

# The impact of the pandemic on 18-30 year old women in U.S.

## Findings from national online survey

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# Methodology

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Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted online from February 11 to February 20, 2022. The survey reached 1,000 women ages 18-30 nationwide with oversamples of 50 Black women and 100 AAPI women.

The sample was drawn from an online opt-in panel of listed adults and screened to be women ages 18-30. The base sample was weighted by region and education to reflect attributes of the actual population. Black women were weighted by age and education; AAPI women were weighted by region and party identification; and Latina women were weighted by region and age. All oversamples were weighted down into the base to reflect their actual proportion of women ages 18-30.

Lake Research Partners and Wellesley College conducted six online focus groups in January 2022. These groups were segmented as follows: 25-30-year-old women of color, non-college-educated (January 5), 18-24-year-old women, mixed race, non-college-educated (January 6), 25-30-year-old white women, non-college-educated (January 11), 25-30-year-old women, mixed race, college-educated (January 12), Wellesley College Students (January 18), and Wellesley College Students (January 18).

A majority of women ages 18-30 are white, and close to half are Black, Hispanic/Latino, AAPI, or Native. About a third are college graduates and about a third are parents. Household incomes are evenly split below and above \$40,000. A plurality are Democrats.

### AGE

18-19	—	16%
20-21	—	15%
22-24	—	23%
25-27	—	21%
28-30	—	24%


### RACE

White/Caucasian	54%
Black/AA	14%
Hispanic/Latino	22%
Asian/PI	6%
Native American	3%

### CHILDREN

Yes	31%
No	68%

### EDUCATION




High School or Less	—	32%	
Post-H.S. / Some College	—	36%	
College Graduate	—	26%	32%
Post-Graduate	—	6%	College Grad or Post Grad

### REGION



Pacific	17%	New England	5%
Mountain	8%	Middle Atlantic	12%
West North Central	6%	South Atlantic	19%
East North Central	14%	East South Central	6%
		West South Central	13%

### PARTY IDENTIFICATION

	Democrat	45%
	Republican	23%
	Independent	16%

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Below 40 thousand	47%
Above 40 thousand	46%

### LGBTQ+



# Key Findings

# Key Takeaways

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- The pandemic was a profound experience on this cohort of women, but the pandemic does not define them.
- This cohort of women are optimistic about the future, even though the pandemic profoundly impacted them. Unlike this cohort, the public is mixed between pessimism and optimism.
- They are also postponing having children or choosing not to have them. Many feel financial security, and the work-life balance necessary to be a good parent, are difficult in these times, based on focus group discussions.
- In the era of the great resignation, this cohort is demanding financial security and respect. They want to redefine the workplace to produce good wages and benefits and respect for all. Young women, across age, race, education, political orientation want good wages and respect from employers.
- These women are united behind a new agenda. They are leading the push for mental health and tying mental health to well-being and aspirations. They are intensely supportive of an agenda on freedom from sexual violence, affordable health care for all, pay equity for women, and workplaces free from discrimination.
- There are some ideological divisions already in this cohort, particularly around issues of reproductive choice, racial profiling, protections for transgender people and undocumented immigrants, and student debt forgiveness, and universal pre-k. Republican women are less likely than Democratic or Independent women to find these policies very important.
- This is the most comprehensive study conducted by Lake Research of the 18–30-year-old cohort. Six percent of young women are Asian American/Pacific Islander, 14% are Black, 22% are Hispanic/Latino, 3% are Native American, and 54% are white.

# Stressed about economic present....

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- Many women in this cohort have been feeling financial anxiety. Concern about finances and their job situation are top worries. Yet, they have hope that their financial situation will improve in the next 5 years.
- Two in ten women say the pandemic has had great impact on their economic and financial stability. Two-thirds say their personal wellbeing has been impacted because of the pandemic.
- Only 7% say they are doing very well in the economy right now (34% well overall), while 29% say they are not doing well at all (61% not well)
  - Rural women are having the hardest time in the economy right now with almost seven in ten saying they are not doing well.
  - College-educated women who are Black, Latina, or AAPI are split on how they feel they are doing in the economy right now, whereas college-educated white women say they feel they are not doing well in the economy right now (22% not well at all, 62% not well).
- Over three quarters of women are feeling financial anxiety, with a little under half having felt financial anxiety very often in the past month.
  - White non-college women, women whose household income is below 40 thousand, and moms are the most likely to have been feeling financial anxiety very often in the past month.
  - Every single demographic group feels financial anxiety.

# ... but hopeful about their future

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- Although most do not feel they are doing well in the economy right now, every group says they feel their personal financial situation will improve in the next 5 years (70% improve), there is no group that thinks it won't improve.
  - College women, urban women, and women whose household income is above 40 thousand are most likely to think their personal financial situation will improve in the next 5 years.
- Seven in ten women feel optimistic about their future with only one-sixth (16%) feeling pessimistic, whereas three-in-ten feel pessimistic about the present. Across subgroups, a solid majority of women are feeling optimistic about their future.
- When they compare their life to how their mom's life was at their age, a little over half (53%) say they are doing worse or about the same as their mom at their age.
  - A majority of college-educated women of color (57% better, 40% about the same/worse) and small business owners (59% better, 40% about the same/worse) say they are doing better than their mom at their age.
- When they imagine themselves at 35 or 40 years old, a majority (62%) said their life will be better than their mother's at the same age.

# Current Worries and Concerns

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- When shown a list of personal concerns, this cohort of women say **they are the most worried about getting a good paying job (33% very worried)**. Other worries include *being able to afford your rent or mortgage (33%)*, *that your total family income will not be enough to meet your family's expenses and pay your bills (33%)* and *having a medical expense for you or your family that you cannot afford (33%)* making up part of their top concerns.
- They're also very worried about climate change (with 33% very worried).
- Concerns regarding discrimination (gender discrimination at work – 38% worried, at work due to children – 34% worried, at work due to pregnancy – 29% worried) and racism (31% worried) are the lowest-ranking worries for this cohort. However, a majority of Black (58% worried, 32% very worried) and AAPI (61% worried, 29% very worried) women rank experiencing racism high. Notably, only 44% of Latinas are worried (19% very worried) about experiencing racism.



# Worries and Concerns for the Future

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- A majority of women say the pandemic has shaped their expectations for their future. Only a quarter say it hasn't.
  - Most subgroups are fairly split on whether their expectations for the future are very different or somewhat different, but a plurality of Black women say that their expectations are very different (48% very, 41% somewhat different).
- **Over half (57%) of women are concerned about being able to juggle or balance their career or job with their personal life and family in the future, with about a quarter being very concerned.**
  - Women of color (23% very concerned, 58% concerned) are equally as concerned as white women (23% very concerned, 55% concerned) are about being able to juggle or balance their career or job with their personal life and family in the future, but AAPI women specifically are 10 points more likely than women of other races to say they are concerned (67% concerned).
  - The most concerned are women who say they are very likely to have children in the next 5 years, women who say starting a small business is very important to them, and smaller city women.

# Life Priorities

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- Looking at what they see as important, financial security and stability stand out. **Being financially secure (94% important) and stable (92% important) are the most important to women, with four-fifths (81% secure very important, 80% stable very important) saying they are very important.**
- Your personal well being also ranks highly with **67% saying it is very important to them (87% important).**
- While two-thirds say being a good parent is very important to them (**78% important**), only **35% say having children is very important (57% important)**. In fact, caregiving for parents and other family members is more important (**42% very important, 74% important**).
  - **Non-college-educated women (45% very important) place more importance than college-educated women (37% very important) on caregiving for parents and other family members.**
  - **Women ages 25 to 30 years old think it is nearly as important to have children (42% very important) as it is to be able to give care for parents and other family members (43% very important).**
- **Childfree women are focused on success in their job or career, achieving their education goals, and managing work and personal responsibilities more than moms are. Moms place more importance than childfree women on financial stability, being a good parent, and owning a home.**

# Current Feelings and Values

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- The top two words to describe how they feel most of the time these days are **tired (40%)** and **stressed (39%)**, followed by **happy (32%)**.
  - Unlike women of other races, **Black women's top feeling is happy.**
- Top values for this cohort of women are **stability, freedom, safety, and equality**.
  - These values rank similarly across groups, but the top value for **AAPI women is opportunity.**
- Every group thinks things will get better, with two-thirds having often experienced in the past month the feeling that things will get better (**22% very often, 66% often**).
  - Out of the demographic subgroups, **Black women are the most likely to have felt very often in the past month that things will get better.**

# Employer Expectations

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- **Respect and good wages/salary are the most important things for employers to provide across the board.**
  - Respect for all employees – (78% very important, 92% important)
  - Good wages/salary – (78% very important, 91% important)
- **The least important for employers to provide to this cohort are aligned values and networking opportunities.**
  - Values align – (48% very important, 79% important)
  - Networking opportunities – (39% very important, 74% important)

# Role of Mental Health

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- **Mental health is a key component to achieving their future goals.** Nine in ten respondents (89%) say mental health is important in achieving their future goals (68% very important), and they believe the pandemic will have long-term impacts on their mental health and wellbeing (78%).
- **Mental health plays a big factor in the way in which these women's expectations for the future have shifted due to the pandemic.** Those who say their expectations for the future are very different from before the pandemic versus now are the most likely to strongly agree that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on their mental health and well-being and are the most likely to think mental health is very important to achieving their future goals.

# Core Views

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- **Three-quarters hold the opinion that society should work for all, including women. This is almost a core value.**
  - Democrats, AAPI women, Independents, unmarried women, and women whose household income is above 40 thousand are most likely to hold the opinion that we need a society that works for all, including women.
  - A solid majority of every group, including Republicans, think society should work for all, including women.
- **Young women see a role for government. Half of the women would prefer the government create opportunities for advancement, and only 29% think government should get out of the way.**
  - Democrats as well as Black, Latinx, and AAPI women, college educated women who are Black, Latina, or AAPI, and urban women, would especially prefer this.
  - Less than half of Republicans, rural, white, and married women prefer this. Republicans are the only group that has a plurality that say they would prefer government get out of the way (39% government create opportunities, 44% government get out of your way).
  - However, none of the subgroups has a majority who say they want the government to get out of their way.

# Policy Priorities

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- **Women find it very important for elected officials to address issues related to sexual violence and harassment.**
  - Ensure workplaces are free from sexual violence and harassment – (63% very important, 82% important)
  - Pass protections to address domestic and sexual violence – (61% very important, 81% important)
- **Pay is also very important, with strengthening equal pay laws and passing federal legislation that guarantees a livable minimum wage in women’s top tier of very important issues for elected officials to address.**
  - Strengthen equal pay laws for women – (59% very important, 78% important)
  - Pass federal legislation that guarantees a livable minimum wage – (58% very important, 78% important)
- **A strong majority of young women say it is important for elected officials to address expanding mental health services, with a majority saying it is very important.**
  - Expand the availability of mental health services in schools and communities for women and girls – (56% very important, 80% important)
- **The top policies resonate across demographic subgroups, and while there are some nuances in intensity, there are not any notable policy priority differences across demographic subgroups; however, there are partisan differences on policies in this cohort. Democrats support a wide range of policy solutions. Republicans respond less to policies that involve increased government services or reproductive rights.**

# What Women Need

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- What women volunteer they most need right now is **financial help/a livable wage**, with almost a quarter stating that this is what their note to an elected leader or business leader would be about.
- In the focus groups, when asked to write a letter with the three things they need as young women to be who they want to be, focus group participants mostly wrote **financial help, child care, and things related to mental health like mental health care, mental/emotional support, and mental health resources.**



# Key Distinctions

# Different Perspectives: Black Women

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- **Black women are more likely than any other subgroup to think it's important to:**
  - **start a small business (39% very important, 62% important)**
  - **be their own brand (48% very important, 73% important)**
- **About half of Black women (46%) also say it is very important to them to help their community (75% important).**
  - **Starting a small business or being their own brand is their way of giving back to their community, by creating more generational wealth and increasing representation. For a lot of them, it could be their path to success that doesn't have to involve a college degree, as most of the sample are non-college-educated.**

# Different Perspectives: AAPI Women

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- **AAPI women** really believe in creating more opportunities for others, with opportunity being their most important value (26%).
- **AAPI women** are among the top two subgroups most likely to say they prefer the government to create opportunities for advancement (66%) and believe that society should work for all, including women (80%).

