Colorado AI and Data Center Opinion Survey

August/September 2026

Magellan Strategies

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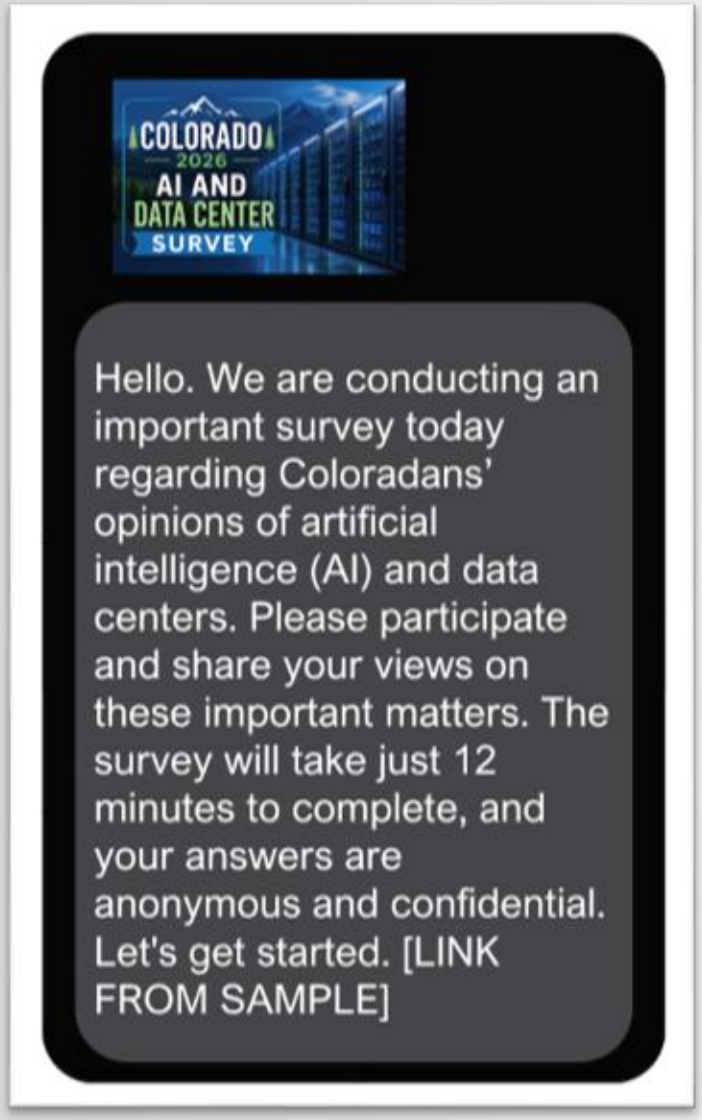
Methodology



Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the topline results of a survey of 1,389 Colorado registered voters. The survey data was weighted to reflect the state's voter registration demographics.

The interviews were conducted from August 26 to September 2, 2026, using text message invitations to an online survey. The survey results have a margin of error of +/- 2.63% at the 95% confidence level.

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Magellan Strategies Colorado Voter Registration & Turnout Demographics

Magellan Strategies Colorado Voter Registration and Past Election Turnout Report

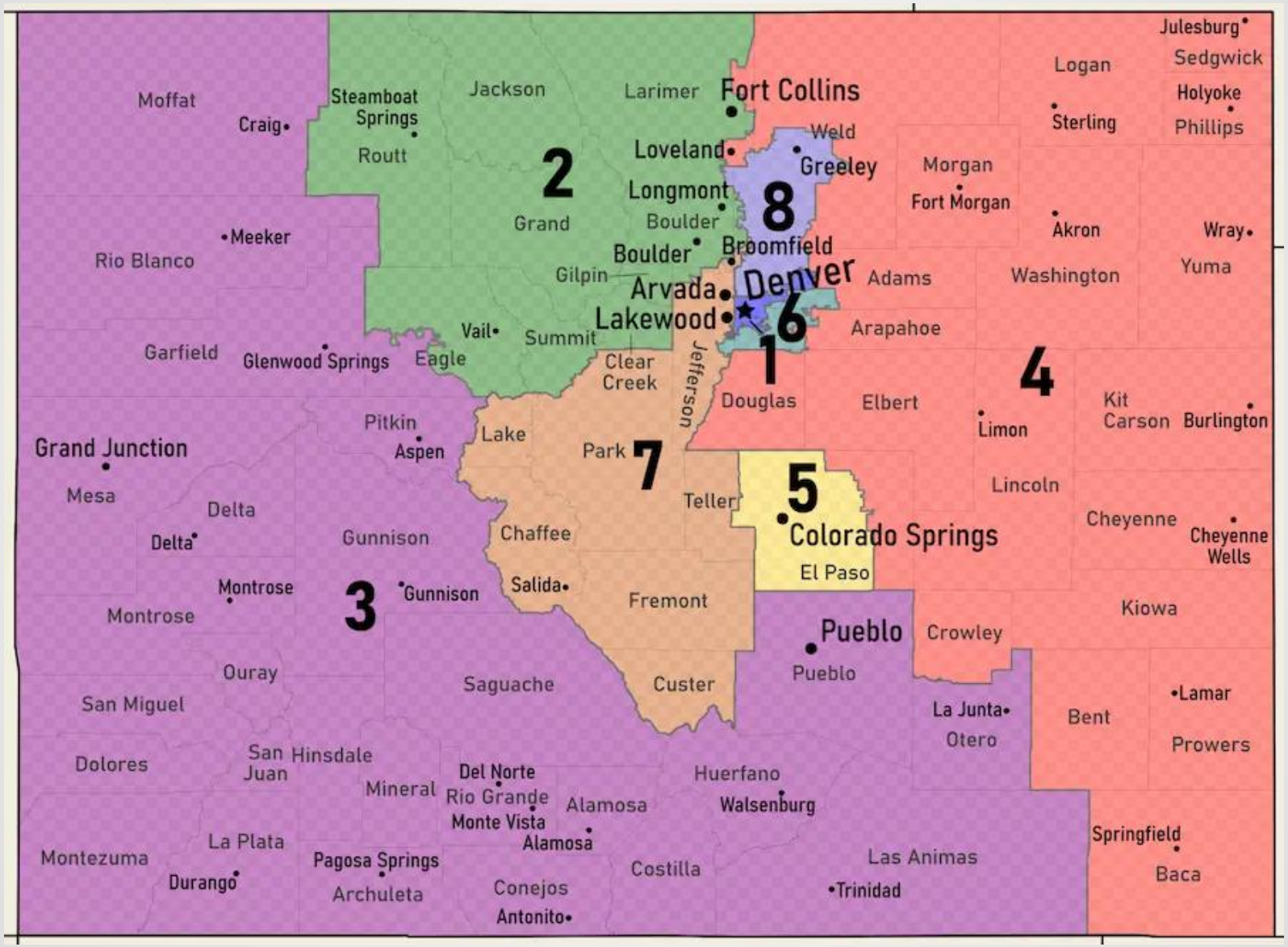
Congress	Registration		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
District 1	564,322	12.3%	376,614	11.5%	164,050	9.7%	284,718	11.3%	166,994	10.7%	402,100	12.2%
District 2	585,458	12.8%	442,946	13.5%	249,747	14.8%	357,243	14.2%	228,701	14.7%	443,136	13.5%
District 3	588,323	12.9%	416,657	12.7%	225,161	13.3%	332,651	13.2%	212,676	13.7%	414,471	12.6%
District 4	614,017	13.4%	471,304	14.4%	262,545	15.5%	359,940	14.3%	235,596	15.1%	435,671	13.3%
District 5	578,570	12.7%	385,817	11.8%	192,836	11.4%	286,072	11.4%	169,560	10.9%	379,527	11.6%
District 6	528,245	11.6%	369,596	11.3%	187,446	11.1%	283,639	11.3%	175,475	11.3%	426,390	13.0%
District 7	598,765	13.1%	454,447	13.9%	258,025	15.2%	367,399	14.6%	232,450	14.9%	436,096	13.3%
District 8	512,859	11.2%	352,885	10.8%	152,584	9.0%	246,055	9.8%	136,561	8.8%	346,068	10.5%
Total	4,570,559		3,270,266		1,692,394		2,517,717		1,558,013		3,283,459	

Sex	Registration		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
Female	2,308,098	50.5%	1,702,135	52.0%	884,325	52.3%	1,303,748	51.8%	804,985	52.0%	1,679,090	51.9%
Male	2,262,462	49.5%	1,568,131	48.0%	808,069	47.7%	1,213,969	48.2%	744,082	48.0%	1,553,523	48.1%
Total	4,570,559		3,270,266		1,692,394		2,517,717		1,549,067		3,232,613	

Age	Registration		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
18-34	1,445,243	31.6%	834,188	25.5%	235,166	13.9%	495,111	19.7%	214,380	13.8%	872,423	26.6%
35-44	846,140	18.5%	579,080	17.7%	245,792	14.5%	419,122	16.6%	224,716	14.4%	565,220	17.2%
45-54	661,645	14.5%	503,802	15.4%	259,175	15.3%	408,955	16.2%	241,398	15.5%	523,354	15.9%
55-64	636,924	13.9%	513,478	15.7%	323,679	19.1%	462,301	18.4%	317,119	20.4%	569,709	17.4%
65+	980,607	21.5%	839,718	25.7%	628,582	37.1%	732,228	29.1%	560,400	36.0%	752,753	22.9%
Total	4,570,559		3,270,266		1,692,394		2,517,717		1,558,013		3,283,459	

Party	Registration		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
Unaffiliated	2,243,257	49.1%	1,476,570	45.2%	676,249	40.0%	1,017,709	40.4%	566,548	36.4%	1,278,947	39.0%
Democrat	1,170,504	25.6%	900,176	27.5%	507,266	30.0%	761,772	30.3%	490,571	31.5%	1,017,590	31.0%
Republican	1,049,884	23.0%	830,042	25.4%	489,847	28.9%	705,537	28.0%	485,091	31.1%	936,440	28.5%
Libertarian	45,195	1.0%	27,746	0.8%	11,451	0.7%	21,429	0.9%	10,923	0.7%	34,130	1.0%
Other	61,719	1.4%	35,732	1.1%	7,581	0.4%	11,270	0.4%	4,880	0.3%	16,352	0.5%
Total	4,570,559		3,270,266		1,692,394		2,517,717		1,558,013		3,283,459	

Colorado Congressional Districts



Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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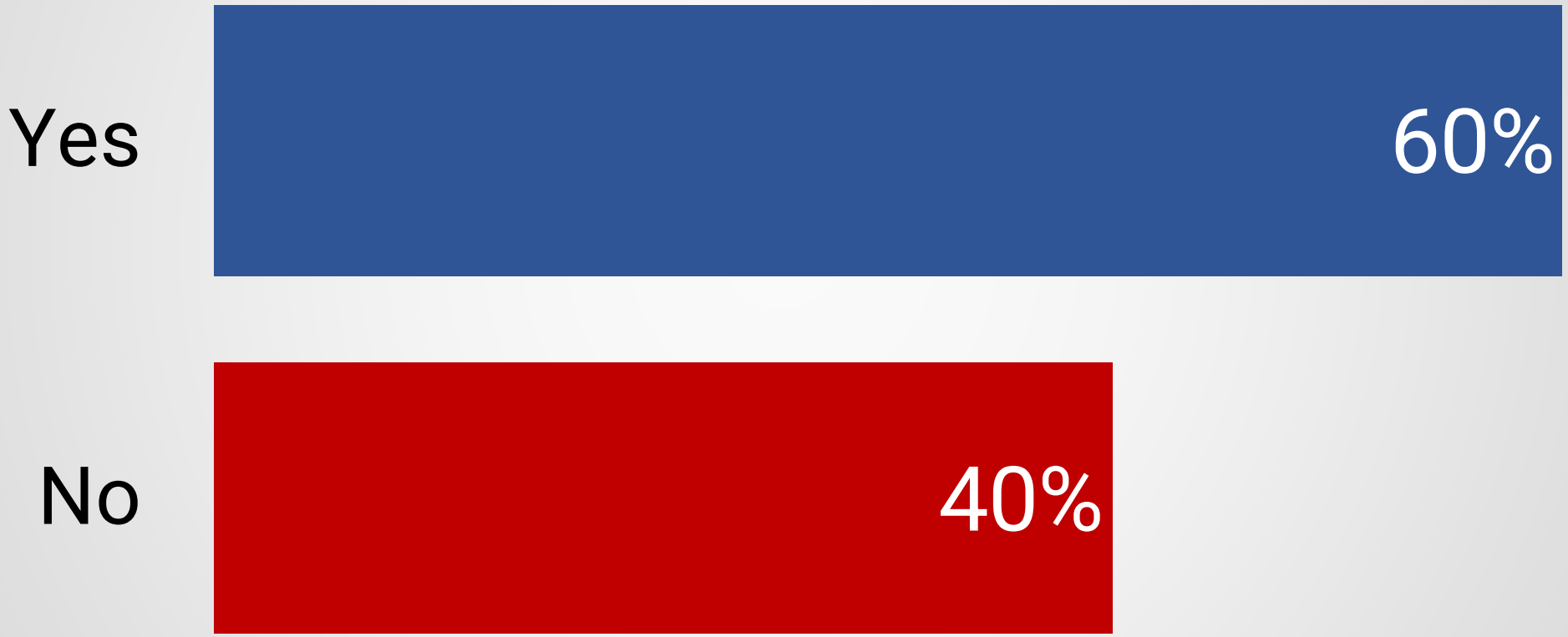
Key Findings

- **Two-thirds of Colorado voters hold an unfavorable opinion of AI, and using it changes the picture:** Sixty-six percent of voters have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence, including 41% who are very unfavorable, while 29% are favorable. Sixty percent have used an AI tool in the past 12 months, and 43% of those users are favorable compared to 8% of non-users. Republican voters (48% favorable) and voters 65 and older (42%) are the warmest groups; voters 18 to 44 are the coldest at 16%.
- **Jobs are the sharpest AI worry, and it cuts across every group:** Seventy-seven percent of voters expect AI to eliminate jobs, with 52% saying it definitely will, and only 8% expect it to create jobs. Eighty-eight percent are concerned AI will eliminate jobs for future generations (59% very concerned), including 92% of voters 18 to 44 and 81% of voters 65 and older. Among the 897 employed respondents, 41% are concerned about losing their own job.
- **Voters do not trust AI companies and do not want local governments or schools using AI:** Seventy percent of voters are not comfortable with their local government incorporating AI into its operations, and 75% are not comfortable with their school district using it to educate students. No more than 16% trust AI companies to build tools that are accurate and reliable, and 83% say the tools are not safe for children. Meta draws an 86% unfavorable rating, and Google and Microsoft each sit near 66% to 68% unfavorable.

Key Findings

- **Opposition to data center construction is broad, intense, and grows closer to home:** Eighty-six percent of voters oppose a data center near their neighborhood, 81% strongly, and opposition stays at 82% in their city or town, 77% in their county, and 75% elsewhere in the state. Among the 1,162 voters who have seen information about data centers, 82% say it made them more negative. Republican voters are the most receptive group, yet only 34% support a data center in their city or town, and just 5% of voters 18 to 44 do.
- **A majority want a ban on new data centers, and they reject the economic case for them:** Fifty-five percent of voters say a ban on all data center construction projects is the best path for their community, 26% prefer a new zoning and land use code, and 4% favor a time delay. Support for a ban reaches 68% of voters 18 to 44, 63% of women, and 73% of voters who have not used AI. Eighty-two percent agree data centers use too much water, 78% agree they drive up household electricity costs, and 68% disagree that they bring long-term, high-paying jobs. Water in a drought state leads the reasons opponents give in their own words.

In the past 12 months, have you used an artificial intelligence (AI) tool such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or Claude?



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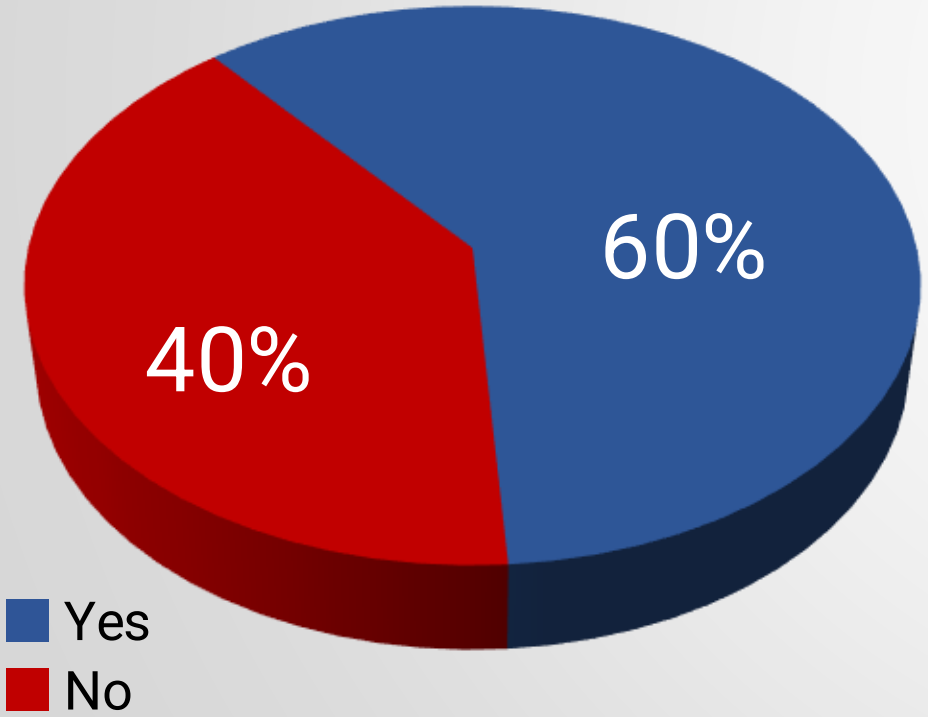

