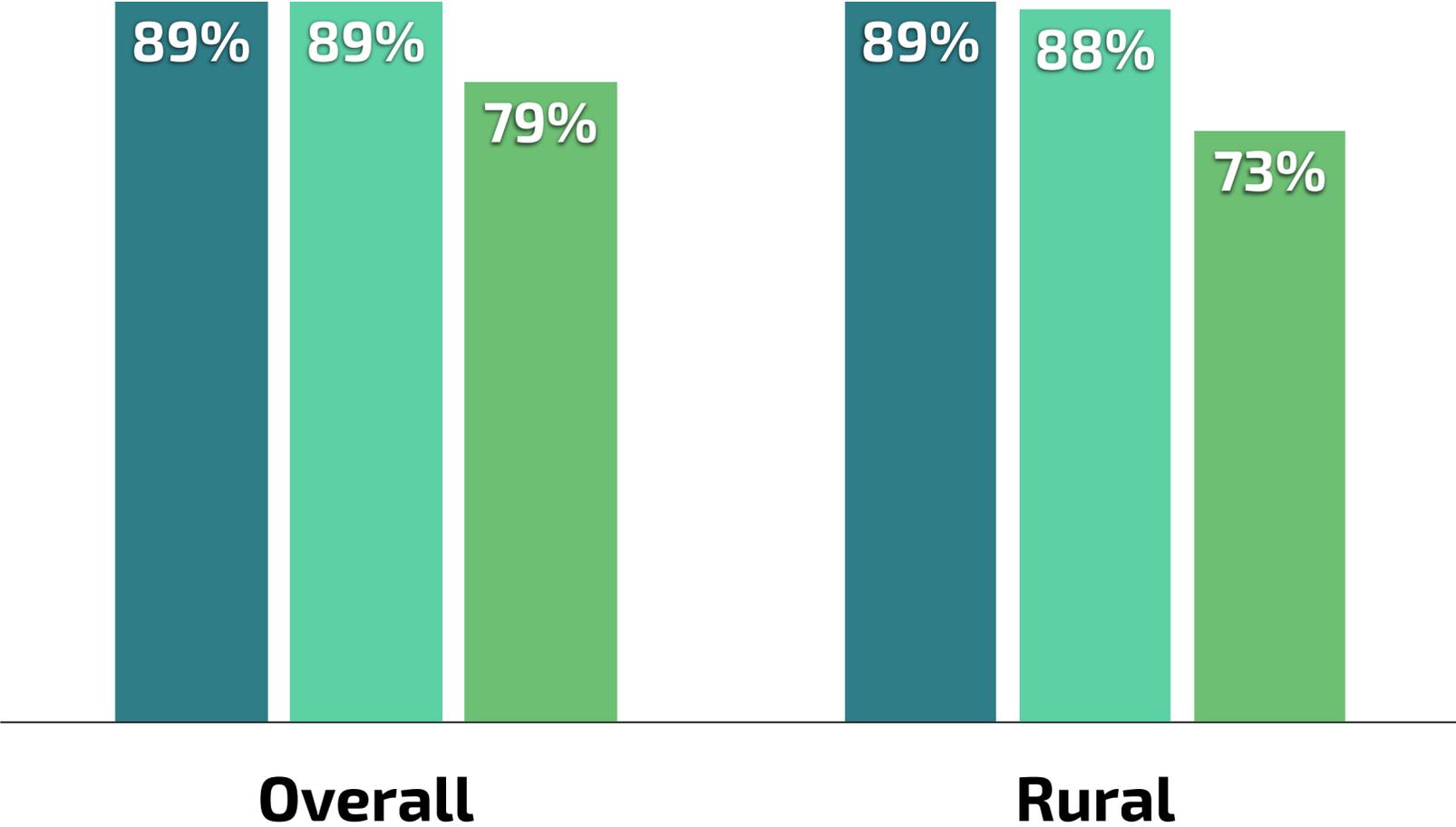


**Nearly 8 in 10 say combating climate change should be an important goal, and even more see reducing pollution and protecting the environment as important**



**% VERY/SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT**

- Reducing water and air pollution**
- Protecting the natural environment**
- Combating climate change by reducing emissions**



