

THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Survey on Veterans, Military Families, and American Civic Culture

Moving Forward Together

Overview

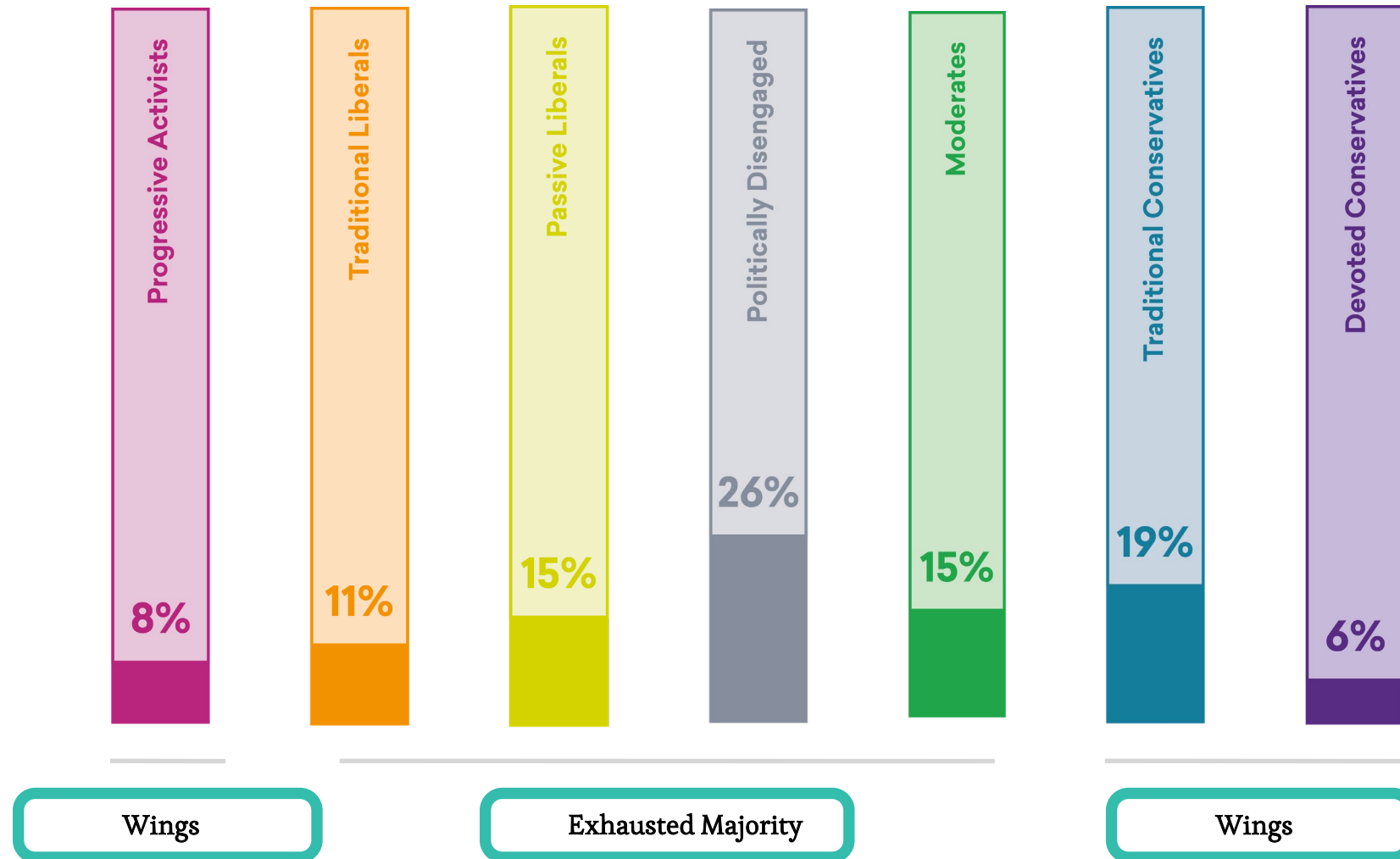
Methodology

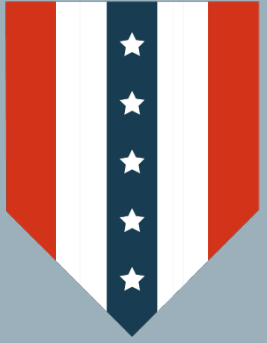
- Two Online polls in 2020
 - N = 4,000 for American Fabric, margin of error +/- 2%;
 - N=2,000 for Civic Culture, margin of error +/- 1.96%
- Fieldwork for American Fabric: 11-20 July 2020
- Fieldwork for Civic Culture: December 14 – 21, 2020
- Research partner: YouGov

- Online poll in March 2021
- N = 2,000 total, with Test group N = 1,000 and Control group N = 1,000
- Margin of error +/- 2.36%
- Research partner: YouGov



Throughout the brief we will describe views using the typology shown below, identified by More in Common in the 2018 report *Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape*



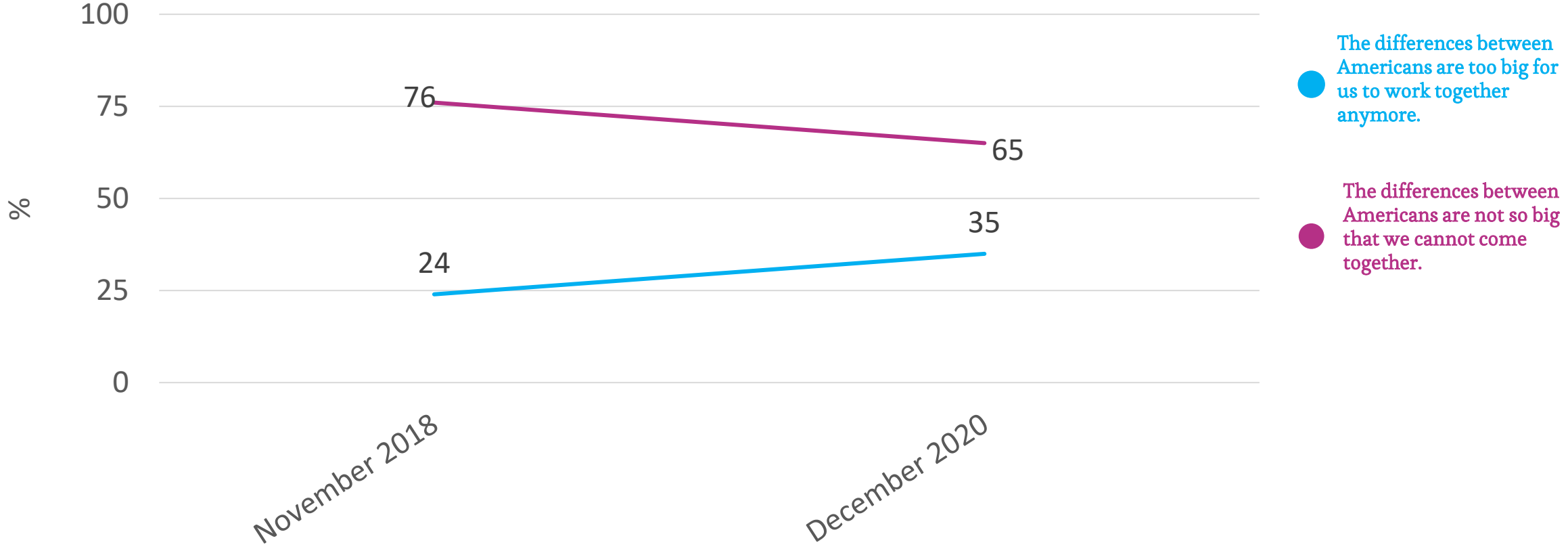


THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Polarization and Social Fracture Has
Eroded America's Civic Culture

Over the past two years the proportion of Americans who feel are differences are too big for us to work together has grown from 24% to 35%

