

**B** | Center for  
**Middle East Policy**  
at BROOKINGS

**American attitudes on  
refugees from the Middle  
East**

**A PUBLIC OPINION POLL BY SHIBLEY TELHAMI**

*A survey sponsored by the*  
**Center for Middle East Policy's**  
**Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at**  
**The Brookings Institution**  
*and*  
**Sadat Chair**  
**for Peace and Development**  
**at the University of Maryland**

*fielded by*  
**Nielsen Scarborough**

Valuable assistance was provided by The Program for Public Consultation, especially its director Steven Kull, Evan Lewis, and Clay Ramsay. Neil Schwartz, Scott Willoth, and Jordan Evangelista from Nielsen Scarborough also provided assistance. Brittany Kyser, Shaqaiq Birashk, and Cameron Zotter were particularly helpful.

# Survey Methodology

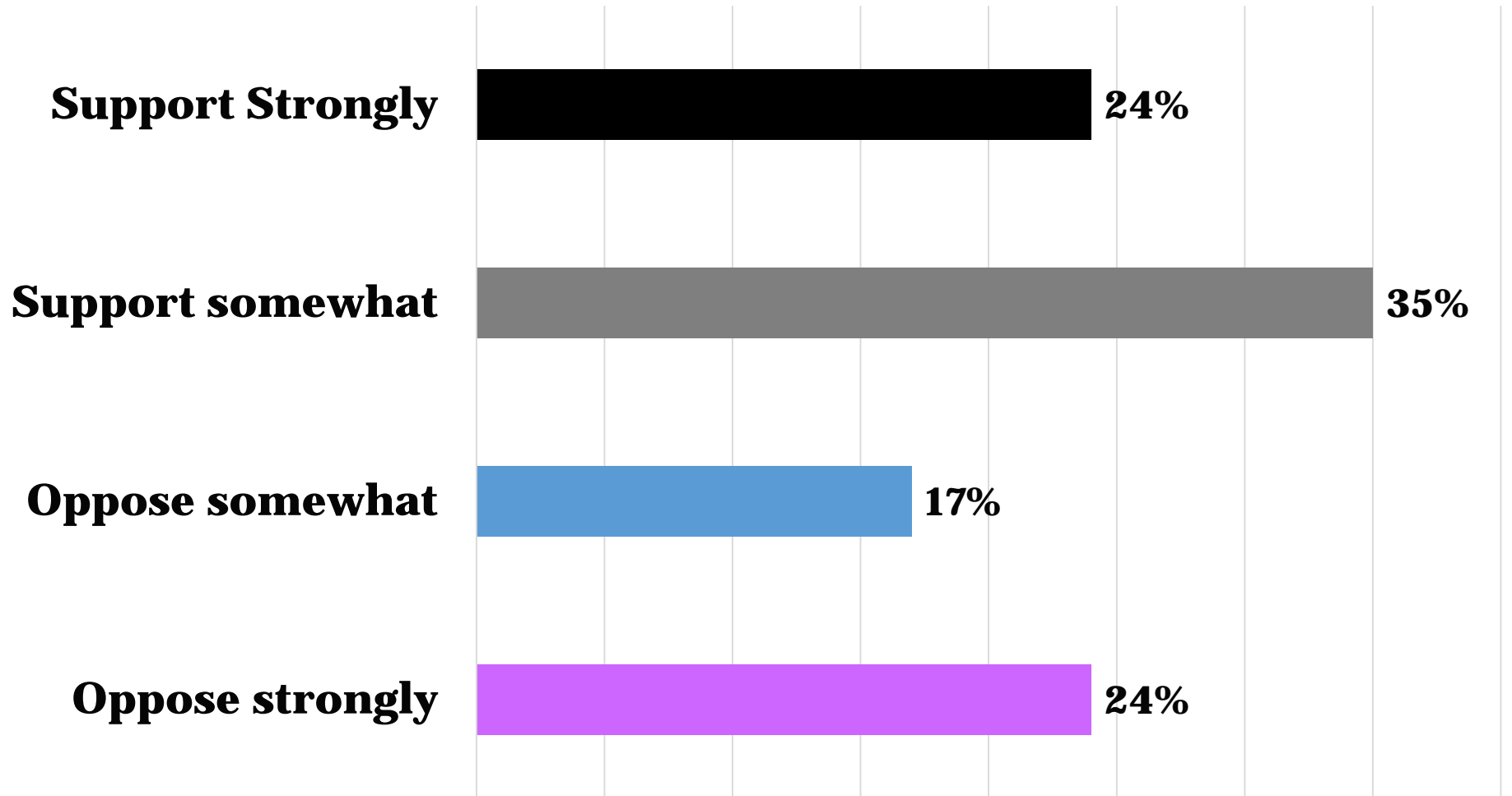
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The survey was conducted May 20-31, 2016 with a panel consisting of a probability-based representative sample. The panel was recruited by Nielsen Scarborough from its larger probability-based national panel, which was recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households provided by Survey Sampling International. A total of 1580 panelists completed the survey including a national sample of 845 adults, plus an oversample of 735 millennials (18-34), making for a total sample of millennials of 863. Responses were weighted by age, gender, income, education, race, and geographic region using benchmarks from the US Census. The survey was also weighted by partisan identification and millennials were down-weighted consistent with these groups' incidence rate in the U.S. Census. The margins of error for the national sample and for each subgroup is: National – 845 respondents, MoE: 3.4% Millennials – 863, MoE: 3.3%

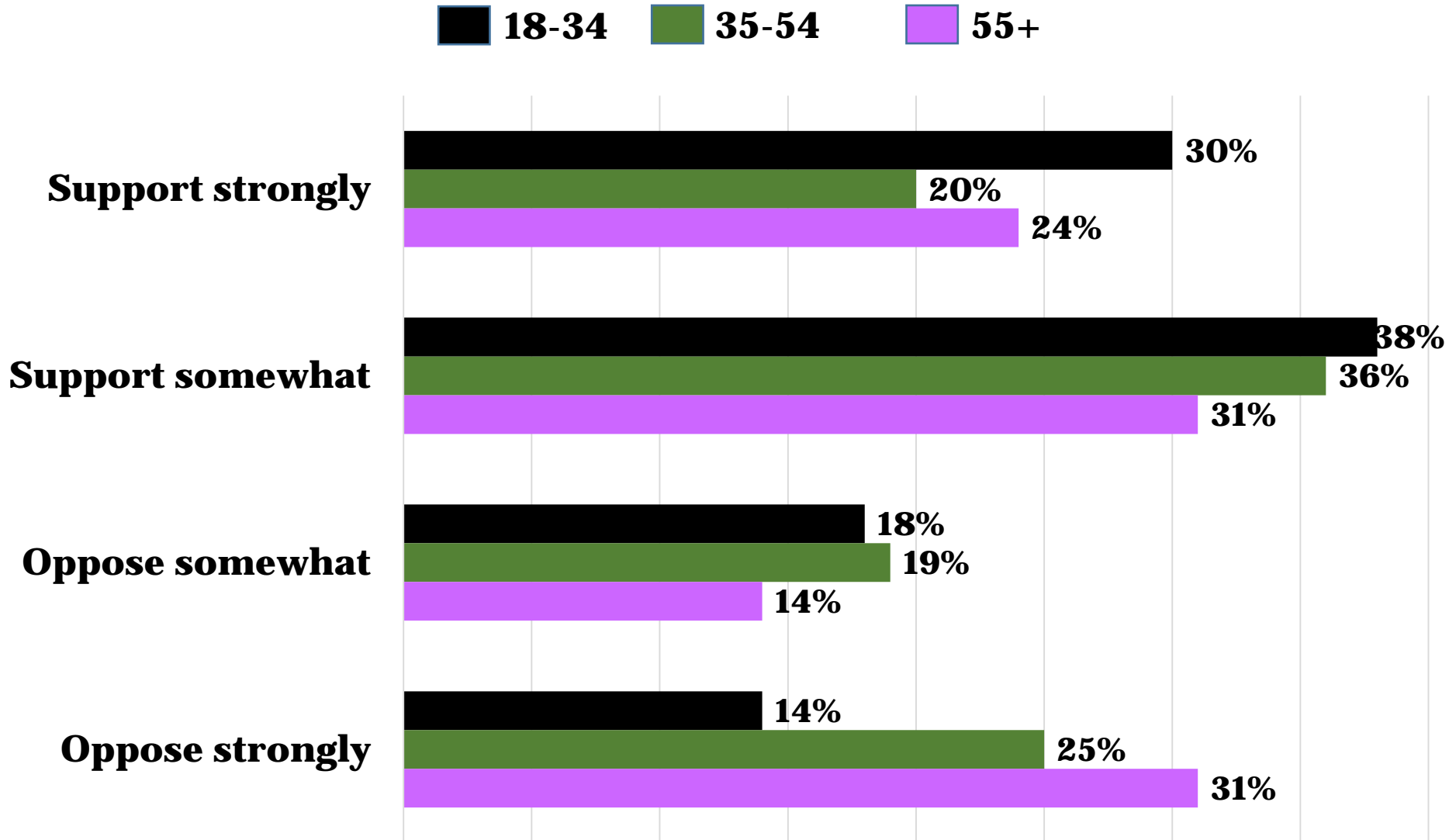
**As you may know, since 2001 the United States has admitted about 800,000 persons with refugee status from around the world, or about 50,000 people a year on average. In U.S. law, a refugee is a person who is already living outside their own country because of a “well-founded fear of persecution.” This definition can include those fleeing civil war in their home country. It excludes those who “participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.” Those applying as refugees for asylum in the U.S. are investigated by various arms of the U.S. government. This process takes about two years.**

**In general, do you support or oppose the United States taking in refugees from the conflicts in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries after screening them for security risks?**

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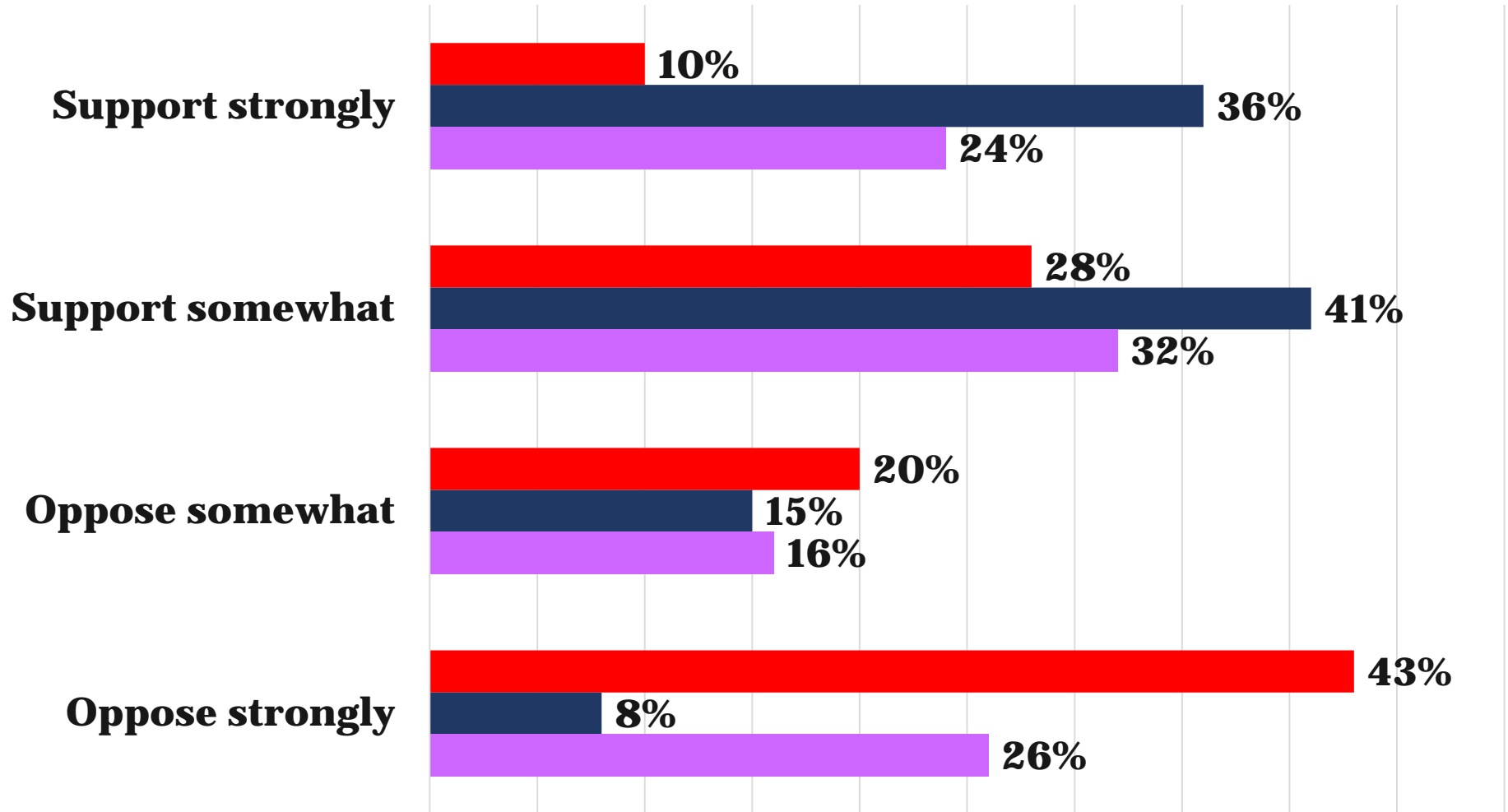


# In general, do you support or oppose the United States taking in refugees from the conflicts in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries after screening them for security risks?



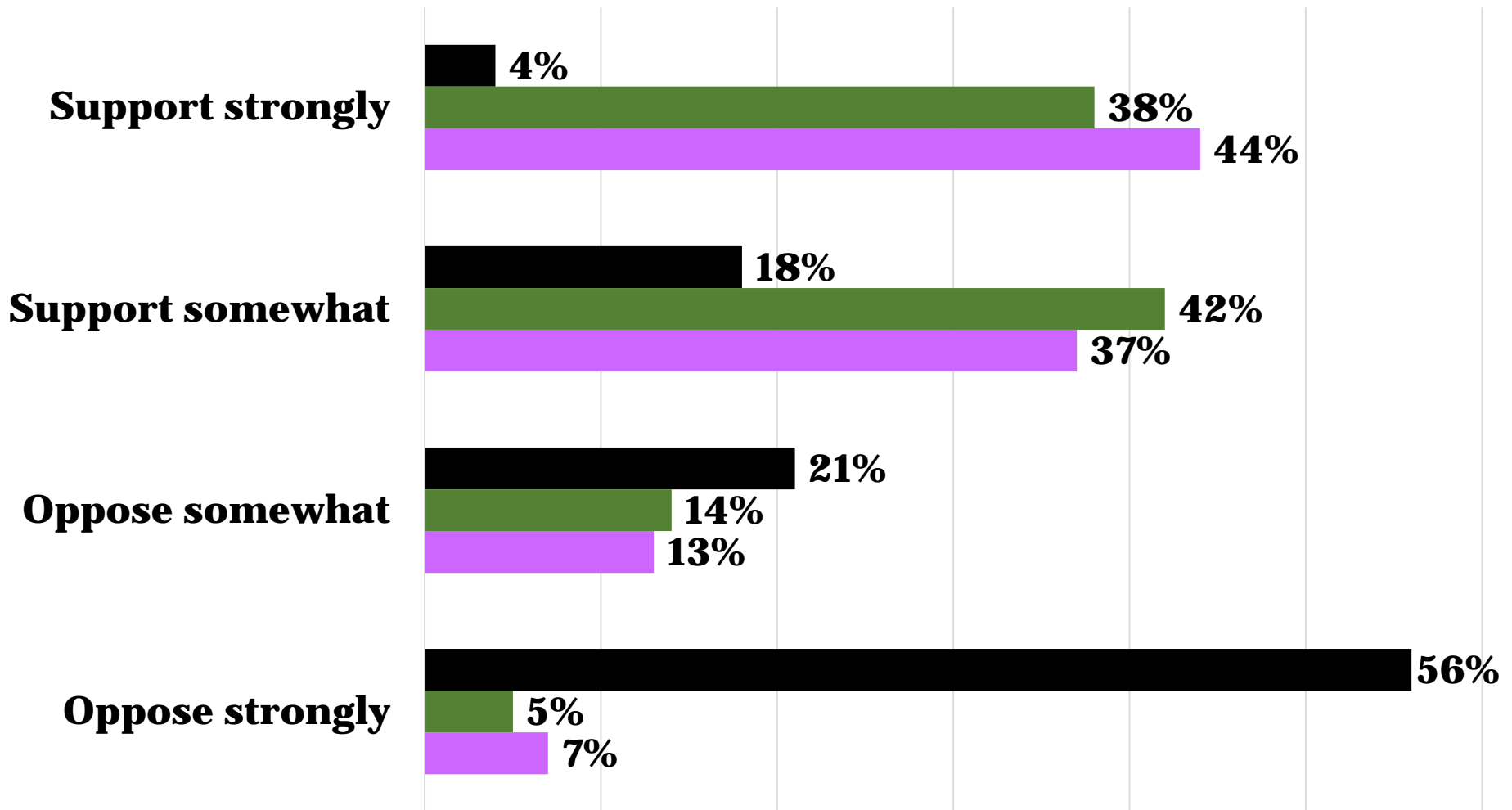
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**Republican Democrat Independent**



