

Research on American Institutions of Higher Education



Conducted for:
**Americans for Democratic Action
Education Fund**

By: **Lake Research Partners**

Findings from a National Survey of 1,000 adults with oversamples of 500 African Americans, 500 Latino/as, and 250 Lower-Income Whites
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The Rationale For Research:

- Since its inception in 1947, educational equality has been one of Americans for Democratic Action's major goals. Today, America's economic future requires the nation to combat educational inequality. Many school districts, particularly those with higher-income families, provide excellent education while many big city and rural districts suffer from substandard education. High-income families have access to high quality college preparation while low income families do not.
- Given that disparity, the nation must act to guarantee access to post-secondary academic and vocational education and training for all high school graduates to meet their personal needs and the needs of a 21st Century high-tech economy.
- This ADA study examines public attitudes, nationally and among key demographic groups, regarding this goal with particular emphasis on public attitudes -- and perceived student access -- regarding publicly funded institutions, private non-profit institutions, and private for-profit institutions.



The Rationale For Research:

Two Pyramids of American Education: Institutional and Access/Preparation

Institutional:

- The Institutional pyramid is based on public perception of value. At the top of the first pyramid are the elite private institutions where a bachelor's degree costs upward of \$250,000 but seldom less than \$125,000. (There are now 58 private colleges with annual tuition of \$50,000 and up.)
- As the pyramid descends to the public flagship universities, bachelor's degree costs around \$100,000 then falling to \$50,000 or less at other public institutions. All of these institutions cater to full-time students and have entrance requirements that exclude students, (often students from low income families), with poor high school preparation.
- At the bottom of the pyramid are the open access community colleges, where a two year degree costs under \$10,000; and the for-profit institutions, where the cost of a bachelor's degree ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000. Students who must work while going to school often choose a for-profit university because they offer convenience and the same degrees as traditional institutions.



The Rationale For Research:

Two pyramids of American Education: Institutional and Access/Preparation

Access/Preparation:

- The Preparation/Access pyramid mirrors income distribution. At the top are children from wealthier families that attend private schools from pre-school through high school, followed by schools in wealthy school districts, followed by middle class districts, and descending down to schools in the inner cities which are often starved for adequate funding.
- At each level the quality of preparation declines as does the percentage of qualified high school graduates and thus the percentage who enroll in college. At the top, private schooling qualifies all but the least able for college. In the lower income areas of our cities and rural communities more often than not only the truly gifted and exceptionally motivated can meet the academic qualifications for college. Children of wealthy families, whether by preparation or legacy, have access to practically all levels of higher education.
- As family incomes fall the level of preparation falls and children enter at ever lower levels of the Institutional pyramid. When family incomes are too low to pay for access, high performing children of lower income families often receive scholarships to supplement the cost of tuition. Full scholarships for high performing students whose families can afford the tuition is restricted by capacity at every level as demand for higher education exceeds capacity. Increasingly, these qualified students must settle for community college. Families that cannot afford tuition, and whose children do not meet the entrance standards required for a tuition waver, must choose either a community college or a for-profit institution.
- For adults who were denied access either because of lack of preparation or family income, and now seek a college degree, find access at open enrollment institutions — a community college or a for-profit institution. Those working adults who desire a bachelors degree or higher often choose a for-profit college or university that can accommodate to a life of work, family duties and study.



The Rationale For Research:

Two pyramids of American Education: Institutional and Access/Preparation

- There are those who defend this income based system as the envy of the world. True, most countries would love to have universities equal to our elite private and public flagship universities. However, no country we know of is trying to replicate our system of preparation and access based on wealth.
- On the contrary, most of our major competitors are working to provide universal access that will allow all students an opportunity to reach the top of the academic pyramid. The data are incontrovertible, intelligence is distributed equally across income and ethnicity which means that our current system is squandering the talents of millions of our citizens who lack access to higher education. These are talents America must have if it is to compete with societies whose citizens number in the billions.
- If America hopes to compete with societies whose goal is universal access to students at whatever level, then we must flatten the Preparation/Access pyramid and perhaps the institutional pyramid as well. This survey is ADA's first step in seeking to define and promote a higher education system that offers opportunity to the estimated 25 million Americans who currently lack the preparation and access.
- This is the first of three nationwide surveys among the general public on their attitudes toward higher education institutions, the preparation for and the access to these institutions.



Core Findings:

Overview

- Americans value a college education now more than ever. They know a degree is the new threshold for achieving the American Dream, and they know the country's future depends on more graduates and their innovations.
- Cost is the biggest frustration when it comes to higher learning. The cost of a college degree is getting more and more expensive and further out of reach, all while Americans are placing a stronger priority on college graduation.
- The public has a positive view of traditional as well as for-profit colleges and universities. They have a better sense of the work of traditional schools, but they think for-profit schools are doing an excellent or good job educating their students. They want a variety of institutions out there including community colleges and for-profits to offer the most opportunity to students and workers. People believe for-profits offer critical flexibility.
- President Obama's goal for graduating more college students than any other nation by 2020 is a major support point for more Americans to favor expanding the reach of for-profits and oppose the efforts others would make to restrict their growth.



Core Findings (continued):

For-Profit Education

- The biggest support point, other than cost, is that for-profit colleges and universities serve non-traditional students who cannot attend college fulltime on campus and underserved communities that may have received a poor education earlier in their life. Opportunity and flexibility are the strongest values to buttress the arguments against faulty critiques and other efforts to restrict the growth of for-profit schools.
- The public does not buy arguments that for-profit colleges and universities exploit their students. Instead, they believe these institutions play a powerful role in making a college education more accessible to non-traditional and underserved students.
- Nor do Americans buy the attacks that for-profit schools provide a lower-quality education, though standards are important.
- The tax dialogue helps promote for-profit colleges and universities, since the taxes they pay help to offset the federal tuition aid their students receive.
- Voters support allowing for-profit colleges and universities to expand their reach and serve more students. They soundly reject the notion that these schools should be stopped and that their growth should be hindered, and many are willing to make it a voting issue.

In the end, as more and more non-traditional students return to college, the vast majority of Americans understand that for-profit colleges and universities are a good option for these students because they offer more flexibility and the opportunity to earn a degree that they would otherwise not have.



Context

People think higher education is important in today's world and that helps drive support for expanded access to for-profit schools as one of many vehicles.



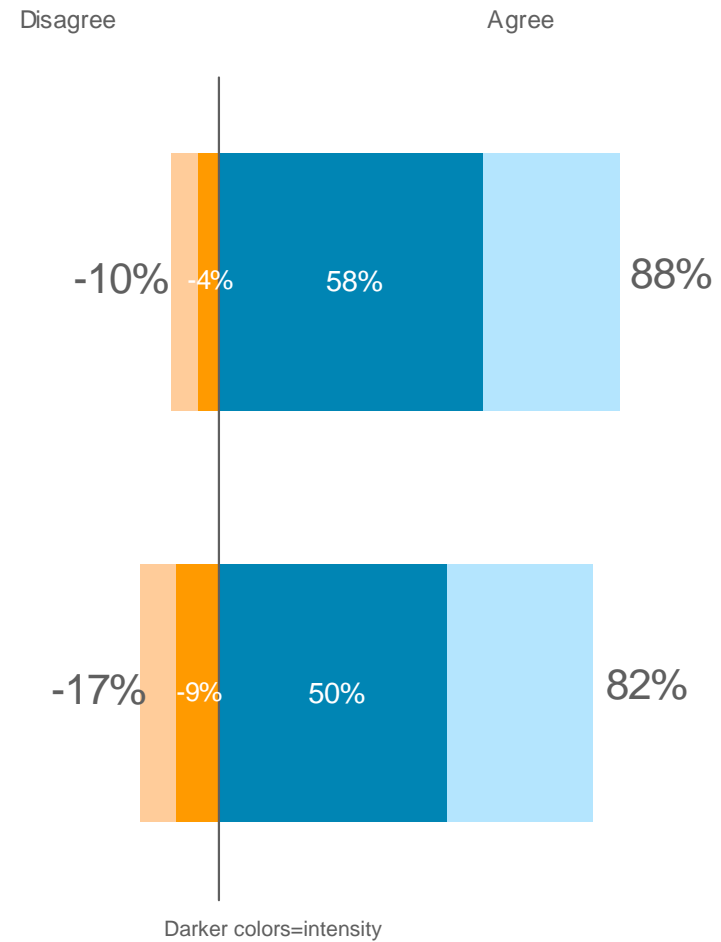
When it comes to personal progress and the future of America, Americans have very little doubt about the importance of a college education – a degree is extremely important.

Eight in ten Americans agree that the key to enhancing our economic competitiveness and capacity lies in providing every American the opportunity to afford and attend college.

To be successful in this 21st Century economy, America's workforce must be more technologically innovative and productive than our global competitors.

This can only happen if our higher education institutions train more world class engineers & scientists*

The key to enhancing America's economic competitiveness and capacity for innovation lies in providing every American the opportunity to attend and afford college.*



*Asked of half the sample

Now, I'm going to read you a series of statements people have made. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.



Americans also know the country’s success depends on an innovative workforce and that can only happen with more trained world class engineers and scientists.

Support for these notions extends across race and partisanship.

% Agree (% strongly agree)	Total	African Americans	Latinos	Lower-Income Whites
To be successful in this 21 st century economy, America’s workforce must be more technologically innovative and productive than our global competitors. This can only happen if our higher education institutions train more world class engineers and scientist.*	88% (58%)	91% (53%)	88% (57%)	89% (61%)
The key to enhancing America’s economic competitiveness and capacity for innovation lies in providing every American the opportunity to attend and afford college.*	82% (50%)	88% (60%)	93% (70%)	80% (49%)

% Agree	Total	Democrats	Ind.	Republicans
To be successful in this 21 st century economy, America’s workforce must be more technologically innovative and productive than our global competitors. This can only happen if our higher education institutions train more world class engineers and scientist.*	88% (58%)	90% (59%)	87% (63%)	90% (59%)
The key to enhancing America’s economic competitiveness and capacity for innovation lies in providing every American the opportunity to attend and afford college.*	82% (50%)	90% (61%)	77% (52%)	79% (34%)

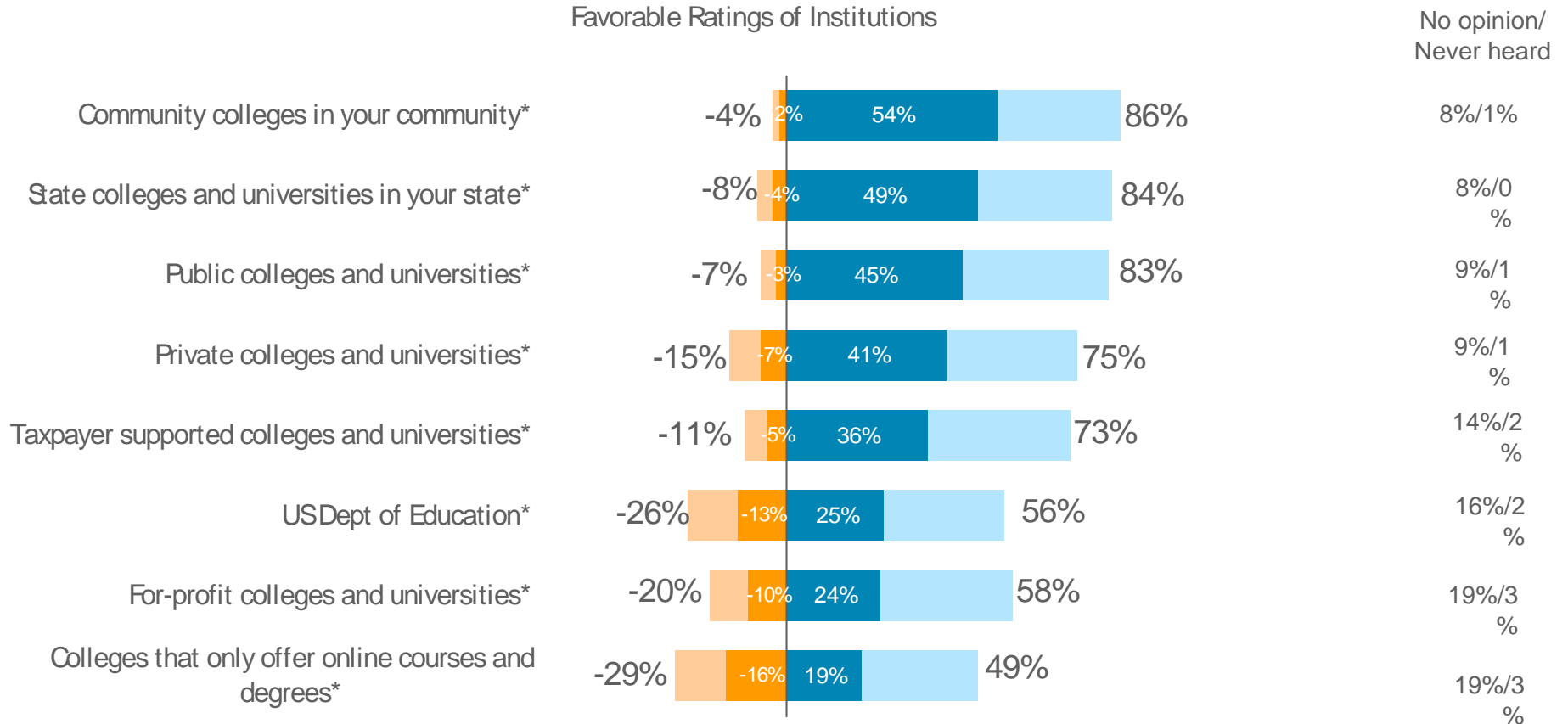
*Asked of half the sample



A strong majority of adults have a favorable opinion of for profit colleges and universities. Americans also have a favorable attitude toward other institutions of higher learning, though they divide over colleges that only offer online courses and degrees.

