



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS

Reimagining the American Dream: Views from Young Americans

Project Background

- This is the second annual Sine Institute survey focused on understanding young Americans' (ages 18-34) perspectives on politics, community engagement, and public service.
- The Sine Institute's inaugural survey (released August 2022) centered on topics including democracy, American values and the role of social media in young Americans' lives.
- This latest iteration takes on the challenging and important topic of what the American Dream means for young people today and notably, what leaders need to know in order to support today's youth in making their dreams a reality.
- The Sine Institute partnered with the **Millennial Action Project**, the **Close Up Foundation** and a team of American University student advisors on the research. **Generation Lab** conducted the online interviews using its robust, proprietary panel.
- This research is an investment in understanding young Americans' goals for the future as well as the barriers and support they experience as they pursue those goals. It is essential reading for those involved in setting policy and shaping institutions that closely intersect with young Americans' lives.
- Our findings provide a roadmap for leaders — from national, state and local elected officials to community organizers and others — to know how to effectively engage, harness, and reflect the power of America's young voices.

Overview of Key Findings

As our country heads into another presidential election year, candidates are evoking the power of the American Dream in their communications. They are rendering their judgment about its viability, and how the pursuit of the American Dream would direct the way they would lead. No one is asking the important question of what the American Dream actually means for young Americans, who are trying to sort through the churning dynamics shaping their lives. These include: spiraling technological innovation and major economic transitions, changing attitudes about social justice, and what constitutes a “good” or “successful” life after a devastating global pandemic with profound impacts on their physical and mental health, the extent of which is still unknown.

These survey findings provide important insights into how young Americans are reimagining the American Dream to reflect their experiences, values and goals. Among the highlights:

- 1. The reimagined American Dream for today’s young Americans is one of both continuity and change.** The core elements include **feeling happy & fulfilled, having the freedom to make important life decisions, having meaningful personal relationships** and **being financially successful**. More traditional elements like owning a home, getting married and having a family are important, but not top tier priorities.
- 2. Young Americans remain optimistic that their lives will be better than their parents in many areas and that they have a good chance of achieving what they consider to be the American Dream.** Members of this generation recognize and affirm that the American Dream means different things to different people and that this vision can and should vary by generation and by individuals within the same generation.
- 3. Young Americans identify distinct barriers as they pursue their American Dream, including the overwhelming experience of stress, pressure and mental health struggles.** The unrelenting pace and standards that young Americans report as part of their daily lives and the ensuing anxiety and depression this causes are one of the most consistent themes emanating from this research.

Overview of Key Findings (continued)

4. Notably, young Americans also identify our current political structure and political climate as an obstacle to their efforts to achieve their goals; in fact, *“having a functional government that represents all Americans”* is the only one of more than a dozen traits where young Americans do not expect to be better off than their parents’ generation.

Fortunately, these survey findings also identify a range of solutions and attributes to help repair America’s broken system of leadership in the eyes of its youngest citizens, including demonstrating more compassion, a willingness to listen and consider different perspectives, and greater authenticity.

5. Young Americans also identify many sources of support and strength as they strive toward their vision of the American Dream: the encouragement of family and friends, the impact of education (and specifically teachers), and their own hard work and effort are hallmarks of the positive dynamics they describe. Social media is a dominant force but a double-edged sword that both helps young Americans connect and lift each other up, while also contributing to their stress and feelings of burnout.

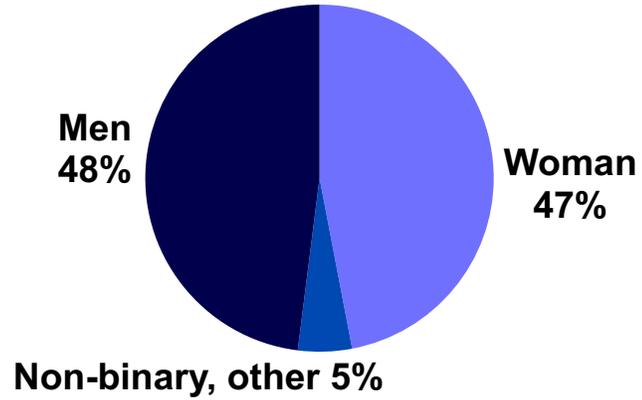
6. As they establish their political roots, young Americans value doing things that will be effective and have impact, directly serve others in real time, and create long-lasting change. In this regard, young Americans defy conventional wisdom that they are fragile and, instead, embrace high expectations: looking for ways that are easy, don’t require much effort or are convenient to engage in politics are their lowest priorities.

7. The 2024 presidential election is a long way off in the eyes of young Americans. Fully one in four say they’re undecided about how they’ll vote and the candidates and their campaigns have significant work to do to harness their energy and support. More than a year out from picking our next president, a large plurality don’t think the outcome of the election will matter significantly in their day-to-day lives and half admit they’re not yet especially motivated to vote.

Demographic Profile

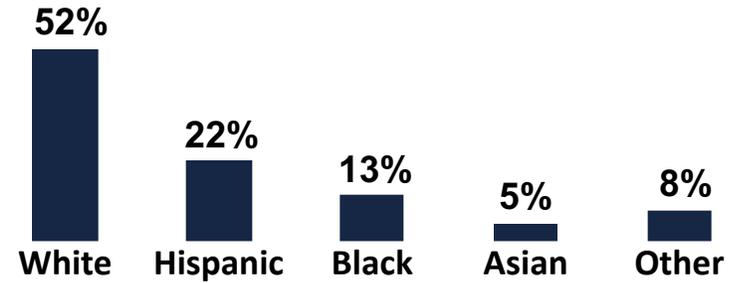
Methodology: 1,568 interviews of Americans age 18 to 34 (regardless of voter registration status), including oversamples with Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQI+ respondents; interviews conducted July 24 - August 11, 2023 using Generation Lab's proprietary panel.

GENDER



25% identify as LGBTQ+

RACE



AREA TYPE



Urban
39%

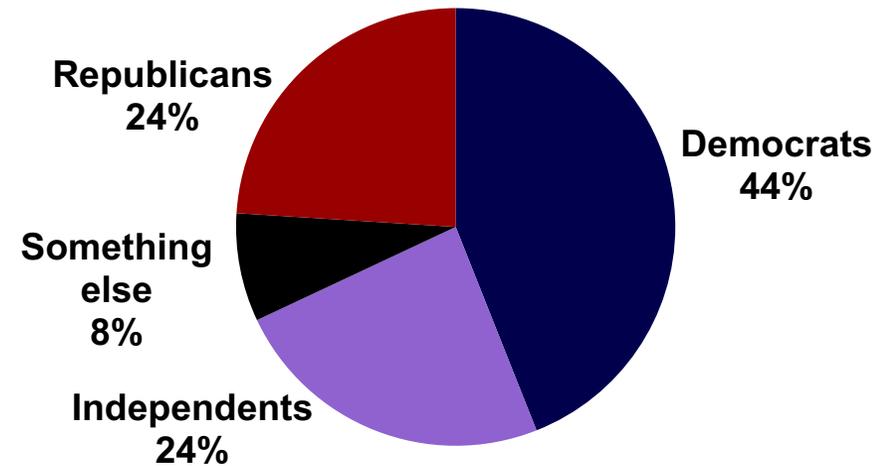


Suburban
42%



Small town/
rural area
19%

PARTY ID



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS



Young Americans Describe Their American Experience

Key Findings

In describing their American experience and the routines and feelings that govern their everyday lives, young Americans:

- Overwhelmingly describe feeling stress, pressure and the consequences of mental health challenges. While this is true among all groups of young Americans, these findings (consistent with other studies) show that this is an especially common experience for young women.
- Are governed by contradicting values and emotions that pull them in different directions, such as feeling simultaneously lonely and connected as well as resilient and discouraged.
- Remain steadfastly optimistic about their own lives, surpassing both their positive feelings about the overall direction of the country and their own judgements about the experience of their parents' generation.
- See the American Dream as a flexible vision that can and should adapt for each individual and across generations.
- Say the pandemic, while officially over, has permanently changed their vision for their own future while openly admitting they're not fully recovered from its impacts.

For young Americans, the pace and pressure of everyday life can be overwhelming (young women feel this especially).

■ Very much applies to my life ■ Somewhat applies to my life

People feel **pressure to live up to a certain standard** or expectation instead of being able to be true to themselves.



Daily life moves at such a **fast pace** that I often feel like it's exhausting to keep up.



Too often **people distance themselves from those who seem different** than they are and instead surround themselves mostly by others who are like-minded.



There is too much **emphasis on knowing a lot of people at a superficial level** than on knowing a smaller number of people on a deep level.



I don't feel like I've recovered from the **negative effects that Covid** and the pandemic had on my life.



Young Americans see themselves as creative and innovative, but most of all, they are stressed (along with other contradictions like feeling simultaneously connected but lonely).

Which two of these adjectives best describe people in your generation?



24%	Creative & entrepreneurial/innovate	44%	Stressed & overwhelmed
17%	Connected & informed	16%	Discouraged & hopeless
15%	Hard working	15%	Lonely & isolated
15%	Accepting & tolerant	7%	Fearful
13%	Ambitious	6%	Angry
11%	Resilient		
9%	Confident		
7%	Happy		

The American Dream is in transition: there is no one uniform vision, instead, it varies by individual and by generation, and the effects of the pandemic are enduring.

