



**THE VETERANS AND
CITIZENS INITIATIVE**

Moving Forward Together

2022 Veterans Day Report: A Survey of Americans' Attitudes towards Veterans

November 2022

INTRODUCTION

Veterans Day this year comes just a few days after a divisive and polarizing election. For months, Americans have been inundated with news coverage and political ads dividing us into red and blue camps. Most Americans are exhausted and fed up with the worsening polarization and toxicity in our politics yet see few avenues for hope.

Encouragingly, our research suggests veterans could play a unique role in disrupting this cycle of polarization and division. Overwhelmingly, Americans trust veterans to do what is right for the country and see them as role models for citizenship. This confidence in veterans holds true for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike, underscoring the significant potential veterans have to reach across our ideological divides.

But for veterans to play a larger role in bringing Americans together, we first must do more to connect veterans with the broader society. Over 50 percent of Americans say they rarely or never talk with veterans and over a quarter say they have never talked with a veteran about his or her service. These findings underscore that the warmth and trust Americans feel towards veterans lack a robust foundation.

This Veterans Day is an appropriate moment for us to step back from politics and consider the ways we could do more to engage veterans in efforts to build a healthier society. This charge applies equally to nonveterans and veterans alike.

THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

The Veterans and Citizens Initiative (VCI) launched in 2020 to serve as a connective tissue to elevate civic work being done by veterans and military family organizations and build connections between such organizations and the broader field of nonpartisan civic renewal efforts. Anchored in More in Common, a nonpartisan research and civic nonprofit, the VCI leads national research and engages with partners to elevate ways for veteran and military family organizations, and civil society groups, to come together around nonpartisan work that strengthens our democracy and builds a stronger shared sense of belonging.

VCI Partners



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Americans across the political spectrum have high trust in veterans and see them as civic role models.

Americans in general feel **very warm** towards US military veterans.

Americans have significantly higher confidence in veterans and the military to do what is right for America than in Congress or the Supreme Court.

8 in 10 Americans across political ideology have a **great deal or some confidence** in veterans to do what is right for America.

More than 7 in 10 Americans, regardless of political affiliation, believe that veterans are **role models for good citizenship**.

2. The overwhelming majority of Americans plan to celebrate Veterans Day this year.

8 in 10 Americans will celebrate Veterans Day this year.

The ways of celebrating Veterans Day that Americans are most likely to say they will do include flying the American flag, expressing gratitude towards veterans on social media, and talking to a veteran in person or online.

3. Americans across the political spectrum believe it is important to engage with veterans, yet many say they have never or rarely talked with a veteran.

Most Americans (81%) across the political spectrum believe that it is very or somewhat important for nonveterans to engage with veterans in their local communities.

However, **more than half of Americans (54%) have never or rarely talk with a veteran**.

More than a quarter of Americans (28%) **do not recall ever speaking to a veteran about their service**. Many report that they do not have any veterans in their social circles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

General Population Survey

Results are shown as “US Average”.

More in Common partnered with international polling company Morning Consult to conduct online survey interviews with n=2,004 adult US citizens from October 28 to November 1, 2022. The data was weighted to be representative of American citizens using propensity scores, with score functions including gender, age, race, education, and region. The margin of error is +/- 2%.

American Military Veteran Survey

Results are shown as “Veterans”.

More in Common also partnered with international polling company Morning Consult to conduct online survey interviews with n=500 US military veterans from October 28 to November 1, 2022. The data was weighted to be representative of American veterans using propensity scores, with score functions including gender, age, race, education, and region. The margin of error is +/- 4% for the veteran sample.

Past Research

Results are shown as “September 2021”.

This report includes longitudinal data based on references and data from previous research study conducted by More in Common in September 2021. For additional information and methodology statement on this previous study, please see *After Kabul: Veterans, America, and the End of the War in Afghanistan* ([link](#)).

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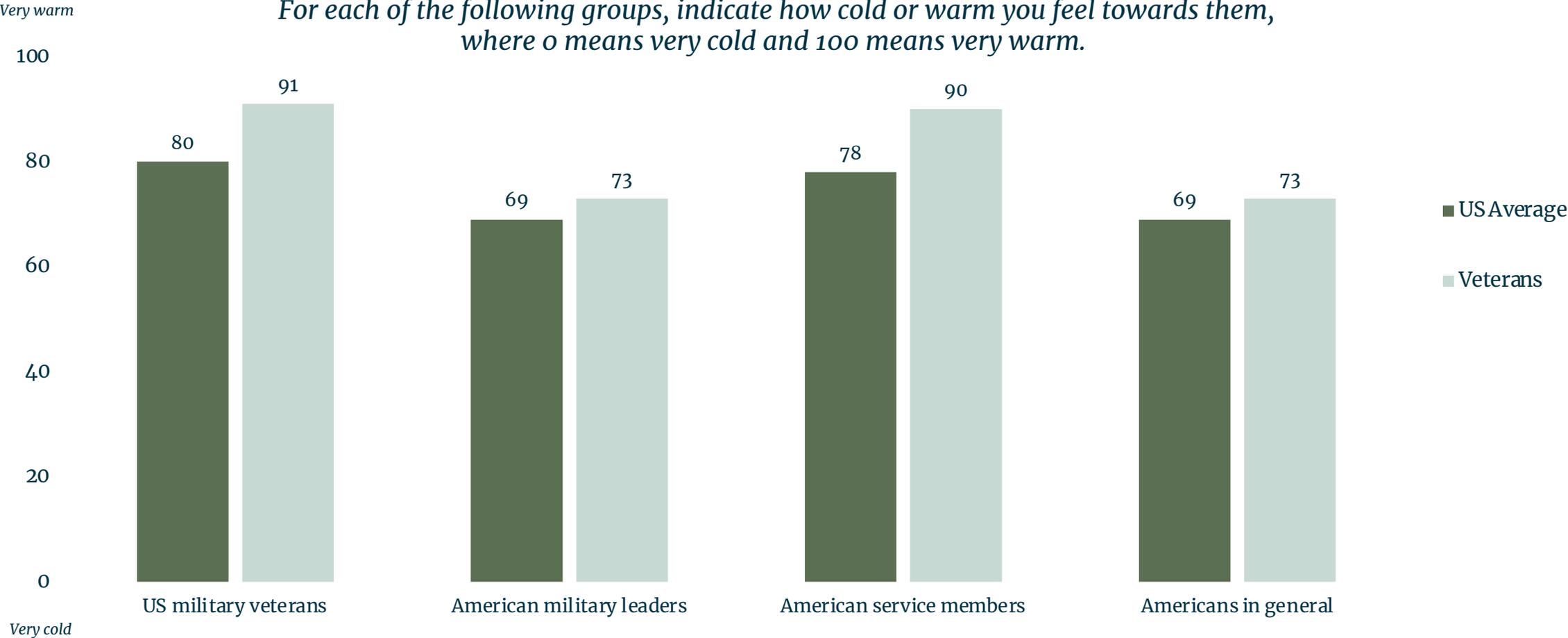
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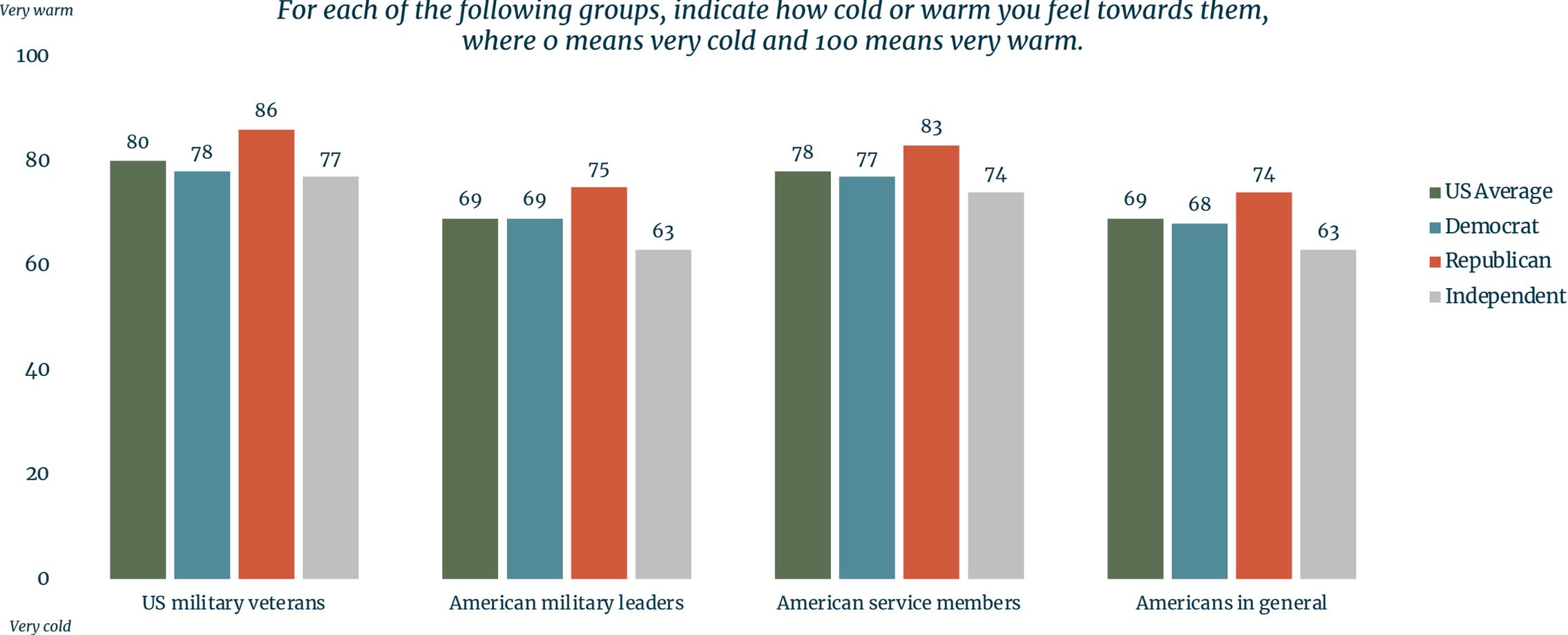
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Trust and Warmth towards Veterans

Americans in general feel very warmly towards veterans.



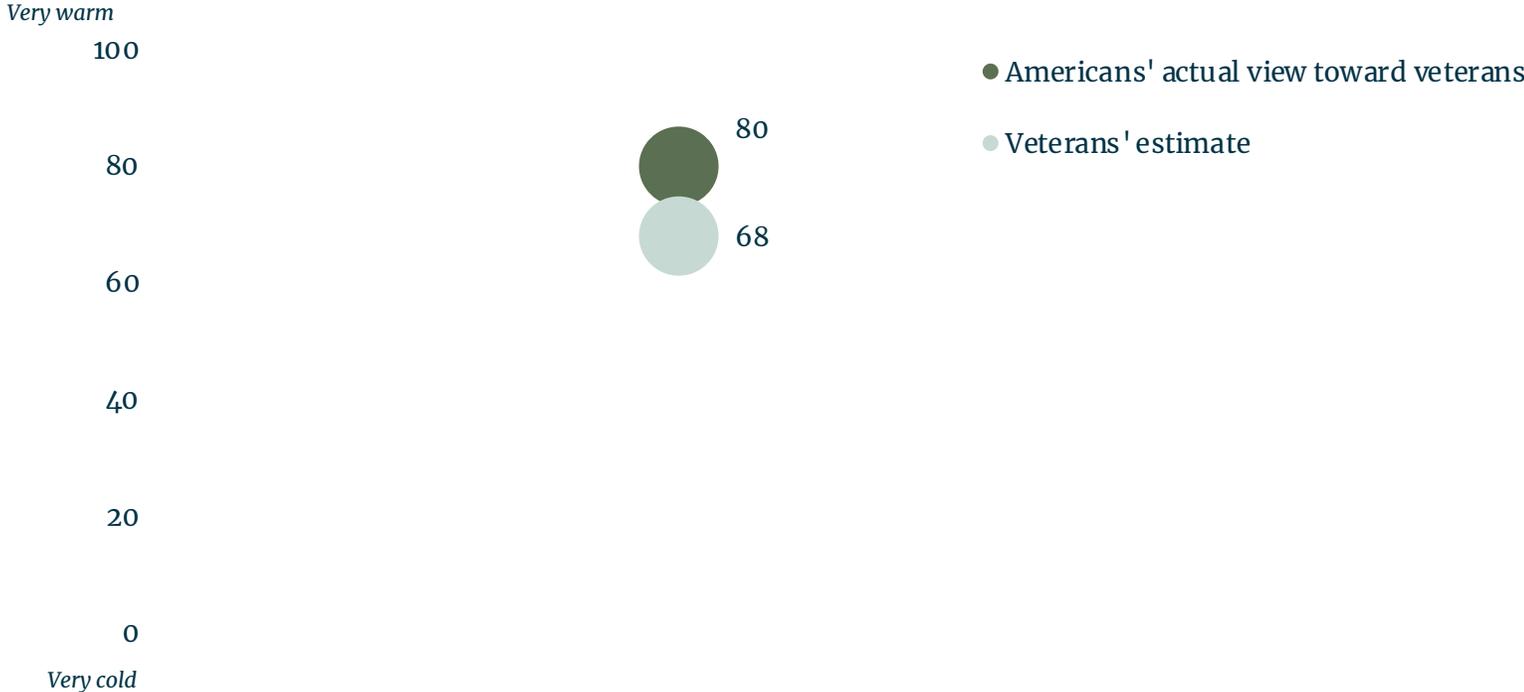
Feelings of warmth towards veterans are high across political ideology, with Republicans reporting slightly warmer feelings.



Veterans slightly underestimate the degree of warmth Americans in general feel towards them.

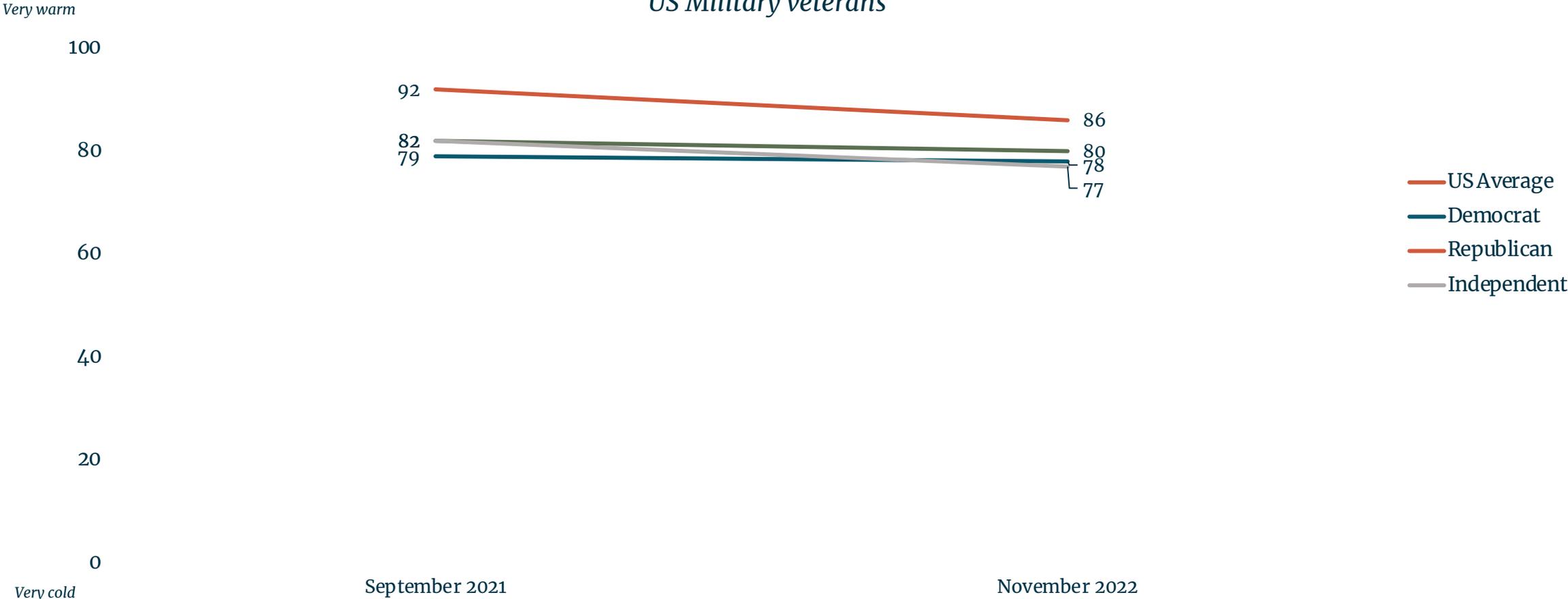
[US average & nonveterans] Indicate how cold or warm you feel towards US military veterans, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm.

