

# Maryland Statewide Study to Assess Perceptions of Higher Education

Prepared for:

**Solutions for Maryland's Future**

Prepared by:



## Background and Purpose

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- **The American Council on Education, working with several other national higher education associations, is coordinating the “Solutions for Our Future” campaign, a nationwide effort to develop and communicate a compelling message in support of higher education.**
- **Maryland established a “Solutions for Maryland’s Future” Steering Committee and Implementation Committee to support this national effort and coordinate a State-focused campaign.**
- **The Maryland campaign will embrace the national message, but will include a Maryland-specific focus within the context of the national campaign.**
- **In an effort to understand the challenges faced by Maryland institutions and to refine campaign messages, the Solutions for Maryland’s Future Committee commissioned WB&A to conduct market research among registered voters in Maryland. Specifically, this research was designed to understand public perceptions about higher education in Maryland.**
- **The Solutions for Maryland Steering Committee is comprised of Maryland’s higher education segment heads:**
  - **Ms. Tina M. Bjarekull, President of the Maryland Independent College and University Association;**
  - **Dr. Calvin W. Burnett, Secretary of Higher Education;**
  - **Dr. William E. Kirwan, Chancellor of the University System of Maryland;**
  - **Dr. Jane Margaret O’Brien, President of St. Mary’s College;**
  - **Dr. Earl S. Richardson, President of Morgan State University; and**
  - **Dr. H. Clay Whitlow, Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges.**
- **The seventeen-member Implementation Committee includes representatives of Maryland’s public universities, community colleges, and independent institutions.**

## Methodology

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- A telephone survey was conducted among registered voters in Maryland.
- A total of 1,106 telephone interviews were conducted between July 24<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
- The average survey length was 18 minutes.
- These interviews were stratified as follows:

Completed Surveys	
Central Maryland	506
Baltimore City	101
Baltimore Area	205
DC Area	200
Southern Maryland	200
Eastern Shore	200
Western Maryland	200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,106</b>

- The data were weighted to be proportionate to the actual household population by region.
- A sample size of 1,106 will yield data that has a maximum fluctuation of  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



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# Detailed Findings

## Most Important Problems/Issues Facing Maryland Leaders Today

	Total	Central MD	Baltimore City	Baltimore Area	DC Area	Southern MD	Eastern Shore	Western MD
		B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	n =	(506)	(101)	(205)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
<b>Net: Education</b>	<b>47%</b>	50% <sub>EFGH</sub>	65% <sub>BEFGH</sub>	55% <sub>EFGH</sub>	41% <sub>H</sub>	34%	37% <sub>H</sub>	28%
Education- K through 12 <sup>th</sup>	38	40 <sub>F</sub>	50 <sub>EFGH</sub>	41 <sub>F</sub>	36 <sub>F</sub>	25	31 <sub>H</sub>	18
Education- Higher Education	10	11 <sub>G</sub>	12 <sub>G</sub>	12 <sub>G</sub>	10 <sub>G</sub>	10 <sub>G</sub>	4	8
Education- Other	7	8 <sub>EH</sub>	12 <sub>EH</sub>	11 <sub>EFGH</sub>	3	5	5	4
<b>Net: Social Issues</b>	<b>39</b>	41 <sub>H</sub>	47 <sub>F</sub>	39 <sub>H</sub>	41 <sub>H</sub>	33 <sub>H</sub>	34 <sub>H</sub>	17
Crime and Safety	25	28 <sub>F</sub>	38 <sub>D</sub>	23 <sub>G</sub>	29 <sub>F</sub>	18 <sub>G</sub>	12	9
Environment	9	9 <sub>CH</sub>	4	11 <sub>CH</sub>	8	12 <sub>CH</sub>	16 <sub>BCEH</sub>	4
<b>Net: Economic Issues</b>	<b>34</b>	33	36	34	32	37	35	38
Taxes	12	12	11	11	14	13	14	15
The Economy	9	9	8	9	9	7	11	9
Jobs	5	5	7	4	5	5	5	11 <sub>BDEG</sub>
Electricity Rates	4	5 <sub>EF</sub>	5	7 <sub>EFG</sub>	2	2	3	4
Gas/Oil Prices	4	3	4	3	3	10 <sub>BCDE</sub>	8 <sub>BDE</sub>	9 <sub>BDE</sub>
<b>Net: Government</b>	<b>14</b>	14	12	17	11	16	16	19 <sub>E</sub>
Leadership/Pol. Leaders	5	5 <sub>E</sub>	6	8 <sub>E</sub>	2	6 <sub>E</sub>	5 <sub>E</sub>	4
Illegal Immigration	4	4 <sub>C</sub>	1	4	5 <sub>C</sub>	4	5 <sub>C</sub>	3
Health Care/Prescrip. Drugs	10	10	14	10	8	7	9	12
Rapid Growth/Overdevel.	6	6 <sub>C</sub>	1	5 <sub>C</sub>	8 <sub>C</sub>	6 <sub>C</sub>	8 <sub>C</sub>	7 <sub>C</sub>
Traffic/Not Enough Roads	5	5 <sub>CDGH</sub>	1	2	10 <sub>CDGH</sub>	5 <sub>CH</sub>	2	1
Transportation (Not Specific)	4	5 <sub>DGH</sub>	-	2	9 <sub>DGH</sub>	7 <sub>DGH</sub>	1	2

Base = Total Sample

Letters indicate significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Multiple Responses Accepted, Top Mentions

Q1. What do you think are the most important problems or issues facing the leaders of Maryland today?

## Most Important Problems/Issues Facing Maryland Leaders in 10 to 20 years

	Total	Central MD	Baltimore City	Baltimore Area	DC Area	Southern MD	Eastern Shore	Western MD
n =	(1,106)	B (506)	C (101)	D (205)	E (200)	F (200)	G (200)	H (200)
<b>Net: Social Issues</b>	<b>31%</b>	31% <sub>H</sub>	40% <sub>FH</sub>	30% <sub>H</sub>	30% <sub>H</sub>	27% <sub>H</sub>	32% <sub>H</sub>	16%
<b>Crime and Safety</b>	<b>14</b>	14 <sub>H</sub>	26 <sub>BDEFGH</sub>	12 <sub>H</sub>	13 <sub>H</sub>	13 <sub>H</sub>	12 <sub>H</sub>	6
<b>Environment</b>	<b>13</b>	12 <sub>H</sub>	10	14 <sub>H</sub>	12	14 <sub>H</sub>	18 <sub>H</sub>	7
<b>Net: Education</b>	<b>25</b>	27 <sub>H</sub>	35 <sub>EFGH</sub>	29 <sub>FH</sub>	22 <sub>H</sub>	20 <sub>H</sub>	21 <sub>H</sub>	13
<b>Education- K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	<b>20</b>	21 <sub>FGH</sub>	29 <sub>EFGH</sub>	23 <sub>FGH</sub>	18 <sub>H</sub>	13	15 <sub>H</sub>	8
<b>Education- Higher Education</b>	<b>6</b>	7 <sub>GH</sub>	7 <sub>H</sub>	8 <sub>H</sub>	6 <sub>H</sub>	6 <sub>H</sub>	4	2
<b>Net: Economic Issues</b>	<b>25</b>	24	28	23	25	22	24	30
<b>The Economy</b>	<b>8</b>	8	6	8	9	11	11	11
<b>Taxes</b>	<b>7</b>	7	7	6	8	6	6	8
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>6</b>	6	11 <sub>F</sub>	5	5	4	5	9 <sub>F</sub>
<b>Rapid Growth/Overdevelopment</b>	<b>14</b>	14	11	18 <sub>E</sub>	11	17 <sub>E</sub>	18 <sub>E</sub>	15
<b>Net: Government</b>	<b>10</b>	10	11	9	11	6	9	11
<b>Health Care/Prescription Drugs</b>	<b>6</b>	6	8	6	6	4	6	8
<b>Transportation (Not Specific)</b>	<b>6</b>	7 <sub>CG</sub>	2	5 <sub>G</sub>	10 <sub>CGH</sub>	7 <sub>CG</sub>	2	5
<b>Traffic Cong./Not Enough Roads</b>	<b>6</b>	6 <sub>C</sub>	2	5	10 <sub>CGH</sub>	5	4	4
<b>Energy Crisis</b>	<b>4</b>	4	3	4	4	4	3	3

