



The State
of
**State
Courts**

★
2018
★

★
POLL
★

NCSC
National Center for State Courts

SURVEY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS



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Connecticut



Jesse Rutledge
NCSC

METHODOLOGY



WHAT: NCSC nationwide telephone survey

WHO: Conducted by GBA Strategies

WHEN: November 13–17, 2018

POLLED: 1,000 Registered Voters

STATS: MOE +/- 3.1% 19 times out of 20

KEY FINDINGS



Confidence in state courts is the **highest since the start of the State of the State Courts series**—though there is still plenty of room for improvement.



Views on cash bail are fluid, but after hearing messages for reforming the system, the public strongly believes that judges should base pretrial release decisions on factors other than ability to pay.



A majority say they are unprepared to represent themselves in court—yet **alternatives to hiring a lawyer** are only modestly popular.



Certain case types lend themselves to **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)** while others may not, and the public sees pros and cons to ODR generally.

FIGURE #1

Confidence in state courts is at a seven-year high, which may (or may not) be connected to positive views of the economy.

Q: “How much confidence you, yourself, have in the [STATE] court system—a great deal of confidence, some confidence, not very much confidence, or no confidence at all” and “How would you rate the economy in [STATE] today—excellent, good, just fair or poor?”

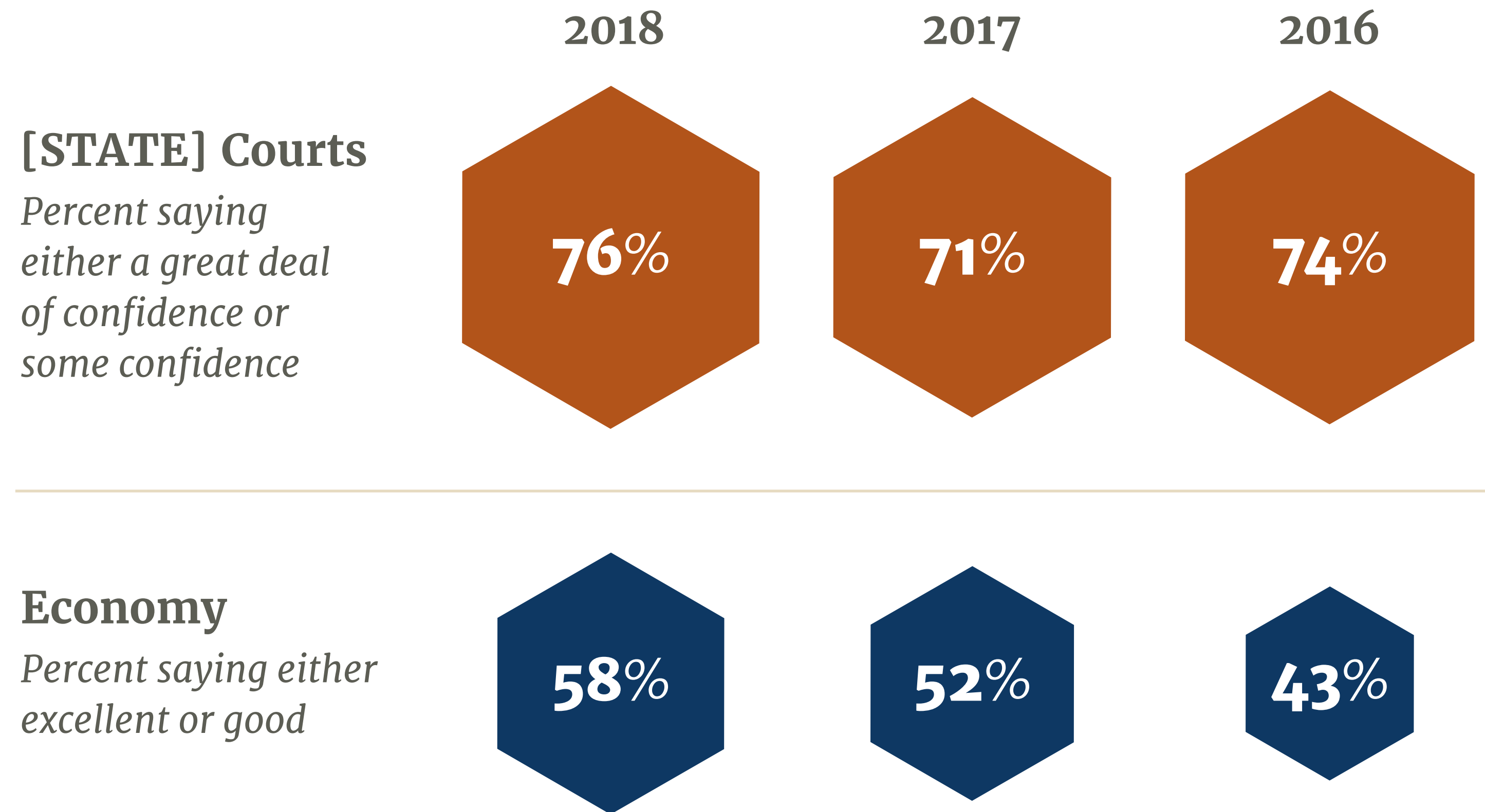


FIGURE #2

Increased confidence translates into higher marks on public trust attributes.

Q: “In your opinion, do the following words or phrases describe the state courts very well, well, not very well or not well at all?” or “Do you agree or disagree with each statement?”

Net gain on each attribute compared to 2017.

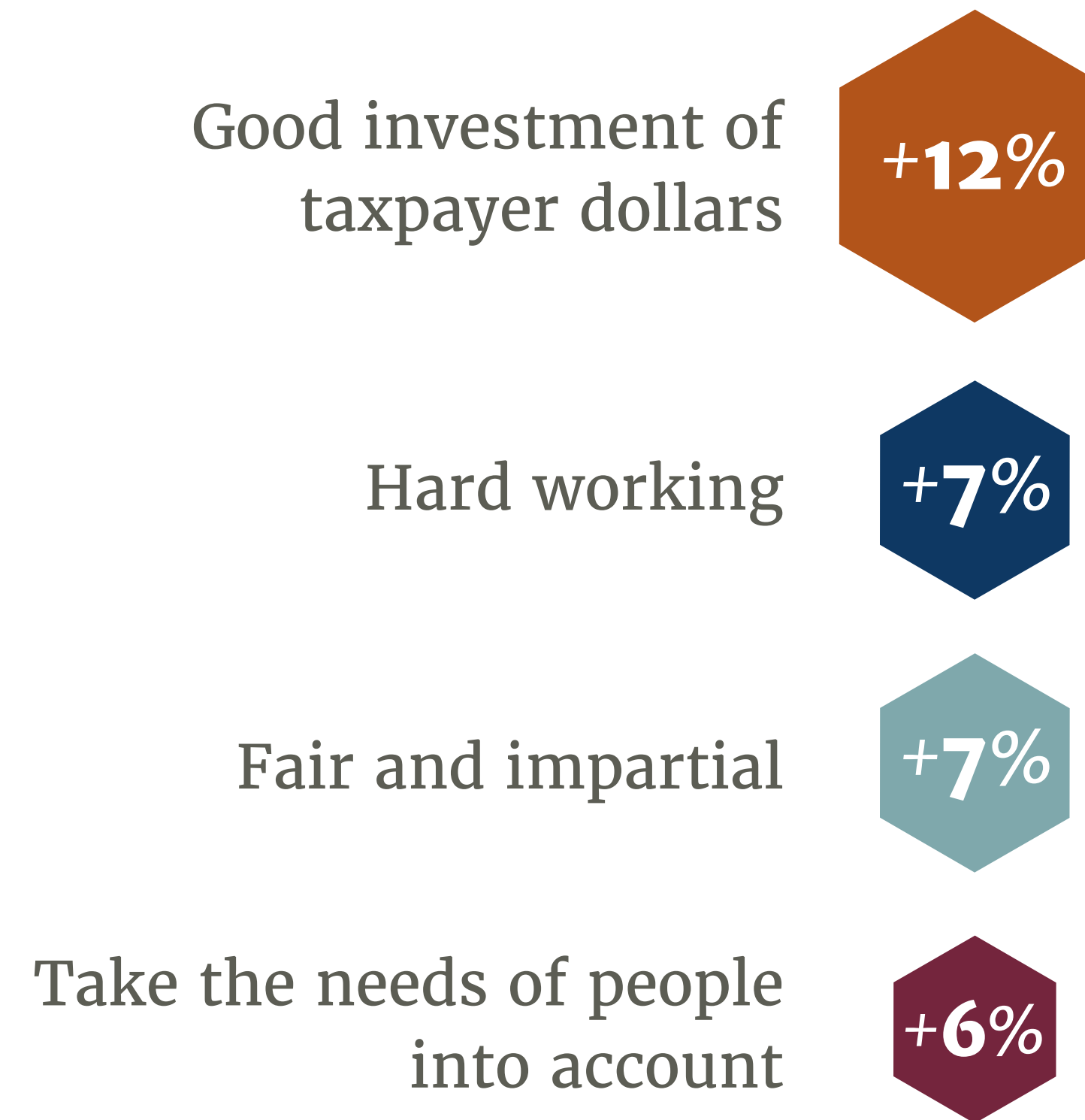


FIGURE #3

The perception that judges are out of touch with community concerns has moderated.

Q: “Which statement comes closer to your own view?”

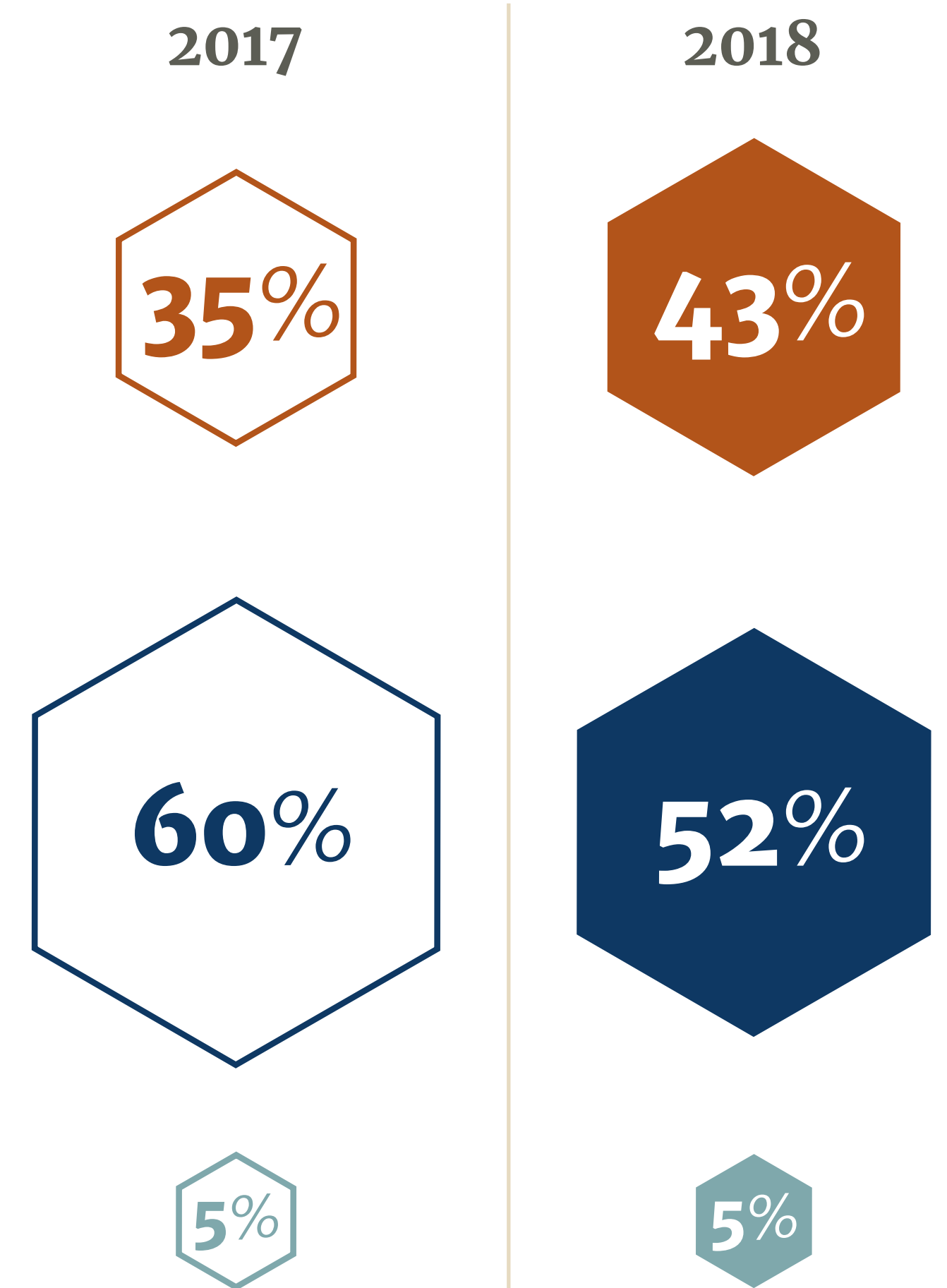
Statement 1

“In general, judges in (STATE) courts reflect the values of our communities and **understand the challenges facing the people who appear in their courtrooms.**”

Statement 2

“Too many judges in (STATE) courts don't understand the challenges facing people who appear in their courtrooms and **need to do a better job of getting out into the community and listening to people.**”

Don't Know



Net gain: +16% compared to 2017

FIGURE #4

Voters begin with fairly divided views on cash bail...

Q: “Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?”

Statement 1

“The current system of **cash bail** is a good way to keep our communities safe from criminals and **ensure defendants appear** for their court dates.”

Statement 2

“The current system of **cash bail** produces a two-tier justice system, with wealthy defendants able to walk free **while low-income defendants are jailed.**”

Don't Know

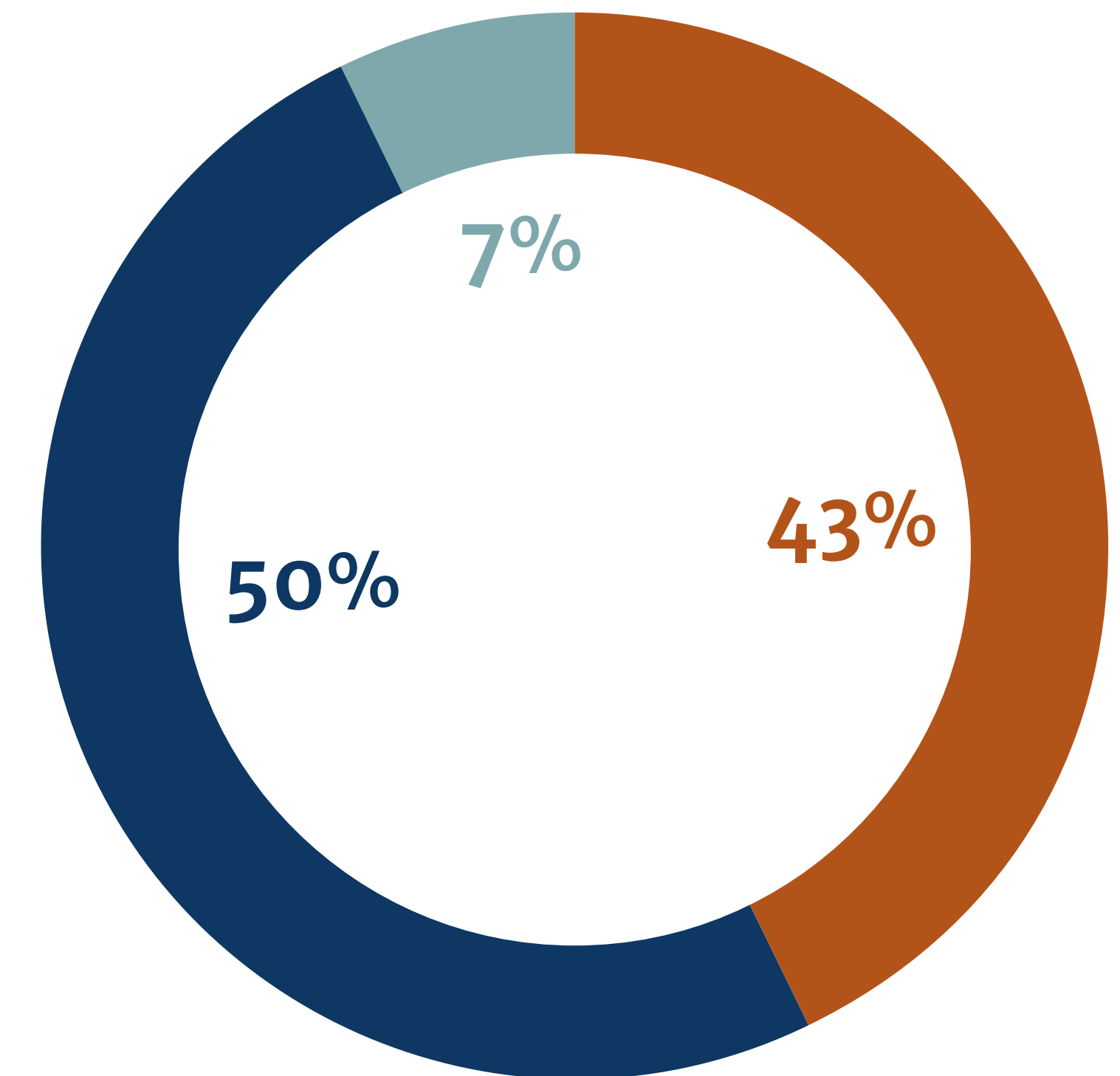


FIGURE #5

...But find certain messages for reform persuasive.

Q: “Tell me whether you feel (each statement) is very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing.”

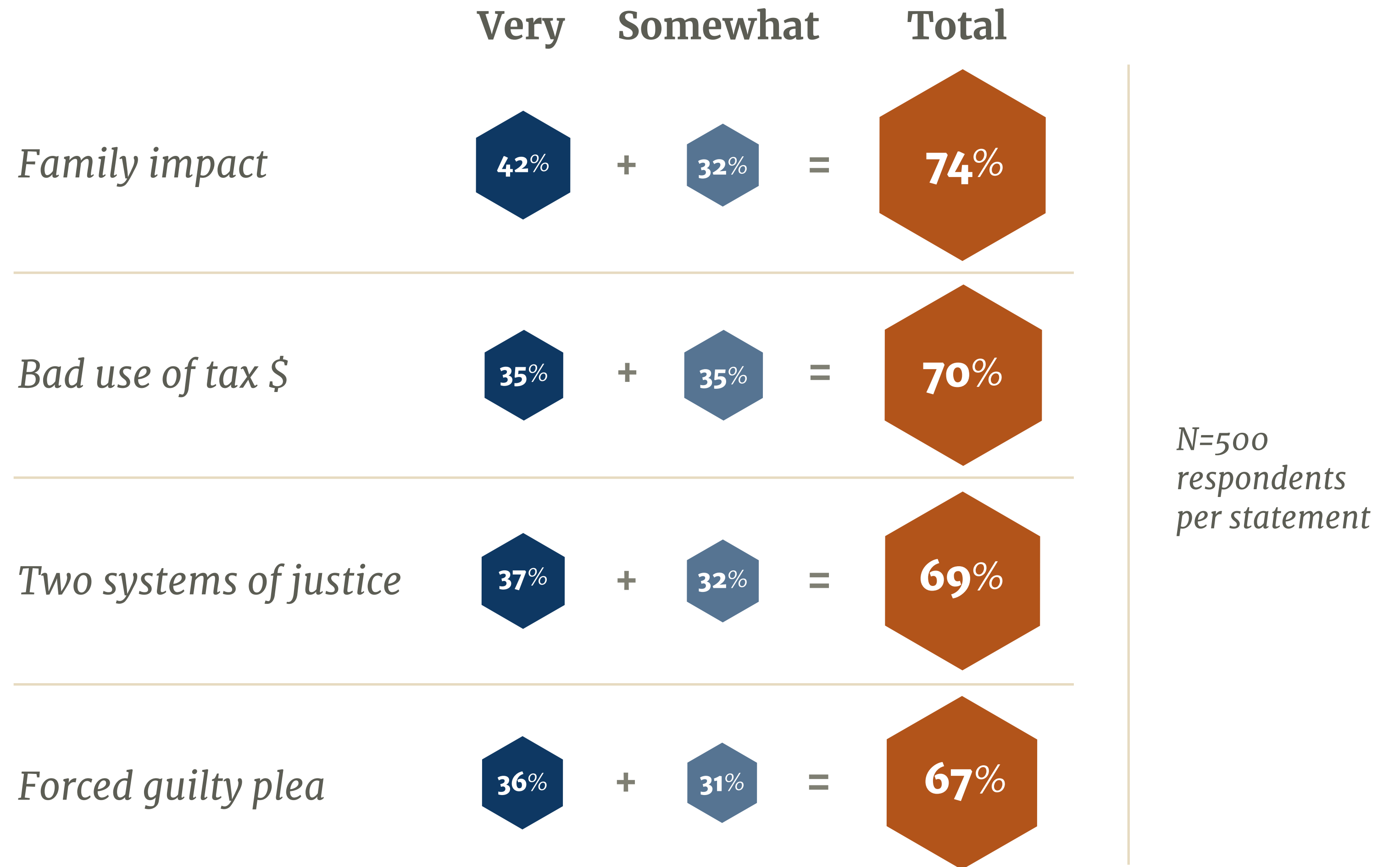


FIGURE #6

And there is
across the board
support to allow
judges to use
criteria other than
money in making
pretrial release
decisions.

Q: “We should allow judges to determine whether a defendant should be detained based on their individual case, previous offenses and personal circumstances...do you support or oppose this proposal?”

Support

Strongly – 37%
Somewhat – 36%

Oppose

Strongly – 12%
Somewhat – 12%

Don't Know

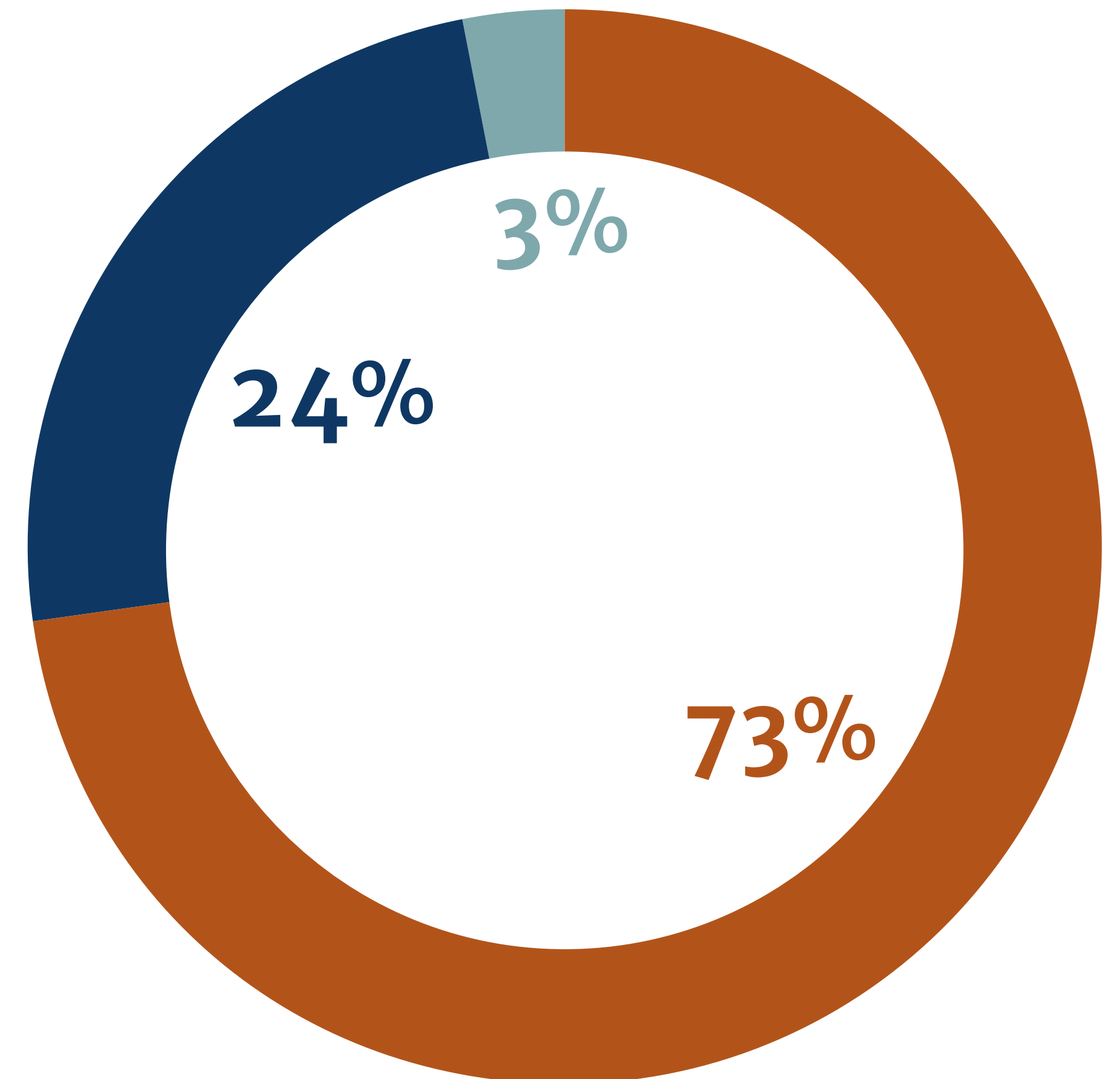


FIGURE #7

Most people do not feel prepared to represent themselves in court.

Q: “Which of the following statements comes to closer to your view?”

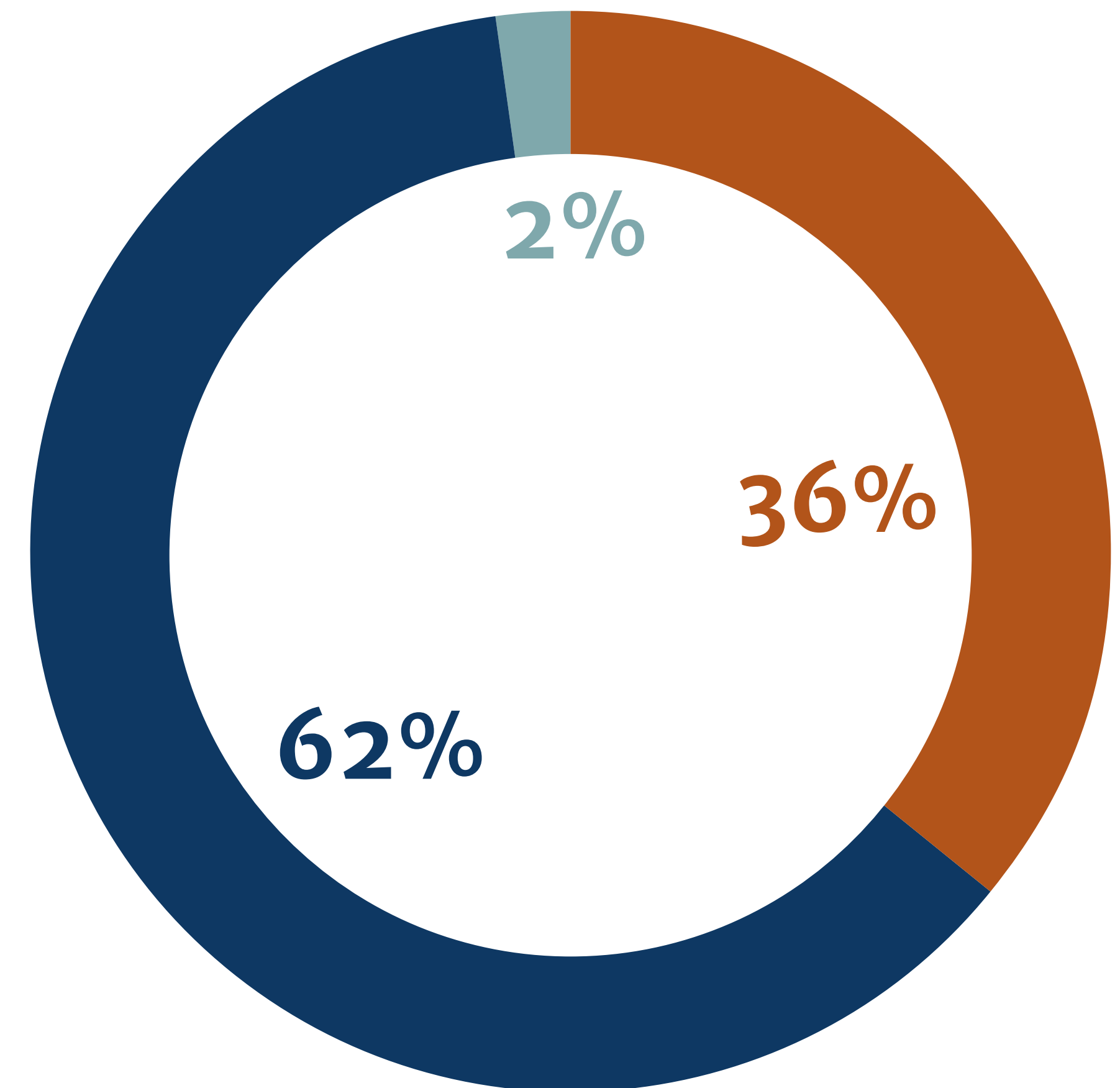
Statement 1

“I am confident I could find the information and tools I need to effectively represent myself if I needed to go to court to resolve a dispute.”

Statement 2

“I don’t believe I could effectively represent myself in court, regardless of what resources and information are provided to me.”

Don’t Know



1 in 5 respondents indicated they have represented themselves before the courts.

FIGURE #8

There is a clear desire for alternatives to full legal representation.

Q: “There are a number of potential alternatives to hiring a lawyer to represent you through an entire case. How likely would you be to use each of the following services—very likely, somewhat likely, a little likely, or not at all likely?”

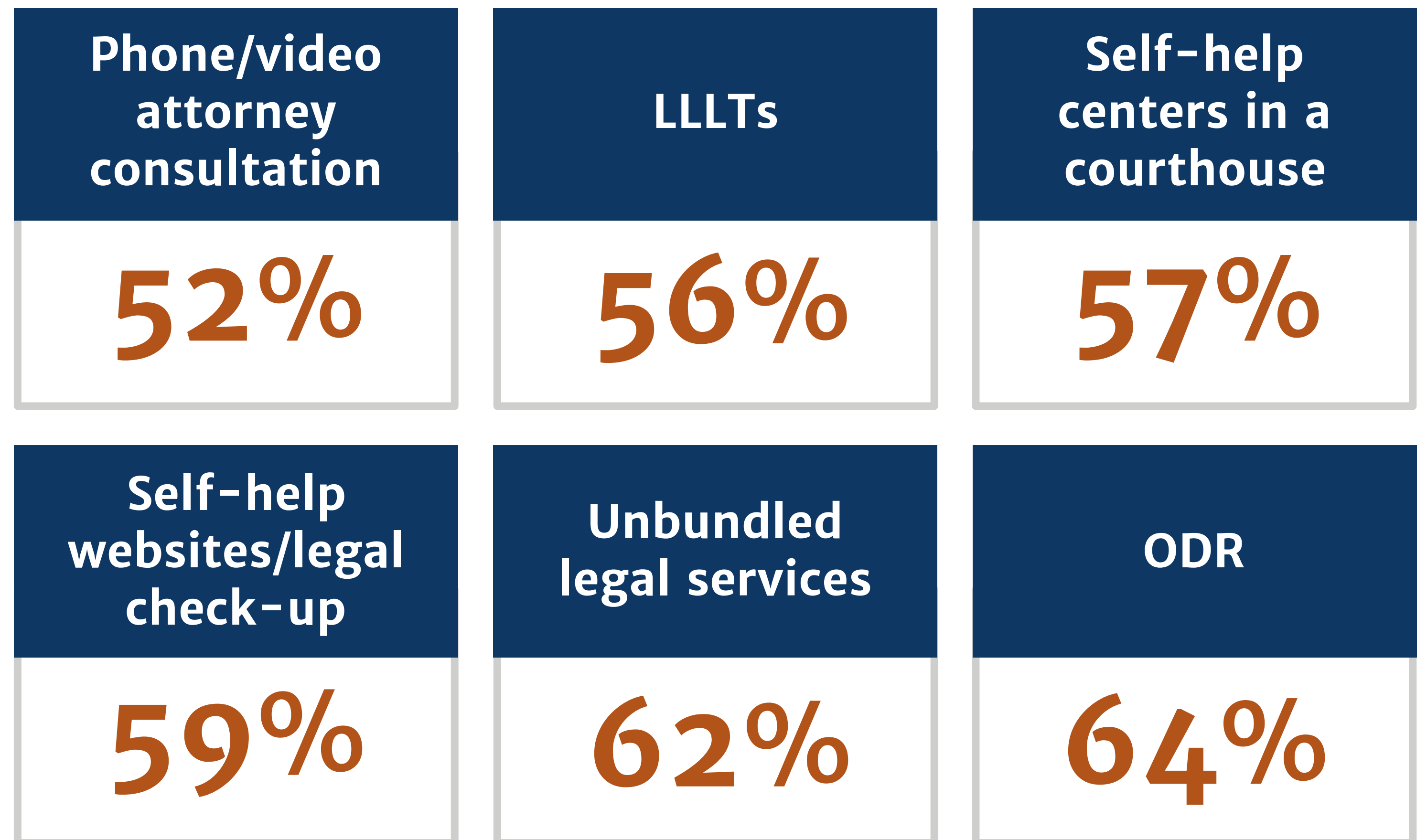


FIGURE #9

Faced with a list of possible case types for ODR, voters identify some places to start.

Q: “If you were party to a court proceeding of this type... would you prefer to resolve this type of case online or by appearing in-person at a courthouse?”

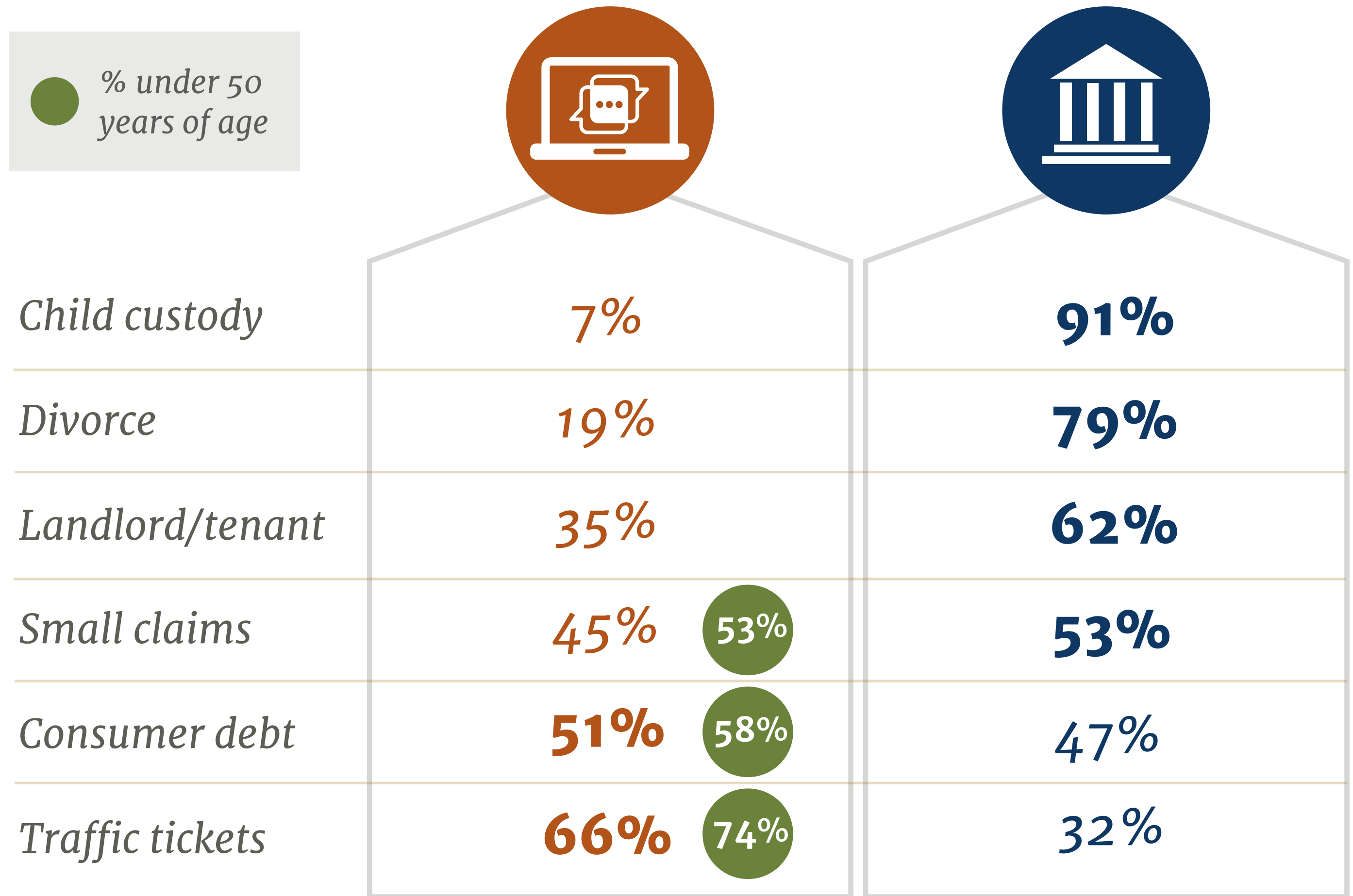


FIGURE #10

The public views ODR as efficient and cost effective, while the courthouse itself remains iconic for access and fairness.

Q: “Which process (ODR or courthouse) best fits each of the following descriptions?”



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For more information, visit:
ncsc.org/2018survey