



Retirement Insecurity 2021

Americans' Views of Retirement

FPPTA Fall Trustee School

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National Institute on Retirement Security

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**NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON
Retirement Security**

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Why This Report

- NIRS updates every two years national public opinion polling to measure Americans' views on a variety of retirement issues -- from general sentiment about retirement in the U.S. to pensions to 401(k) accounts to state-sponsored plans.
- This year, the poll results were released as separate reports to allow for a deeper focus on findings.
 - General retirement sentiment, impact of COVID-19, sentiment by political affiliation
 - Views regarding public employee retirement benefits
 - Women's views of retirement
 - Generational views

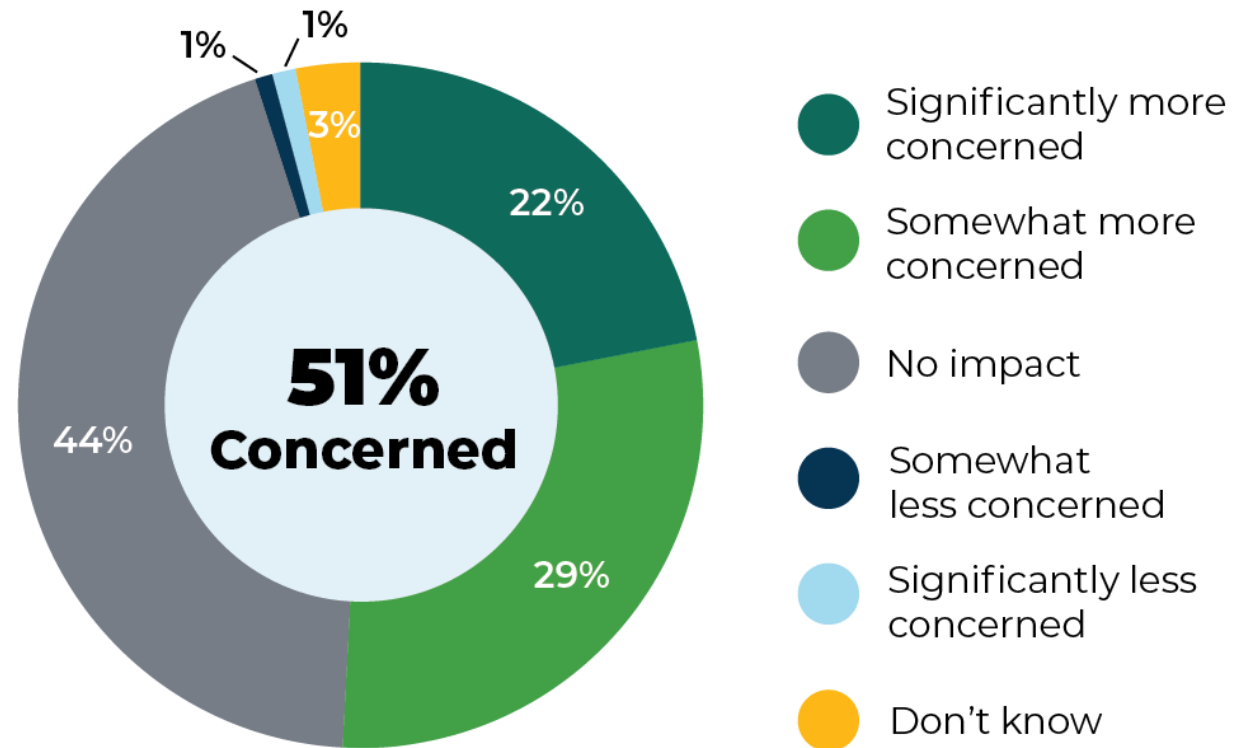
Key Finding 1

**The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted
many Americans' concerns and
plans for retirement.**

More than half of Americans concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their ability to achieve a secure retirement.

Q:

Has the COVID-19 crisis increased or decreased your concern that you won't be able to achieve a financially secure retirement?



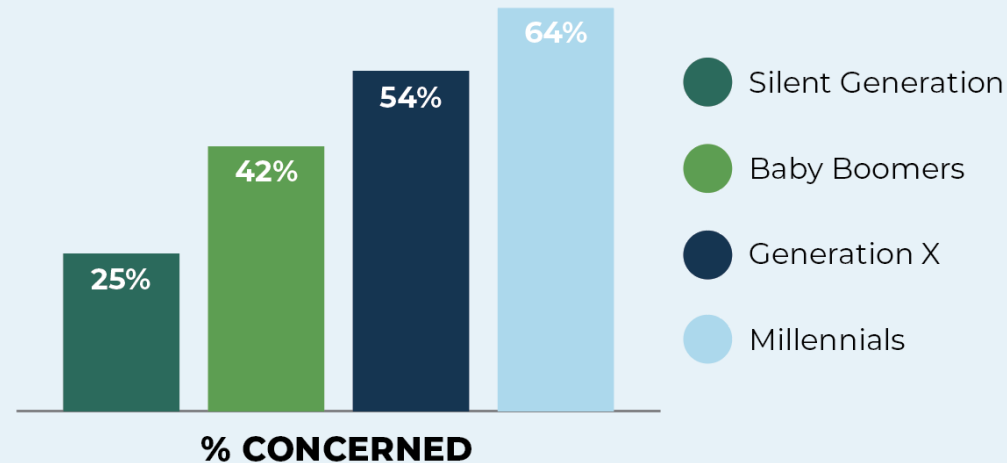
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Figure 1: Gen X and Millennials are the most concerned about retirement in the wake of the pandemic.

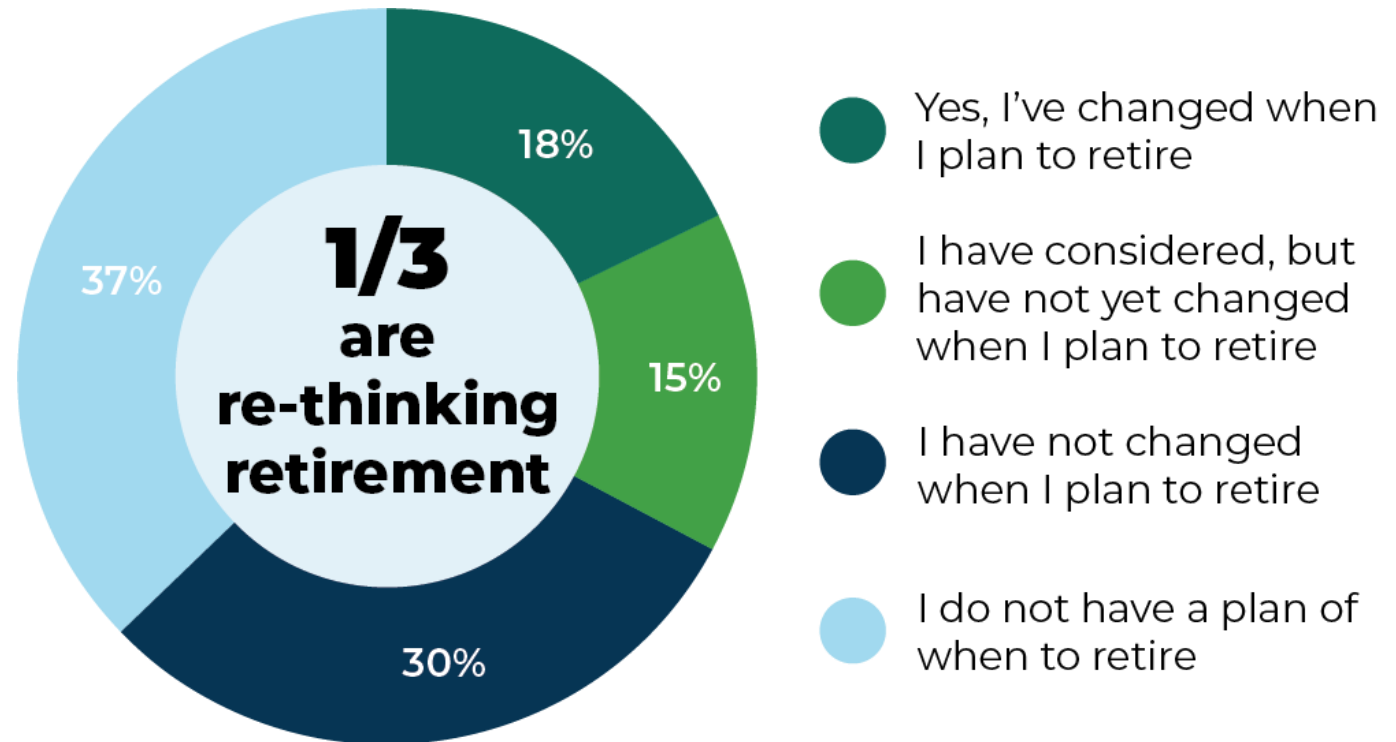
Has the COVID-19 crisis increased or decreased your concern that you won't be able to achieve a financially secure retirement?



More than one-third say COVID-19 has triggered a retirement re-think.