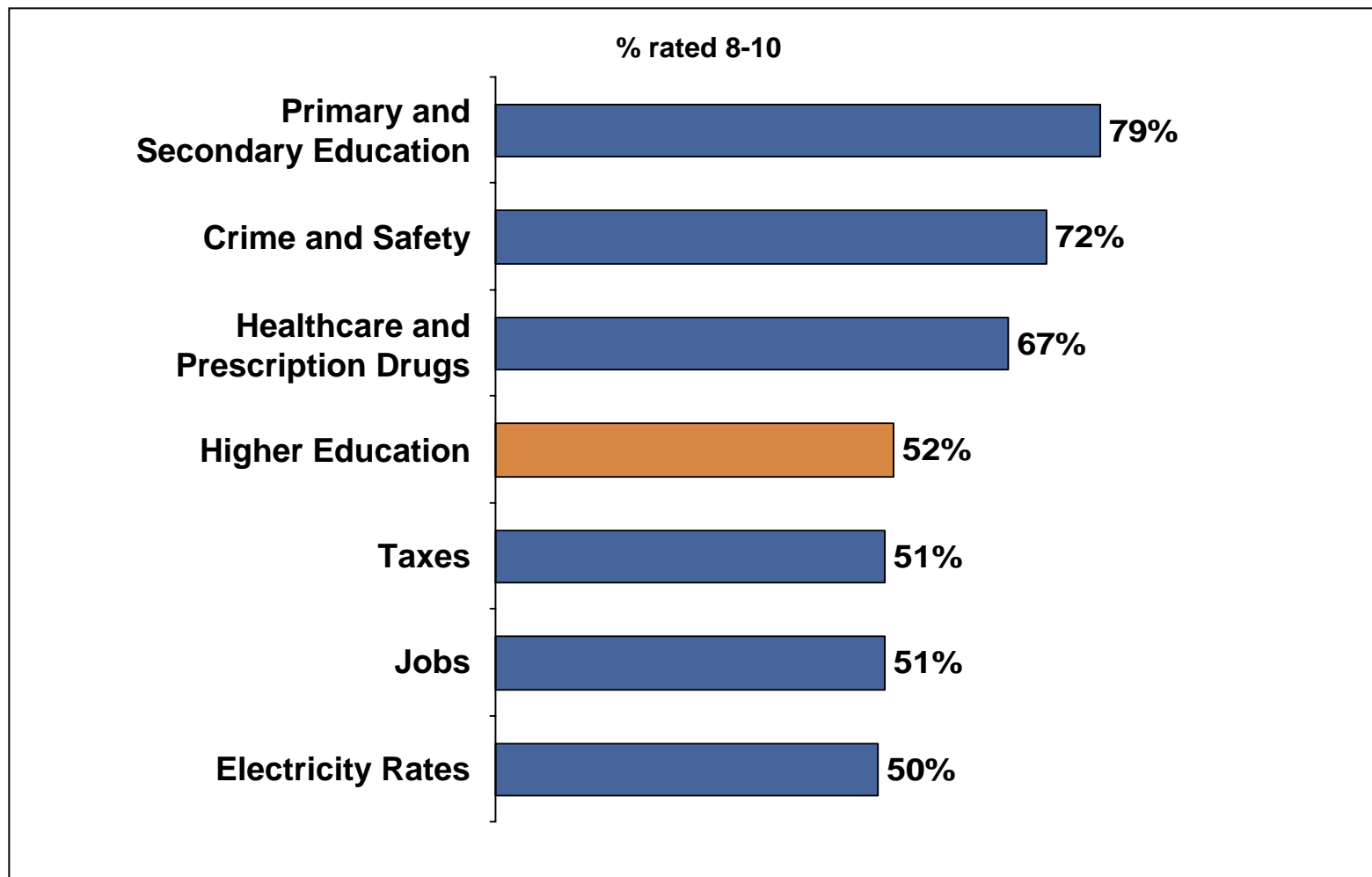
Base = Total Sample

Letters indicate significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

Multiple Responses Accepted, Top Mentions

Q2. And, thinking longer term, what do you think will be the most important problems or issues facing the leaders of Maryland in the next 10 to 20 years?

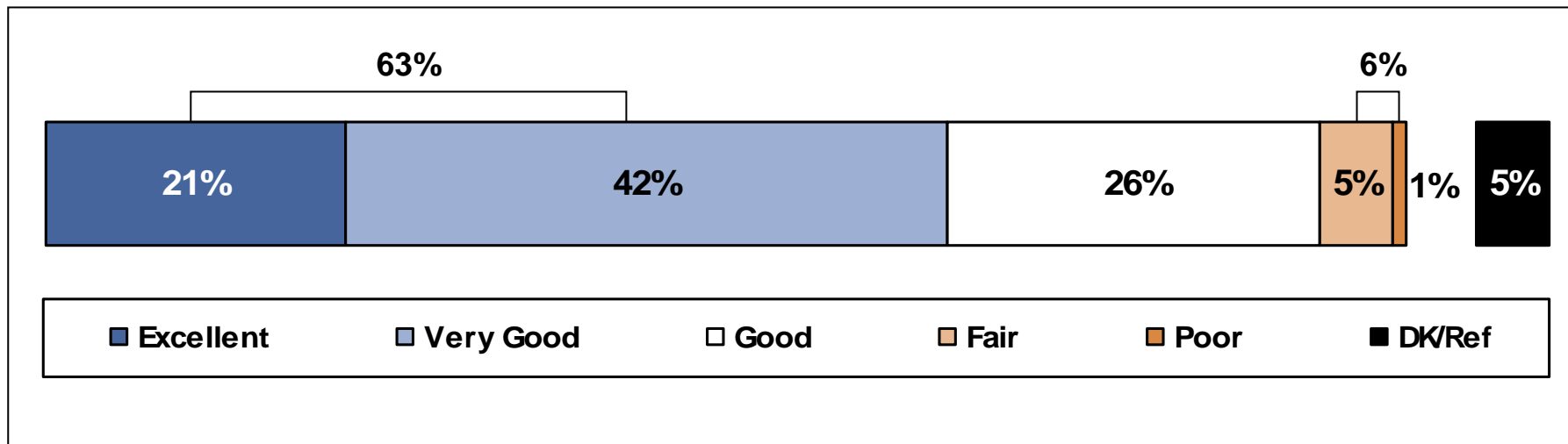
## Priority Issues For Maryland's Leaders



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q3. Using a 10-point scale, where a 10 means you feel that this issue is of highest priority for Maryland's leaders overall, and a 1 means that you feel the issue is not a priority, how would you rate the following issues?

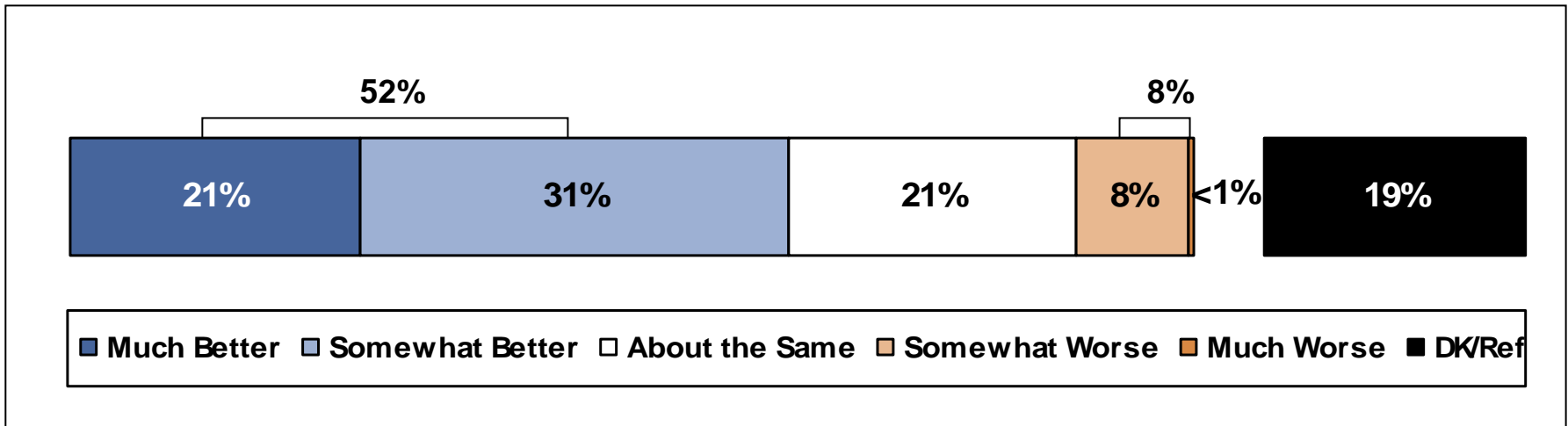
## Overall Quality of Higher Education in Maryland



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q6. First, overall, would you say the quality of higher education that is available in the State of Maryland is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?

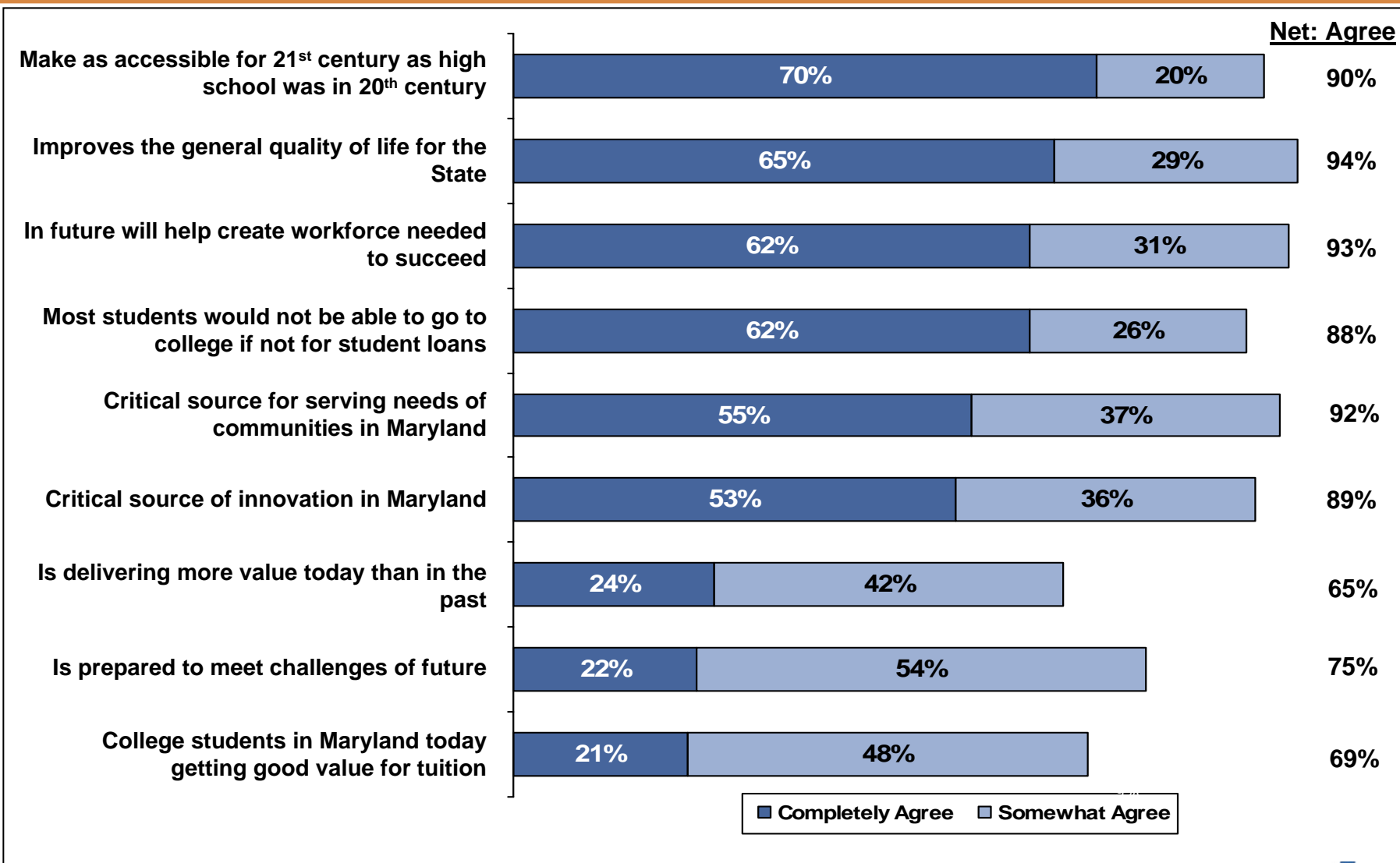
## Maryland's Higher Education Today, as Compared to 10 Years Ago



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q6A. And, how would you rate Maryland's higher education today compared to where it was 10 years ago? Would you say it is...?

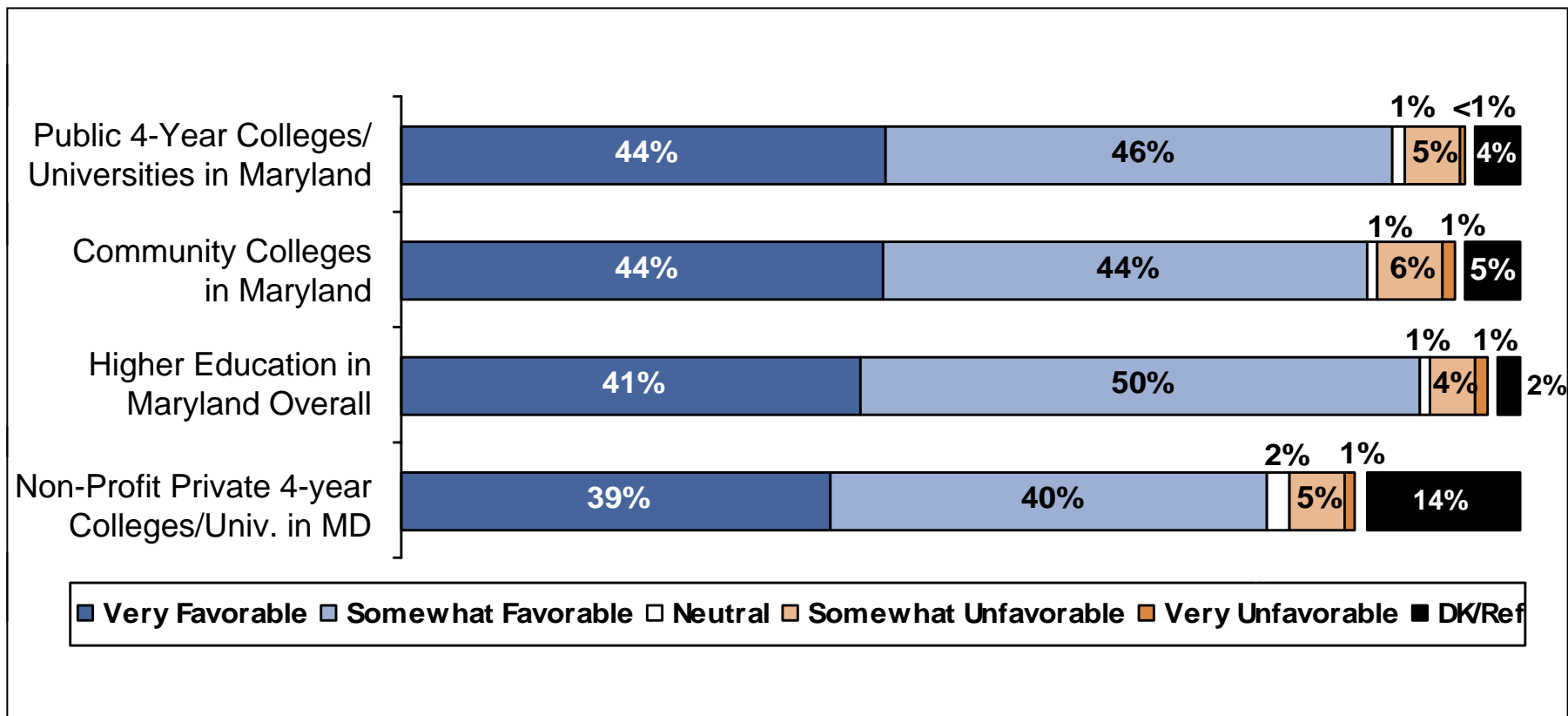
## Impressions of the Role of Higher Education in Maryland



