

 **MORNING CONSULT**

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IBM Security

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RANSOMWARE STUDY

September 2019

Key Points

- 1 **Half of Americans know nothing about ransomware**, and only 17% are very familiar with it.
- 2 **79% of Americans are concerned about the threat of ransomware to cities across the U.S.**, while 68% are concerned about the threat of ransomware to their specific city and 75% are worried about threats to their personal data.
- 3 **56% of Americans would disapprove of their local government using tax dollars to pay a ransomware hacker**; when given an explicit choice, 63% of respondents would prefer to pay higher repair costs and not pay a ransom rather than using taxpayer dollars to pay for a ransom.
- 4 **More than half of Americans would not be willing to pay additional taxes to protect their city, county, or town from attacks**, and among those who are unwilling to pay additional taxes for cybersecurity, respondents are split 50-50 on whether they would support cutting funding from other local priorities for cybersecurity.
- 5 **Nearly half (49%) of respondents view the federal government as having the greatest responsibility to protect cities from ransomware attacks**, vs. 22% seeing it as a state-level responsibility and 28% viewing it as the responsibility of the local government.
- 6 **88% of Americans believe in increasing federal funding for local governments to improve their cybersecurity infrastructure**, and 76% believe the federal government should reimburse cities for damage from cyberattacks.

Methodology

This poll was conducted from August 15-18, 2019, among a national sample of 2200 U.S. adults. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of U.S. adults based on age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Contents / Agenda

1

**Americans' Knowledge of
Ransomware and Other
Cybersecurity Threats**

2

**Current Perceptions of
Threats/Preparedness from
Ransomware Attacks**

3

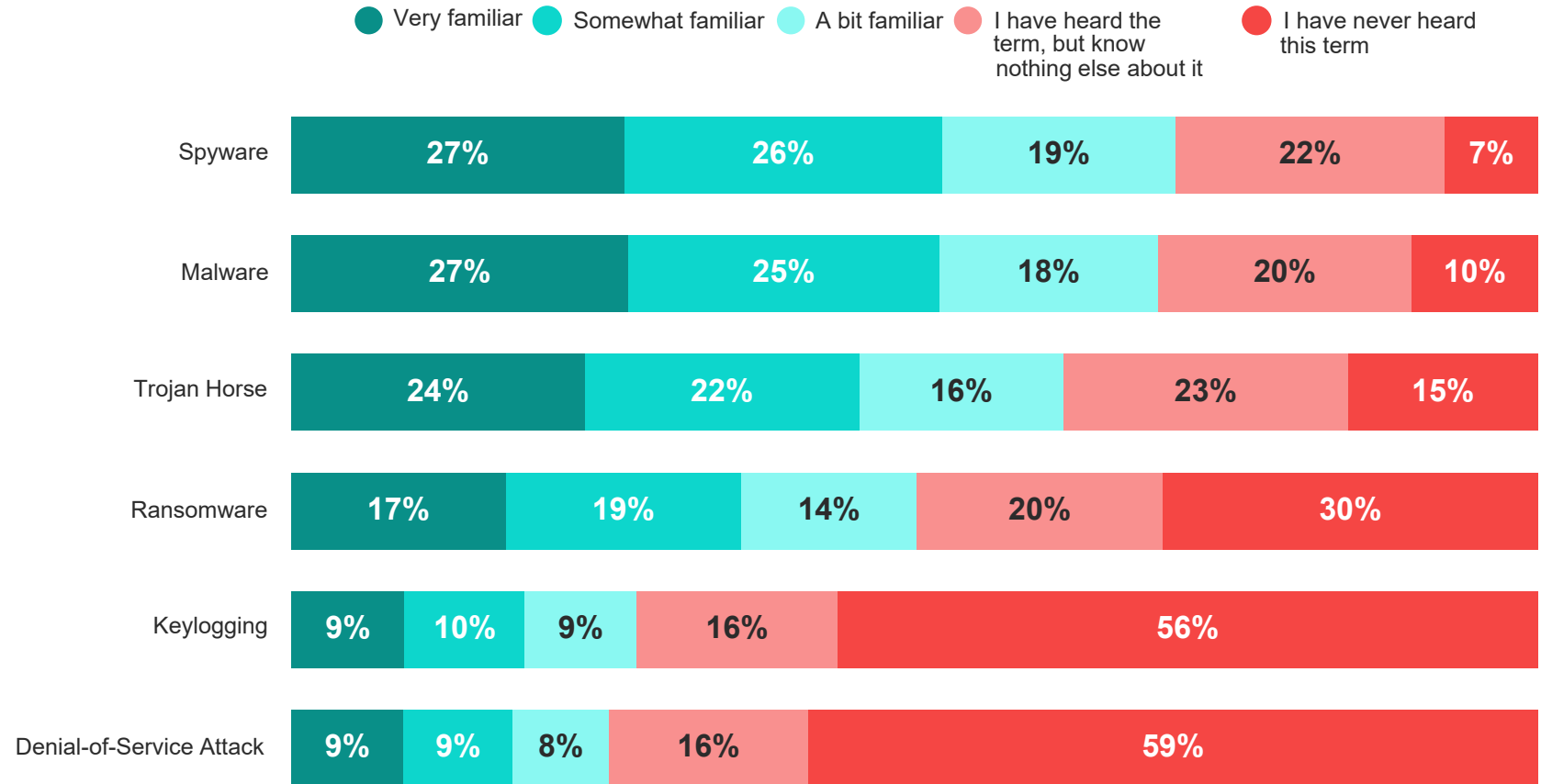
**Willingness to Pay Ransoms/
Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity**

4

**Cybersecurity Responsibility of
Federal vs. Local Governments**

Half of Americans have any familiarity with ransomware, and only 17% are very familiar with it

How familiar are you with the following types of cybersecurity threats, if at all?



Americans' Knowledge of Ransomware and Other Cybersecurity Threats

Contents / Agenda

1

**Americans' Knowledge of
Ransomware and Other
Cybersecurity Threats**

2

**Current Perceptions of
Threats/Preparedness from
Ransomware Attacks**

3

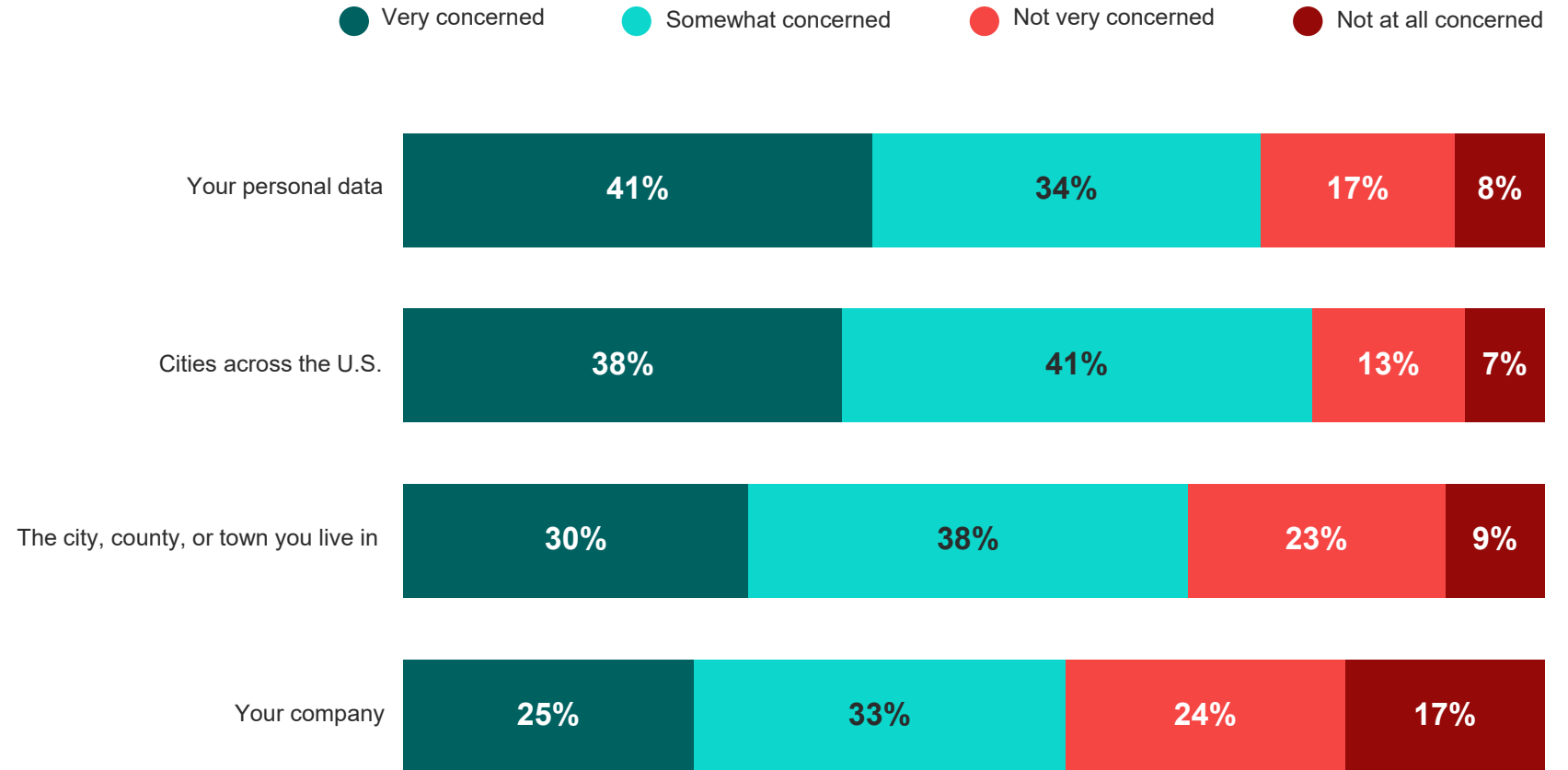
**Willingness to Pay Ransoms/
Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity**

4

**Cybersecurity Responsibility of
Federal vs. Local Governments**

79% of Americans are concerned about the threat of ransomware to cities across the U.S., while 68% are concerned about the threat of ransomware to their specific city

How concerned are you about the threat of ransomware to...

