

Youth Climate Survey 2022

Blue Shield of California

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& Climate Change

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Research Methodology

Mode:
Online survey



Field Dates:
March 10 – 22, 2022



Qualification Criteria:

- US resident
- Ages 14-24



Weighting:
Data weighted to ensure results are projectable to U.S. population



Sample Size:



1,300 youth ages 14 – 24
across the United States



Includes an oversample of
369 youth ages 14-24 in
California

The research was conducted online in the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of Blue Shield of California between March 10-22, 2022 among 1,300 respondents ages 14-24 ("Gen Z"), including an oversample of 369 youth who reside in California. The 2021 survey was conducted by Quest Mindshare between March 5-12, 2021 among 1,200 respondents ages 14-24 in the US, including an oversample of 300 youth in California.

Data for both the General Population and California residents are weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region (general population only), education, and household size to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. A post-weight was applied to the total data to reflect the proportions within the U.S. population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the total Gen Z sample data is accurate to within + 3.4 percentage points using a 95% confidence level and the total California sample data is accurate to within + 5.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.



Report Notes

In charts:

- ✓ Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting and/or computer rounding.
- ✓ Results based on small samples ($n < 100$) should be interpreted as directional only.
- ✓ A “ * ” indicates a percentage greater than zero but less than 1%; a “ – ” indicates a value of zero

Throughout this report:

- ✓ Where appropriate, subgroups of interest are noted throughout the detailed findings slides. Note that due to space limitations, not all significant differences among subgroups of interest are displayed.
- ✓ Colors differentiate which audience is being represented on each slide:



Total US



Total California



Audience Profile

Total US

Gender



49%
male



45%
female

Non-binary or gender
non-conforming: 4%
Transgender: 2%

Urbanicity



23%
Urban/
large city

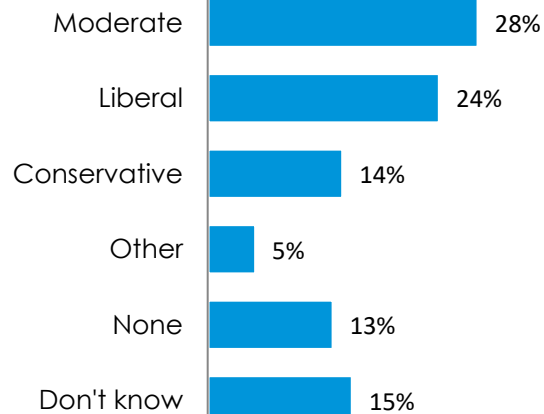


45%
suburban

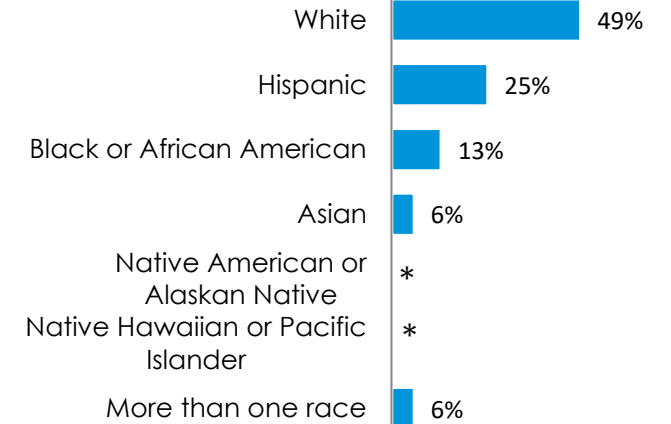


30%
Small town/
rural

Political Ideology

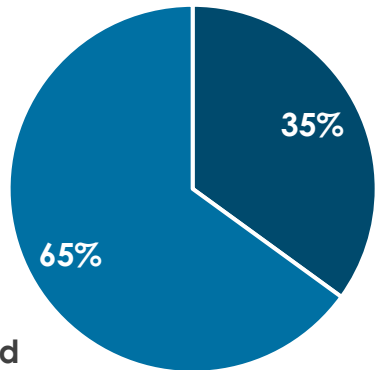


Race/Ethnicity



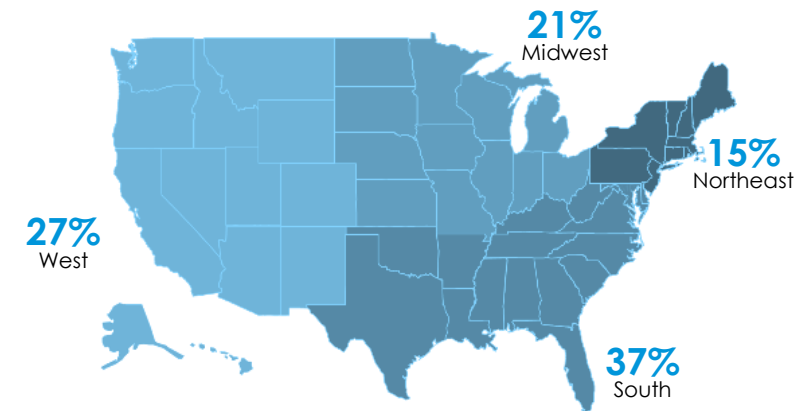
Age

18-24
years old



14-17
years old

Region



Audience Profile

Total California

Gender



48%
male



45%
female

Non-binary or gender
non-conforming: 3%
Transgender: 2%

Urbanicity



35%
Urban/
large city

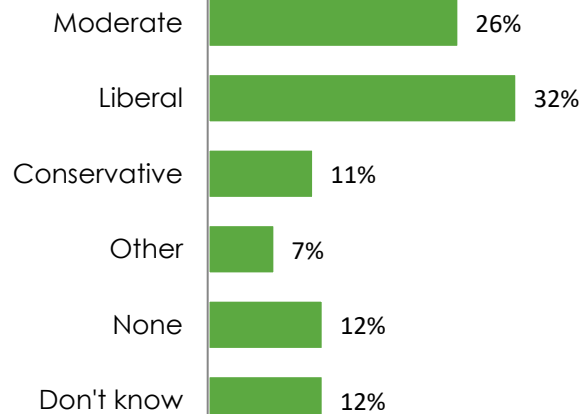


43%
suburban

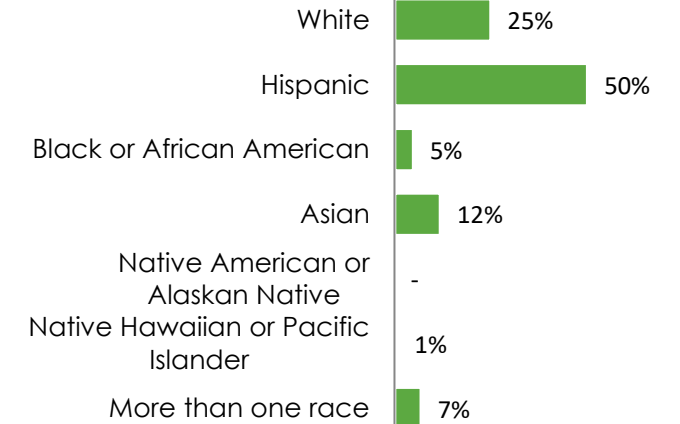


19%
Small town/
rural

Political Ideology

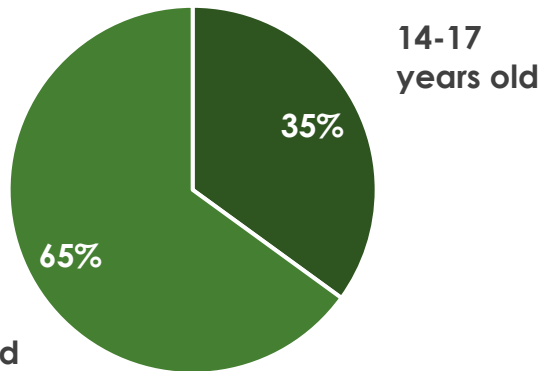


Race/Ethnicity



Age

18-24
years old



Key Findings



The environment and personal health

- Environmental concerns continue to take a toll on youth's mental health. The vast majority of youth continue to say their environment affects their physical *and* mental health.
- This connection between the environment and personal health is clear, with nearly 2 in 3 youth – and 3 in 4 in California – saying they have experienced at least one health issue related to an environmental event.
- Three in four youth say they have experienced at least one mental health-related issue as a result of consuming climate change-related news, including feeling anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed.
- In order to protect their mental health, more than half (57%) of American youth limit the amount of climate change-focused news they consume. Many also talk to friends or parents when they are experiencing negative feelings due to climate change news.



The environment and climate change

The environment remains a high priority for Gen Z across the U.S. “The environment and climate change” continues to be in the top three issues Gen Z is most concerned about – behind only jobs/the economy and racism/social justice.



When thinking of both the future of the planet as well as their own personal health, Gen Z in California are specifically more concerned about drought and water shortages – up significantly from last year.



Taking action

Despite COVID being a barrier, youth are taking action to combat climate change.

About half of American youth say that addressing climate change during COVID is more difficult than other times, a significant increase from last year.

Despite this difficulty, about 4 in 5 say they have personally taken action to respond to climate change, most commonly reducing use of plastic, power, and water.



These actions are aligned with Gen Z's top environmental concerns, with water pollution, air pollution, and plastic pollution topping the list – similar to last year.



The role of the government and companies

- The vast majority of youth across the U.S. agree that global leaders are *not doing enough* to combat climate change.
- Gen Z demands government leaders to do more to fight climate change.
- Companies are not exempt from having to play a role. Nearly 3 in 4 American youth agree that companies in the U.S. bear some responsibility to help people combat the impacts of climate change on their mental health.
- And, the overwhelming majority of Gen Z say it is important for them to support brands that are sustainable or environmentally friendly, with 1 in 7 saying it is absolutely essential.



Regional disparities

California youth are acutely aware of climate change's impact given their location and express even greater concern about its effect.

Youth in the West are very concerned about the issues of extreme heat, drought, natural disasters, and wildfires (all events that can impact the West to a higher degree) when it comes to their health.

In fact, the majority of youth in California have experienced at least one health issue related to an environmental event.



More than 3 in 5 youth in California say the amount of climate change-focused news they consume directly impacts their mental health. And, a greater proportion say they have experienced mental health problems as a result, including feeling anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed.

Compared to youth in general, those in California also believe the current state of the climate and environment will impact their future decisions/plans to a greater degree, including where they will live and what foods they eat.



Racial disparities

The connection between social justice and climate change appears to be greatest among Black Gen Z.

About half of Gen Z believe the fights against climate change and racial injustice are deeply intertwined.

And, nearly half of Black youth say in the United States, the climate crisis is a racial injustice crisis – higher than other races/ethnicities.



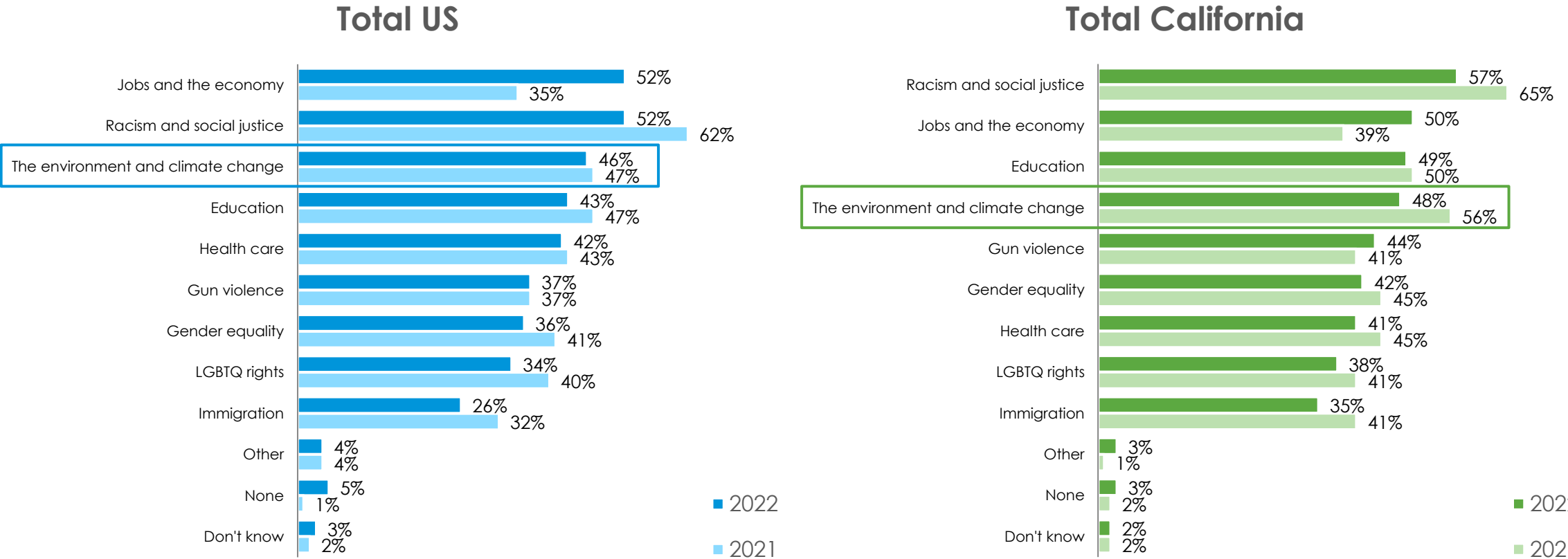
More than 4 in 5 Black youth say there is *not enough* discussion around how climate change impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – significantly higher than all other races/ethnicities.

Concerns about the Environment & Climate Change



The environment and climate change is among the top three issues that Gen Z in the US are most concerned about today.

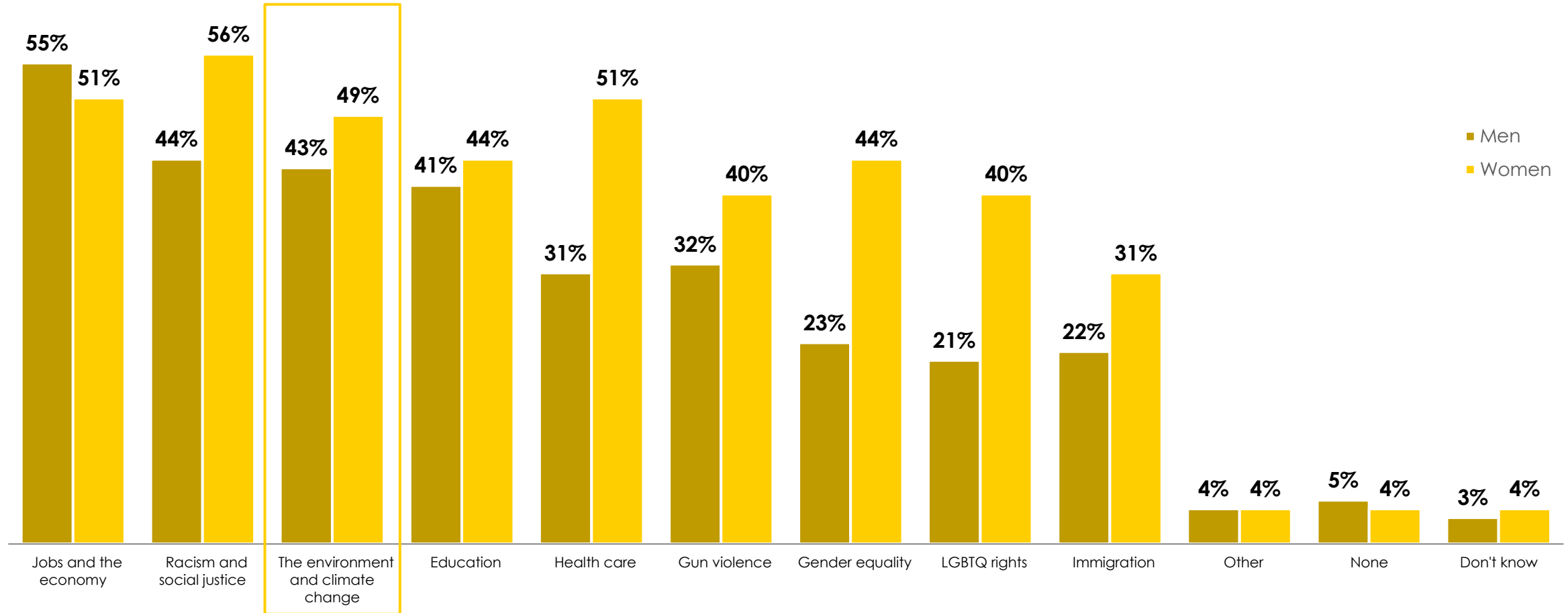
This year, there is a significant increase in concern about jobs and the economy, perhaps reflecting the impact of recent domestic inflation.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q3. Which of the following issues do you find yourself most concerned with today? Please select all that apply.

