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Center for Climate Change Communication

# Communicating Climate Change and the Case for Action

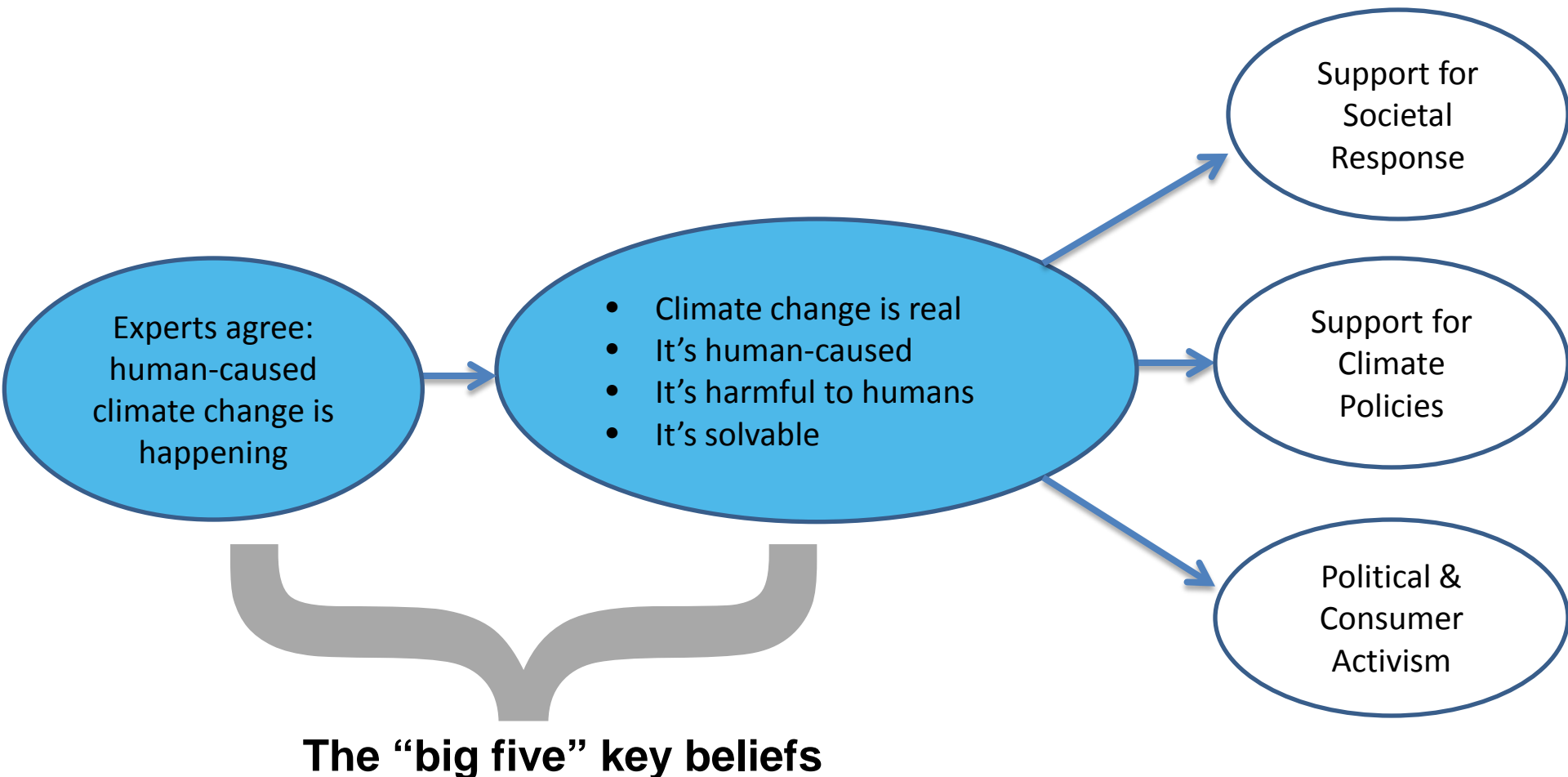
**Climate Leadership Conference**  
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## **My remit – to answer four key questions:**

- What does the public think about climate change?
- Who are they listening to?
- Who do they expect to take action?
- What do they want to see done?

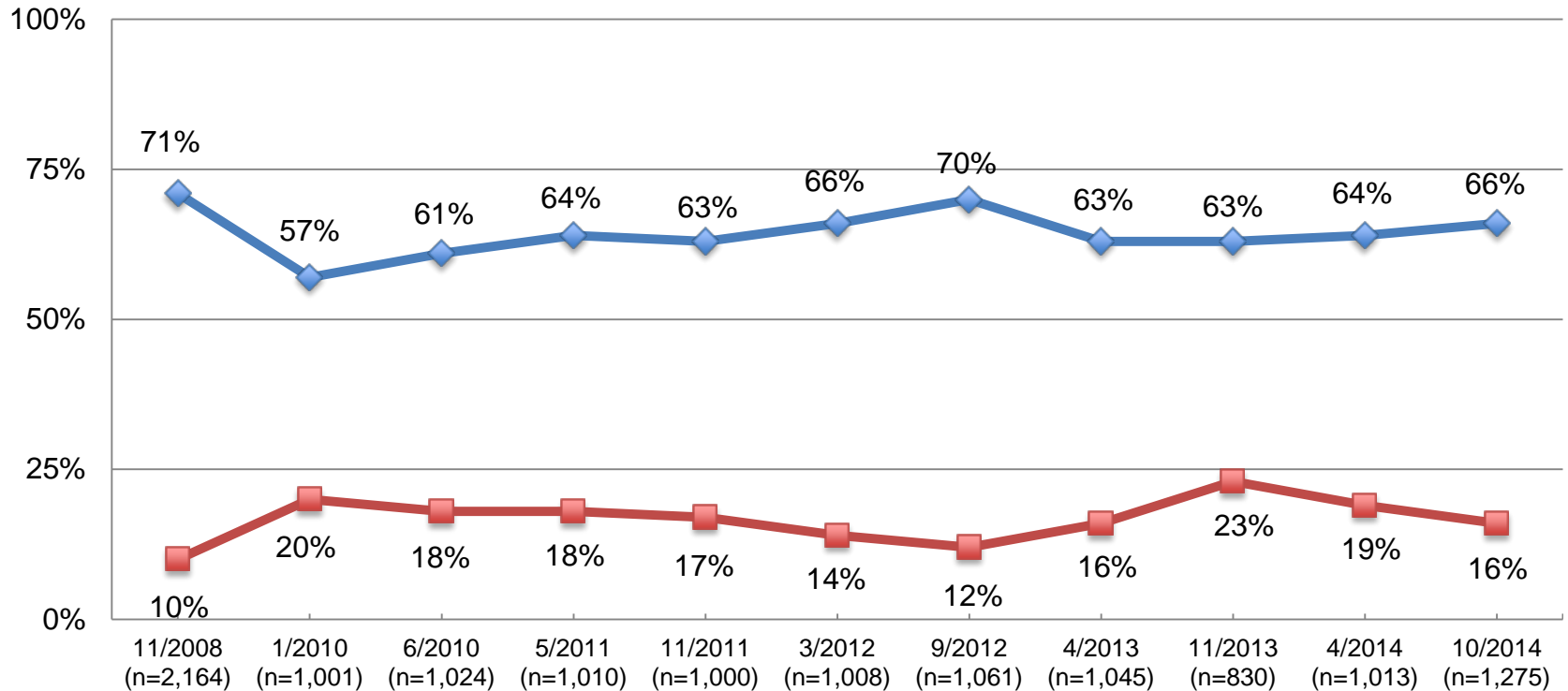
# Five key beliefs about climate change contribute to a range of helpful attitudes and actions



