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TCCRI

Texas Conservative Coalition
Research Institute

School Finance and Property Tax Study

Texas Voters

**Survey conducted on January 14 – January 18, 2004 and
January 23 – January 24, 2004**

n = 1000, MoE = +/- 3.1% @ 95% Confidence Interval





Methodology

WRS was commissioned by the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute to conduct a research study of frequent voters in Texas.

Respondents were required to be over the age of 18 and self-report voting “most of the time” or more. Current Texas voter statistics were used for race, sex, and geographical location to ensure a sample that resembles the state.

Interviews were conducted January 14th through January 18th, and January 23rd through January 24th of 2004.

The study has a sample size of $n=1000$ with a margin of error equal to $\pm 3.2\%$ at the 95% confidence interval.

Statewide Survey: Voter Attitudes on School Finance and Education Reform



Top Line Results:

- Almost 76 percent of those polled said Texans pay enough in taxes and shouldn't pay any more. That holds true for all demographic groups.
- 67 percent said money should be taken from another area of government if education funding is increased.
- Performance and accountability are more important statewide than cutting property taxes and eliminating Robin Hood.
- Only 7.5 percent believe that state officials in Austin should solely be responsible for public school funding and control.
- Texans overwhelmingly prefer a local property tax to a statewide property tax. Given the choice of new funding options, voters prefer the sales tax over any other.
- Texans overwhelmingly endorse a proposal to cap residential property tax rates and the amount of property tax revenues local officials can collect.

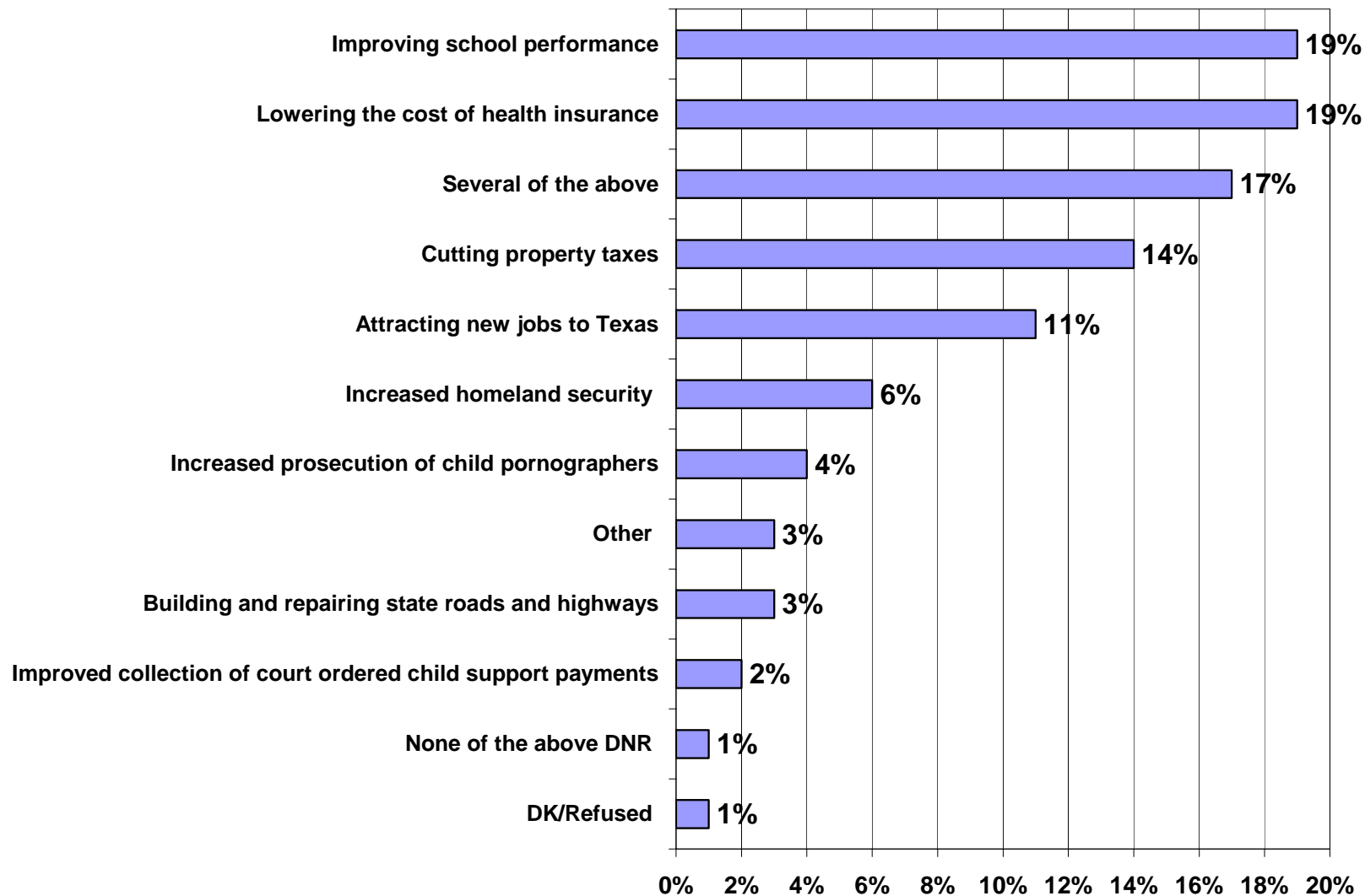


Higher Standards and Accountability

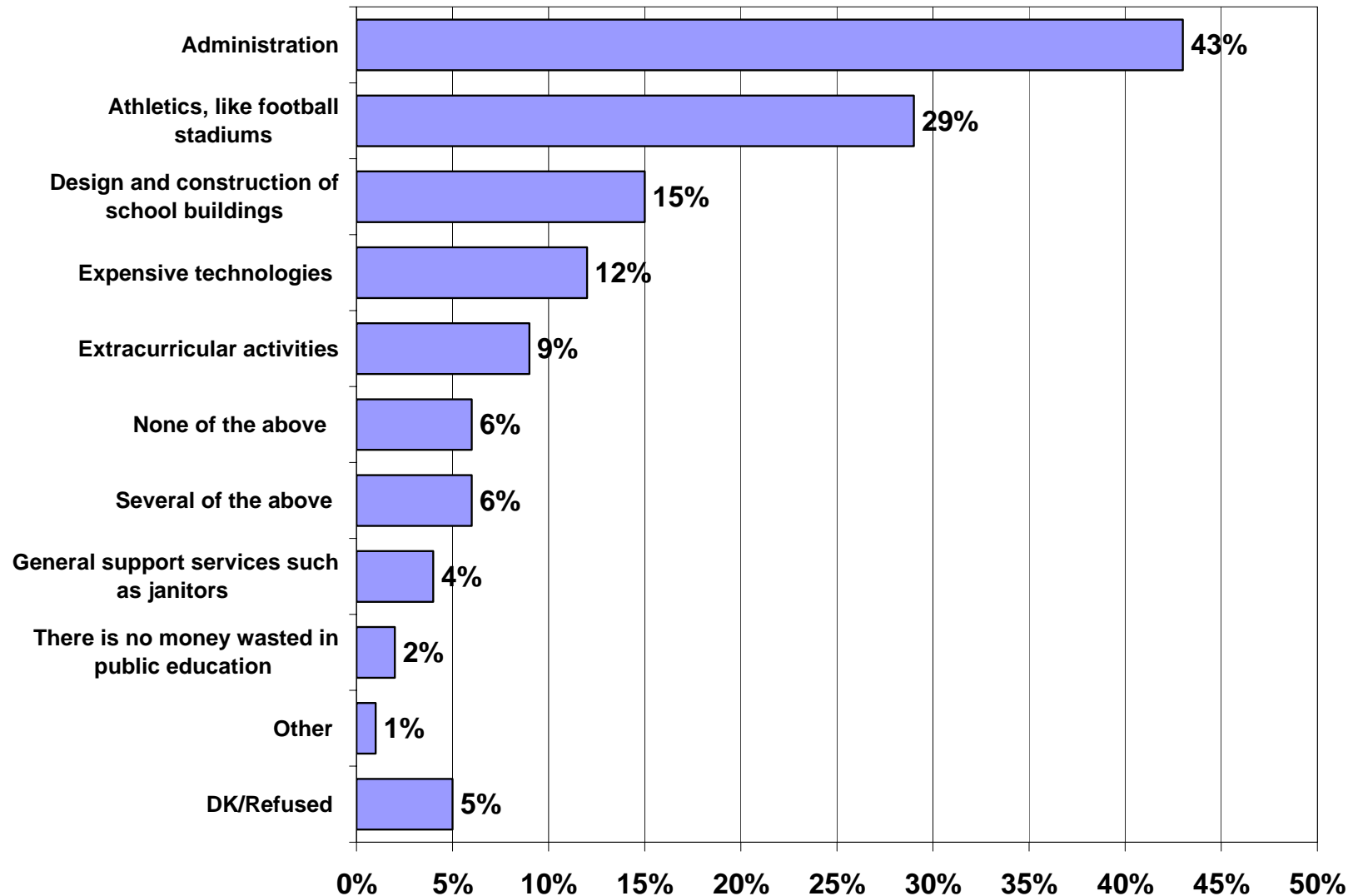
The following slides indicate that Texans want higher standards of performance and accountability in Texas schools.

Cutting property taxes is the number four issue statewide.

Of the following issues facing the state, which would you rank as the most important?



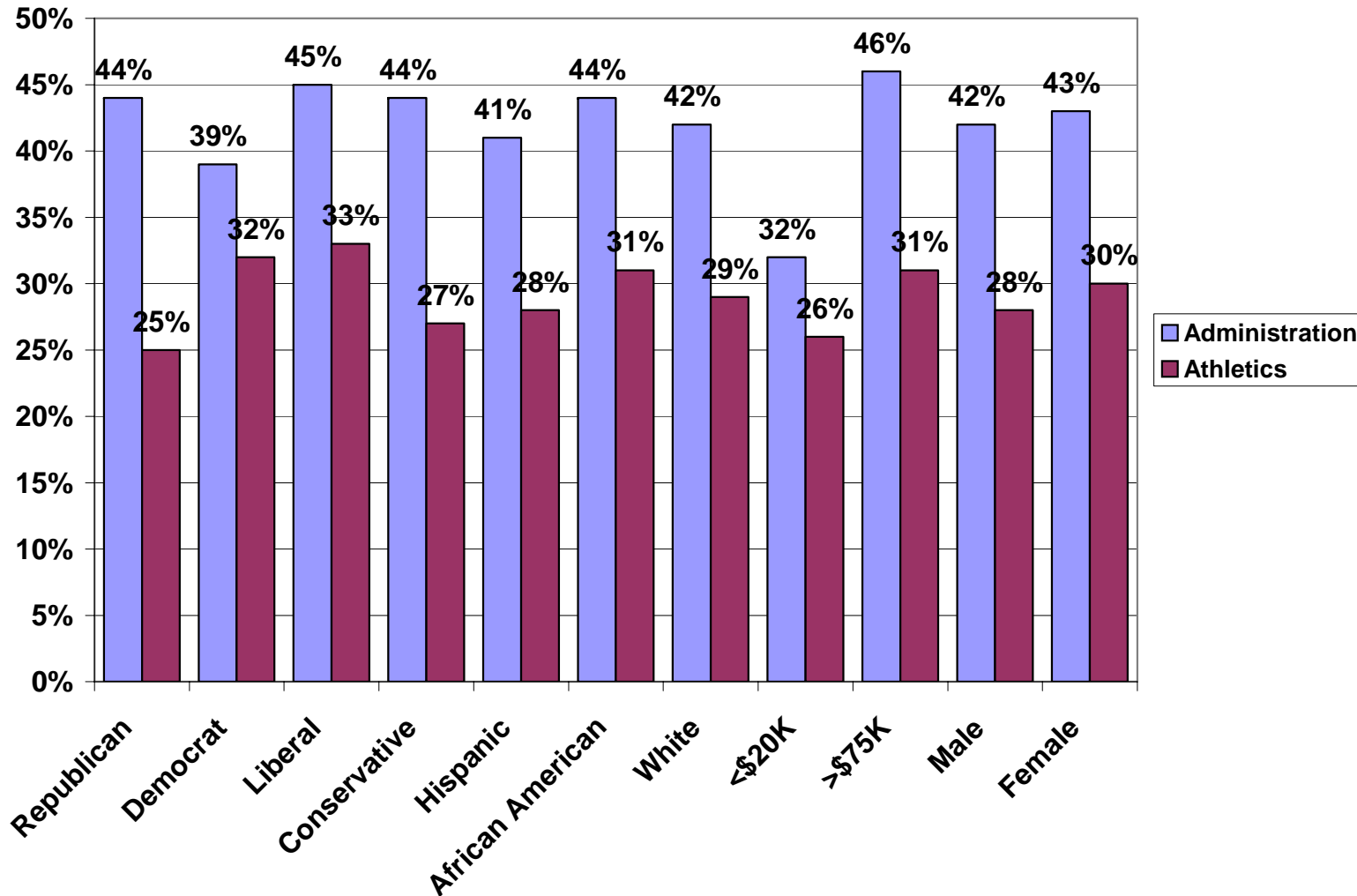
According to state records, approximately 52 cents of every education dollar goes into classroom instruction to pay for things like teacher salaries and textbooks. The other half is spent in other ways. Generally speaking, from the following list, where do you think your school district can spend less money to achieve cost savings?



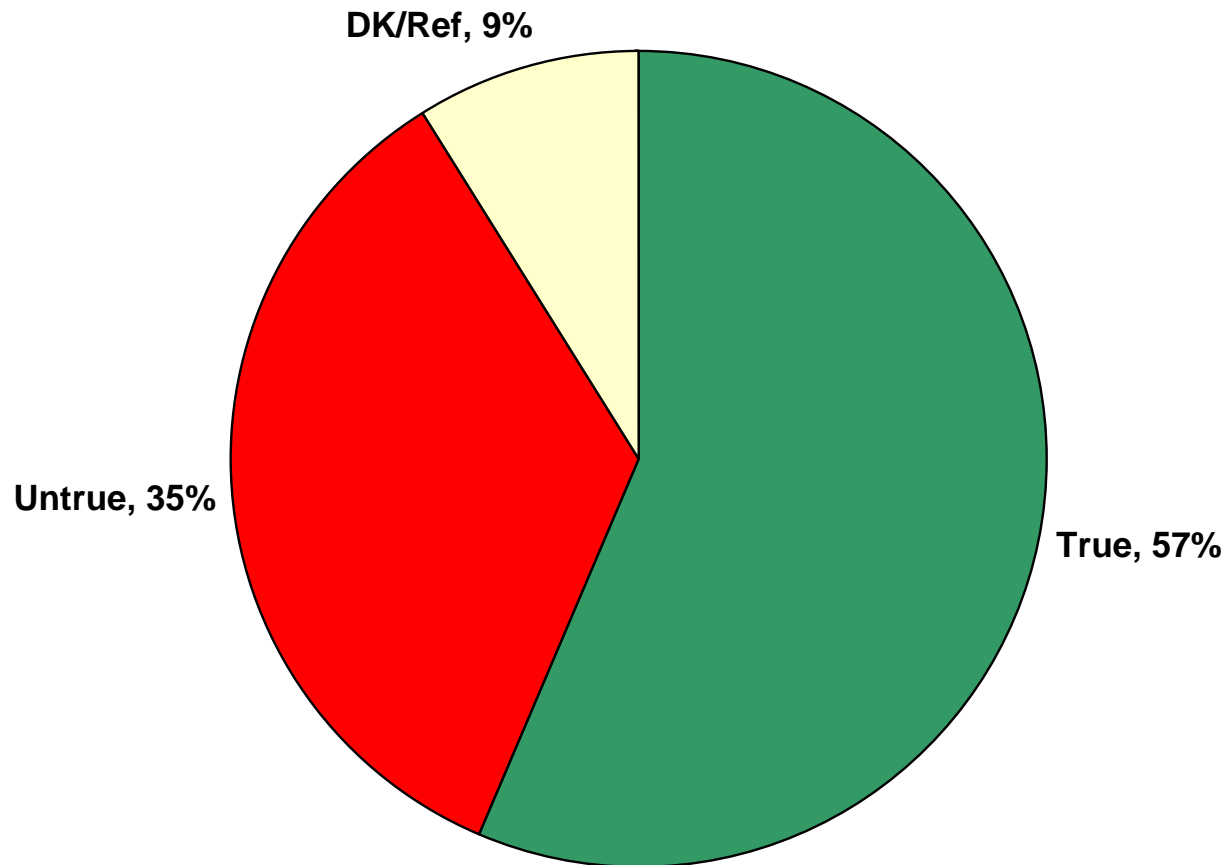
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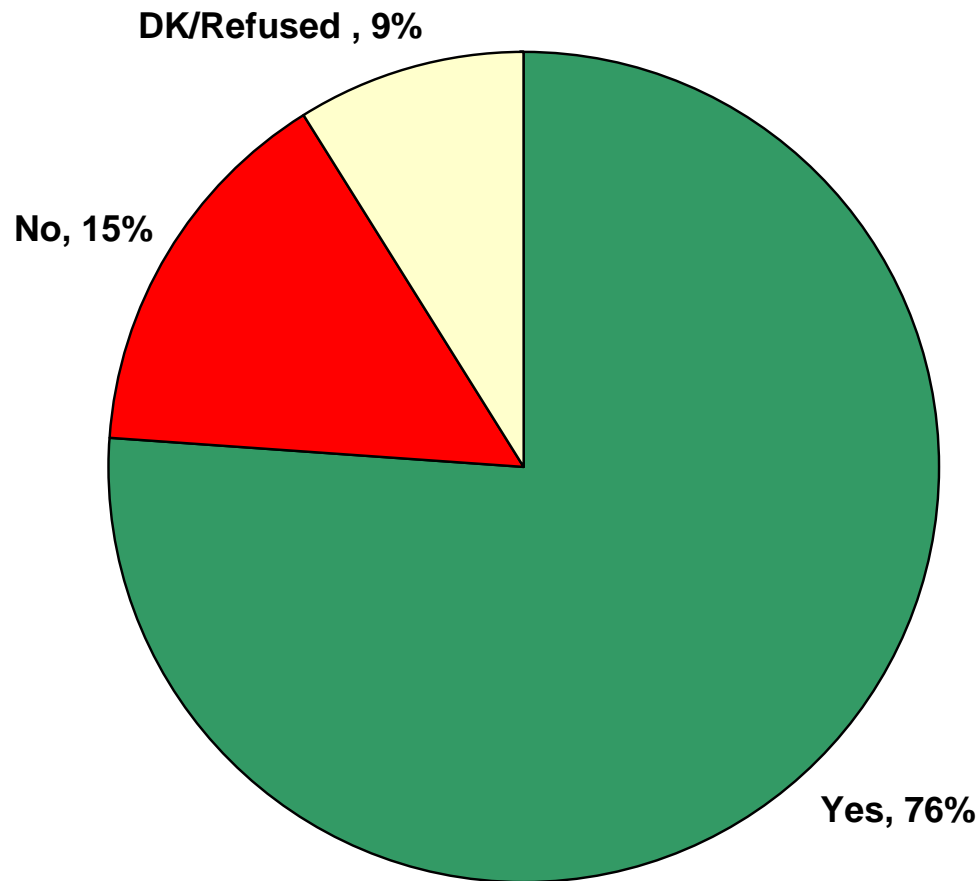
Top Two Answers Only



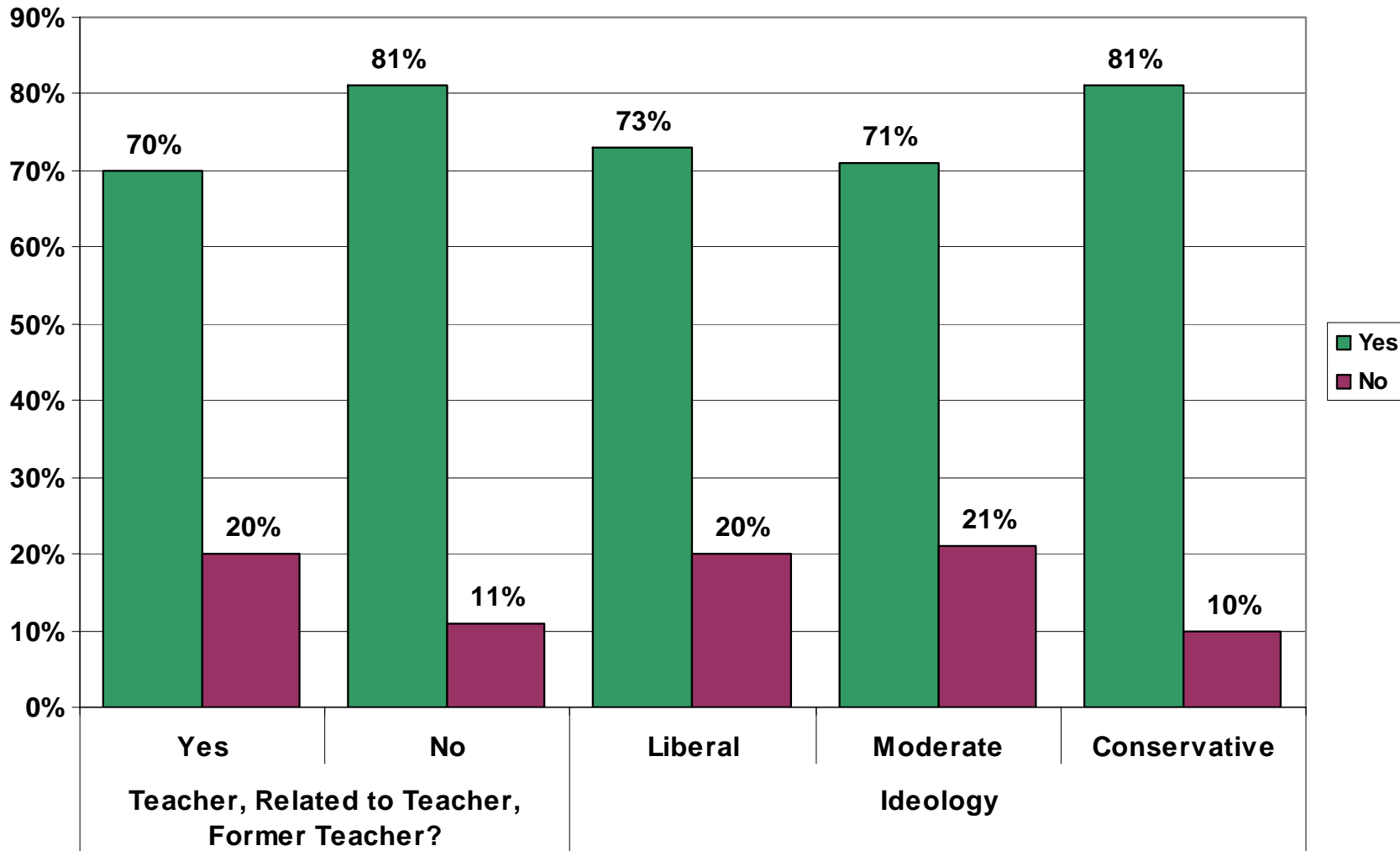
Please tell me if you believe the following statement to be true or untrue: The professional education establishment, including teachers' unions, administrators and superintendents are always asking for more money but they don't want to be held accountable for whether or not they are achieving results with that money.



