

The American Dream Survey:

***Anxiety, Anger, and
Restoring the Dream***

***Presented by Celinda Lake,
Lake Research Partners***

Summary Description of Methods

- **Interview Dates: March 11 to 19, 2007.**
- **800 interviews of a random sample of non-supervisory workers nationwide.**
- **Sampling error is +/- 3.5% for the full sample, higher among split sampled questions.**
- **'Non-supervisory workers' are comprised of workers who are not: full-time students, nor retired persons, nor business owners or CEOs, company executives, managers/supervisors, or professionals such as doctors or lawyers, but who are: either employed or actively looking for work, work at least 20 hours per week if employed, and earn \$100,000 per year or less.**

Key Summary: The Dream

- ✓ **The American Dream is rooted in the workplace, and it is tied to the job.**

- ✓ **The cornerstones of the American Dream include:**
 - ✓ **wages that support a family,**
 - ✓ **affordable quality health care,**
 - ✓ **opportunities for your children,**
 - ✓ **respect for the work you do,**
 - ✓ **and retirement security.**

Key Summary: The Problem

- ✓ **Workers are anxious about the state of the economy their economic insecurity. They believe strongly that, despite the news accounts of economic growth, working families are falling behind.**
- ✓ **Working America believes the American Dream is becoming harder to achieve and think it will be even more difficult for their children.**
- ✓ **Workers are angry and believe corporations and wealthy interests have too much power and that this is a barrier to working people achieving the American Dream.**

Key Summary: The Solution

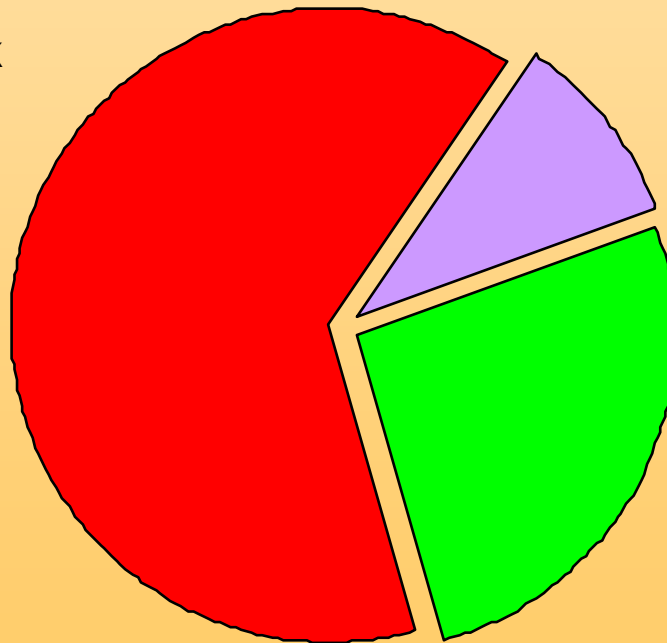
- ✓ **Workers believe joining together in unions or worker associations would help them achieve these key measures of the American Dream—especially getting a job that pays enough to raise a family, have health coverage, and enjoy a secure retirement.**
- ✓ **Workers want Government to hold corporations accountable. They also believe, as workers and consumers, they have a powerful role in holding corporations accountable**
- ✓ **They support a strong platform of economic security to restore the American Dream, including guaranteeing affordable health care, protecting Social Security, and raise the minimum wage as the cost of living rises.**

***Anxiety: Workers are
negative about the
economy and worried about
their family's and their
children's financial future***

Workers are deeply pessimistic about the state of the country's economy.

Generally speaking, do you think that the economy in this country is going in the RIGHT DIRECTION, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the WRONG TRACK?

**Wrong Track
64%**



**Don't know
10%**

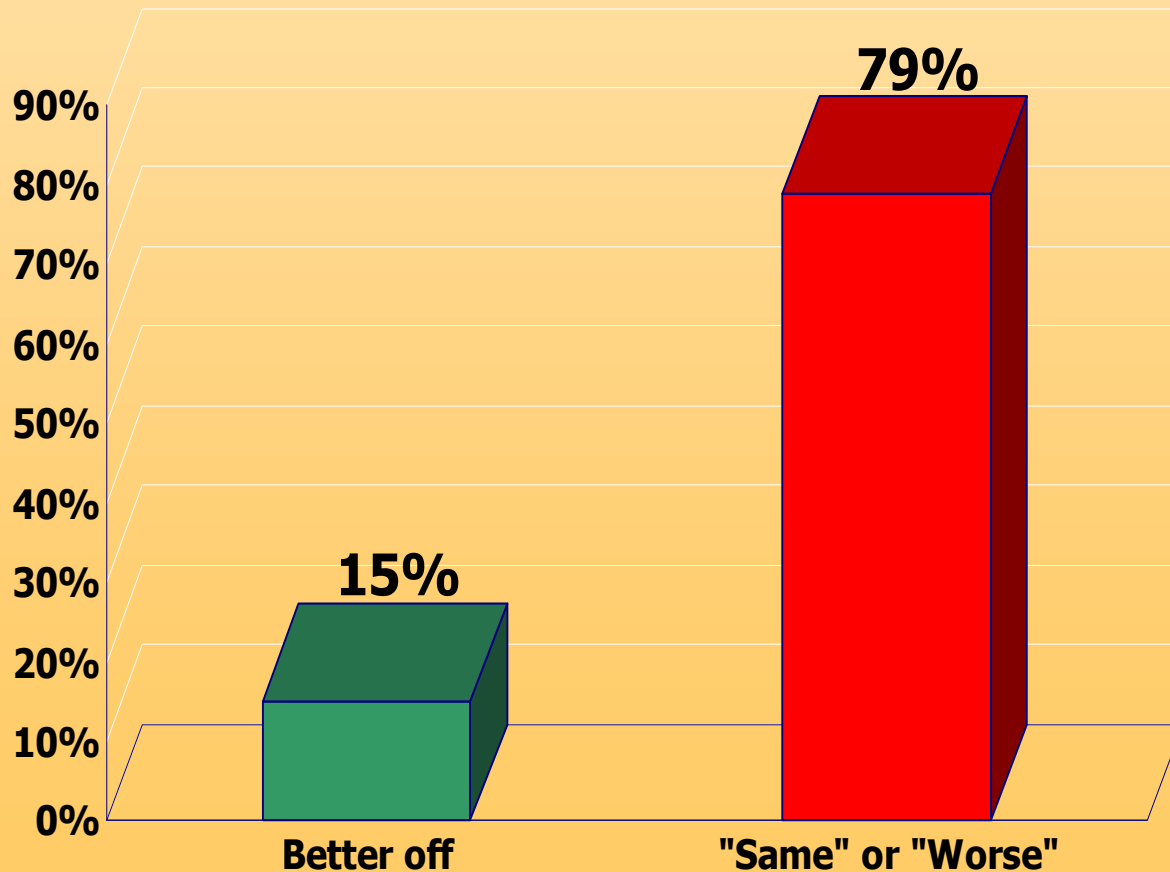
**Right
Direction
26%**

-From August 2006 survey:
63% Wrong track
28% Right Direction

As in August, every demographic group is net negative now on the direction of the economy.

Only 15% of workers believe the next generation will be better off.

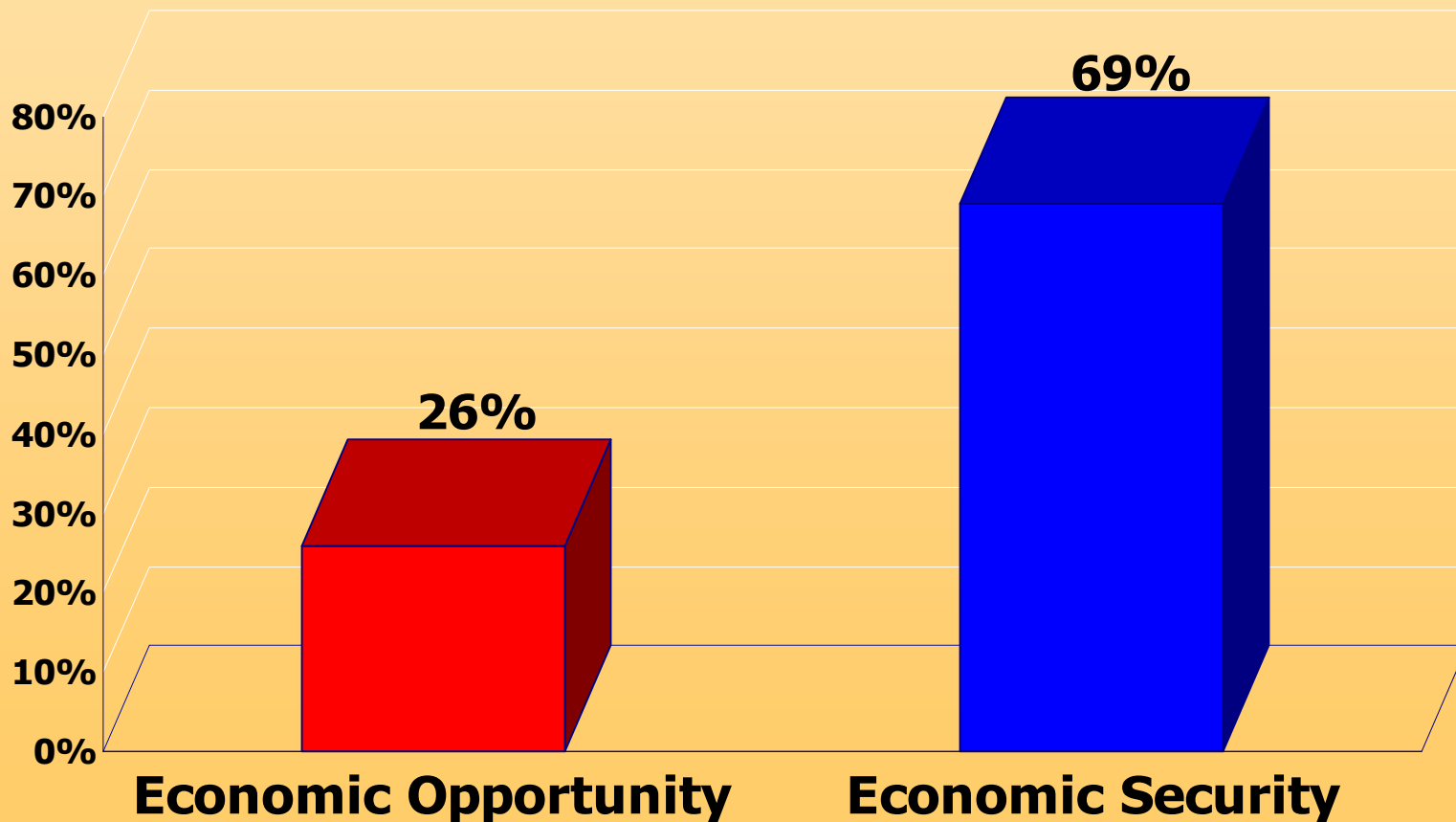
Thinking about the next generation of Americans who are children today, the way things are going, do you think economically they will be better off, worse off, or about the same as the generation of adults who are working today?



From August 2006 survey:
18% Better off
78% "Same" or "Worse"

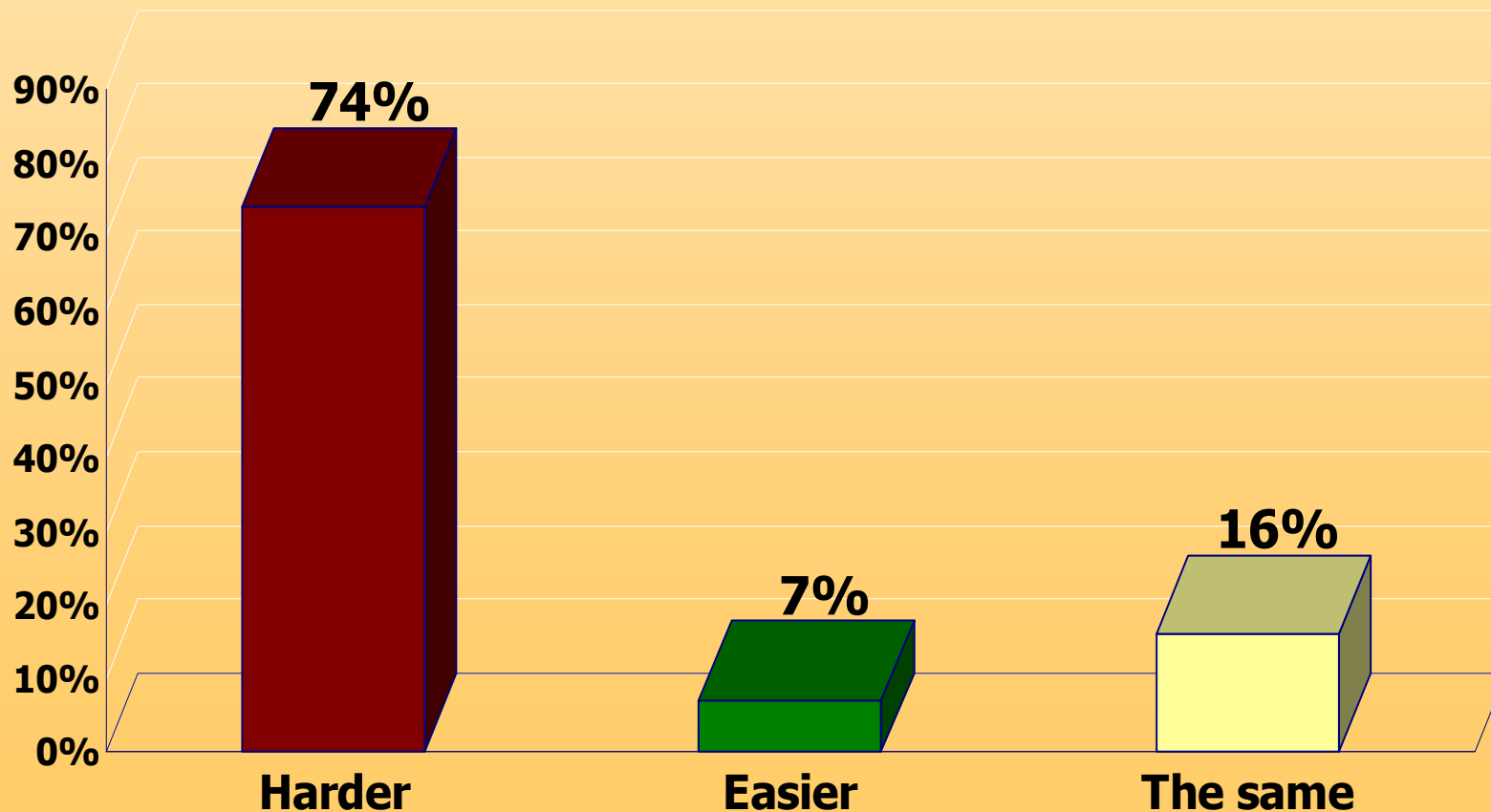
Working people highly value economic security over opportunity.

*Thinking about the global economy, which is more important to you personally – economic opportunity or economic security?**



Nearly three out of four believe the American Dream is becoming harder to reach.

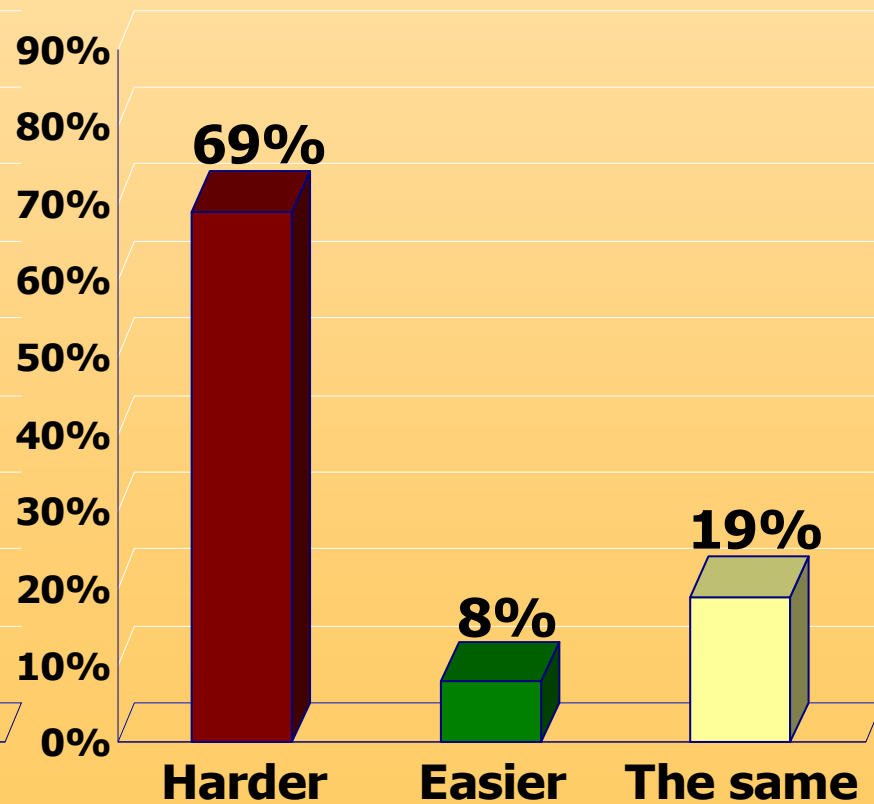
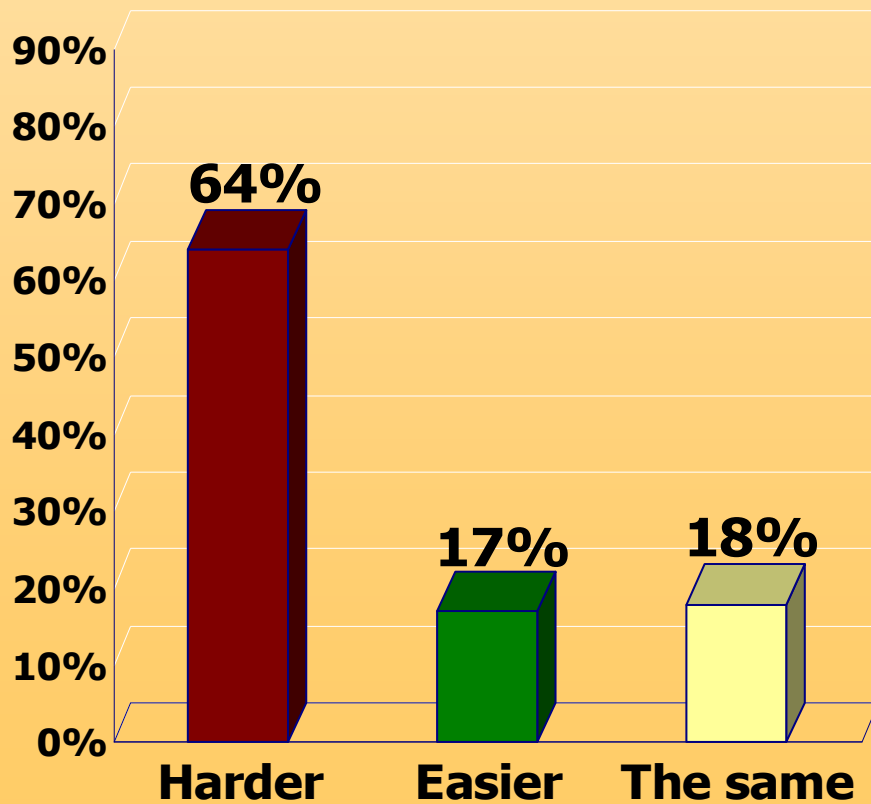
*Do you think it is becoming harder or easier these days to achieve the American Dream, or is it about the same?**



Two thirds also believe it is harder to achieve the American Dream than it was for their parents, and it will be harder for the next generation.

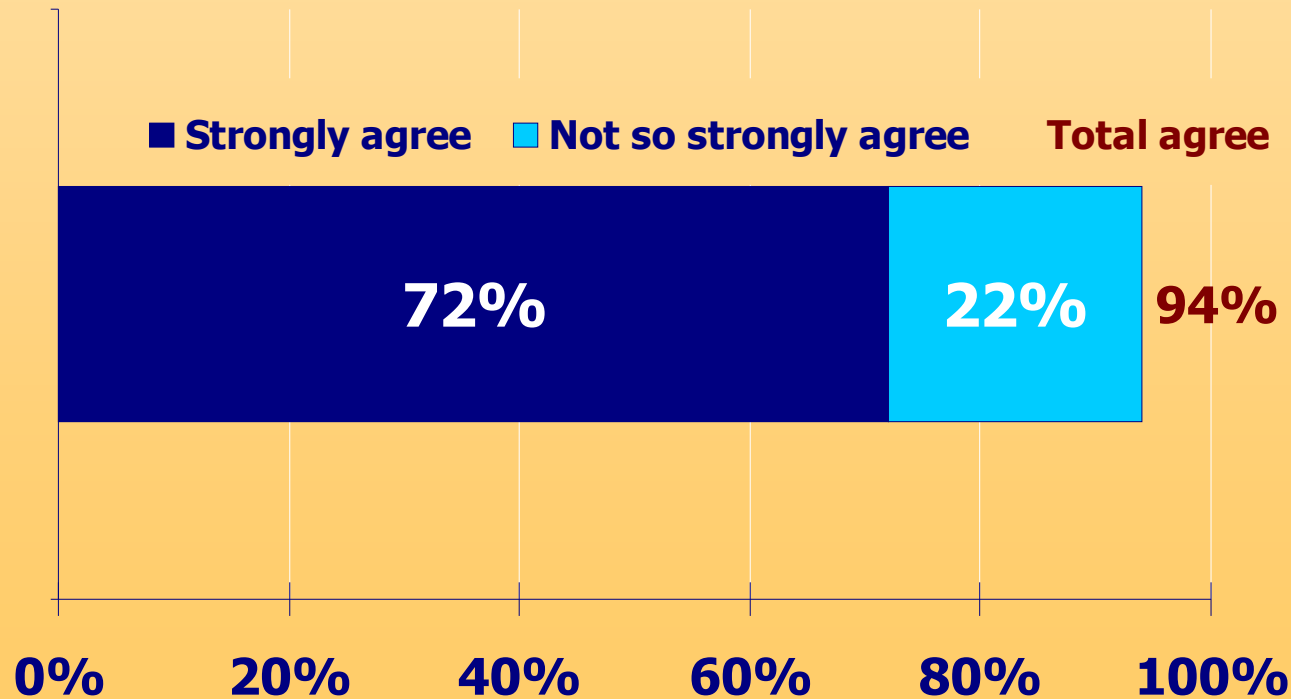
Compared to your parents' generation, do you think it is becoming harder or easier to achieve the American Dream, or is it about the same?

Looking to the next generation, the way things are going now, do you feel the American Dream will be easier to reach than today, harder to reach, or will it be the same?



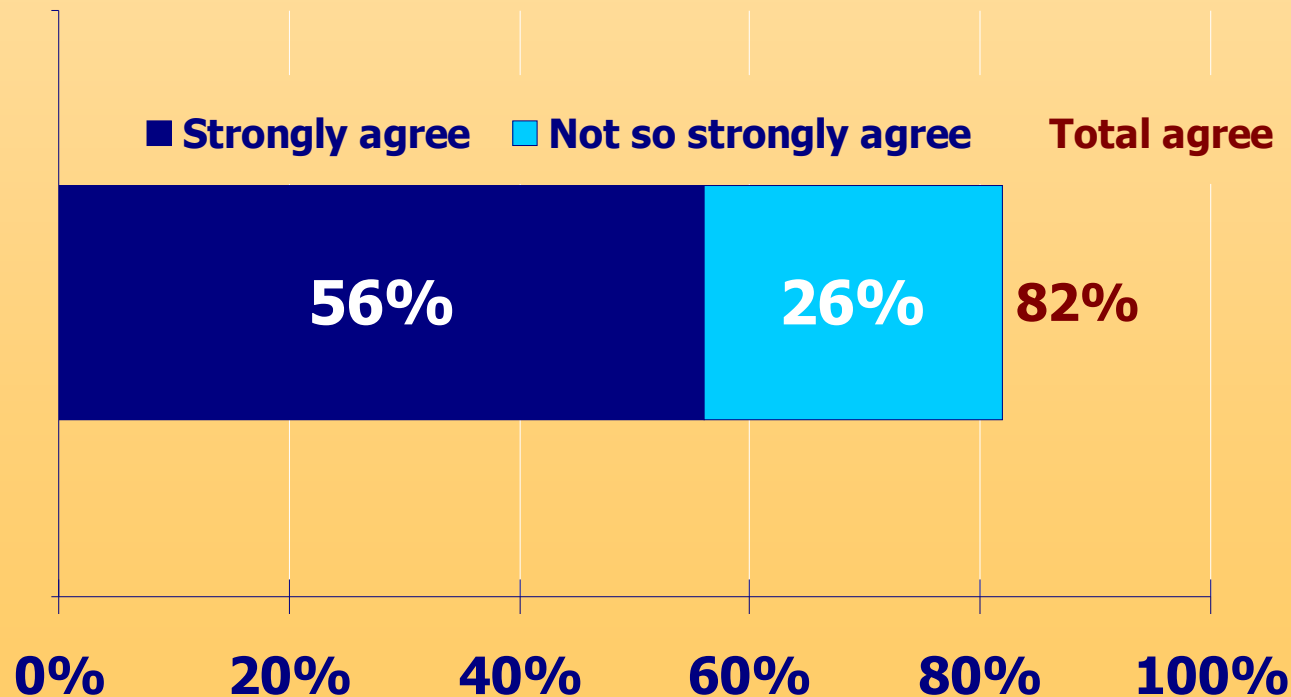
Workers see a strong working middle class as essential to the country's strength and security.

Making sure that America continues to have a strong working middle class is essential to the strength and security of our country.



They see working families falling behind, despite national economic indicators.

No matter what you hear about the economy, working families are falling behind.

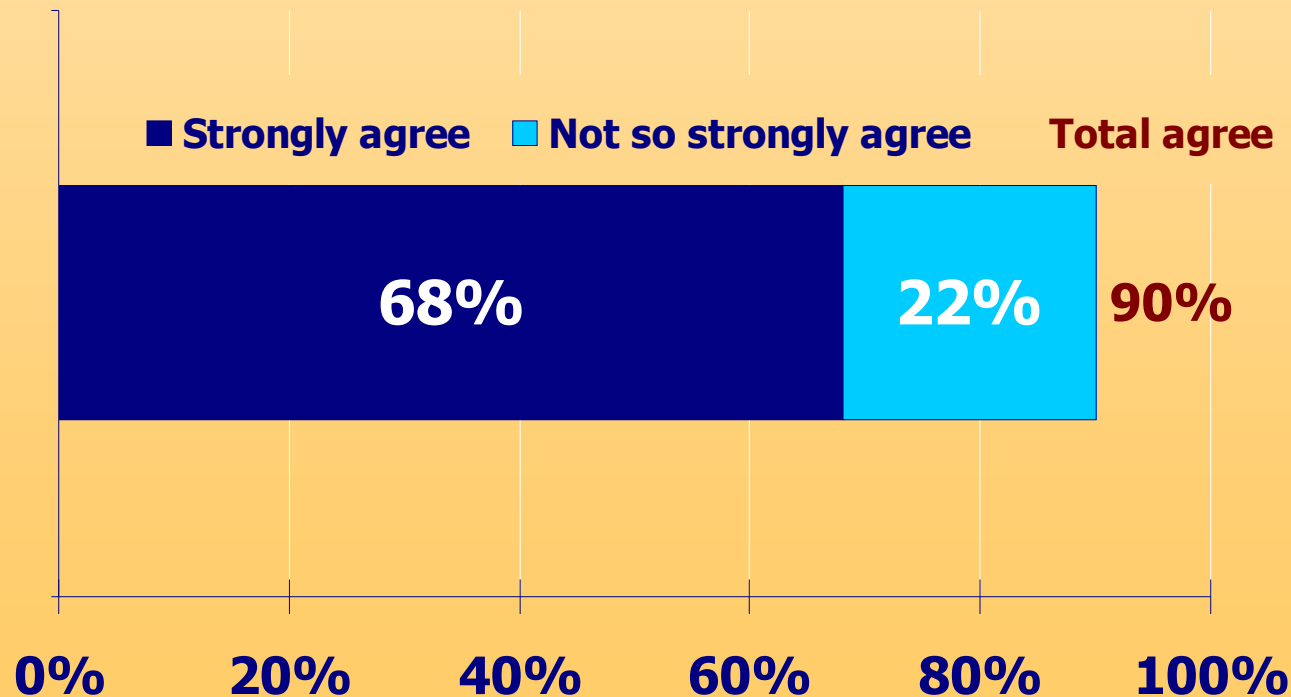


Anger:

*Corporate power is hurting the
American Dream.*

Workers are angry about profits only going to the top and want corporations held accountable.

Corporations in America have a responsibility to see to it that their workers get ahead when they are profitable, not just the CEOs.



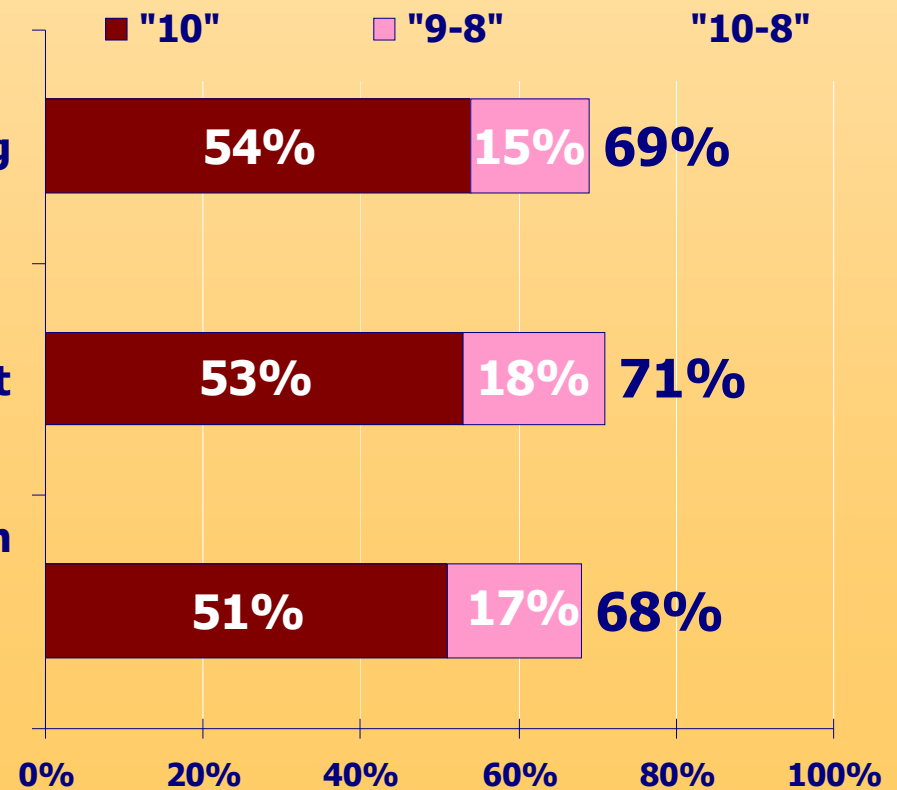
Workers see an increase in the power of the wealthy and corporations as obstacles to the American Dream.

I'm going to read you a list of things that some people say are reasons the American Dream is becoming more difficult to reach. For each one, please rate how convincing it is as a reason for why the American Dream may be more difficult to reach. Use a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means it is an extremely convincing reason, and 0 means it is not convincing at all as a reason.

The government gives tax breaks and special favors to the rich while neglecting working and middle class families.*

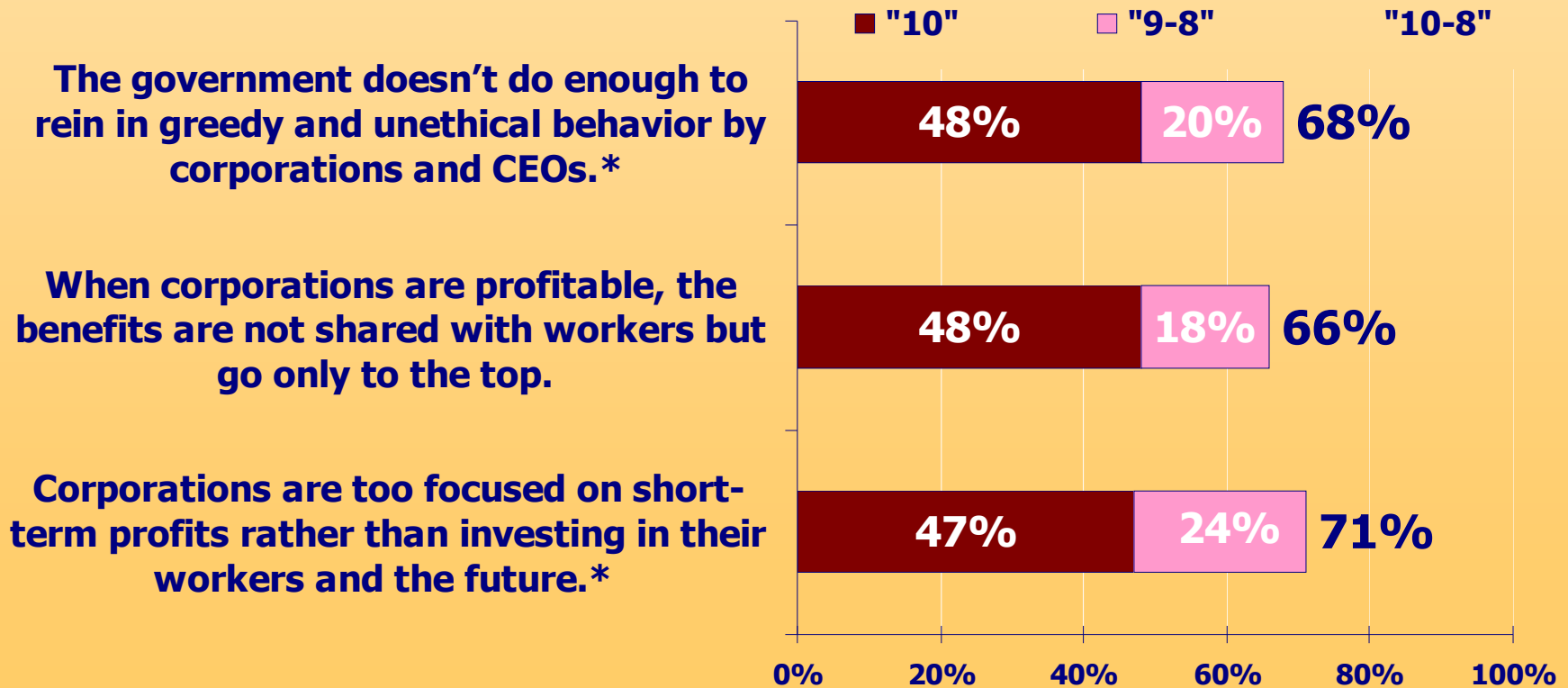
Corporations have gained too much power in the political system and that has hurt working people.