# Majority of Americans Think Global Warming Is Happening

- Continuing decline in the number of Americans who think it is not happening -

◆ Believe GW is happening    ■ Believe GW is NOT happening



**Do you think global warming is happening?**

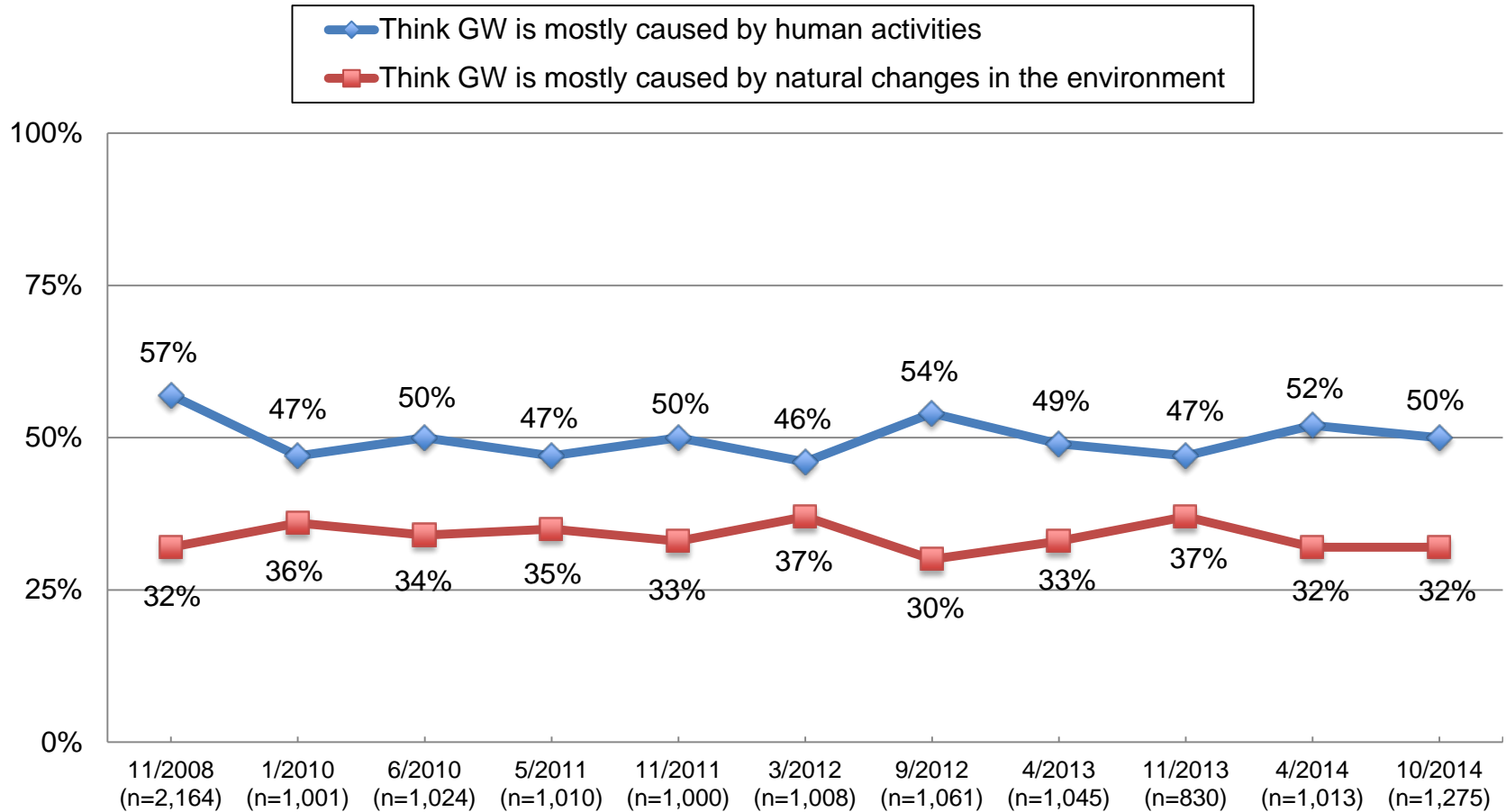
**Base: Americans 18+. October, 2014.**

Note: Respondents who either said they “don’t know” or who did not answer the question are not included in the chart. As a result, percentages sum to less than 100%.