# Different Perspectives: Latina Women

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- **Latinas** know mental health is important because the pandemic has had an impact on this aspect of their lives. Compared to their counterparts, they are the most likely to say that mental health is important in achieving their future goals (71% very important, 94% important).
- Two-thirds of Latinas say the pandemic has shaped their expectations for the future, with 45% saying those expectations are very different from before the pandemic versus now.
- Much of what was impacted by the pandemic was Latina's personal well being. About a quarter (24%) say the pandemic had a great impact on their personal well being (69% impact).
- Compared to their counterparts, Latinas are the most likely to say that mental health support is very important (70% very important, 88% important) for employers to provide.
- Latinas are less concerned than Black or AAPI women about experiencing racism.

# Different Perspectives: White Women

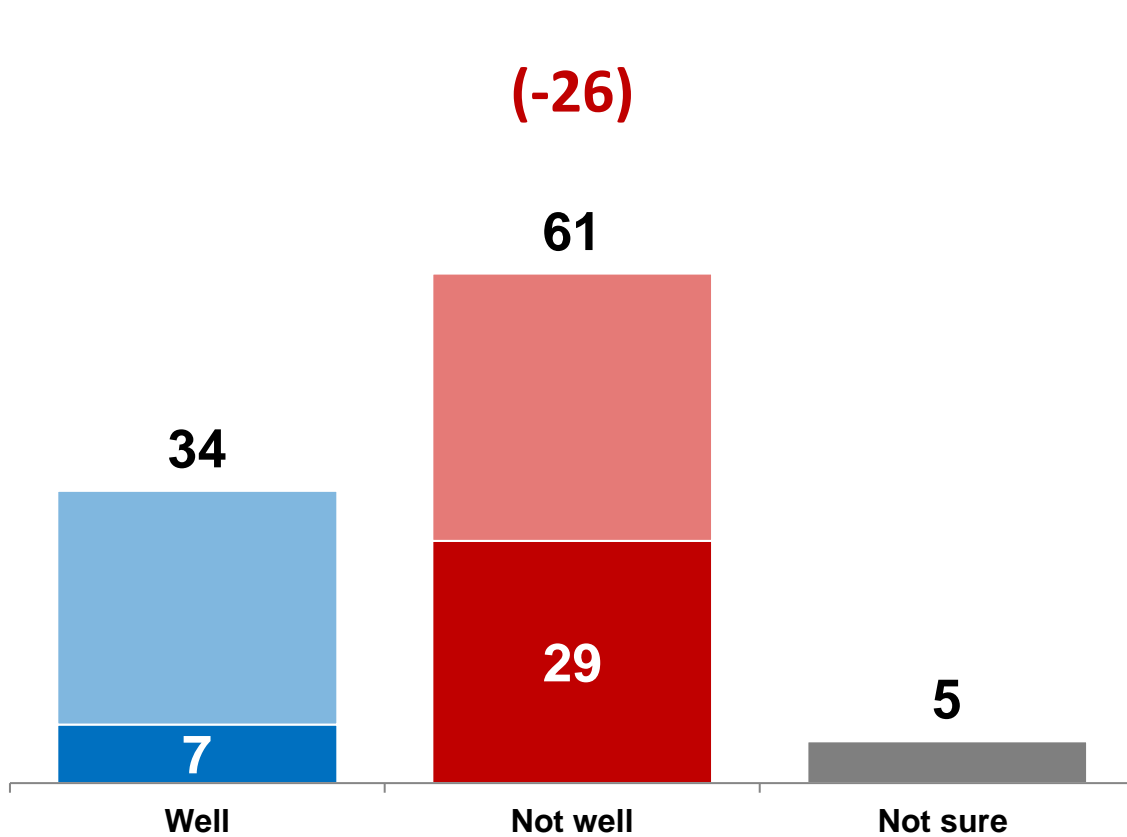
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- **White women's** worries and priorities are very economic-centered, and they feel that this has stemmed from the pandemic.
- White women say the pandemic has impacted their economic and financial stability (21% great impact, 62% impact) and they are the most likely to have experienced feeling financial anxiety in the past month (48% very often, 79% often).
- White women's top intensely felt concern is being able to afford their rent or mortgage (34% very worried, 57% worried). They are also worried about getting a good paying job with benefits (30% very worried, 64% worried) and their total family income not being enough to meet their family's expenses and pay their bills (32% very worried, 62% worried).
- White women know what they need to succeed and that's financial help/a livable wage (25%).

# Economic Standing

Across demographic subgroups, women say they are not doing well in the economy right now. Black women are the only demographic to be net positive for how well they are doing in the economy right now with a net of 14 points. Rural women are doing the worst right now in the economy, with almost seven in ten saying they are not doing well. College-educated women of color are split on how they feel they are doing in the economy right now.

How well would you say you are doing in the economy right now - very well, somewhat well, a little well, or not well at all?



	Well	Not well	Net
18-24	35	59	-24
25-30	34	63	-30
Non-college	32	63	-31
College	40	57	-17
Urban	37	58	-21
Suburban	36	59	-23
Rural	29	68	-39
Democrat ID	34	62	-28
Independent ID	33	59	-27
Republican ID	37	61	-24
Married	42	57	-16
Unmarried	32	62	-29
White	30	66	-35
African American	54	41	+14
Latinx	31	63	-32
AAPI	35	59	-24
Below 40 thousand	32	64	-33
Above 40 thousand	38	59	-21

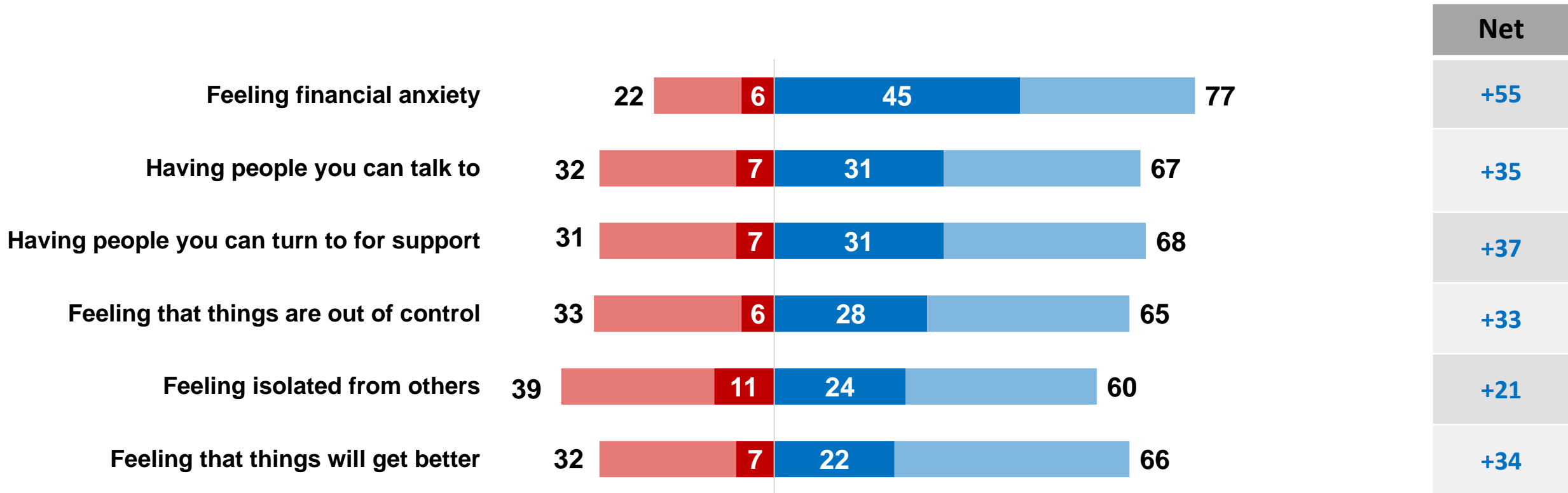
	Well	Not well
POC non-college	36	57
POC college	47	51

Somewhat well  
Very well

A little well  
Not well at all

Financial anxiety is the most frequently felt experience in the past month with almost half saying they felt financial anxiety very often in the past month. However, this cohort of women does feel that they often have people they can talk to and people they can turn to for support, though maybe not as often as they should given that less than a third feel this way very often. Two thirds feel that things will get better.

How often have you experienced the following in the past month – very often, somewhat often, rarely, or never?



■ Somewhat often      ■ Rarely  
■ Very often            ■ Never



While college-educated women in focus groups are less financially anxious than non-college educated women, many worry about paying back student loans and the cost of living. The pandemic profoundly impacted many across the socio-economic spectrum. All participants notice and worry about rising prices for food, basics, and housing.

“My husband, he **lost his job during the pandemic**, a lot of people did, and then of course, the government, you know, didn't really provide us with enough aid or really extend themselves to really help and support families. So, a lot of us just are trying to figure out like how are we going to pay you know rent and how are we going to get tissue, the basics... **Every day is a concern**, especially for a large family like myself. Like we feel very alone in this world. Like we feel like wow; like we're not sure like what's going to happen.” — 25-30-year-old woman of color, non-college-educated

“**Rent is expensive**. Because I got the job, I am looking into housing in Boston. I'm from LA. So, I know life is expensive, generally. But I found that to be the case, elsewhere. I'll be in Boston. And I'm someone for a variety of reasons, does best alone, but that's not the reality that I'm in. ... But I think, again, it's kind of that reminder of like, I am thankful I have resources, but that is something that I don't have the luxury to kind of pick and choose on. And the fact that it will take a **hefty amount of my income on top of paying loans**. I'm just trying to find that balance between like how can I live a somewhat comfortable life that will allow me to be productive, but you know how can I also **save for XYZ or save for grad school**.” — Wellesley student