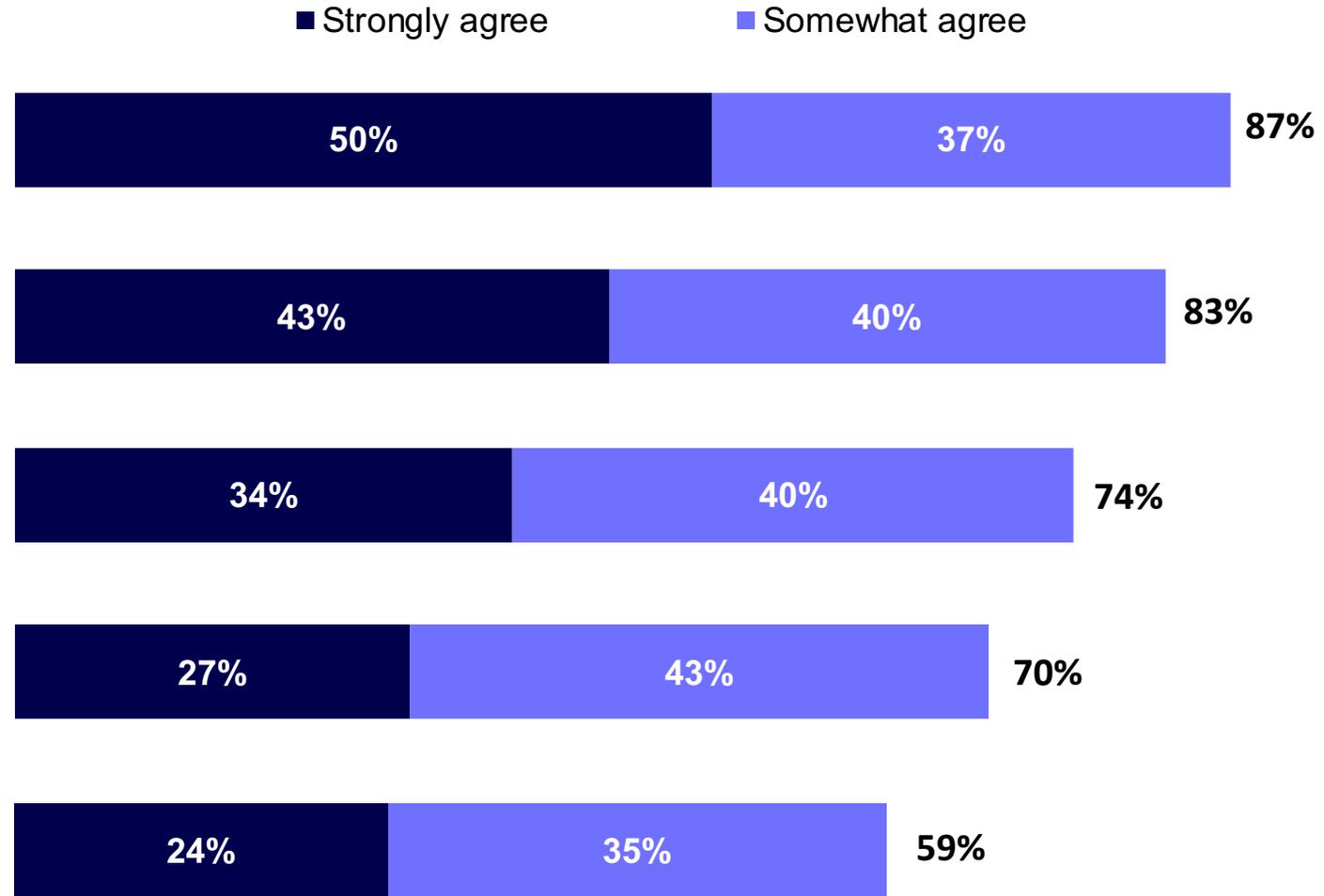
There is no one American Dream; instead the American Dream can and should look different for each individual.

The American Dream **means something very different to me than it did to my parents** and older generations.

I have a **good chance of achieving** what I consider the American Dream for myself.

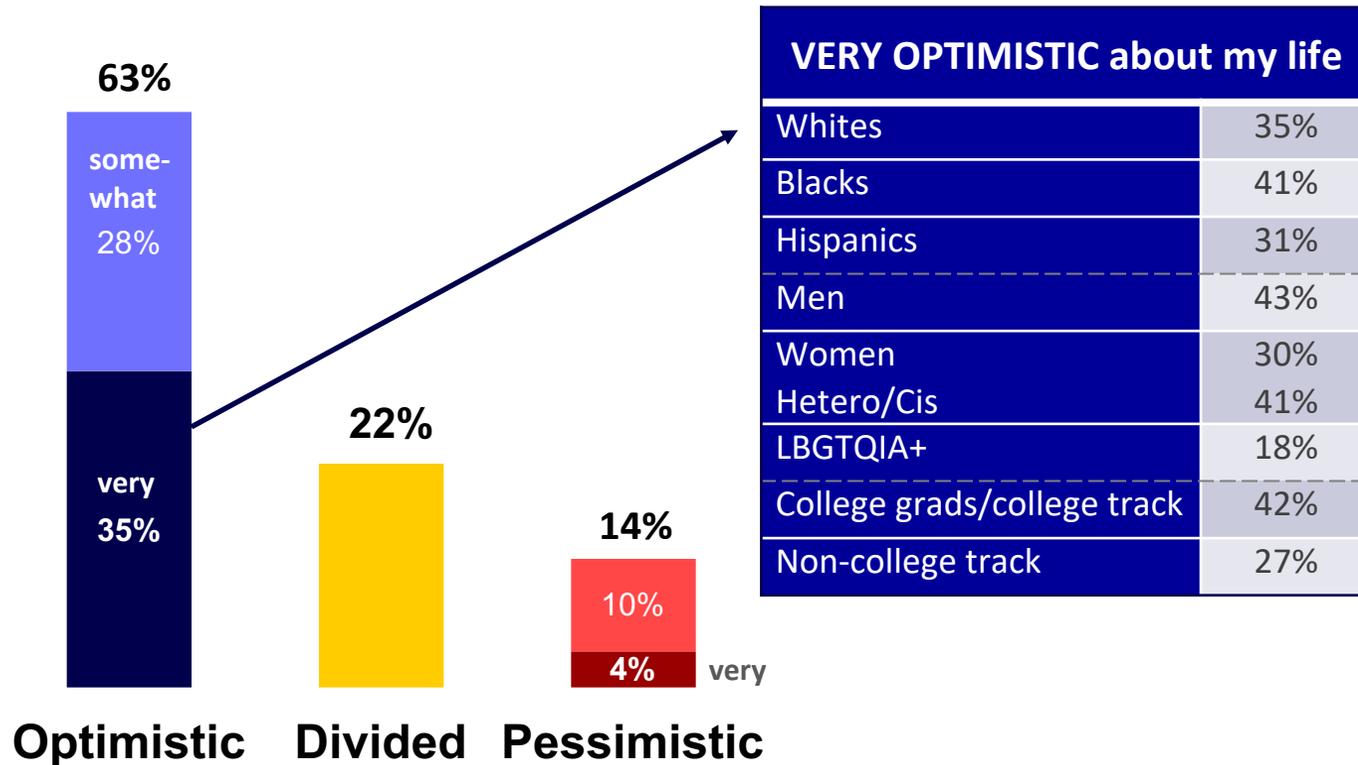
The experience of **Covid and living through the pandemic changed my goals** for the future and what I consider important in my vision of the American Dream.

All people my age have a good chance of achieving their own vision of the American Dream.

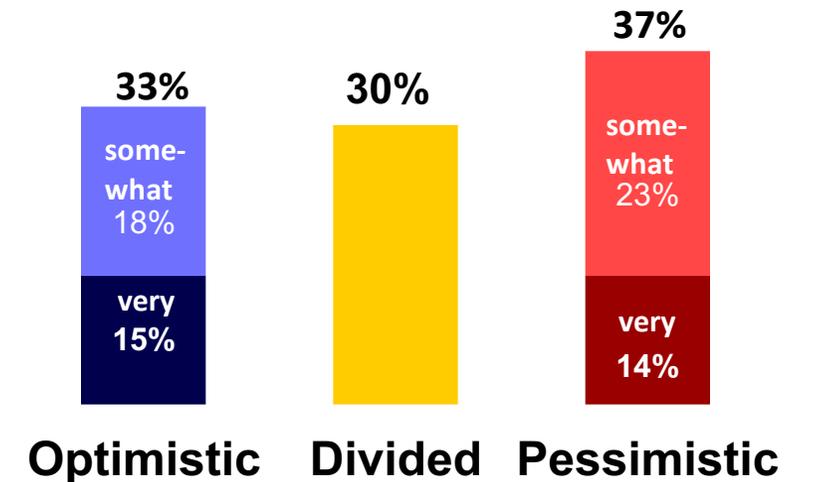


Young Americans are more optimistic for themselves than they are for the country.

