

FUTURO Y

ESPERANZA

LATINX PERSPECTIVES ON
POLICING AND SAFETY



@conmijente



FUTURO Y ESPERANZA:

LATINX VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES ON
PUBLIC SAFETY AND POLICE VIOLENCE

Introduction	1
Report Highlights	5
Methodology	14
Results and Observations	15
Conclusion	93
About the Authors	95
Organizations	
Individuals	
Designer's Note	

INTRODUCTION

This report is the nation’s first comprehensive investigation capturing Latinx experiences and perceptions on policing and public safety. Commissioned by the national Latinx organizing body Mijente and conducted by the non-partisan public opinion firm PerryUndem, it is an intervention supported by data to broaden the conversation about public safety and policing in the Latinx community. Learning and building from the leadership of Black communities and organizers, the results of the poll and focus groups offer unprecedented insights into the scope and complexity of how Latinx people interact with the police, and insights to sharpen or spark organizing and advocacy around policing and community safety.

In 2020, the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor once again put a spotlight on police violence in the United States, particularly against Black people. As a result of decades of Black-led and multi-racial organizing, protests erupted and the demand to “defund the police” became part of a mainstream public dialogue. The backlash was swift and immediate, including the villainization of protestors and movement leaders, discrediting ‘defund the police’ in the media, and hysteria about rising crime rates in the midst of a global pandemic.

“THIS REPORT IS THE NATION’S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION CAPTURING LATINX EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS ON POLICING AND PUBLIC SAFETY.”



Latinxs perspectives on police violence have been mixed at best, and anti-Black at worst. Latinx responses after the uprisings visibilized a gap in Latinx leadership and engagement on policing issues, insufficient existing data about the scope of impact of police violence on Latinxs. As a growing segment of the population¹ and as the second-largest group impacted by criminalization in the United States,² understanding what shapes Latinx perspectives - and what can move them - can have a significant impact on the fight against police violence in this country.

Right wing actors have spent billions of dollars on political and cultural strategies to push their platform in Latinx neighborhoods - engaging in persistent and targeted misinformation campaigns around policing that are specifically designed to fan the flames of division between Black and Brown communities. Particularly after the end of the Trump administration, Latinxs have been specifically targeted by organizations looking to move the community towards the Right, setting up community centers to push conservative candidates.³ Organizing with Latinx communities on issues of police and policing requires a strategy for countering these right-wing tactics.

But - until now - public opinion research around policing has been opaque. Polling on police violence and public safety tends to be fairly one-dimensional. Much of the existing research has been framed through an electoral lens, and focuses on the strength of particular messaging with frequent voters. Little attention has been paid to how Latinx communities uniquely experience, perceive, and feel about police and public safety - and there has been no significant exploration of how race, economic status, immigration history, gender, and other demographics impact the diversity of opinions within the Latinx community.

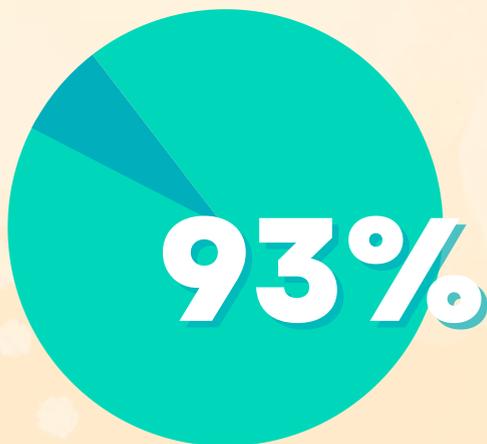
¹<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>

²<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>

³<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/republicans-target-latino-voters-2022-community-centers-rcna2567>

To get at the root of our communities' perspectives on safety and policing, this research study was designed with input from Mijente's network of organizers and partners who hoped to better understand what moves Latinx communities. The final product is a representative survey of 1,359 Latinx adults and 11 focus groups of varying geography, race, immigration history, language, economic status, and level of political activism, in the United States and Puerto Rico.

The results tell a story that is representative of the Latinx diaspora as a whole: political perspectives vary dramatically depending on any number of factors. While Black Latinx participants reported higher rates of negative or violent interaction with the police, people across the racial spectrum reported family and friends experiencing negative interactions with the police. There were also important differences amongst Puerto Ricans living in the island - many connect police budgets to the lack of funding that currently exists of all public resources, such as education, health, and transportation.⁴



Another important insight: 93 percent of respondents **support political platforms that invest in crime prevention strategies**, including investments in healthcare, education, and workforce development.

⁴Many of the latest protests target the Financial Oversight and Management Board controlled by the U.S. government for limiting and cutting public services. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/us/puerto-rico-teachers-protests.html>



The intention is for the results of this research to make an important contribution to grassroots organizing strategy across the country. Latinx people understand that class and race determine how police engage the public, and want alternatives to public safety systems that rely on trained professionals instead of police. Still, it's clear that we're a long way from Latinx communities embracing safety systems that exclude police entirely – particularly when it comes to crisis response and protection of property.

The research shows some clear openings for moving our communities. We hope it will serve as a helpful resource in developing or strengthening strategic platforms and creating tools for dialogue for organizers, policy-makers, campaigns, base-building efforts, and groups dedicated to ending police violence.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Below are some of the key findings from this study, including the information obtained from the survey and the focus groups.

A majority of Latinxs surveyed reported that they or a close family member has had a negative encounter with police.



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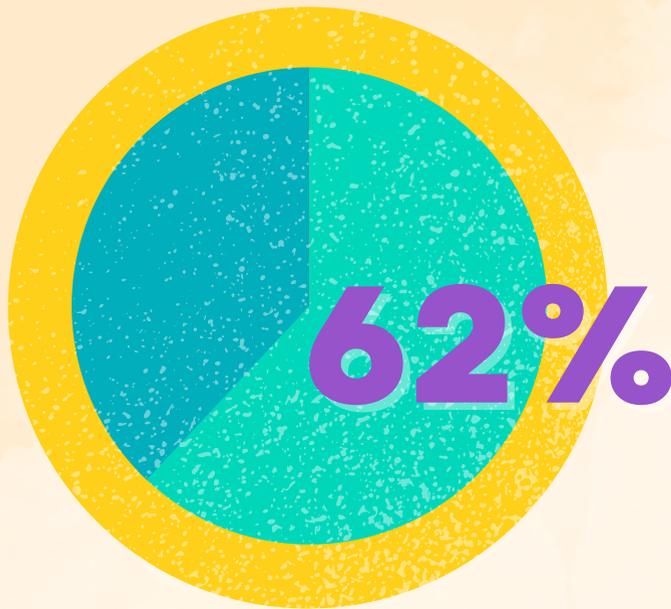


One out of 10 Latinxs reports that a police officer has pointed a gun at them.

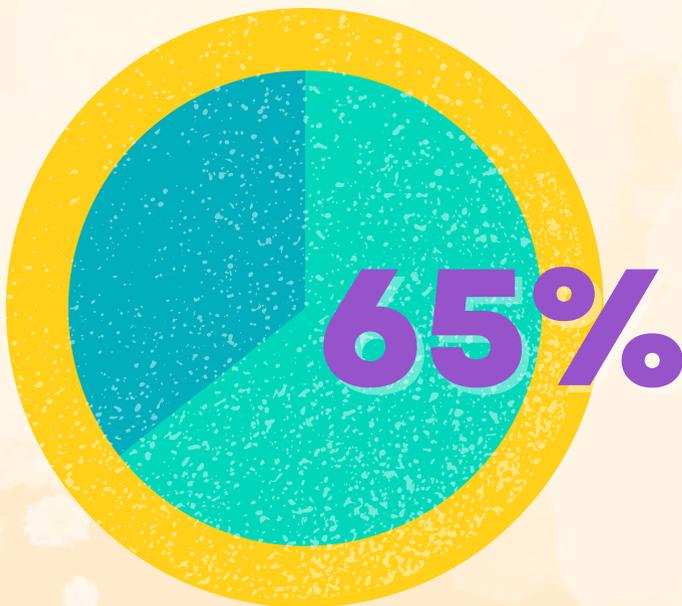
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While one in 3 Afro-Latinxs reports that they or a family member has had that experience.



About six in ten Latinx adults (62%) say that they or a close friend or family member has had a negative or unsafe experience with a police officer.



Roughly two-thirds of Afro-Latinx respondents (65%) say they personally have had at least one of these negative encounters.

While not top-of-mind for most, some women in the focus groups reported feeling unsafe around police because of their gender. Several women say they feel vulnerable around police due to the fear of being sexually assaulted or not being protected by male police officers. One Afro-Latina woman says being a woman and Black compounds her chances of being targeted by police and experiencing police violence.

The data suggest that people who have had negative experiences with police or who have heard about the targeting of people of color by police, are more likely to distrust them and understand the need for alternatives outside of policing.

THE EXPERIENCES AFRO-LATINX PEOPLE WITH POLICE STANDS OUT IN WAYS THAT UNDERSCORE THE IMPACT OF RACE AND RACISM.

Afro-Latinx respondents are most likely to say they've been stopped by police, with 67% versus 51% of respondents who identify as white. Forty-four percent (44%) of Afro-Latinxs say a police officer has been aggressive with them, versus 19% of respondents who identify as white.



Latinxs consider police mistreatment, toward people of color, particularly Black people, as pervasive, and a sign of “a bigger problem,” not an isolated incident.

A majority of Latinxs perceive police often treating people differently depending on race, skin color, language, immigration status, and class. For example, 69% believe that police abusing their power when dealing with people of color happens often in the US and 72% says the same about police racially profiling people.

A majority of Latinxs understand that police violence is not solely a question of individual bad actors, and that it points to a larger issue. **For example, 69% of those surveyed felt that the murder of George Floyd is not an isolated incident.** Most likely to agree with this are Afro-Latinx respondents (82%), but even nearly half of Latinx Republicans respondents felt the incident was a sign of a bigger problem (52%).



Four in ten Afro-Latinx respondents (41%) have avoided calling the police for fear the police might make the situation worse, almost double the number of those who identify as white (22%).

4 in 10 Afro-Latinx respondents have avoided calling the police for fear the police might make the situation worse.



Afro-Latinx (62%) and multiracial (58%) respondents are the most likely to have felt police can be too aggressive when dealing with their communities.

People believe that making communities safer is about resources, jobs, and education, not more police. But it is difficult for them to imagine police not playing a role in safety.

93%

Believe that to make communities safer, “investing money in things that prevent crime from happening in the first place, such as good schools, access to good-paying jobs, and affordable housing, instead of just funding police to respond to it.”

Instead of sending the police:

87% OF LATINXS SUPPORTED SENDING A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, 85% SUPPORT SENDING A MENTAL HEALTH CARE EXPERT INSTEAD OF AN ARMED OFFICER, AND 82% SENDING A SOCIAL WORKER WHEN APPROPRIATE.

Most Latinxs are likely to link improving public safety with a broad set of changes beyond increased policing.

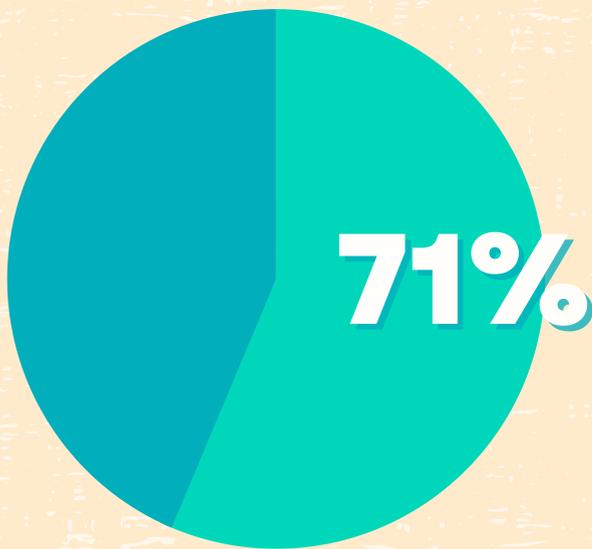
When given a list of the conditions that would improve public safety, the top factor is having jobs with good pay (80%) followed by having quality schools (78%). Majorities also say having trust between police and the people they serve would improve community safety (76%).



There are opportunities for figuring out messaging for Latinx Republicans, for example, in the issues where they split right down the middle.

Although generally Republicans aligned with defending the police, there are some openings for intervention. For example, 45% of Latinx Republicans think that police abuse their power with people of color.

A surprising 71% of Republicans express support for changing the laws to prevent police violence, 79% support investing in things that would prevent crime to begin with, 76% support sending a healthcare professional to a medical emergency instead of an armed police officer, and 71% support sending a mental health professional to a crisis involving mental health.



Of Latinx Republicans express **support for changing the laws to prevent police violence.**

Despite persistent reports of distrust, many Latinxs report positive experiences with police with some variation depending on demographic.

Some agree that there are times when police are not helpful or will make things worse, particularly for people of color or undocumented immigrants.

At the same time, a majority of respondents say they've had a personal connection to a positive experience with police officers. Close to six in ten respondents (58%) say that either they (38%) or a close friend or family member (30%) has been helped by police in an emergency situation.

Residents of non-metro areas (51%) are most likely to say they've been helped by the police in an emergency, while people in Texas are among the lowest to say so (34%).

A significant number of people do not believe a police officer would be helpful in an emergency situation or are unsure whether a police officer would be helpful in an emergency situation (41%)

A majority believe that people of color (73%) and undocumented Latinxs (76%) often feel unsafe calling the police.



Latinxs have positive associations and understand social movement demands responding to police violence



58%

feel positive towards the Black Lives Matter movement⁵

53%

of Spanish speakers haven't heard the phrase "defund the police"

Latinxs feel somewhat positive (28%) or very positive (30%) about Black Lives Matter.

Afro-Latinx respondents and young respondents are among the most likely to express these feelings. In the focus groups, all participants who were Afro-Latinx identified with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Almost half of Latinxs (45%) understand that “defund the police” is a demand for using some police funding for other ways to make communities safer - but there are specific opportunities within segments of the Latinx population, particularly Spanish speakers, Afro-Latinxs, and immigrants, with almost half of Spanish speakers (53%) having never heard the phrase, as well as 39% of Afro-Latinxs, and 37% of immigrant respondents.

⁵The responses were based on what individual respondents identify as “Black Lives Matter,” which may or may not be associated with specific organizations or institutions.

METHODOLOGY

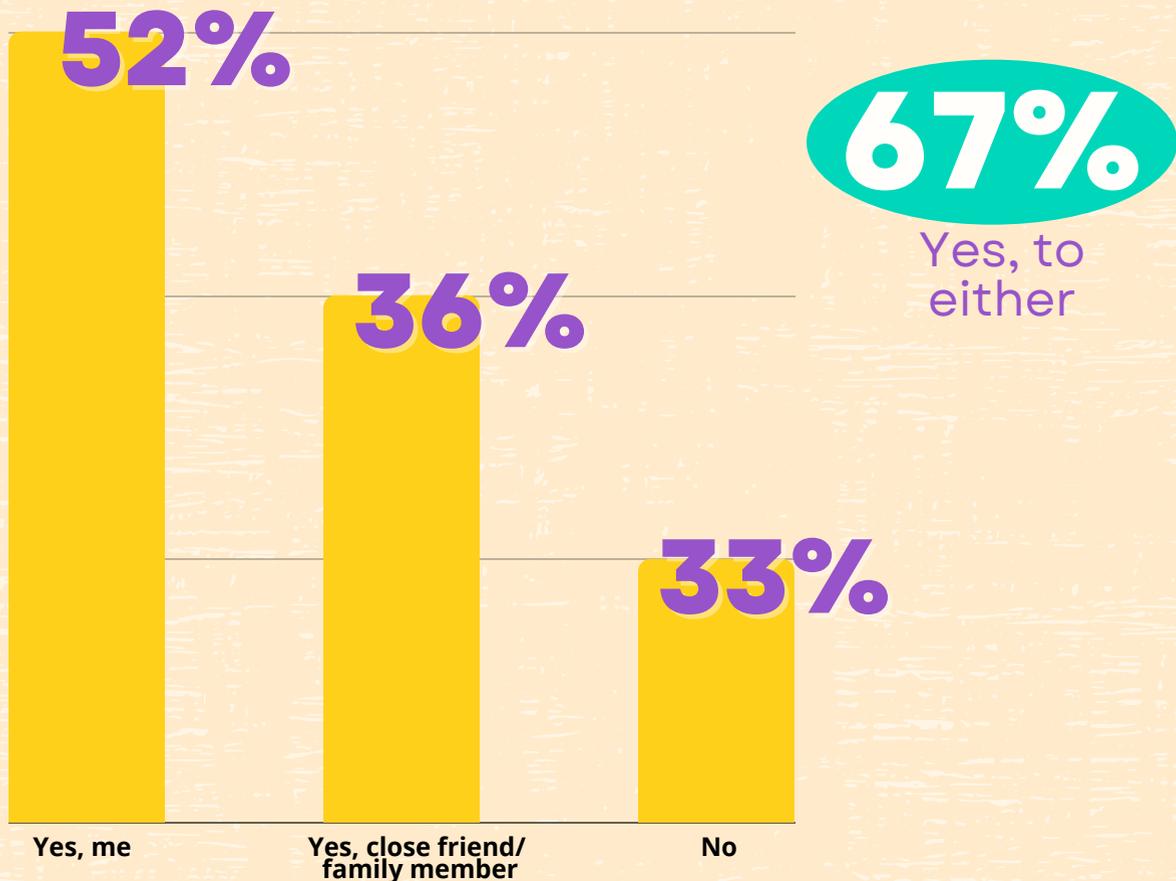
This report presents findings from a national survey of $n = 1,359$ Latina/o/x adults 18 and older conducted December 28, 2021 through February 6, 2022. The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago, using a probability-based online panel and by telephone. Respondents could choose to take the survey in English or Spanish. The survey instrument was informed by eleven focus groups among Latinx adults from diverse backgrounds and communities.



RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Two-thirds of respondents say they or a close loved one has been stopped by the police.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever been stopped by police?



“

Most of the time, [the police] would stop me for, let's say, any reason. They automatically thought that I wasn't here legally, that I didn't have papers. That's what I have to say about racism and them thinking that we're all here illegally.

Texas Man, Republican, Spanish speaker, 37 years old

I was at NMSU and I've approached [the police] and I didn't feel safe. Because I am a woman and I am Hispanic and I had an incident there at school. They really didn't help me, they helped the other guy. He was the one who hit me, they didn't really care. My license plates were from Mexico so they were like, "Oh, OK." They didn't even ask me anything. Instead of making me feel safe, I felt scared. They gave me a ticket, which they shouldn't have.

New Mexico Woman, Strong Democrat, 24 years old

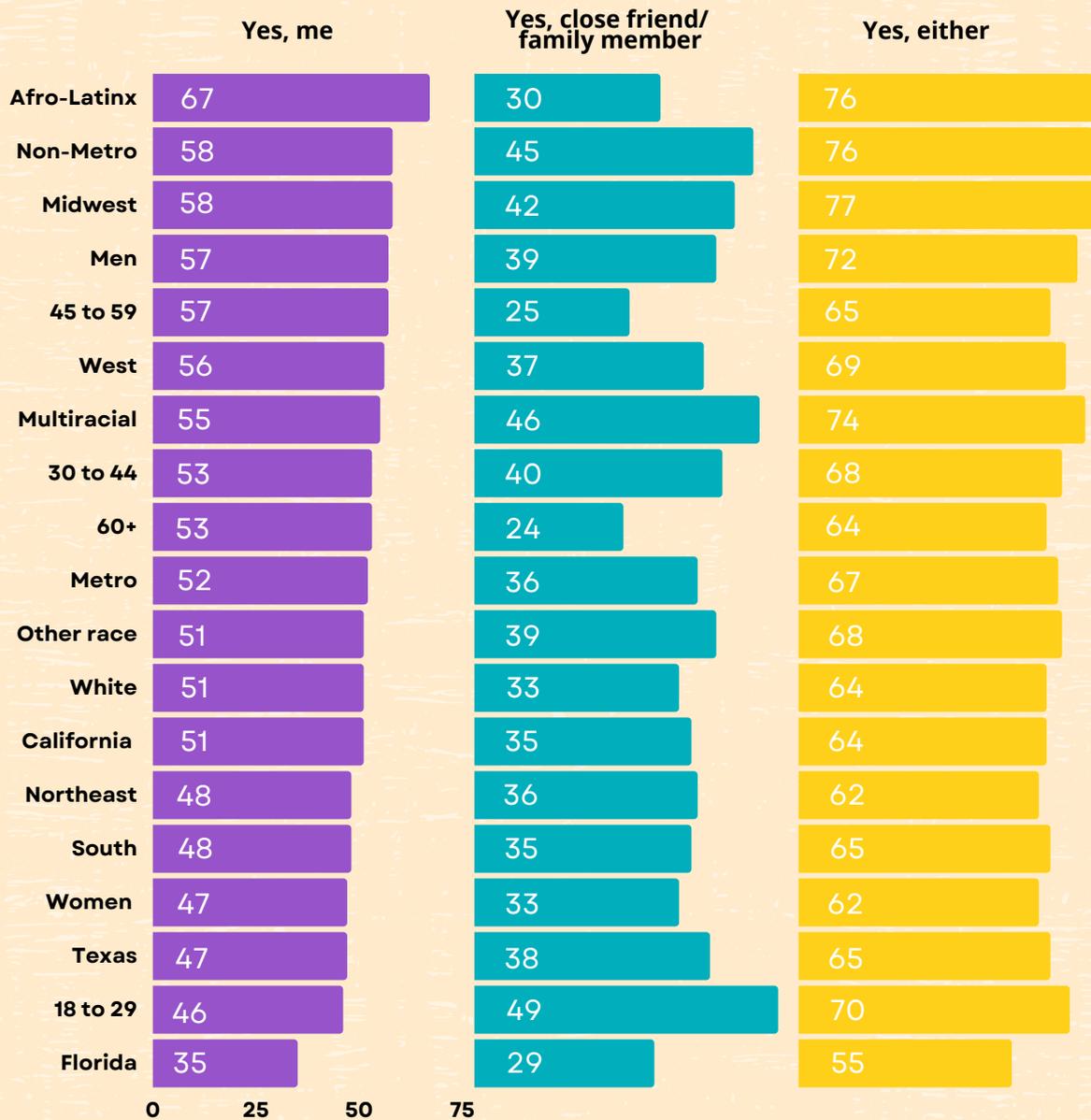
[The police] have stopped me and I was pretty sure I wasn't in trouble or anything, and they gave me tickets two times. One, because they said I was speeding and I had my cruise control on my car, and they still gave me a ticket. It's always your word against theirs.

Arizona Man, Republican, 40 years old

”

Afro-Latinx respondents are more likely than respondents overall to have been stopped by the police.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever been stopped by police?



Six in ten respondents (62%) report they or a close loved one has had a negative encounter with a police officer.



Close to half (46%) say they personally have experienced at least one of the situations below. Close to one in four (23%) says a police officer has pointed a gun at them or a close loved one.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever...



“When I was driving down I-95 from Orlando to Miami, I was pulled over. [The police] asked me to reach for my driver’s license. When I reached for my driver’s license, the cop pulled his gun out on me. There's stories like this, where I hear from people I know from my community, from other people’s communities, from different people I know, from people of color, and the stories don't compare to those of my white counterparts.”

- Florida Man, Independent lean Democrat, 34 years old

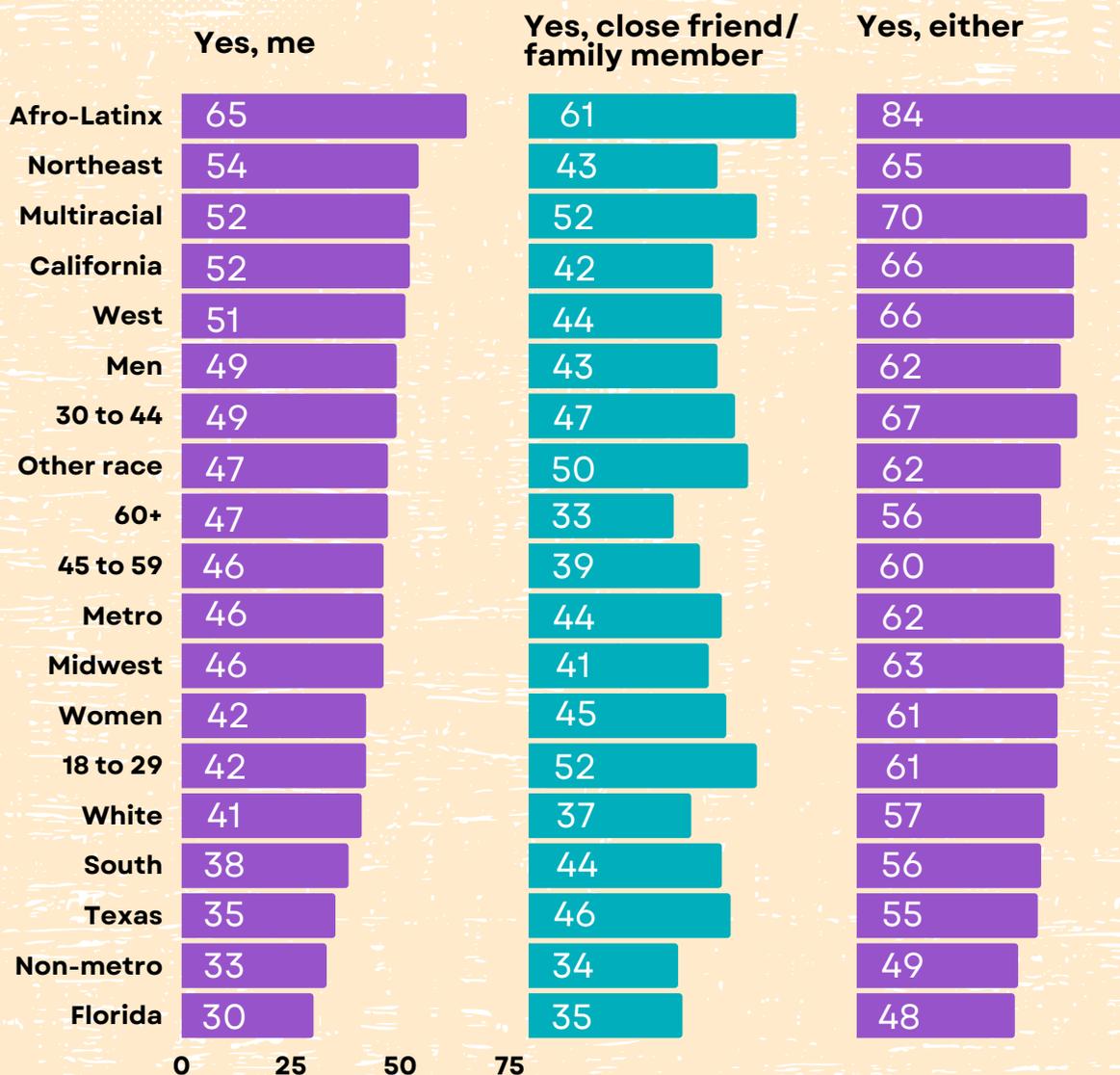
“When I was younger, my dad was going to the bank once in his car. Another car crossed in front of him and almost hit my dad. My dad, being very angry at that time, said a few things to the driver, but it was a regular car. The person got out, and it was a police officer. They made my dad get out. They asked him for his ID. They went to my house and sat my dad in an armchair. They trashed our house, taking everything out of the cabinets. There was no reason for that to happen, but they used their authority. If my dad had been a white person, all that wouldn't have happened.”

**- Likely Voter Woman, Illinois, Spanish speaker,
Independent, 24 years old**



Afro-Latinx respondents are most likely to have had a negative experience with the police.