Differences between Americans



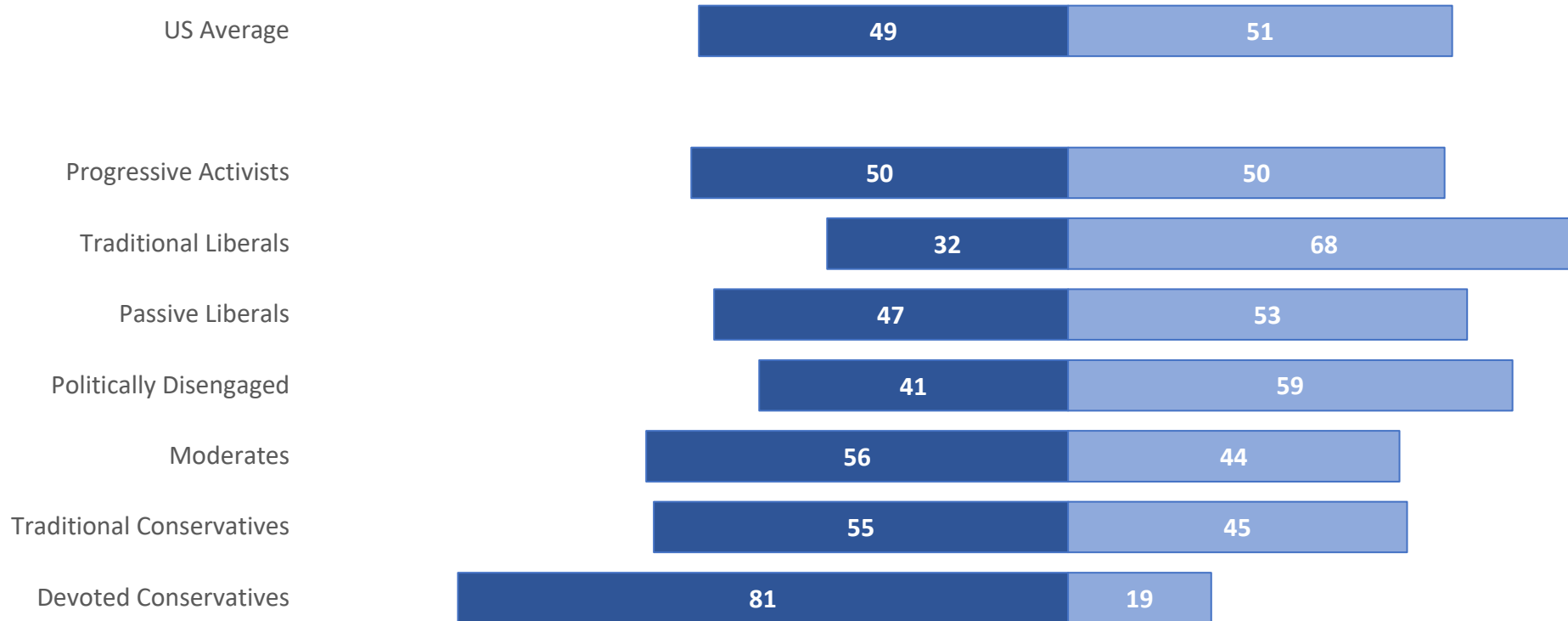
Question: Which statement do you agree with more?



And while a slight majority (51%) of Americans feel it is possible for the country to come together in 2021...

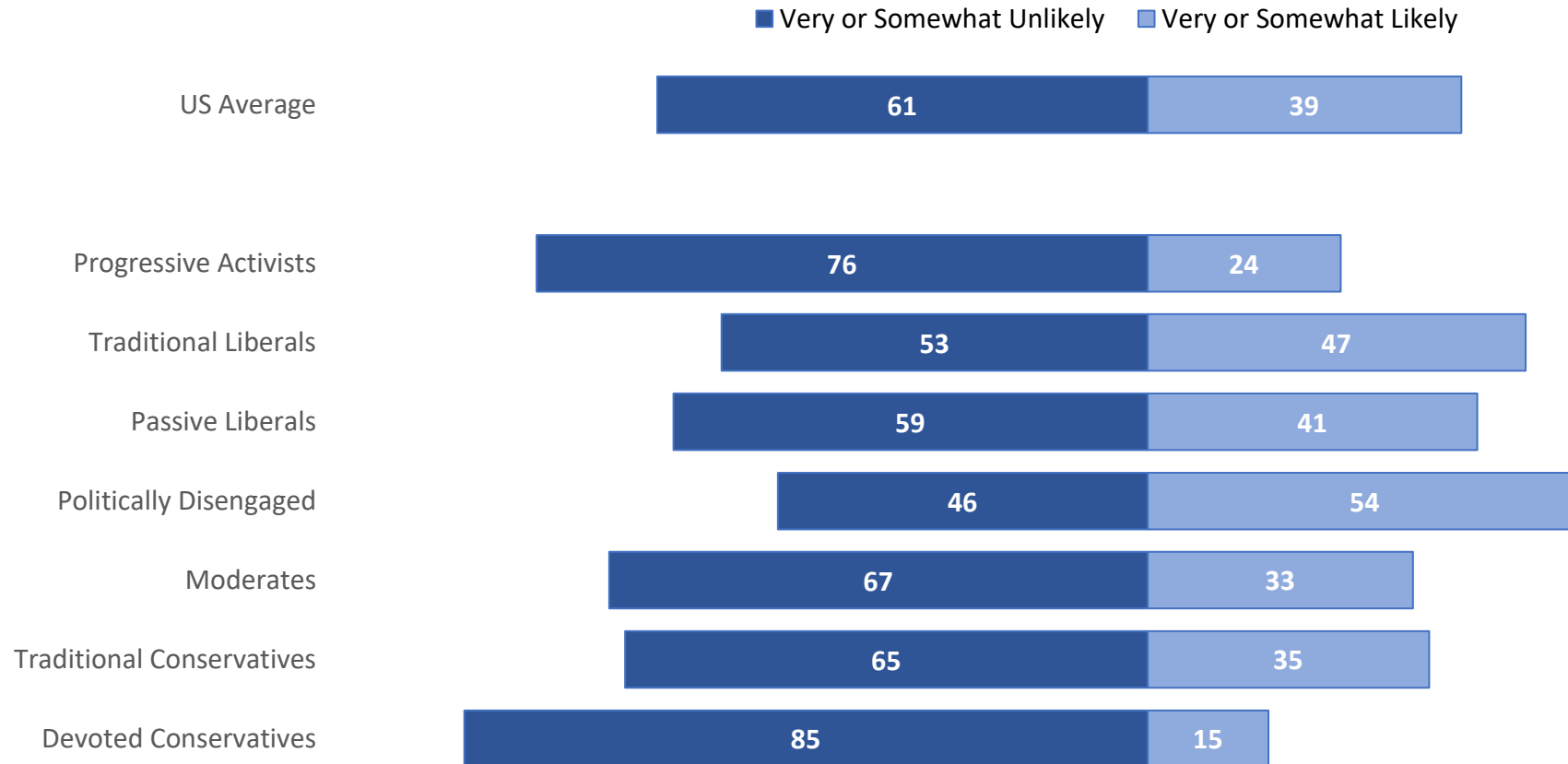
In your opinion, how **possible** do you think it is for the country to come together in 2021?

■ Totally or Almost Impossible ■ Very or Somewhat Possible



...only 39% feel it is likely we will

In your opinion, how **likely** do you think it is for the country to come together in 2021?