Thinking about the next five to ten years, when it comes to MY OWN PERSONAL LIFE, I feel:

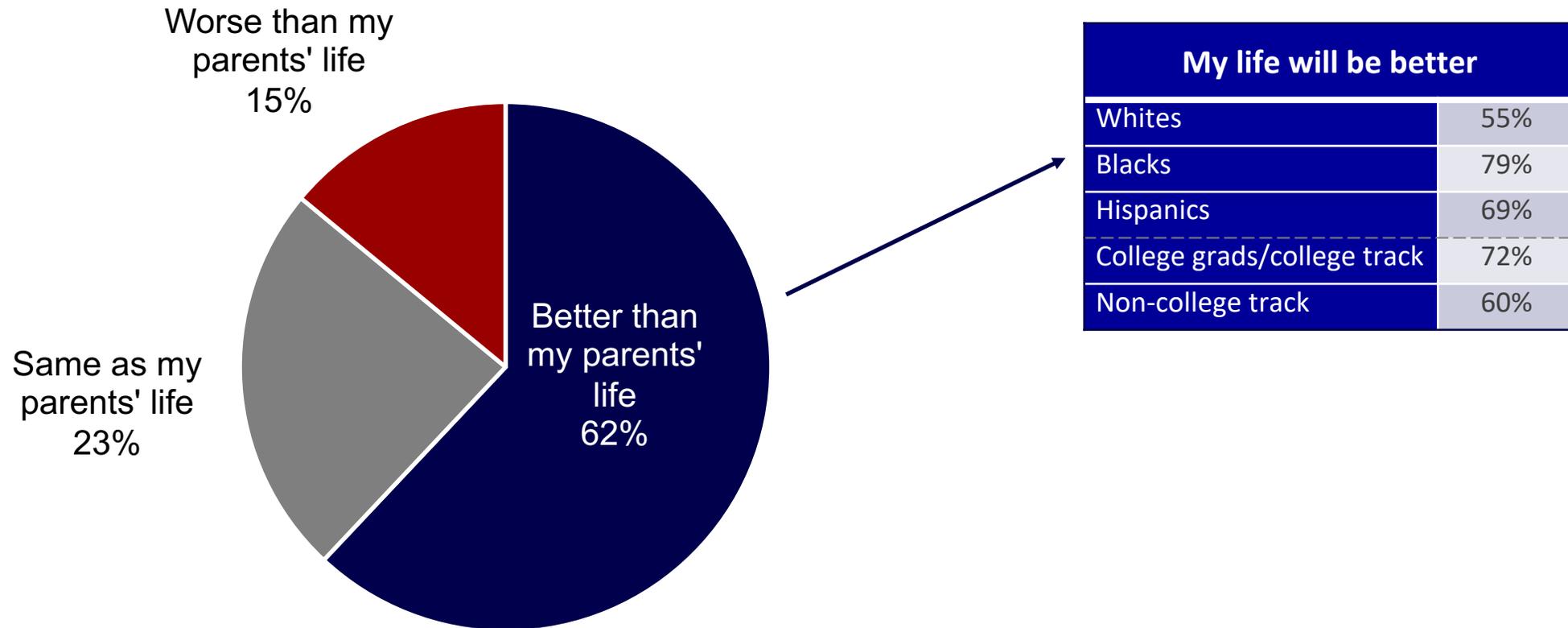


Thinking about the next five to ten years, when it comes to HOW THINGS WILL BE HERE IN AMERICA, I feel:



Contrary to some negative media narratives, most young Americans don't expect their lives to be worse than their parents.

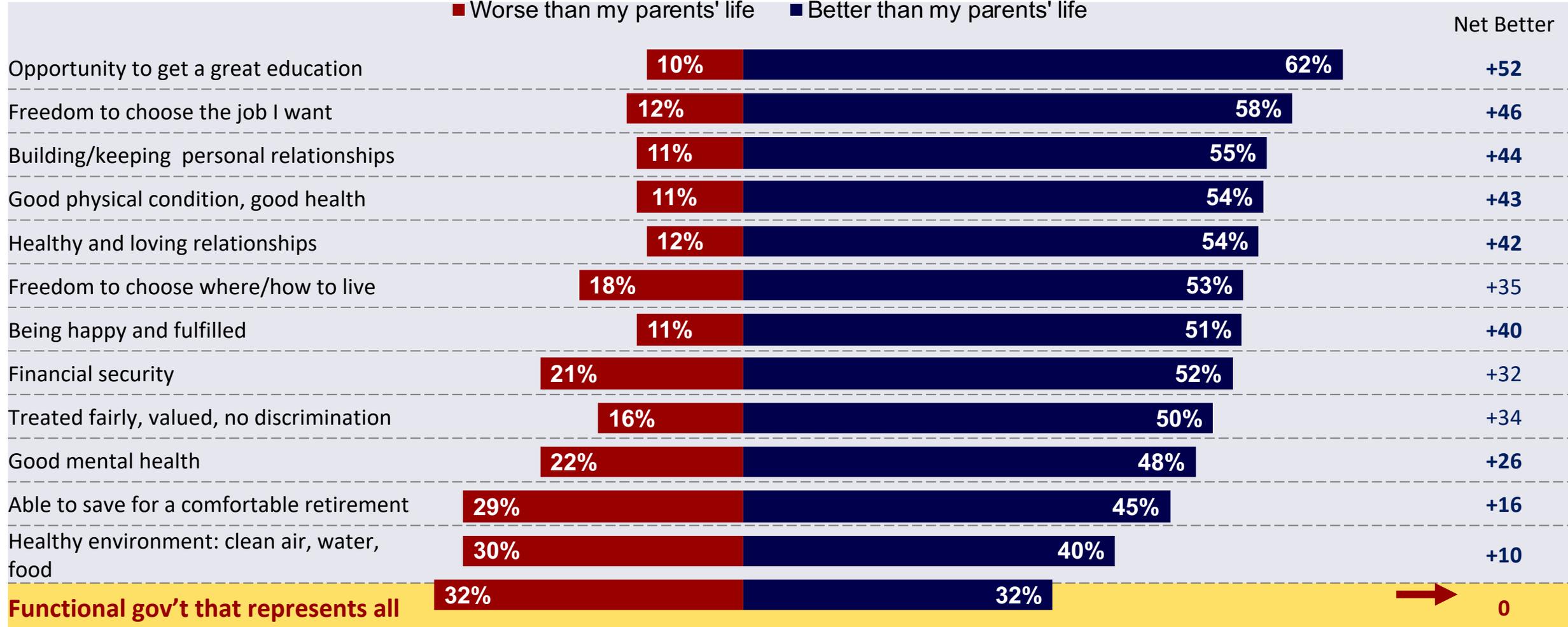
Thinking about the life my parents have had, I expect that I my life will be:



On many measures, young Americans say they will be better off than their parents; but having a functional & effective government is a notable exception.

On this aspect of quality of life, I expect that I my life will be:

■ Worse than my parents' life ■ Better than my parents' life



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS



Young Americans and the Reimagined American Dream

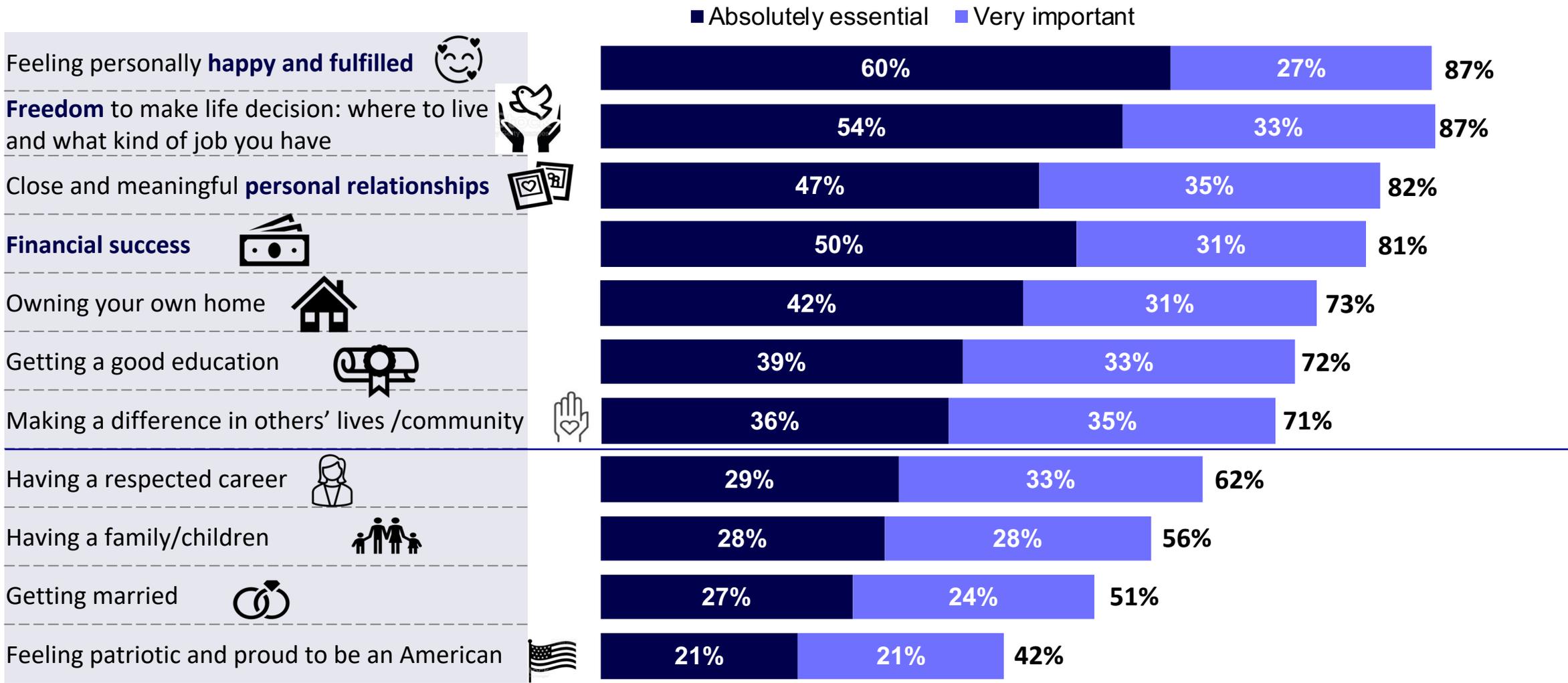
Key Findings

The reimagined American Dream that young Americans describe reflects both continuity and change. The changing social conditions they are witnessing and their own life experiences profoundly shape their goals for their future.

