

Climate Matters in the Newsroom

Radio Television Digital News Association
Member Survey, 2018



**Climate Matters in the Newsroom:
Radio Television Digital News Association Member Survey, 2018**

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Introduction

This report provides the initial findings from an online census survey of Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) members conducted as part of the *Climate Matters in the Newsroom* project—a National Science Foundation-funded collaboration between George Mason University, Climate Central, NASA, NOAA, RTDNA and other professional societies—the aim of which is to enable local, science-based reporting on climate change. This survey was designed to identify the needs of journalists who wish to report on climate change as a local issue and the challenges they face in doing so.

The findings presented in this report provide broad insights into RTDNA members' views on journalism, climate change, and more specifically local climate change reporting. The survey findings include: (a) members' views about the role of journalists and their impacts on society; (b) understanding of climate change; (c) perspectives on and experience with climate change reporting; (d) obstacles to reporting on climate change; and (e) perspectives and practices of presenting opposing viewpoints in climate change stories. These survey findings will be used to guide the ongoing development and delivery of *Climate Matters* materials, a science-based, localized, informational resource originally developed to help TV meteorologists report on the local relevance of global climate change.

This survey was conducted in early 2018. All 1,217 RTDNA members were invited to participate in this survey via an email sent on January 4, 2018; five additional requests to participate were sent throughout the month. By the end of January, when the survey closed, 235 RTDNA members had participated in the survey, yielding a survey participation rate of 19.3%.

This survey and its findings are an important first step in producing localized climate change reporting resources for RTDNA members and other journalists based in the United States. We would like to recognize the important contributions and partnership of RTDNA board members and staff. Without their help, this survey would not have been possible. We would also like to sincerely thank the 235 RTDNA members who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in this survey. We hope they will find the information in this report enlightening and useful.

Funding for this research was provided by NSF Award #DRL 1713450. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Notes:

Due to rounding error, the figures in this report do not always total to 100%.
Open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.

Key Findings

About Climate Change Reporting Practices:

- Fully 6 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants had reported on—or supervised journalists reporting on—a local climate change-related story within the prior 12 months. Of those, approximately half reported four or fewer stories during that period, while the other half reported or supervised five or more stories; nearly 1 out of 10 reported or supervised more than 20 stories.
- Nearly all RTDNA survey participants say they are at least slightly interested in reporting local climate impacts stories, with nearly 4 out of 10 saying they are very interested. Similarly, nearly all RTDNA survey participants say they are interested in reporting on local climate solutions stories, with more than 4 out of 10 saying they are very interested. The local climate change stories they are most interested in reporting focus on droughts and water shortages, extreme precipitation, human health, the economy, air quality, local wildlife, energy, extreme heat, ecosystems, crops and livestock, infrastructure, transportation, wildfires, forests, and hurricanes and storm surge.
- Fully 7 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants receive—or expect—primarily positive responses, or a lack of response, from management while covering or supervising local climate change stories. About 2 out of 10 receive or expect responses from management that are equally mixed between positive and negative, or primarily negative.
- Over half of RTDNA survey participants receive—or expect—primarily positive responses, or a lack of response, from audience members when covering or supervising local climate change stories. Nearly 4 out of 10 receive or expect audience responses that are equally mixed between positive and negative, or primarily negative.
- Over half of RTDNA survey participants feel that reporting on climate change will be neither beneficial nor detrimental to their career, while 4 out of 10 feel it will be beneficial. Only 4% feel that reporting on climate change will be detrimental to their career.
- More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say that reporting on climate change is beneficial to society, with nearly half saying it is very beneficial.
- Fully 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say that lack of training in climate science is an important obstacle to reporting on climate change, making this their most common obstacle. Nearly 2 out of 3 also say that lack of time for field reporting is an obstacle, and about half say lack of time or space in their news outlet and lack of access to role models for climate reporting are obstacles. Additionally, 3 out of 10 say lack of access to local sources and to experts are important obstacles to reporting on climate change.

- Nearly half of RTDNA survey participants think downsizing in their news organization has created or exacerbated obstacles to reporting on climate change, with more than 1 out of 10 saying this has occurred “a lot” in their news organization.
- Five percent of RTDNA survey participants say they have experienced at least one instance where management softened or censored a climate change-related story that they had personally reported or supervised, although nearly 2 out of 10 say they don’t know if this has happened to them or not.
- RTDNA survey participants think that climate change is relevant to many beats. The beats most likely to be seen as relevant include weather, environment, agriculture, science and technology, energy, food, and politics—each of which are seen as very relevant by more than 70% of participants. Majorities also see climate change as relevant to business and finance, health and medical, and investigative reporting. Conversely, fewer than 30% think climate change is very relevant to human interest, crime and public safety, religion, sports, and art and entertainment beats.
- Well over half of RTDNA survey participants are interested in a range of professional development activities related to climate change reporting. The professional development activity they are most interested in is learning about climate change solutions, followed closely by learning how to craft local climate stories, learning how to access credible sources of climate stories, and learning about climate change impacts.
- RTDNA survey participants tend to most trust the climate information provided by independent scientific organizations—including the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, professional science societies, and colleges and universities. Professional journalism societies, science advocacy organizations, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are also trusted by many. In comparison, relatively few trust partisan think tanks (both liberal and conservative) and business advocacy organizations.
- Just over half of RTDNA survey participants say their trust in U.S. government agencies as sources of information about climate change has decreased over the past 12 months, coinciding with the first year of the Trump administration; few say their trust has increased.
- One out of 10 RTDNA survey participants who had covered or supervised climate change stories in the past year say they purposively avoided using the terms global warming or climate change on at least one occasion.
- About 4 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants who had covered climate change stories during the prior year say they rarely or never presented an opposing viewpoint (i.e., someone not convinced of climate change). Conversely, nearly 6 out of 10 say they did so sometimes, often, almost always or always.

- While nearly all RTDNA members are convinced that human-caused climate change is occurring, many feel that reporting two sides of a climate change story is helpful for one or more reasons. For example, more than 8 out of 10 say it enables them to acknowledge that different viewpoints exist, nearly 7 out of 10 feel it is essential to objective, balanced journalism, and more than 6 out of 10 say it will help maintain their credibility and that it will avoid the appearance of bias.

About Views on Climate Change

- Nearly 6 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants feel they know the science of climate change somewhat, moderately, or very well.
- RTDNA survey participants are more or less equally divided on whether the terms climate change and global warming mean the same thing or different things to them.
- More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think global warming is happening; 3 out of 4 say they are very sure or extremely sure.
- More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that the global warming that has occurred in the past 50 years is mostly, largely or entirely due to human activity; 15% think it is caused equally by human activity and natural causes. Very few think it is mostly or entirely due to natural causes.
- Nearly 3 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants are aware that 97% or more of climate scientists think human-caused global warming is occurring, and nearly 6 out of 10 think the scientific consensus is 90% or greater. Conversely, about 4 out of 10 say the consensus is less than 90%, and some say it is far less.
- More than 7 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that at least some additional climate change can be averted over the next 50 years if mitigation measures are taken worldwide, while more than 6 out of 10 think a moderate or large amount of additional climate change can be averted. About 2 out of 10 say they don't know how much climate change can be averted.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that at least some harm from climate change can be averted in the United States over the next 50 years if adaptation measures are taken, while more than 6 out of 10 think a moderate or large amount of harm can be averted. Nearly 2 out of 10 are unsure of how much harm can be averted through adaptation measures.
- More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants agree with the statement, "I have personally experienced the effects of global warming," with nearly 4 out of 10 strongly agreeing.

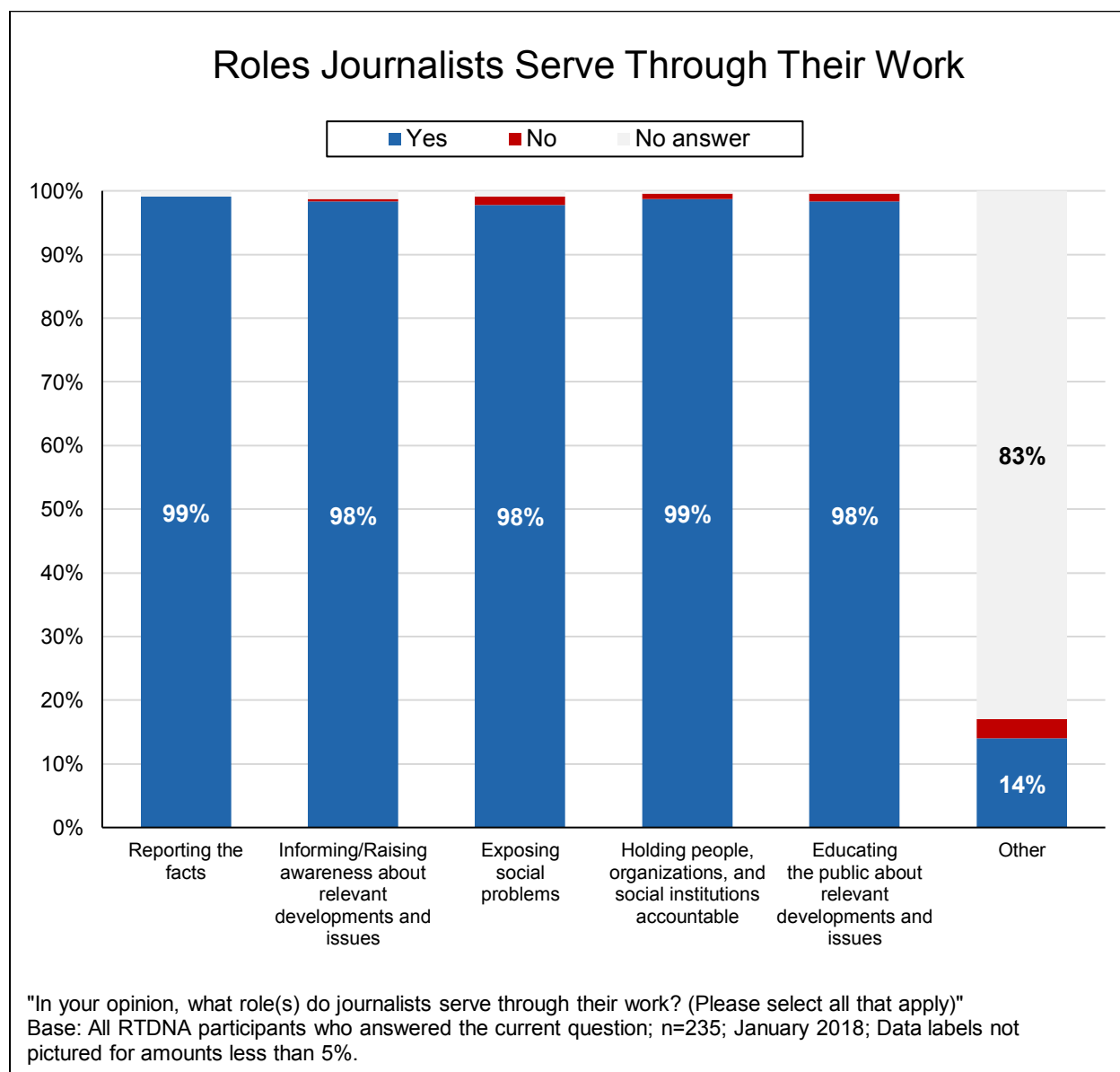
- More than 4 out of 5 RTDNA survey participants say the climate has changed in their region in the past 50 years. Among them, almost half say the impacts have been primarily or exclusively harmful, while a third say the impacts have been equally mixed between beneficial and harmful, and nearly 2 out of 10 say that they don't know. Very few say the impacts have been primarily beneficial.
- RTDNA survey participants who think there have been climate change impacts in their region—whether harmful or beneficial—and those who don't know were asked about the nature of those impacts. Over half say there have been harmful impacts on ecosystems or forests, water resources, coastal properties, infrastructure, agricultural resources, seasonal cycles, human health, energy resources, and the economy. About 4 out of 10 say there have also been beneficial impacts on seasonal cycles, tourism/recreation/leisure, and the economy in their region.
- More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say the issue of global warming is at least somewhat personally important to them; two-thirds say it is very or extremely important to them.
- More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say they are worried about global warming; more than one-third say they are very worried.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants feel they will be personally harmed by global warming, if only a little; nearly 2 out of 3 feel they will be harmed a moderate amount or a great deal.

Roles of Journalists

The survey began with general questions about how participants see the role(s) of journalists in society.

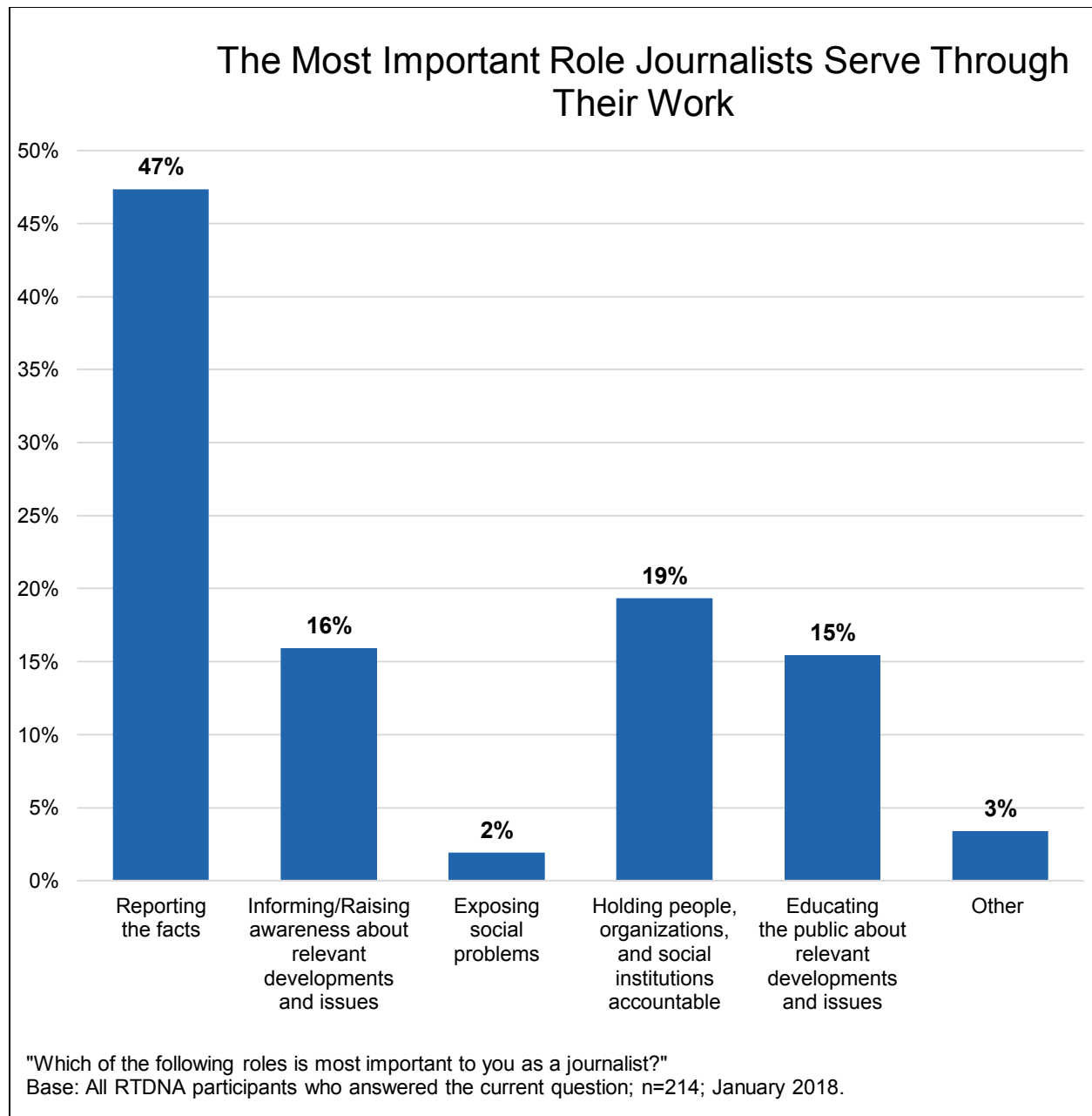
Which Roles do Journalists Serve?

Nearly all RTDNA survey participants feel that journalists serve society through a range of roles from reporting the facts to holding people, organizations and social institutions accountable. The additional roles that survey participants identified in response to the “Other” are open-ended responses that will be coded and reported at a future date.



Which Role Is Most Important?

RTDNA survey participants hold a wide range of views about which of the roles that journalists play in society is most personally important to them. Almost half feel that reporting the facts is the most important role they serve through their work. Another 2 out of 10 most value the role of holding people, organizations and social institutions accountable, while 15% most value informing and raising awareness about relevant developments and issues, and 15% most value the role of educating the public about relevant developments and issues.

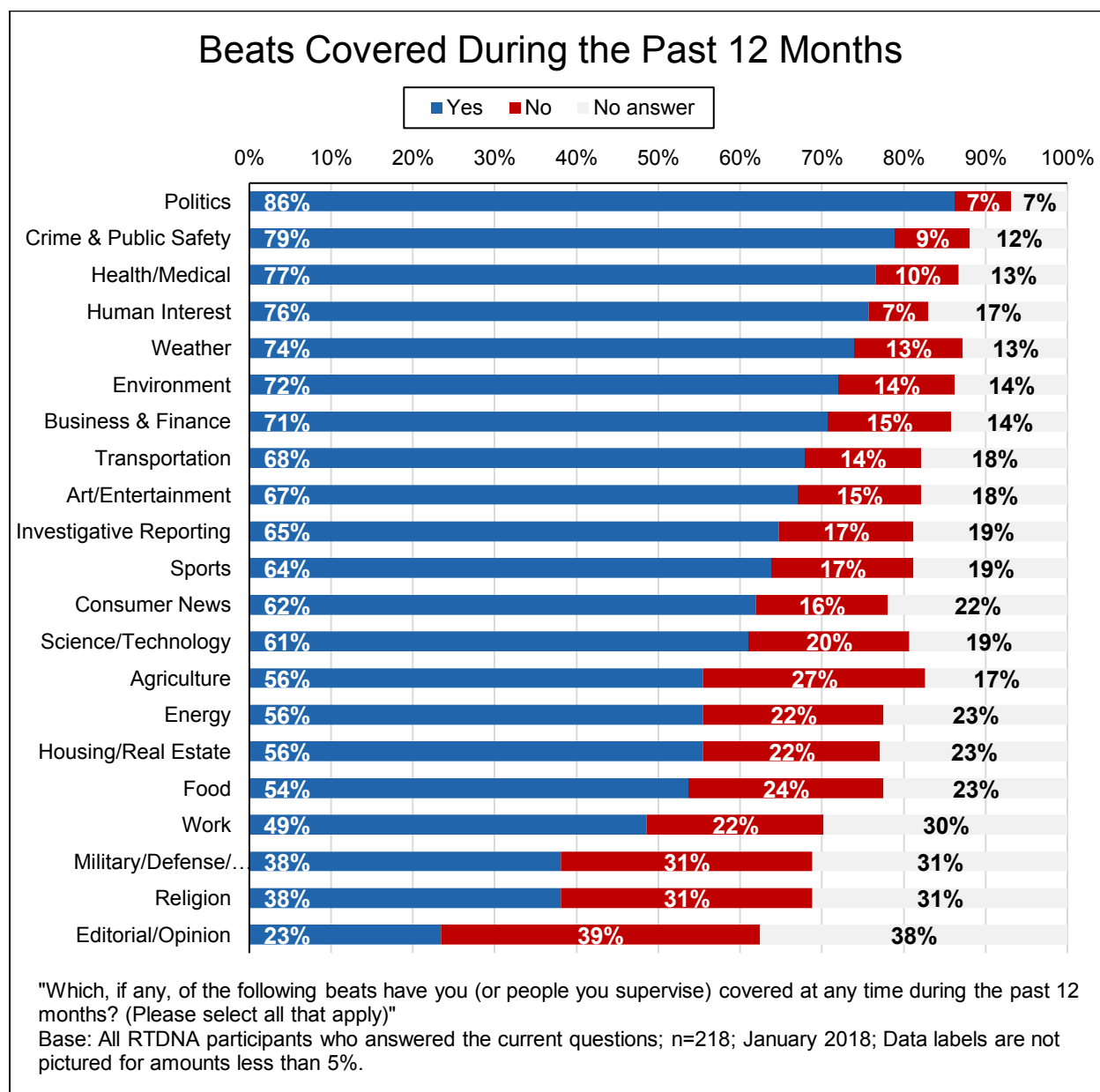


Beat Experience and Perceived Relevance of Climate Change

To get a sense of what kind of story climate change is seen as by journalists, we asked questions about participants' beat experiences, and about the relevance of climate change to various beats.

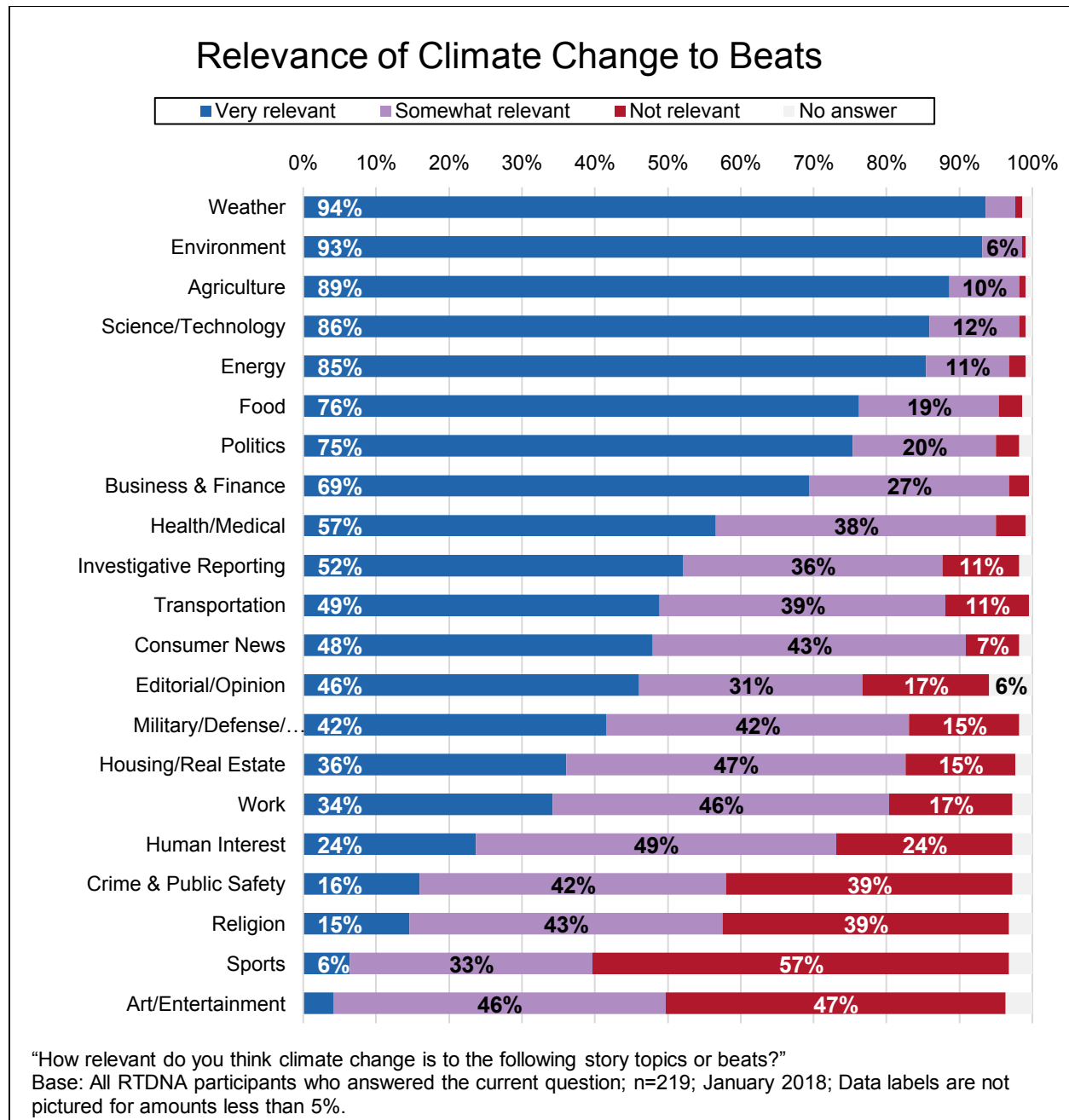
Experience Covering Beats

The most common beats covered by RTDNA survey participants in the prior year were politics, crime and public safety, health and medical, human interest, weather, environment, and business and finance—each of which was covered by 7 out of 10 or more.



