



State of the Facts 2019

State of the Facts Poll 2019

- Nationwide poll of 1,032 adults conducted October 15-28 using the AmeriSpeak Panel[®]. AmeriSpeak is NORC's probability based panel designed to be representative of all US households. Poll conducted by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research
 - Margin of error +/- 4.2 percentage points
 - 888 via the web and 144 via telephone
 - Interviews conducted in English and Spanish
 - Cumulative response rate of 8.5%
 - Final stage completion rate = 29.1%
 - Weighted household panel response rate = 34.2%
 - Weighted household panel retention rate = 85.6%
- Examines views on federal government information and perceptions of facts

Key Findings



State of the Facts Poll 2019

- Americans say they face a challenging environment for finding facts.
 - Nearly half say they struggle with knowing whether information is true or not. This holds for Democrats and Republicans.
 - Majorities say the sources they come across are one-sided, and that they get conflicting information across sources.
 - Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say sources are one-sided.
 - Local TV, national TV, and social media are top news sources for information about the government but trust in these sources is low, especially for social media.

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- Americans are deeply divided along party lines in where they get information, and what they trust.
 - Democrats trust information from scientists, academics, and the media more than Republicans do.
 - Democrats are much more likely to use and trust national news sources; Republicans are more likely to trust the president.
 - Republicans express greater trust than Democrats in data from the government on the economy, immigration, foreign affairs and infrastructure.
- About 4 in 10 adults say political division in the country is due to Americans' reliance on different facts.

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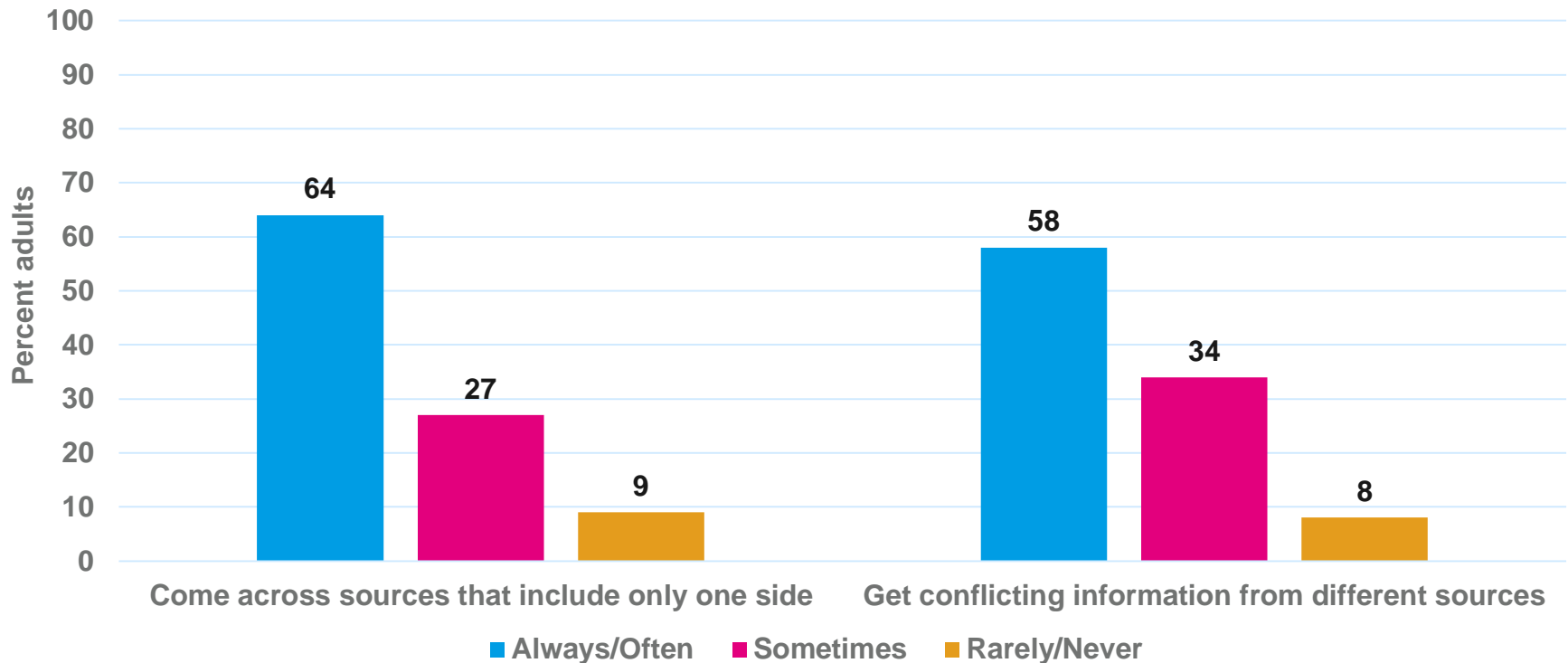
- Still, the public overwhelmingly agrees on what facts should be.
 - Majorities of Democrats and Republicans say transparency and being backed up by data are key elements.
- Americans across parties think the president's and Congress' politics influence federal government information. A minority says the same about employees of federal agencies.
 - As a source, the government is not often used or trusted compared to other places people go for facts.

State of the facts



Majorities report they frequently come across one-sided sources and conflicting information

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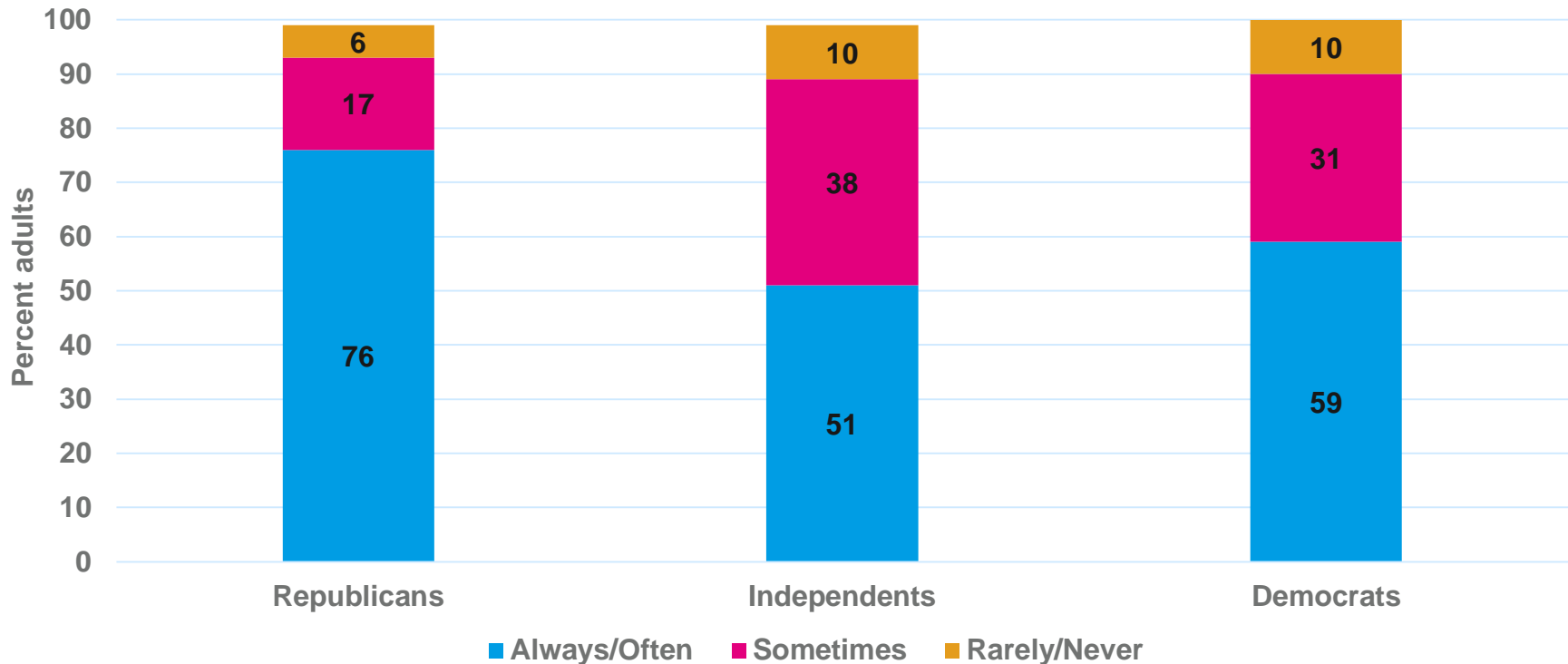


Question: How often do you feel like you ...