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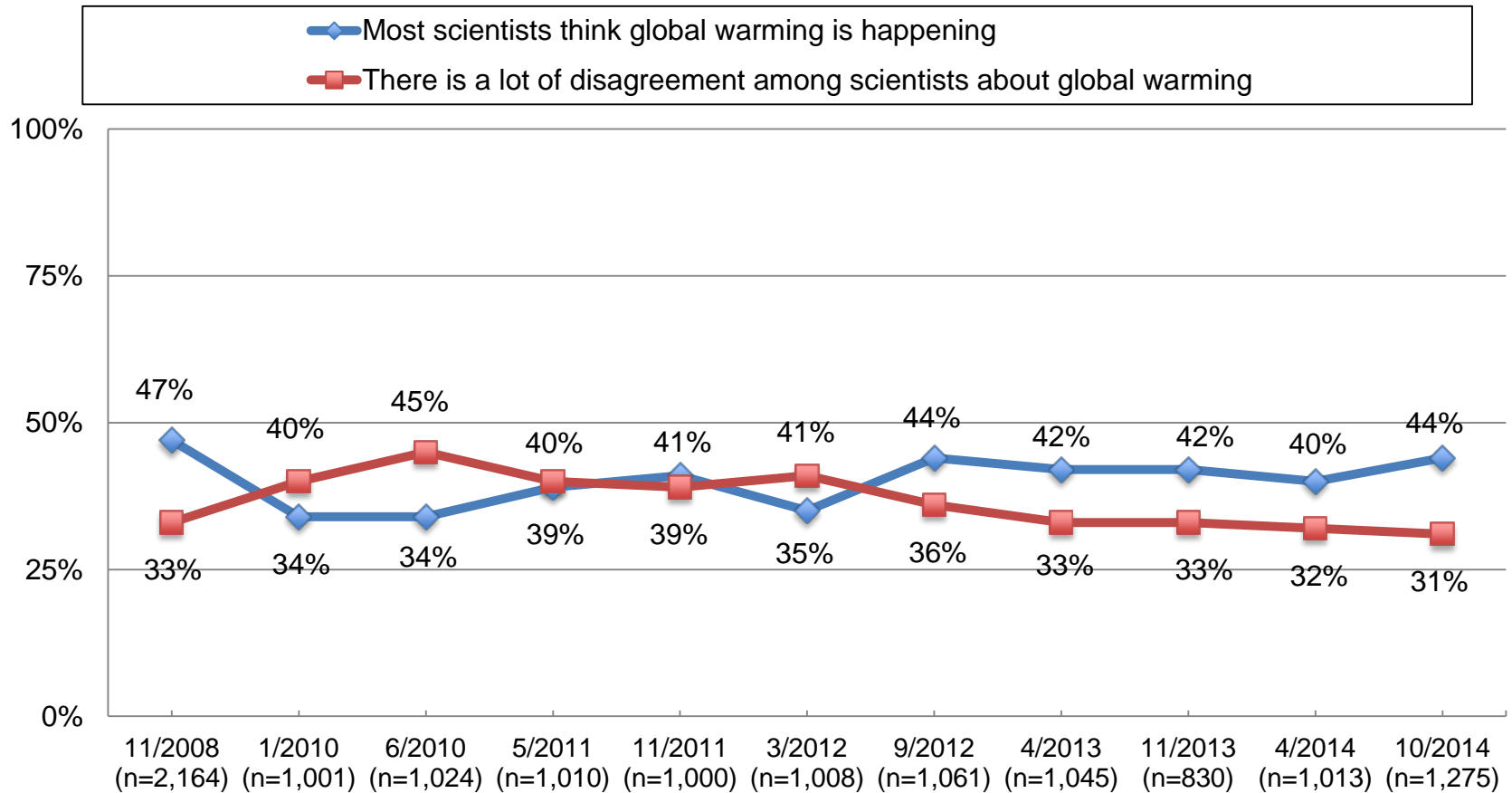
# Half of Americans Think That If Global Warming Is Happening, It Is Mostly Human Caused



Assuming global warming is happening, do you think it is...

Base: Americans 18+. October, 2014.

# Four in Ten Americans Believe Most Scientists Think Global Warming Is Happening



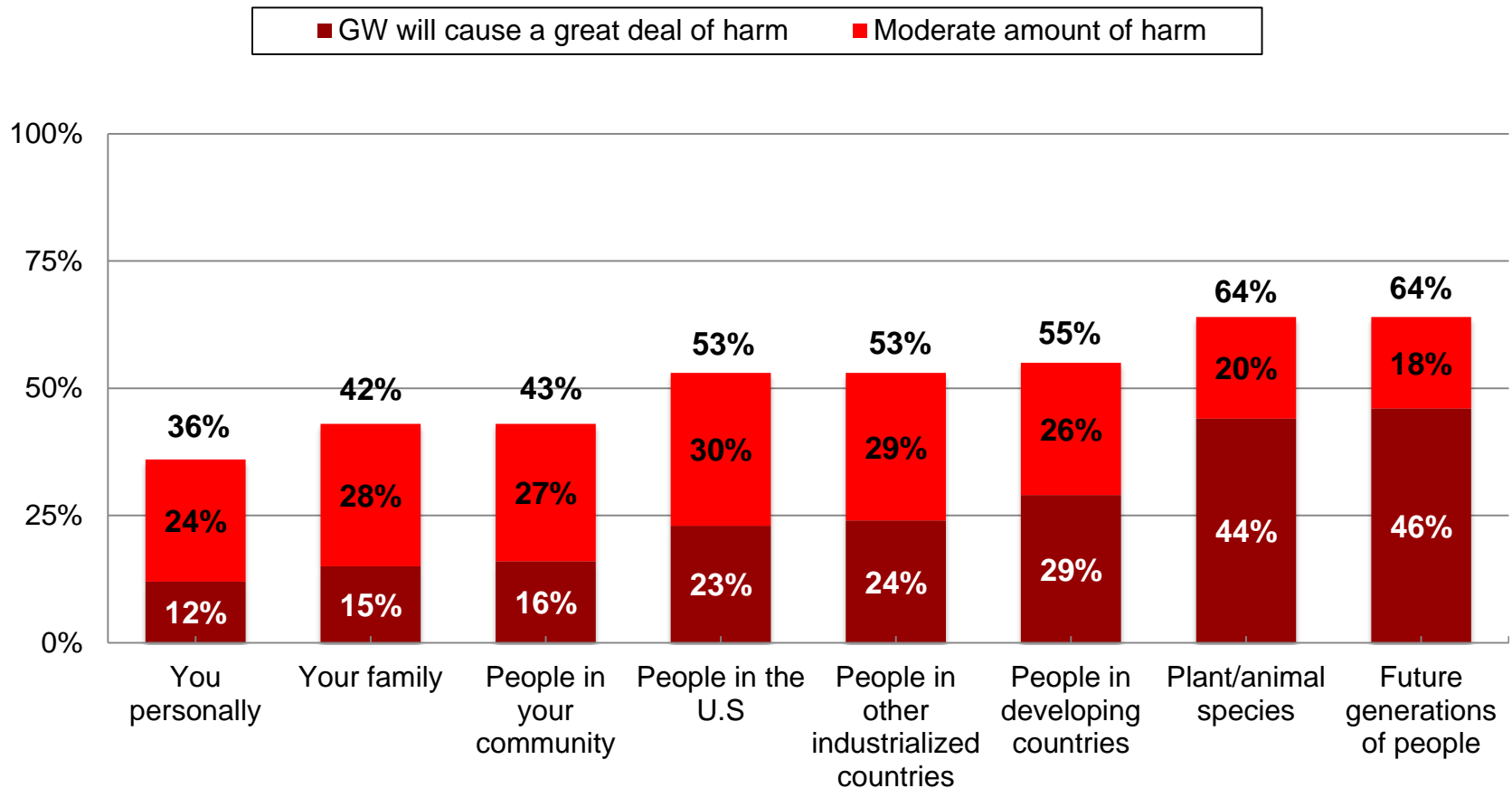
Which comes closest to your own view?