Multinational corporations have so much power they can drive down wages, eliminate health benefits and pensions, and disregard labor laws.



Workers see greedy CEOs and a focus on short-term profits as hurting the American Dream.

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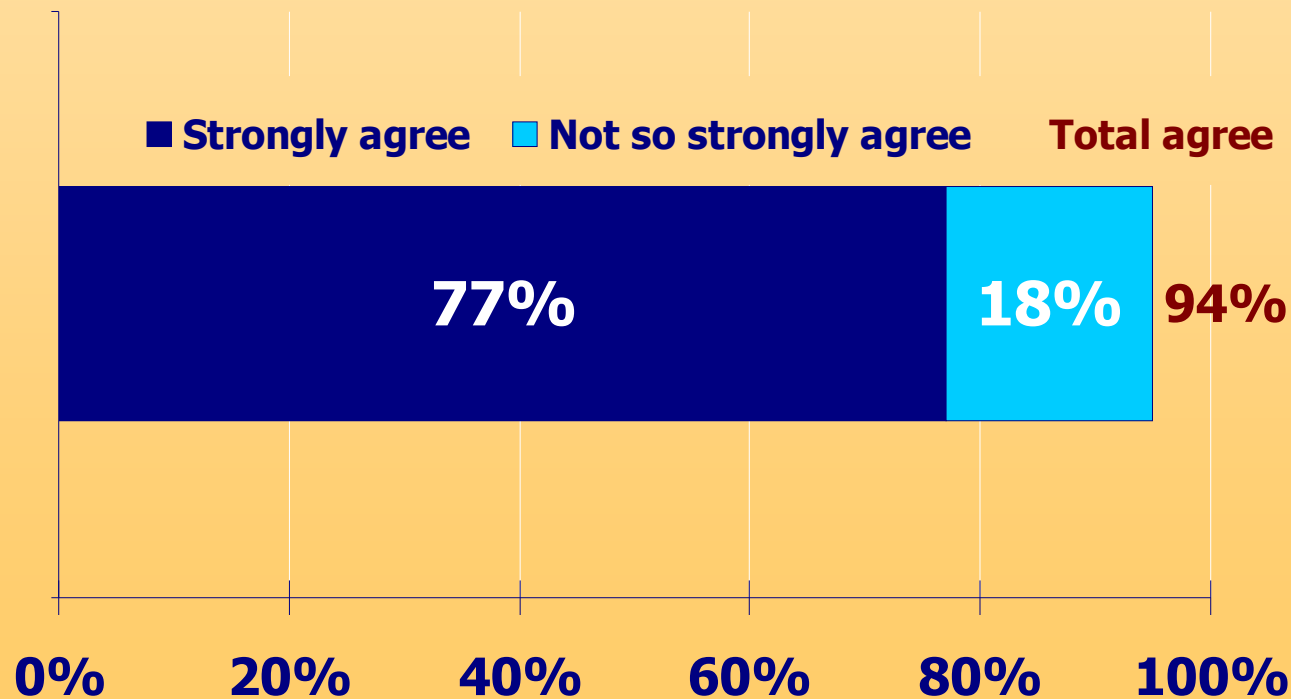


Cornerstones of the American Dream:

*Good wages, health care,
retirement security, opportunity
for children, and respect*

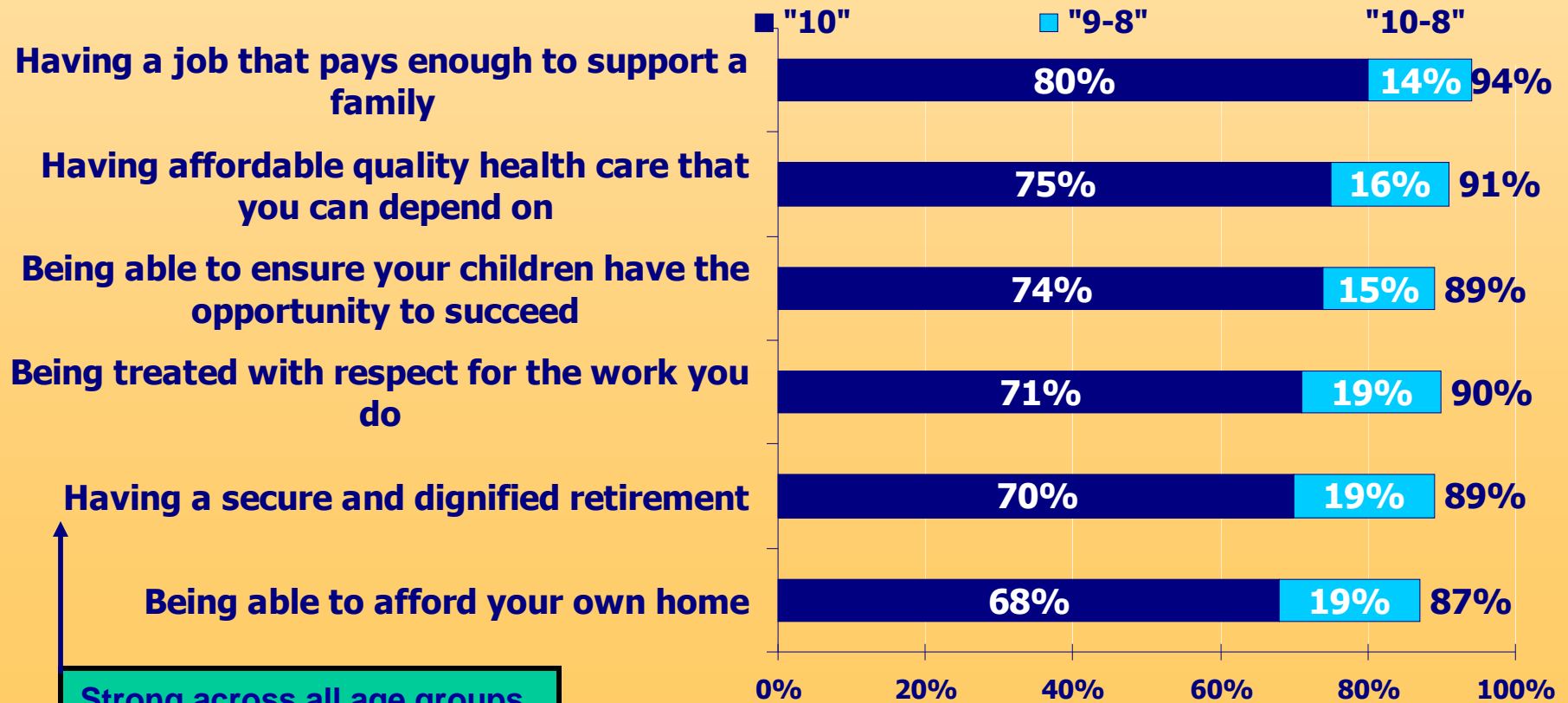
Workers strongly believe hard work should create economic security.

In America, hard work should lead to economic security for your family.



Being able to support your family and their future, and having basic benefits and respect at work are important elements of the American Dream.

I'm going to read some goals that some people say are important for reaching the American Dream. For each one, please rate how important it is for you personally as part of the American Dream. Again use a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means it is an extremely important part of the American Dream for you, and 0 means it is not important at all, and 5 is neutral.



