



Iowa Water Quality Survey

John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

September 2026

Methodology

On behalf of the John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF), GQR conducted an 18-minute mixed mode survey among 800 likely 2026 voters in Iowa from July 9-16, 2026. Text-to-web interviews made up 75 percent of respondents, online panel made up the other 25 percent. Text-to-web respondents were found through voter file sample, and online panel respondents were contacted from a panel sample of Iowa residents.

If this poll was fully conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 3.46 percentage points overall at the 95 percent confidence interval; the margin of error is higher among subgroups and online respondents.

The data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age, and gender composition reflects that of the estimated likely 2026 voters in Iowa. The composition of likely 2026 voters in Iowa is estimated by looking at past participation in similar elections using Iowa's voter file.

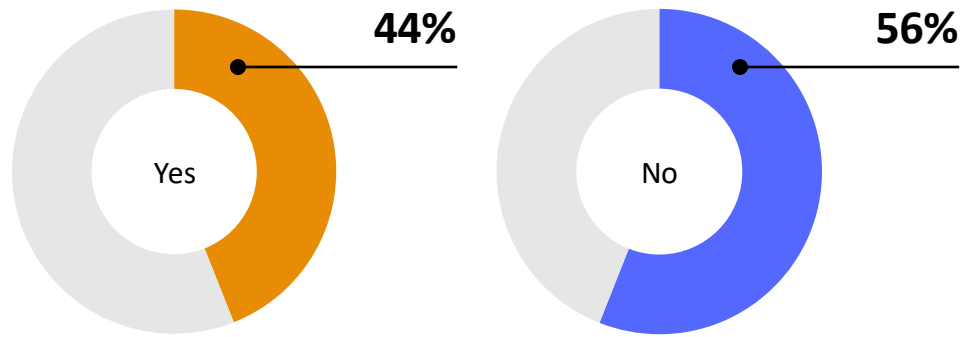
In this report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the charts due to rounding.

Key summary

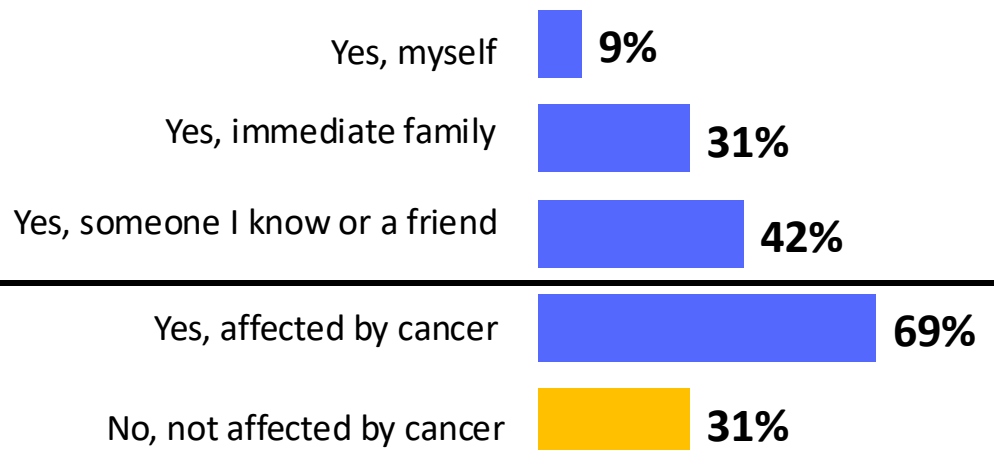
- **Iowa voters have a foundation of knowledge about Iowa's poor water quality and already have some idea about the cause: nitrates, pollutants and chemicals in the water.** Eighty-four percent of Iowa voters report hearing about Iowa's drinking water quality recently, and nearly half (47 percent) have heard a lot about this issue. Most voters who have recently heard about this issue feel more concerned about water quality as a result (85 percent were more concerned).
- **Drinking water quality and the environment ranks as one of the most important issues to voters, just after the high cost of living, health care and Social Security and Medicare.** This is a bipartisan issue: 78 percent of Democrats rank water quality and the environment in their top five of nine issues, along with 64 percent of independents and 41 percent of Republicans.
- **Iowans are favorable to the agricultural industry, especially to small and medium-sized independent farms.** The majority of Iowa voters are favorable to the agriculture industry, and this popularity holds across party lines and regardless of if they have had a career in the industry or not. Small and medium-sized independent farms are near-universally liked, while large-scale corporate industrial farming and national/multi-national agricultural corporations are deeply disliked.
- **A strong majority (63 percent) are already concerned about the quality of their tap water at home.** This is also clear when looking at Iowans' drinking water habits: a majority are filtering their water before drinking it on a weekly basis, and almost 80 percent have bought bottled water to drink in the past year.

