



# State *of the* State Courts

// 2025 POLL

NCSC

# // Survey Advisory Committee Members



**Chief Judge Anna  
Blackburne-Rigsby**  
District of Columbia



**Chief Justice  
Megan Cavanagh**  
Michigan



**Nancy Cozine**  
Oregon



**Julie Hamil**  
Rhode Island



**Chief Justice Gordon  
J. MacDonald**  
New Hampshire



**Marcia Meis**  
Illinois



**Molly Justice**  
NCSC



**Jesse Rutledge**  
NCSC



# // Methodology: An Overview

**What:** NCSC Online Survey

**When:** November 12-16, 2025

**Who:** Conducted by GBAO Strategies

**Polled:** 1,000 Registered Voters

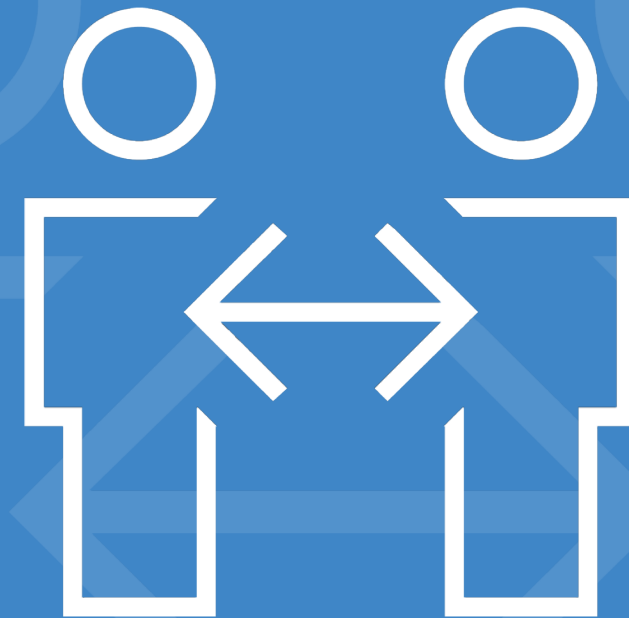
**MOE:** +/- 3.1% (19 times out of 20)



