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Expanding the Primary Electorate

A Segmentation Study on Who Participates, Who Doesn't, and Why

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More in Common
UNITE AMERICA Institute





The research in this publication was conducted by More in Common, a nonpartisan research nonprofit that works to understand the forces driving us apart, find common ground, and bring people together to address shared challenges. More in Common partnered with Unite America Institute on this research.

Established in 2017, More in Common works in the US and six other countries to help strengthen societies to become more united and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division.

More in Common's work is frequently featured in media and used by leaders in government, nonprofits, philanthropy, education, the arts and business.

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Executive Summary (1 of 2)

In 2026, just 23.3% of the voting-eligible population participated in midterm primaries. Even though turnout is higher in general elections (it was 46.2% in 2022 and 63.9% in 2024), most elections are decided during the primaries. Despite often being the most important election, especially where one party dominates the general election, many Americans are missing out on a major opportunity to choose who represents them. Primary elections also remain understudied compared to general elections, leaving questions about who participates, why, and how to help more Americans to the polls during primaries.

A new study from More in Common and Unite America Institute offers clues for how to expand this primary electorate and increase participation. Our central finding is that **expanding the primary electorate is partly about helping willing but inconsistent participants become regular voters**, not only making sure engaged voters turn out or persuading disengaged Americans to care.

1. We identified five distinct groups of Americans based on their relationships with primary elections.

- **Do-Your-Part Primary Voters** (share of adult citizens is 22%): Regular voters who emphasize civic duty, personal responsibility, and confidence in the system.
- **Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters** (21%): Politically engaged but exhausted, with concerns about inequality and whom the government serves.
- **Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters** (19%): Want to vote more but have knowledge gaps and other barriers alongside less consistent participation.
- **Not-For-Me Americans** (30%): Less engaged in primaries and doubtful that the process is for people like them.
- **Focused-Elsewhere Americans** (7%): Disconnected from political life, with considerable uncertainty about political and social topics and little political or civic participation.

Executive Summary (2 of 2)

2. **We identify a promising opportunity to expand primary participation among Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters**, who make up nearly one in five U.S. adult citizens. Their strong desire to participate coexists with less consistent voting and substantial gaps in their understanding of primary elections. Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters report practical, informational, and interpersonal barriers to voting. This group also expresses the highest support for primary election reform.

3. **Social context matters: primary participation is connected to family, school, and social life. Psychology also matters:** personal habits and psychological outlooks are associated with primary participation and the desire to vote more.

4. The two most consistent primary-voter groups share a commitment to civic participation but have different worldviews, including about individual responsibility and the fairness of the system. Do-Your-Part Primary Voters are much more likely to believe that hard work can bring success regardless of starting circumstances. Meanwhile, Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters are far more likely to believe that government is rigged to favor the wealthy and powerful.

5. Though they together account for nearly 4 in 10 adult citizens, the two least-participating groups are not interchangeable. Not-For-Me Americans tend to express more alienation and doubts about the relevance of primary elections, while Focused-Elsewhere Americans stand out for their uncertainty about political topics and limited connection to politics in any form.

Expanding the Primary Electorate

Outline

Sections

1. Methodology
2. The Five Primary Orientations
3. Opportunity Segment: Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters
4. Who Participates
5. Parsing Established Primary Voters
6. Social Context, Psychology, and Primaries
7. Conclusion

Why Segmentation

In this project we conduct a segmentation of American citizens—both voters and nonvoters—based on their **orientation toward primary elections**. A segmentation is a way of using statistical methods to group people who share similar patterns of values, priorities, and beliefs.

Rather than looking at Americans only by political party, age, race, or other demographic characteristics, we identify five groups based on how people think about primary elections and civic engagement broadly. A person is assigned to a segment based on the overall pattern of their responses.

The groups help us understand:

- why people who vote differently may agree on some issues
- why people in the same party may want different things, and
- where there may be unexpected areas of common ground

Via segmentation, we can better understand the distinct ways that different groups in the community participate in elections and support for reforms.

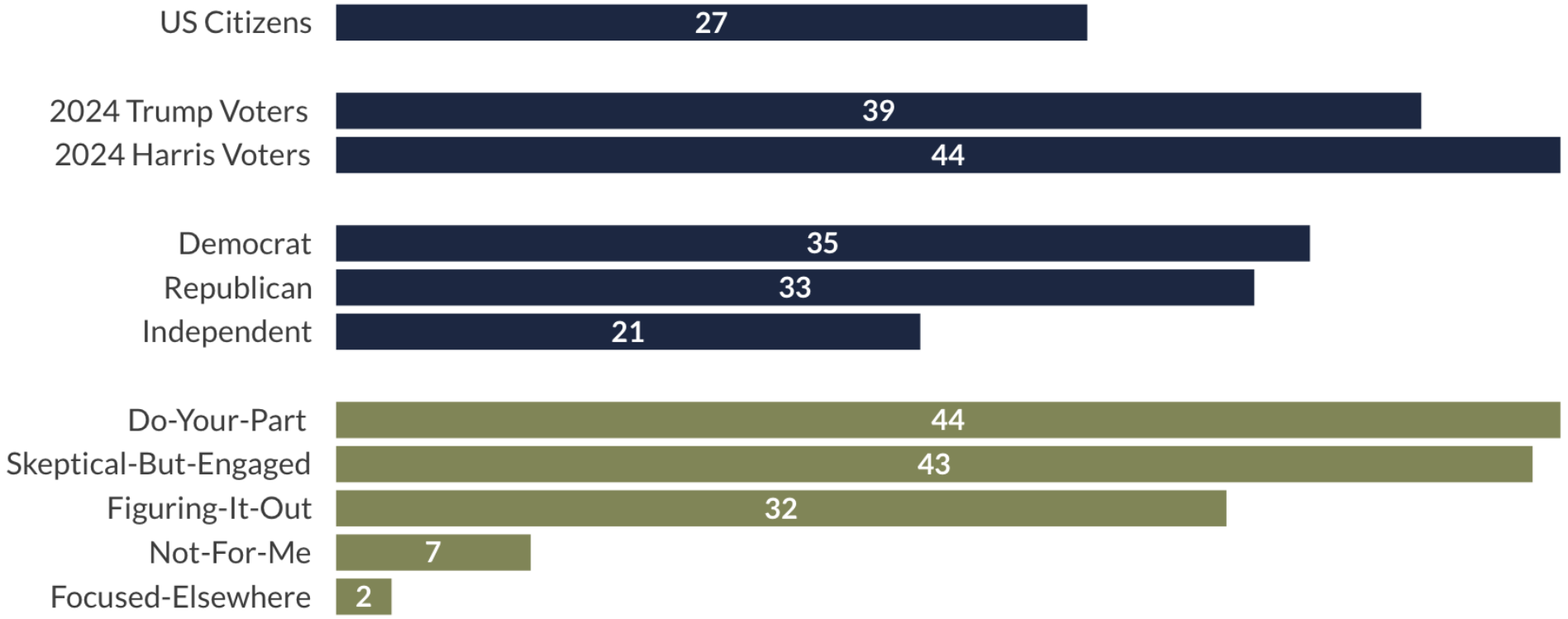
Using these groups as shortcuts to understand people's values and worldviews better helps us **design more effective strategies** that start with where people are at.

The Value of Segmentation: Beyond Partisanship

Our Primary Orientation segments can show further spread than political affiliation does on key questions like primary election turnout.

"Thinking about your state's 2026 primary election, which of the following best describes you?"

Showing the % of U.S. citizens who already voted in their state's 2026 primary or definitely intend to vote if their primary had not yet occurred at the time of the survey.



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Survey Research Methods

1

Nationally Representative Survey

N = 3,930 US adult citizens.
Fielded August 21–September 1, 2026 via Dynata

- The sample was recruited and weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult citizen population on gender and age (interlocked), race/ethnicity, education level, region, and 2024 presidential vote and turnout, based on data from the US Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey, 2025 Population Estimates Program, November 2024 Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement, and certified 2024 presidential election results.
- The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is ±1.82 percentage points for the national sample and is higher for subgroups.
- We collected state-level information on election regulations, including primary date, type, and voting rules. We matched and appended relevant state-level election information to each respondent by their self-reported zip code.

2

Large Qualitative Panel

N = 304 US adults
Fielded October 14–20, 2026 via Recollective

- More in Common fielded an online research activity via Recollective on MIC's Americans in Conversation qualitative research panel. The panel is roughly representative of the US adult population across key demographic and political characteristics, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and party.
- The activity included questions designed to segment Americans based on their attitudes toward and participation in primary elections, alongside qualitative questions exploring why Americans choose to vote or not vote in primaries, their voting habits, motivations and barriers to participation.
- Quotations are anonymized and lightly edited for spelling and grammar.