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Republicans are most likely to frequently come across one-sided sources

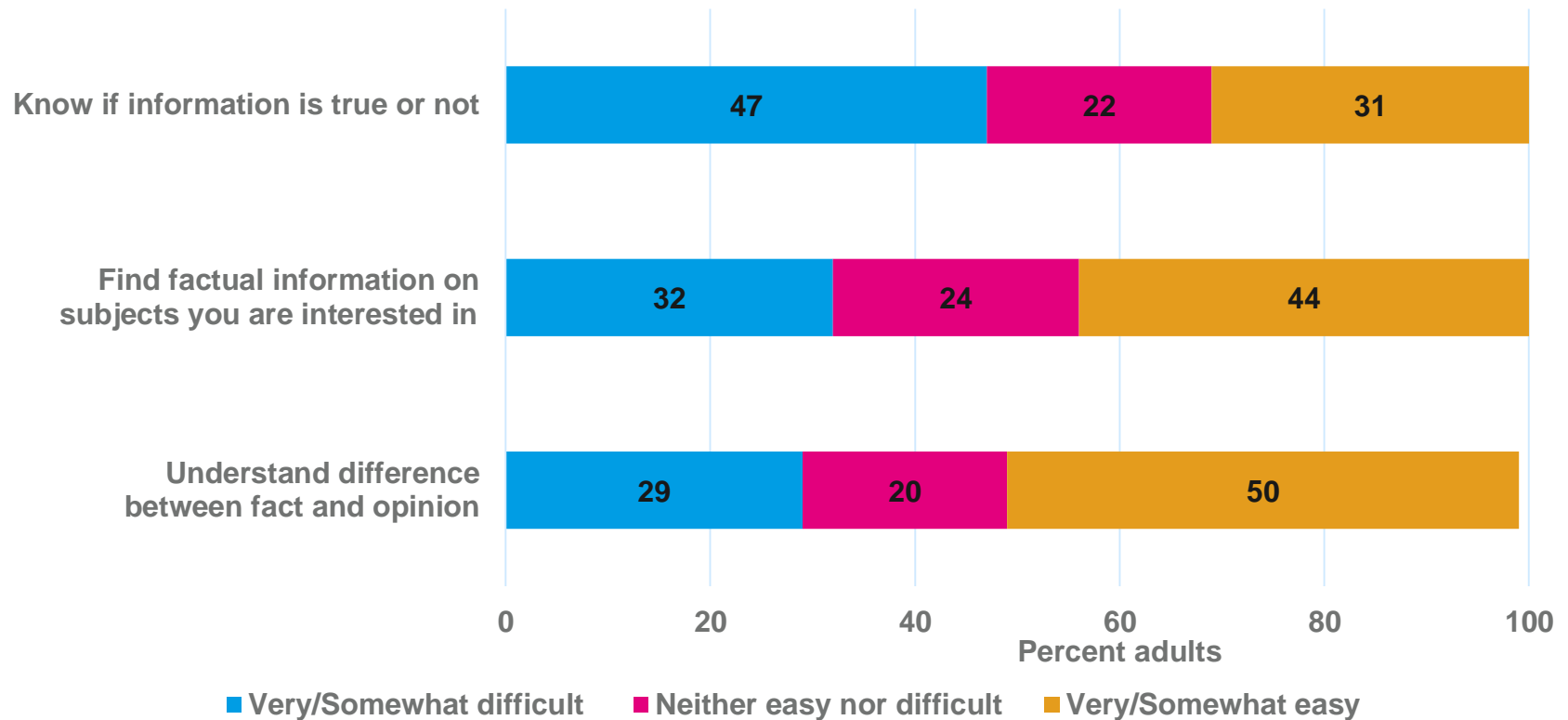
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Question: How often do you feel like you come across sources that include only one side ...
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Nearly half say it is hard to know if information is true, but fewer say the same about parsing fact vs. opinion

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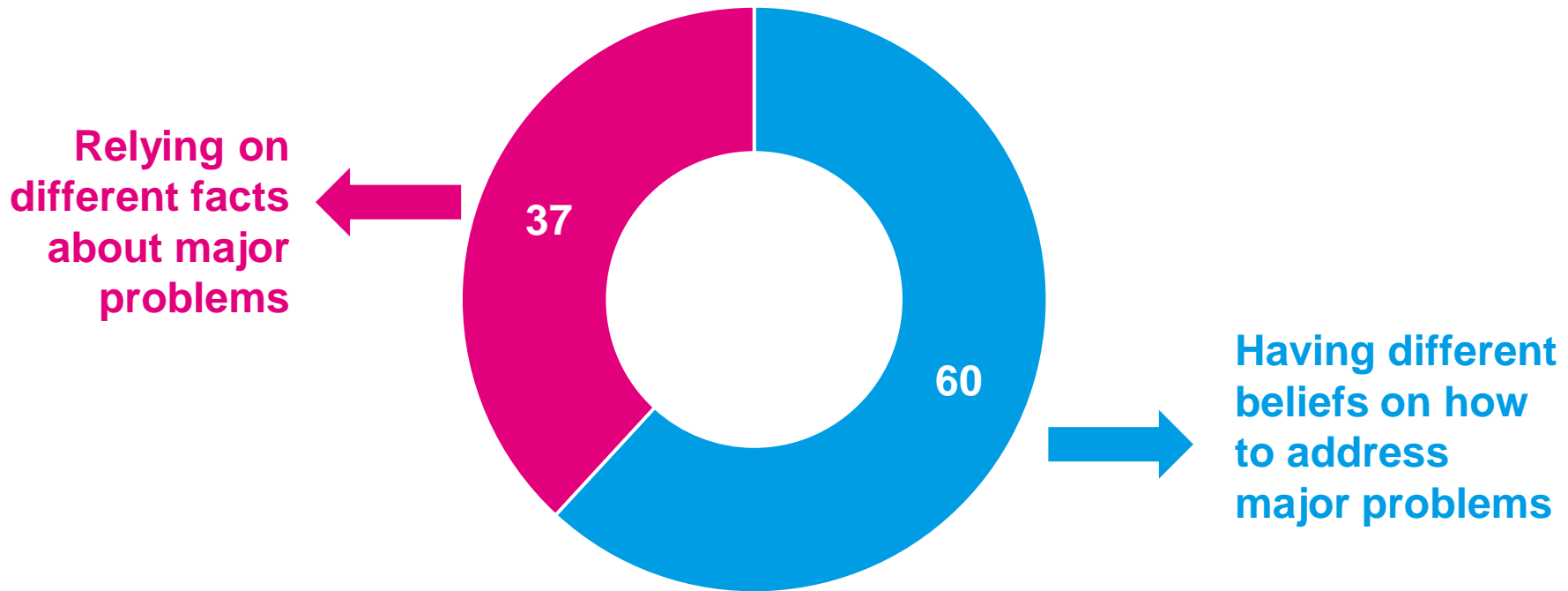


Question: Next, these days, how easy or difficult is it for you to...

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Majority says political division is due to different beliefs; nearly 4 in 10 say it's about different facts

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Question: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

Political division in the United States is more a result of Americans...

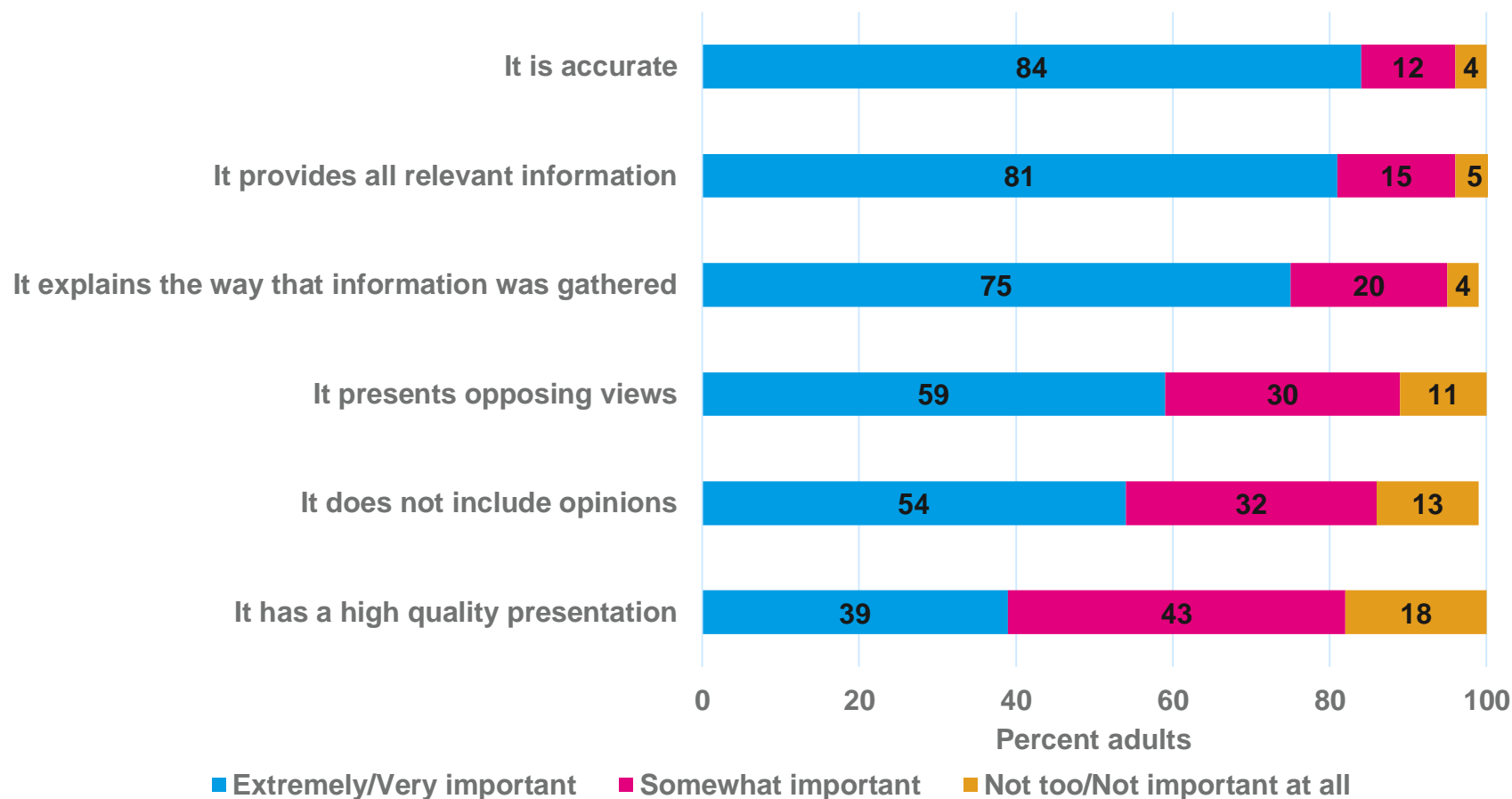
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