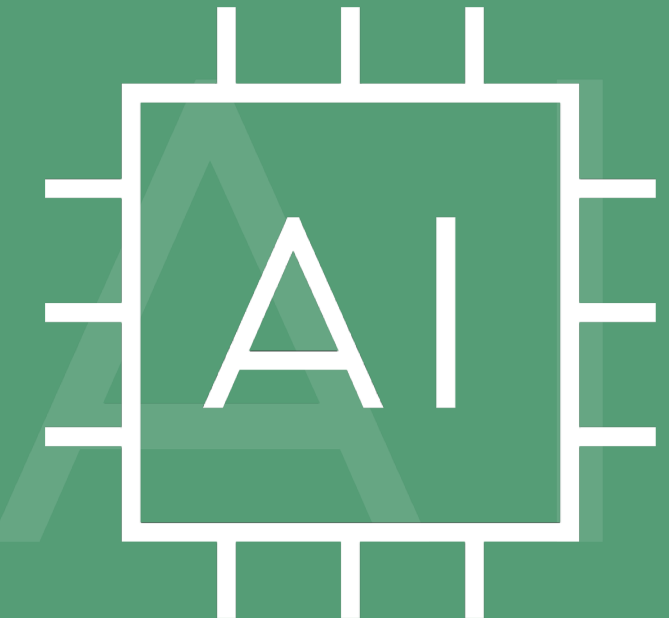
# // Key Findings



**State courts maintain higher trust** than other government branches and federal courts.



**Americans increasingly perceive a two-tiered justice system** and believe judges are disconnected from communities.

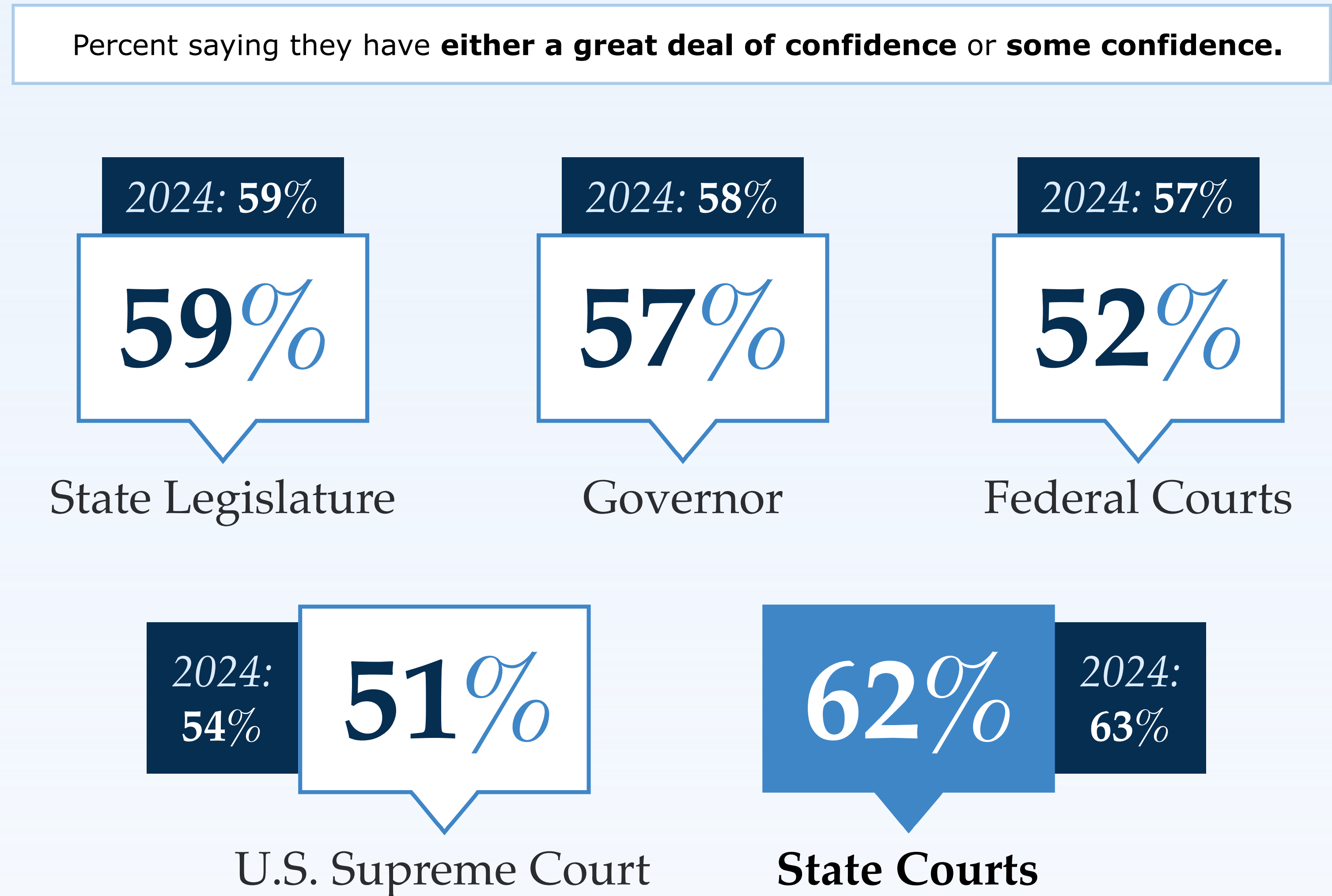


**Public skepticism remains high regarding AI's impact on the justice system**, with concerns about misinformation and negative consequences.

Q: “How much confidence do you have in each institution?”

// FIGURE 1

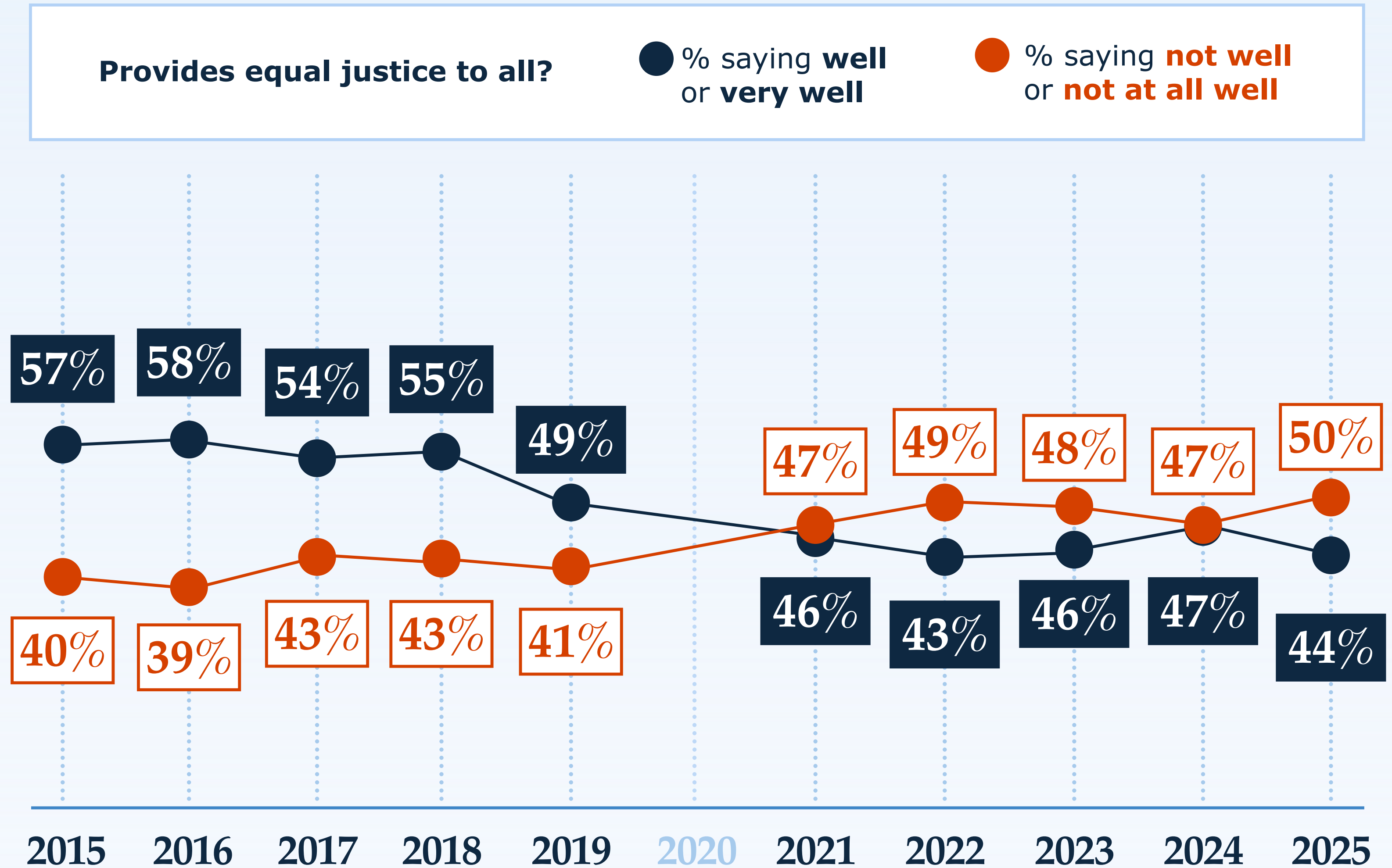
Across most institutions, public trust is holding steady.