- The core of the American Dream for today's young Americans is largely rooted in more intangible feelings: being happy and fulfilled, having the freedom to make important life decisions, and building meaningful personal relationships are among their most important goals.
- More measurable and visible accomplishments—especially financial success—are still important, but the traditional “white picket fence” vision of marriage, children and home ownership are less central than they once were.
- Given the diversity of this generation, the commonality of the central touchstones that comprise the American Dream is remarkable; by gender, race and even partisan identification, there is tremendous overlap in how members of this generation prioritize and order their life goals and priorities.
- The online and mobile-friendly format of this survey was leveraged to design an original exercise in which respondents were asked to evaluate and rate visual images according to how they reflect the American Dream they have for themselves. The pictures that rose to the top are entirely consistent with their responses from more traditional rank-choice questions: freedom to chart one's own course and personal happiness are paramount.

What is the reimagined American Dream?

Happiness, freedom, quality relationships & financial success overshadow.



Young Americans' View of Reimagining the American Dream

For young Americans, the core components of the reimagined American Dream are largely shared across identities.

Three most important elements of the American Dream

Women	Men
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Financial Success	Financial Success
Close Meaningful Relationships	Close Meaningful Relationships
	Owning a Home

Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Close Meaningful Relationships	Owning a Home	Financial Success
Financial Success	Financial Success	Owning a Home

In a time of heightened polarization, the core elements of the American Dream are shared across partisan divides.

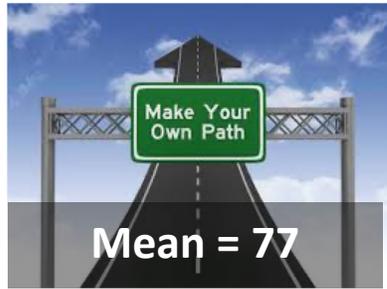
Three most important elements of the American Dream

Republicans	Independents	Democrats
Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled	Happy and Fulfilled
Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions	Freedom for Life Decisions
Close Meaningful Relationships	Financial Success	Close Meaningful Relationships
Financial Success	Owning a Home	Financial Success
		Making a Difference in my Community

The images that young Americans choose to symbolize their American Dream are varied, but freedom & personal happiness rise to the top.

For these pictures of scenes that some people might associate with the American Dream, please rate your reaction.

(mean ratings on a 100-point scale*)



↑
This is the most resonant image among men, women, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Democrats & Independents (and second most resonant for Republicans, after family moving to a home).

* 0 = does not at all fit into the vision of the American Dream I have for myself; 100 = very closely fits into the vision of the American Dream I have for myself

SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS

Pursuing the American Dream: the Supports and Barriers Young Americans Encounter

Key Findings

Young Americans are acutely aware of the obstacles and opportunities for support they experience as they pursue their American Dream. The influential factors they identify are a mix of individual traits, life circumstances, and macro-level, social-political-economic forces beyond their control.

- Of more than a half-dozen distinct factors that young Americans were asked to evaluate, they say that their own hard work and effort is the most consequential in their ability to achieve their vision of the American Dream.
- Unlike the core composition of the American Dream which young Americans across gender, race, class and political lines describe in largely similar ways, the barriers they report vary considerably: conditions like racism and discrimination and even the impact of elected leaders' policy decisions have very different effects.
- Educational opportunities and the support of family and friends lead the list of factors that young Americans hail as helping them in their efforts to achieve their American Dream; our political system and the way our leaders are chosen to represent stands out as a distinct hindrance; in fact, by double digit margins, members of this generation say this dynamic has done more to hurt them than to help them.

Young Americans say that individual attributes are key in determining their ability to achieve the American Dream, but they also identify forces out of their control.

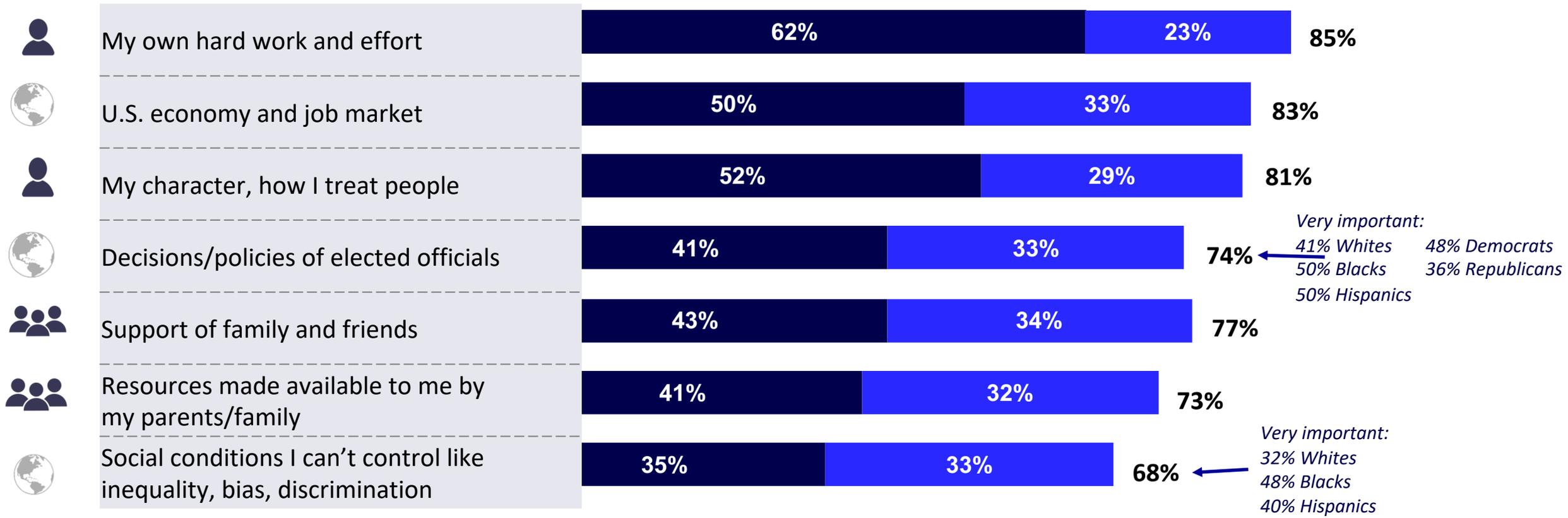
Individual level 

Family/friends level 

Macro/social level 

Selected factors' importance in my ability to achieve my goals and my vision of the American Dream

■ Very important factor ■ Fairly important factor



There are new barriers to the American Dream for this generation; the magnitude of these obstacles vary by identify.

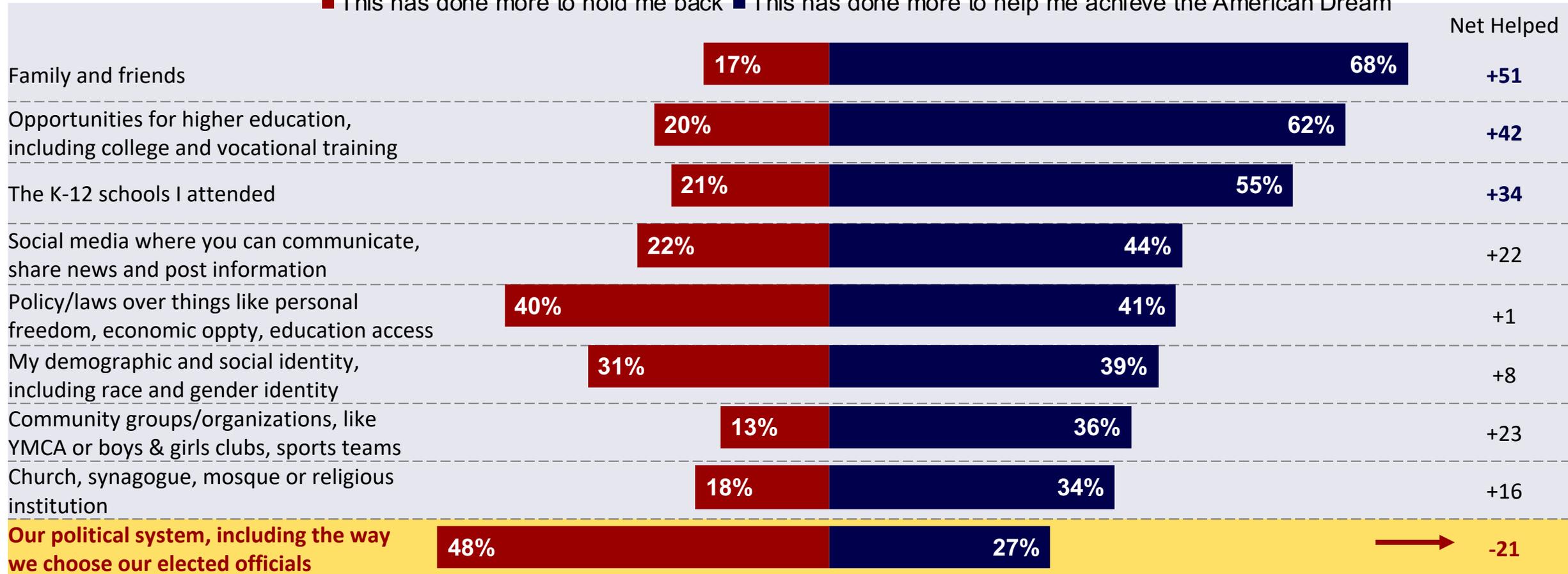
*People identify different things that hold them back from being able to achieve their goals and their vision of the American Dream. Please select **THREE FACTORS** that represent the biggest challenges for you personally when you think about your goals and your vision of the American Dream.*