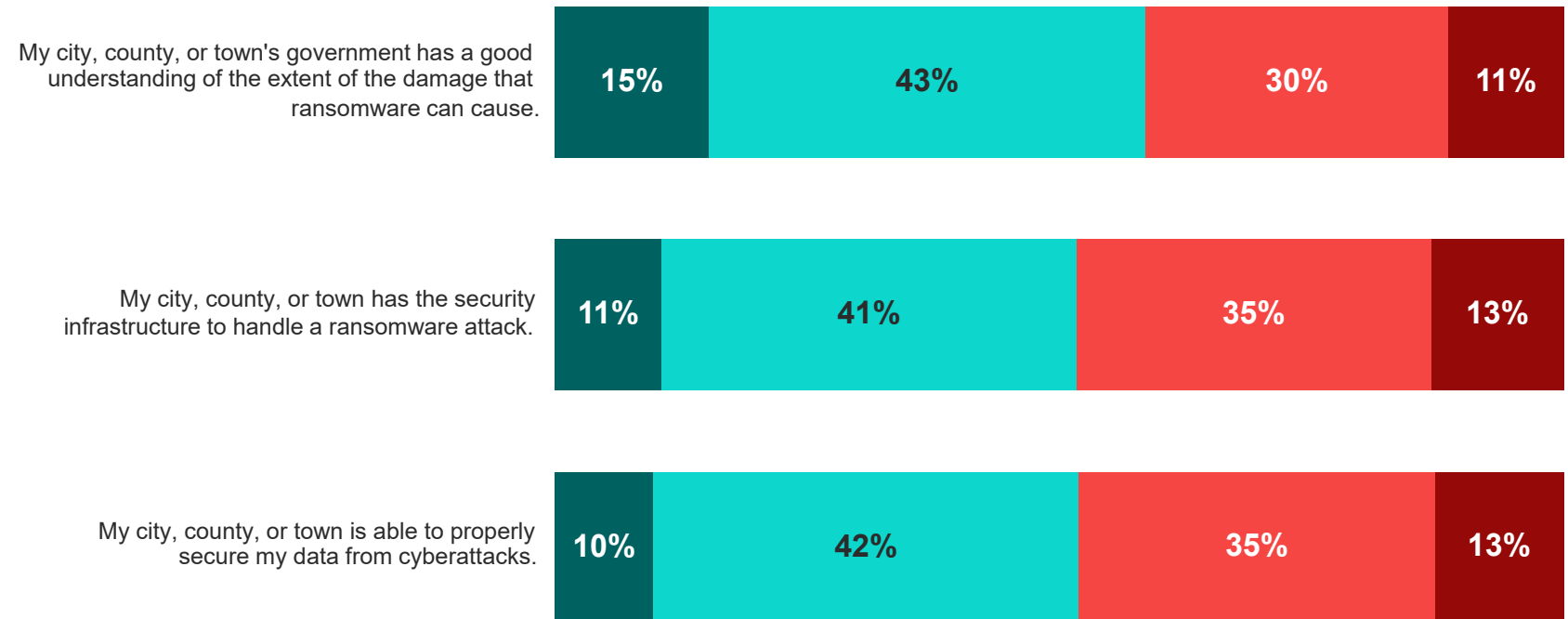


Current Perceptions of Threats/ Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks

Over half of respondents agree their local government has the awareness, infrastructure, and ability to protect their area from cyberattacks, but less than 1 in 5 strongly agree

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your own city, county, or town's ability to defend against cyberattacks?

● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree



Current Perceptions of Threats/ Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks

Contents / Agenda

1

Americans' Knowledge of
Ransomware and Other
Cybersecurity Threats

2

Current Perceptions of
Threats/Preparedness from
Ransomware Attacks

3

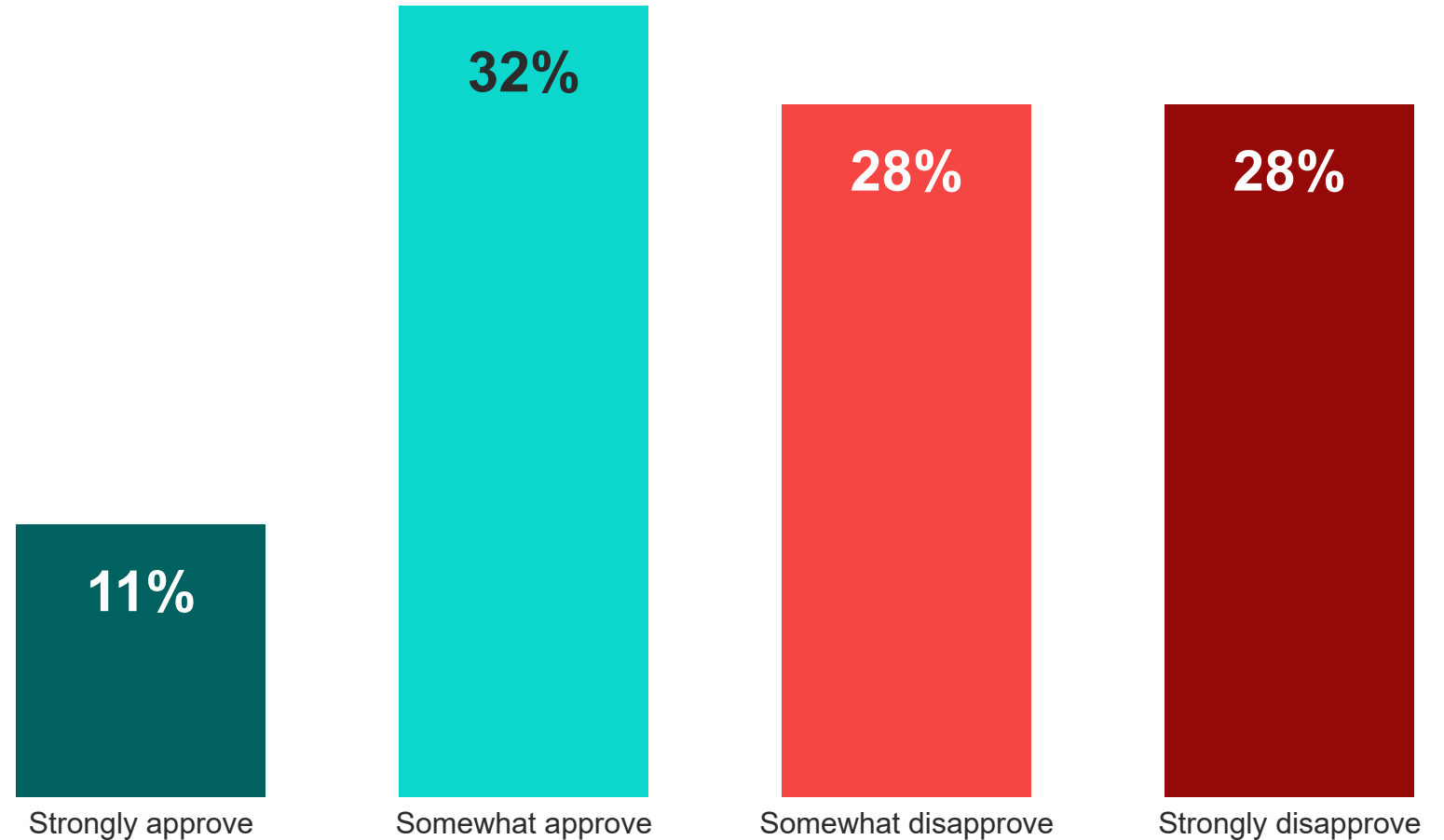
Willingness to Pay Ransoms/
Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

4

Cybersecurity Responsibility of
Federal vs. Local Governments

56% of Americans would disapprove of their local government using tax dollars to pay a ransomware hacker

If your city, county, or town was attacked by ransomware and unable to quickly solve the problem through other means, would you approve of your local government using tax dollars to pay a ransomware hacker?

