



SCAN Rural Voters National Survey Key Findings

November 2022

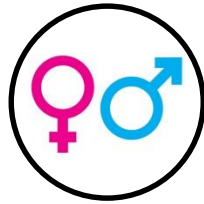


Methodology

New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=1,006 registered voters in rural counties nationwide from November 9-20, 2022. Rural counties are defined as those considered “mostly rural” or “completely rural” by the U.S. Census. In addition, respondents had to identify as living in a “rural area” or “small town.” Interviews were conducted online for the national sample, and online and via live telephone interviews (both cell phones and landlines) for the target state samples. Interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the country by state. Quotas were set for key demographic sub-groups, such as gender and age.

The credibility interval is $\pm 3.5\%$ for the overall national sample. The credibility interval will vary for sub-groups.

Key Demographics of Rural Voters Nationally



Gender

Male
Female

46%
54%



Parent Status

Parent/Guardian 29%
No children at home 71%



Age

18-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

20%
13%
15%
19%
33%



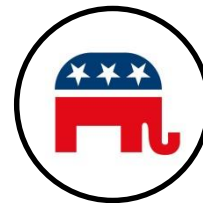
Community

Rural 72%
Small Town 28%



Ethnicity

White 85%
Total Non-White 15%



Party

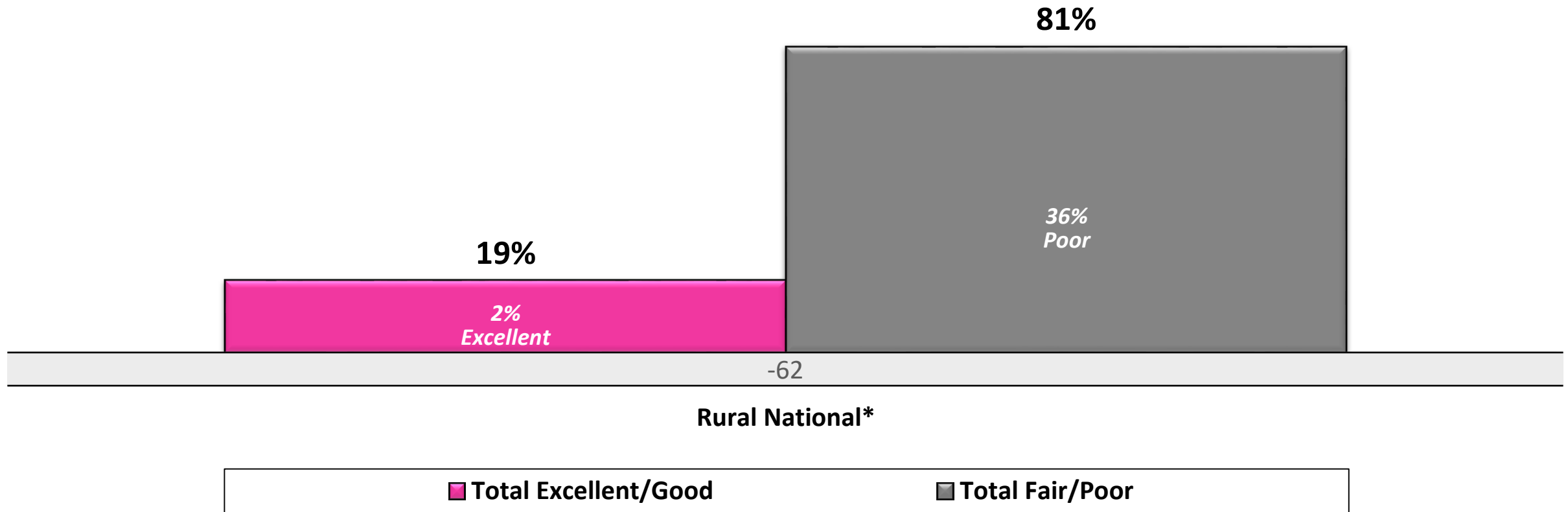
Republican 48%
Independent 21%
Democrat 31%



State of the Economy



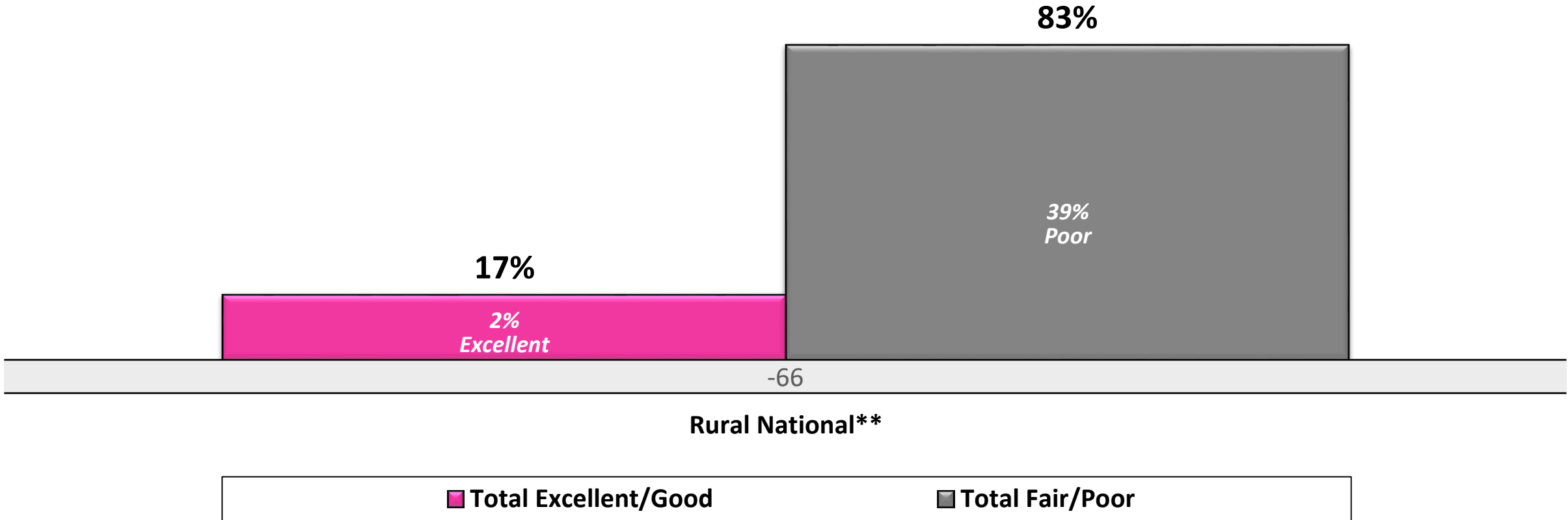
More than four-in-five rural voters say the economy “in their state” is fair or poor.



How would you rate the current state of the economy in your state? Would you say it is...

*National Sample A, N=506

The response is basically the same when asked to characterize the rural economy in their state.



How would you rate the current state of the economy in rural areas of your state? Would you say it is...