62%	Lack of money and financial resources	(College grads/college track, 56%, Non college track 67%)
48%	Mental health challenges, including emotions such as hopelessness and anxiety	(Women 53%, Men 40%)
42%	Lack of trust and feeling hopeless about government and social institutions	(Hetero/Cis 38%, LBTQIA+ 47%)
24%	Fear of violence and not feeling safe	(Urban 27%, Suburban 23%, Small town/rural 23%)
23%	Not having mentors or people close to me who will support me	
19%	Racial inequality	(Whites 9%, Blacks 46%, Hispanics 21%)
18%	Pressure from peers and friends, including on social media	
14%	Gender inequality	(Women 19%, Men 9%; Hetero/Cis 13%/LGBTQIA+ 21%)
	Other forms of discrimination (not race or	

In pursuing the American Dream, education and friends & family are important sources of support, but young Americans see our current political circumstances as an obstacle.

Selected factors' role in my ability to achieve my vision of the American Dream :

■ This has done more to hold me back ■ This has done more to help me achieve the American Dream



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS

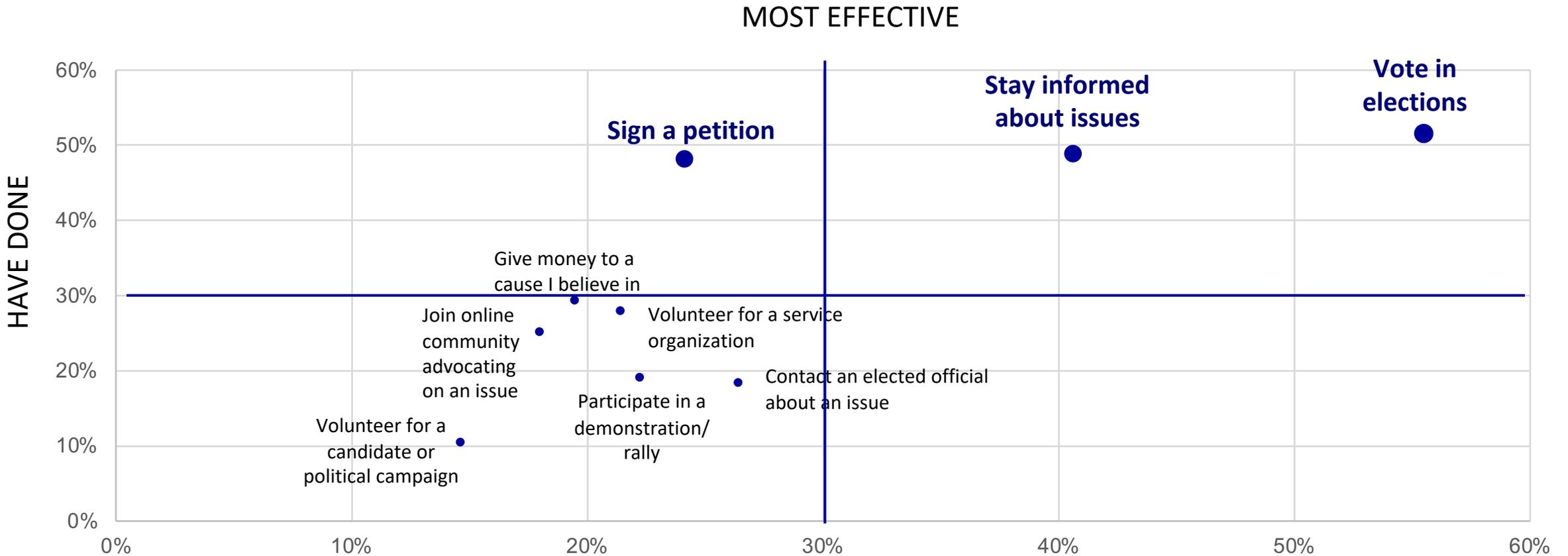
Path to the American Dream: Political Engagement and Redefining Leadership

Key Findings

Given that young Americans consistently describe our current political system as more of an impediment than a resource and that they expect that their experience with democratic representation will be more disappointing for them than it was for their parents, these findings nonetheless offer some encouraging insights about what members of this generation think is relevant and important in their efforts to choose leaders who will help them pursue the American Dream:

- Voting in elections and staying informed about issues are the leading edge of what young Americans report they are doing and what they see as effective in expressing their beliefs. Still, the lack of consensus around a core pattern of engagement suggests they are still looking for ways to participate meaningfully in our political system.
- Young Americans display remarkable sincerity and commitment when they describe their motivation to engage politically - far from looking for easy or convenient ways to get involved, they say they are driven to participate in ways that will truly have an impact, provide direct help to people in real time, and that they will facilitate deeper change in our political and social system.
- Foreshadowing their feelings about the personal relevance of political leaders who often feel distant from their lives, including the President and members of Congress, young Americans instead point to the influence of local figures including teachers, state and local leaders and people in their community. The perceived impact of Supreme Court justices is a notable exception.
- In setting their own agenda for leadership, young Americans value leaders who are intelligent and knowledgeable and wanting to serve others, but also prioritize less traditional traits such as being willing to listen and consider other perspectives, demonstrating compassion, and being authentic.

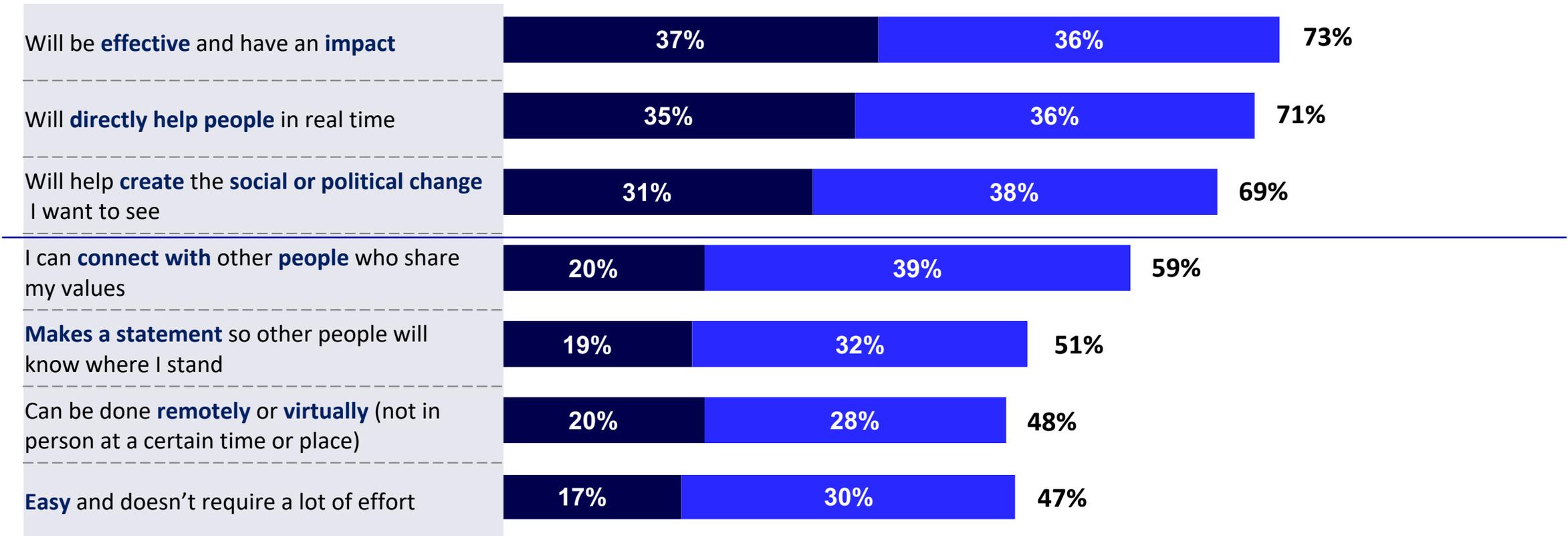
Far from apathetic, young Americans engage in multiple forms of political engagement that track what they think of as the most effective ways to enact change.



Above all, young Americans are seeking genuine engagement and impact when they take political action, not quick and easy solutions.

When you think about doing something or taking action to support your personal beliefs, how important is this?

