

# RETIREMENT INSECURITY 2024

AMERICANS' VIEWS OF  
RETIREMENT



NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON  
Retirement Security  
Reliable Research. Sensible Solutions.

By Dan Doonan and Kelly Kenneally

February 2024

# Webinar on New Research

## Retirement Insecurity 2024 Americans' Views of Retirement

March 20, 2024

# Agenda

- Speaker Introductions
- Presentation
- Q&A



# SPEAKERS



**Dan Doonan**

NIRS Executive Director and Report Co-Author



**Kelly Kenneally**

NIRS Communications Consultant and Report Co-Author

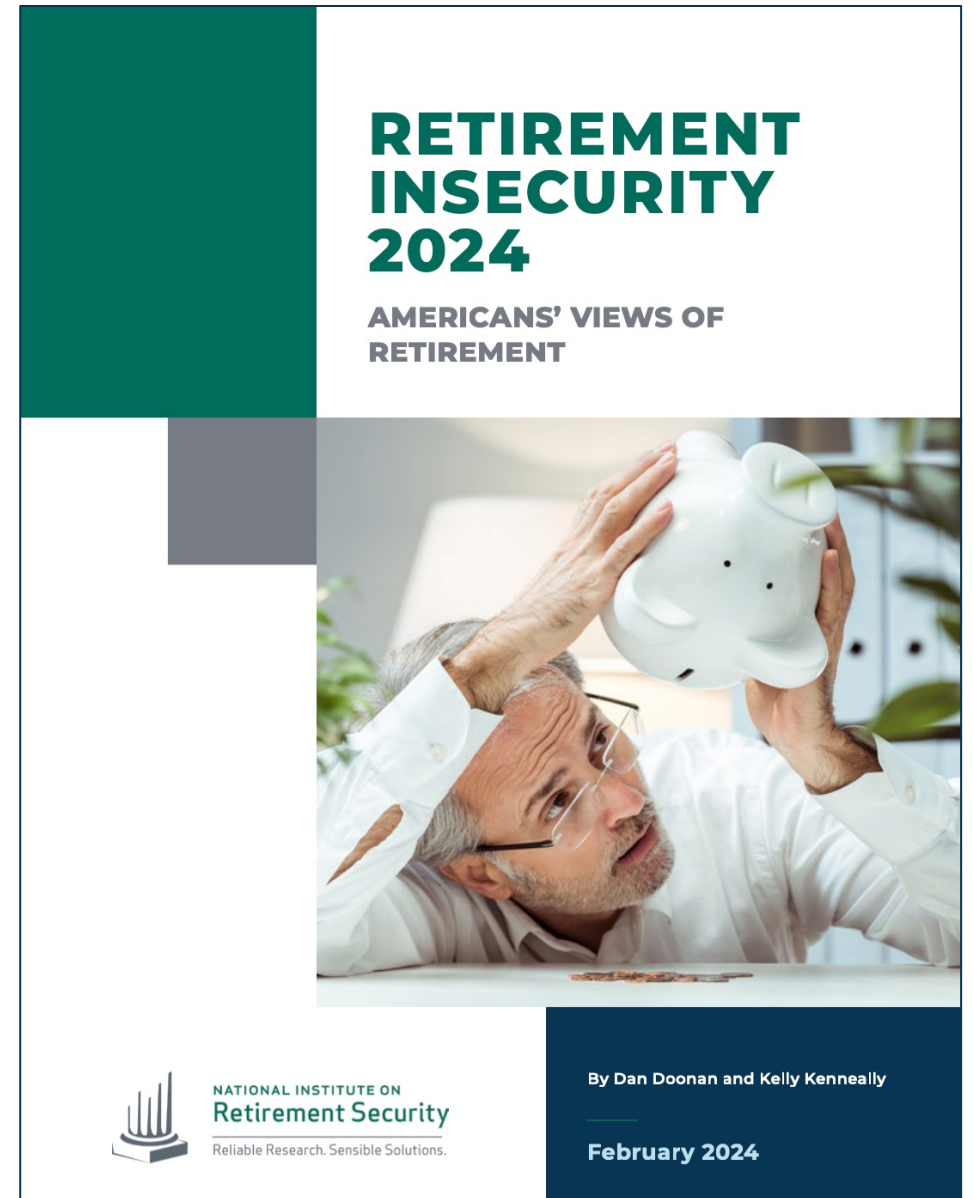
# Why This Research

- When NIRS was founded, a key unknown was: **What do Americans think about pensions?**
- Intentionally selected a polling firm with expertise in financial services to survey full scope of retirement views.
- Polling conducted about every two years to measure trends, add new questions on emerging issues.
- Modified the polling methodology in 2018, so polls before that date cannot be trended with current data.
- First report was in 2009, evolved to a report with 70+ questions on range of retirement topics – retirement, public plans, state programs, long-term care.



# Study Methodology

- Conducted by Greenwald Research.
- Information was collected from online interviews between October 10-25, 2023.
- A total of 1208 individuals aged 25 and older completed the survey.
- The final data were weighted by age, gender, and income to reflect the demographics of Americans aged 25 and older.



# Key Finding

## Americans Express Strong Support Pensions

### NIRS Asked Americans

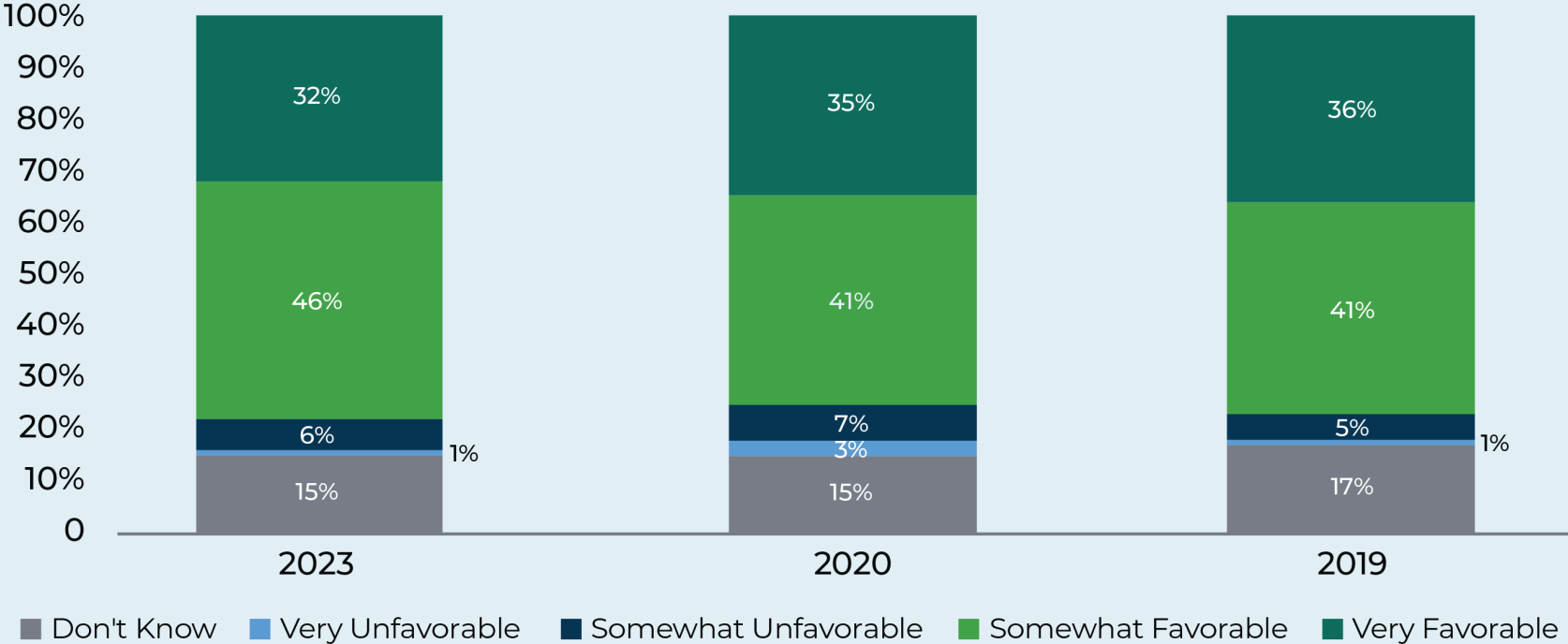
Describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.

"Since inflation has come, it has really been difficult to see myself retiring when I had planned. I have had a hard time adding into my 401k. Since I am losing money, I am really worried about the future."

# More than three-fourths of Americans consistently have a favorable view of pensions.

**Figure 1: More than three-fourths of Americans consistently have a favorable view of pensions.**

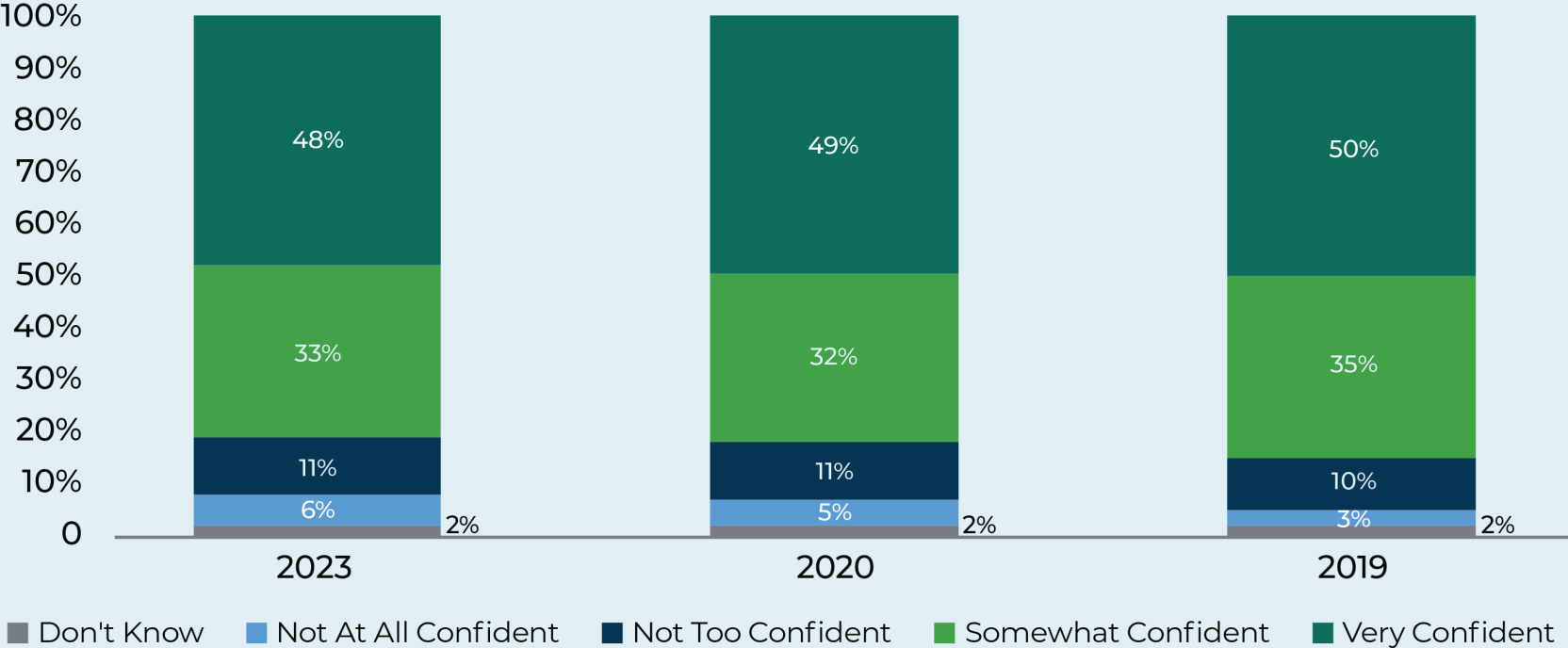
How would you describe your overall view of this type of pension?



# Americans have strong confidence that their pension will be there at retirement.

**Figure 2: More than eighty percent of Americans with pensions consistently are confident that their pension will be there at retirement.**

Before you retired, how confident were you that your pension would be there when it was time to retire?

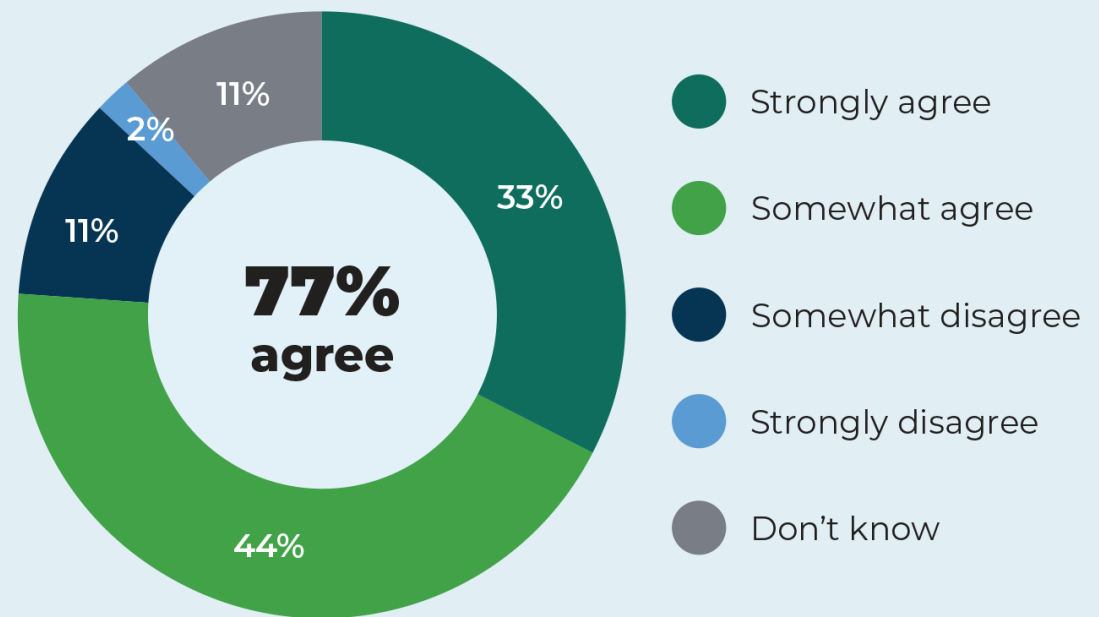




**77% say pensions provide retirement security.**

**Figure 3: More than three-fourths of Americans agree that those with pensions are more likely to have a secure retirement.**

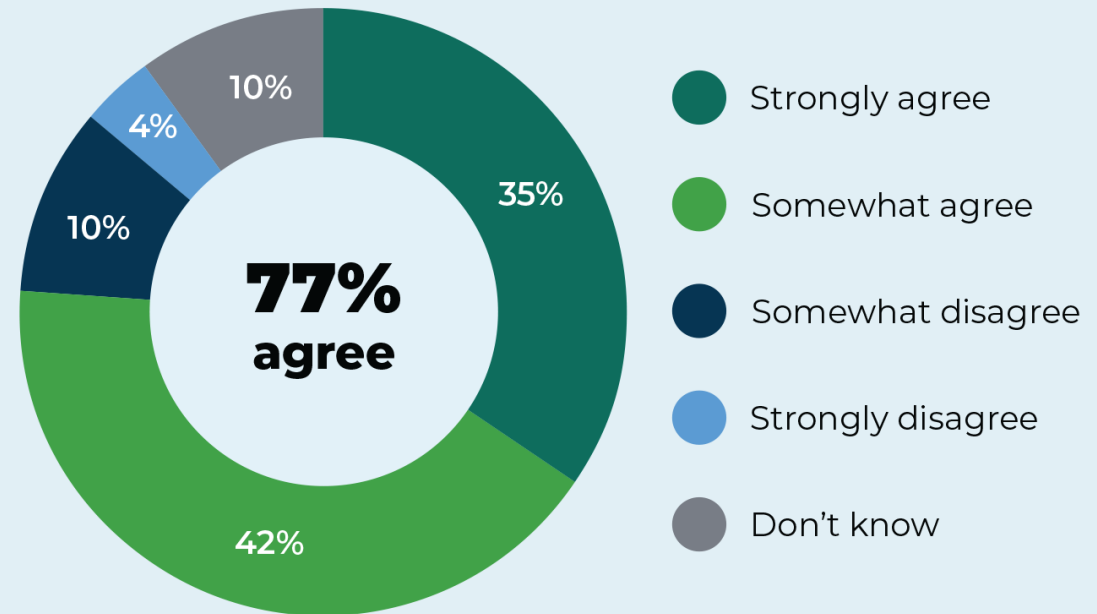
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Americans with traditional pensions are more likely than those without pensions to have a secure retirement.



# Without a pension, it's hard to achieve the American Dream.

## Figure 4: Americans overwhelmingly agree that the disappearance of pensions makes it harder to achieve the American Dream.

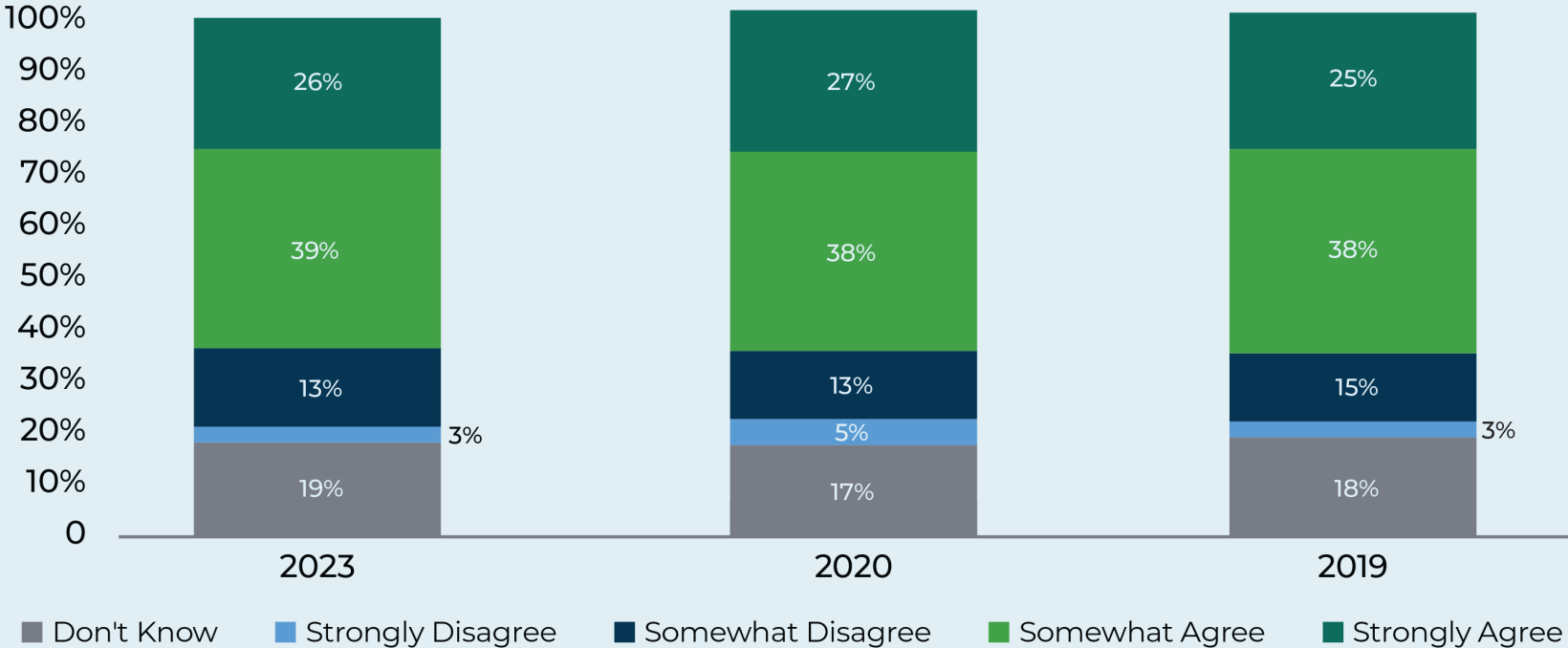
To what extent do you agree or disagree: The disappearance of traditional pensions has made it harder for workers to achieve the American Dream.



# 65% see pensions as better than 401(k) plans for delivering retirement security.

**Figure 5: More than two-thirds of Americans consistently agree that pensions are better than 401(k)s for achieving retirement security.**

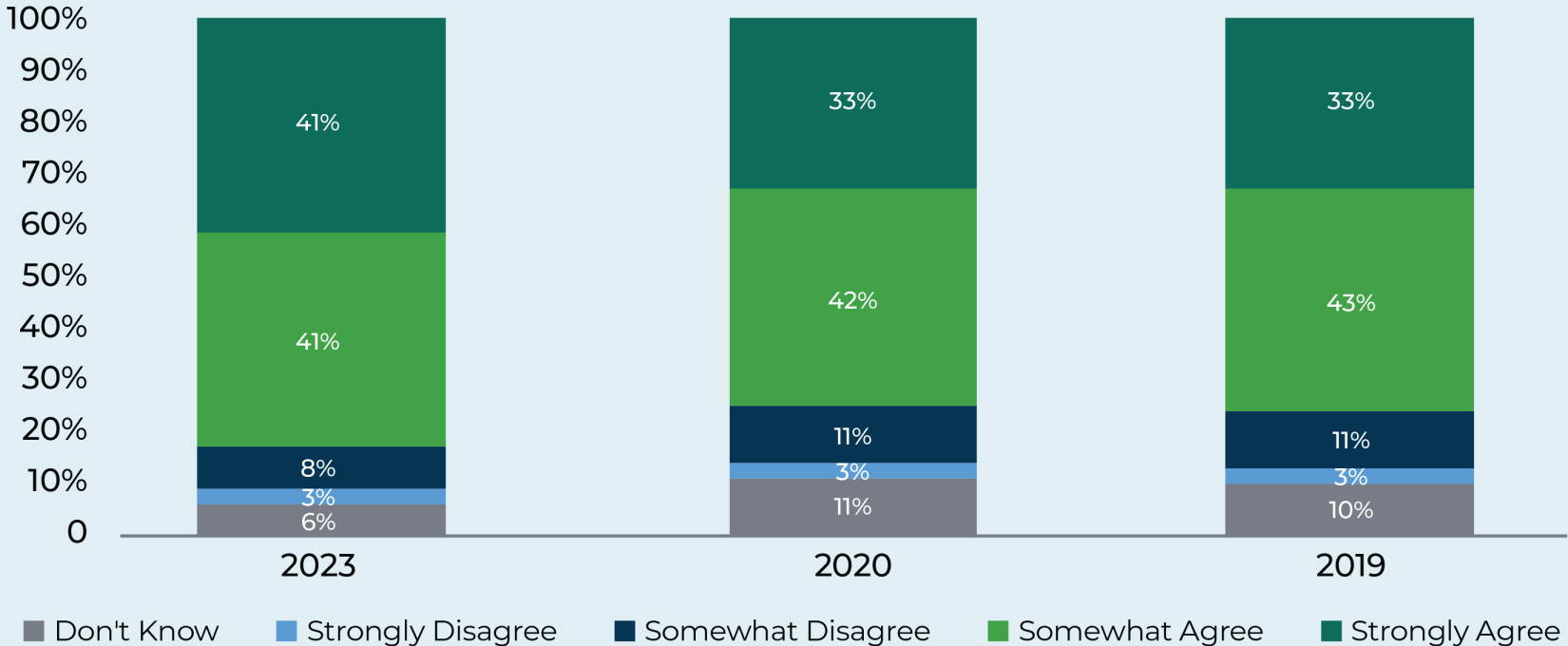
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Pensions do more to help workers achieve a secure retirement as compared to retirement savings plans such as 401(k)s.



# 82% say all Americans should have a pension for independence and self-reliance.

**Figure 6: The vast majority of Americans say all workers should have a pension so they are independent and self-reliant in retirement.**

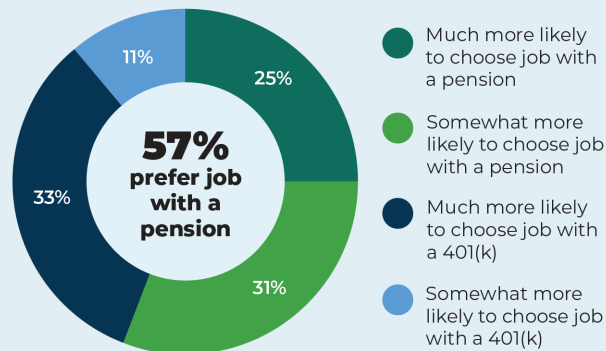
To what extent do you agree or disagree: I believe that all workers should have access to a pension plan so they can be independent and self-reliant in retirement.



# In a tight labor market, pensions are recruitment and retention tools for employers.

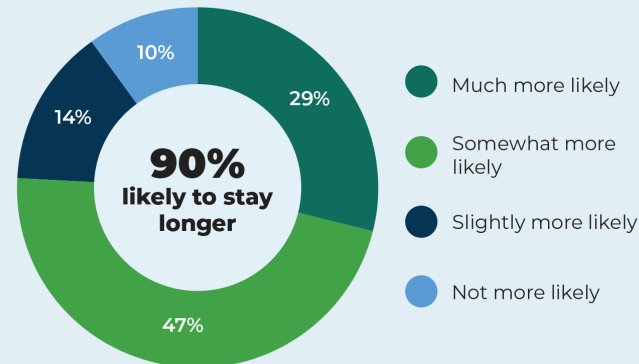
**Figure 10: More than half of working Americans would choose a job with a pension rather than a 401(k).**

Imagine you are evaluating two new job opportunities. Both jobs are similar in all aspects (such as pay, type of work, etc.) except for one: Job A offers employees a traditional pension plan as part of the retirement benefits, while Job B offers a retirement savings plan (like a 401k). Which job would you be more likely to choose?



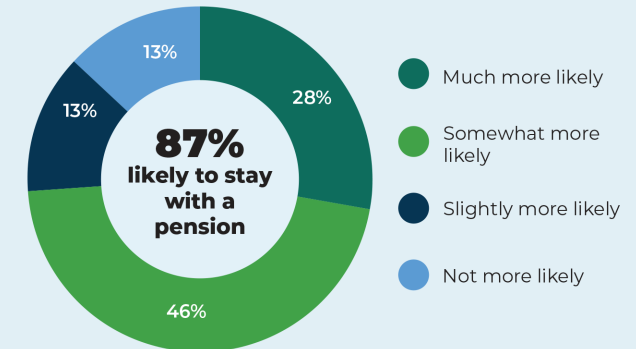
**Figure 11: Nearly all workers with a pension say they'd be more likely to stay with a pension.**

All other factors equal, if your current employer did not provide a traditional pension plan as part of the retirement benefits, would you be more inclined to leave the company if another job opportunity came up?



**Figure 12: Most workers without a pension say having a pension would make them more likely to stay in their job.**

All other factors equal, if your current employer provided a traditional pension plan as part of the retirement benefits, would you be more likely to stay at the company longer even if another job opportunity came up?



# Key Finding

## High Retirement Anxiety Continues Among Americans

### NIRS Asked Americans

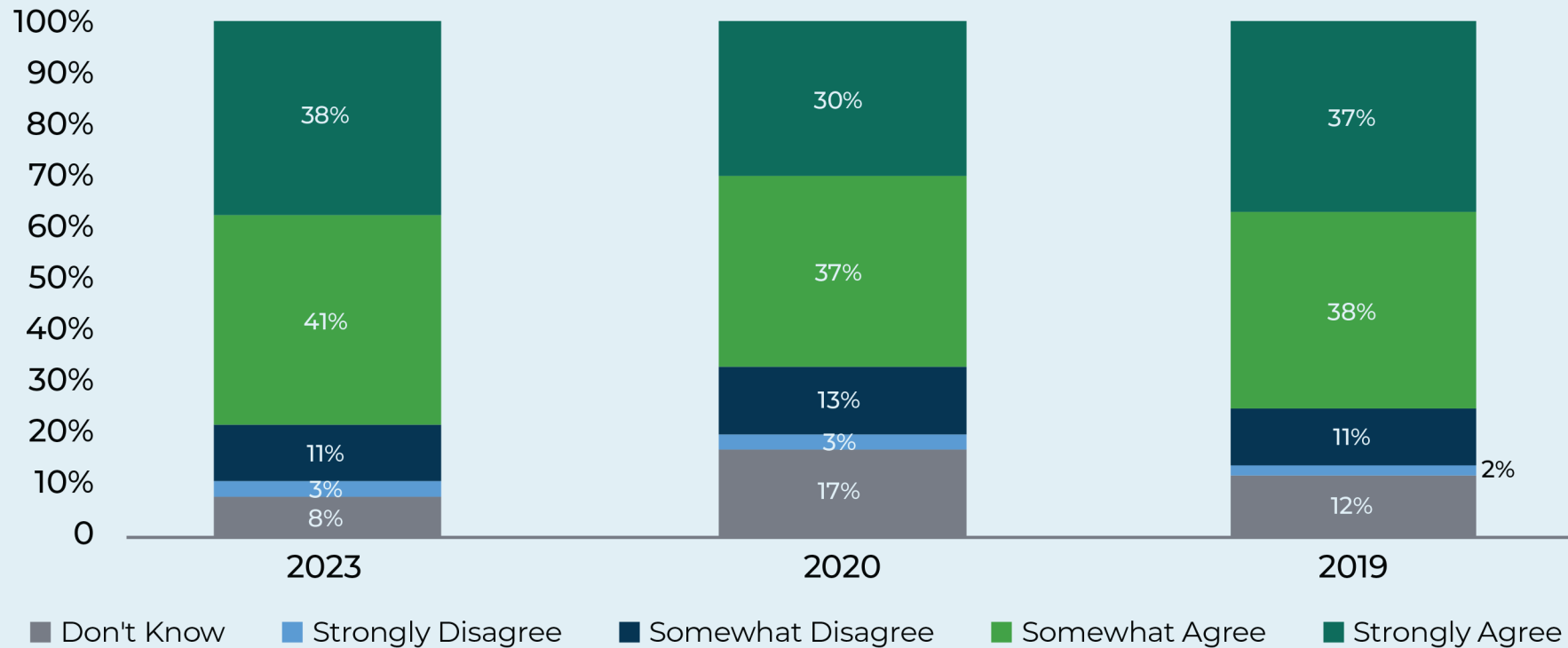
Describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.

"The cost of living has severely impacted our outlook on what we can do now and will be able to do in the future. Insurance doesn't cover medicines as much as they did, and this has cut into our income as well."

# In 2023, 79% say U.S. faces a retirement crisis, up from 67% in 2020.

**Figure 13: Americans increasingly agree that nation faces a retirement crisis.**

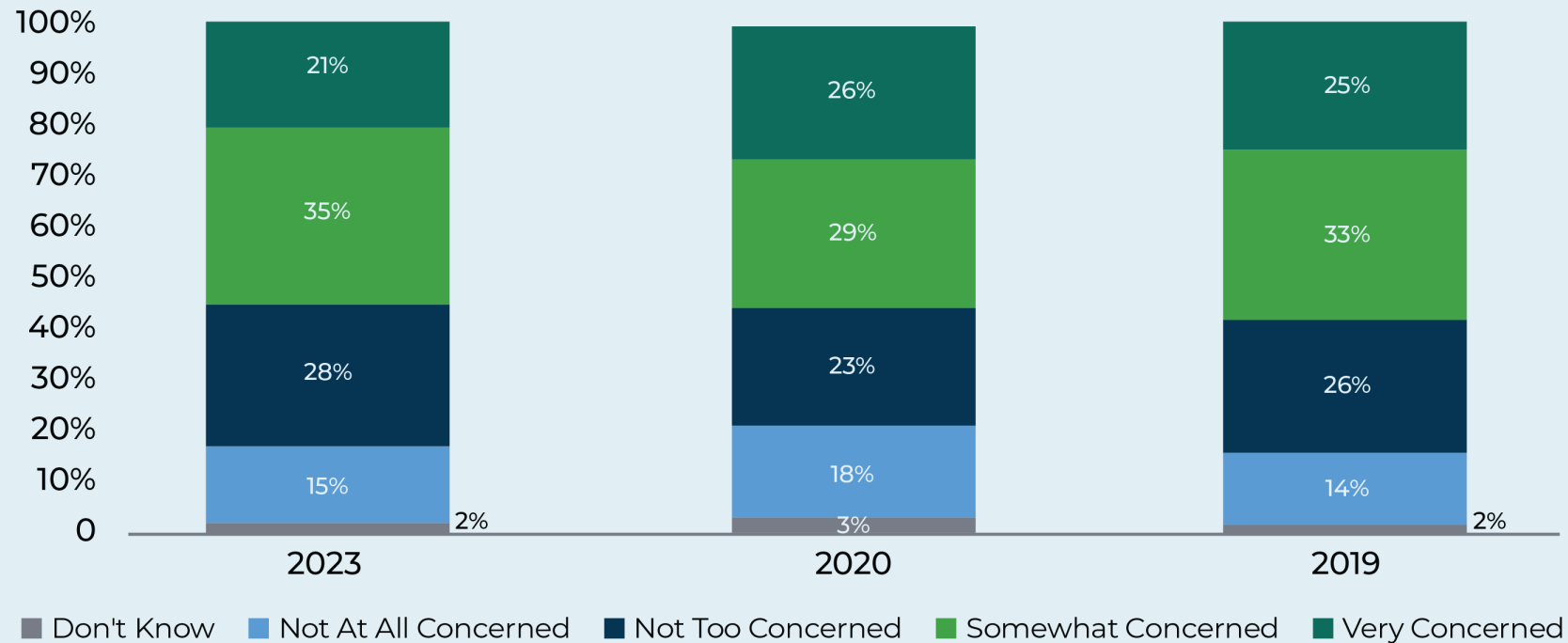
To what extent do you agree or disagree: America is facing a retirement crisis.



# Most Americans consistently say retirement is out of reach.

**Figure 14: More than half of Americans say they won't be able to achieve a secure retirement.**

How concerned are you that you won't be able to achieve a financially secure retirement?

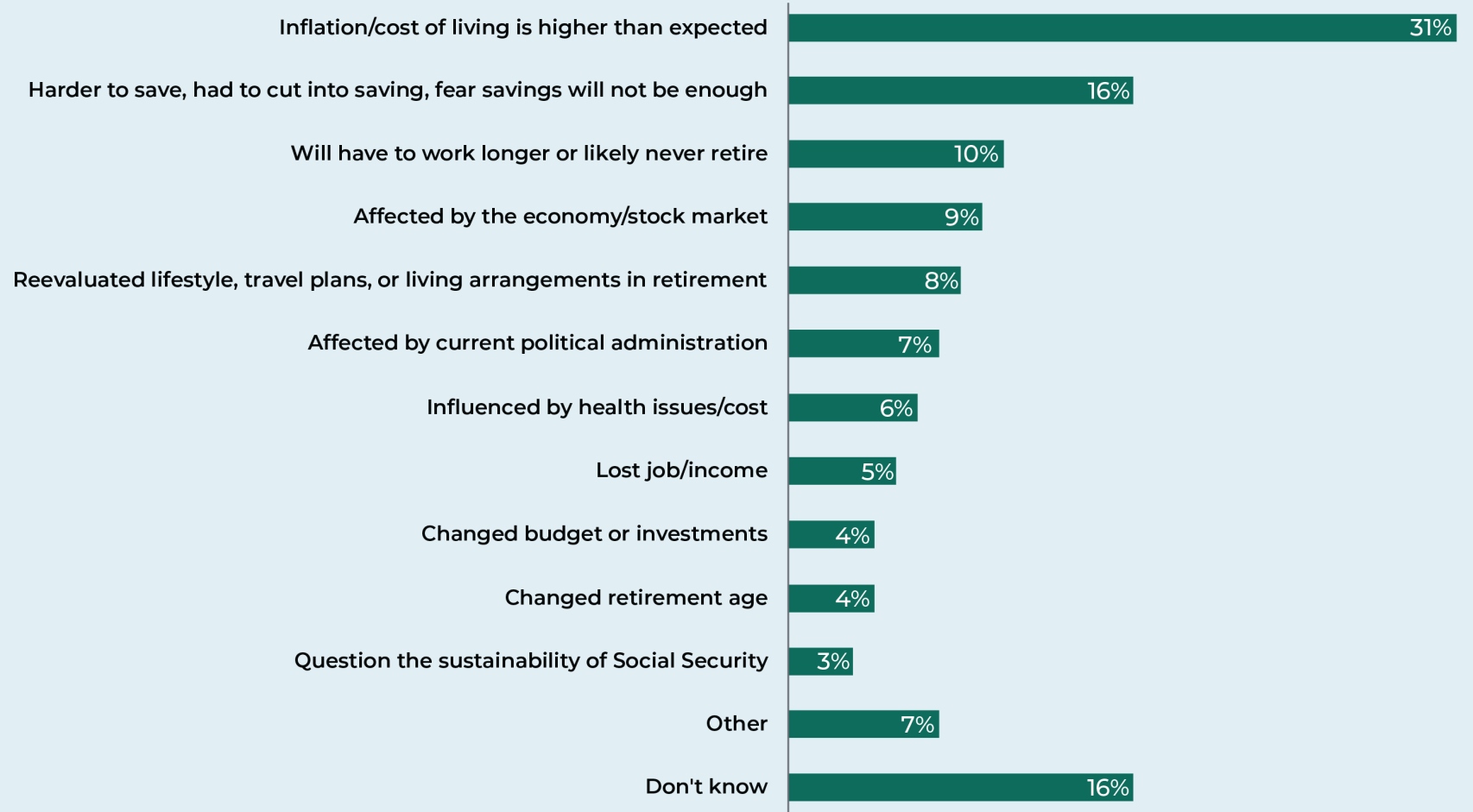




# Inflation is a driving factor of retirement worries.

**Figure 16: For about one-third of Americans who say their vision of retirement has changed, inflation and the cost of living are the issues.**

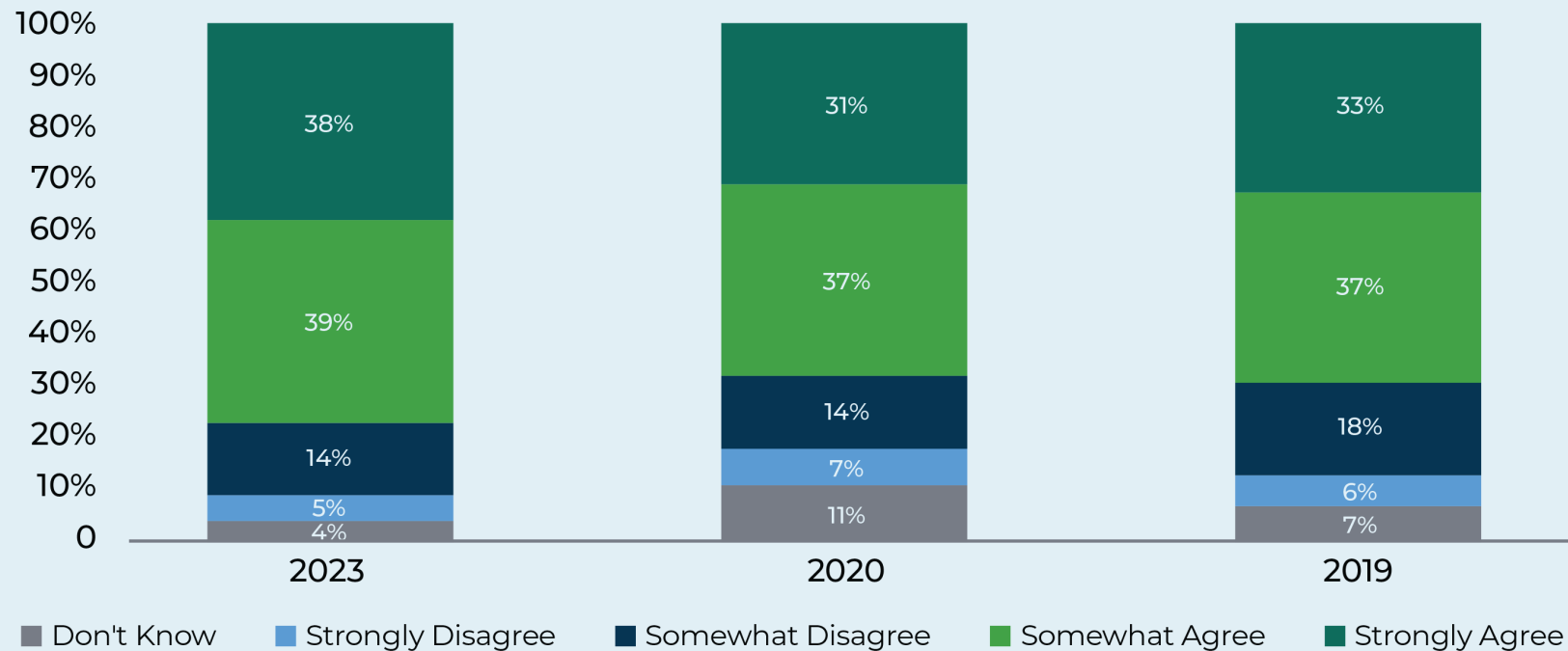
In your own words, please describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.



# Americans say workers just can't save enough on their own to achieve retirement security.

**Figure 19: A large share of Americans increasingly agree that the average worker cannot save enough on their own for a secure retirement.**

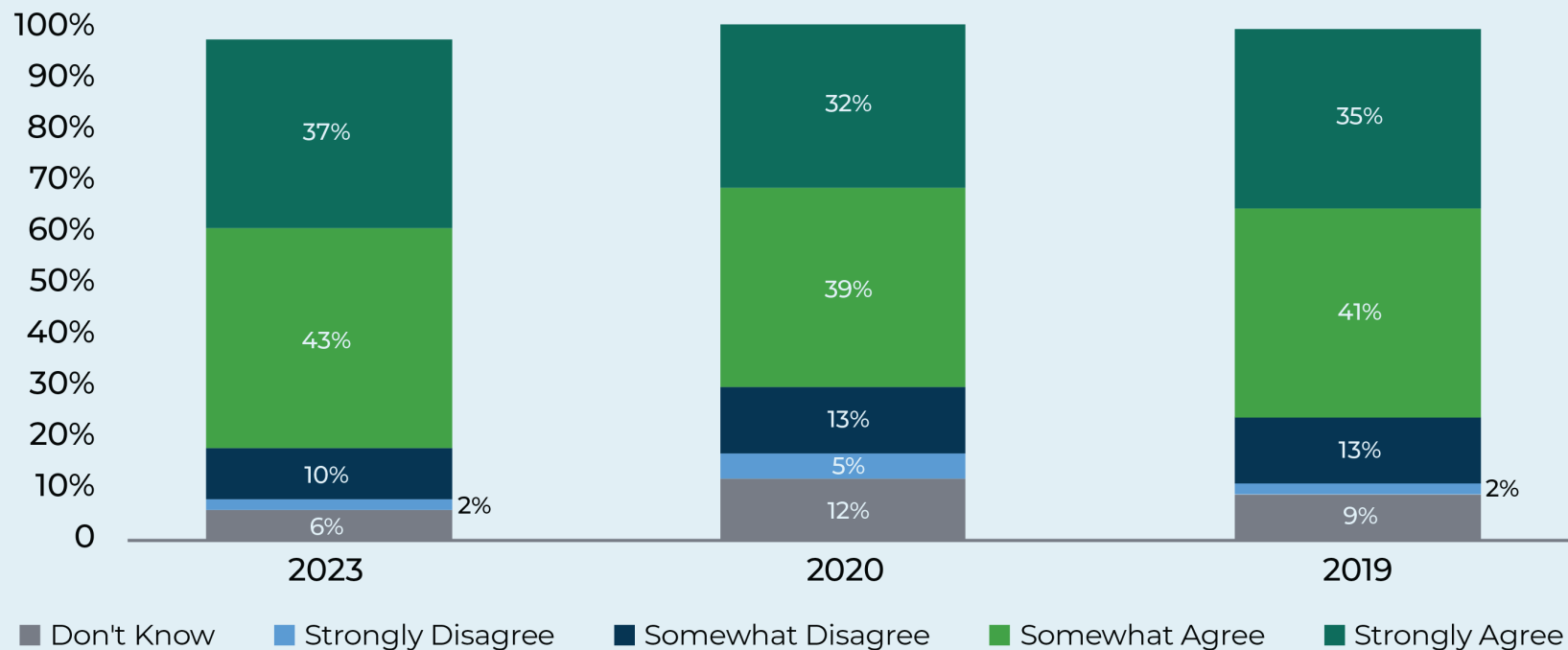
To what extent do you agree or disagree: The average worker cannot save enough on their own to guarantee a secure retirement?



# 80% of Americans want employers to do more, up from 71%.

**Figure 20: Most Americans increasingly agree that employers should contribute more to workers' retirement plans.**

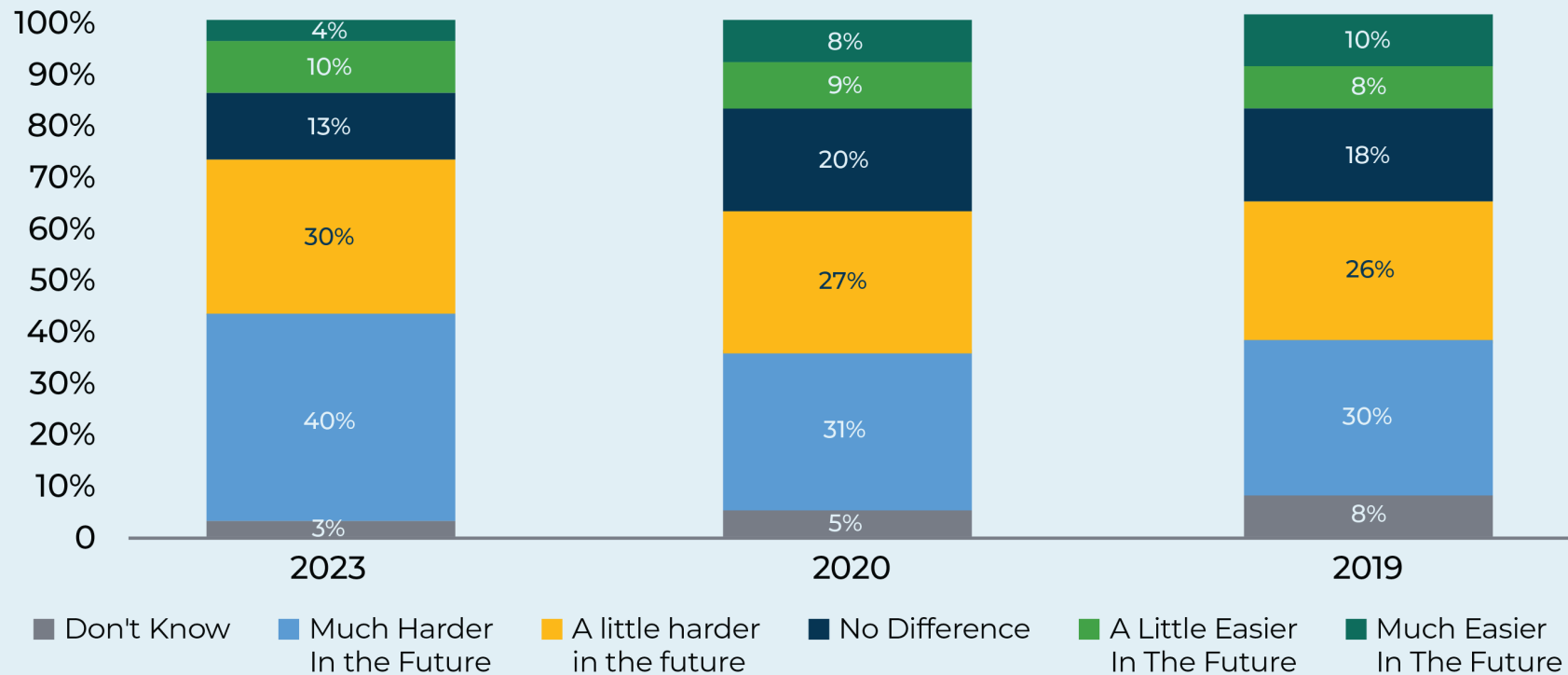
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Employers should contribute more money to workers' retirement plans to allow them to achieve a secure retirement.



# 70% say retirement is getting harder, up from 58%.

**Figure 22: Americans increasingly agree that it's only getting harder to retire.**

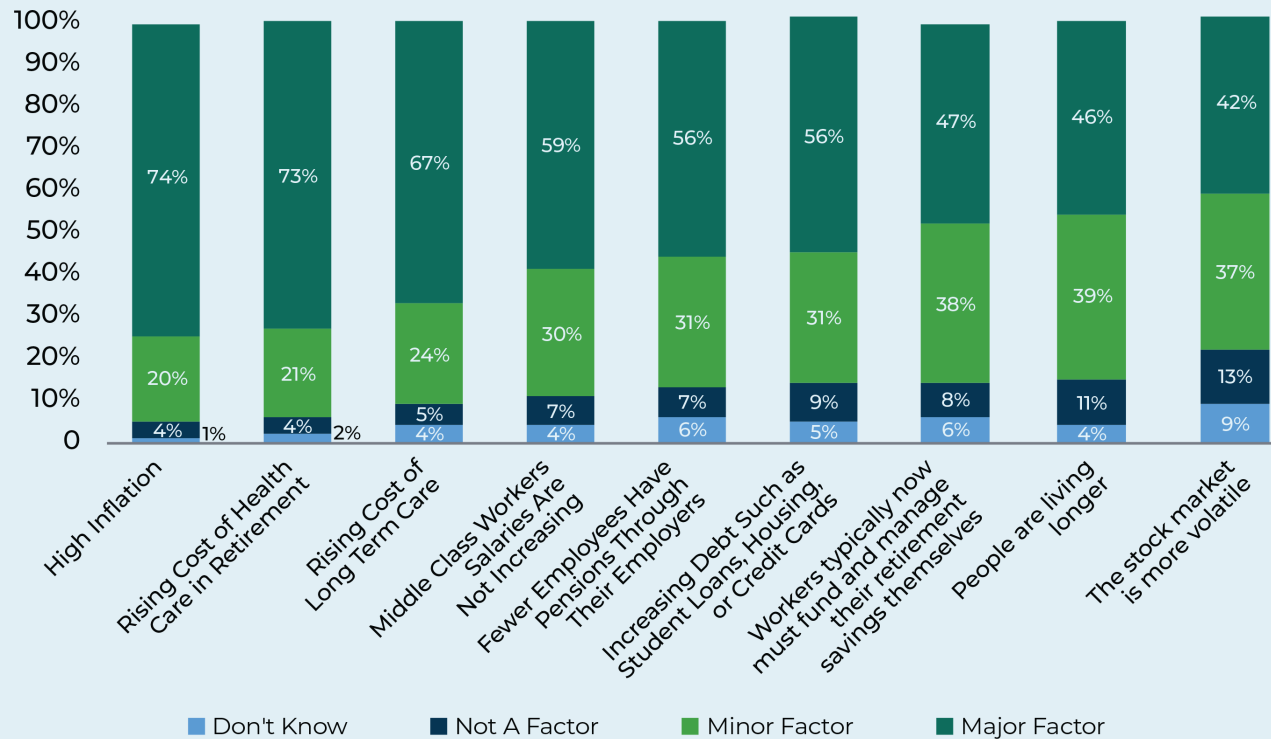
Do you feel that – compared to today – it will be easier or harder for Americans to prepare for retirement in the future, or will there be no difference?



# The disappearance of pensions is part of the reason retirement is harder.

**Figure 23: Rising costs and fewer pensions are key factors in making it harder to prepare for retirement.**

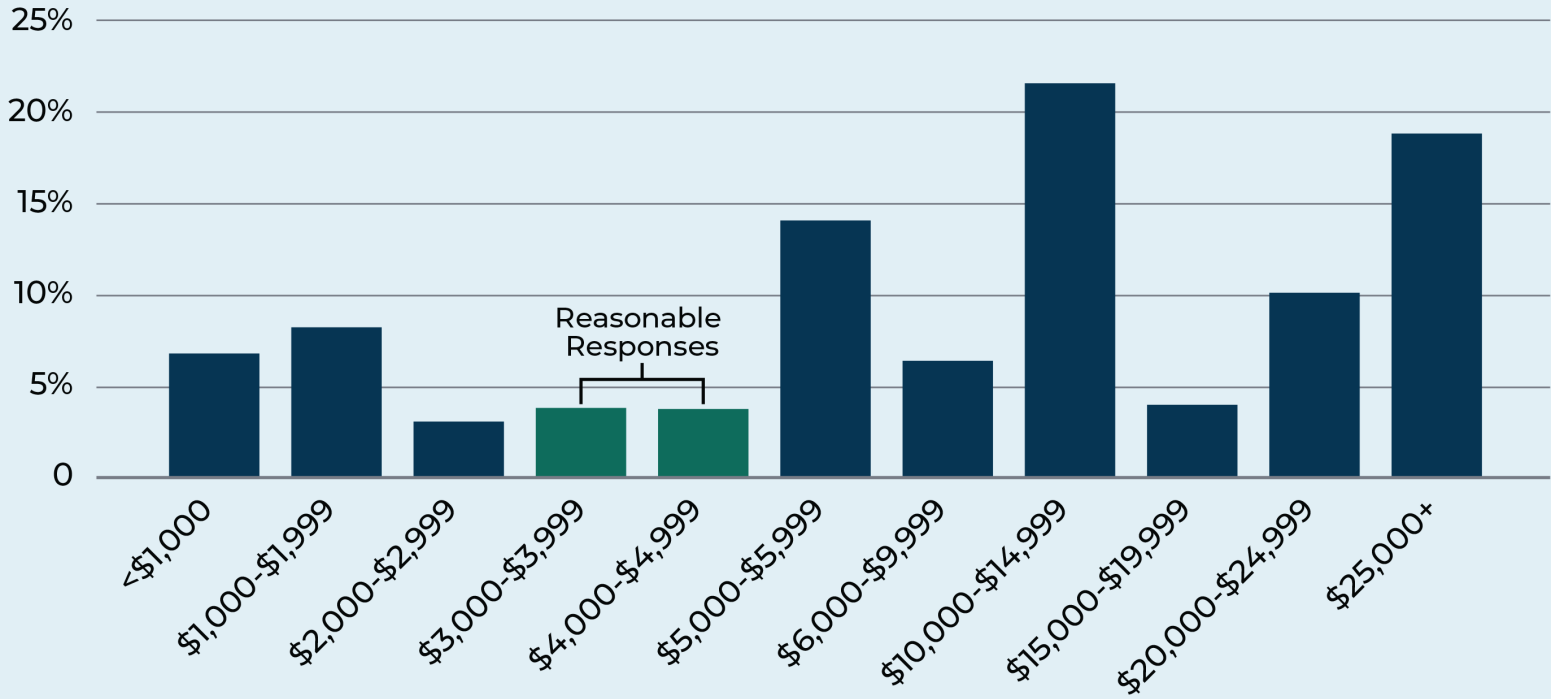
To what extent do you feel each of the following issues are a factor in making it harder for Americans to prepare for retirement?



# Only 8% of Americans accurately estimated how much retirement income is generated by \$100,000.

**Figure 25: Few Americans accurately estimated how much retirement income would be generated from a \$100,000 nest egg.**

If you were to retire at age 67 with \$100,000 in retirement savings, how much income do you think you would be able to draw annually from that savings throughout your retirement?



# Key Finding

## Americans Want Policy Leaders to Give Their Retirement Concerns a Higher Priority

### NIRS Asked Americans

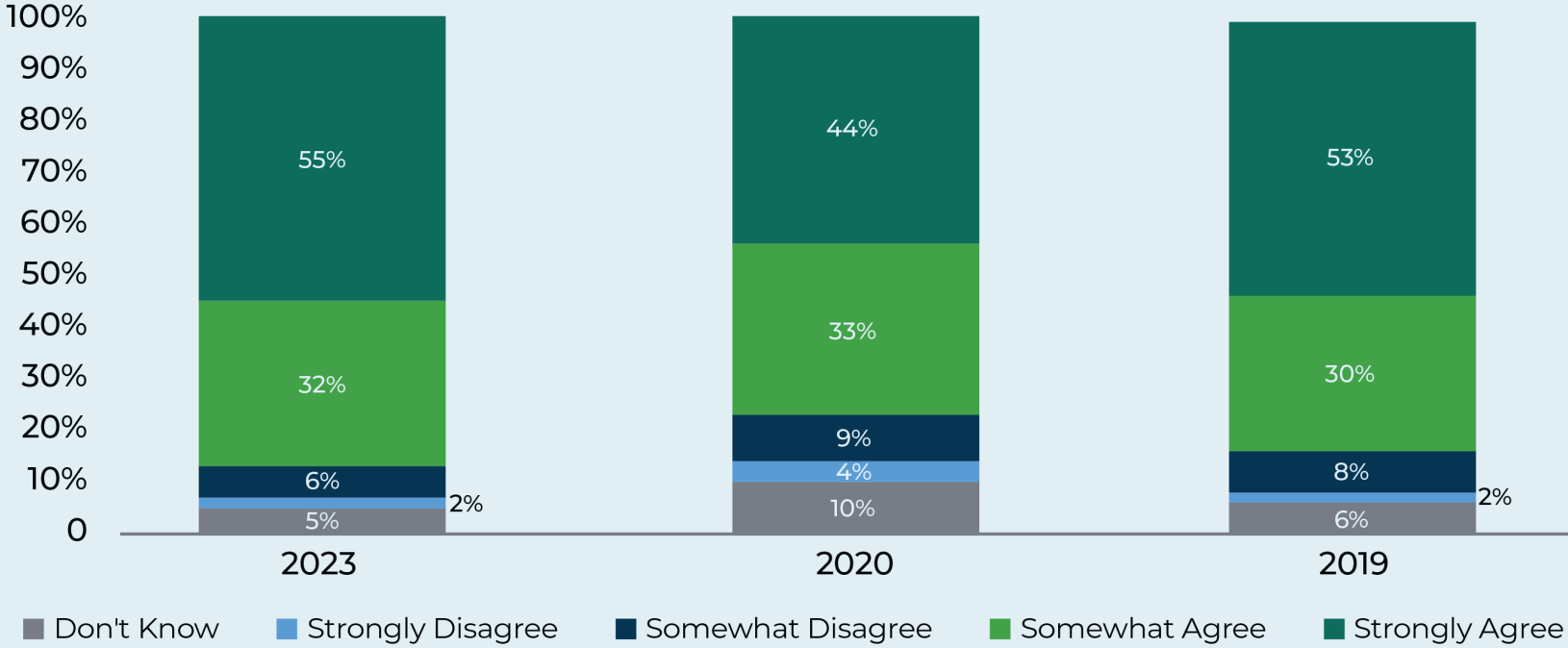
Describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.

"The staggering rate of inflation makes retirement unlikely. I envision a significant, even catastrophic financial disaster on the near horizon that makes me very anxious about relying on the government for any kind of assistance at all."

# 87% say leaders just don't get how hard it is to prepare for retirement.

**Figure 26: Most Americans feel leaders in Washington don't understand how hard it is for workers to save for retirement.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree: Leaders in Washington do not understand how hard it is for workers to save enough for retirement.

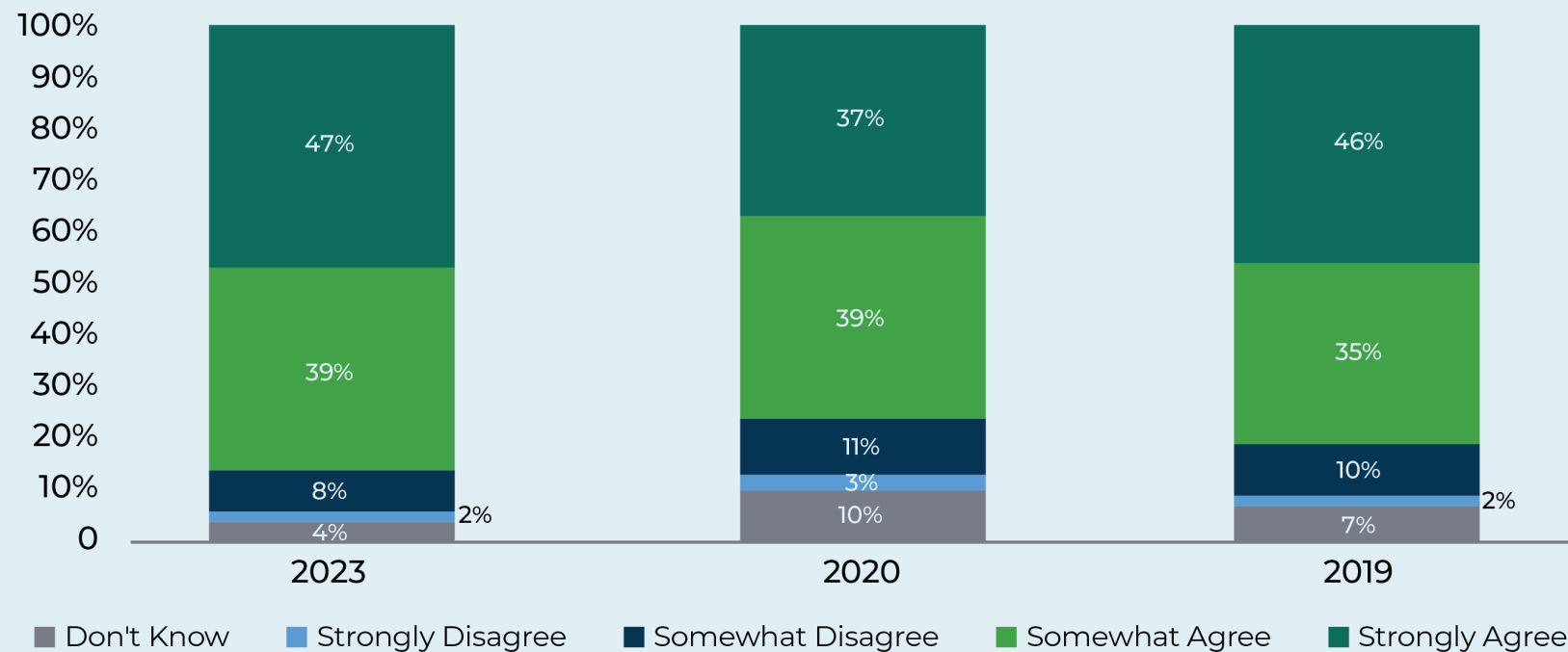




# 86% say leaders should give retirement a higher priority.

**Figure 27: Americans overwhelmingly agree Washington leaders need to give retirement a higher priority.**

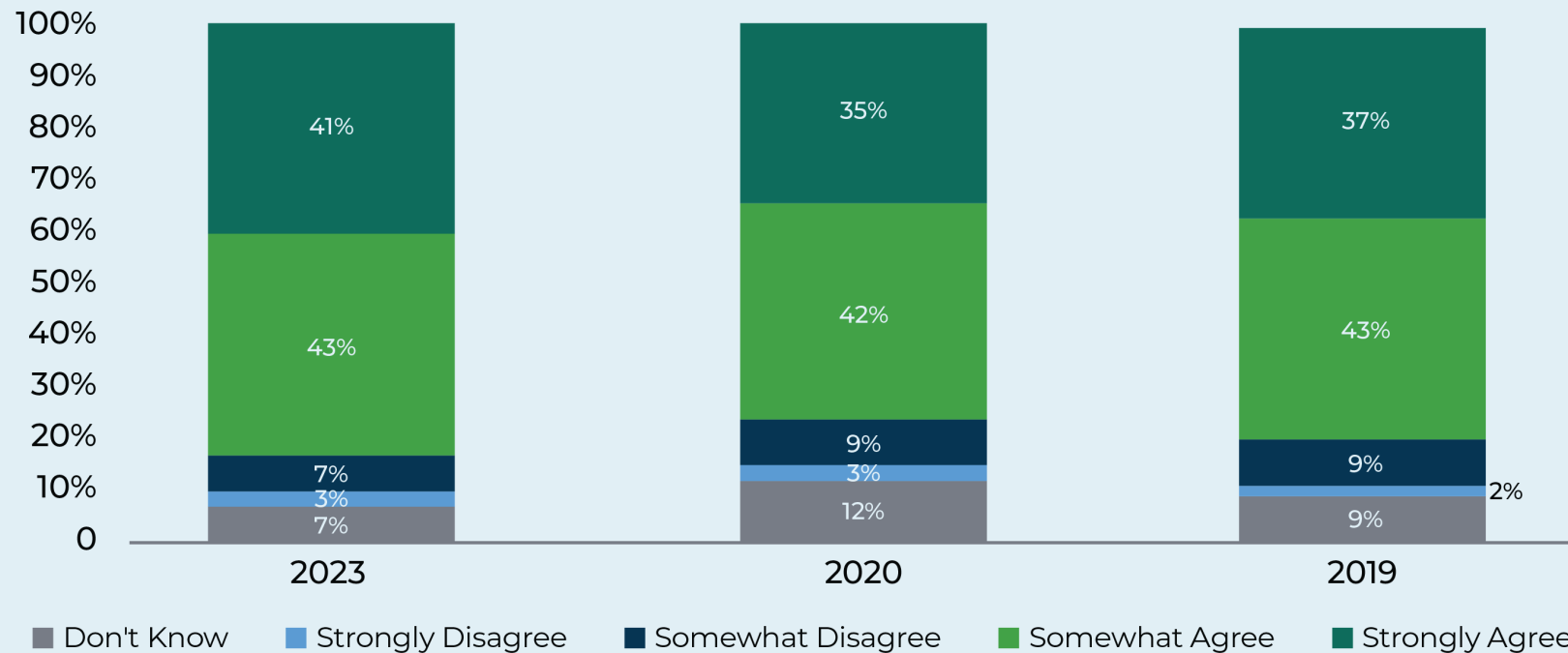
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Leaders in Washington need to give a higher priority to ensuring more Americans can have a secure retirement.



# 84% want lawmakers to make it easier for employers to offer pensions.

**Figure 28:** The vast majority of Americans say government should make it easier for employers to offer pensions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree: The government should make it easier for employers to offer traditional pension plans.



# Key Finding

## Americans Want Action Now to Safeguard Social Security

### NIRS Asked Americans

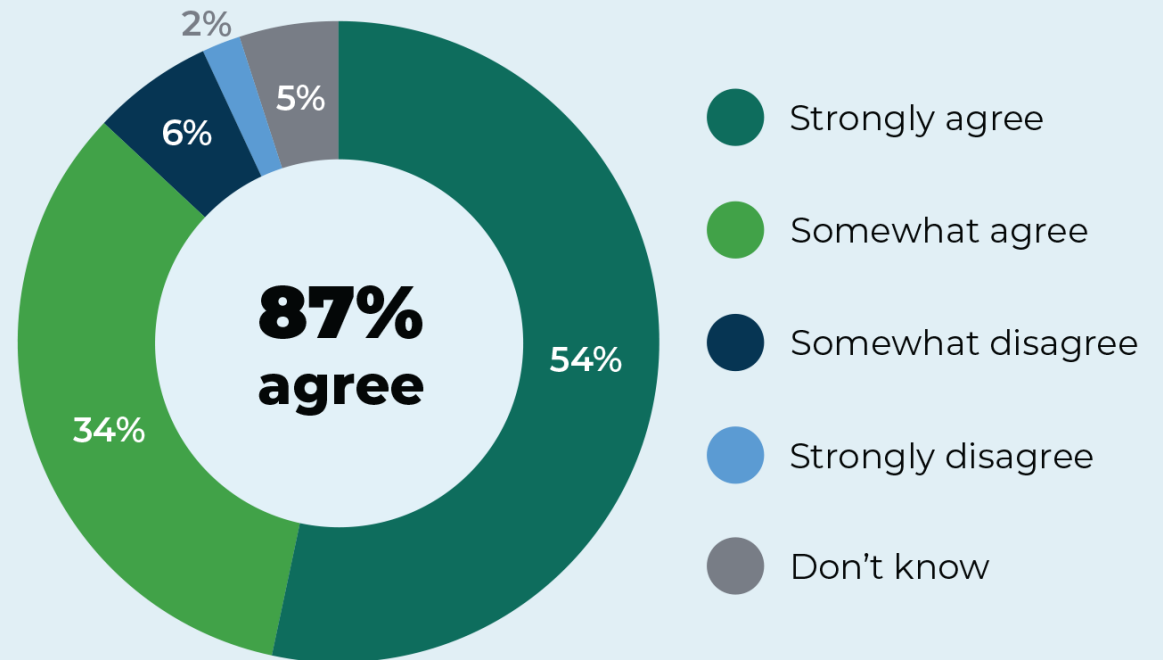
Describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.

"I'm not sure about Social Security benefits being available."

# Americans want a Social Security solution now.

## Figure 30: Nearly all Americans want Congress to shore up Social Security now.

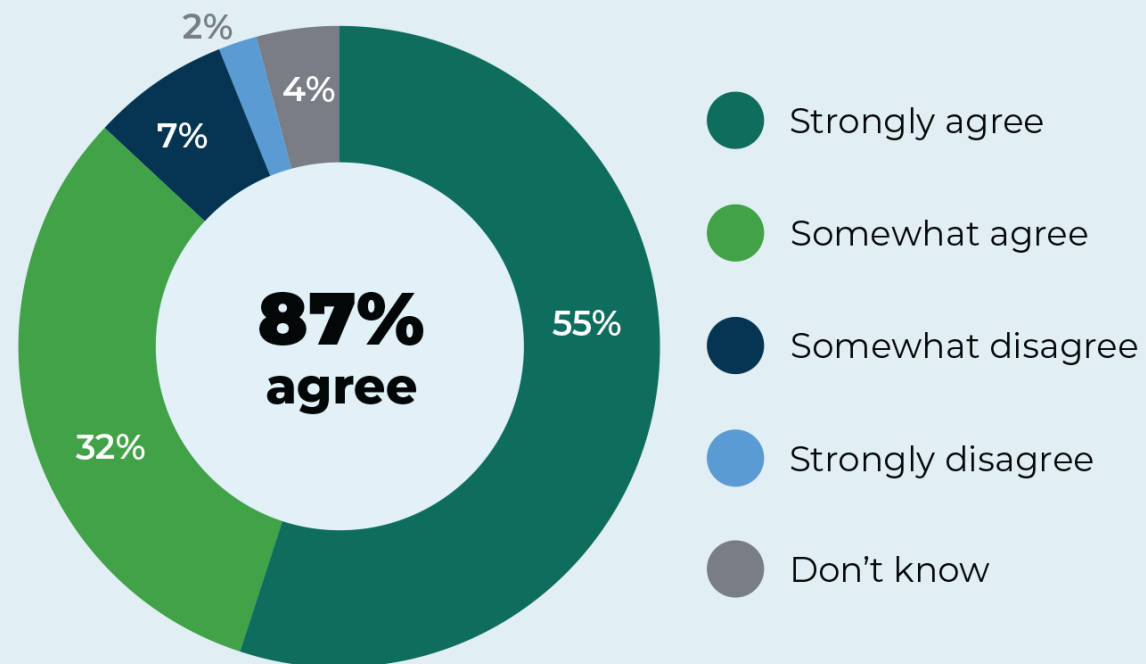
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Congress should act now to shore up Social Security funding rather than waiting another 10 years.



# Americans want Social Security to remain a policy priority.

## Figure 31: An overwhelming majority of Americans say Social Security must remain a priority.

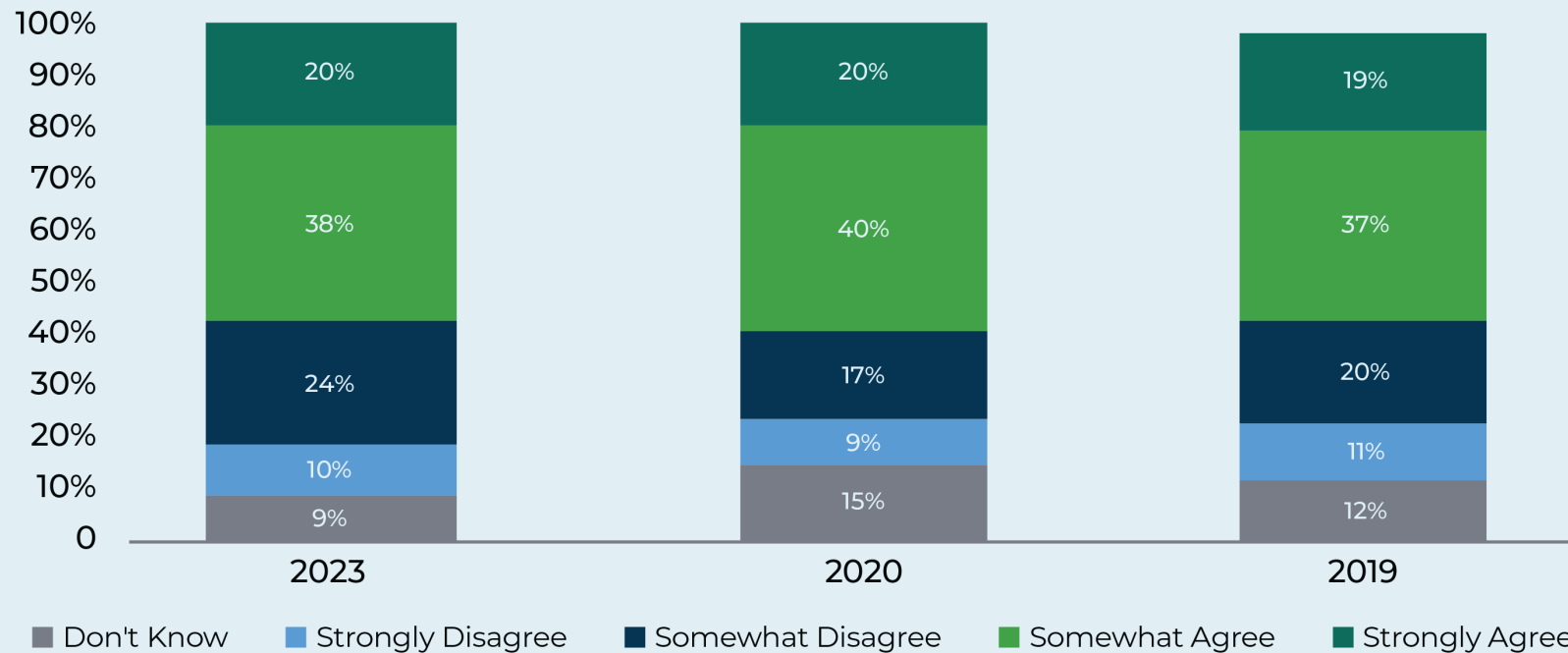
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Social Security should remain a priority for our country no matter how bad budget deficits get.



# Most Americans want increased contributions from employers and employees.

**Figure 32: Most Americans are in agreement that government should increase the amount that workers and employers contribute to Social Security.**

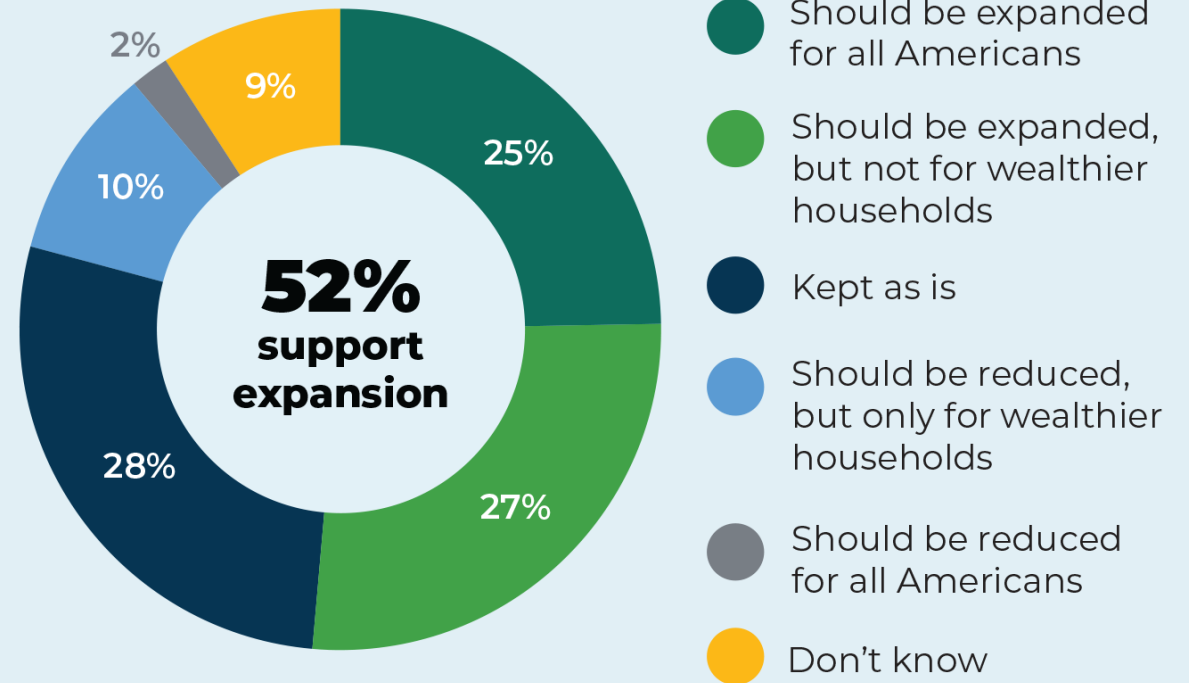
To what extent do you agree or disagree: To ensure that Social Security will be around for future generations, the government needs to increase the amount that workers and employers must contribute to Social Security.



# Americans are split on expanding Social Security.

## Figure 34: 52% of Americans support an expansion of Social Security benefits.

Would you support an expansion of Social Security benefits, a reduction of benefits, or should it be kept as is?



# Key Finding

**Americans are worried about long-term care costs in retirement.**

## NIRS Asked Americans

Describe the ways in which your vision of retirement has changed.

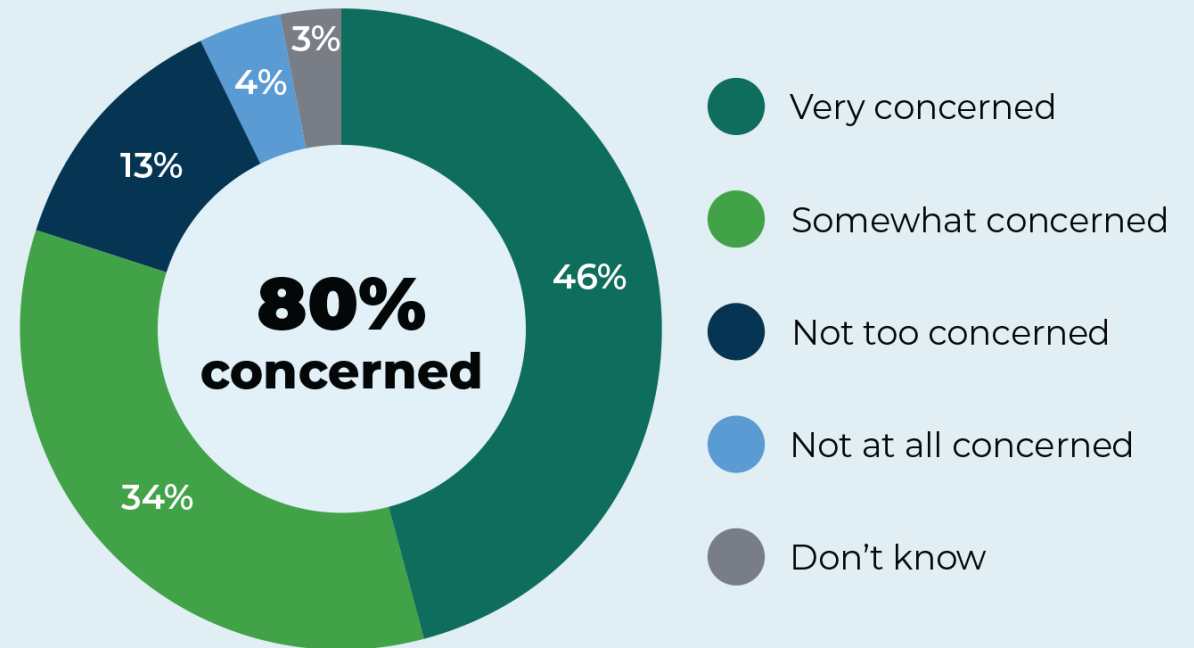
"Healthcare costs are extremely high compared to a couple years ago, and that has to be taken into account if retiring before Medicare eligible age."



# Long-term care costs are a source of retirement anxiety for most.

## Figure 37: Most Americans are concerned about the rising cost of long-term nursing care.

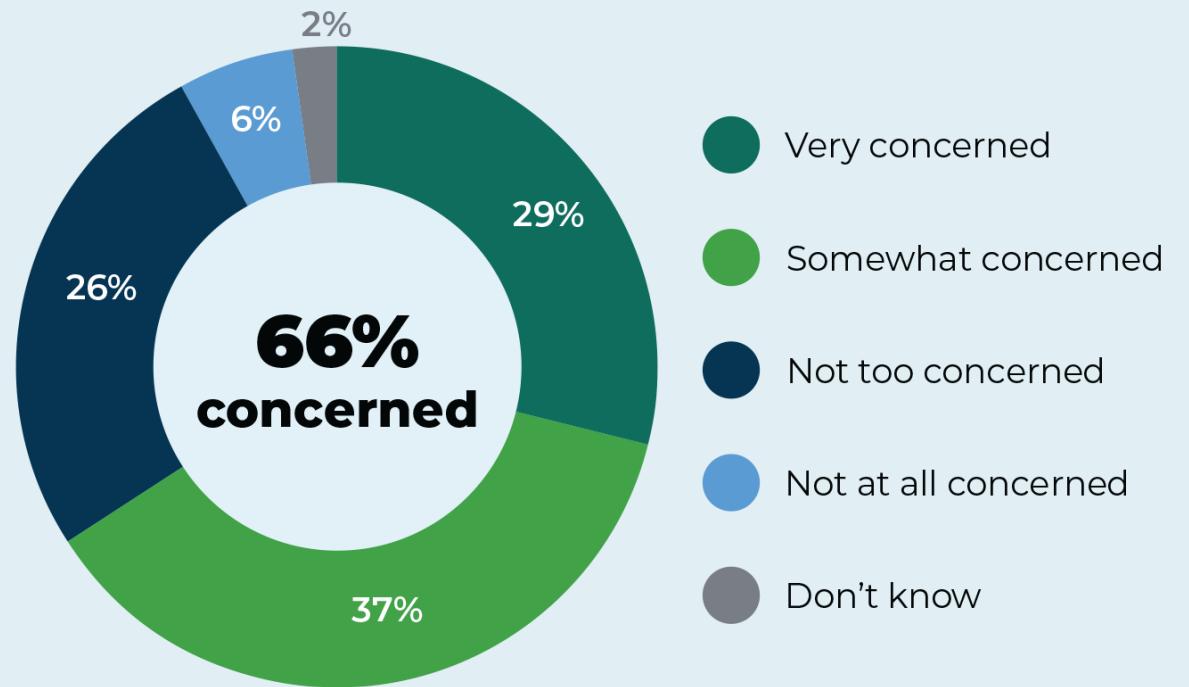
To what extent are you concerned about rising costs in the following areas during your retirement:  
The cost of needing long-term nursing care.



# Rising healthcare costs in retirement also are a concern.

## Figure 39: Most Americans are concerned about rising healthcare costs in retirement.

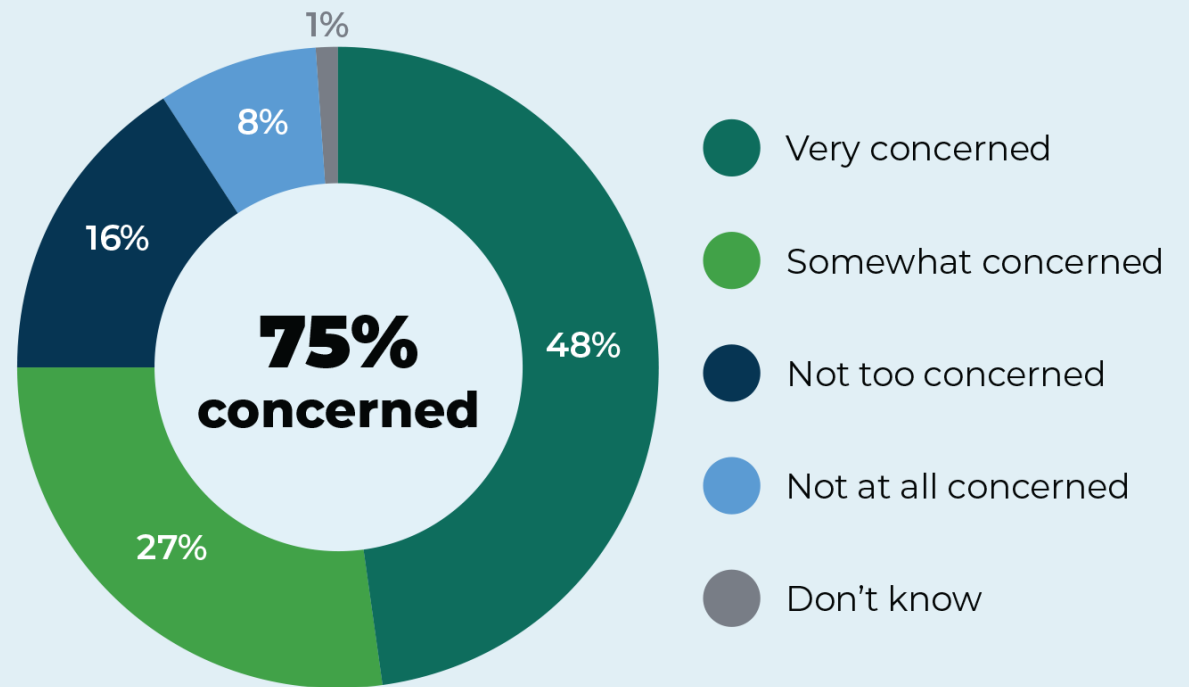
To what extent are you concerned about rising costs in the following areas during your retirement:  
Healthcare costs.



# And housing costs in retirement are a source of anxiety.

## Figure 40: Three-fourths of Americans are concerned about rising housing costs in retirement.

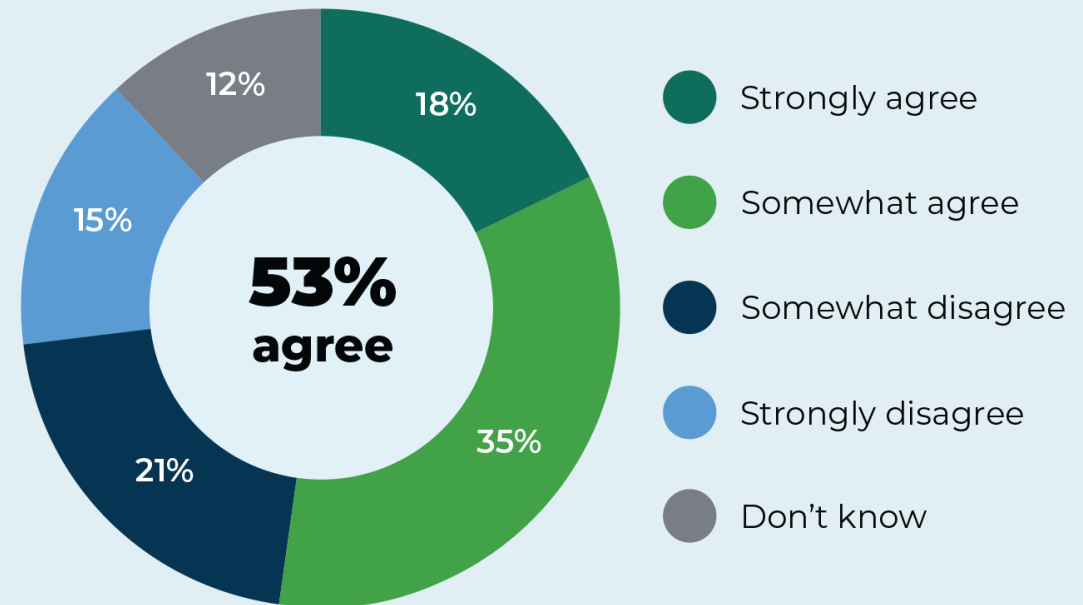
To what extent are you concerned about rising costs in the following areas during your retirement: Housing costs



# There are mixed views on the government collecting money to pay for long-term care.

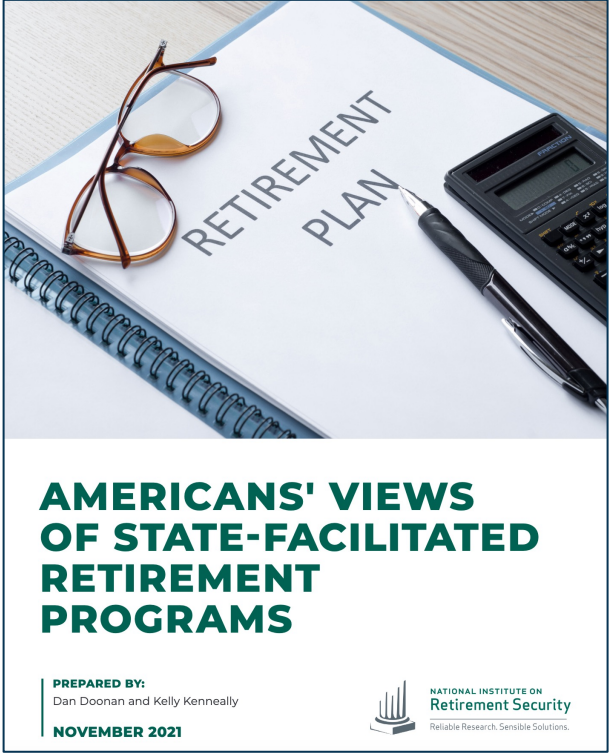
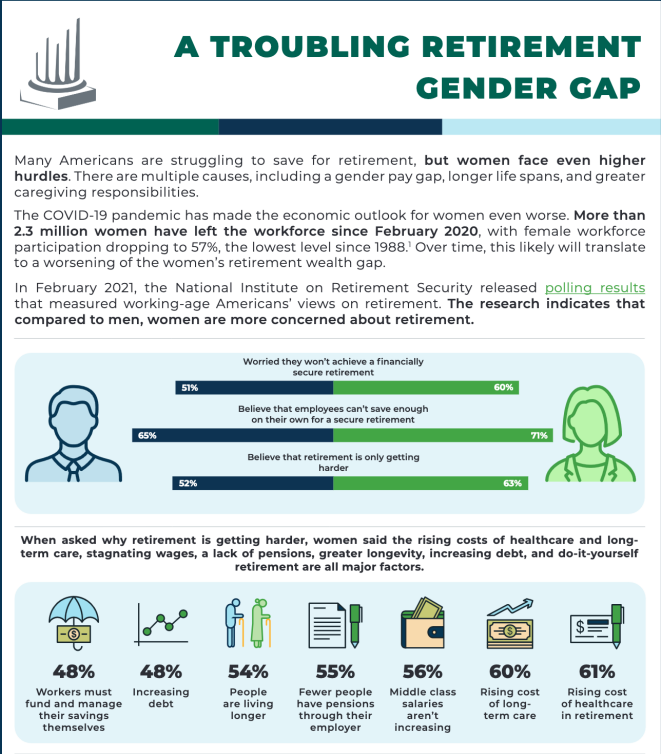
## Figure 38: Americans are split on whether government should collect money from each paycheck to pay for long-term care.

To what extent do you agree or disagree: Similar to Social Security, state government programs should collect a small amount from every paycheck to assist Americans in someday paying for long-term care.



# More to Come With Issue Briefs and Infographics

- Women’s Views
- State Programs
- Social Security
- Generations
- Public Plans



# Research Garnered Substantial Media Coverage



## Retirement Is Broken — Is a 'Pension Renaissance' Coming to Save Us?

By: Mary Ellen Cagnassola | Editor: Julia Glum  
Published: Mar 18, 2024 | 10 min read

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Money, Getty Images

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Retirement [Add Topic +](#)

## Americans love pensions. Where did they go? Will they ever return?

Daniel de Visé  
USA TODAY

Published 5:12 a.m. ET March 19, 2024 | Updated 10:25 a.m. ET March 19, 2024

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In 2023, autoworkers sought a revival of the traditional pension as one of their strike demands. Olivia Evans, USA TODAY NETWORK

## Americans want pension plans, worry about retirement security — NIRS

By ROB KOZLOWSKI [T](#) [X](#) [E](#)

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PERSONAL FINANCE

## Many workers believe pensions are key to achieving the American Dream. But getting those plans back isn't easy

PUBLISHED FRI, MAR 1 2024 8:30 AM EST | UPDATED FRI, MAR 1 2024 8:37 AM EST

Lorin Keshel

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### KEY POINTS

- A shift from pensions to 401(k) plans has made it so retirement savings is a worker's responsibility.
- Yet, new research finds most individuals say pensions are essential for achieving the American Dream.



A United Auto Workers union member holds a sign outside the Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant to mark the beginning of contract negotiations in Sterling Heights, Michigan, on July 12, 2023. Rebecca Cook | Reuters

# Questions