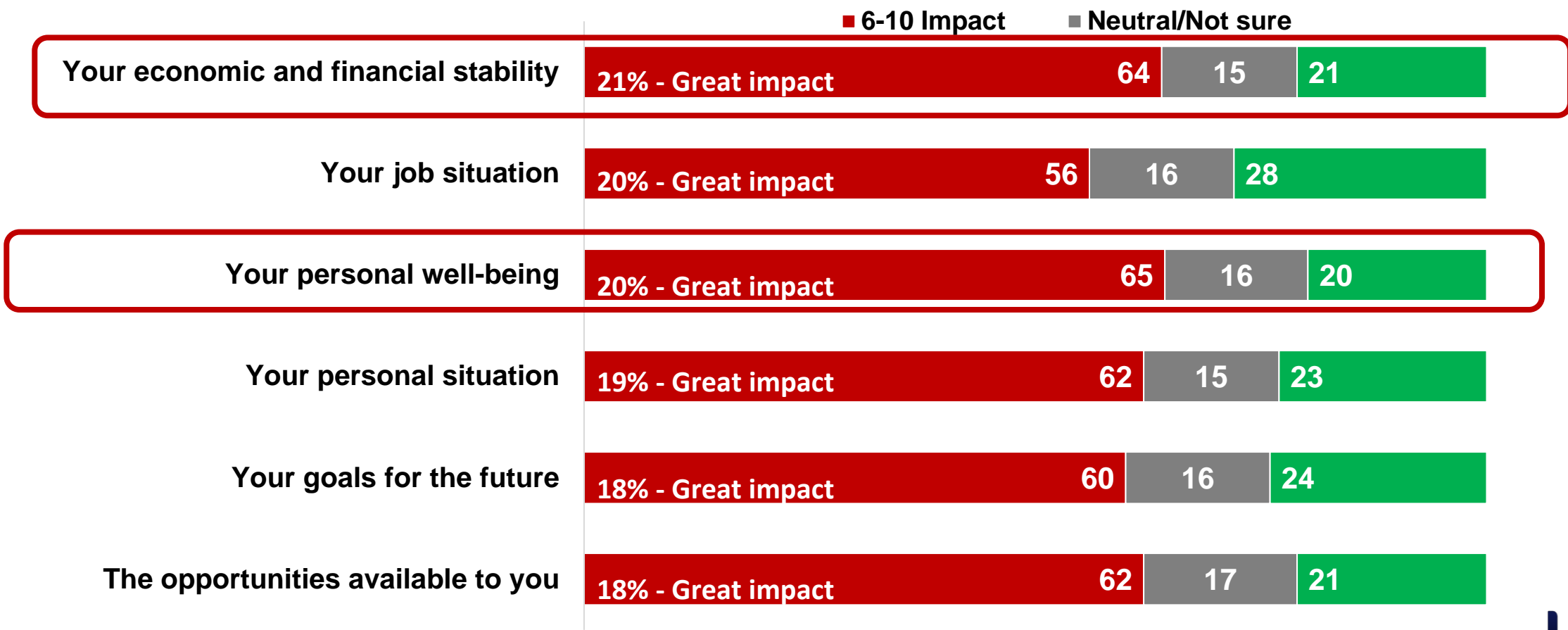
“I definitely have a lot of financial anxiety lately. Just before this, I was on a call with a financial advisor, actually. Because I'm an interior designer, and interior designers don't really get paid that much, and I think when I selected interior design as like my career path, I was like, okay, it's going to be fun, like money isn't everything. But now that I'm actually doing it in the field for like a couple years, I am like well, **money's not everything, but it would be nice to have more of it**. Like compared to like my friends who are not in my industry like, a lot of people are doing like a lot better than me, so I have definitely had a lot of anxiety about that lately.” — 25-30-year-old woman, college-educated

“I was just going to say in regard to like grocery stores, **the price of everything is gone up**. I gotta go to multiple grocery store sometimes just to find exactly what I need because the shelves aren't stocked so.” — 25-30-year-old white woman, non-college-educated

“Yeah, financially wise, **it's been a struggle, especially when the beginning of COVID hit**. You know most things closed. Doing a delivery job, it was like I stayed home for like a long time without being able to work. And a lot of places closed down. So, it was a hard impact for like if you had goals to reach and all that stuff. **Financially, it was really...it was a lot.**” —18-24-year-old woman, non-college-educated

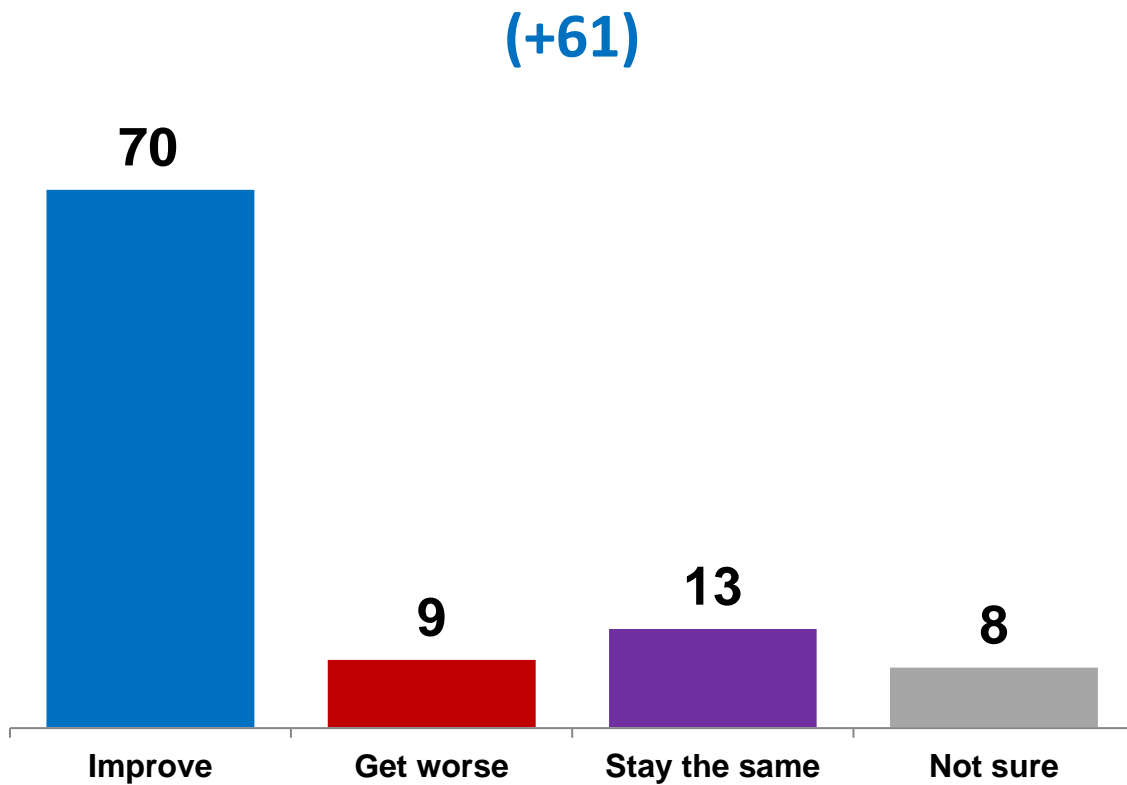
The pandemic has had the most profound impact on young women's economic and financial stability and personal well-being. The pandemic has touched most aspects of young women's lives, with a majority saying it has impacted their job and personal situations, their goals, and their opportunities.

On a scale that goes from 0 to 10, where 0 means no impact at all and 10 means great impact, how much impact has the pandemic had on each of the following?



Although most do not feel they are doing well in the economy right now, seven in ten believe things will improve in the next 5 years. Across subgroups, women believe their personal financial situation will improve in the next 5 years.

In the next 5 years, do you think your personal financial situation will improve, get worse, or stay the same?

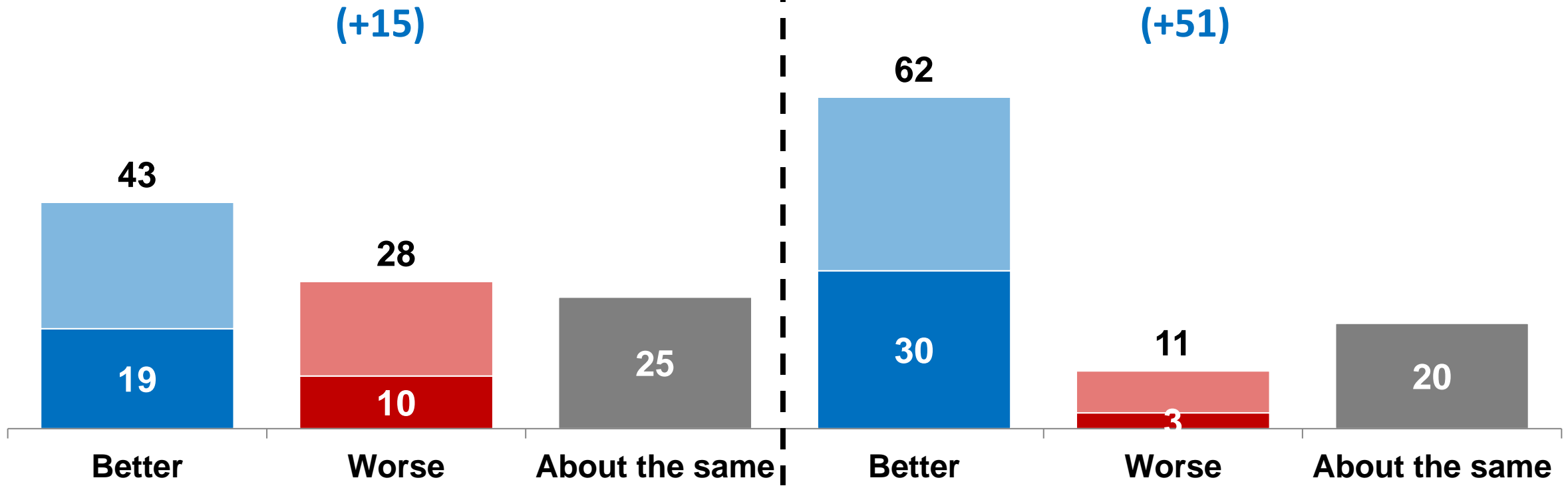


	Improve	Get worse	Stay the same
18-24	71	9	12
25-30	69	8	15
Non-college	67	10	14
College	77	6	13
Urban	75	7	11
Suburban	70	12	13
Rural	62	8	19
Democrat ID	72	10	14
Independent ID	67	7	14
Republican ID	72	10	14
Married	70	10	14
Unmarried	70	9	13
White	69	9	14
African American	73	9	14
Latinx	72	6	12
AAPI	61	8	17
Below 40 thousand	64	9	17
Above 40 thousand	76	9	10

These results conform with the common theme seen throughout this survey: women feel more optimistic about their future than the present. A little over half say they are doing worse or about the same as their mom at their age, while a solid majority say they think their life at 35 or 40 will be better than their moms' at that age. Three in ten say it will be much better.

When you compare your life to how your mom's life was at your age, would you say you are doing better, worse, or about the same as your mom at the same age?

Now imagine yourself at 35 or 40, do you think your life will be better, worse, or about the same as your mom at that age?



(+15)

(+51)

**Somewhat better** (light blue)  
**Much better** (dark blue)  
**Somewhat worse** (light red)  
**Much worse** (dark red)

When comparing their life to their mothers' lives at the same age, young women consider a range of experiences – marriage, immigration, parenting and other caregiving, as well as work. Some acknowledge a wider range of opportunities available for themselves than what was available for their mothers.

