



STATE OF THE FACTS POLL

FULL REPORT PREPARED FOR THE BALLMER GROUP
JULY 2017





BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY

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The Ballmer Group approached Harris Insights & Analytics to conduct research in support of its newly launched website USAFacts.org.

The research was designed to address two main objectives:

1. Provide market insights into a critical target audience for the website, the general public, (understanding who they are, what would bring them to the site, what content they would be interested in seeing, and who their competition is for similar information).
2. Provide some fodder for public release to help market and promote the importance of the site not only for the general public but also policy makers.

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

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, marital status, household size, income, employment, and education where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS – MEDIA CONTENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KEY FINDINGS – MARKET INSIGHTS

- Aided awareness of USAFacts is at 14% and among those aware two-thirds said they were familiar and 83% favorable.
- Forty-two percent have used government web sites.
 - These data junkies are more likely to be Opinion Elites, Millennials, registered voters, Democrats/liberal thinkers, be highly educated and be high income earners.
- Demand is highest for information related to economic issues, followed by government and political information and a desire to know where their money is going.
- Key areas of opportunity include:
 - Crime and the justice system
 - Taxes
 - Healthcare, including Medicare
 - along with information on the budget and elections
- Most want national information, but some key topics for local analysis include crime and tax data.
- There is widespread interest in a newsletter over other forms of information on data trends.
- People want information generally on the nation but are interested in how they personally compare to others.

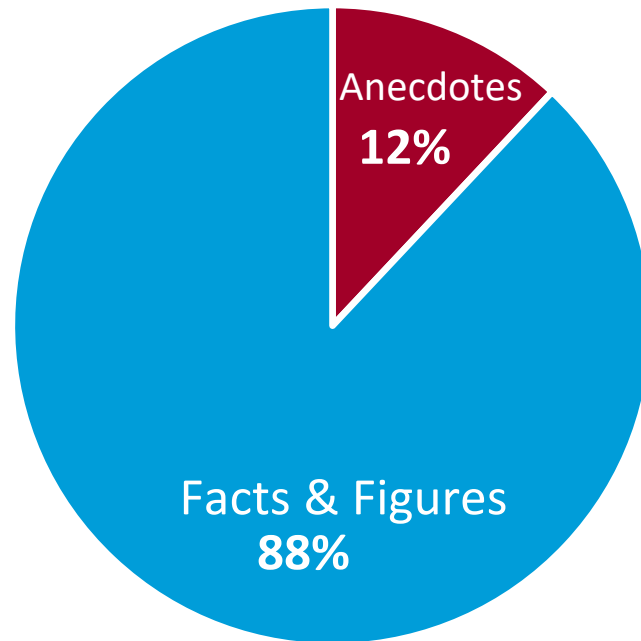


MEDIA CONTENT

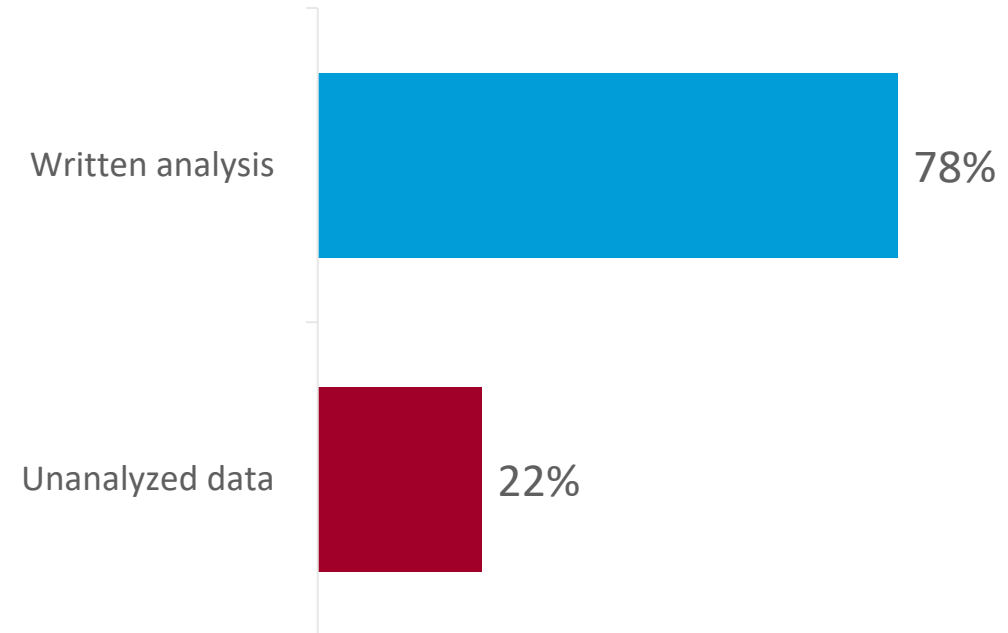
AMERICANS STRONGLY PREFER FACTS AND FIGURES OVER ANECDOTES, HOWEVER WOULD LIKE THAT INFORMATION ANALYZED FOR THEM

BELIEFS VS. FACTS

Interest in Facts vs. Anecdotes



Government Revenue, Expenditures, and Outcomes



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

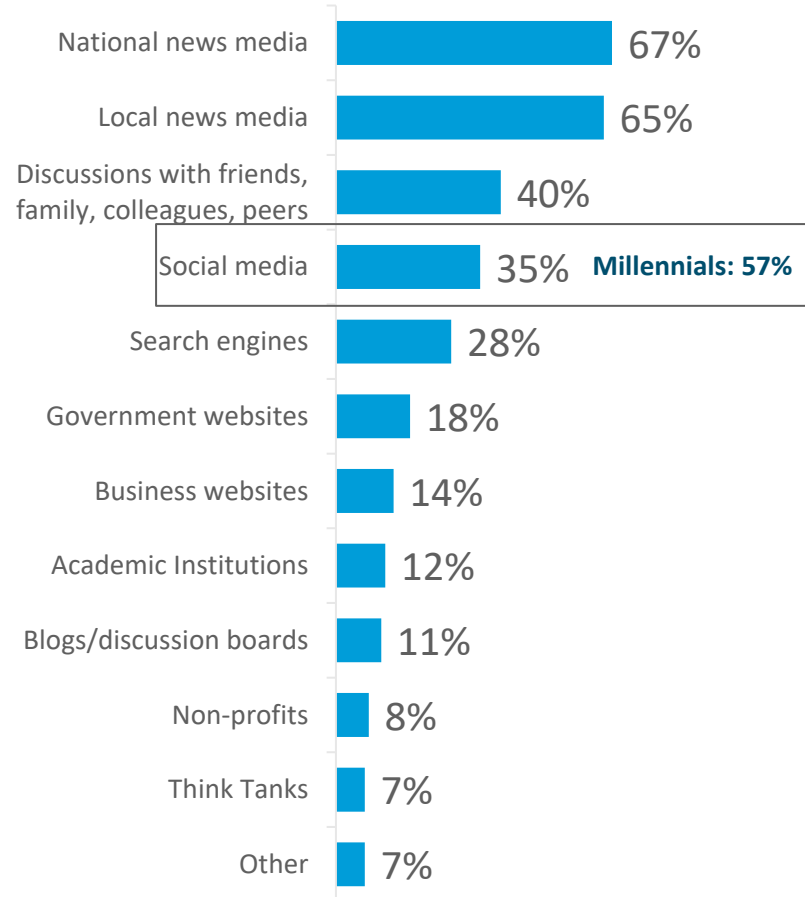
Q610. Are you generally the kind of person who likes [ROTATE: facts and figures on the country and your government] or someone who is more interested in [ROTATE: stories and anecdotes]?

Q613C. Which of the following interests you more?

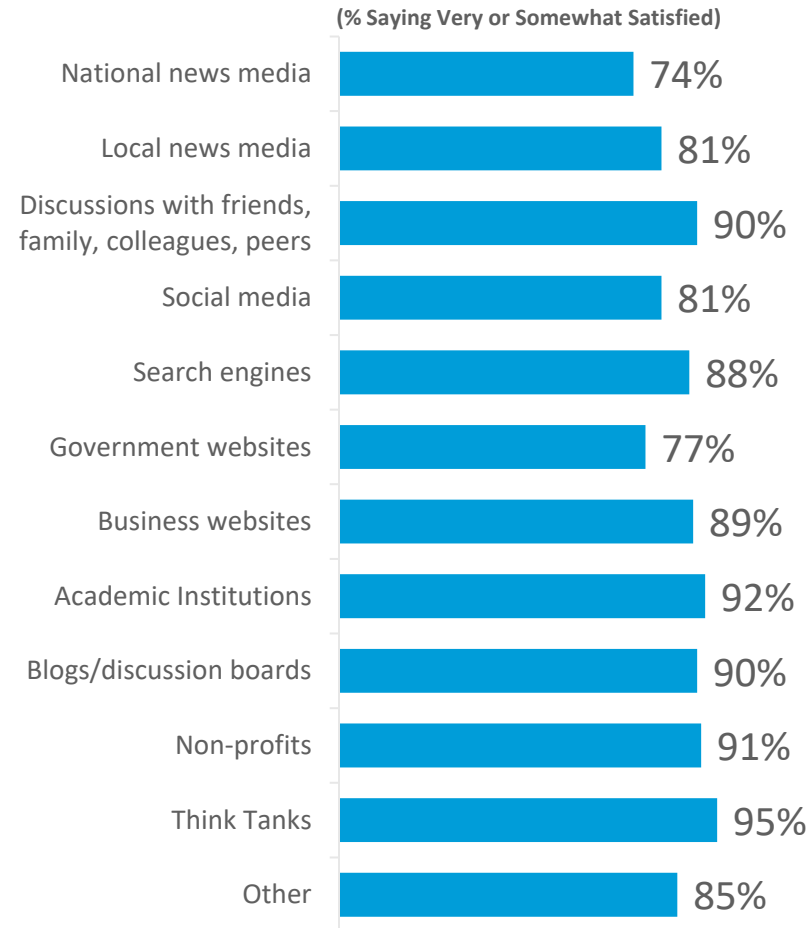
THE PUBLIC IS MORE LIKELY TO TURN TO THE MEDIA FOR INFORMATION AND ARE SATISFIED WITH WHAT THEY FIND

