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SECURITY POLICY

## ***Nationwide Survey and Focus Group Findings***

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***the polling company, inc. & WomanTrend***

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# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

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# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Gauge the understanding of and priority placed on national security and foreign policy issues currently facing the United States generally, and with respect to specific global concerns;
- ▶ Uncover what most influences Americans' views, opinions, thoughts, and actions day-to-day;
- ▶ Understand Americans' views of threats to our homeland and specifically, to the southern border, electrical/power grid, and vulnerabilities
- ▶ Discern impression and opinion of Islamic extremism – what motivates it and what should be done to counter its spread and influence, and;
- ▶ Examine voter expectations of elected leaders in Washington with respect to keeping the nation safe from these various threats.

# Online Focus Groups - Methodology

- Online Focus Groups of Voters across Ohio (12 participants) and Florida (13 participants)
  - Mix of ages, 24 and older
  - A mix of those who both approve and disapprove of the job that President Obama is doing – overall and specifically on national security/foreign policy
  - Republicans and Democrats, with limits on the number of “strong” partisans
  - Mix of other demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, household income, race)

# Nationwide Survey - Methodology

- 1000 interviews nationwide with registered voters
- Conducted over four nights September 23-26, 2014
- Nationwide telephone survey using live callers at a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility
- Sampling controls used to ensure proportionate and representative number of interviews across gender, age, racial/ethnic, political and regional lines.
- $\pm 3.1\%$  overall margin of error at the 95% confidence interval for this national survey. Margins of error for subgroups are larger.

# KEY FINDINGS

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# Key Findings: Americans Feel Less Secure, More Urgent

- **“Security” is the dominant theme now. Whether preceded by the words “financial,” “border,” or “national,” Americans have elevated safety and survival to top-of-list concerns.**
- Americans feel the U.S. is less safe & more vulnerable than a year ago. From the southern border to the rise of ISIS & Iran, struggle & strife reign.
- Respondents not indifferent; in fact, they proved to be engaged and knowledgeable on the issues – and losing patience: 71% say **our leaders are not doing enough to address the threats that concern them most.**
- Survey respondents rank terrorism (52%) as the greatest security concern, but other things worry them, too, e.g., computer hacking of bank accounts and personal information, porous borders and power grid outages.

# Key Findings: Security Mom (and non-Mom) is Back

- **“Security Mom” has returned – if in fact she’d ever receded. Female focus on national security (and border security) is increasing and crystallizing.** Common sense + compassion = protecting the U.S., U.S. interests, U.S. allies, and U.S. citizens.
- **Women without children were especially concerned about** threats to our nation’s electrical power grid and by extension, our food, air, water and power supplies.



# Key Findings: Less Respect for Politics – and its Practitioners

- Voters in both Florida and Ohio focus groups and in the nationwide survey were clear that **family and faith inform their opinions and thoughts most, while political beliefs and alignments were a second tier influencer.**
  - Honesty and integrity were important characteristics for elected leaders to possess. Other qualities included humility, leadership, and the ability to listen to others.
  - Foreign policy/national security experience is as important as economic/domestic experience to these voters for a winning candidate in today's political environment. Voters were clear in voicing their desire for both and their reluctance to have to choose one over the other.
  - **This is also evident in the fact that President Obama is underwater in his handling of foreign policy and national security (43% approve – 51% disapprove).**
  - **Although the GOP has a 9% advantage (41% - 32%) on which party is more capable on foreign policy and keeping the U.S. safe, neither party dominates the issue or has earned sufficient trust.**

# Key Findings: No Sugarcoating of Islamic Extremists

- **Islamic extremism is viewed as a threat to peace in the Middle East as well as here at home.** There is near consensus that the religious and ideological teachings of *fundamental Islam extremists* (not all) are the root cause of terror.
  - Although focus group respondents largely said that Islam is not a “religion of peace”, survey respondents nationwide feel differently as a 55% majority agree that “Islam is a religion of peace and those who commit violence in its name are not following its true teachings.”
  - Even as a majority agree that Islam itself is peaceful, **29% of survey respondents say that its religious teaching and ideology are most responsible for causing Islamic terror**, and nearly three in four respondents (74%) define “jihad” as a “violent holy war against unbelievers of Islam.”
  - Familiarity with both “Jihad” and “Sharia law” fell short of actual knowledge, but they know enough to cause concern. With Americans paying renewed attention, the time is ripe for an information and education campaign.

# Key Findings: Keep the Conflict Off U.S. Soil

- Survey respondents say, “better there than here” when it comes to fighting Islamic terror. **Roughly eight in ten respondents, including 75% of liberals, believe we should continue fighting terrorism.** This includes 84% of African-Americans and 87% of Hispanics.
- Pluralities of Hispanics and African-Americans (33% each) and 35% of respondents overall believe that the best reason to continue to fight is to keep terrorists from attacking us here, from a list of several choices.
- Focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that if Israel were destroyed, violence in the Middle East would continue, and that the U.S. would still be a target.
  - Similarly, when asked how the Middle East would change if the U.S. pulled out, most believe that this would only increase violence and destabilize the region further. A few expressed hope that the situation would improve over time.
  - Most expect to see the same result if U.S. troops were to exit Afghanistan, similar to the results of a post-exit Iraq.

## Key Findings: Plenty of Players in the " Middle East "Blame Game

- **A plurality blame Iran for the Middle East's problems (46%),** while Hispanics are 7% more likely than whites (55% - 48%) and 19% more likely than Blacks (55% - 36%) to blame Iran.
- **A majority of respondents (54%) hold the Islamic State/ISIS/ISIL as the group of people most responsible for Mideast violence.**
- **However,** a 53% majority of young women 25-34 believe Al Qaeda is most responsible, while 51% of men of the same age blame the Islamic State.

# Key Findings: Russia and China should be slapped with sanctions before solved with soldiers

- Slim majorities say the aggression of Russia and China are serious concerns and should be important priorities
- Young women age 25-34 were 14% more likely than men their age to see the Russian threat as “very serious”.
- The focus group respondents believed that Russia and China are posing risks to the U.S., but less so than terrorist attacks.
- They also were clear that taking military action against Russia and China is a risk, wanting to try economic sanctions first.

# Key Findings: A Light Bulb Goes Off When Threats to Electrical Grid are Raised. Scary and Plausible.

- **The power grid is seen as a vulnerable piece of the national infrastructure (83%),** while a 44% plurality say that securing the grid is a top-three issue. In fact, women without children were 9% more likely than moms to rank this as the most important issue.
- Hispanics consistently show more concern, and a more populist bent on national security issues than African-American respondents.
- Millennials were “dovish” in that they were more likely to want resources for the military to remain the same, are more likely to say leaders are doing enough to address foreign policy threats. Still, they agreed more than they differed with their older, more “hawkish” counterparts.

# “Peace Through Strength” a preferred strategy, not a political slogan

- The vast majority of survey respondents, including 65% of liberals, 80% of Blacks, 84% of Hispanics, and 75% of women age 25-34 agree that **“peace through strength” is the best strategy for protecting the United States** (men of the same age group were just slightly more likely to agree at 79%). Continued evidence:
  - 55% want increased resources to military.
  - 85% want to continue fighting terrorists.
  - 35% plurality believe that if we stopped fighting terrorists, our enemies would be emboldened to attack us here on our soil.
  - 51% believe the Russia a “very serious” threat.
  - 52% believe China a “very serious” threat.
  - 46% plurality blame state of Iran for Mid-East violence
  - 54% blame ISIS as group most responsible for Mid-East violence.

# ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

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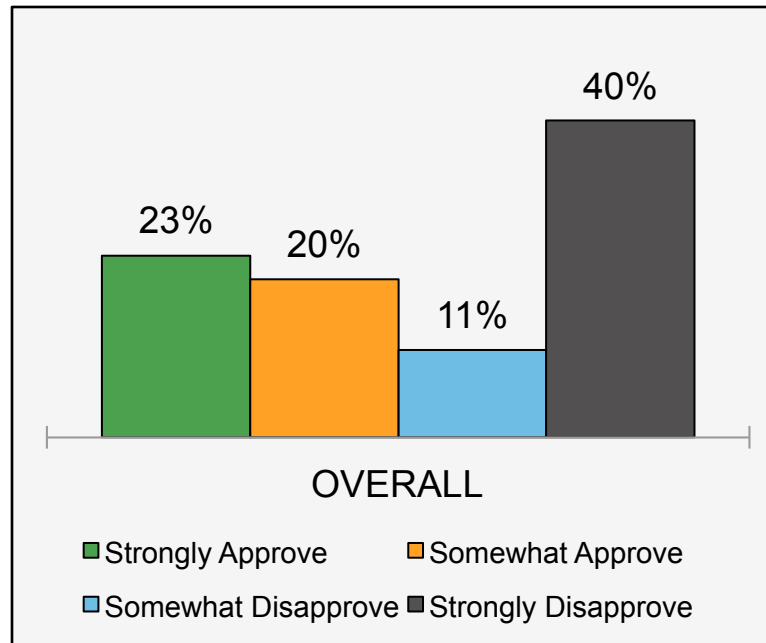
# Obama Underwater on National Security & Foreign Policy

Do you (ROTATED) approve or disapprove of the job that President Obama is doing on foreign policy and national security?

(PROBED: And is that strongly approve/disapprove or just somewhat?)