*[Veterans] On a scale of 0 to 100, how cold or warm do you think **nonveterans** feel towards US military veterans, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm?*



Relatively little change occurred over the past year in the degree of warmth Americans feel towards veterans.

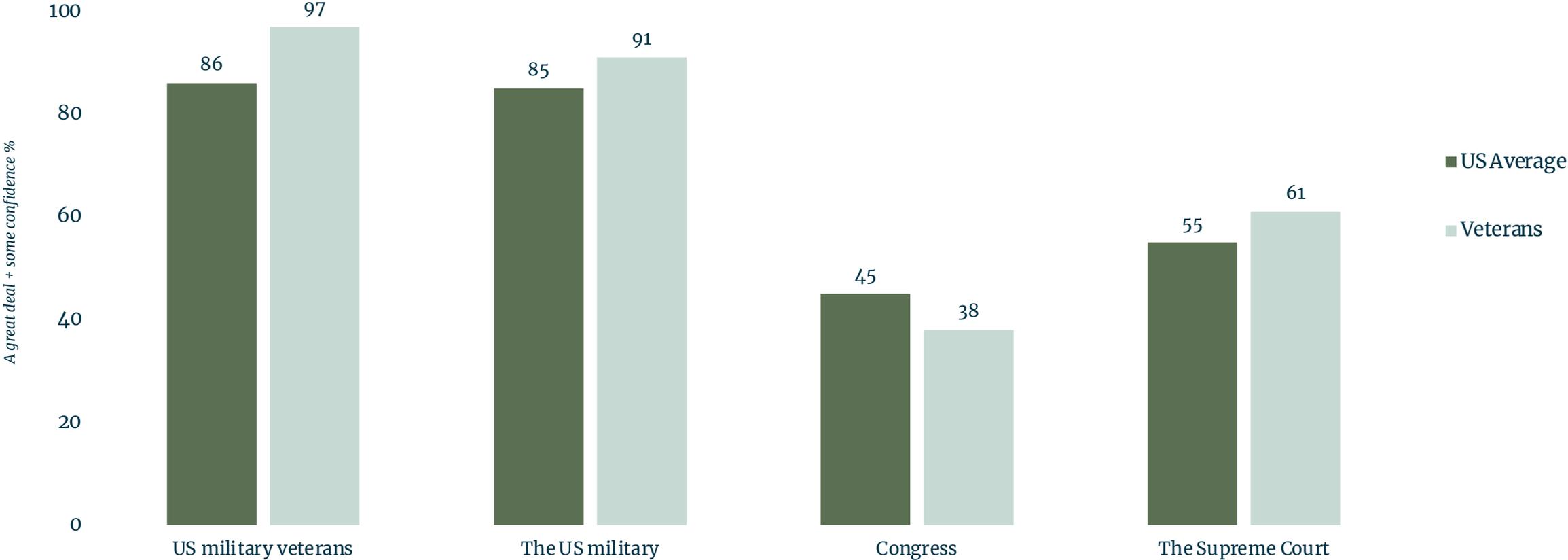
US Military veterans



Survey question: For each of the following groups, indicate how cold or warm you feel towards them, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm.

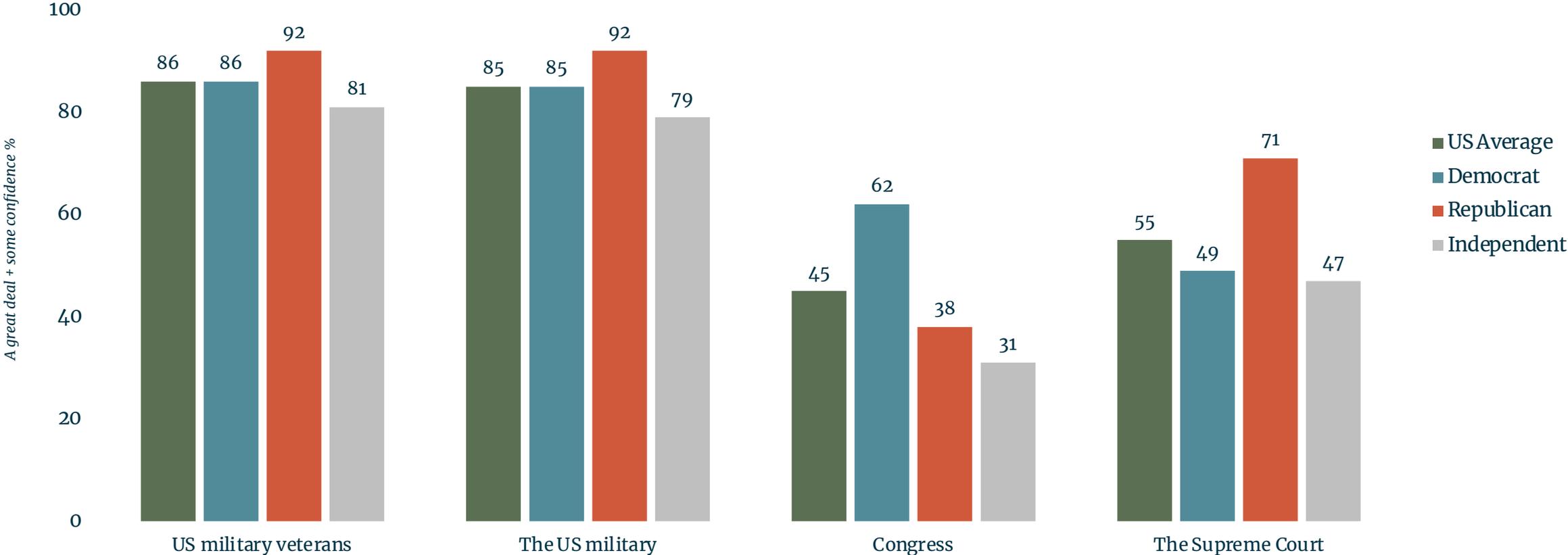
Americans have significantly higher confidence in veterans and the military to do what is right for America than in Congress or the Supreme Court.

For each of these groups or institutions, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, hardly any confidence, or no confidence at all in them to do what is right for America?



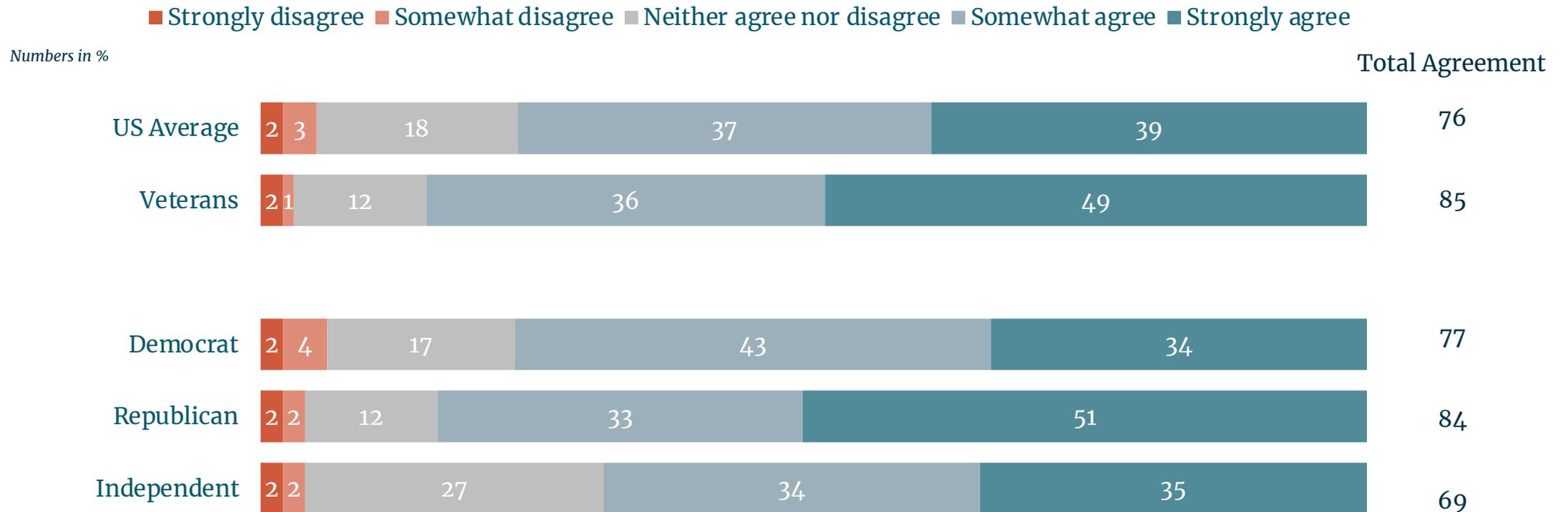
The levels of confidence toward veterans are similar across political ideology.

For each of these groups or institutions, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, hardly any confidence, or no confidence at all in them to do what is right for America?



7 in 10 Americans believe that veterans are role models for good citizenship.

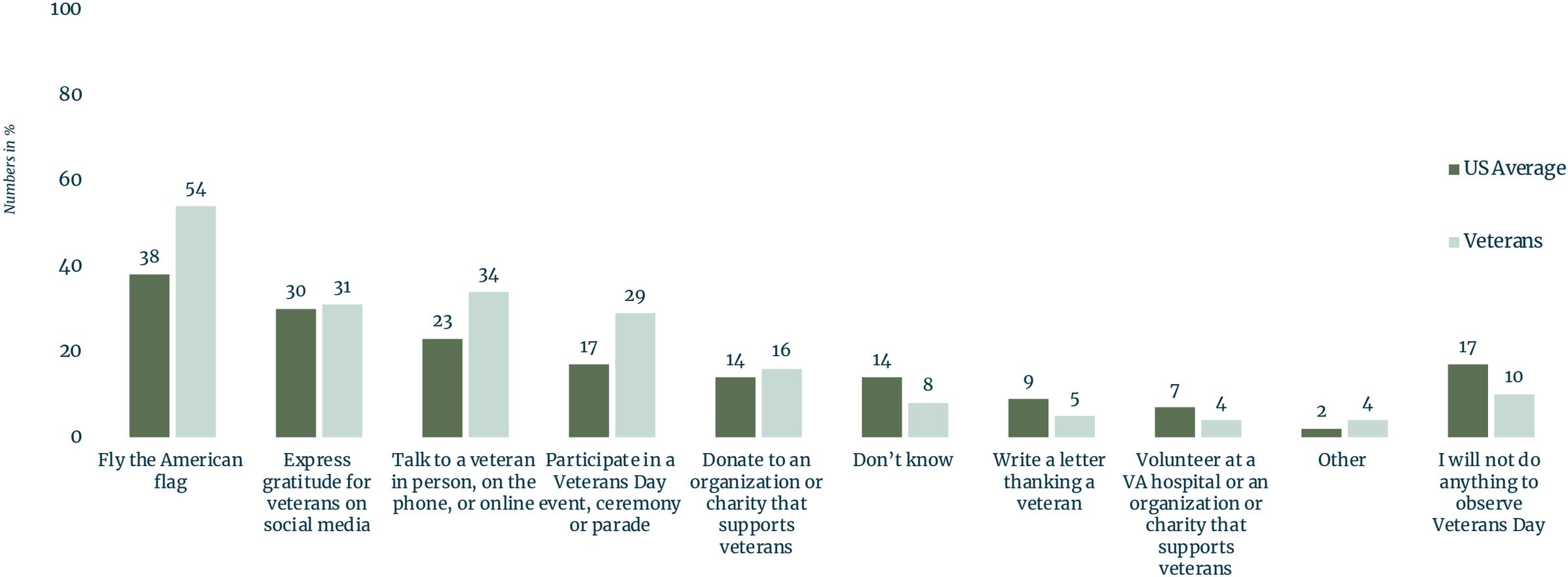
To what extent do you agree that, in general, veterans are role models for good citizenship?



Veterans Day

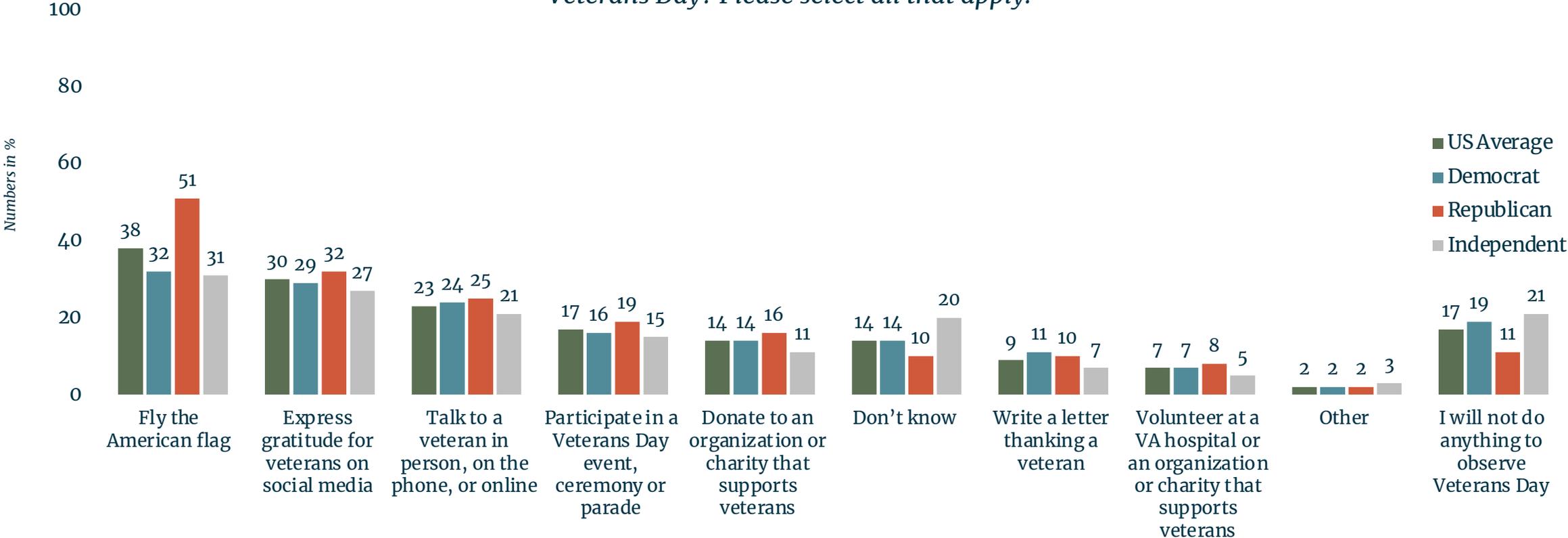
Most Americans – over 8 in 10 – will observe Veterans Day this year. More than one third plan to fly the American flag.