Q: “How would you rate the job being done by courts in (state)?”

// FIGURE 2

A majority of Americans now see a two-tiered system of justice.



// FIGURE 3

The public is concerned that judges aren't sufficiently on the pulse of their community, highlighting the imperative of engagement efforts.

**Q:** "Which statement comes closer to your own view?"

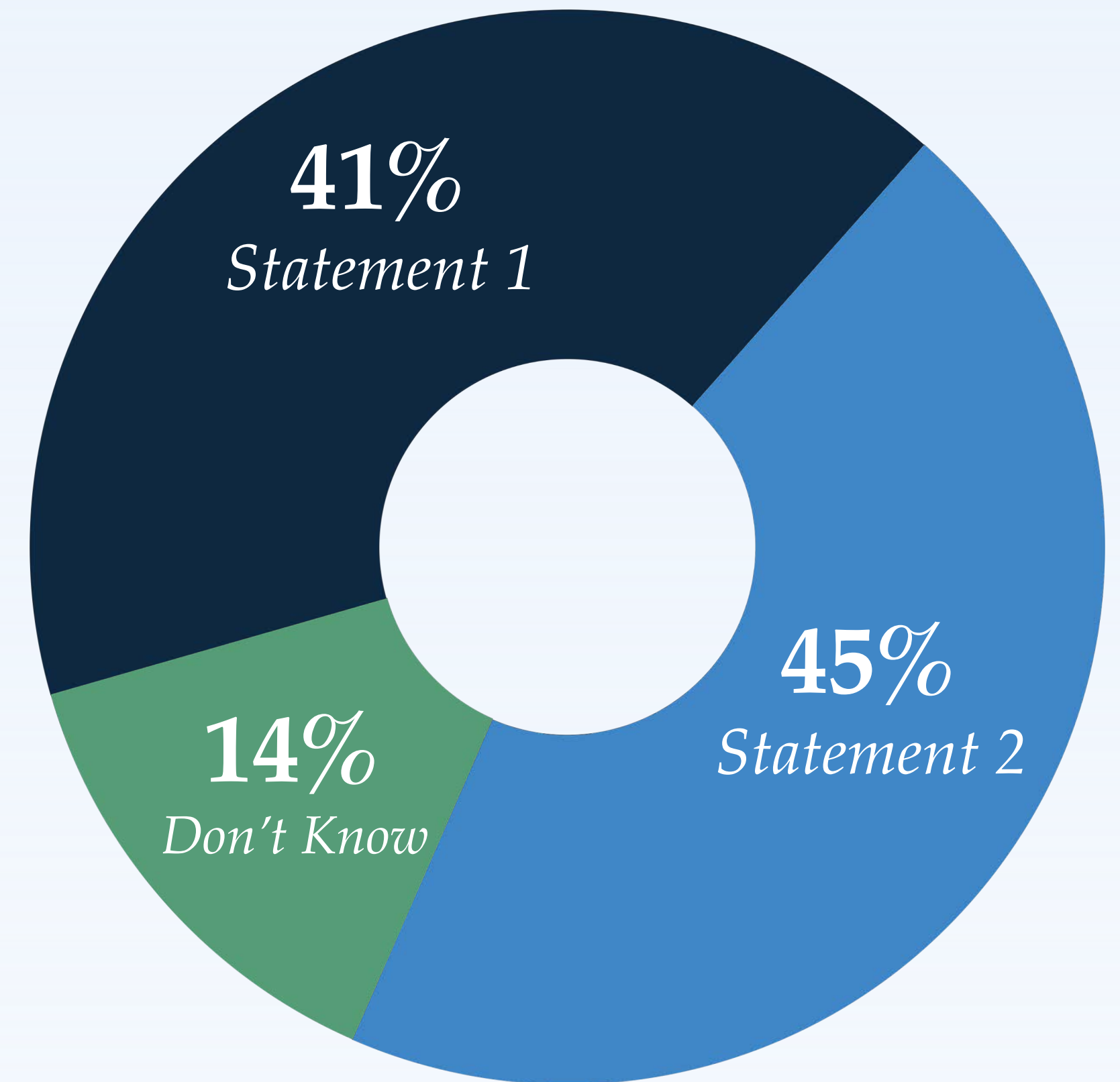
**STATEMENT 1**

In general, judges in (STATE) courts reflect the values of our communities and understand the challenges facing the people who appear in their courtrooms.

**STATEMENT 2**

Too many judges in (STATE) courts don't understand the challenges facing people who appear in their courtrooms and need to do a better job of getting out into the community and listening to people.