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Sources Relied On For Govt. Information



Satisfaction with Source



Websites Utilized For Information



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

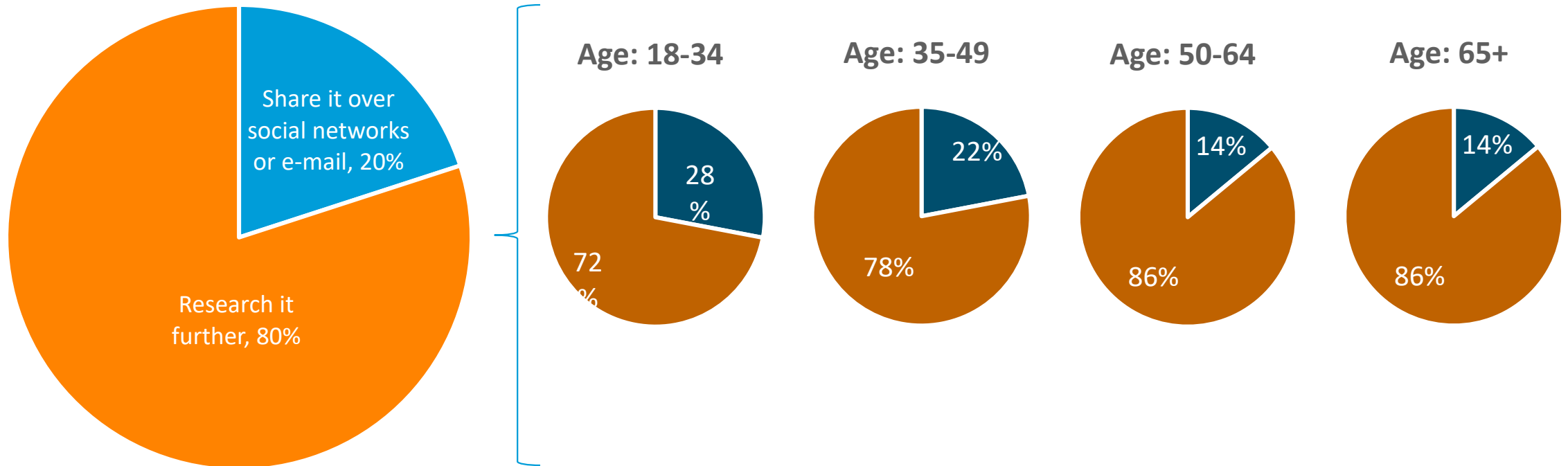
Q607B. How satisfied are you with the information you receive about the government from each source?

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

MILLENNIALS FOCUS IN ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND ARE QUICK TO SHARE IT VIA THE SAME CHANNEL

INFORMATION SHARING

When Finding Something Interesting you...



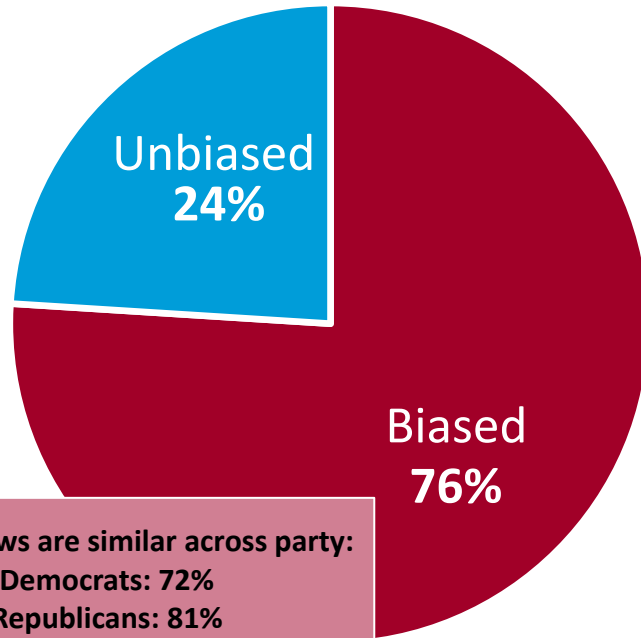
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q613D. When you find something interesting online, what are you more likely to do?

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

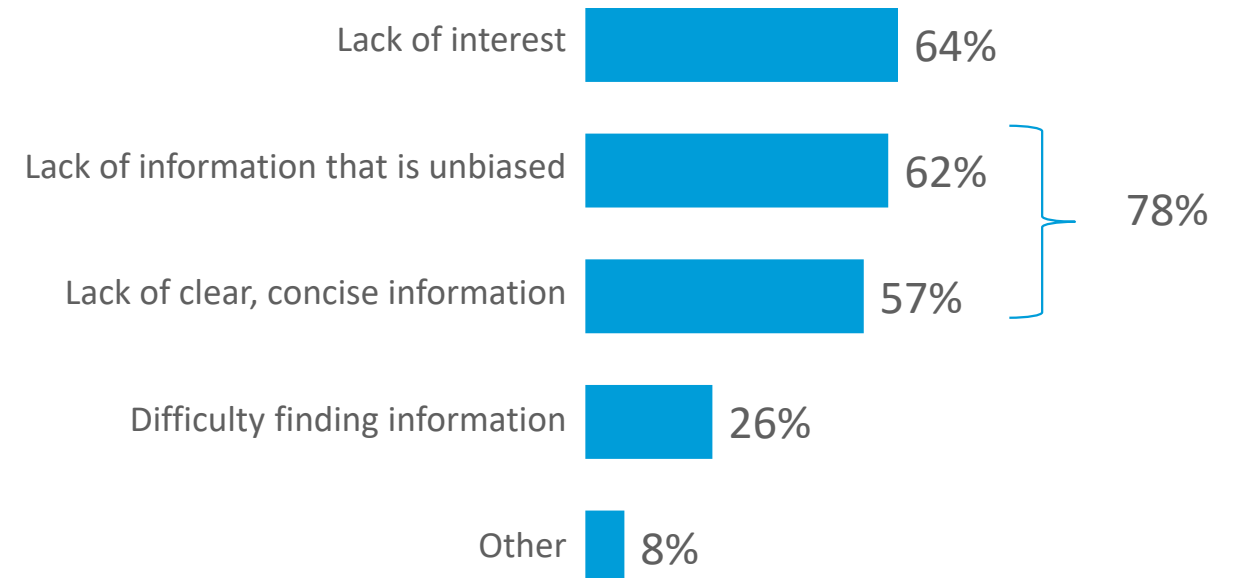
CAUSES FOR BEING UNINFORMED

Information Received Regarding Government, Expenditures, and Outcomes



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

Main Reasons People Could be Uninformed About Government Actions and Expenditures



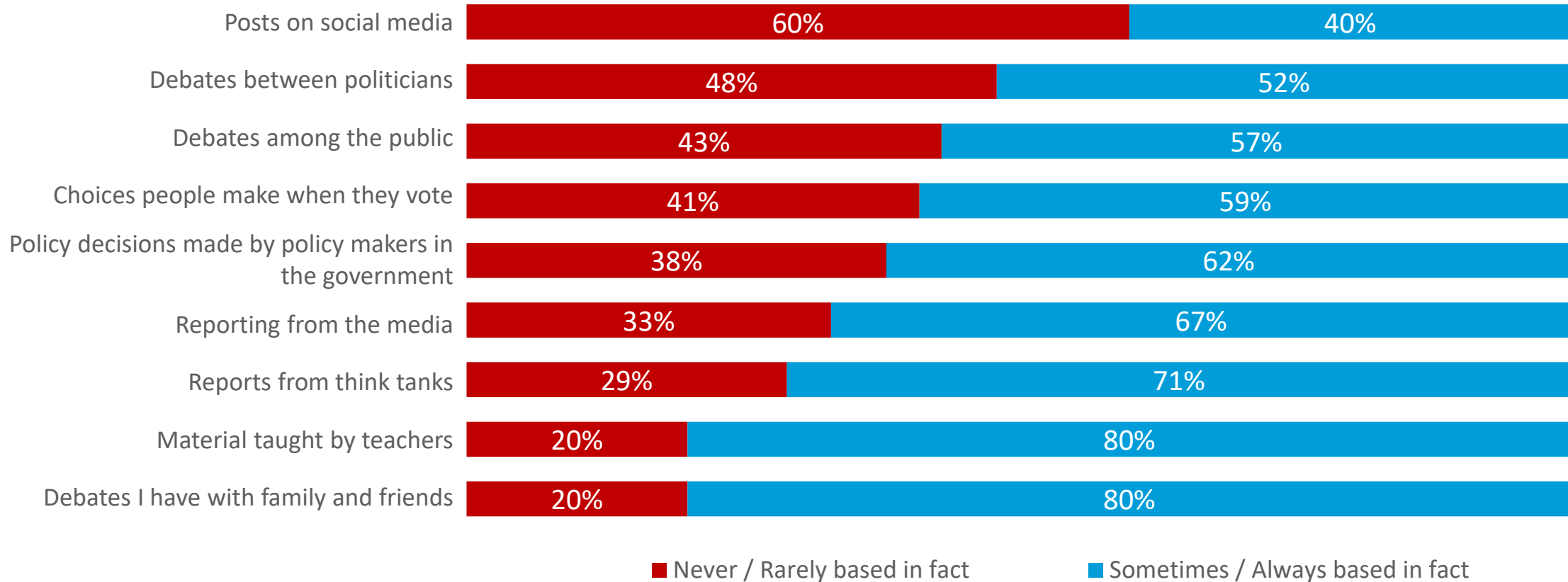
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