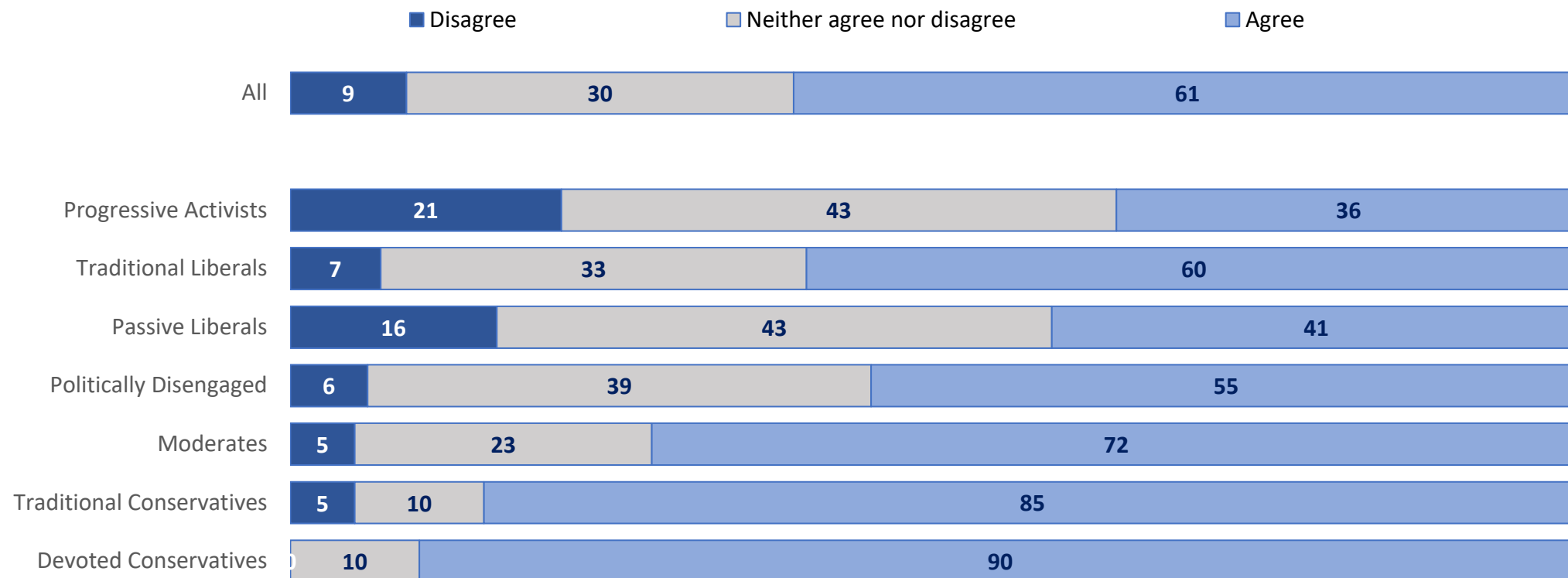


THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Veterans and Military Families
have the potential to serve as leaders for
civic engagement and bridgebuilding

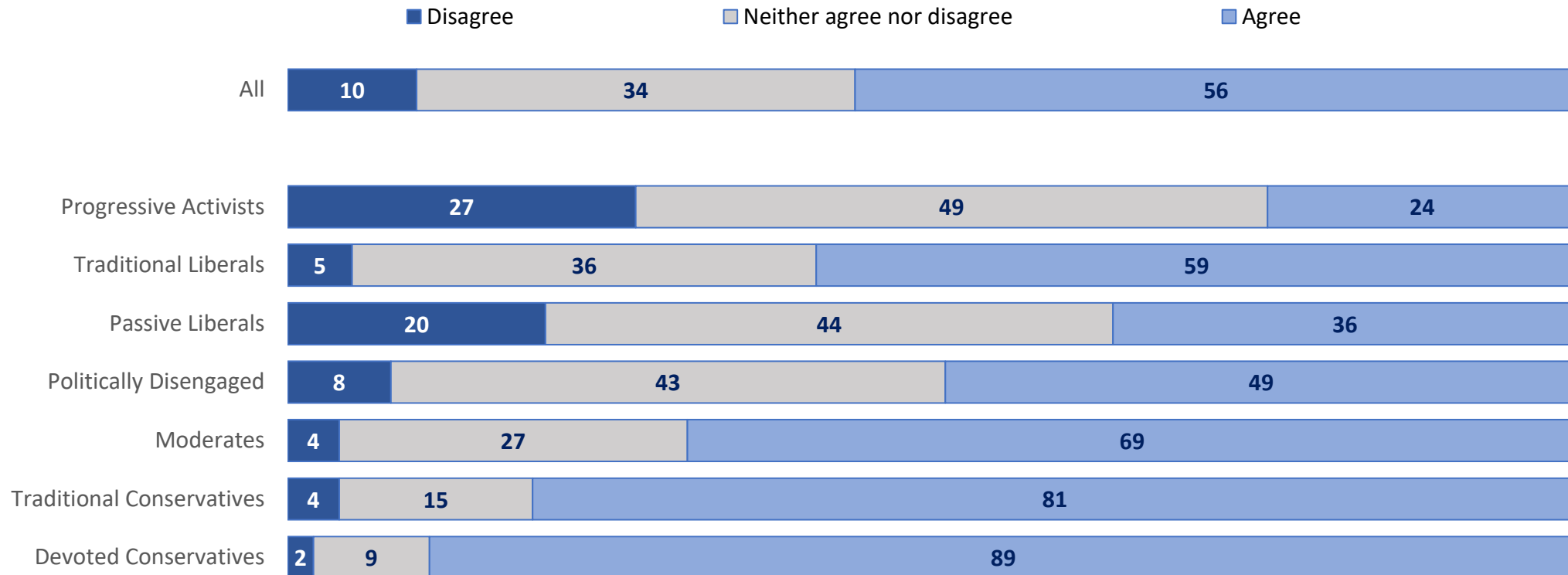
In a December 2020 survey, 61% of Americans said veterans are role models for good citizenship

To what extent do you agree that, in general, **veterans** are role models for good citizenship?



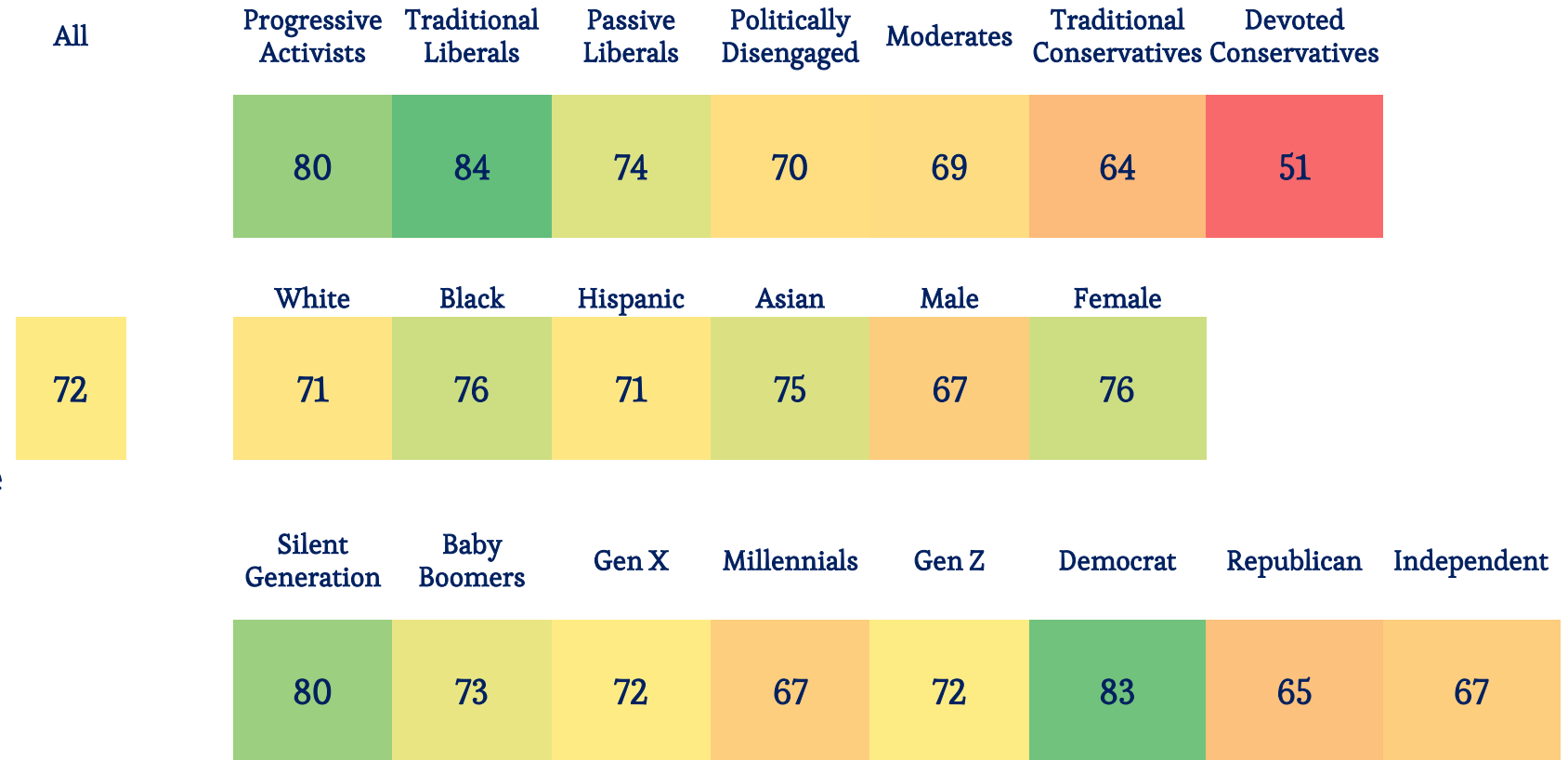
A similar dynamic was evident with confidence in military families as role models for good citizenship, with 56% of Americans agreeing with this sentiment

To what extent do you agree that, in general, **military families** are role models for good citizenship?