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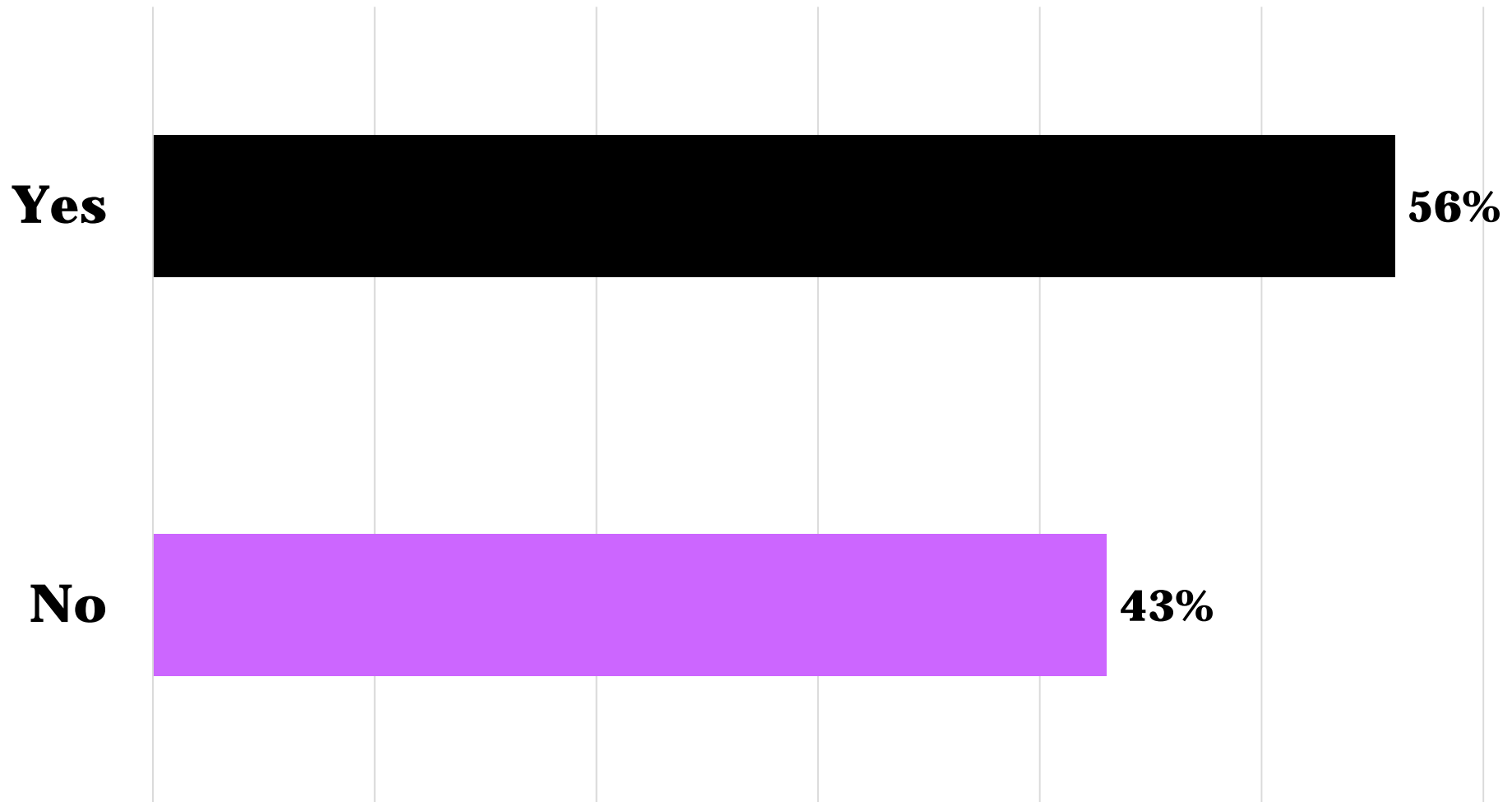
■ Those Favoring Donald Trump   ■ Those Favoring Hillary Clinton   ■ Those Favoring Bernie Sanders





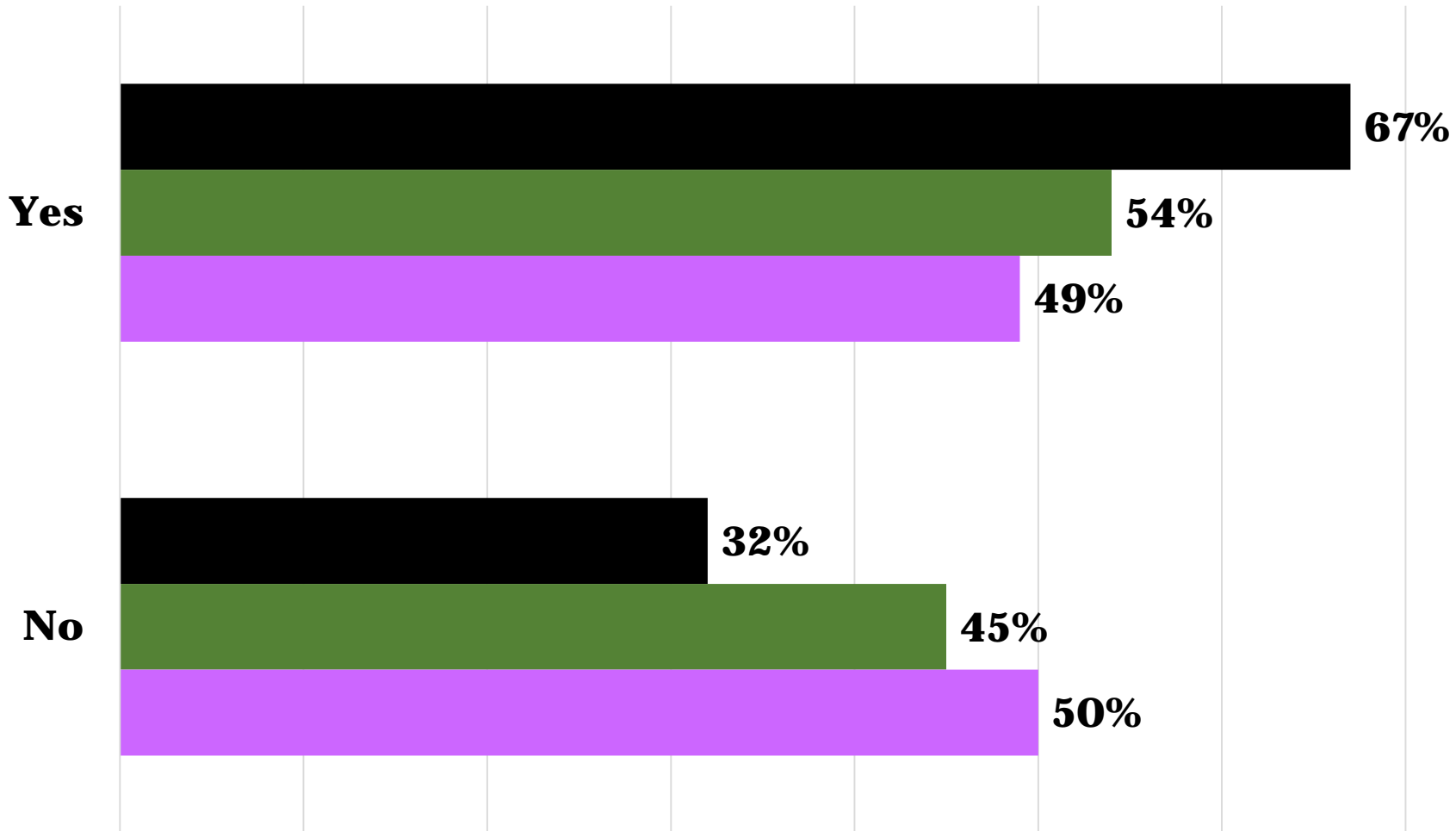
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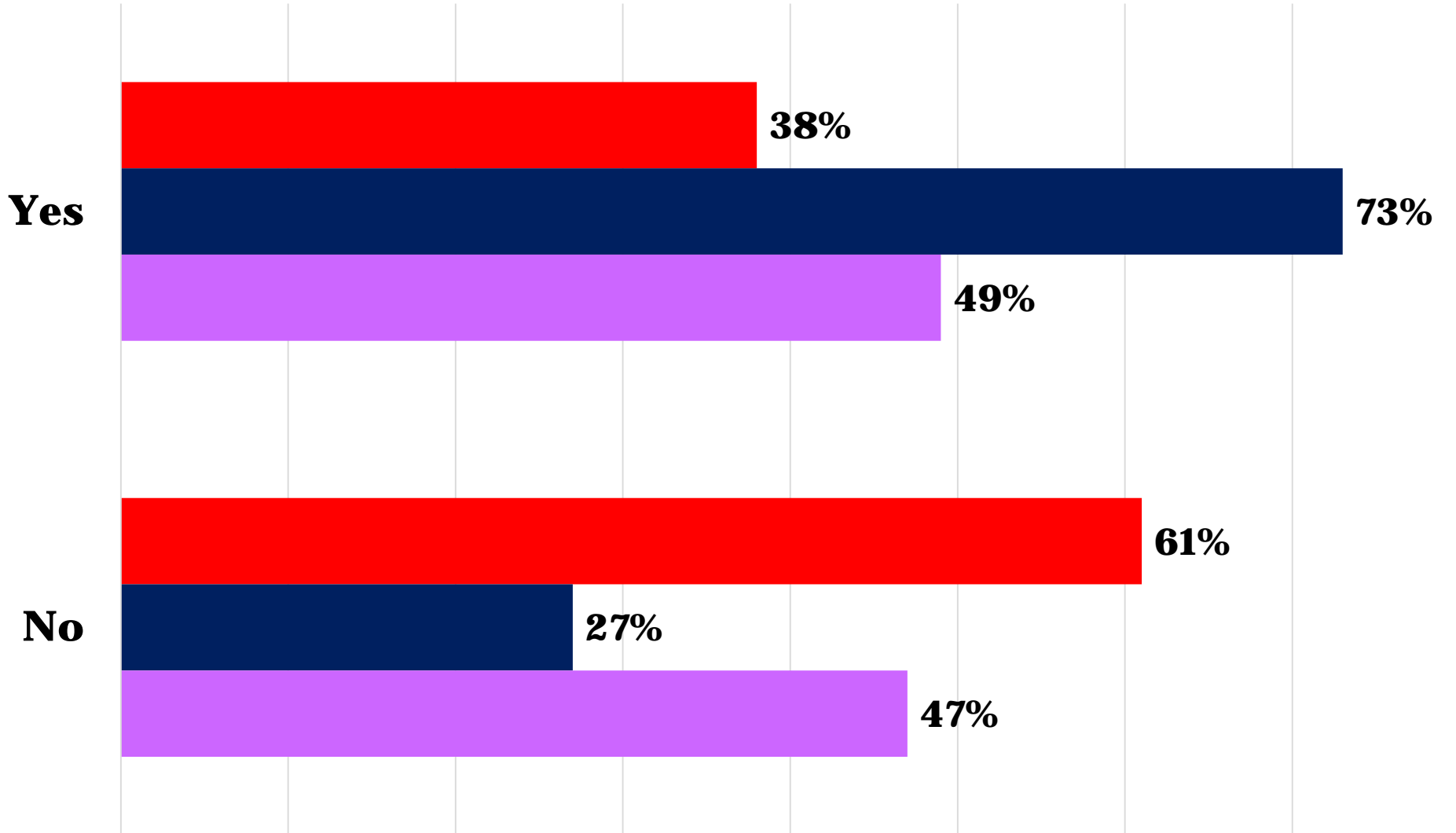
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**18-34**   **35-54**   **55+**



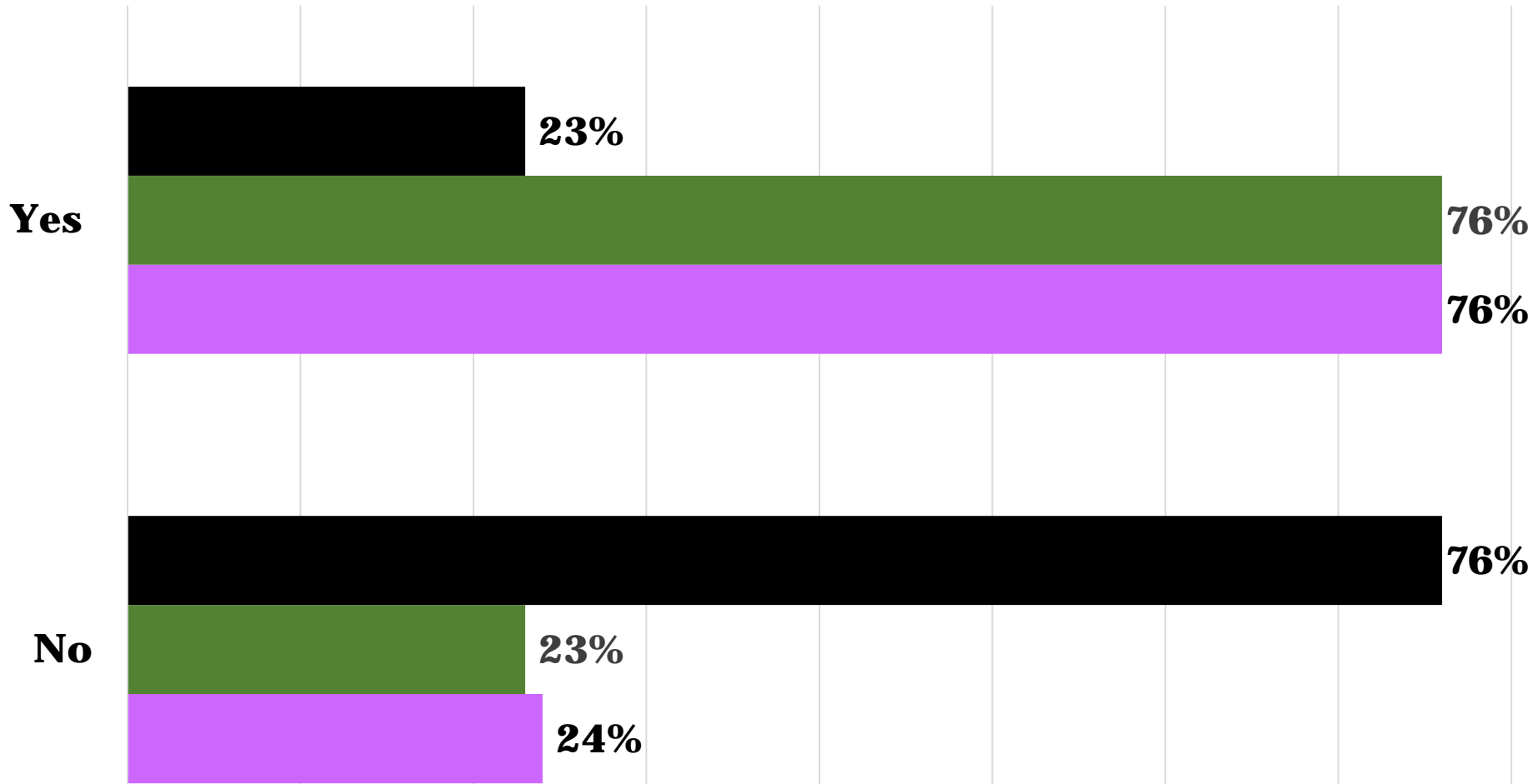
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Those Favoring Donald Trump    Those Favoring Hillary Clinton    Those Favoring Bernie Sanders