Base: Americans 18+.



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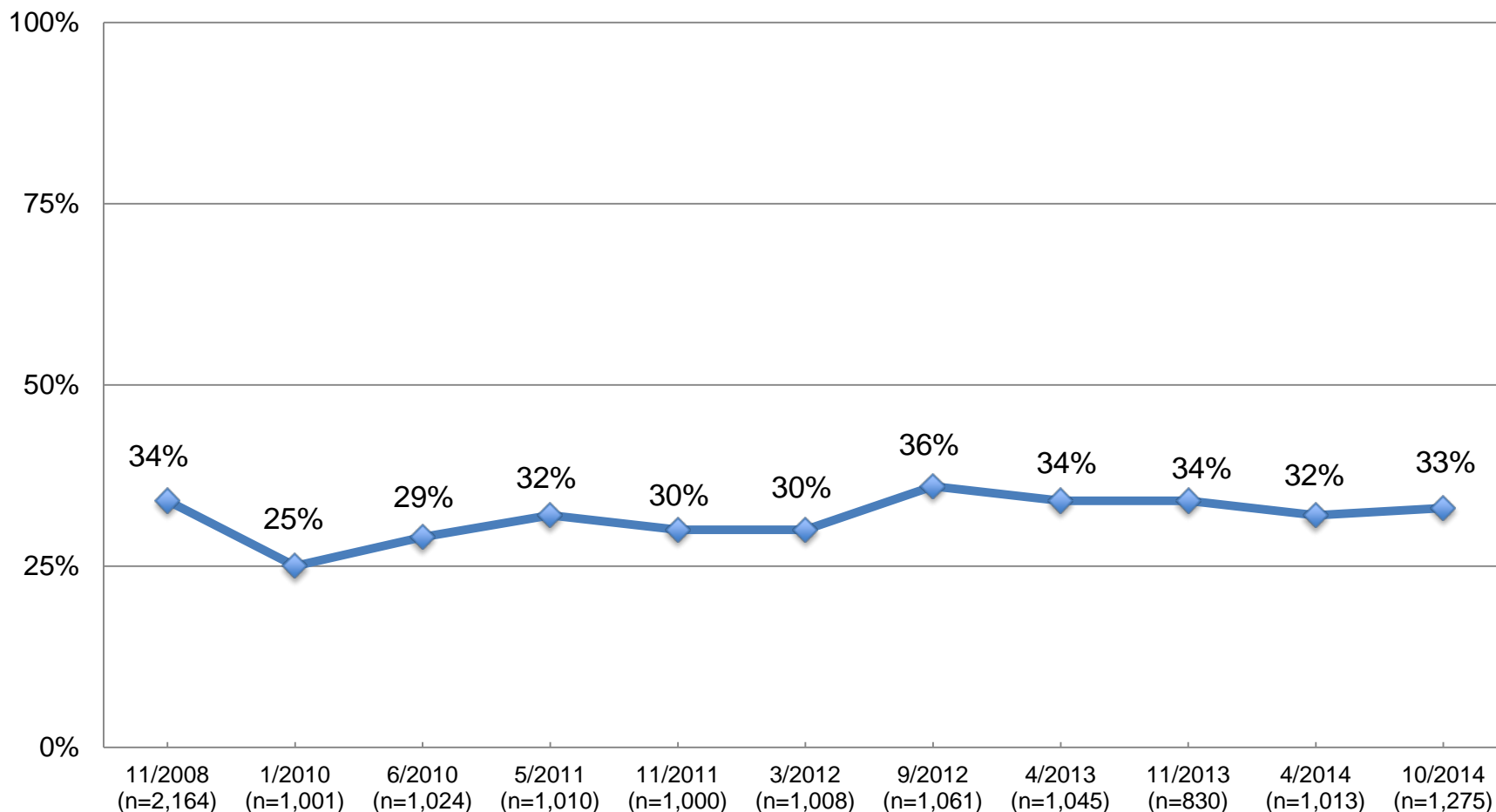
# Most Americans Think Global Warming Is a Relatively Distant Threat



How much do you think global warming will harm...?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,275). October, 2014.