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

POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE RARELY SEEN AS FACTUAL

FREQUENCY OF BEING BASED IN FACT

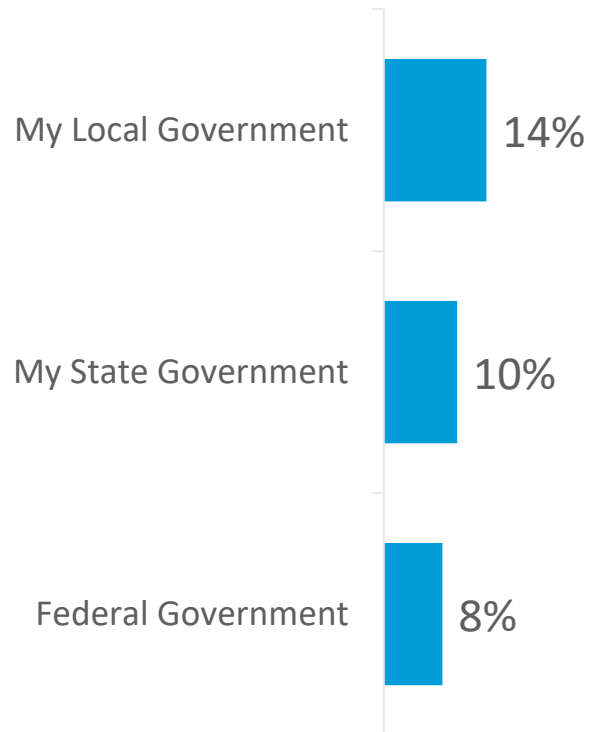


GOVERNMENT DATA IS NOT AS TRUSTED AS IT COULD BE AND IS ONLY SEEN AS DOING A FAIR JOB AT PRESENTING CLEAR UNBIASED INFORMATION

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RATING OF GOVERNMENT DATA RECEIVED

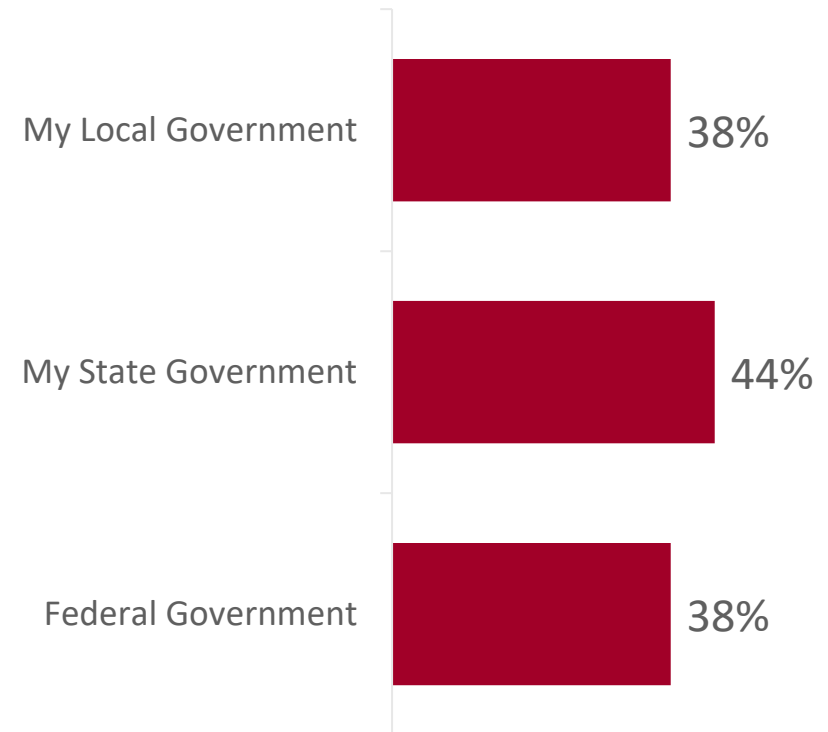
Trustworthiness of Statistical And Financial Information From...

(% Saying Very Trustworthy)



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

(% Saying Fair)



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

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

AMERICANS OVERWHELMINGLY BELIEVE THAT RELYING ON GOVERNMENT DATA WOULD IMPROVE THEIR TRUST IN ELECTED OFFICIALS

RELIANCE ON GOVERNMENT DATA WOULD IMPROVE TRUST IN...

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



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

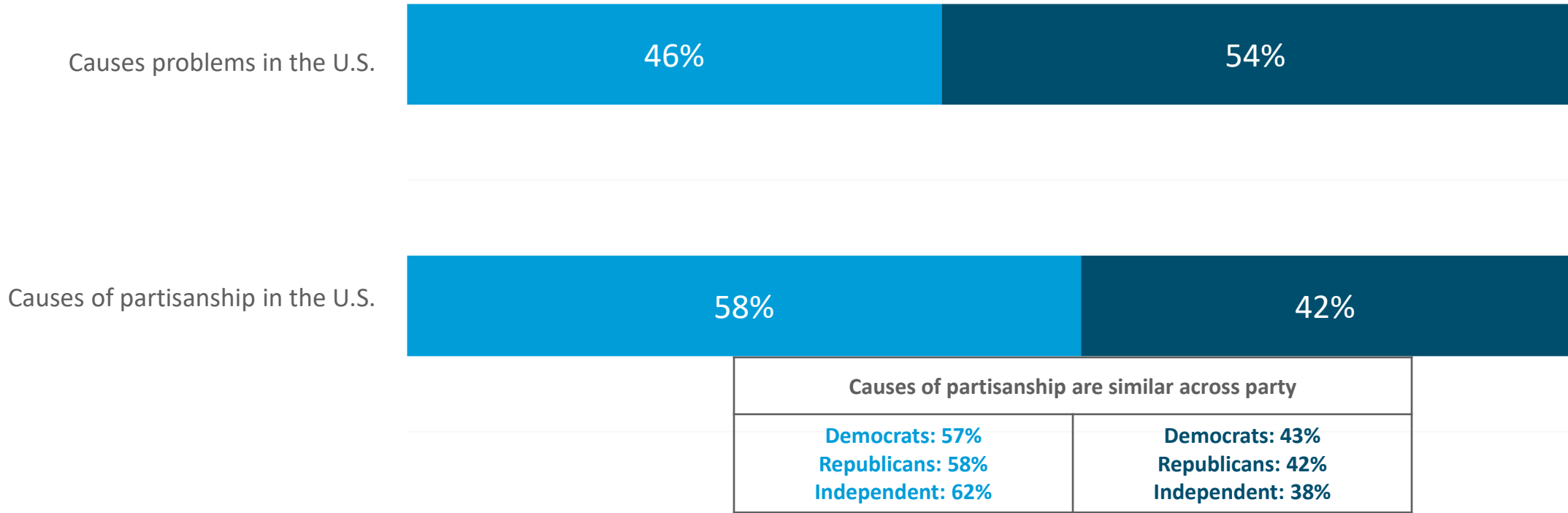
Q629. If political parties relied more on government data for their public debates, would it improve your trust in them?

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

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

PEOPLE USING DIFFERENT FACTS, VERSUS POLITICAL BELIEFS, IS THE CAUSE OF OUR PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. TODAY

POLITICAL BELIEFS VS. FACTS



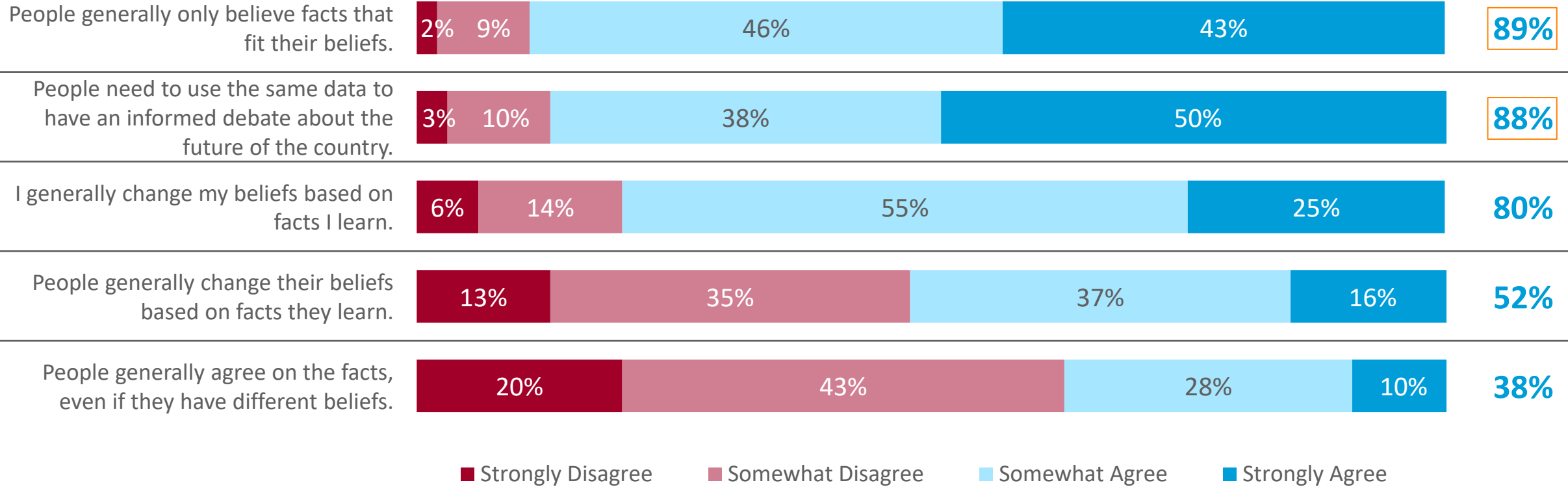
■ Americans holding different political beliefs ■ Americans using different sets of facts

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)
 Q624. Which do you believe is a bigger cause of partisanship in the United States today?
 Q625. Which do you believe causes more problems in the United States today?