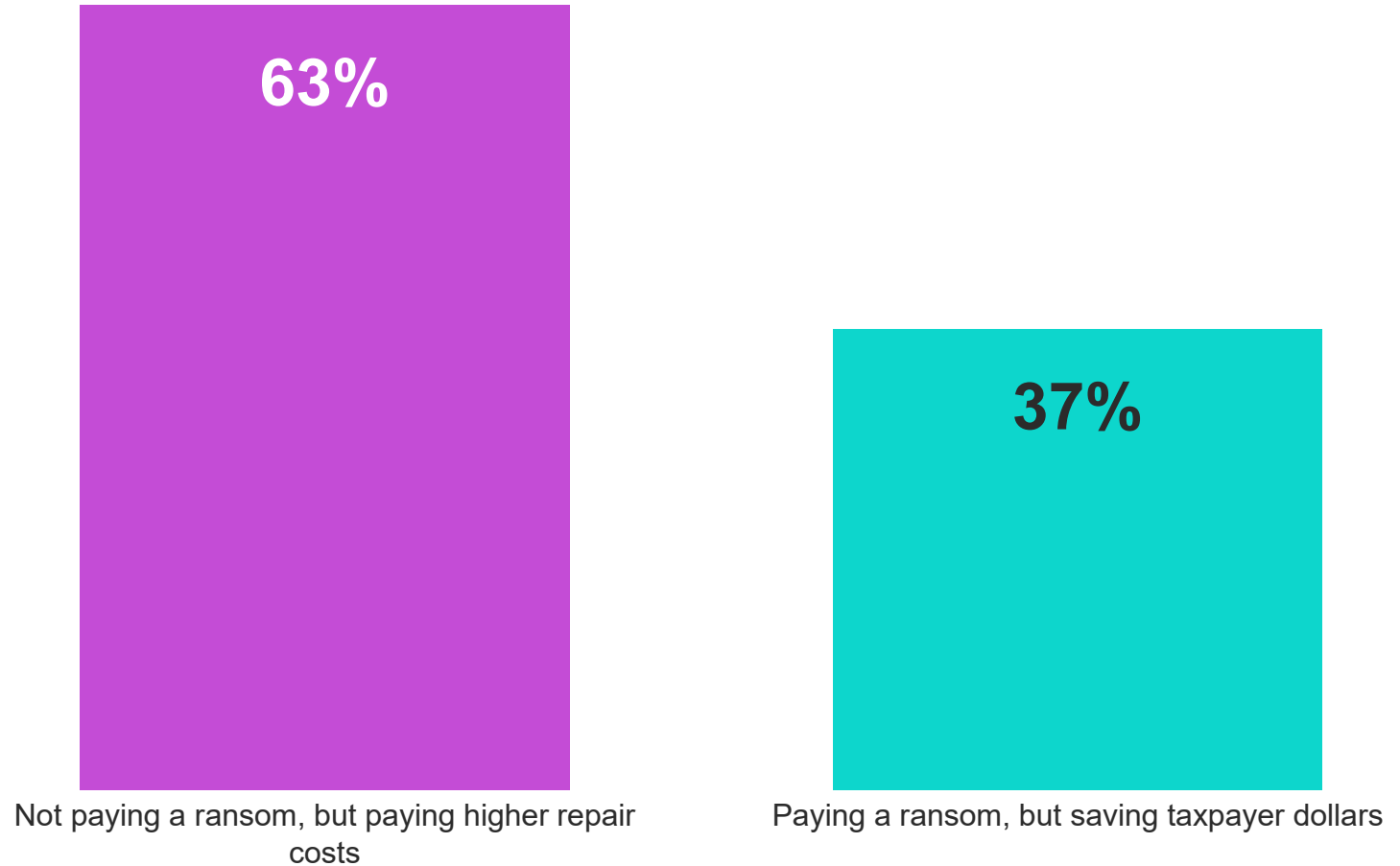


Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

Nearly 2 in 3 respondents would prefer to pay higher repair costs and not pay a ransom rather than using taxpayer dollars to pay for a ransom

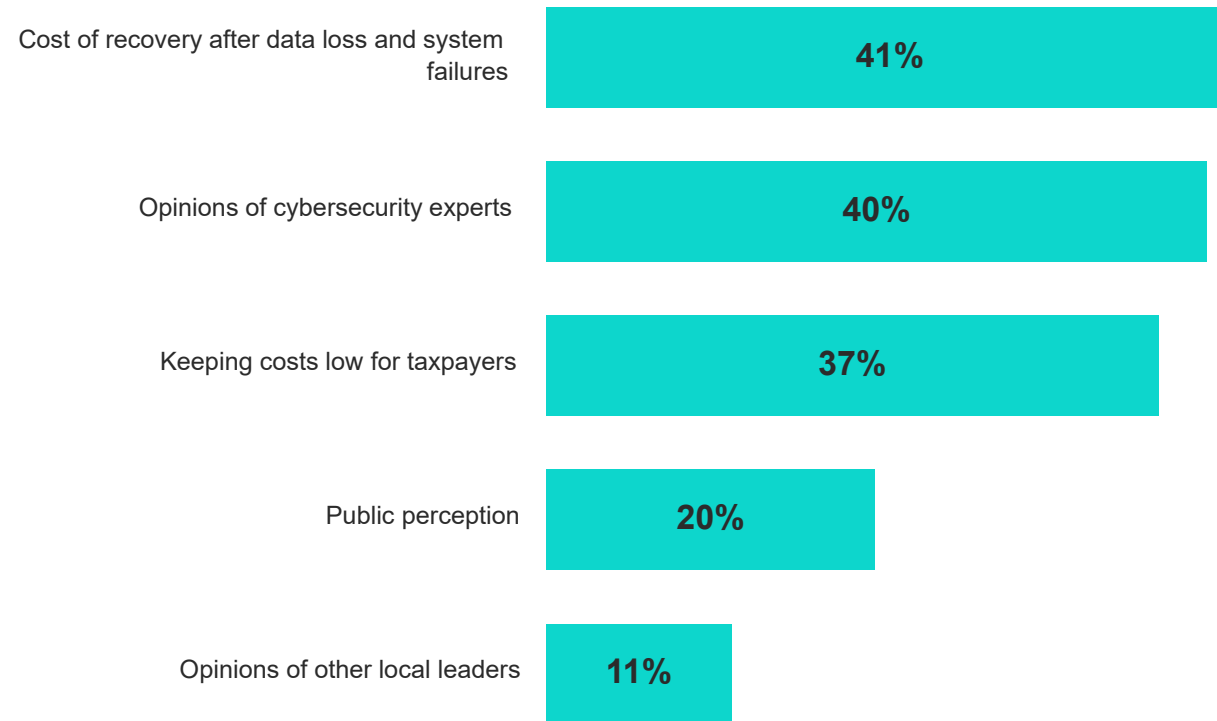
Given an option between not paying a ransom, but paying higher repair costs to get systems up and running, or paying a ransom and saving taxpayer dollars, which would you prefer, even if neither exactly describes your feelings?

Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity



Americans believe that recovery costs and the opinions of cybersecurity experts are the most important factors for local decision-makers to consider when deciding whether or not to pay a ransom

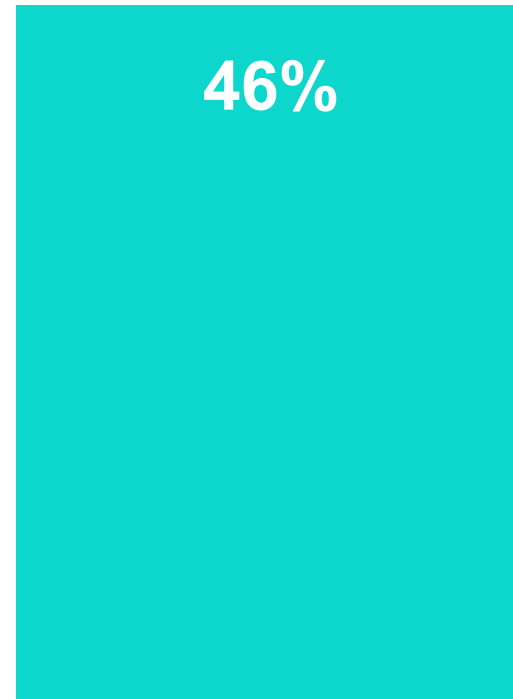
Which of the following factors, if any, do you think are important for local decision-makers to consider when deciding whether or not to pay a ransom impacting a city/town/county?



Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

More than half of Americans would not be willing to pay additional taxes to protect their city, county, or town from attacks

Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to protect your city, county, or town from attacks?



Yes, I would be willing to pay additional taxes

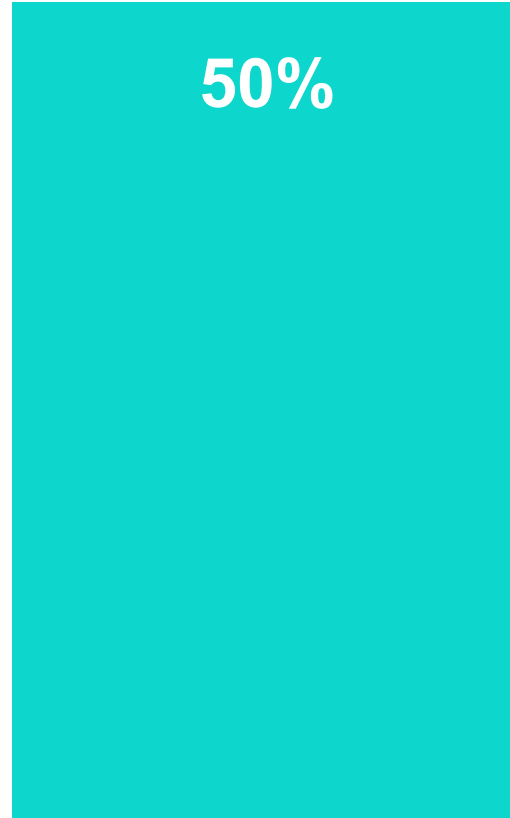


No, I would not be willing to pay additional taxes

Willingness to
Pay Ransoms/
Higher Taxes
for
Cybersecurity

Among those who are unwilling to pay additional taxes for cybersecurity, respondents are evenly split on whether they would support cuts

You mentioned you would not be willing to pay any additional taxes for improved cybersecurity. Would you be in favor of cuts to other local government services to reallocate funding to cybersecurity?



Yes, I would support cuts to other services to reallocate to cybersecurity

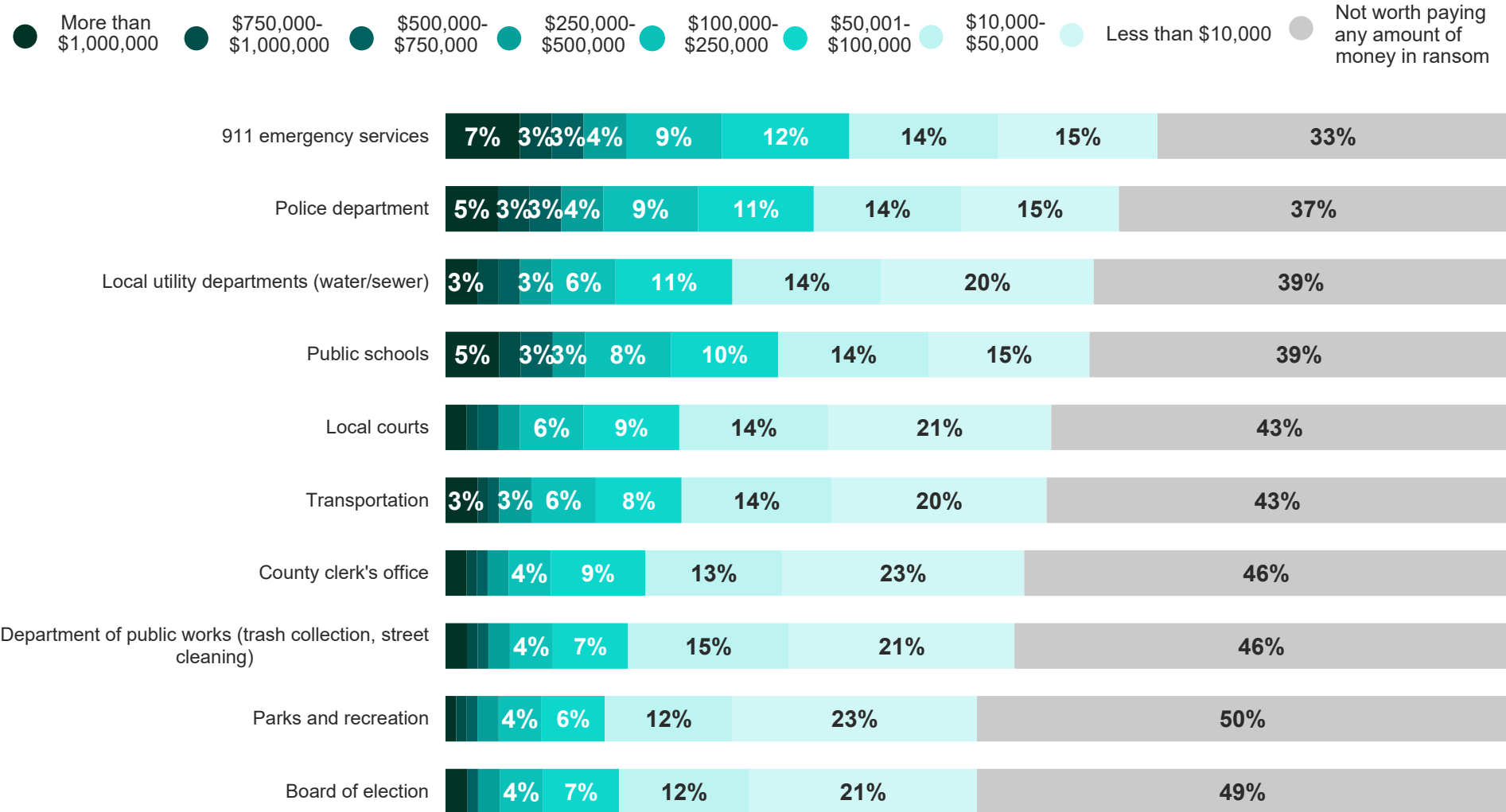


No, I would not support cuts to other services to reallocate to cybersecurity

Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

More than 30% of respondents would not be willing to pay any amount of ransom to help 911 services, police departments, or public schools.

Below are examples of local departments that may be compromised in a municipal attack. Thinking of an average city, what's the highest amount of money it would be reasonable for a city to pay in a ransom to get each department up and running?



Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

Contents / Agenda

1

Americans' Knowledge of Ransomware and Other Cybersecurity Threats

2

Current Perceptions of Threats/Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks

3

**Willingness to Pay Ransoms/
Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity**

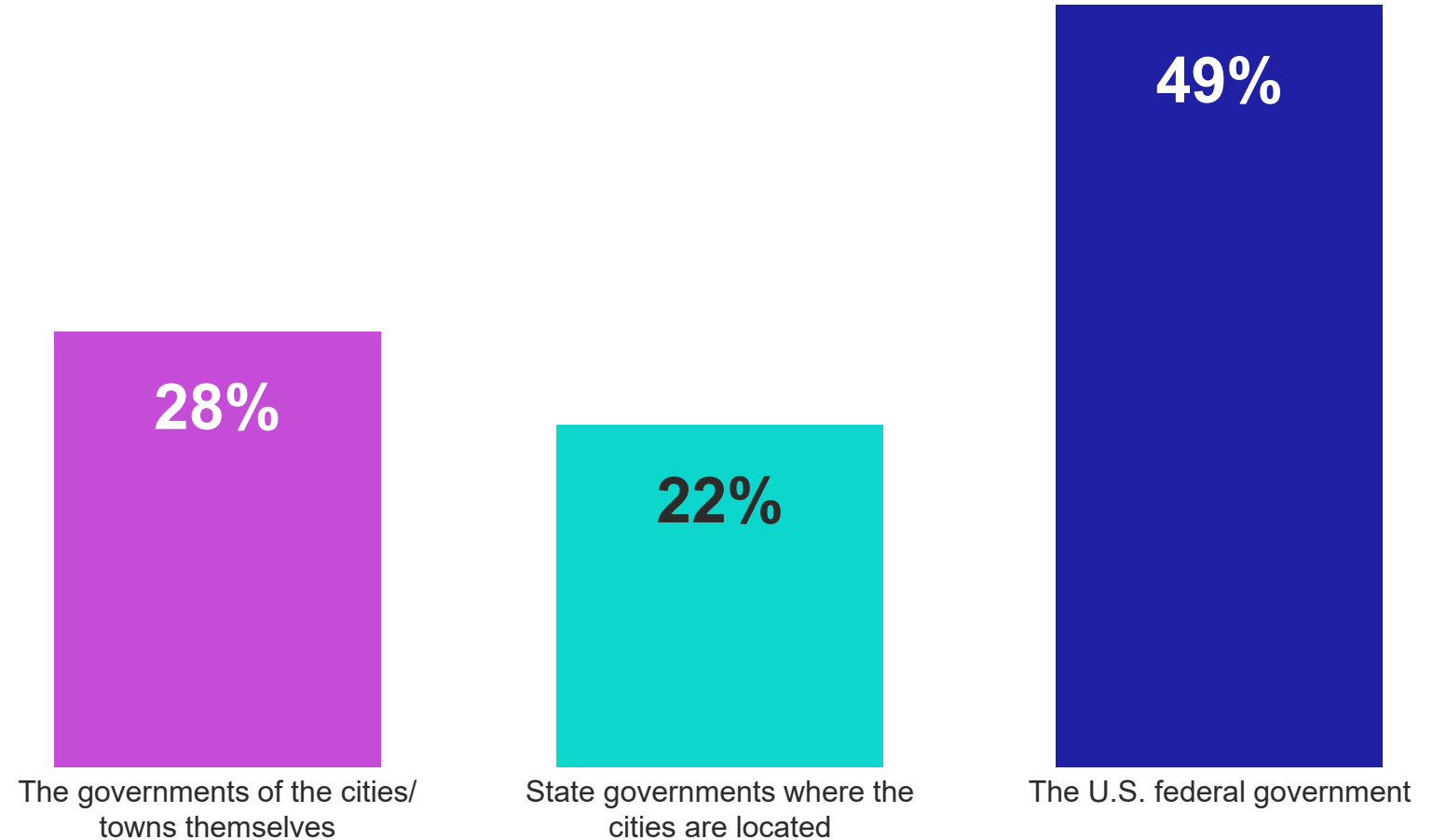
4

Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments

Nearly half of respondents view the federal government as having the greatest responsibility to protect cities from ransomware attacks

Which of the following do you think has the greatest responsibility to protect cities from ransomware attacks?

Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments



88% of Americans believe in increasing federal funding for local governments to improve their cybersecurity infrastructure, and 76% believe the federal government should reimburse cities for damage from cyberattacks

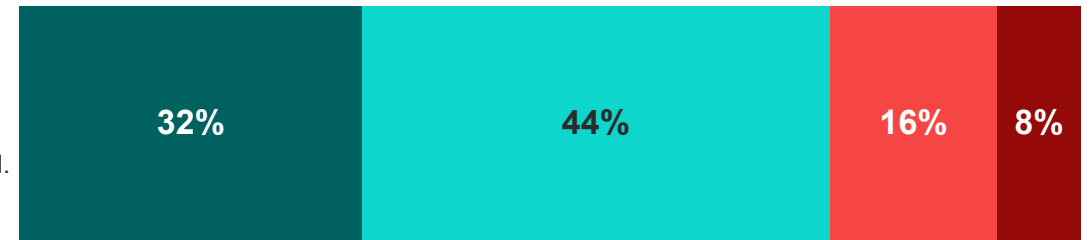
How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the federal government's relationship with cities when it comes to ransomware attacks?

● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree

The federal government should increase access to grants or other funding sources for local governments to improve their cybersecurity infrastructure.



The federal government should reimburse cities for damages from cyberattacks or ransomware attacks, similar to how natural disasters and terrorism are handled.

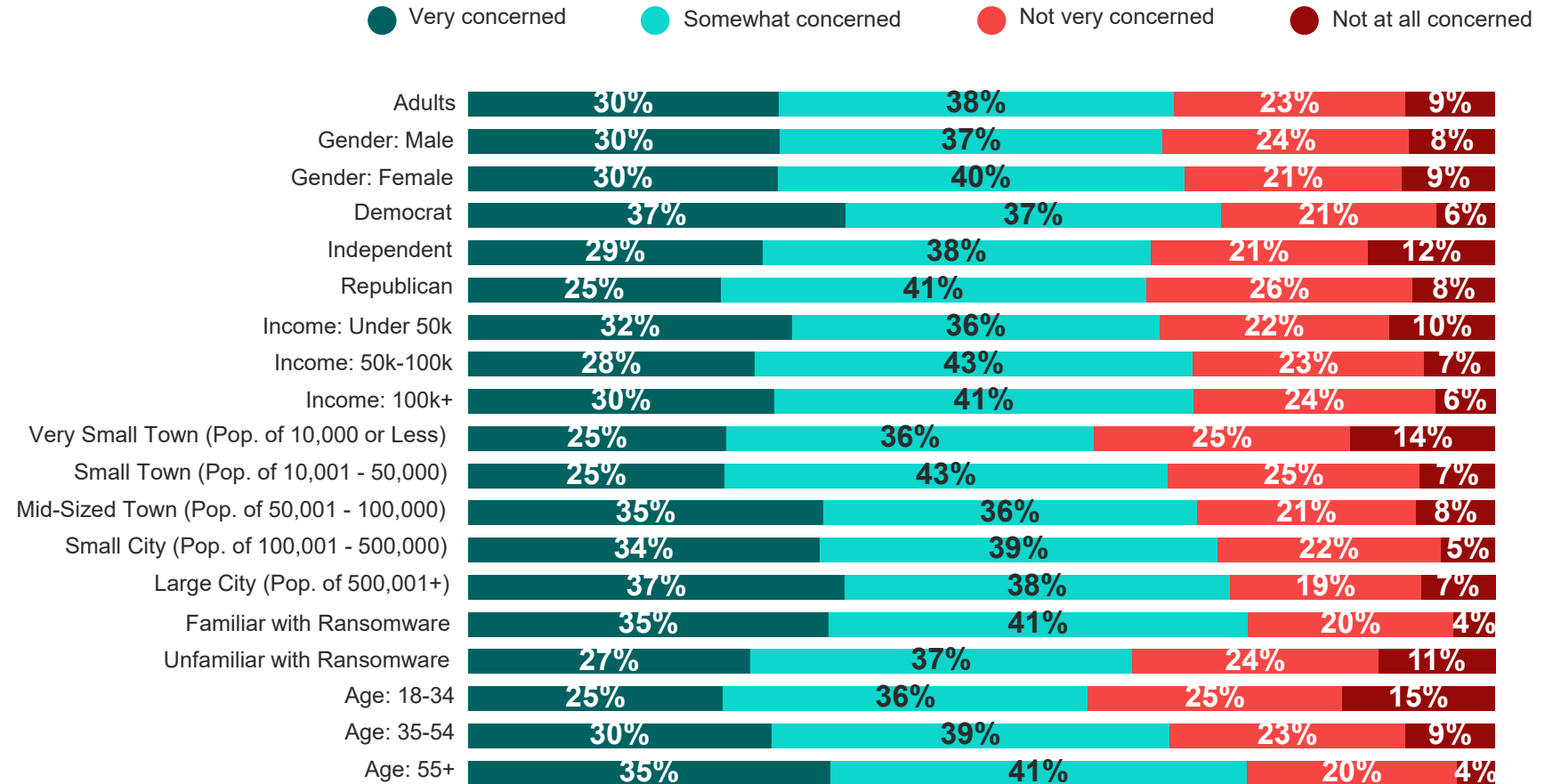


Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments

Older respondents, those more familiar with ransomware, and those living in towns with populations larger than 50,000 are most likely to be concerned about the threat of ransomware to their city, county, or town

How concerned are you about the threat of ransomware to... The city, county, or town you live in

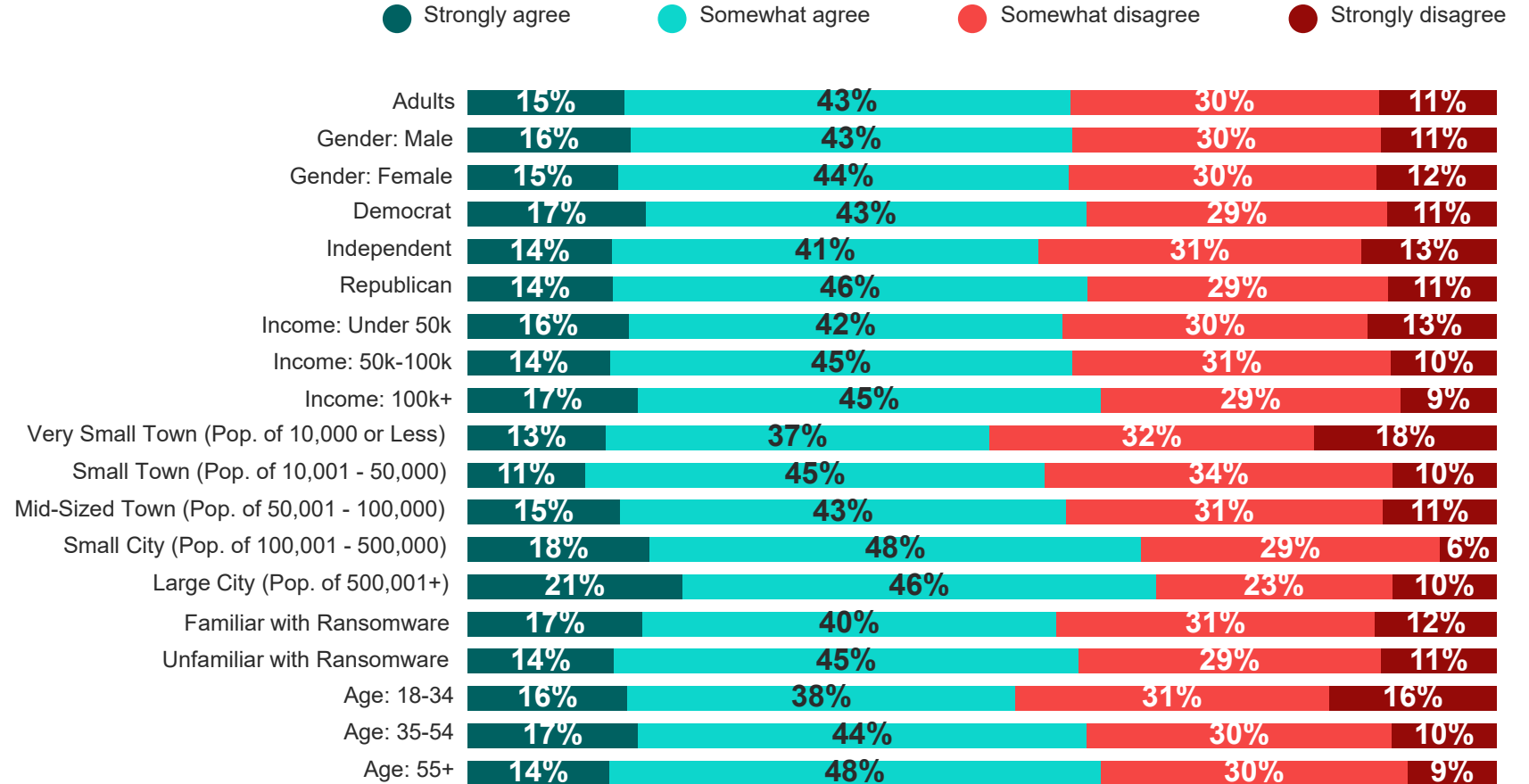
Current Perceptions of Threats/ Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks



Current Perceptions of Threats/ Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks

Those living in larger towns and cities are more likely to believe that their local government understands the threat of ransomware