# One in Three Americans Thinks People in the U.S. Are Being Harmed “Right Now” by Global Warming

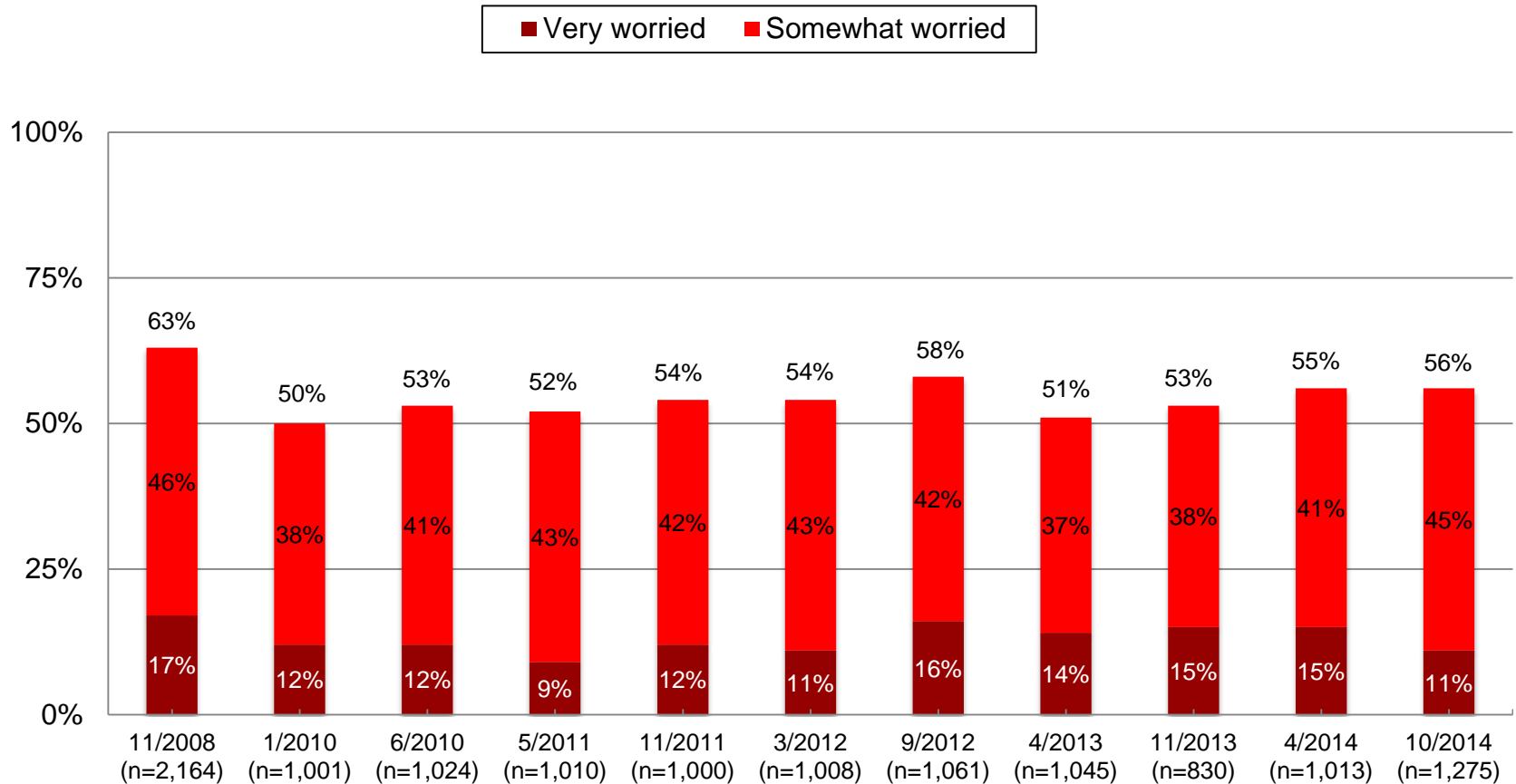


When do you think global warming will start to harm people...?

Base: Americans 18+. October, 2014.



# Over Half of Americans Are Worried About Global Warming, But Few Are “Very” Worried

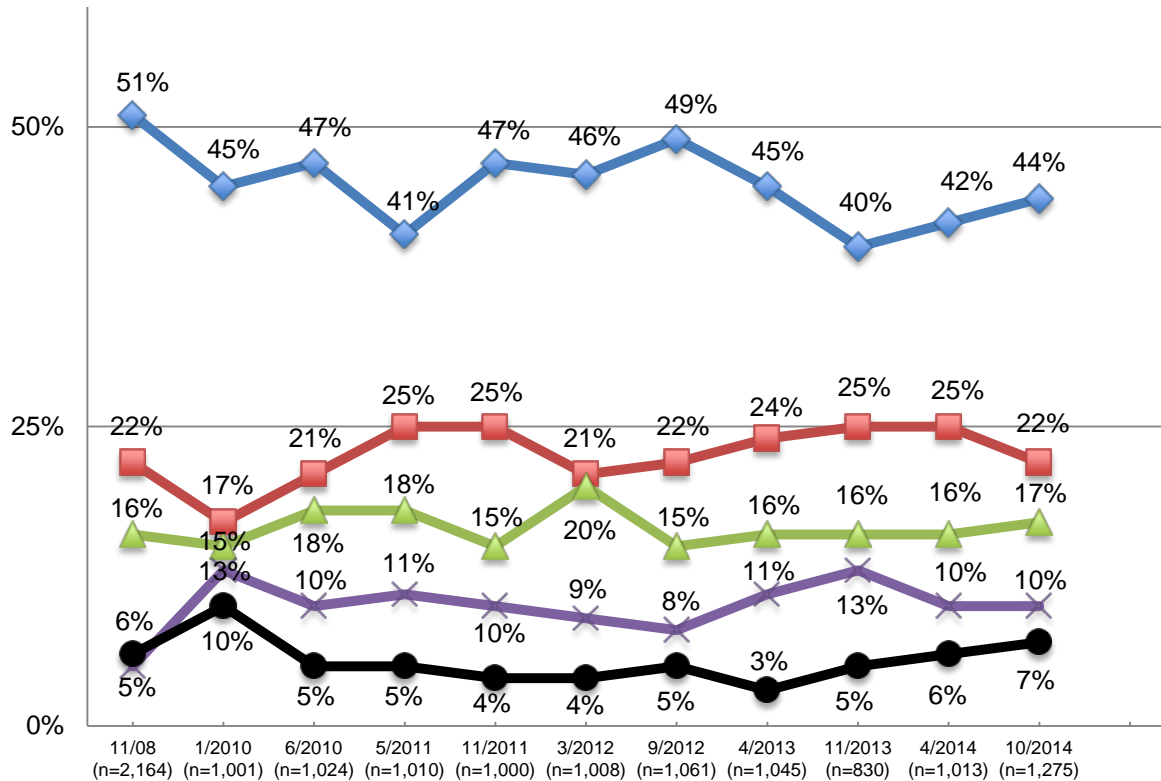


How worried are you about global warming?

Base: Americans 18+. October, 2014.