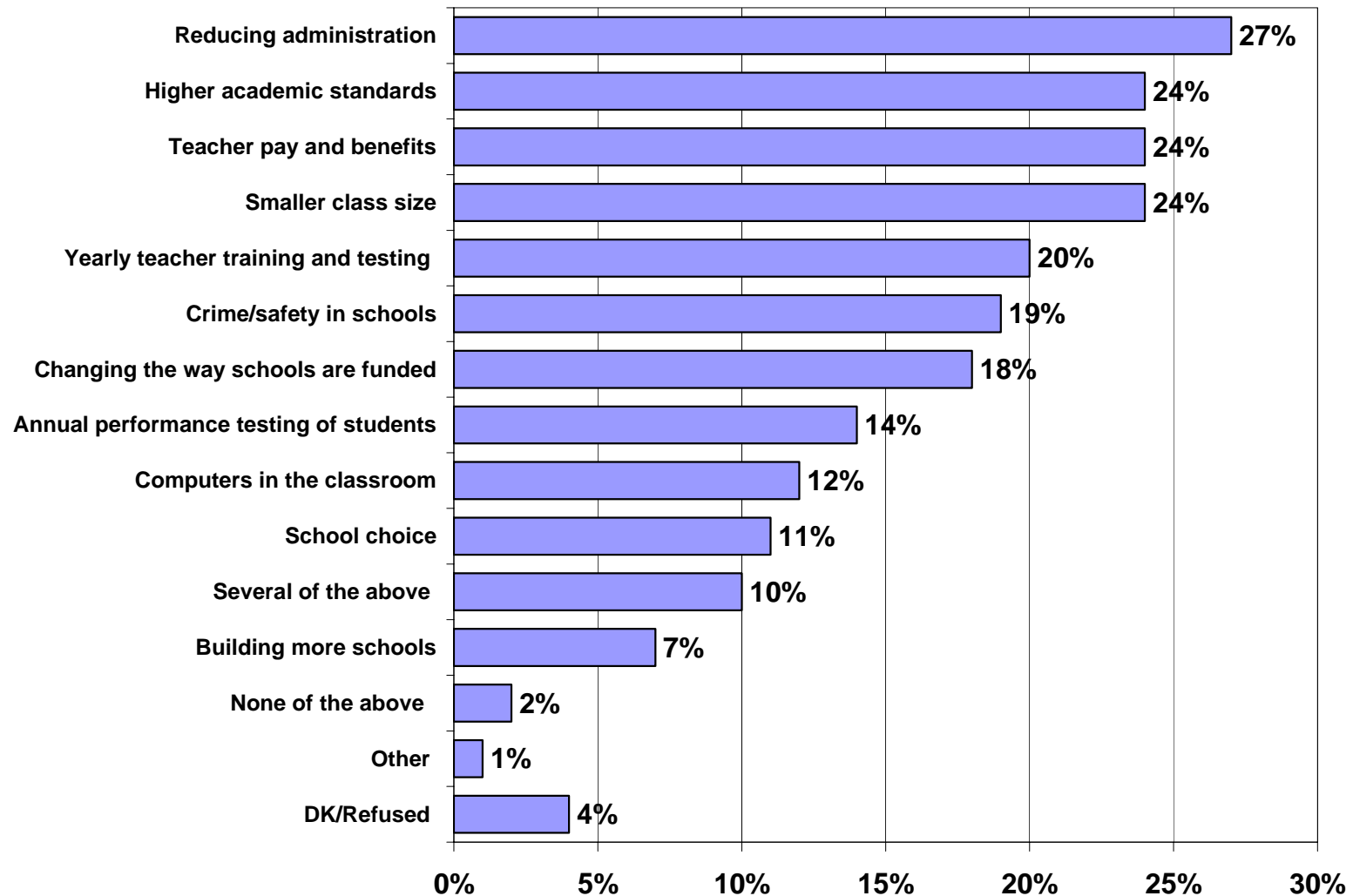
Should policies and procedures be changed to make it less costly and time consuming to discipline or dismiss teachers with a history of low performance?



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In your opinion, which of the following educational programs or initiatives should be a priority of the Legislature?





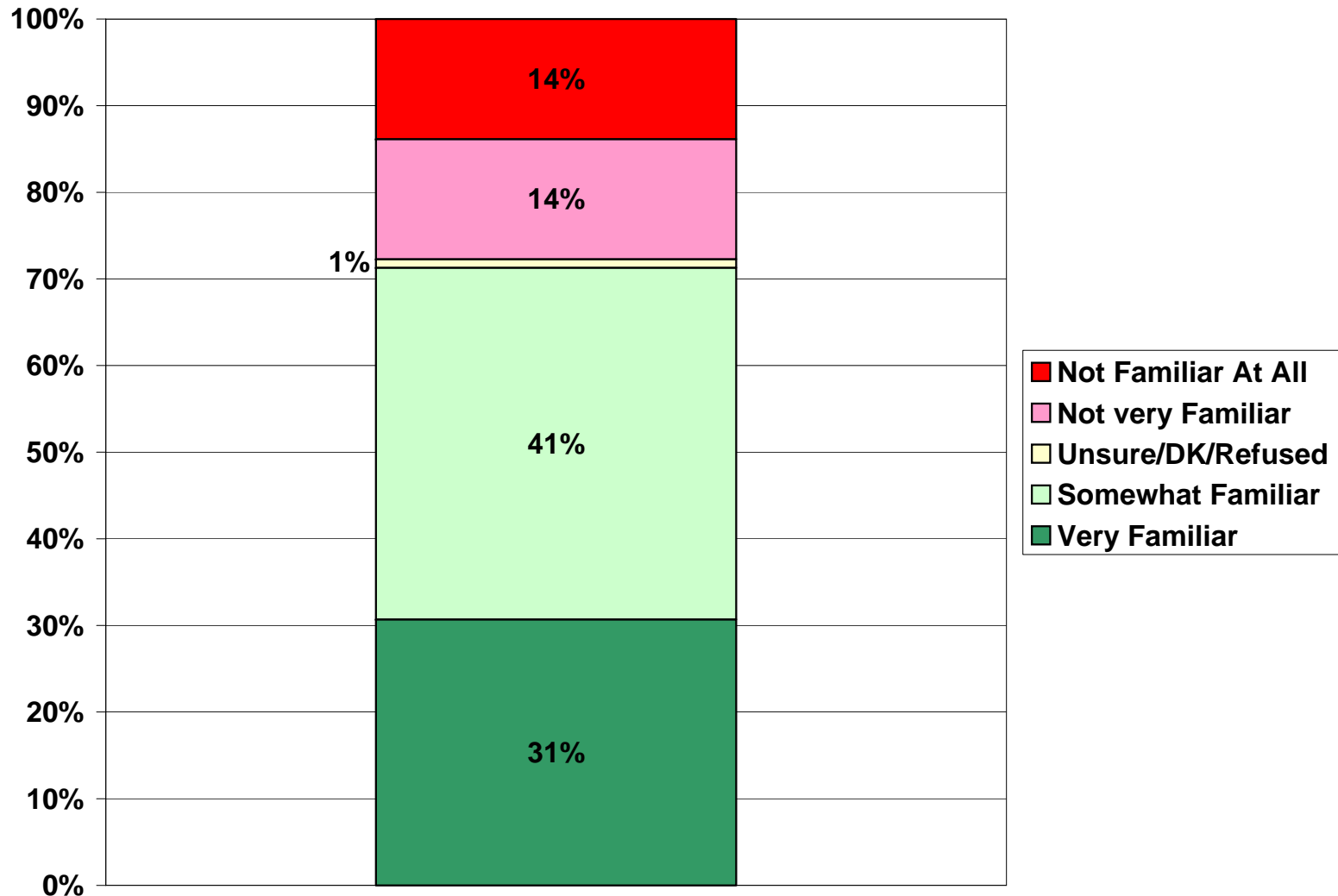
Robin Hood and Property Taxes

Because property taxes and Robin Hood touch communities differently, eliminating Robin Hood and cutting property taxes are not burning statewide issues.

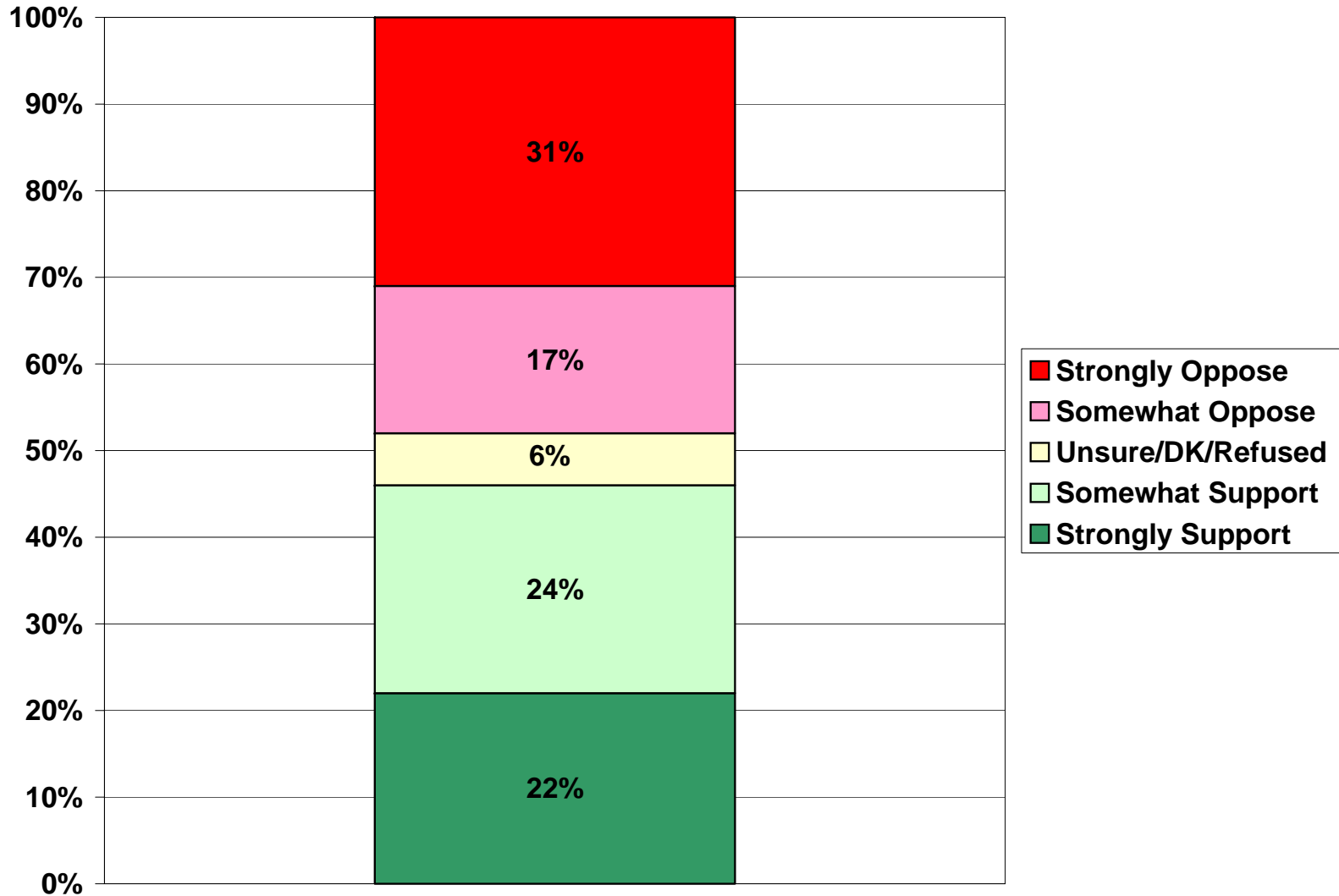
- A majority of Texans believe that property taxes are too high or much too high, however 42% believe that property taxes are “about right.”
- Additionally, by a slim margin of 48% - 42% Texans oppose the Robin Hood system of school finance with strongest support for Robin Hood in the Border area and the strongest opposition to Robin Hood in the Dallas area.

However, Texans definitely do not want higher property taxes, and believe strongly in capping property taxes and revenues generated from property taxes.

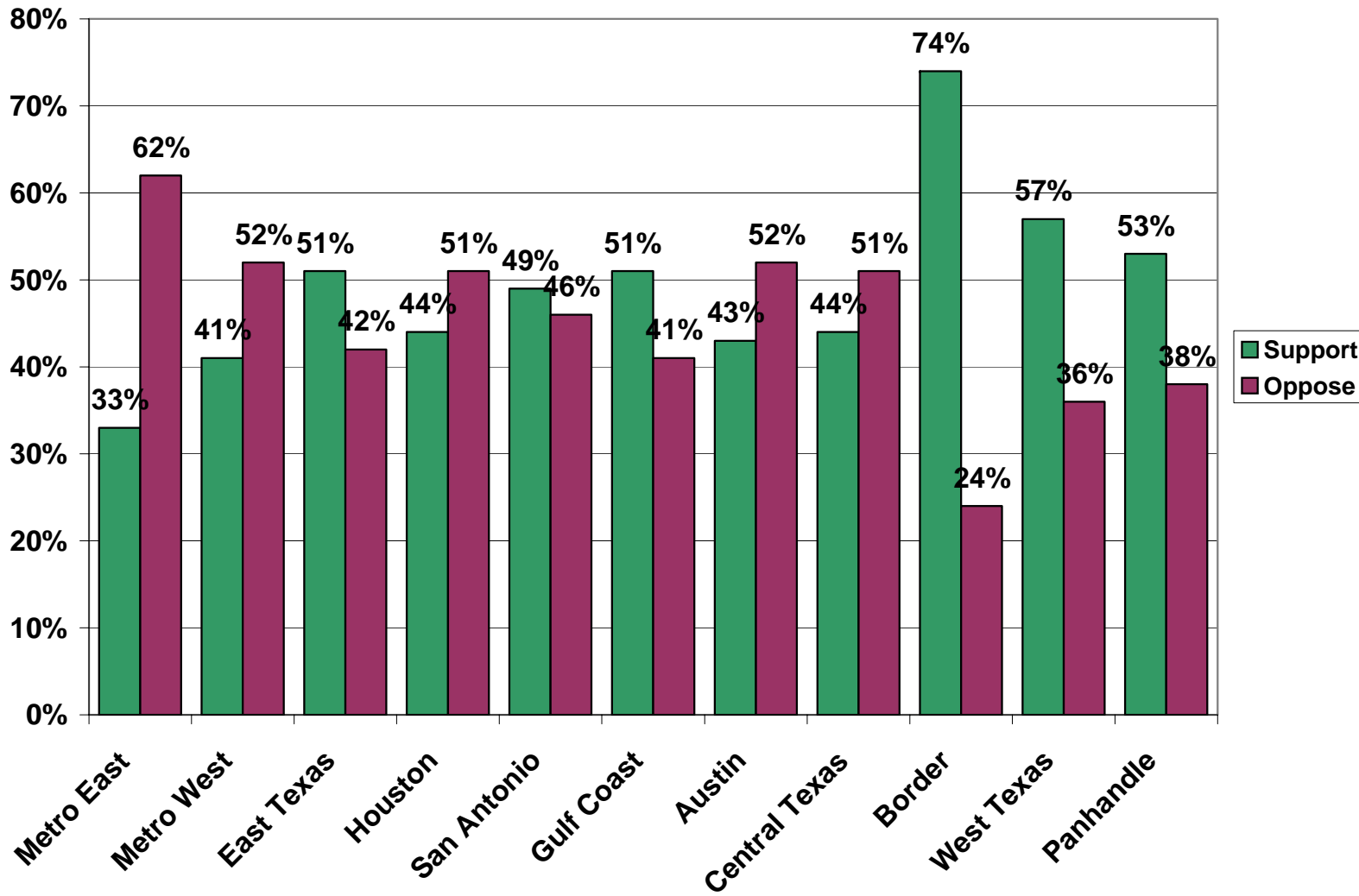
How familiar are you with a state school finance policy nicknamed “Robin Hood?”



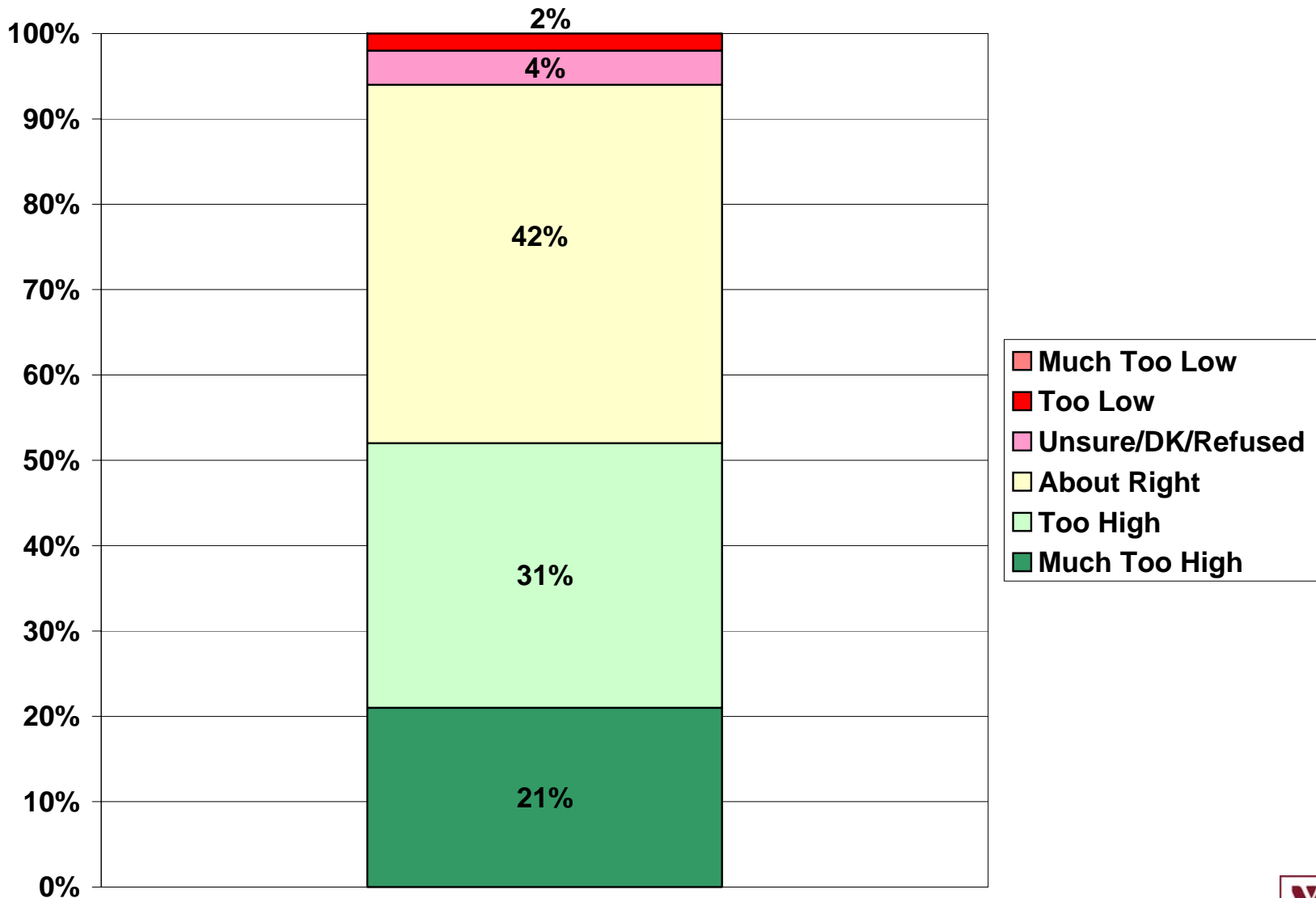
Robin Hood refers to a state education finance policy that redistributes local taxes from rich school districts to poor school districts to equalize education spending statewide
Generally speaking, would you say you support or oppose Robin Hood?



