



Americans' Views of Public School Teachers and Personnel in the Wake of COVID-19



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Why This Study?

- Even before COVID, there were deep concerns about the K-12 workforce – salaries, benefits, staff shortages, fewer people going into the profession.
- The COVID-19 pandemic put unprecedented pressures on the K-12 workforce – overnight pivot to virtual, learning loss, political crossfire on masks, vaccines and other issues like curriculum.
- Now, deeper concerns about losing even more K-12 professionals.
- This study assesses public opinion on a range of issues: overall sentiment about teachers, salaries and benefits.
- Serves as an education and advocacy tool for K-12 and retired educators.
- Funded by NRTA.

Study Methodology

- The survey was conducted by Greenwald Research in December 2021.
- A total of 1,005 individuals aged 25 and older completed the survey, and the final data were weighted by age, gender, and income to reflect U.S. demographics.
- The sample was selected using Dynata, an online sample provider.
- The poll was oversampled in Kentucky and Florida, states that often have pension battles.

AMERICANS' VIEWS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PERSONNEL IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19



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By Dan Doonan and Kelly Kenneally

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4 Key Findings

1. Americans are deeply concerned about teachers and public school employees.
2. Americans value K-12 employees.
3. Better pay and benefits, student loan forgiveness, and more school resources would help attract and retain teachers and school personnel.
4. Healthcare and retirement benefits are viewed as magnets for attracting and retaining K-12 school personnel, and these benefits should be funded and protected.

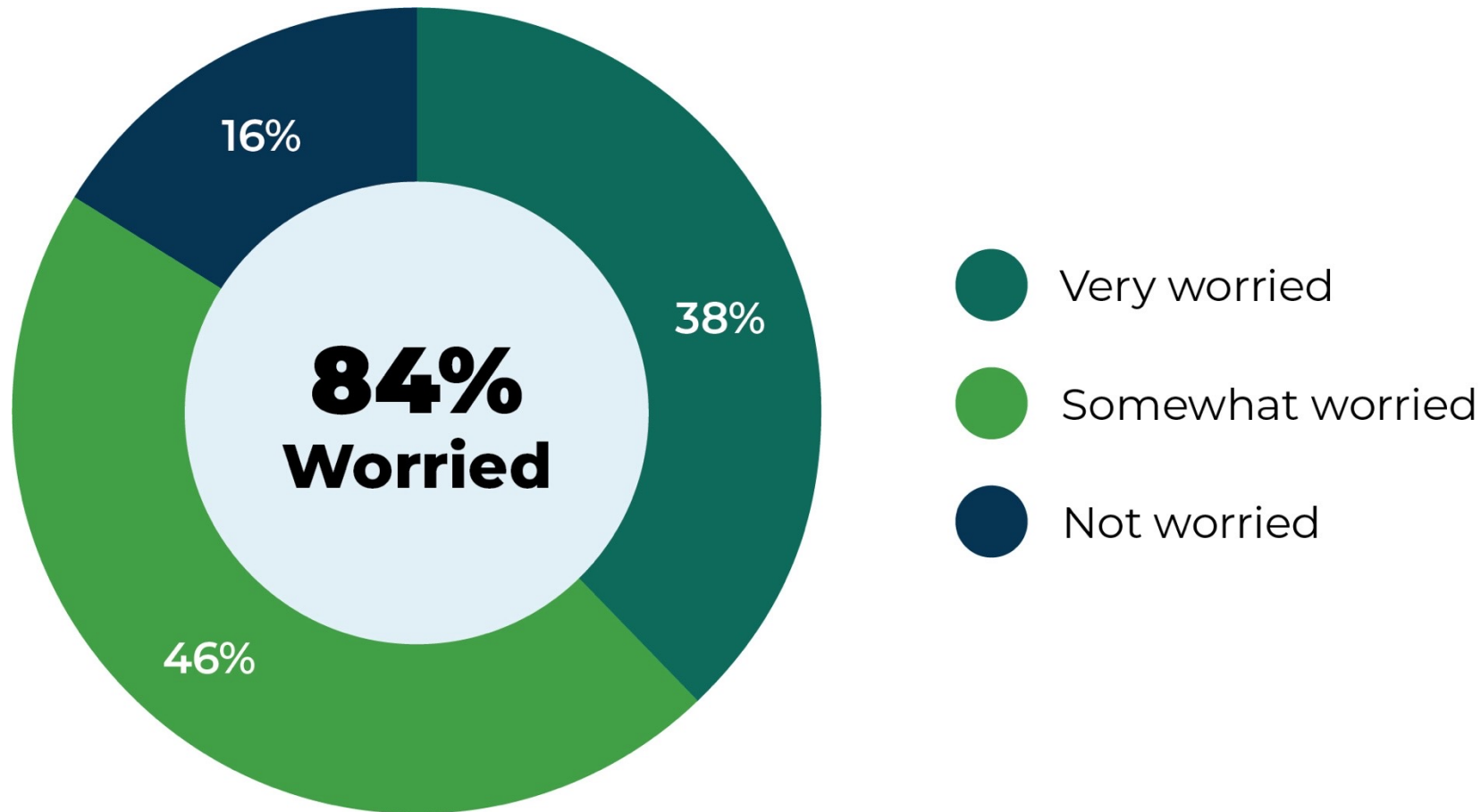


Key Finding

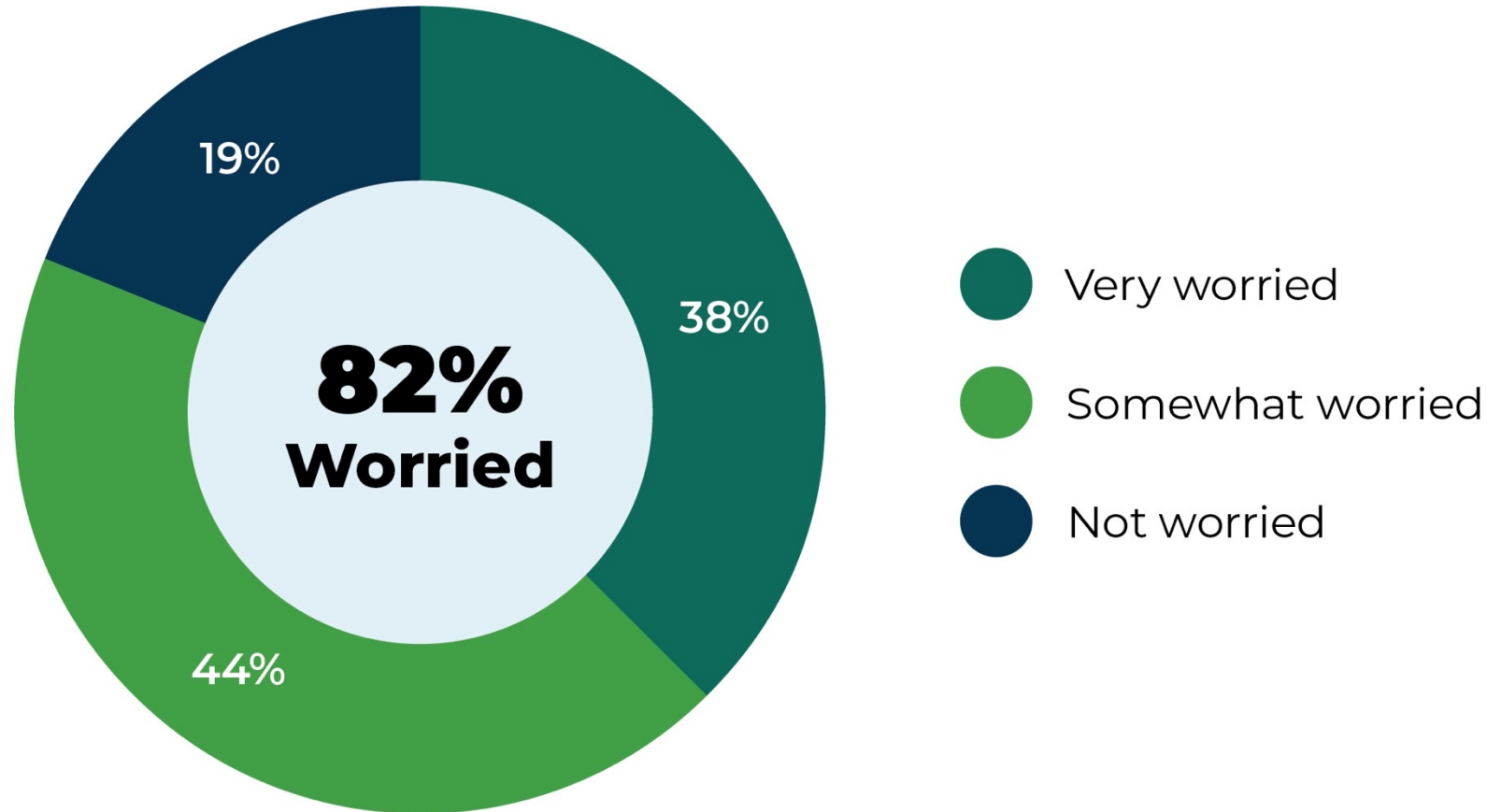
Americans are deeply concerned about teachers and public school employees.

1

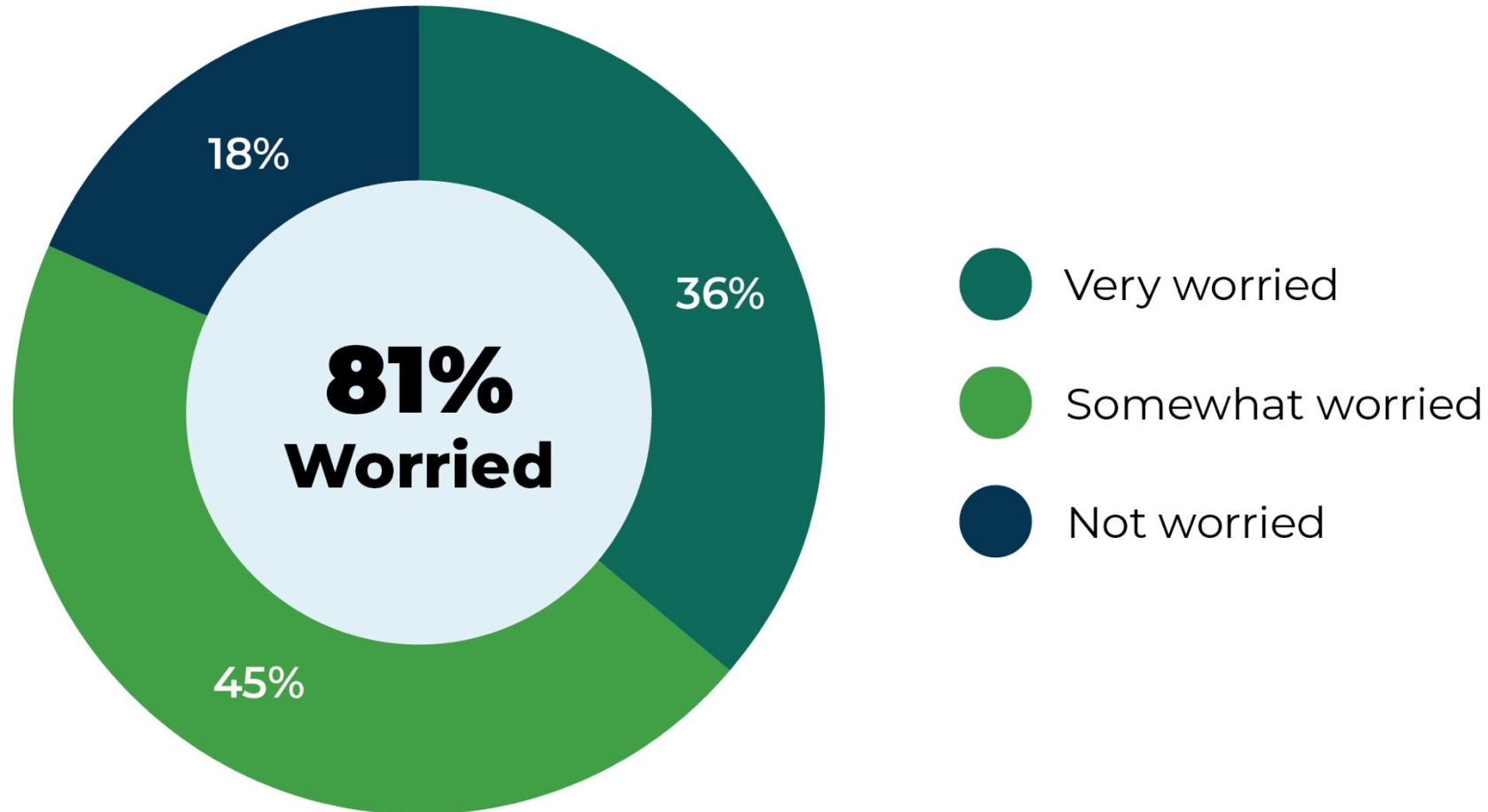
Most Americans are worried about shortages of teachers and public school employees.



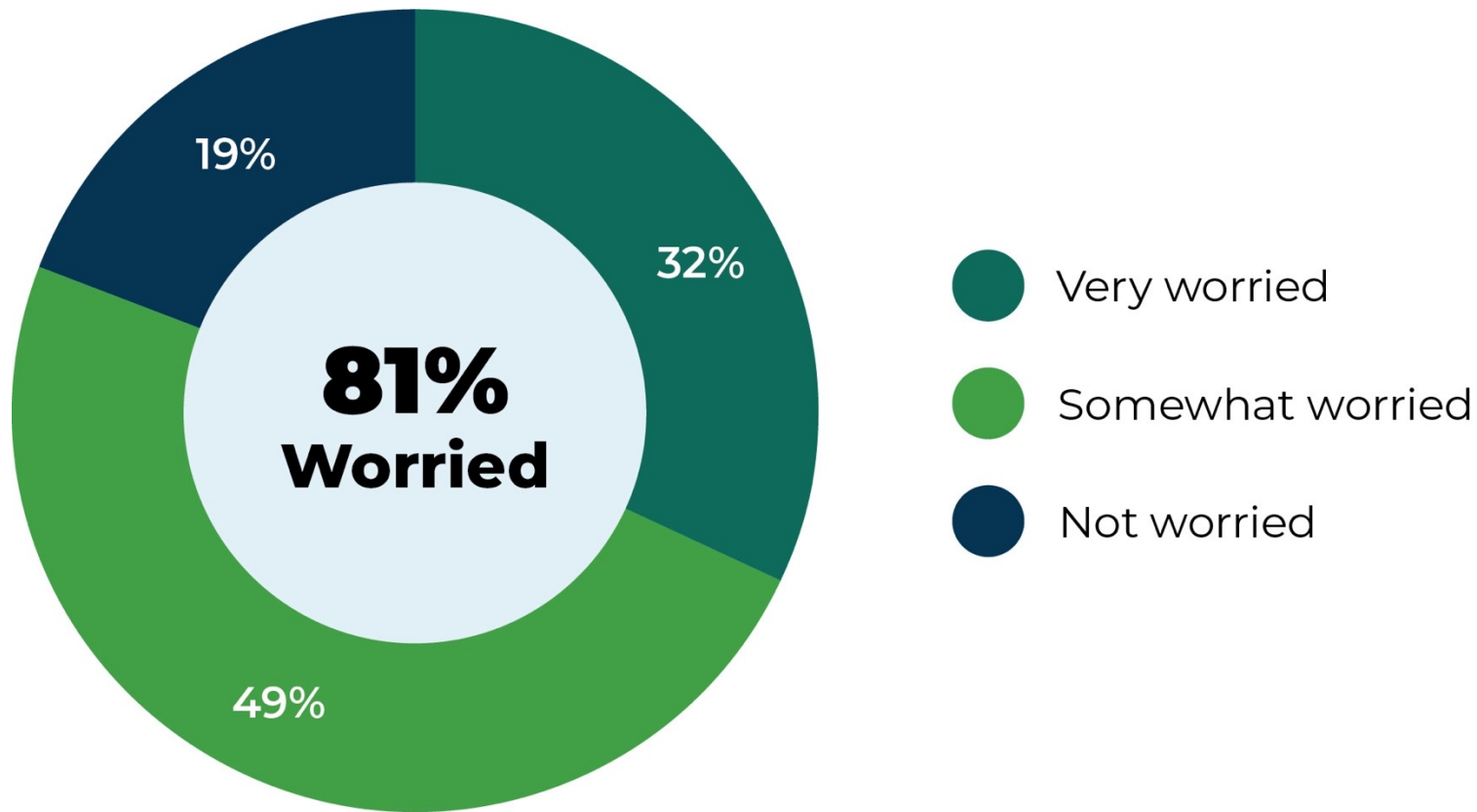
There is a high level of concern about teacher and school personnel burnout.



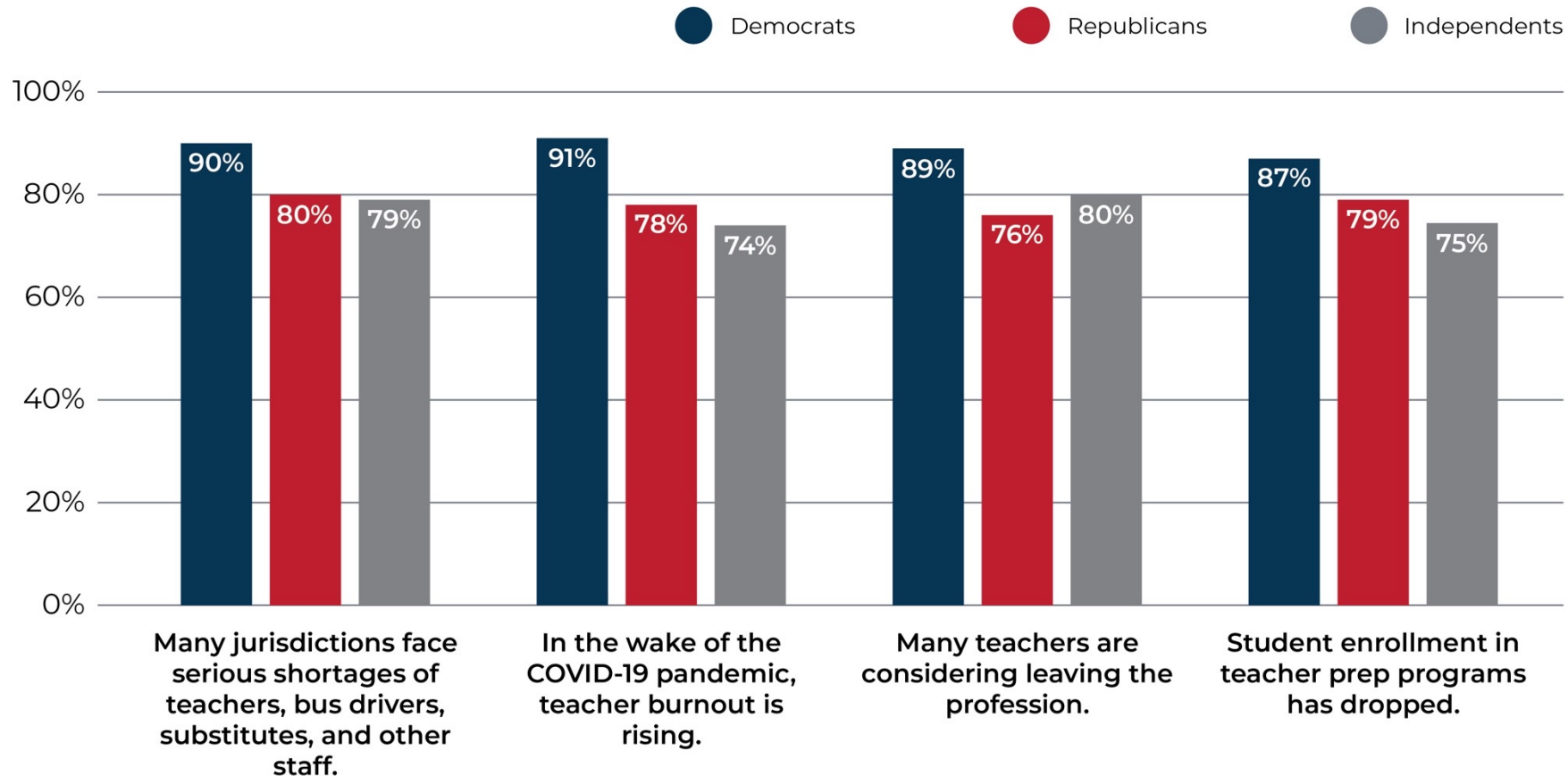
There is deep concern about public school educators leaving the profession.



A substantial drop in student enrollment in teacher preparation programs that will worsen staff shortages is a significant worry.



Across party lines, Americans are worried about teachers and school personnel.

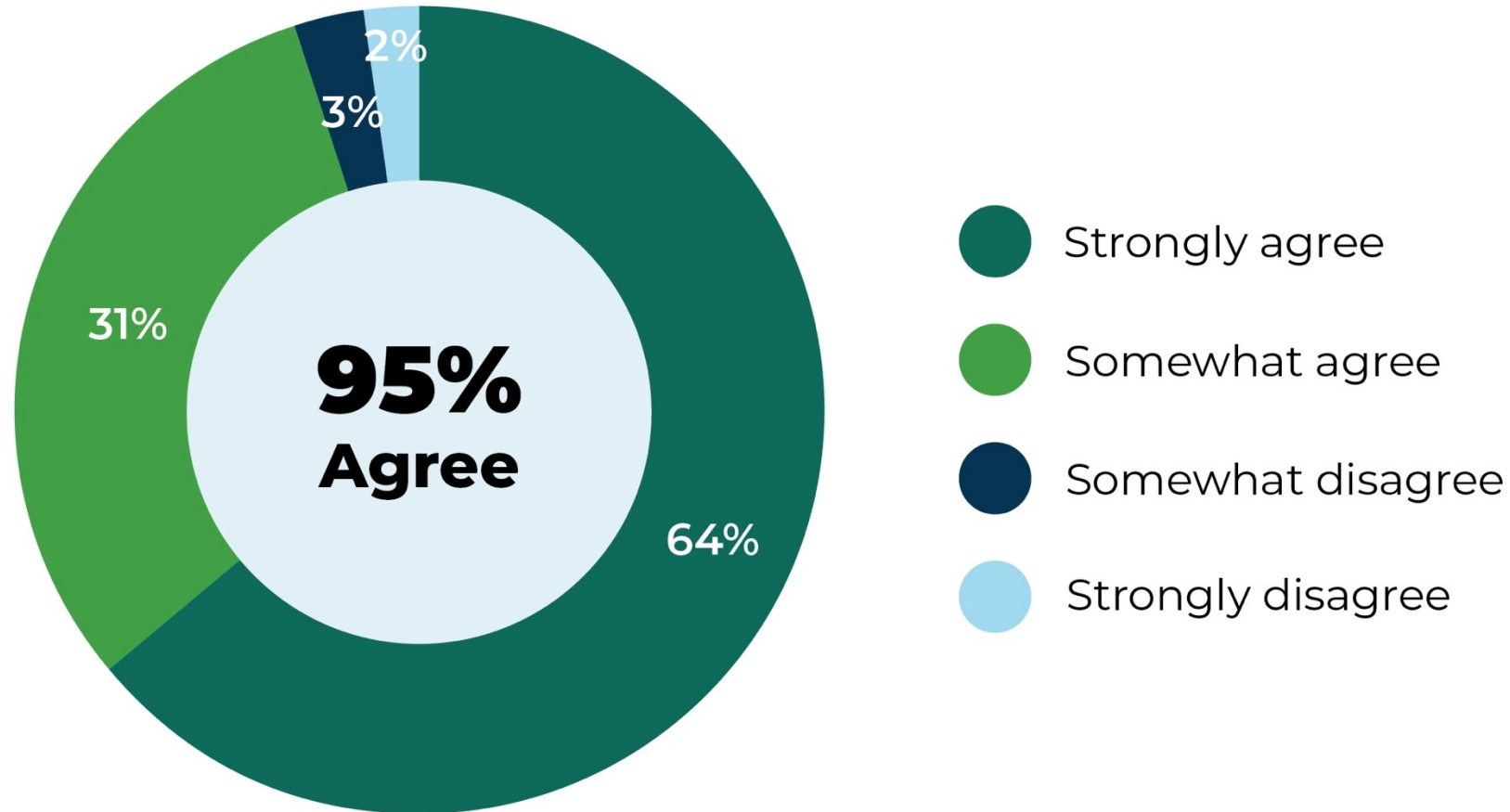


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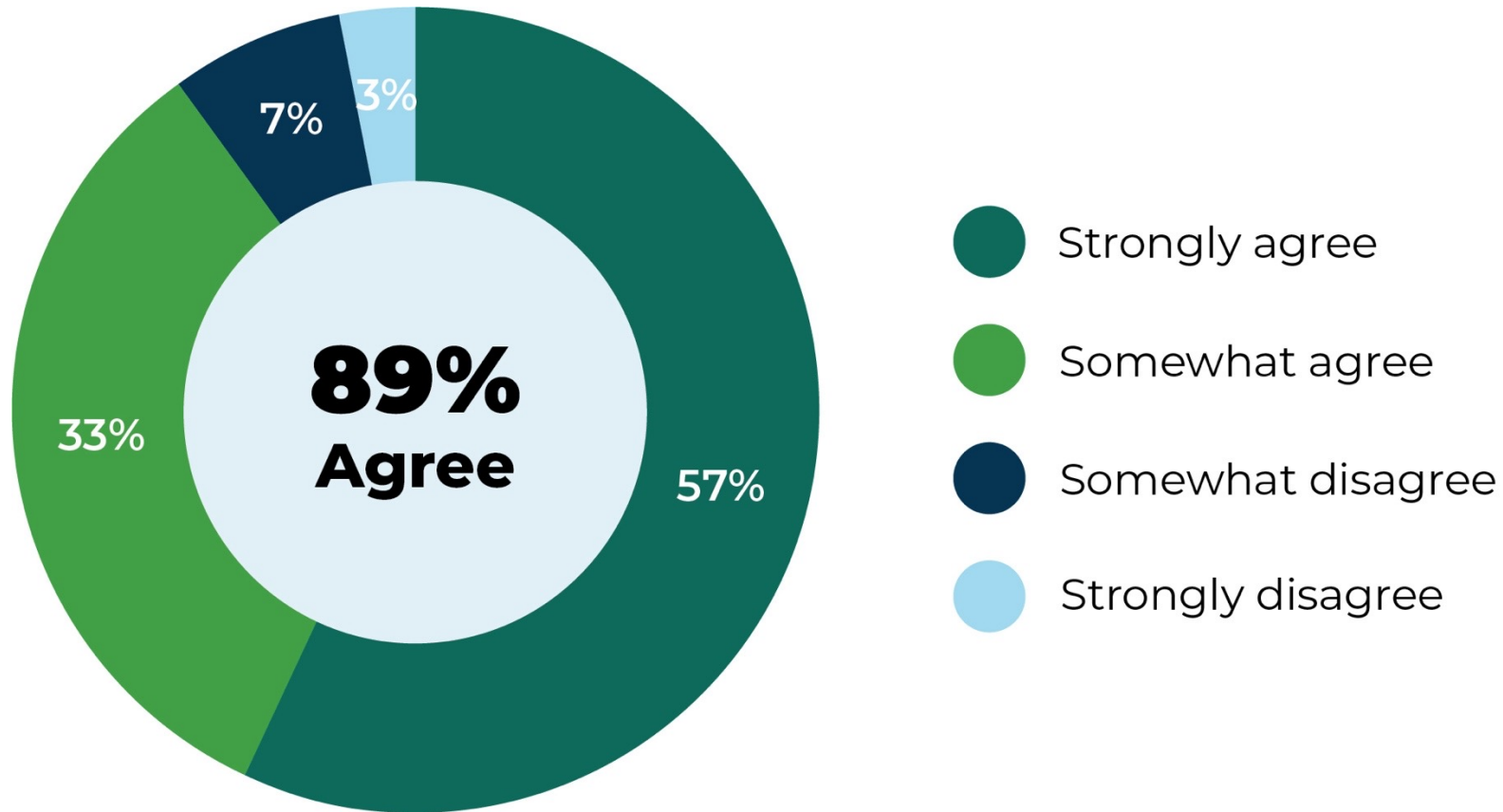
Americans value K-12 employees.

2

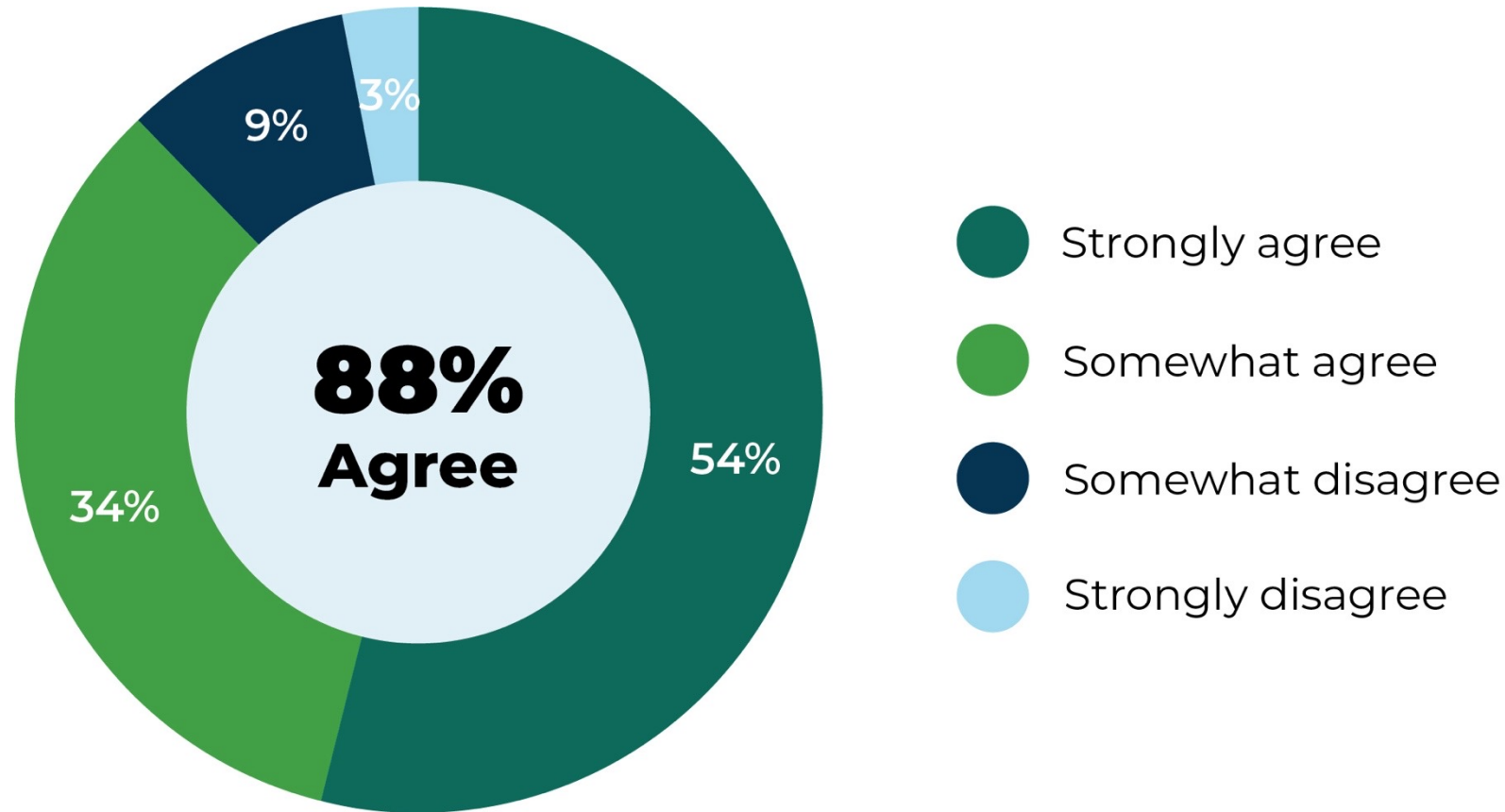
Nearly everyone agrees that teachers and school personnel are important to communities.



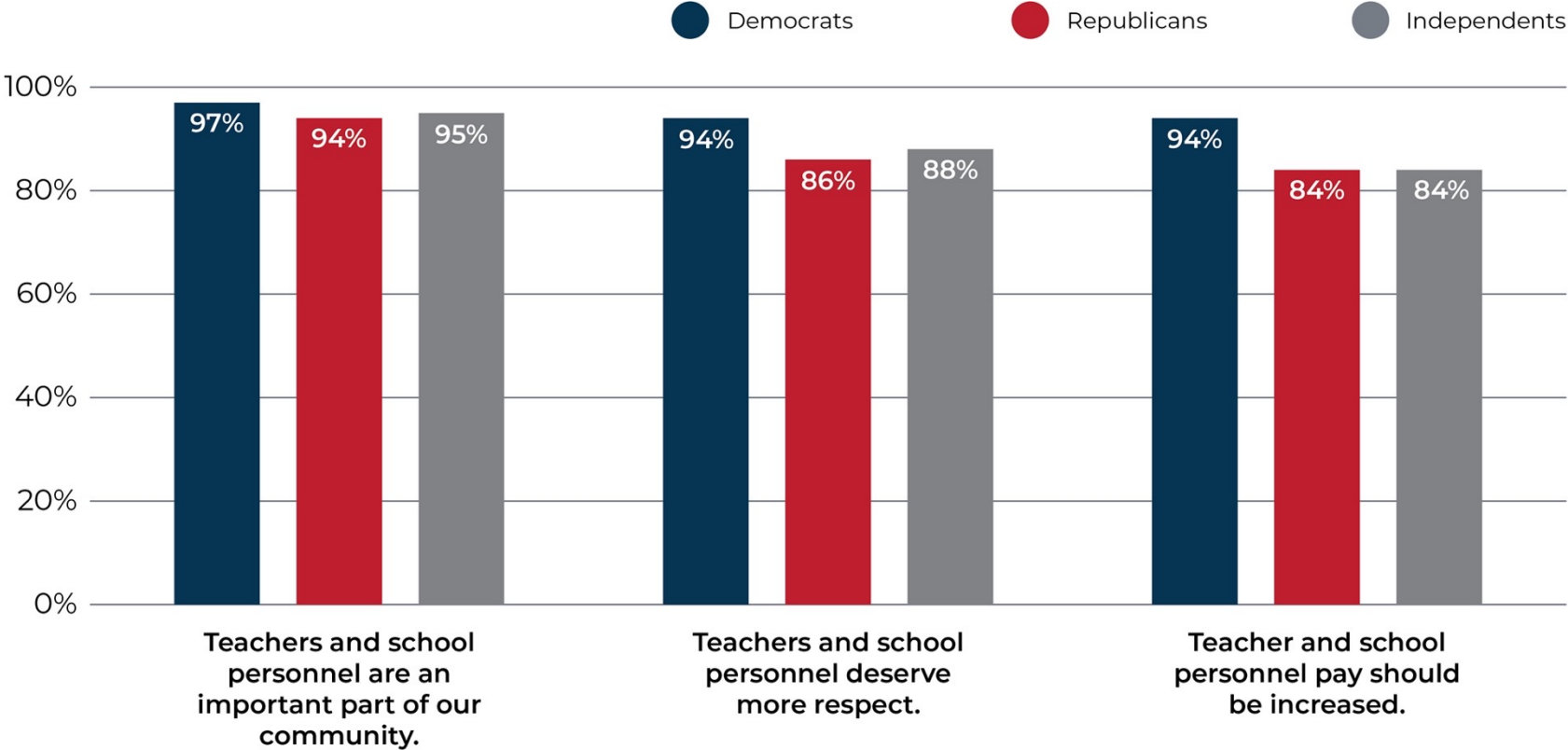
The overwhelming majority of Americans say teachers and school personnel deserve more respect.



The overwhelming majority of Americans say teachers and school personnel should have their pay increased.



Regardless of party affiliation, Americans value teachers and school personnel.

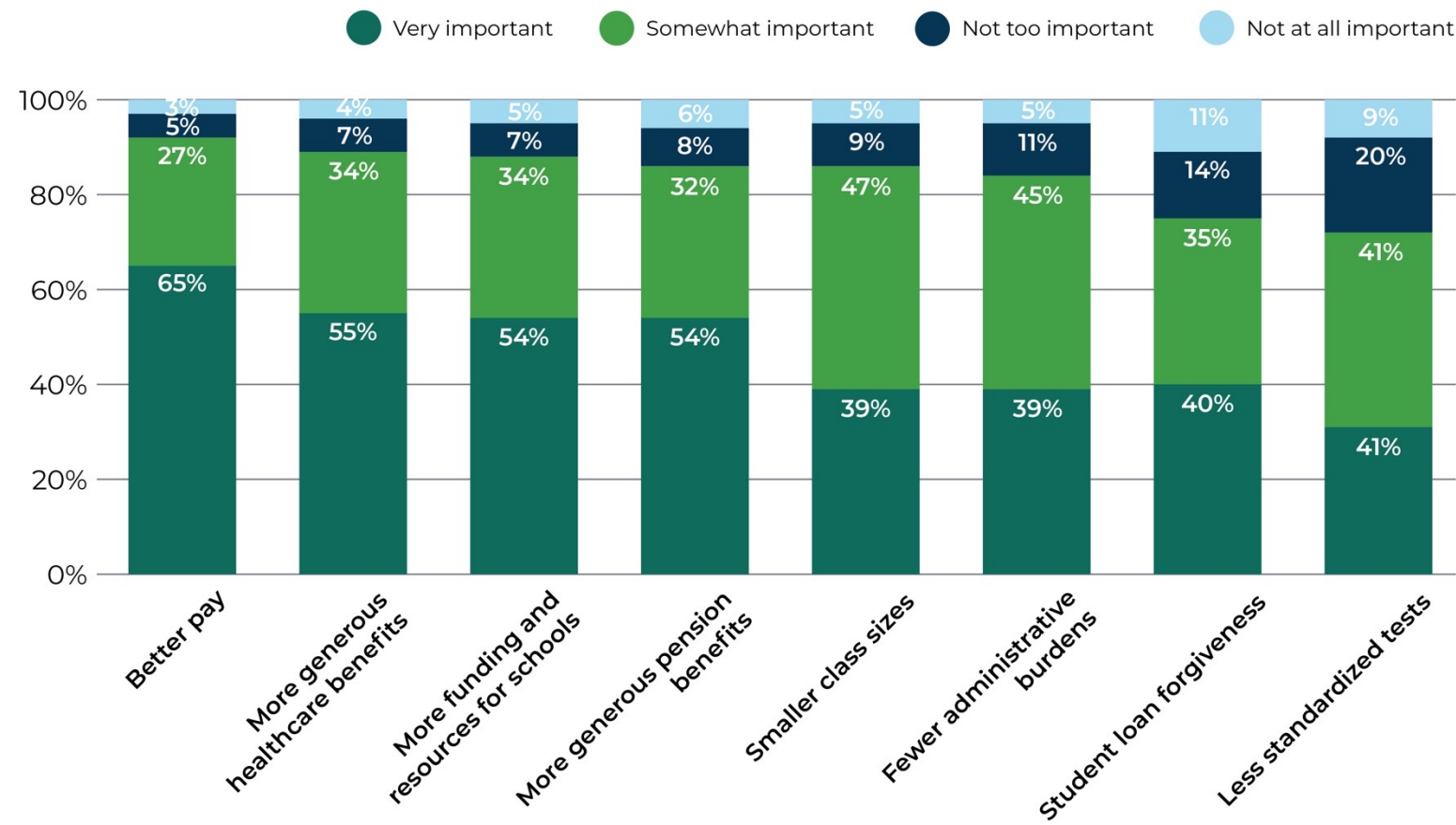


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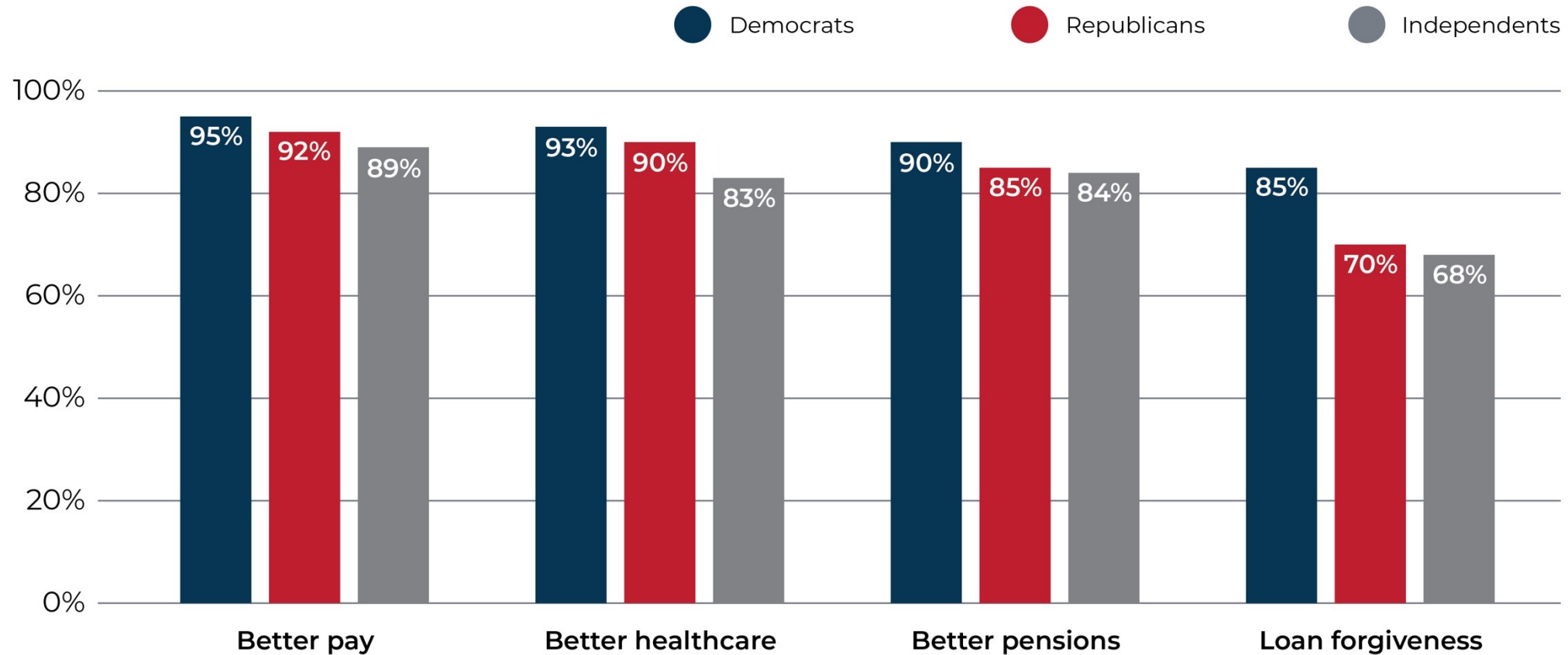
Better pay and benefits, student loan forgiveness, and more school resources would help attract and retain teachers and school personnel.

3

Americans see many avenues to attract and retain teachers and school personnel.



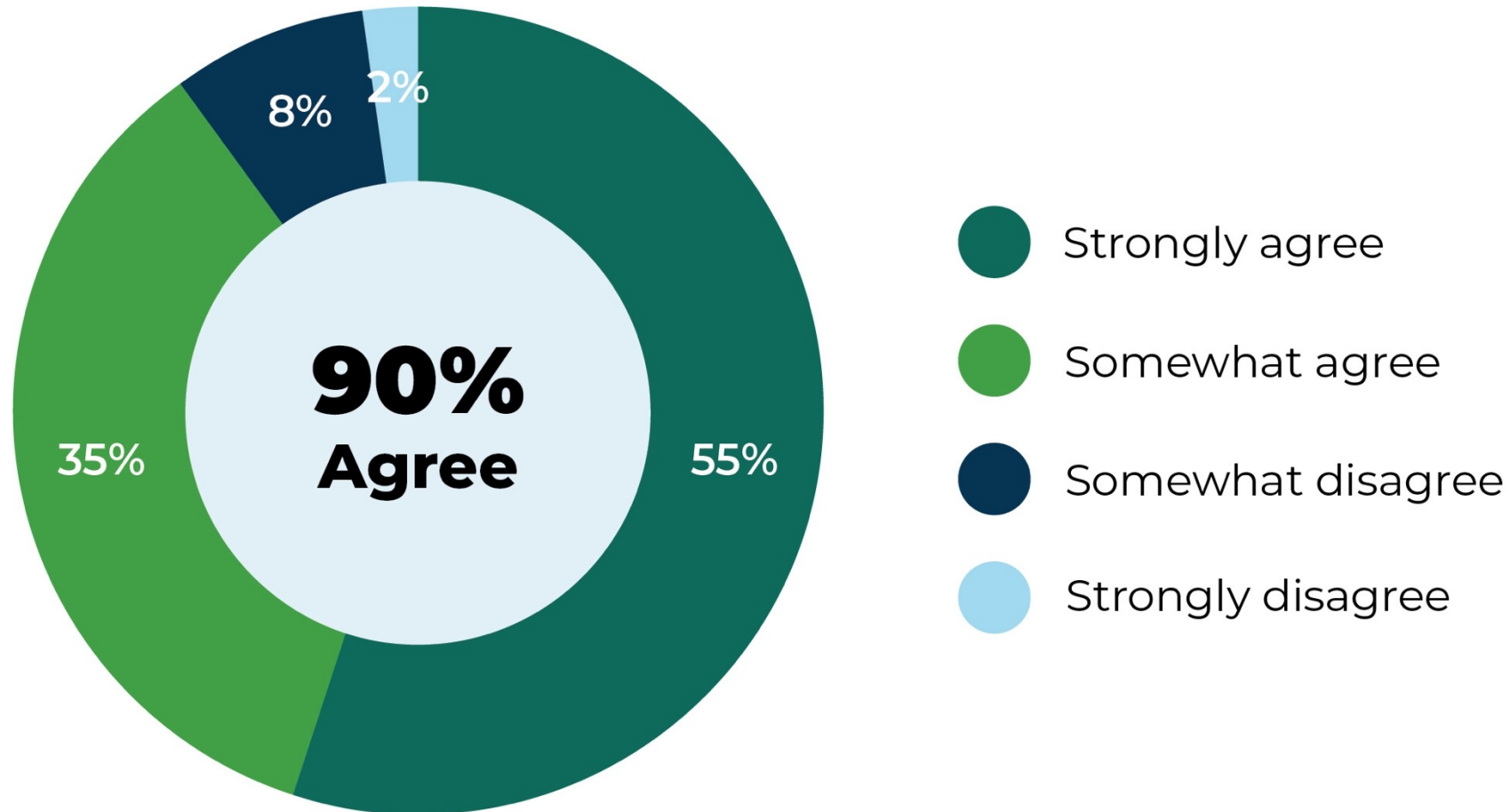
Across party lines, Americans agree on ways to attract and retain teachers and school personnel.



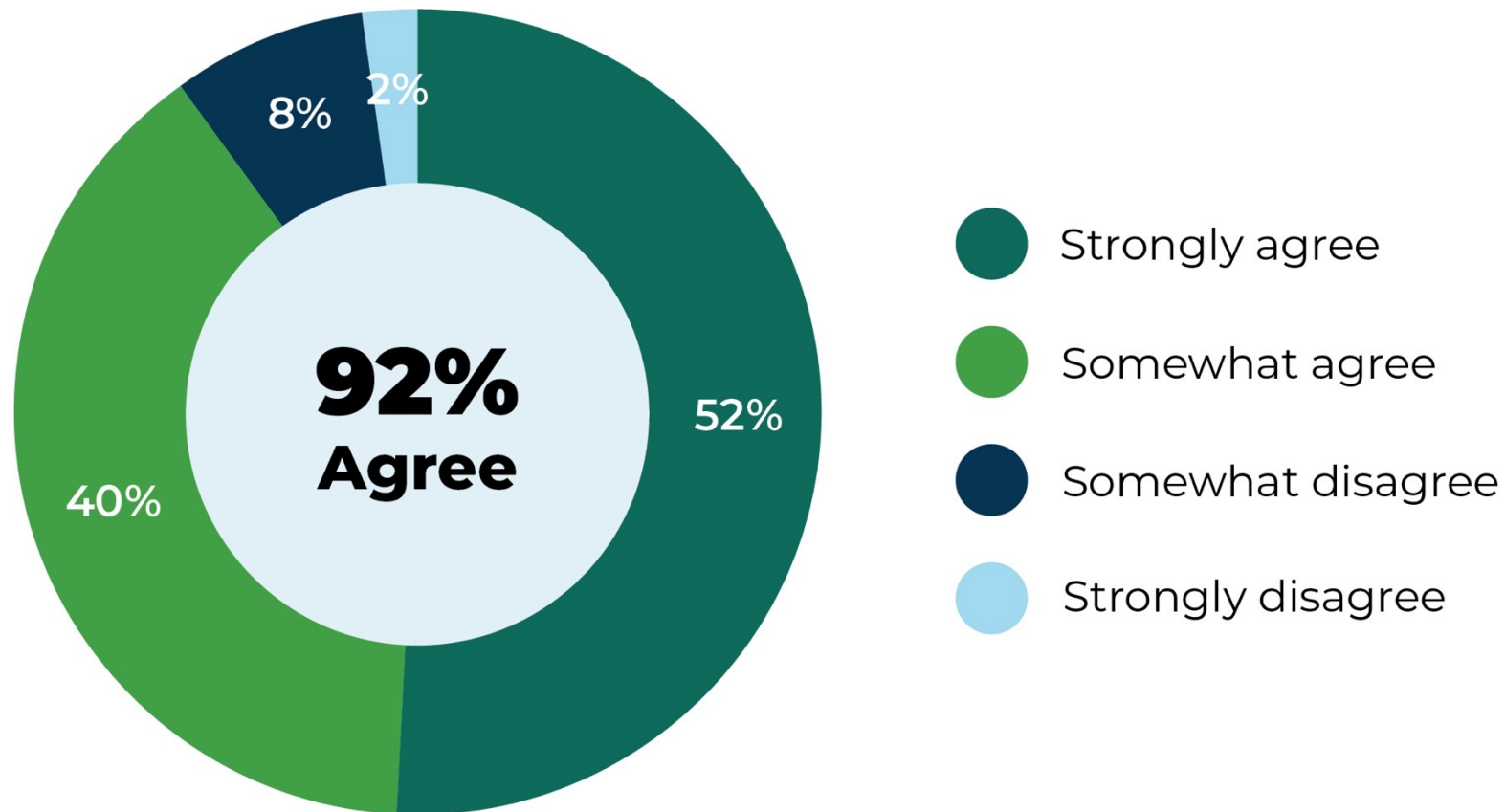
Key Finding

Healthcare and retirement benefits are viewed as magnets for attracting and retaining K-12 school personnel, and these benefits should be funded and protected.

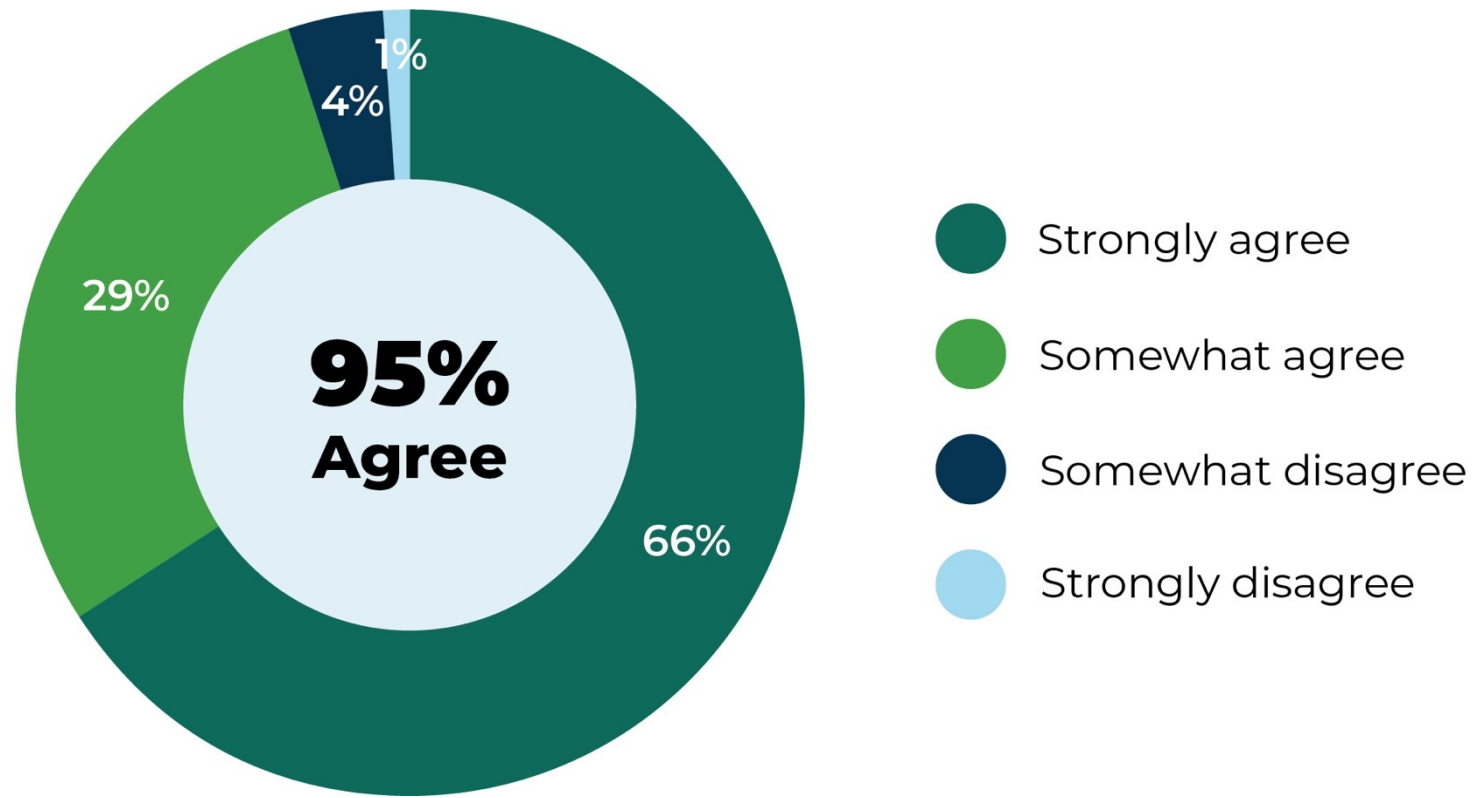
The overwhelming majority of Americans say teachers and school personnel should have healthcare benefits while working and in retirement.



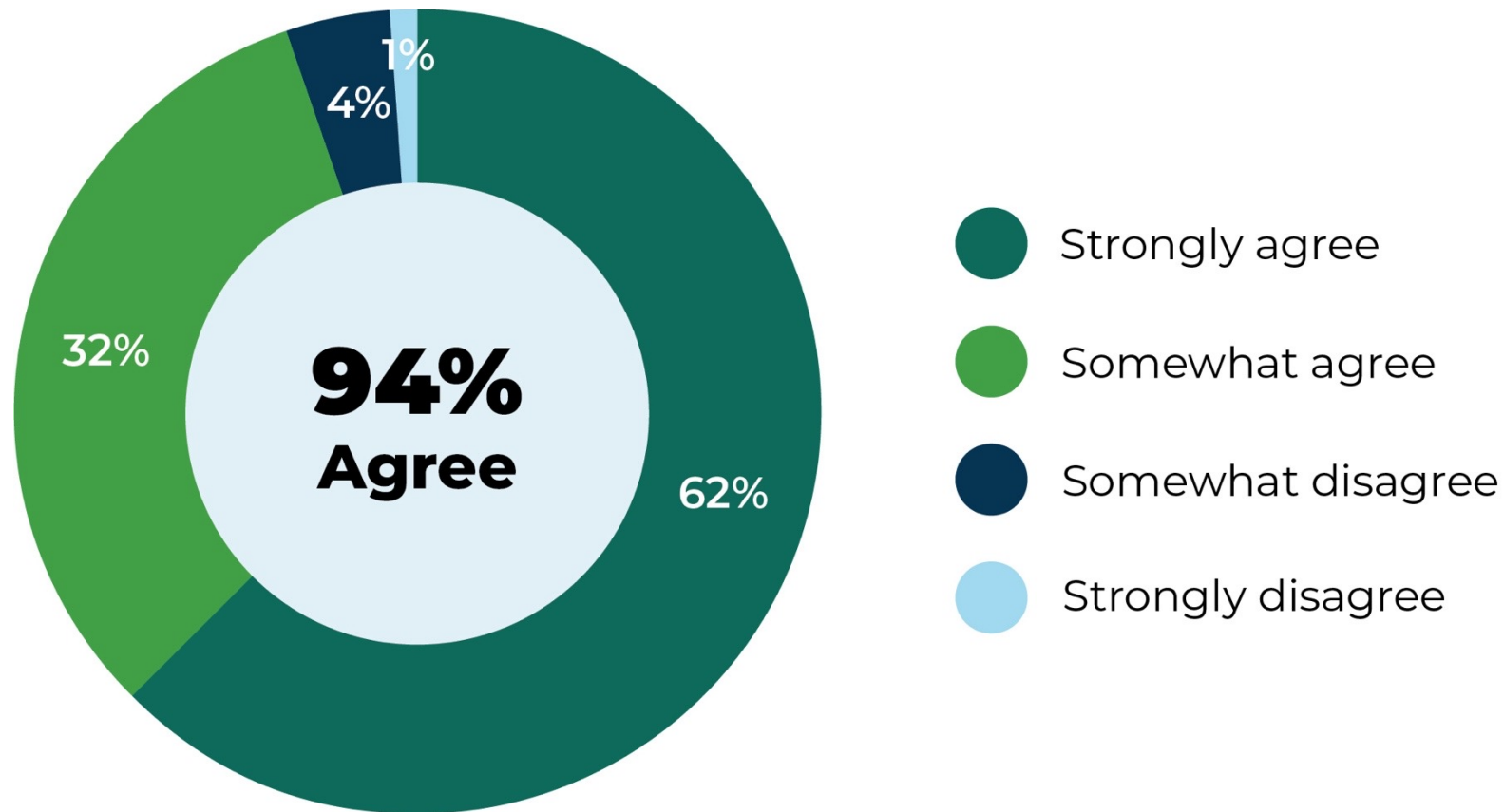
The overwhelming majority of Americans say healthcare benefits are a good way to attract and retain teachers and school personnel.



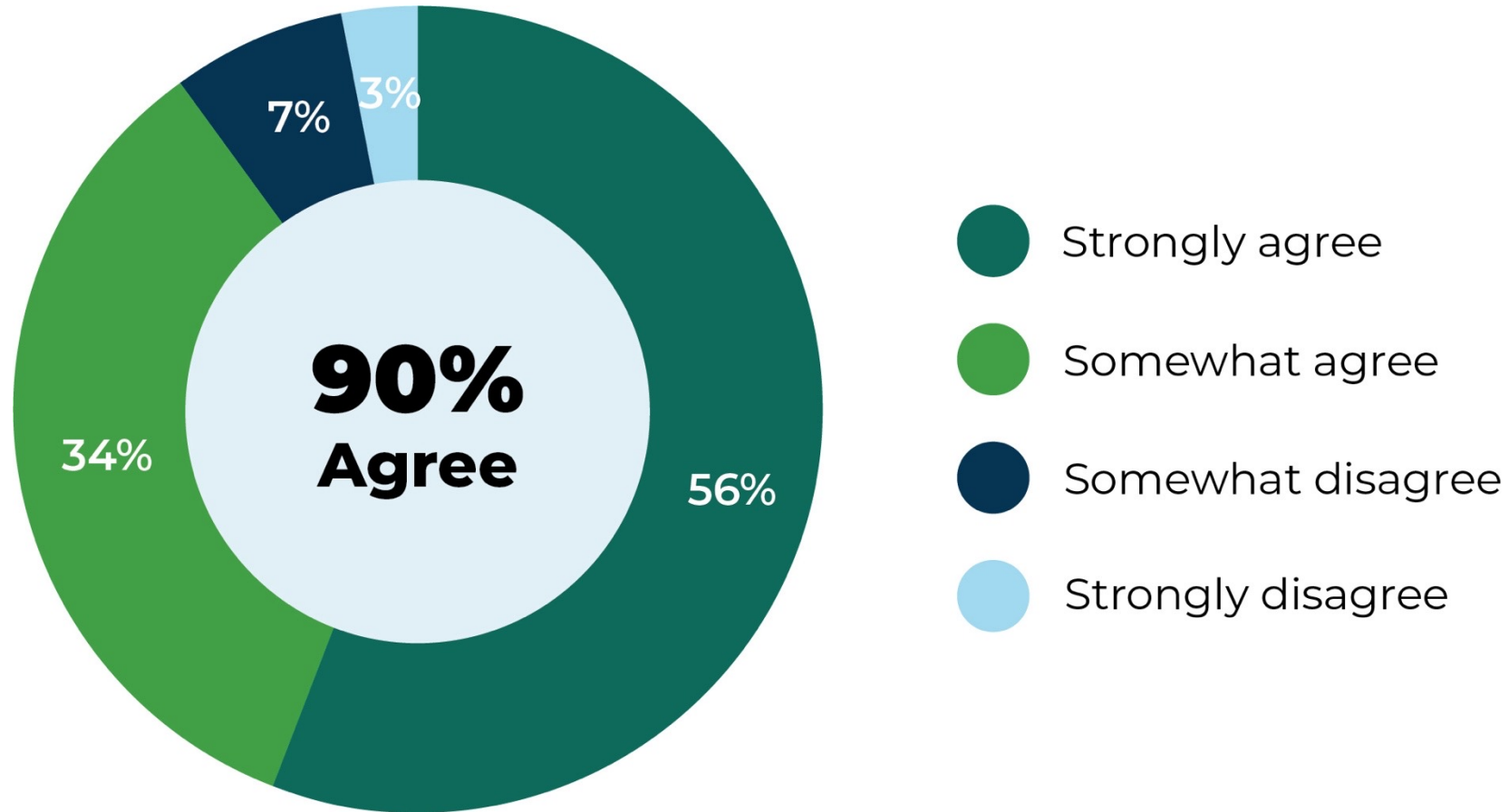
Nearly all Americans agree that retired teachers and school personnel should receive the healthcare benefits they were promised.



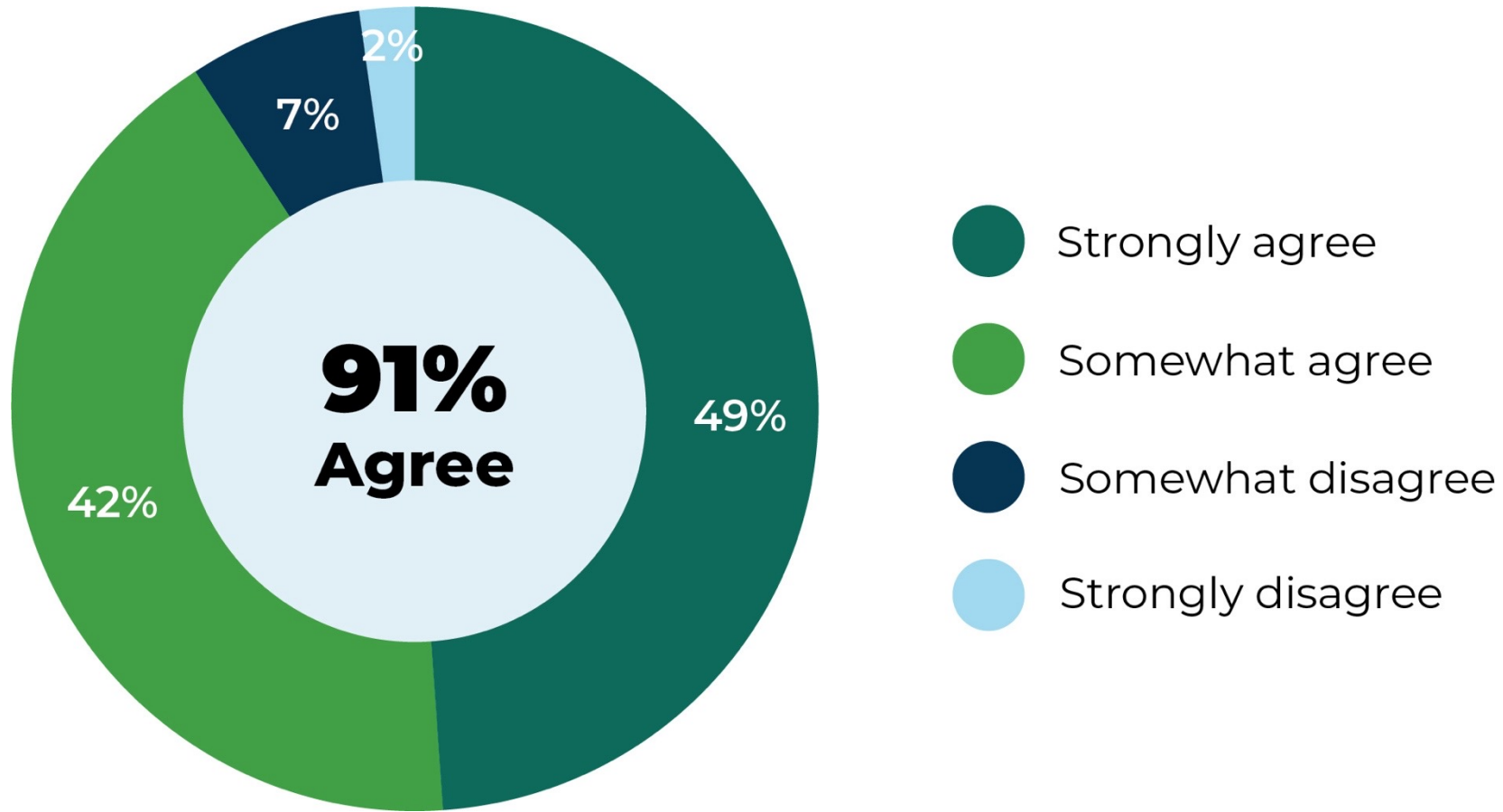
Nearly all Americans agree that elected officials must ensure retiree healthcare plans are sufficiently funded.



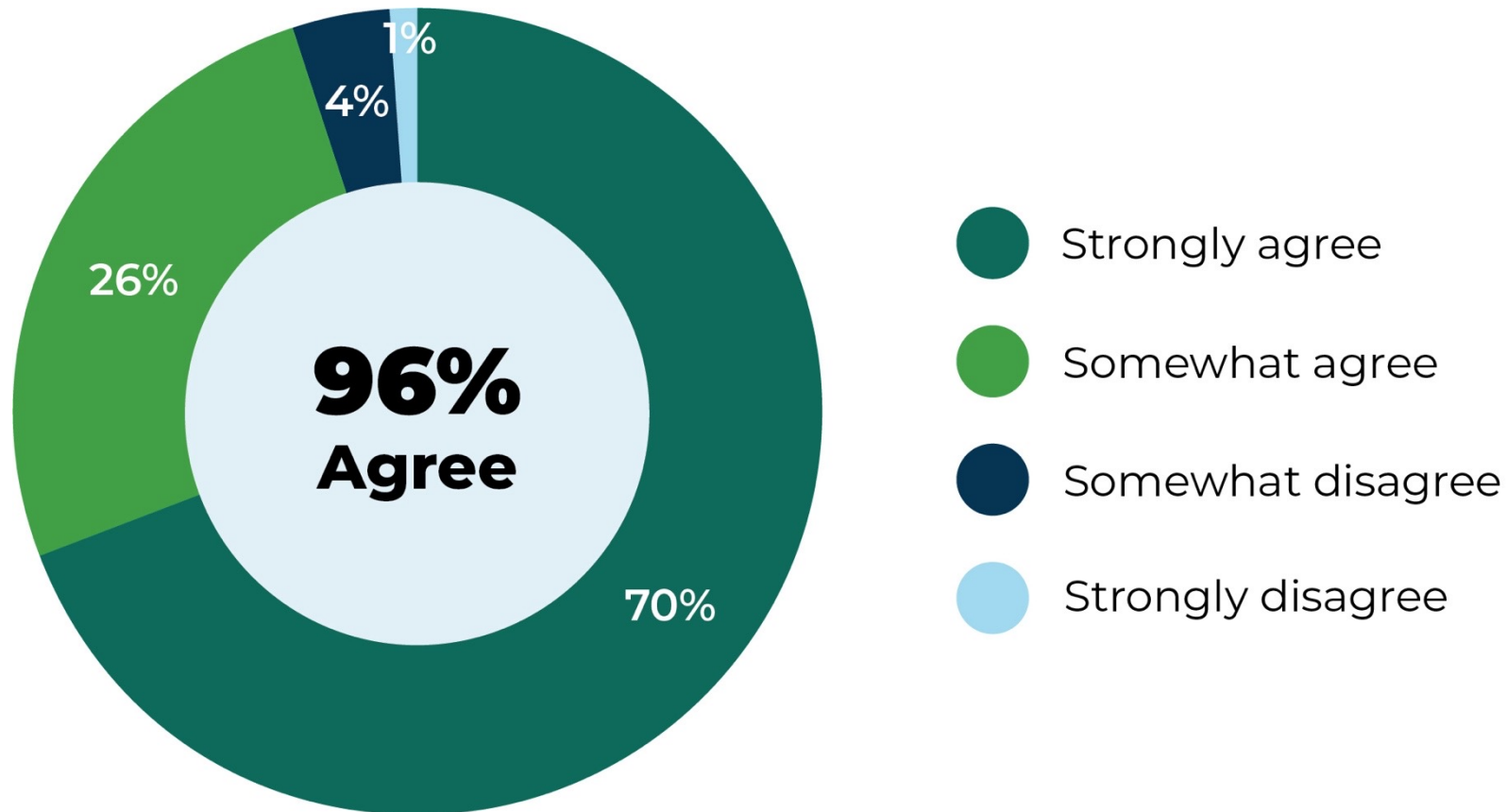
Nearly all Americans agree that teachers and school personnel should have a pension so they have a secure retirement after a career in education.



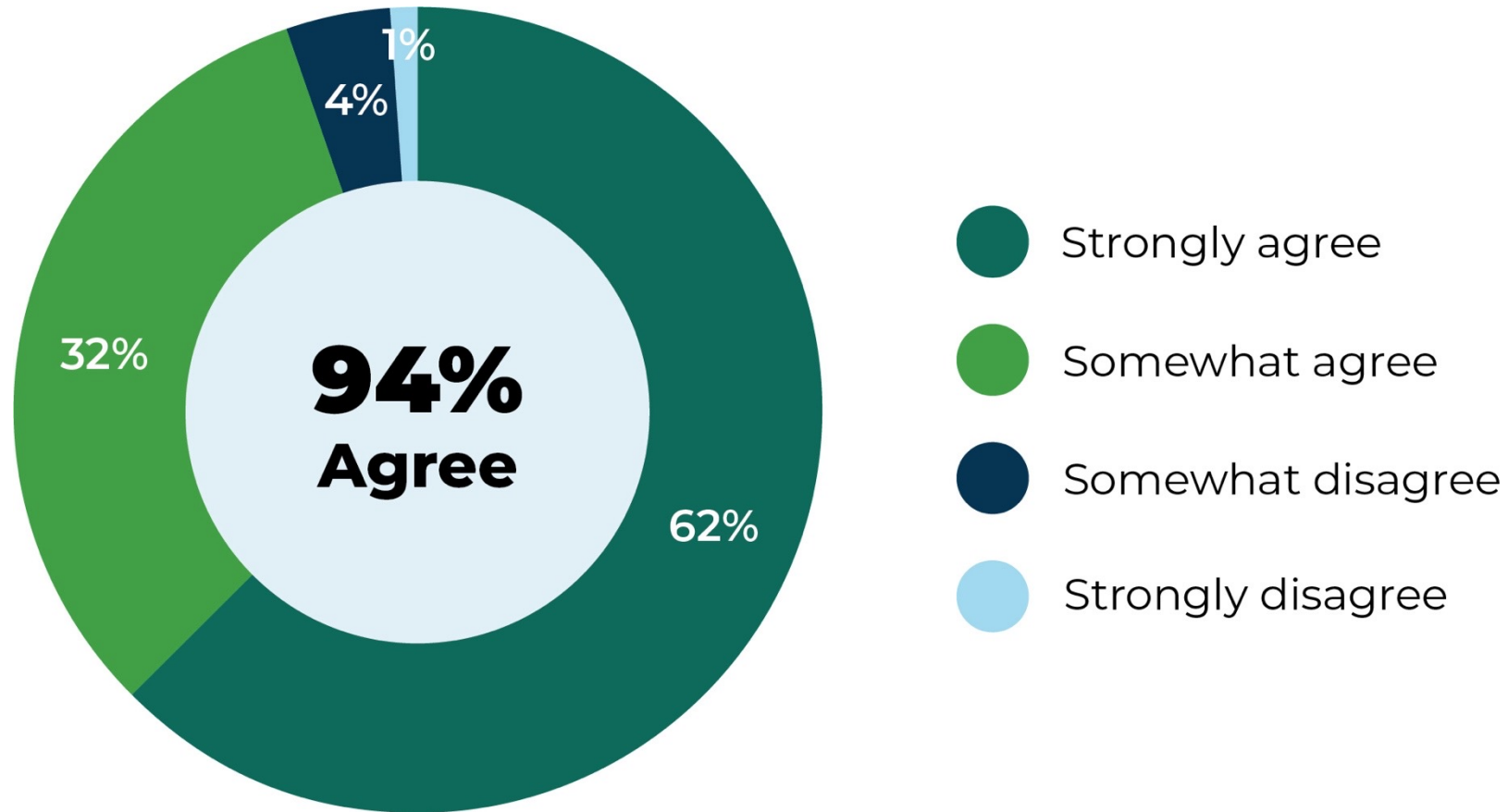
Nearly all Americans agree that pensions are a good way to attract and retain school personnel.



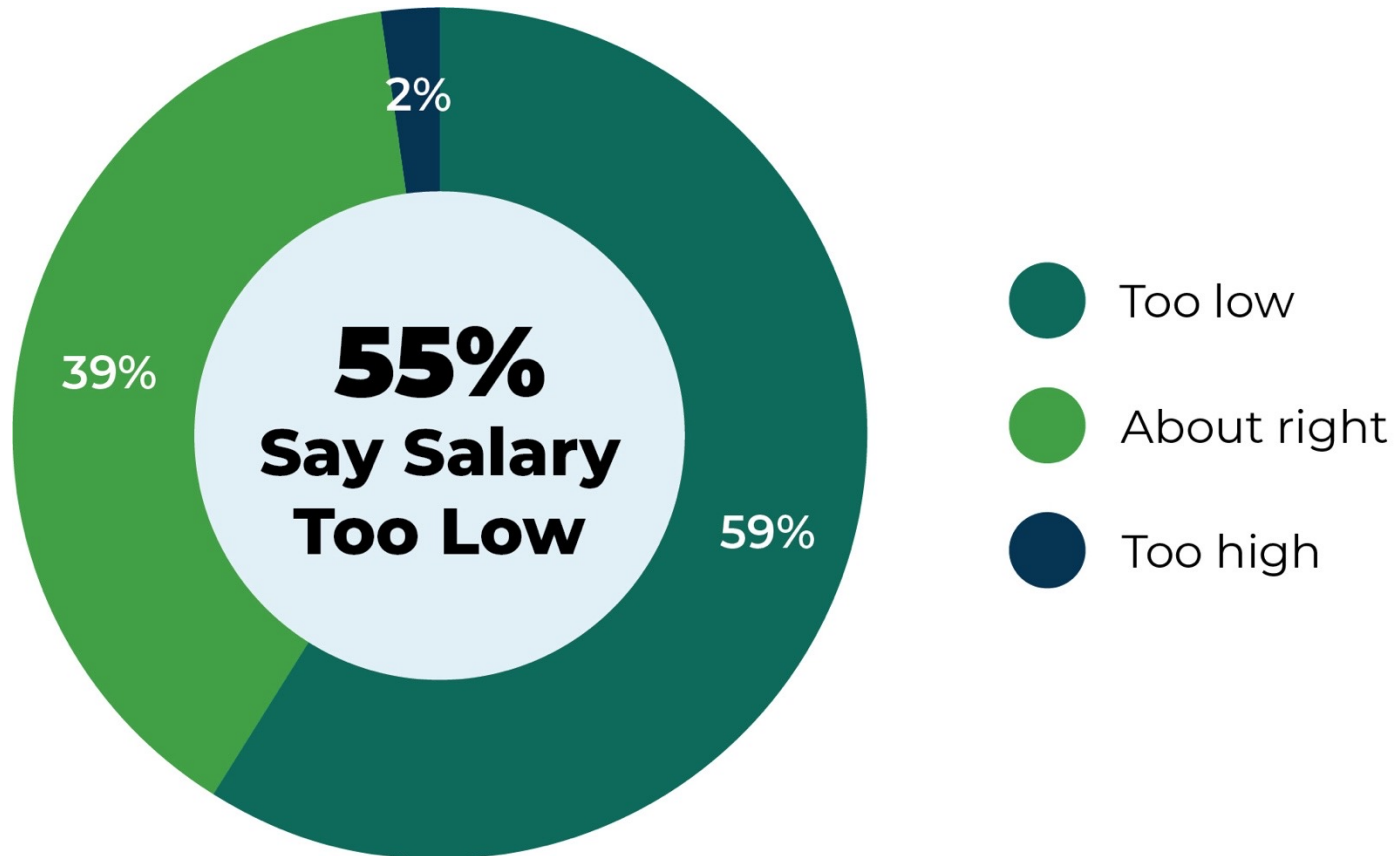
Nearly all Americans agree that retired teachers and school personnel should receive the pension benefits they were promised.



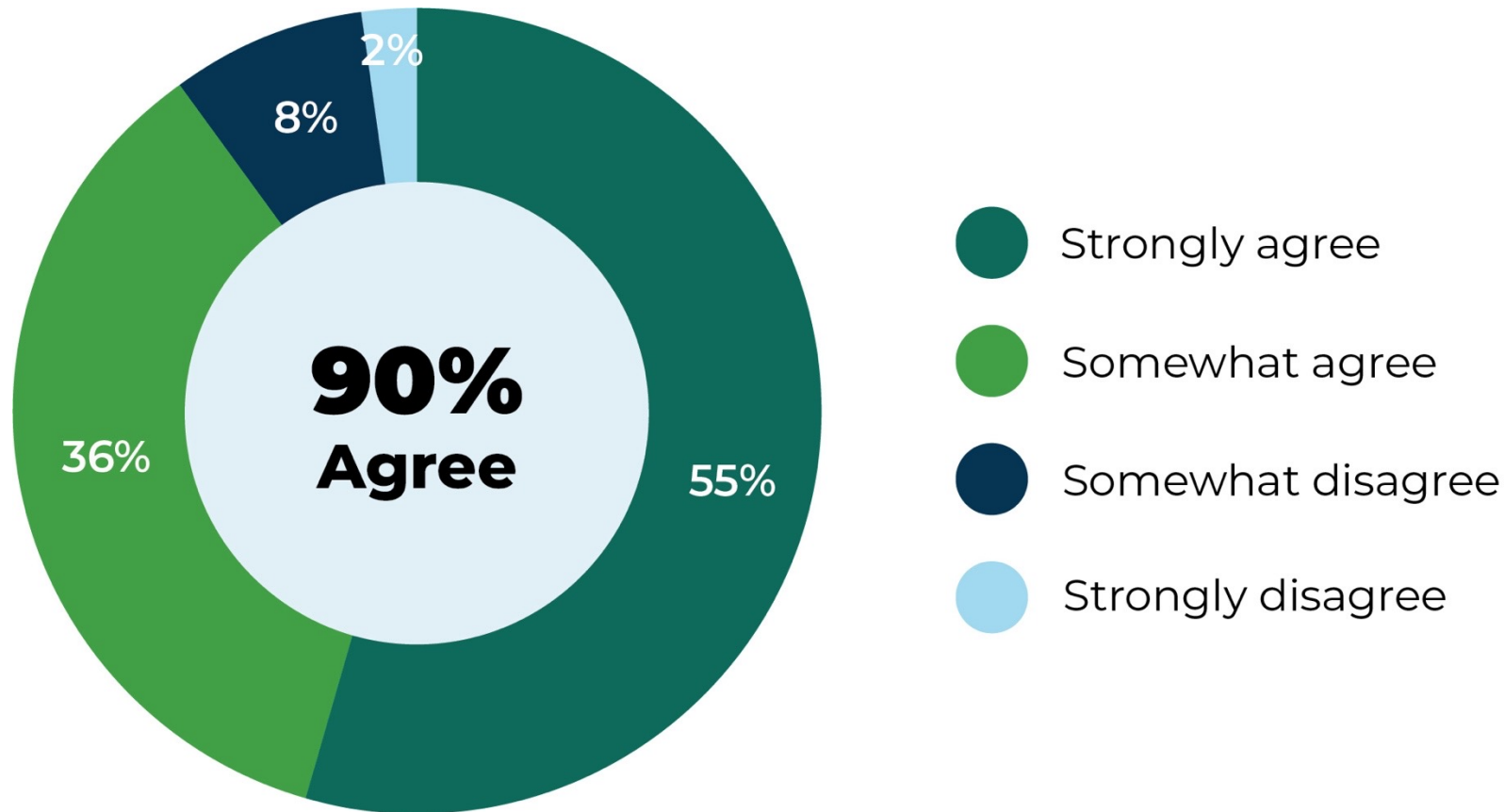
Nearly all Americans agree that elected officials must ensure that pension plans are sufficiently funded.



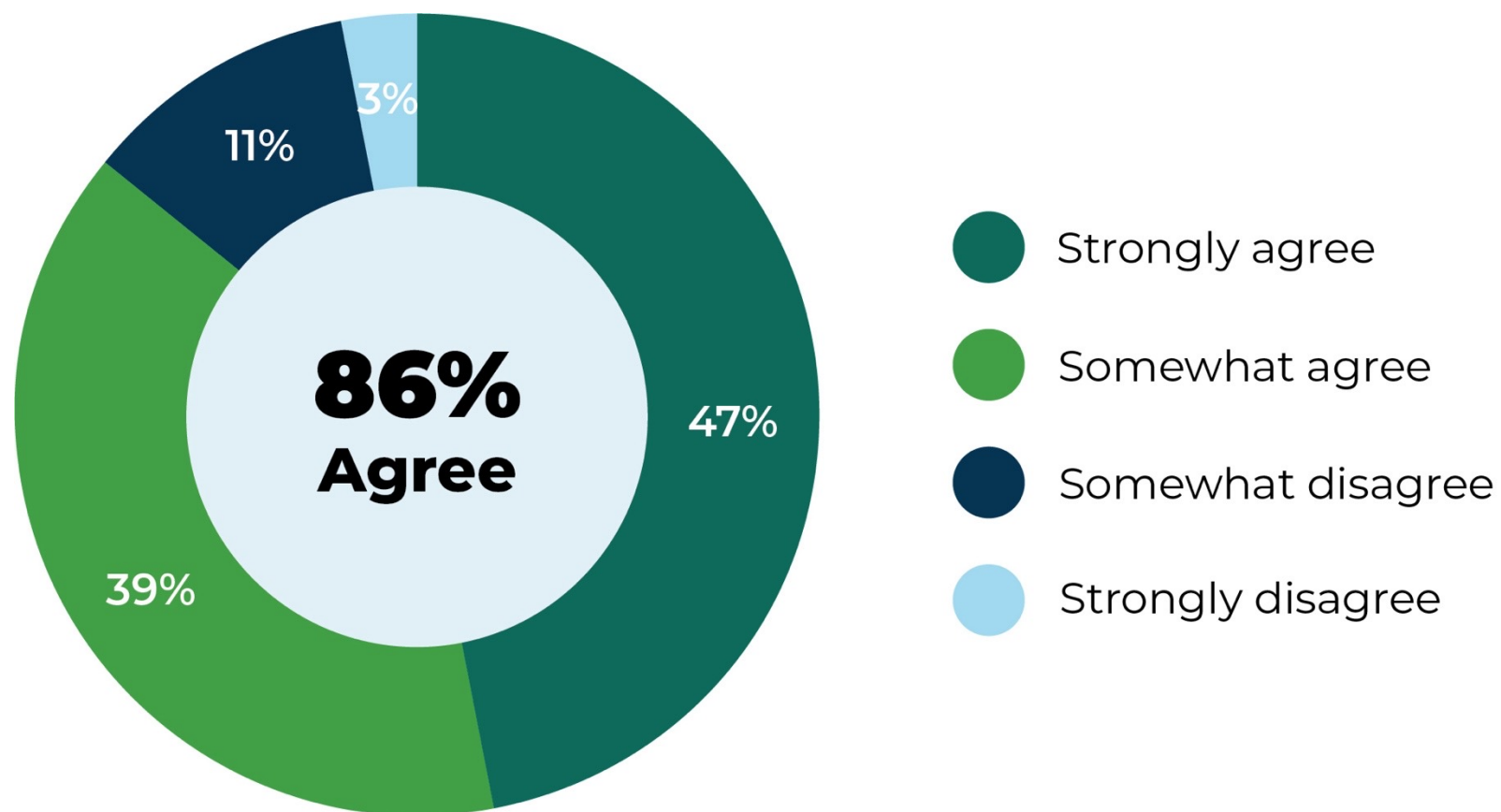
More than half Americans believe the average teacher pension benefit is too low.



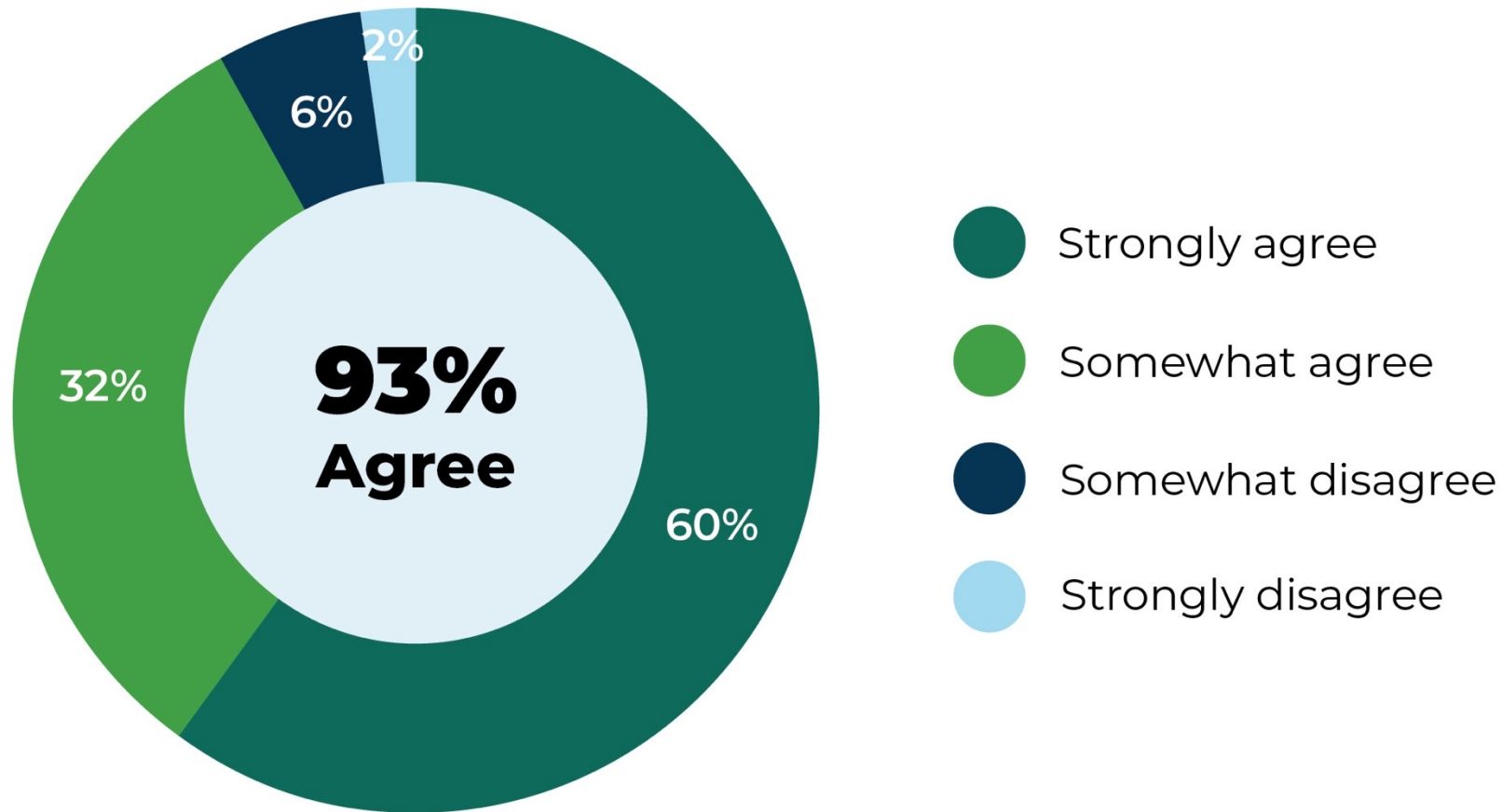
For teacher and school personnel without Social Security, Americans overwhelmingly agree that they need a strong pension for retirement security.



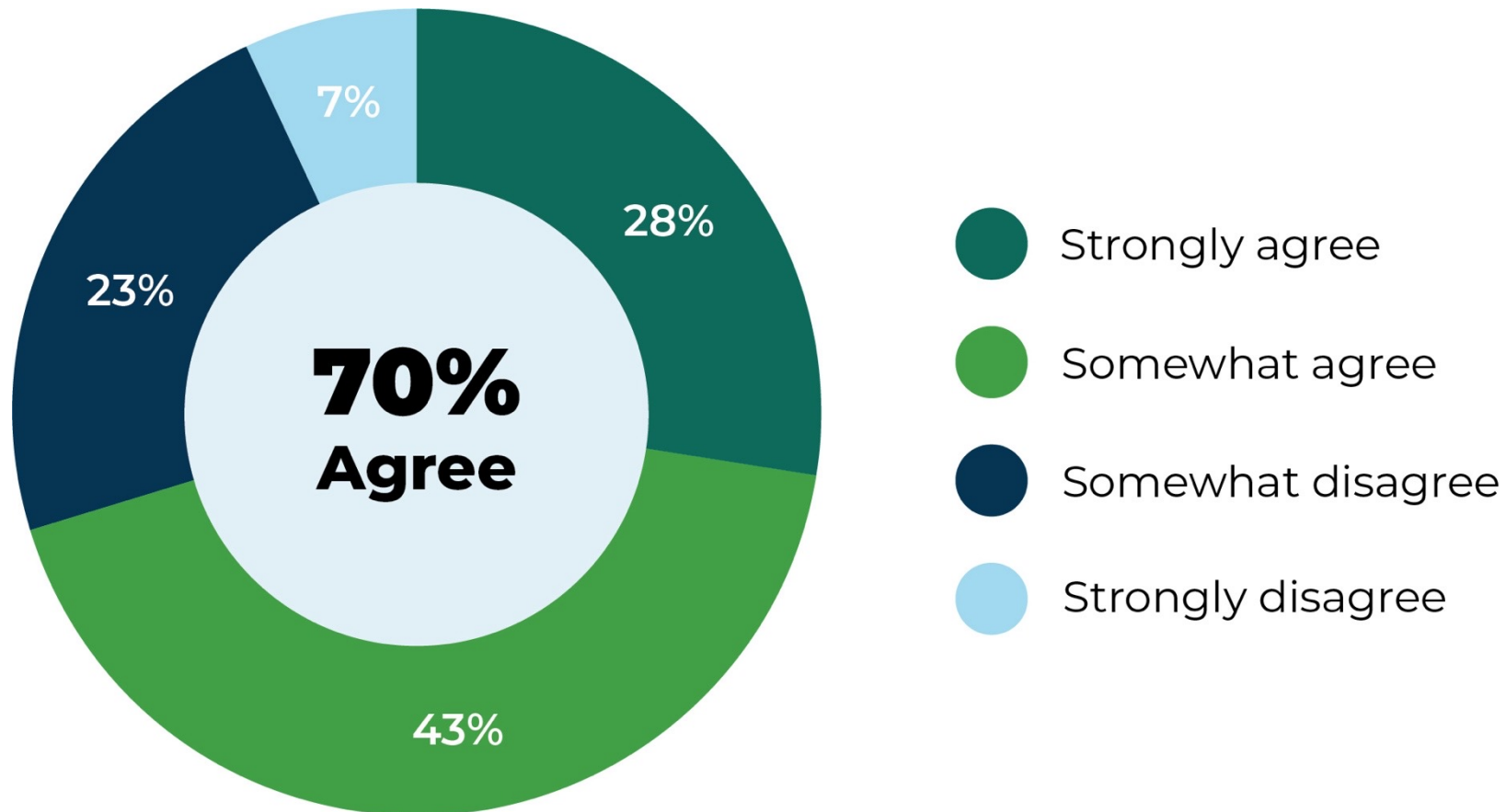
There is strong public support for cost-of-living adjustments for teacher and school personnel pensions.



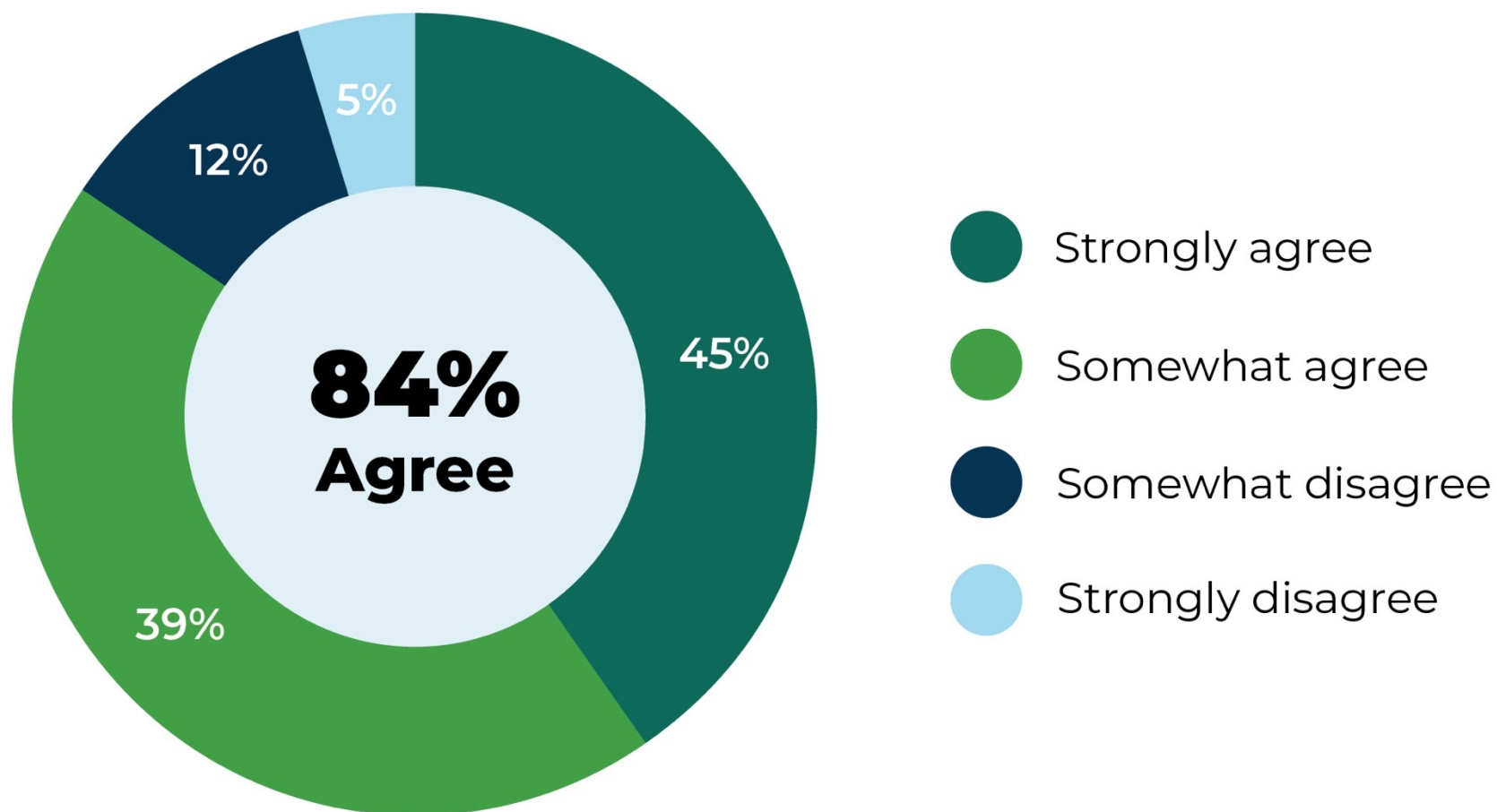
Because teachers contribute to their pension each pay period, nearly all say it is important that they receive their guaranteed pension.



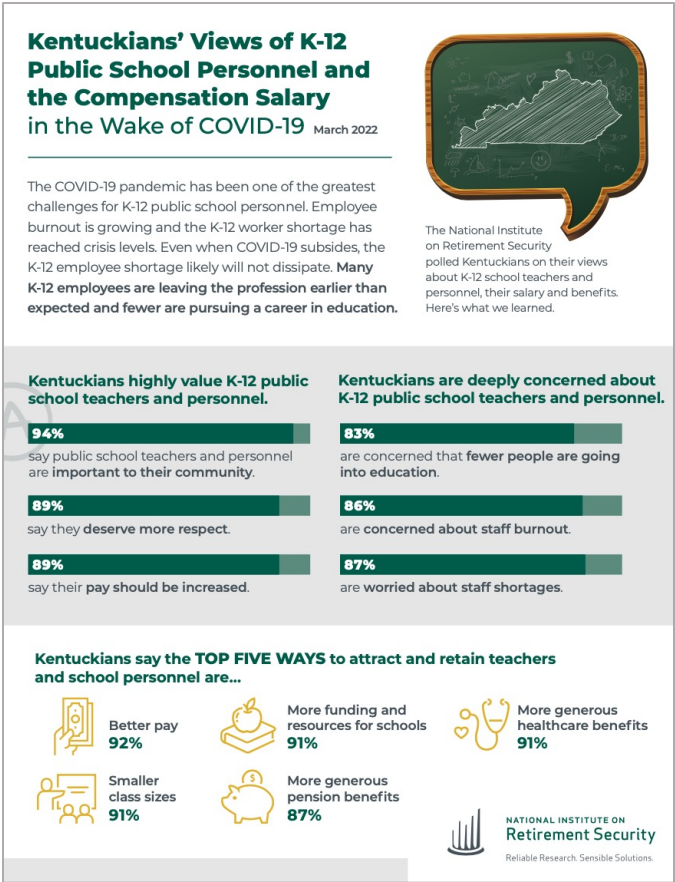
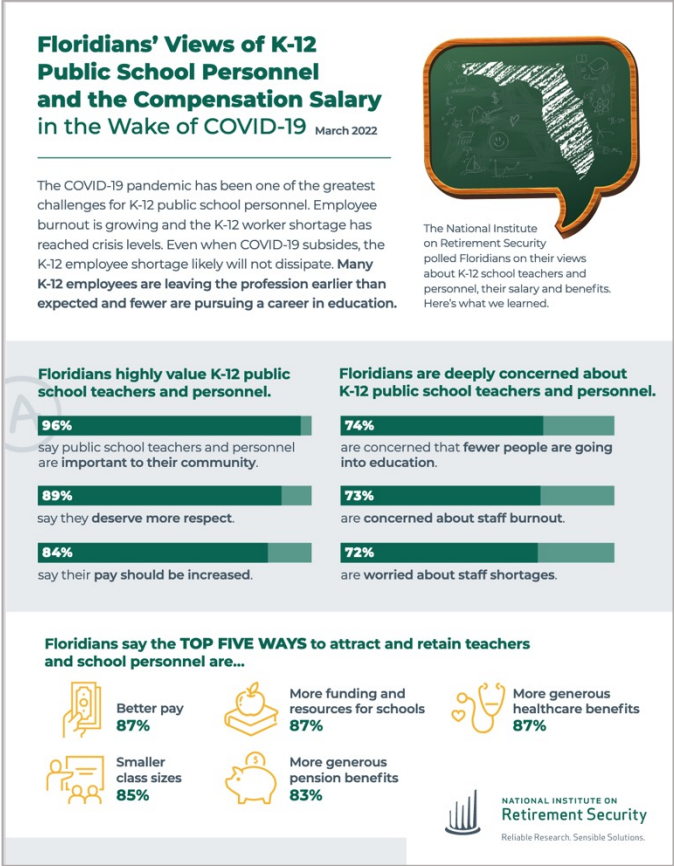
Nearly three-fourths of Americans agree that teacher and school personnel pensions should not be replaced by 401(k)-style accounts.



The majority of Americans agree that all workers should have a pension so they can be self-reliant in retirement.



Oversample in Kentucky and Florida with similar results.



Florida specific questions:

Regarding efforts in Florida to change K-12 employee pensions, Floridians support teacher choice and pensions.

- 87% of Floridians say pensions help incentivize long teaching careers in Florida, which benefits children, schools, and communities.
- 82% of Floridians say K-12 personnel should continue to have a choice between a pension and a 401(k) account.
- 81% say Florida teachers should have a pension to compensate for the fact that on average, 45 states pay their teachers more.
- 81% say it is unfair to offer pensions to some Florida public employees, like police officers and firefighters, but not teachers.
- 79% say any changes to teacher retirement benefits should not raise costs to Florida taxpayers
- 74% agree that Florida teachers have a better chance at a secure retirement with a pension plan rather than a 401(k) account.

Kentucky specific questions:

Kentuckians agree that state lawmakers should properly fund the teacher's pension plan and retiree health insurance fund.

- 92% say Kentucky lawmakers must continue to make the catch-up contributions to the teacher pension plan.
- 92% agree the state should be required to make its annual required contributions to the pension fund on time and in full.
- 91% agree state lawmakers must ensure all teachers & school personnel in Kentucky receive the pensions they earned.
- 91% agree that Kentucky lawmakers must keep their commitment to fund the healthcare insurance benefits that were promised to teachers.

Questions