Iowans' proximity to the agricultural industry and cancer

Iowans who Have Worked in Farming or Agriculture



Personal Experience with Cancer

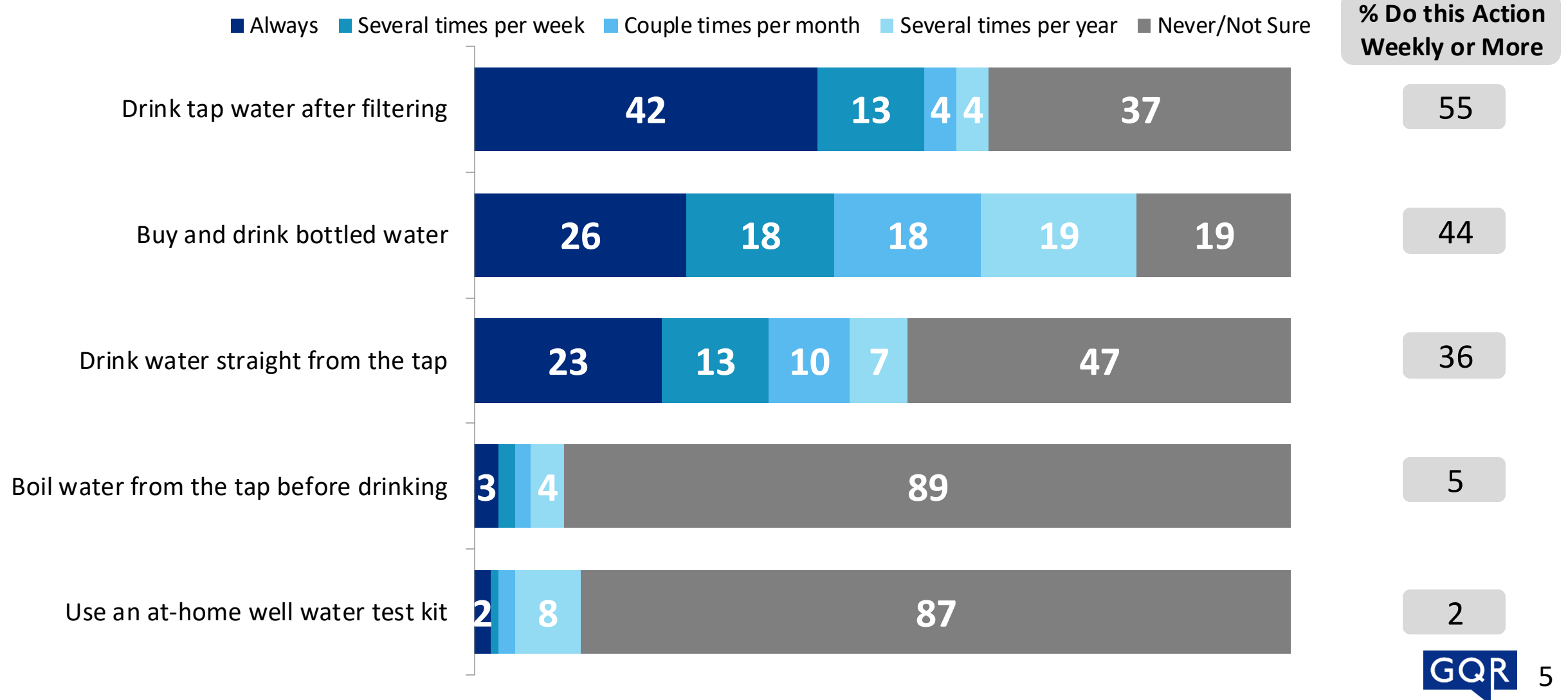


Major Jobs in Agriculture



Many lowans take precautions with drinking water

Thinking about your own personal water usage, how often do you do each of the following?



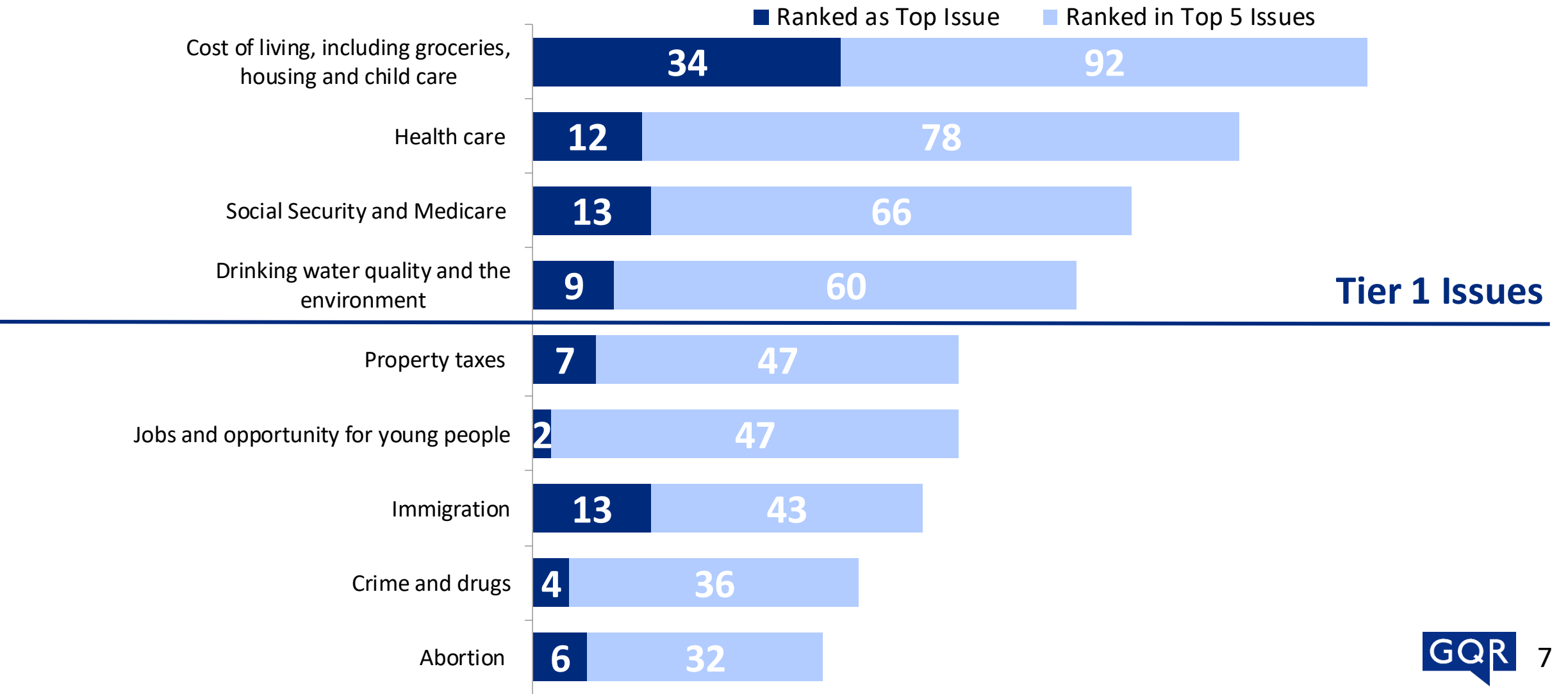


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The Issue Landscape

Cost of living is top of mind for voters, water quality in top tier of issues

Below you will see a list of issues some people say are important to them as they decide whom to support in the November elections. After looking at the list, please rank each item from MOST important to you as you decide whom to support in the November elections to LEAST important to you by dragging the MOST important issue to the top and the LEAST important to the bottom.



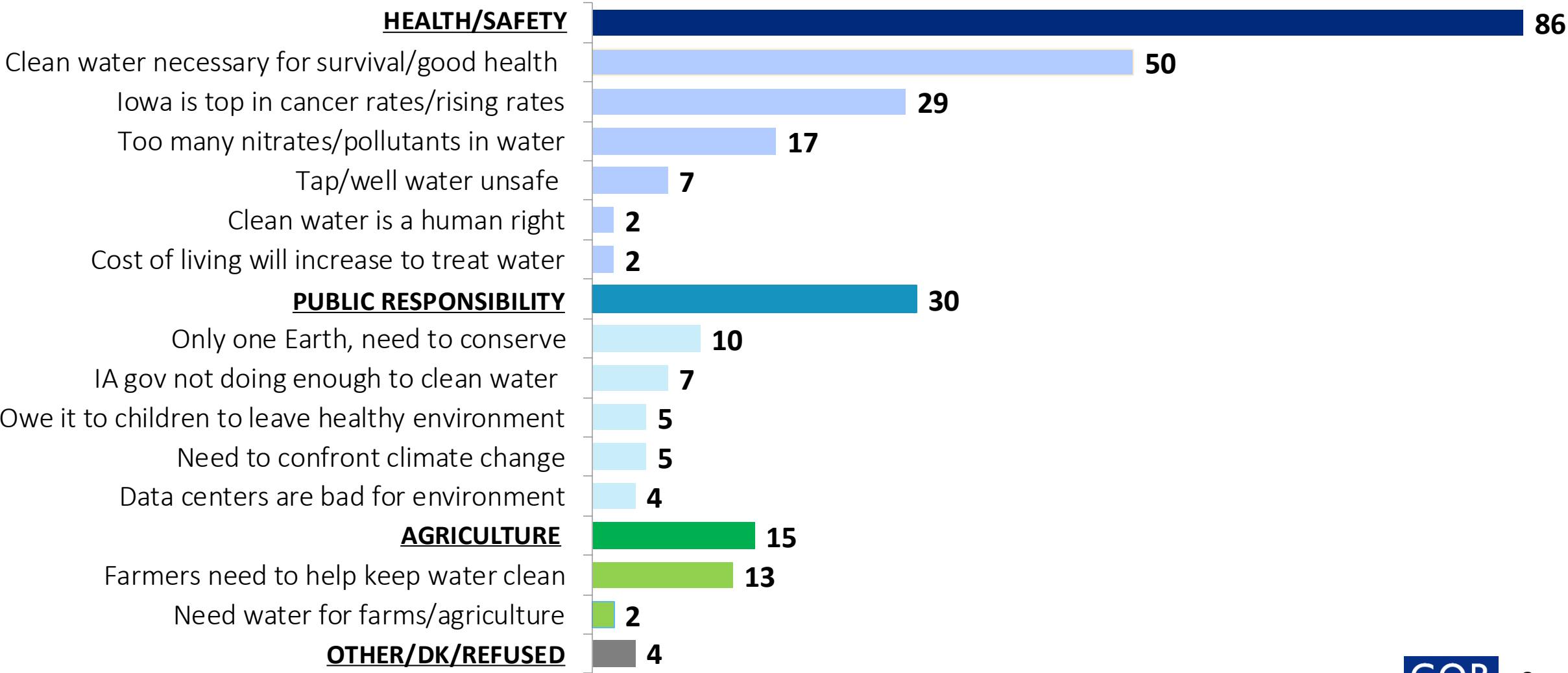
Proportion of respondents ranking key issues in their top five