**DON'T KNOW**

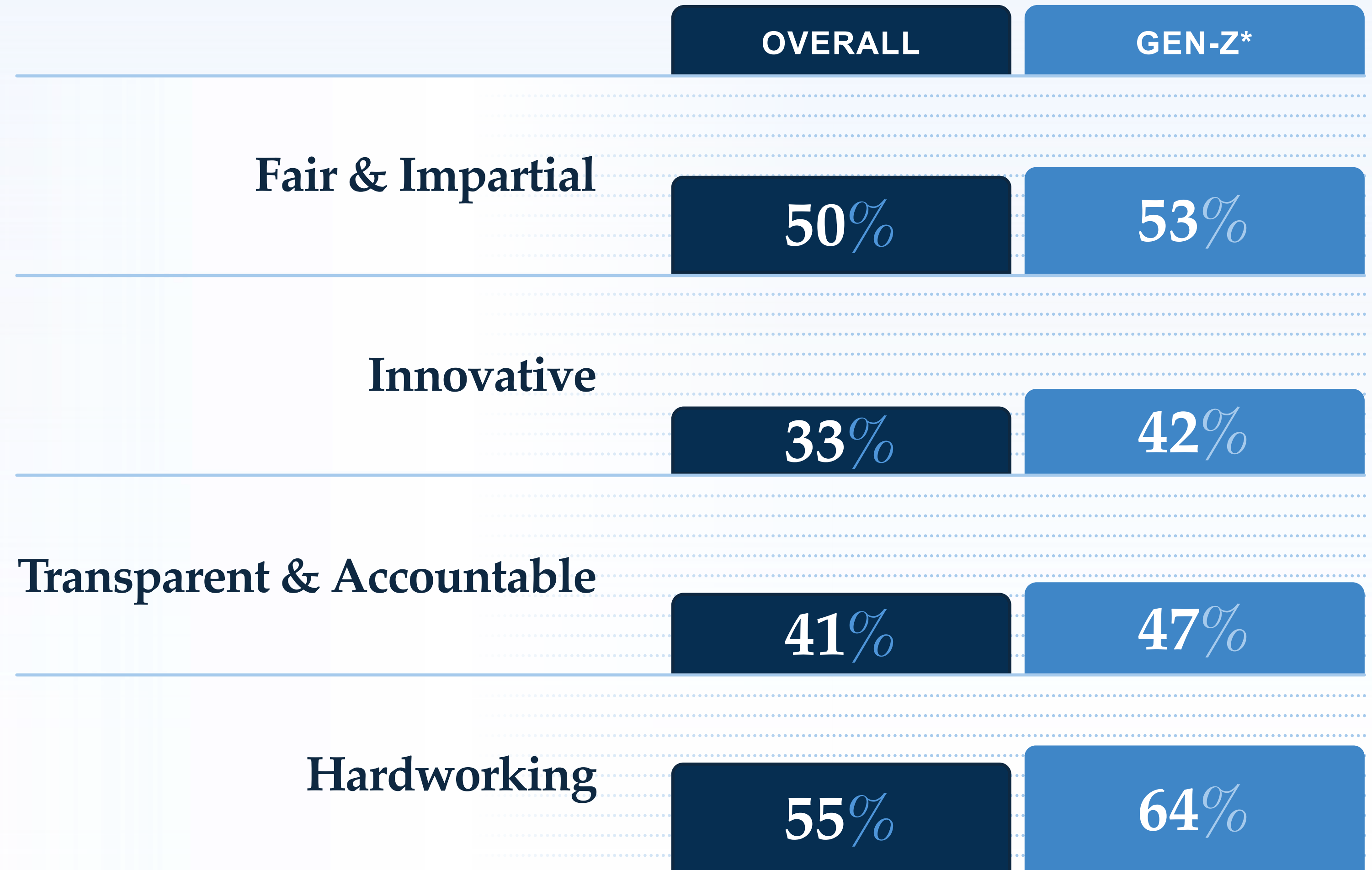


**Q:** “Please indicate whether...each of the following words or phrases describes (state) courts well/not well.”

// FIGURE 4

The kids are alright?  
Gen Z is 😊👍

Ages 18-29 are considerably sunnier in their views of state courts than any other age group.