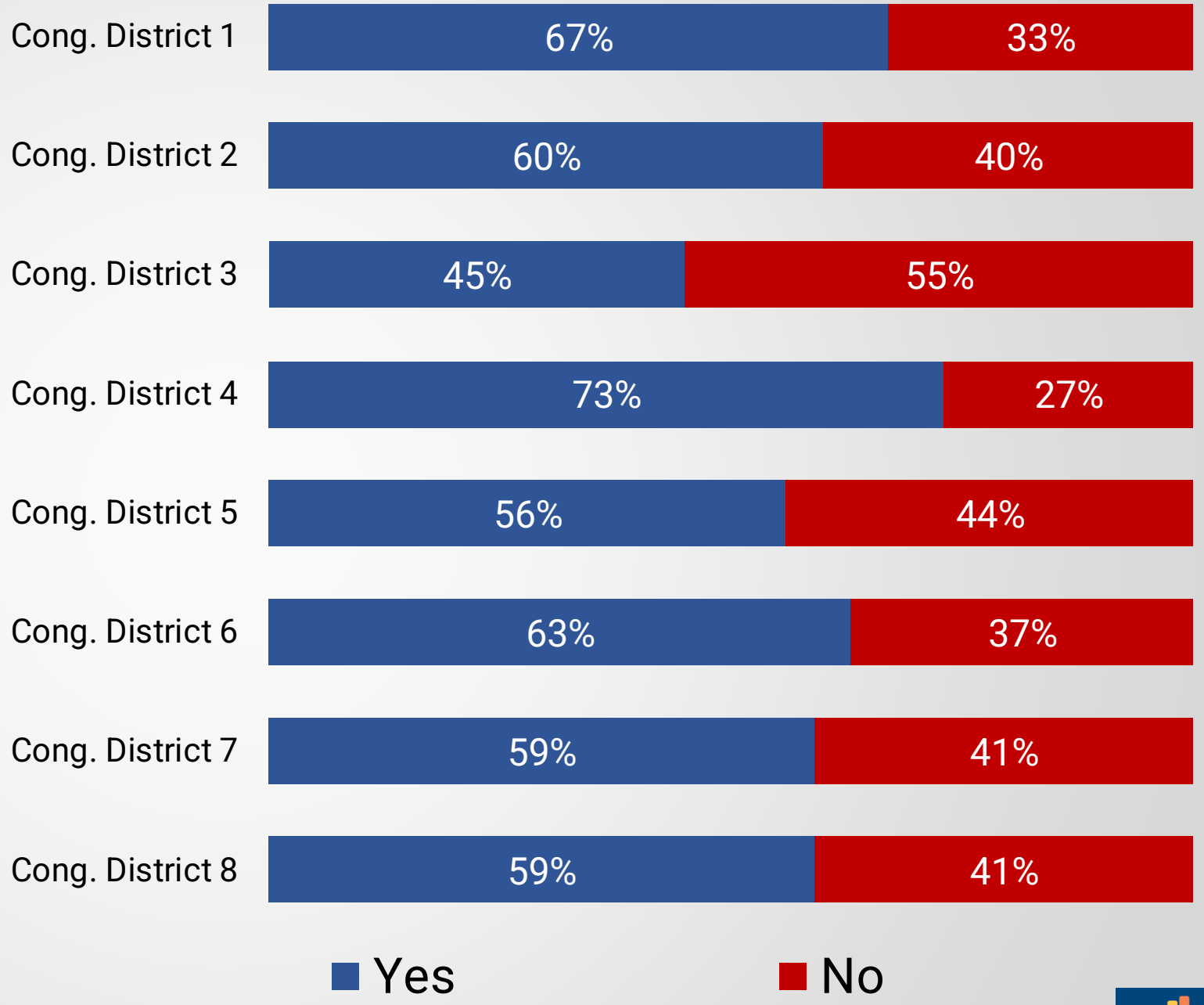

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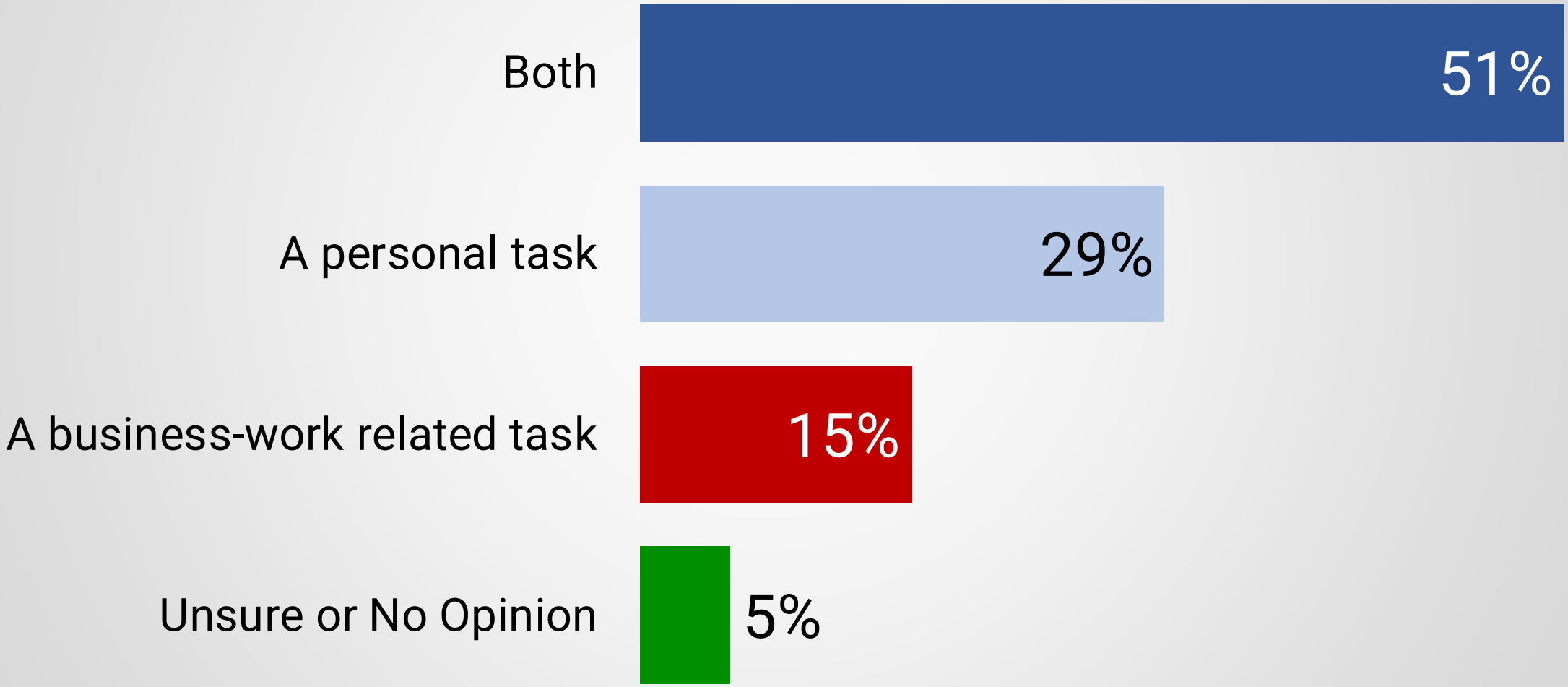
Have you used an AI tool for a personal task, a business/work related task, or both? (Asked to the 835 respondents who have used an AI tool in the past 12 months)



Artificial Intelligence Image Rating

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI)?

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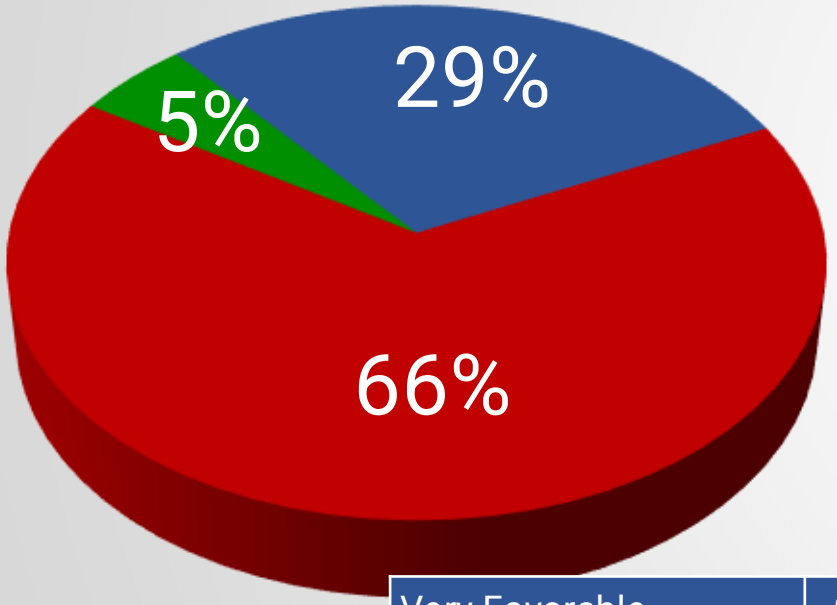
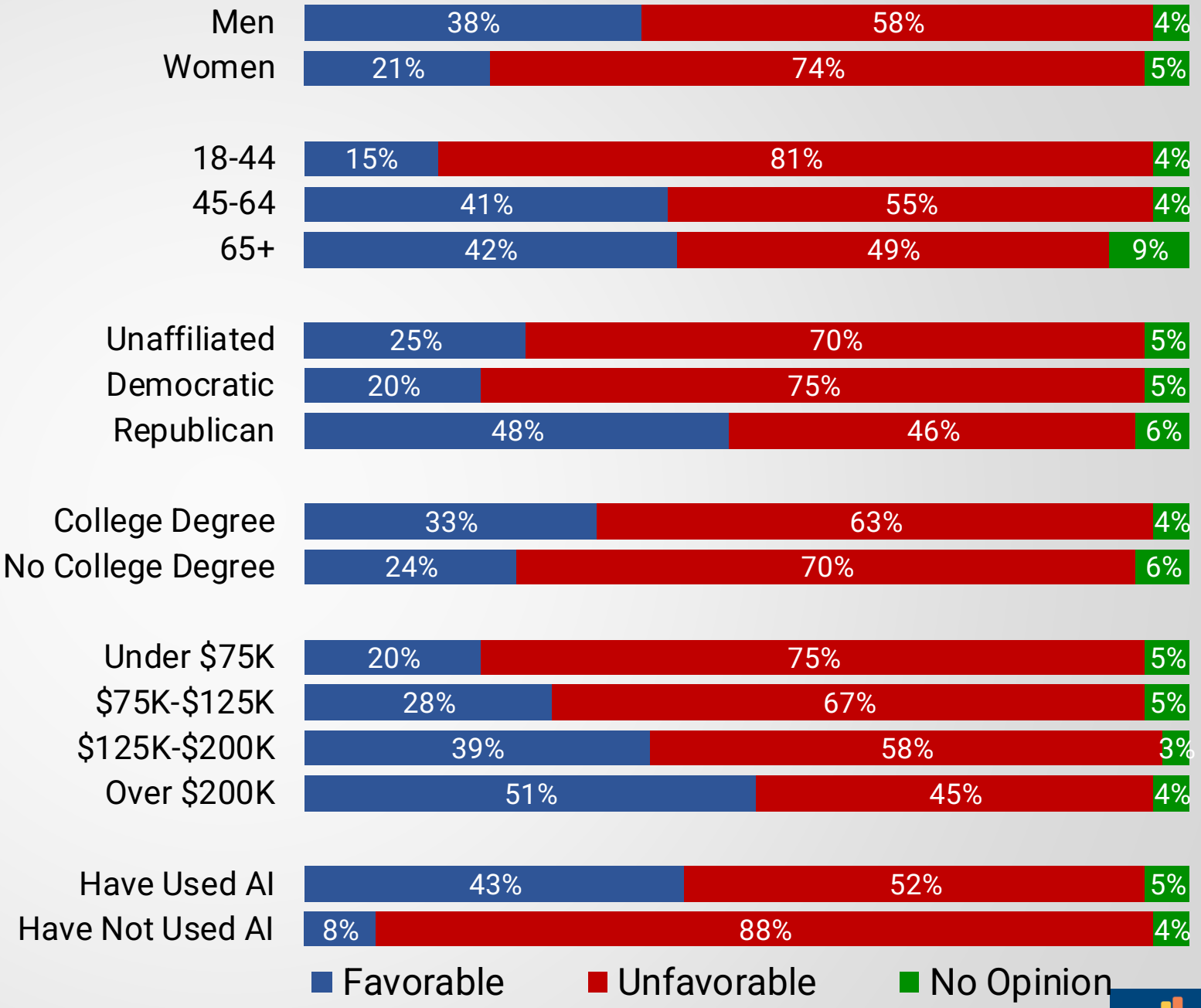


Very Favorable	9%
Somewhat Favorable	20%
Very Unfavorable	41%
Somewhat Unfavorable	25%

- Favorable
- Unfavorable
- No Opinion



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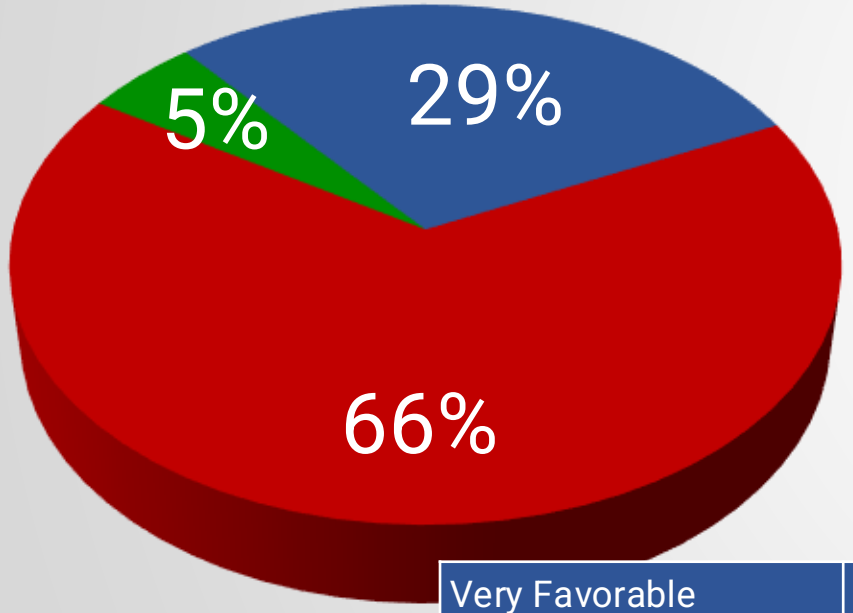

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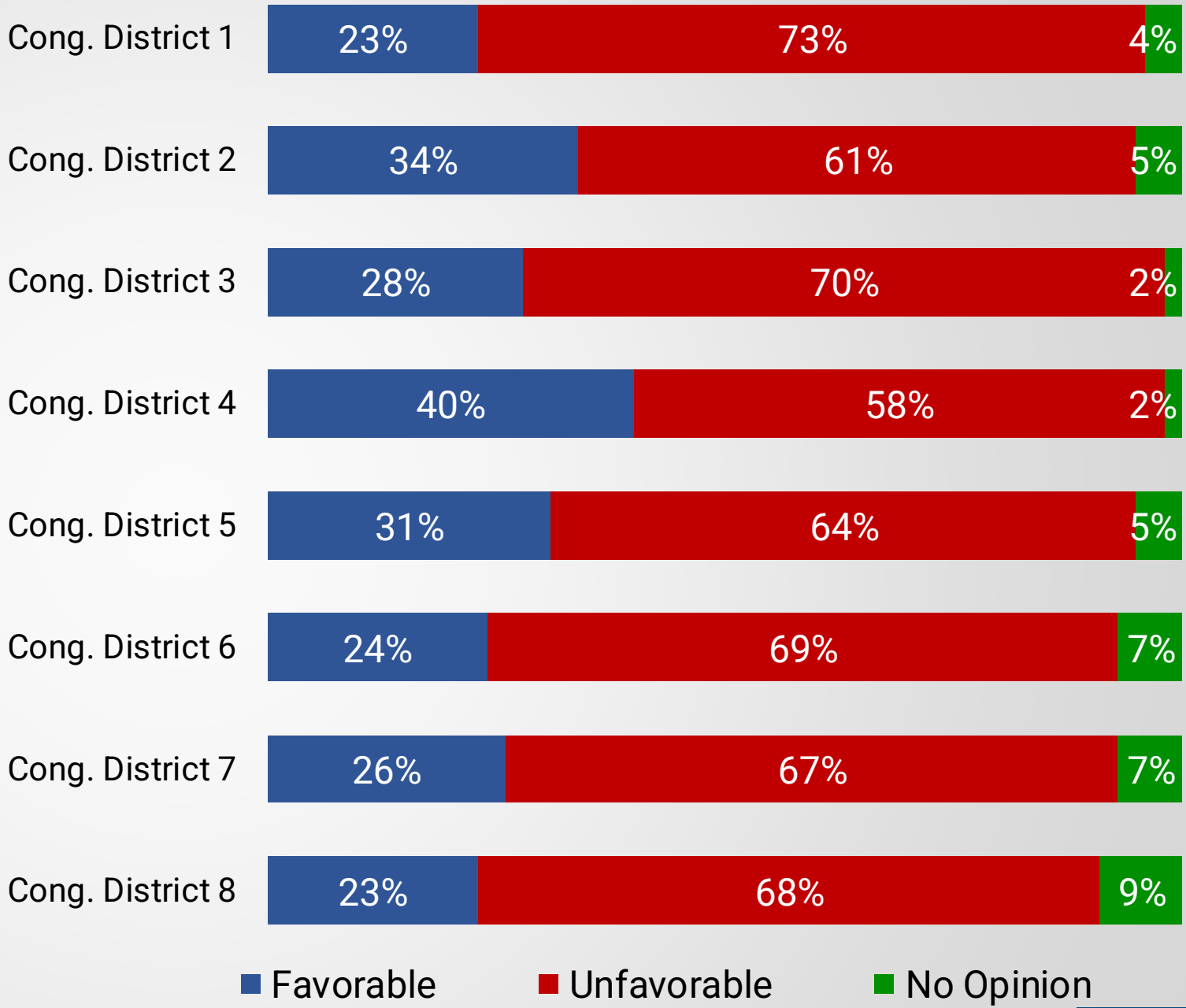

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Artificial Intelligence Image Rating

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(*Asked to the 401 respondents who had a favorable opinion of AI*)

Faster Work and Fewer Mundane Tasks: The most common reason respondents cite is that AI gets work done faster. They describe handing off repetitive or tedious tasks so they can focus on harder problems, and they name the tasks: drafting and cleaning up emails, letters, and reports; writing basic code and spreadsheets; taking clinical notes; compiling labor costs in the automotive industry; and reviewing lengthy contracts for provisions that might work against them. Several call it an accelerator or force multiplier that turns weeks of work into an hour. Most of these respondents frame it as a workplace tool first, with home use as a bonus.

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(*Asked to the 401 respondents who had a favorable opinion of AI*)

A Direct Answer Instead of a Search: Many respondents value AI for quickly getting information in plain language, pitched to their level of understanding. A recurring comparison is with Google, which respondents describe as declining in quality and overrun by commercial interests; some now use ChatGPT or Facebook's AI answers for most of what they once searched for.

The uses are practical: photographing a broken appliance to identify it and learn how to fix it; troubleshooting a car problem that ended up costing $190 rather than the $1,600 quoted by a tire and brake shop; adjusting recipes; planning travel itineraries; getting gardening advice tailored to local growing conditions; reading medical reports; checking whether a claim is true; and skipping the customer service line at Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment offices. Respondents also like that it anticipates follow-up questions and carries context from one question to the next within a conversation.

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(*Asked to the 401 respondents who had a favorable opinion of AI*)

Running a Business and Working Beyond One's Training: Small business owners and self-employed respondents say AI has enabled them to start or run a company they otherwise could not, compete with larger, better-funded firms, and build their own software instead of paying for per-user subscriptions that had become too expensive. A few also say it has raised their earnings.

Others describe going beyond their training: coding without a degree, learning subjects beyond their formal education, preparing for job interviews, checking college papers for run-on sentences, analyzing individual stocks, researching case law, or fact-checking a novel before publication. A few add that it is especially useful for people with learning disabilities or for anyone who could not otherwise afford an accountant, an attorney, or a second medical opinion.

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(*Asked to the 401 respondents who had a favorable opinion of AI*)

The Next Industrial Revolution and Staying Ahead of China: Some respondents focus less on their own use and more on where the technology is headed. They call it the new industrial revolution or the biggest change since the internet, say it is inevitable, and conclude that the sensible response is to learn it rather than resist it. Medicine comes up most often as the field with the largest payoff, with mentions of AlphaFold, mRNA treatments, personalized medicine, and faster development of cancer drugs. A smaller group ties their view to national competitiveness and security, arguing that the United States must stay ahead of China and other countries and that AI will bring jobs and new business here.

Please describe the reasons why you have a favorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(*Asked to the 401 respondents who had a favorable opinion of AI*)

Favorable Toward AI With Conditions Attached: Many respondents qualify their favorable view before they finish the sentence. The most frequent condition is accuracy: answers sometimes hallucinate or draw on unvetted or skewed sources, so users double-check anything that matters. Next come calls for regulation, guardrails, watermarking AI-generated content, and liability for developers whose products cause harm.

Data center water and power use draws objections even within this favorable group, including from respondents who say they would pay more for AI if it spared the environment and from those who argue that closed-loop cooling systems still fall short. Other reservations include job losses, students leaning on it instead of learning, artists' work being used without permission, and military or government misuse, with several respondents saying they trust the tool more than the companies and politicians deploying it.

Artificial Intelligence Image Rating

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Water, Power, and the Environmental Cost of Data Centers: A clear majority of unfavorable respondents start by describing what it takes to run AI, and water comes up more than anything else. They describe data centers cooling servers with drinking water while Colorado is in a drought, with active wildfire seasons and farmers and ranchers already short on supply. Several object to siting facilities near aquifers or inside residential areas.

Electricity is the second complaint: strain on an already stressed grid, fossil-fuel generators brought in to cover the new load, higher carbon emissions, and the open land and wildlife habitat that large campuses consume. Many of these respondents call the trade absurd on its face, spending irreplaceable water and power so people can draft emails or generate pictures. A number say they would give up the technology entirely if the data centers went away with it.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Outsourced Thinking and Declining Skills: Close behind the environment, respondents believe technology is reshaping people's minds. They describe students turning in essays they didn't write, teachers and school staff watching kids cheat and stop working to learn, a decline in literacy, and adults reaching for a chatbot for every question instead of reading or reasoning it through. Several call it a crutch that lets the brain atrophy like an unused muscle, and some cite brain-scan studies and falling test scores.

The same respondents often add that generated writing and images flatten human creativity and make everything look and sound alike. A smaller group extends the harm to mental health: chatbots used as therapists or friends by young or vulnerable users, systems built to agree with whoever is typing, compulsive use, and what several respondents call AI psychosis.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Wrong Answers and a Product Forced on Everyone: A significant share do not trust what the tools produce. Respondents recount hallucinated facts, fabricated sources, travel itineraries built around non-existent dates, and answers delivered so confidently that errors slip past people who take the output as gospel; several say the required checking erases any time saved.

Customer service is a sore spot, with respondents describing phone systems and chat agents at companies like Wendy's and Amazon that loop and never hand off to a person. Many object that the technology is being pushed on them anyway: Gemini answers inserted at the top of Google searches, AI features switched on by default in software they already own, and opt-outs buried or missing.

Beyond individual errors, respondents worry about a public that can no longer tell generated images, video, and voices from real ones, about deepfakes and voice-cloning scams aimed at older residents, and about models that carry the political leanings of whoever trained them. A number draw a line between generative chatbots and image generators, which they see as useless, and narrower uses in medical research or cancer detection that they would accept.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

No Rules and No Trust in the People Running It: Some of the opposition is aimed less at the software than at the companies and the pace. Respondents describe an industry moving faster than anyone can measure the consequences, with no meaningful regulation, no liability when the output is wrong, and executives who admit the risks and build anyway; they point to social media as the precedent for what self-policing produces. Distrust of the billionaires and tech executives in charge runs through these responses, along with objections to wealth concentrating in a few firms while the costs land on everyone else.

Related concerns include surveillance and data scraping without consent, license-plate cameras and other police uses, military applications, and a speculative bubble that has already pushed up prices for memory chips and computer parts and could leave communities holding empty buildings when it bursts. Several want the infrastructure regulated as a public utility or partly owned by the state, and a few expect the technology to escape human control altogether.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Job Loss for Corporate Gain: Employment is the central concern among many respondents. They say companies use technology to cut staff rather than help existing workers, and that productivity gains go to shareholders instead of wages or shorter hours; some report being required to use tools at work that their employer is training to replace them. Entry-level and junior roles come up repeatedly, along with graphic design, writing and editing, customer service, and drive-through and retail work.

Several describe a hiring market already worsened by automated resume screening and by degrees chosen before 2022 for careers that have since thinned out. Respondents also note that a data center creates few permanent jobs once construction ends, and that no one has a plan for displaced workers.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Data Centers as Neighbors: Bills, Noise, and Local Approvals: The facilities themselves, rather than the technology, draw complaints from a meaningful minority. They cite a round-the-clock hum heard by nearby residents and livestock, light pollution, heat vented into the surrounding area, and the loss of farmland and ranchland. Rising residential electric bills recur throughout, with respondents arguing that Xcel Energy and other utilities are passing grid upgrades for industrial customers onto households, while tax abatements shift the public cost further onto residents.

Greeley is named as a city spending on big tech instead of local needs, and Garden of the Gods as a place no facility should go near. Several say local officials approve the projects over residents' objections, that nobody got to vote, and that a facility bringing a couple hundred jobs is not worth what it takes.

Please describe the reasons why you have an unfavorable opinion of artificial intelligence (AI).

(Asked to the 918 respondents who had an unfavorable opinion of AI)

Stolen Work: A meaningful minority, including respondents who identify as artists, authors, illustrators, and musicians, object that the models were trained on copyrighted art, writing, music, and scanned books without permission, credit, or payment, and that companies are now selling the results back while cutting the people whose work went in.

They describe generated art and music flooding online markets, search results, and publishing with low-quality imitations that displace human work, and some cite reports of physical books being destroyed to feed scanners. Related complaints cover the use of a person's face, voice, and likeness without consent, and sexual imagery of real people, including minors, generated without their knowledge.

Opinions on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence

Will the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in the following areas be positive or negative?

Will the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in the following areas be positive/negative/unsure?

	Total Positive	Total Negative	Equally Positive & Negative	No Opinion
Medical and Healthcare	40%	31%	21%	8%
How people do their jobs	24%	49%	24%	3%
Colorado businesses	23%	47%	20%	10%
Law enforcement	18%	61%	14%	7%
Higher Education (college)	16%	63%	17%	4%
The Colorado economy	16%	56%	15%	13%
The criminal justice system	16%	61%	14%	9%
K-12 Education	14%	65%	17%	4%
How people get news and information	14%	66%	16%	4%
Elections	9%	73%	11%	7%
Personal relationships	7%	71%	14%	8%
Social media	7%	74%	13%	6%

Opinions on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Job Market

In general, do you think the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) will create or eliminate jobs?

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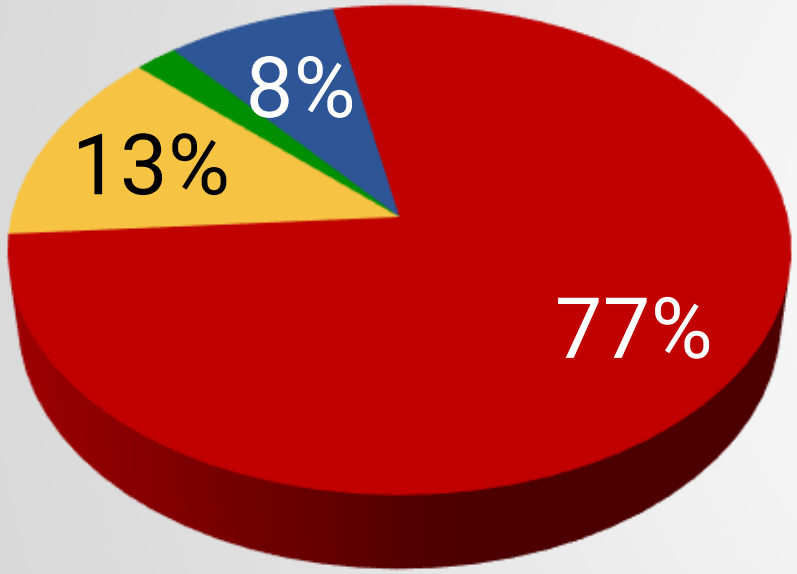
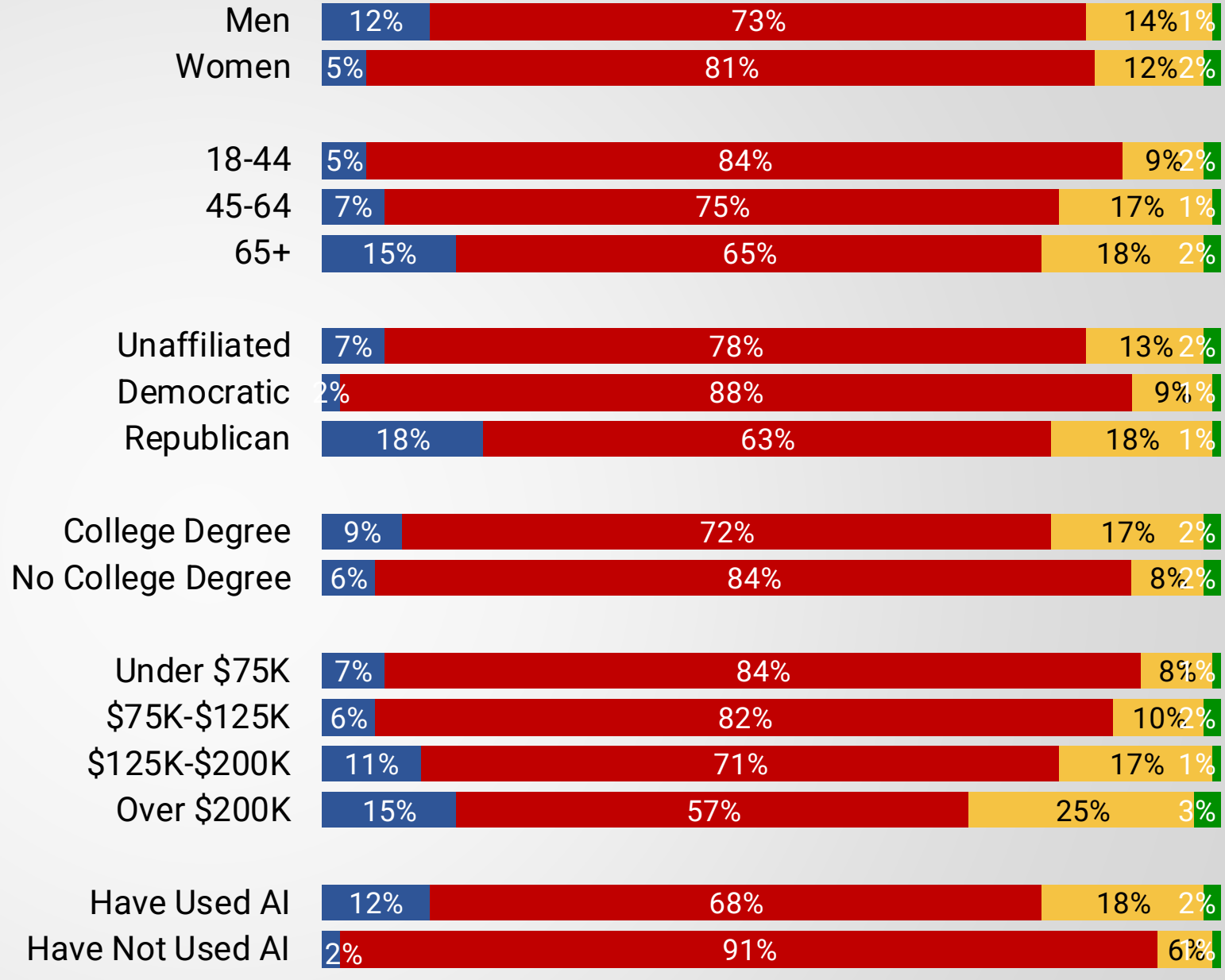


- Create Jobs
- Eliminate Jobs
- Equally Create & Eliminate
- No Opinion

Definitely Create	4%
Probably Create	4%
Definitely Eliminate	52%
Probably Eliminate	25%



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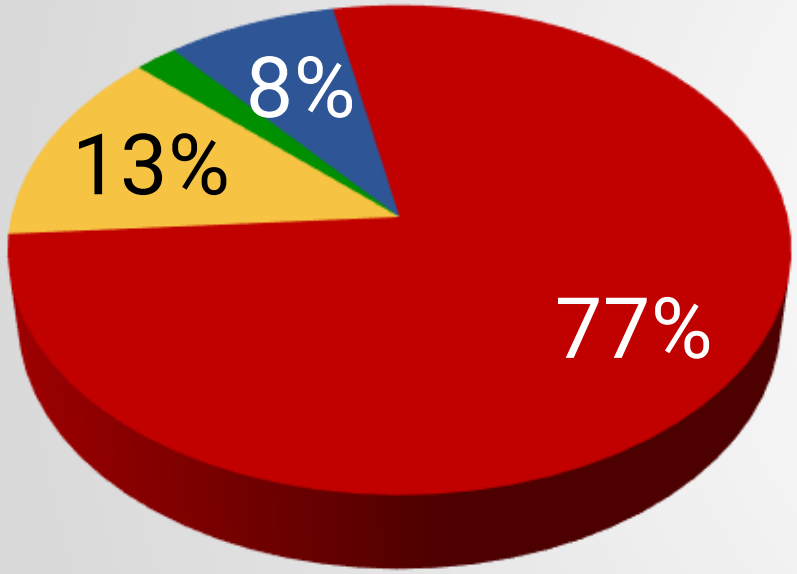

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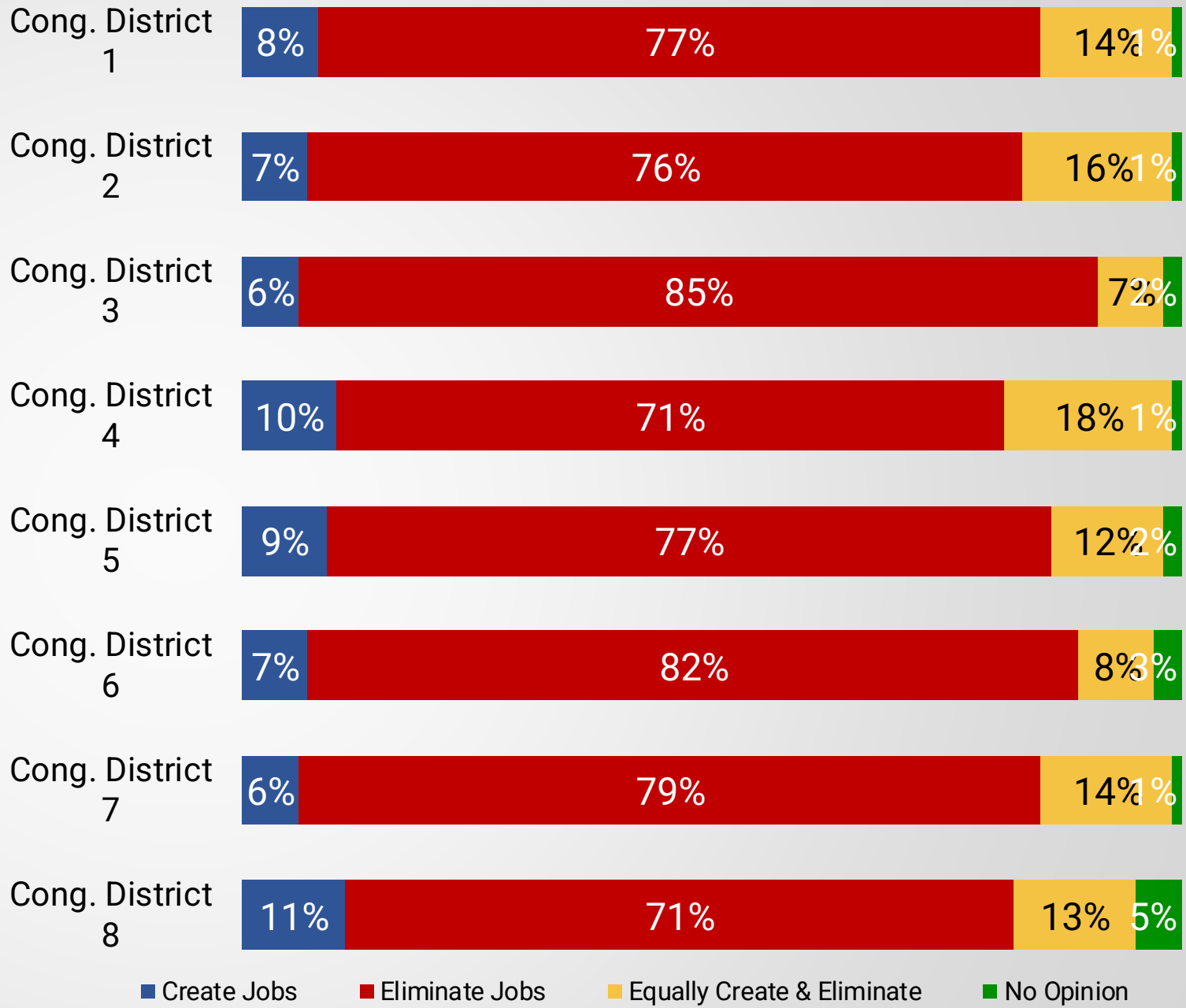

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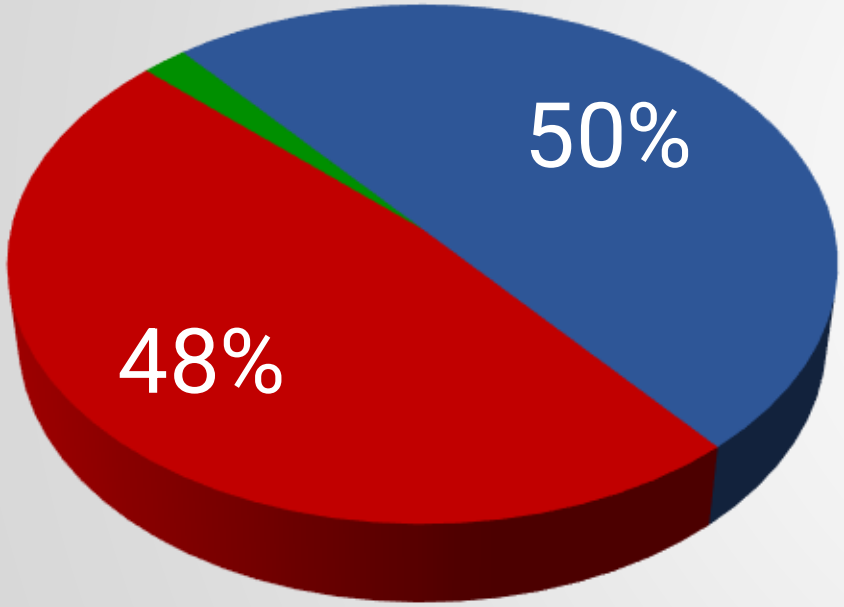
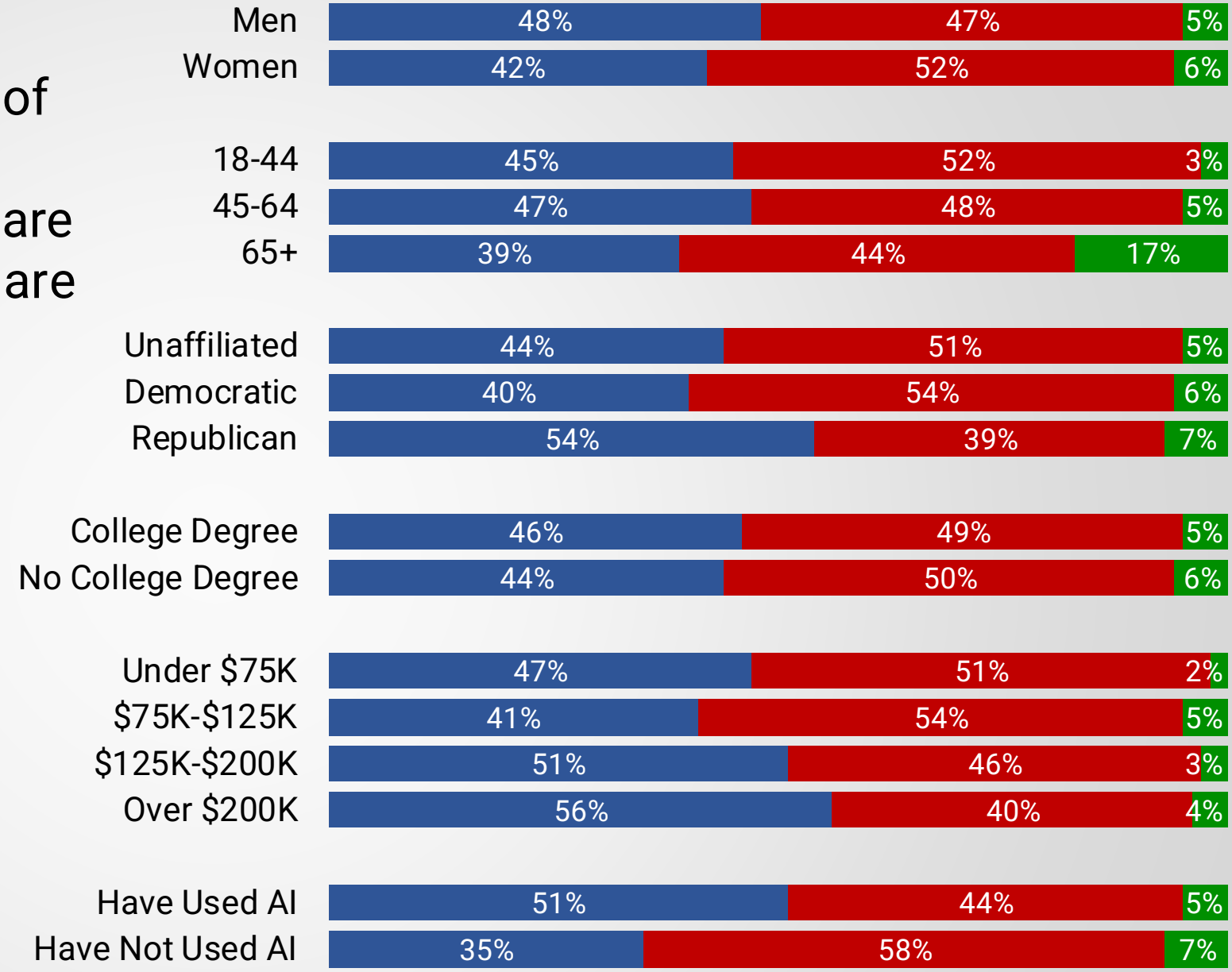
If you are employed, are you concerned at all that the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) will eliminate your job? (Percentages are among the 897 respondents who are employed)



- Not Concerned
- Concerned
- No Opinion

Very Concerned	15%
Somewhat Concerned	32%



Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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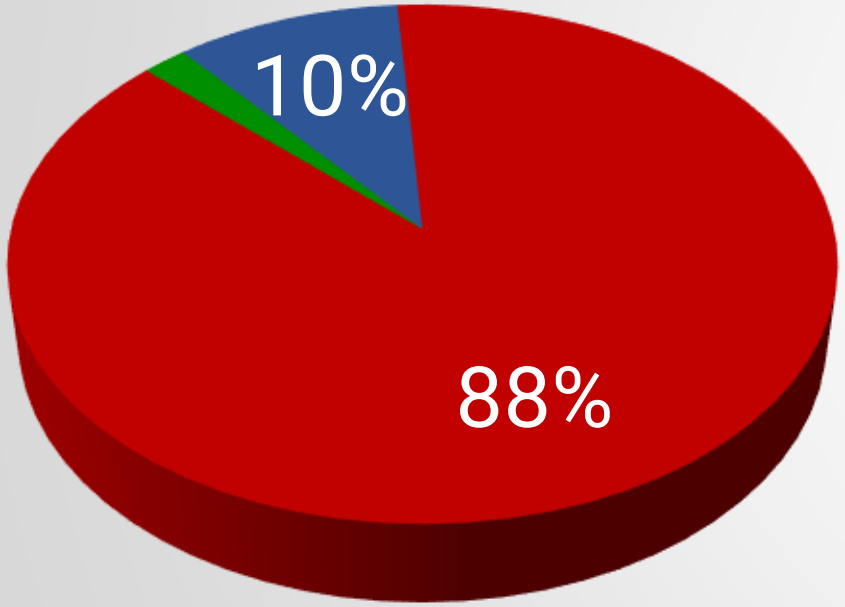
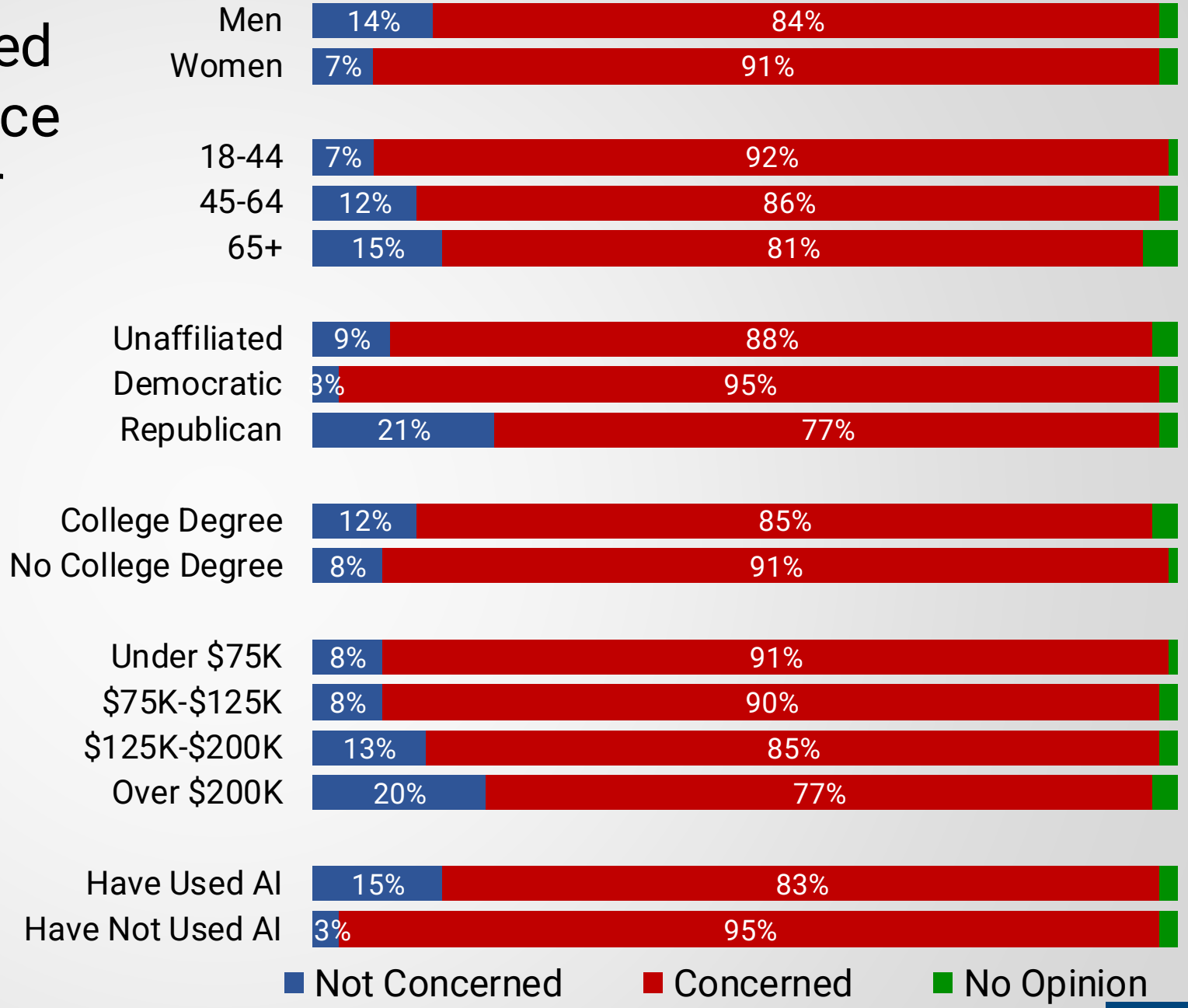
In general, are you concerned at all that artificial intelligence (AI) will eliminate jobs for future generations?



Not Concerned
Concerned
No Opinion

Very Concerned	59%
Somewhat Concerned	28%



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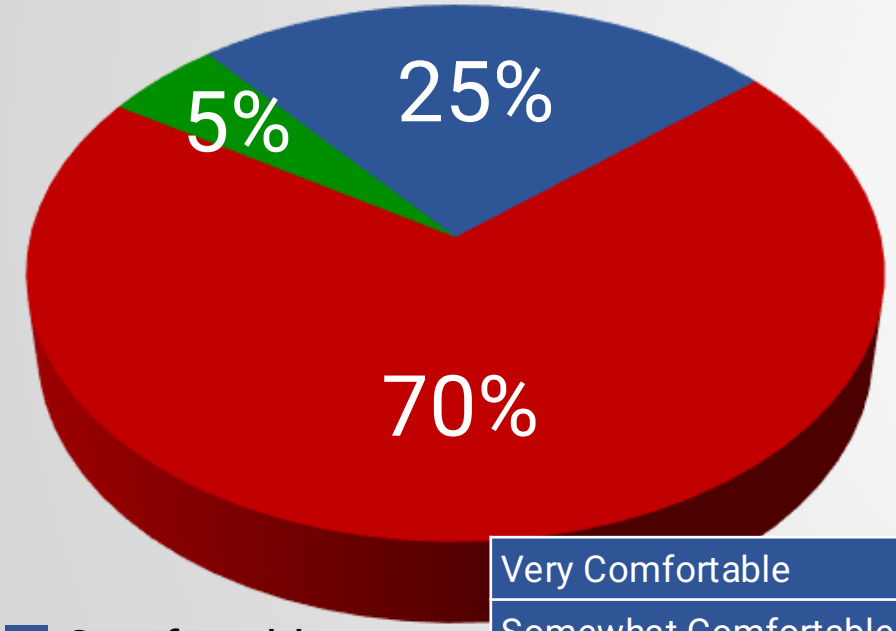
Opinions on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Government & Schools

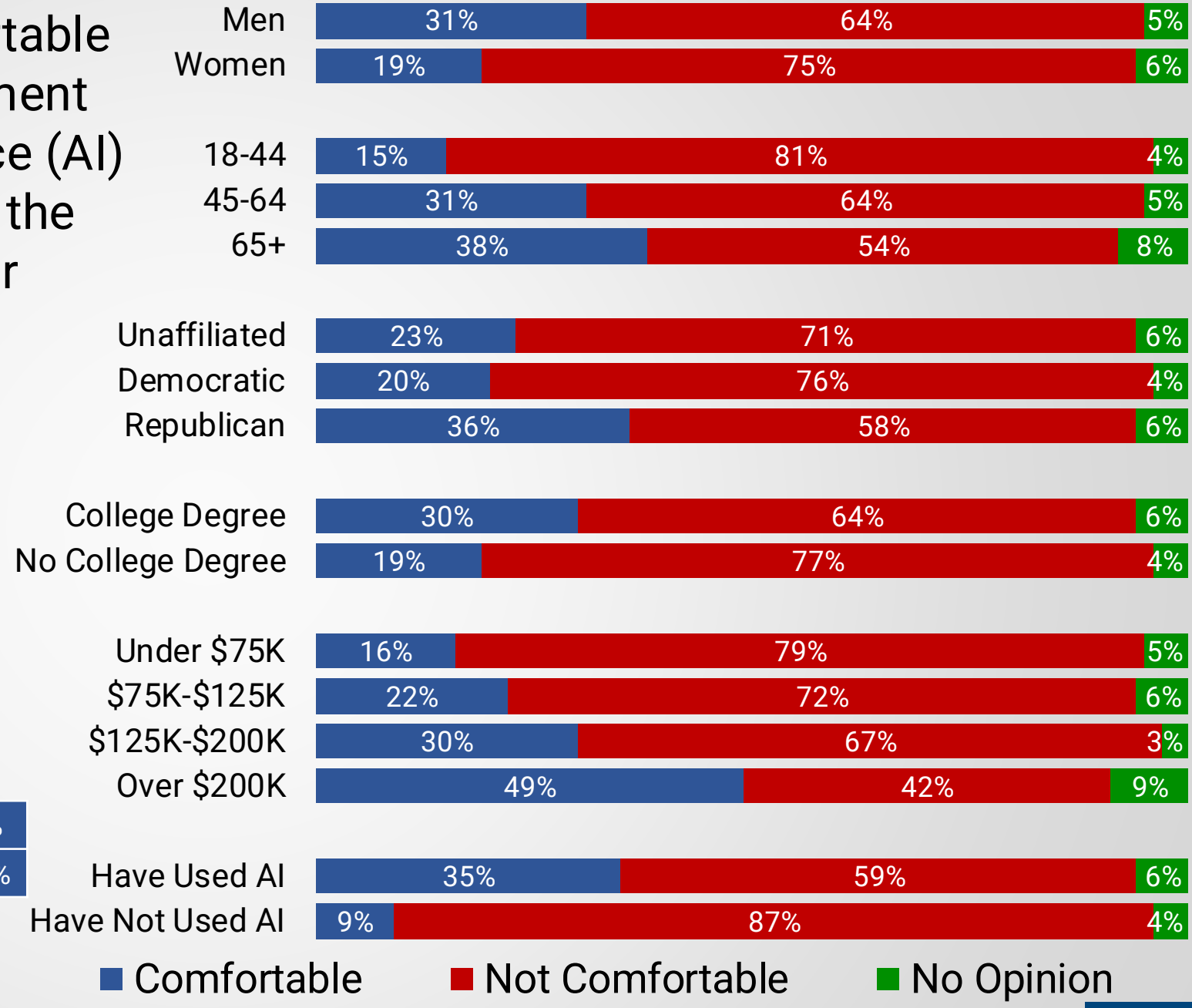
Generally speaking, how comfortable are you with your local government incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into its regular operations and the services they provide to your community?

Generally speaking, how comfortable are you with your local government incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into its regular operations and the services they provide to your community?



Very Comfortable	6%
Somewhat Comfortable	19%

Comfortable
Not Comfortable
No Opinion



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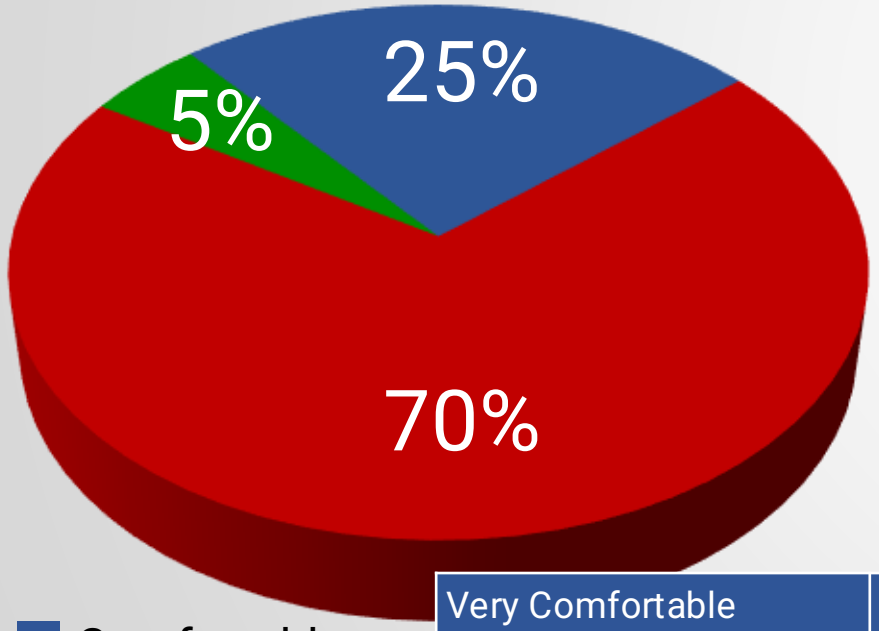
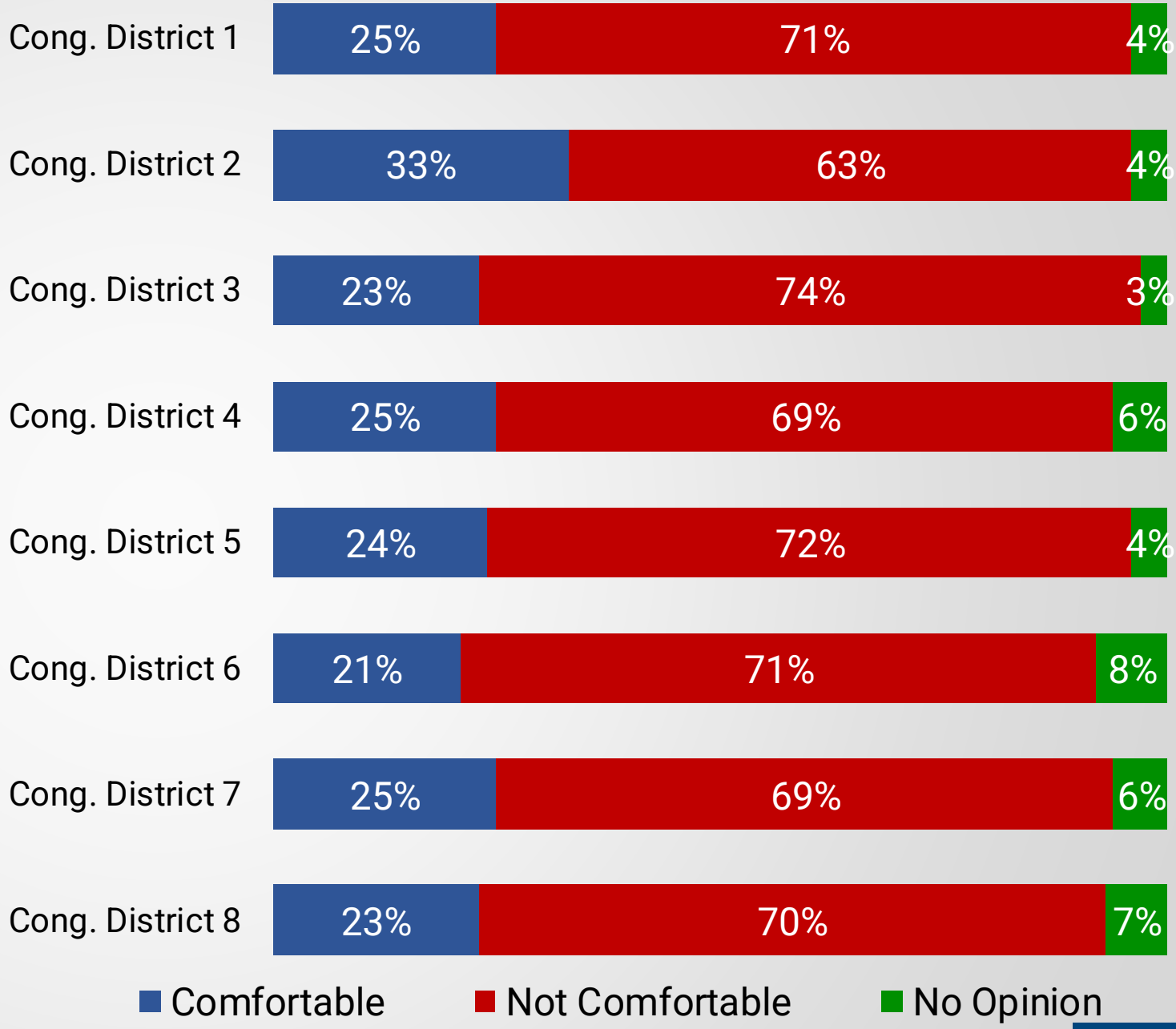
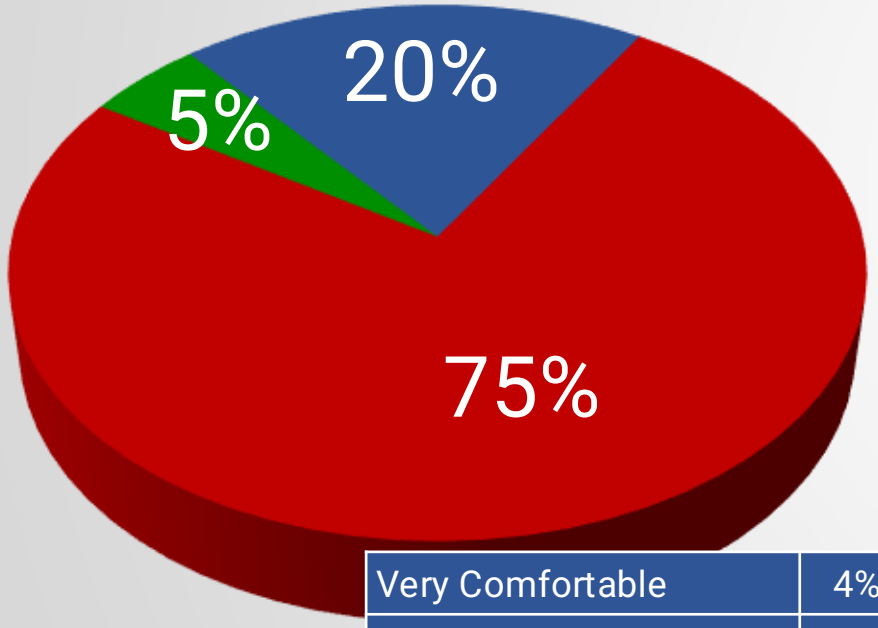


Very Comfortable	6%
Somewhat Comfortable	19%

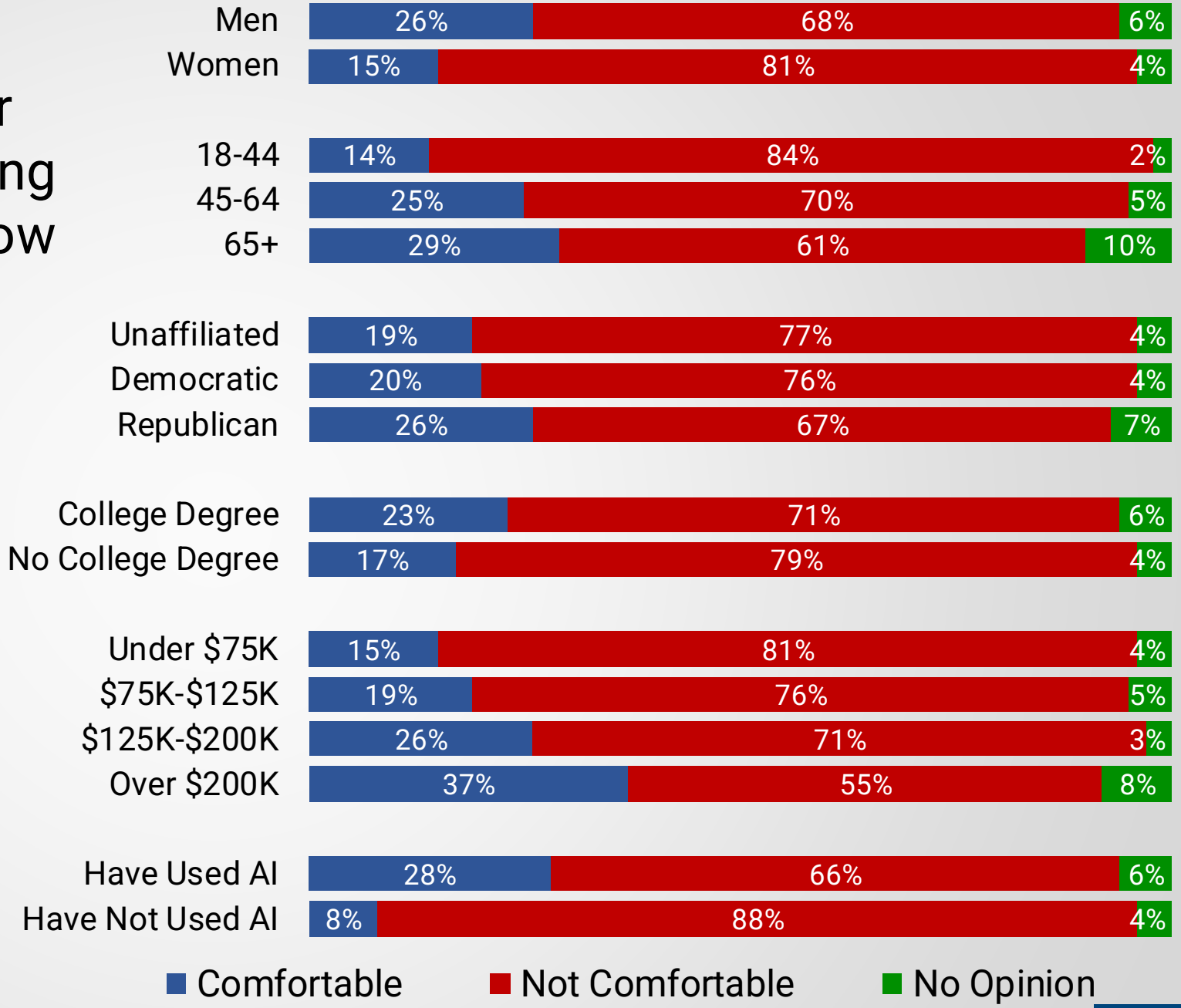


Generally speaking, how comfortable are you with your local school district incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into how it educates students?



Very Comfortable	4%
Somewhat Comfortable	16%

Comfortable
Not Comfortable
No Opinion



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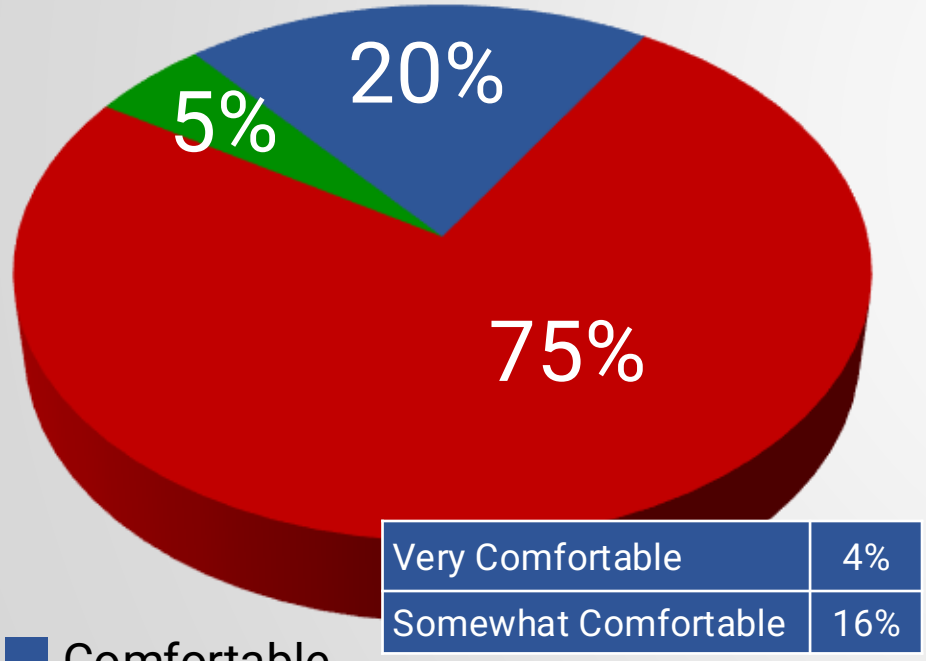
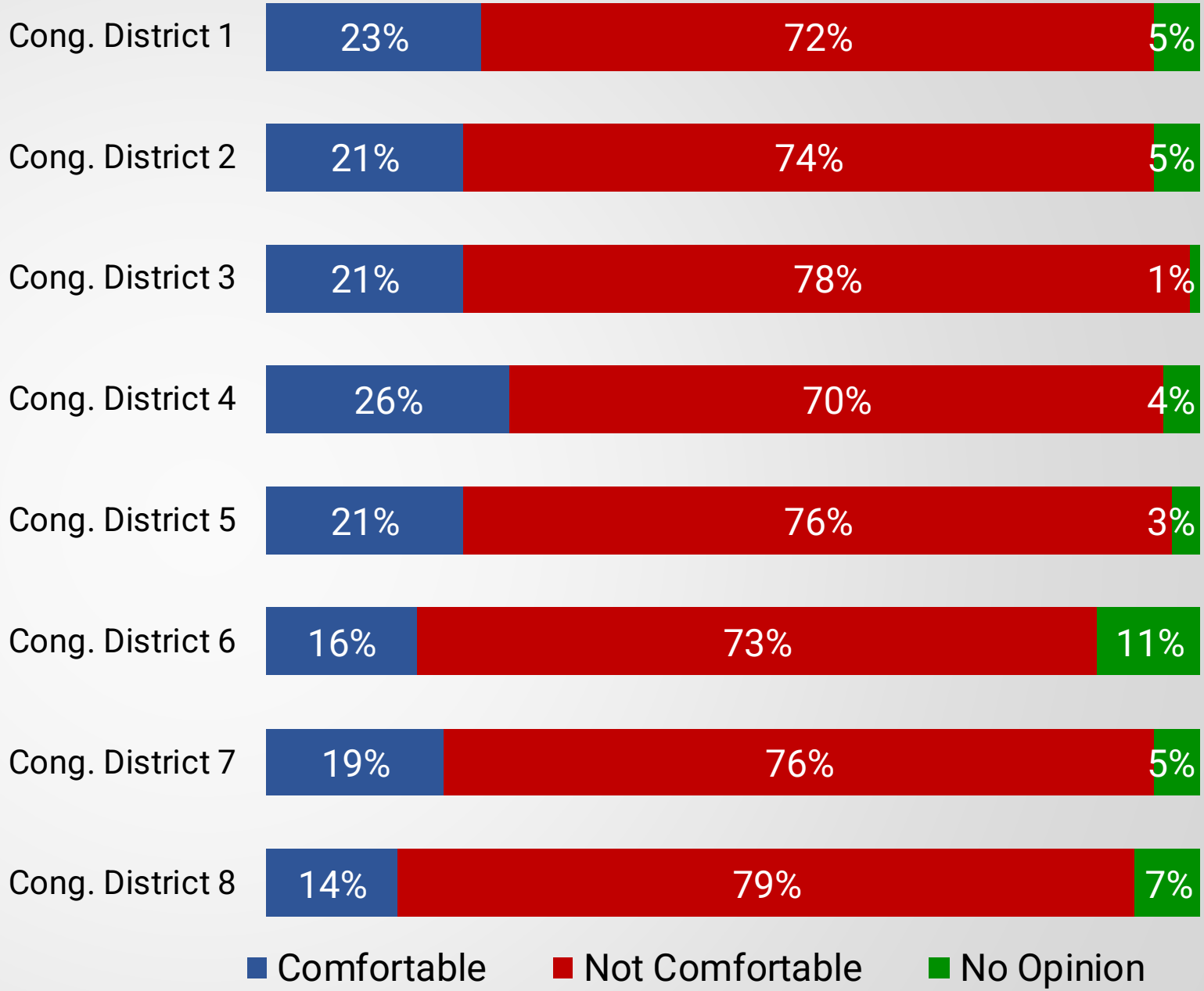




Artificial Intelligence Company Image Rating, Trust, & Competing With China

amazon

Google

Microsoft

OpenAI

ANTHROPIC

SPACEX

Meta

perplexity

Thinking now about companies that build, create, and manage AI tools. Please indicate if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following companies. If you do not know the company and have never heard of it, you can select that option as well. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of:

	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard Of
Google (Now Alphabet)	33%	66%	37%	1%
Microsoft	32%	68%	38%	0%
Amazon	29%	70%	46%	1%
Space X	26%	69%	55%	5%
OpenAI	23%	67%	47%	10%
Anthropic	18%	46%	32%	36%
Meta (Formerly Facebook)	12%	86%	66%	2%
Perplexity	9%	31%	23%	60%

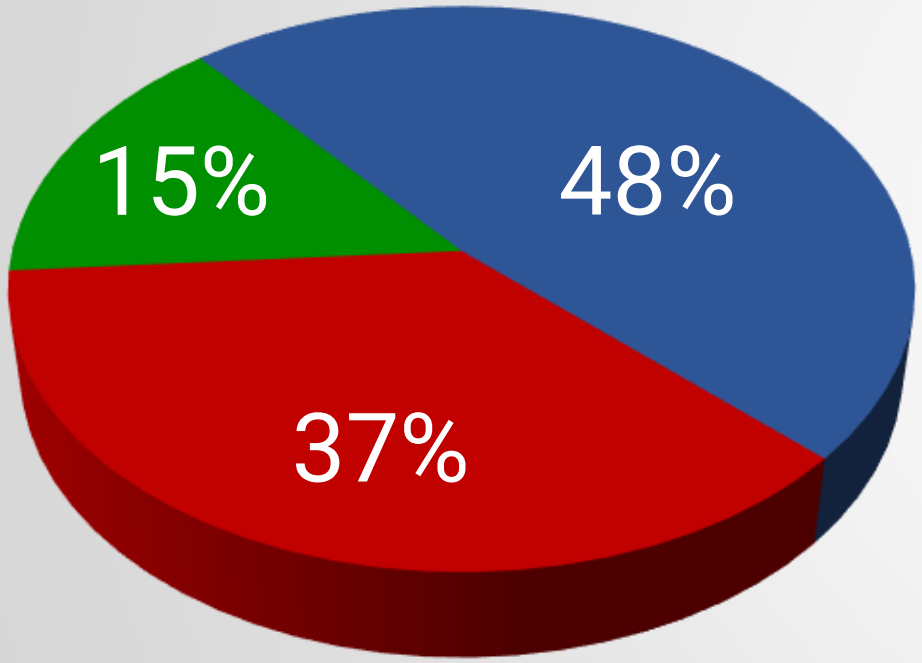
And do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following individuals?

	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard Of
Elon Musk	25%	74%	64%	1%
Jeff Bezos	15%	82%	62%	3%
Sam Altman	10%	61%	47%	29%
Mark Zuckerberg	8%	91%	68%	1%
Dario Amodei	7%	32%	25%	61%

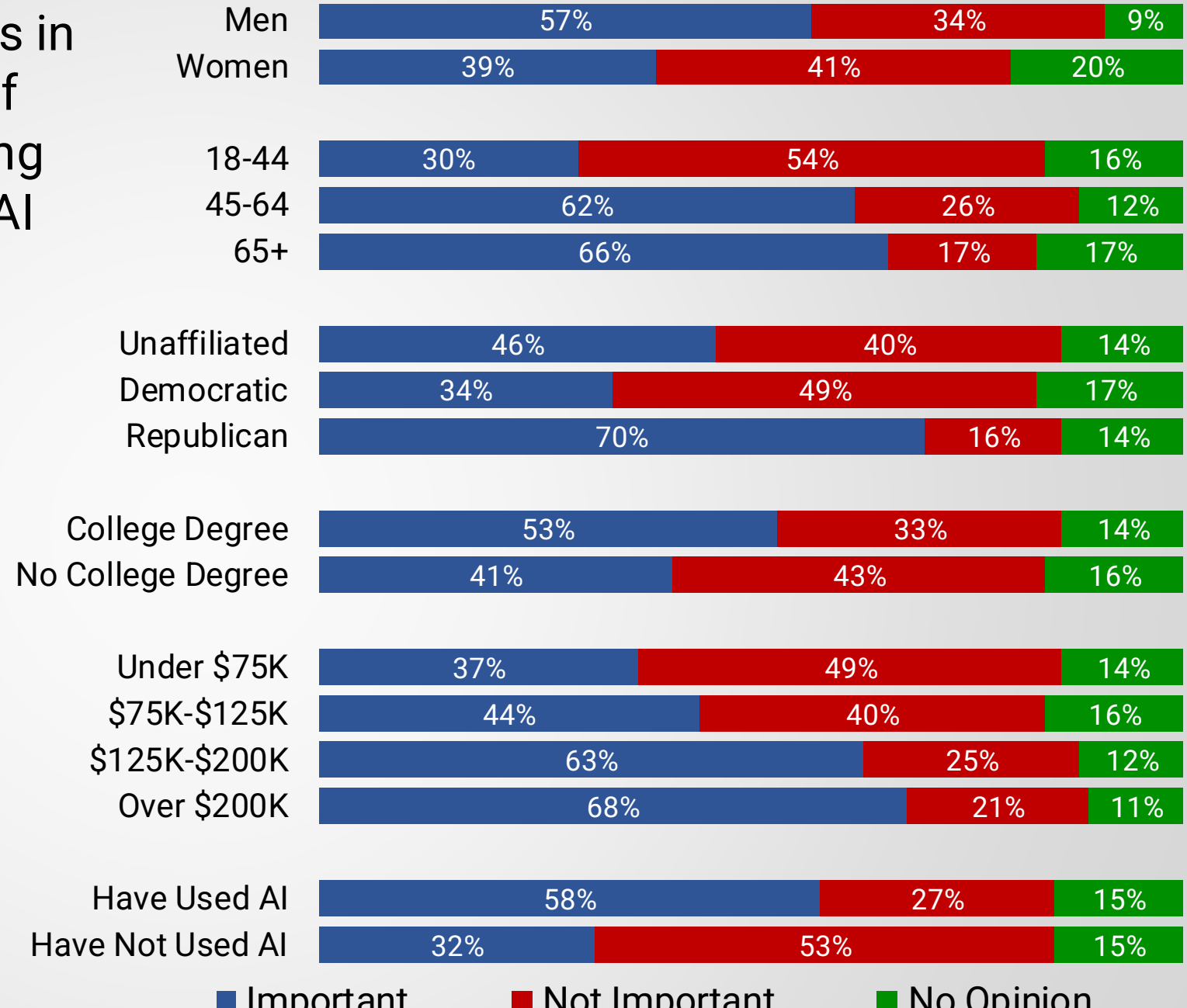
Do you trust companies to create AI tools that are:

	Yes	No	Unsure
Accurate and reliable	16%	71%	13%
Safe in general	15%	72%	13%
Free from discrimination	12%	77%	11%
Designed to prevent harmful uses	12%	77%	11%
Developed responsibly	12%	75%	13%
Respectful of users' privacy	11%	82%	7%
Honest about their dangers	11%	80%	9%
Accountable when something goes wrong	11%	80%	9%
Transparent	10%	80%	10%
Free from political bias	9%	83%	8%
Safe for children	8%	83%	9%

How important is it for AI companies in the United States to stay ahead of Chinese AI companies in developing the most advanced, cutting-edge AI models in the world?



Very Important	26%
Somewhat Important	22%



Important
Not Important
No Opinion

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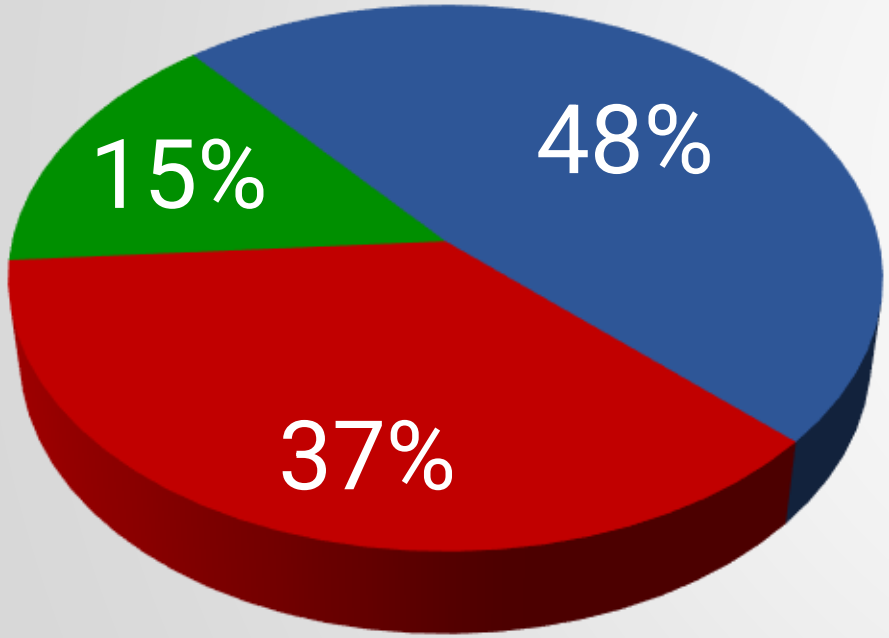
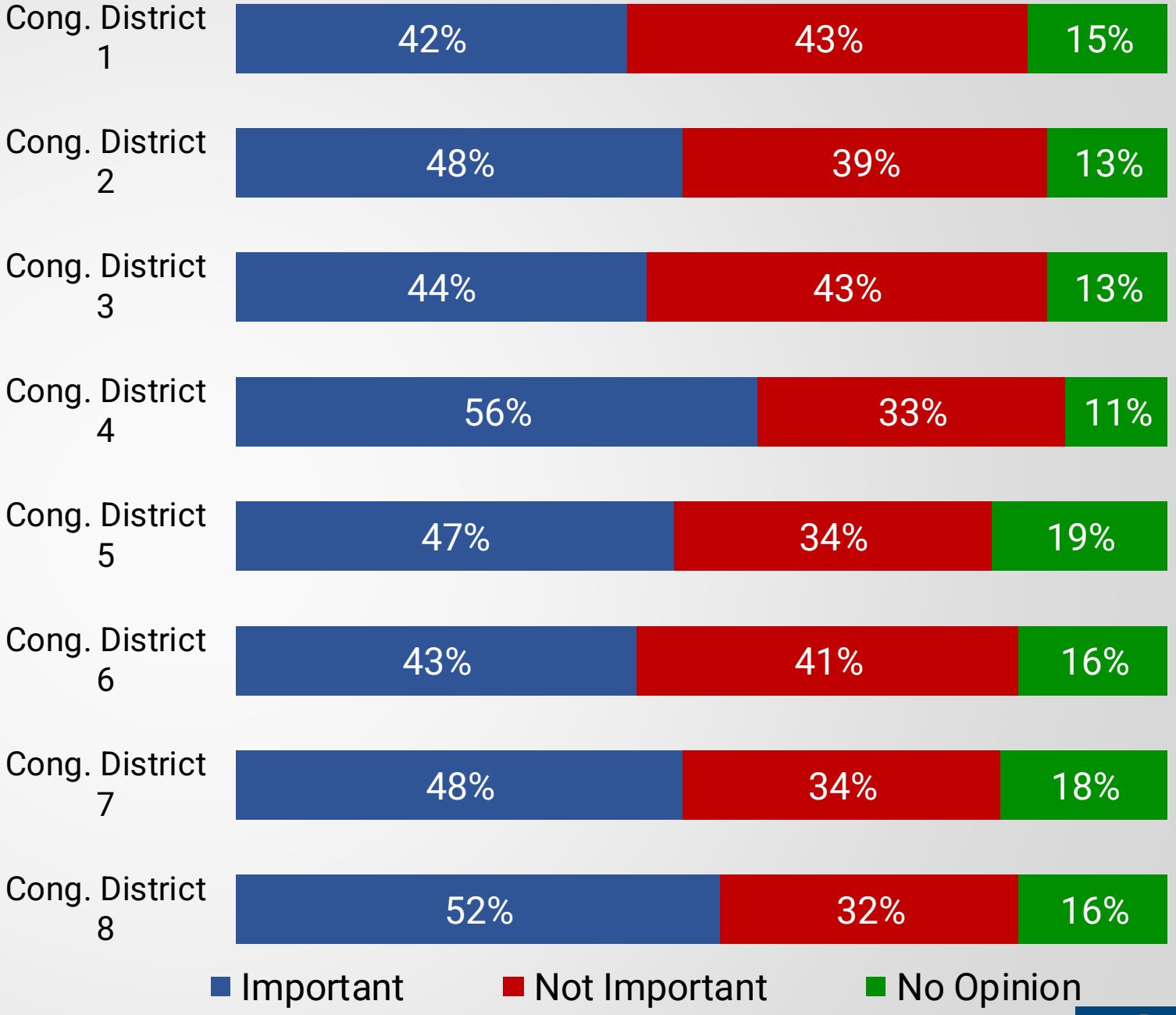
How important is it for AI companies in the United States to stay ahead of Chinese AI companies in developing the most advanced, cutting-edge AI models in the world?



- Important
- Not Important
- No Opinion

Very Important	26%
Somewhat Important	22%



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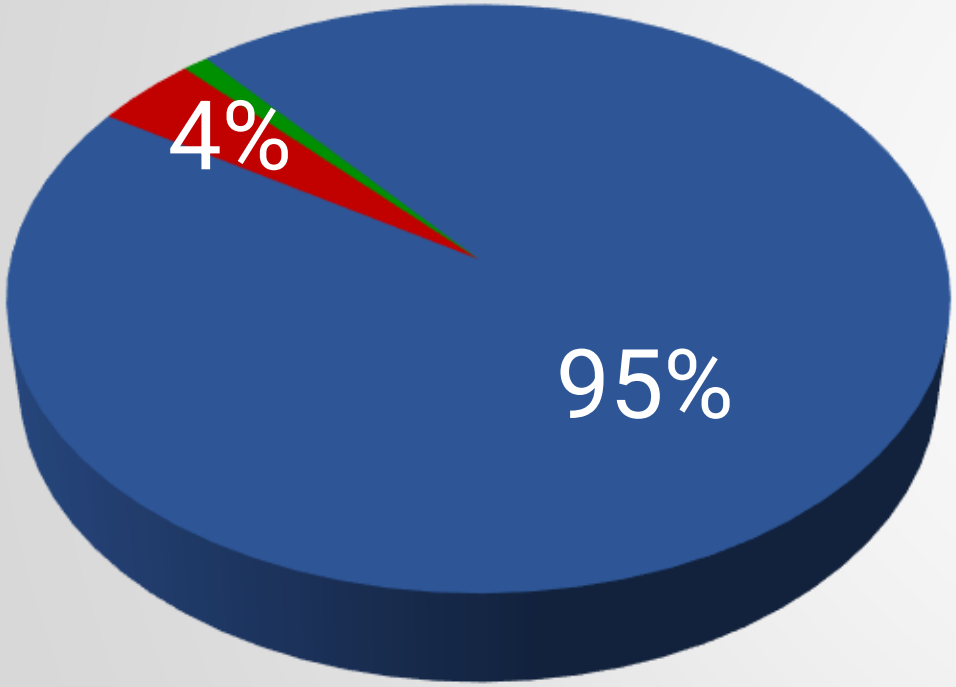
Coloradan Opinion on Data Centers

Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

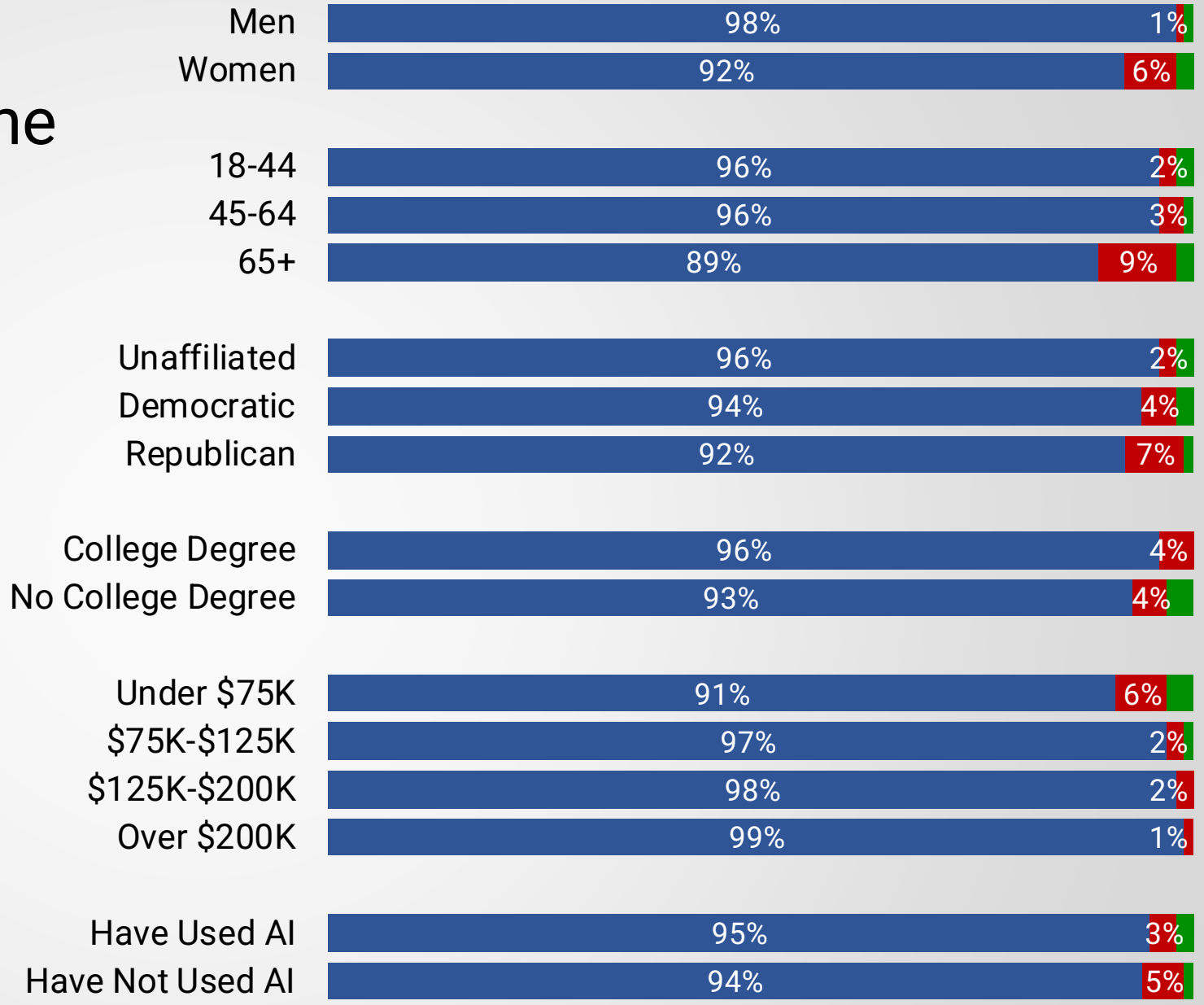
Magellan Strategies

How familiar are you with what "data centers" are — the large facilities that house computer servers?



Familiar
Not Familiar
No Opinion

Very Familiar	50%
Somewhat Familiar	44%



Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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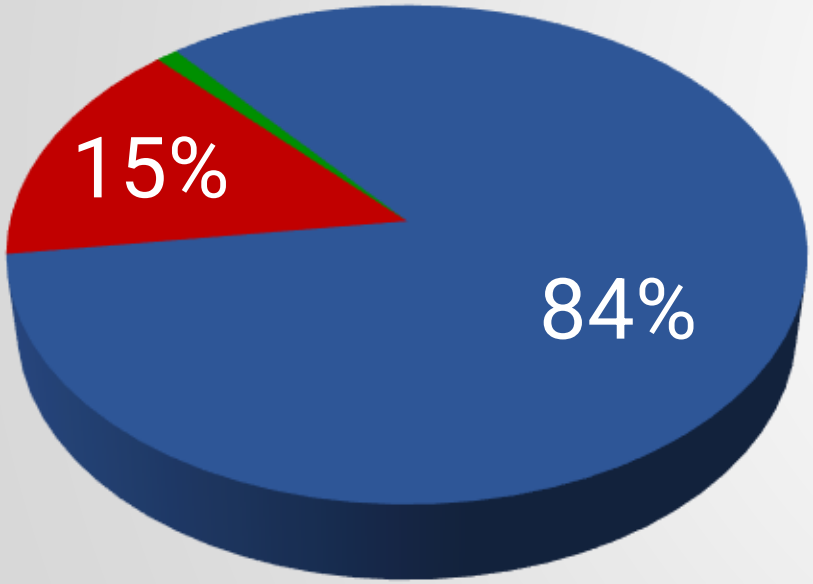
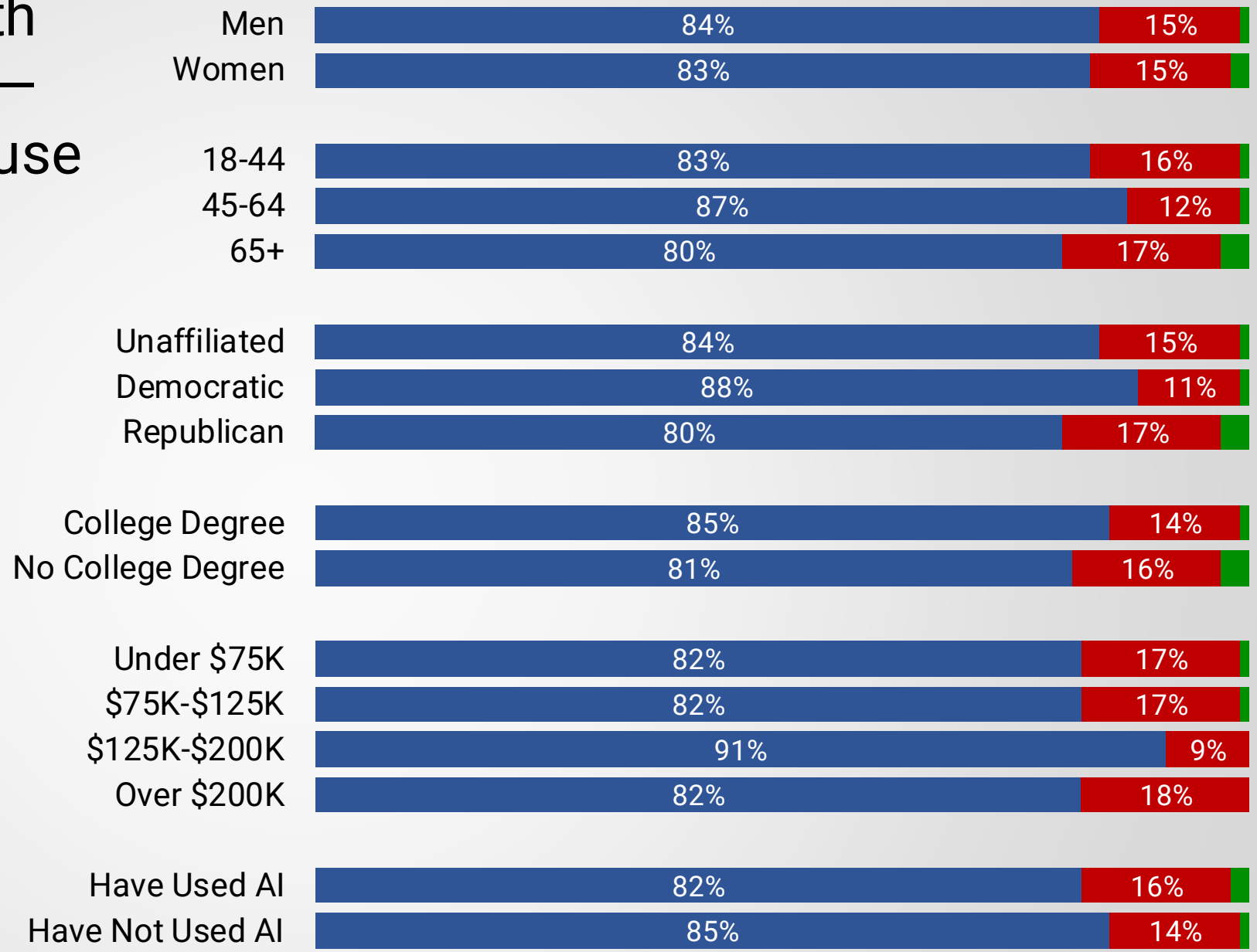
How familiar are you with what "data centers" are — the large facilities that house computer servers?

A Lot of Information	31%
Some Information	52%



- A Lot or Some Information
- No Information
- No Opinion



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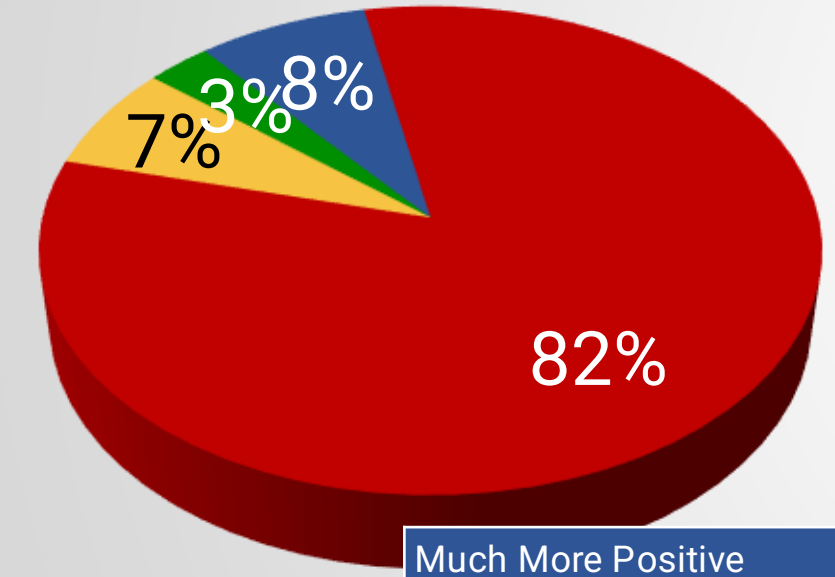
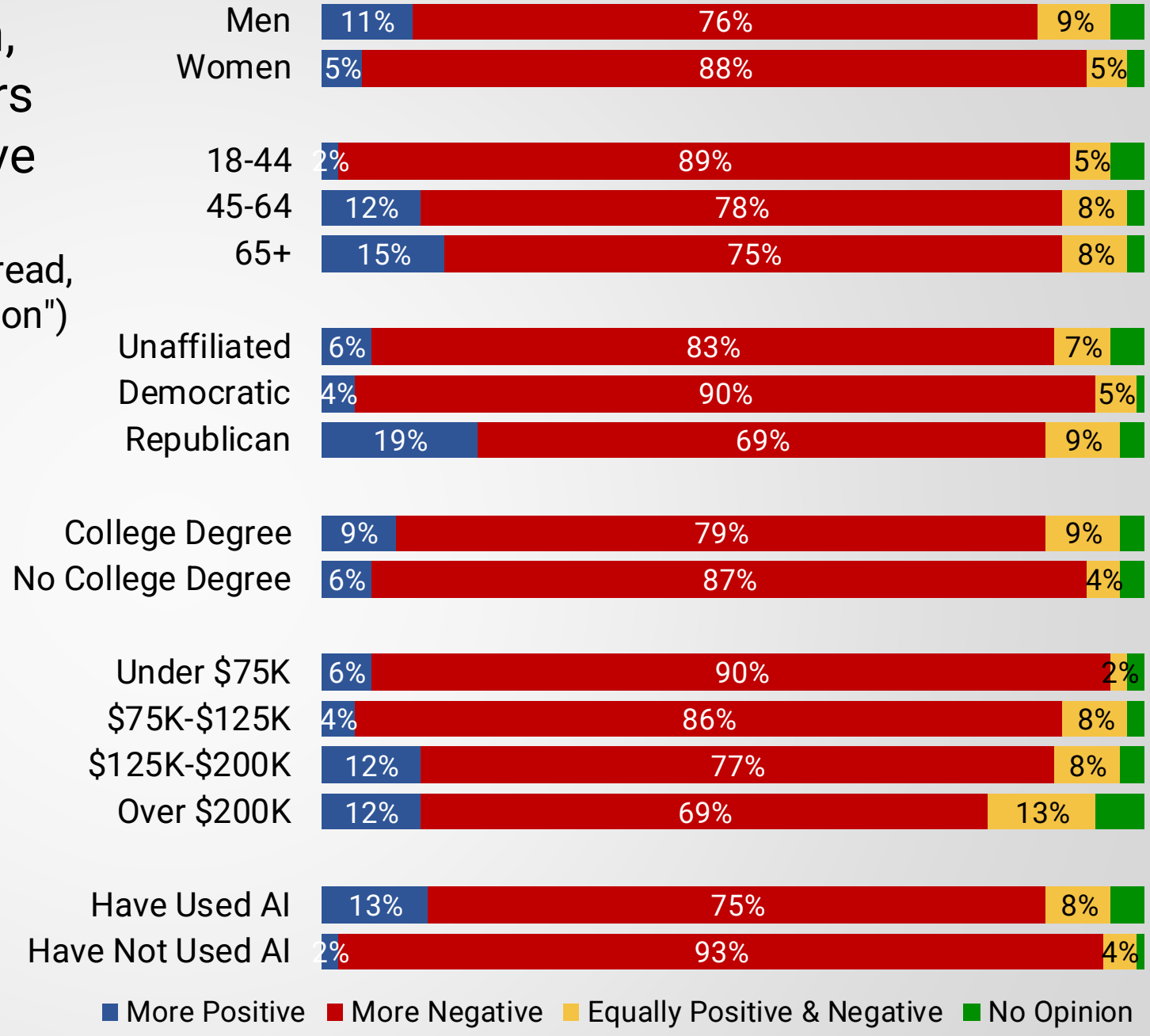
Has the information you have seen, read, or heard regarding data centers given you a more positive or negative opinion of them?

