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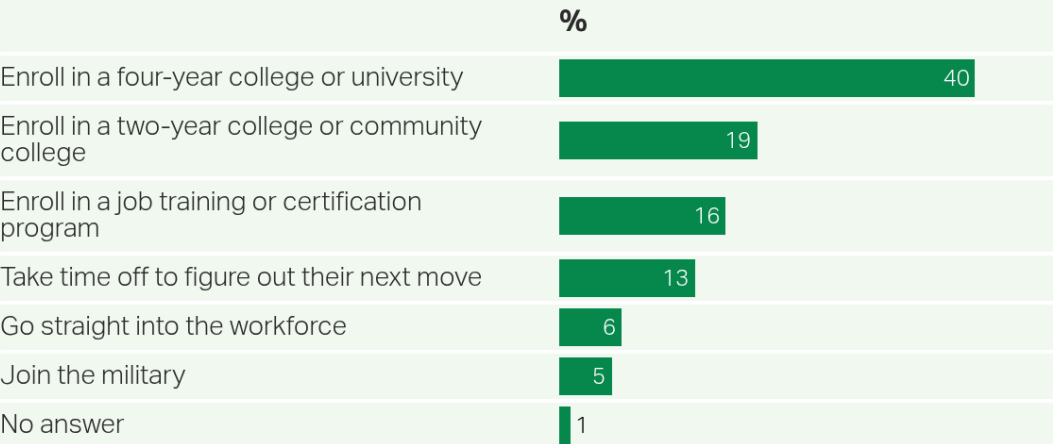
The State of Higher Education in America

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Parents and U.S. adults prefer college pathway for young people in their lives

Most U.S. Parents Prefer Their Child Pursue a Two- or Four-Year Degree Immediately After High School

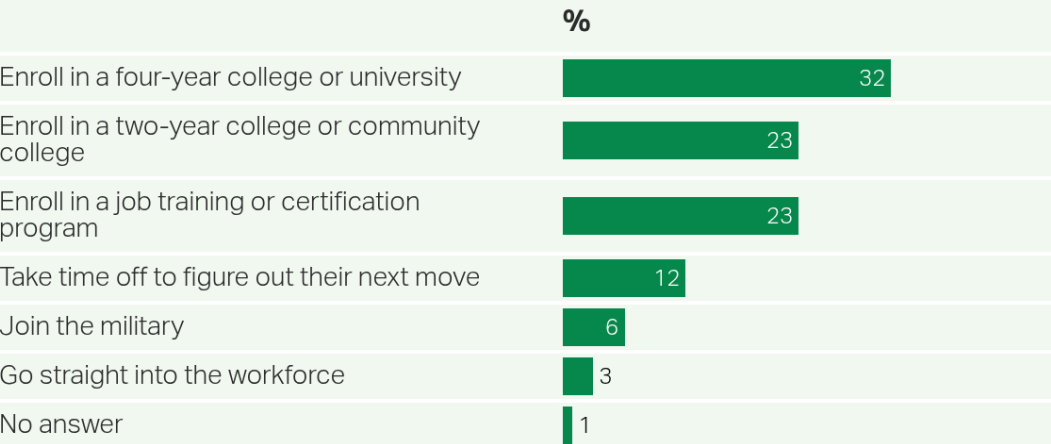
Please think about your oldest child under age 18 who has not yet graduated from high school. What would you most prefer they do immediately after high school?



June 2-15, 2025

Most Americans Prefer the Youth in Their Lives Pursue a Two- or Four-Year Degree After High School

Please think about a child under age 18 you know (grandchild, nephew, niece, family friend) who has not yet graduated from high school. What would you most prefer they do immediately after high school?