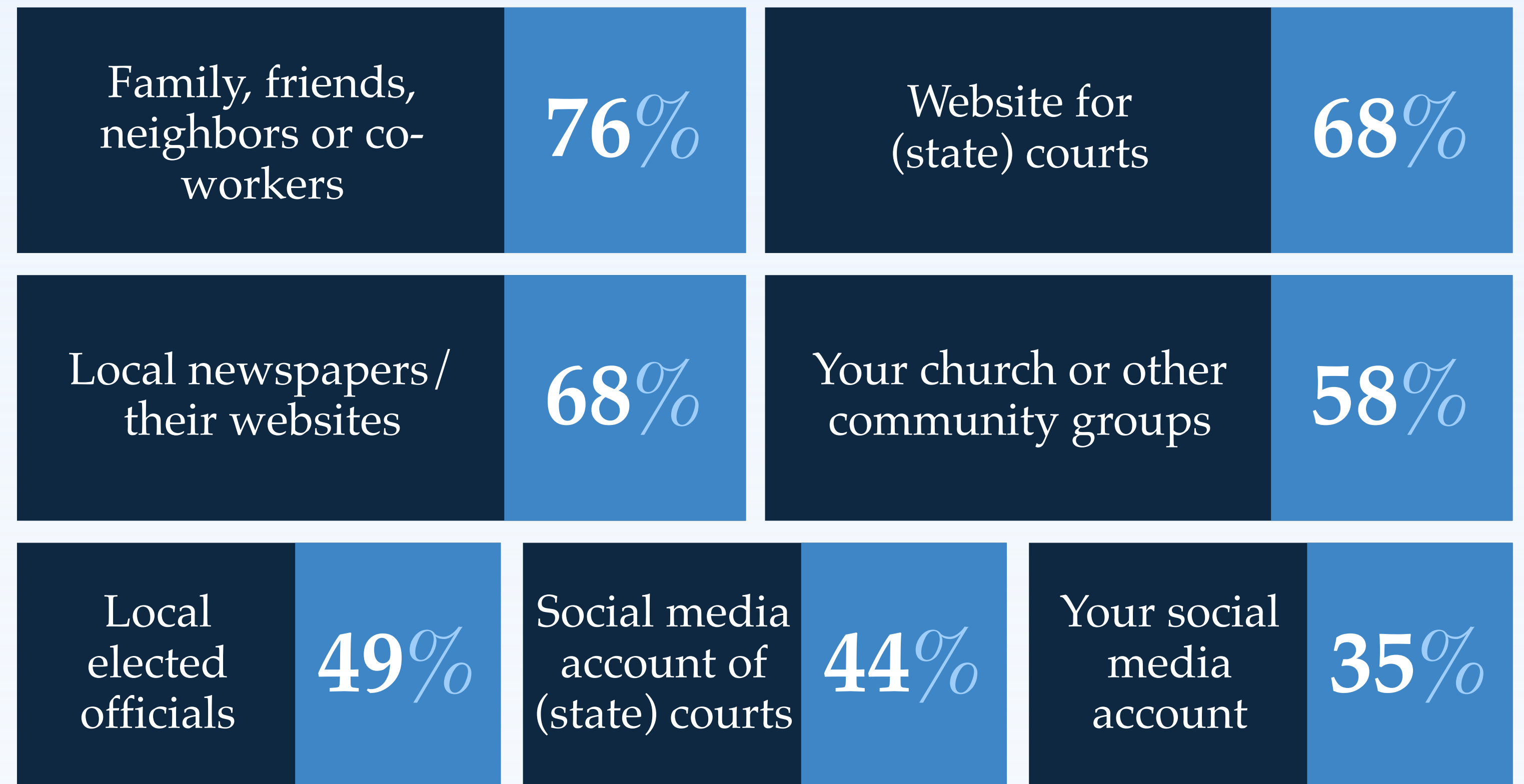
\*Those voters born between 1996 and 2007 are included in Generation Z.

// FIGURE 5

Friends and family are the most trusted source of information about courts.

**Q:** “When it comes to getting information about what is happening in (state) courts, how much trust would you put in information you get from each of the following sources of information?”

Percent saying they put a **great deal** or **some trust** in the information source.



// FIGURE 6

Americans bring a “glass half empty” perspective to how AI will impact state courts.

Q: “Which statement comes closer to your own view?”

