

# Adventist Religion & Public Issues Survey

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# Introduction

- ▶ The questions of religious and social identity are deep and abiding. Who are we? Why are we here? Where did we come from? Where are we going?
- ▶ These are not only religious questions, but social and political.
- ▶ Particularly important questions for Adventists and Adventism – a worldwide movement – offers a challenge to modern culture in the earth's last days AND faces a challenge in its witness on important social and political issues of our day.
- ▶ An understanding of the Social and Political Adventist is key to facing this missiological challenge and to shaping our “ministry expression” or engaging corporately to create a place that is more just and meets the needs of all within a society

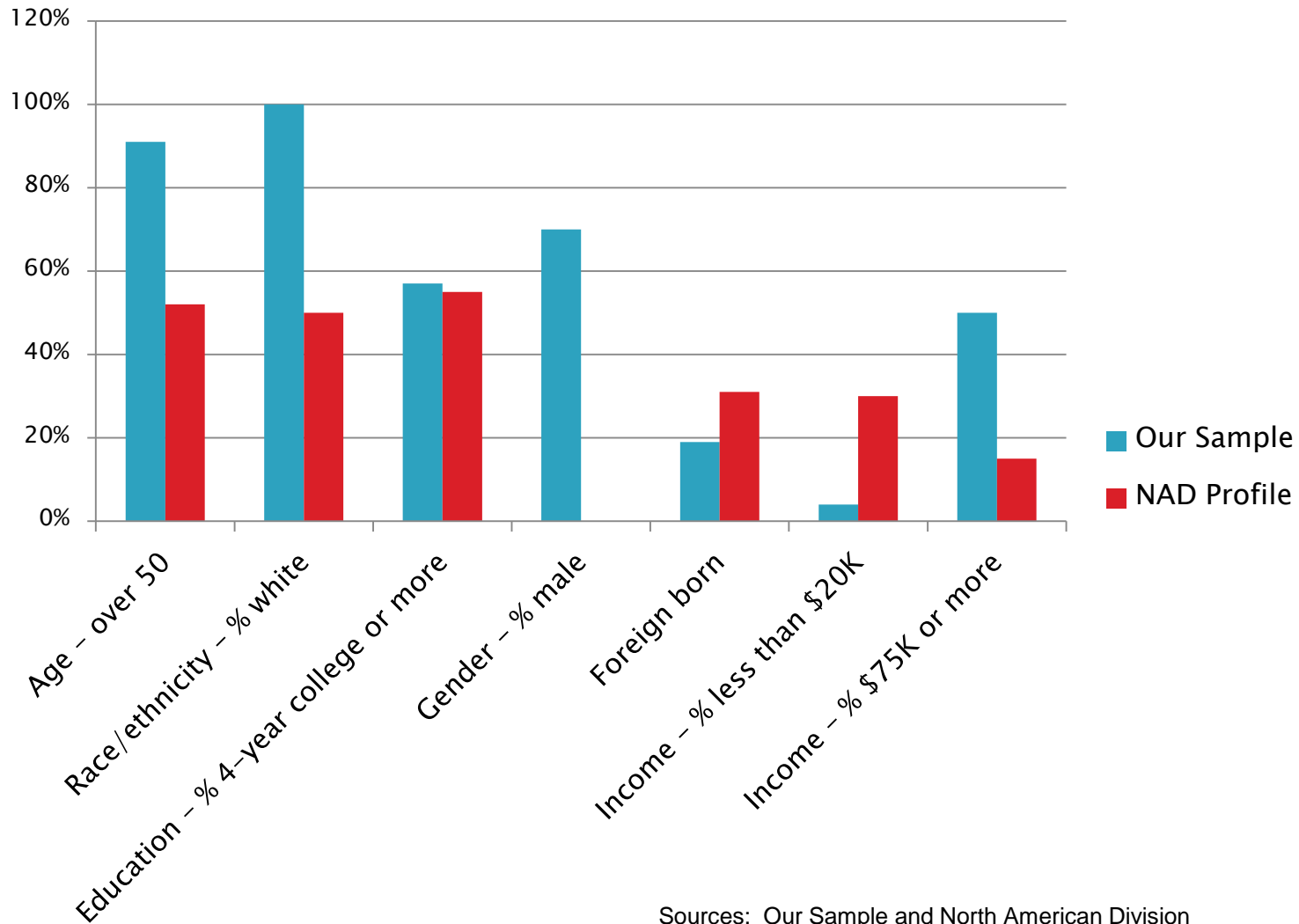
# Methods

- ▶ On March 15 the Adventist Today email subscribers list of 3,336 were emailed an invitation to complete the 2016 Adventist Religion and Public Issues Survey.
  - ▶ Of the 1,236 emails that were open 509 completed the survey for a response rate of 41%.
  - ▶ Replicates 2012 SDA Religion & Social Issues Survey (530 from a random sample of Faculty & Staff of Adventist Universities) – Gavin, Ellis & VanderWaal
  - ▶ Replicates 2004 Religion and Public Issues Survey (Roger Dudley & Edwin Hernandez)
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# Demographics of Sample

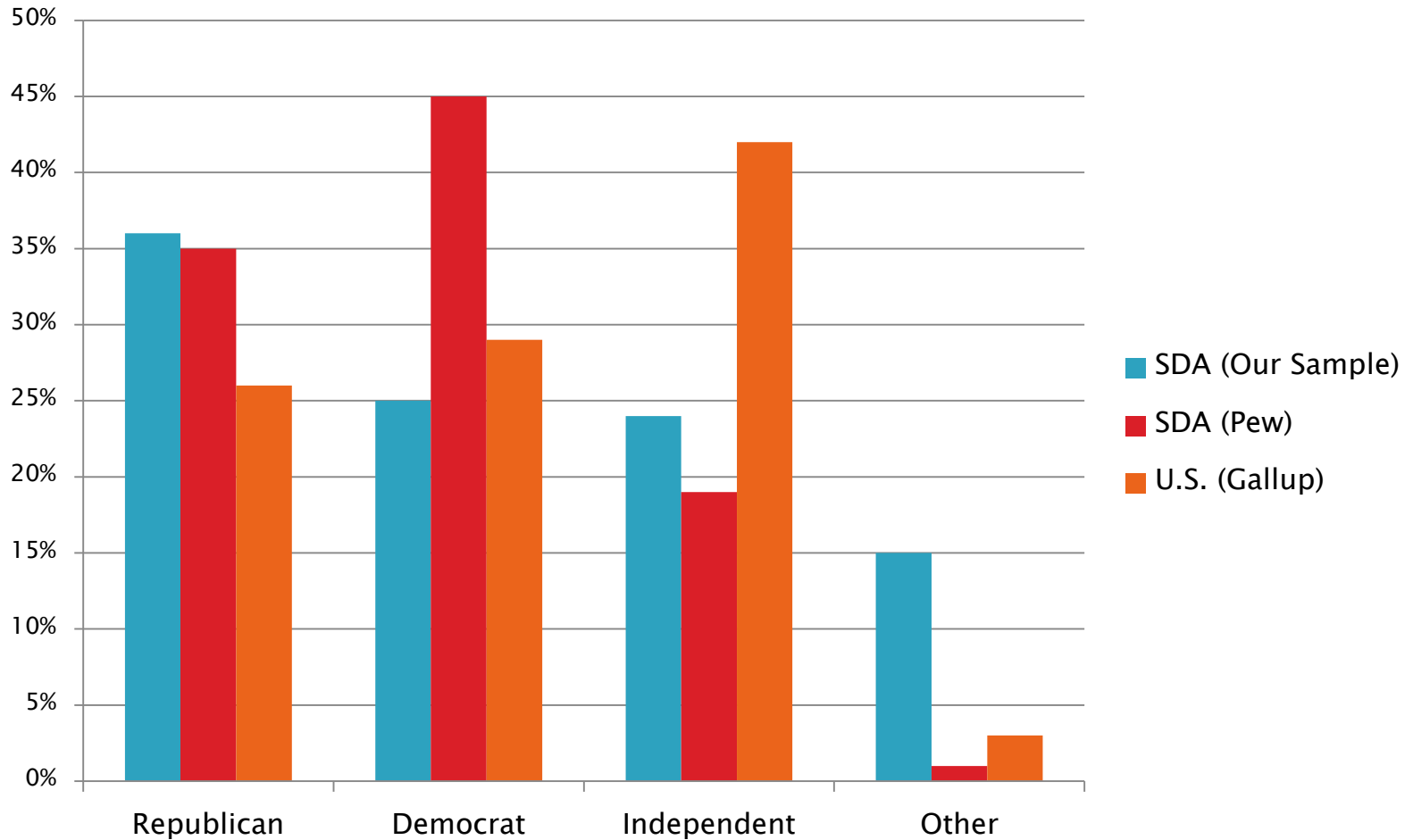
- ▶ Total respondents – 509
- ▶ Gender – **70% male, 30% female**
- ▶ Race and ethnicity – 100% white
- ▶ Foreign born – 19%
- ▶ Age – 18–35 2%, 36–50 7%, 51–65 30%, **over 65 61%**
- ▶ Education – **some college 43%, 4-year degree, 43%, post-college 14%**
- ▶ Income – less than \$20K 4%, \$20K–\$50K 21%, \$50K–\$75K 16%, \$50K–\$75K 16%, \$100K or more 36%
- ▶ Marital status – **married 83%**, divorced or separated 7%, single never married 3%, widowed 7%

# Comparative Demographics



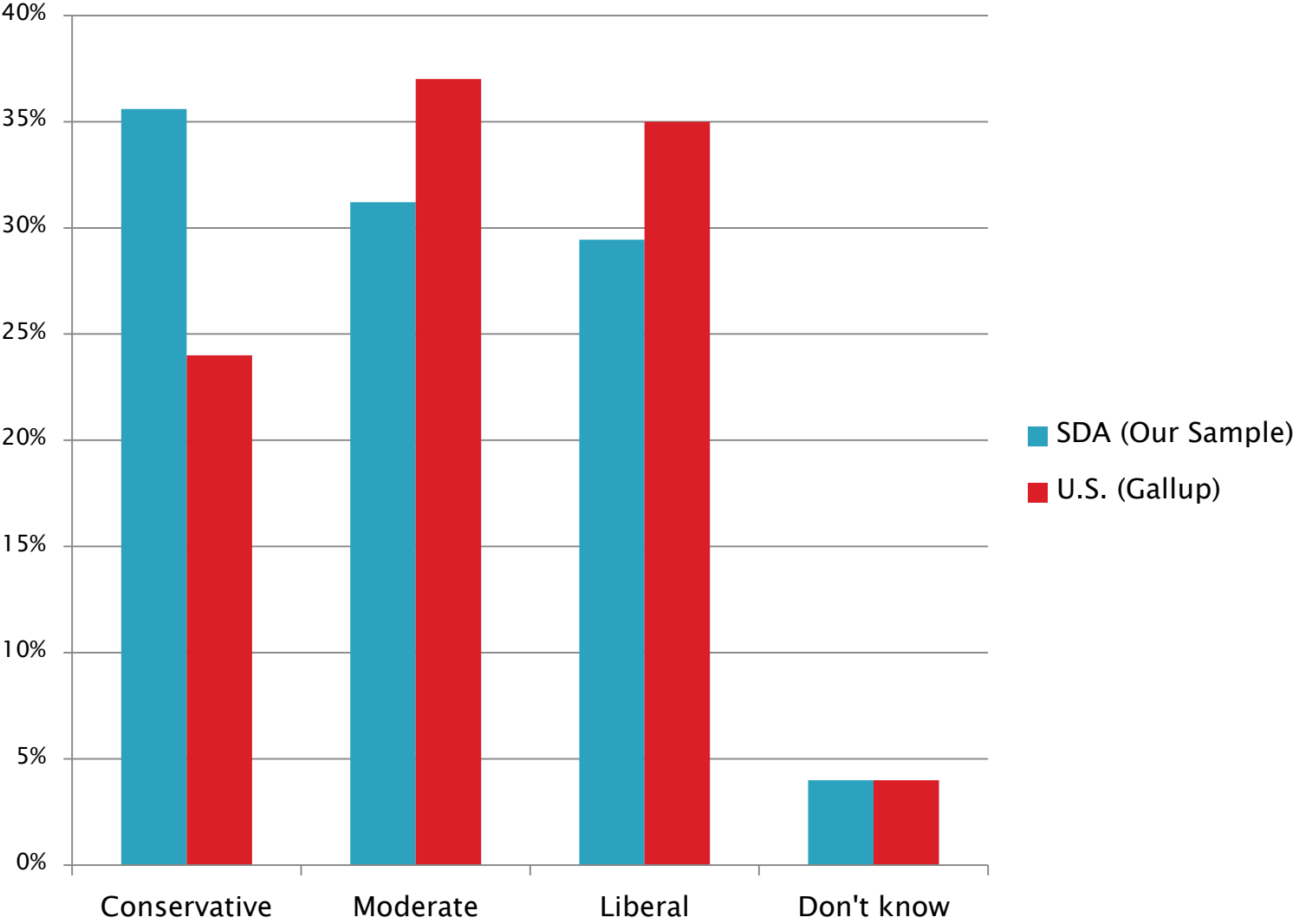
Sources: Our Sample and North American Division  
NOTE: Gender data mission from NAD

# Party Identification



Sources: Our Sample (SDA 2016), Pew (SDA 2014), Gallup (U.S. 2015)

# Political Ideology



# U.S. Political Ideology Trends

## *Americans' Self-Identified Political Ideology -- 1992-2015*

How would you describe your political views -- [very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal]?

■ % Conservative   ■ % Moderate   ■ % Liberal

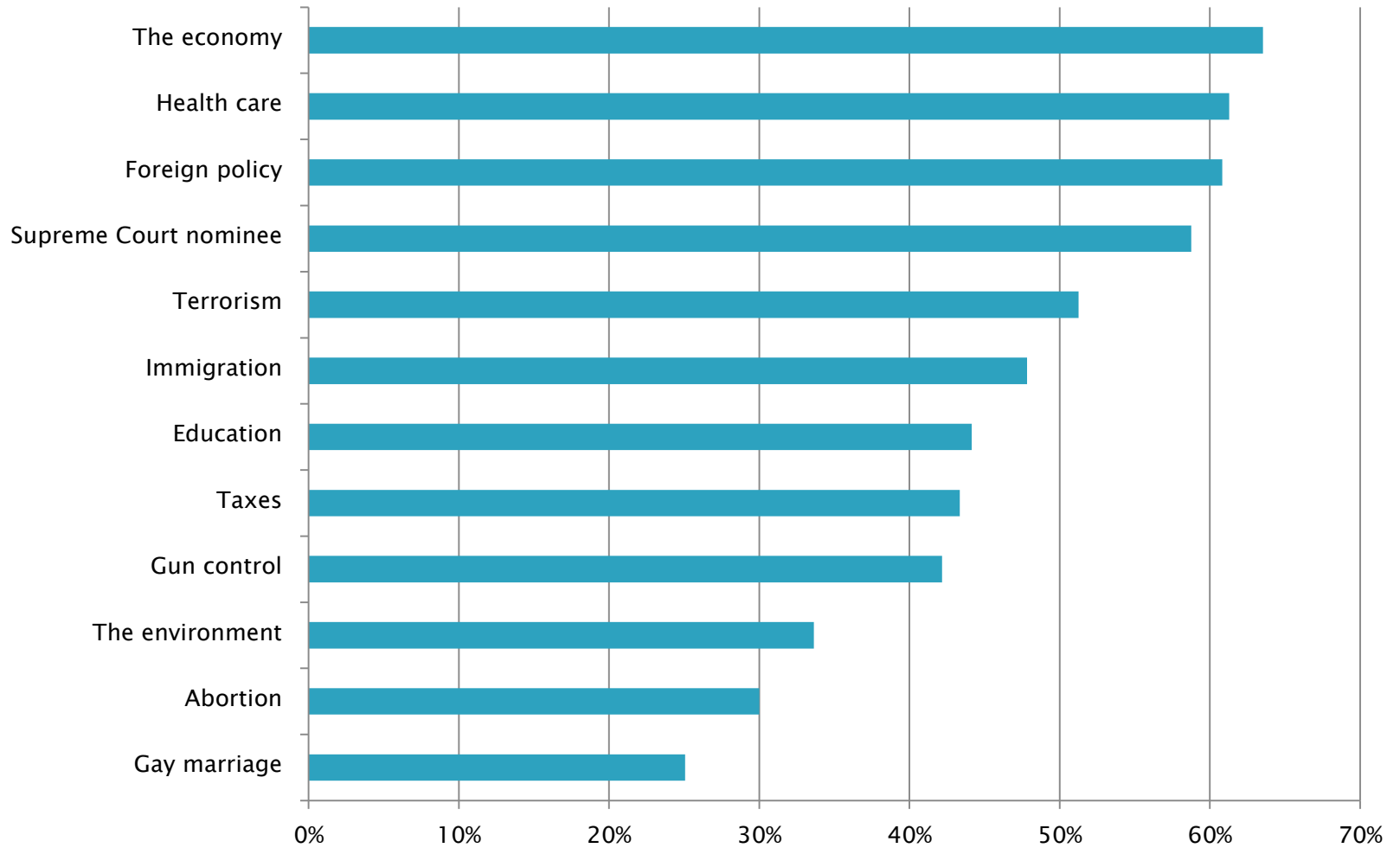


Based on annual averages of Gallup multiday telephone polls

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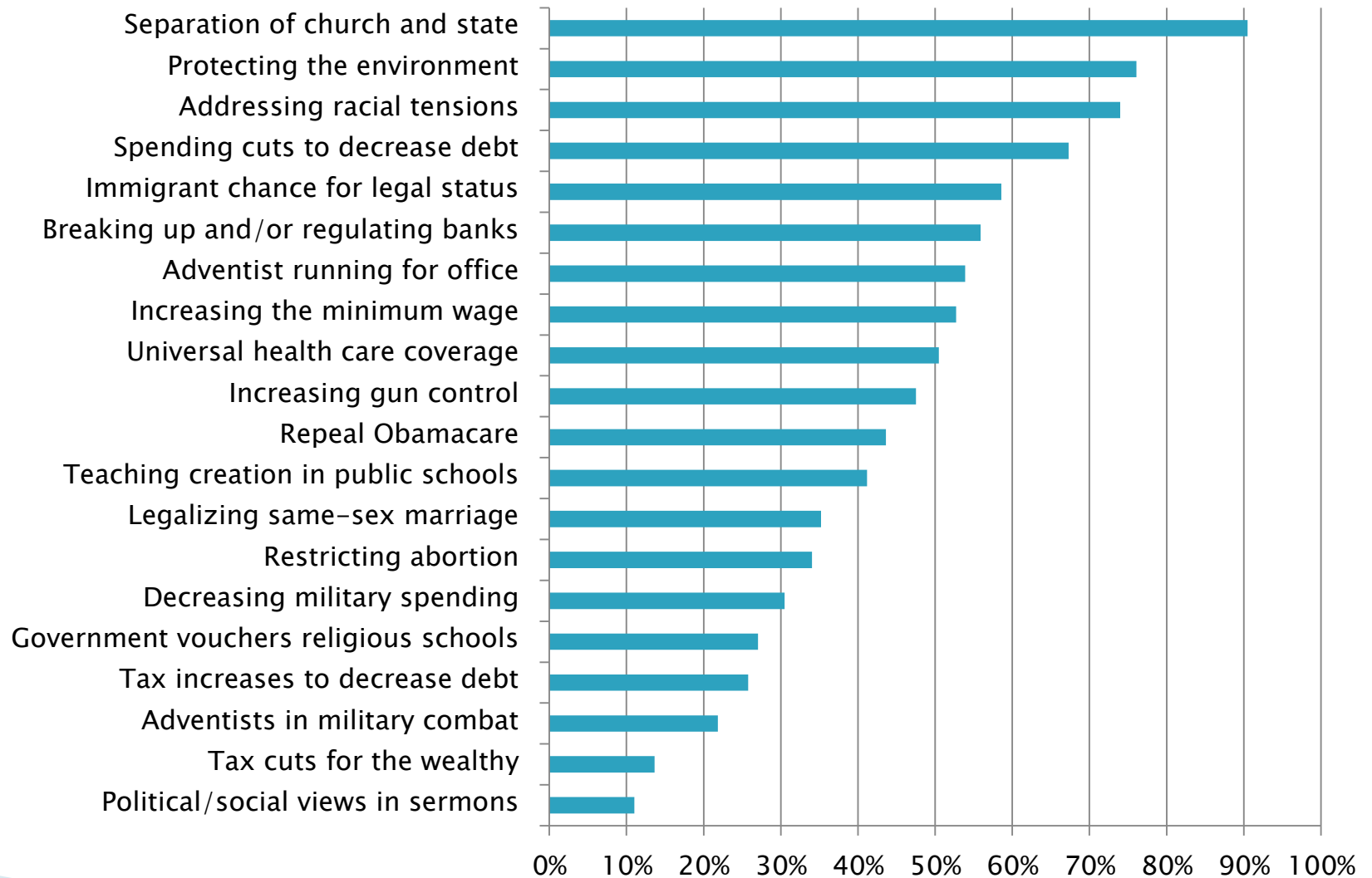


# Political and Social Issues, SDA Very Important



Source: Our Sample

# Political and Social Issues, SDA Favor or Strongly Favor

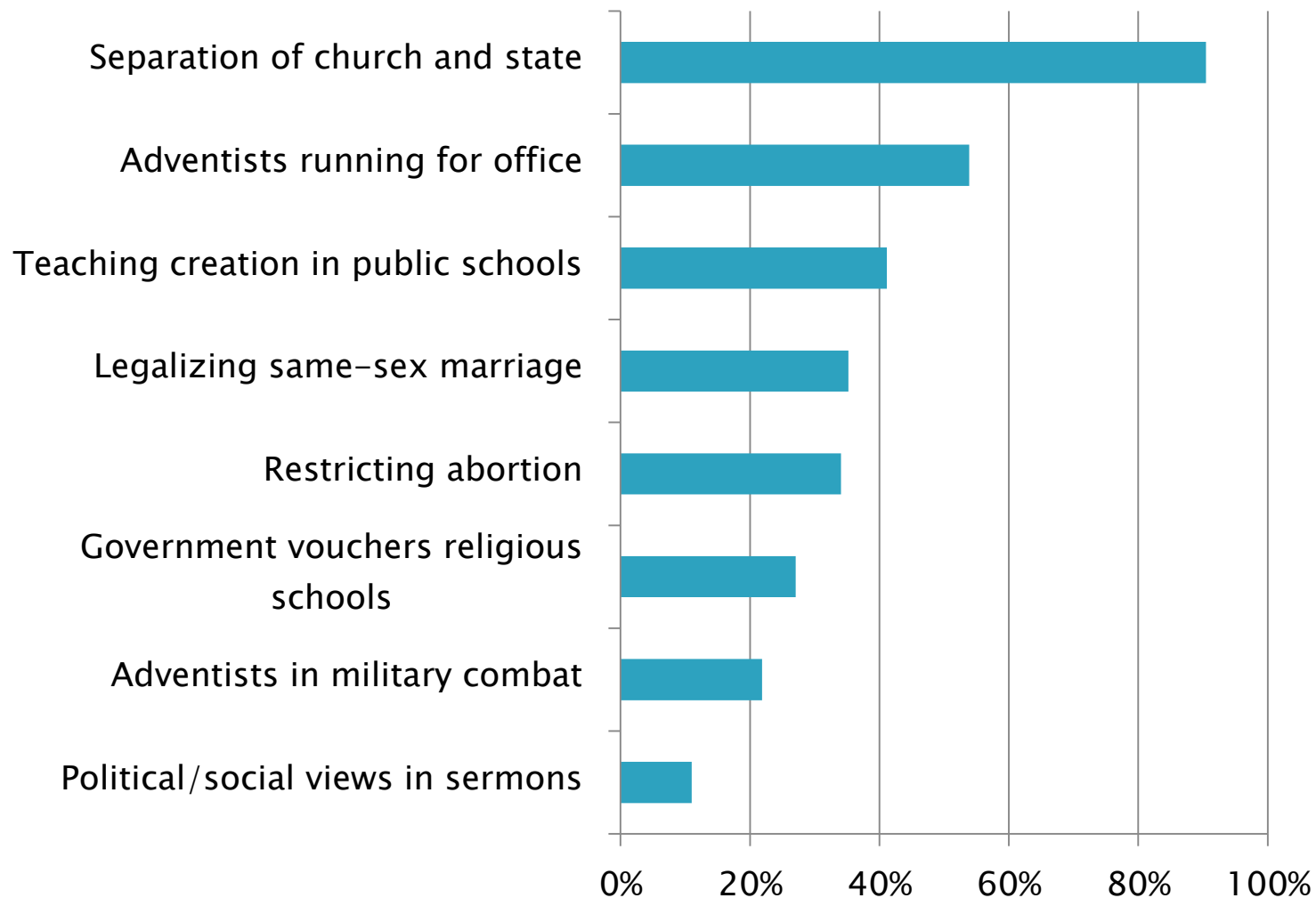


Source: Our Sample

# Issue Clusters

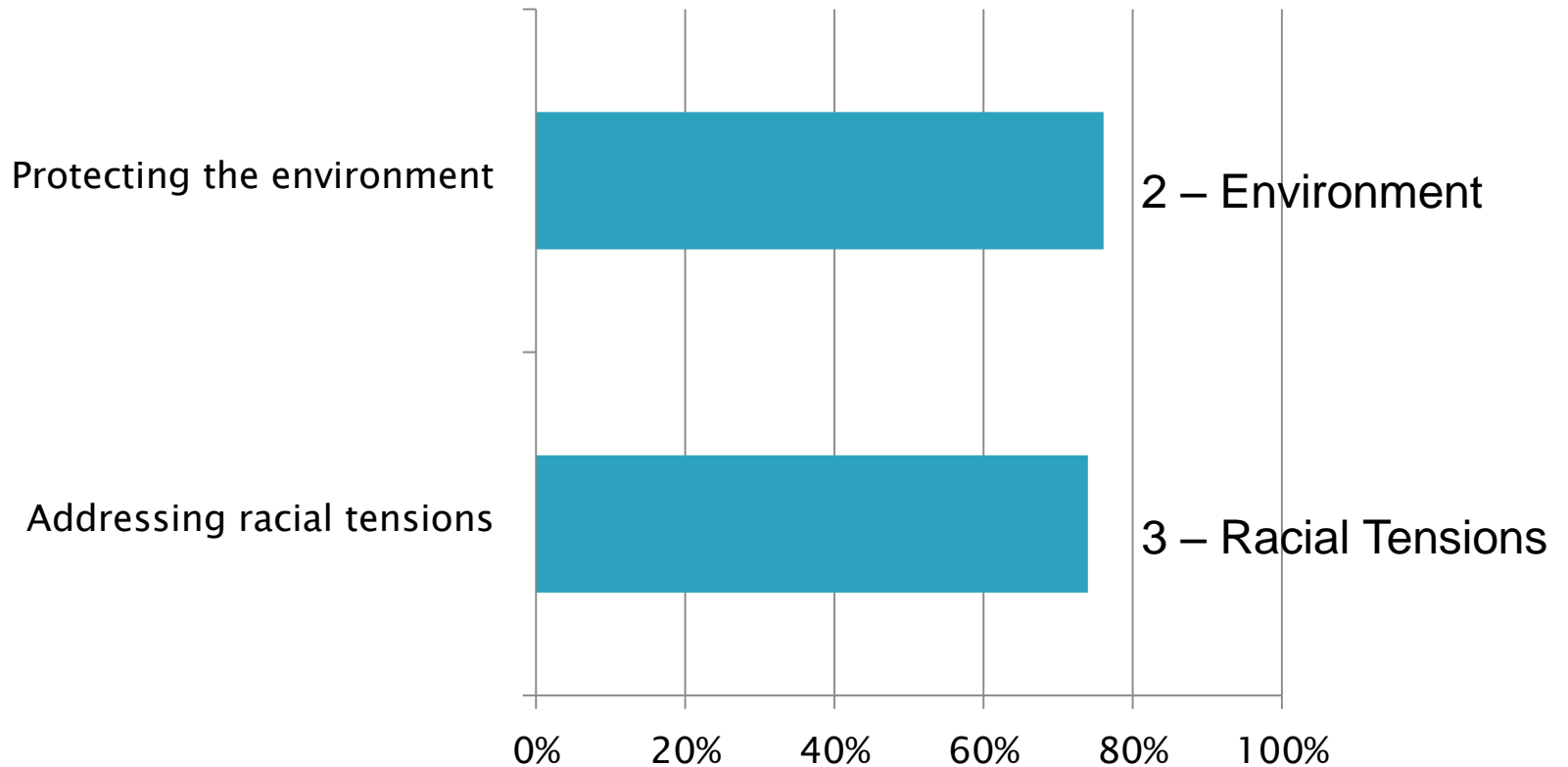
- ▶ 1 - Church and State & Related Family Values
- ▶ 2 - Environment
- ▶ 3 - Racial Tensions
- ▶ 4 - Economic
- ▶ 5 - Immigration
- ▶ 6 - Health Care
- ▶ 7 - Gun Control

# Issue Cluster 1: Church and State & Related Family Values



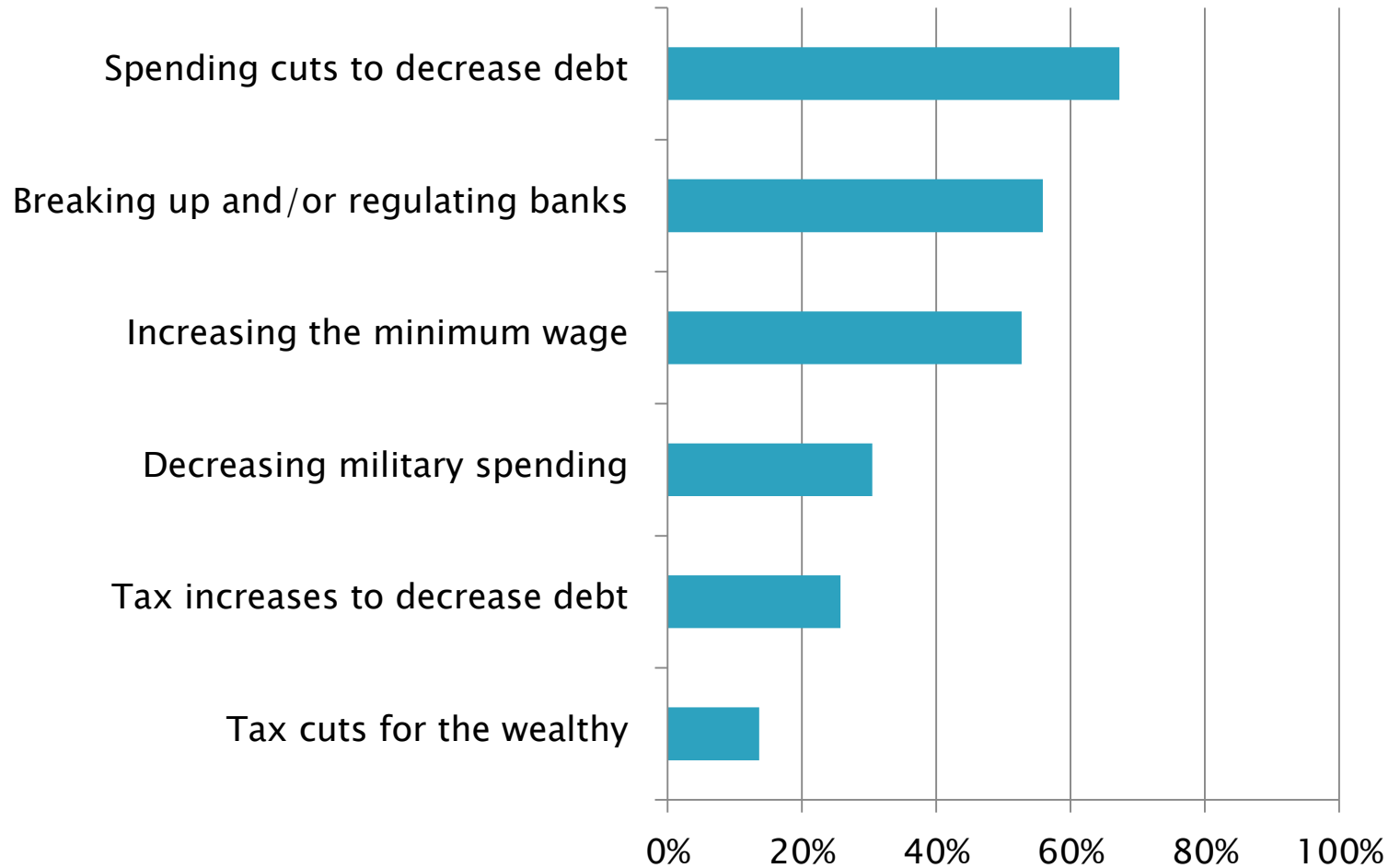
Source: Our Sample

# Issue Clusters 2 and 3: Environment & Racial Tensions



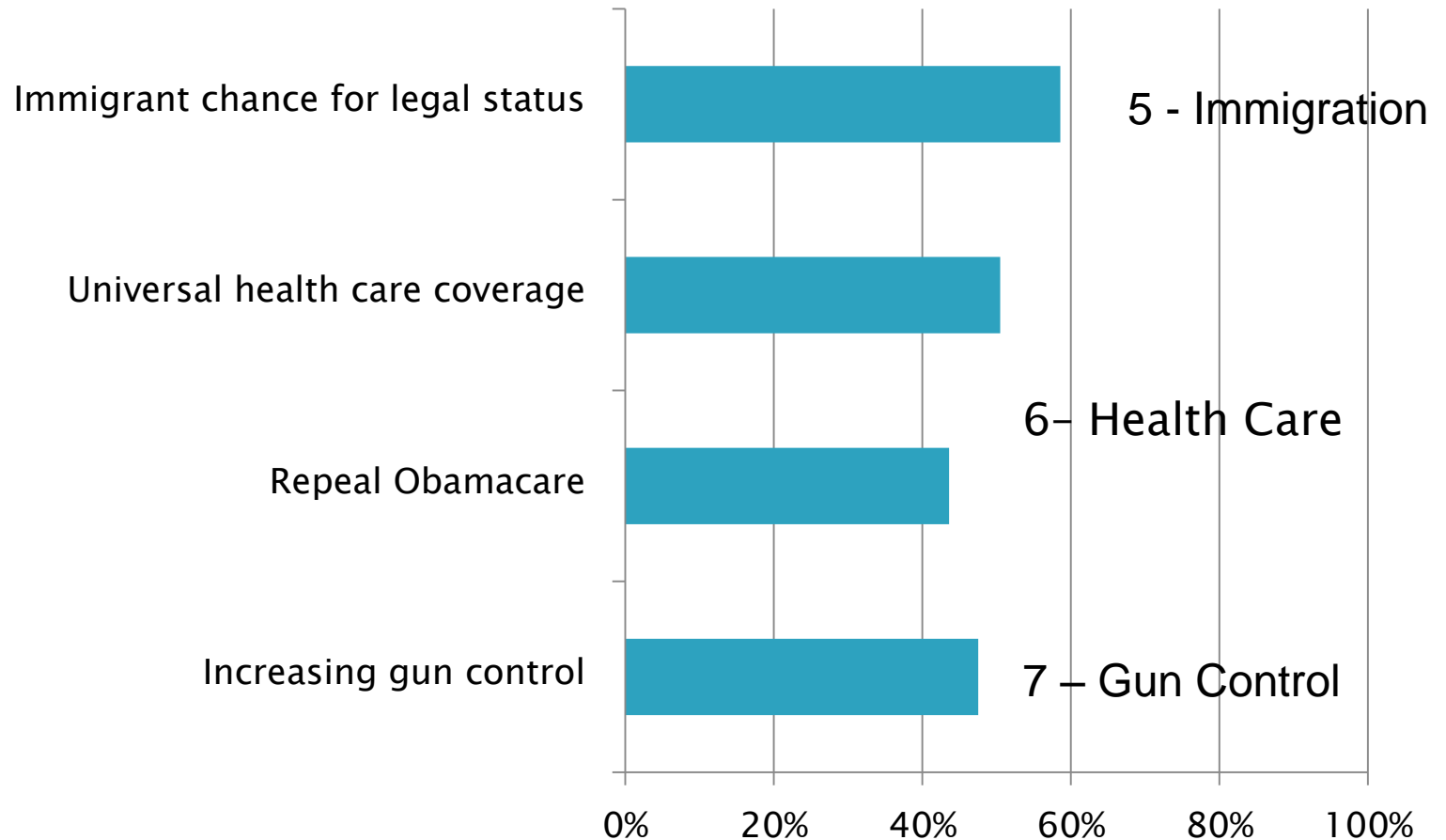
Source: Our Sample

# Issue Cluster 4: Economic



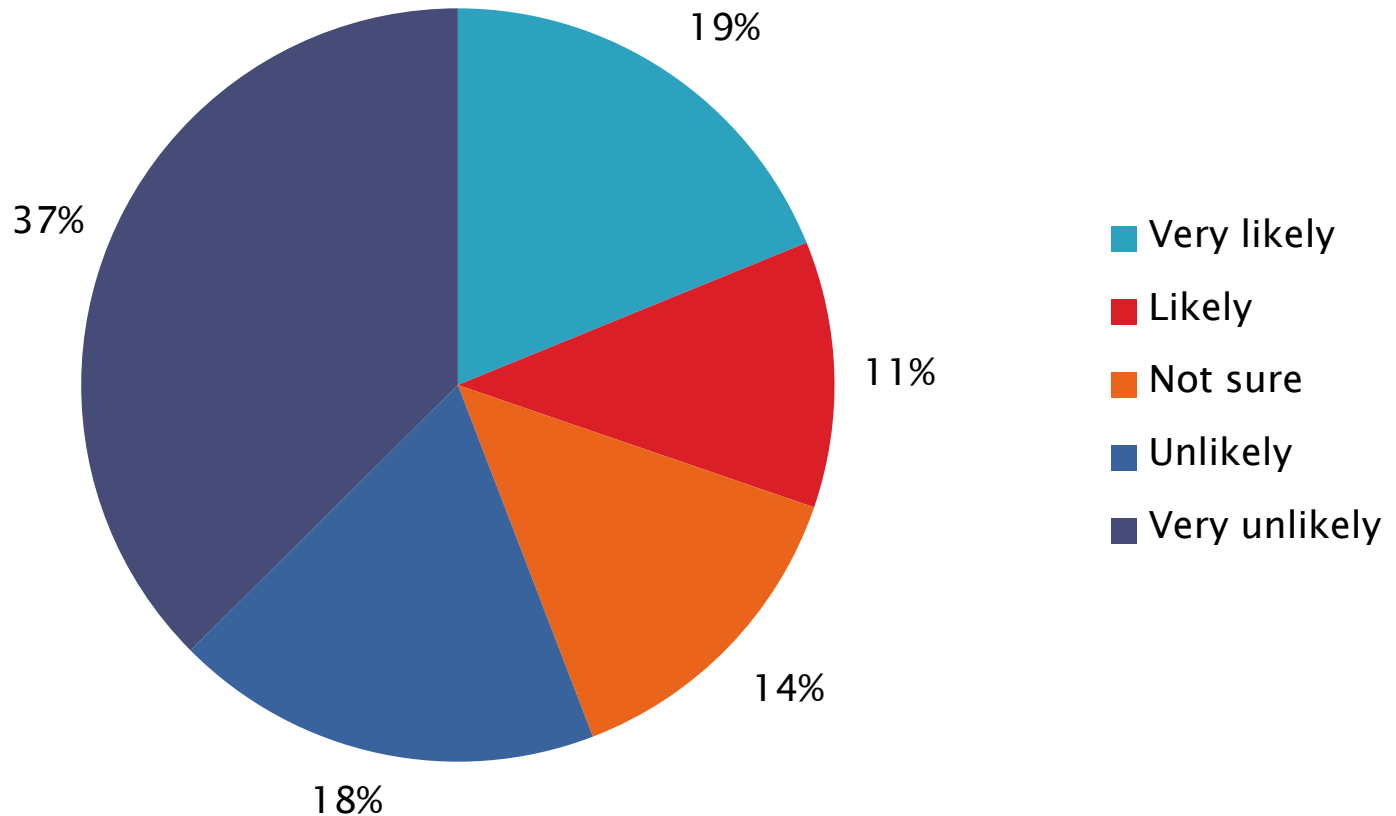
Source: Our Sample

# Issue Clusters 5, 6, and 7: Immigration, Health Care, & Gun Control



Source: Our Sample

# If Ben Carson had remained in the Presidential race, how likely is it that you would have voted for him?



Source: Our Sample



# Summary – What does this say about Adventists...some of us?

- ▶ There is greater diversity in Adventism than in this sample
- ▶ Still very committed to ideas of separation of church and state
- ▶ Political ideology more balanced – more democratic, fewer independents, less republican, less partisan on issues than we anticipated
- ▶ Rating of the importance of specific issues mirrors the current public political discourse reflecting more mainstream views than the past and less tolerant of extreme views. Are we adapting our outlook? Are we paying more attention to the news? Are we more engaged in the debate?
- ▶ Adventists seem less motivated than evangelicals who tend to engage and be motivated by social issues (abortion, same sex marriage etc.)

# Ambivalence

- ▶ 50% feel strongly about Universal health care important, but 45% favor the repeal of Obamacare
- ▶ Largest increase in access to health care since 1997– the Children’s Health Insurance Program – CHIP 1997 prior to that was 1965 Medicaid)
- ▶ Or is this a reaction to the unfortunate re-labeling of the Affordable Care Act?

# Implications for Action

What should the church do?

What should individual  
Adventists do?

# Our thoughts?

- ▶ Improved climate for individuals to be involved in social change by joining in the efforts of other organizations
- ▶ More opportunity for the church to be involved in social issues, but church state position makes it just as unlikely (faded hopes of current generation of activists)
- ▶ Opportunity for greater compassion on family values issues given their relative importance to other issues

*End*