AMERICANS AGREE THAT PEOPLE ONLY BELIEVE THE FACTS THAT FIT THEIR BELIEFS AND THUS A SINGLE SOURCE OF DATA IS NEEDED FOR INFORMED DEBATES

VIEW ON FACTS AND INFORMATION

Agree



Views differentiate among Democrats and Republicans by 1% or less

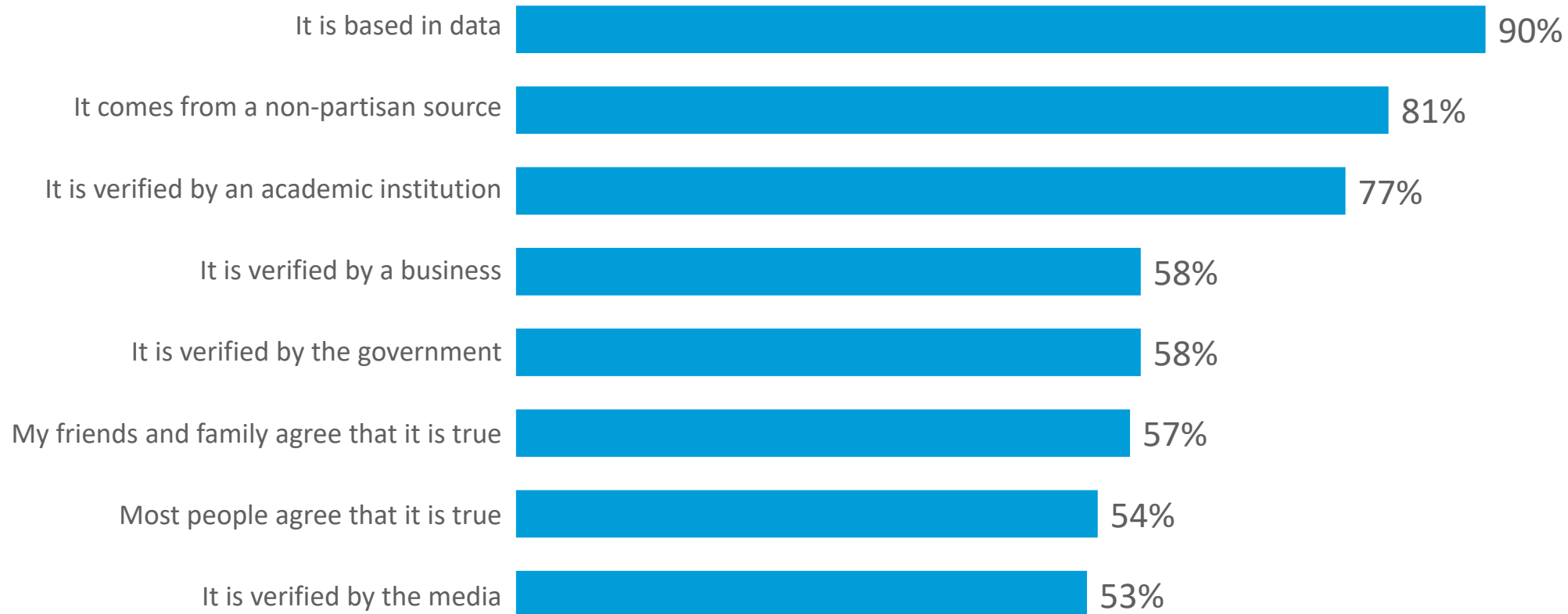
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

Q619. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

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

LIKELIHOOD INFORMATION IS FACTUAL

(% Saying Very or Somewhat Likely)



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

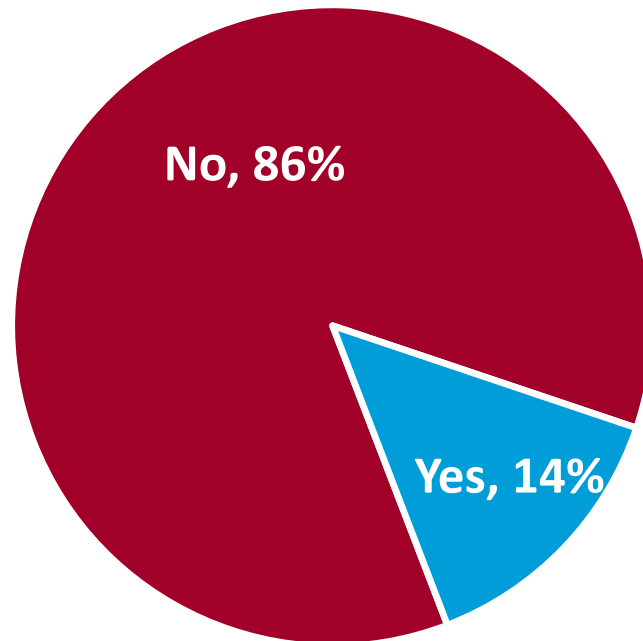


MARKET INSIGHTS

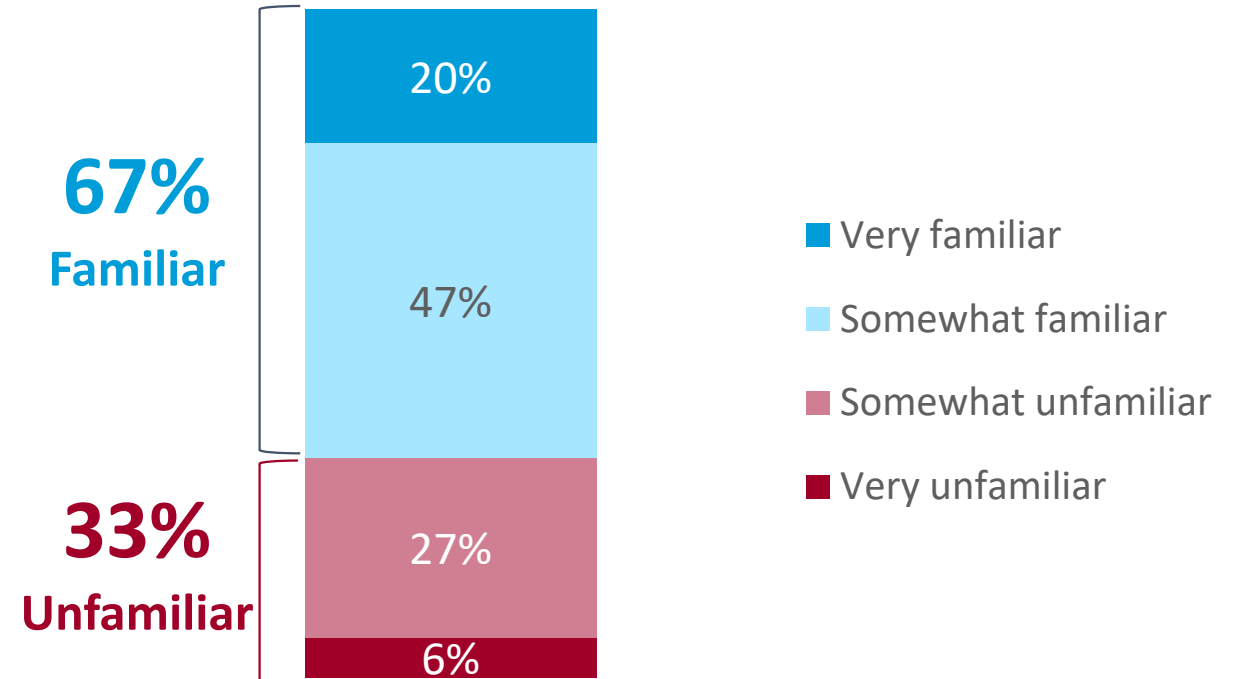
ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS HAVE HEARD OF USAFACTS, HOWEVER THOSE WHO HAVE ARE AT LEAST 'SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR' WITH IT

AWARENESS AND FAMILIARITY WITH USAFACTS

Awareness of USAFacts



Familiarity with USAFacts



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

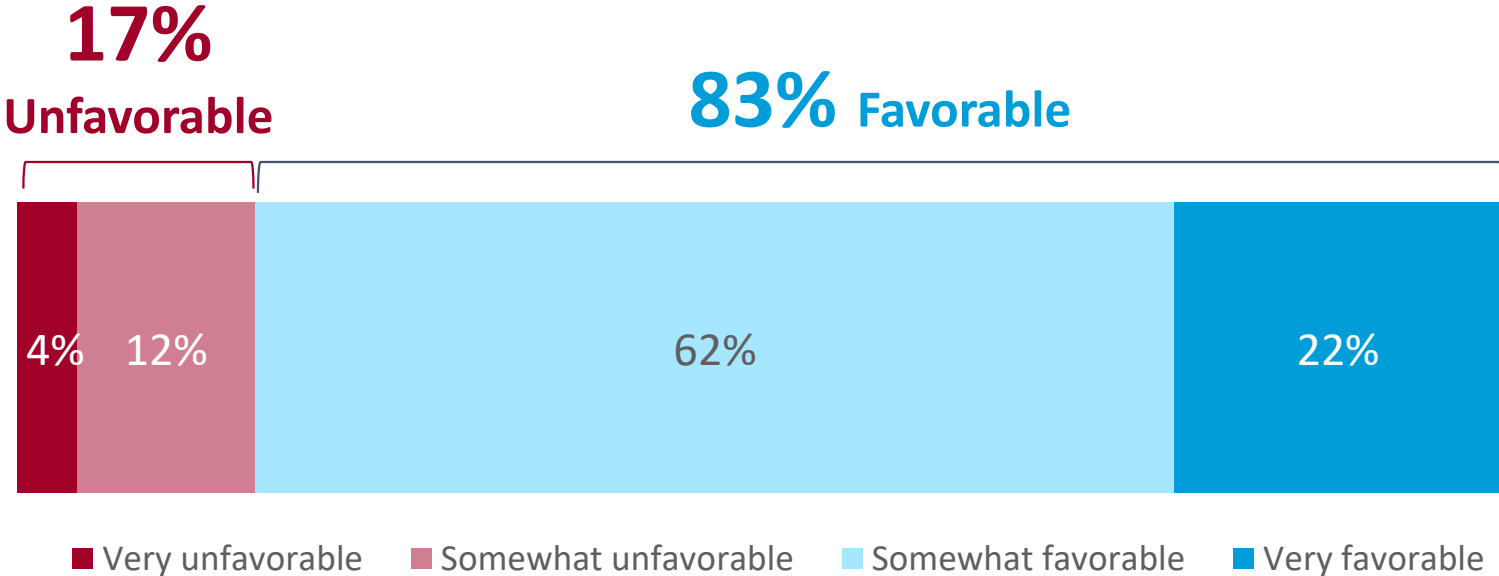
Q633. Have you heard of USAFacts?

BASE: FAMILIAR WITH USAFacts (n=314)

Q634A. How familiar or unfamiliar are you with USAFacts?