Segmentation Process (1 of 2)

Step 1: Define the problem space. Of all our survey questions, we decided which would be inputs to the segmentation, which questions we want the segmentation to explain (including primary election behaviors and primary reform attitudes), and which questions would describe the segments (including demographics). To form the groups of respondents, or segments, we started with 88 survey questions as inputs. The inputs included primary election attitudes, political attitudes, political behaviors, core beliefs, social experiences, civics education, and psychological factors relevant to this orientation toward primary elections

Step 2: Input processing. We then found underlying patterns in the data by reducing the survey questions into 'latent' factors by running an exploratory factor analysis. Each factor is comprised of survey questions that capture shared variation among correlated questions. In other words, we found the sets of questions that tend to move higher or lower in similar ways, revealing a likely underlying construct such as 'civics education exposure'. The factor analysis retained 60 of the 88 inputs, sorted into 10 distinct factors that we included as inputs into the segmentation:

- Primary election voting identity
- Civics education exposure
- Low knowledge of/exposure to politics
- Institutional and social trust
- Primary election awareness
- Perfectionism and discipline
- Individualism/self-reliance
- Disaffection for both political parties
- Appetite to learn
- Openness and sociability

Segmentation Process (2 of 2)

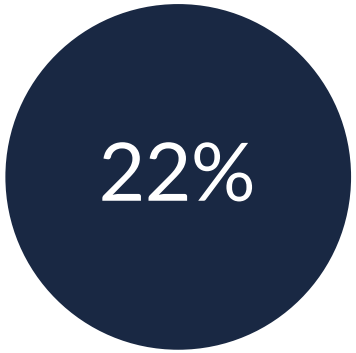
Step 3: Apply clustering algorithm to inputs and decide on segmentation solution. We then used those factors to conduct a type of segmentation called 'k++ means'. This is an algorithm that places data points into groups based on their distance to the center of the group and to other nearby groups. It iteratively tries different starting points as the center of each cluster until it finds stable center points.

Step 4: Validate segmentation. We then evaluated multiple possible solutions to select the best one by its internal and external validity—how reliably the segmentation can be reconstructed and how well it explains key outcomes in the data, including 2026 primary election voting behavior (self-reported). In addition to the quantitative metrics of validity, we ran a large qualitative panel activity with 304 participants through the More in Common “Americans in Conversation” panel to assess the segment profiles.

The Five Primary Orientations



At a glance: Five orientations toward primary participation



Do-Your-Part Primary Voters

Regular voters who emphasize civic duty, personal responsibility, and confidence in the system.



Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters

Politically engaged but exhausted, with concerns about inequality and whom the government serves.



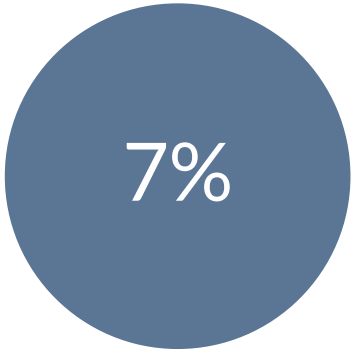
Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters

Want to vote more but have knowledge gaps and other barriers alongside less consistent participation.



Not-For-Me Americans

Less engaged in primaries and doubtful that the process is for people like them.



Focused-Elsewhere Americans

Disconnected from political life, with considerable uncertainty about political and social topics and little political or civic participation.

Percentages do not total to 100 due to rounding.

Do-Your-Part Primary Voters

22%

WHO THEY ARE

Do-Your-Part Primary Voters are more reliable primary election participants who see voting as a basic civic responsibility. **Civic duty animates them.** They often emphasize the importance of staying informed about candidates and issues before casting their ballots. **They follow primaries early, know when elections are happening, and generally like at least one candidate or party.**

They feel the system includes people like them, believe their vote matters, and are more likely to see personal effort as a driver of success. They tend to describe the primary election system in positive terms, for example pointing out it's an opportunity to vote for a preferred candidate or influence election outcomes.

WHERE THEY STAND OUT

84% report frequent primary voting, more than any other segment, and 59% say government reflects the will of the people. They skew older, white, male, and conservative; 71% voted for Trump in 2024. They are also the most likely to say people in their local community vote in primaries and to believe their vote can make a difference.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026. Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Do-Your-Part Primary Voters

22%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I believe that I have a responsibility to cast my vote. To me it is a privilege to vote."

- Rachael, a 63-year-old white woman and Republican from Sandusky, Ohio

"Participating ensures my voice helps shape the candidate choices on the ballot rather than leaving the decision entirely to others."

- Cristobal, a 43-year-old Hispanic man and Independent from Ann Arbor, Michigan

"We all have a duty and a right to vote and we should have a say."

- James, a 60-year-old white man and Republican from Swartz Creek, Michigan

Source: More in Common (2026). Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters

21%

WHO THEY ARE

Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters are politically informed and highly involved, even as they feel exhausted by politics. **They know when and how to vote and pay attention to candidates early.**

But unlike Do-Your-Part voters, they see government as favoring the wealthy and believe luck and circumstance play an important role in people's success. They are concerned about money in politics, wealthy donors, limited candidate choices, and the influence of political parties. Their skepticism is often part of what keeps these Americans engaged in primary elections, not a reason to withdraw. They tend to describe voting as a way to challenge party establishments, encourage accountability, or protect their interests despite doubts about the system.

WHERE THEY STAND OUT

73% report frequent primary voting, yet just 7% believe government reflects the will of the people, compared with 59% of Do-Your-Part voters. Two-thirds voted for Harris in 2024, and 53% have a four-year or postgraduate degree. They are the most likely to call themselves liberal, vote to stop an opposing candidate or party, and cast their ballot by mail.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026. Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Skeptical-But-Engaged Primary Voters

21%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“I'm skeptical because the system feels rigged toward whoever has the most money and it feels the parties already decided who is gonna win. I just pay more attention. Being skeptical doesn't mean checking out, it means going in with your eyes open.”

- Ted, a 42-year-old white man and Republican from Waterford Works, New Jersey

“It is a waste of time to vote Democrat in Alabama. But I do it anyway!!!! I help choose who our candidates will be.”

- Estelle, a 56-year-old white woman and Democrat from Anniston, Alabama

“I think that I don't really feel like I'm getting the person I want, but I feel that I may as well do it anyway so that hopefully my vote moves the needle in some way.”

- Eric, a 22-year-old Asian man and Independent from Milpitas, California

Source: More in Common (2026). Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters

19%

WHO THEY ARE

Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters genuinely **want to participate but have not yet developed consistent primary voting habits.** They are less confident about how primaries work or when they happen, even though they frequently encounter campaign information. Their knowledge gap is more about uncertainty about the primary process, issues, and candidates than it is about a lack of interest in politics.

They are socially engaged, often discussing elections with friends and family and responding to encouragement from people around them.

WHERE THEY STAND OUT

87% want to vote in primaries more often and 87% want to learn more about the basics, but **only 35% vote every or nearly every time.** Half do not know when their state's primary occurs, despite 92% encountering campaign information. They have the highest support for primary reform (77%). They skew younger, are less likely to be white, and are more likely to live in urban areas.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026. Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters

19%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I'm only now beginning to understand the full voting process. Primaries are where the real decision is made for the public."

- Simon, a 46-year-old white man and Independent from Baltimore, Maryland

"I like the idea that we get a say in deciding who will represent our party on a bigger stage, but at the same time I am not sure how much my individual vote would matter."

- Sophia, a 23-year-old Asian woman and Democrat from Dallas, Texas

Source: More in Common (2026). Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Not-For-Me Americans

30%

WHO THEY ARE

Not-For-Me Americans are the **largest segment,** participating much less in primary elections and tending to **not see primary elections as worthwhile.** They are less likely to believe primaries are meant for people like them or that voting in them is a civic responsibility. They follow campaigns less closely, feel less informed about candidates, and are more likely to dislike all of the available choices.

Many are skeptical of the political system and distrustful of elites and political parties. Their nonparticipation has many sources, with some rejecting the major parties or not seeing candidates who represent their concerns. Others see little evidence that primary elections change their circumstances or the outcome. Others want to avoid the conflict and judgment they associate with political choices.

WHERE THEY STAND OUT

Only 19% report frequent primary voting, but 31% say they want to vote more often, compared with 11% of Focused-Elsewhere Americans. Although 66% are registered, **64% did not vote in 2024.** They skew female, independent, and moderate; half have a high school education or less, and 58% report incomes below $50,000.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026. Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Not-For-Me Americans

30%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Primary elections are for show I think sometimes."

- Bess, a 59-year-old white woman and Republican from London, Kentucky

"I feel like primary elections let people feel like they have more control, but the real question is do they really?"

- Austin, a 39-year-old white man and Democrat from Omaha, Nebraska

"I keep an eye on things, but I don't feel married to a party or rush out to vote unless there's someone actually worth showing up for."

- Genaro, a 50-year-old Hispanic man and Independent from Cincinnati, Ohio

"The system doesn't reflect my interests. It parades around candidates that I've never heard of to campaign about issues that don't matter to me…"

- Verna, a 47-year-old Black woman and other party supporter from Detroit, Michigan

Source: More in Common (2026). Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Focused-Elsewhere Americans

7%

WHO THEY ARE

Focused-Elsewhere Americans **have little connection to political life, not just to primary elections.** They rarely follow political news or campaigns and often feel unsure about candidates and the voting process. Unlike Not-For-Me Americans, their defining feature is uncertainty: they frequently answer "don't know" even to questions about their own political views and social experiences.

WHERE THEY STAND OUT

Only 5% report frequent primary voting, 11% want to vote more often, and just 33% are registered. Nine in ten did not vote in 2024. Seven in ten are women; 75% have a high school education or less, and 78% report incomes below $50,000. Roughly four in ten are unsure whether they have ever voted in a primary.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026. Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

Focused-Elsewhere Americans

7%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“I'm not registered to vote because I'm not informed about the issues. And when I try, the issues are too complicated for me to understand.”

- Abigail, a 33-year-old white woman and Independent from Mesa, Arizona

“I don't think I participate in the voting polls because I had no way or support.” - Trey, a 36-year-old Black man and Independent from Lancaster, California

Source: More in Common (2026). Americans in Conversation qualitative panel of 304 US adults conducted in October 2026.