Will you observe Veterans Day (November 11) this year? If so, how will you observe Veterans Day? Please select all that apply.



Around one half of Republicans will fly the American flag to observe Veterans Day this year.

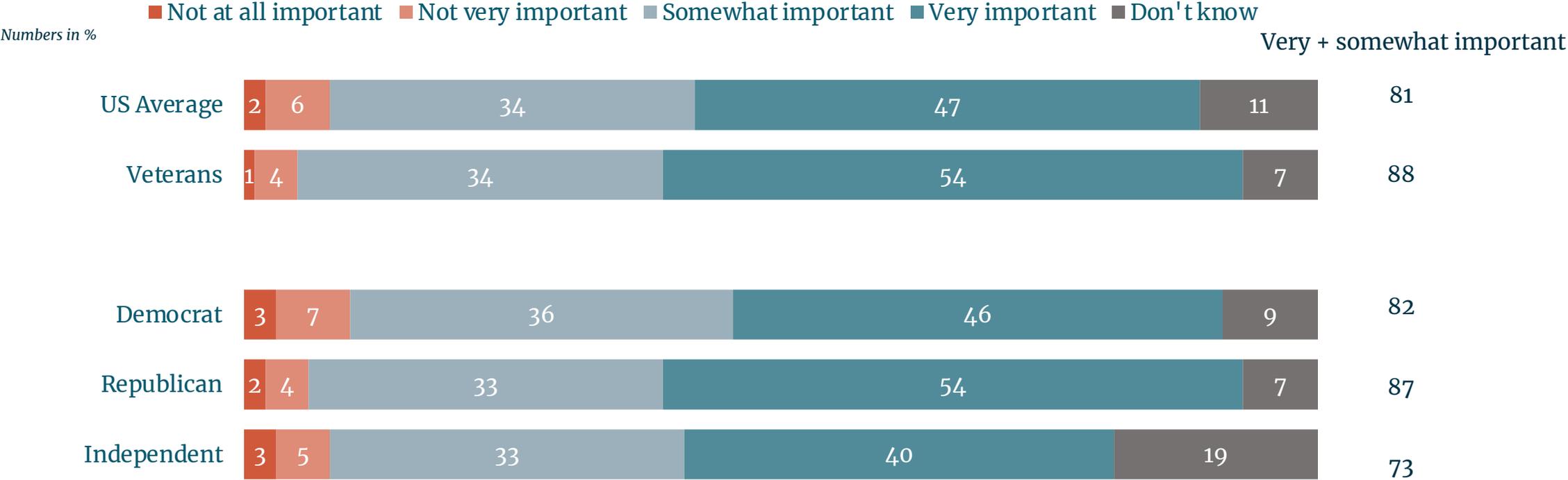
Will you observe Veterans Day (November 11) this year? If so, how will you observe Veterans Day? Please select all that apply.



Contact with Veterans

Most Americans across the political spectrum believe it is very or somewhat important for nonveterans to engage with veterans in their communities.

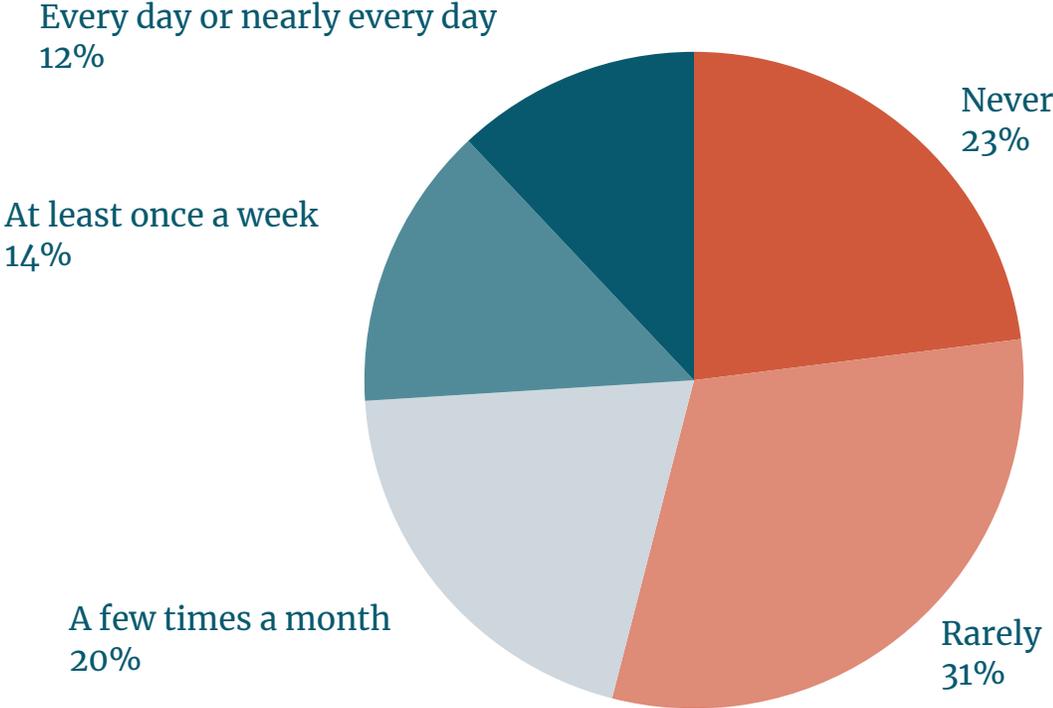
How important do you think it is for nonveterans to engage with veterans in their community?



However, around half of Americans never or rarely communicate with veterans.

How often do you communicate with veteran(s) in person, on the phone, or online?

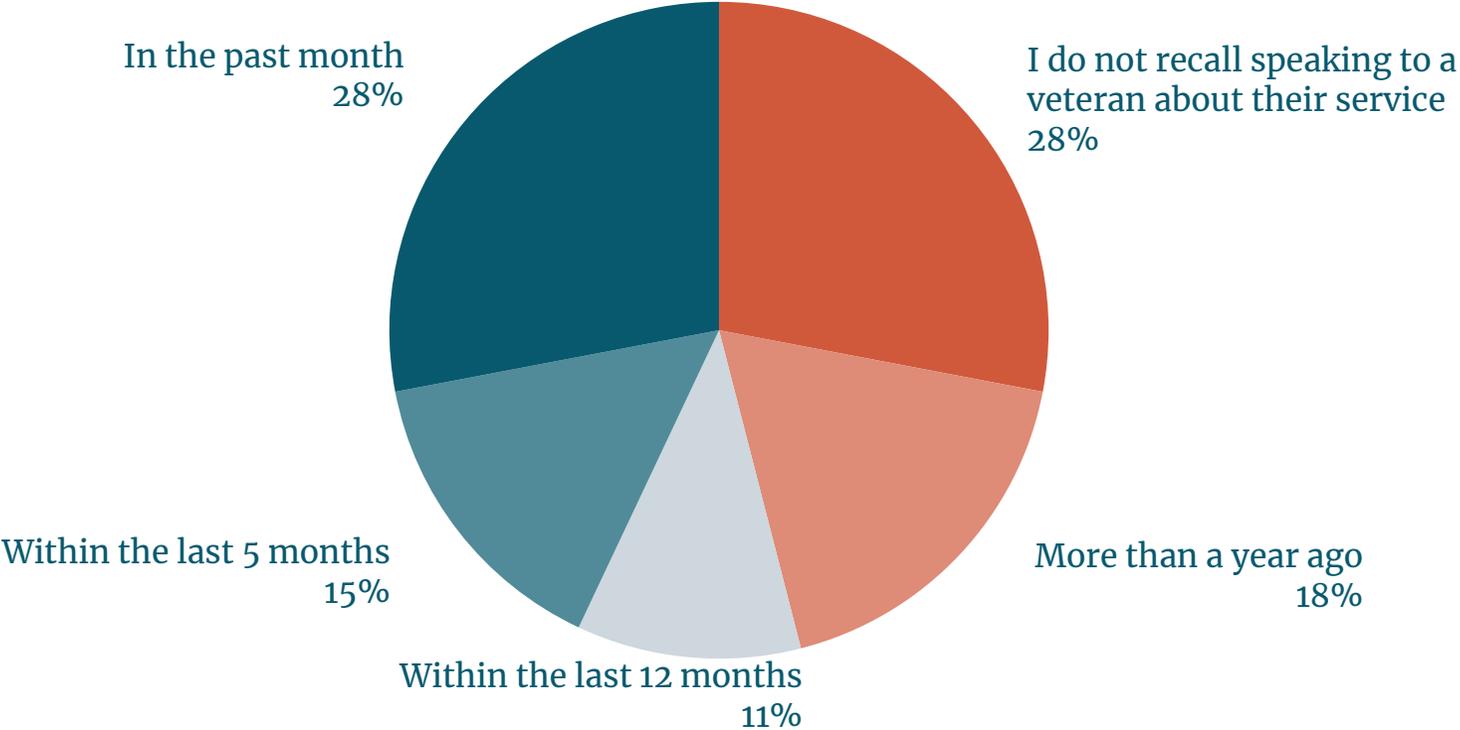
US Average



A little more than 50 percent of Americans have spoken to a veteran about their service within the last 12 months.

When was the last time that you spoke to a US military veteran about their service?

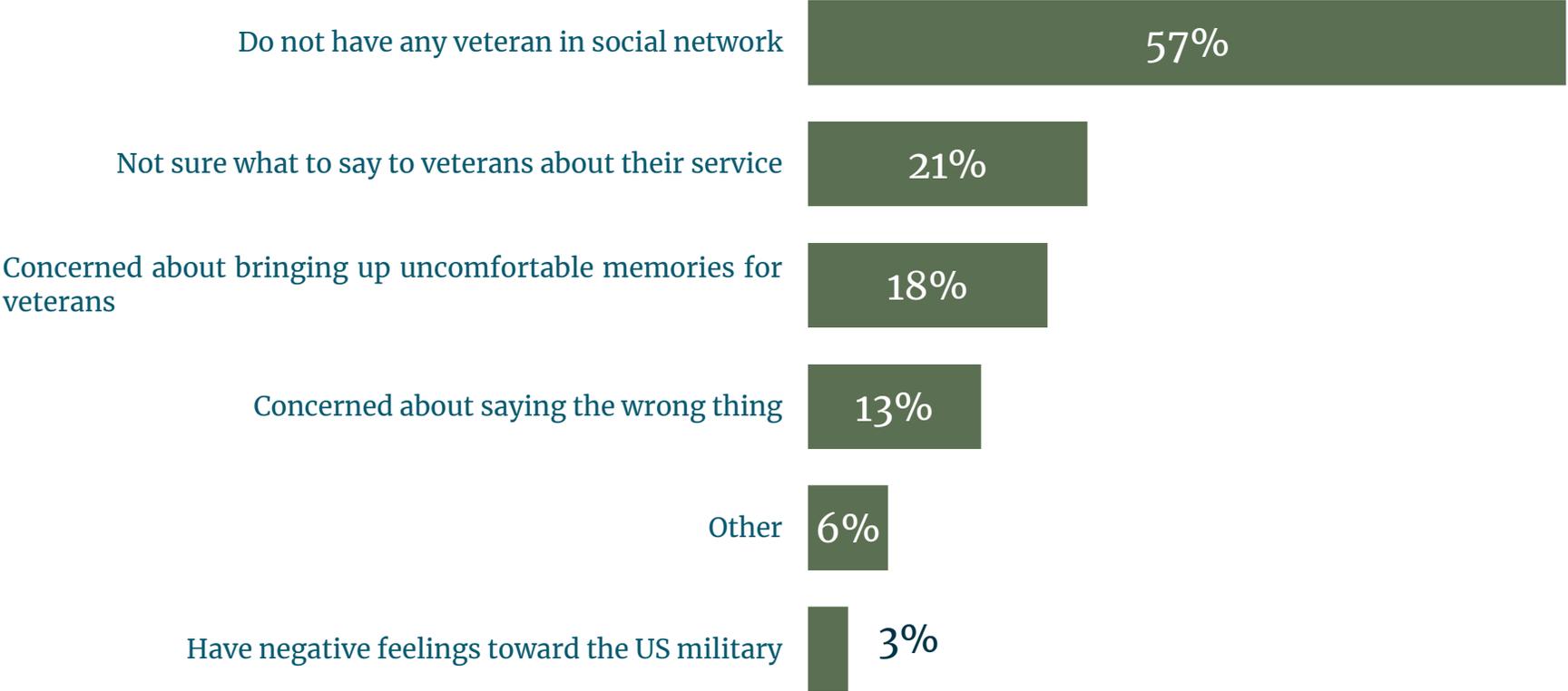
US Average



Out of those who have never spoken to a veteran about their service, around half say they do not have any veteran in their social networks. Around one fifth are unsure about what to say.

Which of the following are reasons for why you have never spoken to a veteran about their service? Please select all that apply.

US Average

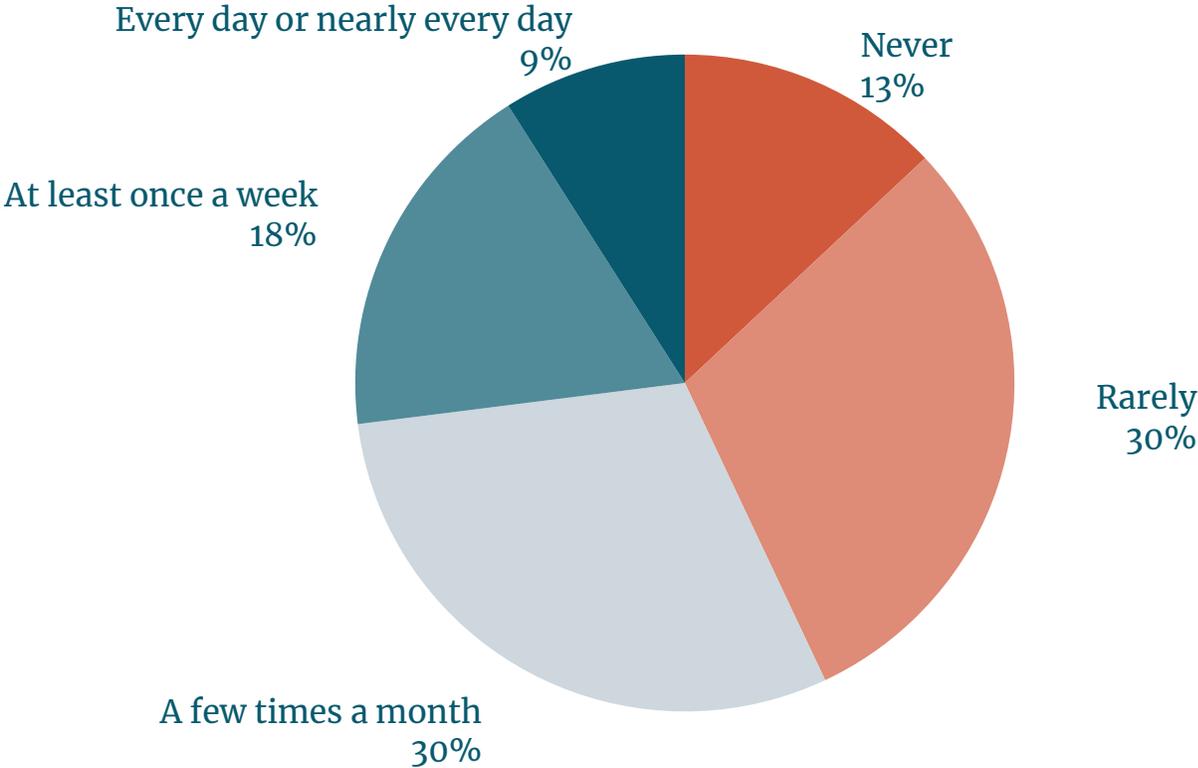


Views on Veterans' Issues

Almost 6 in 10 Americans say that they follow news concerning veterans at least a few times a month. 4 in 10 rarely or never follow news about veterans' issues.