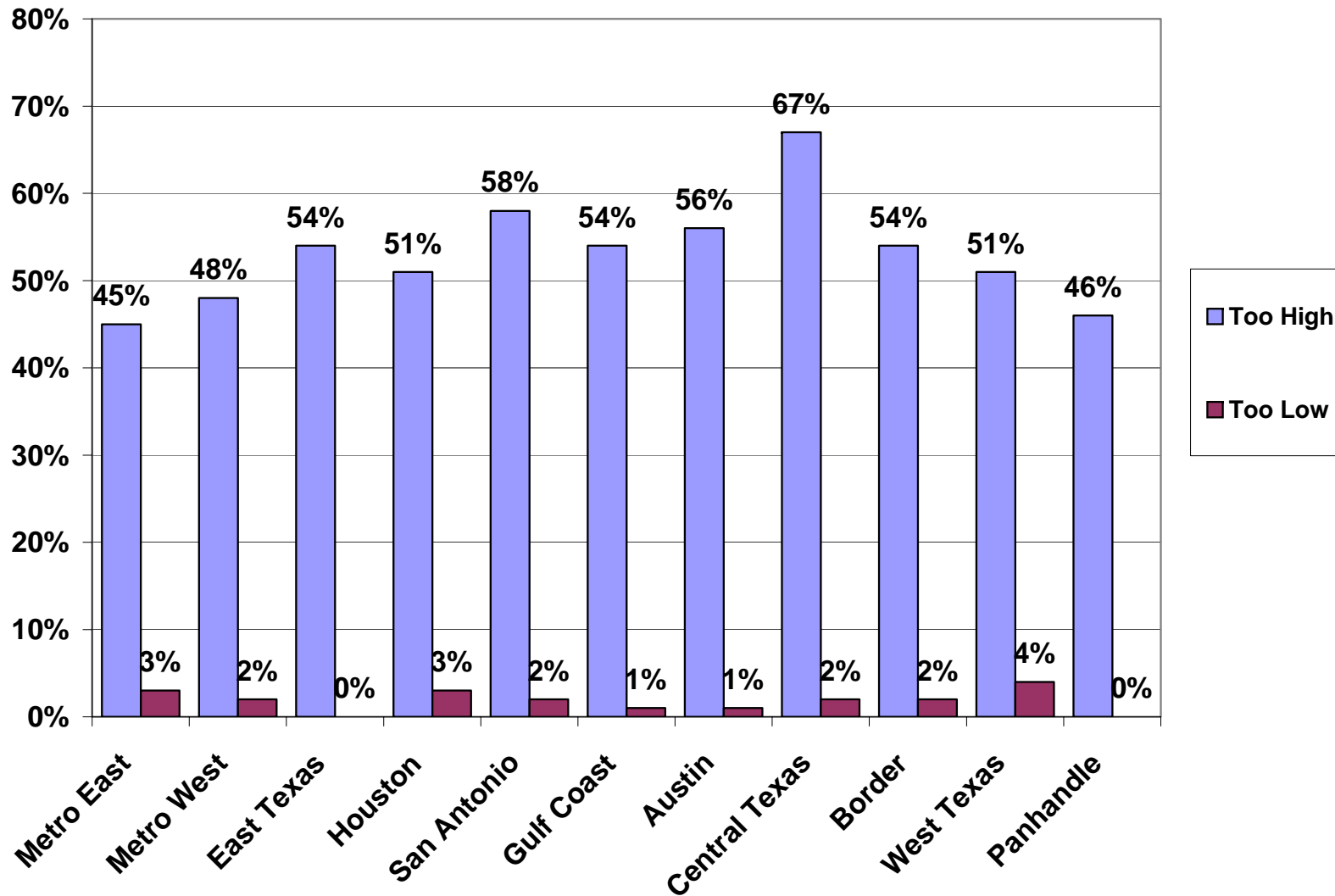
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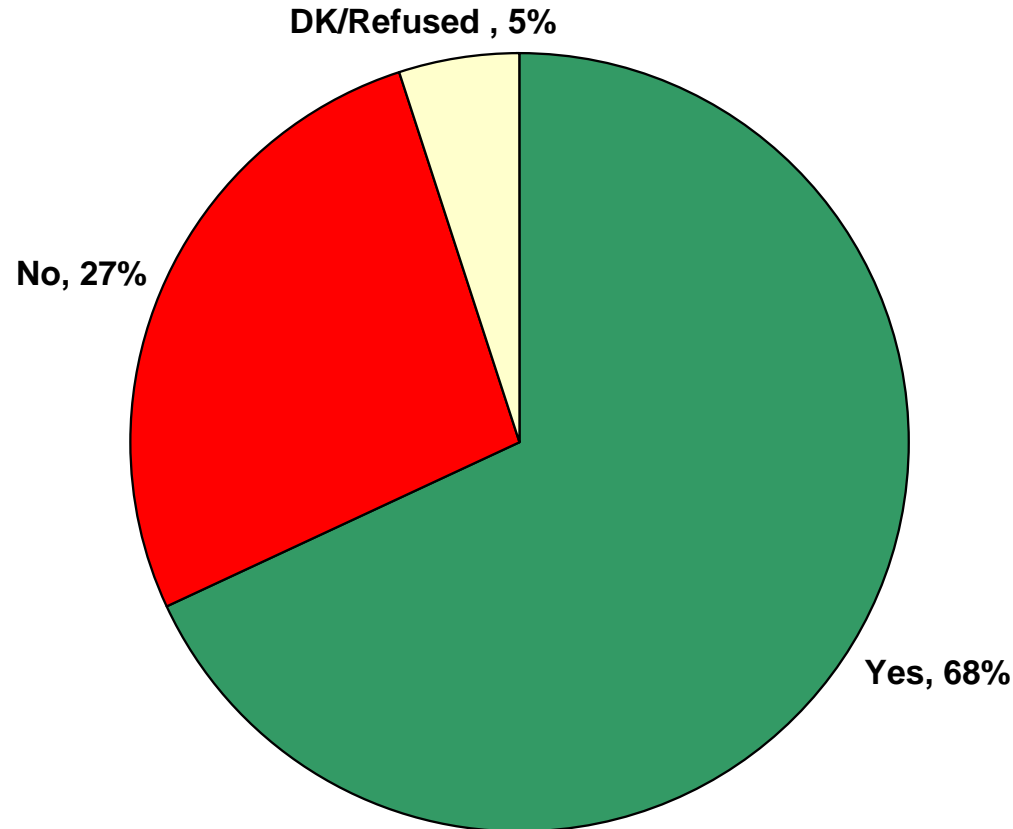
What is your general impression of property taxes in the state of Texas?



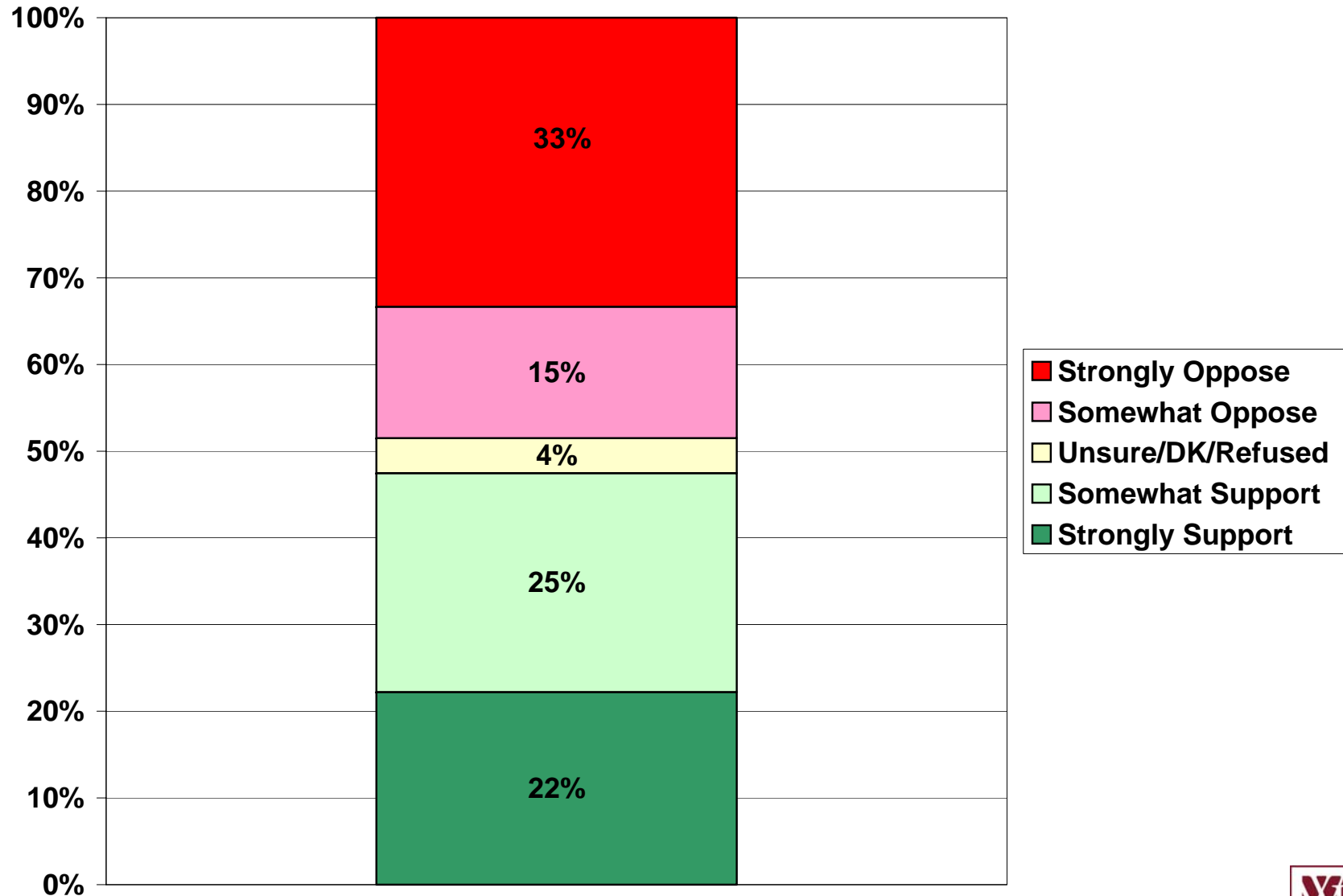
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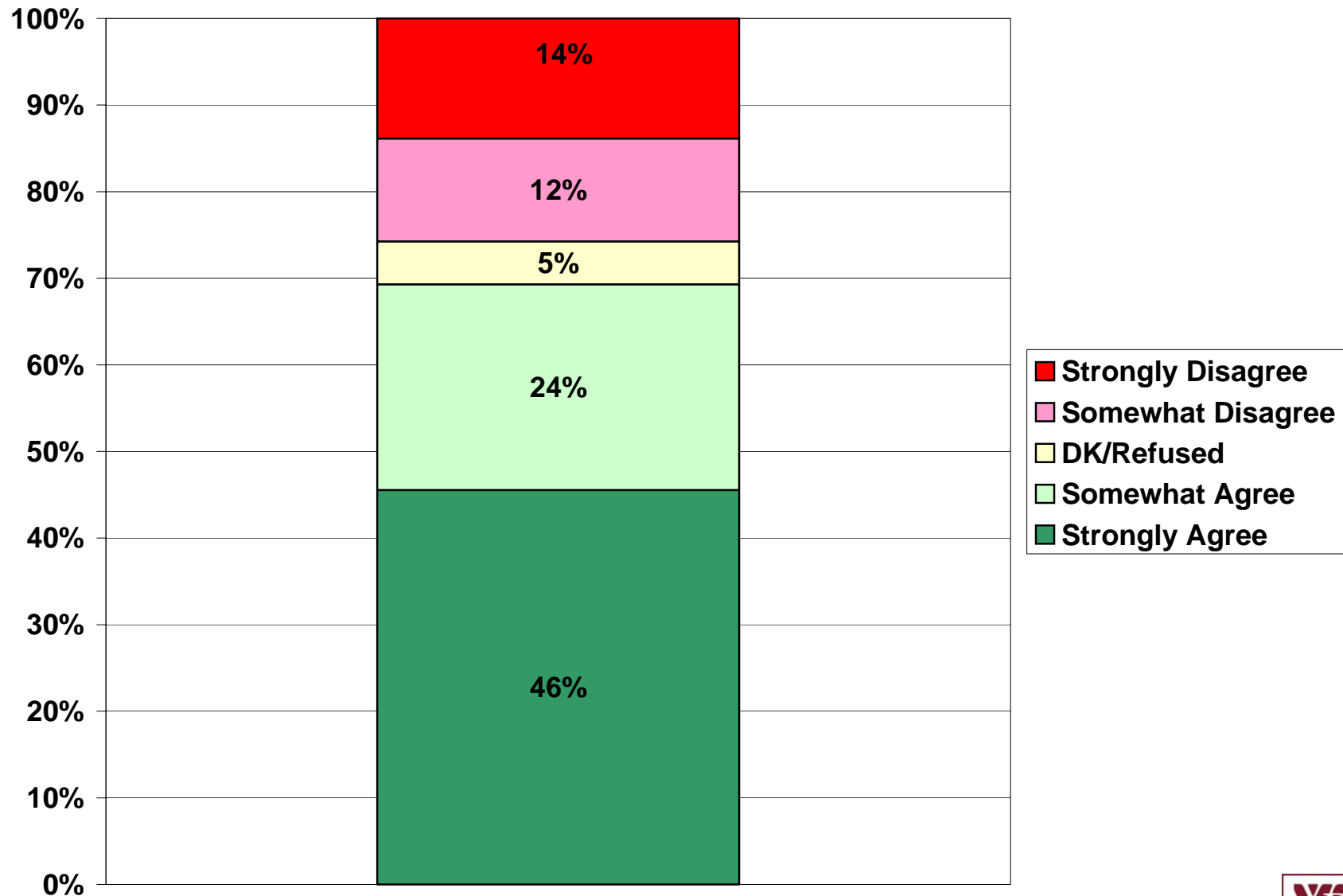
If the entire portion of your school property tax was to support your local public schools, do you still think your property taxes are too high?



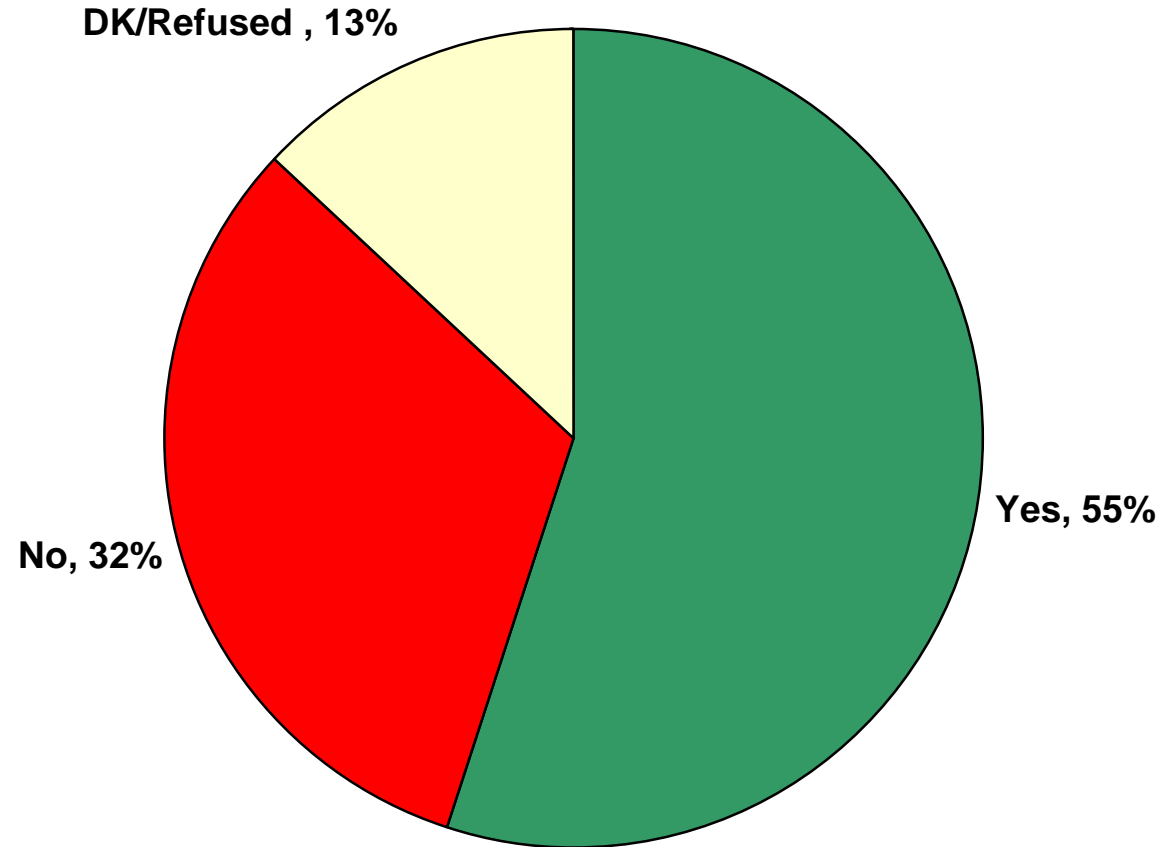
Would you support or oppose an increase in your property tax if you knew the majority of the additional revenues from the tax increase would go to public education?



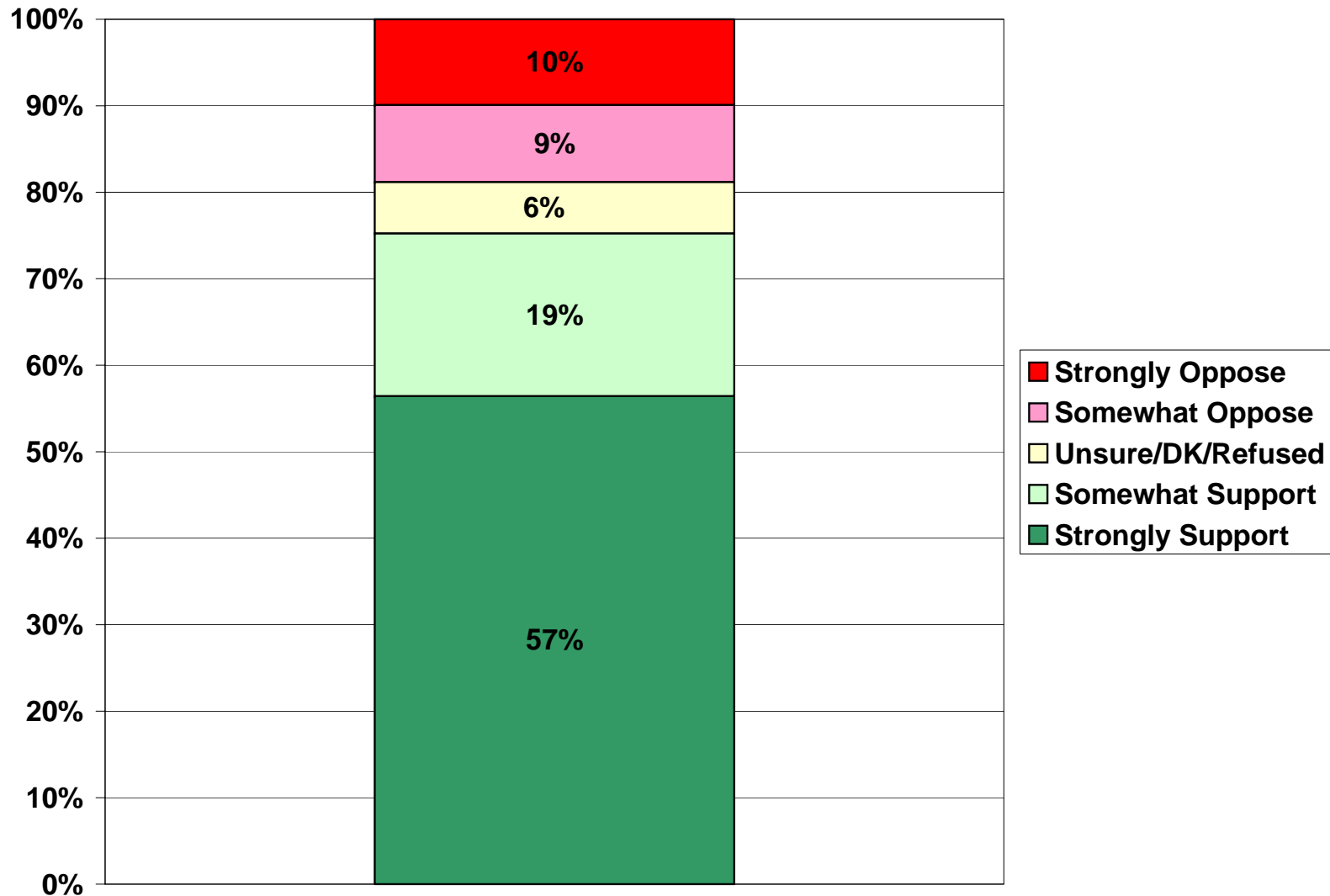
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if I personally benefit from lower residential property taxes, the Legislature should not raise taxes on businesses if it leads to job loss and/or companies leaving Texas?