% Yes, to at least one negative encounter

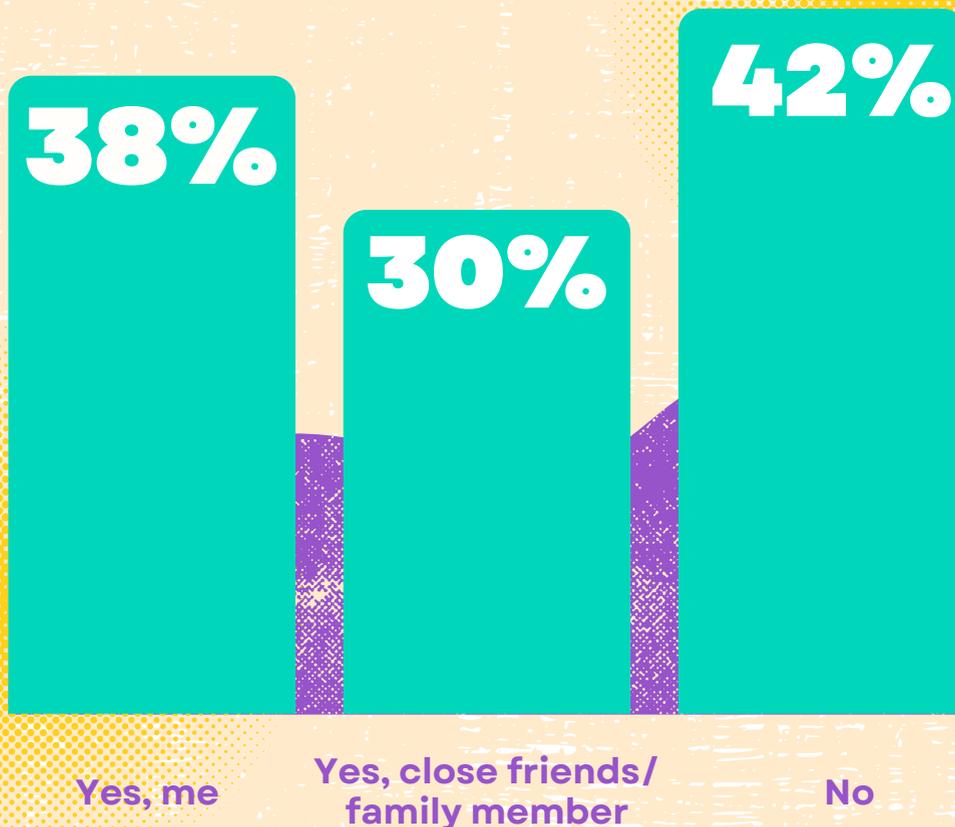


That said, 58% of respondents also report themselves or a close loved one being helped by police.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever...
(Been helped by police in an emergency situation)

58%

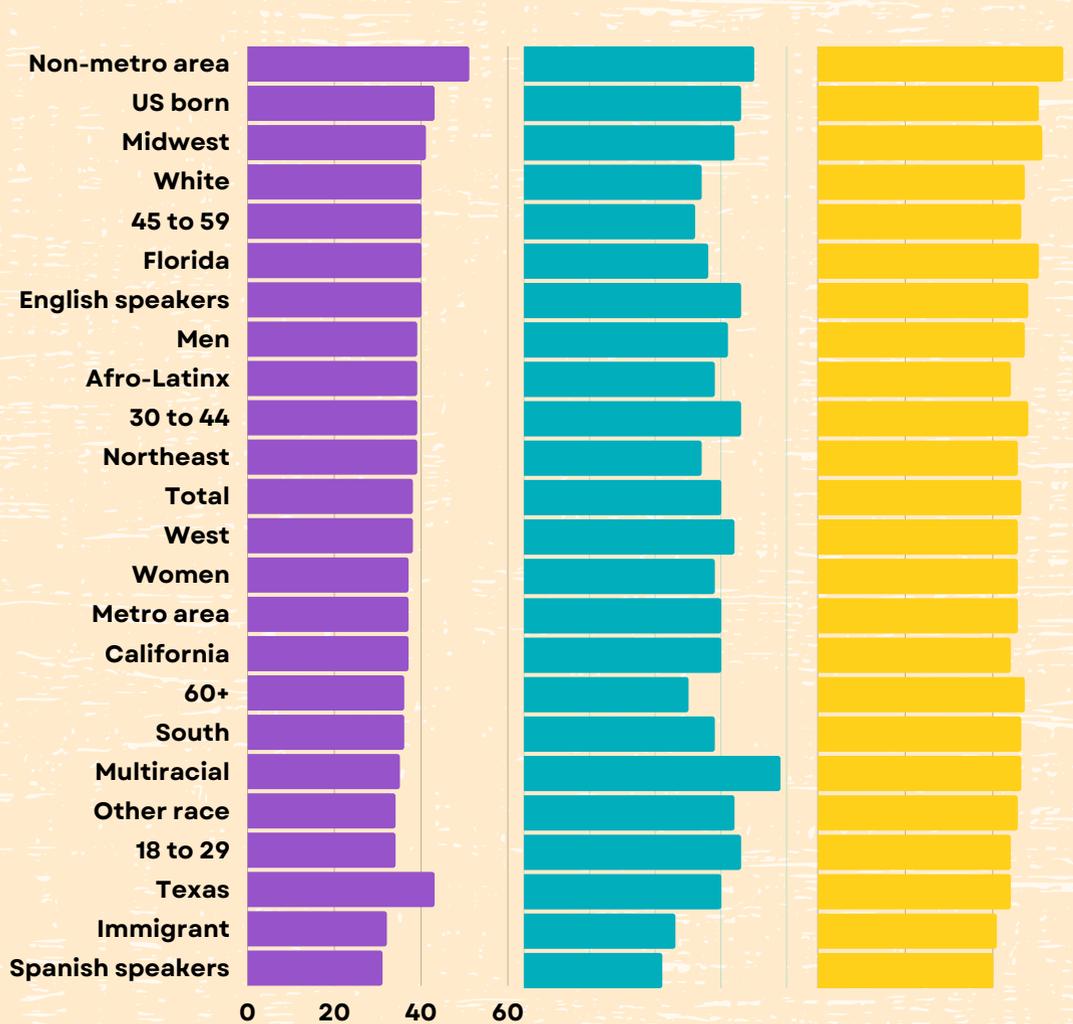
Yes, to either



Residents of non-metro areas are most likely to say have been helped by the police in an emergency.

Those born outside the US and Spanish-speakers are least likely to say they have been helped by police in an emergency.

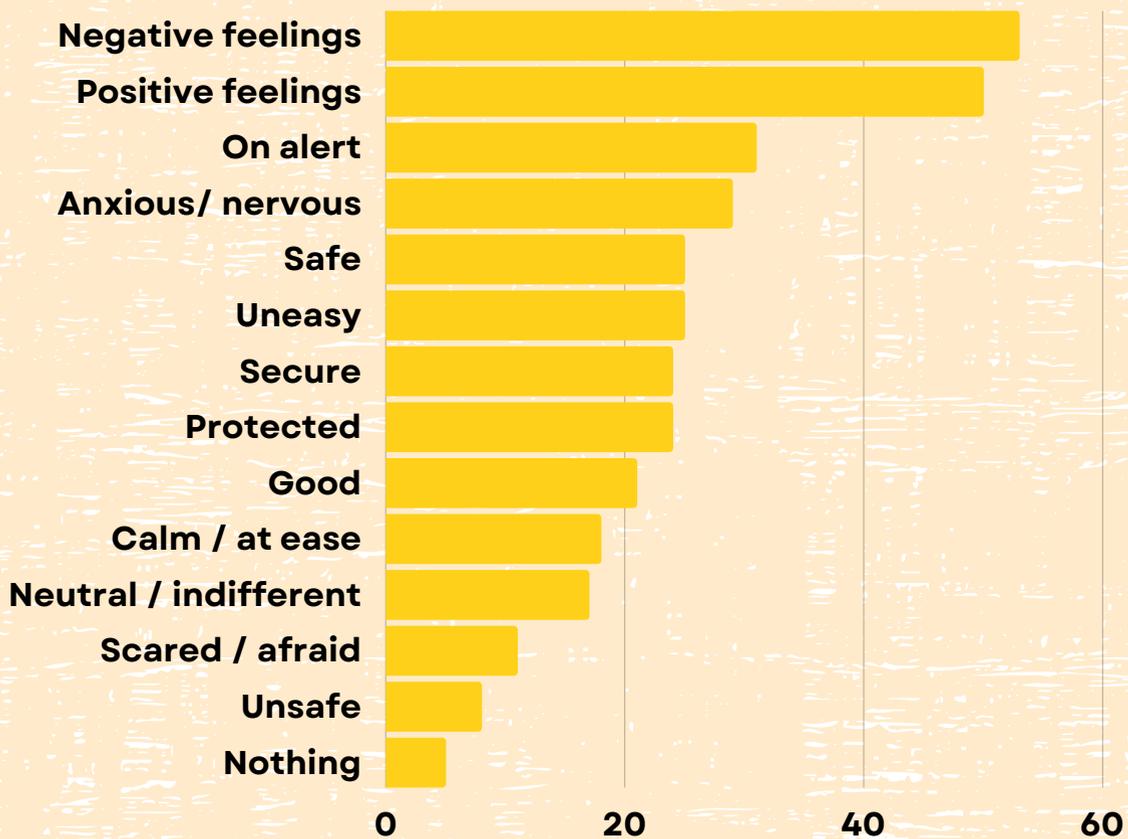
% Been helped by police in an emergency situation



Respondents report a mix of feelings around police officers.

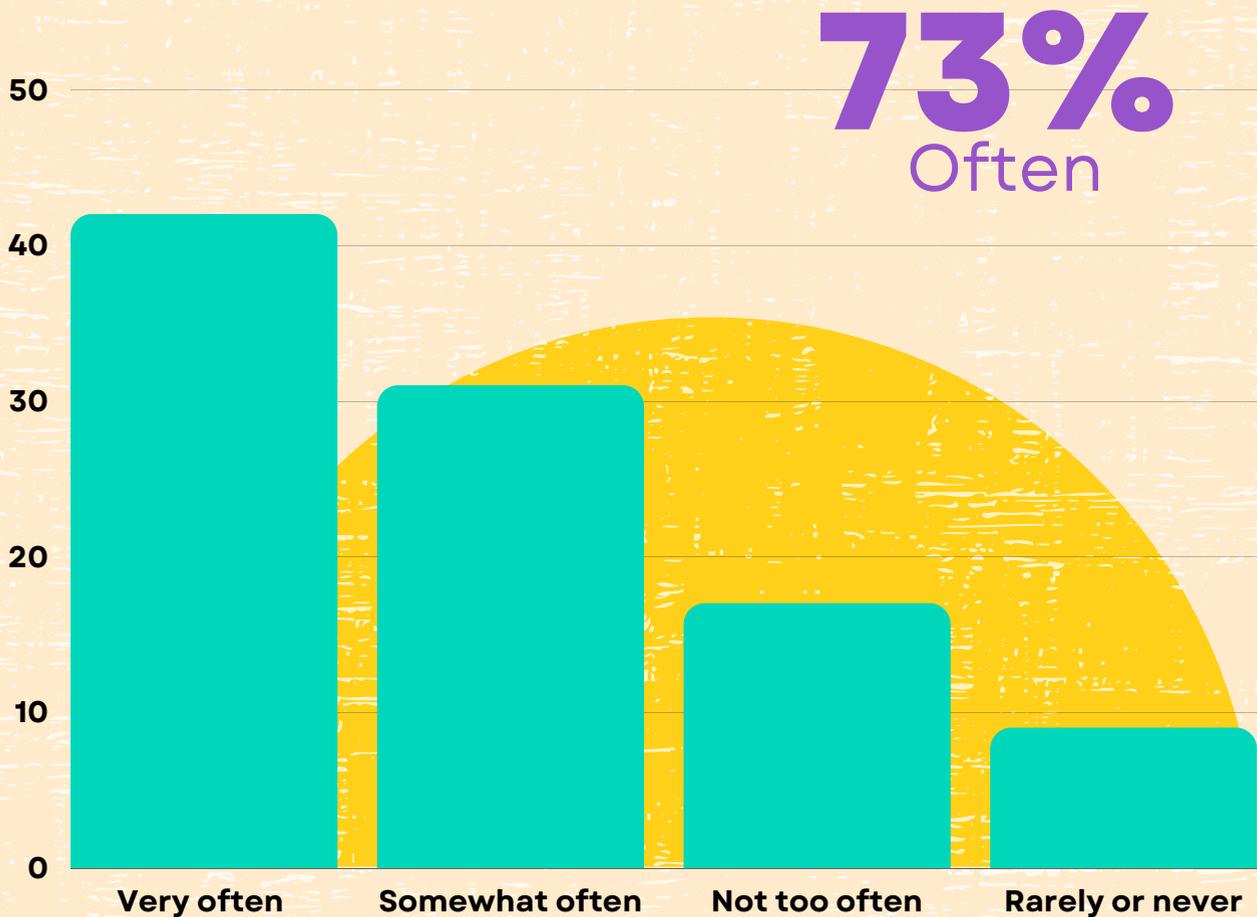
More than half of respondents (53%) feel negative emotions around police – such as anxiety and unease. About half also feels positive emotions.

Finish this sentence. When I see a police officer, I feel: _____. Select all that apply.



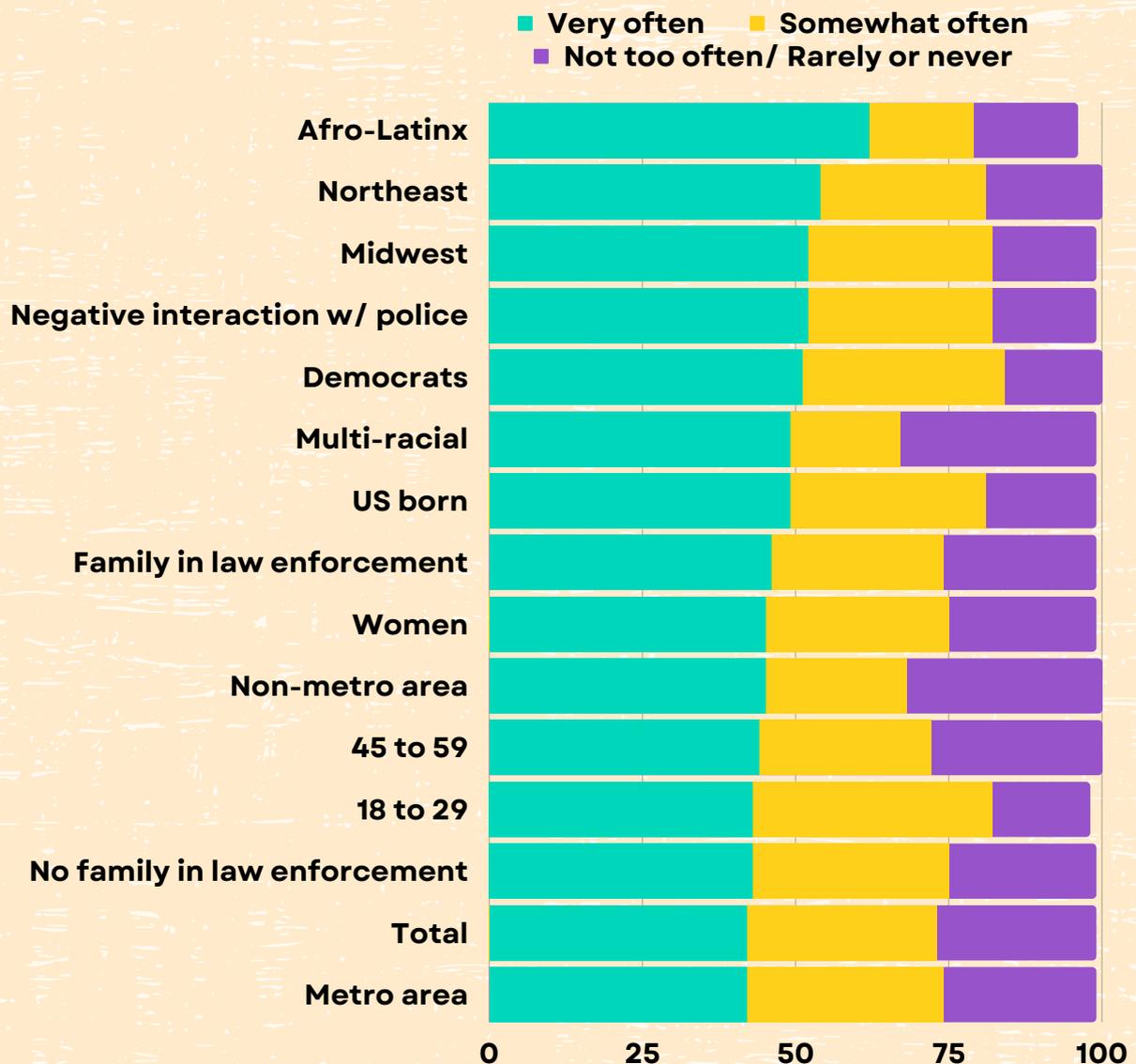
Majorities say people of color often don't feel safe calling the police in the US.

How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: [People of color not feeling safe calling the police]

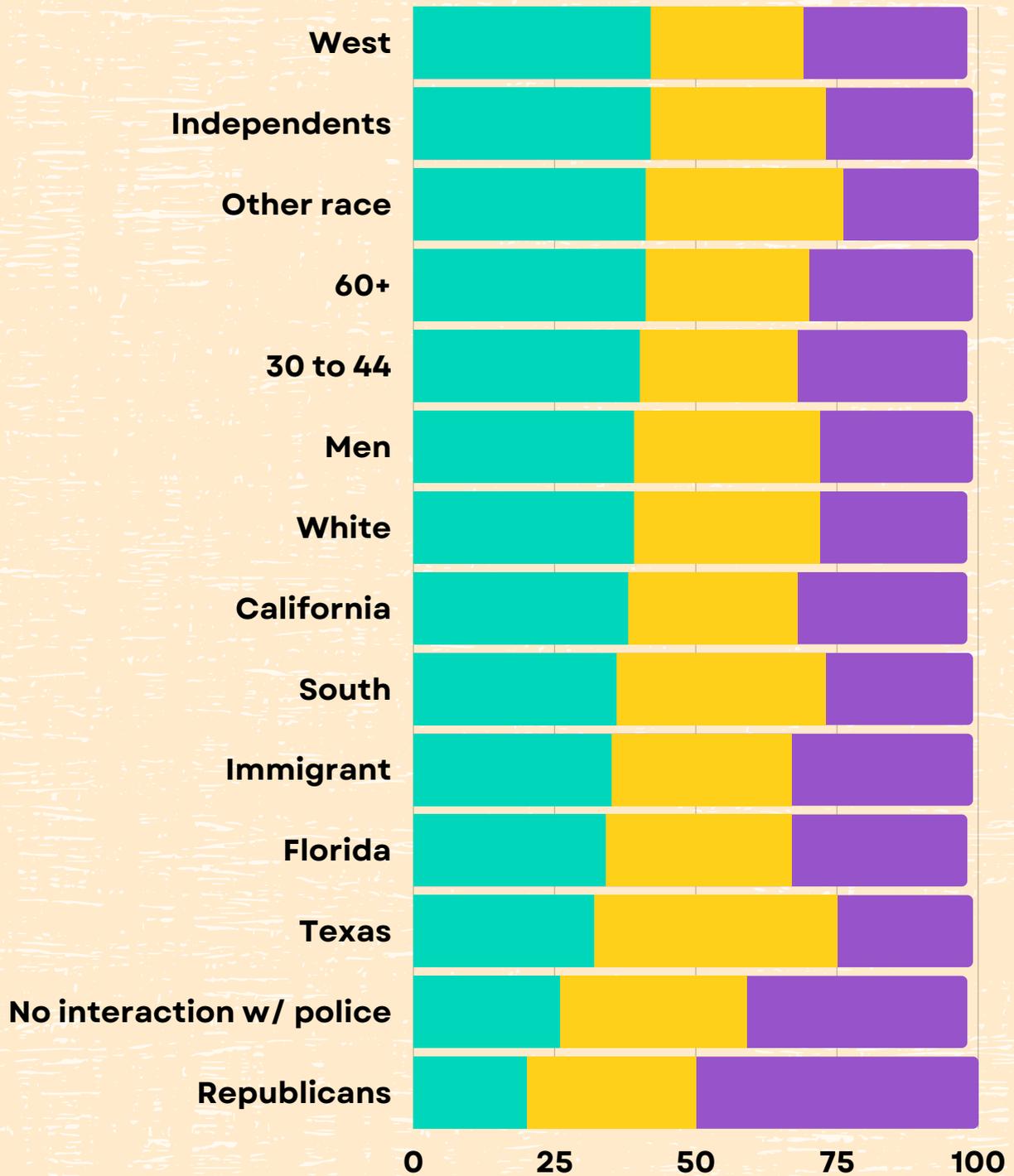


Respondents in the Northeast and Midwest are among the most likely to say people of color very often don't feel safe calling the police. Residents of the South and West are among the least likely to say people of color very often don't feel safe calling the police.

How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: [People of color not feeling safe calling the police]



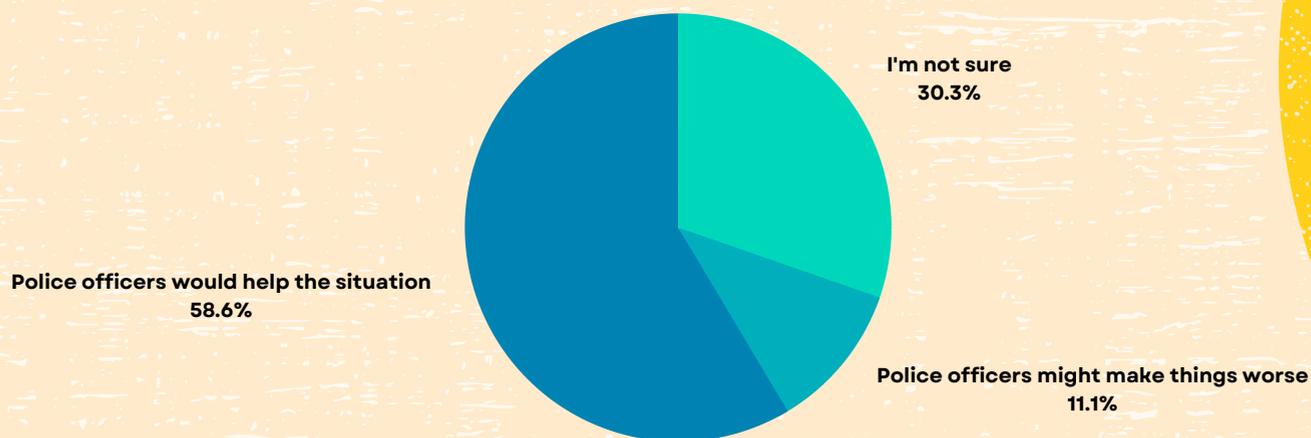
Very often Somewhat often
Not too often/ Rarely or never



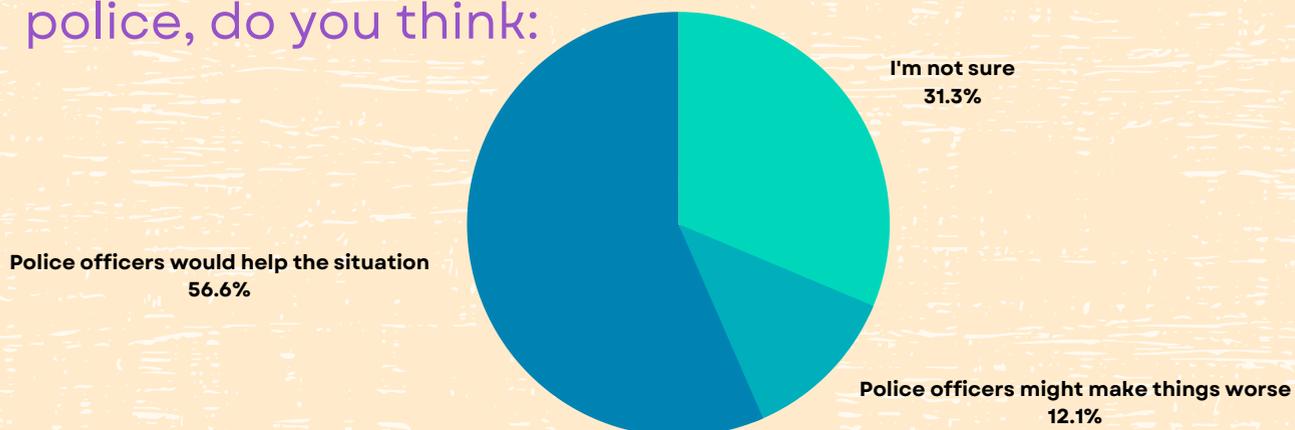
Four in ten are not convinced that calling the police would help their situation in an emergency.

Let's say you or a neighbor had an emergency.

If you called the police, do you think:



Let's say you were sexually assaulted. If you called the police, do you think:



Among women: would help (52%) and Not sure of think might make it worse (47%)

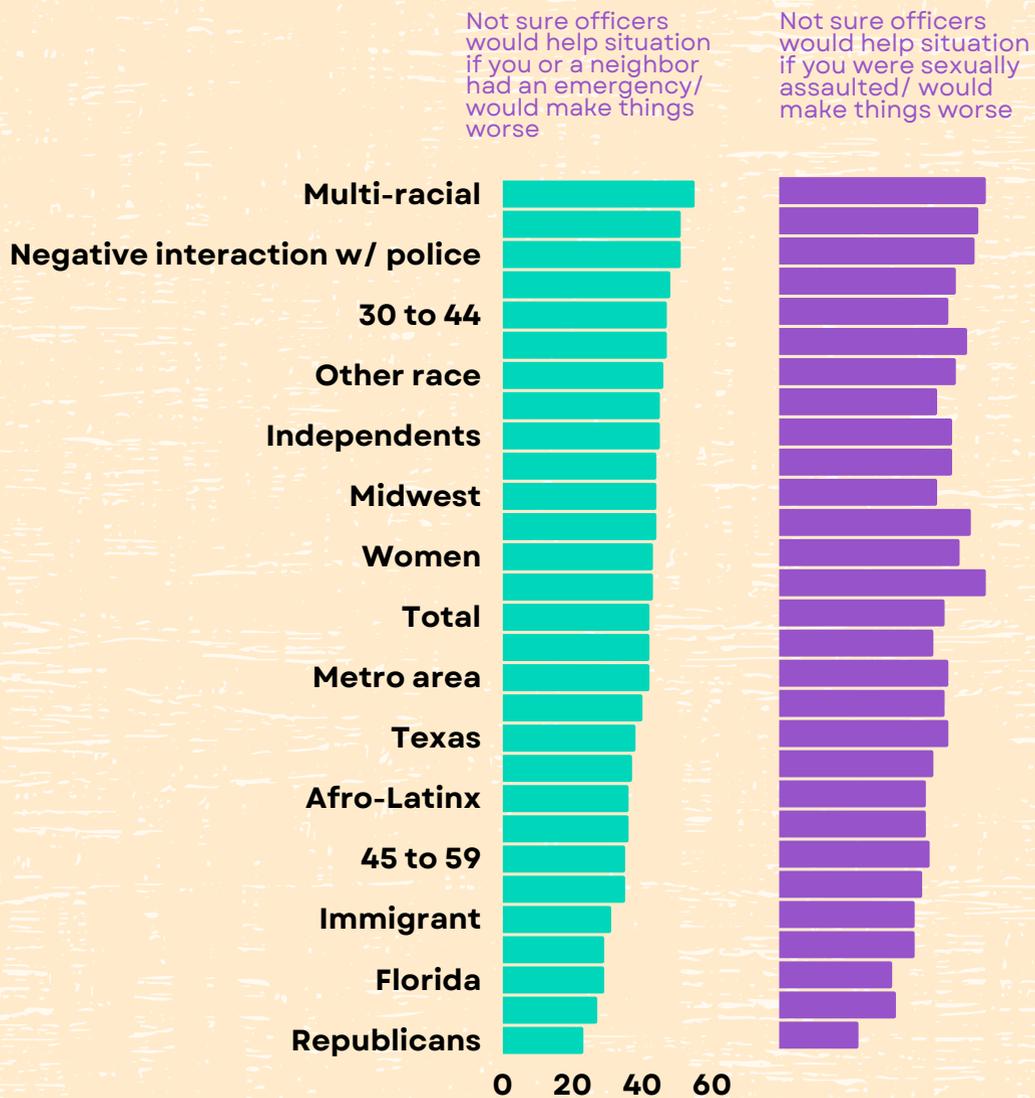
“ —

It feels like they have power over you. No matter how you're interacting, whether it's good or bad or positive or negative, there is this feeling that they do have this power that you don't have. There is this feeling that if this suddenly turned bad-and as a woman you feel like, would I be able to protect myself? For us, it's a different thing. It wouldn't be just my word against their word, which obviously people are going to believe them over a regular citizen. It is, if this turns this way, can I protect myself? Can I even make sure that I'm OK, that I'm safe, and that this doesn't go in a direction where something could happen to me or one of my kids or my girls or something? Just that feeling that there is that moment sometimes where things do turn and, and obviously it's rare, but you do hear of occasions where police officers do use their badge or their position to take advantage of women.

**-New Mexico Woman, Independent lean Democrat,
47 years old**

— ”

Multi-racial respondents, young respondents, and those with past negative police interactions are among the least likely likely to think officers would help their situations.

