

LOCAL SOLUTIONS SUPPORT CENTER UNDERSTANDING PREEMPTION POLL



AFRICAN AMERICAN
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

February 1, 2022

www.AfricanAmericanResearch.us

About the Poll

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- ❖ Total sample of N=1,650 registered voters.
 - Interviews collected in eight states across three regions: the Rust Belt (Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin); the Southeast (North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida), and the Southwest (Arizona and Texas).
 - Includes oversamples of African American and Latino voters.
- ❖ Online survey fielded from December 13 through December 29, 2022.
- ❖ The margin of error for the overall poll is +/- 2.4%; +/- 4.2% for each region; and +/- 4.3% for each racial/ethnic group.

Key Findings

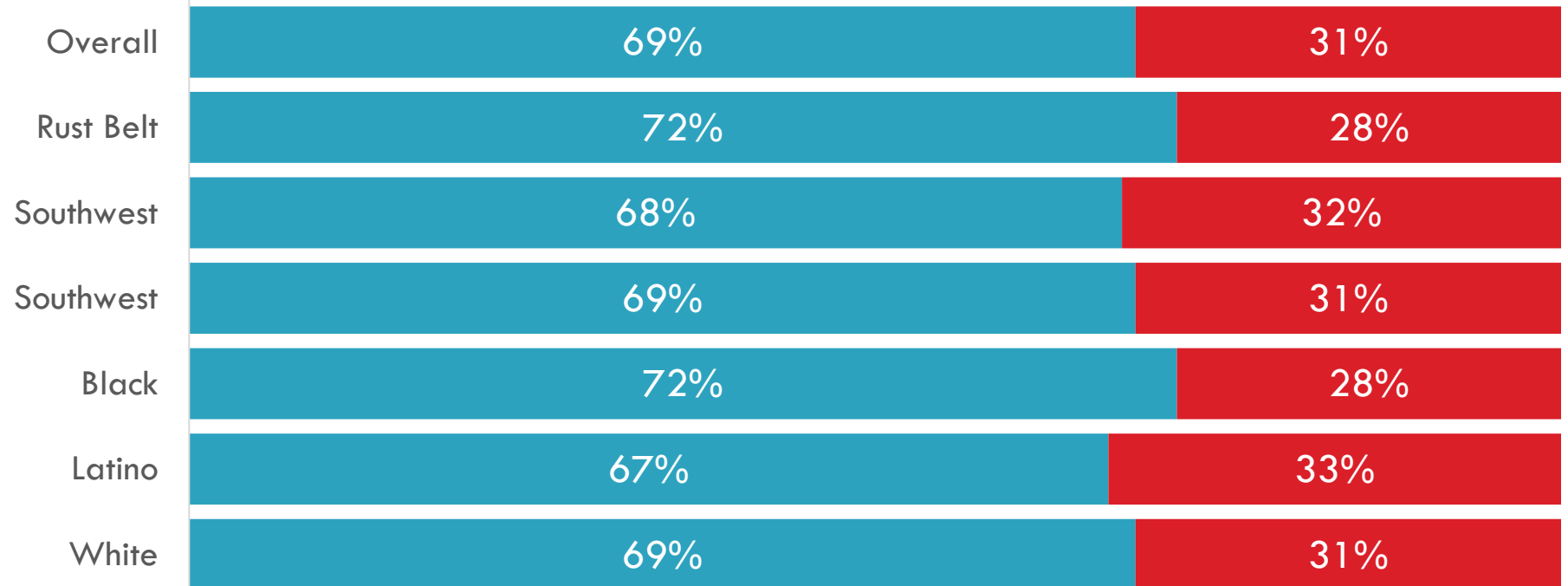
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- ❖ It is most helpful to engage voters through a policy position and then transition to a discussion of how to influence state government to make positive change.
- ❖ The most convincing preemption arguments center the problem of wealthy corporations and political donors using influence at the state level to circumvent local decisionmakers.
- ❖ Advocates can augment primary messages by framing state preemption as racial discrimination when speaking with Black and Latino audiences, and framing preemption as a threat to American democracy with white audiences.

KEY CHALLENGE: Voters are more concerned about getting to the right decision, than about which officials make the decision

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When thinking about policies on issues such as COVID-19, climate change, policing, racial discrimination, or LGBTQ rights, which statement is closer to what you believe?



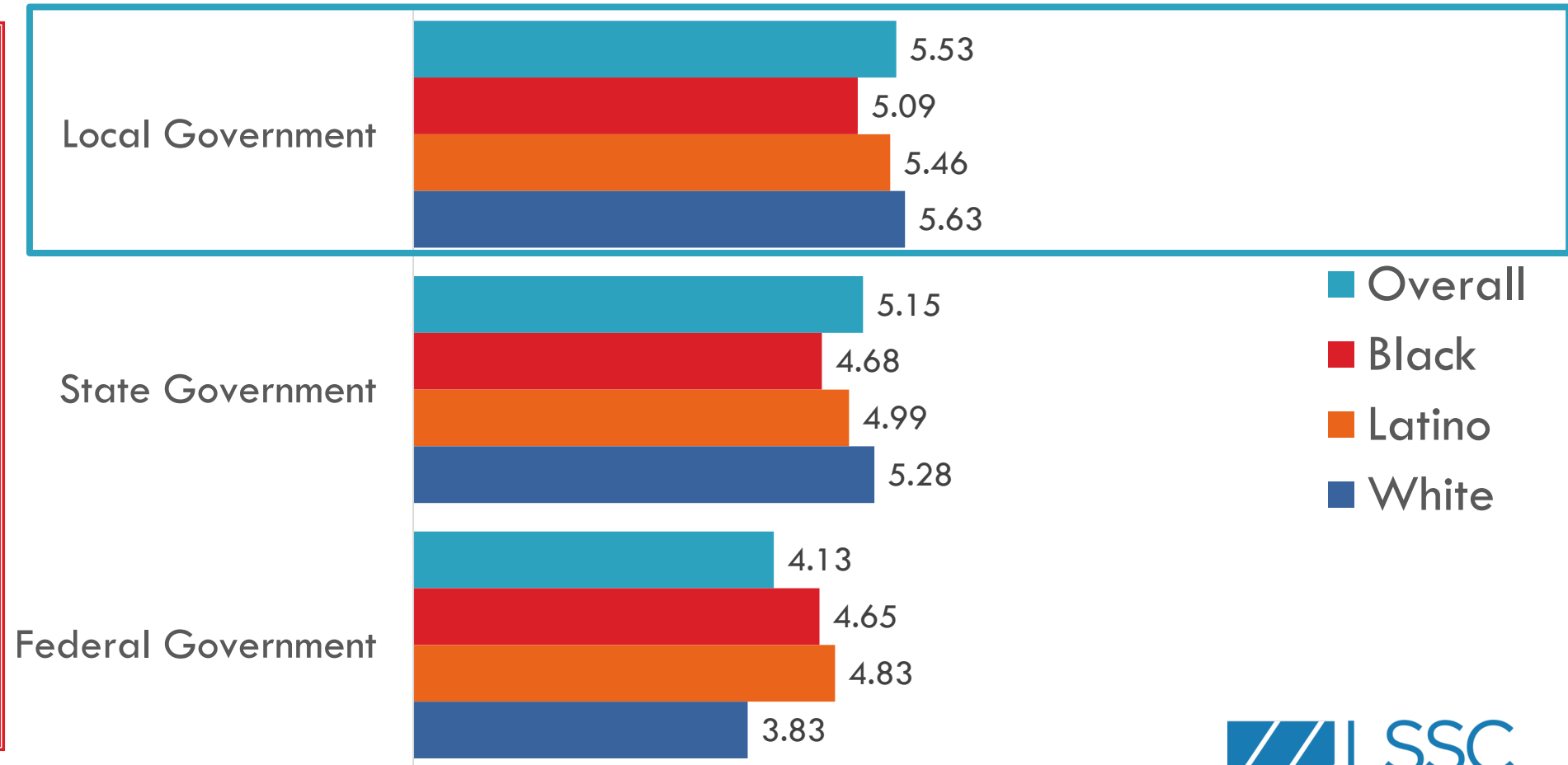
- I care about getting to the right decision on issues more than I care about what part of government makes a decision. I care more about the issues and less about whether it is my city, state or federal elected officials making a decision.
- Whenever possible, government decisions should be made by elected officials and government that are nearest to me, like my city, town, or county government. I trust local elected officials most to know what our community needs.

Voters are more trusting of local government than the state or federal government respectively

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How much do you trust each of the following to do what is best for people like you?

[Average ratings, full sample on a scale of 0 to 10.]