Relevance of Climate Change

RTDNA survey participants think that climate change is relevant to many beats. The beats most likely to be seen as relevant include weather, environment, agriculture, science and technology, energy, food, and politics—each of which are seen as climate-relevant by more than 70% of participants. Majorities also see climate change as relevant to business and finance, health and medical, and investigative reporting. Conversely, less than 30% think of climate change as very relevant to human interest, crime and public safety, religion, sports, and art and entertainment beats.



Difference Between Climate Change and Global Warming

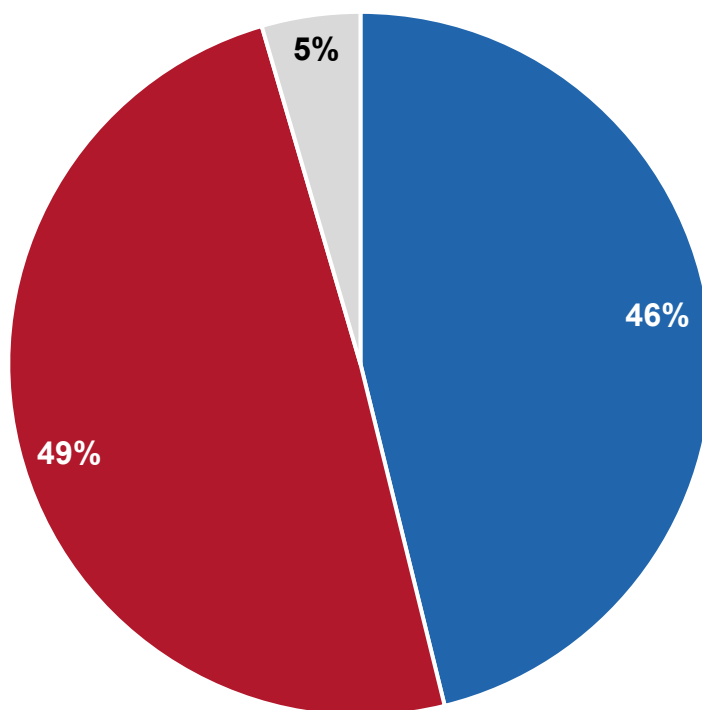
Polling research has shown that the terms global warming and climate change mean largely the same thing to some people, and different things to other people. We asked several questions to determine how RTDNA members see these terms.

Is There a Difference?

RTDNA survey participants are more or less equally divided on whether the terms climate change and global warming mean the same thing or different things to them. Those who see the terms as being different things were asked: "Briefly, how would you describe the difference in meaning between the terms "climate change" and "global warming"?" These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.

"Global Warming" and "Climate Change": Same or Different Things?

■ Same things ■ Different things ■ Don't know



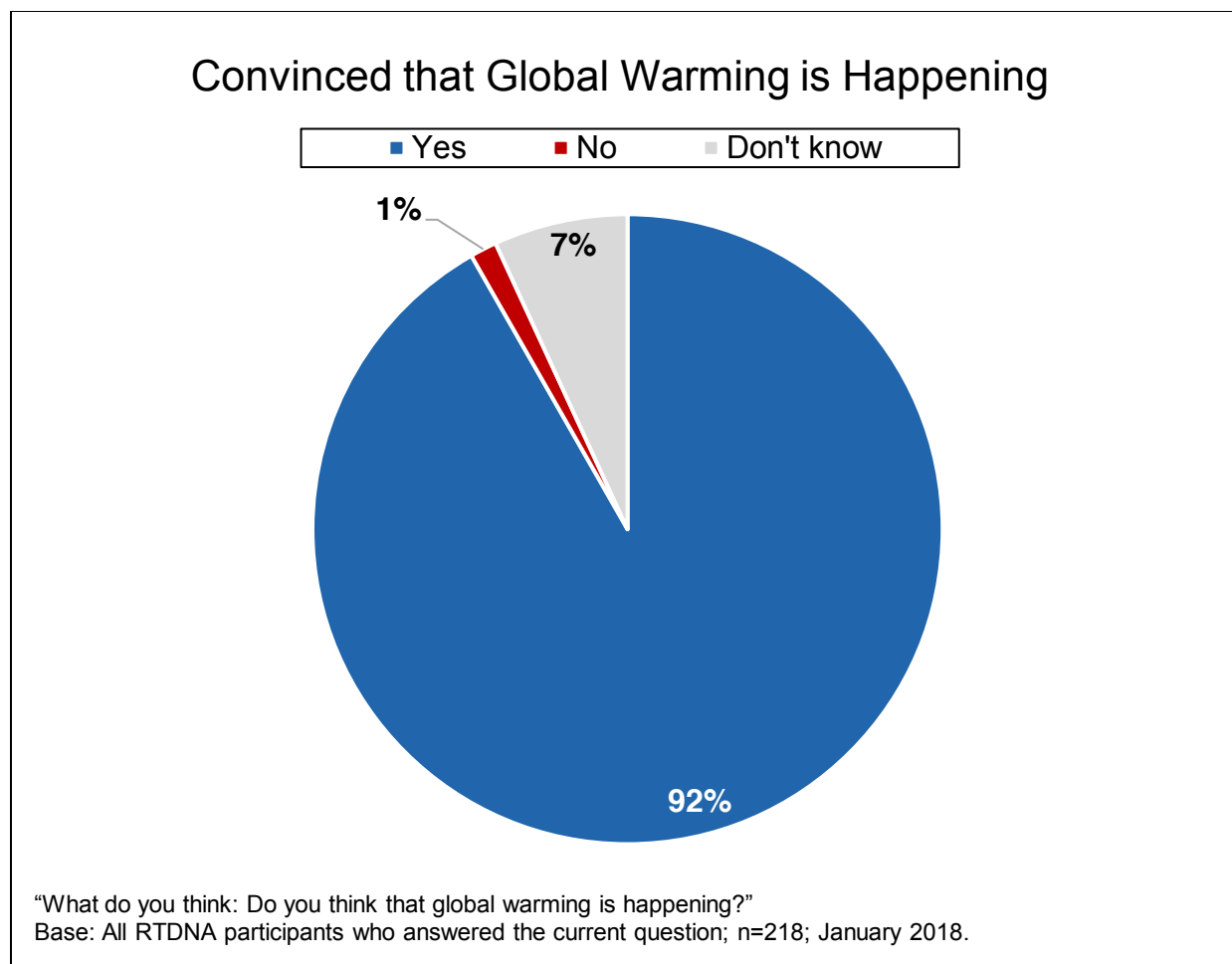
"For you, do the terms "climate change" and "global warming" mean the same thing or different things?"
Base: All RTDNA participants who answered the current question; n=221; January 2018.

Convinced that Global Warming is Happening

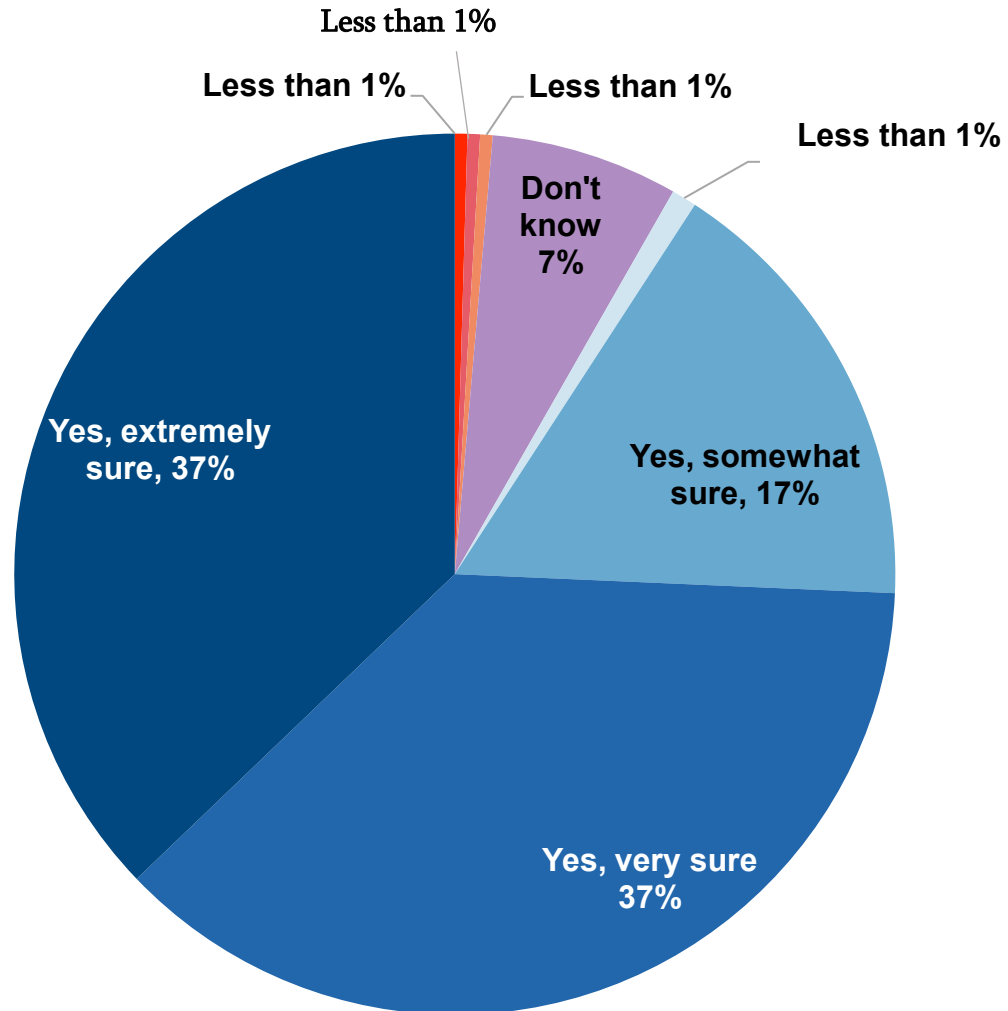
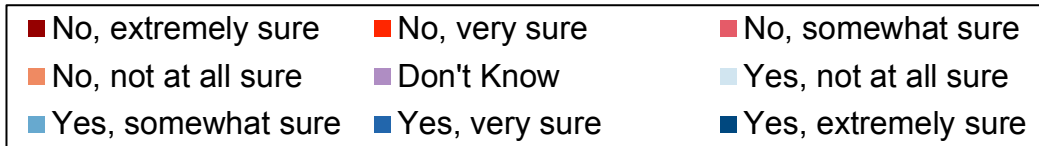
Research has shown that Americans hold a wide range of views about global warming. At various points throughout the survey, we posed questions to RTDNA participants about some of their climate change views that might, or might not, influence their climate change reporting. The most basic of these views is whether or not they think that global warming is happening. Prior research has shown that the vast majority—97% or more—of climate scientists are convinced that human-caused climate change is happening. In fact, the 2014 U.S. National Climate Assessment found that a range of impacts from global climate change are already occurring in every region of the country.

Is Global Warming Happening? How sure are you?

More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think global warming is happening; 1% say they don't think global warming is happening, and 6% say they don't know. In response to a follow-up question asking how sure they are, 3 out of 4 say they are very or extremely sure global warming is happening.



Certainty that Global Warming is Happening



"What do you think: Do you think that global warming is happening?"

"How sure are you that global warming is happening?"

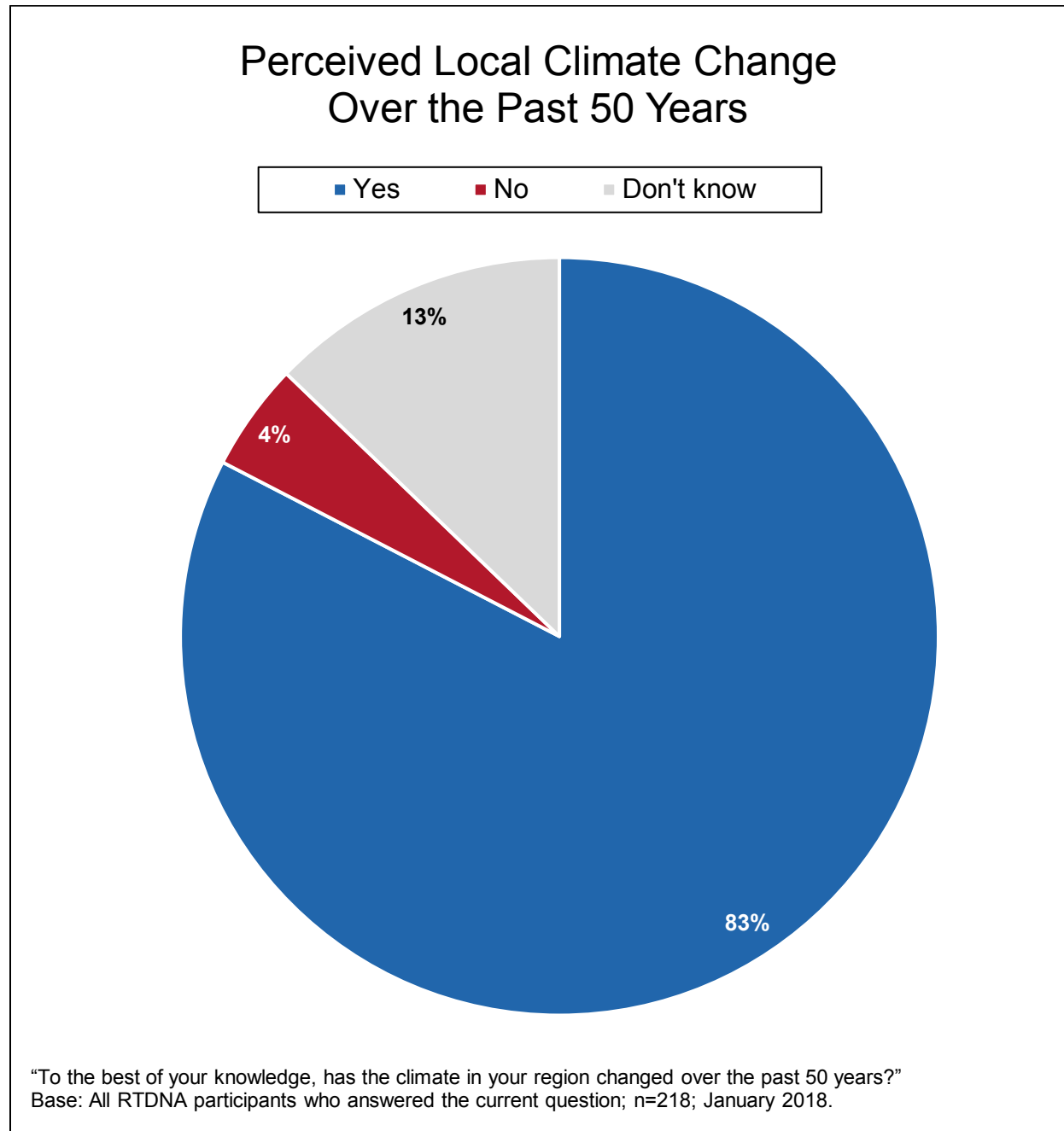
"How sure are you that global warming is not happening?"

Base: All RTDNA respondents who provided answers to any of the following questions: "Do you think global warming is happening?" "How sure are you that global warming is happening?" or "How sure are you that global warming is not happening?"; n=218; January 2018.

Perceptions of Local Climate Change

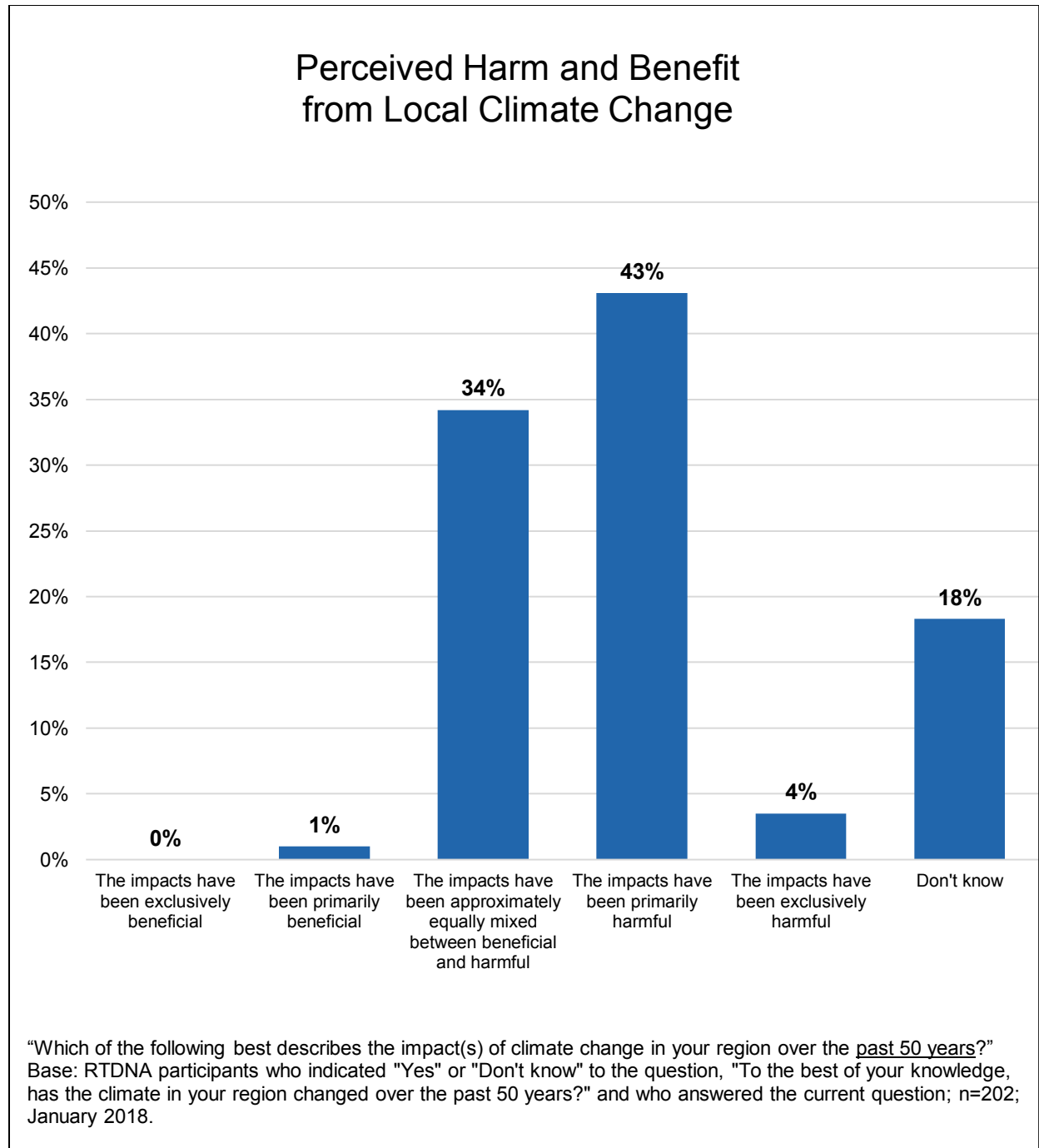
Has the Climate Changed?

More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say the climate in their region has changed in the past 50 years.



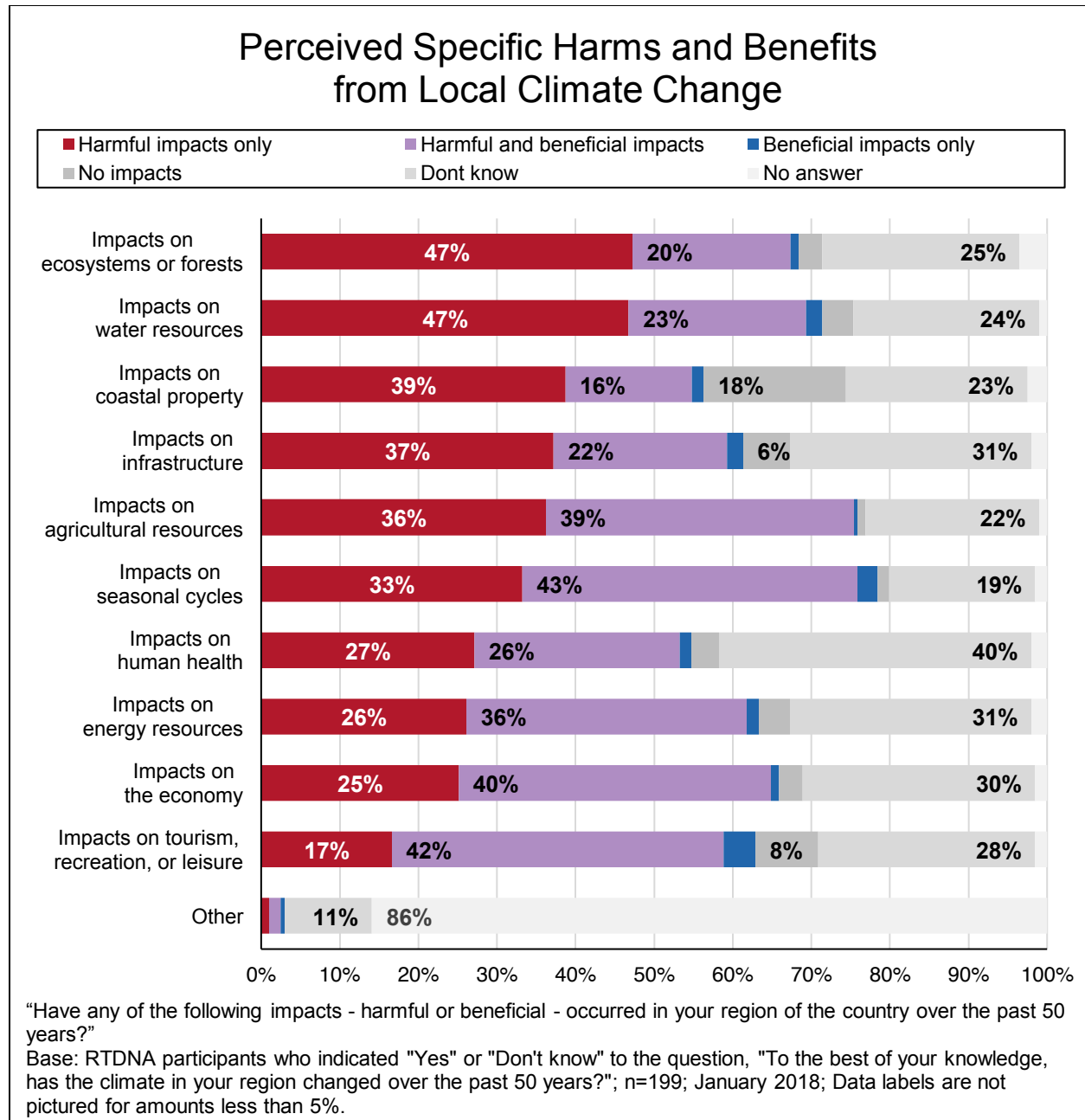
Description of Climate Change Impacts in Region

Among those RTDNA survey participants who believe the climate has changed in their region over the past half-decade, almost half say the impacts have been primarily or exclusively harmful. An additional third say the impacts have been equally mixed between beneficial and harmful, while nearly 2 out of 10 say that they don't know whether the impacts have been beneficial or harmful.



Harmful or Beneficial Impacts

RTDNA survey participants who think there have been climate change impacts in their region—whether harmful or beneficial—and those who don't know were asked about the nature of those impacts. Over half of RTDNA participants said there have been harmful impacts on every impact category we asked about—including ecosystems or forests, water resources, coastal properties, infrastructure, agricultural resources, seasonal cycles, human health, energy resources, and the economy. About 4 out of 10 say there have also been beneficial impacts on seasonal cycles, tourism/recreation/leisure, and the economy.

