



 MORNING CONSULT

# Voter Opinions on Energy Policy, Economic Anxiety, and Covid-19

POLLING PRESENTATION

July 2020

# Key Points

## **When considering Congress's role in power generation decisions, a vast majority of Americans support reliable and affordable energy and policies that target cost-effective emissions reductions.**

- 83% want Congress to focus on encouraging reliable and affordable electricity.
- 81% want Congress to minimize customer/taxpayer energy costs.
- A majority (54%) support a policy that reduces emissions efficiently and at the lowest cost, even if it is not 100% renewable energy.

## **Voters strongly oppose bailouts for struggling power plants and other policies that would increase their monthly bills.**

- 8% oppose policies that allow utilities to increase monthly bills to build renewable energy, while 65% oppose policies that increase utility bills or taxes to prop up struggling power plants.
- Just 7% believe taxpayers and consumers should bear most of the burden of funding new or existing power plants.

### **Methodology**

This poll was conducted between July 15-18, 2020, among a national sample of 1,999 Registered U.S. Voters. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Adults based on age, educational attainment, gender, race, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2%.

## **Voters are feeling increased economic anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- Fifty percent of voters said they could not afford an electricity bill increase of \$15 or less, including 25% who said they could not afford an increase of any amount.
- Meanwhile, 43 percent of voters said they worried about paying their family's monthly bills.

## **Voters want to encourage competition to reduce costs and emissions.**

- 77% want Congress to encourage competition to secure affordable renewable resources at the least cost.
- 74% want Congress to encourage competition among energy providers to reduce emissions at the least cost.
- 67% agree competitive markets will help achieve least-cost emissions reductions.

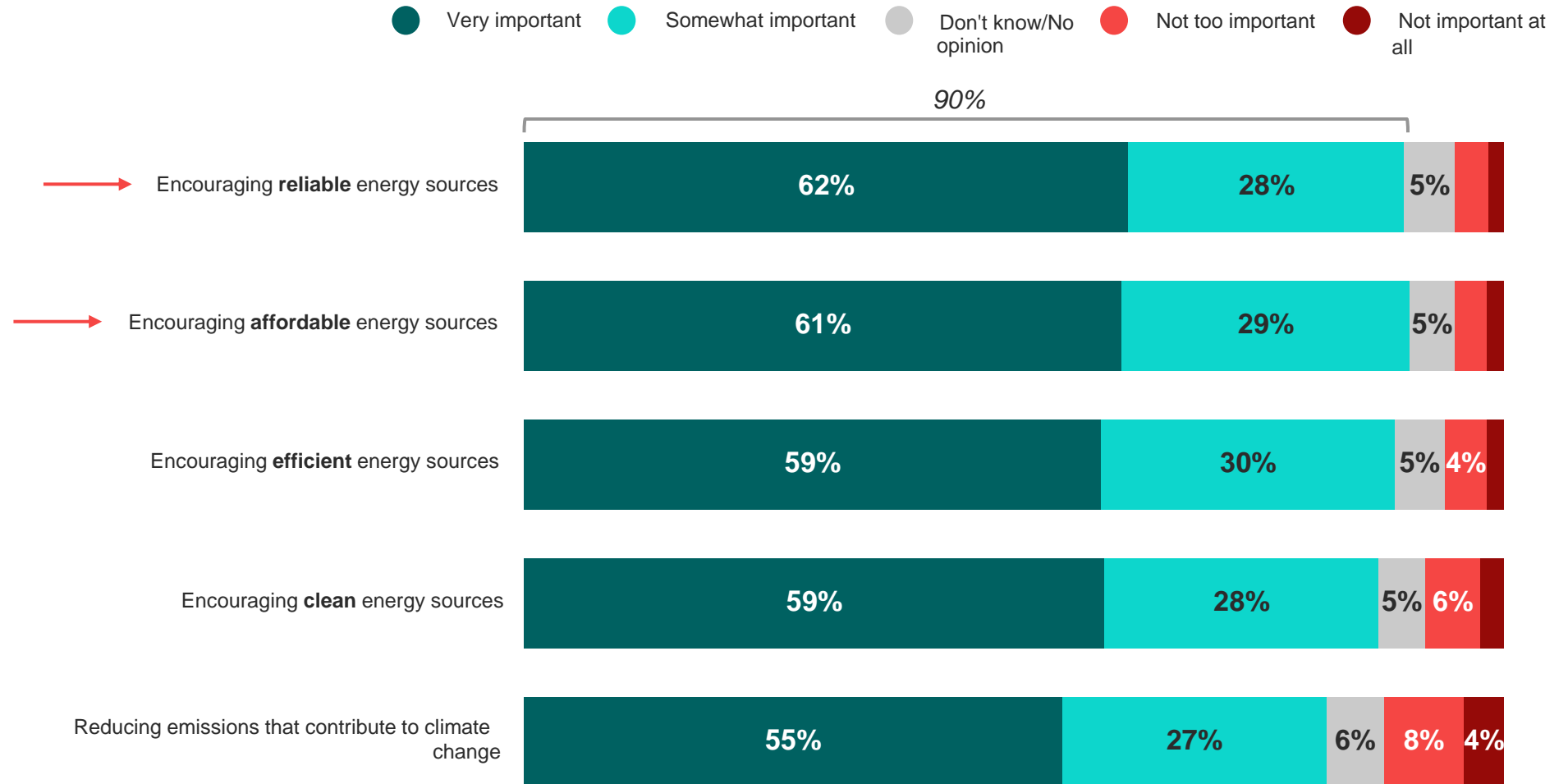
## **While voters support clean energy development in a general sense, they clearly favor policies that place financial responsibility for it on power companies and the government, rather than taxpayers and consumers.**

- Only 7% of voters believe taxpayers and consumers should bear the burden of funding new and existing power plants or building energy projects.
- More than twice as many voters would prefer a policy that prioritizes reducing emissions *efficiently and at the lowest cost* over one that prioritizes total emissions reductions over cost.

# Energy Priorities

## Prioritization of reliable and affordable energy sources by the U.S. government is very popular among voters nationwide, with 90% of voters indicating they think each is *very/somewhat important*.

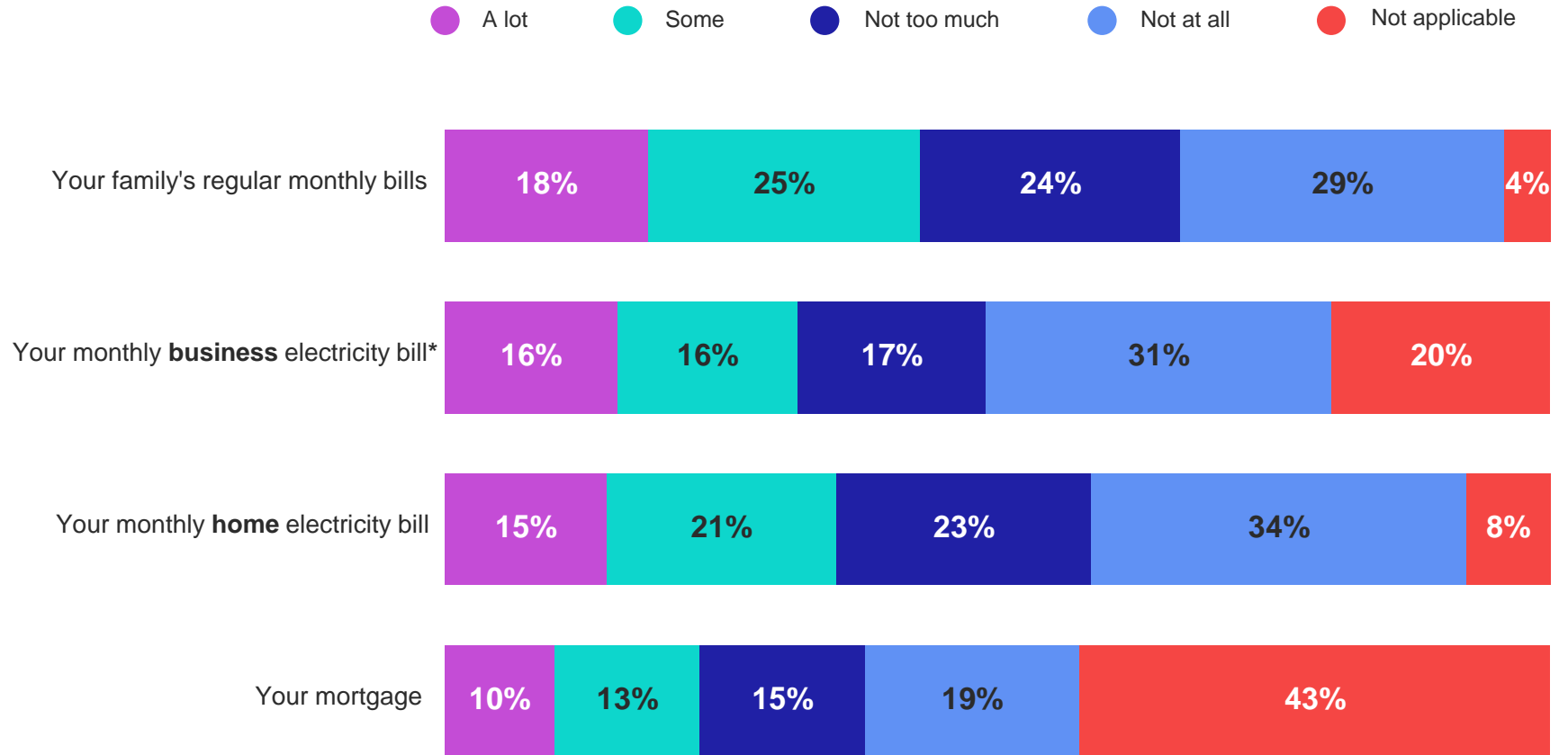
*How important, if at all, would you say each of the following is for the United States government to consider in developing its energy strategy?*



# Economic Anxiety

## Three-in-seven (43%) voters worry about their ability to pay for their family's regular monthly bills. One-in-ten worries *a lot* about their ability to make mortgage payments.