Women are more likely to report concern about a number of issues, including **the environment** and **climate change**.

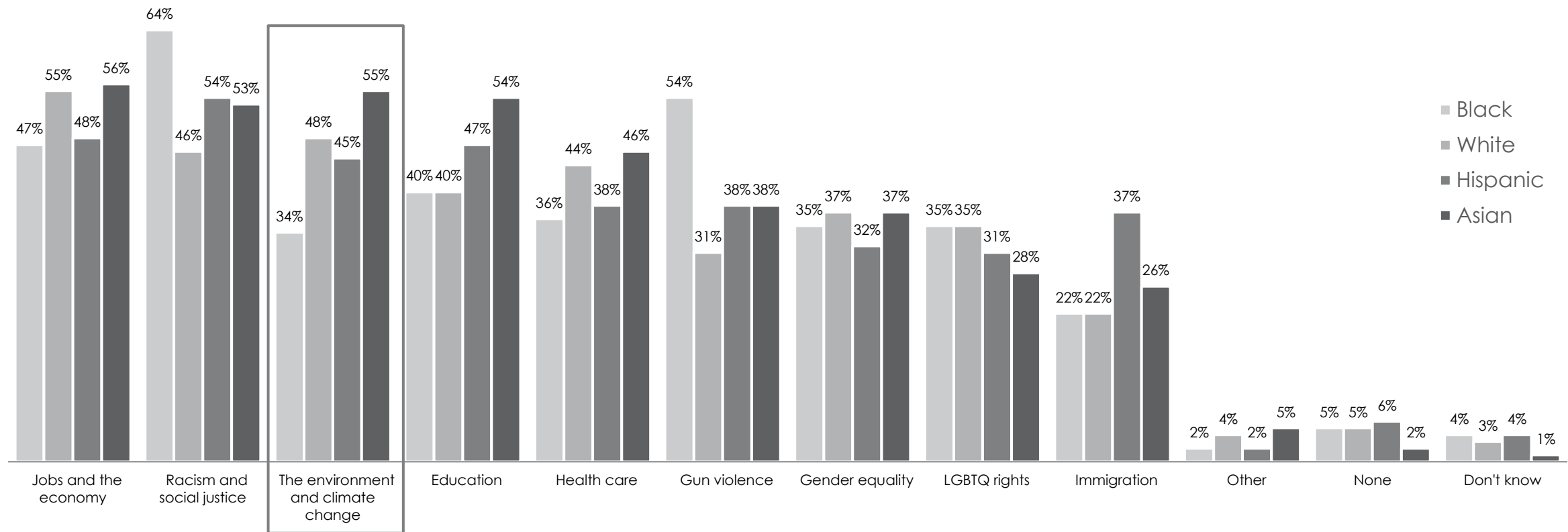


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q3. Which of the following issues do you find yourself most concerned with today? Please select all that apply.

Compared to other races, Asian youth are the most likely to report concern about the environment and climate change

Black youth are the most likely to be concerned about racism and social justice as well as gun violence, while Hispanic youth are more likely to be concerned about immigration.

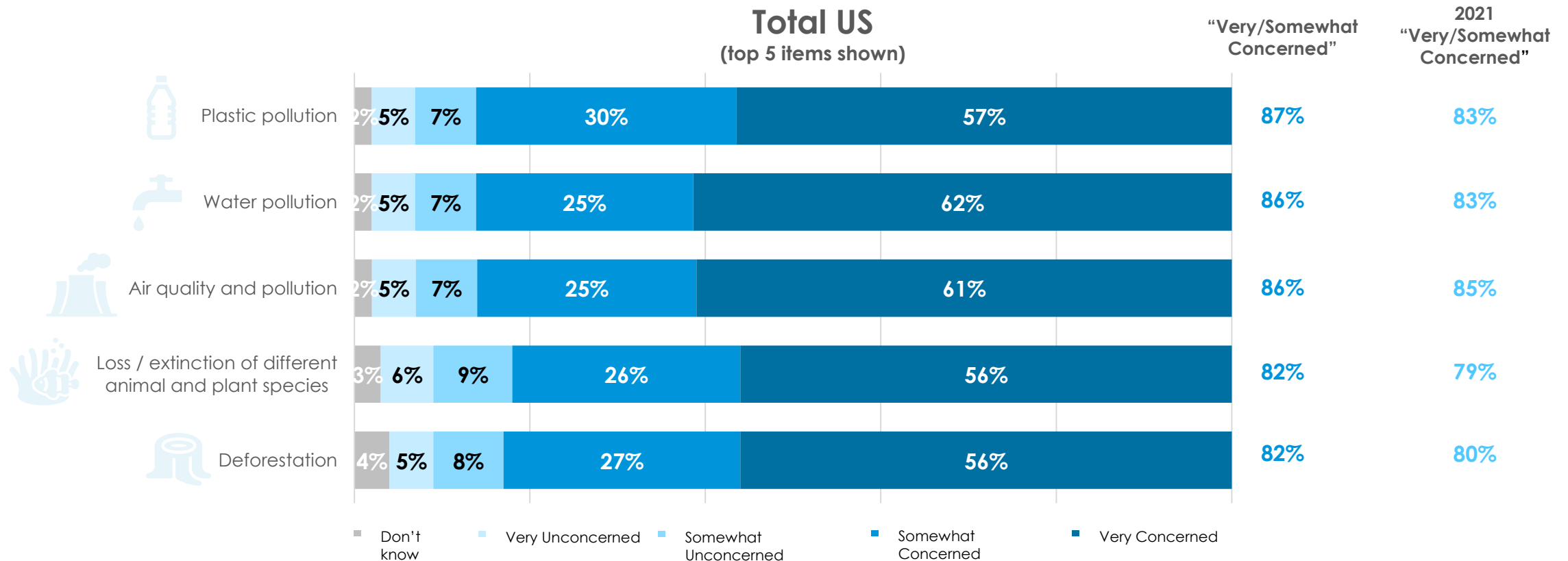


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q3. Which of the following issues do you find yourself most concerned with today? Please select all that apply.

The **majority** of youth continue to express concern about several environmental issues, with **pollution**, **loss of biodiversity**, and **deforestation** topping the list.

On par with last year, more than half of Gen Z say they are **very concerned** about these issues.

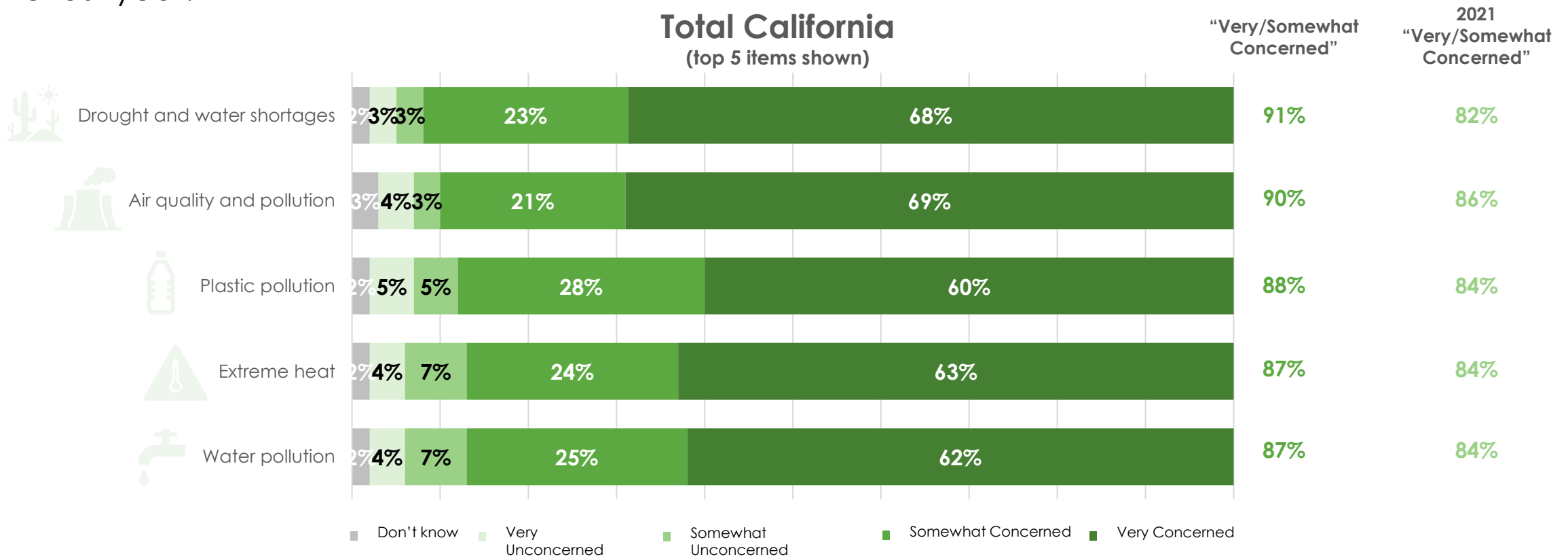


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q13. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet?

Compared to youth in general, Californian youth report even greater concern about drought/water shortages and extreme heat.

Notably, concern about these issues – as well as pollution – has significantly increased compared to last year.

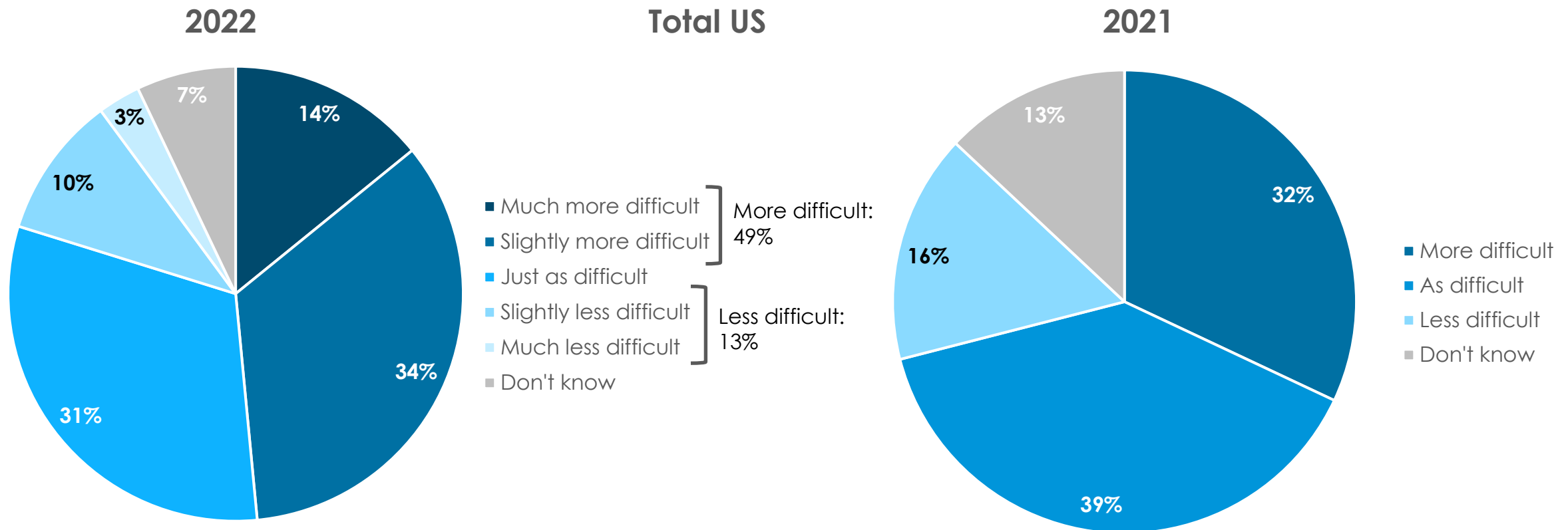


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q13. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet?

Nearly half of Gen Z believe addressing climate change during COVID has become even more difficult than other times.

Notably, this has significantly increased from 32% last year to 49% this year.

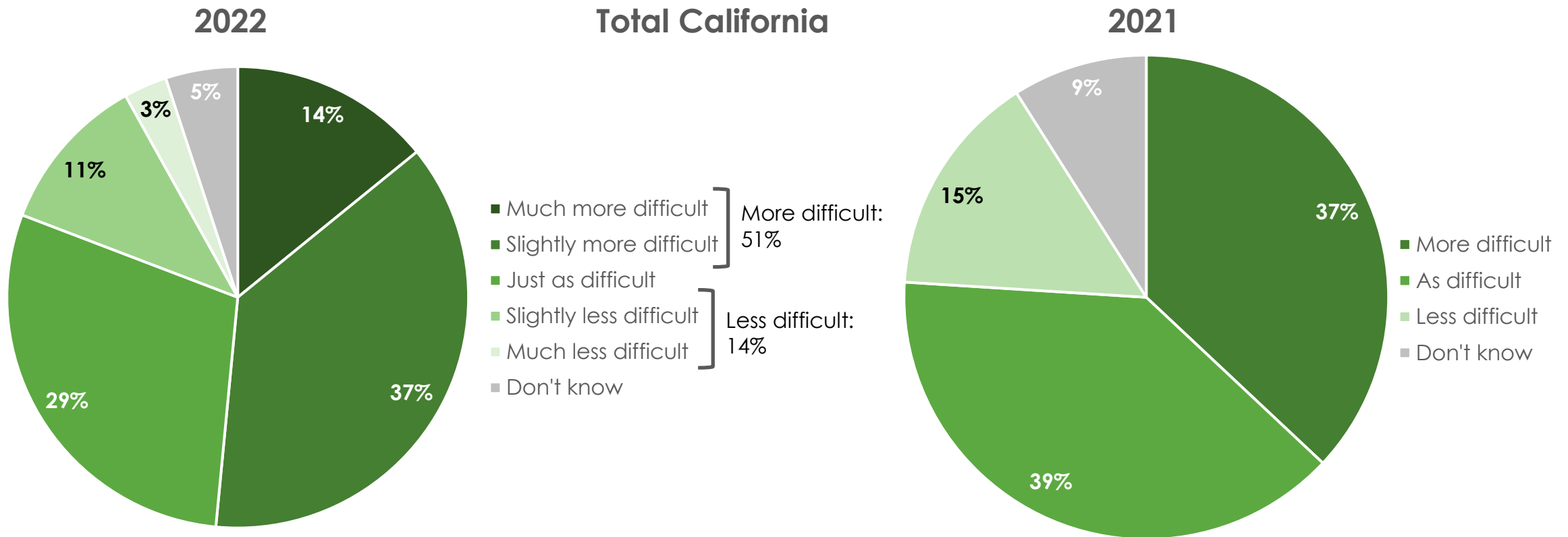


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q7. Is addressing climate change more difficult, less difficult, or just as difficult during the time of COVID when compared to other times?

