

Freedom Economy Index

Special Job Seeker Edition

JUNE 2024

A JOINT PROJECT OF  RedBalloon.work  PublicSquare

Dear Friend,

This is a special edition of the Freedom Economy Index survey, where we're sampling opinion from RedBalloon's file of 100K+ job seekers. The results are quite interesting.

More Americans are struggling financially. 74.7% say their personal financial situation is "somewhat" or "much" worse off than a year ago. 1 in 5 say their finance would last less than 2 weeks if they lost their jobs today, and 37% say they've had to delay bill payments this year to survive.

Our survey also reveals that California job seekers are subject to far more Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) discrimination in the hiring process than those in Texas or Florida. And nationwide, 75.4% of job seekers believe AI is being used to screen out resumes that don't fit the current "preferred" DEI profiles needed to fulfill corporate DEI quotas.

There are a myriad of other interesting findings, including 63% who are "worried" about workplace repercussions if its discovered

that "they are a Republican or conservative."

The pendulum is swinging back toward freedom and away from cancel culture. Employees want to work in positive workplaces, with productive, mission-oriented collaboration, free from divisive cancel culture. 67% of job seekers say they'd be willing to make less money if it means a more positive, less DEI dominated workplace in which to work.

The Freedom Economy is growing. And, this survey reveals the struggles and hopes of those who work on the front-lines of our economy. We hope you'll find this data helpful.

Sincerely,



Michael Seifert
CEO of PublicSq.



Andrew Crapuchettes
CEO of RedBalloon.work

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Sample of Written “Verbatim” Comments

“I have a Hispanic last name but am white. I have encountered disappointment when I get on a Zoom or Teams video call & my Interviewer sees I am not Hispanic.”

“I am a Mexican-born US Citizen with native Spanish and French. All HR sees is a 51 yr old 'white male'. Recruiters have confided in me. This needs to stop. Now.”

“They asked me how to give an example of how I can progress or use DEI. Not even kidding.”

“I was unemployed for 3 months and only received call backs if I did not include that I am white.”

“Their interest ended the moment they saw me on camera.”

“I am a Straight White Female and now, all of a sudden I am finding it impossible to find new work opportunities.”

“Been rejected for employment for being a straight white man. Almost every time I'd gotten in interview was when I opted out of identifying my race or sex on my application.”

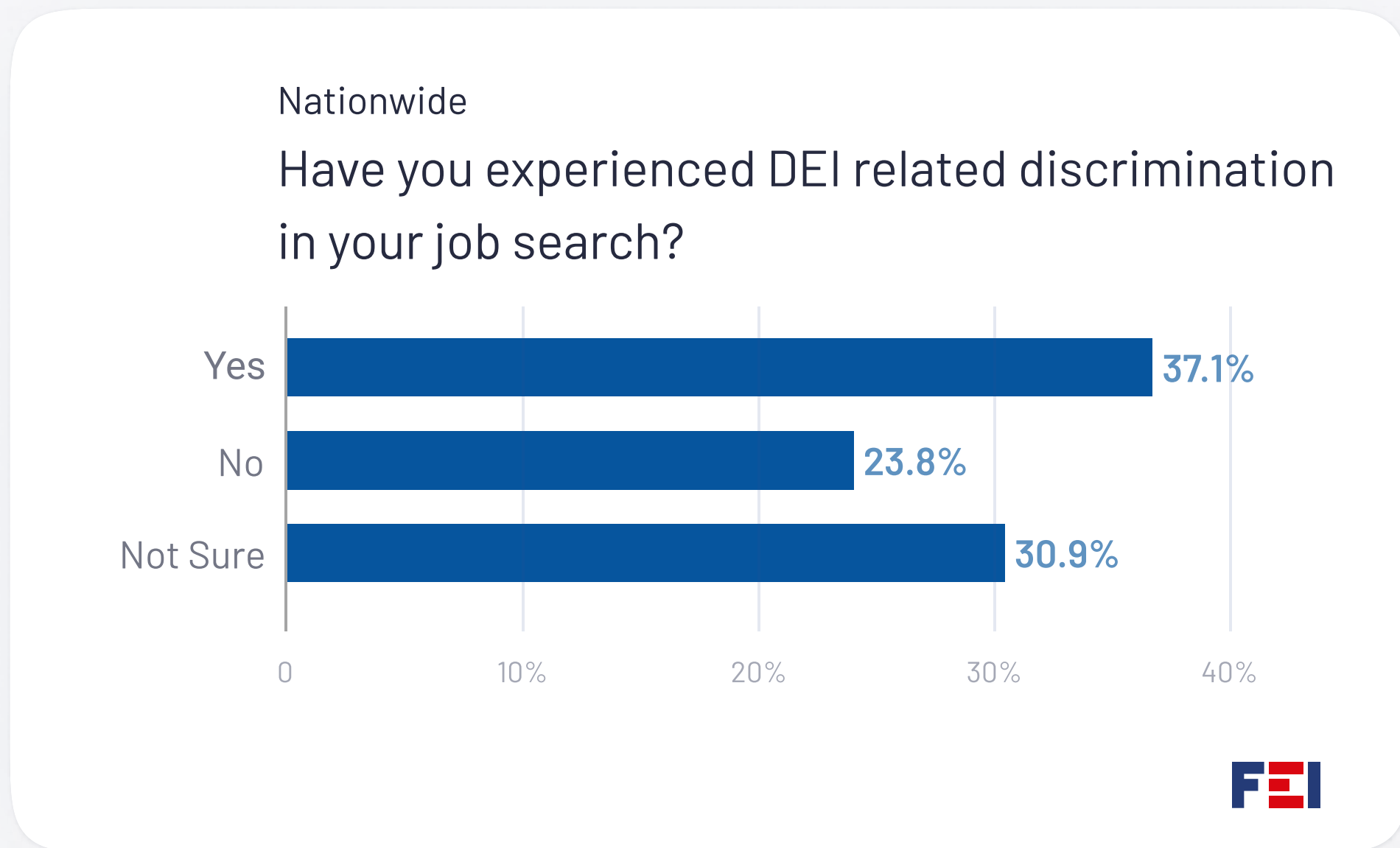
“But during my recent time in the military, DEI was ever-present and governed what we could and could not say aloud.”

“Even better, I've experienced discrimination based on my political affiliation.”

KEY FINDINGS

DEI Discrimination Quantified

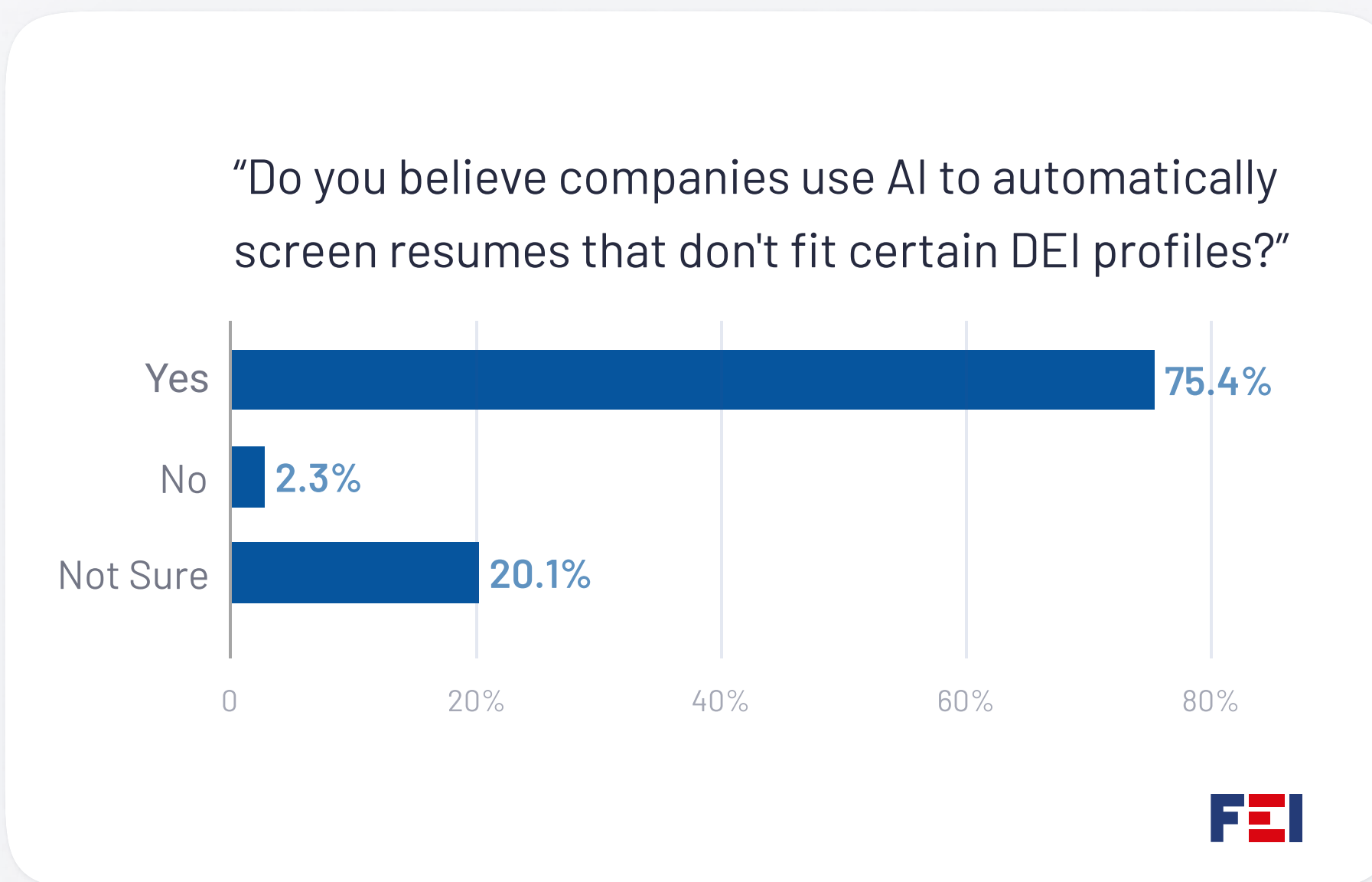
37% of respondents say they've experienced DEI-related discrimination in their job search. That number rises to 41% for California-based respondents and drops to 33.7% among Texas.



KEY FINDINGS

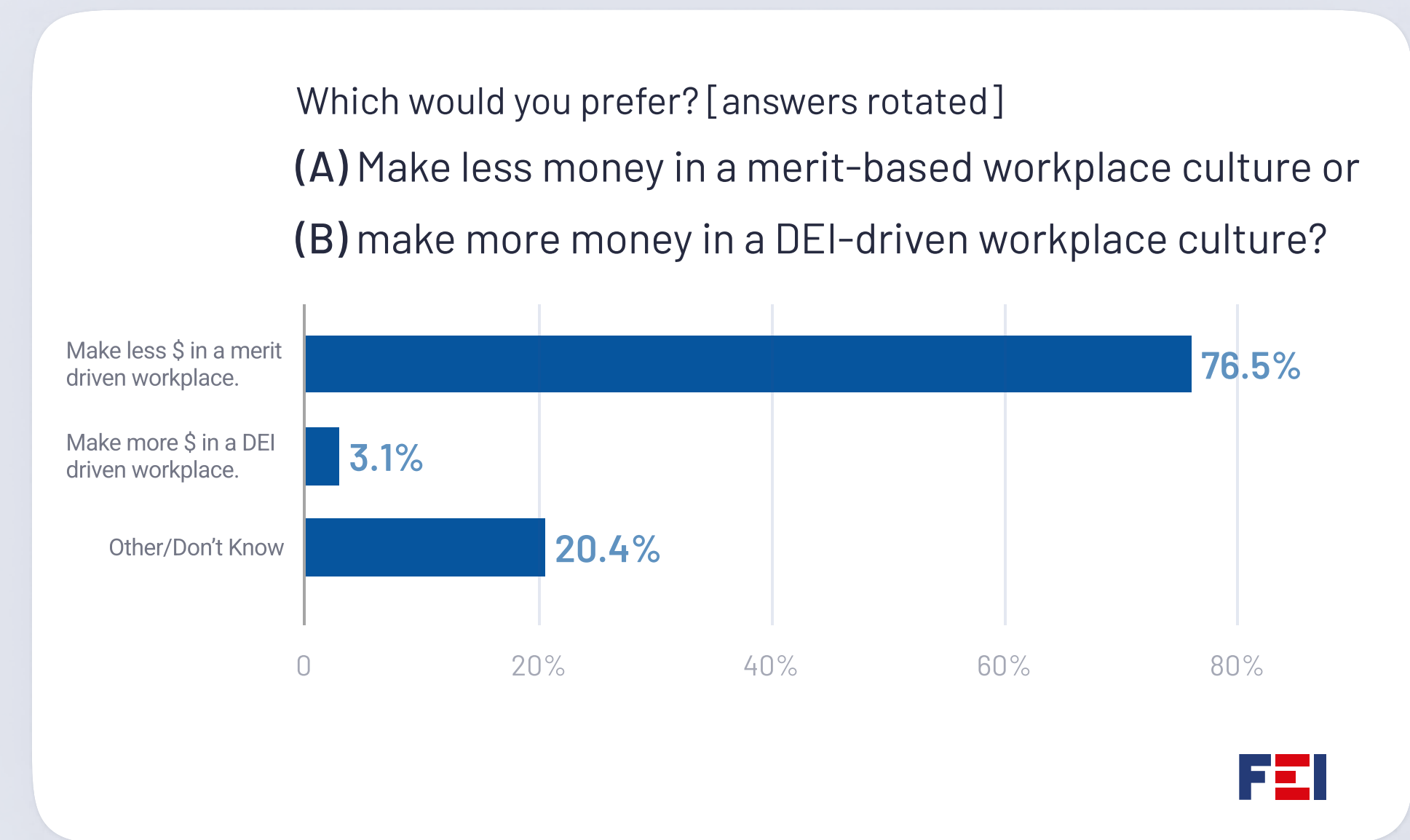
Is AI on DEI's Side?

Job seekers believe AI is working against them, with companies using AI to automatically filter out applicants that don't fit preferred DEI profiles.



Will Take Less Money to Avoid DEI Workplace

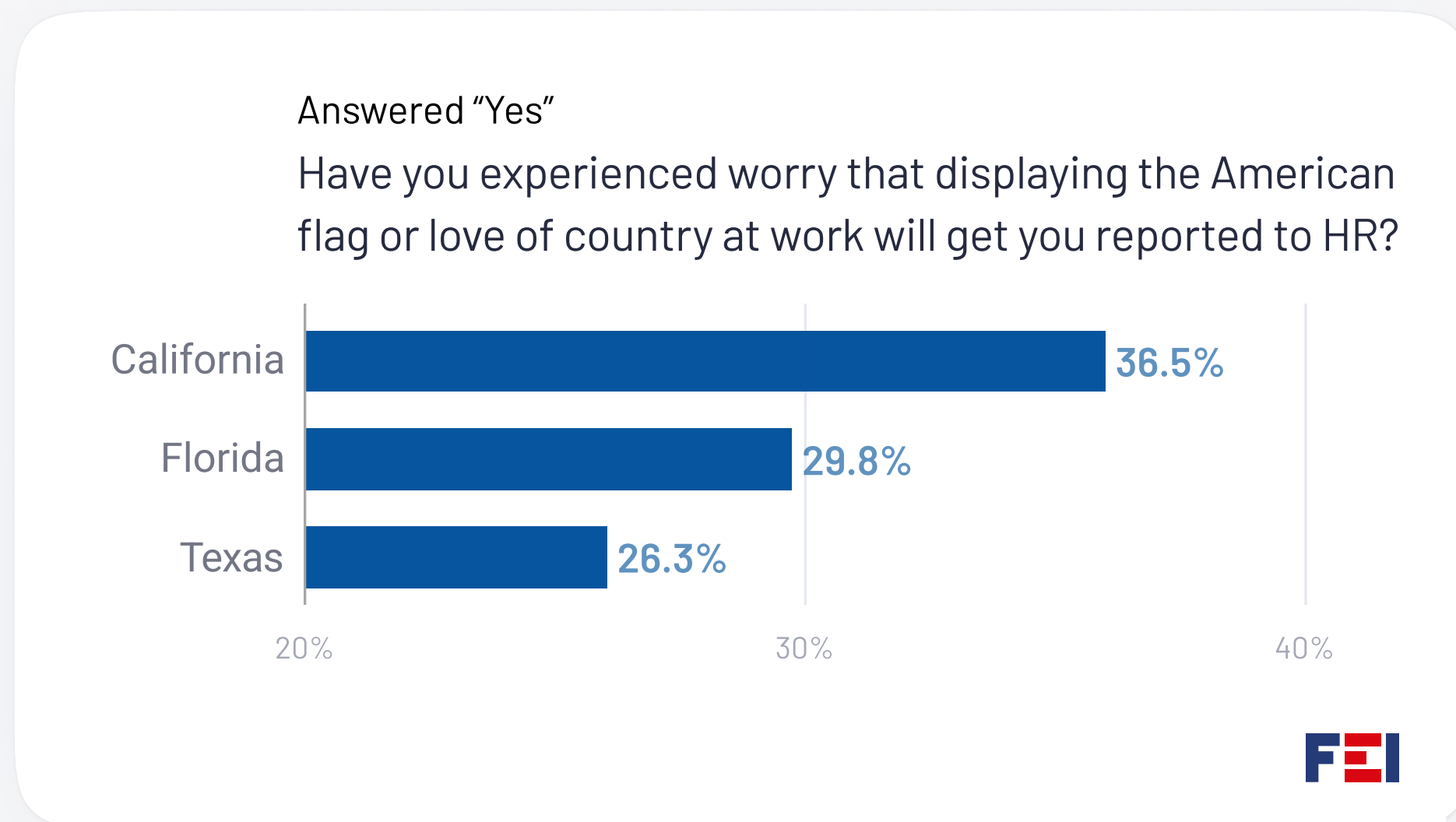
Job seekers & employees are exhausted with the divisiveness and negativity that comes from DEI driven workplace policies. Over 7 in 10 say they'd take less money if that means working in a merit-driven, positive workplace, rather than a DEI driven workplace.



KEY FINDINGS

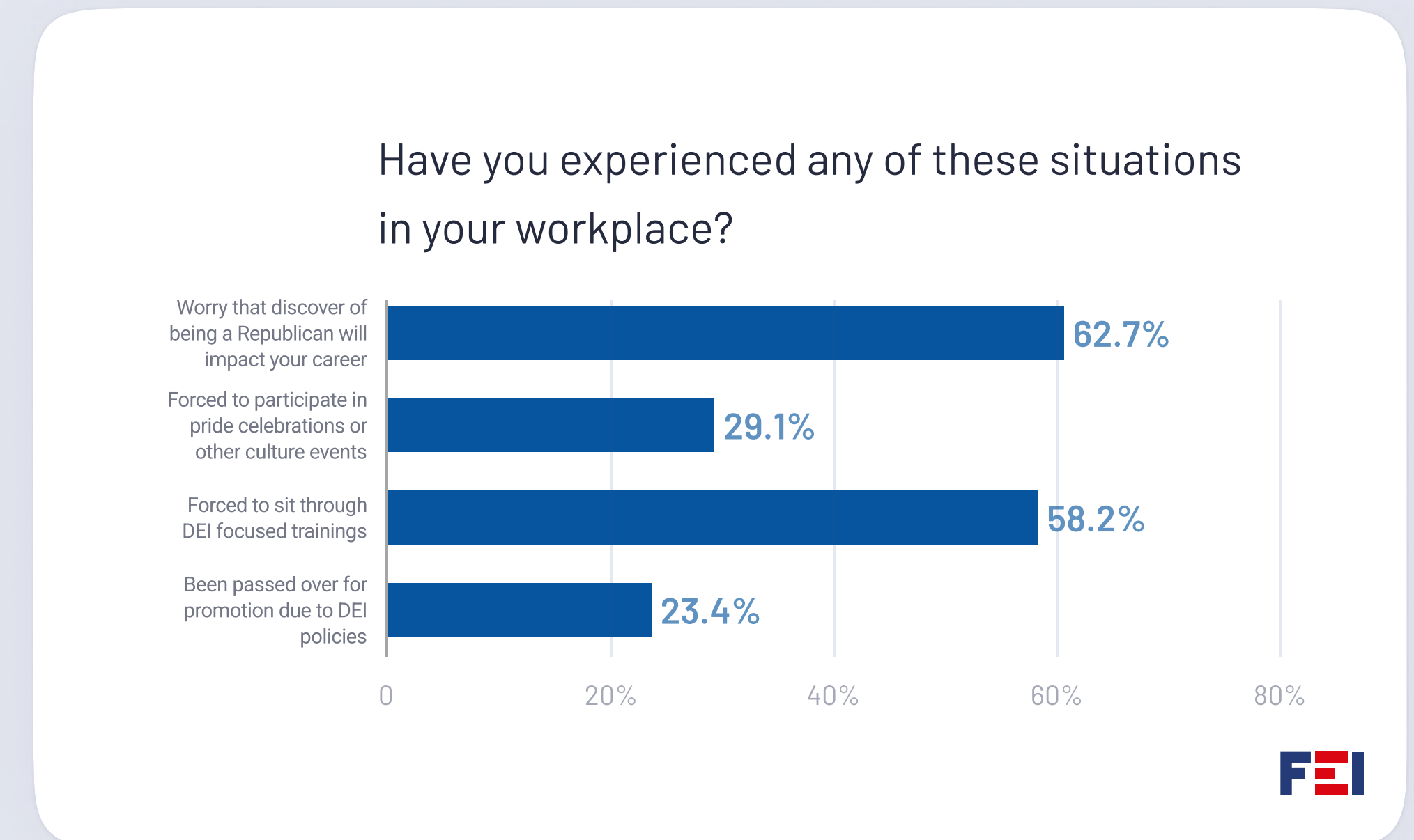
No Star Spangled California

Nearly 4 in 10 California respondents report being worried that if they “display the US flag” or demonstrate “love of country” at the workplace, they’ll be reported to HR. That’s 10 percentage points higher than Texas and 7 points higher than Florida.



“Hideology” in the Workplace

63% of these job seekers & employees fear that discovery of being a “Republican” or “conservative” will negatively impact their career.



Sample of Written Comments

"Lost a major project because the executive didn't want 'another white male' to be leading something."

"I was forced to discipline a worker who didn't use another person's preferred pronouns."

"I was required to purchase material through minority vendors."

"Had to hire based on skin color."

"I cannot wear a beautiful cross necklace my husband got me."

"I was told to remove an American Flag pin off my jacket."

"I am a radical feminist which is a kind of leftist, but I am sympathetic to the discrimination that conservatives have experienced in the workplace."

"Received informal reprimand for inadvertently 'misgendering' nonbinary coworker."

"My new manager claimed she was there to 'solve masculinity in the workplace.'"

"When I worked for HCL/Google we didn't DARE say we were church goers."

Sample of Written Comments

"I was called a racist because of my skin color."

"I was forced to sit through transgender training."

"Every meeting started with DEI acknowledgement, put pronouns and thing in my bio and profile, interact with DEI hires that are counterproductive."

"Forced to watch mandatory DEI training."

"Fired for 'transphobia.'"

"I was told that asking for exemption from working on transgender policy marketing was a violation of Army EO policy."

"Fired from my job for being politically critical toward wokeism in the workplace."

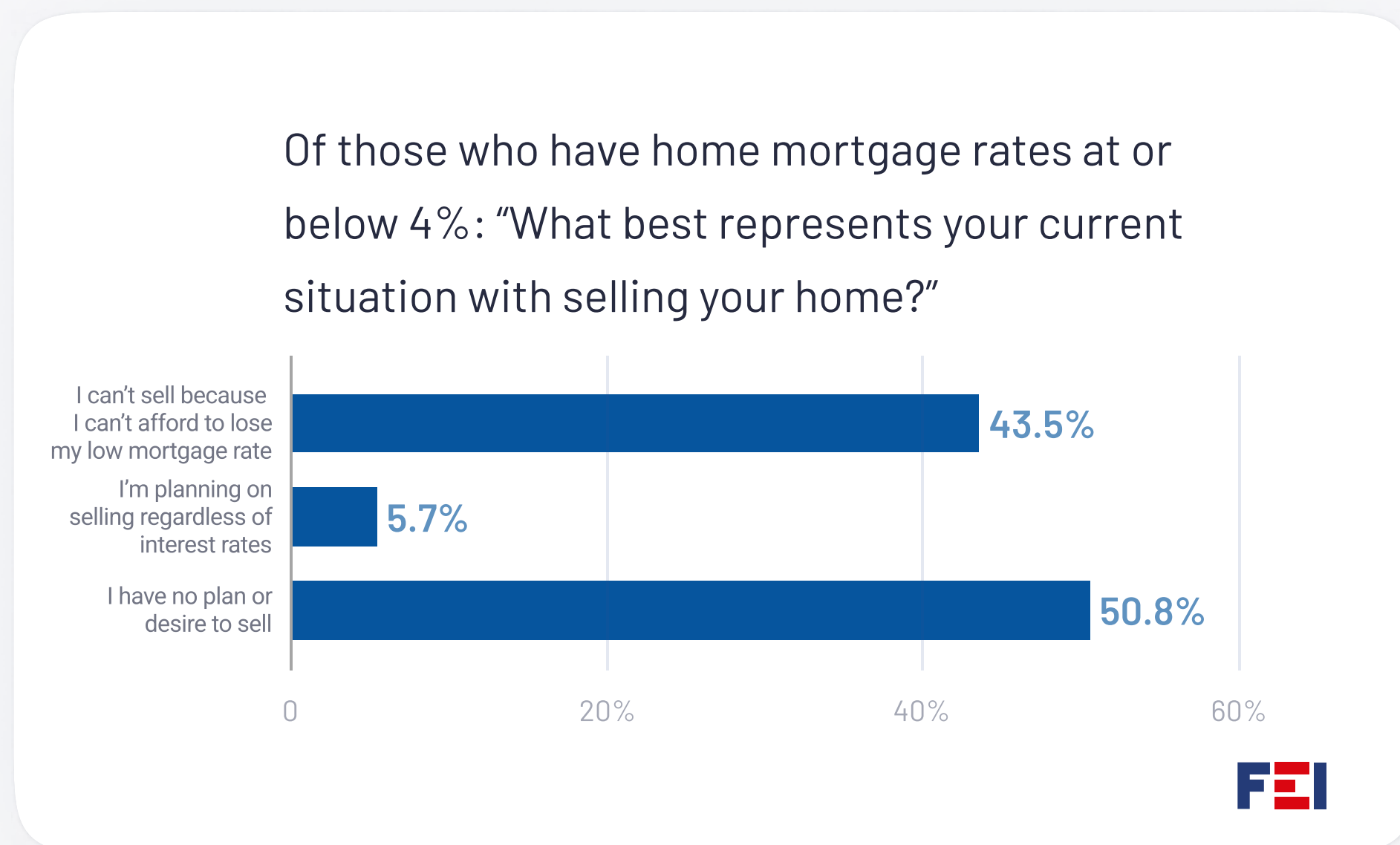
"Stupid grievance meetings where sour grape diversity hires trample on excellent workers who just do not care about stupid issues they promote."

"Discriminated against by colleagues once they learn I'm conservative."

KEY FINDINGS

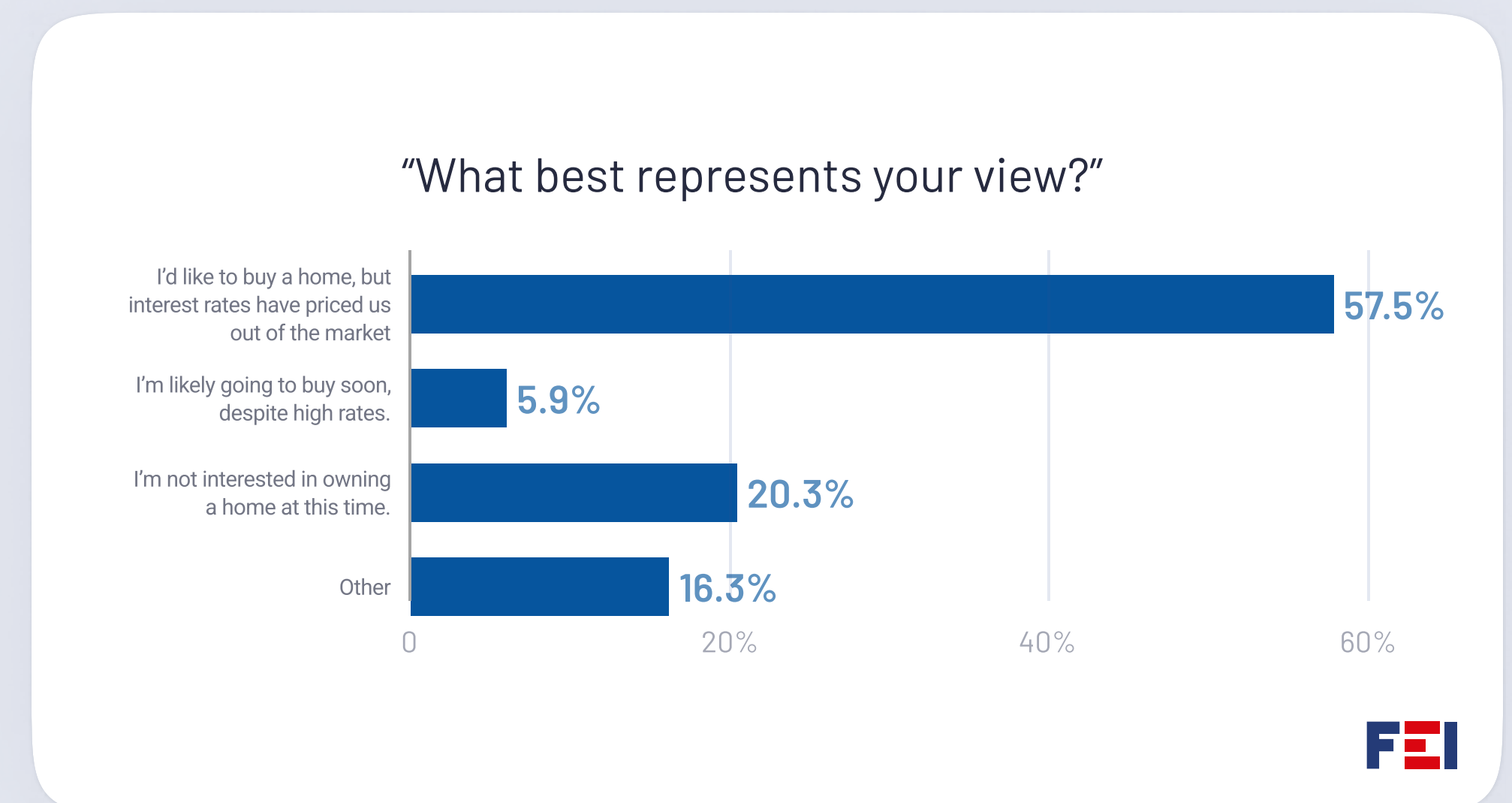
Home Owners Locked In

56% of these job seekers & employees who own a home report that they currently have a home mortgage interest rate below 4%. And, of those, nearly half say they'd consider selling but won't because they can't afford to lose their low interest rates.



Home Buyers Locked Out

On the flip side, 57.5% of those who don't own a home say they'd like to, but "interest rates have priced them out of the market."



Sample of Written Comments

"I was hoping to buy a home this year, but now I am using my down payment for living expenses."

"I saved several thousand dollars to buy a house a few years ago—I'm now living on that money so I'm not homeless, but eventually it will be gone and I'll be on the streets."

"Unfortunately I'll probably never own a home."

"I'll never afford one before I die."

"There's no possibility in my lifetime that I'll be able unless I win the lottery."

"I currently can't afford to buy a home and soon won't be able to pay rent."

"Not only interest rates, but cost of homes is out of reach - definitely not affordable."

"I've lost my business, my home, and on the road to completely losing my savings. This is a very scary future."

"We were forced to move out of our home in Utah the year after Biden took office, and we had to move in with our kids in Iowa. We're hoping to purchase a home this year, but we don't know if we'll be able to afford one now."

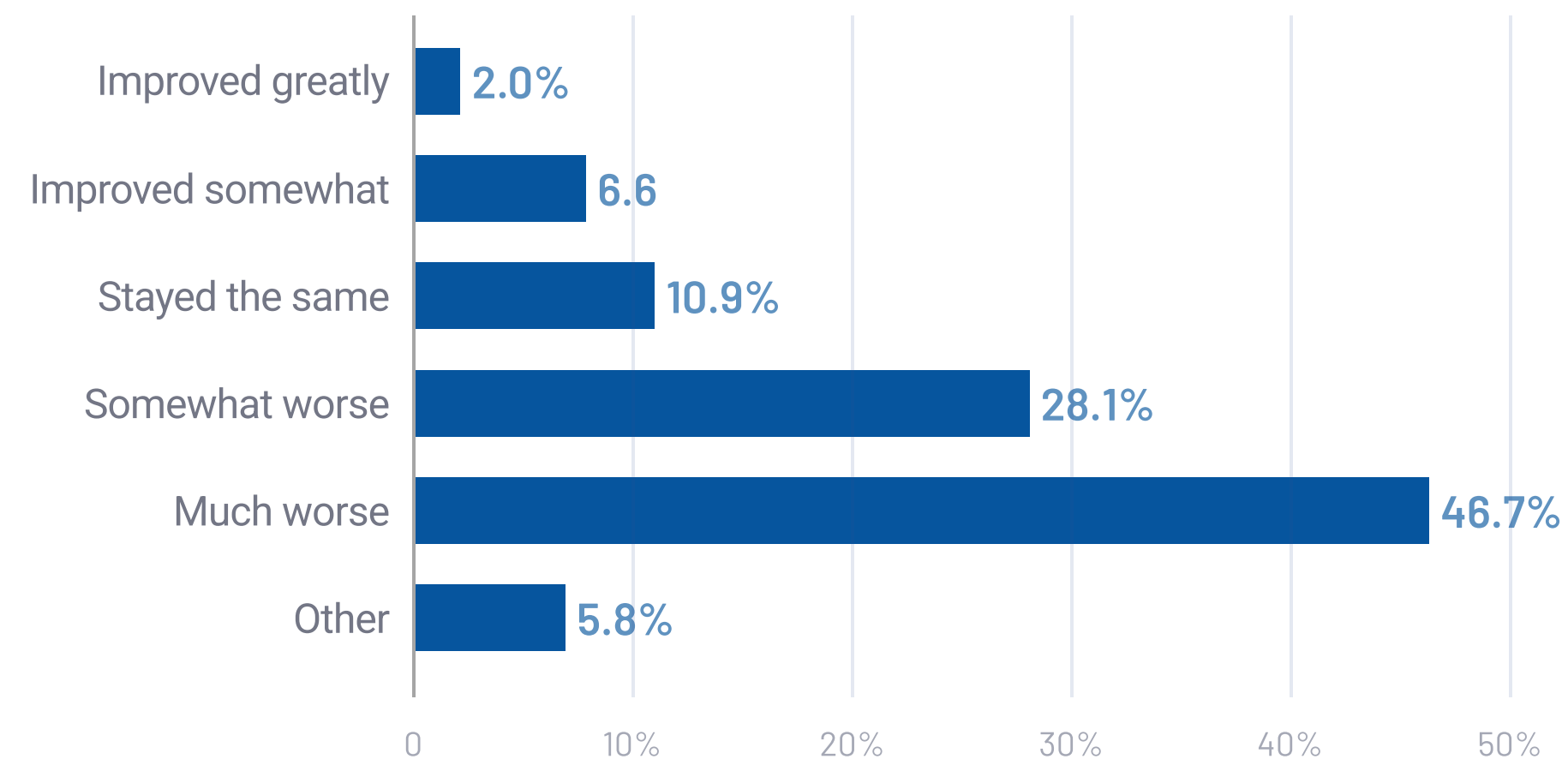
"I lived off savings I was putting away for a down payment on a house in the first two years after Covid so I don't have the money or income to even rent let alone get my own place."

KEY FINDINGS

Personal Financial Check-Up

The economy has been difficult on job seekers. 46.7% say their financial situation is “much worse” than a year ago, while 28.1% say its “somewhat worse.”

“How has your personal financial situation changed in the past year?”



Word Cloud from Written Responses



Sample of Written Comments

"Can't afford food, housing, or healthcare....Cost of everything essential has risen."

"Can't find work and I'm qualified."

"I have three jobs now and have to work every day to make ends meet."

"Can't seem to get ahead. My spouse and I need multiple jobs."

"Absolutely devastated financially...Catastrophically worse!"

"Everything is so expensive. It dilutes any gains in wages."

"My salary is down 40% while inflation is up over 20%."

"I have never seen such high rates of inflation or lack of jobs."

"I've lost my business, my home, and on the road to completely losing my savings. This is a very scary future."

"Prices are too high to be able to do anything."

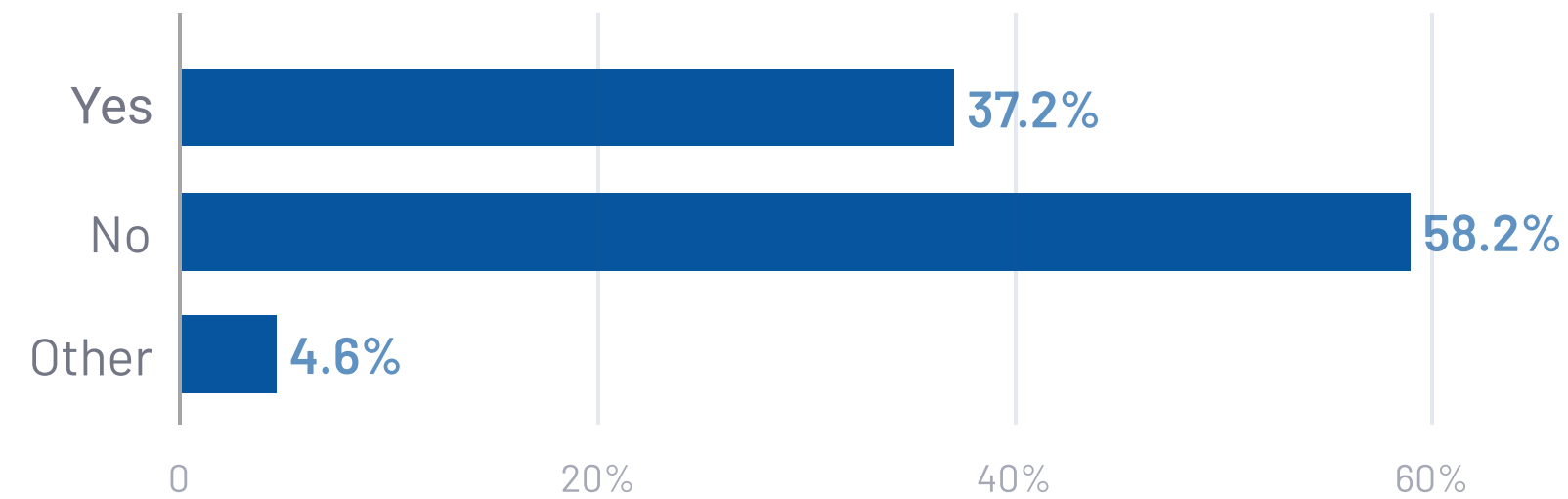
"Struggling to find a full time job at this point."

KEY FINDINGS

Delayed Bill Payments

37% have delayed bill payments in order to get by.

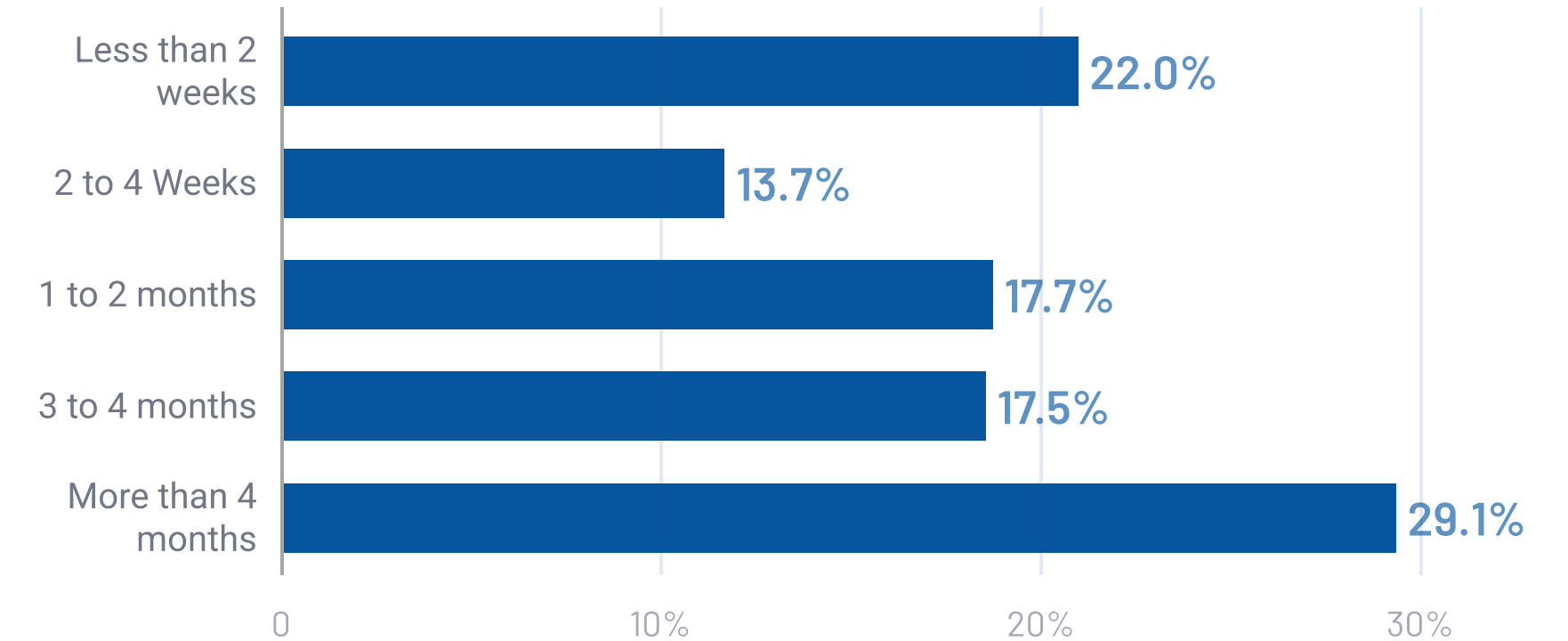
“Have you delayed bill payments this year to manage cash flow?”



Savings - How Low Can You Go?

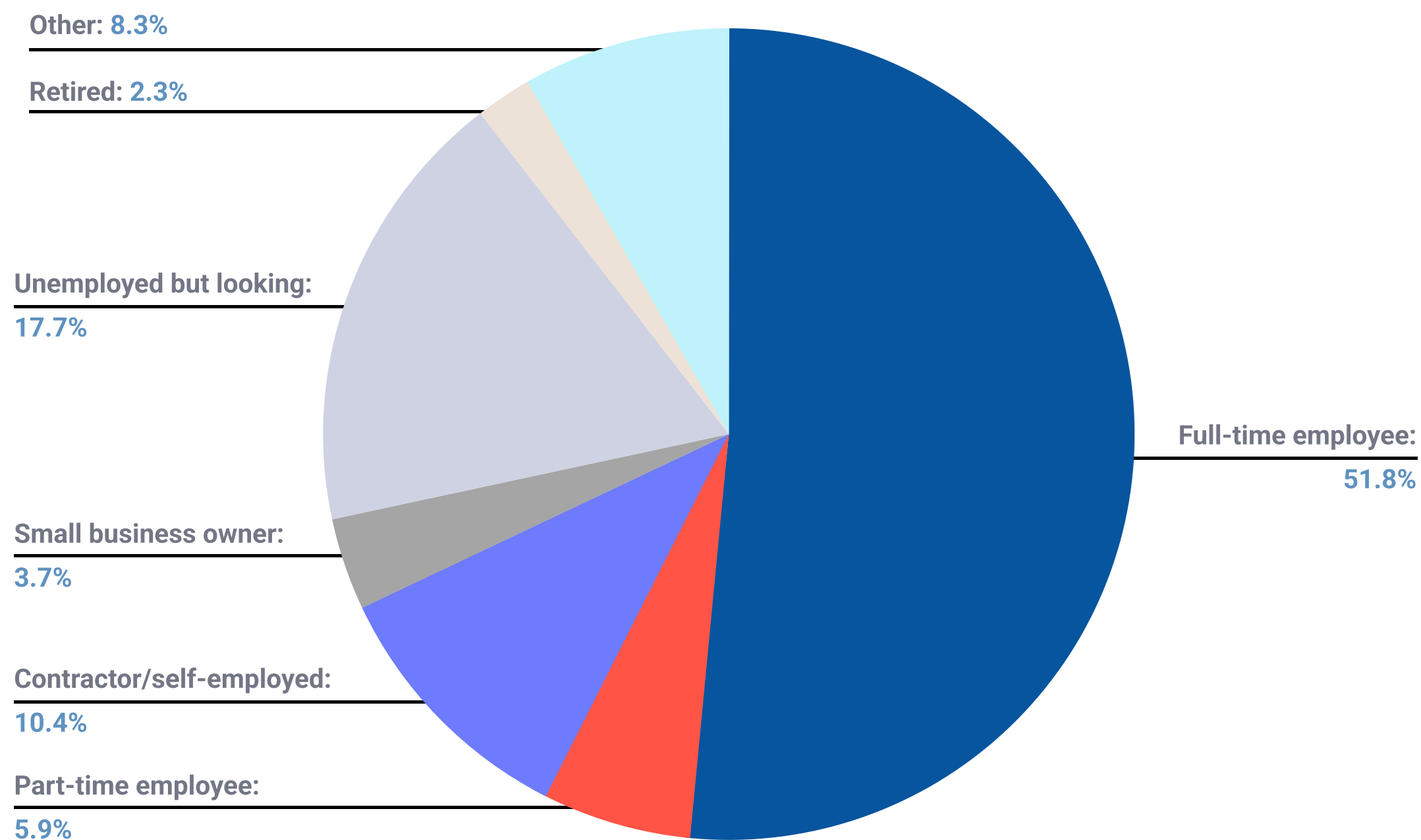
1 in 5 say they'd last less than 2 weeks financially if they lost their job. Another 30% wouldn't last 2 months.

“If you lost your job, how long can you last on your savings?”

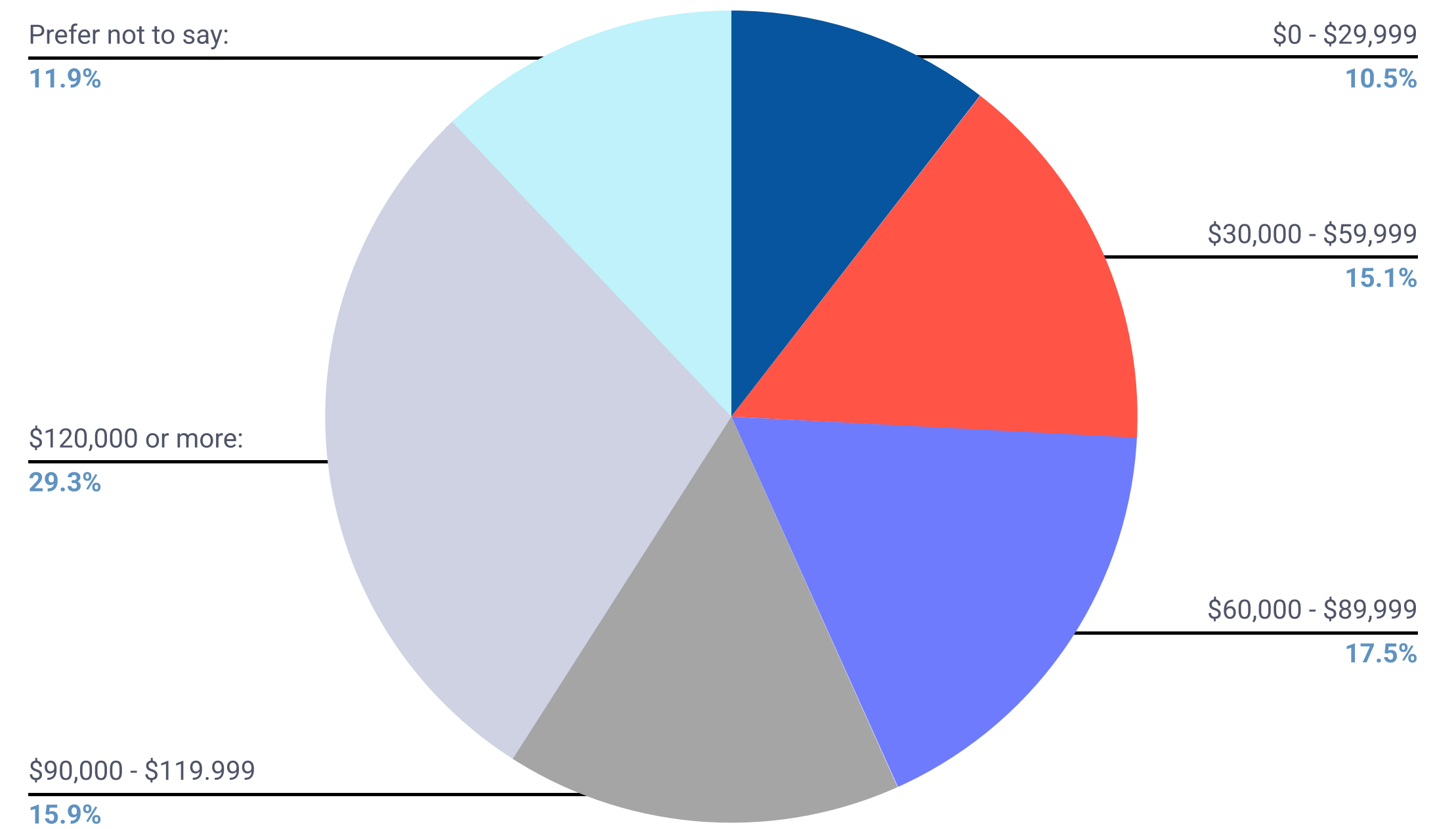


DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

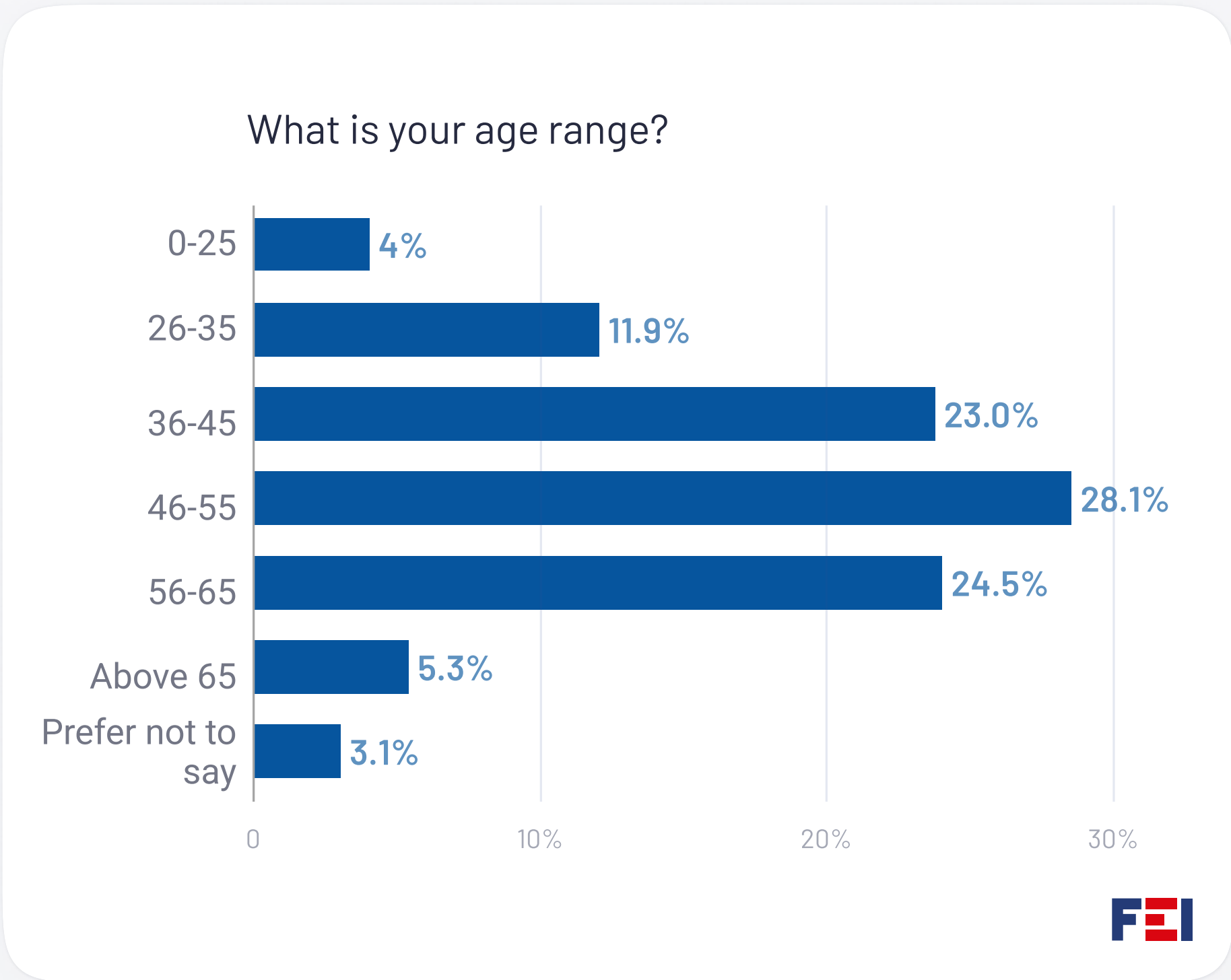
Employment Status



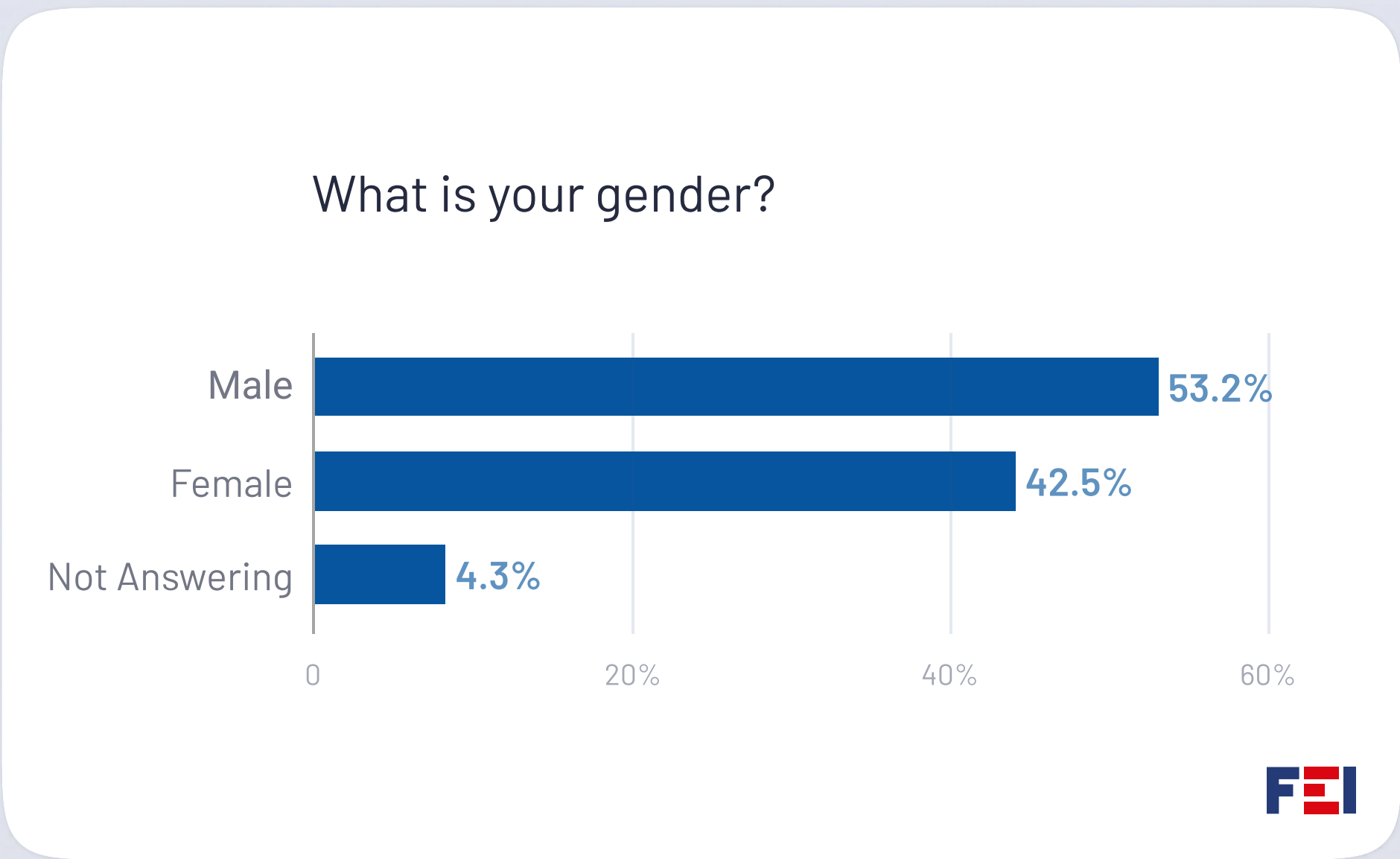
Household Income



Age Range



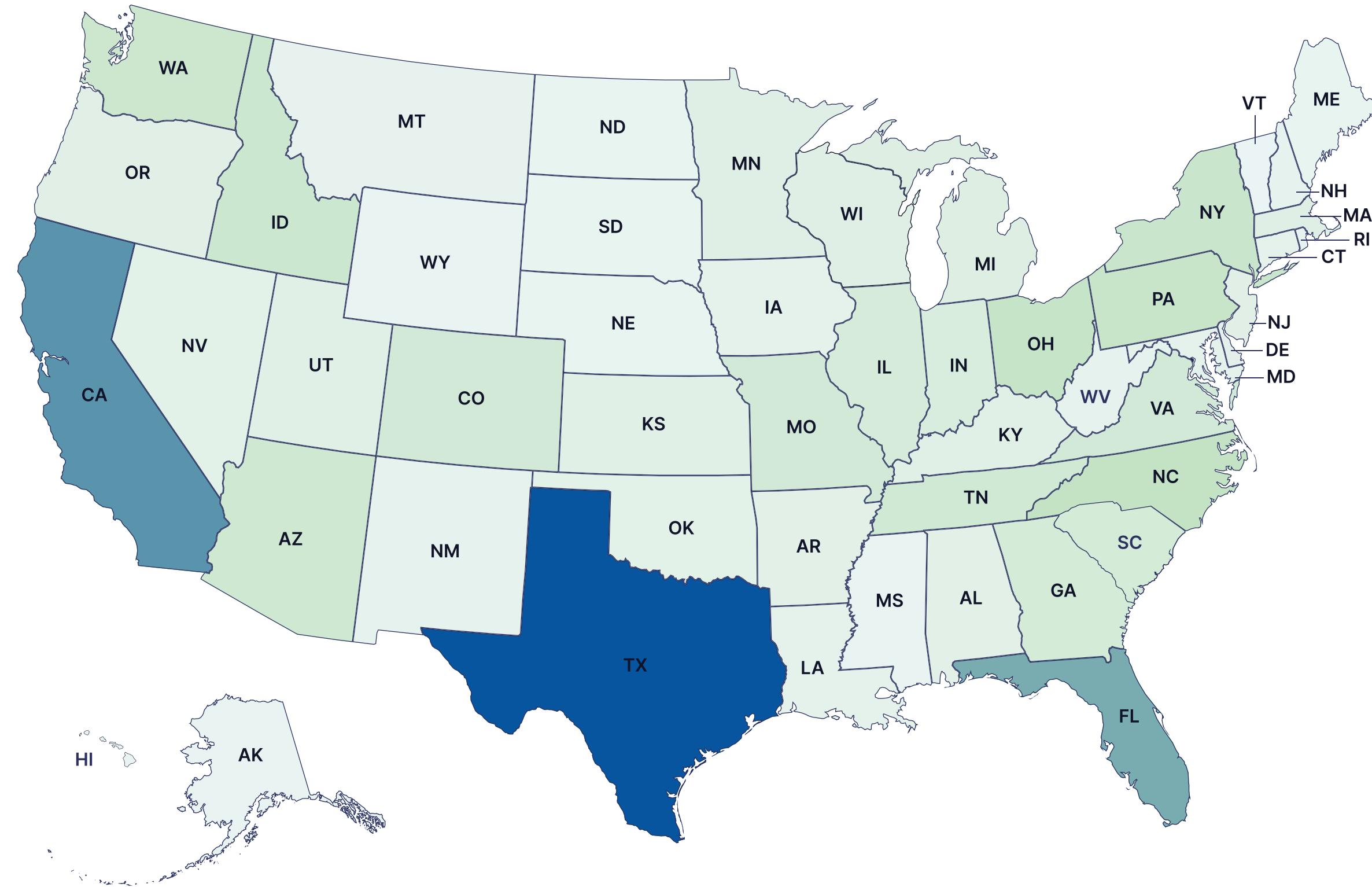
Gender



Geography

In what state do you live?

1%  10.7%



METHODOLOGY

The June Freedom Economy Index Survey focusing on job seekers sampled a universe of over 100,000 job seekers from RedBalloon's national job seeker database. The survey fielded from May 22 to May 31, with 949 respondents with a +/- 3% margin of error at the 95% confidence level.