Overall, 58 percent of adults have a favorable opinion of for-profit schools, including a quarter who have a very favorable opinion. Only one-in-five has an unfavorable opinion.

Favorable Ratings of Institutions



*Asked of half the sample

Darker colors=intensity
Ranked by very favorable

Now I'd like to ask you about some institutions. For each, please tell me whether you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression of that institution.



Latinos and African Americans are especially favorable.

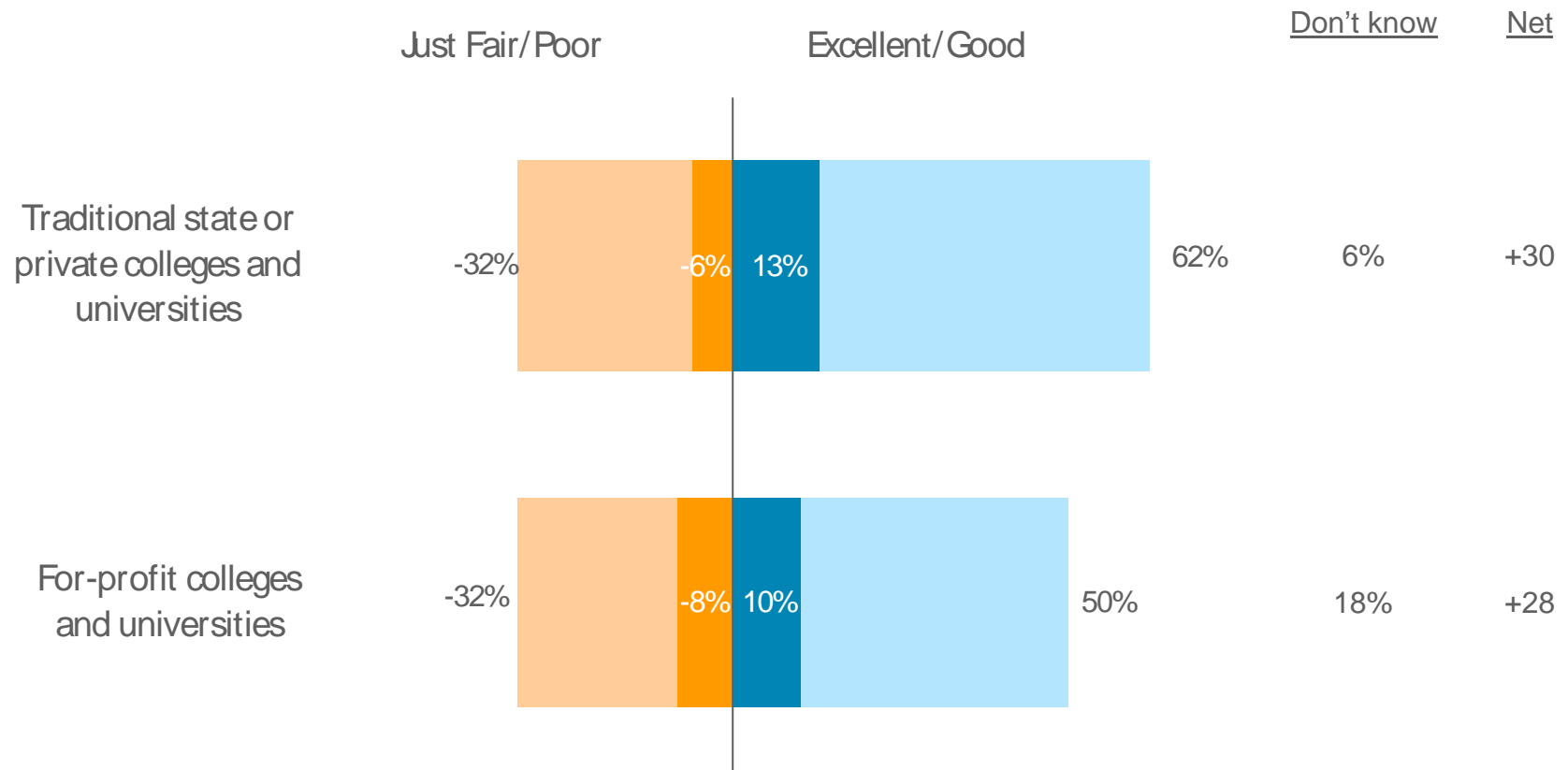
Lower-income whites tilt toward having a favorable attitude but are also the most likely to not have enough information, as 32% cannot state an opinion.

% Favorable				
	Total	African Americans	Latinos	Lower-Income Whites
Community colleges in your community*	86%	88%	85%	78%
State colleges and universities in your state*	84%	82%	87%	81%
Public colleges and universities*	83%	83%	88%	80%
Private colleges and universities*	75%	72%	77%	71%
Taxpayer supported colleges and	73%	77%	70%	65%
The U.S. Department of Education*	56%	68%	64%	53%
For-profit colleges and universities*	58%	65%	64%	52%
Colleges that only offer online courses and degrees*	49%	58%	60%	40%

*Asked of half the sample



Americans view for-profit colleges and universities favorably and also think they do a decent job giving students the knowledge and skills to be competitive and succeed in today's global market. More Americans tend to think traditional state and private colleges and universities do a good or excellent job, but that is because people have greater familiarity with those institutions.

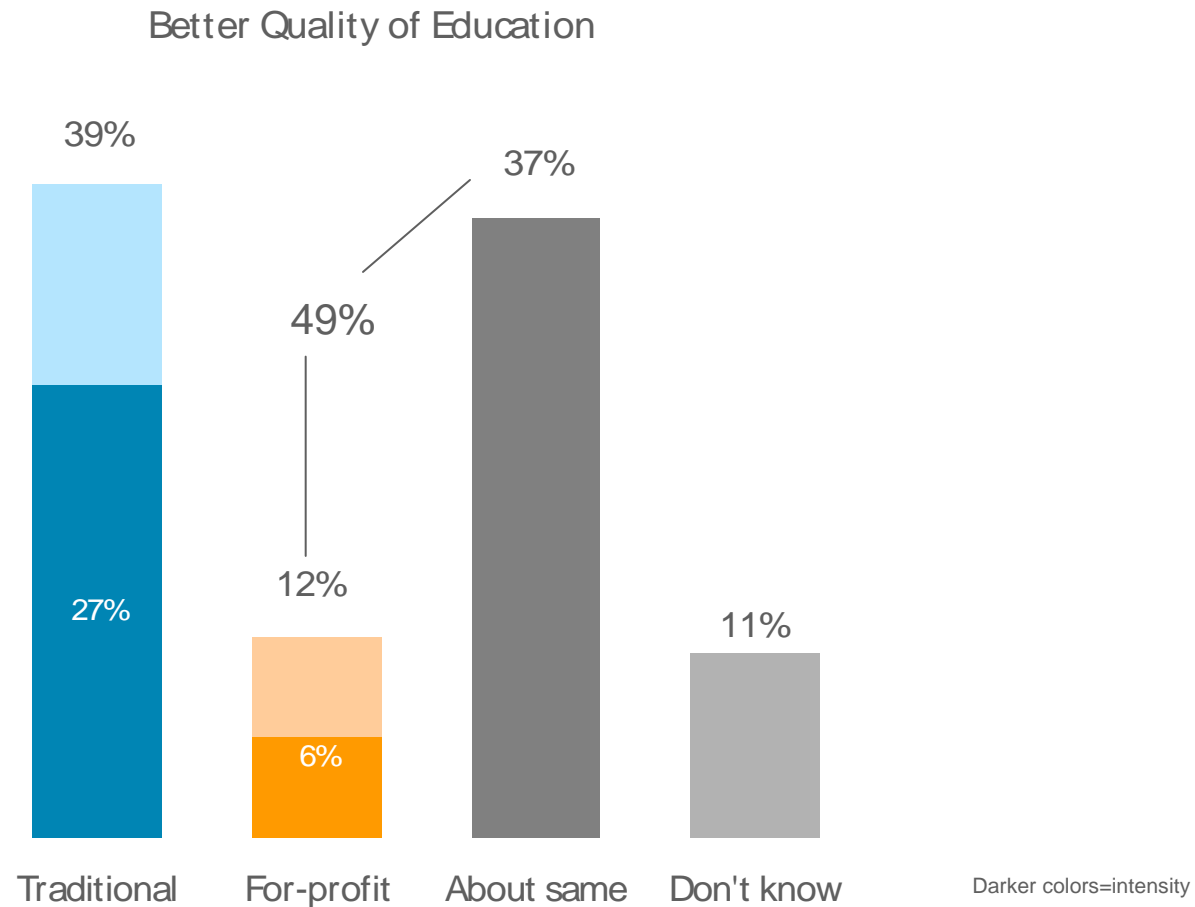


Darker colors=intensity

Would you say traditional state or private colleges and universities/for-profit colleges and universities are doing an excellent, good, just fair, or poor job giving students the knowledge and skills they need to be competitive and succeed in today's global market place?



Almost half the people think for-profits do a better job or as good a job educating students as traditional institutions. Only a quarter believe traditional schools do a much better job.

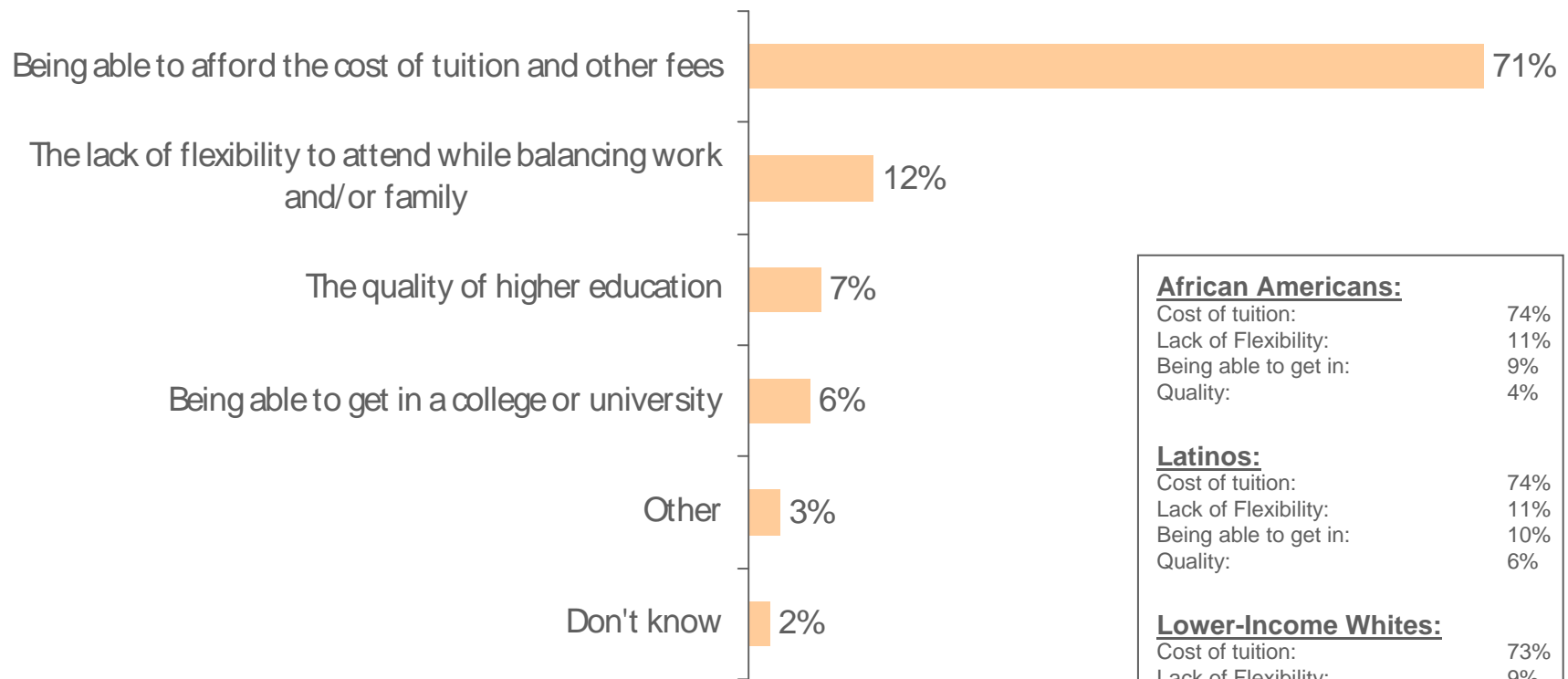


Would you say that the quality of education that students receive is better at traditional state or private colleges and universities, or for-profit colleges and universities, or they about the same?



