

# AMERICAN VIEWPOINT

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**AARP**

2010 Election Survey Results

**U.S. National – Hispanic Oversample**

Prepared for  
**AARP Strategic Issues Research**

Prepared by  
**Gary Ferguson, Guy Molyneux and Jay Campbell**

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# Introduction and Methodology

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AARP commissioned American Viewpoint, Inc. to conduct a series of election surveys in consultation with Hart Research Associates, Inc. Blinded telephone interviewing was conducted with AARP members who are likely voters in the 2010 federal elections. Respondents were selected from random samples of the membership provided by AARP and then screened for likelihood of voting and to confirm AARP membership. Eight surveys were conducted between September 9 and 21 including a national survey with an Hispanic oversample and seven statewide surveys as follows:

<b>Survey Population</b>	<b>Field Dates</b>
U.S. National, n=1,000 with an oversample of n=250 Hispanic voters	9/9-13/2010
Ohio Statewide, n=500	9/12-13/2010
Pennsylvania Statewide, n=500	9/12-14/2010
Nevada Statewide, n=500	9/13-15/2010
New Hampshire Statewide, n=500	9/14-15/2010
Colorado Statewide, n=500	9/14-15/2010
Florida Statewide, n=500	9/19-20/2010
Missouri Statewide, n=500	9/20-21/2010

National data were weighted to sex and age within region, and race. Weights were based on population characteristics. Hispanic data were not weighted. All surveys are subject to errors caused by interviewing a sample of persons rather than the entire population. At 95 percent confidence, the margin of error for a simple random sample of n=1,000 is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points; for n=500,  $\pm 4.4$ ; and for n=250,  $\pm 6.2$ . Some scores may not add to 100% due to rounding.

# Executive Summary

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- The Hispanic AARP members interviewed are highly likely to vote. In all, 90% say they are definitely planning to vote and another 10% are likely to vote.
- Hispanic members appear to differ from AARP members nationwide in terms of their views on the direction of the country. Unlike the national membership, in which most AARP members said that things in the country have gotten off on the wrong track (31% right direction – 61% wrong track), Hispanic members are more evenly divided. A plurality of Hispanic members (48%) say the country is going in the right direction while nearly as many (45%) say things are off on the wrong track.
- Hispanic members are dissatisfied with current economic conditions and are concerned about the deficit. In all, 70% are dissatisfied with the current state of the economy, and 90% are concerned about the deficit. Still, Hispanic members are more optimistic about the near-term economy as 48% (compared to 39% nationwide) think the national economy will get better over the course of the next year while 17% think it will get worse and 29% think it will stay about the same.
- Hispanic members are concerned about the future and there is a widespread belief that conditions for their children's generation will be more difficult than they have experienced. Indeed, fewer than four in ten (38%) are confident that life for their children's generation will be better than it has been for them while 54% say they are not confident.
- At the same time, most are at least somewhat satisfied with their own economic situation. In fact, 66% are satisfied overall (20% very satisfied) while 33% are dissatisfied with their own economic situation. In addition, they are reasonably optimistic about their economic outlook in the near-term. Most (58%) indicate that their personal financial situation will remain about the same in the next year while 25% think it will get better and 12% worse.

# Executive Summary

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- Two-thirds of Hispanic members (66%) are confident that they will receive full Social Security benefits throughout their retirement while 32% are not confident. The inherent value of Social Security is underscored by the fact virtually all respondents (96%) say that it is important to them that Social Security is there for future generations.
- To that end, 98% of the likely Hispanic voters interviewed say it is important that a candidate in the 2010 election pledge their commitment to ensuring that Social Security remains a guaranteed life-long benefit.
- With regard to the deficit, Hispanic AARP members do not support reducing Social Security benefits for future retirees in order to control the deficit. The vast majority (72%) agree more with a hypothetical candidate who says that Social Security is essential for retirement security and that cutting the benefits of future retirees will place an unfair burden on them. Fewer than two in ten (18%) agree more with a candidate who says that Social Security is one of the biggest federal programs and we can't control the deficit without reducing Social Security benefits for future retirees.
- Furthermore, 63% say that they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who favors reducing the deficit by cutting Social Security benefits for future retirees.
- Medicare fraud is perceived to be a major problem that adds substantially to the cost of the program (77%). Hispanic members' reasoning for cracking down on Medicare fraud is focused more on maintaining the overall strength of the program than on the impact on their own health or finances. The top reason to crack down on Medicare fraud is to keep Medicare financially strong (42%), although a substantial number say the most important reason to fight fraud is that it will save consumers money (15%), protect seniors' health (18%) or help reduce the deficit (14%).

# Executive Summary

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- Hispanic members are very responsive to a number of bipartisan legislative proposals that have been offered in Congress to fight Medicare fraud. Most (90%) say that “significantly increasing penalties for criminals who commit fraud” would be at least somewhat helpful in helping minimize Medicare fraud and identity theft of Medicare patients, including 72% who say it would help to a great extent. Similarly, 86% say that “changing the way Medicare pays claims so that suspicious claims would have to be verified before they are paid” would help; 62% a great deal. Further, 71% say it would be helpful to “prevent Medicare from using a person’s Social Security number as their Medicare number” (43% a great deal). Here again, a majority of Hispanic AARP members (74%) are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports these proposals while just 4% are less likely.
- Hispanic members see the threat of annual reduction in reimbursement rates to Medicare doctors as a problem and support a permanent solution. In all, 88% of Hispanic AARP Medicare beneficiaries (n=111) say that they are concerned – and 65% are very concerned – that if the 23% cut in payments takes place in December as scheduled, their current doctors will stop accepting Medicare. Future retirees (n=136) are also concerned; 89% of those not currently enrolled in Medicare say that they are concerned – 62% very – that if Congress fails to fix the doctor reimbursement problem, it will limit their access to doctors when they become Medicare eligible.
- As a result, a majority (65%) would be more likely to vote for a candidate who promises to fix the system to prevent future cuts in reimbursement rates to doctors. Just 7% are less likely.

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# *Political Environment*

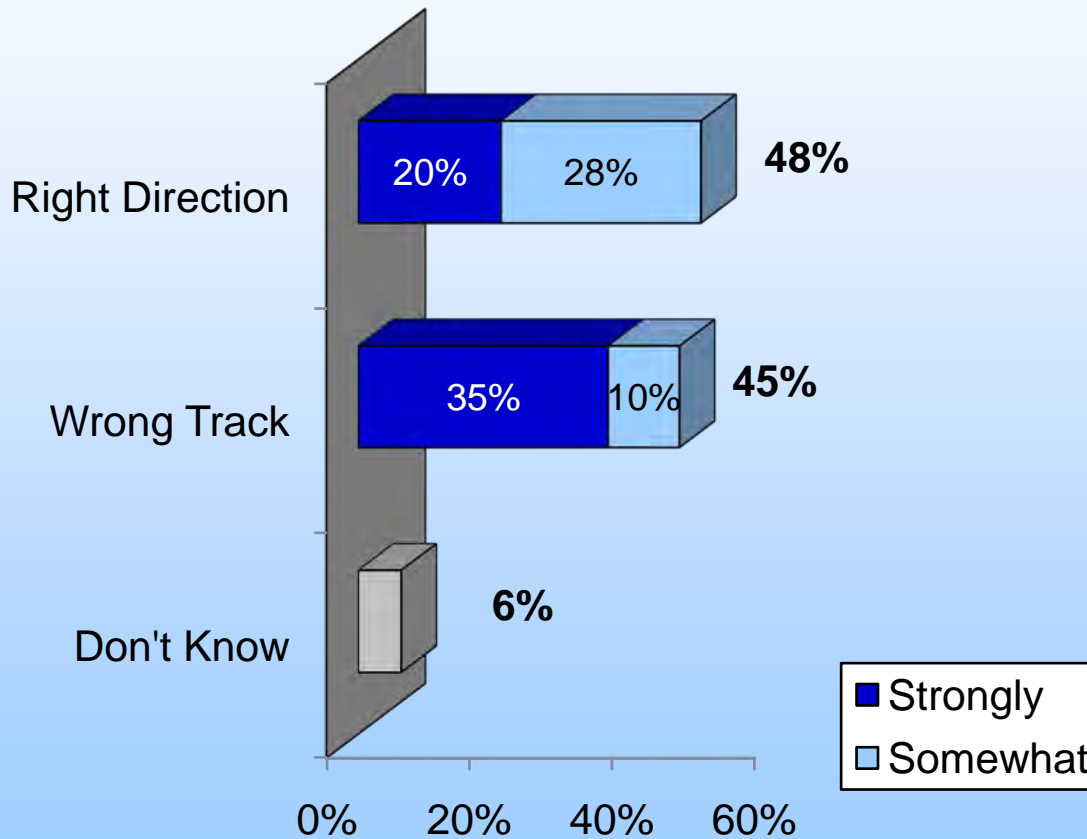
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**Mood of the Country:** Hispanic AARP members are more satisfied than the national membership with the direction of the country. In this case, 48% say things are going in the right direction while 45% say things have gotten off on the wrong track. At the national level, 31% say things are going in the right direction while 61% say things are off on the wrong track.

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Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are going in the right direction or have they gotten off on the wrong track?

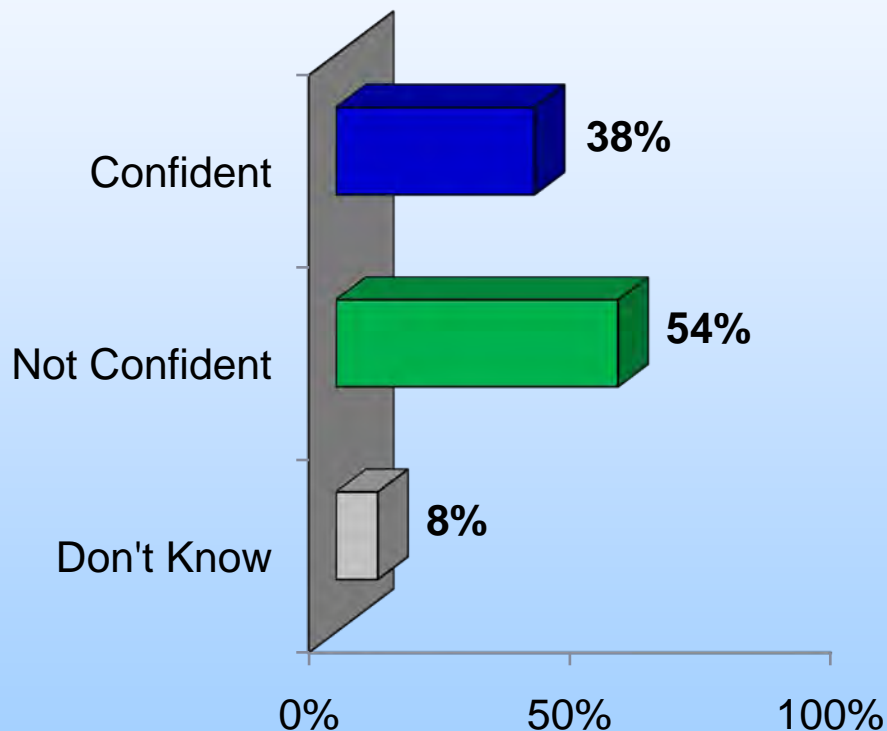




***Life for our Children's Generation:*** A majority of Hispanic members lack confidence that life will be better for their children's generation than it has been for them.

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Do you feel confident or not confident that life for our children's generation will be better than it has been for us?

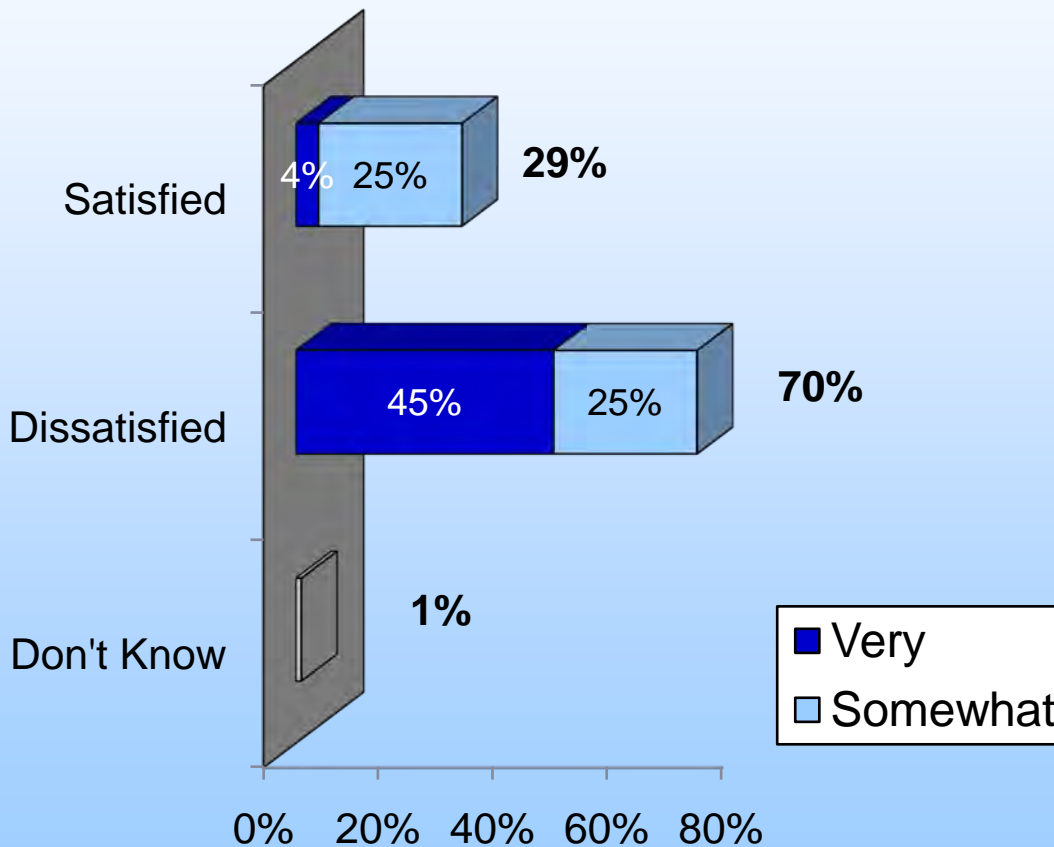


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# *The Economy*

**Dissatisfaction with the economy:** Most Hispanic members are dissatisfied with the current state of the U.S. economy.

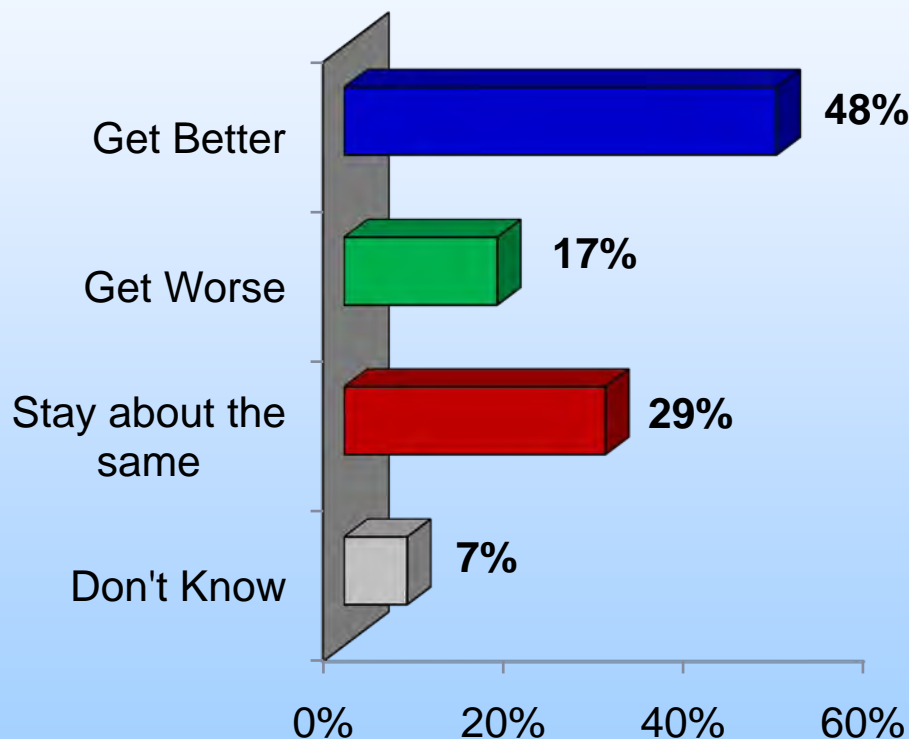
How satisfied are you with the state of the U.S. economy today – are you: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the state of the economy?



**Economic outlook:** 48% think the economy will get better in the next year, 17% that it will get worse, and 29% that it will stay about the same. This view is more optimistic than the national sample overall (39% better/24% worse/31% same).

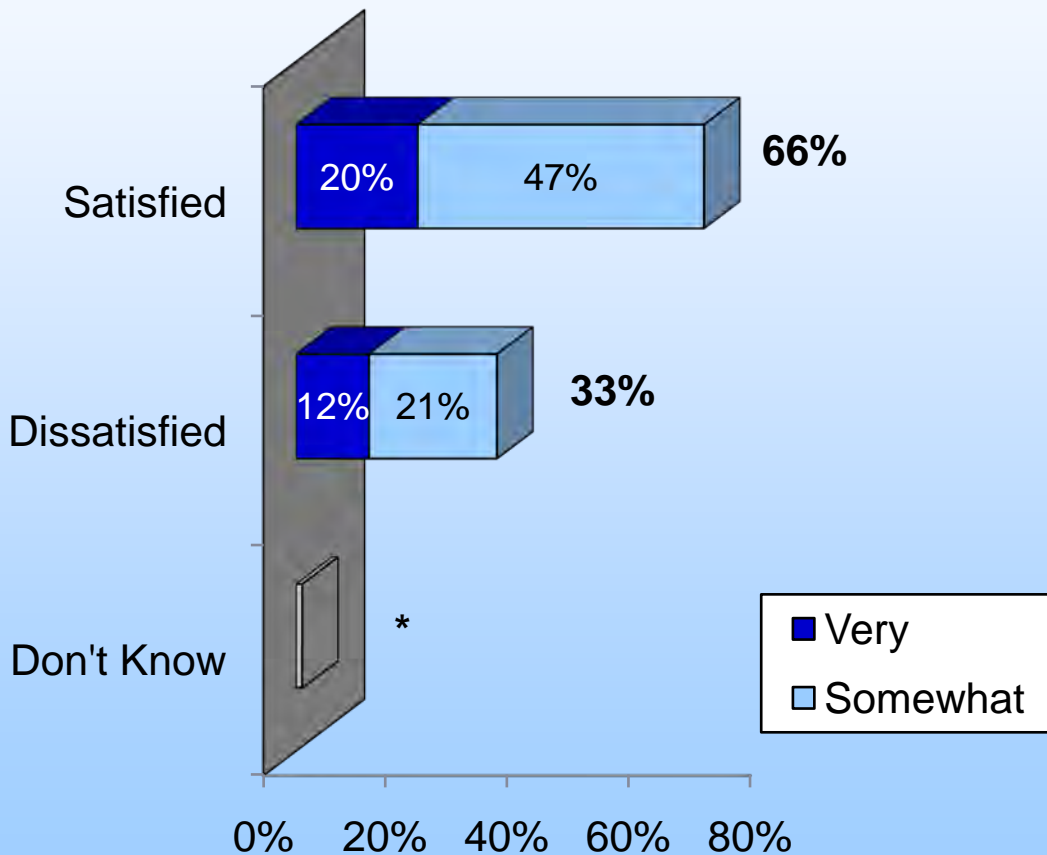
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Thinking about a year from now, do you think the national economy will get better, get worse, or stay about the same as it is now?



**Satisfaction with personal financial situation:** Most Hispanic members are at least somewhat satisfied with their own financial situation.

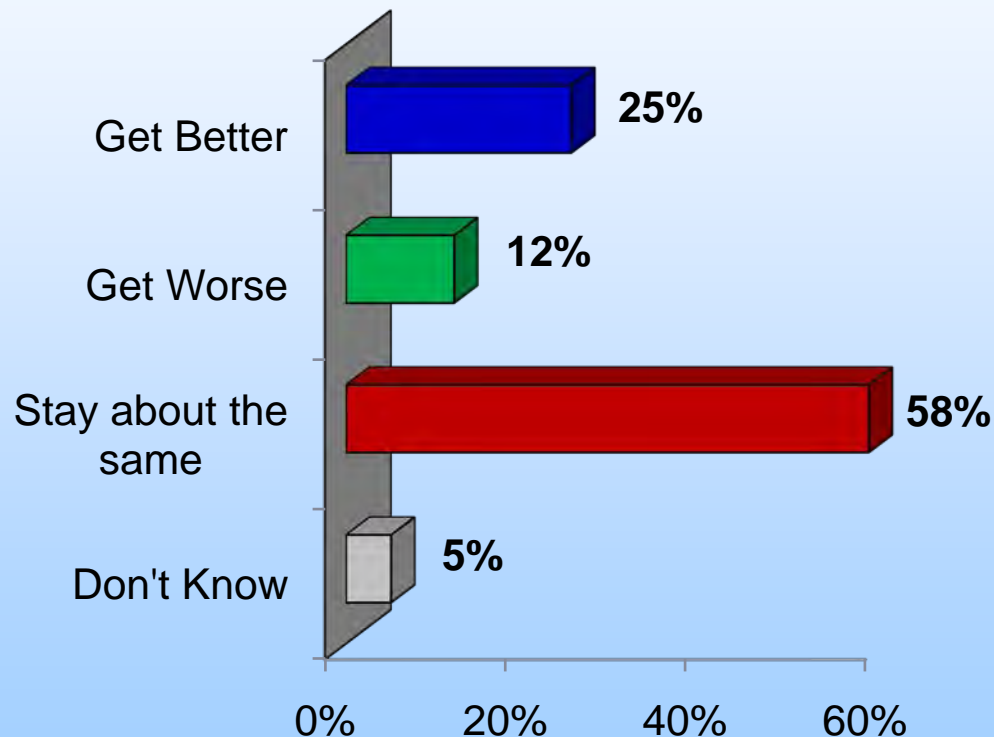
How satisfied are you with the state of your own financial situation today – are you: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with your own financial situation?



***A majority of Hispanic members indicate that their personal financial situation will be stable over the course of the next year.***

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Thinking about a year from now, do you think your personal financial situation will get better, get worse, or stay about the same as it is now?

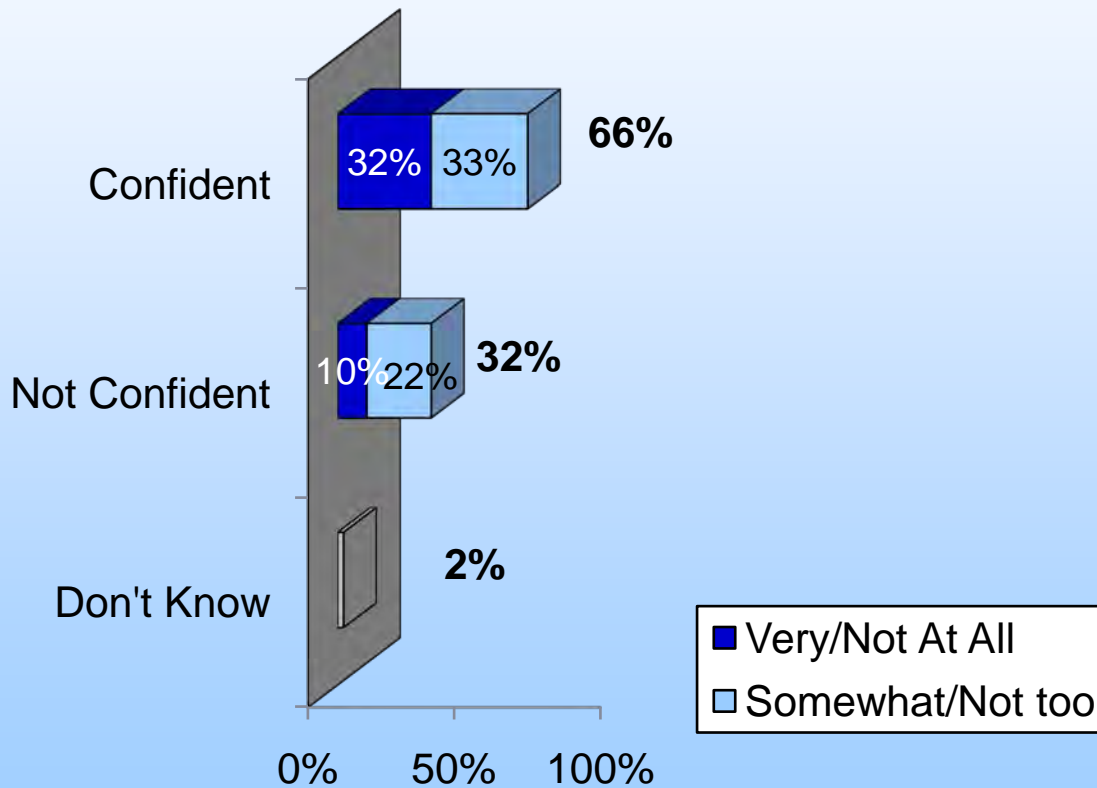


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# ***Social Security***

**Confidence in Social Security:** Two-thirds of Hispanic AARP members say they are confident that they will receive full Social Security benefits throughout their retirement. However, just one in three respondents (32%) expresses high confidence.

How confident are you that you will receive full Social Security benefits throughout your retirement?

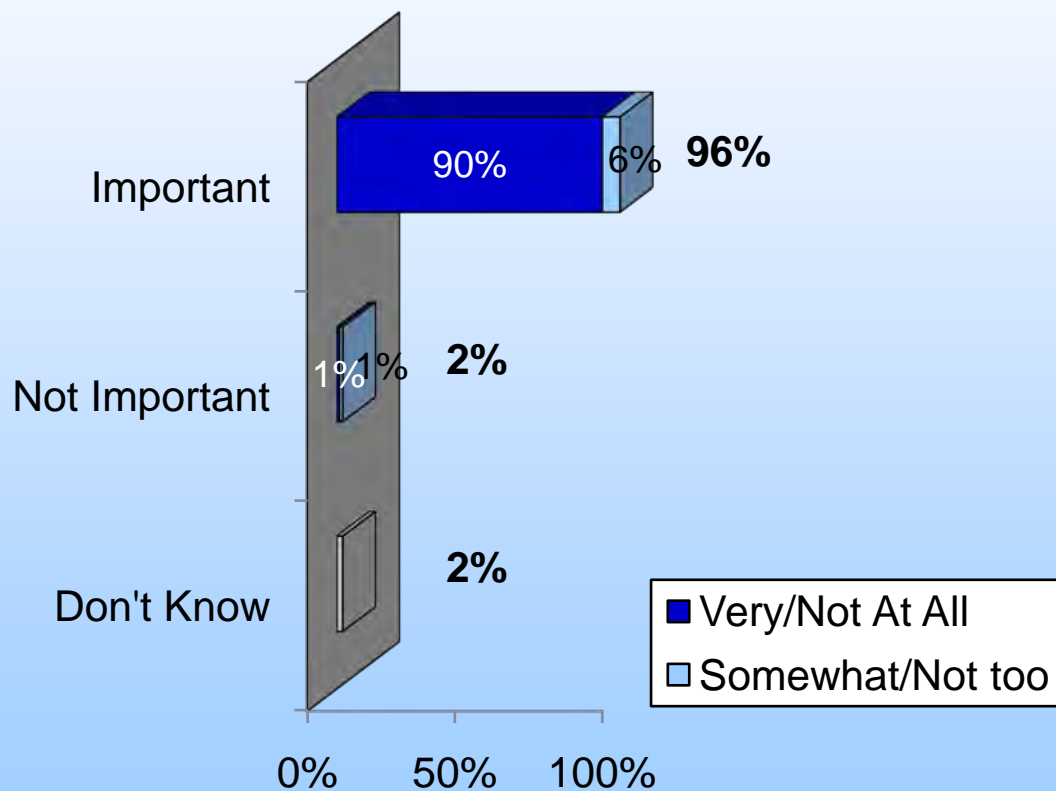




**The future of Social Security is important to Hispanic members:** Virtually all Hispanic members say it is important to them that Social Security is there for future generations.

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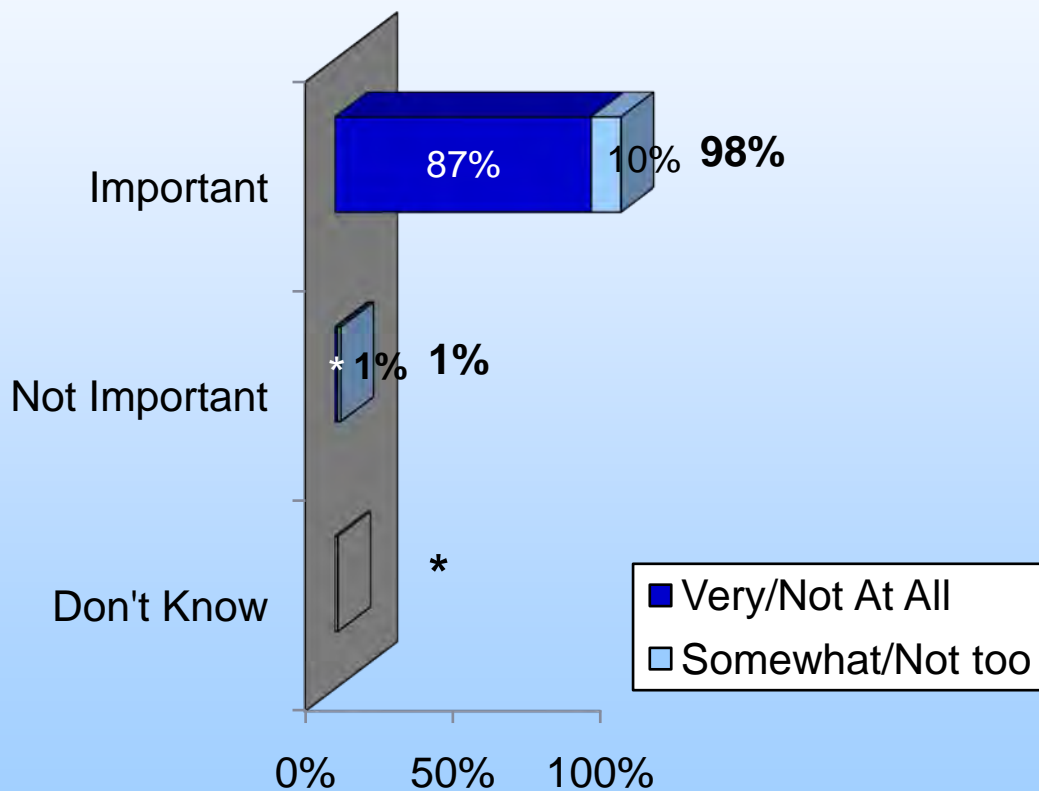
How important is it to you that Social Security is there for future generations?



**Hispanic AARP members want candidates to pledge their commitment to Social Security:**

There is a nearly universal sentiment that it is important for candidates in the 2010 election to voice their commitment to ensuring that Social Security remains a guaranteed life-long benefit.

In the 2010 election campaign, how important is it to you that a candidate pledge their commitment to ensuring that Social Security remains a guaranteed life-long benefit.



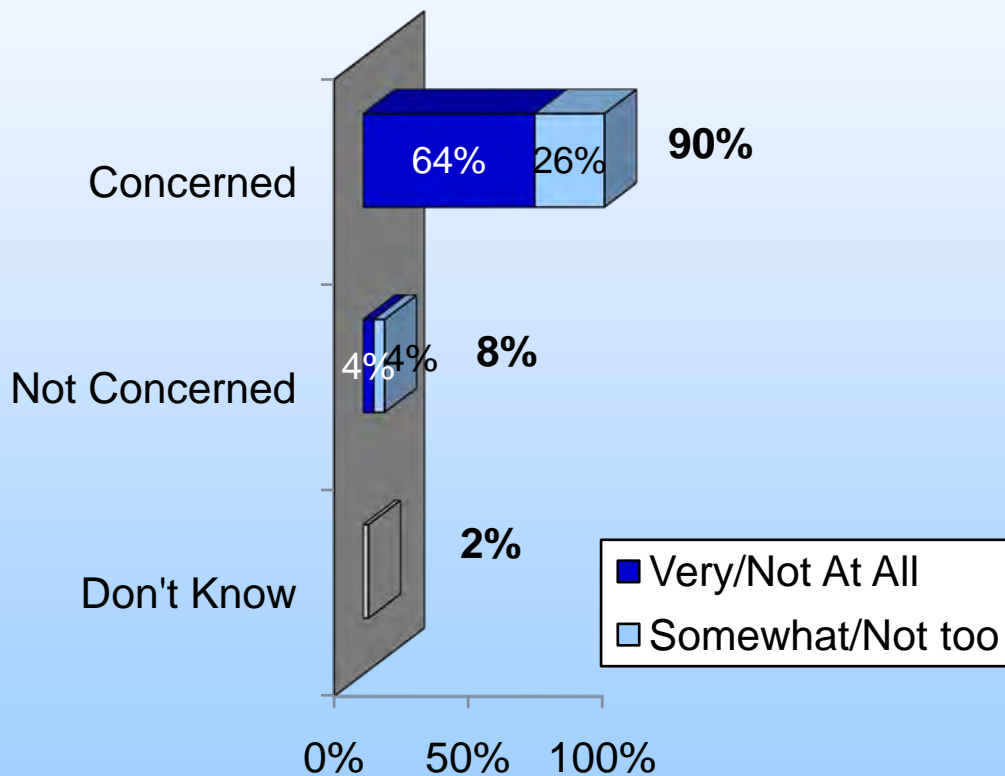
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# *The Deficit*

**Concern about the deficit runs high across the Hispanic population:** 90% are concerned about the deficit and 64% are very concerned.

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How concerned are you about the national deficit?



**More than seven in ten Hispanic AARP members (72%) reject the idea of reducing Social Security benefits for future retirees in order to control the deficit:** Only 18% would agree more with a candidate who says we can't control the deficit without reducing the Social Security benefits of future retirees.

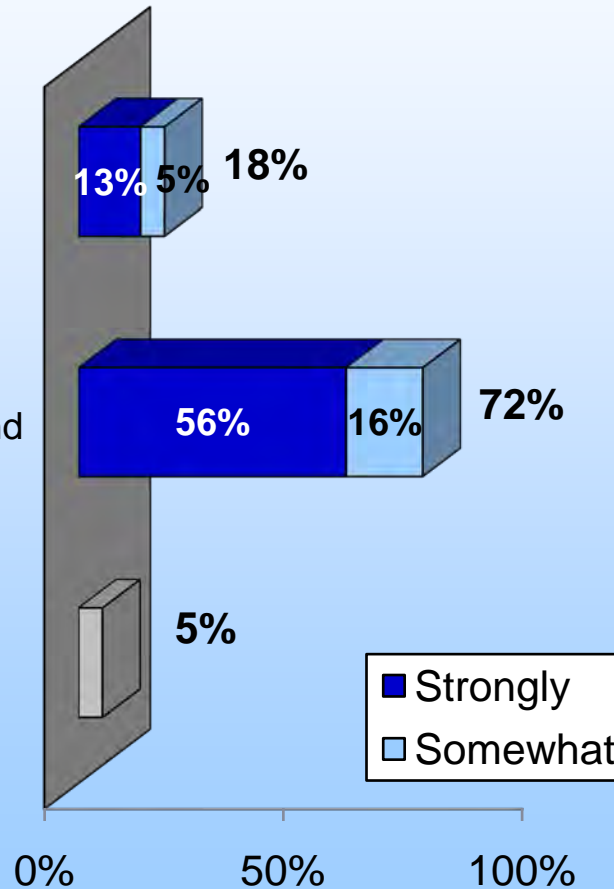
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Which of these two candidates do you agree with more?

Says Social Security is one of the biggest federal programs and we can't control the deficit without reducing Social Security benefits for future retirees.

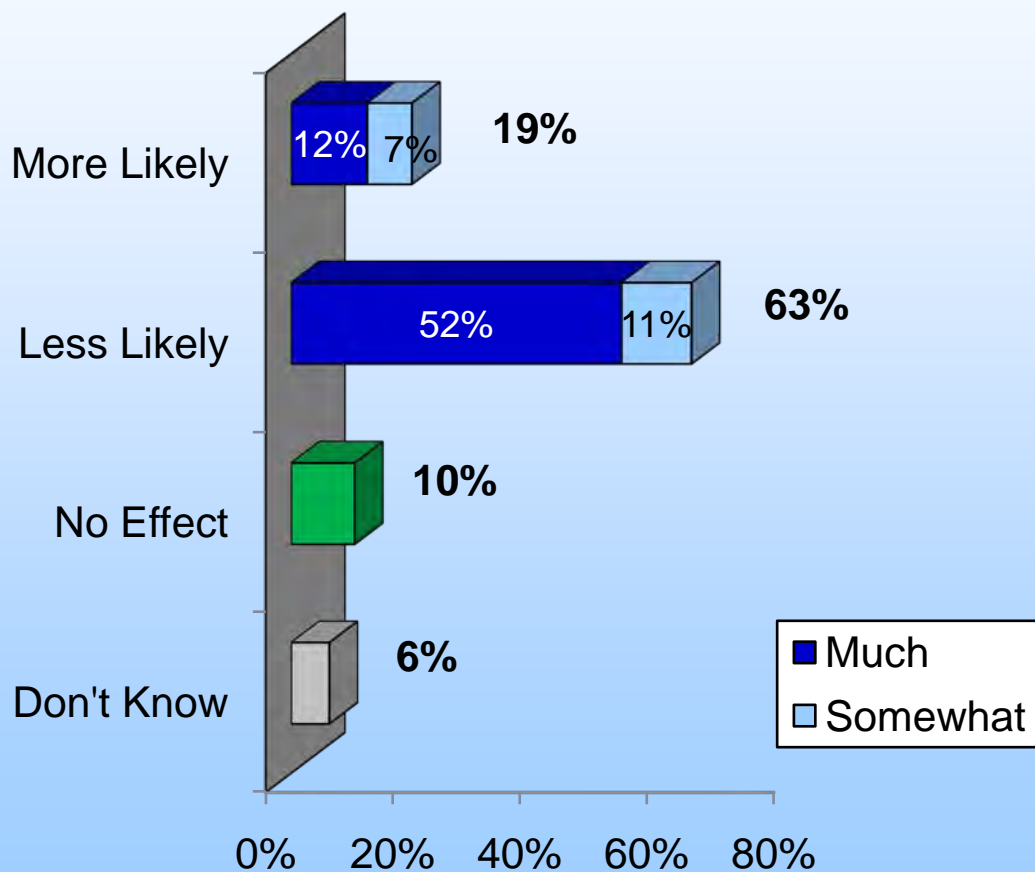
Says Social Security is essential for the retirement security of senior citizens and cutting the benefits of future retirees will place an unfair burden on them.

Don't Know



**Hispanic AARP members would be less likely to vote for a candidate who would reduce the deficit by cutting Social Security benefits for future retirees.** 63% would be less likely to vote for a candidate who favors this approach.

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who favors reducing the deficit by cutting Social Security benefits for future retirees, or would it not affect your vote either way?

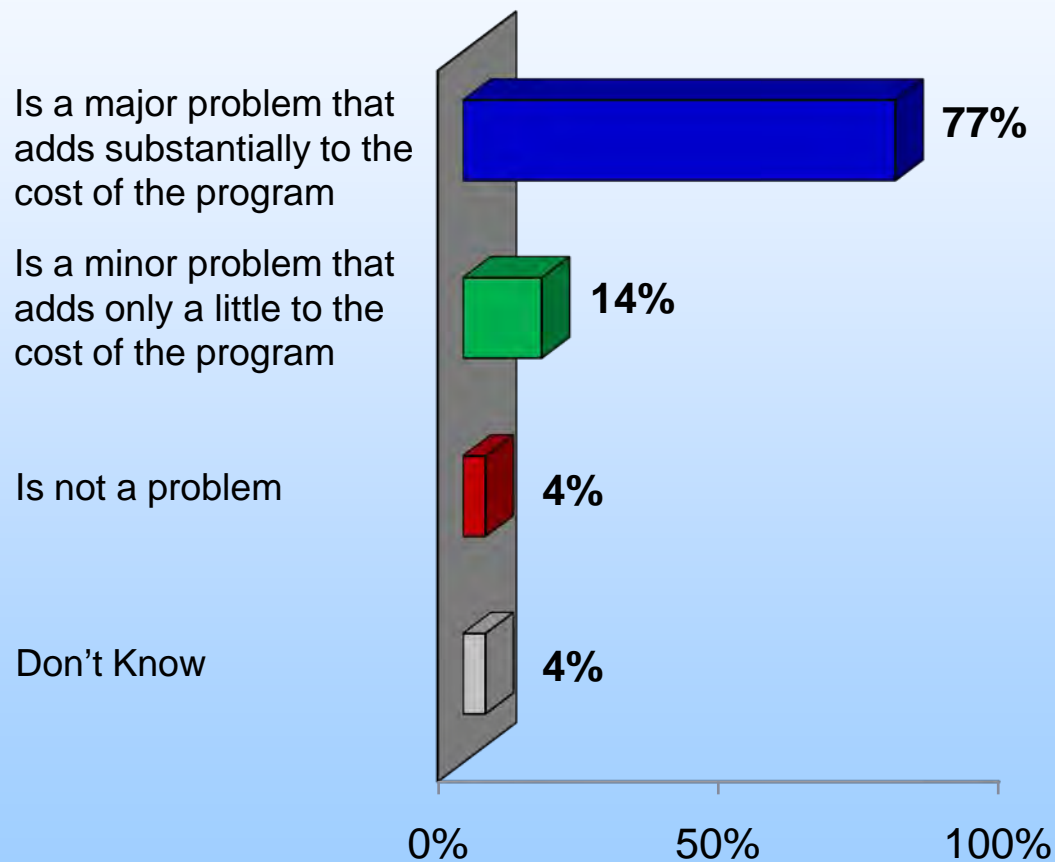


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# *Reducing Medicare Fraud*

**Medicare fraud is seen as a major problem that adds substantially to the cost of the program.** In all, 77% of Hispanic members say fraud is a major problem, 14% a minor problem, and 4% that it is not a problem.

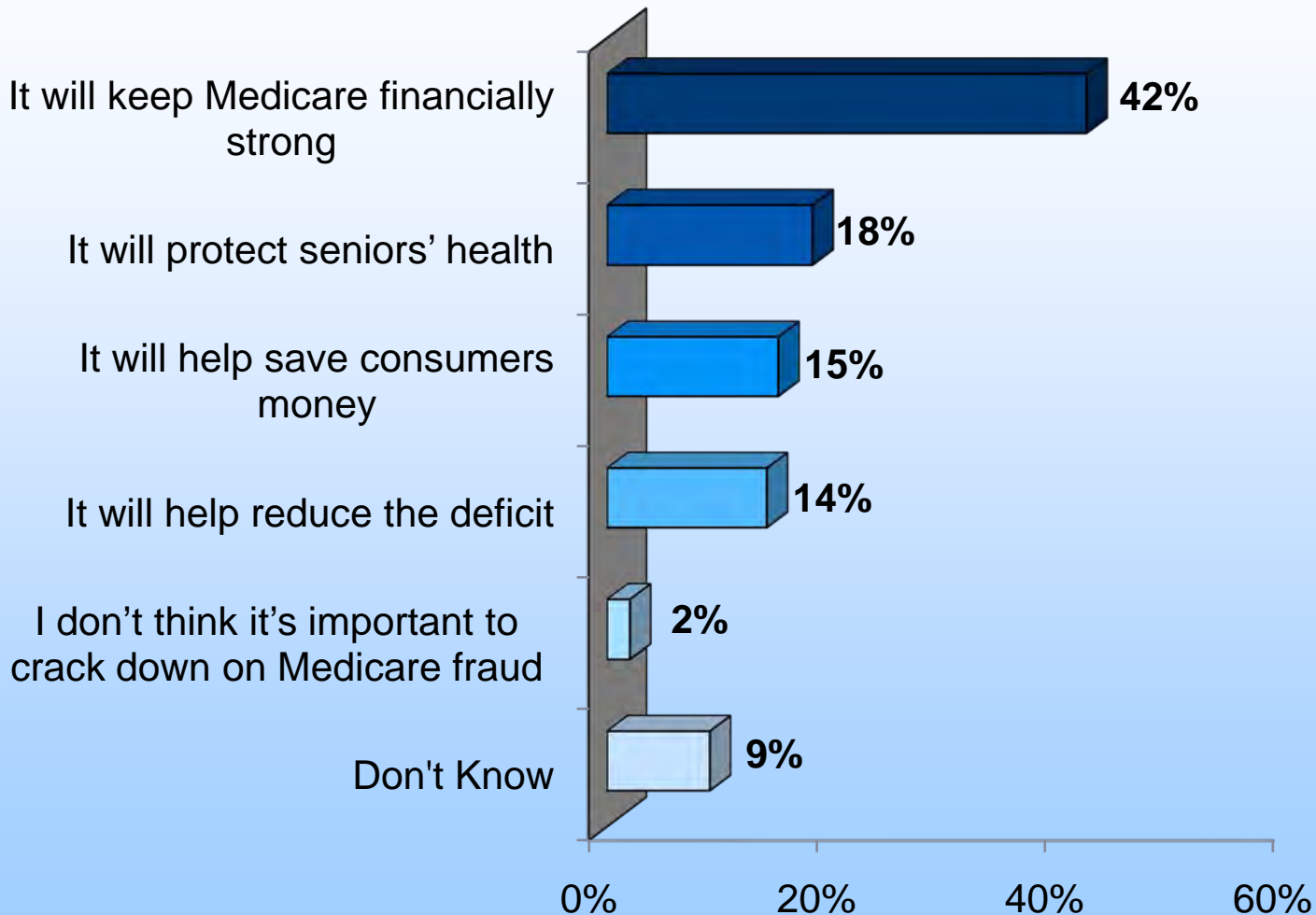
Would you say that Medicare fraud:





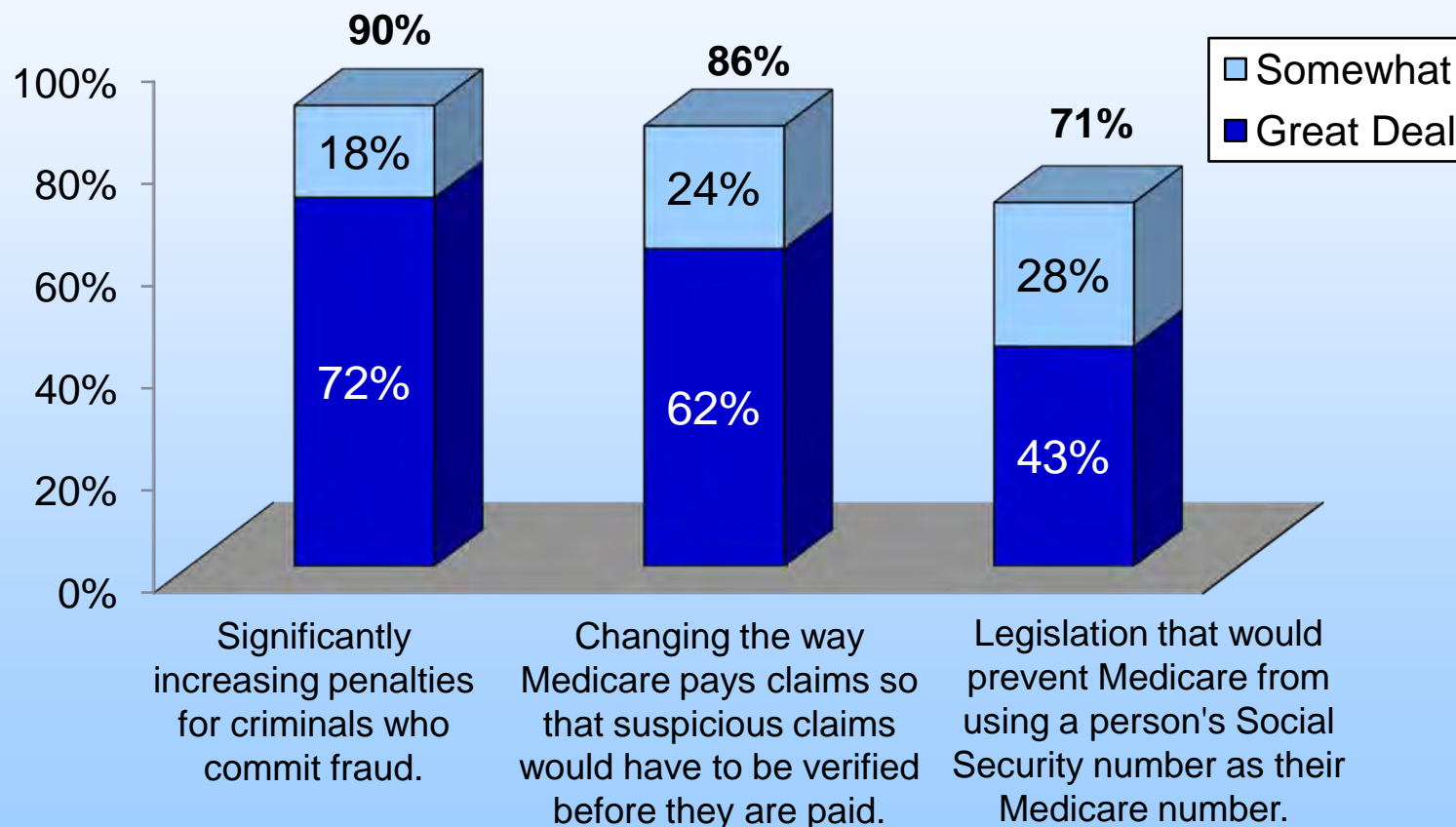
**Cracking down on Medicare Fraud:** A plurality of Hispanic AARP members say the most important reason to crack down on fraud is to keep Medicare financially strong.

Which do you think is the most important reason to crack down on Medicare fraud?



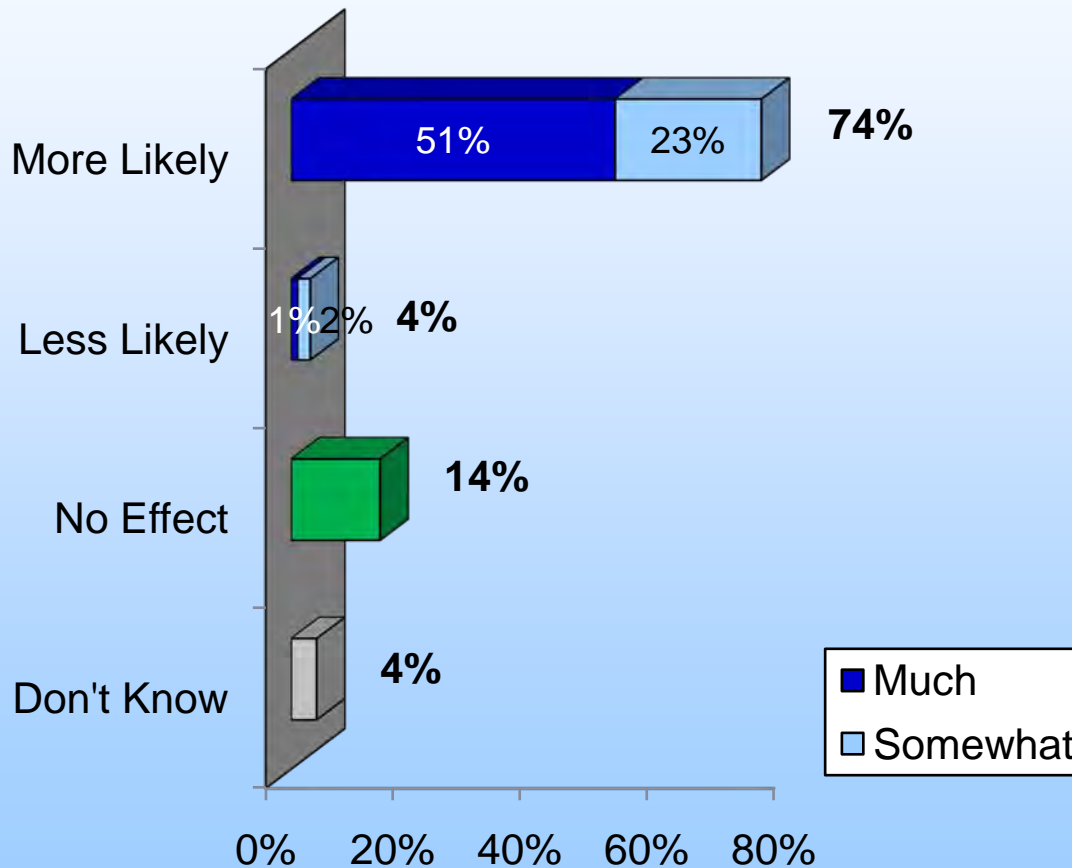
Hispanic members are very responsive to a number of bipartisan legislative proposals that have been offered in Congress to fight Medicare fraud.

Now I'm going to read several legislative proposals that have been made by members of Congress and ask to what extent you think each proposal would help minimize Medicare fraud and identity theft of Medicare patients?



**Hispanic AARP members are more likely to vote for candidates who support these legislative proposals.** Nearly three-fourths of Hispanic AARP members are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports the legislative proposals to minimize Medicare fraud and identity theft.

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who supports these proposals or would it not affect your vote either way?



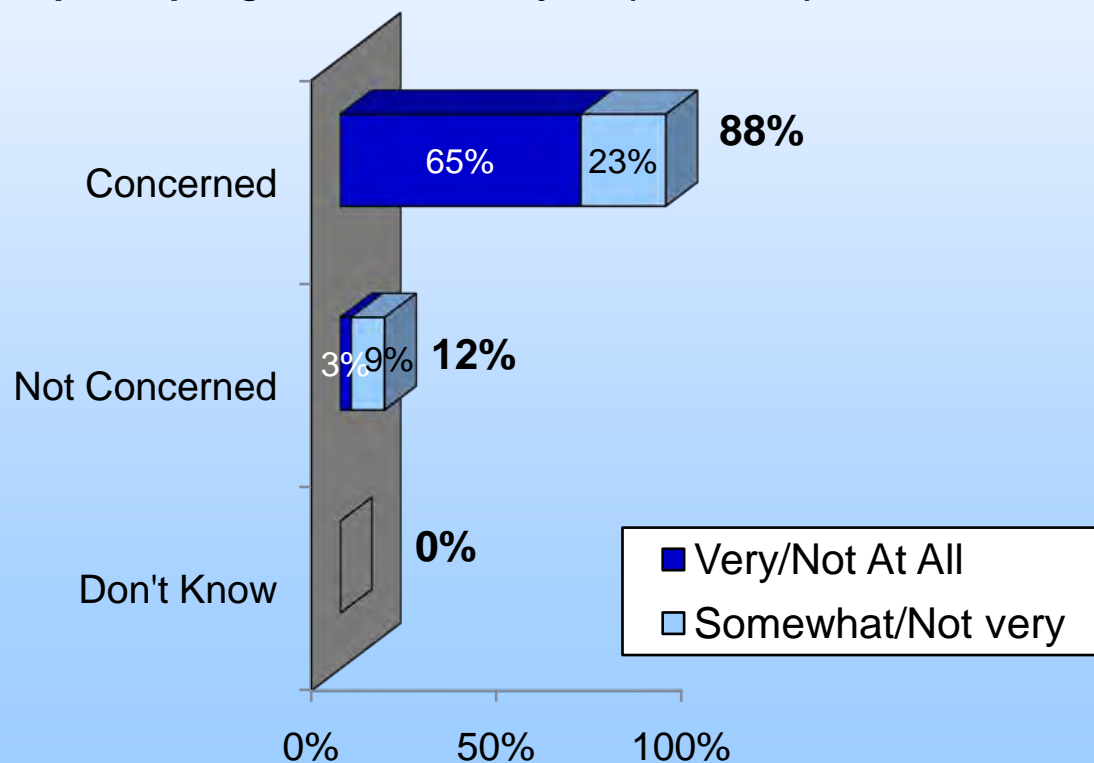
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# *Doc Fix*

**Concern about Medicare reimbursement rates:** Hispanic Medicare enrollees express a high level of concern that their current doctors will stop accepting Medicare if the scheduled 23% cut goes into effect.

As you may know, in an effort to control the rate of growth in Medicare spending, current law requires that doctors who treat Medicare patients receive a reduction in reimbursement rates every year. Although Congress has taken action to block the cuts in the past, it has been unable to come up with a permanent solution to the problem. Currently, doctors are scheduled to receive a 23% cut in reimbursement rates starting December 1.

***If the 23 percent payment cut takes effect, how concerned are you that your current doctors will stop accepting Medicare? Are you: (Base=111)***



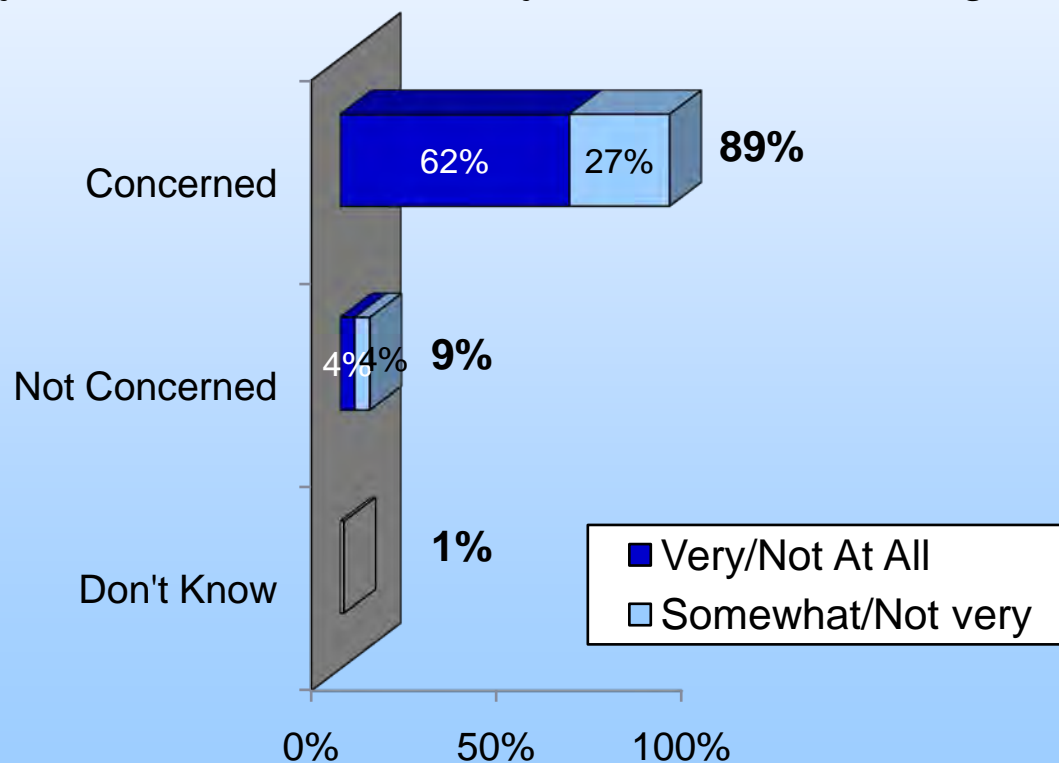
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**Concern about Medicare reimbursement rates:** the non-Medicare Hispanic population is highly concerned that their access to Medicare doctors will be limited in the future if Congress fails to fix the doctor reimbursement problem.

As you may know, in an effort to control the rate of growth in Medicare spending, current law requires that doctors who treat Medicare patients receive a reduction in reimbursement rates every year. Although Congress has taken action to block the cuts in the past, it has been unable to come up with a permanent solution to the problem. Currently, doctors are scheduled to receive a 23% cut in reimbursement rates starting December 1.

***If Congress fails to fix the doctor reimbursement problem, how concerned are you that it will limit your access to doctors when you become Medicare eligible? (Base=136)***

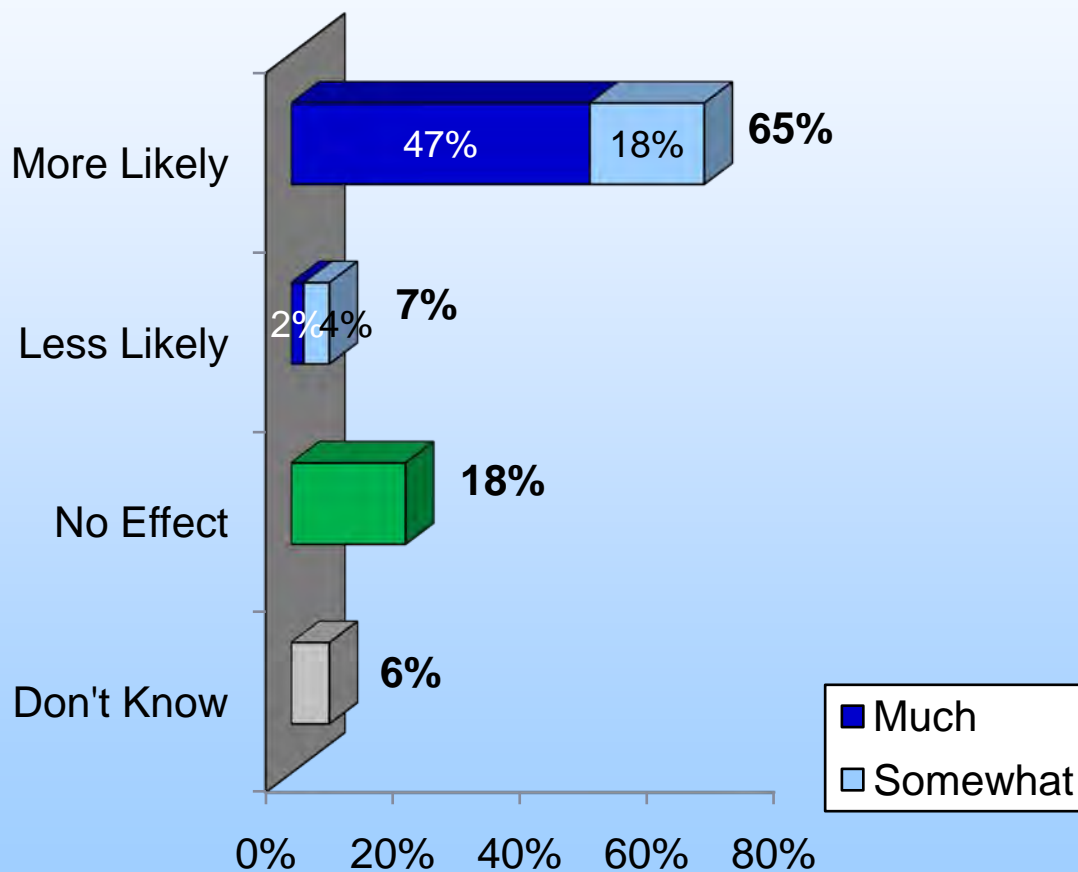


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**Hispanic AARP members are more likely to vote for a candidate who promises to fix the system to prevent future cuts in Medicare reimbursement rates to doctors.** In all, 65% are more likely and 47% are much more likely to vote for such a candidate. Only 7% are less likely.

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who promises to fix the system to prevent future cuts in reimbursement rates to doctors, or would it not affect your vote either way?



## Summary and Conclusions

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- Despite the economic crisis and uncertainty of recent years and their dissatisfaction with the U.S. economy, Hispanic AARP members are somewhat more optimistic than the general member population about the direction of the country and the future economy. Nearly half (48%) are optimistic about the nation's economic prospects over the next year as compared to 39% among the national membership.
- Even so, members are very concerned about the deficit and about the future. Indeed, more than half (54%) of Hispanic AARP members say they lack confidence that life for their children's generation will be better than it has been for them.
- Even so, most are relatively satisfied with their own economic circumstances and think that their own financial situation will remain stable in the near-term.
- Two-thirds of all Hispanics are confident that they will receive full Social Security benefits throughout their retirement.
- Not surprisingly, then, most Hispanics think Social Security is very important for future generations and would like to see candidates pledge their commitment to ensuring that Social Security remain a guaranteed life-long benefit.



## Summary and Conclusions

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- The concept of reducing the Social Security benefits of future retirees in order to control the deficit is rejected by 72% of Hispanic AARP members as an unfair burden to future retirees. Further, 63% say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who favors this approach to deficit reduction.
- Similarly, there is widespread concern about the continued threat of reductions in Medicare reimbursement rates to doctors. Most think that their ability to receive treatment from a doctor who accepts Medicare will be impacted if the issue is not addressed. As a result, 65% say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who promises to fix the system to prevent further cuts to reimbursement rates to doctors.
- Medicare fraud is perceived as a major problem and Hispanic members think the most important reason to crack down on fraud is to keep Medicare strong. To that end, Hispanic members are receptive to the bipartisan legislative proposals tested and would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports these efforts to minimize fraud and identity theft of Medicare patients.

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**For more information, please contact  
Gary Ferguson at:**

**American Viewpoint  
300 N. Lee Street, Suite 400  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 684-3325 / (800) 684-4410  
(703) 684-9295 fax  
gferguson@amview.com**