# Few Americans Are Optimistic Humans Will Reduce Global Warming

*Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?*



**Humans could reduce global warming, but it's unclear at this point whether we will do what's necessary**

**Humans could reduce global warming, but people aren't willing to change their behavior, so we're not going to**

**Humans can't reduce global warming, even if it is happening**

**Global warming isn't happening**

**Humans can reduce global warming and we are going to do so successfully**

**Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?**

**Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,275). October, 2014.**



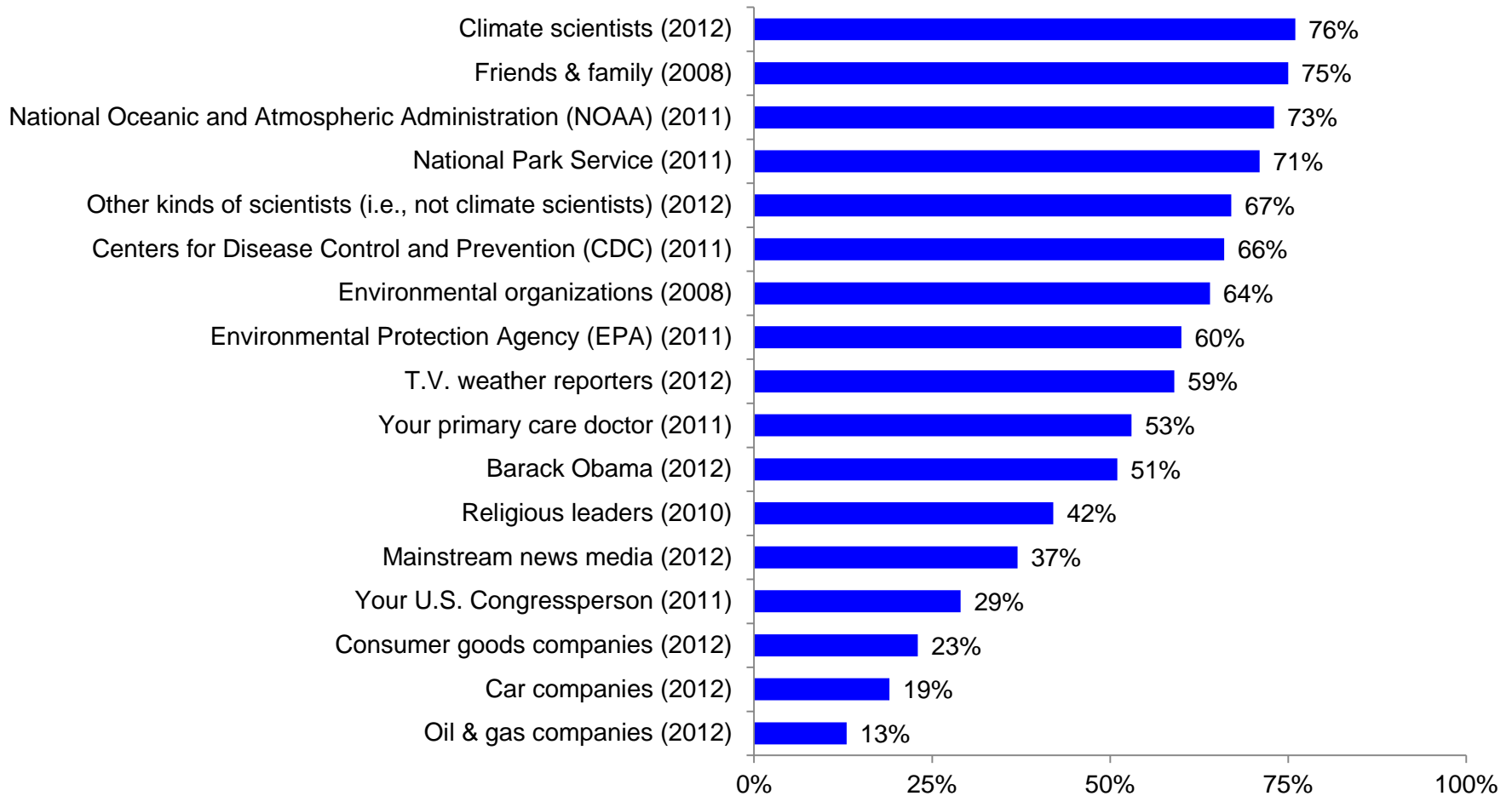
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# Americans Trust Climate Scientists, Friends & Family Most As Sources Of Information About Global Warming

- % of Americans who strongly or somewhat trust... -



How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?

Base: Americans 18+.



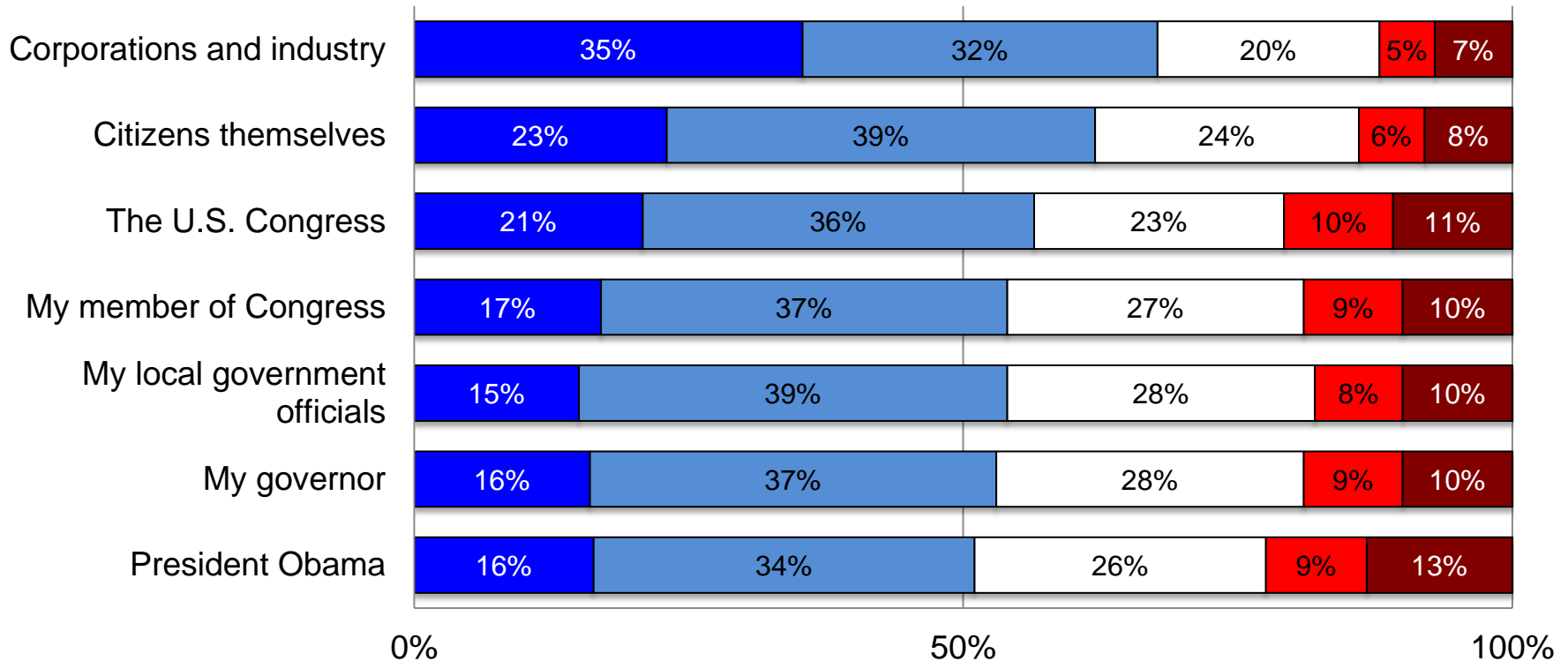
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# Americans Are Most Likely to Say Corporations and Industry, as Well as Citizens Themselves, Should be Doing More to Address Global Warming

■ Should be doing much more   
 ■ More   
 □ Currently doing right amount   
 ■ Less   
 ■ Much less



Do you think each of the following should be doing more or less to address global warming?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,275). October, 2014.