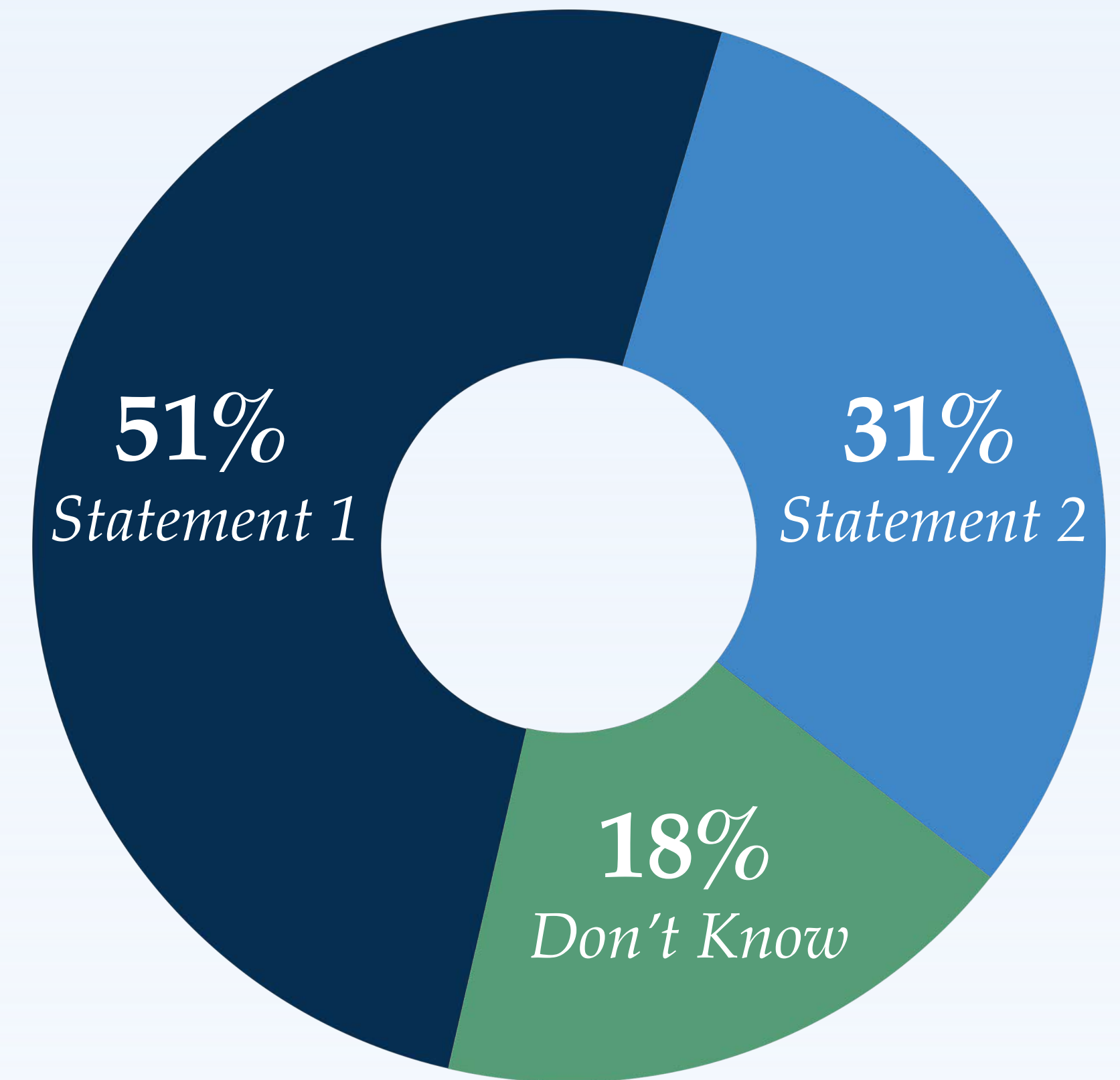
**STATEMENT 1**

AI will hurt state courts by increasing the risk of mistakes that judges and staff can't always catch and making it harder for people to trust court decisions.

**STATEMENT 2**

AI will help state courts work faster and more efficiently, by cutting down on paperwork, reducing backlogs, and giving judges better tools to manage cases.

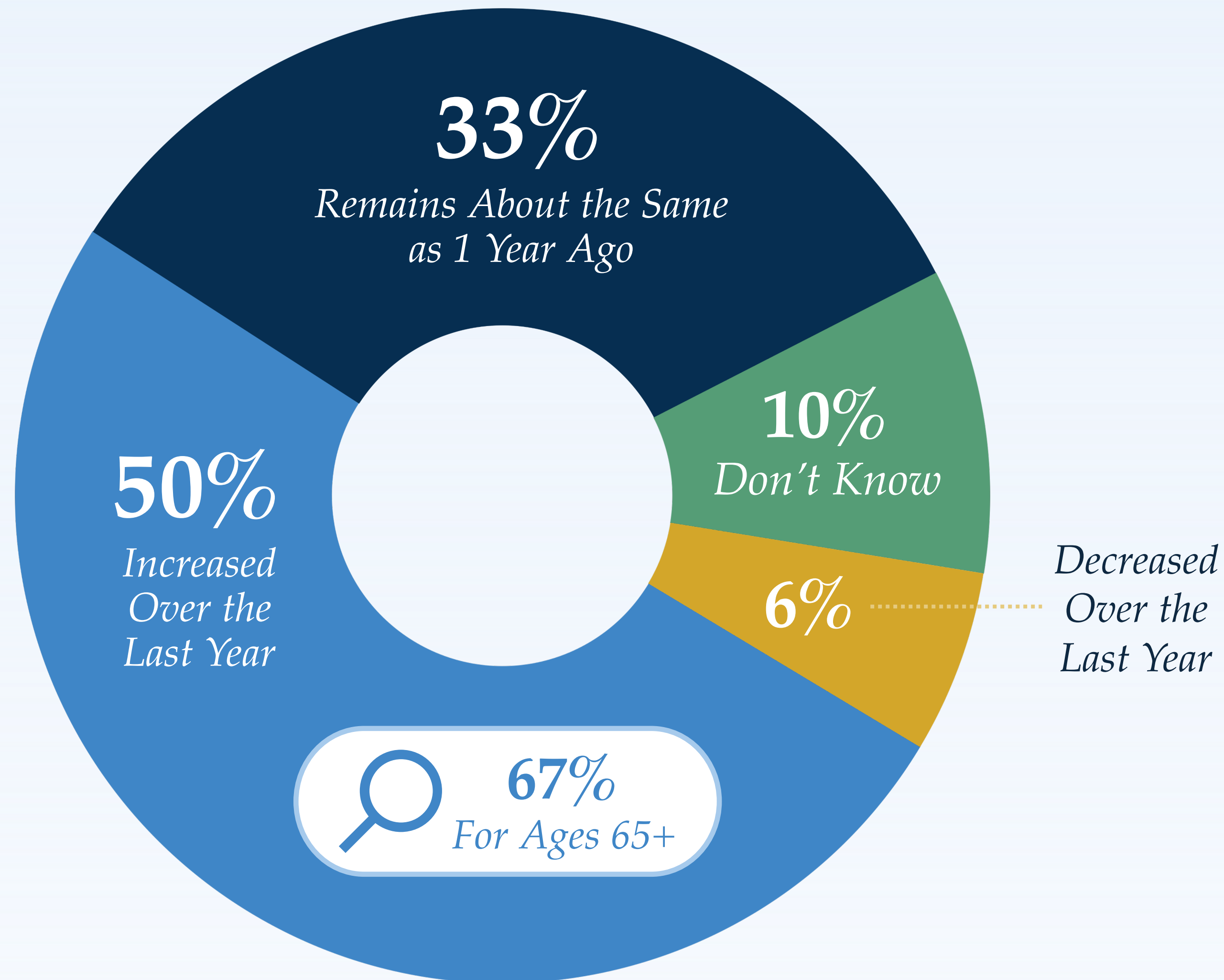
**DON'T KNOW**



**Q:** “Do you think the threat of politically-motivated violence against elected officials, judges and other public officials...?”