Q:

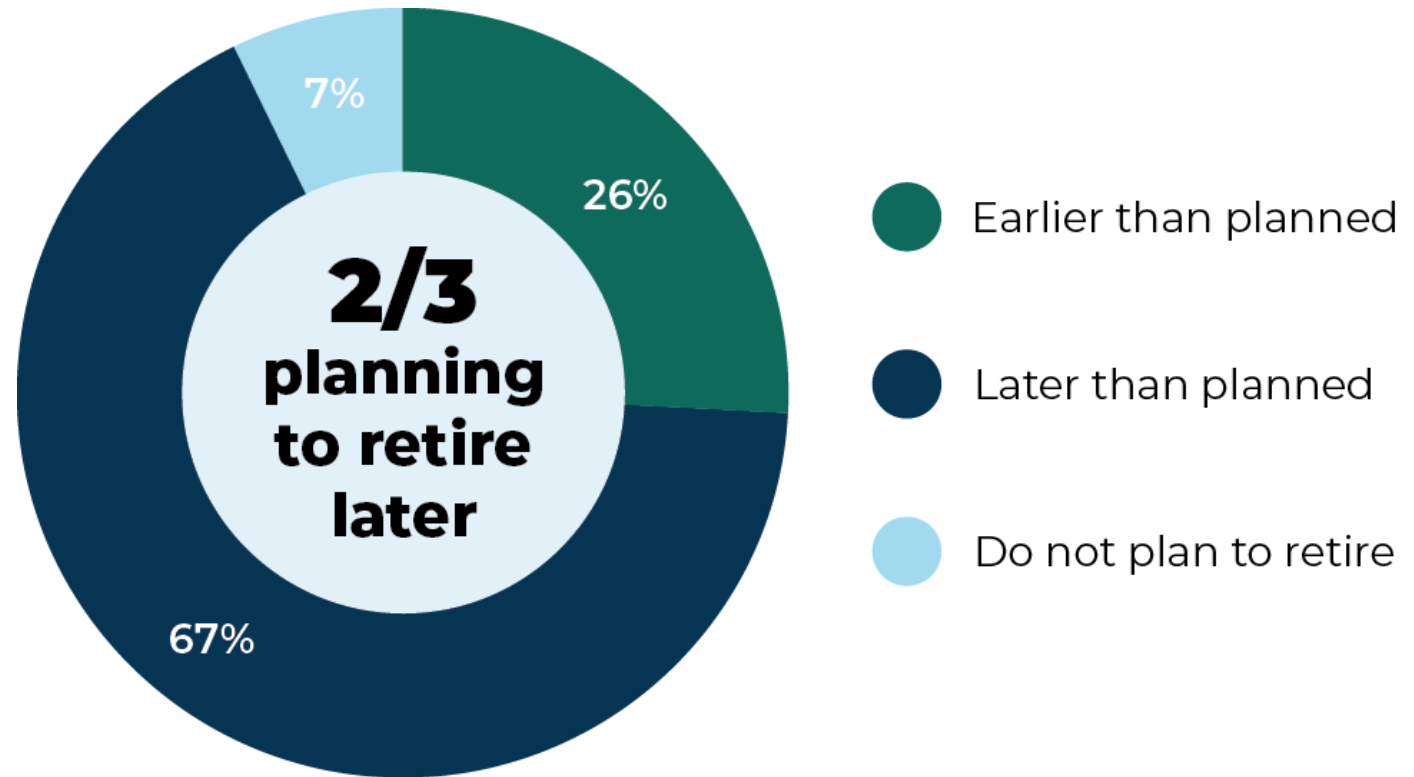
Has the COVID-19 crisis caused you to change when you plan to retire?



Among those re-thinking, more than two-thirds say they plan to retire later due to COVID-19.

Q:

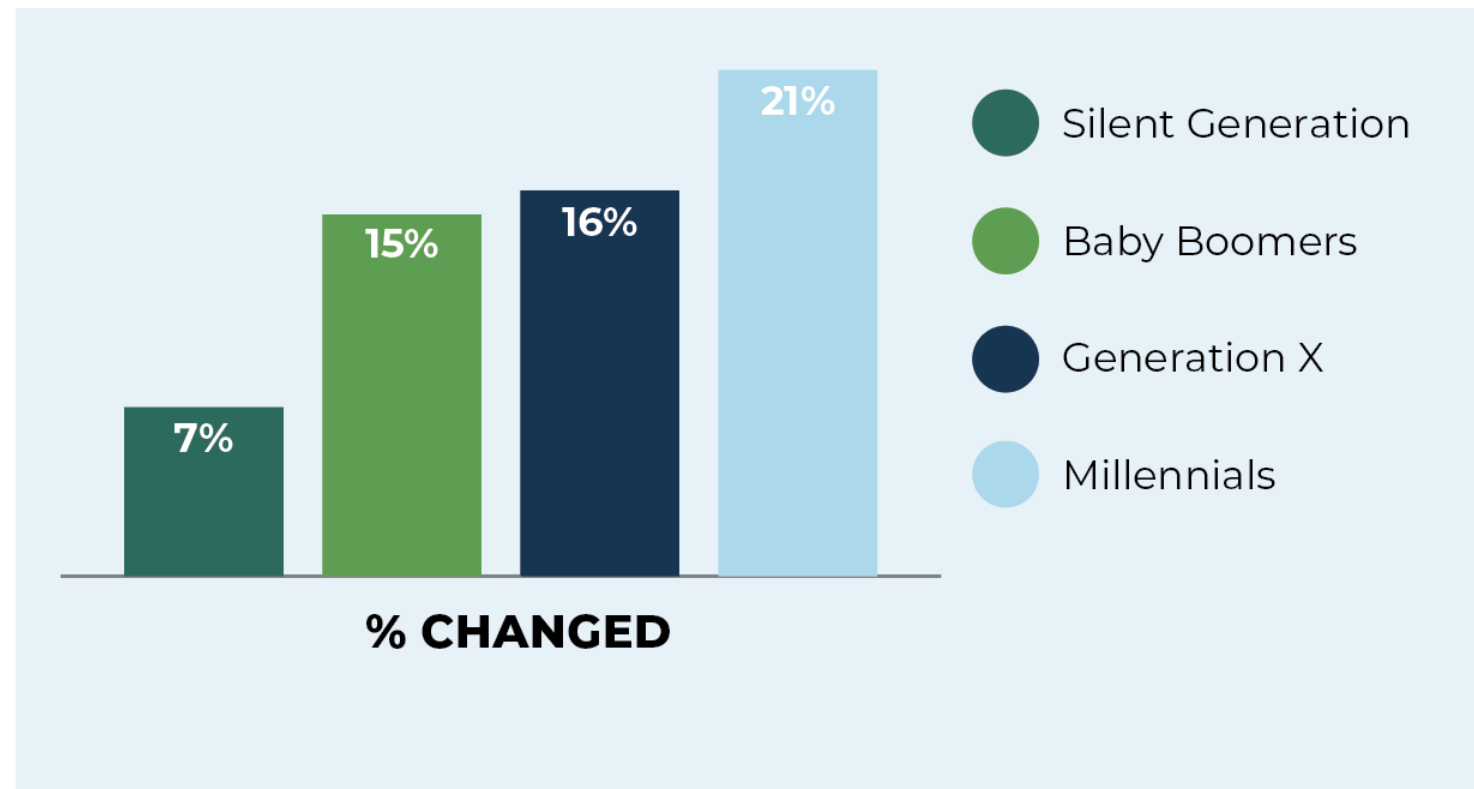
Do you now plan/have you considered retiring earlier or later than originally planned due to the COVID-19 crisis?



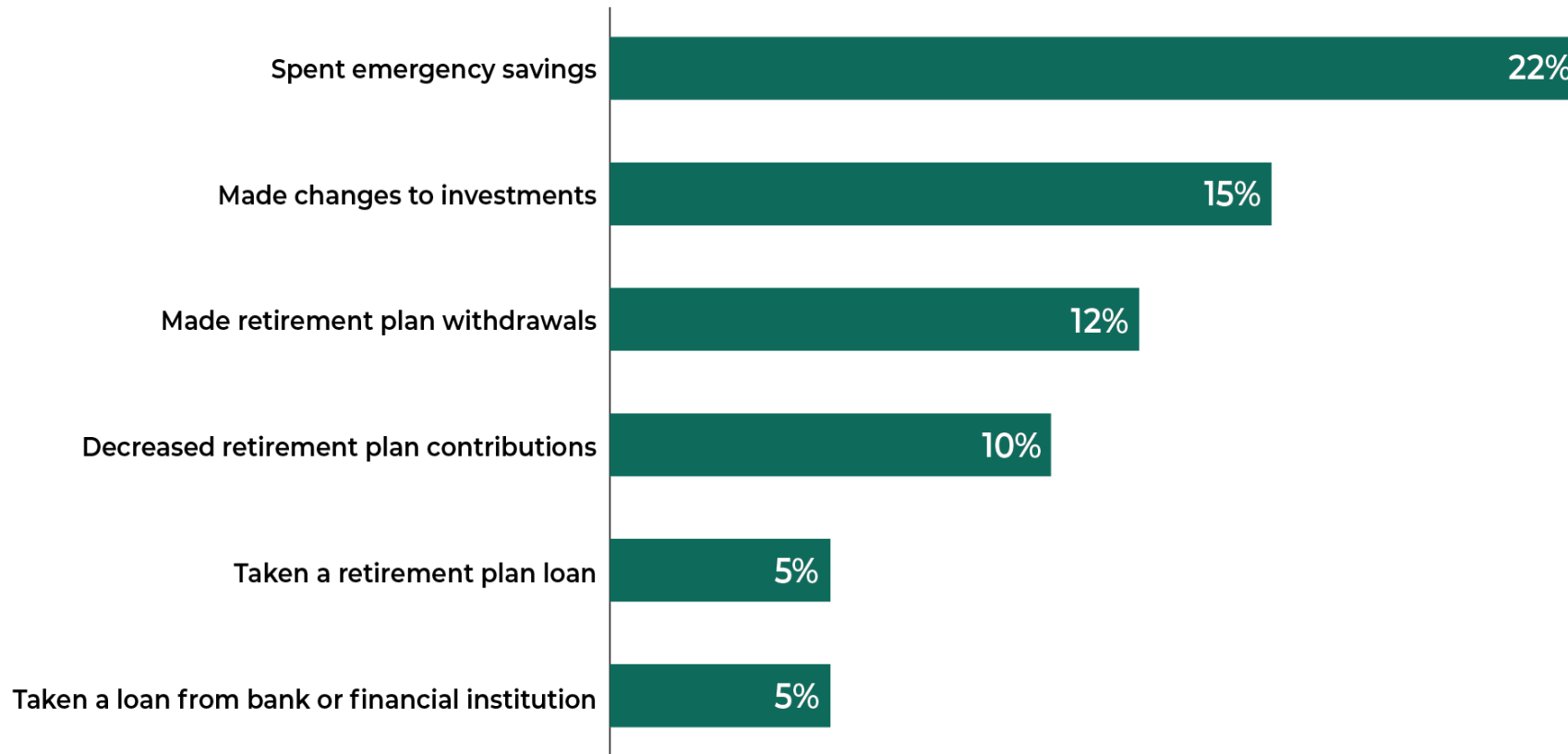
Younger generations more likely to say their retirement plans have changed.

Q:

Do you now plan/have you considered retiring earlier or later than originally planned due to the COVID-19 crisis?



Americans have taken a number of financial actions stemming from the pandemic.