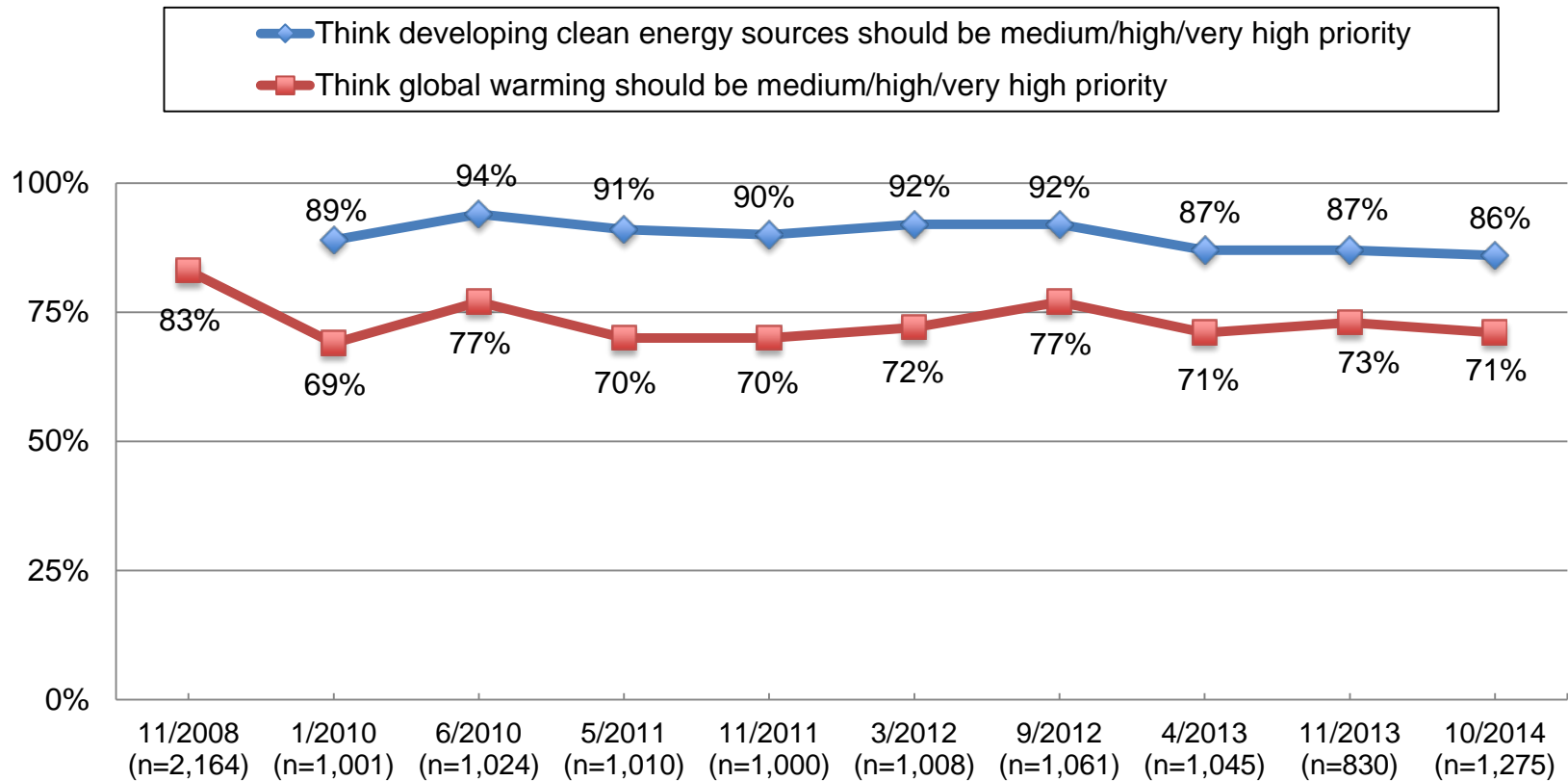


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- **What do they want to see done?**

# Majorities of Americans Think Developing Clean Energy And Global Warming Should Be Priorities For The President and Congress



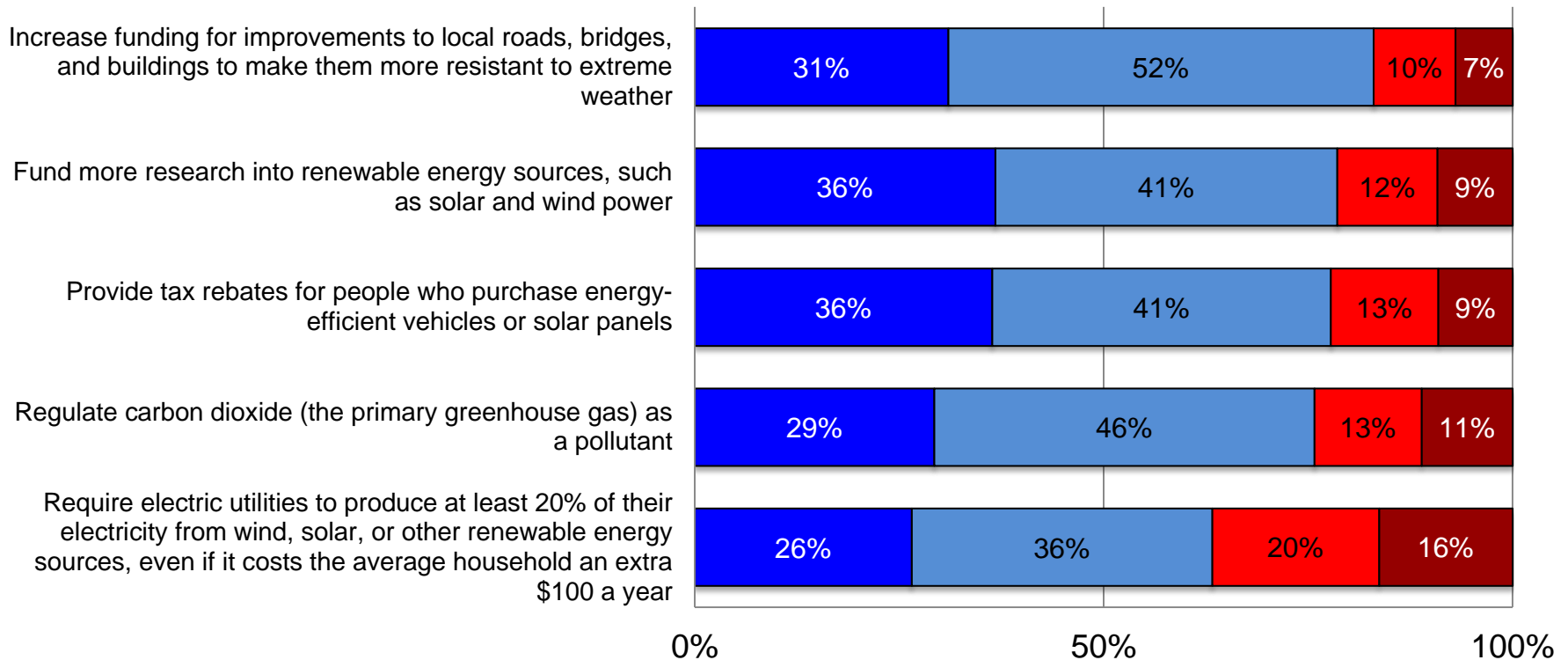
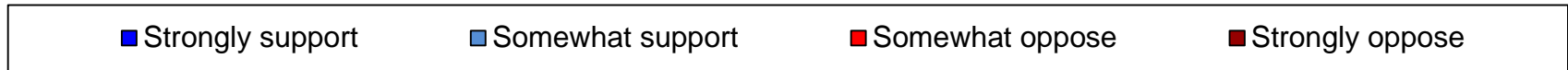
**Do you think that global warming should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority for the president and Congress?**