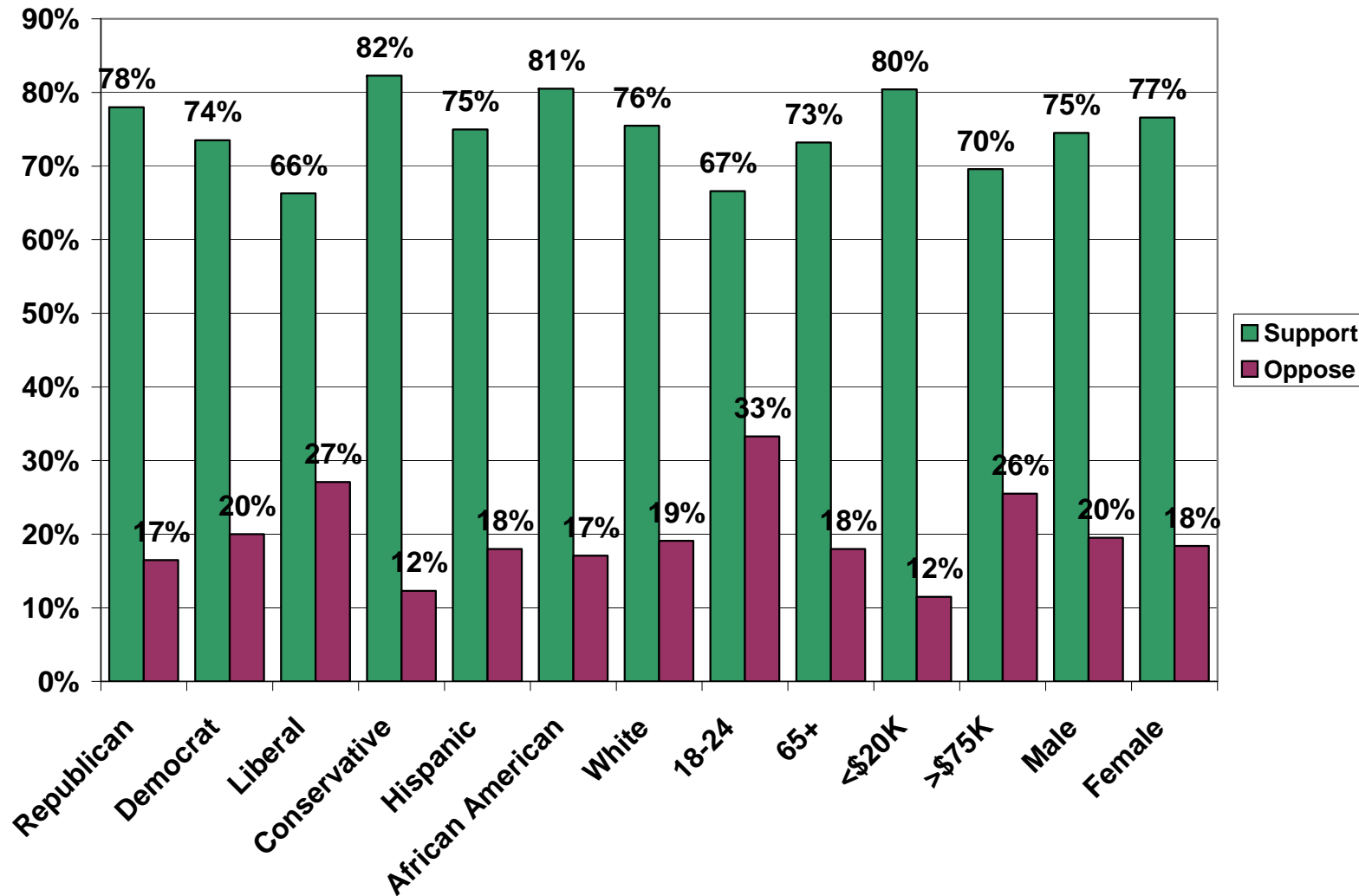
The amount of your residential property tax bill is a reflection of the value of your home. The higher the value of your home, the more taxes you are likely to pay. Knowing that, would you want or accept a lower property tax bill, if it meant that your home was worth less?



Would you support or oppose a plan to reduce and cap the residential property tax rate, and cap the amount of property tax revenues that city, county, and school districts can collect each year?



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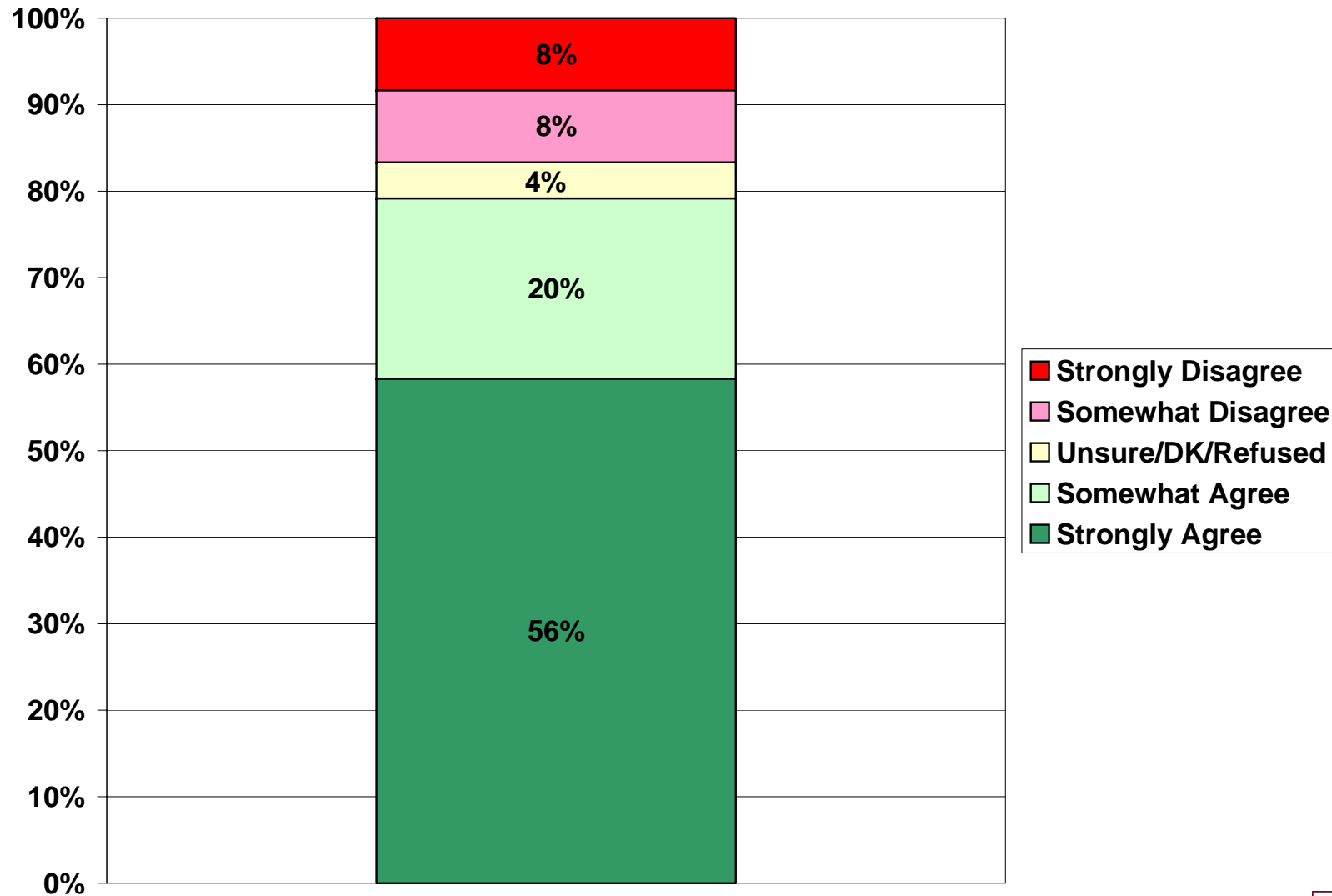


No New or Higher Taxes

The following slides demonstrate that Texans categorically reject new and higher taxes.

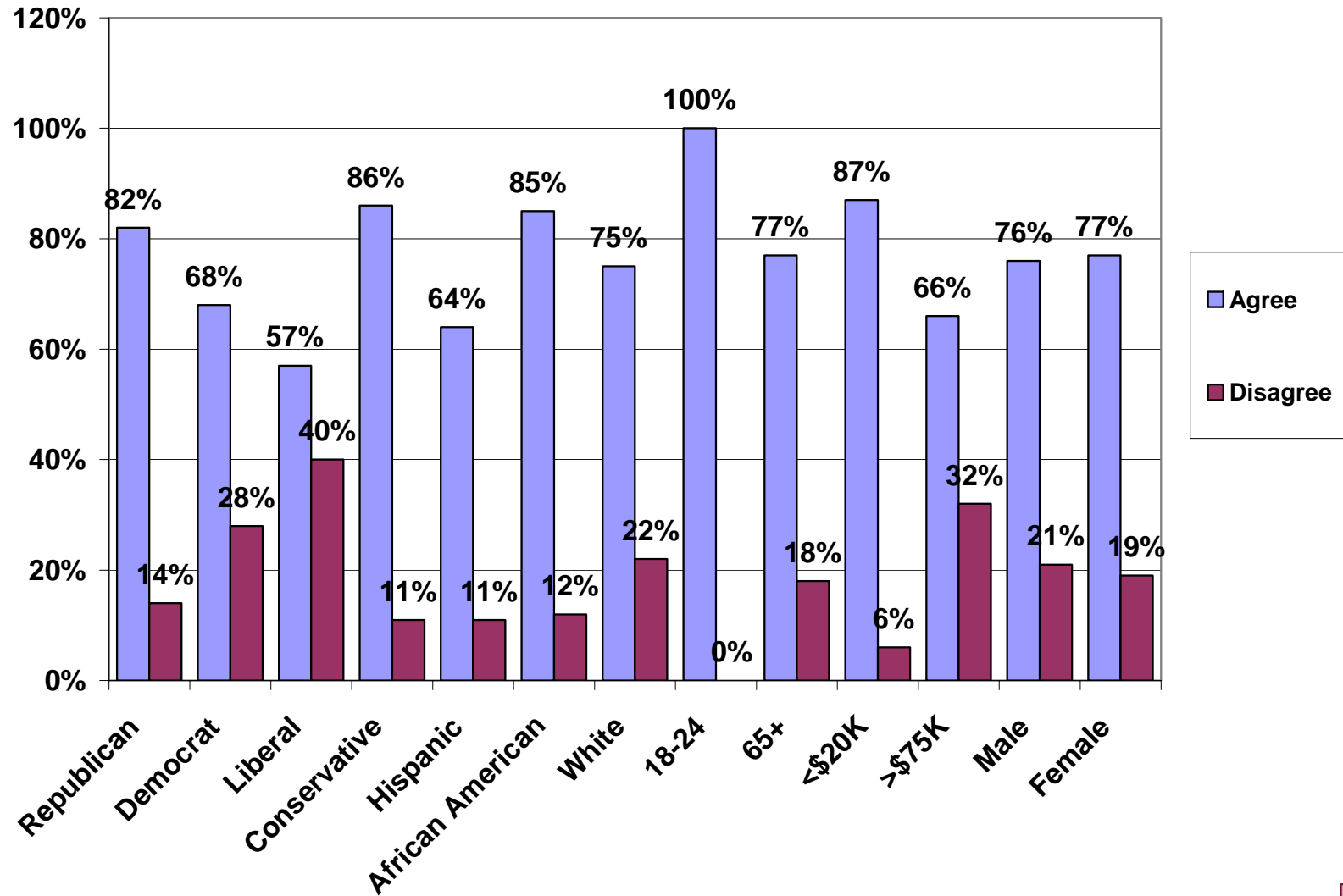
That belief cuts across party, ideological and cultural lines.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Texans already pay enough in taxes. We should not pay more.

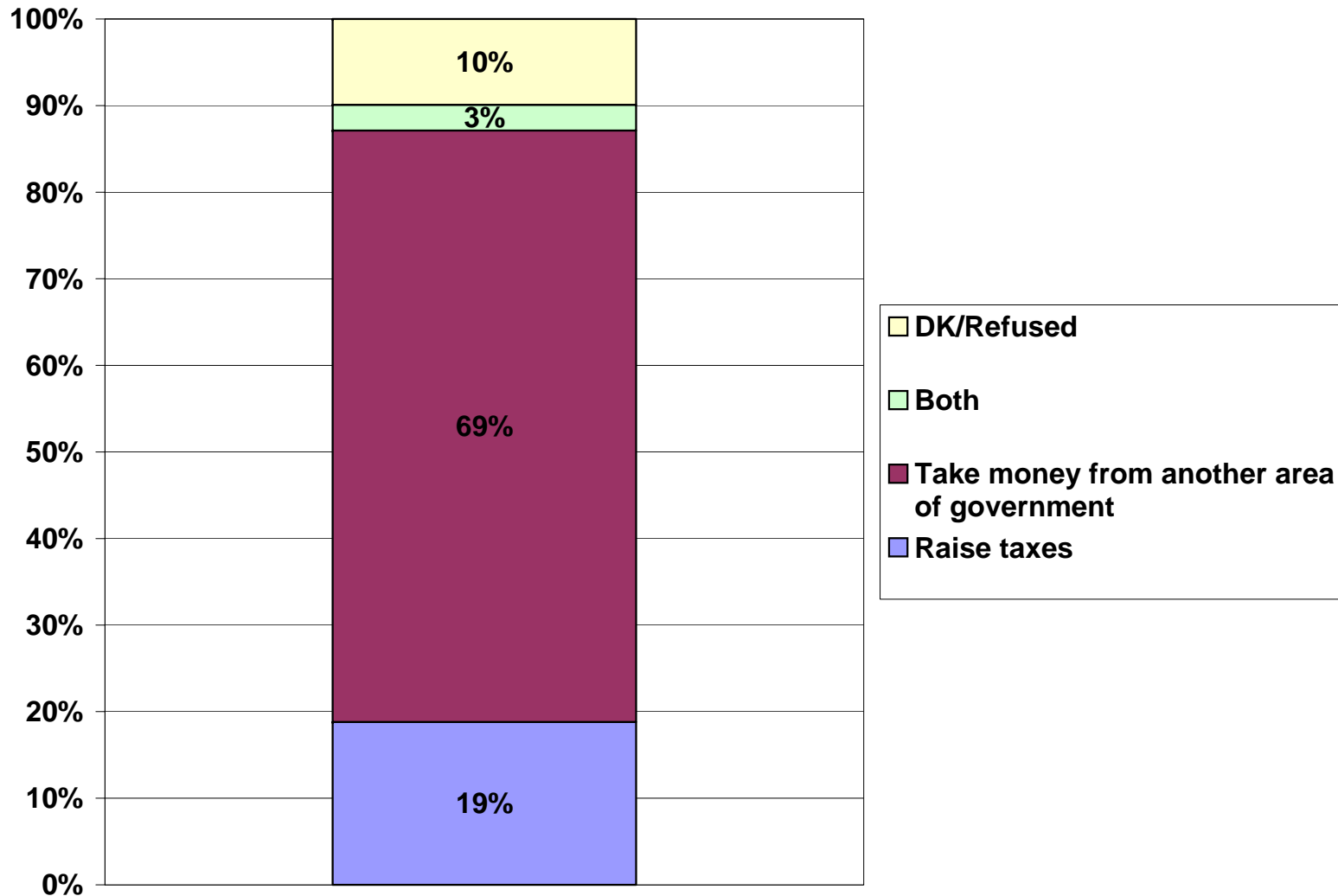




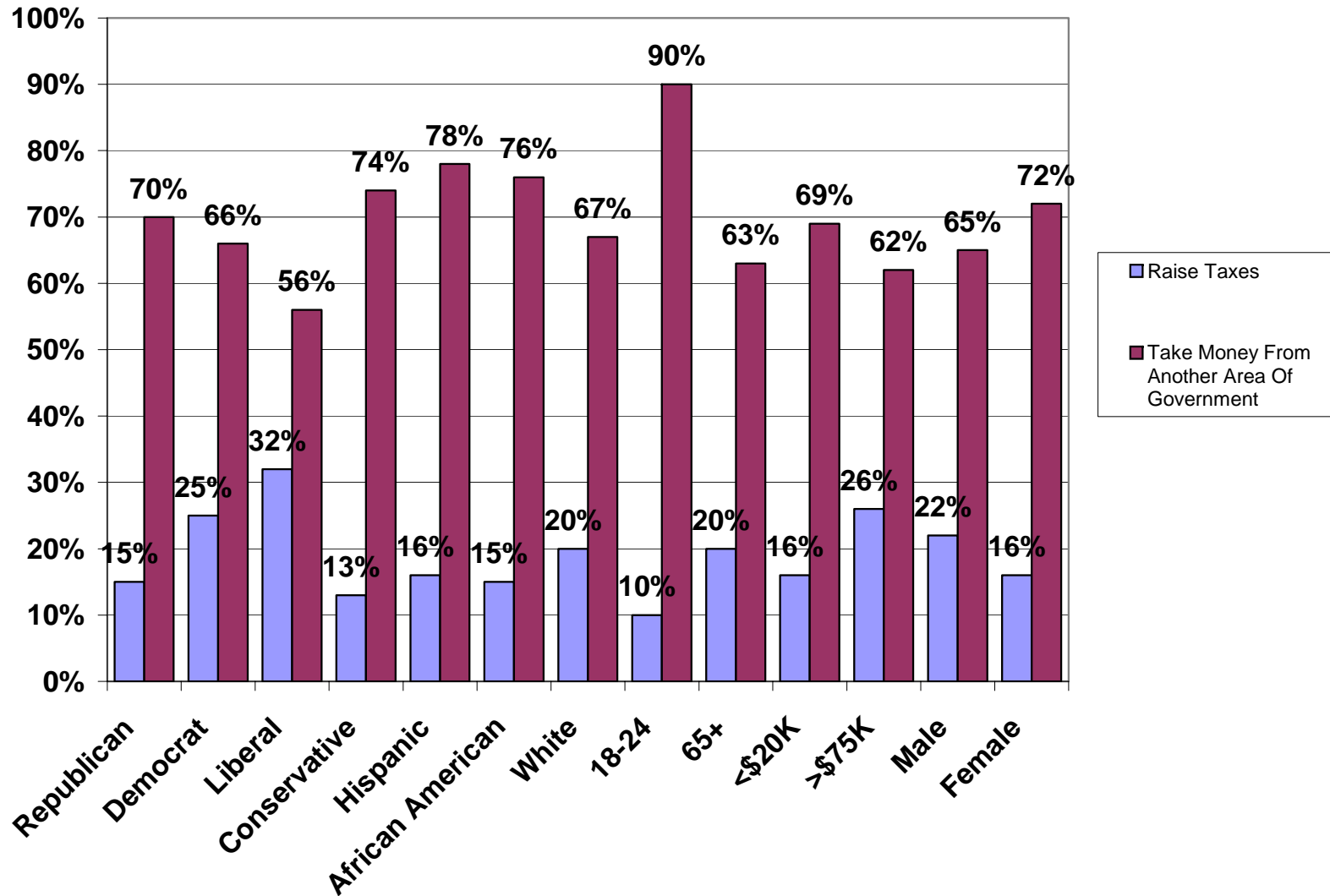
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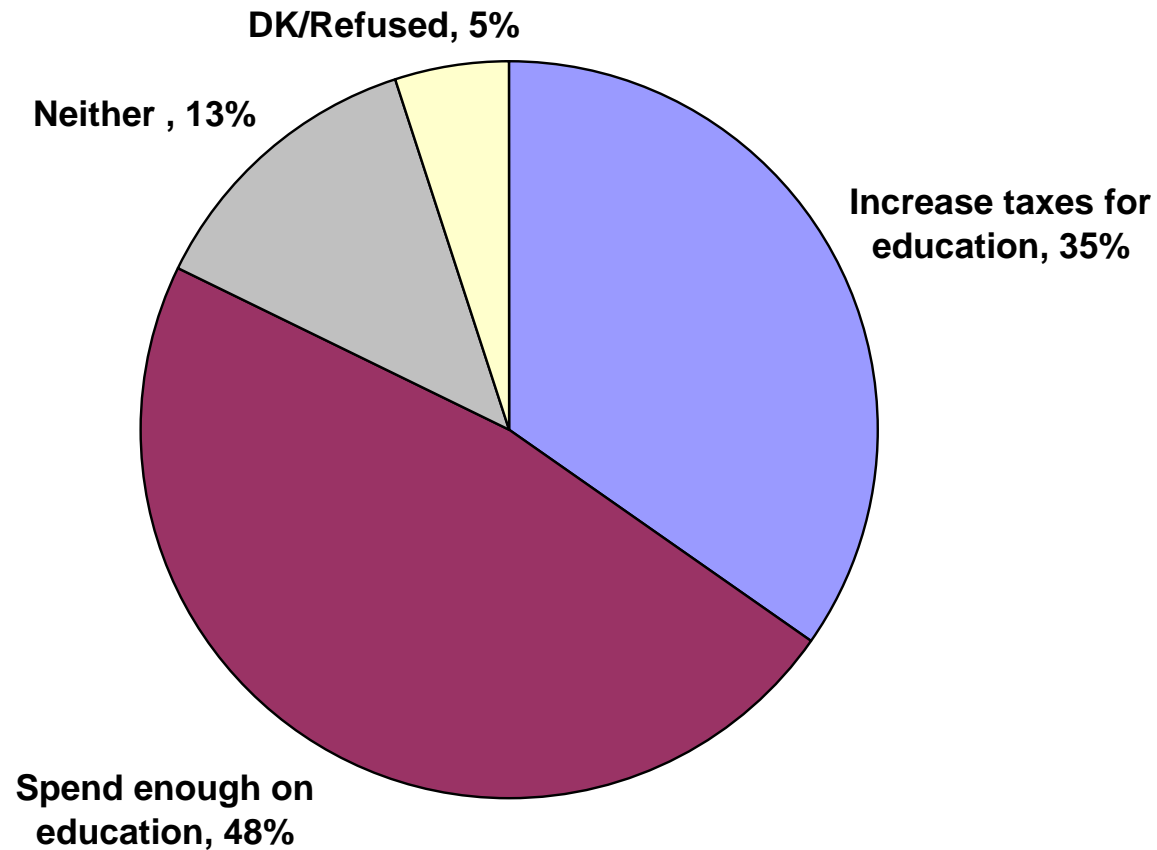
If the Legislature decided to increase funding for education, would you prefer to raise taxes or take money from another area of government?