Similar to youth across the US, about **half** of Californian youth believe addressing **climate change** has become **more difficult**.

This proportion is up significantly from 37% last year to 51% this year.



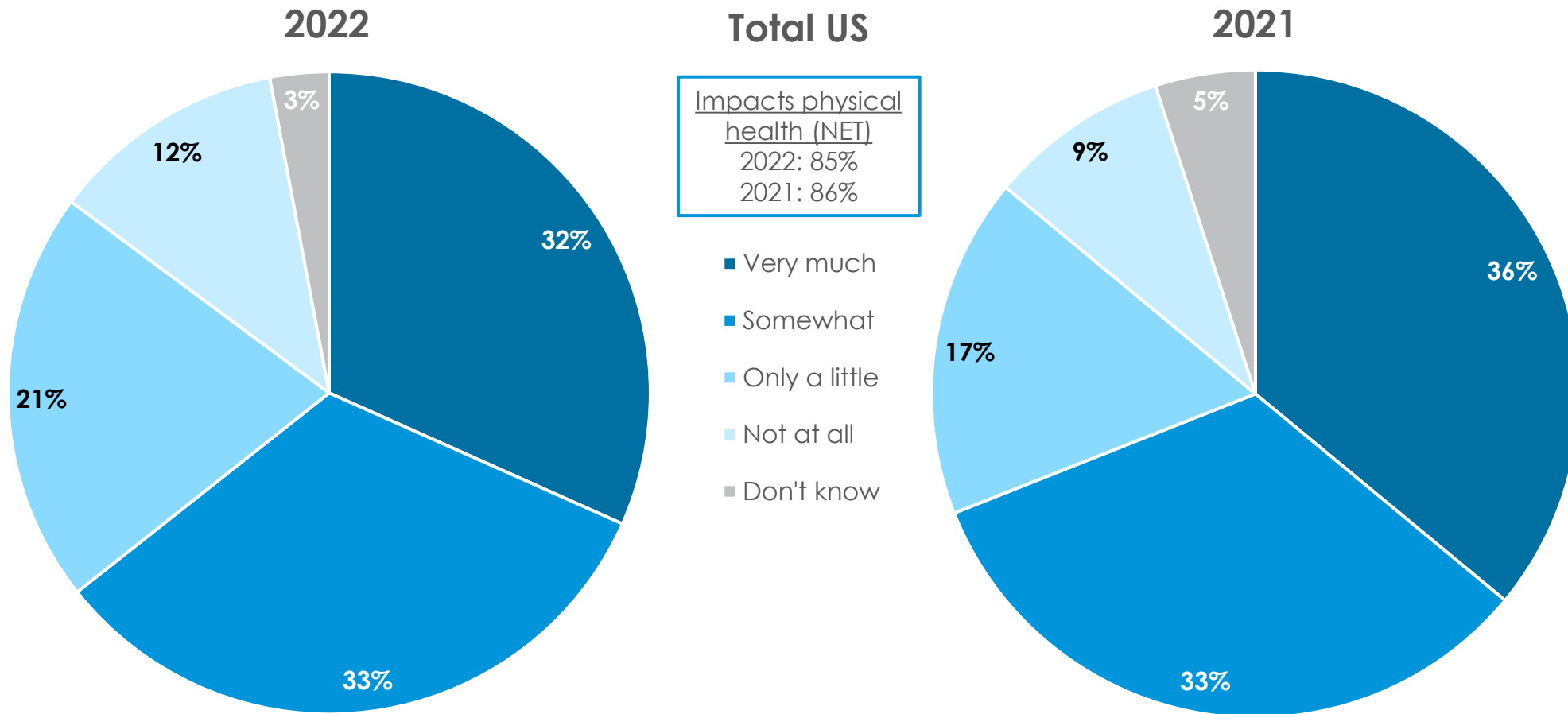
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q7. Is addressing climate change more difficult, less difficult, or just as difficult during the time of COVID when compared to other times?

The Impact on Physical & Mental Health



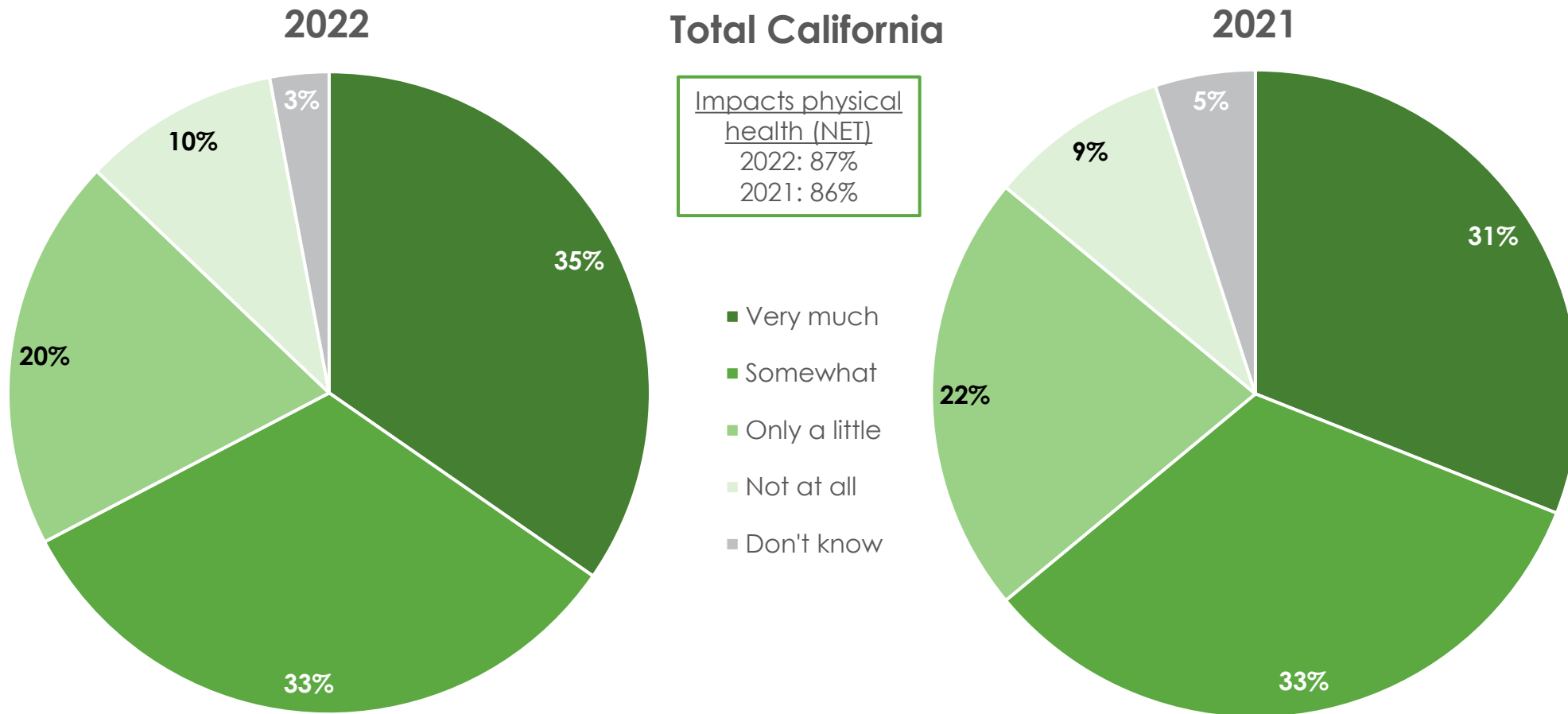
The **overwhelming majority** of Gen Z youth say their environment impacts their **physical health**.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q11. How much does the environment you live, work, and play in affect your physical health?

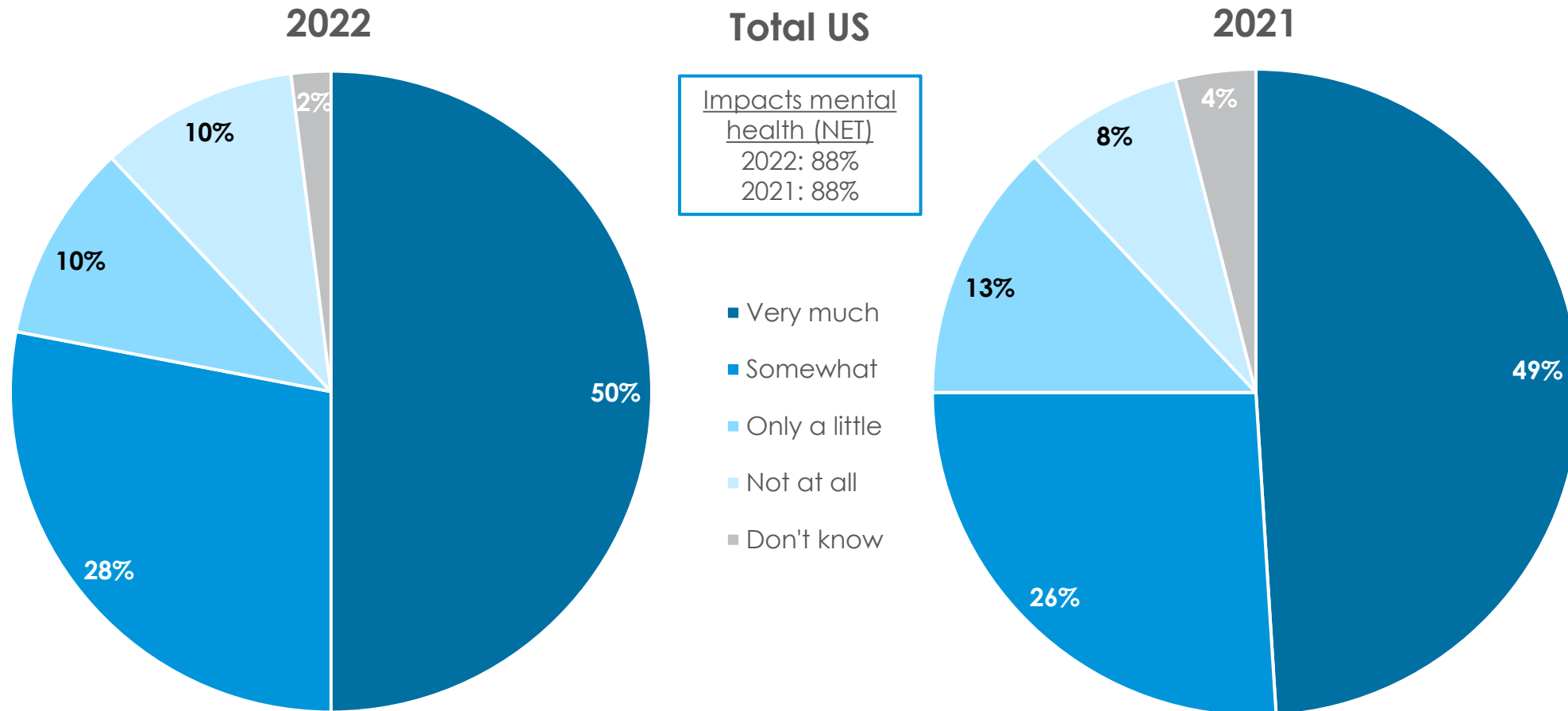
The same is true for Californian youth, with nearly **9 in 10** saying that their **physical health** is impacted by their environment.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q11. How much does the environment you live, work, and play in affect your physical health?

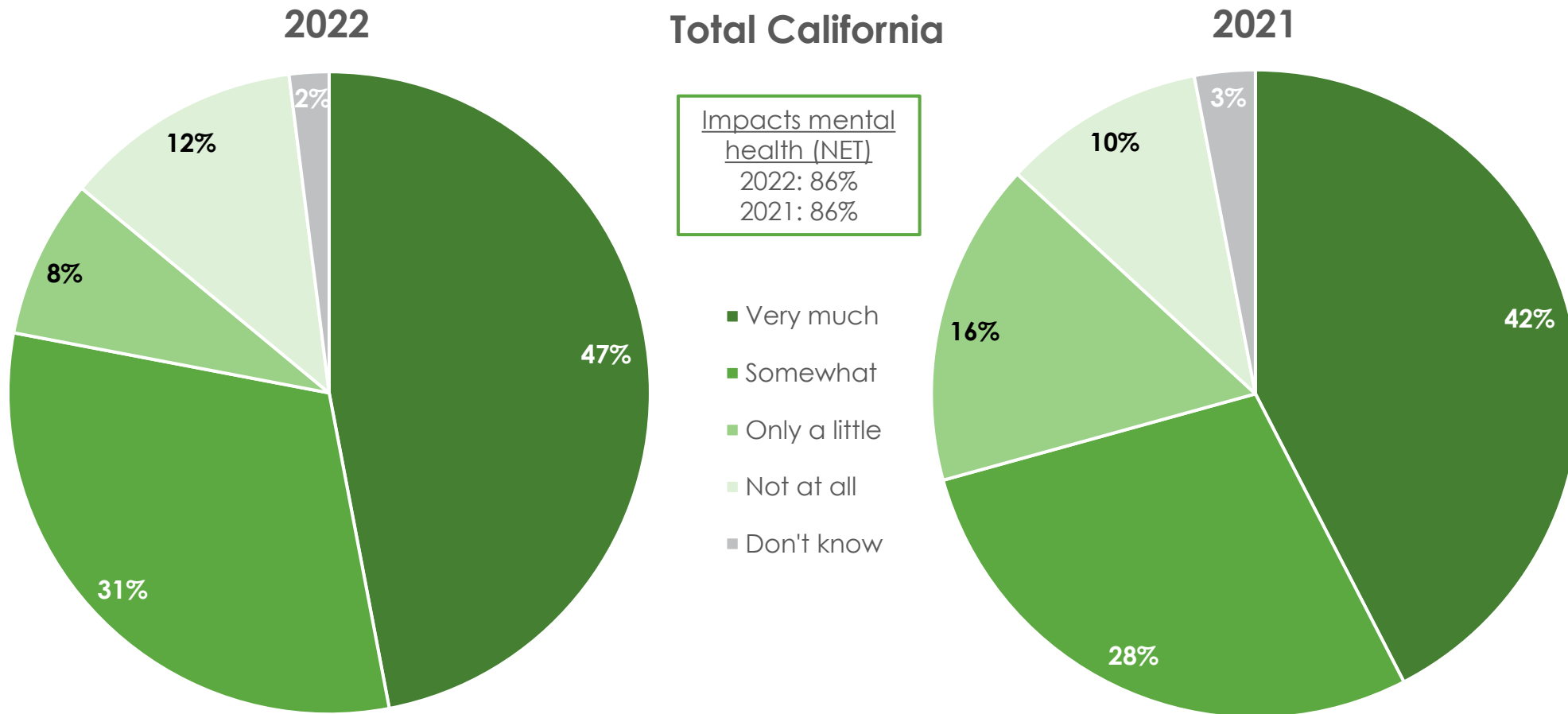
Similar to physical health, most Gen Z youth say their environment impacts their **mental health**, with half saying it does so **very much**.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q12. How much does the environment you live, work, and play in affect your mental health?

And, the same is true for Californian youth, with **nearly half** saying their environment impacts their **mental health very much**.