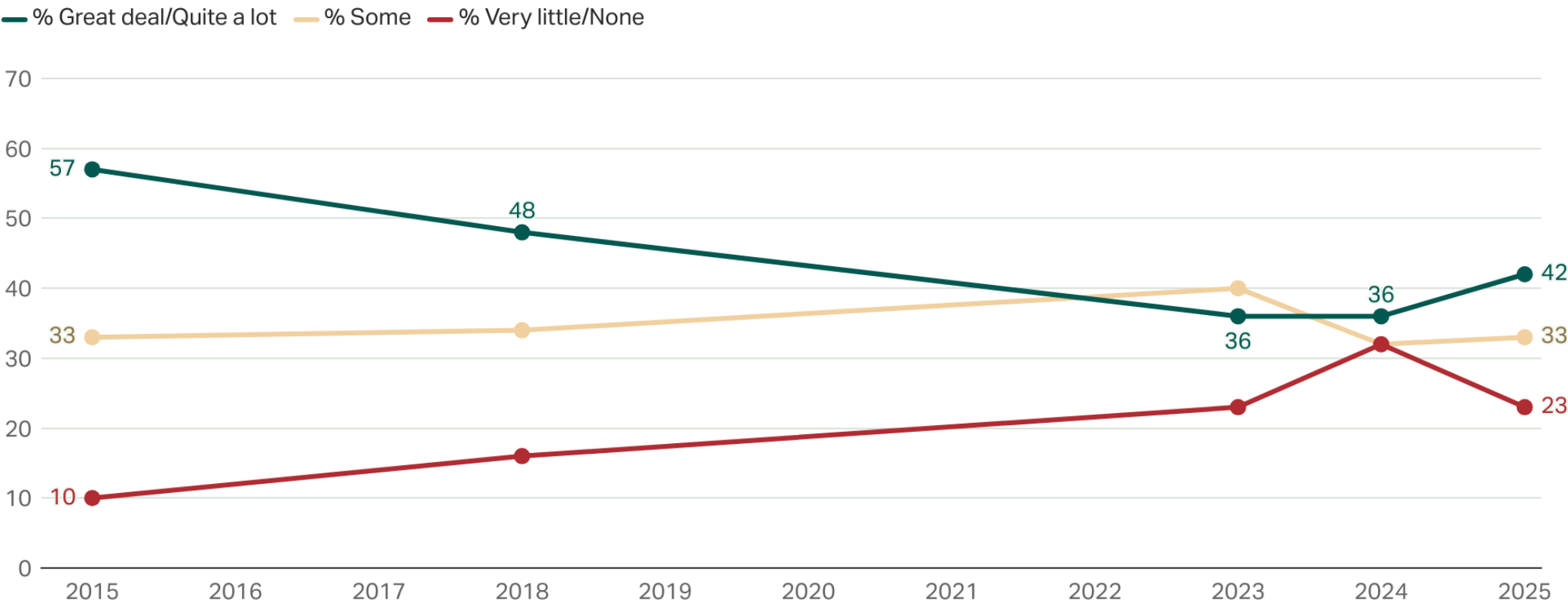
June 2-15, 2025

Democrats and college grads more strongly prefer a college pathway

Democrats, College Graduates Most Prefer Postsecondary Pathway for Their Child					
<i>Please think about your oldest child under age 18 who has not yet graduated from high school. What would you most prefer they do immediately after high school?</i>					
	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	Non-college grads	College grads
	%	%	%	%	%
Four-year college	27	40	53	30	58
Two-year college or community college	21	17	20	20	17
Job training or certification program	22	19	7	19	11
Take time off	13	12	17	16	9
Enter the workforce	10	7	0	8	3
Join the military	7	3	3	5	3
No answer	0	2	0	1	0
June 2-15, 2025					

American trust in higher education rebounded slightly in 2025, but remains 15 percentage points lower than a decade ago