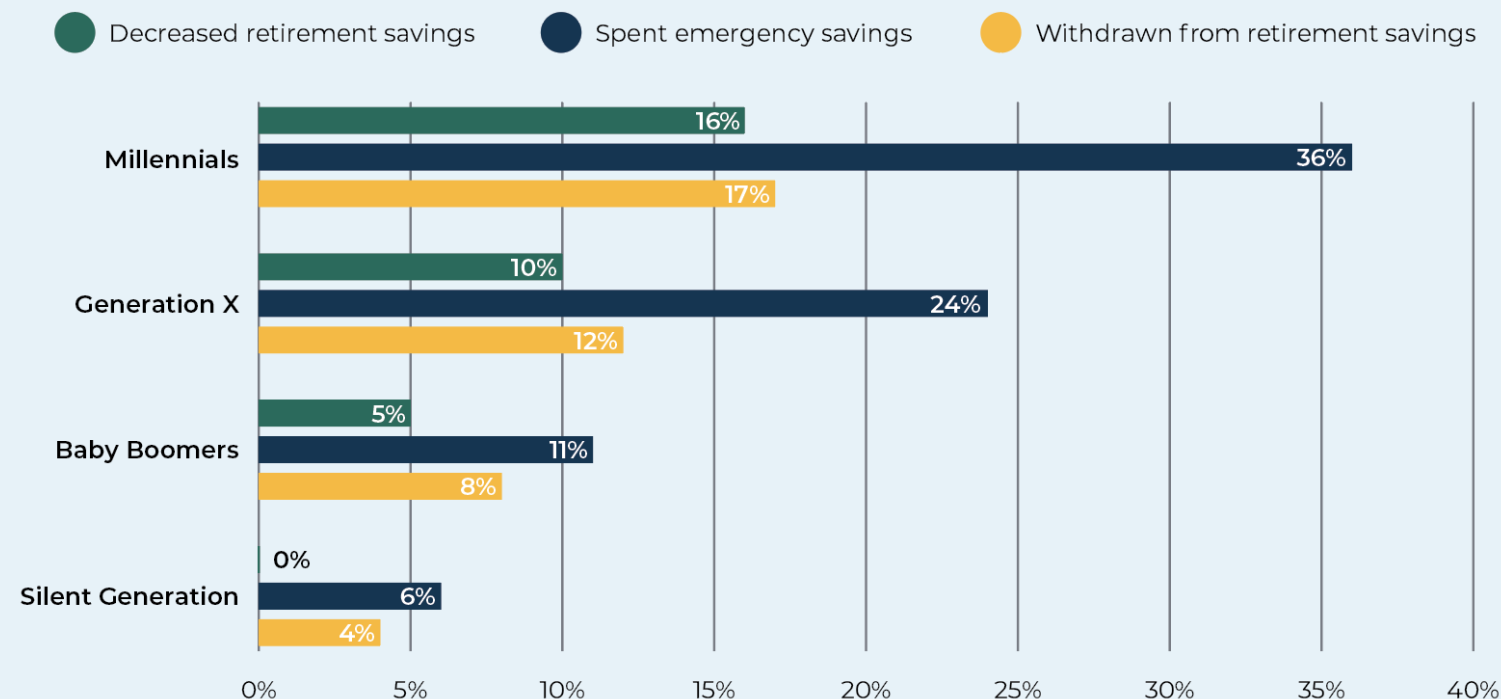
Q:

Which of the following actions have you taken as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis?

Younger generations more likely to have taken such actions during the pandemic.

Figure 4: Millennials were more likely to take actions during the pandemic that could harm their long-term financial security.

Which of the following actions have you taken as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis?



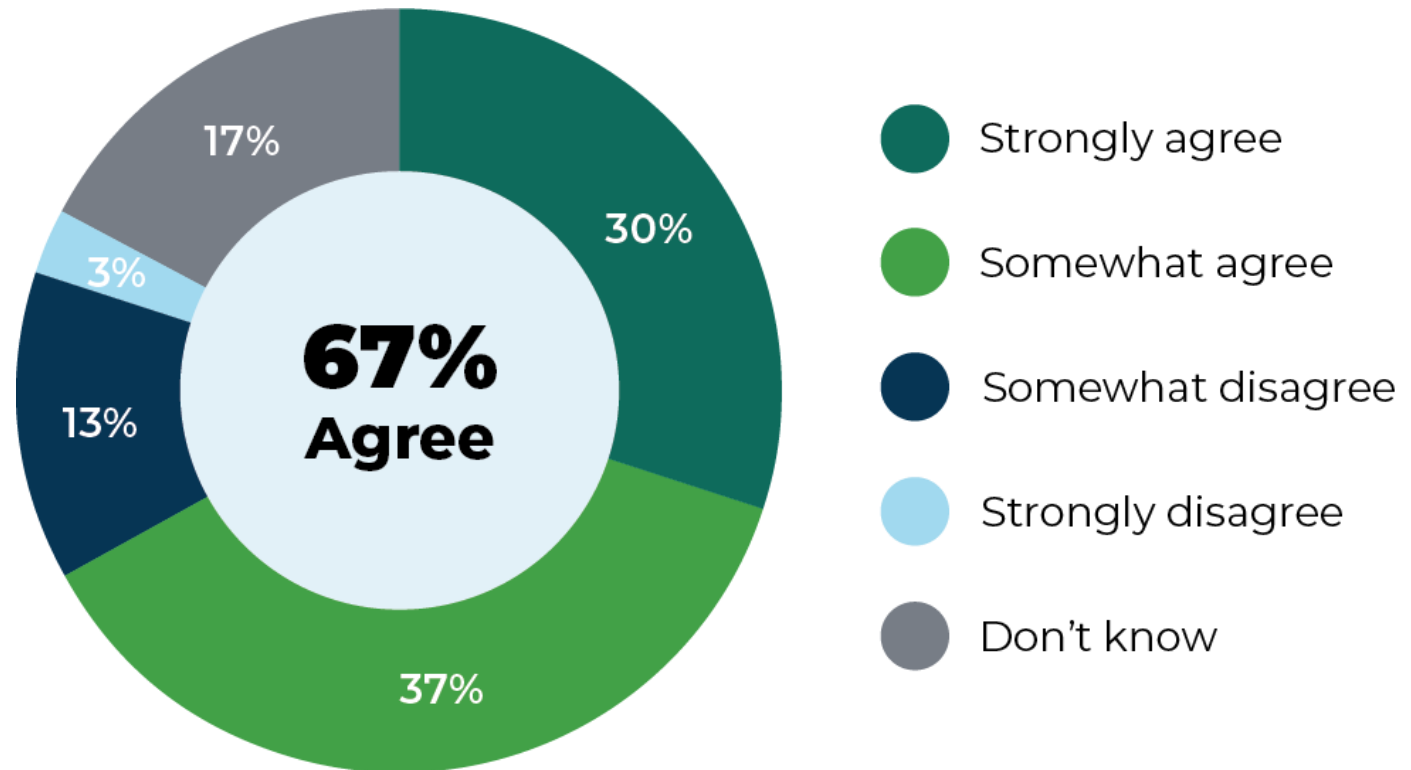
Key Finding 2

**A large swath of Americans is concerned
about their economic security
in retirement.**

More than two-thirds say the U.S. faces a retirement crisis.

Q:

To what extent do you agree or disagree:
America is facing a retirement crisis.



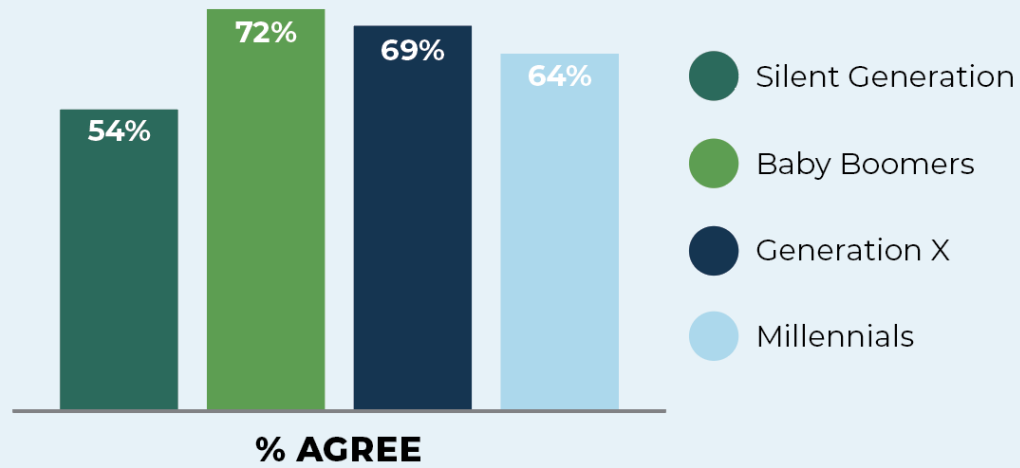
More than two-thirds say the U.S. faces a retirement crisis.

Q:

To what extent do you agree or disagree: America is facing a retirement crisis.

Figure 5: Across generations, most Americans say the nation faces a retirement crisis, with Baby Boomers expressing the most concern.

To what extent do you agree or disagree: America is facing a retirement crisis.



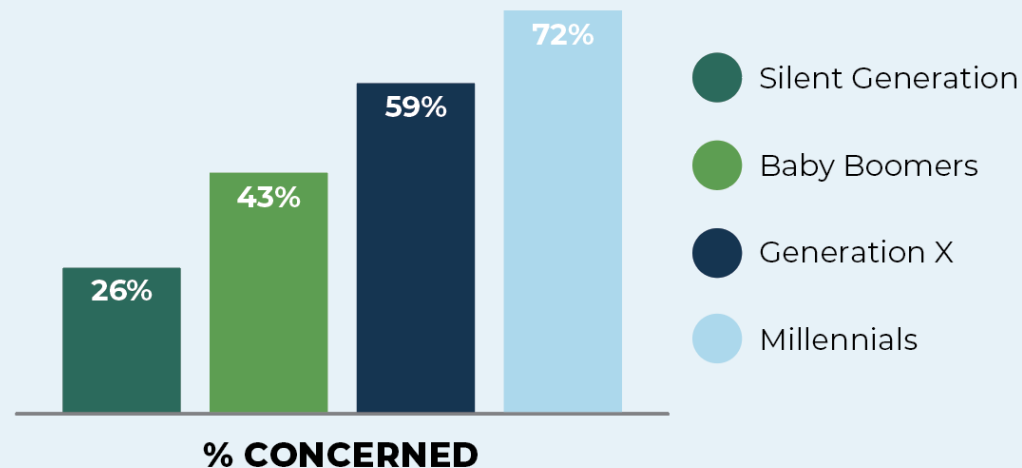
More than half of Americans are concerned about achieving financial security in retirement.