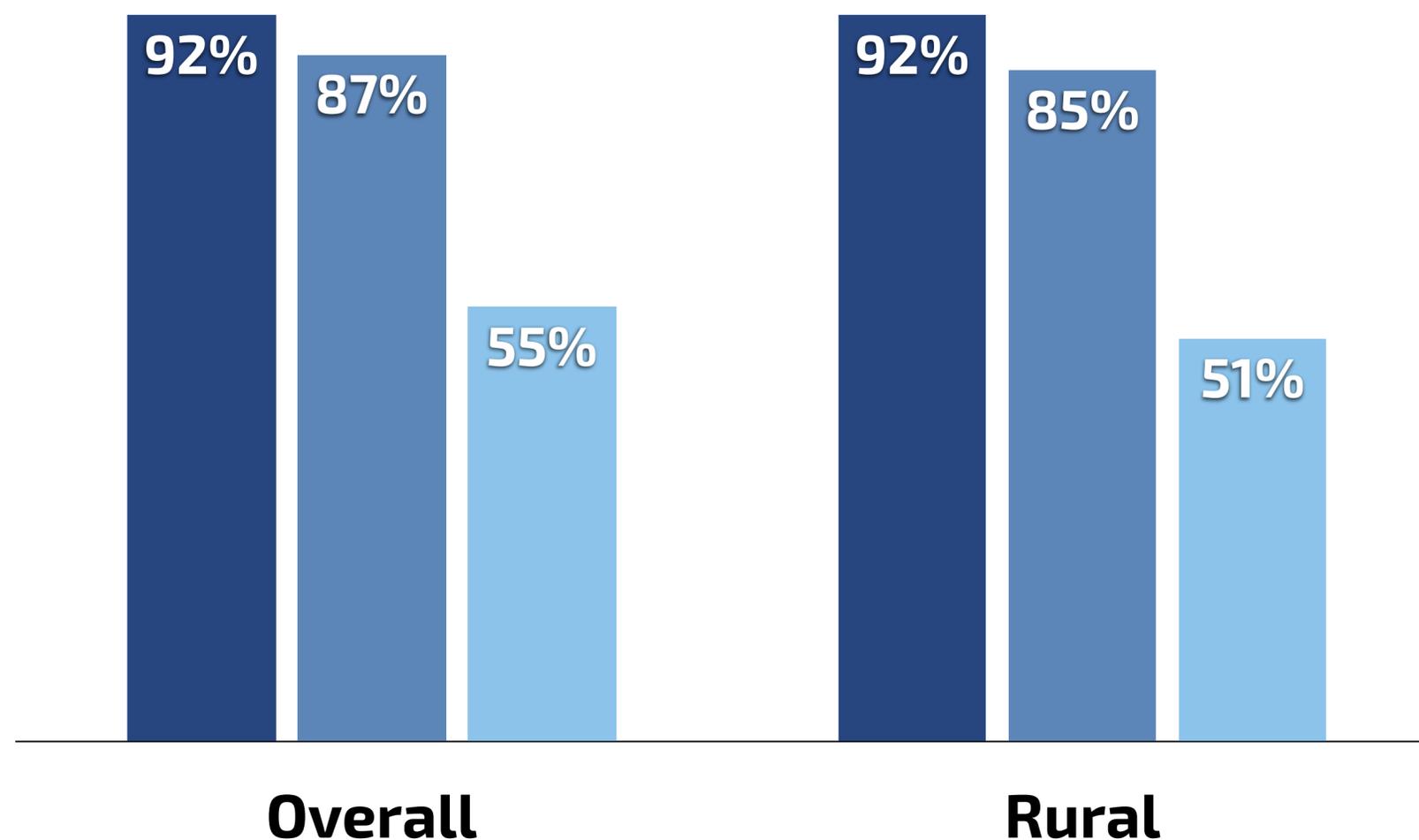
Q. When making decisions about which energy sources to use, how important do you think each of the following goals should be for the United States?

**Beating China in the clean energy race does not matter as much as goals related to strengthening America's energy independence and job market**



**% VERY/SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT**

- Providing good quality jobs for Americans**
- Reducing reliance on foreign countries for energy**
- Beating China in the clean energy race**



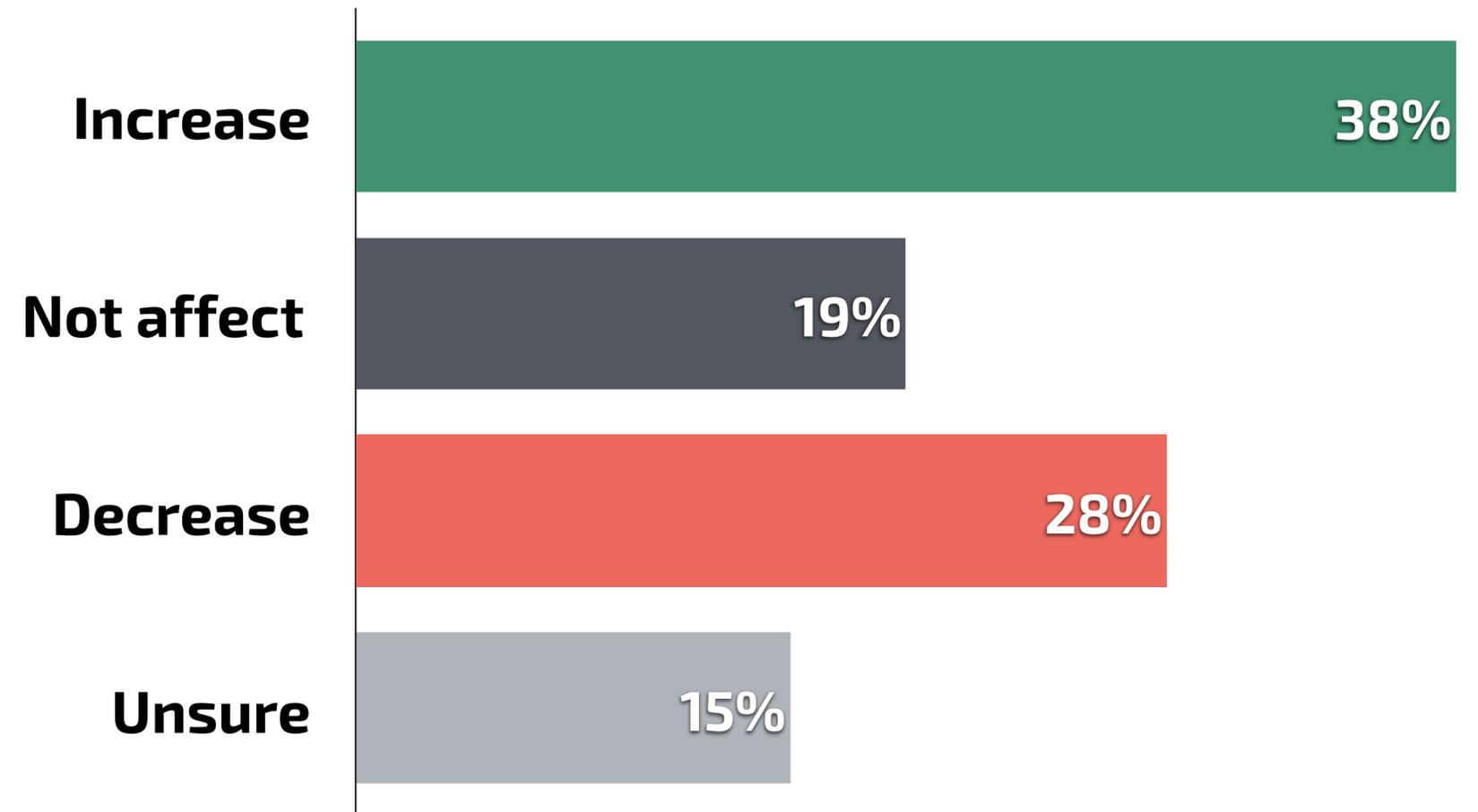
Q. When making decisions about which energy sources to use, how important do you think each of the following goals should be for the United States?