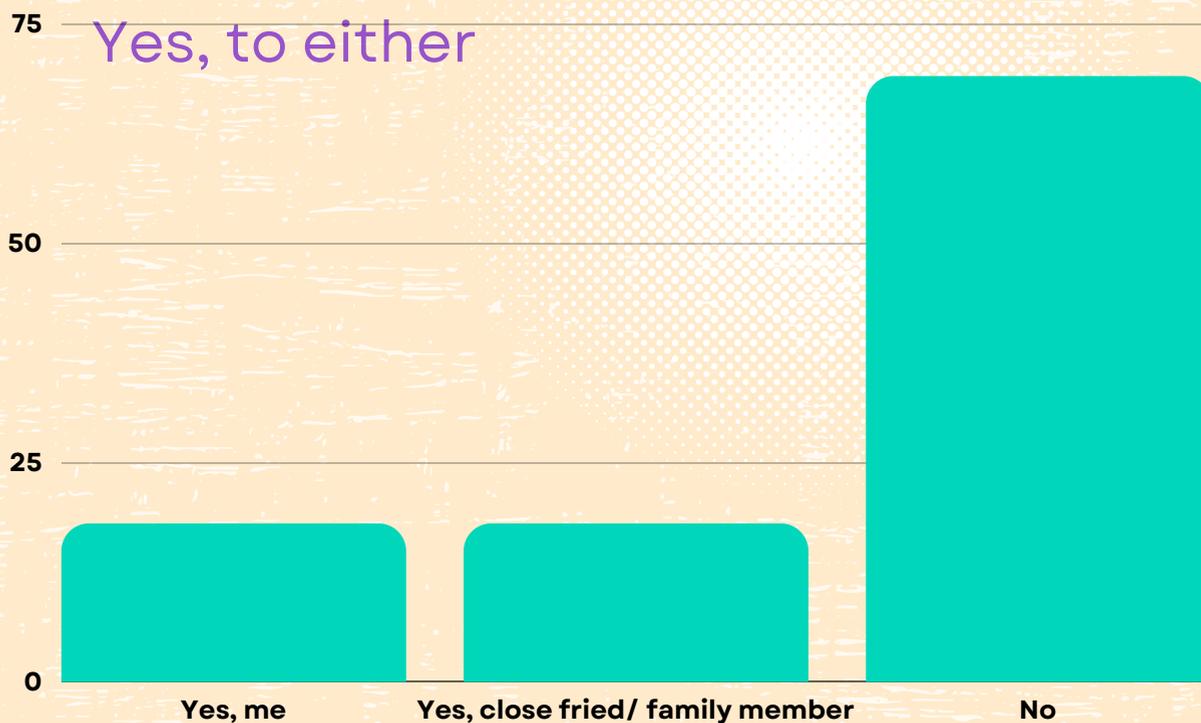


One in three say they or a close loved one has avoided calling the police because they won't show up or will come late.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever... (Avoided calling the police because they won't show up or will come late)

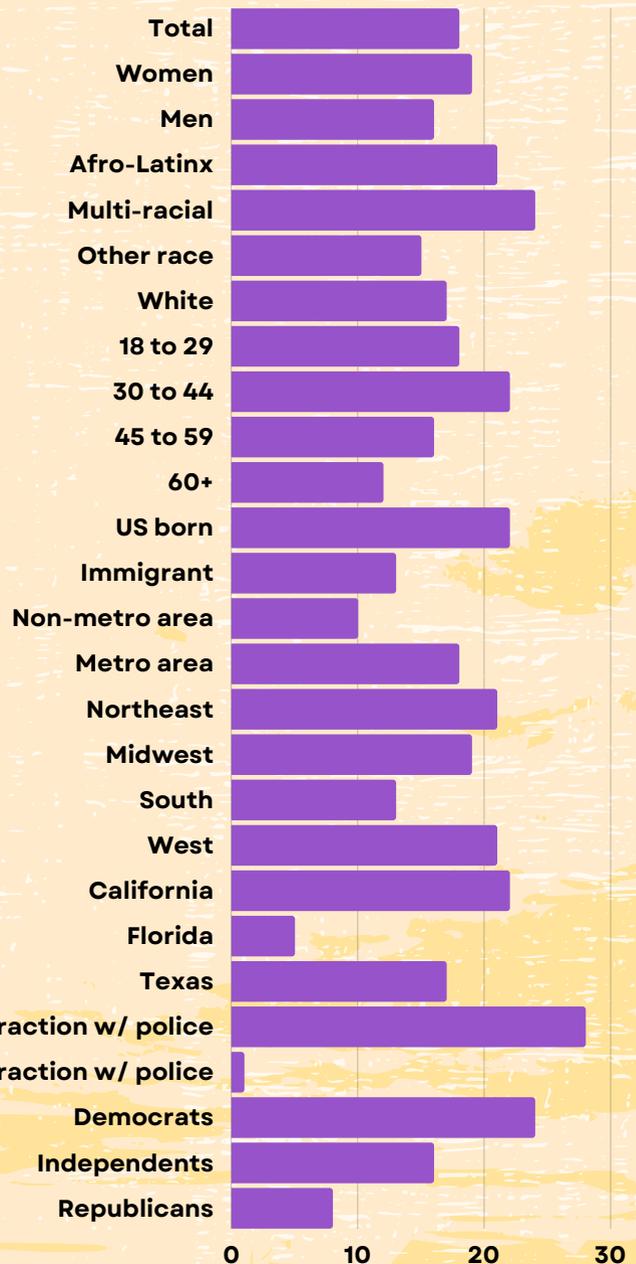


31%



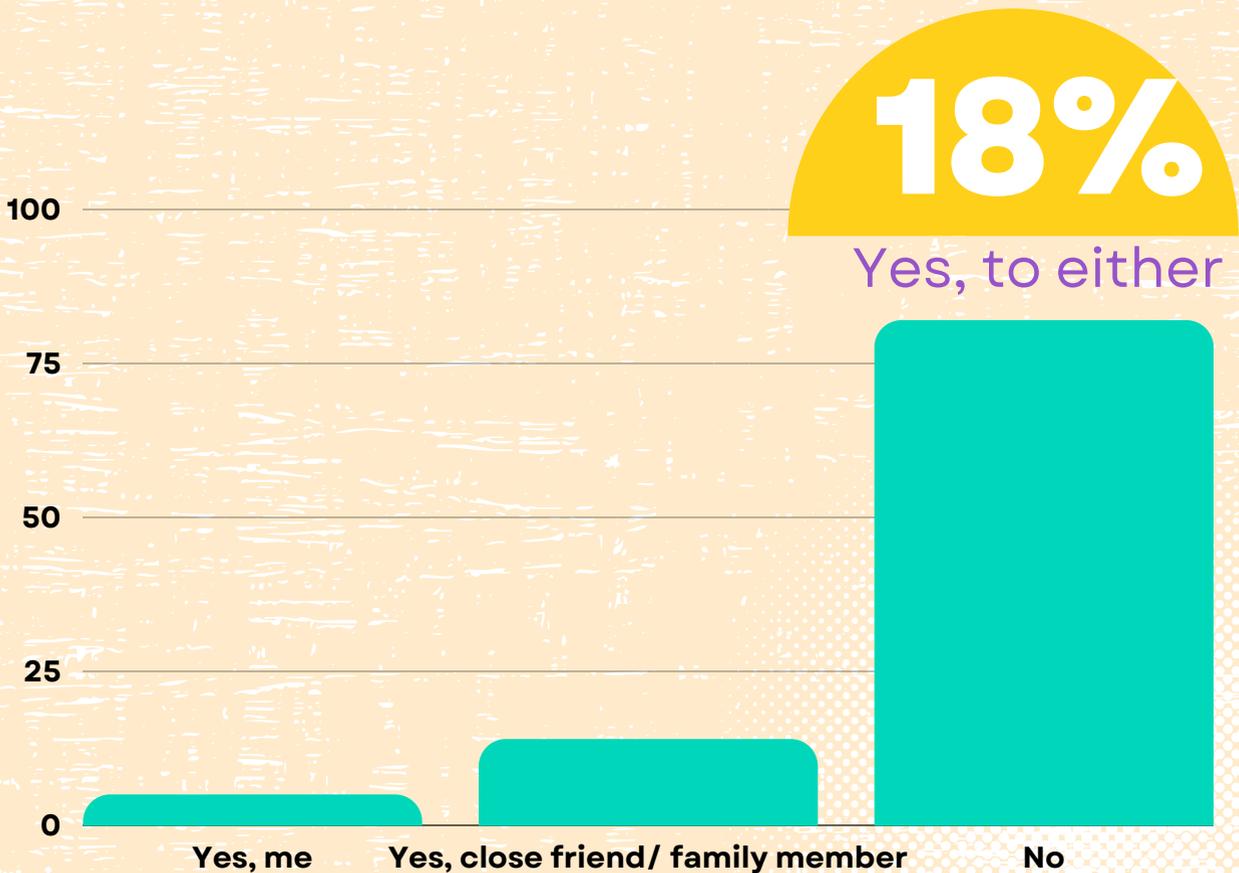
Respondents most likely to have avoided calling the police in this situation include those with a negative police interaction (28%) and multi-racial respondents (24%).

% Have avoided calling the police because they won't show up or will come late



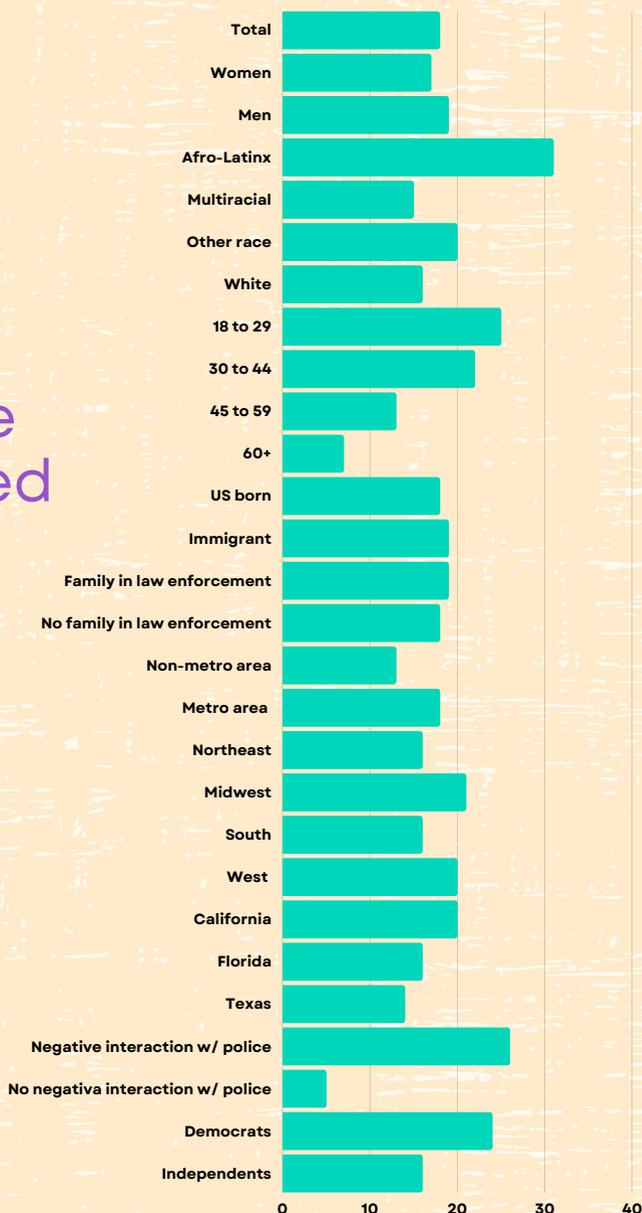
One in five respondents say they or a close loved one has avoided calling the police out of fear related to immigration status.

Have you or a close friend or a family member ever... (Avoided calling the police out of fear related to immigration status)



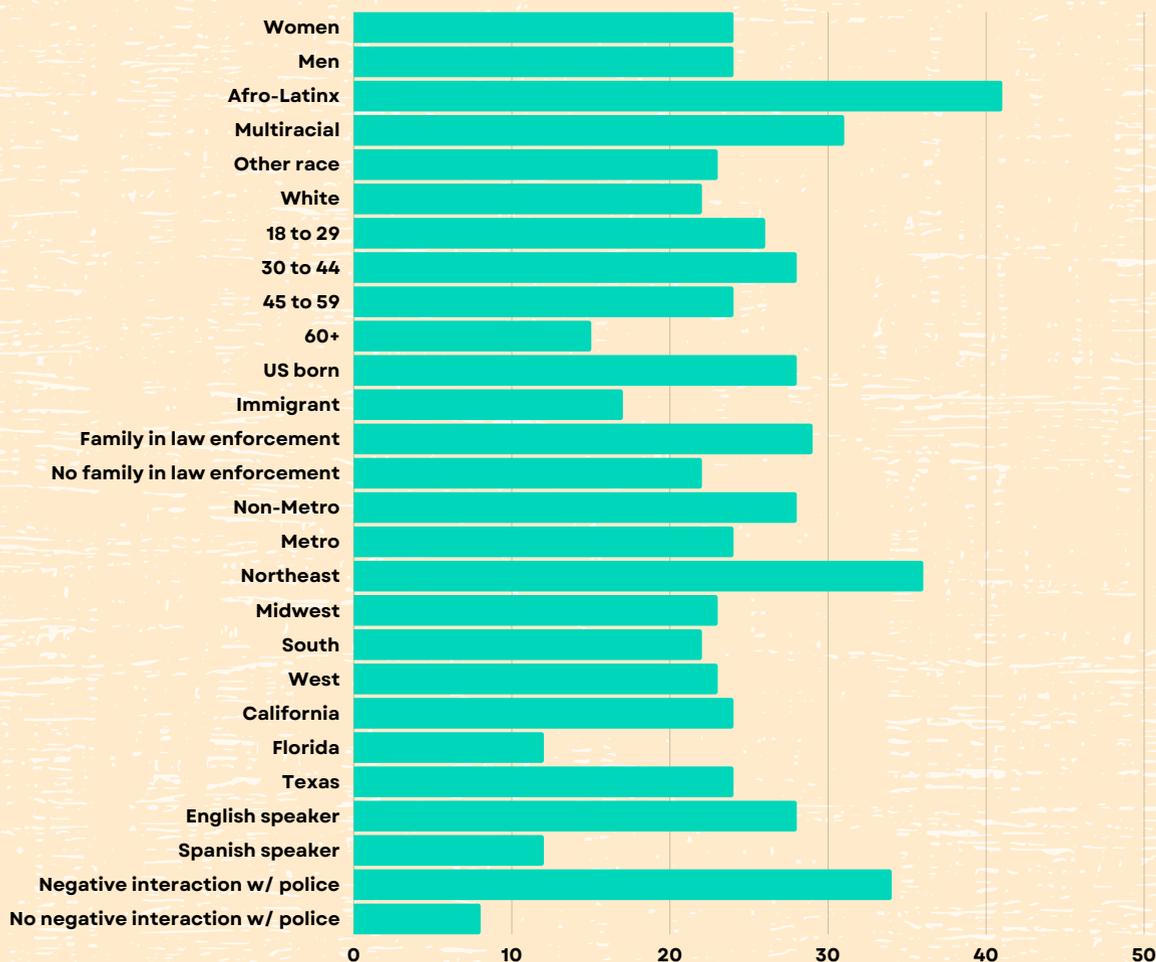
Afro-Latinx respondents are most likely to have avoided calling police due to fears around immigration status.

% Personally or have had close loved one avoid calling the police out of fear related to immigration status



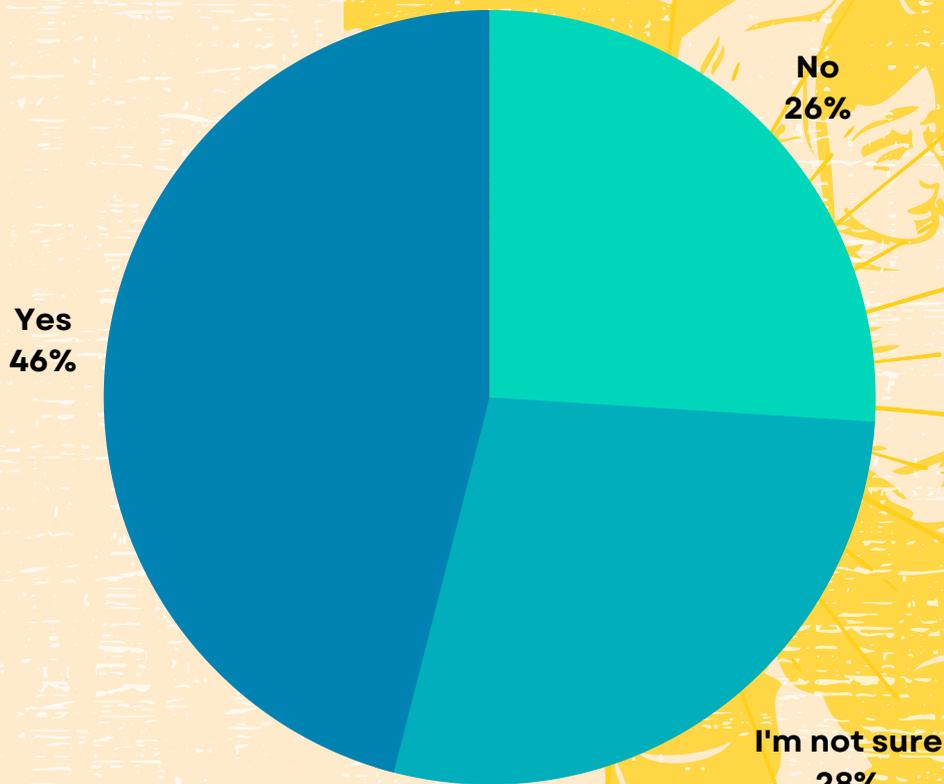
Afro-Latinx respondents are most likely to say they've avoided calling the police because they fear the police would make things worse.

Have you ever avoided calling the police because you were afraid the police might make the situation worse?



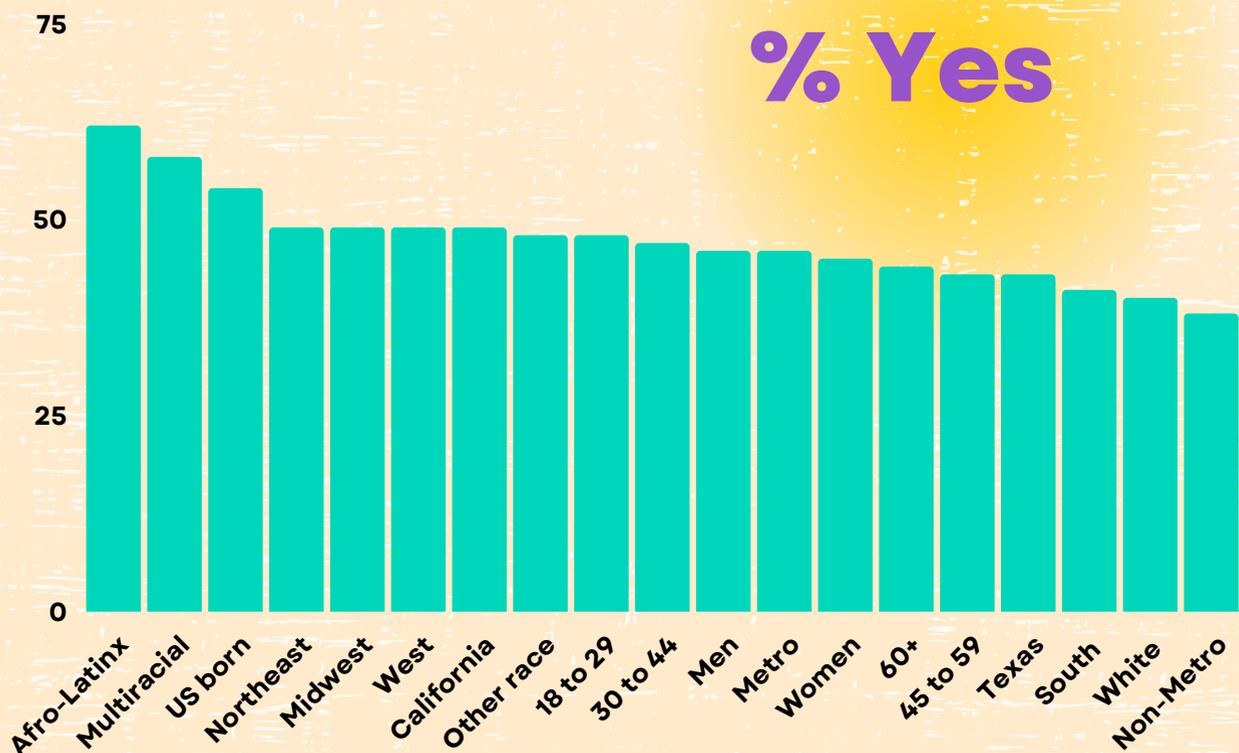
Nearly half of Latinx respondents have felt police can be too aggressive when dealing with people in their communities.

Have you ever felt the police can be too aggressive when dealing with people in your community?

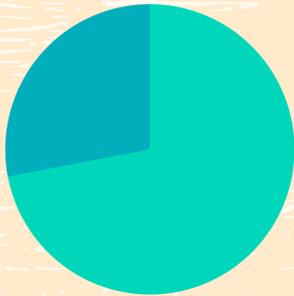


Afro-Latinx and multiracial respondents are the most likely to have felt police can be too aggressive when dealing with their communities.

Have you ever felt that police can be too aggressive when dealing with people in your community?

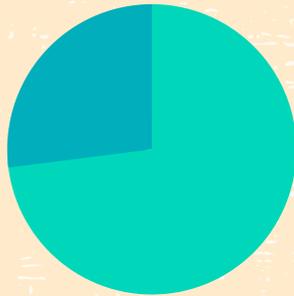


Respondents consider police mistreatment, particularly toward people of color, as pervasive.



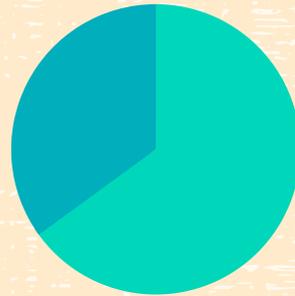
72%

Say police treat people differently because of the color of their skin



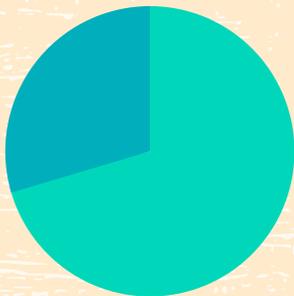
73%

Say police violence against Black people, including those of Latinx descent, happens often in the US



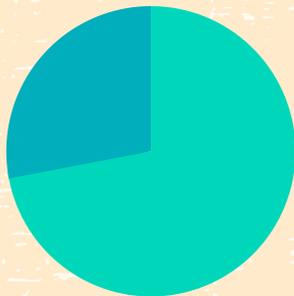
65%

Say police violence against Latinx people happens often in the US



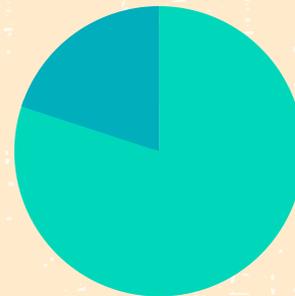
69%

Say George Floyd's murder is a sign of a bigger problem, as opposed to an isolated incident



72%

Say police are often not held accountable for misconduct



88%

Support changing laws to try to prevent police violence

Majorities think police often treat people differently based on race, skin color, language, immigration status, and class.

In your view, how often, if at all, do you think police treat people differently based on:

	Very/ somewhat often	Very often	Somewhat often	Not too often	Rarely or never
Whether a person lives in a majority Black, Brown, or white neighborhood	72	36	37	16	11
A person's skin color	72	39	33	17	10
A person's race	72	39	32	18	9
How a person dresses, looks, or the car they drive	71	32	40	19	9
A person's ethnicity	70	32	38	18	11
A person's neighborhood - whether low - income, middle income, or high inc.	69	33	36	21	10
A person's immigration or documentation status	69	30	39	21	9
A person being homeless	69	32	36	21	9
A person's language or having an accent or not	65	28	37	22	12
A person's mental illness	62	28	35	26	11
A person's gender	54	20	35	29	16
A person's perceived sexual orientation	47	18	29	35	18

“

With the systems operating in this country, at the end of the day, White people are the ones who have the power, and they've had the power in this country since slavery, since the beginning. Yes, I know that, of course, we have to unite. At the same time, though, it's been hard for us to unite with the very people who are creating the aggression, who are creating the problems. It's the only way, to unite one way or another. Because it's the same thing. They're not helping to find solutions to these problems. That's how I see it.

- Immigrant Woman, South Carolina, Independent, Spanish speaker, 24 years old

I completely agree with this entire list. Usually, you see it especially like I forget what country it is, but I was listening to the news in Spanish and they recently had a major natural disaster and the community hasn't been able to build back and the crime has gone up because there's no jobs, there's no money to buy food. So naturally, these crimes start to- the crime rate goes up.

- Afro-Latina Woman, Florida, Democrat, 30 years old

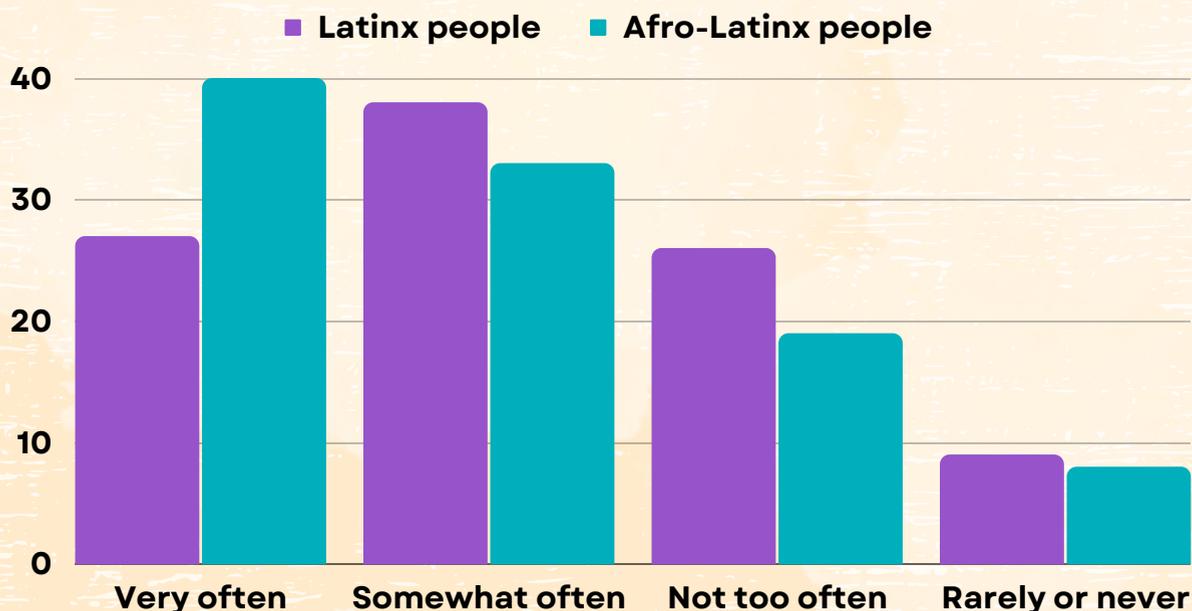
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Two-thirds of respondents say police violence against Latinx people happens often.

Respondents perceive police violence against Black people as more common than police violence against Latinx people.

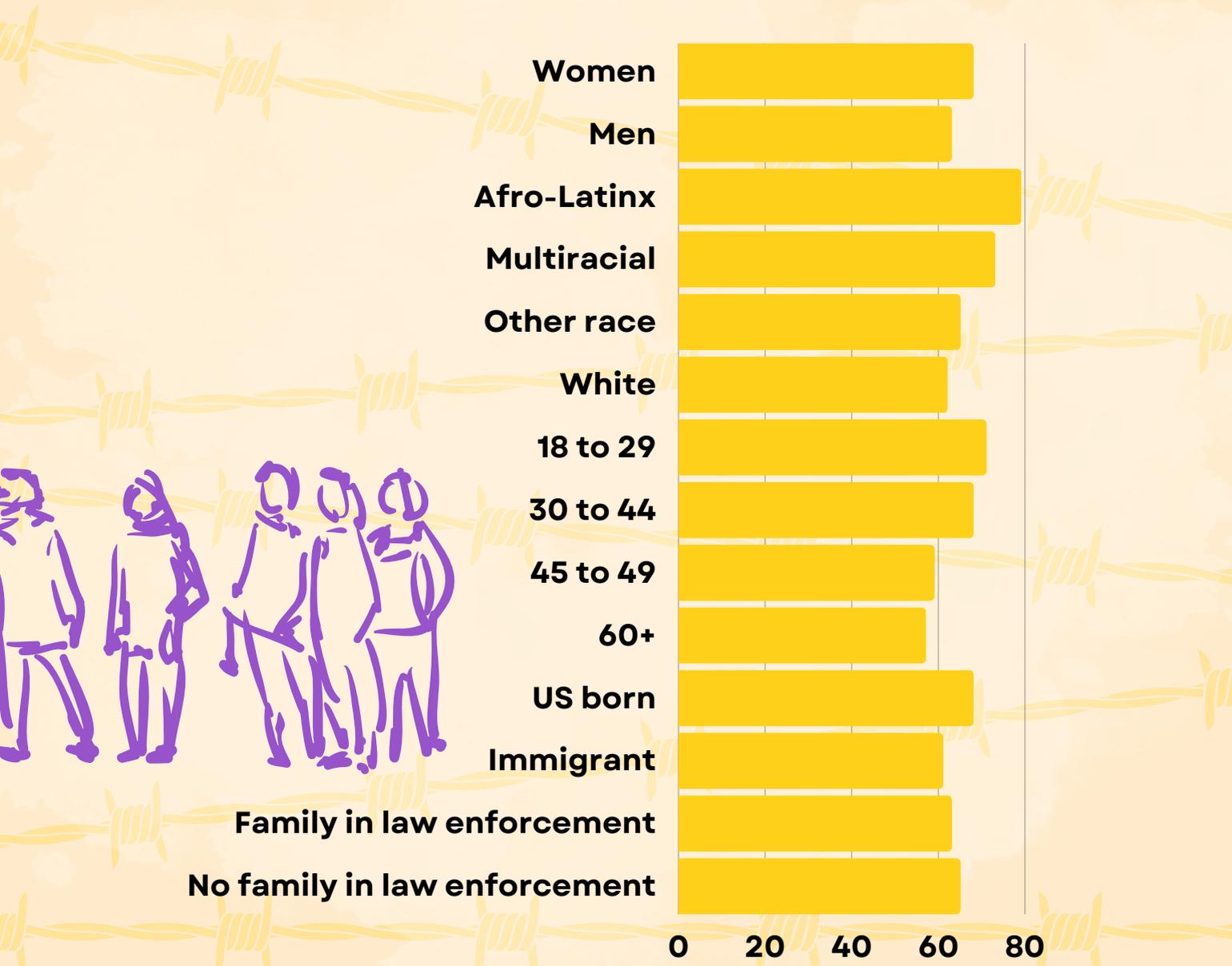
Afro-Latinx respondents and those living in metro areas are among the most likely to say police violence happens often.