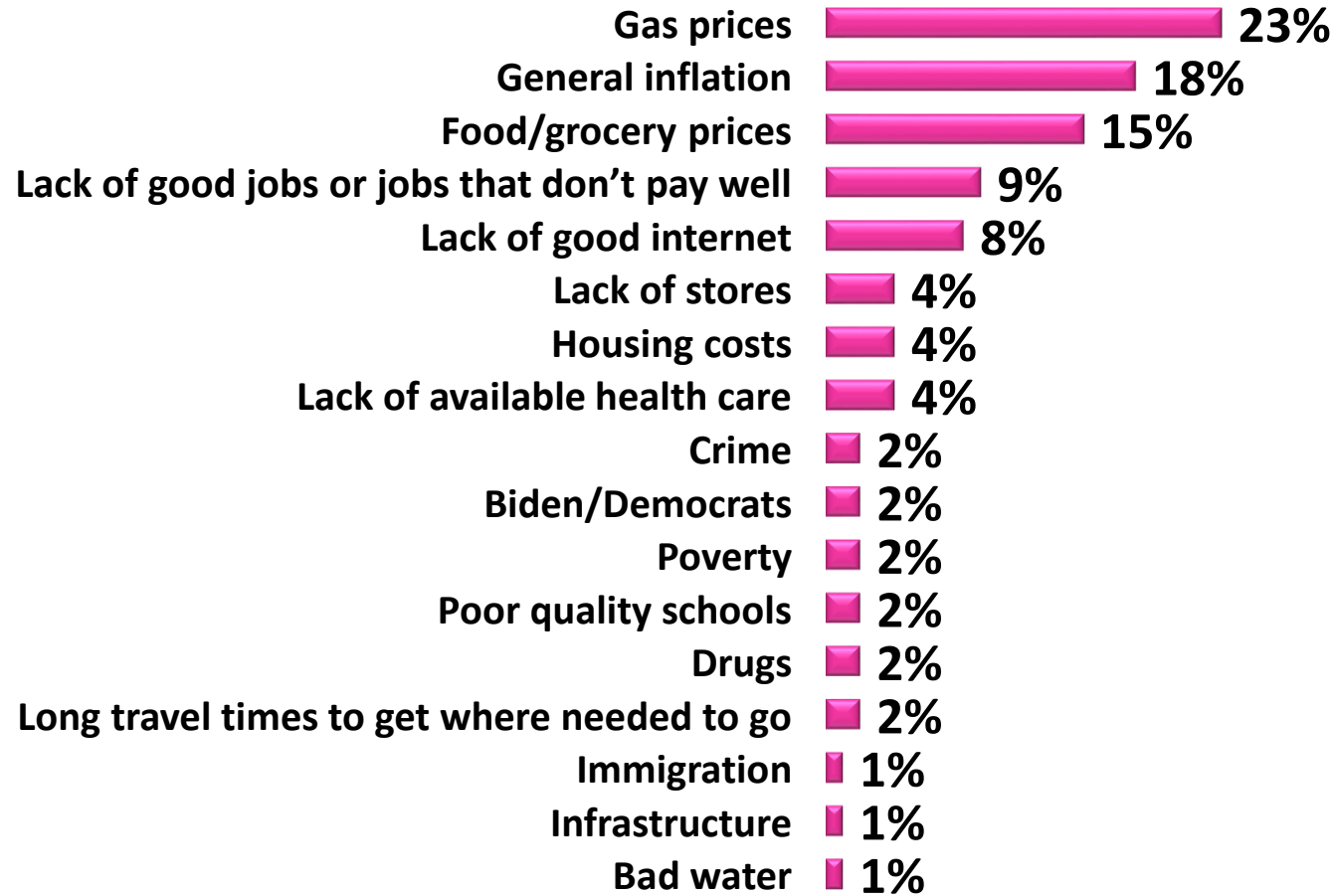
**National Sample B, N=500



Challenges Facing Rural Families

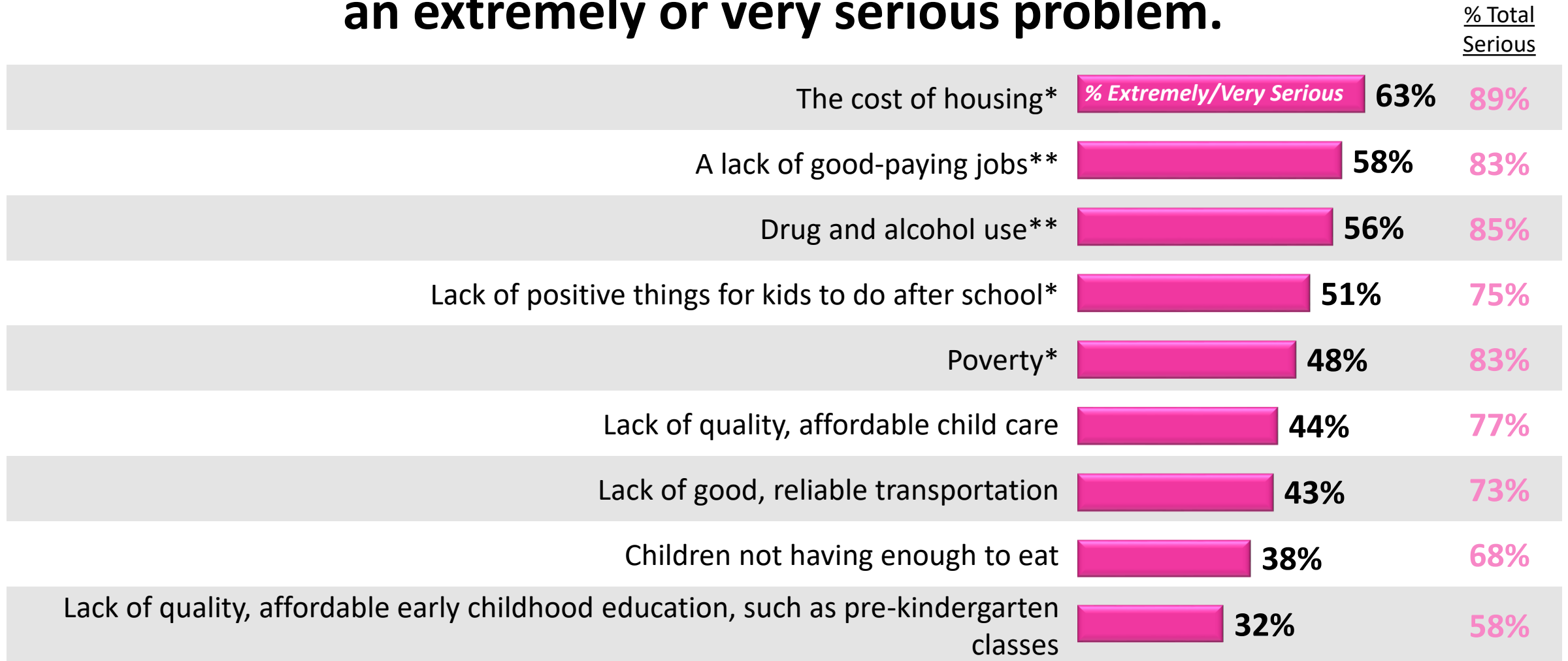


Rural voters say the biggest problems facing families in rural areas are high prices and inflation – including food prices.



What would you say are the one or two biggest problems facing families living in rural areas?

Over three-fifths of rural voters nationally say the cost of housing is an extremely or very serious problem.



For each one of the following, please indicate how serious a problem you think that is in your area. Is it extremely serious, very serious, somewhat serious, not really serious or not a problem in your area?

*National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500

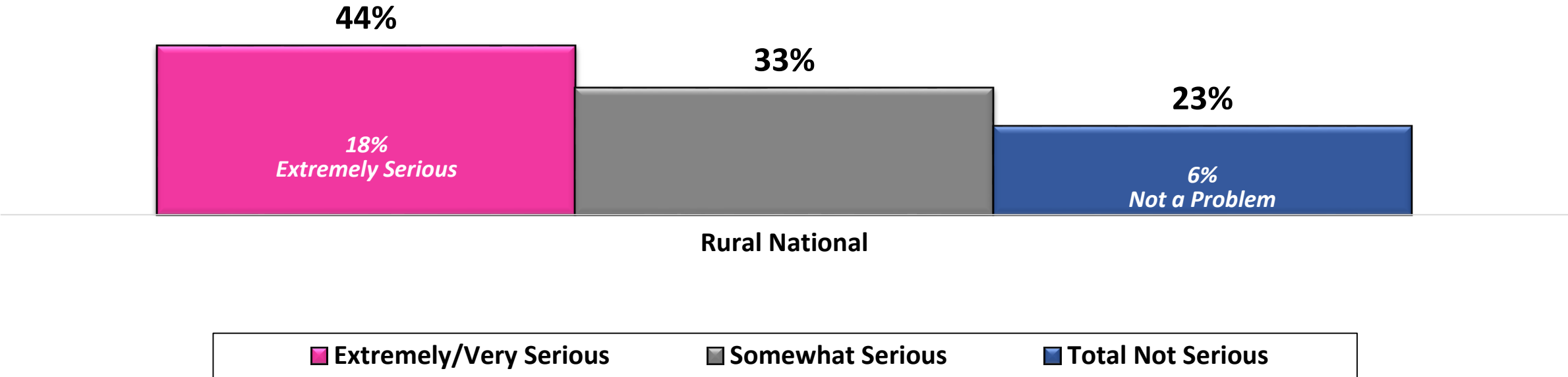


Child Care and Early Education



Most voters cite the lack of quality, affordable child care as a serious problem in their area.

