



Public School Diversity and Segregation

Polling by **Morning Consult** on behalf of **The Century Foundation**

— MARCH 2024





Methodology

This poll was conducted from March 19 to March 22, 2024, among a sample of 2,202 U.S. adults. The interviews were conducted online, and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, gender, race, educational attainment, region, gender by age, and race by educational attainment. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Key Takeaways

1

Most adults (61%) agree segregation by race and income is a persistent problem in American public schools. While many Americans (43%) believe segregation in public schools has improved in recent decades, a similar share (42%) believe the issue has remained stagnant *or* become more severe during that time.

2

The importance of student body diversity is generally agreed-upon by U.S. parents. Three-in-four parents agree school diversity is an important factor they consider when deciding where to raise and educate their children.



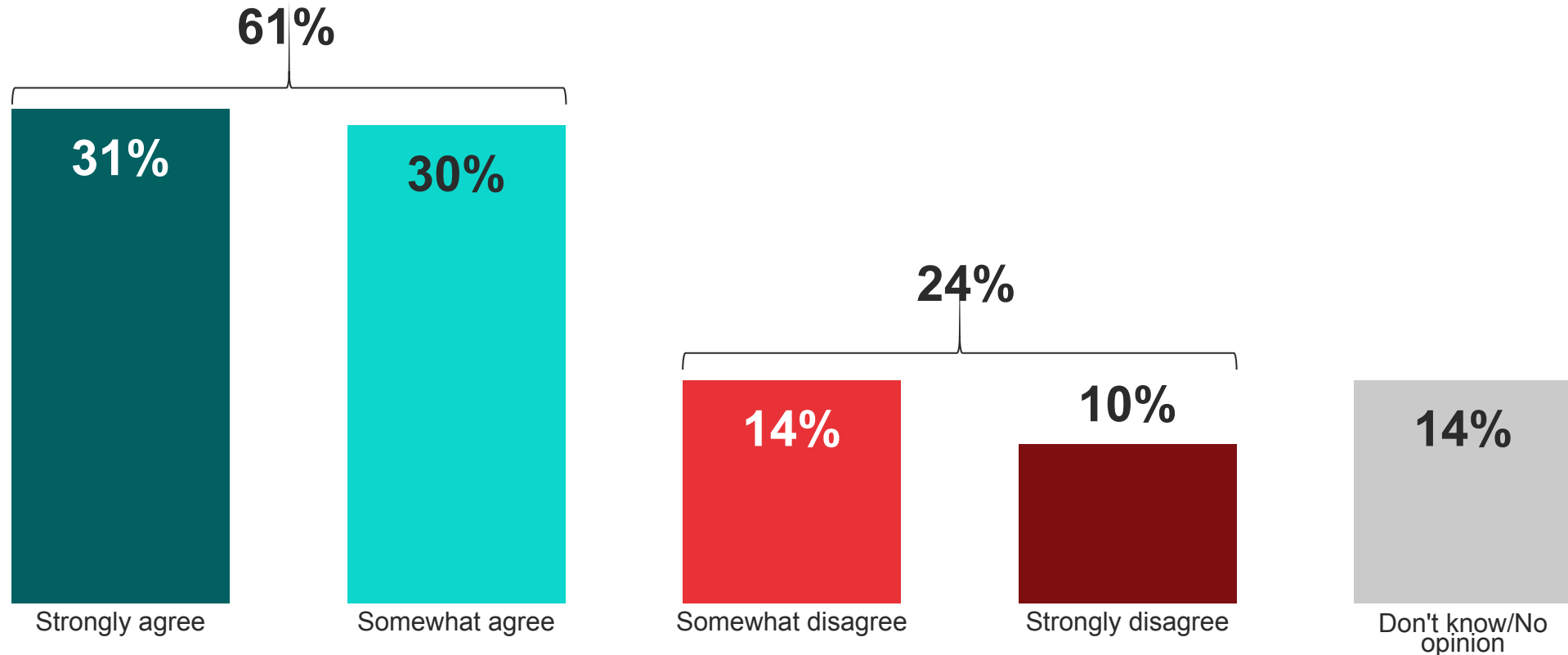
Context Provided to Respondents

As you may know, **segregation** refers to the separation of different groups based on factors like race, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. While segregation can be (and historically has been) carried out through explicit practices like schools, restaurants, and public amenities catering to “whites only” that have since been outlawed, subtler forms of segregation can persist through unequal resource distribution and other practices (such as housing patterns) that reinforce existing inequalities for different groups.

SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Three-in-five U.S. adults agree that race and income-based segregation is an issue currently plaguing the country's public schools.