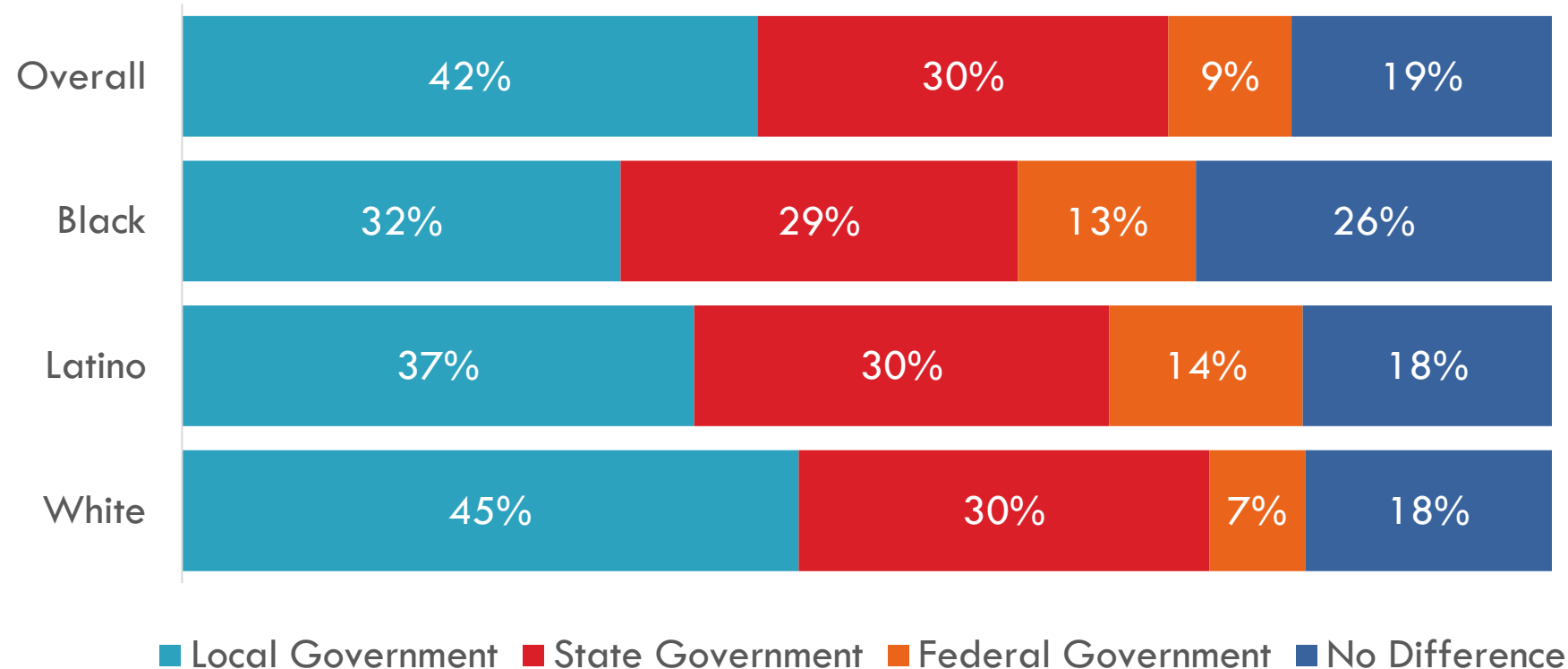


Voters prefer local leadership set rules for public schools, consistent with default trust in local government

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Which level of government do you trust most to do each of the following:

Set rules for your public schools.

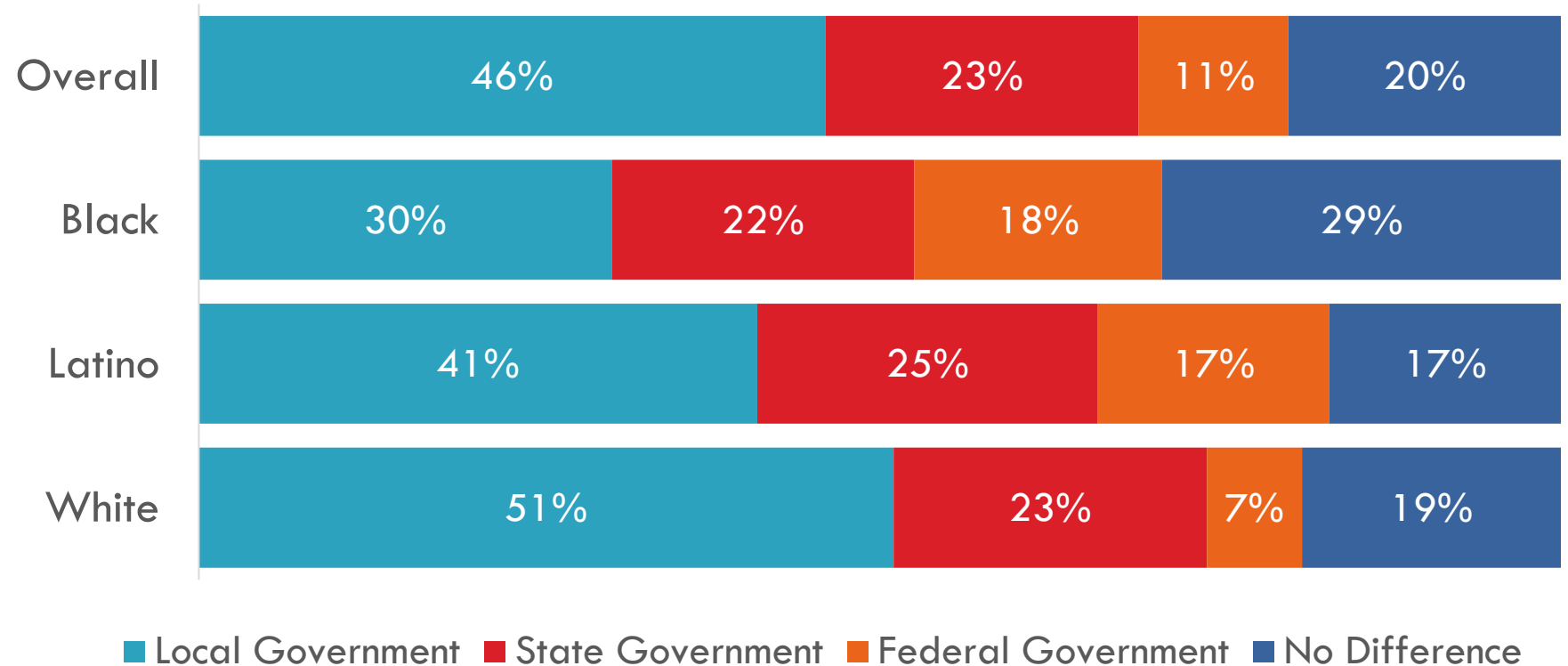


Similarly, pluralities prefer local government leadership on setting rules for police departments

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Which level of government do you trust most to do each of the following:

Set rules for your community's police department.

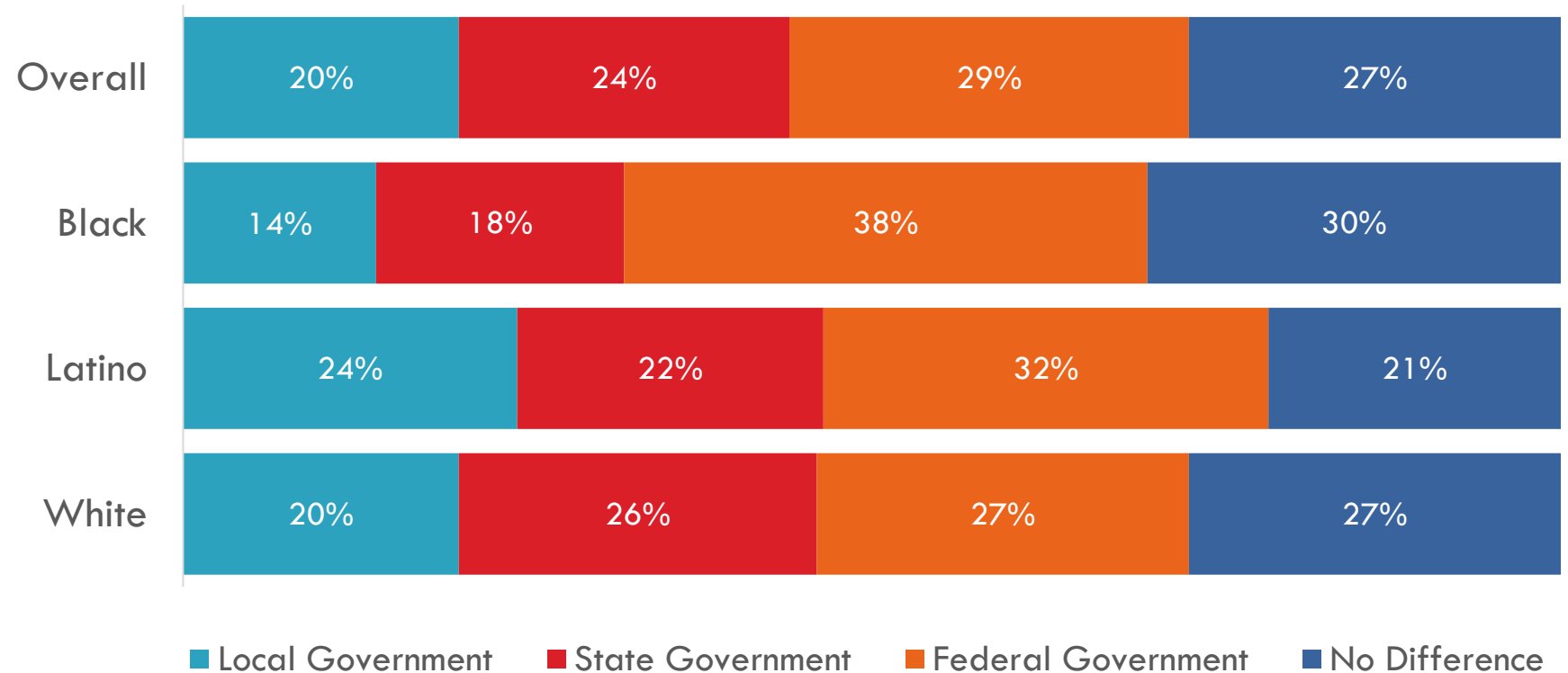


However, Pluralities back federal government leadership on COVID-19, with significant variation by race

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Which level of government do you trust most to do each of the following:

Respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Messaging Findings

Messaging Takeaways

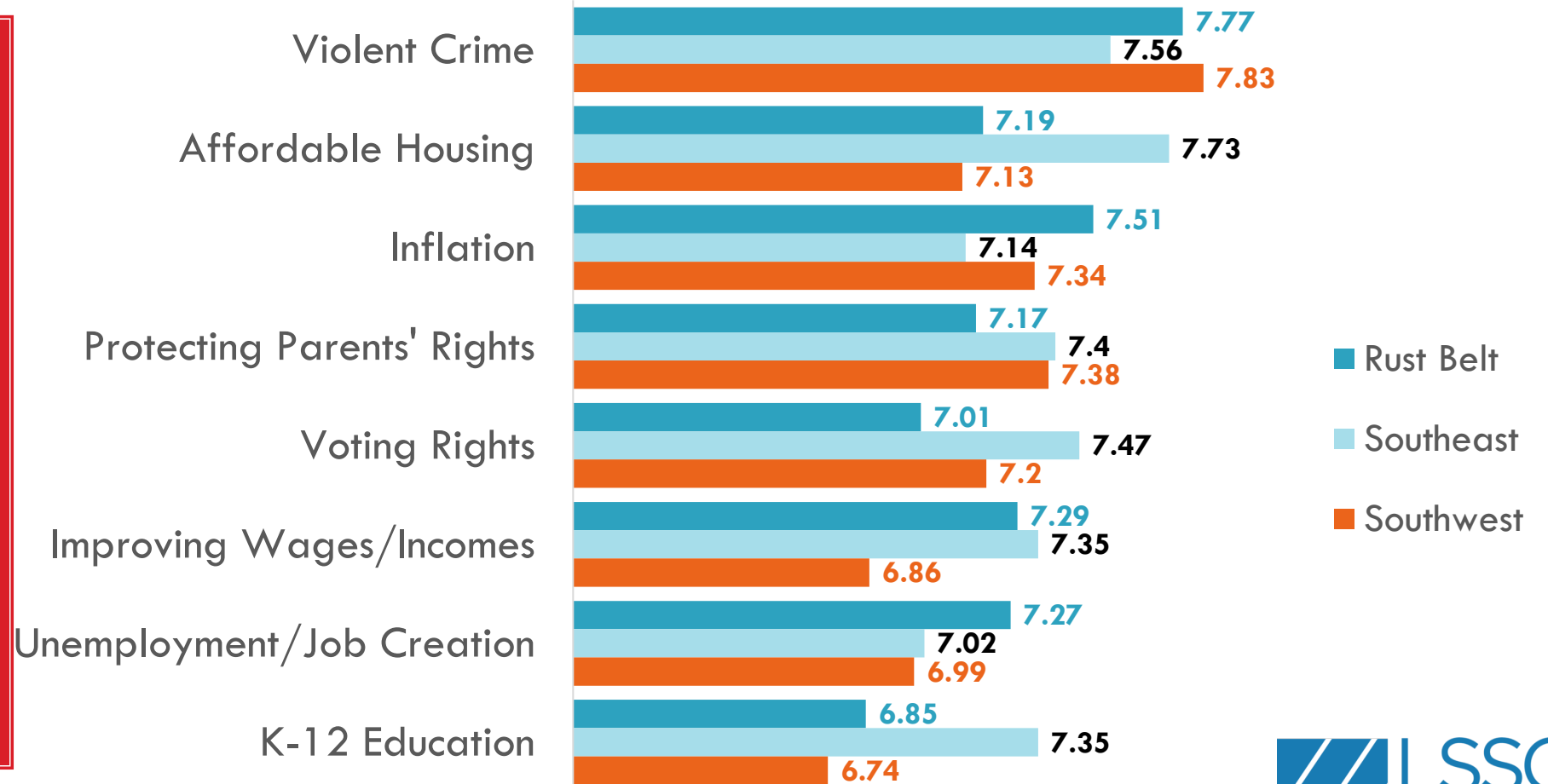
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- ❖ Start with issues, not preemption.
- ❖ Highlight the negative effect of corporate power on the authoritative power of local governments.
- ❖ When aiming to mobilize across race, appeals that frame preemption as a threat to American democracy can be effective.
- ❖ Appeals to Black/Latino audiences perform well when preemption is framed as an affront to Black/Latino political power. Black/Latinos messengers are most trusted.
- ❖ Emphasize the need to give power back to voters.
- ❖ Tackle CRT attacks with balance: Great country, many positive accomplishments, strong enough to teach children honestly about what we got wrong.

Voters' top priorities: Violent crime, affordable housing, kitchen table issues, voting rights, and schooling-related matters [Shown By Region]

Which of these issues do you think are most important for elected officials to address over the next year?

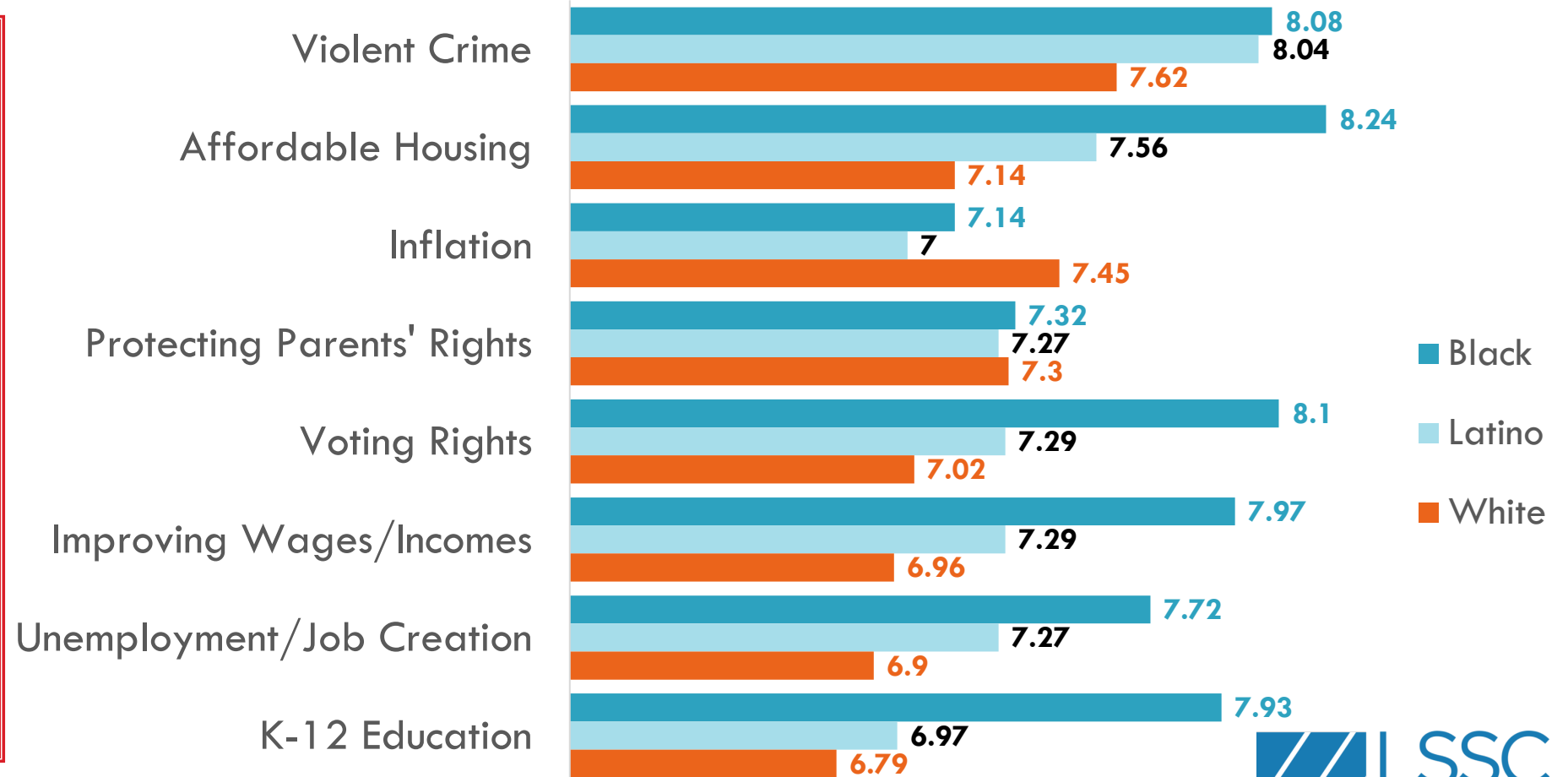
[Average ratings, full sample, on a 10-point scale]



Voters' top priorities: Violent crime, affordable housing, kitchen table issues, voting rights, and schooling-related matters [Shown by Race]

Which of these issues do you think are most important for elected officials to address over the next year?

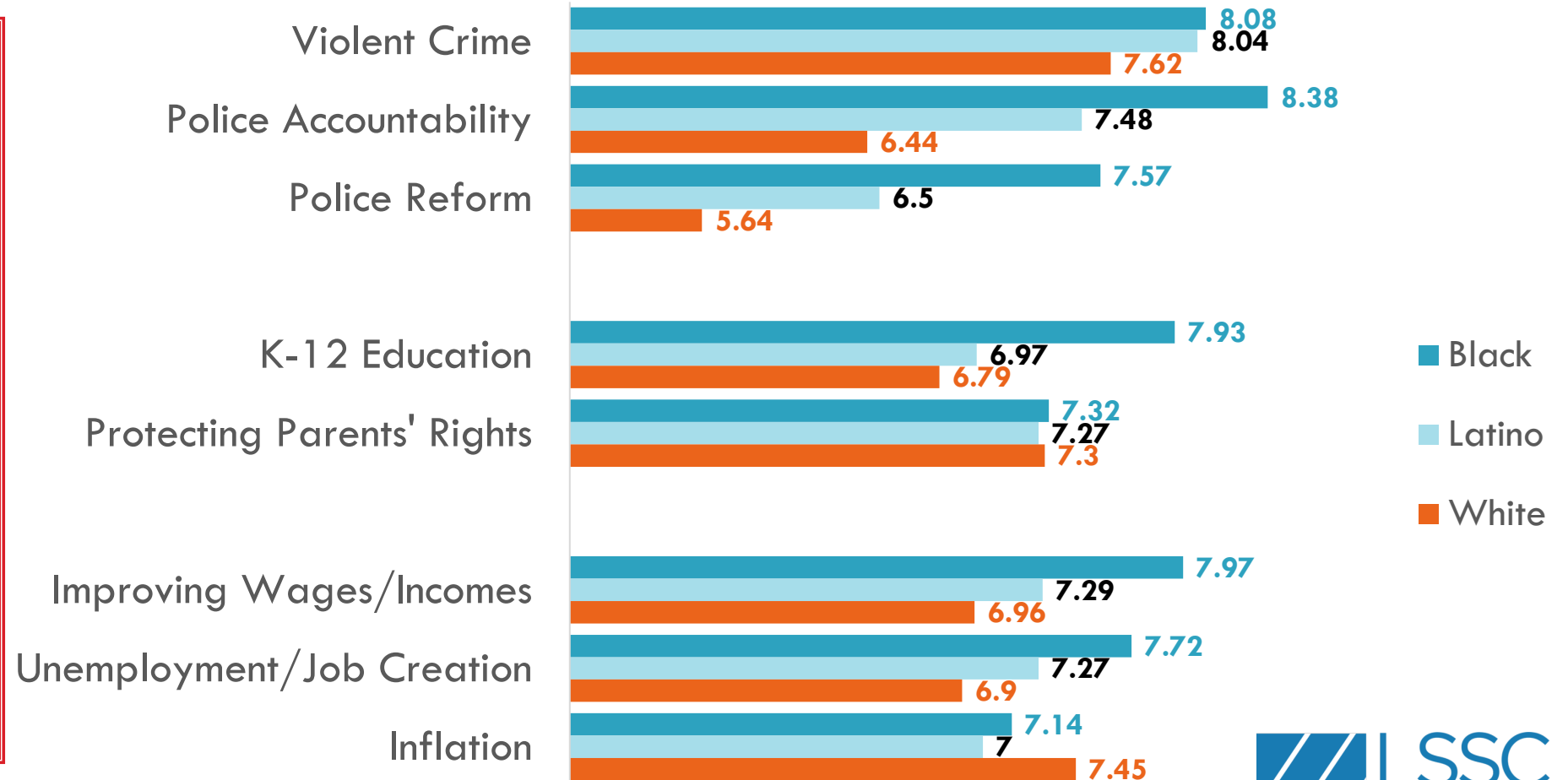
[Average ratings, full sample, on a 10-point scale]



Advocates should be mindful of progressive vs. conservative language cues when discussing overlapping issues

Which of these issues do you think are most important for elected officials to address over the next year?

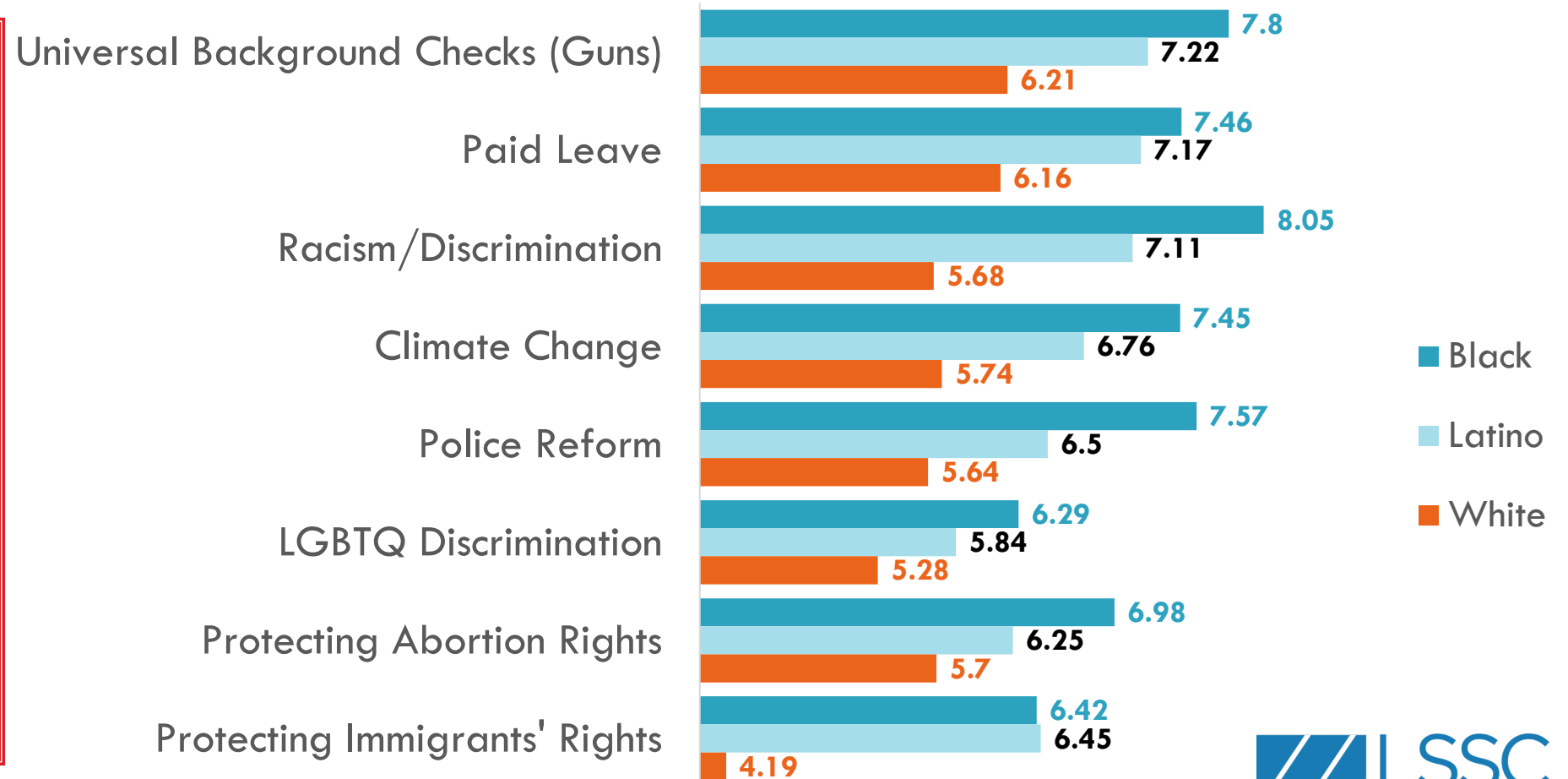
[Average ratings, full sample, on a 10-point scale]



How Additional Important Progressive Policy Priorities Test

Which of these issues do you think are most important for elected officials to address over the next year?

[Average ratings, full sample, on a 10-point scale]

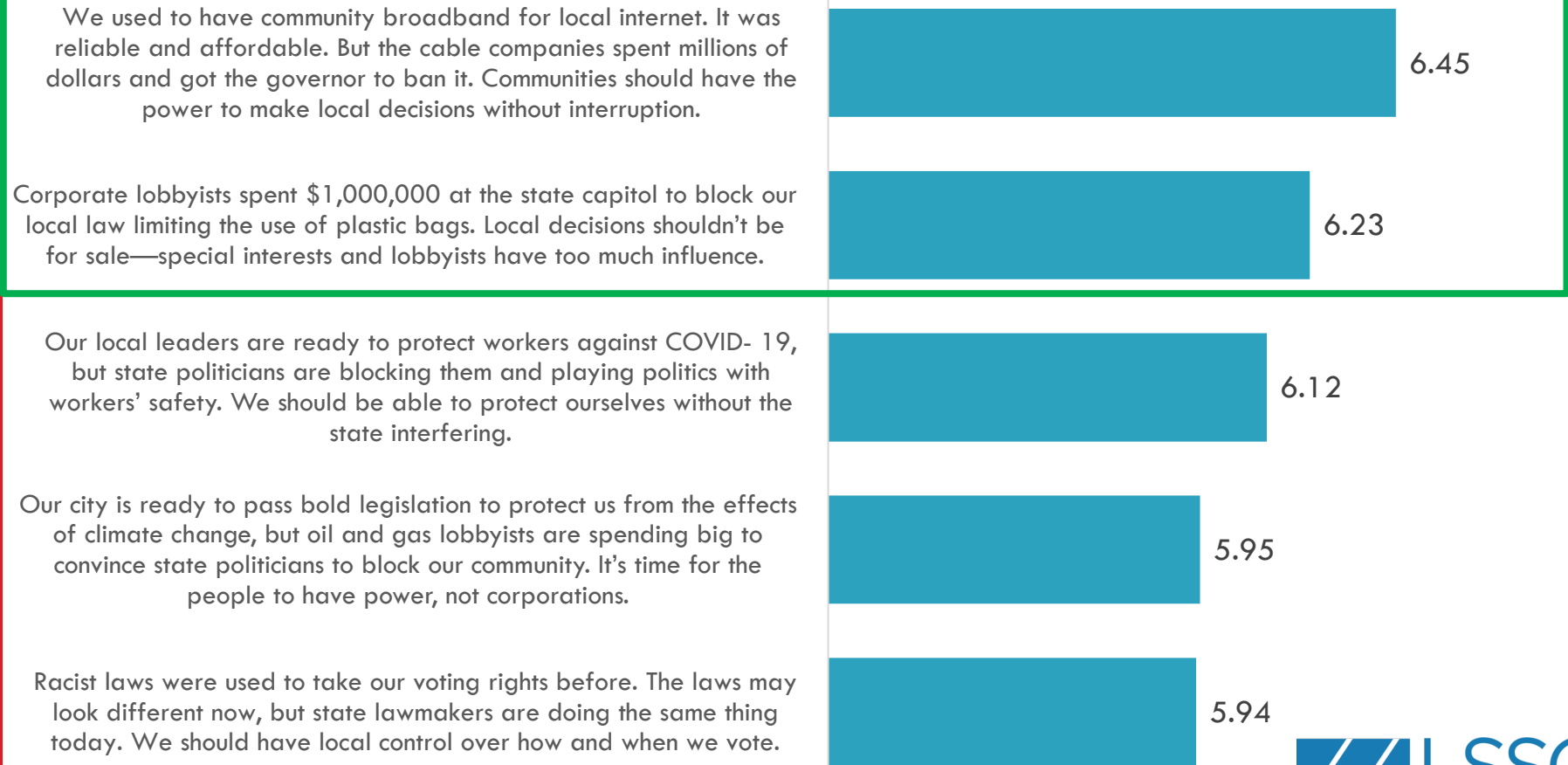


Arguments centering corporate influence on local autonomy offer a useful broad-spectrum messaging framework

“Preemption” is when a state government takes power away from a local government because state leaders do not like the policies created by local elected officials.

How effective are the following statements in convincing you to oppose state government taking power away from local government?

[Average ratings, full sample on a scale of 0 to 10.]



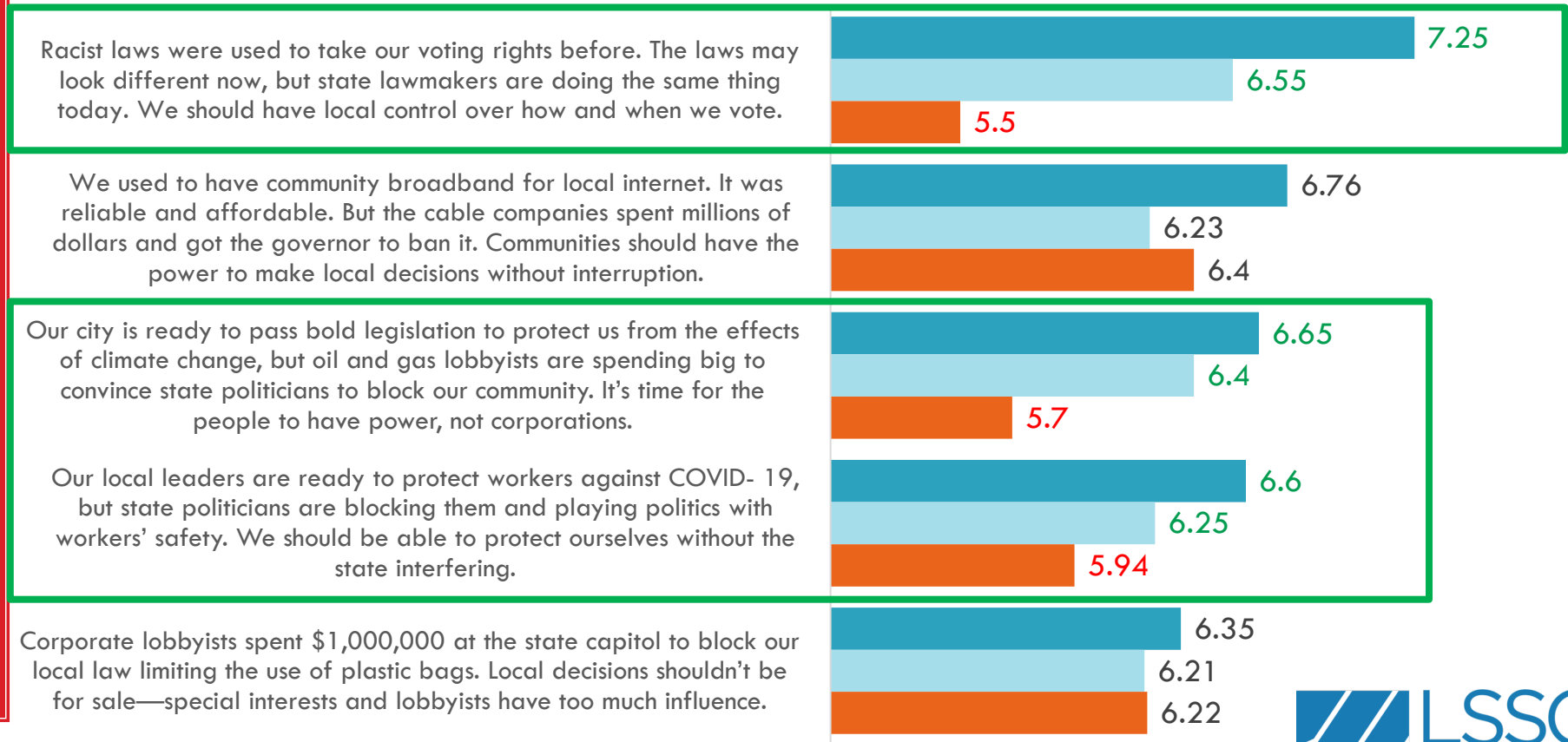
“Racist Laws/Voting Rights” argument is the most resonant among Blacks and Latinos; the least resonant for Whites

■ Black ■ Latino ■ White

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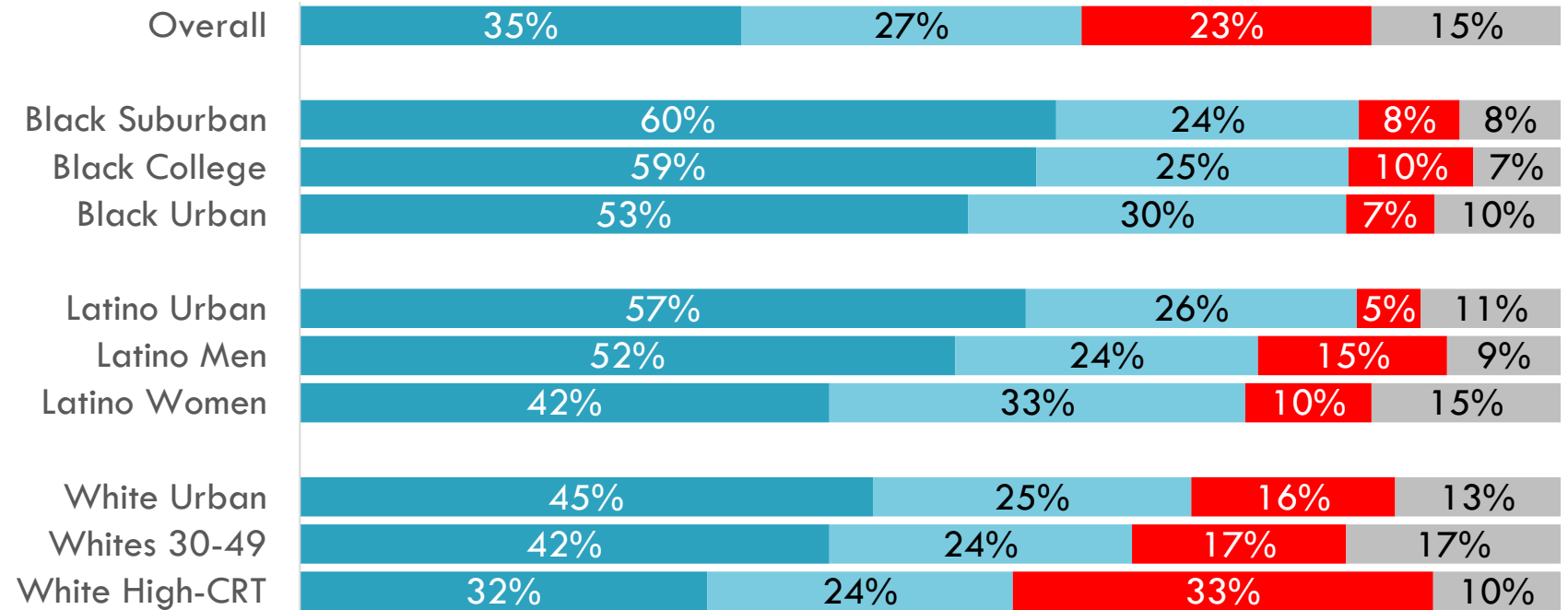
[Average ratings, full sample on a scale of 0 to 10.]



Framing preemption as the suppression of Black/Latino political power activates Black and Latino voters

Some people believe that state governments are discriminating against Black and Latino citizens when they undo policies passed by city governments.

Local officials are elected, often by Black and Latino voters, to solve local problems. State officials, on the other hand, are often suburban and rural White voters. In many places, state officials have blocked local governments from raising their minimum wage, requiring new affordable housing, or taking steps to stop COVID-19, all of which would benefit people of color.

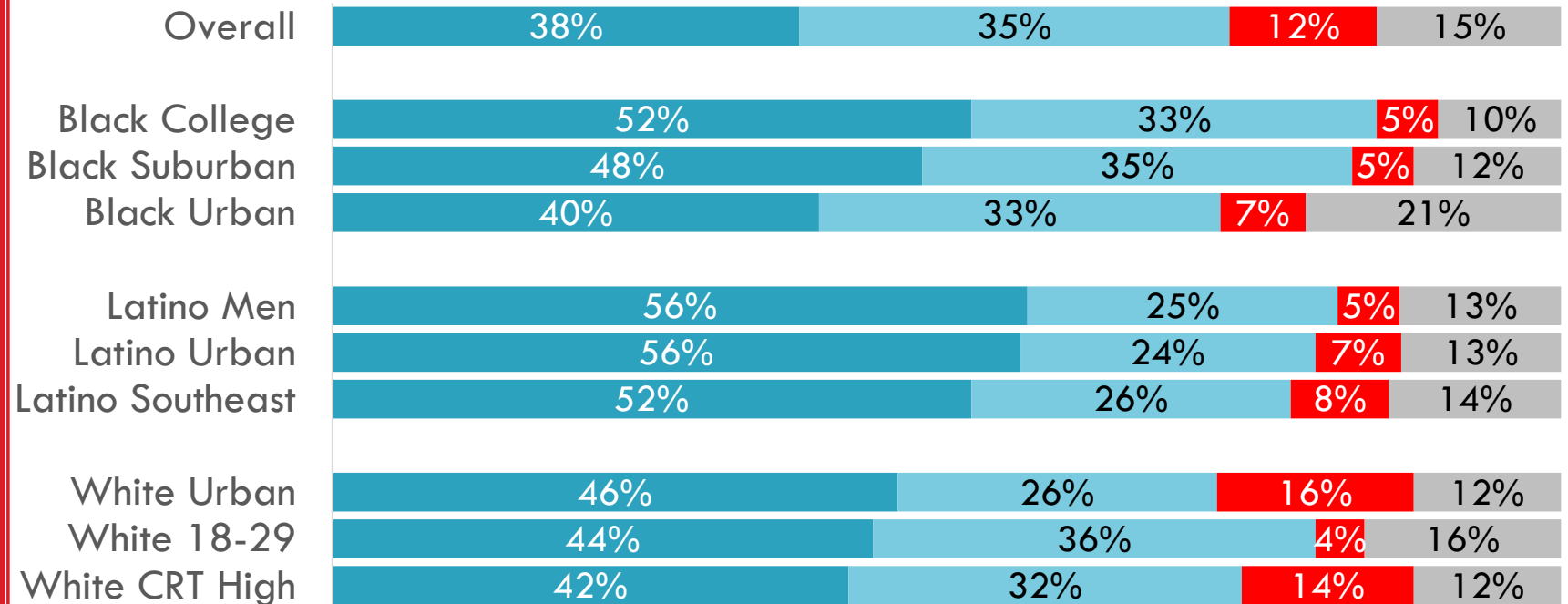


- Agree + Makes Me More Likely to Take Action
- Agree, But Not More Likely to Take Action
- Disagree
- Don't Know

Framing preemption as a danger to American democracy can help make gains with Whites alongside Blacks & Latinos

Some people believe that state governments that stop local governments from taking action on important issues endanger our democracy.

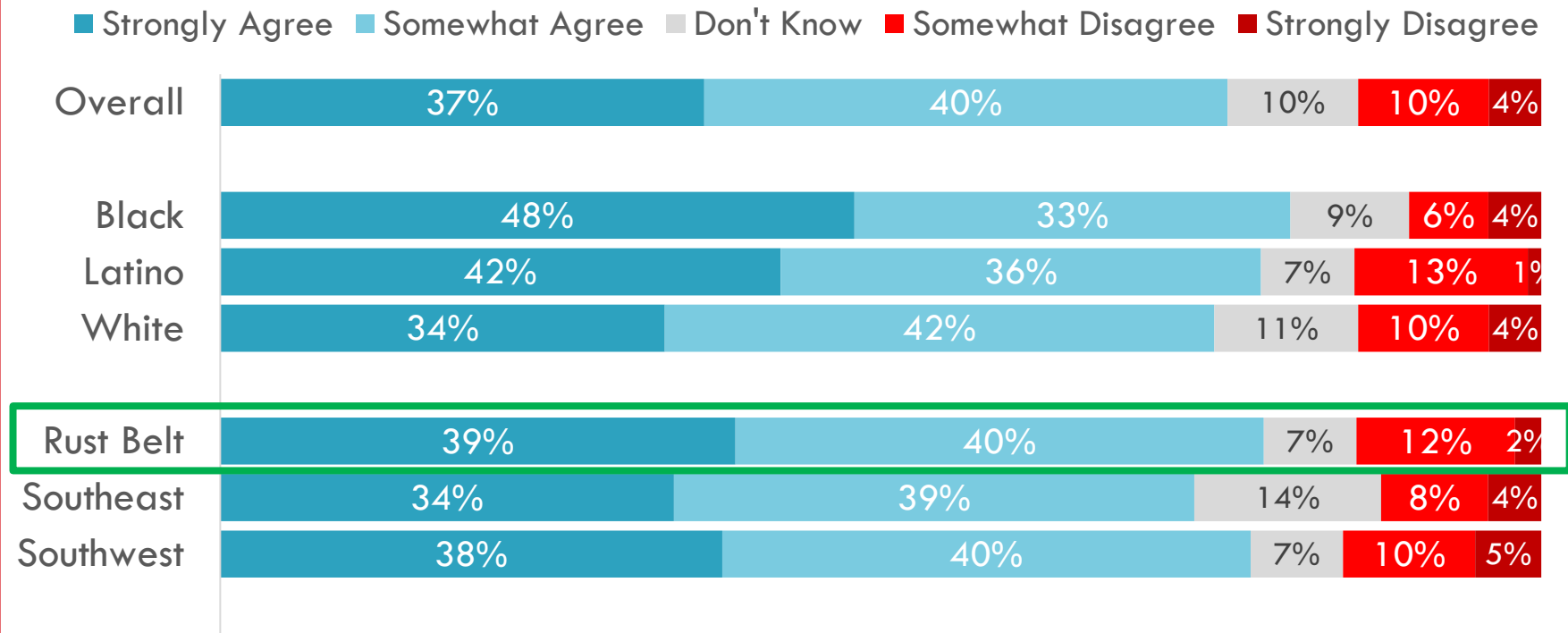
State lawmakers often put the interests of their wealthy donors above doing what is best for all citizens. They pass unpopular laws and block local elected leaders trying to do the right thing. These advocates believe that stopping self-interested state-level politicians from interfering with local decision-making is about restoring and protecting American democracy.



- Agree + Makes Me More Likely to Take Action
- Agree, But Not More Likely to Take Action
- Disagree
- Don't Know

Highlighting “state failure” resonates as a permission structure for local government leadership

When the state government fails to act on an issue that I care about, local governments must take responsibility and pass local rules to address the state’s failure.



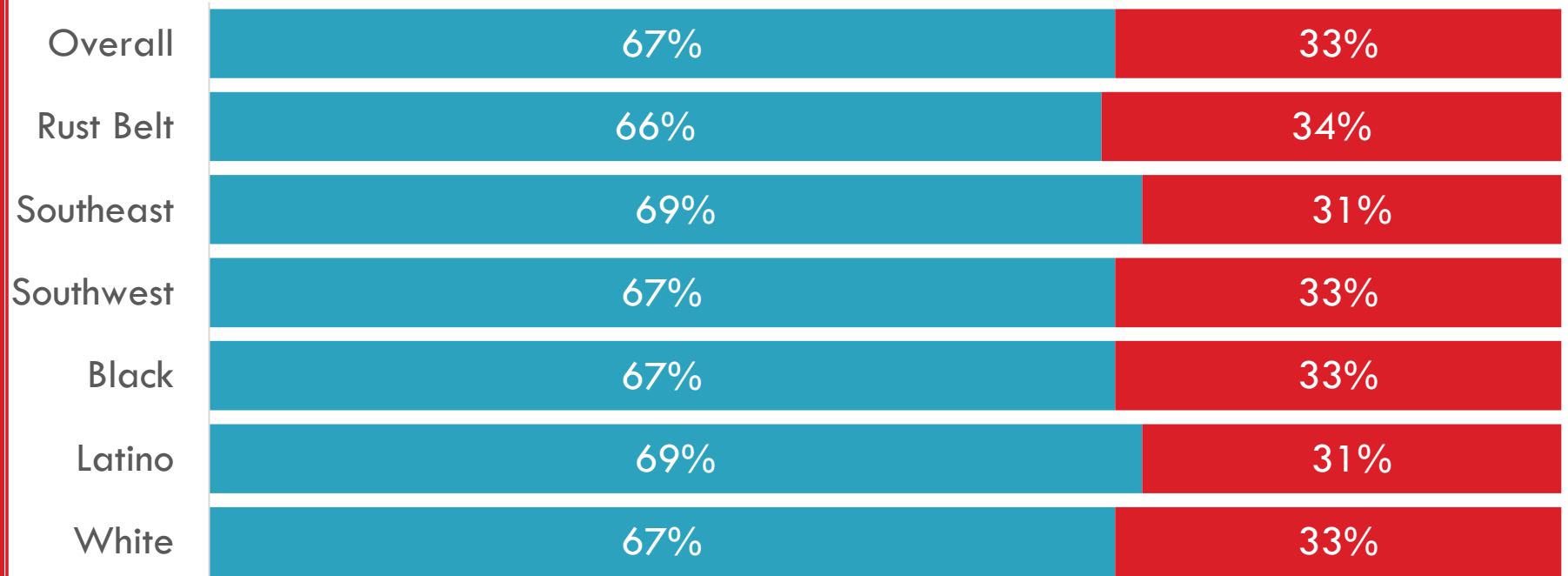
Respondents overwhelmingly favor “giving power back” to voters over “taking power” from bad politicians

When it comes to our government and political system, which do you think is more important?

A) Giving Power Back to the Voters

OR

B) Taking power back from self-interested politicians



■ Giving Power Back to the Voters

■ Taking power back from self-interested politicians

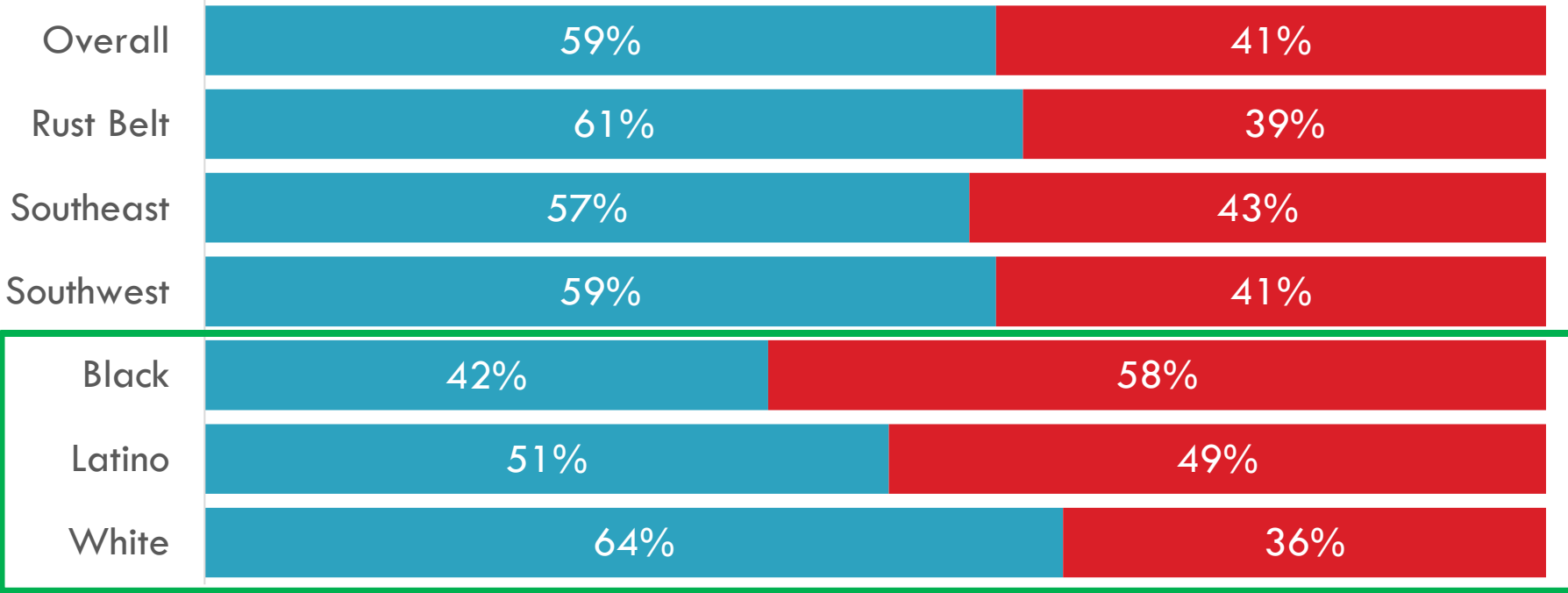
Voters broadly favor political stability over progress; African Americans strongly favor political progress

When it comes to our government and political system, which do you think is more important?

A) Political stability

OR

B) Political progress

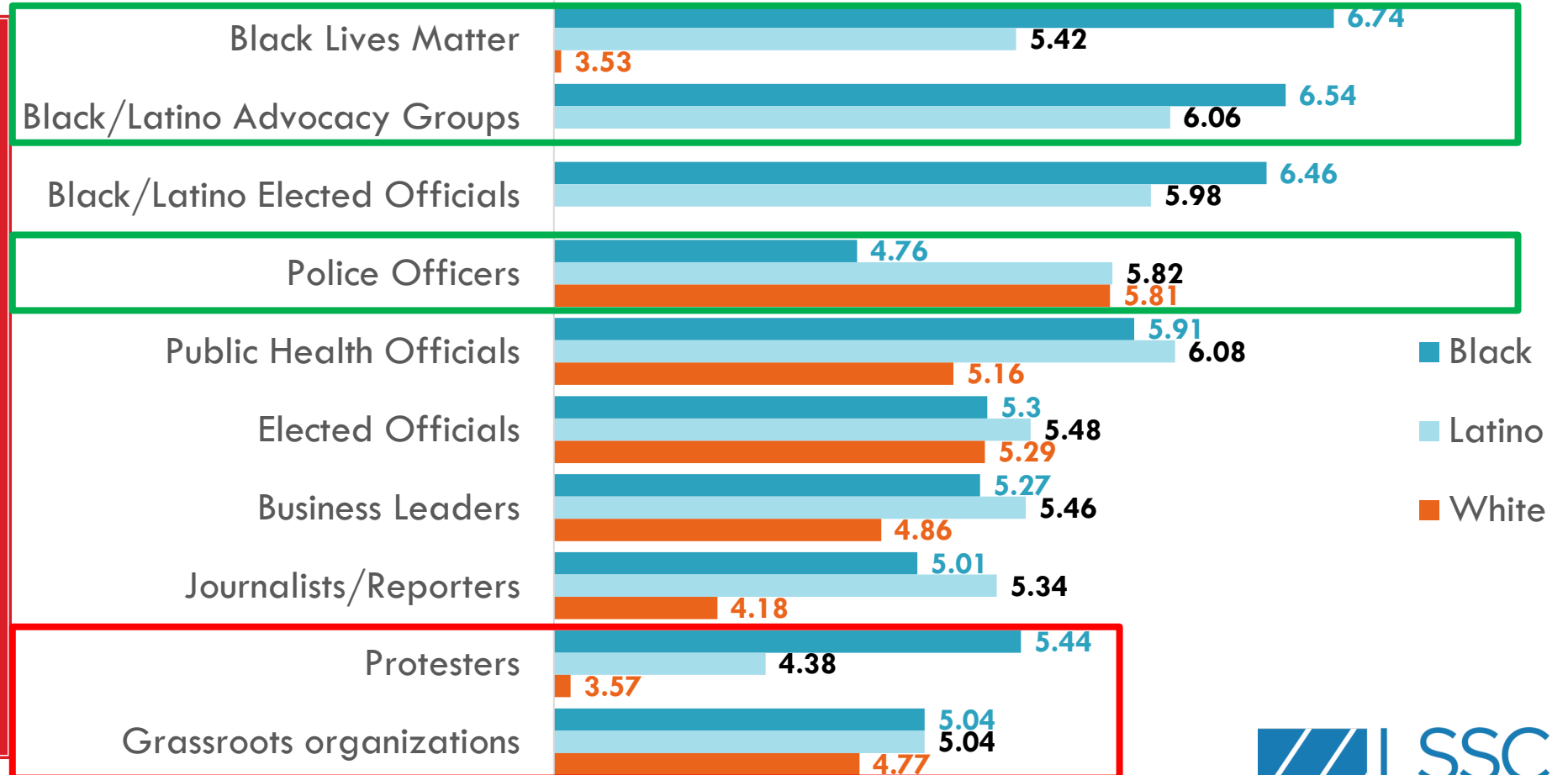


■ Political Stability ■ Political Progress

Racial proximity important to Black & Latino voters' perceptions of change agents; Whites most trusting of police

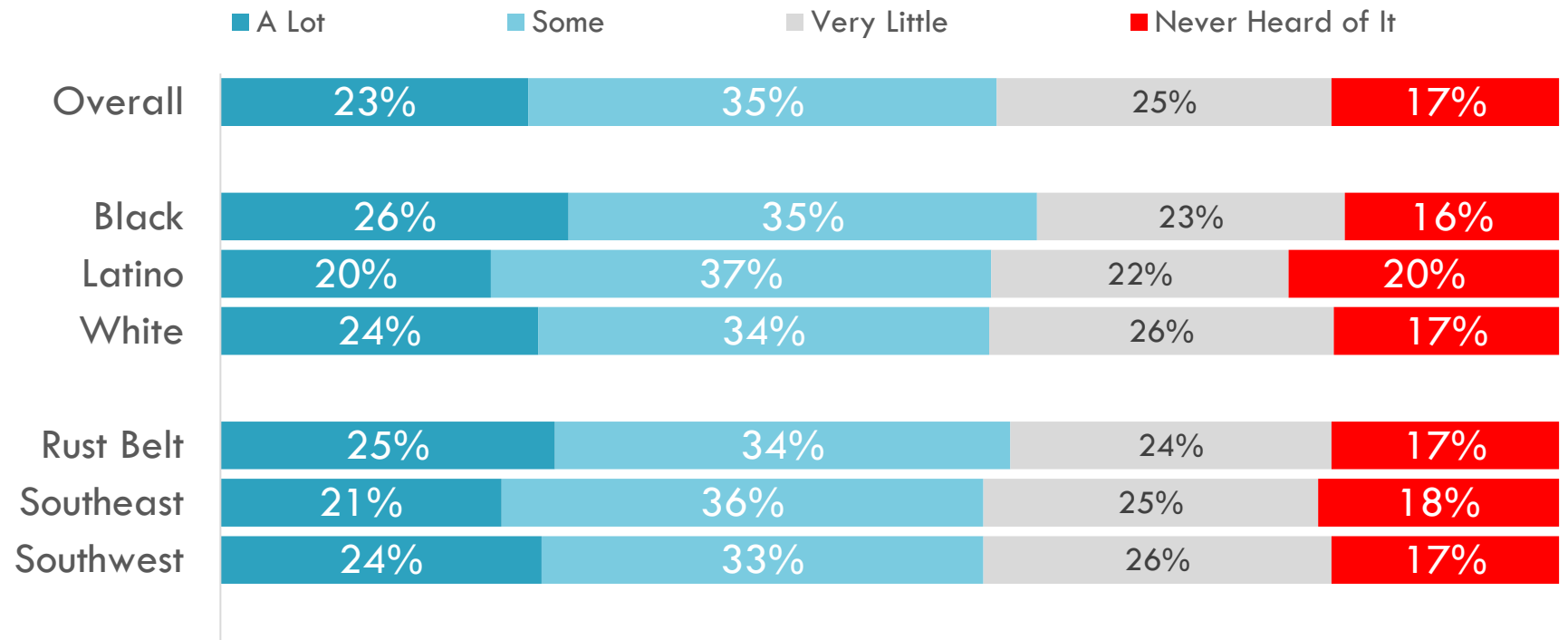
If you wanted to change something in your city or local community, how effective do you think the following people or groups would be in making sure that change happens?

[Average ratings, full sample, on a 10-point scale]



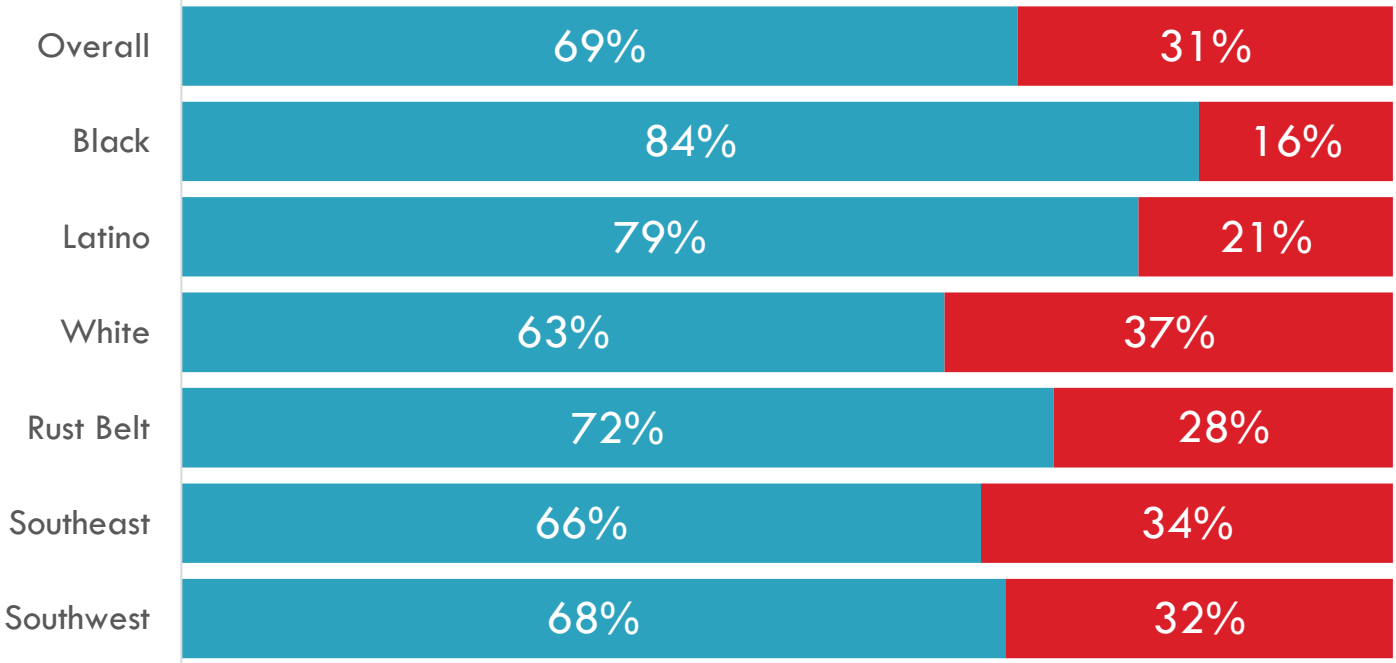
Voters by region and race report low familiarity of “Critical Race Theory”

How much have you heard about “critical race theory”?



Advocates should be balanced but assertive on CRT and arguing for teaching about the history of racism in America

Our country has an amazing history, but we also did some things wrong. Public schools should teach children about all of American history, including the good and the bad. Learning about our history of slavery and discrimination against African Americans, violence against Native Americans, and rules against Chinese Americans and Latinos immigrating to the United States allows children to understand how racism worked in the past and will help us as a country to stop racism in the future.



The focus on teaching about racism in schools may be well intentioned but in practice it means that white children are singled out and made to feel ashamed and guilty. Parents should be able to decide what history their children are exposed to and when.

Messaging Takeaways

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- ❖ Appeals to Black/Latino audiences perform well when preemption is framed as an affront to Black/Latino political power. Black/Latinos messengers are most trusted.
- ❖ Emphasize the need to give power back to voters.
- ❖ Tackle CRT attacks with balance: Great country, many positive accomplishments, strong enough to teach children honestly about what we got wrong.

Your Presenters & Polling Research Leads

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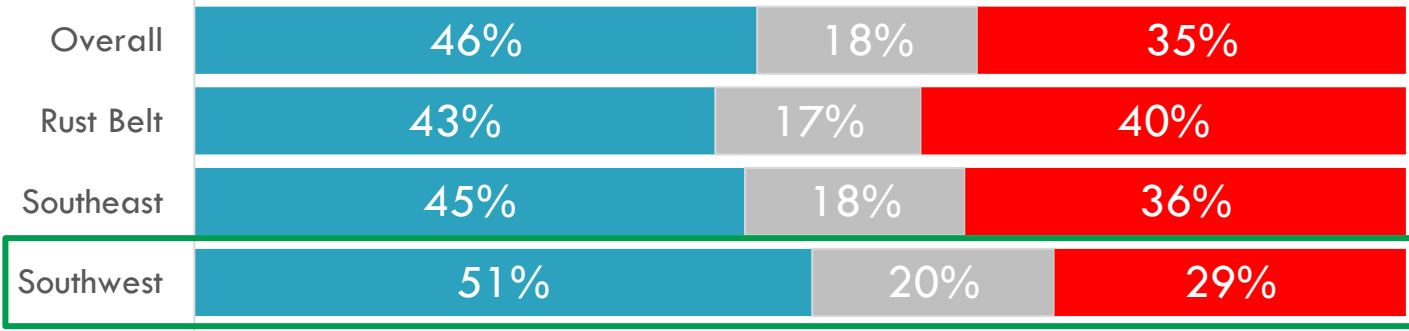
Appendix

Rust Belt voters show stronger deference to state on mask mandates

Southwest voters show more deference to local governments

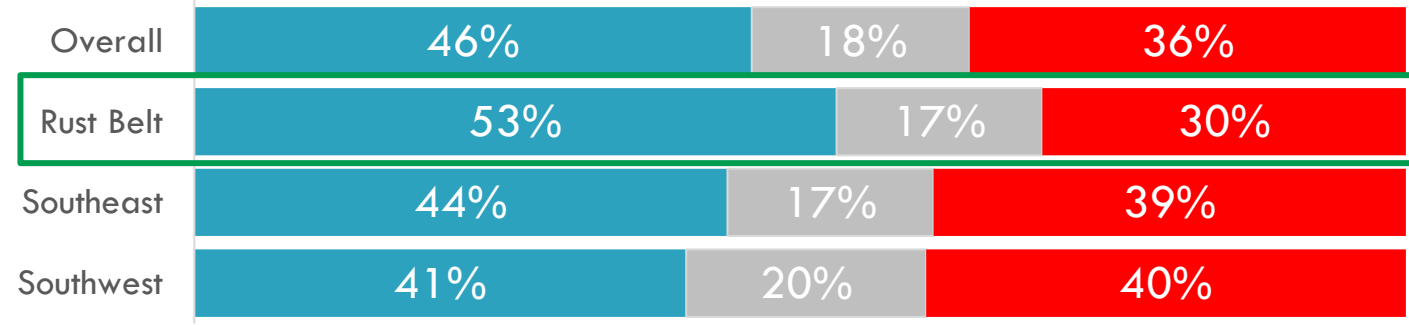
Gray is neither

Local elected officials who enforce mask mandates, saying that requiring masks in schools...



Governors and state government officials who ban local mask mandates...

Governors and state government officials who enforce statewide mask mandates...

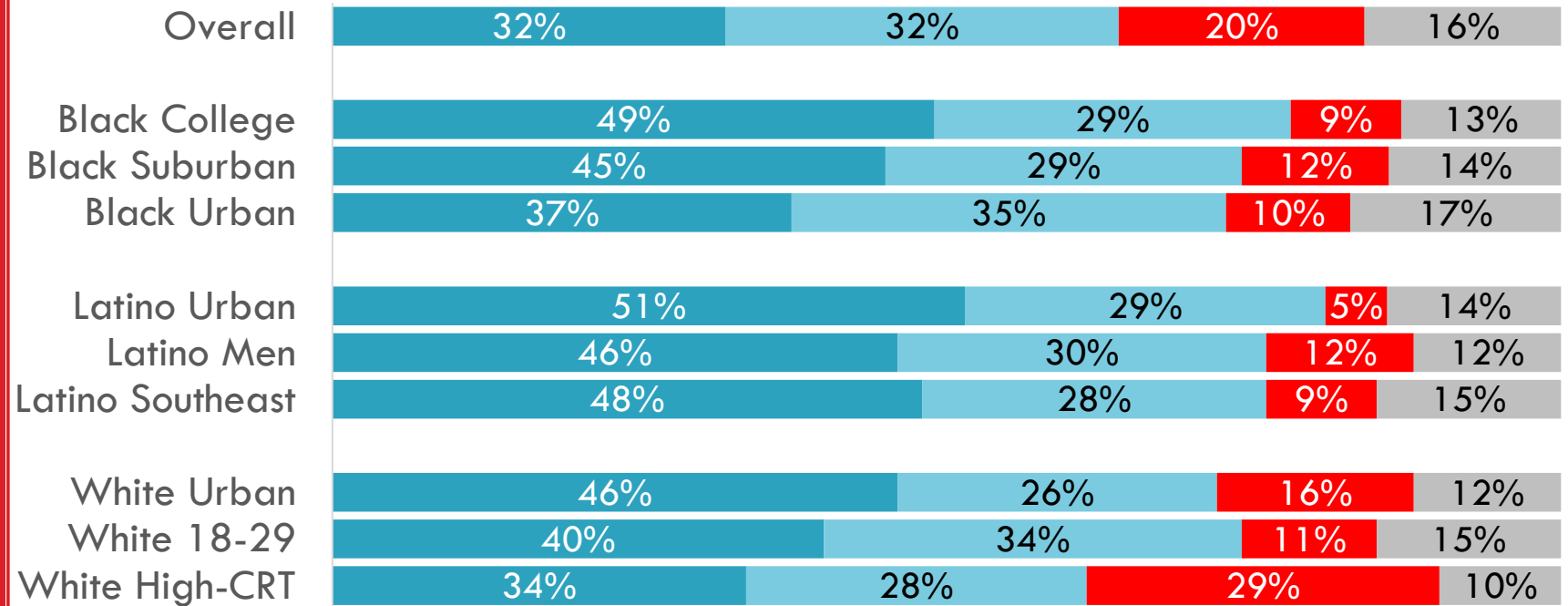


Local elected officials and activists who fight statewide mask mandates...

Framing preemption as a threat to economic opportunity is less promising as a mobilizing message vs. alternatives

Some people believe that state governments that stop local governments from enacting policies addressing social and cultural issues, are a threat to economic opportunity for all.

For example, several states have prevented local governments from enacting anti-discrimination laws designed to protect LGBTQ people, which ultimately led to the cancellation and/or relocation of major sports events, job opportunities, performances, and business conventions. These advocates believe that we can protect our economic future by stopping state governments from interfering with local decision-making.



- Agree + Makes Me More Likely to Take Action
- Agree, But Not More Likely to Take Action
- Disagree
- Don't Know

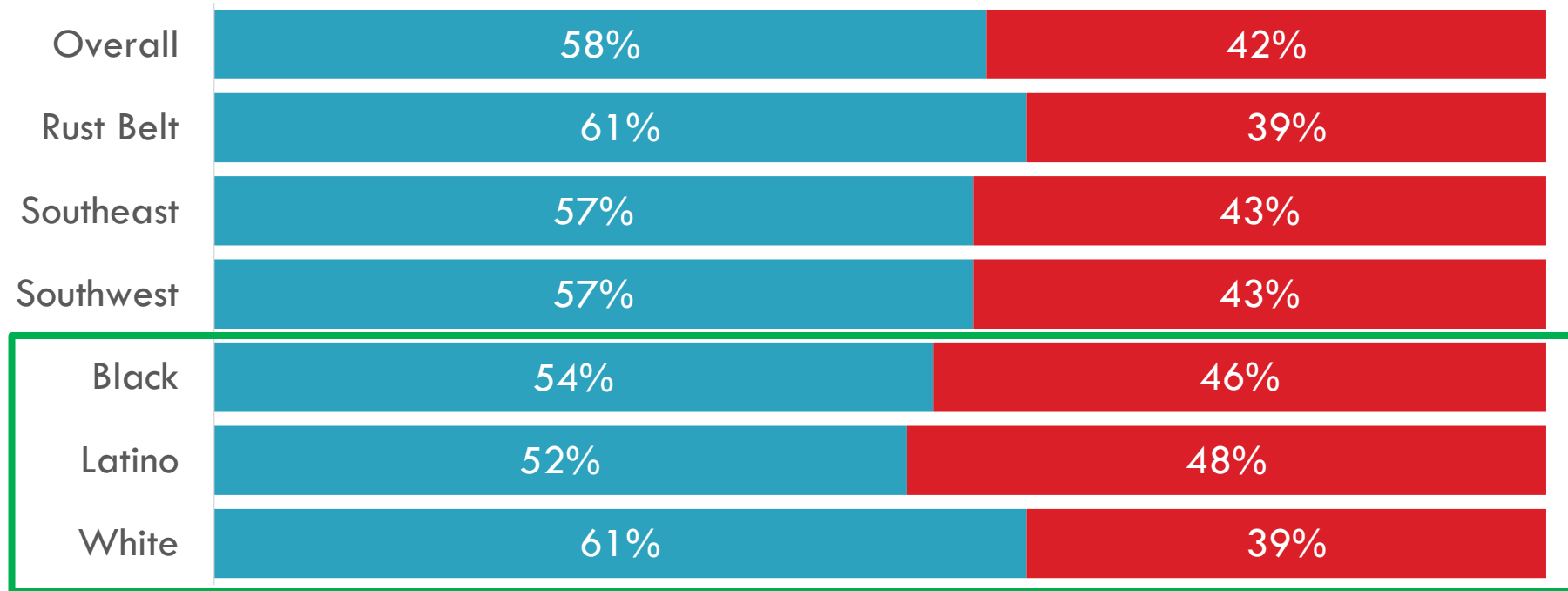
Voters generally favor economic stability over economic progress.
But White voters more inclined to favor economic stability over progress.

When it comes to our government and political system, which do you think is more important?

A) Economic stability

OR

B) Economic progress



■ Economic Stability

■ Economic Progress