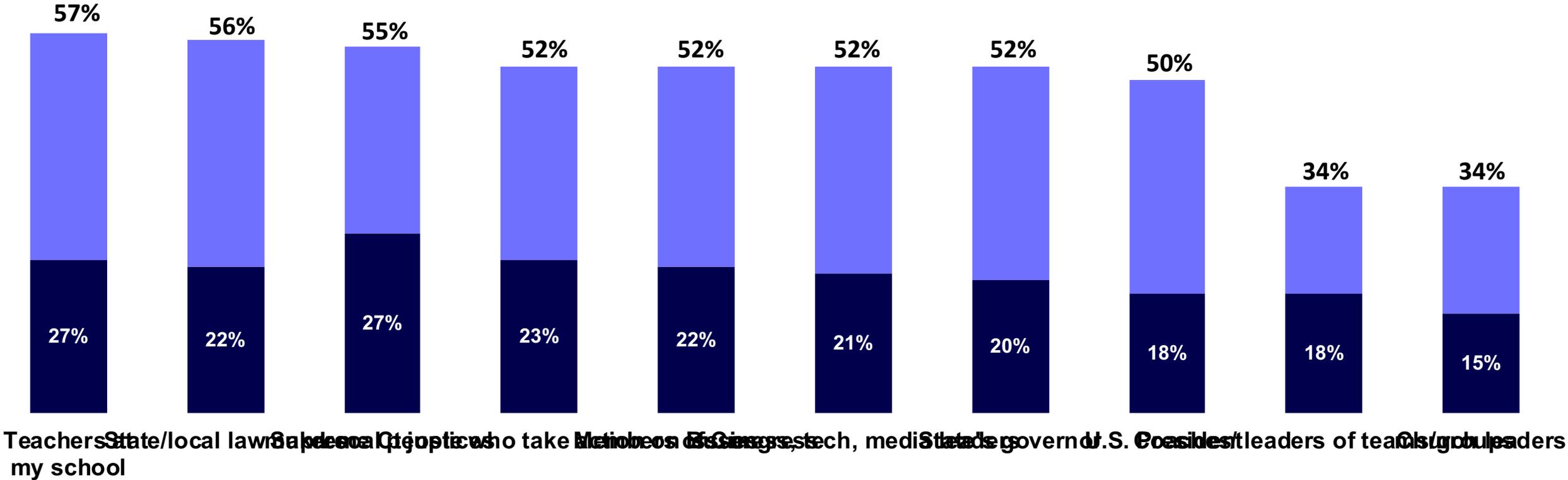
■ Top priority ■ Very important



In the current era, the impact of Supreme Court justices overshadows even the President and Congress, but teachers retain the most influence.

Impact of selected individuals on my life and goals for the future

■ A very significant impact ■ A pretty big impact



Young Americans prioritize intelligence, service, and policy alignment in choosing their leaders, but they also value less traditional political traits, such as listening, compassion and authenticity.

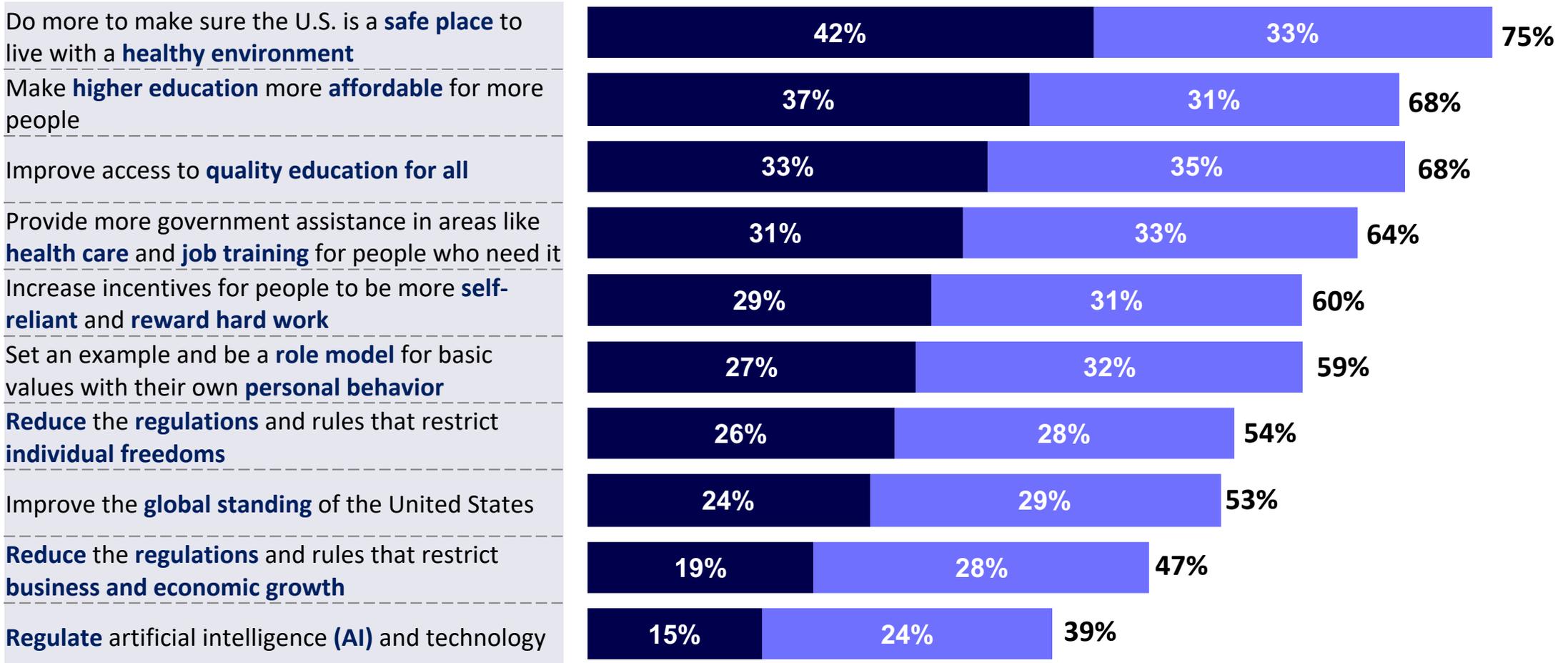
Three most important qualities when I think about supporting a candidate or elected leader

49%	They are intelligent, knowledgeable and have the experience to do the job well
44%	They are motivated to serve others , not their own self interest
40%	They listen and truly consider a variety of perspectives when making decisions
34%	They demonstrate genuine compassion for and kindness to others
31%	They support the same the policies I support
26%	They are authentic and genuine even if it means they make mistakes
13%	They make a genuine effort to understand my life experiences and how I see things
13%	They have core and consistent values , even if I disagree with some of their positions
13%	They share my values
12%	They communicate with me in a language I understand
6%	They share a key identify of mine and some of my life experiences They are motivated to serve others , not their own self interest

Young Americans' spell out a clear agenda for their leaders: a healthy environment, educational opportunities and supports for health care & job training.

How high a priority should this be for elected leaders to focus on?

■ One of the top priorities ■ A high priority



SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS



The Reimagined American Dream: Consequences for the 2024 Election

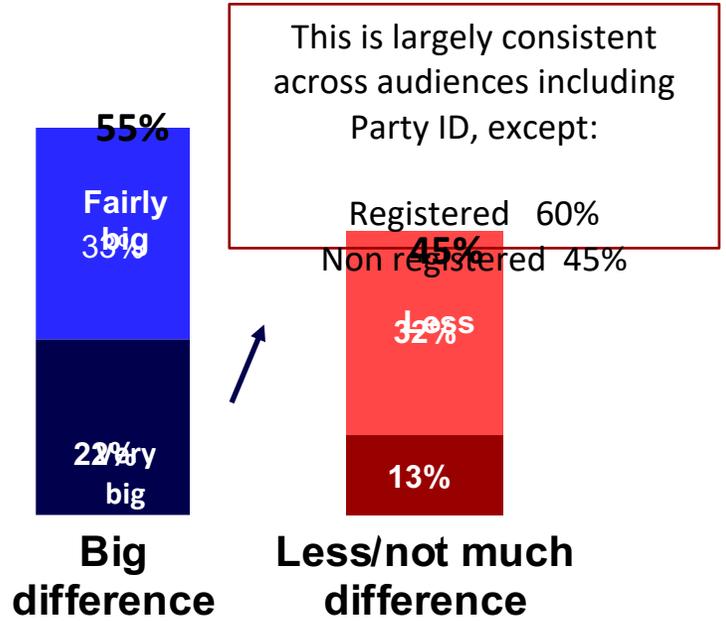
Key Findings

Just over a year out from the next presidential election, young Americans have a long way to go to feel fully engaged and invested in the campaign and its outcome. These findings are a powerful reminder of the work that campaigns and advocacy groups have in front of them as they look to harness the support and energy of young voters next year.

- While a majority of young Americans say the outcome of the election will make a big difference in their own lives, a significant plurality say it won't; this is a remarkable disconnect from the assessment of many experts and pundits describe the 2024 election as historically important and consequential.
- Young Americans are taking a wait-and-see approach; President Biden enjoys core support at this early stage, but one-in-four young Americans say they don't know how they'll vote.
- The dissatisfaction that young Americans feel with the current political state of affairs is evident in their willingness to consider a third-party candidate; a majority say they would think about it.
- Turnout among this cohort is always a major factor in assessing the electoral landscape and at this point, only half of young Americans say they are highly motivated to vote to pick the next president.
- Health care, the economy, affordable housing, and reproductive rights lead the list of issues that will be important to young Americans as they look to November 2024, but this is hardly a generation of single-issue voters: other pressing concerns include workforce issues, climate change and the environment, and gun violence.

Just over a year out from the 2024 presidential election, young Americans' engagement is only modest with a lot of room for growth.

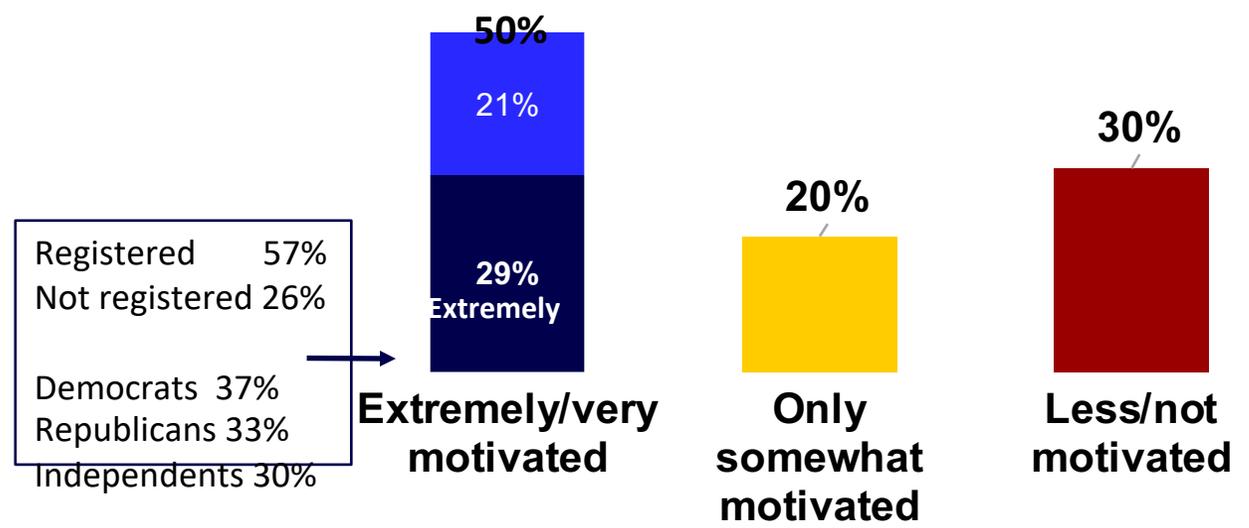
The 2024 election for President: how much difference will it make in your life who wins that election?



This is largely consistent across audiences including Party ID, except:

Registered 60%
Non registered 45%

*Motivation to vote in the 2024 elections**



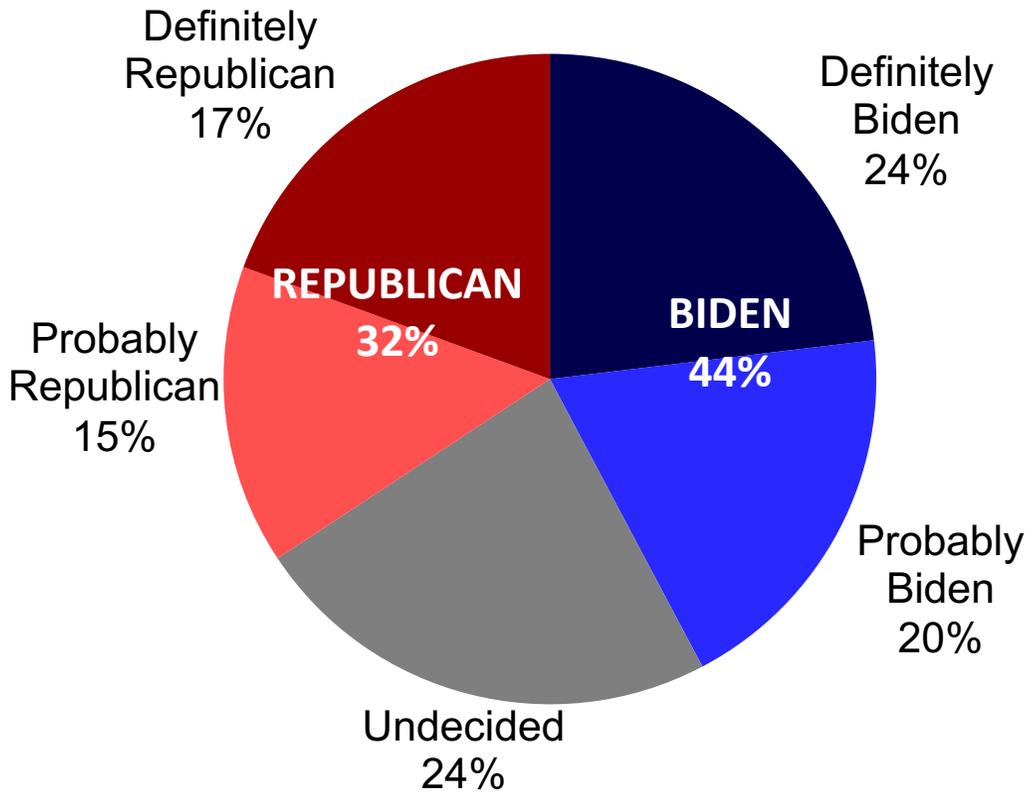
Registered 57%
Not registered 26%

Democrats 37%
Republicans 33%
Independents 30%

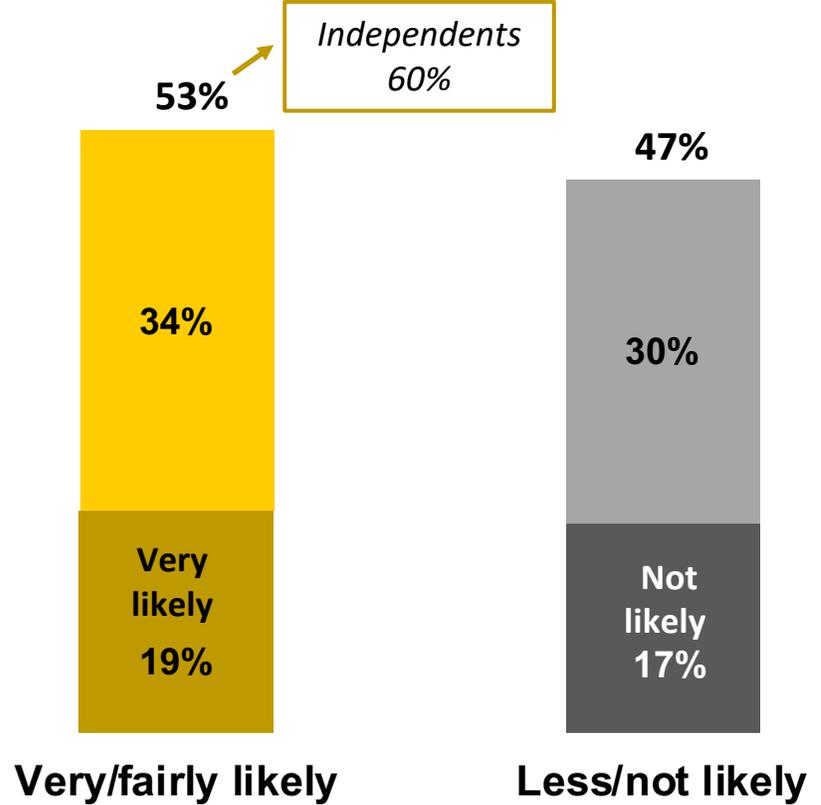
* On 0-to-10 scale: 10 = extremely motivated, 8-9 = very motivated, 6-7 = somewhat motivated, 0-5 = less/not motivated

Young Americans lean toward President Biden but are not committed and are open to alternatives, including a third party.

Vote in 2024 trial heat election for President



Likelihood of seriously considering a third-party candidate for President



Young Americans identify a broad set of issues that will be critical as they make decisions about the 2024 election.

Three most important ISSUES when I think about my votes in the 2024 elections

	25%	Health care		17%	Protecting and maintaining democracy
	24%	The economy, including the cost of living		16%	Education
	24%	Affordable housing		15%	Reducing all forms of discrimination
	23%	Reproductive rights, including abortion		13%	Student debt relief
	21%	Issues related to the workforce, including job training and protections for workers		13%	Racial justice and civil rights
	21%	The environment & climate change		11%	Artificial intelligence (AI) and technology
	20%	Gun violence		10%	LGBTQI+ rights
				10%	Criminal justice reform

SINE INSTITUTE
of POLICY & POLITICS

Background on the Project

The Sine Research Team

Amy Dacey

Amy K. Dacey is Executive Director of the Sine Institute of Policy & Politics at American University. For more than two decades, she managed prominent national organizations, advised leading elected officials and candidates, including President Barack Obama and Senator John Kerry, and counseled a variety of nonprofits and companies. Before joining AU, Amy was President of AKD Strategies, a strategic firm working with non-profits, and foundations in the progressive policy space. During the 2016 presidential election, she served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Democratic National Committee. During the 2004 elections, she worked for then-Senator John Kerry on his presidential campaign and, following his narrow loss, helped to lead Kerry's political operation. She also managed Rep. Louise Slaughter's congressional campaign in 1998. From 2010 to 2013, Amy served as Executive Director of EMILY's List, the organization dedicated to electing Democratic women to national, state, and local offices, and led the organization's revitalization, restructuring and rebranding efforts.



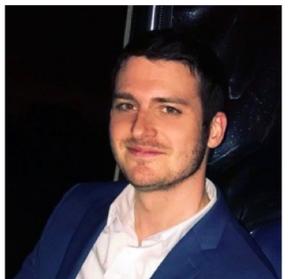
Molly O'Rourke

Molly O'Rourke is an Executive in Residence in the School of Communication at American University and also serves as the Director of the MA program in Political Communication. She teaches undergraduate and graduate level courses in Research Methods, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches. She has more than 20 years' experience in the field of public opinion research, most recently as a partner at Hart Research in Washington, D.C. where she led multiphase research project for dozens of advocacy and nonprofit organizations, political candidates, and media outlets, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Human Right Campaign (HRC) and NBC News.



Benjamin Bryant

Benjamin Bryant joined the Sine Institute as communications director in June 2022. Prior to his current role, he worked for six years on Capitol Hill, serving as the deputy press secretary for Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and communications director for Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA). Benjamin is originally from Rhode Island. He graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2012 and worked for several years in local Rhode Island radio news before coming to Washington D.C. in 2014 to serve as a policy communications extern at Facebook (Meta's) Washington, D.C. office.



Generation Lab

Generation Lab is a data intelligence company that translate youth views and behavior for media, academia, businesses, government, and the American public. Generation Lab uses proprietary methods that streamline the polling process for respondents, maintain exceptional data integrity, and enhance data collection. Generation Lab specializes in studying young people and the trends that shape the future and works to “pursue youth truth” for clients and the American public. Generation Lab’s work has been featured in such media outlets as AXIOS, PBS, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and others.



Close Up Foundation

Founded in 1971, Close Up Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization that believes a strong democracy requires active, informed participation by all citizens. Close Up seeks to serve young people from all communities and all backgrounds, regardless of race, religion, gender, socioeconomic level, or academic standing. For over 50 years, we have partnered with schools nationwide to serve more than one million students and educators through experiential programs in our nation’s capital and in local communities, virtual programs, professional development, and curriculum and resource design. Close Up Washington DC’s issue-centric, nonpartisan curriculum gives participants a deeper understanding of history, government institutions, current issues, and the role of citizens.



The Millennial Youth Action Project

The Millennial Youth Action Project is an organization dedicated to renewing American democracy. In collaboration with dozens of Millennial leaders across the country, and with the generous support of visionary philanthropists, the Millennial Action Project was formed and officially launched in 2013. The Millennial Action Project works directly with our nation’s leading young policymakers on both a national and state level to bridge the partisan divide and lead a new era of collaborative governance. As a national, nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to activating millennial and Gen Z policymakers, MAP gives our nation’s young leaders the resources and support to develop and pass innovative policy solutions — and forge productive partnerships on the issues affecting the youngest generations of Americans.



The Sine Student Advisory Panel

The Sine Institute worked with an advisory group of visionary AU graduate and undergraduate students from across the university to help design the poll, formulate its questions, and provide feedback on the survey methodology and results, as well as offered suggestions for further research topics.

Ifeanyi Ruth Umunna is an undergraduate student at American University in Washington, D.C. She studies Political Science and African American Diaspora Studies. She is from Boston, MA, where she attended The Winsor School. Upon her graduation, she hopes to pursue MPP and JD degrees. She is interested in public defense law. At American University, she served as a Resident Assistant for American University's Black Affinity Housing in its inaugural year, as well as a Teaching Assistant and Student Director for the School of Public Affairs Leadership Program, a Peer Advisor in the School of Public Affairs, a Resident Assistant, and as President of the University's Black Student Union. She interned at Audrey Denney for Congress, the Center for Policing Equity, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, the Office of Representative Ayanna Pressley, and the Trone Center for Justice and Equality at the ACLU National Office. Her other undergraduate achievements include receiving the inaugural Professor Elizabeth A. Sherman Prize for Social Justice and the Robert and Christine Johnson Scholarship from the School of Public Affairs, as well as being elected to the American University chapter of The Phi Beta Kappa Society. For more information about her professional, academic, and volunteer experience, please view the rest of her LinkedIn page.



Logan Galimi is a 2nd year Politics, Policy, and Law three-year Scholar at American University. He has an interdisciplinary array of interests, including democracy, psychology, economics, and philosophy. At the moment, Logan is particularly focused on the concepts of workplace democracy, moral error theory, and urban planning. Outside of the academic world, Logan enjoys jazz drumming, singing, and bicycling. He spent the first 18 years of his life in Southern California, and although he loves DC, he does miss the beach.



Rohan Singh is a third-year undergraduate student at American University's School of International Service focusing on the Middle East and North Africa. Rohan is an Undergraduate Research Assistant to the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University, a Peer Mentor, and intern at the US Mission to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. He is also a member of the Student Advisory Board at the Sine Institute of Policy and Politics. Rohan has recently been selected to present a research paper at the International Association of Political Science Students (IAPSS) 2023 World Congress in Montreal, Canada. He has been published in The Friday Times.



Kaniya Harris is a junior double majoring in Justice, Law, & Criminology (JLC) and Sociology with a Business & Entertainment minor. Kaniya is involved in the School of Public Affairs (SPA) Leadership Program, Collaborative Leadership Certificate Program, School of Public Affairs Honors Program, and AU Honors Program. Additionally, Kaniya has been the Director of Students for Change (SFC) for two consecutive years; SFC is an intersectional organization that is responsible for creating and delivering responsive, effective, and educational programming to address a wide range of issues through the lens of gender and sexuality. In addition to being the Director for Students for Change, Kaniya is the Co-President for the Black Student Union, an AUx Peer Facilitator, and a Teacher's Assistant for the SPA Leadership Program. When she is not on campus, Kaniya works as the Events Associate for the Arlington Chamber of Commerce.



Emily Warshaw graduated Cum Laude from American University with a BA in Elementary Education and minors in Sociology and Special Education. She is currently a graduate student at American University completing a Masters in Special Education. She has completed six internships including at the Smithsonian Gardens and she was a volunteer teacher for Columbia University's Youth Remote Learning Initiative. She is currently serving as a Fellow at the Lab School of Washington and was selected as a Student Associate for Anna Deavere Smith through American University's Sine Institute. She is passionate about science, American Sign Language (ASL), performing arts, singing, and rowing.



Jane Caroline Fusco is a sophomore in the School of Communication majoring in Journalism, with an emphasis in Broadcast. She is currently working as an intern at CNN as part of the production team on *The Lead with Jake Tapper*. Jane is also an anchor and reporter at ATV, the school's student-run television station. Last summer, she worked as a news intern at WECT in Wilmington, North Carolina, where she reported and produced stories that appeared on the air. Jane is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Juan P. Villasmil graduated from American University with a degree in international studies. Aside from his work in the foreign policy world, writing for publications like *The National Interest* and *International Policy Digest*, JP also has domestic policy and journalism experience. He interned with Senator Marco Rubio, participated in Heritage's Young Leaders Program, and assisted former Governor Doug Ducey as a Sine Institute Student Associate. He was one of the main contributors in *The Wall Street Journal's* Future View Snapchat show, and he has been featured on Telemundo, Fox News, MSNBC, *The American Spectator*, and others.



Travis Meuwissen is a second-year masters student studying Public Policy student at American University. Before arriving in DC, Travis spent eight years working in Oregon politics ranging in fields from campaign management, legislative staff, and health care advocacy. Travis was born and raised in Oregon. True to his Pacific Northwest roots, his favorite activities include hiking, swimming, and finding new local craft brews.



Samantha Hessel is a freshman undergraduate student at American University currently studying Political Science. Originally from Breckenridge, Colorado, Samantha has always had an interest in policy and politics, and is constantly inspired whilst attending school in Washington, D.C.



More Information about the Sine Institute



The Sine Institute is a laboratory for university-wide collaboration and an incubator for policy innovation, convening the best and the brightest in the public, private, academic, and nonprofit sectors, as well as journalism.

Today's interconnected world offers an unprecedented opportunity to bring together experts, top scholars, and students in research and scholarship to work on the nation's most pressing challenges in a way that promotes common ground and nonpartisan policy solutions. The Sine Institute of Policy & Politics seizes that opportunity at a defining moment for our democracy and the world. American University's capital city location at the nexus of government and a growing international business center connects diverse perspectives from around the world.

Alongside world-class academics and research-experienced practitioners in international and domestic affairs, leaders in business, nonprofits, and government, and one of the most politically-active student bodies in the U.S., Sine works toward real, lasting change in policy and politics. The Sine Institute stands apart through its focus on the role of business and the nonprofit community in public policy, the rise of importance of economic regions in the United States, and the impact of international policy issues.

Drawing on their expertise in government, politics, academia, journalism, nonprofits, business, and other areas, Sine Institute Fellows uncover new policy solutions and problem solving methods informed by evidence and cross-sector perspectives. Each Fellow is asked to explore a timely aspect of policy and politics that will benefit from these dynamic conversations. In our interconnected world, policy changes ripple through our nation at the federal level and have significant consequences at the regional level. Those ripples cross sectors and impact international and national affairs as well as our local communities. This complex influence is at the core of the conversation topics discussed and debated by Sine Fellows.