**A plurality of young rural conservatives think shifting to clean energy would bring jobs to rural areas**



***What young conservatives in rural areas think***

**Producing more energy using clean energy sources and reducing use of fossil fuels would \_\_\_\_\_ the total number of jobs in rural areas**



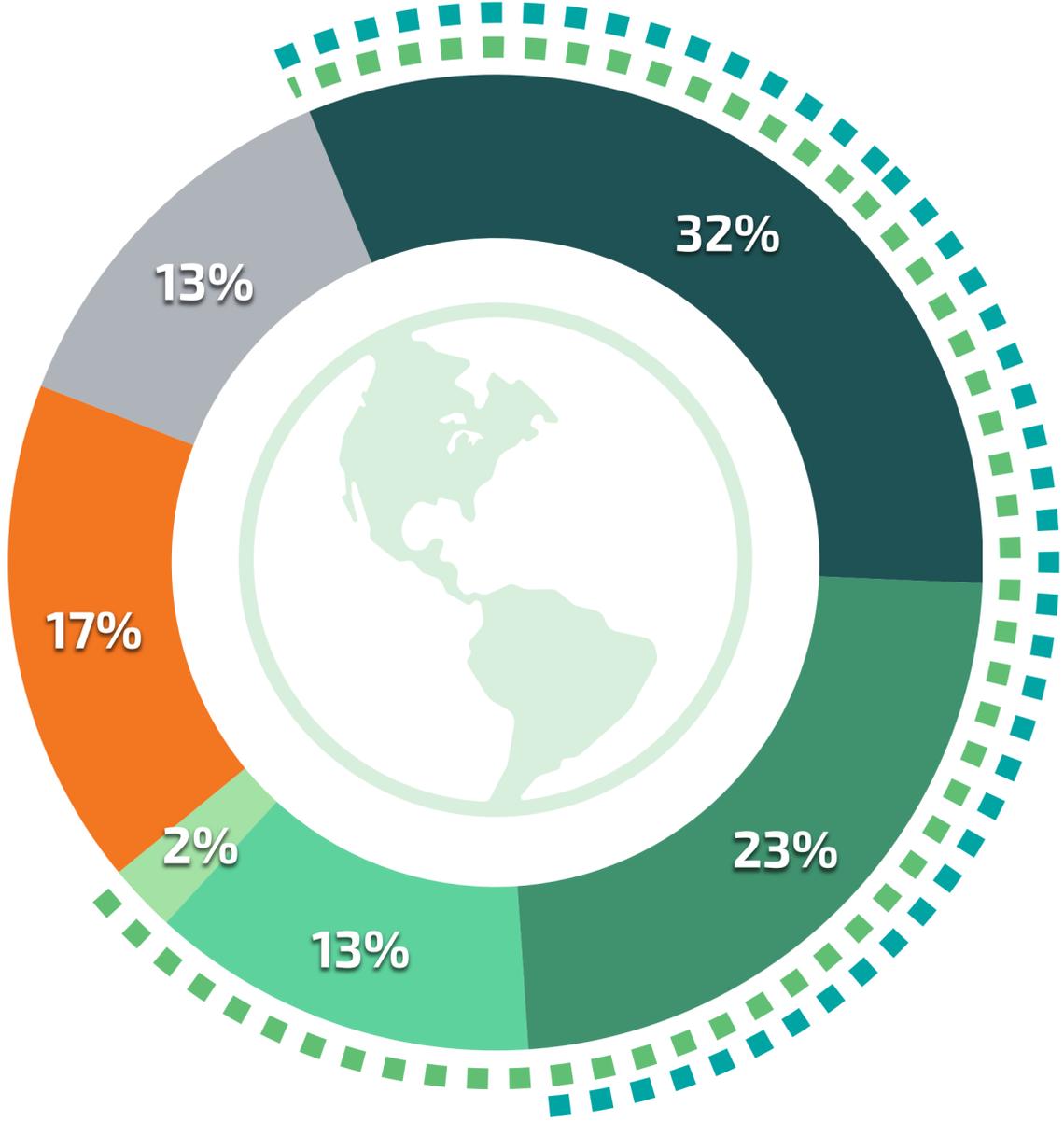
Q. If the United States shifts to producing more of its domestic energy using “clean energy” sources and reduces its use of fossil fuels, how do you think that would affect the total number of jobs available for people in rural communities? Would it . . .

# **Views on Climate Change and the Environment**



# 7 in 10 think there is solid evidence that the earth's climate has been changing, and over half believe human activities play a substantial role

- Yes, solid evidence / Caused mostly or entirely by human activities
- Yes, solid evidence / Caused about equally by human activities and natural patterns
- Yes, solid evidence / Caused mostly or entirely by natural patterns
- Yes, solid evidence / Unsure about cause
- No solid evidence
- Unsure if there is solid evidence



**71%**  
think there is solid evidence of climate change

**56%**  
think human activities are an equal or majority contributor



Q. From what you have read or heard, do you think there is solid evidence that the earth's climate has been changing over the past few decades?  
 [If believes there is solid evidence of climate change (n=727), ask:] Q. Do you believe that climate change is caused . . . (Entirely by human activities like burning fossil fuels, Mostly by human activities like burning fossil fuels, About equally by human activities and natural patterns in the earth's atmosphere, Mostly by natural patterns in the earth's atmosphere, Entirely by natural patterns in the earth's atmosphere , Unsure)