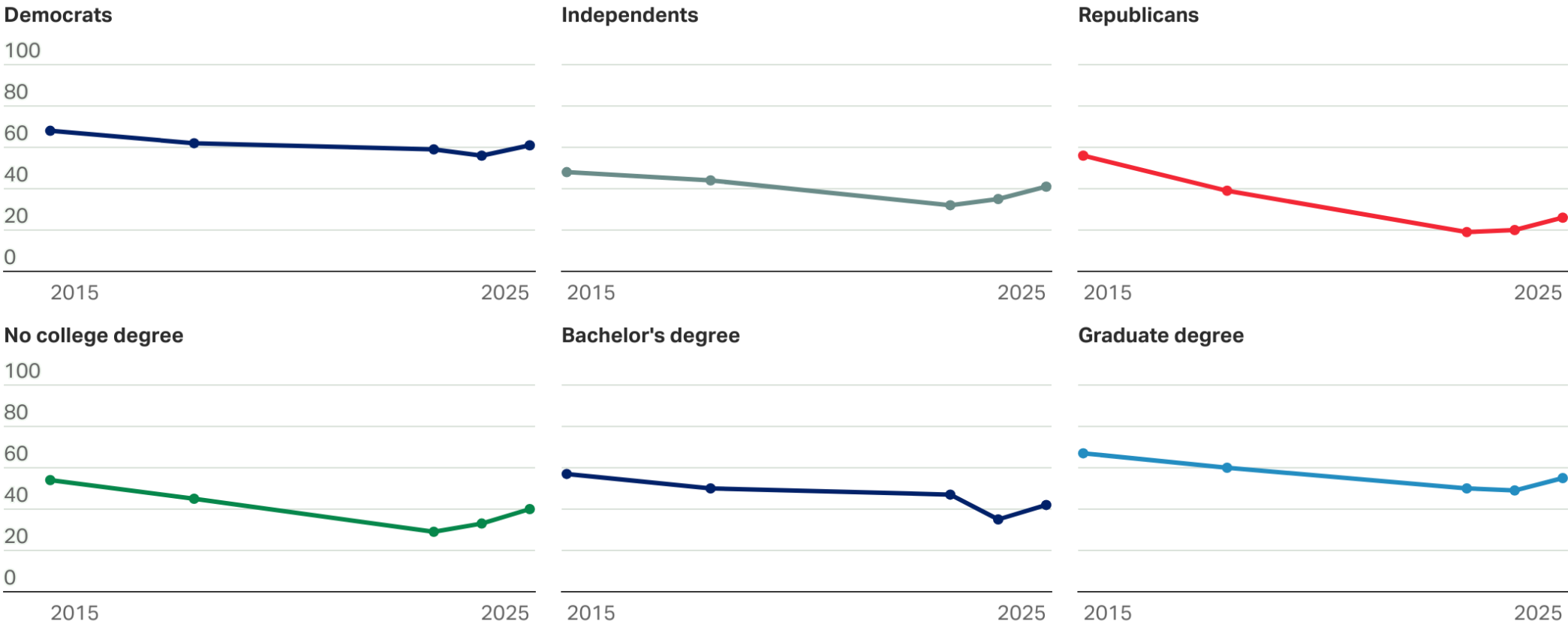
Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in higher education — a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?



Jun. 6-26, 2025

Confidence has declined – and rebounded – among adults of all political and educational backgrounds

Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in higher education — a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?