Q:

How concerned are you that you won't be able to achieve a financially secure retirement?

Figure 6: Millennials and Gen X are most pessimistic about their retirement.

How concerned are you that you won't be able to achieve a financially secure retirement?



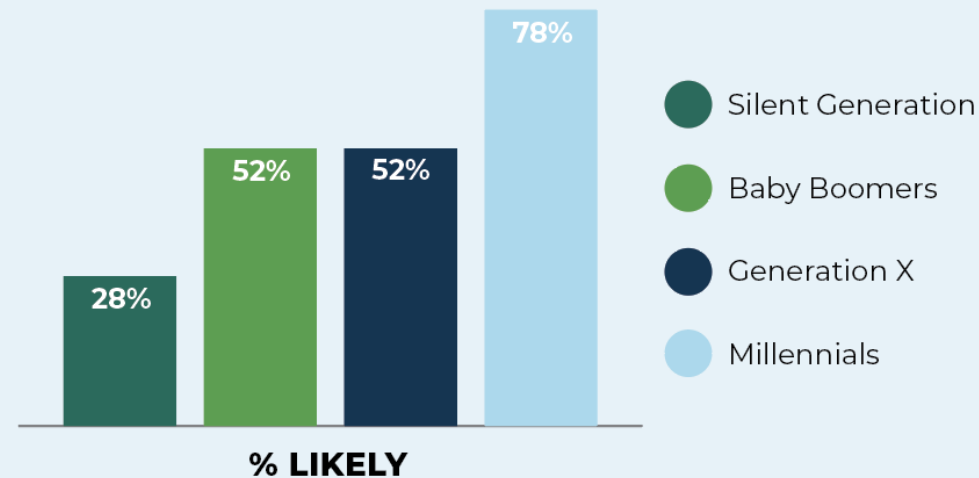
65% of Americans expect to work past the normal retirement age for financial security.

Q:

How likely is it that you will need to work past the normal retirement age to have enough money in retirement?

Figure 10: Millennials are substantially more inclined to believe they will have to work past a normal retirement age for financial security.

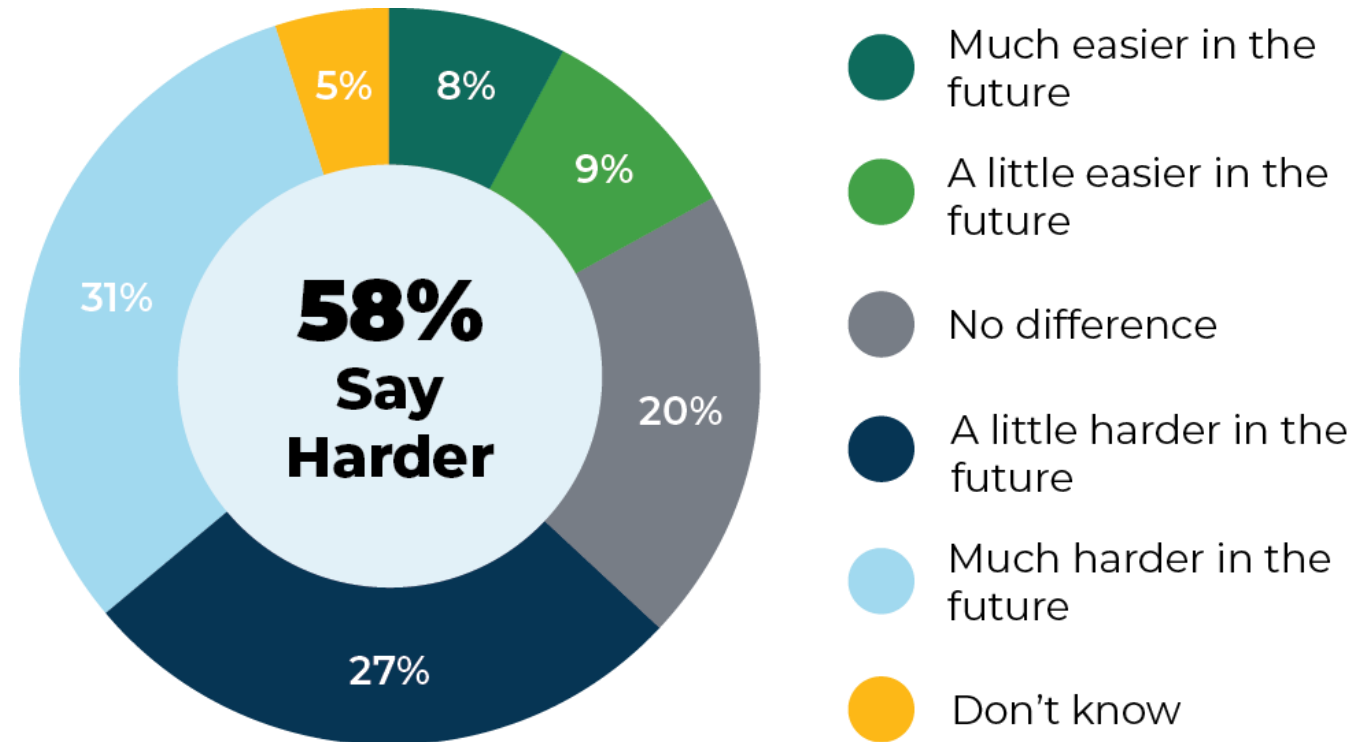
How likely is it that you will need to work past the normal retirement age to have enough money in retirement?



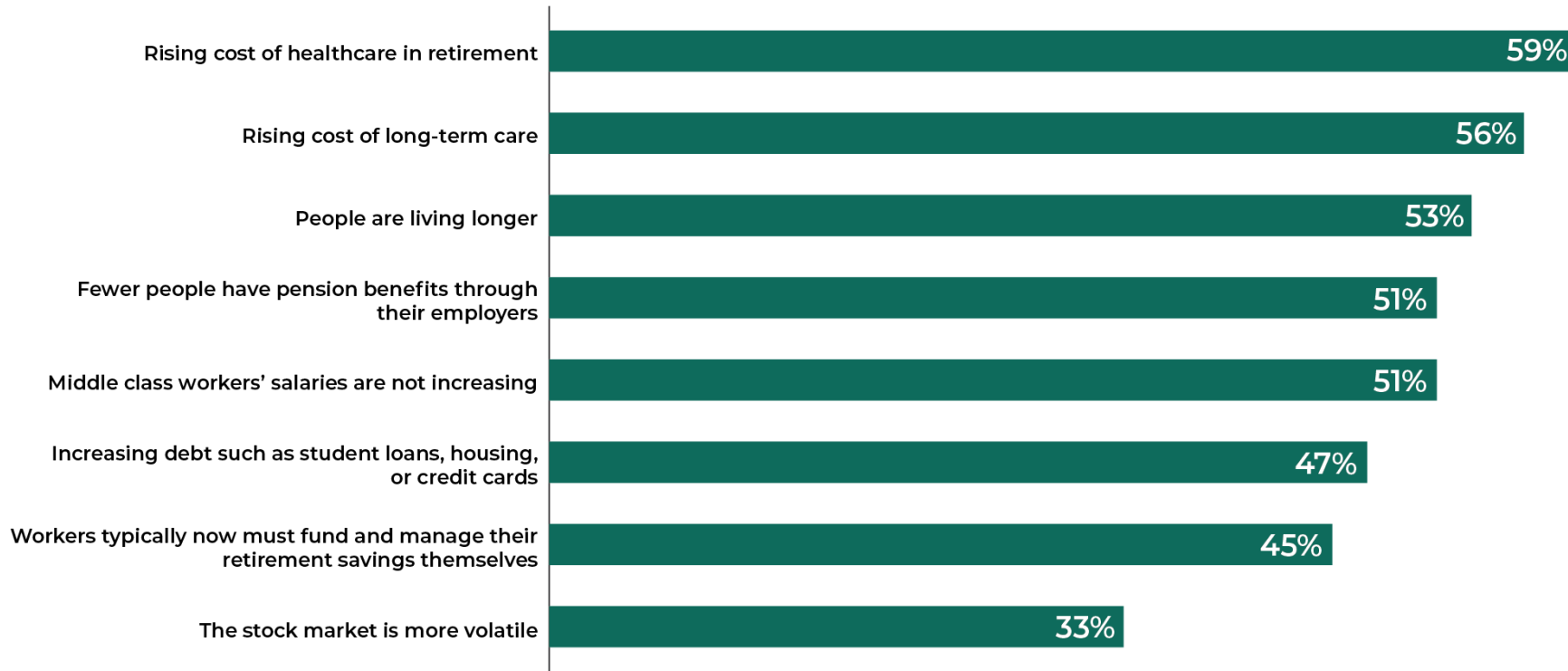
More than half of Americans say preparing for retirement is only getting harder.

Q:

More than half of Americans say preparing for retirement is only getting harder.



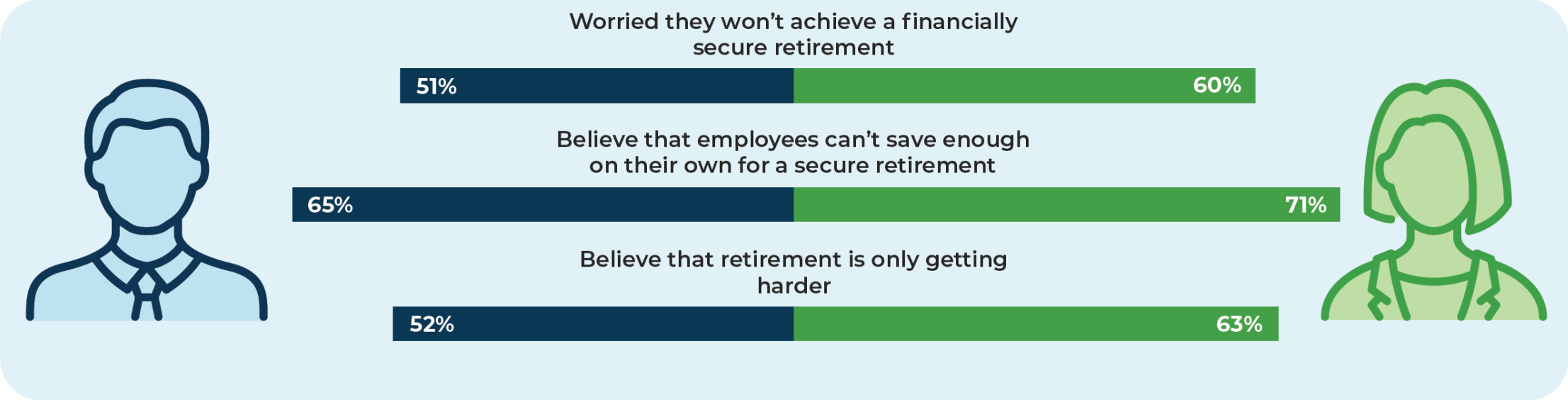
Several major factors contribute to struggle to prepare for retirement.