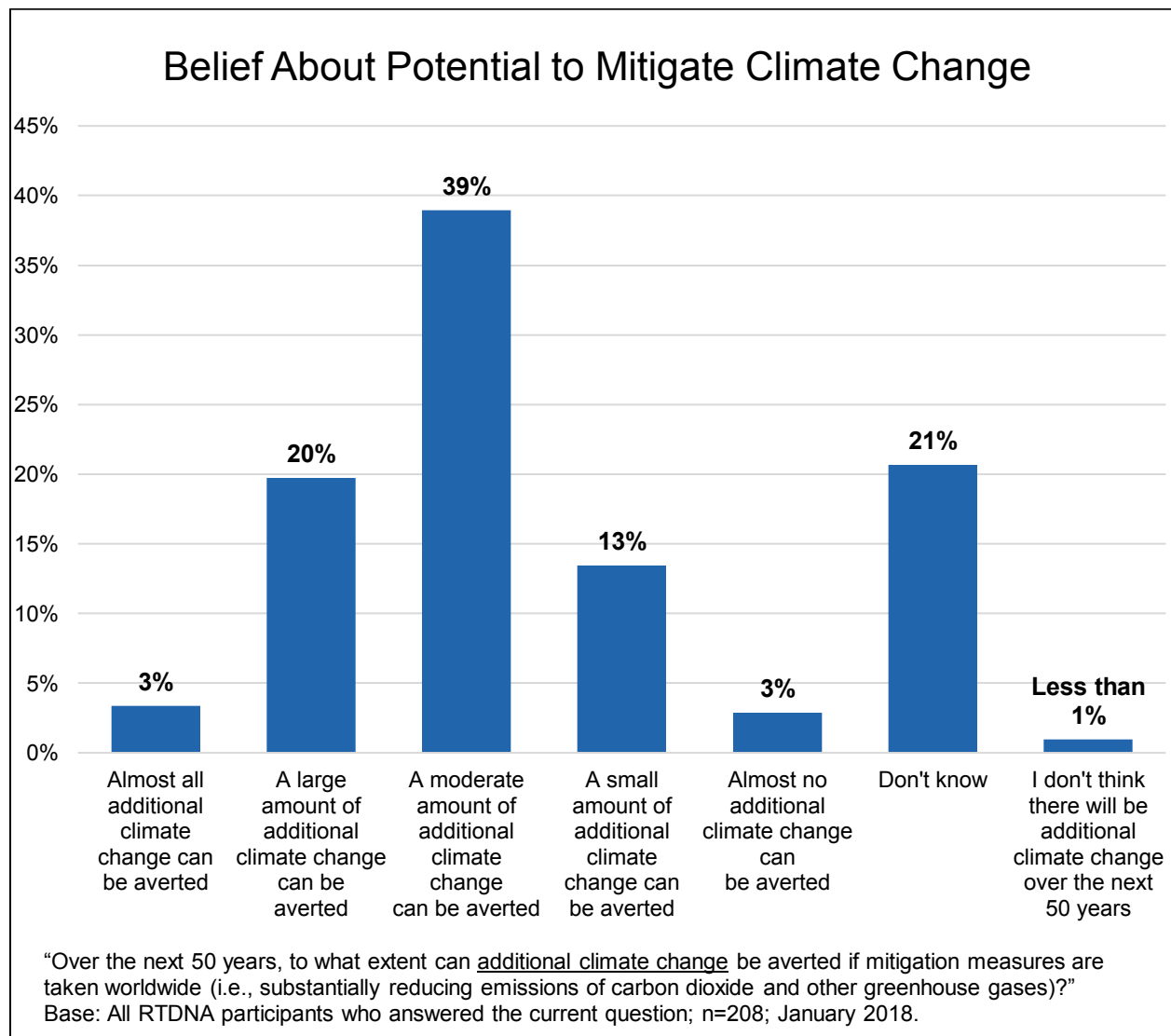


Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The current impacts of climate change are a matter of facts. Future impacts, however, are less certain and will be largely influenced by human decisions and actions going forward. We asked journalists for their views on the extent to which climate change can be prevented, and harm averted, if appropriate actions are taken.

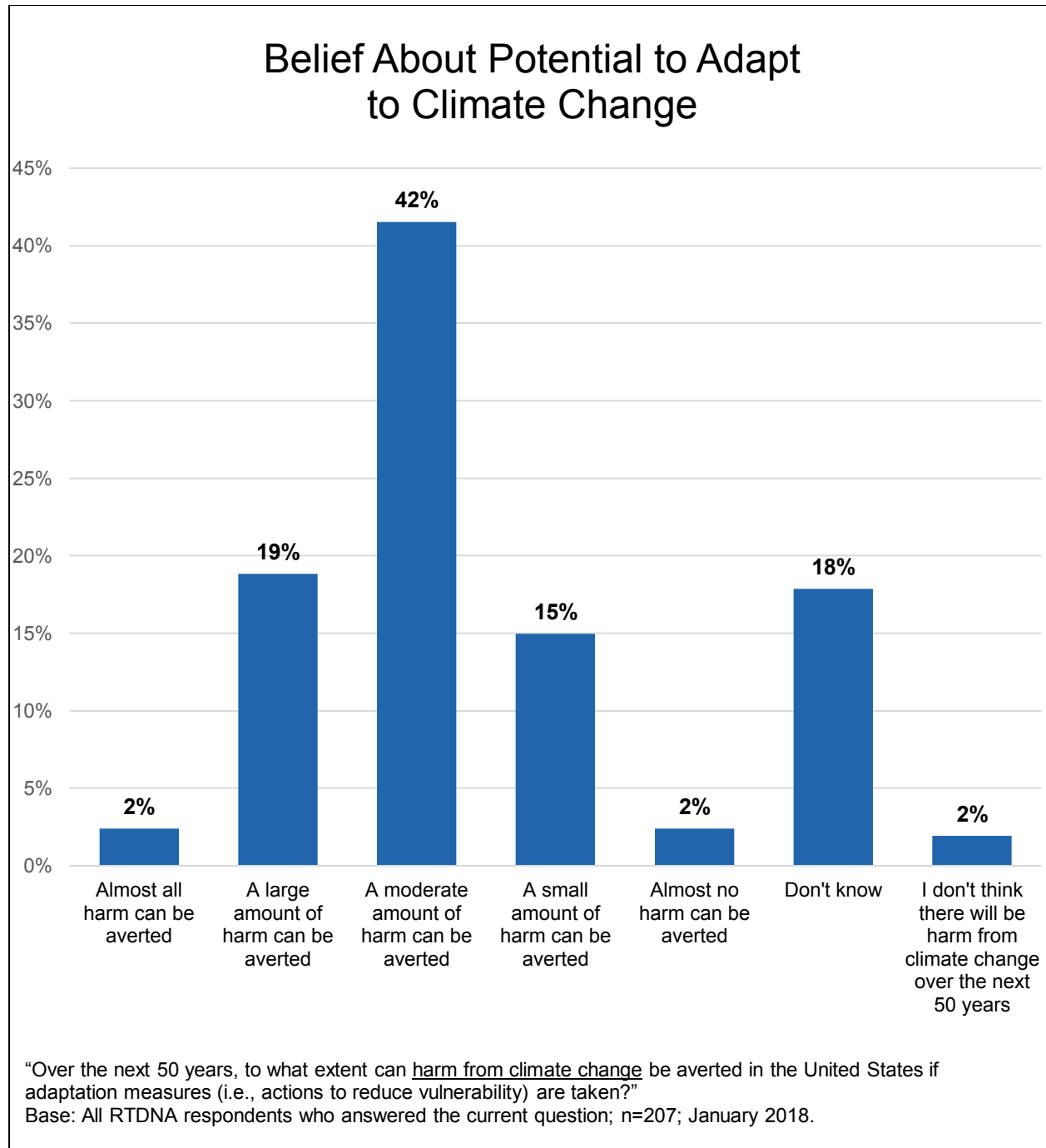
Averting Additional Climate Change

More than 7 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that at least some additional climate change can be averted over the next 50 years if mitigation measures are taken worldwide, while more than 6 out of 10 think a moderate or large amount of additional climate change can be averted. About 2 out of 10 say they don't know how much climate change can be averted.



Averting Harm from Climate Change

Nearly 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that at least some harm from climate change can be averted in the United States over the next 50 years if adaptation measures are taken, while more than 6 out of 10 think a moderate amount or more harm can be averted. Nearly 2 out of 10 are unsure of how much harm can be averted through adaptation measures.

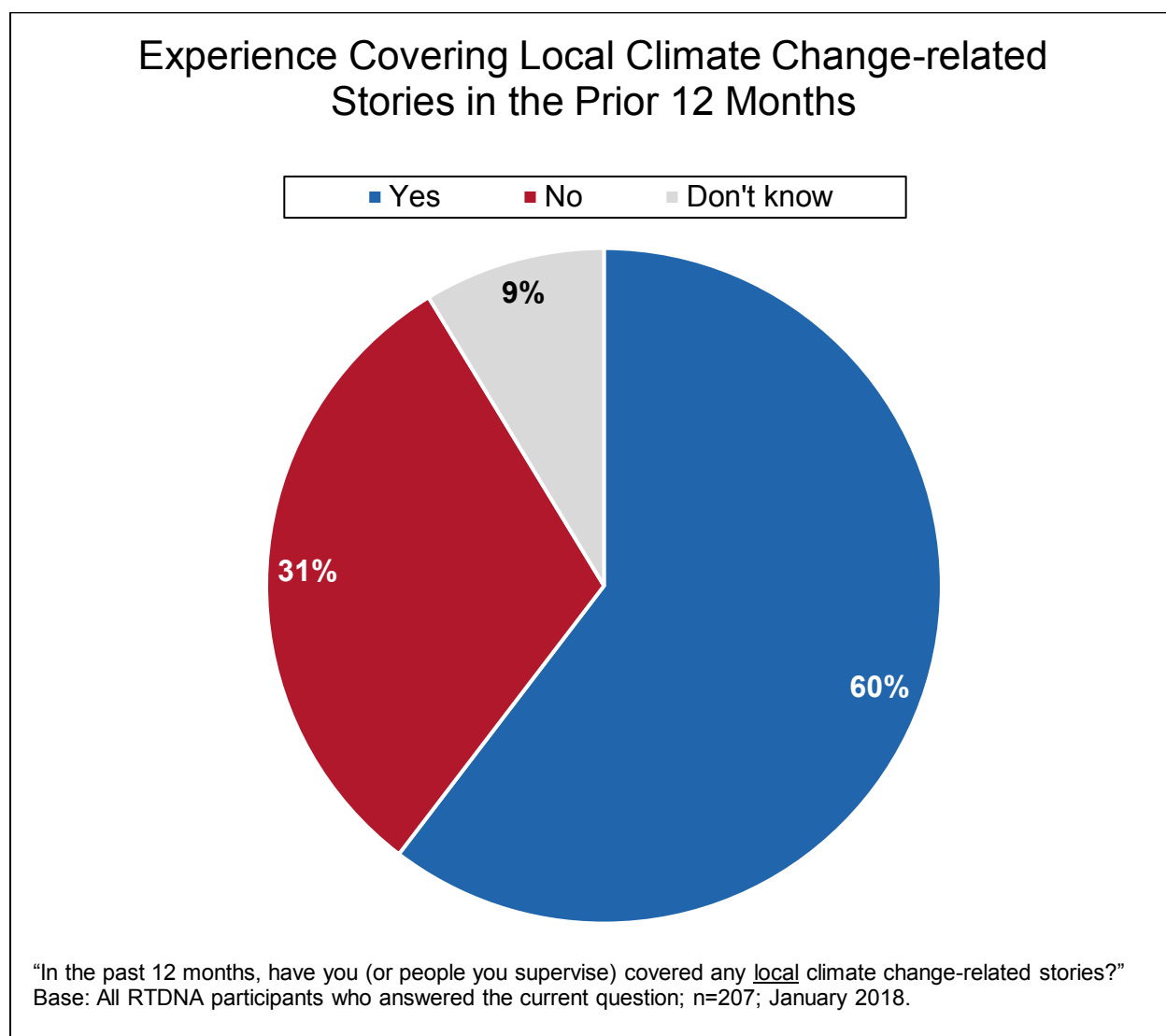


Local Climate Change Coverage: Experience, Interest, and Expectations

Surveys of the public reveal that most Americans don't read or hear much about climate change in the media. Central to the purpose of our survey is determining RTDNA members' level of interest in reporting on climate change, and how much they are currently doing so. To that end, we asked a number of questions about RTDNA members' experiences, interests, and expectations regarding climate change reporting, especially local stories.

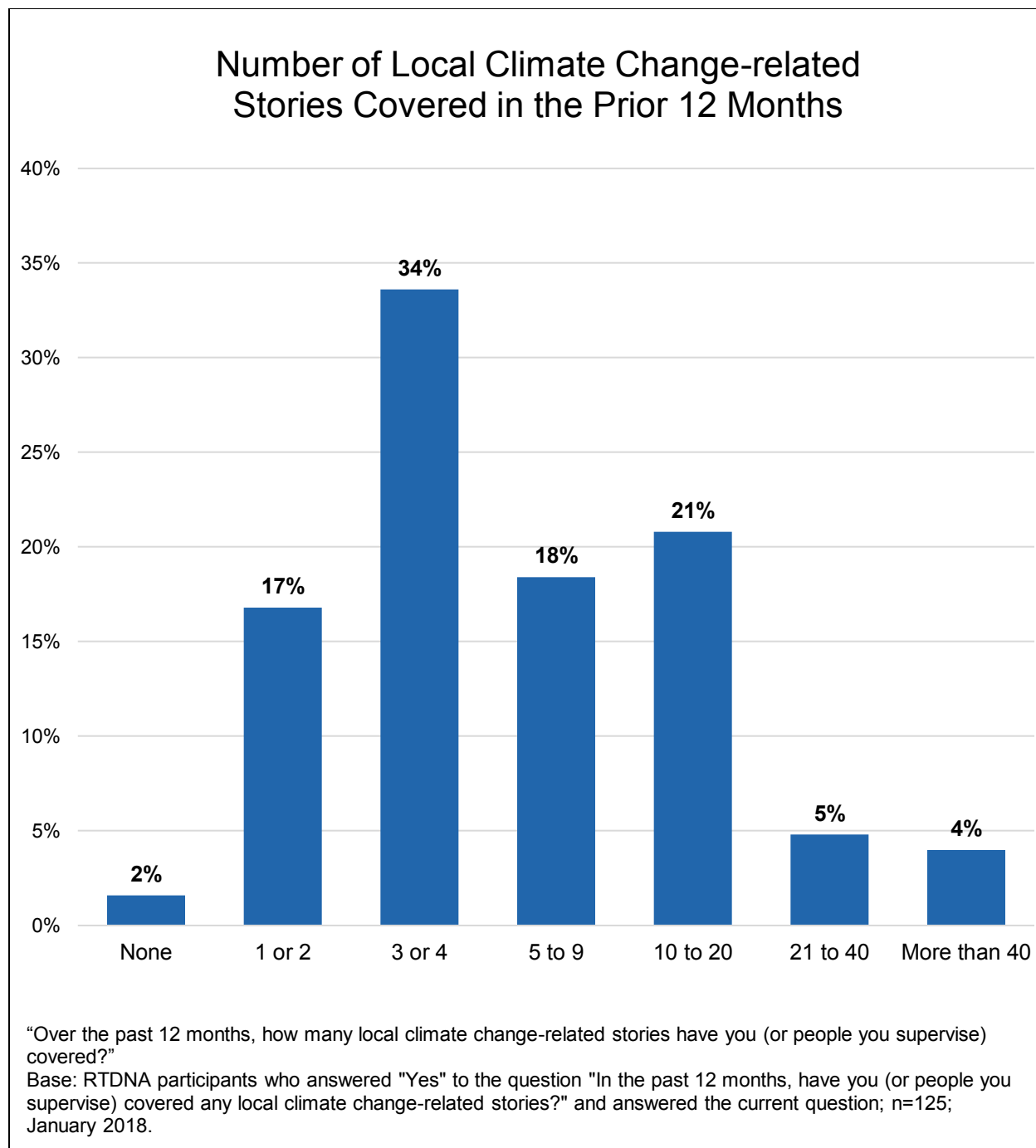
Experience Covering Local Climate Change

Fully 6 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants had reported on—or supervised journalists reporting on—a local climate change-related story in the prior 12 months.



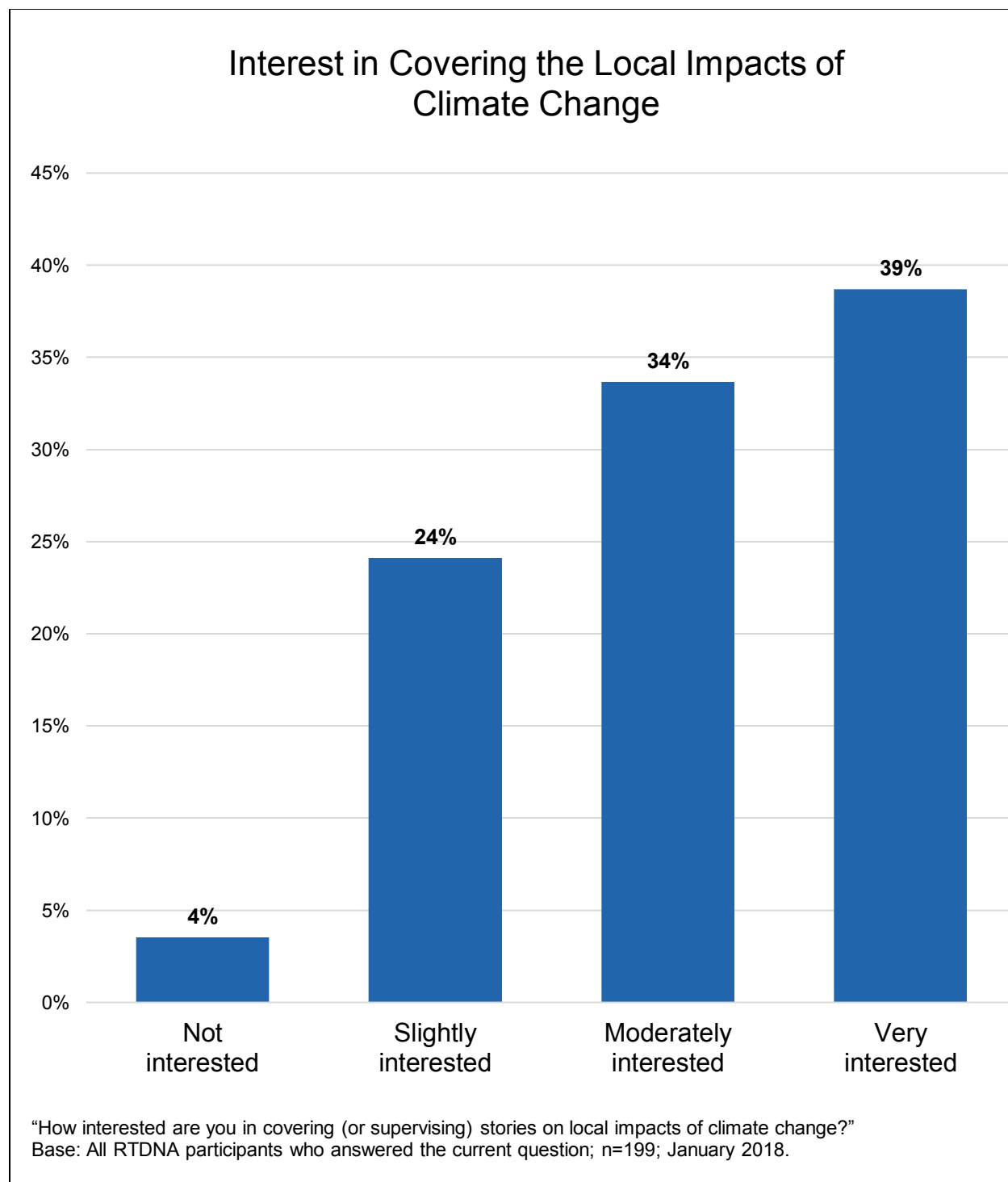
Frequency of Covering Local Climate Change

Of those RTDNA members who had reported or supervised at least one local climate change-related story in the prior 12 months, about half reported four or fewer stories during that period. The other half had reported or supervised five or more stories, with nearly 1 out of 10 having reported or supervised more than 20 stories in the past year.



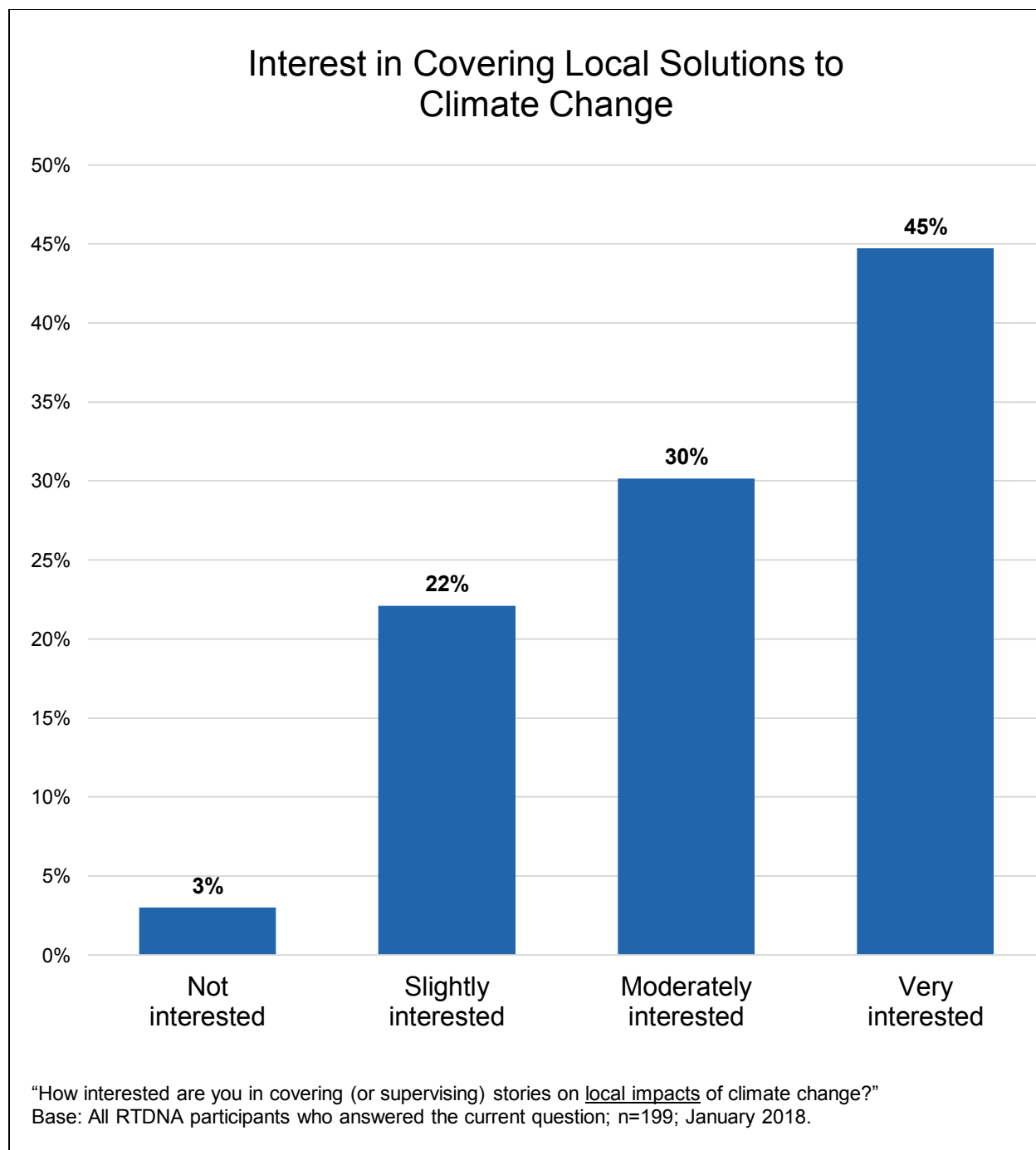
Interest in Reporting on Local Impacts of Climate Change

Nearly all RTDNA survey participants say they are at least slightly interested in reporting local climate impacts stories, with nearly 4 out of 10 saying they are very interested.



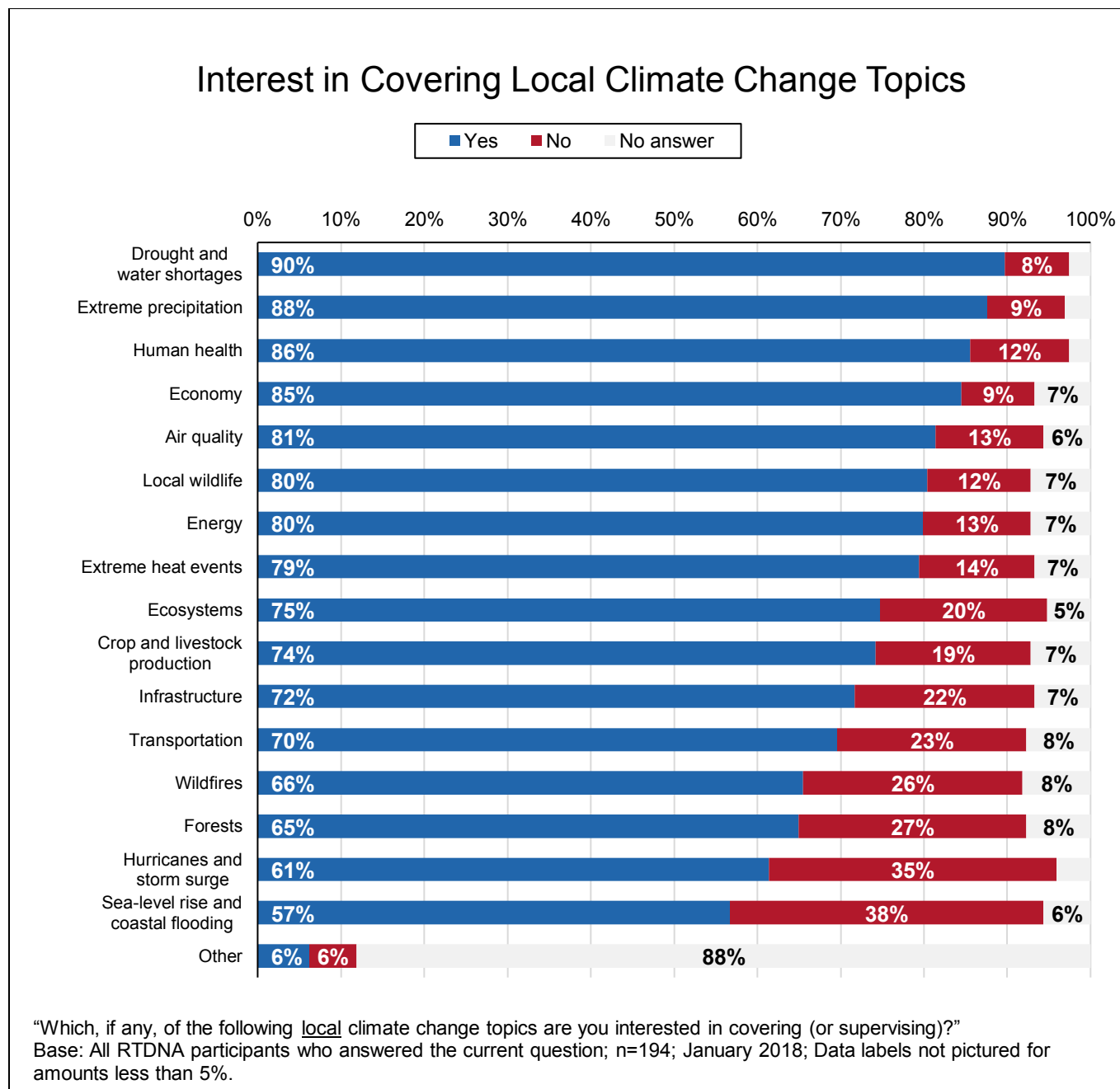
Interest in Reporting on Local Solutions to Climate Change

Nearly all RTDNA survey participants say they are at least slightly interested in reporting on local climate solutions stories, with more than 4 out of 10 saying they are very interested.