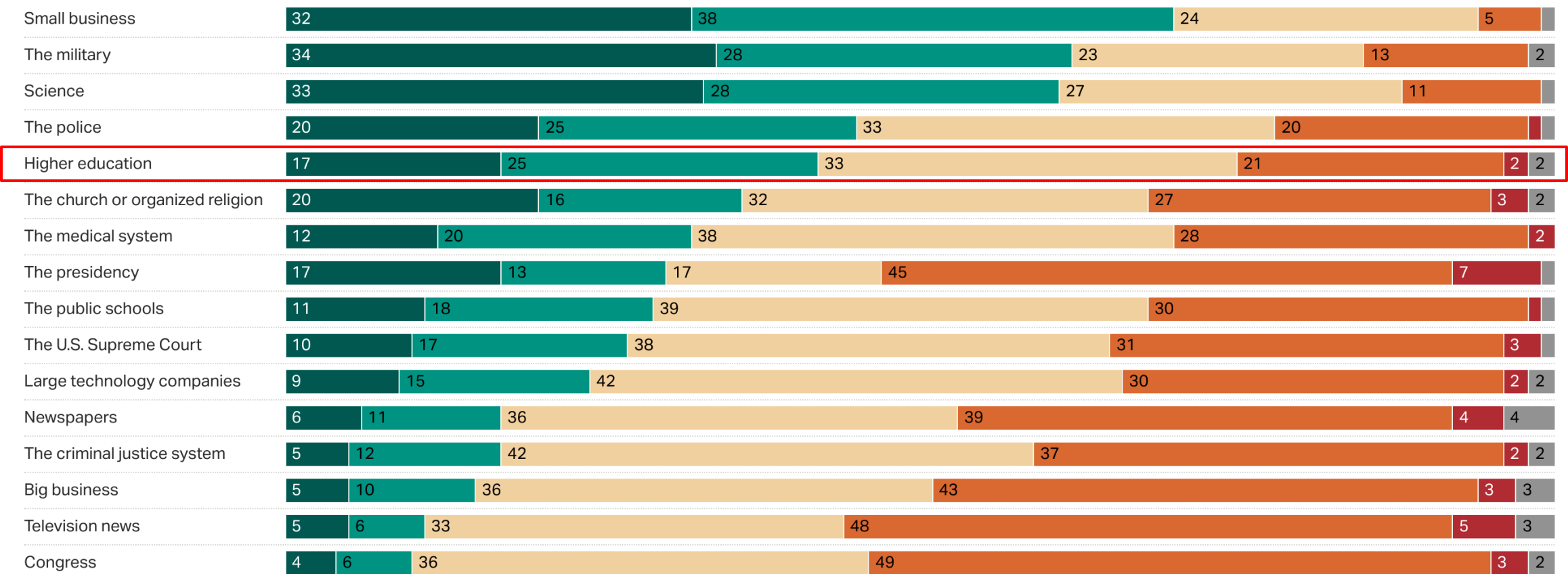


Jun. 6-26, 2025

Despite trends, higher education is among the most trusted American institutions

How much confidence do you, yourself, have in each of the following -- a great deal, quite a lot, some or very little?

■ % Great deal ■ % Quite a lot ■ % Some ■ % Very little ■ % None (vol.) ■ % No opinion



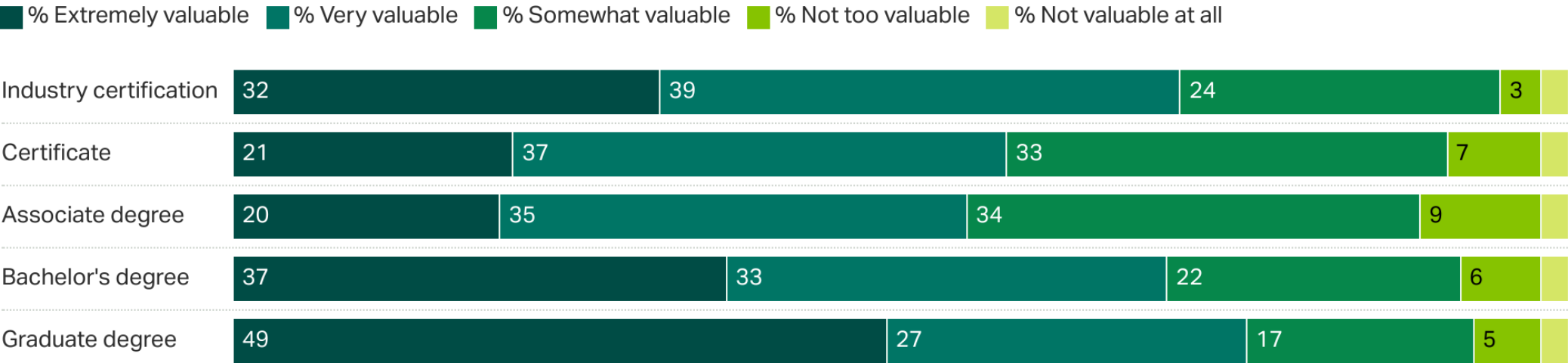
Jun. 2-26, 2025

Americans’ confidence is rooted in their perceptions of a degree’s cost and relevance, as well as institutions’ political climate on campus

What are some of the reasons why you have a lot of confidence in higher education?		What are some of the reasons why you do not have a lot of confidence in higher education?	
30%	Societal and individual value of education	38%	Political agendas, liberal indoctrination, DEI
24%	Exposure to different ideas and points of view; prepares you for life and careers	32%	Does not teach relevant skills/the “right things”
17%	Quality of institutions and faculty	24%	Cost and loan burden