**Do you think that developing sources of clean energy should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority for the president and Congress?**

**Base: Americans 18+.**



# Americans Support a Broad Range of Policies That Will Help Reduce or Prepare for the Impacts of Global Warming



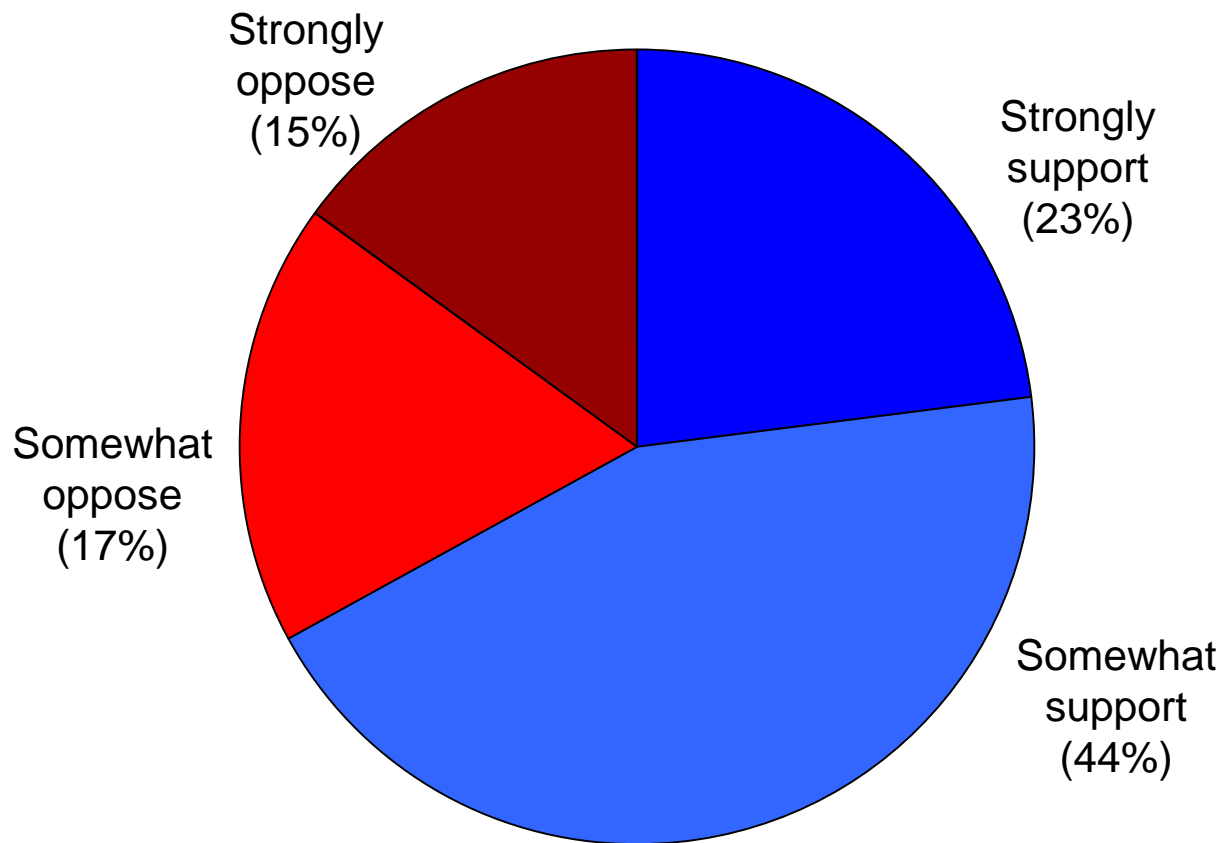
How much do you support or oppose the following policies?

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,275). October, 2014.



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# Two in Three Americans Support Setting Strict Carbon Dioxide Emission Limits on Existing Coal-Fired Power Plants to Reduce Global Warming and Improve Public Health



How much do you support or oppose the following policy? Set strict carbon dioxide emission limits on existing coal-fired power plants to reduce global warming and improve public health. Power plants would have to reduce their emissions and/or invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The cost of electricity to consumers and companies would likely increase.

Base: Americans 18+ (n=1,275). October, 2014.

## **A very important caveat:**

Only 1 in 4 Americans holds strong views  
about climate change

# Global Warming's "Six Americas"

Alarmed

Concerned

Cautious

Disengaged

Doubtful

Dismissive

13%

31%

23%

7%

13%

13%

Highest Belief in Global Warming  
Most Concerned  
Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming  
Least Concerned  
Least Motivated

*Proportion represented by area*



## In summary:

- What does the public think about climate change?
  - About 2/3rds are on board, but only 13% have strong views
  - However, the 13% who object also have very strong views
- Who are they listening to?
  - They aren't hearing much (except from politicians & pundits)
- Who do they expect to take action?
  - The business community, government, ordinary Americans
- What do they want to see done?
  - Clean energy → clean air & water → better health