// FIGURE 7

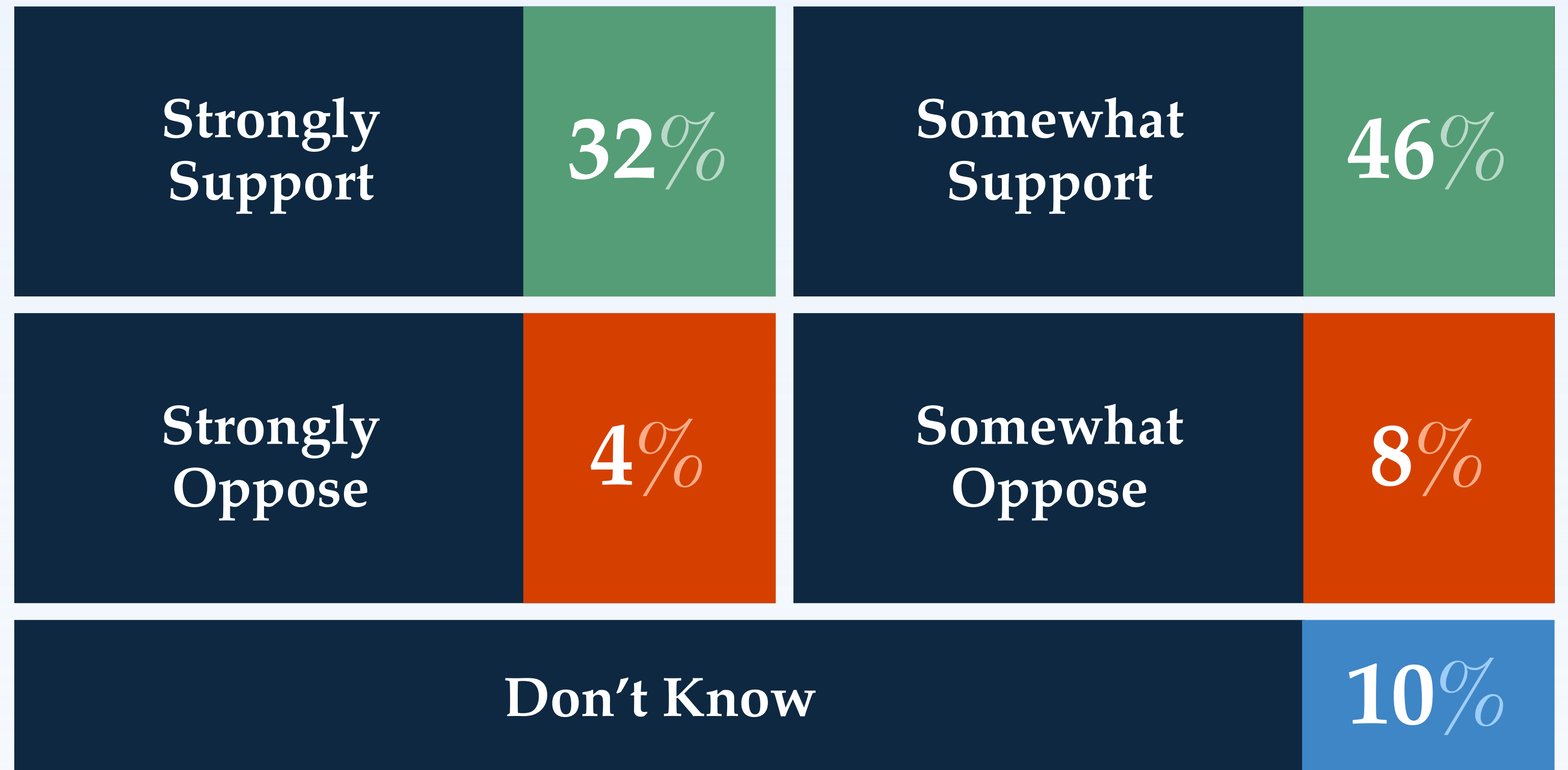
Concern over increased threats against judges and other elected officials is going up...



// FIGURE 8

...And there is overwhelming support for federal legislation to help prevent violence against state and local judges and court staff.

**Q:** “Congress is considering a bipartisan bill to establish a State Judicial Threat Intelligence and Resource Center to help prevent violence against judges and court staff. This center would provide training, safety assessments, and best practices to enhance courthouse safety. Do you support or oppose this legislation?”



// FIGURE 9

Major concerns on access to justice are rooted in complexity, cost.