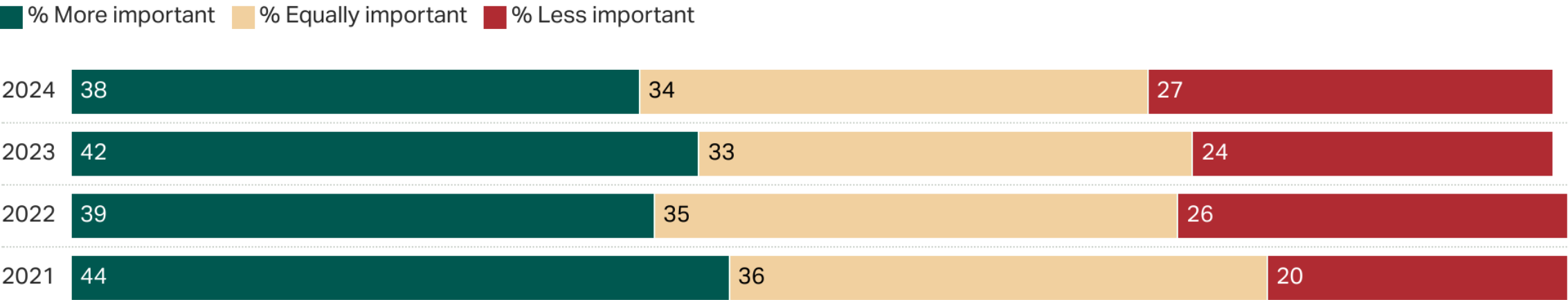
About nine in 10 Americans without a degree say at least one type of credential is very valuable; the gap between bachelor's degrees and other credentials has narrowed

In general, how valuable are each of the following types of degrees and credentials?



This value is rooted in career outcomes: Three-quarters of adults say a college degree is at least as important to a successful career as it was 20 years ago

Compared to 20 years ago, how important is it for people today to have a two-year or four-year college degree in order for them to have a successful career?



About nine in 10 bachelor's students are confident their degree will lead to their desired career outcomes

How confident are you that the degree or credential you are working towards will:

■ % Very confident ■ % Confident

Teach you skills you need to get the type of job you want



Get you a job that you love doing



Help you to make enough money working to allow you to live comfortably



Among currently enrolled bachelor's degree students

Bachelor's degree students generally feel their coursework is aligned with the type of career they want after graduation, though half feel there is room for improvement

How well do you think the courses you are taking at [Institution] are aligned with the type of job you want when you finish college?

■ % Very well aligned ■ % Somewhat well aligned ■ % Not too well aligned ■ % Not at all aligned

Overall



Major or Program of Study

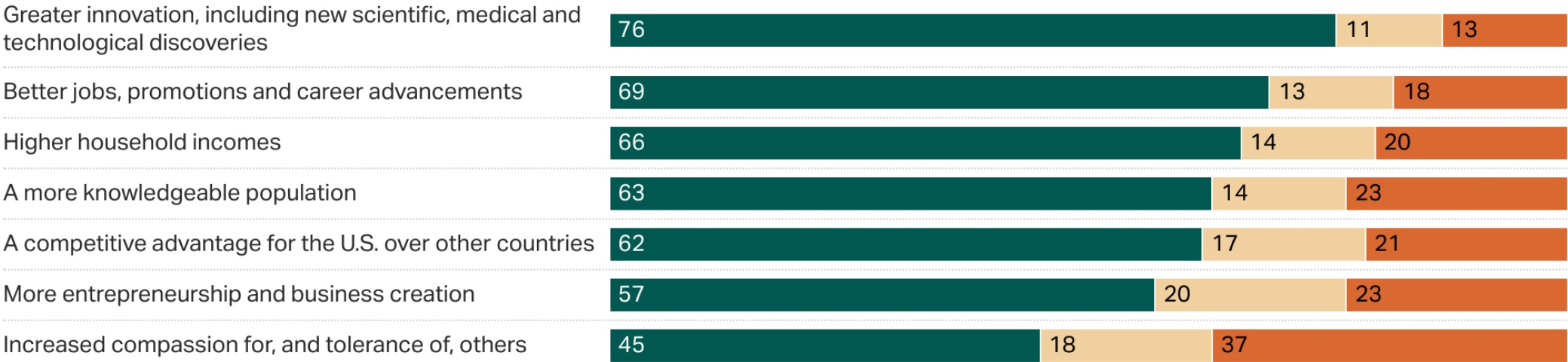


Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100%, +/- 1%.