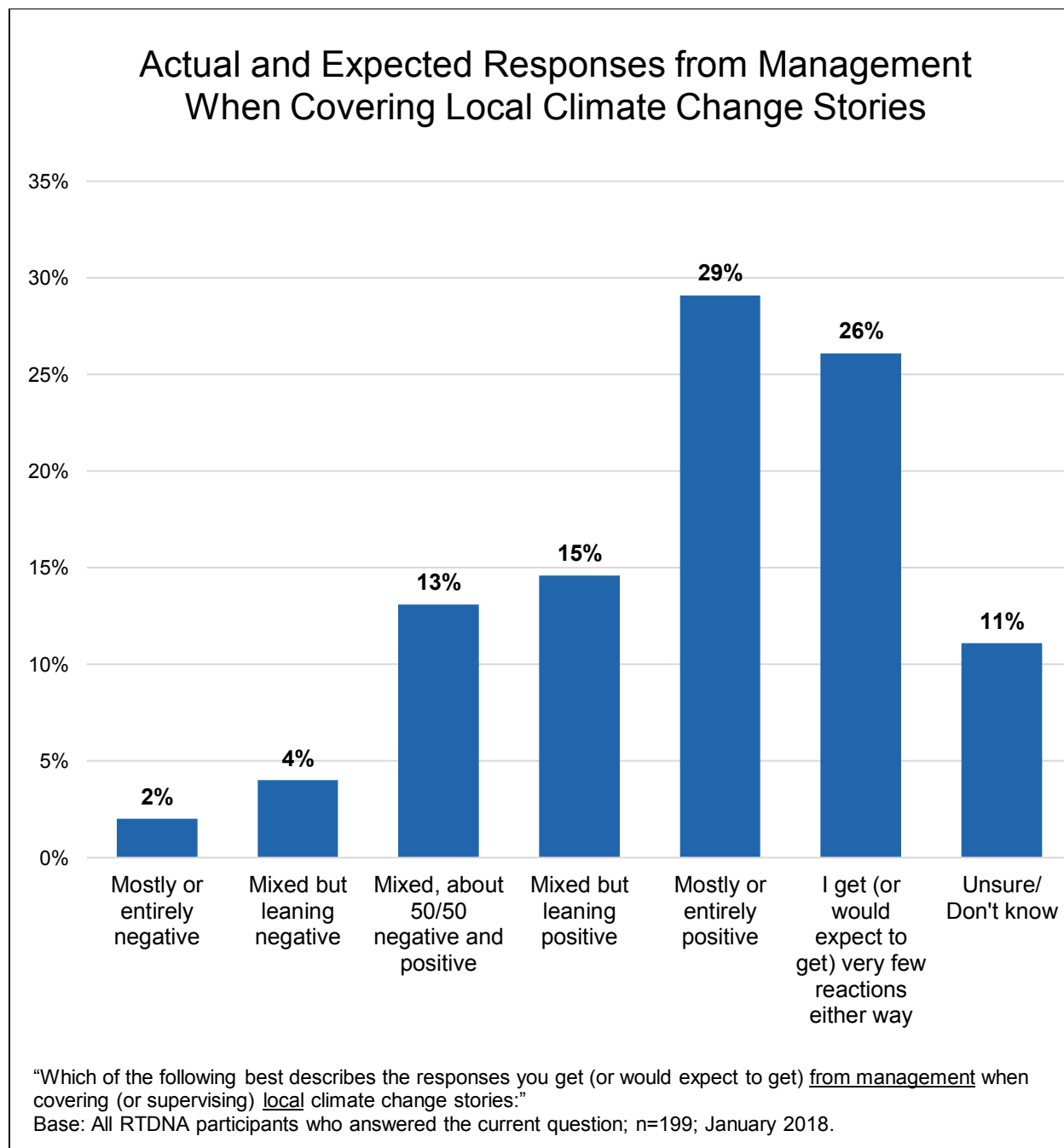
Interest in Local Climate Change Topics

A majority of RTDNA survey participants say they are interested in covering or supervising a wide range of local climate change stories. The highest level of interest is for stories focused on droughts and water shortages, extreme precipitation, human health, the economy, air quality, local wildlife, and energy, with 8 out of 10 survey participants saying they are interested in reporting on these topics. Other topics with high levels of reporting interest include extreme heat events, ecosystems, crops and livestock, infrastructure, transportation, wildfires, forests, and hurricanes and storm surge, with more than 6 out of 10 interested in reporting on these topics.



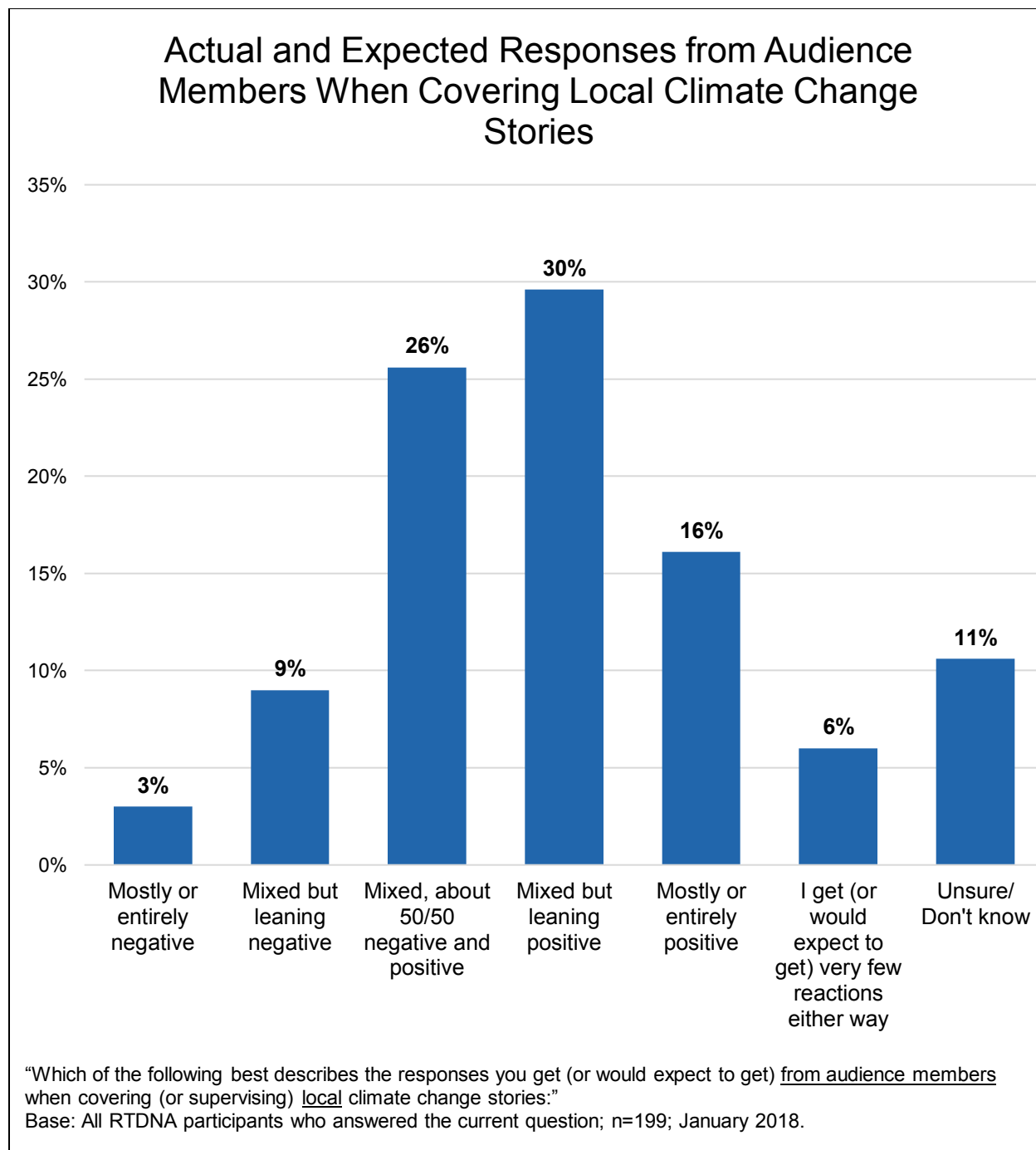
Expected Responses from Management

Fully 7 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants receive—or expect—primarily positive responses, or a lack of response, from management when covering or supervising local climate change stories. About 2 out of 10 receive or expect responses from management that are equally mixed between positive and negative, or primarily negative.



Expected Responses from Audience

Over half of RTDNA survey participants receive—or expect—primarily positive responses, or a lack of response, from audience members when covering or supervising local climate change stories. Nearly 4 out of 10 receive or expect audience responses that are equally mixed between positive and negative, or primarily negative.

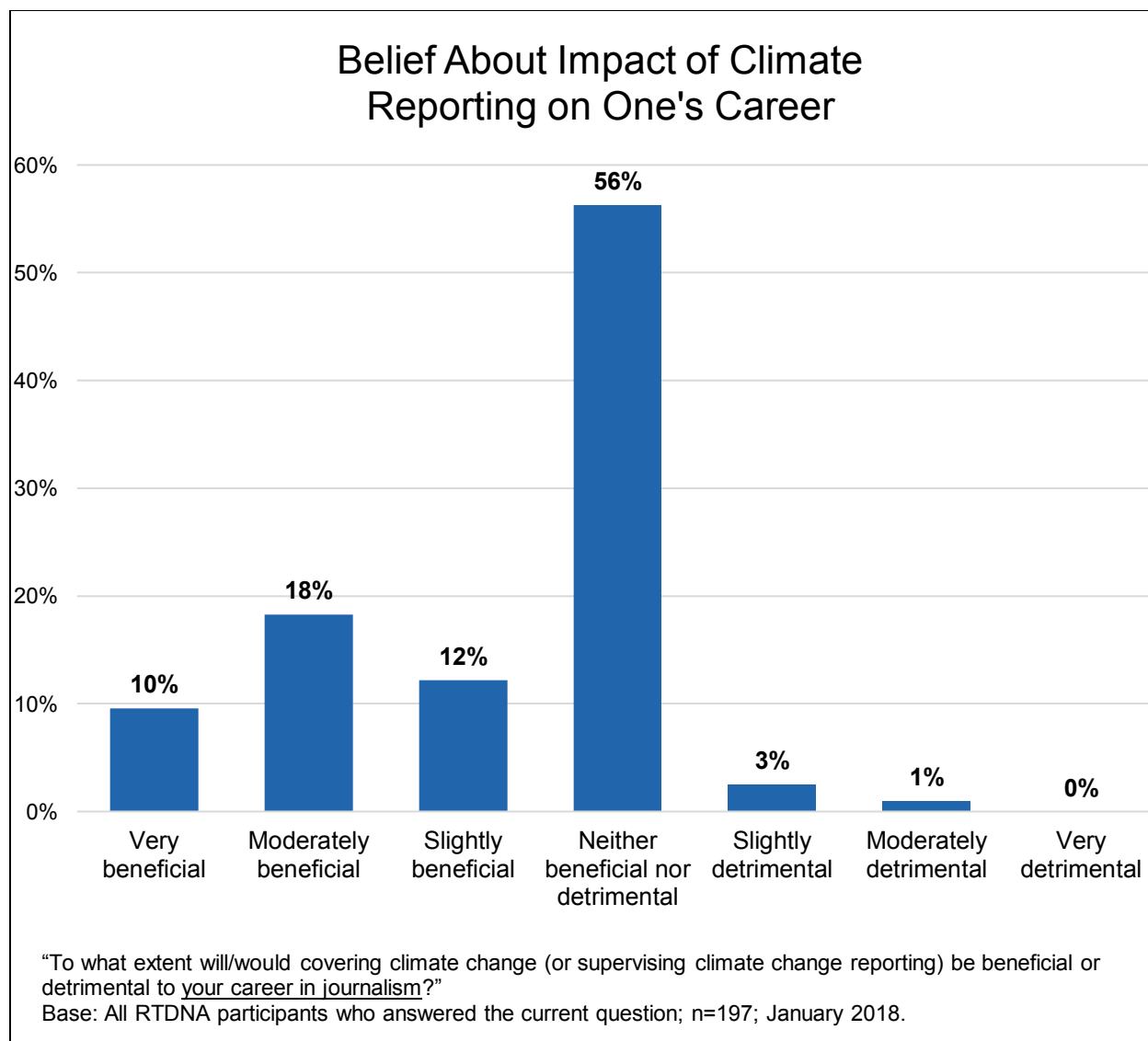


Impacts of Covering Climate Change

Journalists—like all professionals—are likely to consider the impact of their work decisions on both their own careers and on the broader community of which they are a part. We asked RTDNA members what they see to be the likely consequences of reporting on climate change.

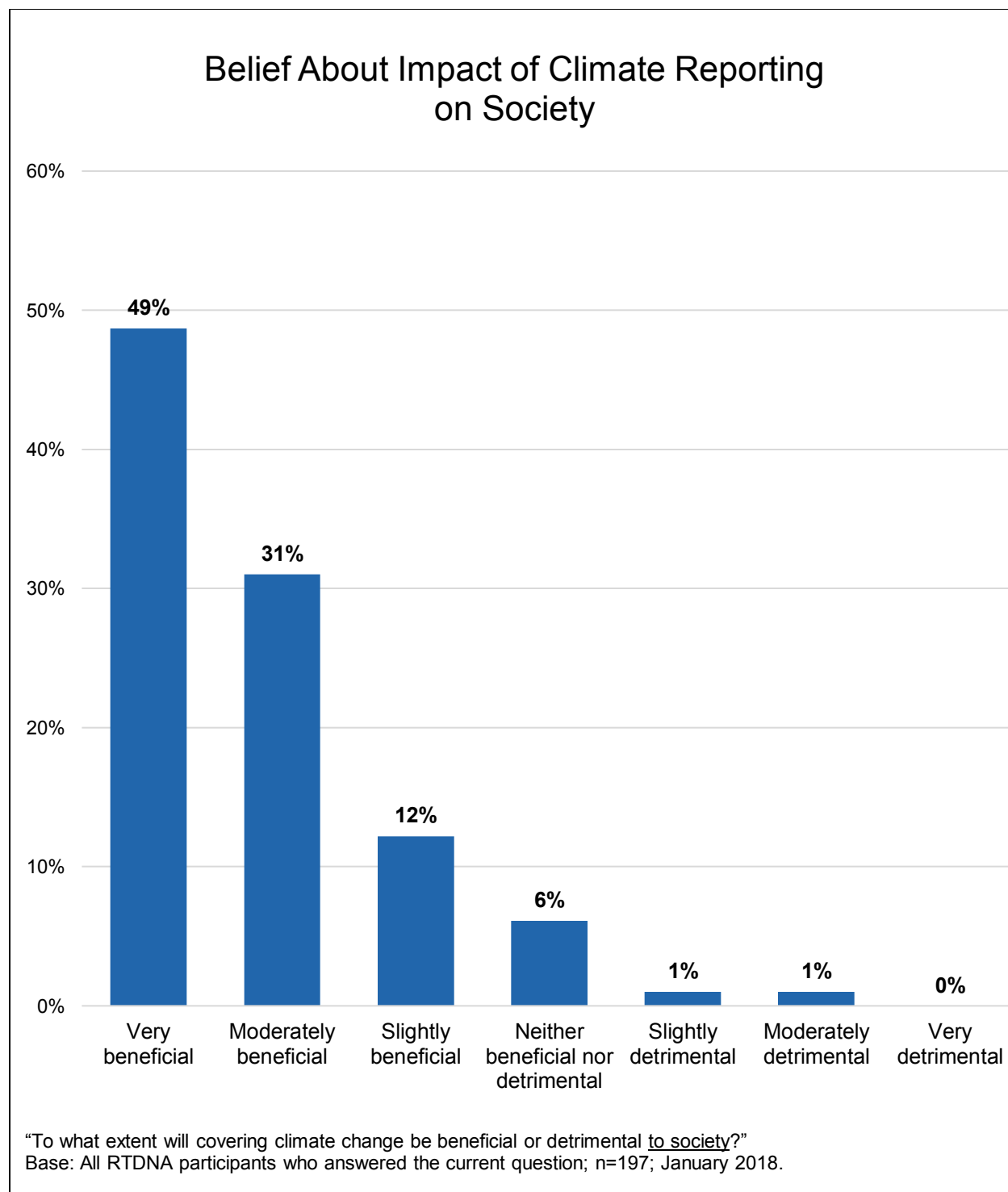
Impact on Respondents' Career

Over half of RTDNA survey participants feel that reporting on climate change will be neither beneficial nor detrimental to their career, while 4 out of 10 feel it will be beneficial. Only 4% feel that reporting on climate change will be detrimental to their career.



Impact on Society

More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that reporting on climate change is beneficial to society, with nearly half saying it is very beneficial.

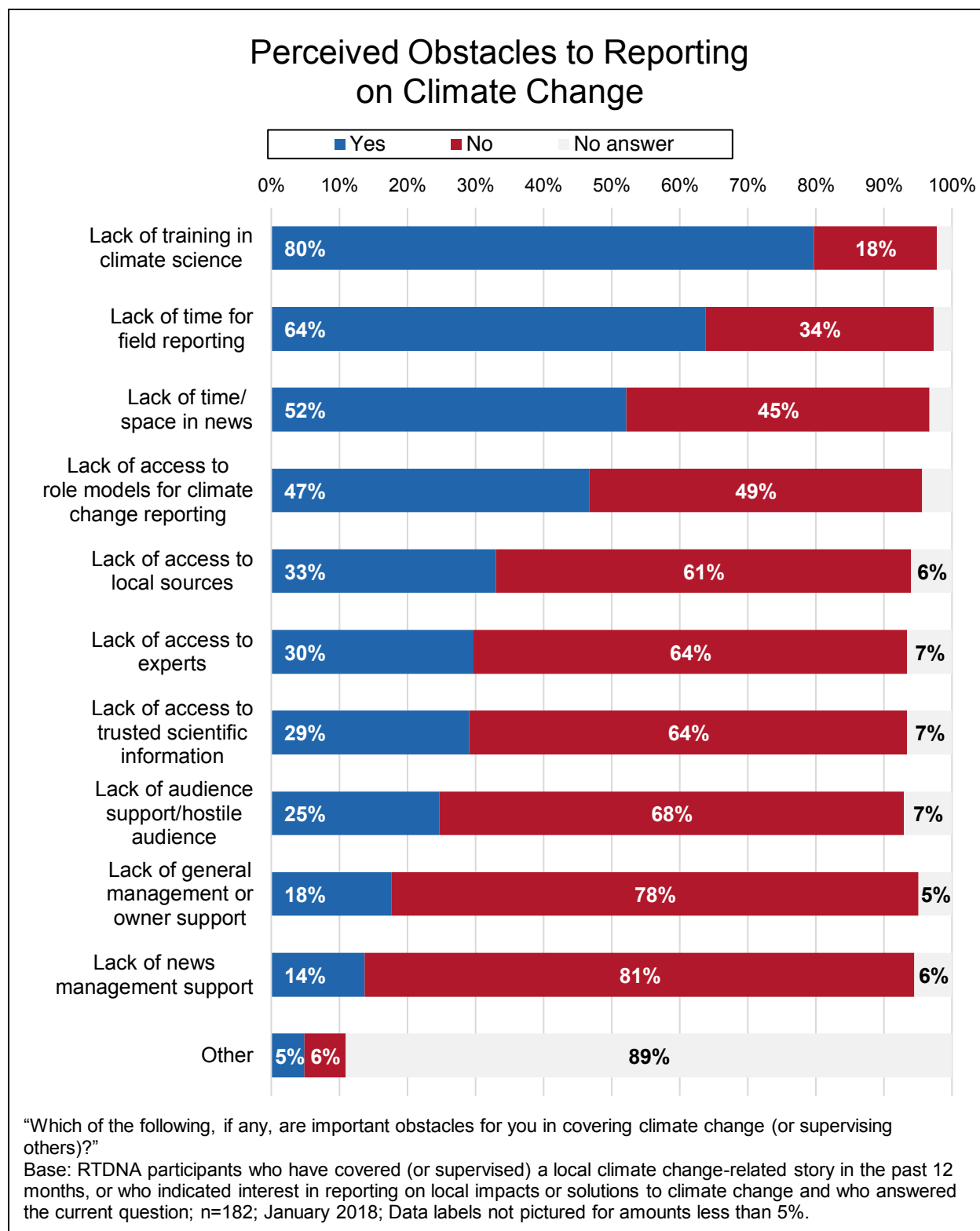


Obstacles to Covering Climate Change

Behavioral science research consistently shows that—across a broad range of beneficial behaviors—many people fail to perform beneficial behaviors not because they don’t see value in them, but rather because they find the behaviors to be difficult to perform. Identifying what makes a behavior difficult to perform—that is, identifying the obstacles to behavioral performance—can lead to important insights about how to design resources that make the behavior easier to perform.

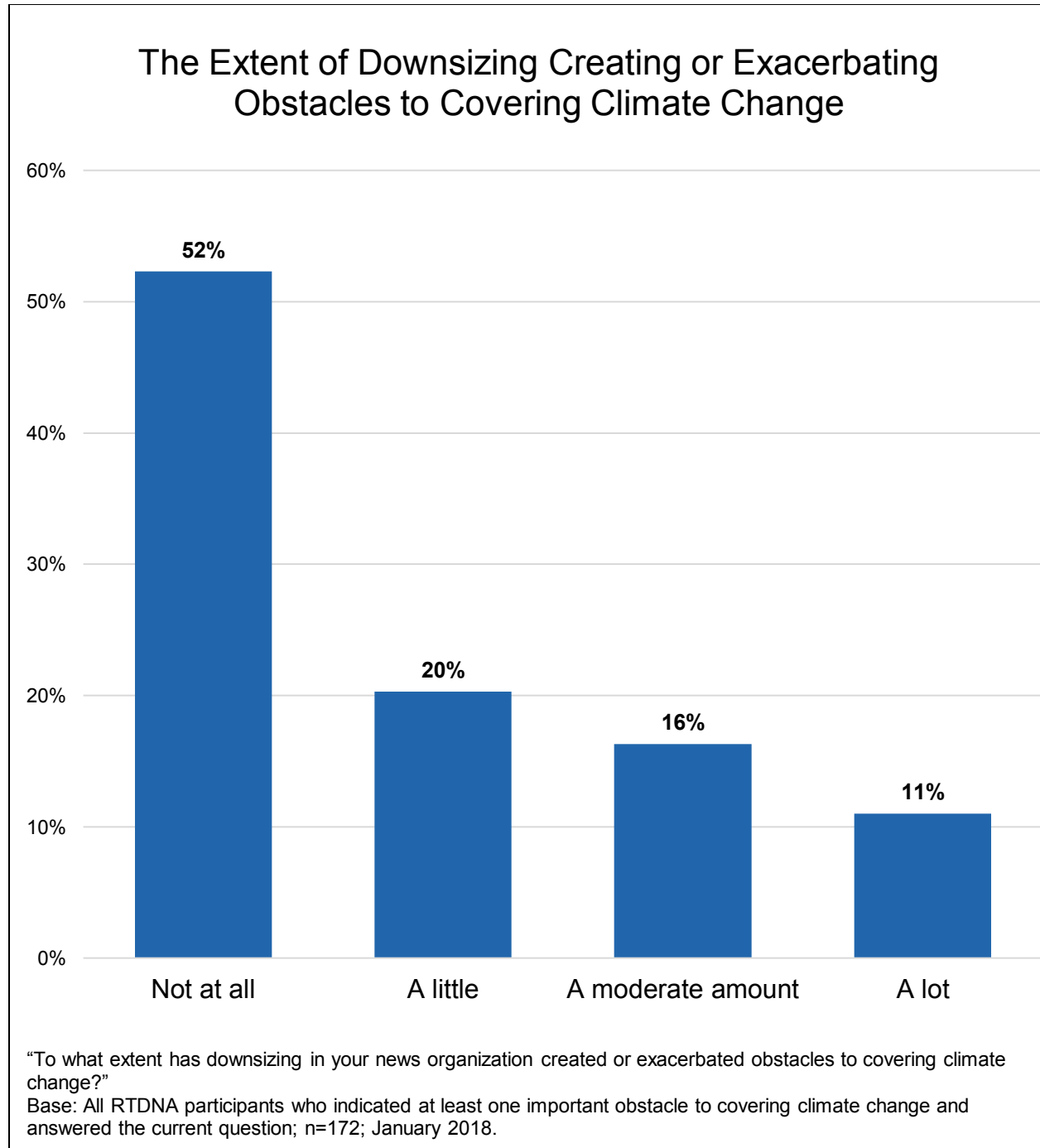
Most Frequent Obstacles to Covering Climate Change

Fully 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say that lack of training in climate science is an important obstacle in reporting on climate change, making this their most common obstacle. Nearly 2 out of 3 also say that lack of time for field reporting is an obstacle, and about half say lack of time or space in their news outlet, and lack of access to role models for climate reporting are obstacles. Additionally, about 3 out of 10 say lack of access to local sources, experts and trusted scientific information are important obstacles to reporting on climate change.



