

2006 Multi-State TABOR Survey - Michigan -

**TOPLINE REPORT
PRESENTED TO:**



June 2006



Alan Newman Research
MARKET RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

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Introduction / Methodology

In May 2006, AARP engaged Alan Newman Research to conduct a series of surveys in eight states regarding AARP members' awareness, knowledge, and opinions of proposed TABOR measures in their state. This report offers data and analysis for Michigan.

- **Data Collection Mode:** Phone Survey
- **Field Period:** May 16 – May 23, 2006
- **Sample Size:** 600 Completed Interviews
- **Screening Criteria:** AARP Membership
- **Calling Procedures:** Unless otherwise requested by the respondent, calling was done between 5:00pm and 9:00pm Monday through Friday. Up to 10 call attempts were made per number at varying times of day as well as days of the week. Respondents who specifically request removal from our “list” are assigned a final disposition and are added to a cumulative “Do Not Call” database which automatically removes them from future research studies.
- **Margin of Error:** The maximum margin of error at the 95% confidence level for a sample of 600 respondents is $\pm 4.0\%$.
- **Response Rate (RR3):** 21%
- **Cooperation Rate (COOP3):** 36%
- **Refusal Rate (REF3):** 32%
- **Statistical Note:** Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Executive Summary

- **Most AARP Members believe too little money is being spent on state services.** More than half believe Michigan is spending too little money on services such as keeping people safe, providing health and long-term care, repairing roads, etc.
- **The majority of Members feel the amount of state and local taxes they pay is about right.** More than two out of five Members believe they are paying about the right amount of state and local taxes.
- **The majority of AARP Members say they trust state and local government to use their tax money effectively and deliver quality services.** At least two out of five trust their state government a fair amount or a great deal, while more than half of Members indicated the same level of trust for their local government.
- **In addition to half of AARP Members suggesting that improving state services is a higher priority than limiting taxes, Members also indicate improving accountability and setting spending priorities are the most important goals for state government.** One-half suggest “improving accountability” is most important, while one out of four believe the most important goal is “setting spending priorities.”
- **The majority of AARP Members have not seen or heard anything about the Michigan Stop OverSpending proposal.** Just over four-fifths say they have not seen or heard anything about Michigan’s SOS proposal compared to one out of six who say they have.
- **Police protection and K-12 public school education are the most highly valued services according to AARP Members.** Consequently, funding cuts to either police protection or K-12 public education would have the biggest impact on Members support of SOS. Nearly two-thirds of Members suggest that if the SOS proposal cut these services, they would be more likely to oppose the measure.



Executive Summary (continued)

- **Overall, AARP Members appear generally unconvinced by any of the arguments either in support of or in opposition to the SOS proposal.** Members say they find the various arguments at least “somewhat convincing” at best. Among the messages rated most convincing are those suggesting that SOS would take power away from state politicians, that SOS would control runaway government spending, and that SOS would return money to taxpayers.
- **More than two out of five members would be more likely to oppose the SOS proposal if they knew AARP also opposed it.** One out of three say AARP’s opposition as well as that of other senior organizations would not make a difference in how they voted on the SOS initiative.
- **Initially, more than half of AARP Members claim they support the Stop OverSpending proposal. However, when asked at the end of the survey, only slightly more than a third still indicate support for the measure.** More than half of AARP Members (57%) said they would probably vote for the proposal after hearing a brief description of SOS. Members were then presented a short series of arguments both for and against the initiative. When asked about supporting or opposing the initiative after hearing these arguments, less than one-half of Members (46%) said they either strongly or somewhat support the SOS proposal. Finally, at the end of the interview, Members were again asked how they would vote, and only slightly more than a third (36%) continued to say they were at least leaning toward voting for the SOS proposal. This shift of nearly 21% between the initial measure and the final measure is statistically significant at the 95 percent level of confidence.



DETAILED FINDINGS



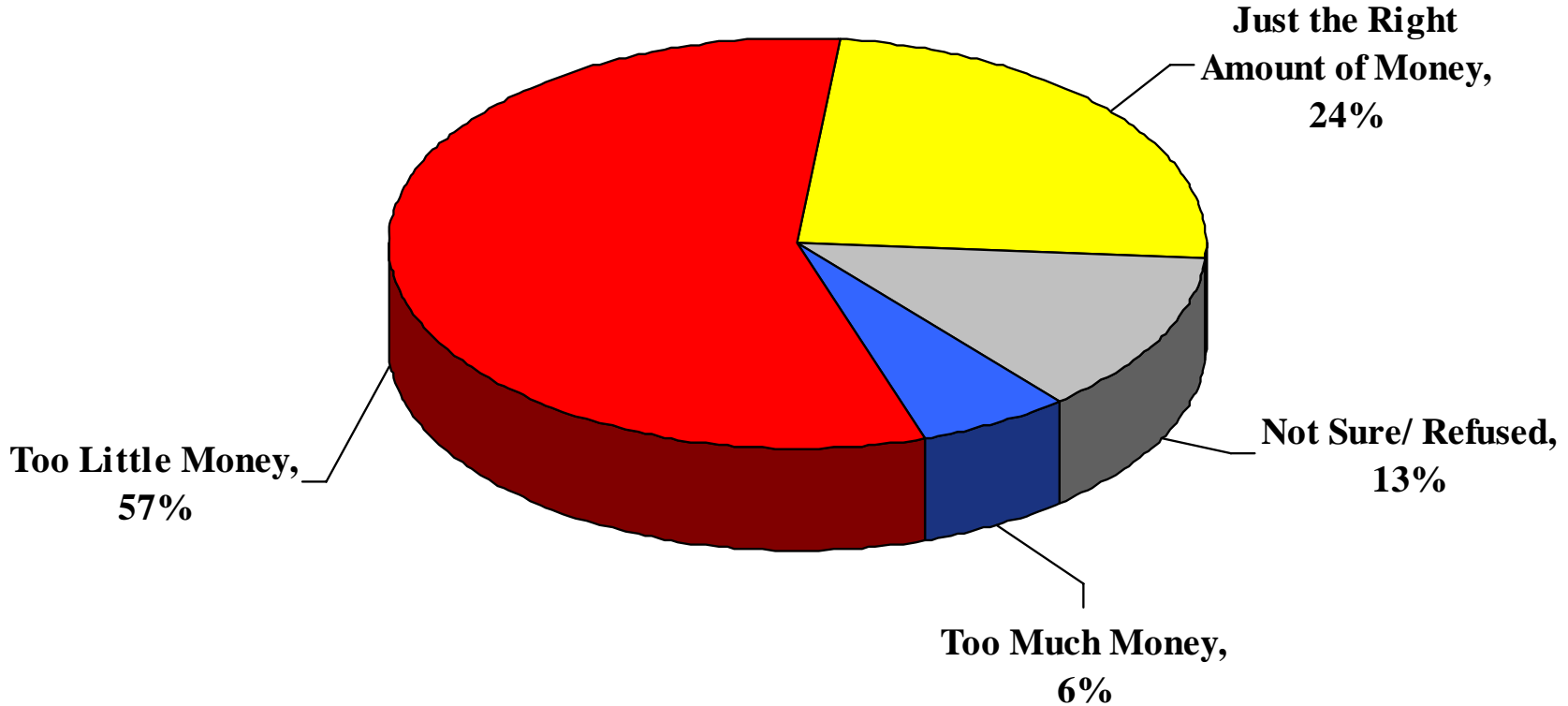
Univariate Analysis



Q1. Do you think that Michigan is spending too much money, too little money, or just the right amount of money on state services such as keeping people safe, providing health and long-term care, repairing roads and highways, maintaining parks, and providing education?

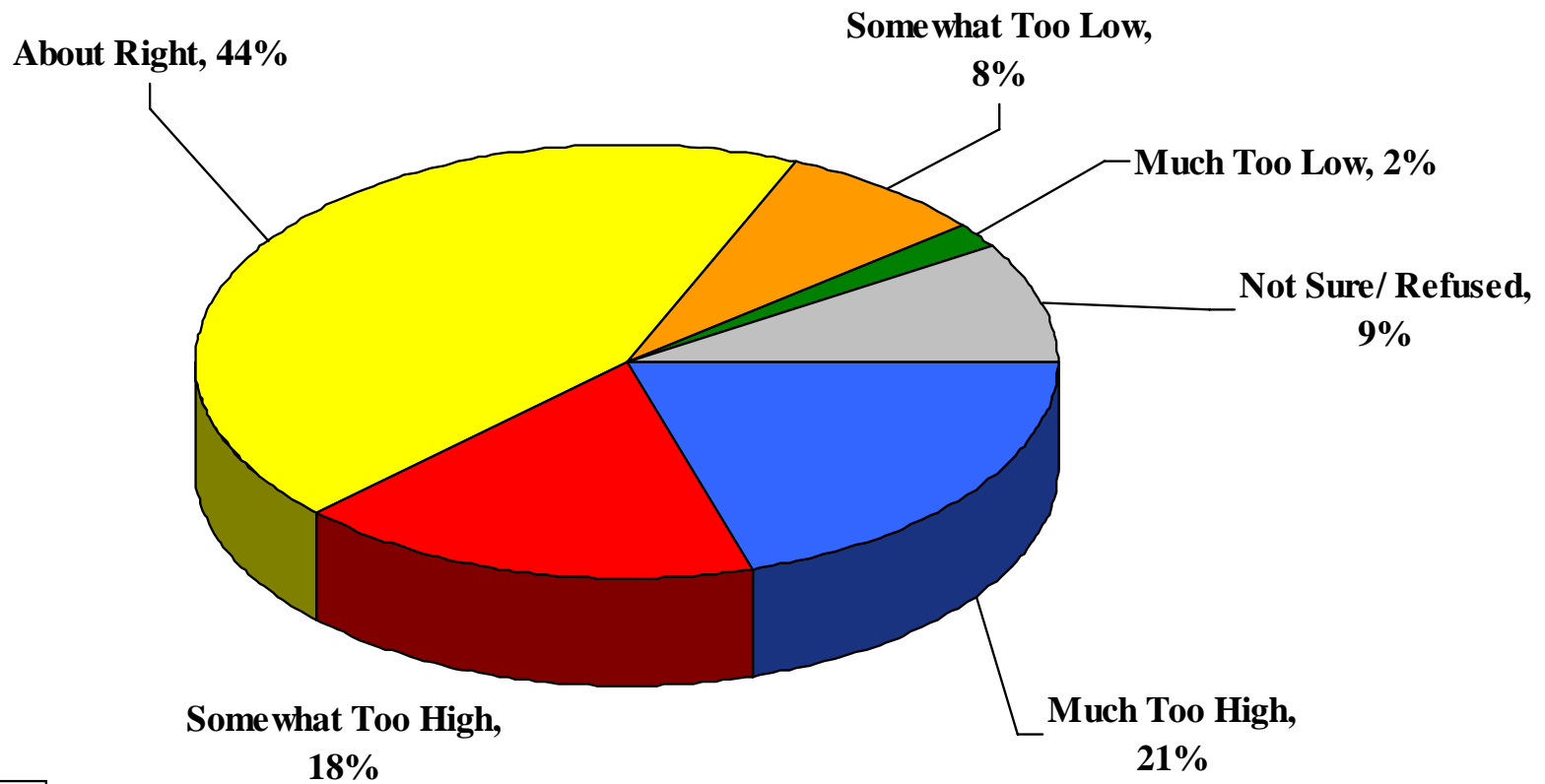
More than half of AARP Members in Michigan believe the State is spending too little money on state services. A quarter believe Michigan is spending the right amount of money. Only six percent of Members say they believe Michigan is spending too much money on state services.

n=600



Q2. Thinking about the state and local taxes that you pay, not including federal taxes, do you think that taxes in Michigan are too high, are about right, or are too low to support state services?

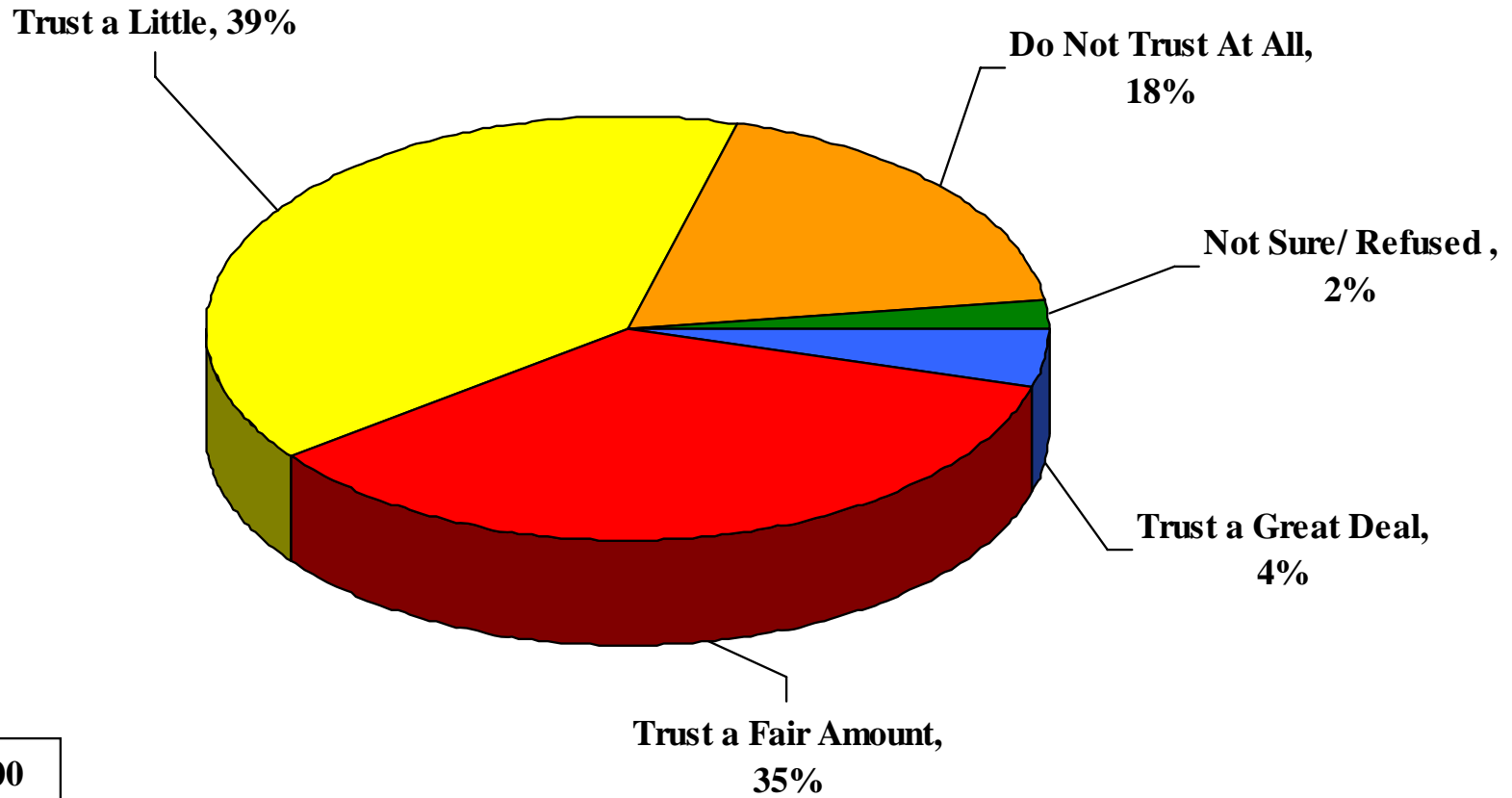
More than two-fifths of AARP Members living in Michigan think the level of state and local taxes they pay is about right.



n=600

Q3a. How much do you trust your state government to use your tax money effectively and deliver quality state services?

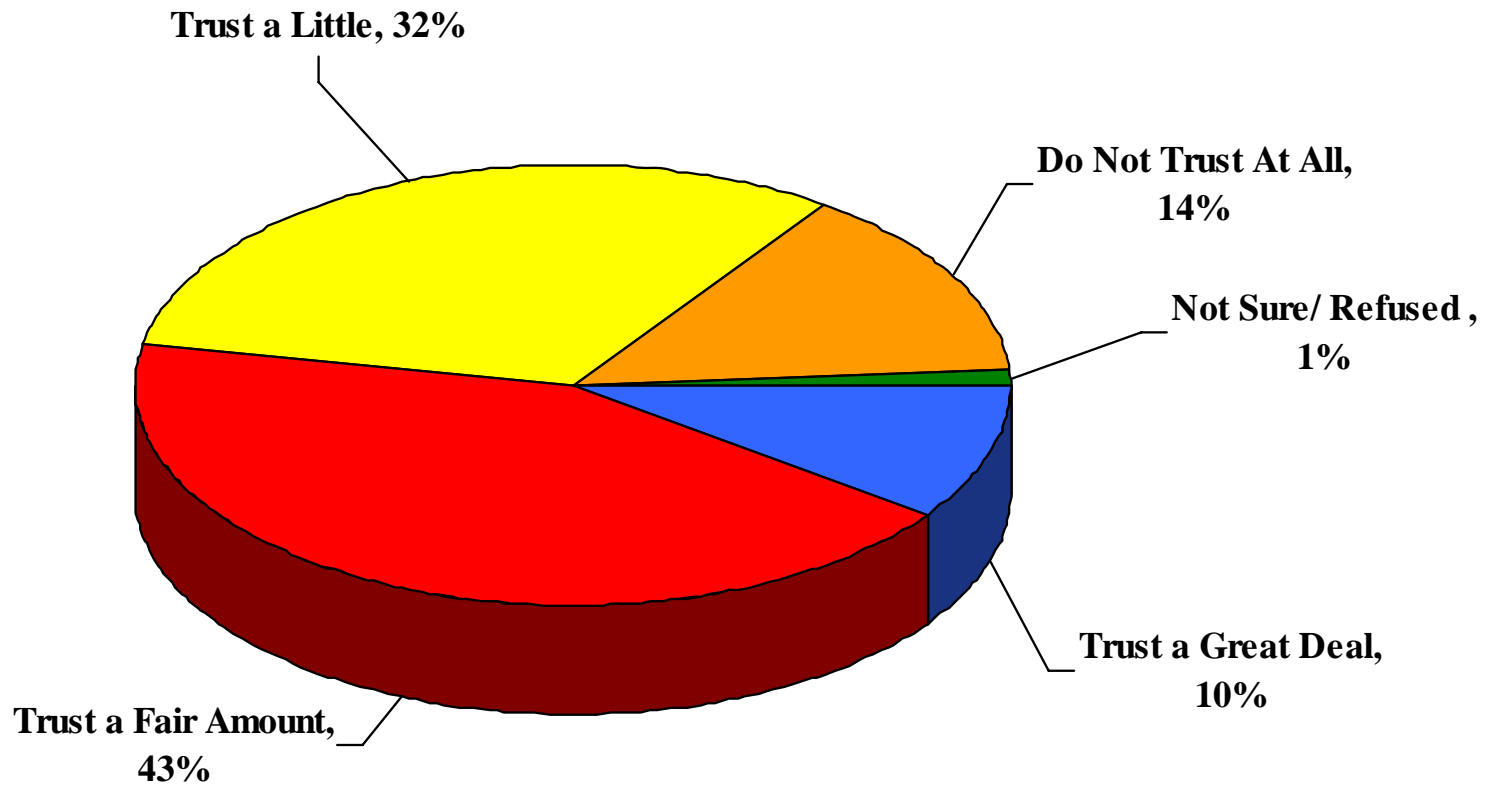
A third of AARP Members living in Michigan trust the State government a fair amount, while two-fifths trust the State government a little. Nearly one out of five suggest they do not trust the State government at all.



n=600

Q3a. How much do you trust your local government (includes Towns, Cities, and Counties) to use your tax money effectively and deliver quality state services?

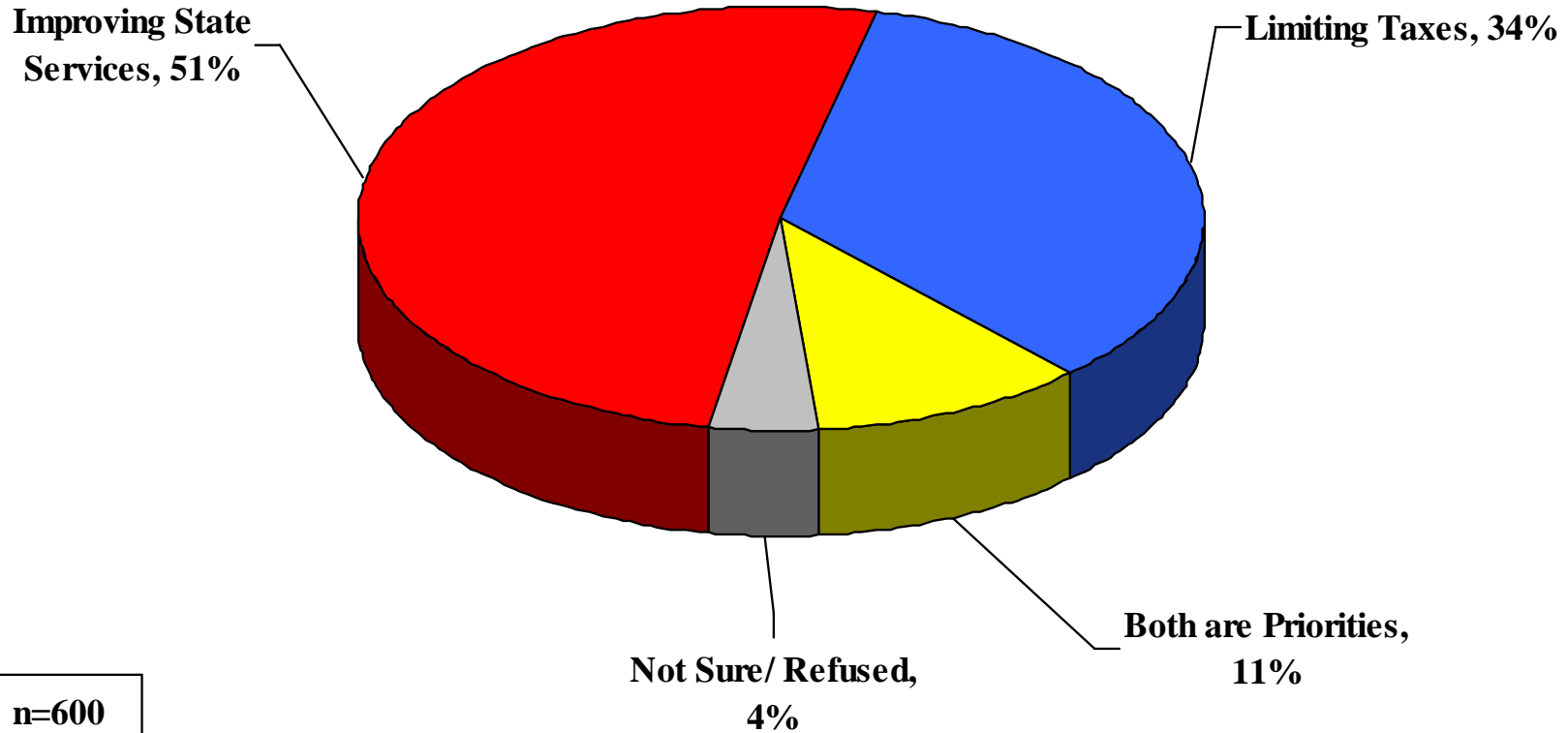
More than half of AARP Members living in Michigan trust the local government a fair amount or a great deal.



n=600

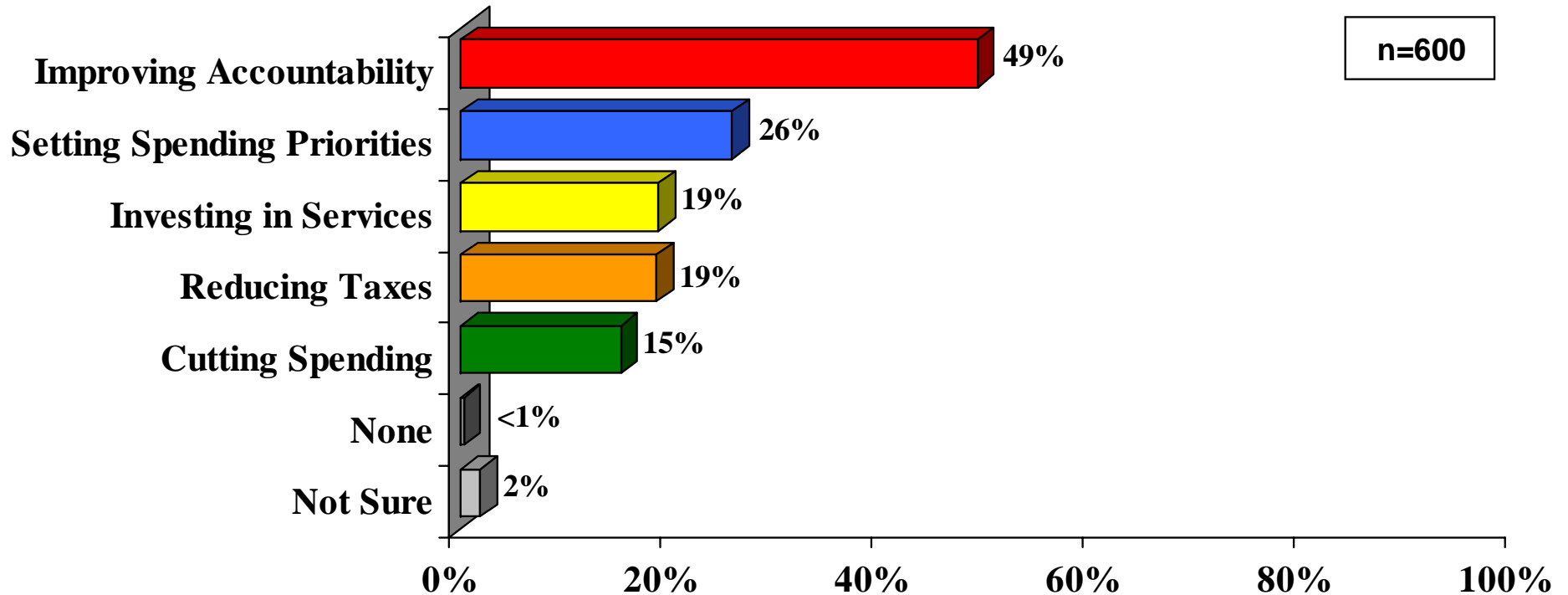
Q4. In Michigan, which is a higher priority for you...?

One-half of AARP Members suggest improving state services is a higher priority than limiting taxes. However, a third of Michigan Members assert the opposite. Only one-tenth indicate both of these goals are a priority.



Q5. Thinking about state government today in Michigan, which one or two of the following goals are most important to you?

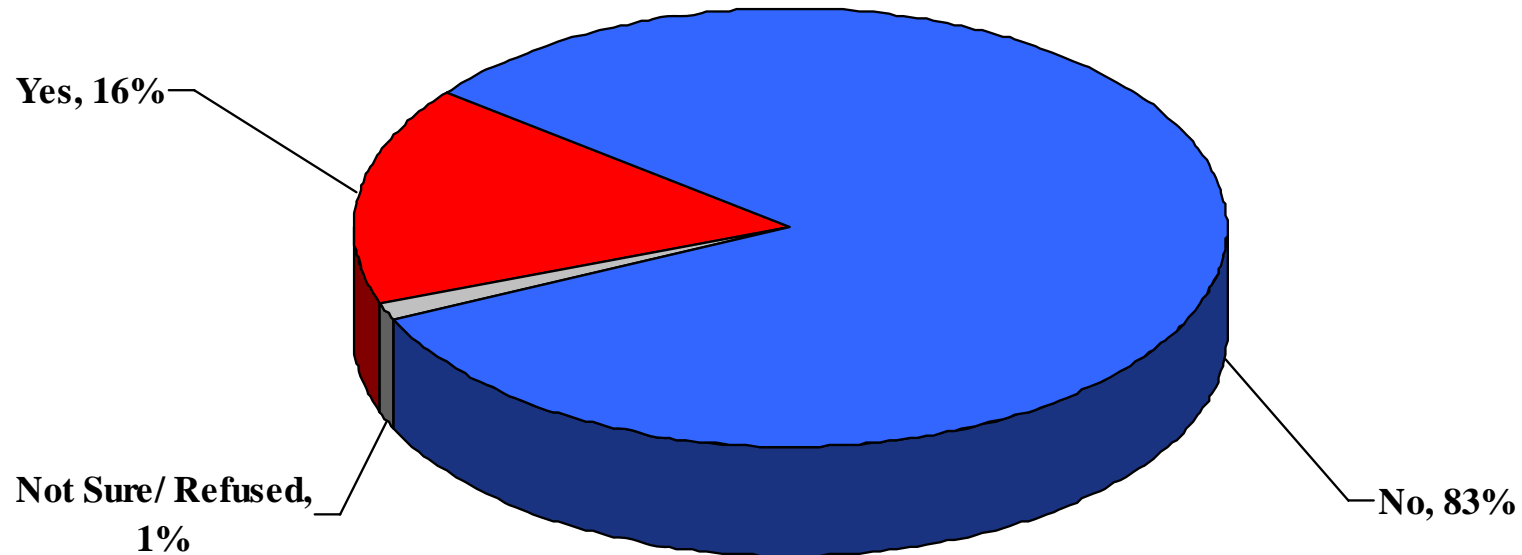
Half of AARP Members living in Michigan say “improving accountability” is one of the most important goals to them. A quarter assert that setting spending priorities is an important goal. Reducing taxes and investing in services are each viewed as among the most important goals by one out of five members.



Q6. Have you seen, read, or heard anything about Michigan's Stop OverSpending or SOS, which is sometimes referred to as the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR proposal in the last year?

Only one-sixth of AARP Members in Michigan say they have seen or heard something about the SOS proposal in the last year.