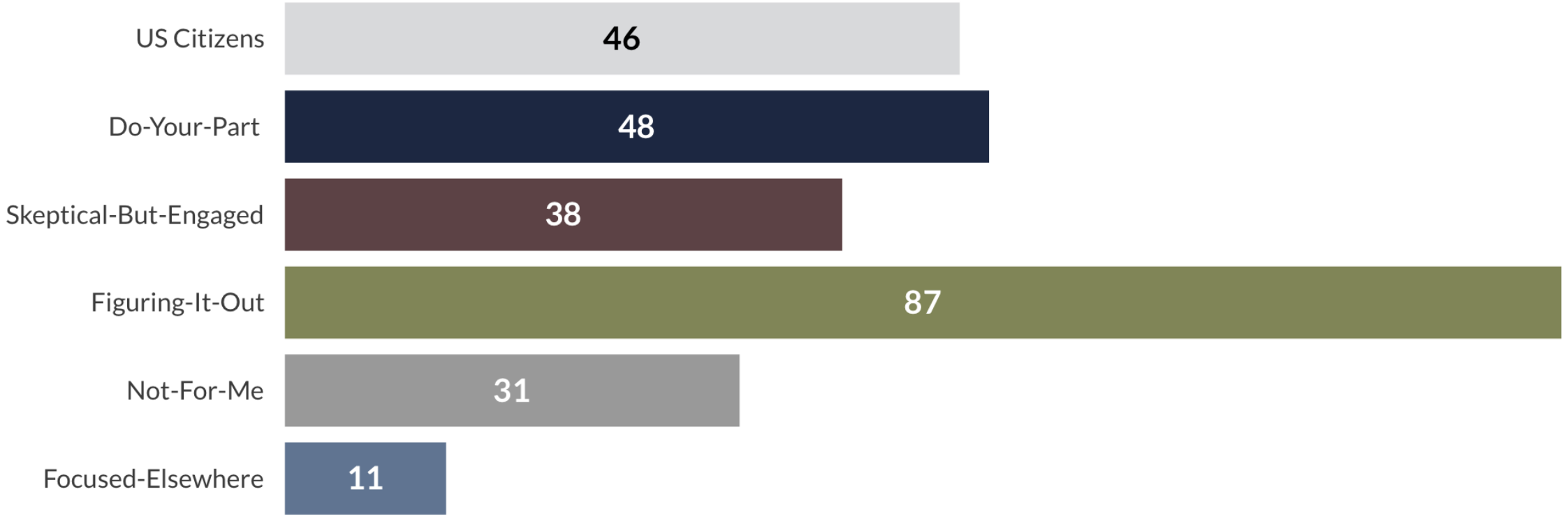
Opportunity Segment: Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters



87% of Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters, who make up nearly one in five U.S. adult citizens, want to vote in primaries more often.

"I want to vote in primary elections more often than I currently do."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who strongly or somewhat agree with the statement.

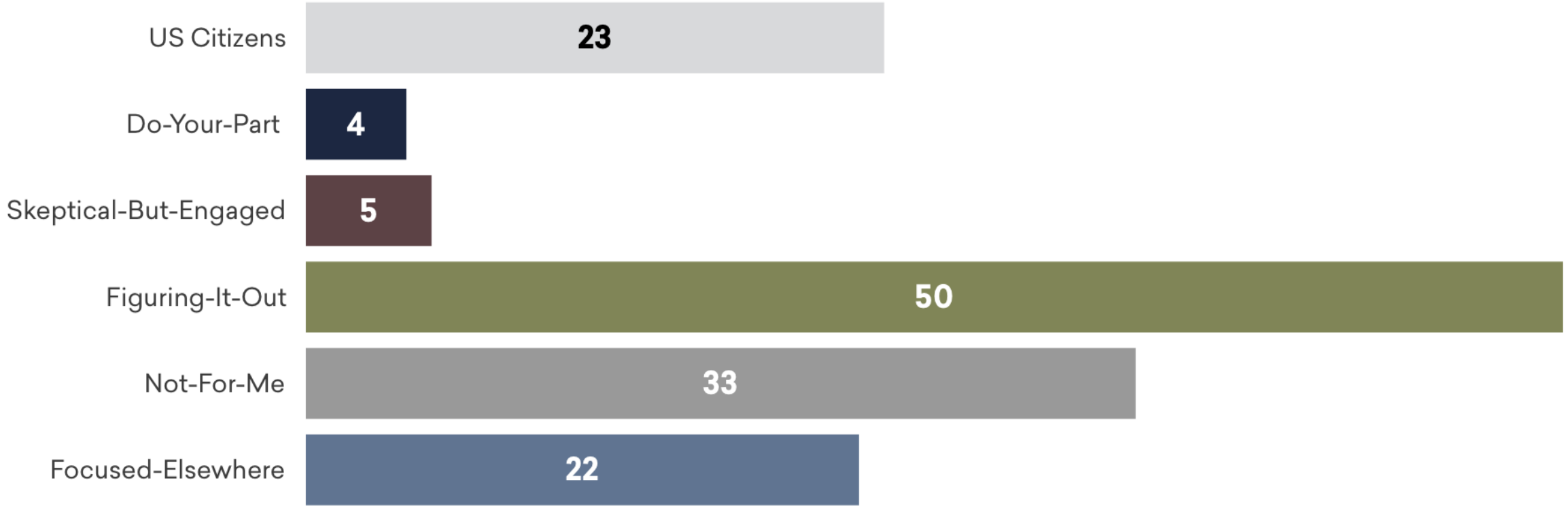


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Half of Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters say they do not know when their state's primary is happening.

"I don't know when primary elections are held in my state."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who strongly or somewhat agree with the statement.

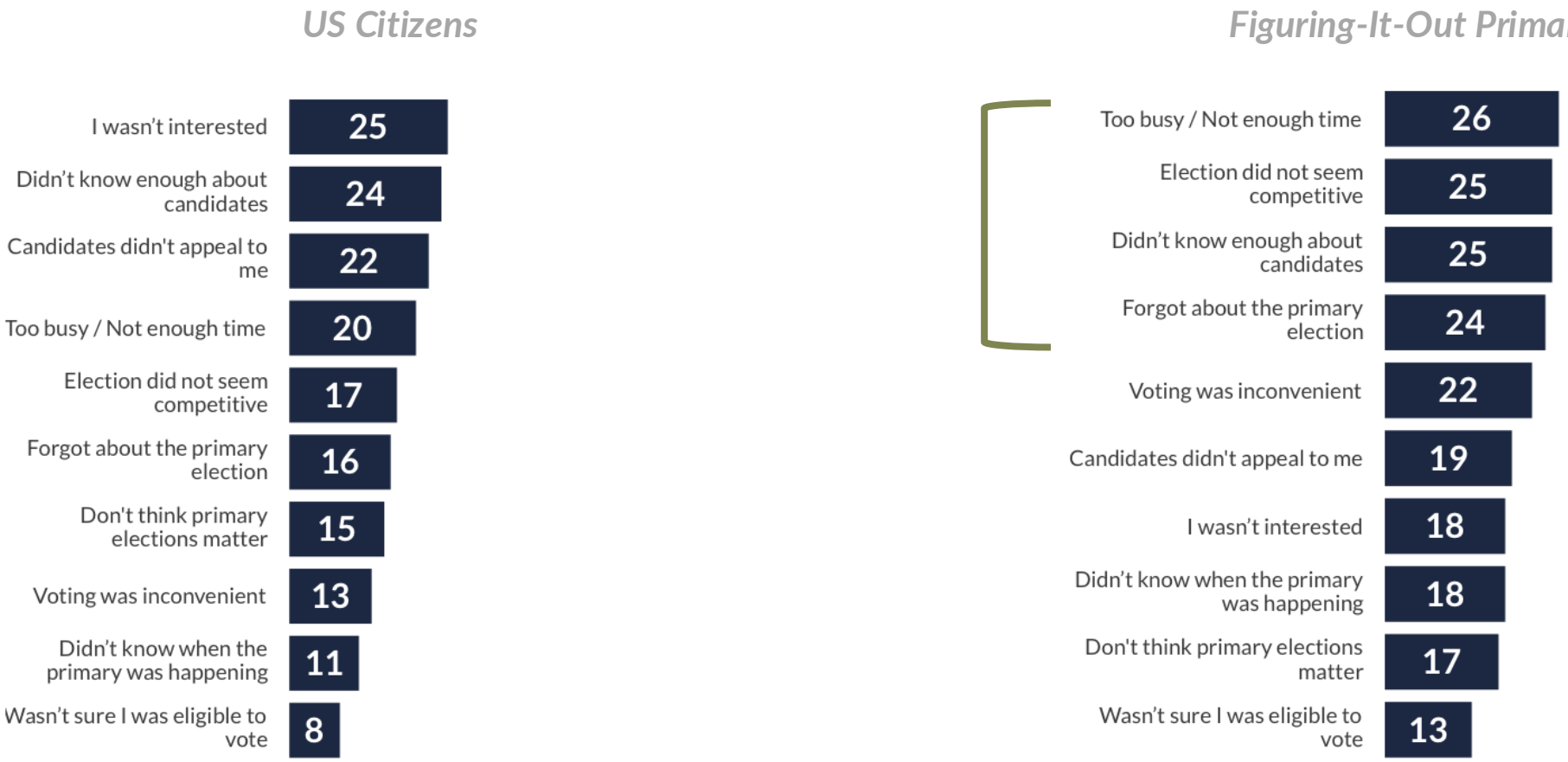


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Figuring-It-Out voters report more practical barriers to primary participation than do other Americans.

"Thinking about times when you have not voted in a primary election, which of the following are reasons why? Select up to three."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who selected each reason, among those who report voting in primaries most of the time or less often, including never. Respondents could select up to three reasons. Not showing "Other". Some options have been shortened for brevity.

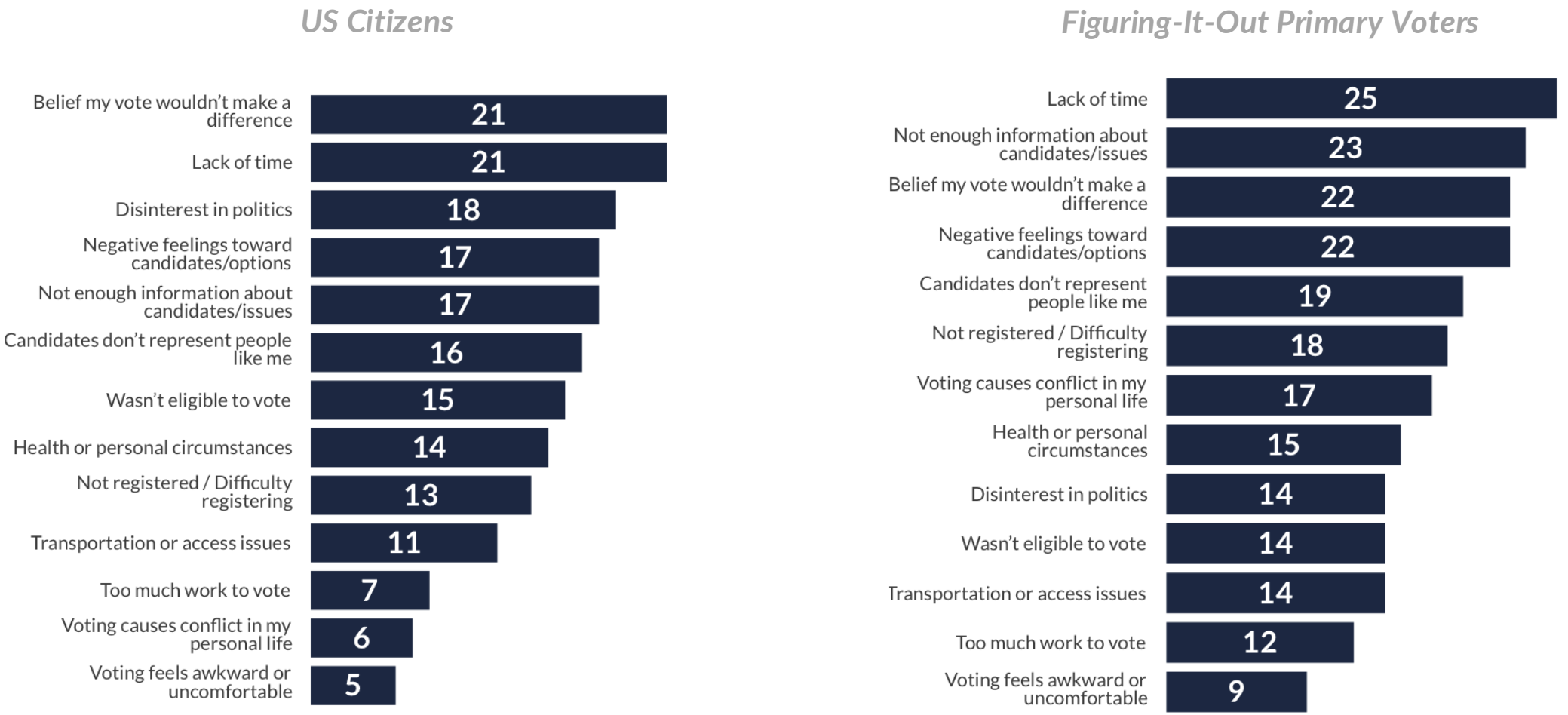


Note: *Not showing "Other". Some options have been shortened for brevity.* Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Figuring-It-Out voters are more likely to cite registration difficulties and personal conflict as reasons for not voting.

"When you didn't vote in the past, why not? Please select up to three."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens overall and Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters who selected each reason, among respondents asked about missing general or midterm elections. Respondents could select up to three reasons. "Other" not shown; labels shortened.

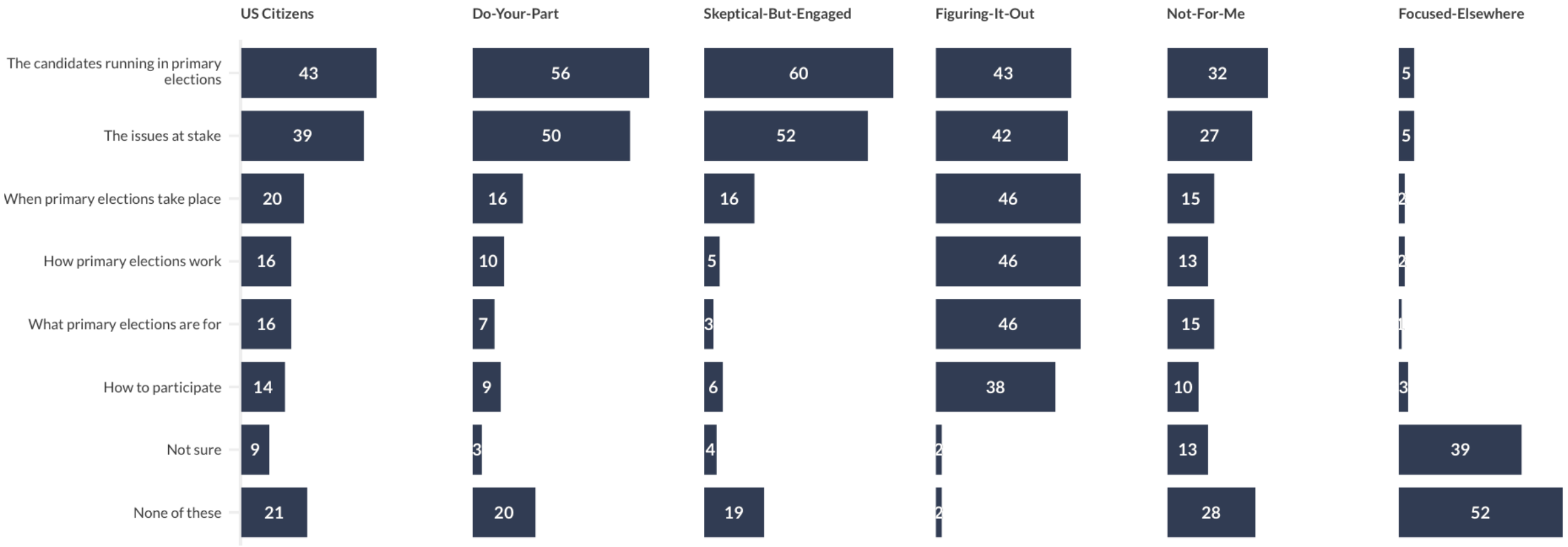


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters are especially interested in when primaries take place and how to participate.

"Which of the following aspects of primary elections in your state, if any, would you be interested in learning more about? Select all that apply."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who selected each topic. Respondents could select multiple topics.

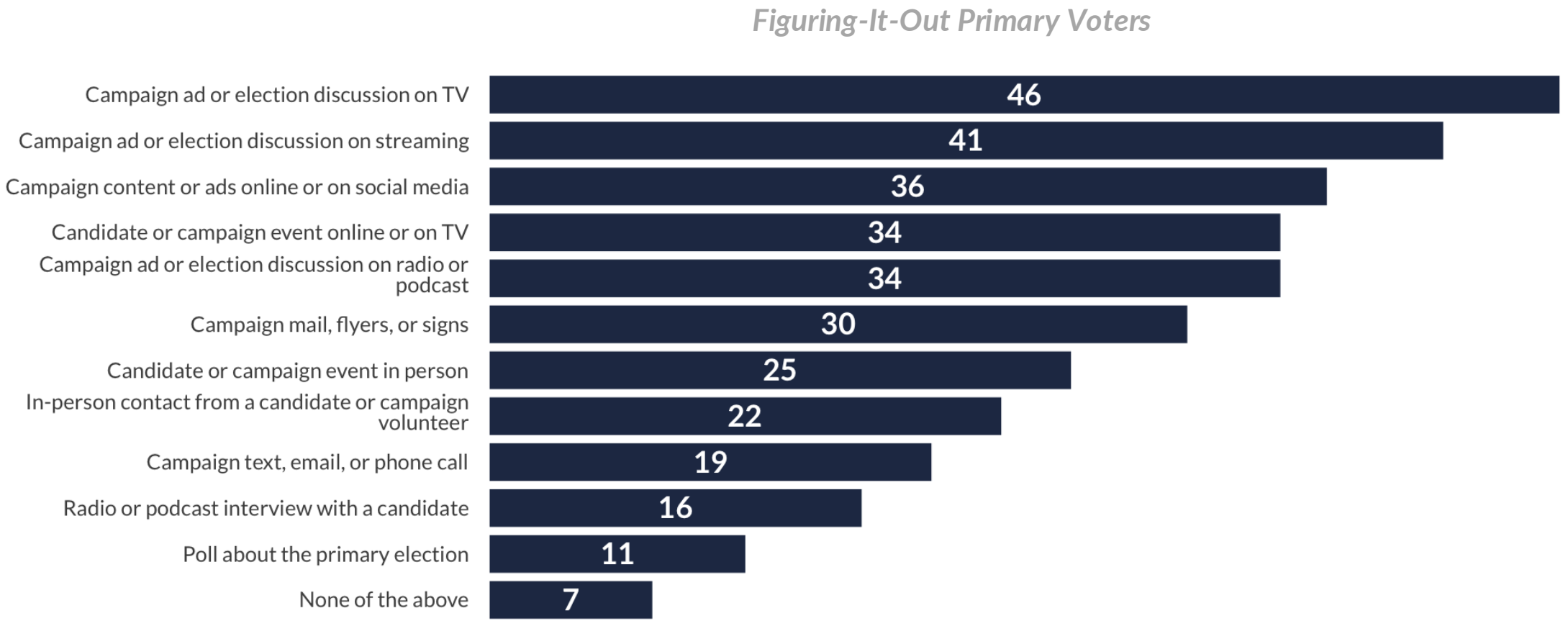


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Inconsistent participation persists despite exposure to campaigns. Most Figuring-It-Out Voters have seen campaign materials.

"During this year's primary election season in your state, which of the following have you encountered? Select all that apply."

Showing the percentage of Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters who encountered each type of campaign information. Respondents could select multiple options. "Something else" not shown. Note: Some response options have been shortened for length.

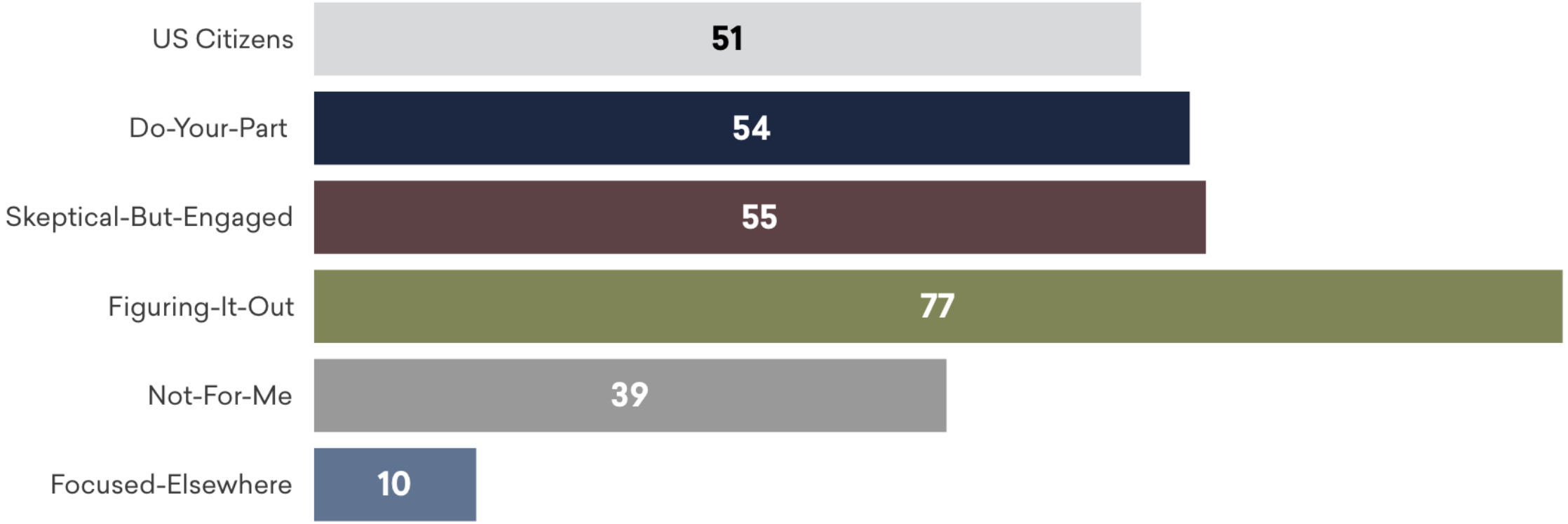


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters are most supportive of changing how primary elections work.

"Based on what you just read, how supportive or opposed would you be to changing how primary elections work in your state?"

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who strongly or somewhat support changing how primary elections work intheir state after reading a randomly assigned statement about primaries.



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Most Not-For-Me Americans prefer an open partisan primary over a closed partisan primary.

"Which of the two election systems listed above would you prefer for your state?"

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens overall and Not-For-Me Americans who prefer an open partisan primary (A) over a closed partisan primary (B), combining "Lean toward A/B," "Mostly prefer A/B," and "Strongly prefer A/B." Only respondents assigned this comparison are included.



All voters may choose either the Democratic or Republican primary, regardless of party registration.

Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

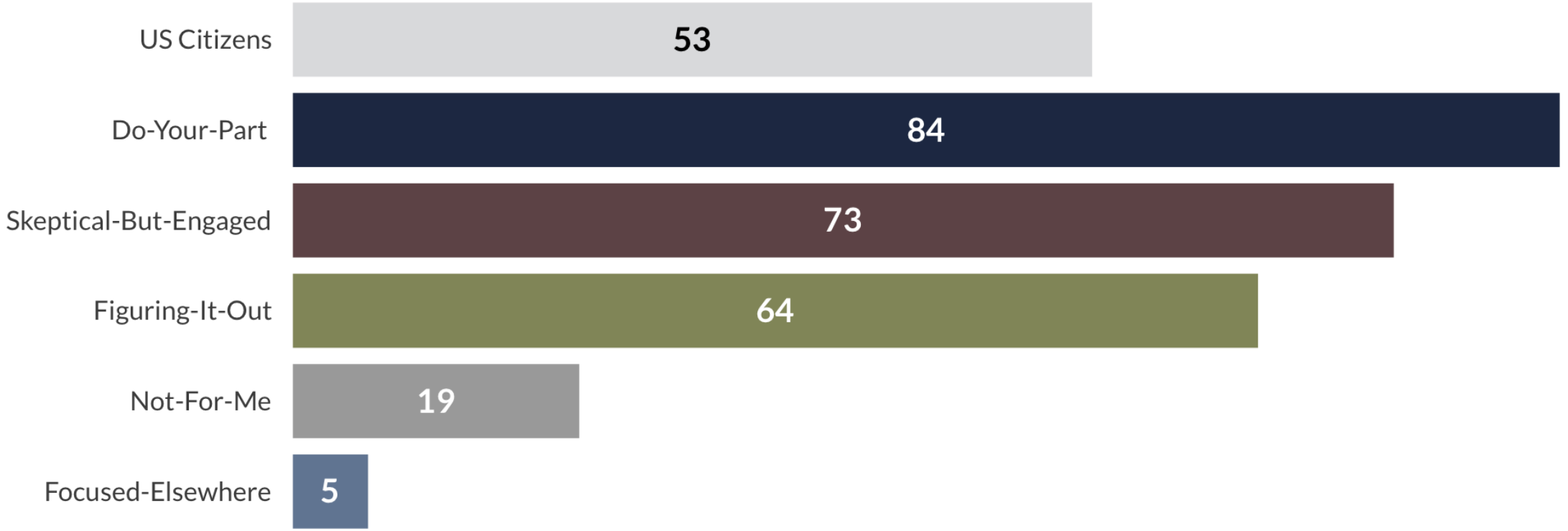
Who Participates



Do-Your-Part and Skeptical-But-Engaged groups report the most consistent primary participation over time.

"In the past 10 years, how often have you voted in your state's primary elections?"

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who report voting in primary elections 'Every time, or nearly every time' or 'Most of the time' in the past 10 years.

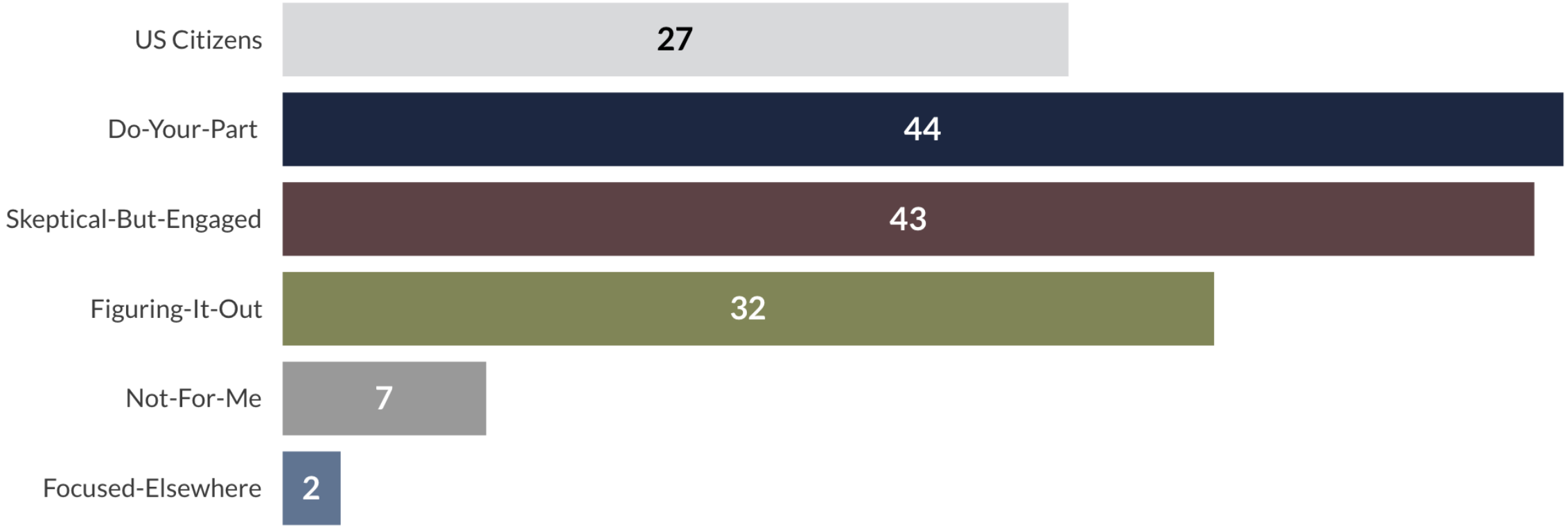


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Primary voting and intention drop sharply among Not-For-Me and Focused-Elsewhere Americans, including in this year's primaries.

"Thinking about your state's 2026 primary election, which of the following best describes you?"

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who already voted in their state's 2026 primary or definitely intend to vote if their primary had not yet occurred.



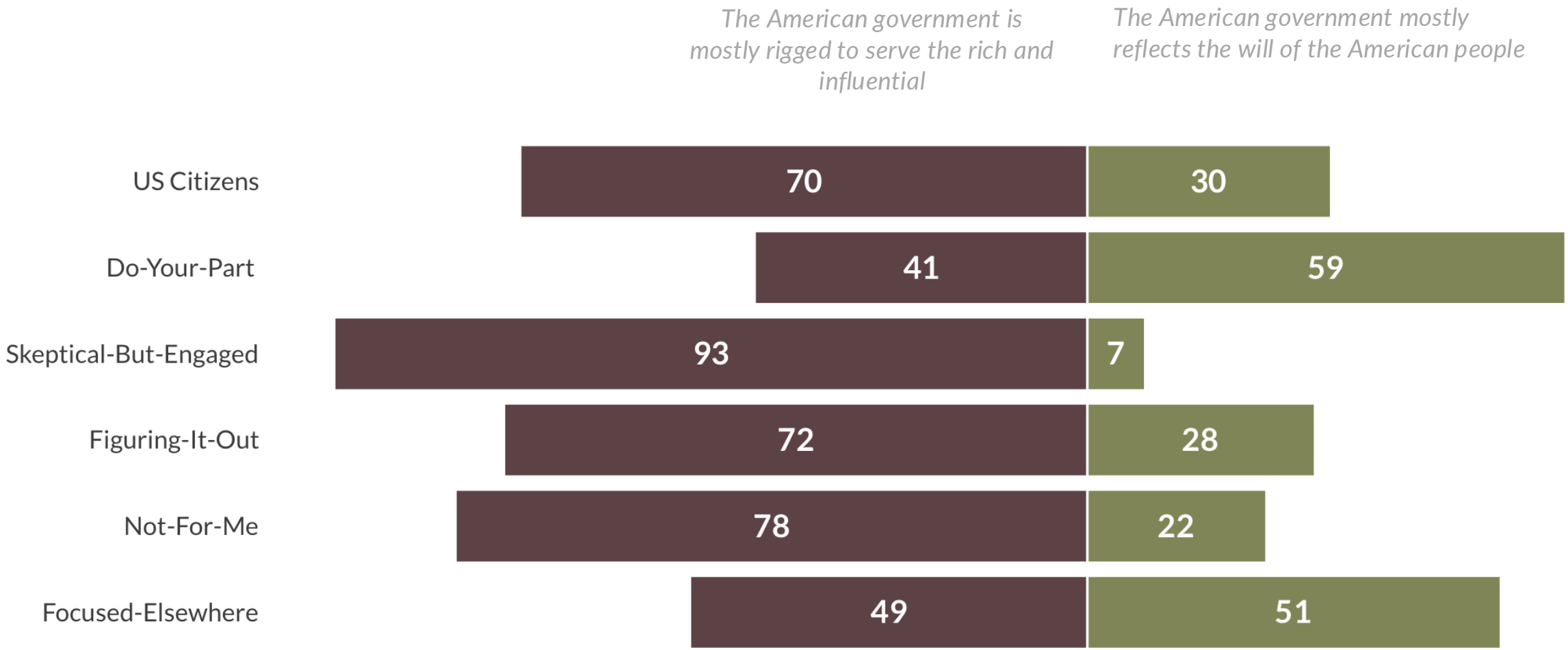
Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Parsing Established Primary Voters



Most Do-Your-Part voters say government reflects the public's will, while nearly all Skeptical-but-Engaged think the system is rigged.

"Which statement comes closer to your view?"

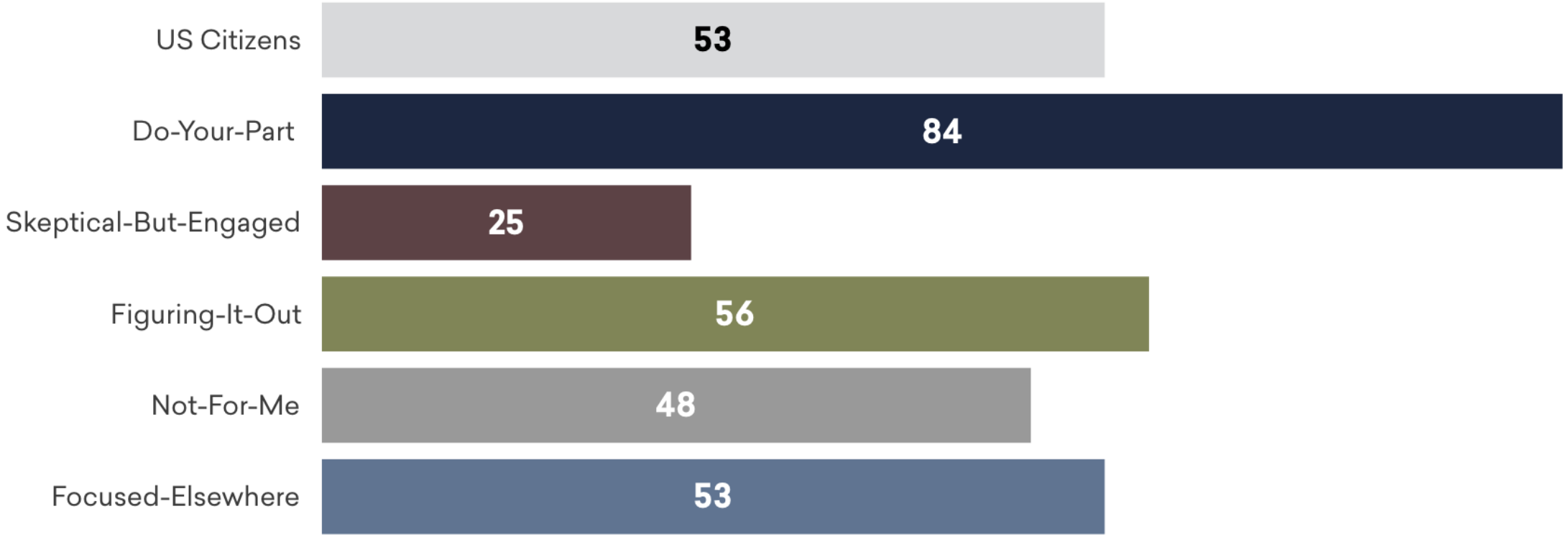


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Do-Your-Part voters are most likely to believe hard work can overcome starting circumstances.

"People who work hard can find success no matter what situation they were born into."

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who lean toward, mostly agree with, or fully agree with the statement shown.



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

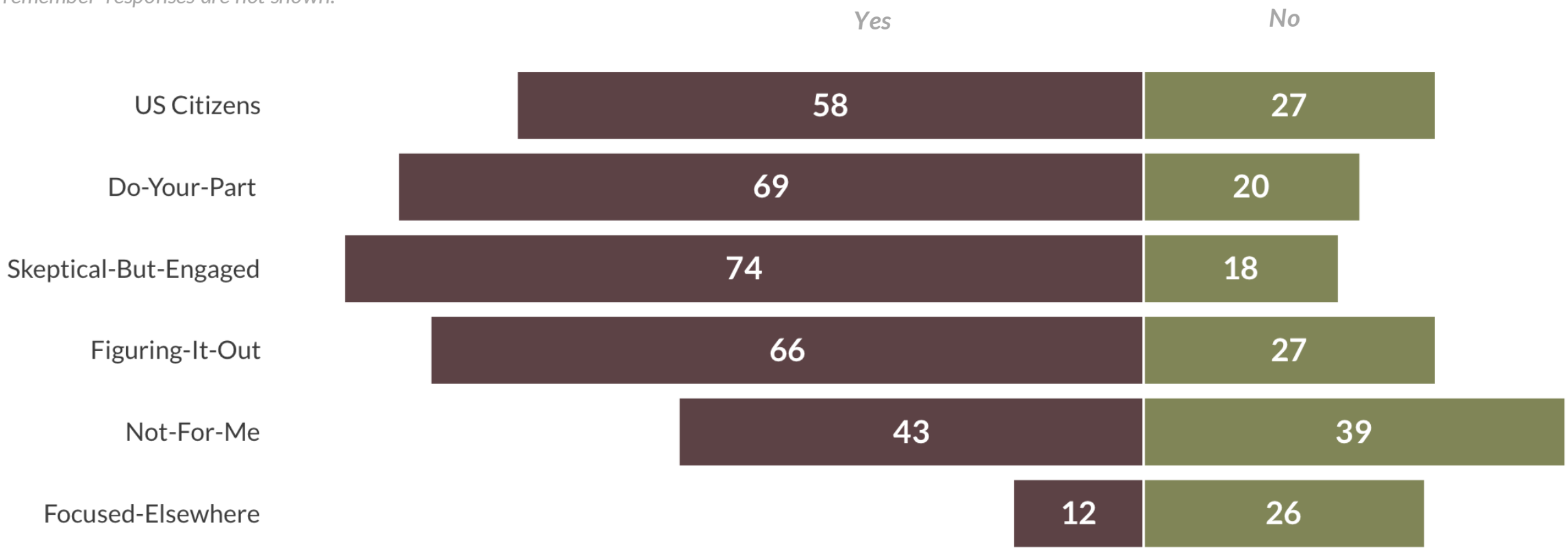
Social Context, Psychology, and Primaries



Do-Your-Part, Skeptical-But-Engaged, and Figuring-It-Out primary voters are more likely to remember a parent or guardian voting in elections.

"Growing up, did you ever see or know that a parent or guardian voted in elections?"

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who recall or do not recall a parent or guardian voting while they weregrowing up. 'I don't know / I don't remember' responses are not shown.

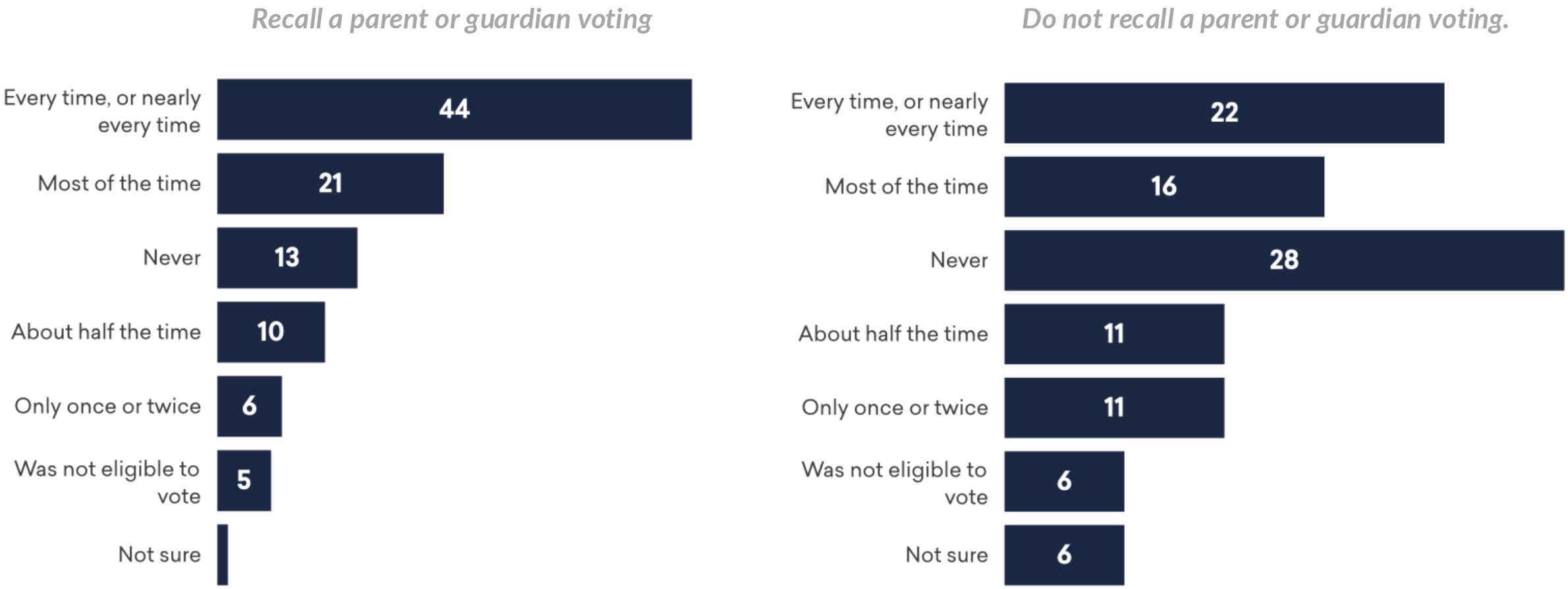


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Primary voting is more frequent among those who recall a parent or guardian voting.

"In the past 10 years, how often have you voted in your state's primary elections?"

Showing how often U.S. citizens report voting in primary elections in the past 10 years, grouped by whether they recall a parent or guardian voting while they were growing up. Respondents answering 'I don't know / I don't remember' to the parent-voting question are not shown.

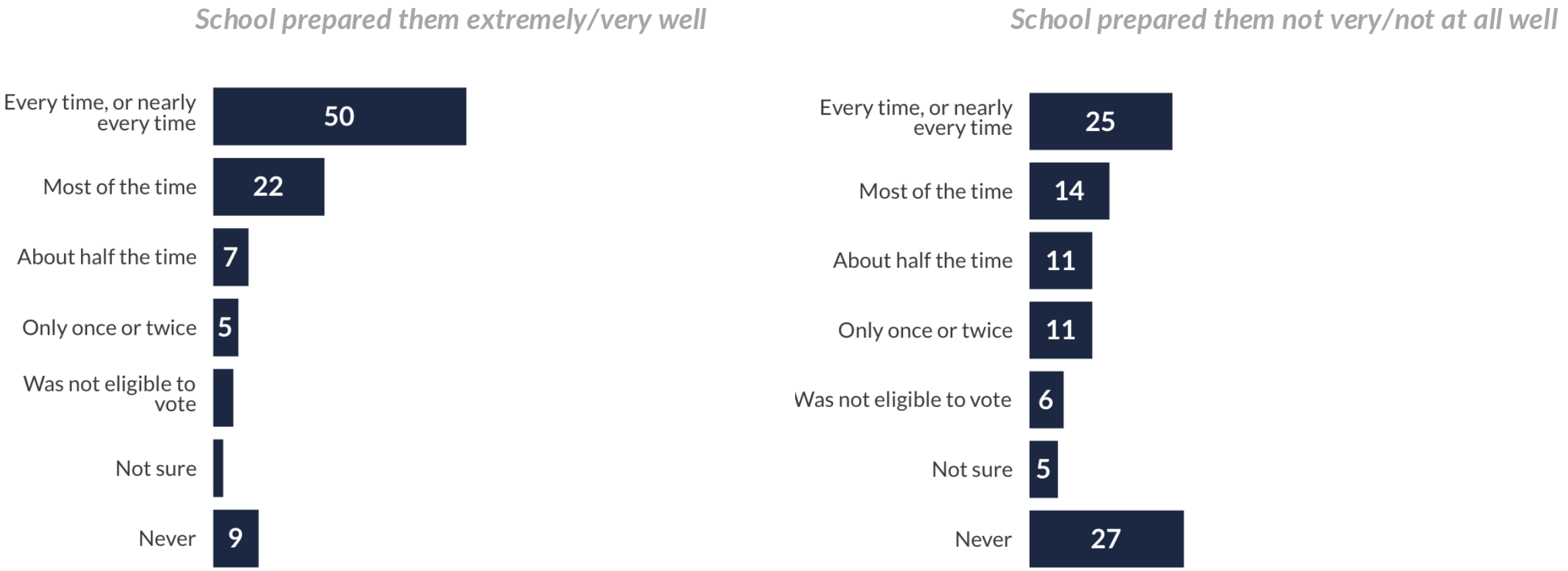


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Those who feel school prepared them for citizenship report more frequent primary voting.

"In your opinion, how well did your school prepare you to participate as a citizen (for example, voting, understanding government, or participating in your community)?"

Showing how often U.S. citizens report voting in primary elections in the past 10 years, grouped by how well they say schoolprepared them to participate as citizens. Not showing: "Somewhat well" and "Not sure".



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Those who rate their community standing higher report more frequent primary voting.

"In the past 10 years, how often have you voted in your state's primary elections?"

Showing how often U.S. citizens report voting in primary elections in the past 10 years, grouped by their self-rated standing in their community. Note: Low is defined as ladder steps 1–3; high: steps 7–10 on a 10-step ladder. Steps 4–6 not shown.

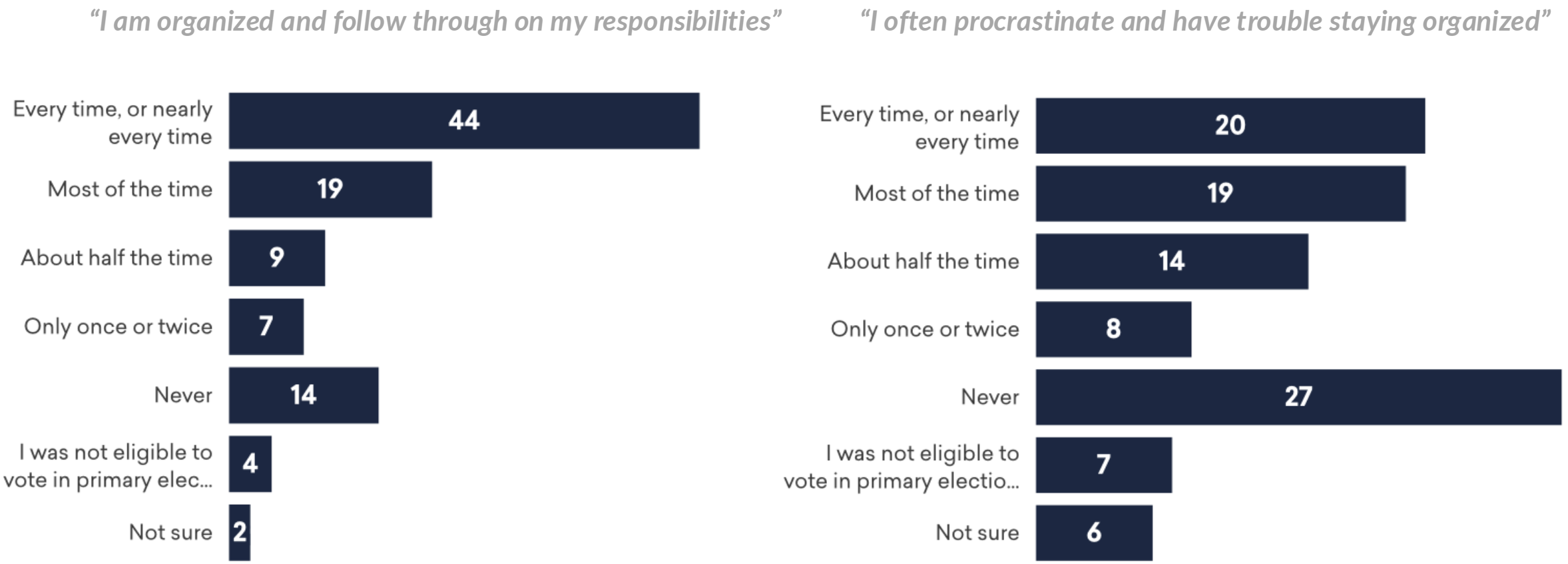


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Those who describe themselves as organized report more frequent primary voting.