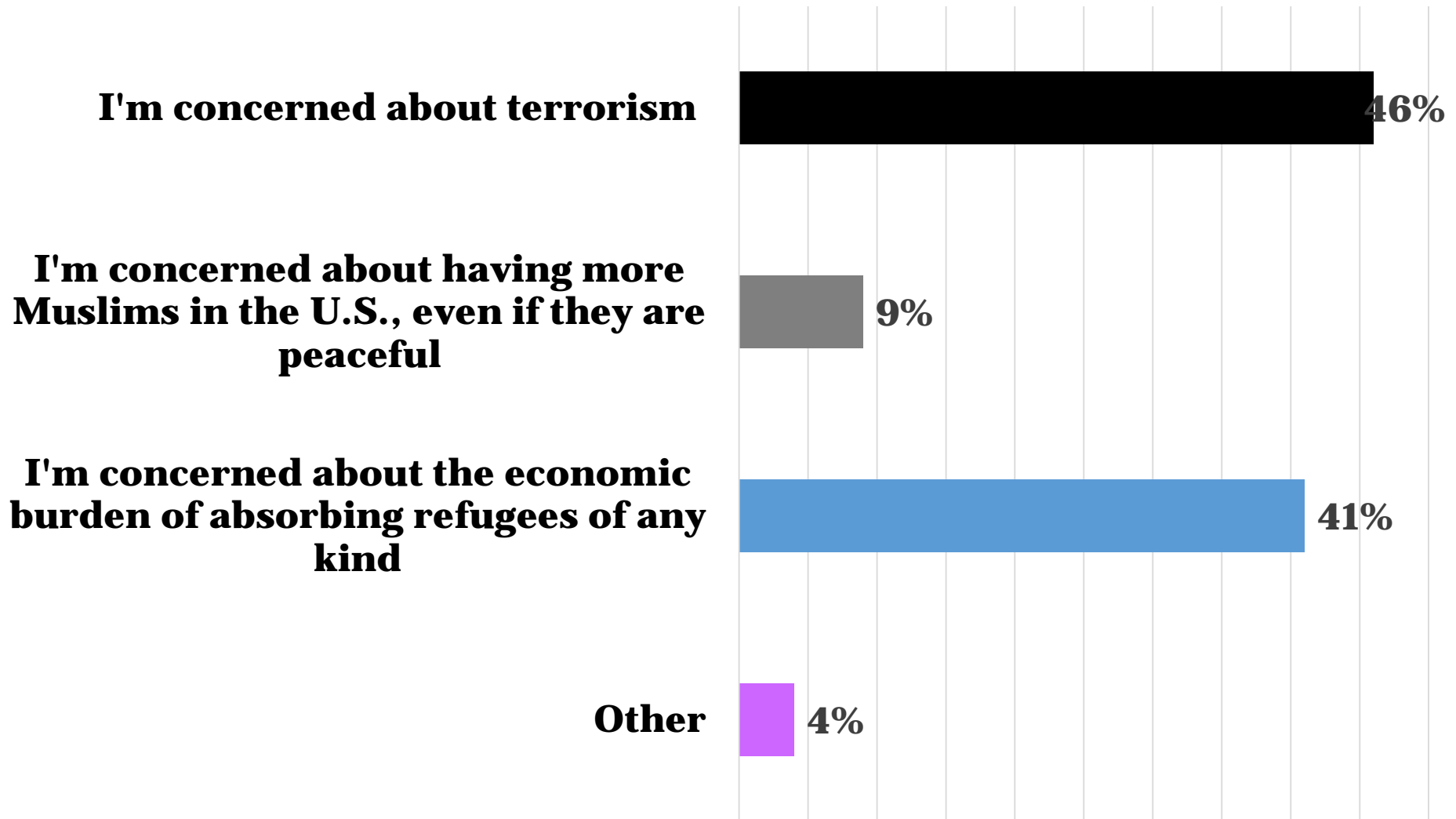


**[Among those opposing absorbing refugees]**

**Which of the following concerns  
you most about absorbing  
refugees?**

**[Among those opposing absorbing refugees]**

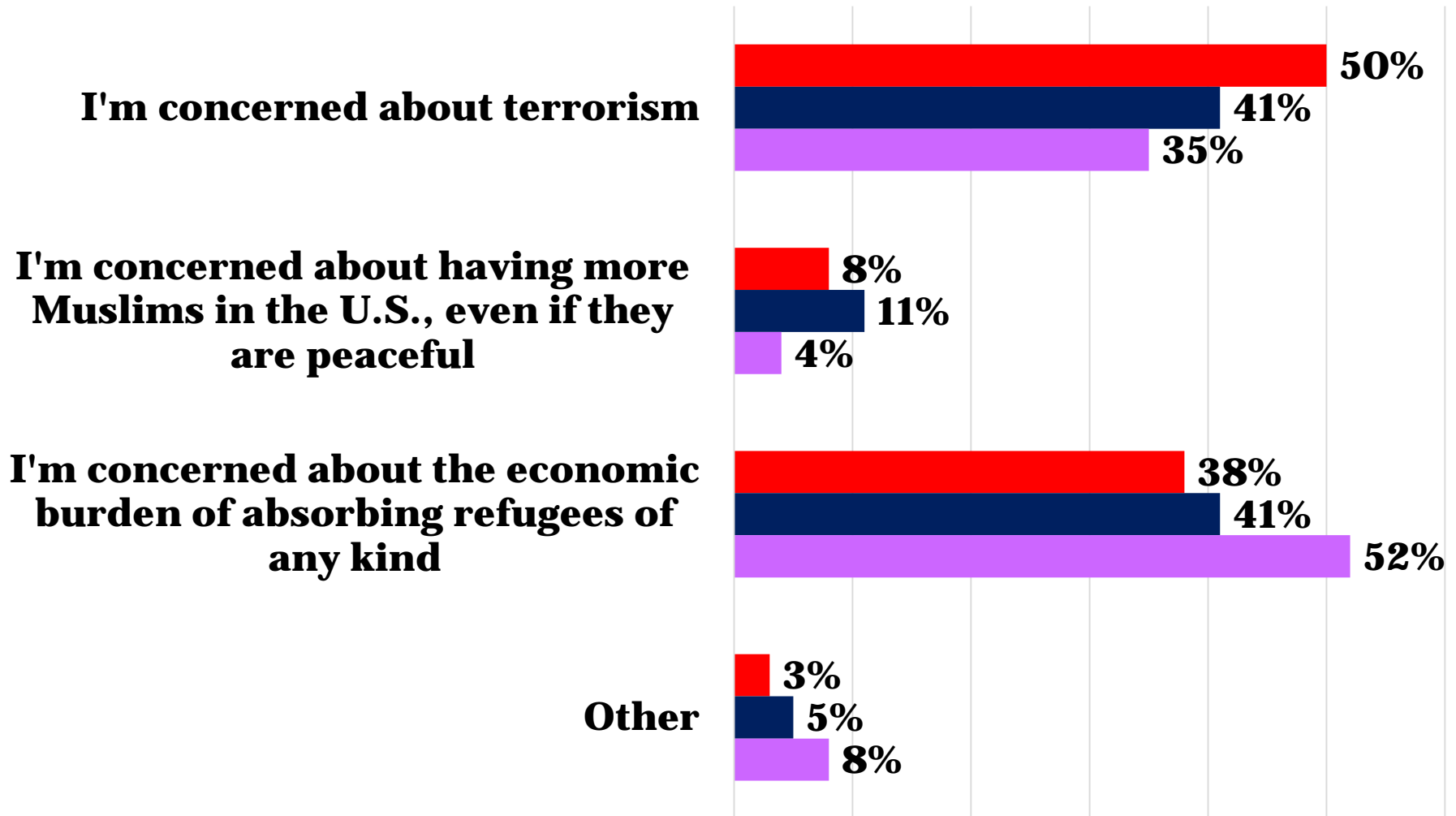
**Which of the following concerns you most about absorbing refugees?**



# [Among those opposing absorbing refugees]

Which of the following concerns you most about absorbing refugees?

**Republican** **Democrat** **Independent**

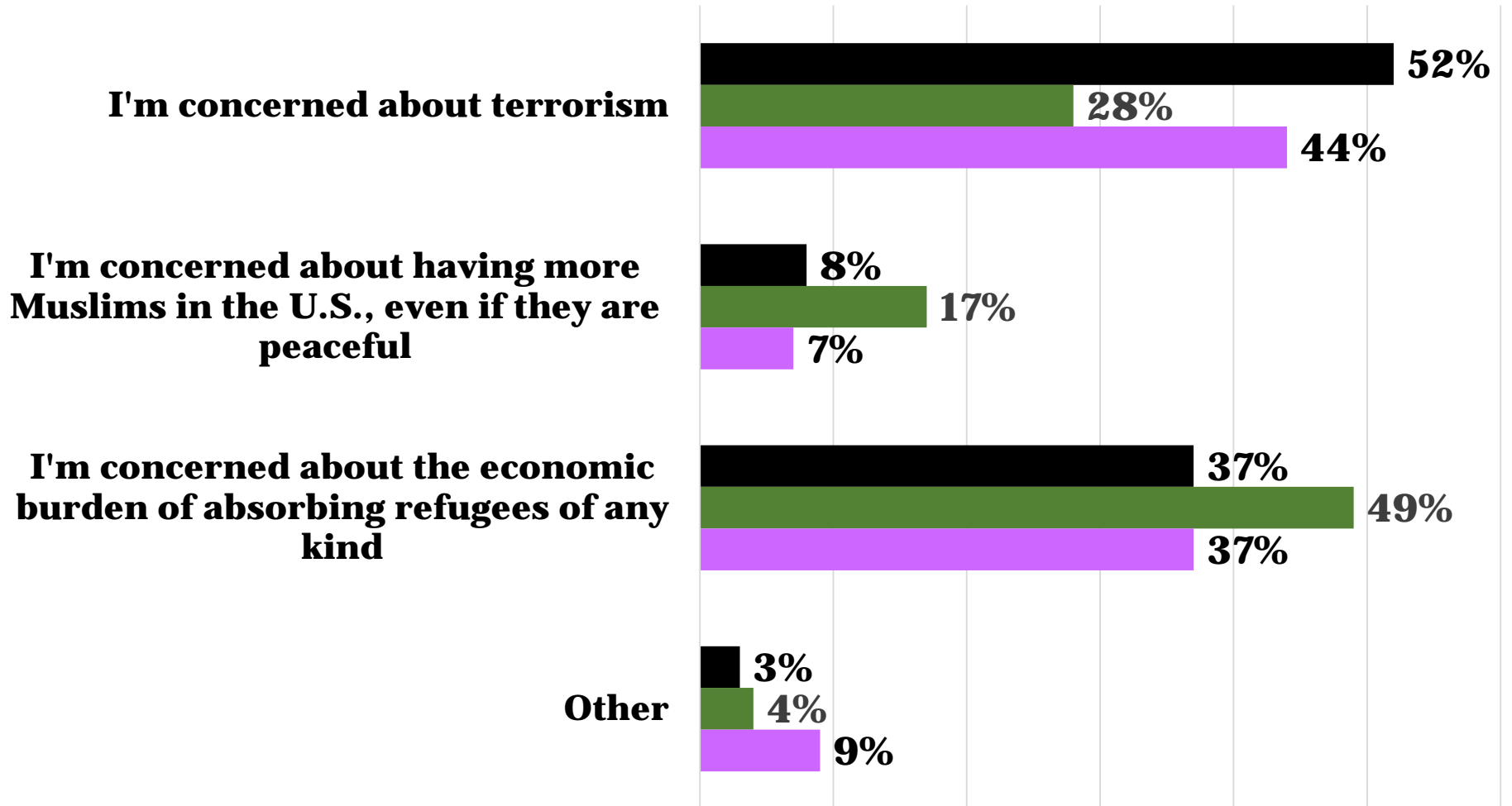




# [Among those opposing absorbing refugees]

## Which of the following concerns you most about absorbing refugees?

Those Favoring Donald Trump    Those Favoring Hillary Clinton    Those Favoring Bernie Sanders



**Apart from the question of whether U.S. should accept more refugees, does the U.S. have a moral obligation to help refugees from the following countries (Libya, Iraq, and Syria)?**

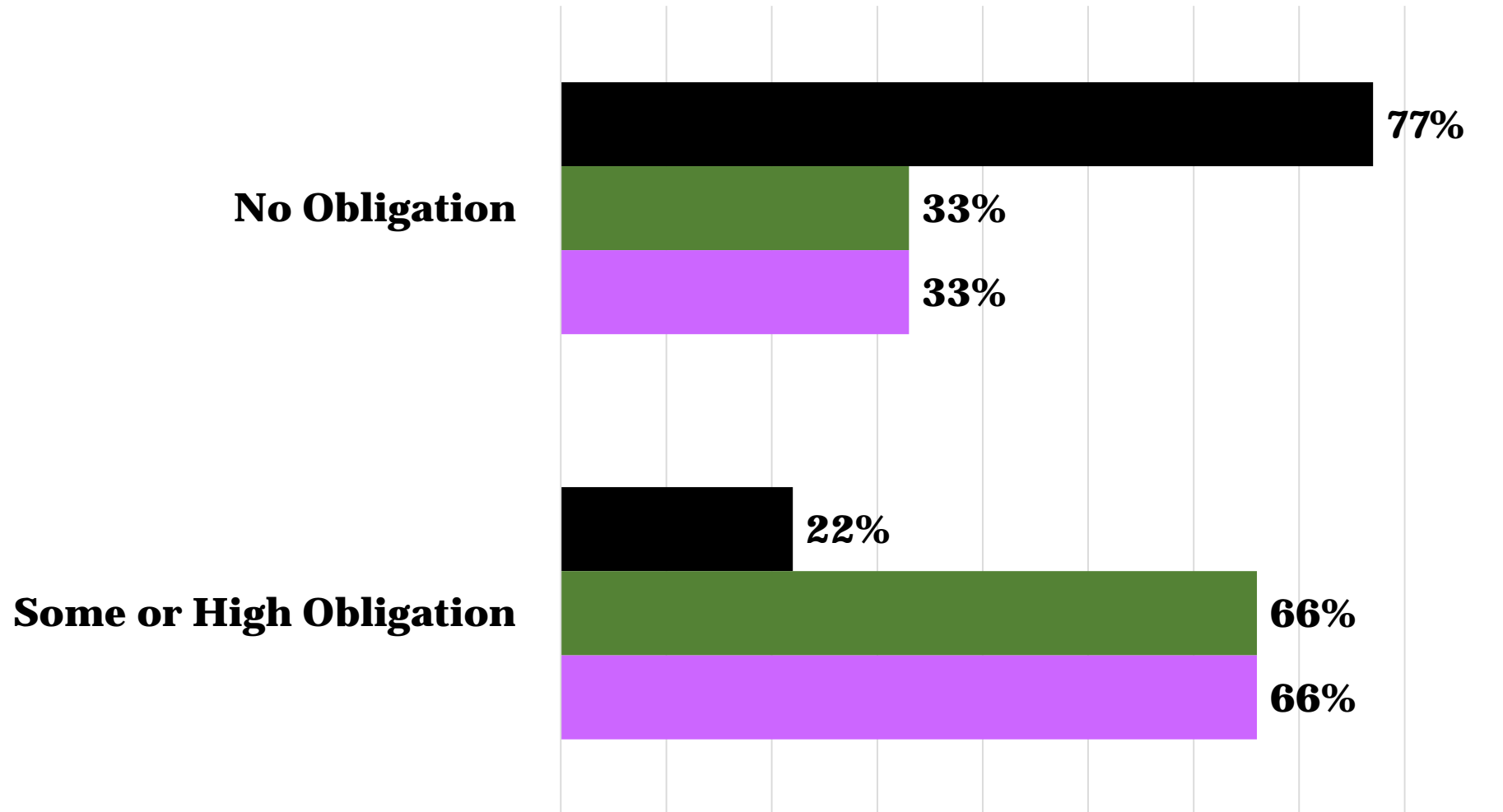
**Apart from the question of whether U.S. should accept more refugees, does the U.S. have a moral obligation to help refugees from the following countries?**

**■ No Obligation      ■ Some or High Obligation**



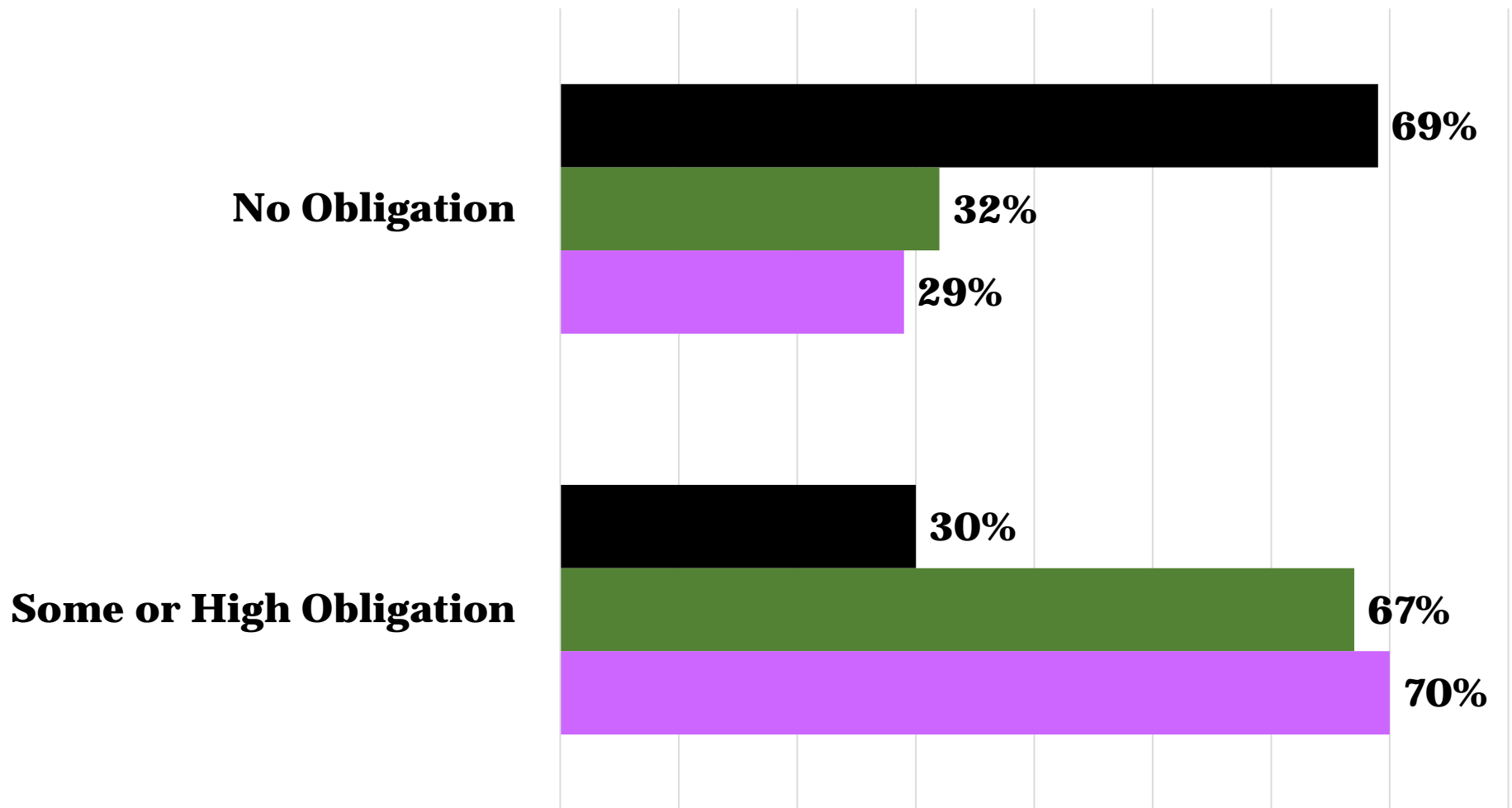
# Apart from the question of whether U.S. should accept more refugees, does the U.S. have a moral obligation to help refugees from the following countries (Libya)?

Those Favoring Donald Trump    Those Favoring Hillary Clinton    Those Favoring Bernie Sanders



# Apart from the question of whether U.S. should accept more refugees, does the U.S. have a moral obligation to help refugees from the following countries (Iraq)?

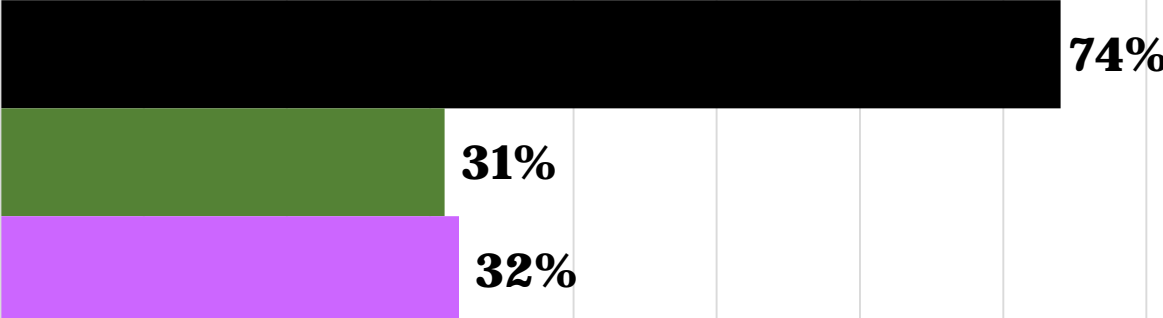
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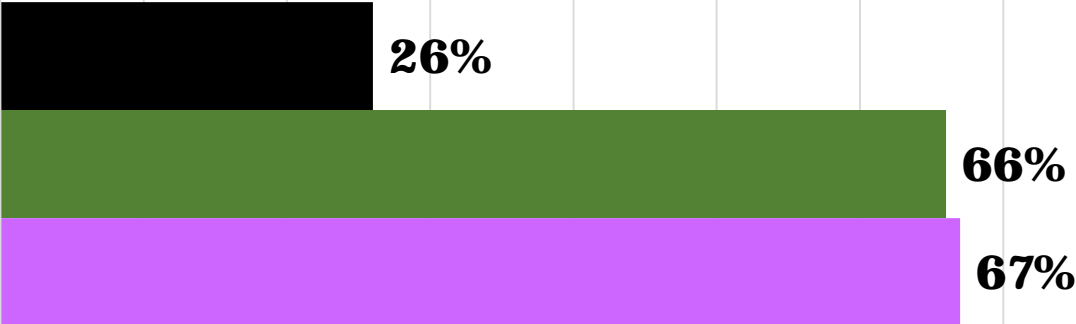
# Apart from the question of whether U.S. should accept more refugees, does the U.S. have a moral obligation to help refugees from the following countries (Syria)?