Is Downsizing an Obstacle?

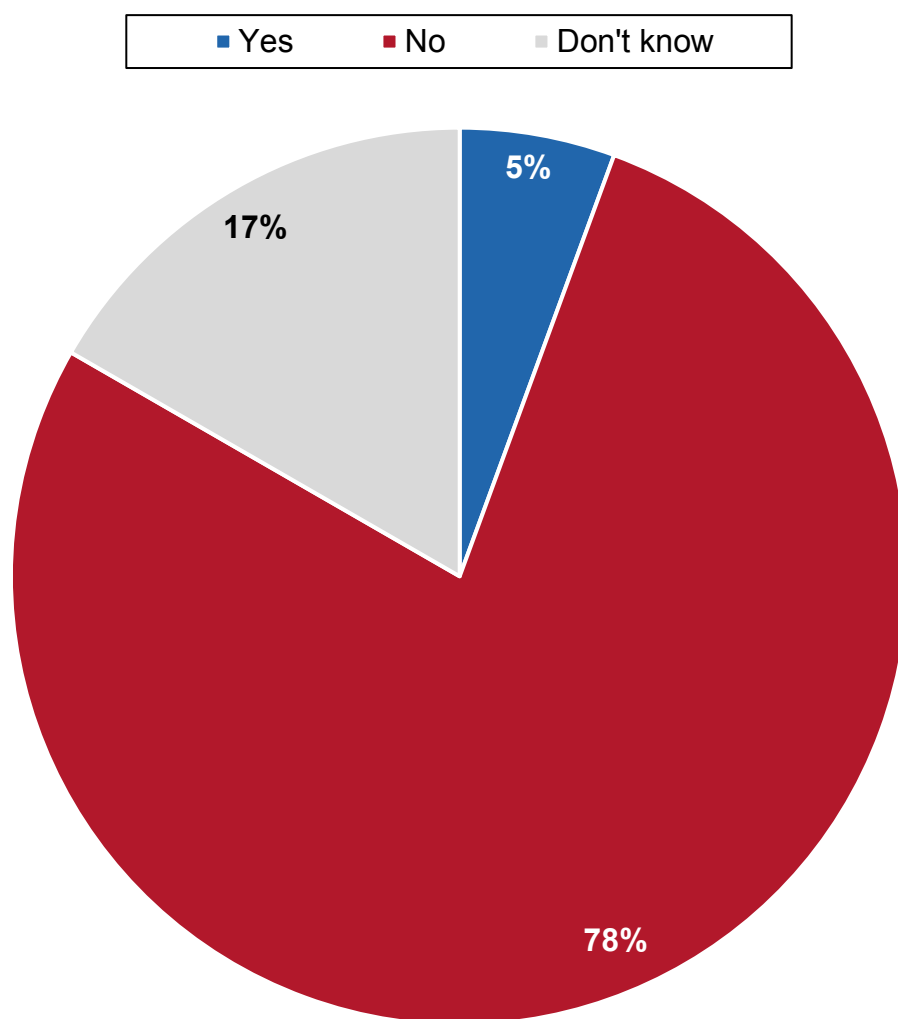
Nearly half of RTDNA survey participants think downsizing in their news organization has created or exacerbated obstacles to reporting on climate change, with more than 1 out of 10 saying that downsizing has created or exacerbated obstacles “a lot” in their news organization.



Is Management an Obstacle?

Five percent of RTDNA survey participants say they have experienced at least one instance where management softened or censored a climate change-related story that they had personally reported or supervised, although nearly 2 out of 10 said they don't know if this had happened to them or not. We asked a follow-up question to those who had this experience: "In what way(s) has management ever softened or censored a story you covered (or supervised) related to climate change?" These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.

Management's Censorship and Softening of Climate Change-related Stories

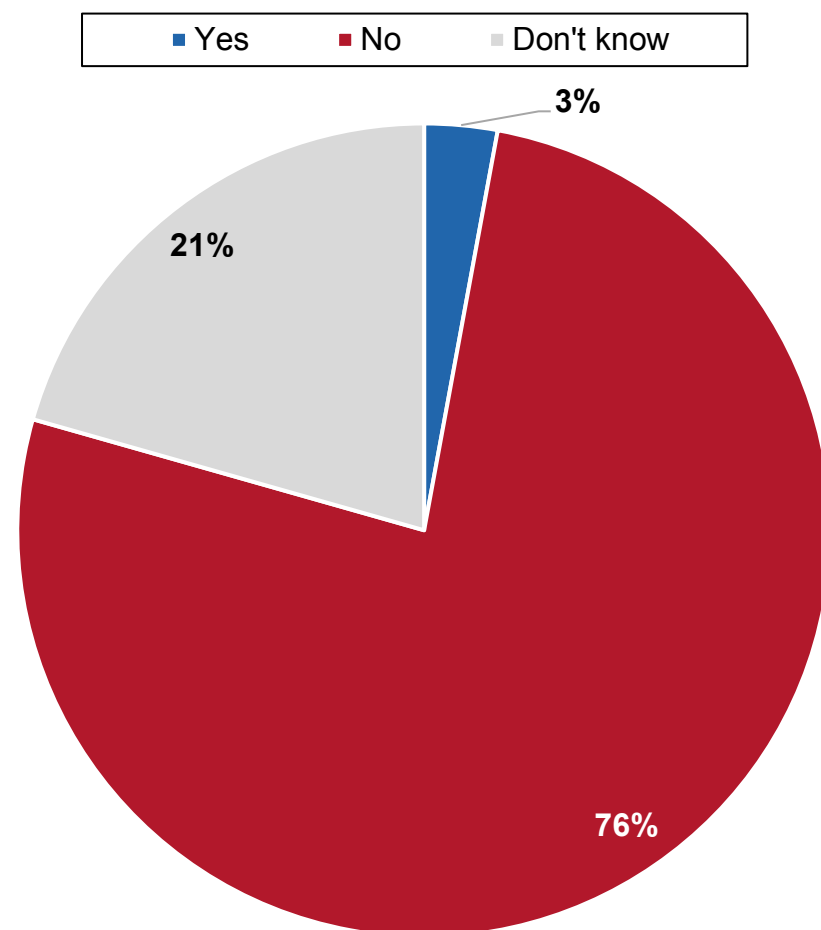


"Has management ever softened or censored a story you covered (or supervised) related to climate change?"
Base: All RTDNA participants who indicated a lack of support from news management, general management, or owner as an obstacle to climate reporting, and who answered the current question; n=36; January 2018.

Is Management an Obstacle for Colleagues?

Three percent of RTDNA survey participants say they have seen management soften or censor a colleague's climate change reporting. We asked a follow-up question to those who had: "In what way(s) has management ever softened or censored a story a colleague covered (or supervised) related to climate change?" These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.

Management's Censorship and Softening of Colleague's Climate Change-related Stories

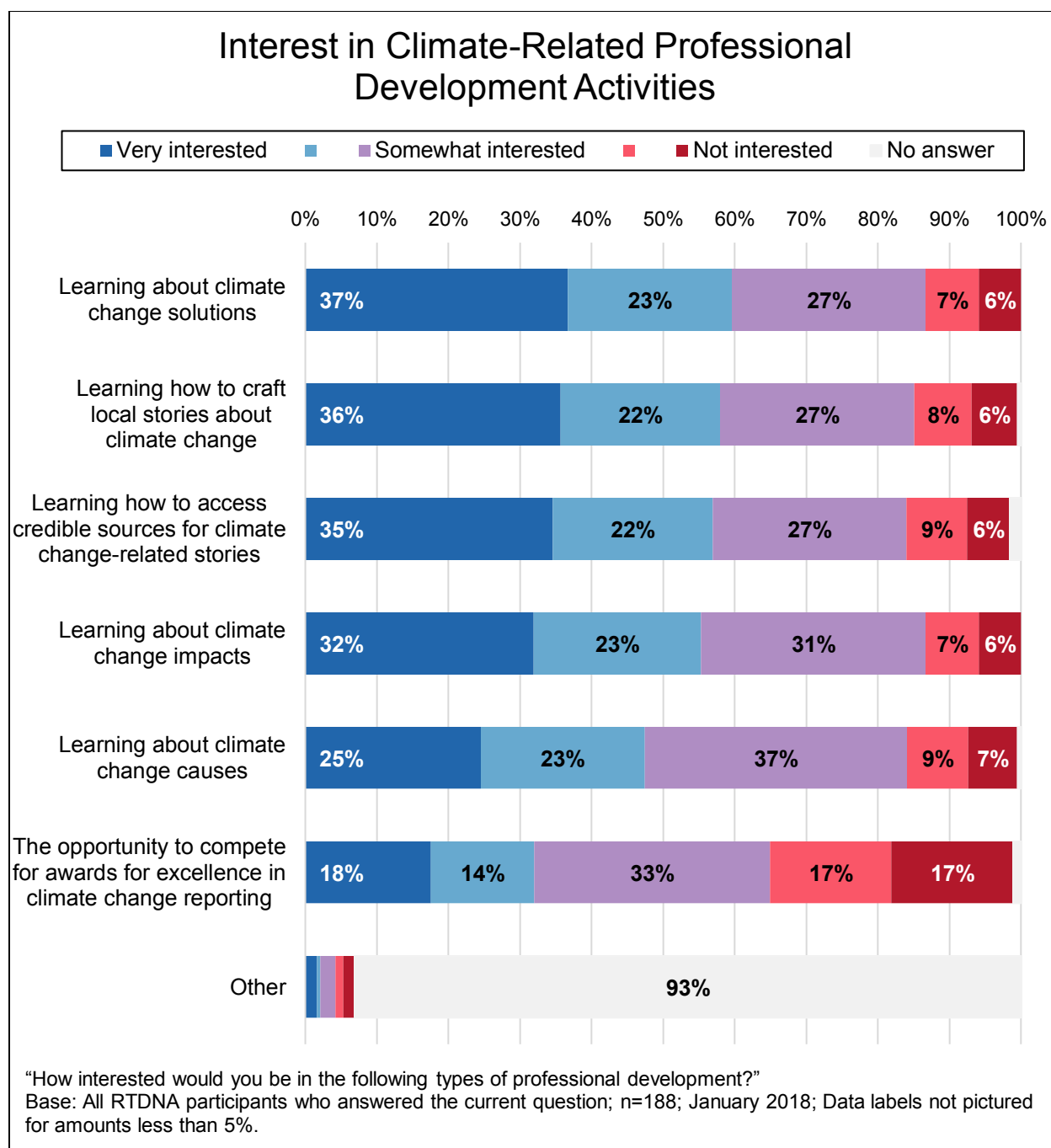


"Have you seen management soften or censor a story a colleague covered (or supervised) related to climate change?"

Base: All RTDNA participants who indicated a lack of general management or owner support or lack of news management support as an obstacle and have not personally experienced management softening or censoring a story related to climate change, and who answered the current question; n=34; January 2018

Professional Development on Climate Change

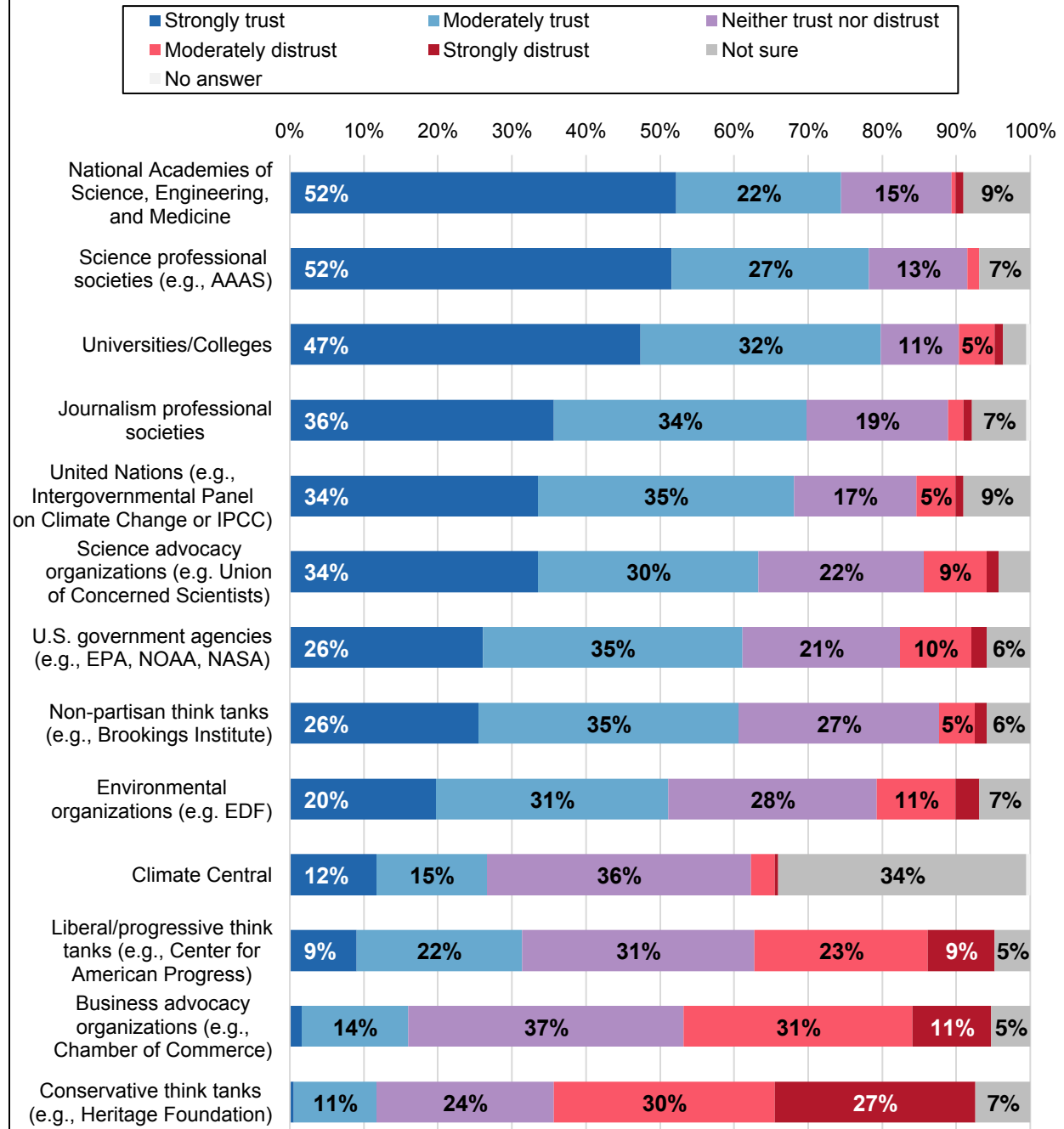
Well over half of RTDNA survey participants are interested in a range of professional development activities related to climate change reporting. The professional development activities they are most interested in are: learning about climate change solutions; learning how to craft local climate stories; learning how to access credible sources of climate stories; and learning about climate change impacts.



Trust in Sources of Climate Change Information

RTDNA survey participants tend to most trust the climate information provided by independent scientific organizations, including the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, professional science societies, and colleges and universities. Professional journalism societies, science advocacy organizations, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are also trusted by many. In comparison, relatively few trust partisan think tanks and business advocacy organizations.

Trust in Sources of Climate Change Information



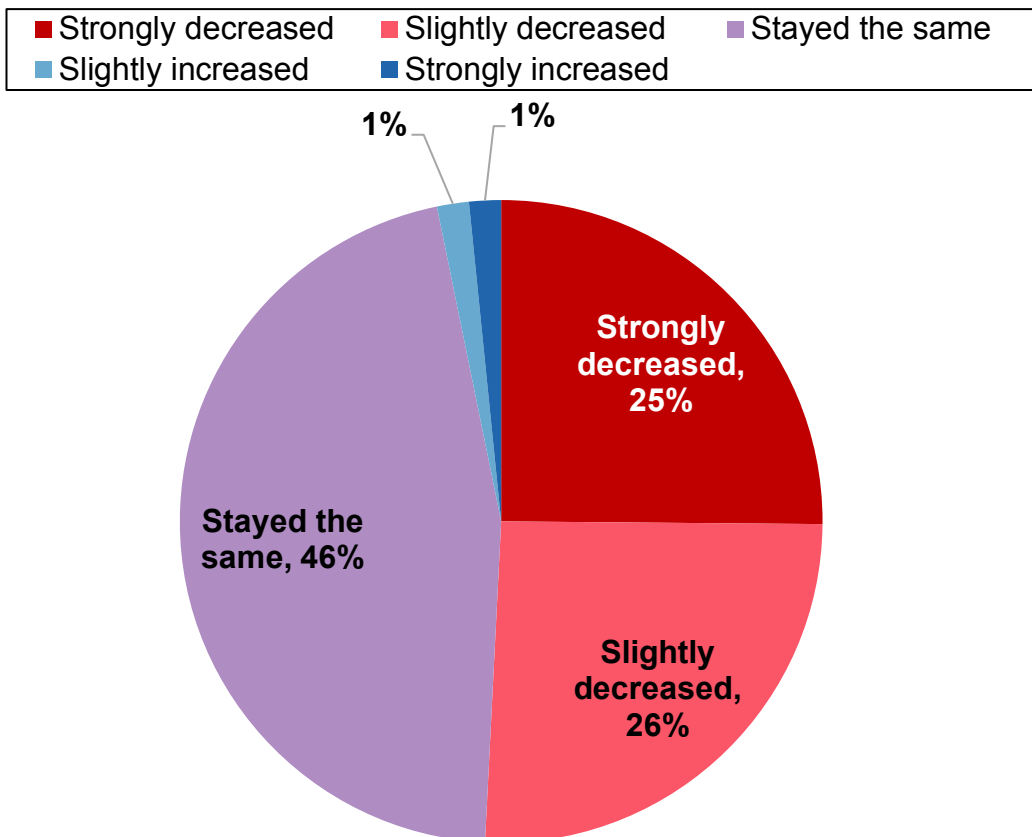
"In general, how much do you trust or distrust the climate change information currently provided by the following organizations?"

Base: All RTDNA participants who answered the current question; n=188; January 2018; Data labels are not pictured for amounts less than 5%.

Change in Trust of Government Institutions?

Just over half of RTDNA survey participants say their trust in U.S. government agencies as sources of information about climate change has decreased over the past 12 months, coinciding with the first year of the Trump administration; few say their trust has increased. Those participants who said their level of trust had changed were asked: “Did your trust in these sources decrease (increase) slightly or strongly?” Those who had experienced an erosion of trust were more or less equally divided between a slight decrease and a strong decrease in trust.

Change in Trust of U.S. Government Agencies as Sources of Climate Change Information



“In the past 12 months, has your trust in U.S. government agencies (e.g., EPA, NOAA, NASA) as sources of information about climate change increased, decreased, or stayed the same?”

“Did your trust in these sources increase slightly or strongly?”

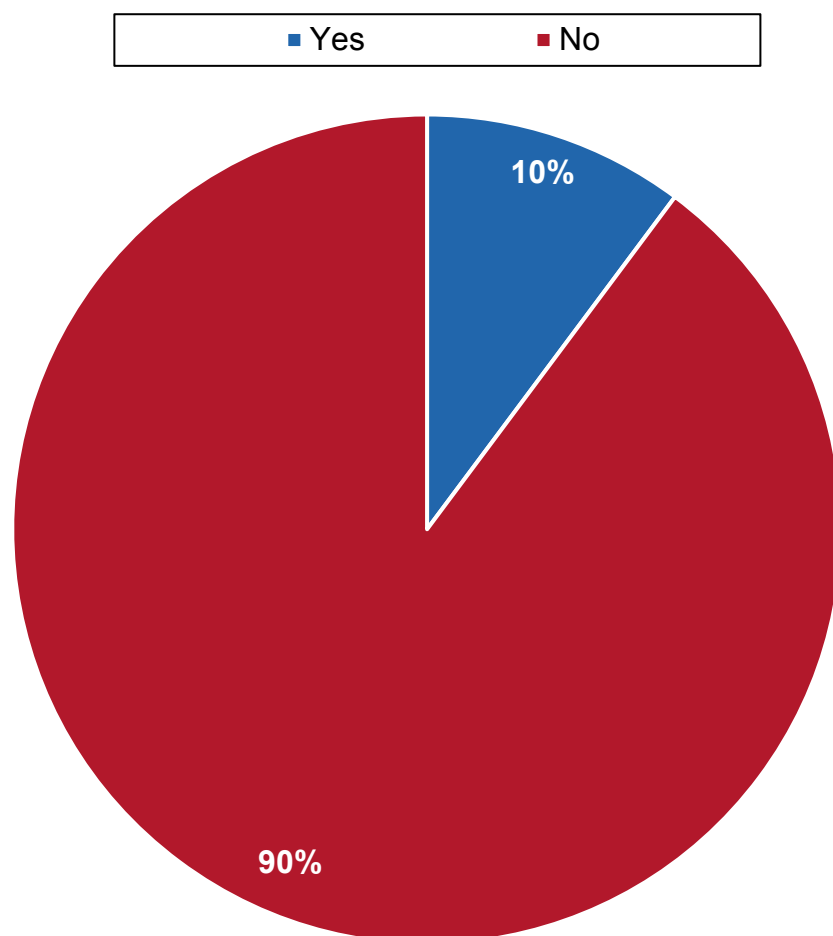
“Did your trust in these sources decrease slightly or strongly?”

Base: All RTDNA participants who answered any of the following questions: “In the past 12 months, has your trust in U.S. government agencies (e.g., EPA, NOAA, NASA) as sources of information about climate change increased, decreased, or stayed the same?” “Did your trust in these sources increase slightly or strongly?” or “Did your trust in these sources decrease slightly or strongly?”; n=189; January 2018.

Avoidance of the Terms Global Warming and Climate Change

Ten percent of RTDNA survey participants who had covered or supervised climate change stories in the prior year say they purposefully avoided using the terms global warming or climate change on at least one occasion. In a follow-up question, we asked them why they did so. These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.

Avoiding the Terms "Global Warming" and "Climate Change" When Covering Climate Change Stories



"When you covered (or supervised) climate change stories in the past 12 months, did you ever purposefully exclude the terms "global warming" or "climate change"?"