Lack of quality, affordable child care



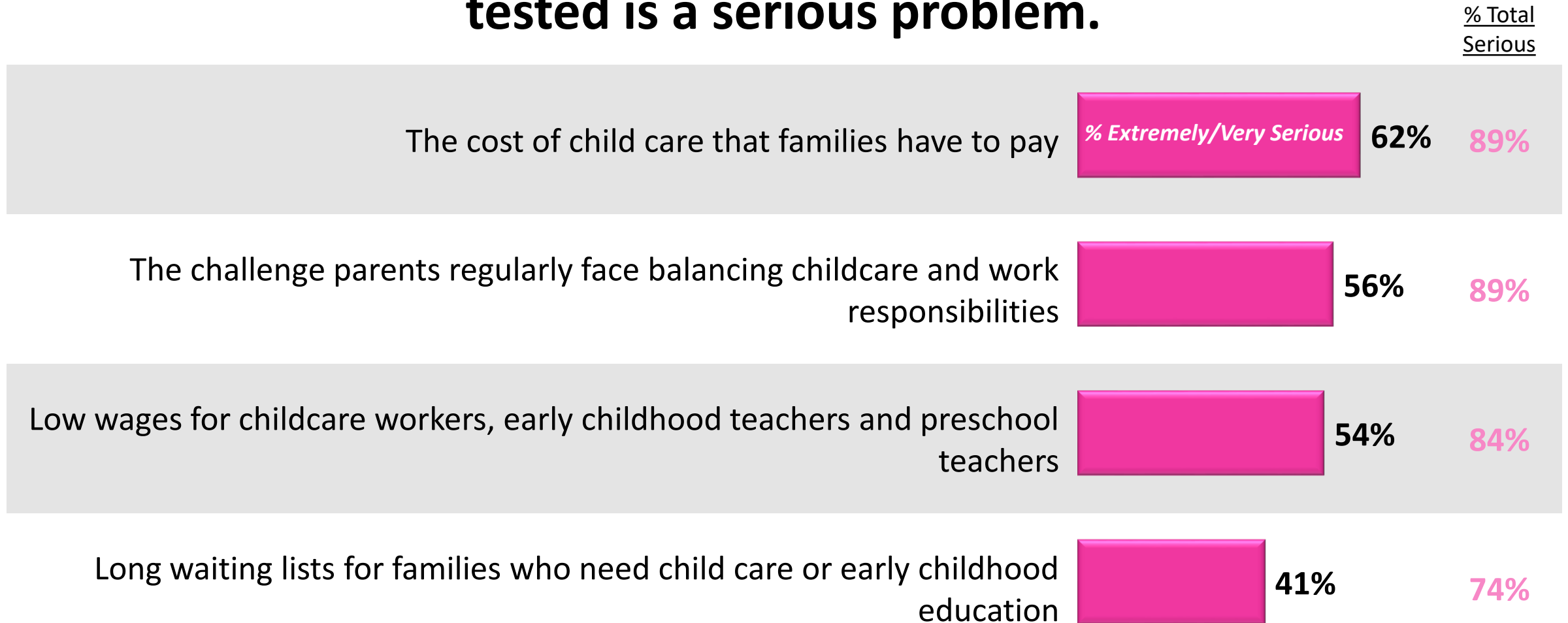
For each one of the following, please indicate how serious a problem you think that is in your area. Is it extremely serious, very serious, somewhat serious, not really serious or not a problem in your area?

Among rural voters nationally, the lack of quality, affordable child care is seen as a bigger problem by those who are younger, women, parents, and have younger children.

<i>Lack of quality, affordable child care</i>	% Extremely/Very Serious
Men 18-34	51%
Men 35-54	47%
Men 55+	33%
Women 18-34	64%
Women 35-54	55%
Women 55+	38%
Moms	57%
Dads	56%
Non-Parents	39%
Age of Kids – Less than Kindergarten	67%
Age of Kids – Kindergarten/Elementary School	56%
Age of Kids – Middle or High School	52%
Working Men	46%
Working Women	59%

For each one of the following, please indicate how serious a problem you think that is in your area. Is it extremely serious, very serious, somewhat serious, not really serious or not a problem in your area?

Majorities of rural voters say that every aspect of child care we tested is a serious problem.



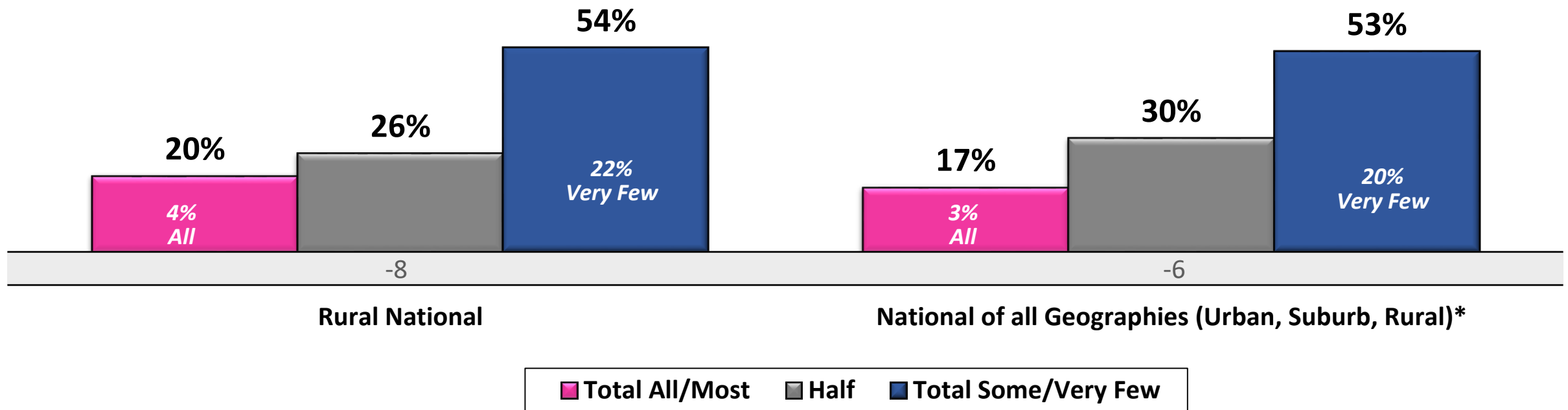
Thinking just about issues related to child care and early childhood education from birth to age five, how much of a problem do you think each one of the following is in your area?

Rural women, regardless of income, are more likely to say that child care issues are extremely or very serious problems.

<i>% Extremely/Very Serious</i>	Total	<\$40K Men	\$40K+ Men	<\$40K Women	\$40K+ Women
The cost of child care that families have to pay	62%	56%	55%	68%	65%
The challenge parents regularly face balancing childcare and work responsibilities	56%	51%	49%	60%	63%
Low wages for childcare workers, early childhood teachers and preschool teachers	54%	52%	48%	58%	57%
Long waiting lists for families who need child care or early childhood education	41%	35%	37%	42%	50%

Thinking just about issues related to child care and early childhood education from birth to age five, how much of a problem do you think each one of the following is in your area?

Both rural and overall national voters are more likely to say that there are only some or very few high-quality, affordable early education programs in their area.



If you had to estimate, about how many of the early education programs in your area would you say are high quality AND affordable for lower and middle income families?