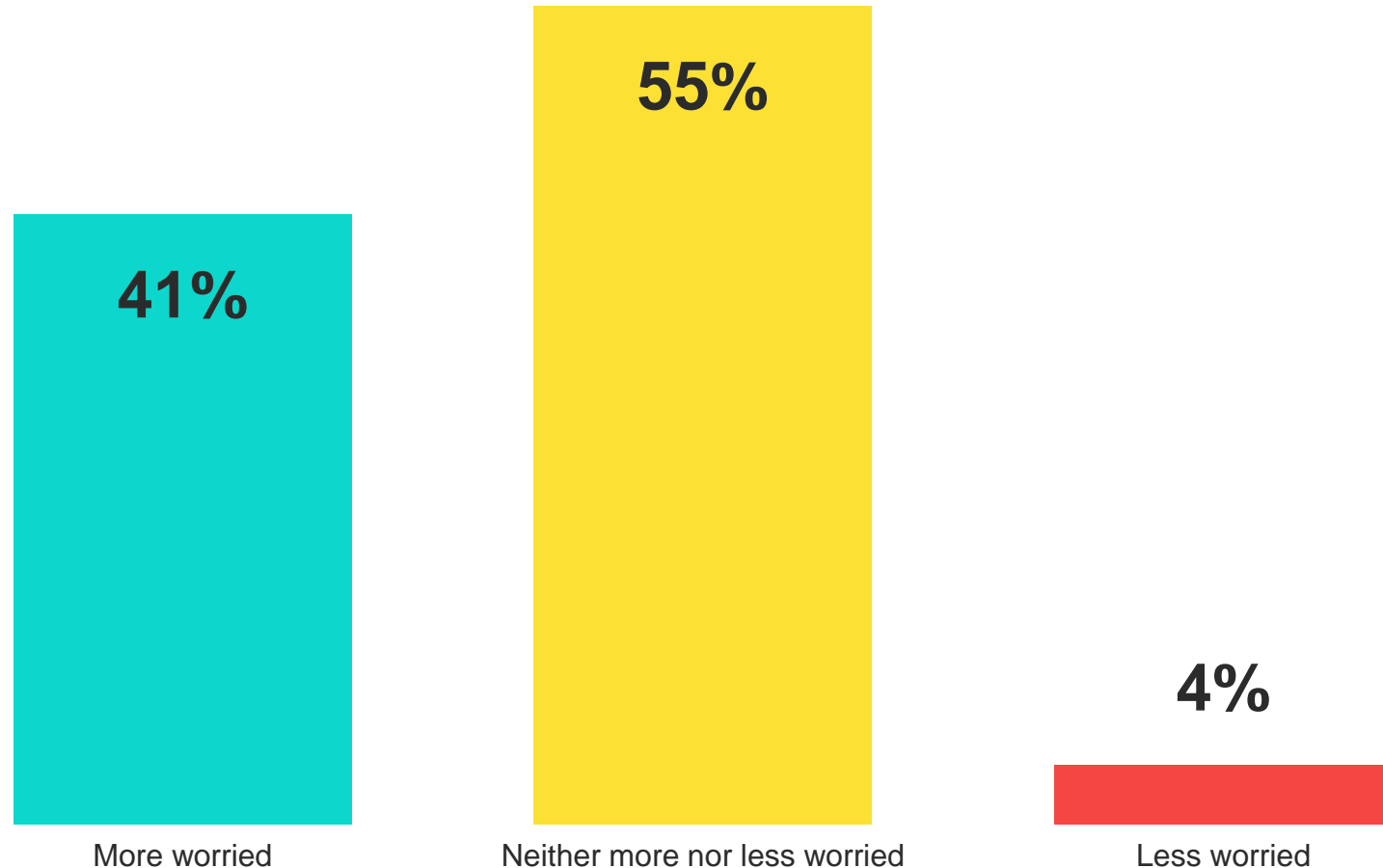
*How much, if at all, do you worry about your ability to pay the following?*



Business owner weighted n=186

**While the coronavirus pandemic has not affected the majority (55%) of voters' worries about paying their monthly bills, two-in-five indicate their worries have increased due to circumstances related to Covid-19.**

*Thinking about the last few months and the circumstances related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, are you more worried or less worried about your ability to pay your monthly bills?*

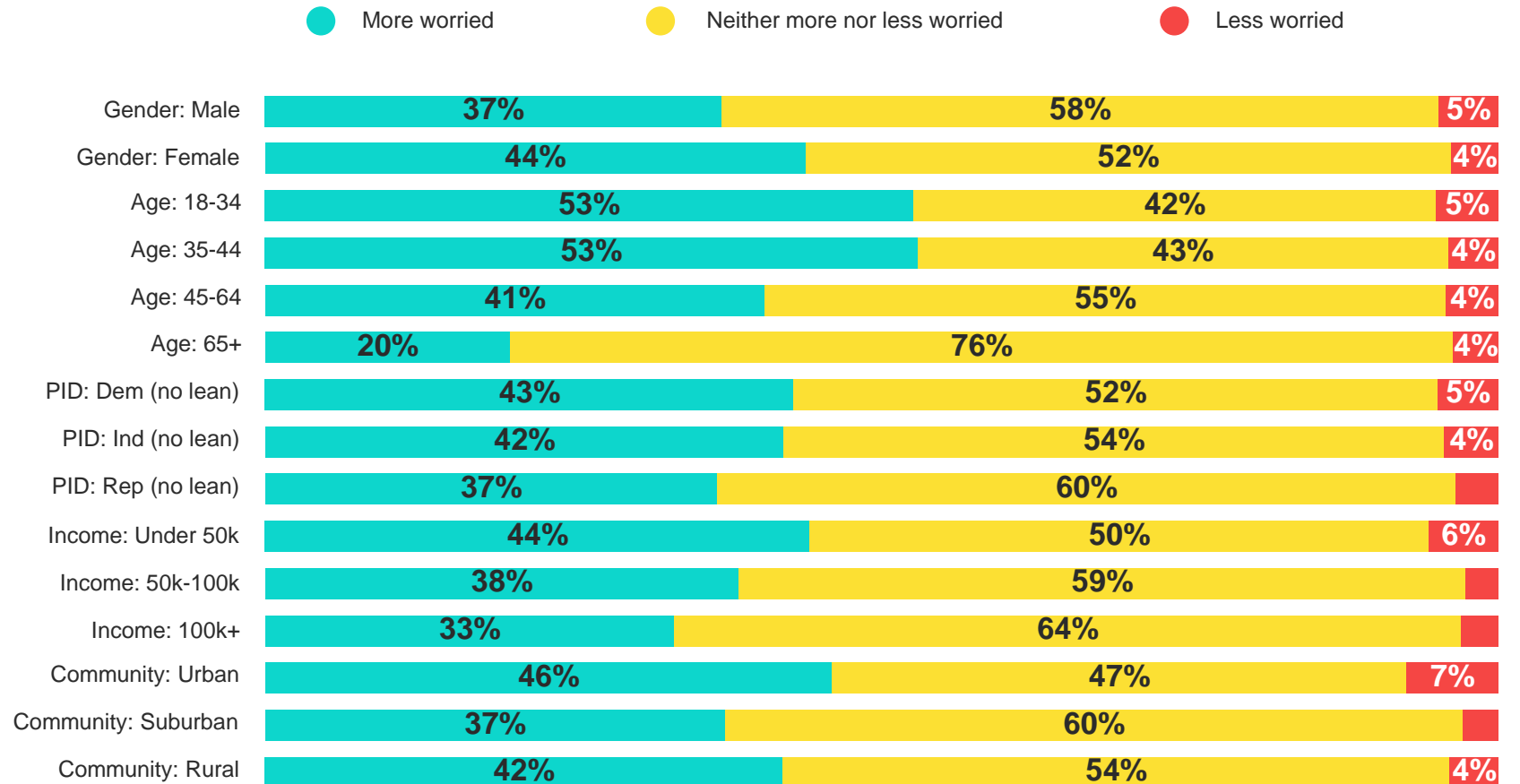


## Economic Anxiety

# Personal Experiences

The coronavirus pandemic has been particularly hard on age 18-44 voters and residents of urban areas, with 53% and 46% indicating it has caused them to be more worried about paying their monthly bills, compared to 37% of the general population.