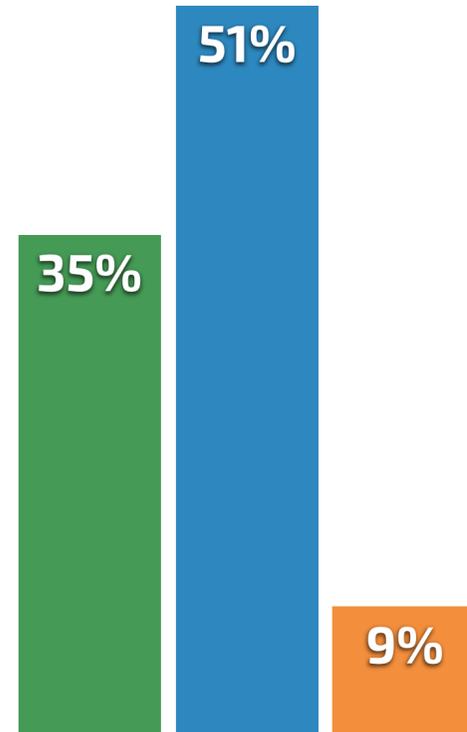
# Most say it important to address climate change and protect the environment but don't want to limit economic growth in the process

## Addressing Climate Change

It is important for the US to address climate change, even if that limits economic growth

It is important for the US to address climate change, BUT ONLY if that does not limit economic growth

It is NOT important for the US to address climate change



### Version A

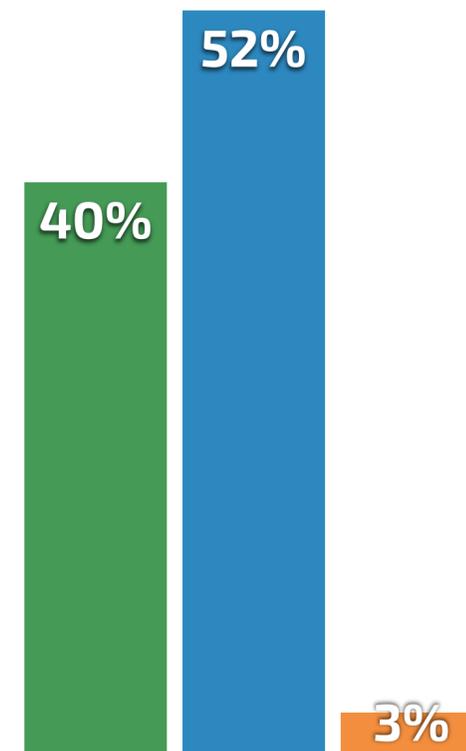
(Unsure: 4%)

## Protecting the Environment

It is important for the US to protect the environment, even if that limits economic growth

It is important for the US to protect the environment, BUT ONLY if that does not limit economic growth

It is NOT important for the US to protect the environment



### Version B

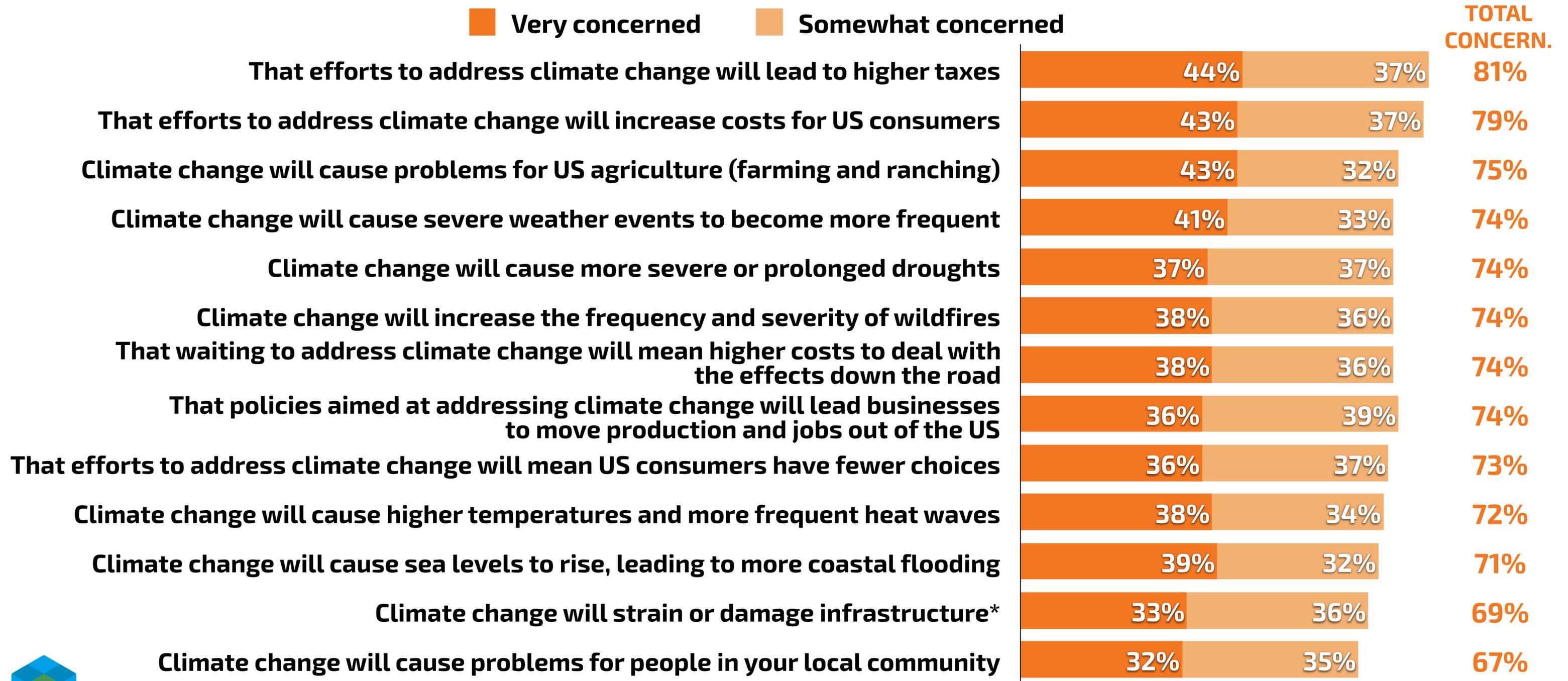
(Unsure: 5%)