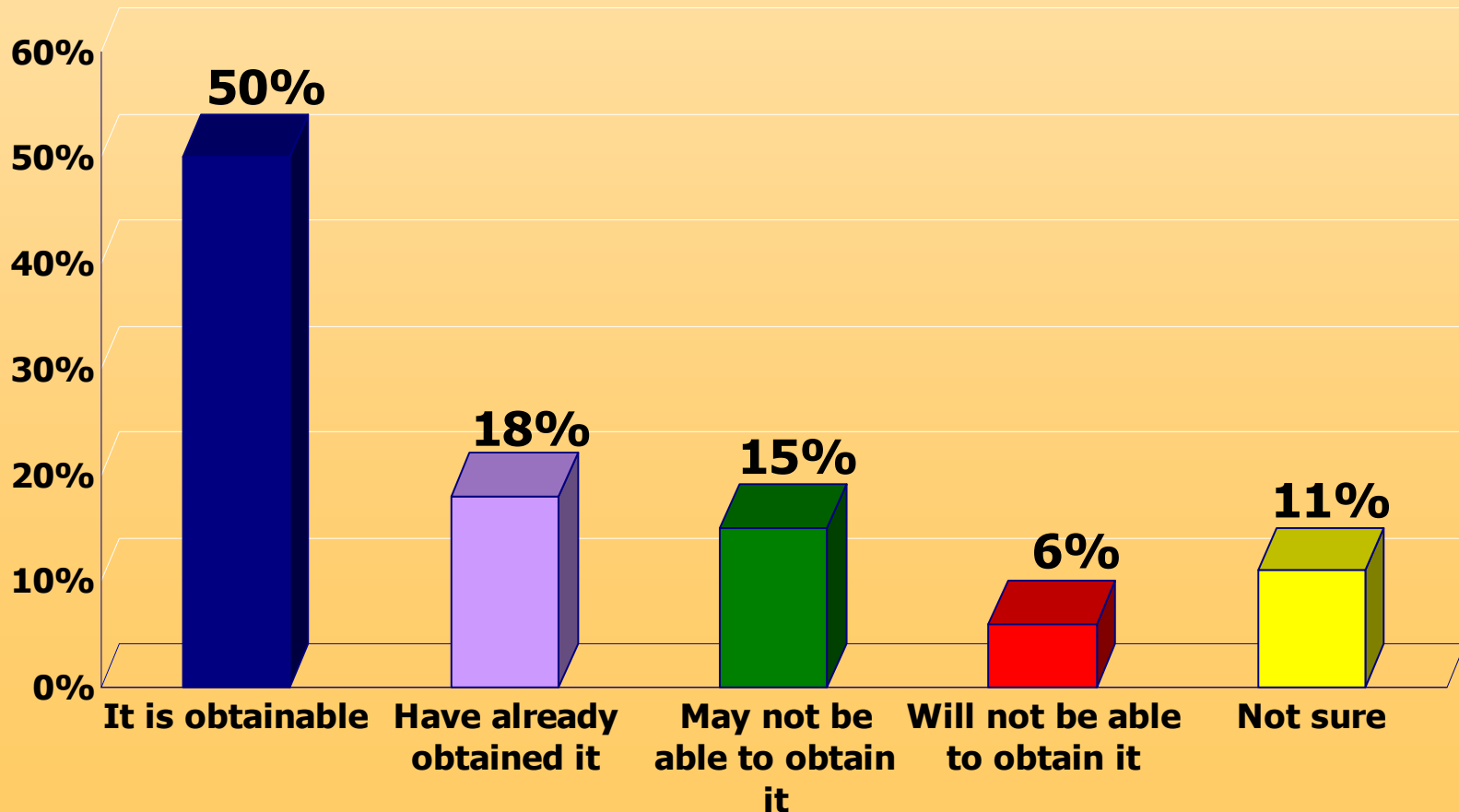
Strong across all age groups

Change is possible:

*Workers have not given up on the American Dream.
They believe that together they can rescue it.*

A majority believe the American Dream is still obtainable.

Thinking about the American Dream and what that means to you and your family, do you think the American Dream is obtainable, you have already obtained it, you may not be able to obtain it, you will not be able to obtain it, or you are not sure?

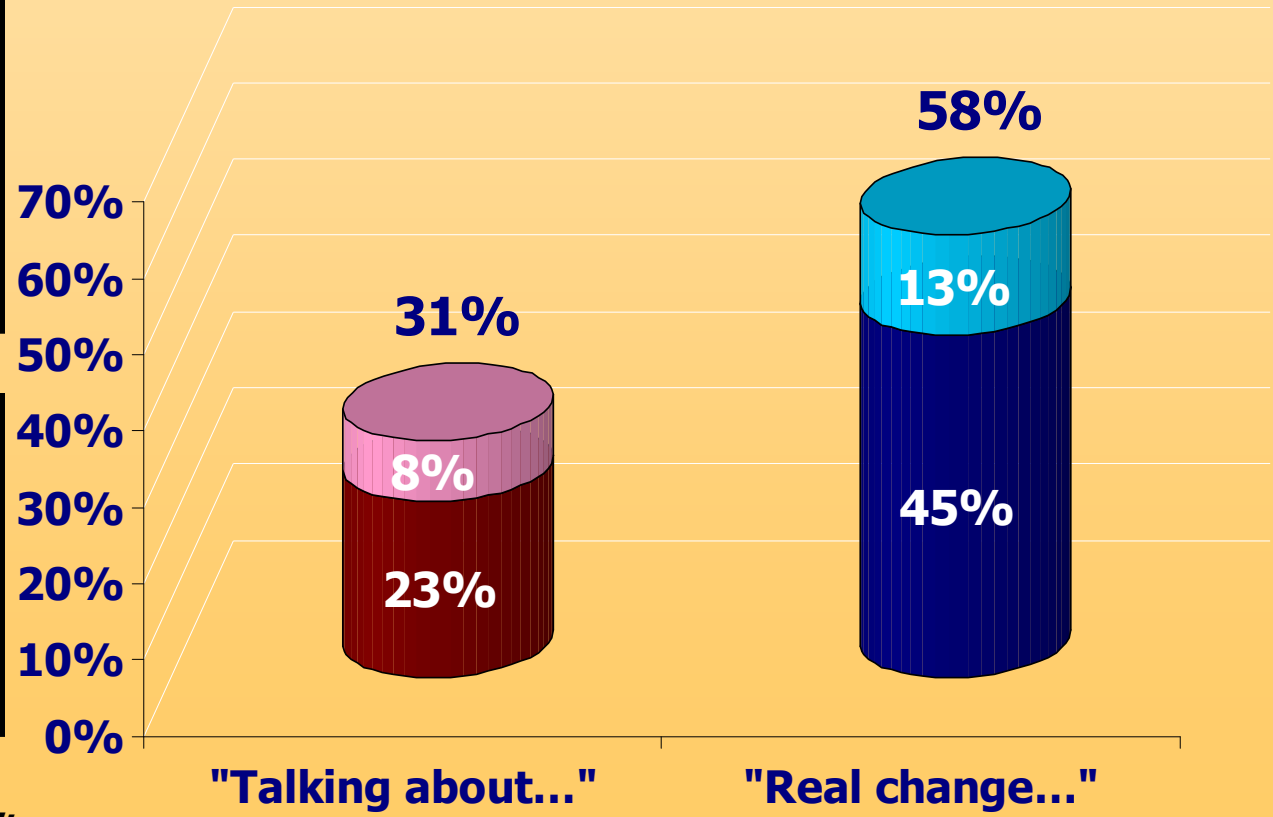


Workers believe real change is possible, working together.