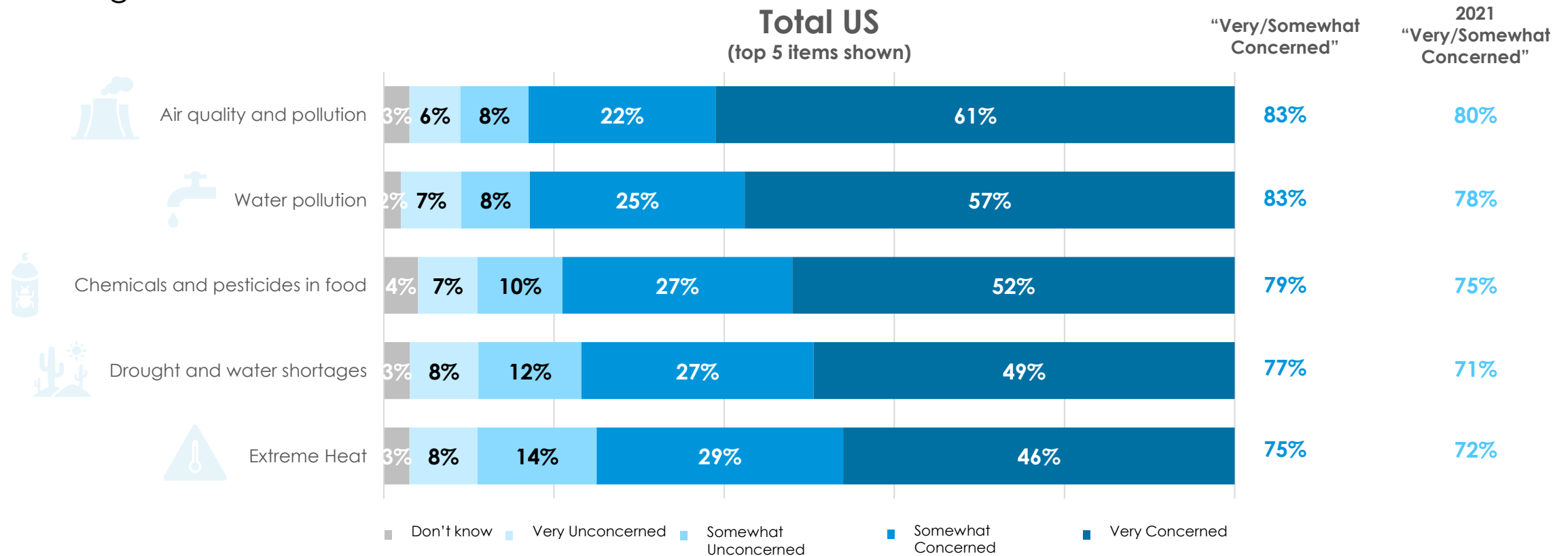


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q12. How much does the environment you live, work, and play in affect your mental health?

In regard to their own personal health, Gen Z are most concerned about **air and water pollution**, followed by **chemicals and pesticides in food**.

Gen Z in the West and South are the most likely to say they are **very concerned** about water shortages and extreme heat.

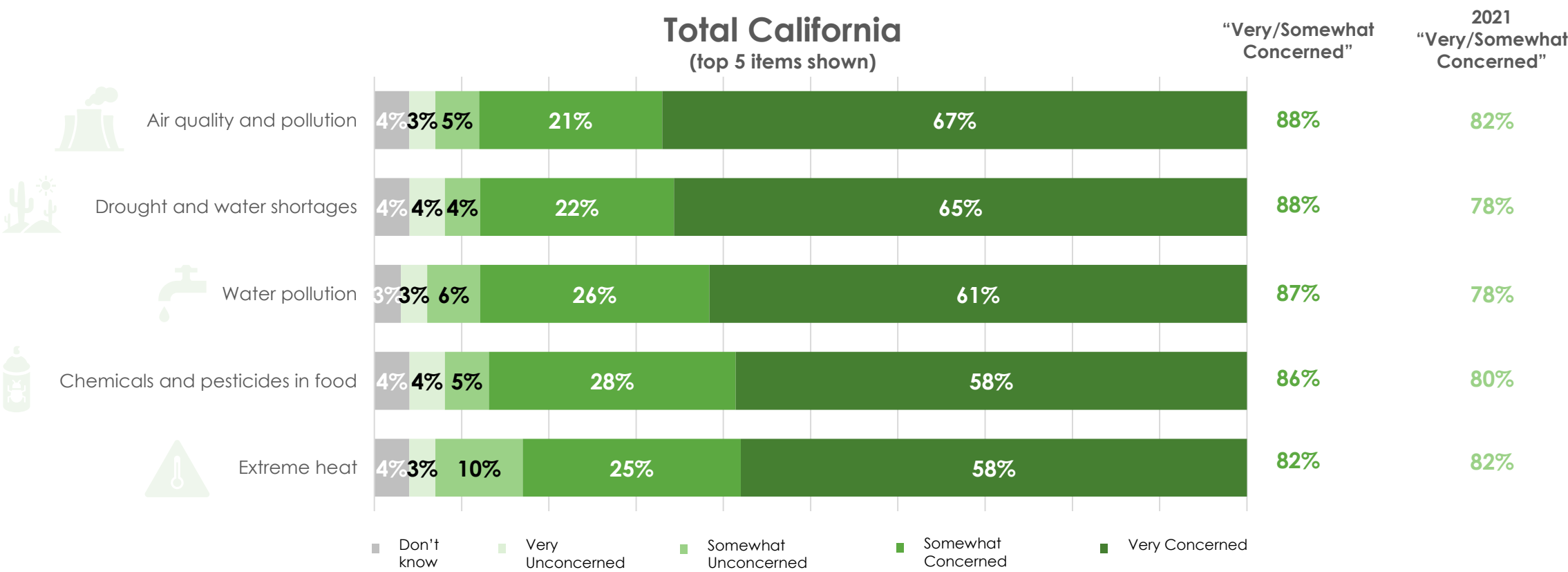


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to your own personal health?

Similar to youth in general, Californian youth report the greatest concern about air pollution, with water shortages following closely behind.

And, concern about most of these issues has increased compared to last year.

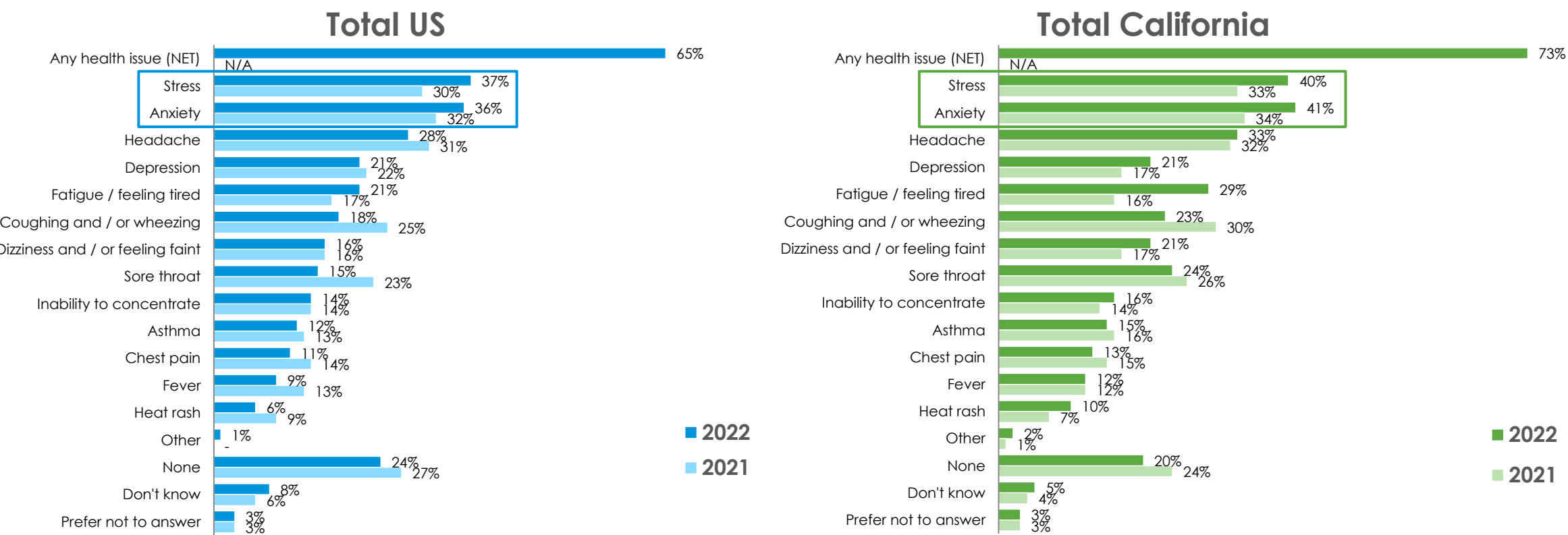


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to your own personal health?

Nearly 2 in 3 youth in the U.S. – and 3 in 4 in California – have experienced at least one mental or physical health-related issue stemming from a natural disaster or environmental event.

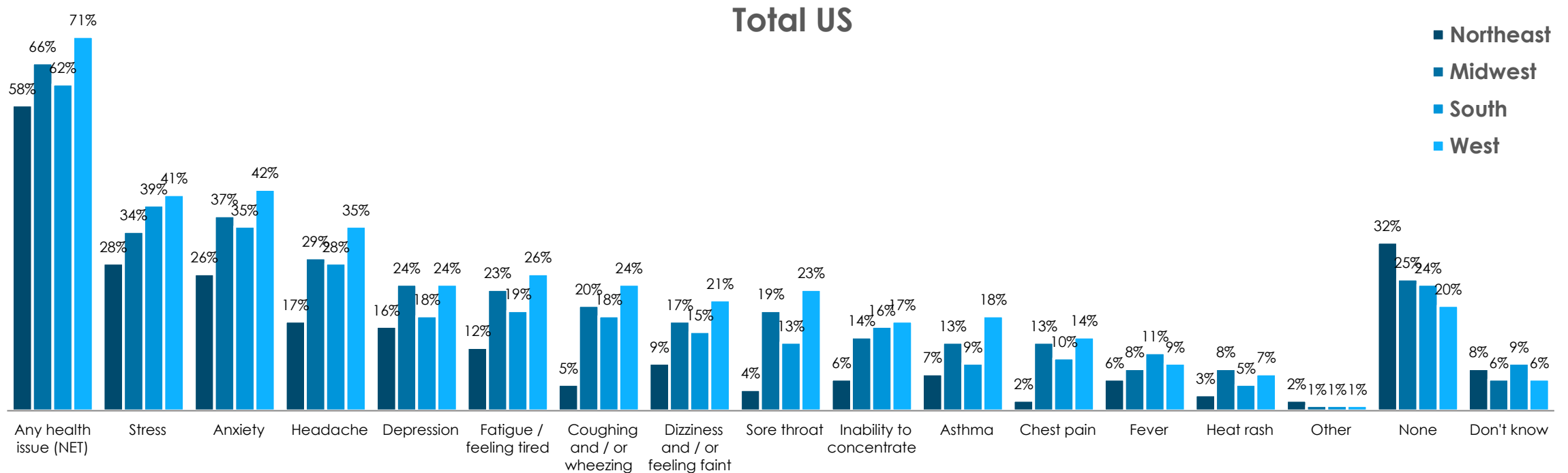
Alarminglly, there has been an increase in stress and anxiety in Gen Z youth across the US as well as in California, compared to last year.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q25. Have you ever experienced any of the following related to a natural disaster or an environmental event, such as from a wildfire, flooding, extremely hot or cold days, hurricane, etc.? Please select all that apply.

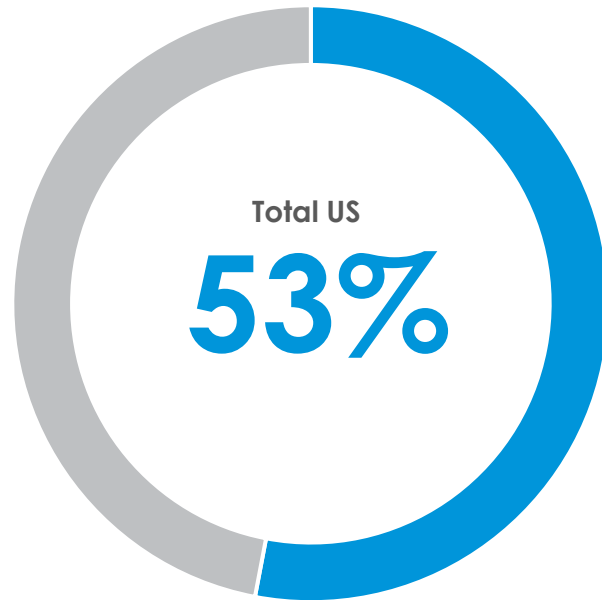
Compared to other regions, youth in the **West** are the **most likely** to have experienced any **environmentally-induced** health issues.



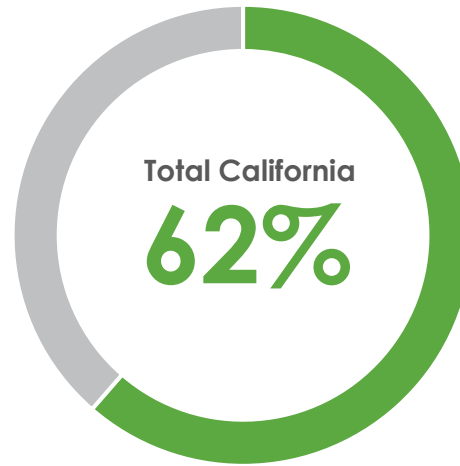
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q25. Have you ever experienced any of the following related to a natural disaster or an environmental event, such as from a wildfire, flooding, extremely hot or cold days, hurricane, etc.? Please select all that apply.

More than **half** of youth – and **3 in 5** California youth – report that climate change-focused news affects their **mental health**



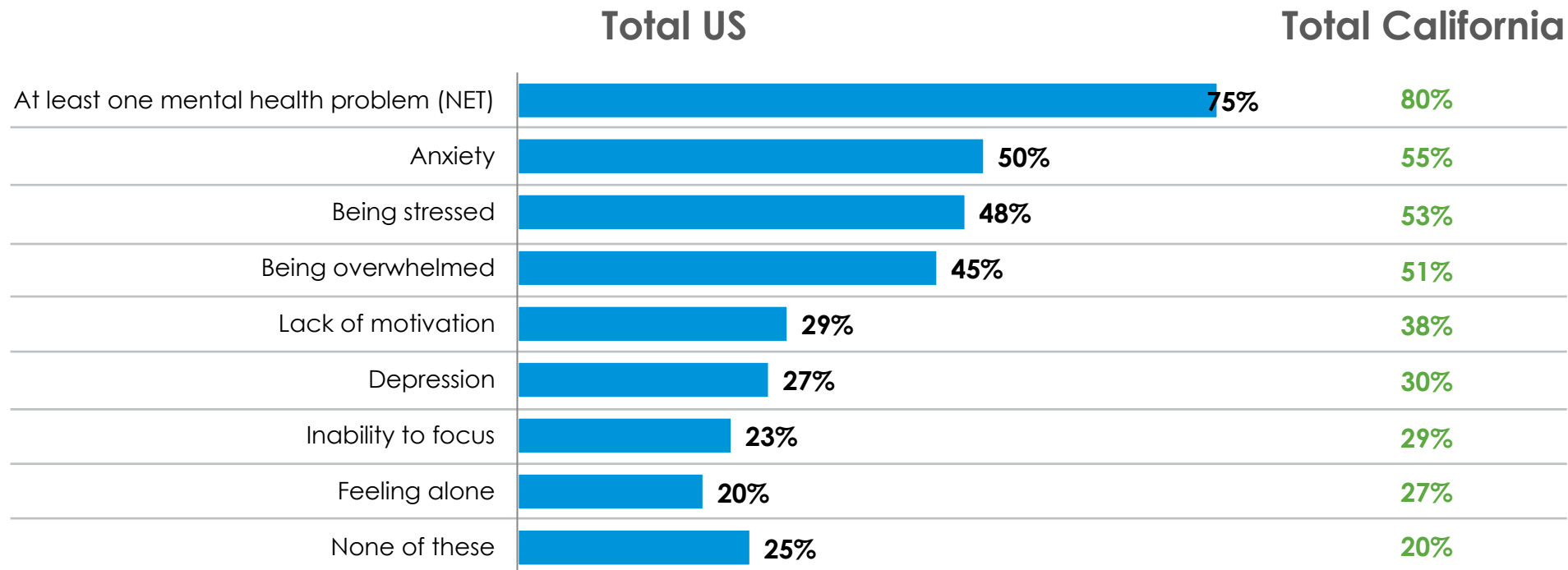
of Gen Z youth agree that the amount of **climate change-focused news** they consume directly impacts their **mental health**.



of Californian youth agree with this statement.