Q. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? (Note: Version A: n=519; Version B: n=526)

# Many are concerned about climate change *and* policy costs

■ Very concerned
 ■ Somewhat concerned

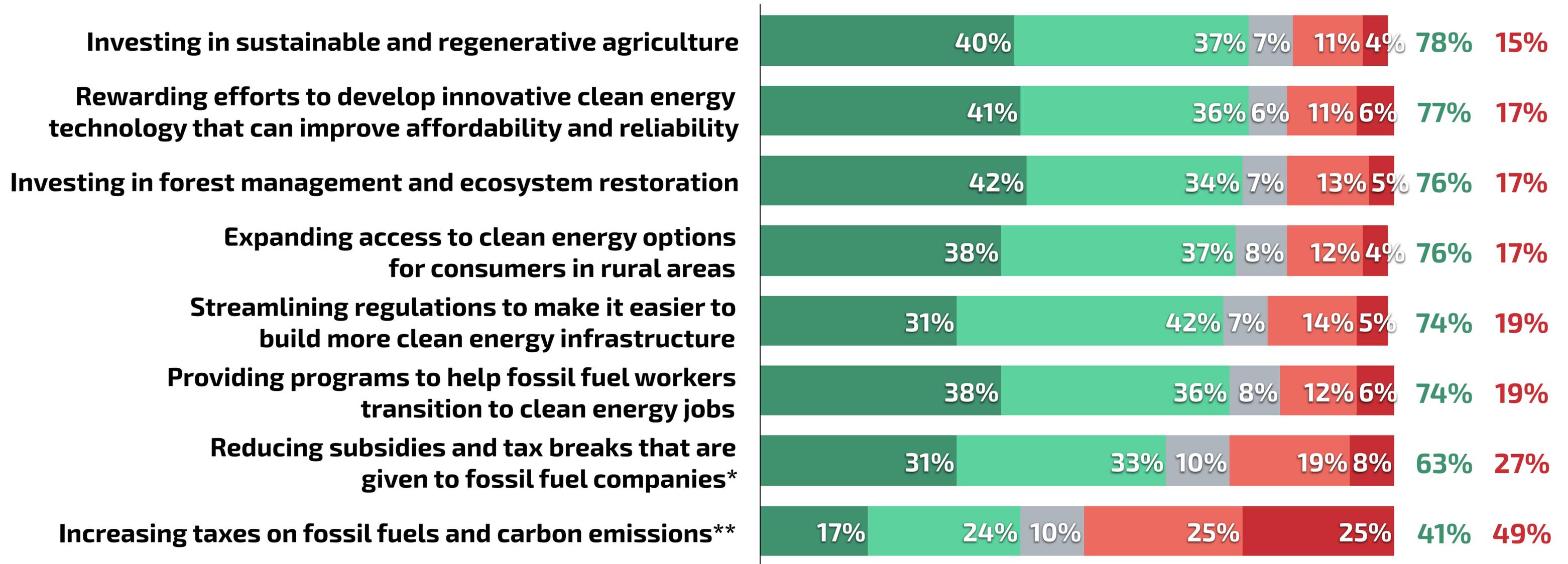


Q. How concerned are you, if at all, that each of the following will happen in your lifetime?

Note: \*infrastructure (e.g., public utilities, railways, roads)

# More support promoting clean energy, sustainable agriculture, and healthy ecosystems than trying to curb fossil fuels, particularly through taxes

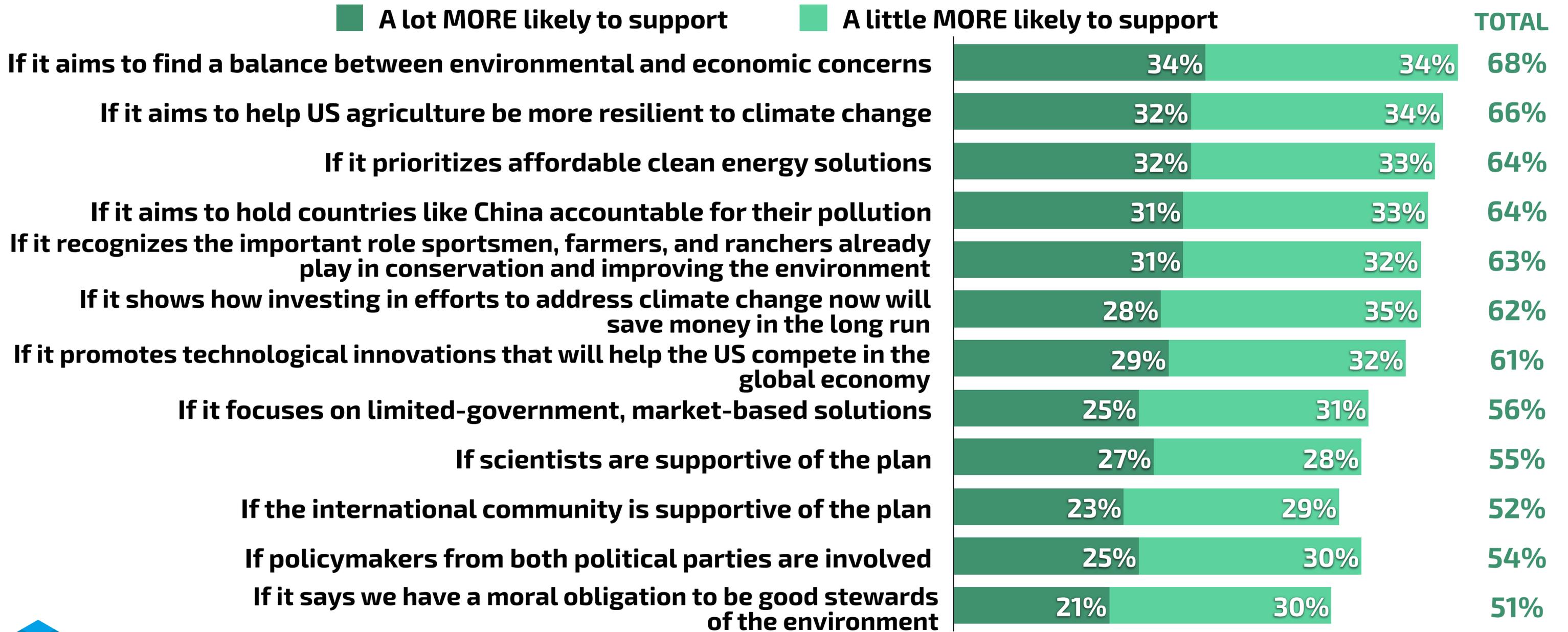
■ Strongly support   
 ■ Somewhat support   
 ■ Unsure   
 ■ Somewhat oppose   
 ■ Strongly oppose   
 SUPP.    OPP.