## Groups Most Likely to Approve (Net):

- Liberals (81%)
- Blacks (78%)
- Democrats (78%)
- Non-moms (61%)
- Those who say computer hacking is their top threat (59%)
- Women 25-34 (51%)
- Moderates (49%)
- Women generally (47%)
- Respondents 25-34 (47%)
- Single respondents (46%)



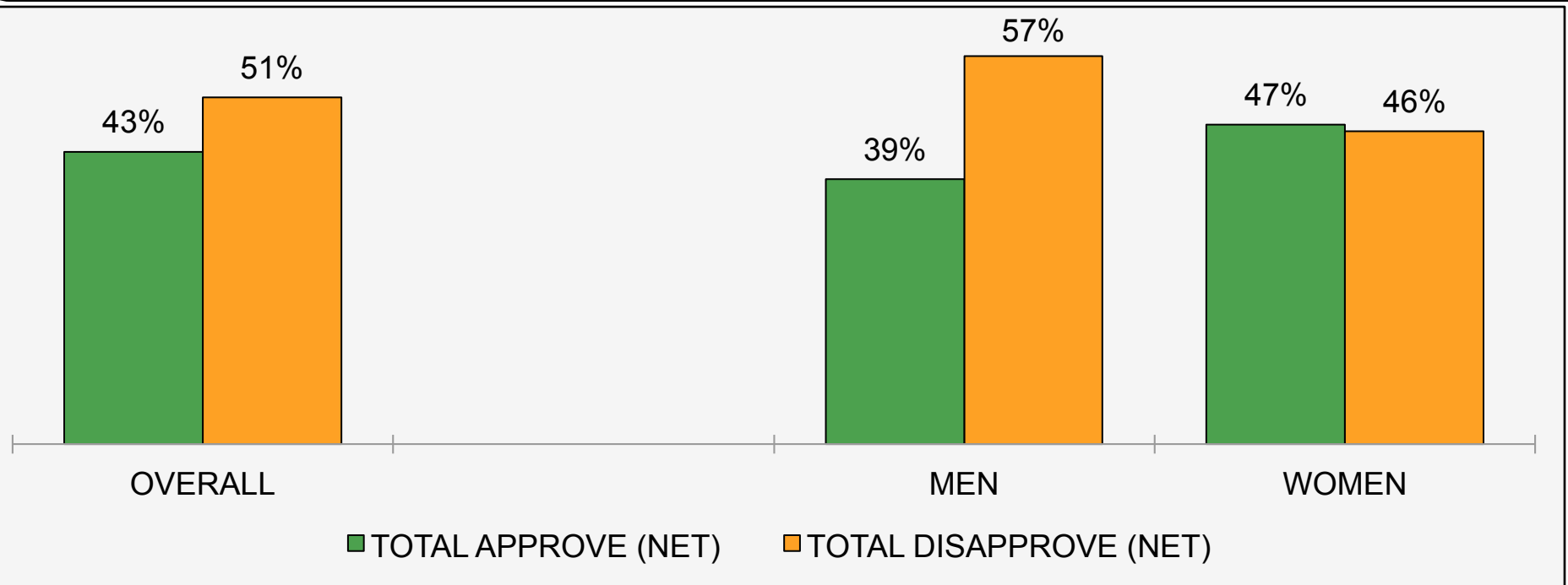
## Groups Most Likely to Disapprove (Net):

- Republicans (85%)
- Conservatives (80%)
- Those who believe the border is our greatest threat (82%)
- Whites (59%)
- Men 45+ (58%)
- Dads (58%)
- Men in general (57%)
- Independents (56%)
- Those 45-54 (56%)
- Marrieds (55%)
- Moms (48%)
- Hispanics (46%)

# Men more critical on POTUS on national security; women more split

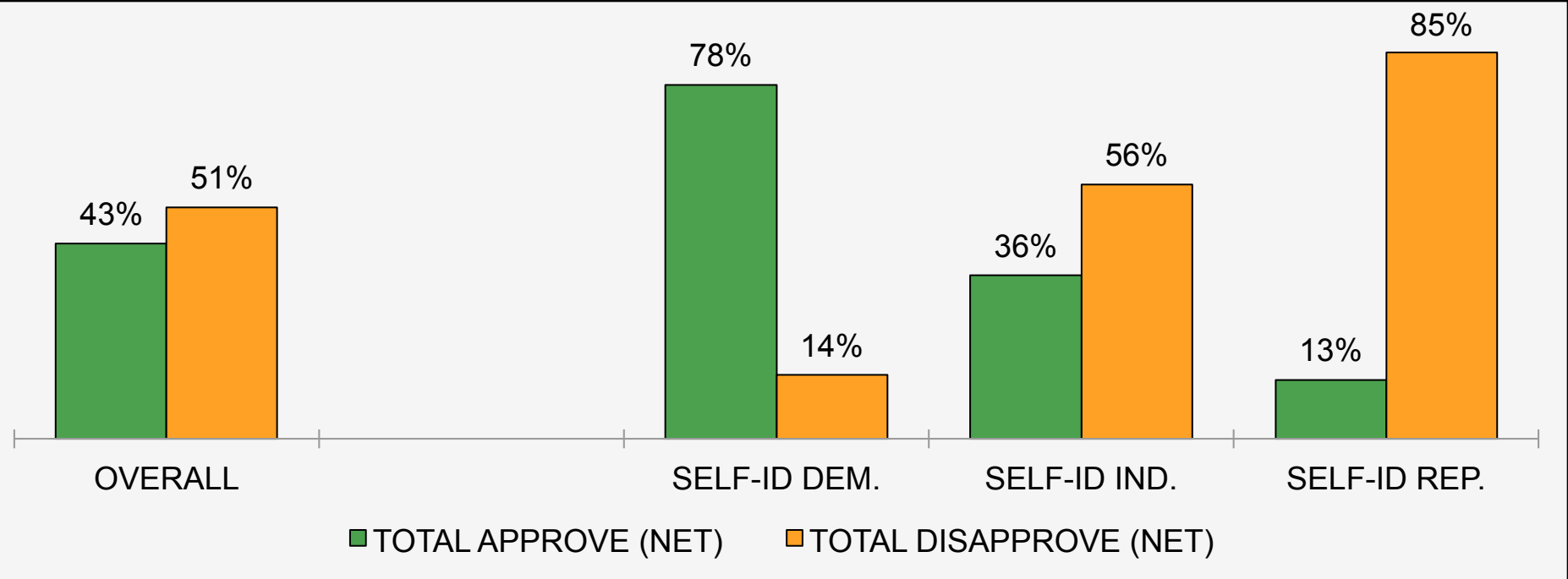
Do you (ROTATED) approve or disapprove of the job that President Obama is doing on foreign policy and national security?

(PROBED: And is that strongly approve/disapprove or just somewhat?)



# Obama has lost Independents on national security

Do you (ROTATED) approve or disapprove of the job that President Obama is doing on foreign policy and national security?  
(PROBED: And is that strongly approve/disapprove or just somewhat?)



# Faith/Family Top Influencers; Politics Down the List

- Family and faith prove to be the strongest influencers of daily life, thoughts, and actions for Ohioan and Floridian focus group participants.

1-10 Scale of Importance to Thoughts/Actions		
	Ohio	Florida
Family	9.2	9.6
Faith	7.8	7.2
Work	6.7	6.3
Community Life	6.0	7.2
Political beliefs/ alignment	5.6	6.9

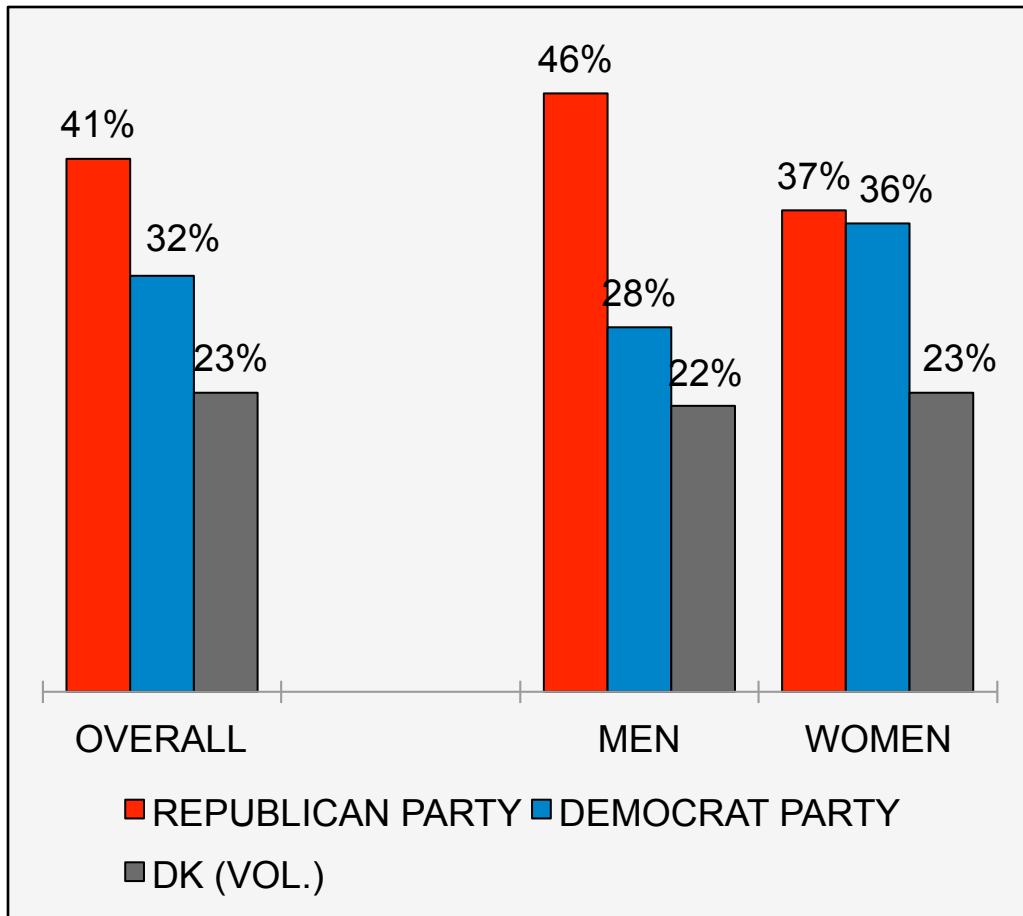
# Republicans Trusted More on NatSec, But Neither Party Has Stranglehold on “Security”

*Which political party do you believe is more reliable when it comes to foreign policy and keeping the United States safe? (ROTATED RESPONSES)*

**THE REPUBLICAN PARTY 41%**  
**THE DEMOCRAT PARTY 32%**

NEITHER/DON'T KNOW (VOL.) 23%  
REFUSED (VOL.) 4%

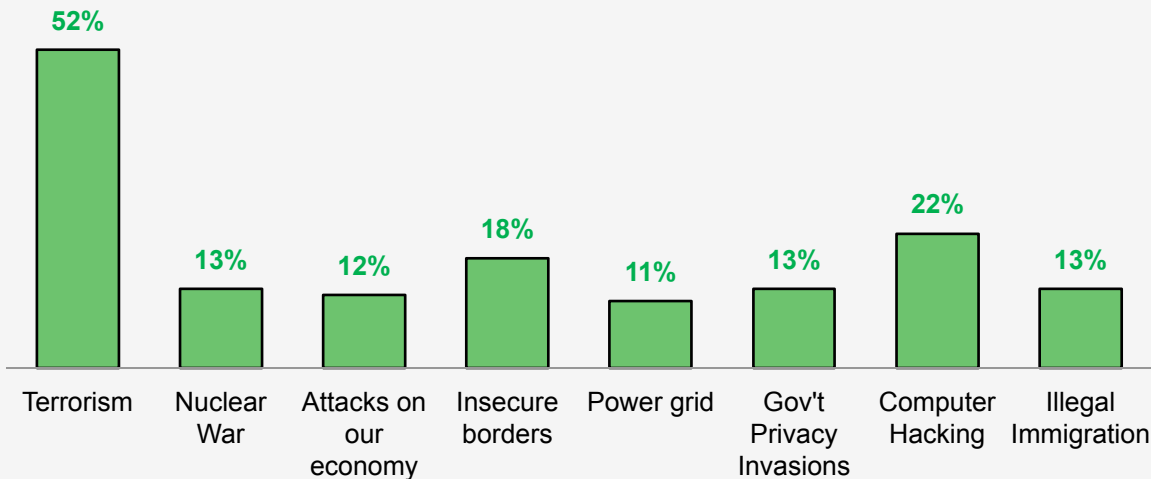
\*portion of those who say “do not know” would include those who say “neither”.