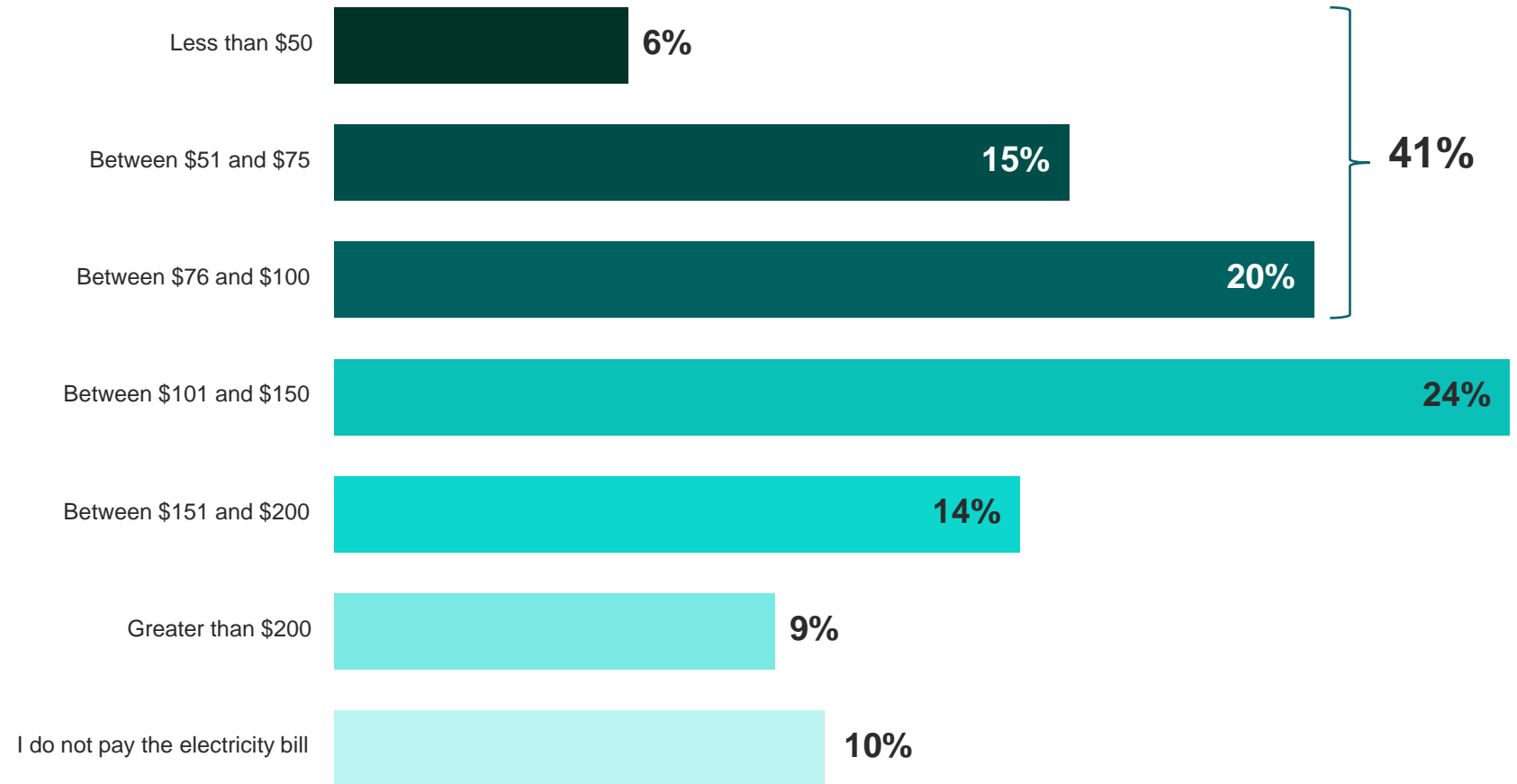
*Thinking about the last few months and the circumstances related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, are you more worried or less worried about your ability to pay your monthly bills?*



## Personal Experiences

**Two-in-five U.S. voters (41%) have a monthly electric bill of \$100 or less. Another quarter (24%) pay between \$101 and \$150 monthly for electricity.**

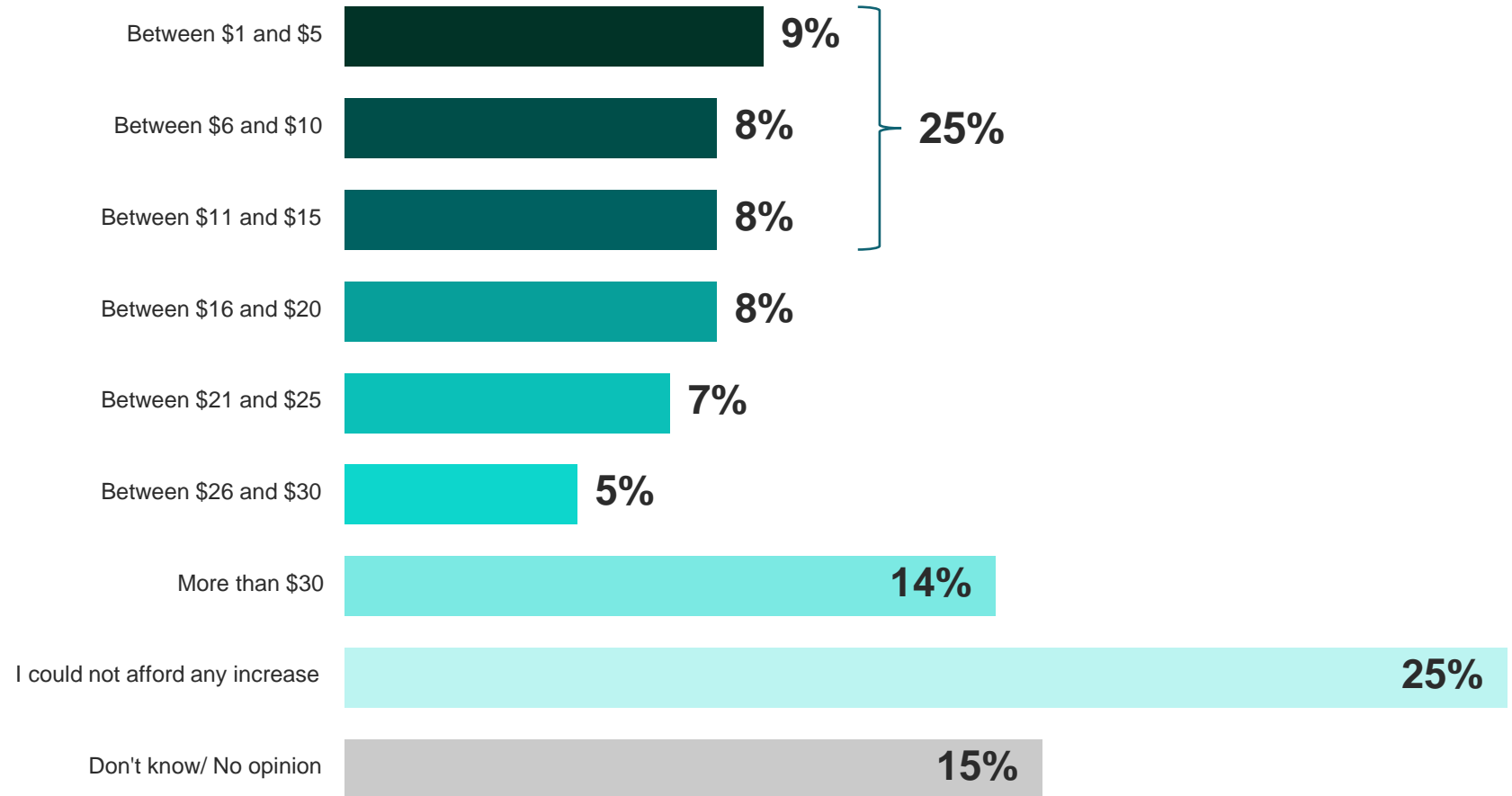
*Which of the following best describes your average monthly electricity bill?*



## Personal Experiences

# One-in-four U.S. voters could not afford *any* increase to their monthly home electricity bill right now, while another 25% could not afford a monthly increase of more than \$15.

*How much of an increase to your monthly home electricity bill, if any, could you afford right now? Select the highest monthly increase you could afford from the choices below.*