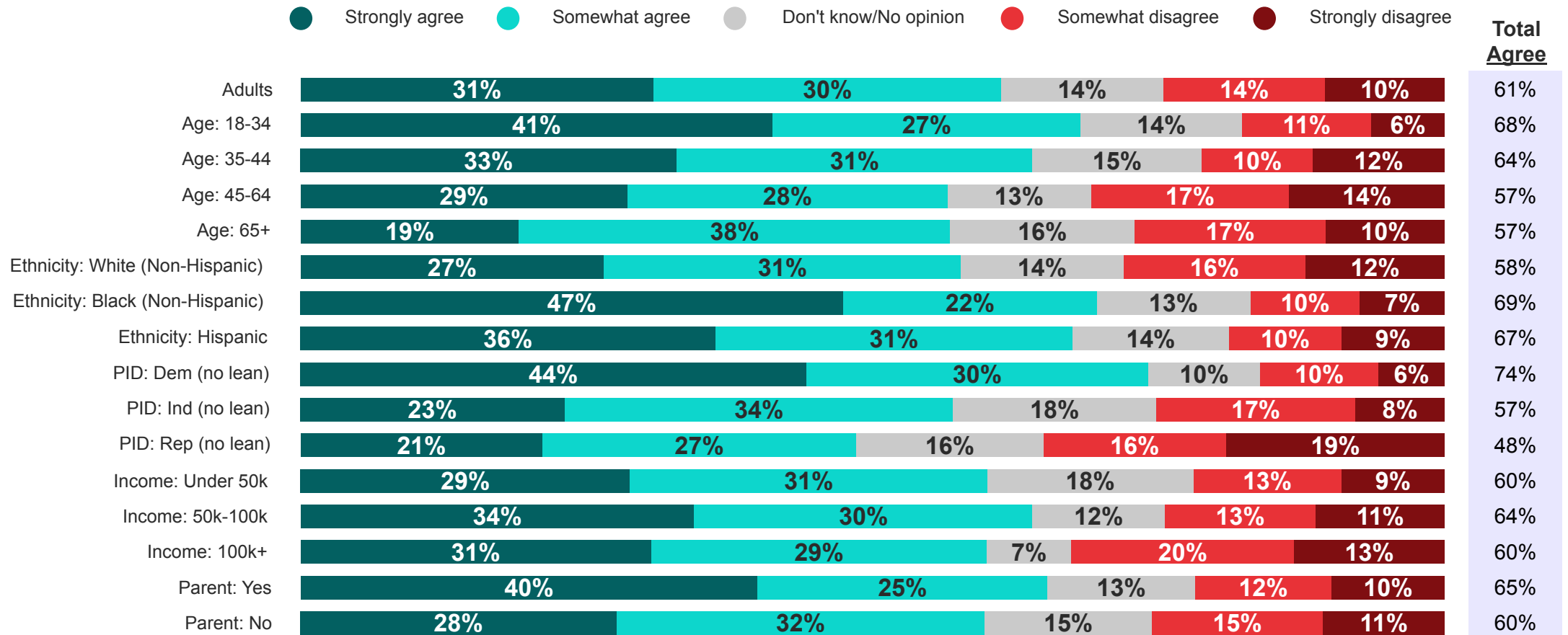
Thinking about the current state of affairs in the United States, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Segregation by race and income in America's public schools is a problem.



SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Black adults, Democrats, adults under 35, and parents are more likely than others to perceive segregation in U.S. public schools. White adults, Republicans, and seniors are less likely.