Q. Would you support or oppose government taking each of the following actions to address climate change?

\*HALF SAMPLE B: n=509; \*\* HALF SAMPLE A: n=536

# Whether a plan to address climate change aims to balance environmental and economic concerns is most likely to affect willingness to support it

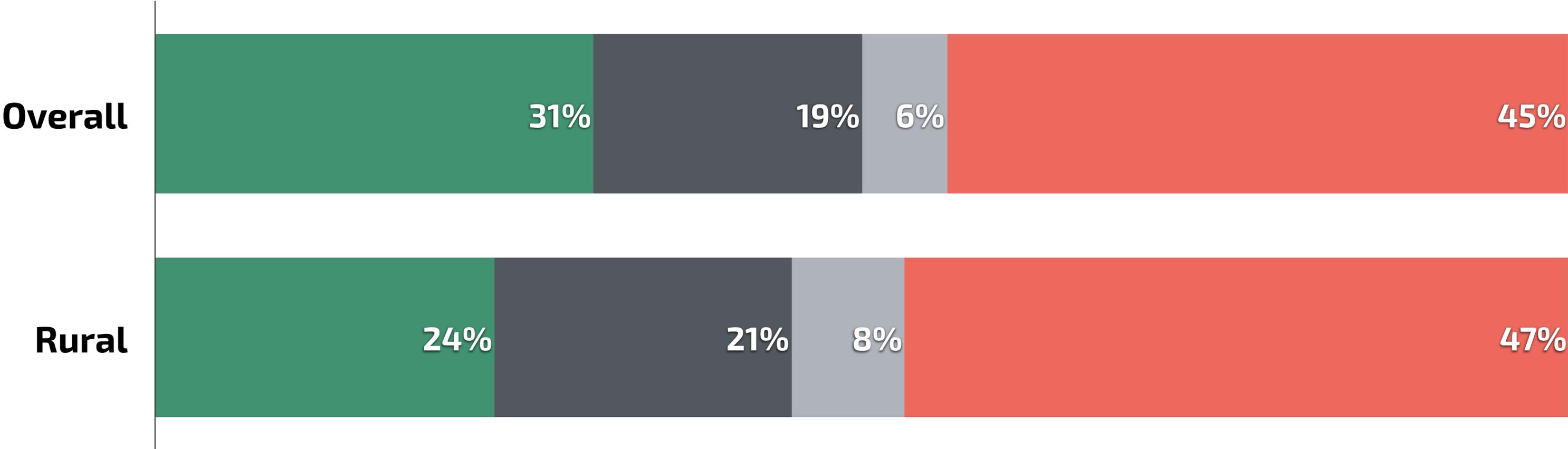


Q. Would each of the following make you more or less likely to support a plan to address climate change?  
 Note: Other response options were “Neither more nor less likely,” “A little LESS likely to support,” “A LOT less likely to support,” and “Unsure.”  
 No more than 14% said any of the statements would make them LESS likely to support a plan.