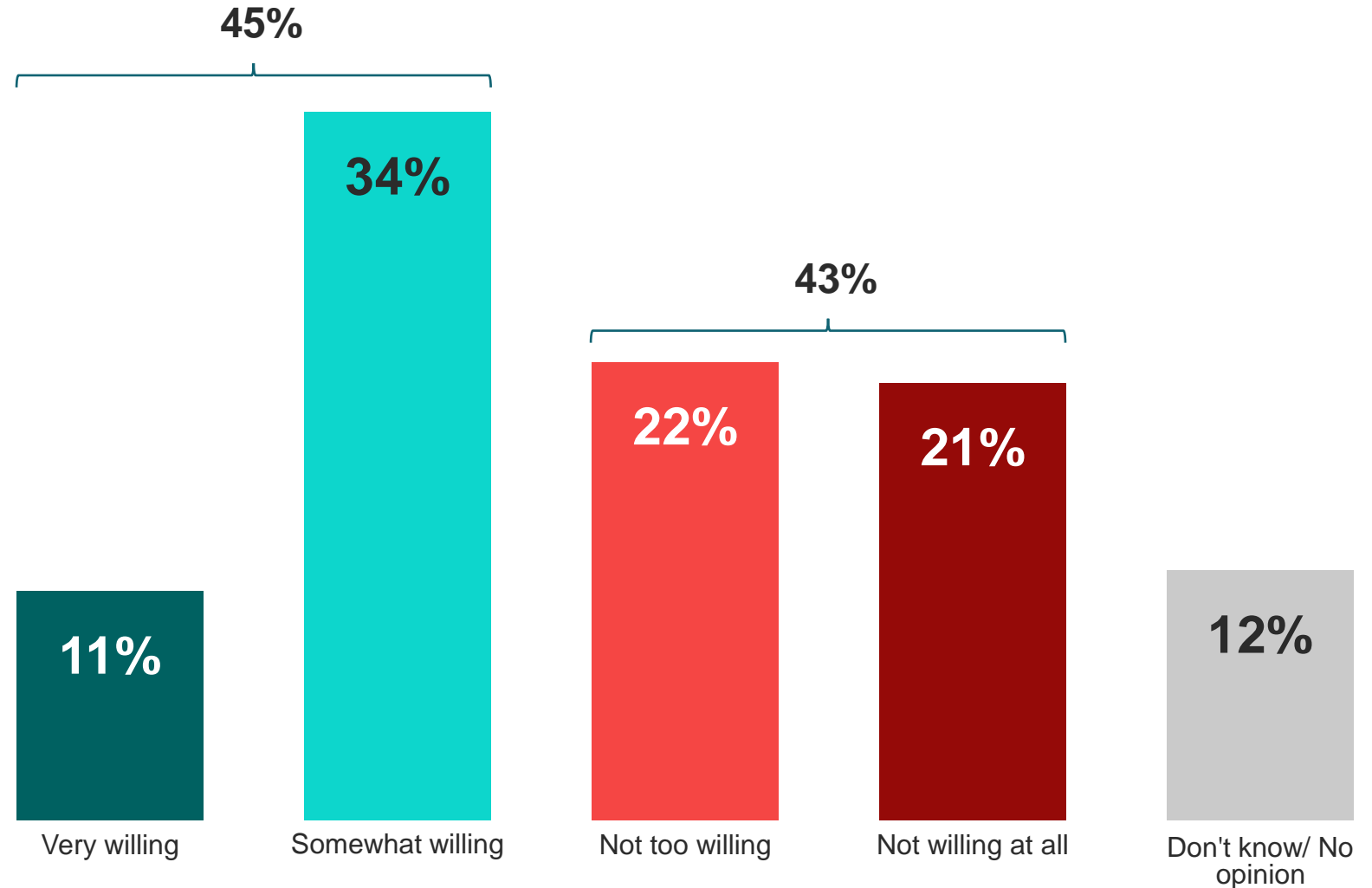




## Policy Positions

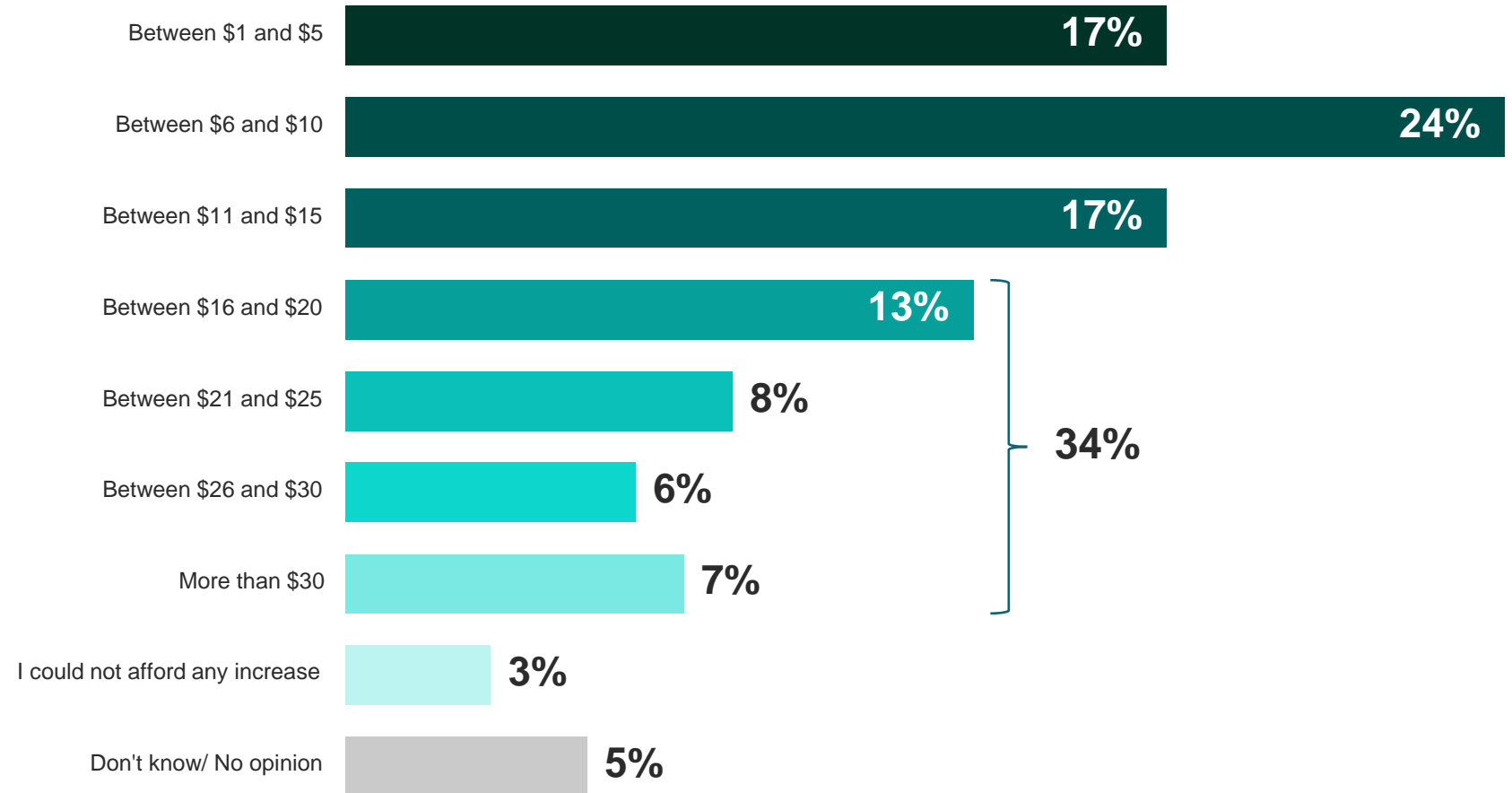
While voters are generally split on whether they would be willing to pay more for their monthly electric bill to help build more clean energy (45%-43%), intensity is soft with most falling into the "somewhat or not too willing" categories.

*How willing, if at all, are you to pay more for your monthly electric bill to help build more clean energy?*



## Among the 45% of voters willing to pay more for their electricity to help build cleaner energy, one-third (34%) would welcome an increase of \$15 a month or more to support the cause.

*You mentioned you are willing to pay more for you monthly electric bill to help build cleaner energy. How much of an increase to your monthly home electricity bill would you be willing to pay?*

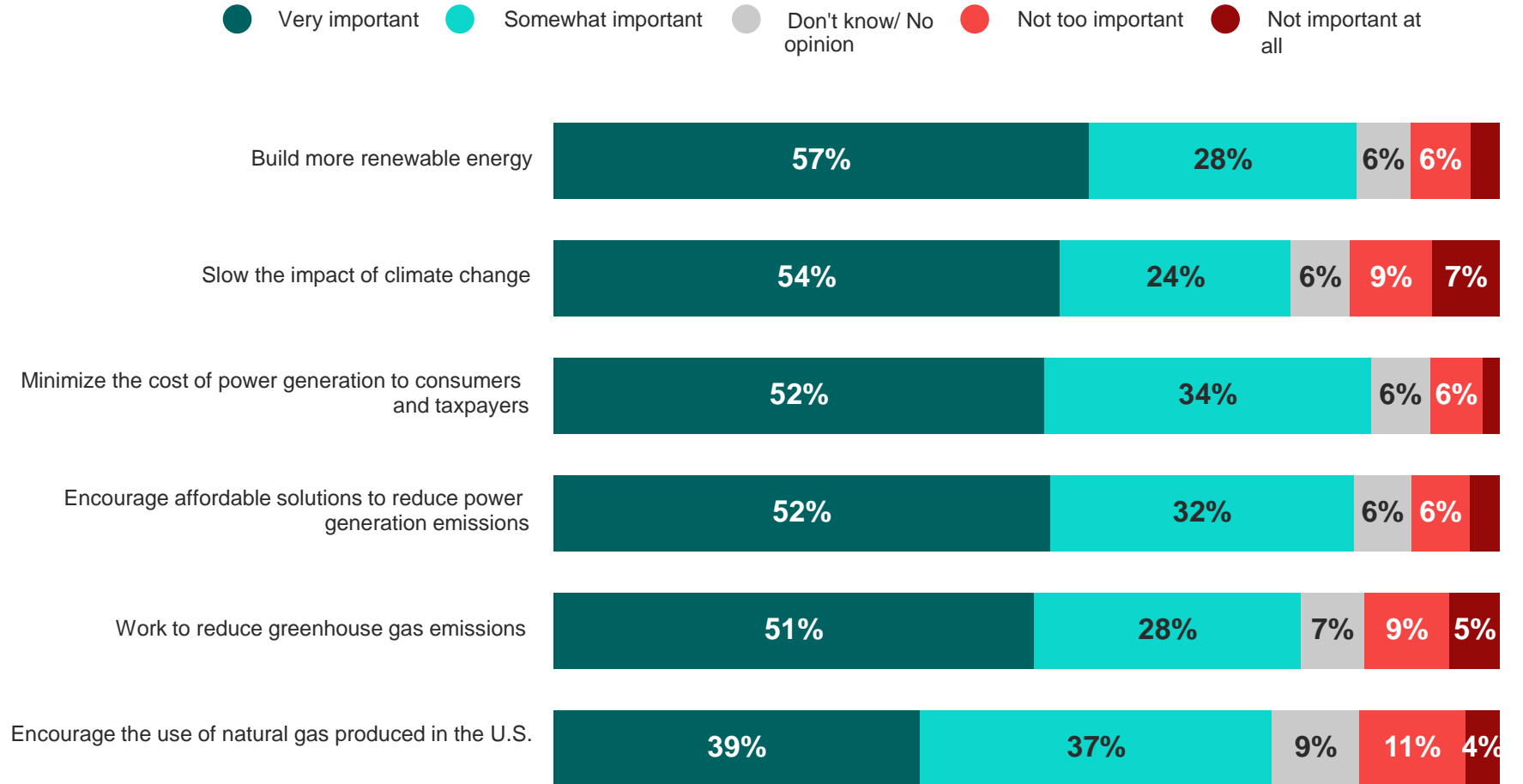


## Policy Positions

# Policy Positions

While the public prioritizes building more renewable energy more *intensely* than other goals for the United States, *overall* support is highest for minimizing the cost of power generation to consumers and taxpayers.