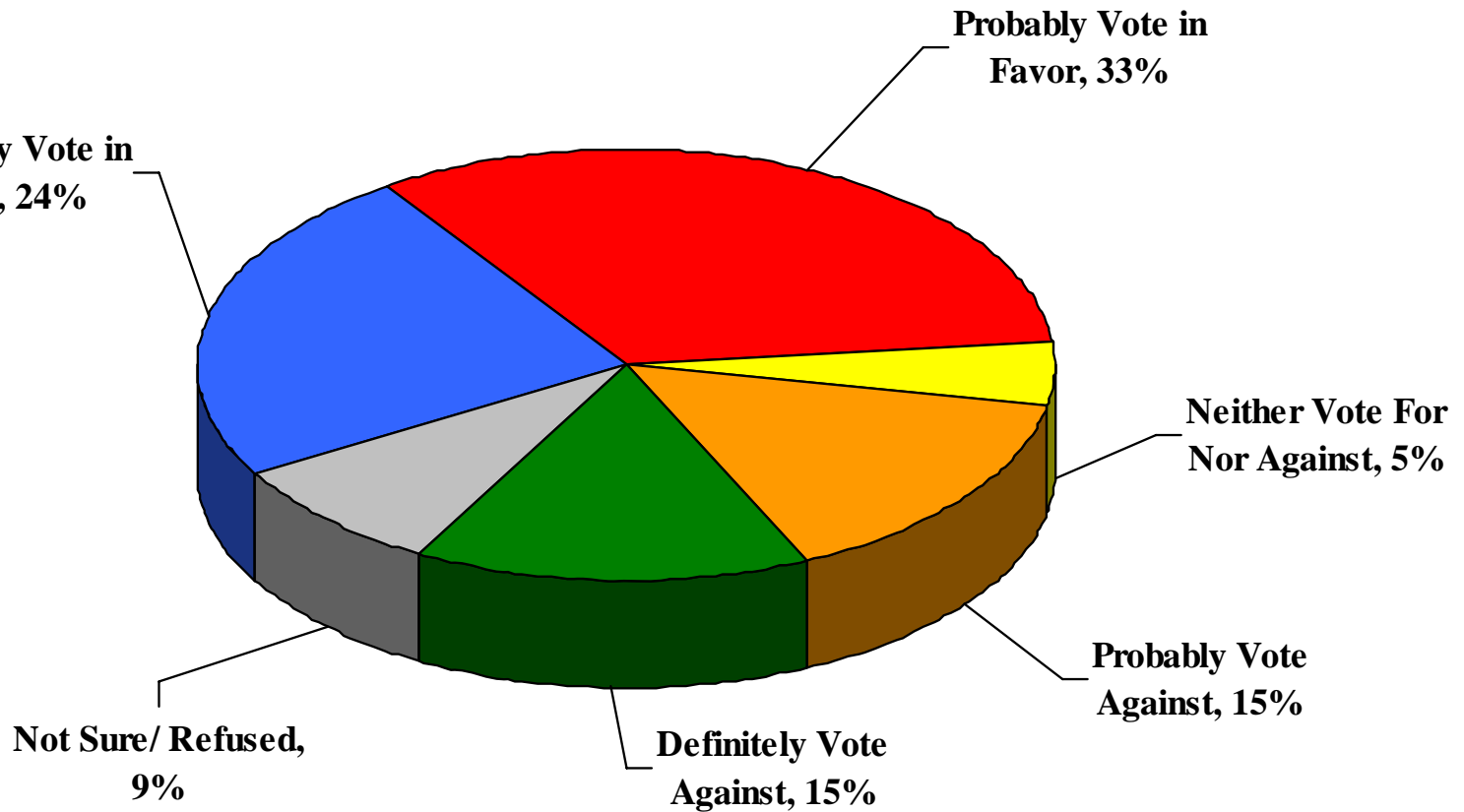
n=600



Q7. Given what you know about the proposal, if the election were held today, would you vote for or against the “Stop OverSpending” or SOS proposal?

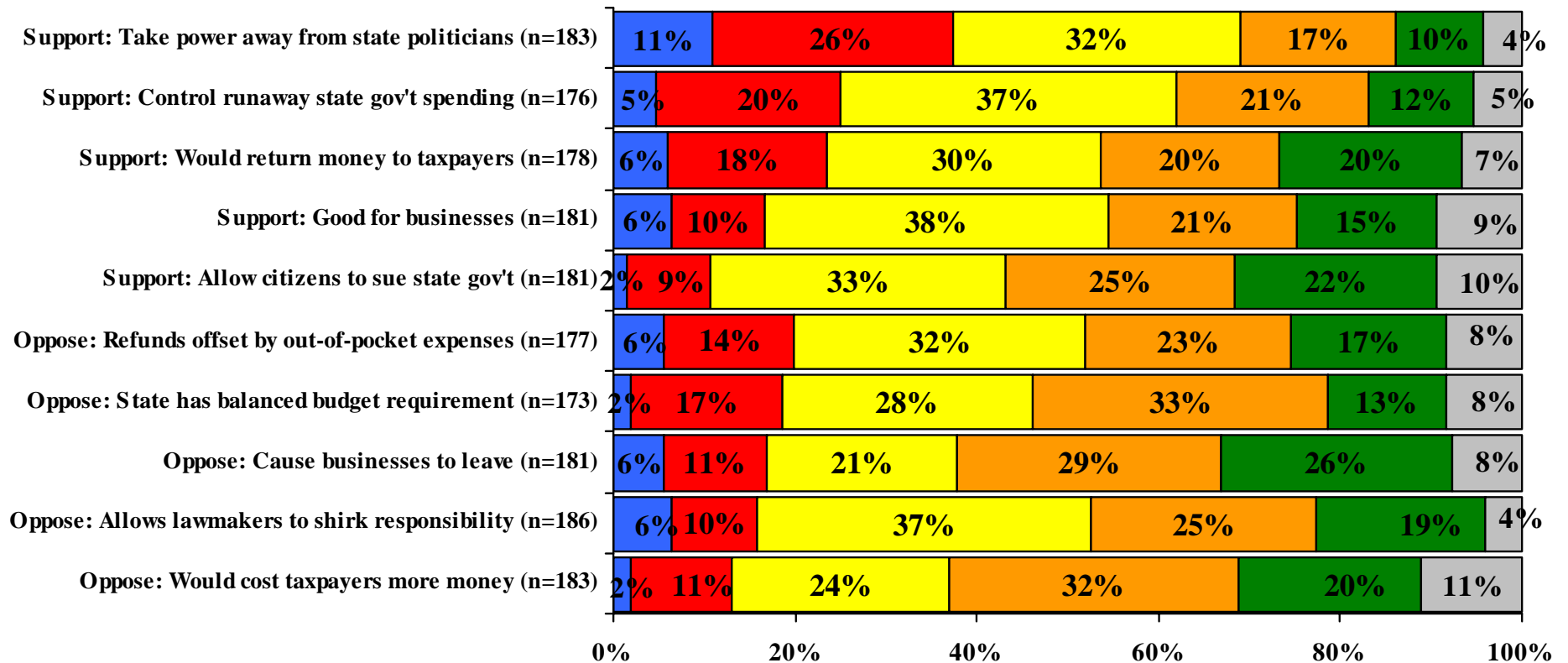
Nearly three-fifths of AARP Members in Michigan say they would either probably or definitely vote for the SOS proposal if the election was held today.

n=600



Q8. Next I'm going to read you some of the things that supporters of "Stop OverSpending" say about the proposal and some of the things opponents say....I'd like you to please tell me whether you find it an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing.

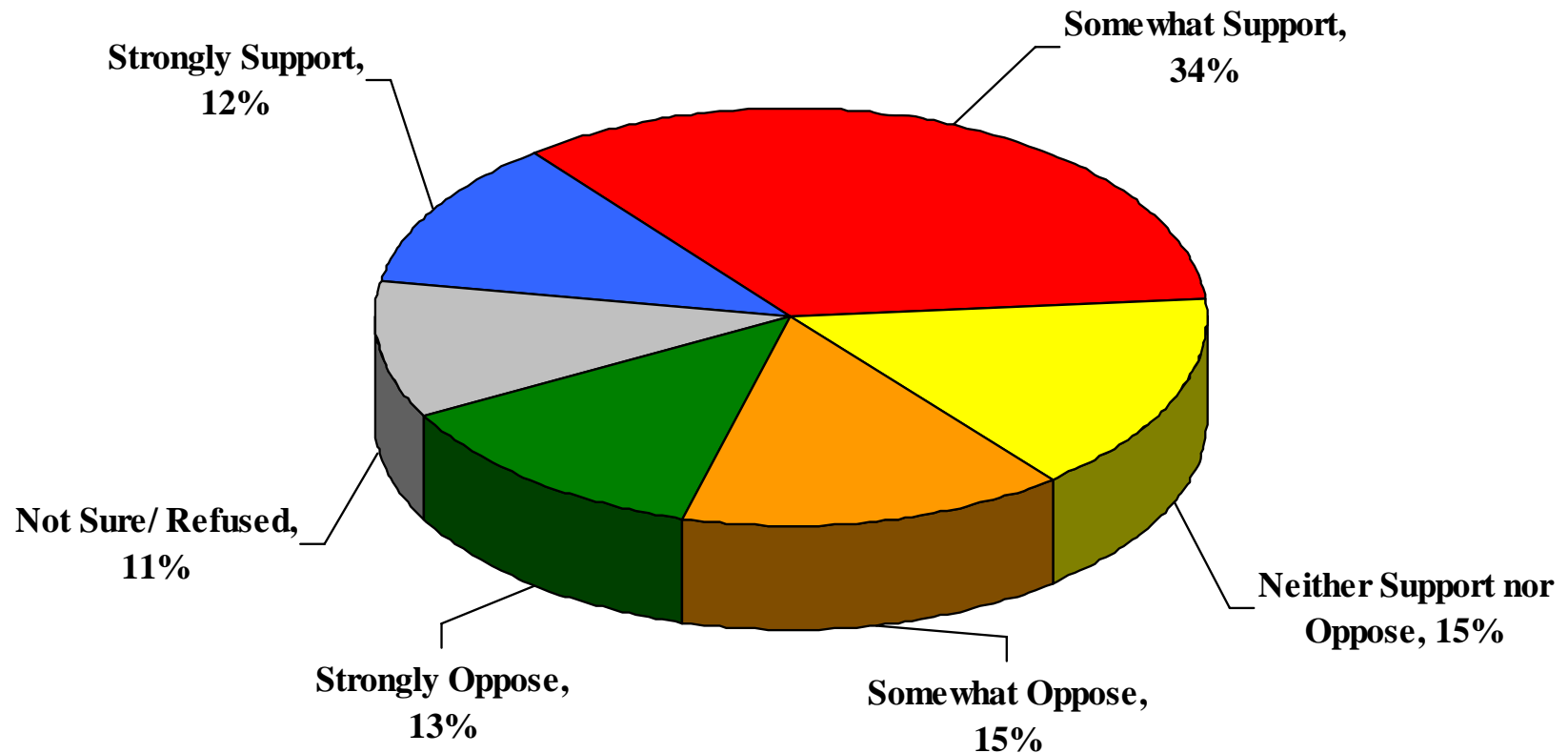
Although AARP Members find most of the arguments presented only somewhat convincing at best, they appear to be most persuaded by arguments that SOS will take power away from politicians, that it will control runaway state government spending, and that it would return money to taxpayers.



■ Extremely Convincing
 ■ Very Convincing
 ■ Somewhat Convincing
 ■ Not Very Convincing
 ■ Not At All Convincing
 ■ Not Sure / Refused

Q9. Having heard arguments both for and against the Stop Over Spending or SOS proposal, now how strongly do you support or oppose SOS in Michigan?

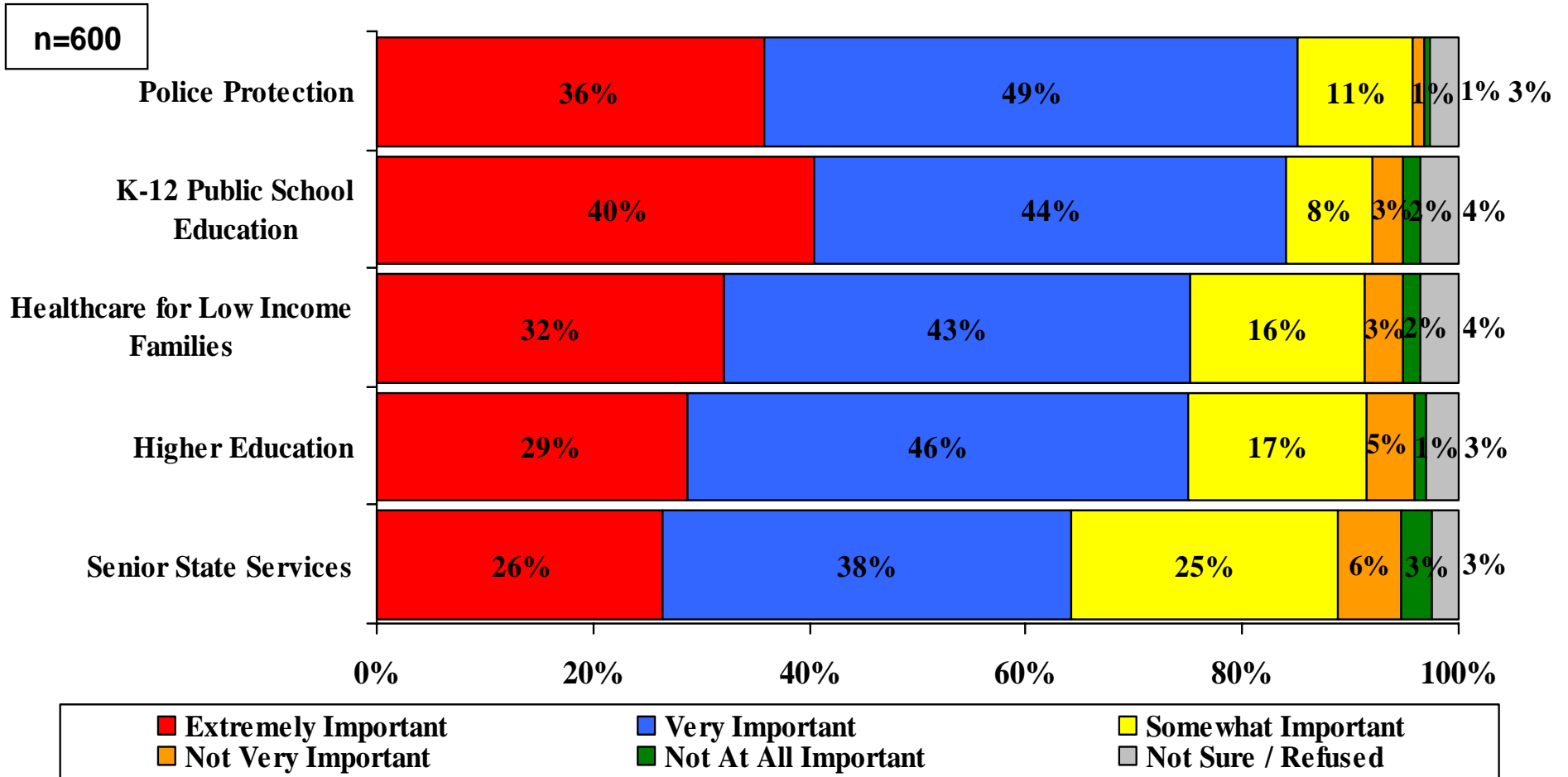
After hearing arguments both in support of and in opposition to the SOS proposal, more than two-fifths of AARP Members living in Michigan say they support the proposal. In comparison, just over a quarter of Members say they oppose SOS.



n=600

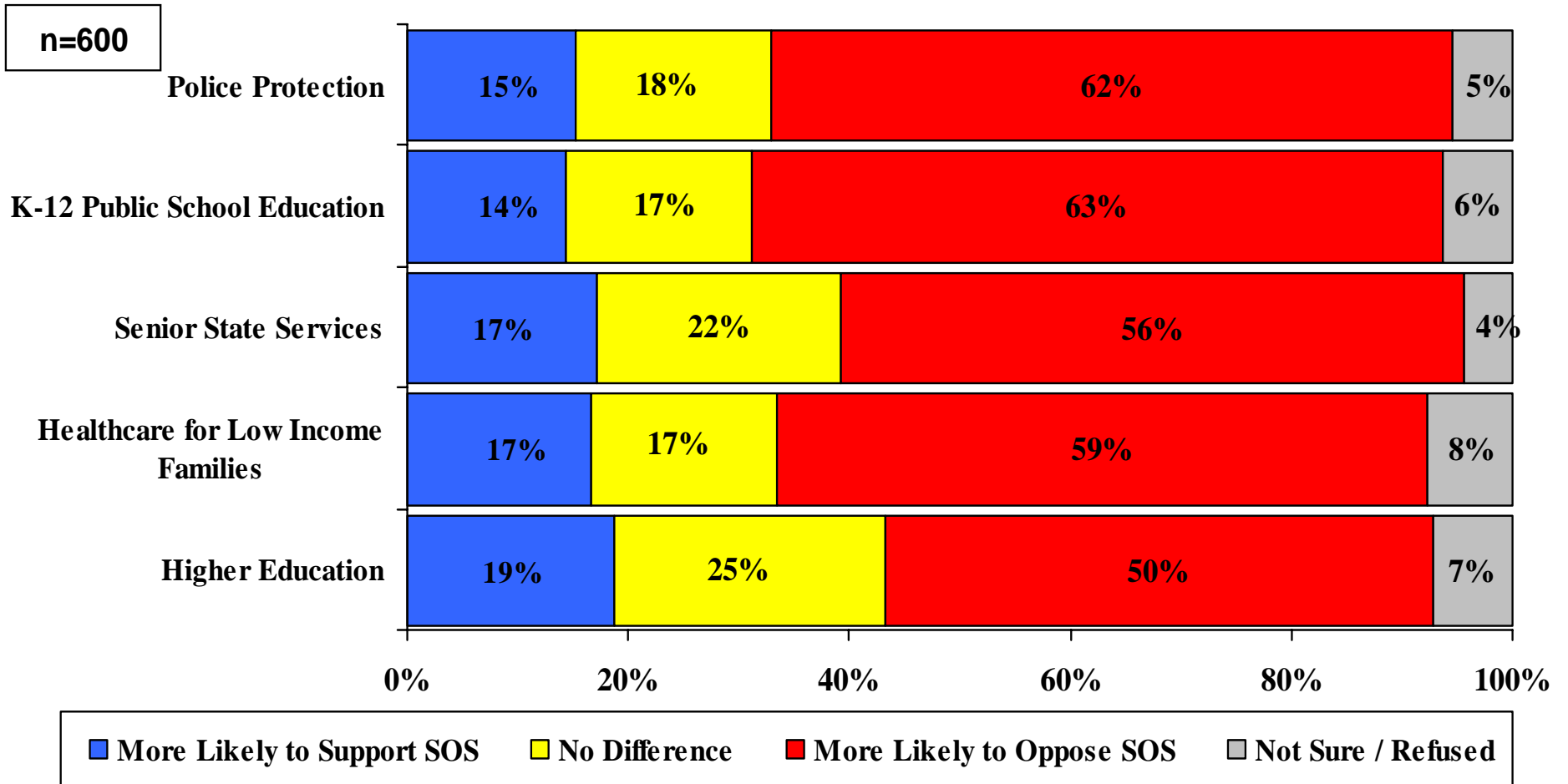
Q10. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important [are each of the following] to you? [Are they] extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

AARP Members value police protection and K-12 public school education above all other state and local services presented.



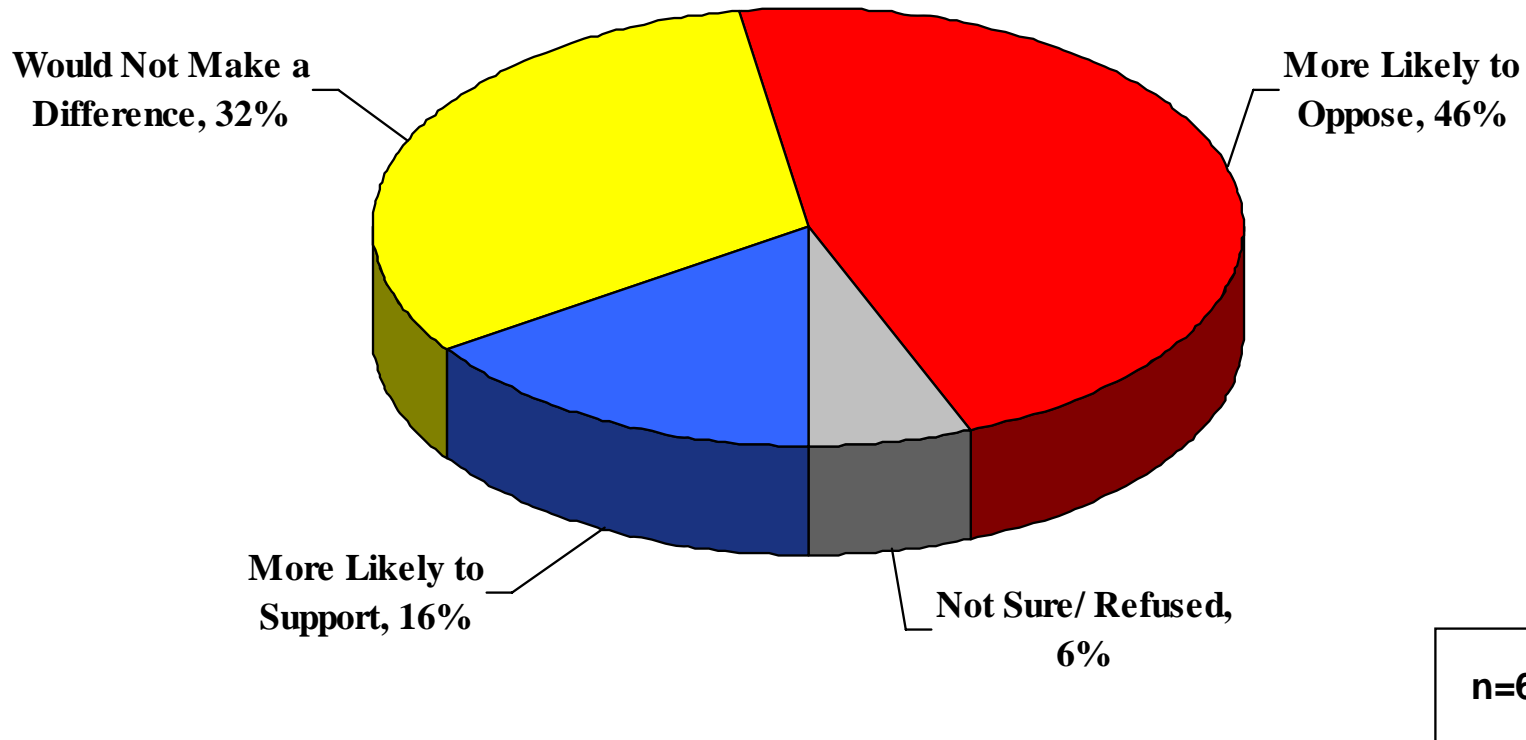
Q11. If Michigan's SOS Proposal cut state funding for [each of the following services], would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?

AARP Members would be more likely to oppose SOS if the proposal cut funding for police protection or K-12 public education. Cuts to higher education would have the least impact on AARP Members.



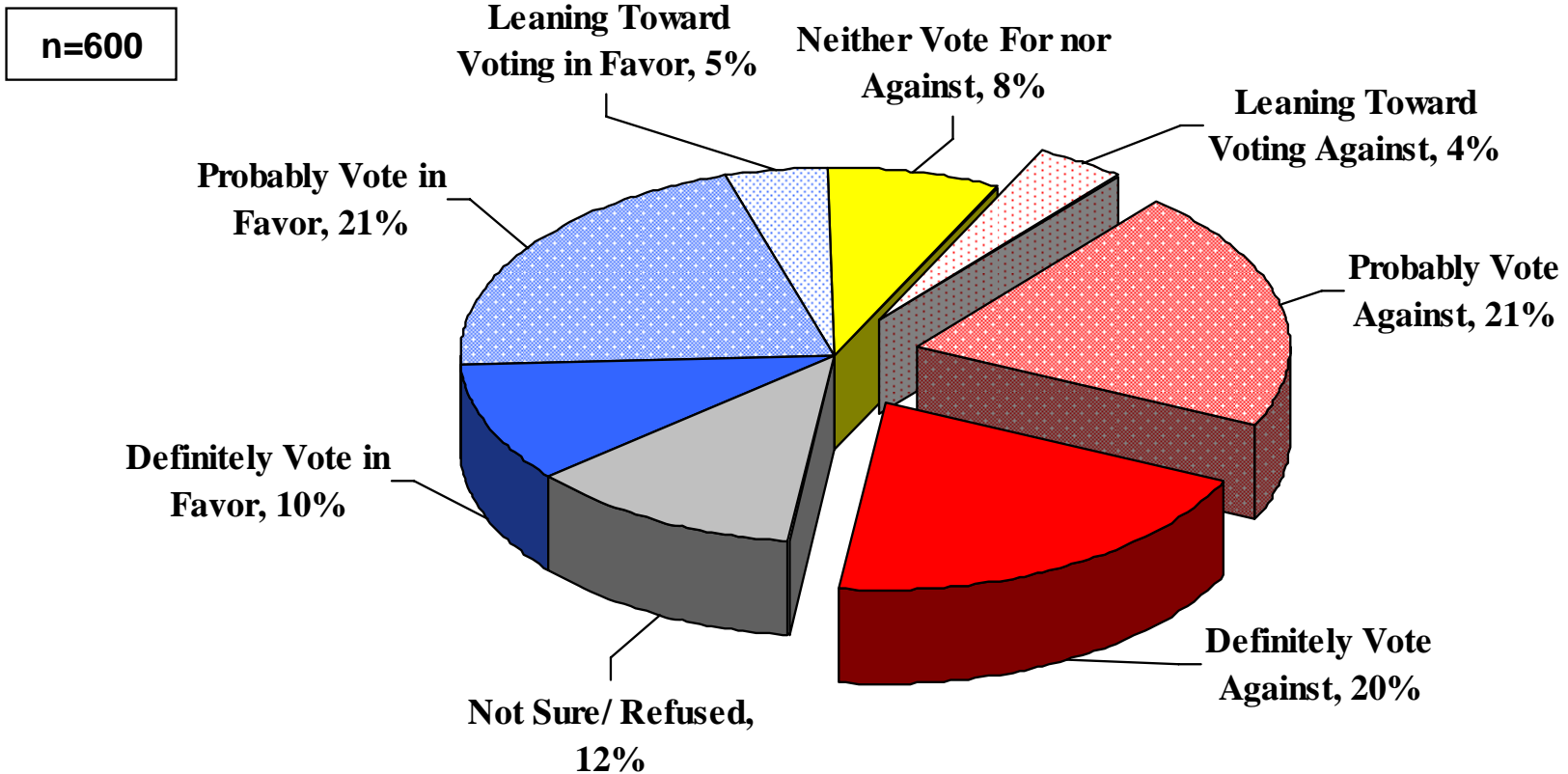
Q12. Suppose you learned that AARP and other senior organizations OPPOSED Michigan's Stop OverSpending, or SOS Proposal, because they believe it would lead to significant cuts in important state services for Michigan seniors. Would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference in how you voted for the SOS Proposal?

Nearly half of AARP Members living in Michigan say that knowing AARP and other senior organizations oppose SOS would lead them to oppose SOS. One-third said it would not make a difference in how they voted.



Q13 & Q14. Now thinking about all the information we have discussed about this proposal that may be on the ballot in November, if the election were held today, would you vote for or against this proposal? [IF INITIALLY UNDECIDED ASK: Well, if you had to decide right now, which way would you say you are leaning—toward voting in favor or toward voting against?"]

Though a third of Members (36%) say they are at least leaning toward voting for SOS, more than two-fifths of Members (45%) suggest they are leaning toward voting against the proposal.