Below you will see a list of issues some people say are important to them as they decide whom to support in the November elections. After looking at the list, please rank each item from MOST important to you as you decide whom to support in the November elections to LEAST important to you by dragging the MOST important issue to the top and the LEAST important to the bottom.

% Top 5	Total	East	Central	South	North west	North East	Dem	Ind	Rep	Under 50	50-64	65 and up	Affected by cancer	Not affected by cancer
Cost of living	92	91	92	91	90	93	97	92	87	97	89	87	91	92
Health Care	78	86	74	74	74	78	97	81	60	74	77	83	79	74
Social Security and Medicare	66	67	66	57	69	68	70	68	60	45	73	84	63	72
Water Quality and the Environment	60	63	64	47	54	61	78	64	41	73	55	48	65	48

Those who rank water in their top 5 issues cite the importance of clean water, cancer rates and nitrates as reasons why

(IF DRINKING WATER QUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IS RANKED IN TOP FIVE ISSUES, 60%) In your own words, why is drinking water quality and the environment one of the most important issues to you?



This question was open-ended and the responses were organized into themes.

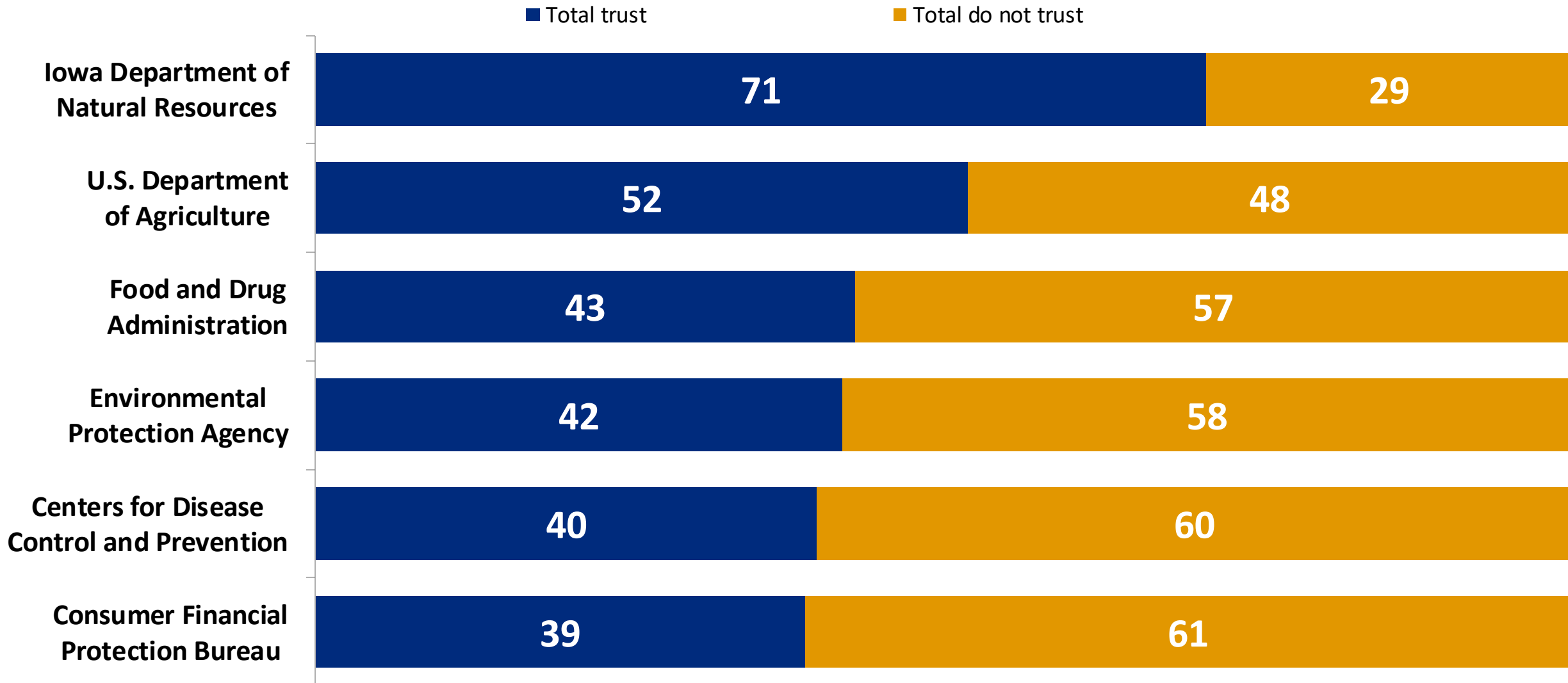


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The Agricultural Industry and Iowa's Drinking Water

Trust in institutions and agencies

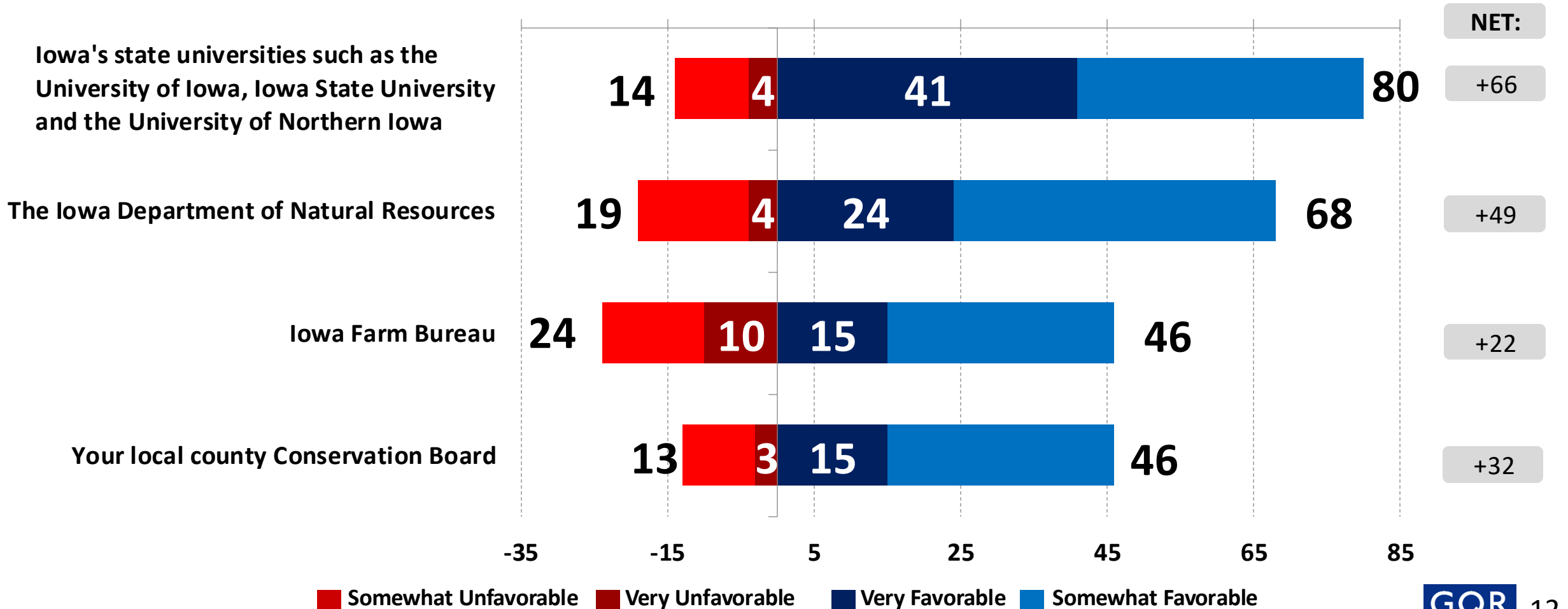
Now you are going to see a list of institutions and agencies. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that institution or agency to keep us safe.



Favorability of groups and organizations

Please rate your feelings toward each of the public figures, terms and organizations below. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that person, term or organization, please check that box rather than looking them up.

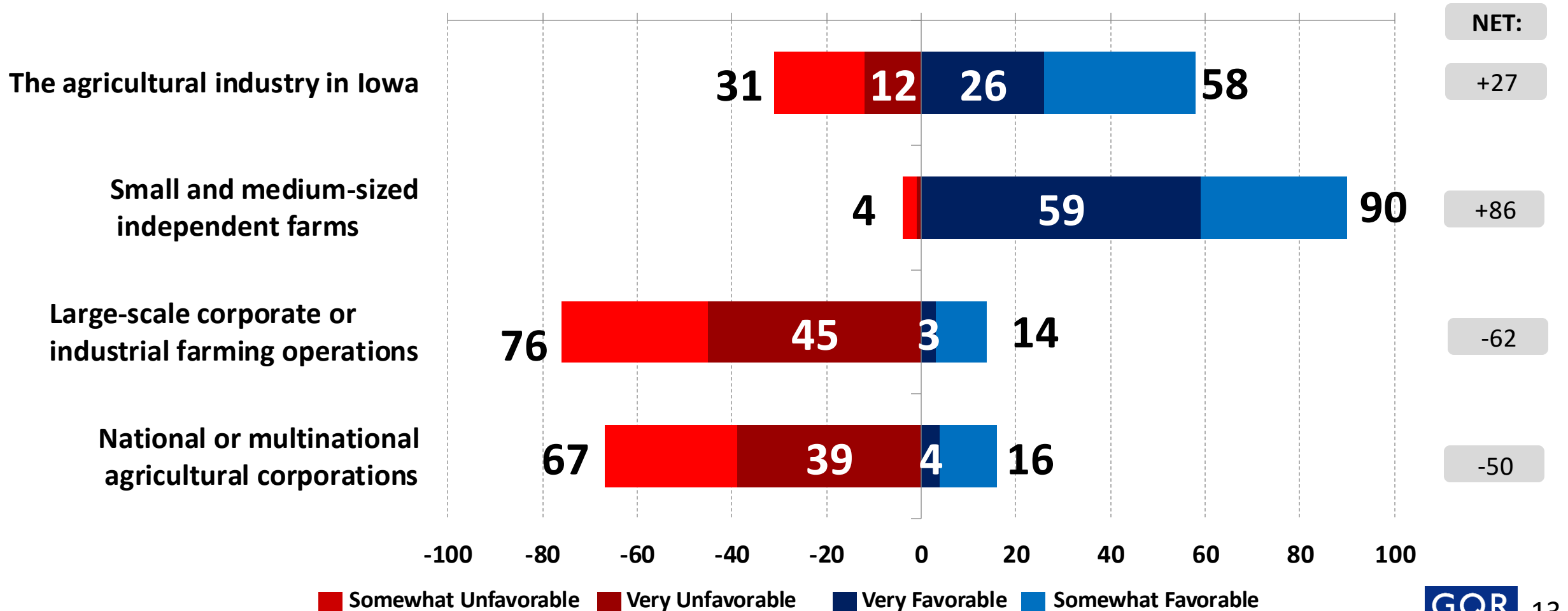
We assessed favorability ratings for 11 public figures, terms and organizations.



Favorability of groups and organizations (continued)

Please rate your feelings toward each of the public figures, terms and organizations below. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that person, term or organization, please check that box rather than looking them up.

We assessed favorability ratings for 11 public figures, terms and organizations.



Favorability of farms and agriculture industry among lowans and subgroups

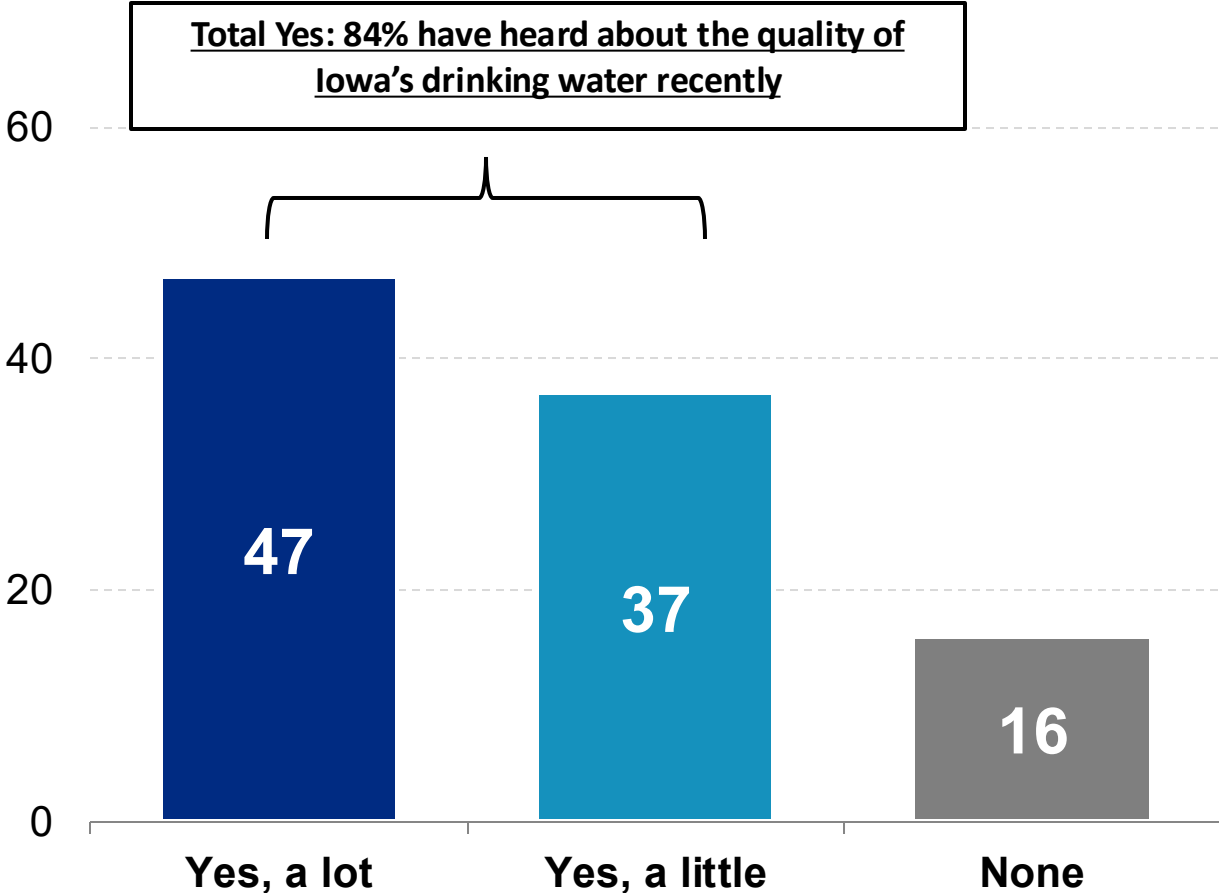
% Favorable – Unfavorable	Ag industry	Small/ independent farms	Large-scale farms	Multinational Ag corps	• The agricultural industry has net positive ratings across political groups. • Those with a career in the agricultural industry are more favorable to the industry than those who have not had a career in the agricultural industry. • People with a personal experience with cancer are less favorable to the agricultural industry than those without. • Near unanimous support for small and local farms. • Voters with a career in the agricultural industry view large-scale farms just as unfavorably as voters with no connection to the agricultural industry.
Total	58 – 31	90 – 4	14 – 76	16 – 67	
Democrat	44 – 41	89 – 3	5 – 83	8 – 72	
Independent	52 – 37	89 – 6	13 – 78	18 – 70	
Republican	73 – 16	92 – 4	21 – 67	20 – 59	
Under 50	49 – 39	88 – 6	11 – 77	14 – 67	
50 – 64	63 – 26	90 – 4	17 – 71	17 – 64	
65 and up	65 – 25	94 – 2	14 – 77	18 – 68	
Career in Agriculture Industry	65 – 31	93 – 3	16 – 76	17 – 72	
No Career in Agriculture Industry	52 – 31	88 – 5	12 – 75	15 – 63	
East	61 – 29	92 – 4	15 – 78	16 – 70	
Central	52 – 40	88 – 6	16 – 73	15 – 67	
South	59 – 26	91 – 3	13 – 75	21 – 63	
Northwest	64 – 18	95 – 0	9 – 75	13 – 61	
Northeast	57 – 33	90 – 5	11 – 78	16 – 66	
Water quality top 3 issue*	35 – 55	90 – 6	6 – 86	8 – 79	
Affected by cancer	54 – 37	90 – 5	11 – 81	14 – 72	
Not affected by cancer	67 – 18	91 – 2	21 – 62	21 – 55	

The first number is the proportion of respondents in that category with a very or somewhat favorable view of that item, and the second number is the proportion of respondents with a very or somewhat unfavorable view.

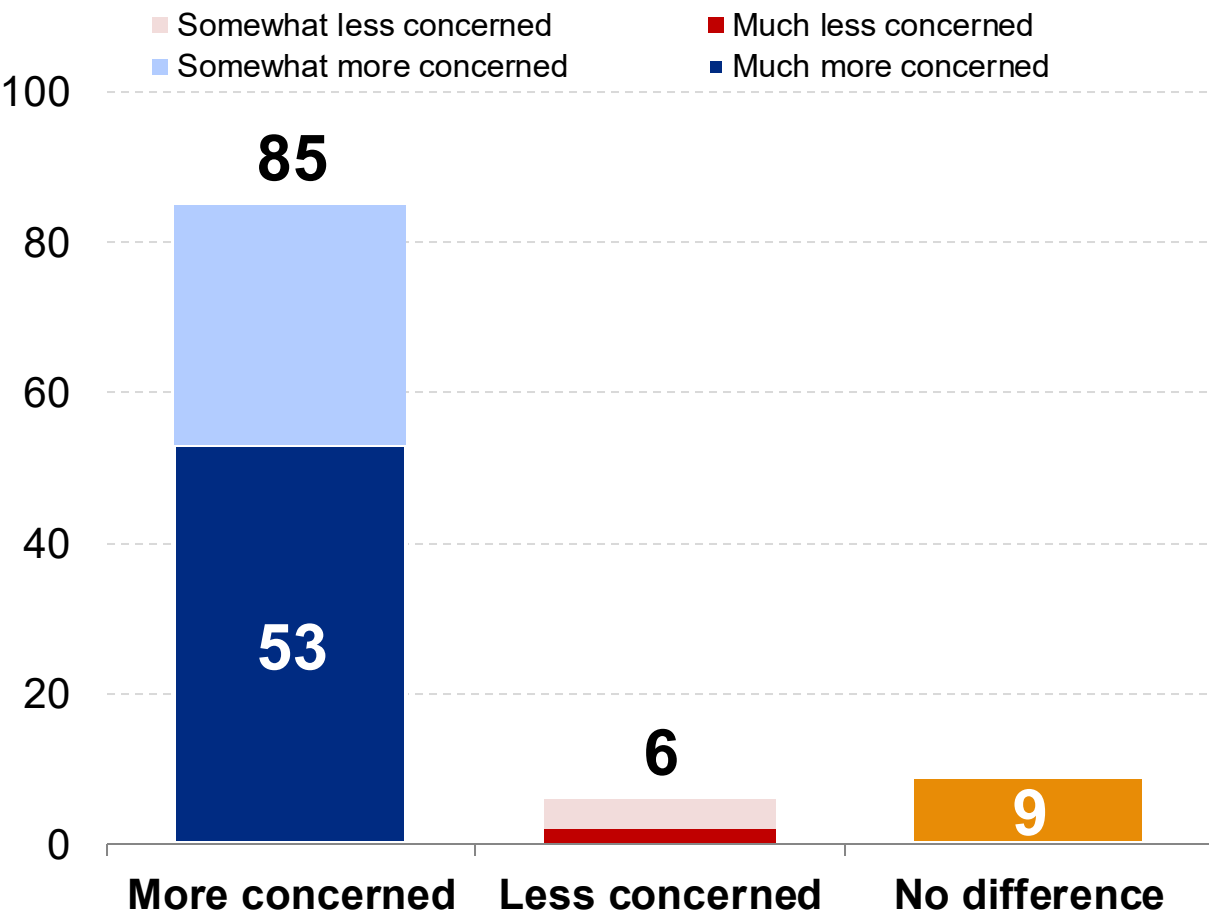
*Showing respondents with water quality as a top 3 issue as a representation of voters with the most intense support for this issue.

Awareness and concern about drinking water quality in Iowa

Have you seen, heard or read anything in the past year about the quality of Iowa's drinking water?

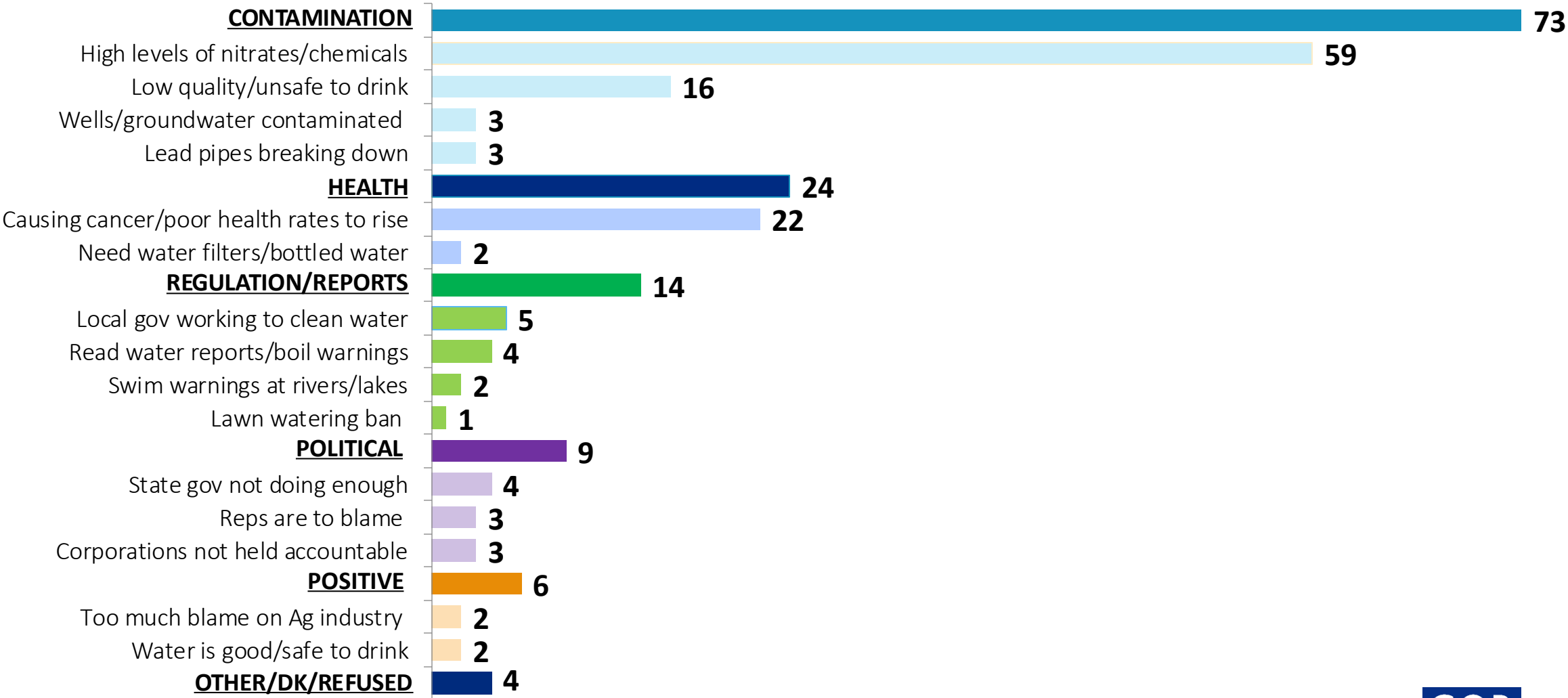


(IF YES) Have the things you've seen, heard, or read in the past year about the quality of Iowa's drinking water made you feel more concerned or less concerned about the quality of Iowa's drinking water?



Most voters report hearing about contamination/nitrates in the water

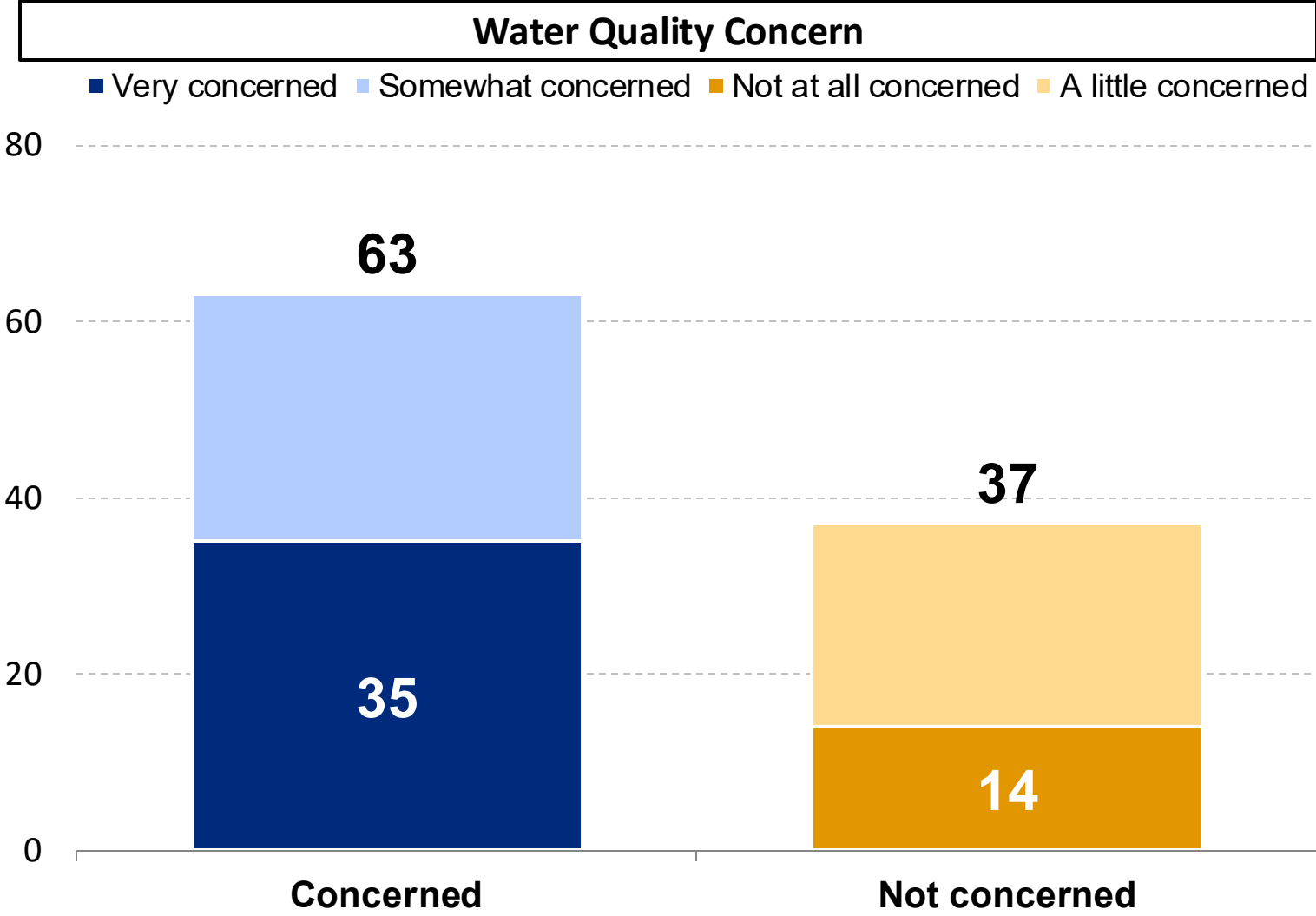
(IF YES HAVE HEARD, 84%) What specifically have you seen, heard or read in the past year about the quality of Iowa's drinking water? Please be as detailed as possible.



This question was open-ended and the responses were organized into themes.

63% of Iowa voters are concerned about the quality of their tap water at home

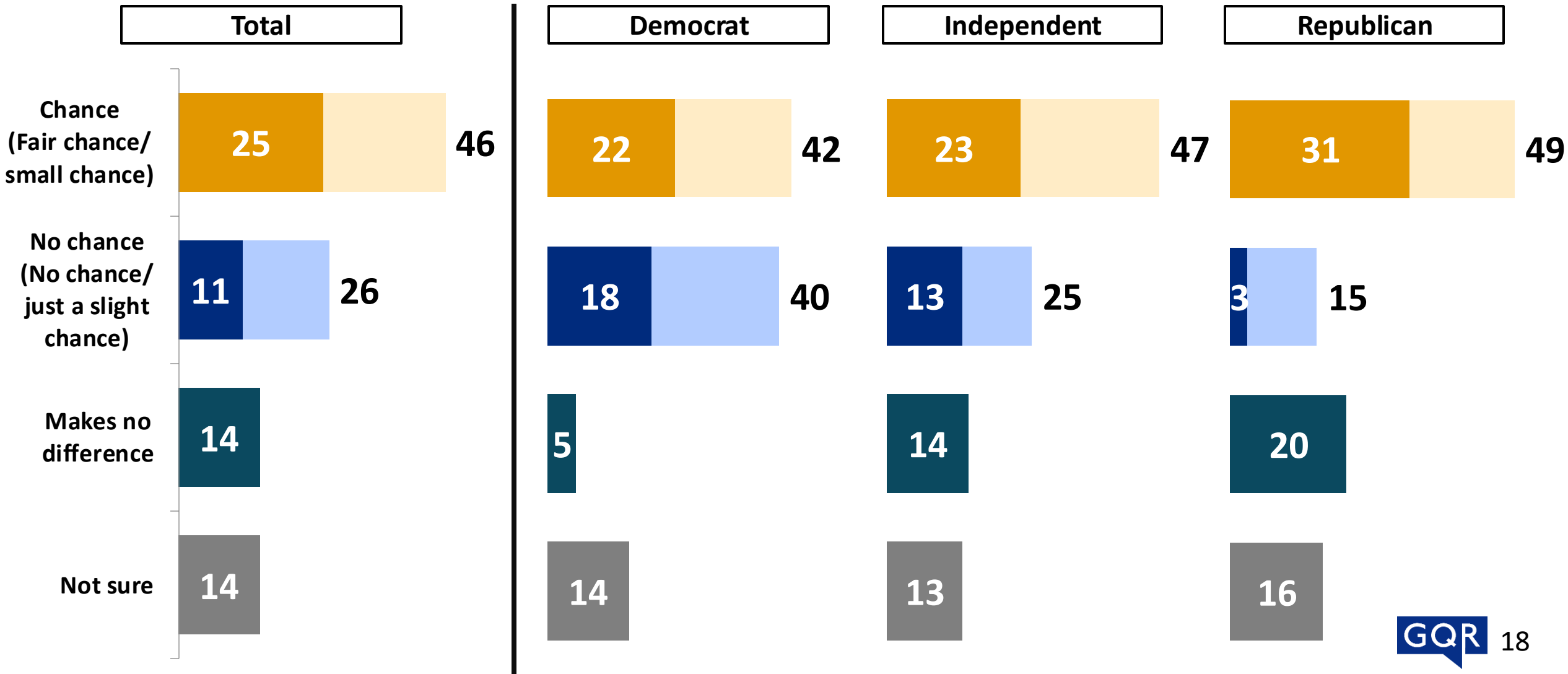
How concerned are you about the quality of your tap water at home here in Iowa?



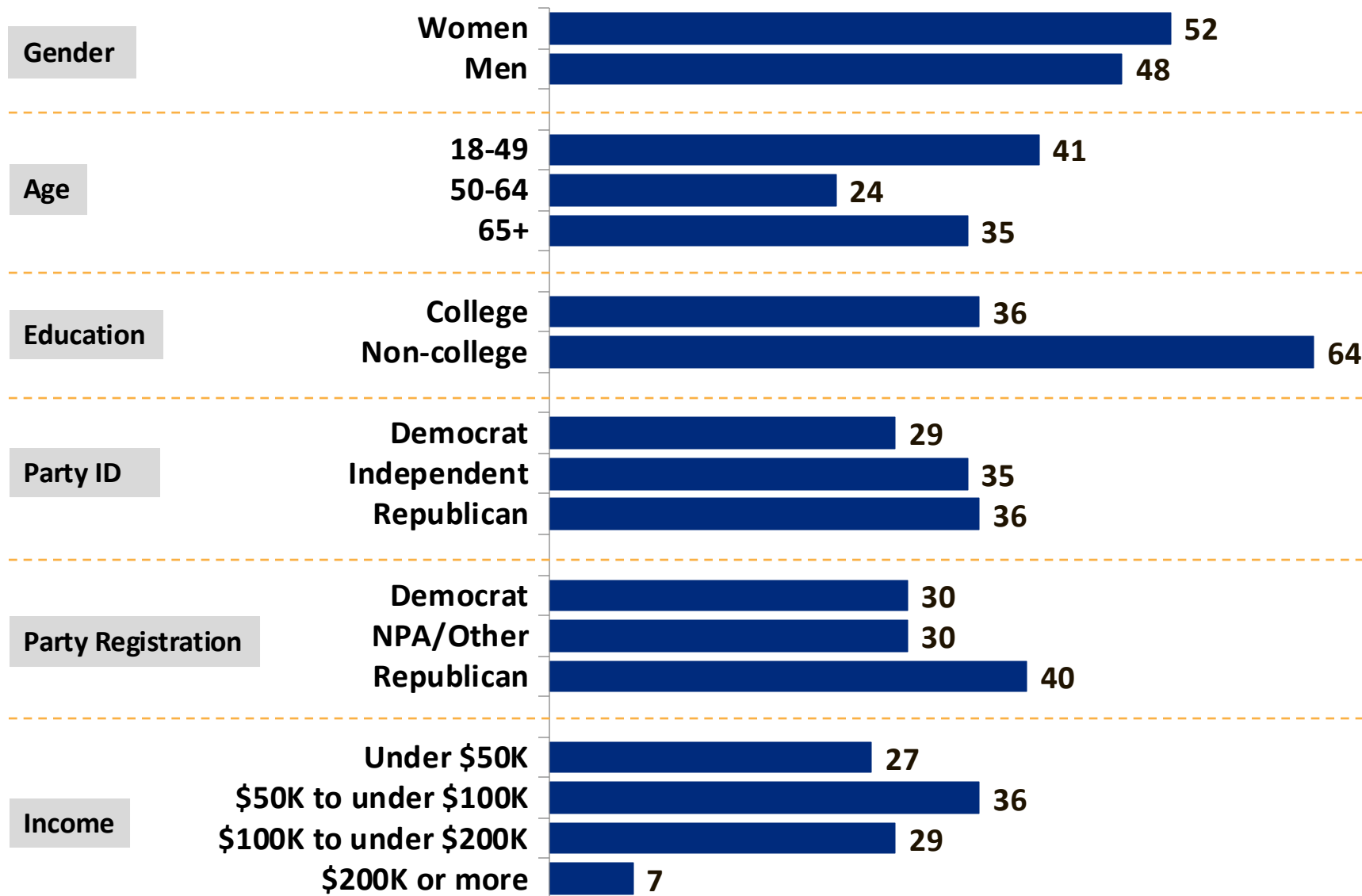
%	Concerned	Not concerned
Total	63	37
Democrat	75	25
Independent	62	37
Republican	54	46
Men under 50	58	40
Men over 50	54	45
Women under 50	85	15
Women over 50	60	40
Career in Ag Industry	59	41
No Career in Ag Industry	66	33
East	62	38
Central	68	32
South	58	40
Northwest	62	36
Northeast	60	40
Affected by cancer	68	32
Not affected by cancer	51	47

26% of voters say there is no chance or just a slight chance of supporting a candidate in November who does not prioritize improving water quality

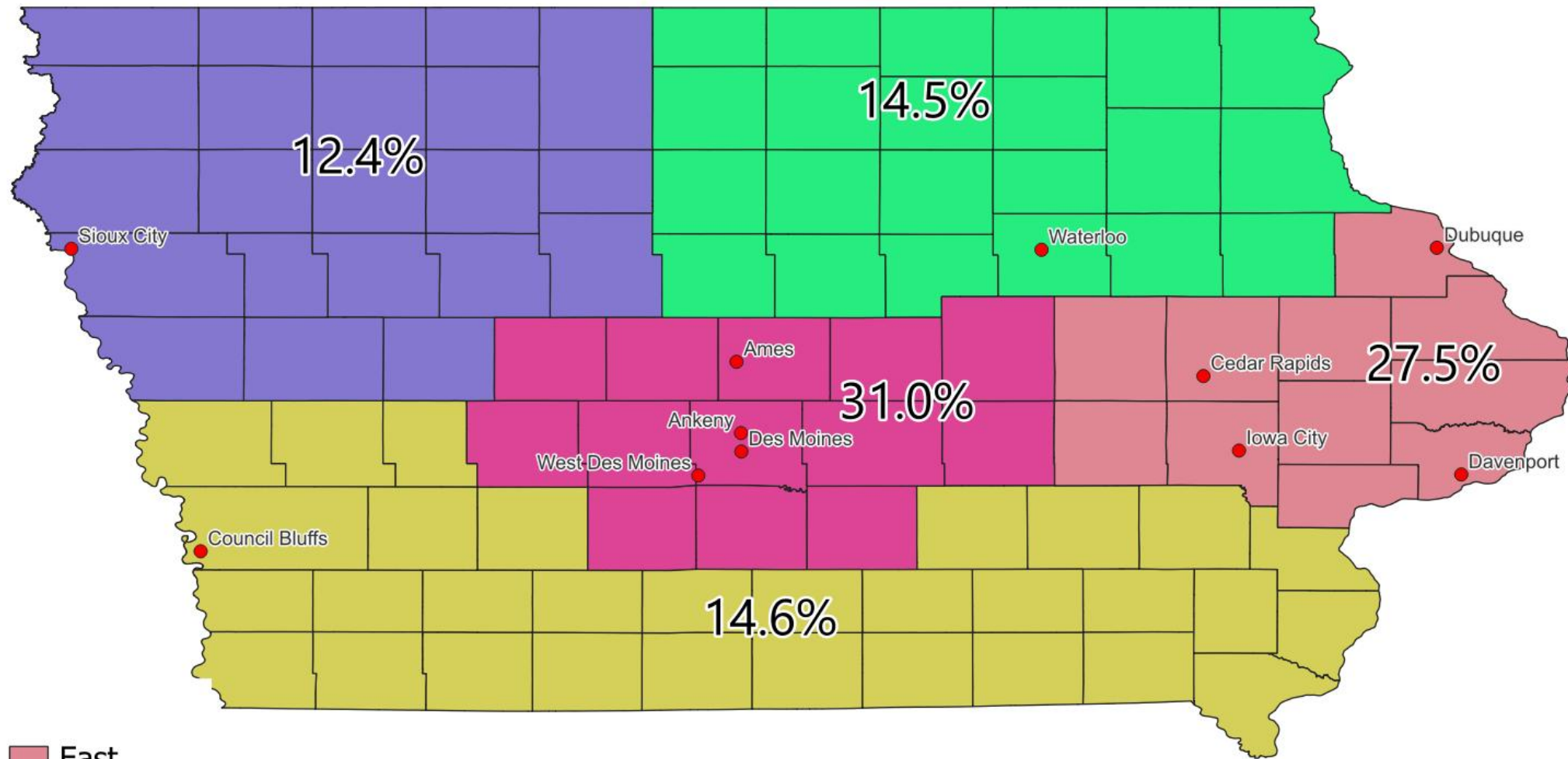
What are the chances of you supporting a candidate in November that you agree with on most issues, but who does not make improving drinking water quality in Iowa a priority?



Breakdown of likely 2026 general election iowa voters



Projected voter breakdown by region



- East
- Central
- South
- Northwest
- Northeast



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Thank you

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