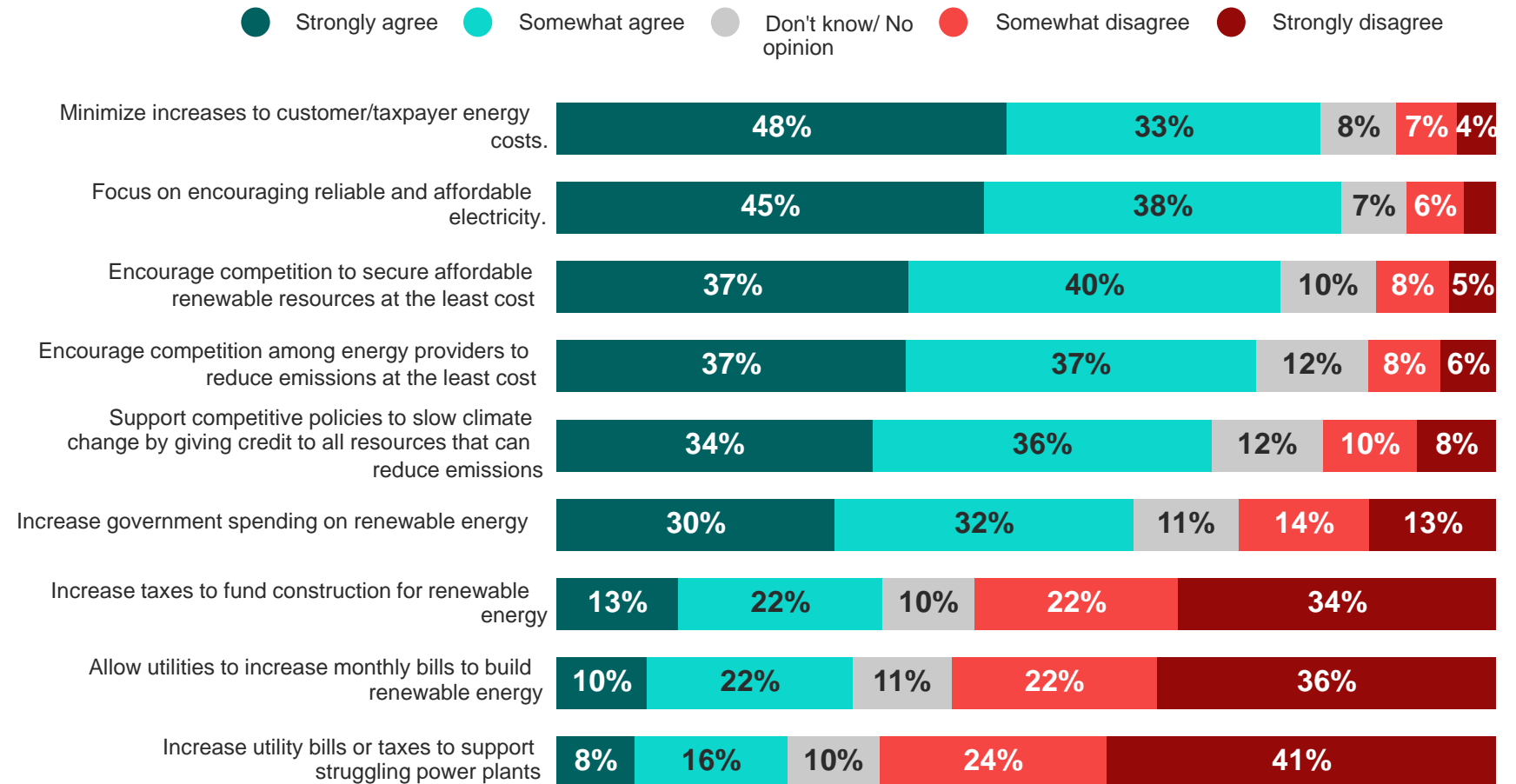
*How important, if at all, do you believe it is for the United States to do the following?*



# Policy Positions

**When it comes to helping the country recover from the pandemic financially, the public strongly favors policies that will minimize costs to consumers and taxpayers and strongly opposes those that will increase costs to those parties. Support is high for encouraging competition among energy providers to reduce emissions and costs.**

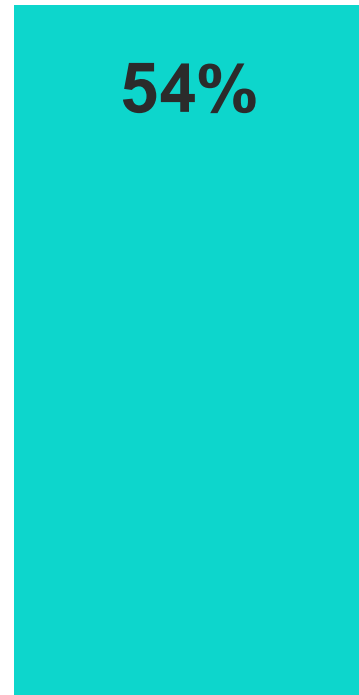
*Do you agree or disagree Congress should do the following while the country recovers from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?*



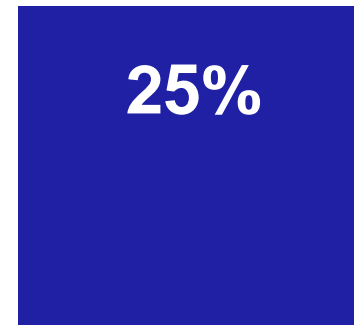
# More than twice as many voters prefer a policy that reduces emissions at the lowest cost despite not being completely renewable over one that is 100% renewable and more expensive.

*Which of the following policy proposal are you most likely to support?*

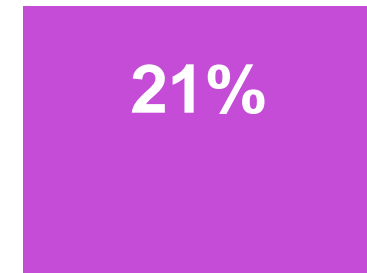
## Policy Positions



A policy that prioritizes reducing emissions efficiently and at the lowest cost, even if it is not 100% renewable energy.



I would not be likely to support either policy

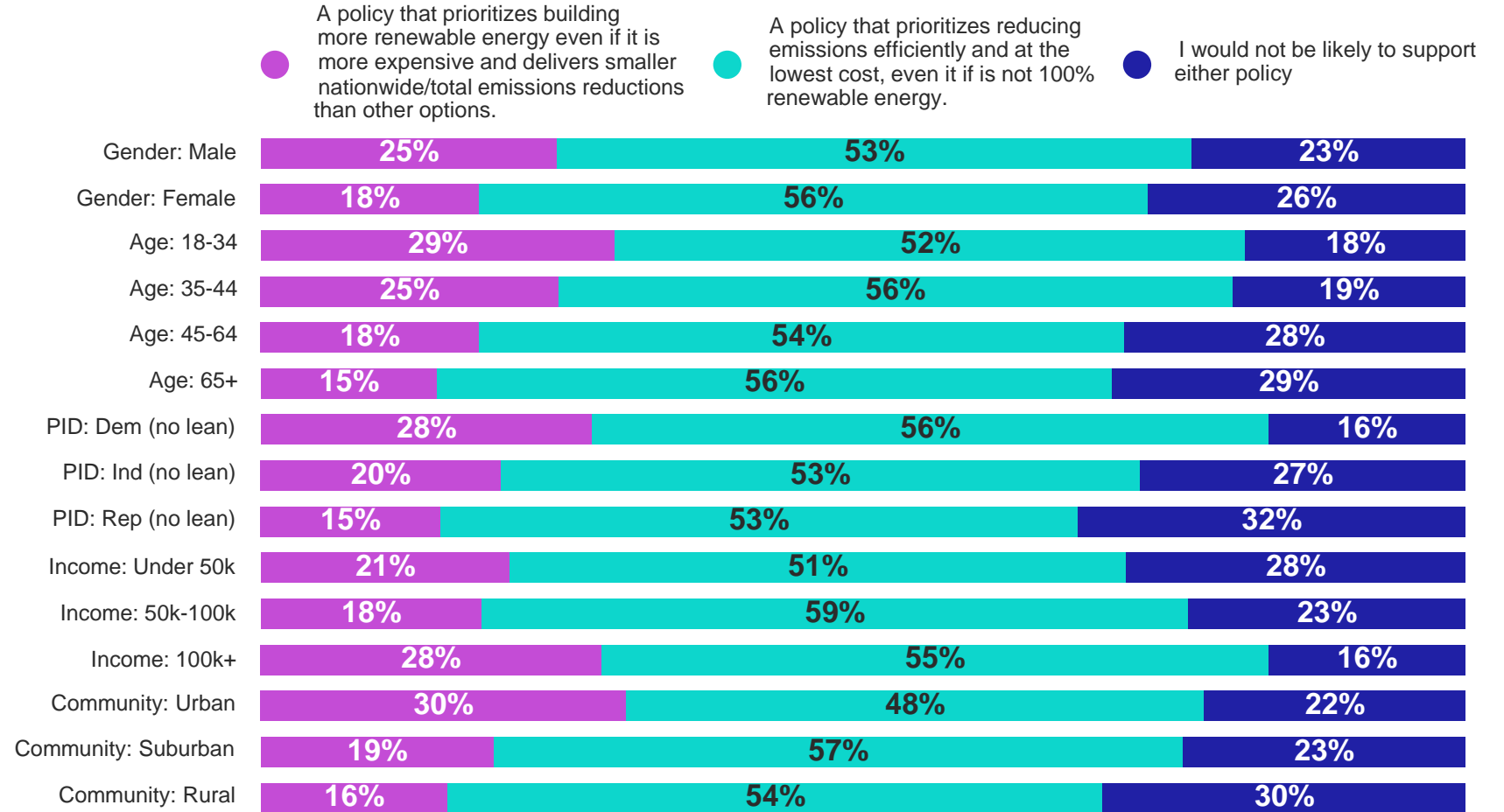


A policy that prioritizes building more renewable energy even if it is more expensive and delivers smaller nationwide/total emissions reductions than other options.