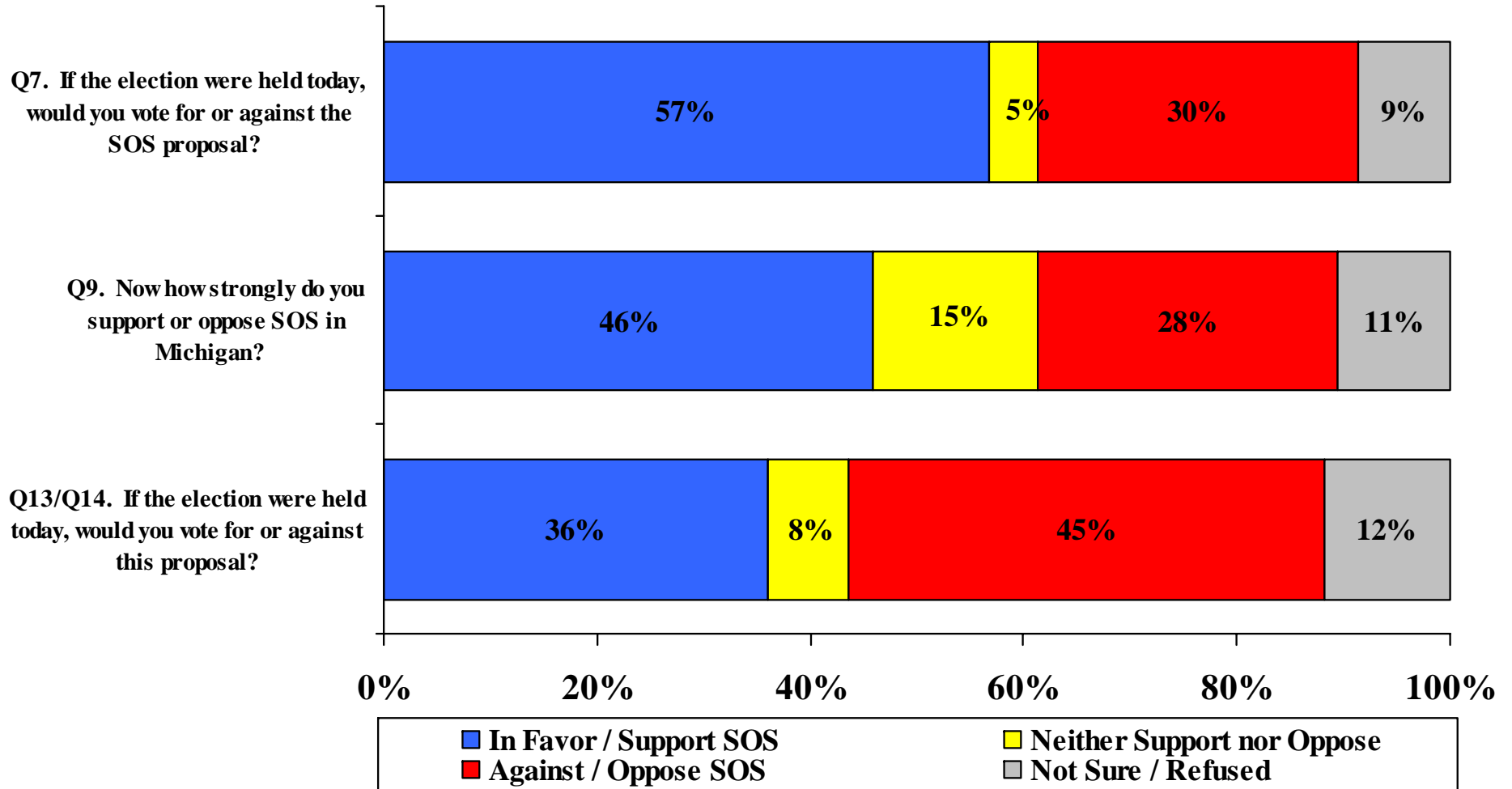


SOS Support/Oppose Summary Chart



SOS SUPPORT/OPPOSE THROUGHOUT SURVEY

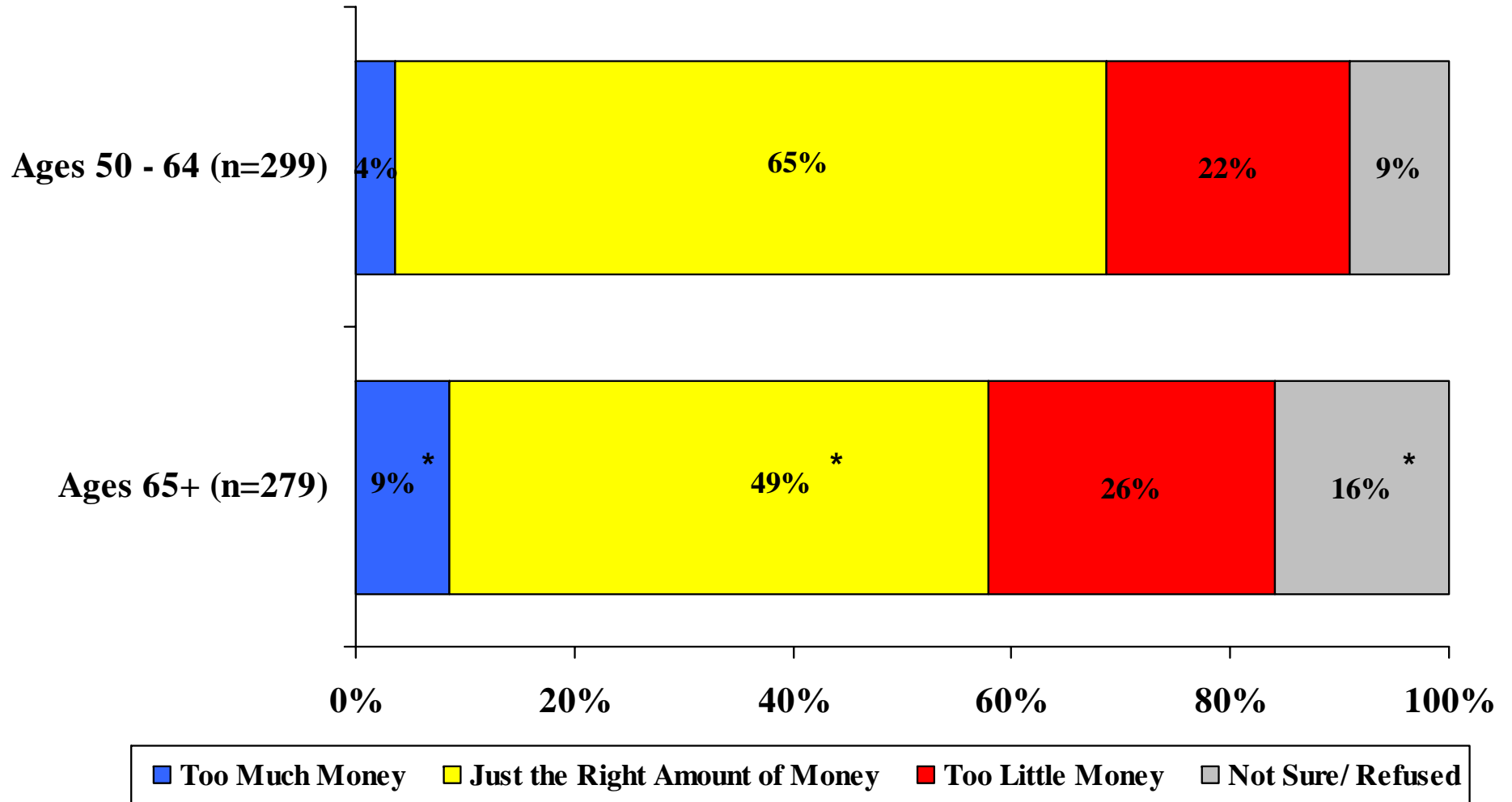
Comparison of the three questions asking about support for or against SOS reveals a statistically significant decline in support for SOS between the measures asked first in the survey and the measure asked last.



Subgroup Analysis: Survey Responses by Age

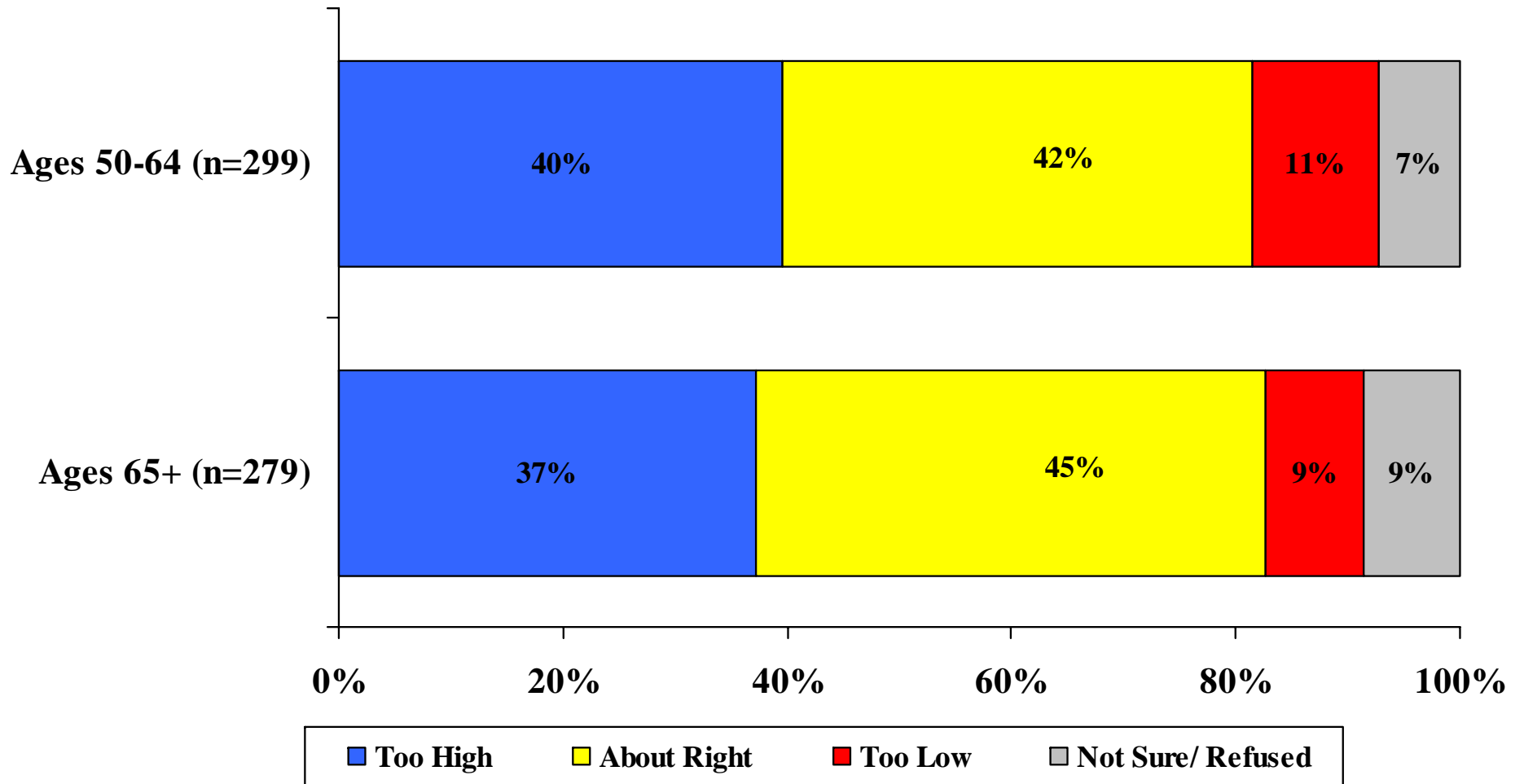


Q1. Do you think that Michigan is spending too much money, too little money, or just the right amount of money on state services such as keeping people safe, providing health and long-term care, repairing roads and highways, maintaining parks, and providing education?



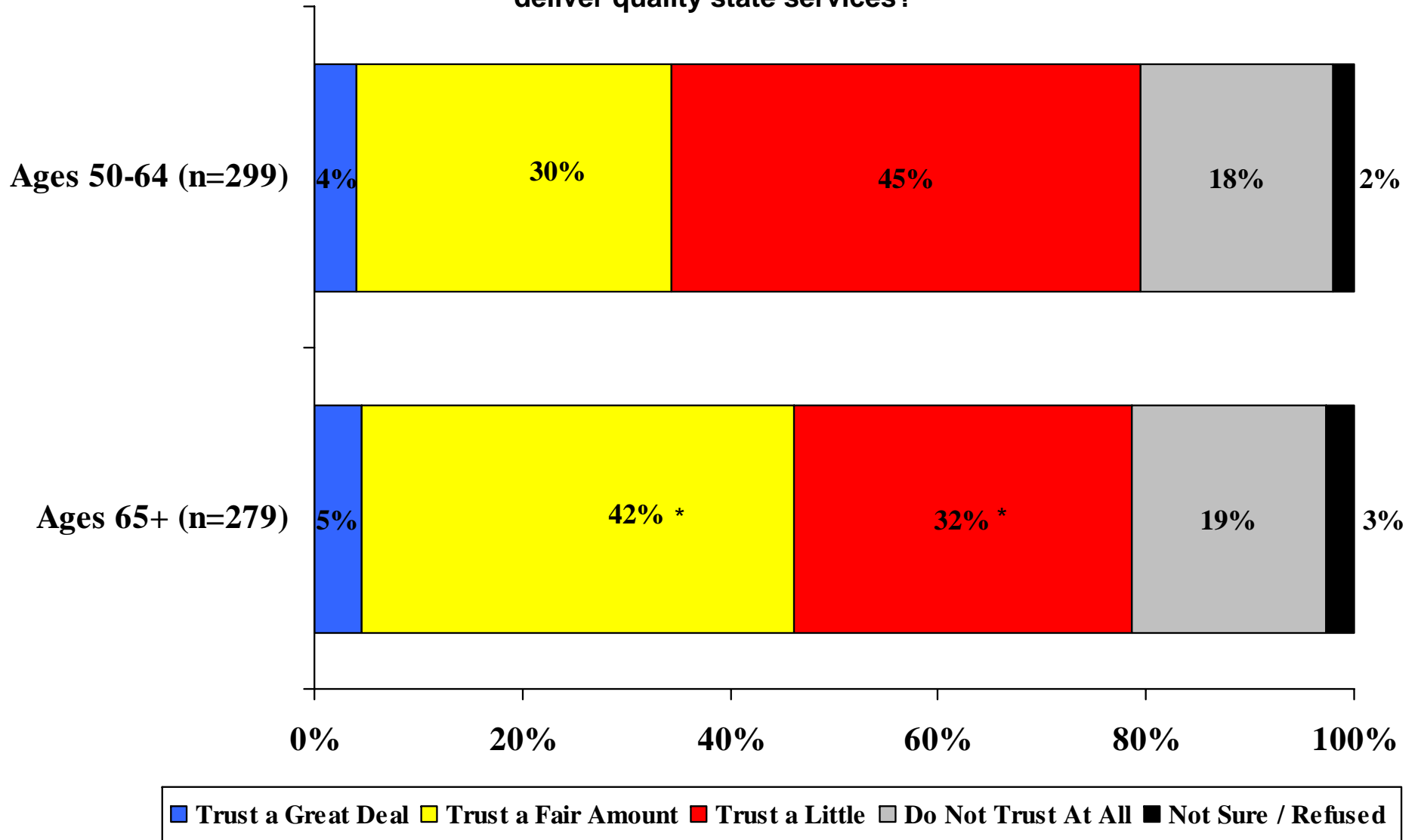
* Statistically significant difference from Members aged 50 to 59 at the 95% level of confidence

Q2. Thinking about the state and local taxes that you pay, not including federal taxes, do you think that taxes in Michigan are too high, are about right, or are too low to support state services?



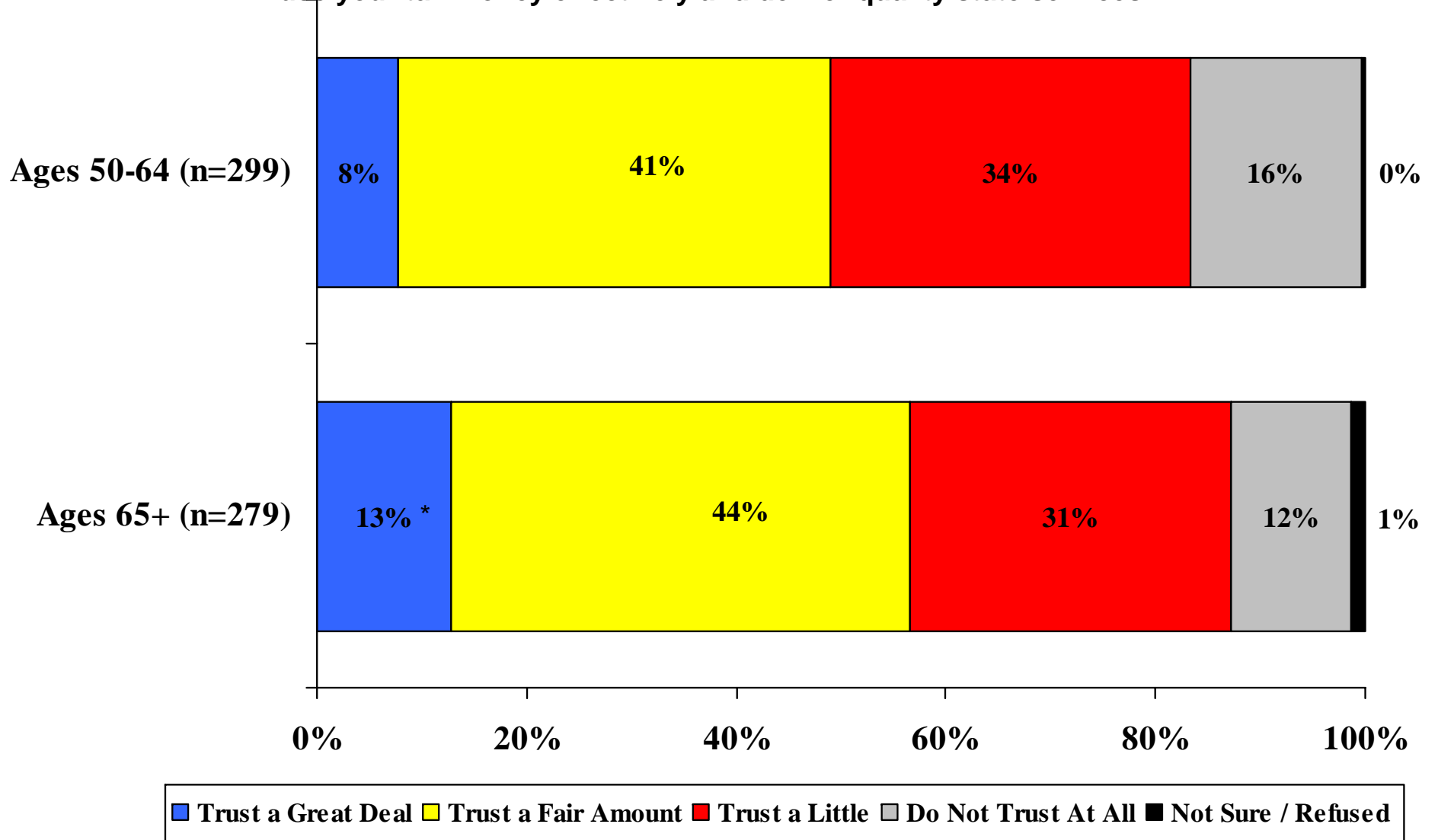
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q3a. How much do you trust your state government to use your tax money effectively and deliver quality state services?



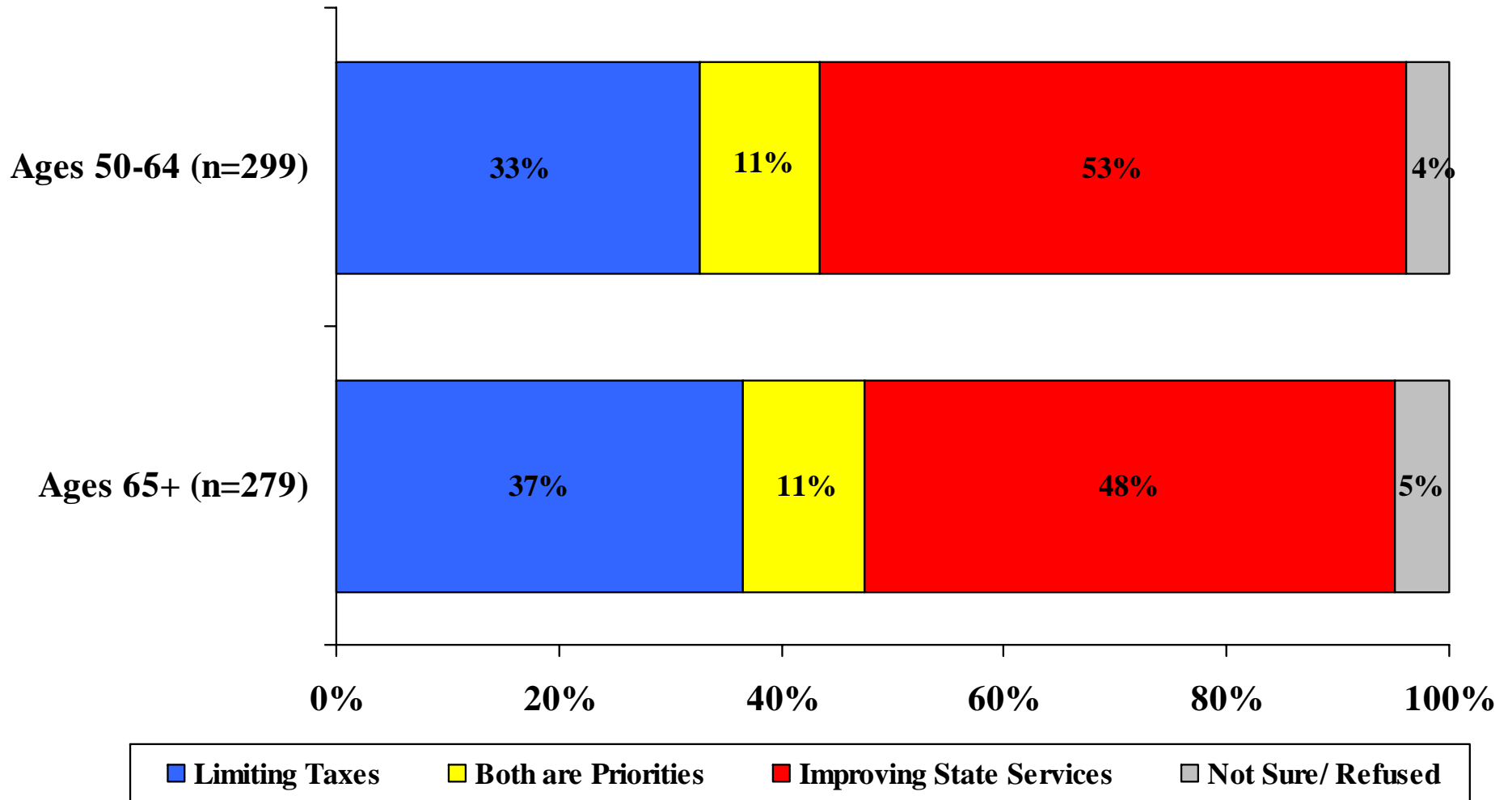
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q3a. How much do you trust your local government (includes Towns, Cities, and Counties) to use your tax money effectively and deliver quality state services?



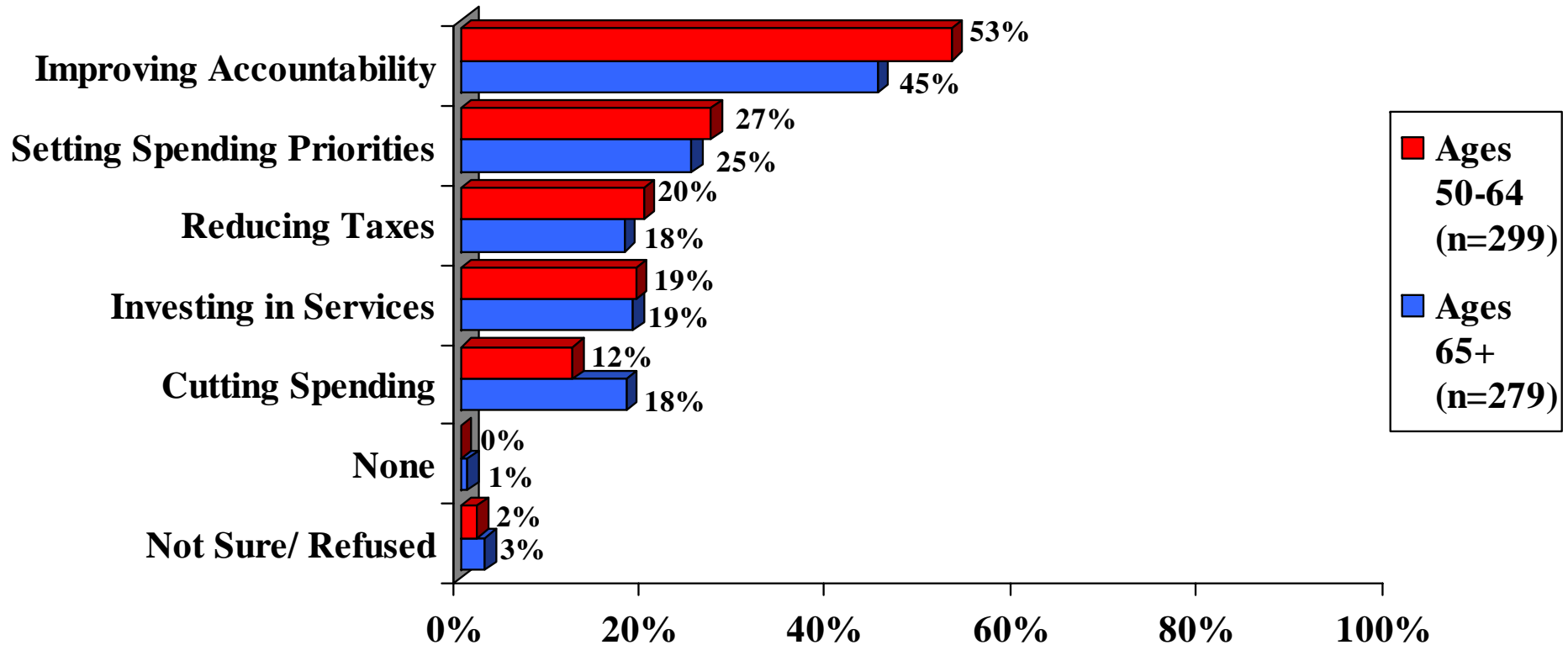
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q4. In Michigan, which is a higher priority for you...?



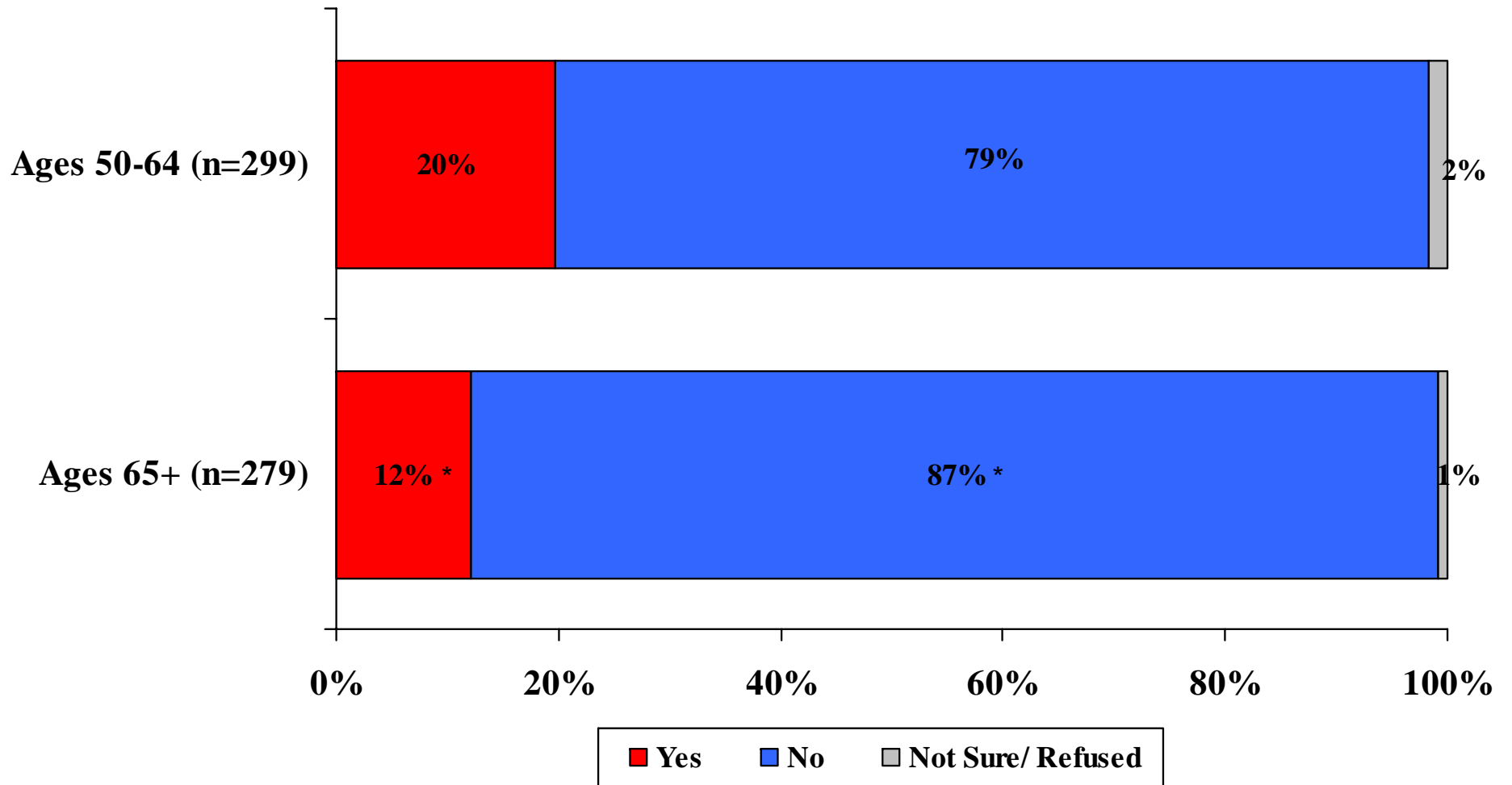
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q5. Thinking about state government today in Michigan, which one or two of the following goals are most important to you?