# Climate protests not effective in growing support for the cause

*How climate protests affect feelings toward climate activists and their cause*

**More sympathetic**   **Does not affect how I feel**   **Unsure**   **Less sympathetic**

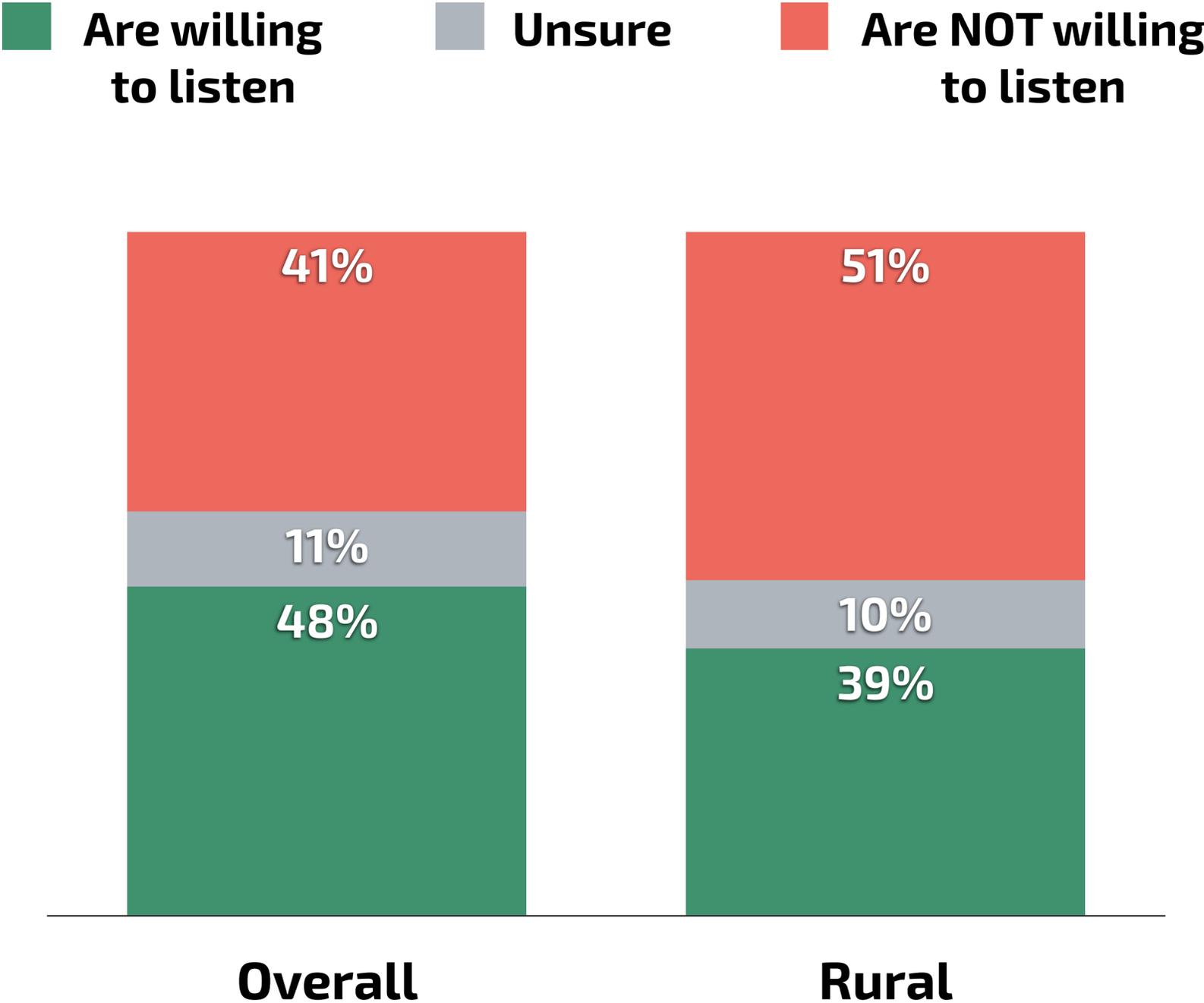


Q. Do climate protests, such as vandalizing gas stations or stopping traffic to protest emissions, make you more or less sympathetic to climate activists and their cause?

# Political Leadership on Climate Change



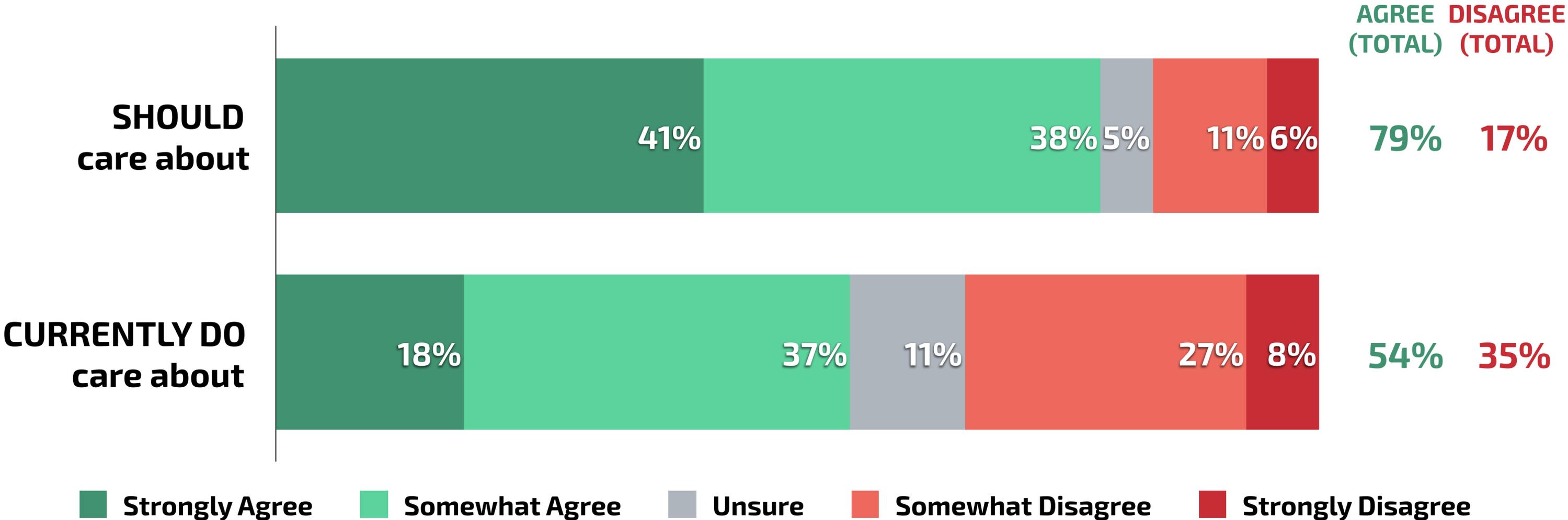
**Less than half of young conservative voters feel government leaders are willing to listen to people like them when making decisions about environmental and energy issues**



Q. When government leaders are making decisions about environmental and energy issues, do you feel that they generally are or are not willing to listen to people like you?