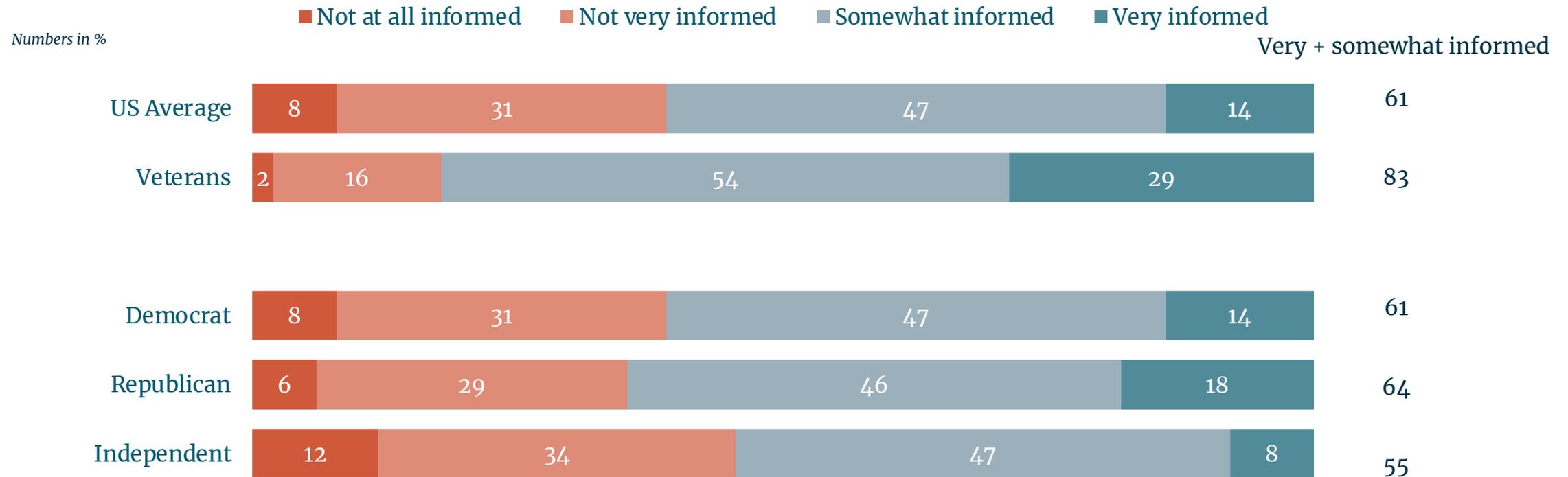
How often do you follow the news about issues concerning veterans, such as veterans' health care and veteran employment?

US Average



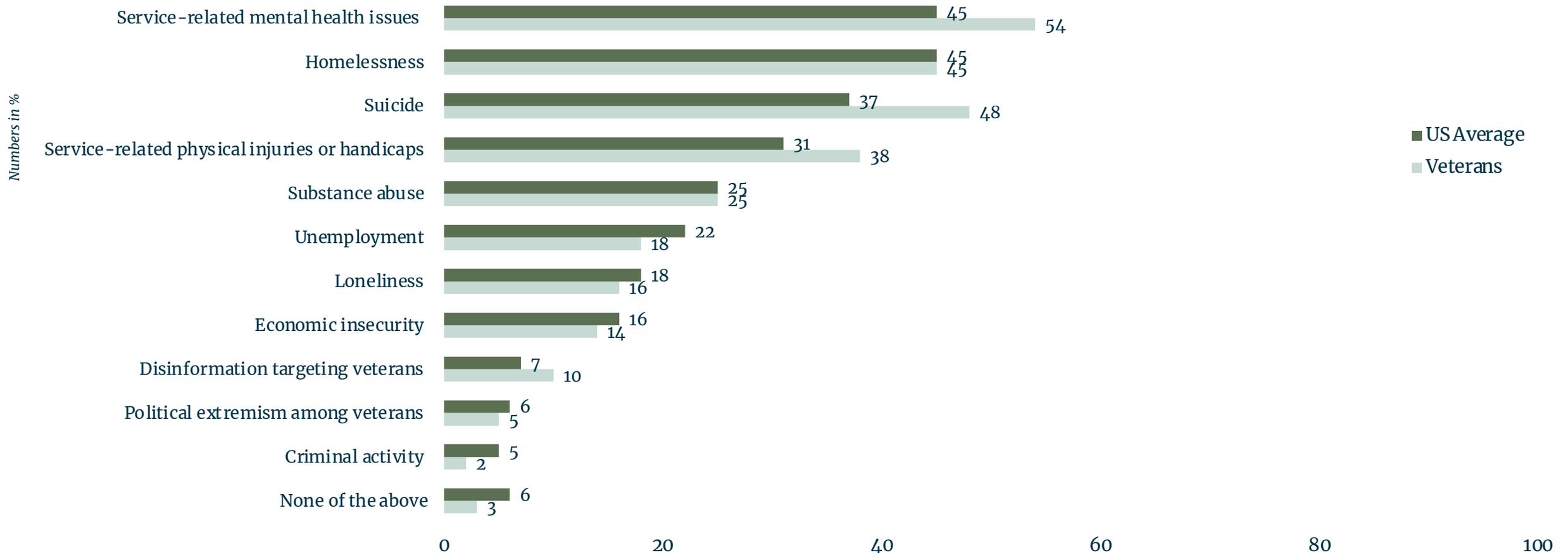
6 in 10 Americans self report as somewhat or very informed about veterans' issues.

How well informed do you feel about issues concerning veterans?



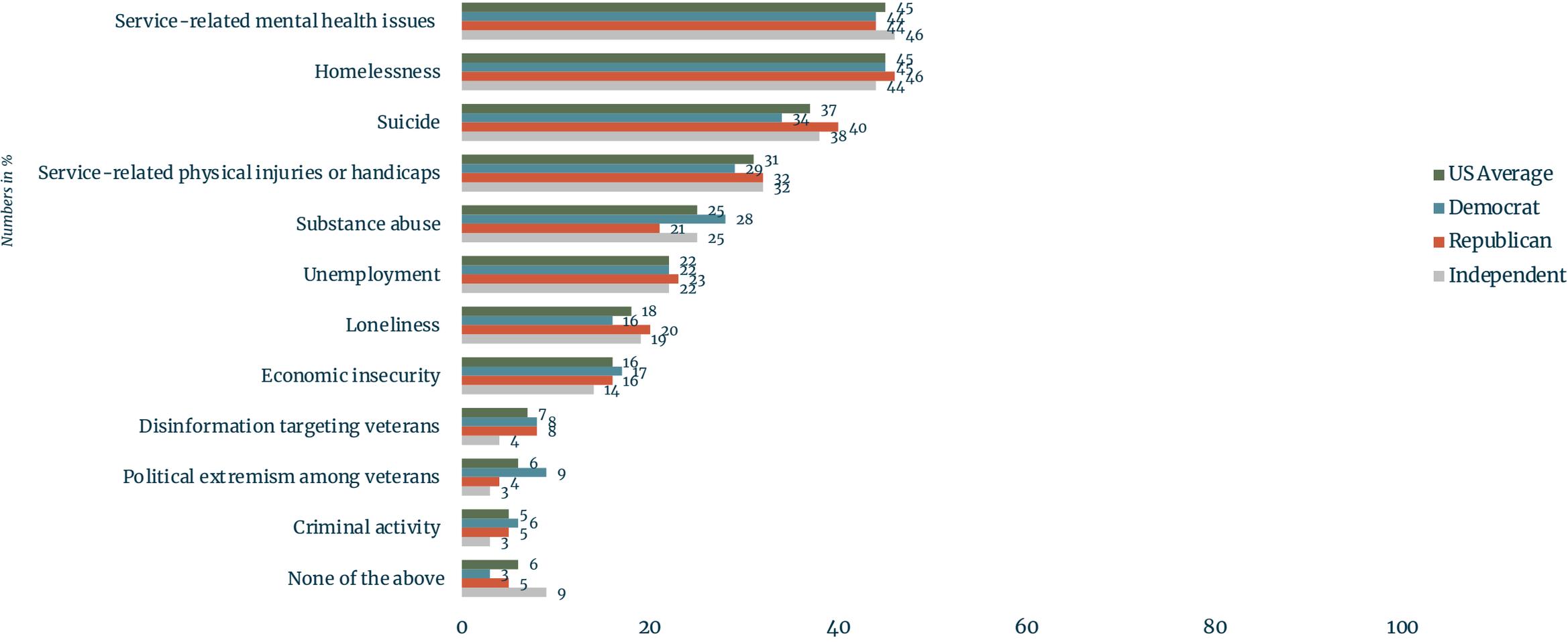
Americans in general and veterans all see mental health, homelessness and suicide as the most significant issues concerning veterans, although veterans are comparatively more alarmed by mental health issues, suicide, and physical injuries.

Of the following issues, what do you feel are the most significant when it comes to veterans? Select top three.



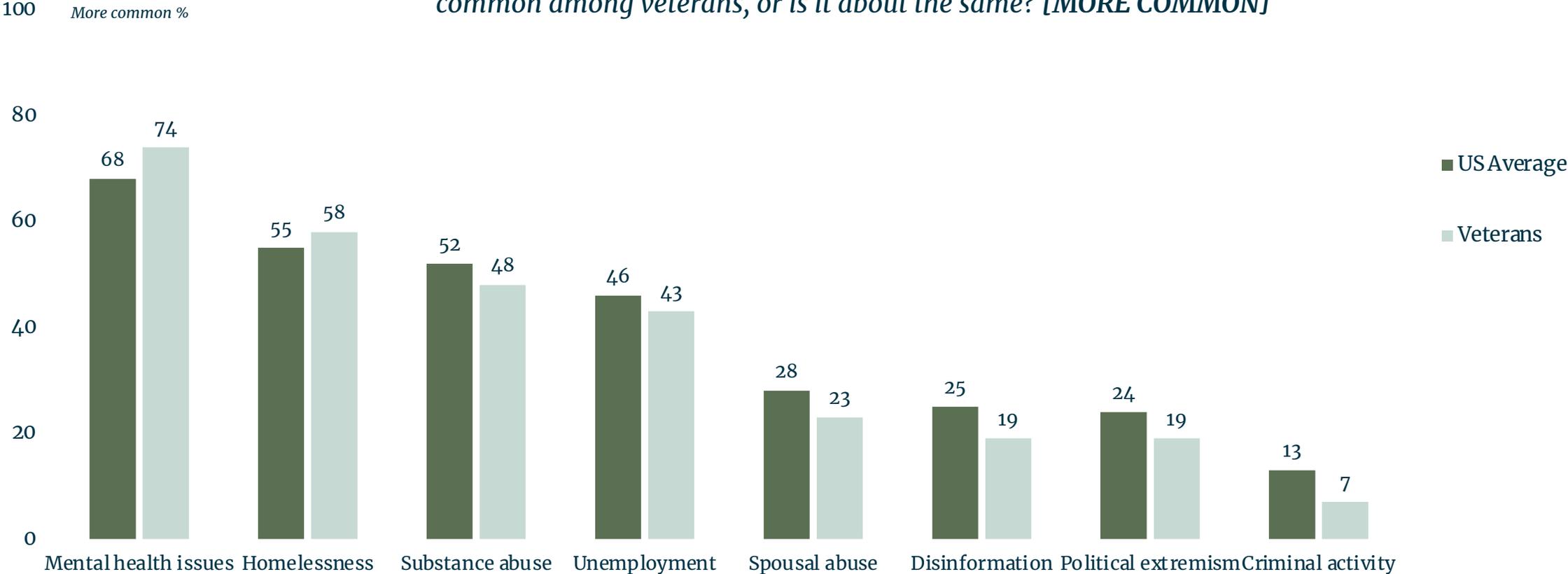
Americans across political ideology identify similar issues concerning veterans.

Of the following issues, what do you feel are the most significant when it comes to veterans? Select top three.



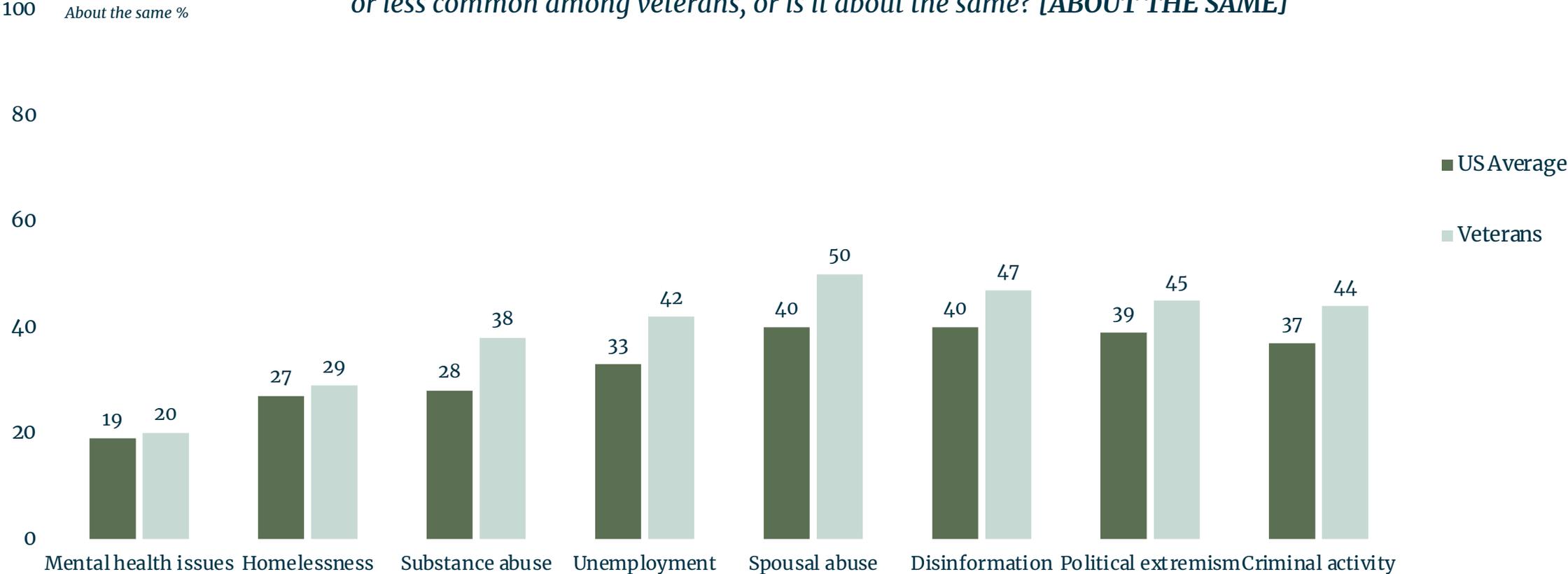
Most veterans and Americans in general believe that mental health issues and homelessness are more common among veterans compared to the rest of American society.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same? [MORE COMMON]