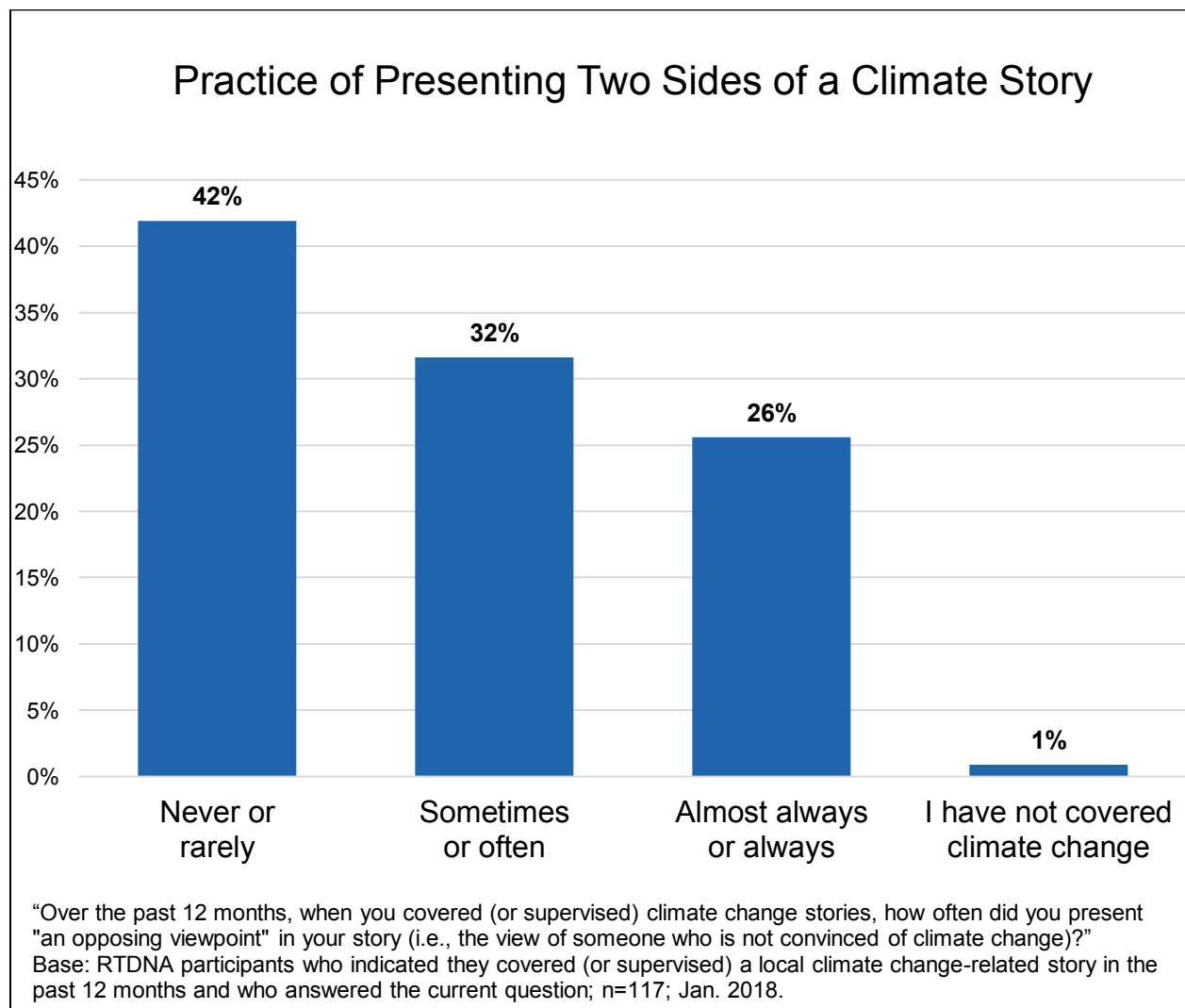
Base: RTDNA participants who covered or supervised local climate change-related stories in the past 12 months and who answered the current question; n=118; January 2018.

Presenting Opposing Viewpoints: Practices and Attitudes

Balance is the professional norm used by some journalists to ensure their reporting remains objective, by including spokespersons on conflicting sides of a debate and by giving equal time and weight to both sides of a story. A ‘false balance’ occurs when this approach is taken despite a weight of evidence strongly favoring one side over another. In effect, such ‘false balance’ has the potential to perpetrate an information bias. Scholars suggest that journalistic accounts of human-caused climate change that include an opposing viewpoint are presenting a false balance.

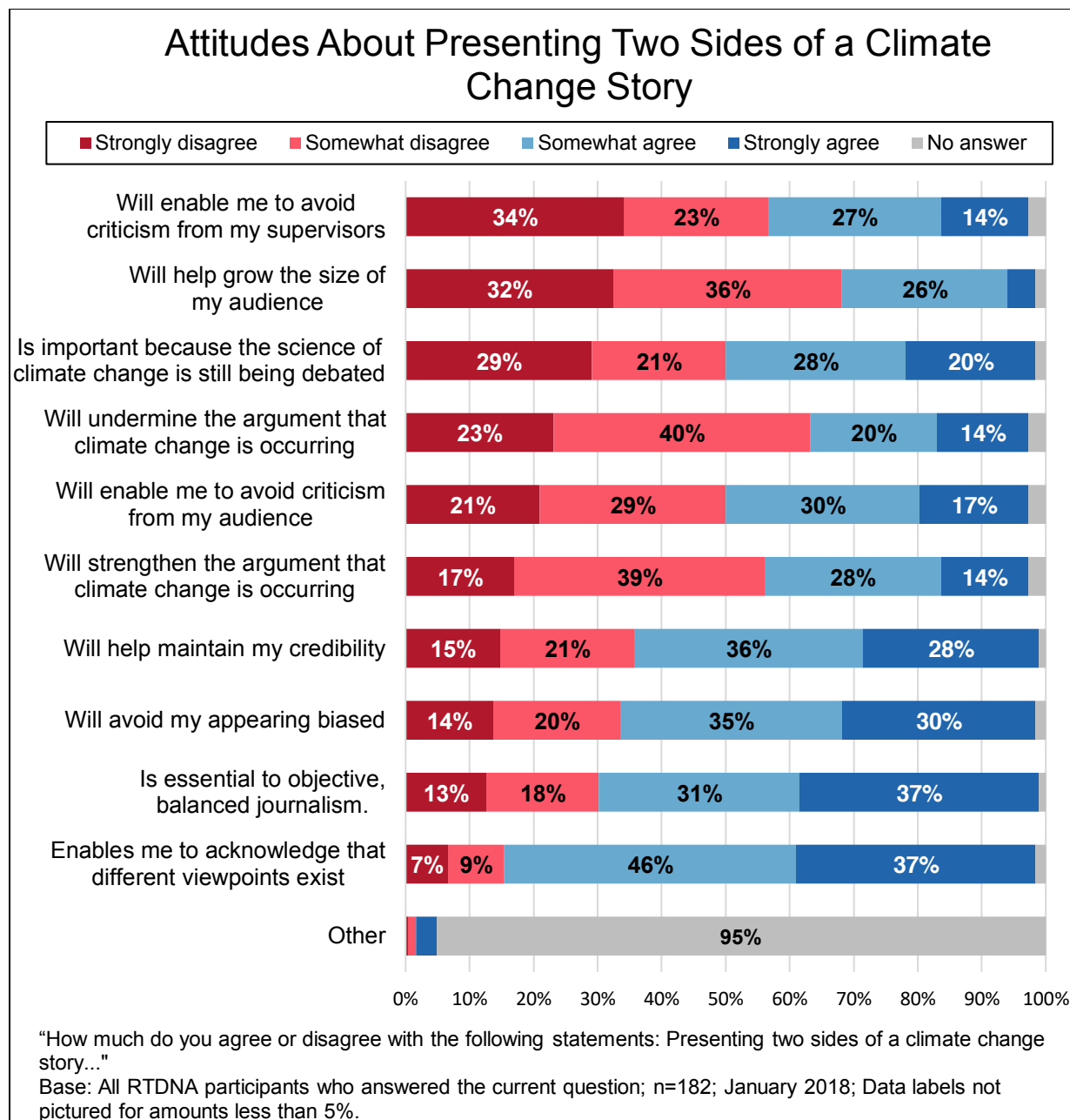
The Practice of Presenting Opposing Viewpoints

About 4 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants who had covered climate change stories during the prior year say they never or rarely included an opposing viewpoint, while nearly 6 out of 10 did so sometimes, often, almost always or always. In a follow-up question, we asked them why they did so. These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.



Attitudes about Presenting Two Sides to a Climate Change Story

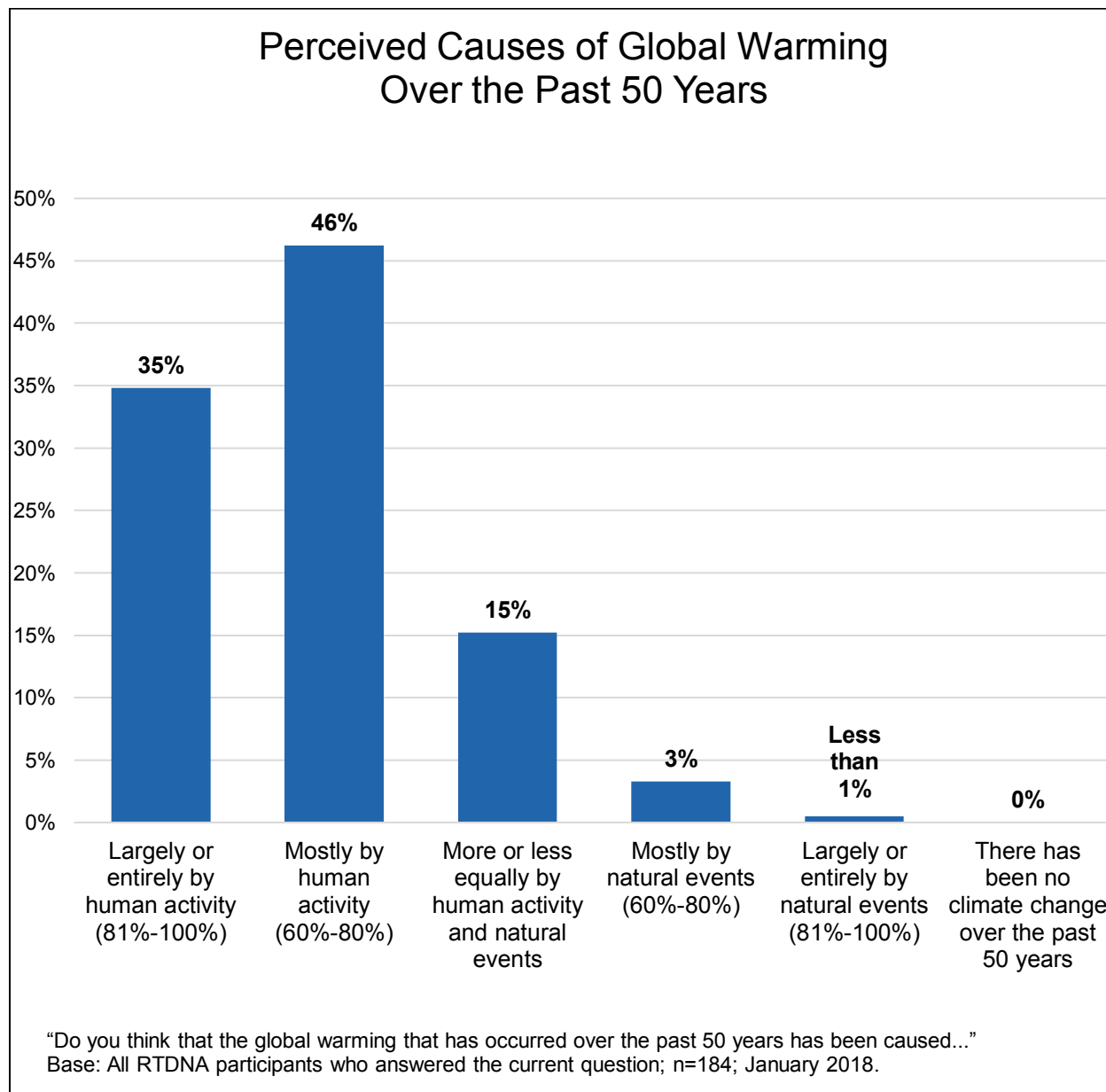
While nearly all RTDNA members are convinced that human-caused climate change is occurring, many feel that reporting two sides of a climate change story is helpful for one or more reasons. For example, more than 8 out of 10 say it enables them to acknowledge that different viewpoints exist, nearly 7 out of 10 feel it is essential to objective, balanced journalism, and more than 6 out of 10 say it will help maintain their credibility and that it will avoid the appearance of bias.



Additional Beliefs, Attitudes and Experiences with Global Warming

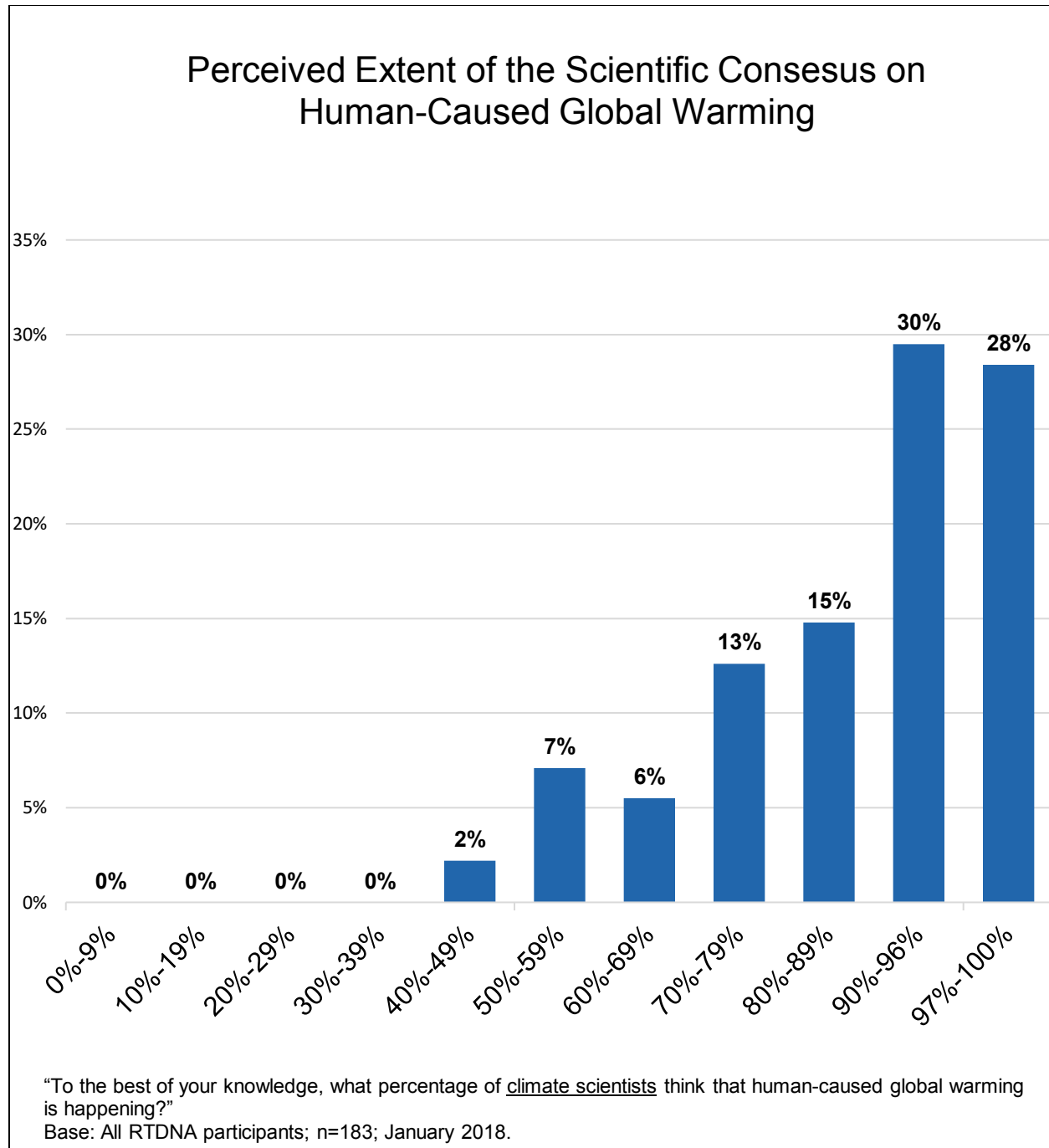
Human Activity or Natural Events

More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants think that the global warming that has occurred in the past 50 years is mostly, largely or entirely due to human activity; 15% think it is caused equally by human activity and natural causes. Very few think it is mostly caused by natural events.



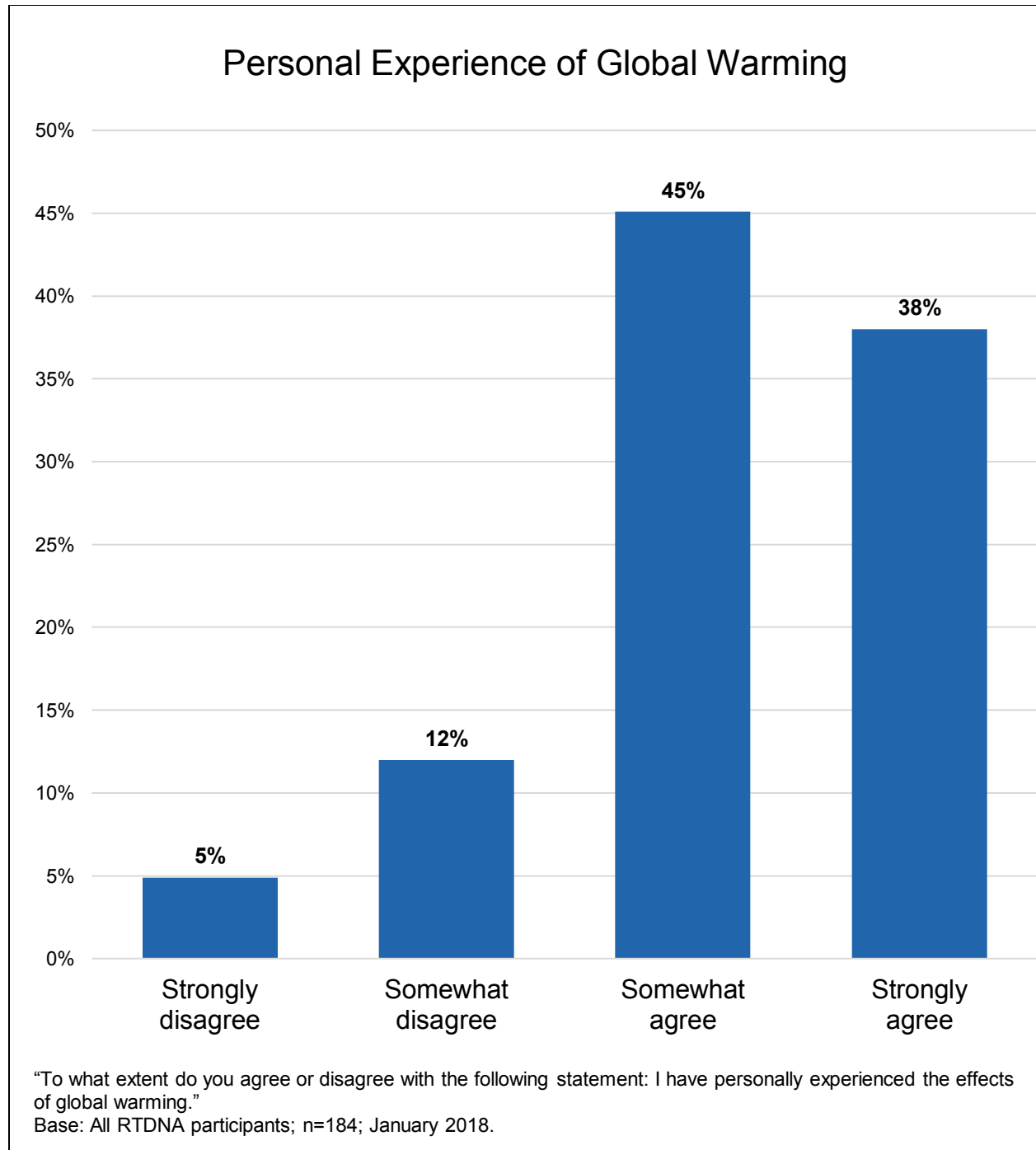
Perceived Scientific Consensus about Human-Caused Global Warming

Nearly 3 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants are aware that 97% or more of climate scientists think human-caused global warming is occurring, and nearly 6 out of 10 think the scientific consensus is 90% or greater. Conversely, about 4 out of 10 say the consensus is less than 90%, and some say it is far less.



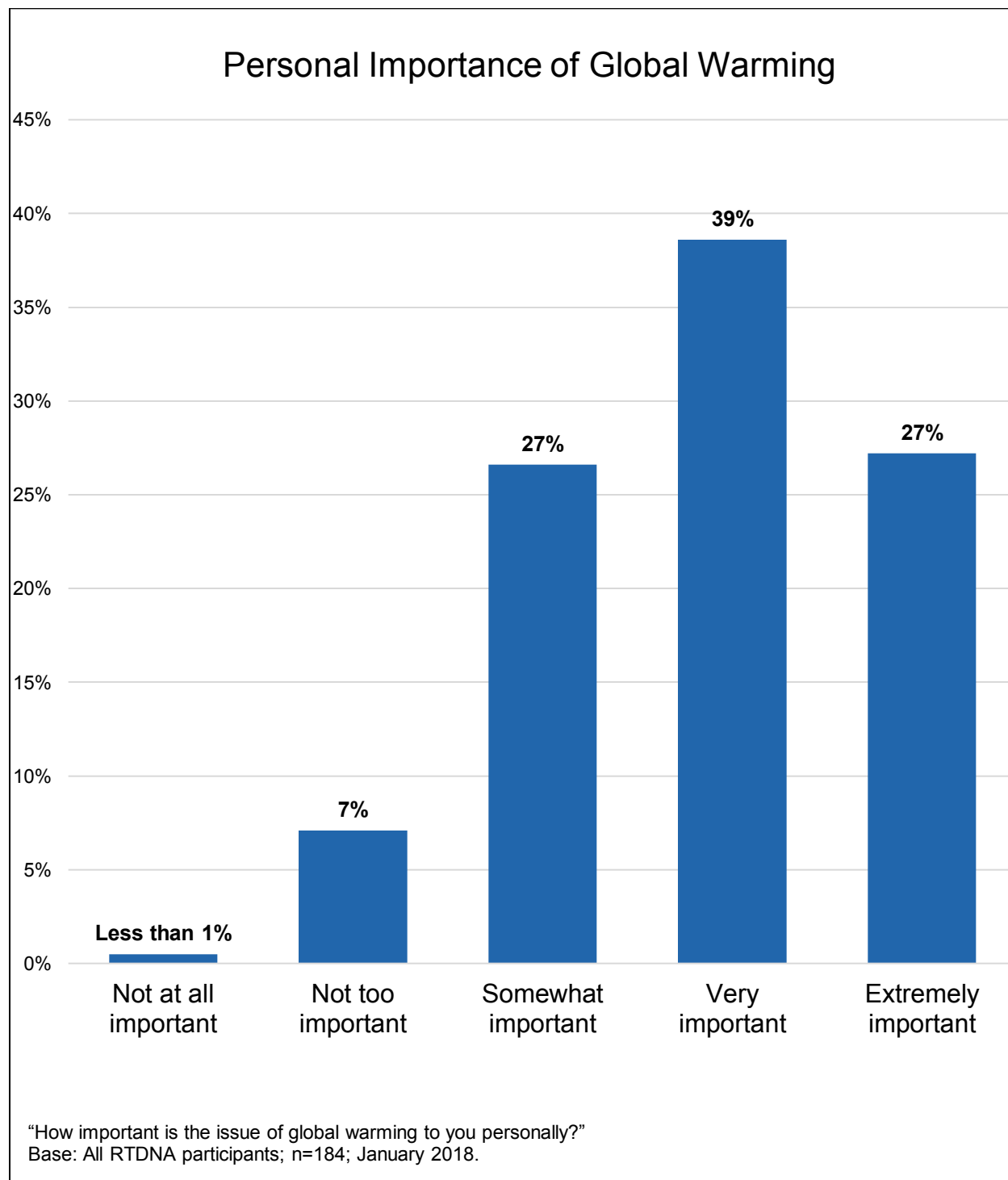
Personal Experience of Global Warming

More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants agree with the statement, “I have personally experienced the effects of global warming,” with nearly 4 out of 10 strongly agreeing. In a follow-up question, we asked these participants, “In what way(s) have you personally experienced global warming?” These open-ended responses will be coded and reported at a future date.