# Top Issue Concerns: Security in Many Forms

- Focus groupers in FL and OH say main concerns are jobs and the economy, terrorism, and immigration; all agreed national security should be a top three issue for the President of the United States.
- Nationwide survey invited respondents to “get granular” on specific threats:

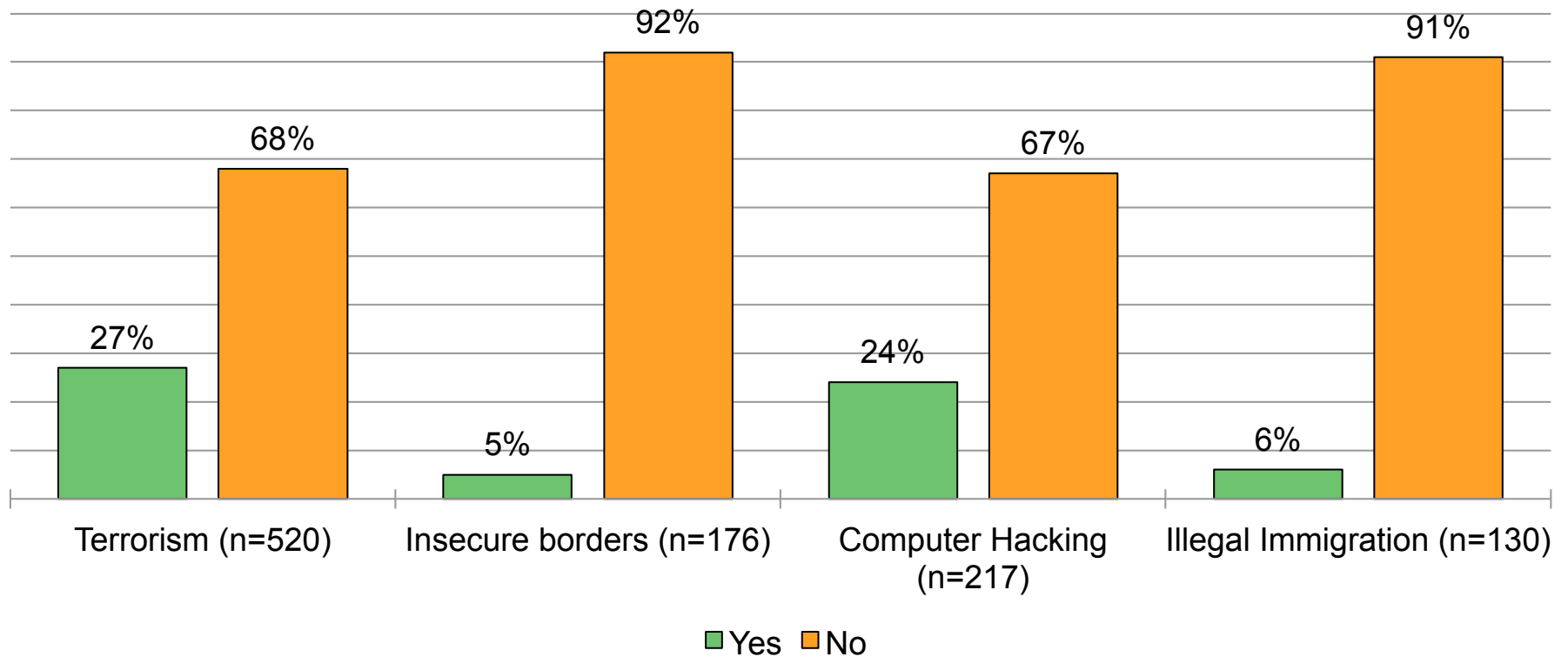
**Which of the following threats worries you most? (ROTATED RESPONSES) (ACCEPTED UP TO TWO RESPONSES)**



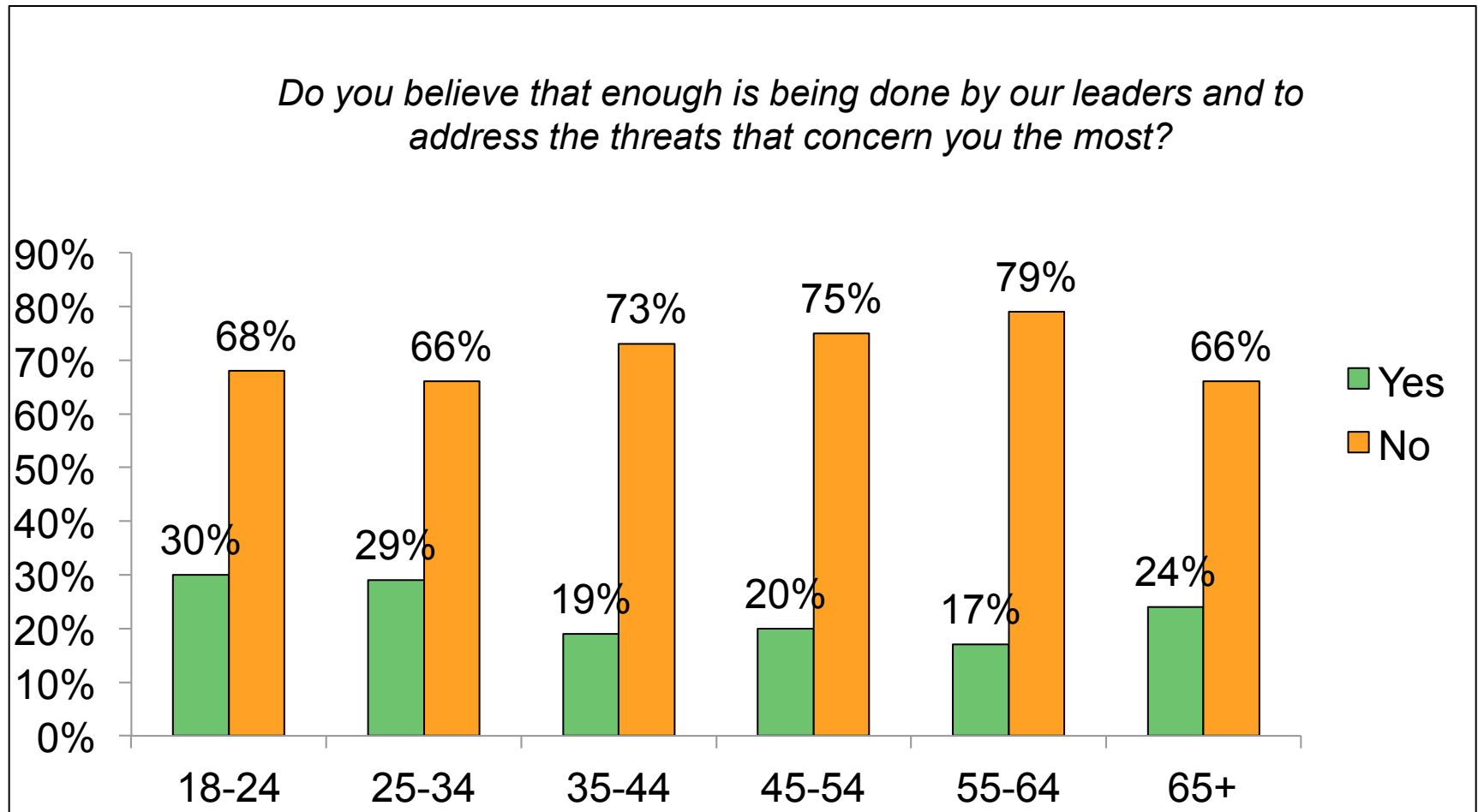
*“If we aren’t all here alive and well – nothing else really matters!” – Heidi (Florida)*

# Leaders AWOL when it comes to meeting the challenge

Do you believe that enough is being done by our leaders and to address the threats that concern you most?



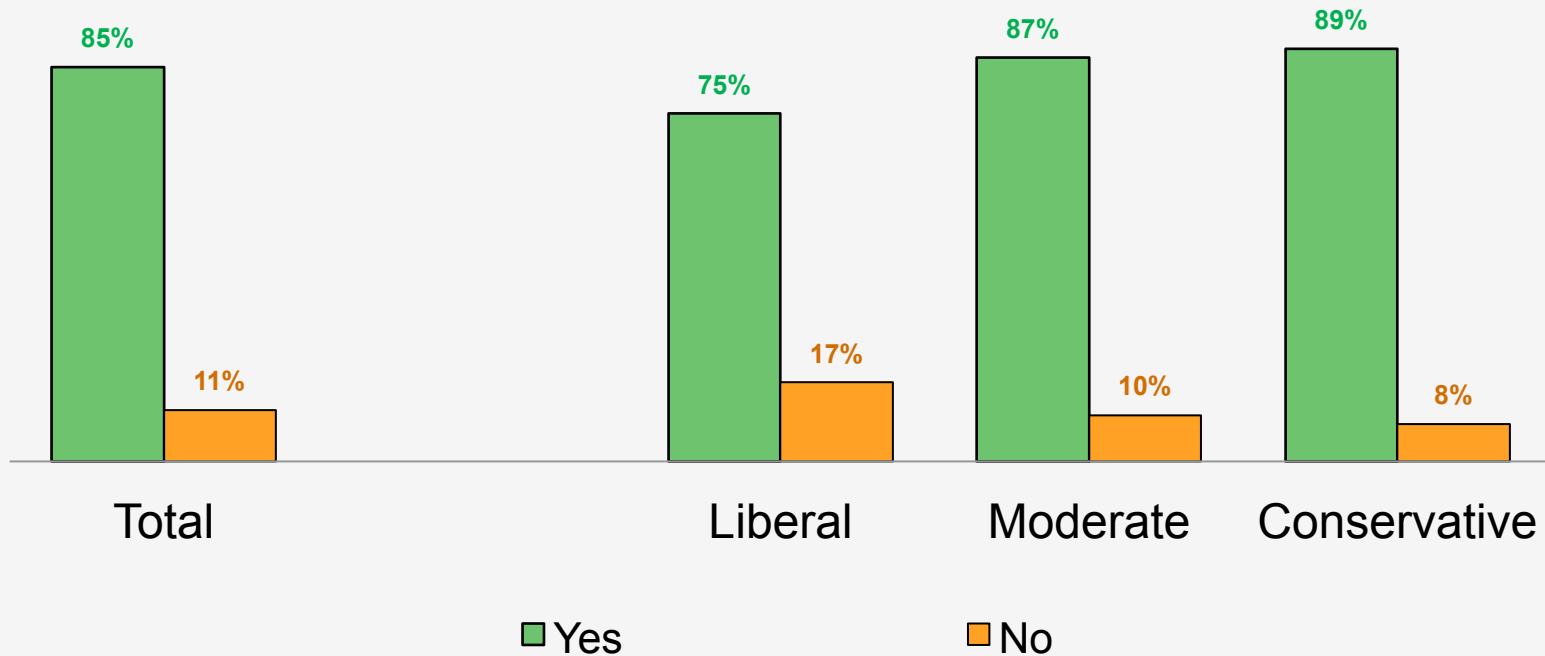
# The same percentage of youth that voted for President Obama say our leaders are absent or underperforming on the threats of our time