Q:

To what extent do you feel each of the following issues are a factor in making it harder for Americans to prepare for retirement.

Women more Pessimistic about their own situations, as well as our broader success.



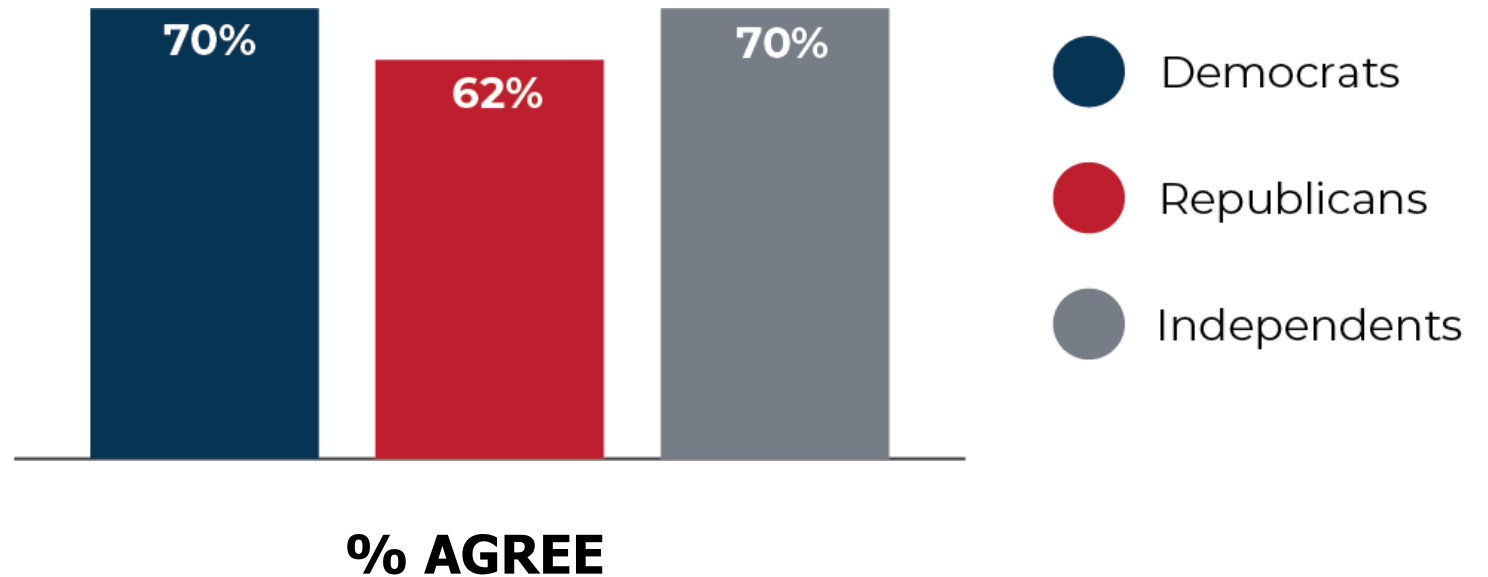
Key Finding 3

The nation is highly polarized, but Americans are united in their worry about retirement issues.

Across party lines, Americans agree the nation faces a retirement crisis.

Q:

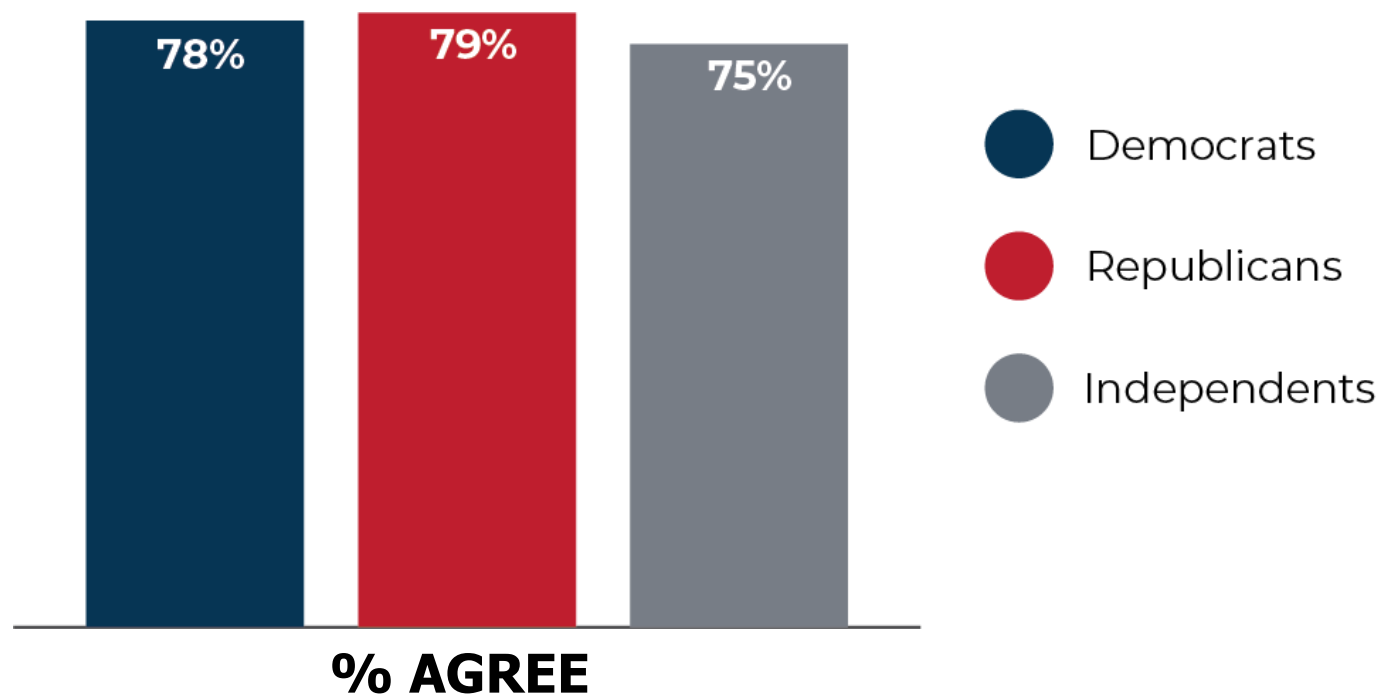
To what extent do you agree or disagree:
America is facing a retirement crisis.



Americans are united in their frustration that policymakers don't understand the retirement struggle.

Q:

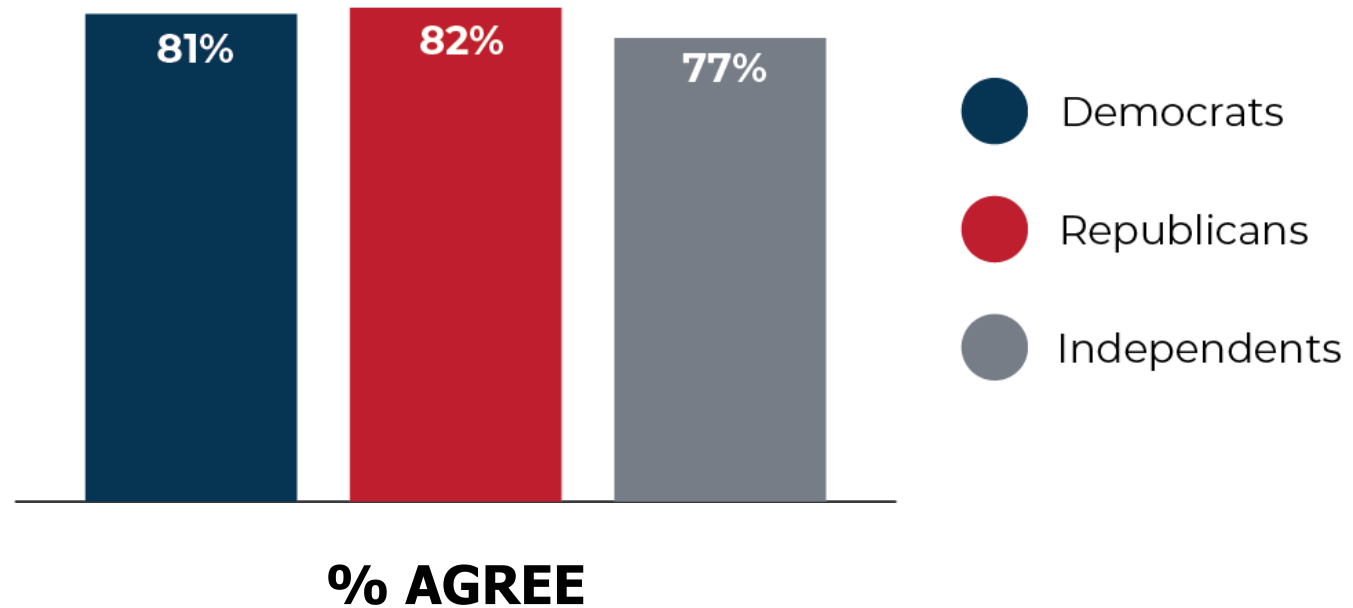
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Leaders in Washington do not understand how hard it is for workers to save enough for retirement.



Americans are united in their strong support for Social Security regardless of budget deficits.