Now I'm going to read you a pair of statements. Please tell me whether the *FIRST* statement or the *SECOND* statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right

Talking about restoring the American Dream sounds good but nothing will change. The wealthy and powerful make the rules in this country, and there's not much working people can do about it

Real change is possible if we join together businesses, families, working people, and community groups. We have done it before and we can restore the American Dream together

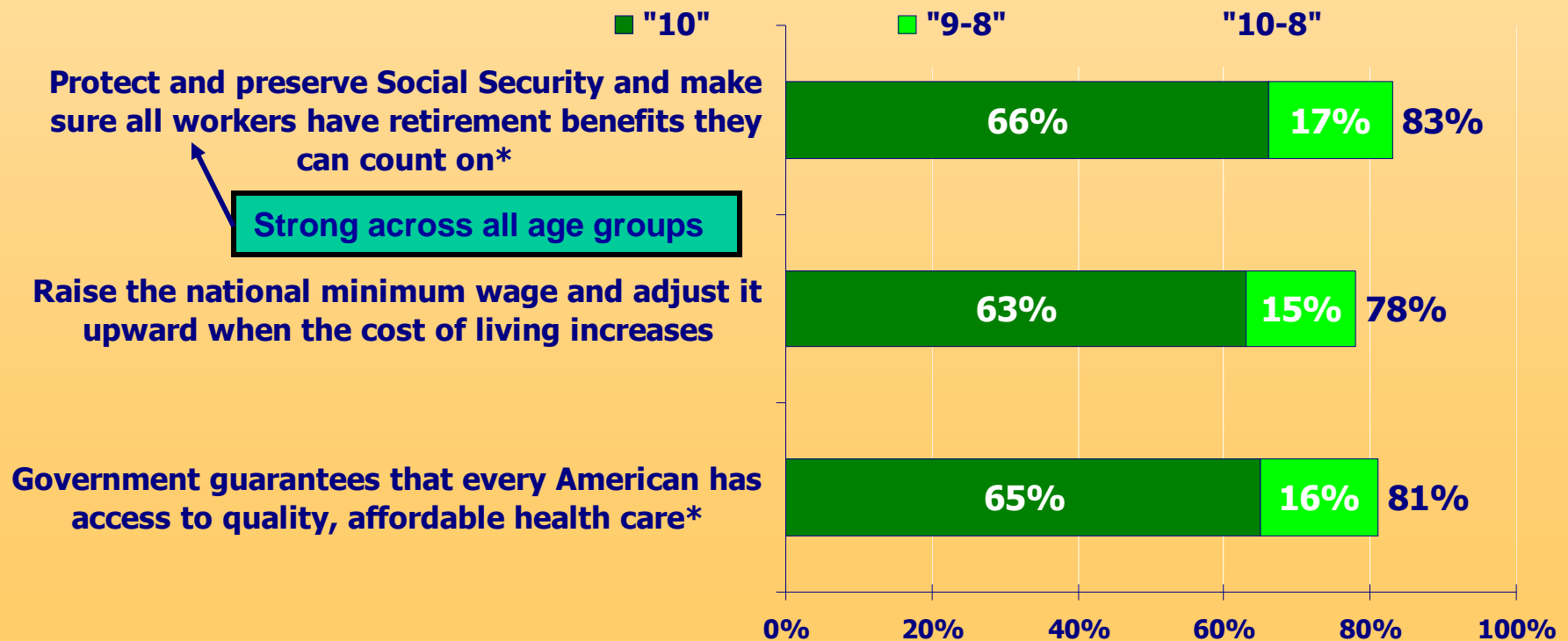


**Dark colors indicate intensity*

Action Agenda:
*Demanding corporate
accountability and strong
government action*

Protecting retirement security, raising the minimum wage, and health care reform are key pieces of the agenda.

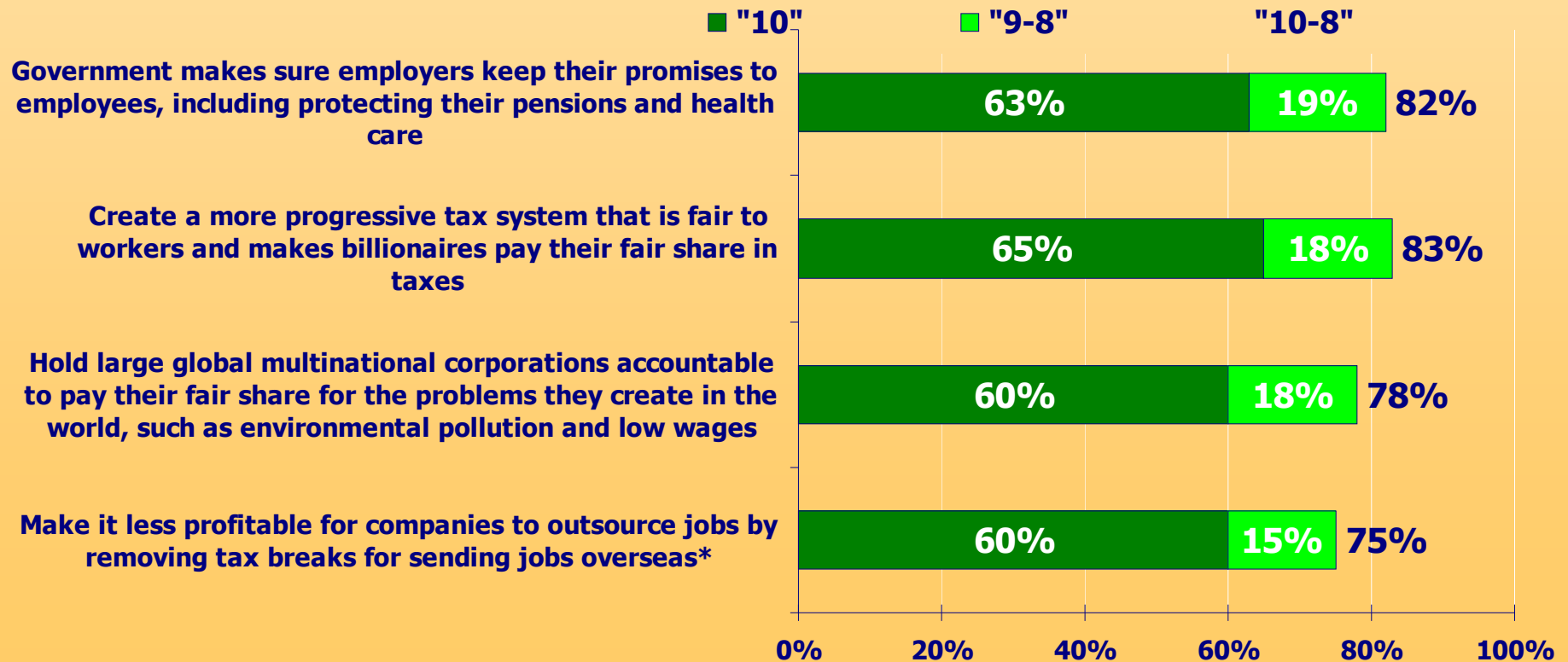
Now thinking overall about the goal of making the American Dream more attainable. I am going to read some steps that could be taken to help make the American Dream more attainable. For each one, please rate how effective that step would be in making the American Dream more attainable. Use a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means this step would be very effective, and 0 means the step is would not be effective at all, and 5 is neutral.



Strong across all age groups

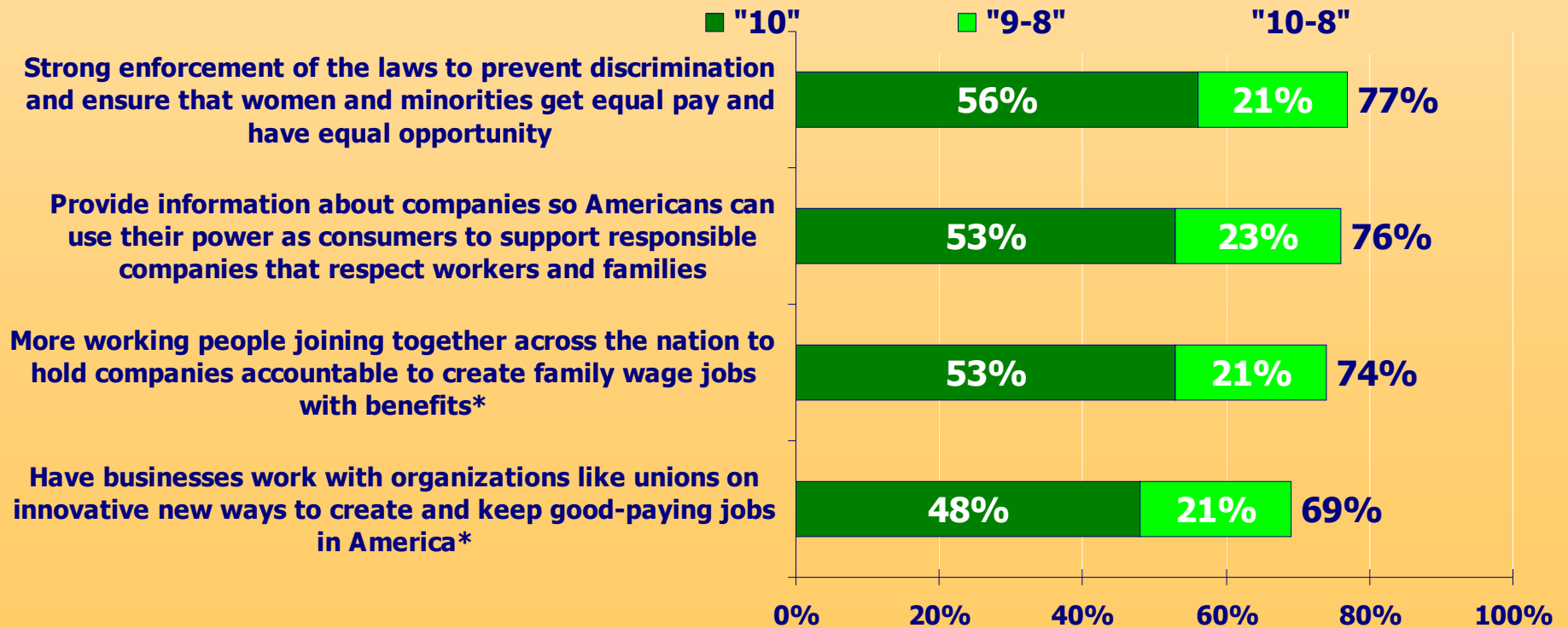
Workers want corporation held accountable.