# Policy Positions

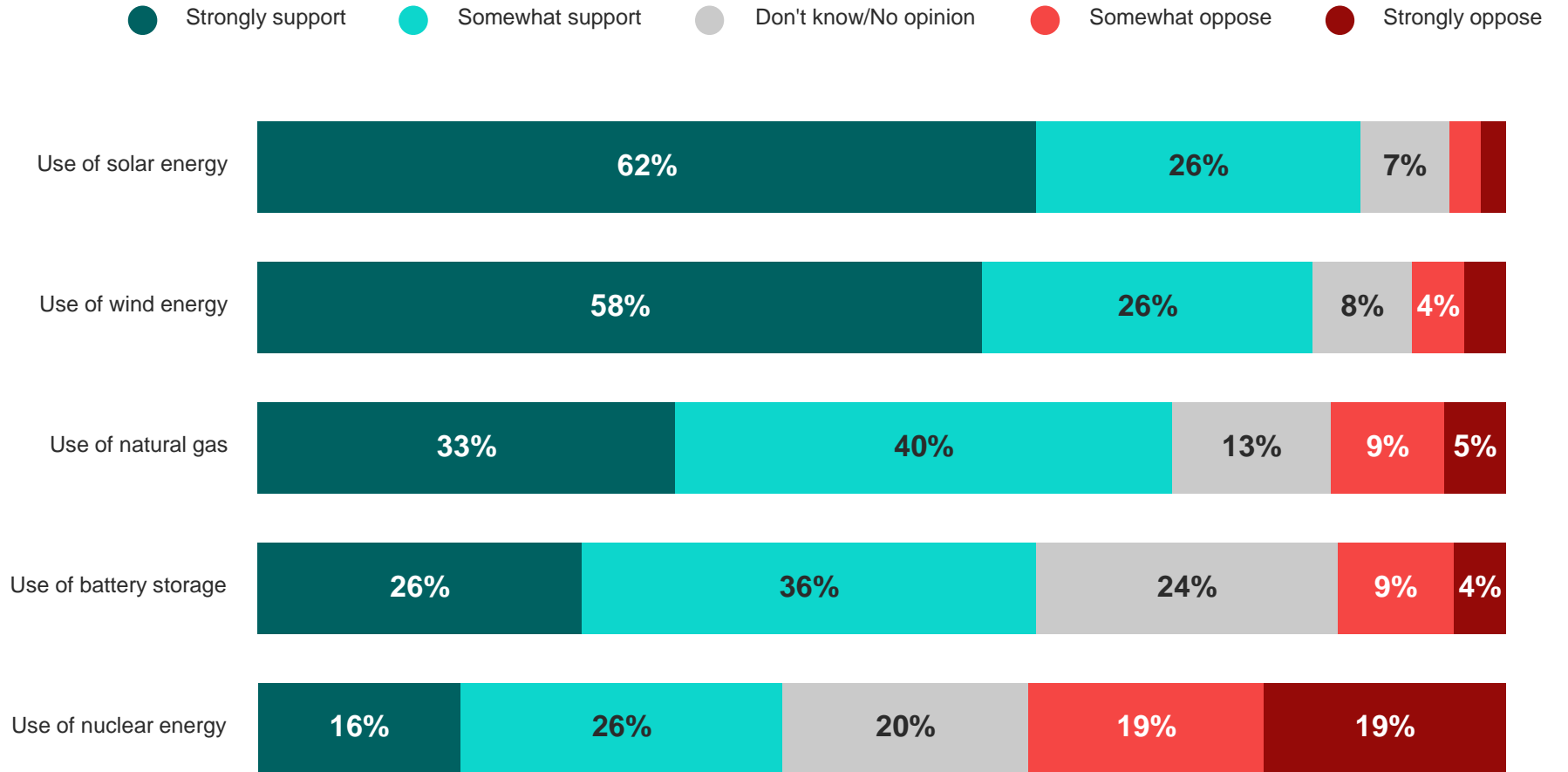
**Urban residents, Democrats, high income-earners, and age 18-34 voters are more likely to prioritize reducing emissions over costs and efficiency. Republicans, older voters (45+), and rural residents stand out as particularly likely to not support *either* policy.**

*Which of the following policy proposal are you most likely to support?*



# While voters are split on nuclear energy, strong majorities support the use of solar and wind energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One-in-four have no opinion on the use of battery storage for this purpose.

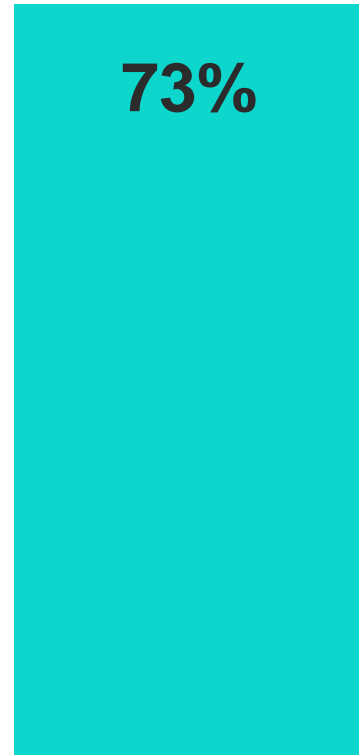
*Do you support or oppose each of the following to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?*



## Policy Positions

## Only 7% of American voters are of the opinion that *consumers*, not power companies, should bear the burden of paying for new and existing power plants.

*Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?*



Power companies should bear most of the burden paying for new and existing power plants

7%

Consumers/taxpayers should bear most of the burden paying for new and existing power plants

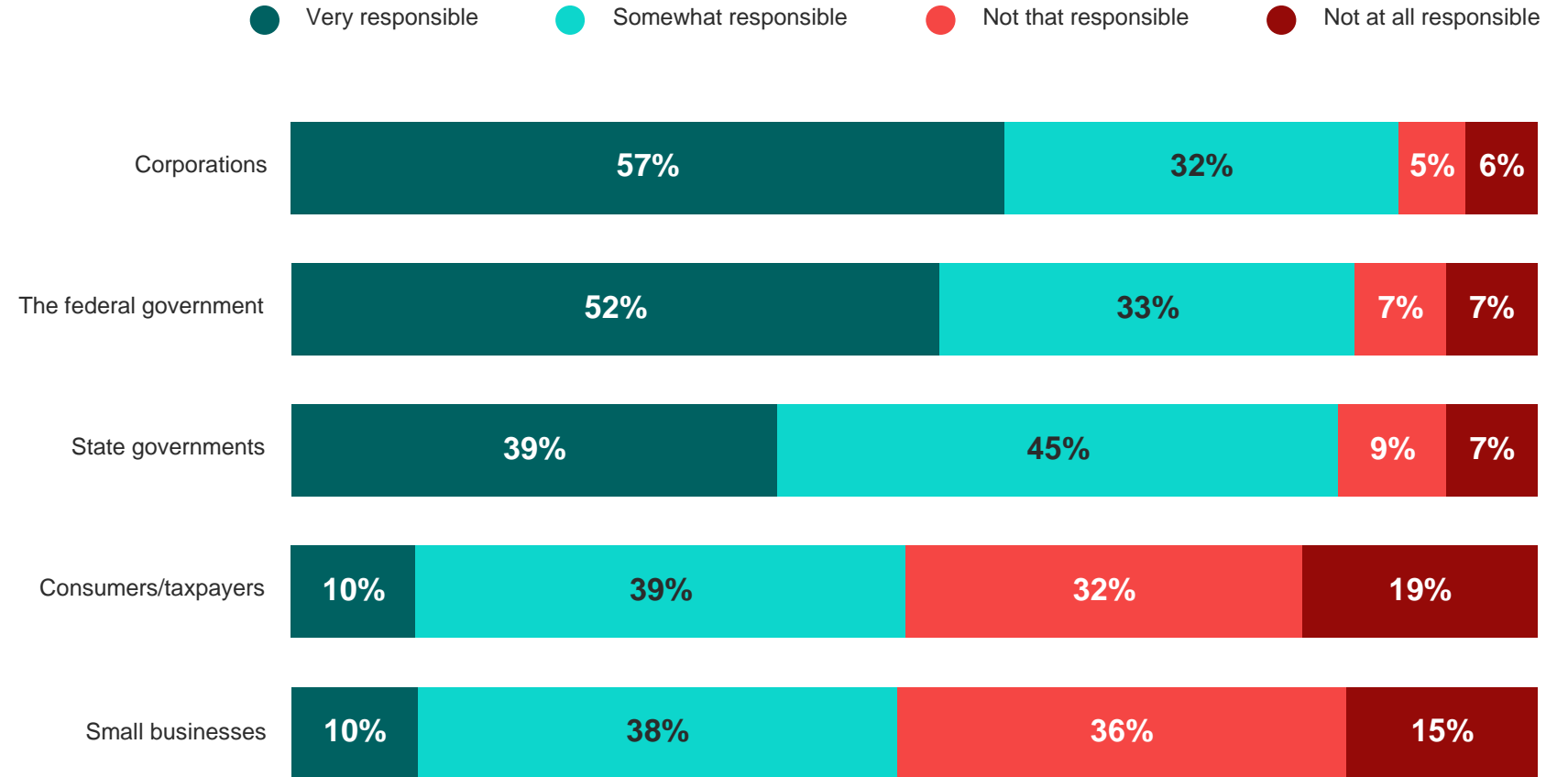
20%

Don't know/No opinion



# Public opinion among voters favors corporations and government footing the bill for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, rather than consumers and/or small businesses.