Those Favoring Donald Trump    Those Favoring Hillary Clinton    Those Favoring Bernie Sanders

No Obligation

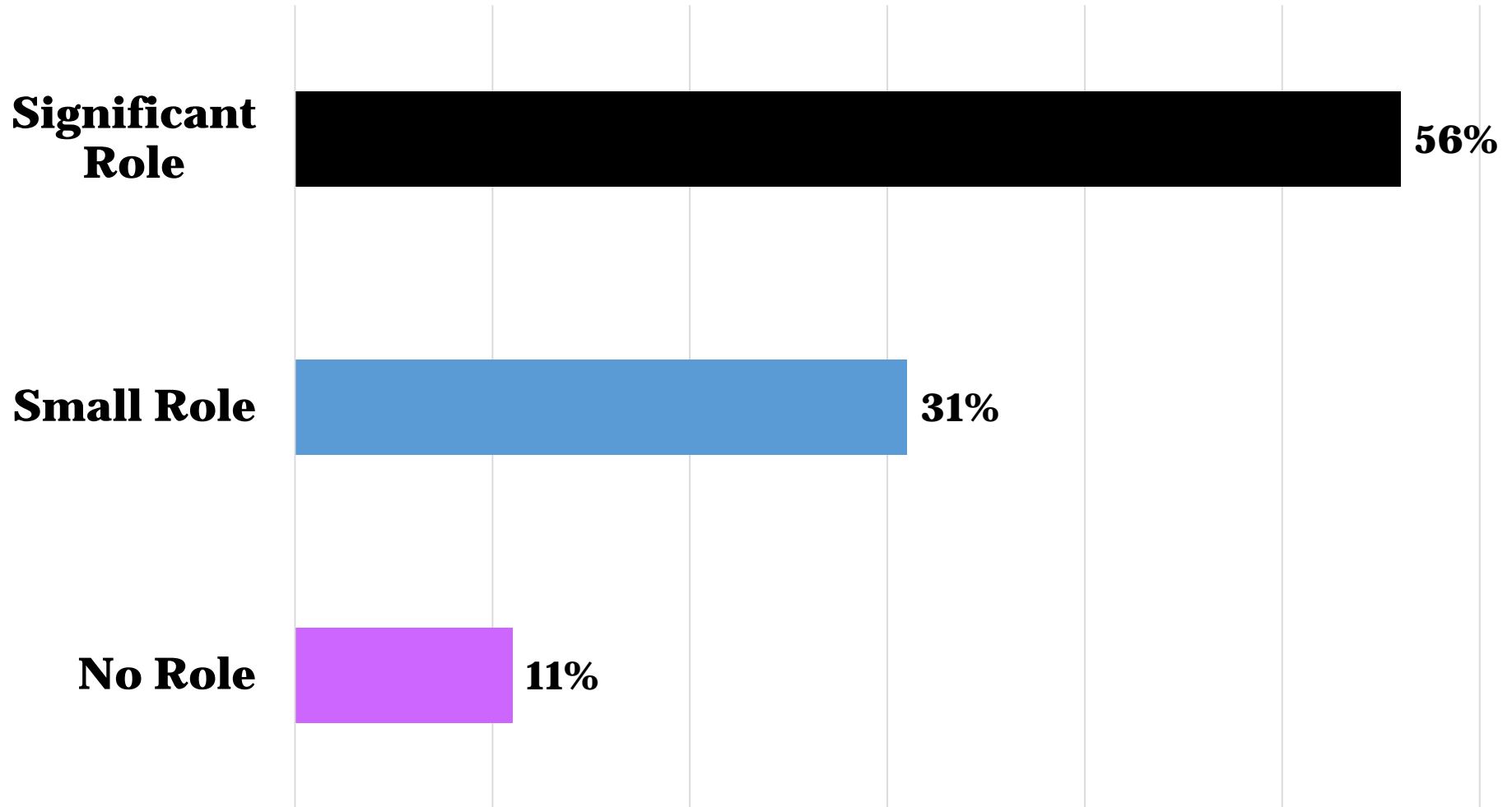


Some or High Obligation



**How much of a role do you believe the 2003 Iraq War has played in the events leading to the emergence of the refugee crisis in Syria?**

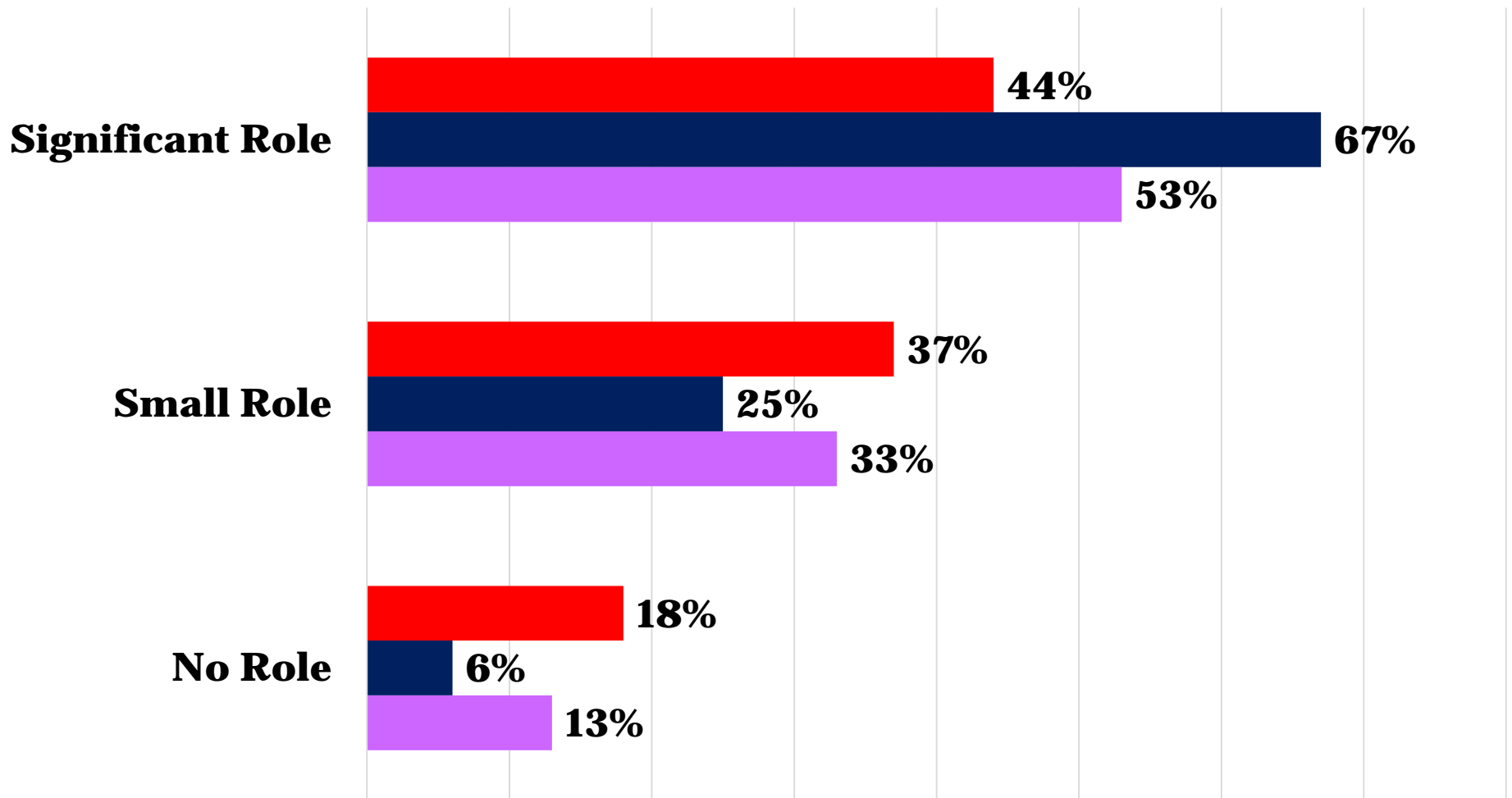
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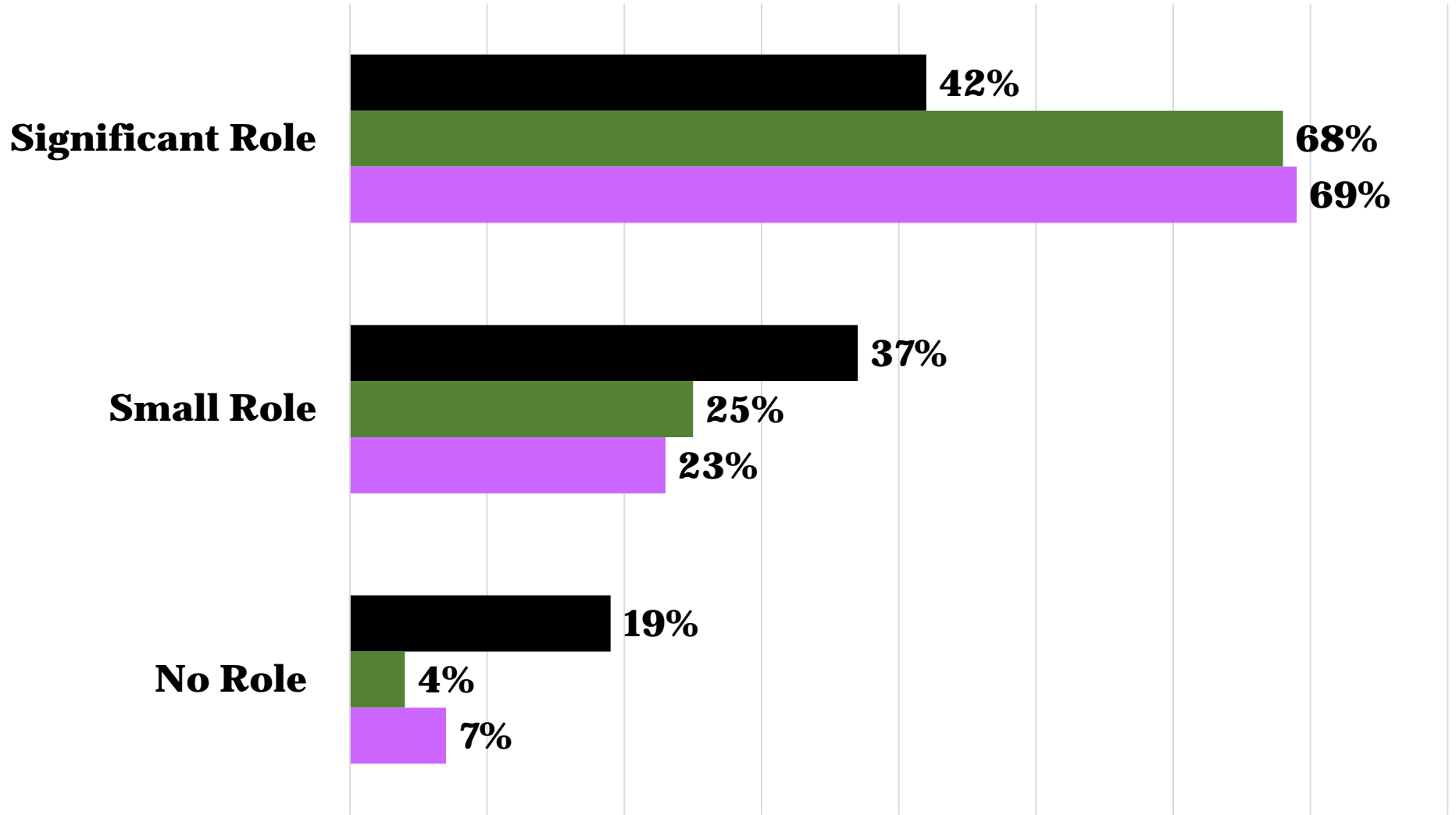
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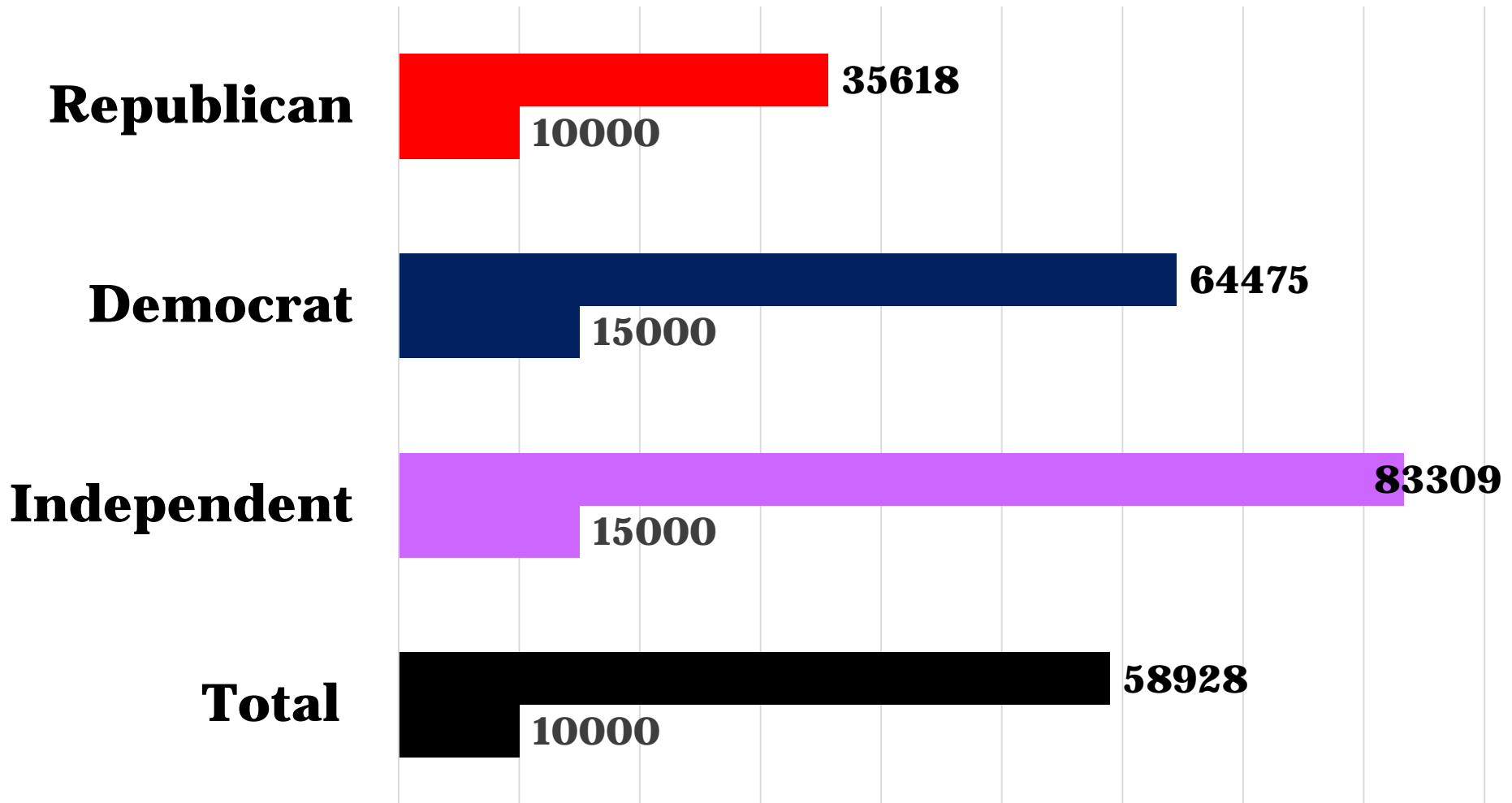
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**[Open Ended Question]**  
**How many refugees should the  
U.S. sponsor and resettle in  
2017?**

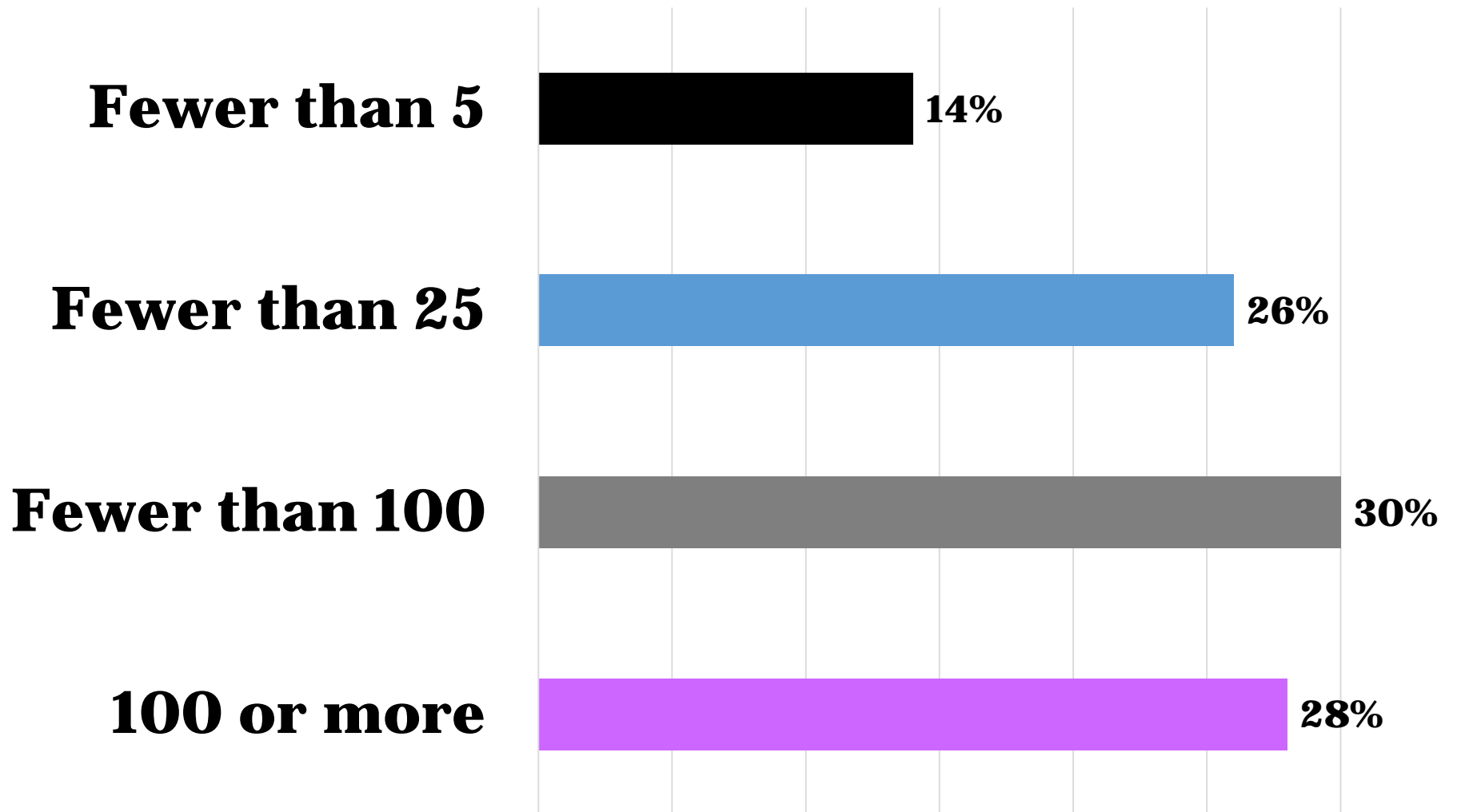
**[Open Ended Question] How many refugees should the U.S. sponsor and resettle in 2017?**



**Mean (top number) Median (bottom number)**

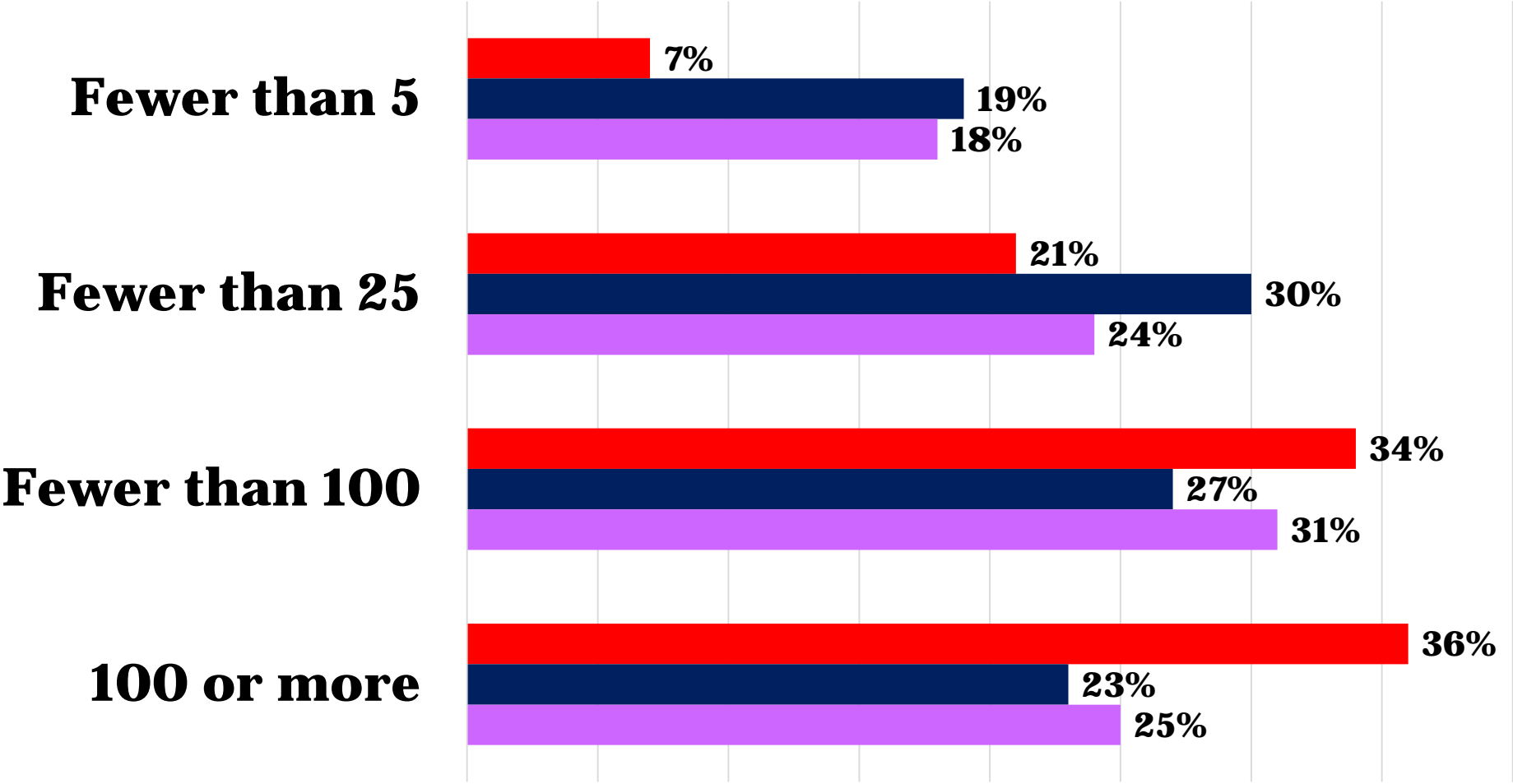
**In your estimation, how many  
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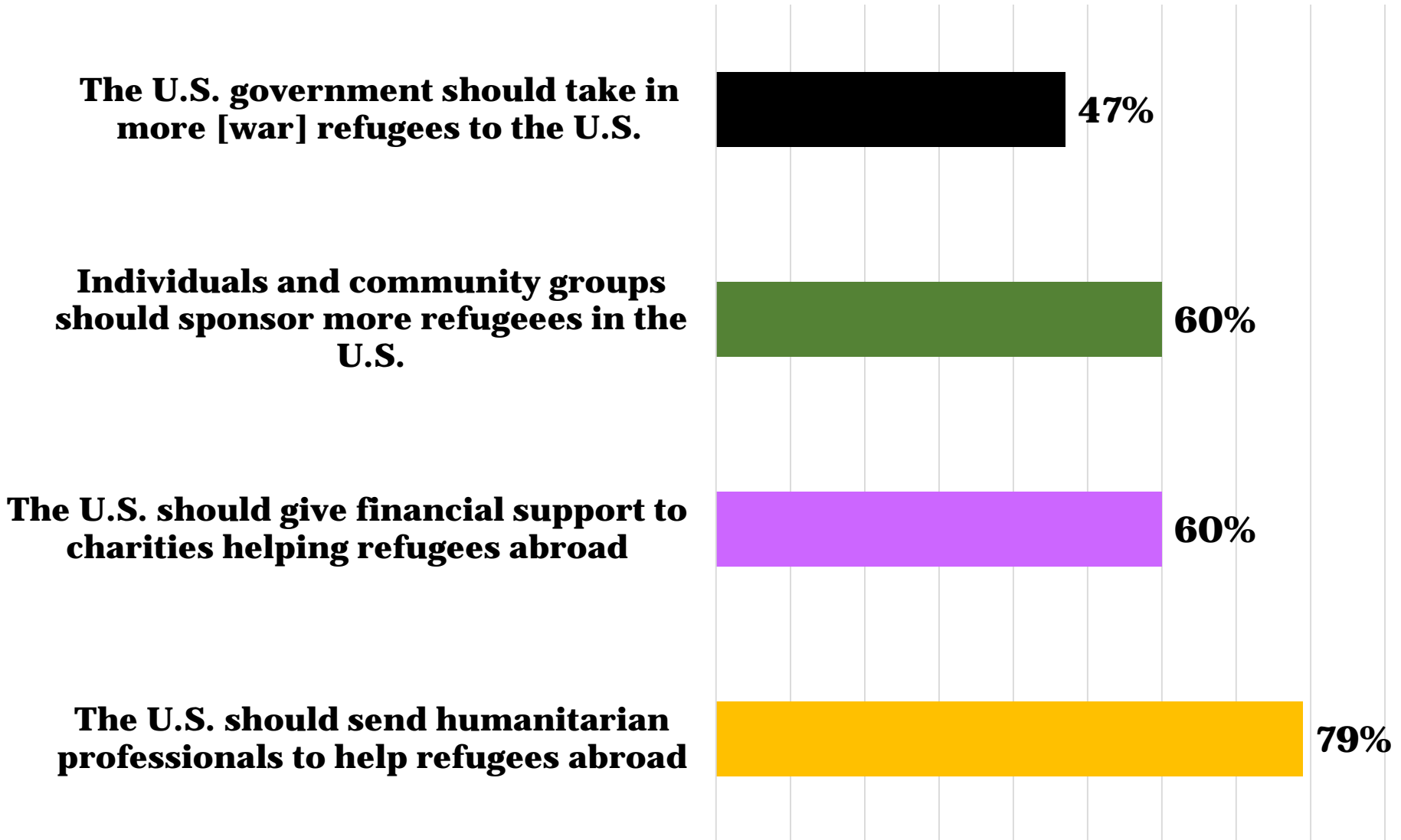


**Here are some ways the U.S. might respond. Please tell us whether you support or oppose the following measures:**

**The U.S. government should take in more [war] refugees, allowing them into the U.S.**



## Percentage of Americans who support each of the following responses to the refugee issue



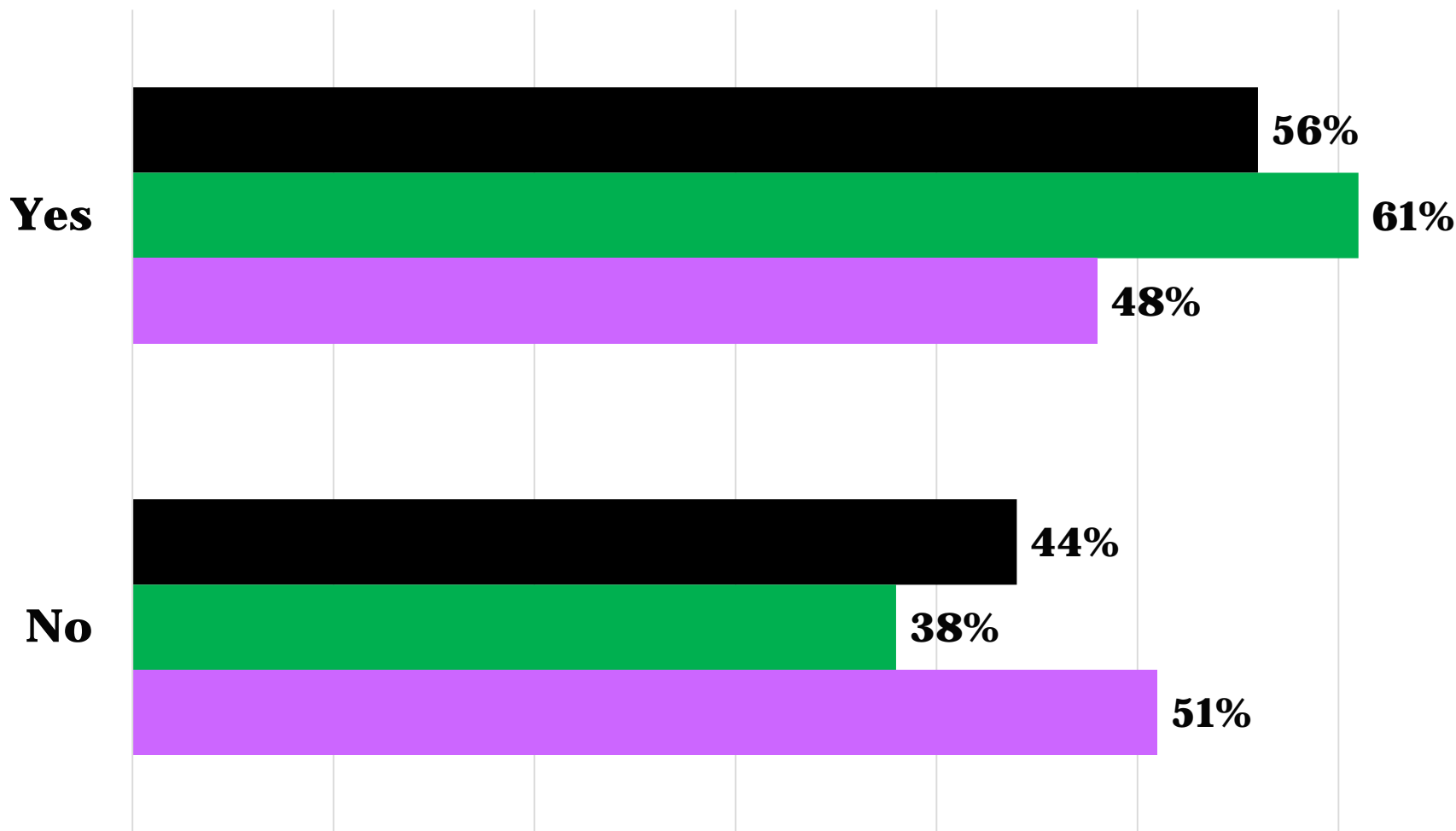
**If some of these Syrian refugees came to live in your state or community, do you think they would be welcomed?**

# If some of these Syrian refugees came to live in your state or community, do you think they would be welcomed?



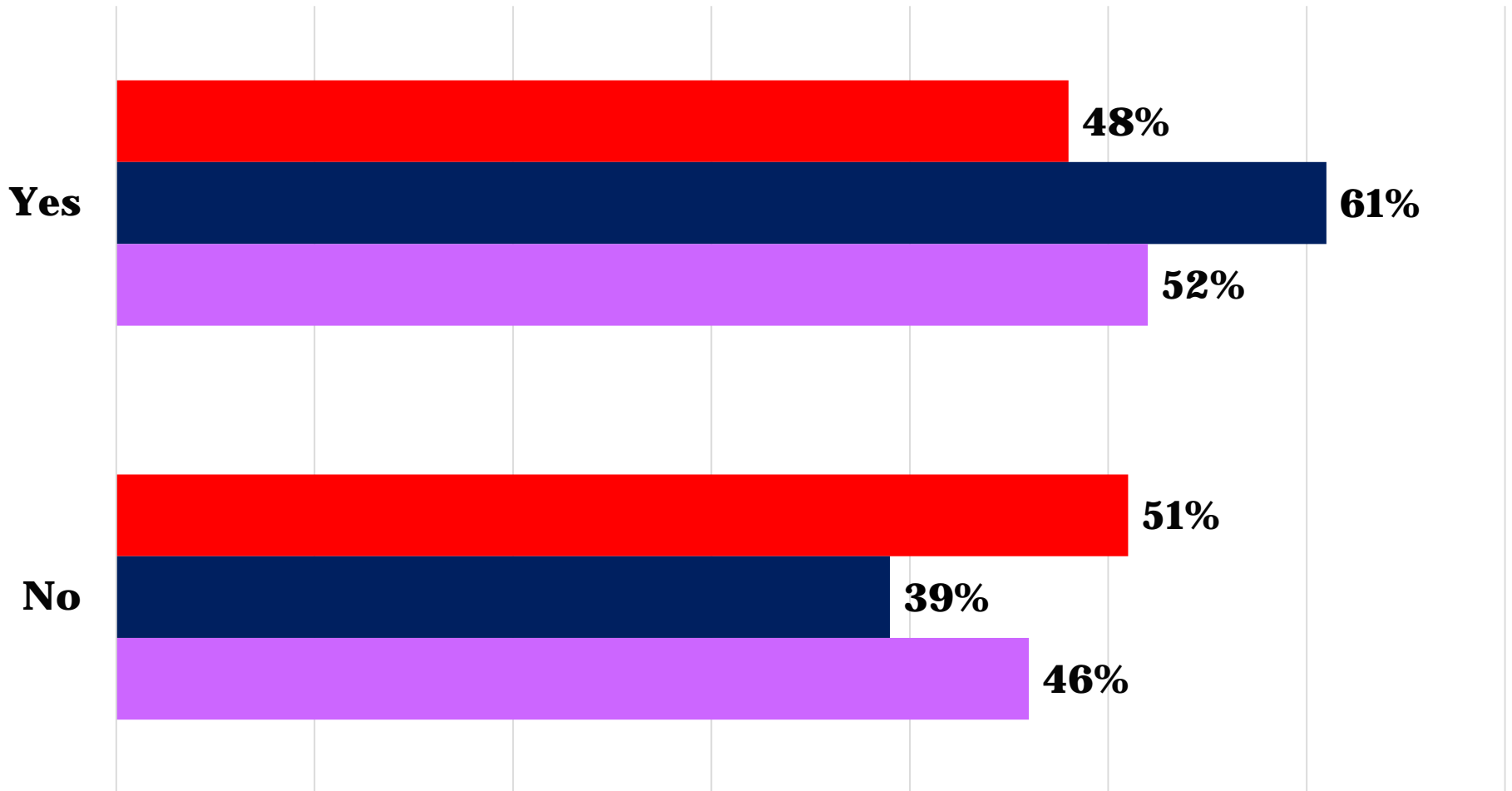
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■ 18-34   ■ 35-54   ■ 55+