What frustrates voters about for-profit colleges and universities is the same issue that frustrates them about all colleges and universities, and that is the cost of earning a degree.

Seventy-one percent of Americans say the biggest problem with higher education is being able to afford the cost of tuition and other fees. Cost drives frustration, and frustration over costs is not a separation point between for-profit schools and taxpayer funded institutions. In either case, Americans worry that costs make a degree out of reach for many.



African Americans:

Cost of tuition:	74%
Lack of Flexibility:	11%
Being able to get in:	9%
Quality:	4%

Latinos:

Cost of tuition:	74%
Lack of Flexibility:	11%
Being able to get in:	10%
Quality:	6%

Lower-Income Whites:

Cost of tuition:	73%
Lack of Flexibility:	9%
Quality:	9%
Being able to get in:	5%

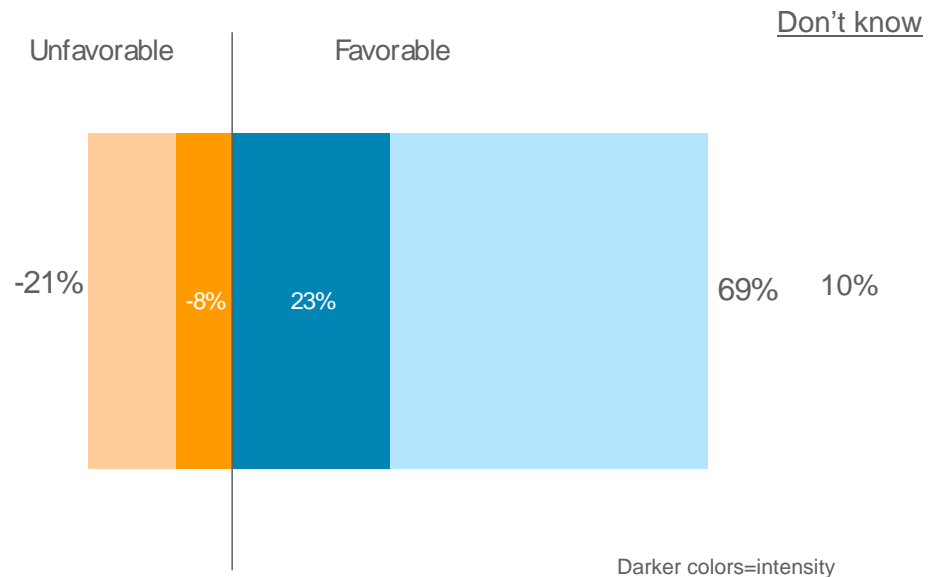
Which of the following do you feel is the biggest problem with higher education?



Competition does not worry Americans.

Sixty-nine percent have a favorable impression of for-profit institutions when they learn that more than one million students that cannot or choose not to attend a traditional college or university attend a for-profit school.

Let me give you some more information. There are an estimated 1.1 million students that either cannot or choose not to attend traditional state or private colleges and universities that are supported with taxpayer dollars. Instead, they choose to attend a non-tax supported, for-profit university. These institutions compete for students with taxpayer funded colleges and universities



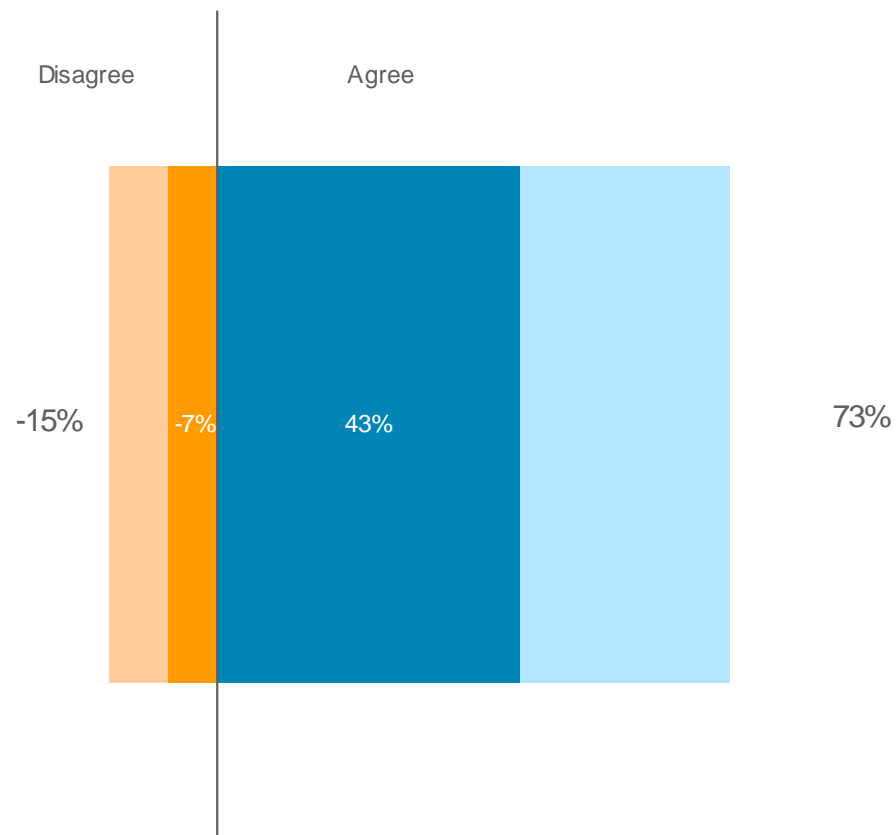
Given this information, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable impression of for-profit colleges and universities?



Seventy-three percent of Americans agree that for-profit colleges and universities should be allowed to grant liberal art degrees in fields such as history, English, and political science.

This is true even when adults are told that these degrees would be equivalent to liberal arts degrees granted at traditional state or private colleges or universities.

For-profit colleges and universities should be allowed to grant liberal arts degrees in fields such as history, English, and political science. These degrees would be equivalent to liberal arts degrees granted at traditional state or private colleges and universities.*



*Asked of half the sample

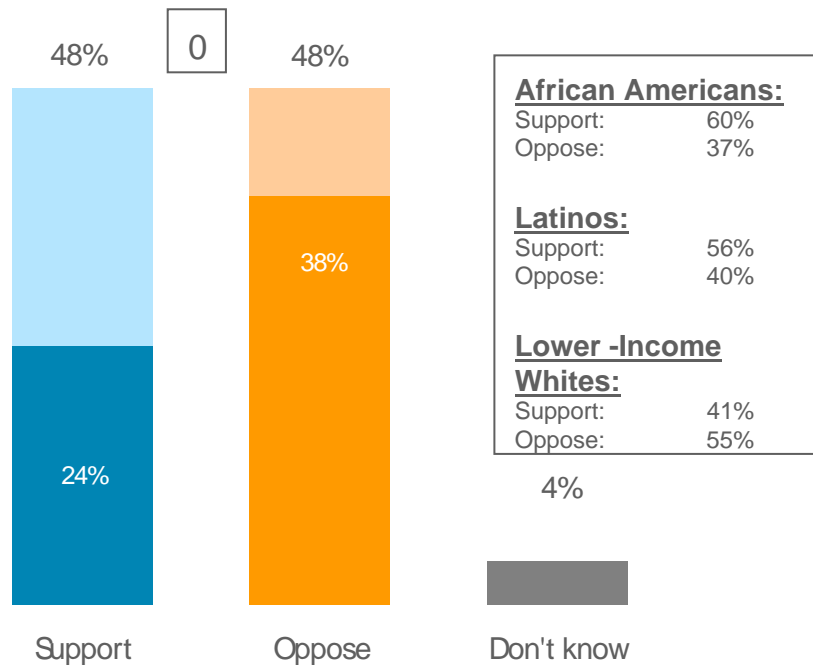
Now, I'm going to read you a series of statements people have made. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.



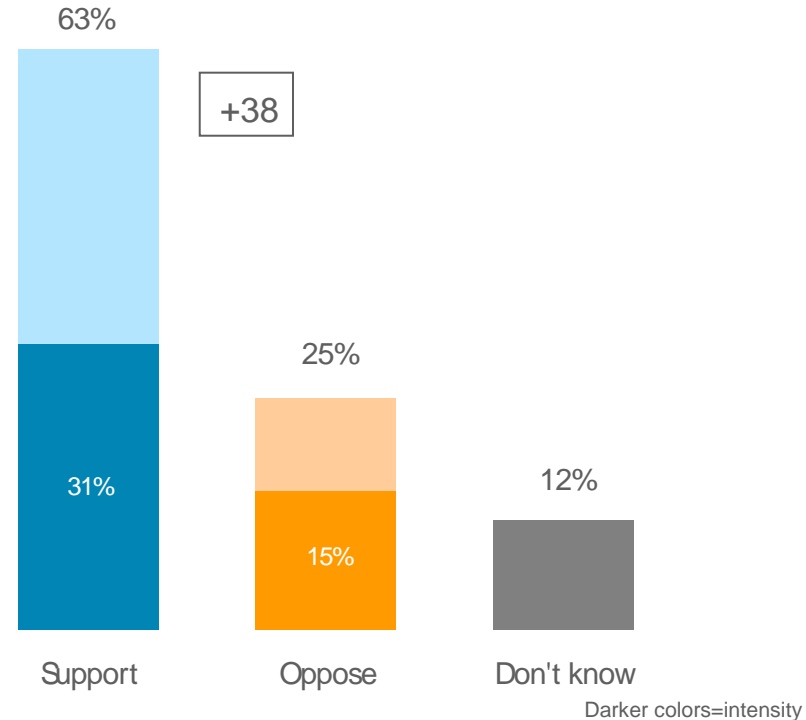
People are tax sensitive and divide on paying higher taxes for higher education despite the perceived need.

For-profits have appeal as institutions that pay rather than eat tax dollars.

Higher Taxes for Growth of State College/ Universities



Expansion of For-Profit College/ Universities



There is a rising demand for higher education in America at state colleges and universities that are funded with taxpayer dollars. To accommodate these students these colleges and universities need to grow in size. Knowing it may mean higher taxes for you if they could enroll the thousands of students who want admission, would you support or oppose higher taxes?

Many students who cannot gain admission to a public university enroll in a for-profit college or university. Students borrow most of the money for the tuition from the federal government, but whatever financial advantage the for-profit receives is more than off-set by the taxes it pays. Do you support or oppose expanding for-profit colleges and universities whose support comes from tuition paid by their students.