**Data is from a survey among overall national voters conducted on behalf of FFYF*

A majority of rural voters say the availability of high-quality and affordable child care has gotten worse since the pandemic.

Gotten better

4%

Gotten worse

55%

Stayed about the same

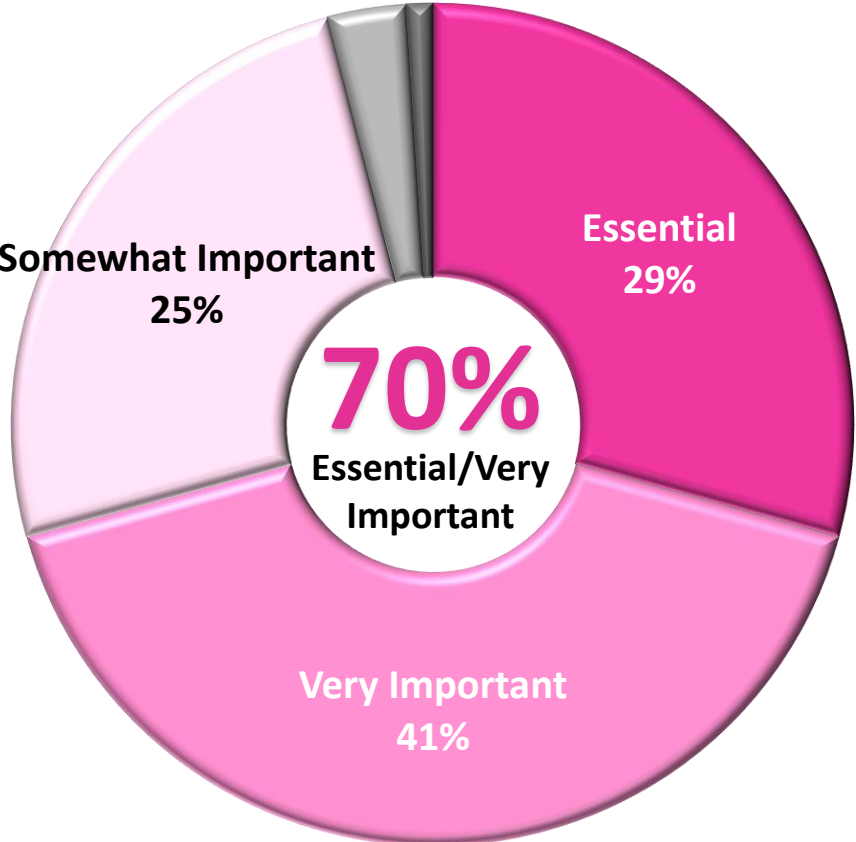
27%

Unsure

13%

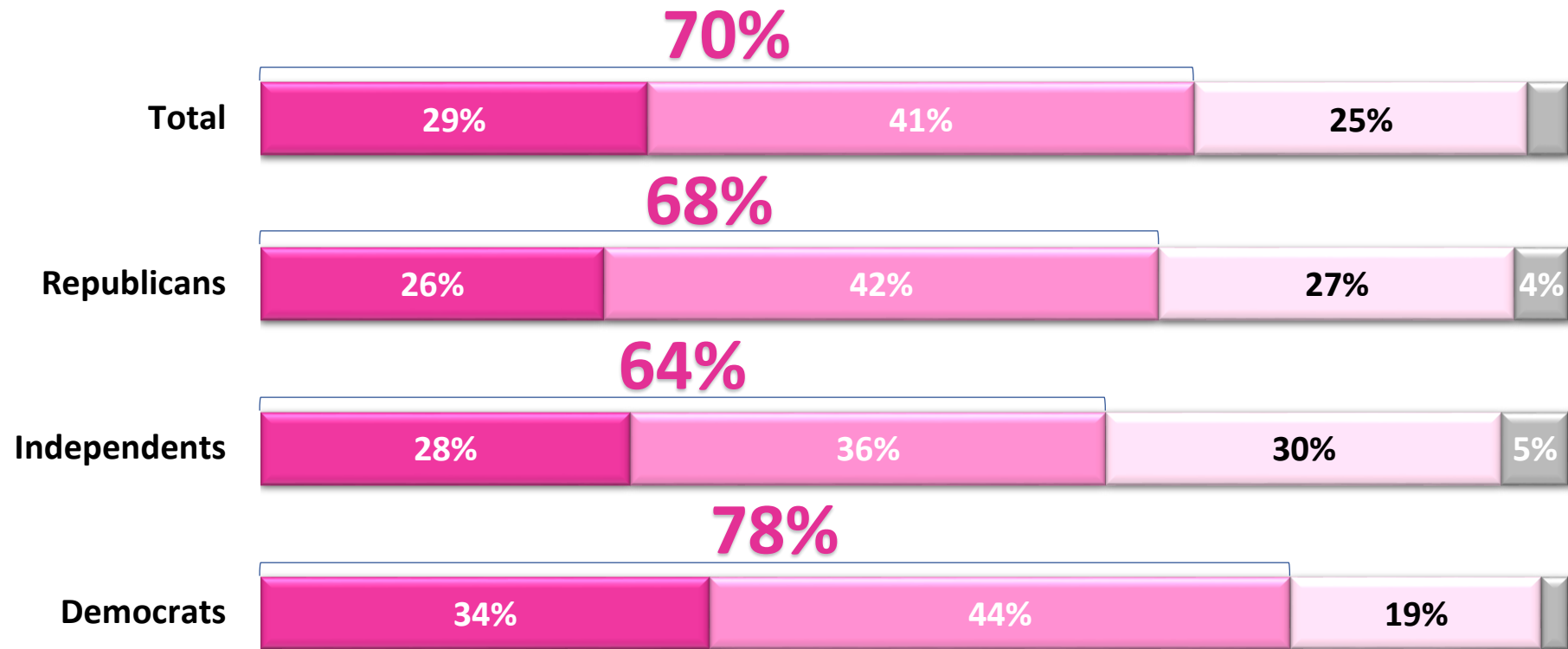
And since 2020 and the start of the pandemic, do you think that the availability of high quality and affordable child care has...

Nearly all rural voters say access to high-quality, affordable child care is important to strengthening the economy and helping workers.



In your opinion, how important is access to high-quality, affordable childcare to our ability to strengthen the economy and help workers? Is it...