Q:

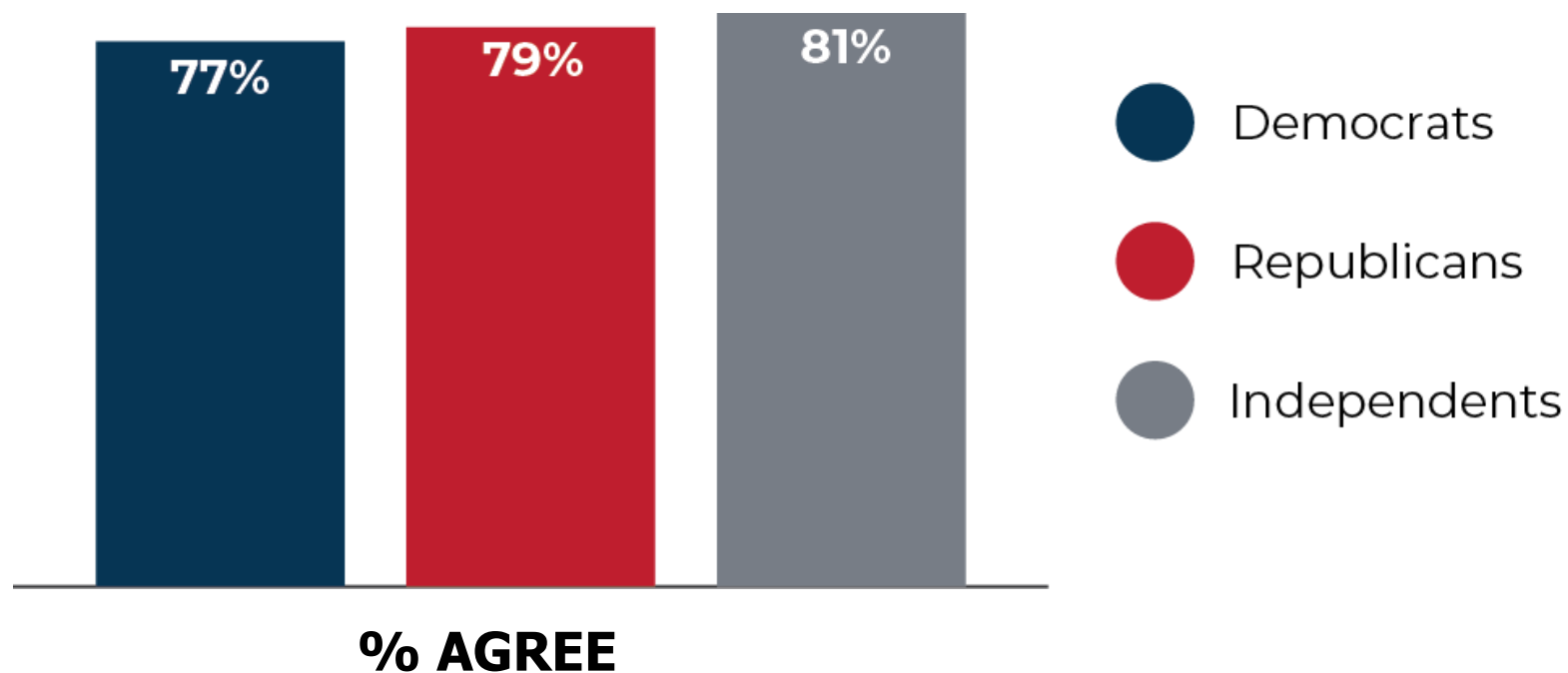
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Social Security should remain a priority for our country no matter how bad budget deficits get.



There is bipartisan agreement that pensions are better at helping Americans achieve a secure retirement as compared to 401(k)s.

Q:

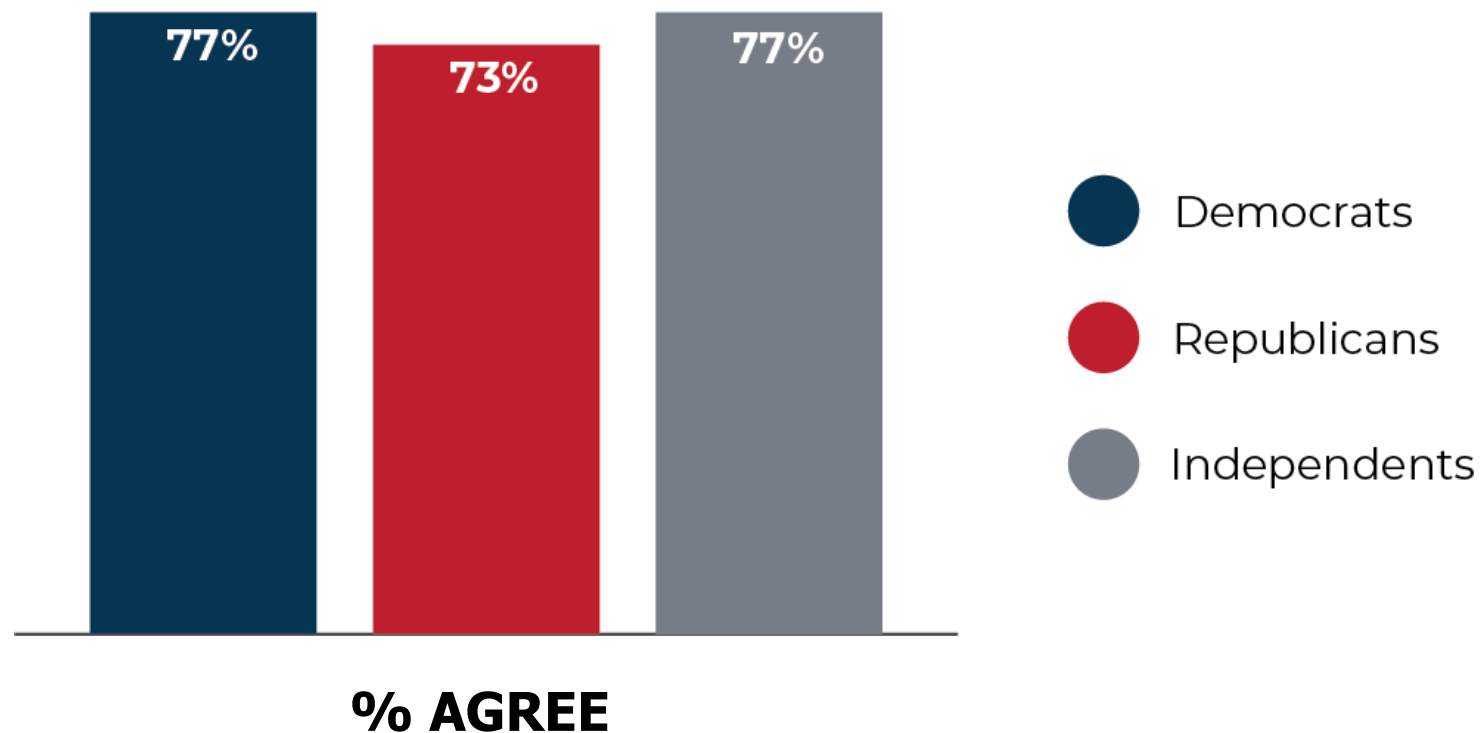
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Pensions do more to help workers achieve a secure retirement as compared to retirement savings plans such as 401(k)s.



Across party lines, there is agreement that all workers should have access to a pension plan to be independent and self-reliant in retirement.

Q:

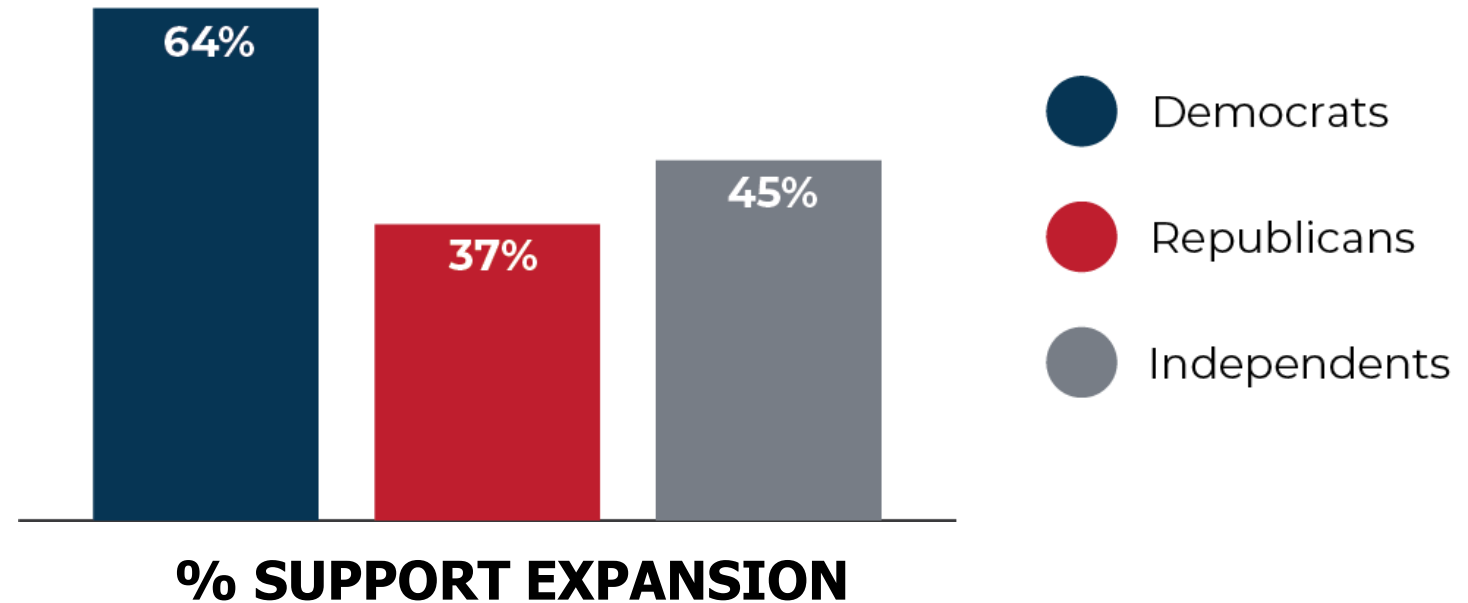
To what extent do you agree or disagree: I believe that all workers should have access to a pension plan so they can be independent and self-reliant in retirement.



There is varied support across party lines for the expansion of Social Security.

Q:

Would you support an expansion of Social Security benefits, a reduction of benefits, or should it be kept as is?