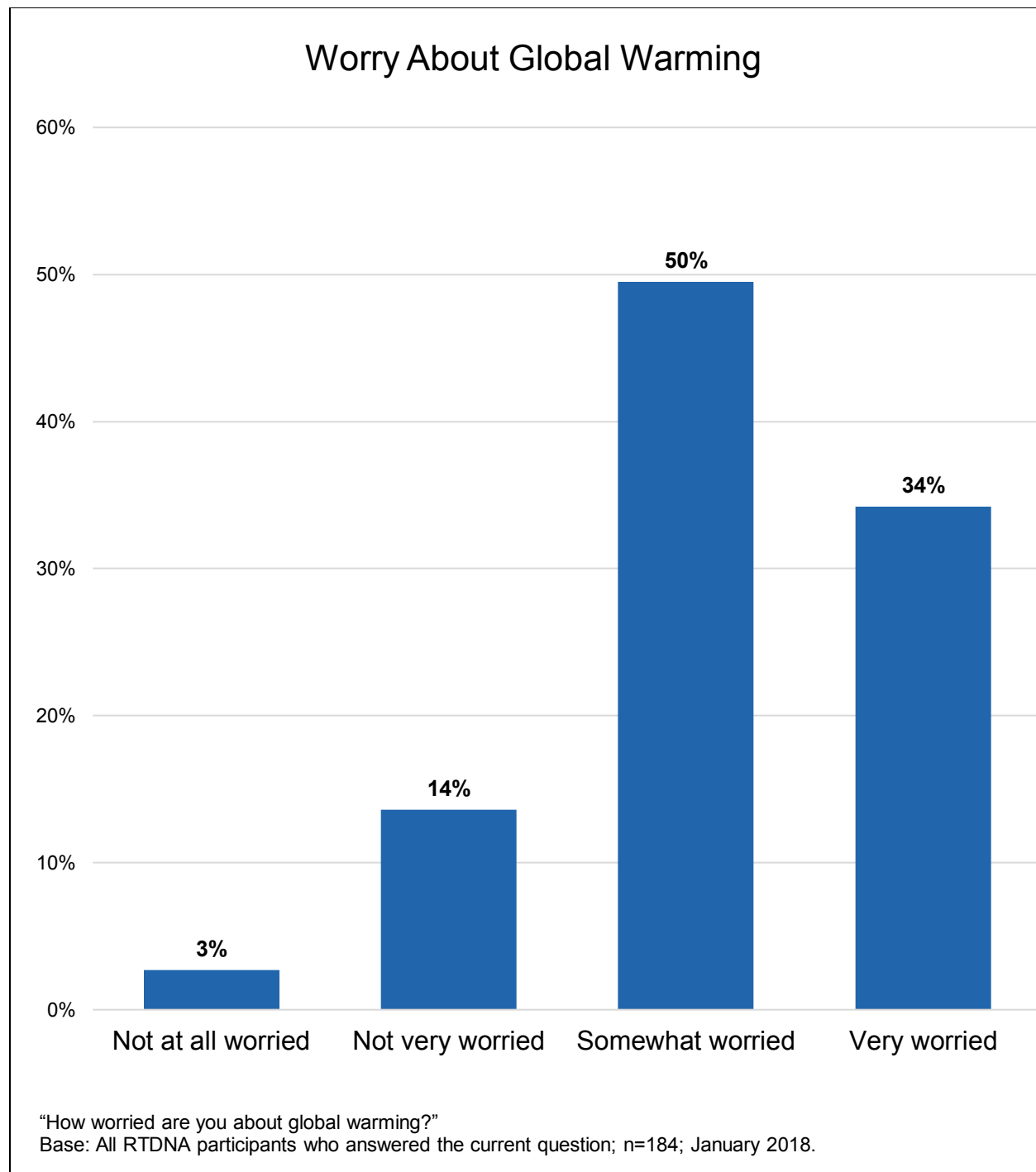
Personal Importance of Global Warming

More than 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say the issue of global warming is at least somewhat personally important to them; two-thirds say it is very or extremely important to them.



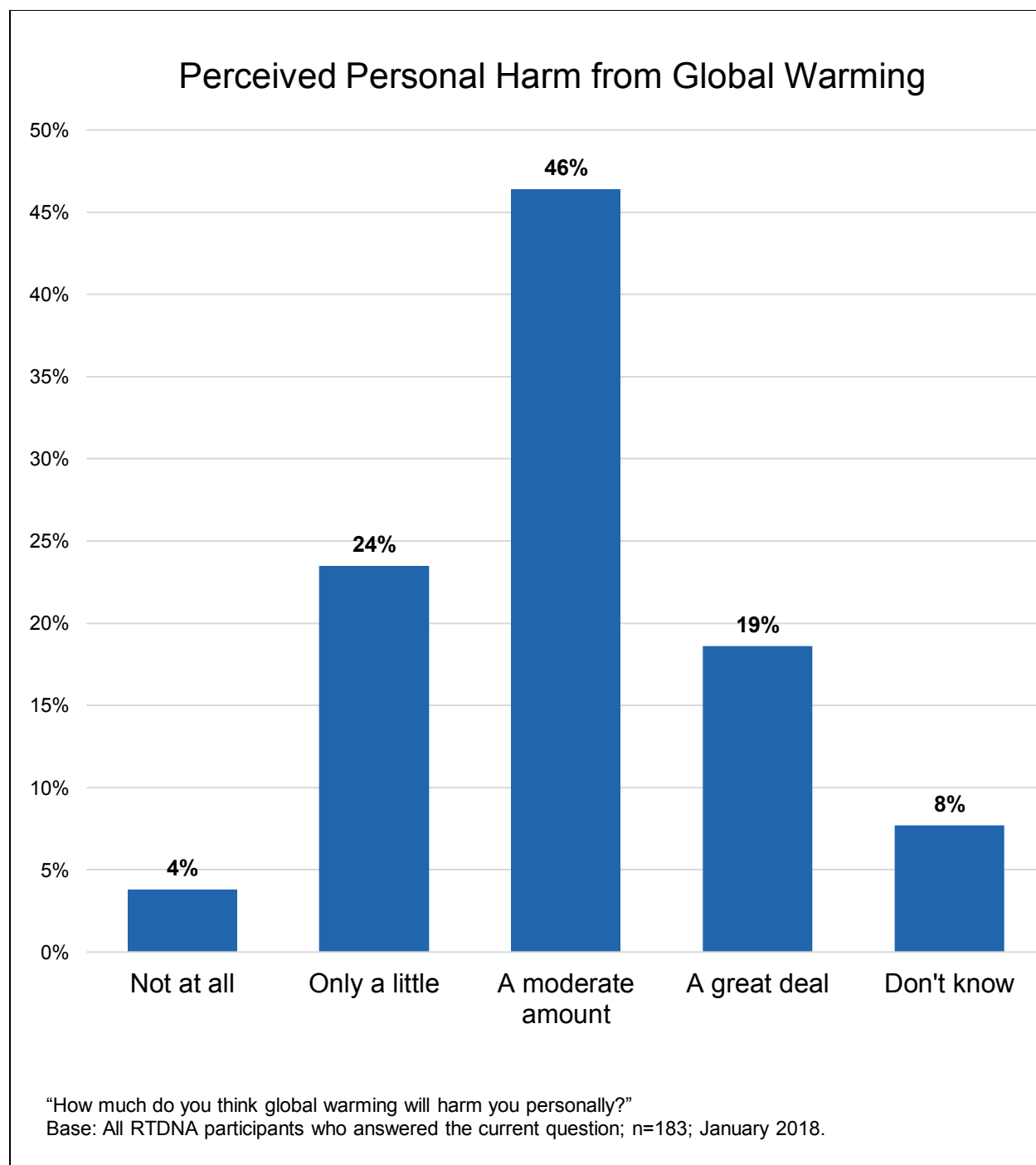
Worry About Global Warming

More than 8 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants say they are worried about global warming; more than one-third say they are very worried.



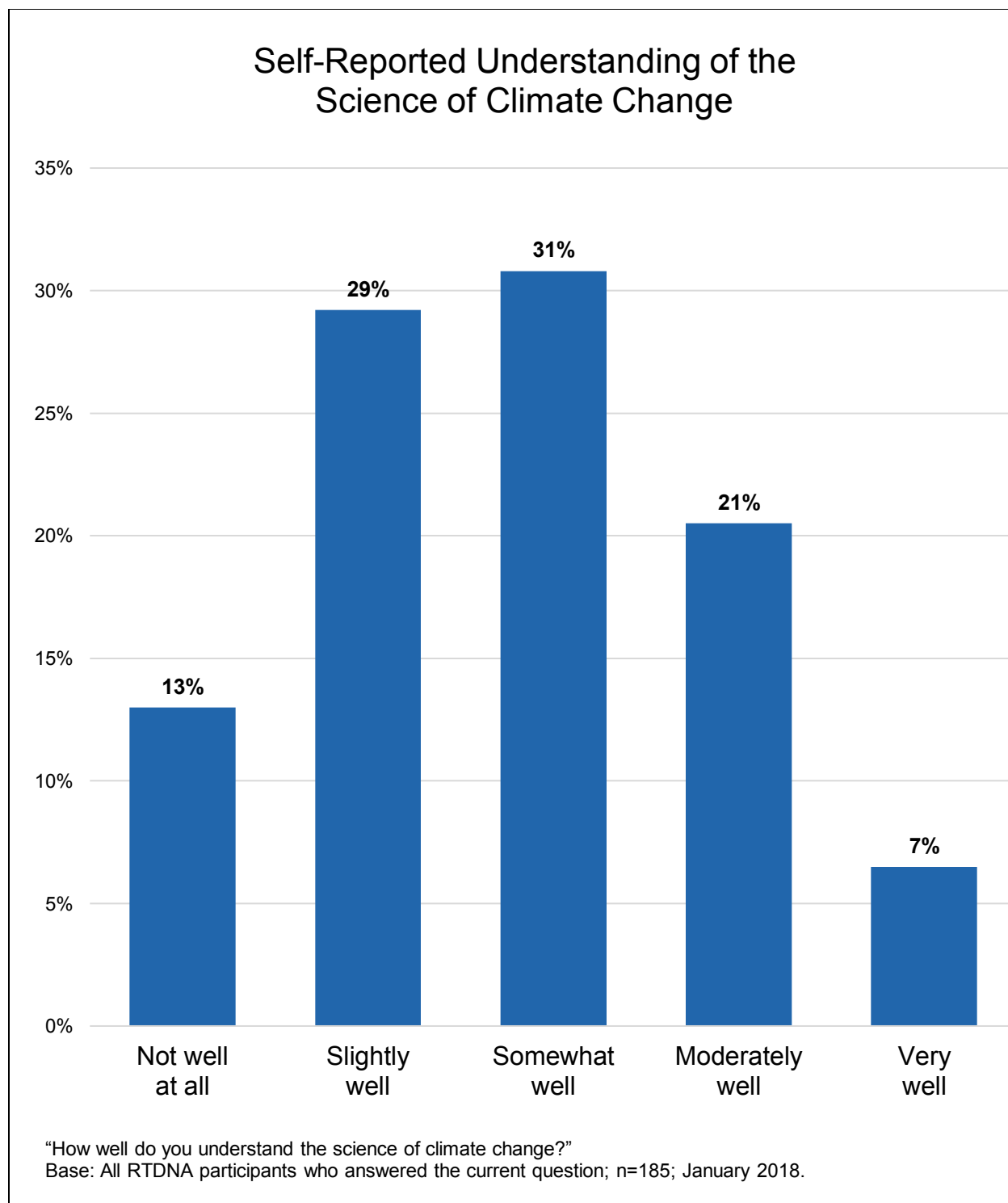
Personal Harm from Global Warming

Nearly 9 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants feel they will be personally harmed by global warming, if only a little; nearly 2 out of 3 think they will be harmed a moderate amount or a great deal.



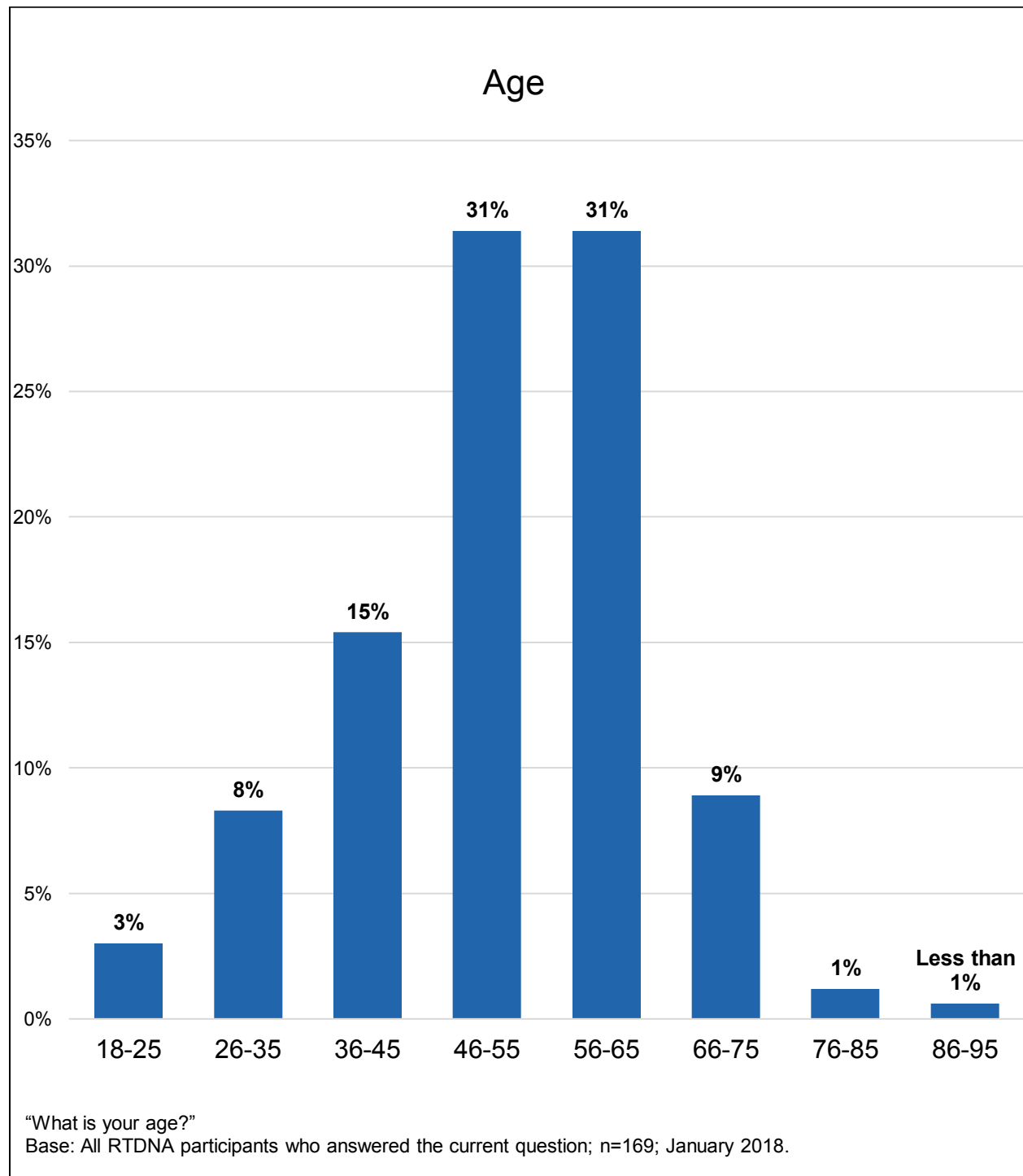
Understanding the Science of Climate Change

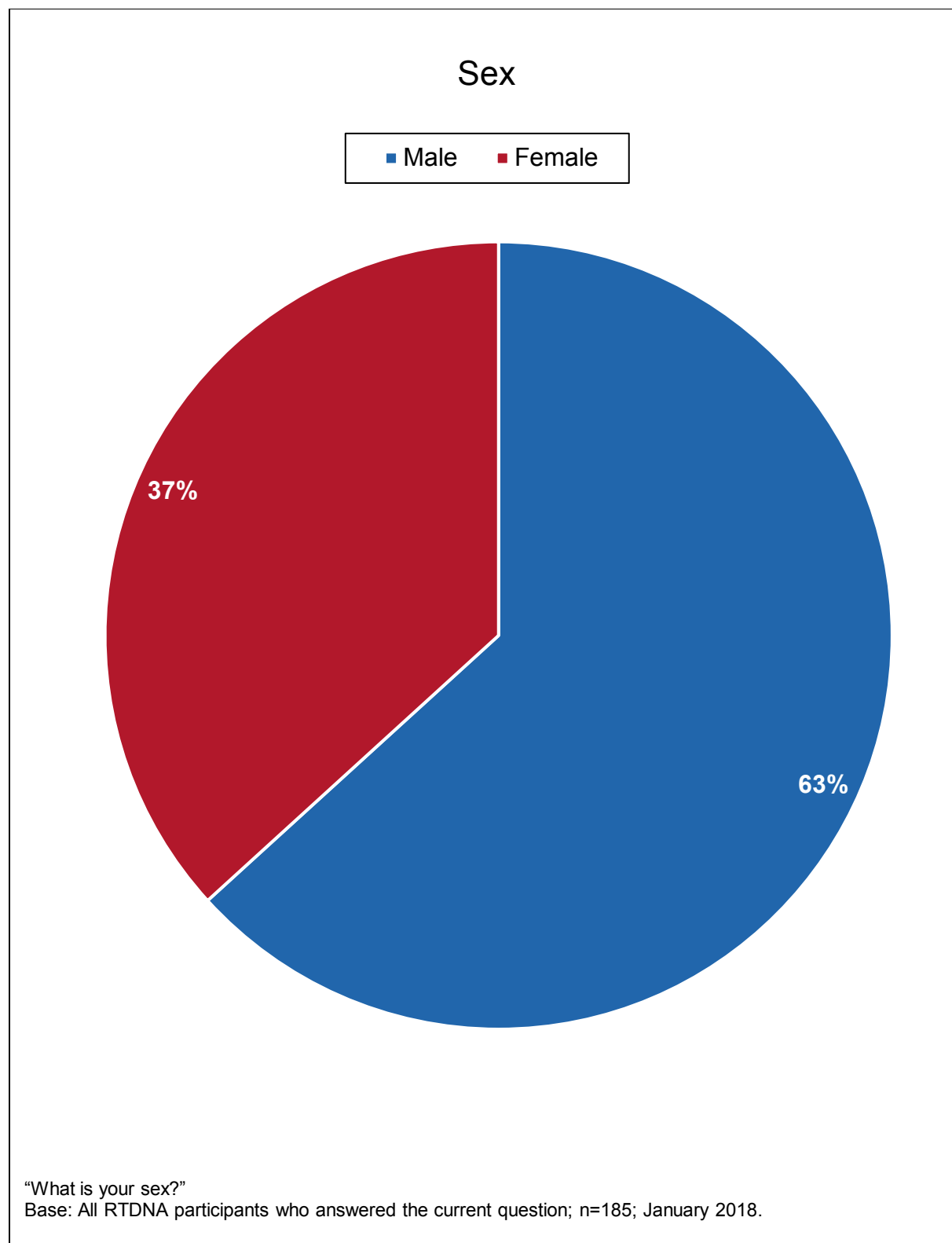
Nearly 6 out of 10 RTDNA survey participants feel they know the science of climate change somewhat, moderately, or very well.