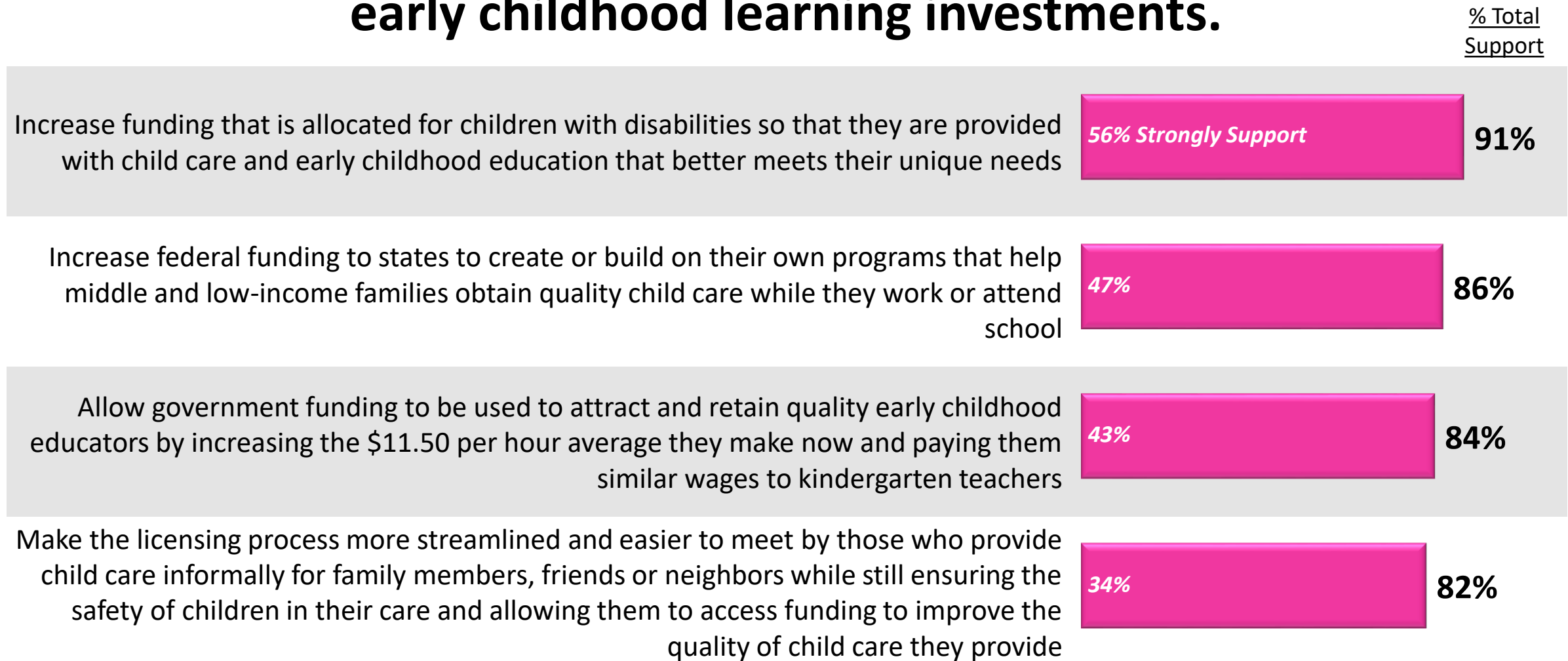
Nationally, rural voters know the importance of high-quality, affordable child care to the economy, and this cuts across party lines.



■ Essential ■ Very Important ■ Somewhat Important ■ Not That Important ■ Not Important At All

In your opinion, how important is access to high-quality, affordable childcare to our ability to strengthen the economy and help workers? Is it...

Most rural voters strongly support increasing funding for a range of early childhood learning investments.



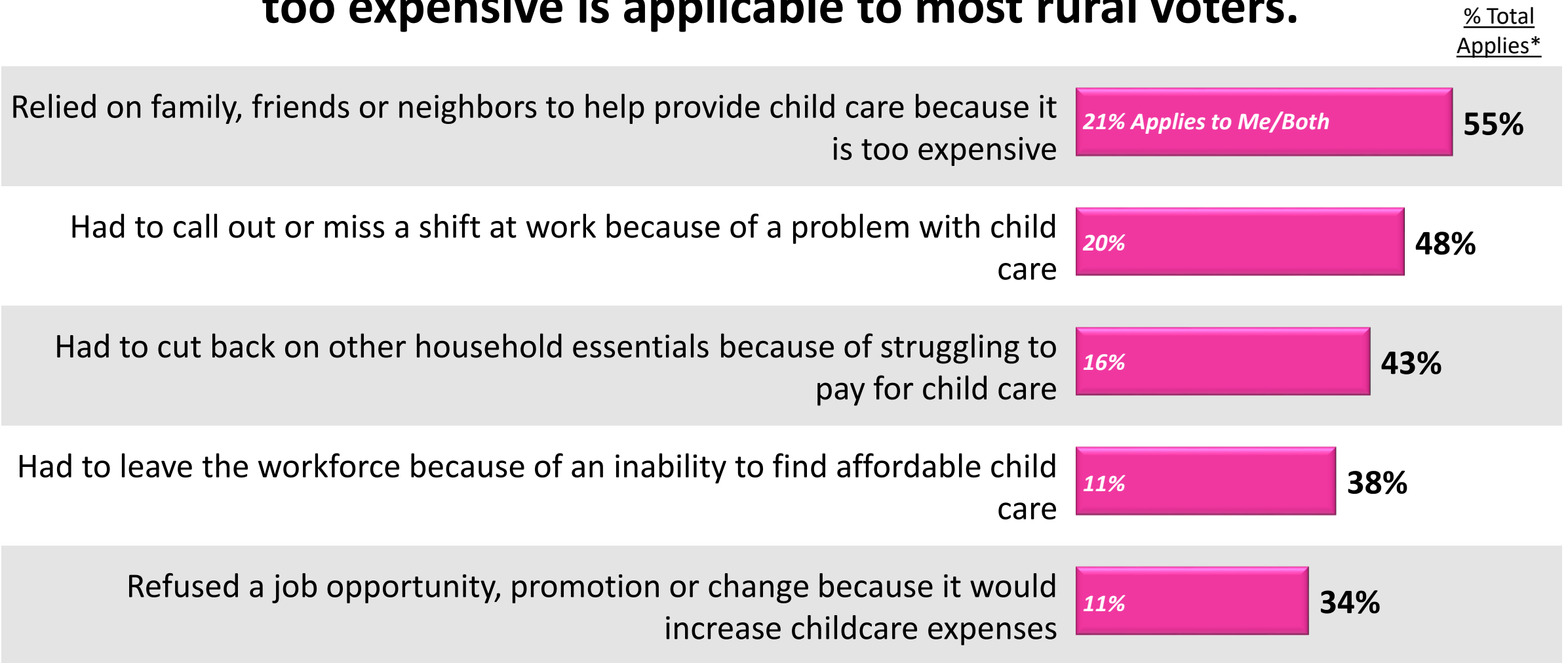
Coming up, Congress and some state legislatures may be considering a number of proposals that provide more families the opportunity for their children to attend high-quality child care and preschool. For each one please indicate whether you would support or oppose that particular change.

Regardless of party, rural voters are very supportive of the proposals.

<i>% Total Support</i>	Total	GOP	IND	DEM
Increase funding that is allocated for children with disabilities so that they are provided with child care and early childhood education that better meets their unique needs	91%	88%	90%	96%
Increase federal funding to states to create or build on their own programs that help middle and low-income families obtain quality child care while they work or attend school	86%	81%	85%	94%
Allow government funding to be used to attract and retain quality early childhood educators by increasing the \$11.50 per hour average they make now and paying them similar wages to kindergarten teachers	84%	78%	83%	94%
Make the licensing process more streamlined and easier to meet by those who provide child care informally for family members, friends or neighbors while still ensuring the safety of children in their care and allowing them to access funding to improve the quality of child care they provide	82%	78%	81%	90%

Coming up, Congress and some state legislatures may be considering a number of proposals that provide more families the opportunity for their children to attend high- quality child care and preschool. For each one please indicate whether you would support or oppose that particular change.