*How responsible, if at all, should the following be for paying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?*

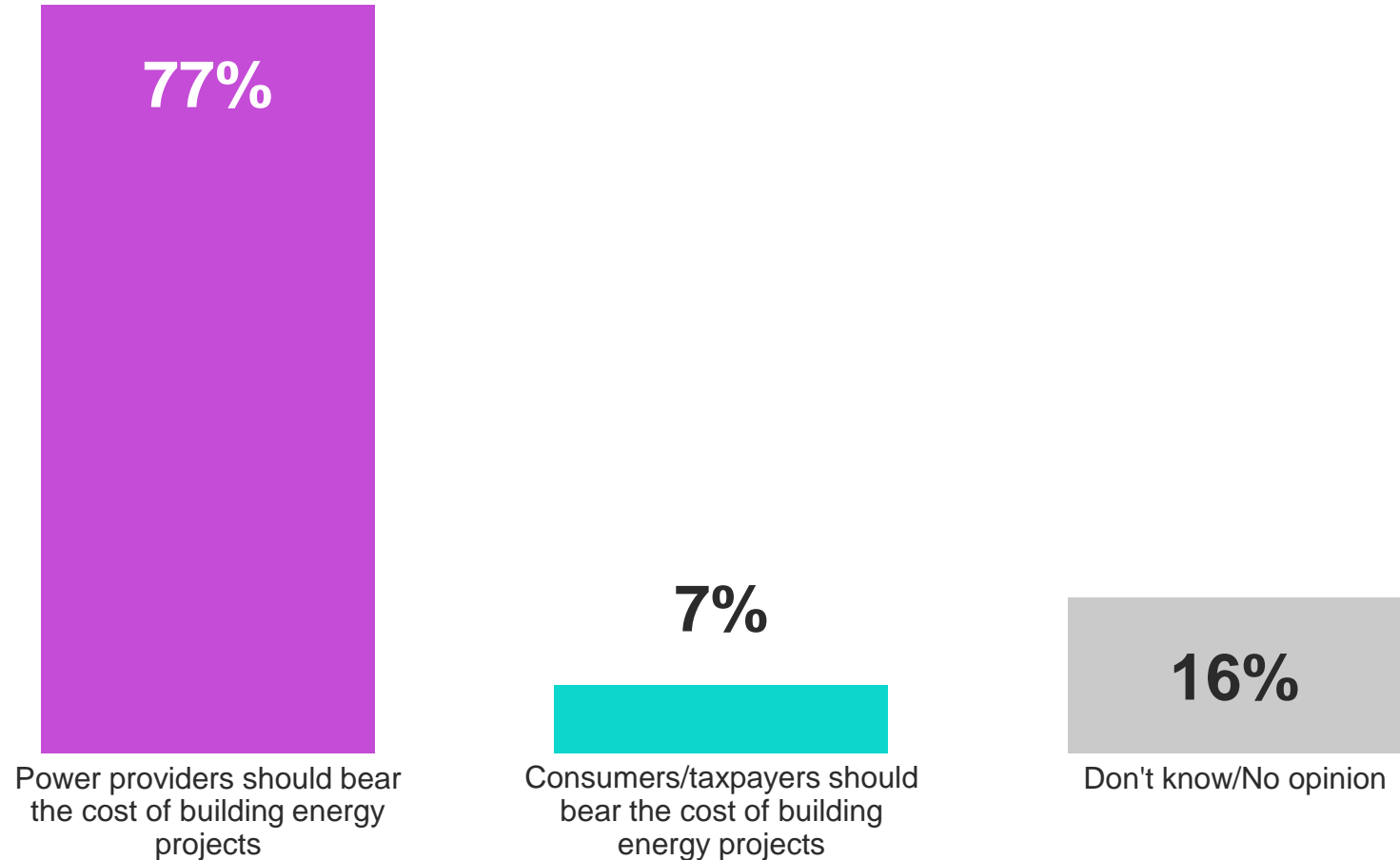


## Policy Positions

**Opinions on what party should be responsible for bearing the cost of building energy projects resemble those regarding funding for power plants – 77% of voters believe funding should come from power providers rather than consumers.**

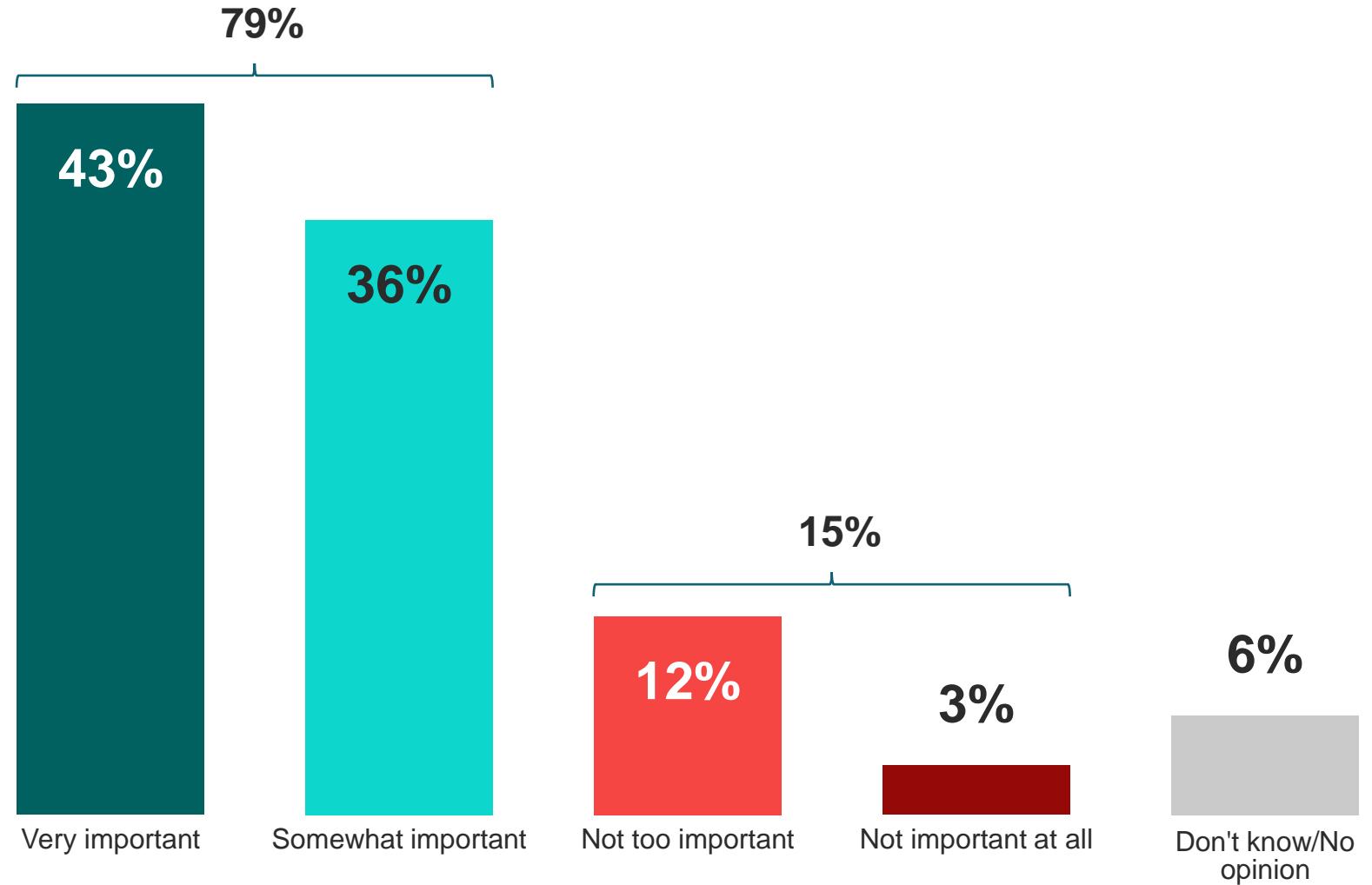
*Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?*

## Policy Positions



Voters indicate they value the ability to choose their electricity provider, with nearly four-in-five (79%) rating is as *very/somewhat important*.

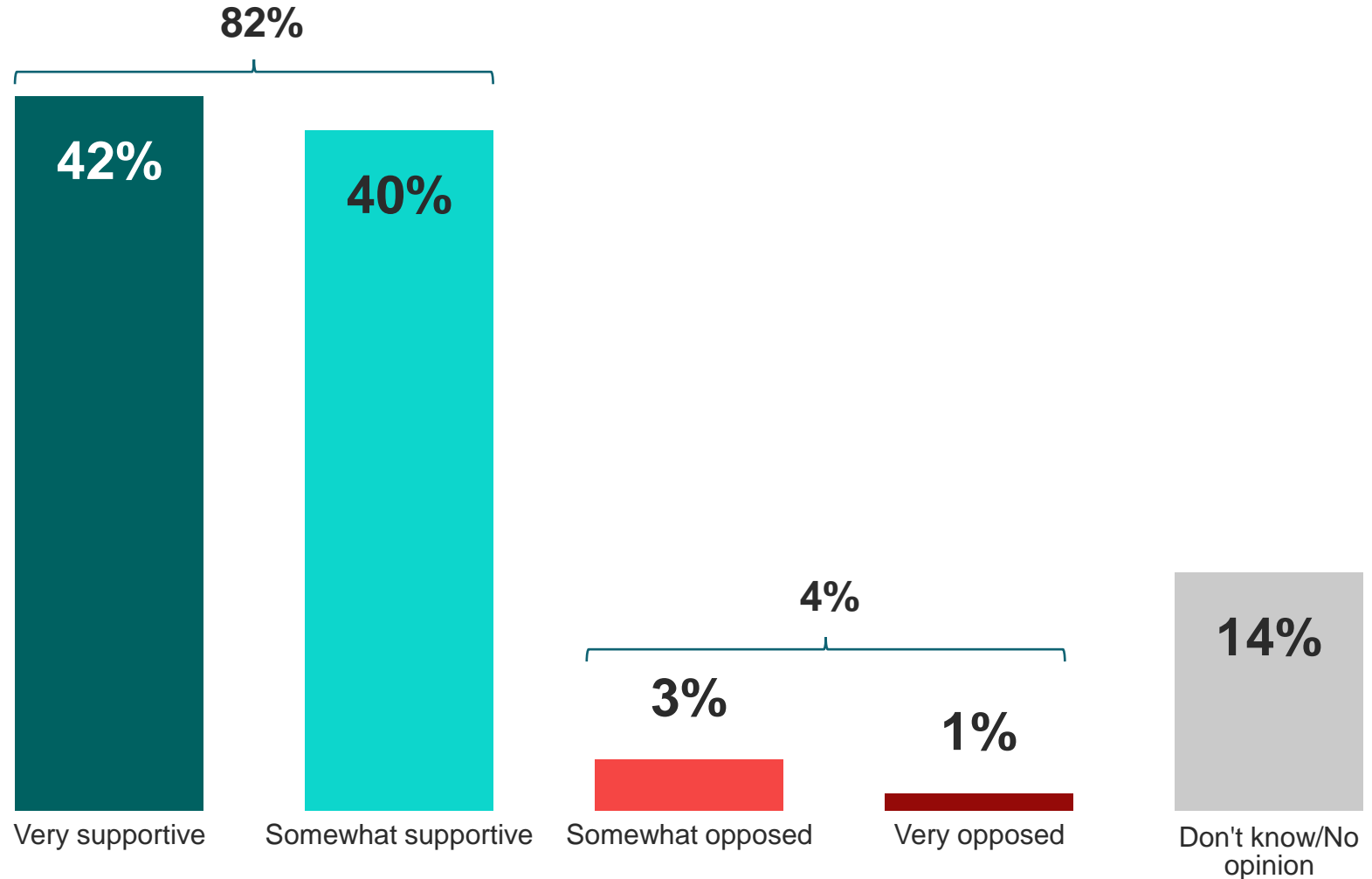
*How important is being able to choose your electricity provider?*