The majority of Gen Z youth have experienced mental health-related issues as a result of consuming climate change news

This is even more pronounced among Californian youth.

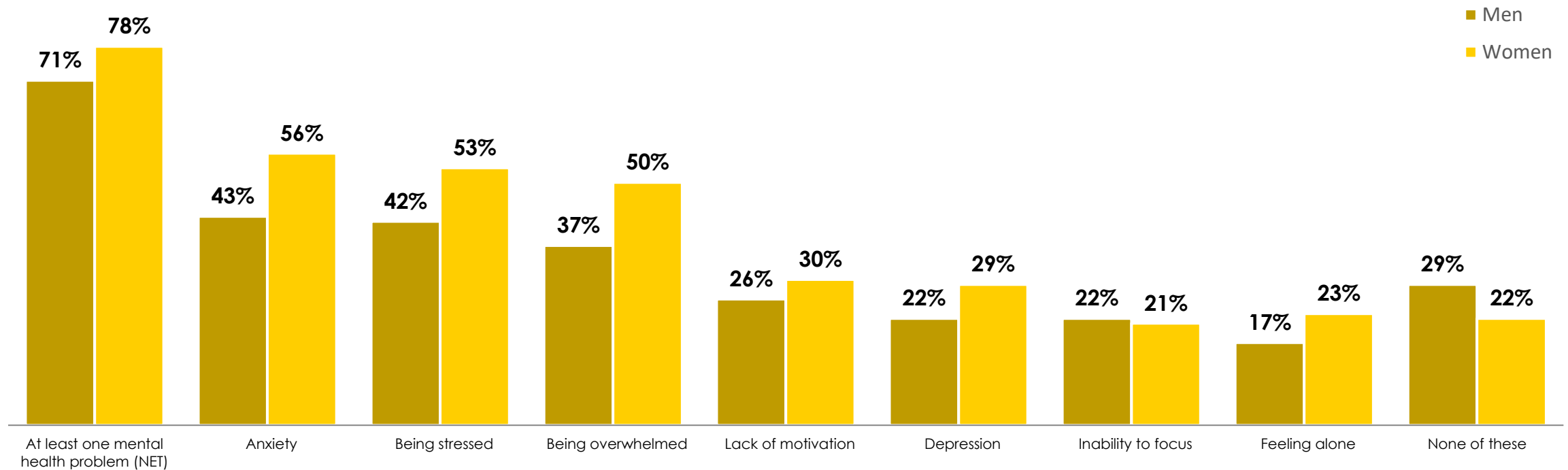


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14B. Have you ever experienced any of the following as a result of reading, seeing, or hearing news about climate change or the state of the environment? Please select all that apply.



Women are more likely than men to experience nearly all mental health-related issues as a result of consuming climate change news



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14B. Have you ever experienced any of the following as a result of reading, seeing, or hearing news about climate change or the state of the environment? Please select all that apply.

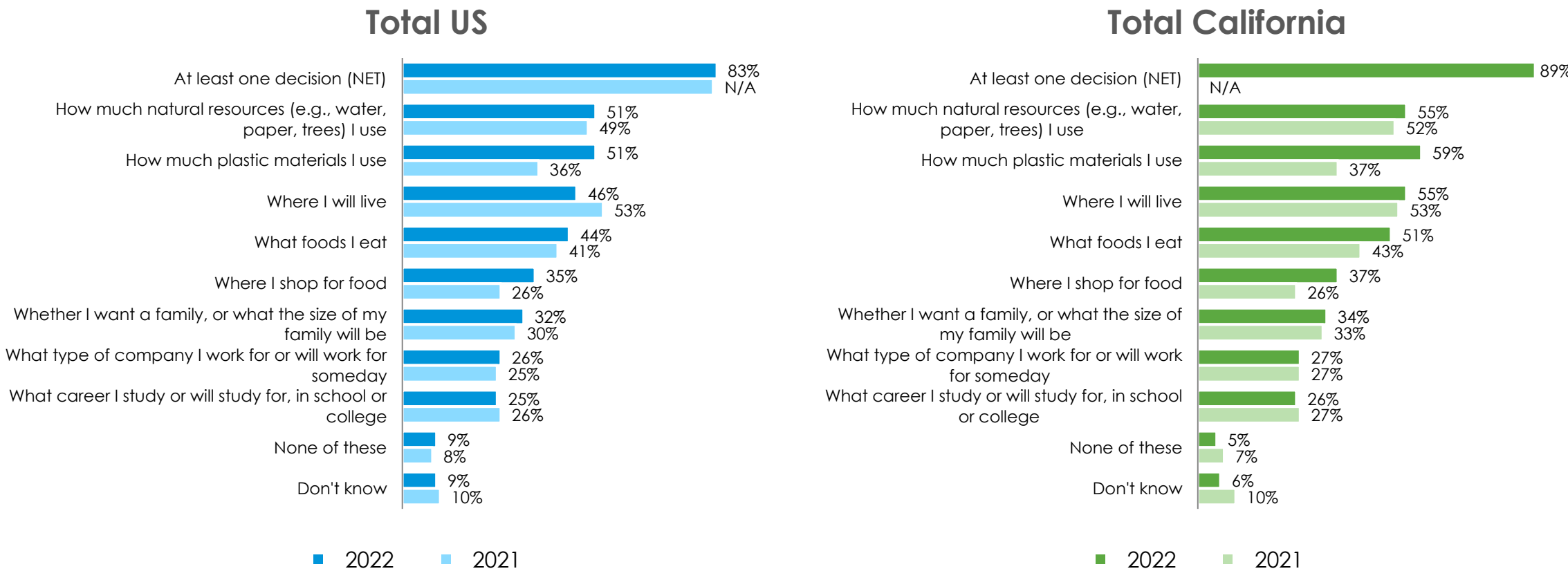


The Need for Resources



The vast majority say the current state of climate and environment will impact their future decisions.

Gen Z youth most commonly cite how much natural resources or plastic materials they use, where they will live, and what foods they eat as future decisions that will be affected.

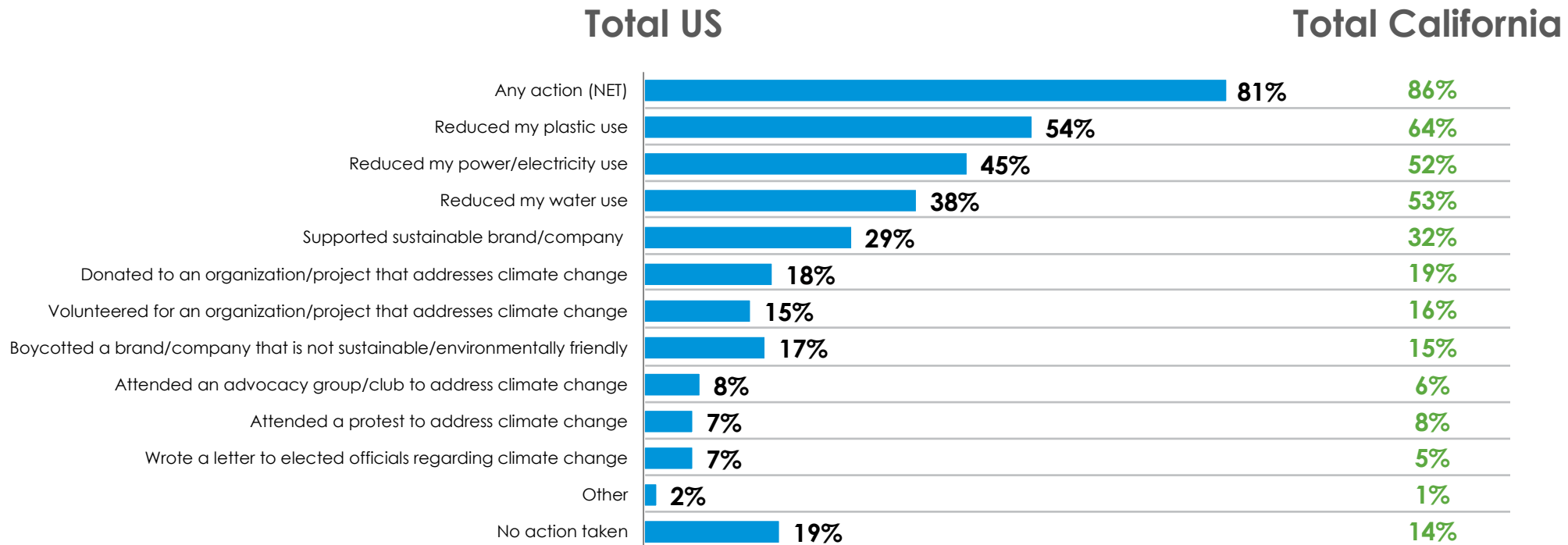


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q27. Do you think the current state of the climate and environment will affect any of your future decisions / plans around the following?
Please select all that apply.

As such, more than **4 in 5** Gen Z youth have personally taken some **action** to respond to **climate change**, most commonly **reducing usage** of plastic, power, and water.

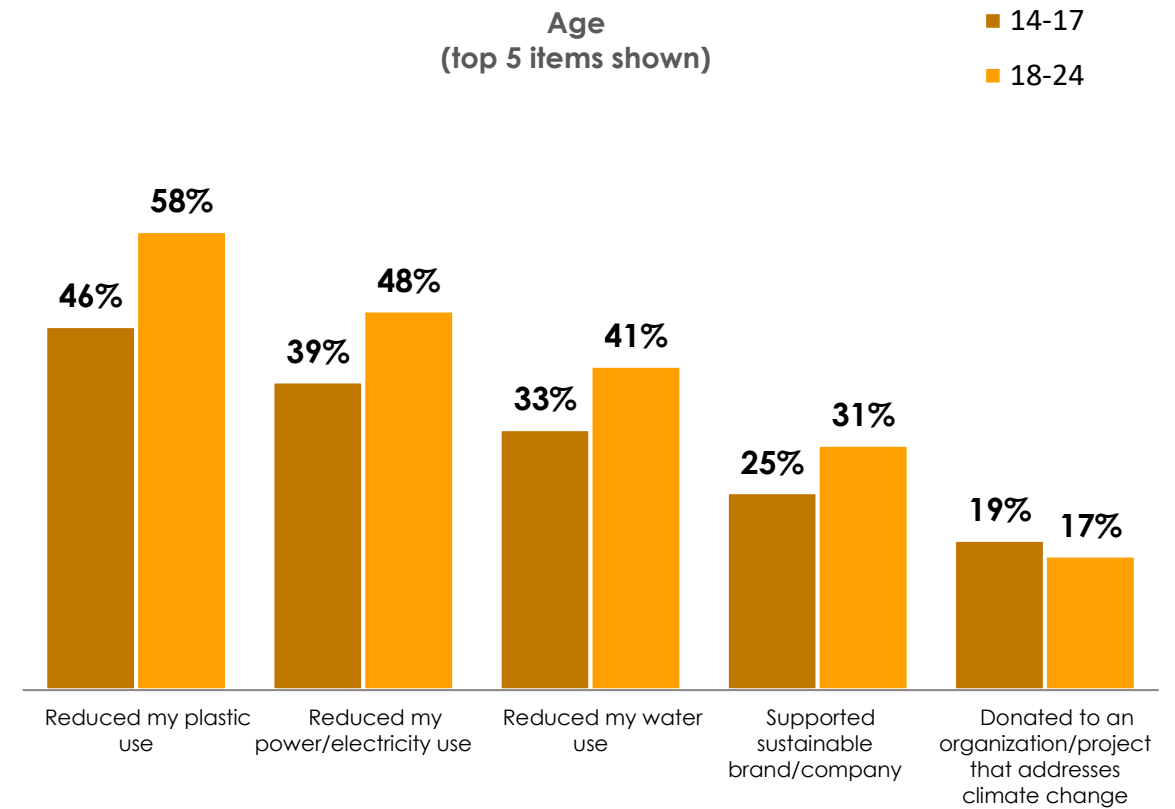
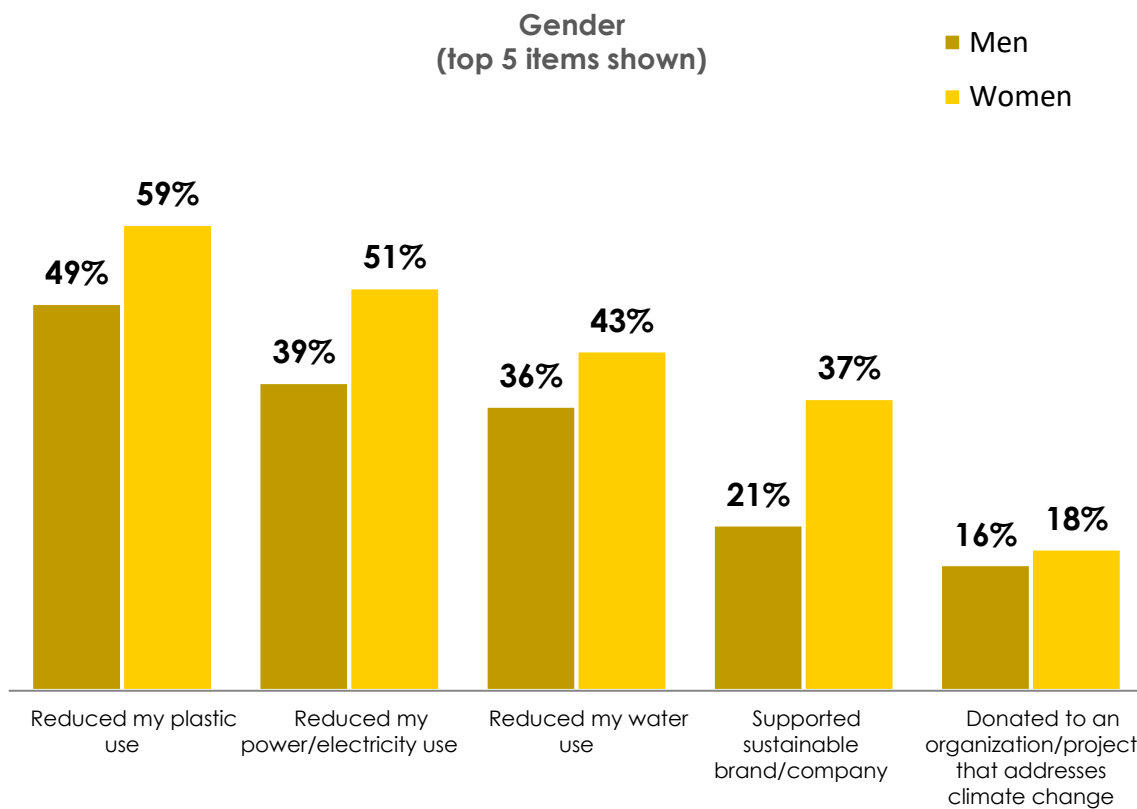
Taking nearly all of these actions are even more common among California youth.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q24. Which of the following actions, if any, have you personally taken to respond to climate change? Please select all that apply.