"In the past 10 years, how often have you voted in your state's primary elections?"

Showing how often U.S. citizens report voting in primary elections in the past 10 years, grouped by which statement about organization and follow-through they selected. Respondents selecting 'Both equally' are not shown.

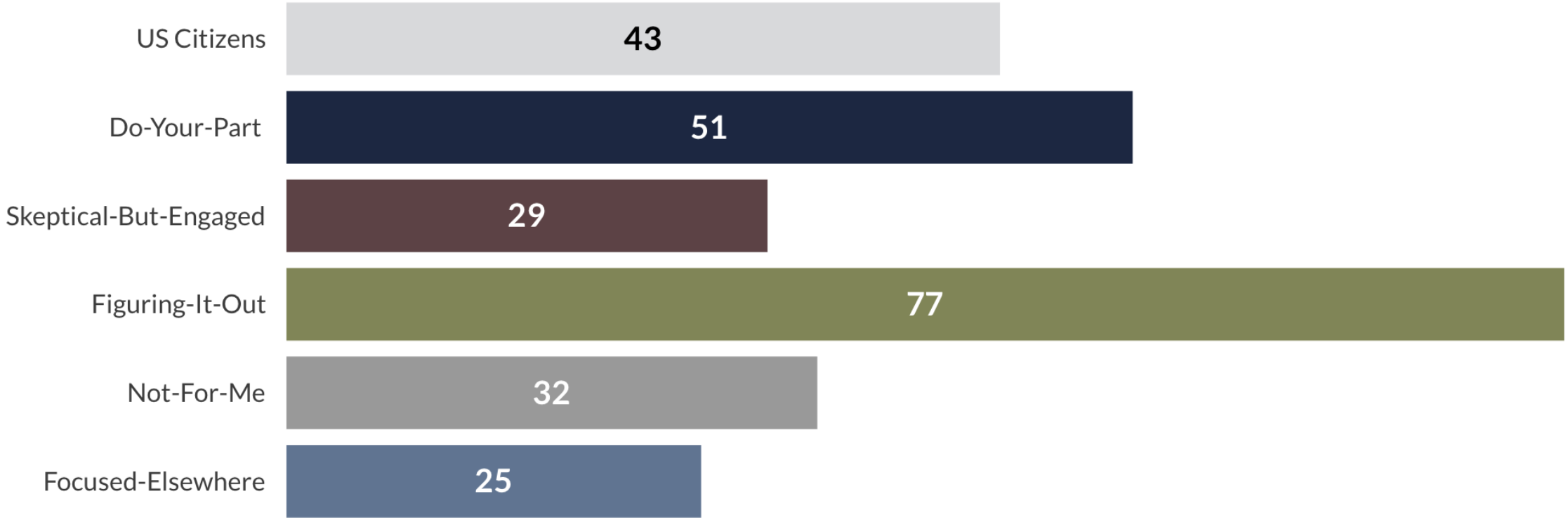


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Figuring-It-Out voters are most likely to say being perfect is a goal.

"One of my goals is to be perfect in everything I do."

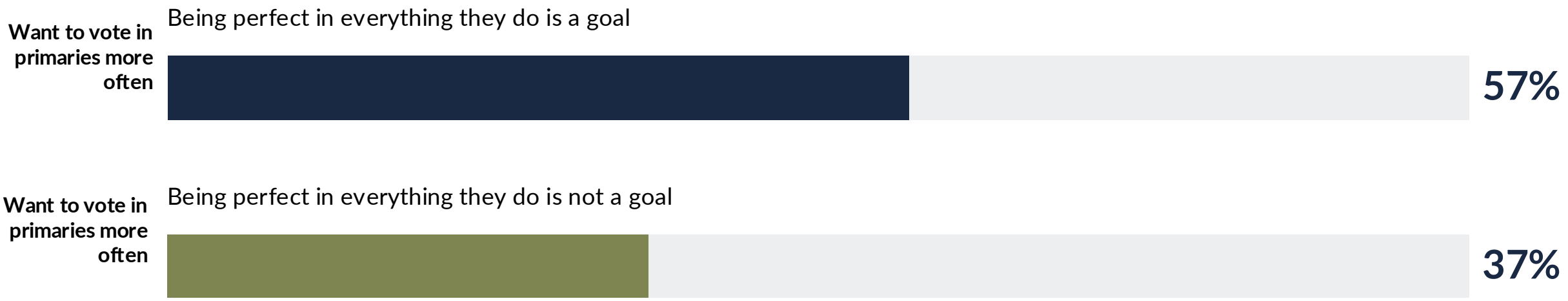
Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the statement.



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Those who strive for perfection are more likely to want to vote in primary elections more often.

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who strongly or somewhat agree: 'I want to vote in primary elections more often than I currently do.'
Perfectionism question: "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? One of my goals is to be perfect in everything I do."

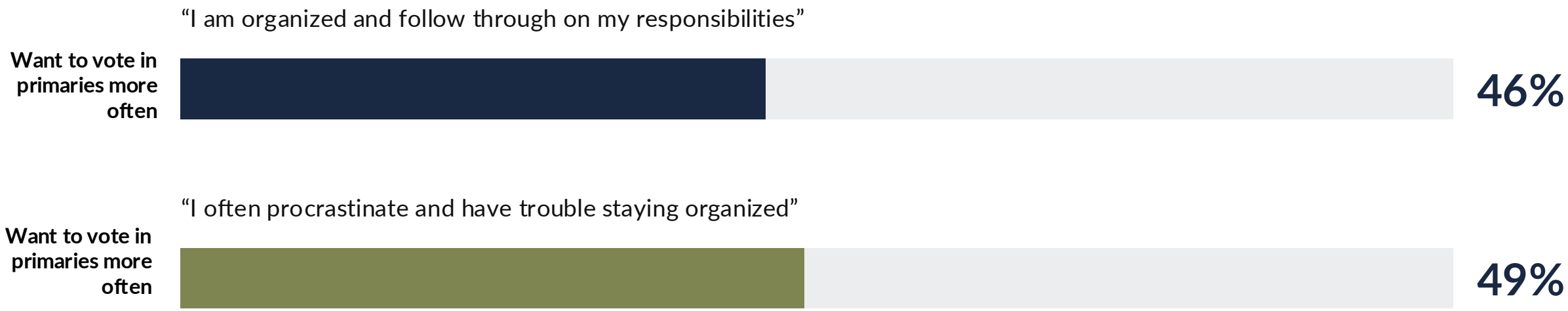


Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Desire to vote more often is similar among organized Americans and those who report procrastinating.

"I want to vote in primary elections more often than I currently do."

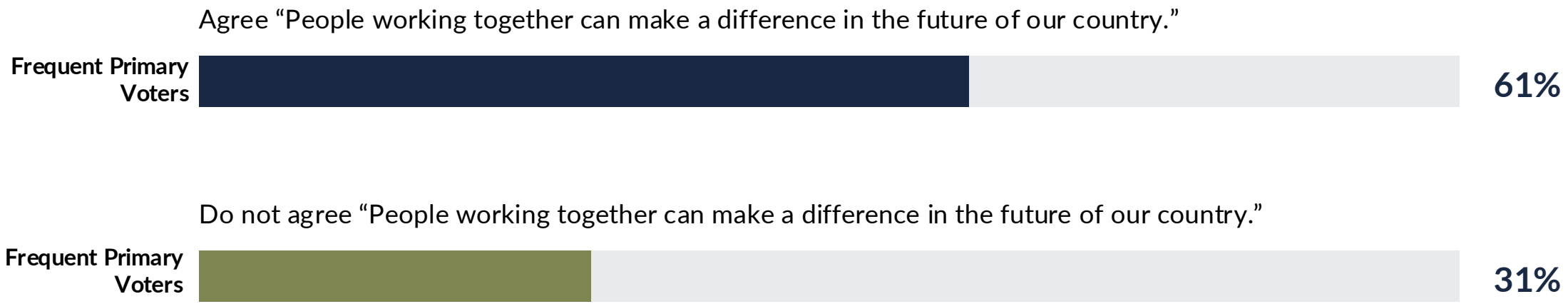
Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who strongly or somewhat agree with the statement. Groups reflect which description of organization and follow-through respondents selected.



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Americans who believe people working together can make a difference are more likely to vote frequently in primary elections.

Showing the percentage of U.S. citizens in each group who report voting in primary elections every or nearly every time, or most of the time, in the past 10 years. Also showing survey question: "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People working together can make a difference in the future of our country."



Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 3,930 US adult citizens conducted from August 21 to September 1, 2026.

Conclusion

This research illustrates **opportunities to make primary election participation easier to navigate**, with different approaches for different voters that recognize the ways they want to grow as voters and their orientations toward the primary system.

- Figuring-It-Out Primary Voters, who make up 19% of U.S. adult citizens, want to become more regular primary voters but are still figuring out how the process works. Building on existing interest into consistent participation through basic voter education, practical guidance, and timely reminders about upcoming primaries can be a practical starting point.
- For the 44% of Americans who tend to be more established primary voters: Get-out-the-vote efforts could emphasize timely, nonpartisan information about candidates and what's at stake in each primary.
- For the remaining 37% of less-engaged Americans, understanding whether they feel excluded from or disconnected from primary elections may be an important first step.



More in Common