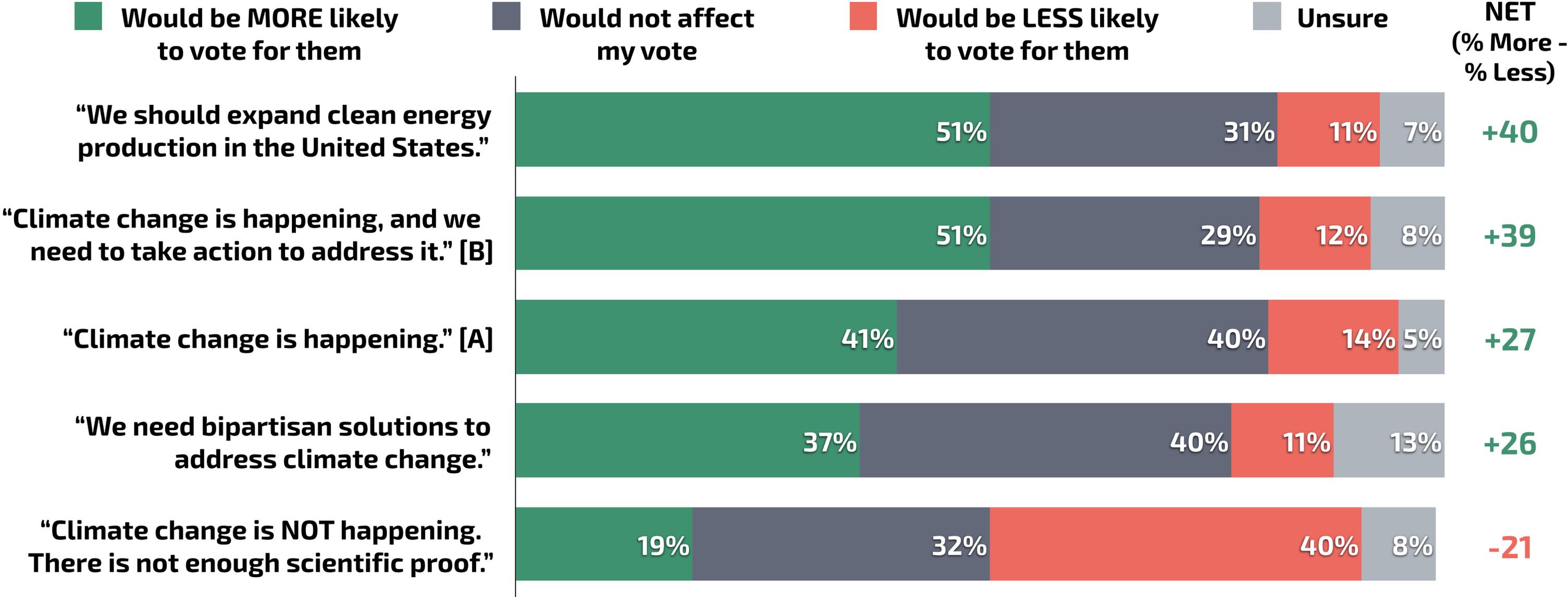
# More than 7 in 10 say Republicans in Congress *should* care about climate change; fewer believe they *currently* do

Climate change is an issue that Republicans in Congress . . .



Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Climate change is an issue that Republicans in Congress should care about.  
 Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Climate change is an issue that Republicans in Congress currently do care about.

# 51% say they would be more likely to vote for a GOP candidate who supports expanding clean energy and addressing climate change



Q. Here are some statements Republican political candidates for public office could make. If a Republican candidate took the following stances, how would it affect your likelihood of voting for them?  
 Note: Split sample - [A] shown to one half (n=504), [B] shown to other half (n=541).



# Methodology



# Methodology

Echelon Insights conducted a survey on behalf of the American Conservation Coalition to understand the opinions of young conservatives. This survey was conducted online from January 12–16, 2024 among a sample of 1045 18–35-year-old conservative self-identified registered voters, with a base sample of 18–35-year-old conservative registered voters nationwide and an additional oversample of 210 18–35-year-old conservative registered voters in rural areas for a total of 505 in rural areas in the sample. The survey was conducted using non-probability sampling.

The sample was drawn from the Cint/Lucid web sample exchange with quotas set for respondents entering the survey based on demographic, regional, and party affiliation targets for conservative, moderate, and ideologically unsure 18–35-year-old registered voters derived from the 2022 Cooperative Election Study (CCES). Once respondents entered the survey, they were then required to answer screening questions to verify they fit the criteria for the study. For this study, respondents qualified as “conservative” if they described themselves as “very conservative” or “somewhat conservative” when asked about their political ideology, or if they initially described their views as “moderate” or “unsure” but indicated they had very or somewhat conservative views on social issues or economic issues when asked follow-up questions. Respondents were categorized as “rural” if they described the area where they live as a “small town (population under 50,000 people)” or a “rural or country area.” For quality control purposes, respondents were removed from the sample if they failed to correctly answer an attentiveness check question or if they answered more than one-third of the questions they were asked in less than one-third of the median response time per question.

Because there are not benchmarks available for conservative 18–35-year-old registered voters as defined in this study, the incoming sample of 18–35-year-old registered voters who described their ideology as conservative, moderate, or unsure was weighted to benchmarks for conservative, moderate, and ideologically unsure 18–35-year-old registered voters nationwide based on the 2022 CCES on gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, region, self-described community type, and party affiliation. The oversample in rural areas was weighted down to reflect the percentage of conservative and moderate 18–35-year-old registered voters nationwide who live in rural areas. After weighting, respondents who initially described their views as moderate or unsure who were disqualified after additional screening questions because they did not indicate they had conservative views were dropped from the sample, so that only the 1045 respondents who passed all screening criteria and completed the survey remained.

Calculated the way it would be for a random sample and adjusted to incorporate the effect of weighting, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points for the overall sample, and  $\pm 4.7$  percentage points for 18–35-year-old conservative registered voters in rural areas. This estimate of precision does not account for other potential sources of error that can occur in online surveys with non-probability samples, such as non-coverage due to the survey being conducted online.