Meeting President Obama's Goals

People believe for-profit colleges and universities are important to meeting President Obama's higher education goals

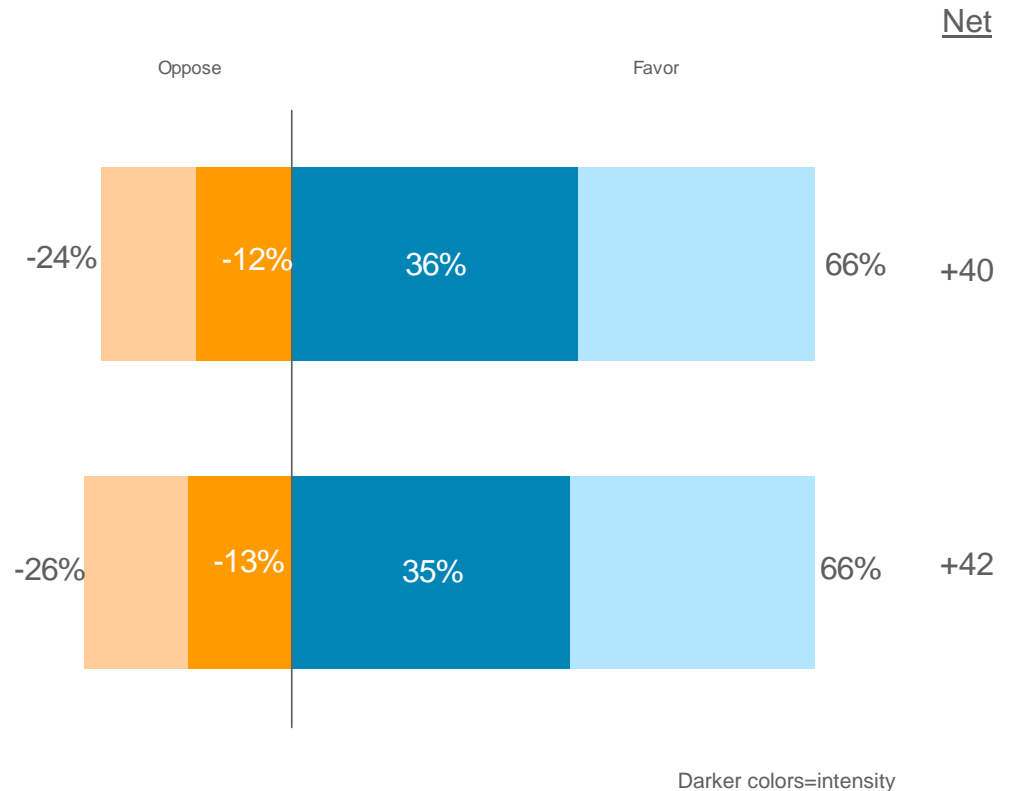


President Obama's goal that America should lead the world in college graduates is a strong motivating factor for allowing for-profit colleges and universities to serve more students.

When adults hear that taxpayer funded colleges and universities have only increased enrollment by 2.5 percent per year while for-profits have increased enrollment by 47 percent, two in three favor for-profit colleges and universities. Only a quarter oppose them after they learn how little taxpayer funded colleges and universities are growing.

President Obama has set a goal that by the year 2020 America will lead the world in the percentage of adults with a college degree. Currently, 30 percent of the U.S. adult population has a college degree, compared to the world leading nations at 40 percent. Right now, this goal is at risk because in the last ten years, traditional state or private colleges and universities have only increased their enrollment by 2.5%. At that rate, the President's goal cannot be met. It will be even more difficult to reach if we limit the number of students for-profit colleges and universities can serve.*

President Obama has set a goal that by the year 2020 America will lead the world in the percentage of adults with a college degree. Currently, 30 percent of the U.S. adult population has a college degree, compared to the world leading nations at 40 percent. To reach Obama's goal there will need to be a 30% increase of funding for higher education across all institutions. However, in the last ten years or so, taxpayer funded colleges and universities only increased enrollment by 2.5 percent per year while for-profit colleges and universities increased enrollment by 47% per year.*



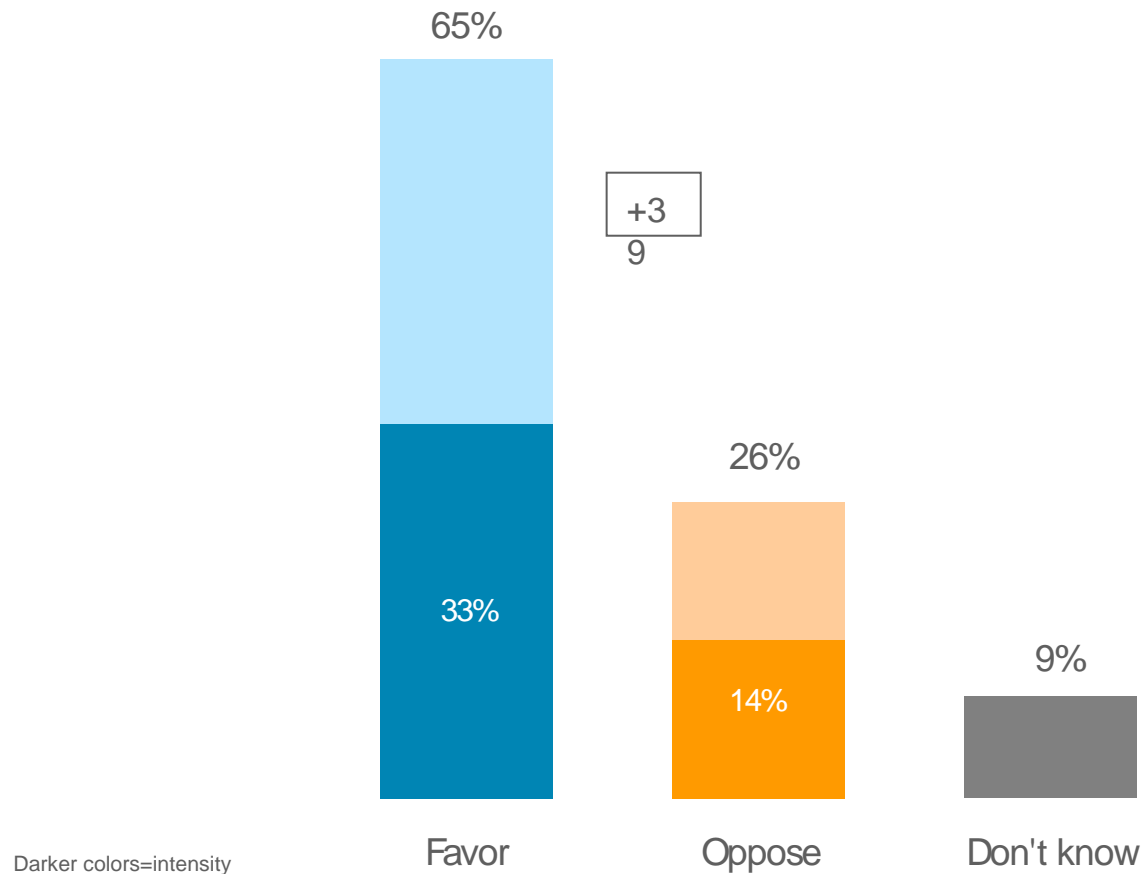
*Asked of half the sample

Knowing this, do you favor or oppose for-profit colleges and universities?



Further, when adults learn that to reach the President's goal only through taxpayer funded schools (and not through for-profit schools) require approximately 5 billion more dollars in tax collections in the first year alone and would cost over 50 billion by 2020. KNOWING THIS, 65 percent favor allowing for-profit institutions to expand and serve more students.

Efforts to Allow For-Profits to Expand and Serve More Students



Based on this information, would you support or oppose efforts to allow for-profit institutions to expand and serve more students?



Support for allowing for-profits to expand and serve more students includes strong majorities of Latinos and African Americans and a majority of lower-income whites.

Even when the goal is linked to President Obama, nearly two in three Republicans support allowing for-profits to expand and serve more students.

	Favor	Oppose	Net (Favor-Oppose)
Total	65%	26%	+39
African Americans	68%	24%	+44
Latinos	75%	19%	+56
Lower-Income Whites	59%	31%	+28
Democrats	67%	23%	+44
Independents	66%	25%	+41
Republicans	64%	30%	+34



Factors Motivating Support for Expanded Access to For-Profit Schools

Opportunity and flexibility are key factors motivating their support for expanded access.



Opportunity and flexibility are two other key factors that buttress American's support for for-profit colleges and universities (cost being the first).

The value Americans place on opportunity and giving people the chance to achieve the American Dream is vivid and a strong underpinning of their support for expanding the number of students for-profit colleges and universities can serve. These institutions' ability to reach out to non-traditional or underserved students is more important to them than arguments that these potential students are being exploited or taken advantage of –they just do not buy those arguments.

Disagree

Agree

Net

For-profit colleges and universities can be a better option for working adults because they have more flexible schedules and programs.*

-14%

-6%

41%

74%

+60

For-profit colleges and universities address the needs of working students, many of whom have lower-incomes, low high school grades, and would be rejected by a traditional public or private university. For-profit institutions give these students the help they need and a chance to earn a degree.*

-18%

-8%

35%

71%

+53

For-profit, private institutions are sometimes the only option for lower income and working people who don't have access to traditional state or private colleges or universities.*

-26%

-12%

32%

64%

+38

Darker colors=intensity

*Asked of half the sample

Now, I'm going to read you a series of statements people have made. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.



Americans understand how important a college degree is and they strongly want that opportunity for non-traditional students who cannot attend school full-time on campus or for underserved populations who may have received a poor high school education.

This is especially true among African Americans, Latinos, and lower-income whites.

% Agree (% strongly agree)	Total	African Americans	Latinos	Lower-Income Whites
For-profit colleges and universities can be a better option for working adults because they have more flexible schedules and programs.*	74% (41%)	77% (48%)	85% (53%)	67% (34%)
For-profit colleges and universities address the needs of working students, many of whom have lower-incomes, low high school grades, and would be rejected by a traditional public or private university. For-profit institutions give these students the help they need and a chance to earn a degree.*	71% (35%)	76% (38%)	80% (44%)	75% (41%)
For-profit, private institutions are sometimes the only option for lower-income and working people who don't have access to traditional state or private colleges or universities.*	64% (32%)	66% (34%)	69% (36%)	71% (39%)

*Asked of half the sample



Critiques and Debates about For-Profit Schools

Americans do not buy the critiques on exploitation, costs, or quality.



Americans tend to believe that for-profits play an important role in higher education by providing an education to hundreds of thousands of students who do not have access to other colleges or universities, and they believe they should be allowed to expand.

Just over one-fifth believe these for-profits exploit students by encouraging them to take more and more loans even though they never graduate and that the larger the for-profits grow the lower the quality of education they will provide.

Some people say for-profit, accredited universities play an important role in higher education and should be encouraged to grow in order to provide education to the hundreds of thousands of students whose only access to higher education is a for-profit institution. This is an education option for those students who don't have access to other colleges and universities.



+3
5

Other people say for-profit, accredited universities exploit their students into taking more and more loans, and then never graduate them. The larger they grow, the lower the quality of education they offer and the larger number of students put at risk. Letting them grow to serve more students is too risky.



<u>African Americans:</u>	
Play an important role:	54%
Exploit students:	27%
<u>Latinos:</u>	
Play an important role:	64%
Exploit students:	21%
<u>Lower-Income Whites:</u>	
Play an important role:	56%
Exploit students:	23%

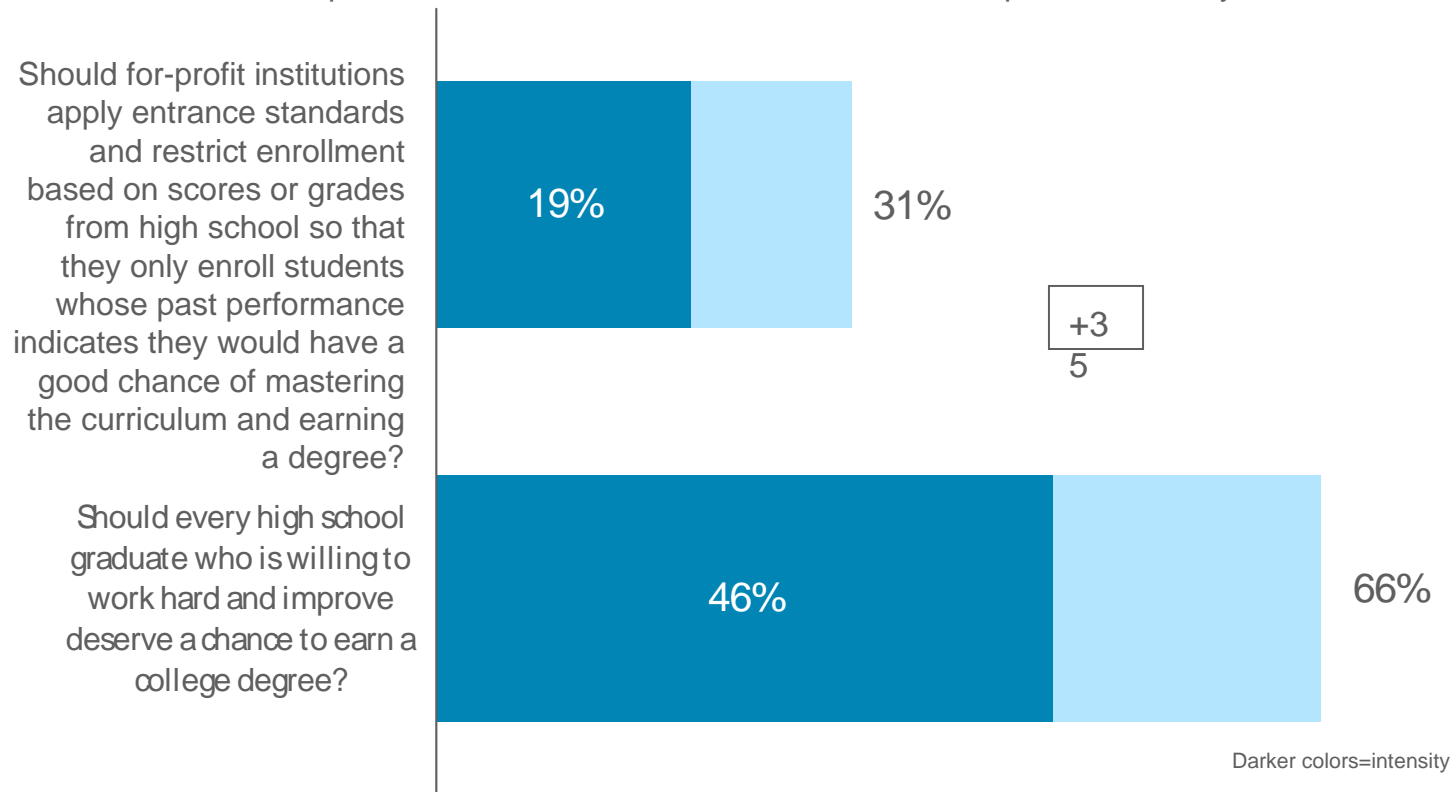
Which is closer to your view?



Americans do not buy the arguments that these non-traditional and underserved communities are exploited by for-profit schools. In fact, the reverse is true, and the alternative provided by for-profit schools is seen as key to opportunity.

Americans value the ability of for-profit colleges and universities to reach out to non-traditional students, students with diverse ethnic backgrounds, and students who would not otherwise enroll in college. Two in three Americans believe that every high school graduate who is willing to work hard deserves a chance to earn a college degree; only 31 percent believe that only highly qualified students should be admitted based on scores and grades from high school.

Some of these students do not have the skills to succeed right away, cannot master the curriculum, and drop out. Some of these drop outs leave with tuition loans that need to be repaid. What do you think?*



*Asked of half the sample



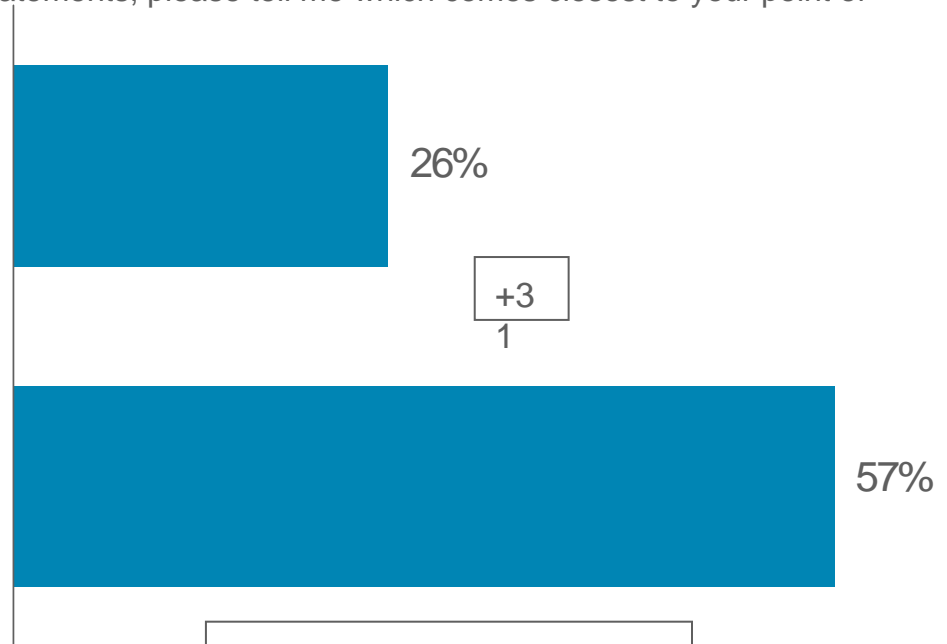
More than half of Americans believe that for-profit schools provide minority communities, single mothers, and others with an opportunity they would not otherwise have.

Only a quarter say that these for-profit institutions exploit or take advantage of these non-traditional students and underserved communities. Racial and income targets hold similar views.

When it comes to for-profit colleges and universities, people are also debating their role in serving minorities and communities of color. Of the following two statements, please tell me which comes closest to your point of view?

Some/other people say these for-profit universities exploit and take advantage of minorities whom they target for enrollment. They encourage poor minority students who struggled in high school to take out thousands of dollars in loans. Then, because of the higher drop out rates at these schools, the students are saddled with debt, have lost their hard earned money, and are in financial trouble for years to come.

Other people say these for-profit colleges and universities are serving a purpose by being there for minority communities, single women, and others who need more flexibility in their college career. Many students in these communities need more flexibility in school because they are working or have families. Many have improved their abilities since high school. Studies show that by the time these students graduate, they have caught up to students in taxpayer-funded colleges. These students deserve an opportunity to go to college and improve themselves



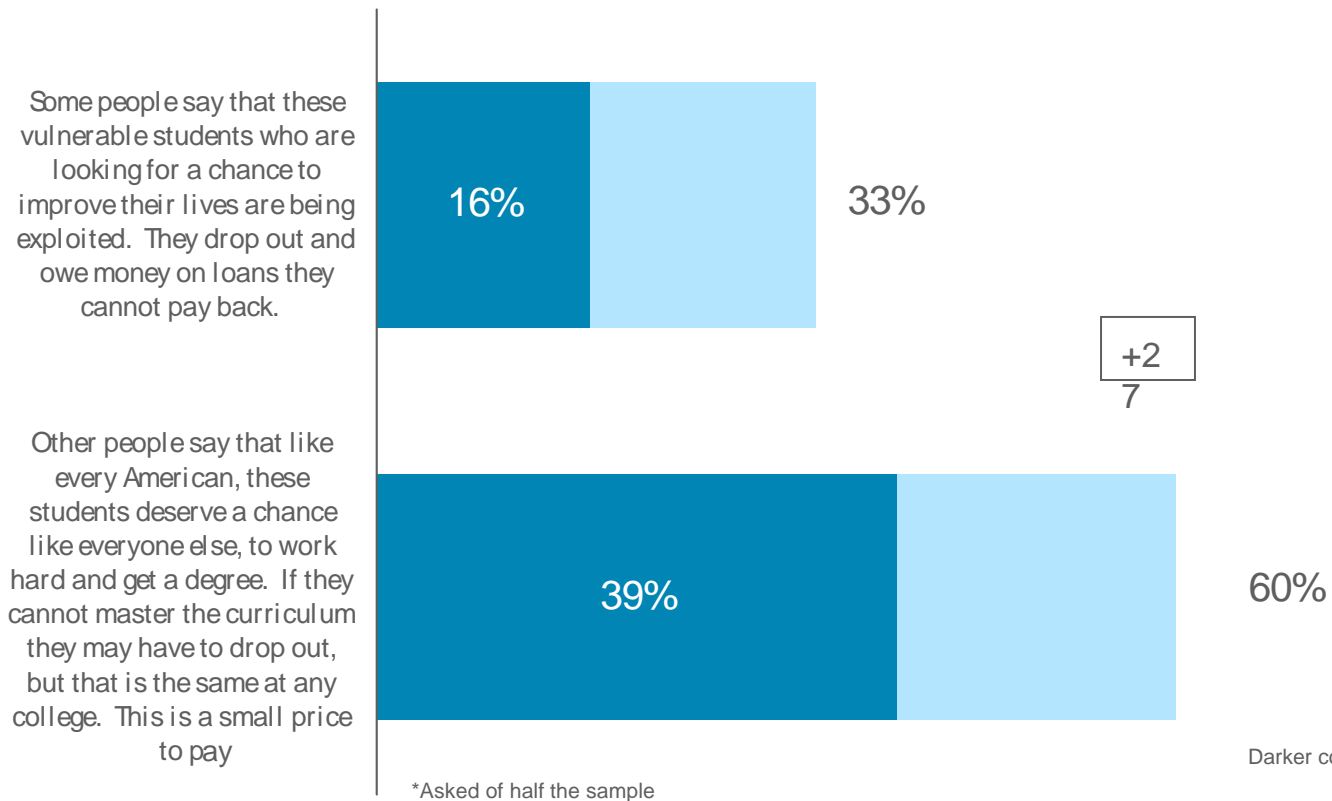
<u>African Americans:</u>	
Exploit minority communities:	28%
Opportunity to go to college:	54%
<u>Latinos:</u>	
Exploit minority communities:	26%
Opportunity to go to college:	55%
<u>Lower-Income Whites:</u>	
Exploit minority communities:	26%
Opportunity to go to college:	56%



When it comes to students with higher risk factors, only a third of people feel they are being exploited because they are not prepared and have to drop out, owing money they cannot pay back.

Instead, six in ten believe these students deserve a chance like everyone else and, though some may drop out, that is the risk they would take at any college. Overall, it is a small price to pay for all high school graduates to have a chance to earn a degree.

Most accredited for-profit universities enroll students with a high school diploma or a G.E.D. Most of these students have one or more risk factors – they have lost their job, they are an ethnic or racial minority, they may have unstable family backgrounds, they may be a single parent, or they have had a poor high school education. Here are the two sides of the debate. Please tell me which one comes closest to your views.*



Darker colors=intensity



Half of Latinos agree that this is worth the price of giving all high school graduates the opportunity to attend college, while 36 percent feel students are being exploited.

African Americans and lower-income whites believe more solidly that this is a small price to pay so that all graduates have a chance to earn a degree.

% Closest to Personal View*				
	Total	African Americans	Latinos	Lower-Income Whites
Some people say that these vulnerable students who are looking for a chance to improve their lives are being exploited. They drop out and owe money on loans they	33%	36%	39%	32%
Other people say that like every American, these students deserve a chance like everyone else, to work hard and get a degree. If they cannot master the curriculum they may have to drop out, but that is the same at any college. This is a small price to pay	60%	58%	53%	58%

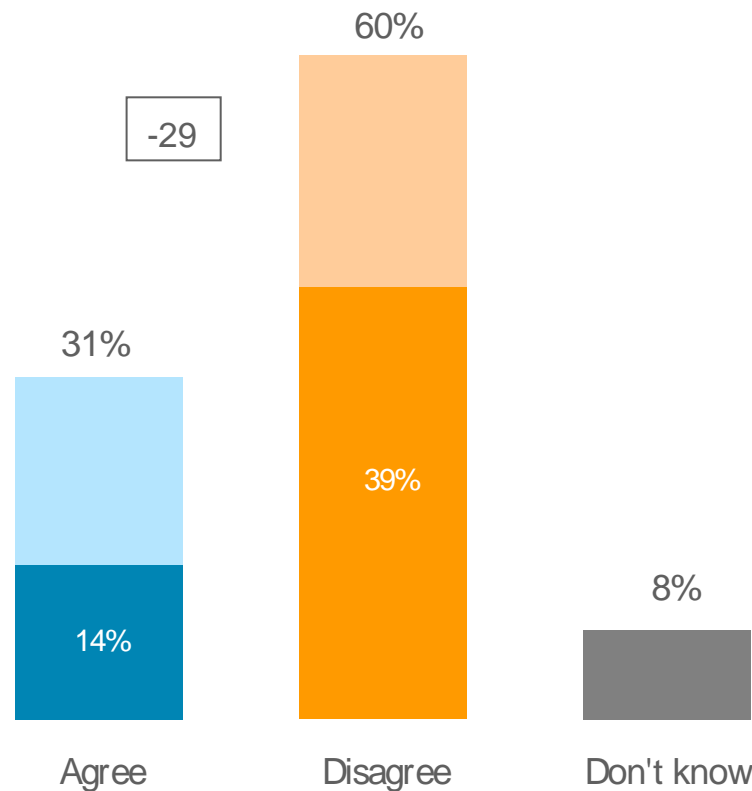
*Asked of half the sample



After hearing this discussion on exploitation or opportunity, most people side with opportunity.

Less than a third agree with those who are seeking to stop the growth of for-profit universities because they believe that students are exploited. Instead, six in ten disagree and think this growth should not be stopped.

Growth of For-Profits Should be Stopped -
Exploit Low Income Students



Darker colors=intensity

<u>African Americans:</u>	
Agree:	36% (20% str.)
Disagree:	58% (36%)

<u>Latinos:</u>	
Agree:	36% (20%)
Disagree:	58% (32%)

<u>Lower-Income Whites:</u>	
Agree:	34% (16%)
Disagree:	56% (35%)

Some people believe these for-profit universities exploit lower-income working students. They have gone to the government education regulators to try and stop the growth of for-profit universities and in some cases shut them down. Do you agree or disagree that for-profit university growth should be stopped?



While some in Washington move to restrict the number of students for-profit institutions of higher learning can serve, Americans disagree.

Faced with a choice, half support allowing for-profits to grow while only a third support limiting their growth.

Some/Other people support for-profit colleges and universities and support their ability to grow and enroll more students. They say these for-profit colleges and universities play an important role in helping hundreds of thousands of working students receive a quality college education. They say the for-profit colleges and universities are accredited and are subjected to the same standards as every traditional state or private college or university. *For-profit colleges and universities take no taxpayer dollars, and, in fact, pay taxes on their profits, adding to state budgets at a critical time.*

Other people oppose for-profit colleges and universities and want to LIMIT their ability to grow and enroll more students. They say these institutions do not adhere to the same high standards as other schools and therefore do not provide as high a quality education. They also say these colleges and universities exploit vulnerable students, especially minority, women and lower-income students by placing profits above education.

Which is closer to your view?*

*Asked of half the sample



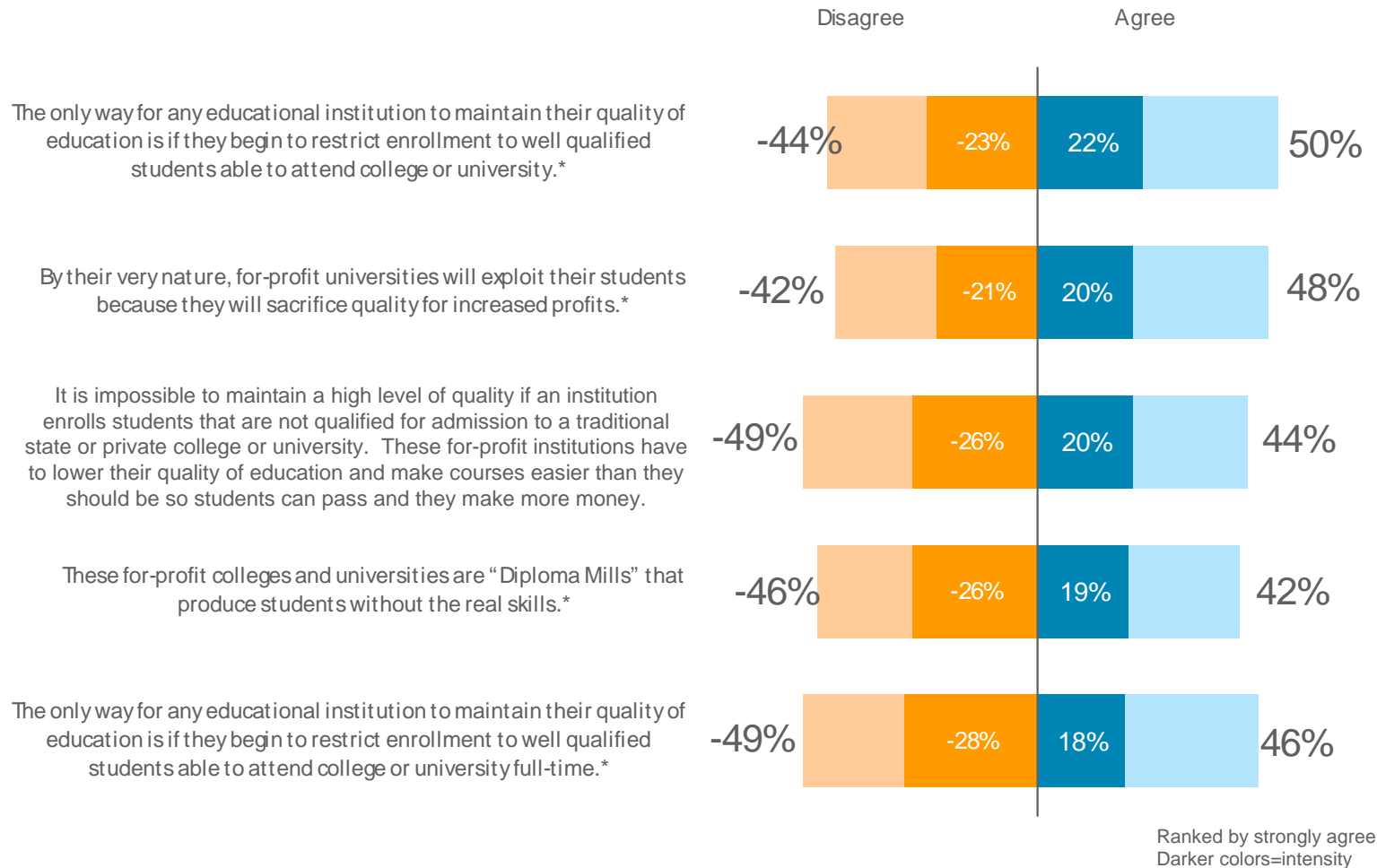
$$\frac{+2}{2}$$



<u>African Americans:</u>	
Play an important role:	42%
Not same standards:	41%
<u>Latinos:</u>	
Play an important role:	58%
Not same standards:	24%
<u>Lower-Income Whites:</u>	
Play an important role:	50%
Not same standards:	34%



People are divided on issues of quality and profits. They do not particularly accept that for-profit schools have to or will sacrifice quality.



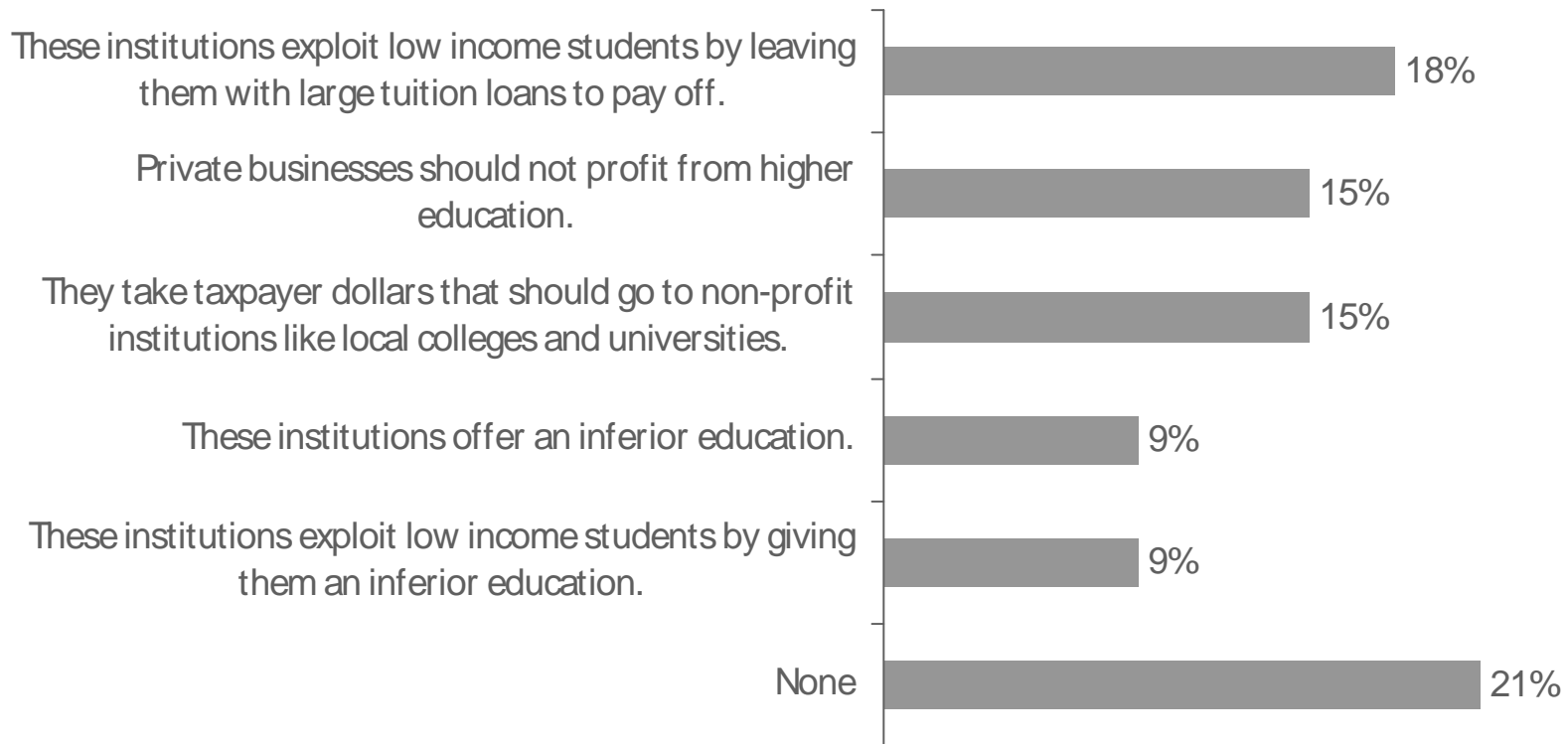
*Asked of half the sample

Now, I'm going to read you a series of statements people have made. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.



Money more than quality dominates people's concerns about for-profit institutions.

A plurality of Americans think the education at for-profits schools is about the same as it is at traditional schools, so quality is not a concern to the public. It divides people but does not have the power of that costs and “profit” arguments carry. Only 9 percent of people say “an inferior education” is the strongest reason to prevent for-profit schools from expanding.



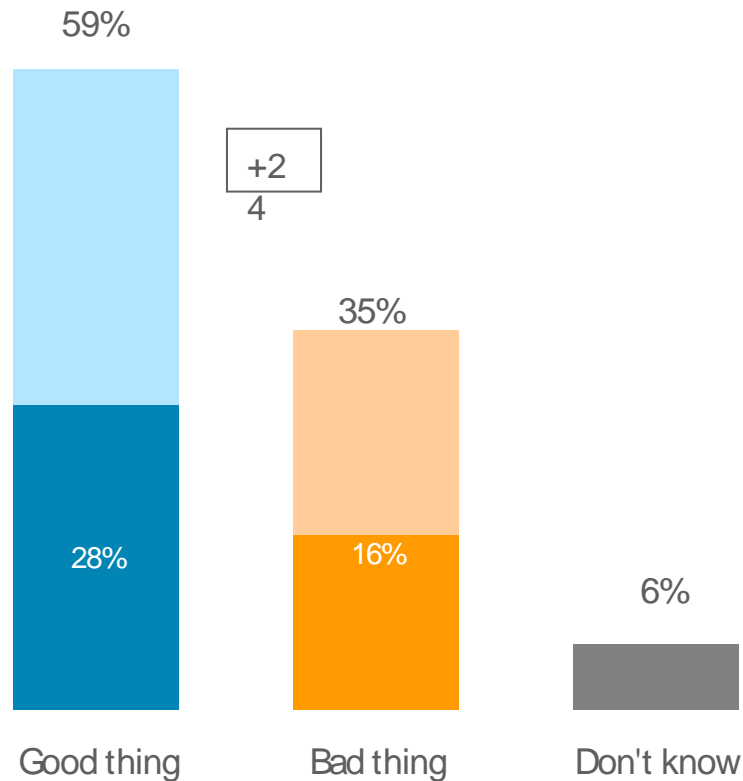
Here are some reasons people have offered for why for-profit institutions should NOT be allowed to serve more students. Please tell me which one comes closest to your opinion?



A large majority believe it is a good thing to have an open enrollment policy that admits students with a high school diploma or GED. For-profit colleges and universities' strength is centered on access, flexibility, and opportunity.

Latinos and African Americans think open enrollment policy that provides more opportunity is a good thing, while lower-income whites are more divided.

Impression of Admittance Standards



<u>African Americans:</u>	
Good thing:	58%
Bad thing:	35%
<u>Latinos:</u>	
Good thing:	59%
Bad thing:	34%
<u>Lower-Income Whites:</u>	
Good thing:	51%
Bad thing:	42%

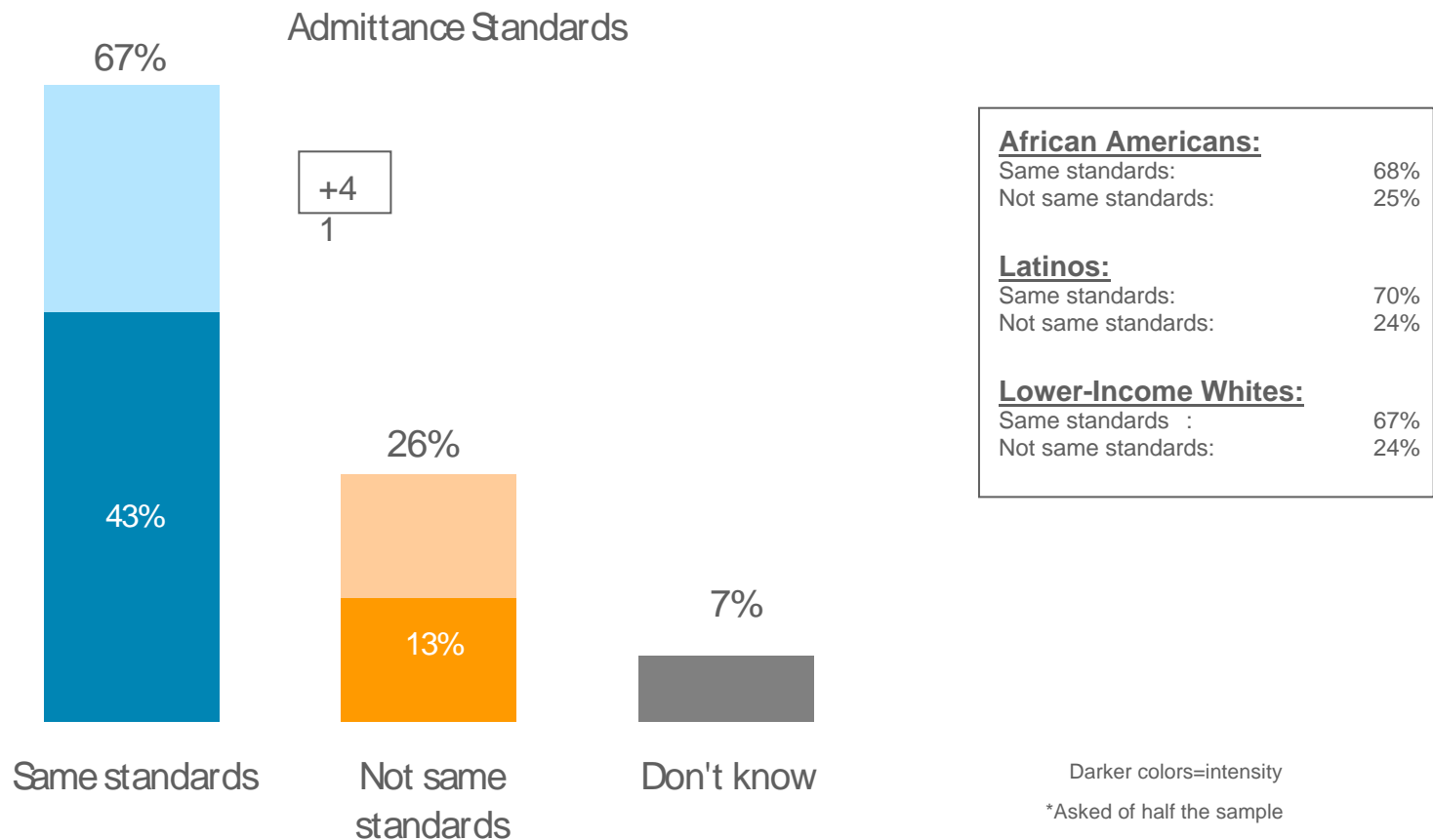
Darker colors=intensity
*Asked of half the sample

Like community colleges, for-profit colleges and universities have open enrollment policies that that admit students with a high school diploma or a GED and do not require students to have high enough test scores on admittance tests or high grade point averages in high school. In your opinion, is this a good thing or a bad thing? *



Standards are important.

Overall, 67 percent of people think for-profit colleges and universities should apply admittance standards such as standardized tests and grade averages the way other colleges and universities do. Only a quarter think they should not use the same standards.



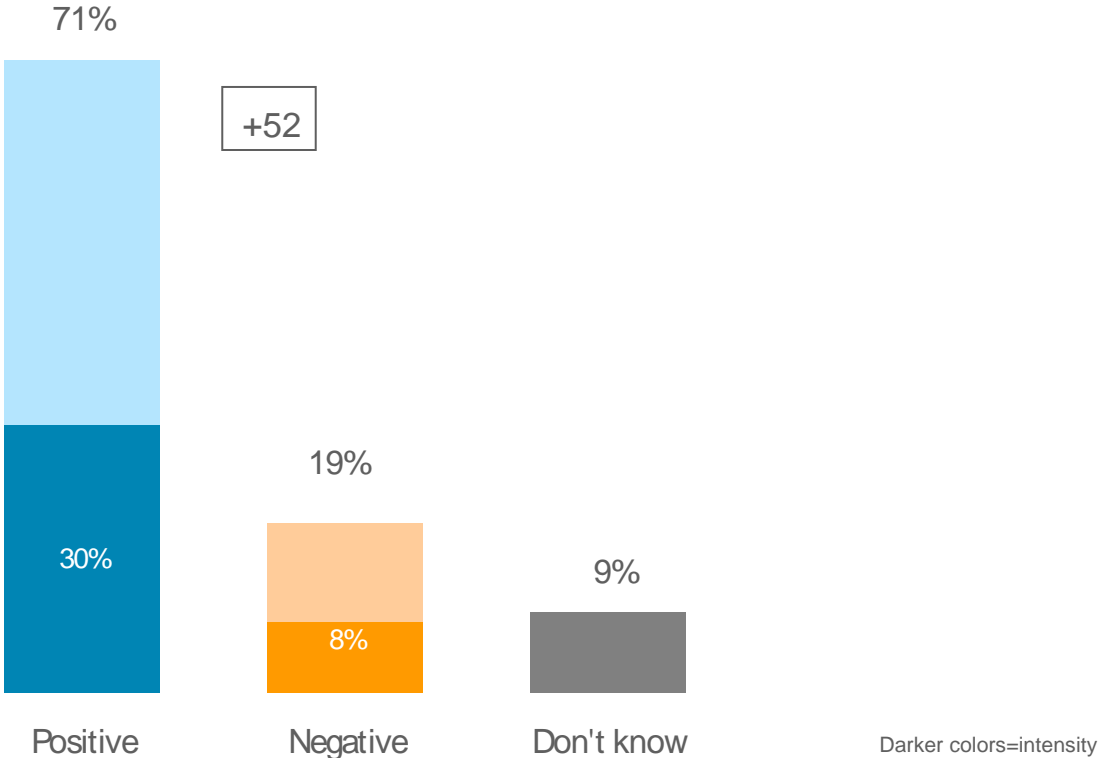
For-profit colleges and universities have open enrollment policies that admit students with a high school diploma or a GED and do not require students to have high enough test scores on admittance tests or high grade point averages in high school. What do you think – should for-profit colleges and universities apply admittance standards such as standardized test scores or grade averages the way other colleges and universities do or should they not use the same standards? *



Support for for-profit schools surges when people learn that they provide tax revenue.

When Americans learn that for-profit universities cost taxpayers nothing and, in fact, pay an average in taxes of \$15 per student per year, 71 percent say they have a positive feeling toward for-profit colleges and universities. Only 19 percent of adults hold a negative feeling after that information.

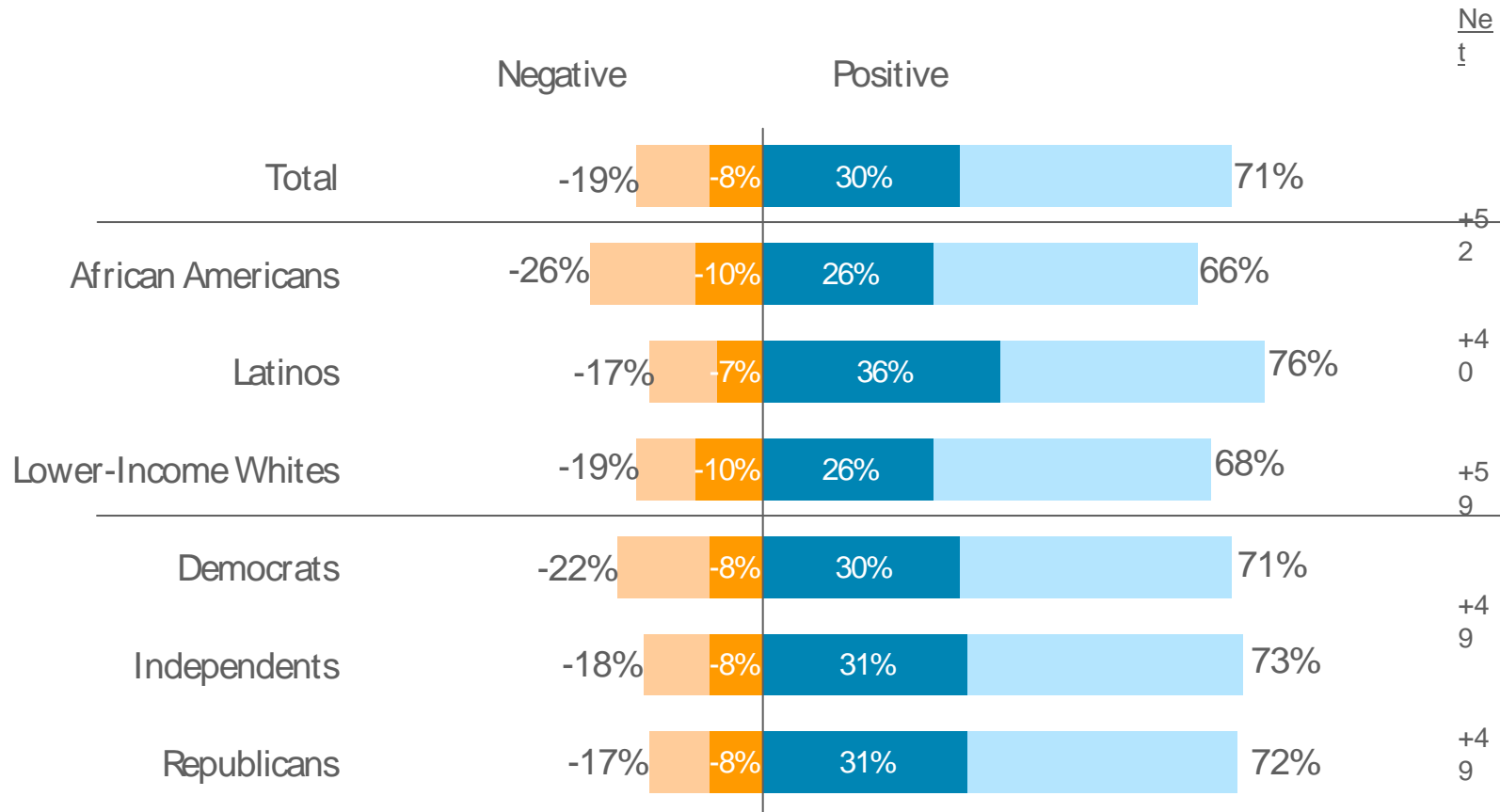
Impression of For-Profit Colleges and Universities



Unlike taxpayer supported institutions, for-profit universities cost the taxpayers nothing. In fact, they pay taxes averaging \$15 per student per year. Knowing this, how positive or negative do you feel toward for-profit colleges and universities?



Positive feelings extend across target groups.



Darker colors=intensity

+5
5

Unlike taxpayer supported institutions, for-profit universities cost the taxpayers nothing. In fact, they pay taxes averaging \$15 per student per year. Knowing this, how positive or negative do you feel toward for-profit colleges and universities?

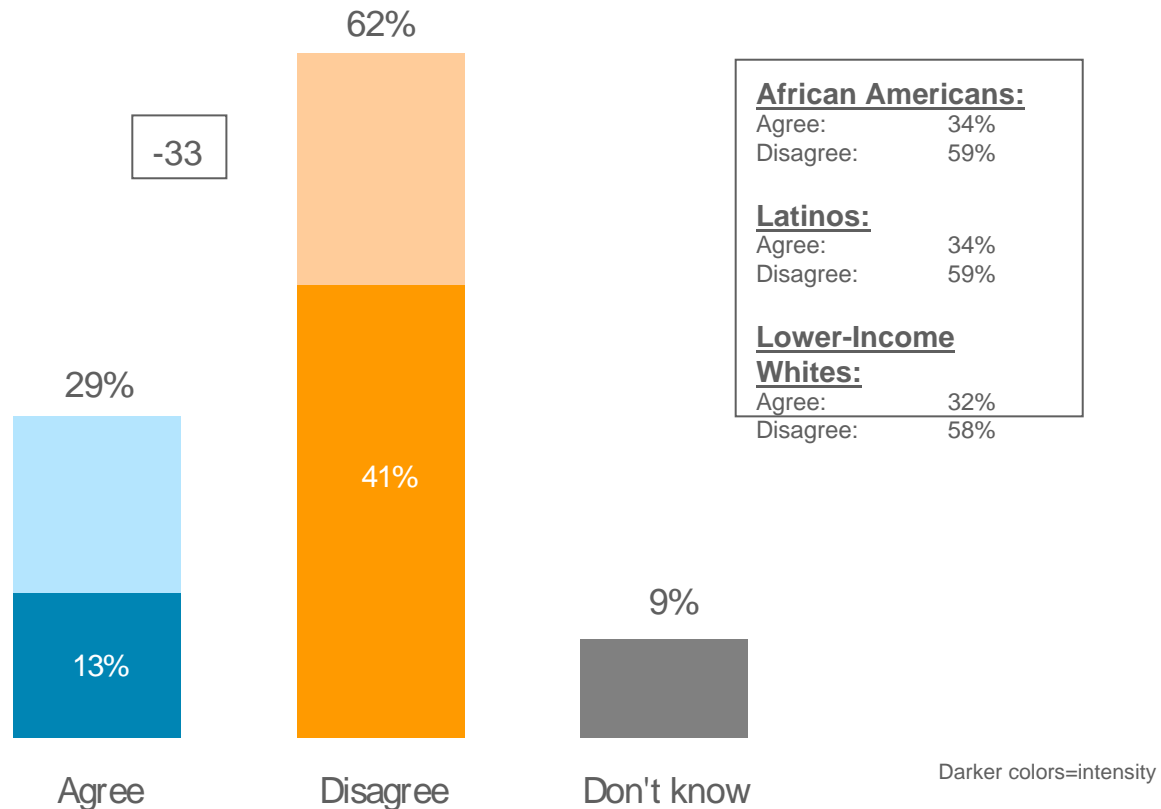




In the end, when told that over one million students attend for-profit schools and to enroll them in state colleges or universities would cost nearly 15 billion dollars in taxpayer money, 62 percent disagree with the notion that their growth should be stopped, while only 29 percent agree.

Attitudes are consistent across race.

Growth of For-Profits Should be Stopped -
Cost of Transferring Students



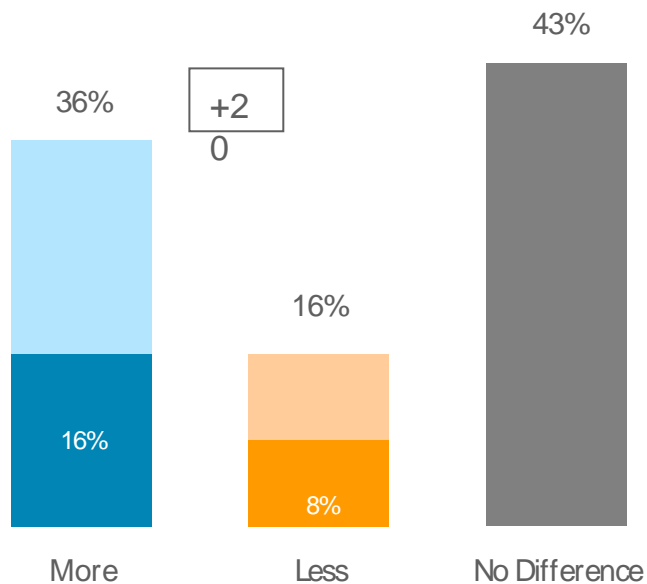
If these for-profit institutions are shut down, it would mean over one million students would have to enroll in traditional state or private colleges or universities or be without access to higher education. Transferring that many students would cost over 14 billion dollars in taxpayer money. Based on this information, do you agree or disagree that for-profit university growth should be stopped?



Not only do Americans want to see for-profit colleges and universities expand the number of students they can serve, but many are willing to make it a voting issue.

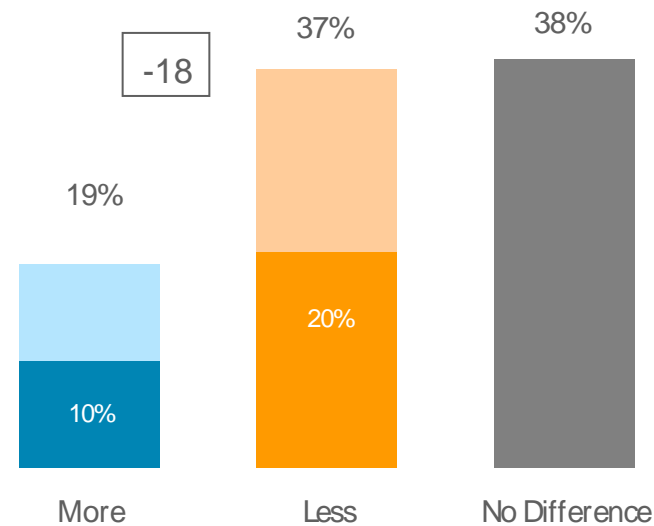
Just over a third of adults indicate they will hold officials accountable on the issue. Thirty-six percent say they will be more likely to support a candidate who supports allowing for-profit colleges and universities to grow. When asked differently, about the same share say they would be less likely to support a candidate who opposes their growth.

Supported For-Profit College and University Expansion



If you knew a candidate for Congress SUPPORTED allowing for-profit colleges and universities to expand, would that make you more or less likely to support that candidate?*

Opposed For-Profit College/Universities Expansion



If you knew a candidate for Congress OPPOSED allowing for-profit colleges and universities to expand, would that make you more or less likely to support that candidate?*

Darker colors=intensity

*Asked of half the sample



Latinos are the most likely to support a candidate who favors expanding for-profits.

African Americans and lower-income whites are also ready to reward candidates who are willing to make it easier for people to earn a college degree.

Likelihood to Support Candidate if Supported for Profit Expansion*

	African Americans		Latinos		Lower-Income Whites	
More	38%	+18	44%	+30	36%	+24
Less	20%		14%		12%	
No diff	38%		36%		46%	

Likelihood to Support Candidate if Opposed for Profit Expansion*

	African Americans		Latinos		Lower-Income Whites	
More	22%	-19	23%	-14	20%	-16
Less	41%		37%		36%	
No diff	31%		35%		39%	

*Asked of half the sample



Partisanship does not factor in making this a voting issue.

Likelihood to Support Candidate if Supported for Profit Expansion*

	Democrats		Independents		Republicans	
More	35%	+17	40%	+28	33%	+17
Less	18%		12%		16%	
No diff	41%		42%		44%	

Likelihood to Support Candidate if Opposed for Profit Expansion*

	Democrats		Independents		Republicans	
More	20%	-17	16%	-15	22%	-22
Less	37%		31%		44%	
No diff	38%		46%		29%	

*Asked of half the sample



Belief Statements that Summarize How People Feel about For-Profit Colleges and Universities

The top statements sum up how the public feels about expanding for-profit colleges and universities.



The top testing statements reflect the public’s attitude that for-profit colleges and universities serve a purpose, now more than ever, as more Americans seek the opportunity and the flexibility offered by for-profit schools.

Message	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
<p>Serves Different Students: For-profit universities have an open enrollment policy that offers a post-high school education to many underserved communities – like African Americans and Latinos, who have often been shut out of other four year colleges, or students who may have suffered at a lower-performing high school, but can excel in college if given the opportunity. We shouldn’t deny those students the opportunity to earn a college degree and become more</p>	40	78
<p>Flexibility: Online for-profit colleges and universities offer students the flexibility they need to be successful and earn a college degree. These universities are tailored to an individual’s work demands and lifestyle. They allow students to attend classes full-time or part-time, and do their course work from home, from their job, or at the college by offering online classes and classes at nearby campuses. That flexibility makes a degree more of a reality for many</p>	38	81
<p>Infrastructure for President Obama’s Goal: For-profit colleges and universities have access to the money needed to expand and have developed the infrastructure needed to grow rapidly without lowering their educational quality. State taxpayer-funded schools, however, face tightening state budgets and higher tuition rates. Because of this, for-profit colleges and universities are better prepared to enroll the millions of new students looking for a college degree and affordable education. If we relied on ONLY taxpayer-funded schools, many students would miss out on the opportunity.*</p>	37	74

*Asked of half the sample



Statements that focus on the positive consequences of expanding for-profit colleges and universities are also convincing to the public.

The strongest elements of support hinge on opportunity and flexibility.

Message	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
<p>Competitive in 21st Century Economy: To be competitive <u>with countries like India and China</u> in the 21st century economy, the U.S. needs a more dynamic and flexible workforce that is unafraid to learn new skills and switch jobs and careers. This is a different economy—not one where you could work the same job for the same company for 20 years as many people used to do. For-profit universities allow more people to gain the new skills they need <u>which will keep the U.S. competitive with other countries in this changing economy.</u>*</p>	36	75
<p>Technology: Many of these for-profit colleges and universities are pioneers in bringing technology to America’s education system. They were among the leaders in using 21st century technology tools, such as online campuses, that link students to their university or college even though they may live further away. And, they help link students who work in the day but can attend an online class in the evening.*</p>	33	76
<p>Saves Taxpayers Money with Stats: Unlike taxpayer-funded colleges and universities, for-profit institutions cost taxpayers nothing because all their revenue comes from student-paid tuition. In 2006, the total cost of taxpayer-supported college universities was 187 billion dollars. The annual average taxpayer per student cost ranged from 8,000 dollars at community colleges to 15,000 dollars at state universities. In contrast, for-profit institutions pay taxes which averages out to paying 15 dollars per student back to the taxpayers.*</p>	32	70

*Asked of half the sample



The top statement focuses on for-profit colleges and universities' ability to provide underserved students an opportunity that they would otherwise not receive.

Among Latinos, this statement is even stronger, while African Americans are more convinced by the greater flexibility that for-profits provide. Lower-income whites found the tested statements less convincing across the board.

% Very convincing				
	Total	African Americans	Latinos	Lower-Income Whites
Serves Different Students*	40%	34%	43%	32%
Flexibility*	38%	43%	43%	32%
Infrastructure for President Obama's Goals*	37%	34%	43%	32%
Competitive 21 st Century Economy*	36%	33%	44%	32%
Technology*	33%	26%	42%	24%
Saves Taxpayers Money w/Statistics*	32%	36%	41%	27%

*Asked of half the sample



Survey Methodology

- Telephone interviews with a base sample of 1,000 adults nationwide. Telephone numbers for the sample were generated by random digit dialing.
- Oversamples of 500 African Americans, 500 Latinos, and 250 lower-income whites (incomes less than \$30,000).
- Dates: October 4-13, 2009
- The data were weighted slightly by race, gender, marital status, and party identification to ensure that they accurately reflect the adult population of the United States. Oversamples were weighted to their appropriate share of the base.
- The margin of error is +/-3.1%. The margin for split-sampled questions is higher. Questions marked with an asterisk were split sampled.

Research on American Institutions of Higher Education



Conducted for:
Americans for Democratic Action Fund

By: **Lake Research Partners**

Findings from a National Survey of 1,000 adults with oversamples of 500 African Americans, 500 Latino/as, and 250 Lower-Income Whites

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