(Asked of the 1,162 respondents who have seen, read, or heard "A lot of information" or "Some information")



Much More Positive	3%
Somewhat More Positive	5%
Much More Negative	69%
Somewhat More Negative	14%



For the next few questions, when we say data centers, we mean large buildings that house computer servers used to store data and run online services, including artificial intelligence. Knowing this information, would you support or oppose the construction of a data center:

	Total Support	Total Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Unsure
In your state, but not close to home	22%	75%	64%	3%
In your County	20%	77%	68%	3%
In your city/town	16%	82%	77%	2%
Near your neighborhood	12%	86%	81%	2%

Coloradan Opinion on Data Centers

Reasons Why Some Coloradans Support a Data Center in Their City/Town

Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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Please describe the reasons why you would support the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 216 respondents who support building a data center in their city or town)

Jobs and Tax Revenue: Most respondents cite employment first, often listing nothing else. Those who elaborate separate the construction and trades work of the build phase from the technical and monitoring positions that follow, and describe the operating jobs as well paid by local standards. Tax revenue is the usual companion, with respondents expecting the added base to fund schools, roads, and county services, and some hoping it will lower homeowner property taxes or bring down residential electric, gas, and water bills.

A smaller group of respondents looked beyond the facility itself to business, hoping it would support local companies and attract skilled workers and their families. A few hope it nudges the next generation toward STEM and computer science. Not everyone is sold on the scale of the benefit: a few say the construction work is temporary and the permanent headcount small, or that jobs are the only upside they can think of.

Please describe the reasons why you would support the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 216 respondents who support building a data center in their city or town)

Inevitable Infrastructure With Room to Build: Many supporters treat the facility as something that will exist somewhere, and it might as well be here. They describe data centers as the next utility, comparable to broadband, power, or telephone service, and note that the buildings predate the AI boom and already sit throughout Colorado. Respondents who use AI, cloud storage, or their phones for everything say it would be inconsistent to want the service and refuse the machines that run it.

Others make a land argument: the open ground between the Front Range and Kansas, the plains, abandoned towns, and empty office campuses left behind by IBM, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, and Sun Microsystems are described as places waiting for a use. A few add practical payoffs: faster internet and lower latency for AI tools, disaster recovery by spreading facilities across regions, and the advances in medicine and engineering they expect AI to deliver.

Please describe the reasons why you would support the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 216 respondents who support building a data center in their city or town)

Keeping Pace With China and Neighboring States: Several respondents framed the facility as competition rather than local benefit. China came up most, with respondents describing AI capacity as a race the United States has to win and domestic data storage as a security question. A Colorado version of the same argument holds that Denver and the state are losing companies and talent to other states because of their business posture, and that turning away data centers would deepen that loss. Several put it more simply as a choice between moving forward and being left behind.

Please describe the reasons why you would support the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 216 respondents who support building a data center in their city or town)

Water and Power Fears Called Overblown: Some respondents support data centers in part because they believe the case against them is flawed. They cite closed-loop systems, refrigerant chillers, glycol coolant, and dry coolers to argue that Colorado facilities do not consume water as critics claim, and compare the figures in circulation to the water used to produce a hamburger or California almonds.

Some fault news coverage and social media memes for the alarm, a few call it a deliberate scare tactic, and one line of argument asks why Xcel Energy draws none of the criticism for power use that data centers do. A handful speak from experience, as an IBM retiree, a former data center product planner, or someone who researched the question independently, and expect solar mandates or future technology to handle whatever strain remains on the grid.

Please describe the reasons why you would support the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 216 respondents who support building a data center in their city or town)

Support With Strings Attached: Some support comes with conditions rather than as a blank endorsement. The most common condition is that the operator supplies its own power and water, pays its own way for infrastructure, and never pushes costs onto residential ratepayers; a few say their support ends the moment their utility bill rises.

Siting comes next: out on the outskirts, in industrial parks or manufacturing districts, in remote or even underground locations, and away from neighborhoods, schools, ranches, and farms. A few raise concerns about noise and visual impact, and some expect state and local regulation to enforce water and energy limits. A number put it more loosely, as support for responsible development, without spelling out what would break the deal.

Coloradan Opinion on Data Centers

Reasons Why Some Coloradans Oppose a Data Center in Their City/Town

Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

Water in a Drought State: A clear majority name water, and most of them say some version of the same thing: Colorado does not have it to spare. Respondents describe the worst drought on record, a summer of wildfires, dead lawns under watering restrictions, wells and reservoirs running low, and the Colorado River drying up while downstream states still draw from it. Many argue that people, farms, and ranches should have first claim, with Greeley farmland, orchard towns, irrigation in southwest Colorado, and the Summit County watershed that supplies Denver named in particular.

A smaller group disputes the industry's claims about closed-loop cooling, saying the systems still need secondary water and are chosen because they are the cheapest option. They also point to reports of contaminated wells, silt in aquifers, and households near existing facilities unable to flush toilets. Several say a facility that used gray water or no water at all would be a different conversation.

Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

Electric Rates and Grid Strain Paid for by Households: A significant share objects to the power draw and, more sharply, to who pays for it. Respondents expect their Xcel Energy or Black Hills Energy bills to rise to cover transmission upgrades and new generation for a single industrial customer. One respondent from the Colorado Springs area adds that Colorado Springs Utilities and Mountain View Electric give data centers discounted enterprise rates, while Hoover Dam prepares to cut generation as its water level drops.

Others describe a grid already prone to outages, homes already asked to curb use during peak demand, and new load met with gas plants or diesel backup generators. Tax abatements draw the same complaint: a respondent living near an existing facility says it produced sixteen jobs and no tax payments for thirty-nine years, and many say a company earning record profits should pay its own utilities and infrastructure without public assistance.

Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

Noise, Heat, Light, and Health Next Door: Respondents describe the constant sound most vividly, comparing it to a 737 idling, a vacuum running in the ear, or a high-pitched whine heard for miles that never stops at night. People who moved to rural areas or small mountain towns for quiet say a data center would defeat the reason they came. Waste heat and warmer neighborhoods, around-the-clock lighting, construction and truck traffic, and falling home values follow.

A number of respondents raise health concerns: infrasound and electromagnetic fields, headaches and lost sleep, cancer claims from other states, and effects on livestock, bees, and nocturnal wildlife. A few identify themselves as electricians or data center engineers and say the noise from generators and heat rejection is real and that the buildings belong far from homes, as refineries and factories do.

Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

Farmland, Open Space, and Colorado's Scenery: Concerns about what the buildings would replace and how they would look bother a significant share. Respondents describe windowless industrial boxes that do not belong in mountain communities, on the Eastern Plains, near Garden of the Gods, or on Weld County farmland, and several say their town simply has no buildable room.

Wildlife displacement, habitat loss, and the conversion of public land and working farms come up repeatedly, along with the view that the same land and water should go to housing, schools, parks, or a grocery store. A minority accepts that the facilities have to go somewhere and offers alternatives: outside city limits in industrial zones, on military bases, near coasts or nuclear plants, in the Midwest, in empty existing buildings, or underwater, as they understand China is doing.

Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

Few Jobs, Profits Elsewhere, and a Possible Bubble: A meaningful minority reject the economic case on its own terms. Respondents estimate permanent staffing at five, sixteen, twenty, or fifty jobs; say construction crews are traveling specialists rather than local workers; and conclude that the headcount cannot justify the land, water, and power consumed. Many frame the deal as billionaires and hyperscalers extracting value from a community that bears the costs, and a smaller group questions whether the facilities will still be running in ten years, raising concerns about Detroit, obsolete hardware, and an AI bubble that could leave the town holding an empty shell, with a request that developers post an escrow account to cover cleanup. Running alongside this is opposition to AI itself: respondents say they would fight a data center anywhere because they object to generative AI, its errors, its effect on students, and the jobs it will replace.

Please describe the reasons why you would oppose the construction of a data center in your city/town.

(Asked to the 1,137 respondents who oppose building a data center in their city or town)

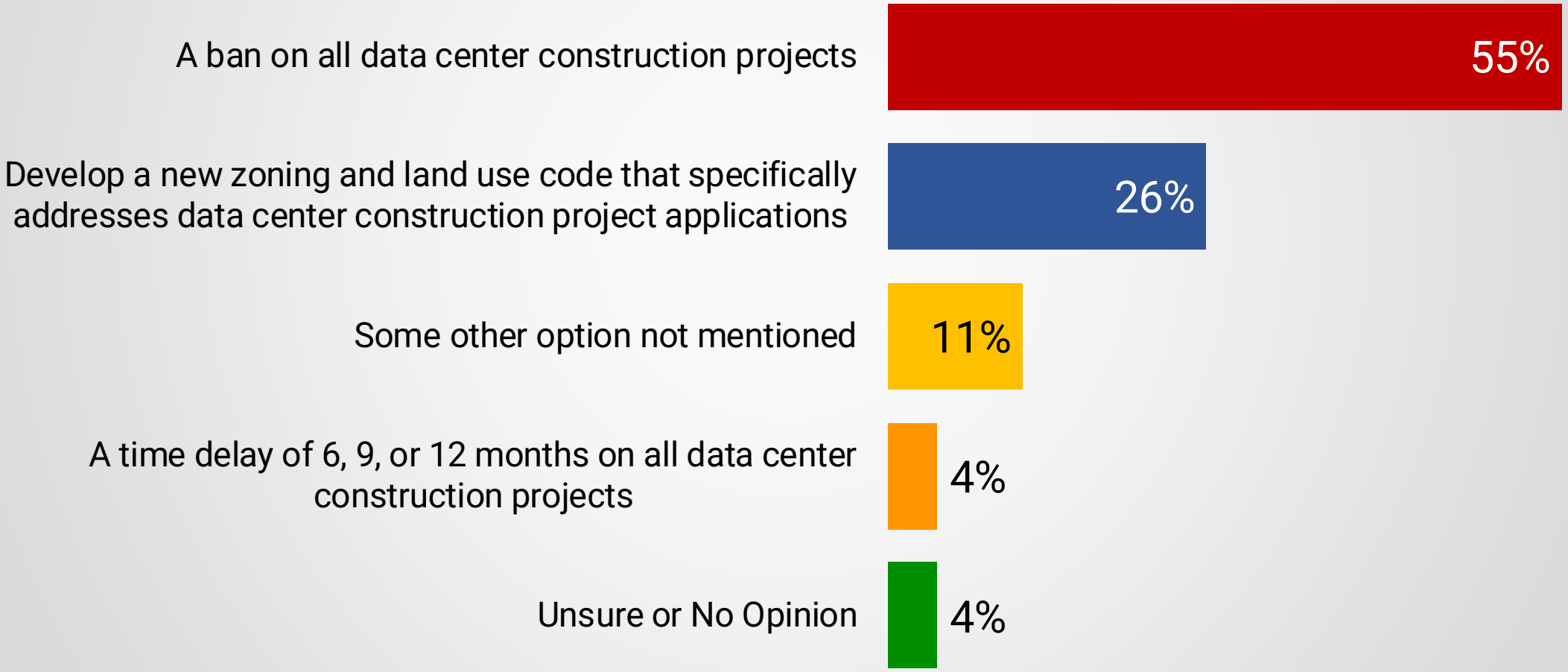
Distrust of Developers, Officials, and the Absence of Rules: Process and accountability are the core grievance for a meaningful minority. Respondents say companies understate water and power use, sign non-disclosure agreements with local governments, make closed-loop and noise-mitigation promises they later abandon as too expensive, and sue towns that try to stop them.

Local officials receive the same treatment: the Colorado Springs mayor and city council for failing to adopt ordinances on noise, light, water, and energy; a city council planning commission that approved a project opposed by everyone else; and the former Kodak site in Weld County, where construction continued despite three stop-work orders for missing permits. Many note that Colorado has no statewide regulation of data centers and that no one voted on any of this. A small group ties the buildout to Flock license-plate cameras and mass surveillance and says the facilities' real purpose has not been disclosed.

Coloradan Opinion on Local Data Center Land Use & Construction Policies

Among the following options, which one do you think is the best path forward for your own community if a data center construction project were under consideration?

As you may know, many local governments in Colorado are deciding the best path forward for their communities regarding data center construction projects. Among the following options, which one do you think is the best path forward for your own community if a data center construction project were under consideration?



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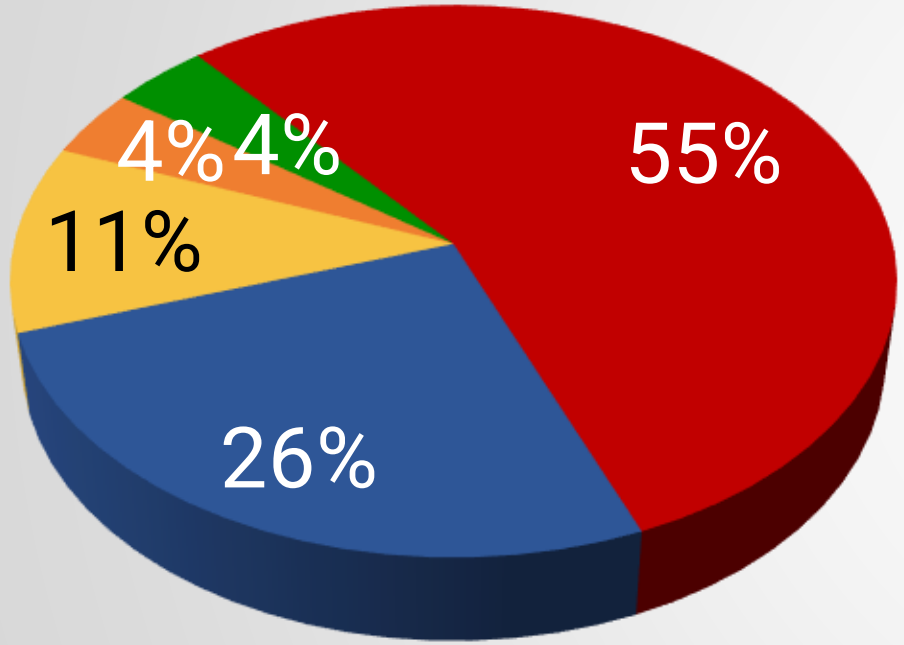
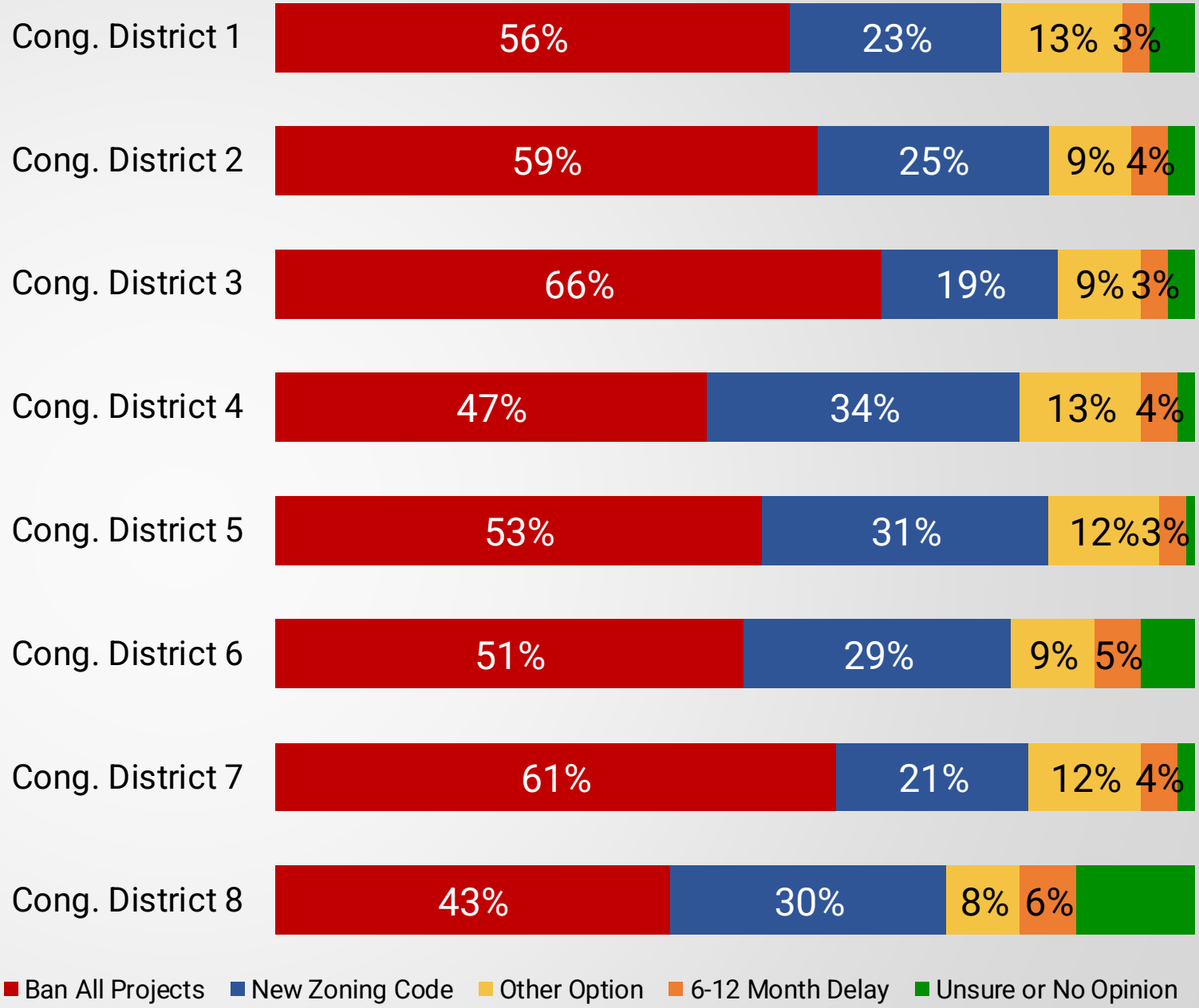
As you may know, many local governments in Colorado are deciding the best path forward for their communities regarding data center construction projects. Among the following options, which one do you think is the best path forward for your own community if a data center construction project were under consideration?





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Responses to “Some Other Option Not Mentioned”

Approve Only if the Facility Pays Its Own Way on Water and Power: The most common alternative is conditional approval: a data center can be built if it supplies or pays for its own electricity and water and leaves residential utility bills untouched. Respondents outline the conditions they have in mind, including on-site solar, geothermal, hydrogen, or small nuclear generation; closed-loop or recycled wastewater cooling instead of fresh water; no draw on the Colorado River; and per-gallon pricing that rises with consumption.

Several want money to flow the other way as well, through local taxes on the operator, a performance deposit, a fund that lowers residents' power costs, or a contract that returns to the city and county for review every twelve months. Refusing tax breaks and incentives comes up repeatedly, and a couple of respondents would add limits on what the facility may do, such as no surveillance or military work.

Responses to “Some Other Option Not Mentioned”

Slow It Down: Longer Moratoriums, Impact Studies, and a Public Vote: Rather than a six- to twelve-month delay, these respondents want the pause to run longer or end only when something specific happens. Suggestions include a two-year or three-to-five-year moratorium, a halt until the drought is over, an indefinite delay until new zoning and land use codes are adopted, and a freeze while the state studies the effects of data centers elsewhere and sends representatives to communities that already host them.

Some respondents would put each project to a yes-or-no vote by the people in the affected district, or require public hearings, an independent impact statement, and a cost-benefit analysis covering water, power, noise, and long-term expansion before any approval. Some in this group combine the listed options, asking for a moratorium followed by zoning and, if the findings warrant it, a ban.

Responses to “Some Other Option Not Mentioned”

Keep Them Away From Homes and Water, or Out of Colorado: Several respondents accept data centers only in certain locations. Proposals include a fifty-mile buffer from homes, schools, and parks; siting in remote deserts with no aquifers; underground construction; reusing vacant office and tech buildings instead of farmland; and classifying data centers as heavy industry, like a concrete plant, rather than light industrial. One respondent would ban them throughout the Colorado River watershed because of the reservoir crisis; others would keep them clear of the I-25 and I-70 corridors or require them to be silent and out of sight. A smaller group said the state is the wrong place: build them east, where water is cheaper, or don't build them anywhere.

Treat Them Like Any Other Business: A number of respondents reject all three listed options because they want no data-center-specific rules. They would let the county planning board run its normal permitting and conditional-use process, allow construction in any zone that already permits industrial development, and impose nothing on data centers that is not imposed on a factory or warehouse. A few go further, saying Colorado should welcome data centers with tax incentives rather than restrictions, and a few object to the question for offering only limits.