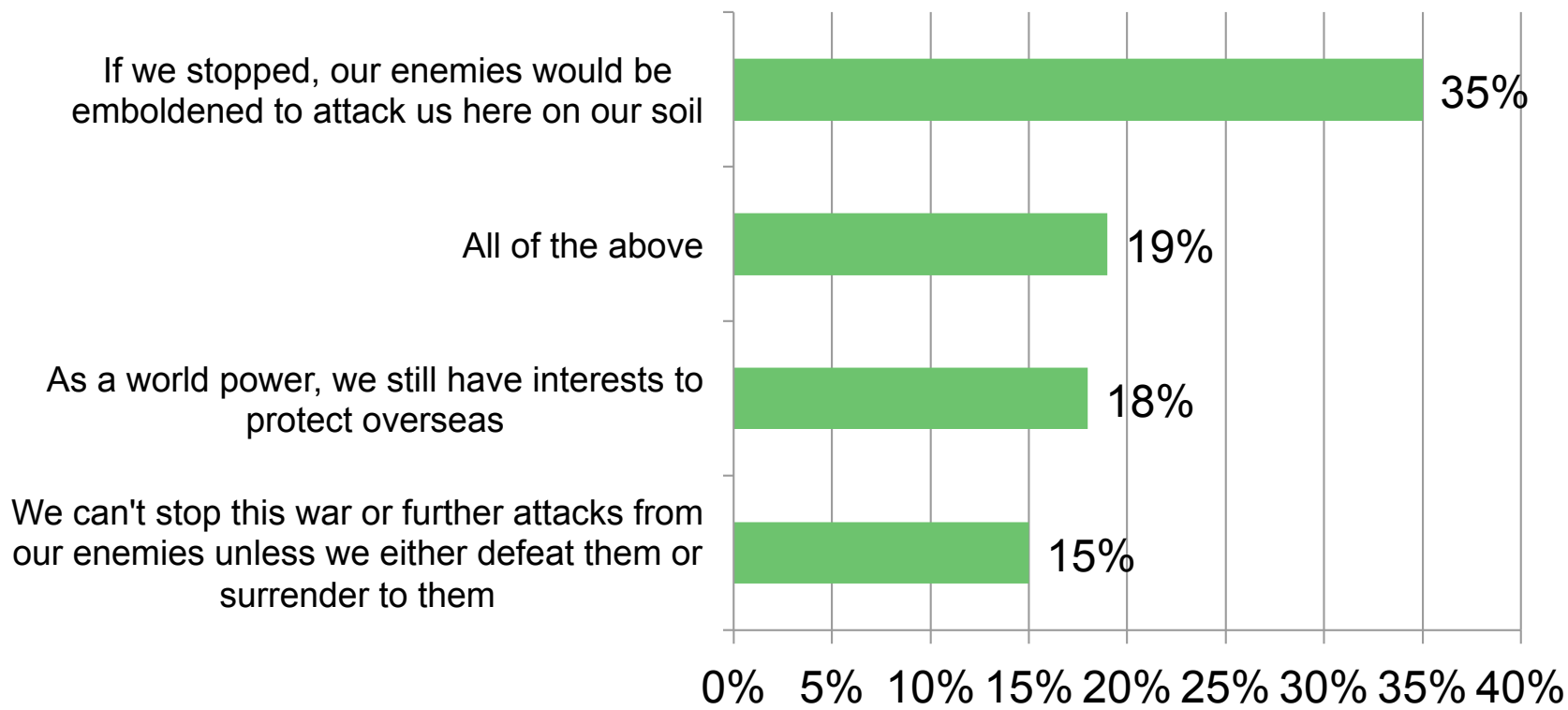
# Continue the fight: Even three quarters of liberals want the U.S. continue to “solider on” against terrorism

*Do you think the United States should continue to fight terrorists around the world who do us harm?*

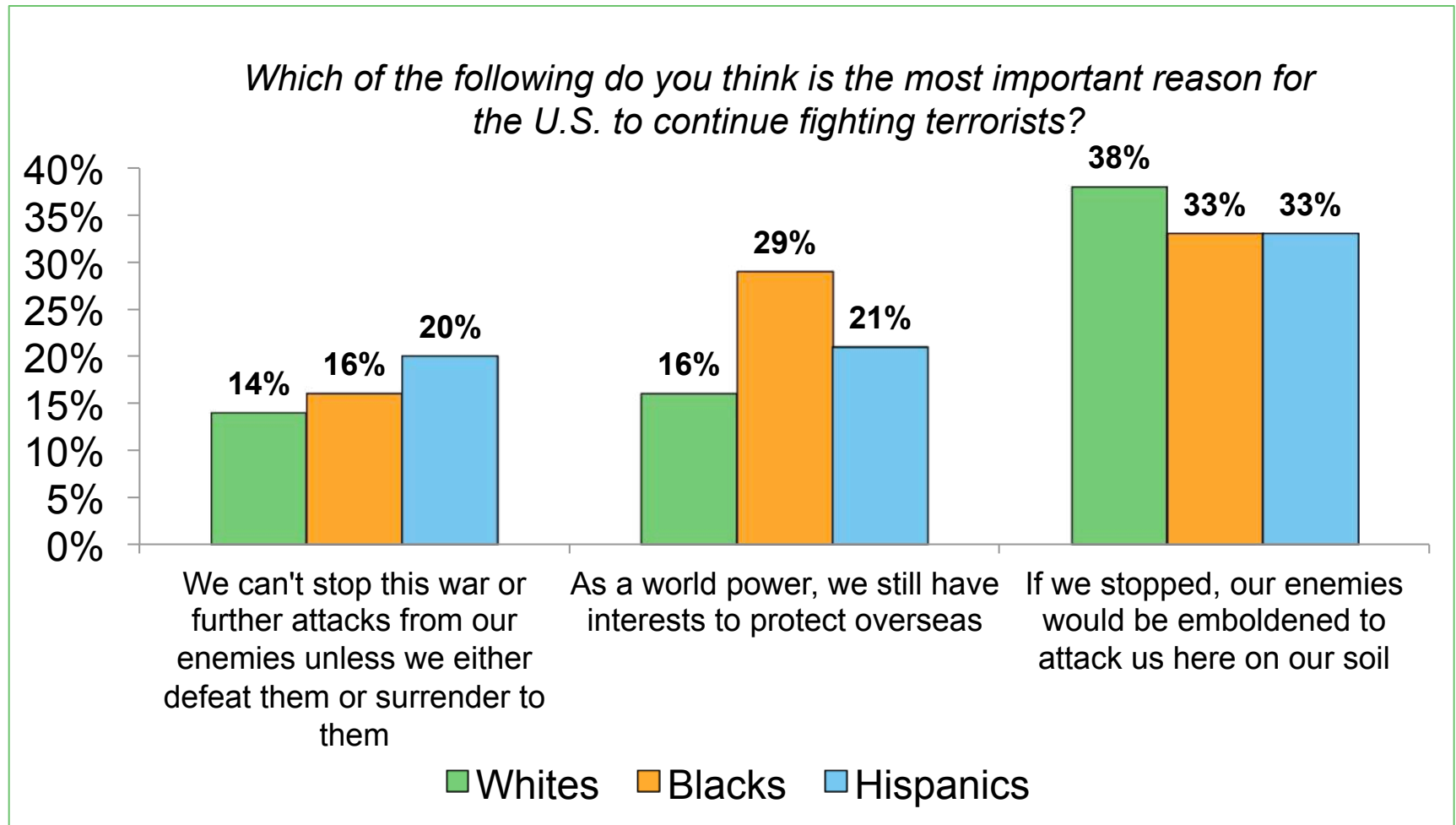


# Better There than Here.

***Which of the following do you think is the most important reason for the U.S. to continue fighting terrorists?***



# All races agree: U.S. ceasefire = increased fire by our enemies. Blacks more likely to focus on protecting U.S. interests overseas

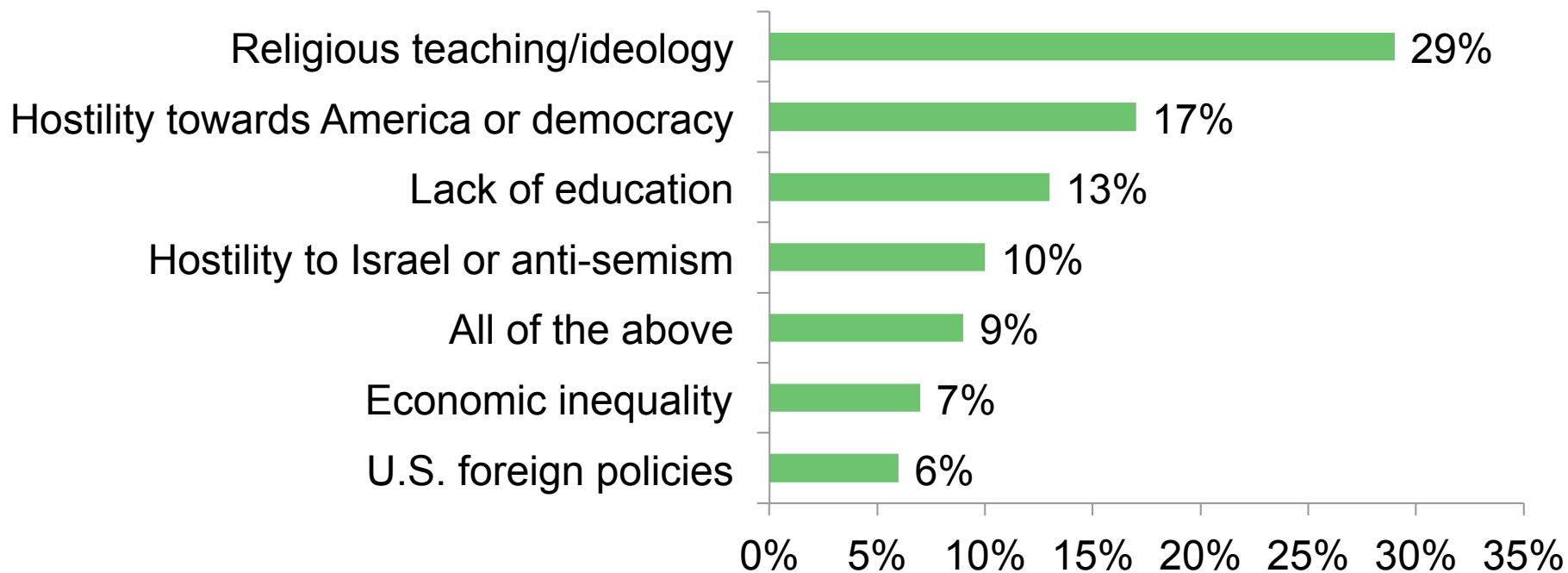


# Islamic extremism a clear and present danger

- The U.S. addressing Islamic extremism ranked a 9.8 in Ohio and Floridians placed it an 8.5 on the 1-10 scale.
  - Even as they know many Muslims are peaceful, they believe that the ideology and teachings of fundamentalist Islam fuel Islamic terror. They see through the effort to be politically correct when Islam is not used in the description of terrorists and terrorist acts.
  - Only a few believe that lack of opportunity, poverty, and inequality lead some to commit terrorist attacks.
- Survey, however, showed a majority (55%) of Americans are unaware of roots in Islamic teachings of violent jihad, giving benefit of the doubt in absence of knowledge.