In addition to individual outcomes, adults broadly agree that higher education provides benefits to American society

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that higher education leads to each of the following outcomes in the United States.

■ % Agree ■ % Neither agree nor disagree ■ % Disagree

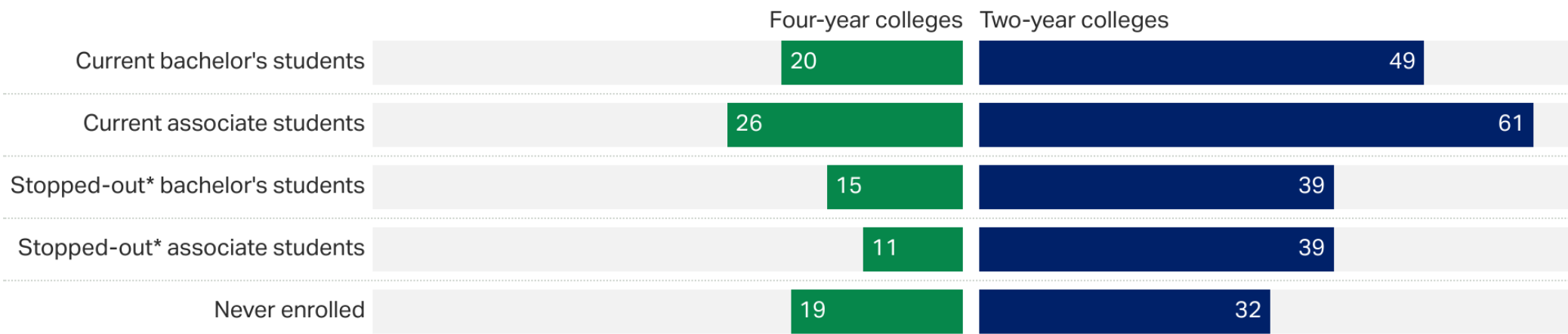


Jun. 2-26, 2025

While U.S. adults value college, just 18% say four-year colleges charge fair prices, including 20% of current bachelor's degree students

Do you think _____ charge fair prices for what they offer students and graduates?

% Yes

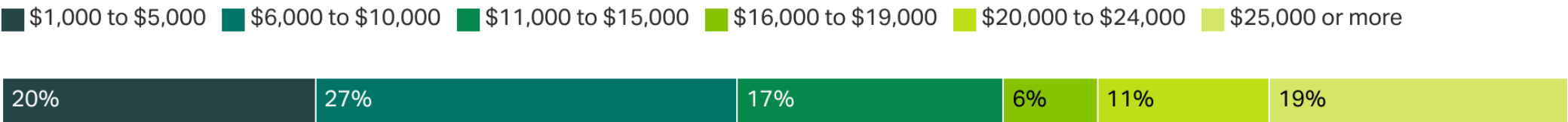


*Stopped-out students refer to those students who enrolled in a program, but stopped attending the program before completing it.

Nearly half of adults underestimate average tuition by \$5,000 or more, and about one in three overestimate by at least \$5,000

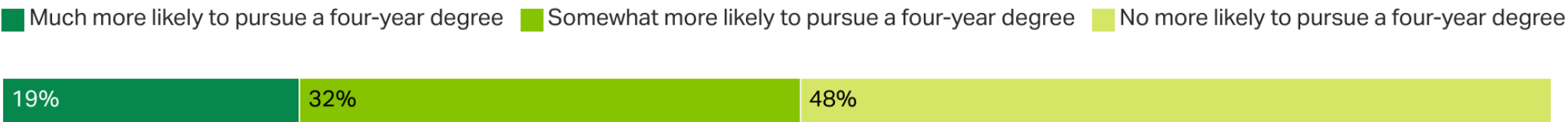
The average yearly cost of attendance at 4-year, in-state U.S. public colleges is about \$25,000. This is called the “sticker price,” and it includes tuition, room, and board, books and fees.

How much do you think the average in-state student at a public college actually pays per year, after grants and scholarships they receive from the college?



The average yearly amount that in-state public college students actually pay is about \$15,000 compared with the \$25,000 “sticker price.”