How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: (Police violence against_____?)



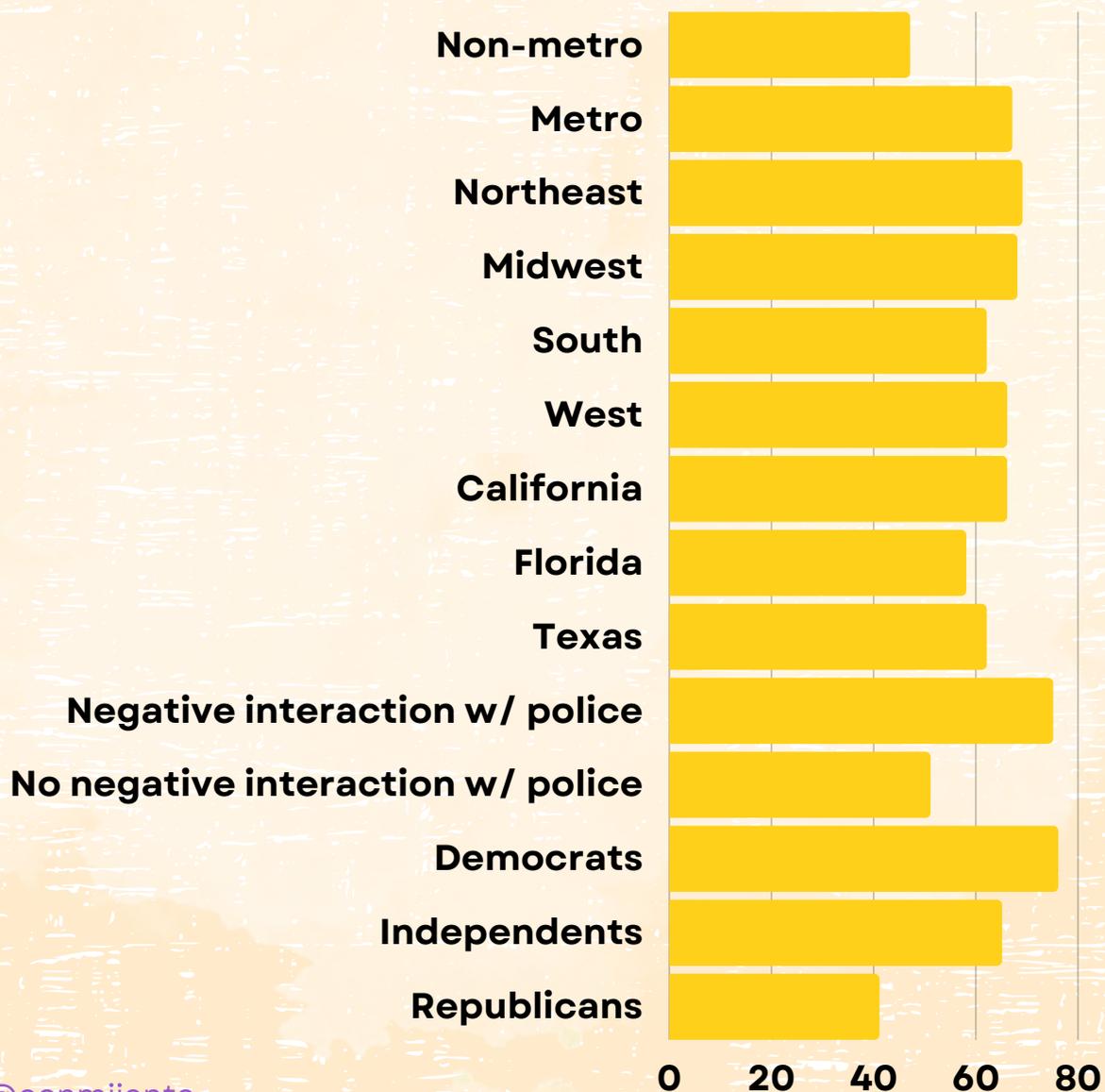
% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

Police violence against Latinx people



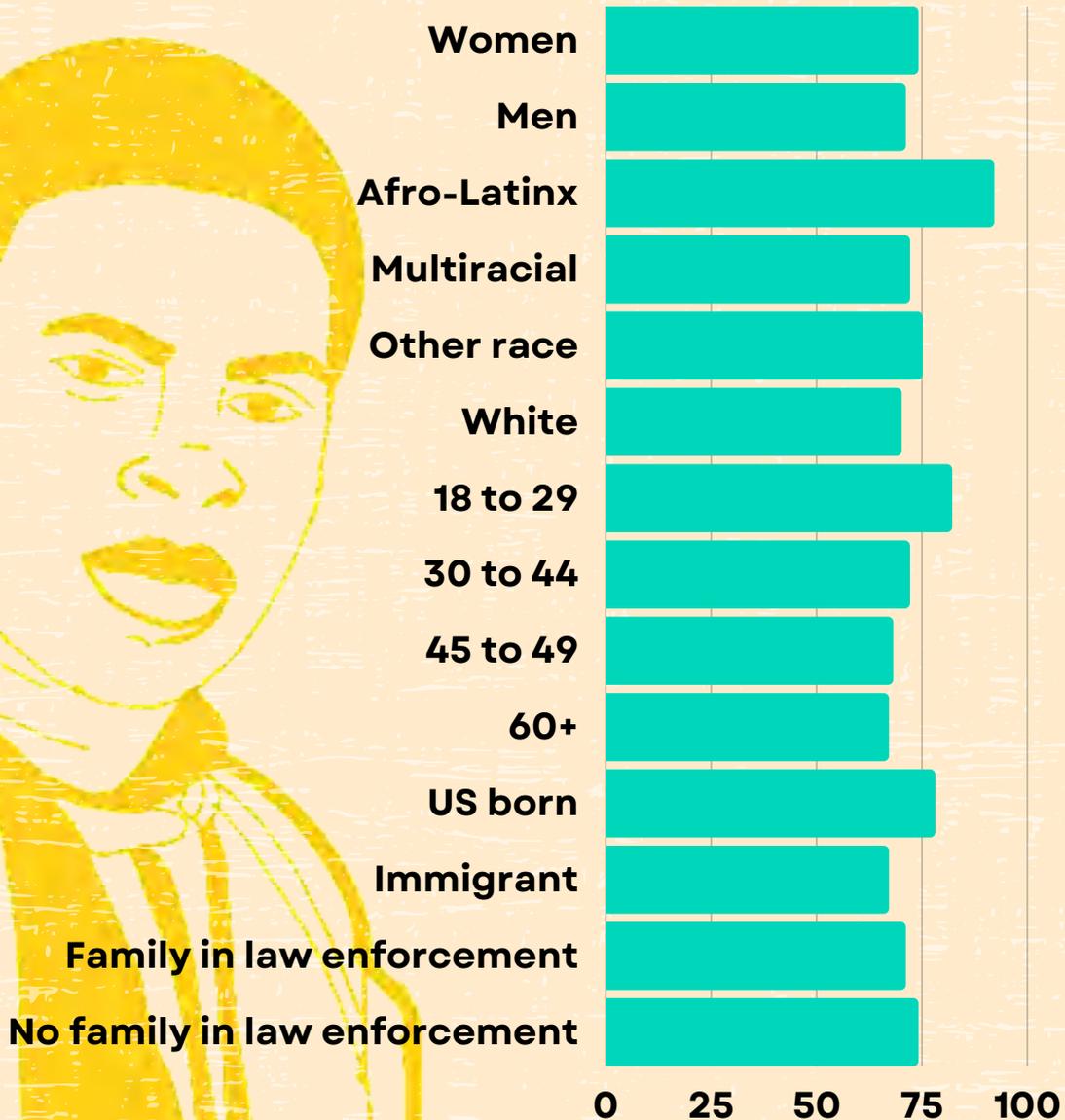
% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

Police violence against Latinx people



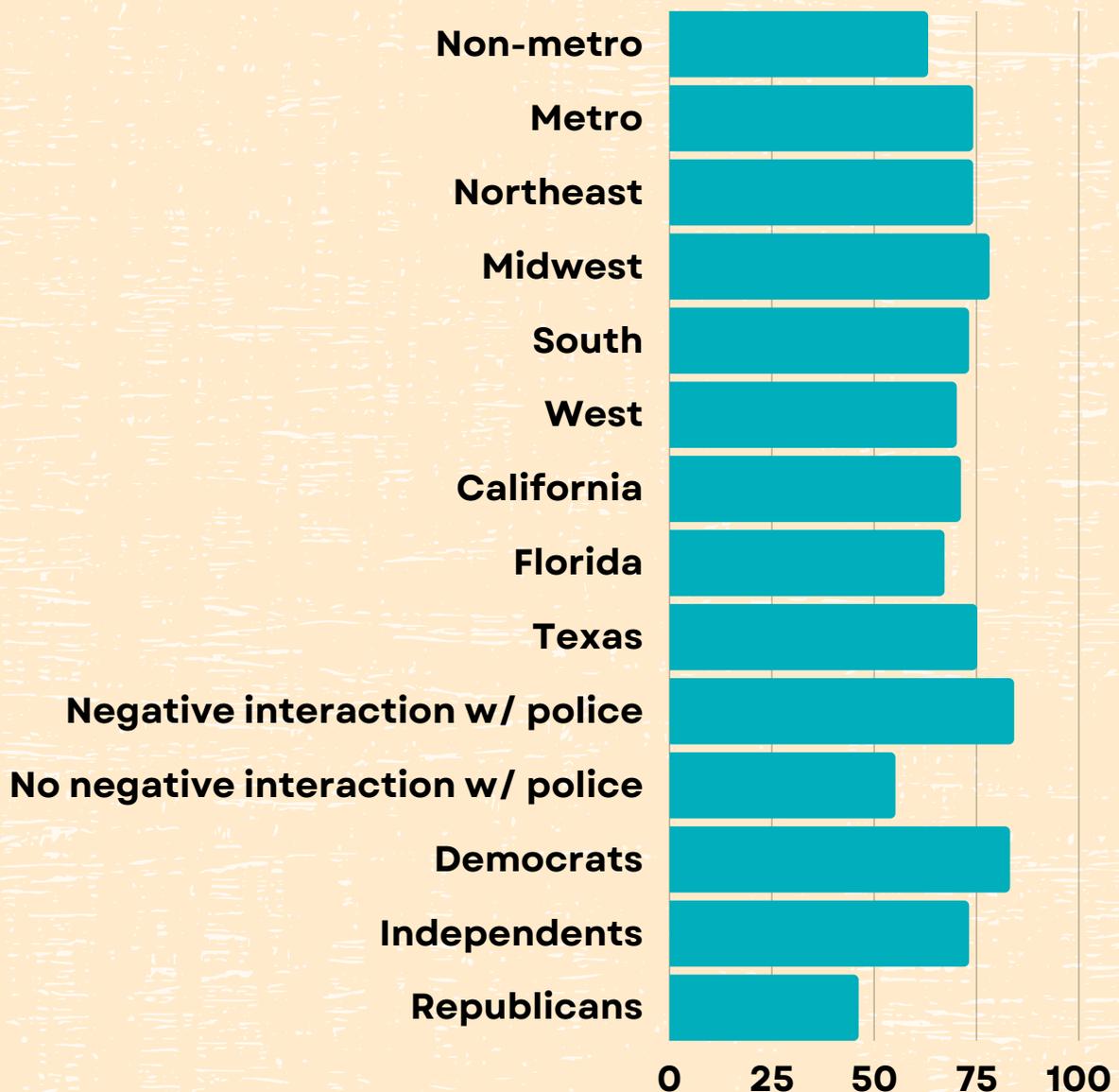
% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

Police violence against Black people including those Latinx descent



% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

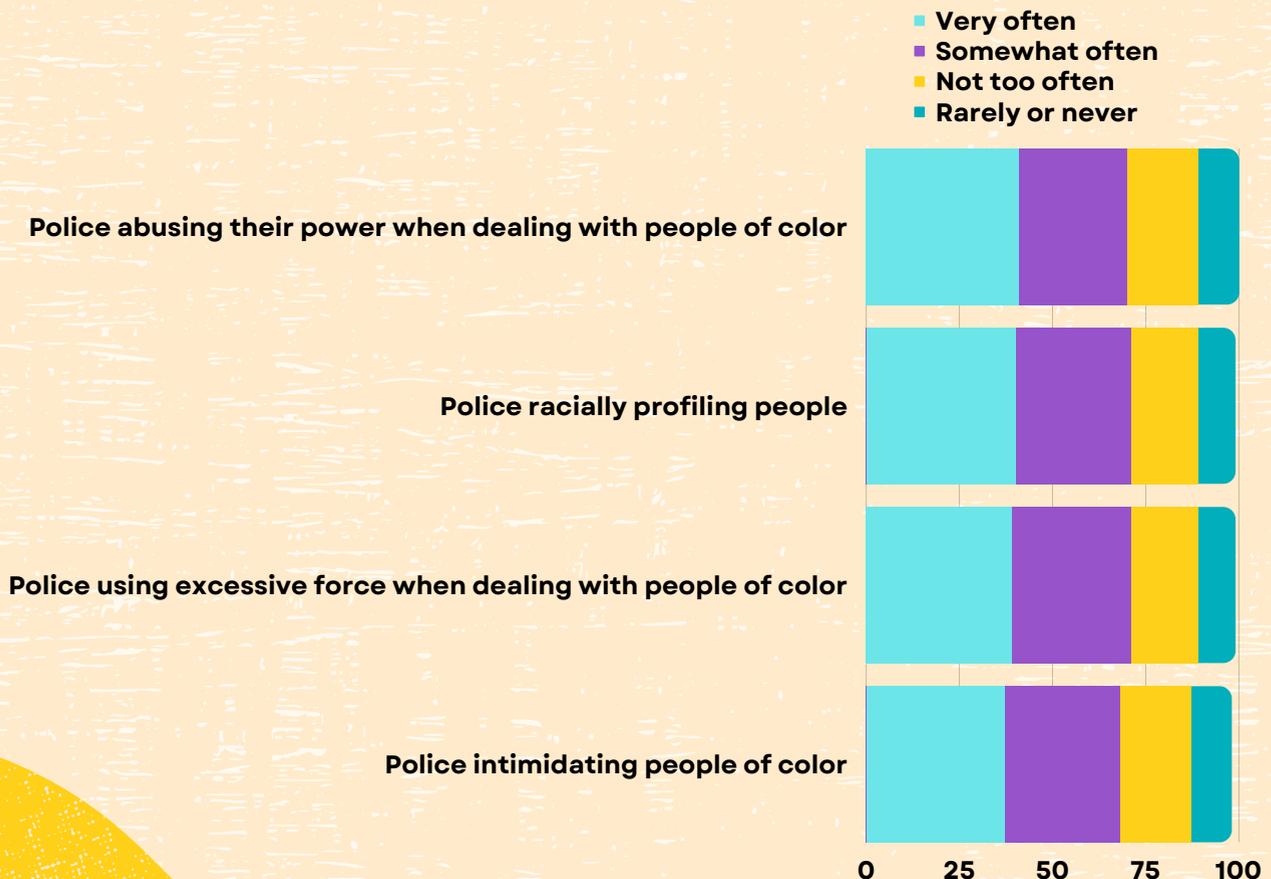
Police violence against Black people including those of Latinx descent



Seven in 10 say various forms of police mistreatment toward people of color happens often in the US.

These include police abusing their power, racial profiling, use of excessive force, and intimidation.

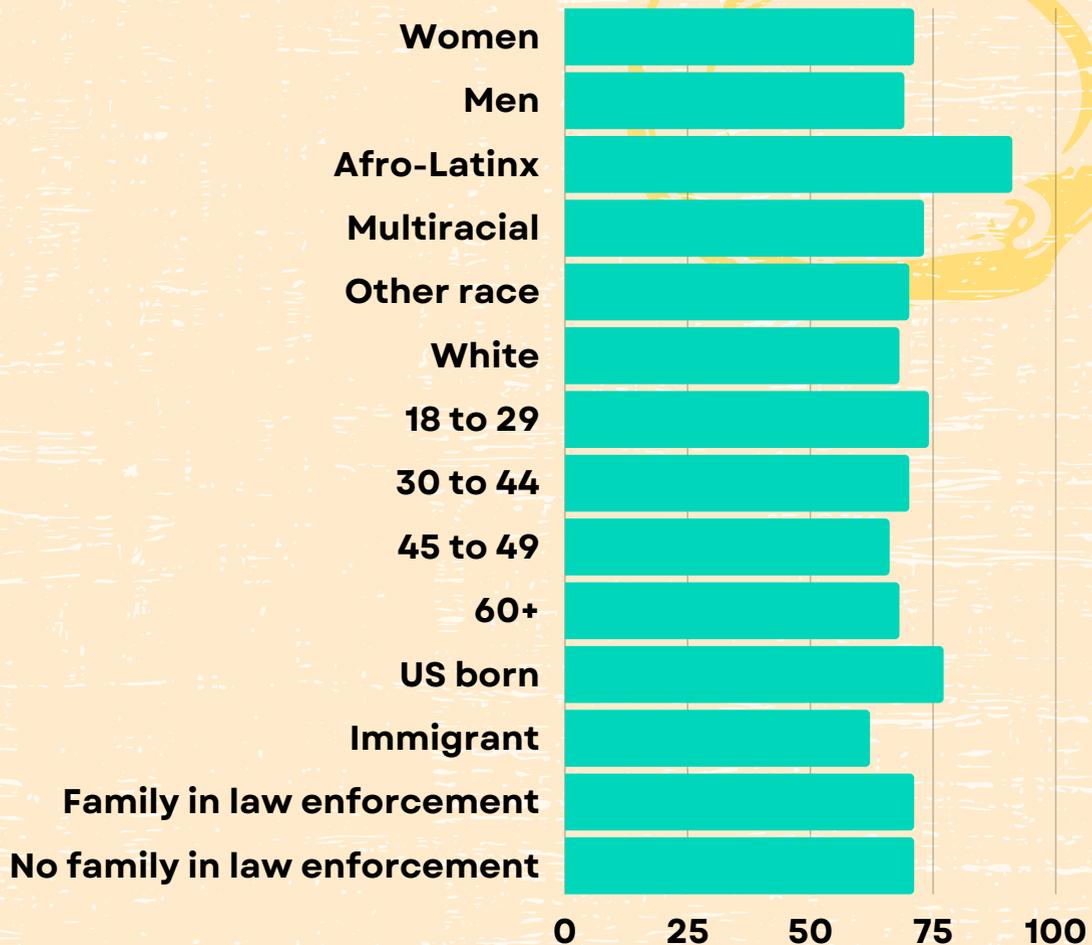
How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US:



A majority of Latinxs feel that police use excessive force when dealing with people of color.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

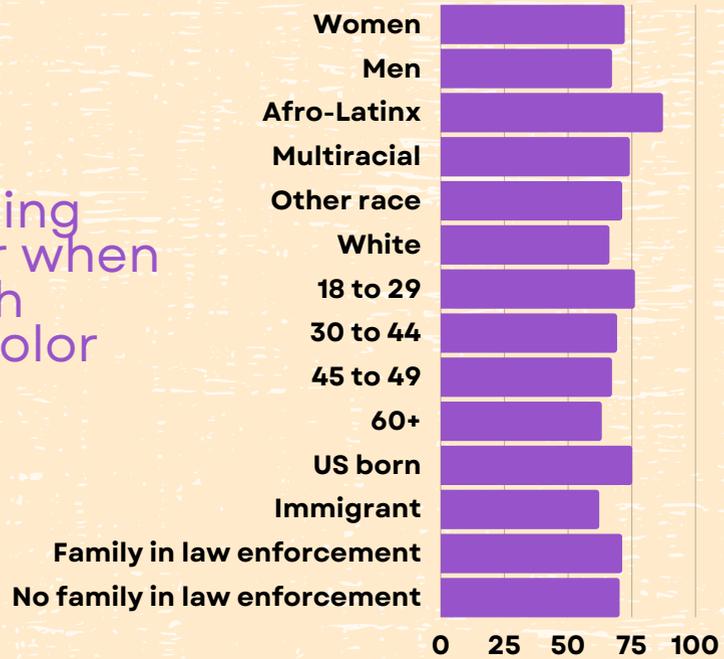
Police using excessive force when dealing with people of color



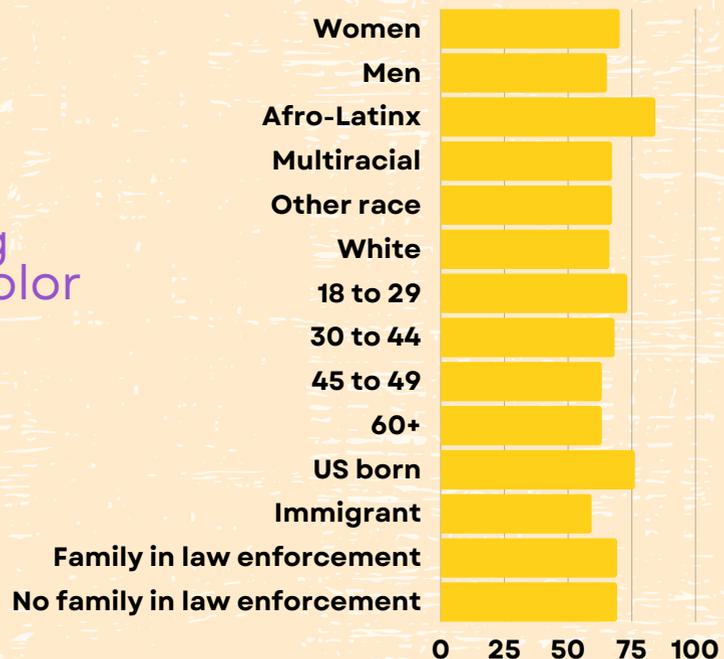
A majority of Latinxs feel that Police are abusing their power when dealing with people of color.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

Police abusing their power when dealing with people of color



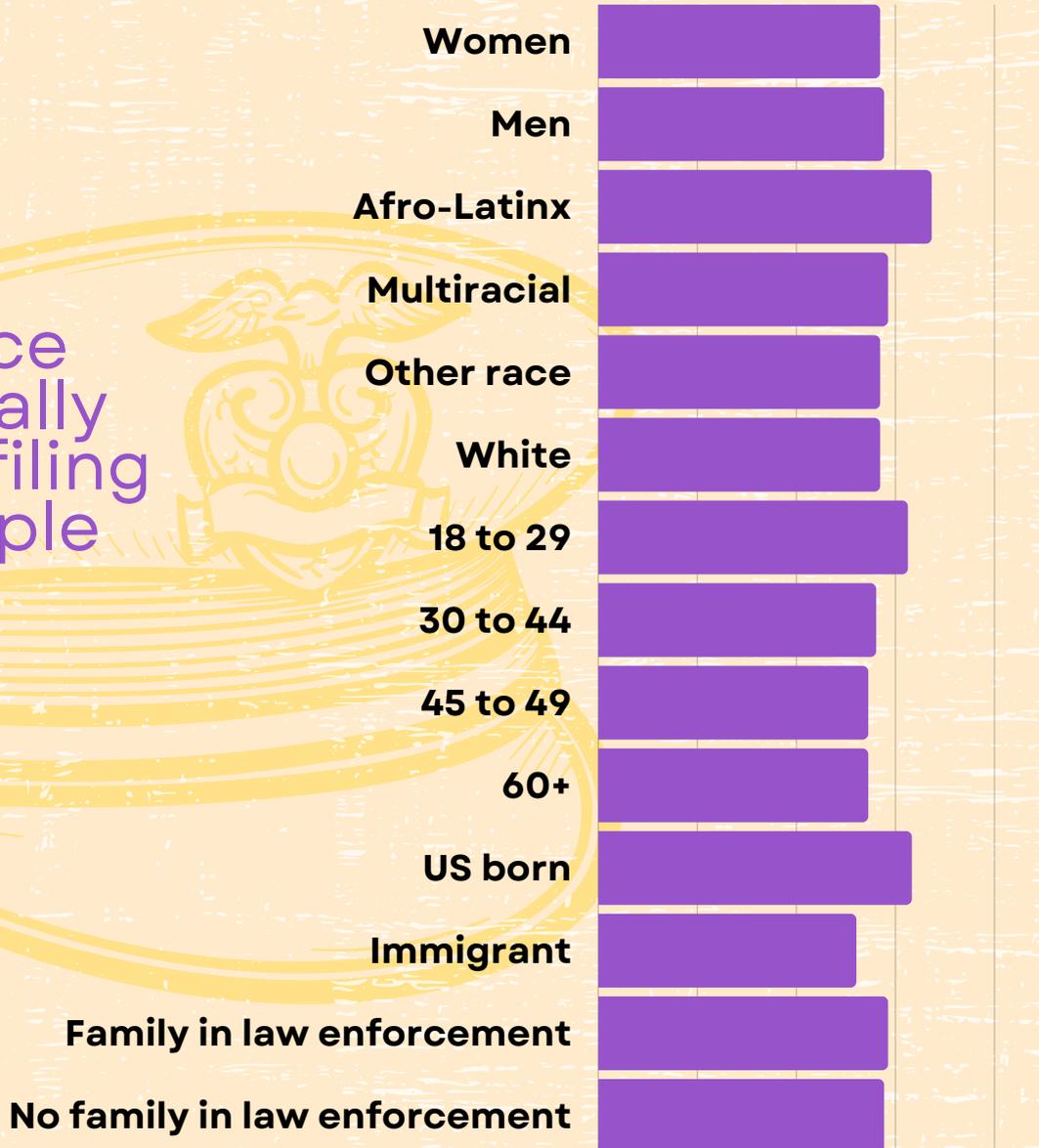
Police intimidating people of color



A majority of Latinxs feel police racially profile.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

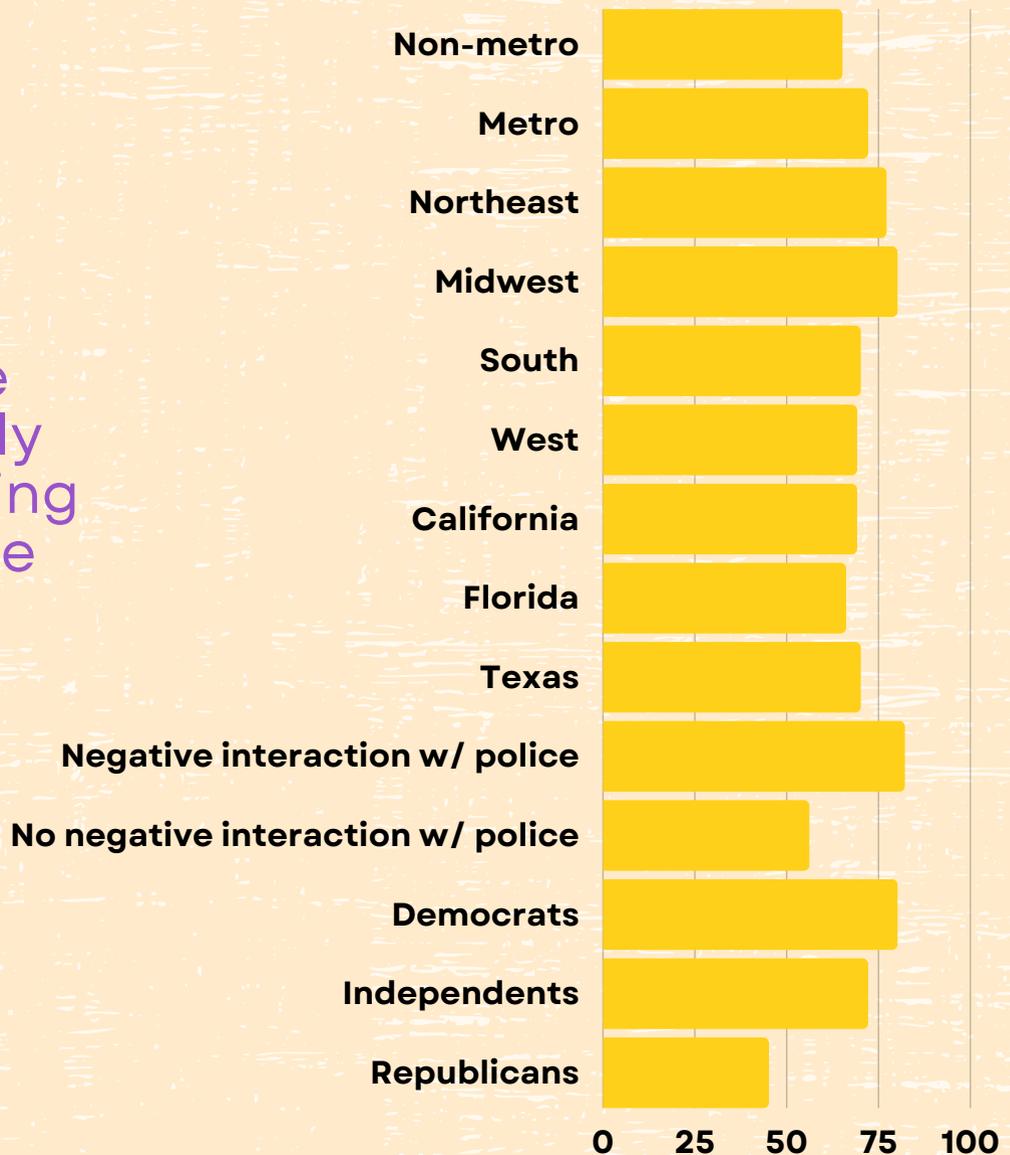
Police racially profiling people



A majority of Latinxs believe that police racially profile people

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

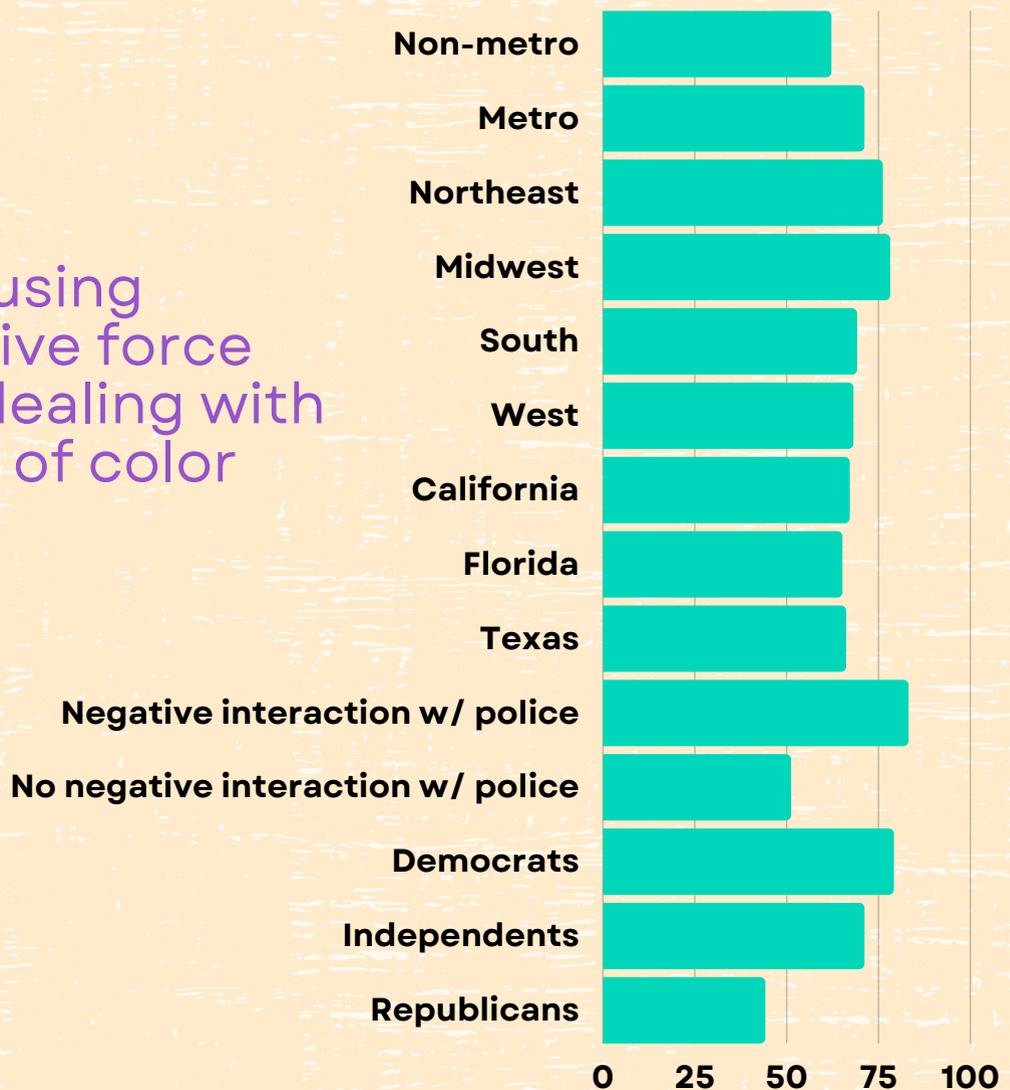
Police racially profiling people



A majority of Latinxs believe that police use excessive force when dealing with people of color.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

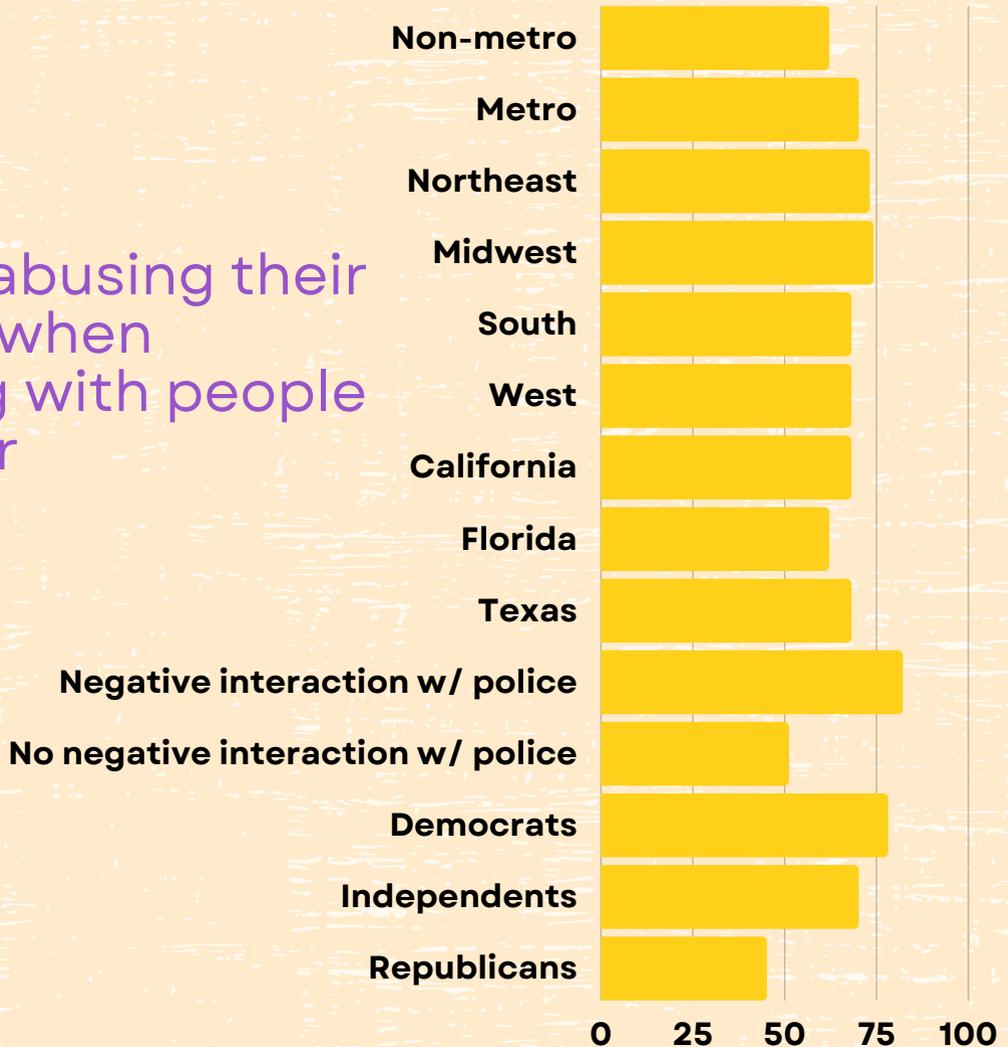
Police using excessive force when dealing with people of color



A majority of Latinxs believe that police abuse their power when dealing with people of color.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

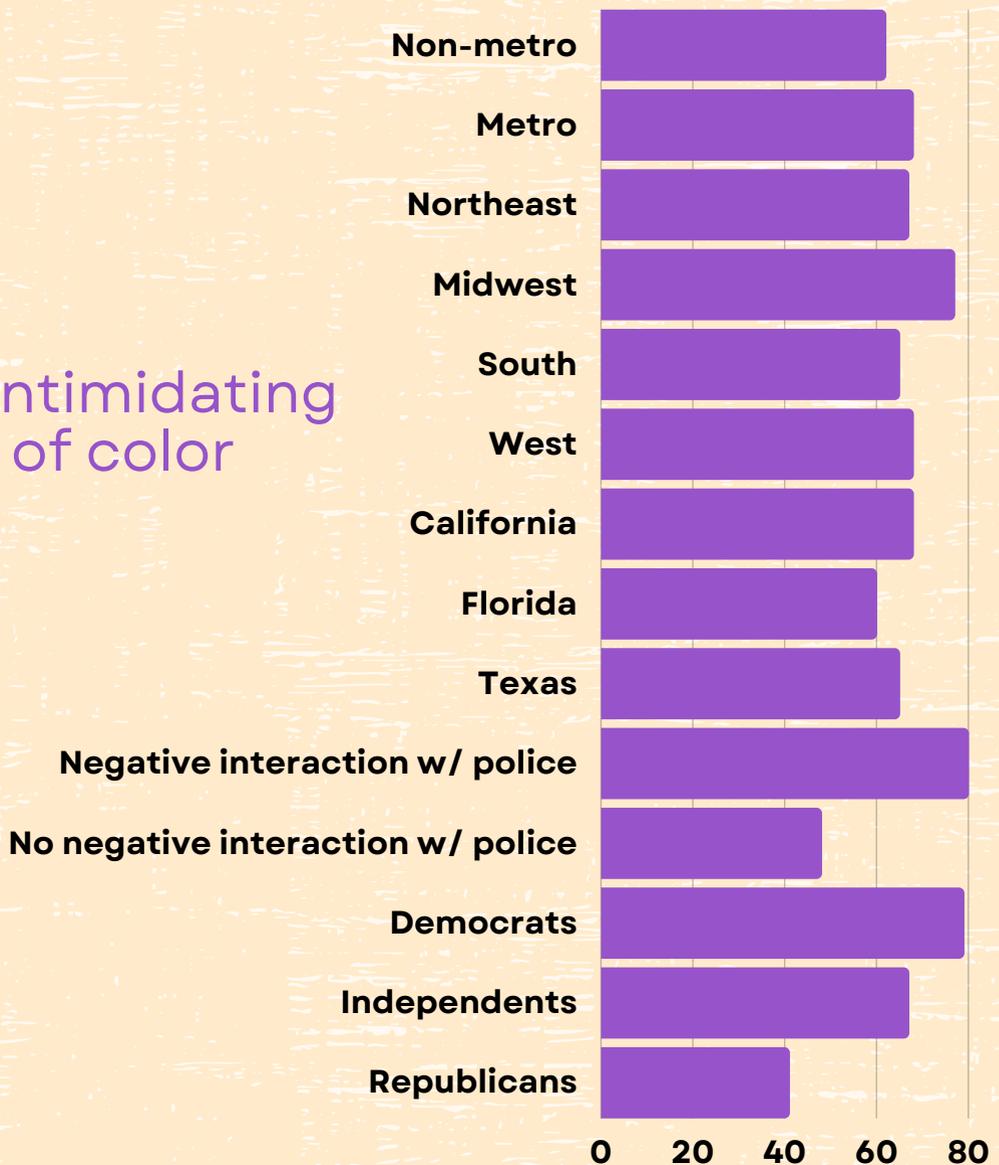
Police abusing their power when dealing with people of color



A majority of Latinxs believe that police intimidate people of color.

% Saying this happens very or somewhat often in the US

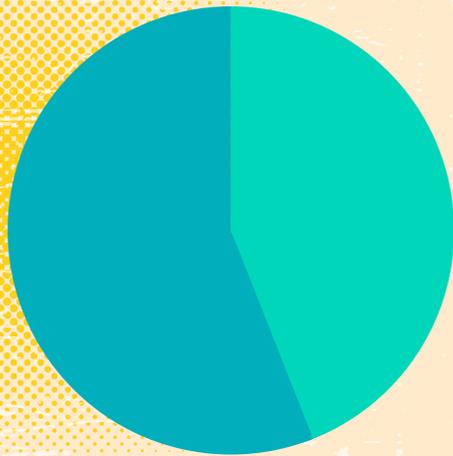
Police intimidating people of color



Four in 10 think police often sexually assault / harass women.

How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: (Police sexually harassing or assaulting:_____)

WOMEN



44%

Say often

WOMEN OF COLOR

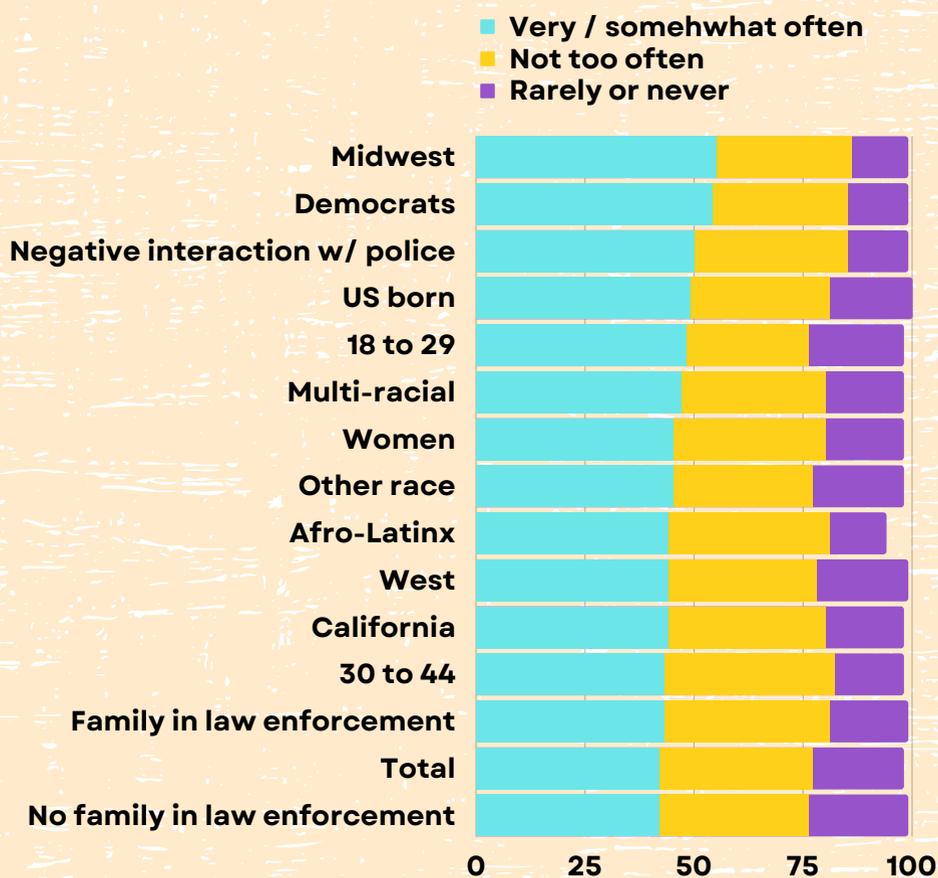


41%

Say often

Democrats, Midwest respondents, and those who have had negative police interactions are among the most likely to say police sexual assault / harassment happens often.

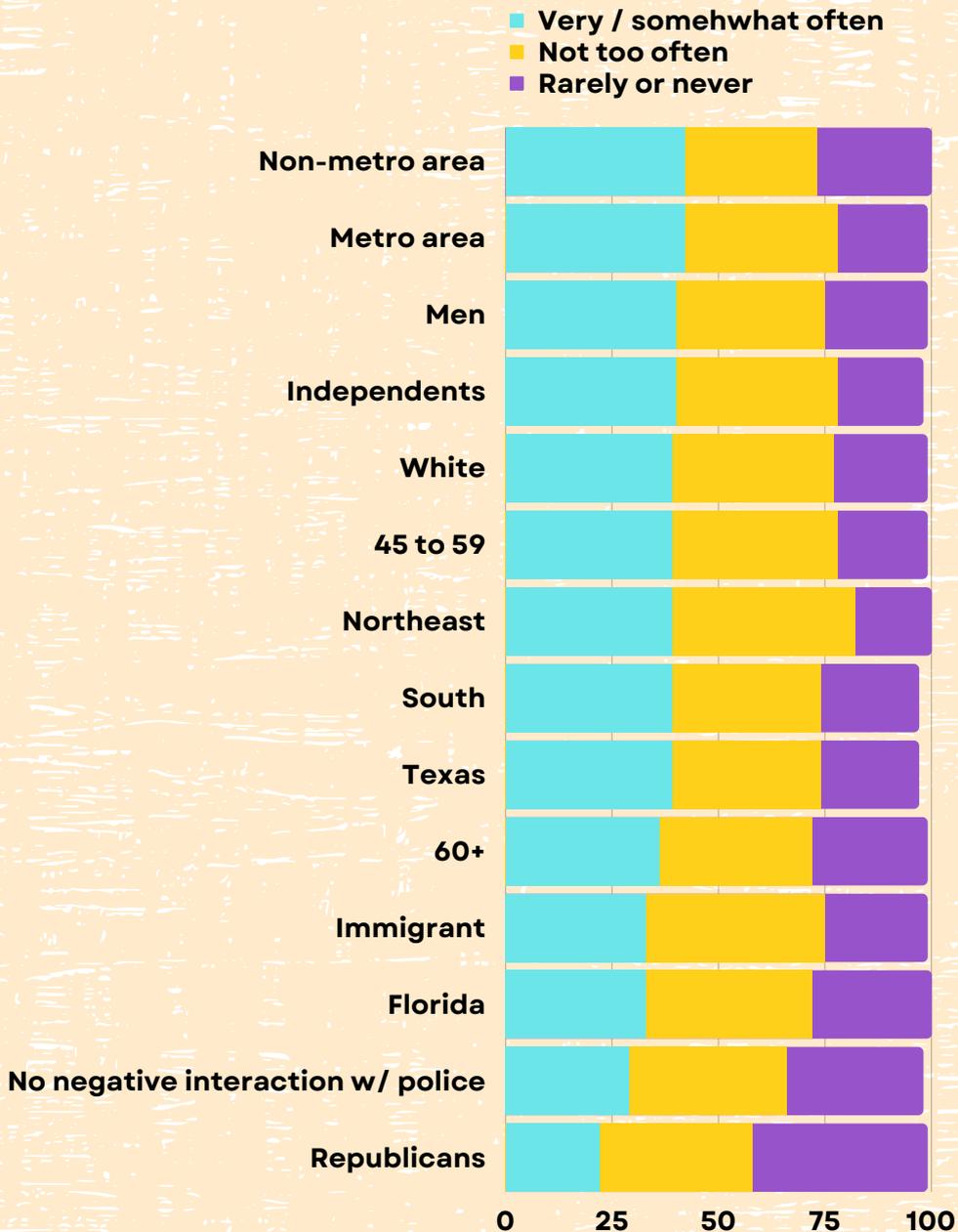
How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: [Police sexually harassing or assaulting [SPLIT A: women / SPLIT B: women of color]]



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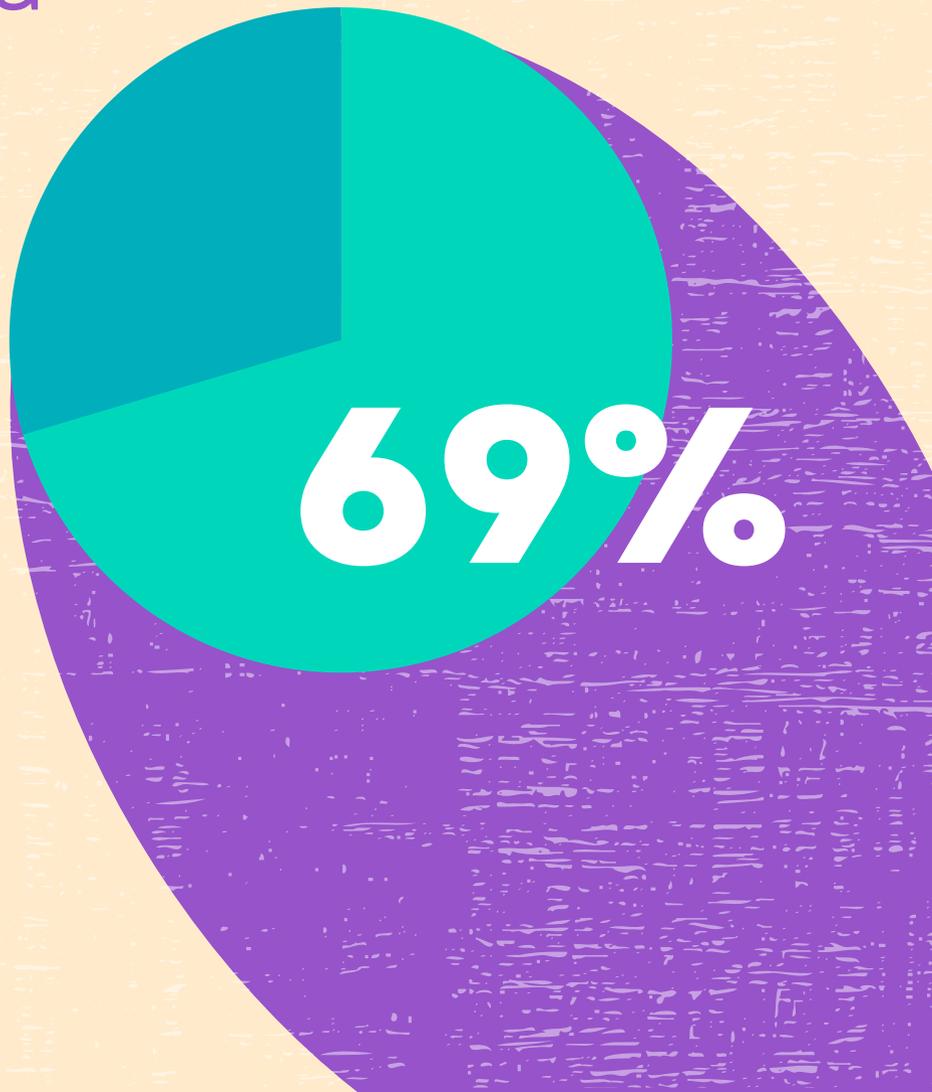
How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US: [Police sexually harassing or assaulting [SPLIT A: women / SPLIT B: women of color]]



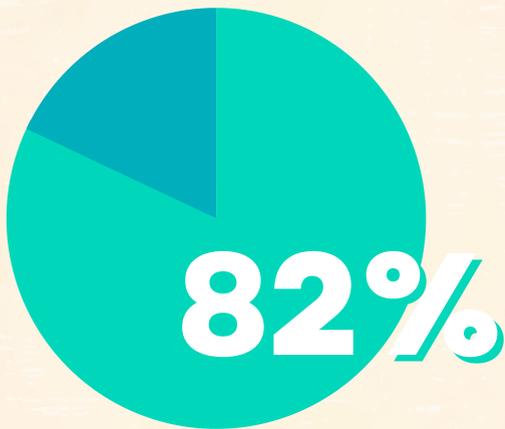
Most say the murder of George Floyd is a sign of a bigger problem – not an isolated incident.

Respondents most likely to say the murder of George Floyd is a sign of a bigger problem include:

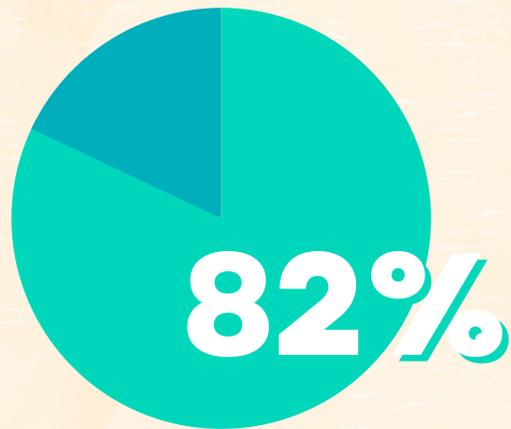
A sign of a bigger problem:



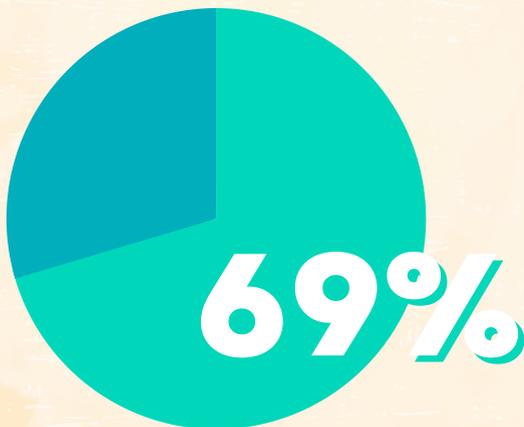
The murder of George Floyd is a sign of a bigger problem – not an isolated incident.



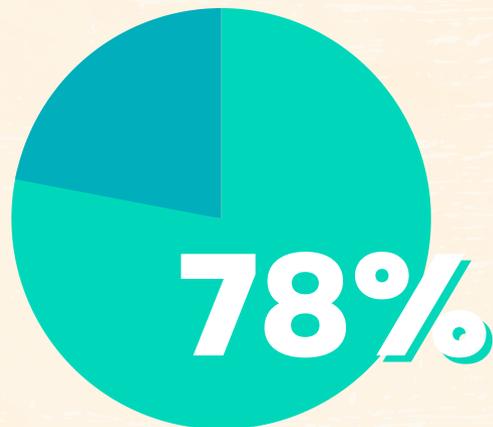
Afro-Latinx respondents



Residents of the Northeast

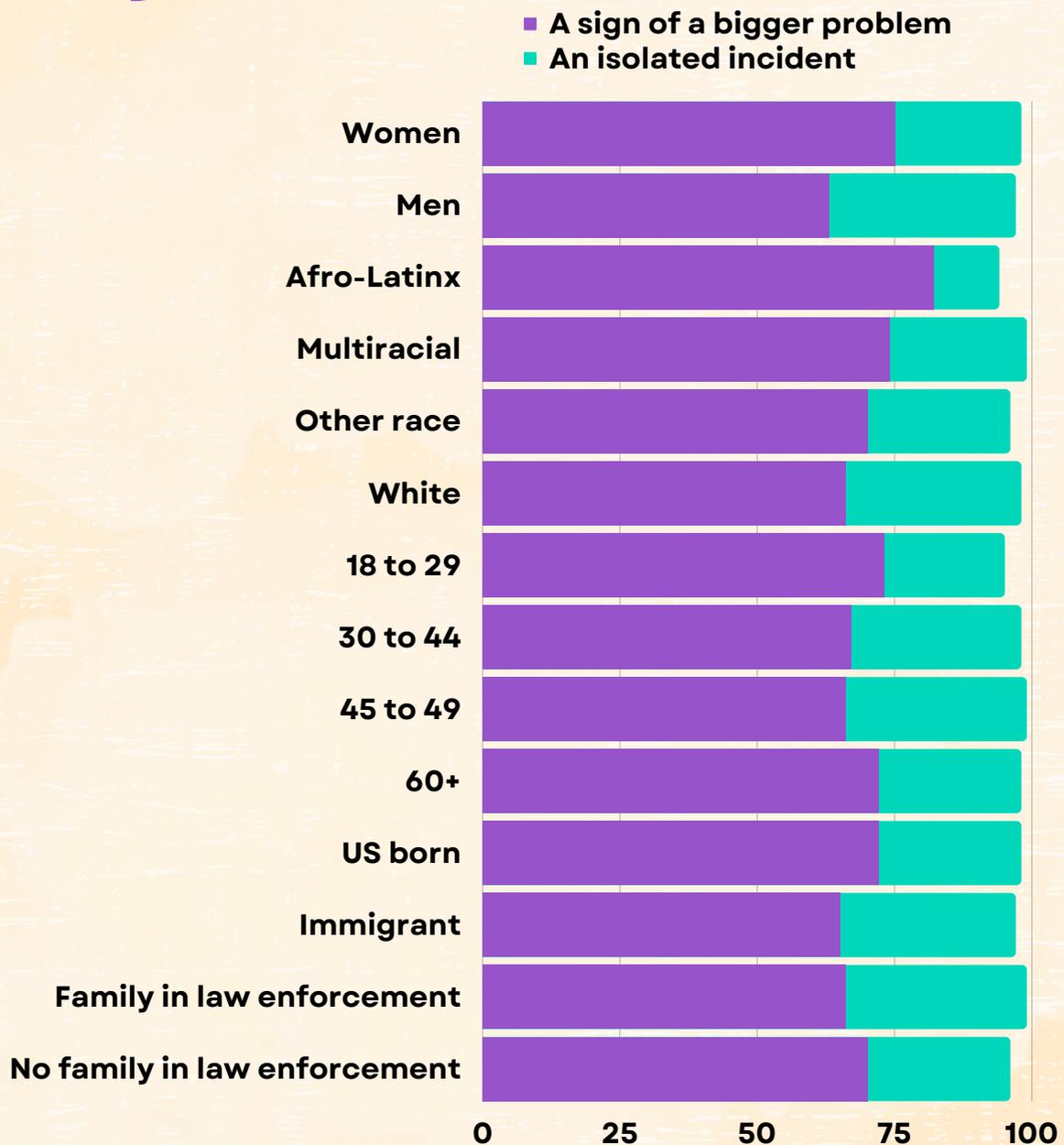


Independents



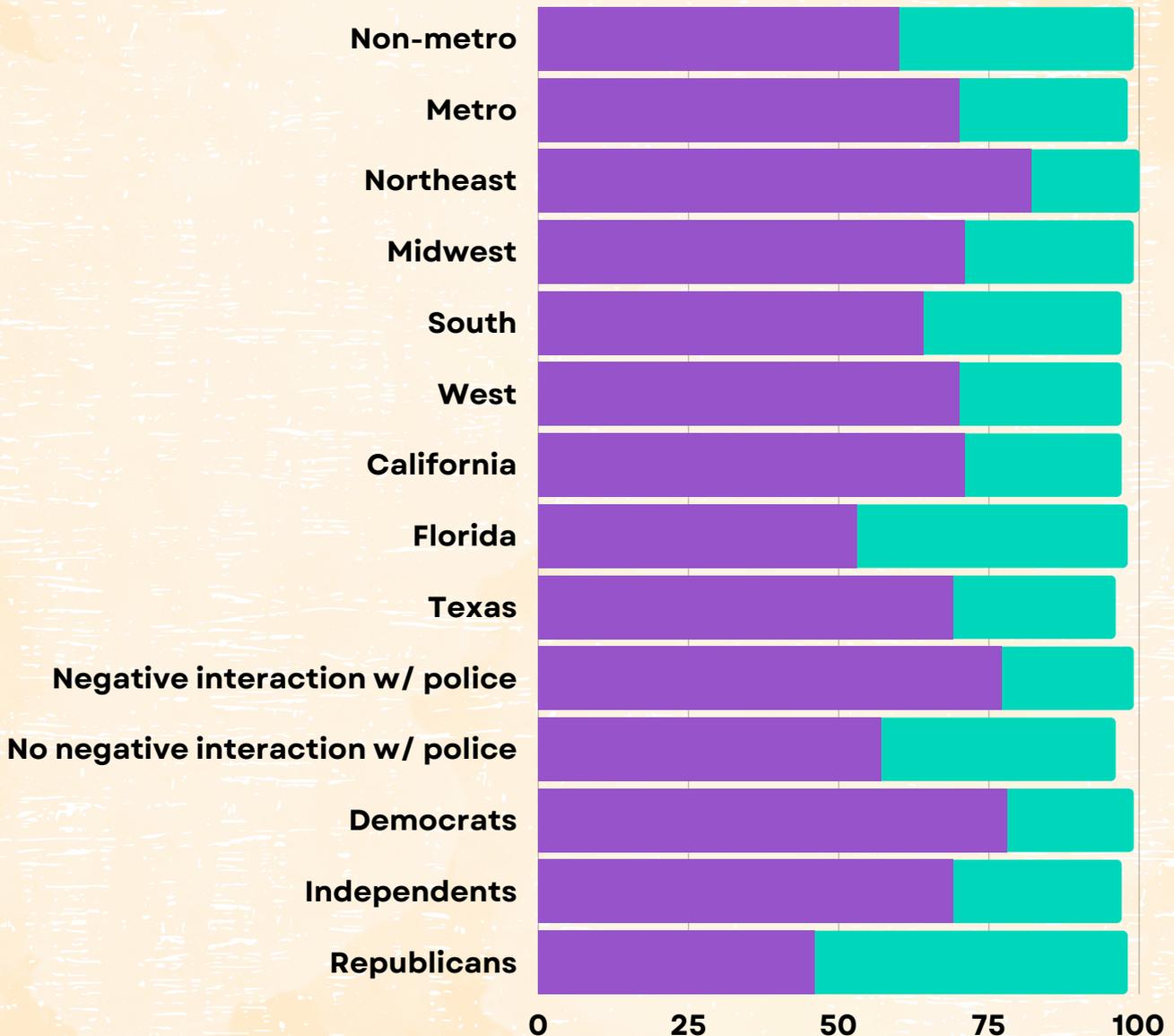
Democrats

Do you think the murder of George Floyd was:



Do you think the murder of George Floyd was:

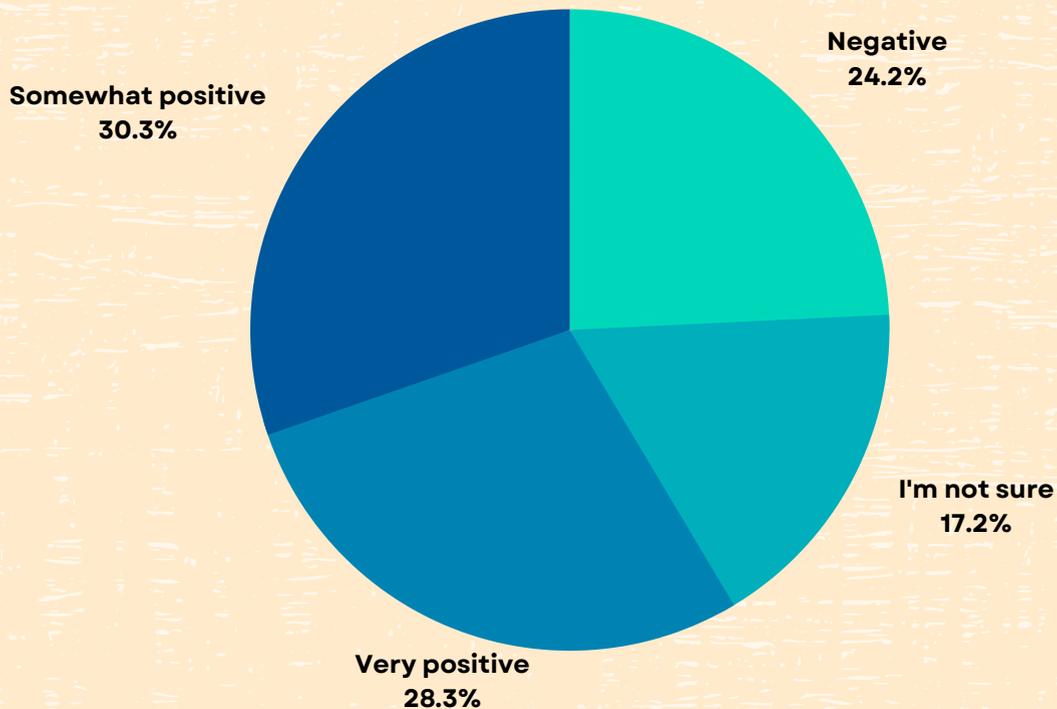
- A sign of a bigger problem
- An isolated incident



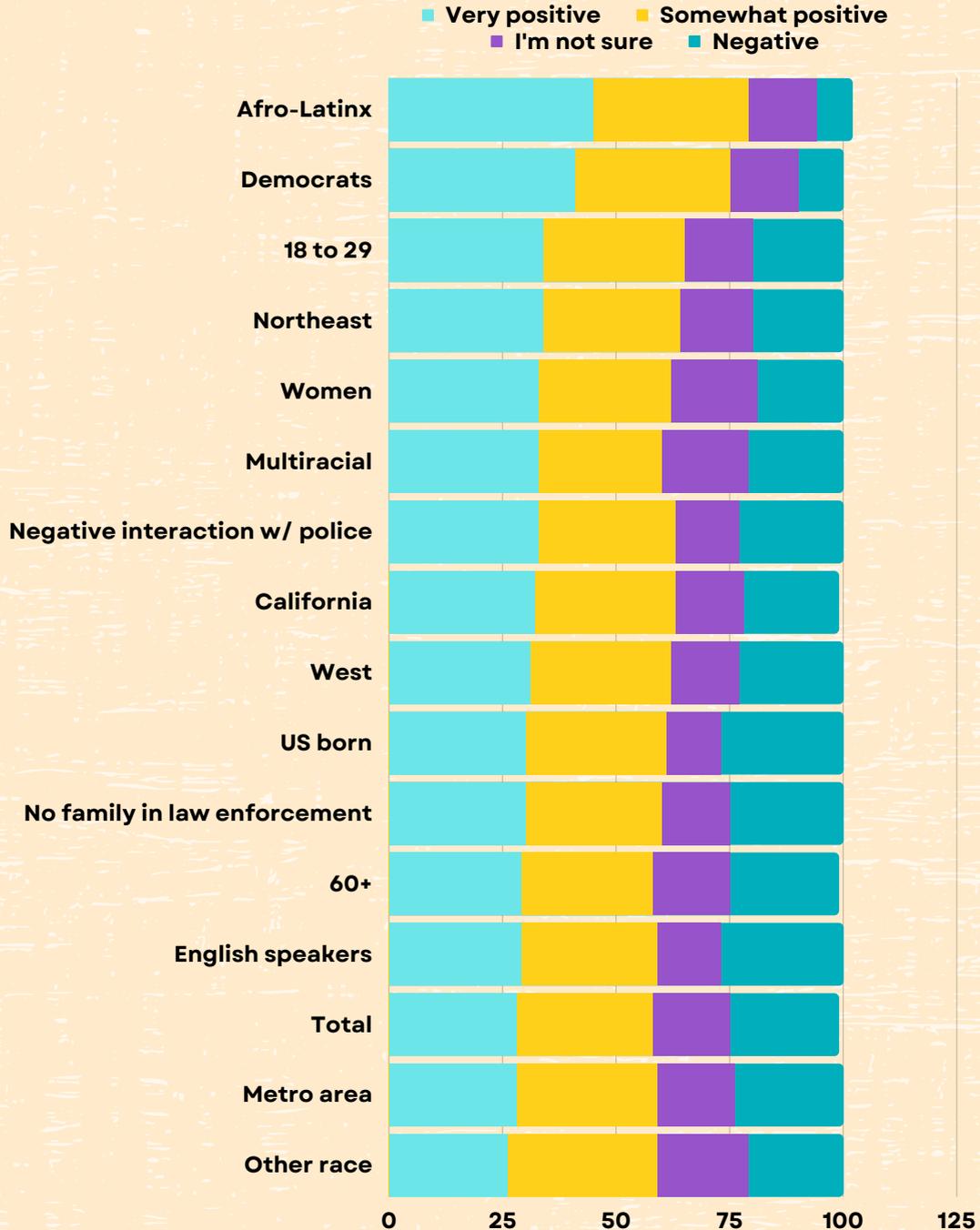
Most feel favorably toward the Black Lives Matter movement.

Afro-Latinx respondents, Democrats, and young respondents are among the most likely to feel positively toward BLM. Republicans, Floridians, and non-metro respondents feel the most negatively.

Overall, how do you feel about the Black Lives Matter movement?



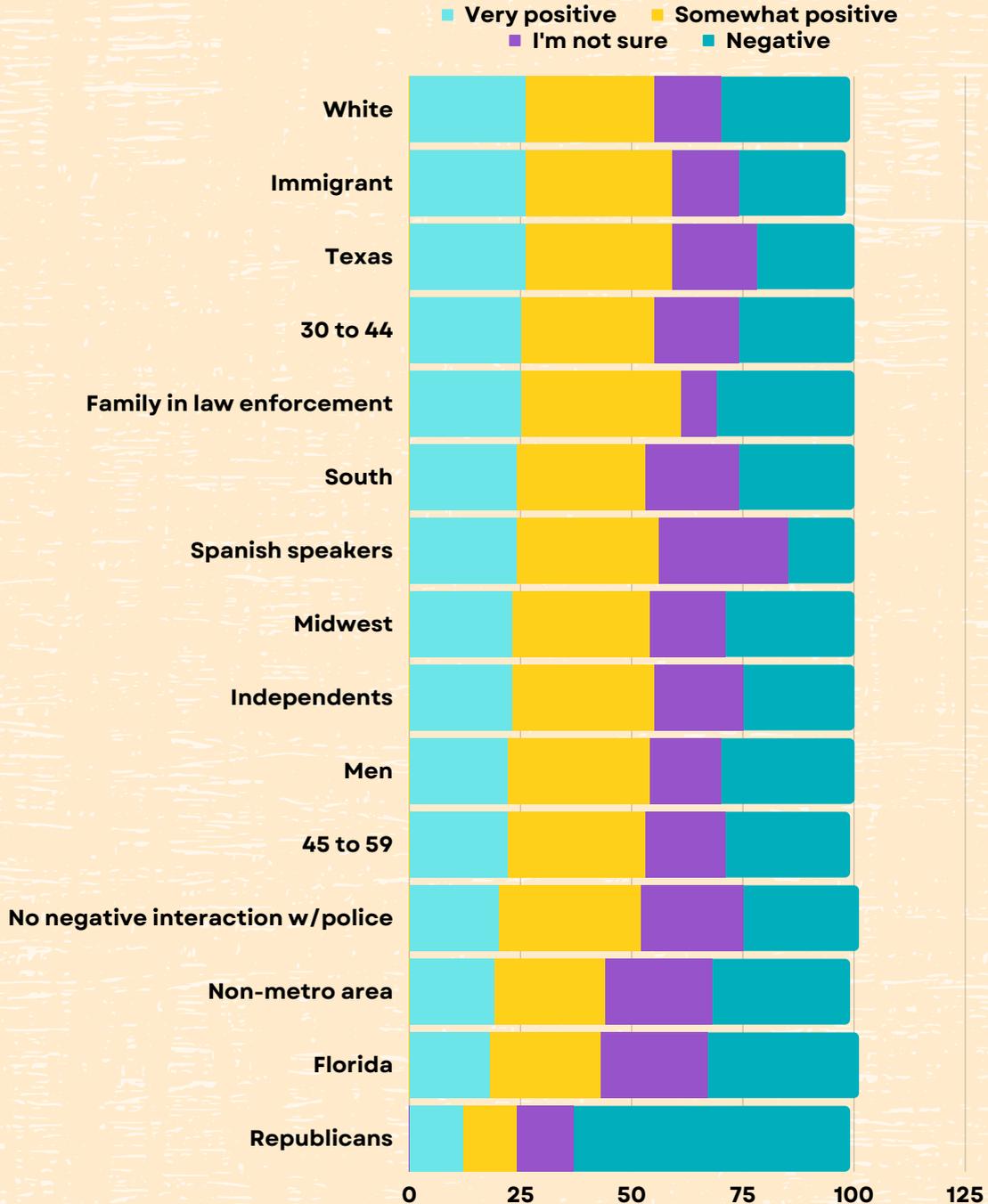
Overall, how do you feel about the Black Lives Matter movement?



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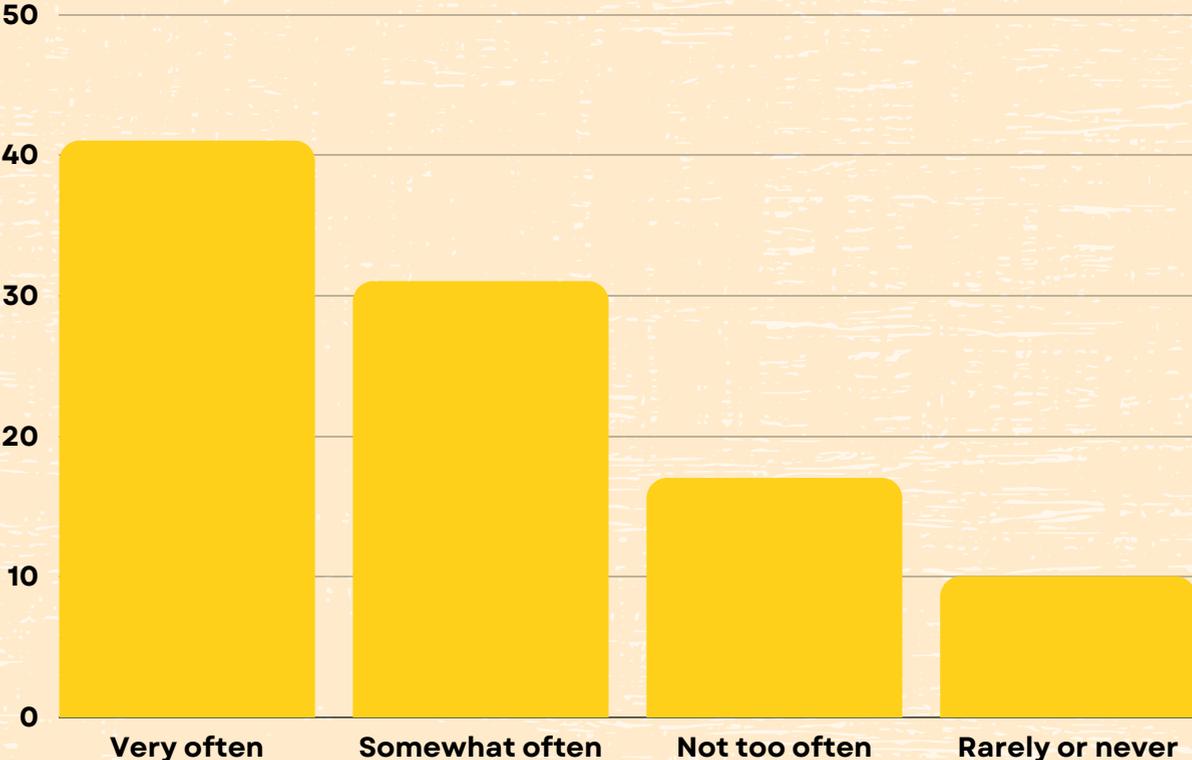


Overall, how do you feel about the Black Lives Matter movement?



Majorities feel police are not often held accountable for misconduct.

How often, if at all, do you feel each of these things happen in the US:
[Police not being held accountable for misconduct]



“I think because I've seen some of it, that some law enforcement officers when they're given a badge, and they're given a gun, that they start believing that they are no longer going to be held accountable for actions. That they are not necessarily serving to protect as much as to go after criminals in ways that are not part of their training. I think that they take that badge and they use it as a means to be violent, be a racist. Just all-around bad people”

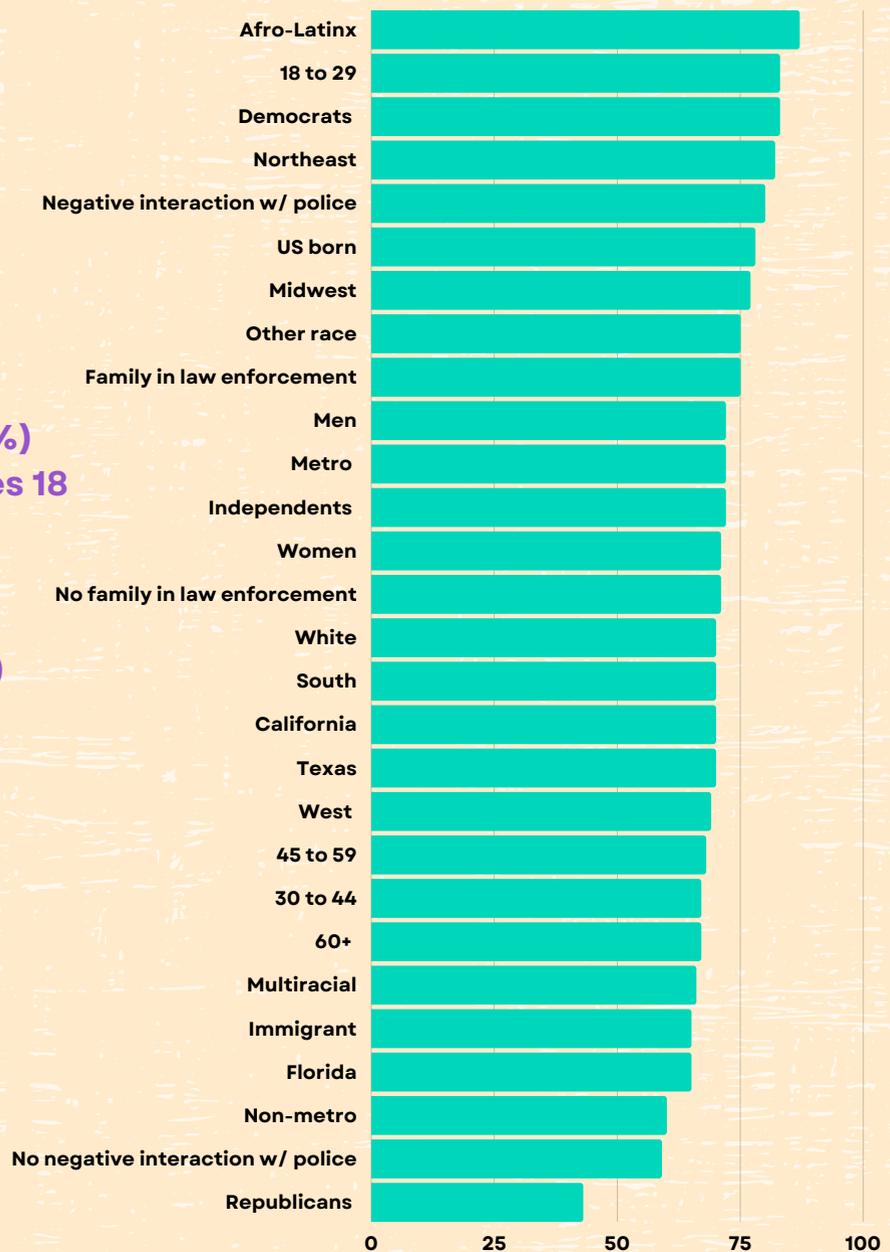
-North Carolina Woman, Independent lean Democrat, 42 years old



Respondents most likely to perceive a lack of accountability include:



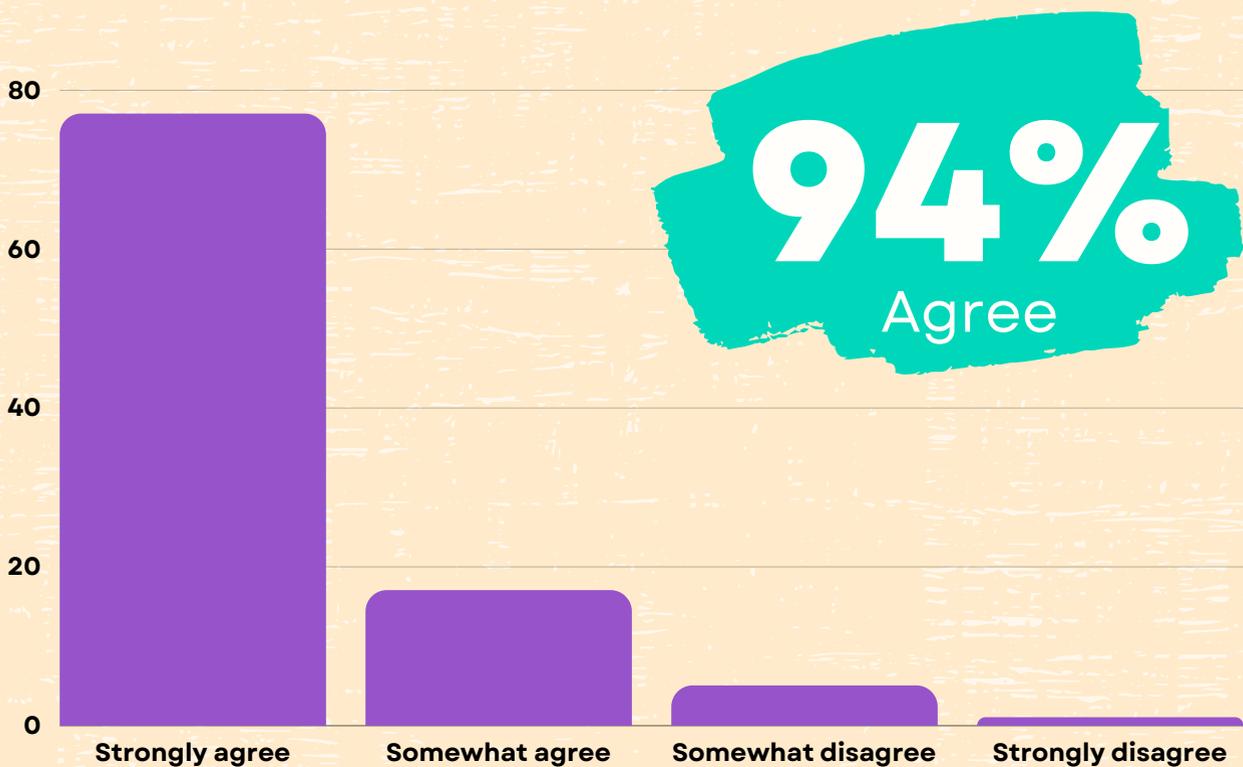
Afro-Latinx respondents (87%)
Respondents ages 18 to 29 (83%)
Residents of the Northeast (82%)
Democrats (83%)



Nearly all (94%) say police should be held accountable for treating people unfairly.

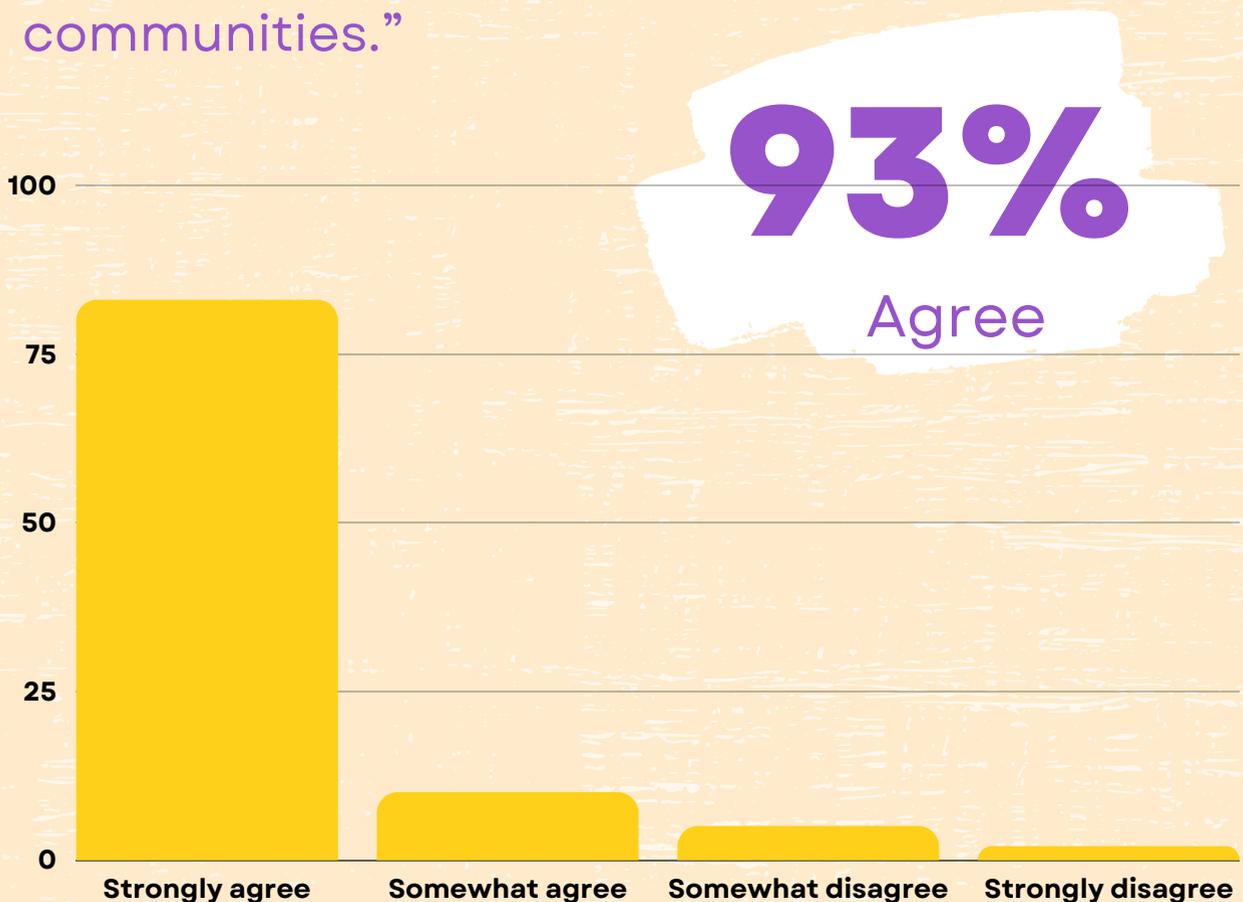
Three-quarters (77%) say they “strongly agree” with the idea that police should be held accountable when they treat people unfairly.

How much do you agree or disagree with these statements: “Police should be held accountable when they treat people unfairly.”



Respondents overwhelmingly agree that everyone deserves to feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.

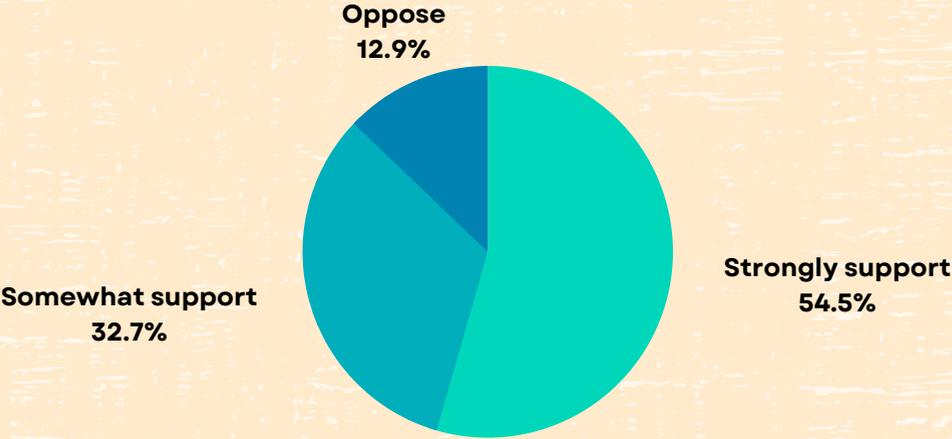
How much do you agree or disagree with these statements: “Everyone deserves to feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.”



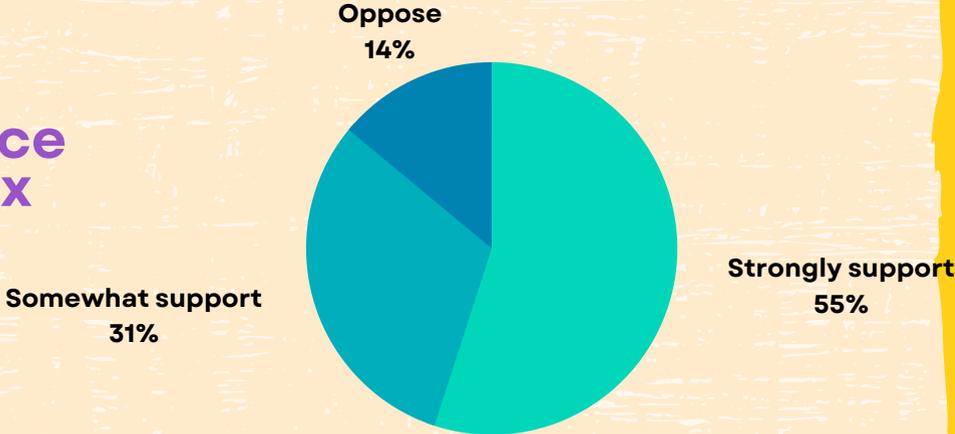
Large majorities support changing laws to prevent police violence.

How much do you support or oppose changing laws to try to prevent _____?

Police violence

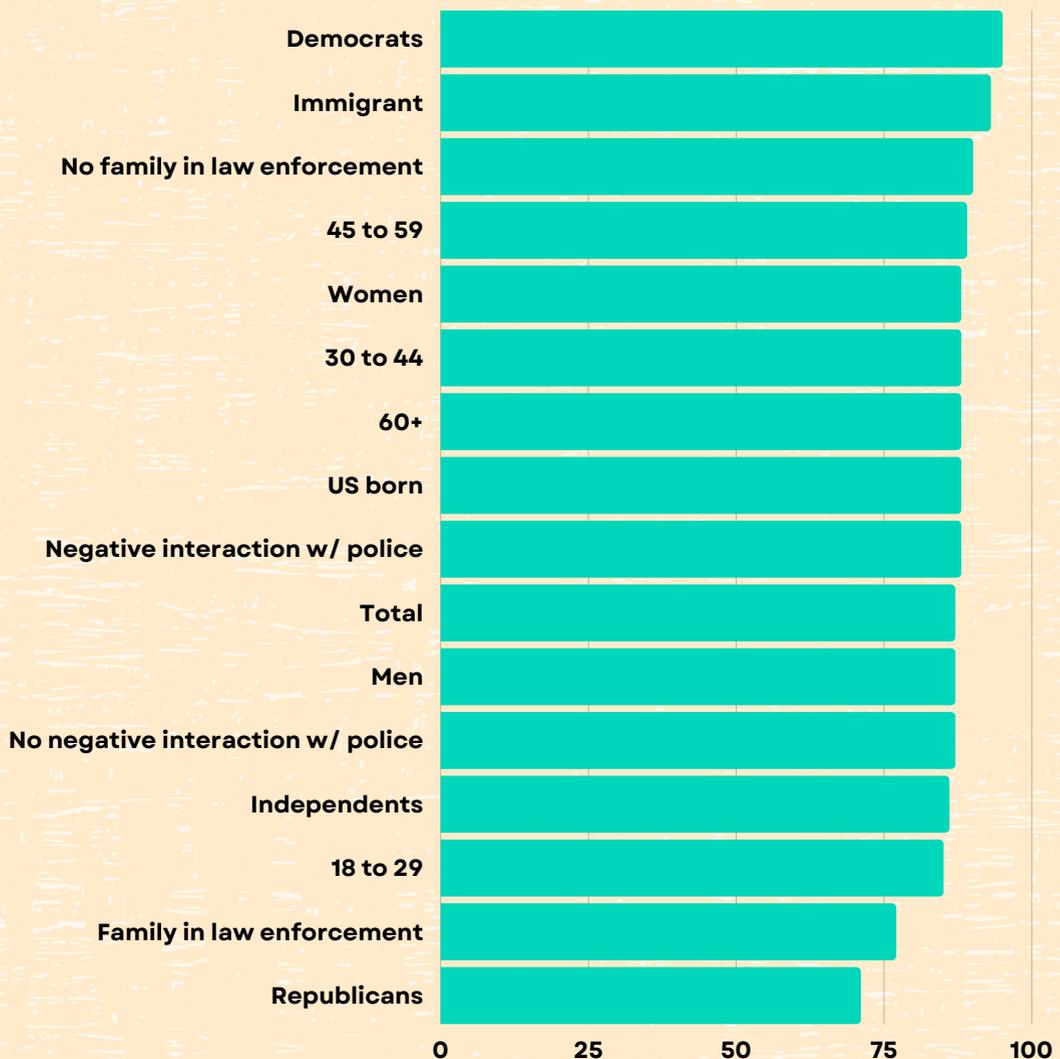


Police violence toward Latinx people



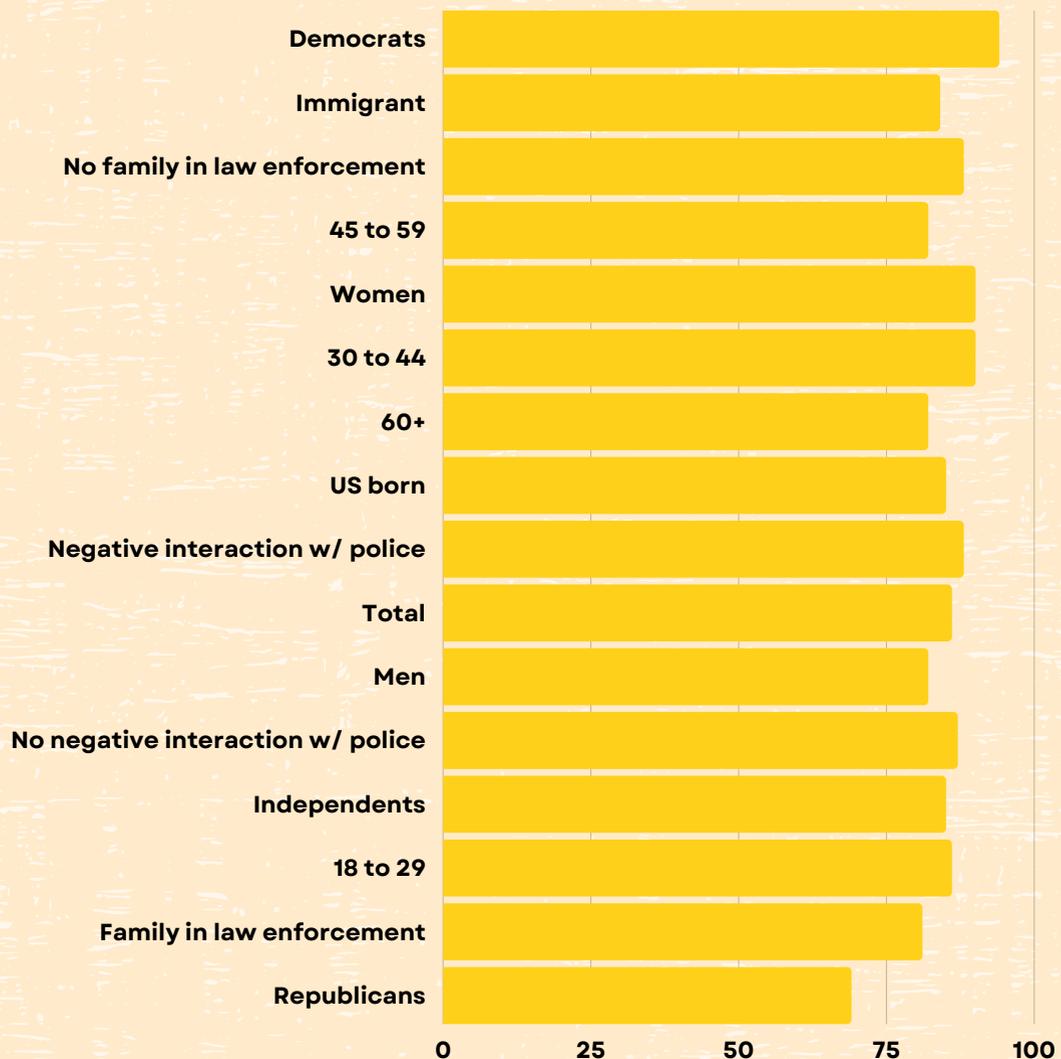
Healthy majorities across segments support changing laws to prevent police violence.

Support changing laws to prevent police violence



Healthy majorities across segments support changing laws to prevent police violence.

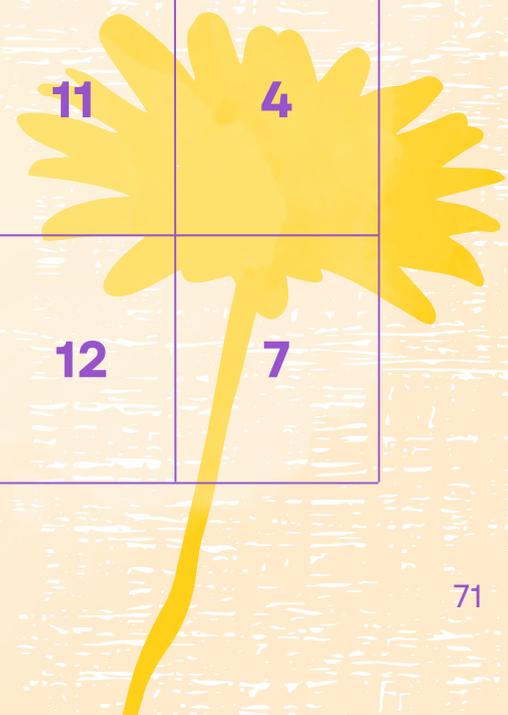
Support changing laws to prevent police violence toward Hispanic/Latino people



The majority of respondents express support for specific interventions to make communities safer.

Here are a few ideas some people have to make communities safer and reduce police violence. How much would you support or oppose...?

	Support	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Invest money in things that prevent crime from happening in the first place, such as good schools, access to good-paying jobs, and affordable housing, instead of just funding police to respond to it.	93	71	22	5	2
Sending a healthcare professional to a medical emergency, instead of an armed police officer	87	52	35	8	5
Sending a mental health expert to a crisis involving mental health, instead of an armed police officer	85	53	32	11	4
Sending a social worker to a call about a homeless person who is loitering, instead of an armed police officer	82	46	36	12	7



“

I think money equals power and I think controlling the power of these organizations and relocating that to others places, whether it be mental health or social justice causes, I think it's the smartest thing to do, I think controlling the people that have the power and that allocate these funds or whatever they do with the police funds, I think would be the smartest thing to do. Yeah, I'm for it.

- **North Carolina Man, Democrat, 27 years old**

I think those are all really effective ways to use the funds that are being moved around. I think the quality of life for people would be better if we all had equal access to really the most basic of necessities, like affordable housing and mental health and all the other things that were on that list. I think these are all like I said, pretty basic things that would increase the quality of life for people. And I think in general would help us not just with police brutality or interactions with police, but interactions with each other. And like I said, quality of life in general. I think it's a good idea, a good way to allocate those funds.

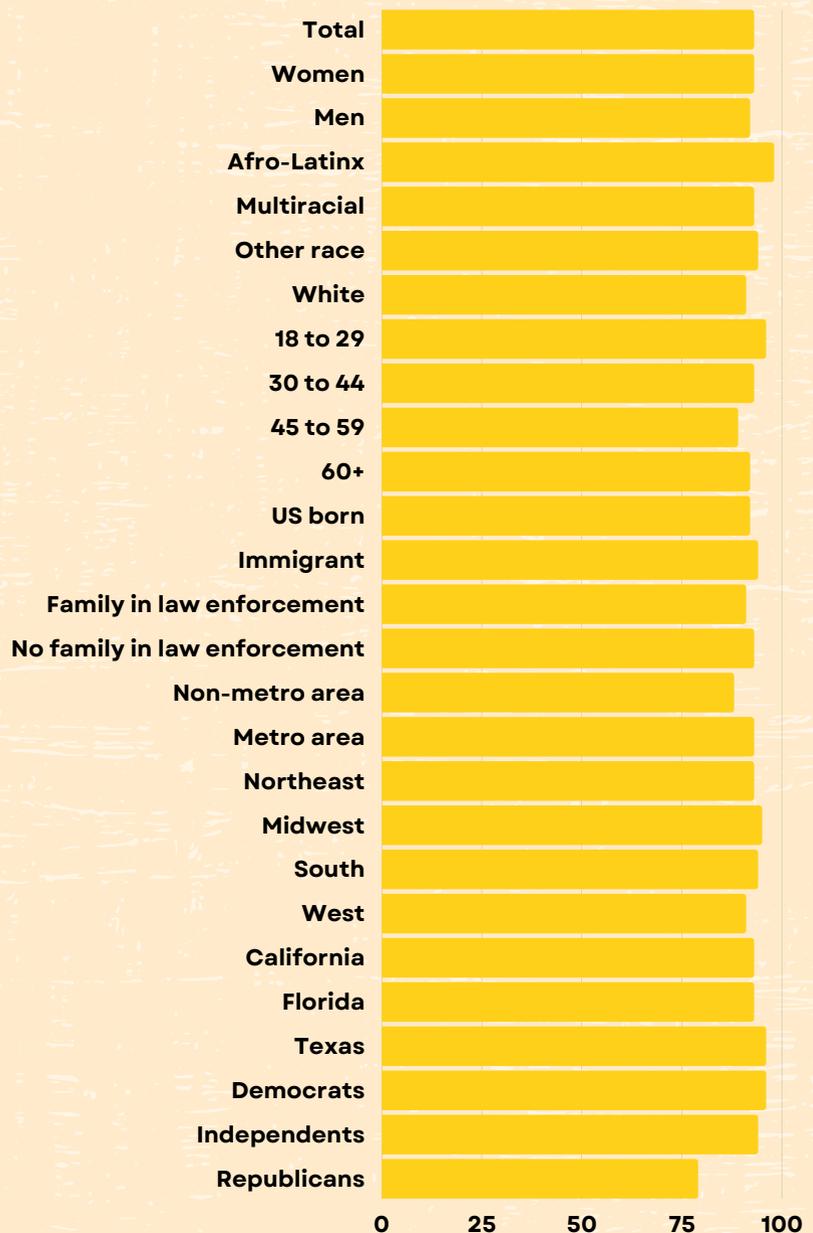
- **North Carolina Man, Democrat, 27 years old**

”

Respondents across segments overwhelmingly support interventions to improve public safety.

% Support

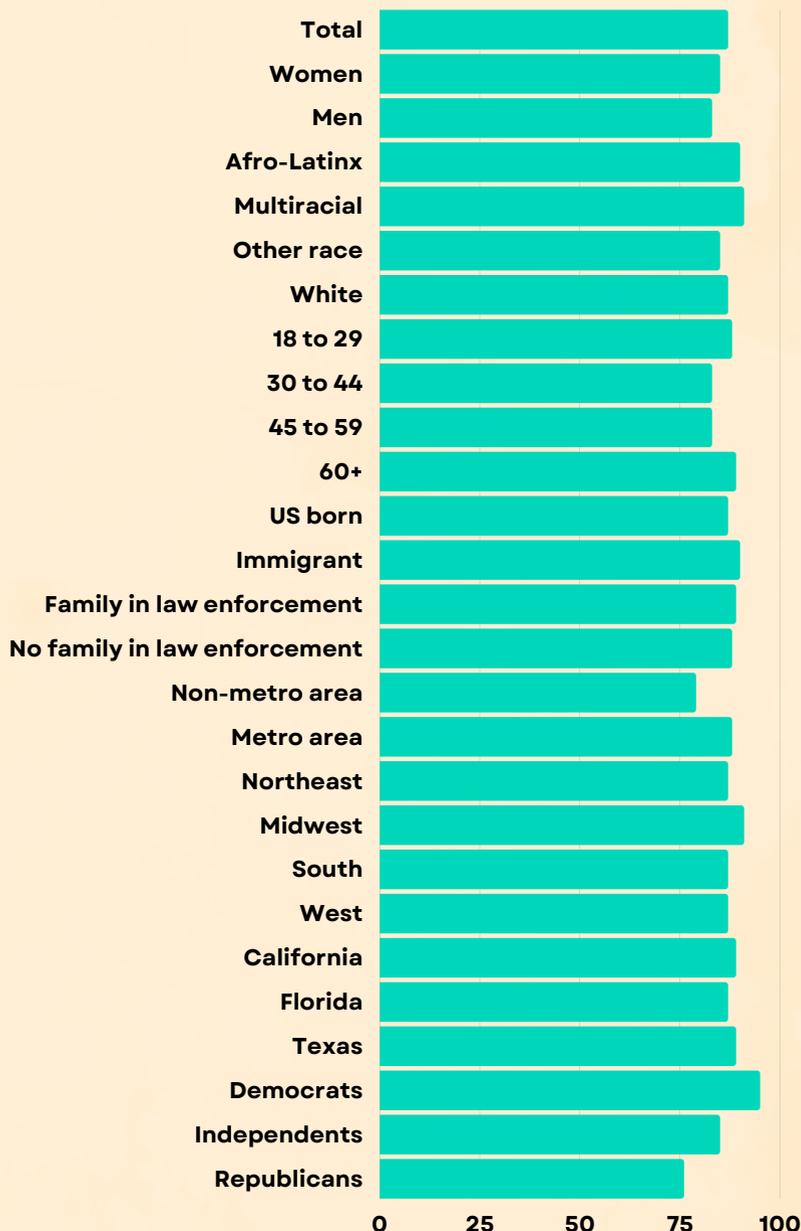
Invest money in things that prevent crime from happening in the first place



Respondents across segments overwhelmingly support interventions to improve public safety.

% Support

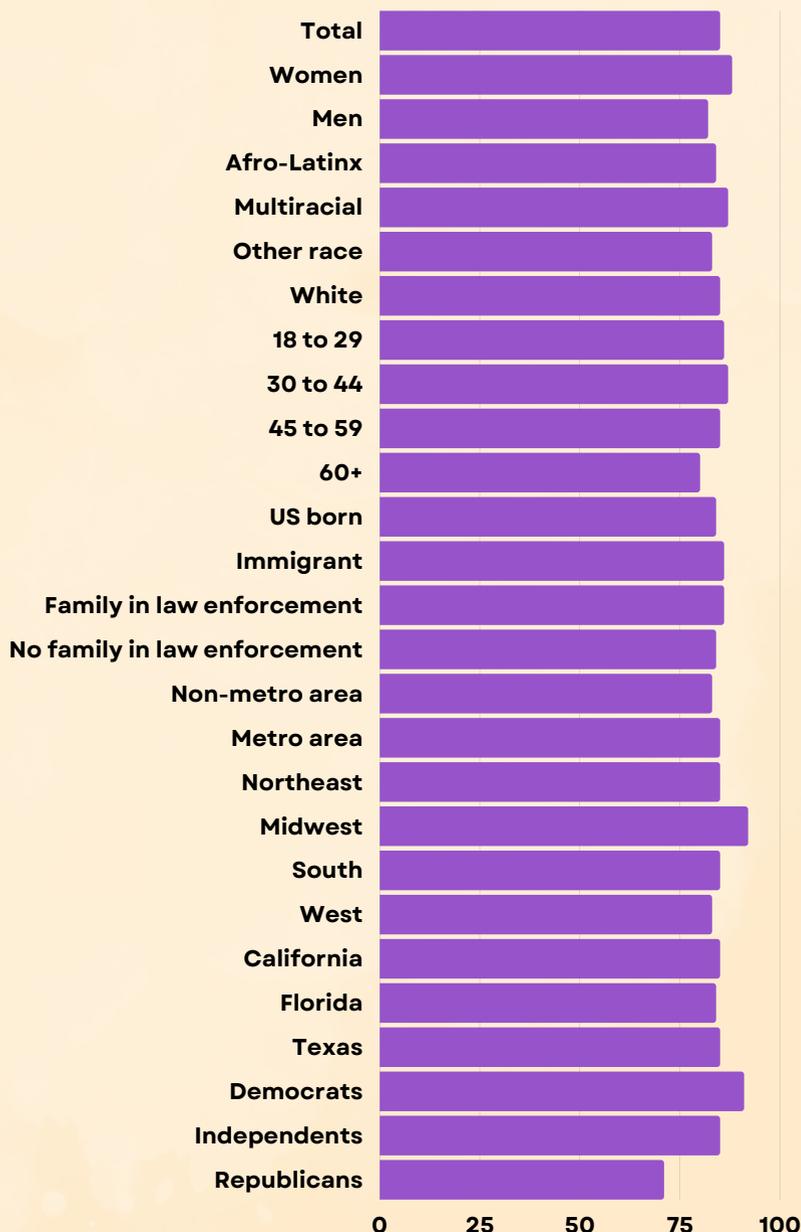
Sending a healthcare professional to a medical emergency, instead of an armed police officer



Respondents across segments overwhelmingly support interventions to improve public safety.

% Support

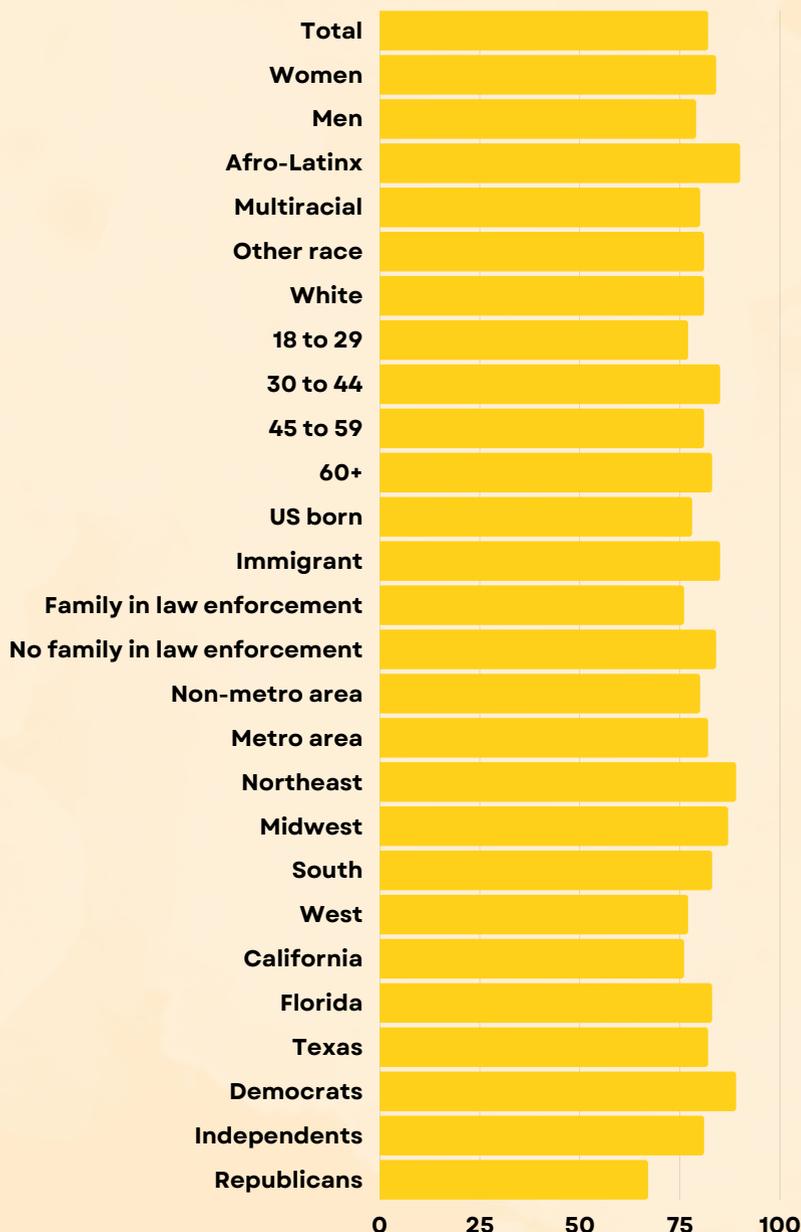
Sending a mental health expert to a crisis involving mental health, instead of an armed police officer.



Respondents across segments overwhelmingly support interventions to improve public safety.

% Support

Sending a social worker to call about a homeless person who is loitering instead of an armed police officer



“I think that sometimes, the police budget is very big. They're given a budget of \$40 million for the year, and they have to spend that money so that next year, they get the \$40 million. We're not paying for police officers. We're supposedly paying for tanks, vehicles, incredible weapons that are basically unnecessary, you know what I mean? We're not paying for police salaries nor for vehicles, but instead for weapons, for war, and for war against the citizens of this country. Because who is it against? It's not against terrorism. It's not against other people. It's against the citizens themselves. These are things that if we could make some budget cuts and move that to community services, to education, to not buying war tanks, or bazookas, or things like that, it could be better for the community at the end of the day. Maybe not initially, but in a couple of years because everything takes time to develop. Nothing happens from one day to the next.”

- Immigrant Man, North Carolina, Independent, Spanish speaker, 51 years old

Latinx adults connect addressing structural issues to increasing public safety.

Interestingly, respondents are much more likely to say many of these conditions will help “a lot” to decrease crime – compared to having a lot of police on patrol.

Let's say we wanted to [SPLIT A: improve safety] in communities. Do you think each of these things would...?