Despite, or perhaps because of our fracturing civic culture, there is strong and widespread appetite for a message of coming together in 2021

2020 has been a challenging year for America. Now that the election is over, it is time for us to change the conversation and talk about what each of us, as Americans, can do to improve our communities and bring our country together. We do not need to agree on everything, but we do need to find ways to come together and support each other in 2021.

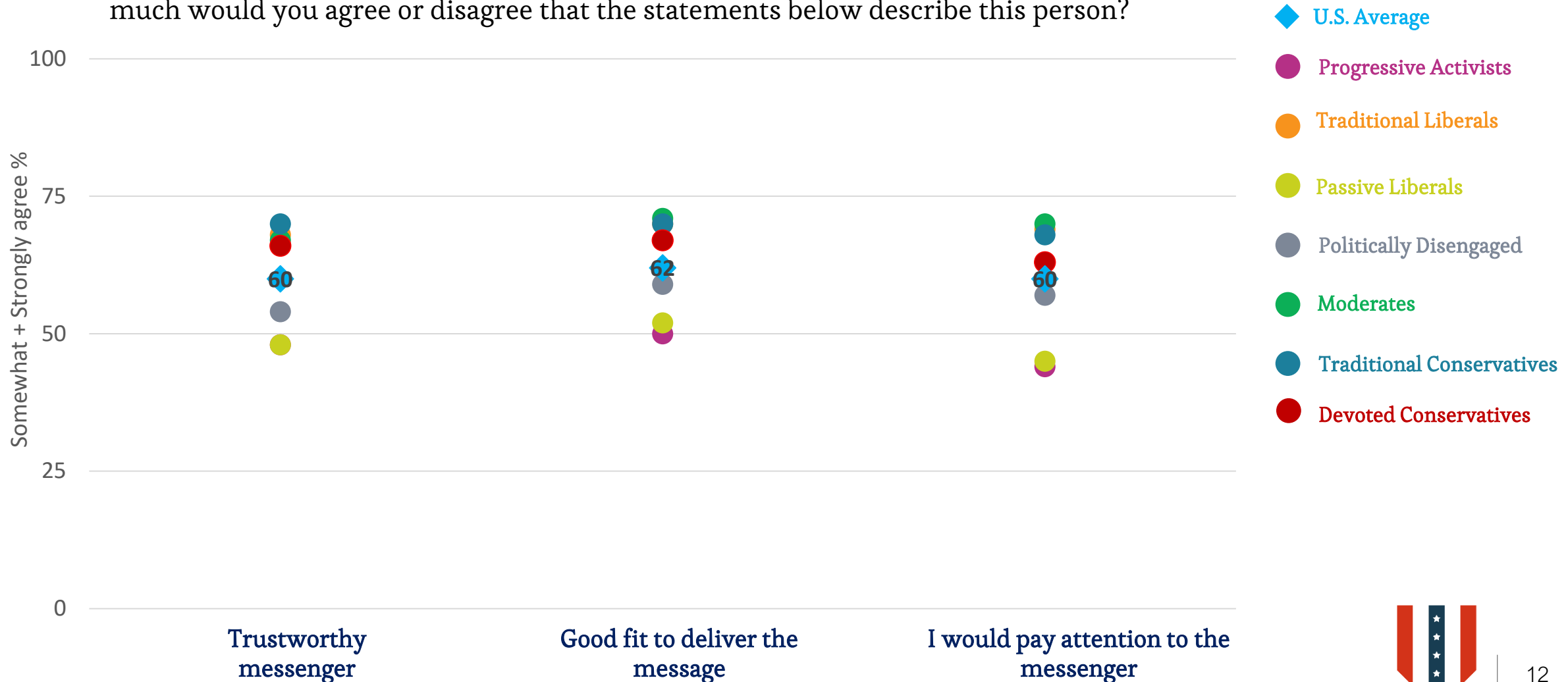


Showing agreement scores with this message



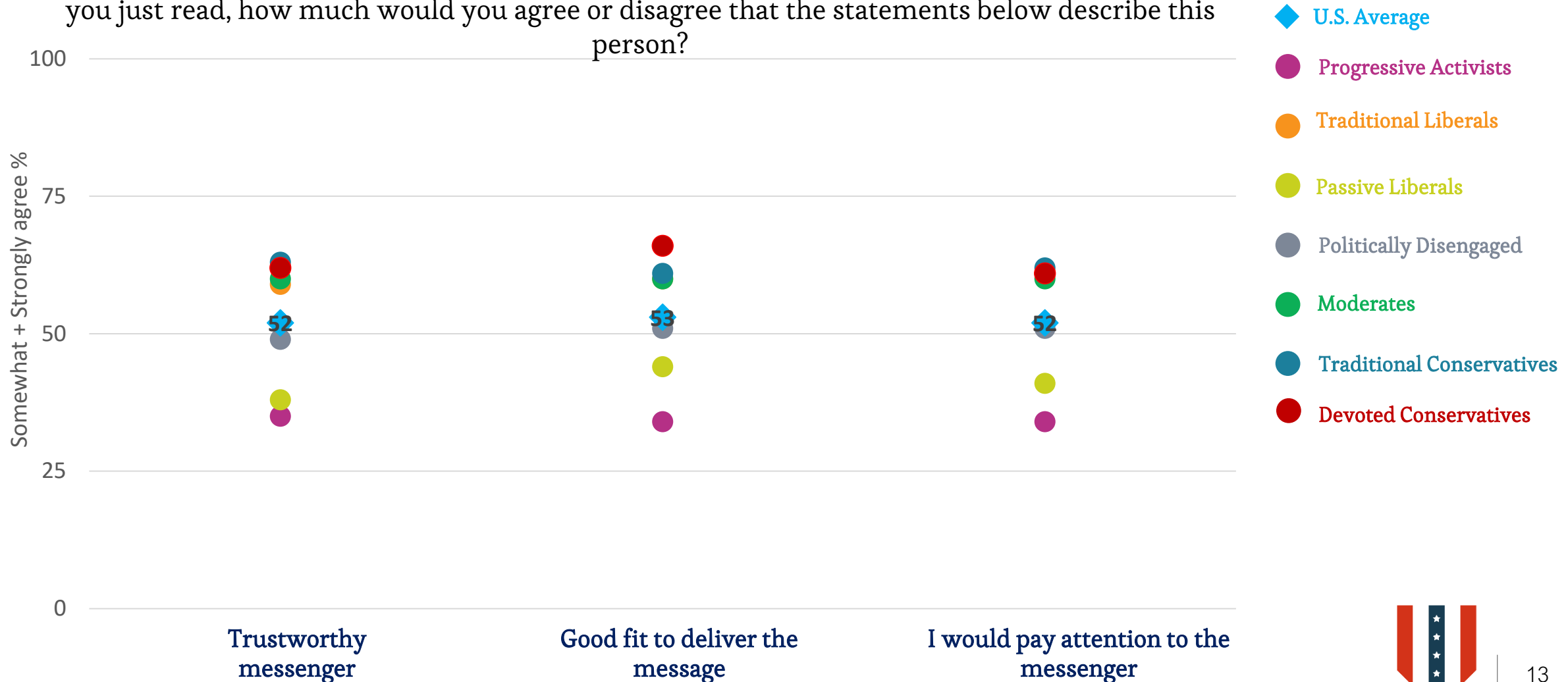
Veterans seen as credible messengers for this sentiment, especially among segments which showed lower levels of support for the message overall

If a **veteran** were to deliver messages on our civic responsibilities like the one you just read, how much would you agree or disagree that the statements below describe this person?