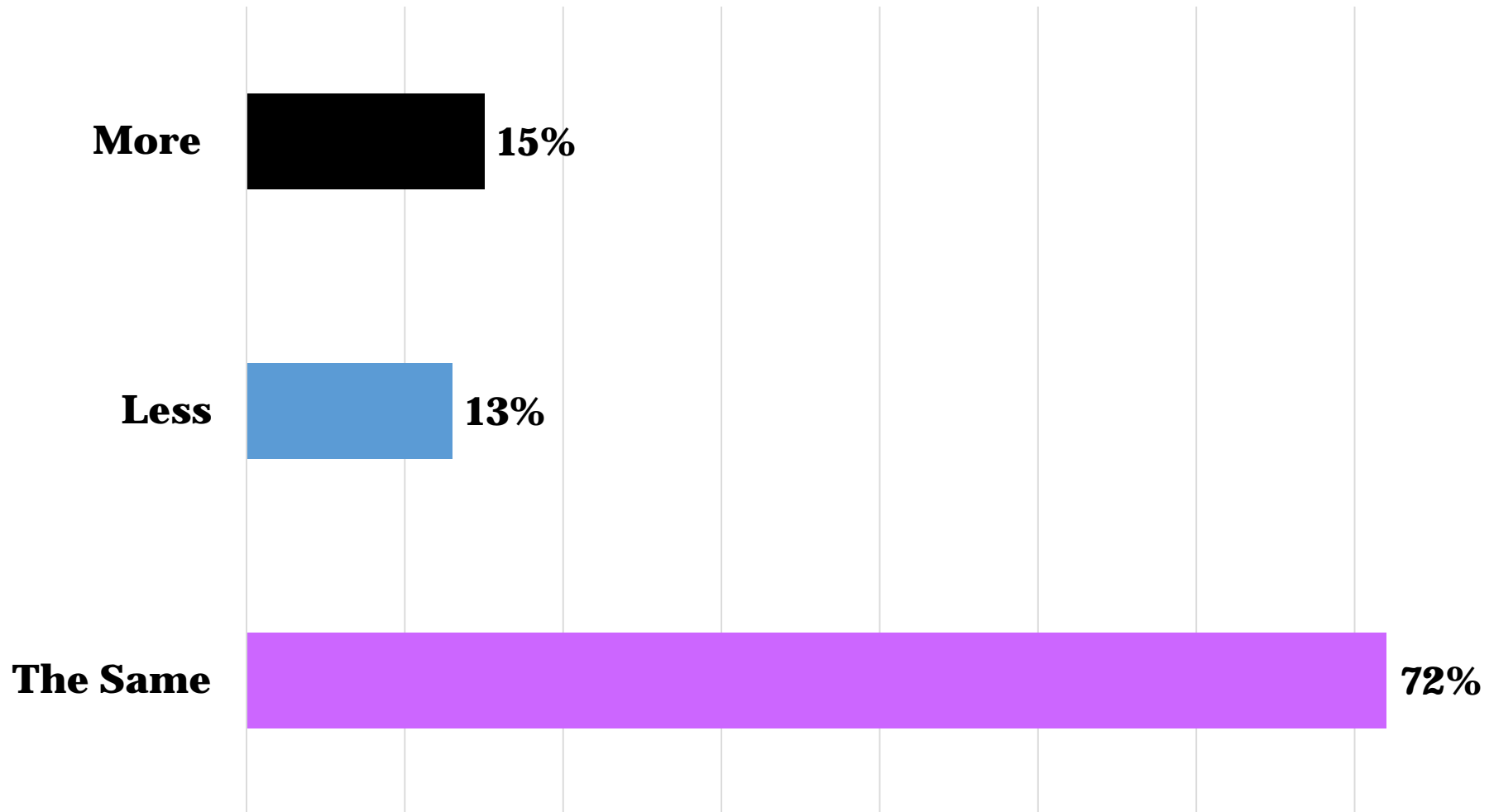
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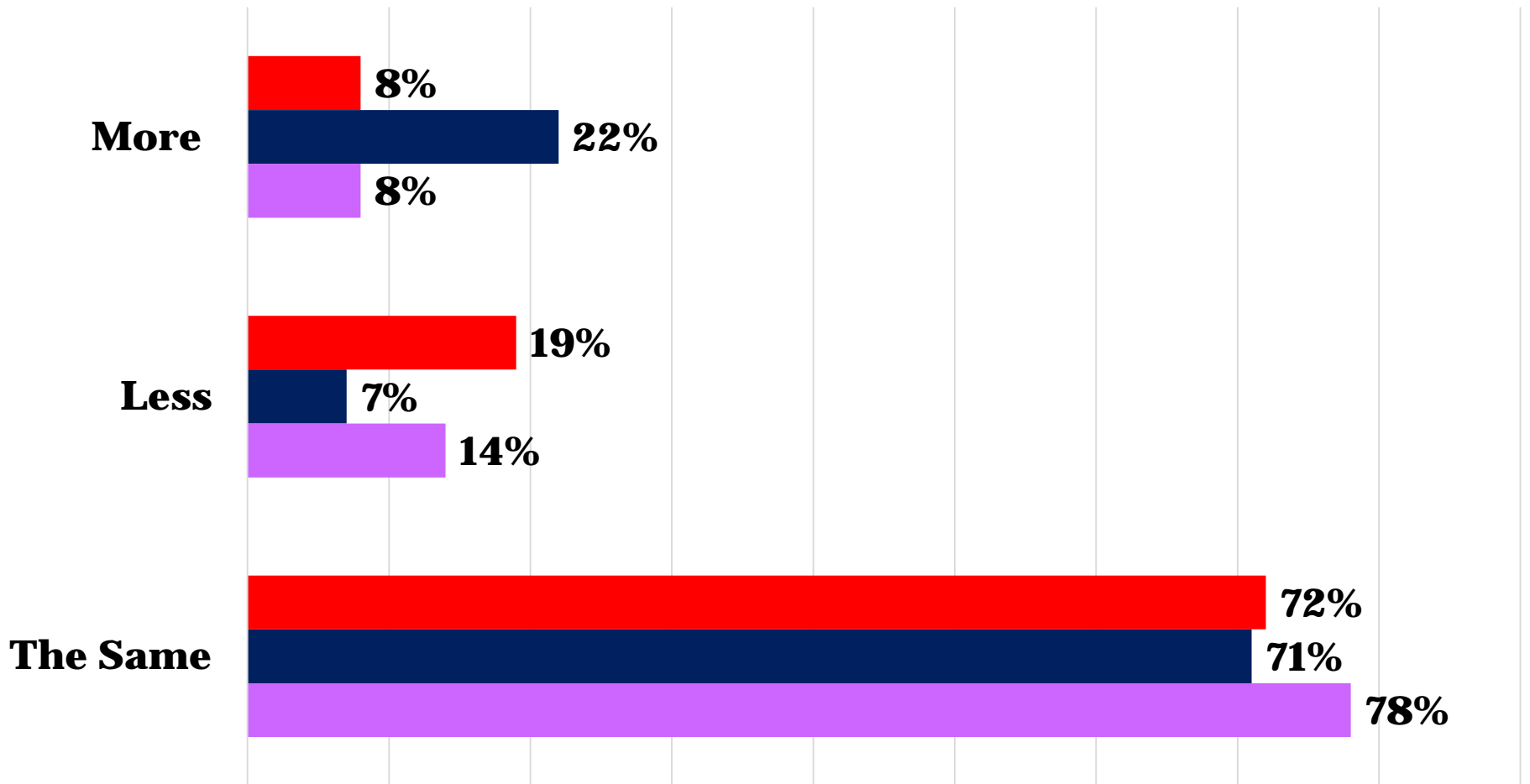
**As you may know, American laws prohibit discriminating against people including refugees solely on the basis of their ethnic or religious background. Does this incline you to be more or less accepting of Syrian refugees in the U.S.?**

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**If the U.S. institutes a refugee policy excluding single men, would you support the U.S. accepting more refugees?**

# If the U.S. institutes a refugee policy excluding single men, would you support the U.S. accepting more refugees?

**Yes**



**28%**

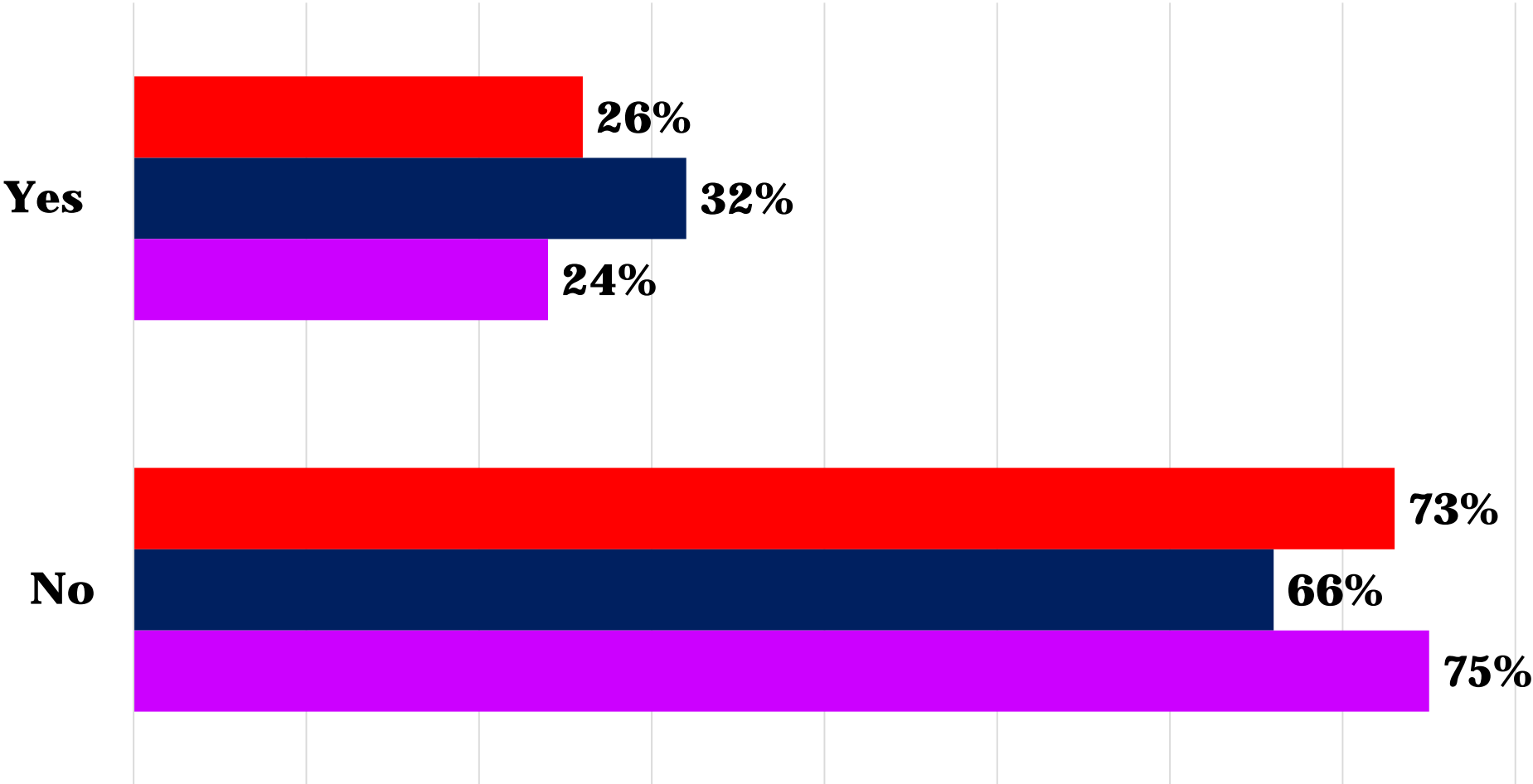
**No**



**70%**

# If the U.S. institutes a refugee policy excluding single men, would you support the U.S. accepting more refugees?

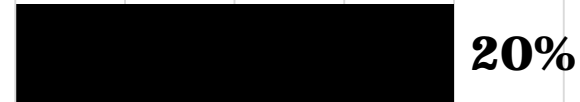
**Republican** **Democrat** **Independent**



**Based on what you've seen,  
heard or read, what do you  
think about Europe's response  
to the migrant crisis?**

**Based on what you've seen, heard or read,  
what do you think about Europe's response  
to the migrant crisis?**

**European nations are doing too  
much as it is**



**European nations are doing as  
much as can be expected**



**European nations should be  
doing more**

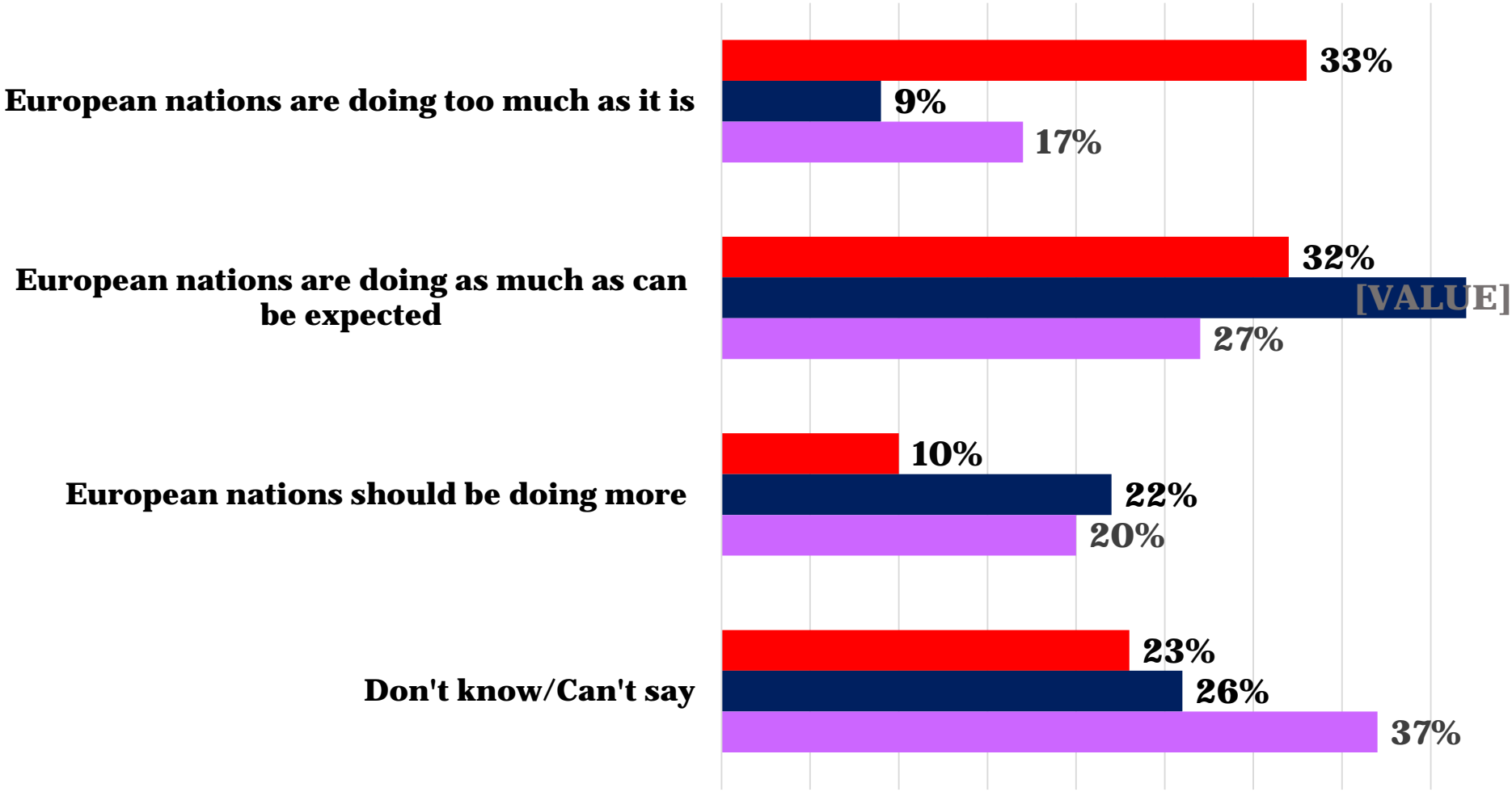


**Don't know/Can't say**



# Based on what you've seen, heard or read, what do you think about Europe's response to the migrant crisis?

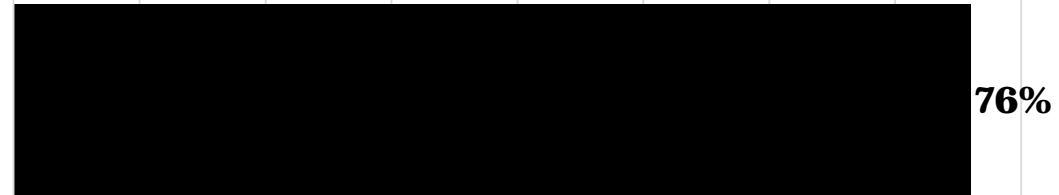
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**How do you think the U.S.  
should deal with the Syrian  
refugees who are already in the  
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with the Syrian refugees who are already  
in the country?**

**Welcome them and help absorb  
them into American society**



**Expel them**





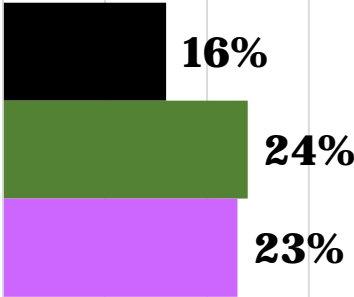
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18-34 35-54 55+