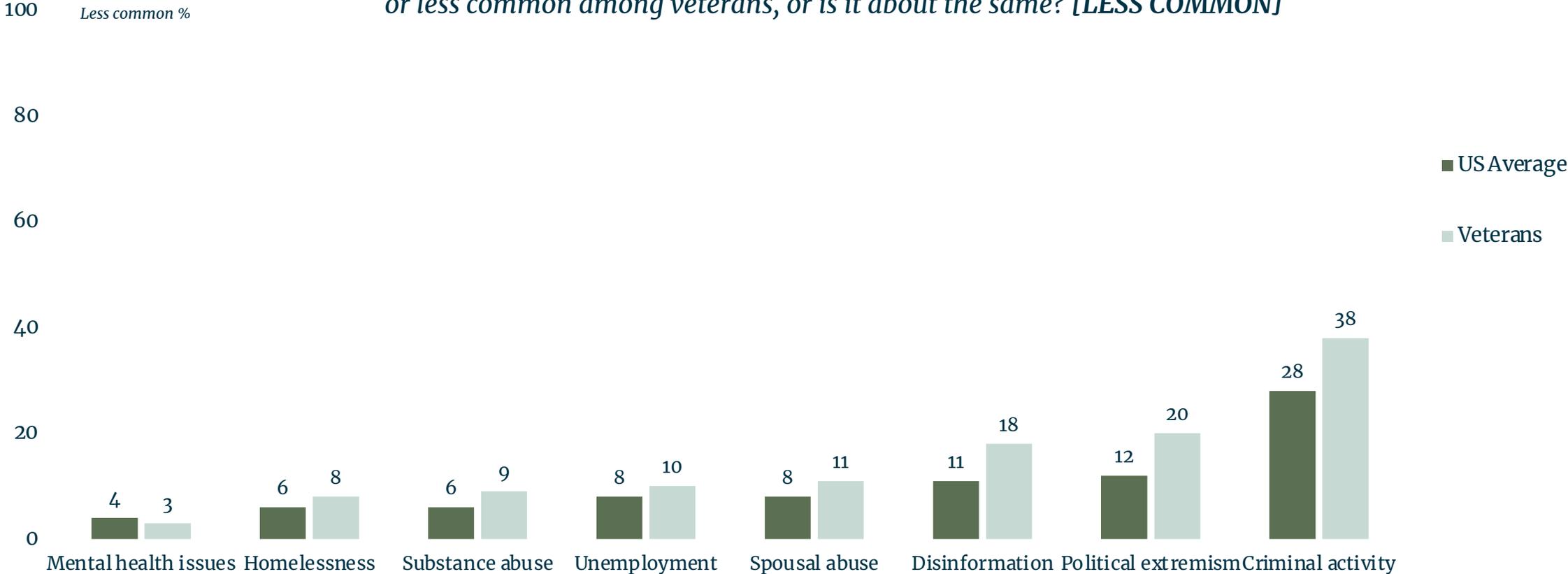
Veterans are slightly more likely than Americans in general to say that the issues of spousal abuse, unemployment, and disinformation are about the same among veterans.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same? [ABOUT THE SAME]



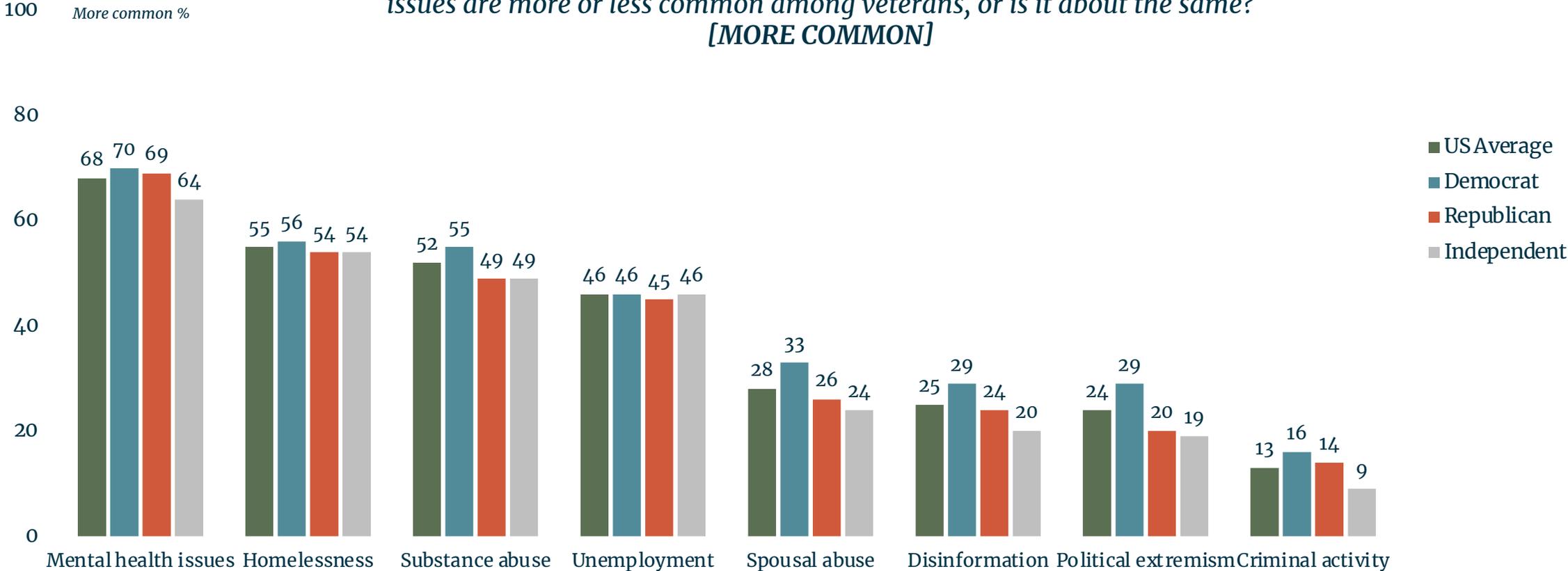
Almost 1 in 4 veterans believe that criminal activity is less common among veterans.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same? [LESS COMMON]



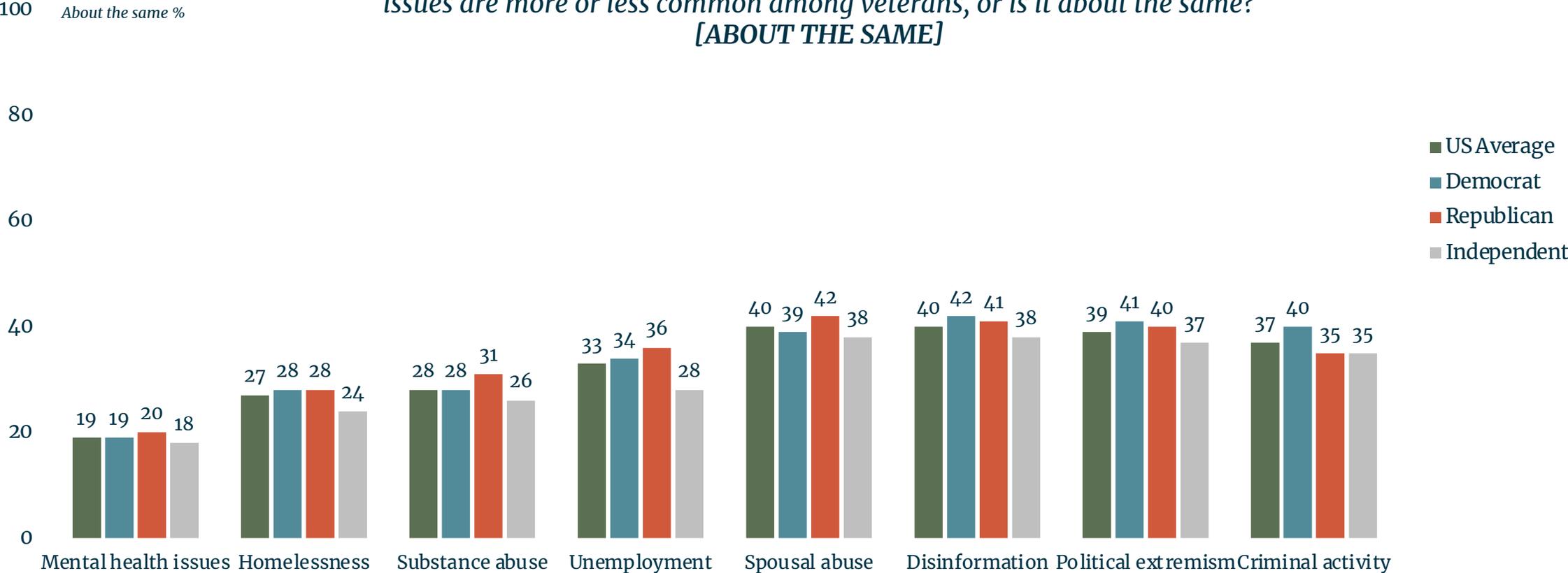
Democrats are slightly more likely than Republicans and Independents to see political extremism as more common among veterans compared to the rest of American society.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same?
[MORE COMMON]



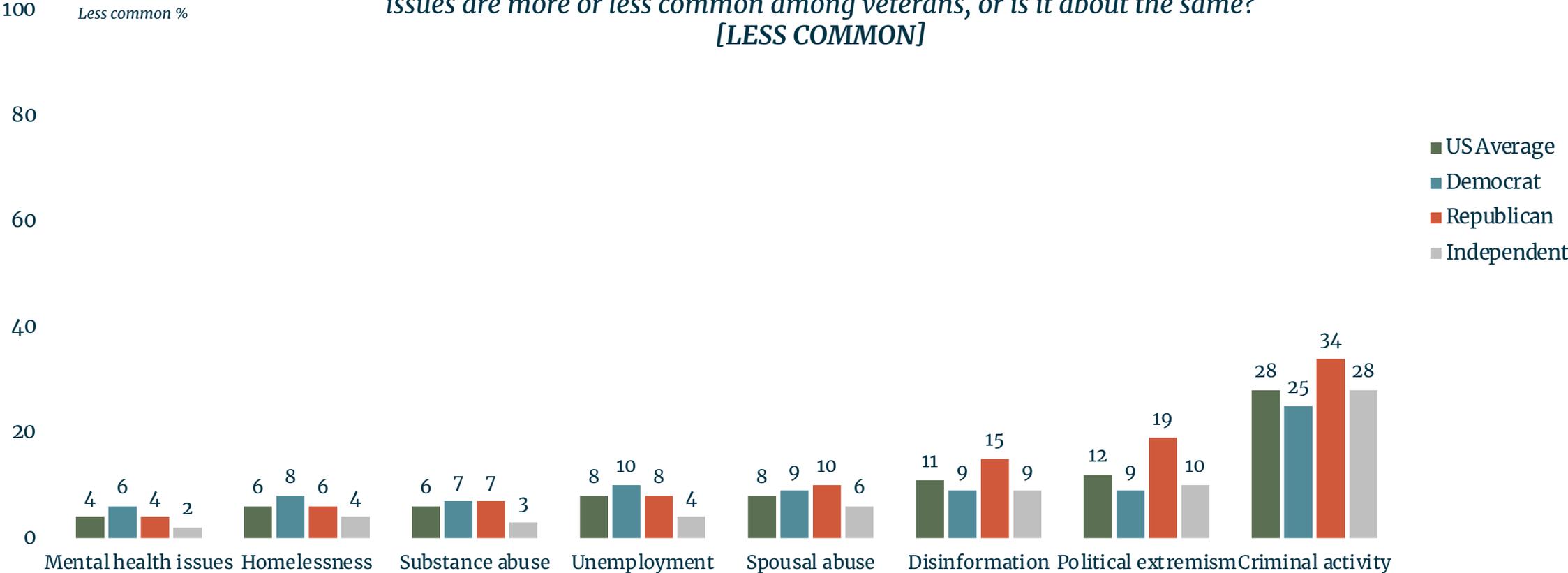
Around 4 in 10 Americans regardless of ideology believe that the issues of disinformation and political extremism are about the same among veterans compared to the rest of American society.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same?
[ABOUT THE SAME]



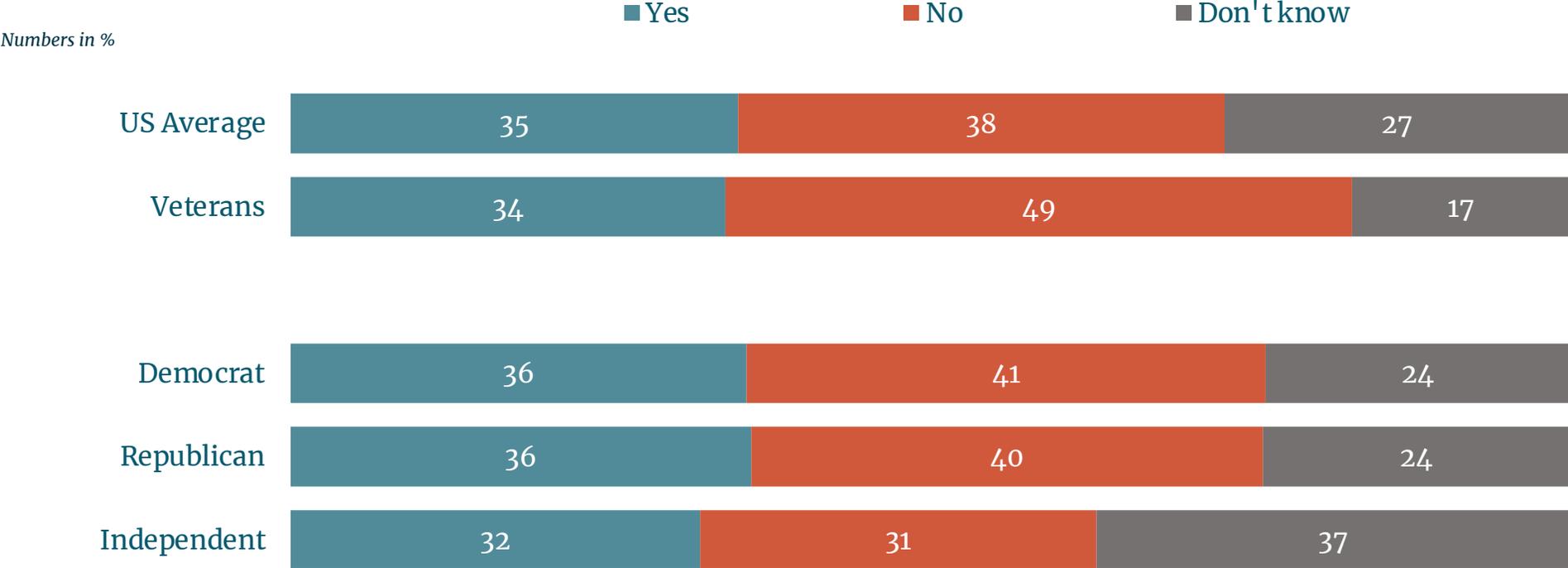
Over one quarter of Americans think criminal activity is less common among veterans. Republicans are slightly more likely to view political extremism as less common among veterans.

Compared to the rest of American society, do you think the following issues are more or less common among veterans, or is it about the same?
[LESS COMMON]



Around one third of Americans in general and veterans feel that veterans are isolated from American society.