A similar dynamic is true with respect to military families as the messengers

If a member of a military family were to deliver messages on our civic responsibilities like the one you just read, how much would you agree or disagree that the statements below describe this person?





THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Following the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, it is a critical moment for veterans and military families to engage with broader society on building a healthier civic culture

The January 6 attack on the US capitol – and the coverage of the military veterans who took part in the attack – seems to have negatively impacted public attitudes towards military veterans

Recognizing the seismic nature of the insurrectionist attack on the Capitol, which occurred after we had finished our survey work in December 2020, VCI went back into the field to poll Americans. We fielded three identical questions to two samples of 1,000 Americans (representative of the US adult population overall). One of the questions both samples answered was identical to the question we had asked in December 2020 – “to what extent do you agree that, in general, veterans are role models for good citizenship?” Our control group was just asked the question directly. Our test group first received a message priming them to think of the January 6 attack and veterans, and then they were asked the question on veterans and role models. The survey was fielded March 2 – 4, 2021 by YouGov.

Prompt

“In recent weeks, there has been coverage of the high number of military veterans who took part in the January 6 attack on the US Capitol. There has also been news coverage of the high number of military veterans who were part of the police force that defended the Capitol on January 6th.”

Control Group (N = 1,000)

No Prompt

56% of Americans agree veterans are role models for good citizenship

5-point drop from Dec. 2020

Test Group (N = 1,000)

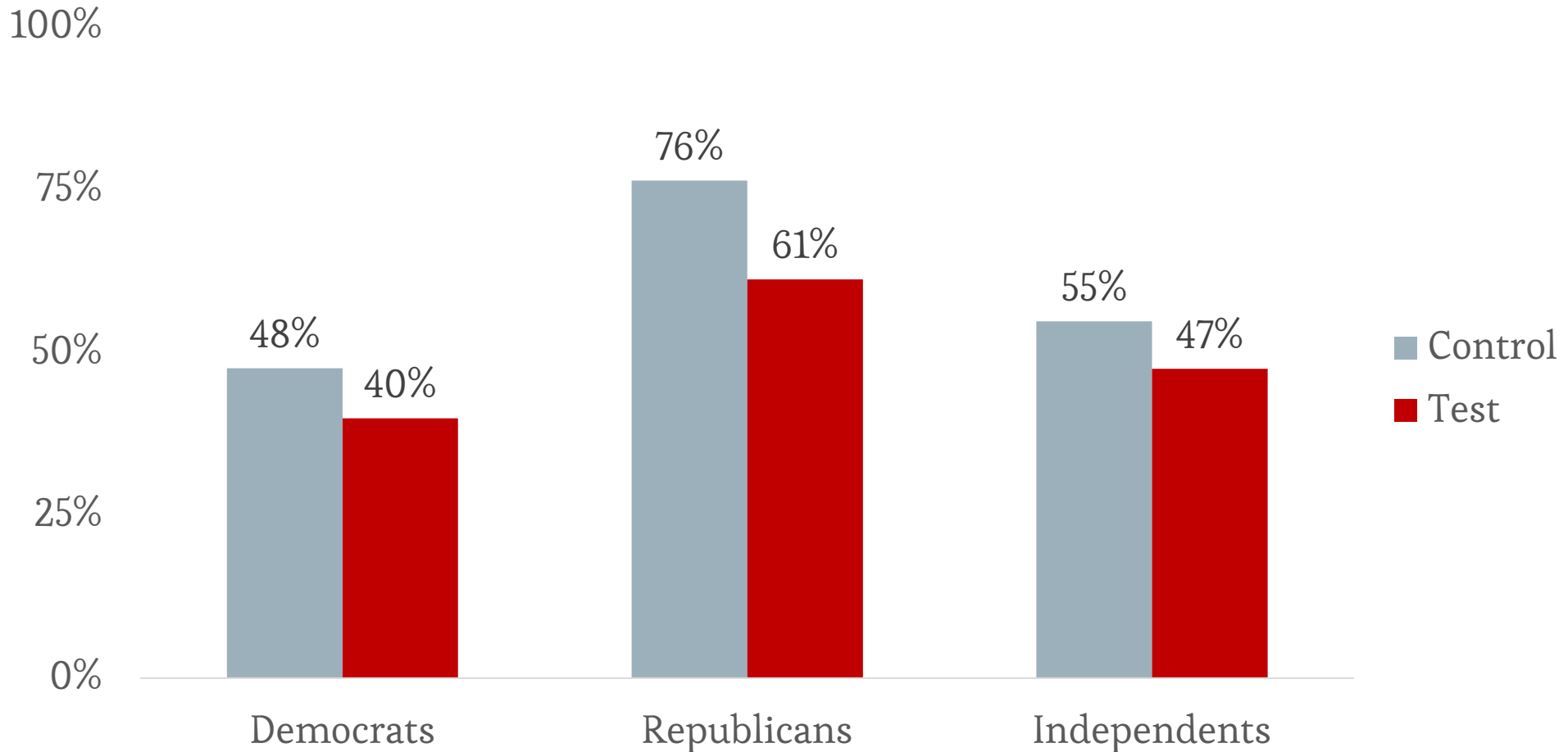
Prompt

47% of Americans agree veterans are role models for good citizenship

14-point drop from Dec. 2020
9 points less than control group



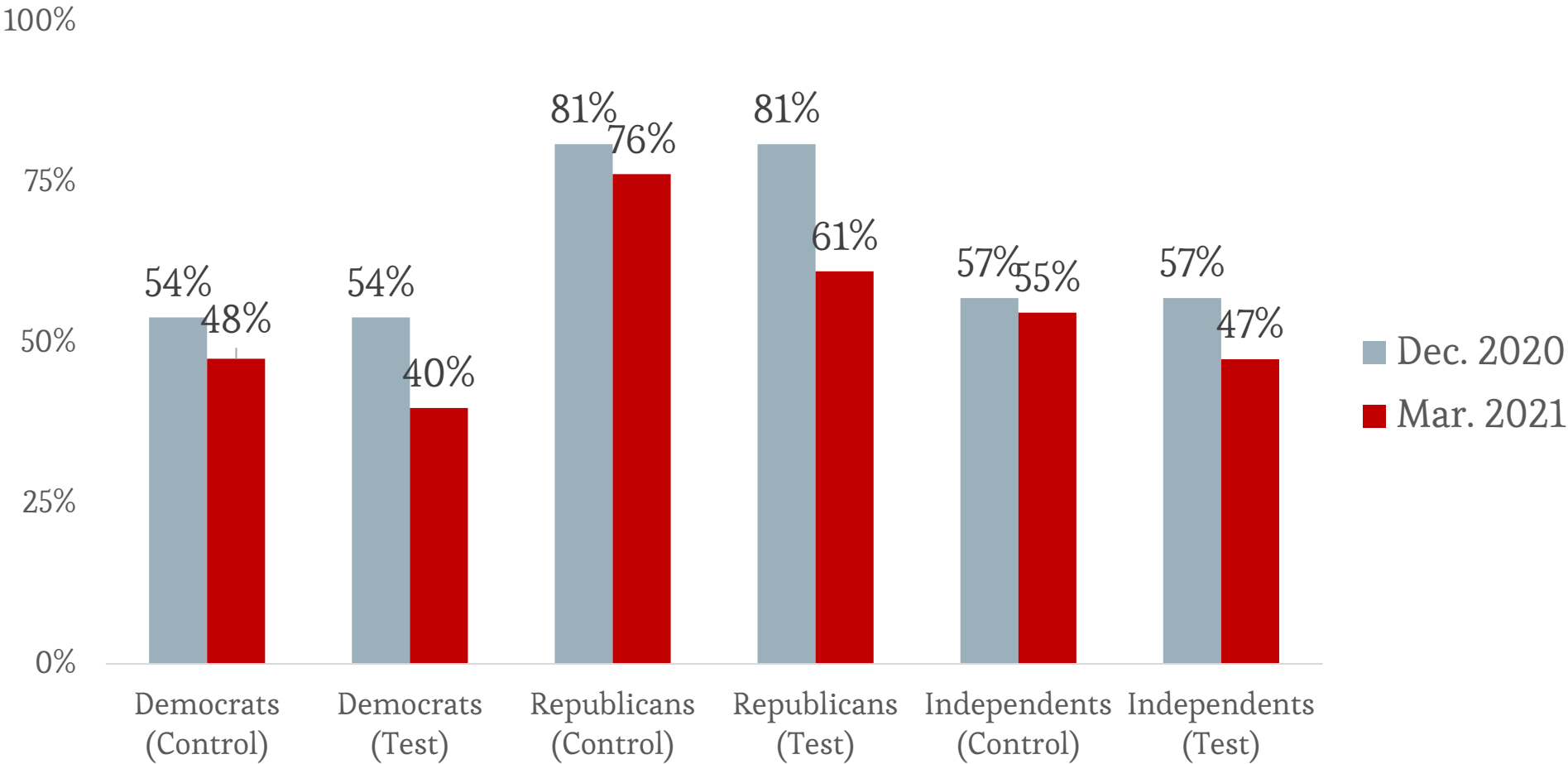
The biggest difference between control and test respondents was with Republicans, who show a 15-point drop in confidence...but all groups show a decline