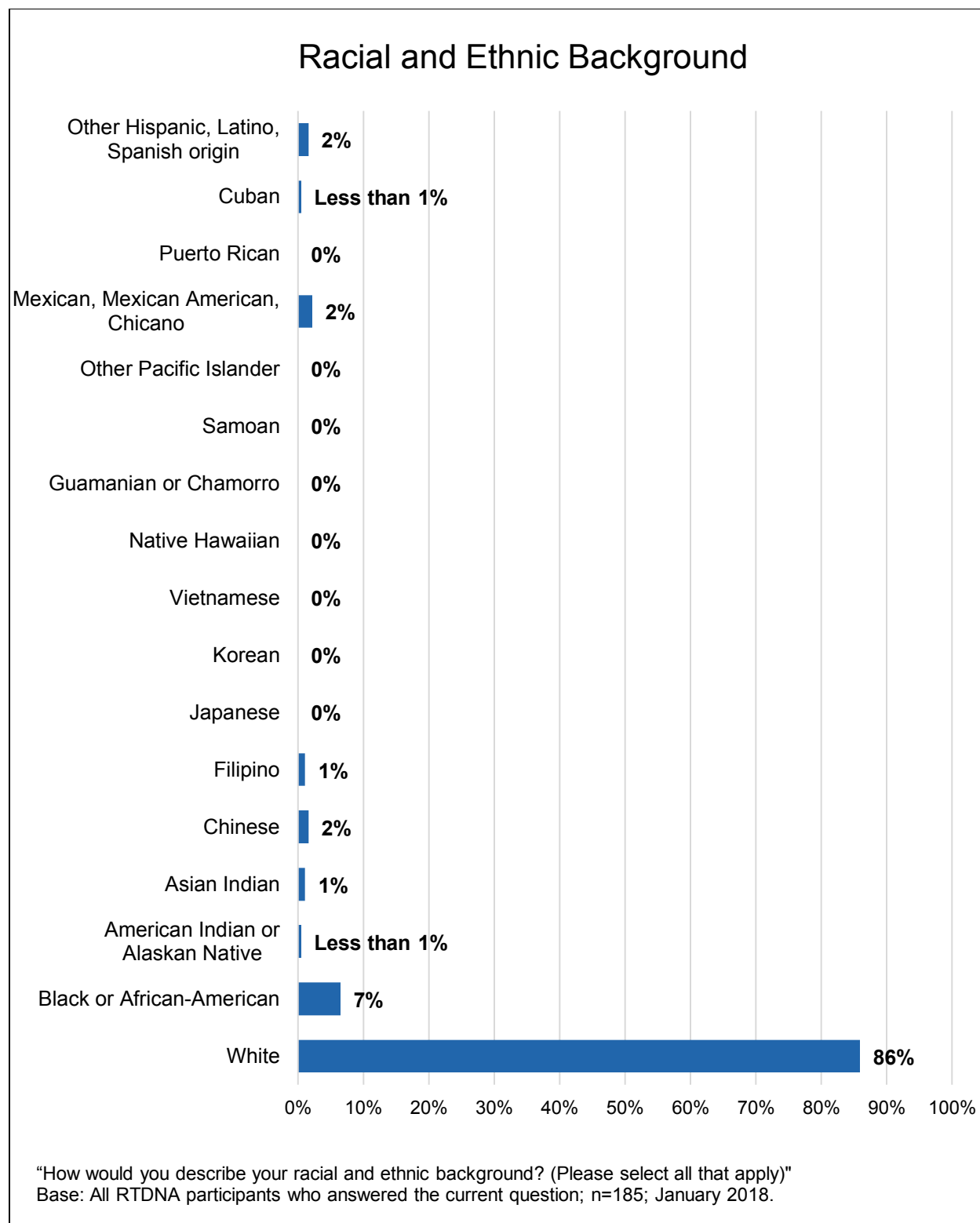


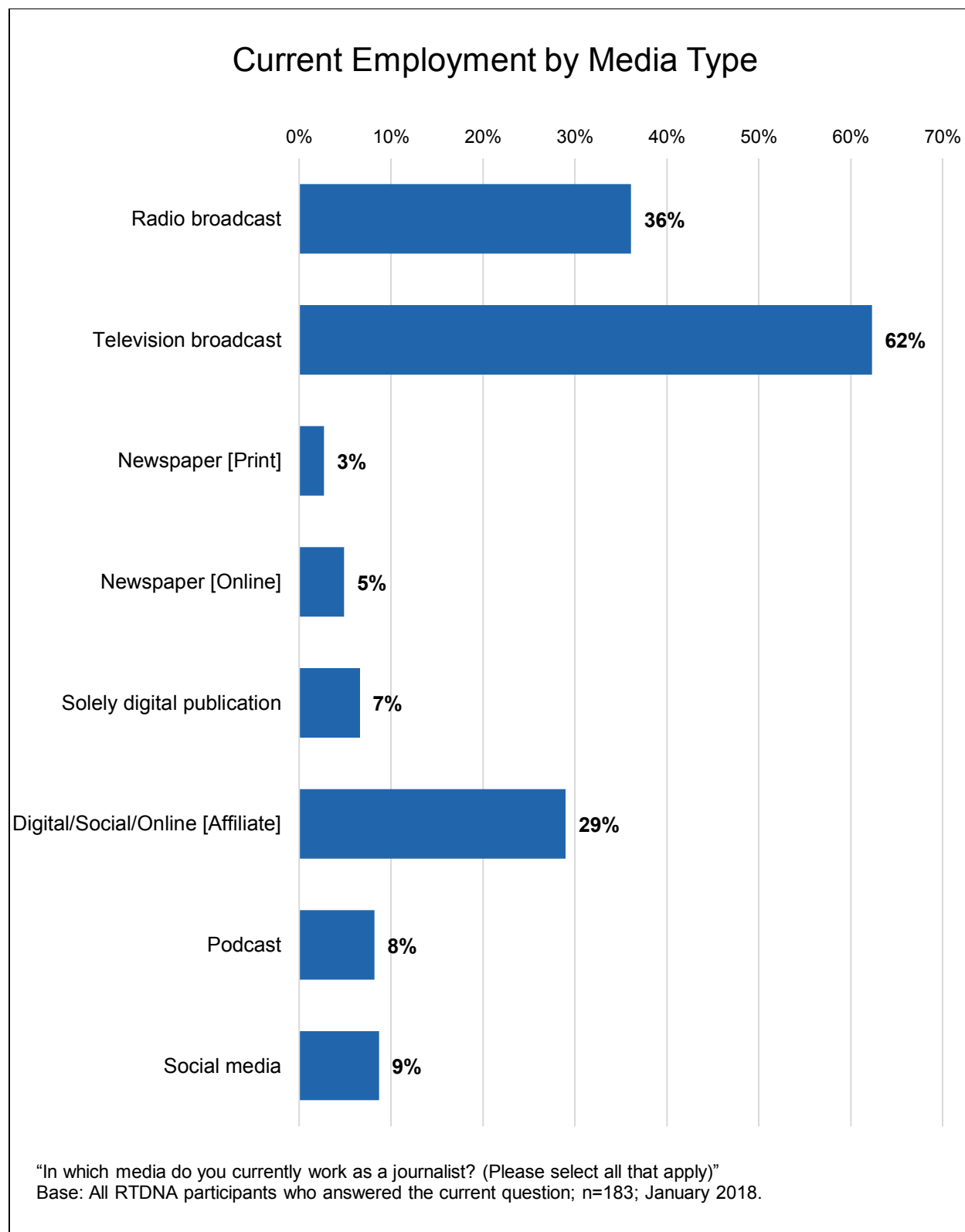
Personal Characteristics

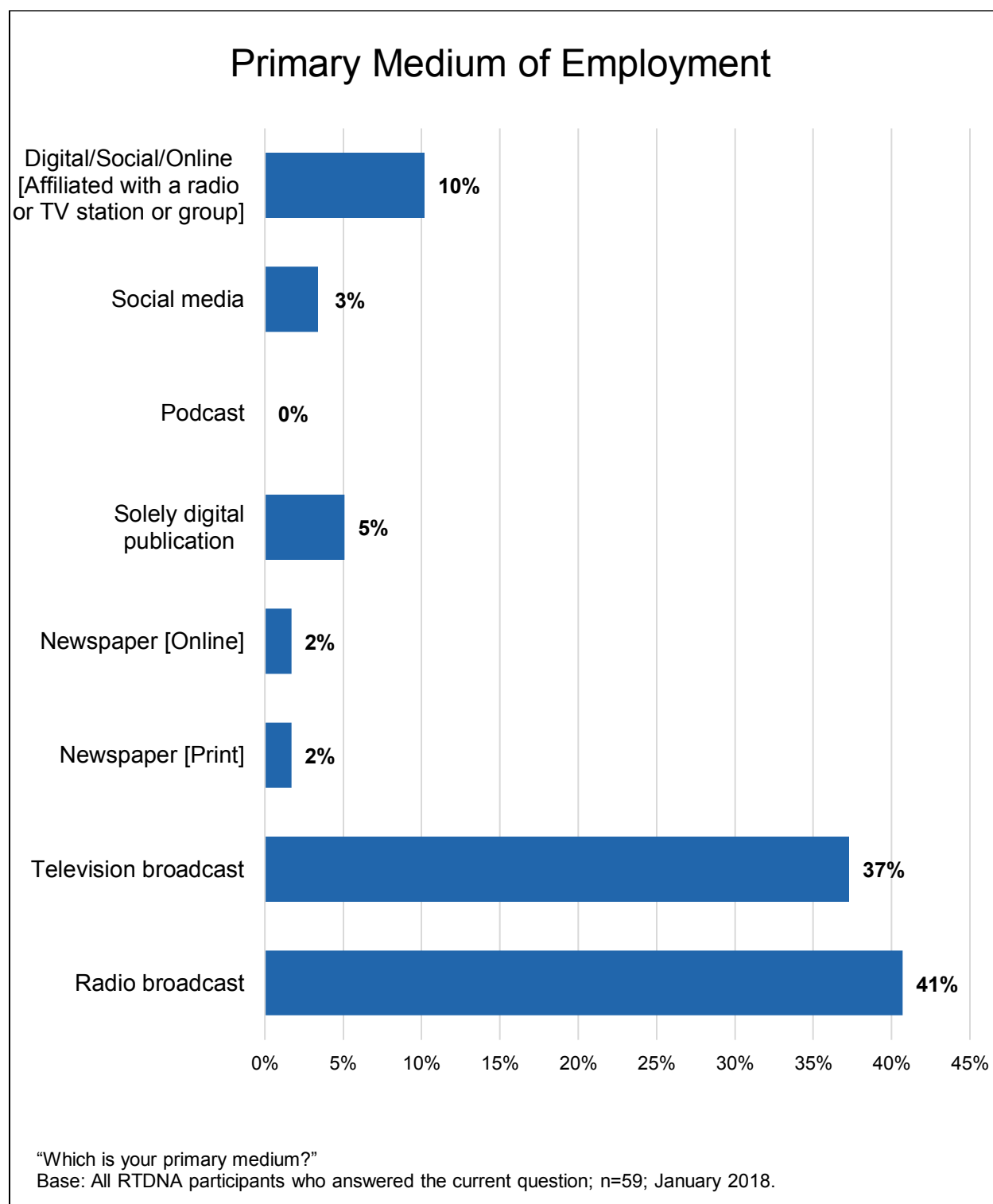
Age of Respondents

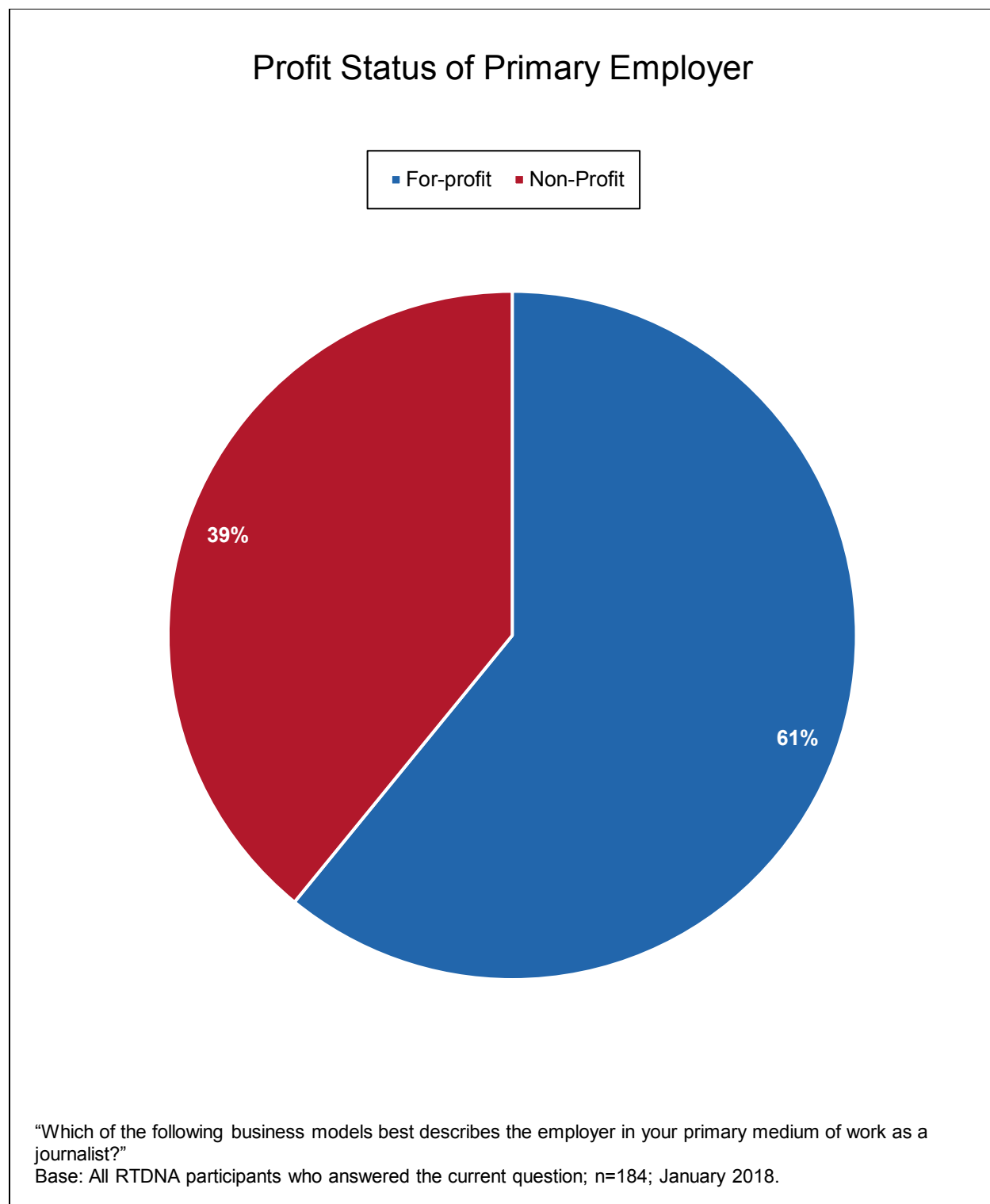


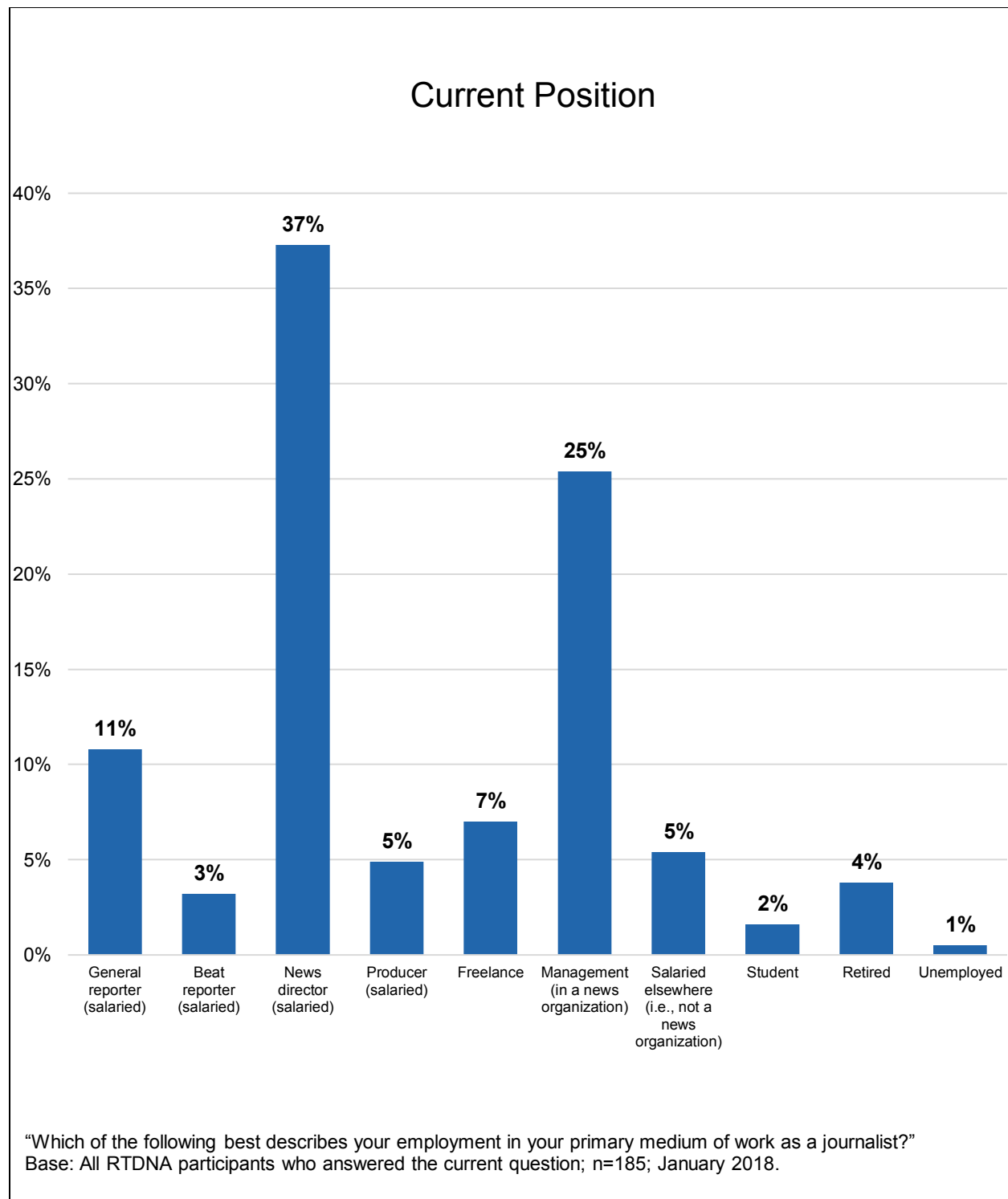
Sex of Respondents

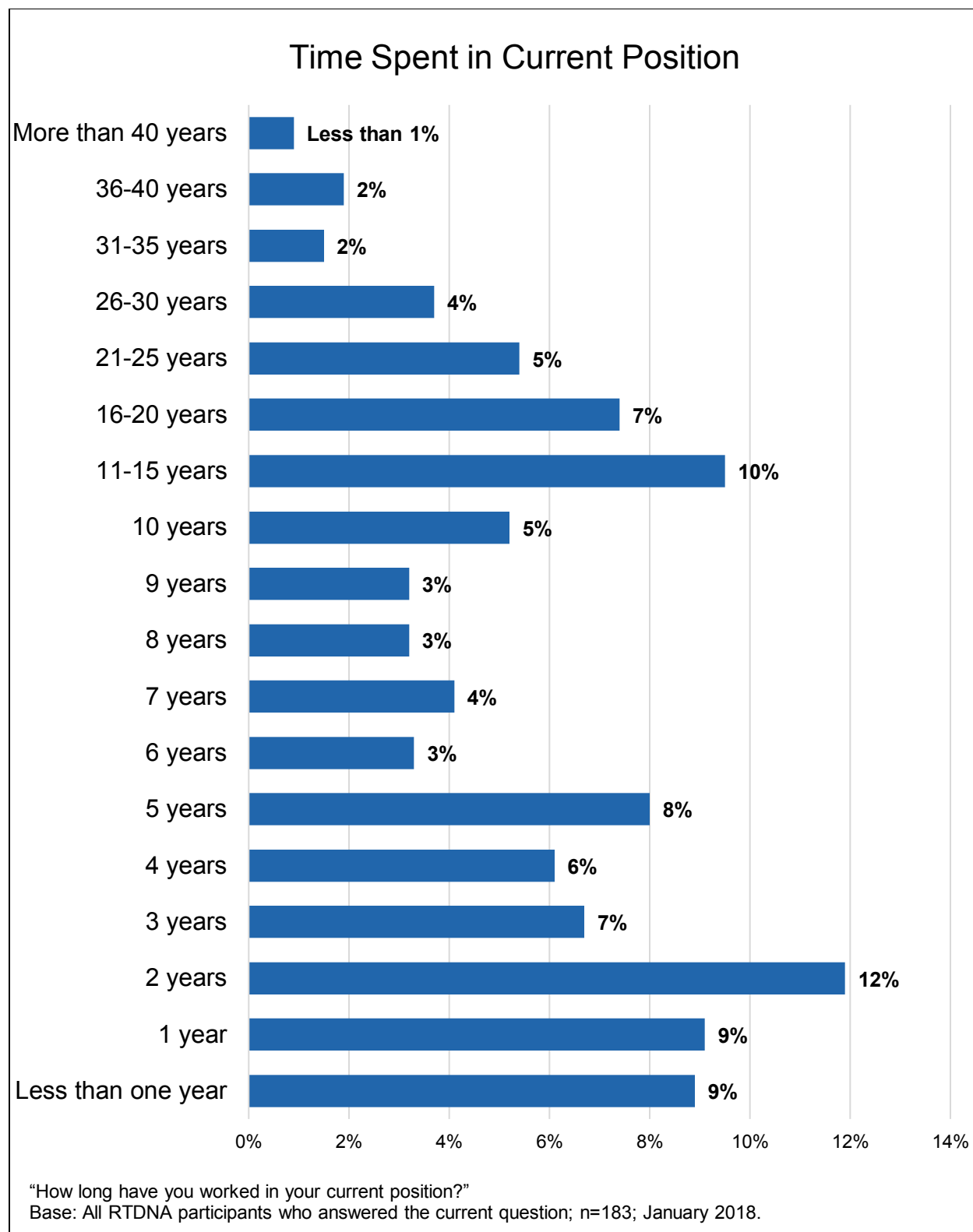
Race and Ethnicity of Respondents

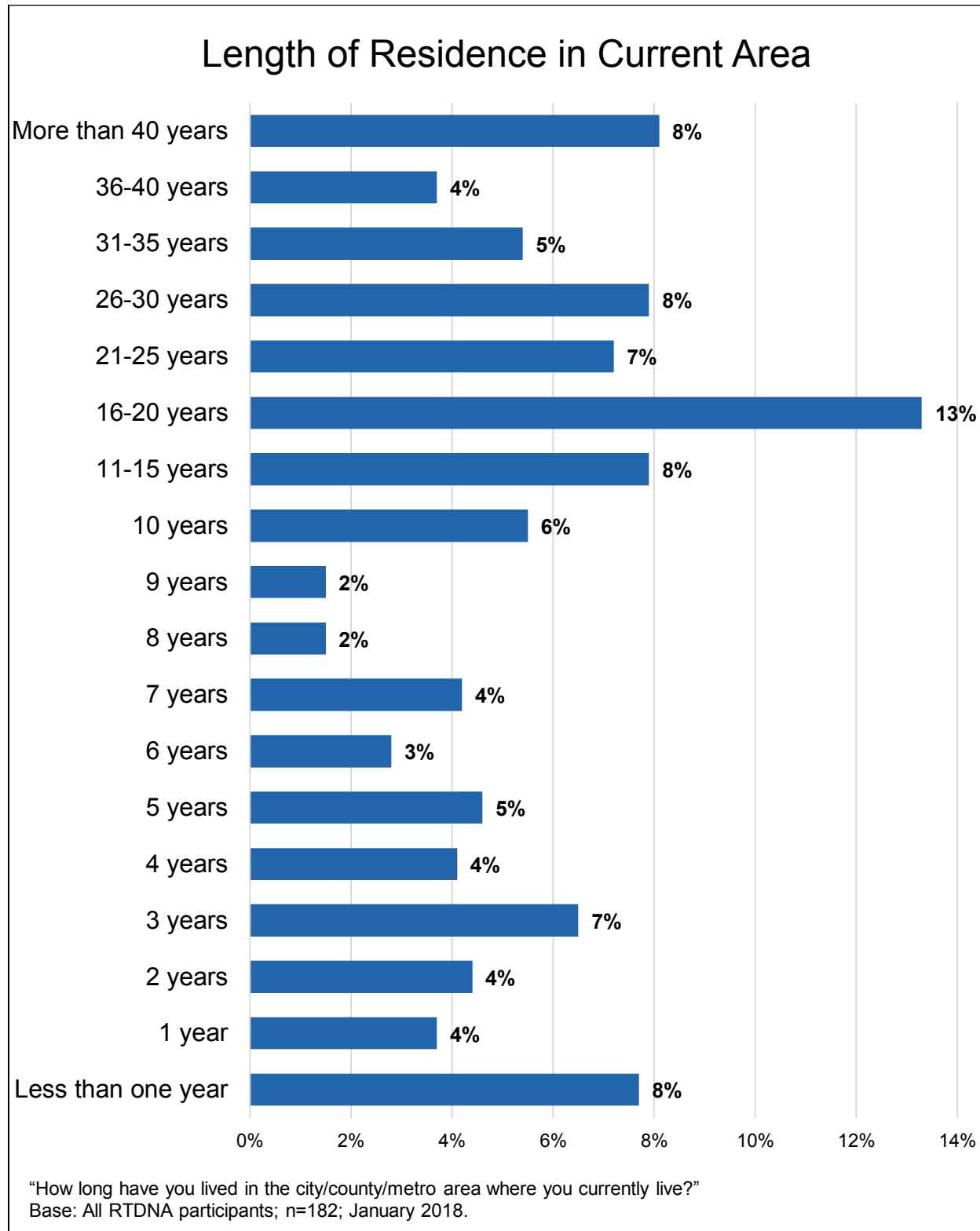
Current Employment by Media Type

Primary Medium

Profit/Non-Profit Status of Primary Place of Employment

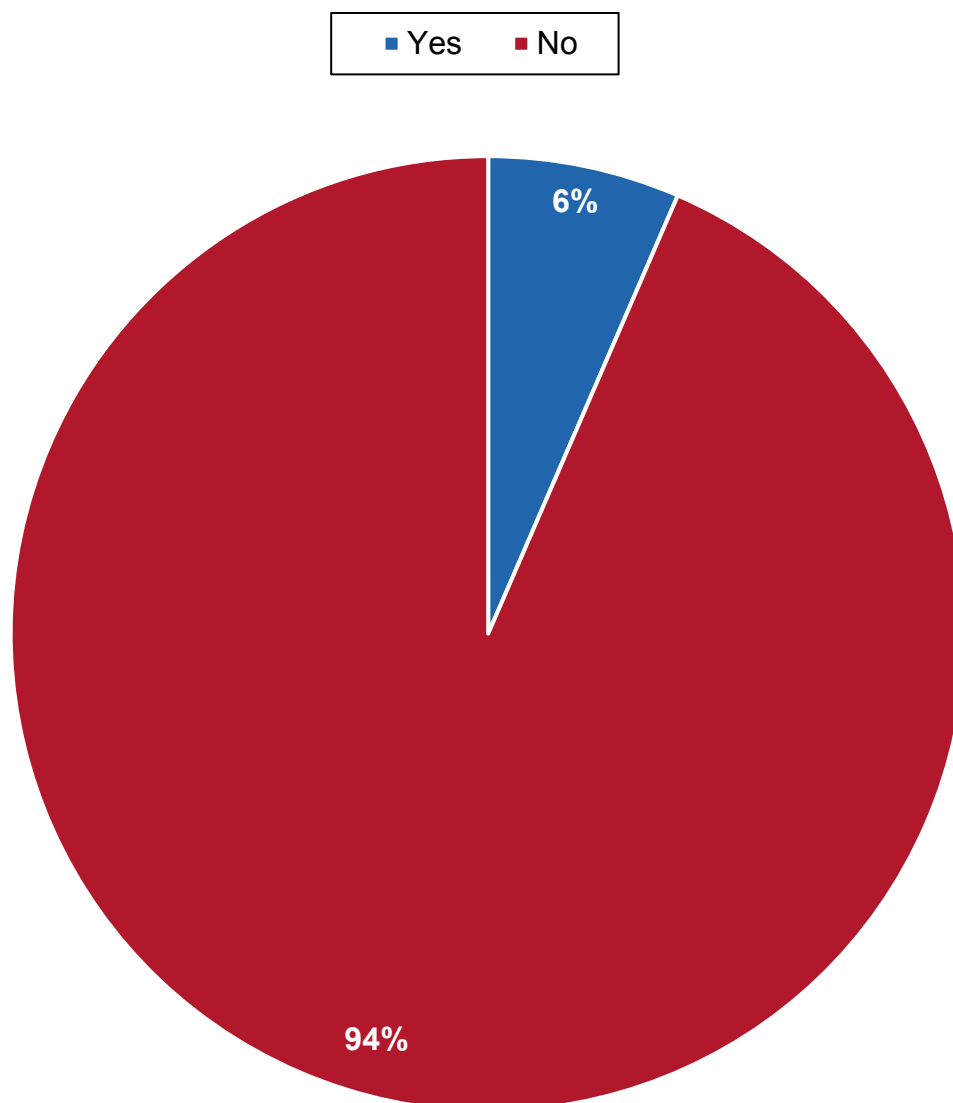
Current Position

Time Spent in Current Position

Length of Residence in Current Area

STEM Training

Formal Education (Major or Minor) in STEM Discipline



"Did you major or minor in a STEM discipline (science, technology, engineering, or math) in college or graduate school?"

Base: All RTDNA participants who answered the current question; n=185; January 2018.

Appendix I: Survey Method

This survey of Radio Television Digital News Association members aimed to investigate members' feelings, experience, and opinions of climate change and climate change reporting. The survey's sampling frame was RTDNA's membership base with email addresses on file. This provided contact information for 1,217 RTDNA members. The survey was administered online using Qualtrics, a web-based survey system.

Several days prior to receiving an email from the Principal Investigator with a formal invitation to participate and a personalized link to the survey, RTDNA members received an email from RTDNA leadership encouraging them to participate. The formal invitation was emailed via Qualtrics on January 4th. Over the course of the following four weeks, RTDNA members who did not complete the survey were sent up to five reminders to participate. The survey was closed February 1st. In total, 235 RTDNA members participated in the survey, yielding a participation rate of 19.3%, and 190 survey participants completed the survey, a completion rate of 15.6%. The survey took participants a median time of 17 minutes to complete.

The survey instrument was designed by Edward Maibach, Richard T. Craig, William Yagatich, Kristin Timm, Shaelyn Patzer, and Josh Murphy of George Mason University. The survey instrument is available upon request.