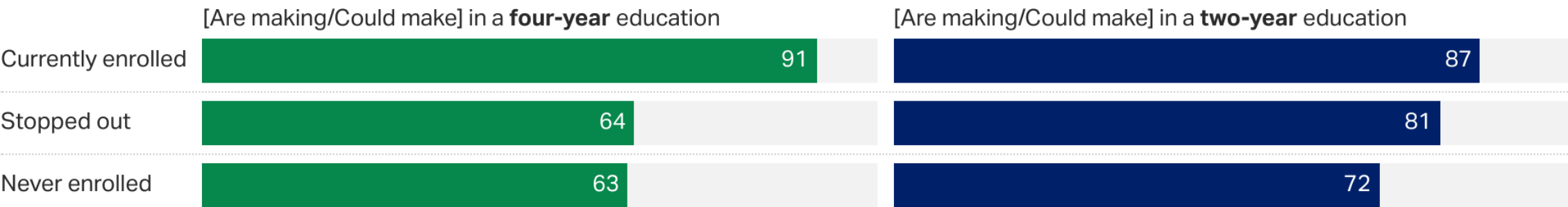
Knowing that the average cost students actually pay is much lower than the sticker price, does this make you:



Even with limited understanding of actual costs, most current and prospective students agree that investing in a degree is/would be worth the cost

Generally speaking, do you think the investment you _____ [is/would be] worth it for you?

% Yes, worth it



Currently enrolled figures reflect students who are currently enrolled in the respective programs; stopped out figures reflect adults who have stopped out of any postsecondary program.

About six in 10 believe a degree pays off within 5 years; 86% say it pays off within 10

About how much time, in years, do you think it takes for a college graduate's investment in college to pay off once they leave college?

■ 1 year or less ■ 2 to 3 years ■ 4 to 5 years ■ 6 to 10 years ■ More than 10 years

Overall



Enrollment status



Age group



Political party identification



Due to rounding, totals may sum to 100%, +/- 1%

Most bachelor's degree students feel free to express their opinions, including 69% of self-identified Republicans

At [Institution], I can express my opinions freely.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree

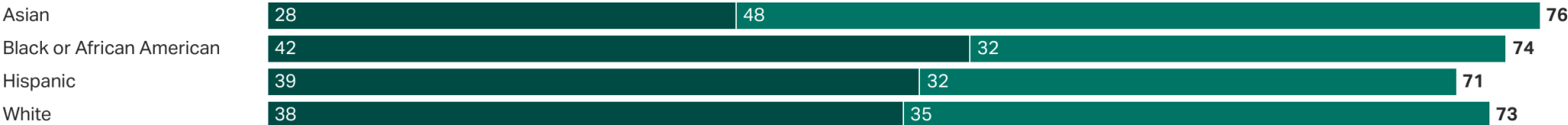
Overall



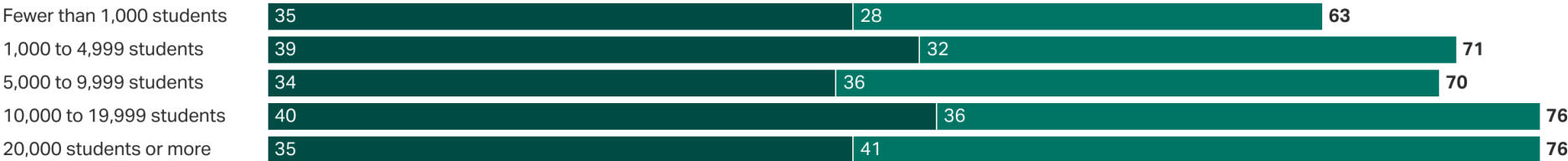
Gender



Race/Ethnicity



Institution size



Political party identification

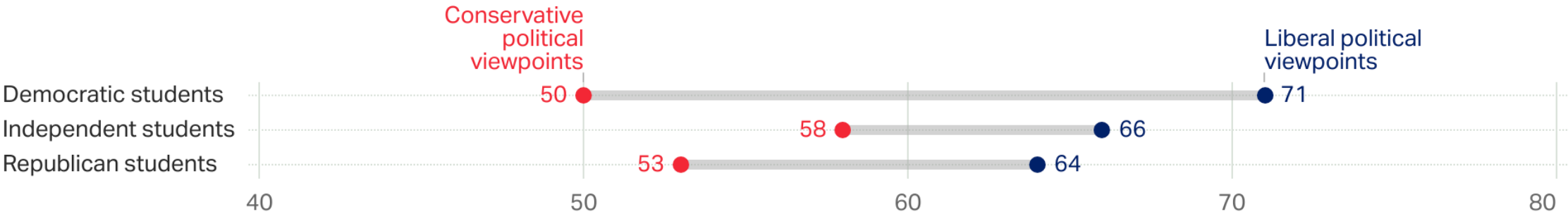


Among currently enrolled bachelor's degree students

While students believe liberal views are more welcome on campus, Republicans believe the gap is narrower than Democrats

[Institution] is a place where students can freely express...

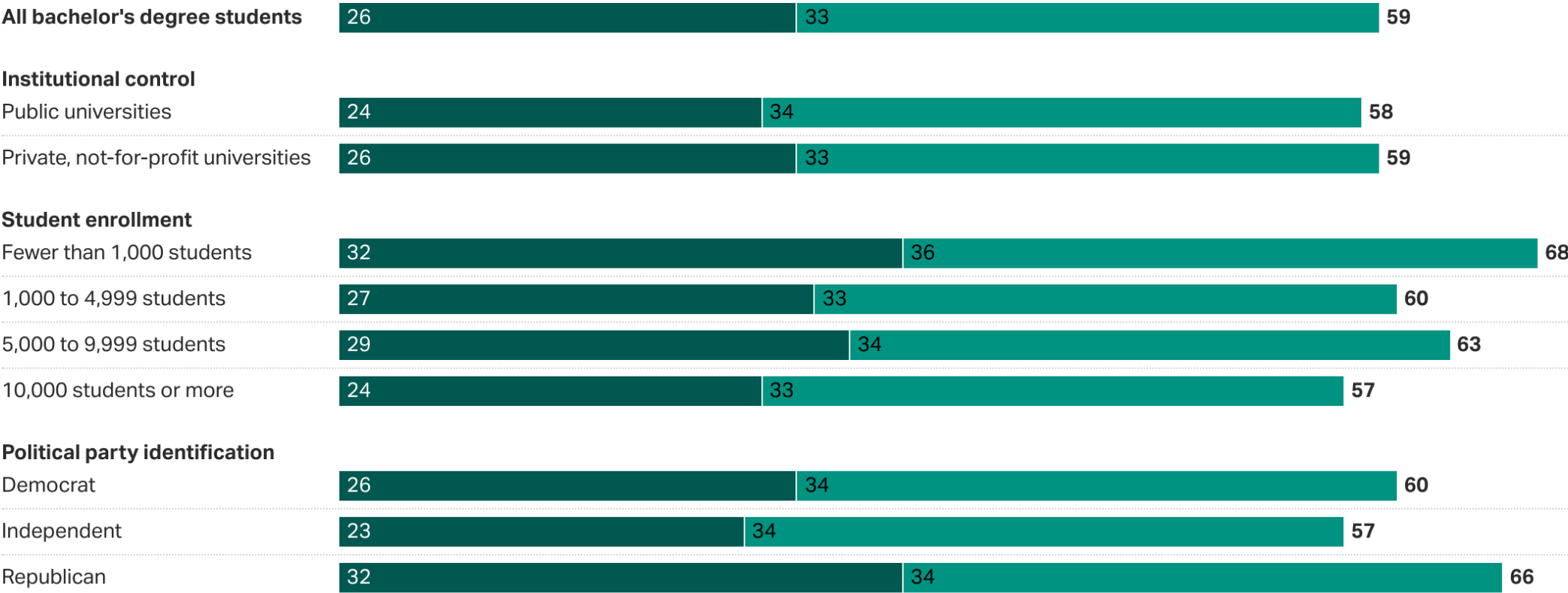
% Strongly agree + Agree



Still, 41% of bachelor's degree students are skeptical of whether their institution prioritizes the needs/interests of its students

[Institution] has students' best interests in mind when making a decision that affects students.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree



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