“My mom had a single mom, and they came to America together when she was little. So, during college, she paid by herself, completely, and she lived on her own by the time she was 20. And she's the oldest sibling in America. So, she had a lot more responsibility and a lot less support. Like she works really hard. Like I have both my parents here and I can stay at home. So, she created the environment I have now.” – Wellesley student

“I think I'm so much better off than where my mom was. I think my mom was probably like lost at a bar somewhere you know. Yeah, I'm so much more set in life, and I do have a child.” – 25-30-year-old white woman, non-college-educated

“Not exactly my age but a little bit older, my mom immigrated to the US. So, already that's completely different that she had to like find her footing here without knowing anyone and like without English being her native tongue. So, yeah, that kind of makes everything completely different. Lack of like family support in the area and financing everything on her own and stuff like that.” – Wellesley student

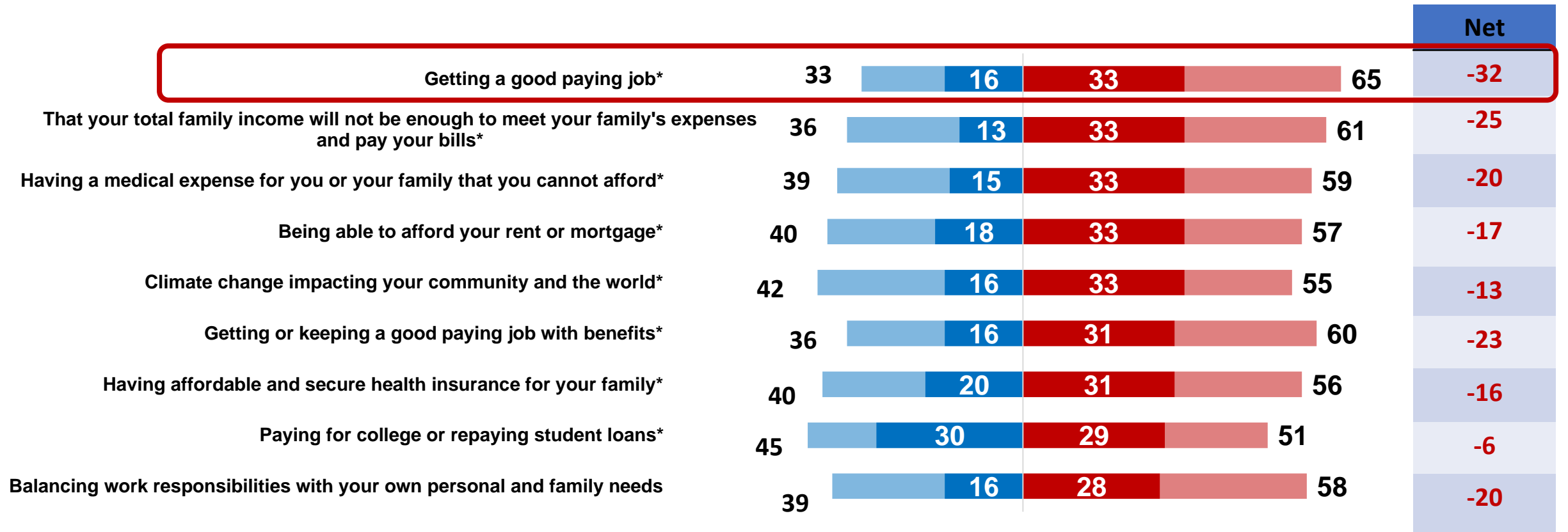
“... my mom was established. She was also taking care of me. And she's been with the same company for like over 20 years. But again, she hasn't grown because of how like people stay in the same level, and like with me, I've been in three major companies in my lifetime. During the pandemic, I crossed over to a different thing from what my degree is. My degree is in hospitality, and due to COVID, hospitality didn't exist.” – 25-30-year-old woman, college-educated

“I think that the laws when my mom was growing up, when she was my age, I think the laws were a lot of stricter as far as like education, especially for women. There weren't a lot of grants and scholarships and things like that for women in that time. So, she just had to, you know, start as a secretary and work her way up. And she started substitute teaching and doing that. But yeah, things were definitely different than they are now. Things were a lot stricter on women. You know, now we, we have scholarships, and they have grants for moms and stuff like that. Things have definitely loosened up. They have definitely changed, and for the better.” – 25-30-year-old woman of color, non-college-educated

# Current Worries and Concerns

This cohort of women is the most worried about getting a good paying job. Many of their top worries center on finances and their job situation with being able to afford their rent or mortgage, that their total family income will not be enough to meet their family’s expenses and pay their bills, and having a medical expense for them or their family that they cannot afford being part of their top concerns. They are also very concerned about the impacts of climate change.

[TOP TIER] Now you will see a list of personal concerns that some people have. Thinking about yourself and your family, please say whether you personally are very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not worried at all about each of these concerns.

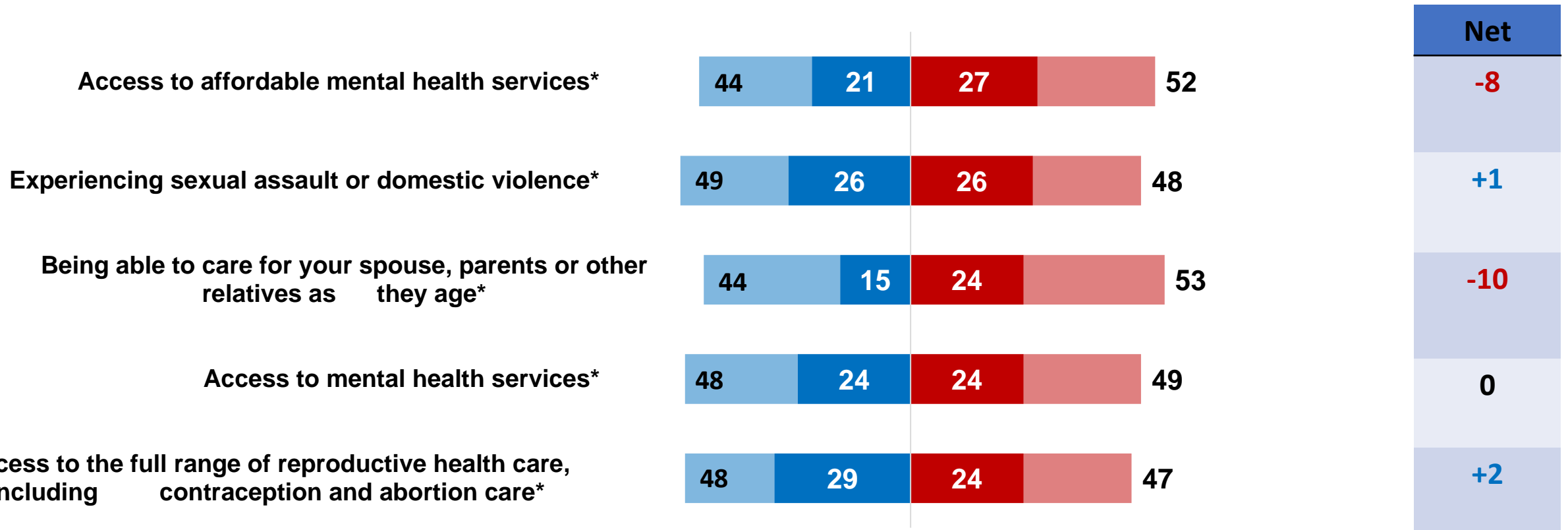


■ A little worried      ■ Somewhat worried  
■ Not worried at all      ■ Very worried

\*Split sampled

In a second tier of personal worries are access to mental health services, gender-based violence, reproductive care, and caregiving for older relatives. Young women are more worried about access to affordable mental health services than just mental health services in general. They are split on whether they are worried about experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence and having access to the full range of reproductive health care. About a quarter are very concerned about being able to care for their spouse, parents, or other relatives as they age.

[SECOND TIER] Now you will see a list of personal concerns that some people have. Thinking about yourself and your family, please say whether you personally are very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not worried at all about each of these concerns.



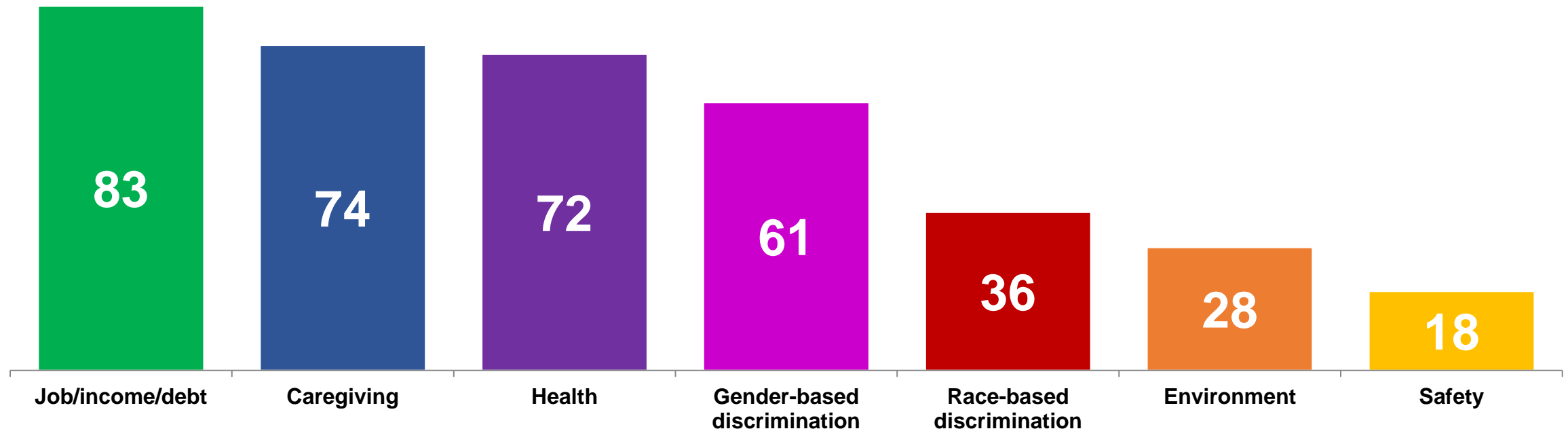
■ A little worried      ■ Somewhat worried  
■ Not worried at all      ■ Very worried

\*Split sampled



Young women overall are most likely to have worries about their jobs, income, or debt, such as getting a good paying job, that their total family income will not be enough to meet their family's expenses and pay their bills, being able to afford their rent or mortgage, and paying for college or repaying student loans. Second, but noteworthy, are caregiving worries like balancing work responsibilities with their own personal and family needs and being able to care for their spouse, parents or other relatives as they age and health worries like having a medical expense for them or their family that they cannot afford, having affordable and secure health insurance, and access to affordable mental health services. A solid majority also express worries about gender-based discrimination.

Now you will see a list of personal concerns that some people have. Thinking about yourself and your family, please say whether you personally are very worried, somewhat worried, a little worried, or not worried at all about each of these concerns.

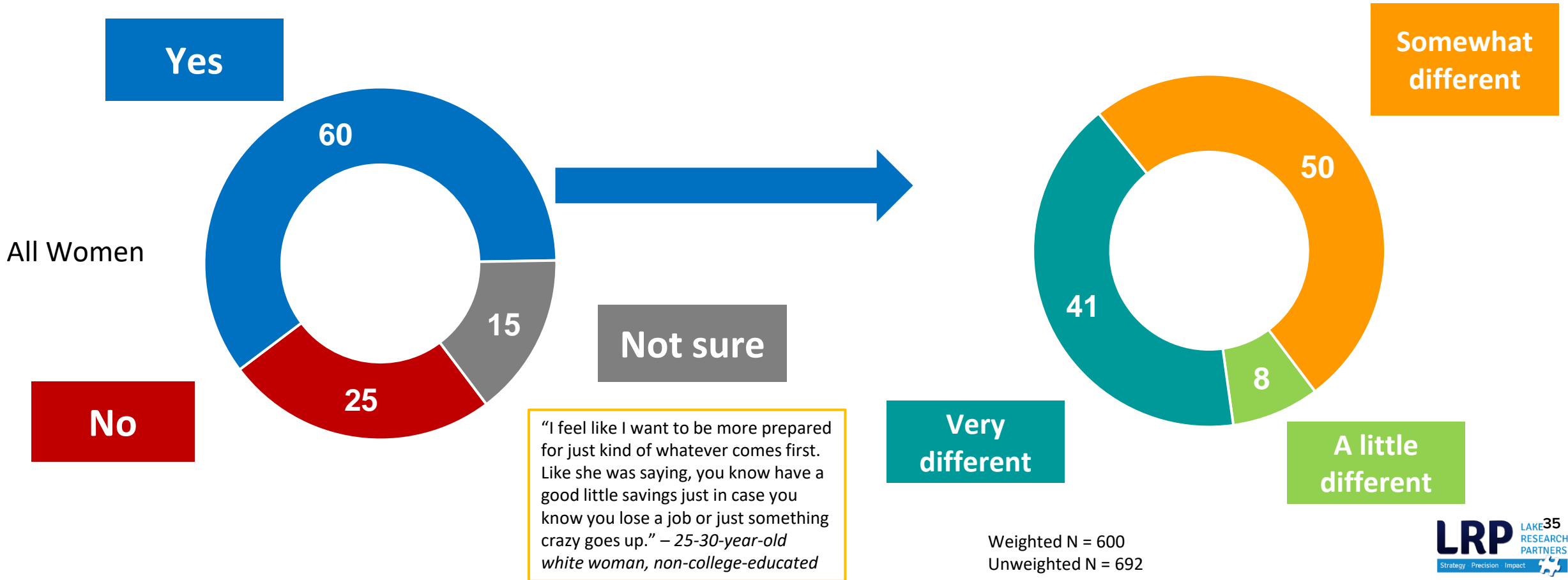


# Worries and Concerns in the Future

A majority of women say the pandemic has shaped their expectations for their future, and only a quarter say it hasn't. Of the women who say it has shaped their expectations for the future, 41% say their expectations are very different, and half say their expectations are somewhat different.

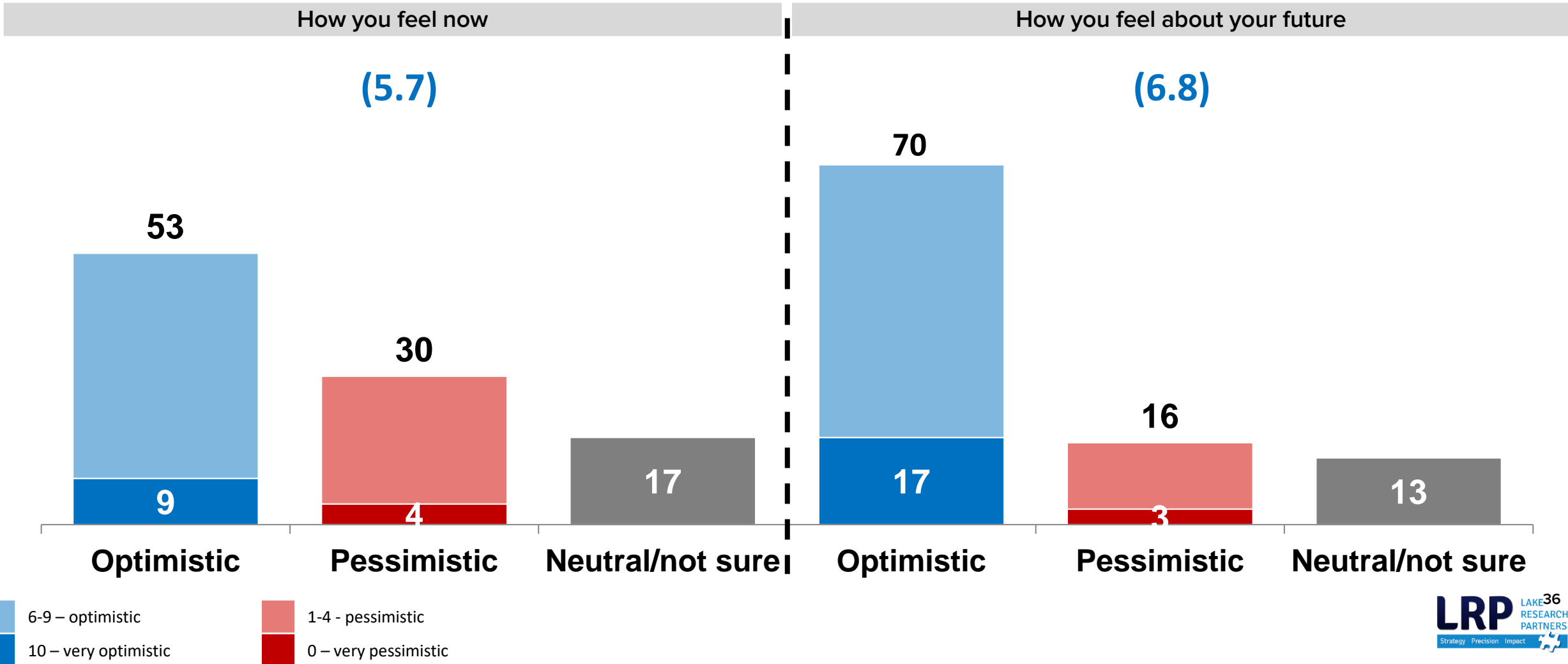
Did your experience during the pandemic shape your expectations for your future?

(If yes, ask:) How different are your expectations for your future before the pandemic versus now?



Women are feeling more optimistic about their future than they are about the present. Seven in ten women feel optimistic about their future with only one sixth feeling pessimistic, whereas three in ten feel pessimistic about the present.

On a scale that goes from 0 to 10, where 0 means pessimistic and 10 means optimistic, please rate the following.



# When women try to forecast their lives, many talk about where and how they will be living, having a family, and feeling happy, stable, and secure.

“Oh, well, I hope I'll be leaving **night shift** and I'll get the **prize day shift job**. I'll be one of those Princess nurses coming in at 6am. Happy, just happy to be alive, you know, instead of a **zombie**. But I hope to **have a family**. I hope to be living in a home where I'm not worried about like fixing the foundation and things like that. I know it's going to be more stressful with kids. I know that I'm going to have different things I'm going to have to worry about than I do now as a 25-year-old. But I see myself as being successful and doing whatever I need to do to make, you know, my life aspirations come true. I've got a great support system. My mom is bugging me to have kids, so I'm like, hey, do you want to watch them? That's great for me. So, anyway, yeah, I've got a good feeling about my future. I've got a really great setup so.” — 25-30-year-old woman, college-educated

“If I imagine myself 15 years from now, I'm not so sure that I would still be living or at least working in the US. I think I see myself **working or living abroad**, at least in my 30s. I don't really have a clear idea as to, or if at all, the kind of degree I'd like. Hopefully, having graduated Wellesley, I hope my 40-year-old self isn't laughing at me right now, I think I **imagine myself married**. But I think, professionally, I see myself working in some kind of public sector. So, working with some kind of like nonprofit public group.” — Wellesley student

“ I hope to **have a family** in five or 10 years. I also hope to **own a home**, which is very difficult in California. In general, the prices are crazy. I still don't know if I'm going to be in the same state or move around, especially with COVID, I guess remote work is finally, you know, a well-accepted thing globally. So, **not sure what the city would look like**, but I do hope to **own a home**. I don't think I want to keep renting a home, especially when we do decide to have family. But yeah, like hopeful for the future.” — 25-30-year-old woman, college-educated

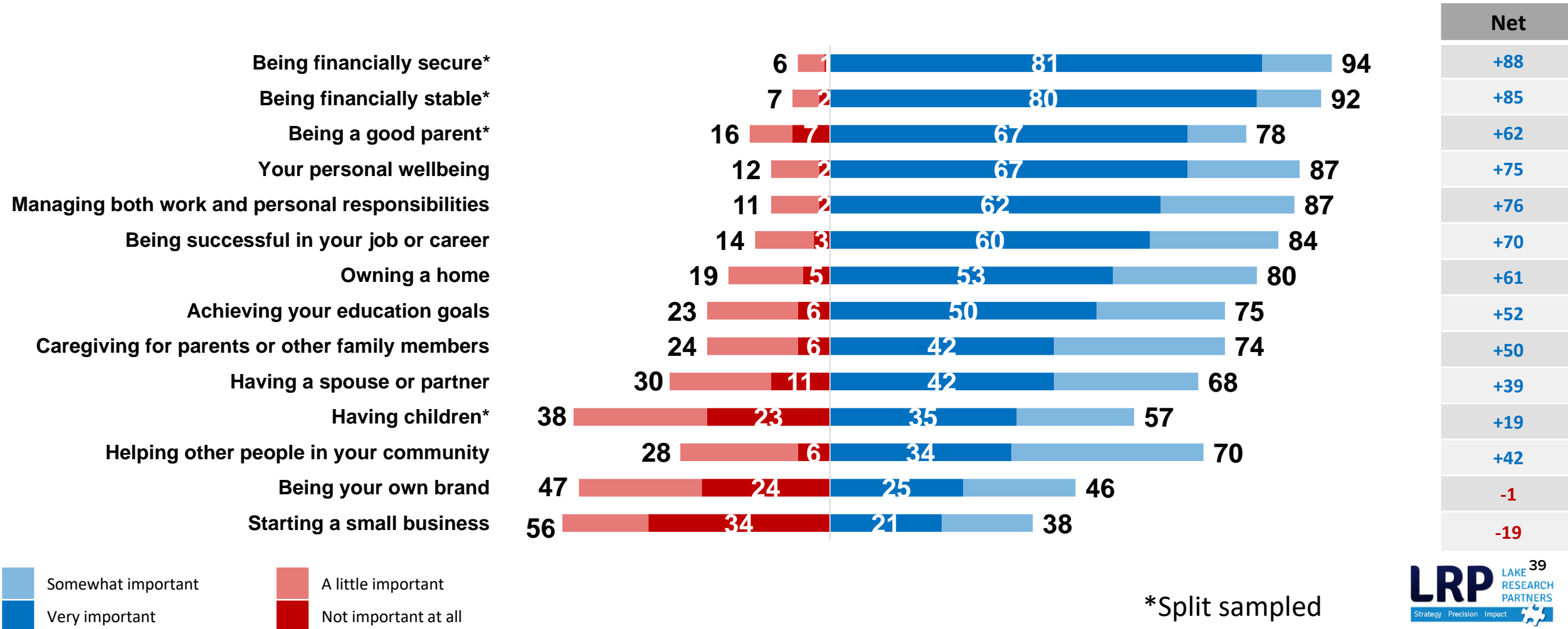
“I always thought that by that age I'd be **married, have a couple kids, have a house, and started my career**. I'm still kind of hopeful about that, I guess, but it's not really like the forefront of my, I guess, priorities right now. At this point, I just want to be like happy and content with what I am currently doing. And so, I guess I'm just trying to like really focus on that and not like so much ahead in the future. I just want to be **happy**.” — 18-24-year-old woman, non-college-educated

“I think like all I want is to be like **mostly self-sustainable**. Like **my little dream house has like solar panels and we have a garden that we can get our own food from**, and you know some **animals and stuff like that**. I don't know...I guess I'm feeling really anxious about like the economy and the climate. And I kind of want to...I guess I'm not like a doomsday prepper or anything like that, but like I want to be able to **take care of myself, so**.” — 25-30-year-old white woman, non-college-educated

# Priorities

Being financially secure and stable are the most important to women with four-fifths saying it is very important. In a second tier are being a good parent, personal well being, managing work and personal responsibilities, and being successful professionally. Over half say it is not important to start a small business, with 34% saying it is not important at all. Young women split on the importance of being their own brand.

How important are each of the following to you?



# Current Feelings and Values



Young women are mostly feeling tired and stressed these days, with happy following those feelings. However, Black women's top feeling is happy followed by hopeful. White and AAPI women split between tired and stressed, and Latinas divide between tired, happy, and stressed.

Thinking about how you feel most of the time these days, which two or three of the following words would apply best?

		White	Black	Latina	AAPI
Tired	40	43	30	38	38
Stressed	39	43	23	35	43
Happy	32	29	39	36	31
Overwhelmed	29	29	27	27	27
Hopeful	28	26	33	30	27
Optimistic	20	19	21	23	15
Depressed	20	22	21	16	13
Excited	14	12	24	15	17
Worried	14	16	9	12	20
Stuck	14	15	6	18	9
Lonely	13	12	12	14	17
Frustrated	12	11	14	12	15

A key change in the COVID era has been the emergence of stability as a key value. For this cohort of women, stability is more important than security right now. Top values to this cohort of women are stability, freedom, safety, and equality. AAPI women's top value is opportunity but that is followed closely by the other top values. Black women's is freedom, and Latina and white women's is stability. Few young women value tradition which is the lowest ranking value.

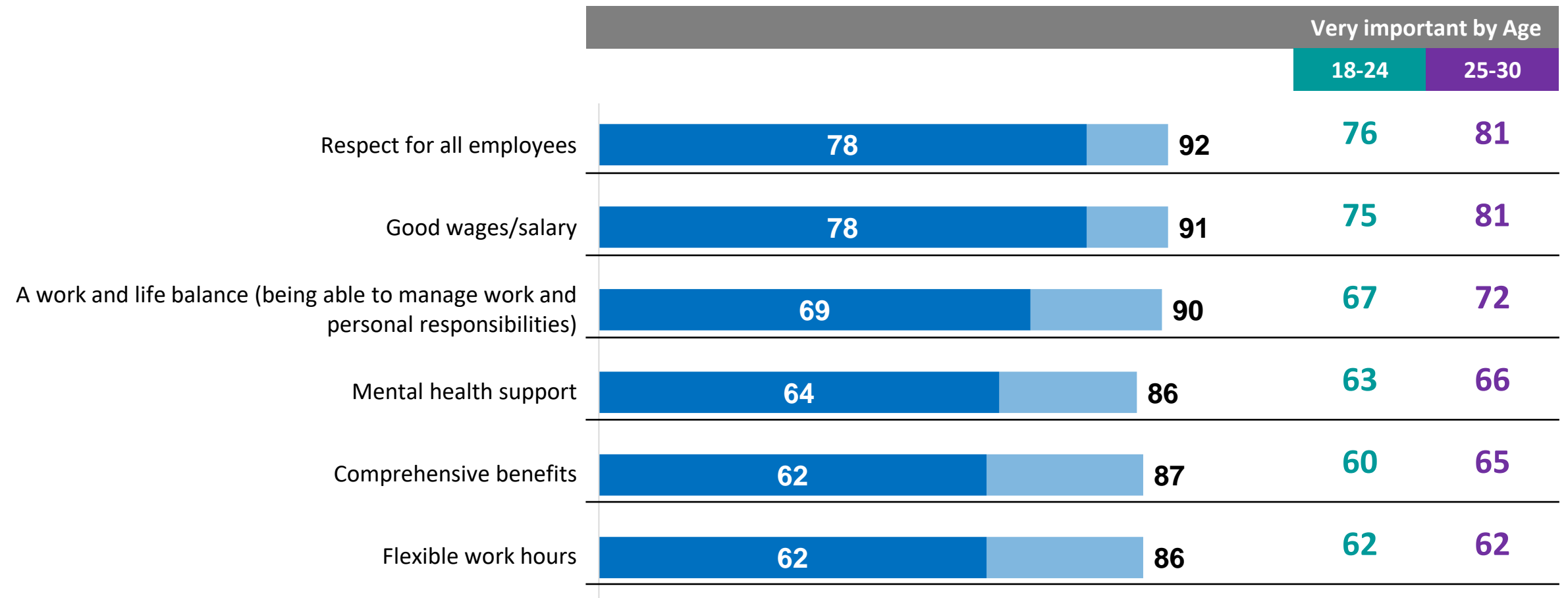
Even though many of these values may be important to you, which one or two would you say really stands out as the most important to you right now?

		White	Black	Latina	AAPI
Stability	33	34	31	33	25
Freedom	26	26	34	22	25
Safety	20	19	17	21	25
Equality	20	18	21	22	23
Personal Responsibility	16	17	14	18	10
Opportunity	16	14	16	19	26
Security	15	15	11	18	17
Morality	14	18	8	10	12
Fairness	12	11	11	14	12
Individual rights	12	11	14	10	10
Tradition	4	4	5	3	2

# Employer Expectations

Nearly universally, women find it important for employers to provide many different workplace essentials. Respect and good wages/salary are the most important things for employers to provide. Women ages 25-30 have higher intensity on importance than women ages 18-24 do for these things.

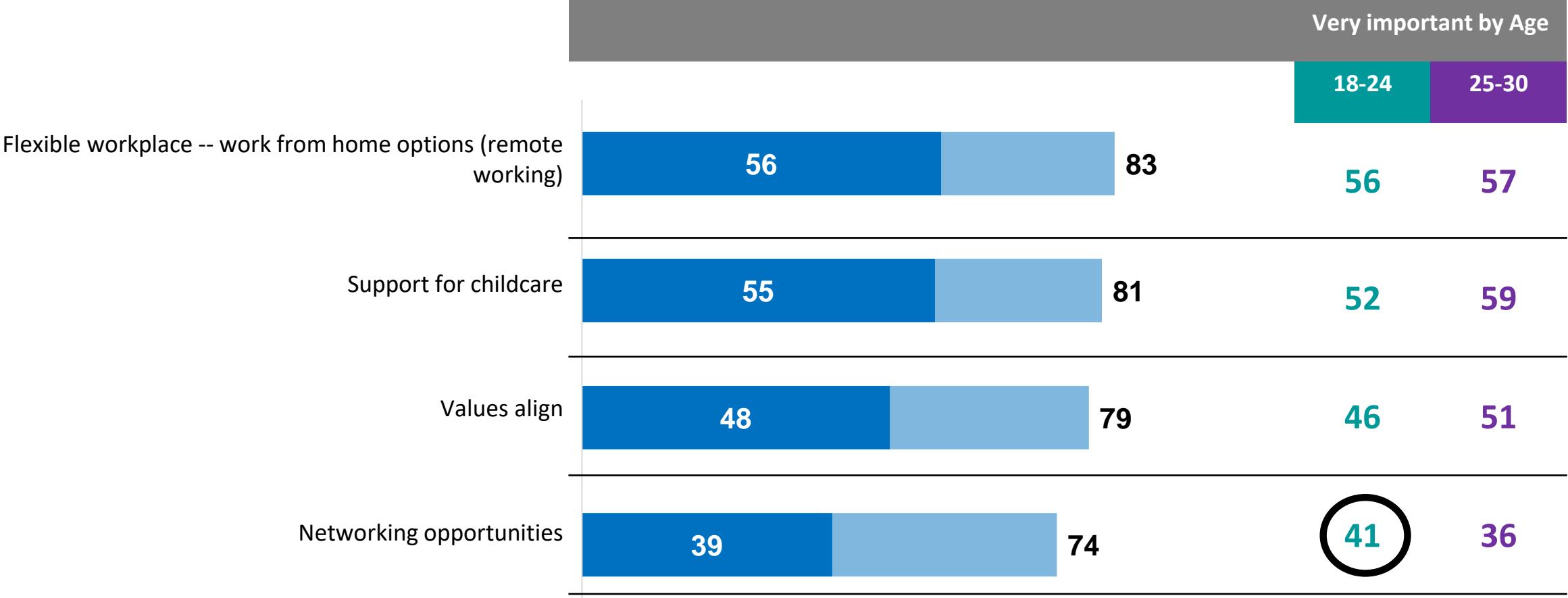
How important are each of these for employers to provide?



Very important      Somewhat important

Values aligning and networking opportunities are the least important to young women, but women ages 18-24 do have higher intensity than women ages 25-30 for the importance of networking opportunities. Over half find it very important that employers offer flexible workplaces and support for childcare.

How important are each of these for employers to provide?



Very important      Somewhat important

Young women are expecting employers to have fair and transparent salary policies, offer a range of benefits, including mental health leave, provide flexible work options, and recognize that their employees have lives and caregiving responsibilities.

“I feel like my expectations will be like once I go into like a dental office, being more understanding, especially being a single mom, especially like flexible schedules, health benefits, and those sorts of things.” — 18-24-year-old woman, non-college-educated

“You know when I go and do my internship and then when I apply for positions in law and everything that the employer is not just focused on me just working for the company, you know, and have like a work life balance so I can take care of my family still, or if there's an emergency, which, honestly speaking, is definitely guaranteed now even more so and that I wouldn't be penalized or felt like I have to choose between being able to support and feed my family or if I just support the company only and try to advance in my career. And I think that's the problem right now with a lot of employers in that they're just focused on your company growing and not really on their staff needs.” — 25-30-year-old woman of color, non-college-educated

“I think a level of fairness instead of like favoring people and paying them more just because whatever reason, not a good one.” — 25-30-year-old white woman, non-college-educated

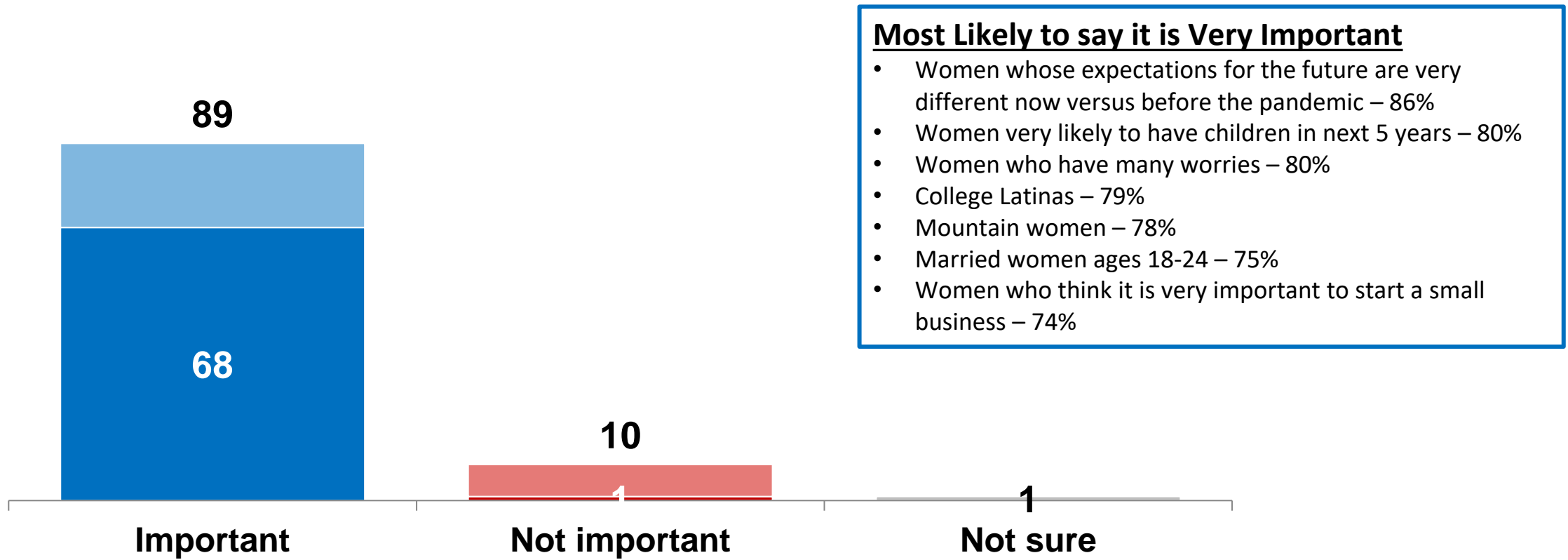
“...I just wanted to say that there's one thing that I have not seen in any company and that is mental health days. There's sick leave, which I guess would be under that, but for persons such as myself, I suffer from anxiety, depression, PTSD, and things like that. I have yet to see any company that supports mental health days. One day you wake up...with my condition, I wake up and one day I'll be cheery and happy and ready to go to work and you know ready to start my day, but some days, I don't even feel like getting out of bed. And I think that what I would look for, and what anyone should look for, because it can happen at any time. Something can happen, something can happen in your life, or you know a phone conversation can affect the rest of your day. And I think that a lot of companies need to adapt mental health days for sure. So, that's what I will look for.” — 25-30-year-old woman of color, non-college-educated

“I definitely look at the benefits because I have a family, and my husband, he's 1099. He does gigs and so he doesn't get any benefits. My daughter has sickle cell, so having good benefits is very important to me. Having a 401k and having my employer contribute as well is really important. And also, when I speak to...like for interviews and get to know companies, I want to know that they're also like human. There's companies that they don't understand your kid is sick. They don't understand that you're sick. And I like to find out like okay, if I'm sick, are you understanding or will you fire me my first sick day? Or would you make tell me oh, no, you need to come in. Like, I like to find the human...especially now with COVID, it has taught us like we could work our asses off for companies, but at the end of the day, you could die at any moment.” — 25-30-year-old woman, college-educated

# Mental Health

Mental health is very important to this cohort. Over two-thirds say mental health is very important in achieving their future goals.

### How important is mental health in achieving your future goals?



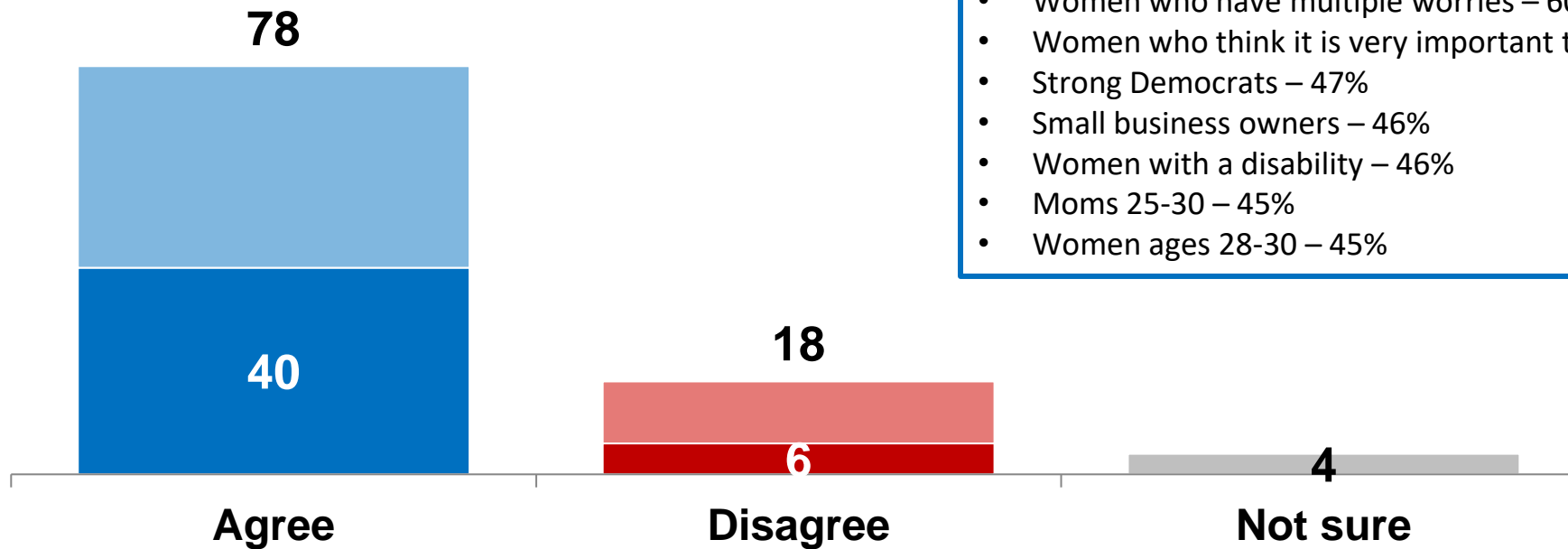
“I want to make sure that I am prioritizing myself more and making sure that my mental health is at a good state just because that helps me in the long run, when it comes to just like daily life, achieving different things and having some type of motivation.” – 18-24-year-old non-college educated woman

Somewhat important  
Very important  
A little important  
Not important at all



Over three quarters of women agree that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on their mental health and well-being with two-fifths strongly agreeing with that statement. Mental health plays a big factor in how these women's expectations are very different for the future before the pandemic versus now. They are the most likely to strongly agree that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on their mental health and well-being and are the most likely to think mental health is very important to achieving their future goals.

Do you agree or disagree that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on your mental health and well-being?



### Most Likely to Strongly Agree

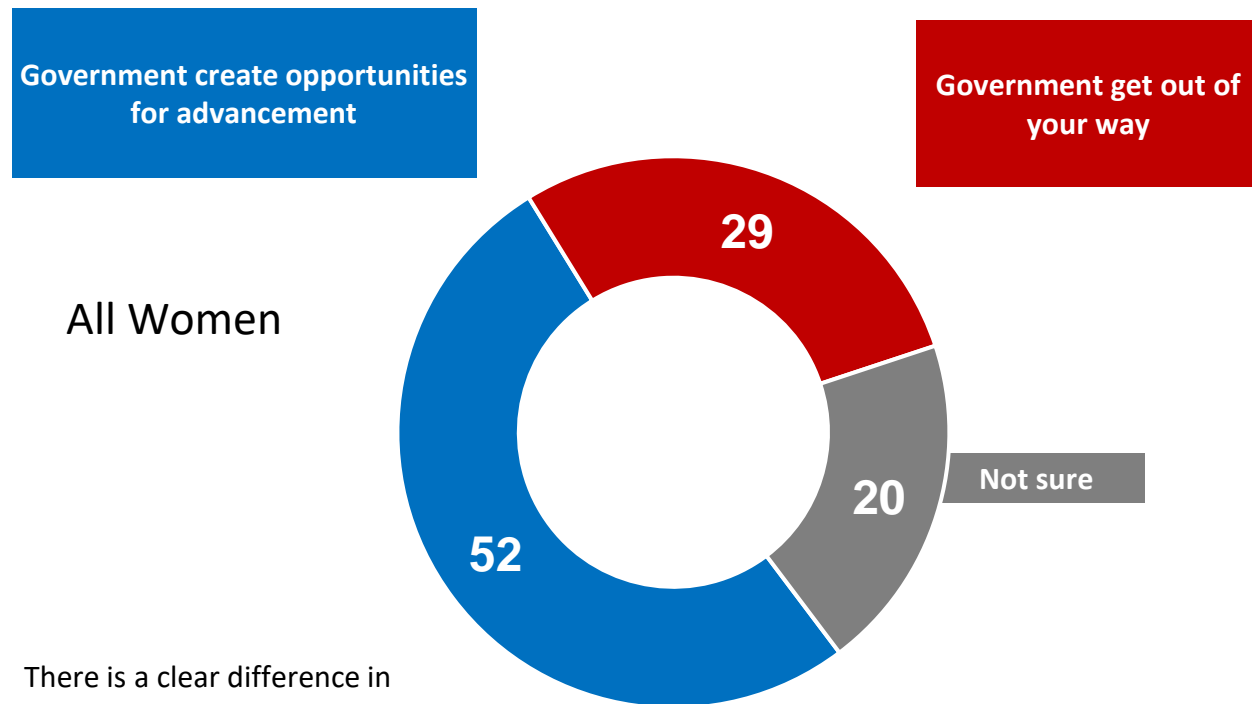
- Women whose expectations for the future are very different now versus before the pandemic – 62%
- Women who have multiple worries – 60%
- Women who think it is very important to start a small business – 51%
- Strong Democrats – 47%
- Small business owners – 46%
- Women with a disability – 46%
- Moms 25-30 – 45%
- Women ages 28-30 – 45%



# Core Orientations

Over half prefer the government create opportunities for advancement and less than a third prefer the government to get out of the way. Republicans are least likely to think the government should create opportunities for advancement but are divided, while AAPI women are most likely to think this way. Unmarried women are 6 points more likely than married women to say the government should create opportunities for advancement.

If you had to choose, would you prefer:



	Create opp.	Out of way	Net
18-24	50	28	+22
25-30	54	29	+25
Non-college	49	29	+21
College	57	29	+28
Urban	56	25	+31
Suburban	54	32	+22
Rural	41	31	+10
Democrat ID	67	21	+45
Independent ID	42	27	+15
Republican ID	39	44	-5
Married	47	33	+13
Unmarried	53	27	+26
White	46	34	+12
African American	58	25	+32
Latinx	56	21	+35
AAPI	66	19	+47
Below 40 thousand	52	26	+26
Above 40 thousand	54	32	+22

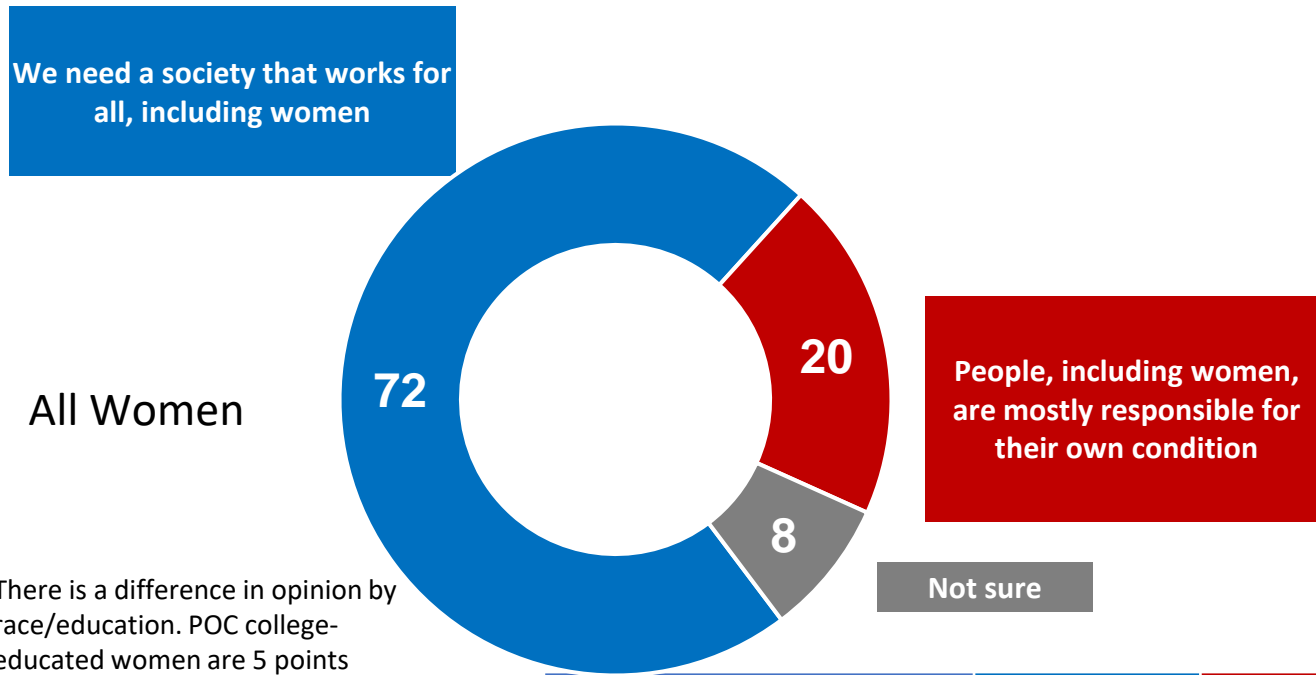
There is a clear difference in views on government intervention between POC non-college-educated women and POC college-educated women, and married women ages 18-24 and married women ages 25-30.

	Create opp.	Out way
POC non-college	54	24
POC college	69	17
Married 18-24*	41	40
Married 25-30	49	31

\*Note small n size

Nearly three-quarters believe that we need a society that works for all, including women. Democrats, AAPI women, Independents, and unmarried women, are most likely to hold the opinion that we need a society that works for all, including women. A majority of every group agrees. There is some difference between married and unmarried women; about three quarters of unmarried women think we need a society that works for all, whereas around two thirds of married women hold this opinion.

Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion?



There is a difference in opinion by race/education. POC college-educated women are 5 points more likely than POC non-college-educated women to think society should work for all, whereas white non-college-educated women are 5 points more likely than white college-educated women to hold this opinion.

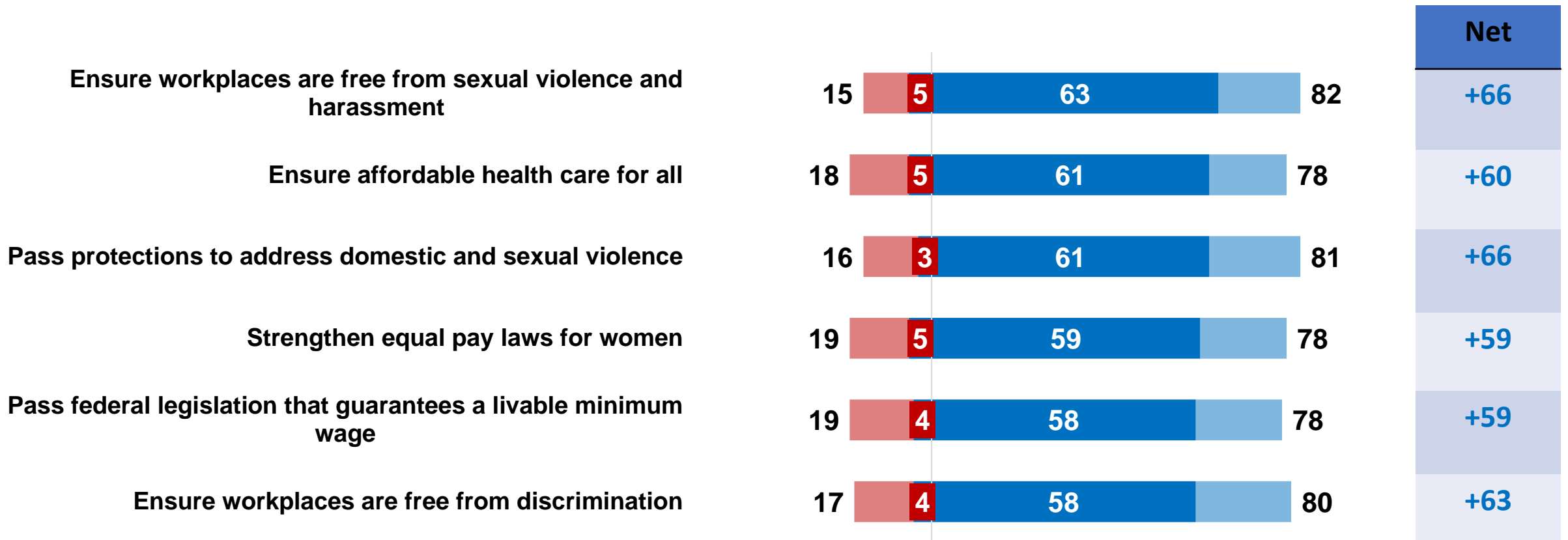
	W for all	Own C
POC non-college	72	20
POC college	77	18
White non-college	73	17
White college	68	26

	Works for all	Own condition	Net
18-24	71	19	+52
25-30	73	20	+52
Non-college	72	19	+54
College	72	22	+50
Urban	72	20	+52
Suburban	73	19	+54
Rural	71	19	+52
Democrat ID	81	16	+65
Independent ID	72	16	+56
Republican ID	56	35	+22
Married	67	24	+42
Unmarried	74	19	+55
White	71	20	+51
African American	73	21	+52
Latinx	72	20	+52
AAPI	80	13	+67
Below 40 thousand	72	20	+52
Above 40 thousand	75	19	+55

# Policies

Young women have a number of policy priorities. Women find issues related to sexual violence and harassment very important for elected officials to address. Pay is also very important, with strengthening equal pay laws and passing federal legislation that guarantees a livable minimum wage in their top tier of very important issues for elected officials to address. Also in the top tier are affordable health care and discrimination-free workplaces.

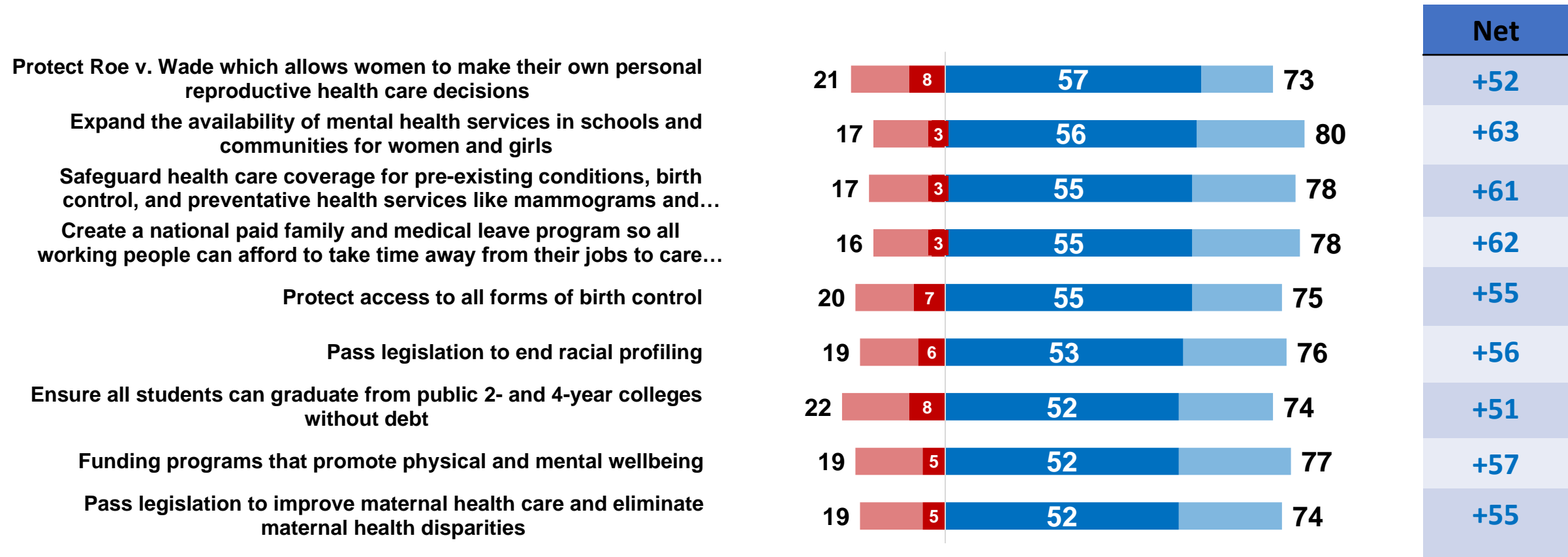
[TOP TIER] How important is it for elected officials to address the following issues, very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not important at all?



■ Somewhat important  
■ Very important  
■ A little important  
■ Not important at all

Within the second tier of issues important for elected officials to address, expanding mental health services ranks the highest in overall importance. Protecting Roe v. Wade is met with the highest intensity but has one of the lowest net scores of the second tier. This cohort of women has a diffuse agenda for elected officials; a solid majority find all of these policies very important.

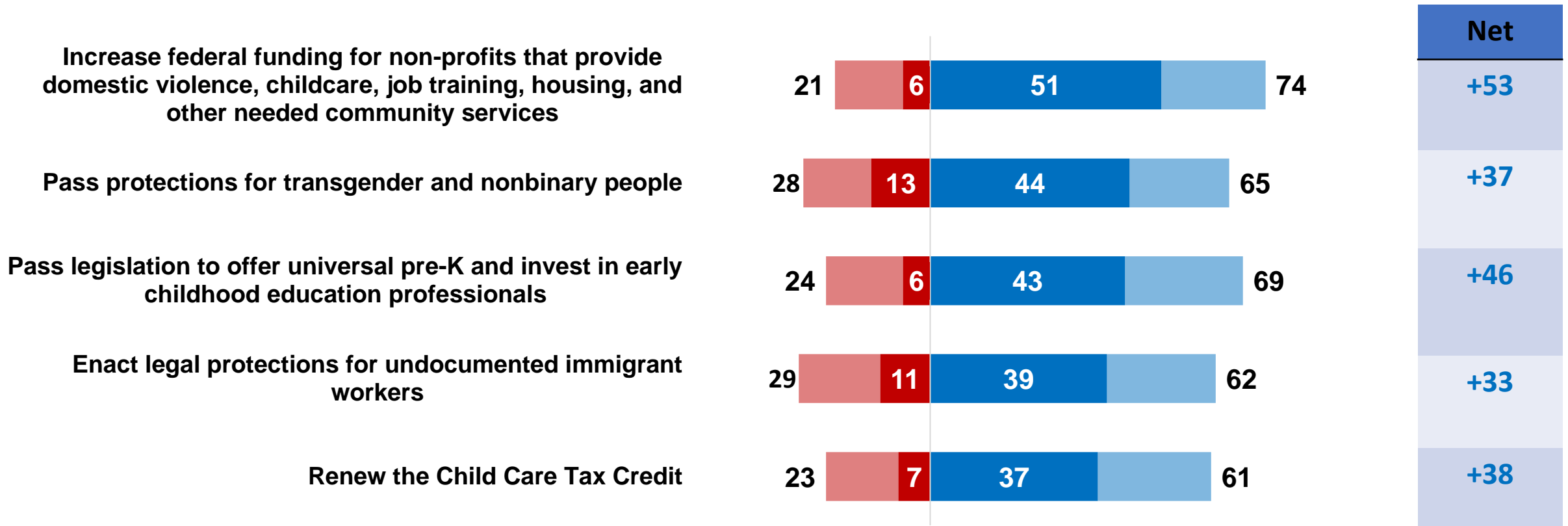
[SECOND TIER] How important is it for elected officials to address the following issues, very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not important at all?



■ Somewhat important  
■ Very important  
■ A little important  
■ Not important at all

In the bottom tier of issues for elected leaders to address are renewing the Child Care Tax Credit and enacting legal protections for undocumented immigrant workers. However, a solid majority still find all of these important overall.

[THIRD TIER] How important is it for elected officials to address the following issues, very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not important at all?



■ Somewhat important  
■ Very important  
■ A little important  
■ Not important at all



# What Women Need

When asked to write a letter with the three things they need as young women to be who they want to be, focus group participants mostly wrote financial help, child care, and things related to mental health like mental health care, mental/emotional support, and mental health resources.





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