

Attitudes and Experiences of Republicans in America

Part One: Identity, Belonging, and Priorities



About

More in Common

For more information please visit
www.moreincommon.com
or contact us at us@moreincommon.com



The report was conducted by More in Common US, a nonpartisan research nonprofit that works to understand the forces driving us apart, find common ground, and bring people together to address our shared challenges.

We work in partnership with a wide range of civil society groups, as well as philanthropy, business, faith, education, media and government in order to connect people across lines of division.



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Methodology

2023 Survey of Registered Republicans

Results are shown as “Registered Republican voter average”.

More in Common partnered with international polling company YouGov to conduct online survey interviews with N = 800 registered Republican voters from August 8-14, 2023. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling of a subset of Republican registered voters in the 2022 Cooperative Election Study (CES) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is +/- 3.7 for registered Republican voters and higher for subgroups.

Note: Numbers in data visualizations are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures may total to larger or smaller than one-hundred percent due to rounding, and column totals may not match with individual data points in graphics due to rounding.



Introduction

Far too often in politics, our first question of people is what candidate they support. We organize tens of millions of people into clusters that we describe with frames such as "Trump voters" or "Biden voters" as the case may be. There is an obvious and important logic to this approach—knowing which candidate people support is a good predictor of how people will vote, and any organization interested in political outcomes in America wants to track and influence what candidates gain support among various segments of the population.

But we should be honest that this approach has significant limits. As we document in this report, Americans—including Republican voters—are far more than their political identities. For example, when we ask Republicans what elements of their identity are important to them, they are much more likely to point to things such as their family role or their identity as an American than they are to call out being a Republican. Similarly, only 7 percent of Republicans said that they felt a strong sense of belonging with a political organization whereas 40 percent said this about a faith community. As these data points underscore, categorizing people based on the candidates they support obscures some of the most salient feelings, attitudes, and experiences of the voters themselves.

We have seen this play out in our prior work on [perception gaps](#). These are the misperceptions we hold about what our political opposites believe. The most politically-active Americans, those most likely to think in terms of Trump voters or Biden voters, have the largest perception gaps. These inaccurate impressions, while not the only factor, push us to see the other side as enemies and foster a more hostile sense of 'us-versus-them'.

Our intent with this report, then, is to flip the conventional approach. Rather than start with which candidates Republicans support, we begin with an exploration of the core beliefs that animate Republicans' views and attitudes today. We launch this new initiative as a diverse slate of Republican candidates compete to be the nominee for president. In the coming months, we will roll out a series of reports that highlight the diversity of views and values present among Republicans. In time, we will do the same with Democrats and Independents. With all our research, we will include data on attitudes around candidates and political priorities, as these are undeniably relevant expressions of Americans' political identities, but over the course of this endeavor, we will keep our focus on the voters and their stories.



Key Findings

Republicans are far more than their political identity, and their stories are complex and nuanced.

- **Identities** Although 74 percent of Republicans self-identify as “conservative” or “very conservative,” relatively few Republicans feel their political identity is important when compared to other identities: only 25 percent said being Republican is “very important” whereas 59 percent say this about being American and 55 percent say this about their “family role.” Gender identity (49 percent) and religious identity (36 percent) were also seen as priority identities.
- **Sense of belonging** 77 percent of Republicans say there is a community (or set of communities) where they feel a strong sense of belonging. Republicans are most likely to cite a faith community (40 percent), followed by local neighborhood (31 percent), and workplace (25 percent) as where they feel this sense of belonging. 14 percent of Republicans identify an online community and 23 percent say there is no community where they feel a strong sense of belonging.
- **Pace of change** Republicans are more likely to be concerned about being left behind given America’s rapid pace of change than they are to be excited about potential new opportunities. 56 percent express worry they will be left behind versus 44 percent who express excitement.
- **Emotions towards America** Republicans express high levels of concern and frustration towards America. 80 percent feel America is becoming a more dangerous place; 79 percent feel frustrated towards America and 77 percent feel disappointed. Republicans are also slightly more pessimistic (44 percent) than optimistic (36 percent) about what the future holds for America.
- **Family story** When presented with a list of potential options to describe their family’s experience in America, 74 percent of Republicans identify with “A story of working hard, doing your part, and passing on to the next generation a better life;” 38 percent identify with “A story of duty, honor, and service to the nation;” and 35 percent identify with “A search for opportunity and a better life.” 13 percent identify with “A story of hardship or adversity” and 12 percent identify with “A story of just barely hanging on.”



Key Findings

Republican voters are concerned about the level of division in the country but believe Americans have more in common than what divides us.

- 79 percent of Republicans are worried “political divisions will lead to an increase in violence and hatred.”
- 76 percent say Americans have more in common than what divides us.
- 80 percent feel exhausted by the division in politics.
- 86 percent say they want both political parties to work together to solve problems for our country.
- 79 percent agree with the statement, “there are times when I can see both sides of an issue.”
- 80 percent say the deepest division in America is the division between liberals and conservatives, twice as high as the comparable figure for any other area of division. The next most prominent sources of division are divisions based on race (37 percent), class (37 percent), and religion (36 percent).

Most Republicans want a presidential candidate who prioritizes fighting for conservative policies over fighting against “woke” left ideology.

More generally, Republicans express much less appetite for culture war issues than it may appear based on national news coverage of these issues, though they still want a leader who will stay true to their beliefs.

- 67 percent of Republicans prefer a presidential candidate who prioritizes fighting for conservative policies on the economy, immigration, and crime”, whereas only 23 percent prefer a candidate who prioritizes “the fight against ‘woke’ left ideology.”
- 61 percent of Republicans would rather have a candidate “who will work to heal the conflicts in our culture”, whereas only 32 percent want a candidate “who will fight to win the conflicts in our culture.”
- 57 percent of Republicans want to see presidential candidates place less emphasis on “issues related to transgender students / individuals.”
- 53 percent of Republicans prefer a presidential candidate who “sticks to their beliefs and fights” versus 41 percent who prefer one who will “work with people from the other side of the aisle to get things done.”



Key Findings

Republicans identify candidates' ethics, their ability to stand up for what they believe under pressure, and their potential to unite the country as top considerations in the 2024 primary.

- Of the most important qualities when considering who to vote for in the 2024 primary, the ones most frequently selected are:
 - Is honest and ethical (65 percent)
 - Stands up for what they believe in no matter the pressure (53 percent)
 - Will unite the country (50 percent)

Donald Trump is the preferred candidate by a significant margin, though most candidates are largely unknown at this point.

- 53 percent of Republicans said they would vote for Donald Trump if the Republican primary were held today. 16 percent said Ron DeSantis and no other candidate cleared 10 percent. Vivek Ramaswamy received 6 percent, Mike Pence and Tim Scott 4 percent, and Nikki Haley 3 percent. 10 percent don't know.
- Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis, and Mike Pence are the only candidates where a majority (88 percent, 60 percent, and 56 percent respectively) of Republicans said they felt they knew them “moderately well” or “very well.”

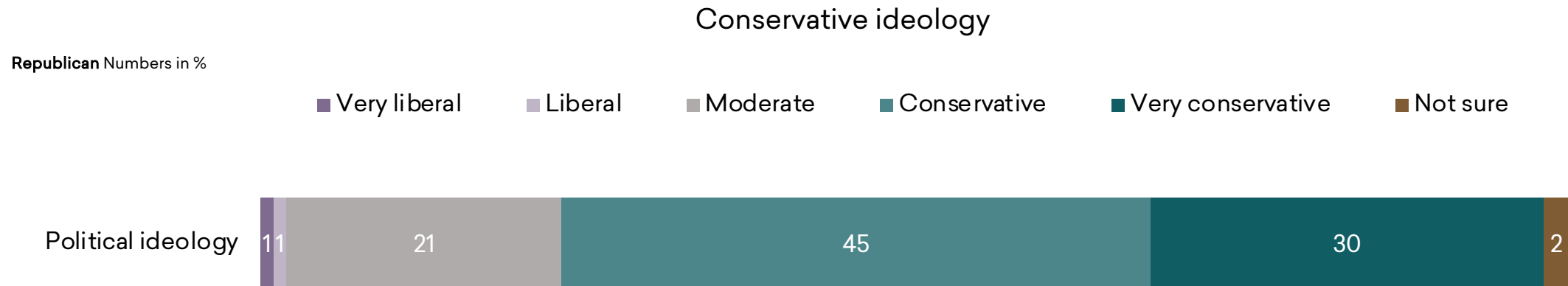


Identity, belonging, & attitudes towards America

Republicans are far more than their political identity, and their stories are complex and nuanced.



3 in 4 Republicans self-identify as conservative, or very conservative.



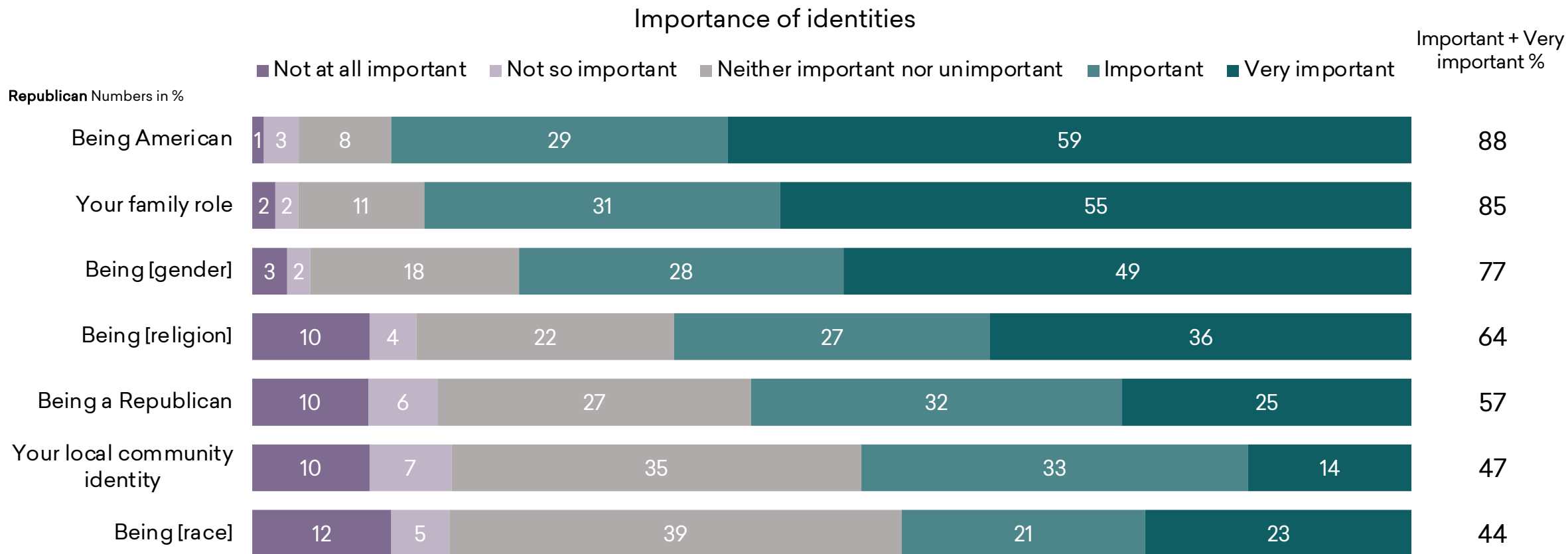
Survey question: In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

Source: More in Common

Note: Numbers in data visualizations are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures may total to larger or smaller than one-hundred percent due to rounding, and column totals may not match with individual data points in graphics due to rounding.



Republicans are most likely to identify their American identity and their family role as important parts of their identity.



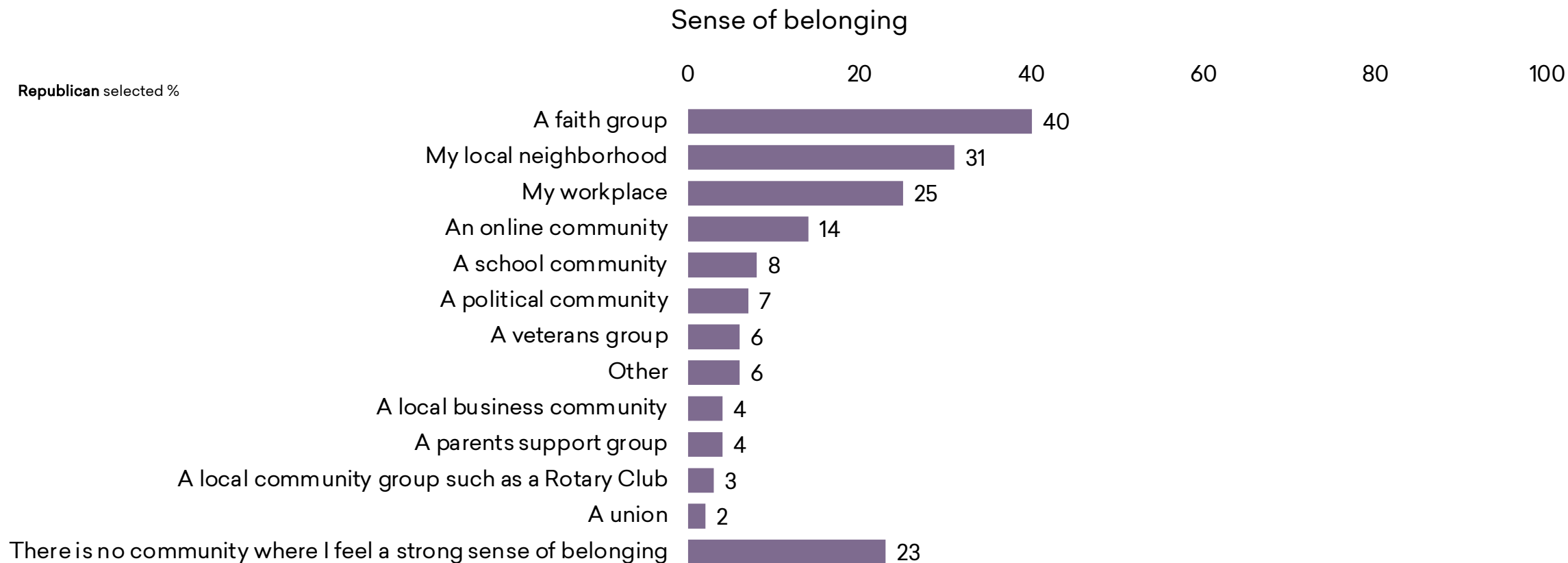
Survey question: How important to you are each of the following parts of your identity?

Source: More in Common

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Faith groups are the communities where Republicans are most likely to feel a strong sense of belonging, followed by their local neighborhood and workplace.



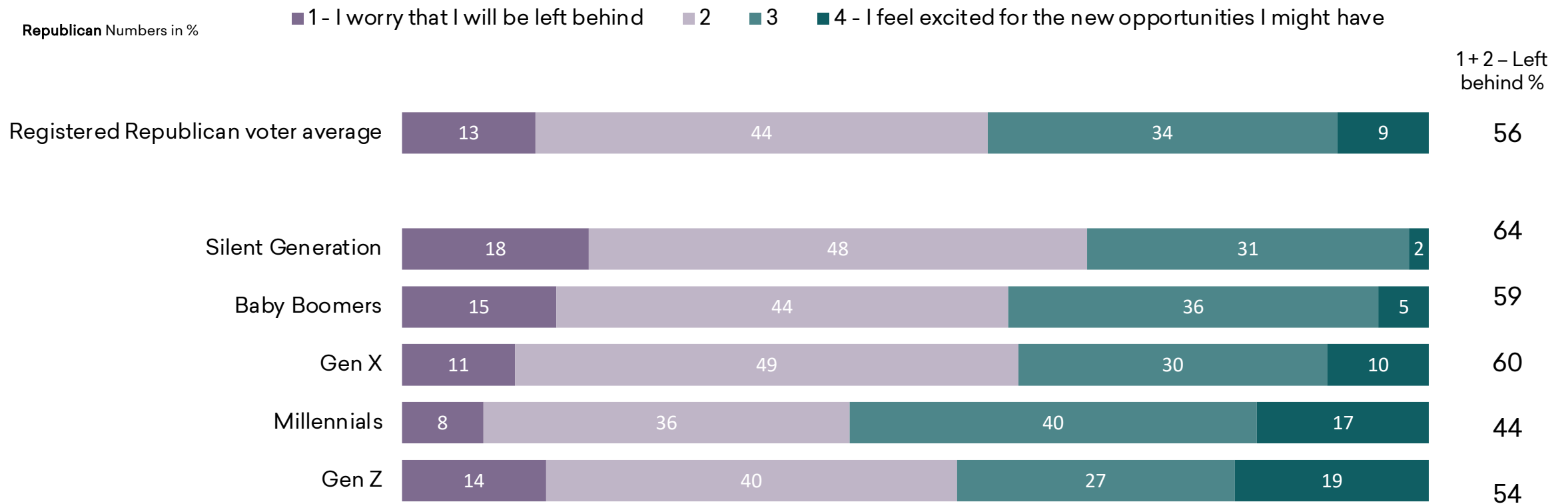
Survey question: Having a sense of belonging means you feel accepted and valued. Outside of your family and friends, please select the community or communities to which you feel the strongest sense of belonging. Select up to 3.

Source: More in Common



Except for Millennials, Republicans of all generations are concerned about being left behind when thinking about America's rapid pace of change.

Feelings towards the rapid pace of change in America



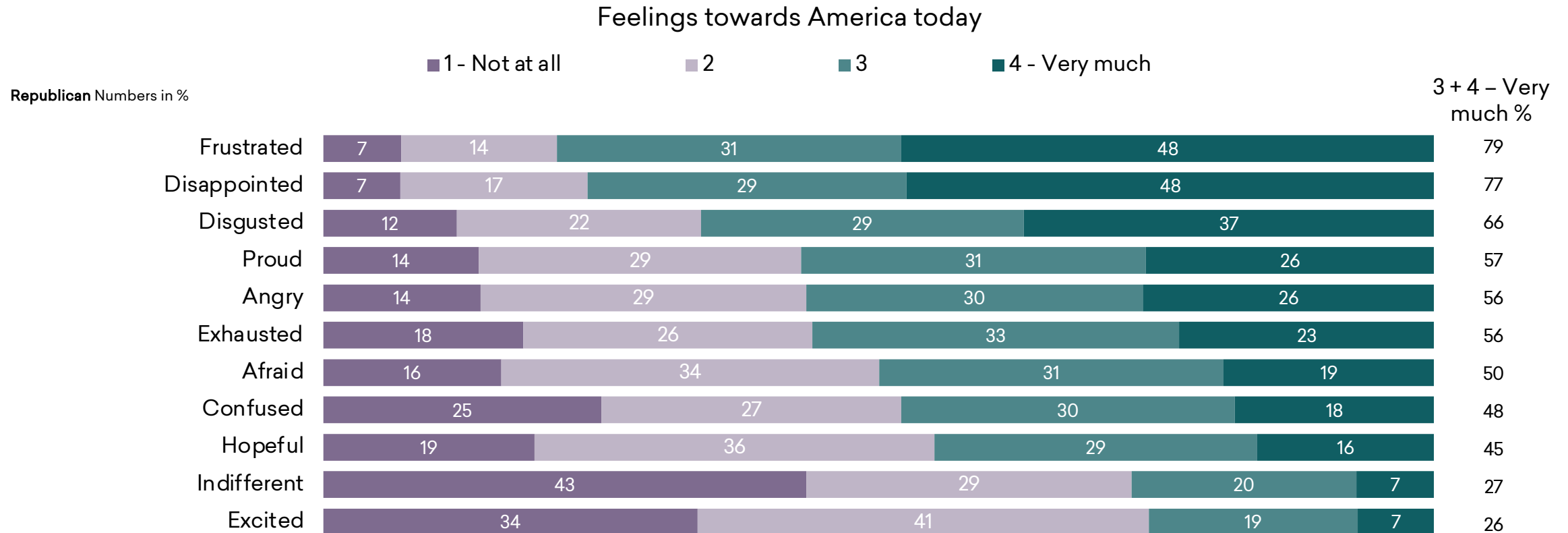
Survey question: Please say how well the following statements reflect your views using the scale below. When I think about the rapid pace of change in America...

Source: More in Common

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Close to 8 in 10 Republicans feel frustrated and disappointed in America today.

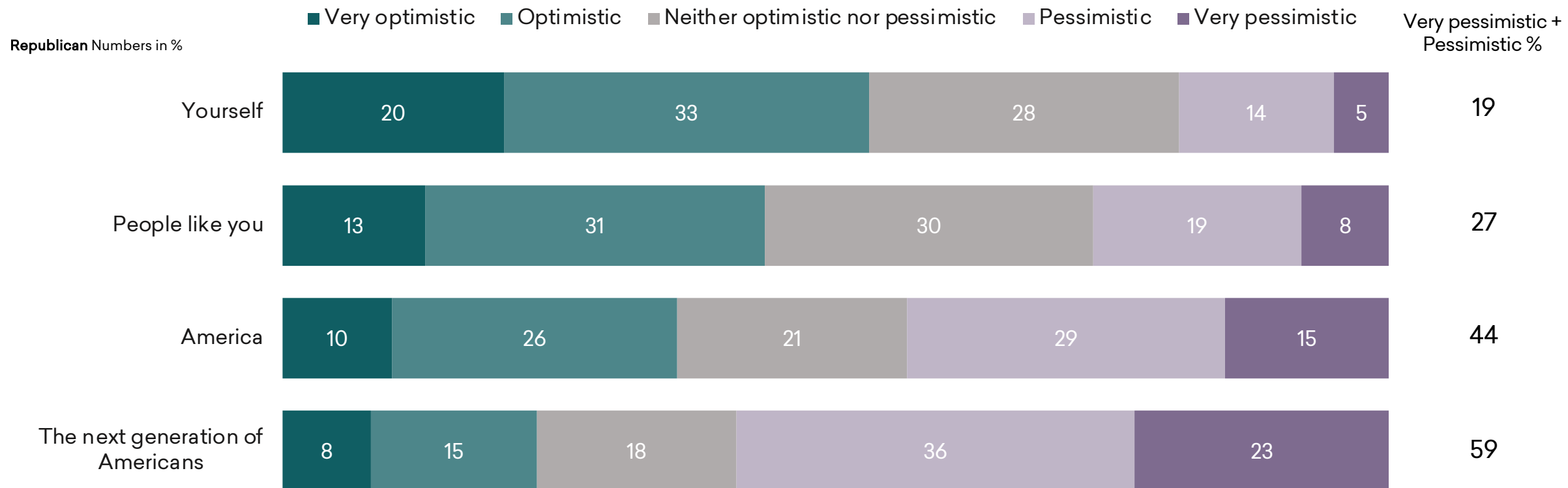


Survey question: To what extent do each of the following reflect your feelings toward America today?
Source: More in Common



Although Republicans are mostly optimistic about what the future holds for themselves, they are less hopeful about what might be in store for the nation and for the next generation of Americans.

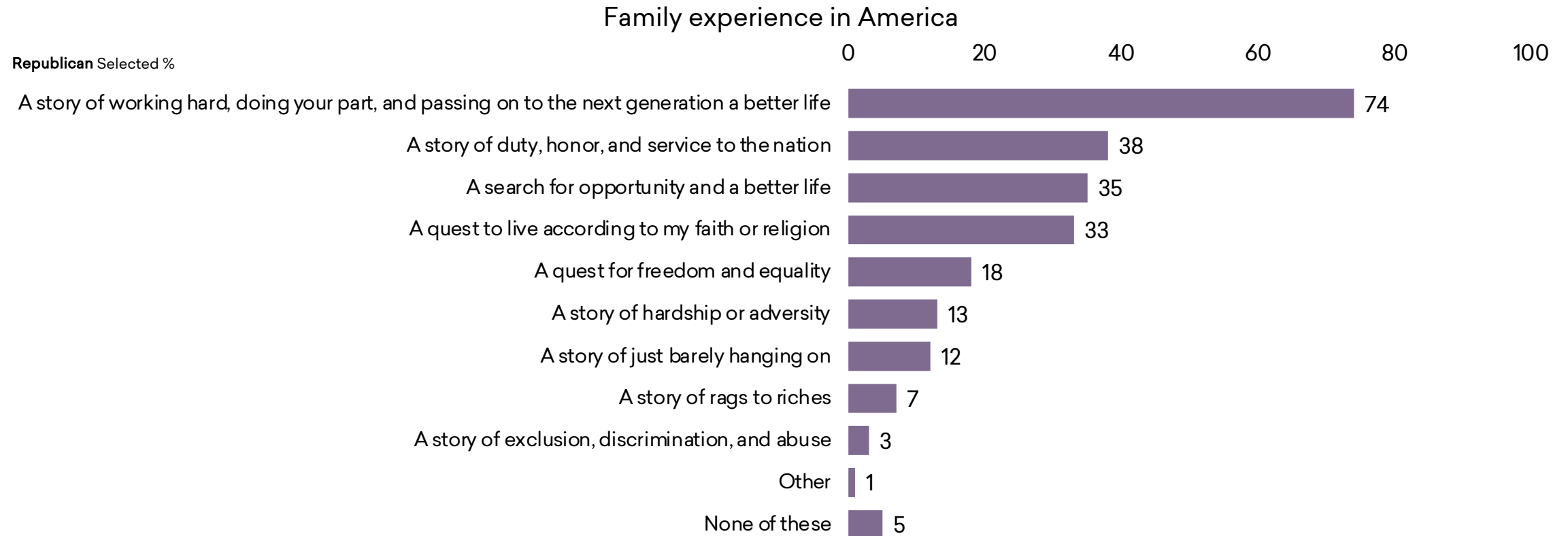
Feelings of optimism or pessimism about the future



Survey question: To what extent do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about what the future holds for...
Source: More in Common



7 in 10 Republicans say that a story of working hard and passing on to the next generation a better life resonates with their family's experience in America.



Survey question: Please read the following phrases. Which of the following statements best describe your family's experience in America? Select up to 3.
Source: More in Common

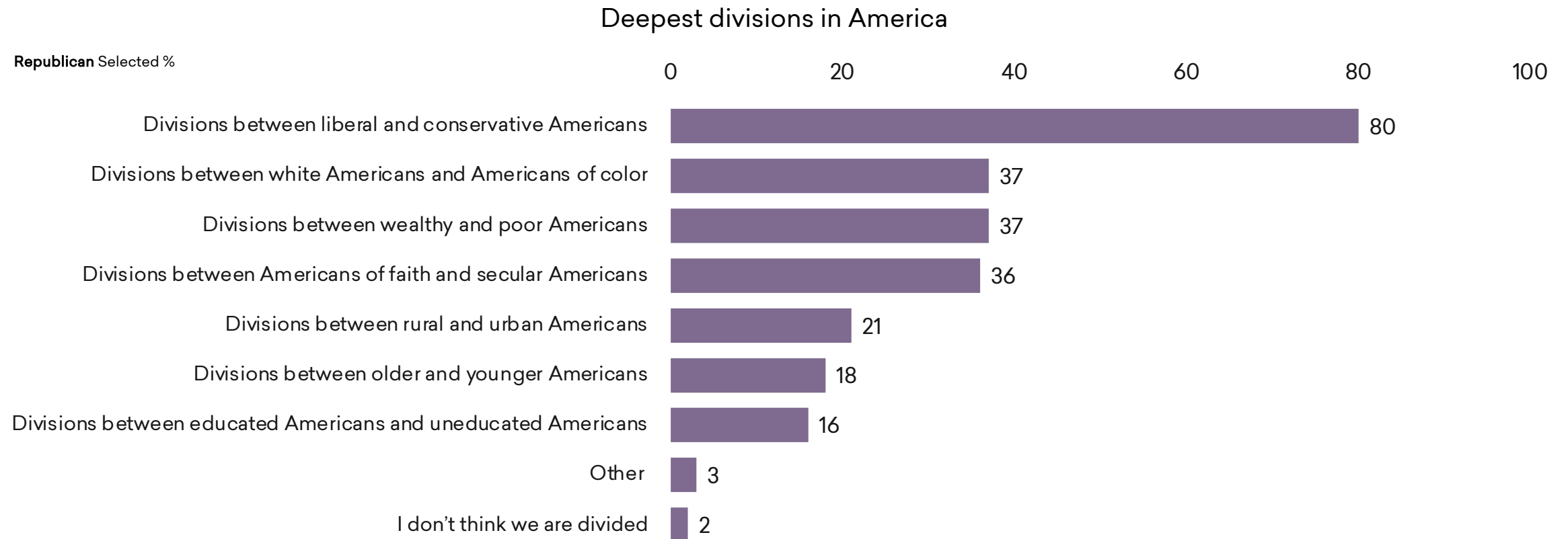


Attitudes towards political divisions

Republican voters are concerned about the level of division but believe Americans have more in common than what divides us.



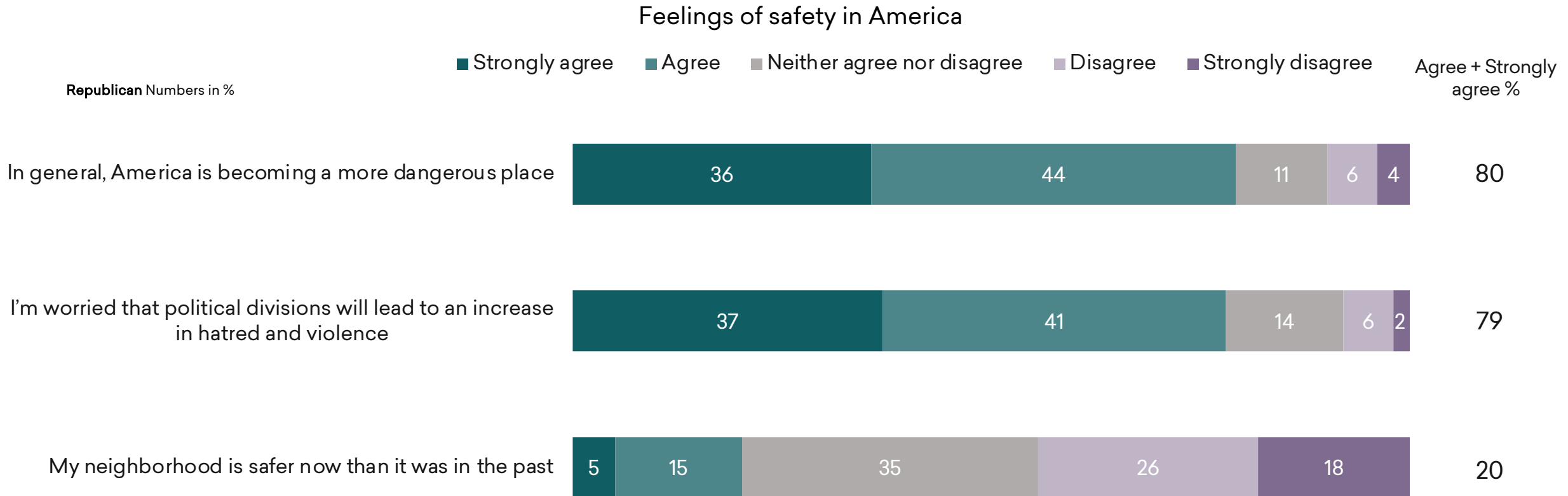
80% of Republicans view the division between liberals and conservatives as the deepest division in the country, more than twice as high as other types of division.



Survey question: What do you think are the deepest divisions in America, if any? Select up to 3.
Source: More in Common



Most Republicans feel America is becoming more dangerous and that political divisions will lead to more hatred and violence.



Survey question: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Source: More in Common

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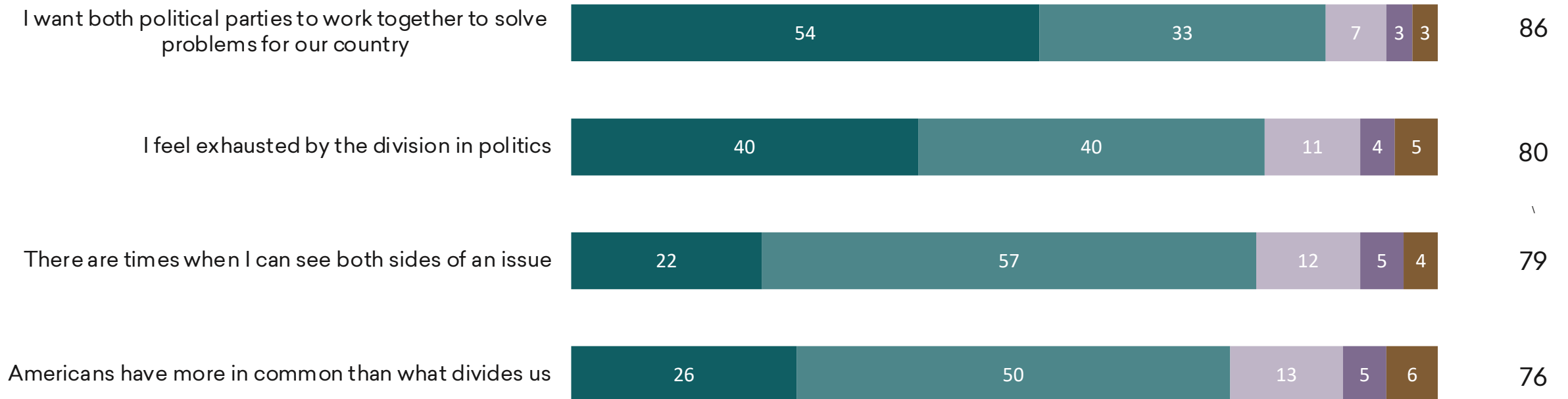
Most Republicans are exhausted by political division and feel that Americans still have more in common than what divides us.

Feelings towards political divisions in America

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Republican Numbers in %

Agree + Strongly agree %



Survey question: Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Source: More in Common

Note: Numbers in data visualizations are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures may total to larger or smaller than one-hundred percent due to rounding, and column totals may not match with individual data points in graphics due to rounding.



Attitudes towards conflicts in American culture

Republicans express much less
appetite for fighting conflicts in
culture than is commonly
presented in national news
coverage.



Republicans prefer a presidential candidate who prioritizes advancing conservative policies and healing the conflicts in our culture over one who wants to fight "woke" ideology and win the culture wars.

“Republicans need a presidential candidate who/who will...”

Republican Numbers in %

- Prioritizes the fight against “woke” left ideology
- Prioritizes fighting for conservative policies on the economy, immigration, and crime
- Don't know

Registered Republican voter average



- Fight to win the conflicts in our culture
- Work to heal the conflicts in our culture
- Don't know

Registered Republican voter average



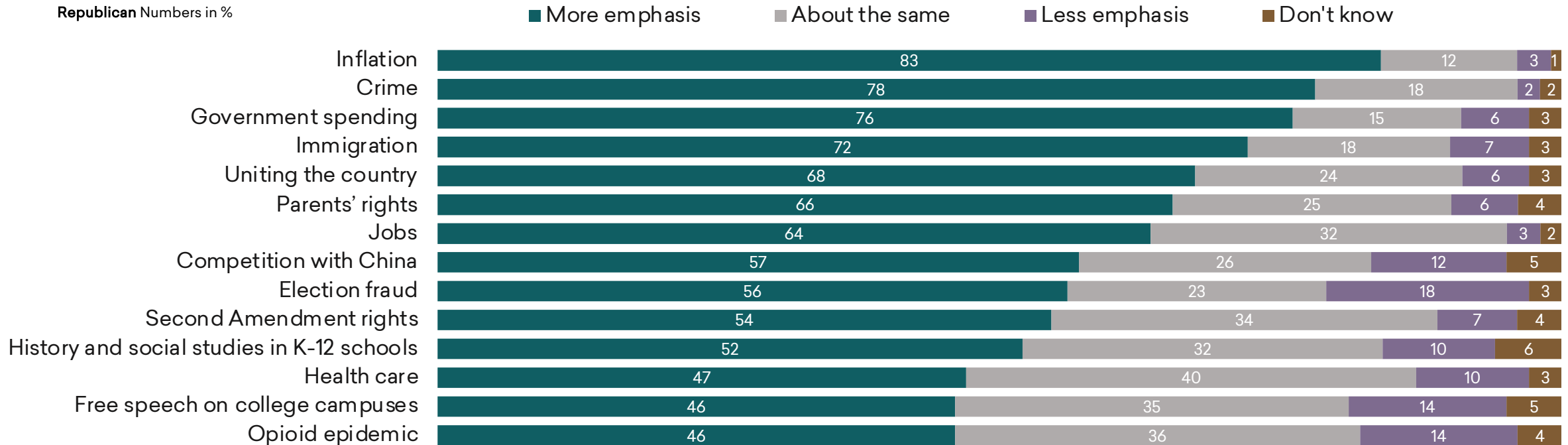
Survey question: Survey question: When thinking about the 2024 presidential election, which do you agree with more? “Republicans need a presidential candidate who/who will...”

Source: More in Common



Republicans want candidates running to be the Republican nominee for president to put *more* emphasis on inflation, crime, government spending, and immigration.

Issues where Republicans want to see [more/the same/less] emphasis from presidential candidates



Survey question: Considering each of the following issues, do you think candidates running to be the Republican nominee for president should put more emphasis on it, less emphasis on it, or are things about right as they are?

Source: More in Common

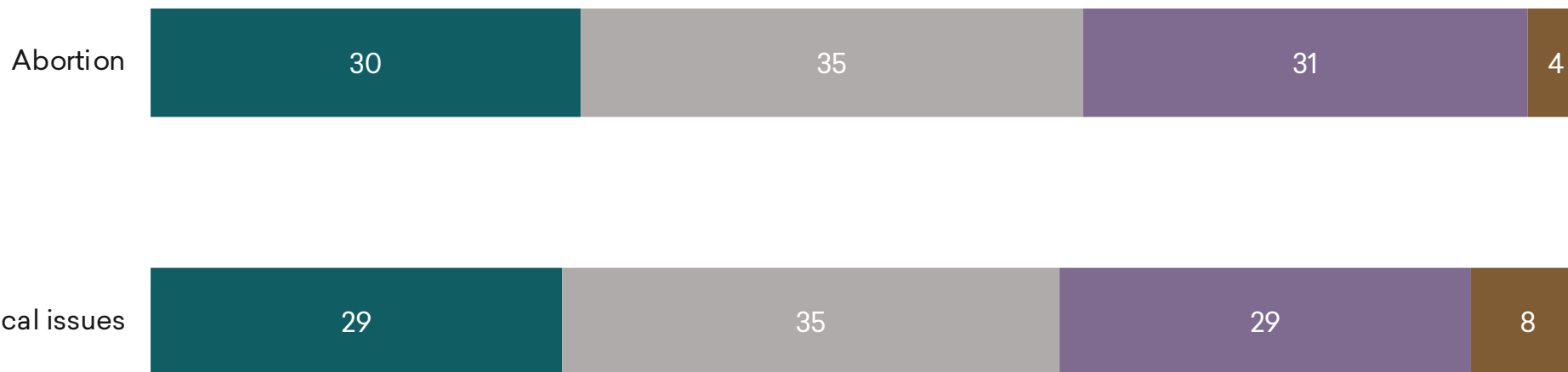


Republicans are *split* over how much candidates should focus on the issues of abortion and companies engaging in political issues.

Issues where Republicans want to see [more/the same/less] emphasis from presidential candidates

Republican Numbers in %

■ More emphasis ■ About the same ■ Less emphasis ■ Don't know



Survey question: Considering each of the following issues, do you think candidates running to be the Republican nominee for president should put more emphasis on it, less emphasis on it, or are things about right as they are?

Source: More in Common

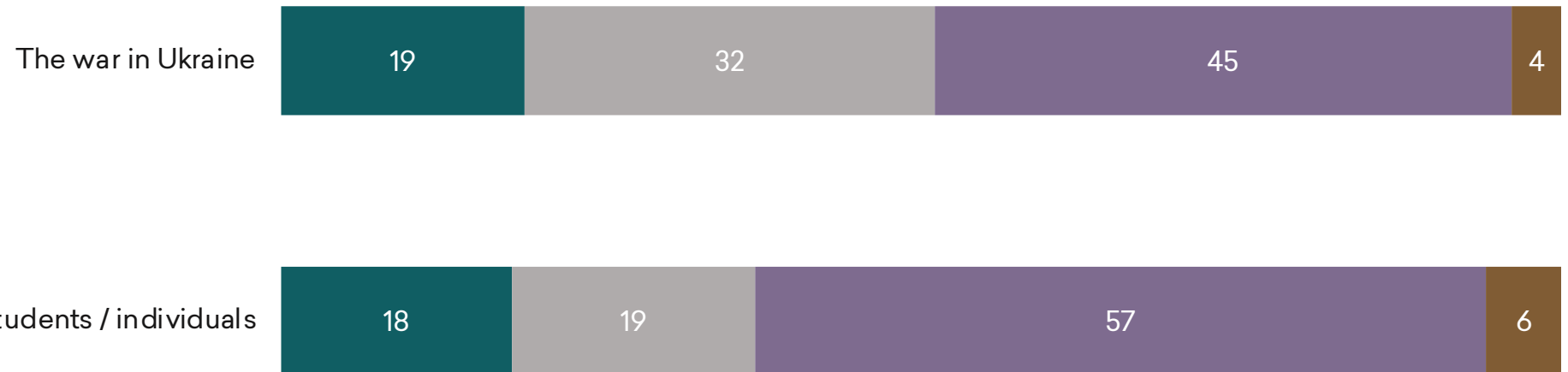


A majority (57%) of Republicans want candidates to put *less* emphasis on issues related to transgender students/individuals; a plurality (45%) feel the same about the war in Ukraine.

Issues where Republicans want to see [more/the same/*less*] emphasis from presidential candidates

Republican Numbers in %

■ More emphasis ■ About the same ■ Less emphasis ■ Don't know



Survey question: Considering each of the following issues, do you think candidates running to be the Republican nominee for president should put more emphasis on it, less emphasis on it, or are things about right as they are?

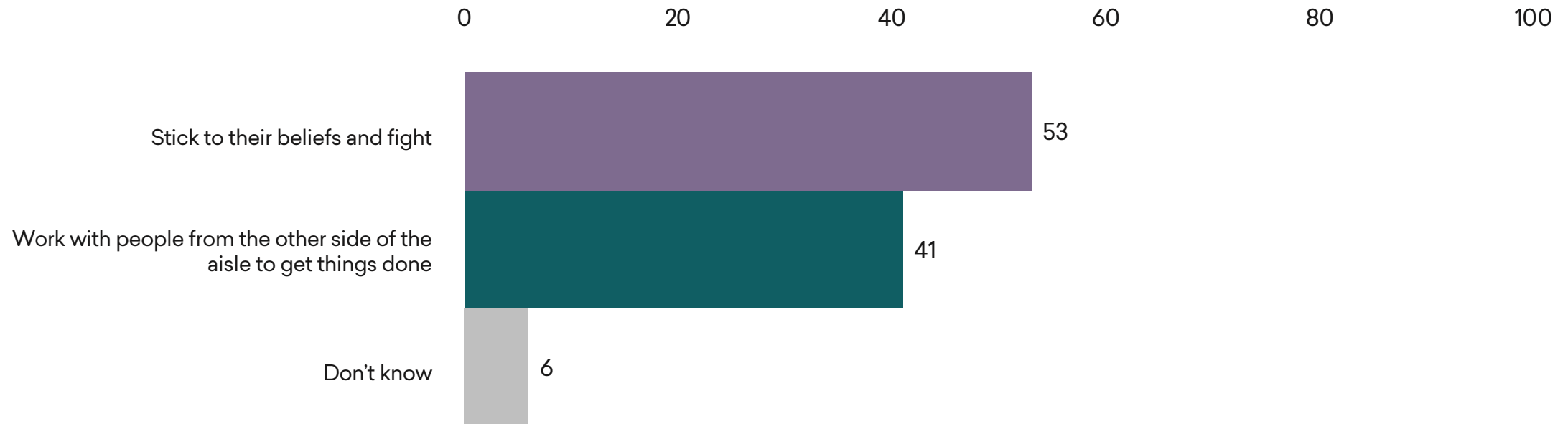
Source: More in Common



Although Republicans do not want a presidential candidate who prioritizes conflicts in our culture, about half want to see their candidate be willing to stick to his or her beliefs and fight in a more general sense.

Stick to beliefs and fight vs. work with people across the aisle

Republican Numbers in %



Survey question: When thinking about the 2024 presidential election, which do you agree with more? "Republicans need a presidential candidate who will..."
Source: More in Common



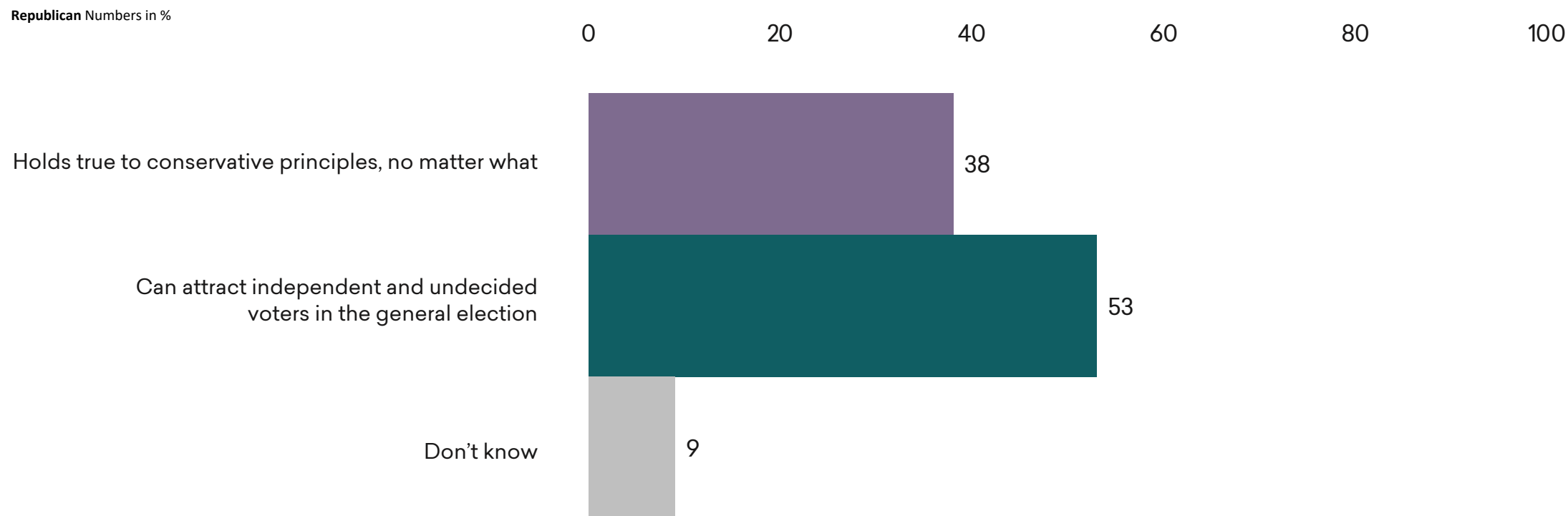
Preferences for the 2024 presidential primary

Donald Trump is the preferred candidate to be the Republican nominee for president, though most other candidates are largely unknown at this point.



About half of Republicans prefer a presidential candidate who can attract independent and undecided voters in the 2024 general election over one who holds true to conservative principles no matter what.

Attitudes towards 2024 presidential candidate

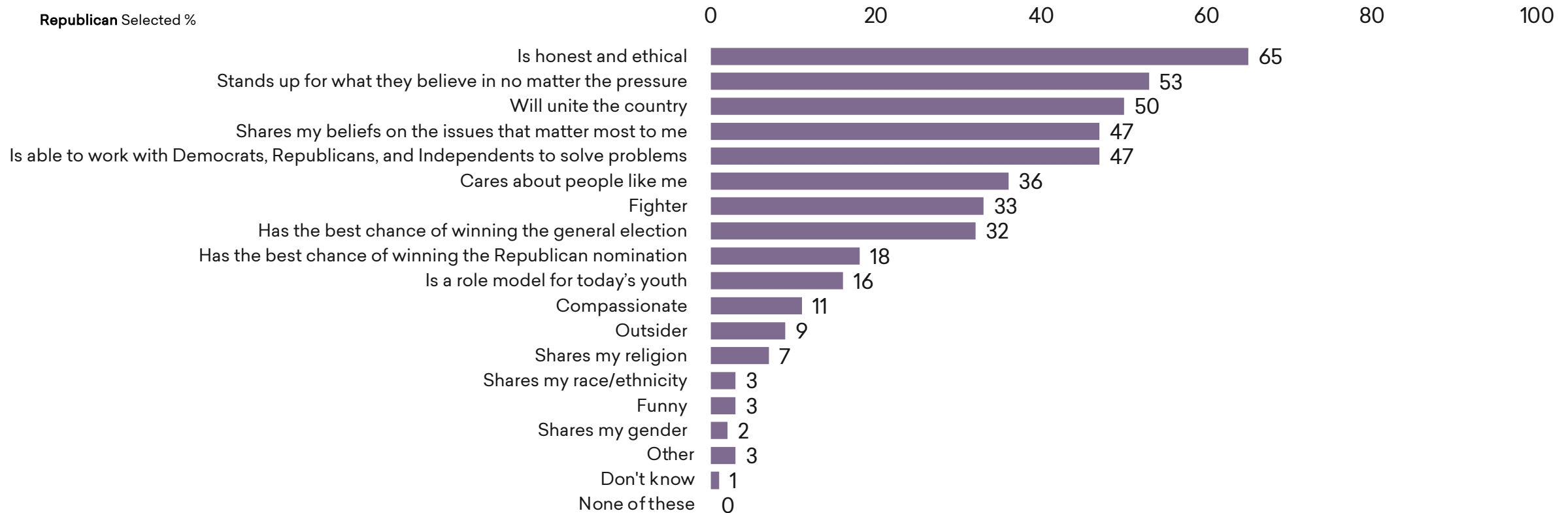


Survey question: When considering who you will vote for in the 2024 Republican primary, which of the following statements do you agree with more? "It's most important to support a candidate who..."
Source: More in Common



Republicans identify candidates' ethics, their ability to stand up for what they believe under pressure, and their potential to unite the country as top considerations in the 2024 primary.

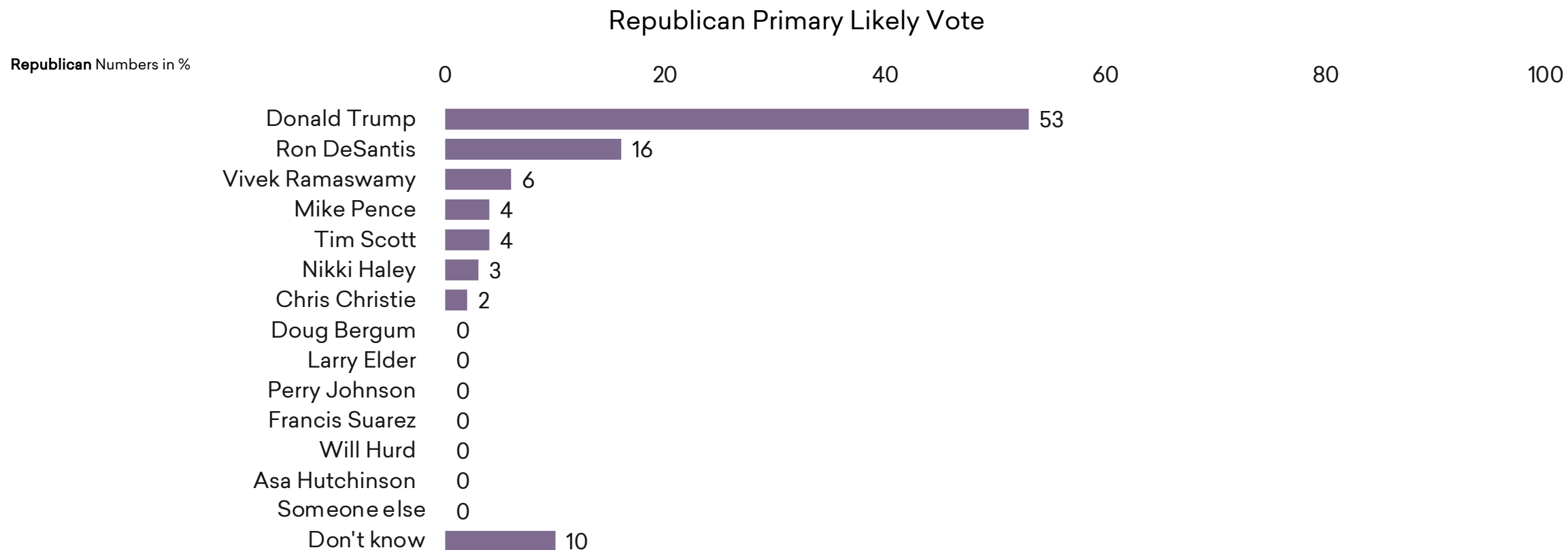
Most important qualities when considering who to vote for in the Republican primary



Survey question: When considering who you will vote for in the 2024 Republican primary, which of the following qualities are most important to you? Select all that apply.
Source: More in Common



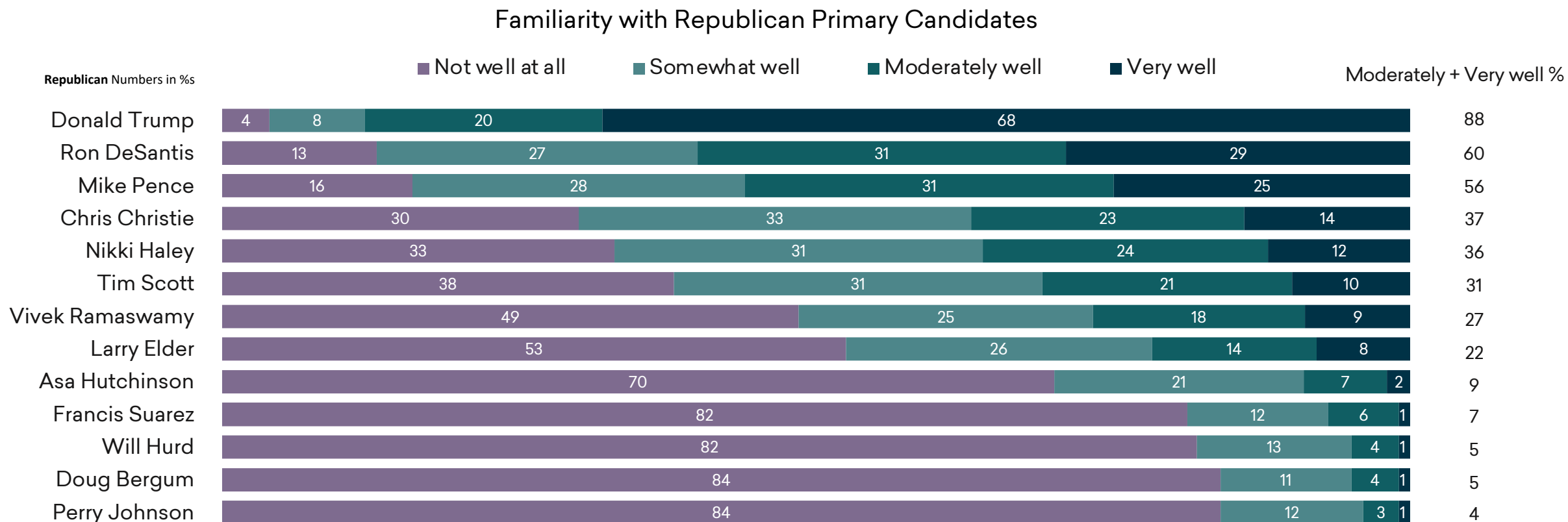
53% of Republicans say they would vote for Donald Trump if the Republican primary were held today; 16% chose Ron DeSantis, while 10% say they don't know.



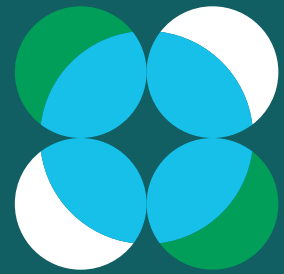
Survey question: If the election for the Republican nominee for president were held today, which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?...
Source: More in Common



Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis, and Mike Pence are the only candidates where a majority of Republicans say they feel they know them moderately or very well.



Survey question: How well do you feel you know the candidates running to be the Republican nominee for President?
Source: More in Common



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