% agree veterans are role models for good citizenship

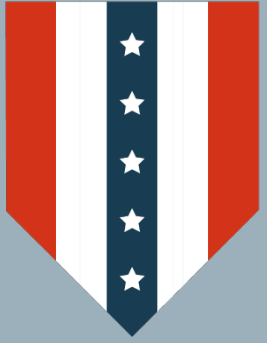


All groups show a drop from December to March in terms of confidence



% agree veterans are role models for good citizenship

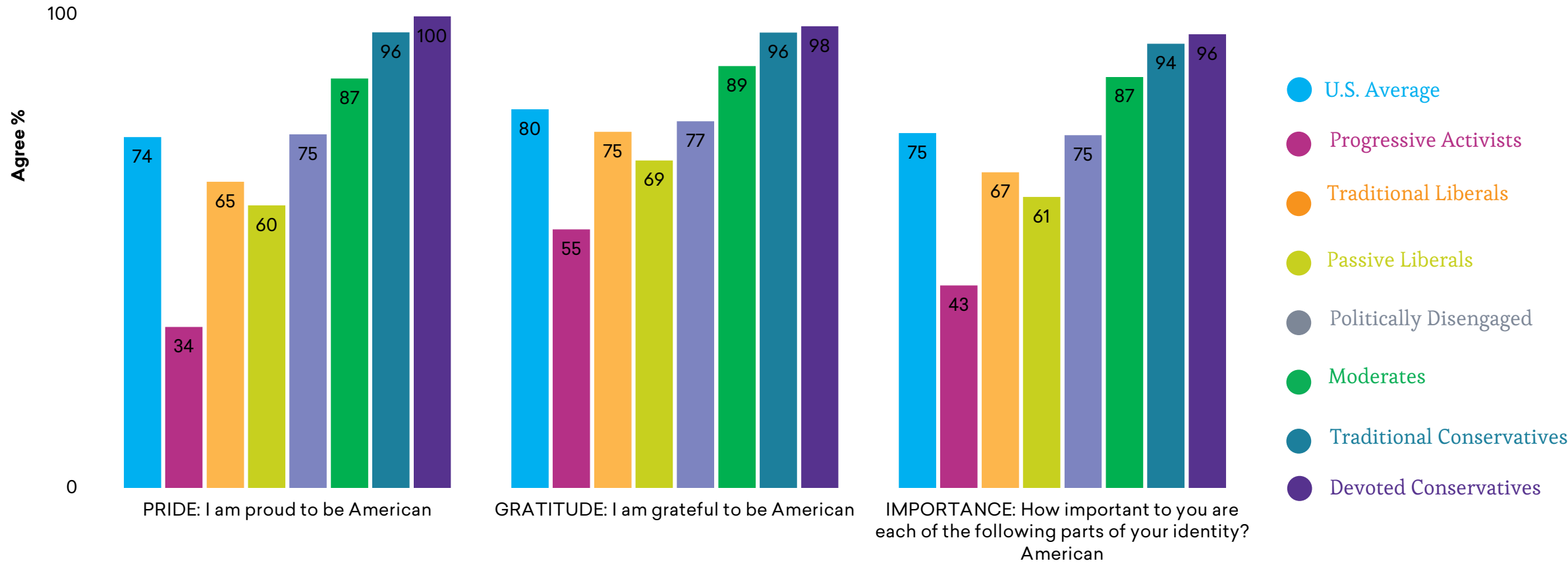




THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Although we are polarized on many levels,
there are strong touchstones for coming
together around American identity
and civic behavior

Most Americans – across race and ideology – are proud and grateful to be American, and our American identity is seen as important for most Americans

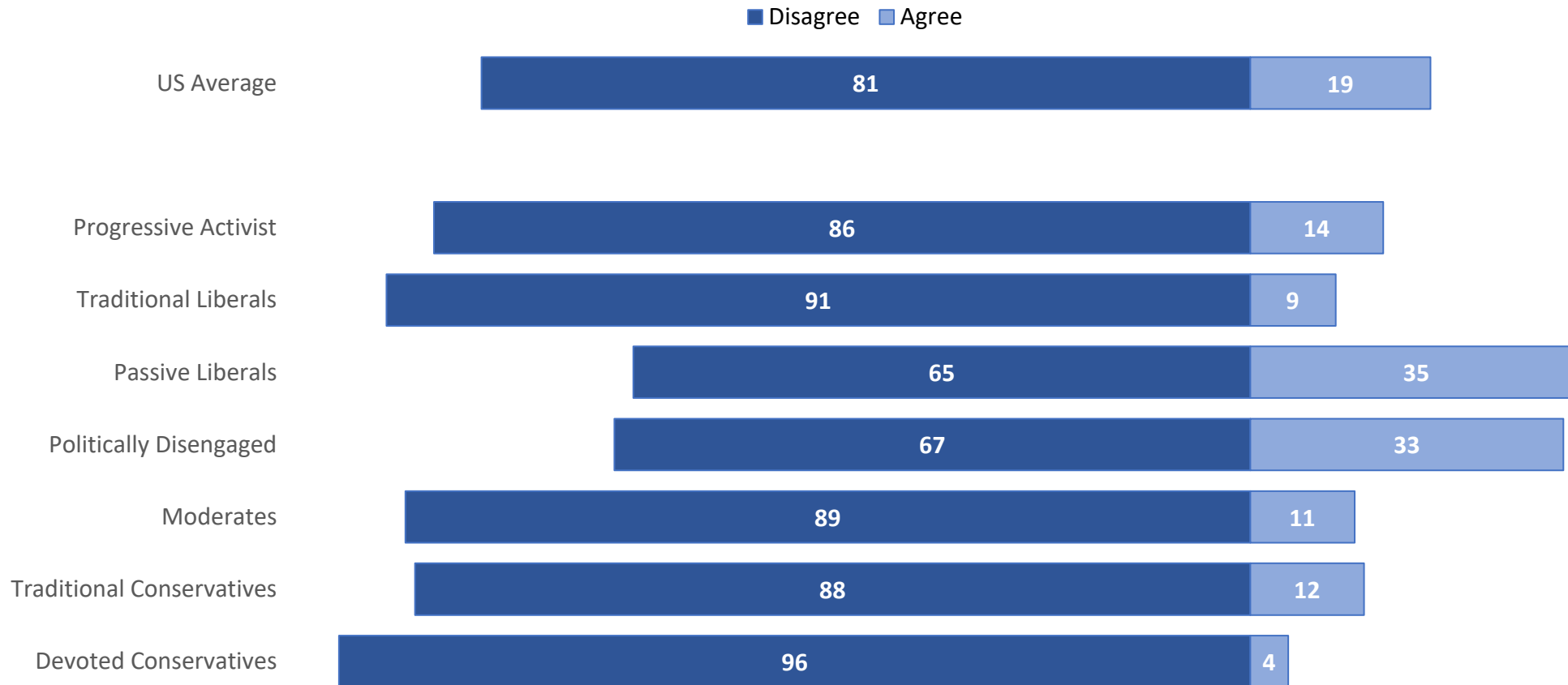


Americans also share a core set of civic activities seen as important to being a good American: voting, respecting others' beliefs, and learning our history

