



2025 Competitiveness Poll:

A Companion to the MTF Competitiveness Index

Developed in conjunction with the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation

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**Massachusetts
Taxpayers Foundation**

The MTF Competitiveness Index

- MTF has released its 2025 Competitiveness Index.
 - Ranks Massachusetts against other states on 27 competitiveness metrics.
 - A key finding is the tension between the Commonwealth's talent and the cost to live here.
- For competitiveness, perception can be reality.
- MTF commissioned MPG to survey Massachusetts residents on how they think we compare to other states.



Key Findings

- Massachusetts residents see the state as a national leader on education and health care.
- The education level of the state's talent pool is also seen as a major positive for the business environment in Massachusetts.
- But cost – of living and of housing, in particular – are seen as top challenges.
- On balance, most see Massachusetts as ahead of the pack, both as a place to live (63%) and do business (58%).
- About a quarter say they are considering moving out of Massachusetts in the next five years, roughly in line with other recent surveys that have asked similar questions. Young people are more likely to say so.
- Few see positive outcomes for Massachusetts coming out of unified GOP control of Washington.

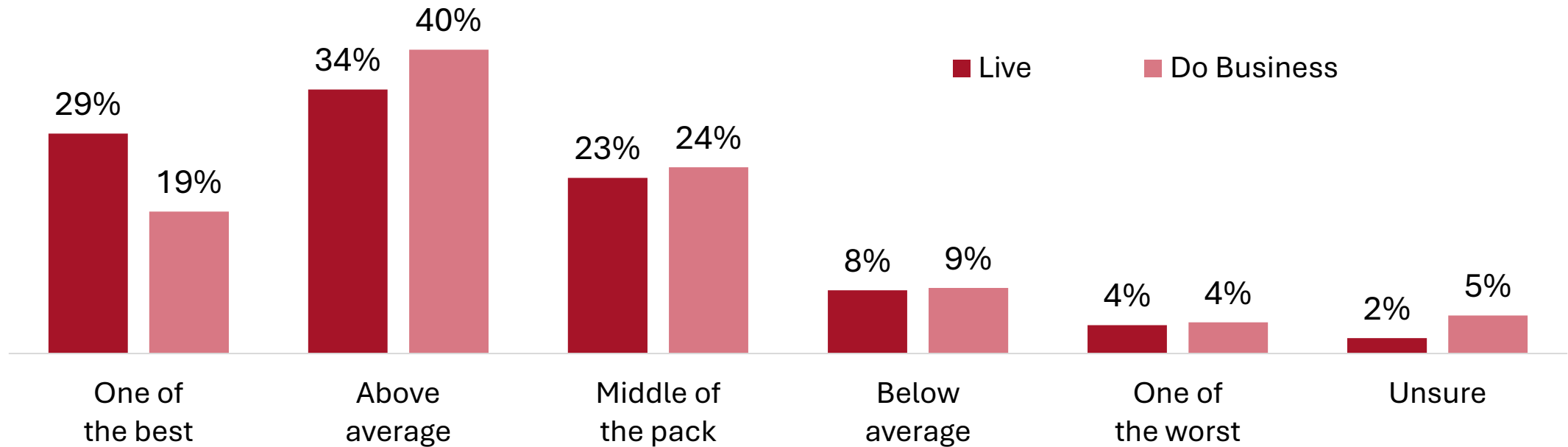
Competitiveness Ratings

Perceived competitiveness for Massachusetts

- Majorities see Massachusetts as comparatively better than other states, both as a place to live (63%) and do business (58%).

Most see Massachusetts as ahead of the pack as a place to live and do business

% who say Massachusetts is better / worse than other states as a place to _____

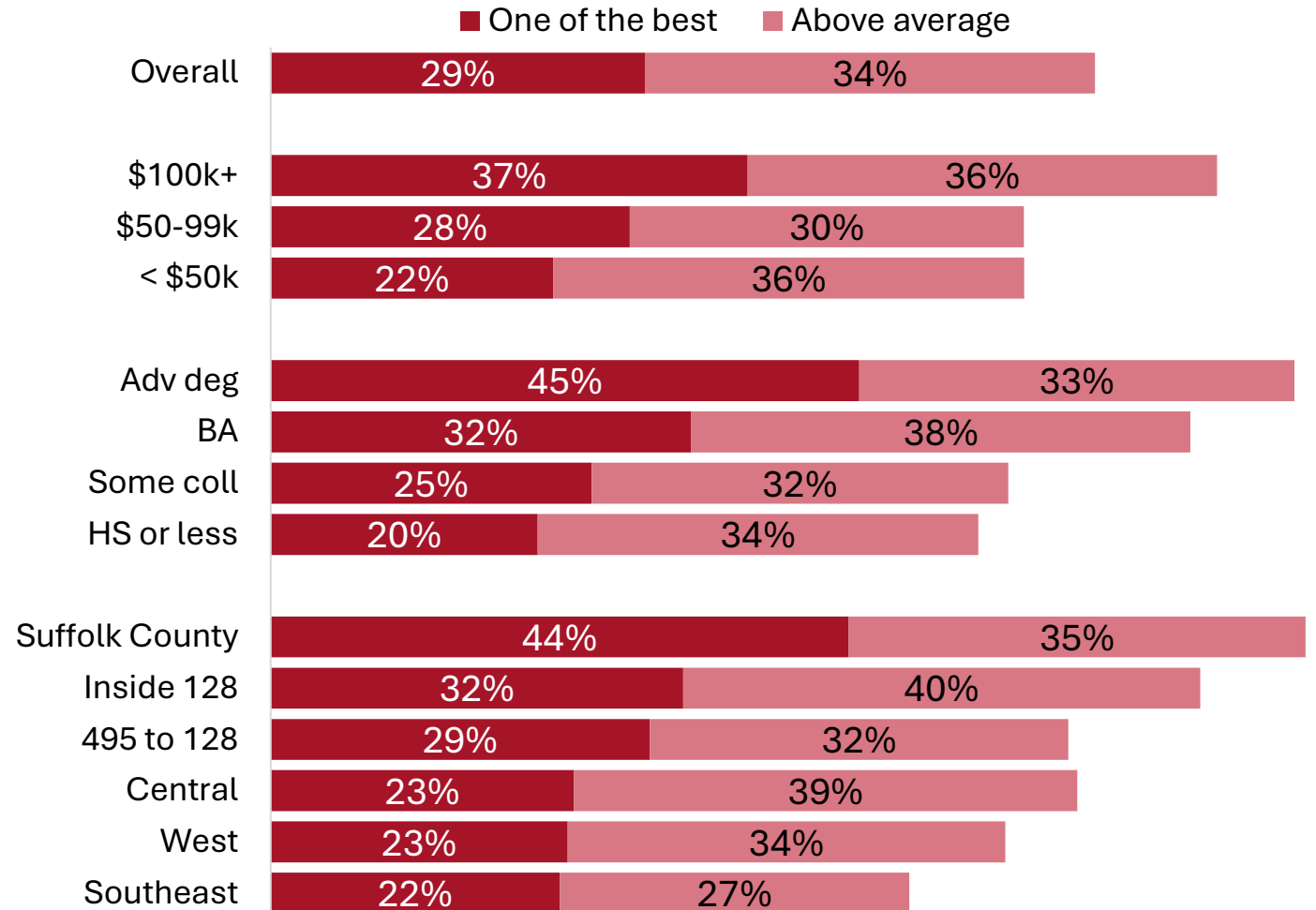


Massachusetts is highly rated, but for whom?

- People with higher levels of education and income are relatively more likely to rank Massachusetts highly as a place to live.
- There are also regional differences, with those closer to Boston offering higher ratings.

People with more education, income offer higher ratings for Massachusetts

% who say Massachusetts is one of the best / above avg place to live compared to other states

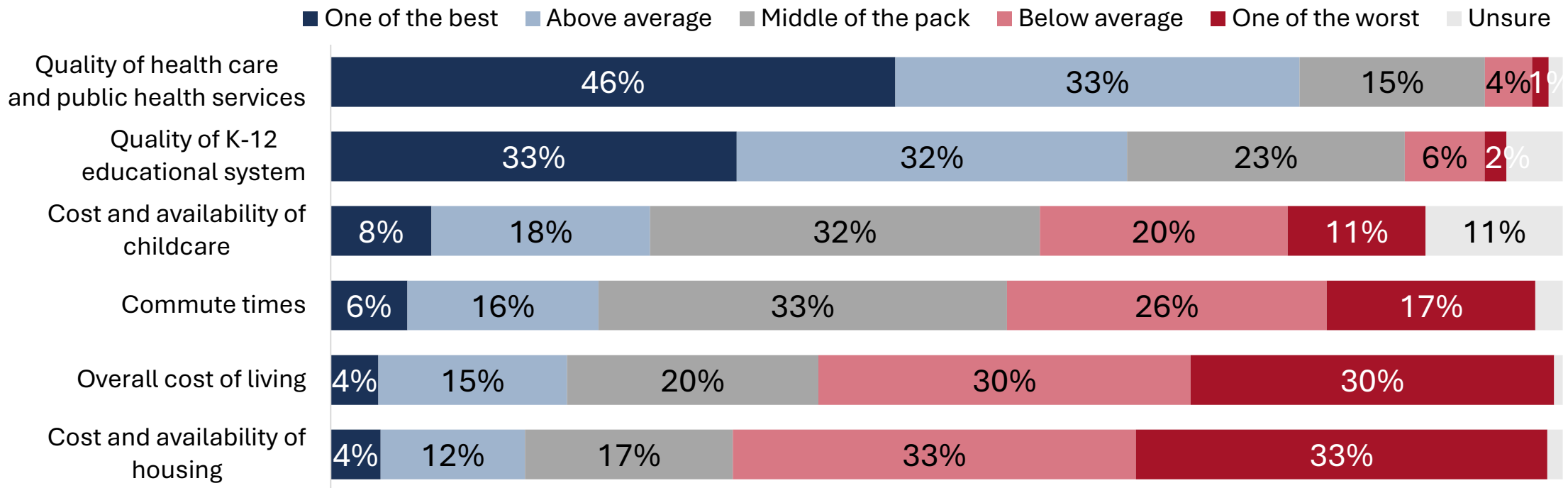


Where Massachusetts shines, and falls behind

- Massachusetts is seen as a leader on education and health care, and trails far behind on cost of housing and overall cost of living.

Education, health care perceived as key strengths for Massachusetts while costs lag behind

% who say Massachusetts is better / worse at each element of quality of life

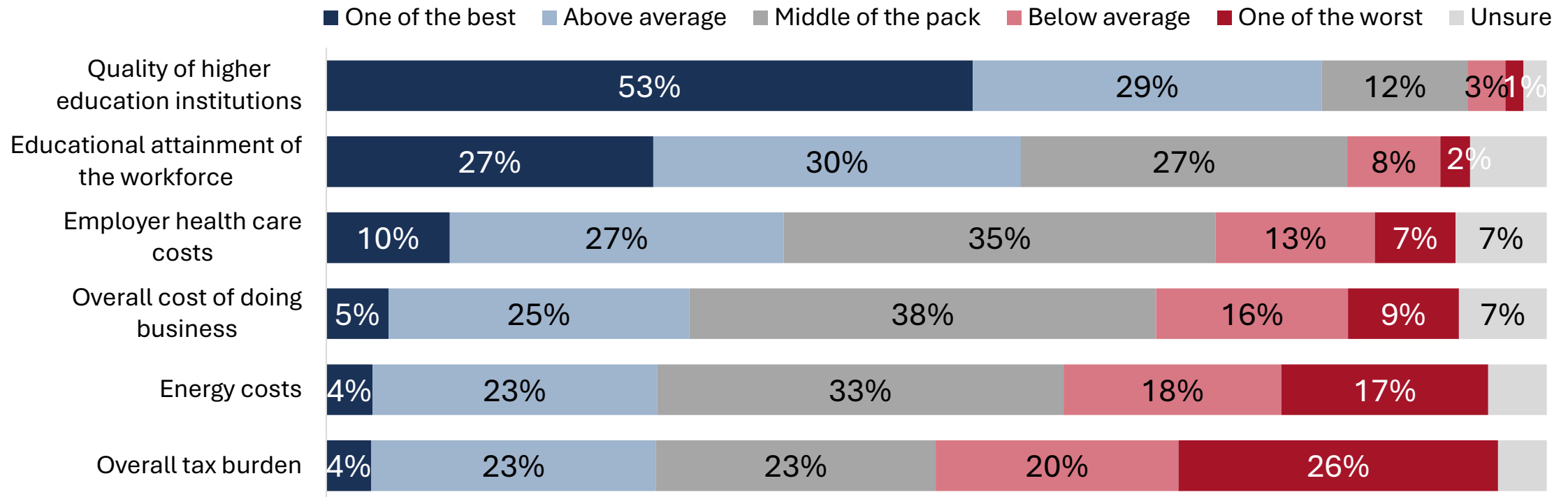


Perceived business conditions in Massachusetts

- Our educational institutions and our educated workforce are seen as our greatest strengths in Massachusetts. Taxes and energy costs are barriers to competitiveness.

Education seen as key competitive advantage for Massachusetts businesses

% who say Massachusetts is better / worse at each element of competitiveness for business



Introducing Competitiveness Scores

- Having multiple data points for each item can make comparisons across subgroups difficult.
- Subtracting the percentage of residents who think Massachusetts is below average from those who think we are above average creates a single “competitiveness score” for each item in the survey.

	Raw results	Total above, below average
One of the best	29%	63%
Above average	34%	
<i>Middle of the pack</i>	23%	
Below average	8%	12%
One of the worst	4%	
<i>Unsure</i>	2%	
COMPETITIVENESS SCORE (% above average minus % below average)		51

Competitiveness Scores: Quality of Life

- A positive score (shades of blue) indicates more residents think the state is above average than below.
- A negative score (shades of red) means more residents think the state is below average than above.

Item Description	Index Score
Overall Quality of Life Score	51
Quality of health care and public health	73
Quality of K-12 educational system	56
Cost and availability of childcare	-5
Commute times	-21
Overall cost of living	-40
Cost and availability of housing	-50

Quality of life scores by demographic group

- Having a single score allows for easier comparisons across demographic groups.
- Despite a high overall score, Massachusetts is seen as lagging behind on 4 of the 6 quality-of-life components tested.

Competitiveness Score for each element of quality of life

% positive rating minus % negative rating

		AGE				EDUCATION		PARTY ID			REGION					
	Overall	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	No BA	BA+	Dem	Rep	Ind / oth	West	Central	South-east	495 to 128	Inside 128	Suffolk County
Overall quality of life score	51	56	55	48	47	41	65	70	32	45	43	48	30	46	65	76
Quality of health care and public health services	73	68	74	80	71	65	85	89	65	85	56	72	59	75	83	86
Quality of K-12 educational system	56	59	66	60	43	46	69	71	47	70	39	66	43	52	72	61
Cost and availability of childcare	-5	12	-2	-10	-14	-1	-9	-6	-2	-11	4	-1	-20	-14	-2	20
Commute times	-21	5	-12	-29	-40	-14	-31	-32	-14	-32	17	-12	-27	-44	-24	5
Overall cost of living	-40	-36	-39	-49	-38	-33	-51	-45	-33	-51	-18	-33	-46	-47	-52	-26
Cost and availability of housing	-50	-39	-42	-57	-60	-44	-59	-52	-44	-60	-29	-39	-63	-58	-57	-33

Business scores by demographic group

- Somewhat surprisingly, residents rate Massachusetts higher on measures related to business competitiveness.
- Energy costs and overall tax burden stand out as the major weakness.

Competitiveness Score for each element of business competitiveness

% positive rating minus % negative rating

		AGE				EDUCATION		PARTY ID			REGION					
	Overall	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	No BA	BA+	Dem	Rep	Ind / oth	West	Central	South-east	495 to 128	Inside 128	Suffolk County
Overall Business Competitiveness	46	62	48	42	35	42	51	66	22	39	26	48	18	49	54	69
Quality of higher education institutions	77	69	76	81	80	68	90	82	63	80	53	80	67	80	87	83
Educational attainment of the workforce	47	40	47	50	48	31	68	60	38	44	26	53	26	49	57	62
Employer health care costs	18	35	21	11	8	16	20	33	3	12	9	20	4	15	24	38
Overall cost of doing business	5	23	8	3	-10	8	1	20	-13	-1	7	4	-13	4	11	17
Energy costs	-8	12	-4	-9	-24	-6	-11	5	-19	-14	-3	-3	-31	-15	-1	16
Overall tax burden	-19	0	-17	-20	-34	-16	-24	-1	-30	-29	-20	-24	-29	-24	-18	11

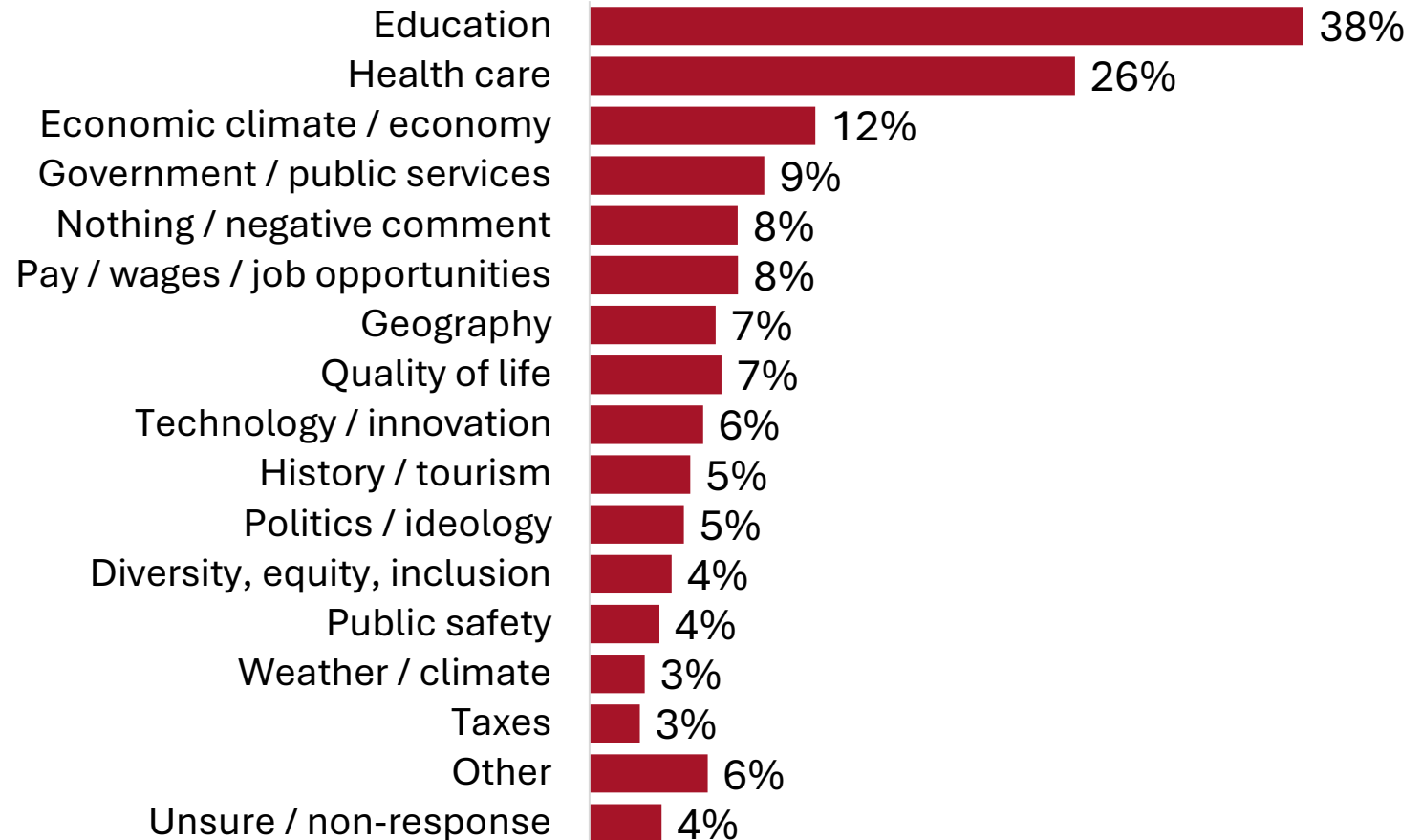
Advantages and Weaknesses

What are our competitive advantages?

- We asked residents an open-ended question to name Massachusetts' competitive advantages and weaknesses.
- More than twice as many people cited education and health care as being a competitive advantage than any other idea suggested.

Education and health care top Massachusetts competitive advantages

% who say _____ is a Massachusetts competitive advantage



Advantages, in their own words

“Massachusetts has an extensively trained and educated workforce. That in itself is enough to qualify the state as a good place to do business.”

“The abundance of higher education establishments draw students to the area, increasing the chances they will stay or return to work in the area after graduation.”

“Excellent health care, excellent education, low crime, four seasons, access to the ocean and the mountains (Berkshires), protects peoples' individual rights.”

“Massachusetts has amazing doctors, top notch hospitals, and quality education. We also have many programs for low-income families.”

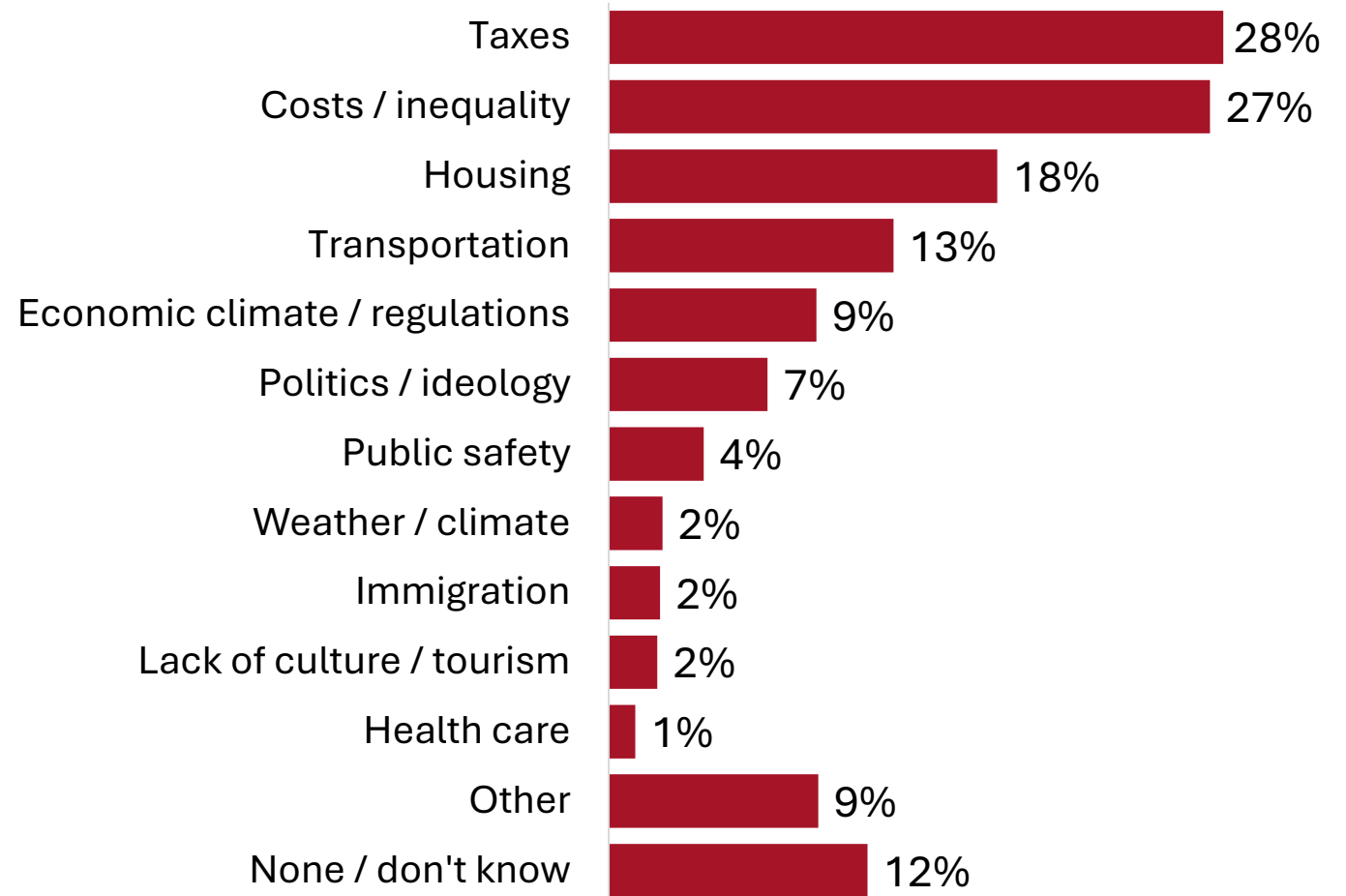
“I like that Massachusetts tends to vote democratic in elections, it has many safe and beautiful towns, and it has many venues for the arts and sports.”

“Massachusetts takes care of its residents in a socially responsible way, as compared to other states.”

What are our competitive weaknesses?

- Taxes and cost of living are neck and neck in terms of the state's competitive weaknesses.
- Housing and transportation are a tier down from those top two.

Taxes and cost of living top Massachusetts competitive weaknesses
% who say _____ is a Massachusetts competitive weakness



Weaknesses, in their own words

“The taxes in Massachusetts seem to be some of the highest in the country. The cost of living has also become astronomical, including in small towns, making it harder for the average family to continue living in the state.”

“Massachusetts needs to invest more on tourism and cultural activities to match other states.”

“High cost of living, traffic congestion, and complex regulations stifle affordability and business growth compared to more tax-friendly states.”

“Honestly, the cost of living here is tough. Like housing, rent, everything is expensive, and traffic around Boston is a nightmare. And the T (our public transit) breaks down more than it should. And winters too can be brutal.”

“Unfortunately, some areas of Massachusetts are extremely high crime, we experience robbery, car theft, drug sales and use. And our capital city is a motorist's nightmare, massive traffic congestion, bridges and tunnels that are hard to navigate even for long-time residents.”

“Massachusetts public transit system is always struggling, and the governor spends too much on illegal immigrants.”

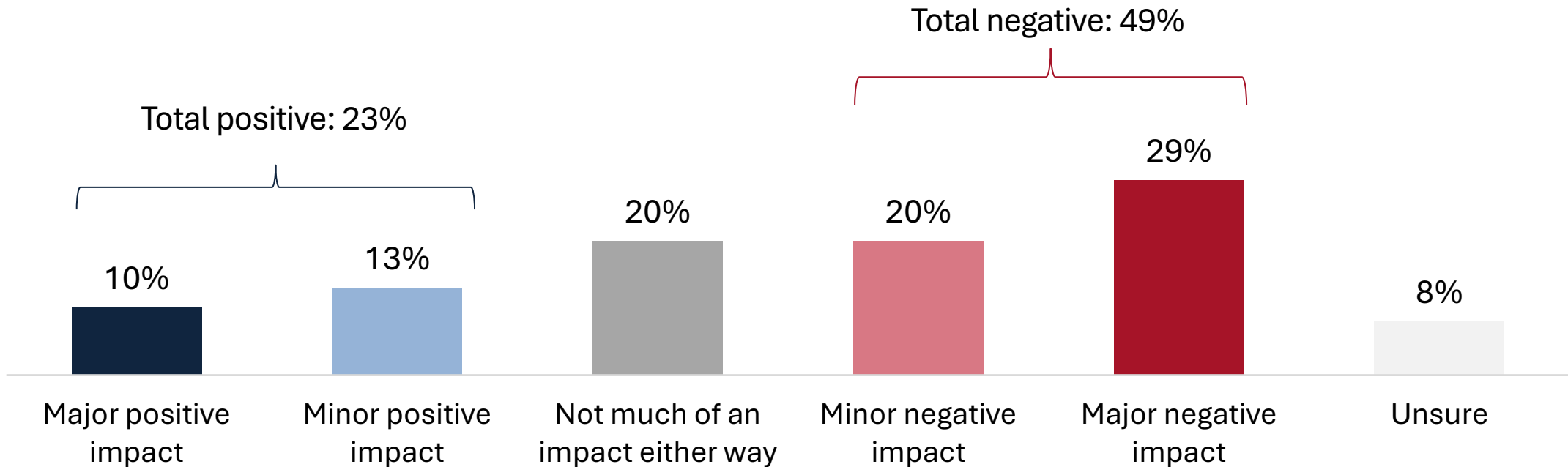
The Federal Picture

Impacts of GOP control of Washington on Massachusetts

- About half of the state's residents see negative impacts to Massachusetts coming from unified Republican control of the federal government, while 23% see positive outcomes.

More see negative than positive outcomes from GOP control of the federal government

% who say Massachusetts will see positive or negative impacts from GOP control

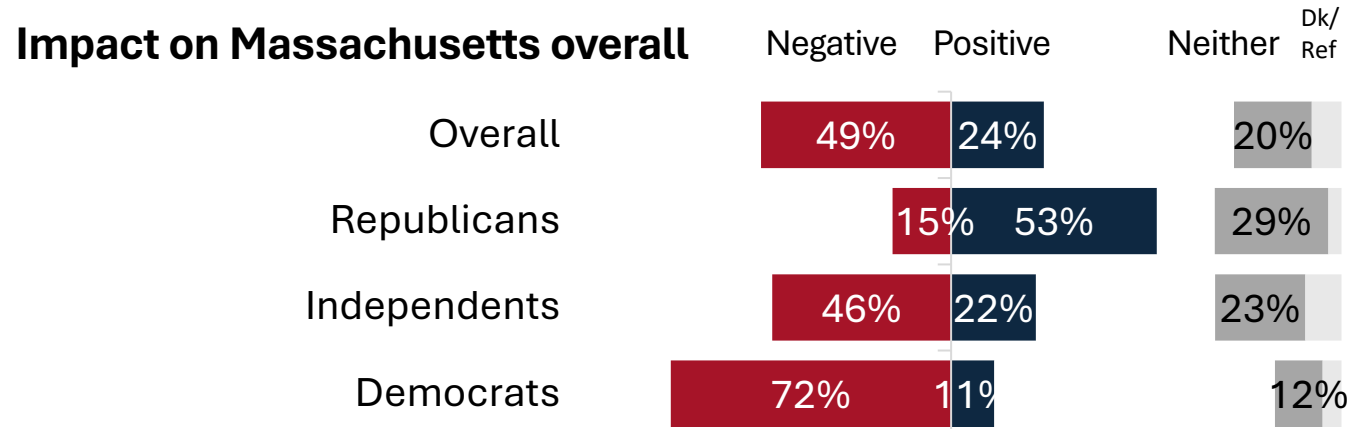


Partisan perceptions of impacts to Massachusetts

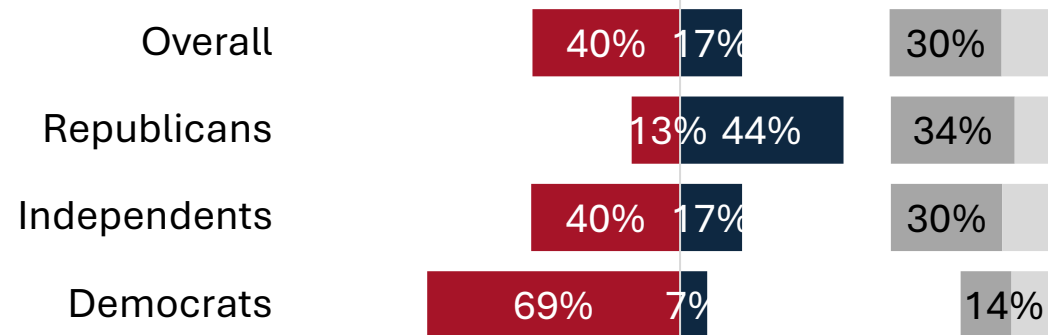
- Few Democrats and Independents see positive impacts from unified GOP control.
- Overall, more see negative impacts, both overall and specific to the business environment.

Partisan splits in anticipated impacts of GOP control

% who say they anticipate positive / negative impacts by party



Impact on Massachusetts biz environment



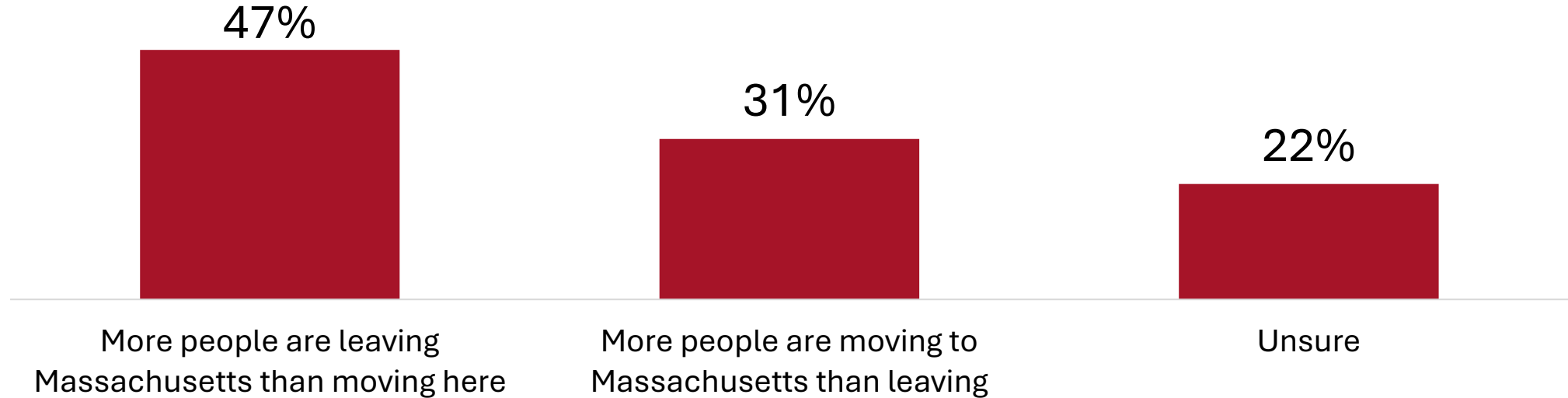
Q: Republicans control the White House and both houses of Congress, and a majority of the seats on the Supreme Court were appointed by Republican presidents. What impact do you think Republican control of Washington will have on Massachusetts?

Coming and Going

More perceive outflows of people from Massachusetts

- About half (47%) of Massachusetts residents think that more people are leaving Massachusetts than moving in.
- Those aged 60+ (55%), Republicans (65%), and living in the Southeast (55%) are more likely to say people are leaving.

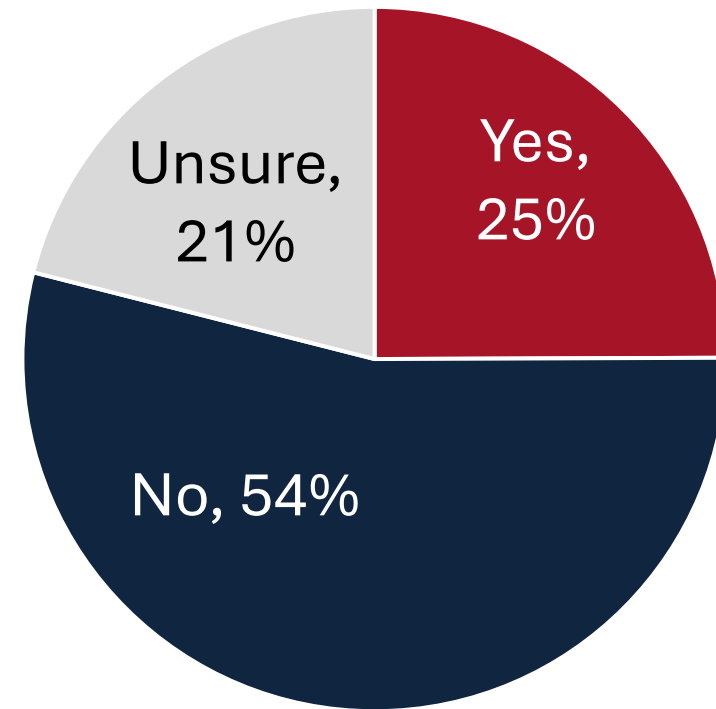
About half of Massachusetts residents perceive more people leaving the state than moving in
% who say they think more people are moving in / leaving Massachusetts



Considering moving out of Massachusetts

- Overall, 25% say they are considering moving in the next 5 years.
- Variants of this question have been asked for the last 20 years, with figures ranging from 21% to 39% saying “yes”.

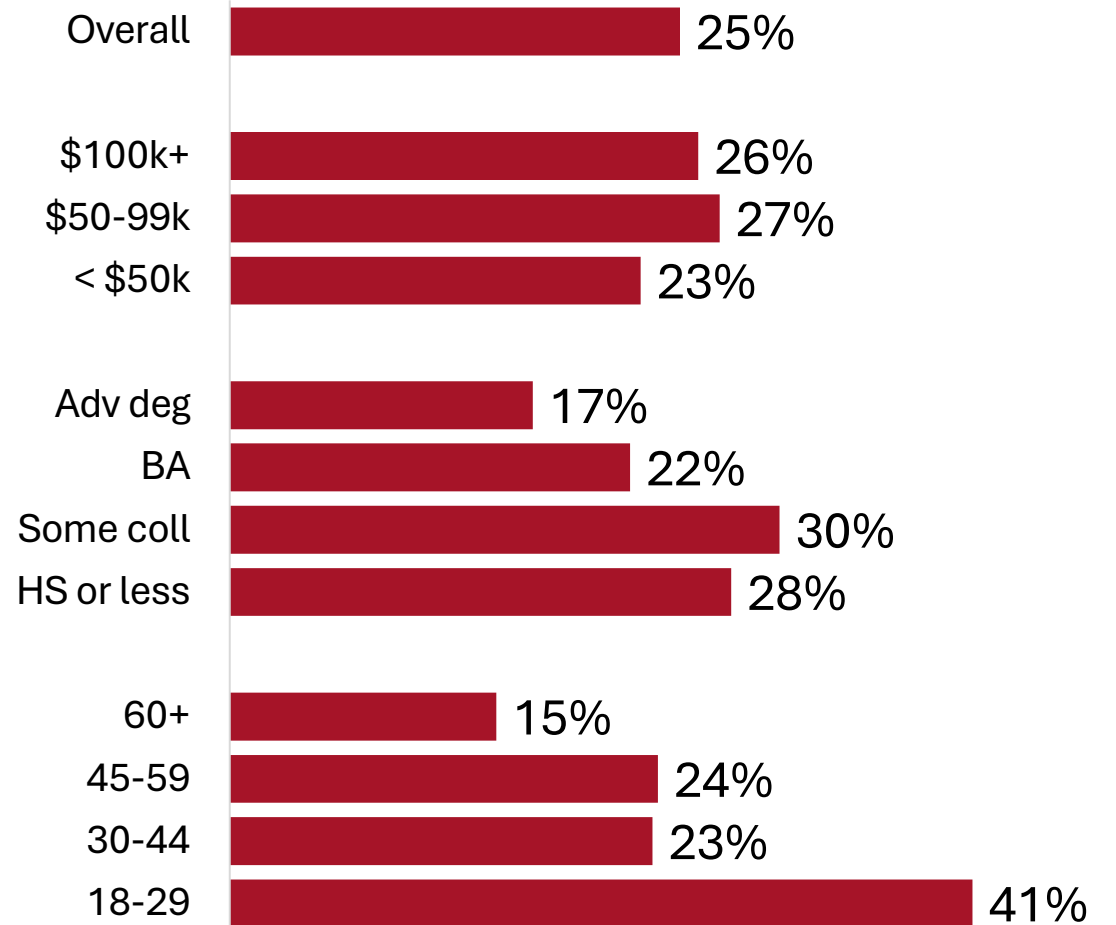
About 1 in 4 considering leaving Massachusetts in next 5 years
% who say they are / are not considering moving



Younger residents more likely to consider leaving

- Younger people tend to be more transient, and 41% say they are considering leaving the state.
- Though people in lower income households rate Massachusetts less positively, it does not translate into increased plans to relocate.

Younger people more likely to consider moving
% who say they are considering moving by demographic



Why are people considering moving?

- Those considering moving identify the cost of living and taxes as the two most common reasons.
- Among those 18-29 thinking about moving, a majority (57%) cite job opportunities elsewhere.

Cost of living, taxes top reasons for considering moving out of Massachusetts

% who say they are considering moving and identify each reason

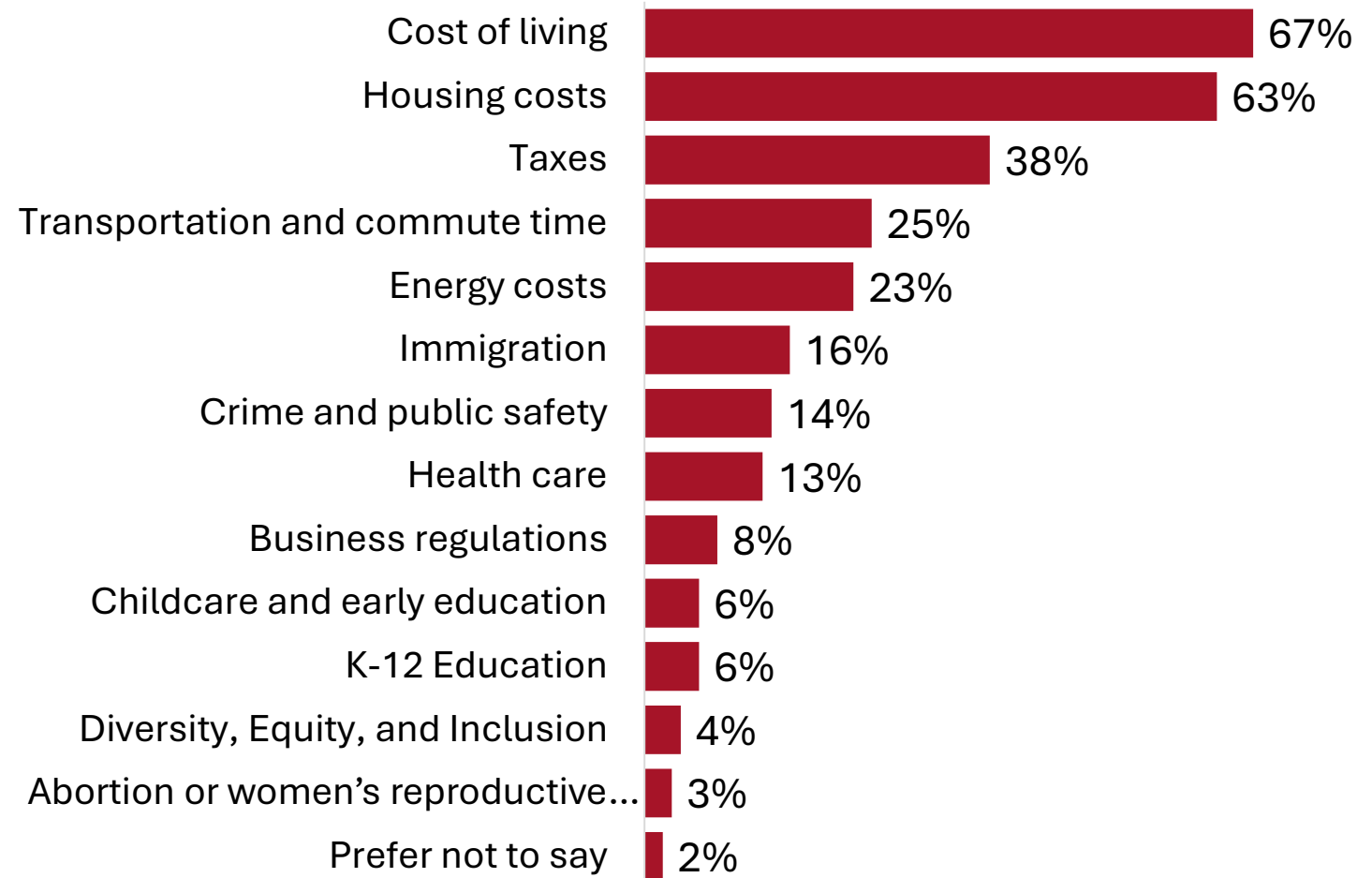
Considering moving	25%
Cost of living	20%
Taxes	13%
Weather	9%
Job or business opportunities elsewhere	8%
Politics	7%
Family reasons	5%
Some other reason	1%
Not considering moving	54%
Unsure	21%

What can be done?

Where Massachusetts is lagging...

- Cost of living and housing costs are by far the top two most frequently mentioned items in terms of where Massachusetts is lagging other states.
- Taxes, transportation, and energy costs made up the next tier of items.

Massachusetts residents see the state lagging behind on costs, housing
% who say that ___ is one of three top things that Massachusetts is lagging on

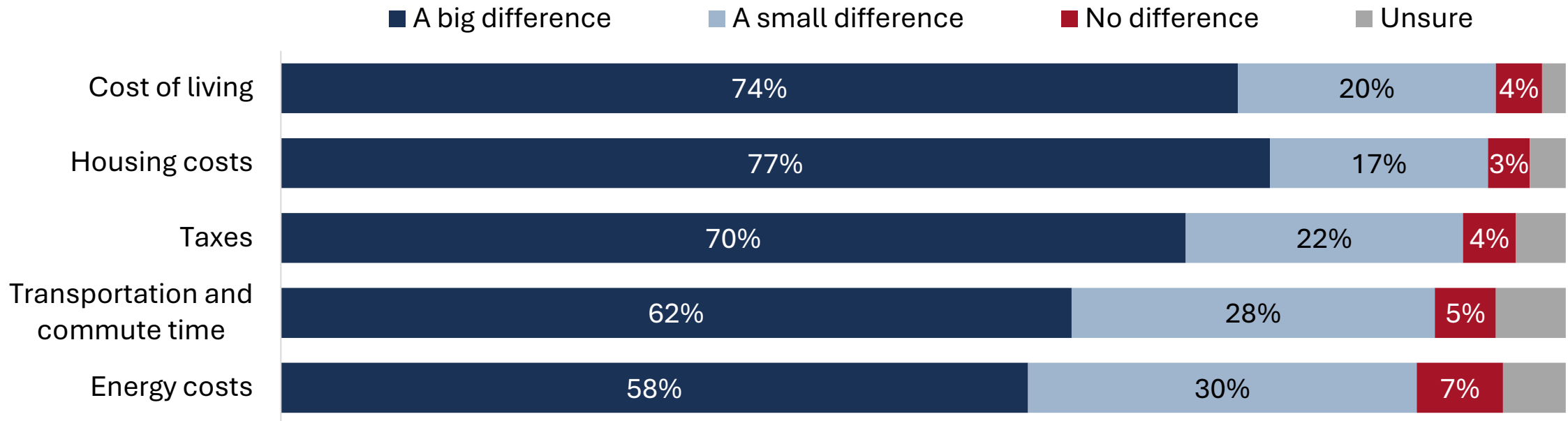


... and can we improve?

- Majorities think that focusing on improving the top 5 “lagging” issues could make a big difference in the state’s competitiveness.

Majorities say improvement efforts in top 5 lagging areas would make a big difference

% who say that government improvement efforts would make _____ in terms of Massachusetts competitiveness



Survey Background

- Results are based on a survey of 1,000 Massachusetts residents age 18+.
- The survey was conducted online from July 17 - 30, 2025.
- Results were weighted by race, age, gender, education, political party, and county to reflect known and estimated population parameters for Massachusetts residents.
- This poll was funded by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation as a companion to its 2025 Competitiveness Index.



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