**A whole host of root causes for Islamic terror;  
Religion/ideology top list;  
Anti-American & anti-Israeli views fuel the fire**

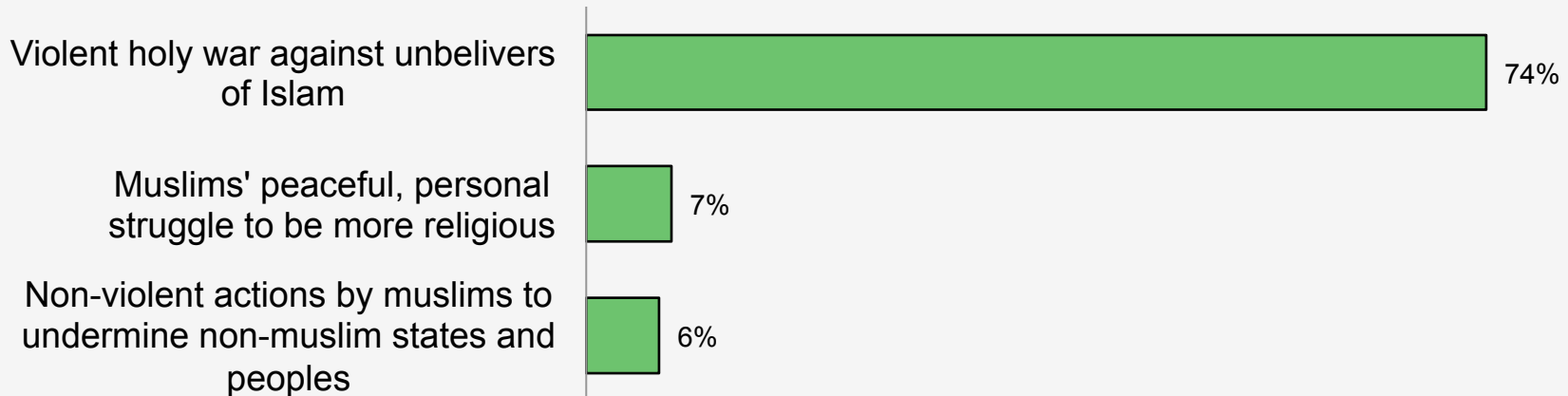
**Which of the following is most responsible for causing Islamic terror?**



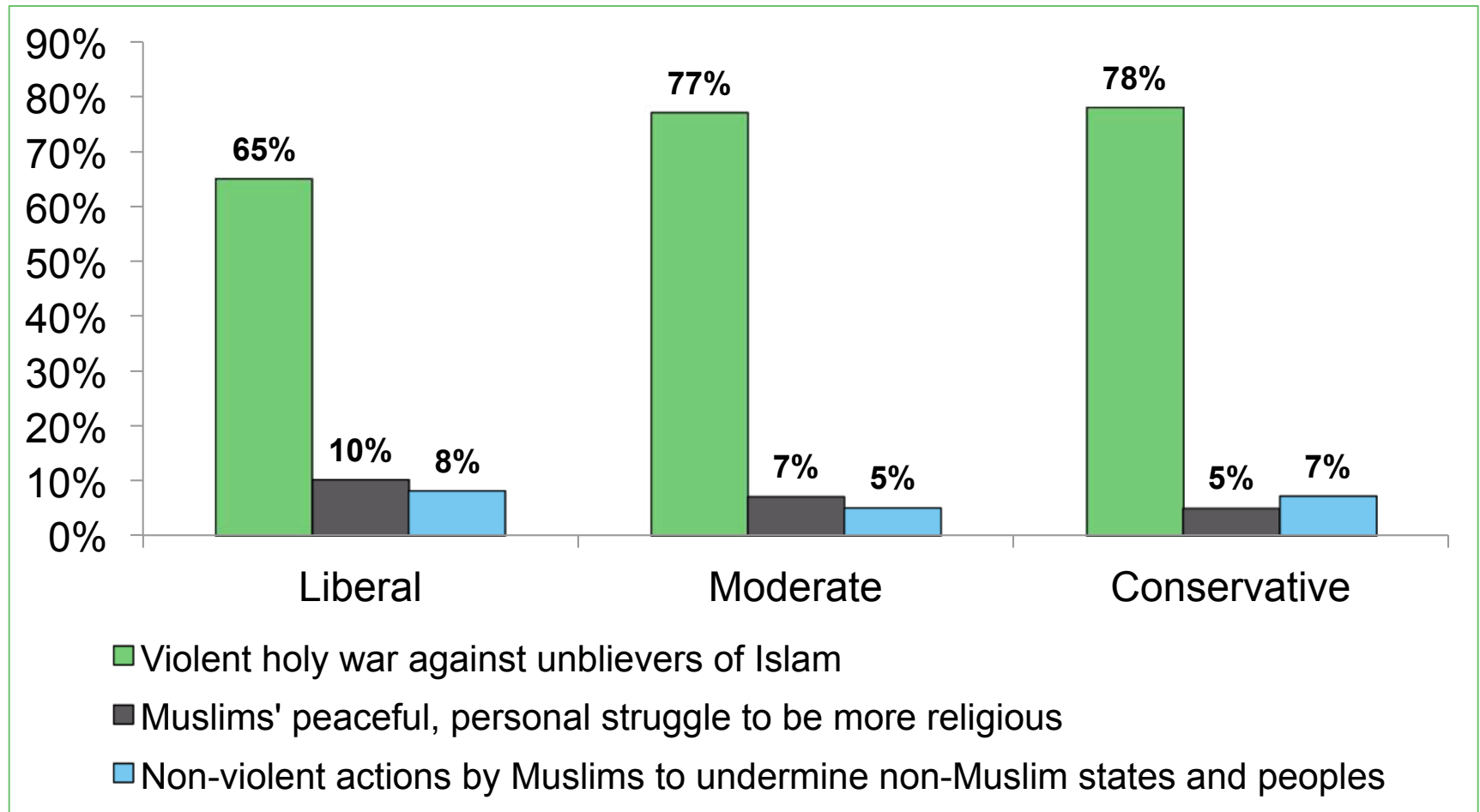
# No mincing words: “jihad” means war

- The term “jihad” was known to most as a “holy war” in focus groups and in the survey.
- “Sharia” was not familiar to most; those few in the know associate it with Islamic law and its detriments to women.

*Which of the following comes closest to your understanding of the term “jihad”?*



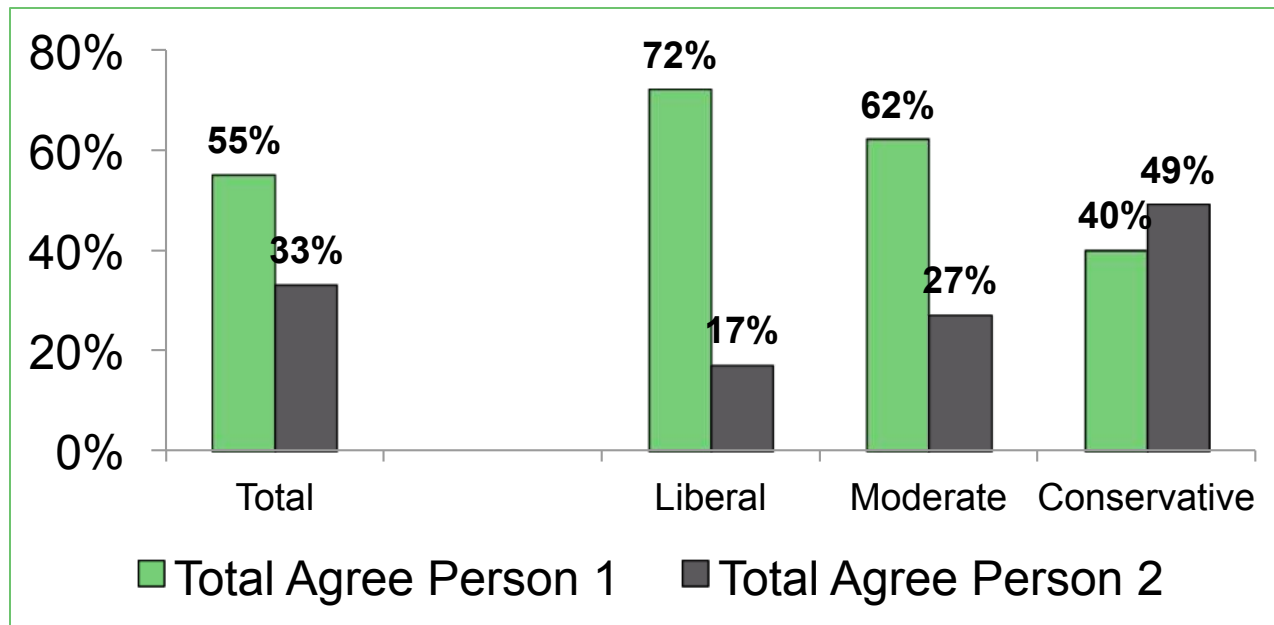
# Even those on the political Left reject “jihad” as peaceful, non-violent or even political



# Majority say Islam is religion of peace

PERSON 1: "Islam is a religion of peace and those who commit violence in its name are not following its true teachings."

PERSON 2: "People are being politically correct, but not truthful, when they say that 'Islam is a religion of peace'. The Quran and Islamic ideology serve as the basis for violence against non-believers of Islam."