Women and older Gen Z are more likely to have taken several actions, most commonly reducing plastic use and/or power or electricity.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q24. Which of the following actions, if any, have you personally taken to respond to climate change? Please select all that apply.

Being more sustainable, focusing on positive news, and enjoying nature are common actions Gen Z is taking to mitigate the impact of climate change on their mental health.

Being more sustainable themselves

Limiting climate change-focused news consumption

Reading positive news about climate change

Talking with family, friends, and even therapists

Going for walks or enjoying nature

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14D. What steps, if any, have you personally taken to address the impact of climate change on your mental health? Please be as specific as possible.



Gen Z shares specifically how they are trying to address **climate change's** effect on their **mental health**.

"I have made efforts to **look up positive news** and read articles that detail good things happening in the environment."

"I've tried to help **reduce my carbon footprint** and engage in more **environmentally sustainable** usage of products."

"I've talked about the **change** that I think needs to happen..."

"I've skated and exercised. I **hang out with friends** as often as possible."

"Trying to do what I can to **reduce my carbon footprint**, which is a small step but at least I'm **holding myself accountable**."

"I try to remind myself that my generation has the **passion for combating climate change**. I look forward to what we can achieve despite the grim outlook."

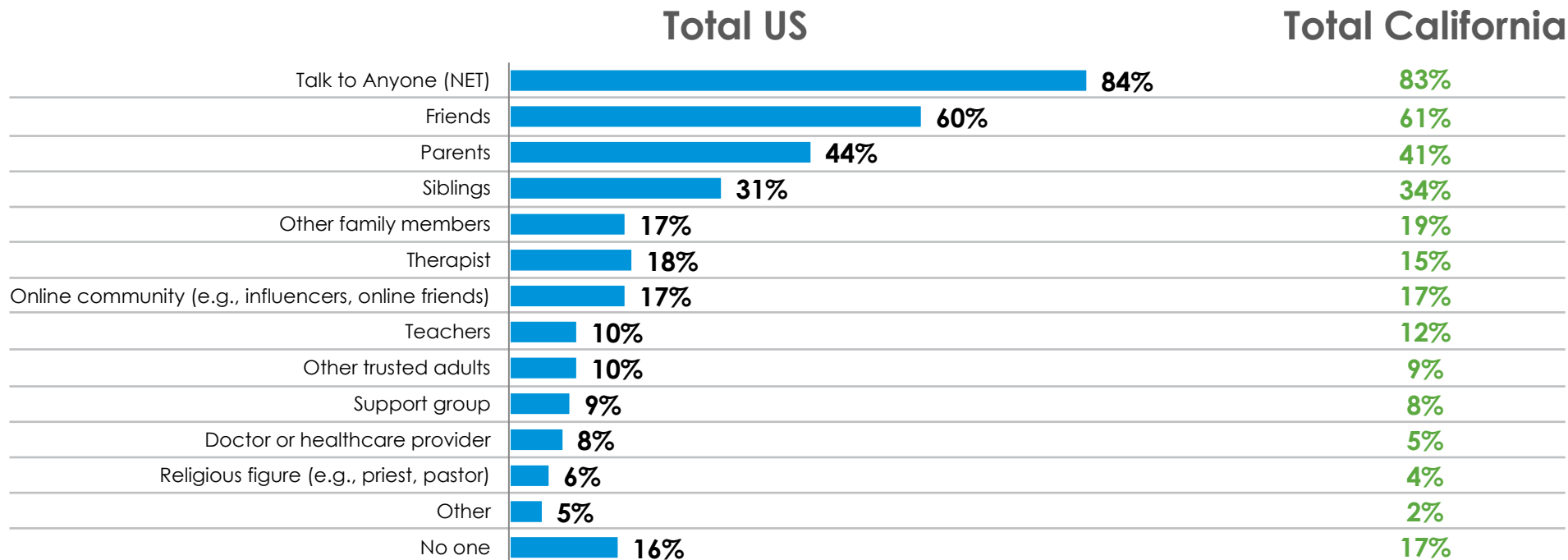
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14D. What steps, if any, have you personally taken to address the impact of climate change on your mental health? Please be as specific as possible.



By far, **friends** are the most common people Gen Z youth turn to when experiencing **mental health problems** stemming from consuming **climate-change news**.

Nearly 1 in 5 say they don't speak to anyone when they are experiencing negative feelings from consuming climate-change news or the state of the environment.



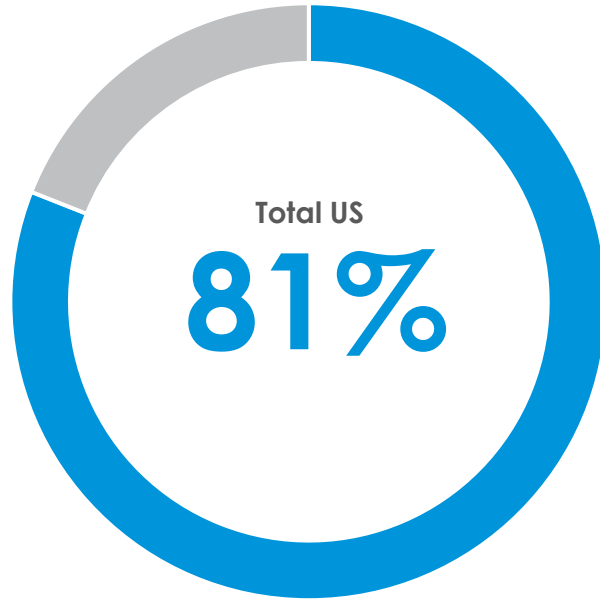
BASE: EXPERIENCED NEGATIVE FEELINGS DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS

Q14C. When you feel this way, which of the following people, if any, do you typically talk to? Please select all that apply.

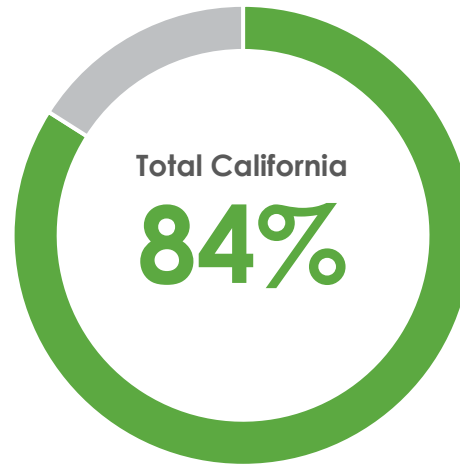
The Role of Leaders and Companies



Most youth believe **leaders** around the world aren't doing enough to fight climate change.



of Gen Z youth agree that **global leaders are not doing enough** to combat climate change.

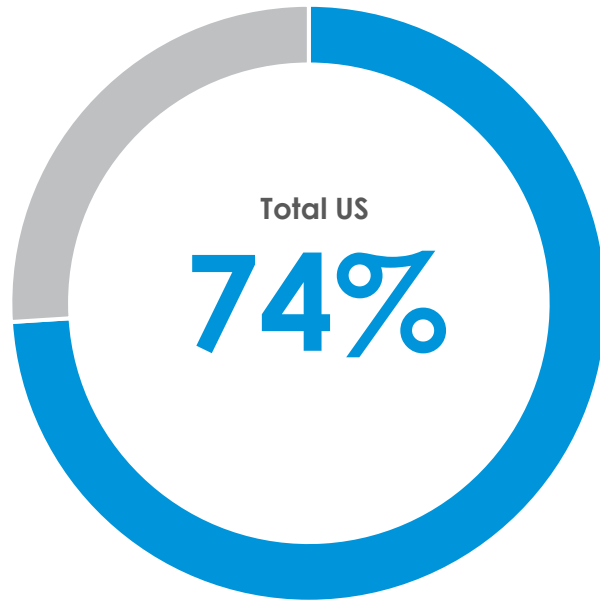


of Californian youth agree.

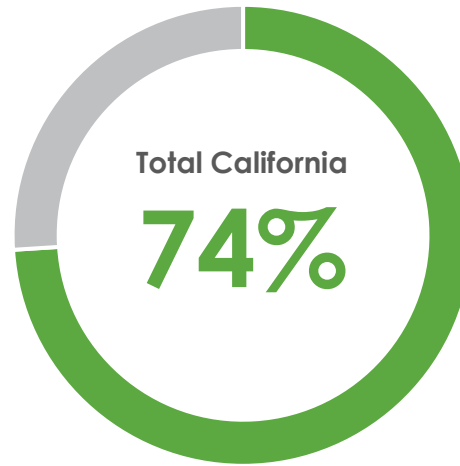


And, nearly 3 in 4 Gen Z believe private companies should bear some responsibility.

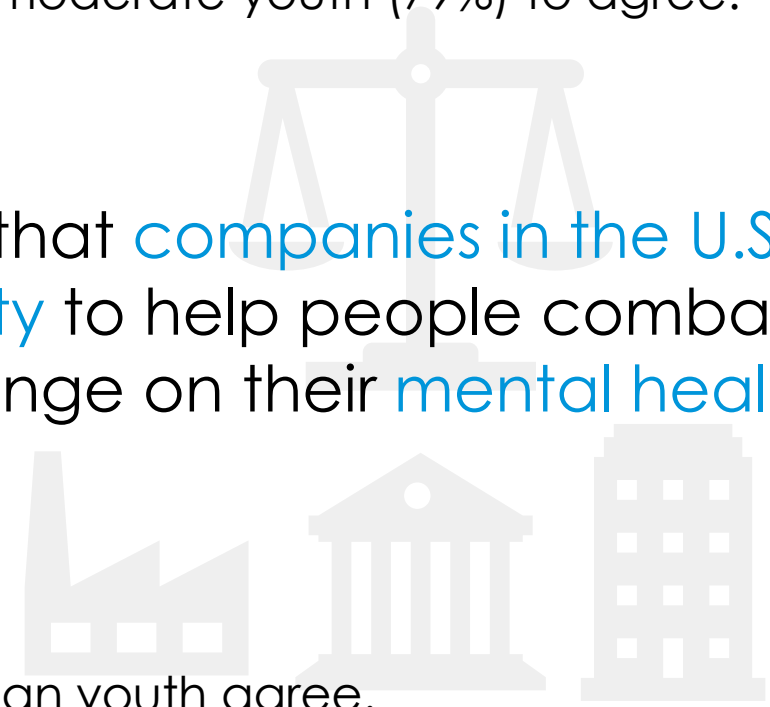
Conservative youth (67%) are less likely than liberal (82%) and moderate youth (79%) to agree.



of Gen Z youth agree that companies in the U.S. bear some responsibility to help people combat the impact of climate change on their mental health.

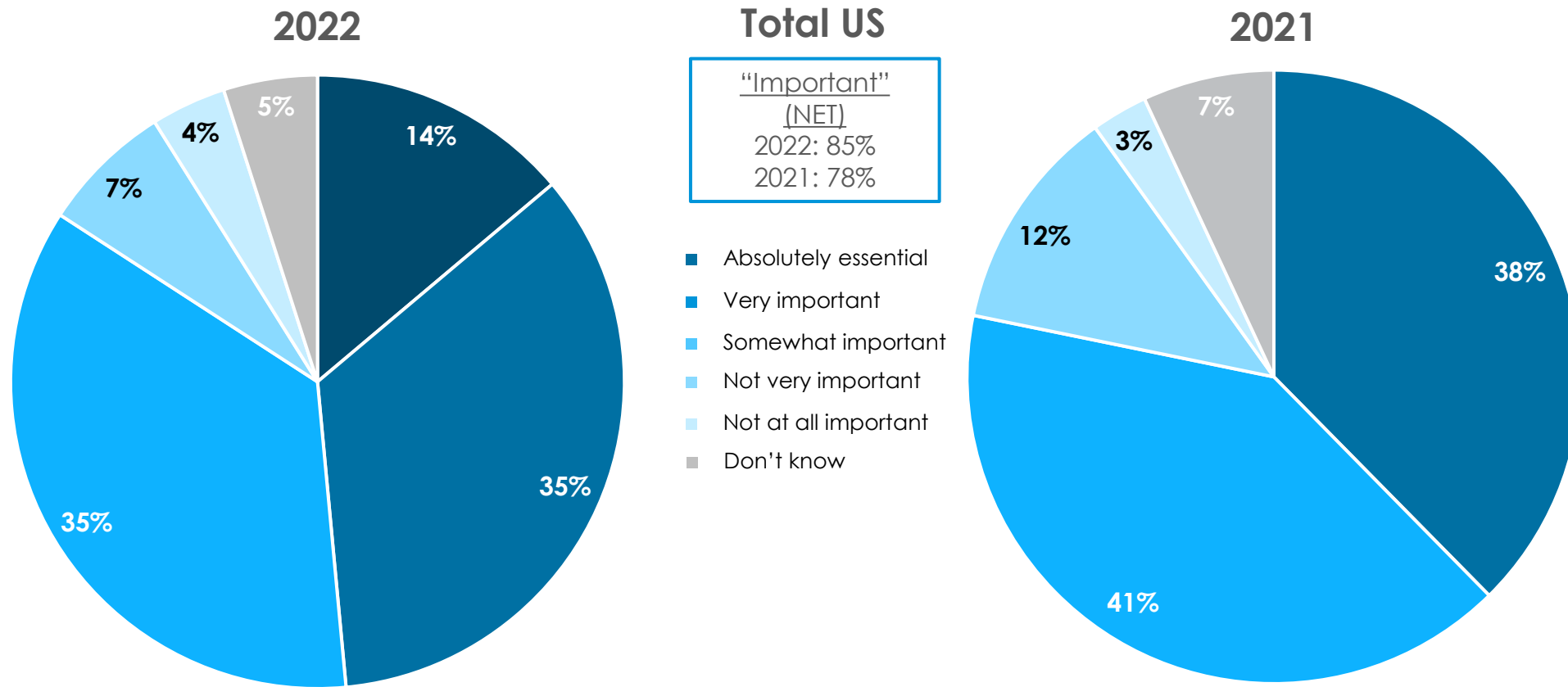


of Californian youth agree.



The **overwhelming majority** say it is important for them to **support brands that are sustainable or environmentally friendly.**

Women are more likely than men to say this is *absolutely essential/very important* to them (53% vs. 44%).