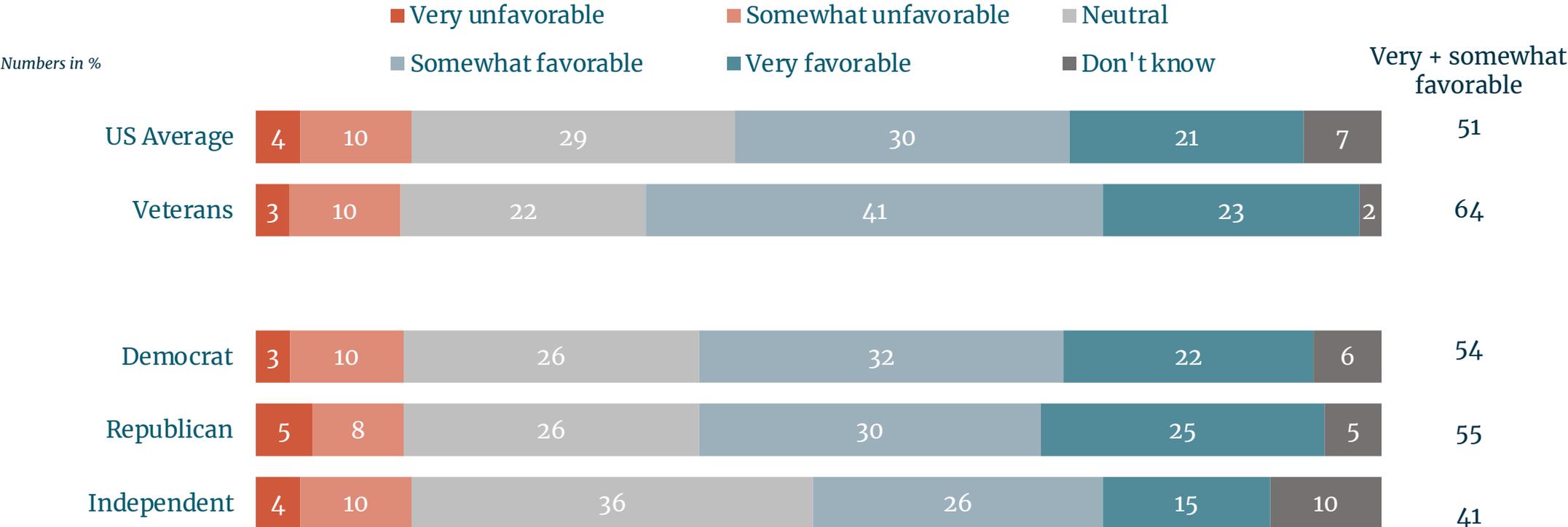
Are veterans isolated from American society?



Perceptions of Veterans

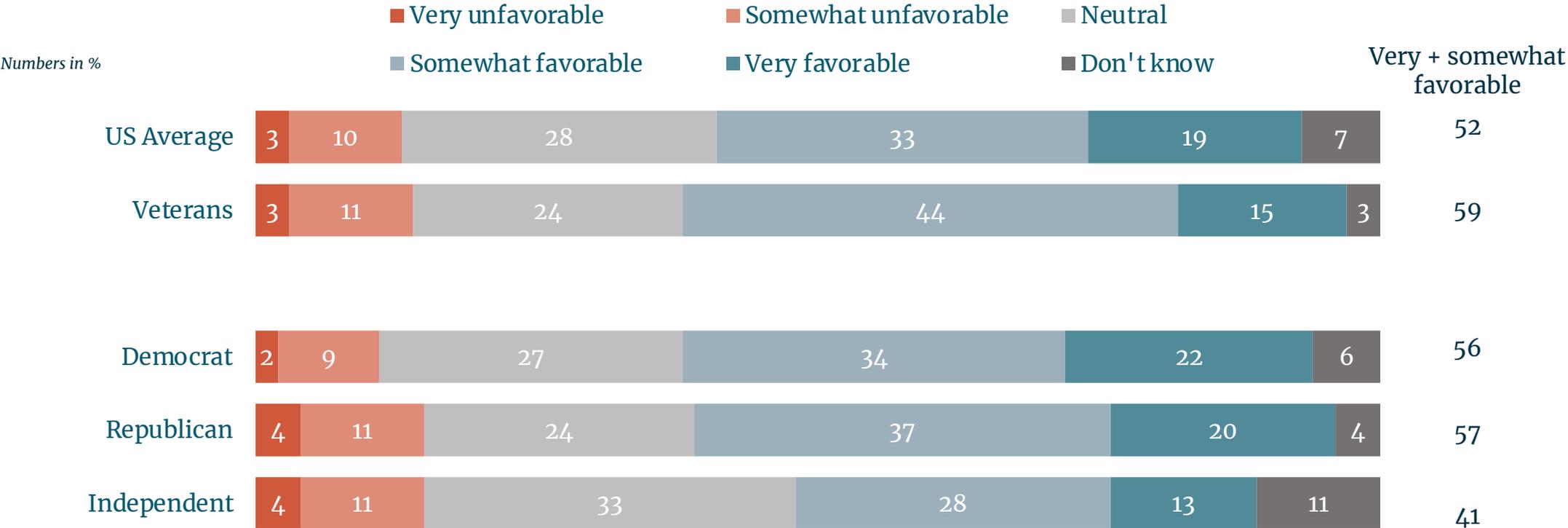
Around half of Americans in general and almost two thirds of veterans believe that depictions of veterans in the news today are favorable.

In general, do you think depictions of veterans in the news today are...



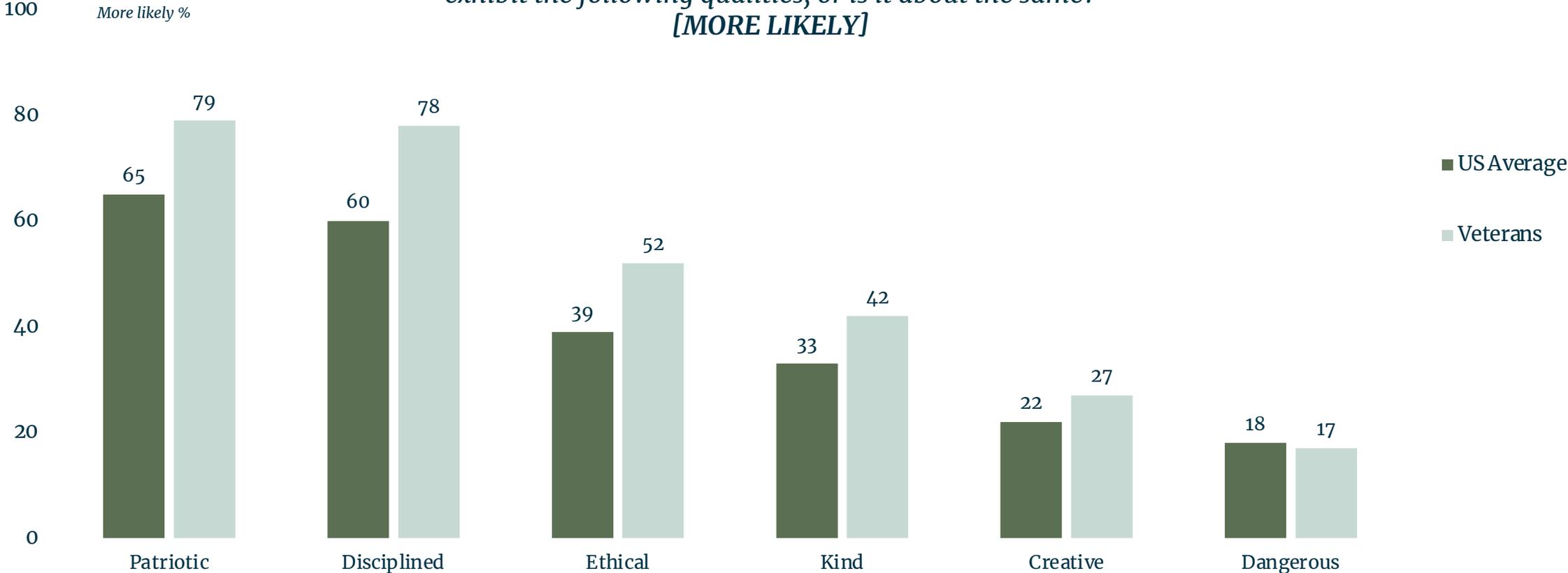
Similarly, around half of Americans in general and 6 in 10 veterans feel that depictions of veterans in popular culture are favorable.

In general, do you think depictions of veterans in popular culture today, such as TV shows and movies, are...



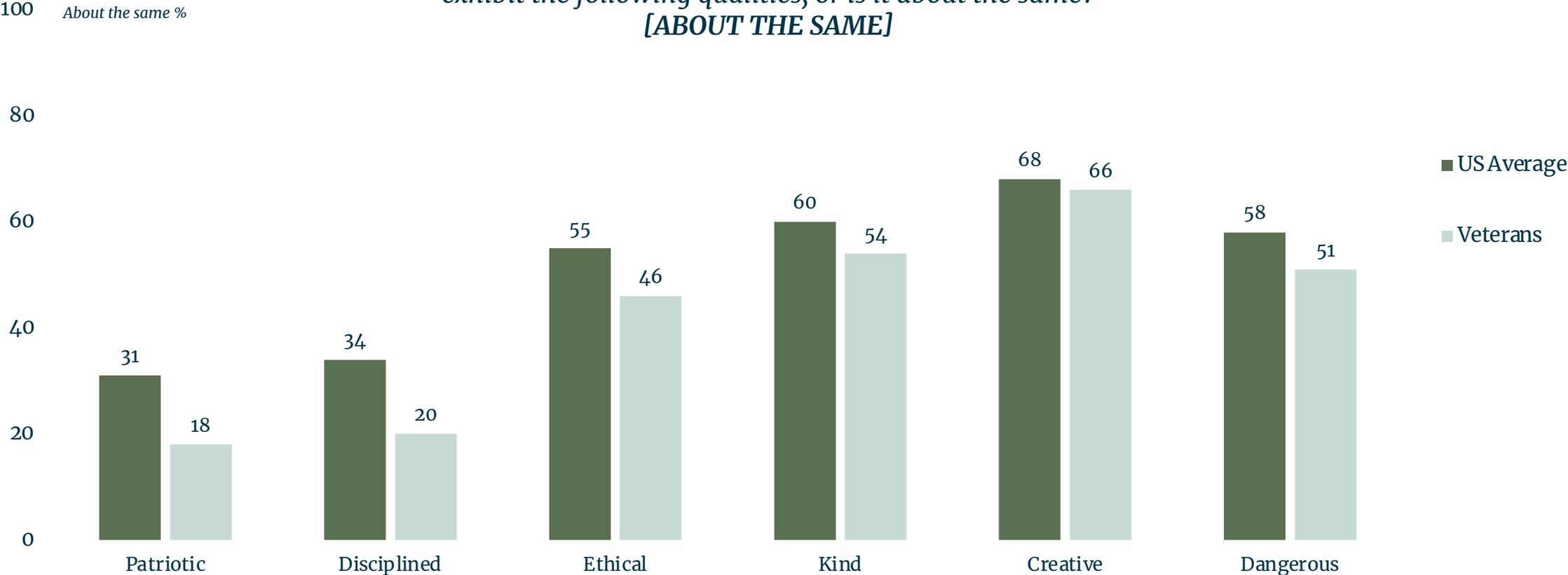
Most Americans in general think that veterans are more likely to be patriotic and disciplined than the average American.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[MORE LIKELY]



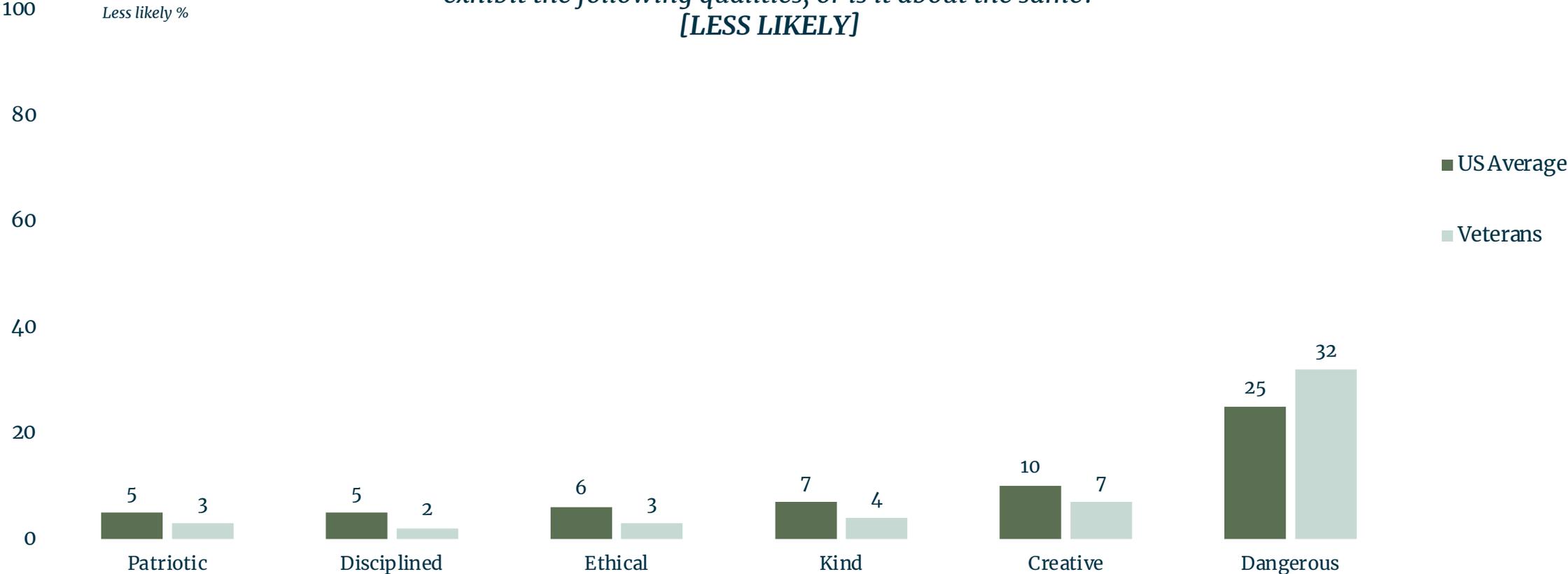
When it comes to being creative and kind, most Americans think veterans are about the same compared to the average American.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[ABOUT THE SAME]



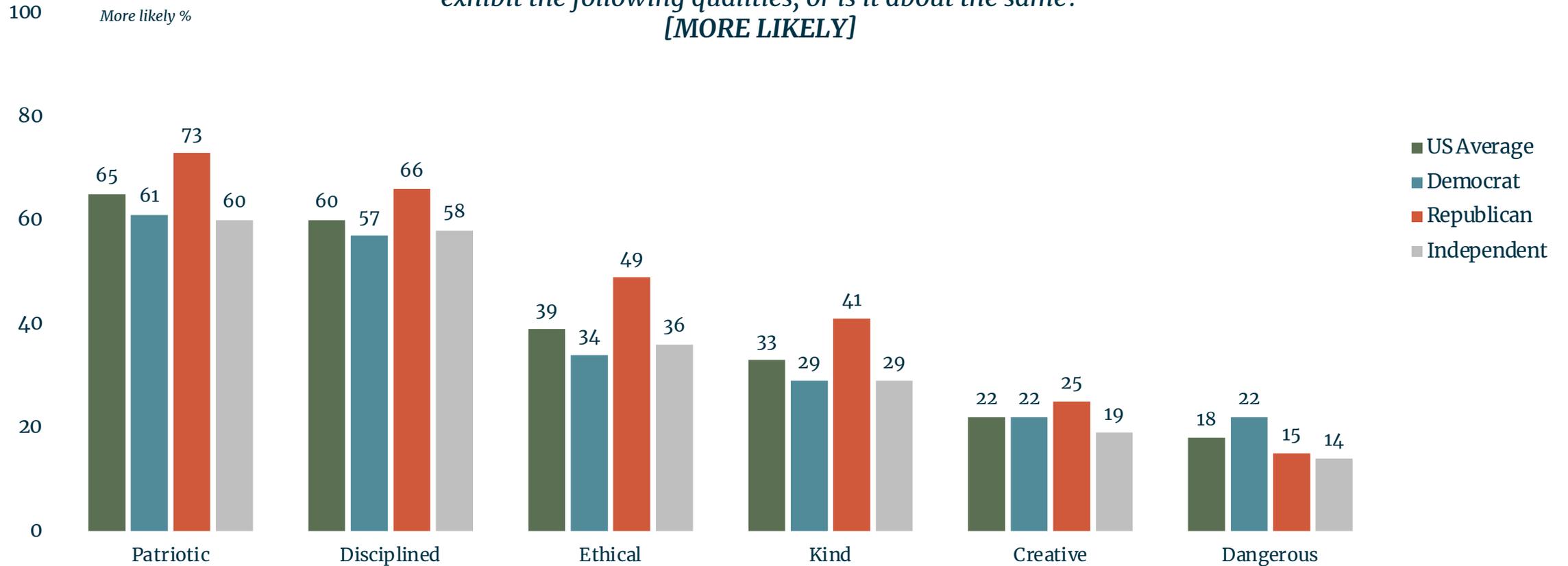
One quarter of Americans and one third of veterans believe that veterans are less likely to be dangerous than the average American.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[LESS LIKELY]