If the Legislature decided to increase funding for education, would you prefer to raise taxes or take money from another area of government?



Do you support increasing taxes for education, or do you think we spend enough on education?



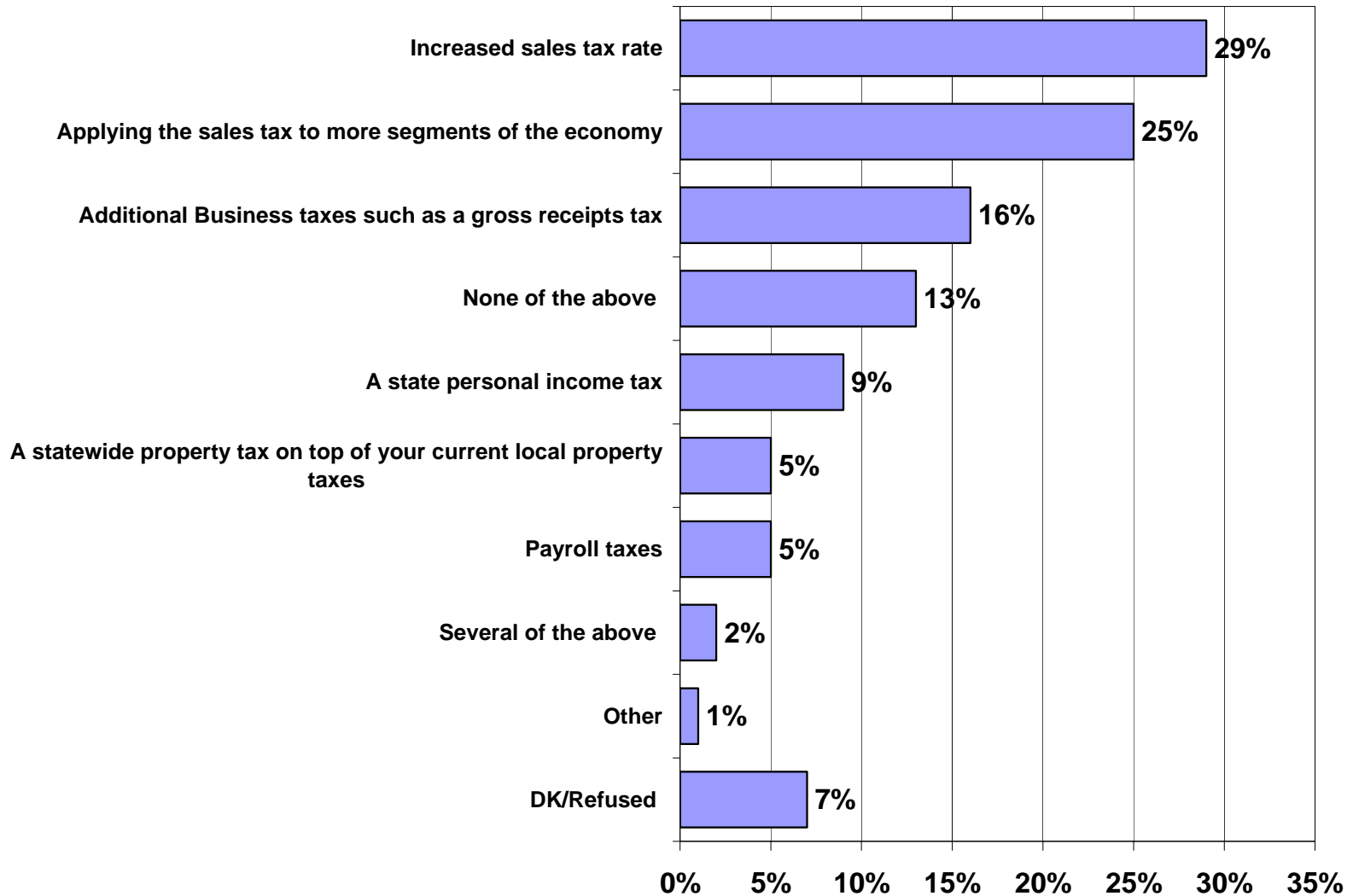


Tax Options

The following slides indicate if the Legislature changes the system of school funding
Texans want the taxes to be honest, inclusive, and transparent.

Tellingly, voters overwhelmingly reject a statewide property tax as an option for school
finance.

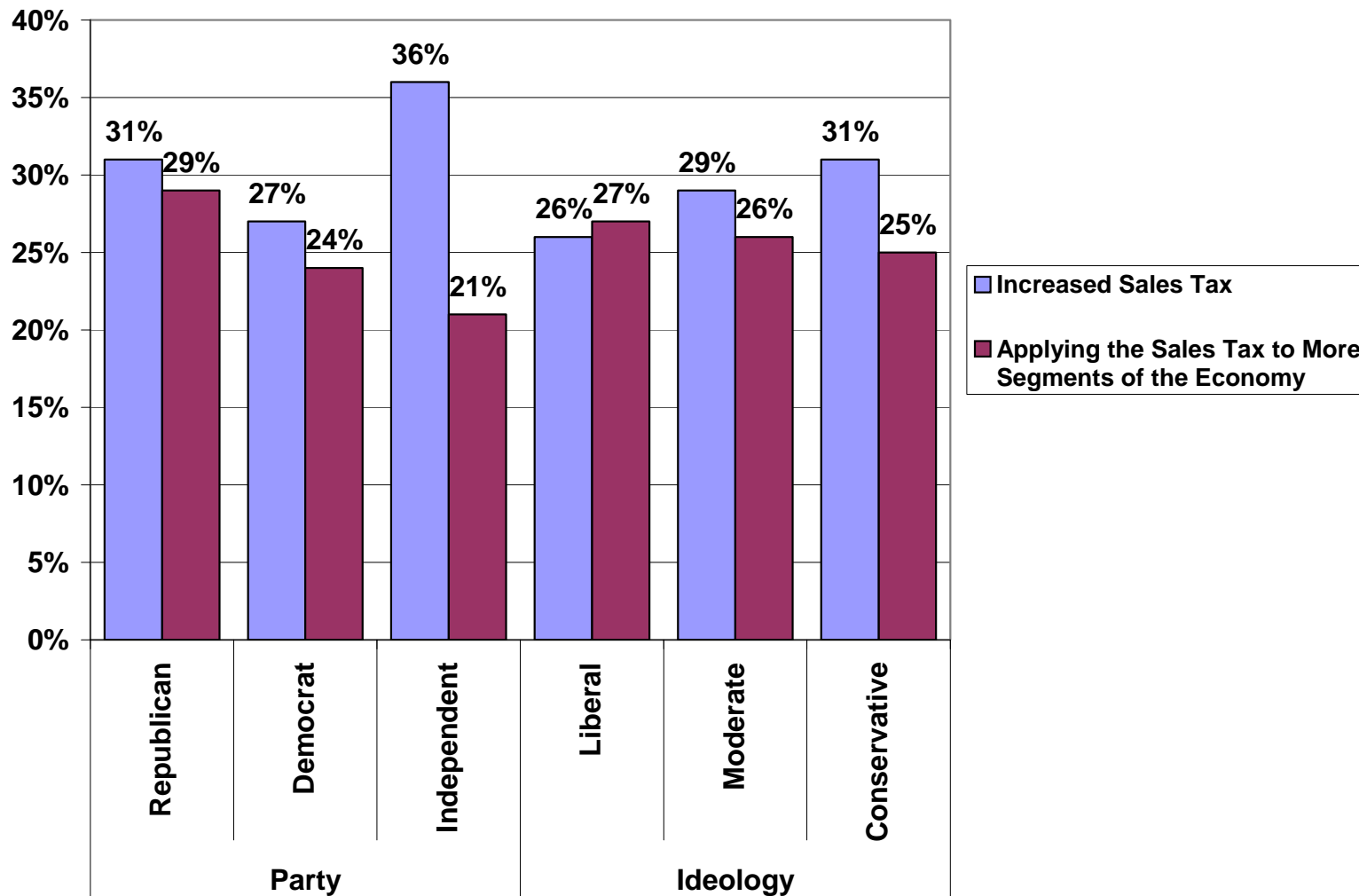
The Legislature is currently debating a new tax structure to fund public education. Of the following options, which new tax plan would you prefer if you had to pick one?



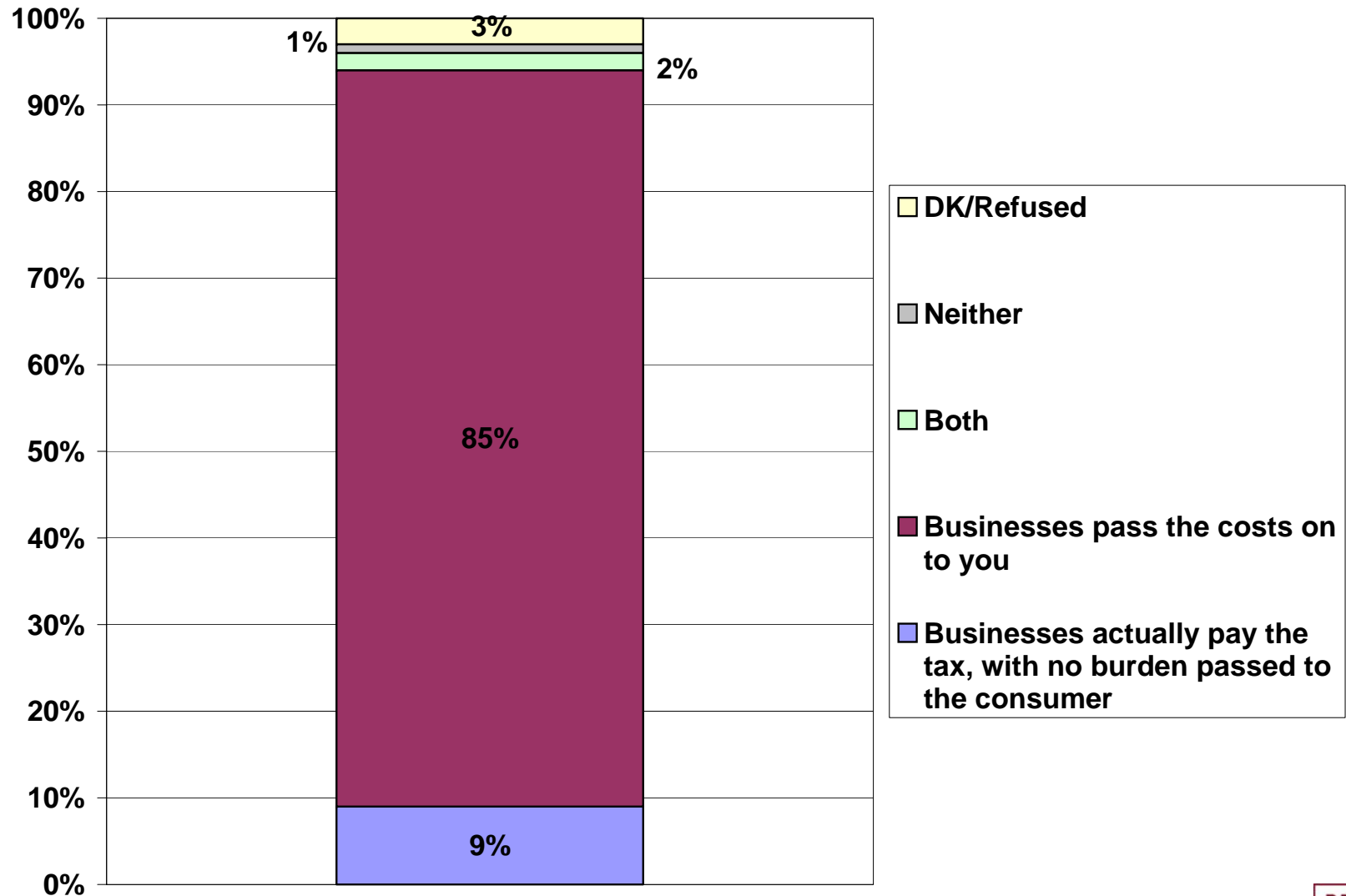
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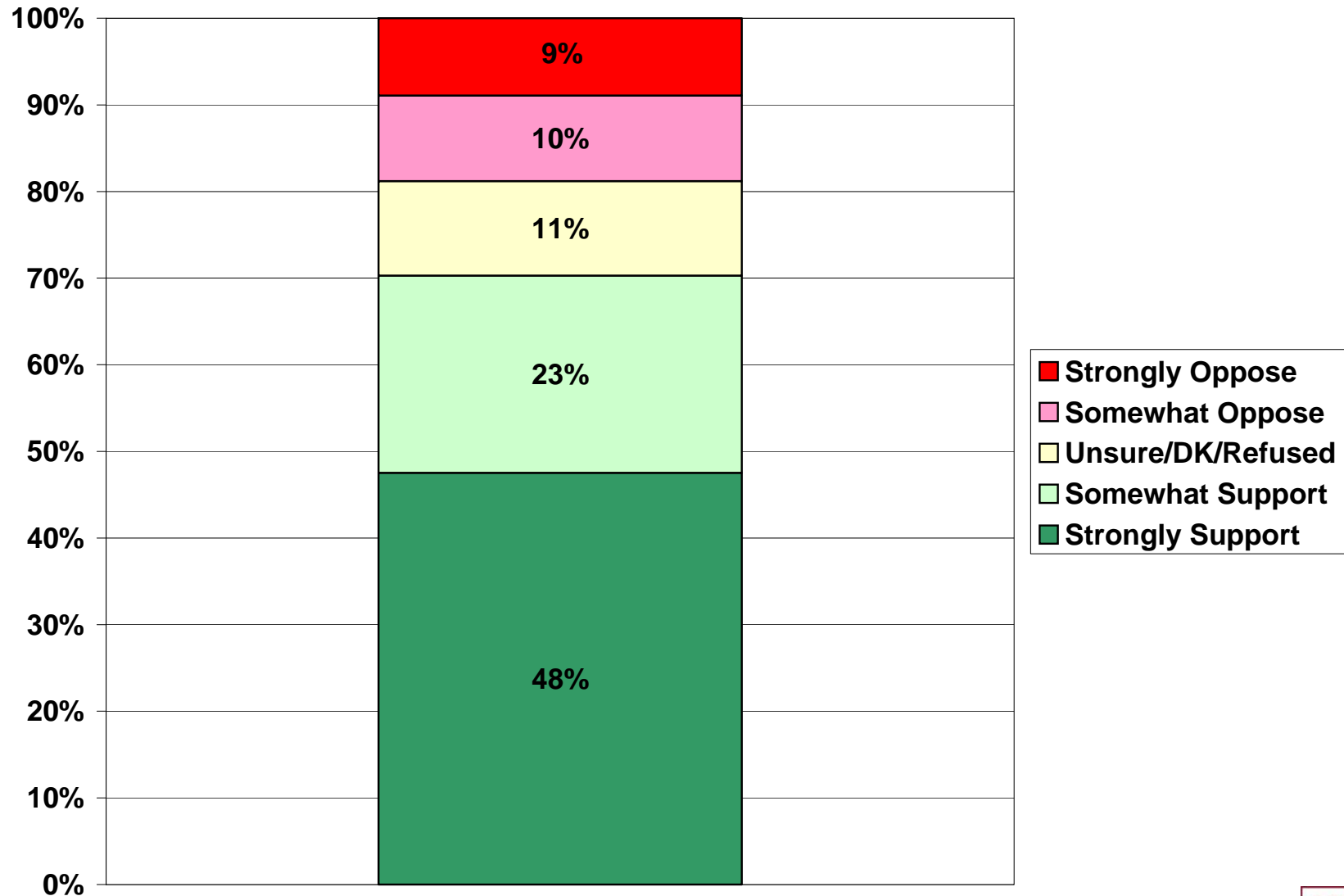
Top Two Answers Only



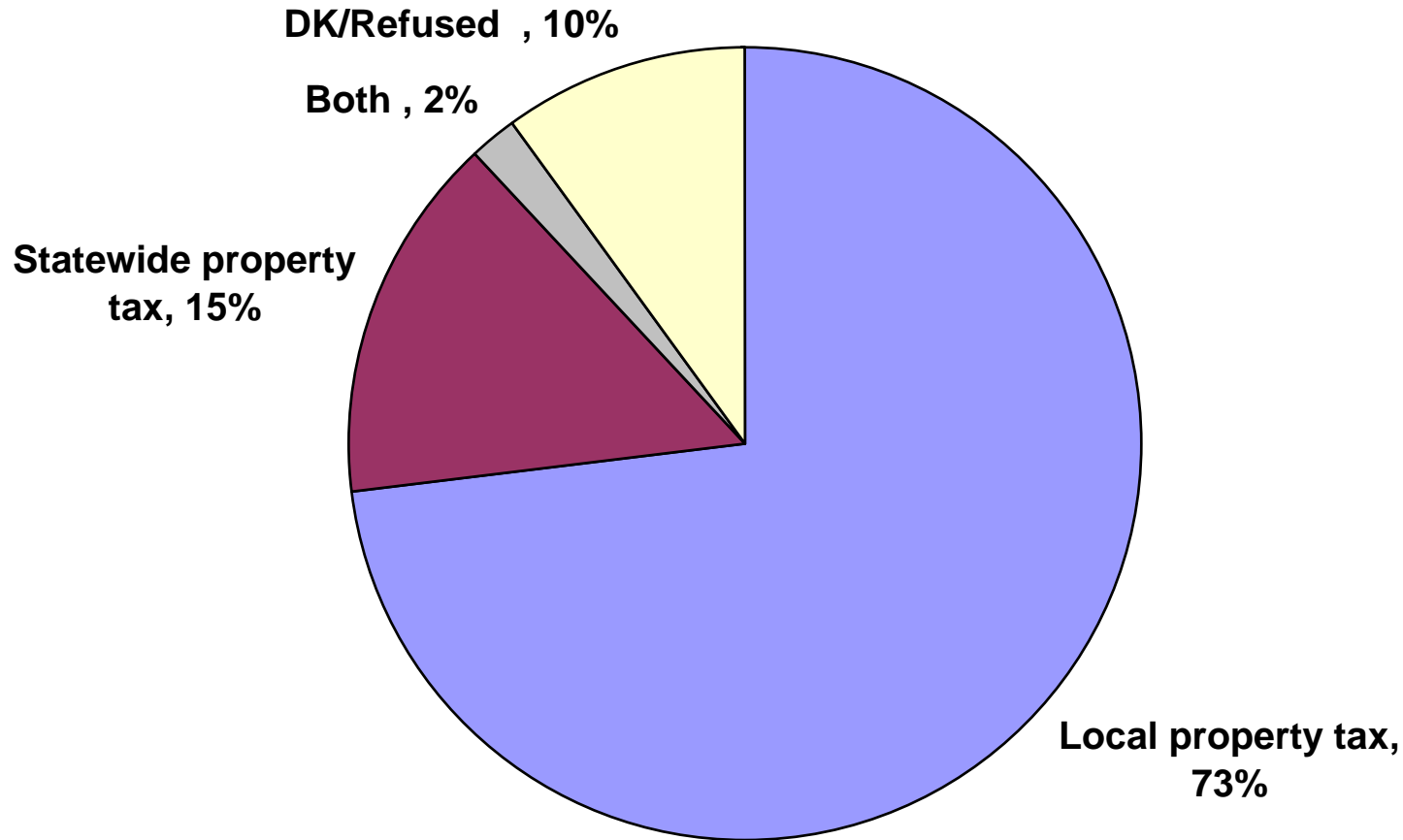
When lawmakers impose taxes on businesses, do you believe that the businesses actually pay the tax without passing the burden on to you, or do businesses pass the costs on to you in the form of higher prices for goods and services?



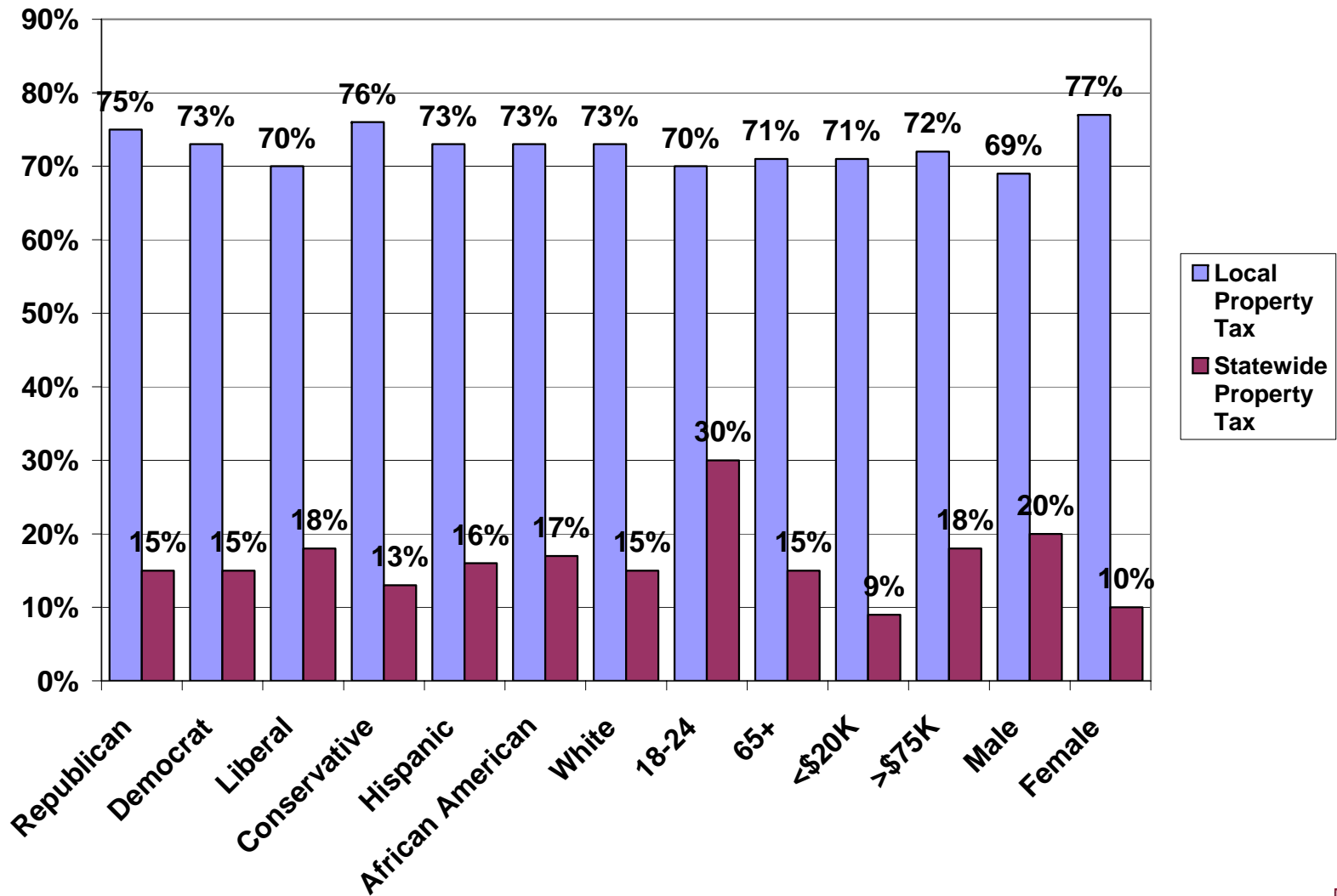
Would you support or oppose making all taxes transparent, meaning all taxes would be directly imposed on you so you know what you are paying, rather than hiding them in the form of a business tax that increases the cost of goods and services?



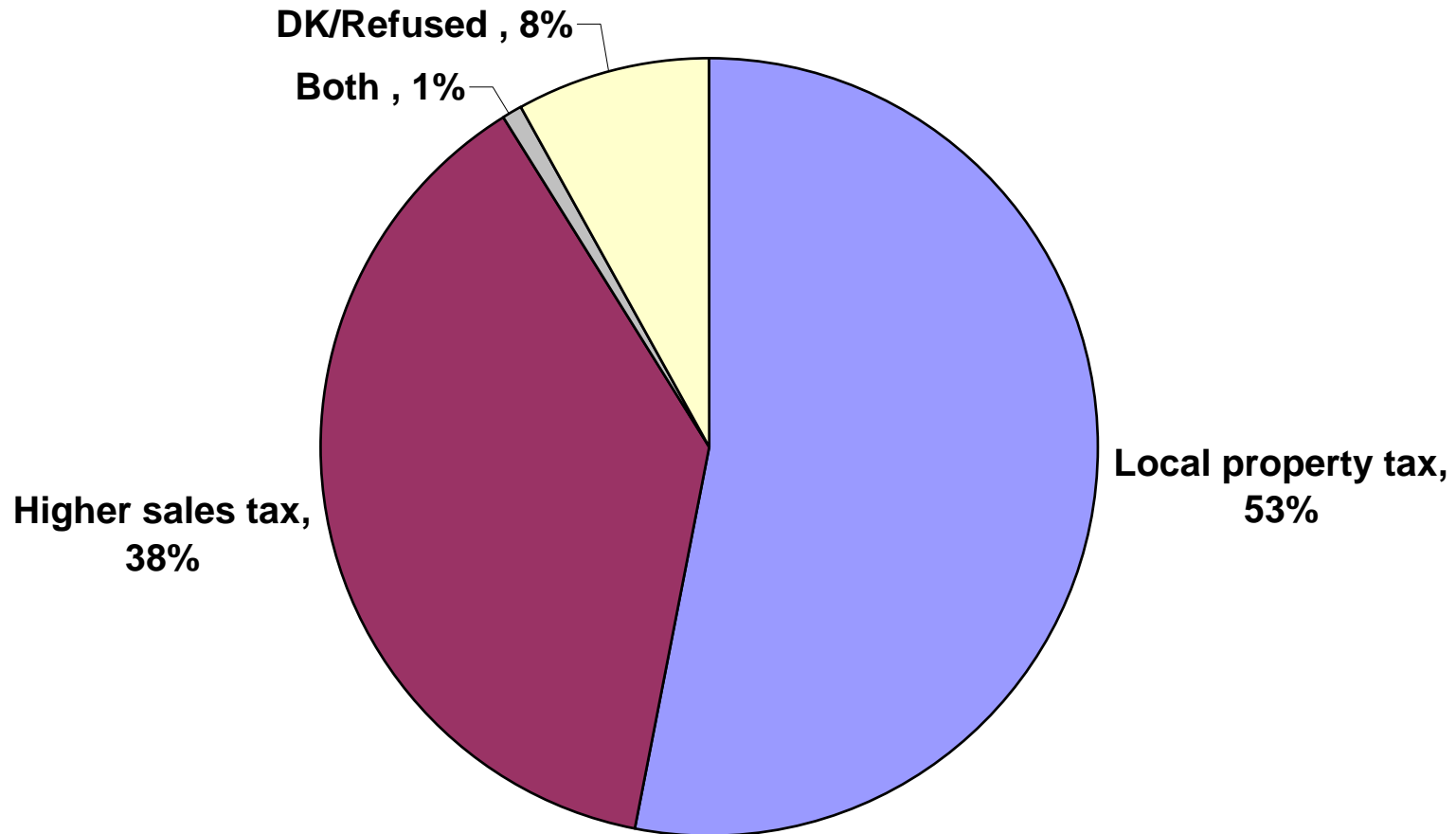
If you are going to pay roughly the same amount of taxes, would you prefer to continue paying your local property tax or pay a statewide property tax?



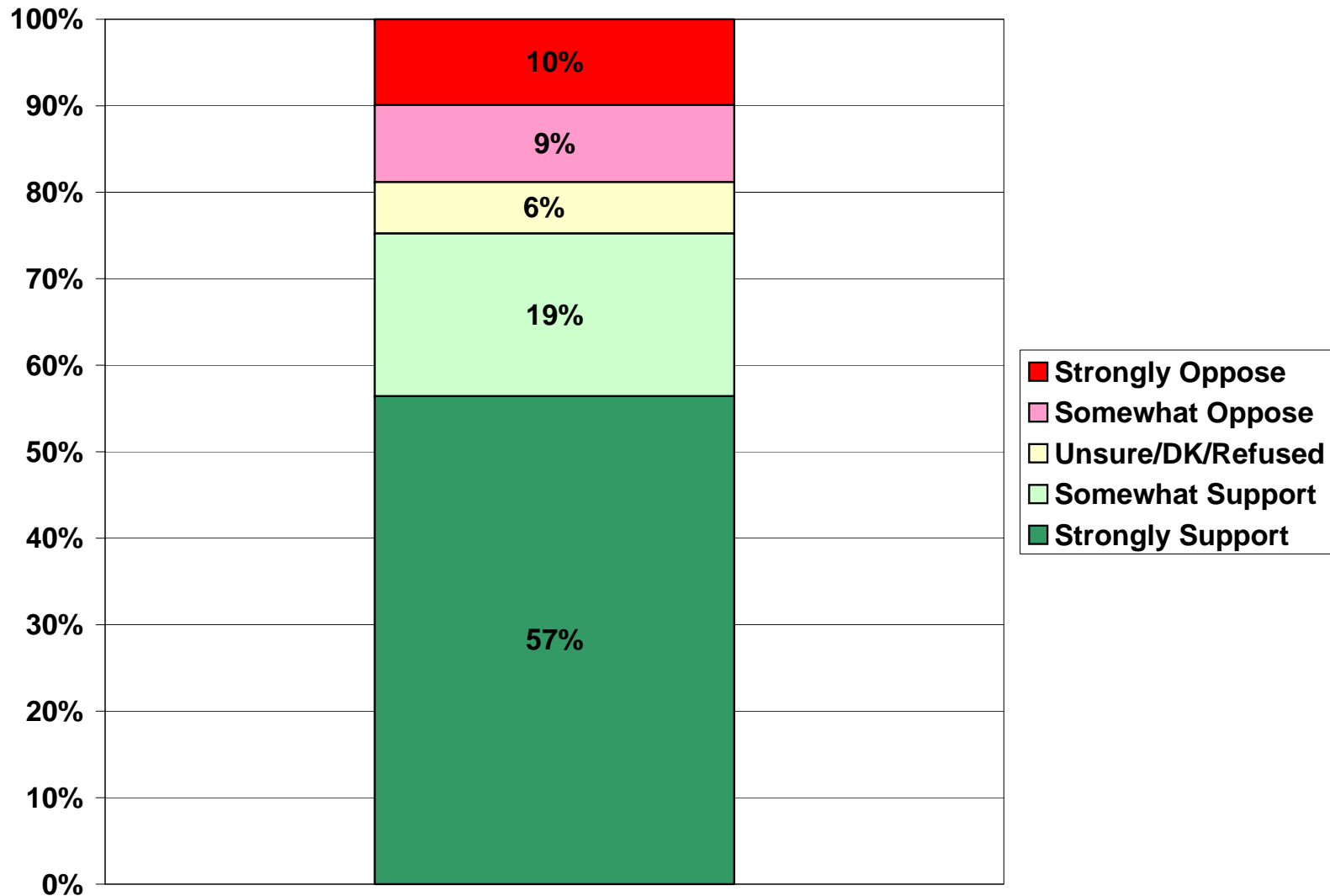
If you are going to pay roughly the same amount of taxes, would you prefer to continue paying your local property tax or pay a statewide property tax?



If you are going to pay roughly the same amount of taxes, would you prefer to continue paying your local property tax or a higher sales tax?



Would you support or oppose a plan to reduce and cap the residential property tax rate, and cap the amount of property tax revenues that city, county, and school districts can collect each year?

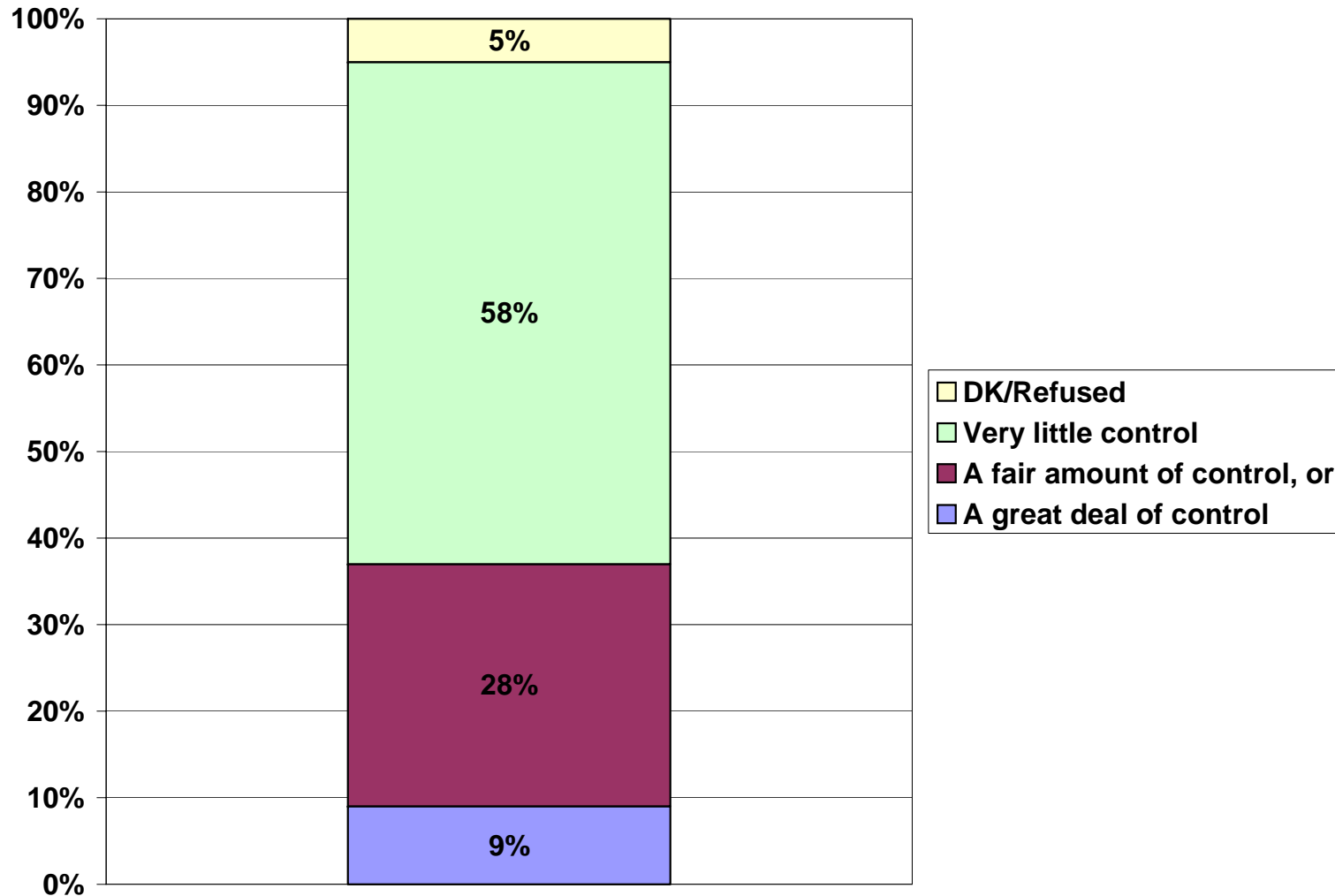




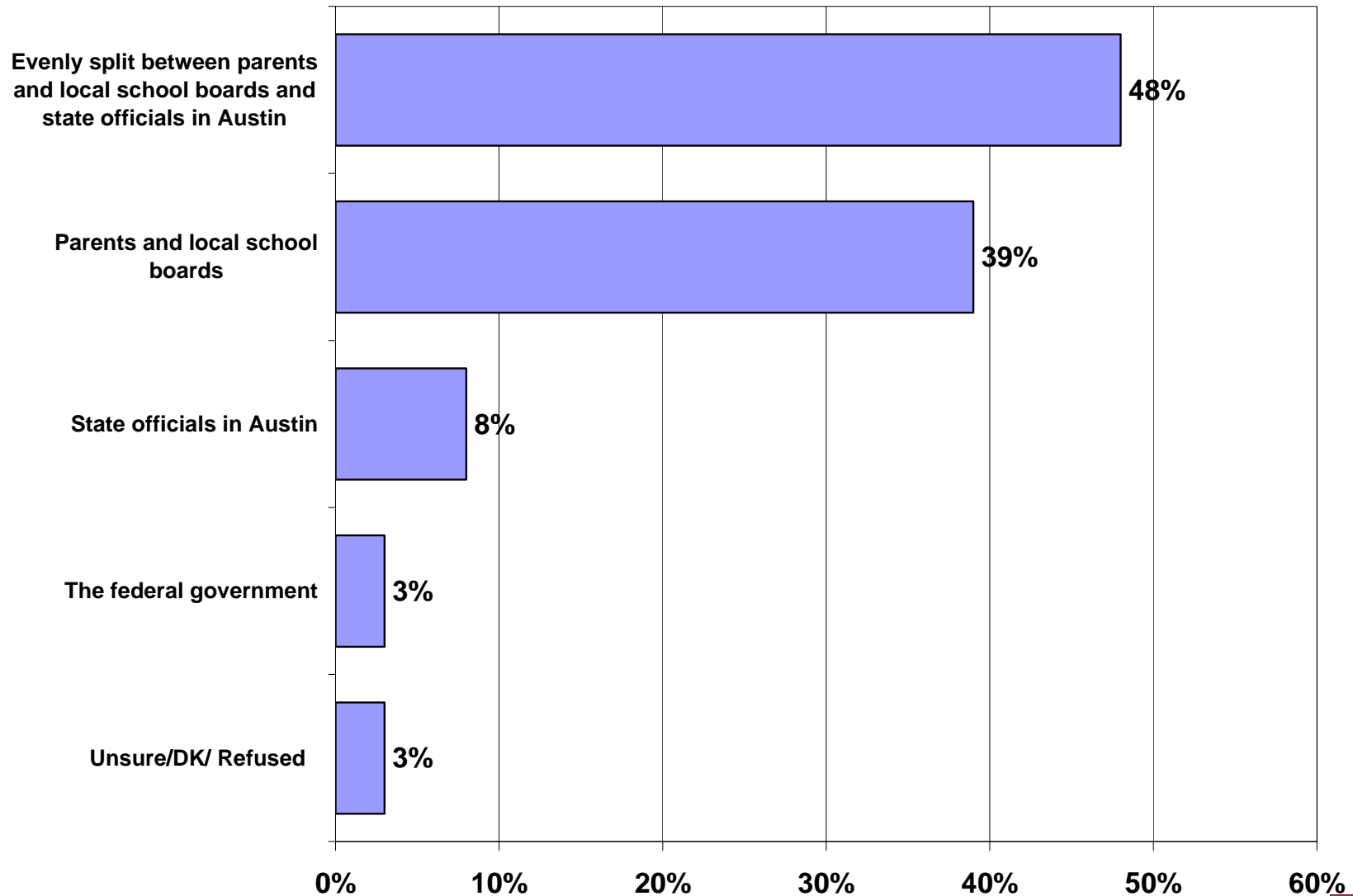
Local Control

The following slides all indicate that Texans desire some measure of local control in the direction and funding of schools.

Do you think parents have a great deal of control, a fair amount of control, or very little control over how public schools operate in the state today?



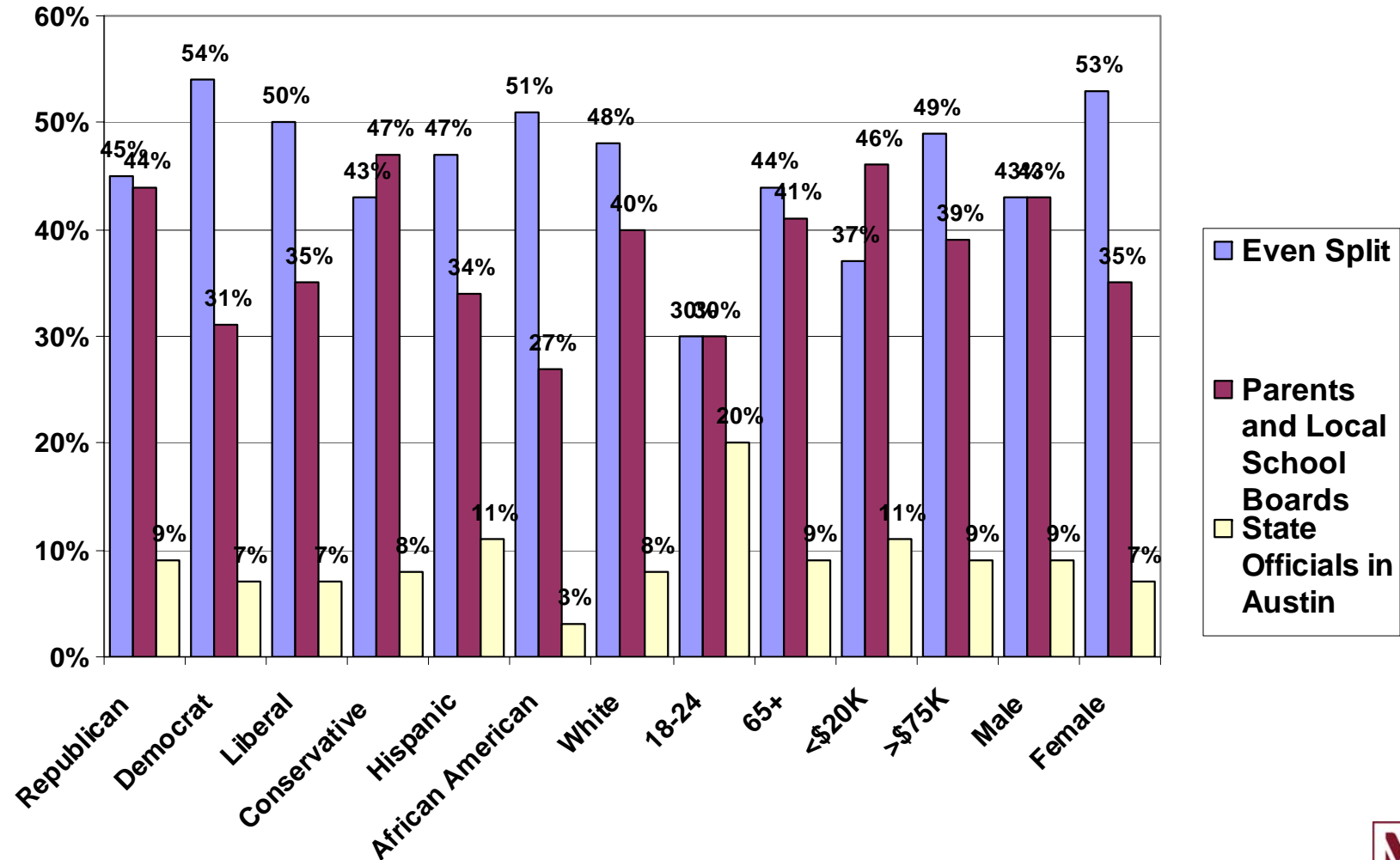
Who should be most responsible for public school funding and control?



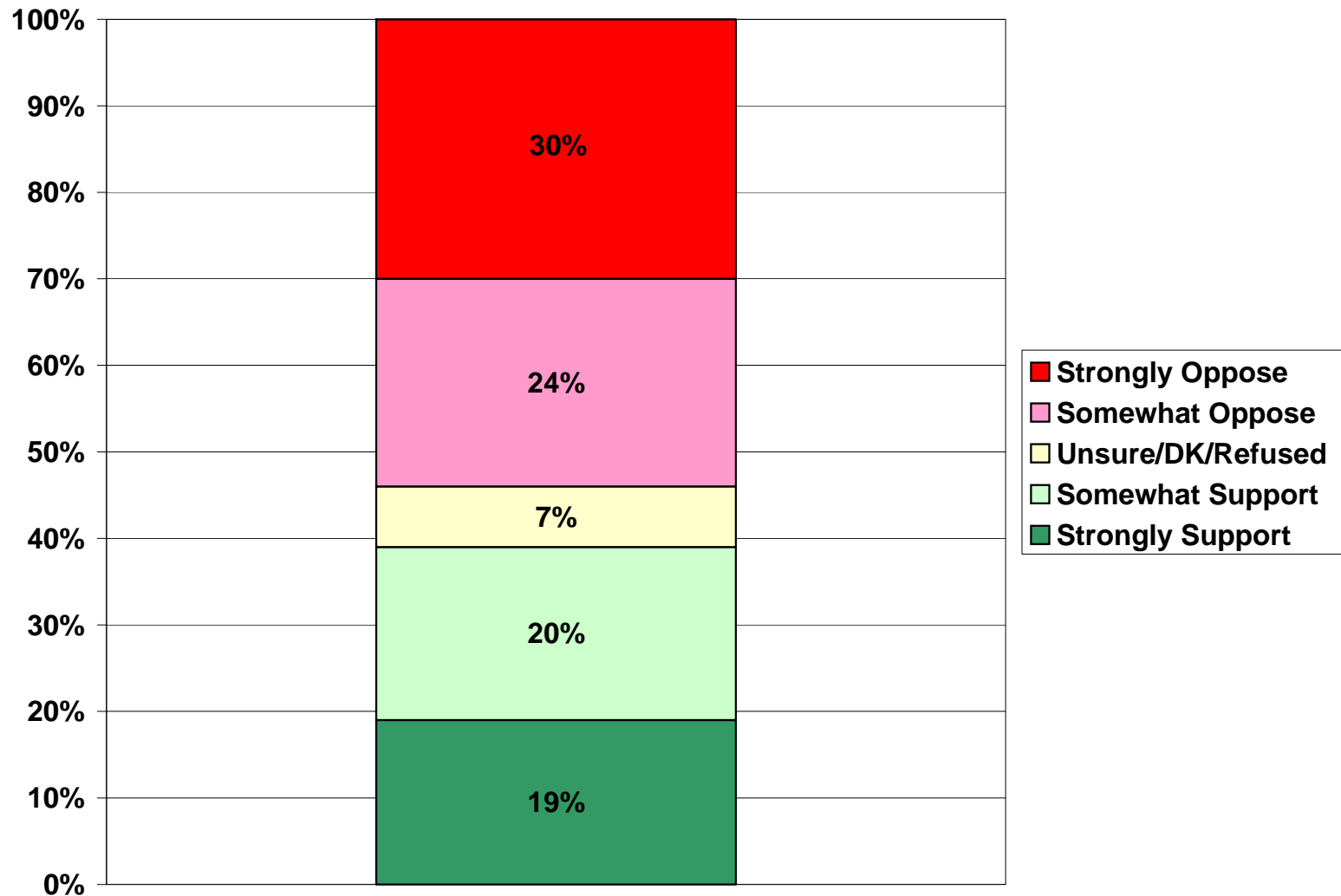
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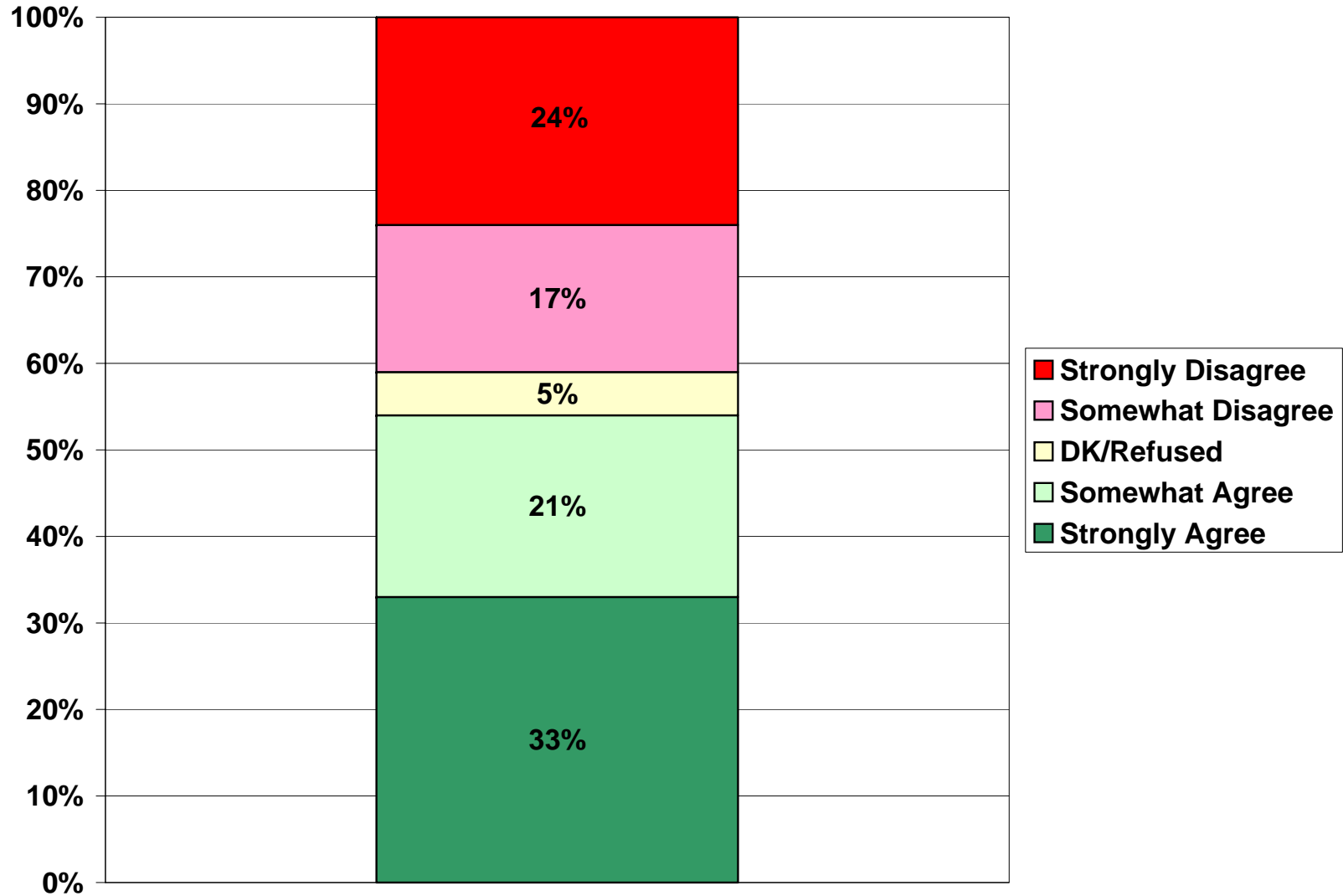
Top Three Answers Only



Do you support or oppose the state government increasing its share of the education funding if it meant that it would also increase its control over the educational system?



Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: state education money should be sent to school districts as a block grant with no strings attached, allowing local school districts to spend money as they see fit?

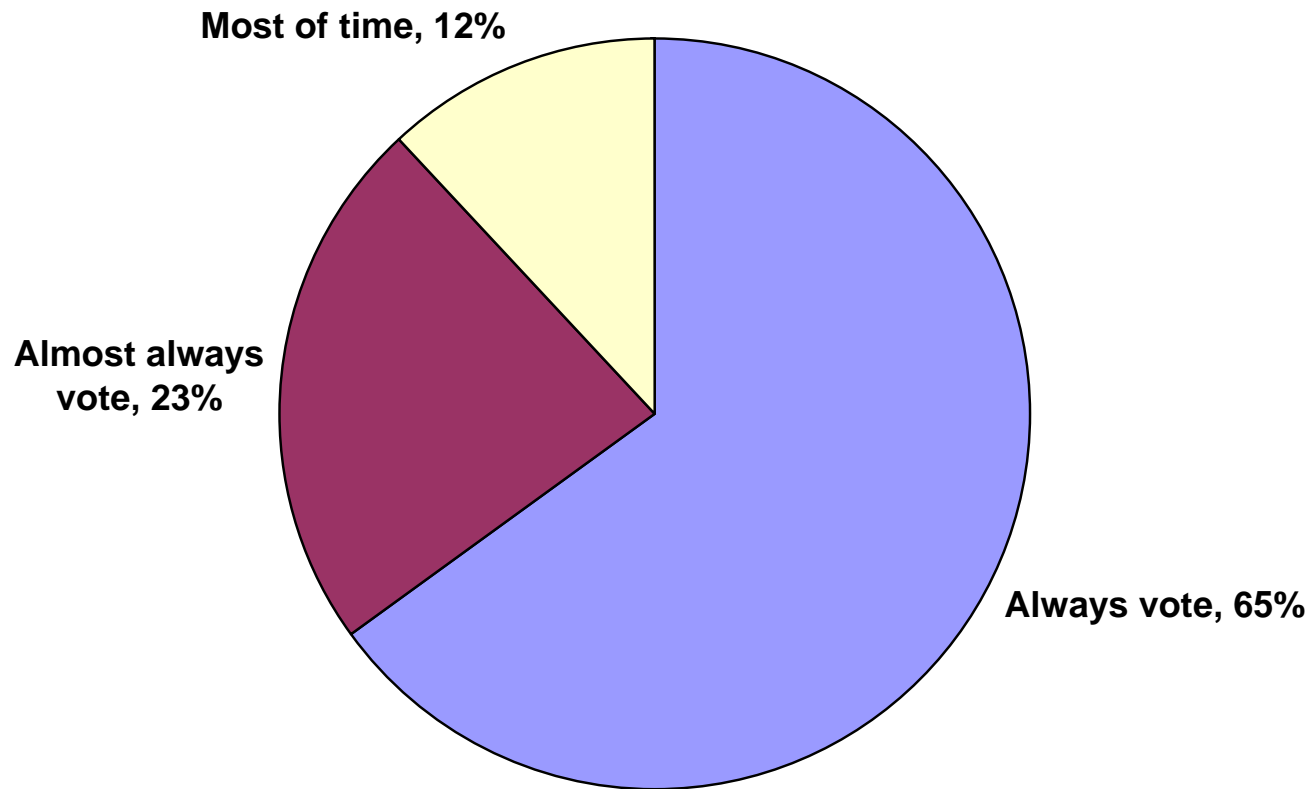




Other Findings

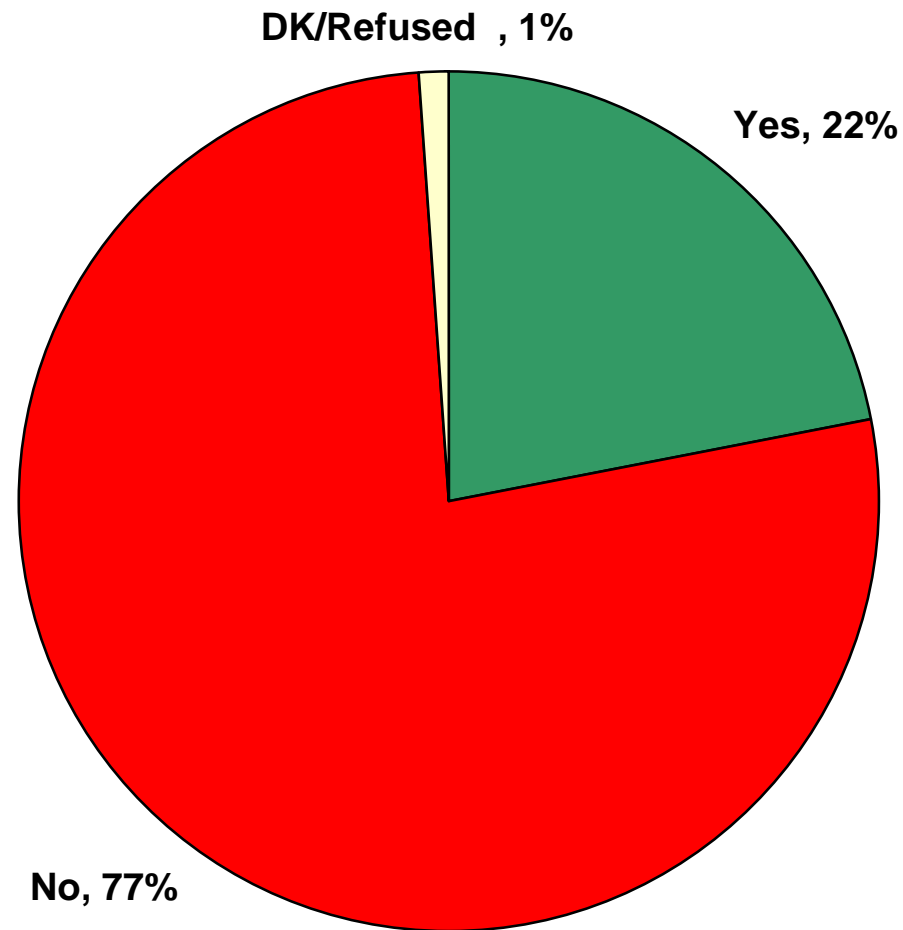
The following slides show other findings of the study.

In general, when there are elections in Texas, do you always vote, almost always vote, vote most of the time, vote some of the time, hardly ever vote or never vote?

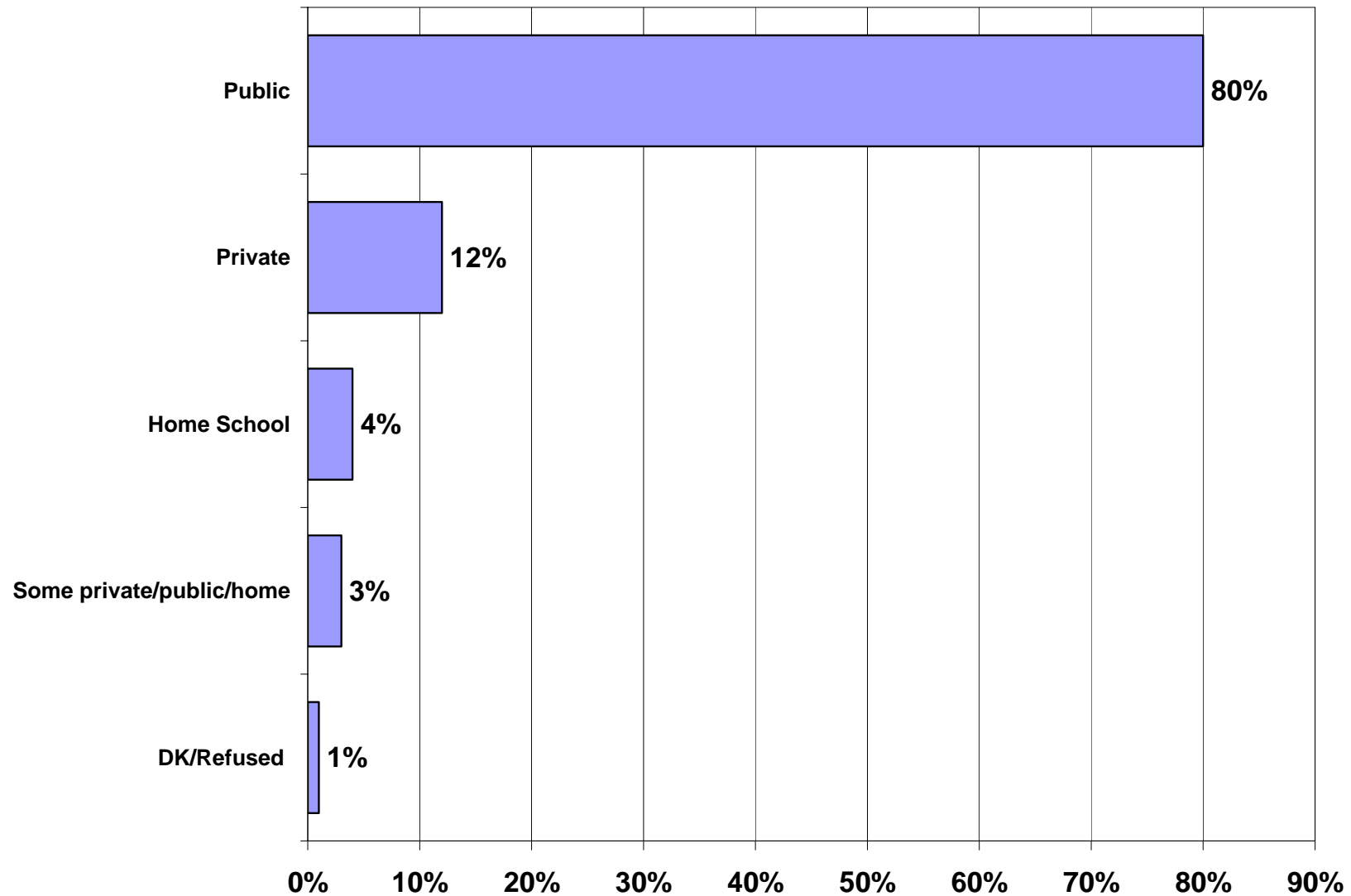




Do you have any school-age children living in your home?

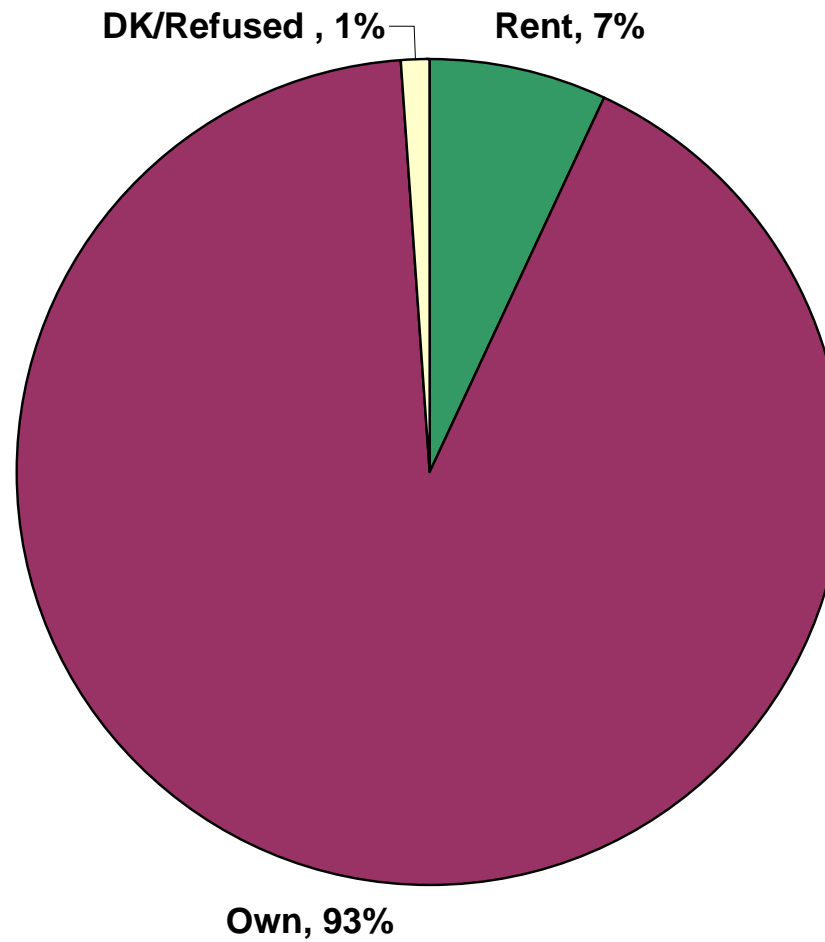


Do those children attend a public, private school, or are they home schooled?