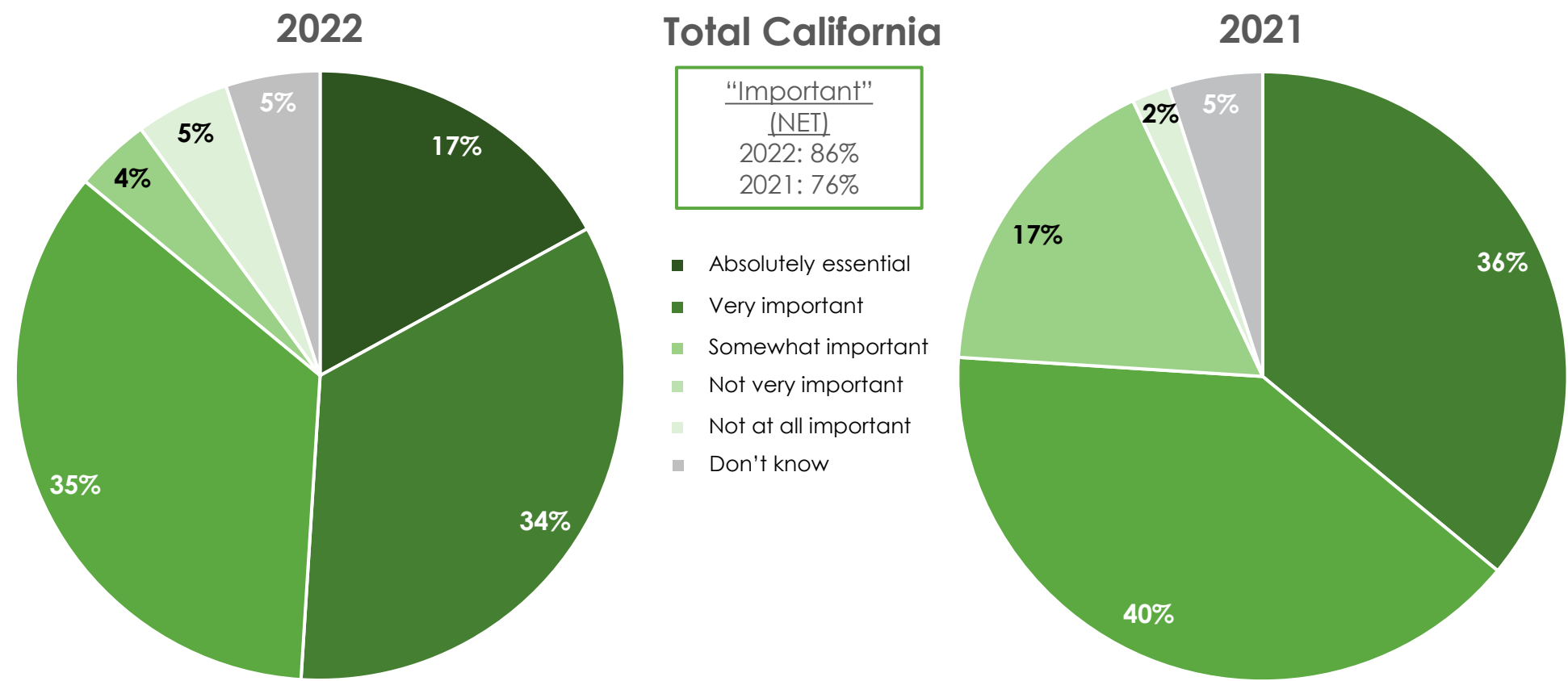


Note: "Absolutely essential"
response option added in 2022

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q28. How important is it to you to support brands and companies that are sustainable and / or environmentally friendly?

Similarly, close to 9 in 10 youth in California feel it is important for them to support brands that are sustainable.

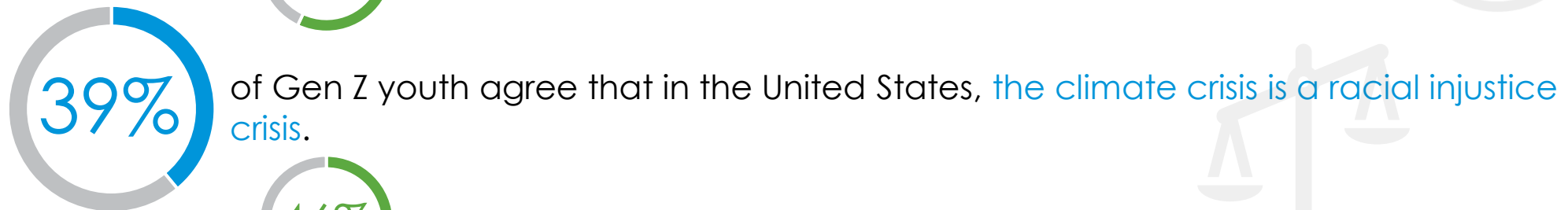
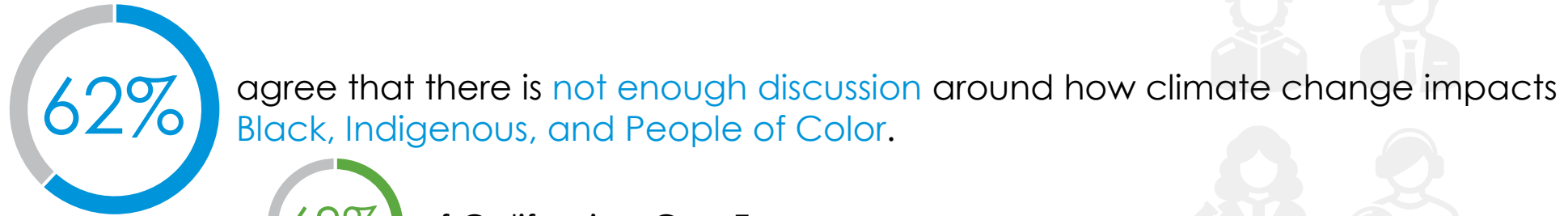


Note: “Absolutely essential” response option added in 2022

Social Justice Concerns



Gen Z acknowledge a connection between the climate change and racial injustice movements.

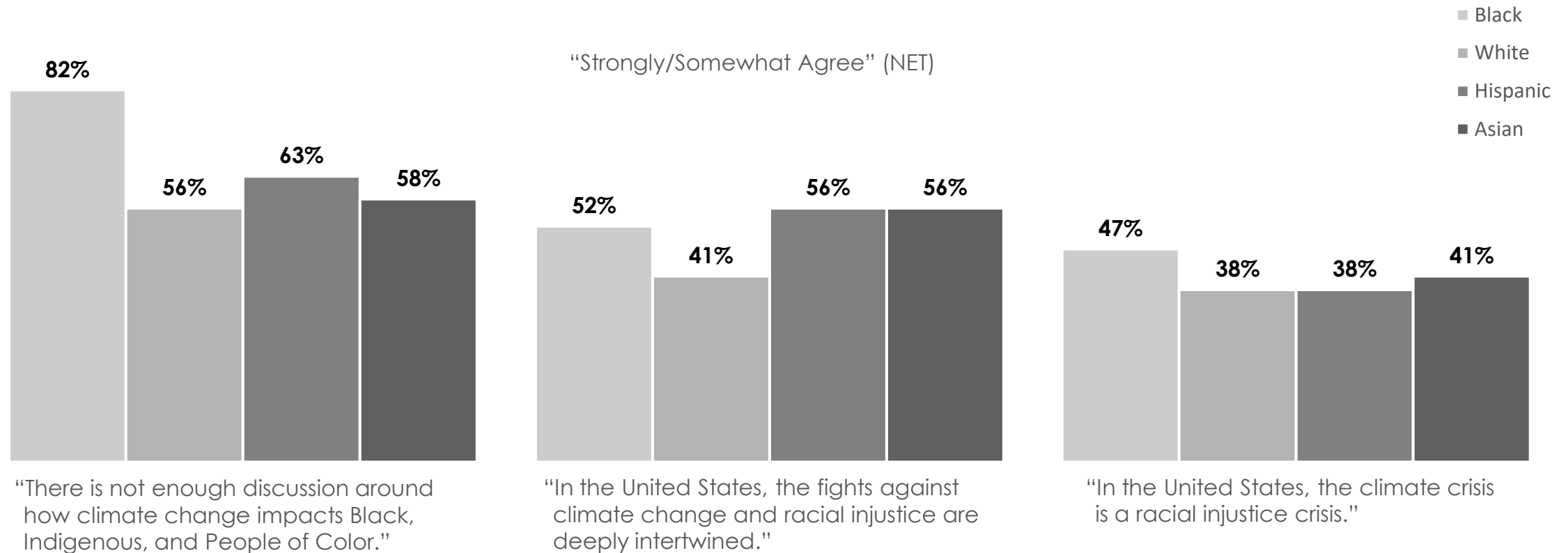


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Black youth overwhelmingly agree that there is not enough discussion about how climate change impacts BIPOC.

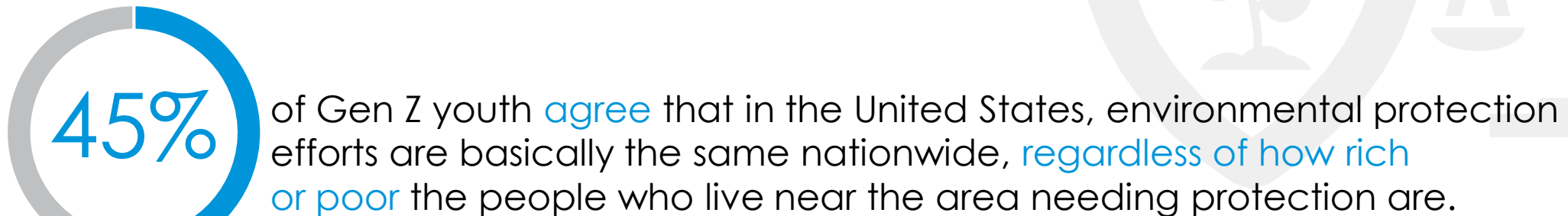
Nearly half of Black youth agree that the climate crisis is a racial injustice crisis.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Gen Z youth are **split** over whether **environmental protection efforts** are **equitable**.



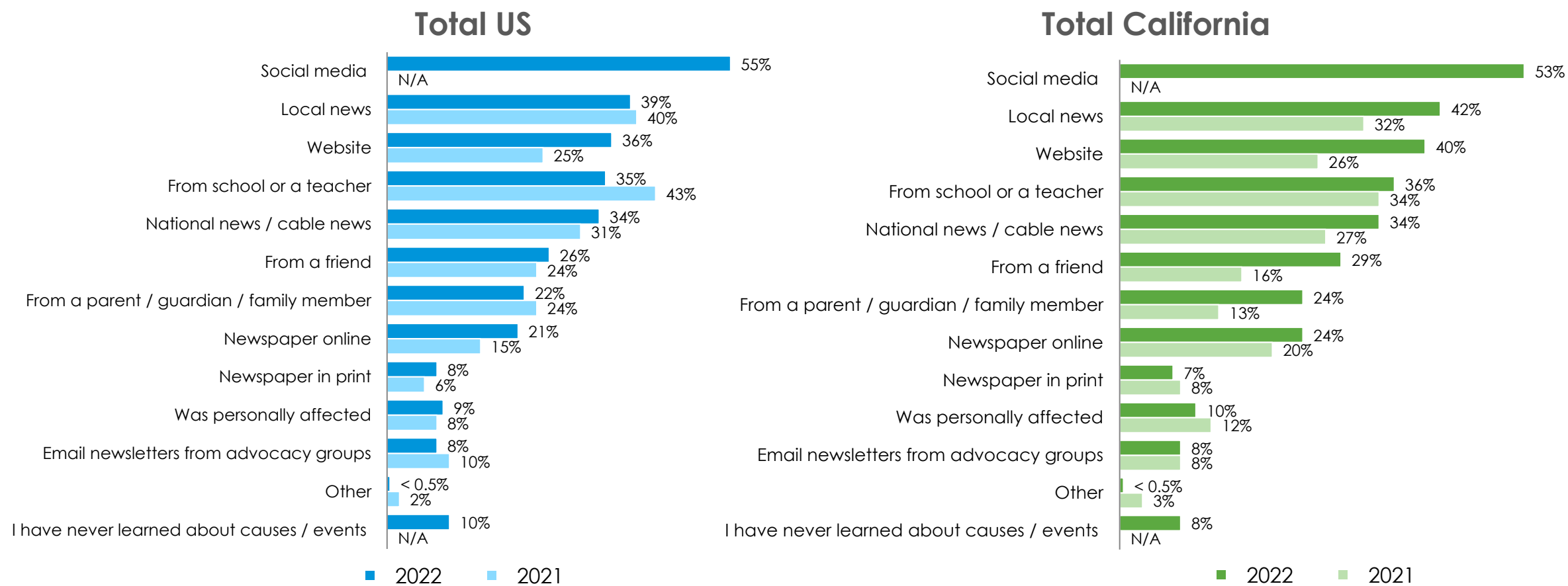
BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Appendix

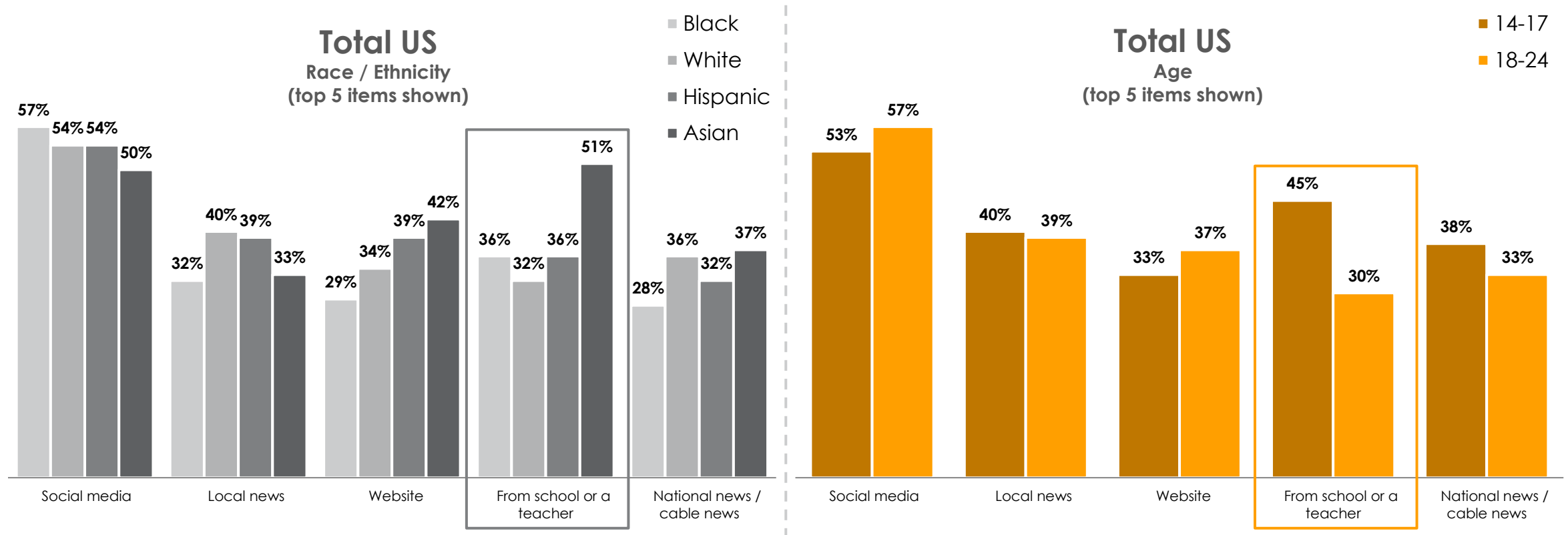


Social media is the most common outlet Gen Z has learned about causes or events dedicated to combating climate change.



BASE: (2022) ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS; (2021) EVER PARTICIPATED IN A CAUSE OR EVENT DEDICATED TO COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE
Q23. Where have you ever learned about causes or events dedicated to combating climate change or helping the environment?
Please select all that apply.