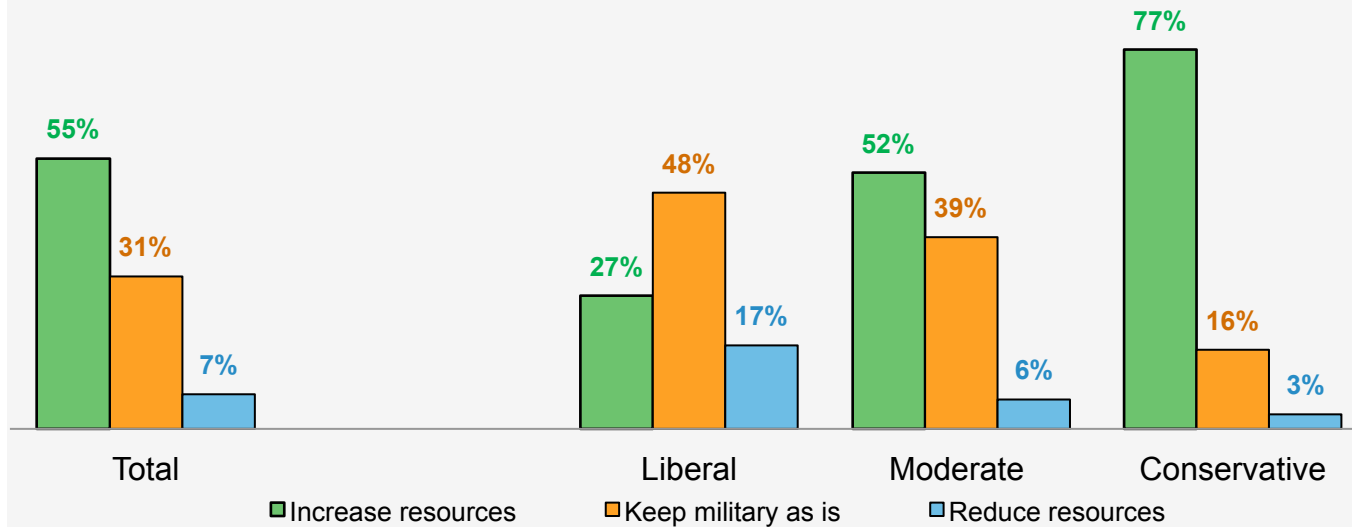




# Going against the “cut it” grain, military is one area where people want more spending, not less

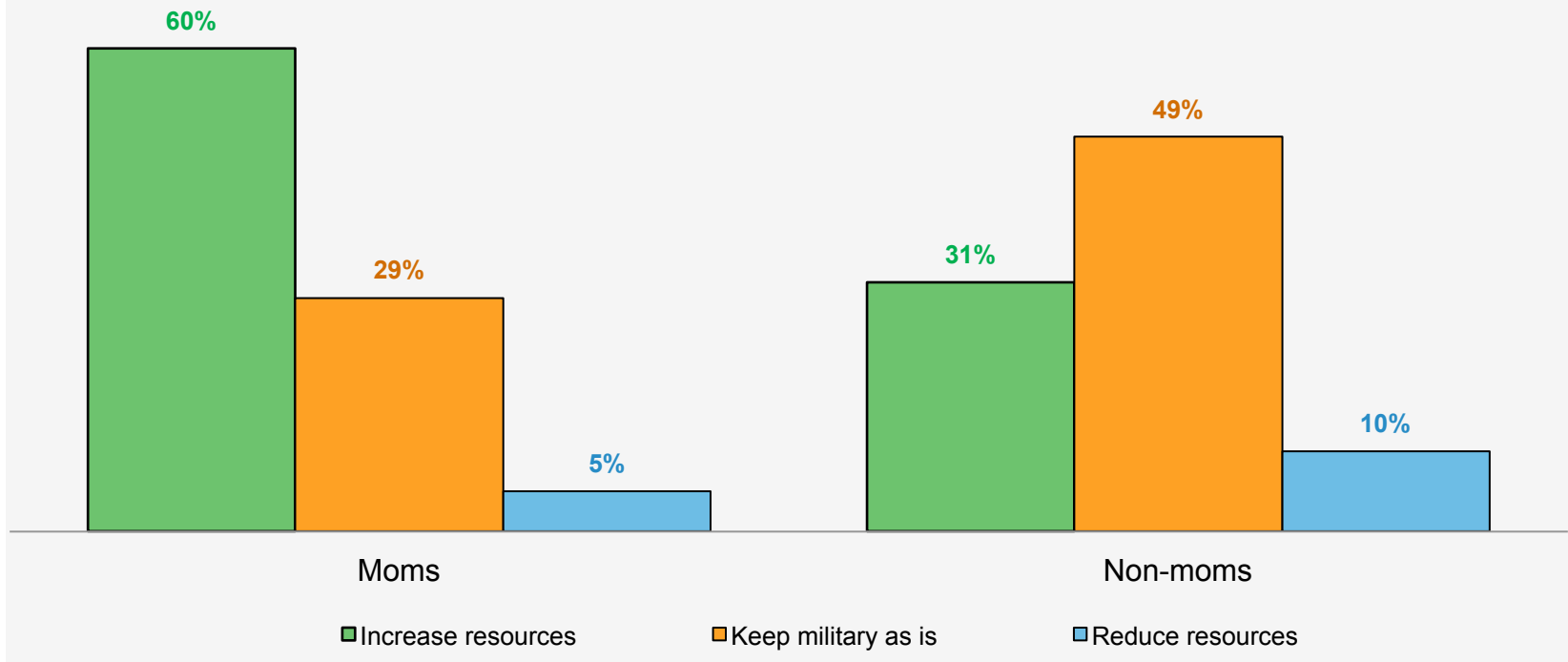
- 20 of the 25 participants believe that we should increase military spending (support even in FL and OH).
- In the nationwide survey, only 17% of liberals would reduce it; 75% would keep it where it is (48%) or increase it (27%).

*Thinking about current world events, what is the best course of action for our military forces? Should we...?*



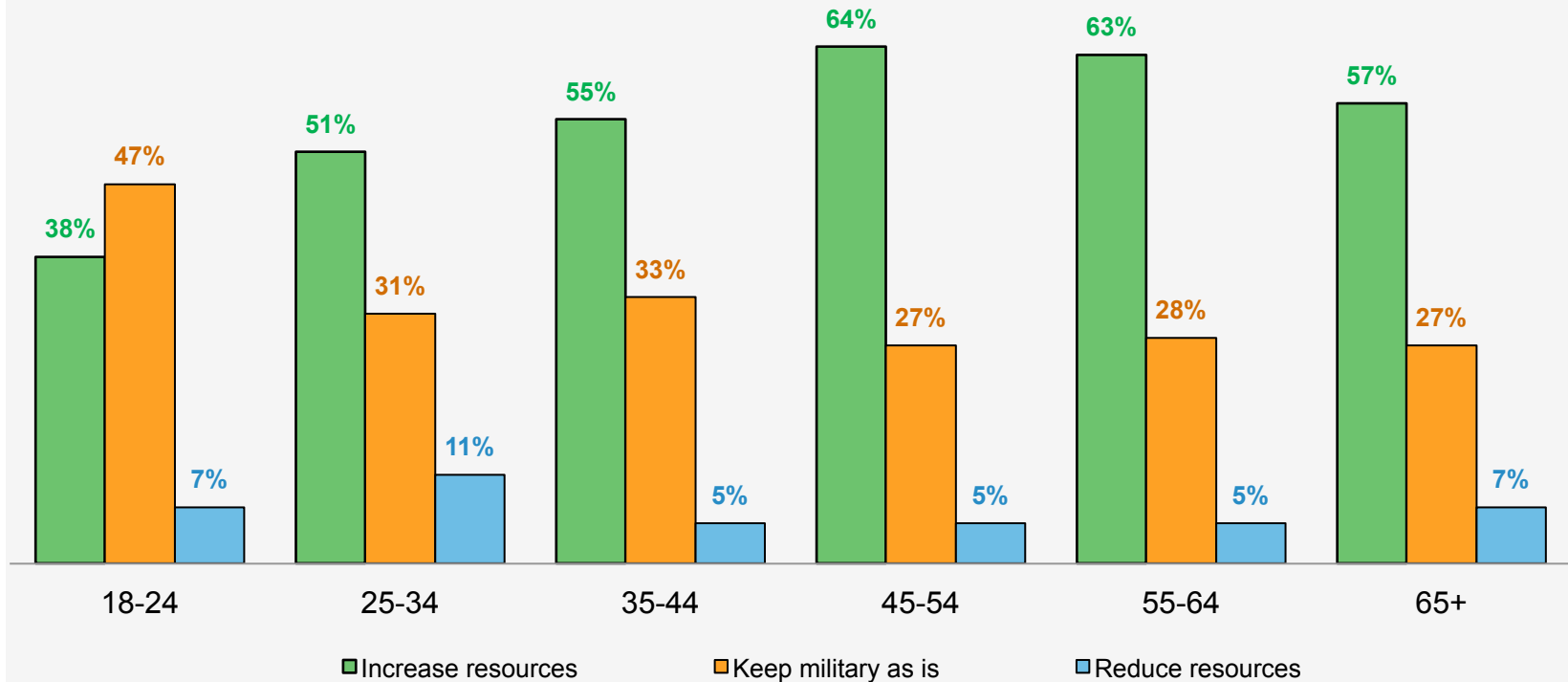
# Security Moms Overwhelmingly Support Increases in Military Spending

*Thinking about current world events, what is the best course of action for our military forces? Should we...?*



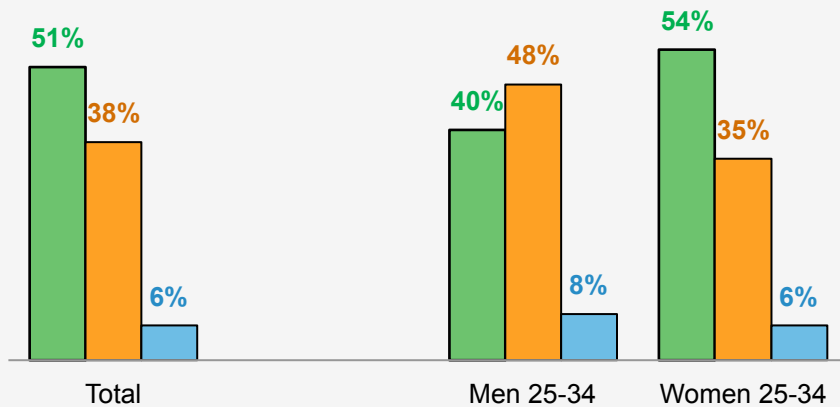
# No age group would cut the military budget; 45-64 year olds highly favor an increase; 18-24 set say hold steady

*Thinking about current world events, what is the best course of action for our military forces? Should we...?*

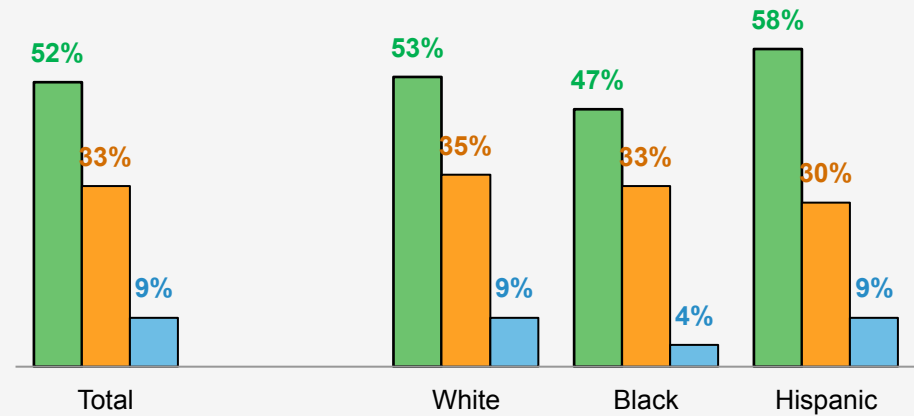


# Strong action against ISIS, sanctions for Russia/China/Syria

*If Russia engages in further aggression against Ukraine and possibly other nations with whom we have friendly relations, how serious a problem do you think it would be for the United States?*