To improve safety in communities... would each of these:	Help a lot	Help some	Help a little	Would not help
Having jobs available with good pay	80	15	4	1
Having quality schools	78	15	6	0
Having trust between police and the people they serve	76	17	5	2
Having affordable access to college or job training	74	18	6	2

To improve safety in communities... would each of these:	Help a lot	Help some	Help a little	Would not help
Having access to affordable, quality housing	72	20	6	2
Having access to affordable, quality health care	71	19	8	2
Having activities for children outside of school	69	22	8	1
Having neighbors who know each other and look out for each other	69	24	6	1
Having access to affordable, quality childcare	67	24	7	2
Reducing the number of guns on the street	61	18	11	10
Having parks and green spaces	60	25	12	3
Having a lot of police on patrol	46	34	15	5

When framed as helping to “decrease crime,” we find similar results.

Let's say we wanted to [SPLIT B: decrease crime] in communities. Do you think each of these things would...?

To improve safety in communities... would each of these:	Help a lot	Help some	Help a little	Would not help
Having quality schools	78	17	4	1
Having jobs available with good pay	78	15	6	1
Having trust between police and the people they serve	73	20	5	1
Having affordable access to college or job training	71	21	6	2

To improve safety in communities... would each of these:	Help a lot	Help some	Help a little	Would not help
Having activities for children outside of school	67	24	7	2
Having access to affordable, quality housing	66	22	8	4
Having access to affordable, quality childcare	65	22	9	3
Having neighbors who know each other and look out for each other	64	25	8	1
Having access to affordable, quality health care	63	23	11	3
Reducing the number of guns on the street	59	18	11	10
Having parks and green spaces	52	29	11	7
Having a lot of police on patrol	45	35	13	6

“

I think it has to deal with people don't just, or most people don't just want to do bad things or just commit crimes. You have to be put into a certain situation in order for you to like, do things that would make a community unsafe. You're not going to want to like, just do that. But when you don't have options, like opportunities to get good jobs, you don't have good education. You don't get all these things at these places that are seen as safer, getting you need to do things in order to feel safe yourself or to live, to do, to pay rent. You need to buy things like food, transportation, all this, all this stuff. And if you can't do that, it could lead you to actually committing crimes and making the area less safe. When you have the options of all these opportunities, that good schools, all of this stuff, you don't need to commit crimes or make the area unsafe.

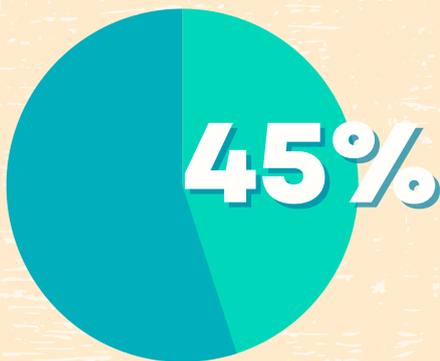
- **Afro-Latino Man, New York, not so strong Democrat, 19 years old**

”

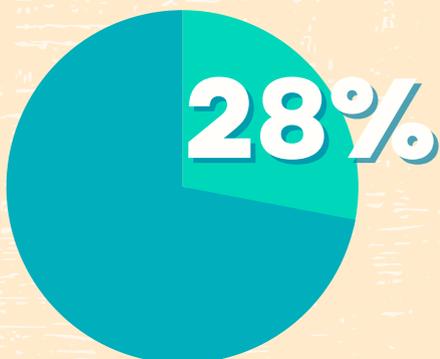
Just 28% think “defund the police” means “getting rid of funding that police need.”

Respondents are most likely to think “defund the police” means using some police funding for other ways to make communities safer. Republicans and rural residents are least likely to understand the phrase.

Some people have used the phrase “defund the police.”
What is your sense: does “defund the police” mean?



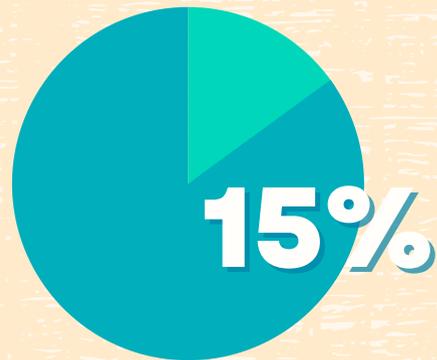
Using some police funding for other ways to make communities safer



Getting rid of funding that police need



**Haven't heard
this phrase**



**I'm not
sure**

“

When I think about or talk about “defunding the police,” I'm referring to reallocating funding into social programs. And it's really cutting and trimming the fat from a lot of these police departments in areas that don't need to be as built up as they are, [It also means] funneling that money into training for mental health workers [and] into helping out those community organizations that are going to be addressing a lot of these social problems.

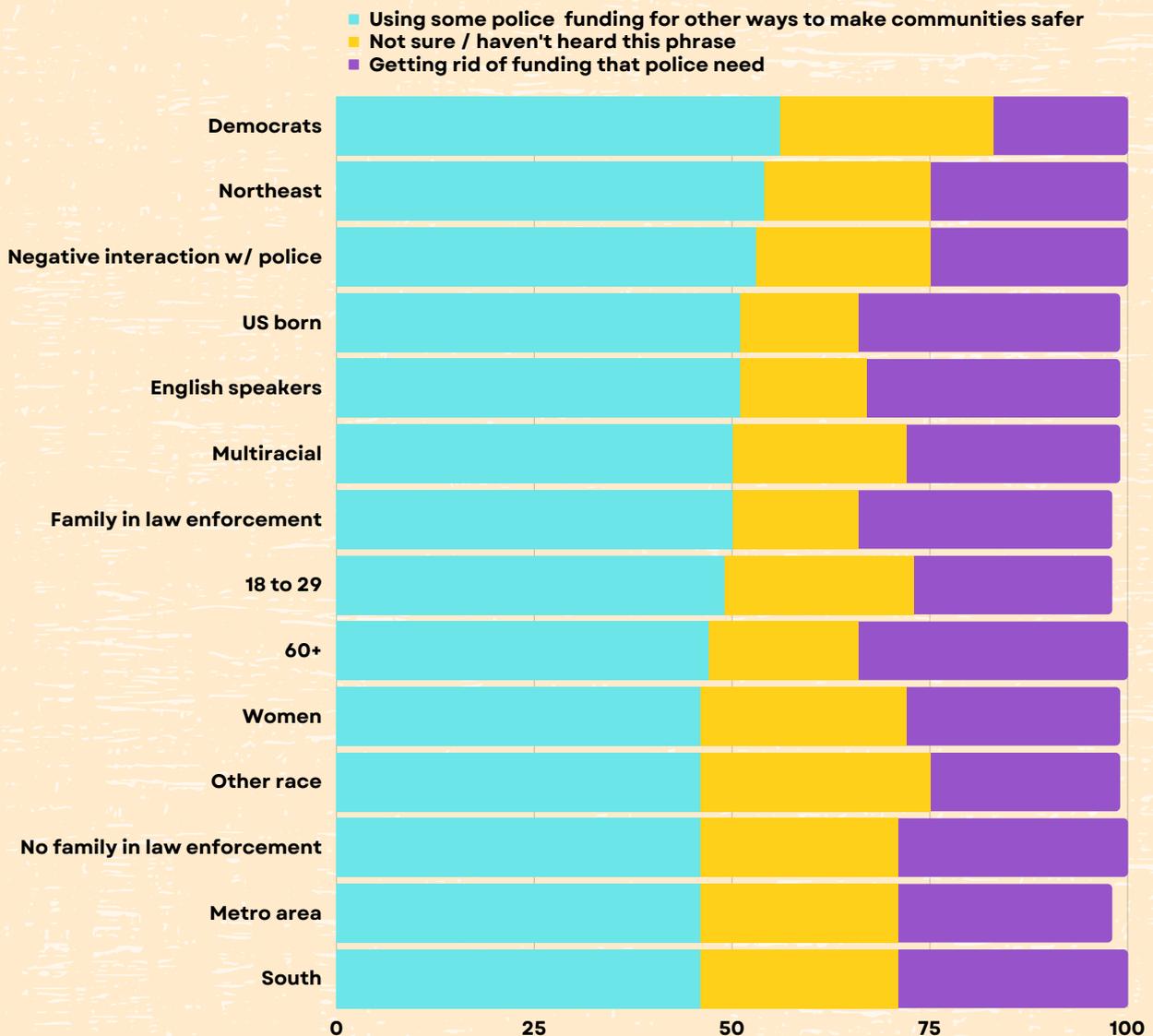
- North Carolina Woman, Independent, 42 years old

For “defund the police,” it just means allocating the funds to different things such as education and housing. I really think that they need to help people that have mental issues and get them the proper care that they need. So, there's other things that need the money more than the police.

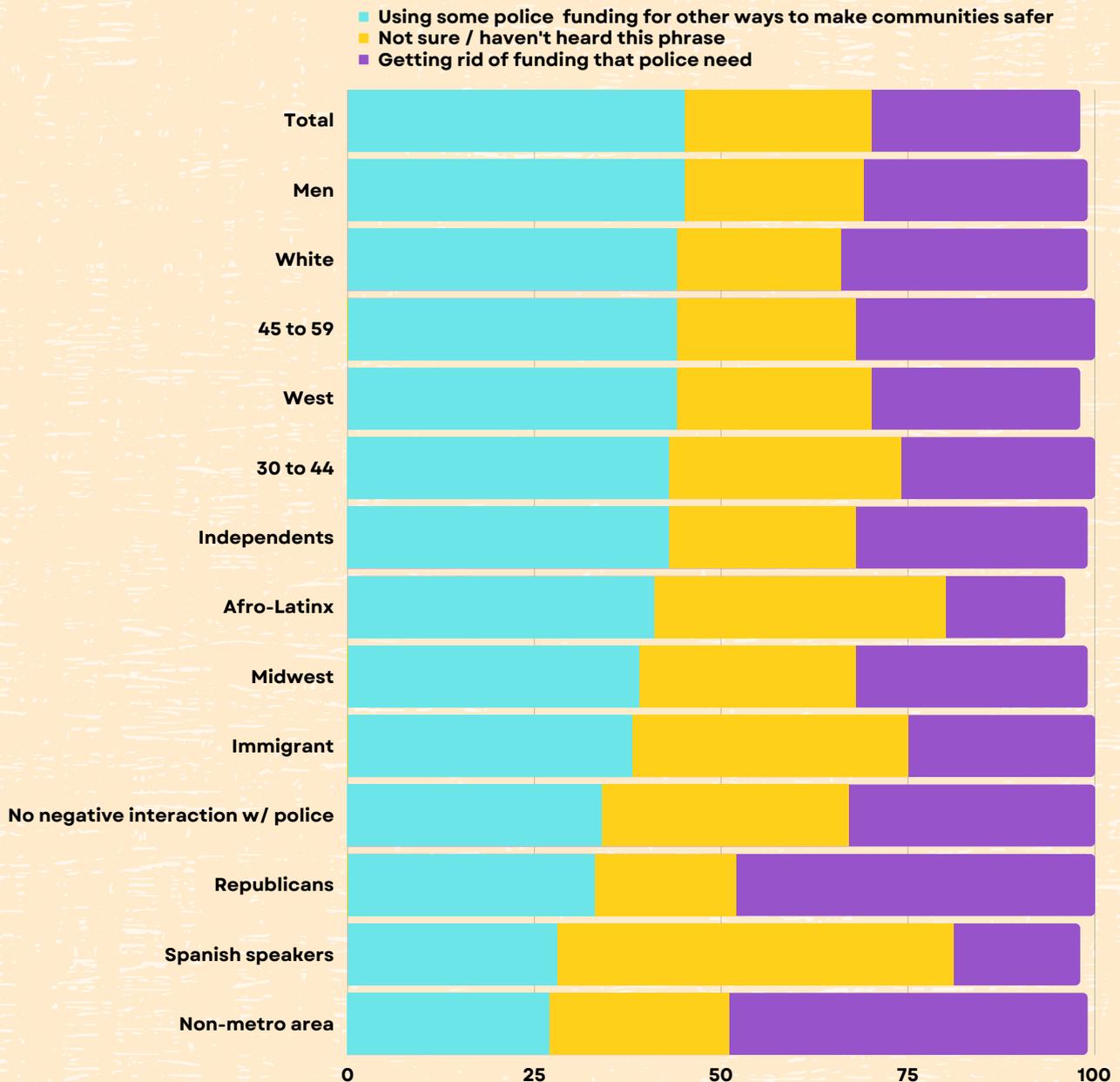
- LGBTQ Woman, New York, Democrat, 37 years old

”

Some people have used the phrase “defund the police.” What is your sense: does “defund the police” mean?



Some people have used the phrase “defund the police.” What is your sense: does “defund the police” mean?



We asked respondents if these statements make them feel interested in taking action.

Data suggest the first message may be most engaging. Afro-Latinx respondents, older respondents, and Democrats are among the most likely to say the facts increase their interest in taking action.

The best way to reduce crime is prevention (45% say this makes them interested in taking action)

Police budgets keep increasing year after year, regardless of the crime rates or population size. The best way to prevent crime starts with things like good schools, access to good-paying jobs, and affordable housing. We are not doing that yet. Since 2010, police budgets have increased by more than \$10 billion, while the budget for schools has gone down by \$6 billion and public housing funds have gone down by \$1.6 billion.

Police budgets are not correlated with crime rates (40%).

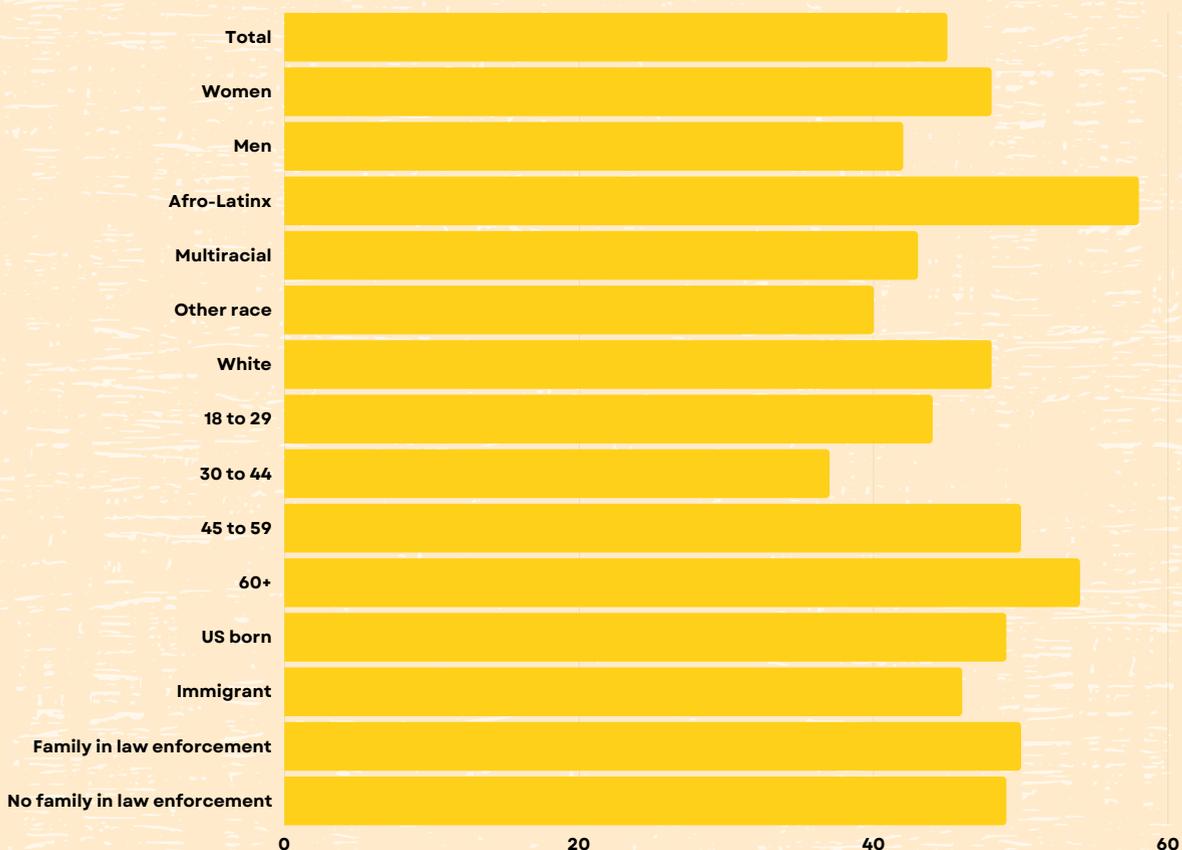
Data over the past 60 years show that the amount of money we spend on police does not correlate with crime rates. For example, when police budgets go up, crime doesn't necessarily go down. That's because police are mostly there to respond to calls and crime after it's happened, not prevent it from happening in the first place.

Only 5% of police calls are about violent crime (36%)

Data suggest only about 5% of police calls are about violent crime. Police spend 95% of their time on non-violent issues, such as responding to non-criminal calls and traffic stops. That is when police violence against people of color tends to happen, during non-criminal calls and traffic stops.

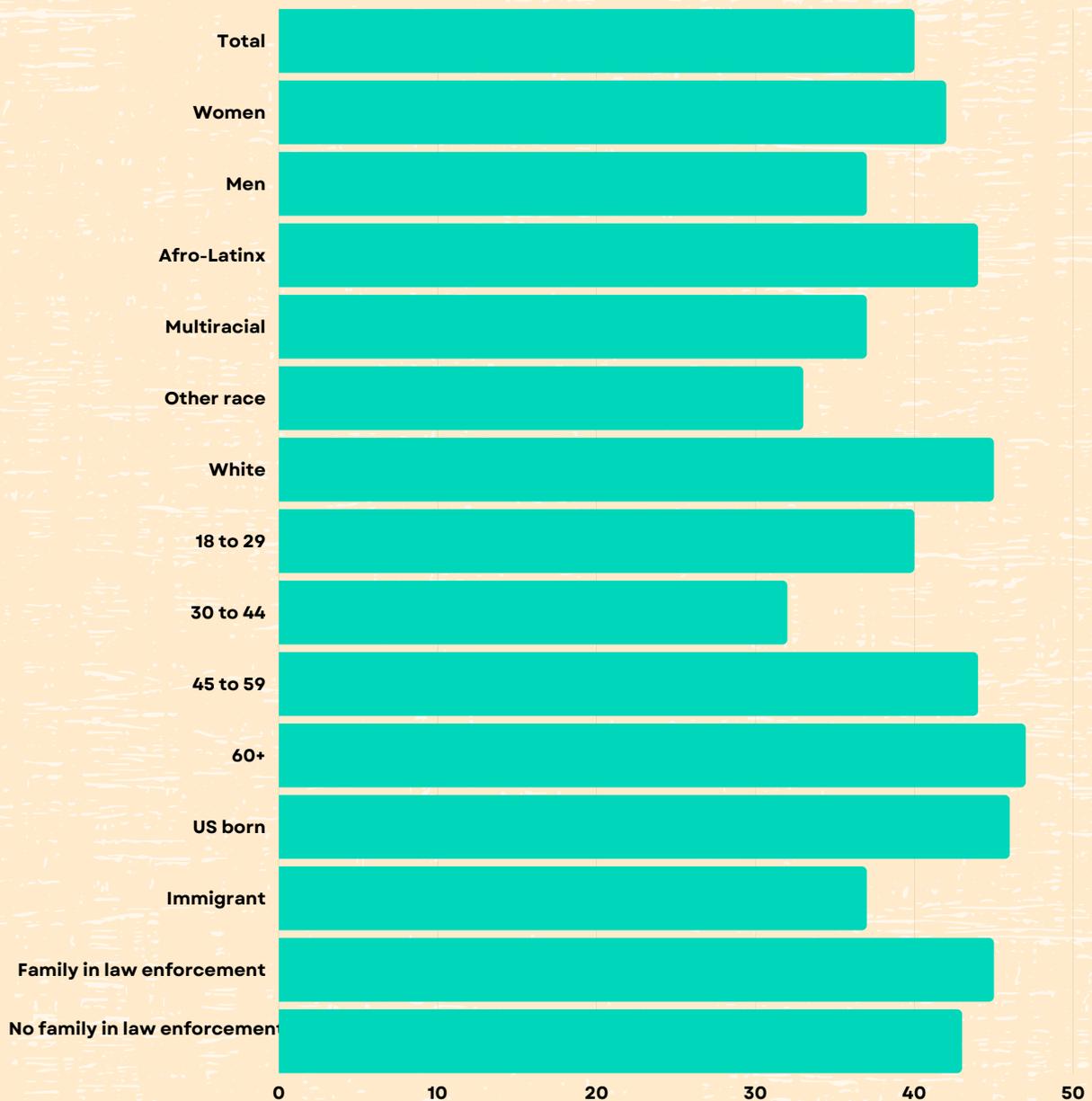
% Yes, makes me feel more interested in taking action

The best way to reduce crime is prevention



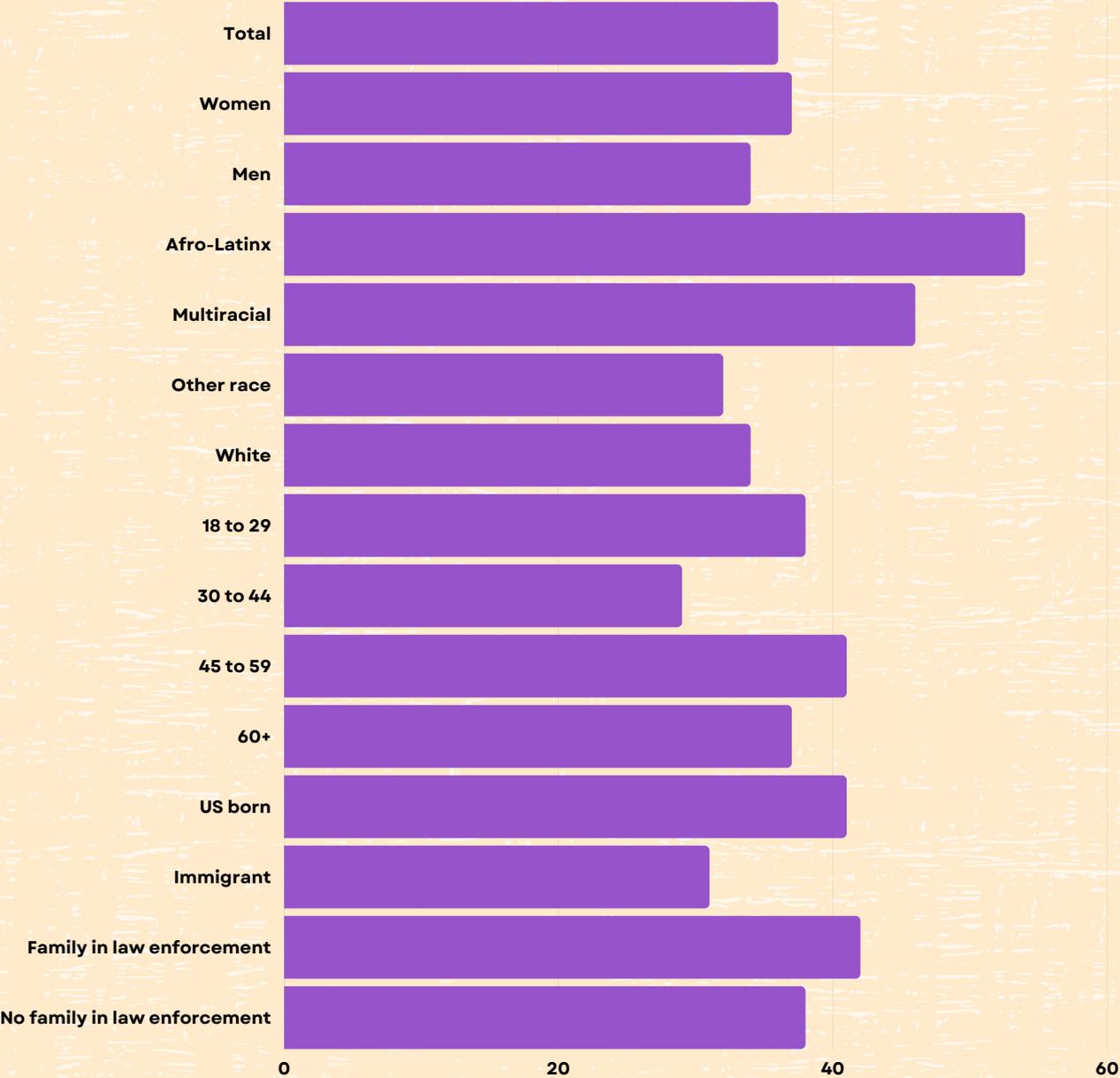
% Yes, makes me feel more interested in taking action

Police budgets are not correlated with crime rates



% Yes, makes me feel more interested in taking action

Only 5% of police calls are about violent crime



Those who say crime has increased also consider community investments more helpful at decreasing crime than having a lot of police on patrol.

Let's say we wanted to [SPLIT B: decrease crime] in communities. Do you think each of these things would...?

% Saying would help “a lot” to decrease crime	Total	Among those who think crime has gone up
Having quality schools	78	73
Having jobs available with good pay	78	79
Having trust between police and the people they serve	73	75
Having affordable access to college or job training	71	70
Having activities for children outside of school	67	68
Having access to affordable, quality housing	66	68
Having access to affordable, quality childcare	65	65
Having neighbors who know each other and look out for each other	64	67

% Saying would help “a lot” to decrease crime

	Total	Among those who think crime has gone up
Having access to affordable, quality health care	63	62
Reducing the number of guns on the street	59	57
Having parks and green spaces	52	49
Having a lot of police on patrol	45	47



CONCLUSION



The data presented here tells a complex story.

As a multi-racial community with broad sets of demographics – Latinx people cannot be addressed as a monolith. The messages that reach us will always require careful thought, specificity, and research. But a few things are clear:

First: the experiences of Black Latinxs with the police require greater attention. **Deeply embedded racism in the American criminal justice system has inevitably resulted in higher incidences of violence by the police in Afro-Latinx communities.** But the data points to organizing opportunities: nearly 40% of Afro-Latinxs have never heard the phrase “defund the police” or don’t know what it means. It is imperative that the experiences of Black Latinx people are included with the developing narrative around our community’s history with policing.

Second: Local and historical context matters. Puerto Ricans living in the Island interpreted defunding the police as part of the package of cutting of public services, most recently a result of the Financial Management and Oversight Board. In light of massive disinvestment in education, transportation, and infrastructure – removing any other government-funded service, including the police, was not a welcome message for everyone. **Political and local context matters.**

Finally: this research clearly demonstrates the need and opportunity for ongoing intervention and organizing. **It shows a community that has experienced violence at the hands of the police, recognizes that colorism and racism affect that treatment, and understands the larger racial dynamics at play in the United States.**

Policy makers and organizers alike should take note:

LATINXS UNDERSTAND THAT PUBLIC SAFETY, QUALITY SCHOOLS, GOOD PAYING JOBS, ARE ALL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE MORE TO SAFETY THAN INCREASING THE NUMBER OF POLICE.

The analysis and research presented here builds on the deep legacy of Black and Brown organizing against police violence throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. And much more needs to be built in order to make an impact in the Latinx community. We need a comprehensive strategy that helps our communities imagine a world without the need for police intervention. We will be forced to continue the fight against right-wing messaging and continued disinformation about BLM and other social justice movements. We must invest in grassroots organizing and education in our communities that includes sharp and innovative messaging. We hope this research is a contribution to all the future work that is yet to be done.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mijente: Mijente is a political home for Latinx and Chicnx people in the US and Puerto Rico. Our cause isn't just pro-Latinx. It's pro-Black, pro-indigenous, pro-worker, pro-Mujer, pro-immigrant, and pro-Pachamama. Since 2016 Mijente has been doing this through campaigns, connecting people across a wide network and serving as a hub for culture, learning, and advocacy.

Perry Udem: Perry Udem uses data and research to uncover truths, identify new trends, build new narratives, and elevate the value of human experience as a driving force for change. Our approach combines creative thinking, collective wisdom, rigor, and analytical skills to answer some of the most difficult questions.

Center for Advancing Innovative Policy: CAIP creates transformative policy strategies to change the dominant narrative on policy from one where only educated white men get to decide the laws that govern our lives to one that encourages everyone to participate in determining how we're governed.





Community Resource Hub for Safety and Accountability: The Community Resource Hub for Safety and Accountability works to ensure all people have access to resources and tools to advocate for systems change and accountability in law enforcement. The Hub serves as a resource for local advocates and organizers working to address the harms of policing in the U.S. and seeking to cultivate community safety and accountability outside of the criminal legal system.

The **following individuals** contributed to the writing of this report and the design of the research: Tania Unzueta Carrasco, Rocio Valerio-Gonzalez, Enrique Cárdenas Sifre, Adlemy Garcia, Priscilla Gonzalez, Veronica Bayetti Flores, Kelcey Duggan, and Hiram Rivera.

Designer's note

We are naming and building the future our communities deserve through radical hope. The design in the report **Futuro y Esperanza: Latinx Views and Experiences on Public Safety and Police Violence** invites us to imagine new worlds, new ways of being in community and thinking of new alternatives when resolving conflict. The purple, the spirals and the elements included all over this report, invite us to imagine, to hope and to build a future that is safe and just for all of us.

- Aliana Margarita Bigio-Alcoba