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Additionally, workers want consumers and working people to take a role in holding corporations accountable.

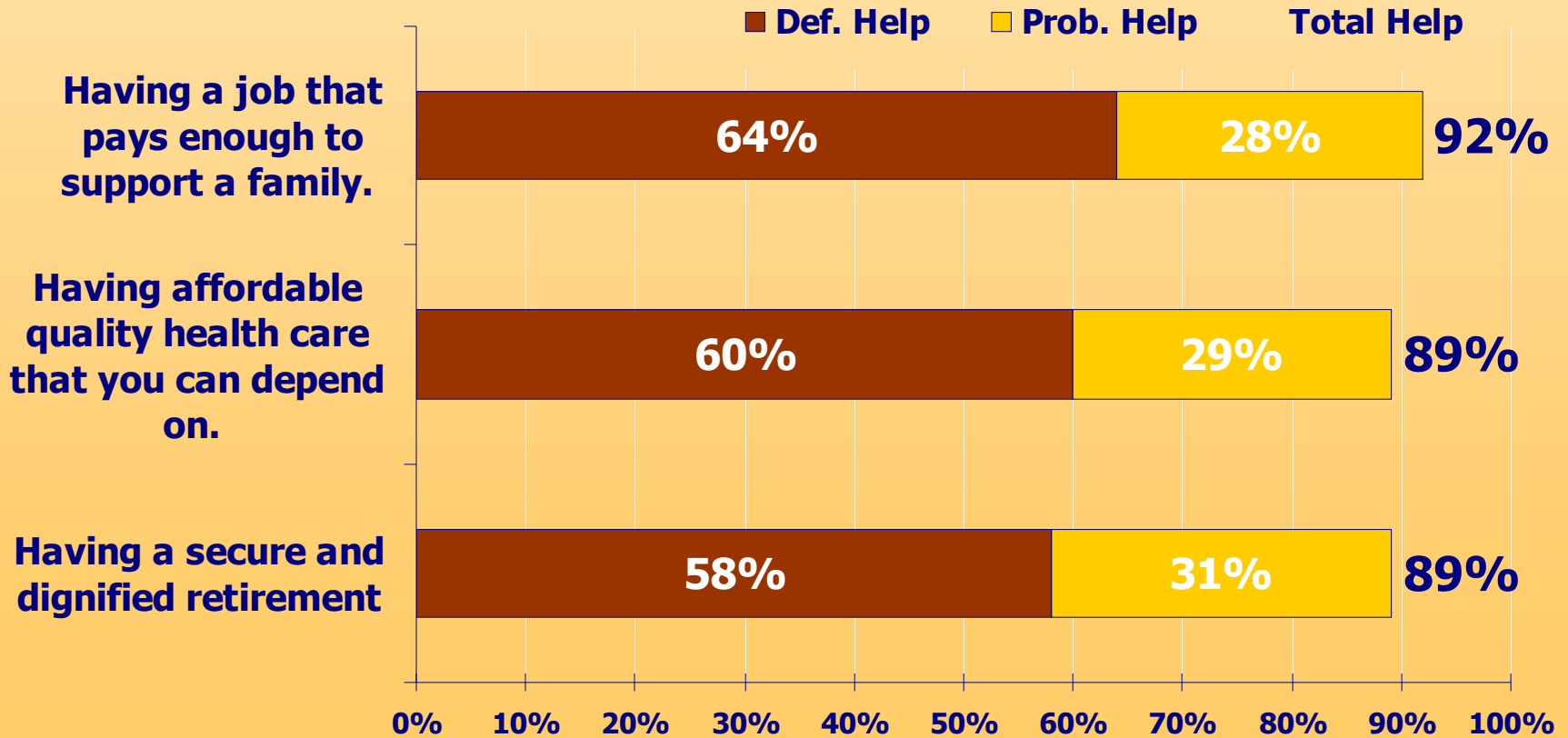
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Unions Can Help:
*Workers believe unions or
worker associations can
help them achieve key
measures of the Dream.*

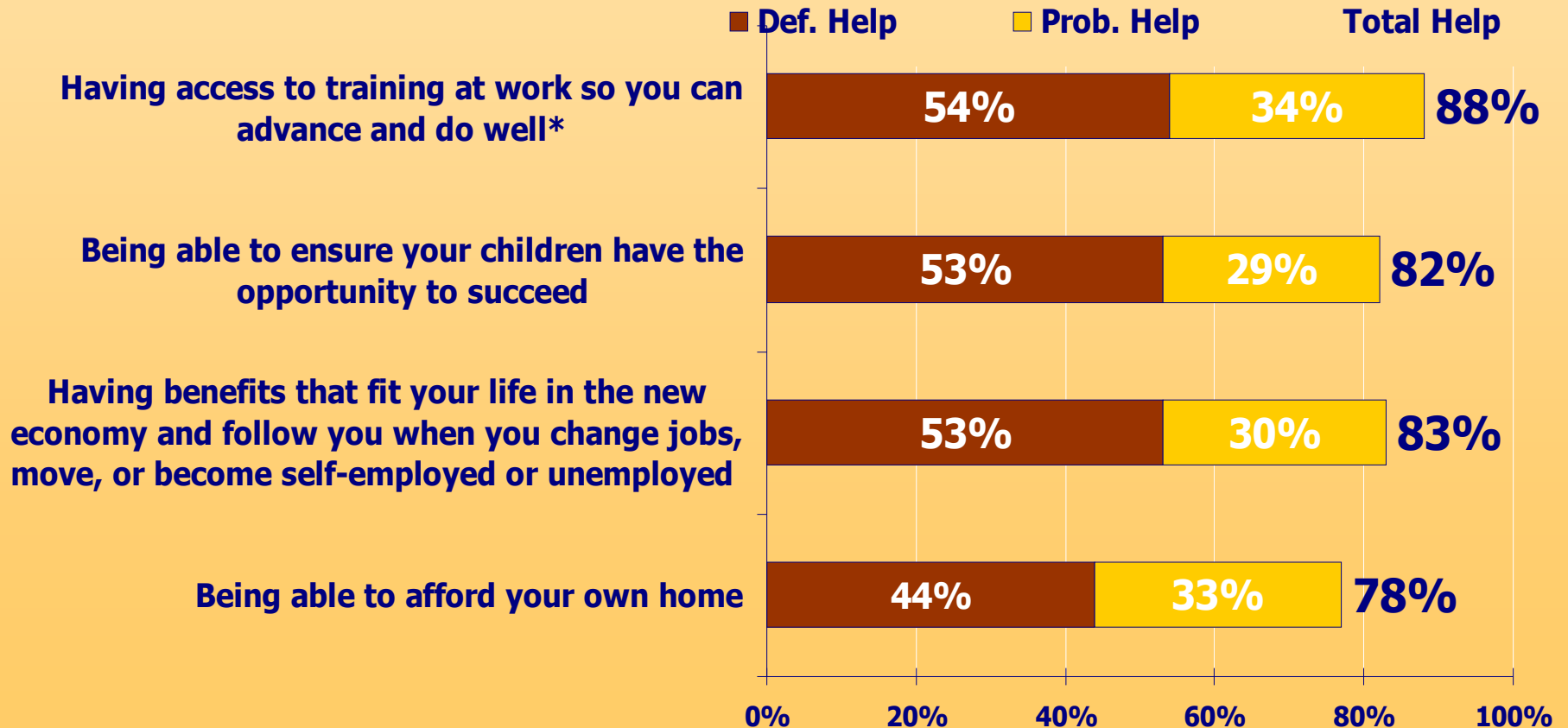
Workers see joining together in unions as helping them achieve family wages, health care, and retirement security.

I'm going to read some goals that some people say are important for reaching the American Dream. For each one, please tell me whether working people joining together in unions or worker associations would help achieve that goal or not.



Unions/associations also are important for career advancement, ensuring their children’s future, and owning a home.

I’m going to read some goals that some people say are important for reaching the American Dream. For each one, please tell me whether working people joining together in unions or worker associations would help achieve that goal or not.



* Asked of half of respondents