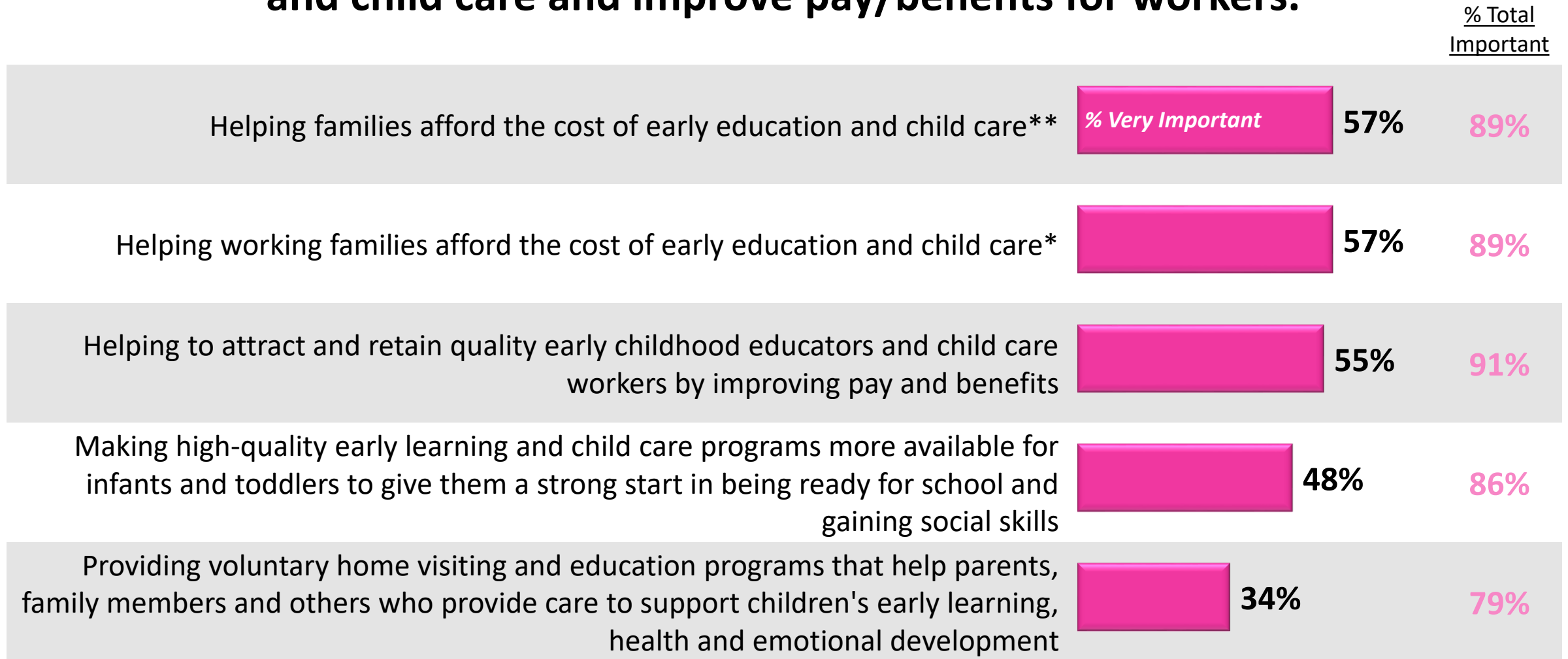
Relying on family, friends, or neighbors to provide child care because it is too expensive is applicable to most rural voters.



Now, do any of the following things apply either to you or to someone you know? You may select both if it applies to you AND someone you know.

*Total includes "Applies to someone I know"

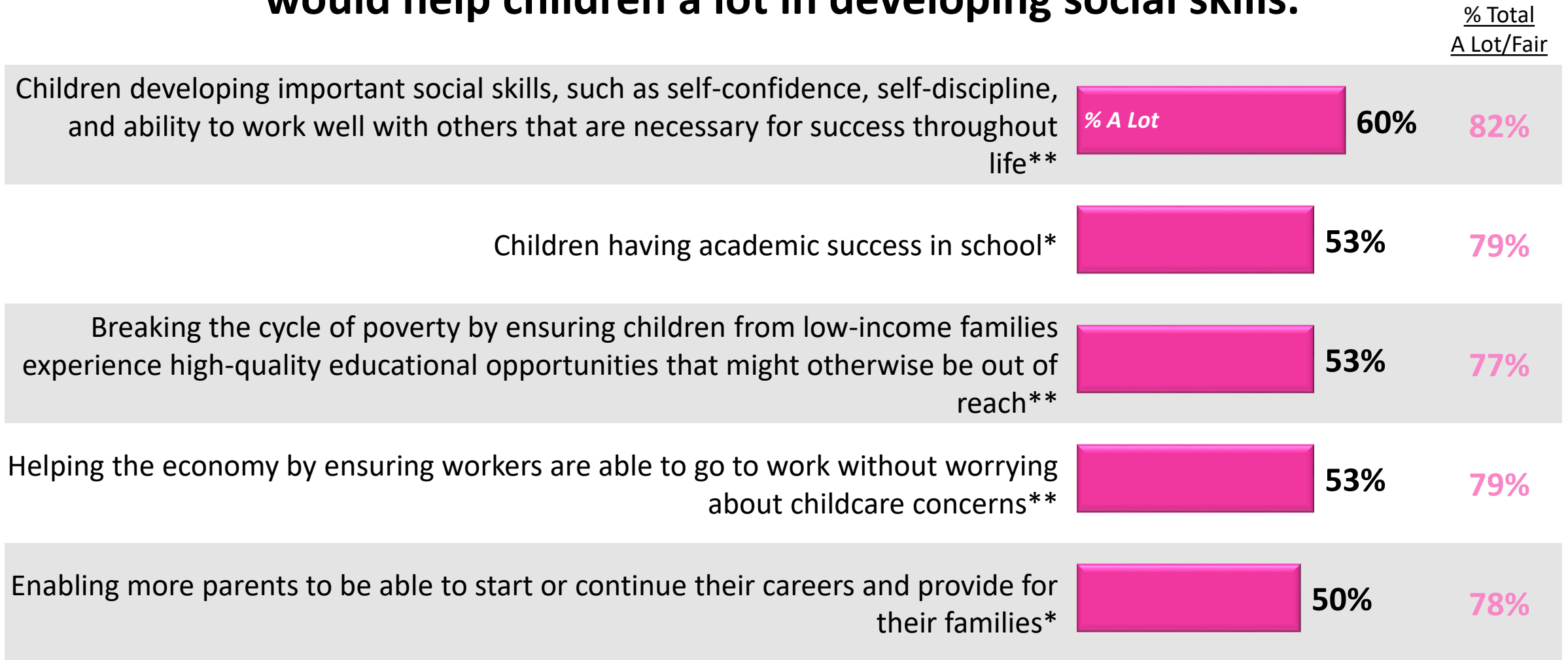
Most rural voters say it's very important to help families afford early education and child care and improve pay/benefits for workers.



The following are some specific ideas related to quality child care and early education. Please tell me if you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all:

*National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500

Three-fifths of rural voters say quality child care and early childhood education would help children a lot in developing social skills.



If more children are able to attend quality child care and early childhood education, how much would it help in each of the following areas? Does it help a lot, a fair amount, some, very little, or not at all in each of the following areas?

**National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500*

Rural parents are even more likely to perceive benefits of more children being able to attend quality child care and early ed.

<i>% Total A lot/Fair Amount</i>	Total	Parents	No Kids
Children developing important social skills, such as self-confidence, self-discipline, and ability to work well with others that are necessary for success throughout life**	82%	84%	81%
Helping the economy by ensuring workers are able to go to work without worrying about childcare concerns**	79%	86%	77%
Children having academic success in school*	79%	89%	74%
Enabling more parents to be able to start or continue their careers and provide for their families*	78%	86%	74%
Breaking the cycle of poverty by ensuring children from low-income families experience high-quality educational opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach**	77%	85%	74%

If more children are able to attend quality child care and early childhood education, how much would it help in each of the following areas? Does it help a lot, a fair amount, some, very little, or not at all in each of the following areas?

**National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500*



Hunger Issues



Nearly three-quarters of rural voters nationally say that due to increasing grocery costs, they are changing how or what food they buy.

% Total Applies*

Are changing how or what food you buy, due to increasing grocery costs

72% Applies to Me/Both

84%

Are struggling to afford to feed your family

37%

64%

Again, do any of the following things apply either to you or to someone you know? If this applies to you AND someone you know, please let me know.

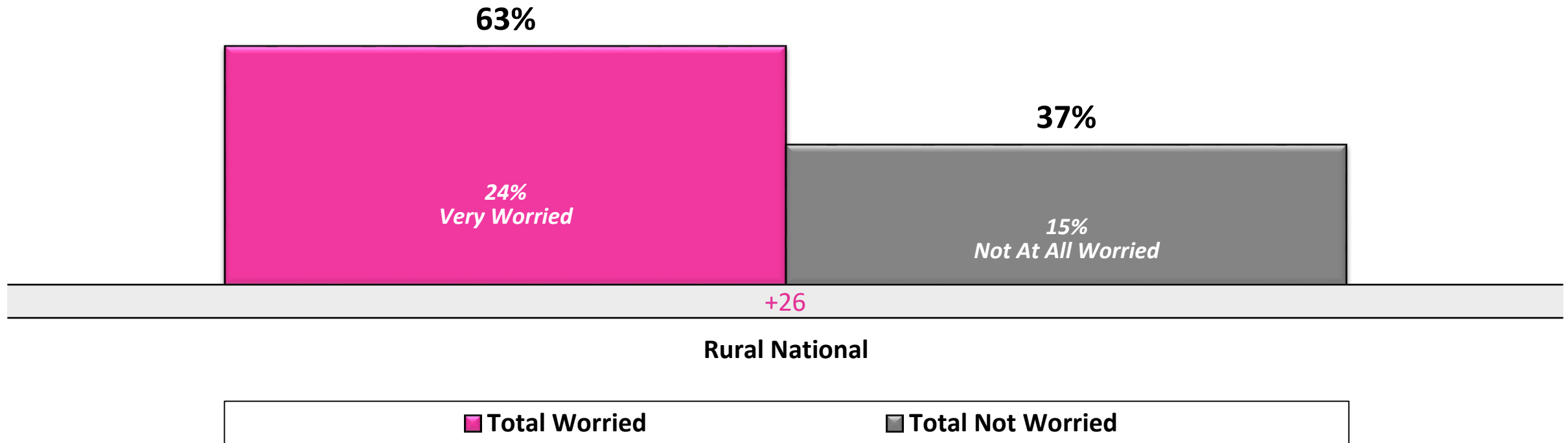
**Total includes "Applies to someone I know"*

Half of parents and the lowest income voters say they are struggling to afford food for their family.

	% Struggling to Feed Family
Income less than \$20,000	51%
\$20-\$39,999	47%
\$40-74,999	28%
\$75,000+	18%
Moms	50%
Dads	51%
Non-Parents	32%
GOP	39%
Independent	34%
Democrat	36%
Working Men	39%
Working Women	42%
Not Employed Men	37%
Not Employed Women	35%

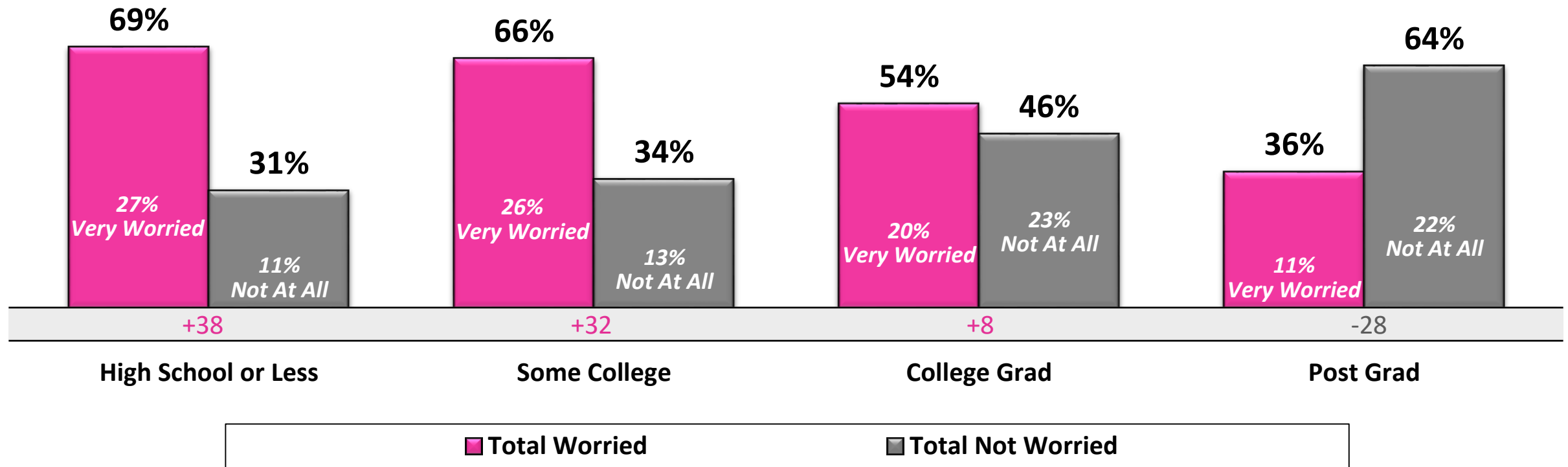
*Again, do any of the following things apply either to you or to someone you know? If this applies to you AND someone you know, please let me know.
 "Are struggling to afford to feed your family"*

A majority of rural voters are worried that they might not be able to afford enough food to feed themselves and their family over the next year.



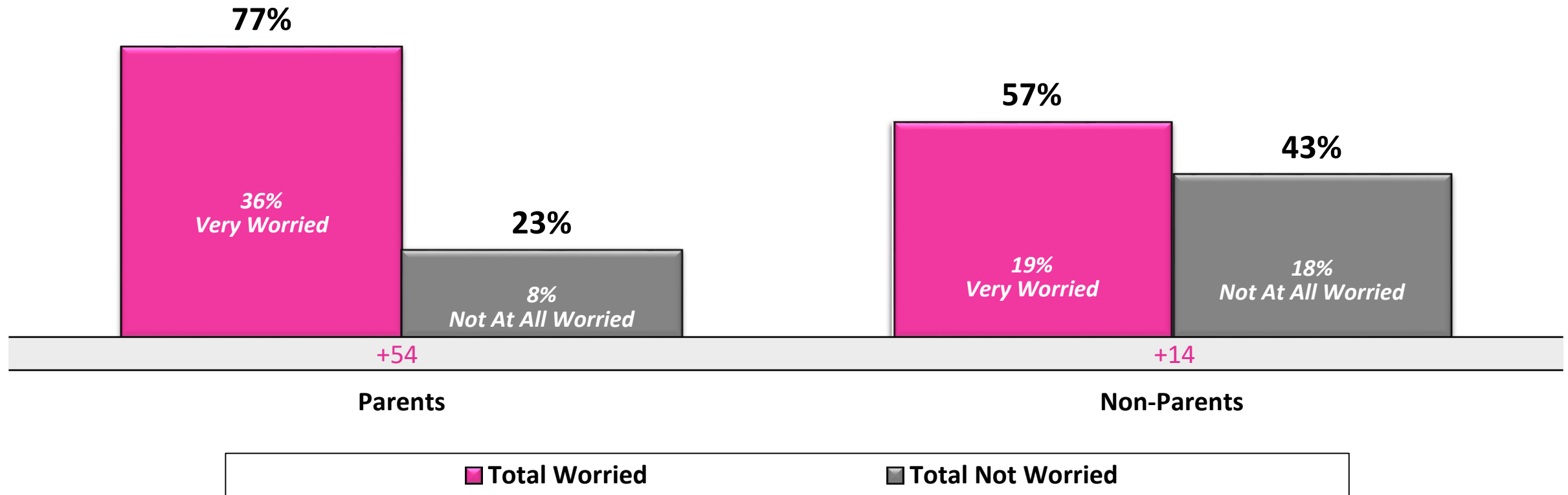
Thinking ahead over the next year, how worried are you that you might not always be able to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family?

Rural voters with less education are more likely to be worried about being able to afford enough food.



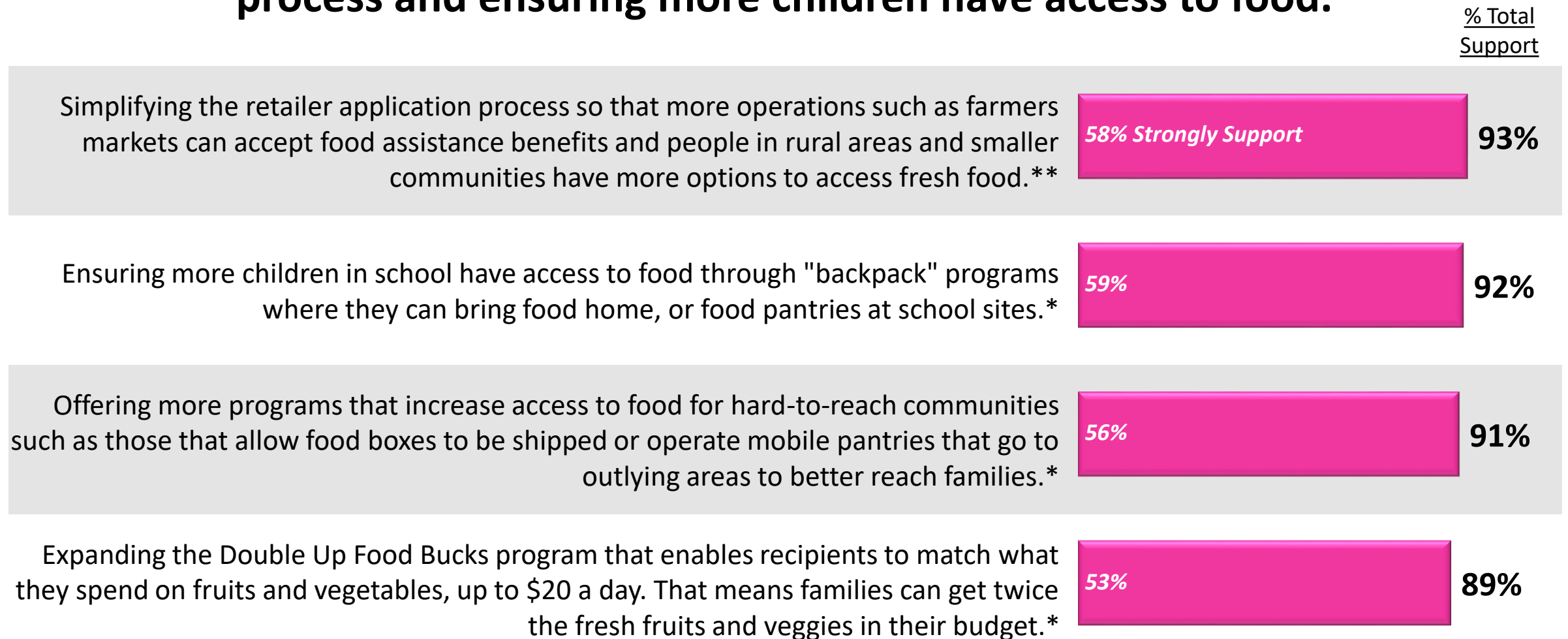
Thinking ahead over the next year, how worried are you that you might not always be able to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family?

Over three-quarters of rural parents are worried about their ability to afford enough food.



Thinking ahead over the next year, how worried are you that you might not always be able to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family?

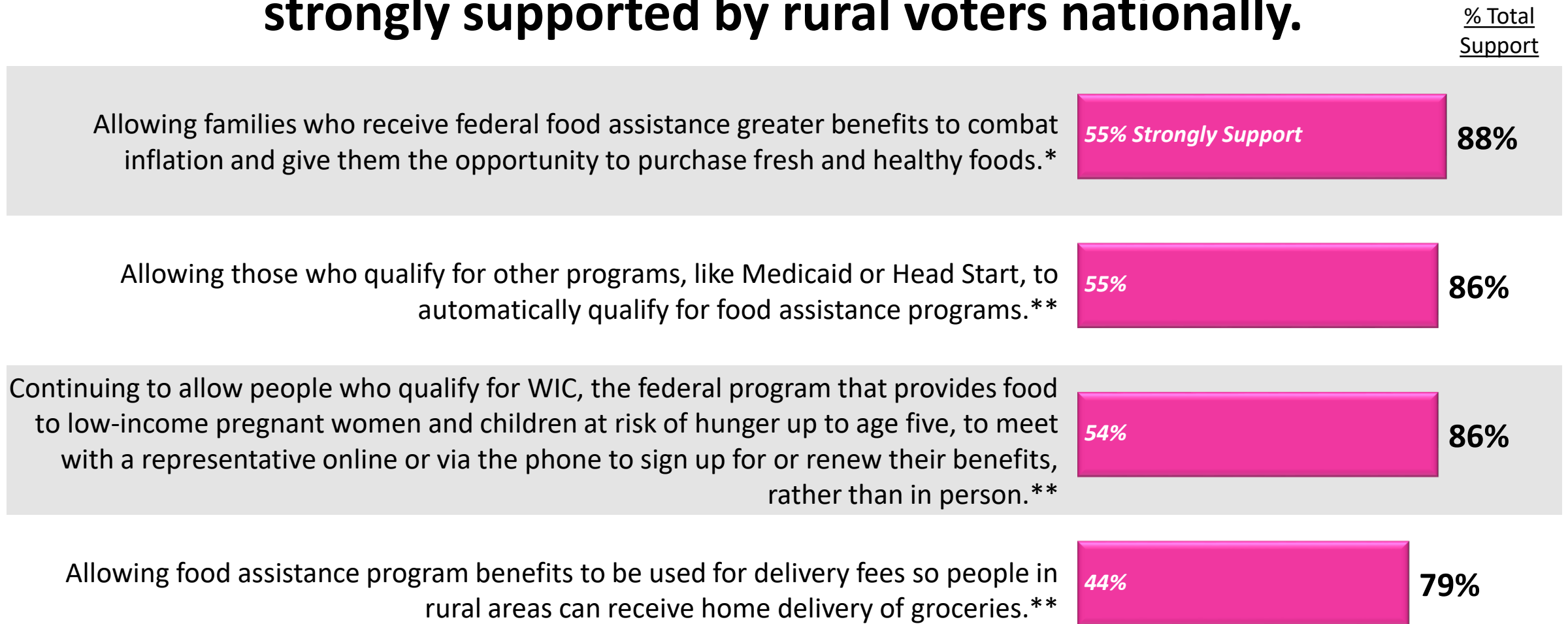
The top policy solutions among rural voters are simplifying the retailer application process and ensuring more children have access to food.



Thinking some more about this...Congress and a number of state legislatures will be considering some changes to programs that help families afford and access food. For each one please tell me whether you would support or oppose that particular change.

*National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500

Helping families who qualify for different assistance programs is strongly supported by rural voters nationally.



Thinking some more about this...Congress and a number of state legislatures will be considering some changes to programs that help families afford and access food. For each one please tell me whether you would support or oppose that particular change.

*National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500

Every policy receives majority support across party lines.

<i>% Total Support</i>	Total	GOP	IND	DEM
Simplifying the retailer application process so that more operations such as farmers markets can accept food assistance benefits and people in rural areas and smaller communities have more options to access fresh food.**	93%	91%	92%	97%
Ensuring more children in school have access to food through "backpack" programs where they can bring food home, or food pantries at school sites.*	92%	90%	88%	97%
Offering more programs that increase access to food for hard-to-reach communities such as those that allow food boxes to be shipped or operate mobile pantries that go to outlying areas to better reach families.*	91%	88%	88%	97%
Expanding the Double Up Food Bucks program that enables recipients to match what they spend on fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 a day. That means families can get twice the fresh fruits and veggies in their budget.*	89%	85%	89%	95%
Allowing families who receive federal food assistance greater benefits to combat inflation and give them the opportunity to purchase fresh and healthy foods.*	88%	85%	85%	95%
Allowing those who qualify for other programs, like Medicaid or Head Start, to automatically qualify for food assistance programs.**	86%	81%	87%	94%
Continuing to allow people who qualify for WIC, the federal program that provides food to low-income pregnant women and children at risk of hunger up to age five, to meet with a representative online or via the phone to sign up for or renew their benefits, rather than in person.**	86%	79%	86%	96%
Allowing food assistance program benefits to be used for delivery fees so people in rural areas can receive home delivery of groceries.**	79%	75%	79%	86%

Thinking some more about this...Congress and a number of state legislatures will be considering some changes to programs that help families afford and access food. For each one please tell me whether you would support or oppose that particular change.

**National Sample A, N=506 **National Sample B, N=500*



Questions?





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HART

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