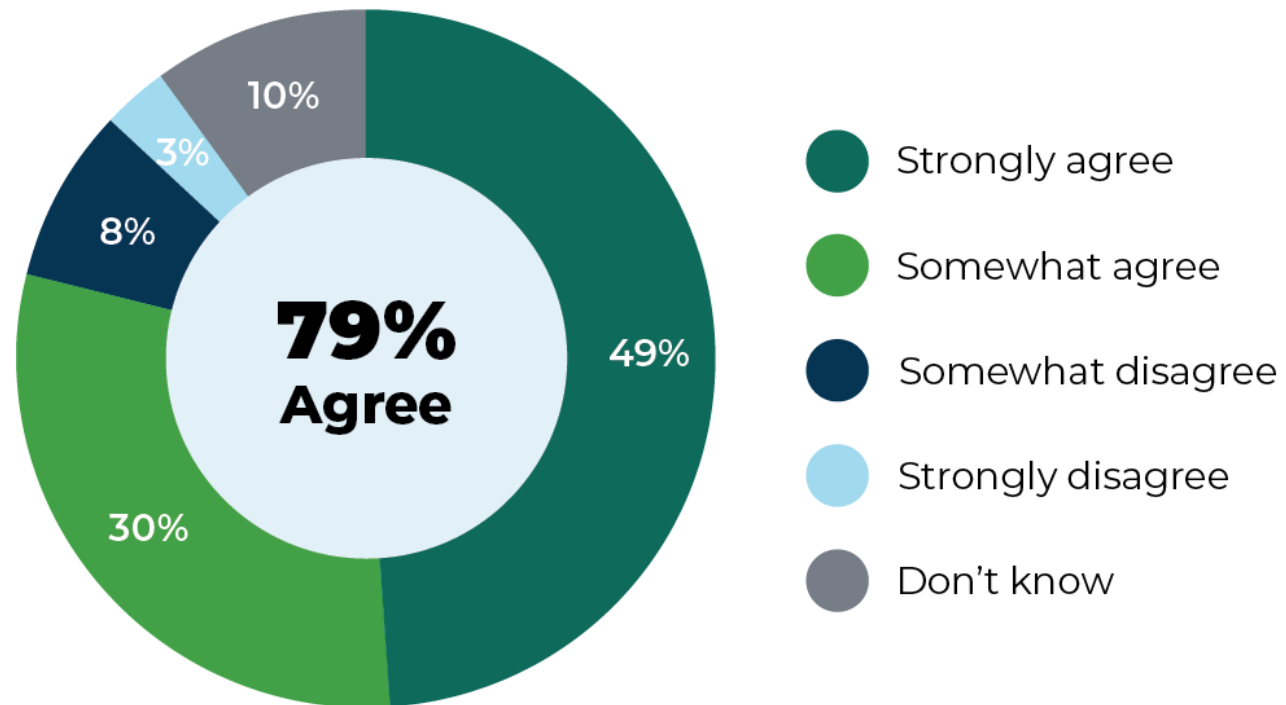
Key Finding 4

**Americans are highly supportive of Social Security,
and there is some support for
expanding the program.**

The vast majority of Americans say Social Security should remain a priority regardless of budget deficits.

Q:

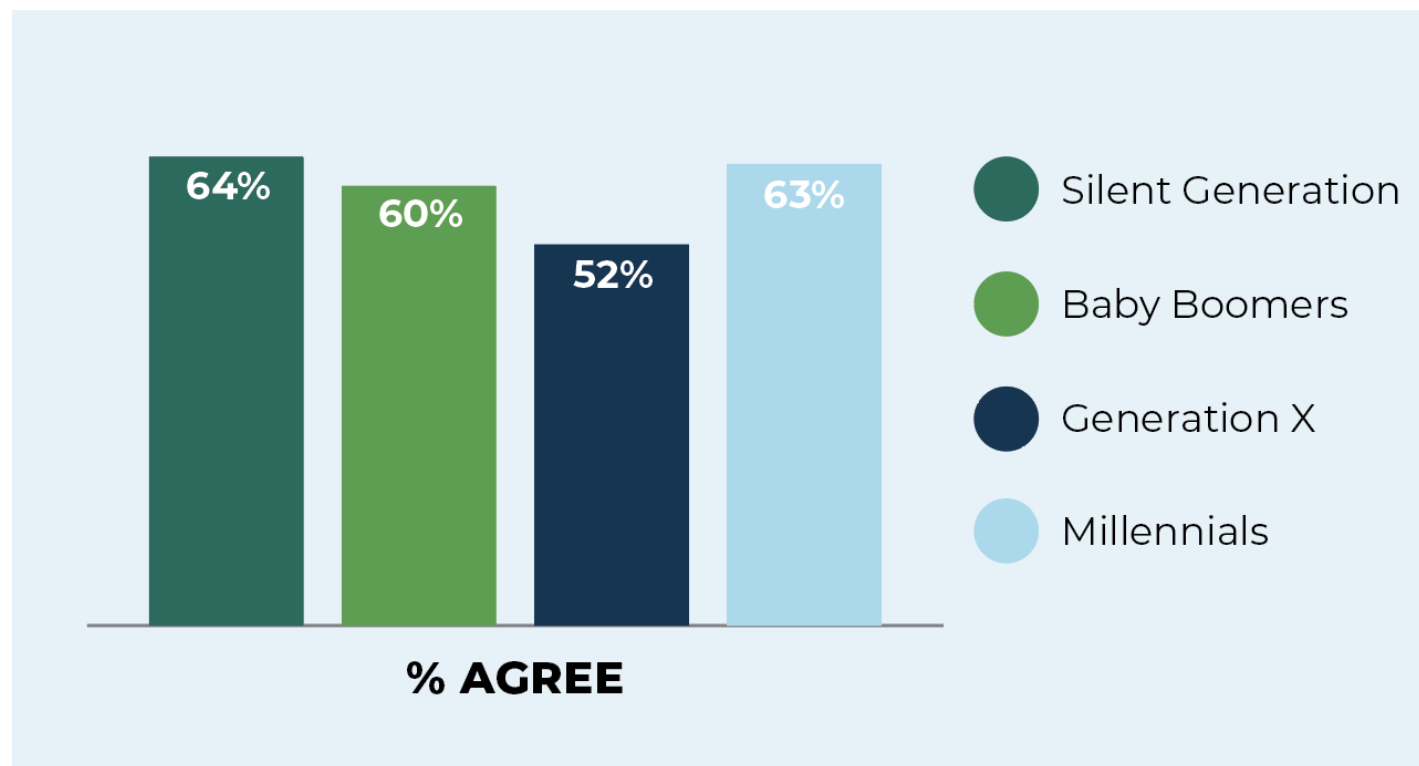
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Social Security should remain a priority for our country no matter how bad budget deficits get.



Most Americans agree workers and employers should contribute more to Social Security so it is in place for future generations.

Q:

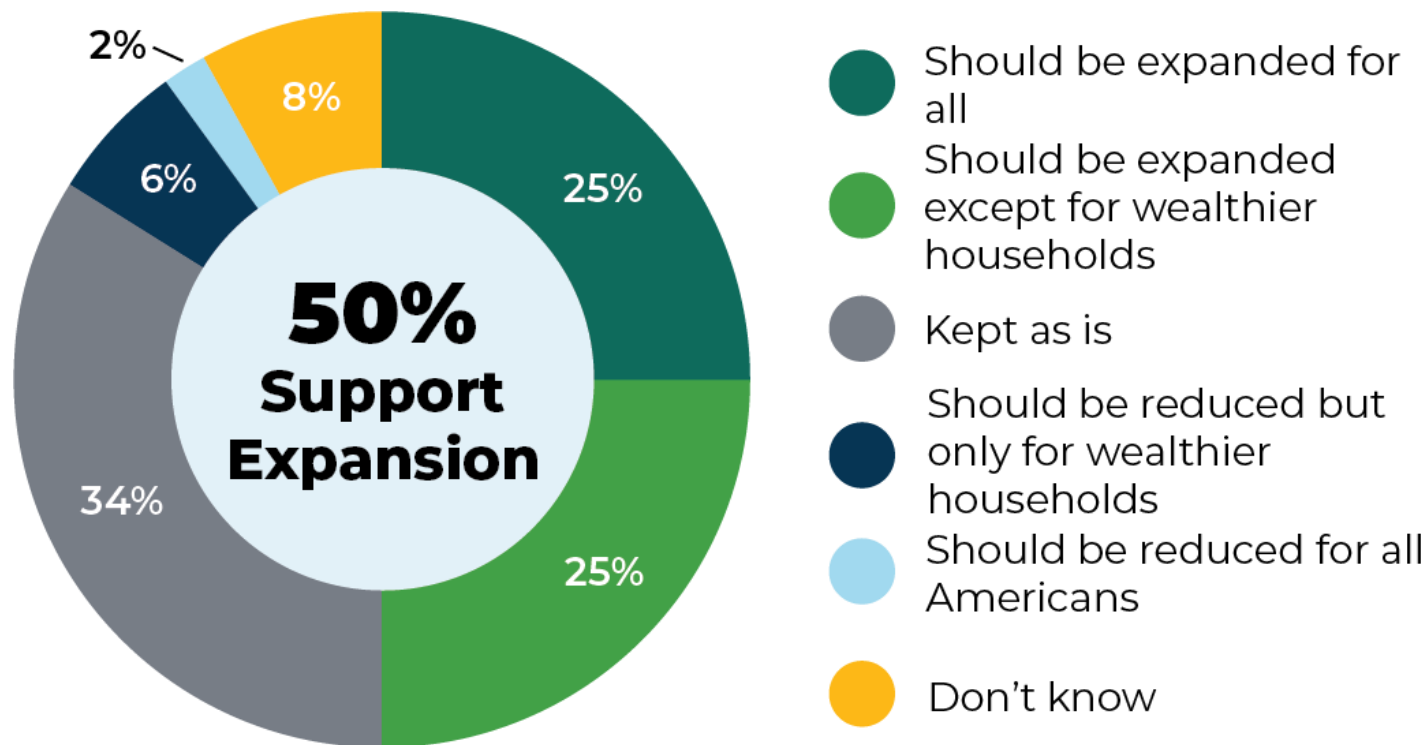
To what extent do you agree or disagree: To ensure that Social Security will be around for future generations, the government needs to increase the amount that workers and employers must contribute to Social Security.



Half of Americans support the expansion of Social Security.

Q:

Would you support an expansion of Social Security benefits, a reduction of benefits, or should it be kept as is?