For Asian youth and younger Gen Z, a school or teacher is a more common source for learning about causes related to climate change.

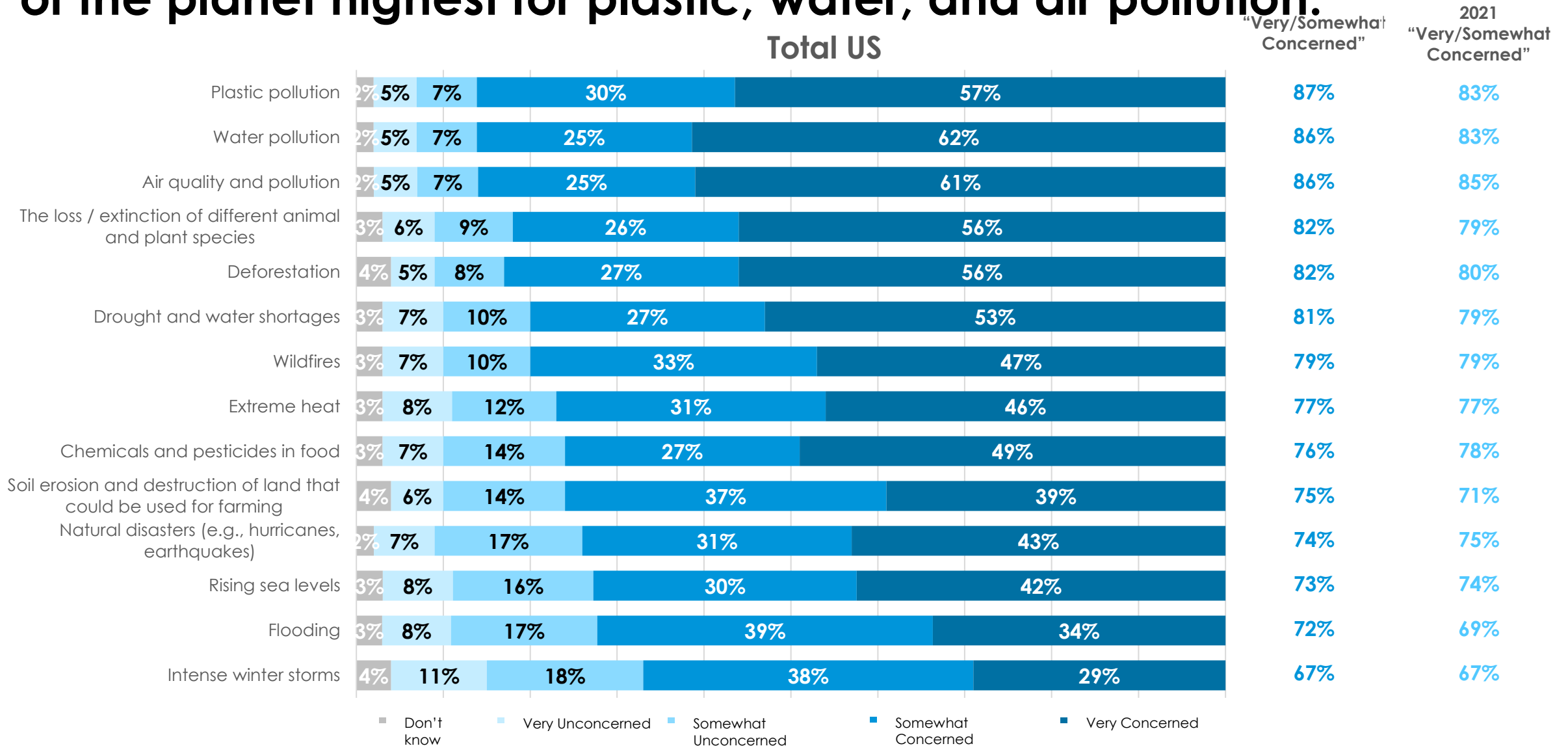


BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q23. Where have you ever learned about causes or events dedicated to combating climate change or helping the environment?
Please select all that apply.



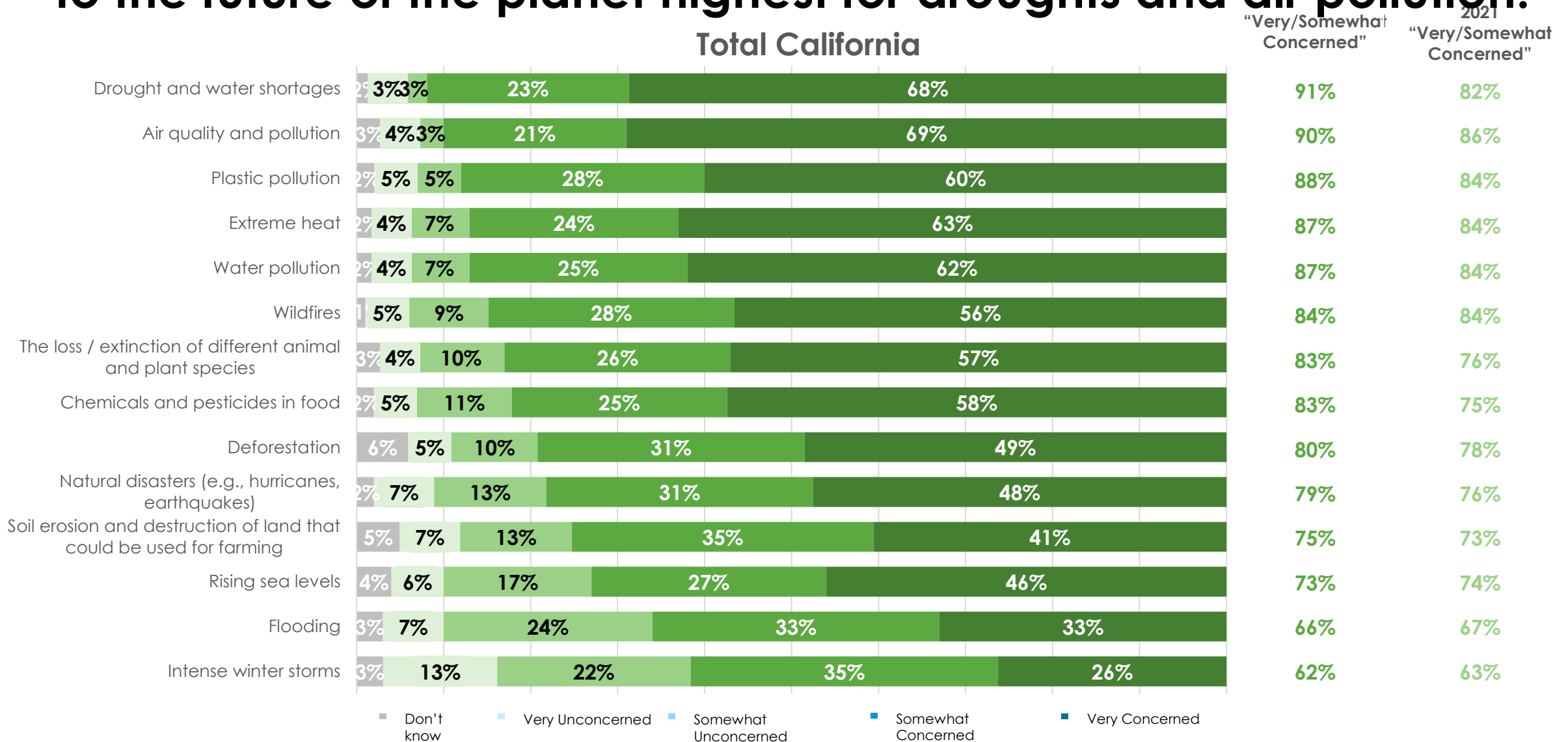
Concern about environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet highest for plastic, water, and air pollution.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q13. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet?

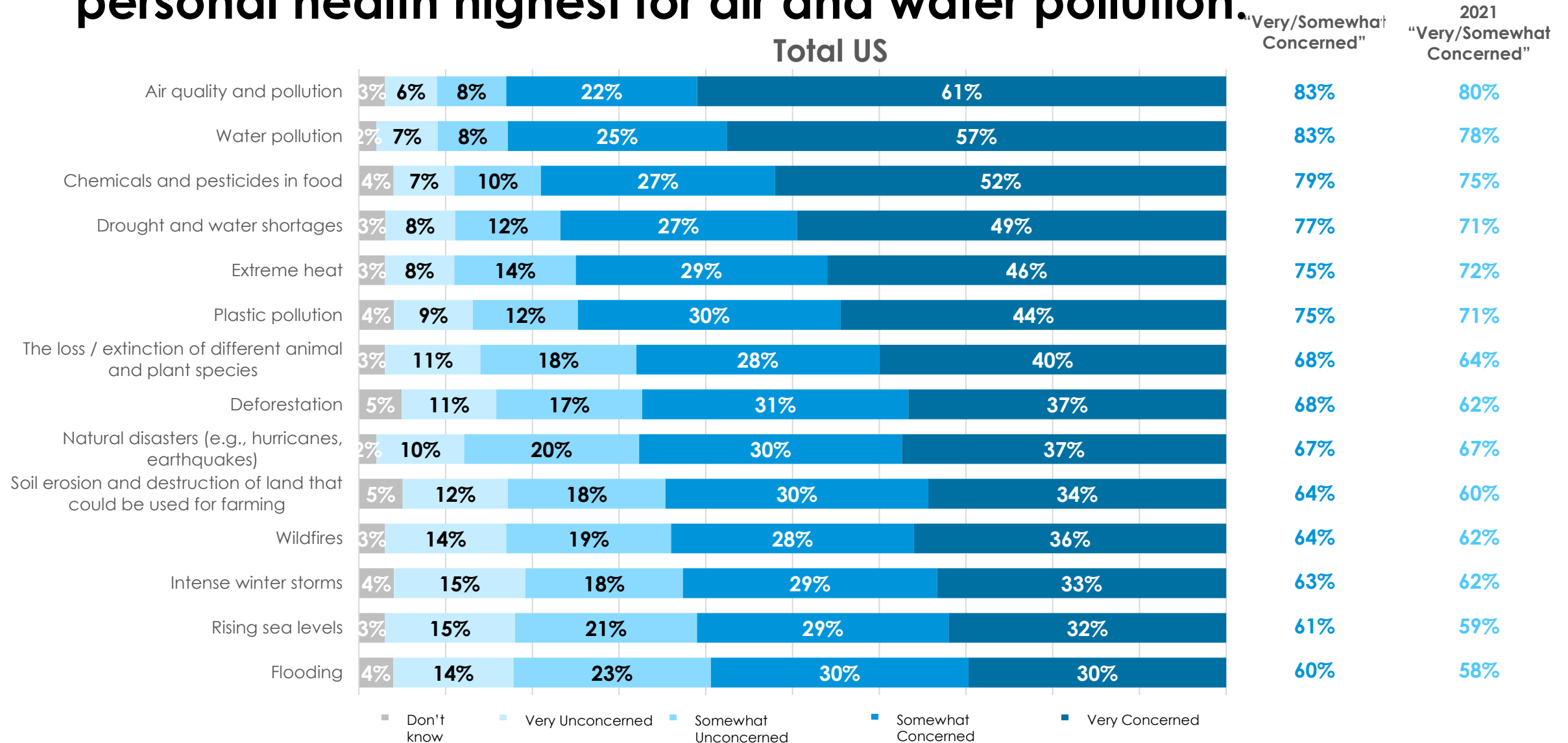
In California, concern about environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet highest for droughts and air pollution.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q13. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to the future of the planet?

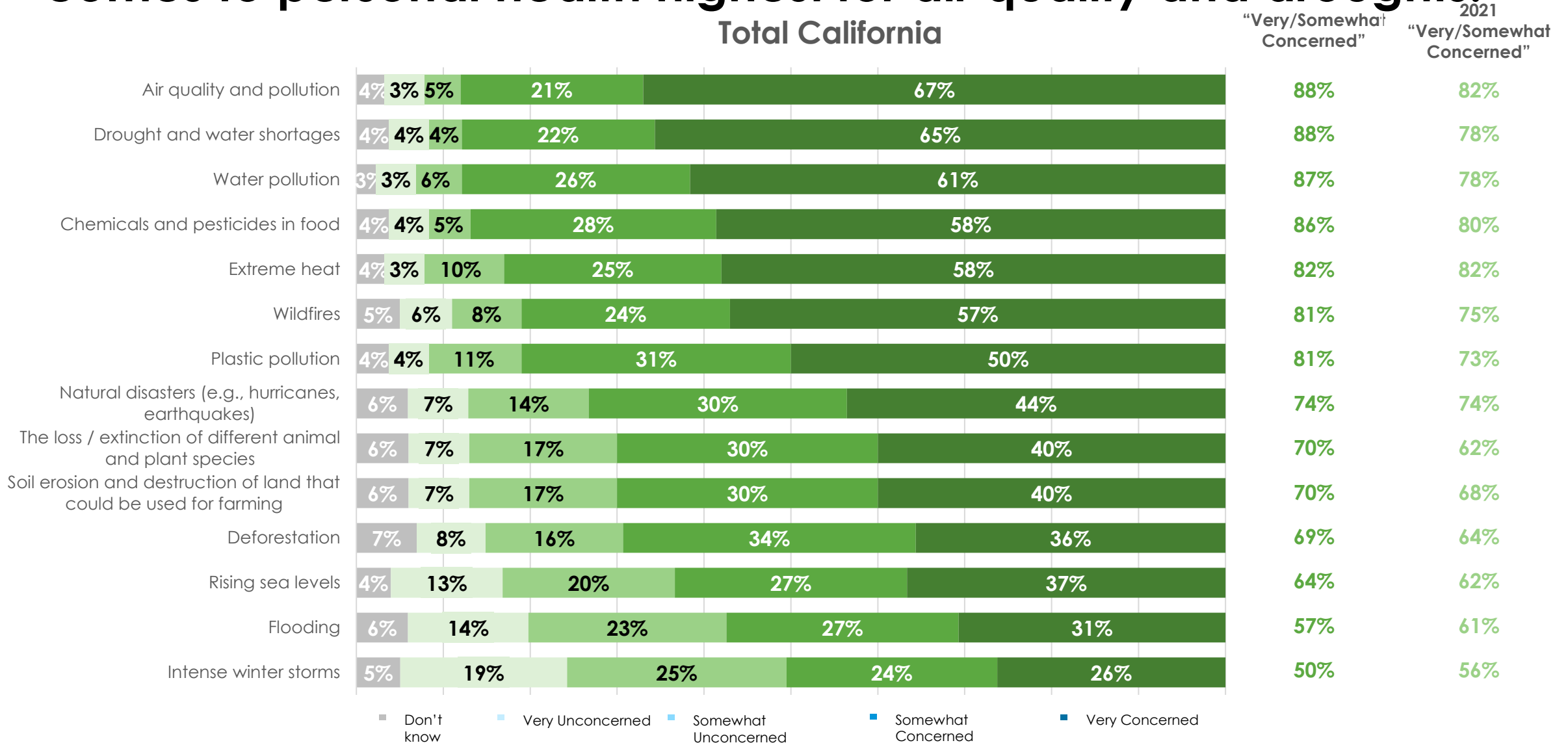
Concern about environmental issues when it comes to personal health highest for air and water pollution.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to your own personal health?

In California, concern about environmental issues when it comes to personal health highest for air quality and drought.



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q14. How concerned are you about each of the following environmental issues when it comes to your own personal health?



Blue Shield of California is an independent member of the Blue Shield Association A52191-W (2/21)