**Consistent with public sentiment on the importance of choice when it comes to purchasing electricity, only 4% of voters are *opposed* to policies that would expand consumer choices for clean energy sources.**

*How supportive, if at all, are you of policies that expand choices for consumers to purchase electricity from their preferred clean energy sources?*

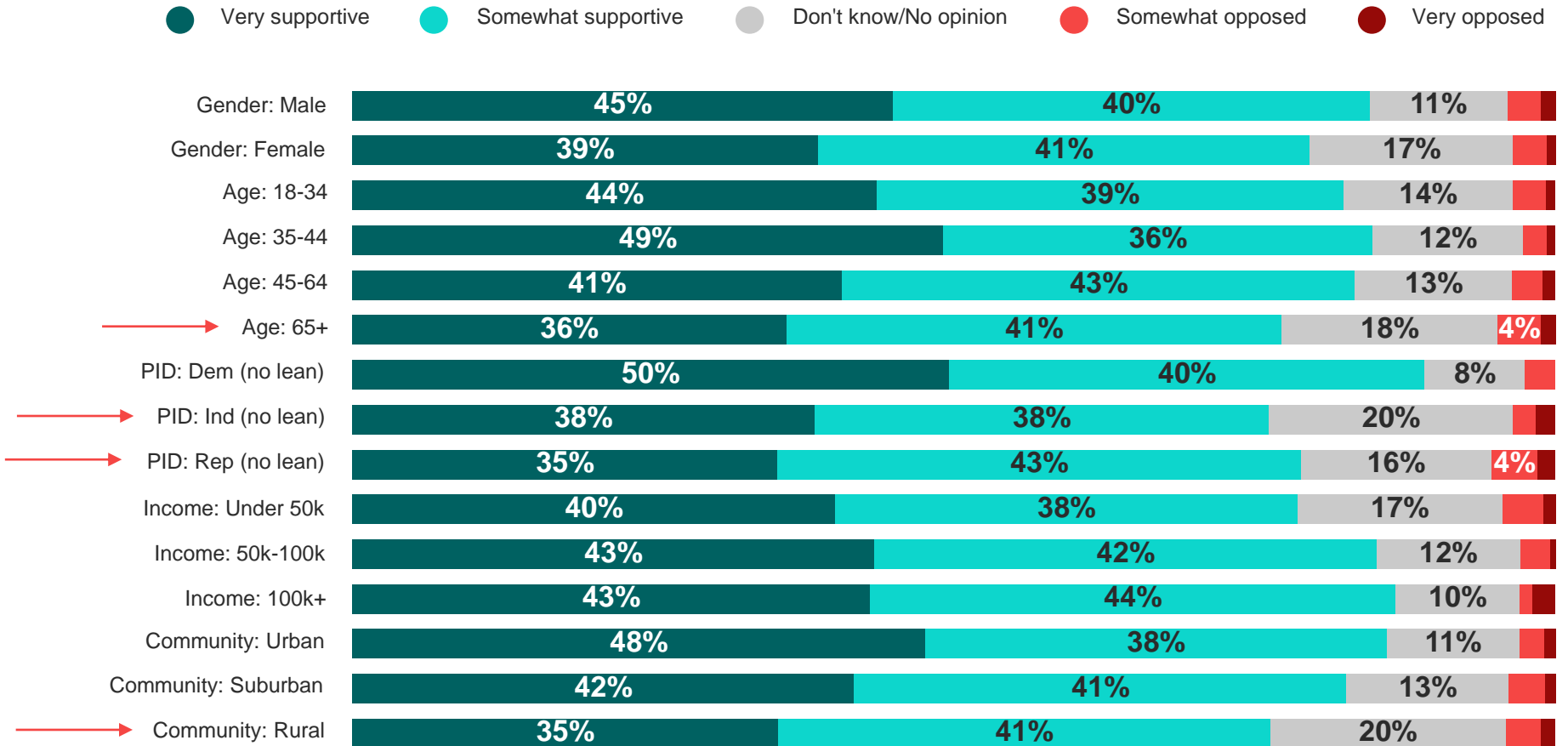
## Policy Positions



# Policy Positions

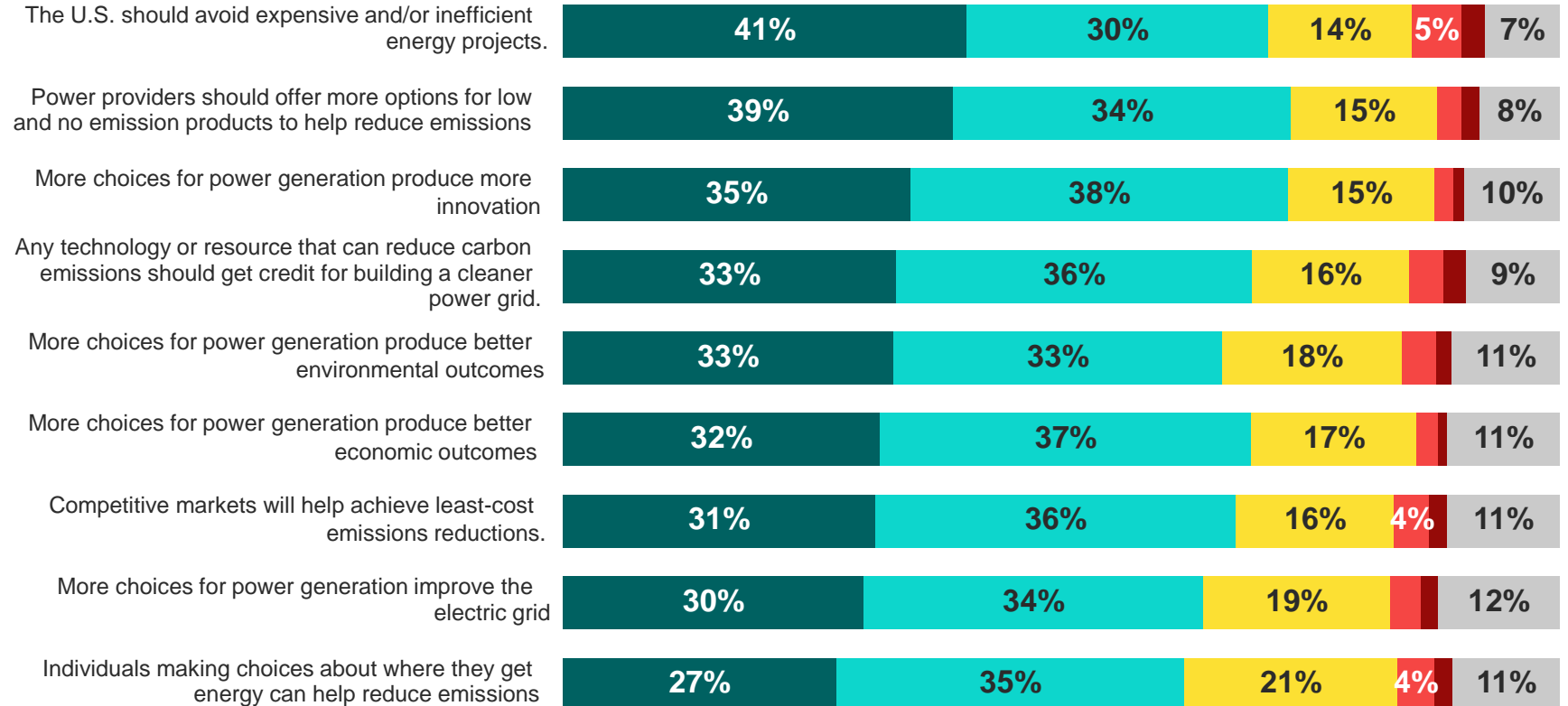
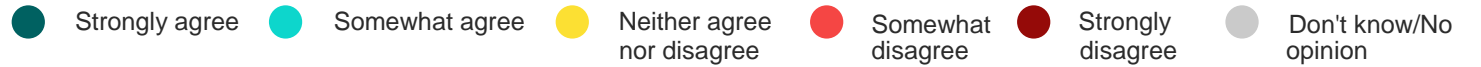
Republicans, Independents, rural residents, and seniors (65+) stand out as somewhat less supportive of policies that expand choices for consumers to purchase electricity from their preferred sources, though support is high among all groups.

*How supportive, if at all, are you of policies that expand choices for consumers to purchase electricity from their preferred clean energy sources?*



**Among statements tested, the most resonant among registered voters were focused on the U.S. avoiding inefficient energy projects, power providers offering more low and zero-emission products, and that consumer choice for power consumption driving innovation.**

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?*



**Policy  
Positions**

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