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q8. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Do you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree that...?

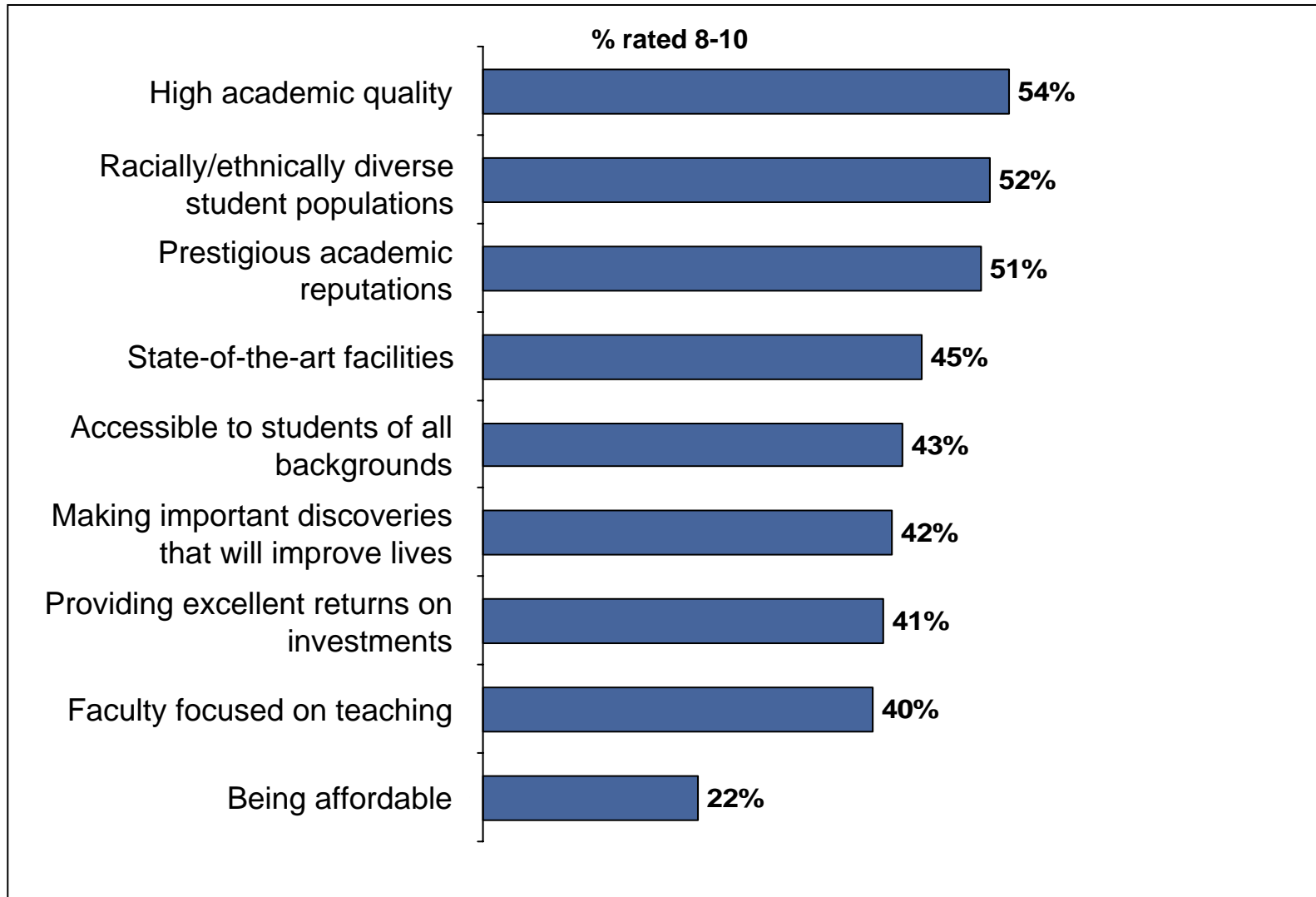
## Impressions of Higher Education in Maryland Overall



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q7. For each of the following, please tell me if your impression is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable.

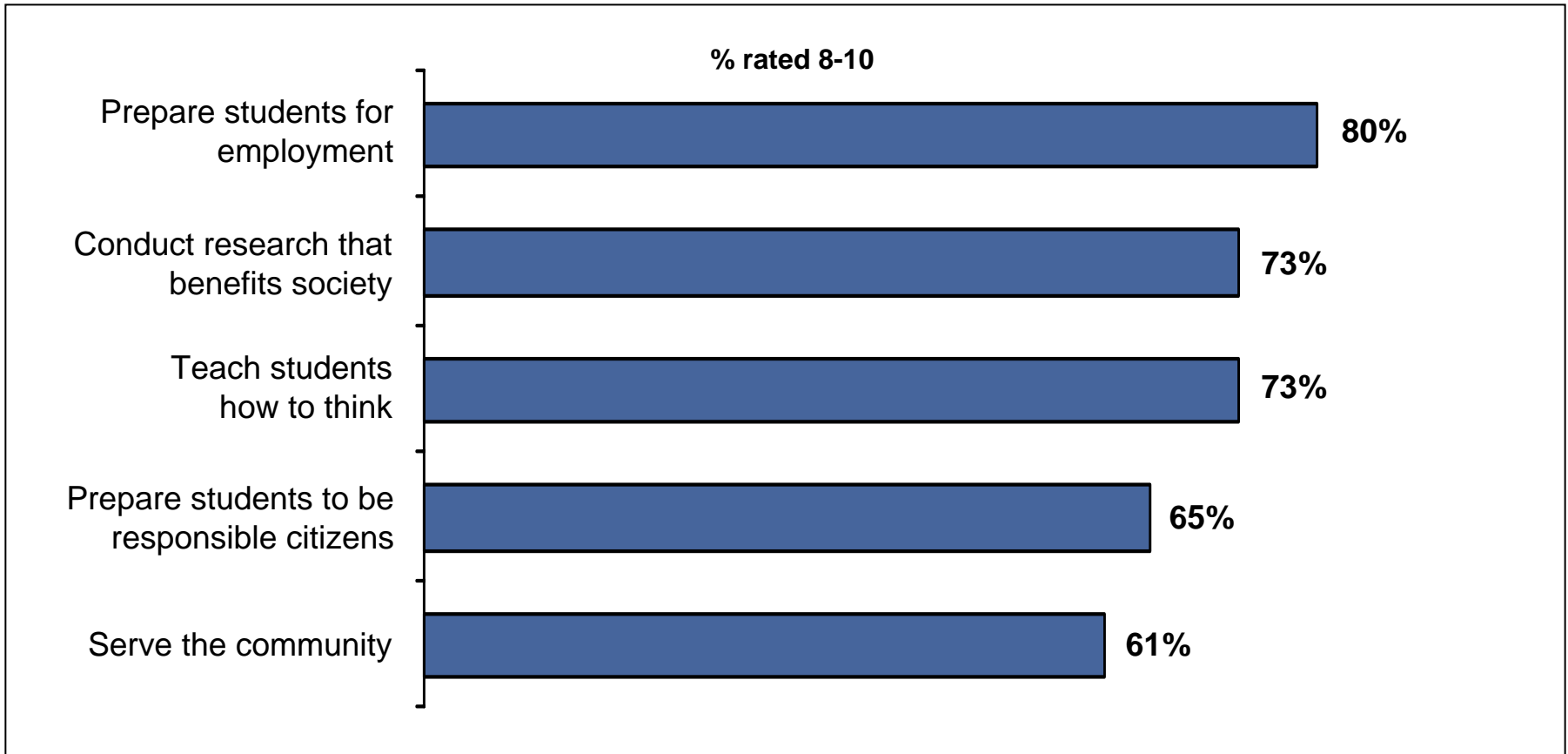
## Impressions of Maryland Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q9. I would like you to rate Maryland higher education overall using a 10-point scale where a 10 means the attribute completely describes Maryland's higher education, and a 1 means the attribute does not describe it at all. How would you rate higher education in Maryland on...?

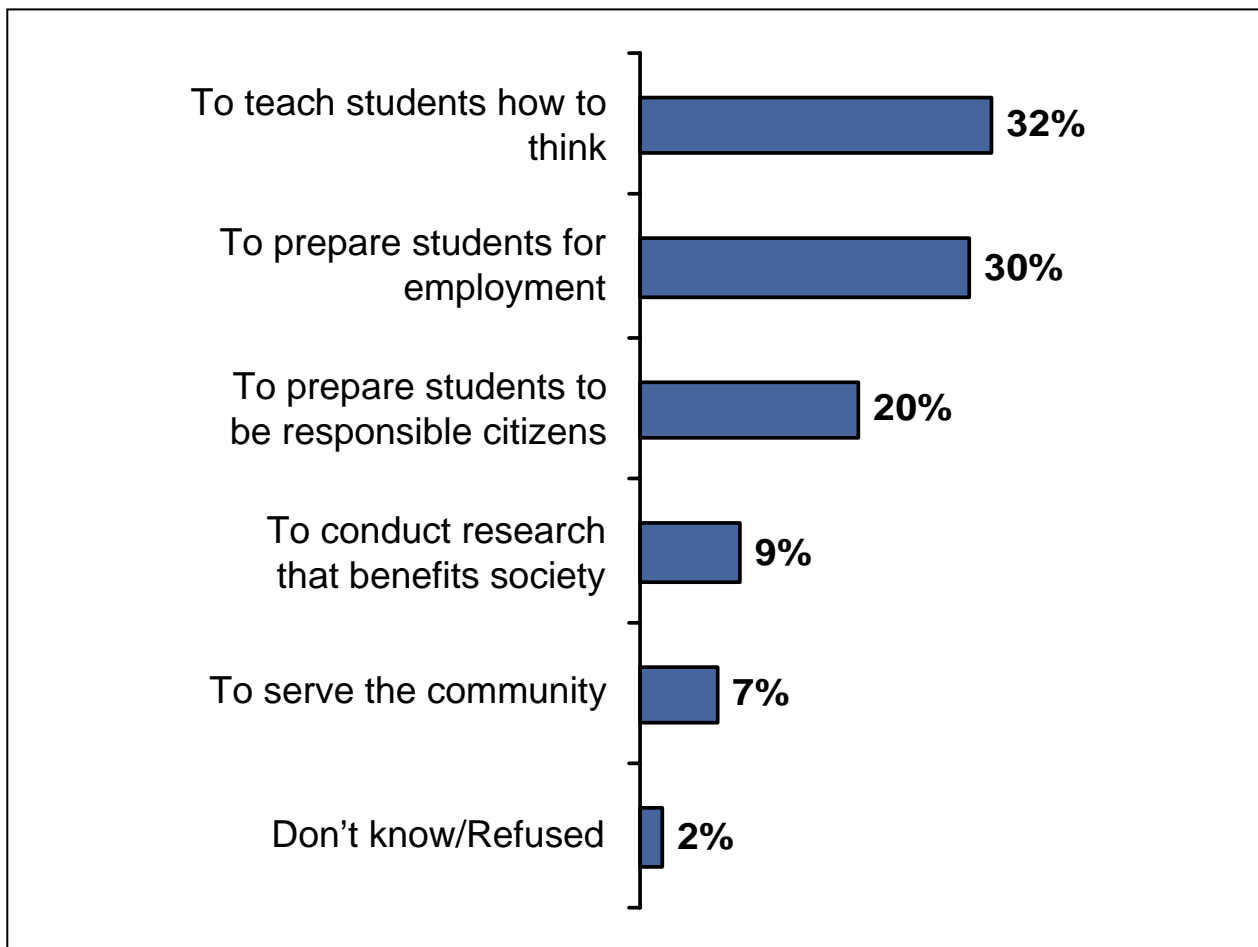
## Roles of Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n = 1,106)

Q11. To what extent do you feel it is the role of higher education...? Please use a 10-point scale, where a 10 means this is an extremely important role of higher education, and a 1 means it is not the role of higher education at all.

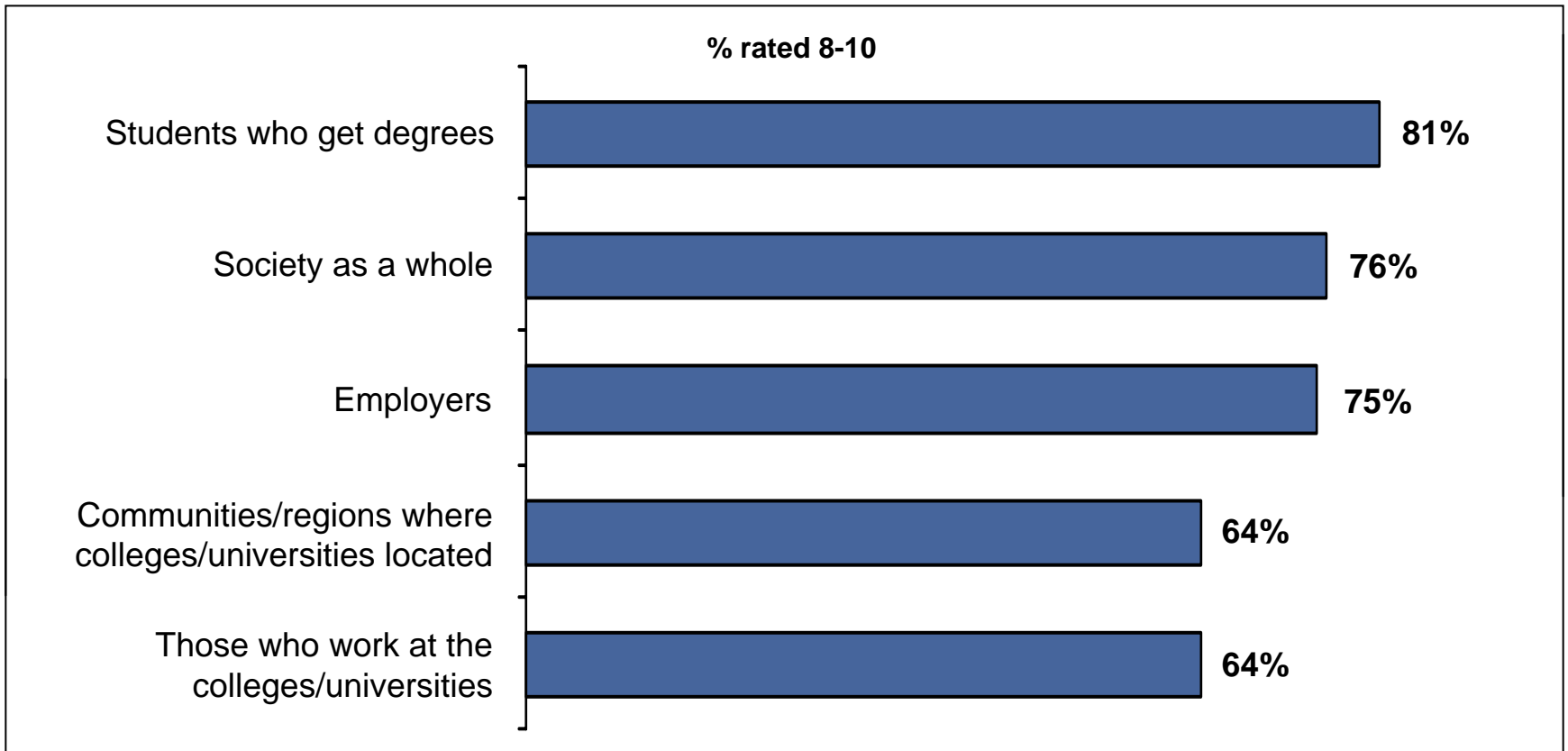
## Most Important Role of Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n= 1,106)

Q11A. From the list of roles I just read to you, which do you feel is the most important role of higher education?

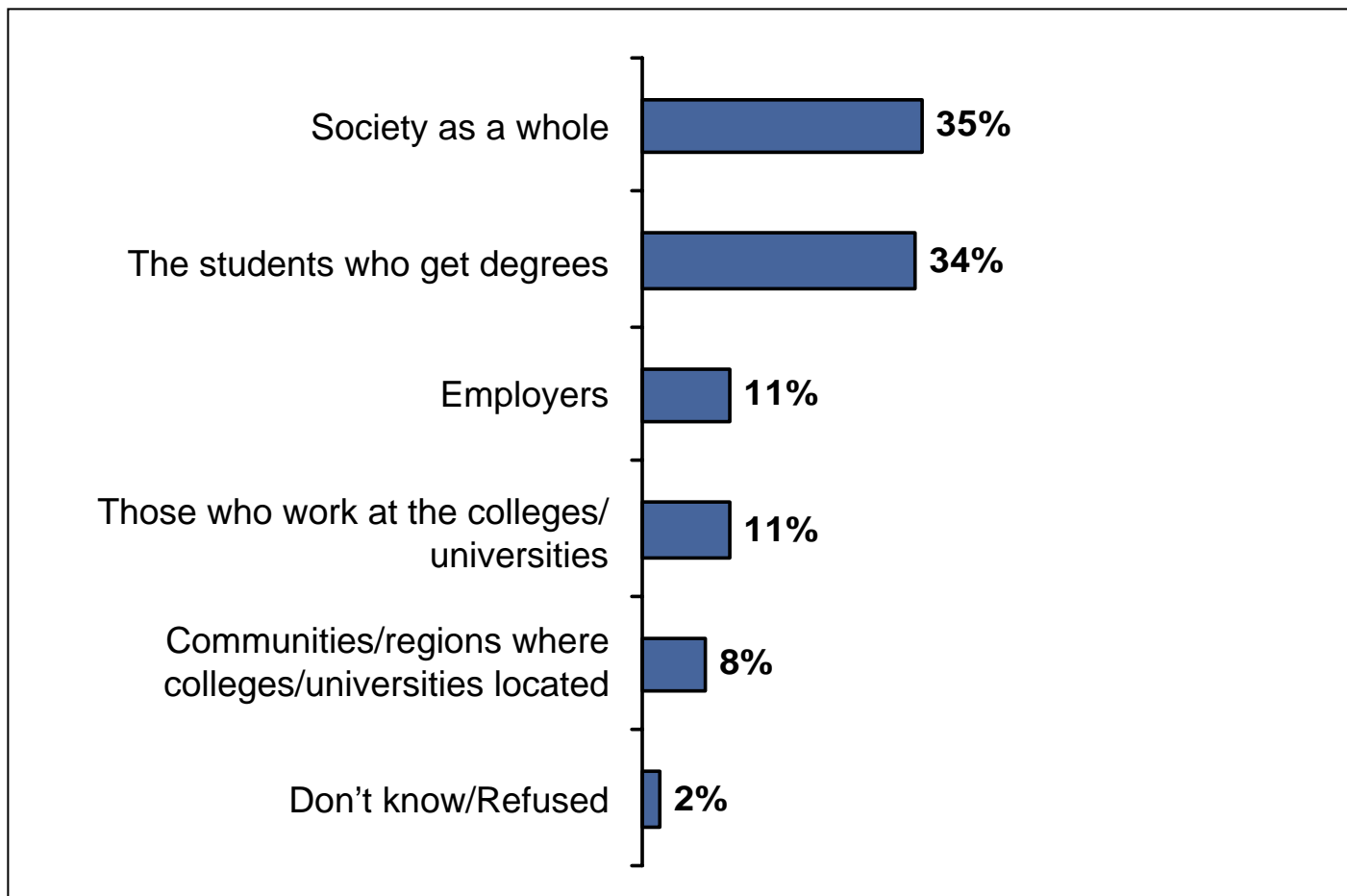
## Who Benefits from Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n = 1,106)

Q12. Thinking about who benefits from higher education, to what extent do you feel...benefits from higher education? Please use a 10-point scale where a 10 means they benefit greatly from higher education and a 1 means they do not benefit at all.

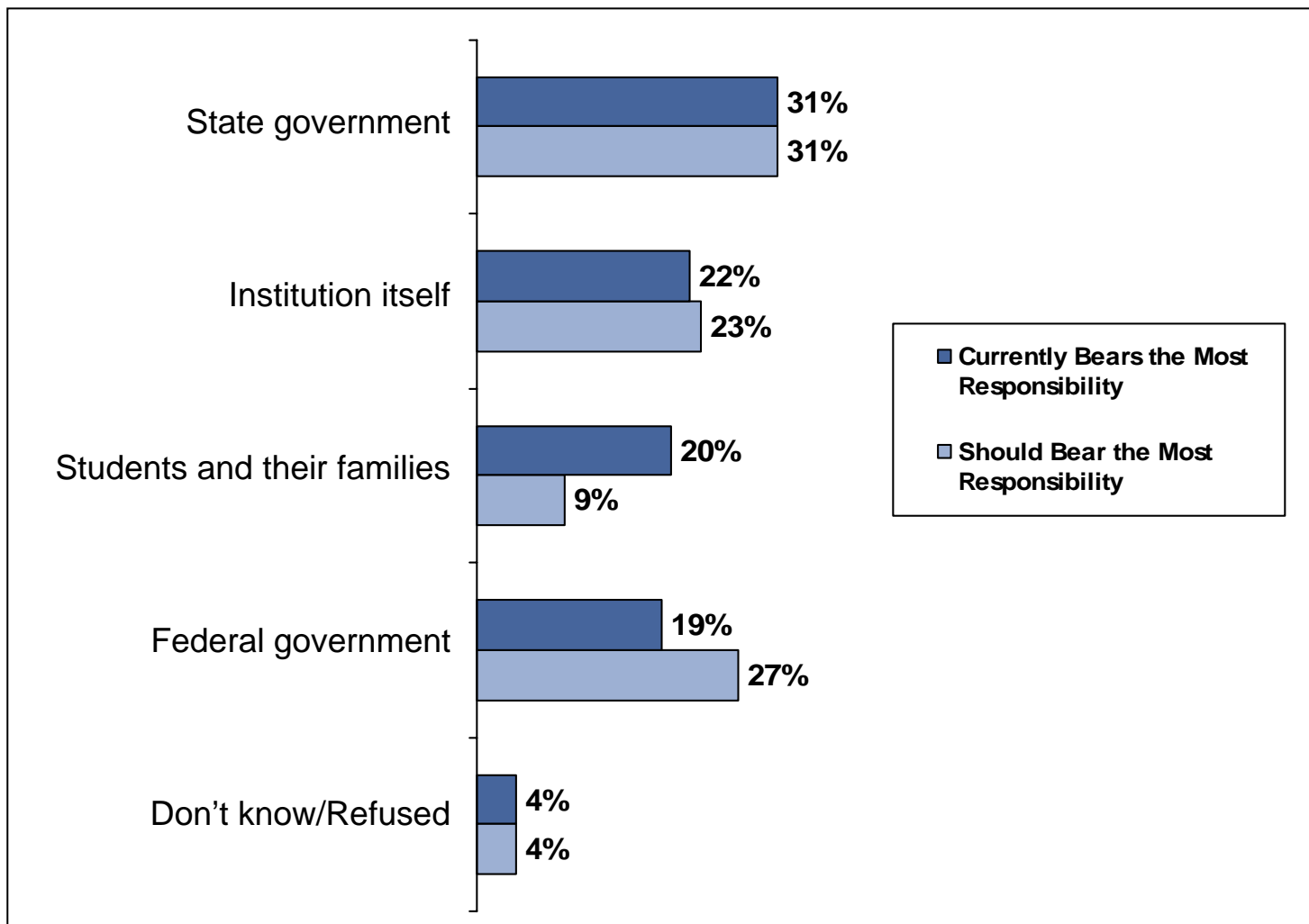
## Who Benefits Most from Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n= 1,106)

Q12A. From the list of roles I just read to you, who do you feel benefits most from higher education?

## Responsibility for Keeping Higher Education Affordable

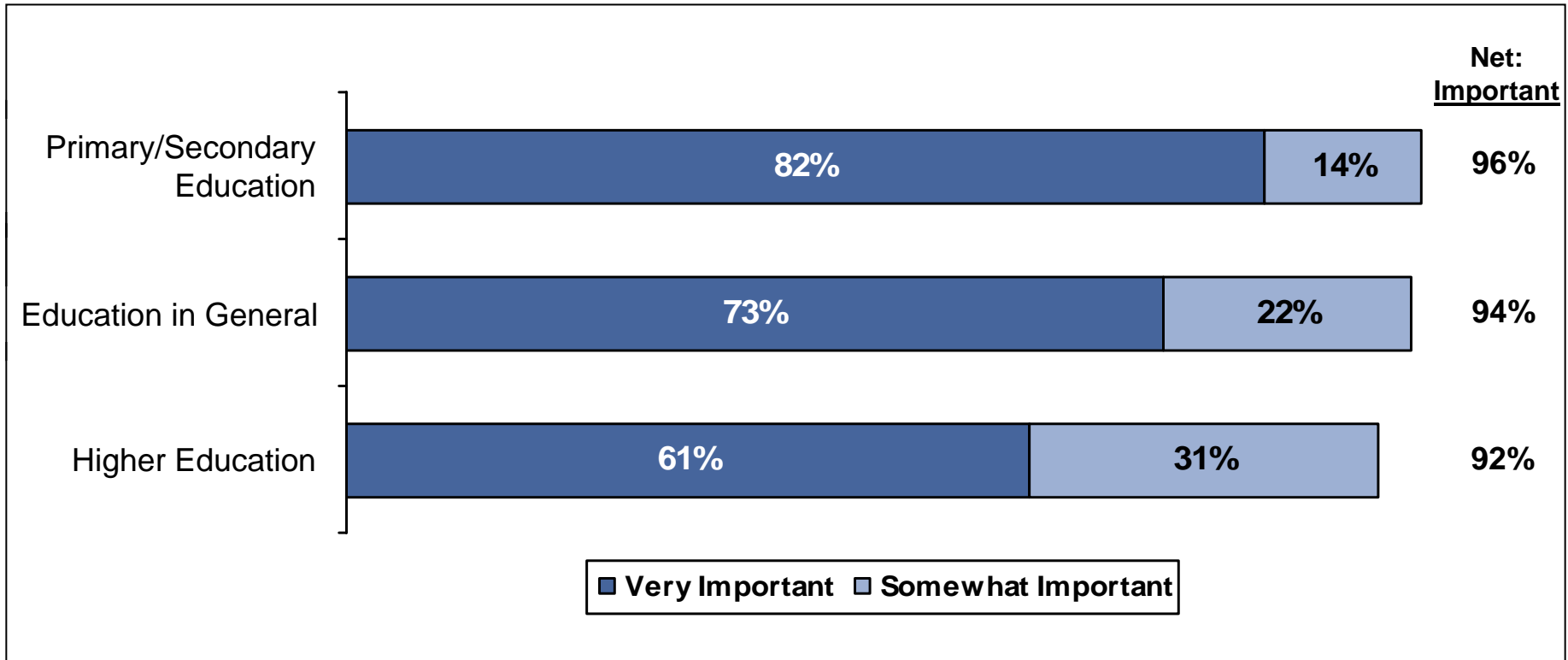


Base = Total Sample (n = 1,106)

Q13A. Who do you feel currently bears the most responsibility for keeping higher education affordable to the average student? Would you say...?

Q13B. And, from the same list, who do you feel should bear the most responsibility for keeping higher education affordable to the average student?

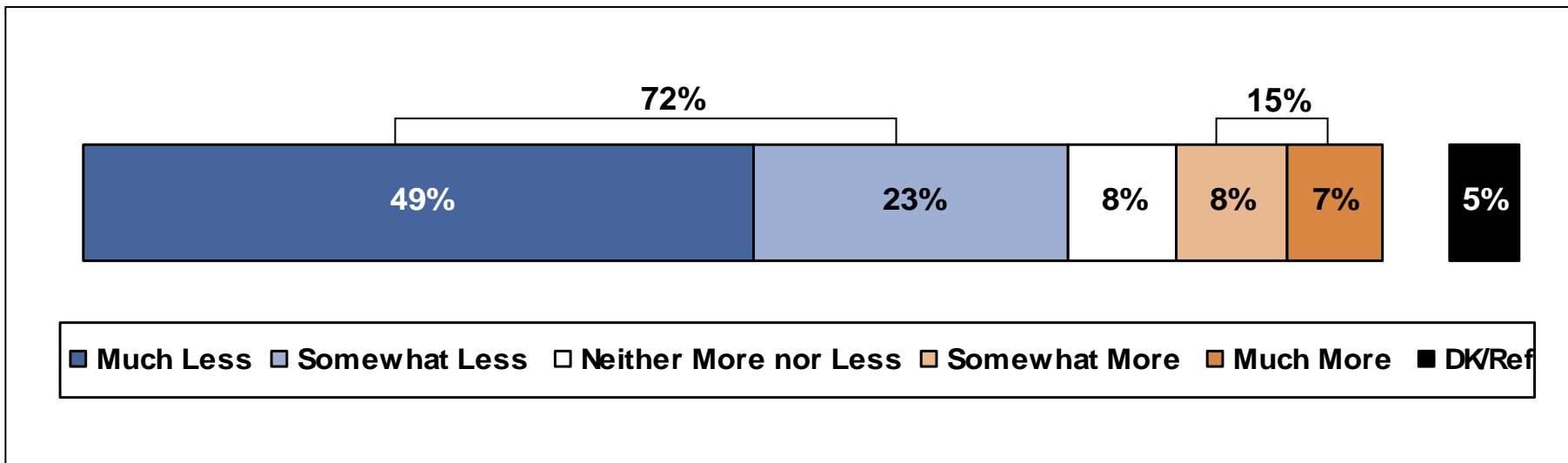
## Importance of Government Funding for Education



Base = Total Sample (n=1,106)

Q5. How would you rate the importance of government funding for...? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

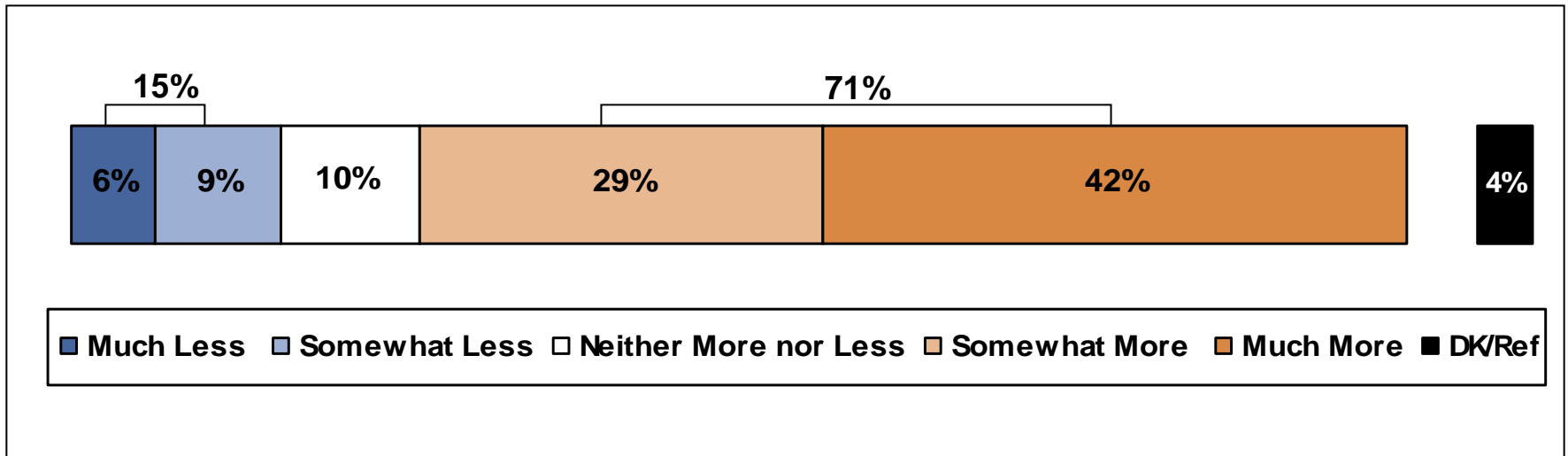
## Likelihood of Supporting Cuts in Government Spending on Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n= 1,106)

Q14. If cuts in government spending would mean harming higher education in Maryland, such as making it less accessible, less affordable, or somehow harming the public good, how likely would you be to support these cuts?

## Likelihood of Supporting Increases in Government Spending on Higher Education



Base = Total Sample (n= 1,106)

Q15. If increases in government spending would mean benefiting higher education in Maryland, such as making it more accessible, more affordable, or somehow benefiting the public good, how likely would you be to support these increases?

## Demographics

<b>Demographics: Child's Education</b>		<b>Total</b>
<b><u>Children Under 18 in Household</u></b>	n=	(1,103)
Yes		30%
Between 13 and 17 years <sup>1</sup>		52
Between 6 and 12 years <sup>1</sup>		53
Under 6 years <sup>1</sup>		34
No		70
<b><u>Children Attending College This Fall</u></b>	n=	(1,102)
Yes		18%
No		82
<b><u>Type of College Child will be Attending</u></b>	n=	(190)
Net: In Maryland		70%
Public 2-year college/community college in MD		22
Public 4-year college/university in MD		43
Non-profit private 4-year college/university in MD		9
Net: Not in Maryland		28
Public 2-year college/community college not in MD		1
Public 4-year college/university not in MD		18
Non-profit private 4-year college/university not in MD		16
Other		2

Base = Those Answering

D5, D6, D7

Base<sup>1</sup> = Those with children under 18 in household

D5

## Demographics

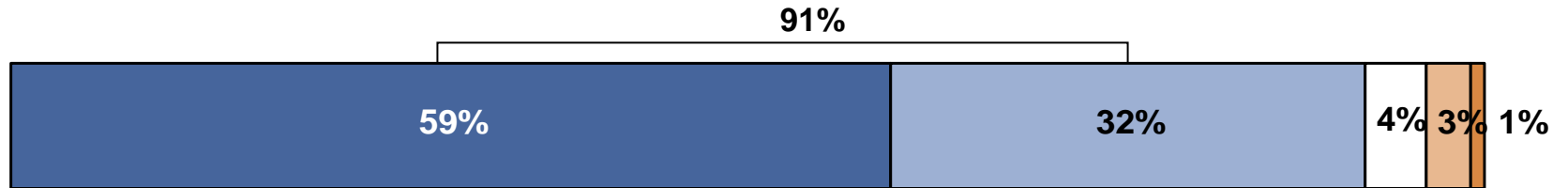
Demographics: Personal Education		
		Total
<b><u>Highest Level of Education Completed</u></b>	n=	(1,098)
Some high school or less		2%
High school graduate/GED		20
Some college or associate's degree		25
College graduate		27
Postgraduate study		25
<b><u>Type of College Attended<sup>1</sup></u></b>	n=	(786)
Net: In Maryland		54%
Public 2-year college/community college in MD		22
Public 4-year college/university in MD		30
Non-profit private 4-year college/university in MD		9
Net: Not in Maryland		44
Public 2-year college/community college not in MD		6
Public 4-year college/university not in MD		26
Non-profit private 4-year college/university not in MD		23
Other		2

Base = Those Answering  
D10

Base<sup>1</sup> = Those who completed at least some college and answering  
D11, D12, D13

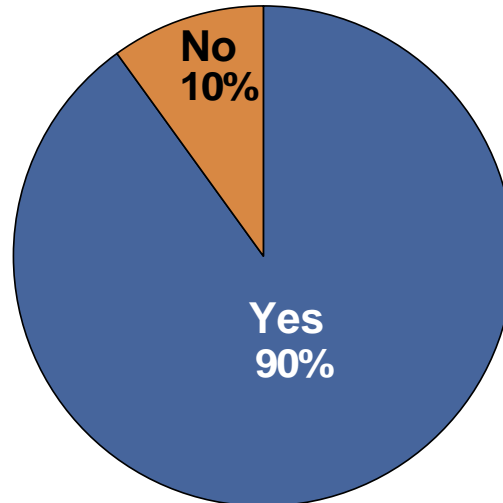
## Demographics

### Attitude Toward College Education Received



■ Very Favorable   ■ Somewhat Favorable   □ Neither   ■ Somewhat Unfavorable   ■ Very Unfavorable

### Did you get your money's worth?





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# Key Findings

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- Maryland voters cite education (specifically primary and secondary education), economic issues and crime/safety as the most important problems or issues facing the State's leaders. **Higher education**, along with health care/prescription drugs and the environment, are among the **second tier of problems or issues** facing the State's leaders from the perspective of voters.
- Maryland voters rate the **overall quality** of higher education in the State **fairly high** and have **quite favorable impressions** of the colleges and universities in the State.
- Maryland voters believe that higher education in the State is generally **better now than it was 10 years ago**.
- Maryland voters rate the State's institutions **fairly high for academic quality and reputations**, but are more **neutral** in their ratings of **affordability**.
- Maryland voters see the most important roles of higher education to be **teaching students how to think and preparing students for employment**.
- The **students** who get degrees, along with **society as a whole**, are seen as the beneficiaries of higher education by Maryland voters.
- Maryland voters perceive that **students are bearing a disproportionate responsibility** for keeping higher education affordable, while the **Federal government should be doing more**.
- Maryland voters consider **government funding** for education, be it primary and secondary education or higher education, to be **very important**.

Q&A