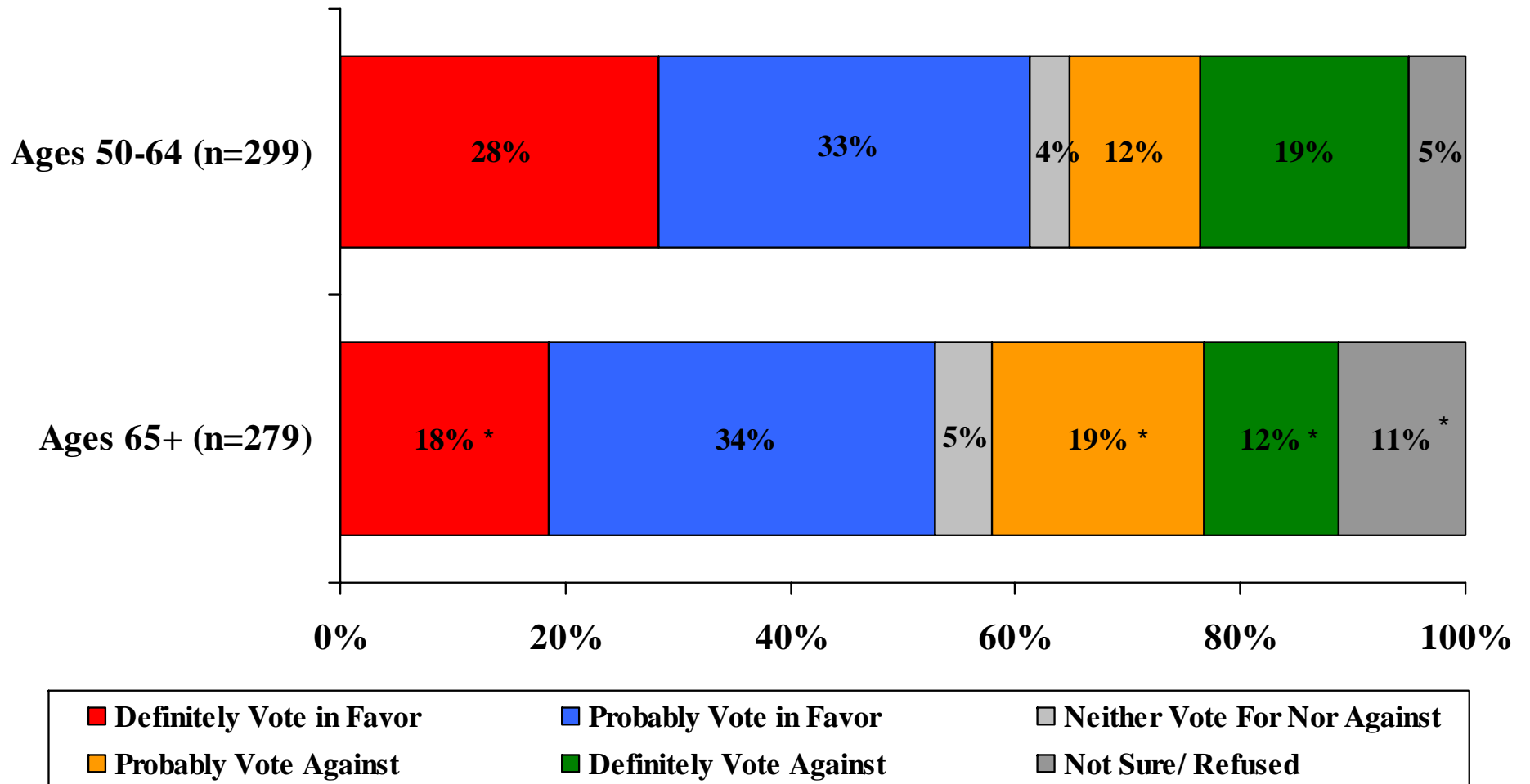
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q6. Have you seen, read, or heard anything about Michigan's Stop OverSpending or SOS, which is sometimes referred to as the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR proposal in the last year?



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

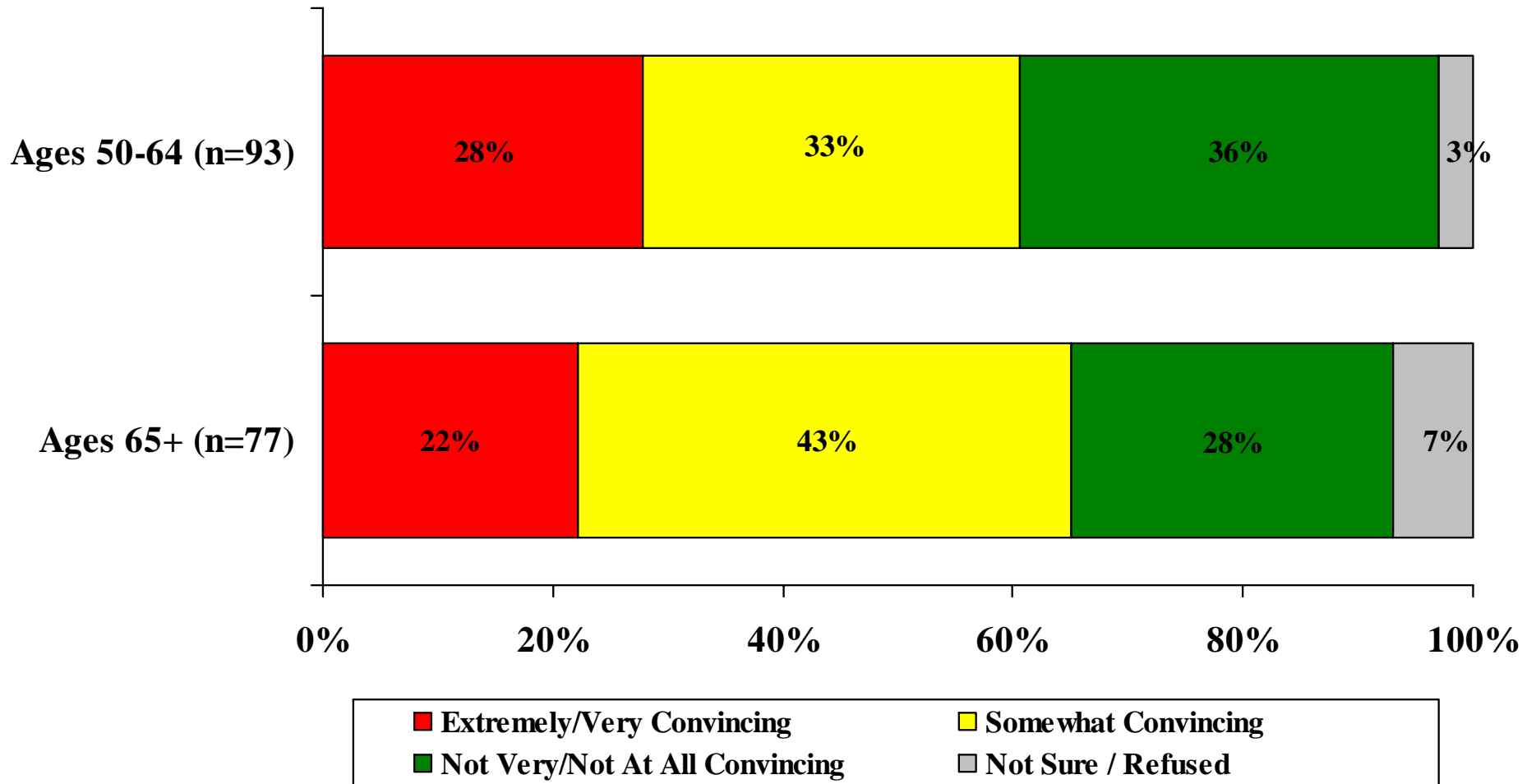
Q7. Given what you know about the proposal, if the election were held today, would you vote for or against the Stop OverSpending or SOS proposal?



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8a1. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

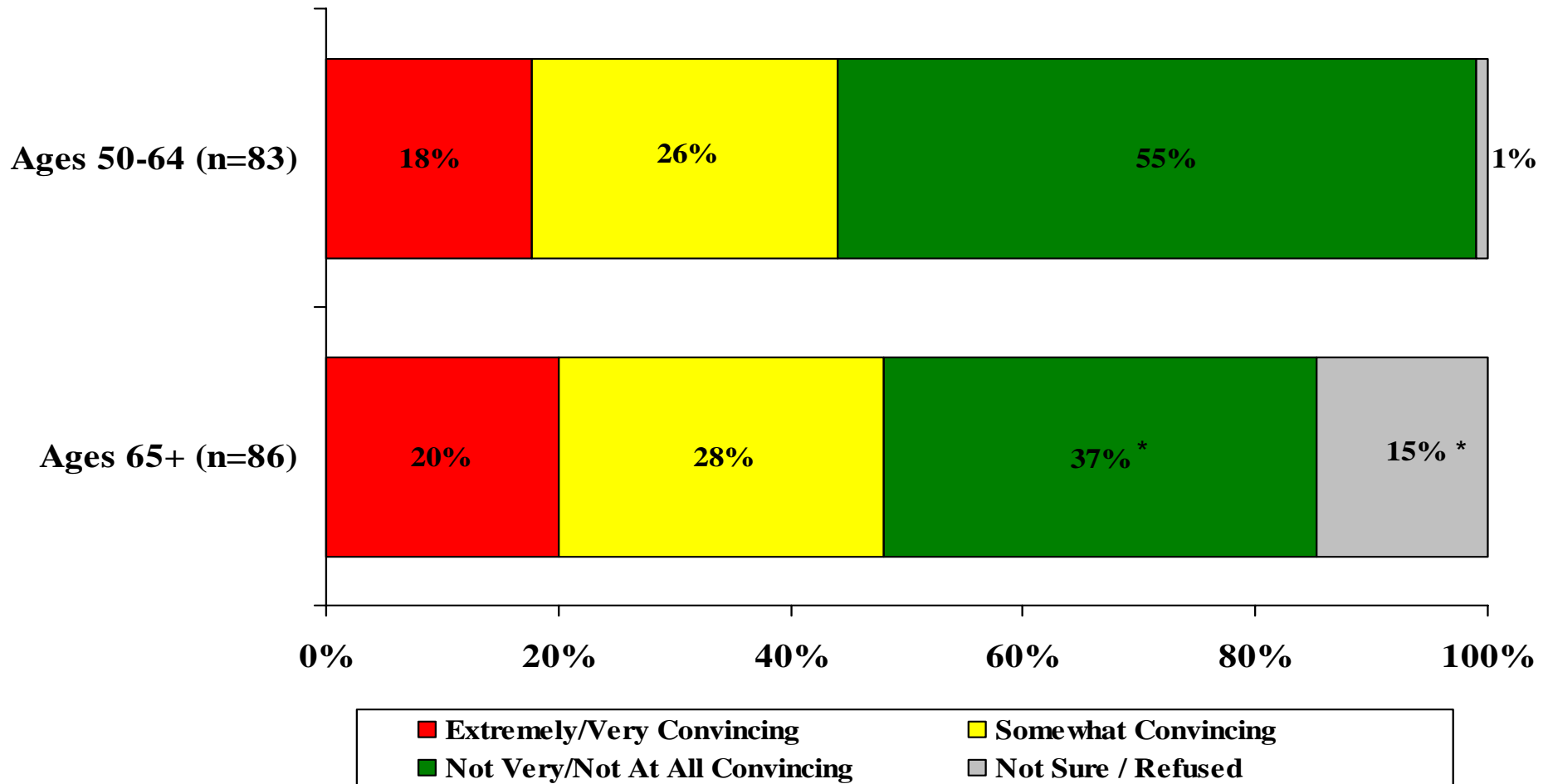
Supporters of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would control runaway state government spending and force the state government to operate more efficiently.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8a2. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

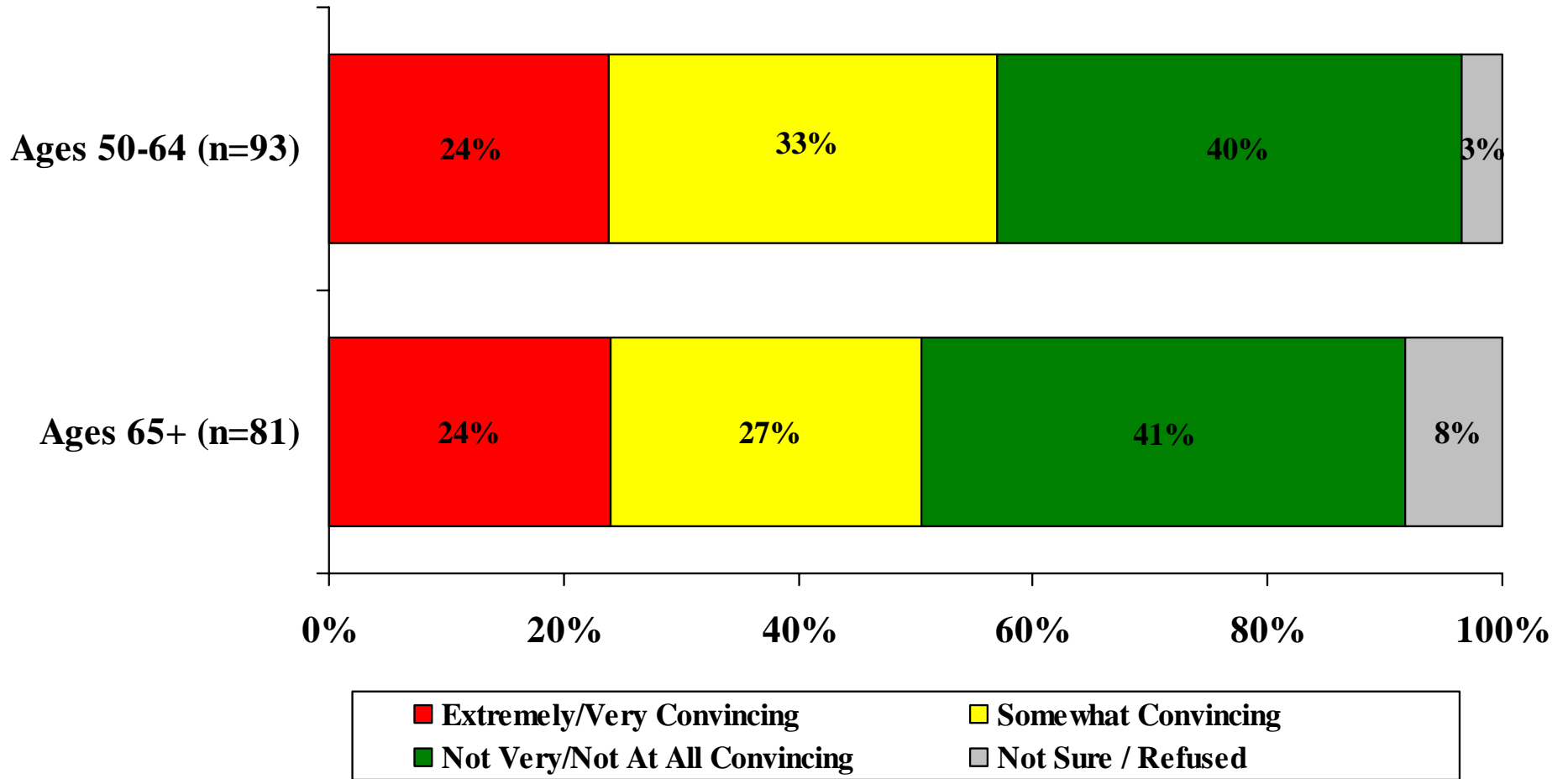
Opponents of the SOS proposal say the state already has a balanced budget requirement, voters already can control state government actions at the ballot box, and that SOS would decrease the quality of life in Michigan, forcing major cuts in health, education, transportation, and public safety.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8b1. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

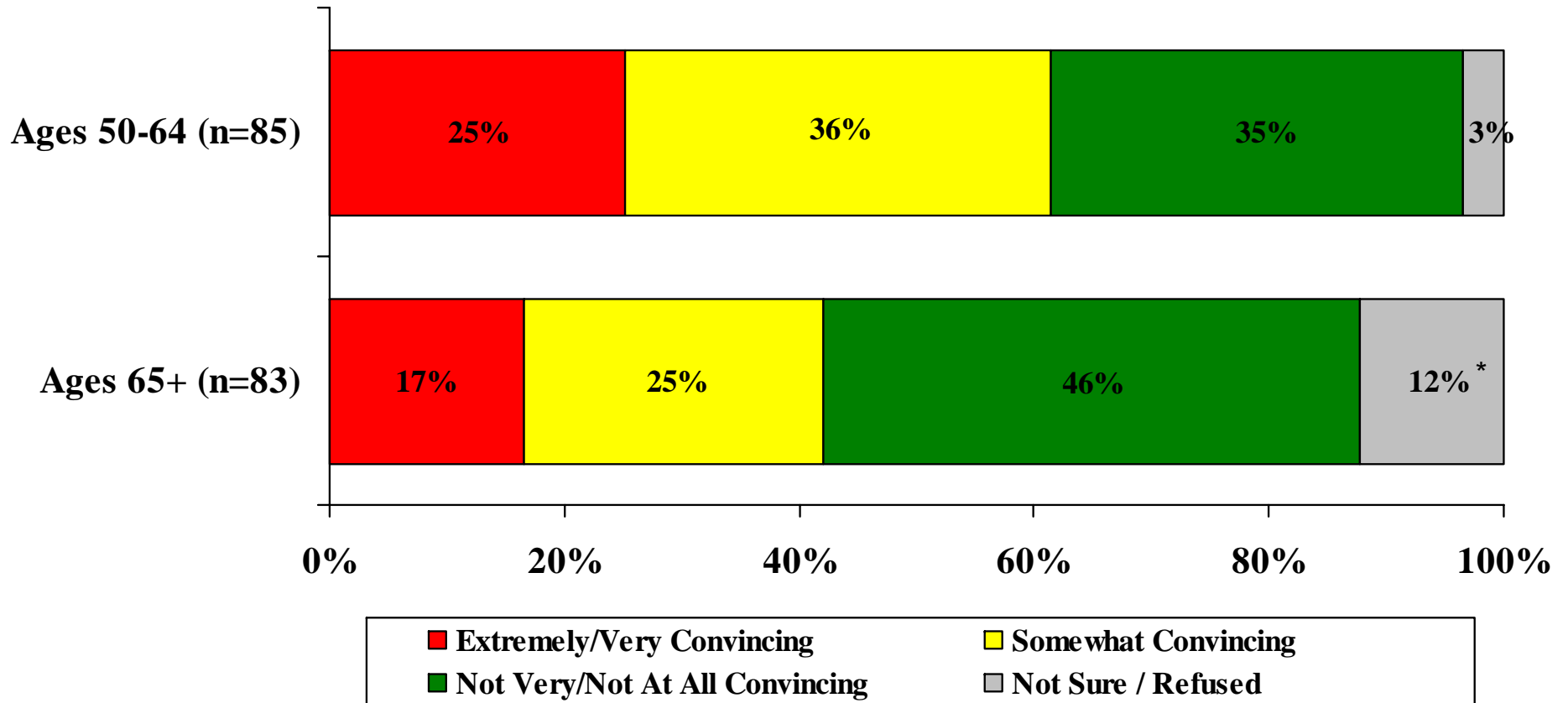
Supporters of the SOS proposal say that it would help the Michigan economy by returning money to taxpayers through tax rebates and tax cuts.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8b2. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

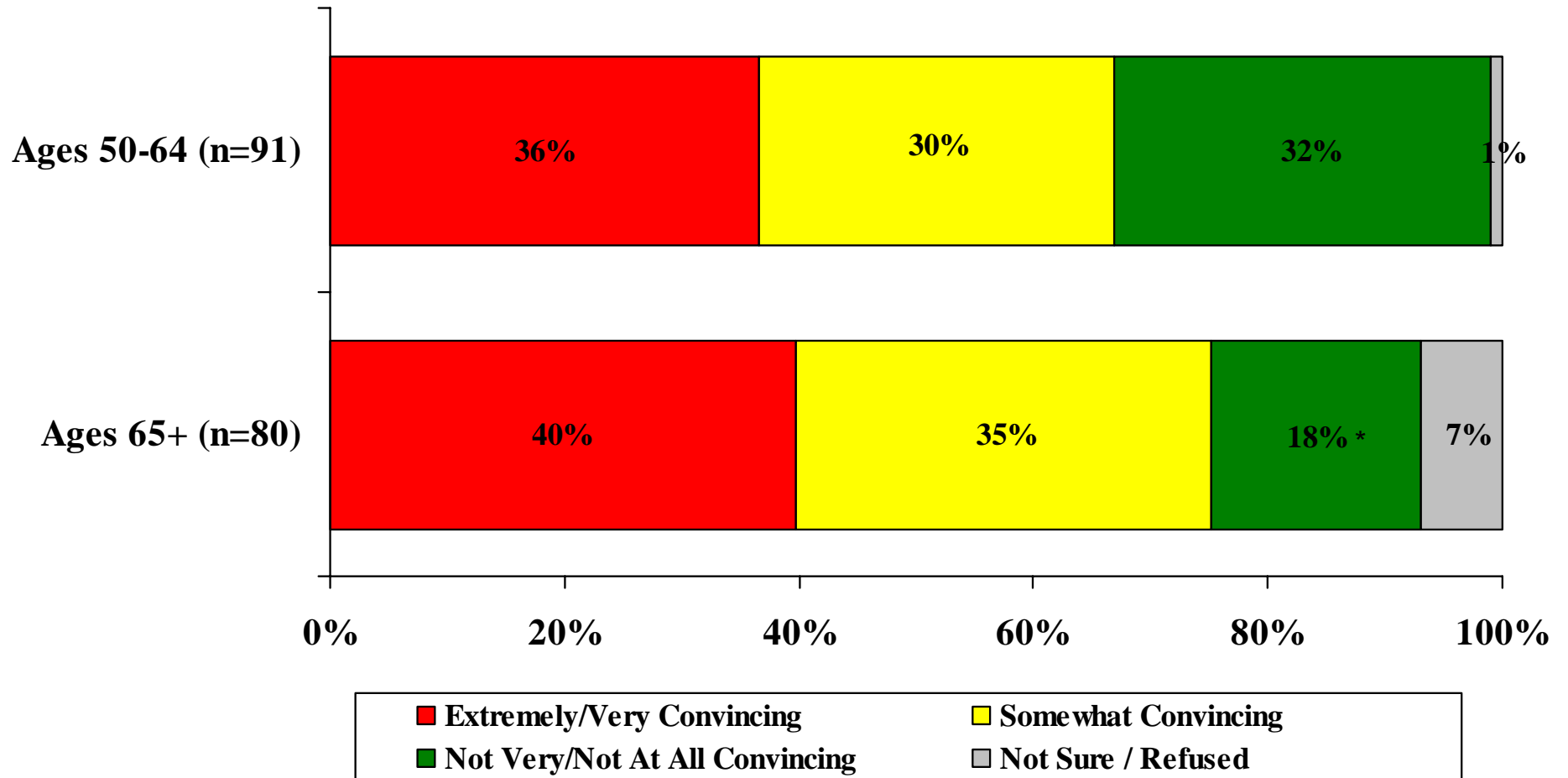
Opponents of Michigan's SOS proposal say that any money refunded to tax payers would be more than offset by the increased out-of-pocket expense they would bear. In Colorado, the only state that has passed TABOR, fees have increased for licenses and park admissions. Also, families have had to pay for items that schools typically provided such as textbooks and basic school supplies, while children attended classes wearing coats because heat had been dramatically lowered.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8c1. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

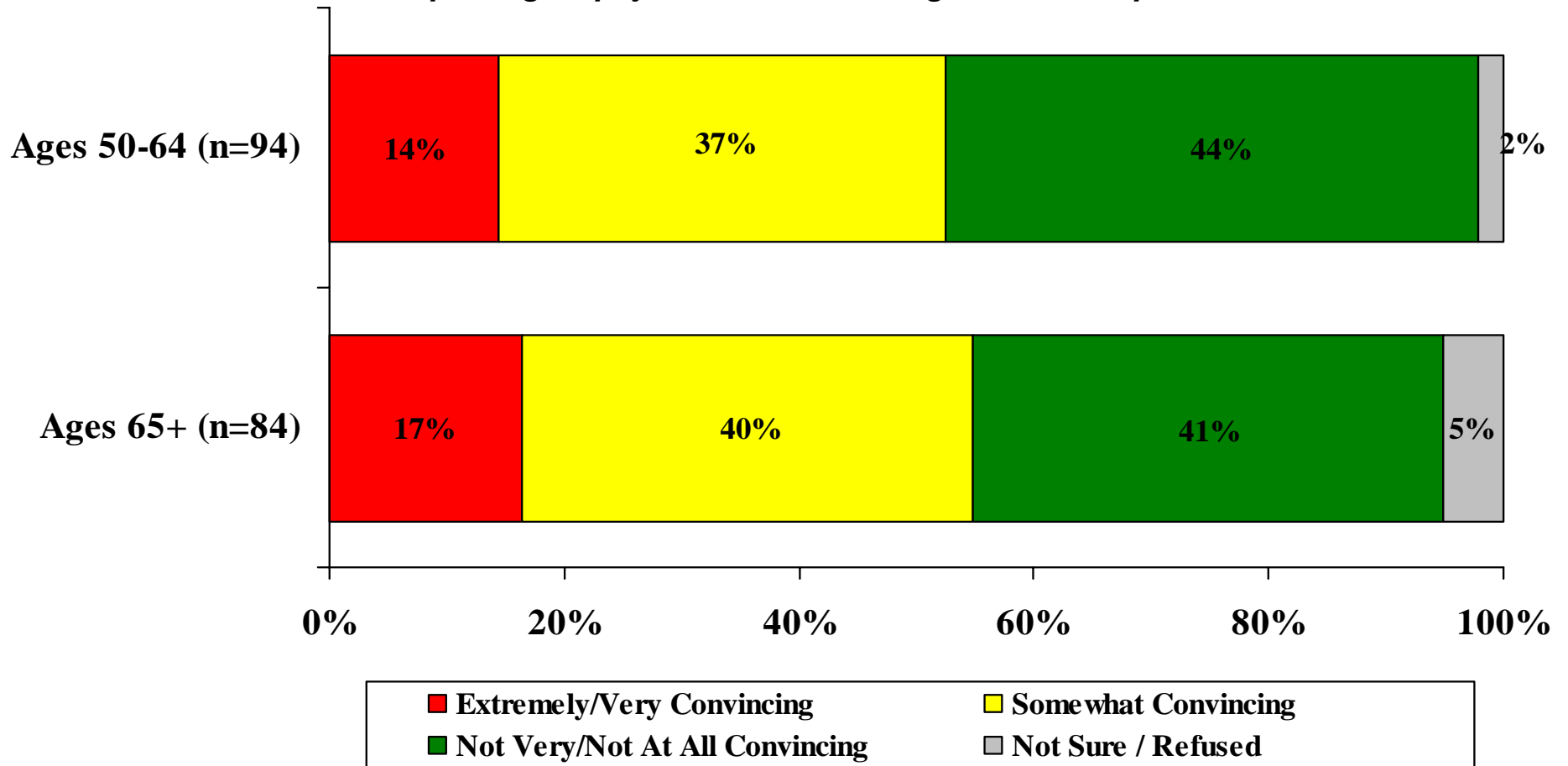
Supporters of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would take power away from state politicians and put it back in the hands of the people by requiring that any tax increase be approved by voters.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8c2. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

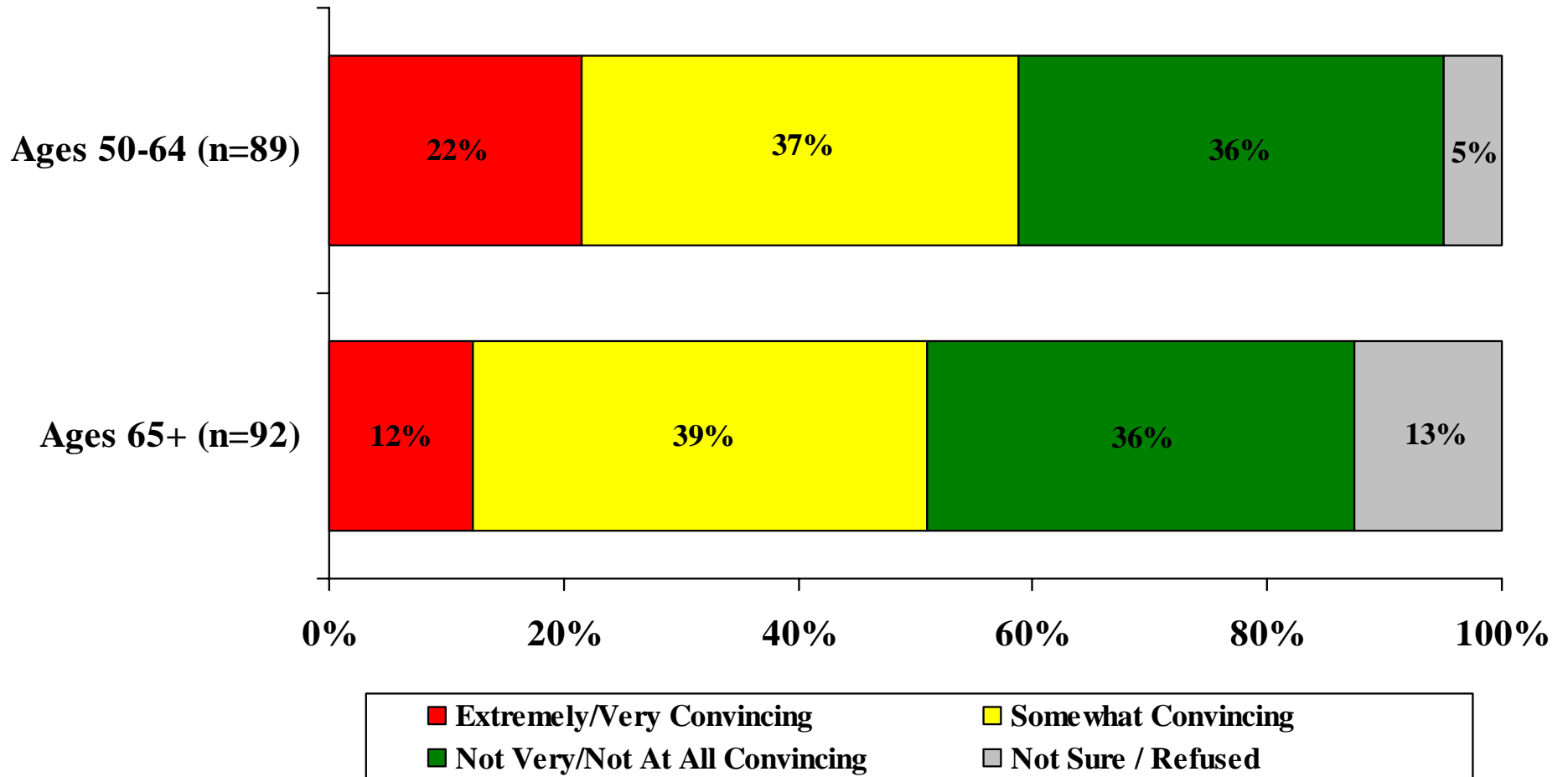
Opponents of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it allows lawmakers to shirk their responsibility for managing the state budget, and, by making voters decide on every single tax increase that the state may need, ties up the budget process and creates gridlock, in addition to expecting taxpayers to become budget and tax experts.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8d1. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

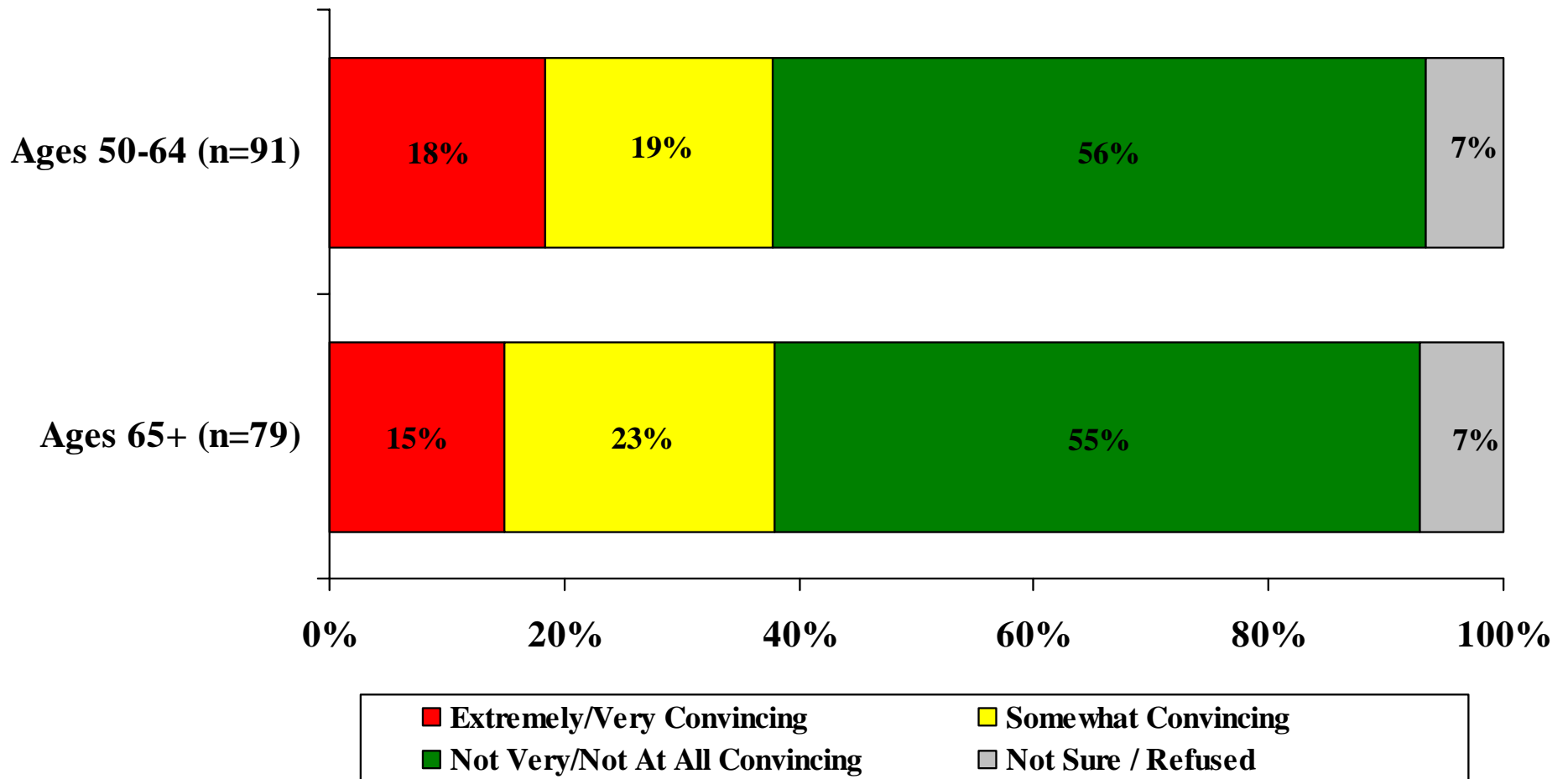
Supporters of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would be good for businesses because it would lower the taxes businesses have to pay to operate in the state.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8d2. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

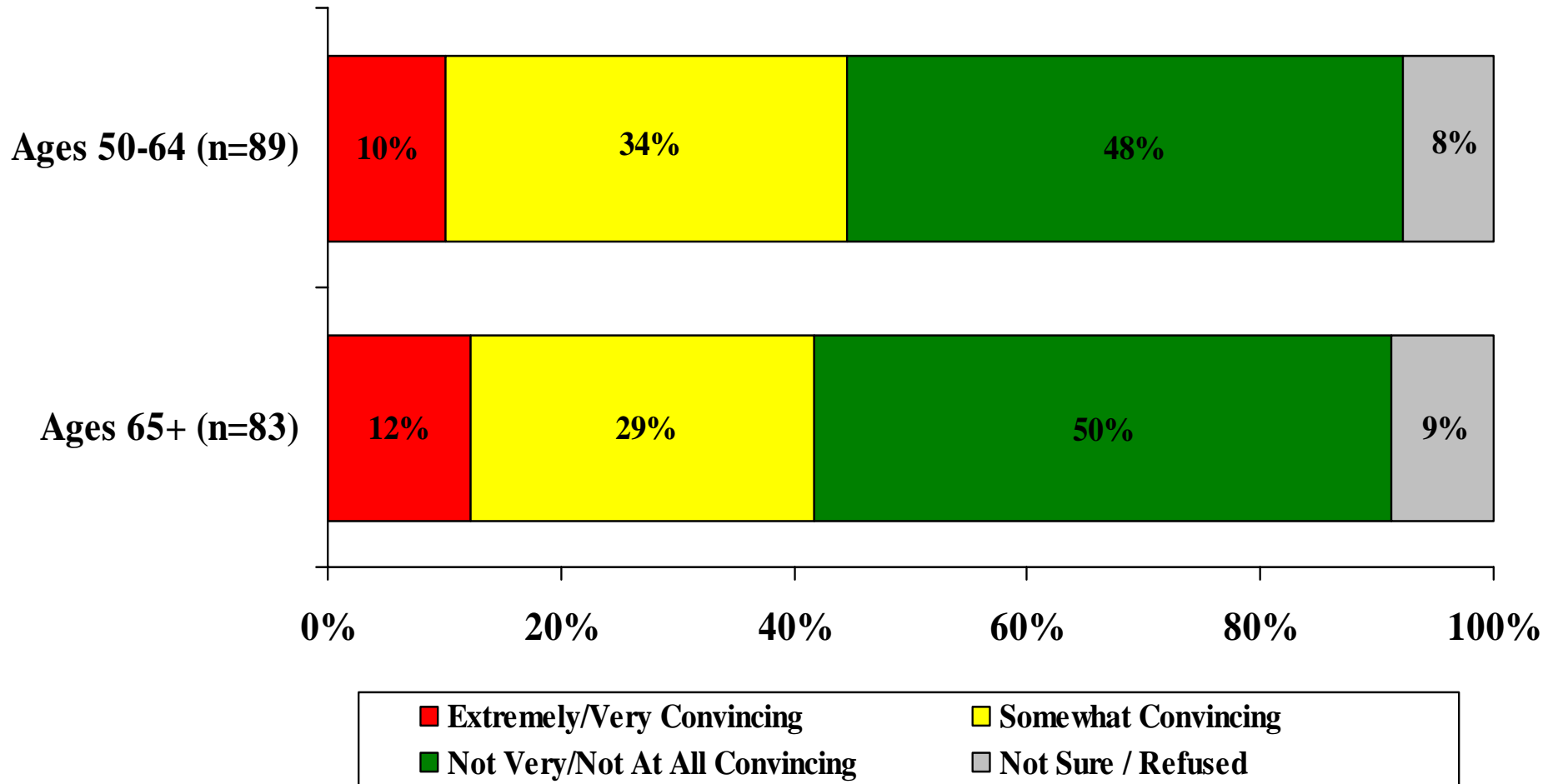
Opponents of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would cause businesses to leave or prevent them from relocating to Michigan because the declining quality of life would drive desirable job applicants out of the state.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q8e1. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

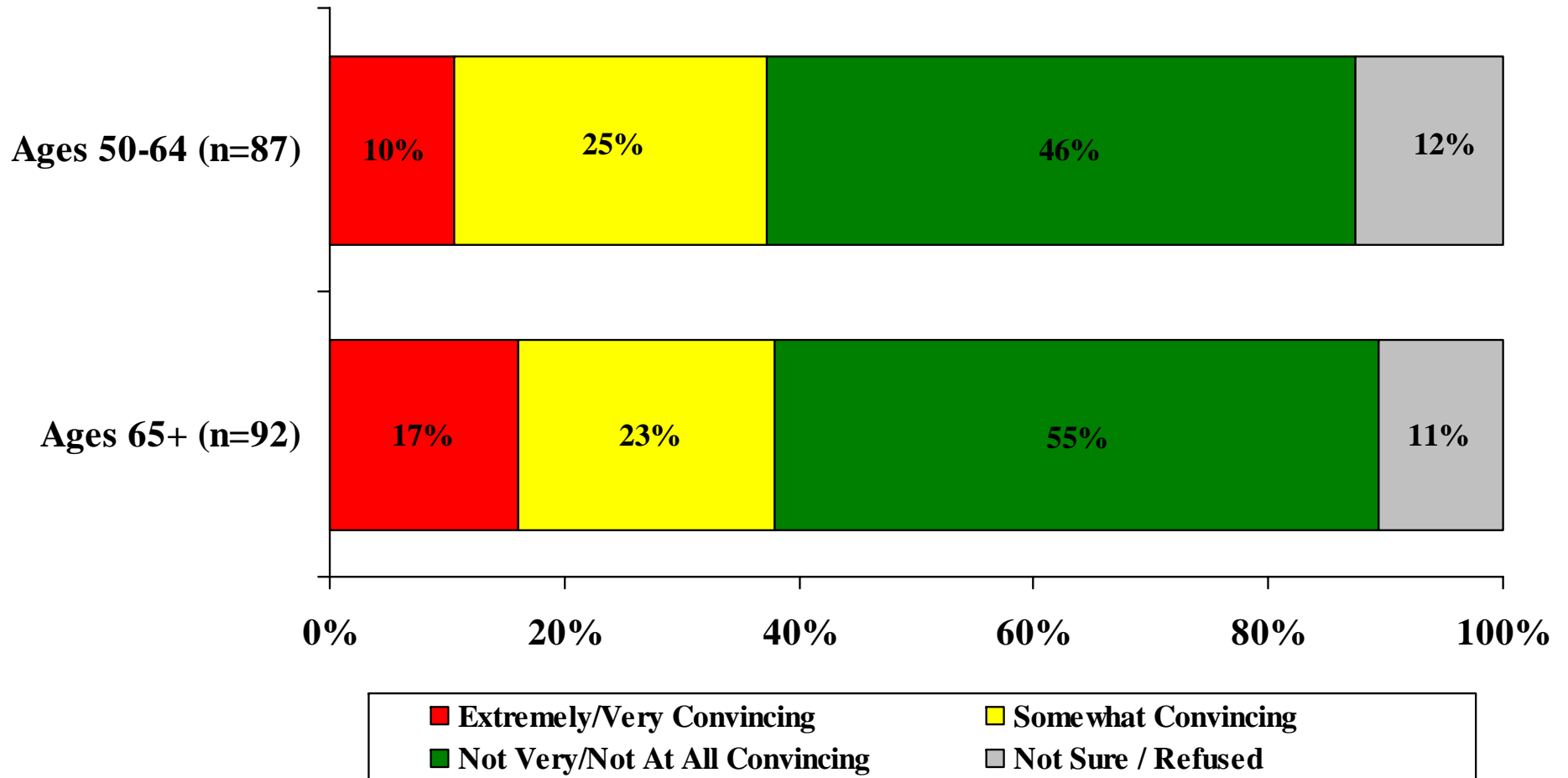
Supporters of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would allow citizens to sue state government if they believe SOS/TABOR limits are not being met.



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

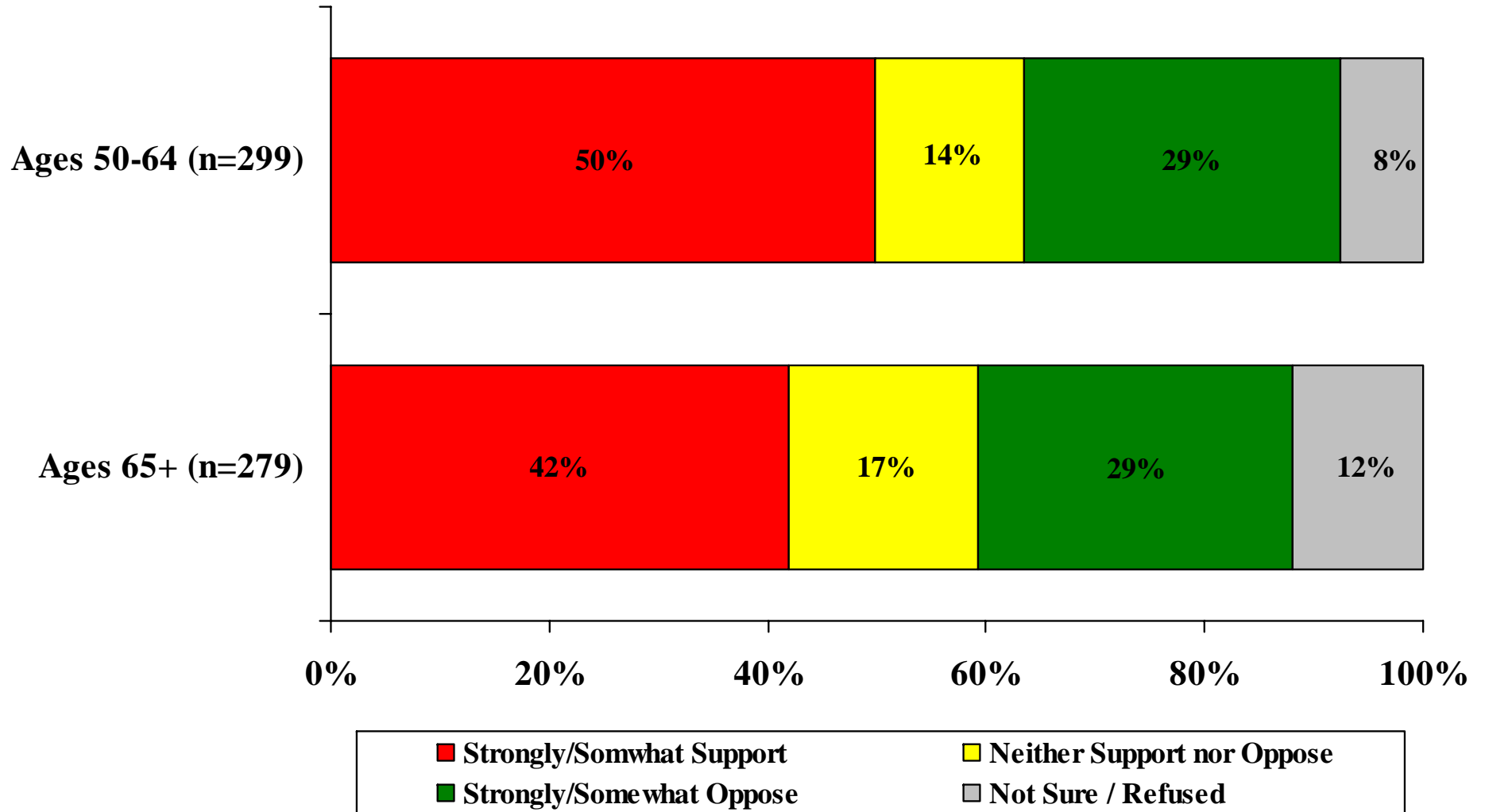
Q8e2. I'd like you to please tell me whether you find [this] an extremely convincing argument, very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or whether this particular argument is not at all convincing:

Opponents of Michigan's SOS proposal say that it would cost taxpayers more money and would cause further strains on the state budget to pay court costs and attorney fees if citizens could sue for enforcement of SOS limits.



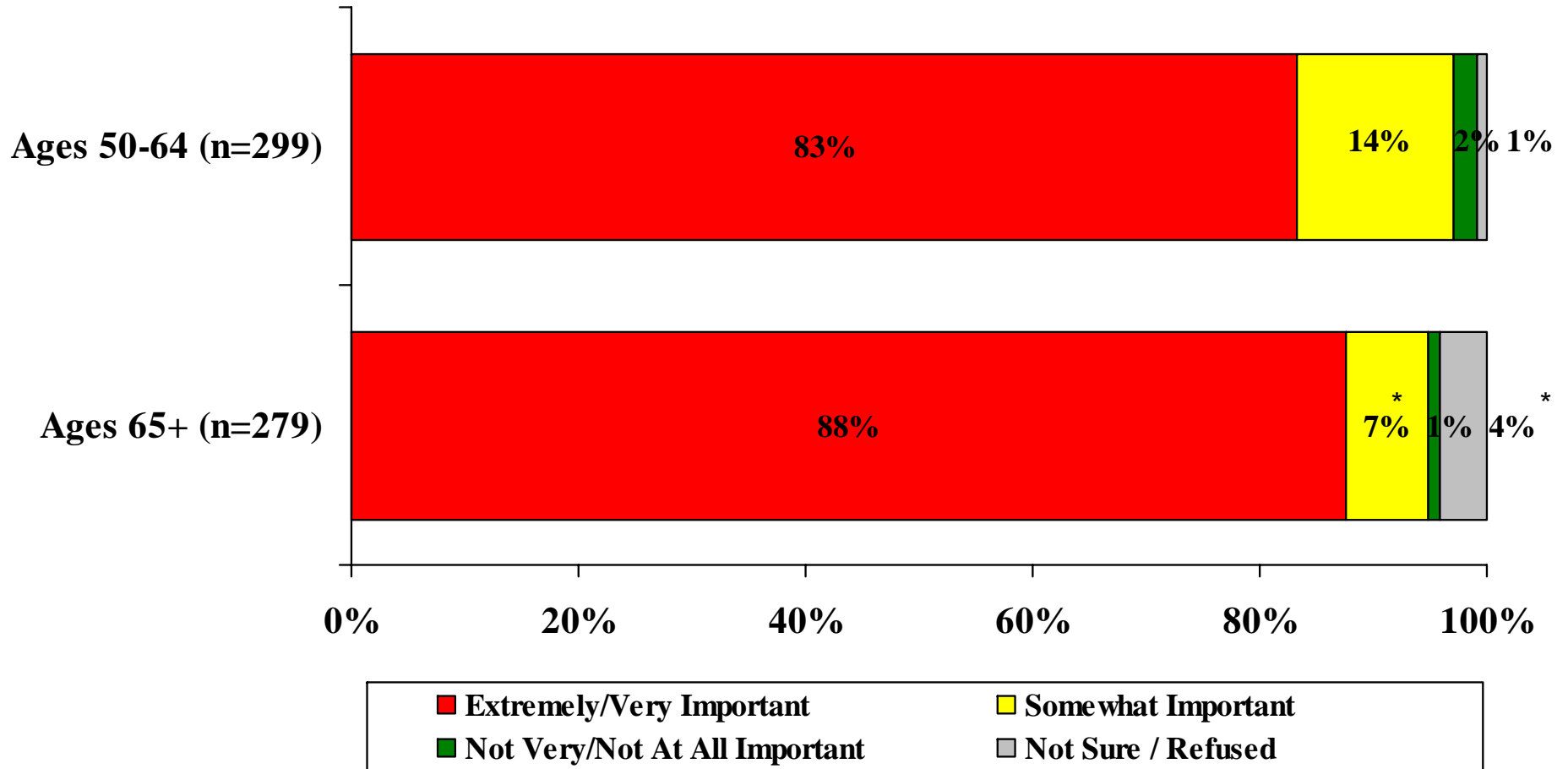
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q9. Having heard arguments both for and against the Stop OverSpending or SOS proposal, now how strongly do you support or oppose SOS in Michigan?



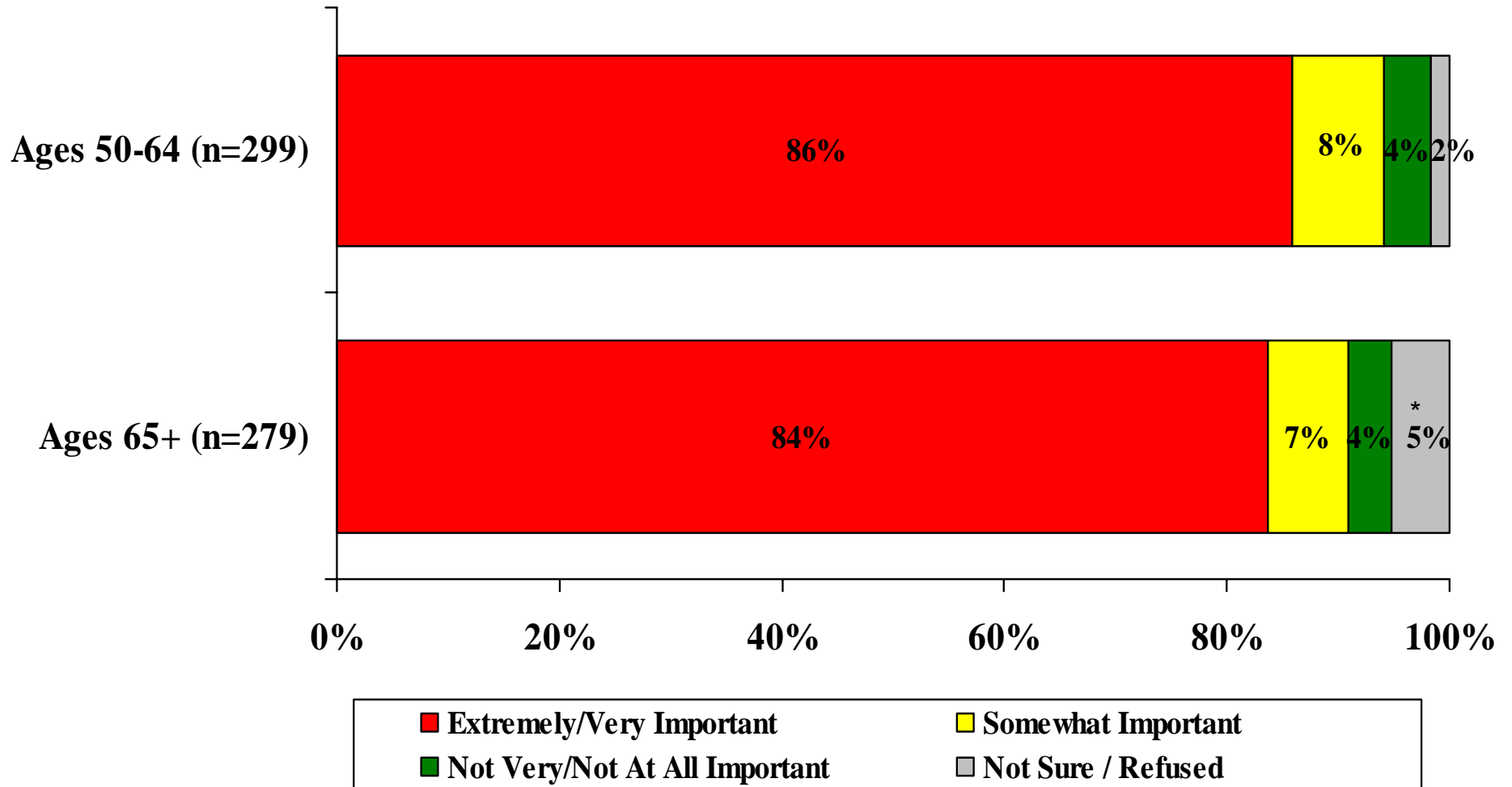
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q10b. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important is police protection and public safety to you? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



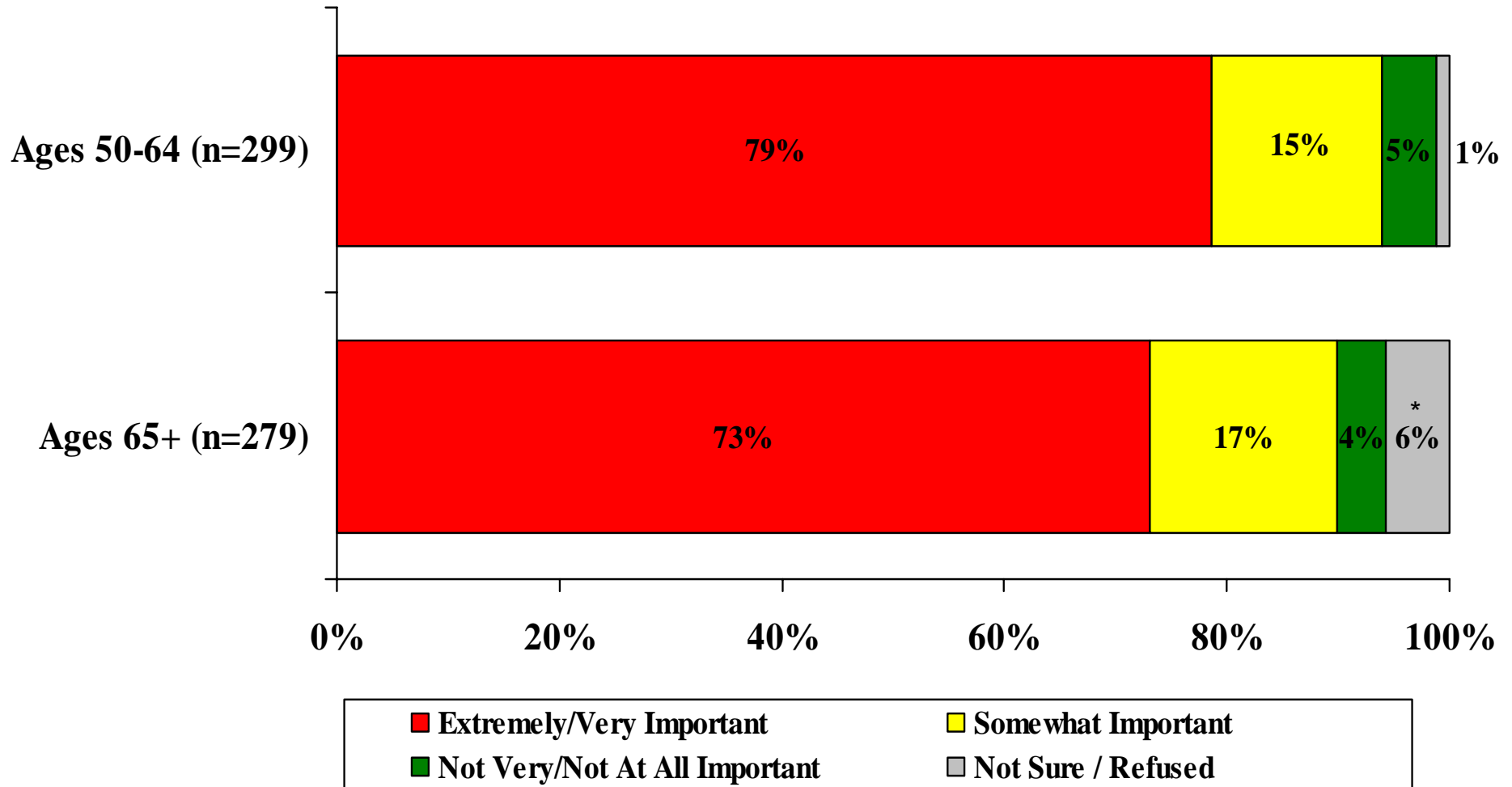
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q10e. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important is K-12 public school education to you? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



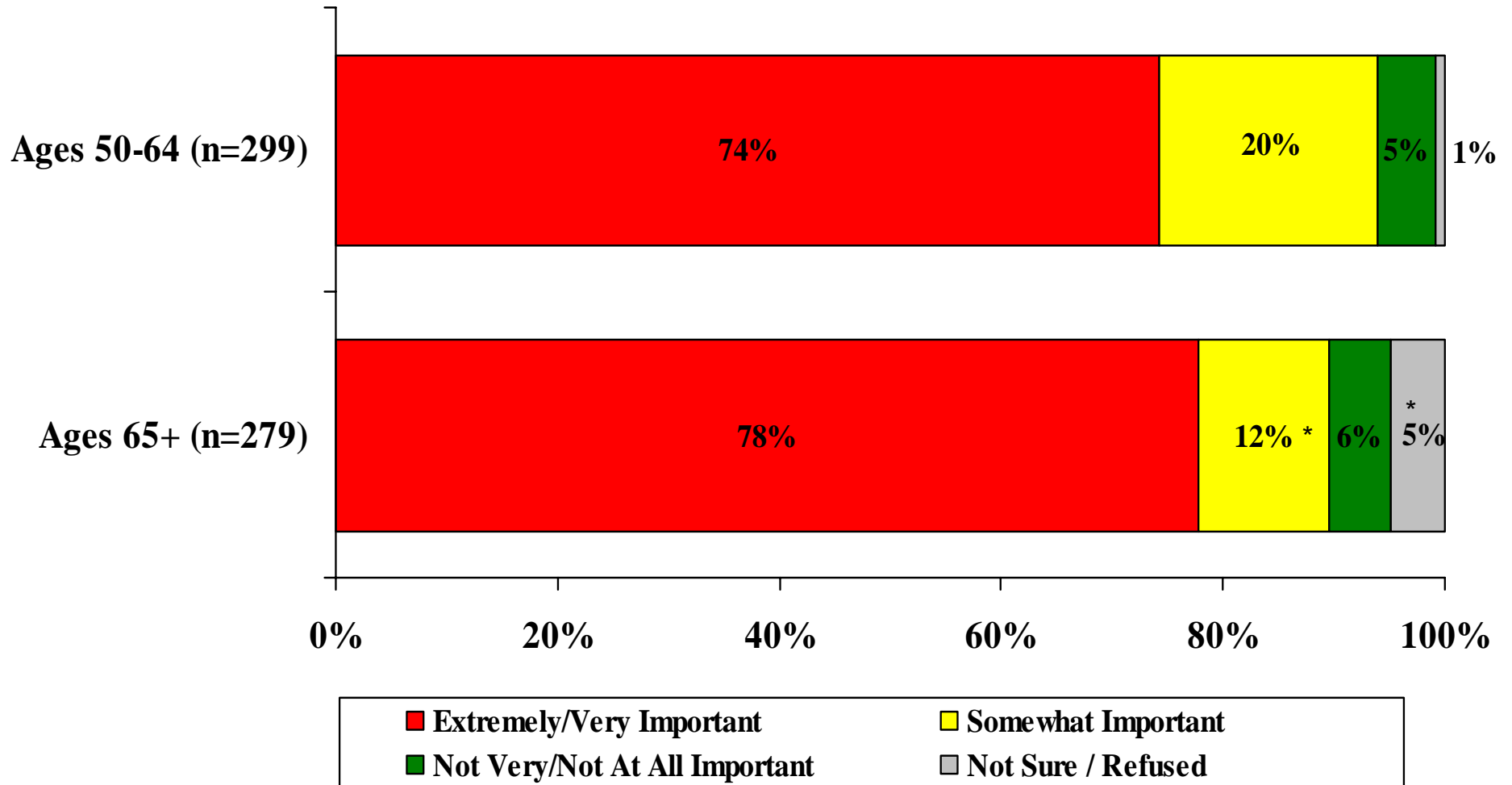
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q10f. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important is healthcare for low income families and their children to you? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



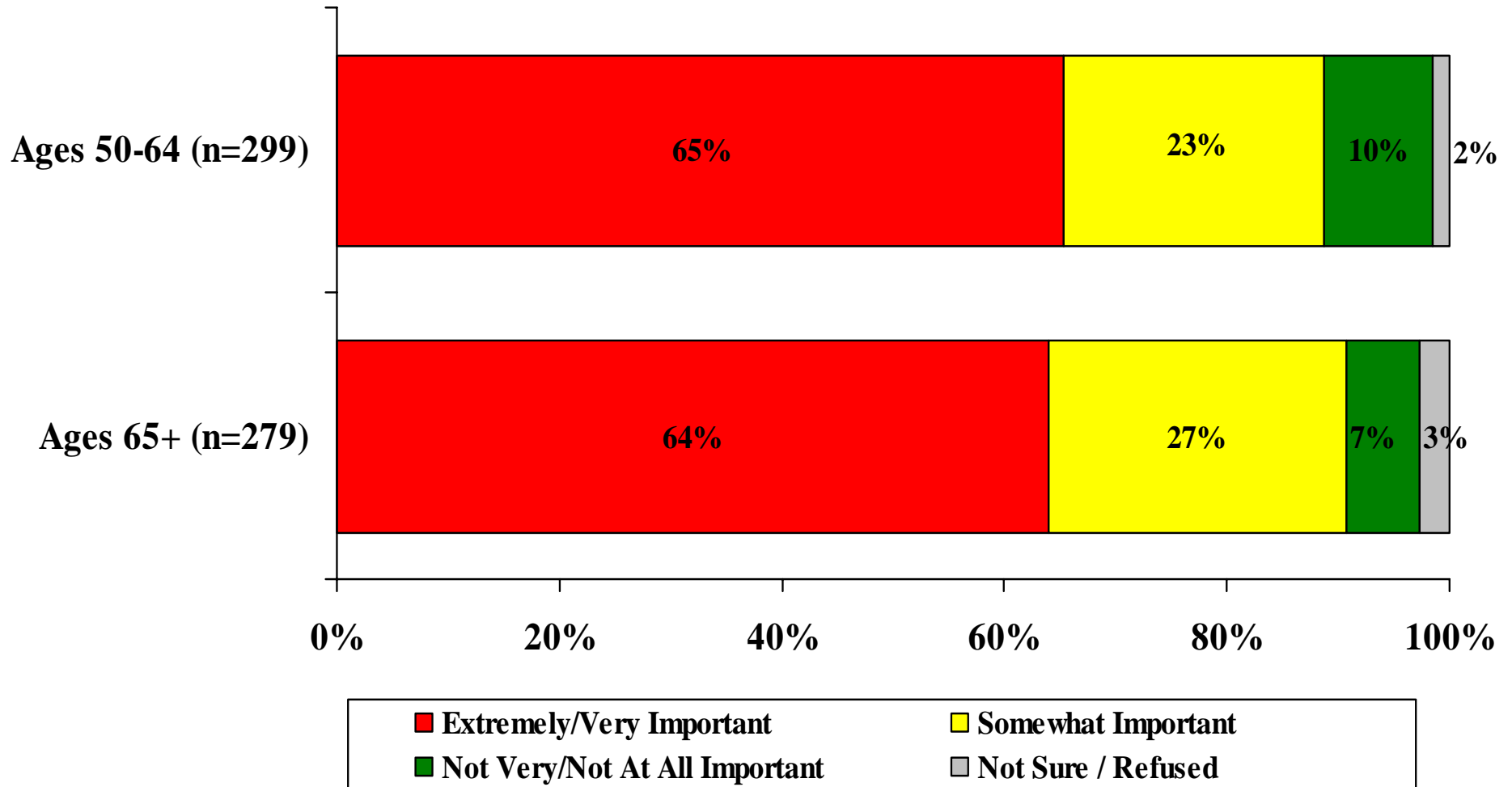
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q10g. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important is higher education (Universities, Colleges, & Technical Colleges) to you? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



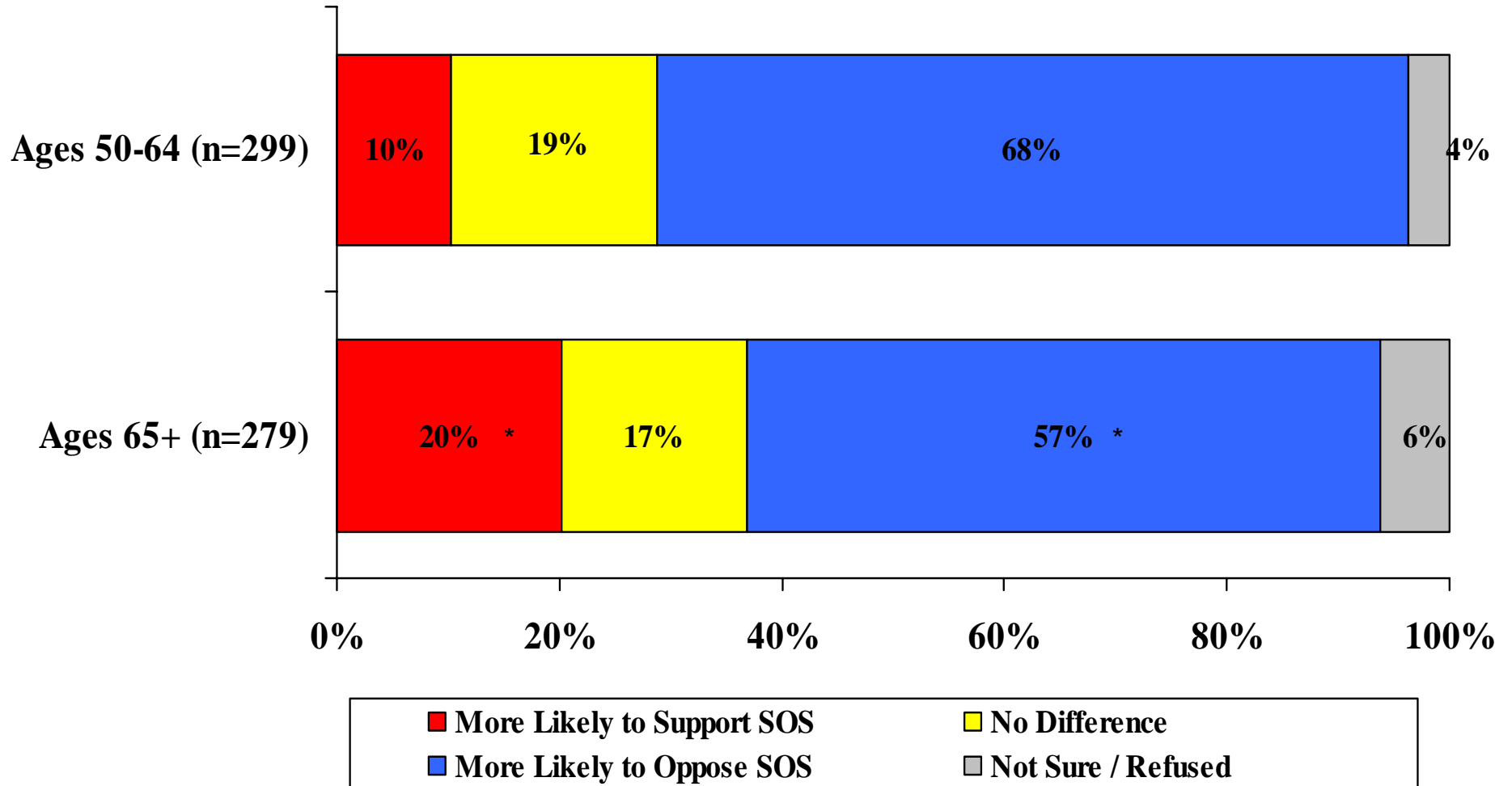
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q10i. Now, I am going to ask you about state and local services Michigan provides. How important are senior state services including home delivered meals, low-income energy assistance, & senior transportation to you? Are they extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?



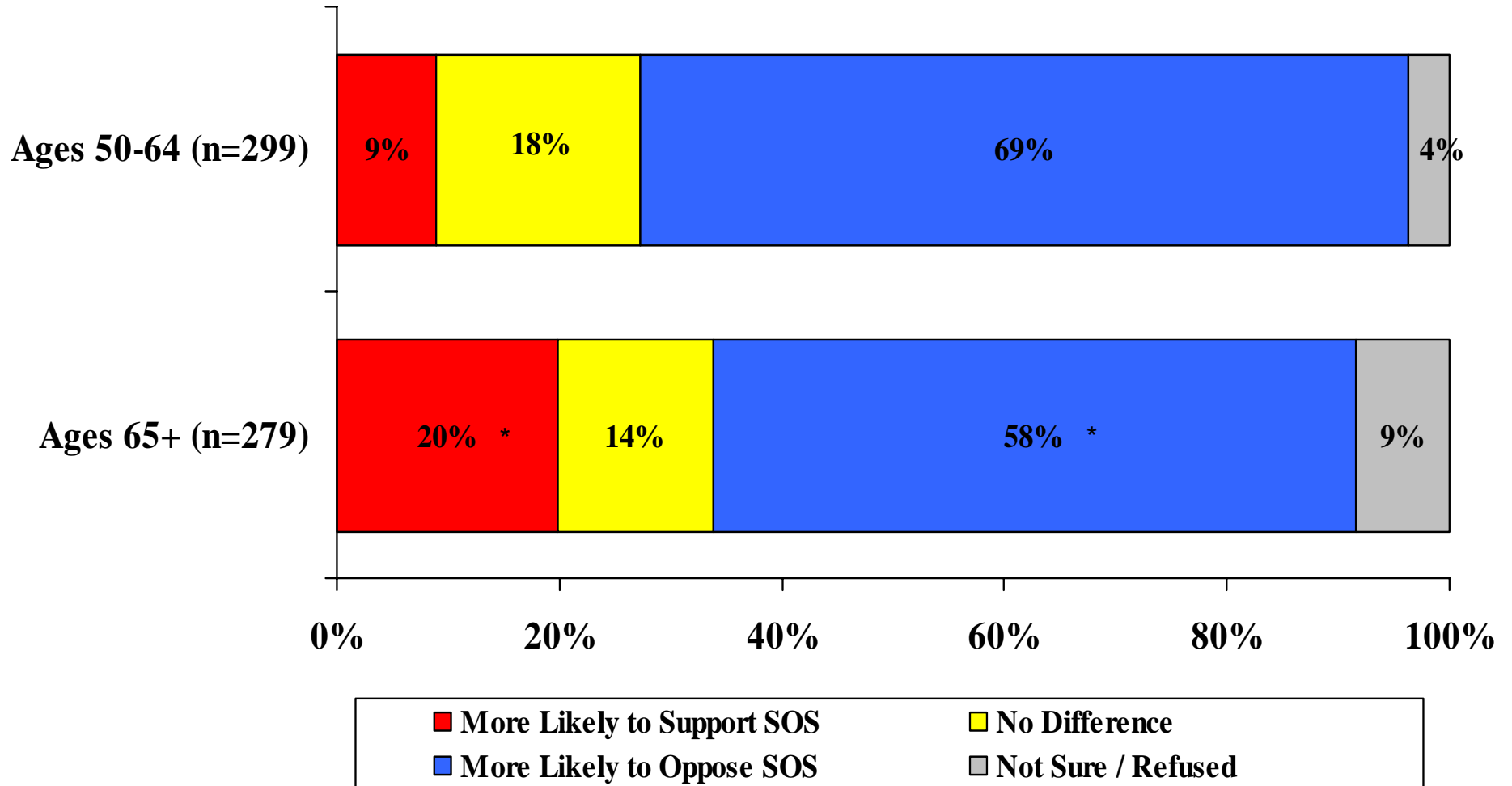
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q11b. If Michigan's SOS proposal cut state funding for police protection and public safety, would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?



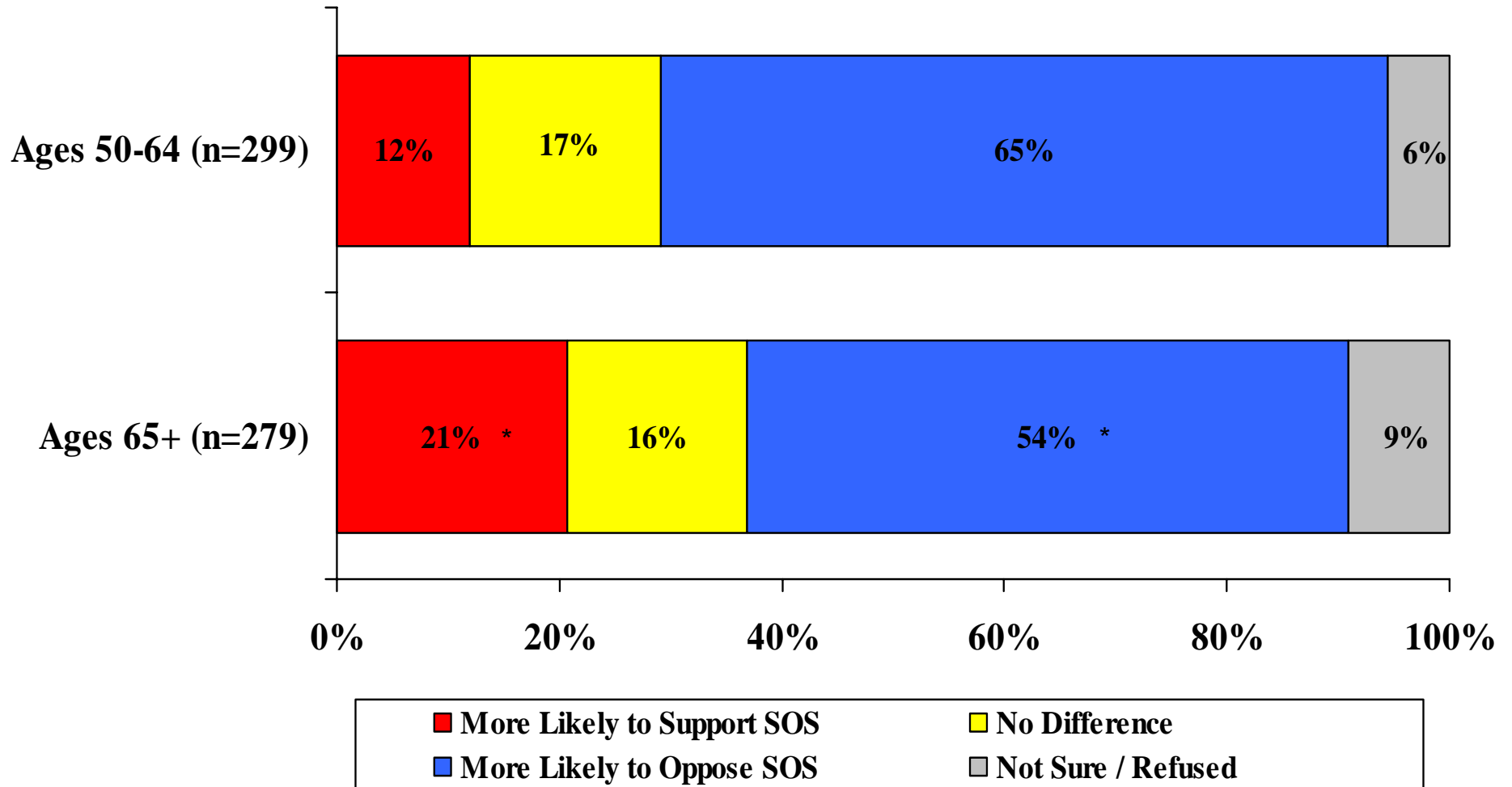
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q11e. If Michigan's SOS proposal cut state funding for K-12 public school education, would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?



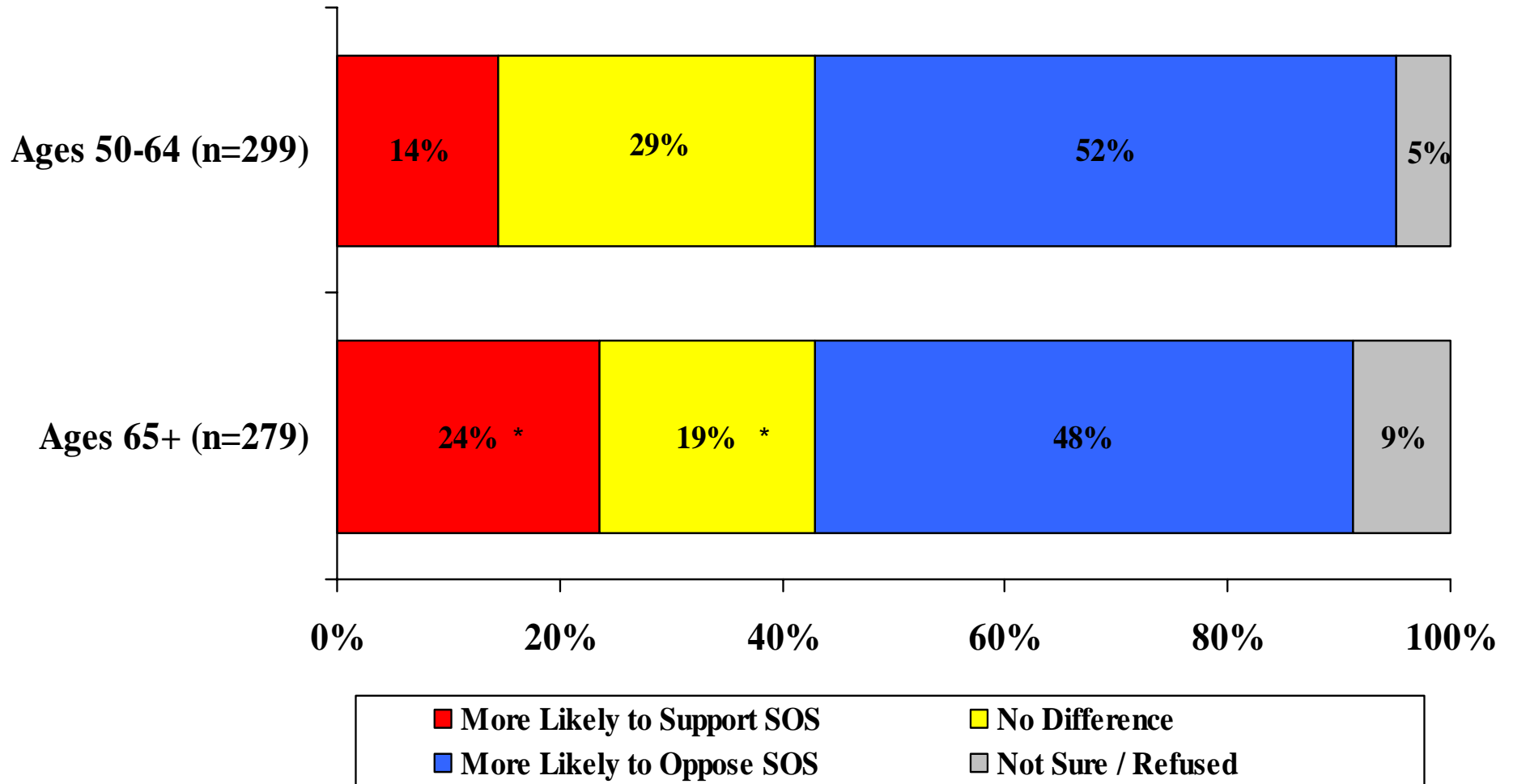
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q11f. If Michigan's SOS proposal cut state funding for healthcare for low income families and their children, would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?



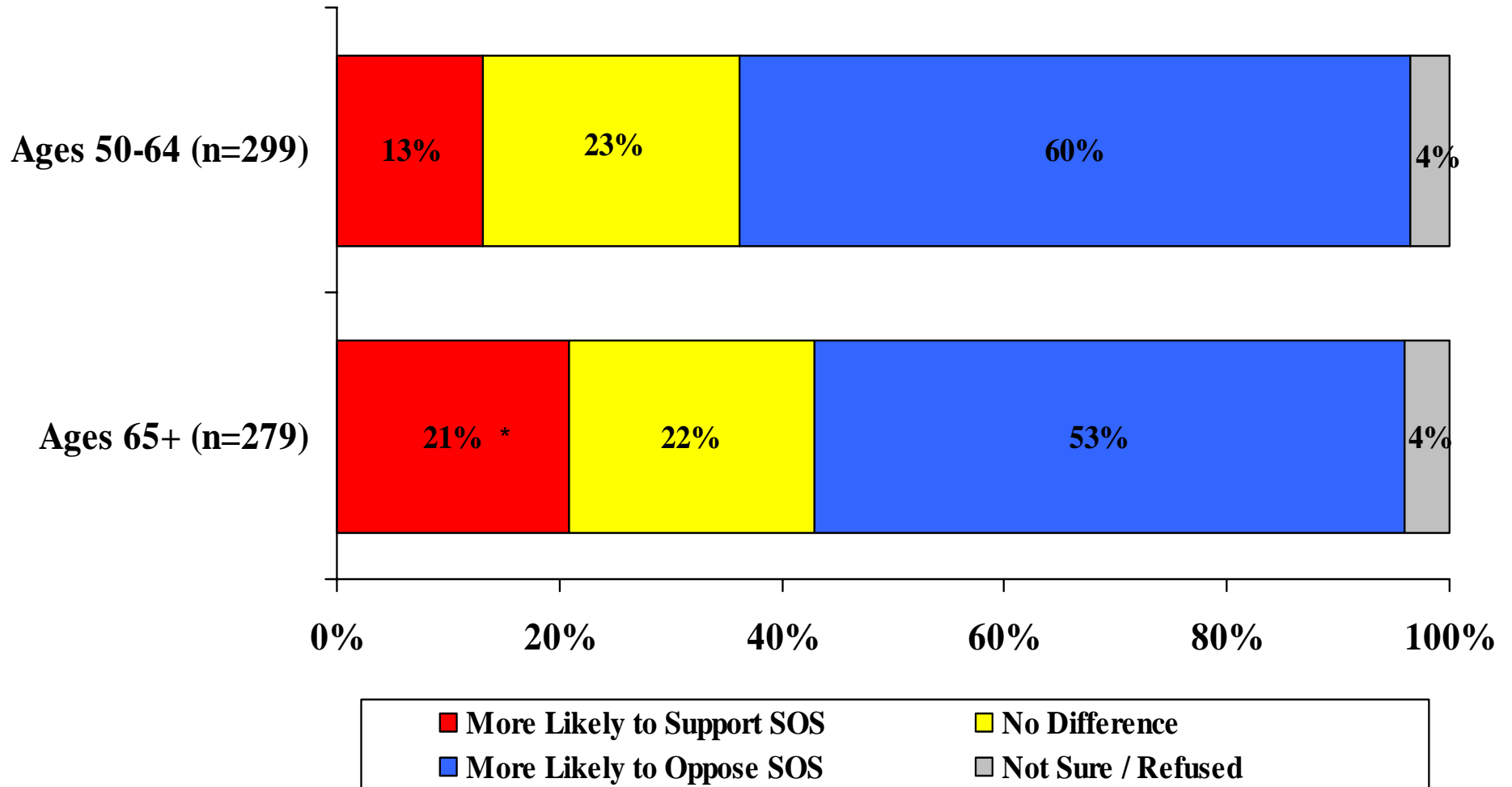
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q11g. If Michigan's SOS proposal cut state funding for higher education (Universities, Colleges, & Technical Colleges), would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?



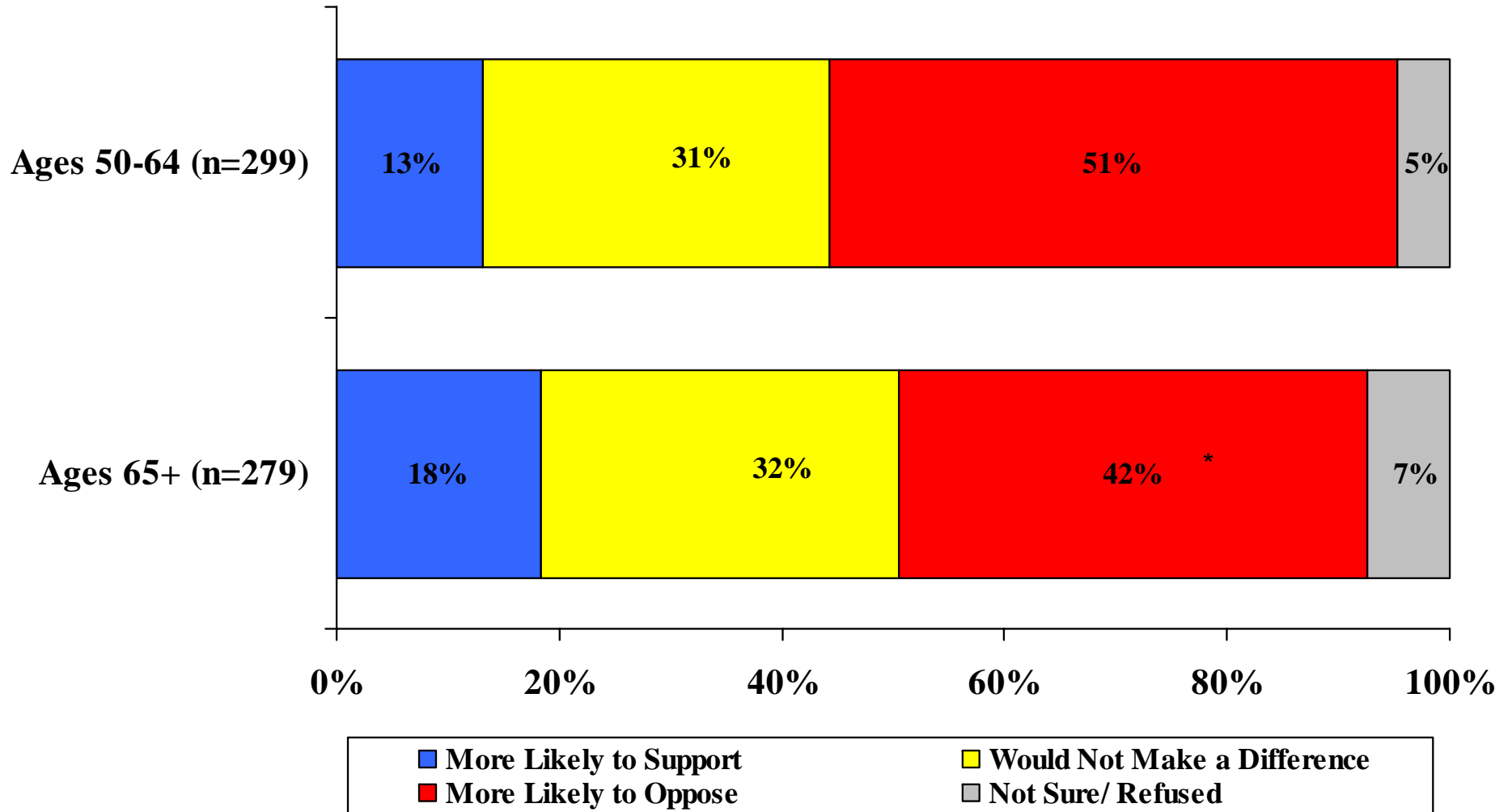
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q11i. If Michigan's SOS proposal cut state funding for senior state services including home delivered meals, low-income energy assistance, & senior transportation, would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference?



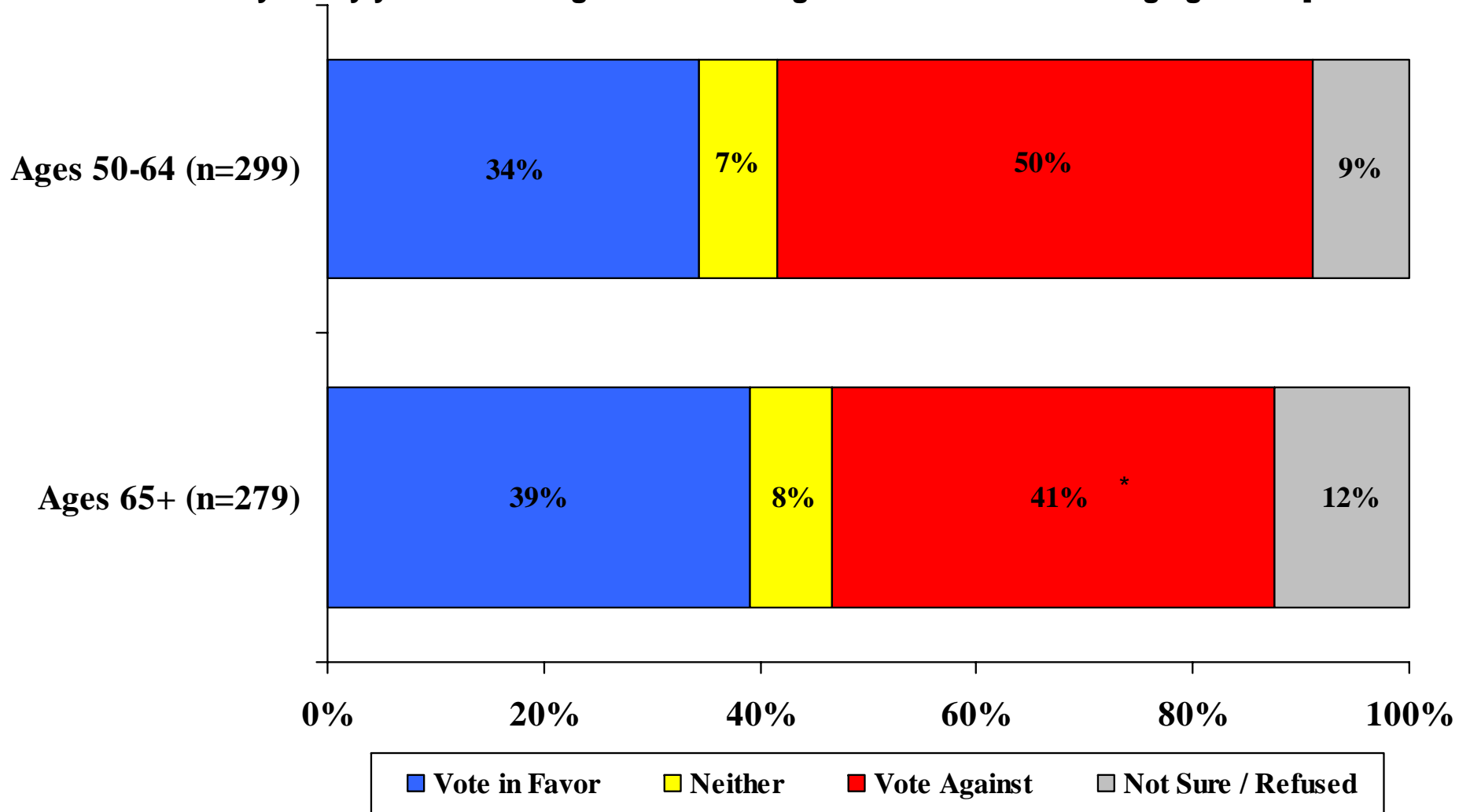
* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q12. Suppose you learned that AARP and other senior organizations OPPOSED Michigan's Stop OverSpending or SOS proposal because they believe it would lead to significant cuts in important state services for Michigan seniors. Would you be more likely to support SOS, more likely to oppose SOS, or would it not make a difference in how you voted for the SOS proposal?



* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

Q13 & Q14. Now thinking about all the information we have discussed about this proposal that may be on the ballot in November, if the election were held today, would you vote for or against this proposal? [IF INITIALLY UNDECIDED ASK: Well, if you had to decide right now, which way would you say you are leaning—toward voting in favor or toward voting against?"]

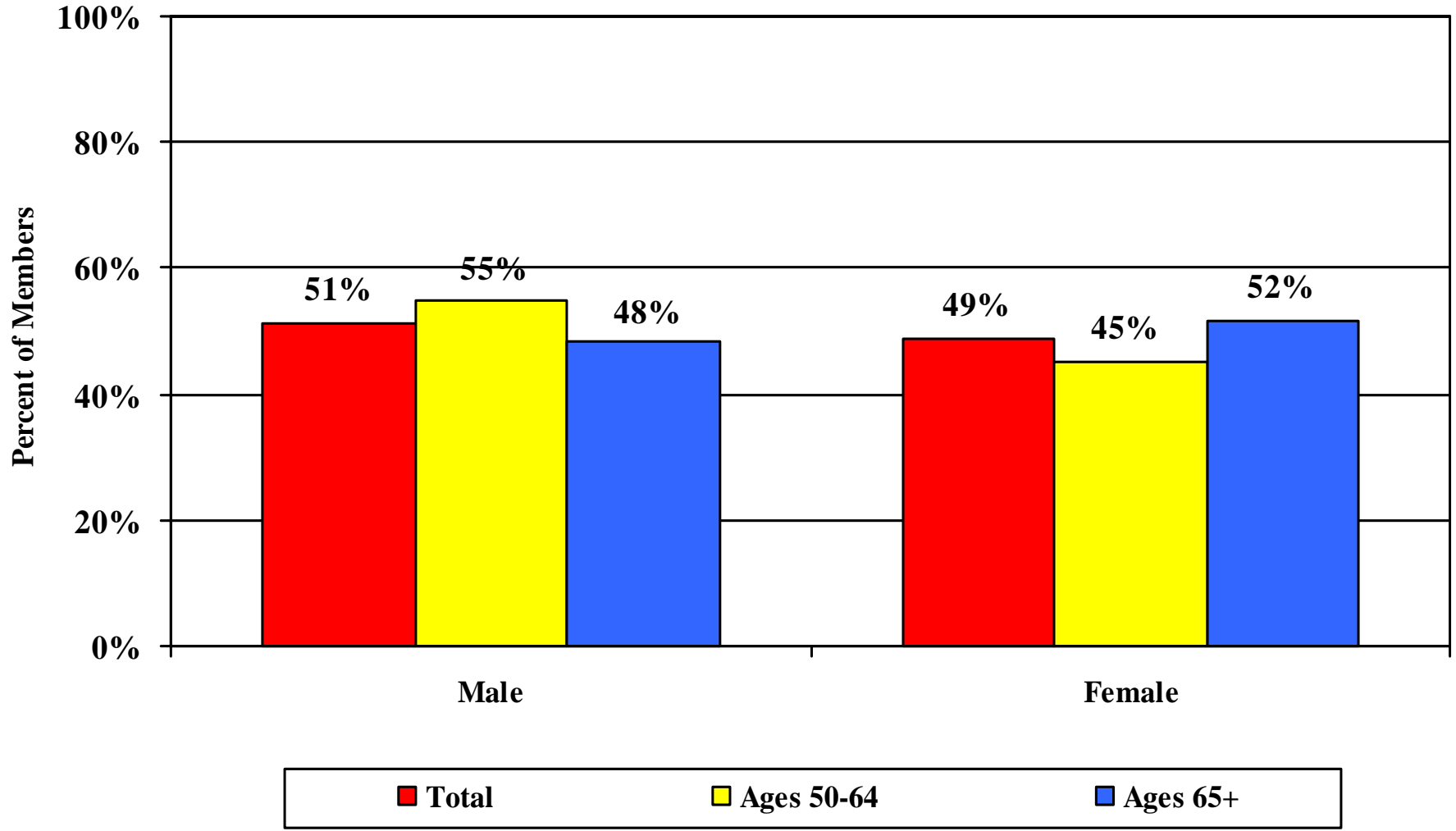


* Statistically significant difference from Members age 50 to 64 at the 95% level of confidence

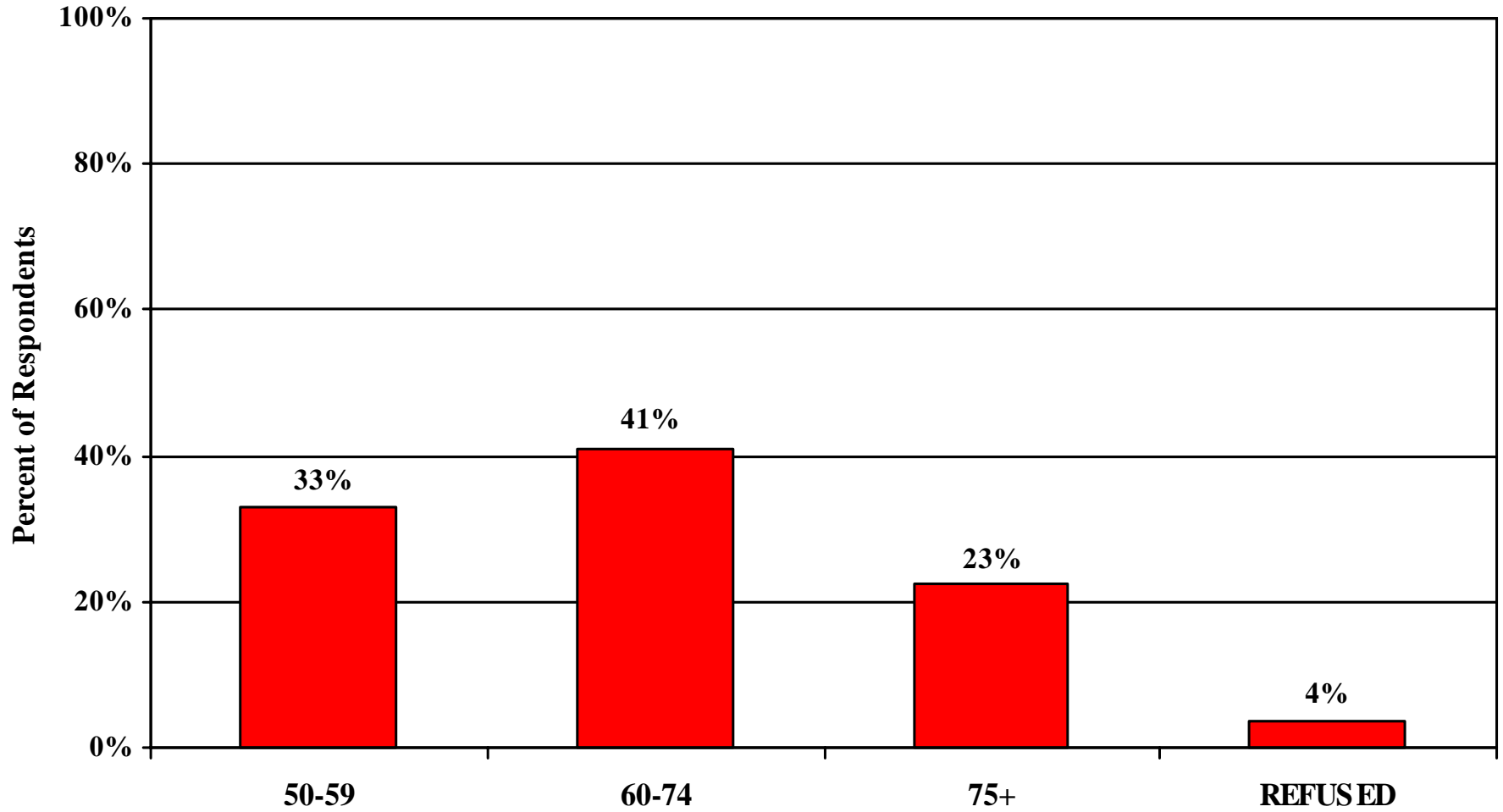
RESPONDENT PROFILE



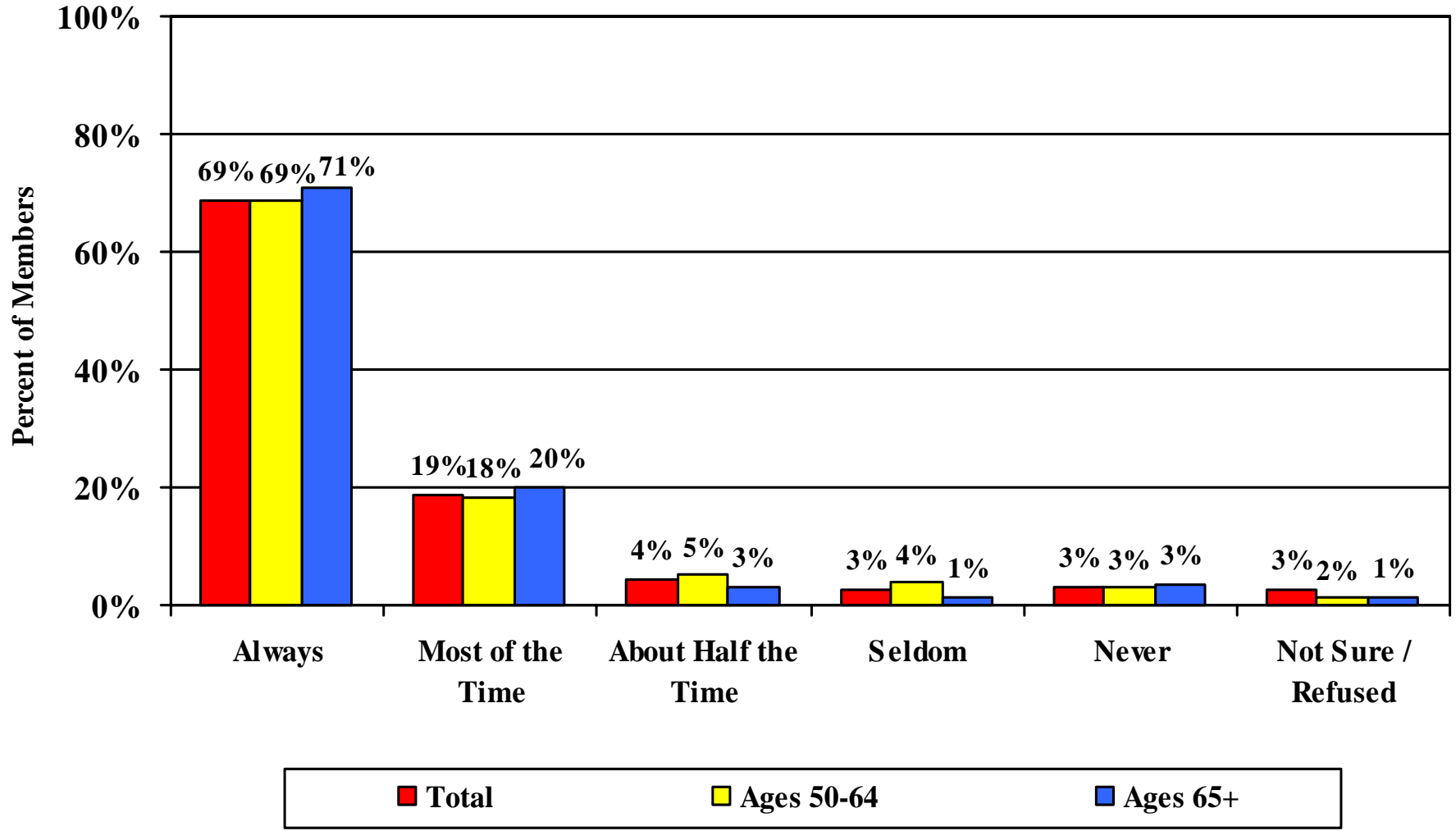
GENDER



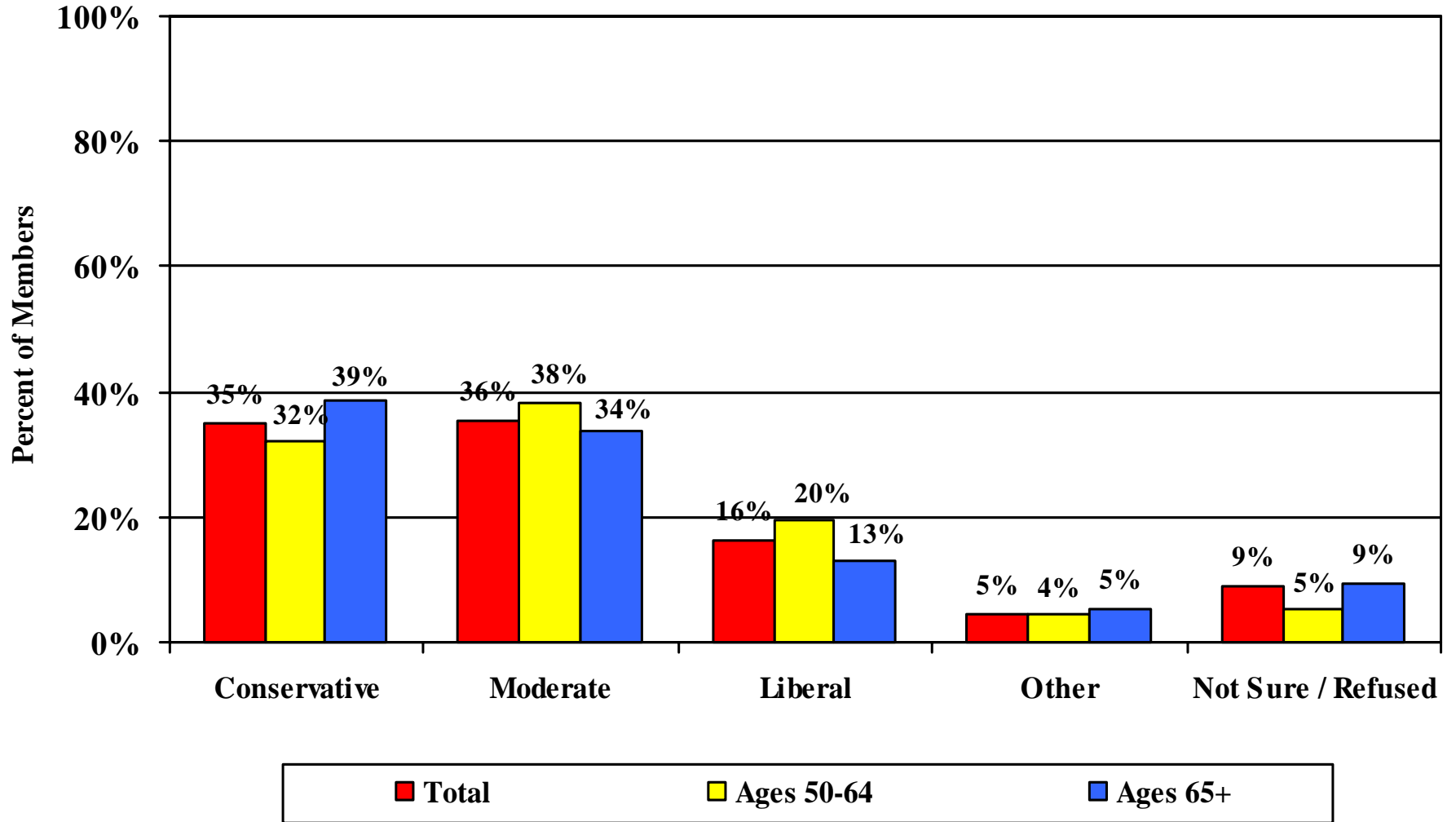
AGE



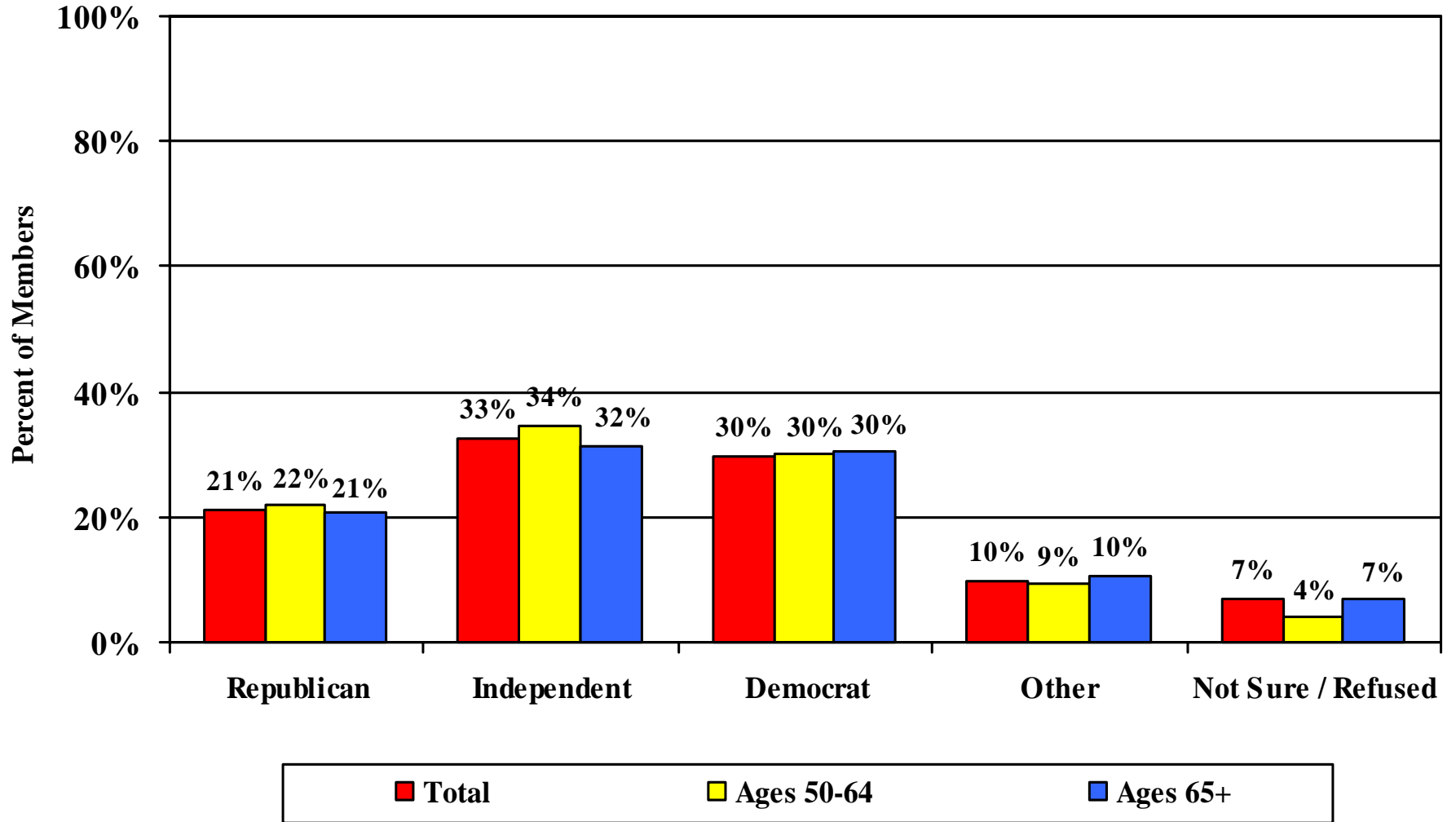
FREQUENCY OF VOTING



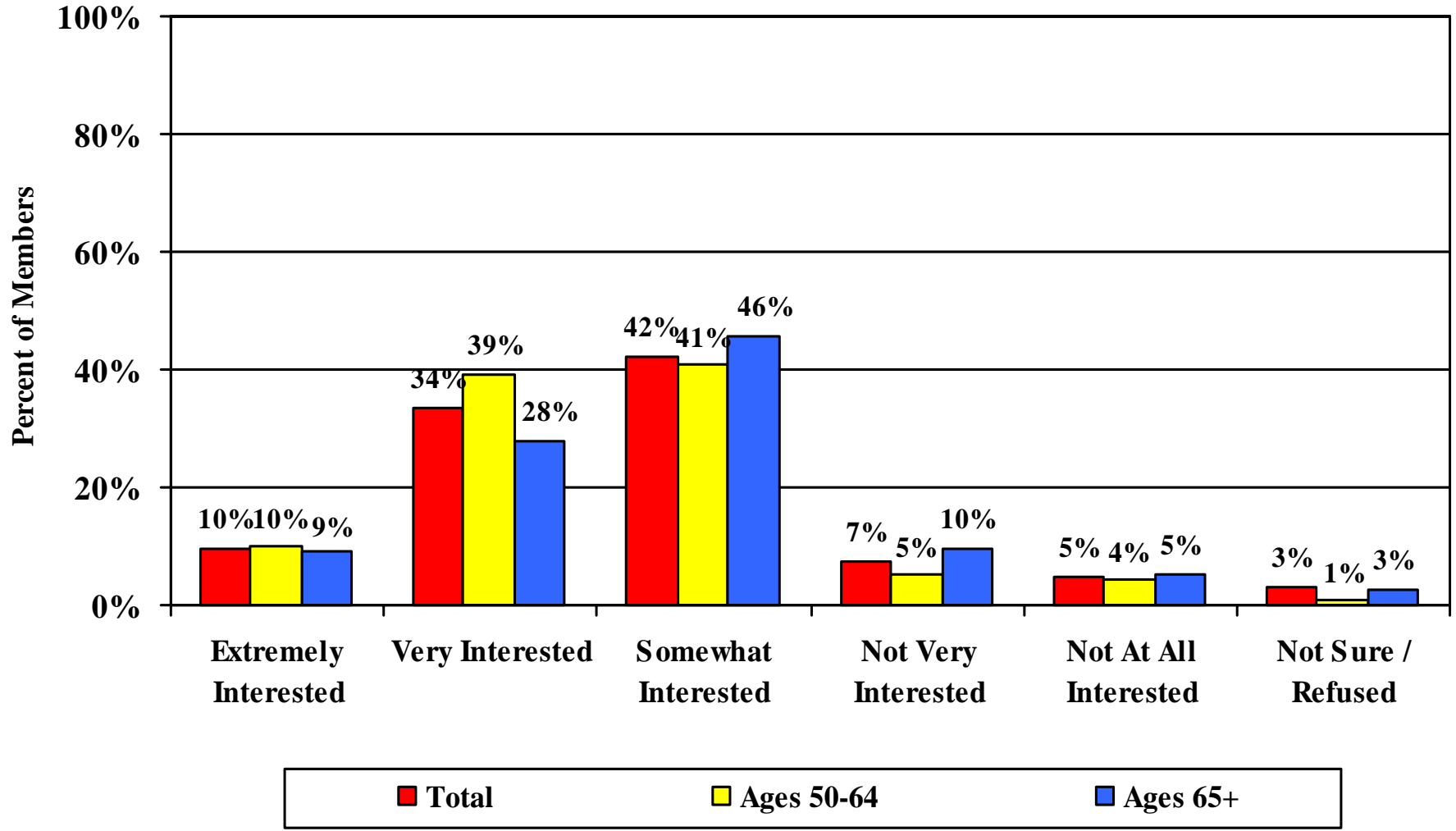
POLITICAL VIEWS



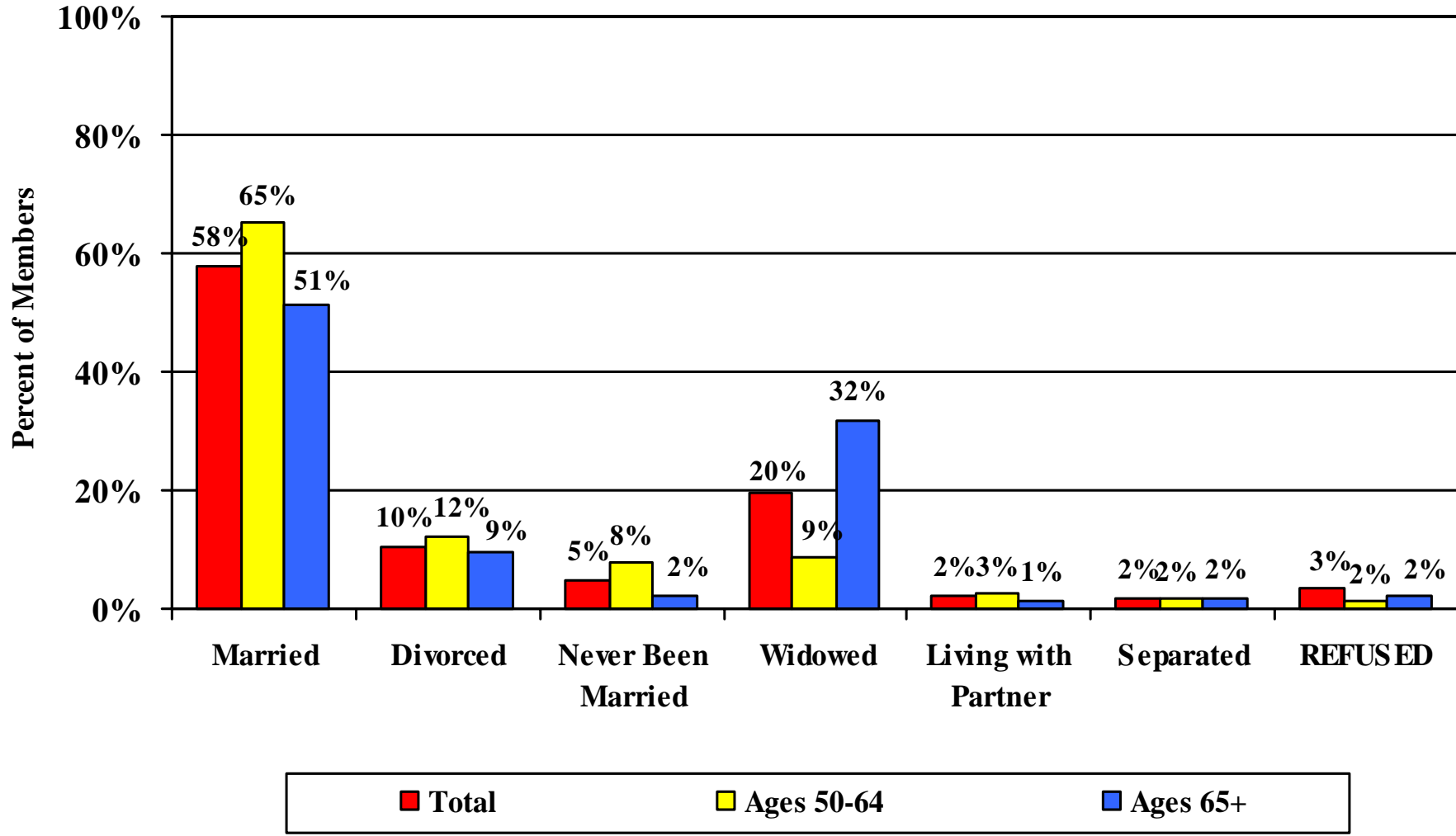
PARTY IDENTIFICATION



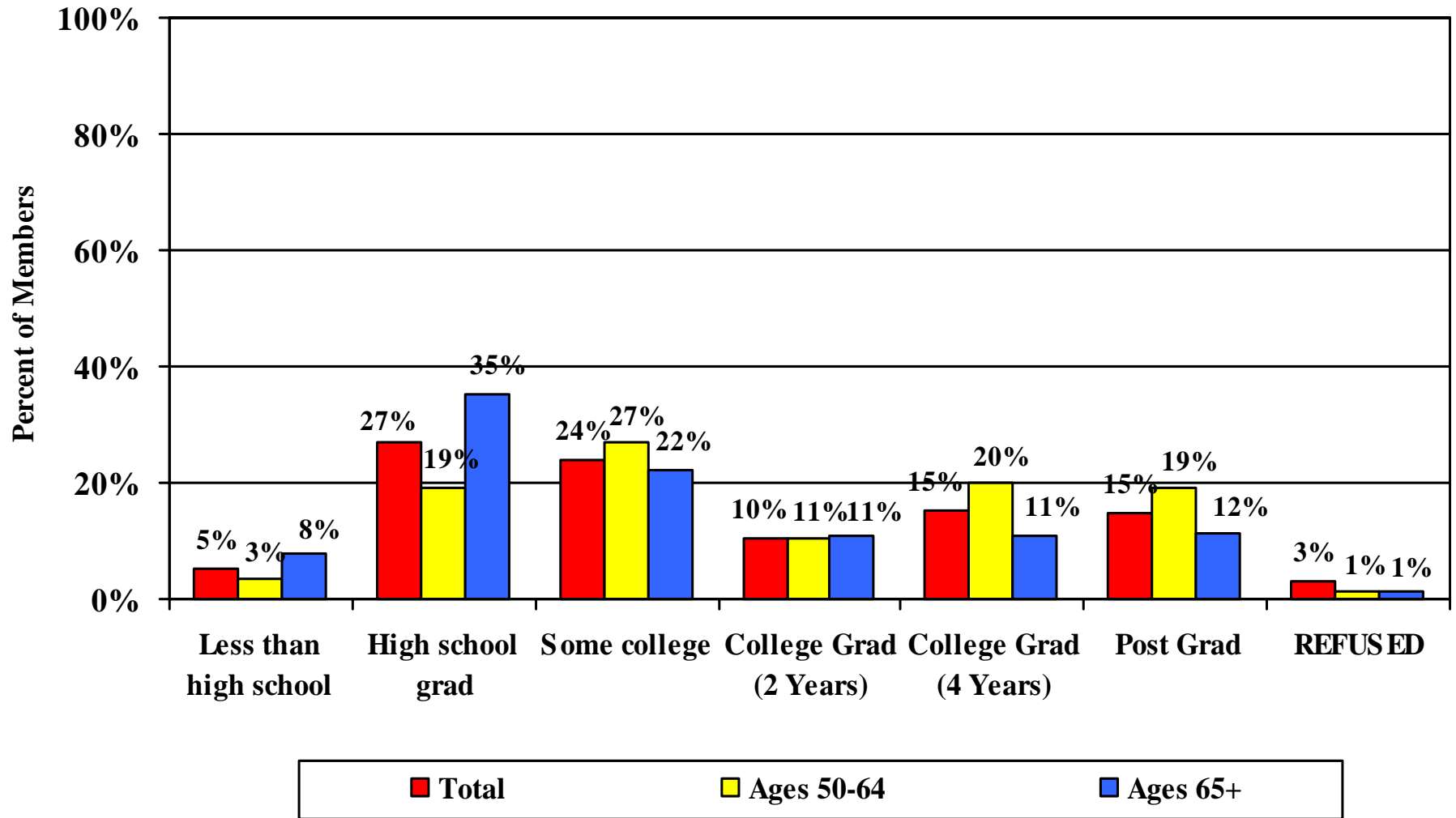
INTEREST IN MICHIGAN'S STATE GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES



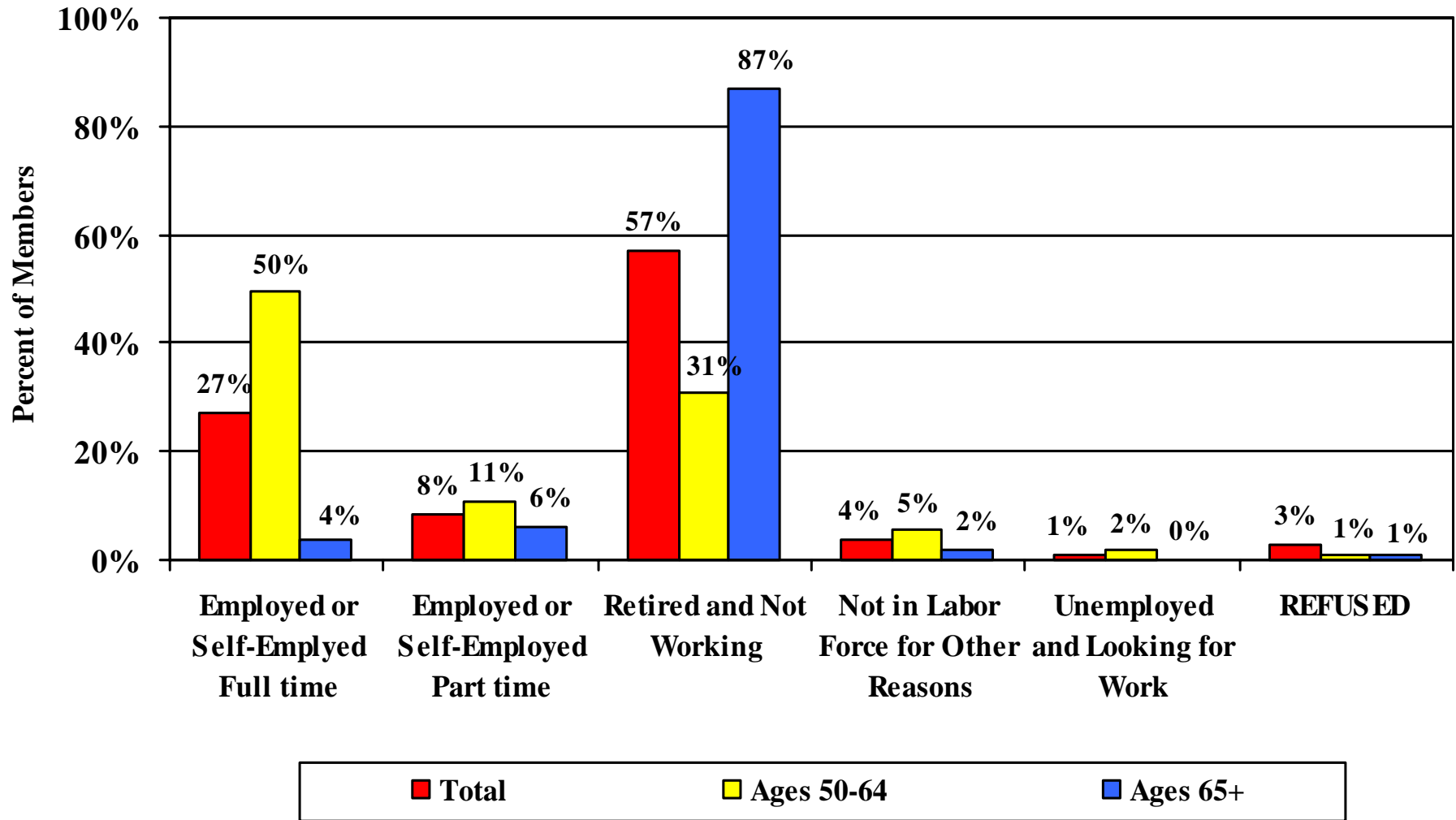
CURRENT MARITAL STATUS



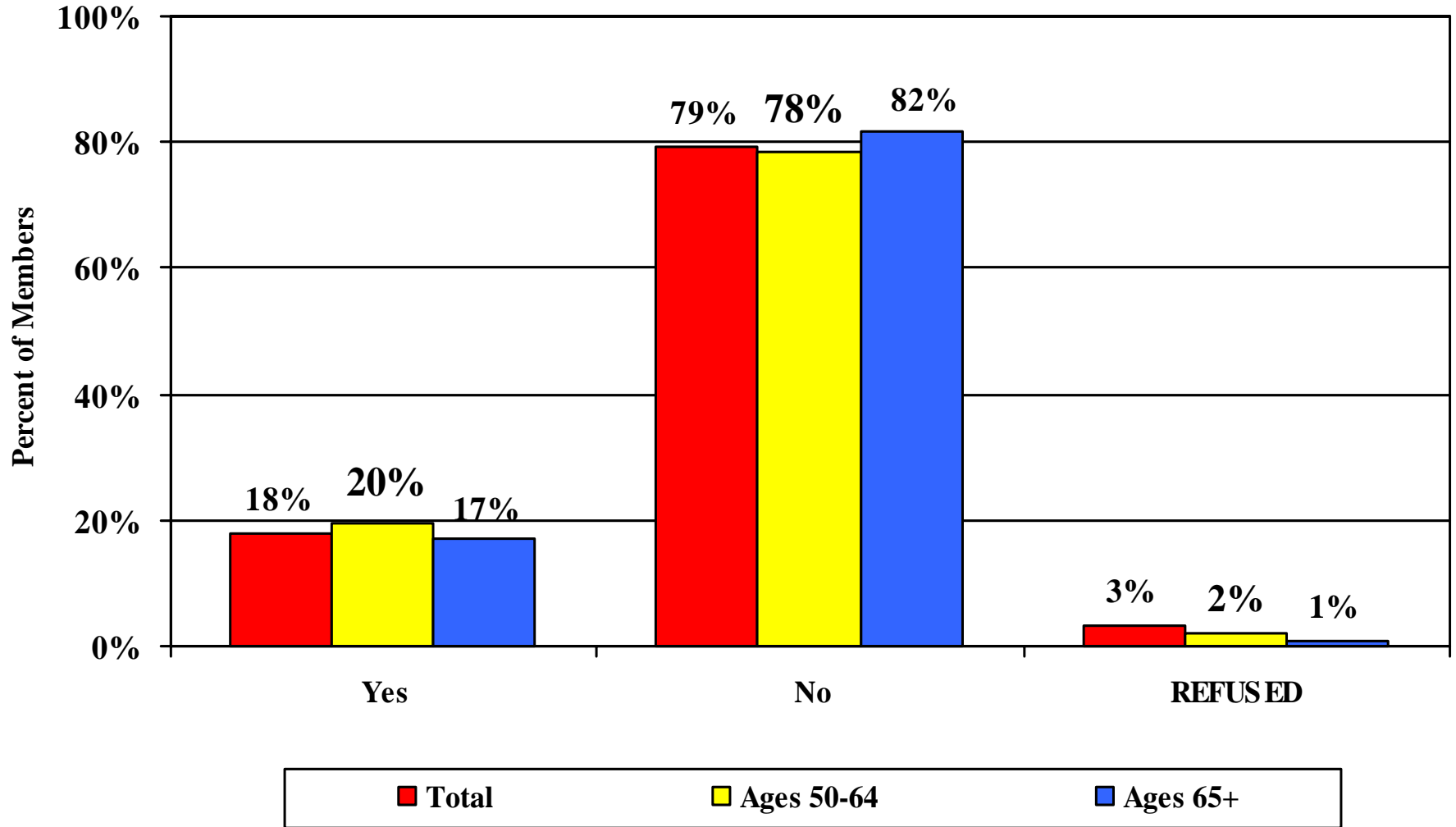
EDUCATION



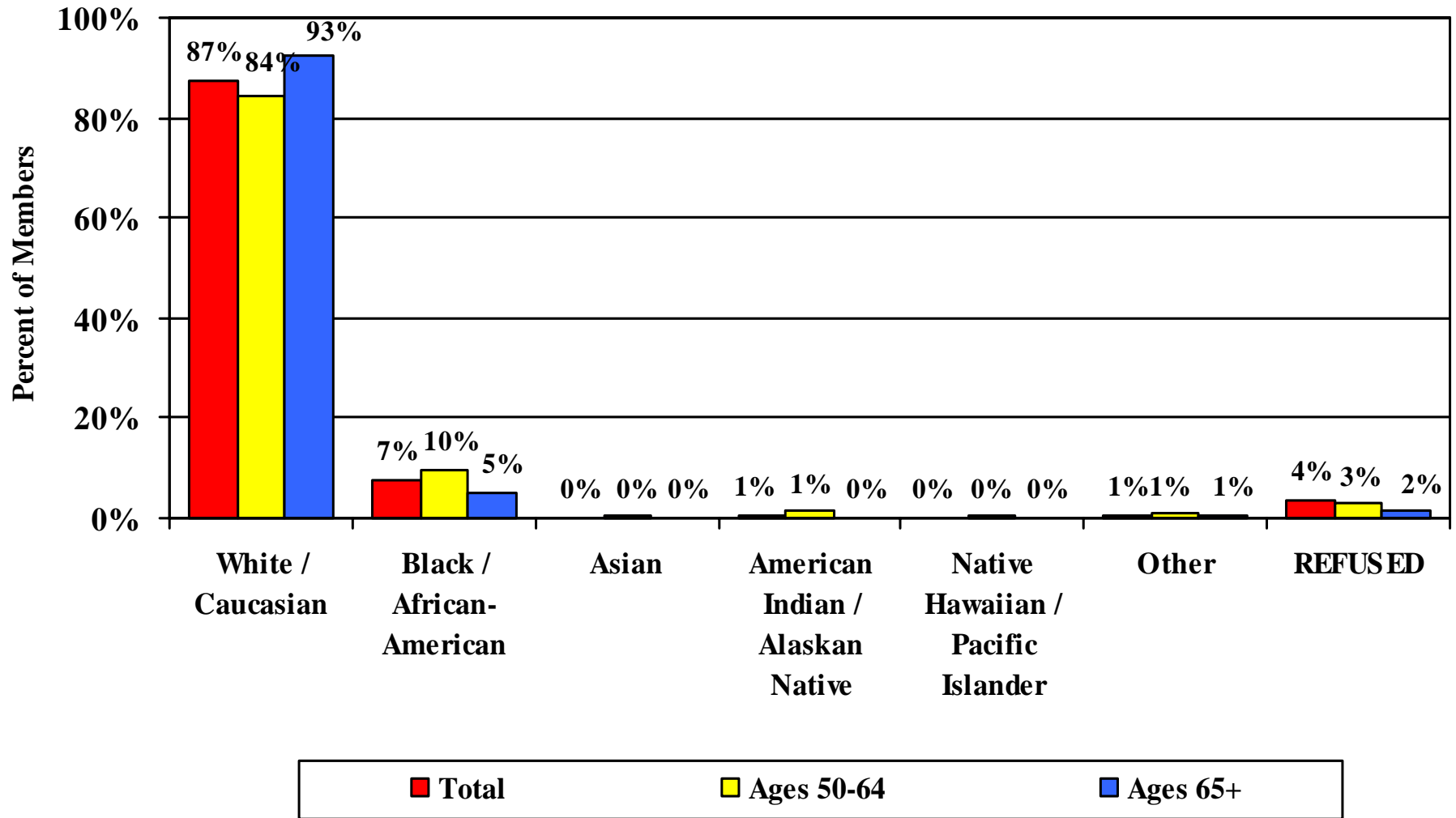
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS



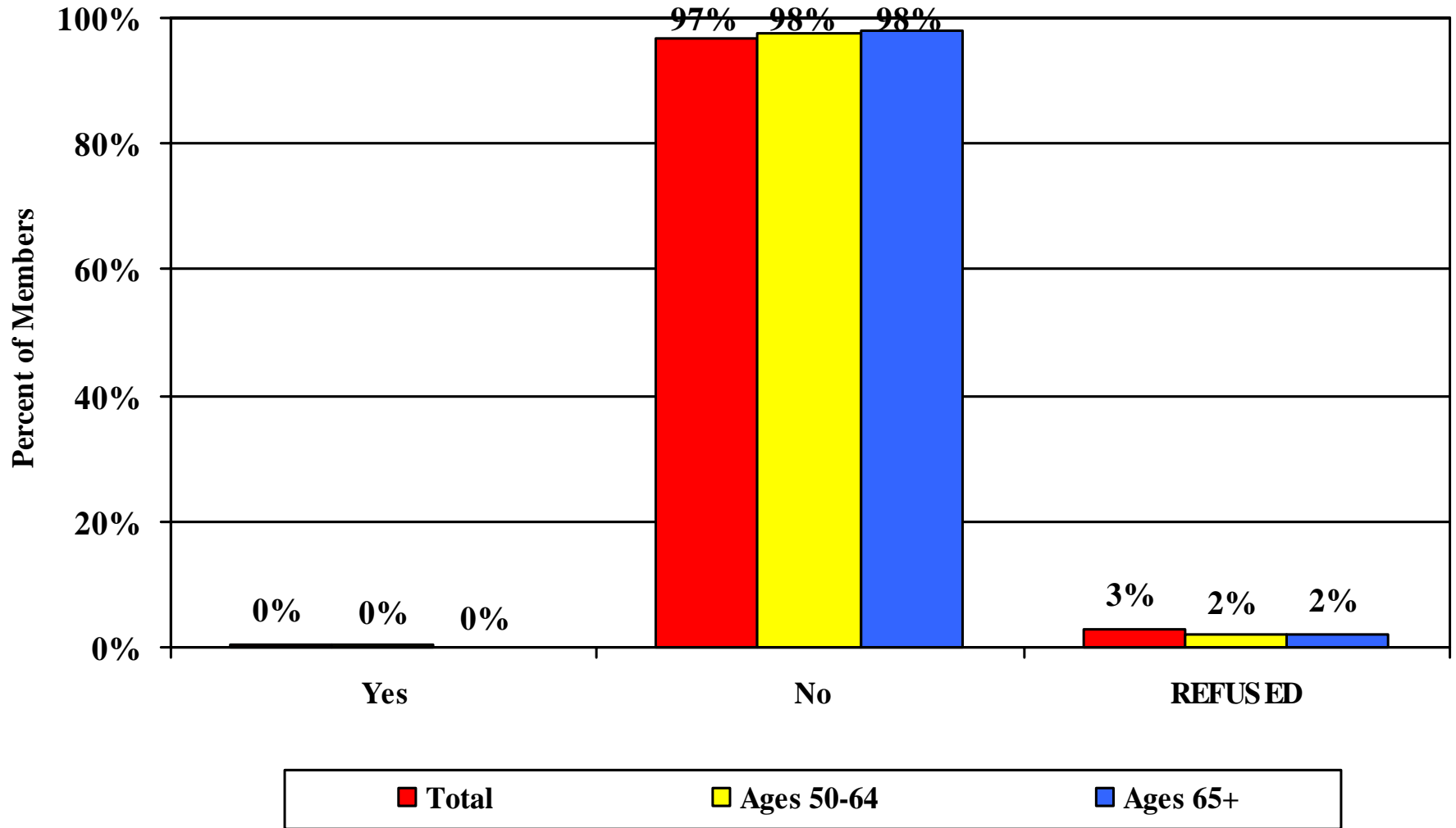
EVER BEEN STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE



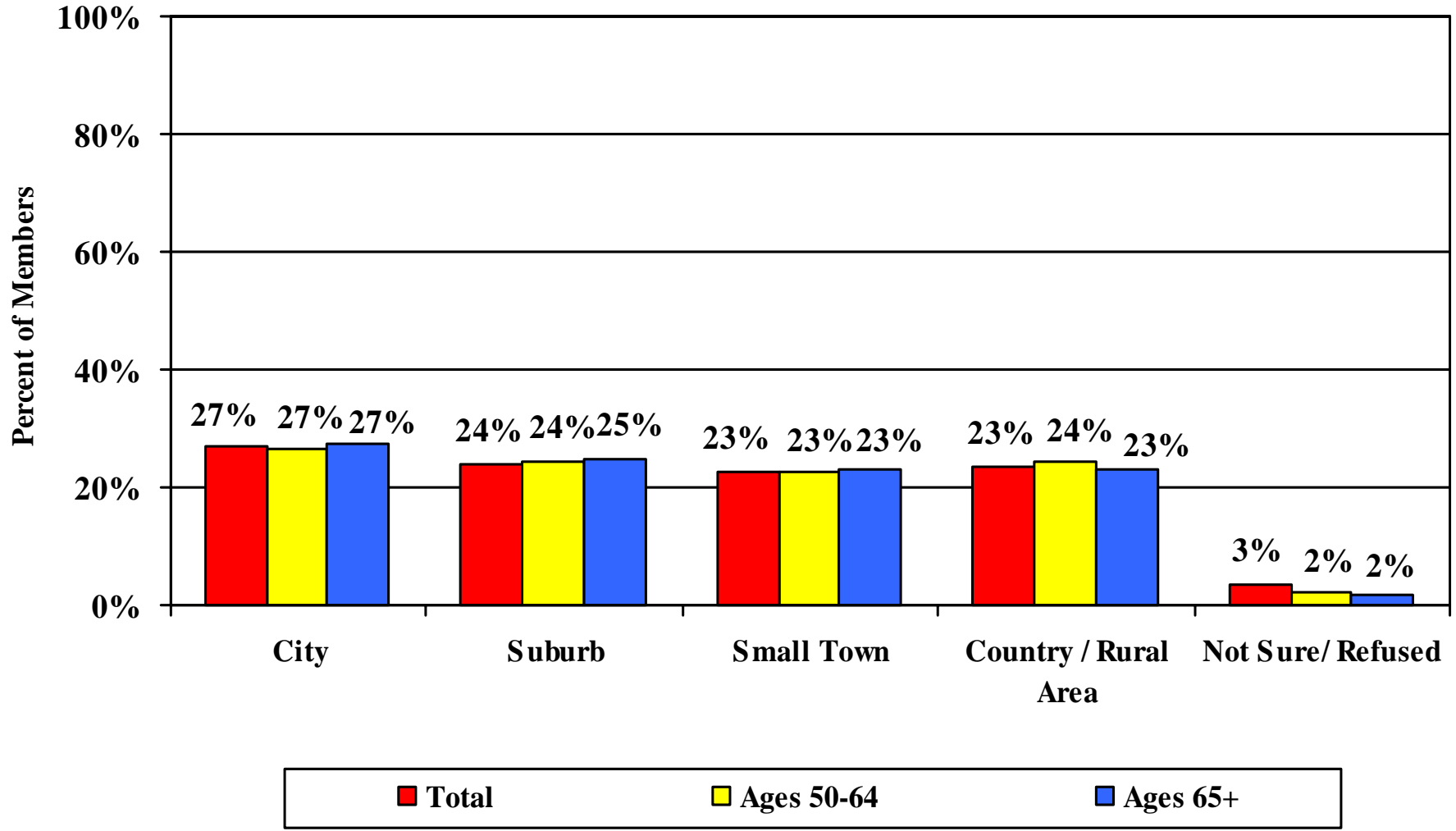
RACE / ETHNICITY



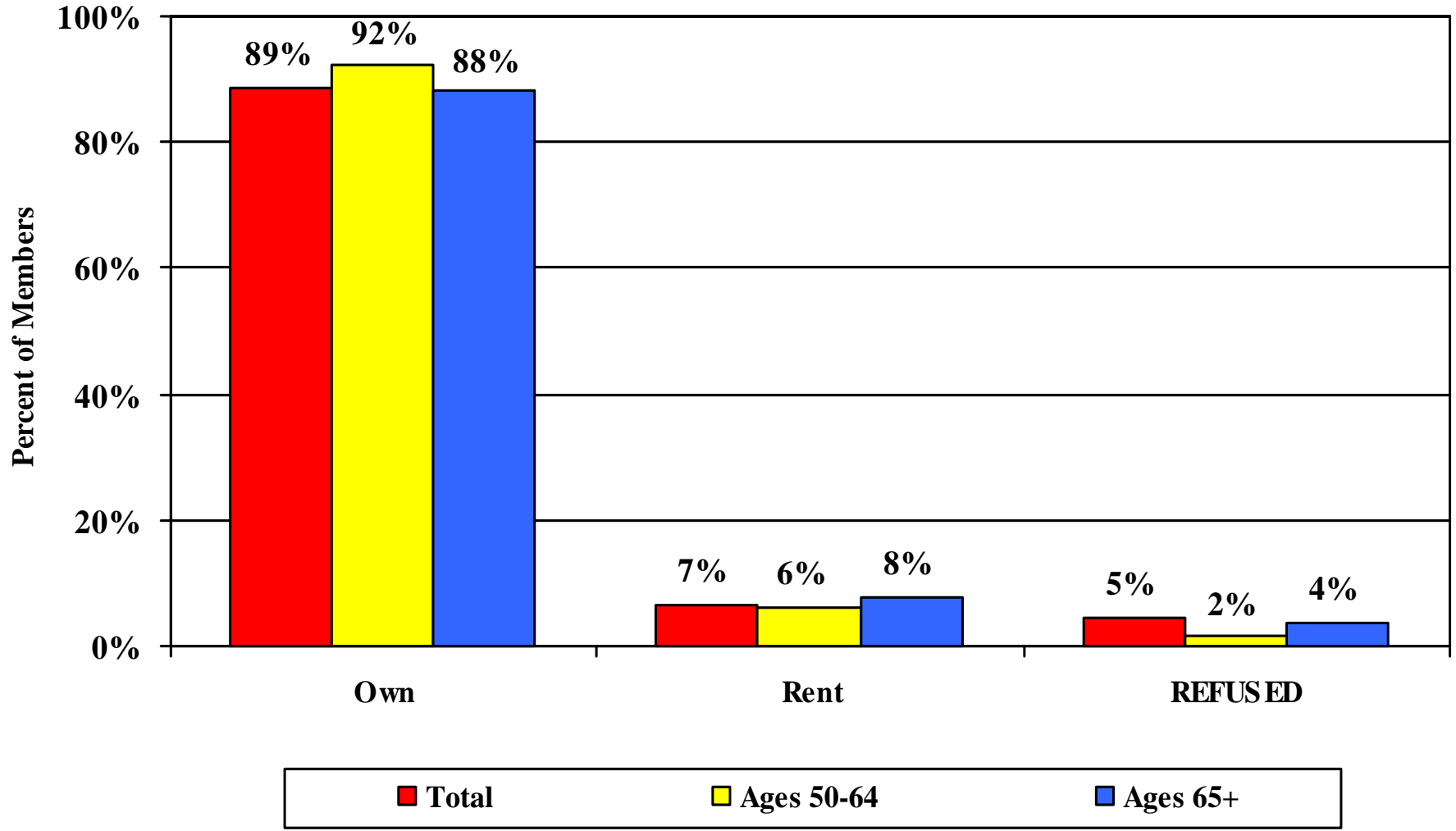
SPANISH, HISPANIC, OR LATINO ORIGIN



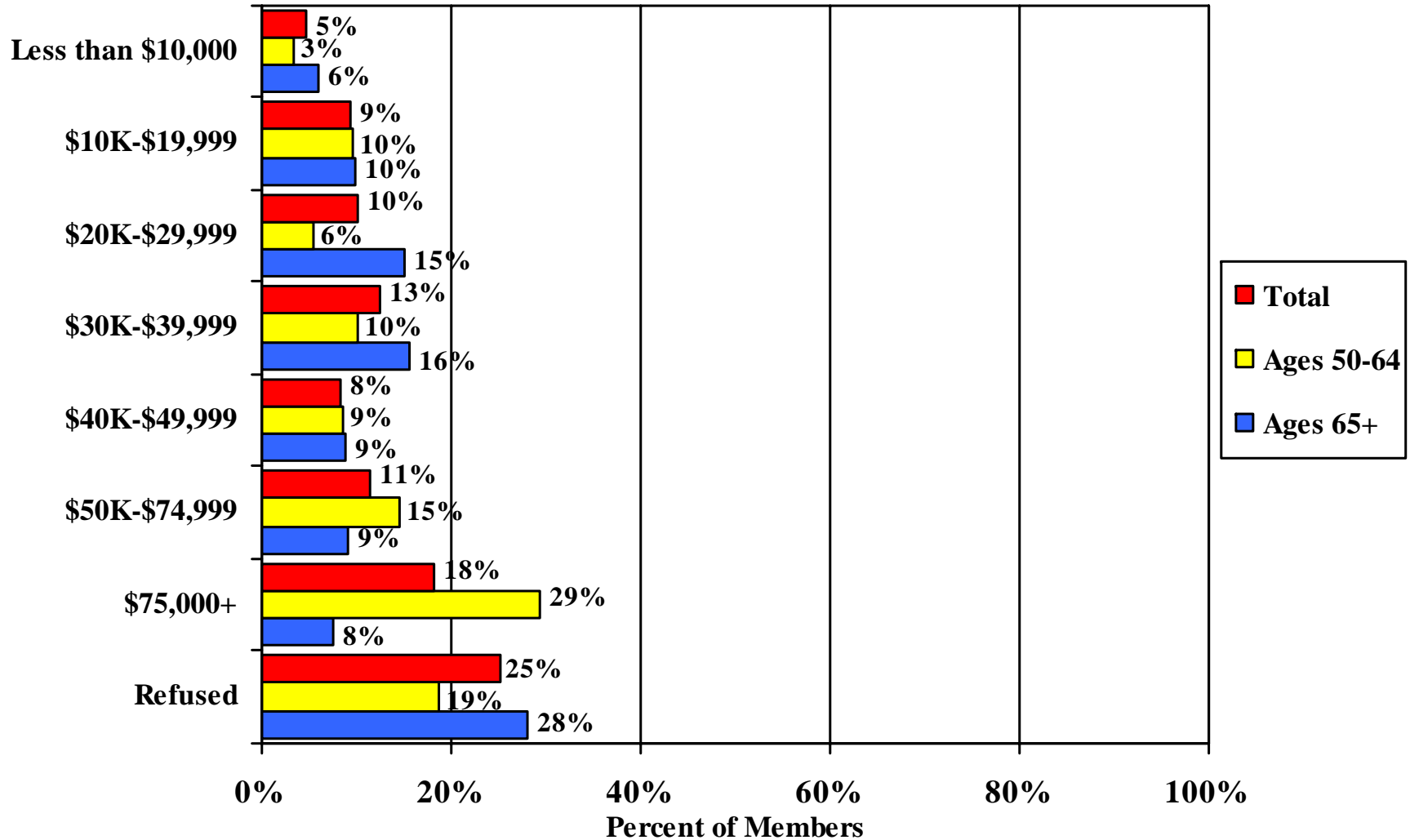
PLACE OF RESIDENCE



HOME OWNERSHIP



HOUSEHOLD INCOME



For Further Information, please contact:

**Susan L. Silberman, Ph.D.
Senior Research Advisor,
State Member Research
AARP
601 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049
202-434-6339
ssilberman@aarp.org**