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS IS FAVORABLE TOWARDS USAFACTS

FAVORABILITY TOWARDS USAFACTS



BASE: FAMILIAR WITH USAFacts (n=314)

Q634. How favorable or unfavorable are you toward USAFacts?

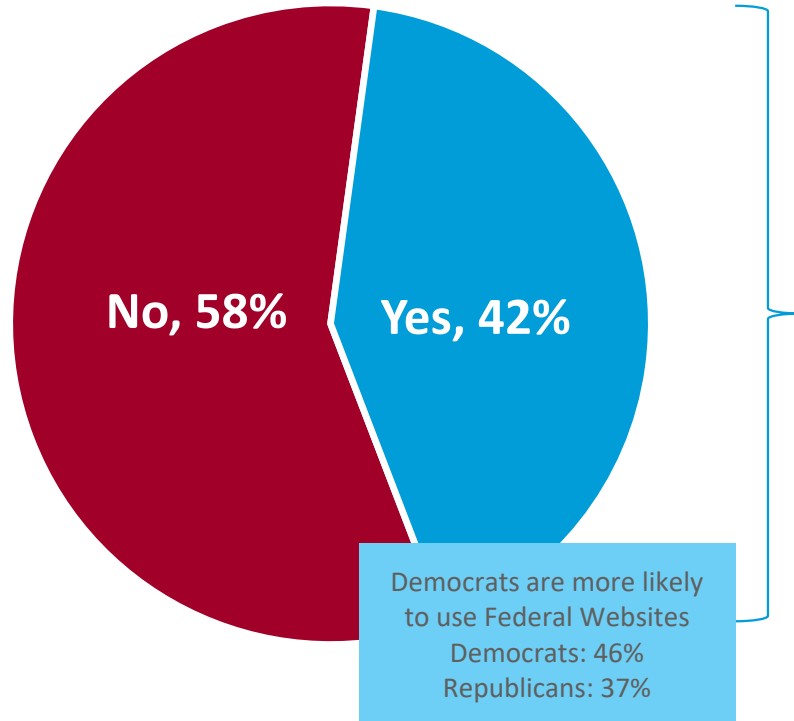
BASE: NOT FAMILIAR WITH USAFacts (n=2207)

Q635. Based on this description, how favorable or unfavorable are you toward USAFacts?

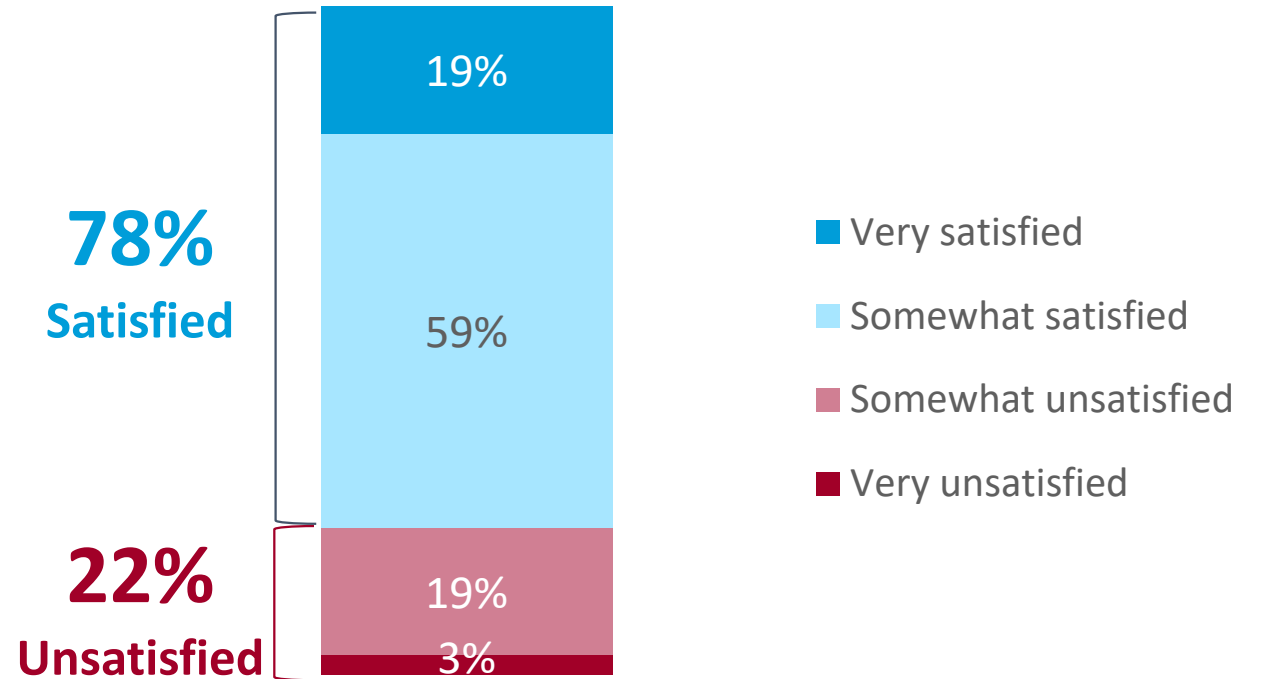
OVER 4 IN 10 AMERICANS HAVE USED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SITES AND ARE SATISFIED WITH THEM

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Used Federal Government Website



Satisfaction with Federal Government Website



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

BASE: HAVE USED GOVERNMENT SITES (n=1060)

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

DATA JUNKIES, THOSE WHO GO TO GOVERNMENT WEBSITES AND SEEK OUT DATA, ARE A CRITICAL TARGET FOR USAFACTS

DATA JUNKIE PROFILE

Demographic Profile:

- Millennials
- Opinion Elites
- Registered Voter
- Democrats
- Liberal
- College Graduates
- High Income Earners



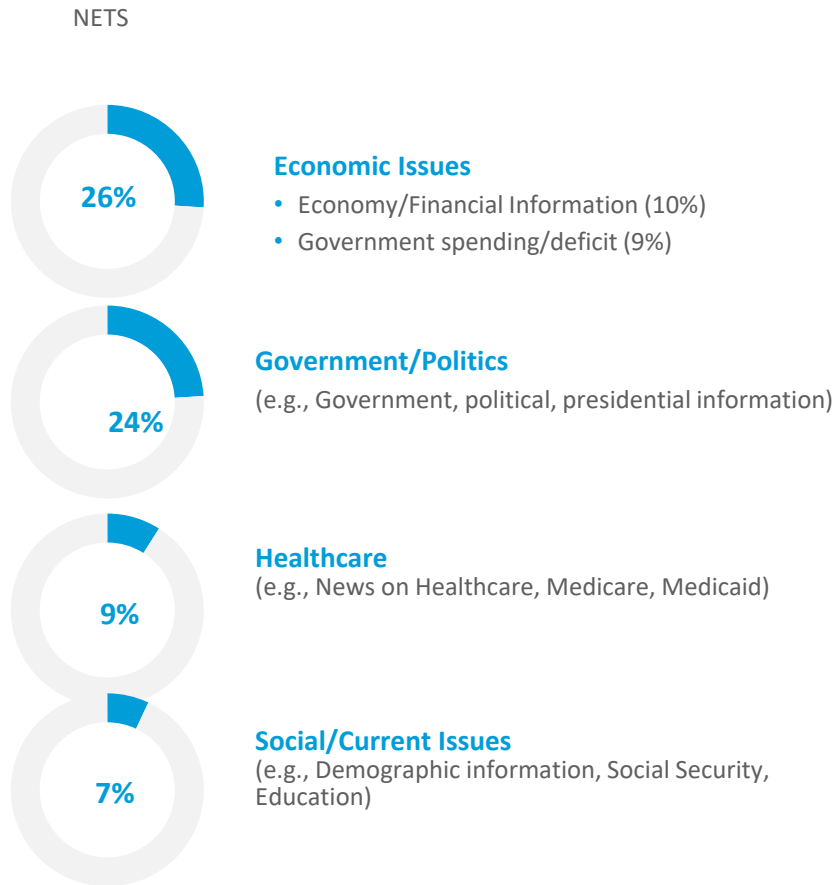
Attitudinal Profile:

- Seeks data about the nation
- Seeks data about people different from them

MOST AMERICANS WOULD LIKE TO SEE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASED INFORMATION ON USAFACTS

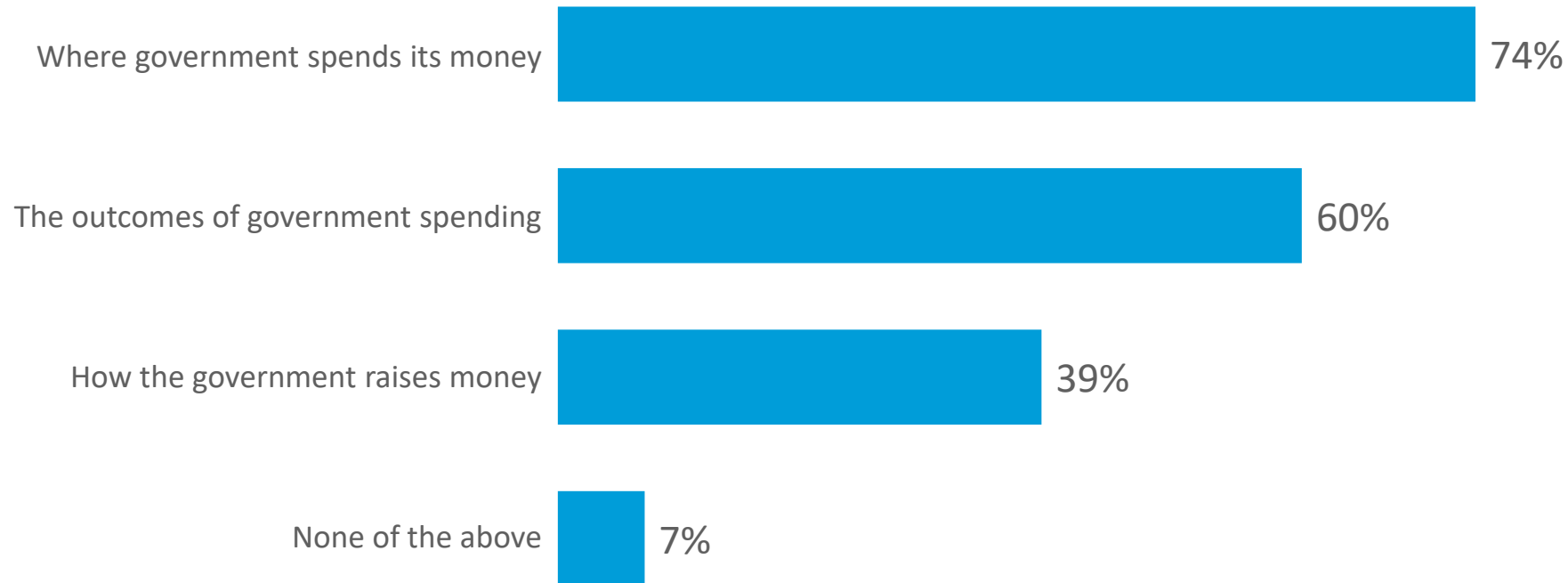
INFORMATION THE SITE SHOULD CONTAIN

Information From USAFacts

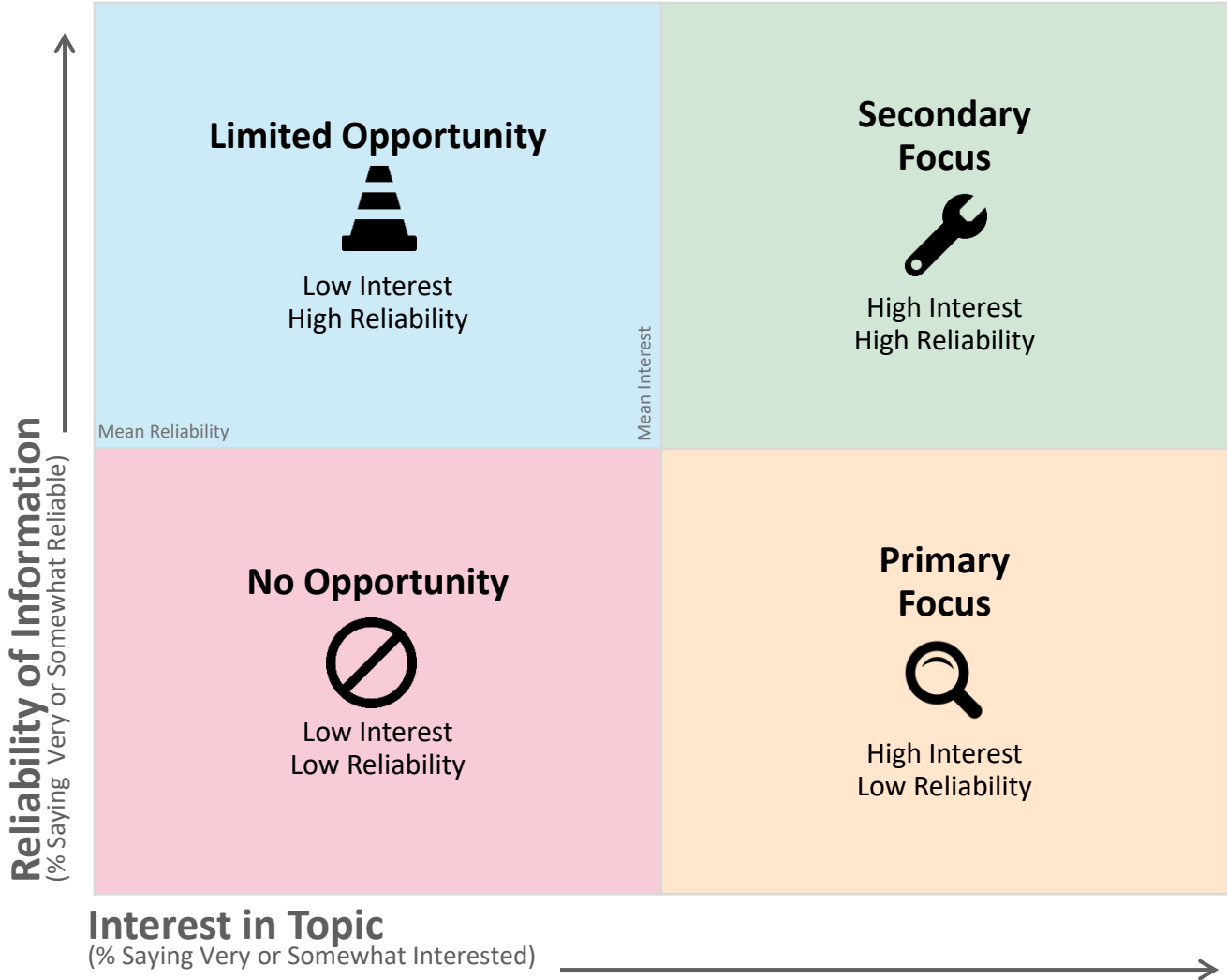


AMERICANS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN WHERE GOVERNMENT SPENDS ITS MONEY AND THE OUTCOMES OF THAT SPENDING

IMPORTANCE IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING

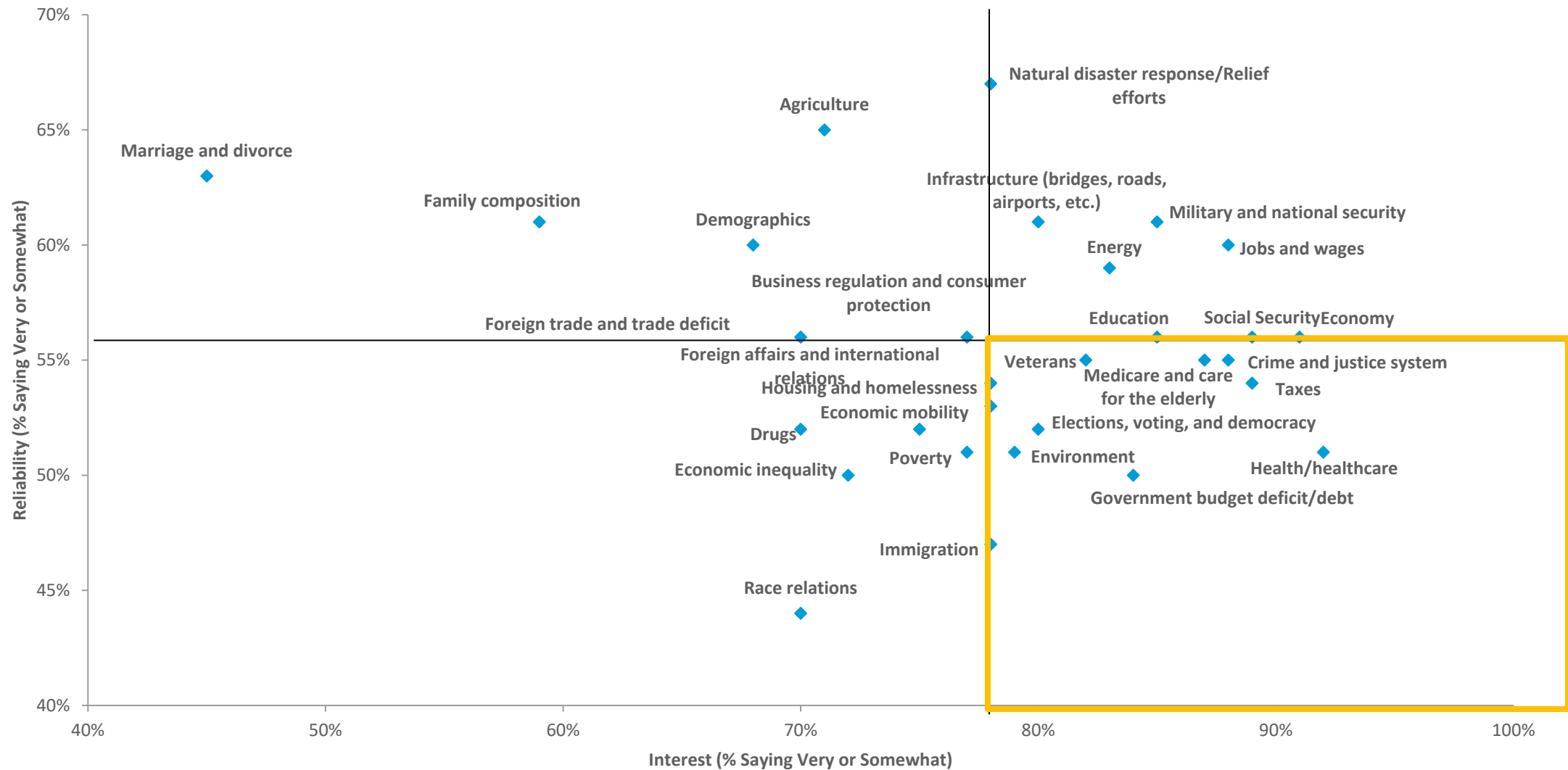


OPPORTUNITY AREAS FOR USAFACTS



By examining the intersection between interest and reliability of current information, we can identify areas of opportunity for the USAFacts website.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR USAFACTS ARE QUITE TOPICAL – HEALTHCARE, ELECTIONS, CRIME/JUSTICE SYSTEM, ETC.



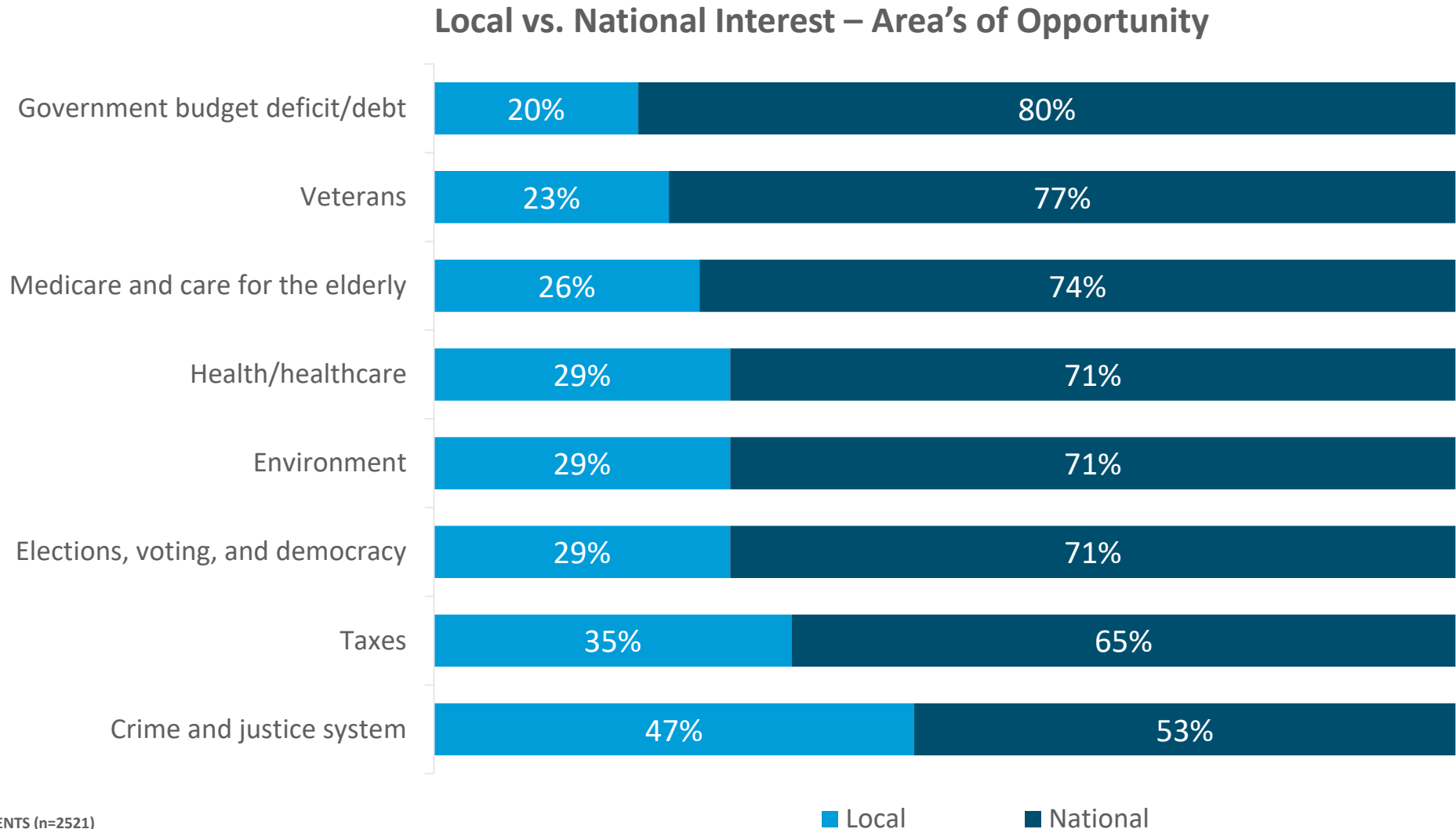
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

Q617. And for each of these areas, how reliable in general are most sources of information about the government's actions and the outcomes of its programs?

FOR NEARLY ALL AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY, INTEREST IS FOCUSED ON NATIONAL BASED INFORMATION

LOCAL VS. NATIONAL INTEREST – AREA'S OF OPPORTUNITY

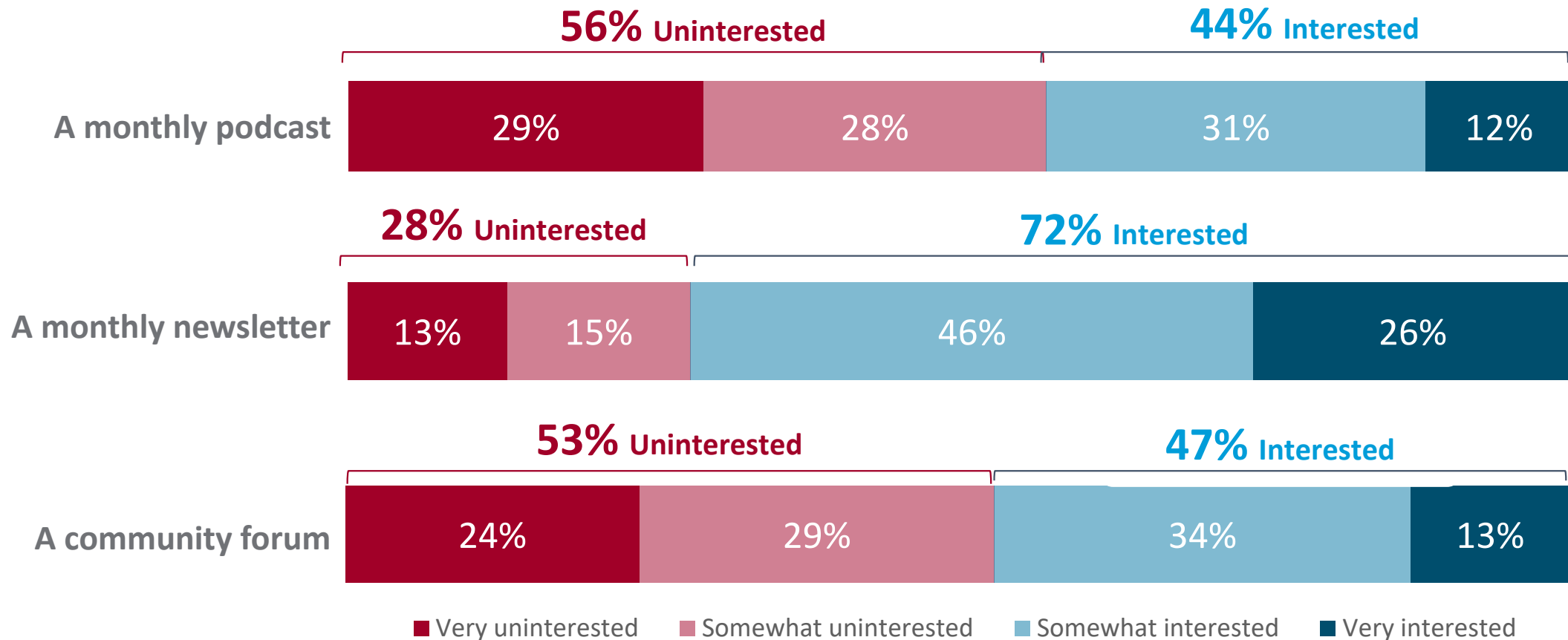


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS PREFER A NEWSLETTER OVER A PODCAST OR COMMUNITY FORUM TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM USAFACTS

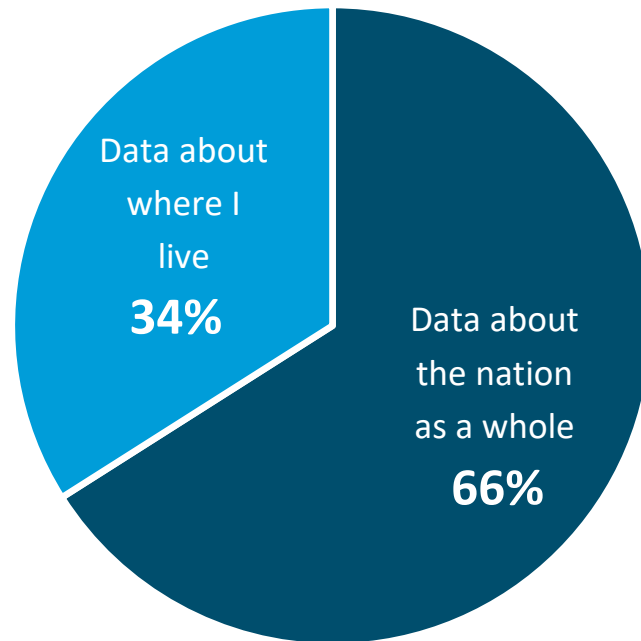
INTEREST IN MODES OF COMMUNICATION FROM USAFACTS



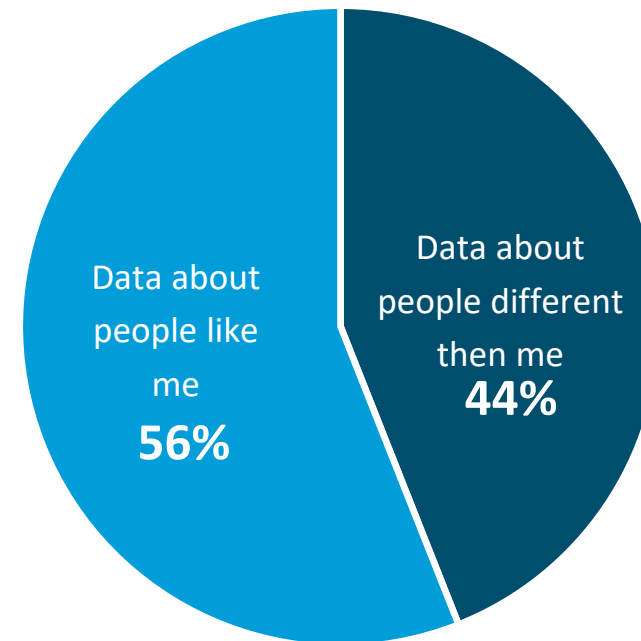
AMERICANS PREFER NATIONAL AND HOMOGENEOUS INFORMATION OVER LOCAL AND INFORMATION ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

LOCAL VS. NATIONAL INFORMATION

Area Similarities



Cultural Similarities



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

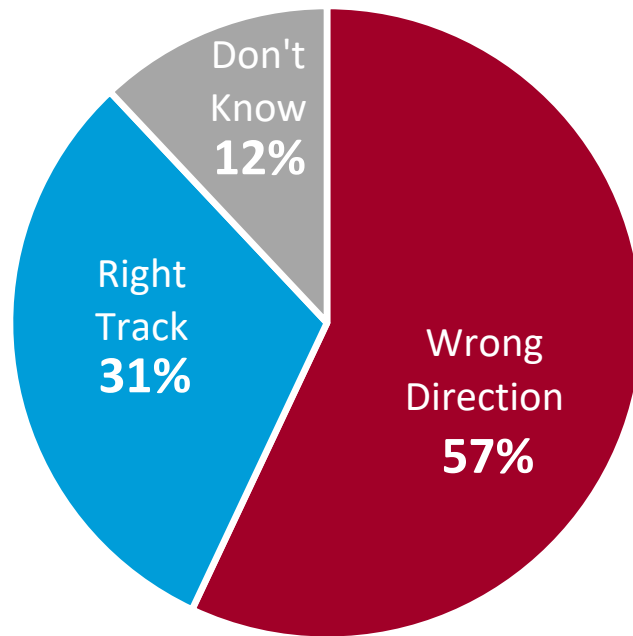


APPENDIX

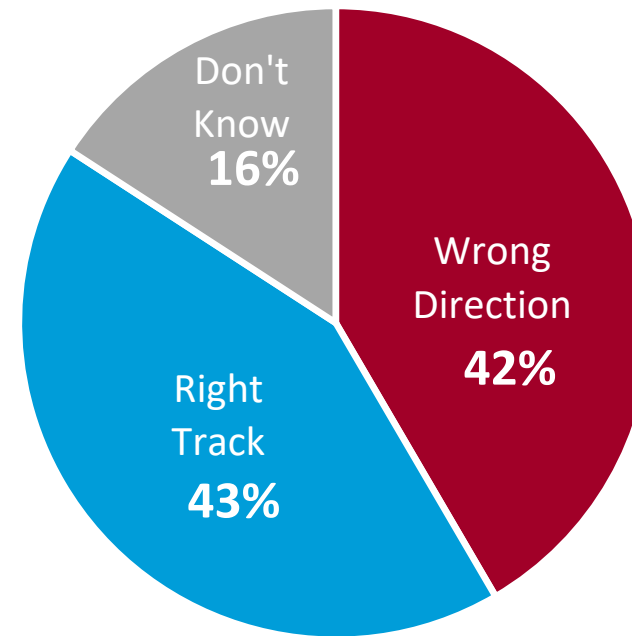
THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THE NATION IS HEADED DOWN THE WRONG TRACK AND ARE SPLIT ON THEIR VIEWS OF THE ECONOMY

DIRECTION OF NATION AND ECONOMY

Direction of the Nation



Direction of the Economy



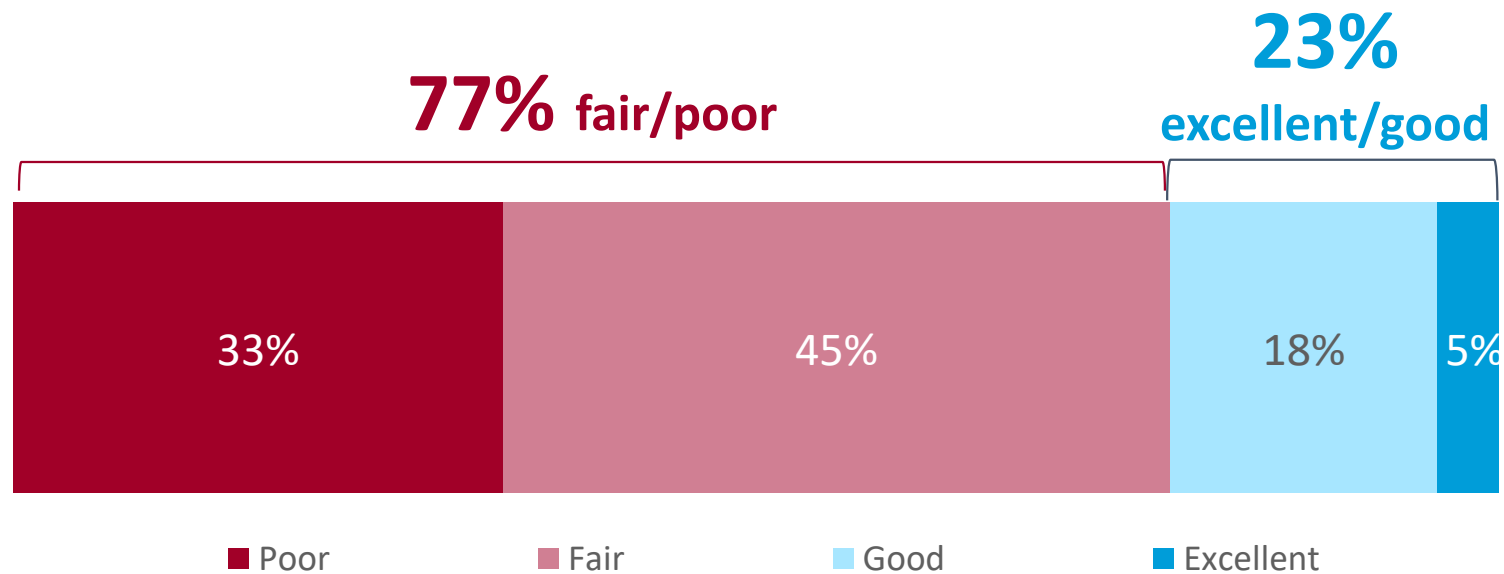
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

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

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

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

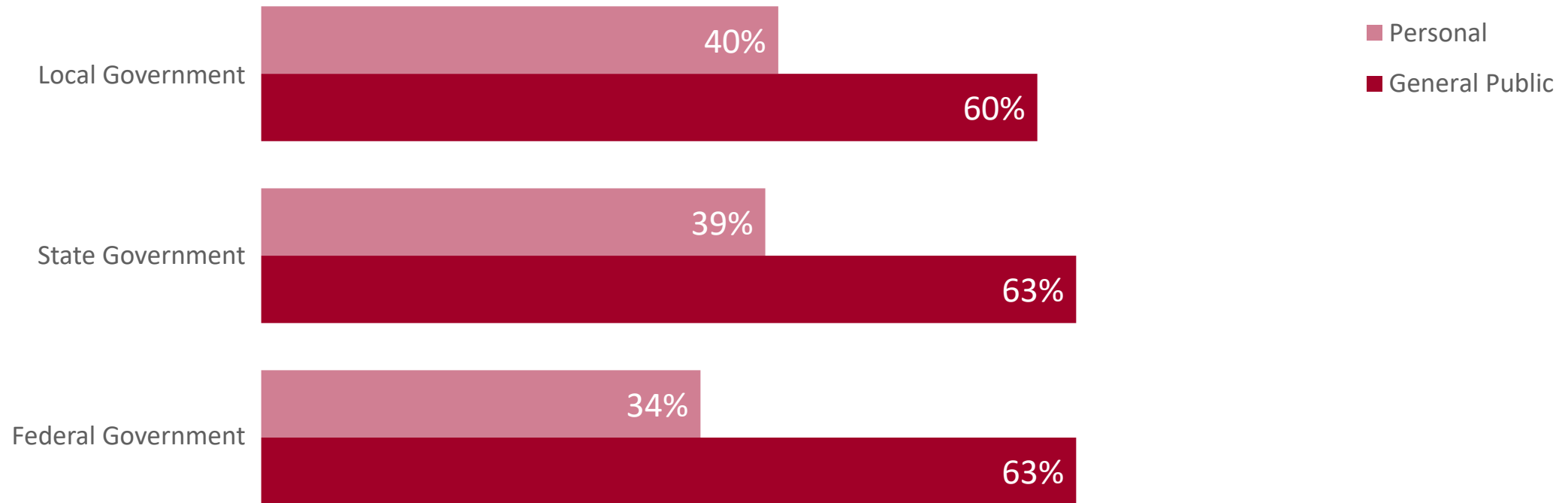
VIEWS ON CIVIC EDUCATION



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

HOW INFORMED THE PUBLIC IS ON THE GOVERNMENT

(% Saying Very or Somewhat Uninformed)



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2521)

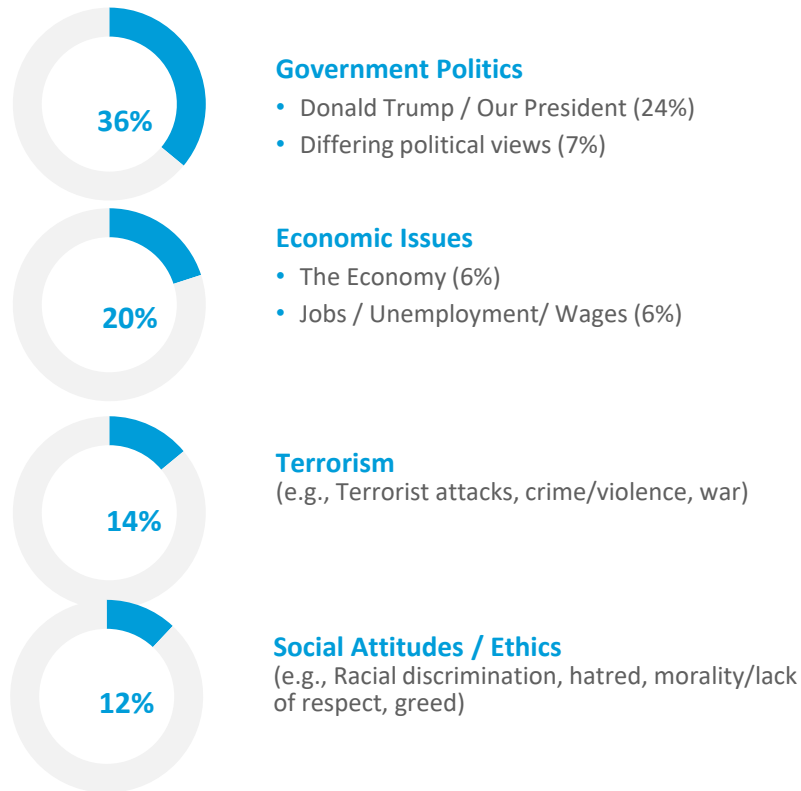
Q607. How informed are you personally about the actions and expenditures of each of the following?

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

THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING THE COUNTRY TODAY STEMS DIRECTLY FROM CONTROVERSY WITH THE OVAL OFFICE AND ISSUES IN THE ECONOMY

BIGGEST ISSUE FACING THE COUNTRY

NETS



DEMOGRAPHICS

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

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

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