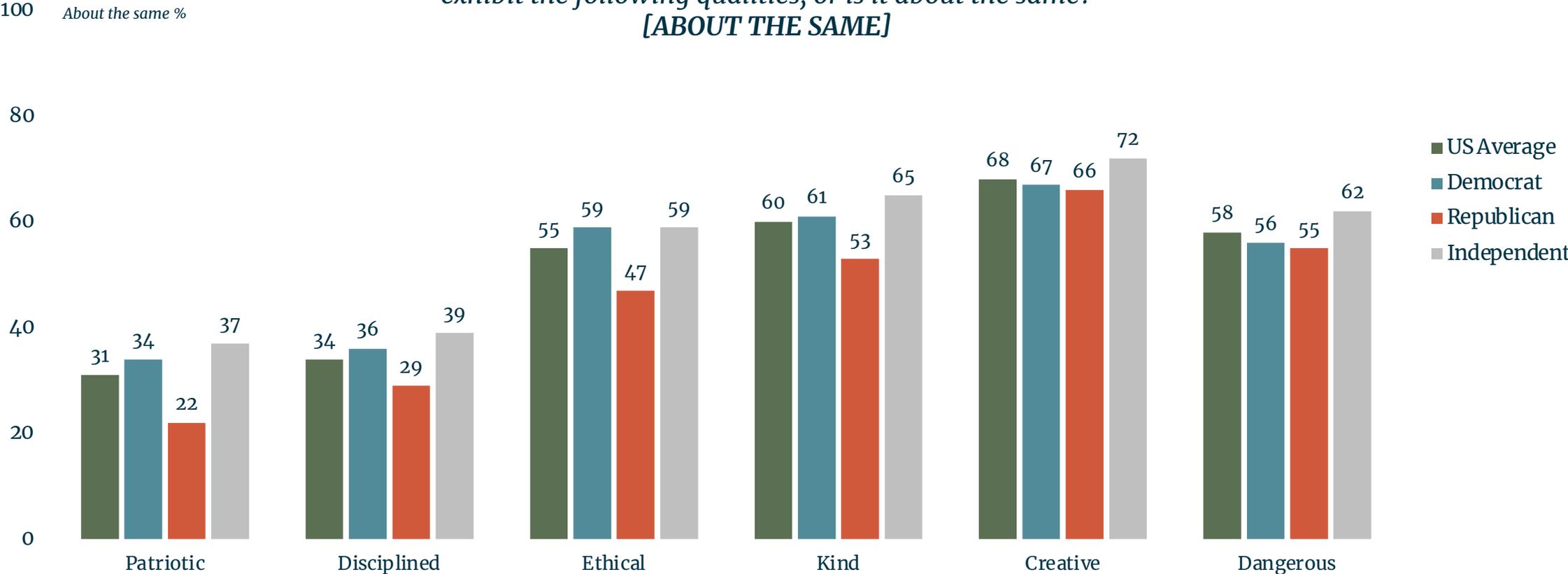
Republicans are slightly more likely to say that veterans are more patriotic and disciplined than the average American, and much more likely to say ethical and kind.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[MORE LIKELY]



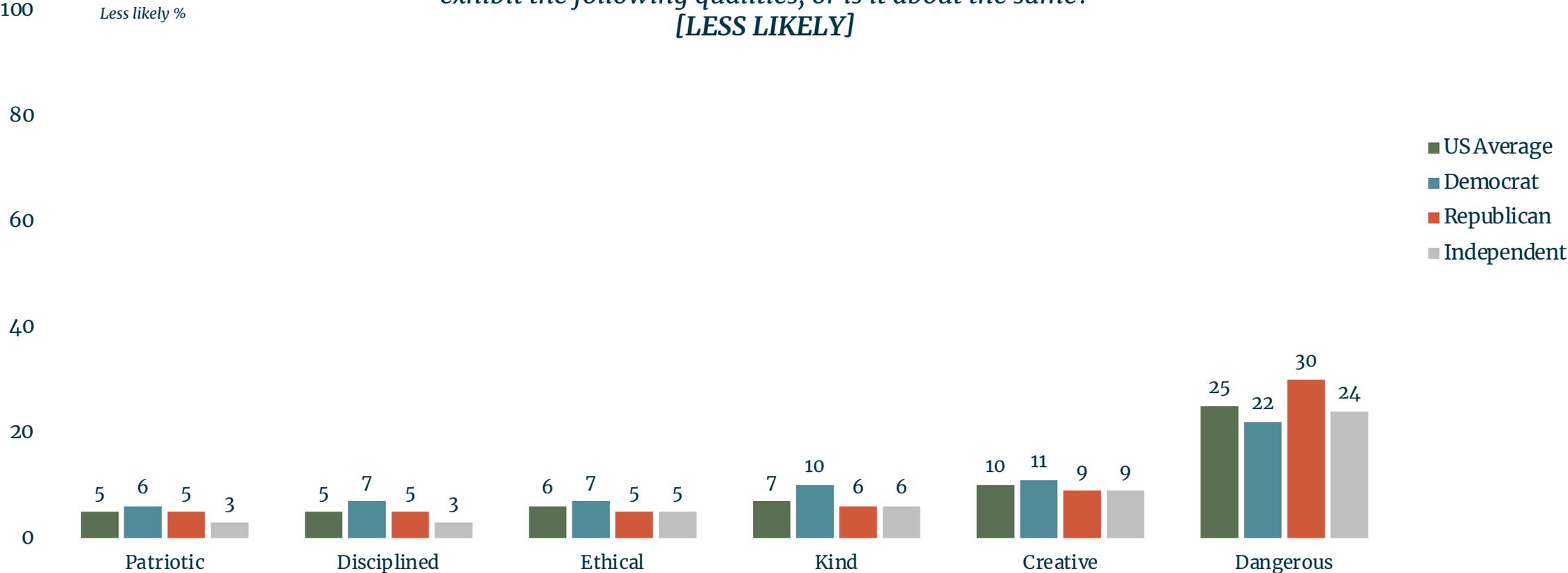
Independents are slightly more likely to say that veterans have about the same qualities as the average American.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[ABOUT THE SAME]



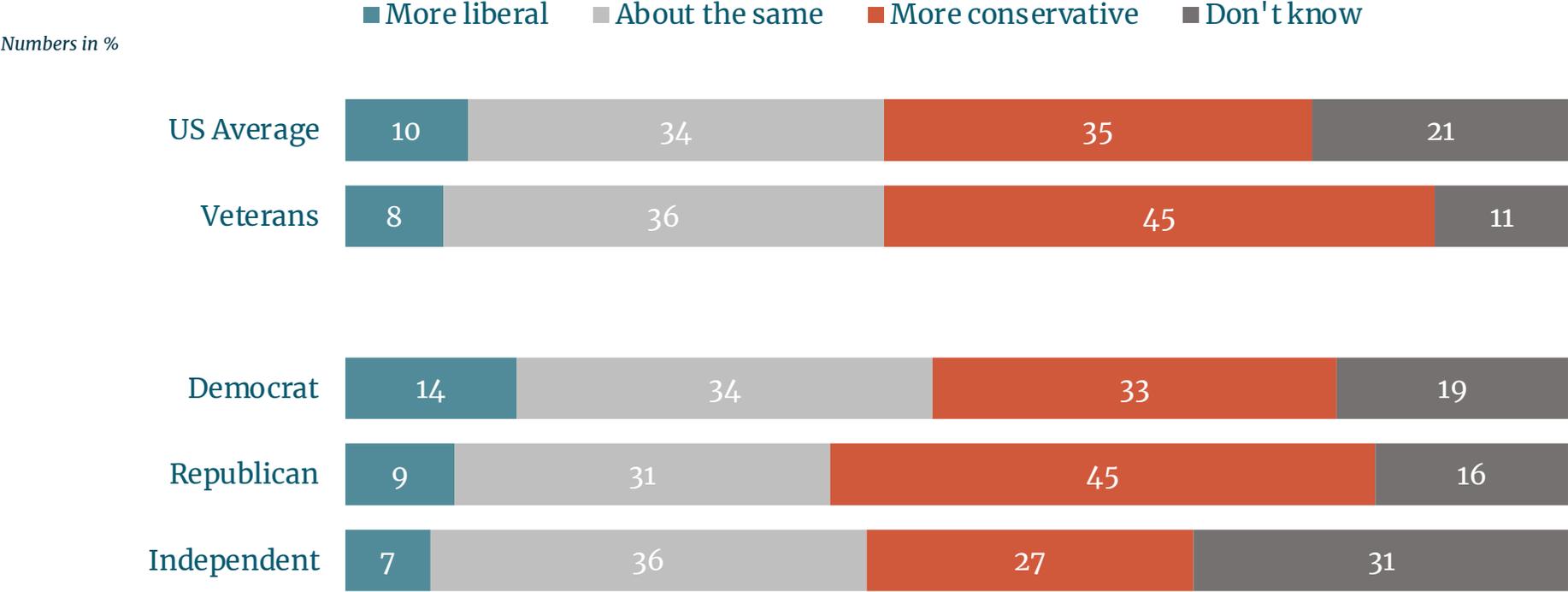
A quarter of Americans in general think that veterans are less likely to be dangerous.

Compared to the average American, do you think veterans are more or less likely to exhibit the following qualities, or is it about the same?
[LESS LIKELY]



While Americans are split between seeing veterans as more conservative or about the same as the rest of society, Republicans and veterans see them as more conservative.

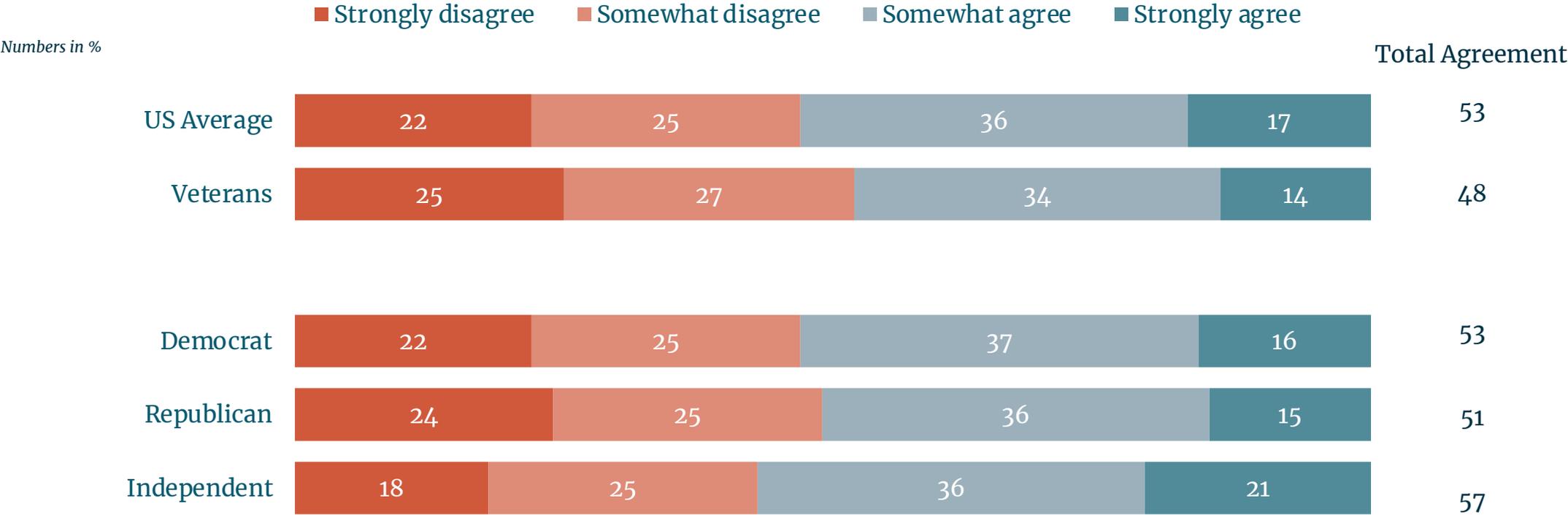
Compared to the rest of American society, do you think US military veterans as a group is more liberal, more conservative, or is it about the same?



Belonging

Around half of Americans in general, as well as veterans, say that they sometimes feel like a stranger in their own country.

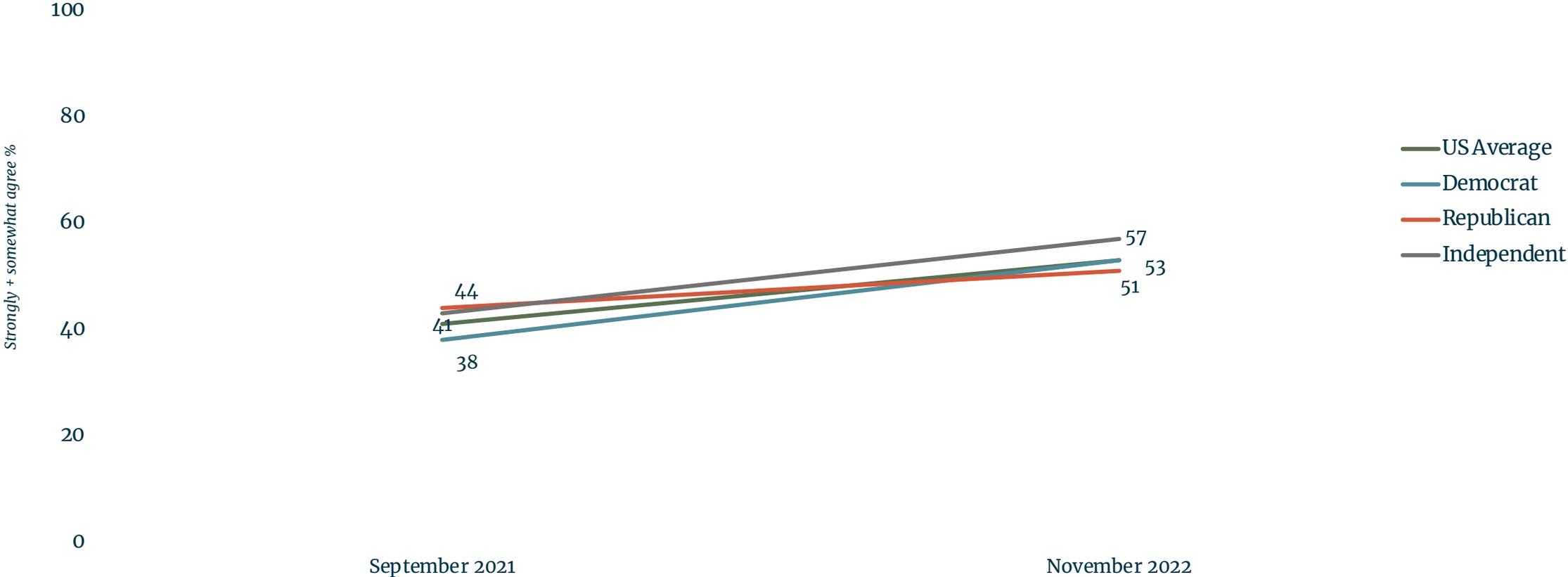
Sometimes I feel like a stranger in my own country.



Survey question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Americans regardless of political ideology are more likely to say they feel like a stranger in their own country than they did in 2021.

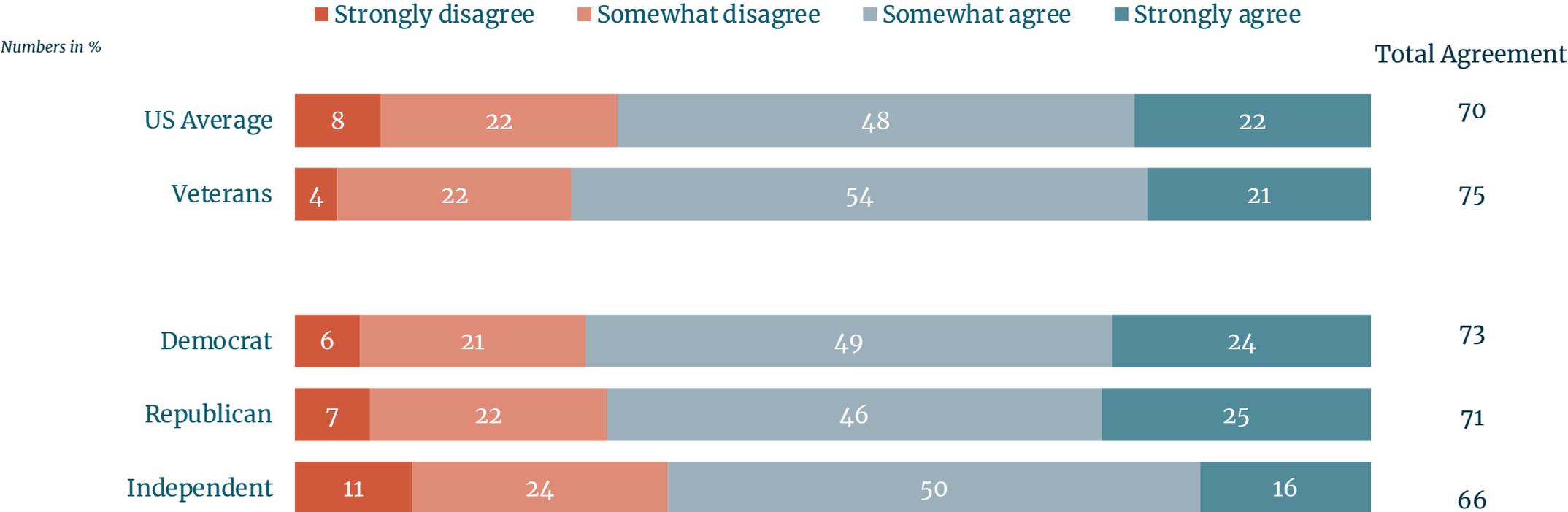
Sometimes I feel like a stranger in my own country.



Survey question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

In comparison, most feel a sense of belonging in their local communities.

I feel a sense of belonging in my local community.

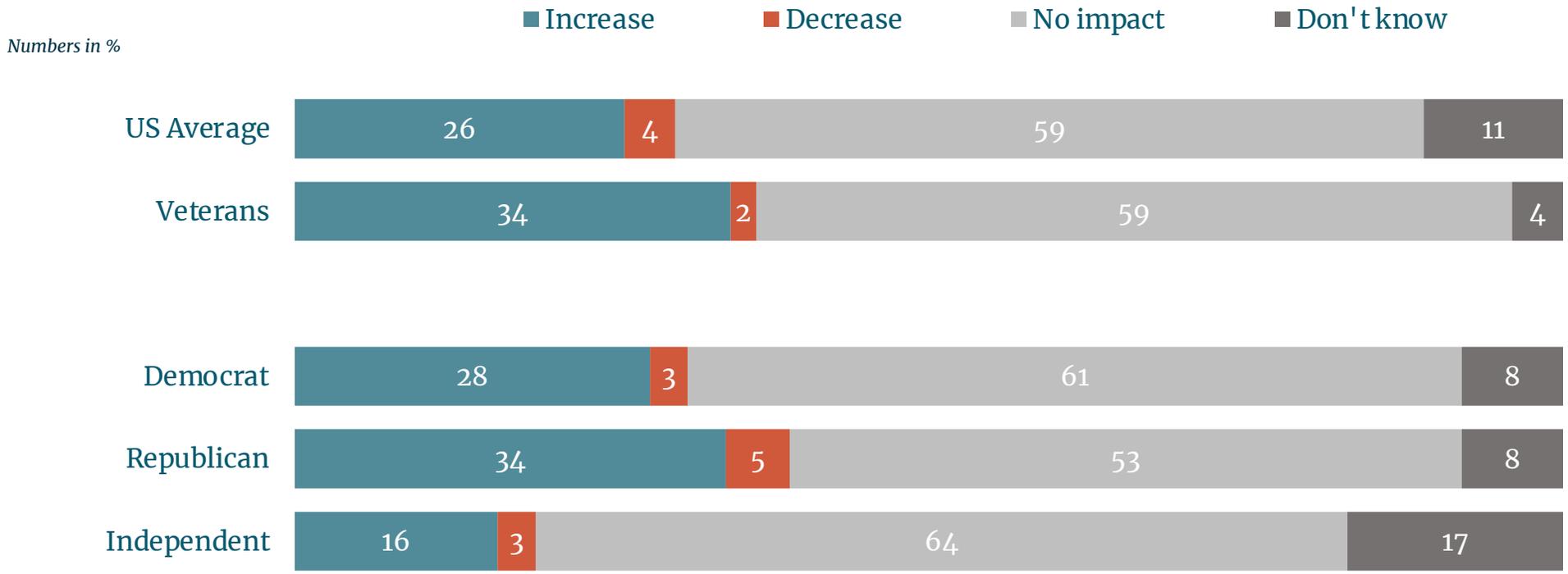


Survey question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Veterans and Elections

26 percent of Americans say that having a veteran serve as poll worker would increase their confidence that the election was run fairly.

If you were voting in person and the poll worker assisting you was a veteran, would that increase your confidence that the election was run fairly, decrease your confidence, or have no impact?

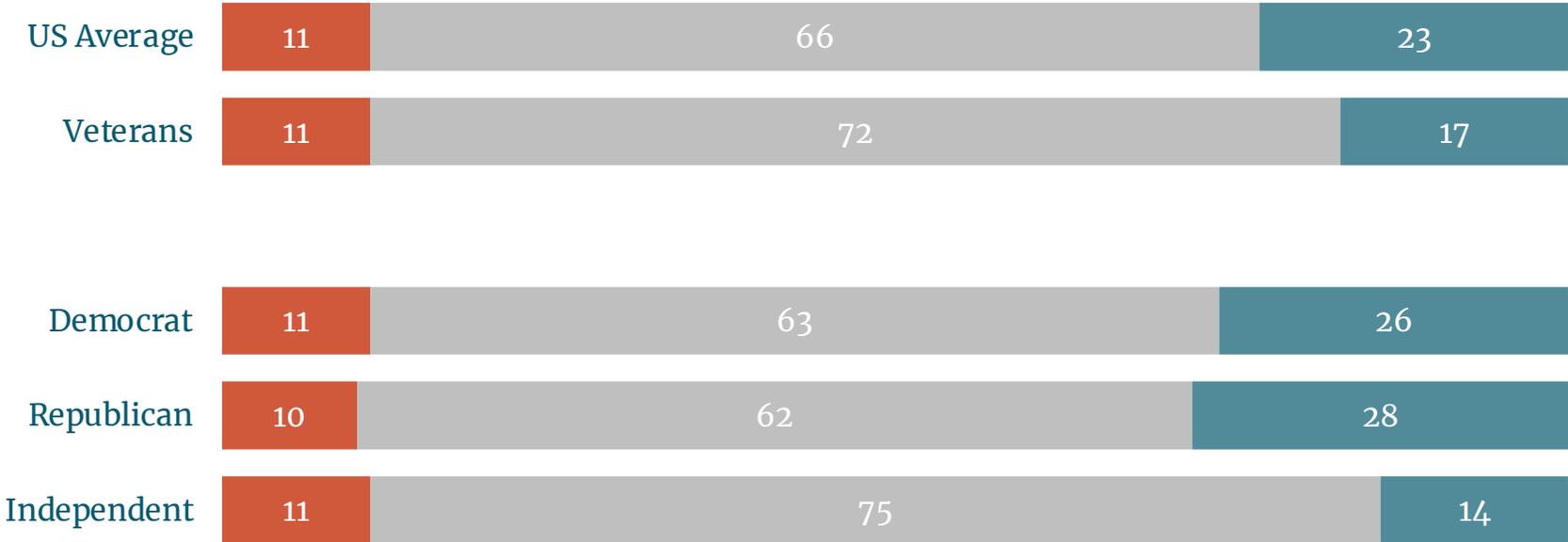


Two thirds of Americans and 7 in 10 veterans say that veterans' public endorsements of political candidates does not affect their opinion of veterans in general.

When veterans publicly endorse political candidates, does it improve or hurt your opinion of veterans, or does it have no impact?

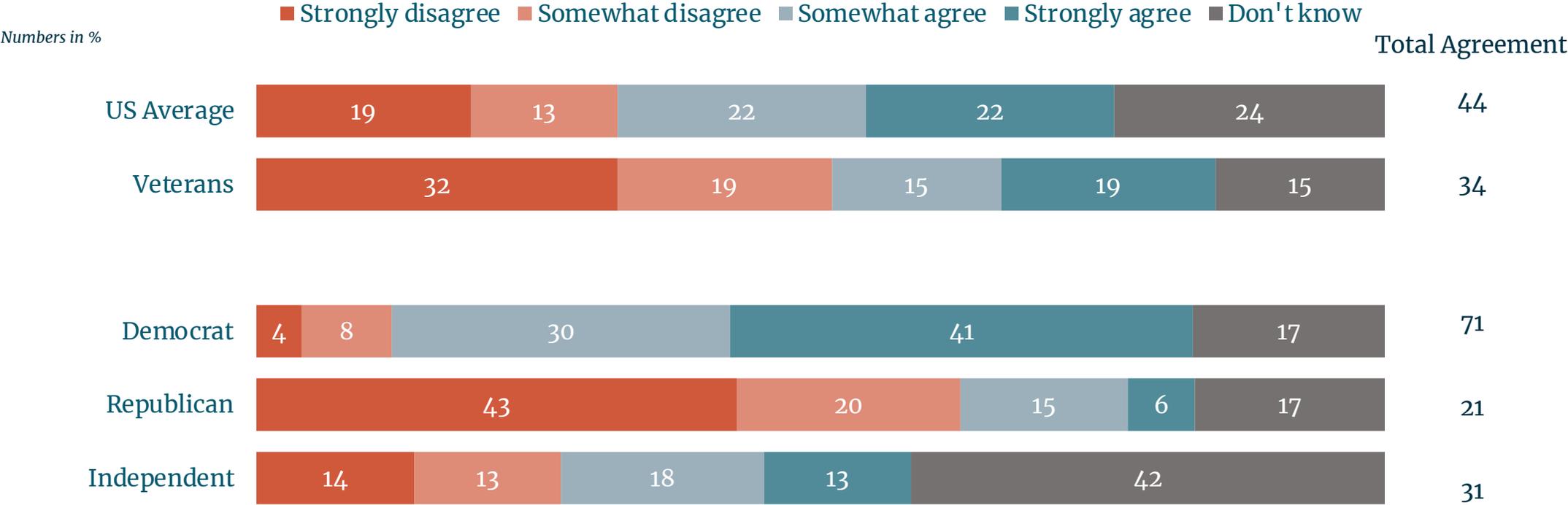
Numbers in %

■ Hurts my opinion of veterans ■ No impact on my opinion of veterans ■ Improves my opinion of veterans



If retired senior military officers overwhelmingly endorsed a Democratic candidate, 21 percent of Republicans say they would be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate.

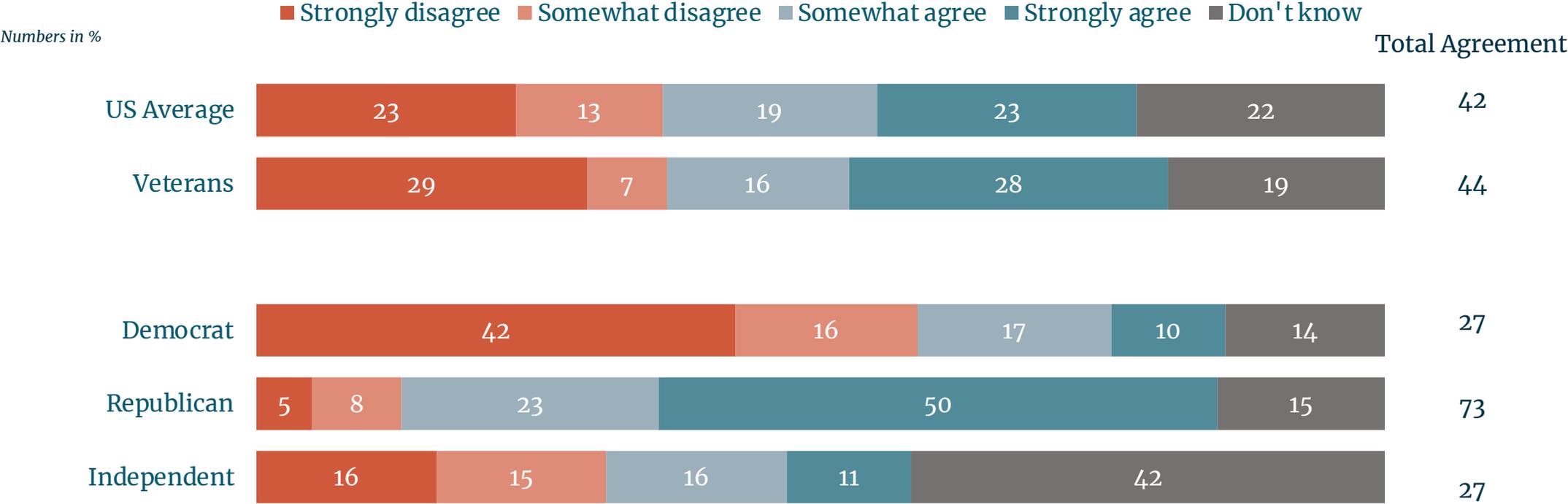
If hundreds of retired senior military officers (generals and admirals) endorsed a Democratic candidate for political office and dozens endorsed a Republican candidate, I'd be more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate.



Survey question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

If retired senior military officers overwhelmingly endorsed a Republican candidate, 27 percent of Democrats say they would be more likely to vote for the Republican candidate.

If hundreds of retired senior military officers (generals and admirals) endorsed a Republican candidate for political office and dozens endorsed a Democratic candidate, I'd be more likely to vote for the Republican candidate.



Survey question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Thank You