



College Board Swing State Education Survey



HART
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

*Key findings from survey among
voters in nine key swing states
conducted March 15 – 20, 2012
for College Board*

Methodology

- ▶ From March 15 to 20, 2012, Hart Research and North Star Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey on behalf of College Board among 1,839 registered voters across nine key swing states: three in the Southeast, three in the Southwest, and three in industrial states.
- ▶ Approximately 200 interviews were conducted among registered voters (exact sample sizes in following table) in each of the nine swing states in the sample. For reporting purposes, each state was weighted to reflect its proportion of the electorate across these nine swing states.

	Number of Interviews	Weighted Proportion of Swing State Voters
<u>Southeast Swing States</u>	<u>601</u>	<u>46.3%</u>
Florida	200	23.1%
North Carolina	201	12.9%
Virginia	200	10.3%
<u>Industrial Swing States</u>	<u>606</u>	<u>42.0%</u>
Ohio	204	16.2%
Pennsylvania	201	17.4%
Wisconsin	201	8.4%
<u>Southwest Swing States</u>	<u>632</u>	<u>11.7%</u>
Colorado	215	6.6%
Nevada	216	2.9%
New Mexico	201	2.2%

Overview

- ▶ Education is a top issue for voters in this year's elections, ranked only behind jobs and the economy and on par with government spending.
- ▶ Focusing on education is seen as a means of getting the economy back on track.
 - Large majorities of swing state voters believe improving access to a quality education will have a big impact on America's ability to compete in the global economy, young people's ability to get good jobs, and the quality and safety of communities.
- ▶ Three in four voters believe that a post-secondary degree is important to achieving success in the workplace.
- ▶ Candidates who place a priority on education are viewed through a positive lens. They are seen as "forward looking," "caring about ensuring opportunities for all," "in touch with the concerns of the average family," and "understanding what it takes to compete in today's global economy."

Overview

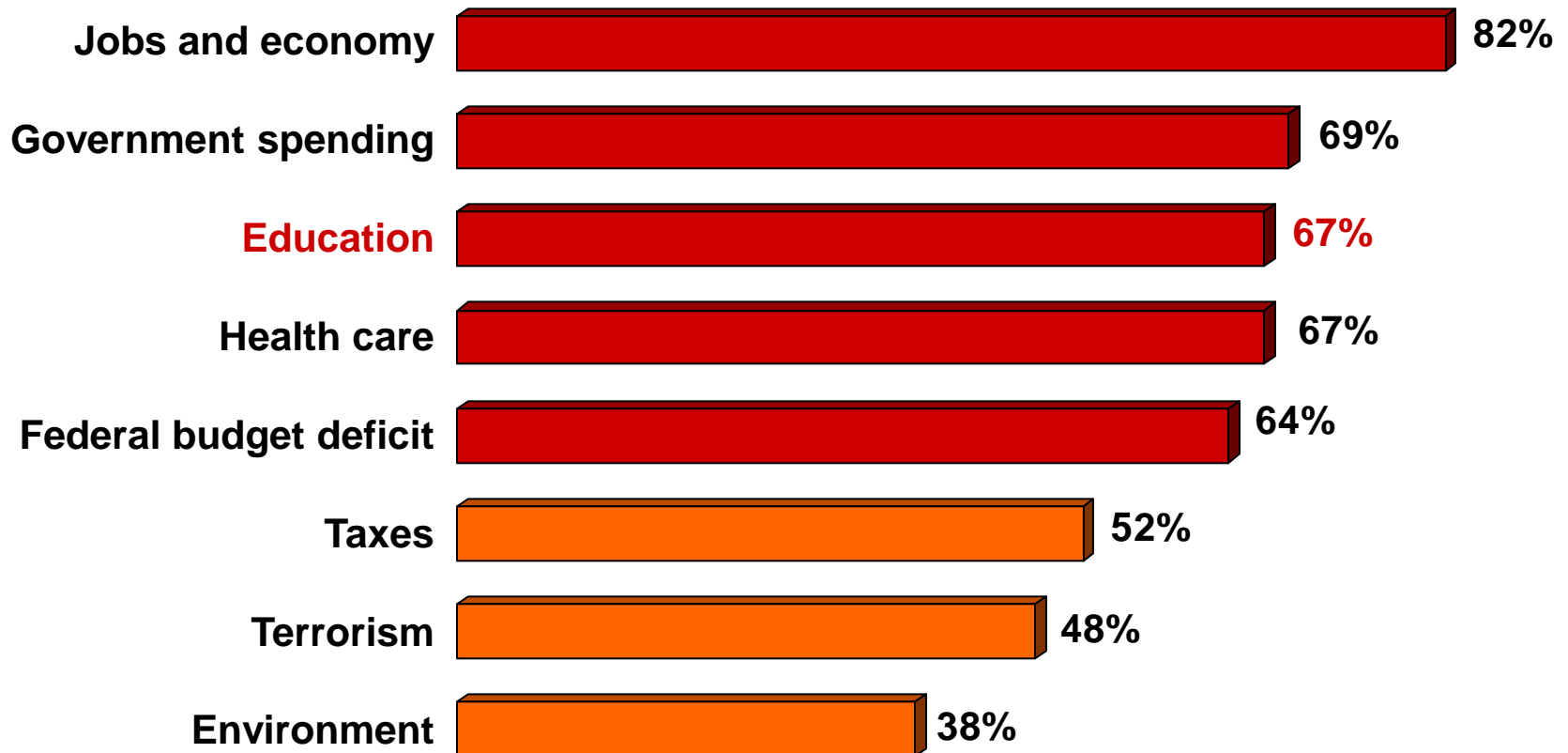
- ▶ There is widespread support for increased funding of education, and a majority of voters (55%) would be willing to pay \$200 more in taxes to do so.
- ▶ Voters say increased public funds for education should be used to ensure elementary and secondary schools offer well rounded curricula in arts, music, physical education, and to hold down the cost of college tuition.
- ▶ At the state level, education is seen as a top policy priority, while feelings toward the federal government's role in education are mixed. Three in four believe education is an important issue for the president and Congress to address, but the majority say the federal government is doing too much that would be better left to the states.

Overview

- ▶ Nevertheless, voters say increasing the affordability of college, ensuring students graduate high school, and improving the quality of public schools should be top goals for the president and Congress to address.
- ▶ In terms of the upcoming elections, voters look more favorably on candidates whose education positions address college affordability and emphasize the importance of making America a leader again in post-secondary degrees.
- ▶ Democrats are slightly better positioned than Republicans when it comes to reflecting the priorities of swing state voters on the issue of education. Yet, neither party enjoys a distinct advantage.

Education is a top-tier issue for voters in this year's elections for president and Congress.

This issue is extremely important to me in this year's elections for president and U.S. Congress:



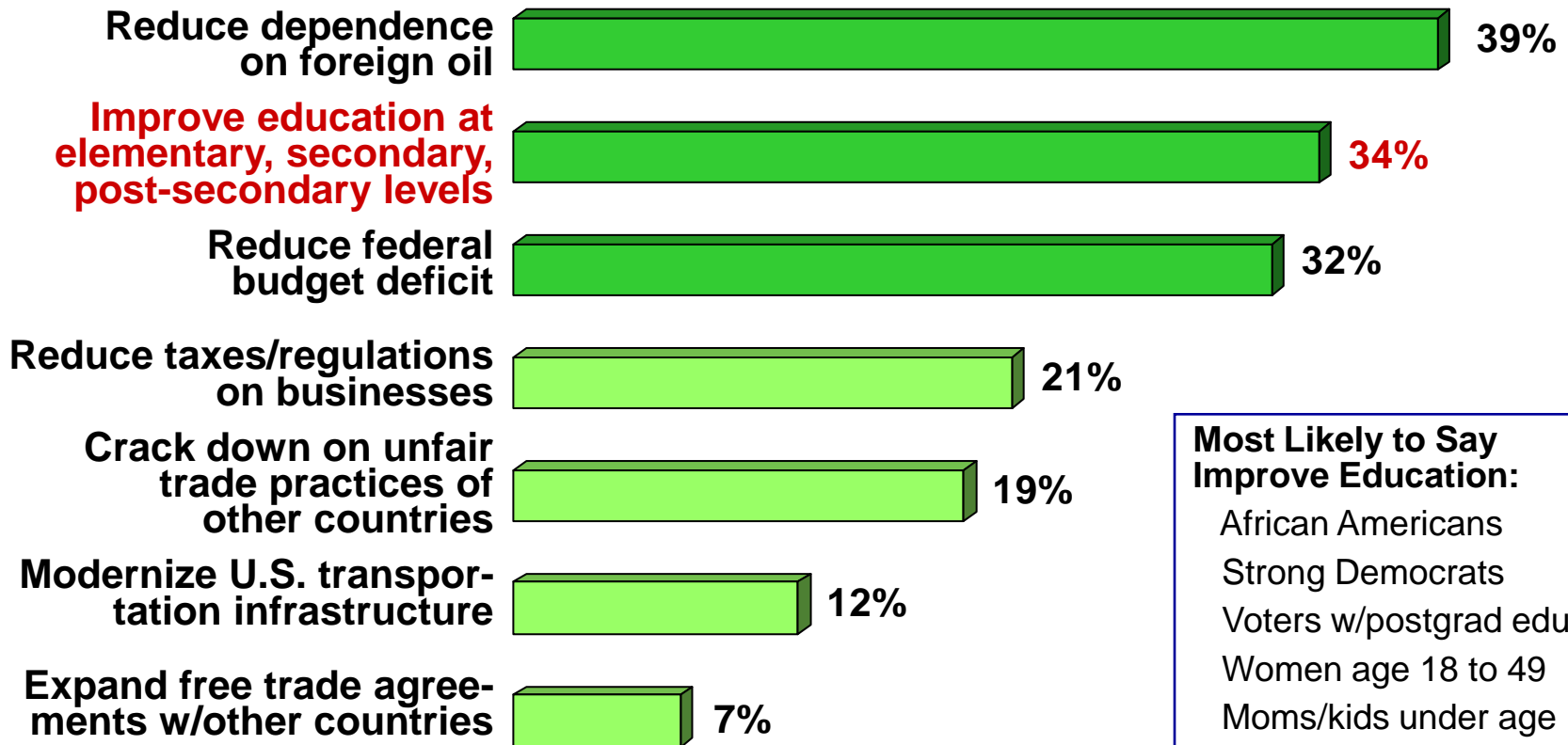
The importance voters place on education in this year's elections for president and Congress varies most notably by gender, race, and party identification.

***Education** is extremely important to me in this year's elections for president and U.S. Congress:*

Men	58%	Southeast states	72%
Women	75%	Industrial states	62%
Men age 18 to 49	61%	Southwest states	64%
Men age 50/over	54%	Democrats	79%
Women age 18 to 49	77%	Independents	63%
Women age 50/over	73%	Republican	53%
High school or less	70%	Democratic men	71%
Some college	66%	Democratic women	84%
Four-year college grad	60%	Independent men	57%
Postgraduate work	71%	Independent women	70%
Whites	62%	Republican men	43%
African Americans	91%	Republican women	65%
Hispanics	81%		

Education is important to voters because they see it as one of the priorities for getting the economy back on track.

Which one or two of these will be most important for getting America's economy on the right track?



Voters recognize that putting a higher priority on improving education can impact the success of individuals, communities, and the country.

If the U.S. put a higher priority on improving education and making sure students have access to a quality education, how much impact do you think that would have on the following?

Very big impact Fairly big impact

America's ability to compete successfully in the global economy



The likelihood that young people can get good jobs in the future

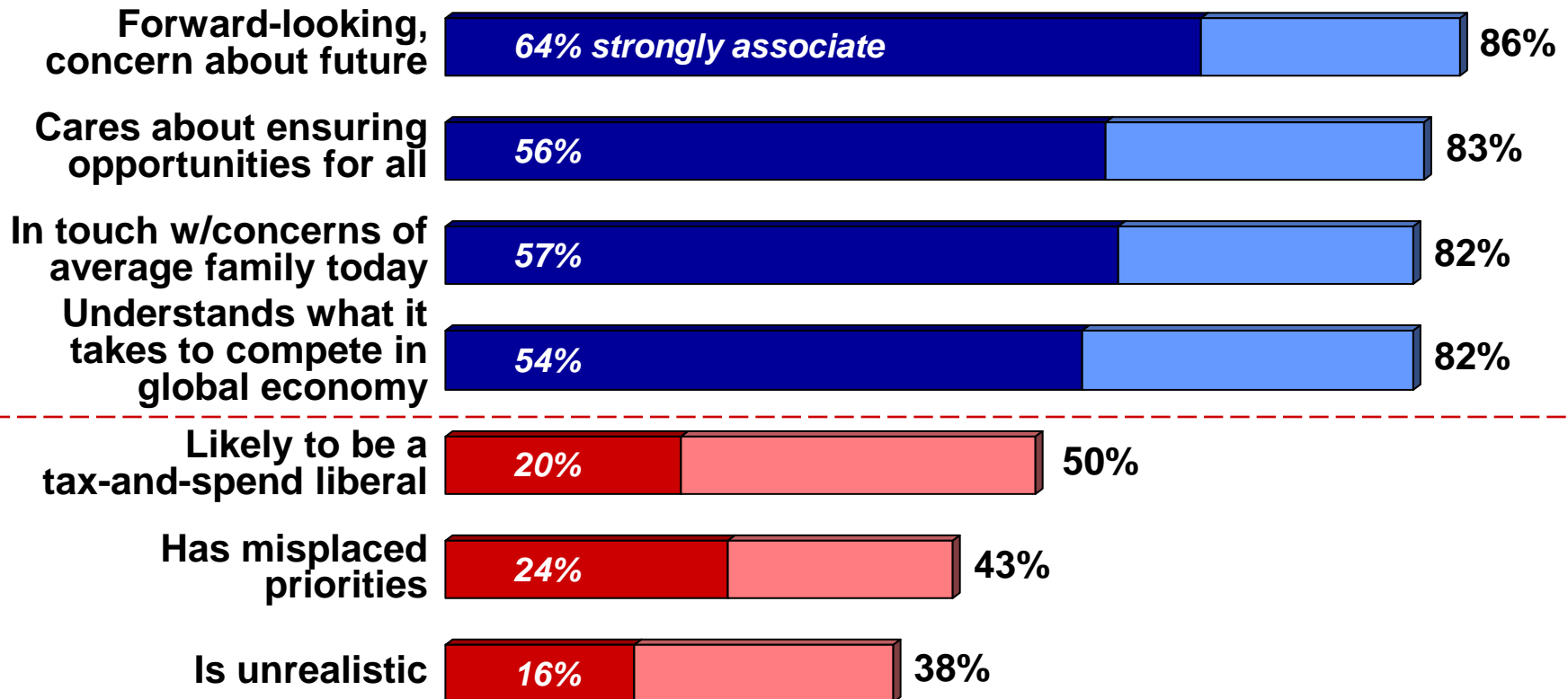


Making our communities better and safer places to live



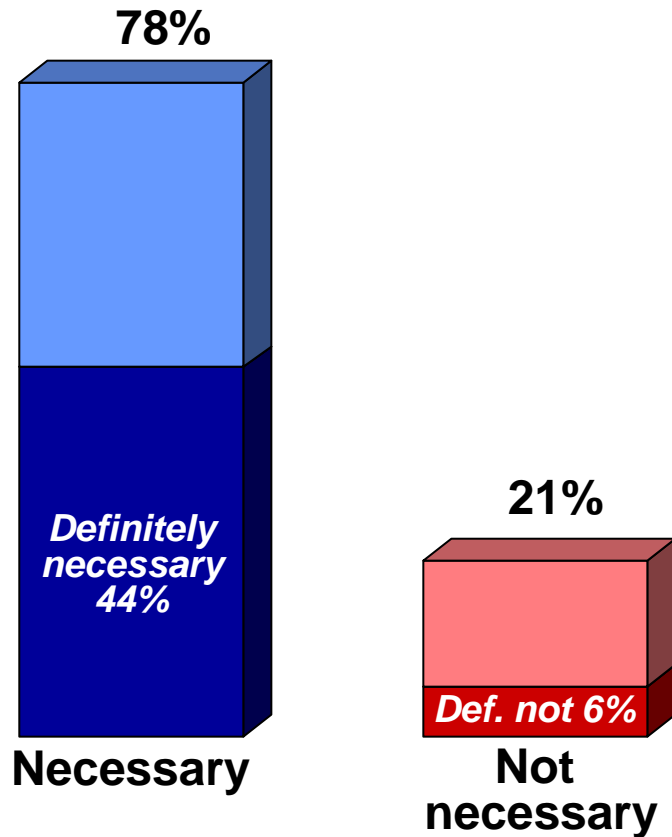
Voters infer many positive attributes about a candidate whom they hear places a priority on education.

I strongly or somewhat associate this phrase with a candidate who puts a top priority on education:



A large majority of voters believes that increased funding for education is necessary, including four in nine who say it is definitely necessary.

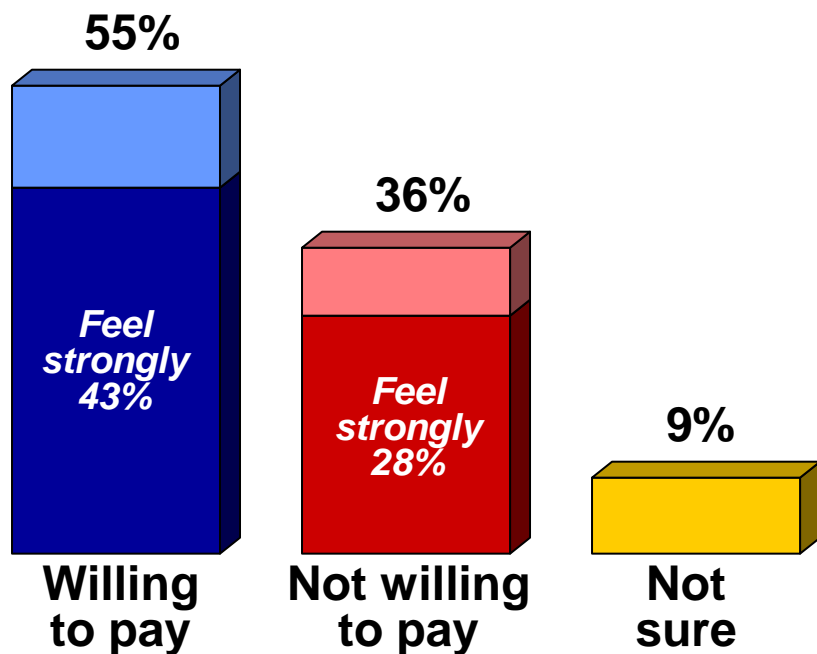
Do you think increased funding for education is necessary?



	Total Necessary	Definitely Necessary
Men	73%	36%
Women	82%	51%
Whites	74%	38%
African Americans	97%	78%
Hispanics	85%	57%
Democrats	94%	64%
Independents	75%	40%
Republicans	62%	24%
Democratic men	93%	55%
Democratic women	93%	69%
Independent men	69%	36%
Independent women	83%	46%
Republican men	61%	21%
Republican women	64%	29%
Education Importance in Elections		
Extremely important	88%	57%
Less important	58%	18%

A 55% majority of voters would be willing to pay \$200 more in taxes to provide increased funding for education.

Would you personally be willing to pay \$200 per year in higher taxes in order to provide increased funding for education?



Voters Most Willing to Pay \$200 More in Taxes for Education

African Americans	76%
Democratic men	75%
Voters w/postgrad education	72%
Democratic women	68%
Voters w/over \$80K income	67%
Women age 18 to 49	65%

Education Voters* Willing to Pay \$200 More

Democrats	73%
Independents	64%
Republicans	52%

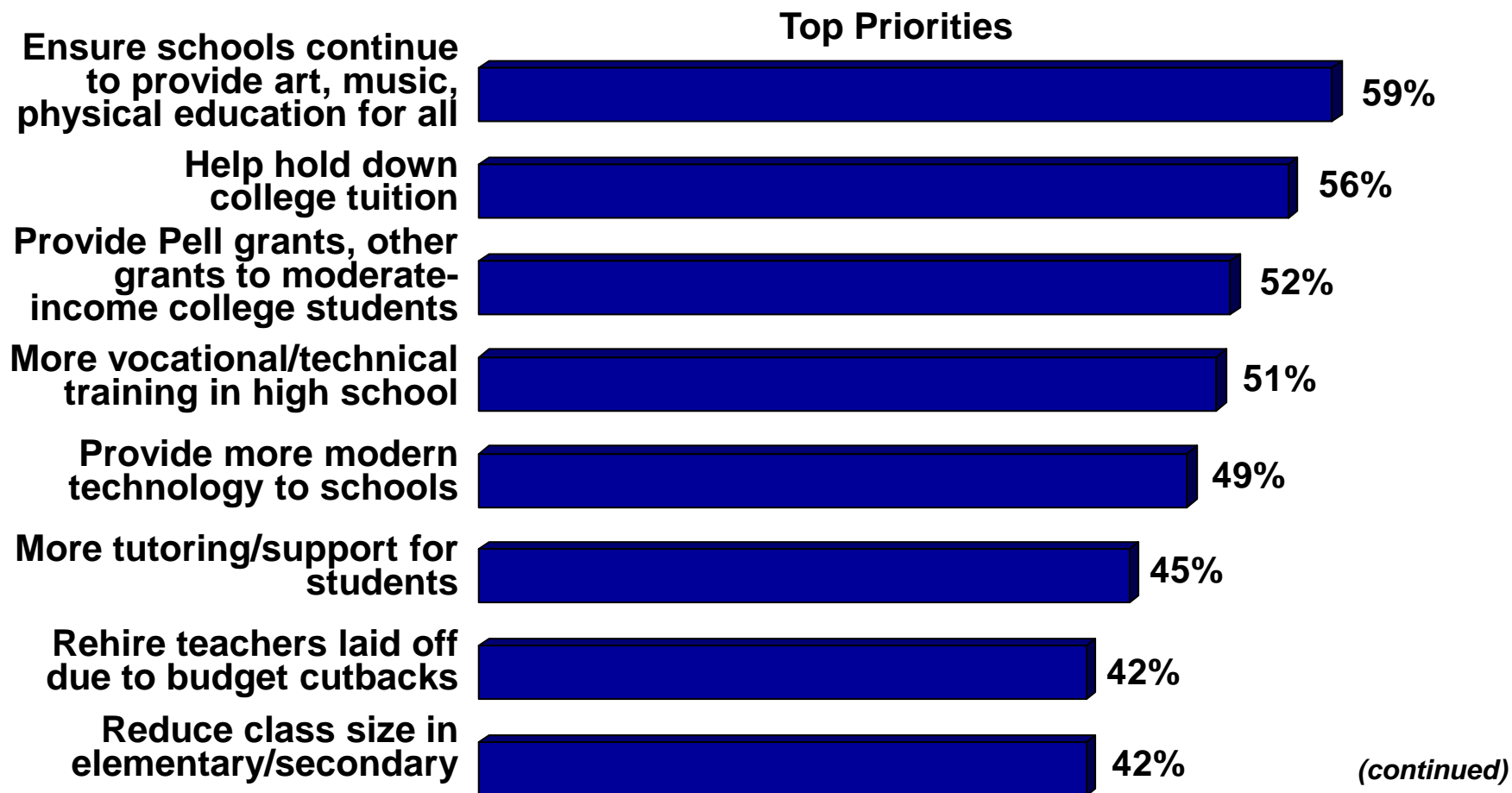
* Voters who say education is extremely important in this year's elections

The main reasons voters are not willing to pay more in taxes are that taxes are already high and money is not being well spent.

Reasons Willing to Pay More in Taxes	58%
Needed, important, priority	11%
Children not getting good education	7%
Education is key, foundation of nation	7%
Small price to pay, not much to pay	7%
Can get better jobs, opportunities if educated	4%
Reasons Not Willing to Pay More in Taxes	42%
Pay too much in taxes already	11%
Money not spent well, not used wisely	9%
Can't afford, on fixed income	7%
Money is not the problem, throwing money at education won't fix it	3%
Money isn't going to education, money not going where it should	2%

Voters' priorities for funding emphasize affordability of post-secondary education and ensuring that elementary/secondary schools offer well-rounded curricula.

Extremely important way to use increased funding for education:

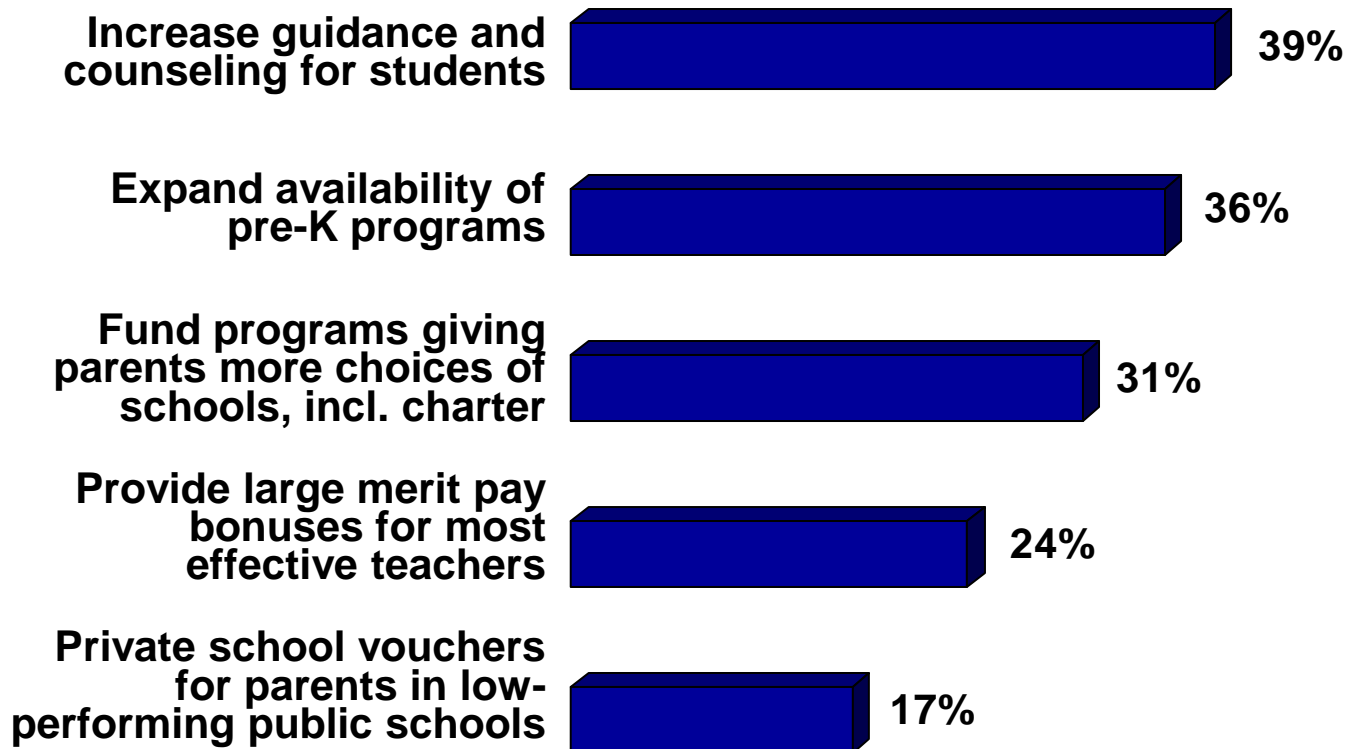


Voters see other funding goals as less important.

Extremely important way to use increased funding for education:

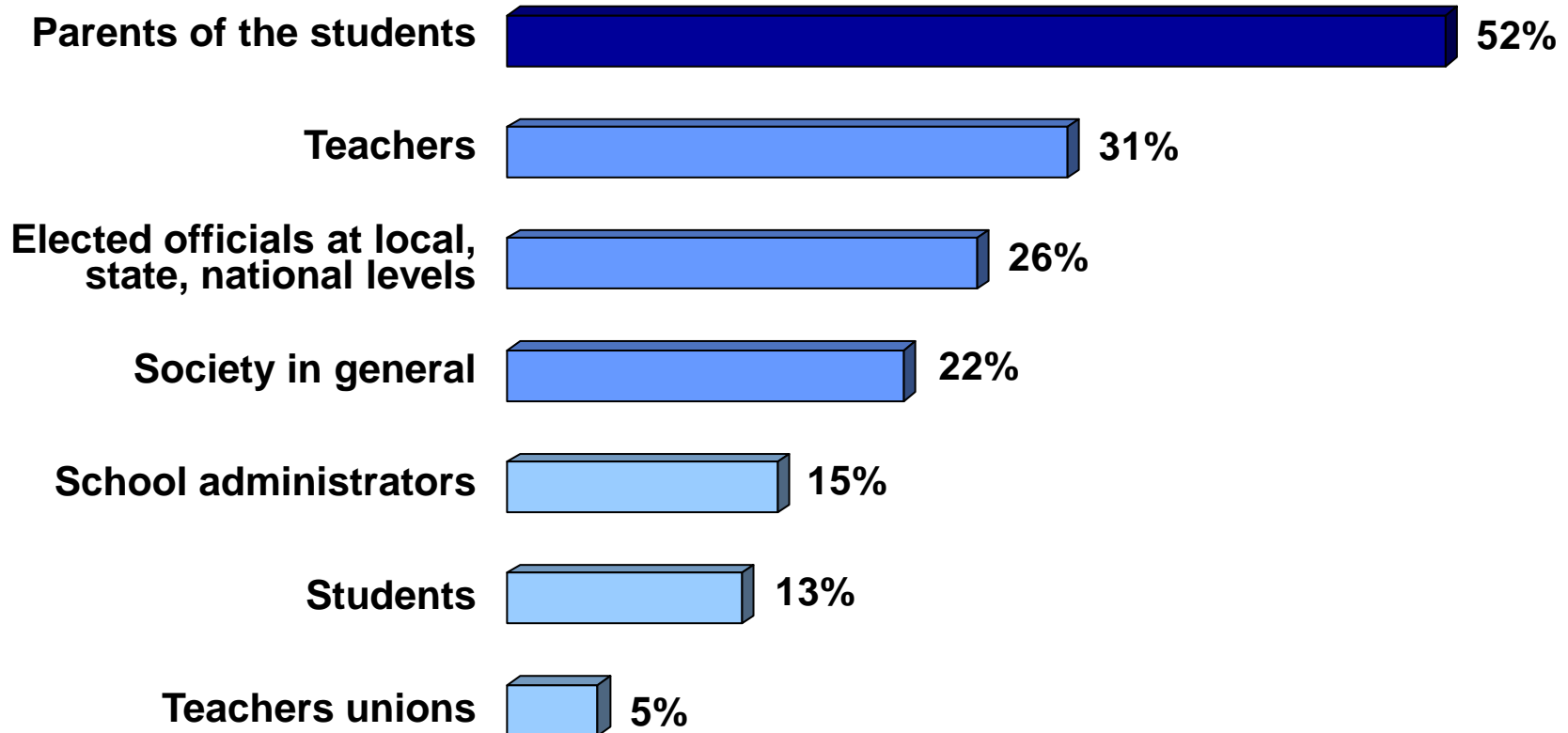
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Lesser Priorities



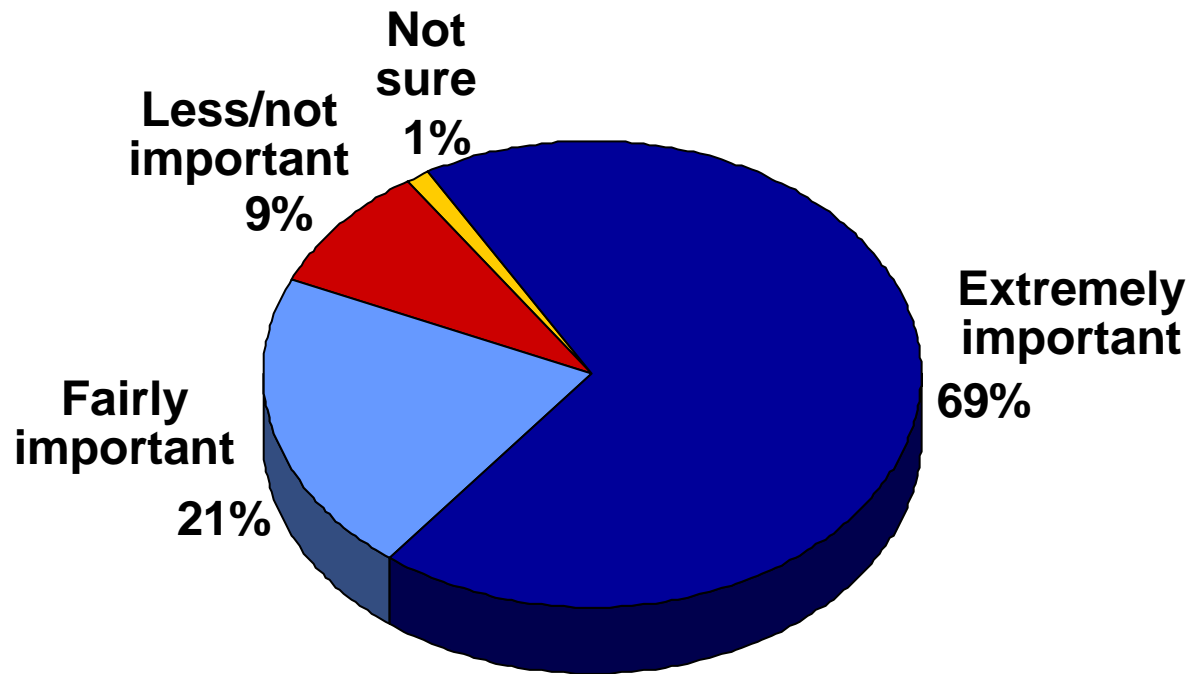
Voters believe that parents, not elected officials, have the greatest responsibility for improving education.

Which one or two of these groups have the greatest responsibility for improving education in the U.S. today?



Nonetheless, there is broad consensus that state government officials should address education as a state priority.

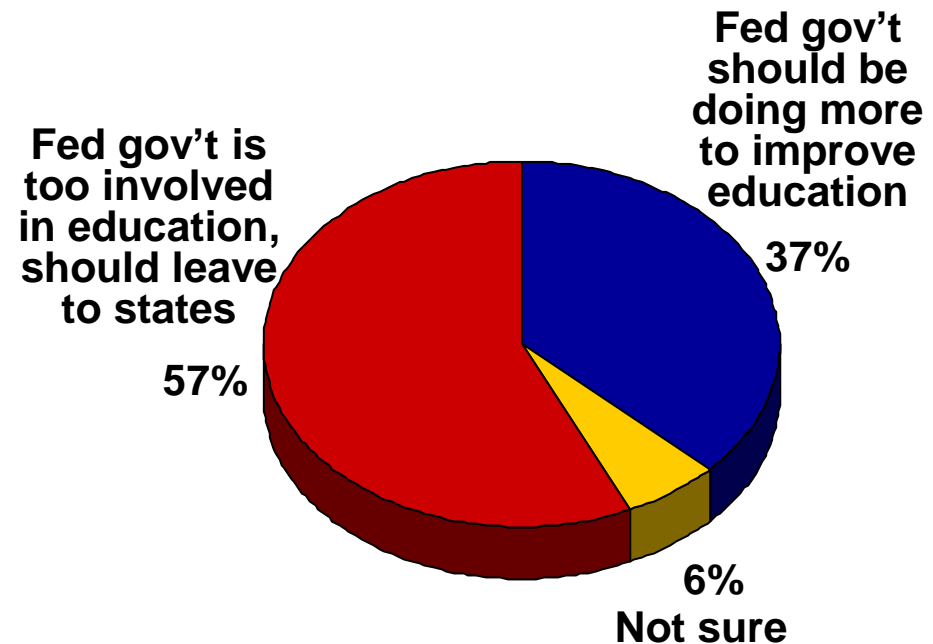
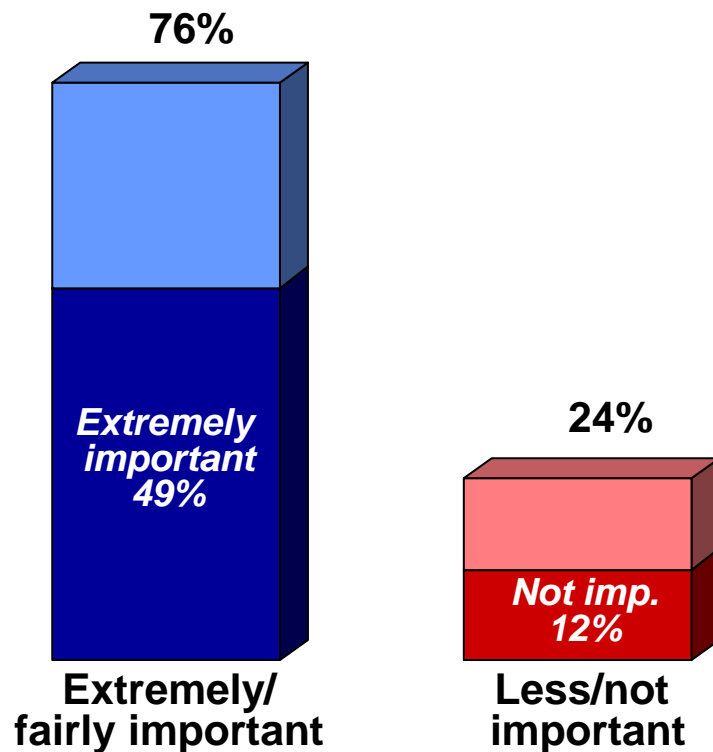
How important is it for your governor and state legislature to address the issue of education as a matter of state policy?



Attitudes about the federal government's role are more complex.

Three in four say it is important for the president and Congress to make education a national priority:

But a majority thinks the federal government is too involved in education:



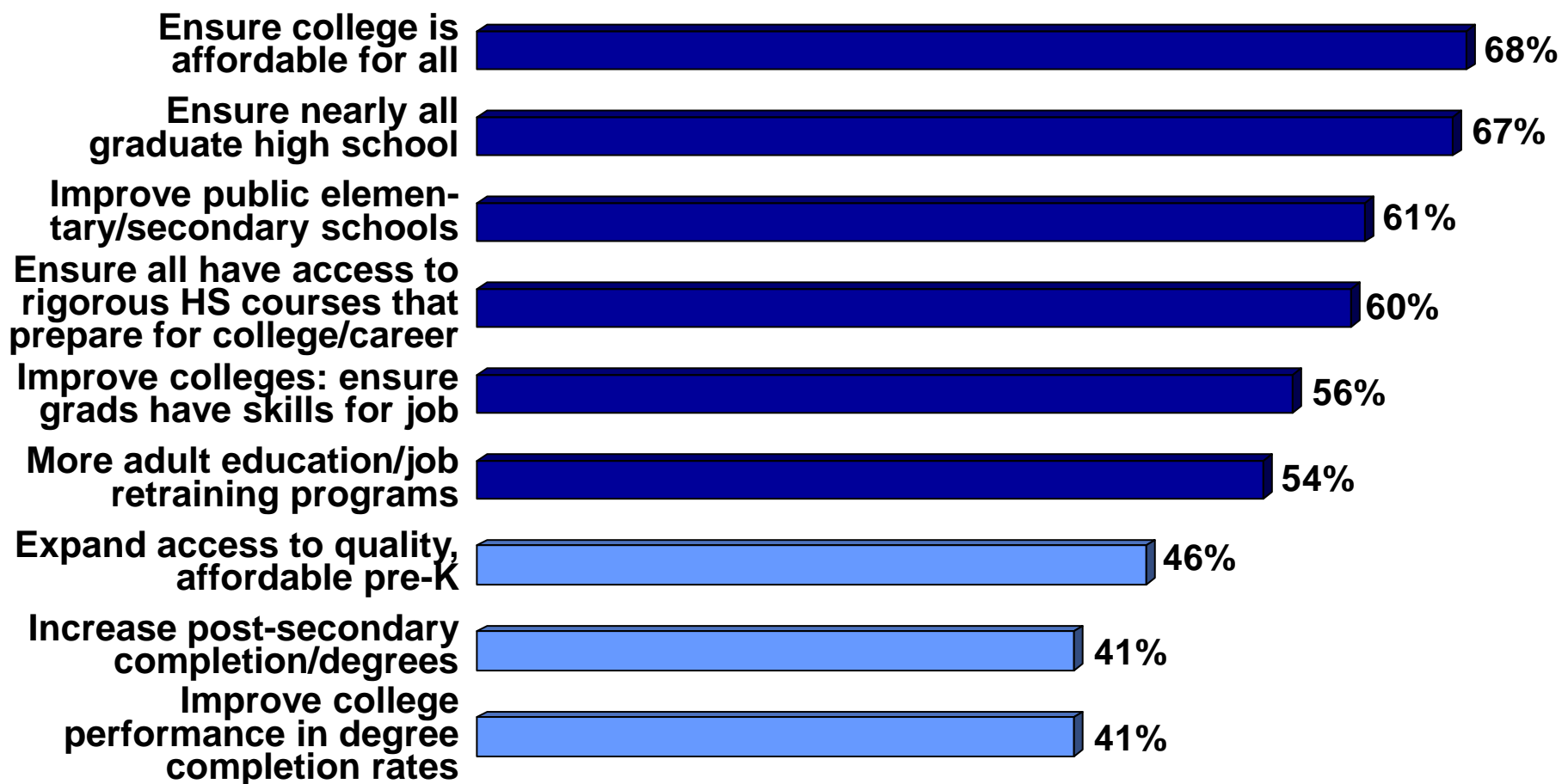
Views on the federal government's role in education vary.

Preference for Federal Government in Education

	Should be doing more to improve education	Already too involved/leave up to states
Age 18 to 34	51%	45%
Age 35 to 49	38%	54%
Age 50 to 64	35%	59%
Age 65/over	29%	67%
High school/less education	34%	60%
Some college	39%	56%
Four-year college grads	34%	61%
Postgraduate education	45%	48%
Whites	30%	64%
African Americans	75%	20%
Hispanics	52%	47%
Southeast states	39%	55%
Industrial states	36%	59%
Southwest states	35%	58%
Democrats	58%	36%
Independents	37%	57%
Republicans	16%	79%
Strong Democrats	61%	33%
Strong Republicans	15%	80%

Whatever their ambivalence about federal role, majorities say six of nine goals are extremely important for the president/Congress to address.

This is extremely important for the president and Congress to address



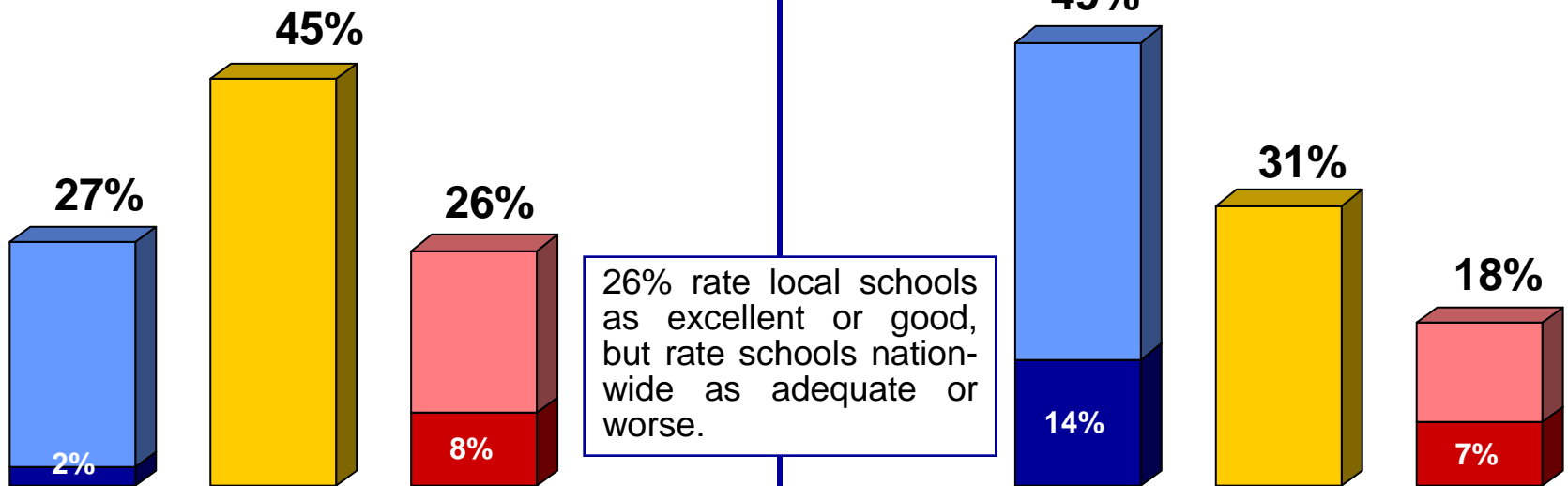
Voters give higher marks to local schools than to schools nationwide.

Ratings of Quality of Education and Level of Student Achievement



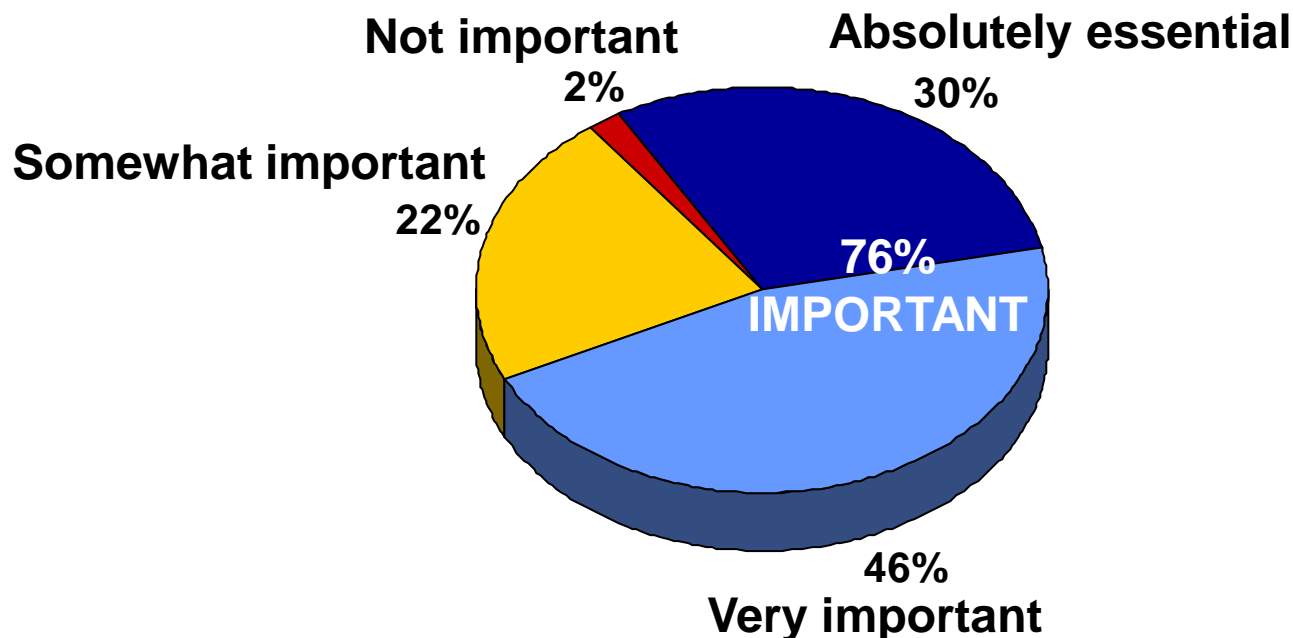
Nation's Public Schools

Local Public Schools



Three in four voters think that to achieve workplace success it is very important to gain a post-secondary degree or credential.

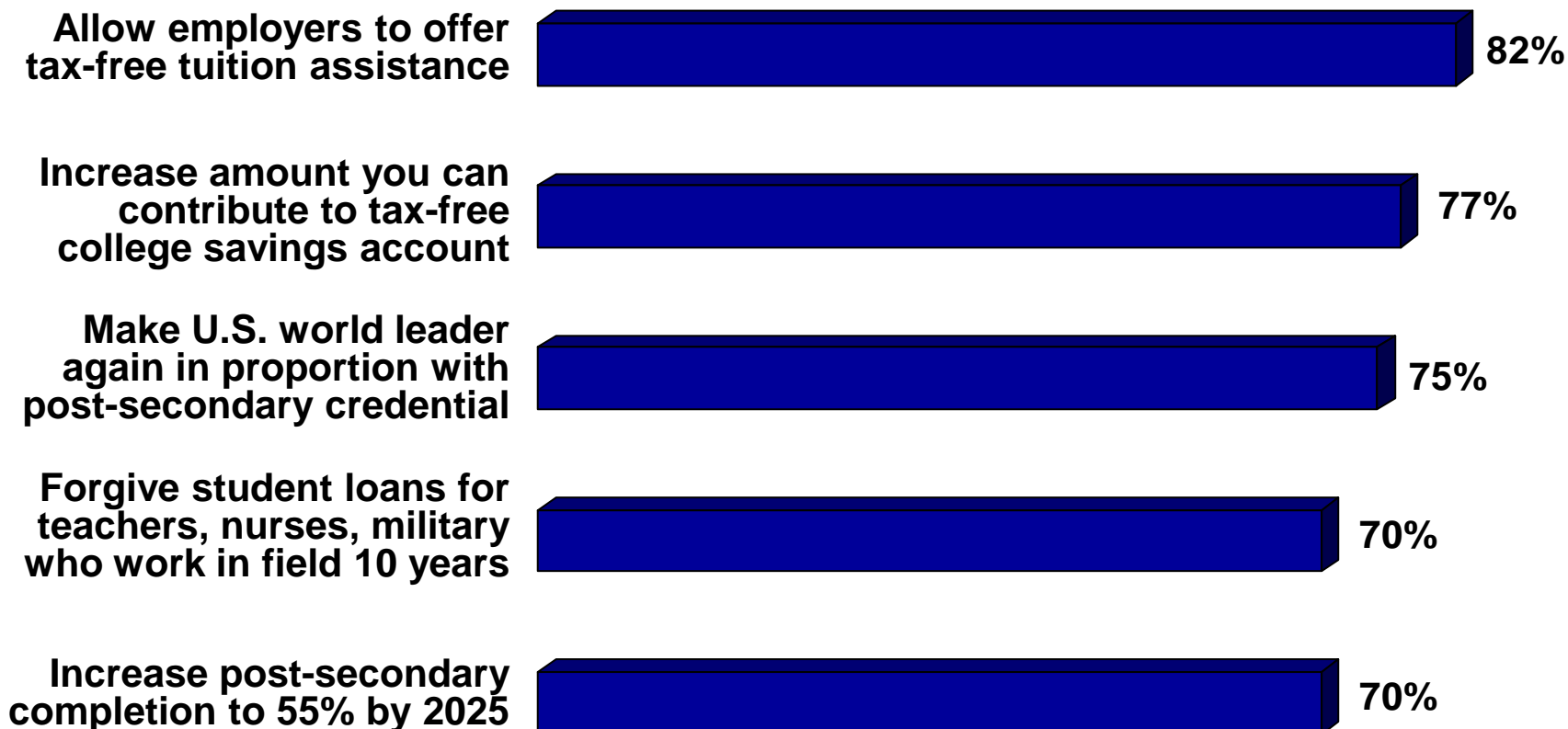
*In order to achieve success in the workplace, how important is it for individuals to complete education programs beyond high school and receive a post-secondary degree or credential?**



*Description prior to question: A post-secondary degree or credential beyond high school can include a degree or credential from a career, vocational, or technical program, an associate degree from a two-year community college, or a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university.

Many education positions taken by candidates are popular, especially those that address college affordability and emphasize the importance of making America a leader again in post-secondary degrees.

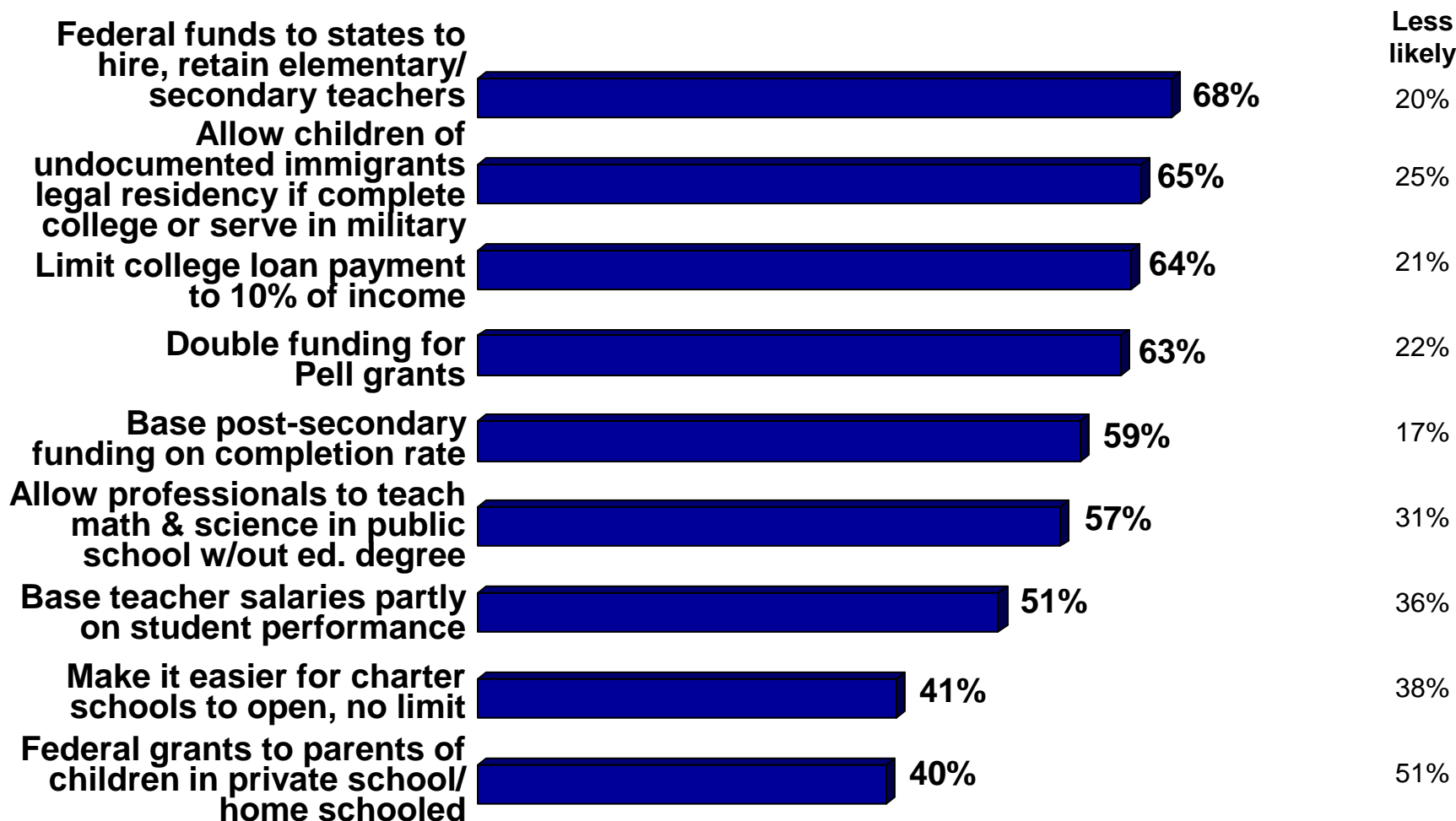
I would be more likely to vote for a candidate who takes this position:



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Various other education positions garner support.

I would be more likely to vote for a candidate who takes this position:



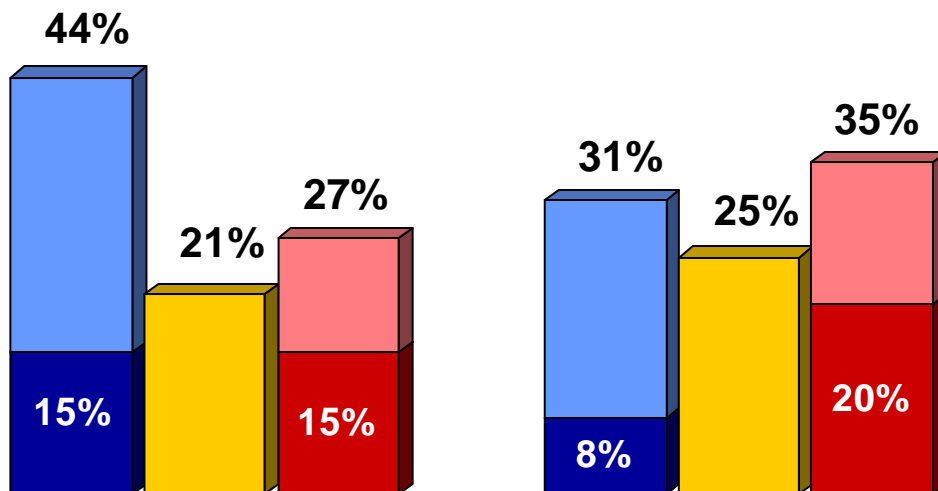
Democrats are just slightly better positioned than Republicans on the issue of education, but it is largely an issue up for grabs in this election.

How well does this party reflect your priorities on the issue of education?



Democratic Party

Republican Party



Democrats are more supportive of their party than Republicans are of the GOP. Few Independents say either party reflects their priorities.

The Democratic Party reflects my priorities very/fairly well:

All Democrats	74%
Strong Democrats	80%
Soft Democrats	59%
Independents	40%
Republicans	18%

The Republican Party reflects my priorities very/fairly well:

Democrats	18%
Independents	26%
All Republicans	52%
Strong Republicans	58%
Soft Republicans	41%

Questions?

- For more information, go to www.dontforgeted.org
- Media Contact: Peter Kauffmann, The College Board
212-713-8052 or communications@collegeboard.org