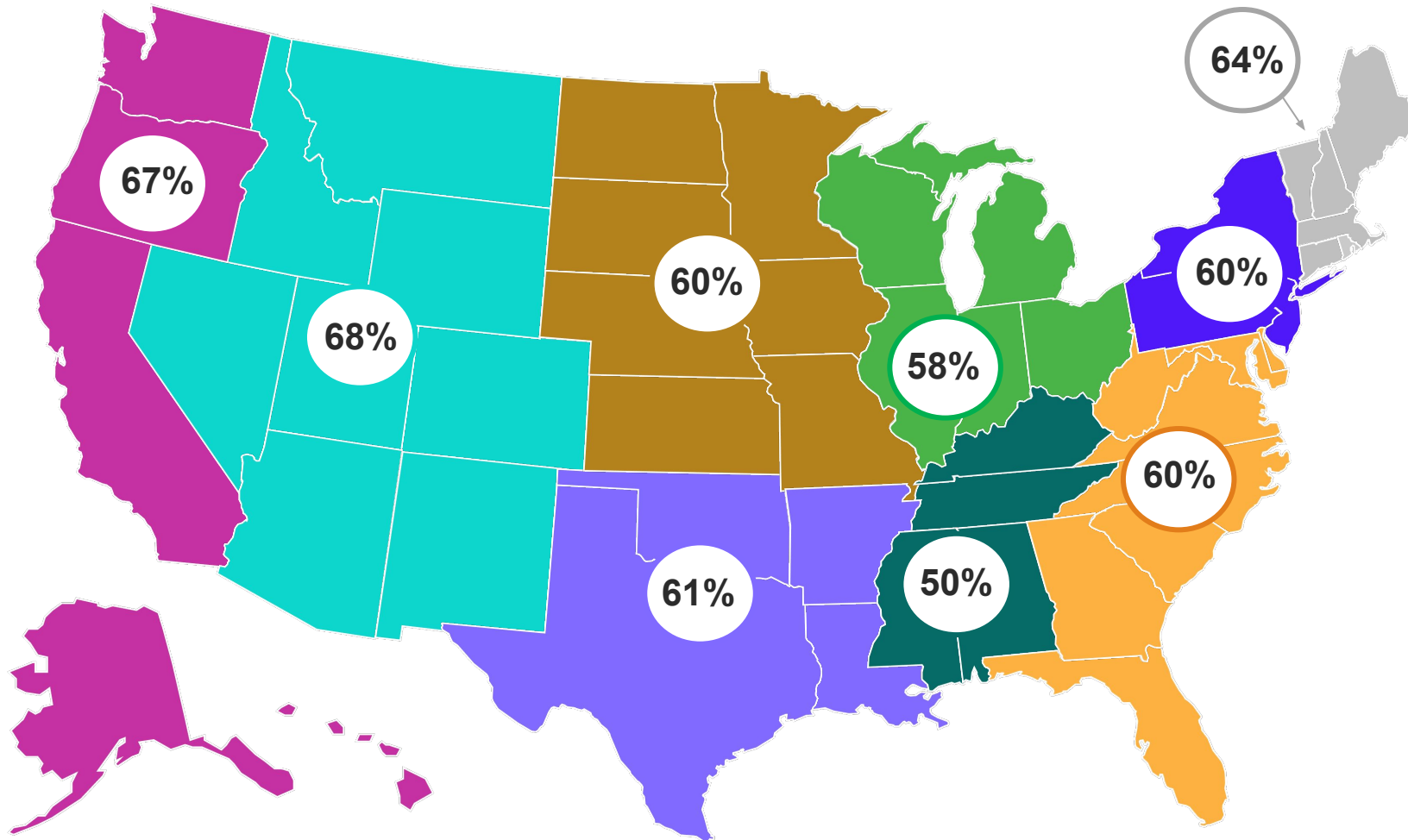
Thinking about the current state of affairs in the United States, do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *Segregation by race and income in America's public schools is a problem.*



Total agree = % Strongly agree + % Somewhat agree

SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Perceived Segregation in U.S. Public Schools By Region



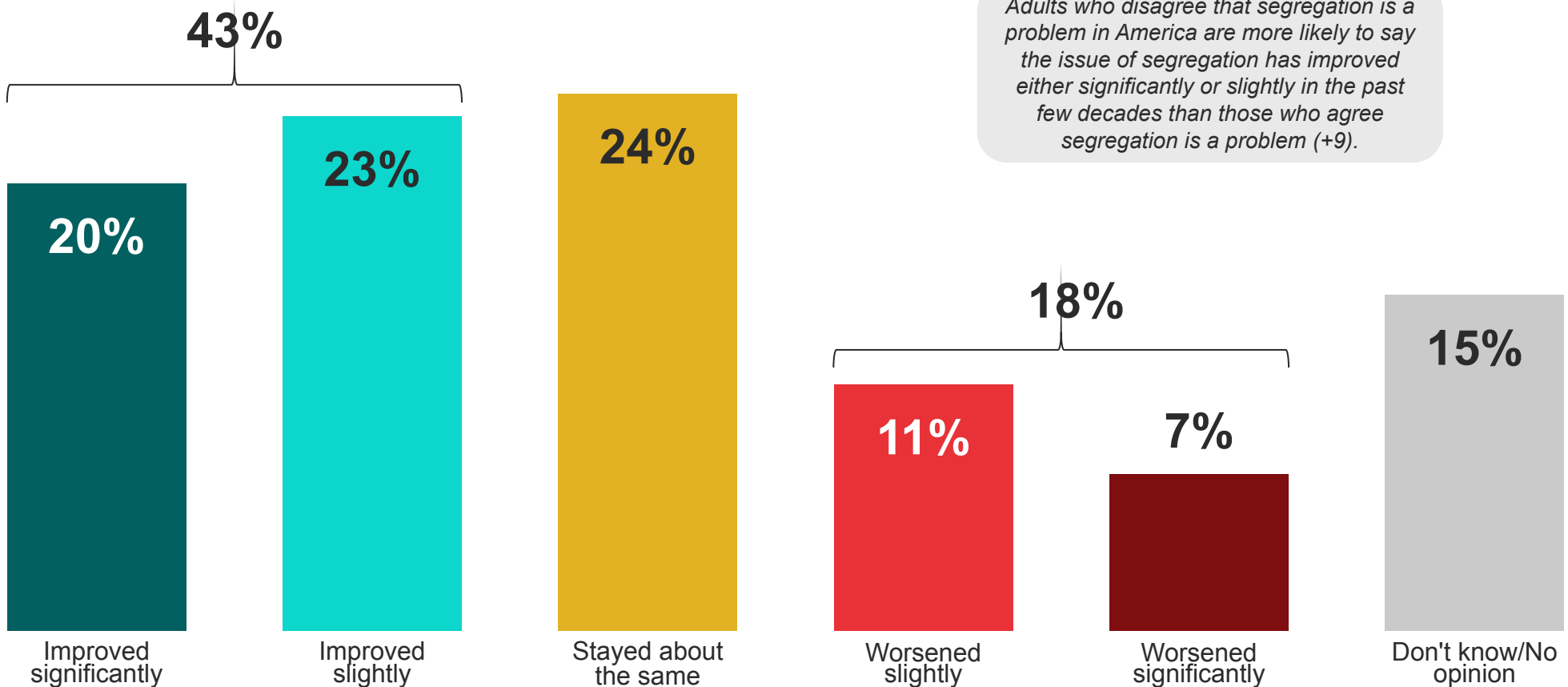
% adults who <i>strongly agree</i> race/ income segregation is a problem	
New England	64%
Mid-Atlantic	60%
E. N. Central	58%
W. N. Central	60%
South Atlantic	60%
E. S. Central	50%
W. S. Central	61%
Mountain	68%
Pacific	67%