What is a fact?



Key characteristics of a fact include accuracy, completeness, and transparency

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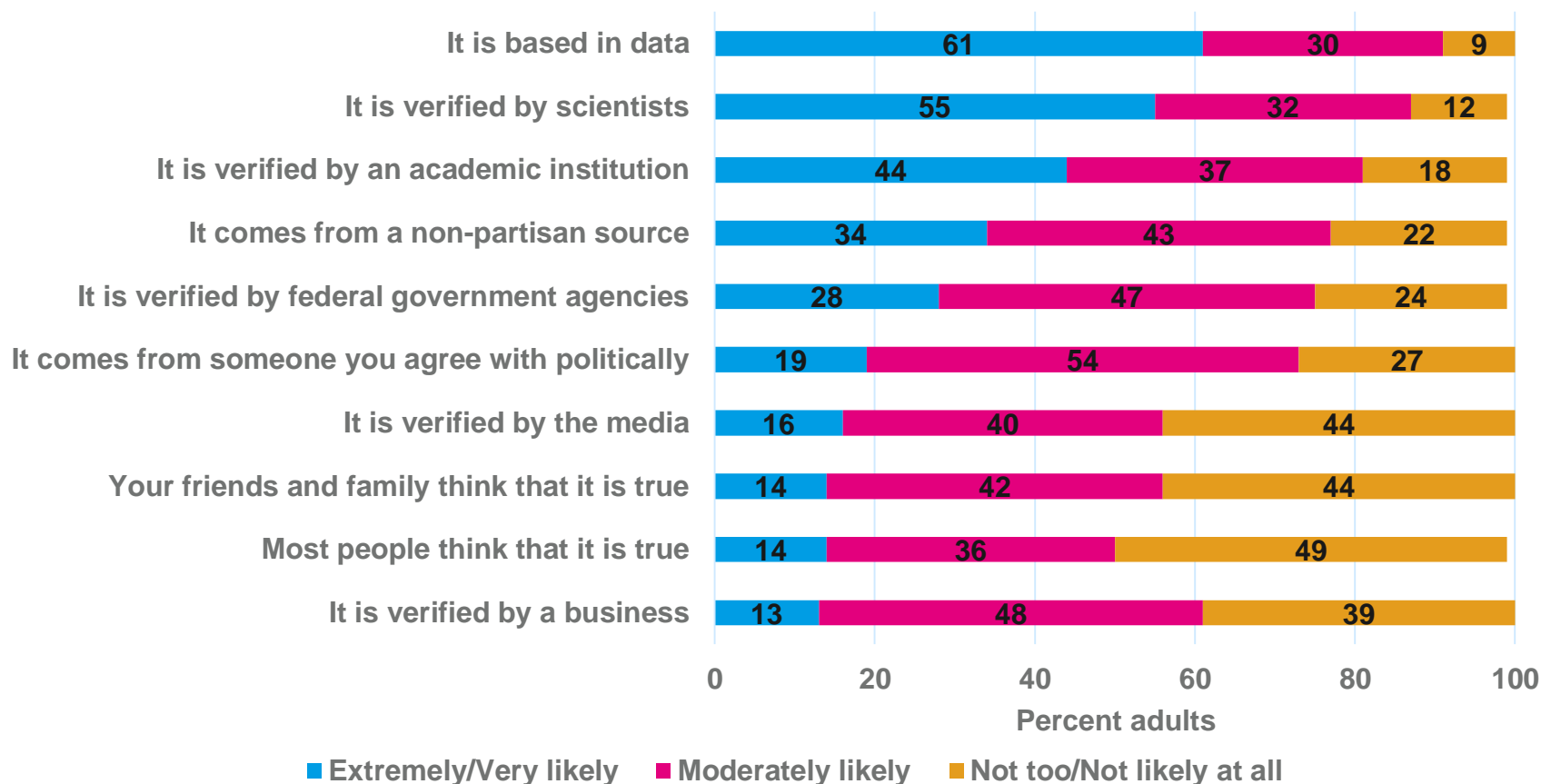


Question: Thinking about information you consider factual, how important is each of the following factors?
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



Majorities consider information factual if it is based in data and validated by scientists

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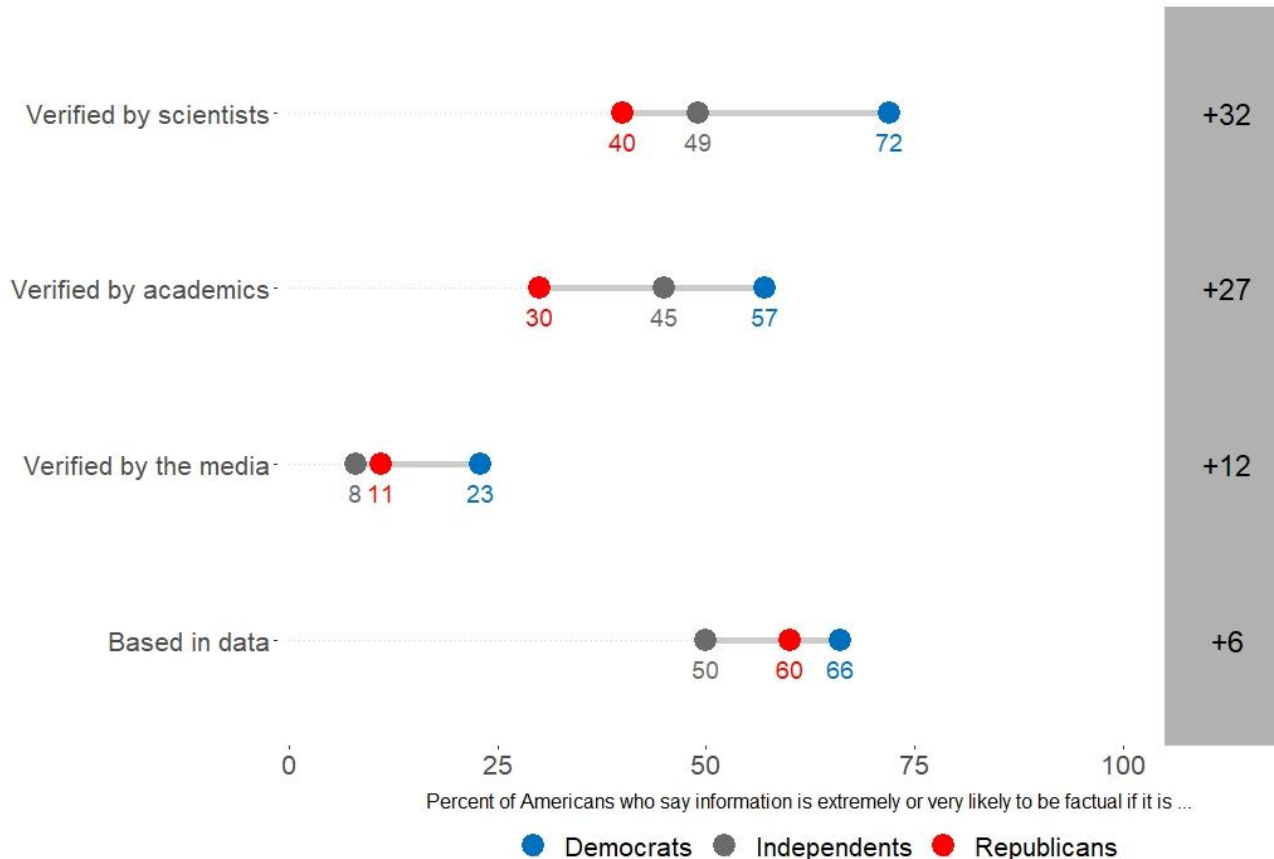
Question: How likely are you to consider information factual if it has each of the following characteristics?
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



Democrats and Republicans agree facts are based in data, disagree about scientists, academics, and media

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Percentage point difference between Democrats and Republicans

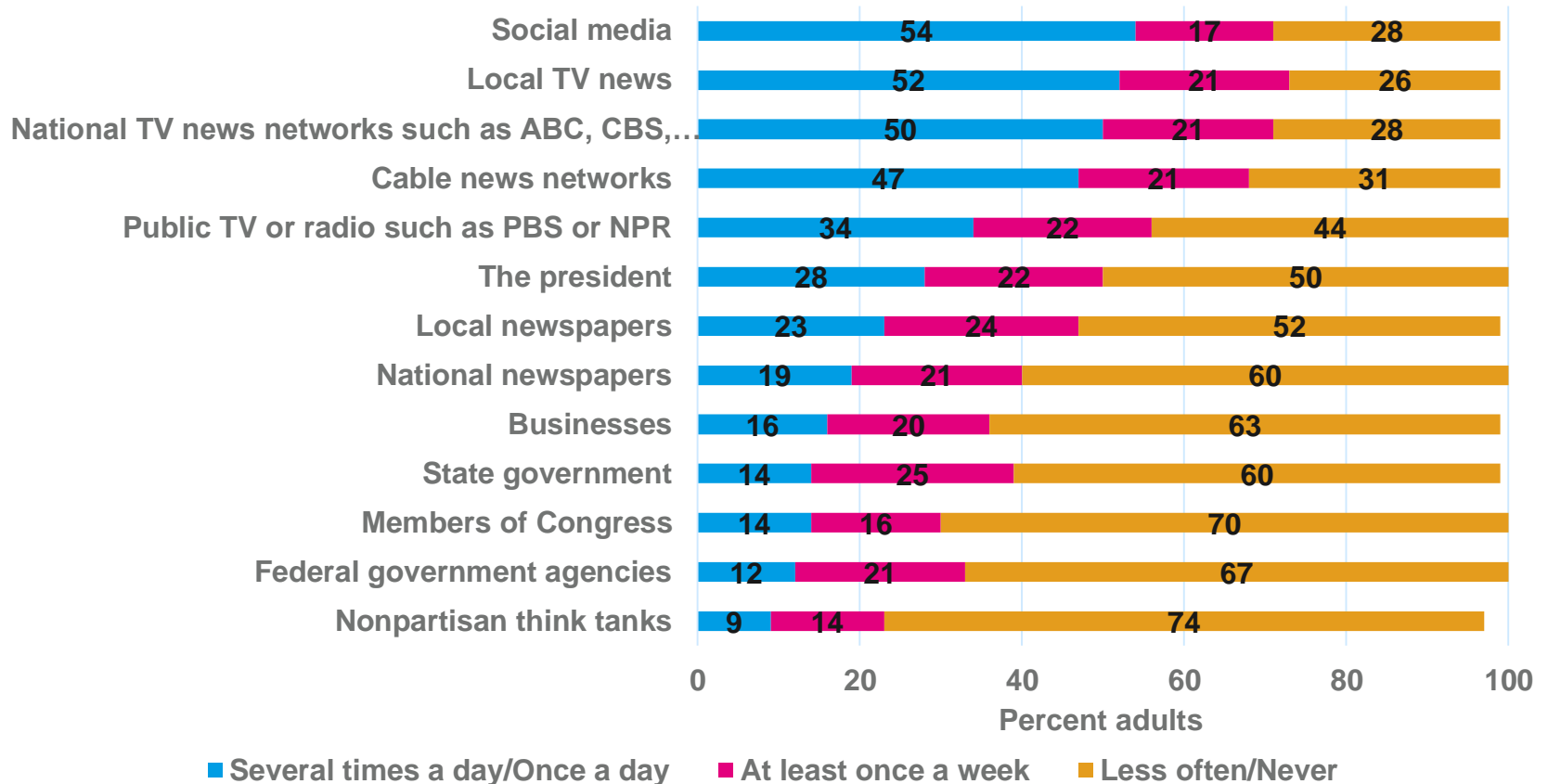


Question: How likely are you to consider information factual if it has each of the following characteristics?
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults
Note: Only significant partisan differences shown.



Social media and news media are top sources of information about the government

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Question: Thinking about some of the ways you get information about the government these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from ...

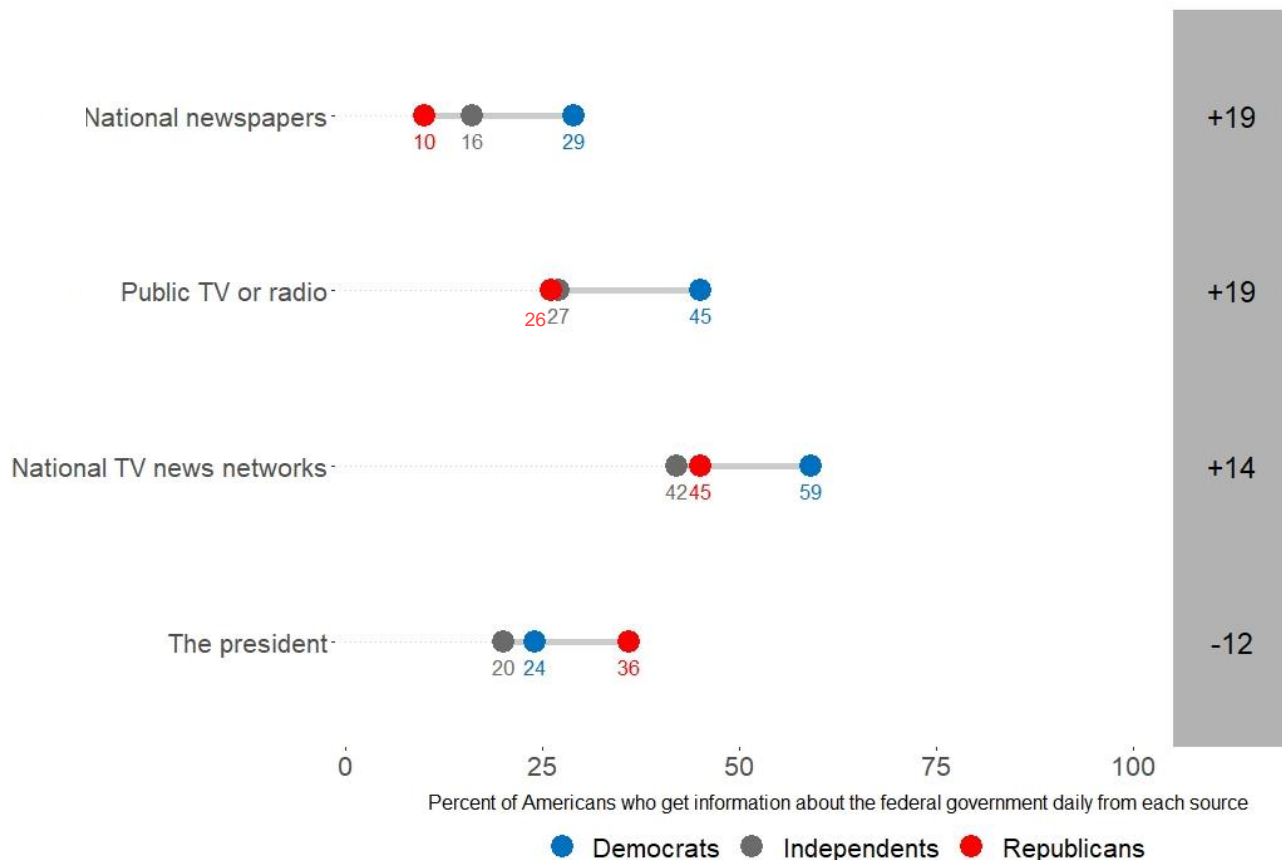
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



Democrats and Republicans differ in their use of several information sources

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Percentage point difference between Democrats and Republicans



Question: Thinking about some of the ways you get information about the government these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from...

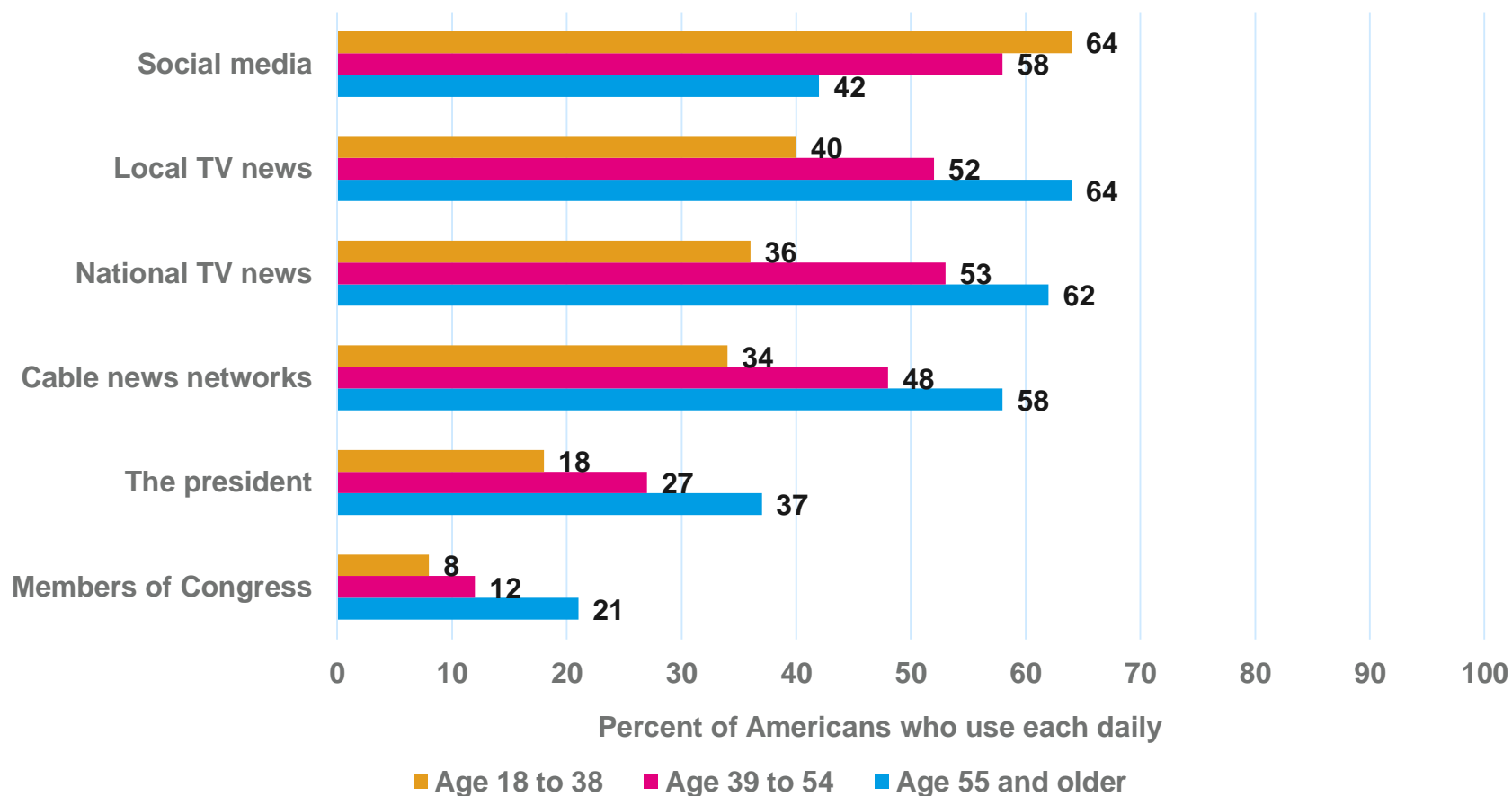
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Note: Only significant partisan differences shown.



Younger generations are more likely to get news from social media, while Boomers are more likely to turn to TV

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Question: Thinking about some of the ways you get information about the government these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from...

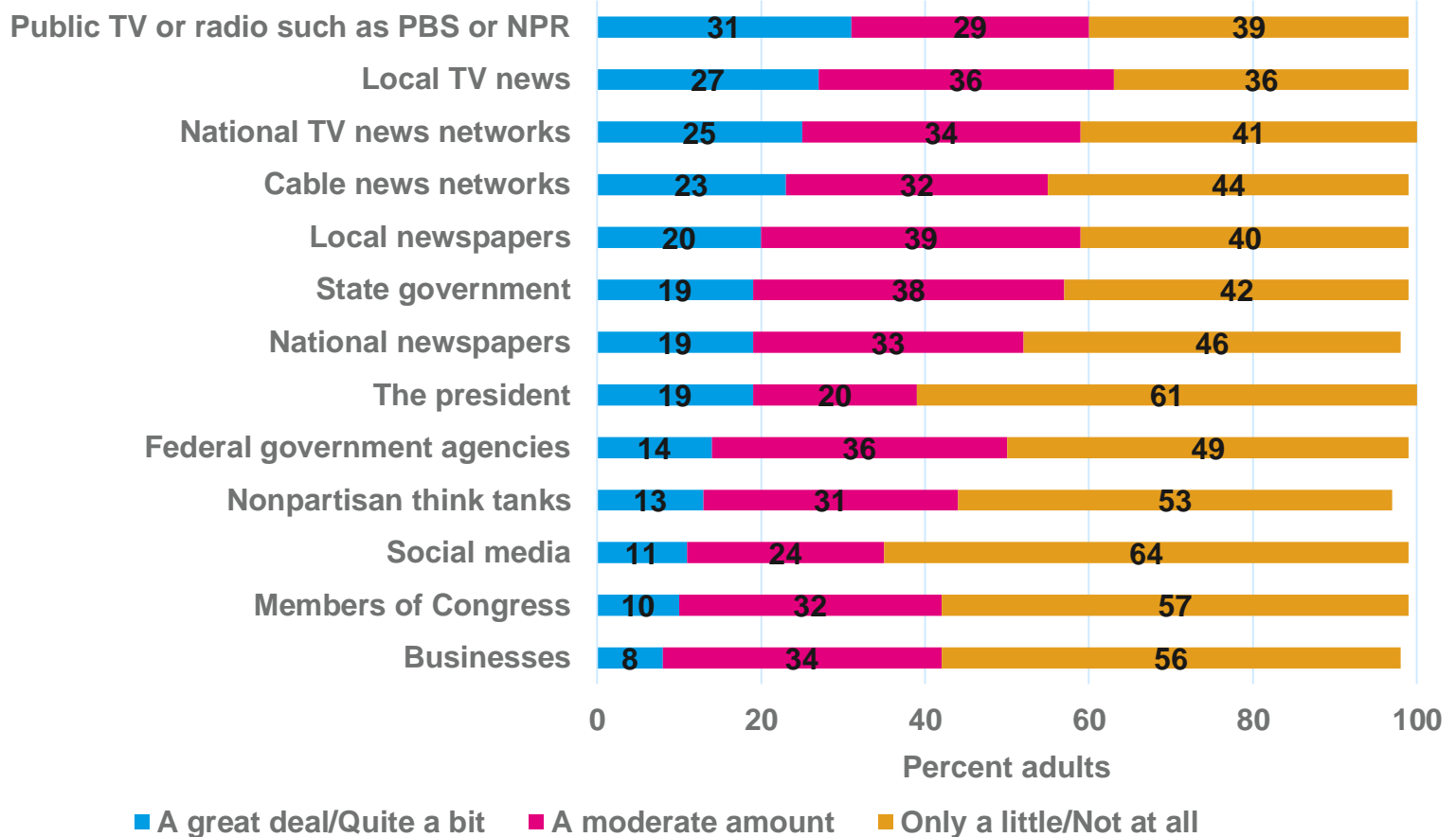
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Note: Only significant differences between age groups shown



Trust in information sources is low across the board, but especially for social media

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Question: Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about the government?

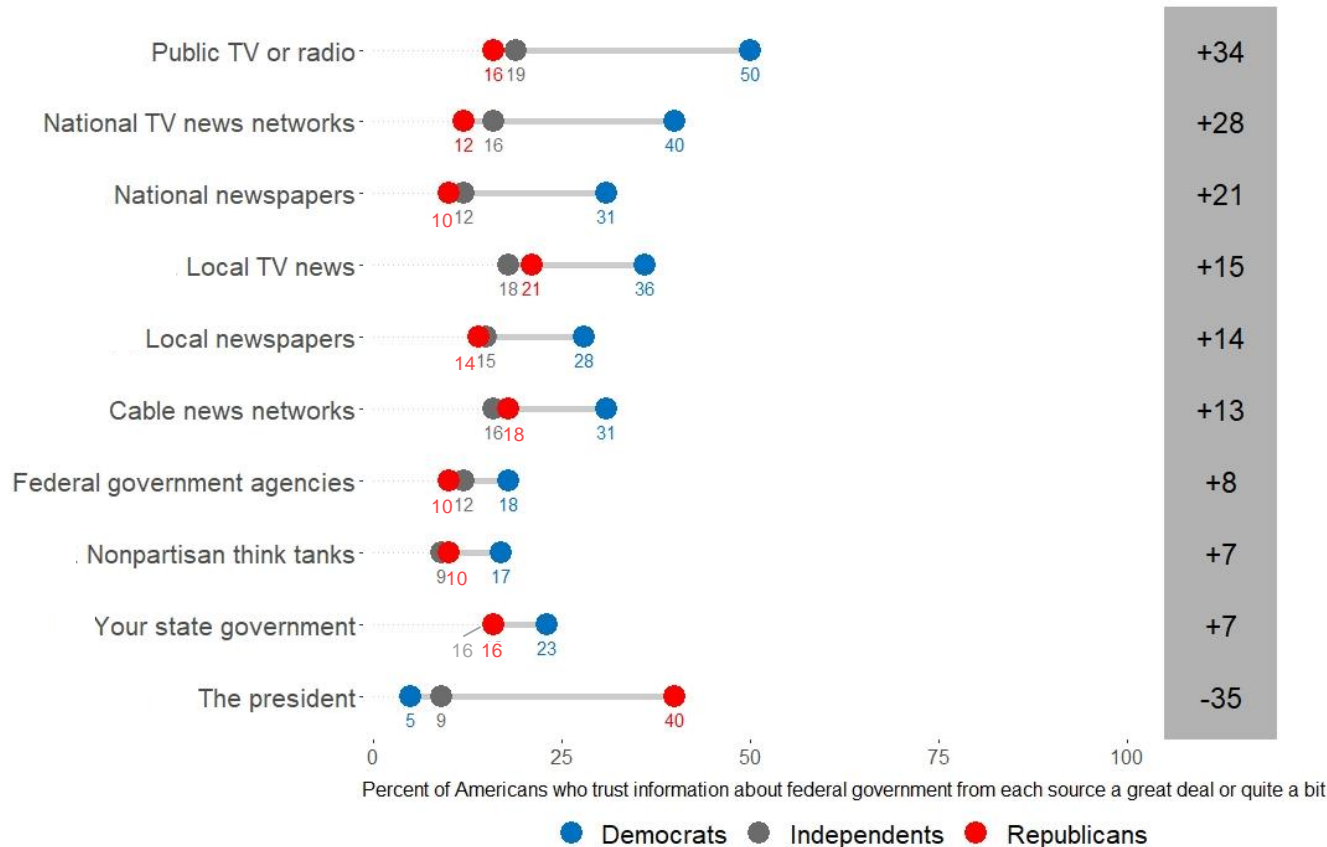
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



Republicans more likely to trust the president about government info, Democrats trust the media more

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Percentage point difference between Democrats and Republicans



Question: Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about the government?

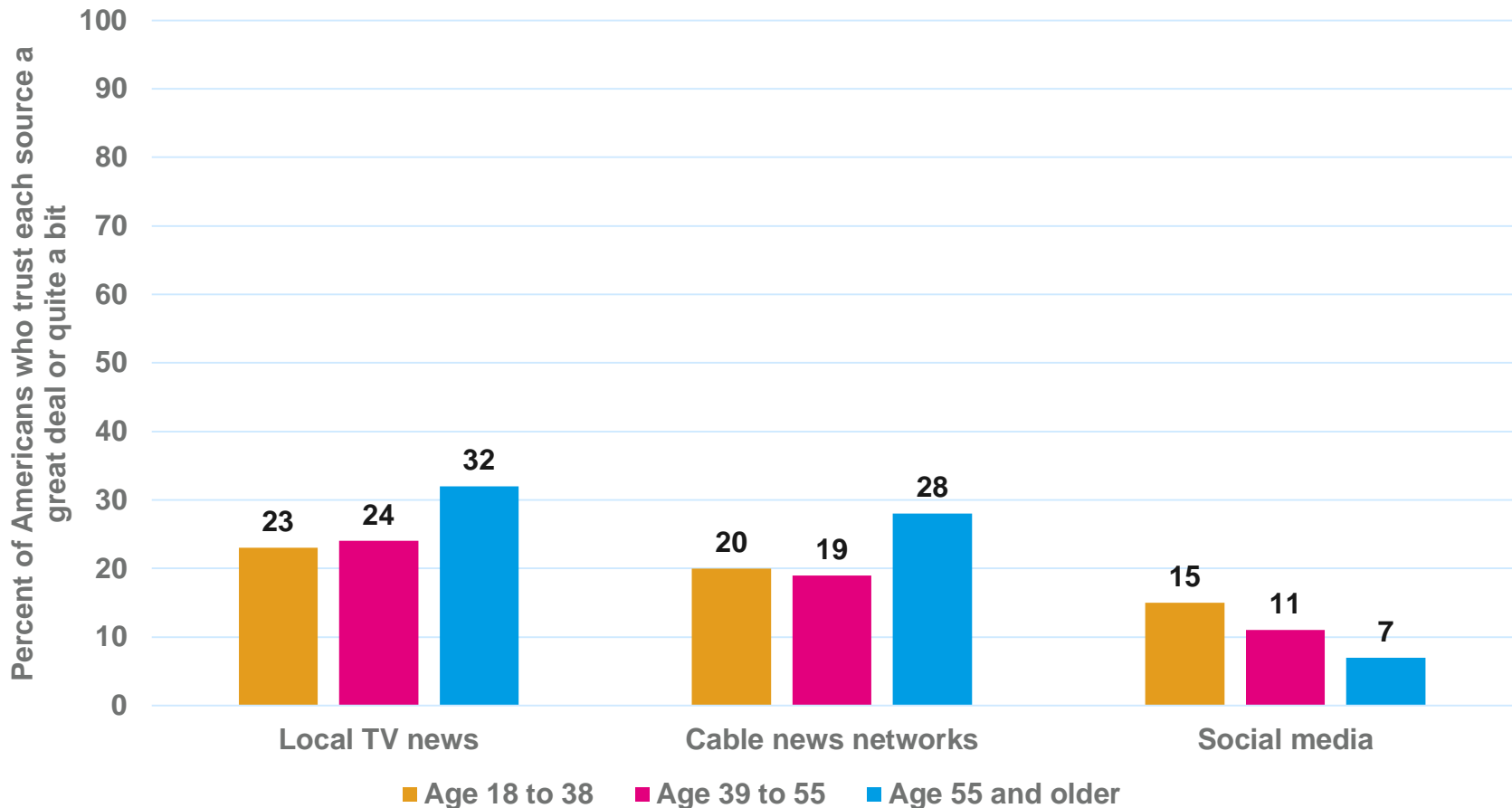
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Note: Only significant partisan differences shown.



Older generations more likely to trust local, cable news; trust in social media is low, but highest for millennials

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Question: Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about the government?

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Note: Only significant differences between age groups shown



For major sources, there is a large gap in % of people who use it frequently and people who trust it a lot

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Source	% Use	% Trust	Use-Trust Gap
Social media	54	11	43
Local TV news	52	27	25
National TV news	50	25	25
Cable news	47	23	24
The president	28	19	9
Businesses	16	8	8
Members of Congress	14	10	4
Public TV or radio	34	31	3
Local newspapers	23	20	3
National newspapers	19	19	0
Federal government agencies	12	14	-2
Nonpartisan think tanks	9	13	-4
State government	14	19	-5

Questions: Thinking about some of the ways you get information about the government these days, how often, if at all, do you get information from...% who use it at least once a day
/Regardless of how often you get information from these sources, how much do you trust information from them about the government? % trust a great deal/quite a bit

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

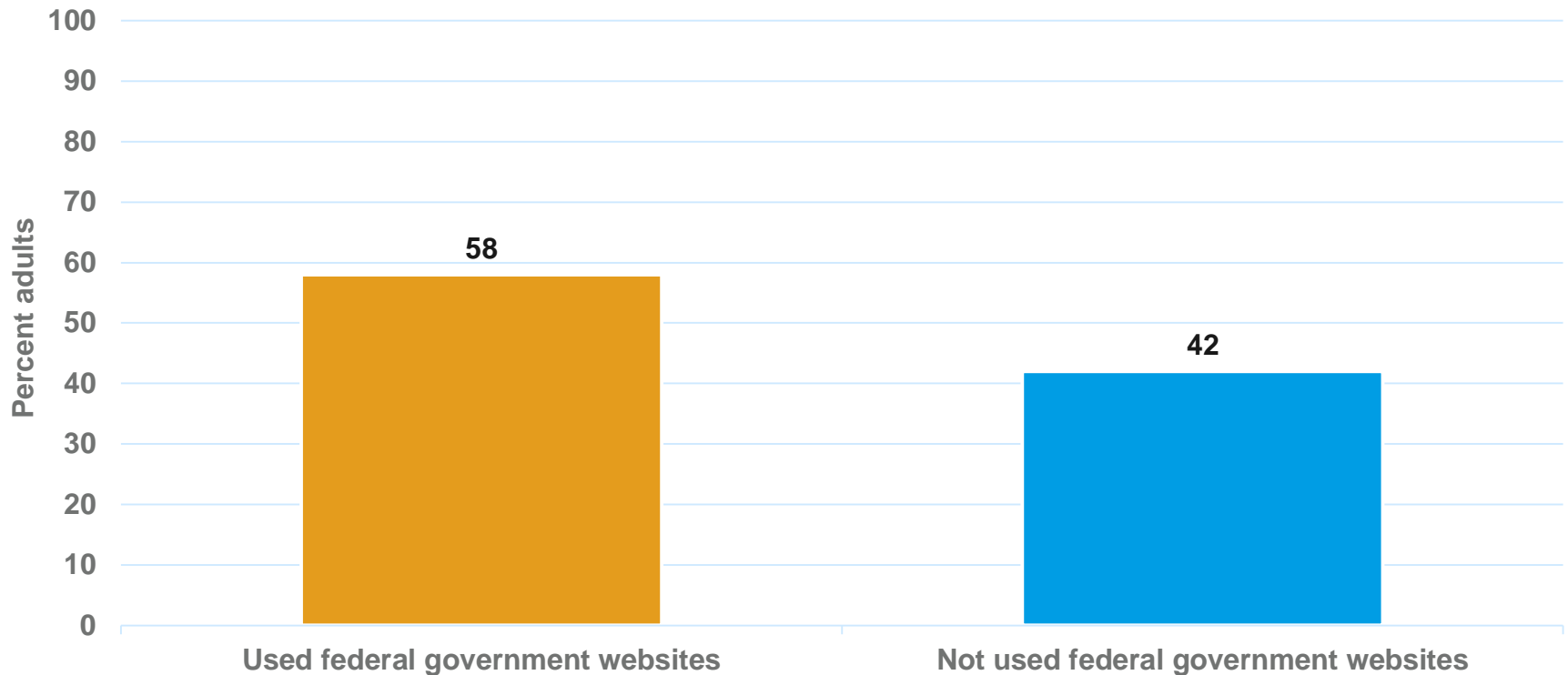


Federal government as a source



A majority of Americans have used federal government websites to find information

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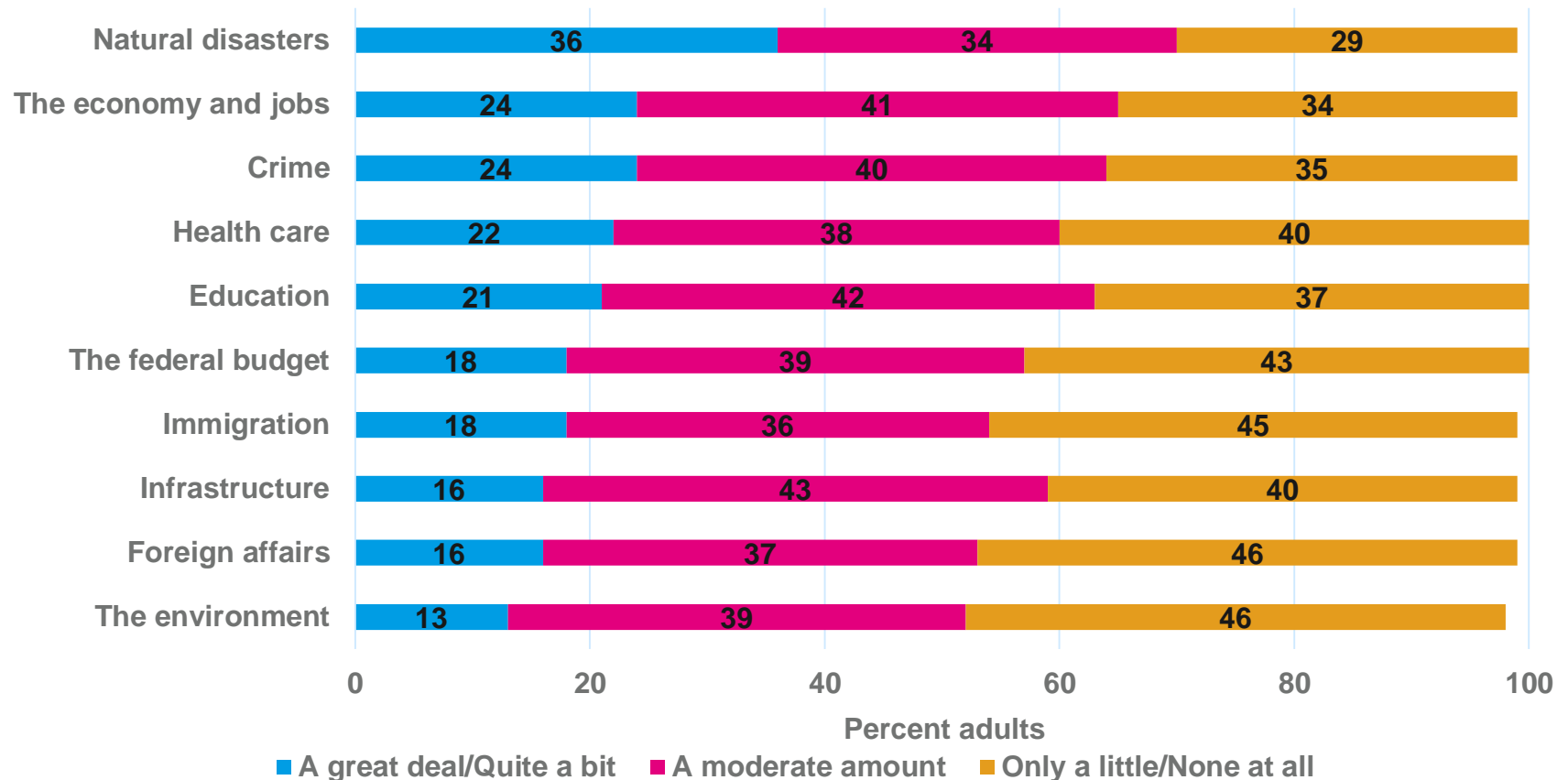
Question: Have you ever used federal government websites (e.g. Census Bureau, IRS, Centers for Disease Control) to look up information?

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



Americans trust federal government information more on some topics than others

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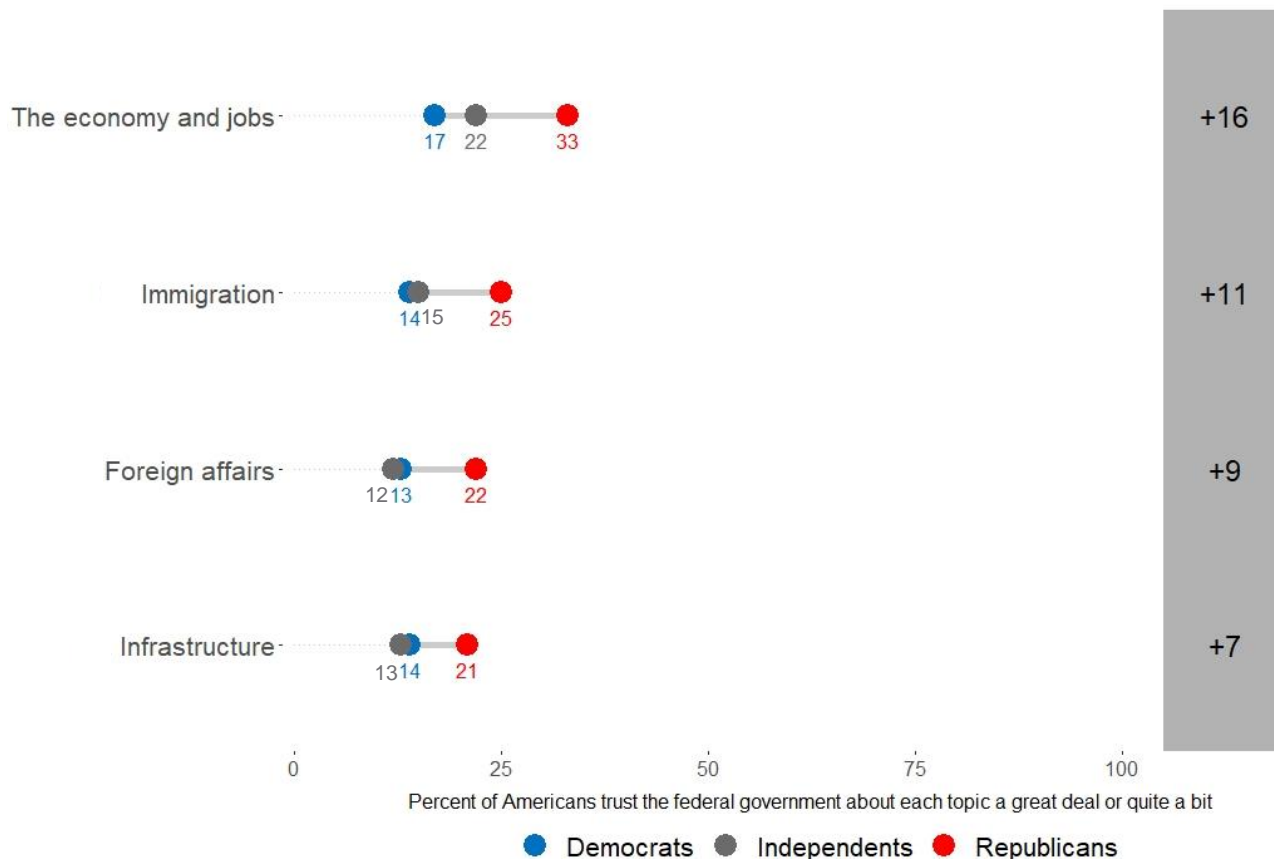
Question: How much do you trust information from the federal government about the following topics?
Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults



More trust among Republicans on natural disasters, economy, immigration, foreign affairs, and infrastructure

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Percentage point difference between Republicans and Democrats



Question: How much do you trust information from the federal government about the following topics?

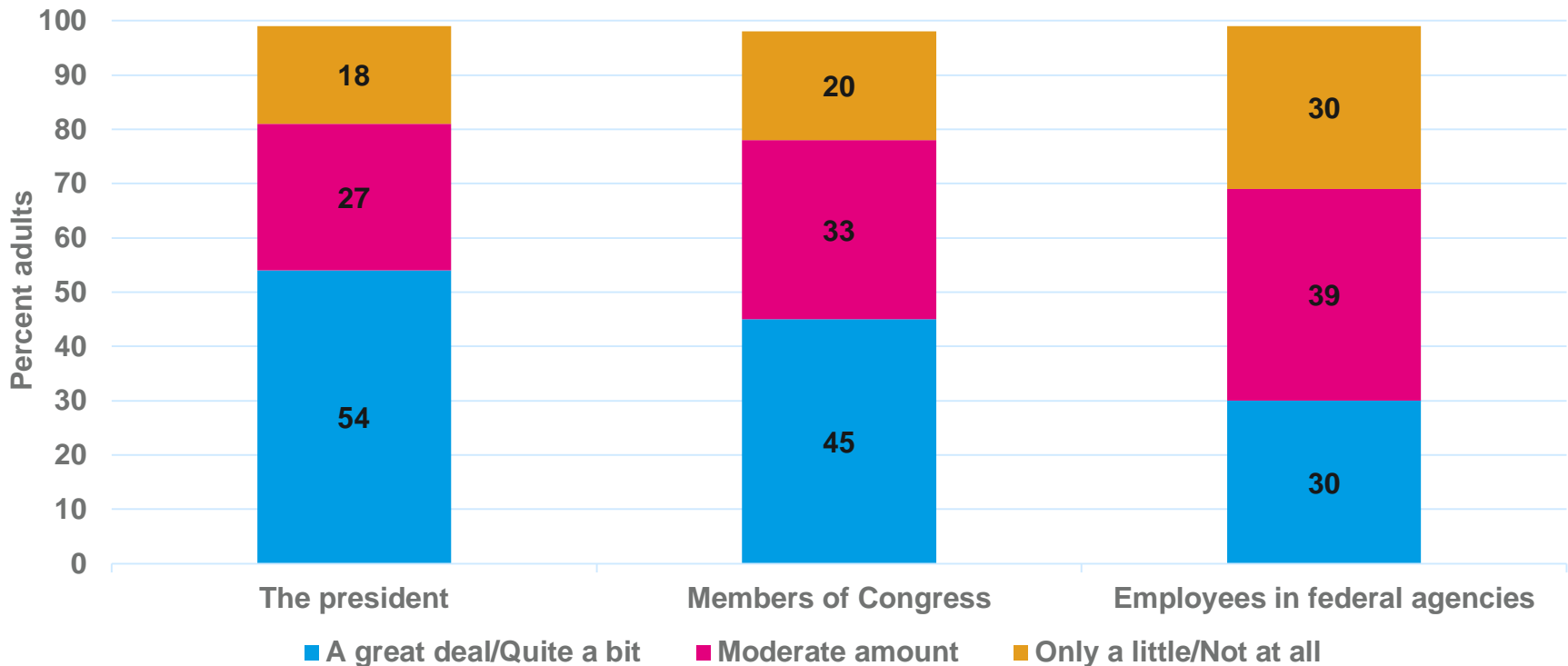
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Note: Only significant partisan differences shown.



Public believes fed agency workers less likely to bias government information than president or Congress

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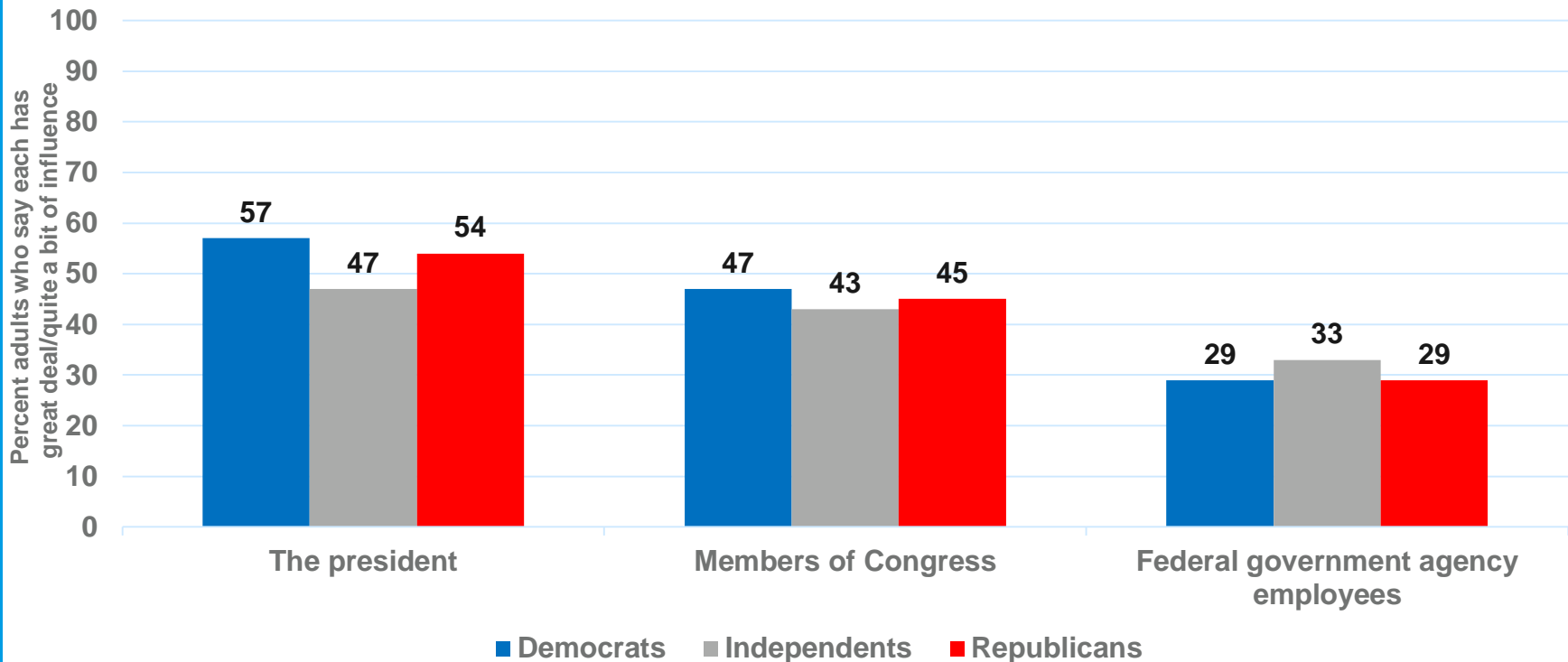


Question: How much influence do you think the political beliefs of each of the following have over information provided by the federal government?

Source: AP-NORC/USA Facts poll conducted October 15-28, 2019, with 1,032 adults

Agreement across parties: president's political beliefs most likely to influence government info, agency employees least

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Question: How much influence do you think the political beliefs of each of the following have over information provided by the federal government?

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About USAFacts and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

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- USAFacts is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan civic initiative providing the most comprehensive and understandable single source of government data.
- The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