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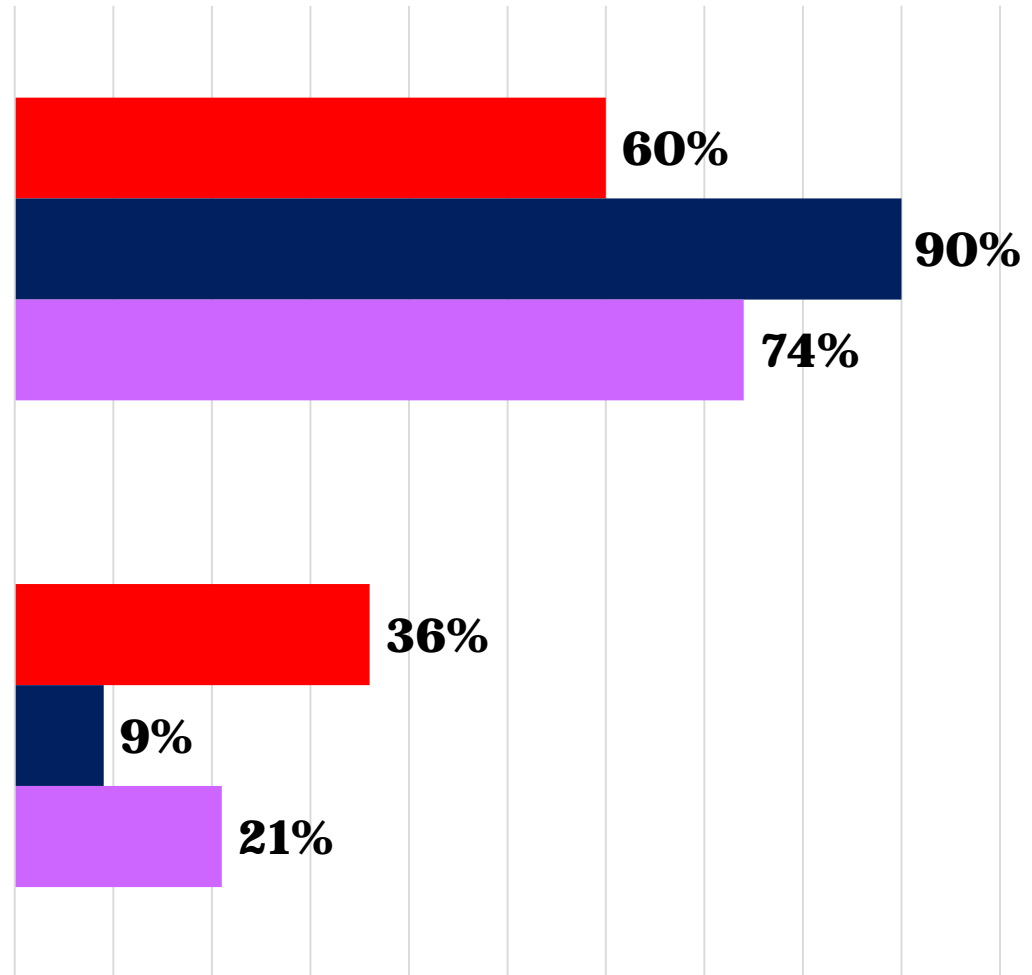
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**Republican Democrat Independent**

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Those Favoring Donald Trump

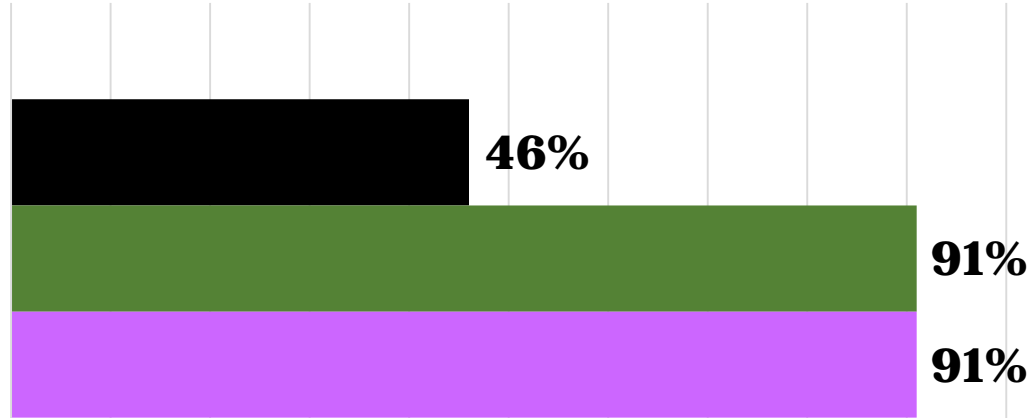


Those Favoring Hillary Clinton

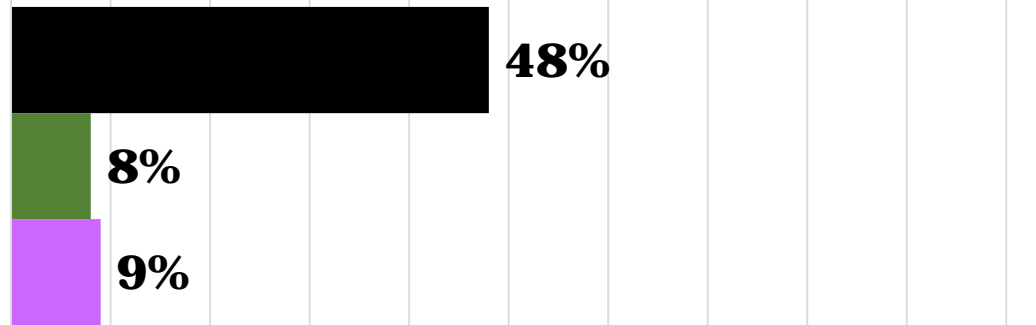


Those Favoring Bernie Sanders

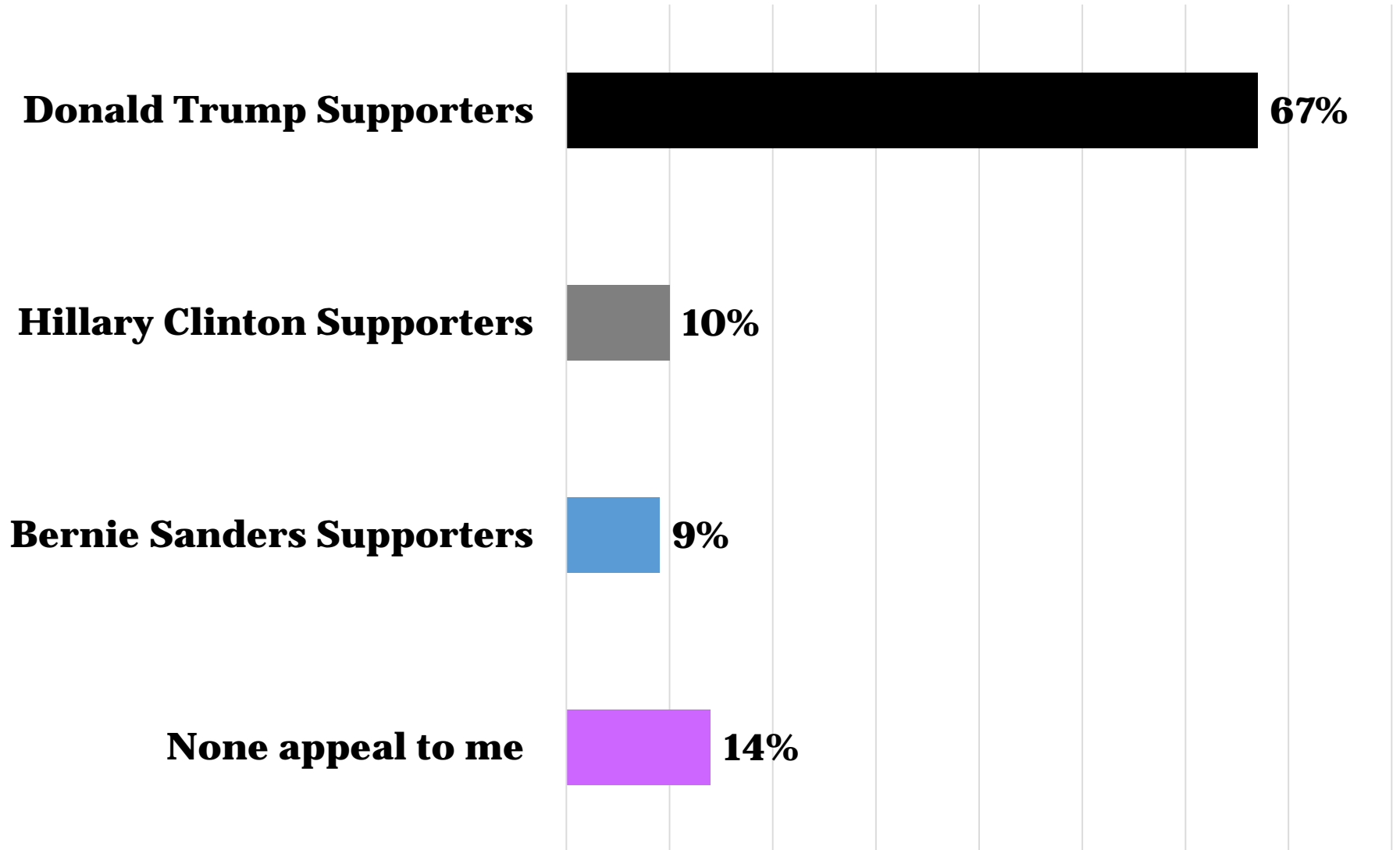
**Welcome them and help absorb them into American society**