Thinking about the current state of affairs in the United States, do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *Segregation by race and income in America's public schools is a problem.*

SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Two-in-five Americans believe the issue of segregation in the nation's public schools has improved in recent decades. Fewer than half that share believe the opposite.

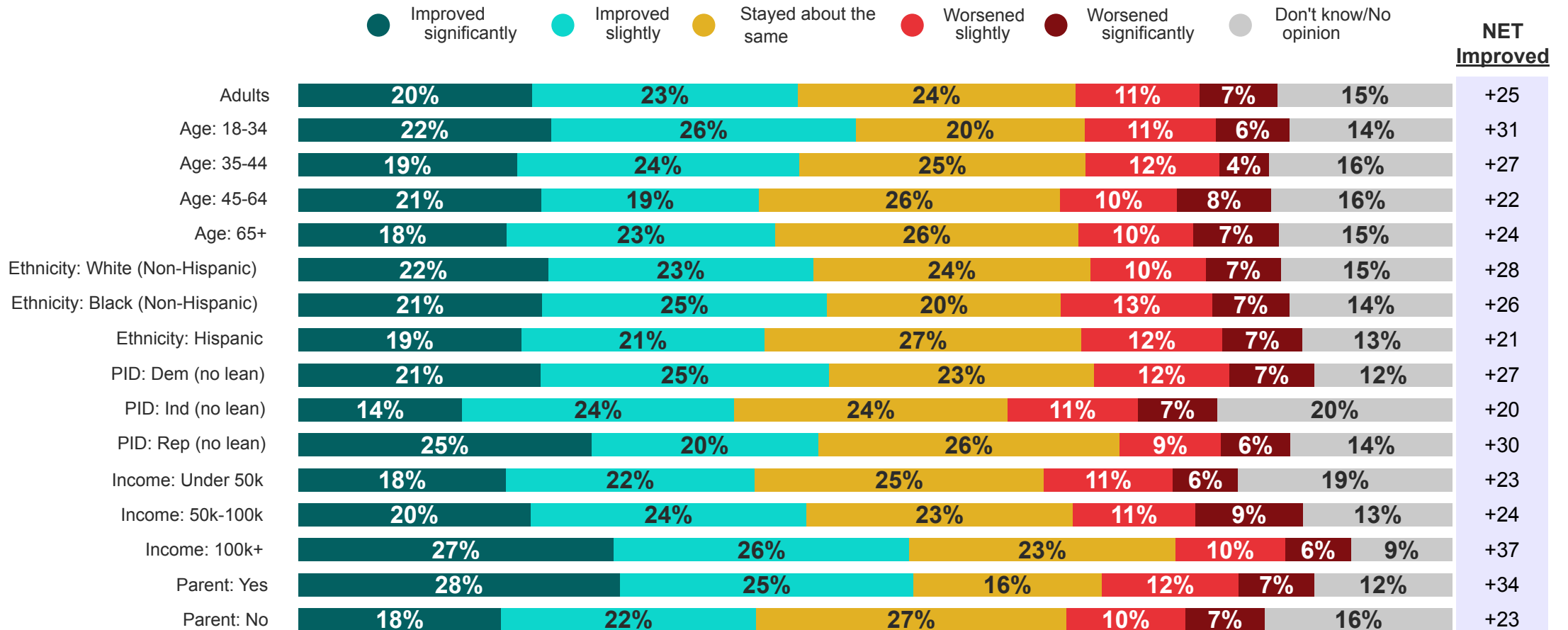
Over the past few decades, do you believe the issue of segregation in America's public schools has... ?



SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Across key demographic groups, relatively few (15-20%) adults believe school segregation in the U.S. has become more severe in recent decades. Parents, 18–34-year-olds, and \$100k+ earners are more likely than others to believe conditions have improved.

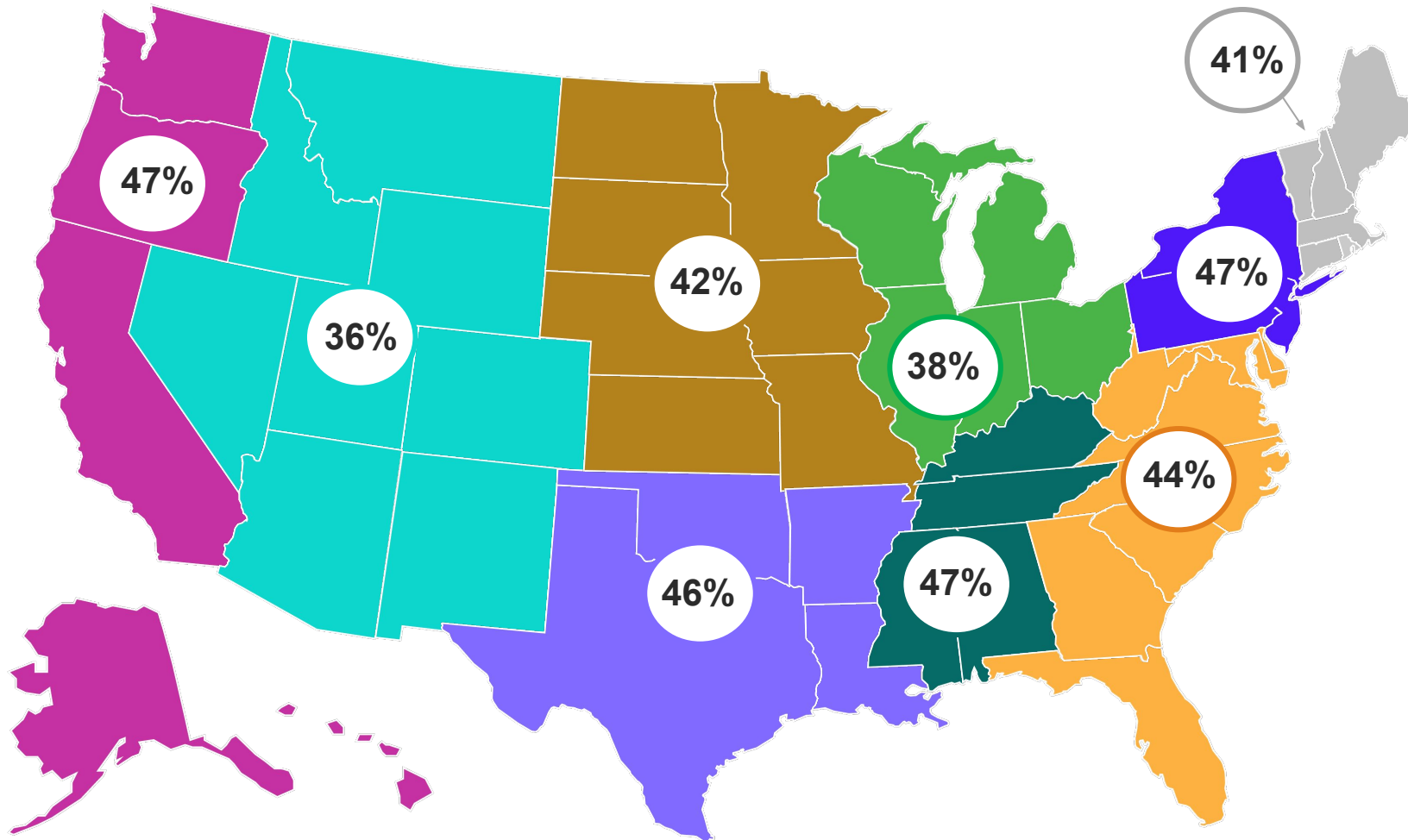
Over the past few decades, do you believe the issue of segregation in America's public schools has... ?



NET = % Total Improved – Total Worsened

SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Perceived Improvement of Segregation in U.S. Public Schools By Region



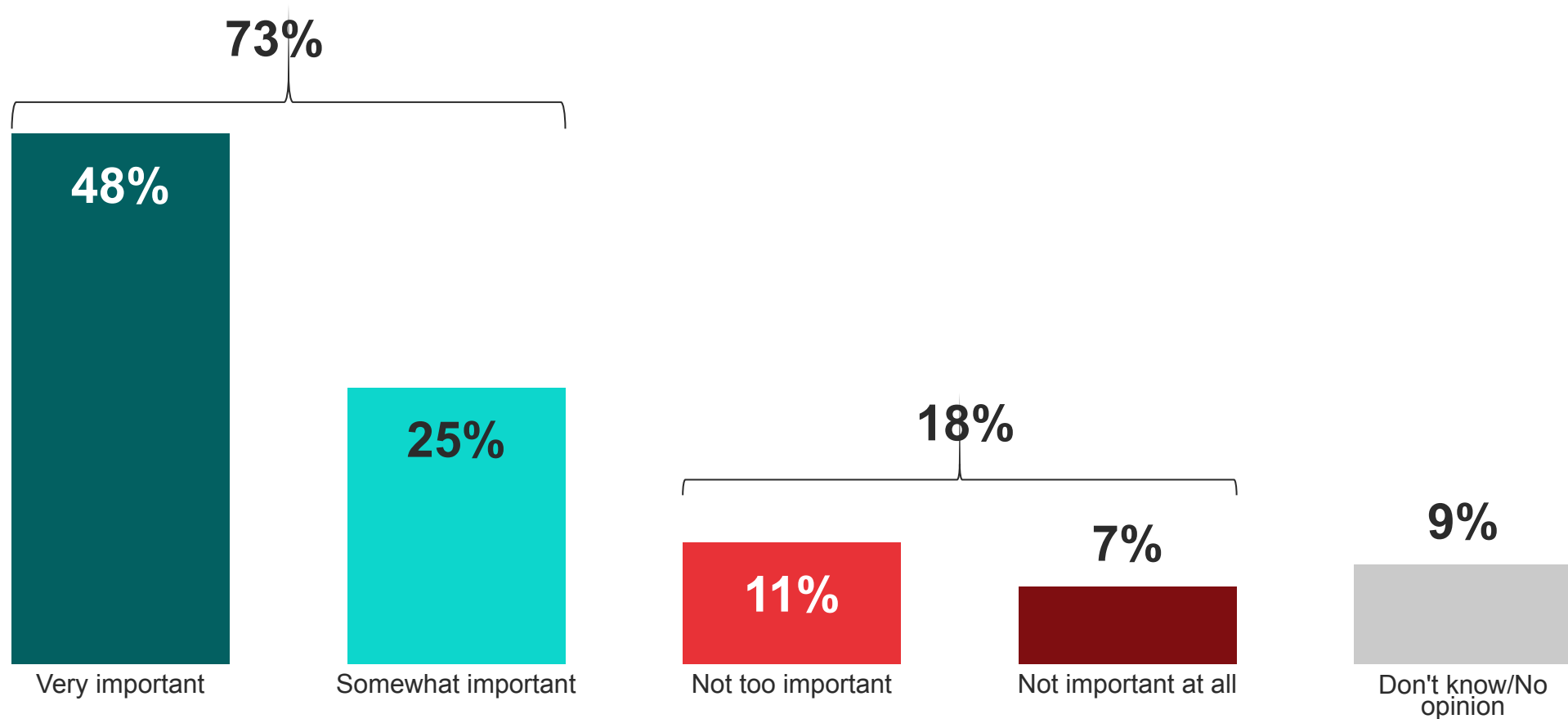
% adults who think segregation has improved <i>significantly + slightly</i>	
New England	41%
Mid-Atlantic	47%
E. N. Central	38%
W. N. Central	42%
South Atlantic	44%
E. S. Central	47%
W. S. Central	46%
Mountain	36%
Pacific	47%

Over the past few decades, do you believe the issue of segregation in American public schools has improved, worsened, or stayed about the same?

DIVERSITY & EDUCATION

Nearly half of U.S. parents consider the diversity of their child(ren)'s schools a *very important* consideration in where they choose to raise them.

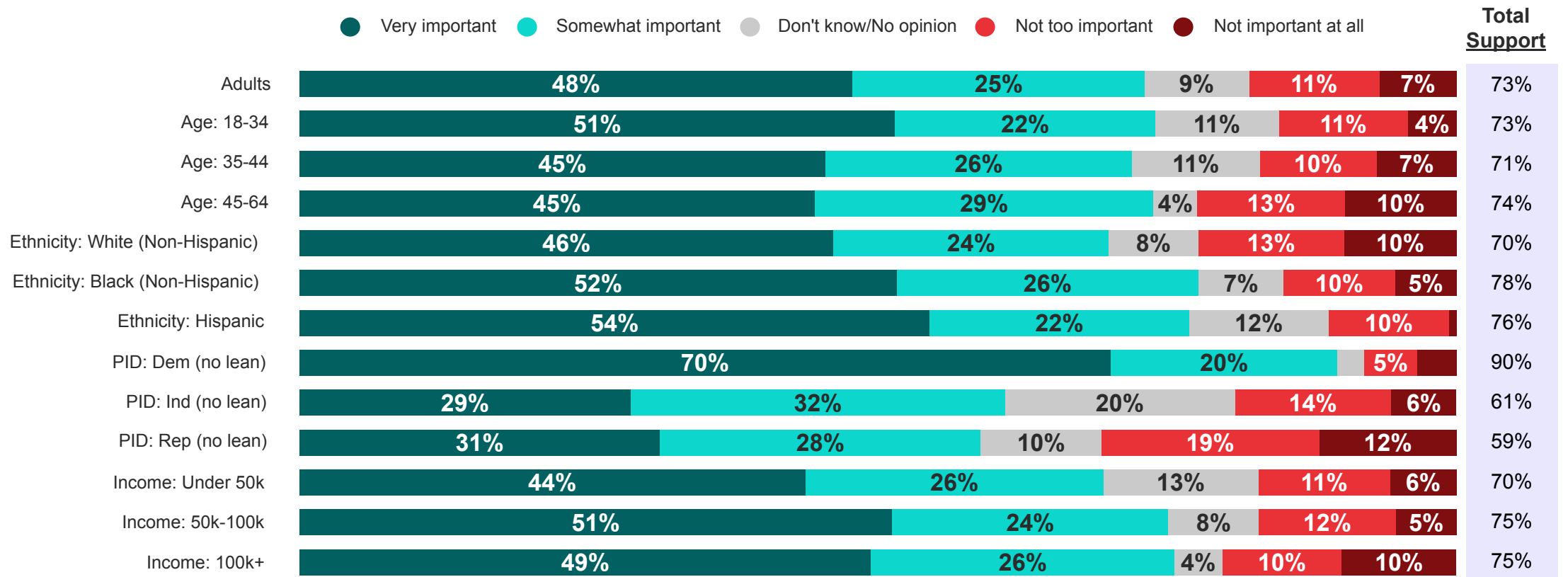
When thinking about where to live and raise your children, how important is it to you, if at all, that the local schools have a diverse student body? (*Asked of parents; n=579*)



DIVERSITY & EDUCATION

Student body diversity tends to carry more weight among Democrat parents, Black and/or Hispanic parents, and those aged 18-34.

When thinking about where to live and raise your children, how important is it to you, if at all, that the local schools have a diverse student body? *(Asked of parents; n=579)*

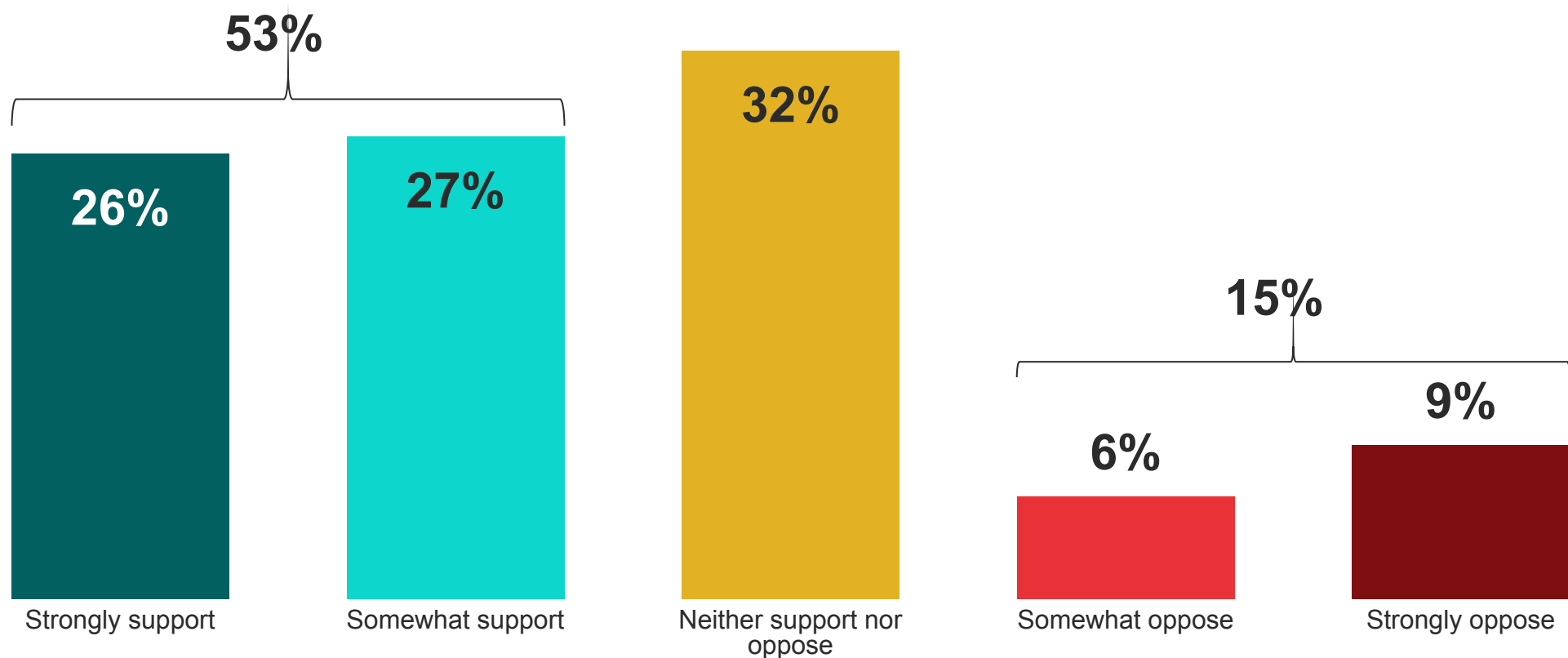


Total = % Very important + % Somewhat important

POLICY POSITIONS

Most Americans support increasing government funding for communities aiming to diversify their local public schools. A plurality of Americans are indifferent on the matter.

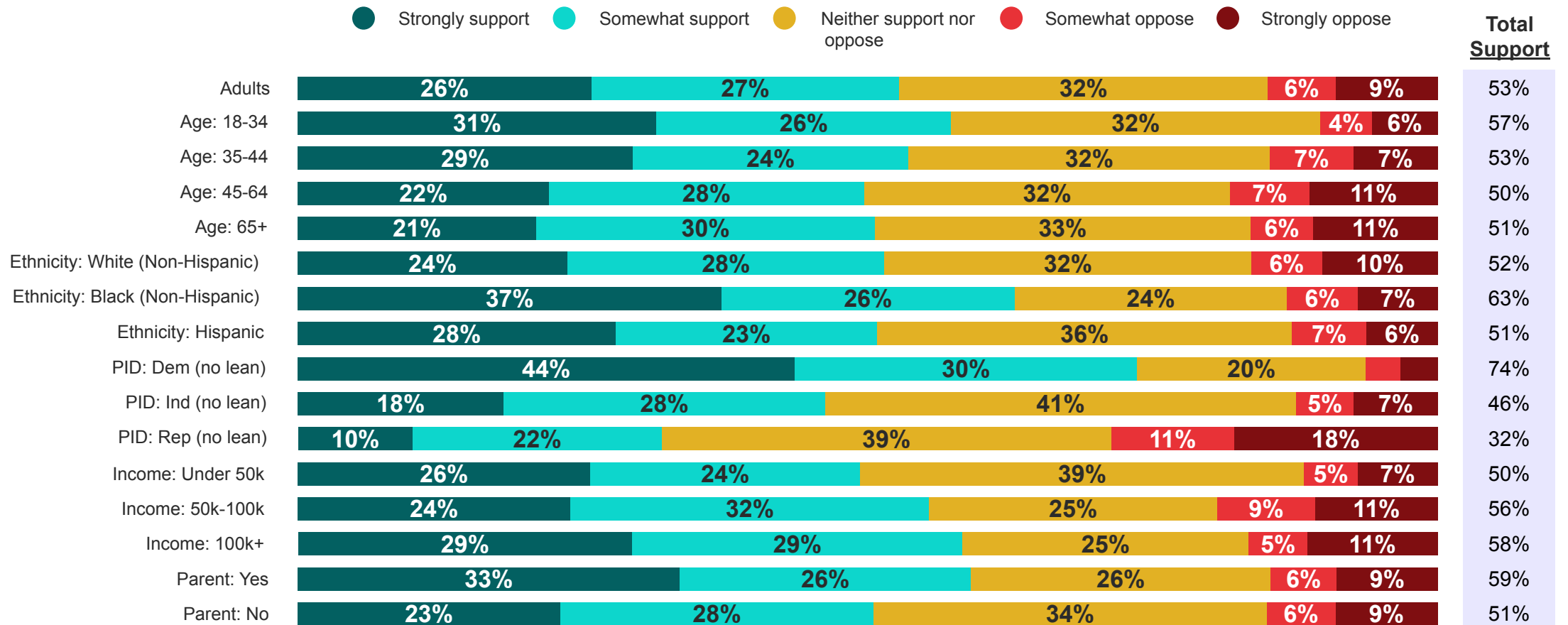
Do you support or oppose increasing government funding for communities that are taking steps to increase diversity in their public schools?



POLICY POSITIONS

Across demographic groups, most opinions re: increased funding for communities investing in diverse schools range from indifference to lukewarm positivity. Among Republicans, more than one-fourth voice opposition to such an increase.

Do you support or oppose increasing government funding for communities that are taking steps to increase diversity in their public schools?



Total = % Strongly Support + % Somewhat support