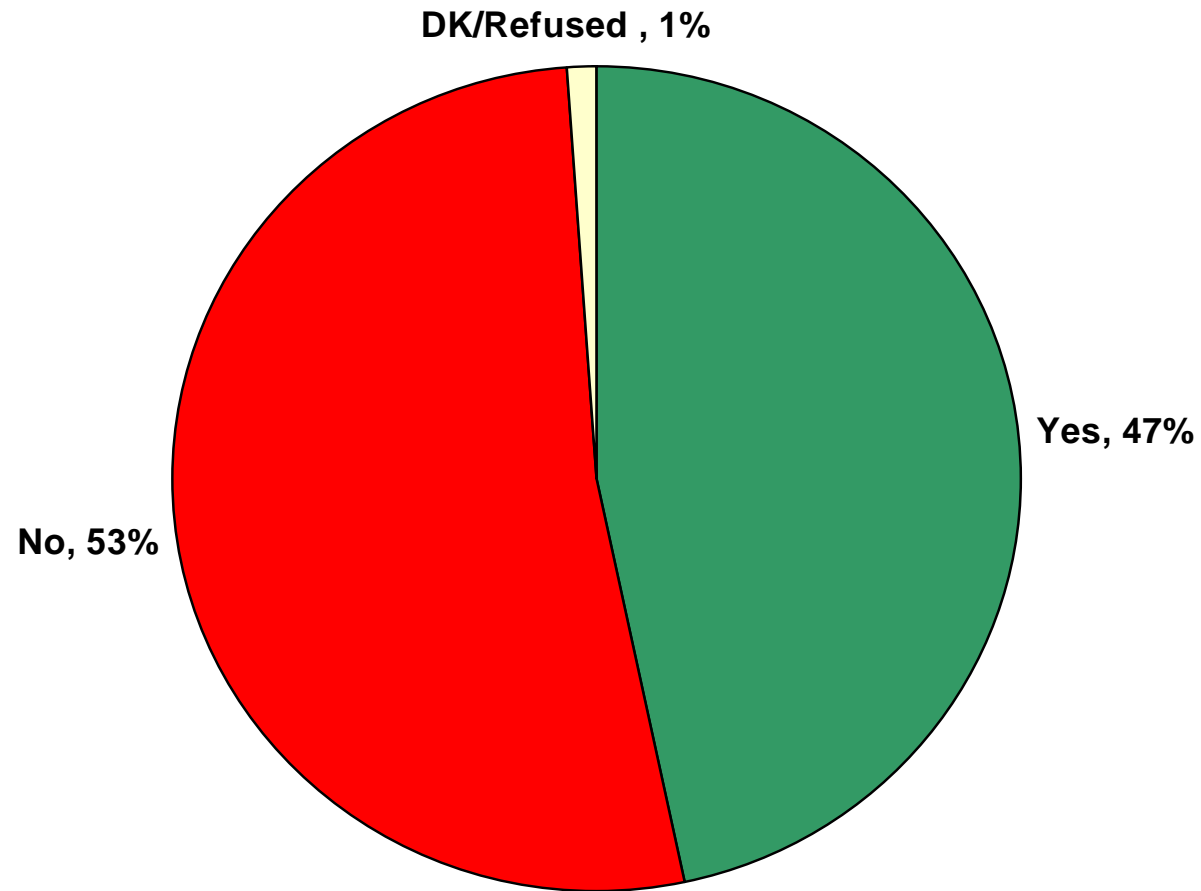


Do you rent or own your own home?



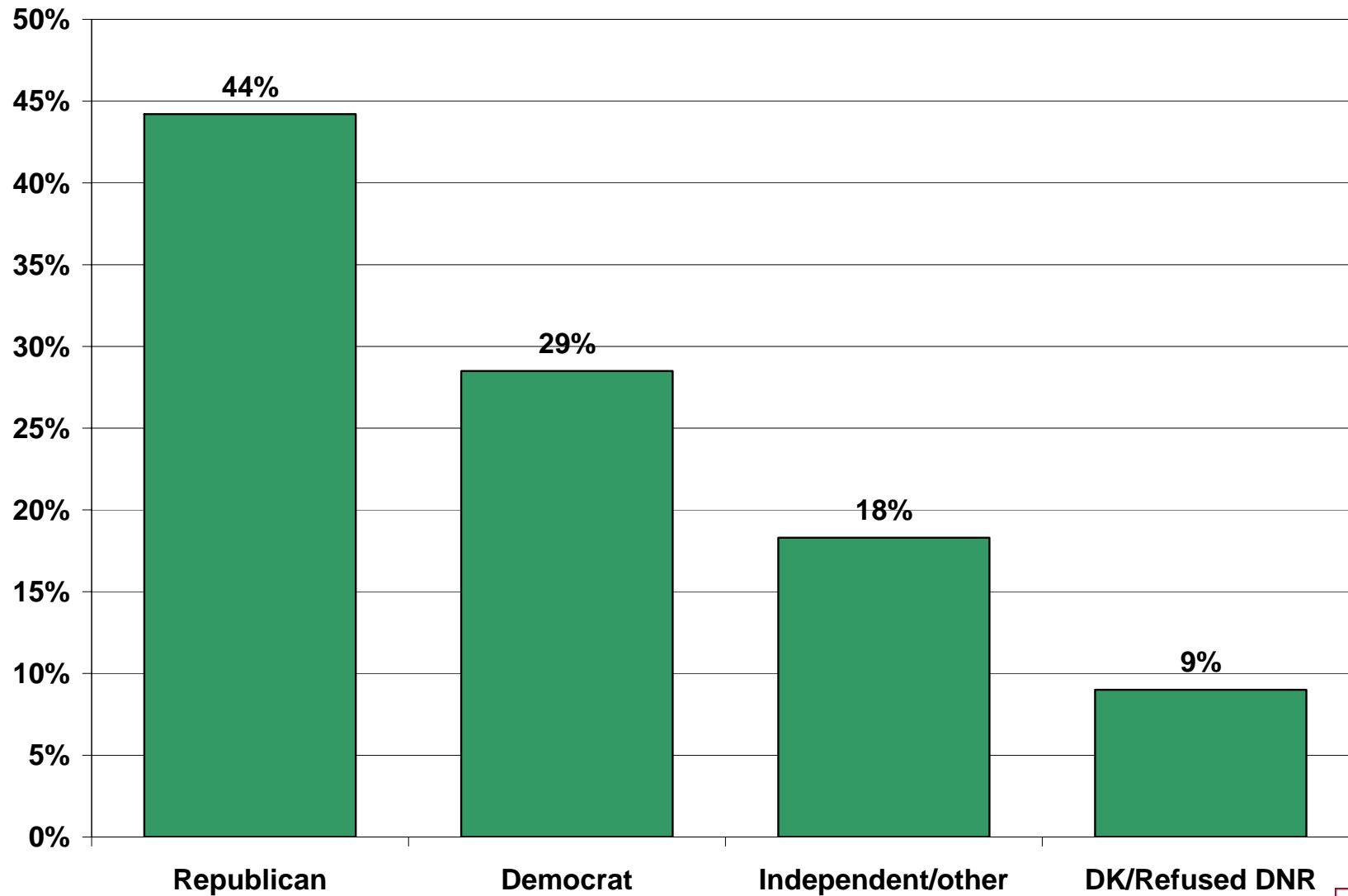


Are you a teacher, retired teacher, or related to a teacher?

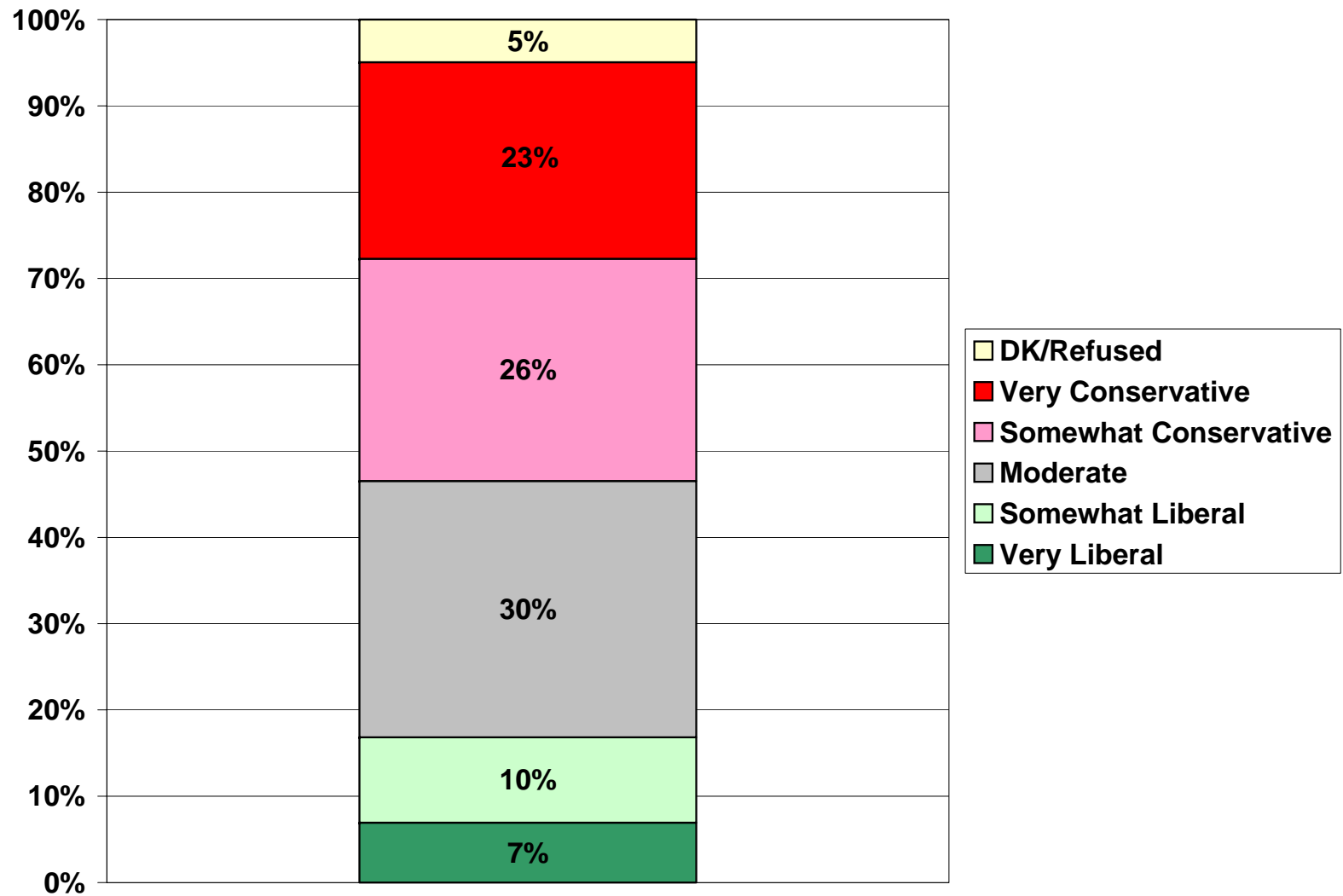




With which political party are you affiliated?

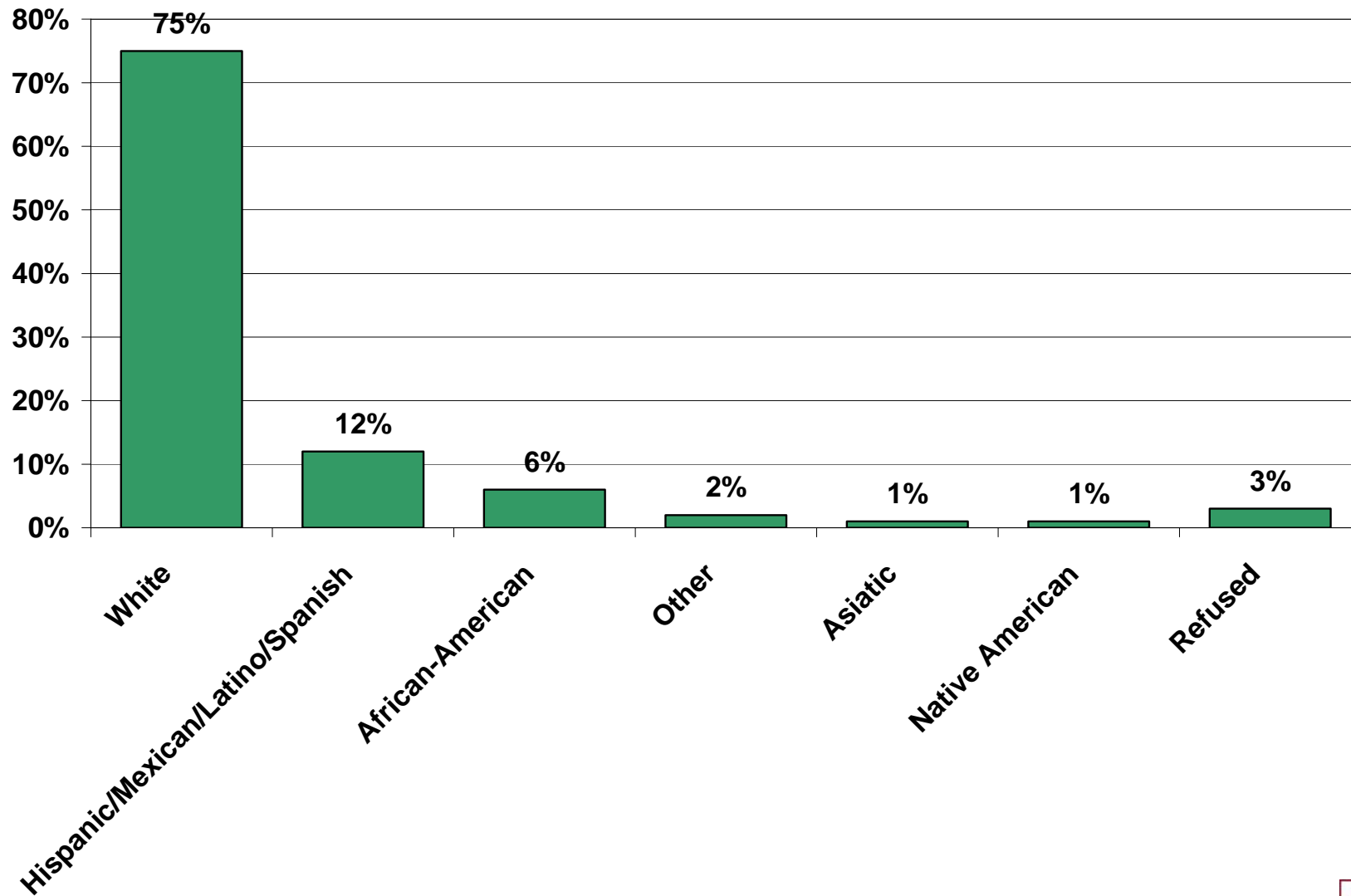


If you were to label yourself, would you say you are a Liberal, a Moderate, or a Conservative in your political beliefs?

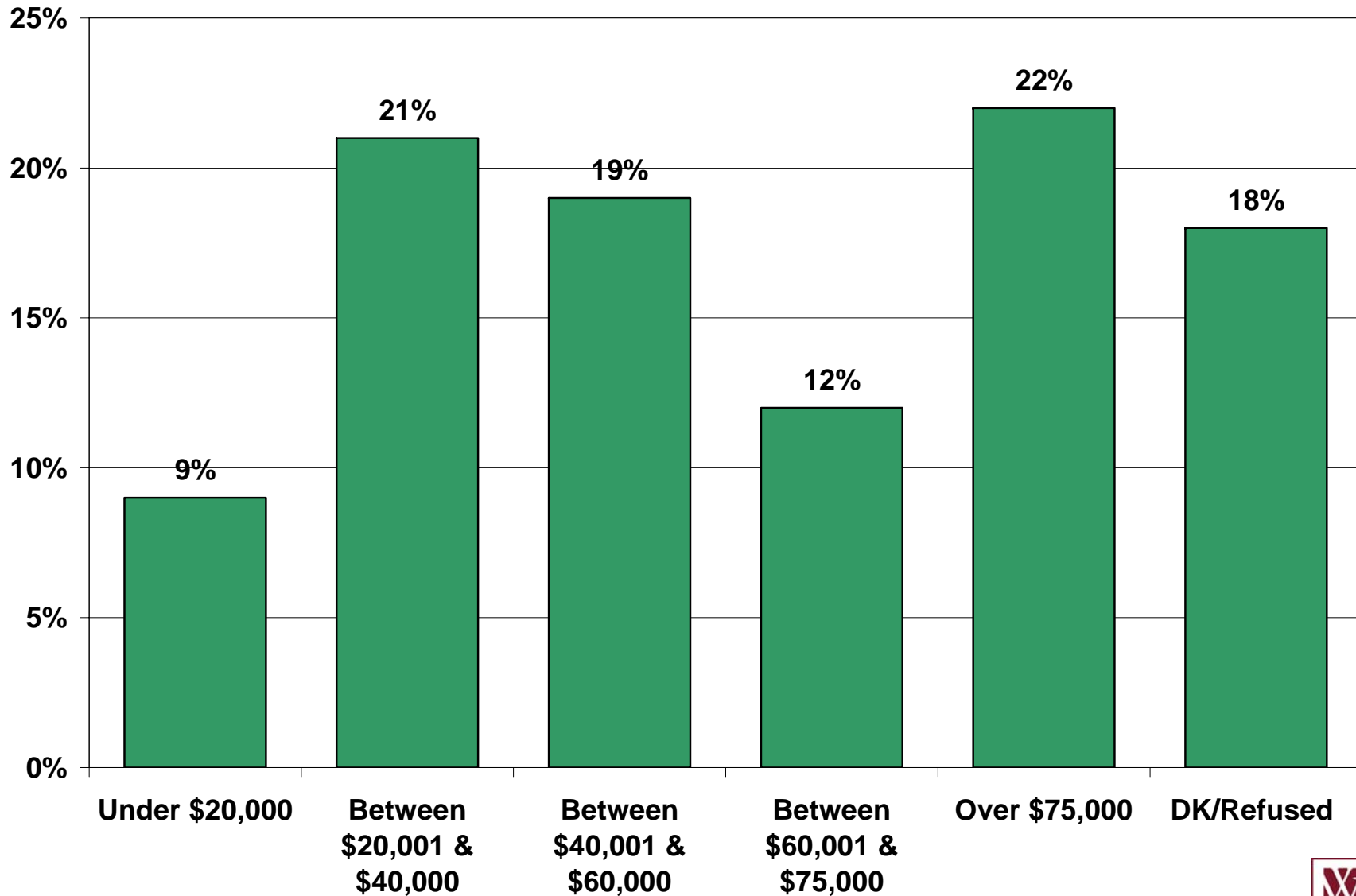




What is your race?

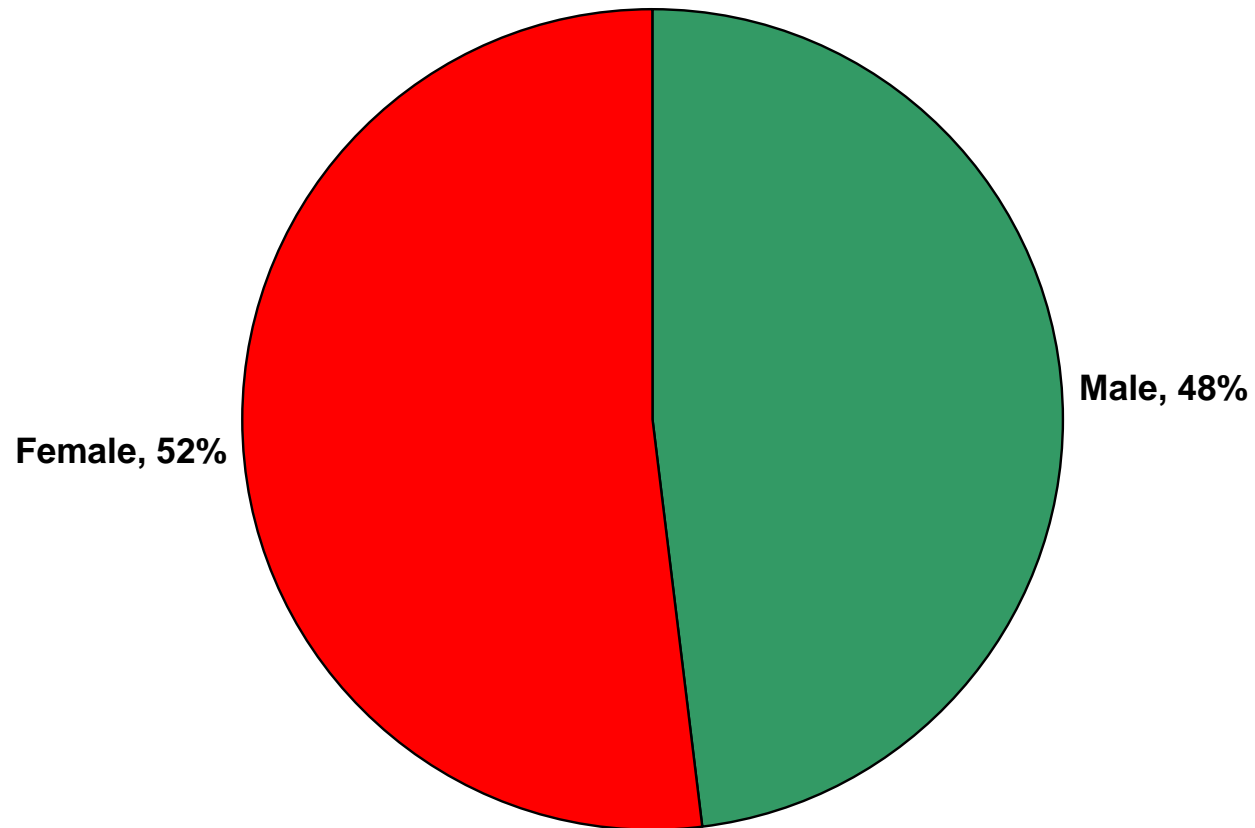


What is your annual family income - Is it under \$20,000, between \$20,001 & \$40,000, between \$40,001 & \$60,000, between \$60,001 & \$75,000, or over \$75,000?





Gender:





Region:

