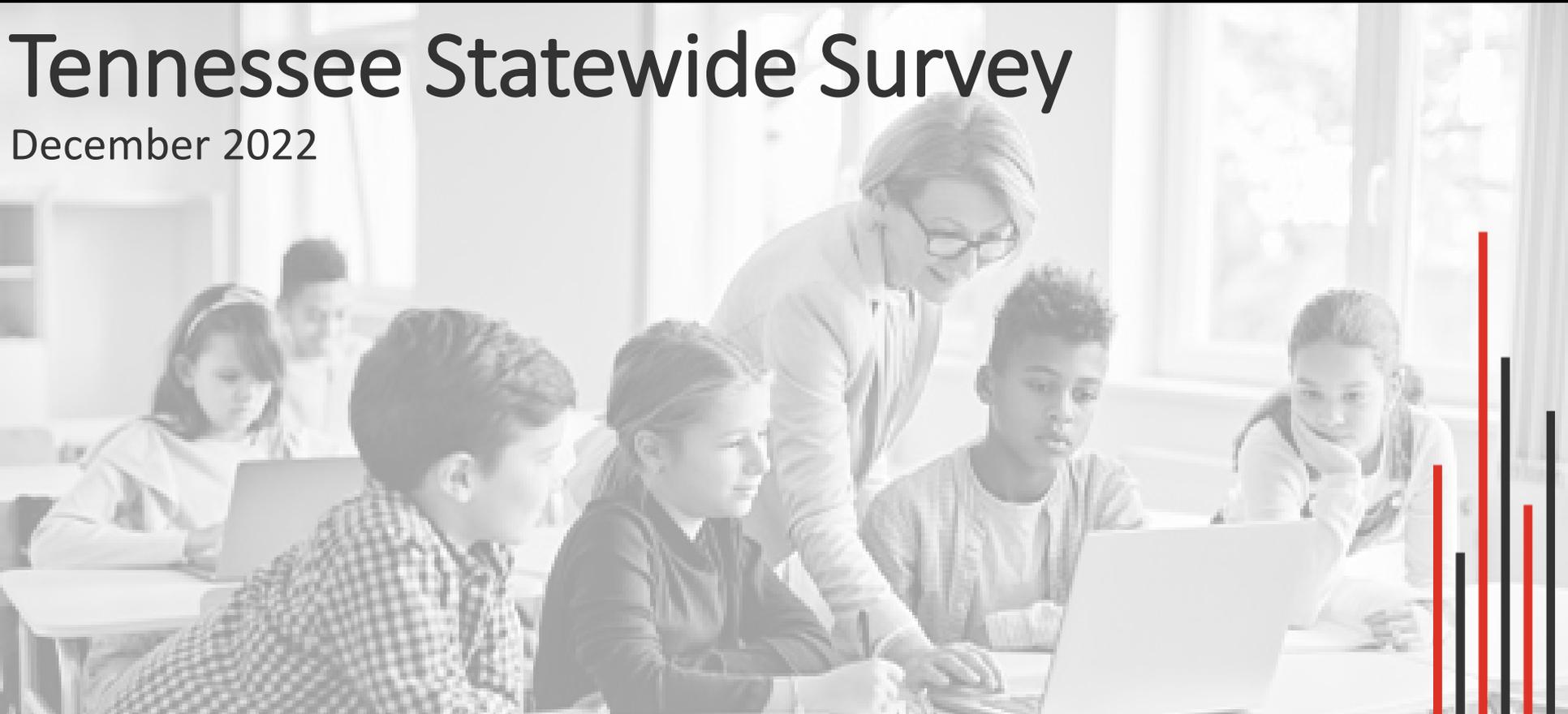


Tennessee Statewide Survey

December 2022



PREPARED BY:

Robert Blizzard, Public Opinion Strategies (R)
Brian Stryker, Impact Research (D)

METHODOLOGY

A bi-partisan polling team of Robert Blizzard of POS (R) and Brian Stryker of Impact (D) completed a statewide survey of 800 registered voters, as well as an oversample of N=250 18–24-year-old registered voters. The survey was conducted December 3-7, 2022 via cell and landline phone, and the statewide topline results have a margin of error of $\pm 3.46\%$.



Key Takeaways

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Tennesseans view “higher education” positively yet express only “soft” satisfaction with the way the state’s higher education system is working today.
- ✓ Voters do say it is important for Tennesseans to get some type of training or education beyond a high school diploma. But at the same time, these voters also strongly believe someone can be successful without a college degree.
- ✓ When it comes to post-secondary being “worth it,” voters place a TCAT training program, two-year community college, and non-degree job training program ahead of a four-year university or college.
- ✓ However, voters’ highest preference for where they would want their child to go to school is a four-year university or college.
- ✓ By more than a two-to-one margin, Tennesseans believe the purpose of higher education is to help identify an area of expertise for a career rather than create a well-rounded, broadly educated citizen.
- ✓ Yet, a strong majority of voters (and majority of 18-24-year-olds) say Tennessee’s high school graduates are not prepared for higher education, or, for a job.

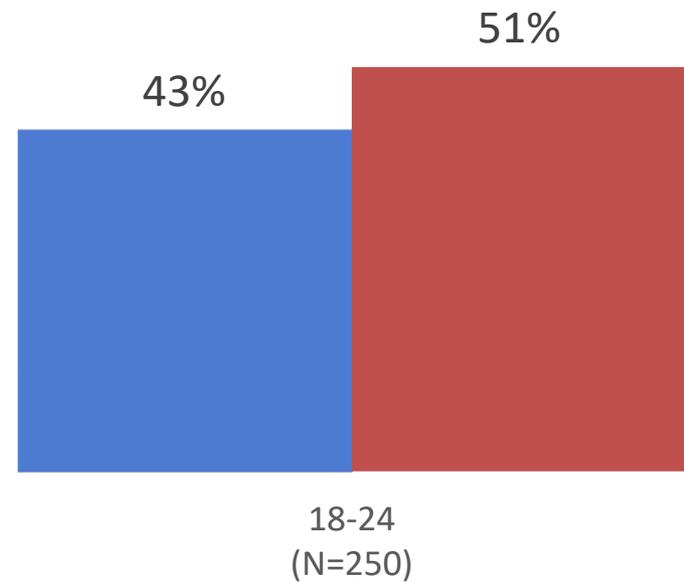
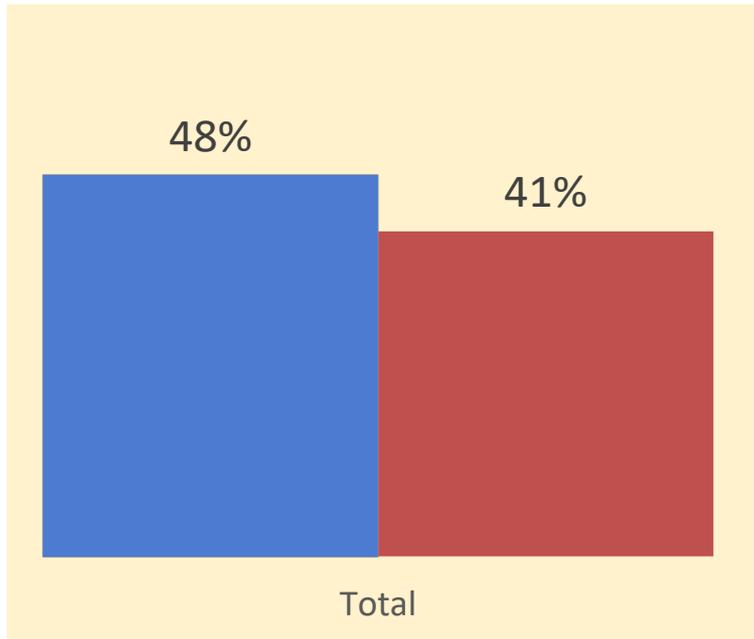
KEY TAKEAWAYS – 18-24 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ While nearly three-quarters of 18–24-year-old Tennesseans believe getting an education beyond high school is “worth it,” there is a strong sense the value of an education beyond high school has decreased and there is significant concern over cost.
- ✓ 18-24-year-old Tennesseans are divided on whether college is worth the investment, particularly if a post-secondary education requires students to go into debt and doesn’t guarantee a student a clear career path.
- ✓ In fact, nearly two-thirds of these younger Tennesseans agree they’d be willing to take on college debt if they were guaranteed a good job after graduating.
- ✓ Among those 18–24-year-olds who have not made up their minds or do not plan on attending post-secondary, most point to improved personal finances as what would make them more likely to attend.



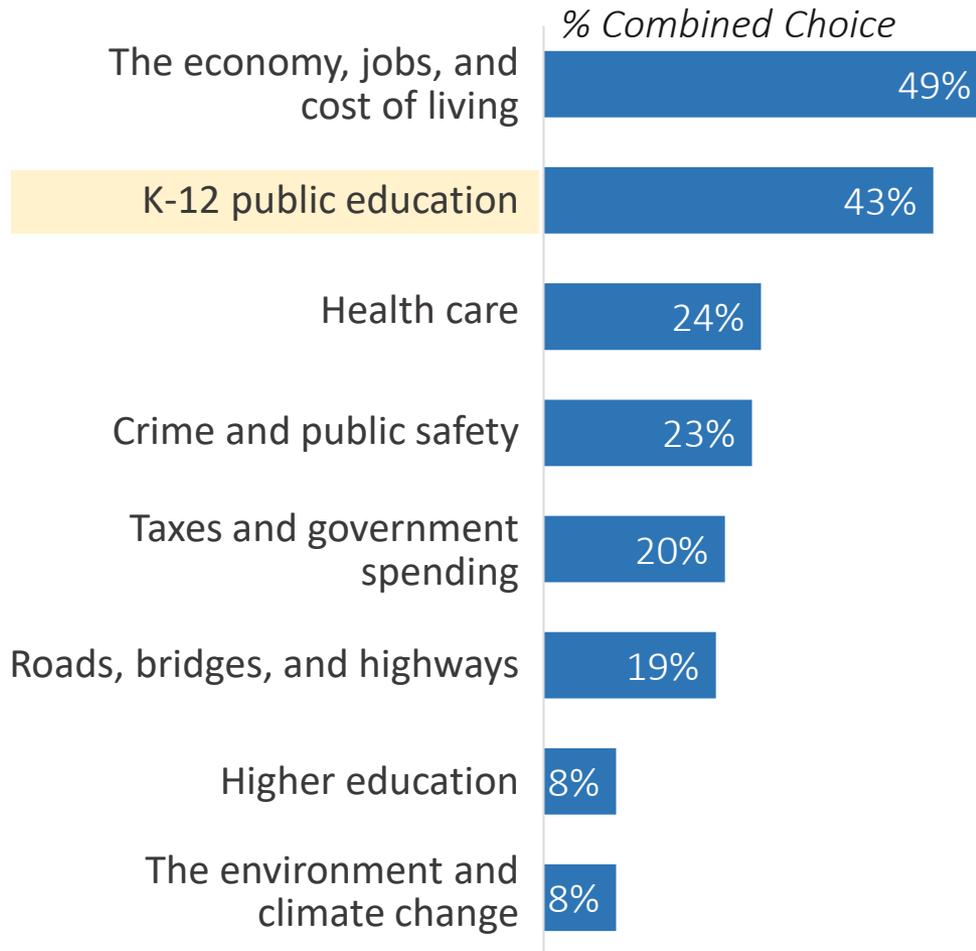
The State's Landscape

A plurality of Tennesseans believe the state is moving in the right direction.



■ Right Direction ■ Wrong Track

Economic concerns and K-12 public education top the issue agenda.



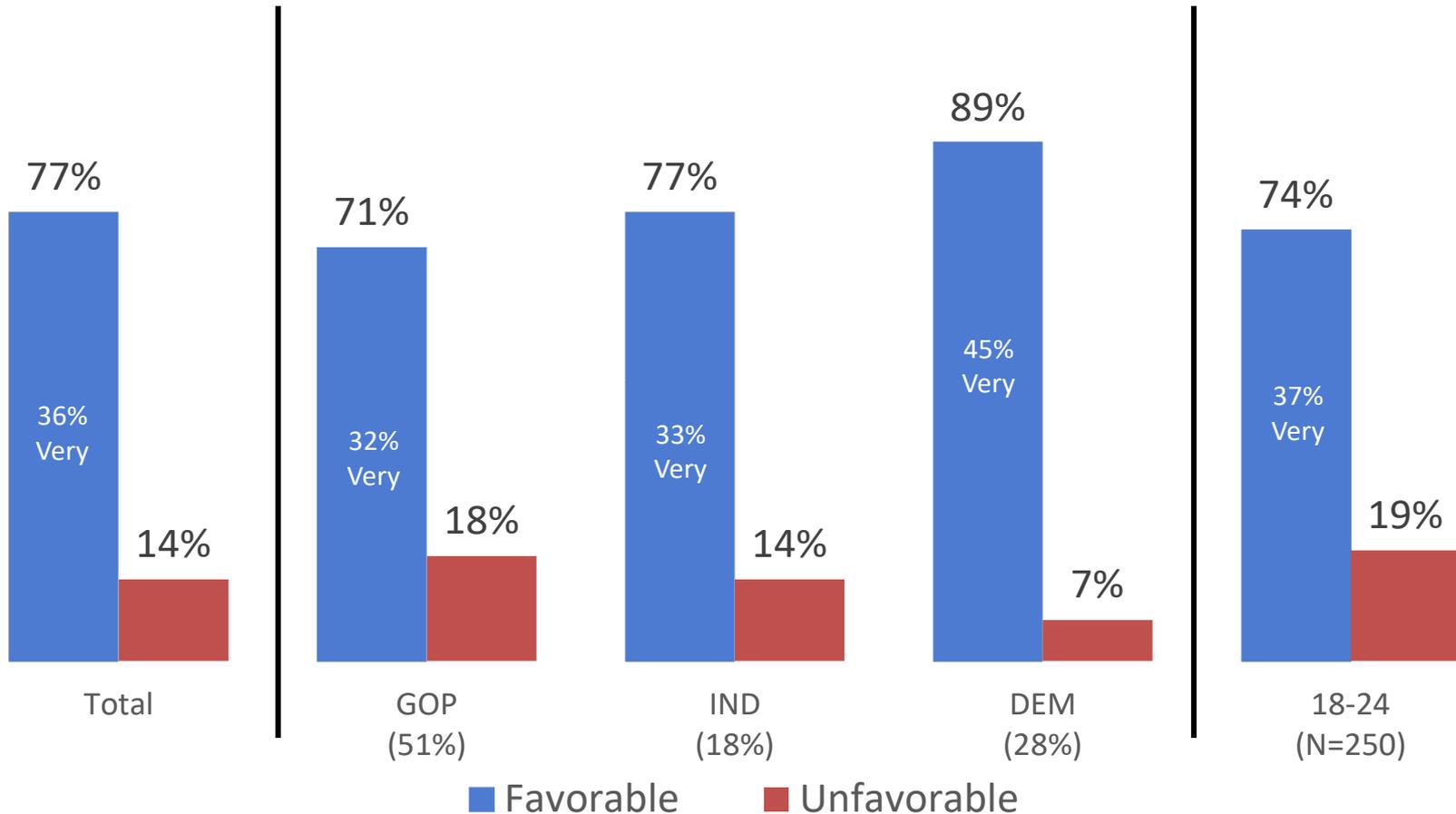
	GOP (51%)	IND (18%)	DEM (28%)	18-24 (N=250)
The economy, jobs, and cost of living	60%	39%	36%	51%
K-12 public education	40%	46%	48%	41%
Health care	21%	20%	33%	25%
Crime and public safety	24%	26%	19%	26%
Taxes and government spending	26%	17%	10%	14%
Roads, bridges, and highways	17%	26%	18%	15%
Higher education	6%	10%	10%	10%
The environment and climate change	1%	7%	19%	16%



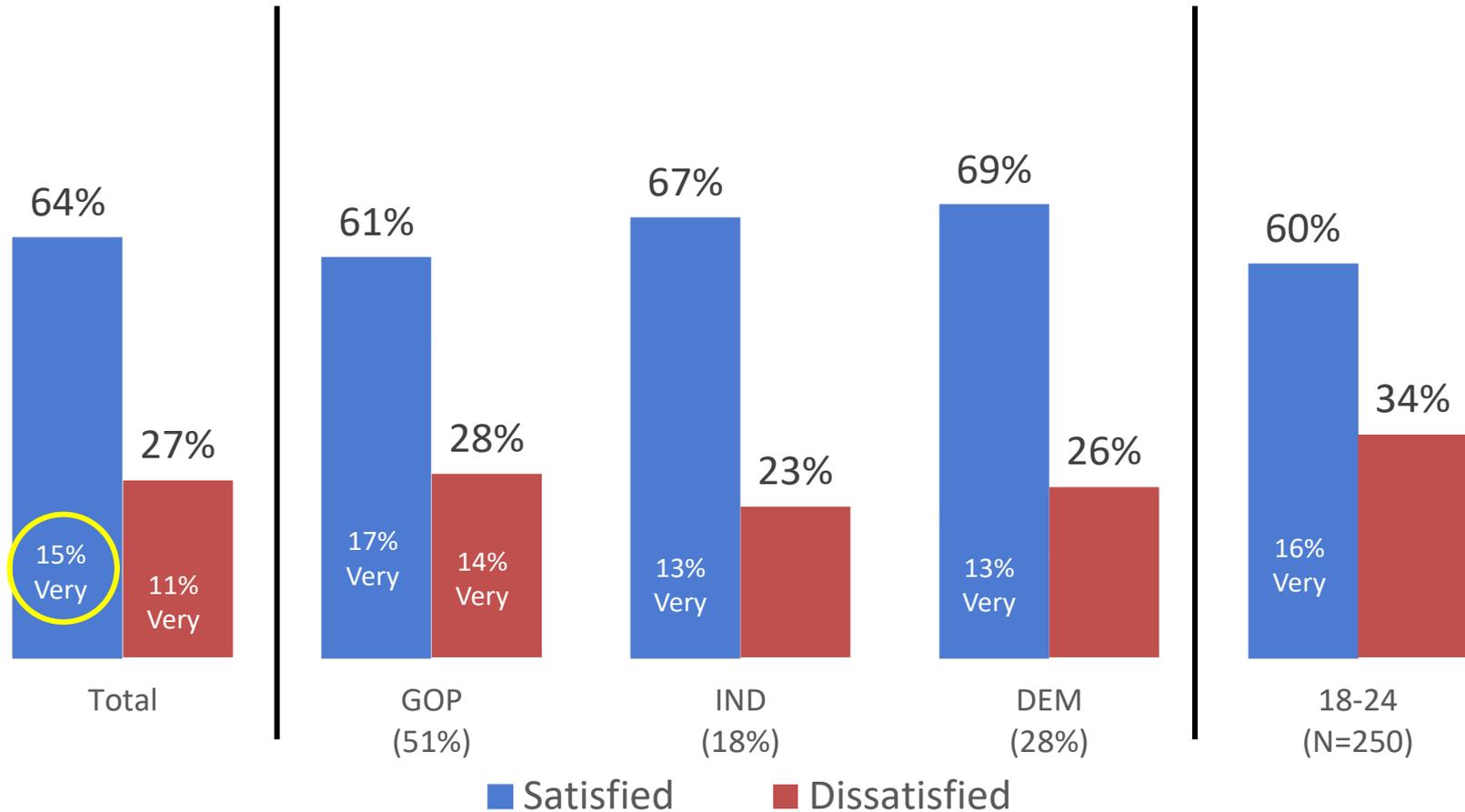
Attitudes Towards Higher Education

Tennessee voters view “higher education” in a positive way.

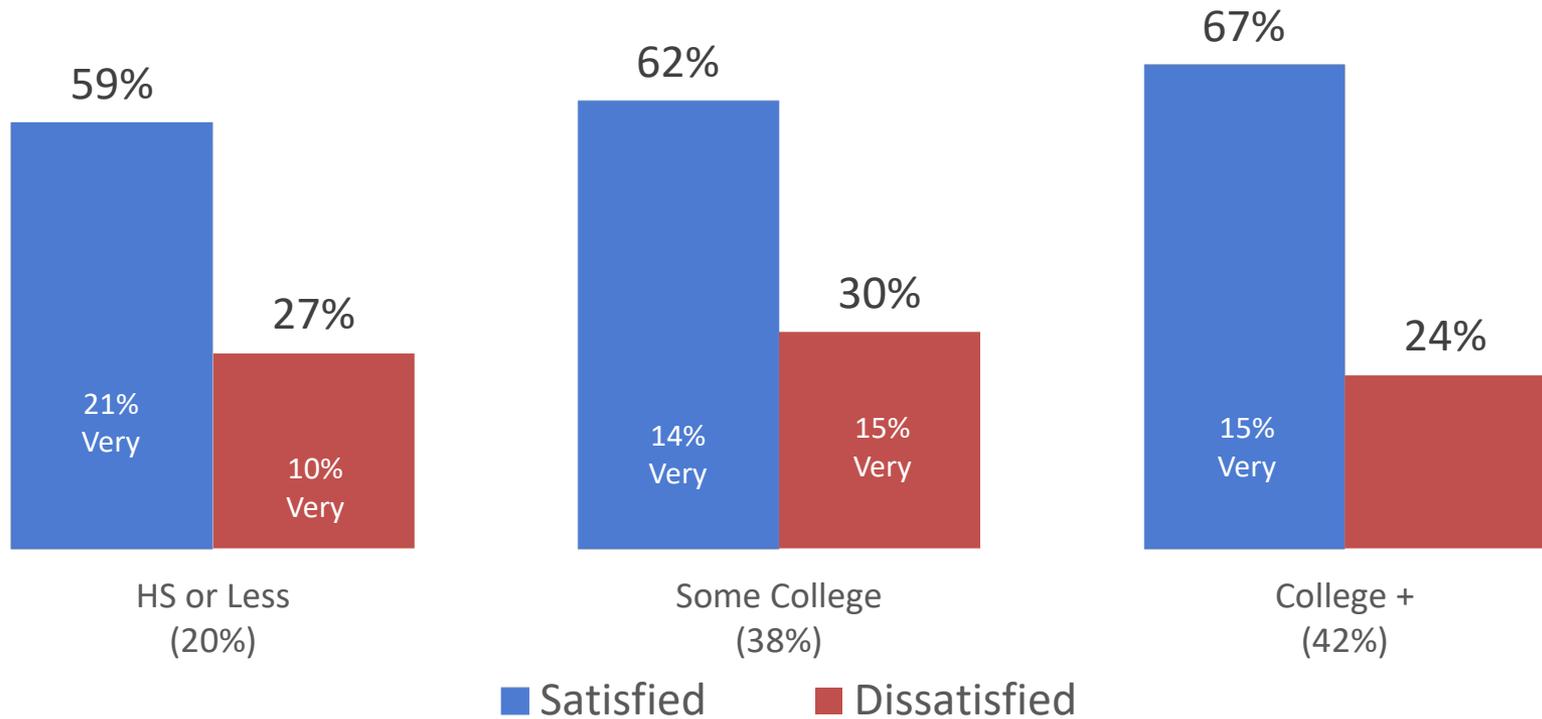
Higher Education



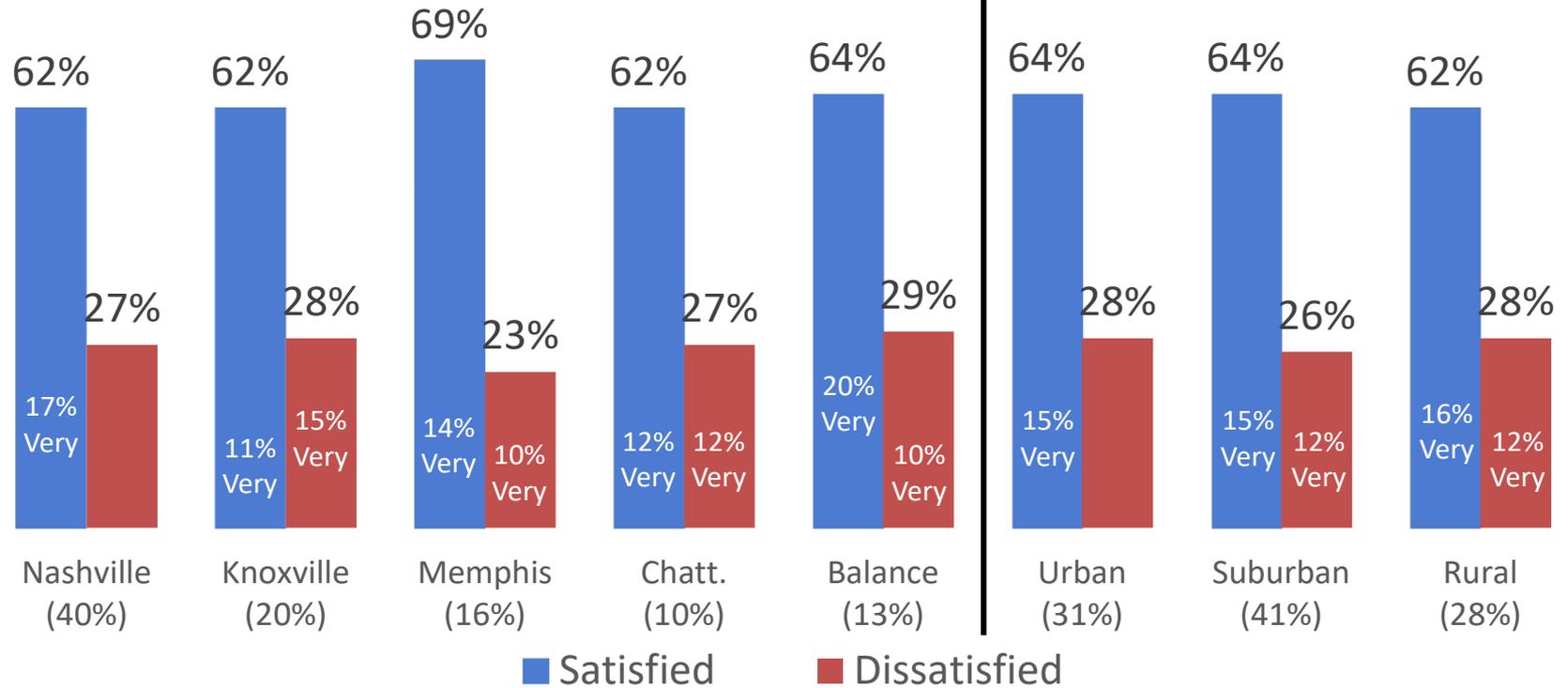
Yet, there is “soft” satisfaction with the way the state’s higher education system is working today.



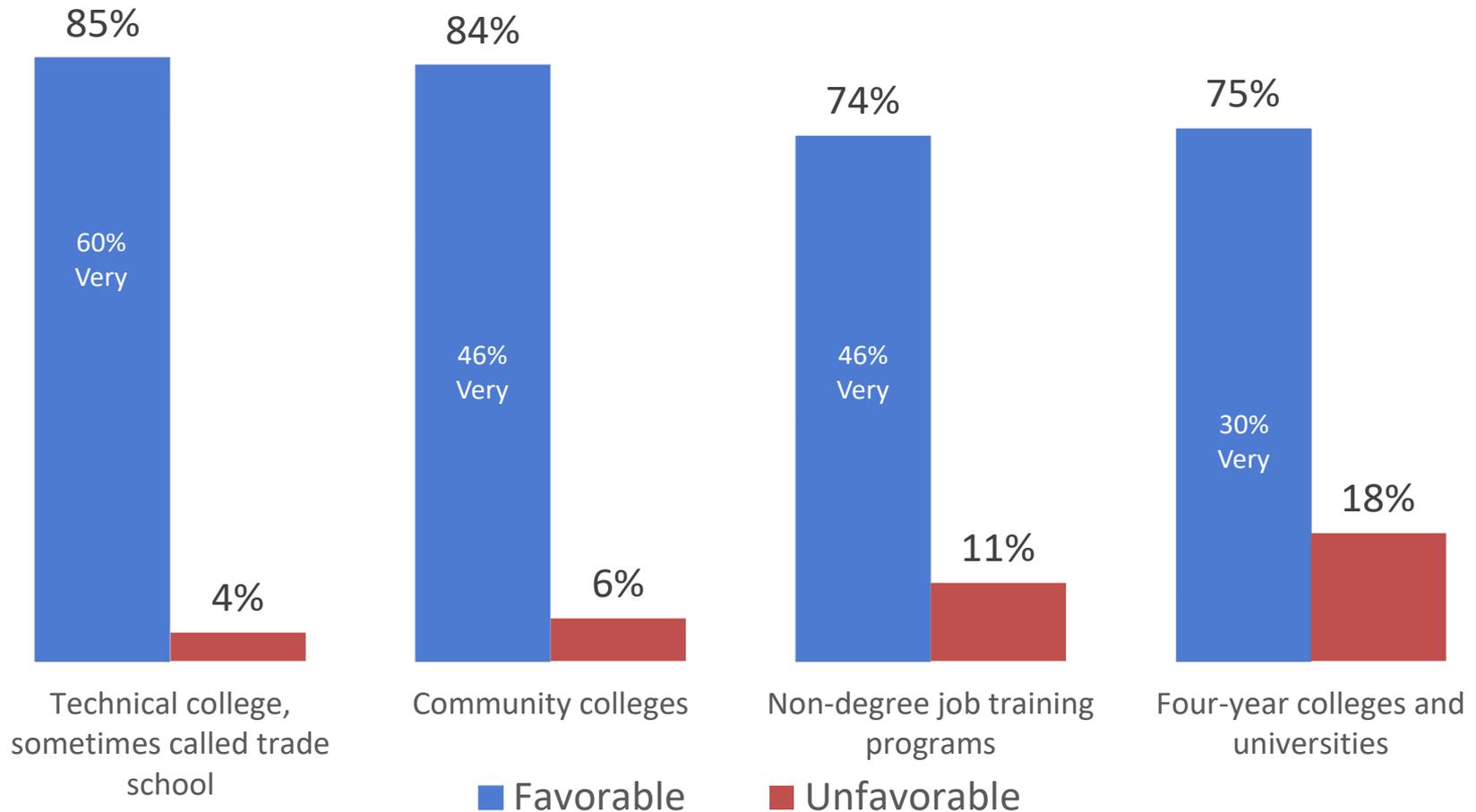
Those who have finished college are slightly more satisfied with the state's higher education system.



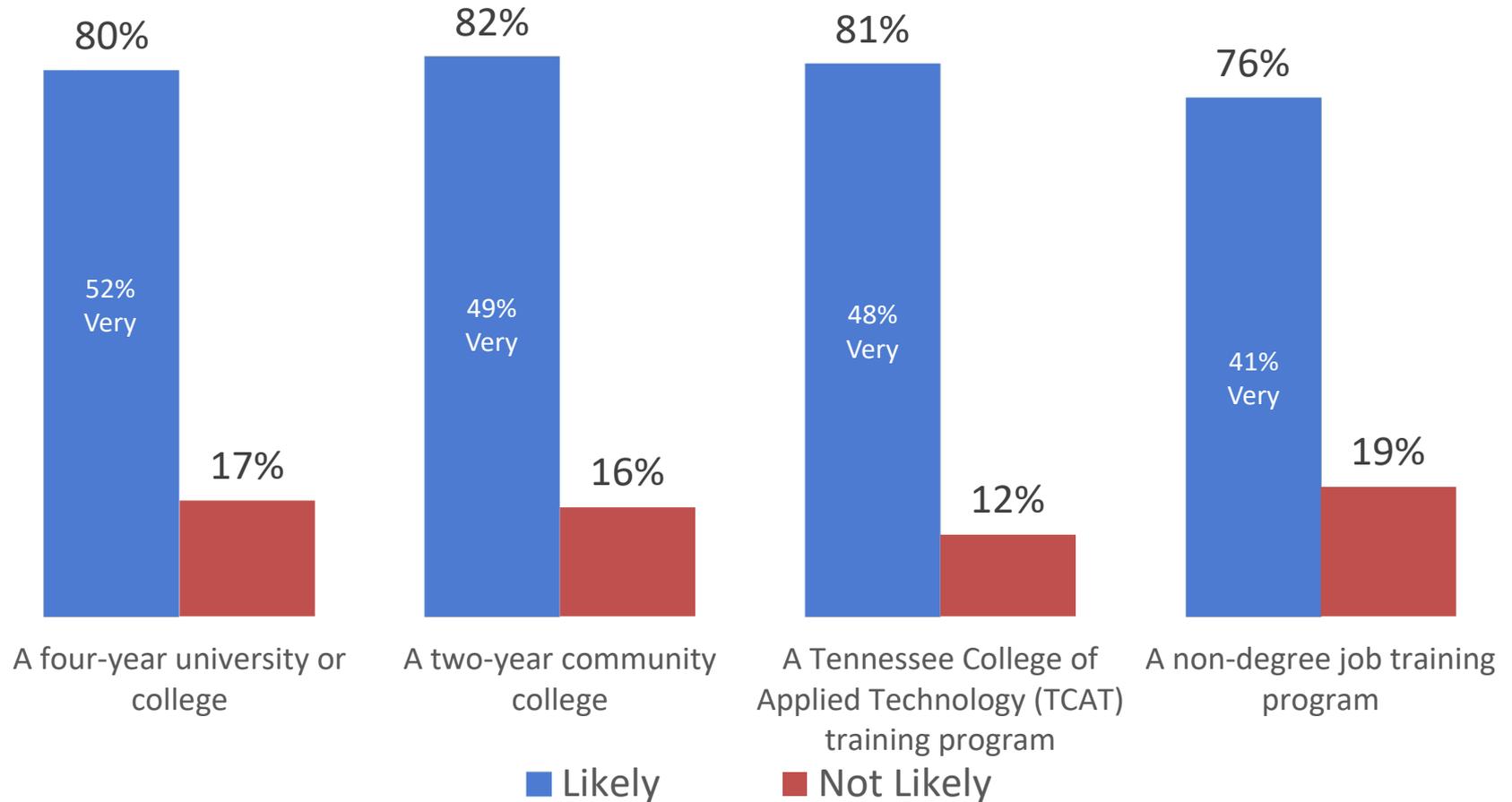
There is little difference in attitudes regionally.



Technical college, community colleges, and non-degree job training programs are viewed most favorably.



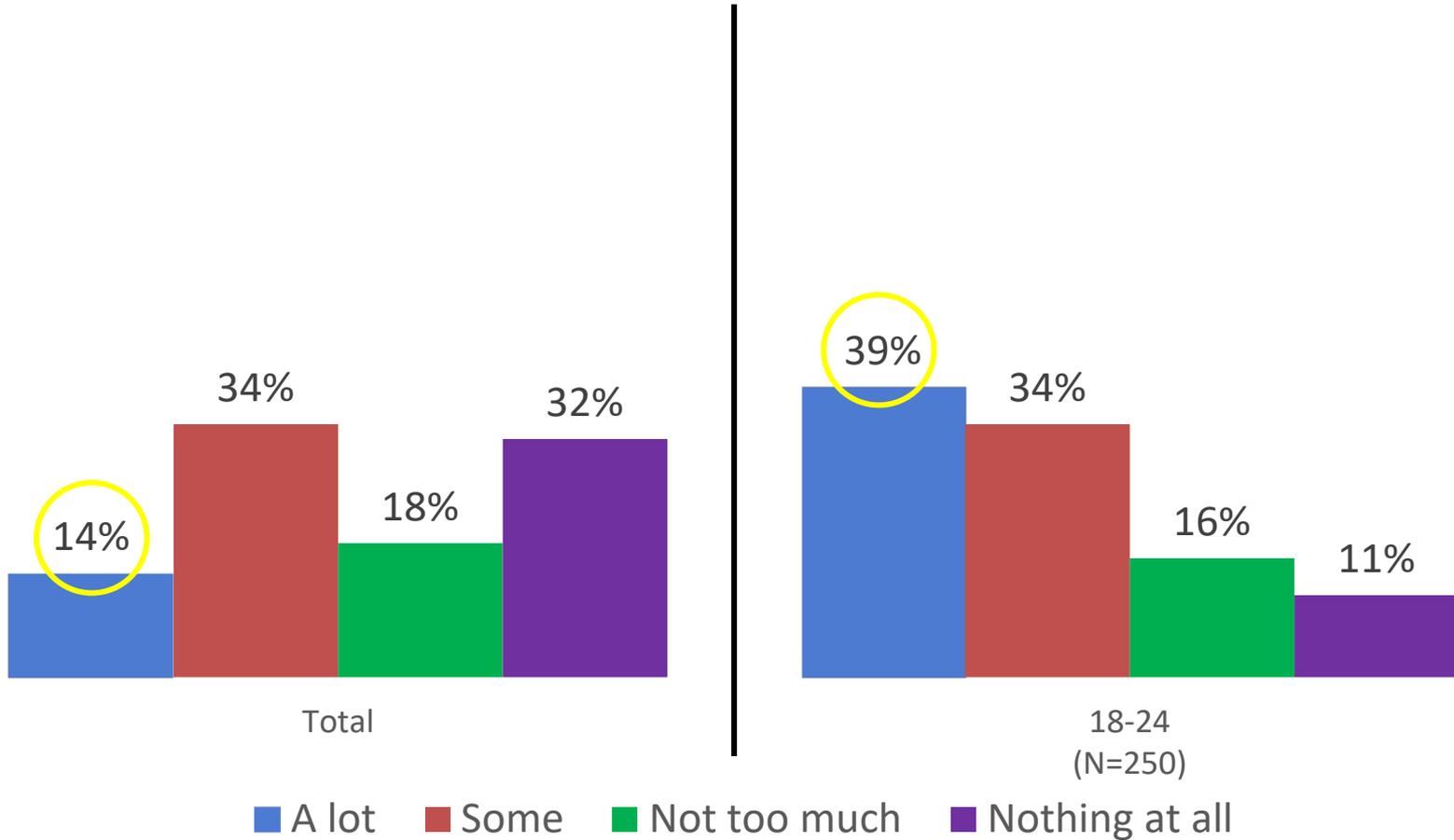
Still, more voters would be very likely to recommend a son or daughter apply to a four-year university or college than to another program.





Tennessee Promise

Just 14% of all voters in the state say they know “a lot” about Tennessee Promise, compared with nearly 40% of 18–24-year-olds.



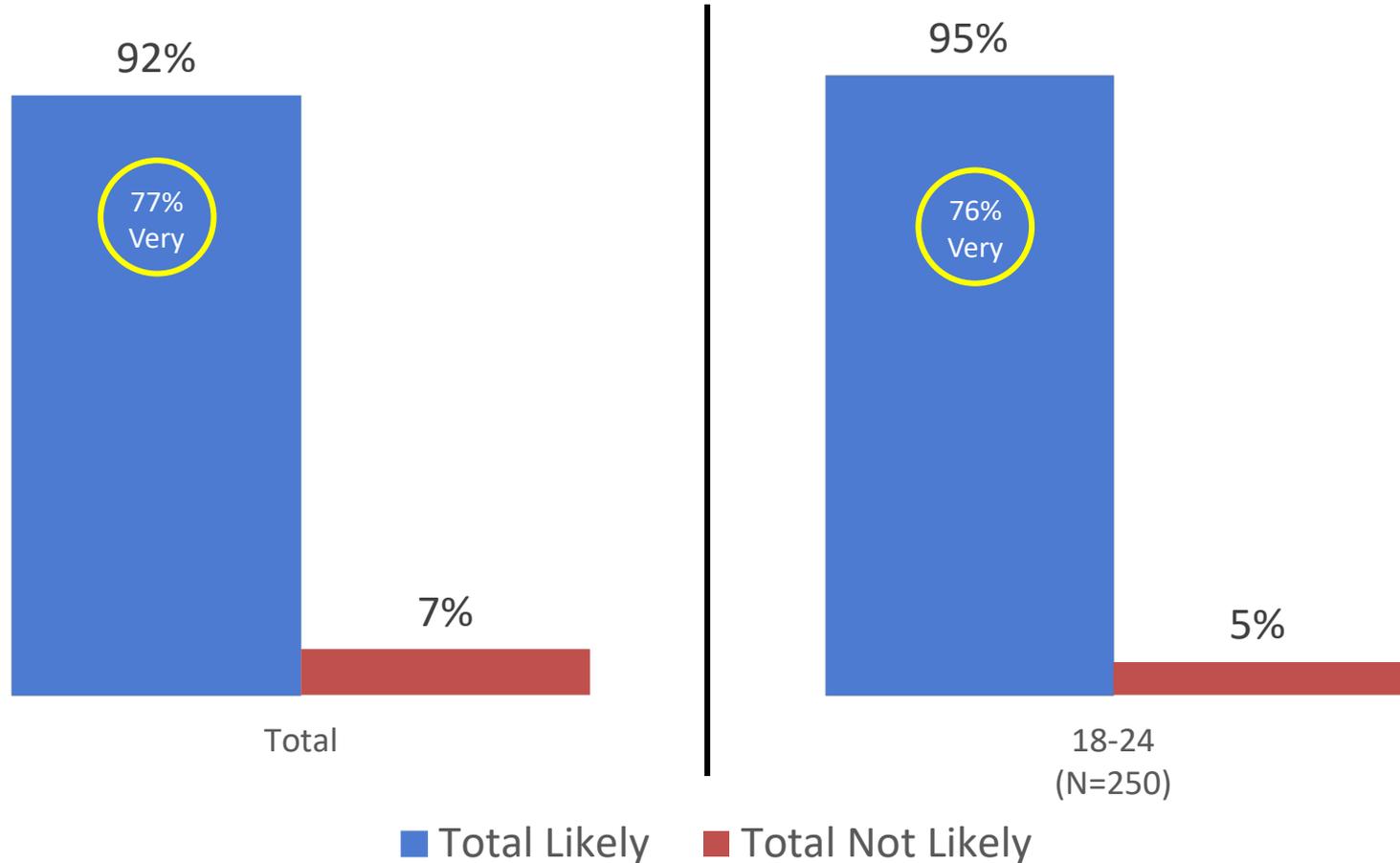
After hearing a brief description of the Tennessee Promise...

Now, just so everyone taking this survey has the same information, let me tell you some more information about the Tennessee Promise...

Under this program, students graduating from Tennessee high schools are eligible for the Tennessee Promise scholarship, which ensures two years of tuition-free education at a public community college or technical school in Tennessee.

If you had a son or daughter who was graduating from high school, how likely would you be to recommend that they use the Tennessee Promise?

More than three-quarters of voters would be very likely to recommend the program.





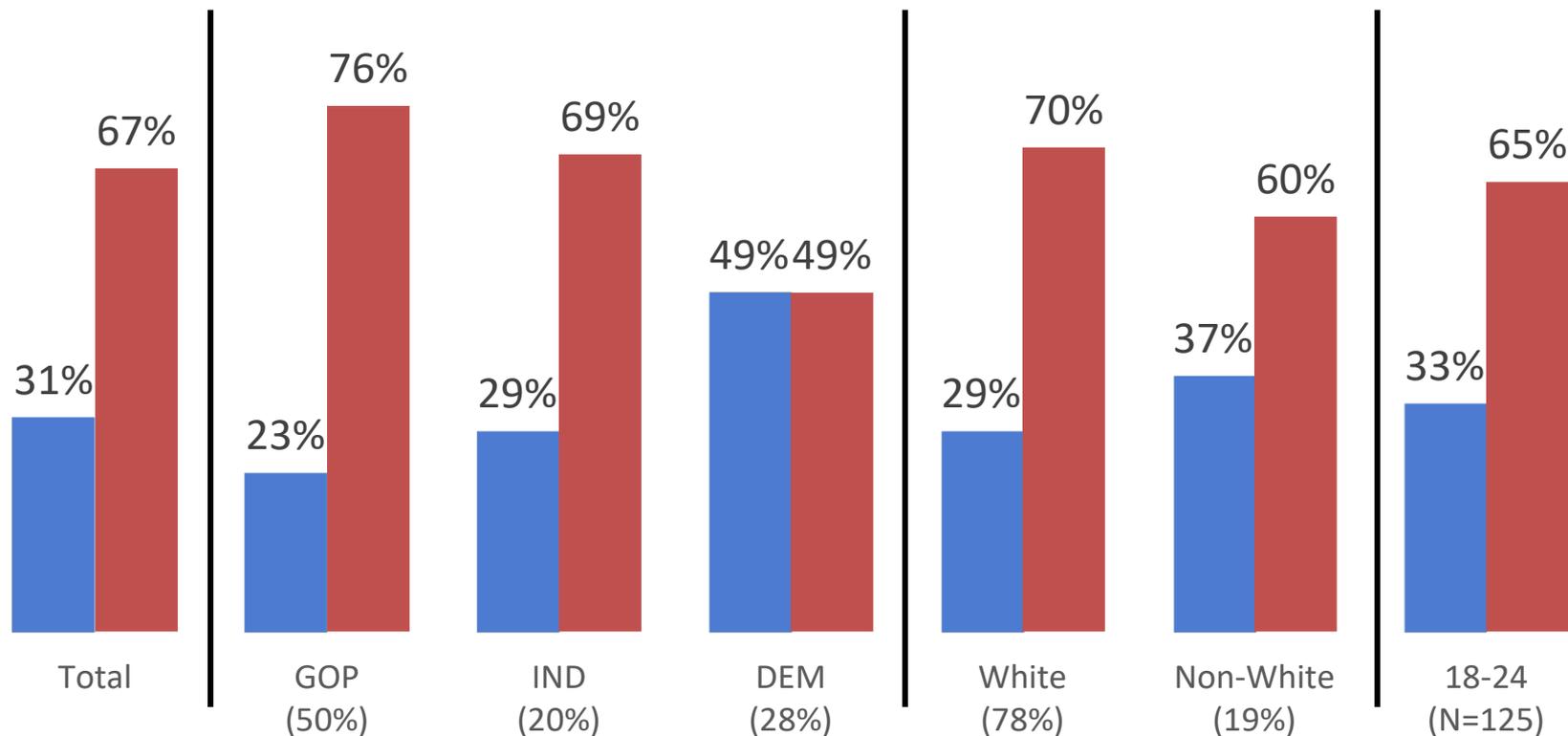
Priorities/Necessity of College

By more than two-to-one, Tennesseans believe the purpose of a post-secondary education is to help identify an area of expertise for a career rather than create a well-rounded, broadly educated citizen.

Create a well-rounded, broadly educated citizen to help solve challenges in the future.

...or is it to...

Help someone identify an area of expertise that will help them find and succeed in a career.



*Sample A, N=400

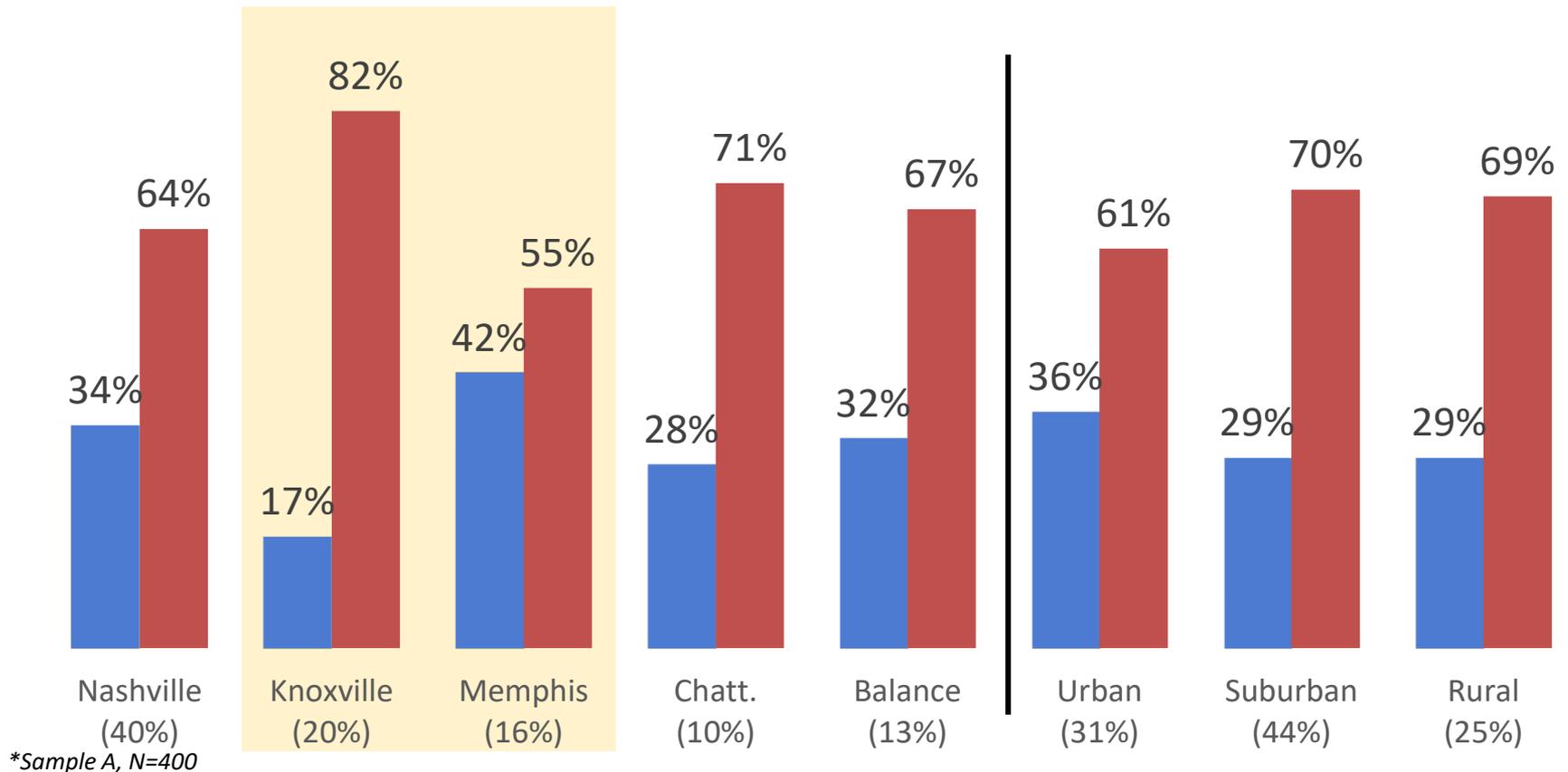
Thinking more broadly about a post-secondary education, that is, education beyond high school, which ONE of the following comes closest to your view of the purpose of a post-secondary education?

There is some regional variation.

Create a well-rounded, broadly educated citizen to help solve challenges in the future.

...or is it to...

Help someone identify an area of expertise that will help them find and succeed in a career.



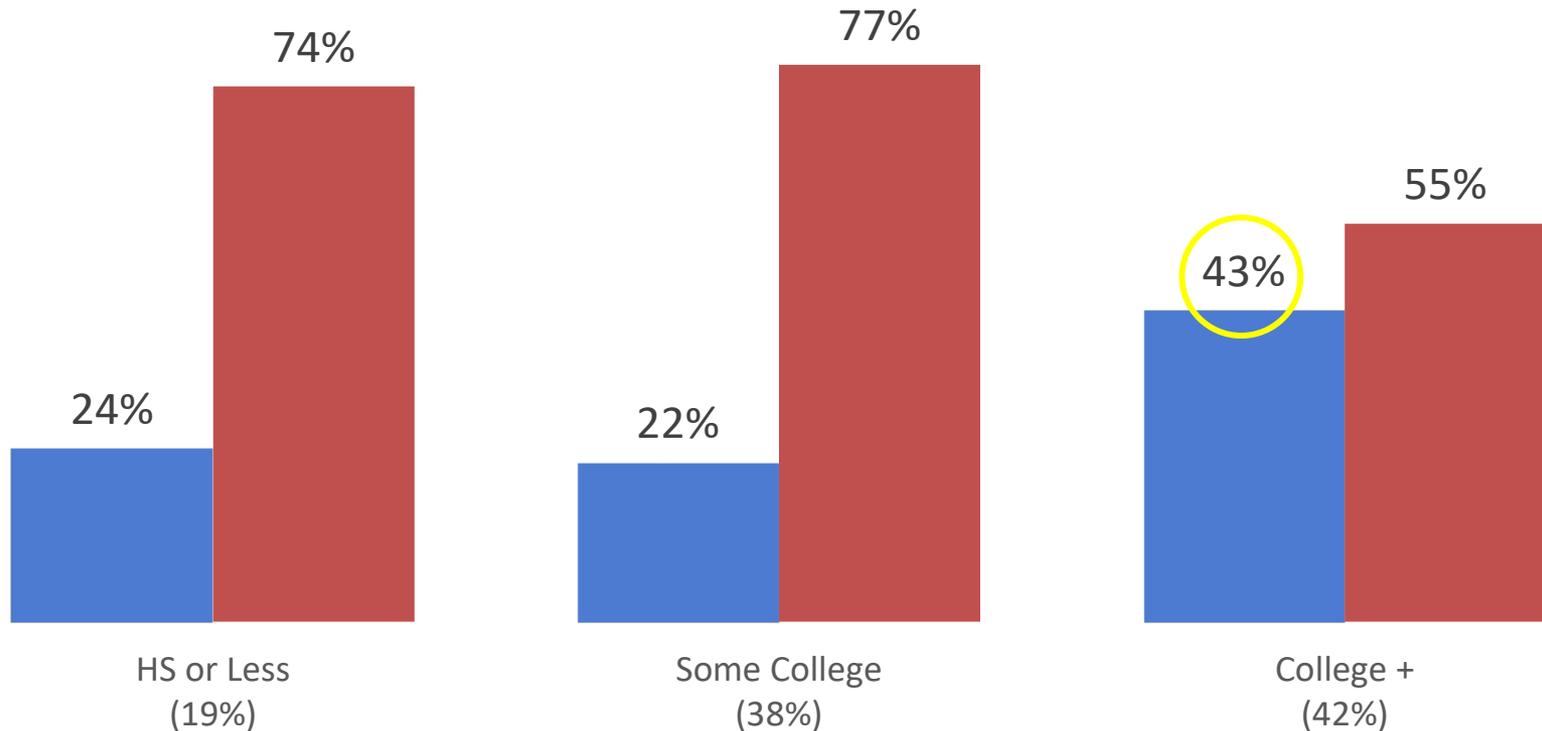
*Sample A, N=400

Thinking more broadly about a post-secondary education, that is, education beyond high school, which ONE of the following comes closest to your view of the purpose of a post-secondary education?

Tennesseans who have finished college are more likely to agree that higher education's purpose is to create well-rounded citizens.

*Create a well-rounded, broadly educated citizen to help solve challenges in the future.
...or is it to...*

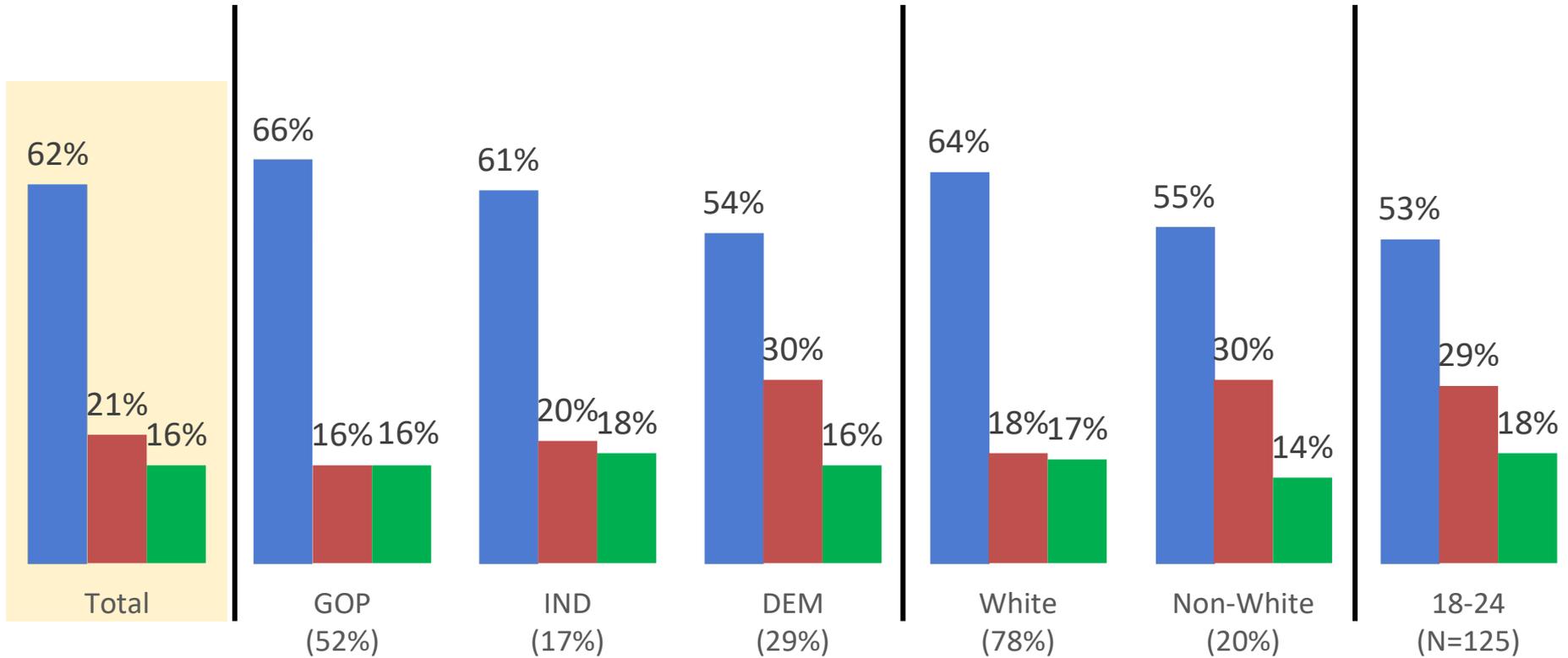
Help someone identify an area of expertise that will help them find and succeed in a career.



*Sample A, N=400

Voters believe that the primary purpose of a post-secondary education is to “prepare students for a career.”

Prepare students for a career
Enable students to expand their horizons and learn new things
...or is it to...
Prepare students to be civically engaged and productive citizens

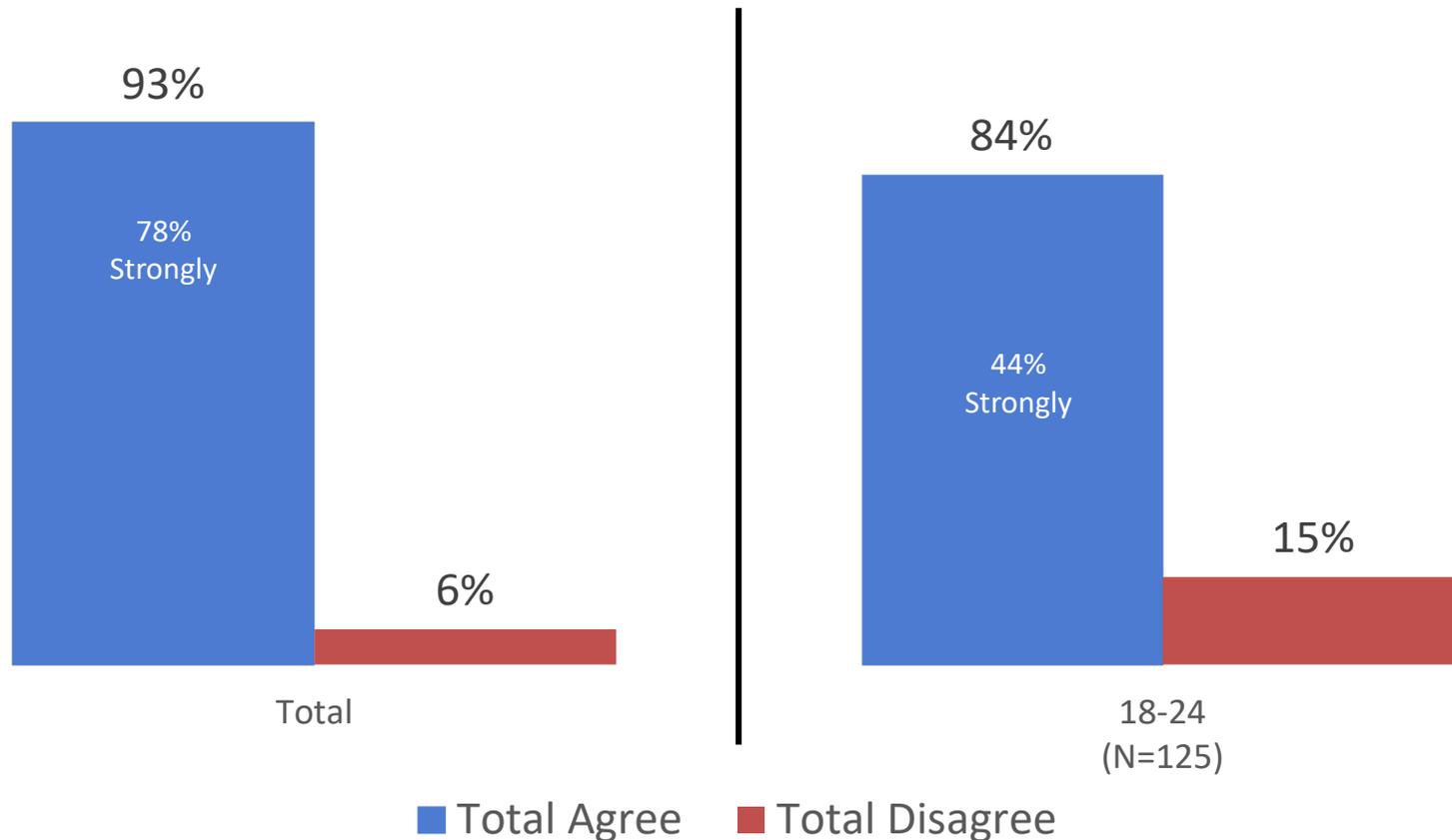


*Sample B, N=400

Which ONE of following comes closest to your view of the purpose of a post-secondary education?

There's overwhelming agreement that it is "important for Tennesseans to get some type of training or education beyond a high school diploma."

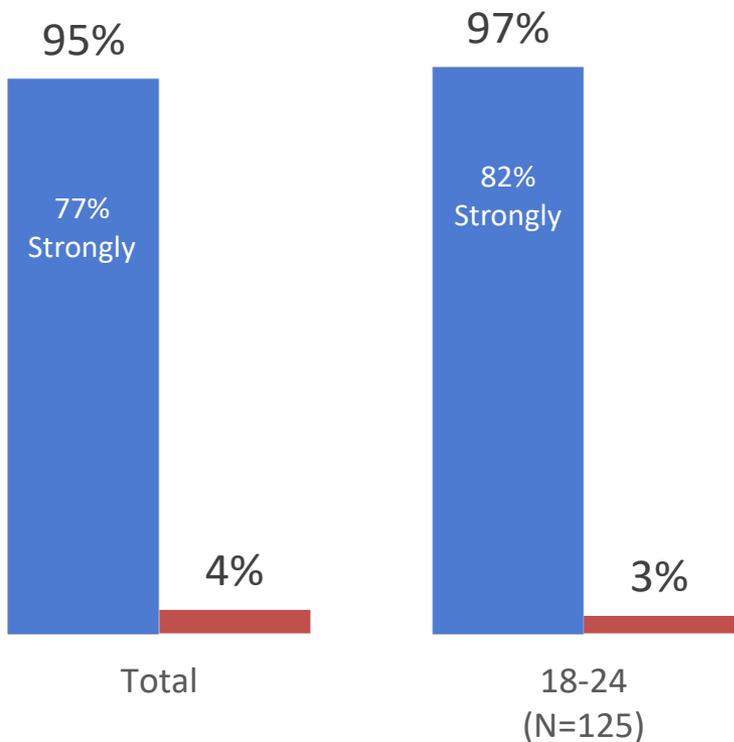
It is important for Tennesseans to get some type of training or education beyond a high school diploma. (A)



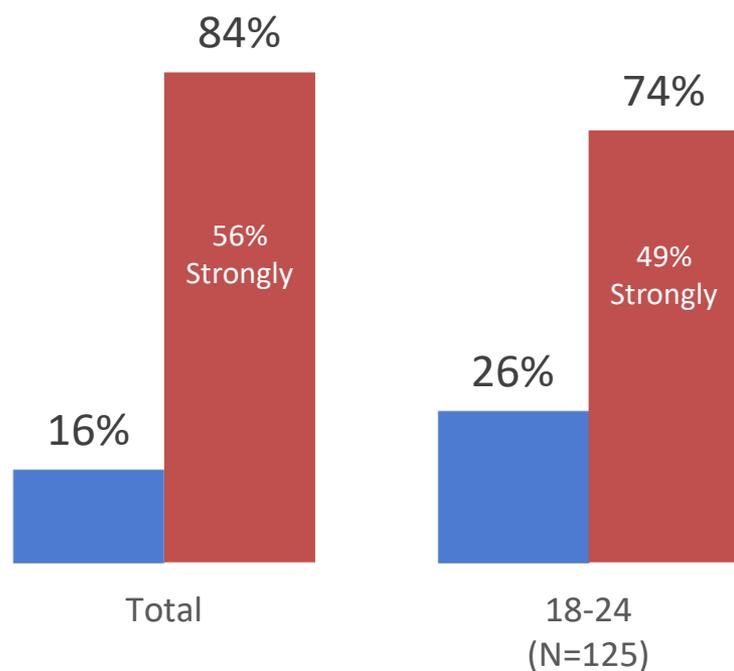
*Sample A, N=400

Yet, voters strongly agree “someone can be successful without a college degree” and strongly disagree that a “good-paying job requires a four-year college degree.”

Someone can be successful without a college degree. (B)



A good-paying job requires a four-year college degree. (B)



■ Total Agree ■ Total Disagree

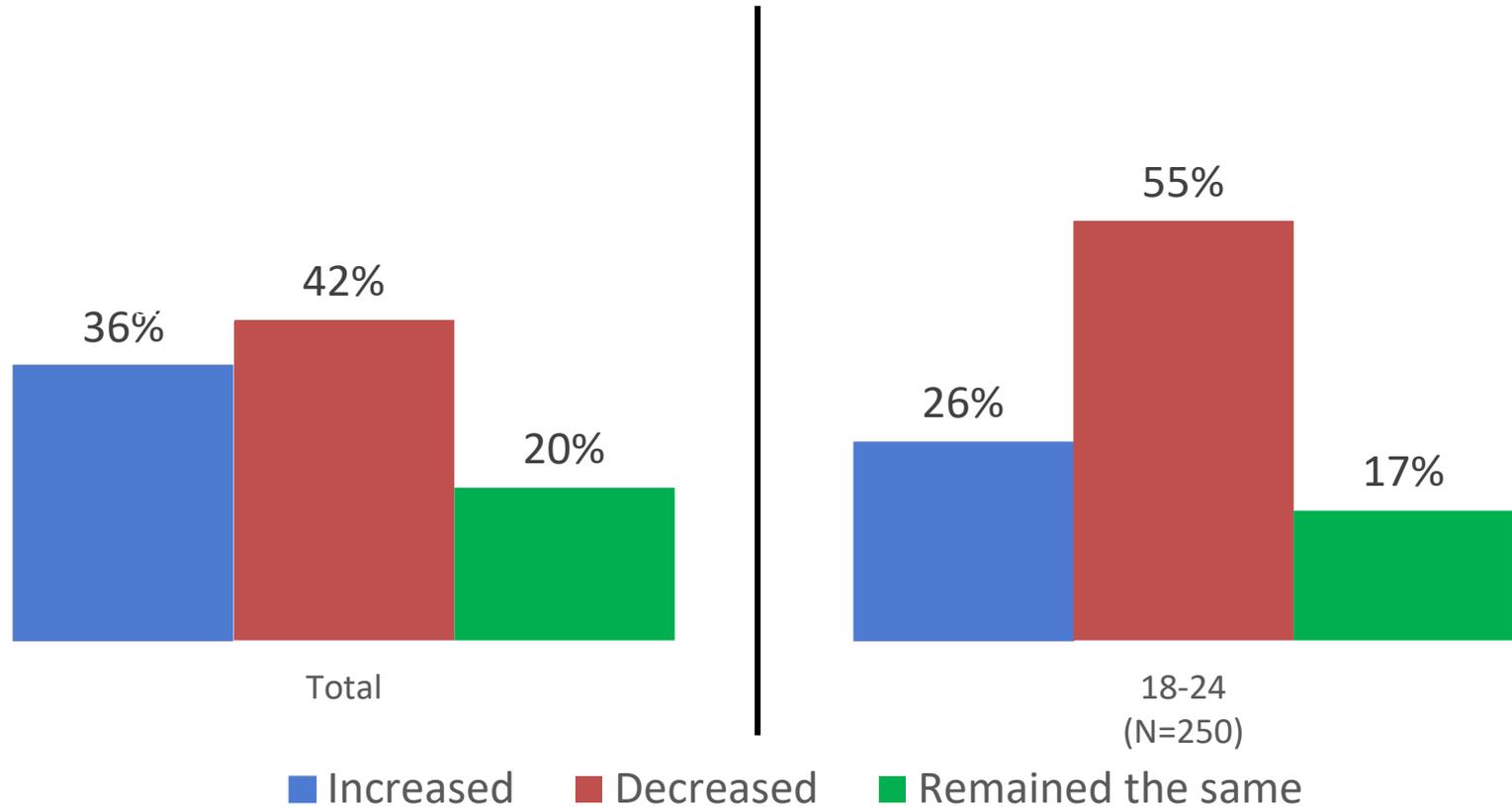
*Sample B, N=400

And, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

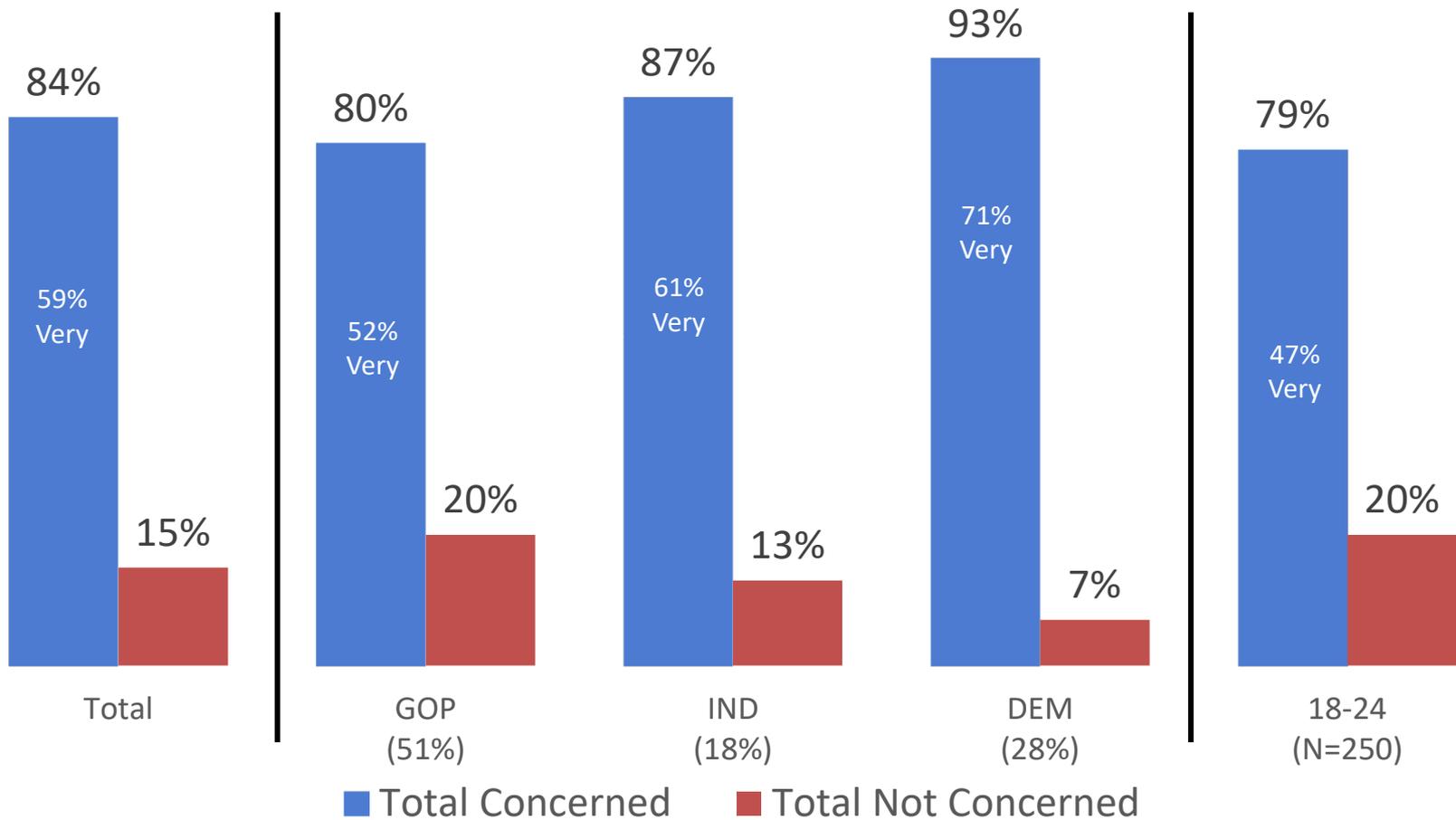


Cost, Affordability, & Value

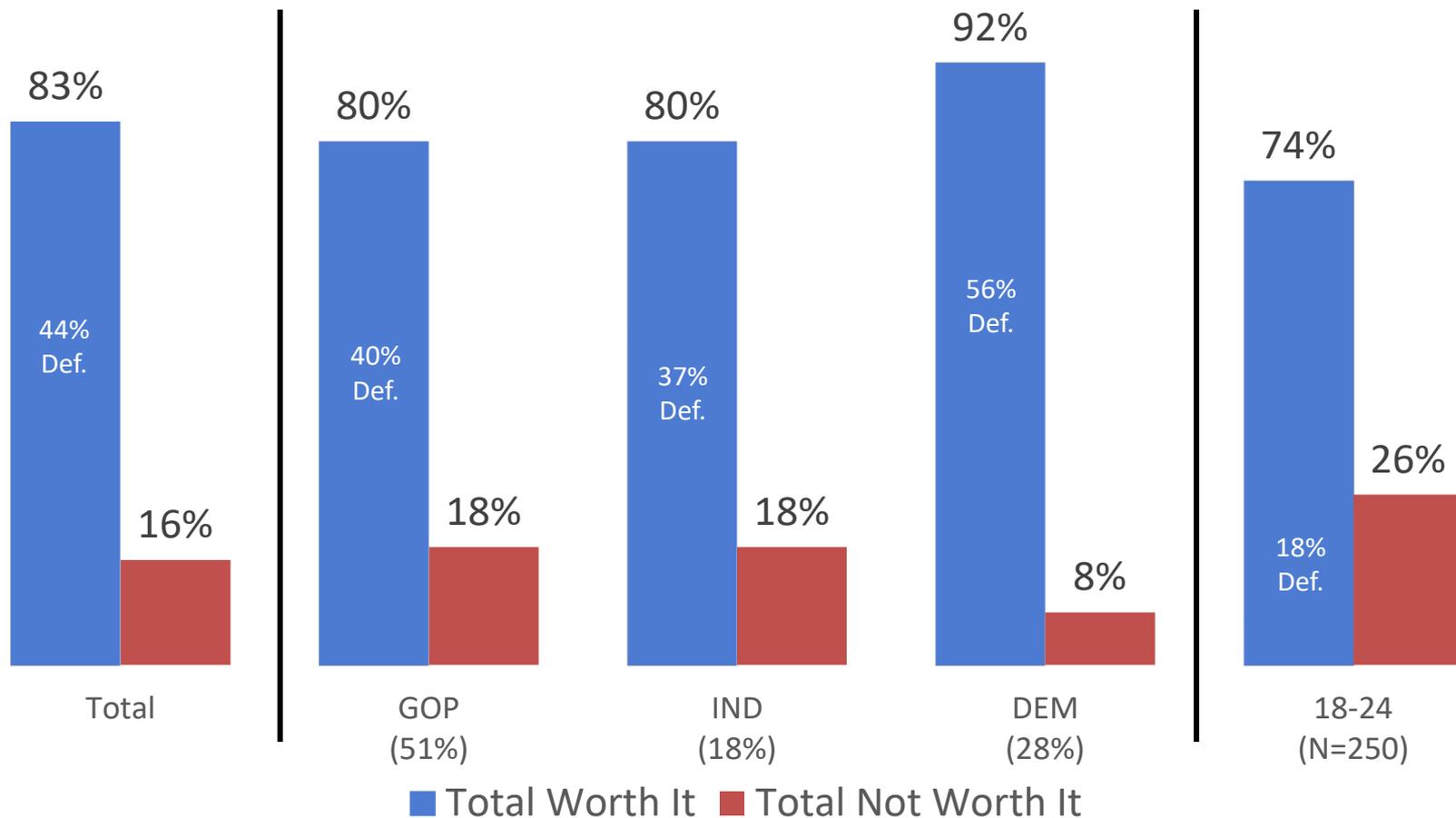
Most Tennesseans, especially those who are 18-24 years old, believe the value of an education beyond high school has decreased over the past couple decades.



There's significant concern about the cost.



However, despite those concerns over cost, an overwhelming majority of Tennesseans believe getting an education beyond high school is worth it.



When it comes to being "worth it" - voters place a TCAT training program and two-year community college highest.



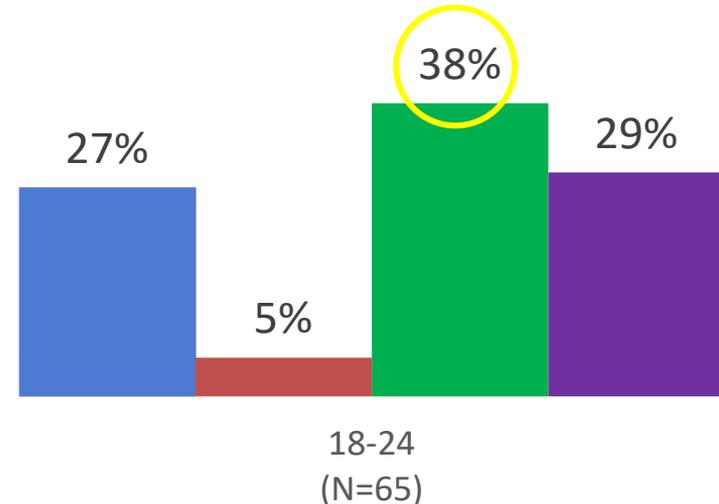
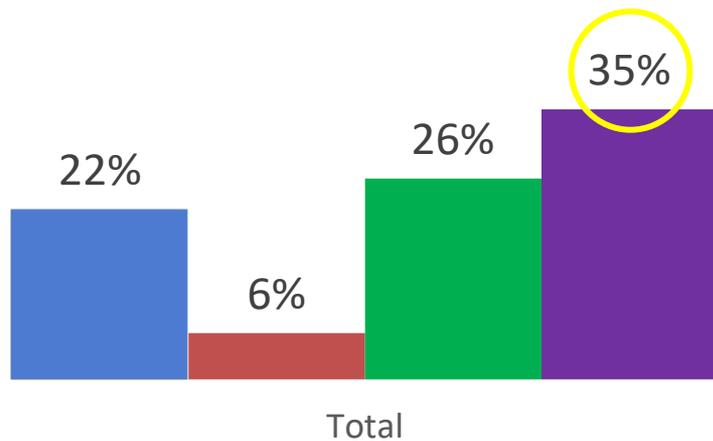
% Worth It	Total	GOP (51%)	IND (18%)	DEM (28%)	White (78%)	Non-White (20%)	18-24 (N=250)
A Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) training program	93%	95%	92%	92%	94%	93%	93%
A two-year community college	90%	89%	92%	91%	90%	90%	86%
A non-degree job training program	87%	87%	90%	87%	87%	85%	82%
A four-year university or college	75%	68%	72%	89%	72%	84%	69%

% Worth It	Total	Urban (31%)	Suburban (41%)	Rural (28%)	Nashville (40%)	Knoxville (20%)	Memphis (16%)	Chatt. (10%)	Balance (13%)
A Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) training program	93%	92%	94%	93%	91%	96%	96%	92%	93%
A two-year community college	90%	91%	94%	82%	89%	91%	91%	92%	86%
A non-degree job training program	87%	89%	90%	80%	88%	91%	85%	86%	83%
A four-year university or college	75%	82%	72%	71%	76%	70%	81%	69%	75%

And, do you think that getting an education beyond high school today is definitely worth it, probably worth it, probably not worth it, or definitely not worth it for each of the following...

Those who do not think an education beyond high school is worth it generally point to the idea that the right skills are not taught to prepare students for the workforce. Younger TN voters believe it's because people can get a good-paying job without a degree.

Students have a hard time finding a job after graduating
Students could be earning money instead of spending time in school
People can get a good-paying job without a degree
...or is it because...
The right skills are not taught to prepare students for the workforce

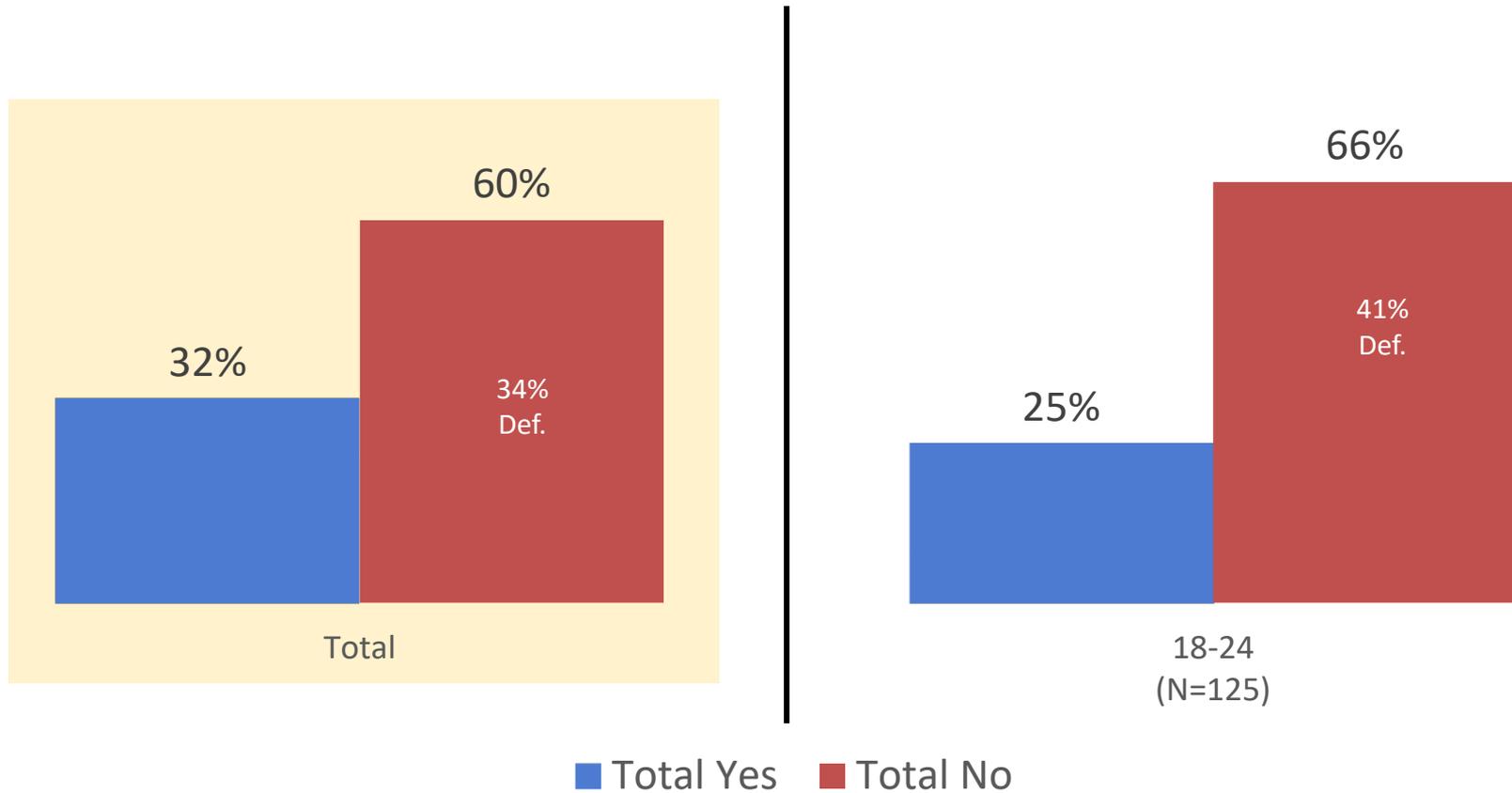


*N=124 Who Answered "Not Worth It" to Q31



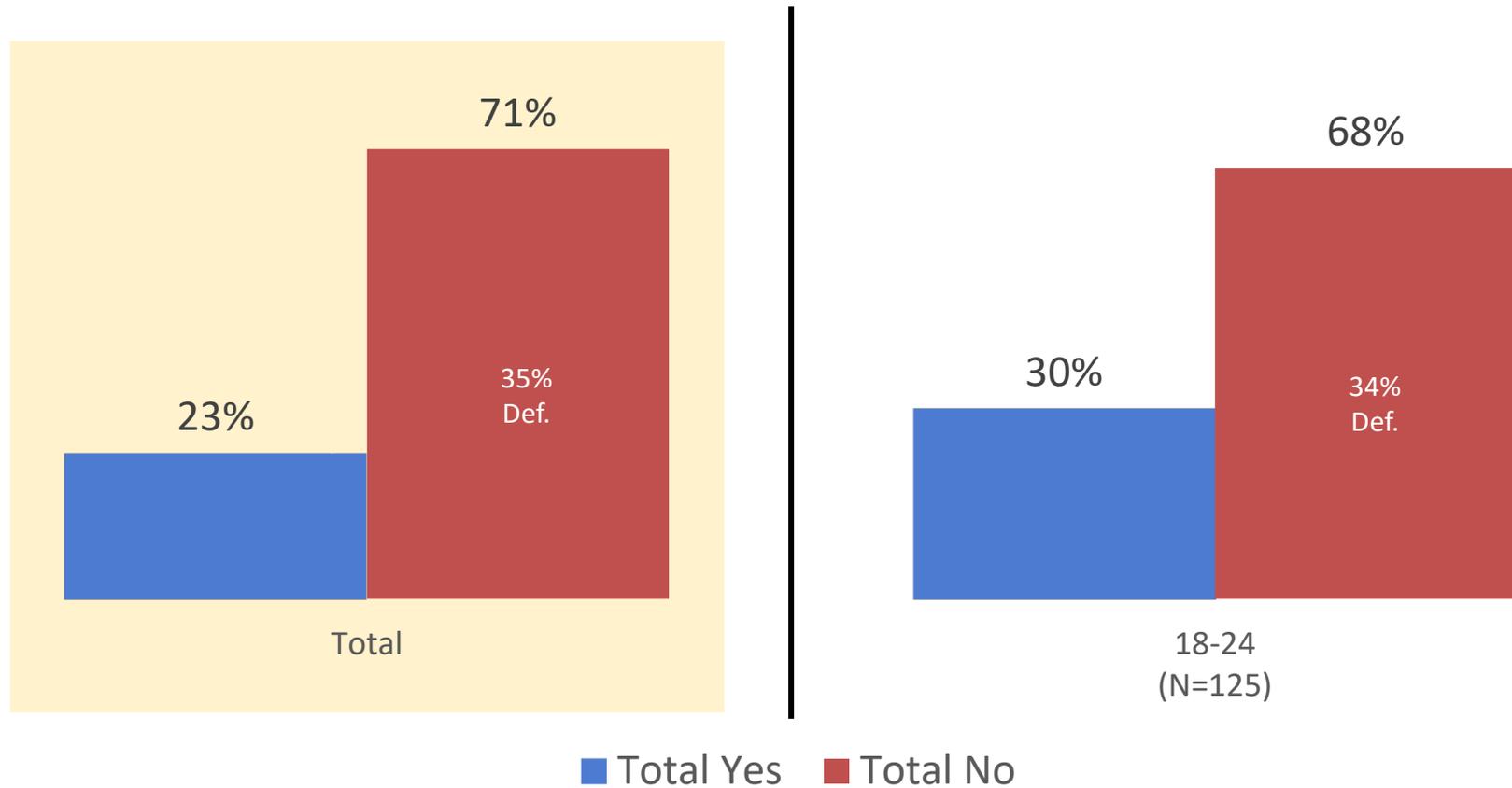
Role of High Schools

A strong majority of Tennesseans do NOT believe high school graduates are properly prepared for higher education.



*Sample A, N=400

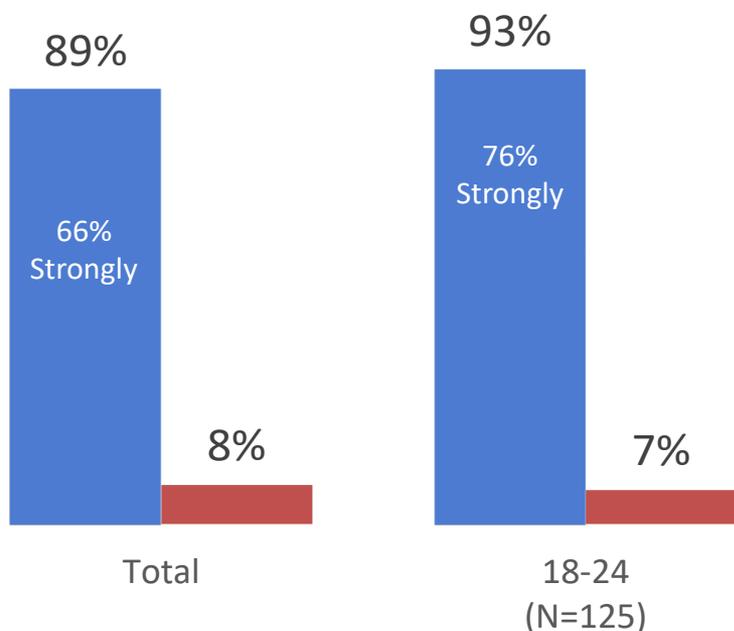
More than 70% of Tennessee voters do NOT believe high school graduates are properly prepared for a job.



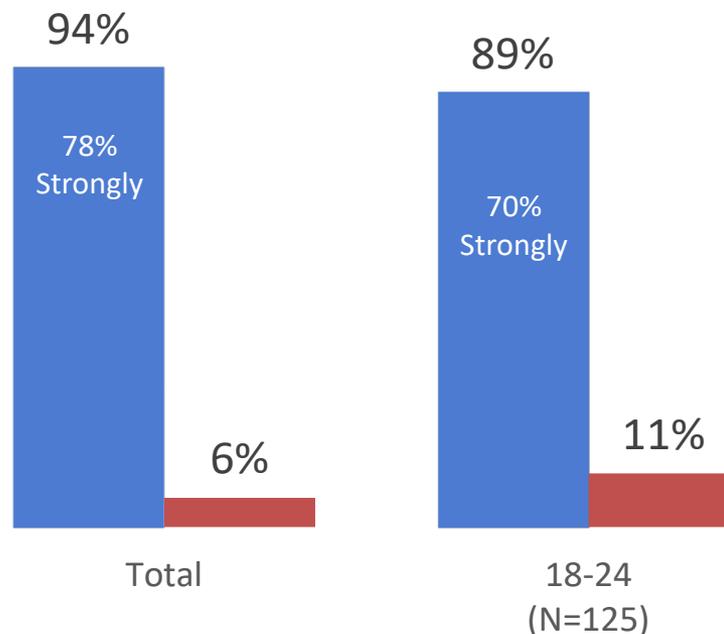
*Sample B, N=400

There's significant agreement high schools should provide more support for students who intend to get a job or join the military after graduation and that they should ensure all students are prepared to choose the path they want to pursue.

High schools should provide more support for students who intend to get a job and/or join the military after they graduate. (A)



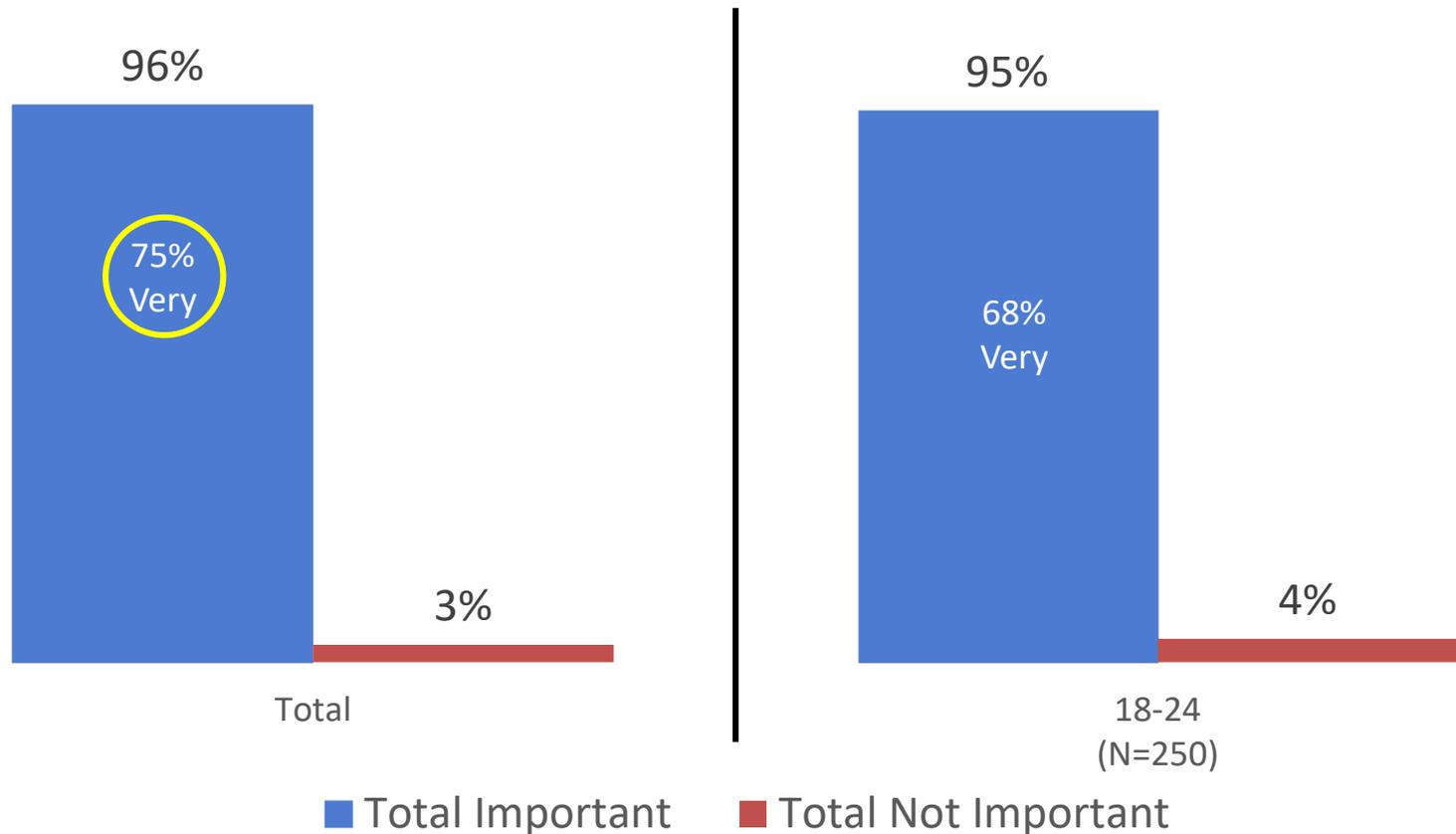
High schools should ensure all students are academically prepared so students can choose for themselves what postsecondary or career path they want to pursue. (B)



■ Total Agree ■ Total Disagree

*N=400

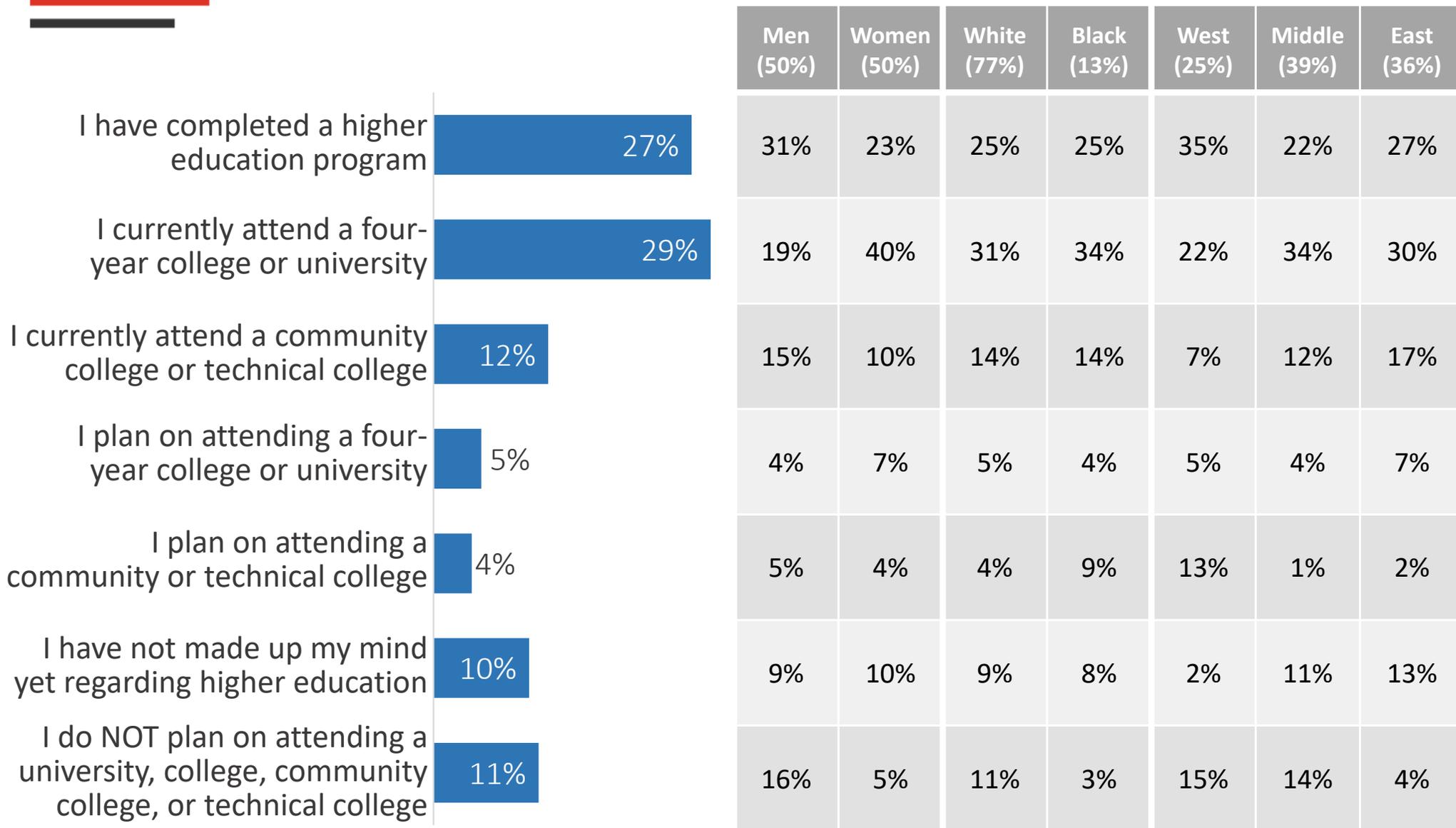
Fully three-quarters of Tennessee voters believe it is very important for the state to expand programs in middle and high schools to help prepare students for technical careers and skilled jobs.



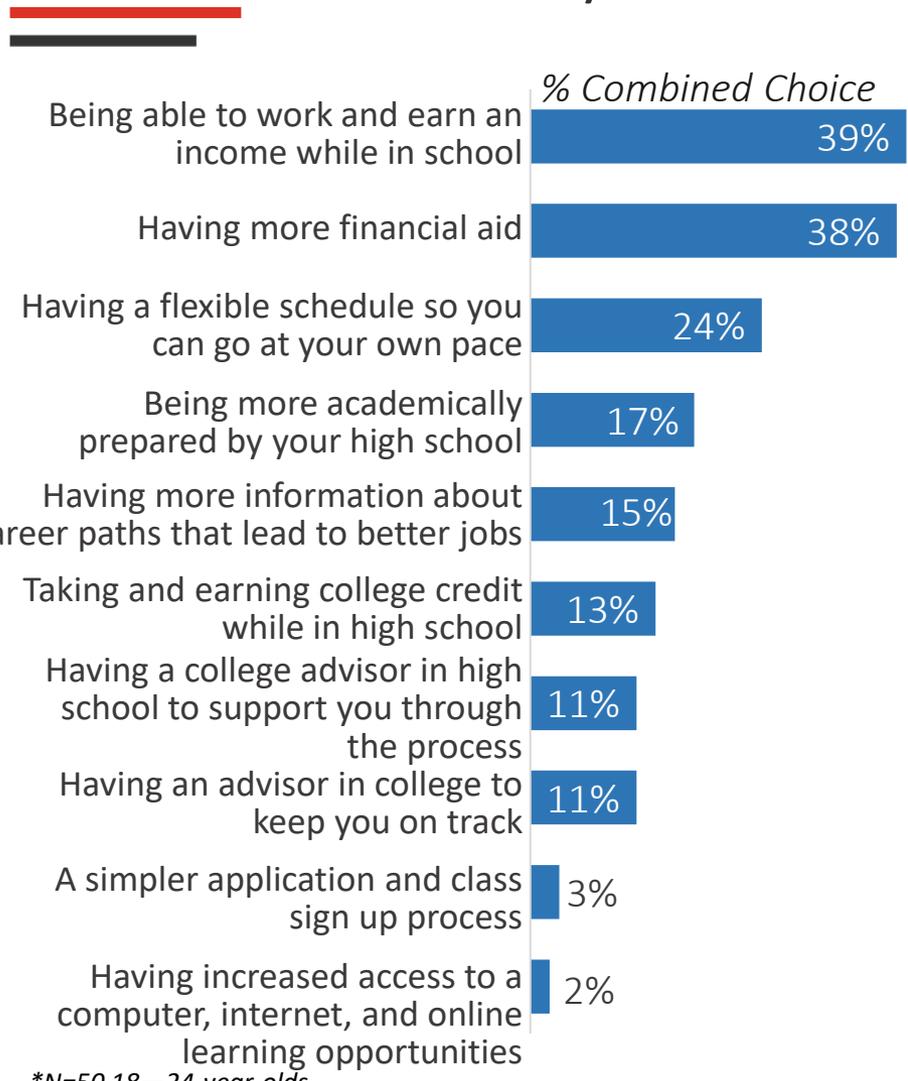


18–24-Year-Old Tennesseans

Among 18—24-year-old Tennesseans, more than one-quarter say they have completed a higher education program.



Among those who have not made up their minds or do not plan on attending, most point to improved personal finances as what would make them more likely to attend.



	Men (61%)	Women (39%)	White (77%)	Non-White (21%)	West (22%)	Middle (47%)	East (31%)
Being able to work and earn an income while in school	40%	36%	40%	37%	47%	31%	45%
Having more financial aid	38%	37%	36%	48%	49%	39%	27%
Having a flexible schedule so you can go at your own pace	23%	26%	31%	-	7%	31%	25%
Being more academically prepared by your high school	18%	17%	16%	26%	9%	19%	21%
Having more information about career paths that lead to better jobs	20%	7%	13%	13%	20%	22%	-
Taking and earning college credit while in high school	9%	20%	17%	-	6%	4%	33%
Having a college advisor in high school to support you through the process	15%	5%	11%	13%	13%	10%	11%
Having an advisor in college to keep you on track	5%	20%	10%	16%	-	7%	24%
A simpler application and class sign up process	4%	-	-	13%	-	6%	-
Having increased access to a computer, internet, and online learning opportunities	-	5%	3%	-	-	4%	-

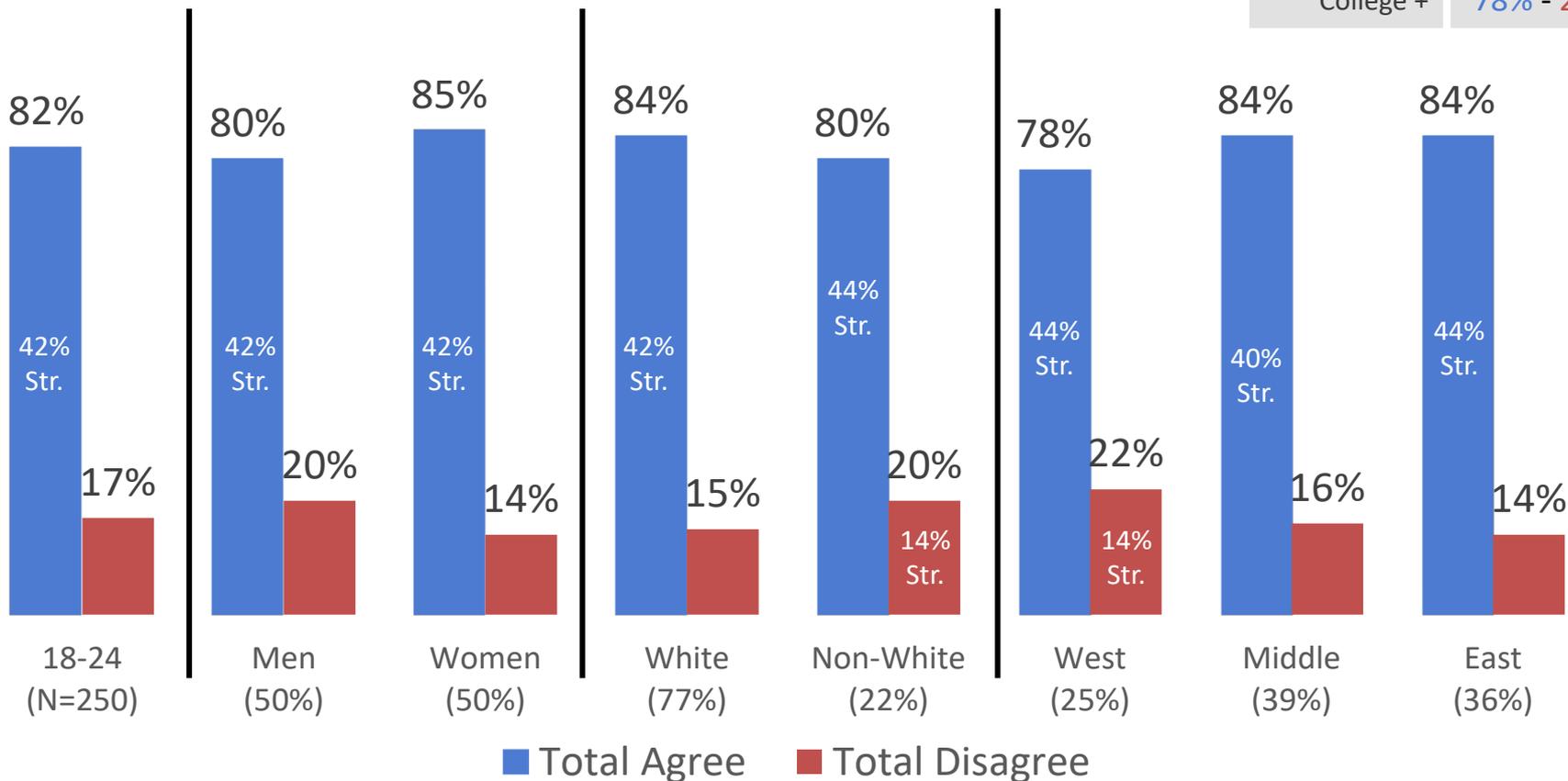
*N=50 18–24-year-olds

And, which TWO of the following would make you MORE LIKELY to attend a university, college, or community college?

An overwhelming majority of younger Tennesseans agree “getting a post-secondary education is a great way to discover which field I’m passionate about.”

Getting a post-secondary education is a great way to discover which field I'm passionate about.

% Agree - % Disagree	
HS or Less [^]	100% - 0%
Some College	70% - 30%
College +	78% - 22%

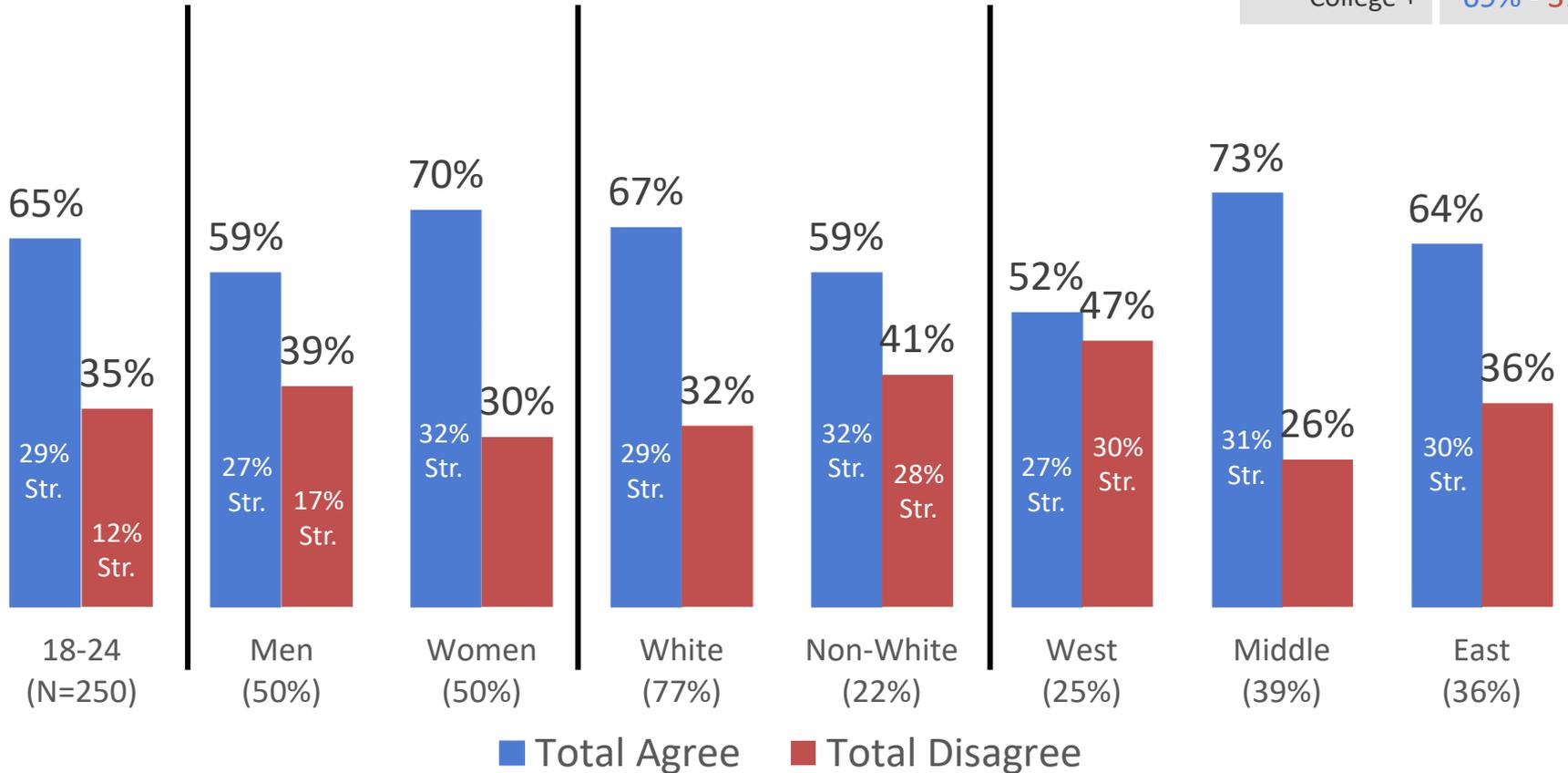


[^]Small Sample Size, N=10

Nearly two-thirds of younger Tennesseans agree they'd be willing to take on college debt if they were guaranteed a good job after graduating.

I would be willing to take on college debt if I could be guaranteed a good job after graduation.

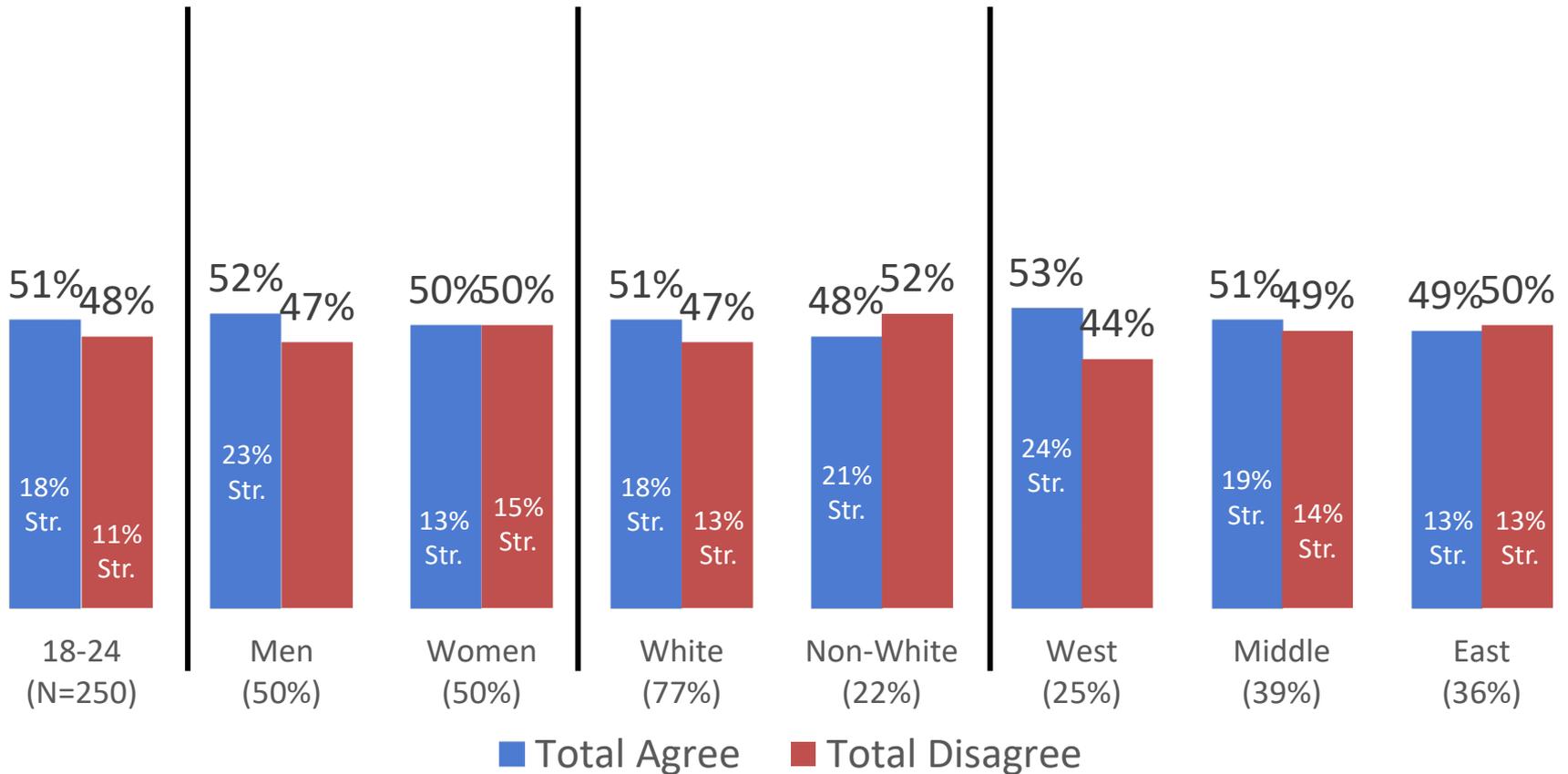
% Agree - % Disagree	
HS or Less [^]	100% - 0%
Some College	46% - 50%
College +	69% - 31%



[^]Small Sample Size, N=10

Yet, 18–24-year-old Tennesseans are pretty divided on the time it takes to get a post-secondary degree versus earning money and getting real-world experience.

It takes too long to get a post-secondary degree, and you are missing out on time you could be earning money and getting real-world experience.

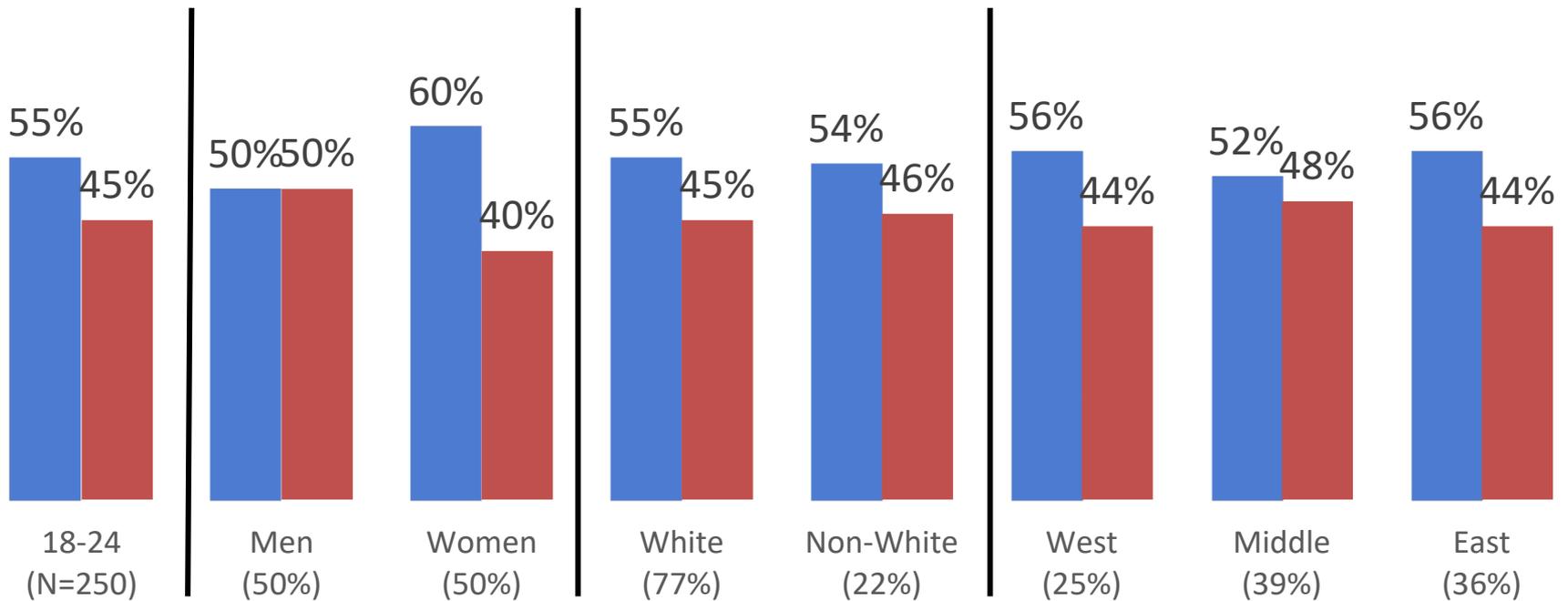


When posed as “worth the investment” —younger Tennesseans are pretty mixed.

Getting a college degree or credential is worth the investment because after I graduate, I will be able to be able to have a career that allows me to be financially stable

...Or...

Getting a college degree or credential is not worth the investment, because I cannot afford to go into debt when I am not guaranteed a future career path and there are plenty of jobs available

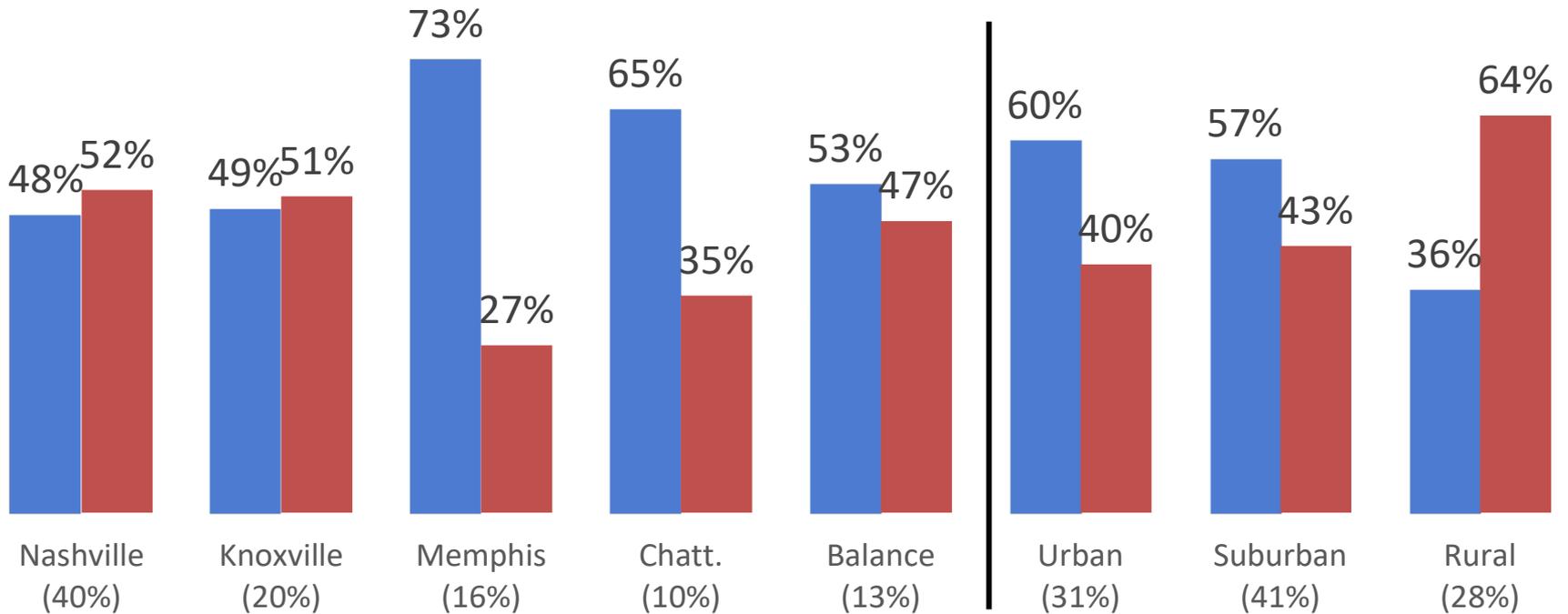


Urban and suburban younger Tennesseans are more likely than rural Tennesseans to think a degree is worth the investment.

Getting a college degree or credential is worth the investment because after I graduate, I will be able to be able to have a career that allows me to be financially stable

...Or...

Getting a college degree or credential is not worth the investment, because I cannot afford to go into debt when I am not guaranteed a future career path and there are plenty of jobs available



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