



# Public Opinion on Science and STEM Topics

December 2020

Results from a Public Opinion Survey conducted August 2020

# Survey Methodology

This online survey was conducted by Zogby Analytics on behalf of Research!America in August 2020, among 1,025 adults plus 869 additional adults for minority oversampling. The survey was supported in part by the Kavli Foundation as a component of support for a working group formed to assess America's commitment to science. For the national sample, the survey has a theoretical sampling error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.\* Sample sizes for minority groups are as follows:

- African American: sample size = 404, margin of error +/- 4.9 percentage points
- Hispanic: sample size = 409, margin of error = +/- 4.8 percentage points
- Asian: sample size 403, margin of error = 4.9 percentage points

Sample sizes for other subgroups are as follows:

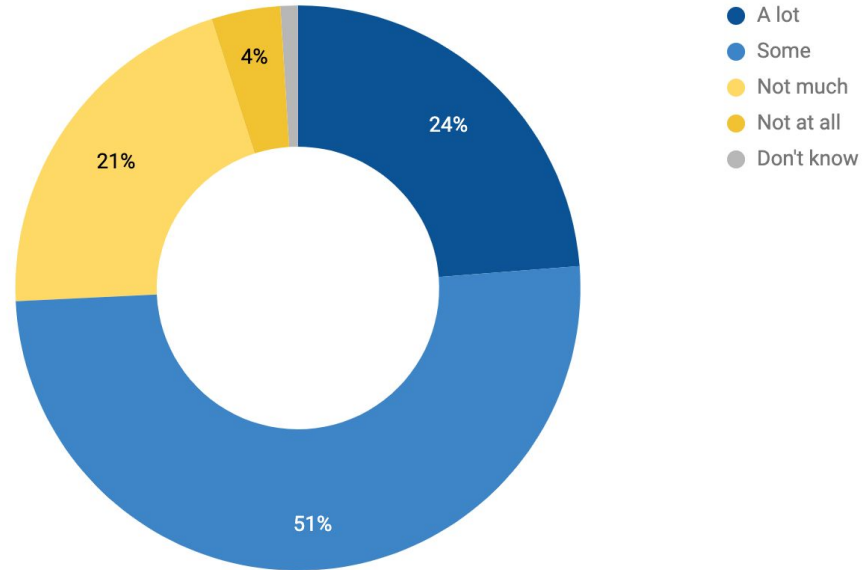
Democratic: 369	Republican: 349	Independent: 309	
Age 18-29: 213	Age 30-49: 335	Age 50-64: 254	Age 65+: 213

\*Due to rounding, the total may not add up to 100 on some slides

# How Much Do Americans Say They Know About Science?

How much would you say you know about science?

- 30-49 year olds were much more likely to say “a lot” - 38%
- 50-64 and 65+ were less likely to say “a lot” - 16% and 9%
- 18-29 was consistent with national sample

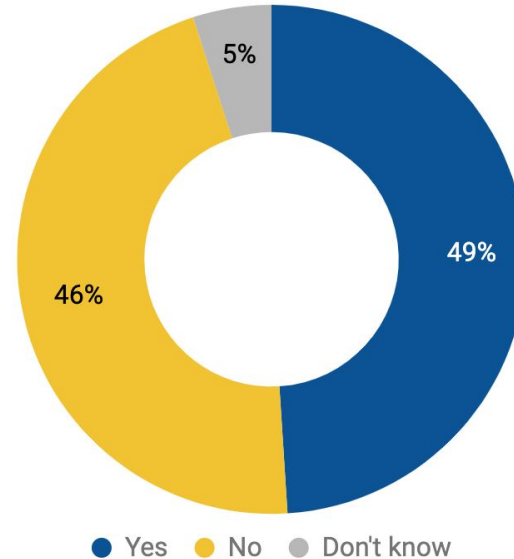


# Half of Americans Say They Have Tried to Get Information About Science in the Past 30 Days

Have you tried to get any information about science in the past 30 days?

Ages 18-29 and 30-49 more likely to say “yes” (54%, 65%)

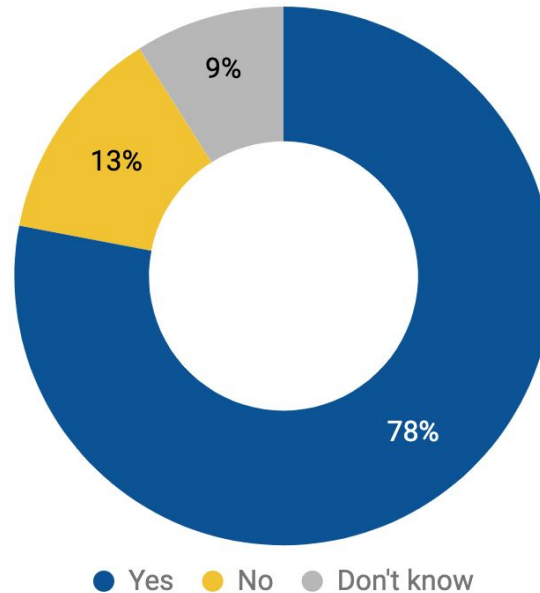
Ages 50-64 and 65+ more likely to say “no” (56%, 68%)



# Majority of Americans Would Like to Know More About Science

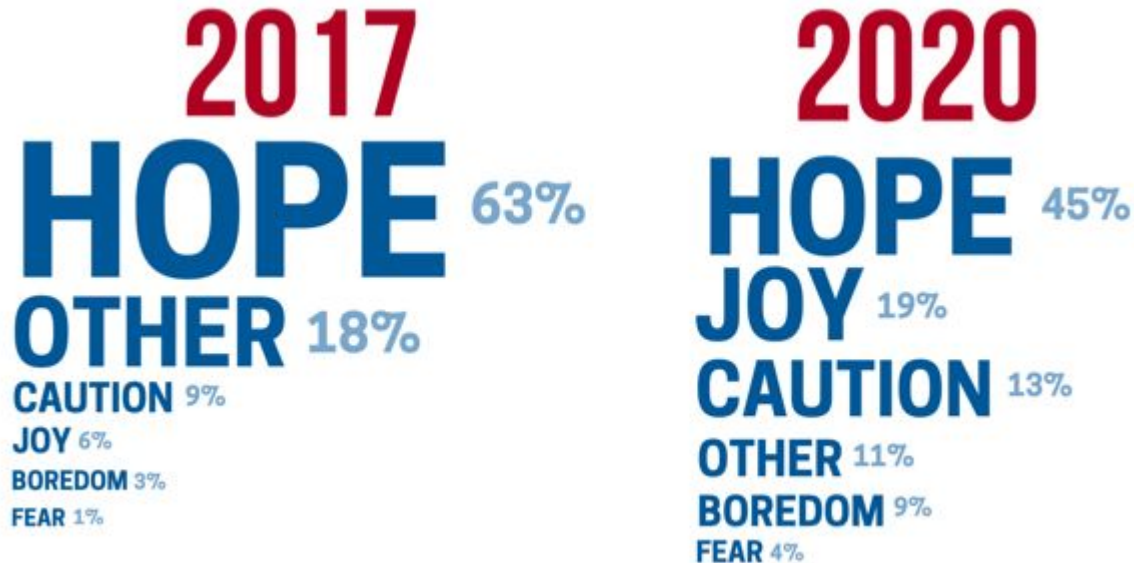
Would you like to know more about science?

Increase since 2018:  
67% → 78%



# Hope is Down, but Joy is On The Rise

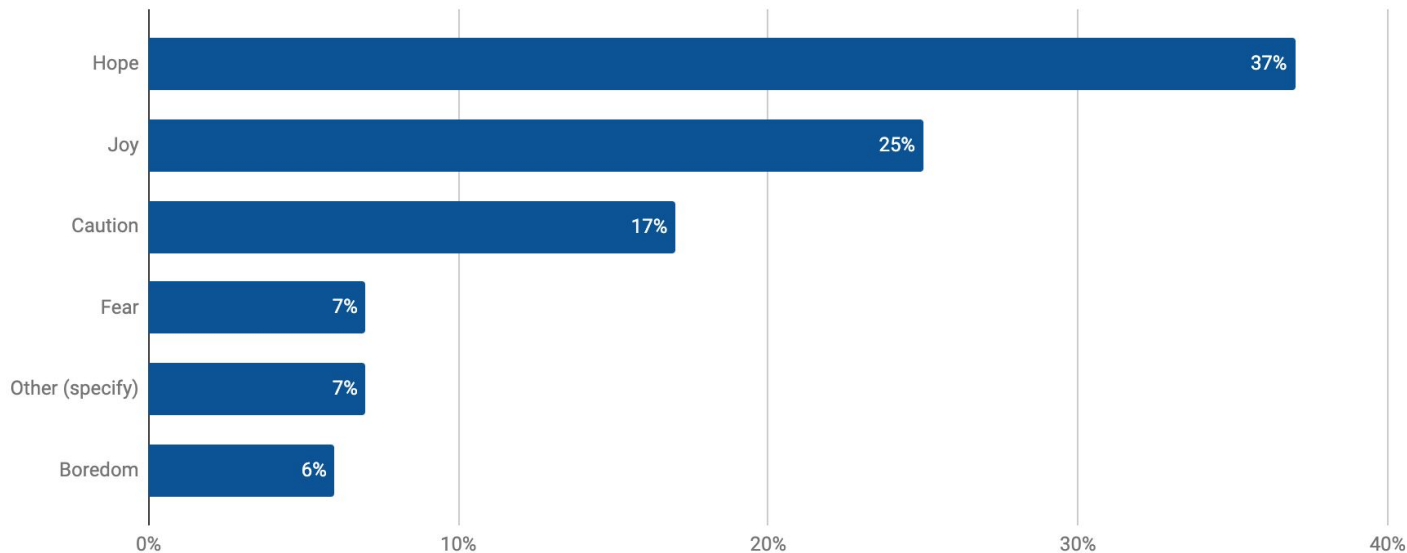
Which one of the following best describes what you feel when you hear the word 'science'?



# Hope is High for Technology

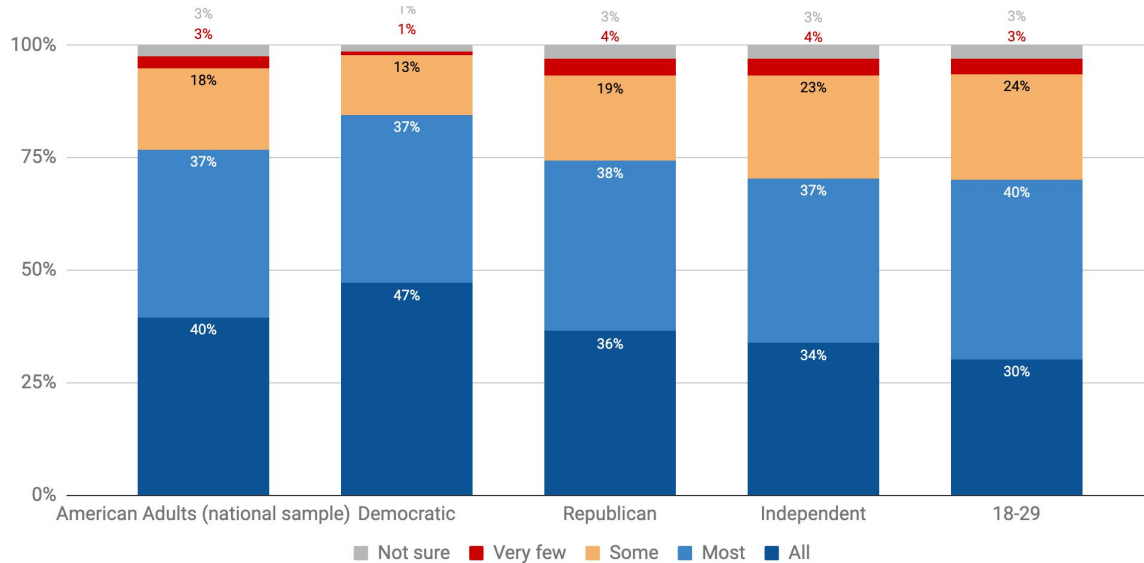
Which one of the following best describes what you feel when you hear the word 'technology'?

Americans ages 50-64 and 65+ less likely to say "joy" (18%, 9%)



# Strong Majority Say Science Benefits All or Most People in U.S.

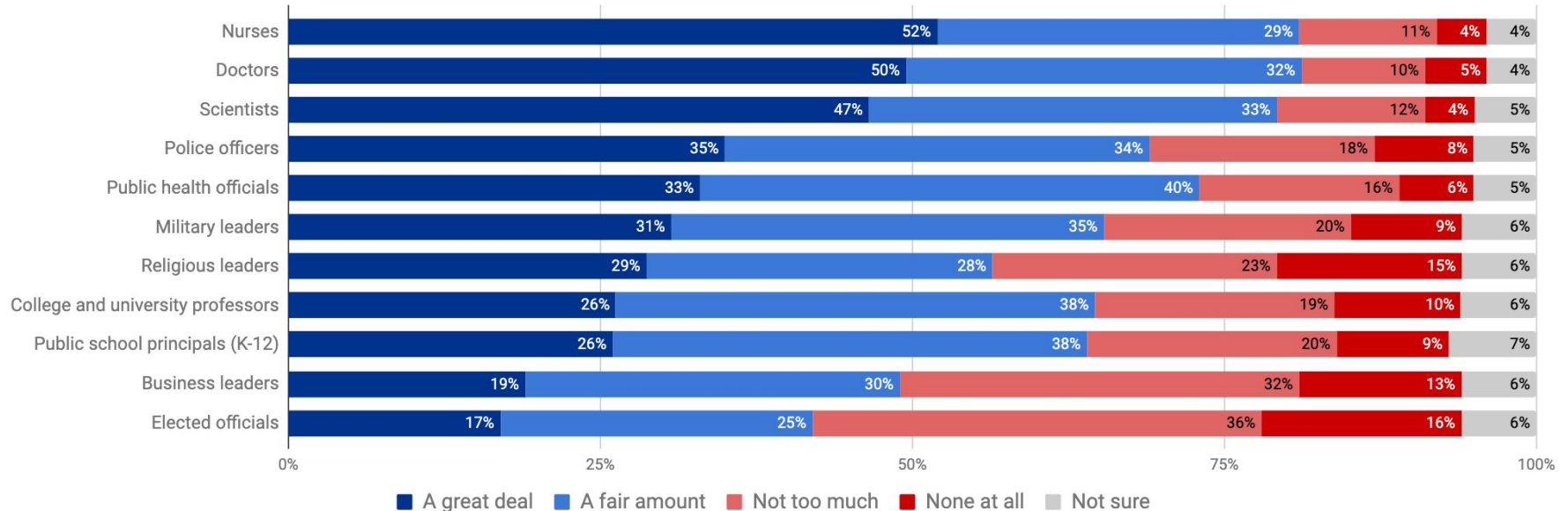
In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits all, most, some, or very few people in this country?





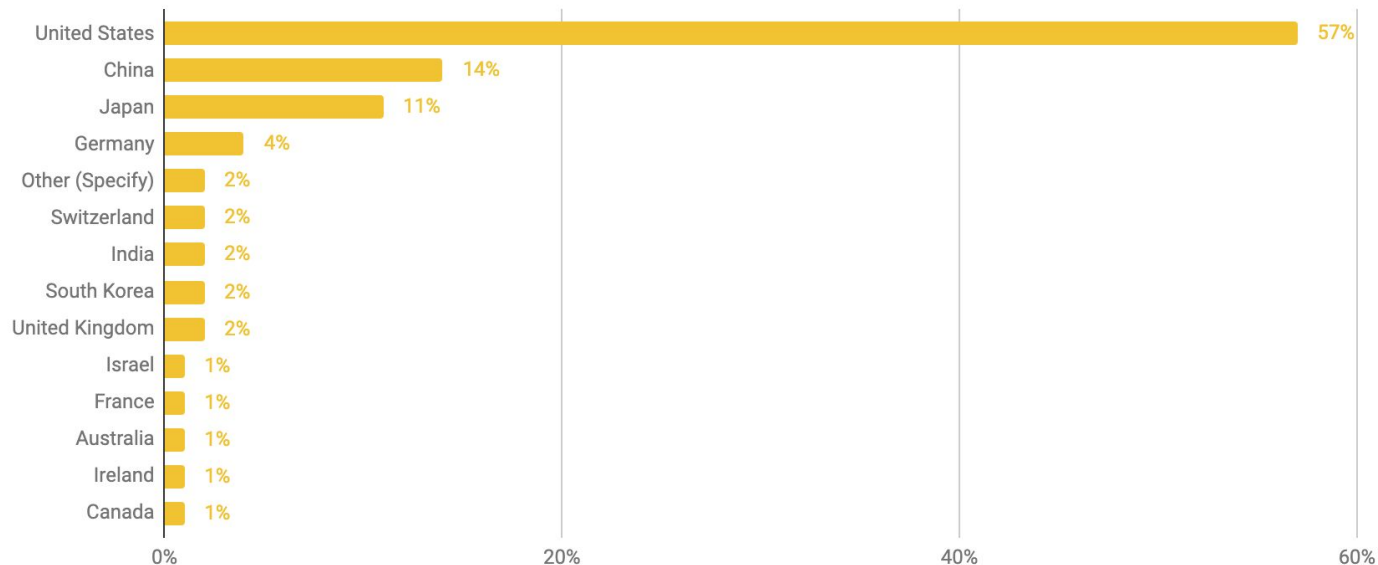
# Highest Confidence in Nurses, Doctors, and Scientists

How much confidence do you have in each of the following to act in your best interest...?



# Majority Say U.S. Will Remain Global Leader in Science and Technology

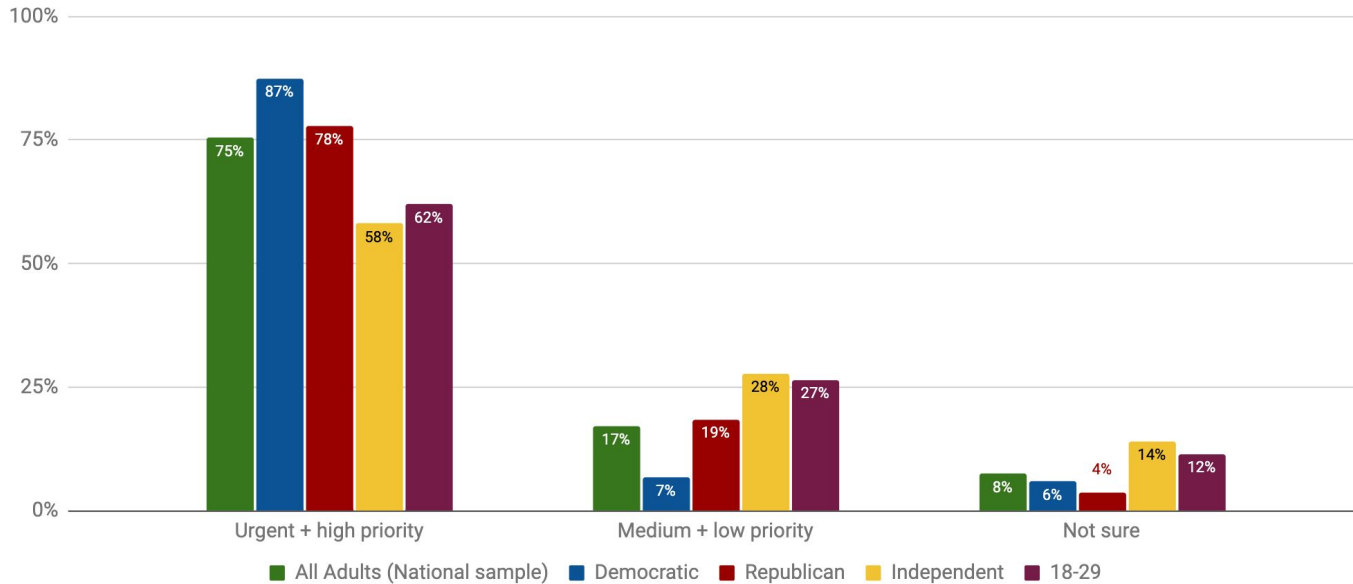
In your view, which of the following will be the number one world leader in science and technology in the year 2030?



Source: A Research!America survey of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in August 2020.

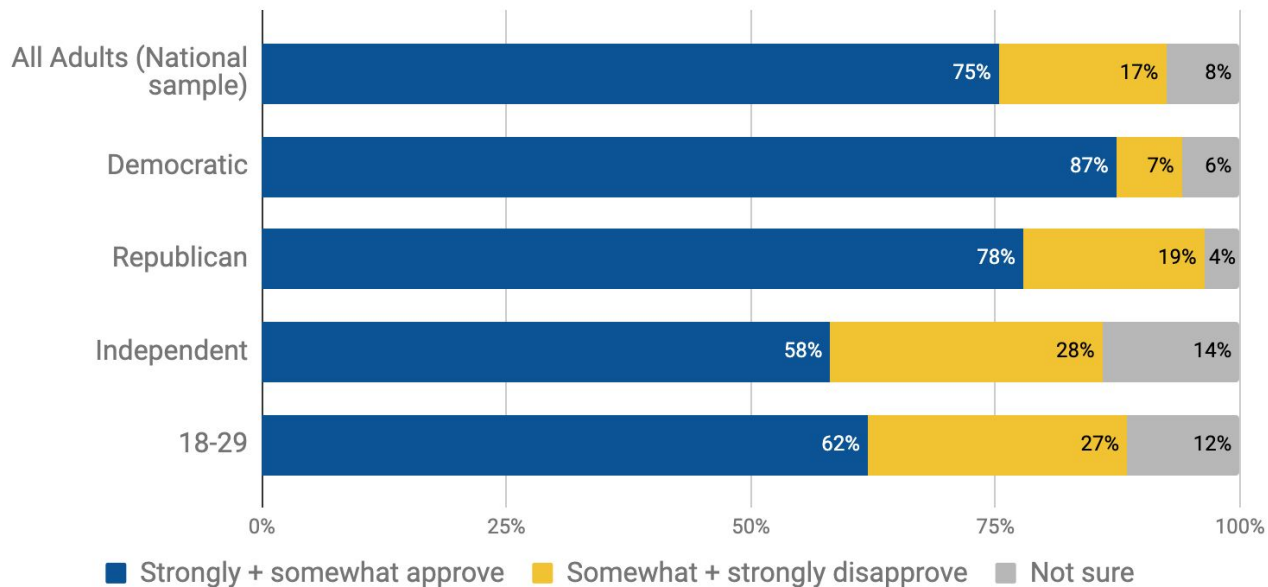
# Strong Support for Federally-Sponsored Scientific Research at Universities

Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government spending to sponsor scientific research at universities?



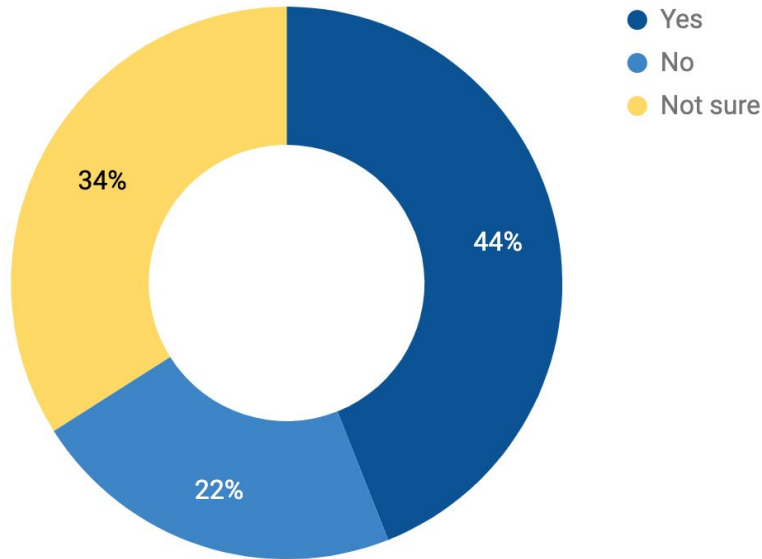
# Strong Support for State-Funded Science and Engineering Research at State Universities

How important is it that your state continues to support science and engineering research at state universities?



# Most Americans Do Not Know Research Is Conducted in All 50 States

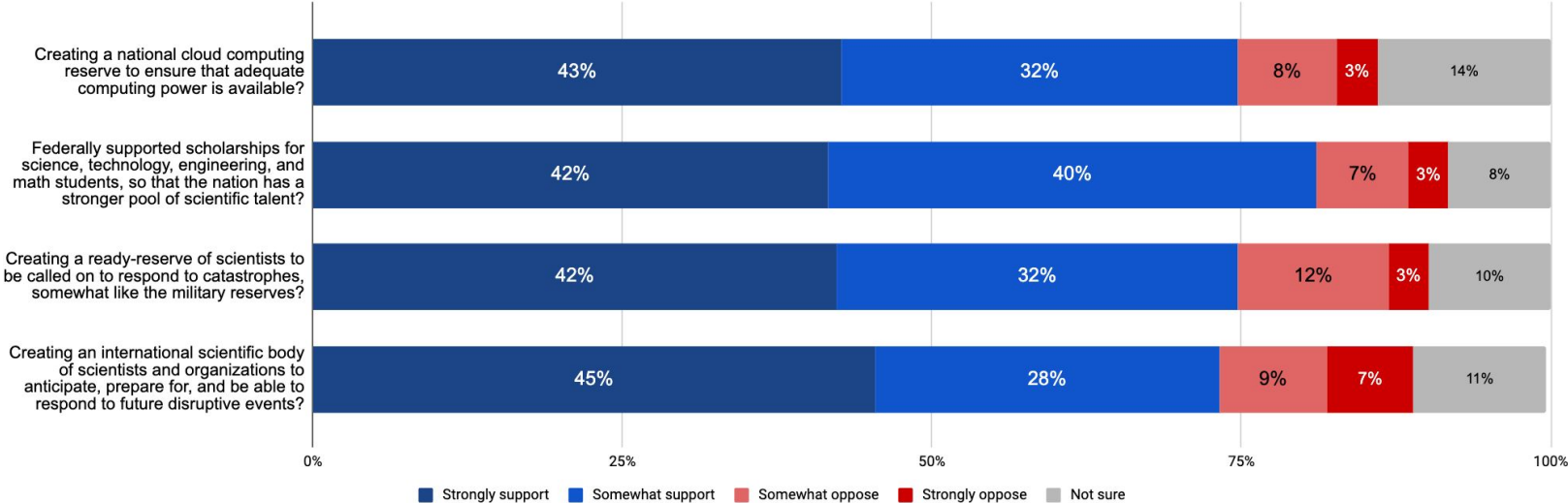
To the best of your knowledge, would you say that research in the U.S. is conducted in all 50 states?



Increase in those saying “yes”  
from 27% in 2019 to 34% in 2020

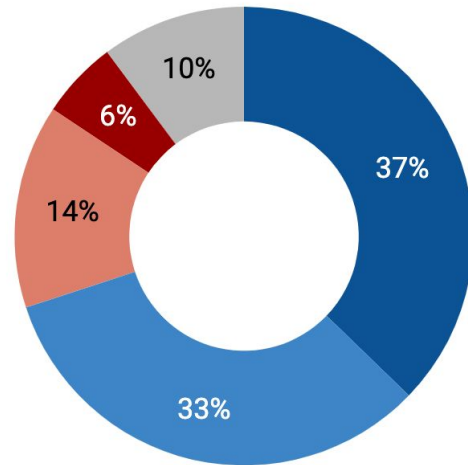
# Preparing For The Future Ahead

Many people say that more needs to be done to ensure the United States is prepared not just for future pandemics but for any other unpredictable catastrophe - would you support or oppose...



# 7 in 10 Americans Support Federal Incentives for STEM Education

If the federal government offered a special incentive payment for students to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics educational programs, would you approve or disapprove of this expenditure of taxpayer funds?

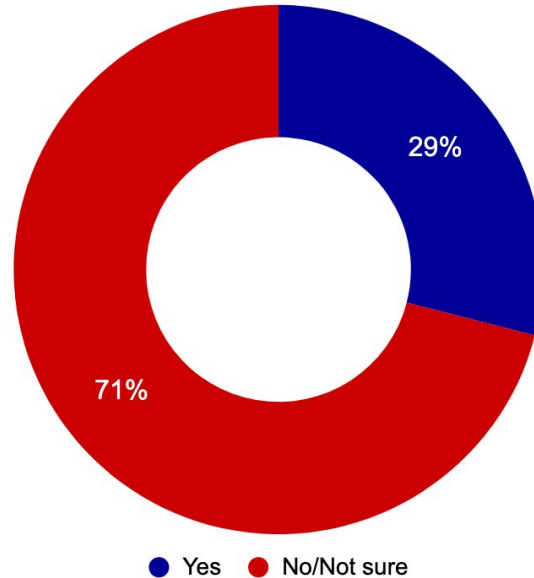


● Strongly approve ● Somewhat approve ● Somewhat disapprove  
● Strongly disapprove ● Not sure

# Most Americans Cannot Name a Living Scientist

Can you name a living scientist?

▲ Increase in those saying “yes” - 9% up from 20% in 2019



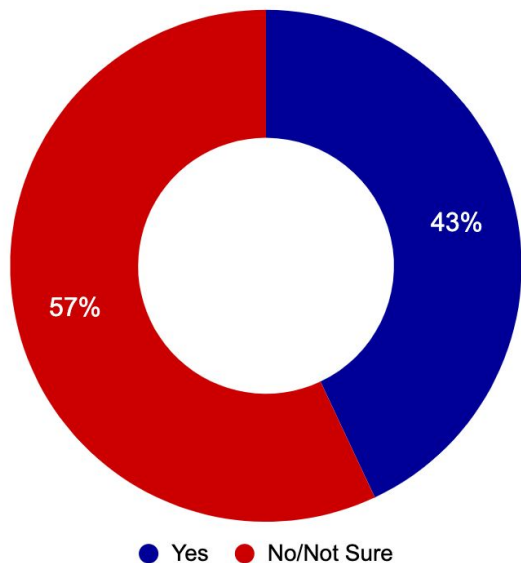
Anthony Fauci	24%
Neil DeGrasse Tyson	10%
Bill Nye	8%
Stephen Hawking*	5%
Timothy Berners-Lee	4%
Jane Goodall	3%
Alain Aspect	3%
Albert Einstein*	2%
Alan Guth	2%
Bill Gates	1%
Elon Musk	1%
Others	37%

\*deceased



# More Than Half of Americans Cannot Name a Scientific Research Institution

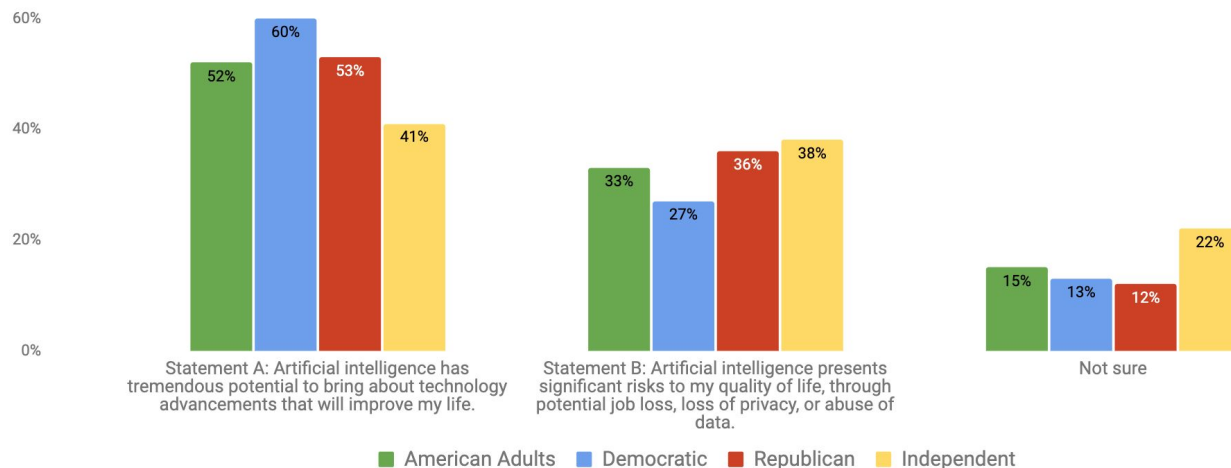
Can you name any institution, company or organization where scientific research is conducted?



NASA	6%
MIT	5%
CDC	2%
Johns Hopkins University	2%
Pfizer	1%
Harvard	1%
NIH	1%
Stanford	1%
WHO	1%
Mayo Clinic	1%
Johnson & Johnson	1%
Other	78%

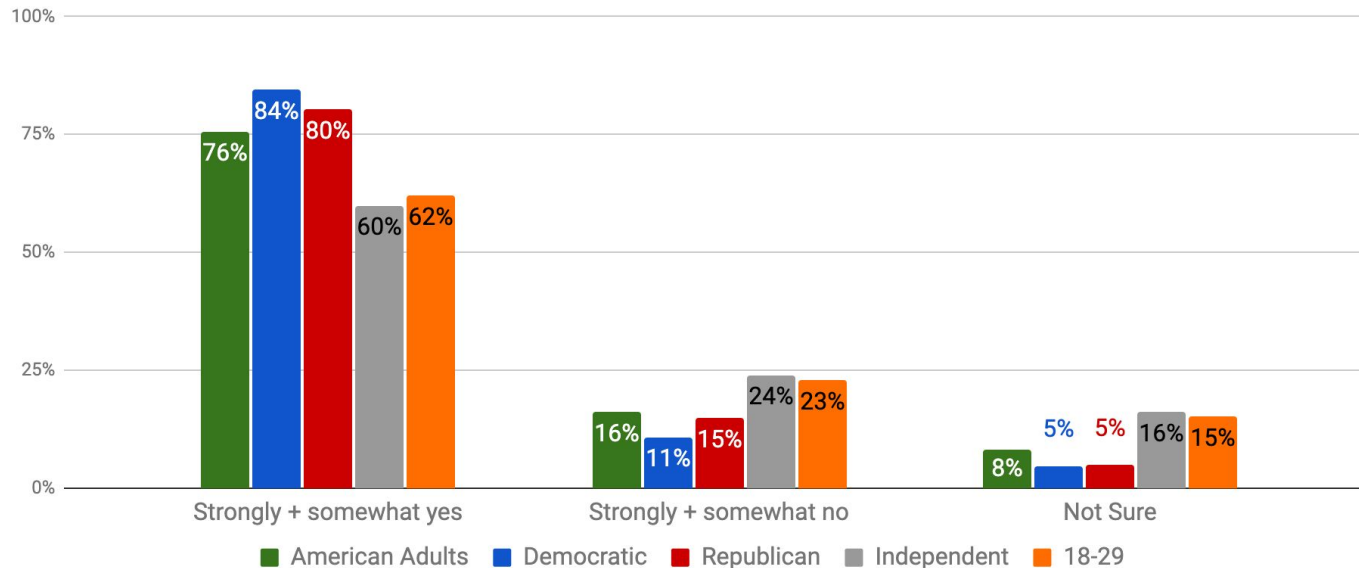
# More Than Half Optimistic About Potential of AI

Please indicate which of the following statements comes closer to your view? Statement A: Artificial intelligence has tremendous potential to bring about technology advancements that will improve my life. Statement B: Artificial intelligence presents significant risks to my quality of life, through potential job loss, loss of privacy, or abuse of data.



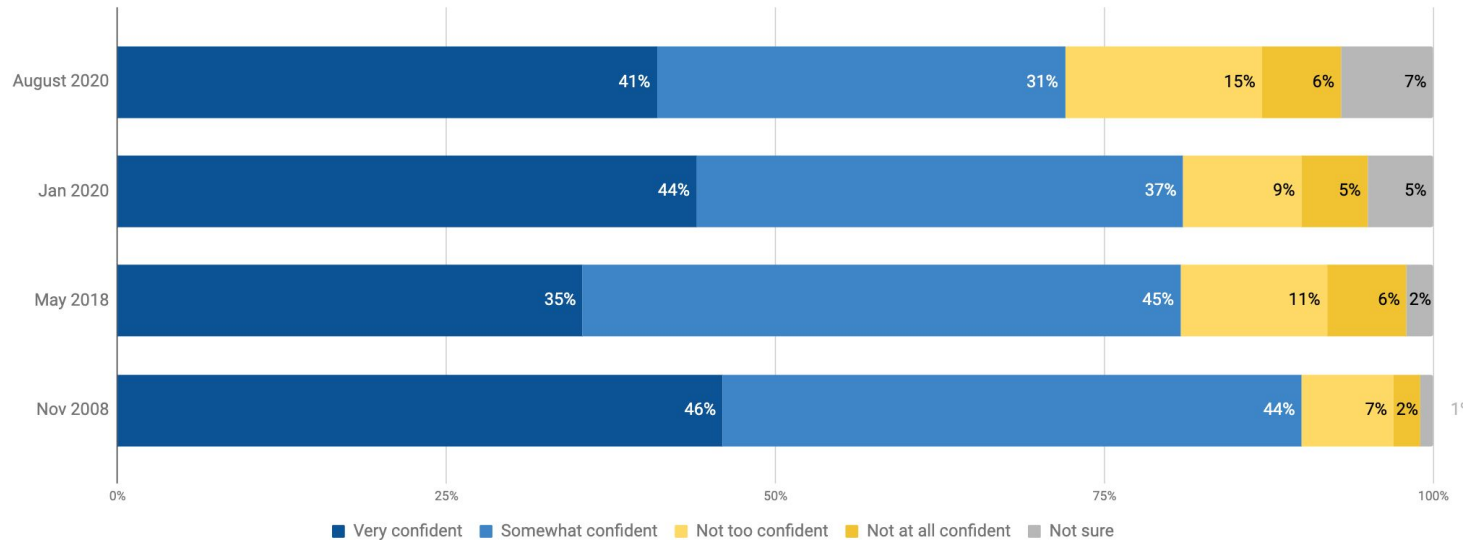
# Strong Majority Say They Have Personally Benefited From Vaccines of Last 50 Years

Do you believe that you have personally benefited from the development of vaccines over the last 50 years?



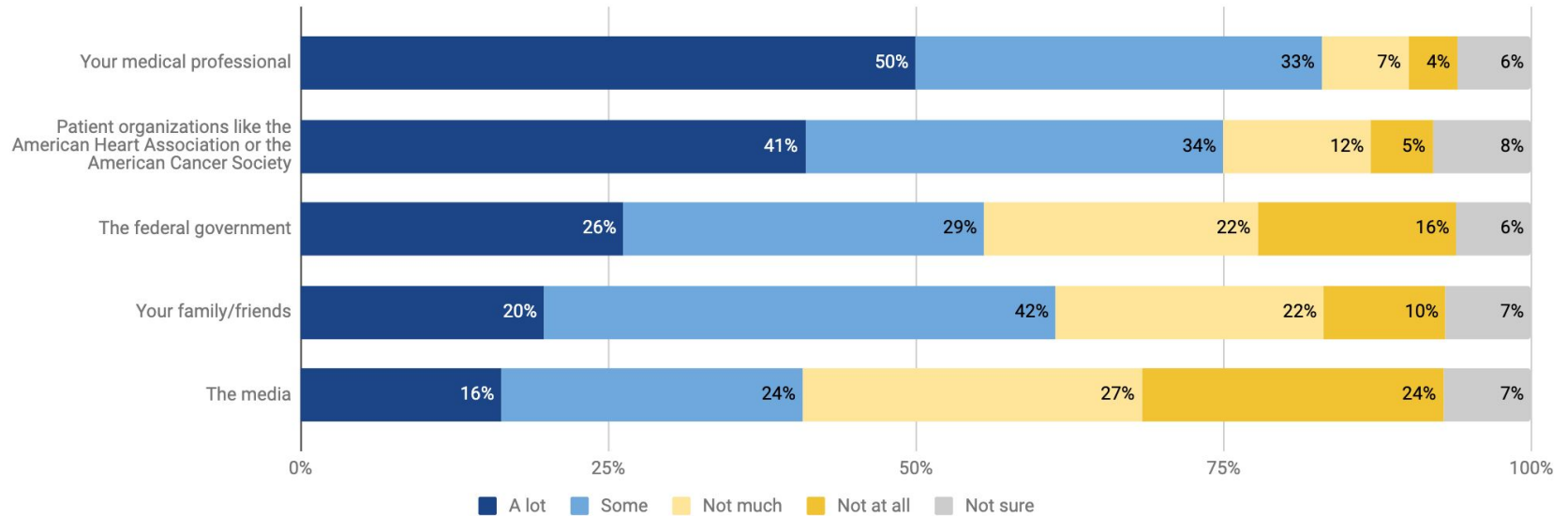
# Declines in Confidence of Overall Vaccine Safety

In general, how confident are you in the safety of vaccines used today?



# Trust in Medical Professionals High

In general, how much do you trust medical and health advice from the following:



# Research!America Works for You

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