Coloradan Opinion Regarding Data Center Statements

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

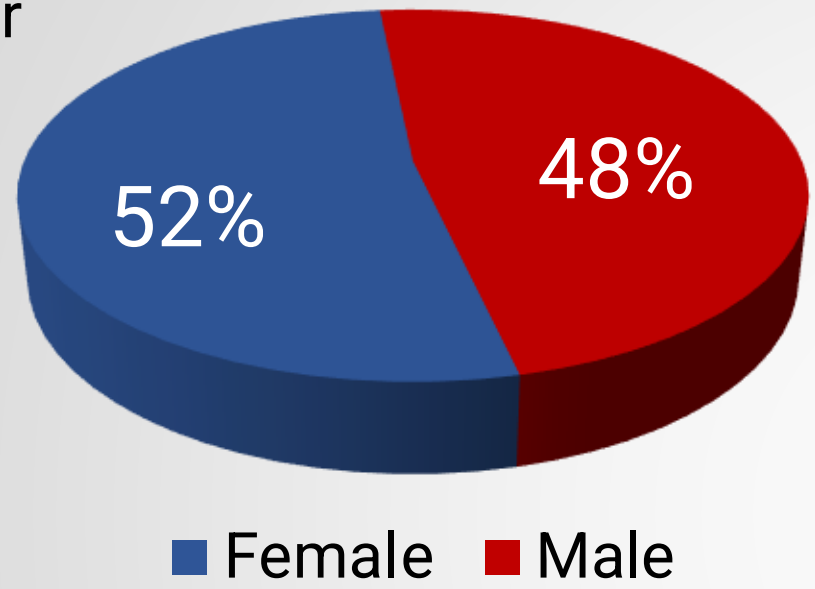
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Total Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure / No Opinion
Data centers put too much strain on the local power grid.	83%	69%	9%	5%	8%
Data centers use too much water.	82%	72%	11%	6%	7%
Data centers drive up electricity costs for nearby households.	78%	64%	9%	4%	13%
Data centers are noisy.	62%	48%	10%	4%	28%
Data centers are essential for the future.	30%	15%	62%	48%	8%
Data centers bring in significant tax revenue for the local community.	20%	8%	57%	46%	23%
Data centers bring long-term, high-paying permanent jobs to the local community.	19%	7%	68%	55%	13%
The benefits of data centers to the local economy outweigh their impact on the community.	16%	9%	77%	69%	7%
Local governments should offer tax incentives for data centers.	12%	6%	75%	68%	13%

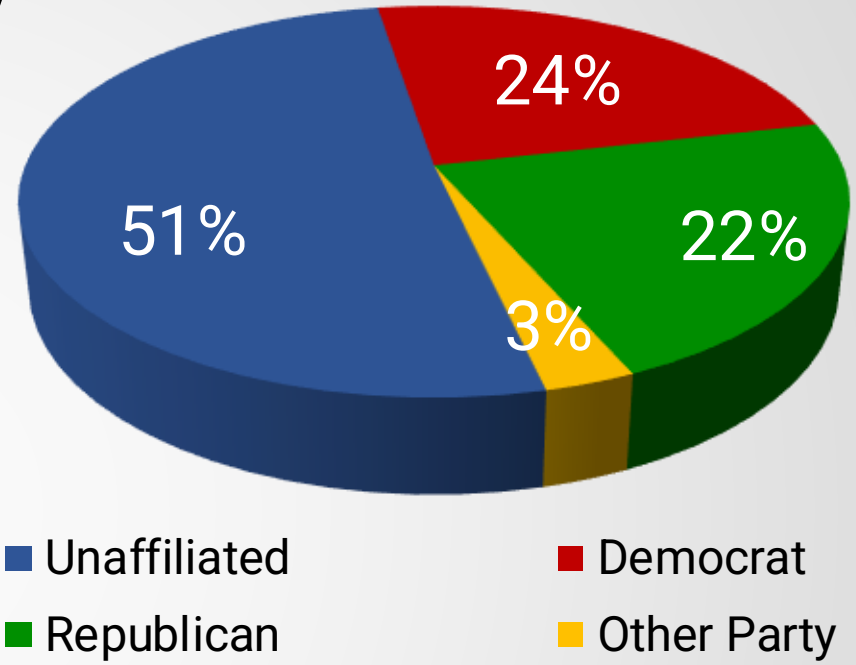
Survey Demographics

Survey Demographics

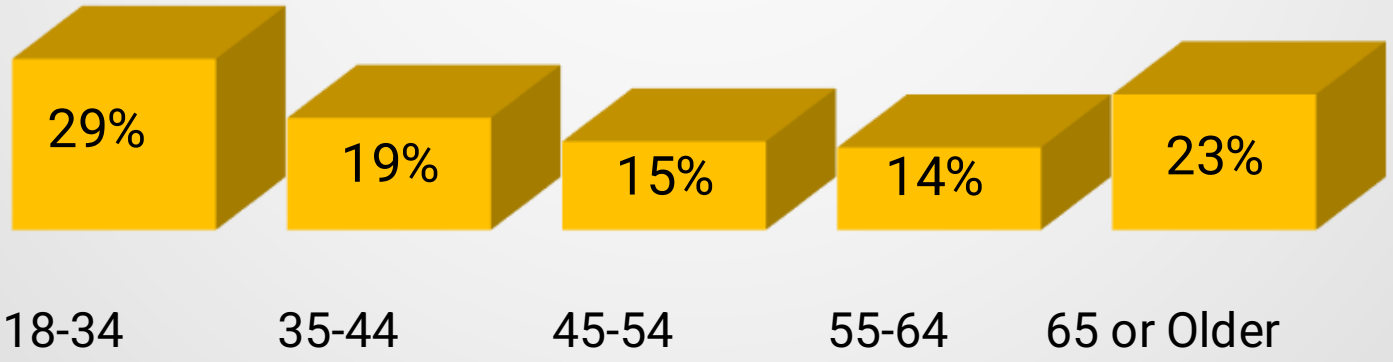
Gender



Party



Age Range



Colorado 2026 AI & Data Center Opinion Survey, August 2026, 1,389n, +/- 2.63% MoE

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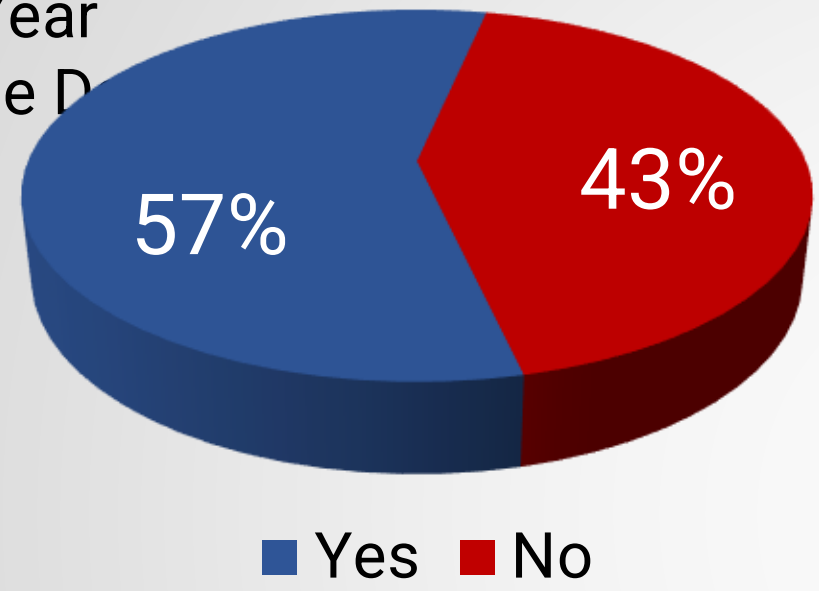
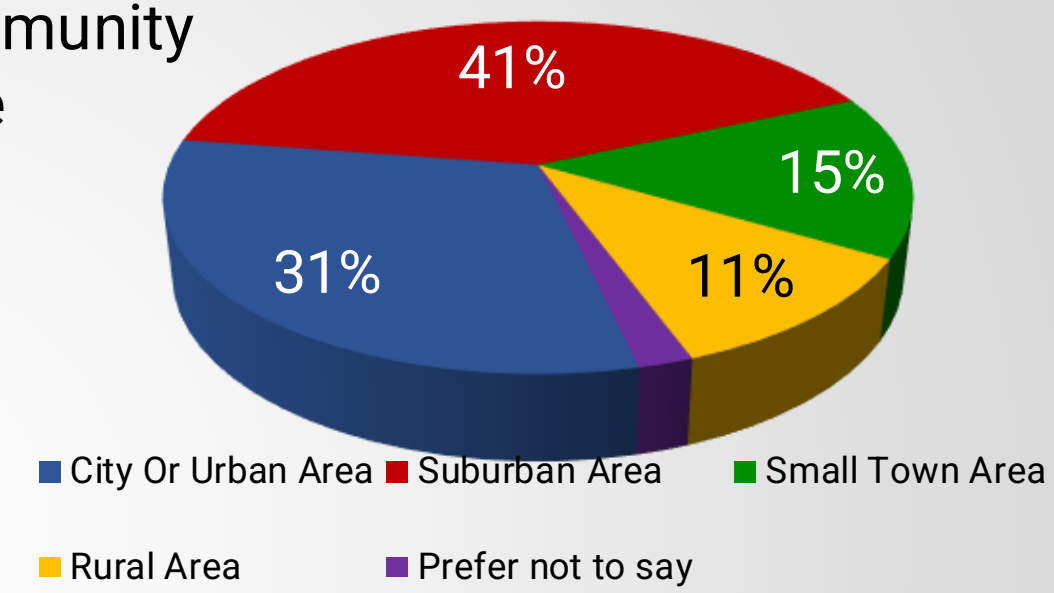
Survey Demographics

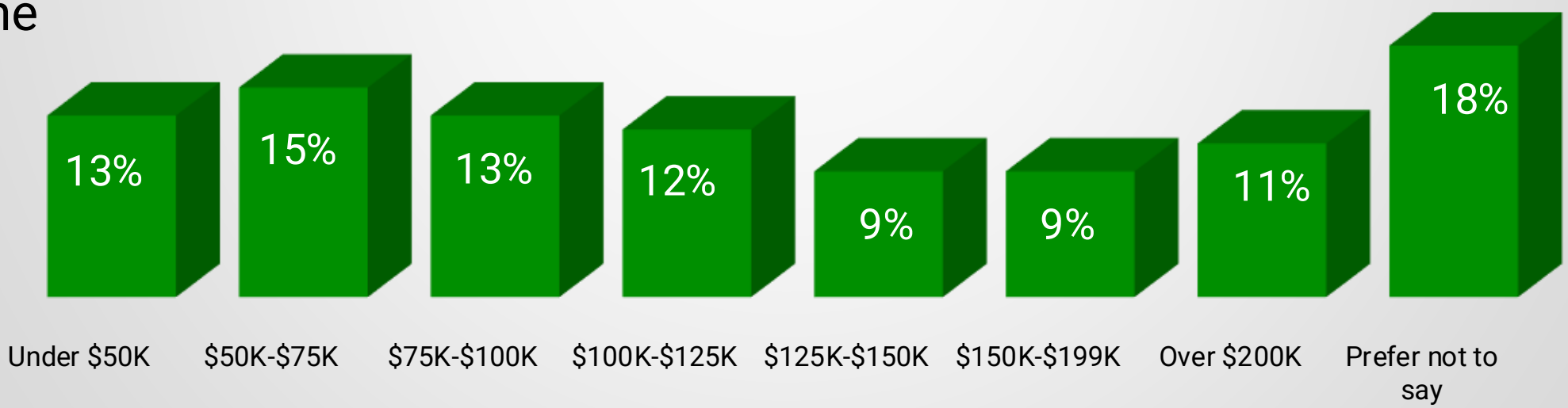
Four-Year College D



Community Type

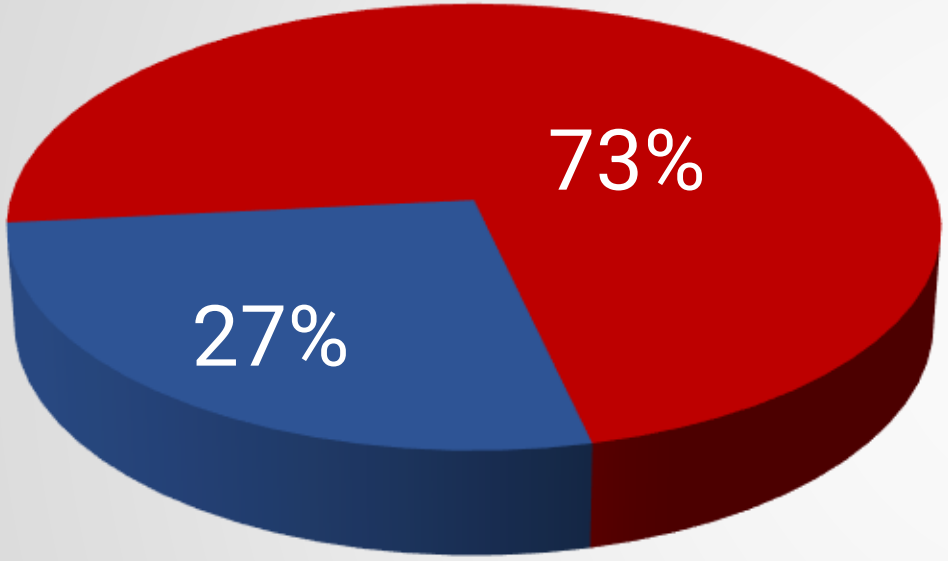


Income

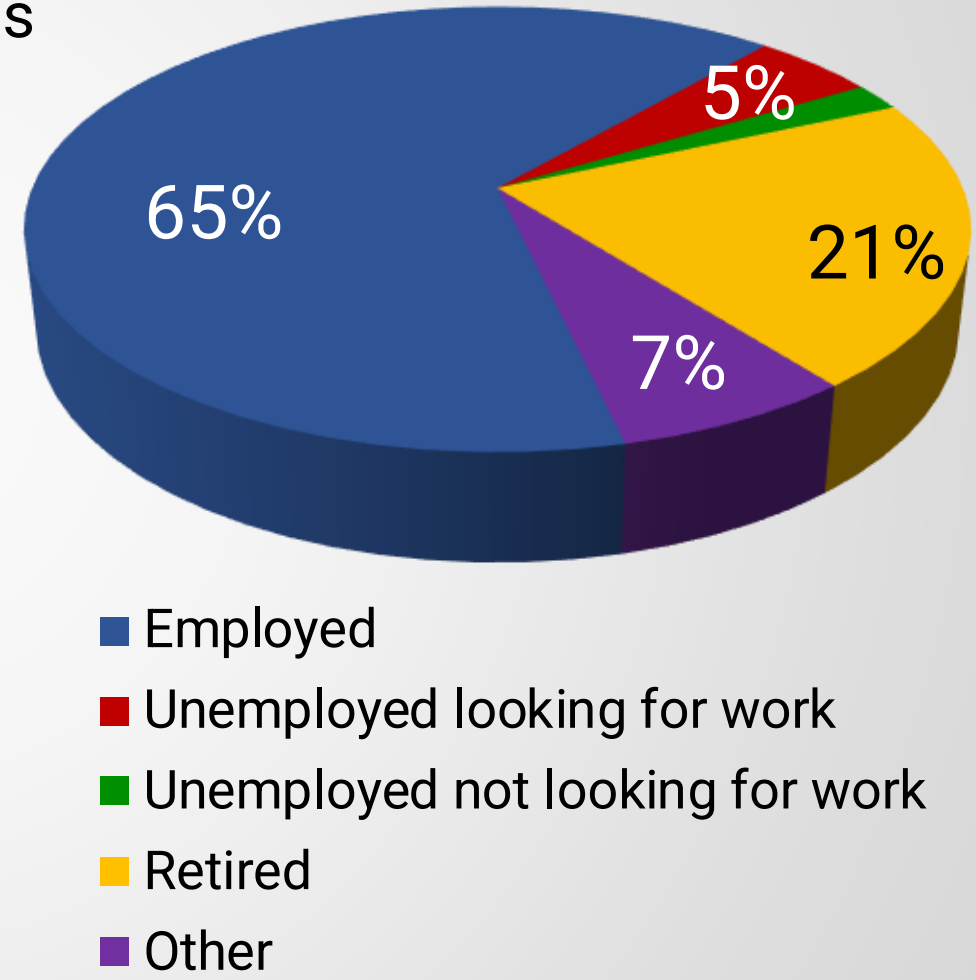


Survey Demographics

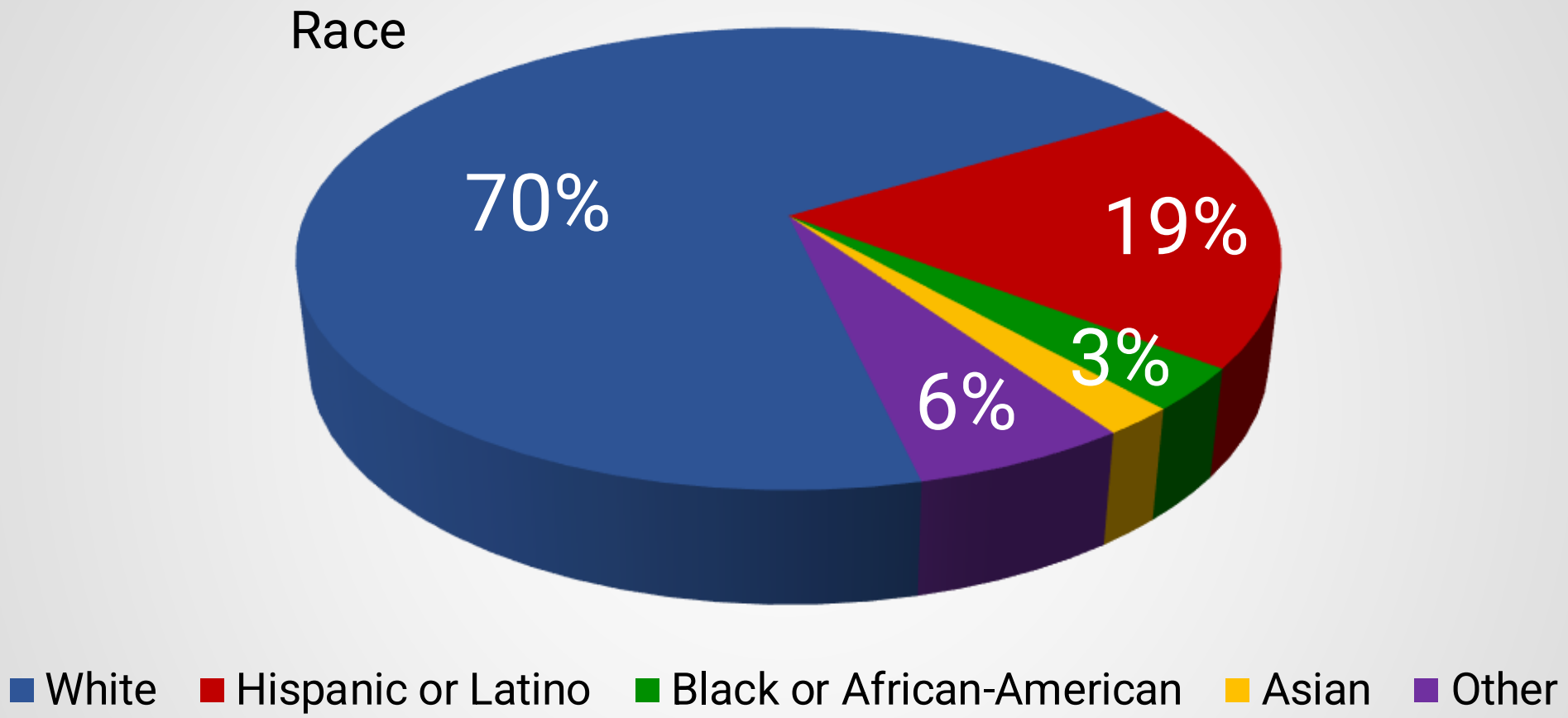
Children in Household



Employment Status



Survey Demographics



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