	<i>US Average</i>	<i>Progressive Activists</i>	<i>Traditional Liberals</i>	<i>Passive Liberals</i>	<i>Politically Disengaged</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Traditional Conservatives</i>	<i>Devoted Conservatives</i>
Voting in elections	76%	92%	91%	70%	47%	85%	82%	93%
Respecting other cultures and beliefs	68%	92%	85%	72%	46%	72%	64%	60%
Learning American history	63%	77%	71%	52%	38%	69%	76%	86%
Paying your taxes	56%	69%	65%	50%	39%	61%	60%	70%
Following what happens in government and politics	53%	82%	73%	44%	22%	54%	58%	73%
Volunteering in your community	45%	66%	58%	39%	24%	48%	47%	57%
Standing for the national anthem	43%	88%	71%	56%	24%	37%	23%	28%
Protesting injustice	42%	52%	56%	38%	25%	46%	44%	53%
Talking to Americans with a different political perspective	41%	2%	17%	21%	36%	57%	74%	90%
Donating to charity	37%	50%	45%	27%	18%	43%	42%	57%
Displaying the American flag	34%	2%	16%	18%	30%	43%	61%	82%
Criticizing a political leader you disagree with	33%	72%	50%	31%	16%	27%	24%	36%
Serving in the military	29%	11%	20%	18%	22%	36%	47%	65%
Singing the national anthem	28%	2%	12%	13%	22%	37%	53%	69%
Attending ceremonies honoring military service members	25%	7%	17%	15%	20%	28%	40%	63%
Attending parades on Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Veterans Day	18%	3%	8%	10%	19%	20%	29%	45%
Serving as a police officer	14%	2%	6%	4%	12%	18%	26%	41%

And the concept of civic duty has broad resonance, with only 19% of Americans feeling as though they do NOT have any duties as an American

I don't feel I have any duties as an American



Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?





Our Mission

The Veterans and Citizens Initiative is a nonpartisan initiative of veterans military families who are committed to rebuilding and reenergizing our democracy.

We have served our country in uniform, and we are now serving our country as citizens, working to ensure peace, solidarity, and a renewed faith in the institutions of our country.

America will be what we make it.

Our vision with VCI is to be a connective tissue that **elevates** the civic work being done by veterans and military family organizations and **builds** connections between such organizations and the broader field of nonpartisan civic renewal efforts.



THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Thank you

scott@thevci.org

dan@moreincommon.com



THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Appendix A:

Trust in the military and concerns about
extremism in the military

In our March 2021 survey, we also asked Americans about general trust in the military and about their concerns about extremism in the military. Interestingly, there were not large differences between control group and test group responses.

Control Group (N = 1,000)
No Prompt

Q1: Would you say you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, hardly any confidence, or no confidence at all in [the military] to do what is right for America?

80% have confidence

In Jul/Aug 2020 when we asked this question, 77% of Americans said they have confidence in the military.

Q2: which statement comes closest to your view of White nationalism in the military?

1. White nationalism is not a problem: **28%**
2. White nationalism is somewhat a problem: **15%**
3. White nationalism is a serious problem: **32%**
4. Don't Know: **25%**

Test Group (N = 1,000)
Prompt

Q1: Would you say you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, hardly any confidence, or no confidence at all in [the military] to do what is right for America?

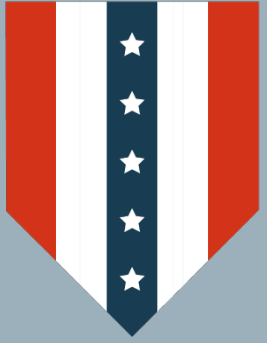
78% have confidence

In Jul/Aug 2020 when we asked this question, 77% of Americans said they have confidence in the military.

Q2: which statement comes closest to your view of White nationalism in the military?

1. White nationalism is not a problem: **27%**
2. White nationalism is somewhat a problem: **16%**
3. White nationalism is a serious problem: **31%**
4. Don't Know: **26%**



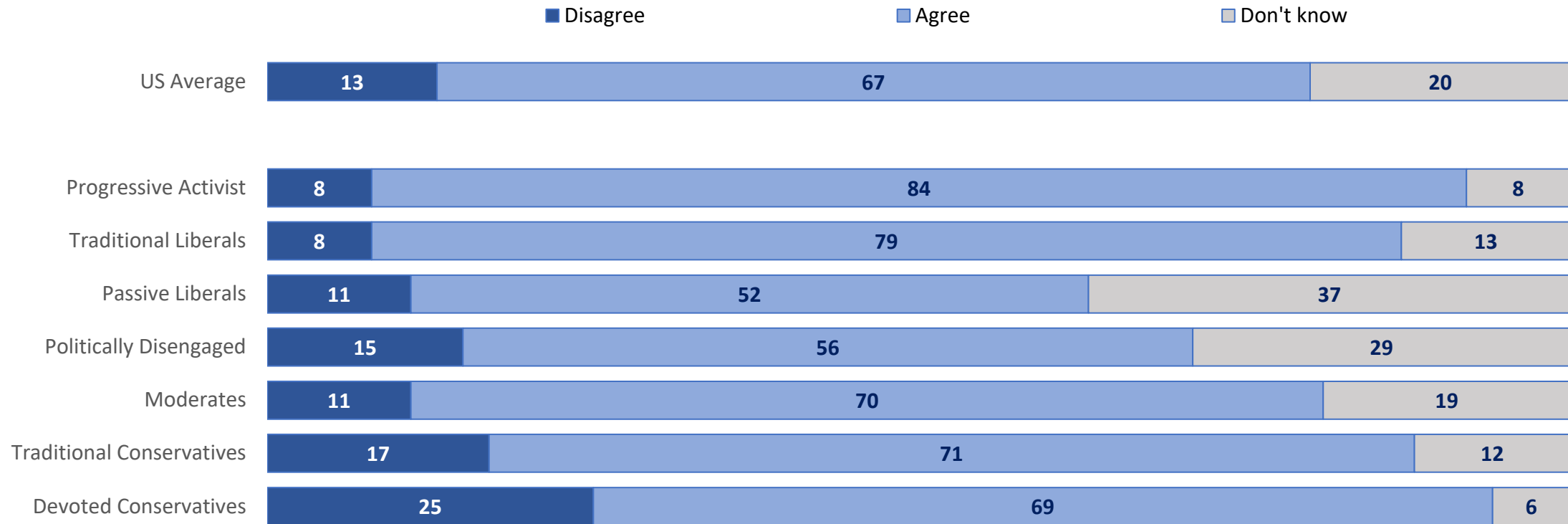


THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

Appendix B: Contextual civ-mil findings

Most Americans—especially liberals—think that they have a responsibility to think critically about military leaders' recommendations

I feel it is my responsibility as an American citizen to think critically about recommendations made by military leaders



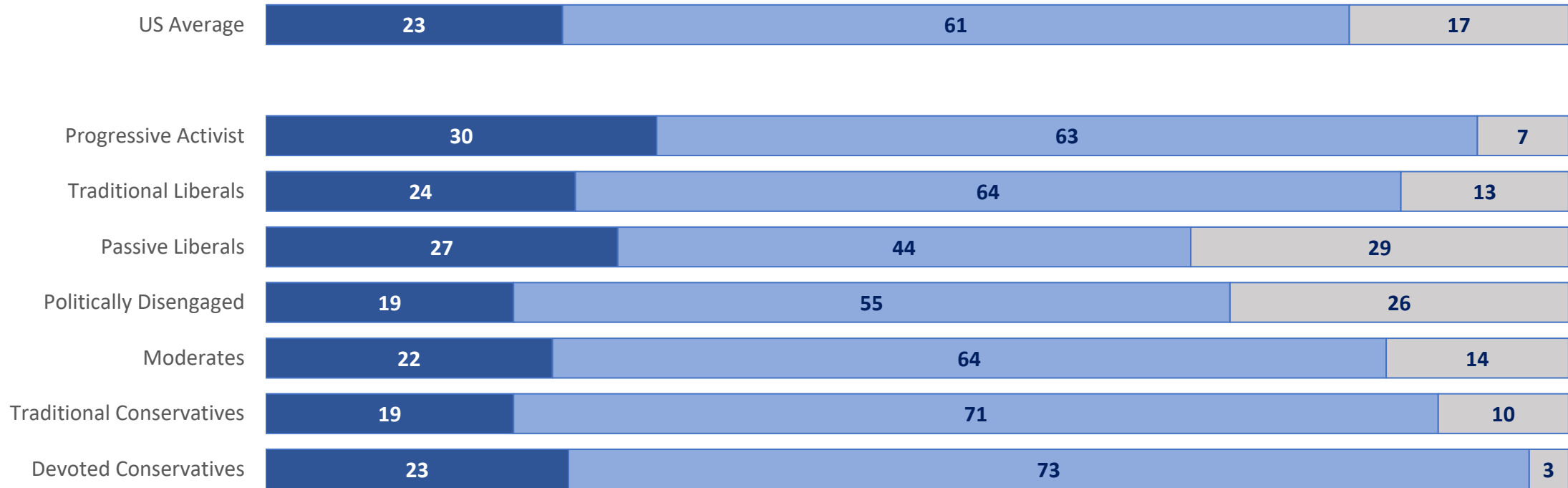
Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?



Majorities – except among Passive Liberals – feel they can assess recommendations from the military leadership, though confidence is lower among the Progressive Activists, the segment that feels the strongest sense of responsibility to apply such scrutiny

I am confident that I have the knowledge and ability to carefully assess any recommendations on the use of force that come from America's military leadership

■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Don't know



Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

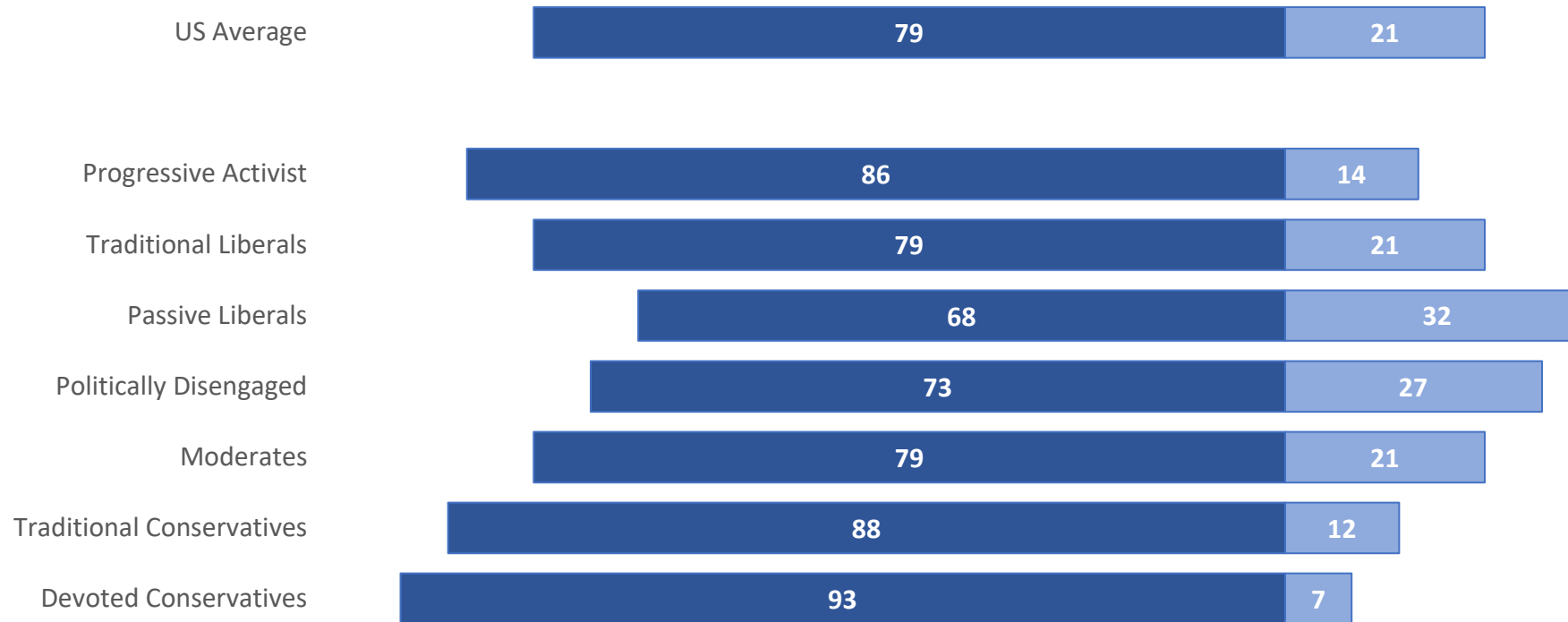


Most Americans across segments find it acceptable to express their views on the military *when they are with like-minded people...*

When I'm with people who are like me...

It is *acceptable for me to express my views* about the US military and our use of force abroad

There is *pressure to think a certain way* about the US military and our use of force abroad

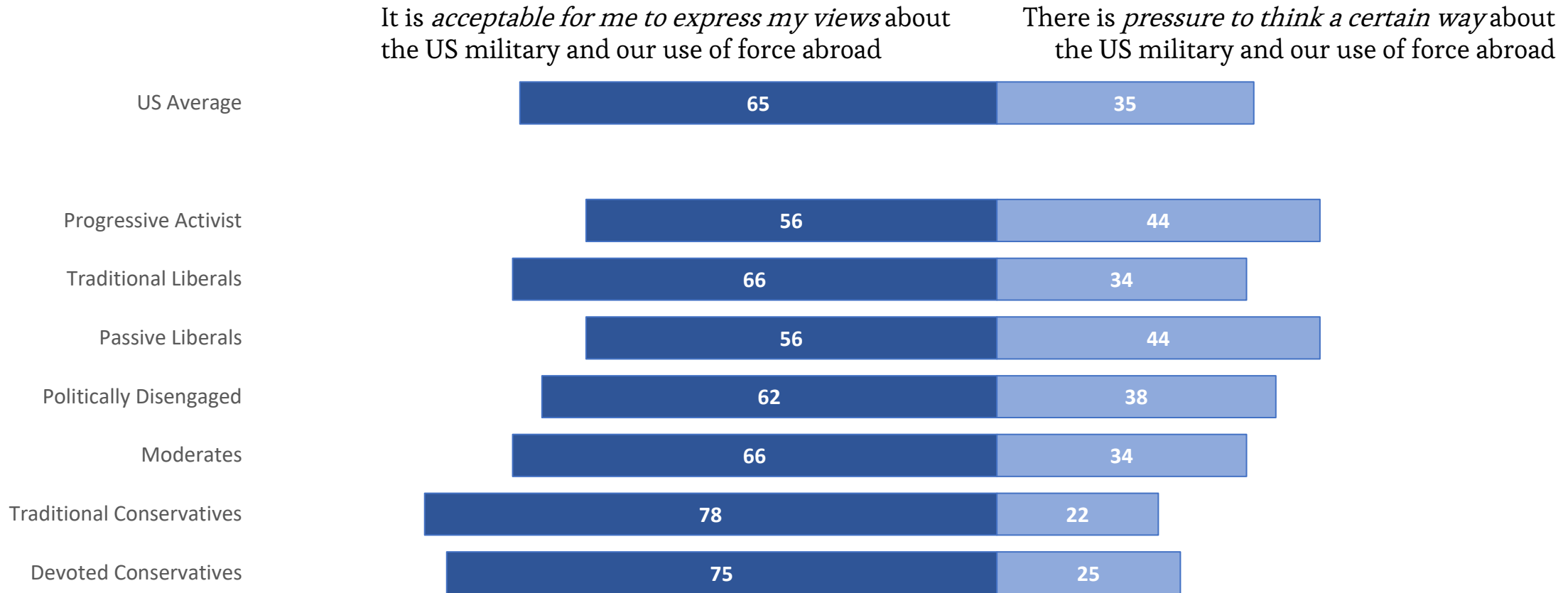


Question: Which statement do you agree with more?



However, fewer Americans feel comfortable expressing their views about the military in the larger social environment; the drop is pronounced among liberals, but all segments show a decline

Today in America...



Question: Which statement do you agree with more?





THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE