

# **Eager to Build Bridges: Religious and Spiritual Americans' Desire to Connect Across Partisan Divides**

A Hidden Common Ground Report

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# Executive Summary

Most Americans consider partisan divisiveness a problem and want politicians to put aside differences and compromise, according to this Public Agenda/USA TODAY Hidden Common Ground survey of 2,219 American adults, fielded in August 2022. However, compared to previous Public Agenda surveys, a declining share of Americans believe it is very important to reduce divisiveness, and a declining share believe it is important to have better ways to understand the views and values of people whose political affiliations are different from theirs. Nonetheless, most Americans, with little difference by political affiliation, report trying to understand people whose political views differ from their own, and nearly half report having constructive conversations across political divides in the past twelve months.

Americans who are both religious and spiritual are especially likely to say they have tried to understand and connect with people whose political views are different from their own, more so than people who are only religious or those who are neither religious nor spiritual. Yet people who are neither religious nor spiritual are skeptical about religious people's capacity to engage in constructive conversations.



# Key Findings

**Americans who are both religious and spiritual—especially Republicans—say their beliefs influence their political views and voting. However, many Americans express concern about mixing religion or spirituality with politics.**

Among people who are both religious and spiritual, more Republicans (75 percent) say their religion influences their political views compared to Democrats (61 percent) or Independents (51 percent). Furthermore, about four in ten Americans overall, including about six in ten Republicans, say a politician's religious beliefs or spiritual values are important when considering who to vote for.

However, about two-thirds of Americans, including about half of Republicans, believe it is a problem that politicians make decisions based on their own religious beliefs or spiritual values. And 59 percent of Americans consider it problematic that religious leaders share their

stance on political issues, and that they express support for political candidates.

**Most Americans see partisan divisiveness as a problem. However, most Americans think the extent of this divisiveness has been exaggerated, especially those who are both religious and spiritual compared to those who are neither.**

Eighty percent of Americans say political hostility among ordinary people is a serious problem, including 48 percent who say it is a very serious problem. More Democrats (56 percent) than Republicans (43 percent) see political hostility and divisiveness as very serious, with Independents falling in between (49 percent).

About half of Americans (51 percent) believe the main reason our political leaders are divided is because there is not much common ground among the American people. However, most Americans (68 percent) nonetheless say there



is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders portray. Across political affiliations, more people who are both religious and spiritual say divisiveness has been exaggerated compared to those who are neither religious nor spiritual.

**Although a declining share of Americans believe it is very important to try to reduce divisiveness, people who are both religious and spiritual are more likely to believe in the importance of reducing it, and of trying to understand people with different political viewpoints.**

While 48 percent of Americans believe it is very important to reduce divisiveness, this represents a [decline since 2019](#), when 65 percent believed doing so was very important. Similarly, [compared to 2021](#), a declining share of Americans say it is important to have better ways to understand the views and values of people whose political affiliations differ from theirs.

Among Democrats, 59 percent overall believe reducing divisiveness is very important, with

little variation by religiosity or spirituality. While fewer Republicans or Independents overall believe reducing divisiveness is very important, Republicans (50 percent) and Independents (56 percent) who are both religious and spiritual are more likely to believe reducing it is very important compared to those who are neither religious nor spiritual (31 percent and 45 percent respectively). Likewise, across political affiliations, people who are both religious and spiritual are especially likely to say understanding people whose political affiliations differ from theirs is important, compared to those who are neither religious nor spiritual.

**Americans who are both religious and spiritual are more likely than those who are neither religious nor spiritual to say they have taken steps to understand and connect with people whose political views are different from their own.**

Seventy-five percent of Americans believe they can learn something by talking to people who have different political views than their own,

and 79 percent say that when people have political views that differ from theirs, they try to understand where they are coming from. There are few differences by political affiliation. But Americans who are both religious and spiritual are especially likely to believe they can learn something by talking to people who have different political views than their own, and to say that they try to understand where people are coming from when they have political views that differ. For example, 86 percent of both religious and spiritual people say they try to understand where people are coming from when their political views differ, compared to 71 percent of largely religious people and 72 percent of neither religious nor spiritual people.

Americans who are both religious and spiritual are also more likely than those who are largely religious, or those who are neither religious nor spiritual, to have made efforts to connect with people across partisan differences. For example, 70 percent of people who are both religious and spiritual say they have gotten to know someone in the past twelve months whose political views differ from their own, compared to 54 percent of people who are neither religious nor

spiritual, and only 44 percent of people who are largely religious.

**While people's religion and spirituality may help them navigate challenging political conversations, about half of Americans are skeptical about religious people's willingness to compromise and about whether they respect those with whom they disagree.**

Among Americans who are both religious and spiritual, 77 percent say their religion, and 82 percent say their spirituality, helps them remain calm when confronted with political views with which they disagree. However, 52 percent of Americans believe religious people are too stuck in their ways and unwilling to compromise, and only 45 percent think religious people respect the opinions of those with whom they disagree. Republicans are less likely to think that religious people are too stuck in their ways and unwilling to compromise.

**Most Americans think religion and spirituality can play roles in bringing people together, but fewer think that making religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life would be effective ways to reduce divisiveness.**

Sixty-two percent of Americans think spirituality can bring people together in the nation, and 57 percent think religion can bring people together. But when asked how to reduce divisiveness or destructive disagreements, only about 45 percent of Americans think making religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life would be effective, while 80 percent believe giving ordinary people a voice in the decisions that affect their lives would be effective.

People who are both religious and spiritual are more likely to believe making religion or spiritual values bigger factors in American life would be effective ways to reduce divisiveness than Americans who are neither religious nor spiritual. But Republicans who are both religious and spiritual (about 85 percent) are far more optimistic about the potential of religion

and spirituality to reduce divisiveness than both religious and spiritual Democrats (about 63 percent) or both religious and spiritual Independents (about 60 percent).

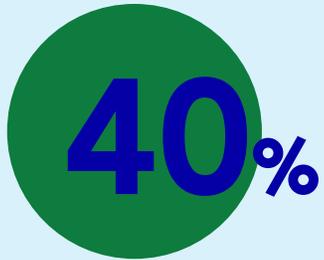
To learn more about these findings or about the Hidden Common Ground initiative, email [research@publicagenda.org](mailto:research@publicagenda.org) or go to <http://www.publicagenda.org/reports/hcg-religion-2022/>

This Public Agenda/USA TODAY Hidden Common Ground® (HCG) research is supported by the Fetzer Institute. The Hidden Common Ground initiative challenges the narrative that Americans are hopelessly divided and incapable of working together. Through research and public engagement, HCG helps Americans identify and strengthen their common ground, productively navigate their differences, and create equitable and productive solutions to the challenges of our time.

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A snapshot of religion and spirituality in the United States:

## Most Americans are either religious, spiritual, or both.<sup>1</sup>



40% of Americans are **both religious and spiritual**, meaning they are both very or moderately religious and very or moderately spiritual.



17% of Americans are **largely spiritual**, meaning they are very or moderately spiritual but only slightly or not at all religious or do not know if they are religious.



38% of Americans are **neither religious nor spiritual**, meaning they are slightly or not at all religious or do not know and slightly or not at all spiritual or do not know.



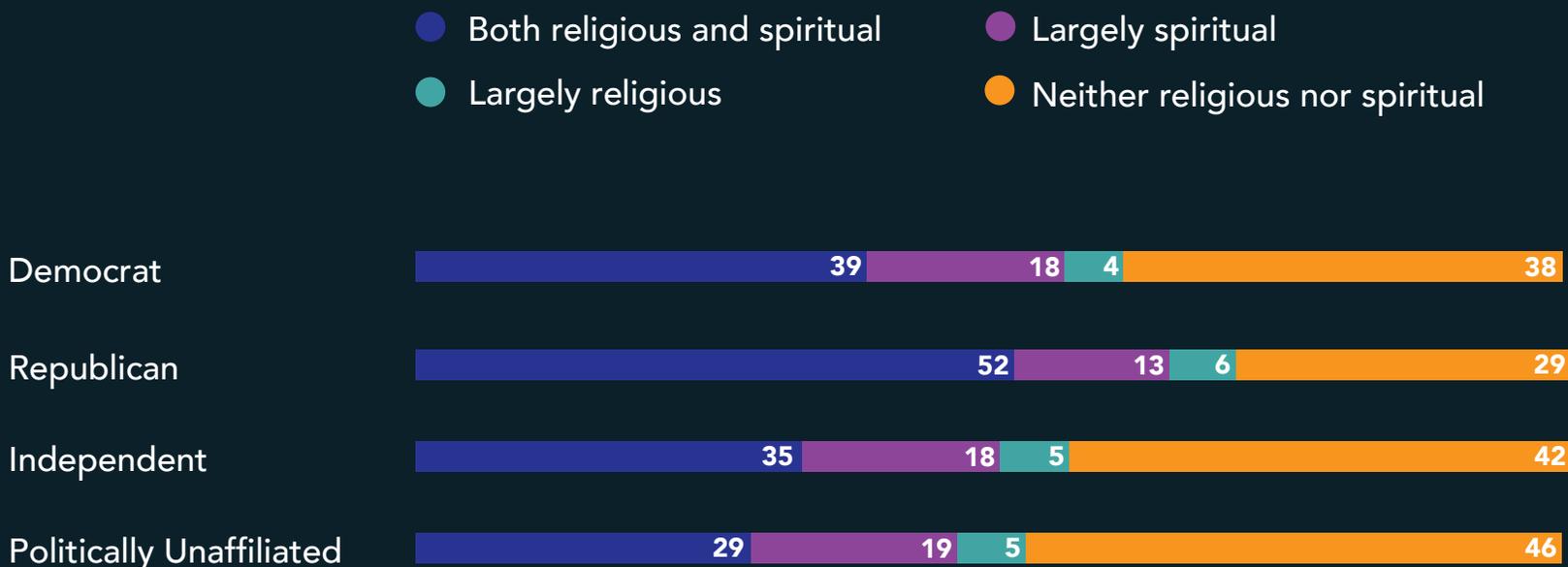
5% of Americans are **largely religious**, meaning they are very or moderately religious but only slightly or not at all spiritual or do not know if they are spiritual.

**Base:** Both religious and spiritual, N=917; Largely spiritual, N=369; Largely religious, N=99; Neither religious nor spiritual, N=834

<sup>1</sup>These categories build on research including Fetzer Institute, 2020, "What Does Spirituality Mean to Us? A Study of Spirituality in the U.S." <https://fetzer.org/work/study-spirituality-america>; and Jones et al, 2017, "Searching for Spirituality in the U.S.: A New Look at the Spiritual but Not Religious." PRRI, <https://www.pri.org/research/religiosity-and-spirituality-in-america/>.

# Half of Republicans and four in ten Democrats are both religious and spiritual.<sup>2</sup>

Percent of Americans who say they are both religious and spiritual, largely spiritual, largely religious, or neither, by political affiliation:



**Base:** All respondents, N= 2,219; Democrat, N= 829; Republican, N=600; Independent, N=578; Politically Unaffiliated, N=212

<sup>2</sup>This report focuses largely on Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, not on Politically Unaffiliated people. Due to the small sample sizes, this report does not discuss how largely religious or largely spiritual people vary by political affiliation.

The Independent group includes those who self-identify as Independents, without respect to whether they “lean” Democratic or Republican. The “Politically Unaffiliated” group includes those who have no preference towards political affiliation with the three dominant categories of political affiliations (Republican, Democrat, or Independent) or who skipped the question, “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as...”. A small number of these people may be affiliated with small political parties.

1

# How religious beliefs and spiritual values interact with political views

Most Americans who are both religious and spiritual say their beliefs and values influence their political views. Specifically, 62 percent of Americans who are both religious and spiritual say their religious beliefs influence their political views, and 65 percent say their spirituality influences their political views. Republicans who are both religious and spiritual, compared to Democrats and Independents who are both religious and spiritual, are especially likely to say their religion and spirituality influence their political views; see Figure 1.

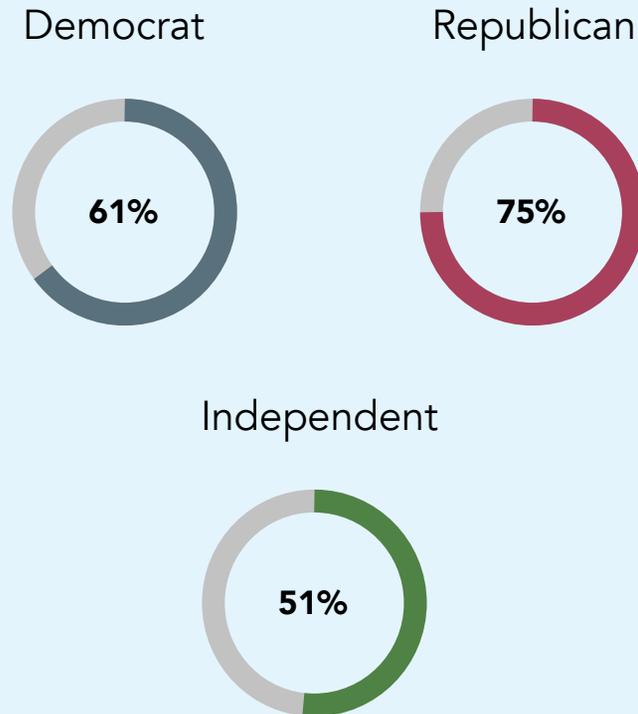


## Republicans who are both religious and spiritual are especially likely to say their religion and spirituality influence their political views.

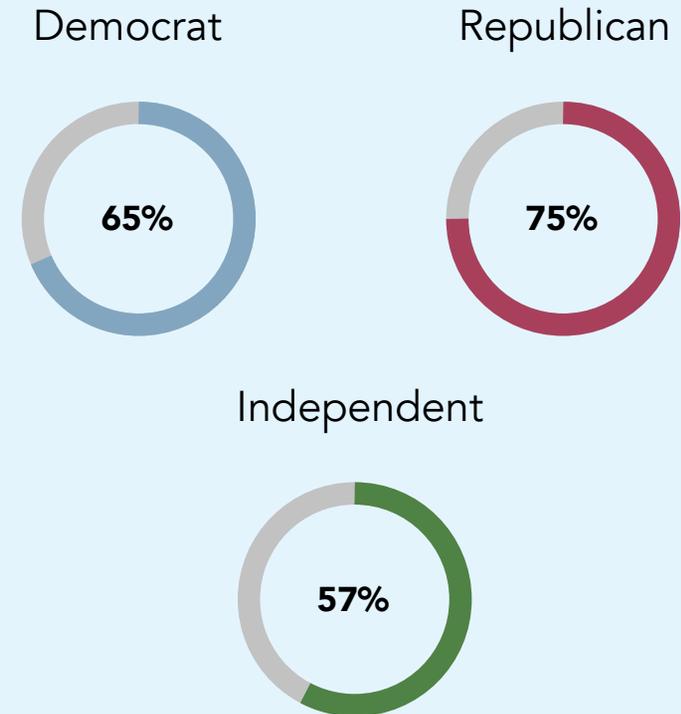
Figure 1. Percent of Americans who are both religious and spiritual who strongly or somewhat agree with the following statements:

● Democrat ● Republican ● Independent

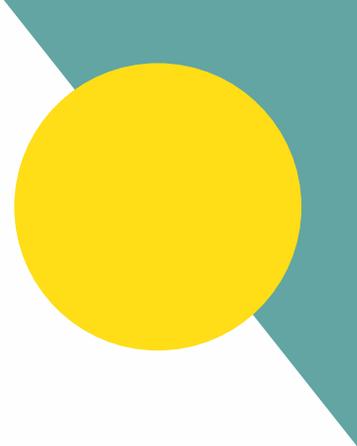
### My religion influences my political views



### My spirituality influences my political views



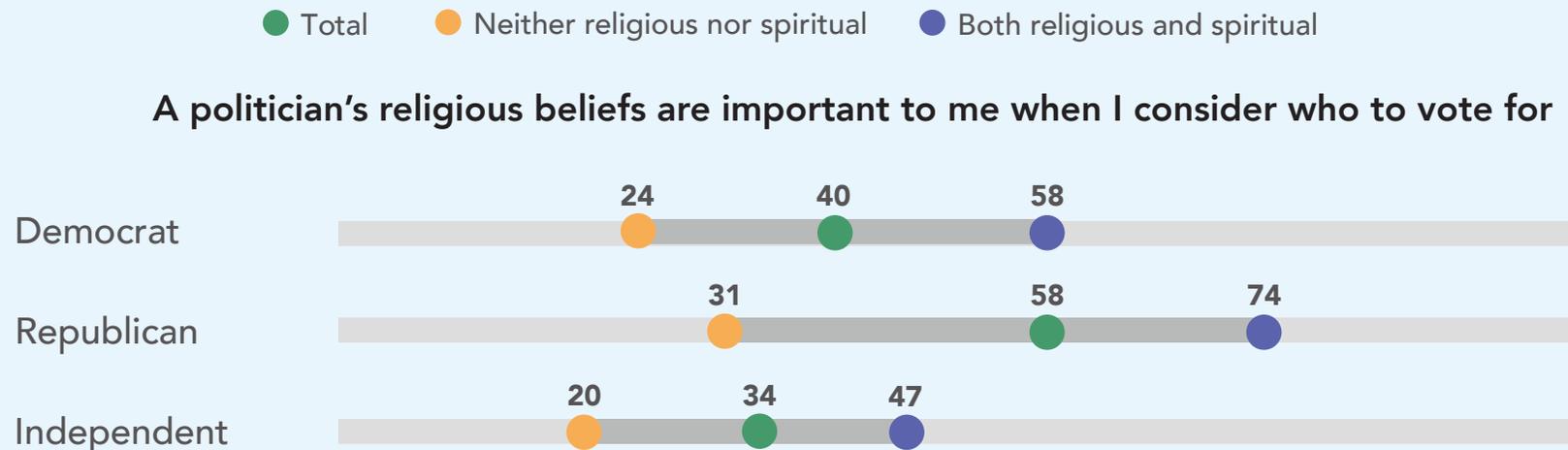
**Base:** Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207



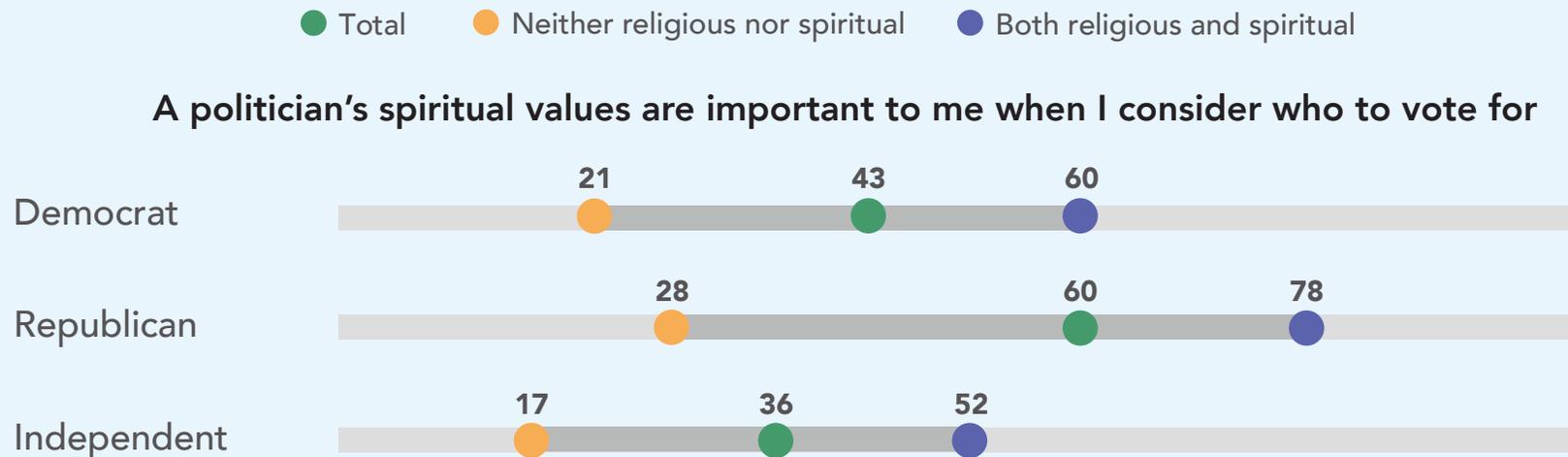
Furthermore, 42 percent of Americans overall—including 59 percent of those who are both religious and spiritual—say a politician’s religious beliefs are important when considering who to vote for. And 44 percent of Americans overall—including 62 percent of those who are both religious and spiritual—say a politician’s spiritual values are important. Again, Republicans in particular say that a politician’s religion and spirituality influence who they vote for. Even among Americans who are neither religious nor spiritual, about two in ten say they consider a politician’s beliefs and values when deciding who to vote for; see Figure 2.

### Most Americans who are both religious and spiritual say a politician’s beliefs influence their voting.

Figure 2. Percent who strongly or somewhat agree with the following statements:



## Most Americans who are both religious and spiritual say a politician's beliefs influence their voting. *(Continued)*



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

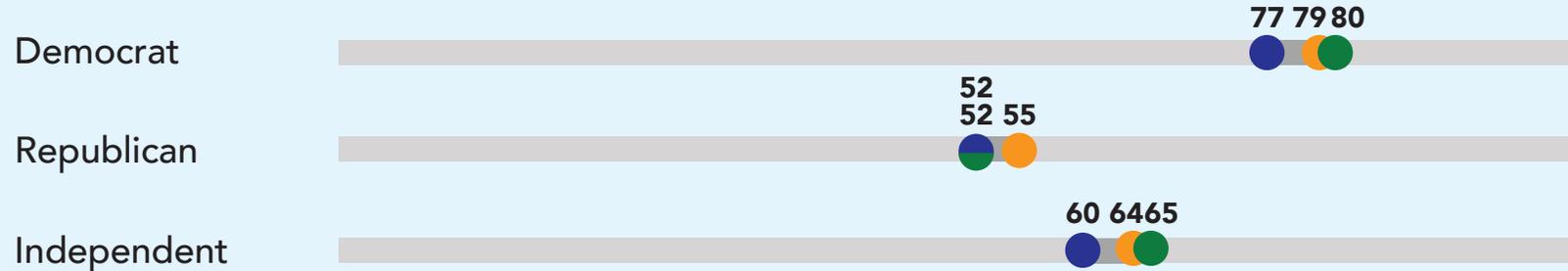
However, 65 percent of Americans believe it is a serious problem that politicians make decisions based on their own religious beliefs, and 64 percent think politicians making decisions based on their own spiritual values is a serious problem. A smaller 59 percent majority think it is a serious problem that religious leaders share their stances on political or social issues, and 59 percent think it is a serious problem that religious leaders support specific political candidates. Moreover, 49 percent of Americans say religious institutions have too much influence on national politics. But Republicans express less concern about mixing religion or spirituality with politics; see Figure 3.

## Fewer Republicans than Democrats or Independents believe that mixing religion or spirituality with politics is a serious problem.

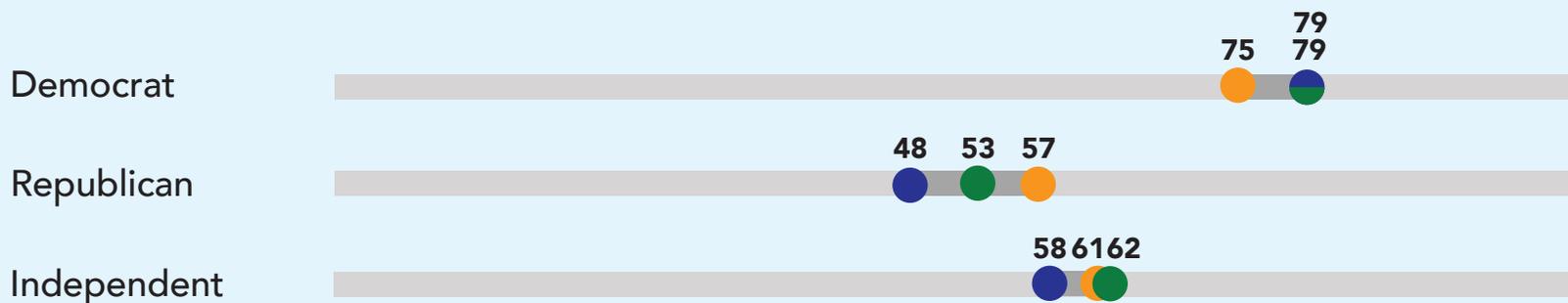
Figure 3. Percent who say each of the following is a very or somewhat serious problem or they somewhat or strongly agree:

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Politicians making decisions based on their own religious beliefs is a serious problem



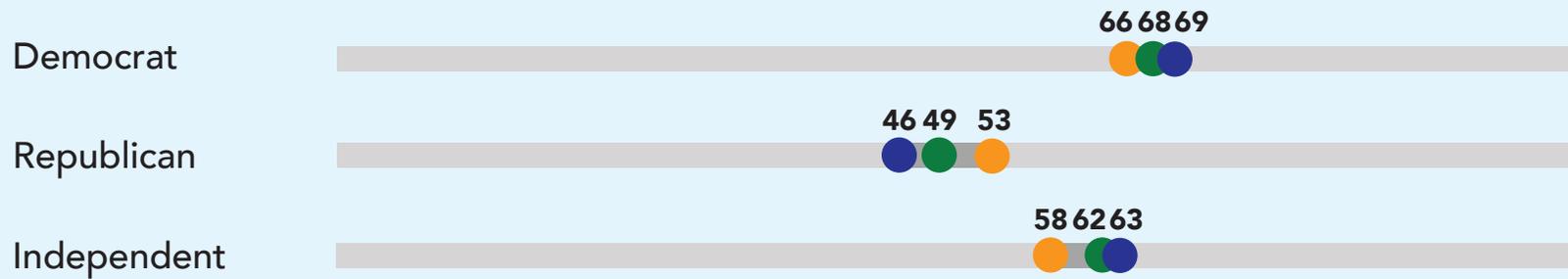
### Politicians making decisions based on their own spiritual values is a serious problem



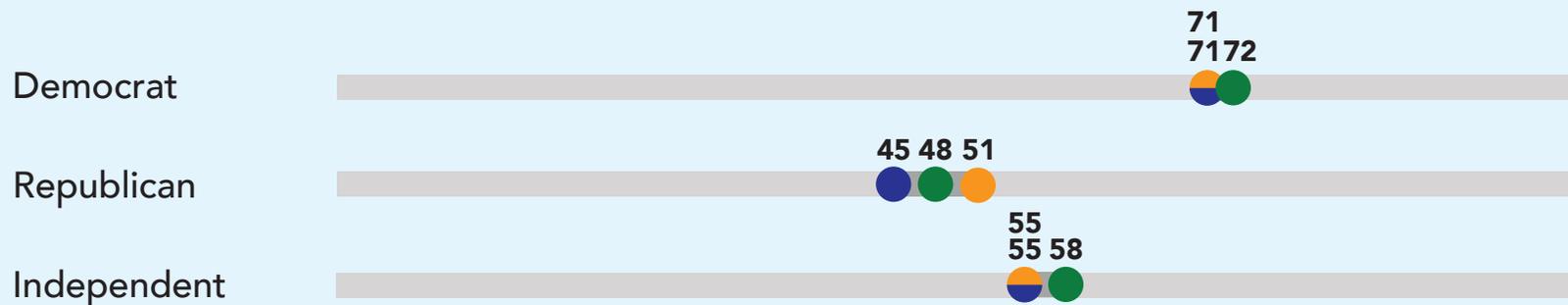
## Fewer Republicans than Democrats or Independents believe that mixing religion or spirituality with politics is a serious problem. *(Continued)*

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Religious leaders sharing their stance on political or social issues is a serious problem



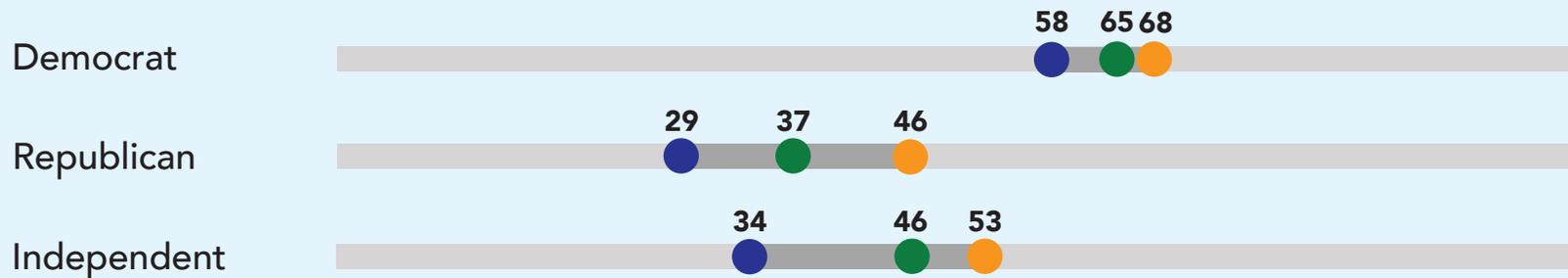
### Religious leaders supporting specific candidates is a serious problem



## Fewer Republicans than Democrats or Independents believe that mixing religion or spirituality with politics is a serious problem. *(Continued)*

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Religious institutions have too much influence in national politics



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

## 2

# Americans' views on the extent of divisiveness in the United States

Eighty percent of Americans say political hostility among ordinary people is a serious problem, including 48 percent who say it is very serious. This is [similar to findings from a 2021 Public Agenda survey](#), in which 45 percent of Americans said political hostility and divisiveness between ordinary Americans was very serious.

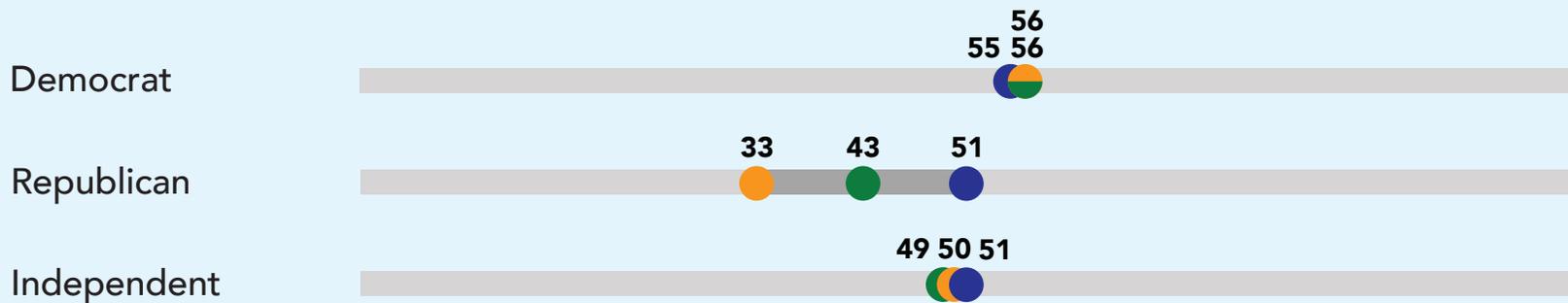
Overall, more Democrats than Republicans see political hostility and divisiveness as very serious. However, Republicans who are both religious and spiritual are more likely to say that political hostility among ordinary people is a very serious problem, compared to Republicans who are neither religious nor spiritual; see Figure 4.

## More Democrats and Independents than Republicans think divisiveness is a very serious problem.

Figure 4. Percent who say the following is a very serious problem:

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Political hostility and divisiveness between ordinary Americans



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

A growing share of Americans attribute divisiveness among politicians to divisiveness among the general public. About half of Americans (51 percent) believe main reason our political leaders are divided is because there is not much common ground among the American people. There is little variation among Democrats and Republicans in these views.

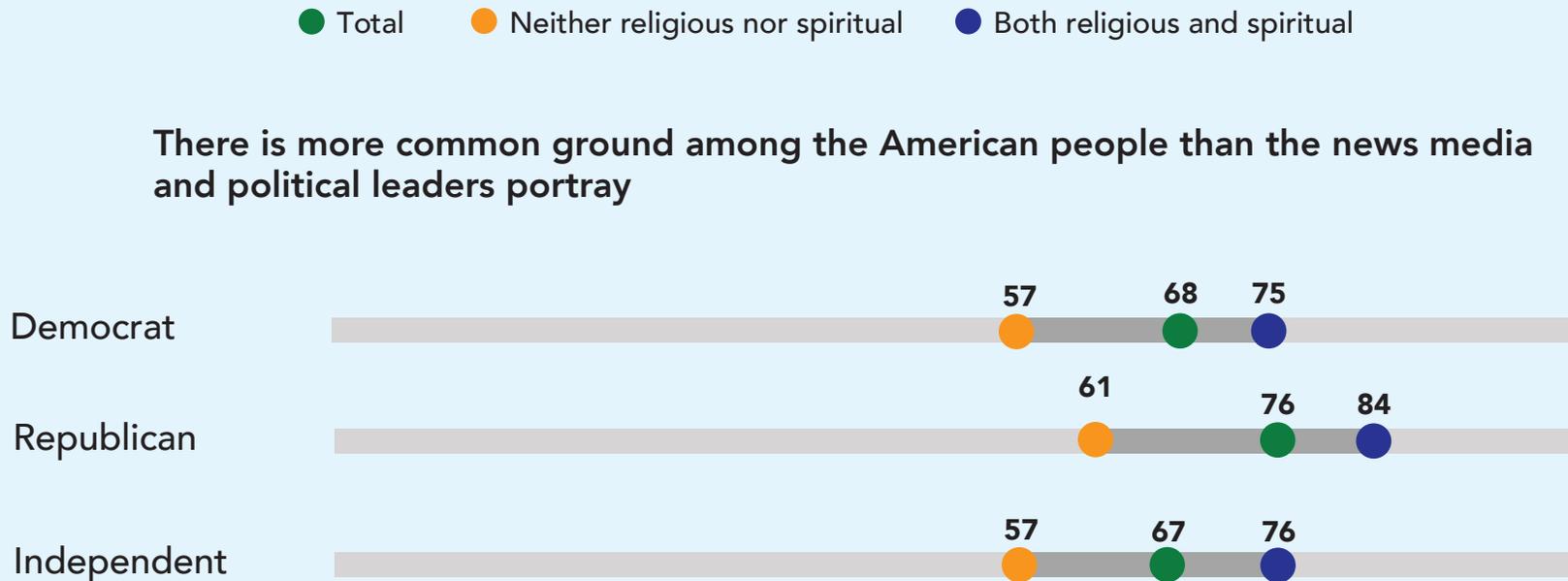
However, these views represent [a shift from Public Agenda's 2019 survey](#), in which only 42 percent of Americans said our political leaders are divided because there is not much common ground among the American people. In other words, a growing share of Americans attribute divisiveness among politicians to a lack of common ground among the general public.

However, most Americans—68 percent—say there is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders portray. These views have changed very little since a [2021 Public Agenda survey](#). Overall, Republicans are more likely to believe divisiveness is exaggerated. But across political affiliations, more people who are both religious and spiritual say divisiveness is exaggerated compared to those who are neither religious nor spiritual; see Figure 5.

Sixty-six percent of Americans overall believe politicians should put aside their differences and compromise, including 68 percent of Democrats, 59 percent of Republicans, and 69 percent of Independents. There are no significant differences by religiosity or spirituality in these views.

## Americans who are both religious and spiritual are especially likely to believe the news media and political leaders exaggerate divisiveness.

Figure 5. Percent of Americans who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statement:



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

## 3

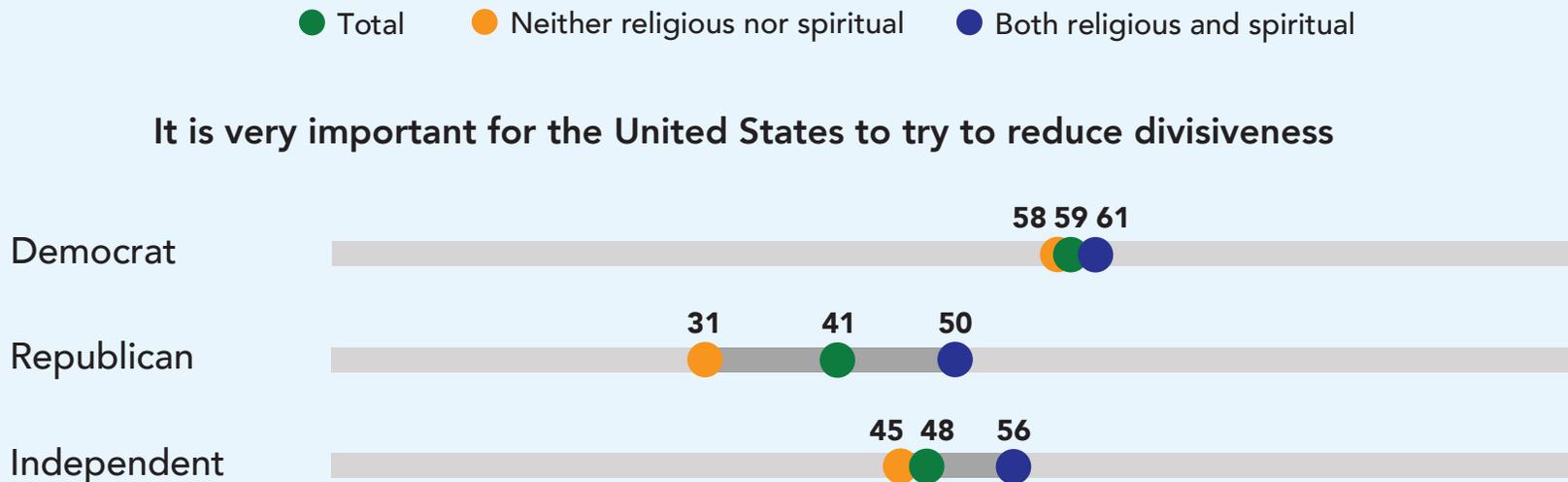
## Declining belief in the importance of reducing divisiveness

Compared to 2019, fewer Americans now believe reducing divisiveness is very important. Nearly half of Americans (48 percent) believe it is very important for the United States to try to reduce divisiveness. But in a [2019 Public Agenda survey](#), 65 percent of Americans believed it was very important to do so.

Regardless of religiosity and spirituality, Democrats in particular believe reducing divisiveness is very important. But Republicans and Independents who are both religious and spiritual are more likely to believe it is very important than those who are neither religious nor spiritual; see Figure 6.

## Among Republicans and Independents, religiosity and spirituality are correlated with believing that reducing divisiveness is very important.

Figure 6. Percent of Americans who say the following:



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

Similarly, [compared to a 2021 Public Agenda survey](#), there has been a decline in the share of people who say it is important to have better ways to understand those whose political affiliations differ from theirs. Fifty-one percent of people who are not Democrats believe it is important to have better ways to understand Democrats, a 12 percentage point decline from 2021. Fifty-six percent of people

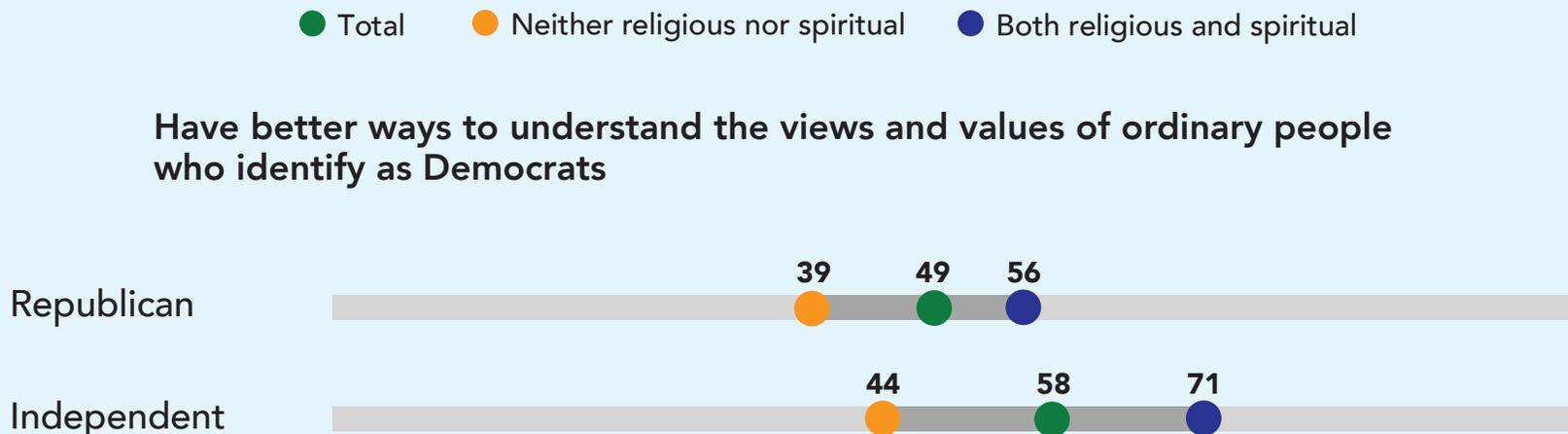
who are not Republicans believe it is important to have better ways to understand Republicans, an 11 percentage point decline.

However, people who are both religious and spiritual are more likely than those who are neither religious nor spiritual to say that understanding people whose political affiliations are different from theirs is important; see Figure 7.



## Religious and spiritual Americans are more likely to say it is important to understand people whose political affiliations are different from theirs.

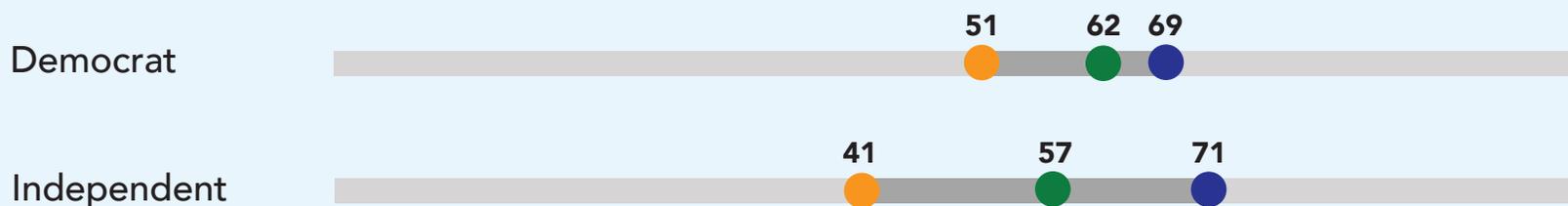
Figure 7. Percent of Americans who say it is very or somewhat important to:



## Religious and spiritual Americans are more likely to say it is important to understand people whose political affiliations are different from theirs. *(Continued)*

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

Have better ways to understand the views and values of ordinary people who identify as Republicans



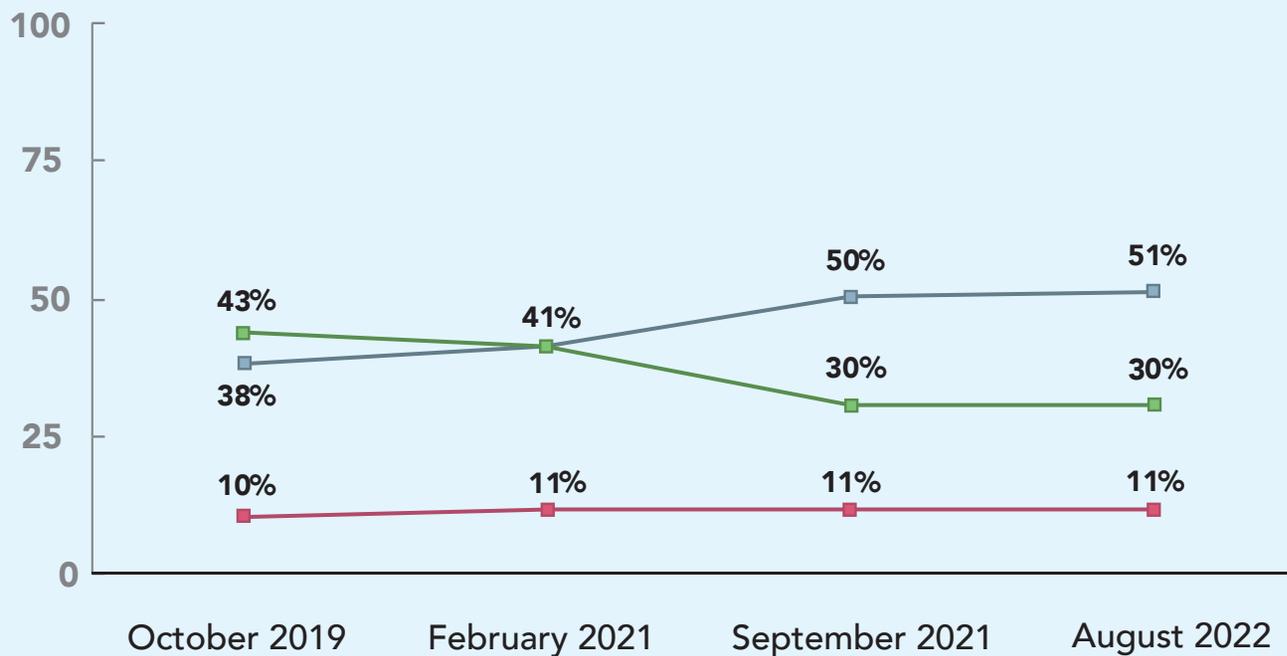
**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

Compared to a Public Agenda survey fielded in [October 2019](#), an increased share of people worry that Americans have both too many fundamental disagreements and that they are unable to talk about disagreements constructively—including about half of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. A decreased share of Americans worry only about an inability to disagree constructively; see Figure 8.

## Since 2019, fewer people are only worried that Americans don't know how to disagree constructively. A growing share worry that Americans also have fundamental disagreements and conflicting values.

Figure 8. Percent of Americans who worry more about each of the following:

- Americans don't know how to talk about their disagreements and conflicts in constructive ways
- Americans have too many fundamental disagreements and conflicting values
- Both equally



**Base:** August 2022: All respondents, N=2,219; September 2021: All respondents, N=2,345; February 2021: All respondents, N=1,283; October 2019: All respondents, N=1,548. Data in 2019 was collected via online probability sampling; data in 2021 and 2022 was collected via online non-probability sampling. This methodological change may contribute to some of the differences observed.

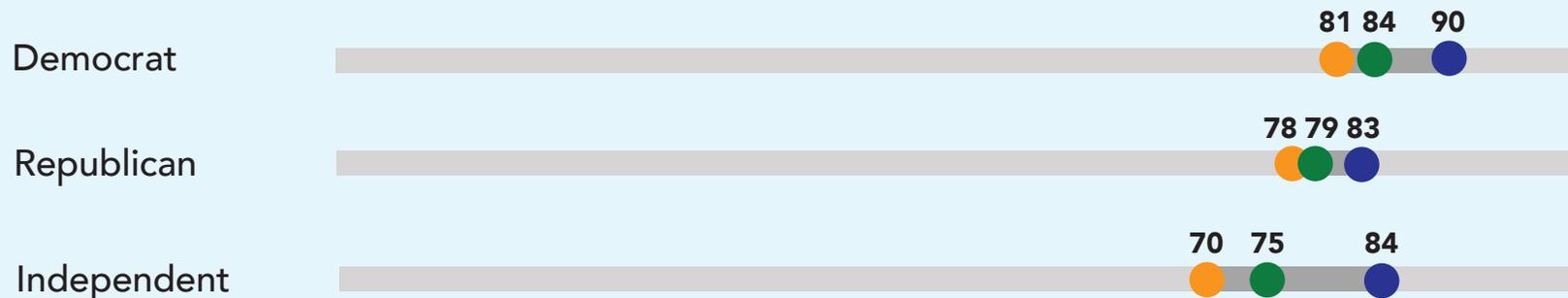
However, most people (77 percent) say it's a good thing that Americans have many different political viewpoints, including some with which they disagree. Democrats and Independents who are both religious and spiritual, compared to those who are neither religious nor spiritual, are especially likely to say they value Americans having a variety of political viewpoints. Republicans vary little by religiosity and spirituality in their responses; see Figure 9.

### Most Americans across political affiliations see the benefit of having a variety of political viewpoints in the country.

Figure 9. Percent who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statement:

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

**It's a good thing that Americans have many different political viewpoints, including some that I disagree with**



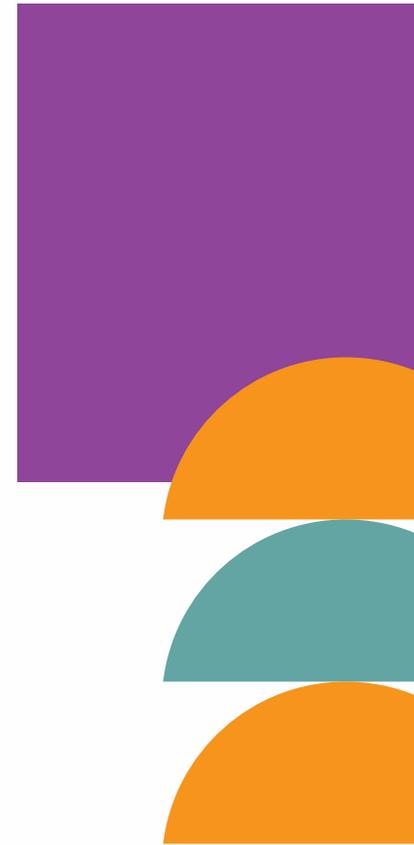
**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

## 4 How religious and spiritual Americans are trying to bridge partisan divides

Many Americans report trying to understand and connect with people whose political views differ from theirs, with no significant differences by political affiliation. However, Americans overall who are both religious and spiritual seem especially interested in bridging partisan divides and especially report having tried to do so—more so than Americans who are largely religious or those who are neither religious nor spiritual.

For example, 75 percent of Americans, including majorities across political affiliations, believe they can learn something by talking to people who have different political views than their own. Most (79 percent) also say that when people have political views that differ from theirs, they try to understand where they are coming from—including majorities across political affiliations.

However, fewer largely religious people than those who are both religious and spiritual say they have tried to understand people with different political views or believe they can learn from them; see Figure 10.



## More Americans who are both religious and spiritual say they try to understand people with different political views and believe they can learn from them. Fewer people who are largely religious say this.

Figure 10. Percent who somewhat or strongly agree with the following statements:

**I can learn something by talking to people whose political views are different from mine**



**When people have political views that are different from mine, I try to understand where they are coming from**



**Base:** Both religious and spiritual, N=917; Largely religious, N=99; Largely spiritual, N=369; Neither religious nor spiritual, N=834

Americans not only think they can learn something by talking to people with differing political views. Most (68 percent) also say that in the past twelve months, they have made an effort to better understand political viewpoints that differ from theirs, and 61 percent say they have gotten to know someone whose political views are different from theirs. About half (49 percent) of Americans say they have had a constructive conversation about politics with someone whose political views differ from theirs; see Figure 11.

There are no significant differences by political affiliation in how often Americans say they have engaged in these types of bridge-building activities. But Americans who are both religious and spiritual are more likely than those who are largely religious or who are neither religious nor spiritual to have gotten to know someone or made an effort to better understand someone whose political views are different from theirs; see Figure 11.

However, most Americans (67 percent) also say they have avoided talking about politics with someone whose political views differ from theirs, with no significant differences by political affiliation. Fewer largely religious Americans say they have avoided talking about politics compared to both religious and spiritual Americans—perhaps because more largely religious people are willing to engage in difficult conversations or perhaps because they know fewer people whose views differ from their own; see Figure 11.

**Americans who are both religious and spiritual are more likely than those who are largely religious or neither religious nor spiritual to have gotten to know someone or made an effort to better understand someone whose political views differ from theirs.**

Figure 11. Percent who have often or sometimes done the following in the past twelve months:

**Gotten to know someone whose political views are different from my own**

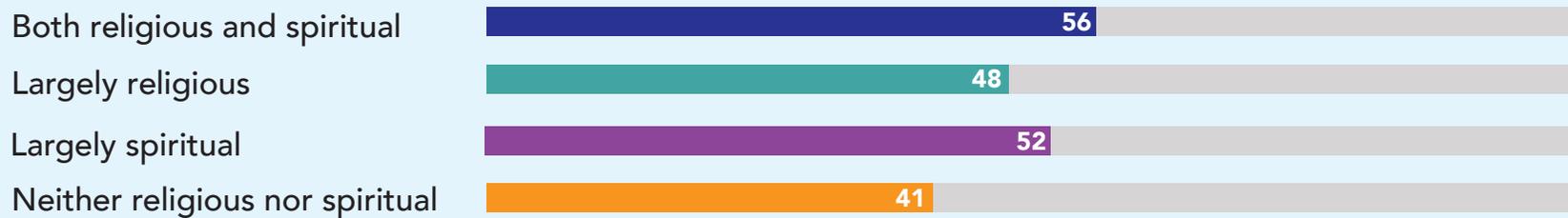


**Made an effort to better understand political viewpoints that are different from my own**

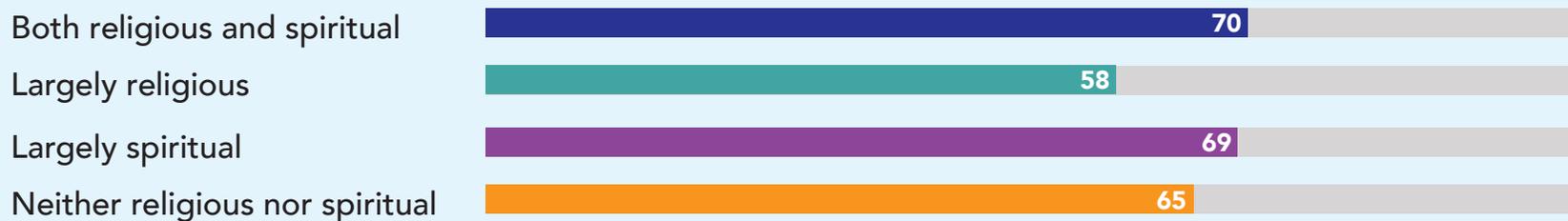


**Americans who are both religious and spiritual are more likely than those who are largely religious or neither religious nor spiritual to have gotten to know someone or made an effort to better understand someone whose political views differ from theirs.** *(Continued)*

**Had a constructive conversation about politics with someone whose political views are different from my own**



**Avoided talking about politics with someone whose political views are different from my own**



**Base:** Both religious and spiritual, N=917; Largely religious, N=99; Largely spiritual, N=369; Neither religious nor spiritual, N=834

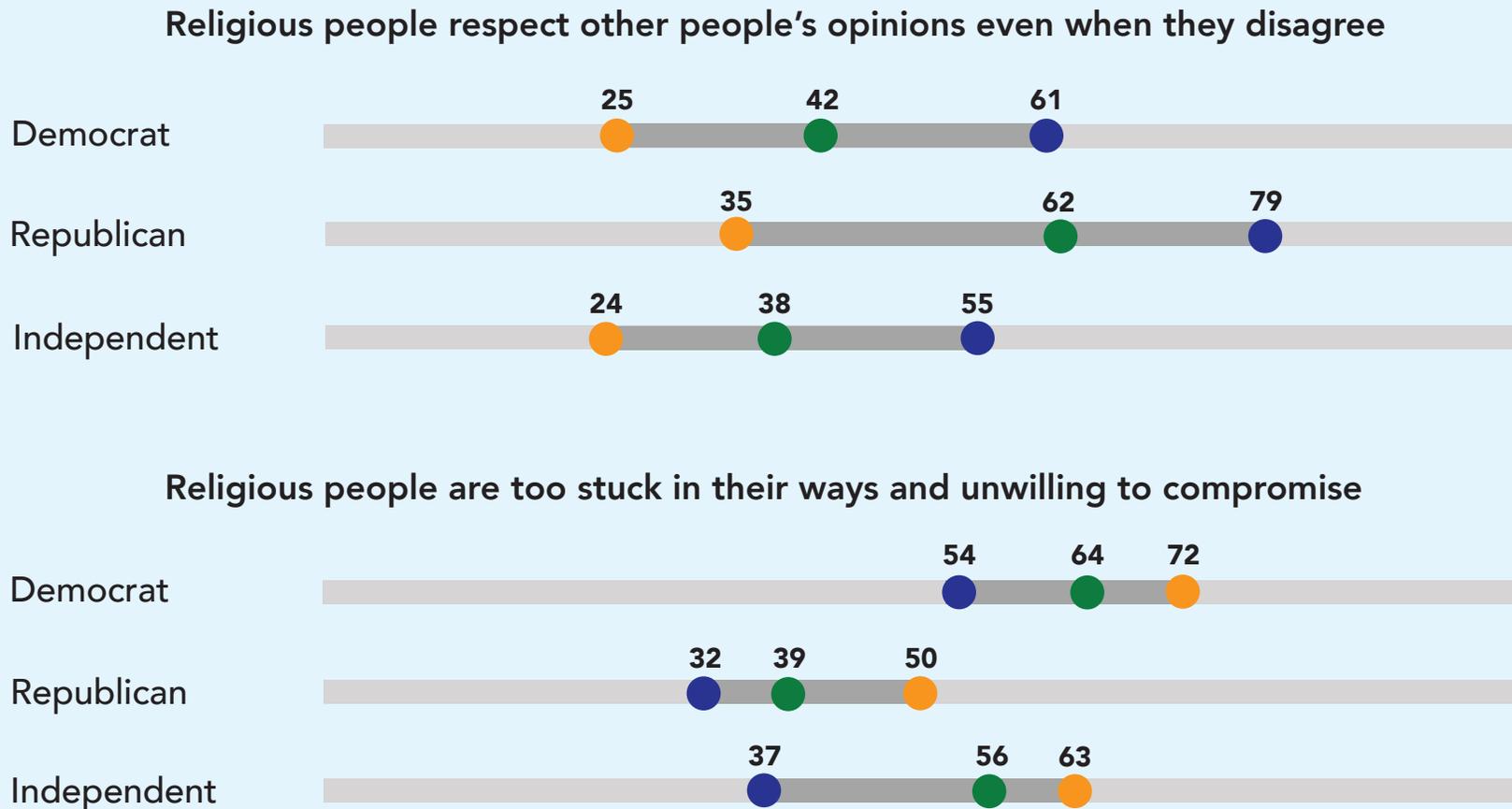
Religion and spirituality may help people navigate challenging political conversations. Among Americans who are both religious and spiritual, 77 percent say their religion and 82 percent say their spirituality helps them remain calm when confronted with political views they disagree with. And 79 percent of those who are both religious and spiritual say their religion helps them to be more understanding of people with different political views, while 81 percent believe their spirituality helps them be more understanding. There is little variation by Democrats and Republicans who are both religious and spiritual in their views on how their religion and spirituality help them navigate political conversations.

Although religious and spiritual people are especially likely to express interest in bridge-building and report more often doing so, 52 percent of Americans believe religious people are too stuck in their ways, and only 45 percent believe religious people respect others' opinions. There are however substantial differences in these views by political affiliation and by spirituality and religiosity; see Figure 12.

## There are substantial differences by political affiliation and by spirituality and religiosity in how Americans view religious people’s capacity to engage in constructive conversations.

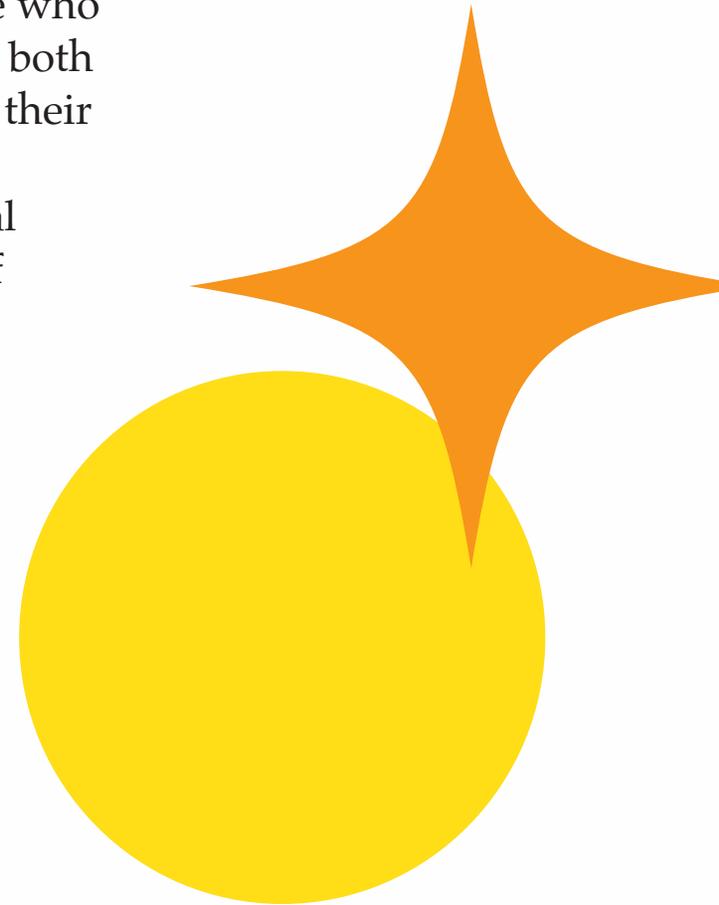
Figure 12. Percent who strongly or somewhat agree with each of the following statements:

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

Most Americans (61 percent) believe it is important to be involved in their community. Across political affiliations, more people who are both religious and spiritual (73 percent) think being involved in their community is important, compared to 50 percent of those who are neither religious nor spiritual. Not only do people who are both religious and spiritual believe it is important to be involved in their community, but 31 percent of them report often or sometimes attending community events or meetings about political or social issues in the past twelve months—compared to only 16 percent of Americans who are neither religious nor spiritual.

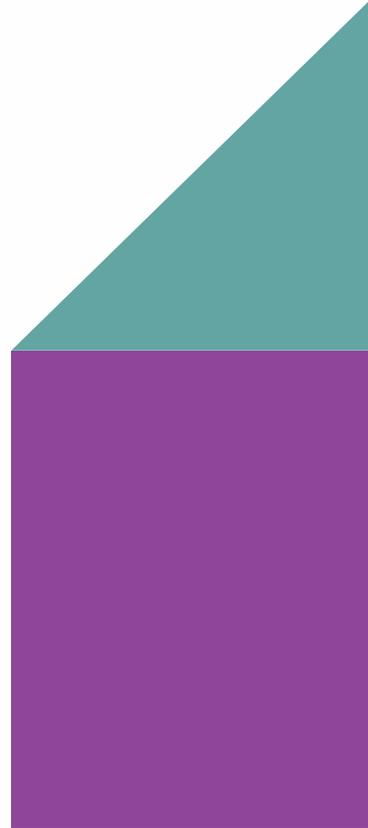
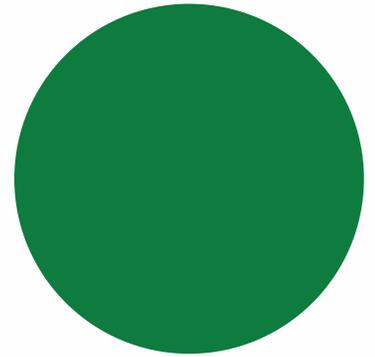


## 5

## Americans' perceptions of how much religion and spirituality can help build cross-partisan bridges

Sixty-two percent of Americans think that spirituality can bring people together in the nation, and 57 percent think religion can bring people together. Predictably, more people who are both religious and spiritual think both spirituality and religion can bring people together, while those who are neither religious nor spiritual are not as convinced; see Figure 13.

However, there is also variation by political affiliation in these beliefs. Republicans are especially likely to believe religion and spirituality can bring people together. In fact, about half of Republicans who are neither religious nor spiritual nonetheless agree that religion and spirituality can play important roles in bringing people together in our nation.

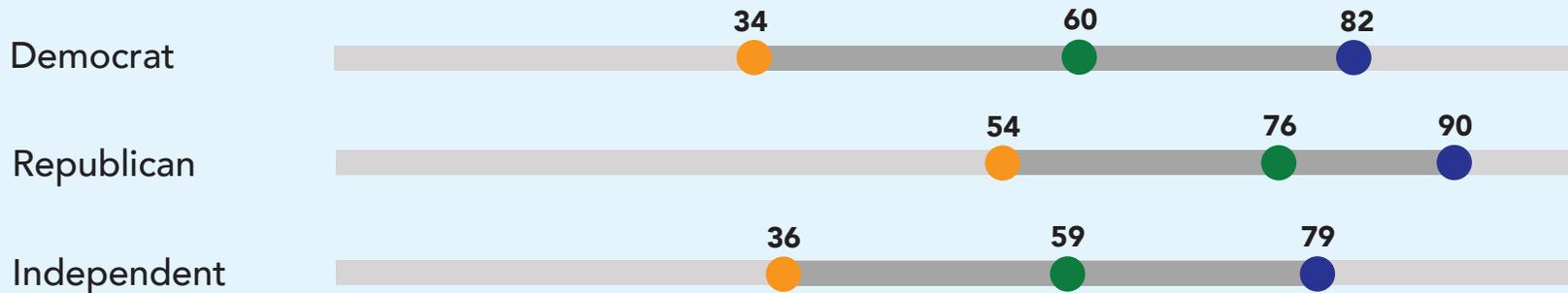


## Most Americans see potential for religion and spirituality to bring people together, especially Republicans.

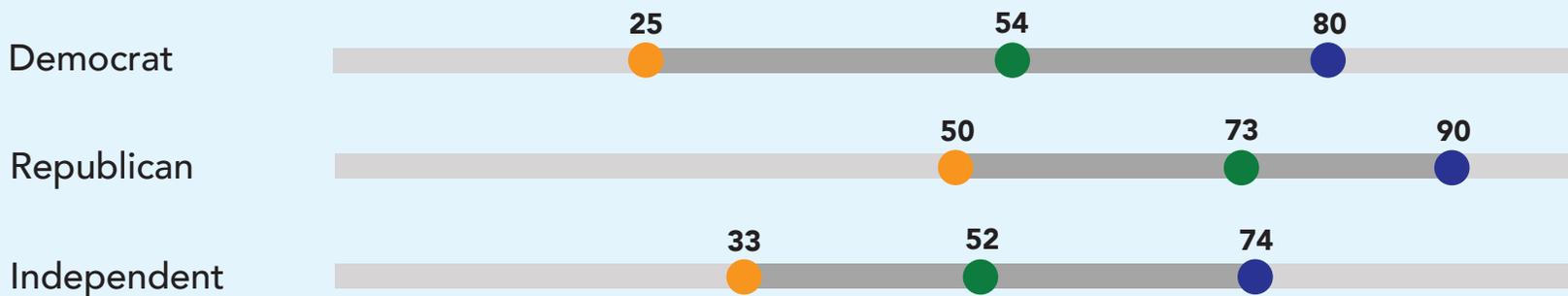
Figure 13. Percent of Americans who somewhat or strongly agree with each of the following statements:

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Spirituality can play an important role in bringing people together in our nation



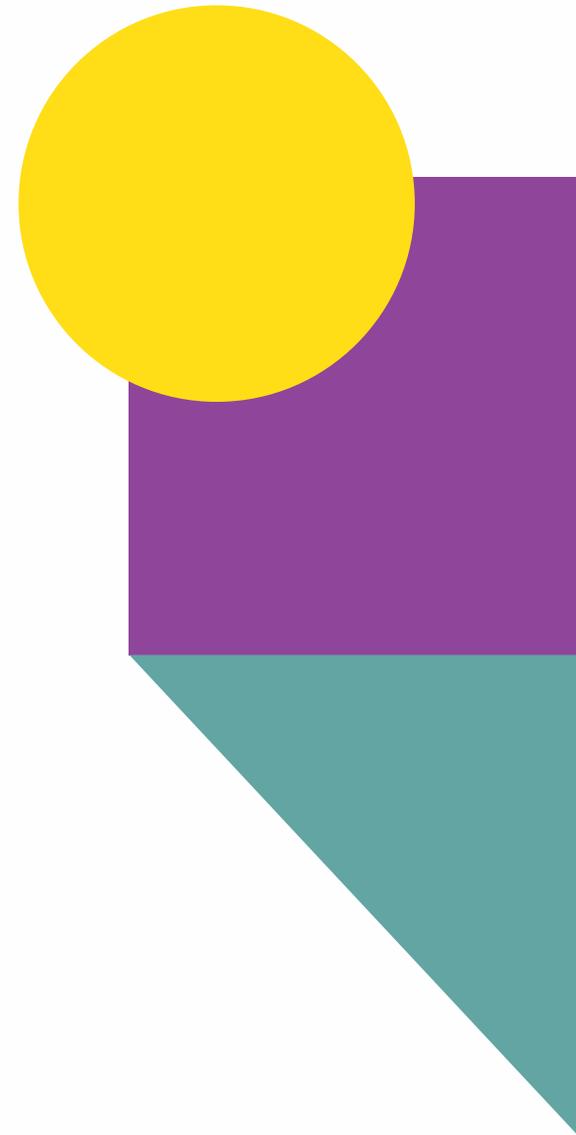
### Religion can play an important role in bringing people together in our nation



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

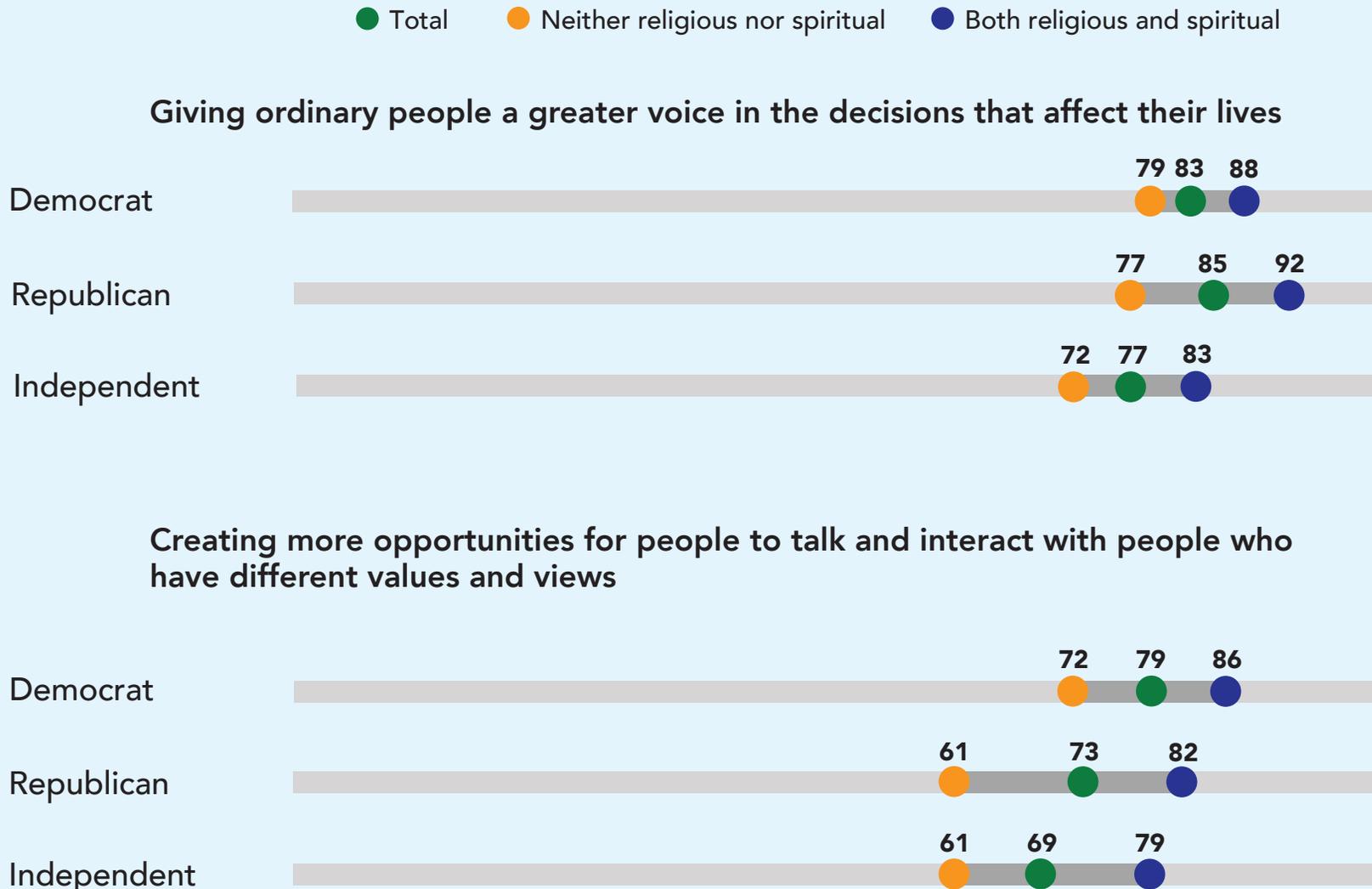
When asked how to reduce divisiveness or destructive disagreements, across political affiliations, the largest share of Americans overall think that giving ordinary people a greater voice, and creating more opportunities for people with different views to interact, would be effective. Fewer see making religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life as effective ways to reduce divisiveness.

Perhaps not surprisingly, both religious and spiritual people are more likely to believe making religion and making spiritual values bigger factors in American life would be effective ways to reduce divisiveness than Americans who are neither religious nor spiritual. Moreover, Republicans who are both religious and spiritual are especially optimistic about the potential of religion and spirituality to reduce divisiveness compared to Democrats who are both religious and spiritual; see Figure 14.



## To reduce divisiveness, more Democrats, Republicans and Independents think it would be effective to give ordinary people a greater voice than it would be to make religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life.

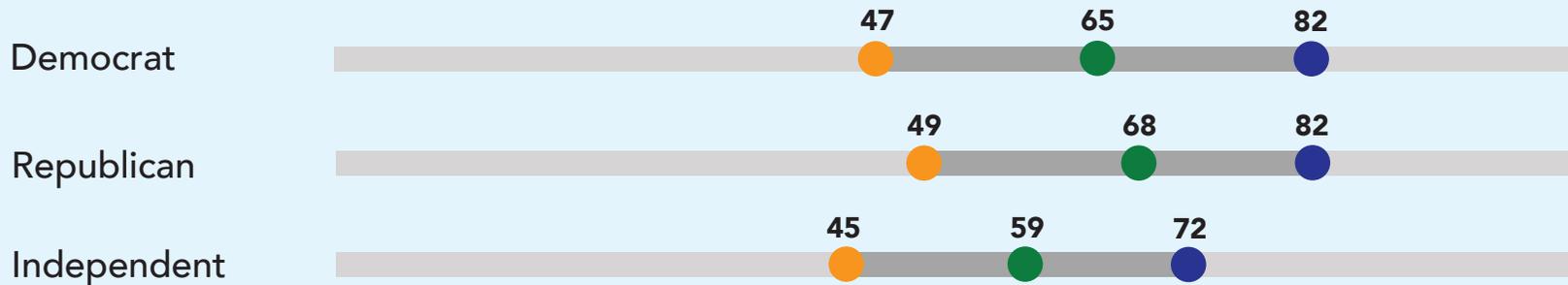
Figure 14. Percent who say each of the following are very or somewhat effective at reducing divisiveness:



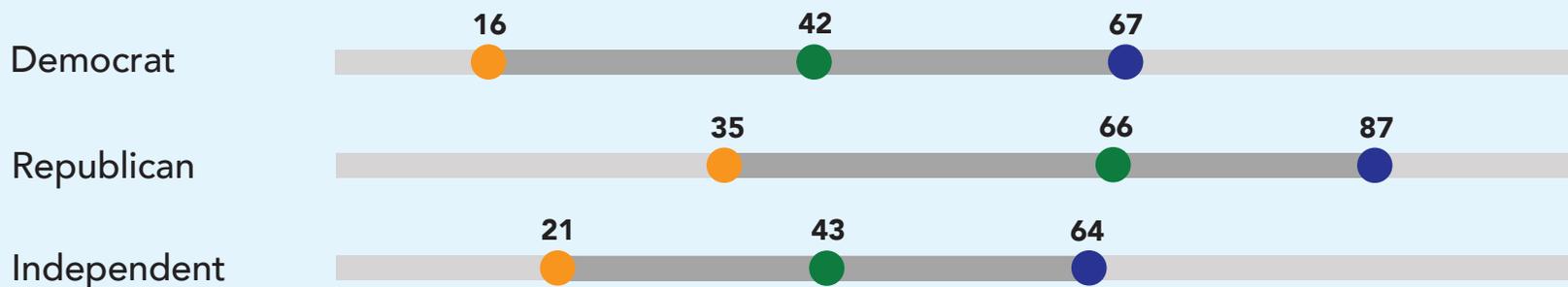
## To reduce divisiveness, more Democrats, Republicans and Independents think it would be effective to give ordinary people a greater voice than it would be to make religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life. *(Continued)*

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Different religious institutions collaborating to create opportunities for people with different values and views to interact



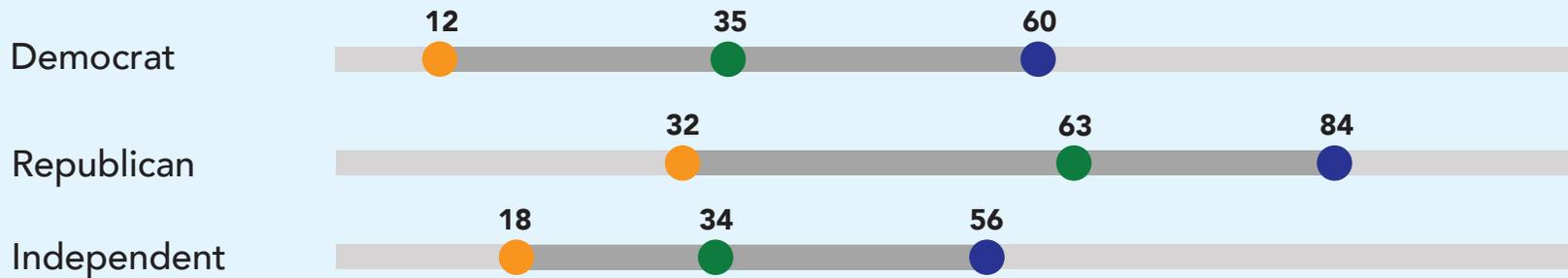
### Making spiritual values a bigger factor in American life



## To reduce divisiveness, more Democrats, Republicans and Independents think it would be effective to give ordinary people a greater voice than it would be to make religion or spirituality bigger factors in American life. *(Continued)*

● Total    ● Neither religious nor spiritual    ● Both religious and spiritual

### Making religion a bigger factor in American life



**Base:** Total Democrats, N=829; Total Republicans, N=600; Total Independents, N=578; Democrats both religious and spiritual, N=322; Republicans both religious and spiritual, N=326; Independents both religious and spiritual, N=207; Democrats neither religious nor spiritual, N=319; Republicans neither religious nor spiritual, N=175; Independents neither religious nor spiritual, N=238

# Methodology in Brief

This report summarizes findings from a nationally representative survey of 2,219 adult Americans 18 years and older. The survey was designed by Public Agenda and fielded August 24-26, 2022, by Ipsos. Respondents completed the survey online in English. The survey has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents. Credibility intervals are greater for population subgroups. The sample was randomly drawn from Ipsos’ online panel, partner online panel sources, and “river” sampling. Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2019 American Community Survey data. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education. Party ID benchmarks are drawn from recent high quality telephone polls.

Due to small sample sizes, this report only discusses groups that are in **bold**.

	DEMOCRAT	REPUBLICAN	INDEPENDENT	APOLITICAL	TOTAL
BOTH RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL	<b>N=322</b>	<b>N=326</b>	<b>N=207</b>	N=62	<b>N=917</b>
LARGELY RELIGIOUS	N=34	N=30	N=25	N=10	<b>N=99</b>
LARGELY SPIRITUAL	N=154	N=69	N=108	N=38	<b>N=369</b>
NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR SPIRITUAL	<b>N=319</b>	<b>N=175</b>	<b>N=238</b>	N=102	<b>N=834</b>
TOTAL	<b>N=829</b>	<b>N=600</b>	<b>N=578</b>	N=212	<b>TOTAL SAMPLE N=2,219</b>

Public Agenda conducted three demographically diverse online focus groups in April 2022 with religious and spiritual people in Washington State, Texas and New York State.

When referencing this report, cite Public Agenda. For a complete methodology and topline with full question wording, email [research@publicagenda.org](mailto:research@publicagenda.org) or go to <http://www.publicagenda.org/reports/hcg-religion-2022/>



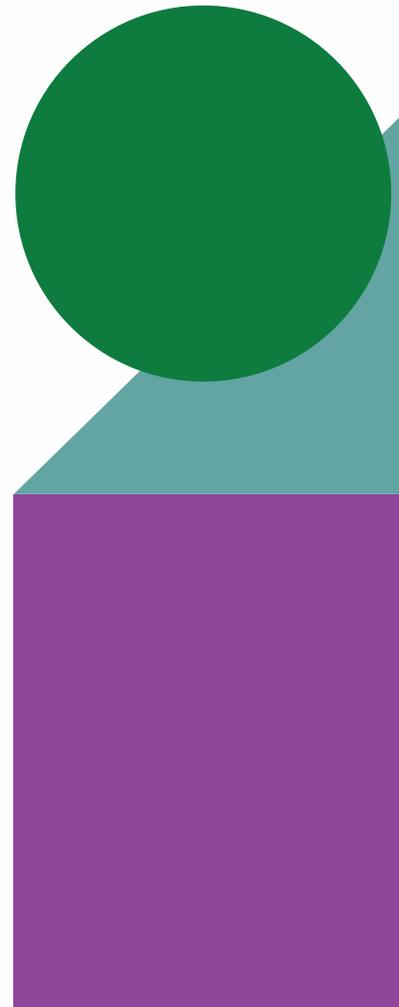
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