*How serious a problem do you think it would be for the United States if China becomes the dominant power in the Western Pacific and Eastern Asia?*



Very serious   Somewhat serious   Not at all serious

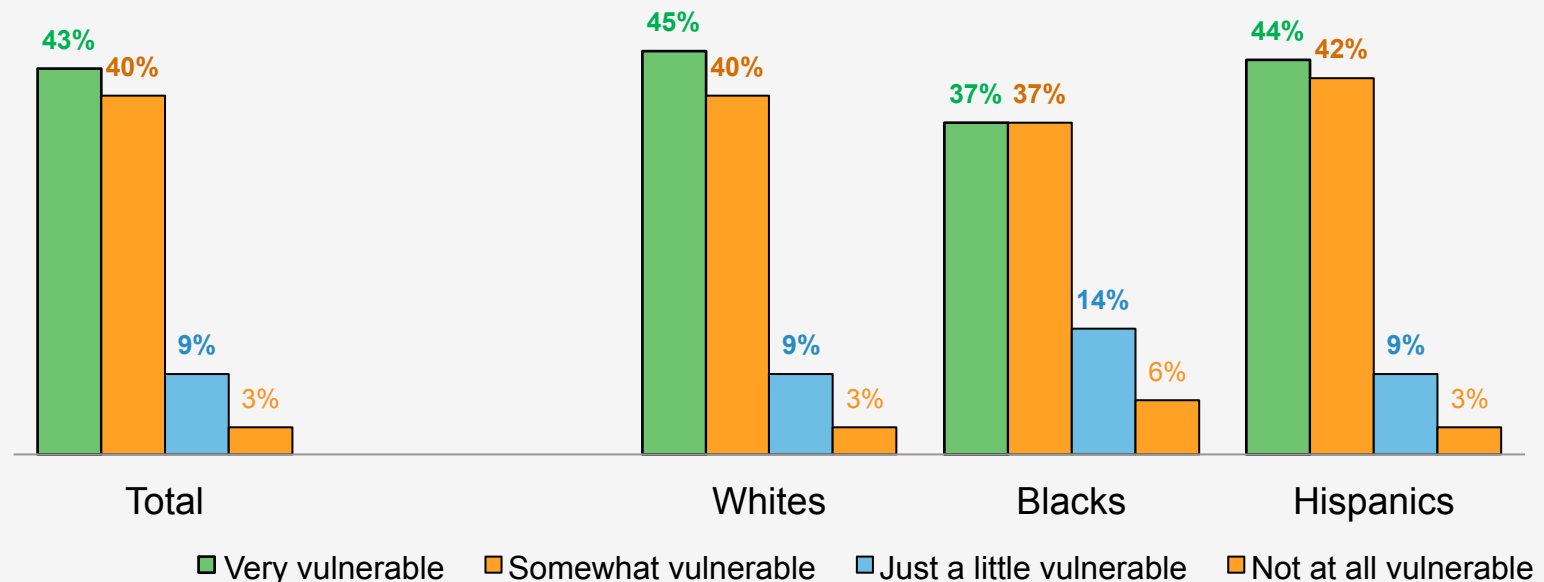
Very serious   Somewhat serious   Not at all serious

- Threats from Russia and China are seen as serious, as young women view Russia's aggression as a more serious problem, while Blacks view China's aggression as less serious.
- Focus group results confirm that defeating ISIS is a top priority, but there is reluctance to engage Russia, China, or Syria militarily - *Sanctions, not boots on the ground, or missiles in the air.*

# Homegrown terror and porous borders top homeland security concerns

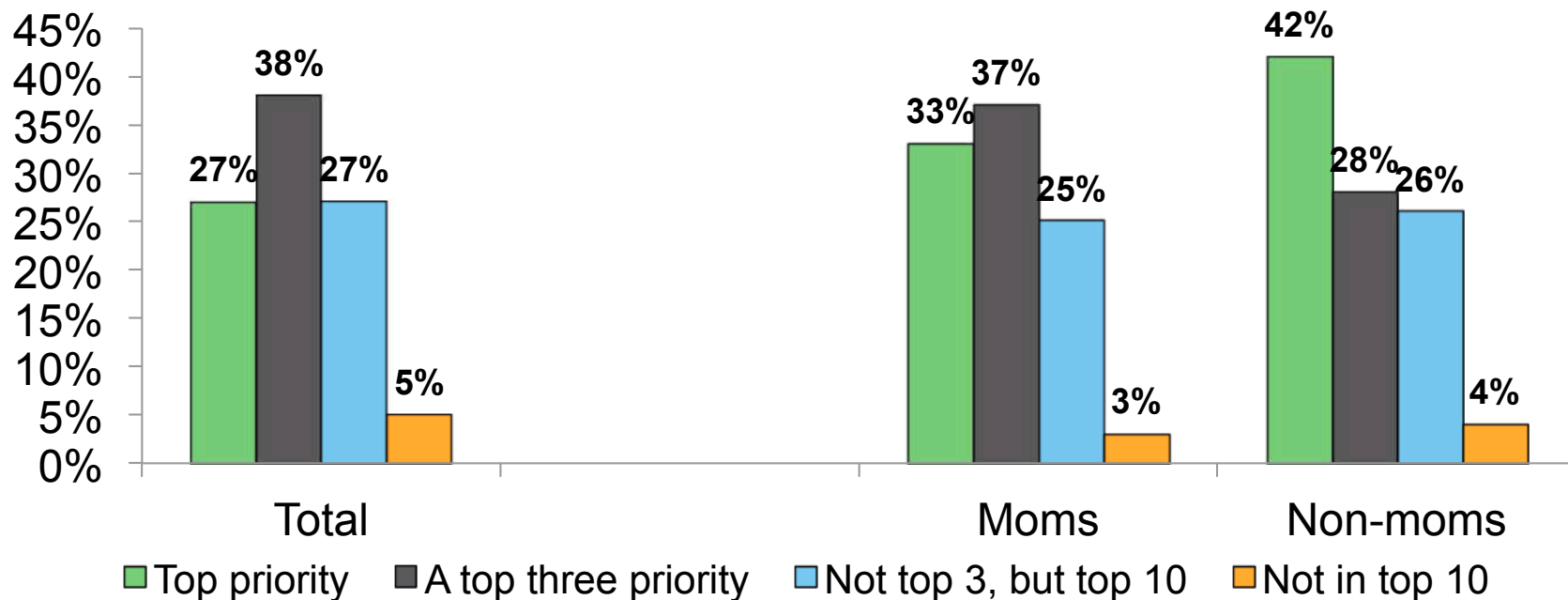
- Focus group participants are concerned about homegrown terrorists and our unsecure borders, while the power grid and other infrastructure is important, too.
- This, while 83% of survey respondents say that our power grid is susceptible to nefarious influence.

*How vulnerable do you think that the system that supplies electric power to our country is to an attack?*



# Non-moms worry more about devastation to our infrastructure and electrical power grid than do mothers

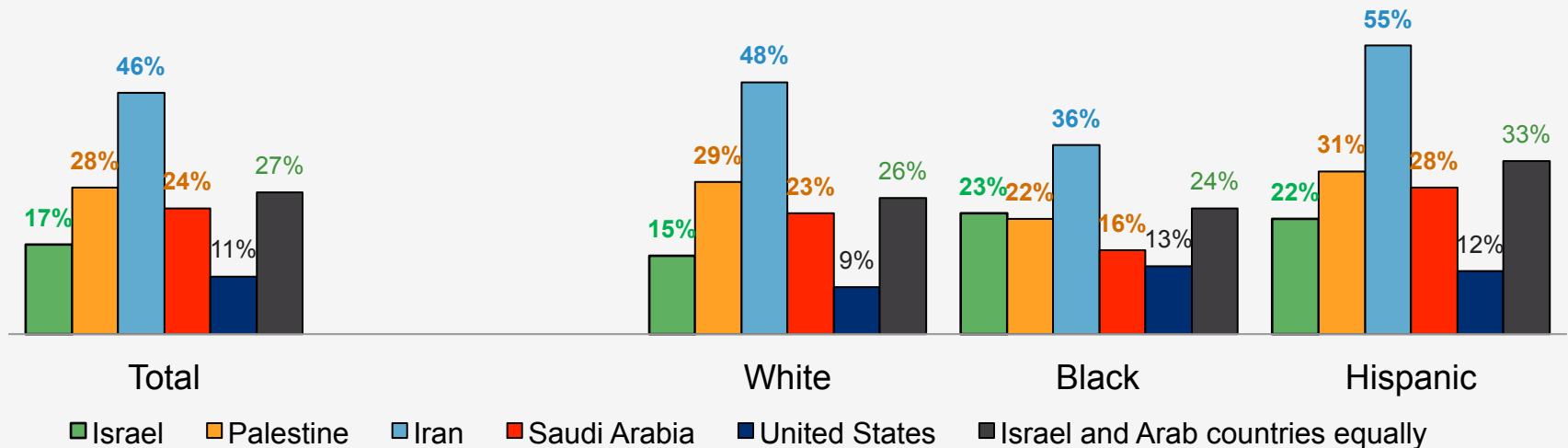
*If large areas of the United States lost electrical power for a long period of time then many people would not be able to access water, food, medicine, transportation, finance and communication. How much of a priority should it be for elected officials to prevent this from happening?"*



# A Spectrum of Responsible Actors have caused Mideast Mayhem; Iran most to blame, but plenty with blood on their hands

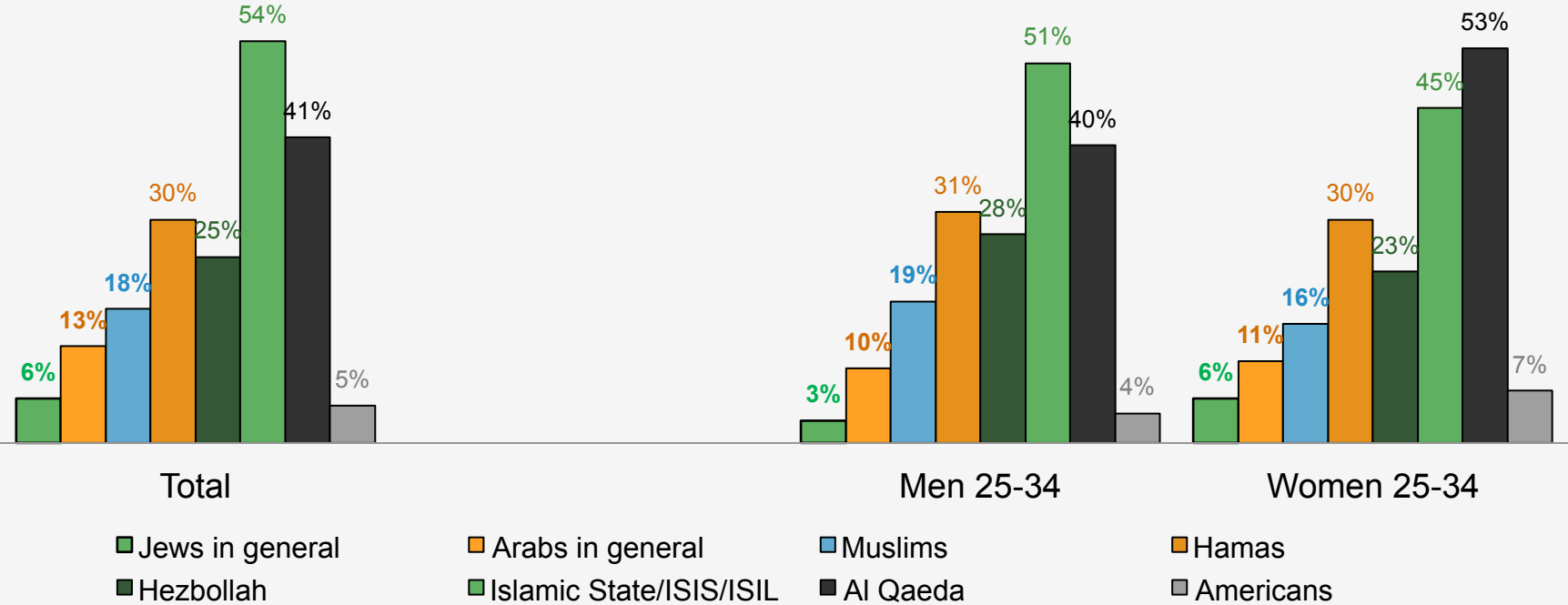
Focus group respondents see conflict in the Middle East as stemming from radical Islam and long-standing conflicts over land and religion. Most also believe that this will not come to an end if Israel is destroyed, but would lead to an emboldened radicalism and possibly the U.S. as the next target.

*Which of the following countries are responsible for the lack of peace in the Middle East?*



# “Older” Millennials differ by gender on cause of Mideast violence

*Which of the following groups of people are responsible for the lack of peace in the Middle East?*



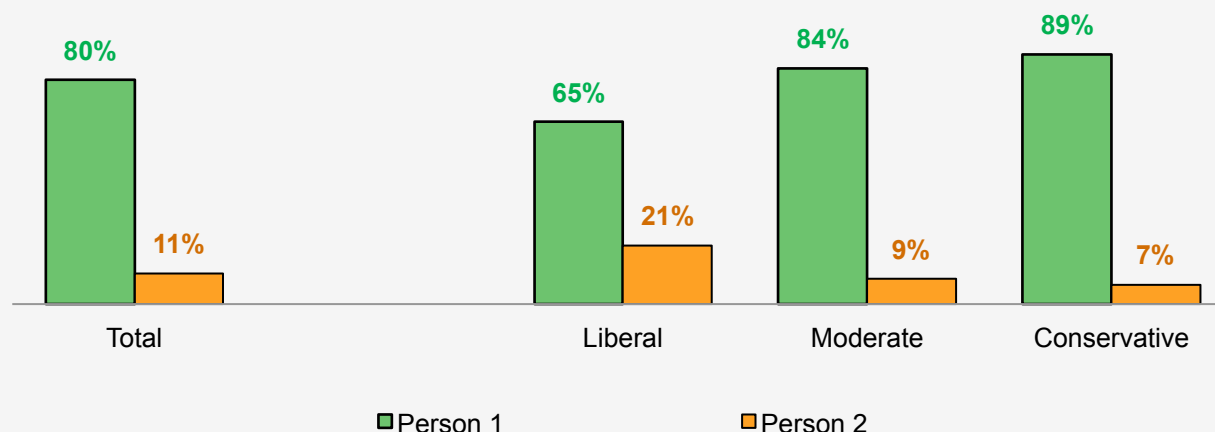


# “Peace through strength” a popular solution, not a political slogan.

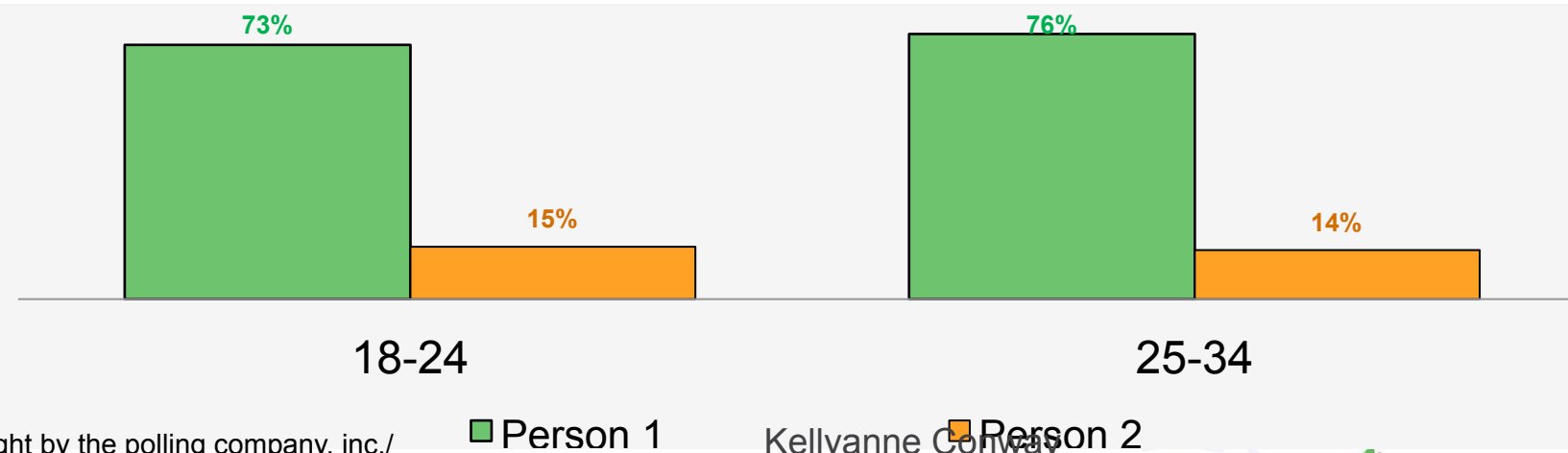
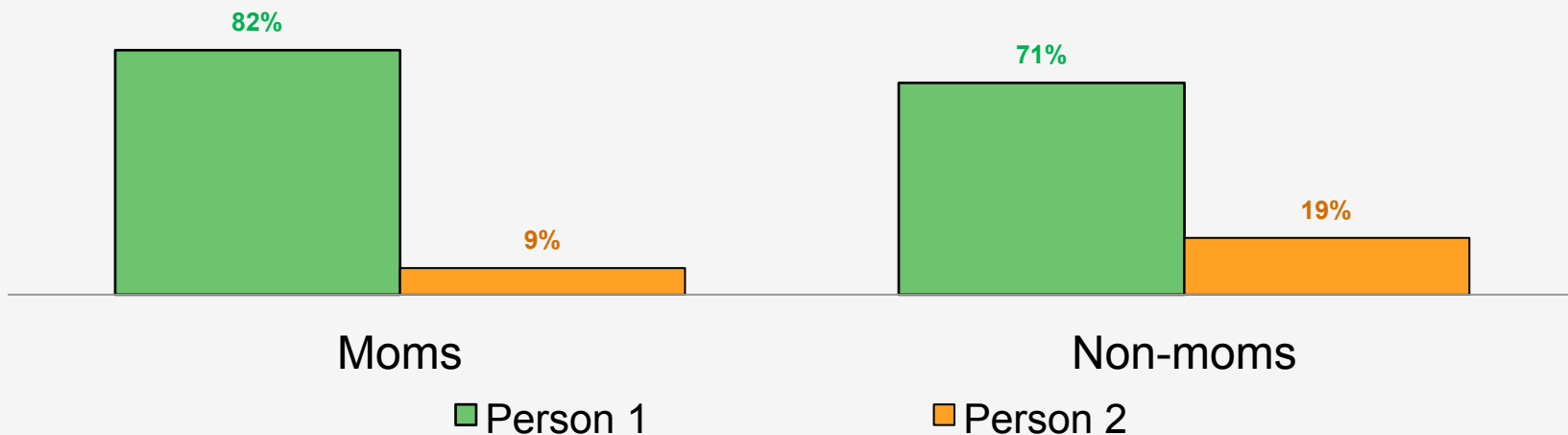
- Focus groupers in both Florida and Ohio largely agreed that the U.S. should display its strength as a deterrent, while mostly rejecting the idea that simply leaving others alone will protect us.

CANDIDATE 1: “The most effective way to protect America is through a national security policy of peace through strength. We must show our enemies that the United States has the most capable military in the world and is determined to protect its citizens, as well as its allies and interests around the world.”

CANDIDATE 2: “To protect America we must disengage from our foreign entanglements around the world that cost this country life and treasure. If we leave others alone, they will leave us alone.”



# “Peace through strength” preferred strategy among “security moms” and youth



# Voters Don't Ask: "Who Can Win?" They Ask: "Who Can Lead?"

- Desired characteristics for a president were uniform among focus group participants: honesty, integrity, and intelligence.

"Strong, honest, stern, intelligent, willing to fight for the right thing. Leadership. Great decision making skills." – Lloyd (Ohio)

"Uphold his oath to protect our constitution." – Michael (Florida)

"A true love of our country. Honesty, integrity and a strong belief in a higher power and purpose for everyone." – Greg (Florida)

"Strength, person of his word, stand for something and have values and ethics." – Linda (Ohio)

# Conclusions & Action Items

- **Americans believe the world is on fire and expect leaders to act swiftly and strongly to address national security and foreign policy concerns.**
- Security is the dominant theme on voters' minds – “job security” and “financial security” are the floor, not the ceiling. Americans say elected officials are failing to meet threats posed by border security and national security.
- Hispanics often ranked security threats as higher priorities than African-Americans, and took a more center-right foreign policy and national security view of things.
- Two-thirds of youth voted for the anti-war/Nobel Peace Prize winning POTUS; now two-thirds of youth say leaders are underperforming globally and militarily.
- Many national security concerns and policy tenets win tri-partisan support.
  - Left-leaning cohorts show sympathy for “peace through strength”, immediate and decisive action on ISIS and sanctions on other troublemakers.
- **Disengagement is seen as dangerous. Few believe that if we leave others alone they will return the favor.**
- **Voters' to-do list: Increase military resources, continue the fight against terrorism, destroy ISIS, and protect U.S. interests, allies and citizens.**