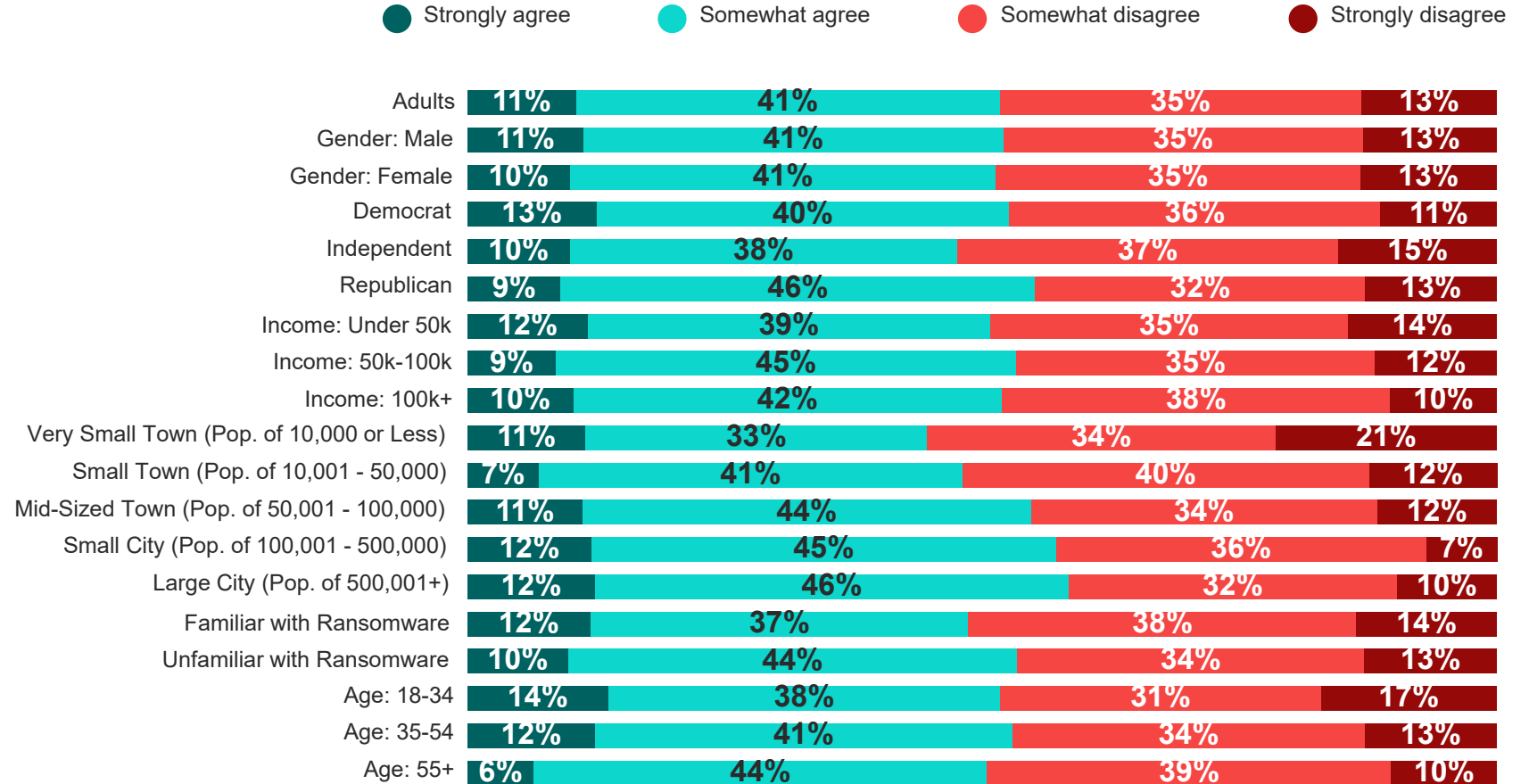
How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your own city, county, or town's ability to defend against cyberattacks? My city, county, or town's government has a good understanding of the extent of the damage that ransomware can cause.



Current Perceptions of Threats/ Preparedness from Ransomware Attacks

Less than half of those who are familiar with ransomware believe that their town has the infrastructure necessary to handle a ransomware attack

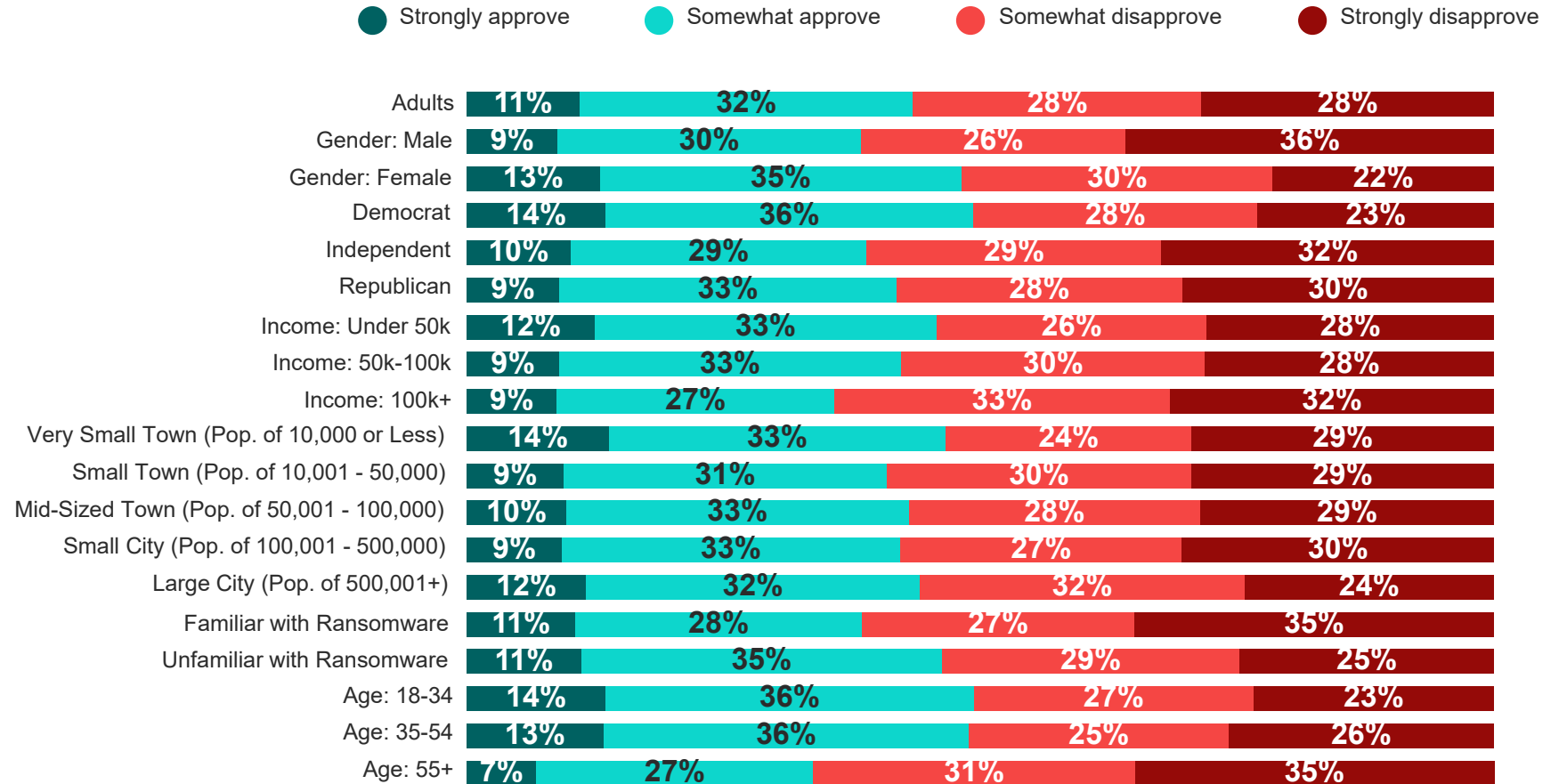
How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your own city, county, or town's ability to defend against cyberattacks? My city, county, or town has the security infrastructure to handle a ransomware attack.



Democrats and younger respondents are more likely to support use of taxpayer dollars to pay a hacker

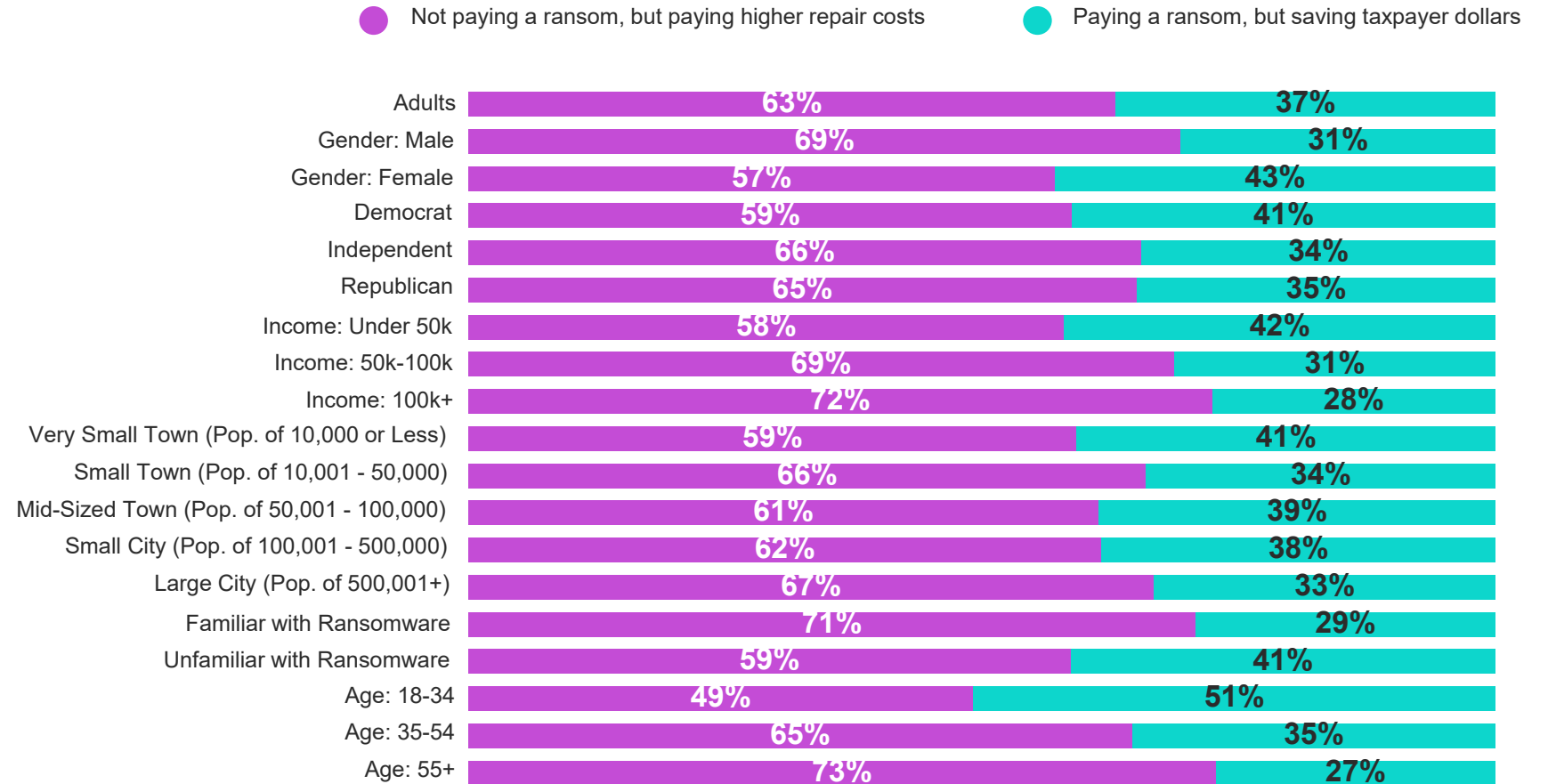
If your city, county, or town was attacked by ransomware and unable to quickly solve the problem through other means, would you approve of your local government using tax dollars to pay a ransomware hacker?

Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity



The only group that would prefer to use taxpayer dollars to pay a ransom is Americans under the age of 35

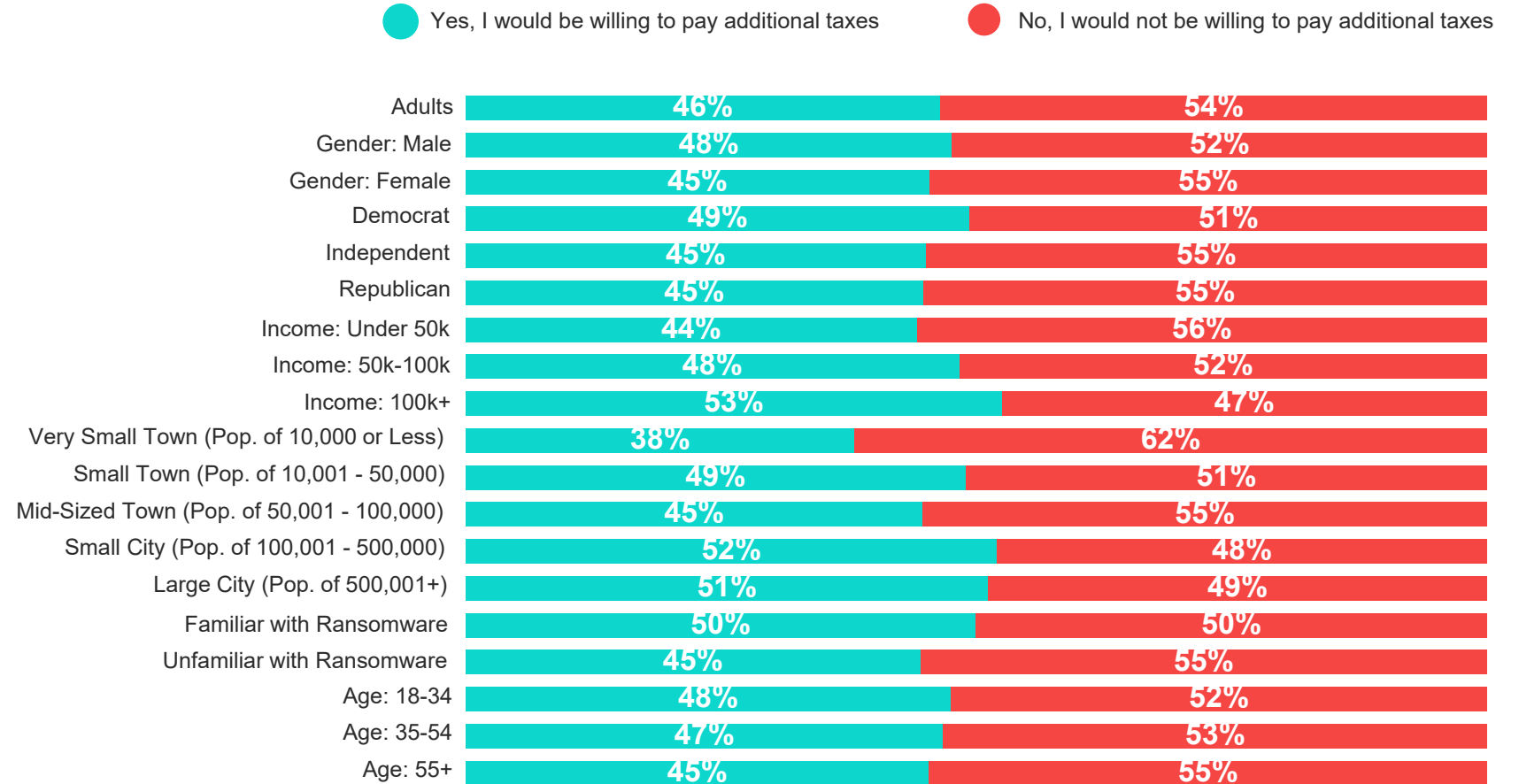
Given an option between not paying a ransom, but paying higher repair costs to get systems up and running, or paying a ransom and saving taxpayer dollars, which would you prefer, even if neither exactly describes your feelings?



Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

Those who are wealthier and those living in cities with populations of 100,000 or greater are willing to pay additional taxes, and those who are familiar with ransomware are more willing to pay additional taxes than those who are not

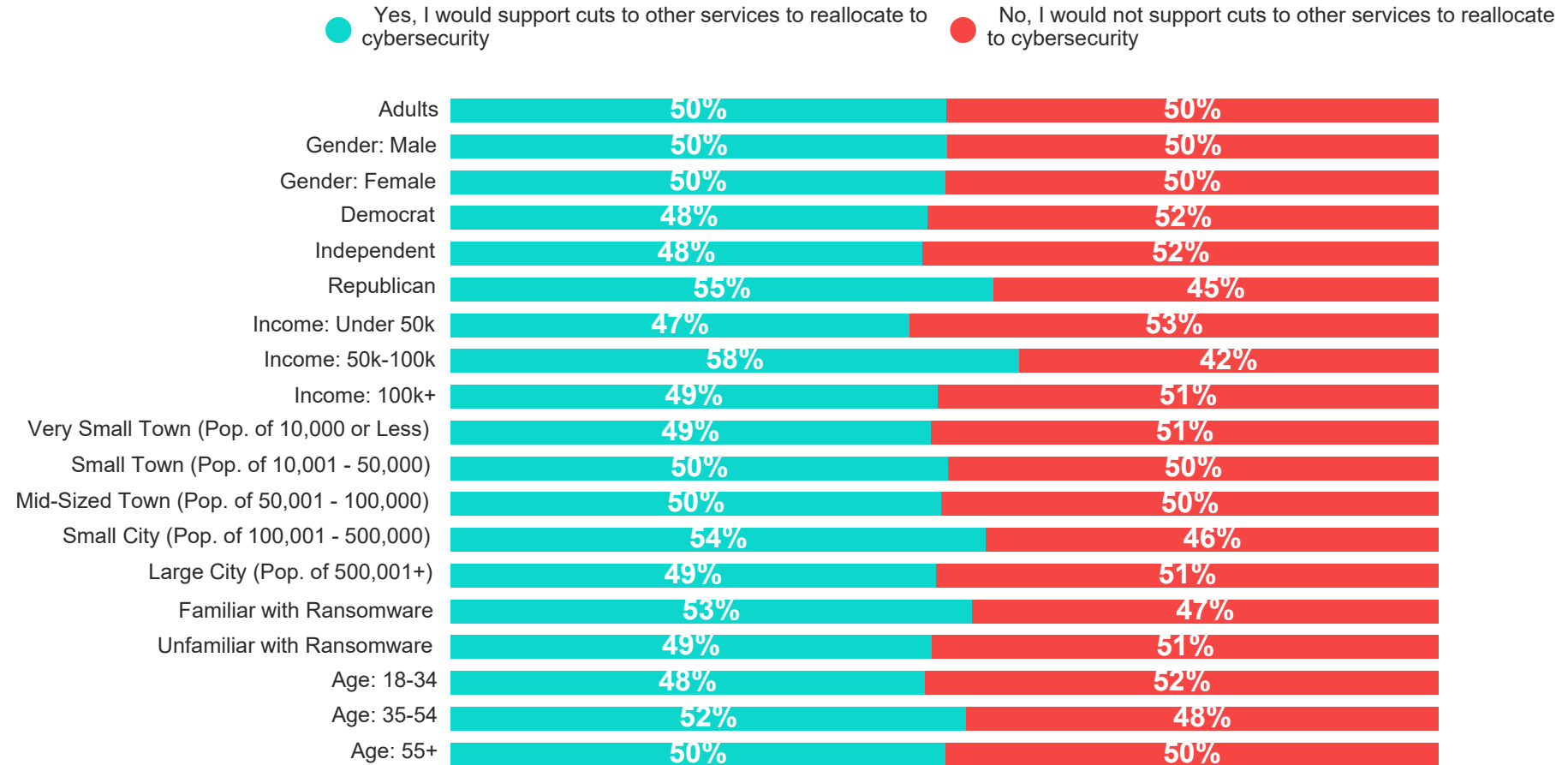
Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to protect your city, county, or town from attacks?



Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

Among those unwilling to pay additional taxes, Republicans and those with a household income between \$50-\$100,000 are most likely to support cuts to other services to reallocate to cybersecurity

You mentioned you would not be willing to pay any additional taxes for improved cybersecurity. Would you be in favor of cuts to other local government services to reallocate funding to cybersecurity?

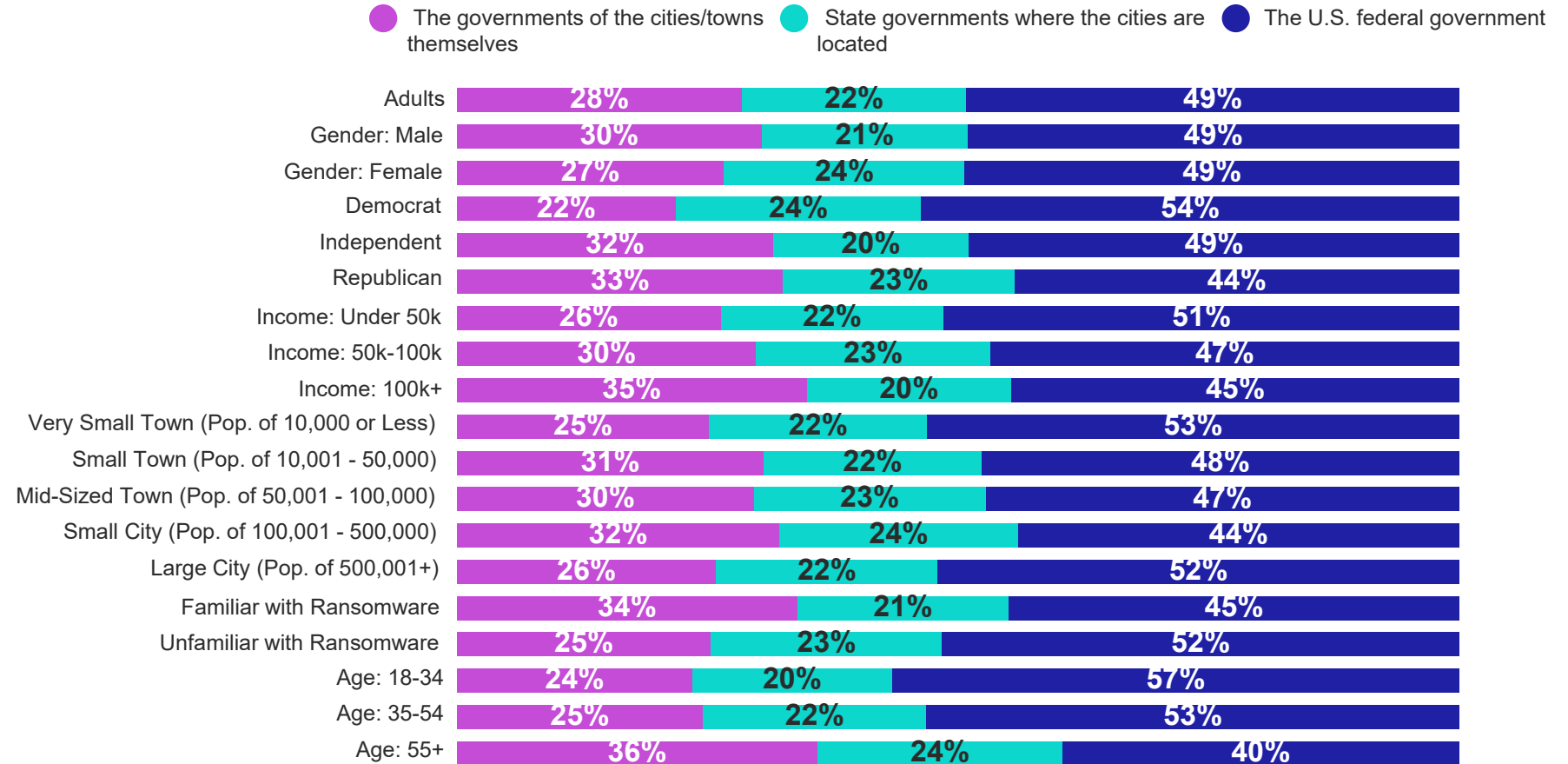


Willingness to Pay Ransoms/ Higher Taxes for Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments

While pluralities of all groups view the federal government as having the most responsibility to protect cities from ransomware attacks, Republicans are more likely to feel that local governments have a greater responsibility

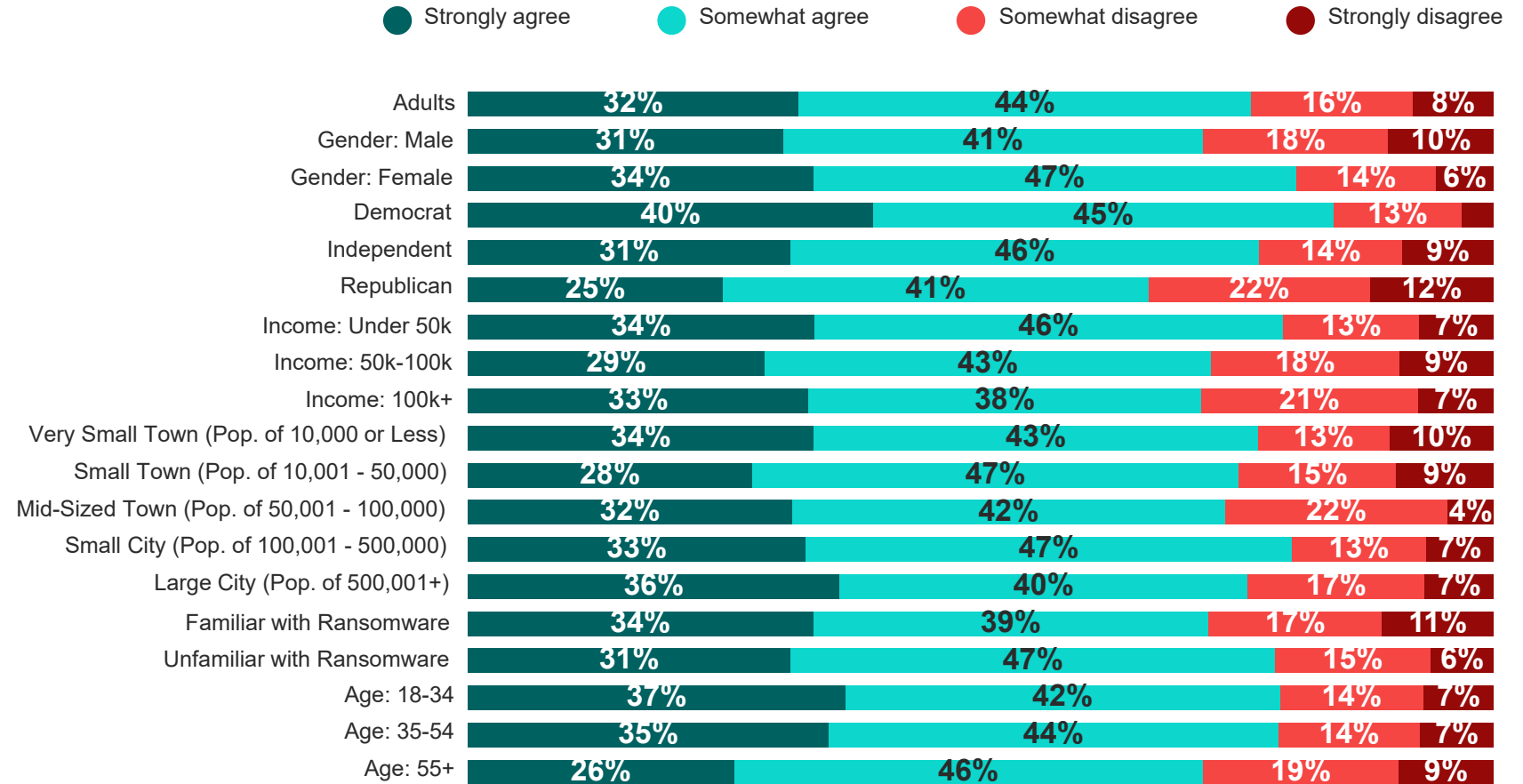
Which of the following do you think has the greatest responsibility to protect cities from ransomware attacks?



Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments

There is also bipartisan support for having the federal government reimburse cities for damages from cyberattacks, though Democrats (85%) are more strongly in favor than independents (77%) and Republicans (66%)

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the federal government's relationship with cities when it comes to ransomware attacks? The federal government should reimburse cities for damages from cyberattacks or ransomware attacks, similar to how natural disasters and terrorism are handled.



Cybersecurity Responsibility of Federal vs. Local Governments

There is overwhelming bipartisan support for additional access to federal funding for local cybersecurity infrastructure, though Democrats (91%) are slightly more in favor than Republicans (85%)

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the federal government's relationship with cities when it comes to ransomware attacks? The federal government should increase access to grants or other funding sources for local governments to improve their cybersecurity infrastructure.