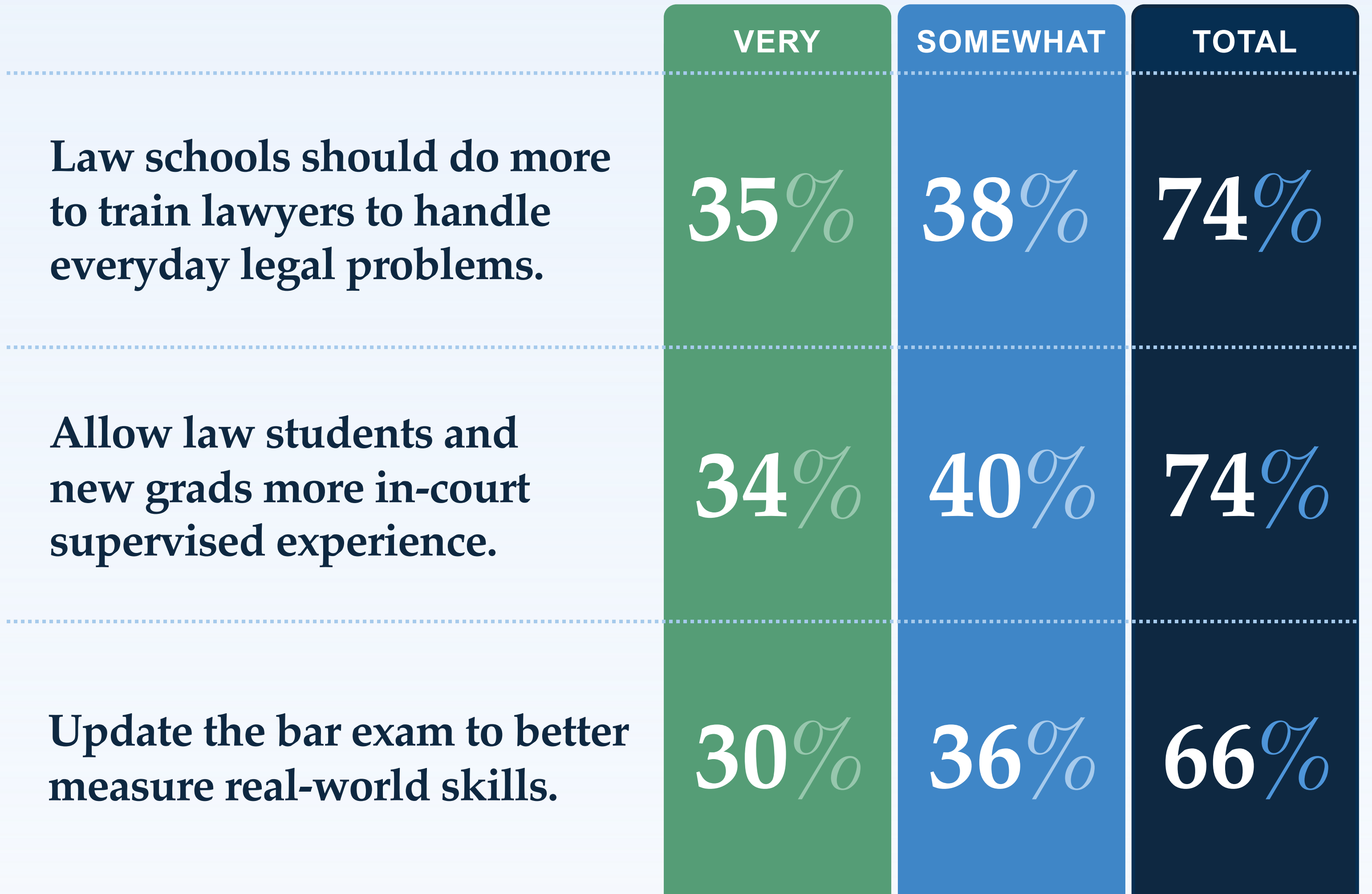
**Q:** “How much of a problem do you think each of the following is for people trying to access the courts or get legal help in your state or local community?”

	VERY	SOMEWHAT	TOTAL
People don't know what to expect in court or how to get information about court process.	27%	53%	80%
People don't know where to turn or how to get legal help.	32%	44%	76%
Court forms and paperwork are confusing or hard to understand.	31%	45%	76%
People have to go to court without a lawyer because they can't afford one.	41%	33%	74%
There are not enough lawyers in your local community to meet the needs of local residents.	19%	29%	48%

// FIGURE 10

When thinking about the access to justice crisis in America, most people see reforming legal education as an effective part of the solution.

**Q:** “How effective do you think each of the following actions would be in making it more likely that people across your state get the support they need to navigate the legal system?”



# // Methodology: A Closer Look

NCSC's State of the State Courts public opinion survey uses **representative sampling of registered voters.**

This statistical method selects a **smaller group from a larger population that mirrors its characteristics**, such as age, gender, or socioeconomic status, to draw accurate conclusions about the entire population.

The sample **provides a national snapshot of opinion** but **doesn't allow conclusions at the state level.**

# // Methodology: About Those Surveyed

*Here are some interesting facts about this year's sample of 1,000 registered voters.*

**50%** have an associate's, college, or advanced degree, while **50%** didn't complete college.

**68%** of those surveyed identified as White / Caucasian, **13%** as Black / African American, **12%** as Hispanic / Latino, **5%** as Asian / Pacific Islander, and **2%** identified as belonging to another racial or ethnic group.

**71%** report an annual family income under \$100,000.

**22%** have served on a jury, while **16%** represented themselves in court.

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**NCSC** | [ncsc.org/survey](https://ncsc.org/survey)