**Expel them**

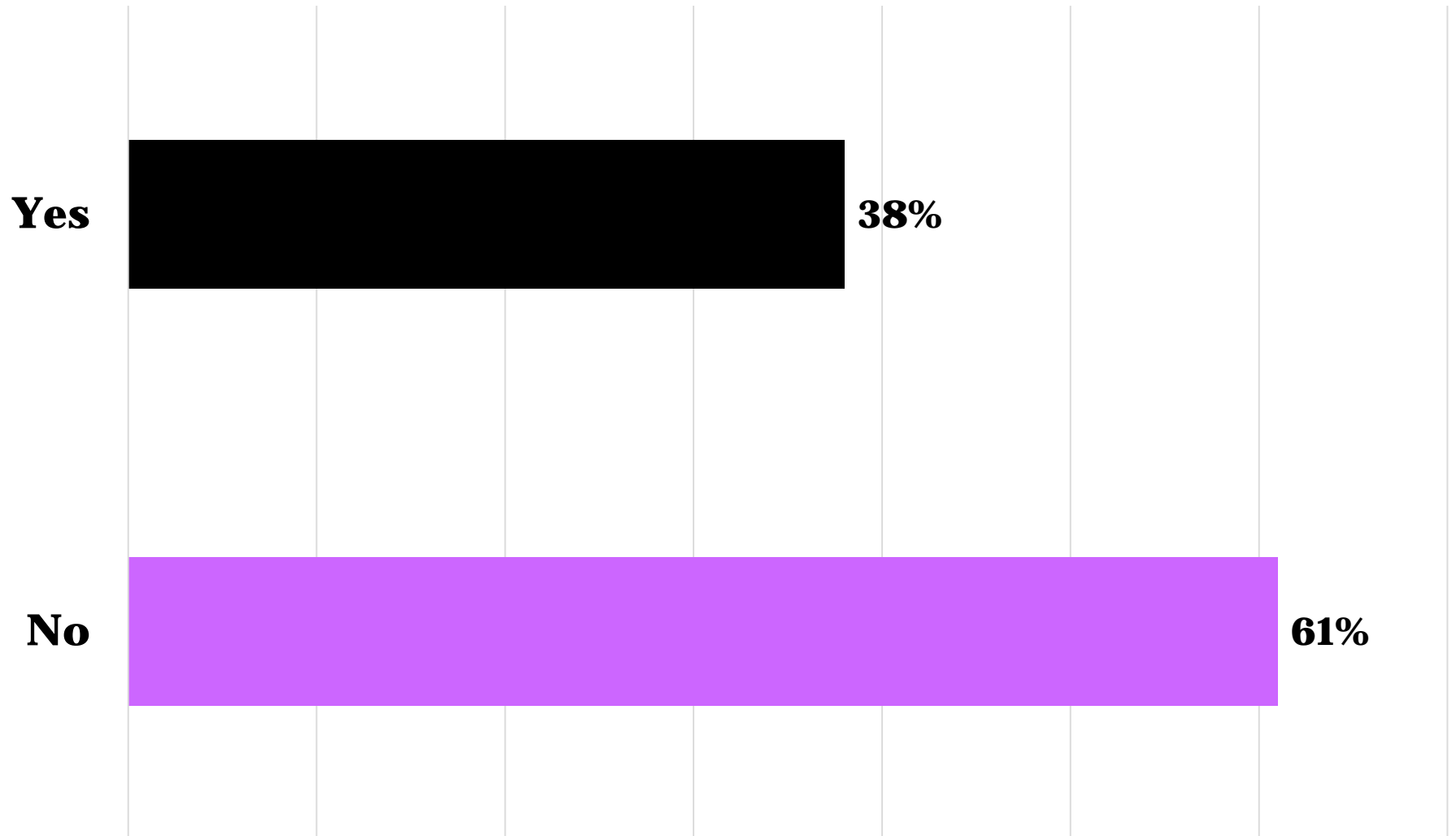


**[Among those who said “Expel them”]  
How do you think the U.S. should deal with the Syrian  
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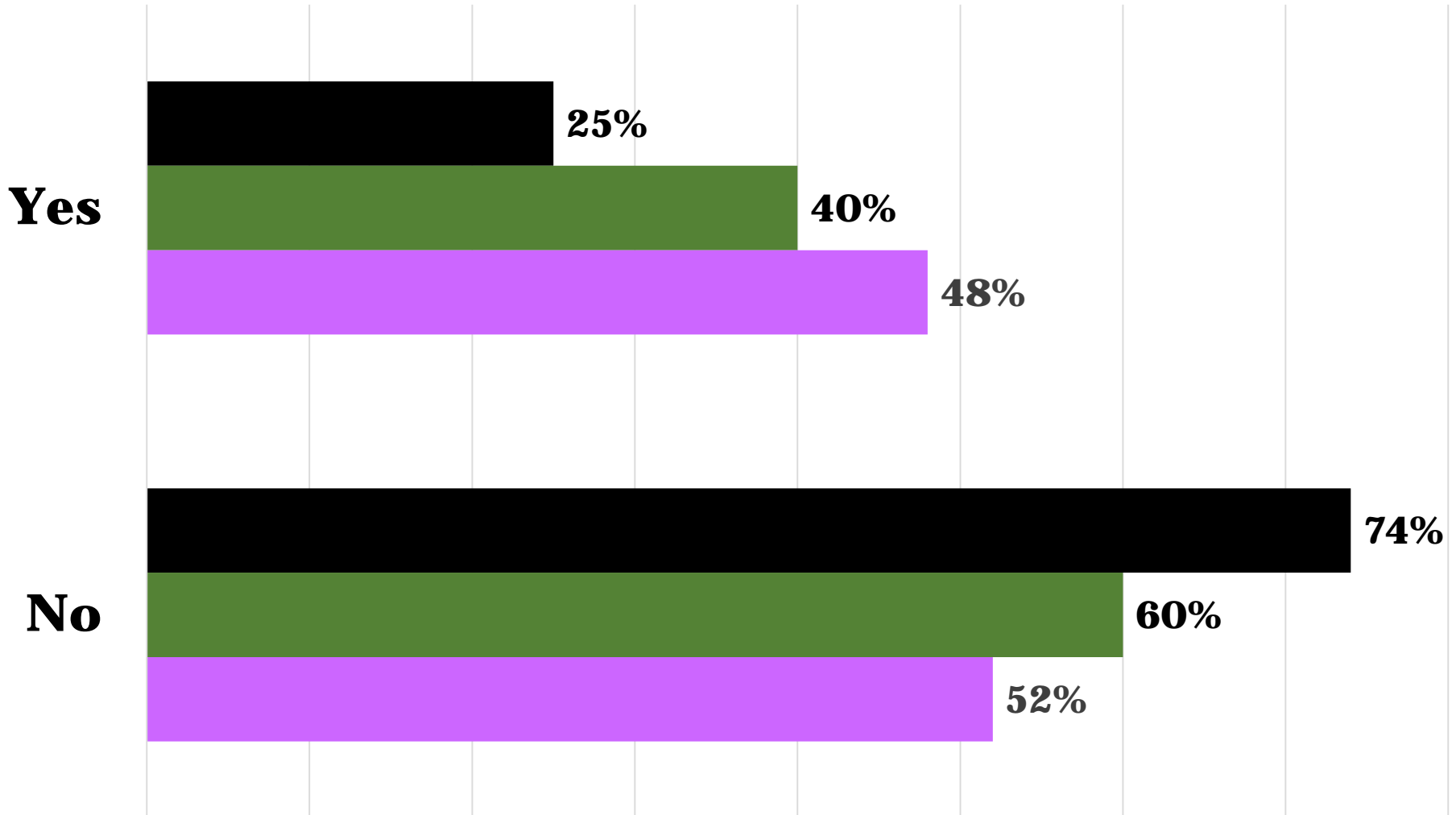
**Do you support the proposal  
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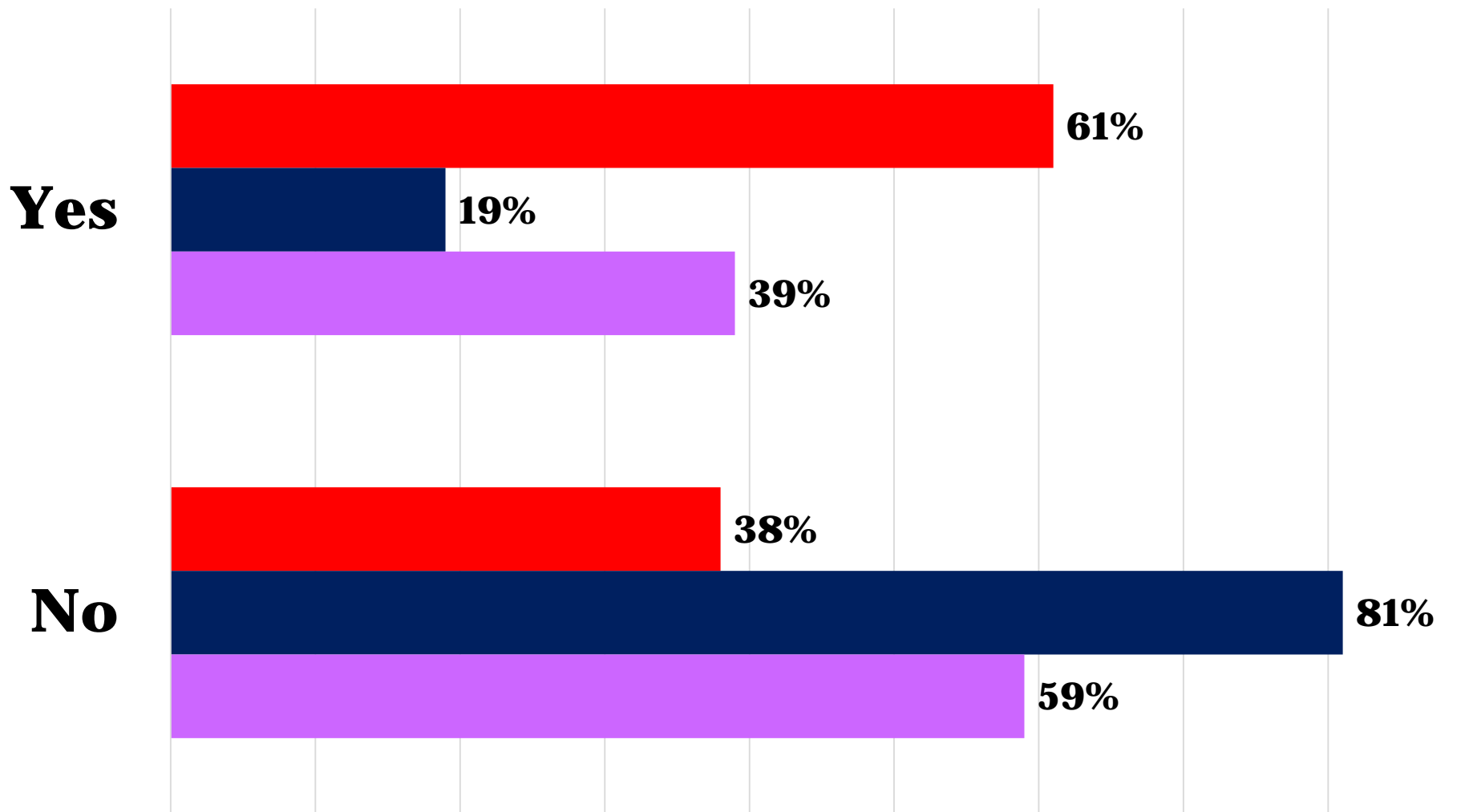
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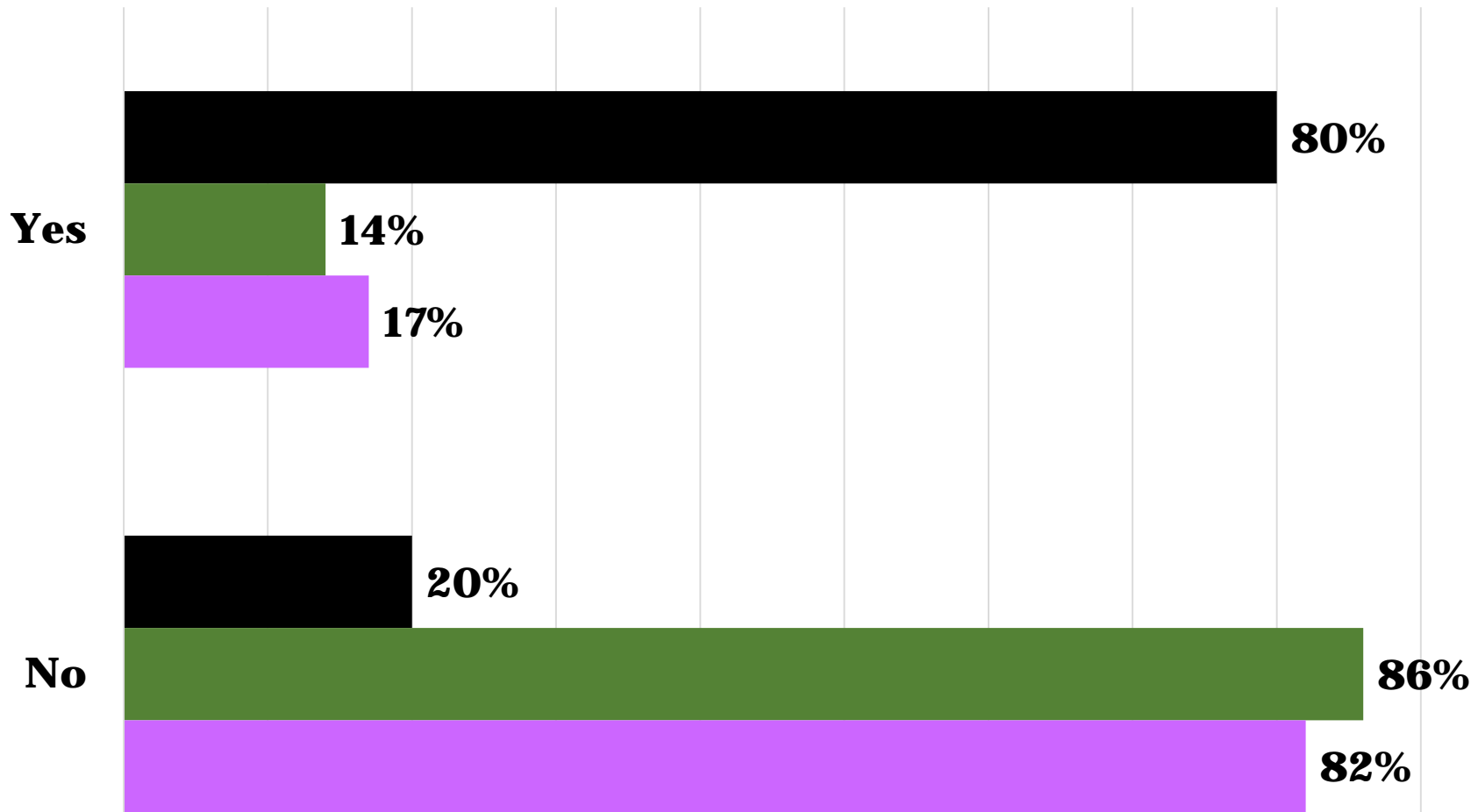
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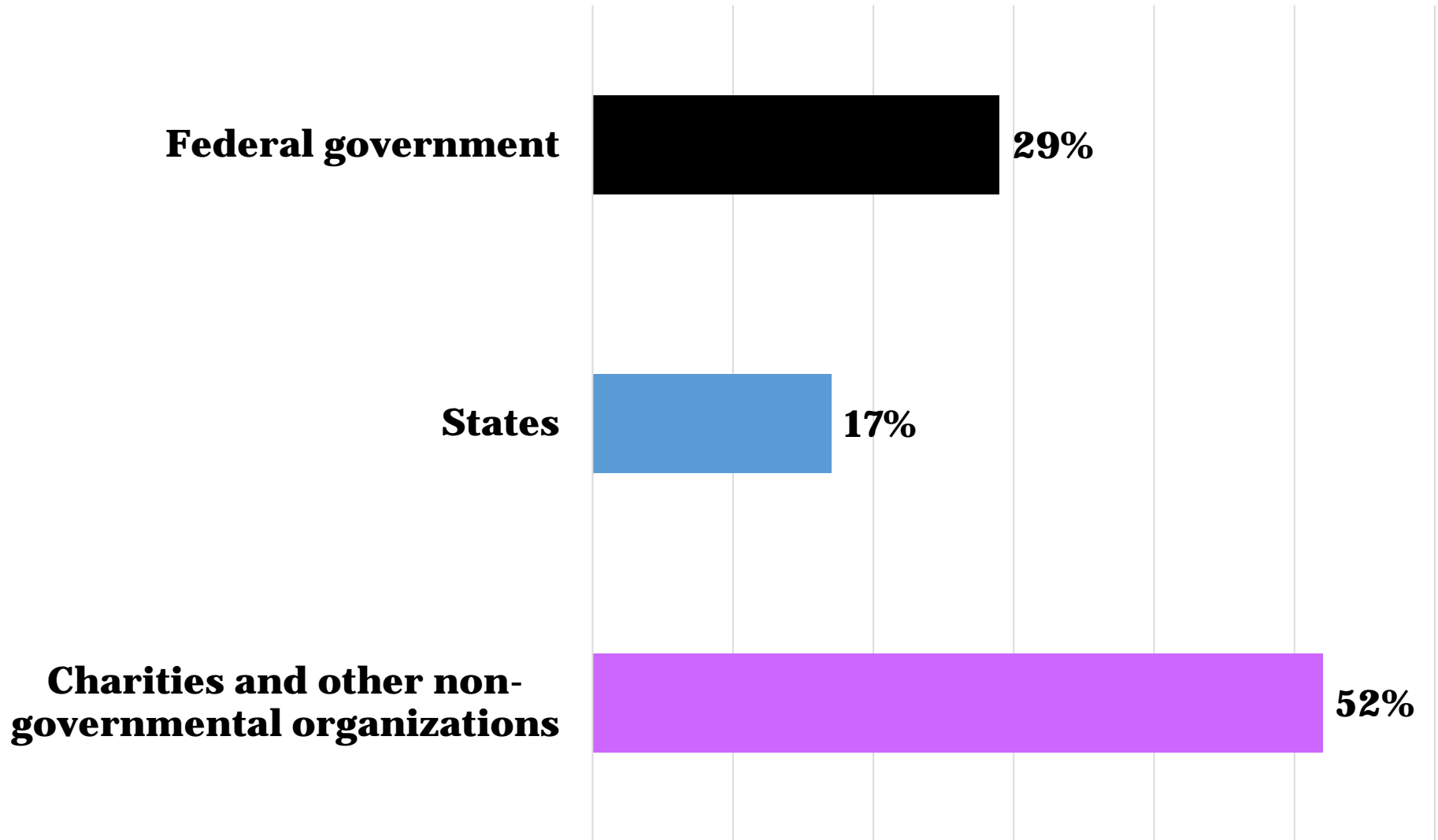
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Those Favoring Donald Trump    Those Favoring Hillary Clinton    Those Favoring Bernie Sanders



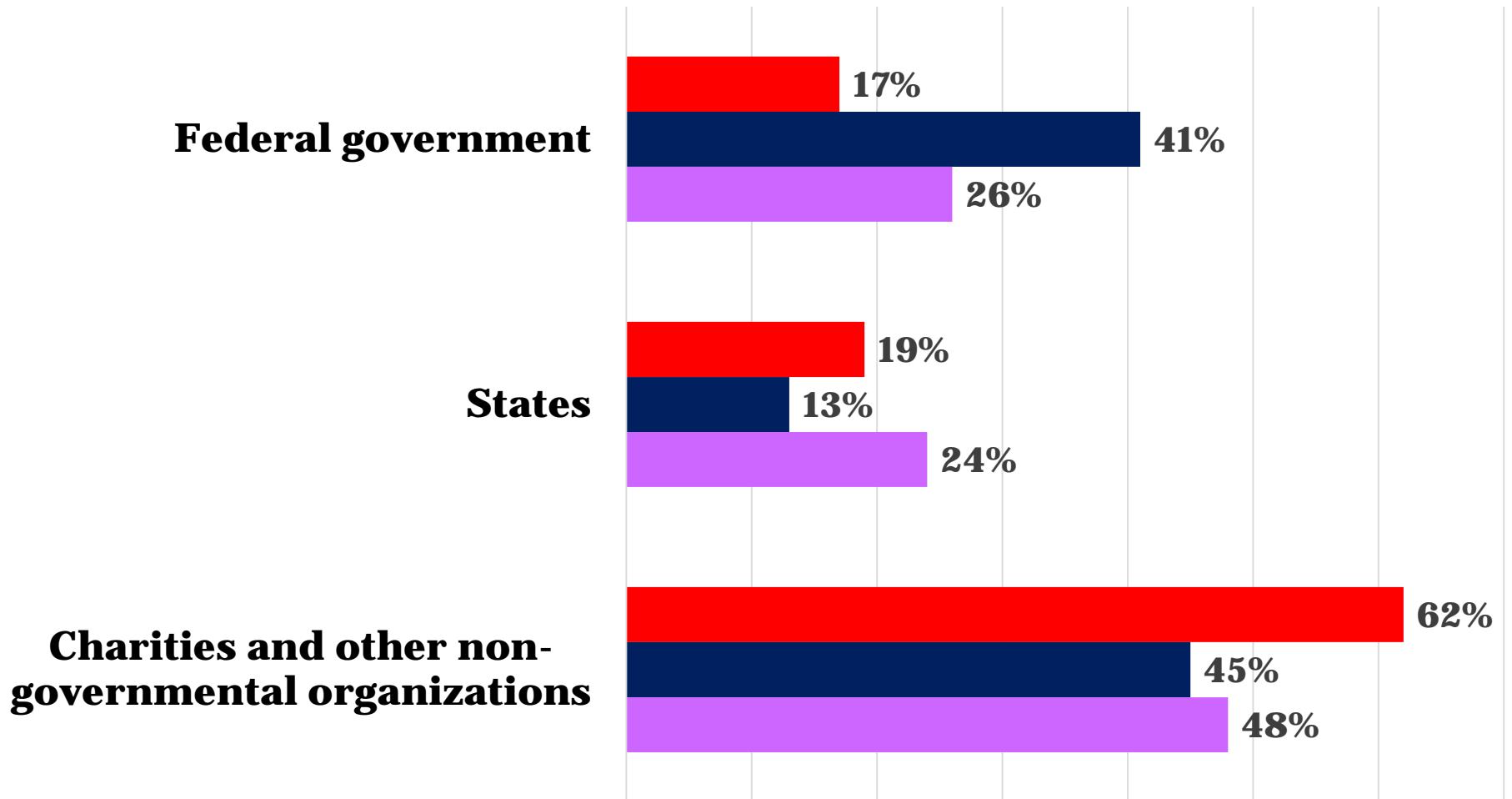
**Who would you like to see take  
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# Who would you like to see take the lead in addressing the needs of refugees once they are in the United States?



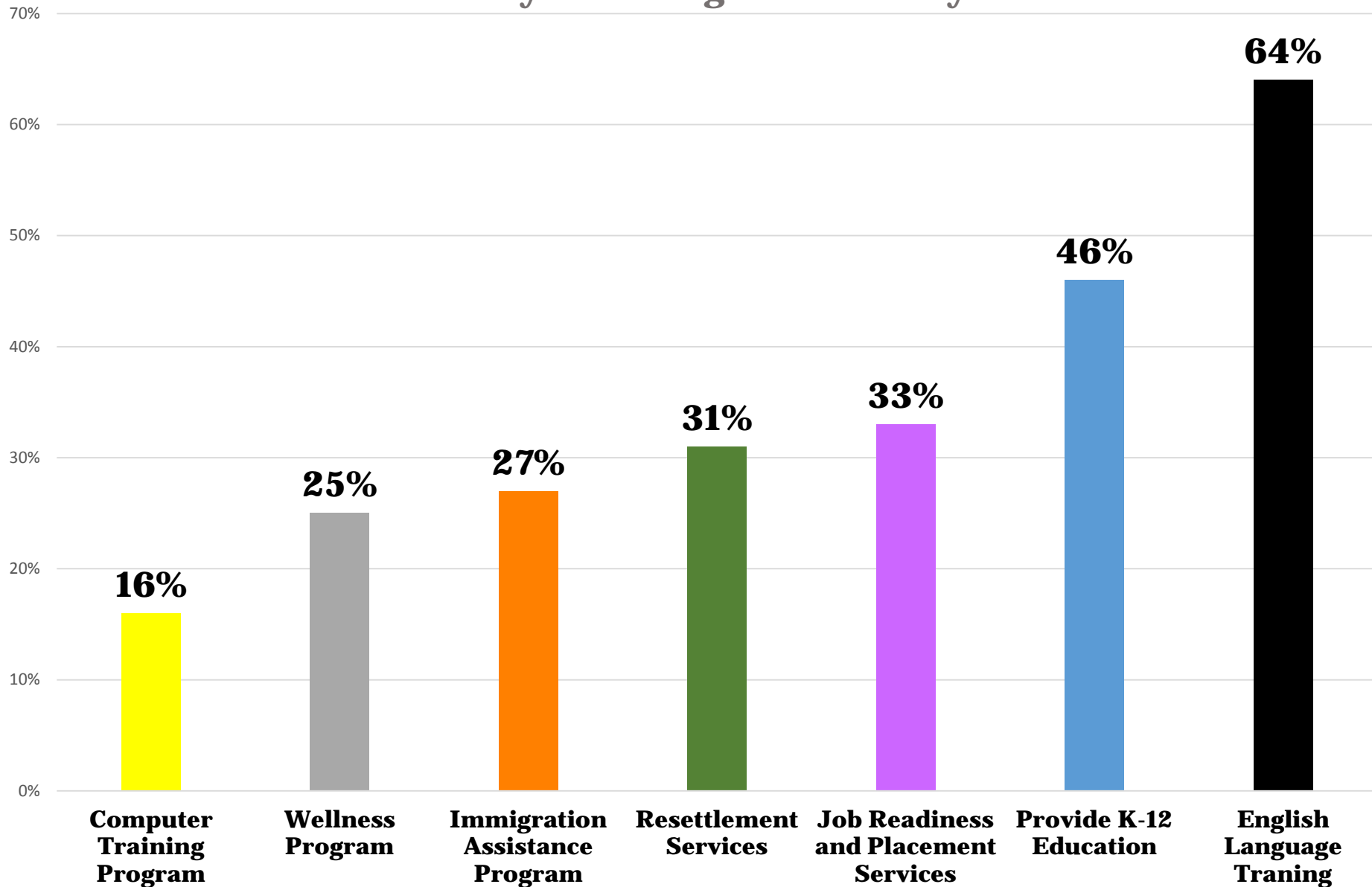
# Who would you like to see take the lead in addressing the needs of refugees once they are in the United States?

**Republican**   **Democrat**   **Independent**



**One a scale of 0-5, where 0 is “not important” and 5 is “very important,” how would you rate the following steps to deal with the Syrian refugees once they arrive?**

# Ranking of responses indicating “very important” when asked: How would you rate the following steps to deal with the Syrian refugees once they arrive?



**On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is  
“not being open” and 10 is  
“being very open,” rate your  
degree of openness for refugees  
from the following region  
(South America, Central  
America, Africa, The Middle  
East, East Asia):**

**On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is “not being open” and 10 is “being very open,” rate your degree of openness for refugees from the following region (mean):**