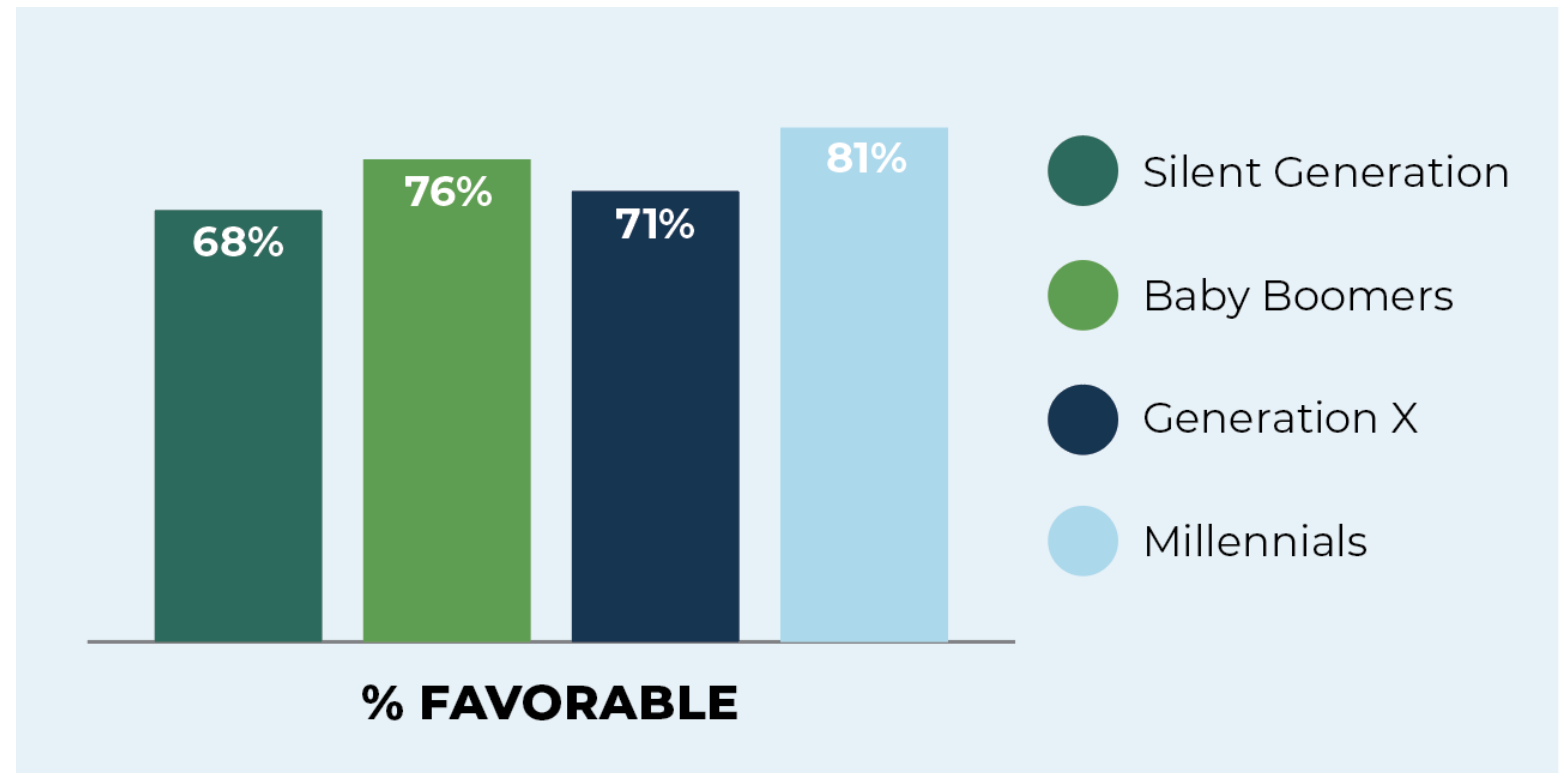
Key Finding 5

When it comes to pensions, Americans have highly favorable views about their role in the retirement equation and see these plans as better than 401(k) savings accounts.

All generations have favorable views of pensions, but millennials hold the most favorable views.

Q:

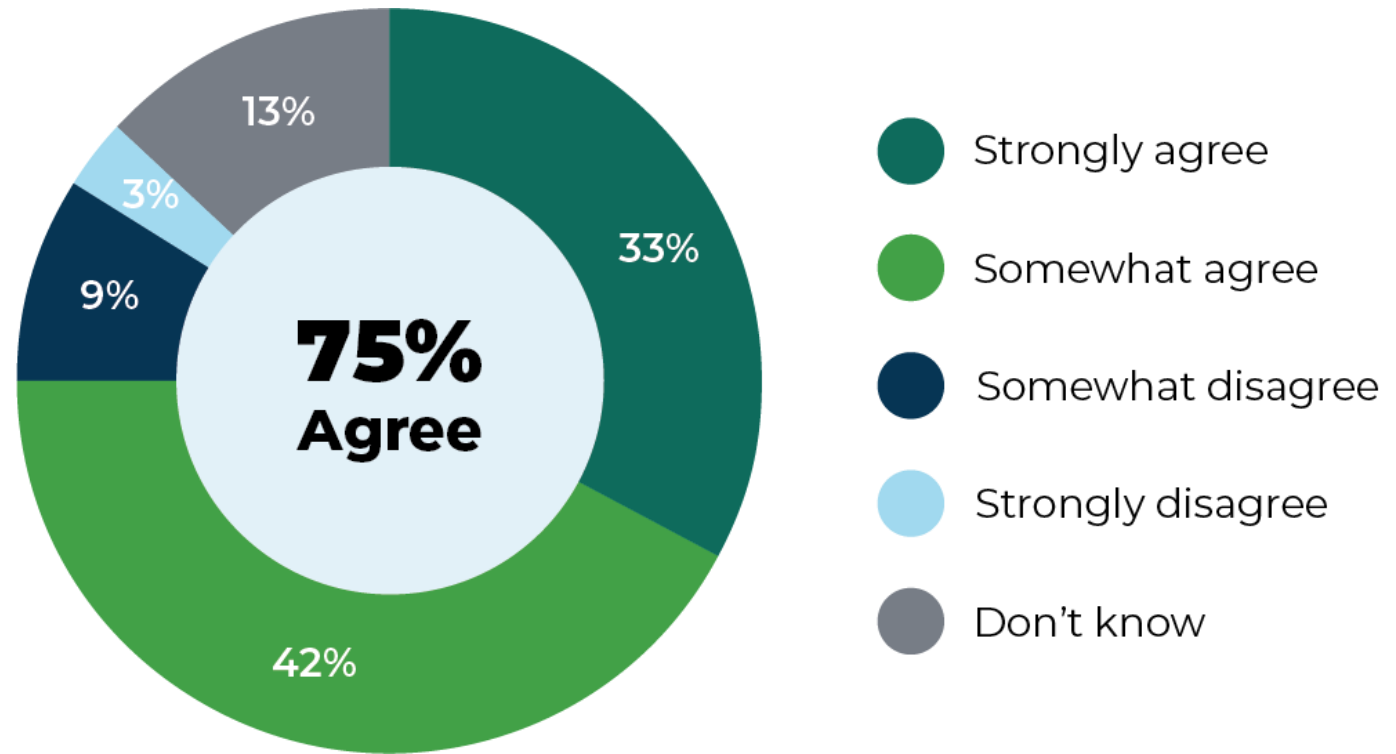
How would you describe your overall view of this type of pension?



Three-quarters say those with pensions are more likely to retire comfortably.

Q:

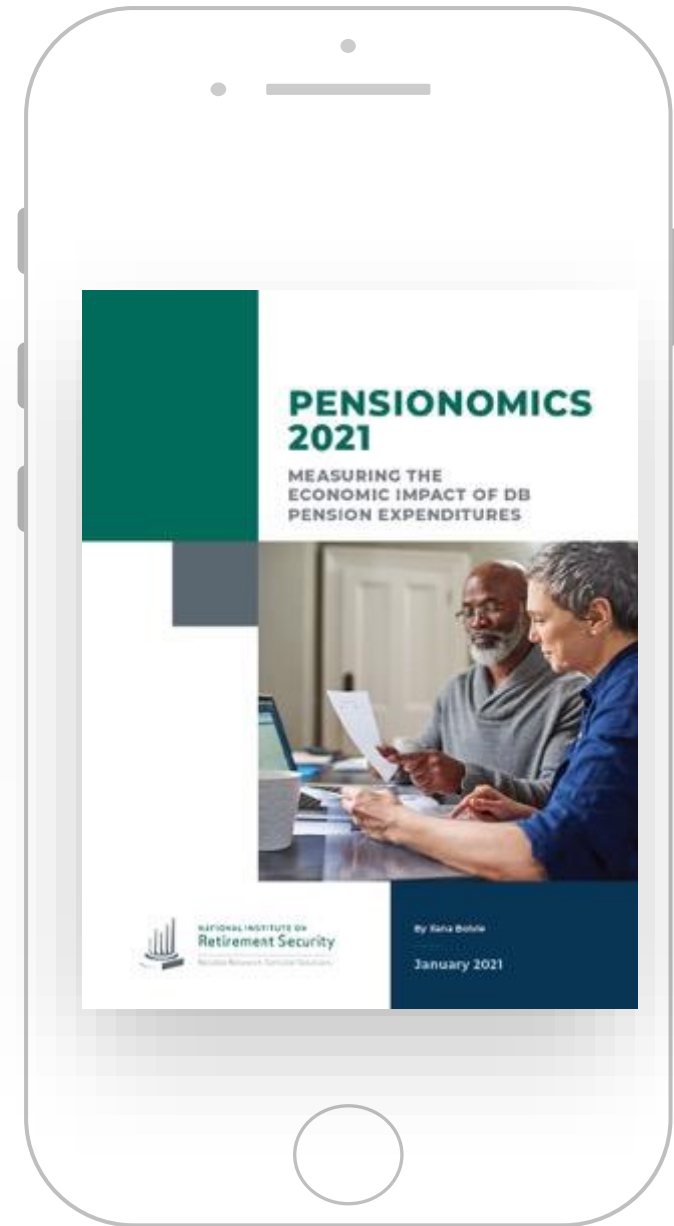
Among people I know, those with a pension are more likely to feel more financially comfortable retiring than those relying on their own savings.



NIRS/CCA Funding Policy Contest

- We hope to foster cross-pollination of good ideas
- Meet ARC/ADEC on a cumulative basis, not annually
- The contest seeks ideas that maximize the following goals:
 - Reduce cost volatility,
 - Promote intergenerational equity, and
 - Assure that pension plans remain on a strong fiscal path over time?
- Submissions due on January 10th
- Website: <https://www.nirsonline.org/award/award-overview/>

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