

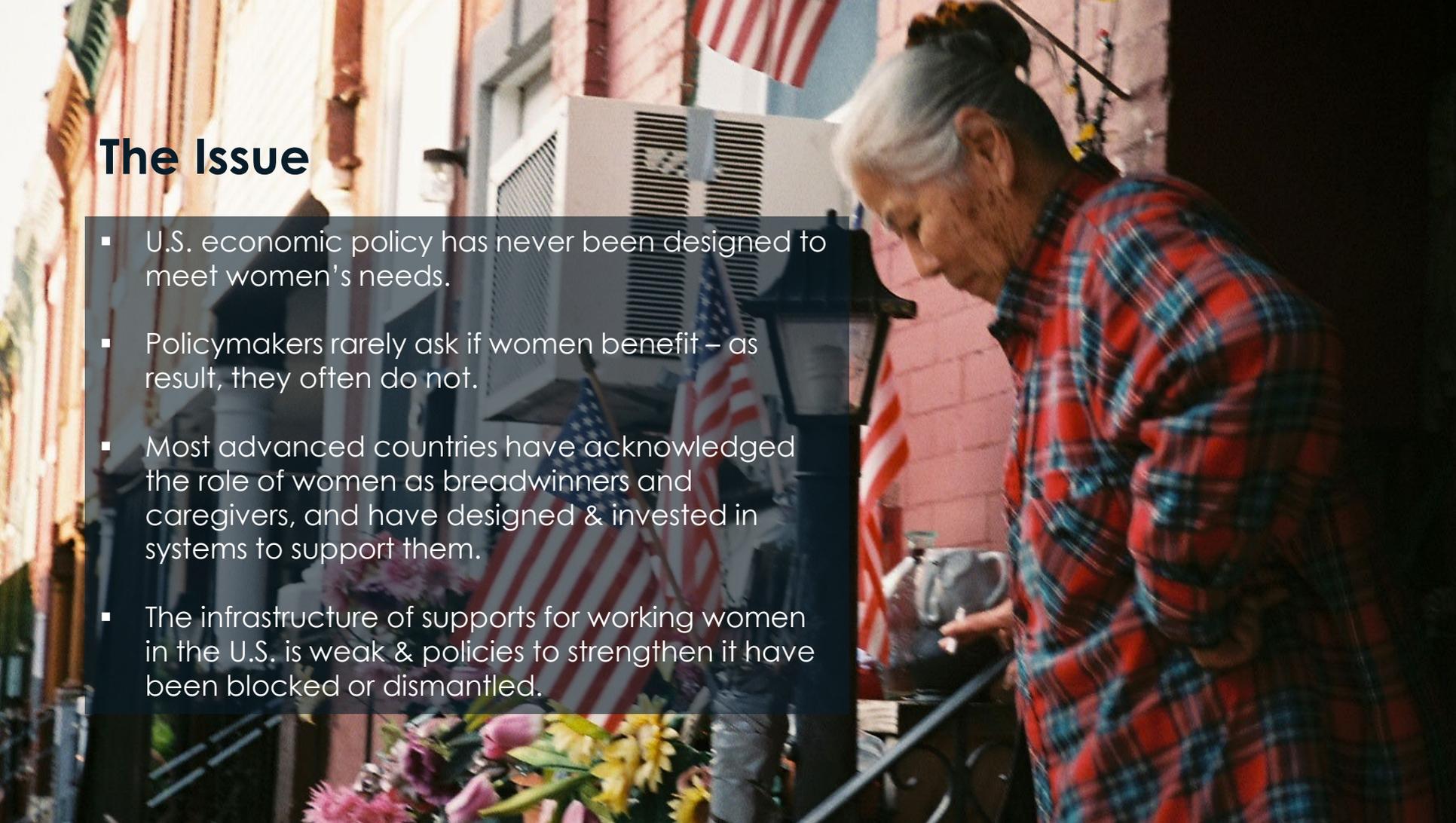


# Women in the Economy (WE)

Lifting up women's voices, wisdom and experience to build a gender-equitable economy

WE Survey Findings – Last Updated September 9, 2023

**FINANCIAL  
SECURITY  
PROGRAM**  
aspen institute

An elderly woman with white hair, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, is looking down at a bouquet of flowers. She is standing in front of a house with several American flags hanging from the porch. A black lantern-style light fixture is visible on the porch railing. The scene is set outdoors during the day.

## The Issue

- U.S. economic policy has never been designed to meet women's needs.
- Policymakers rarely ask if women benefit – as result, they often do not.
- Most advanced countries have acknowledged the role of women as breadwinners and caregivers, and have designed & invested in systems to support them.
- The infrastructure of supports for working women in the U.S. is weak & policies to strengthen it have been blocked or dismantled.

# Women in the Economy is...\*

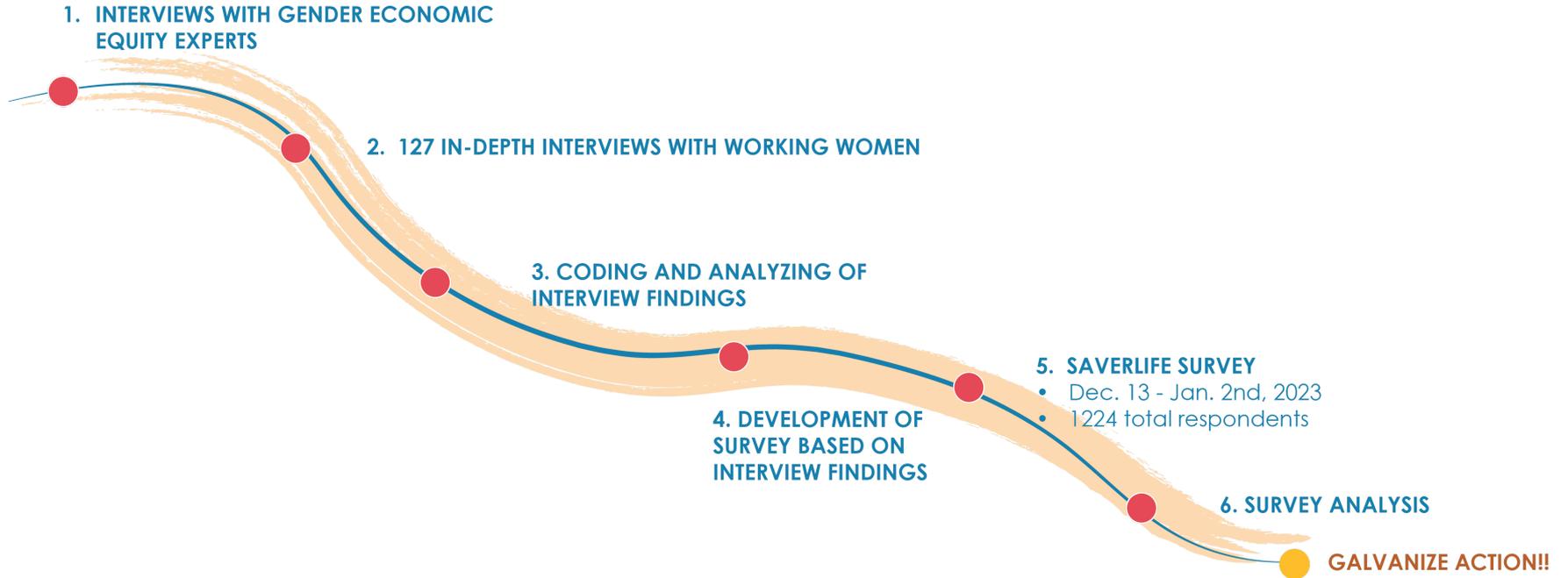


- A research and action project designed to answer the question:

***What would the economy look like if it were designed to work for women?***

- Roots the answer in the **wisdom, voices, and lived experience** of working women

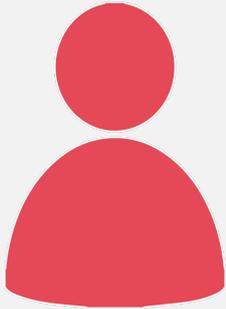
*\*The WE project is inclusive of cis and transgender women, and we welcome insights from non-binary people and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The term “working women” includes women who are providing care with or without compensation.*



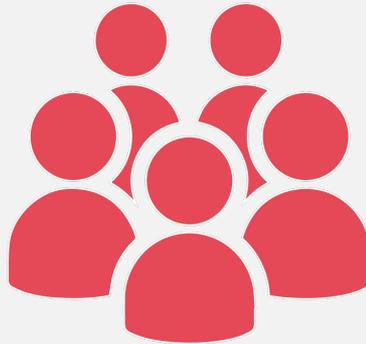
# Methodology

# Survey Demographics

---



**1224 total respondents**



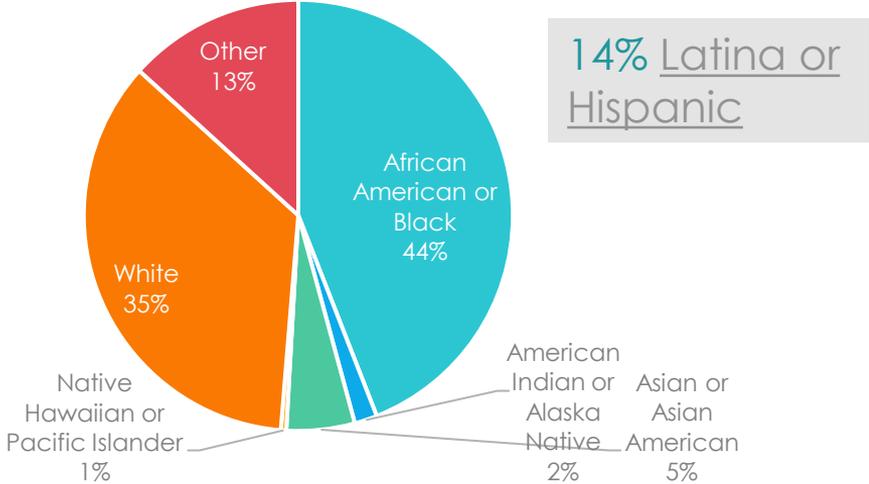
**Survey Respondent Pool:  
SaverLife members**



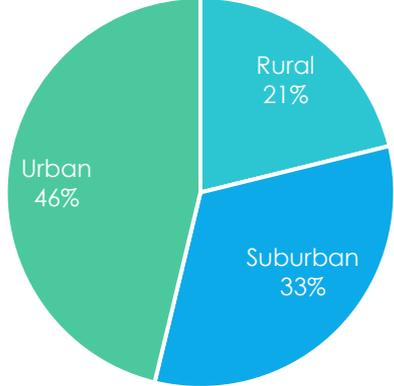
**Date: December 13, 2022 -  
January 2, 2023**

# RACE, ETHNICITY, and GEOGRAPHY

Race or Ethnicity



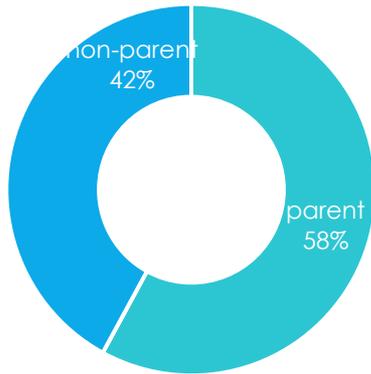
Geography Type



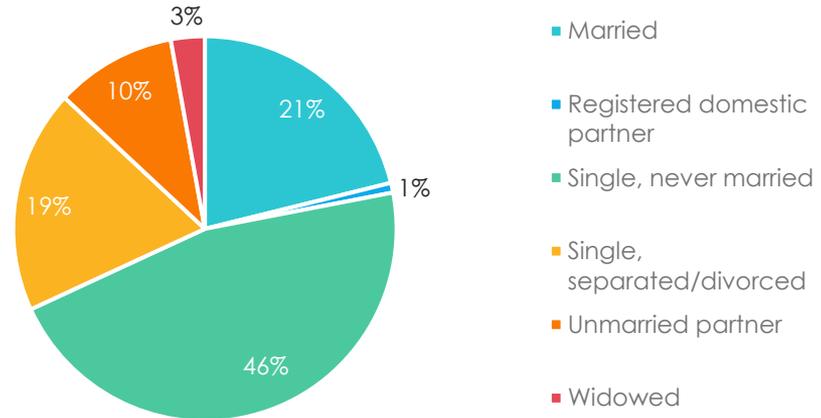
# PARENTAL & MARITAL STATUS

37% respondents  
are single mothers

Parental Status



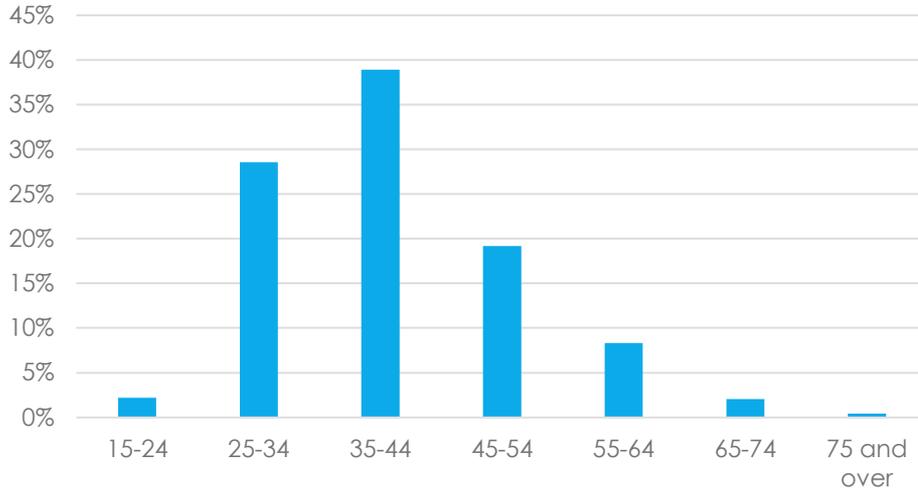
Marital Status



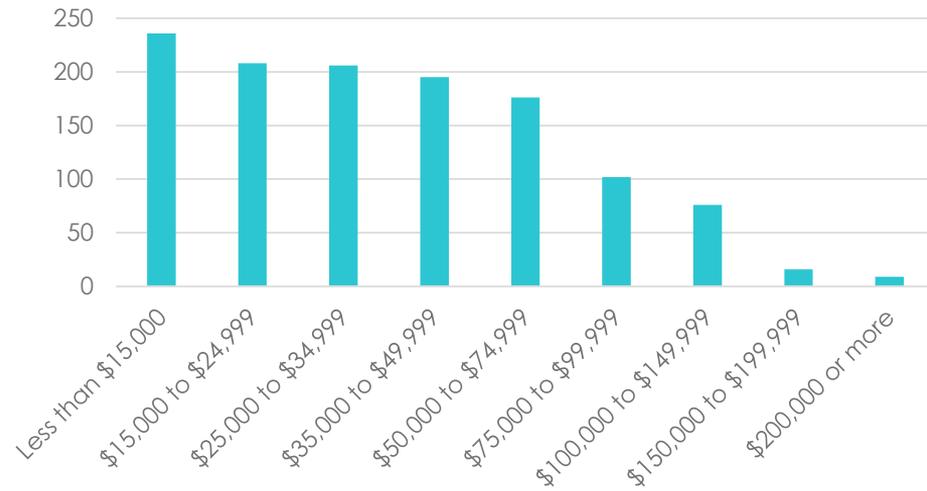
# AGE & INCOME

2 out of 3 had household income(s) of less than \$50K

Age

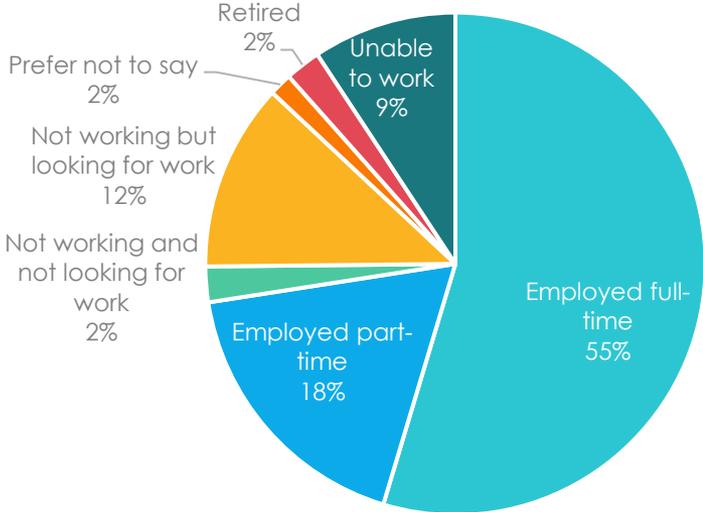


Household Income

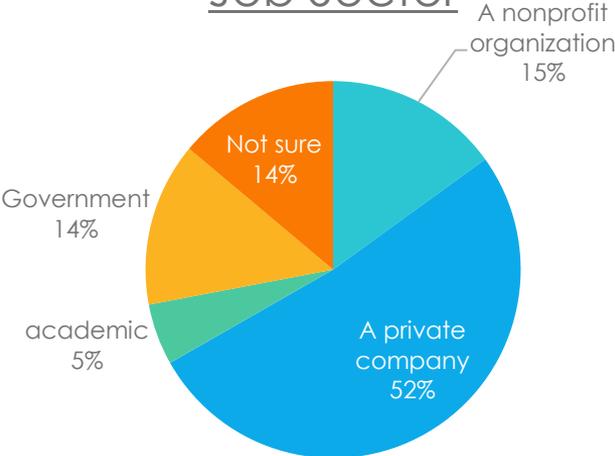


# EMPLOYMENT

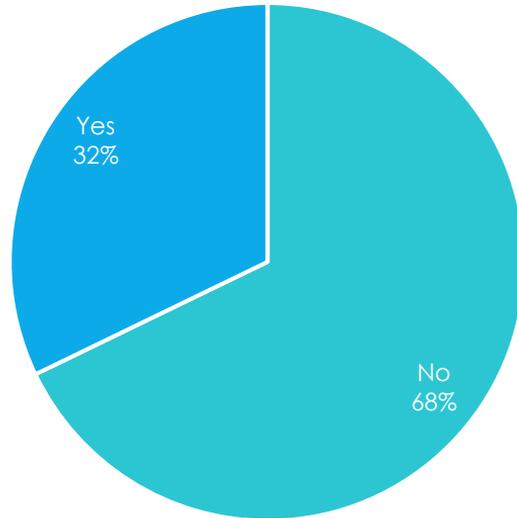
## Employment Status



## Job Sector



# WOMEN WITH A DISABILITY

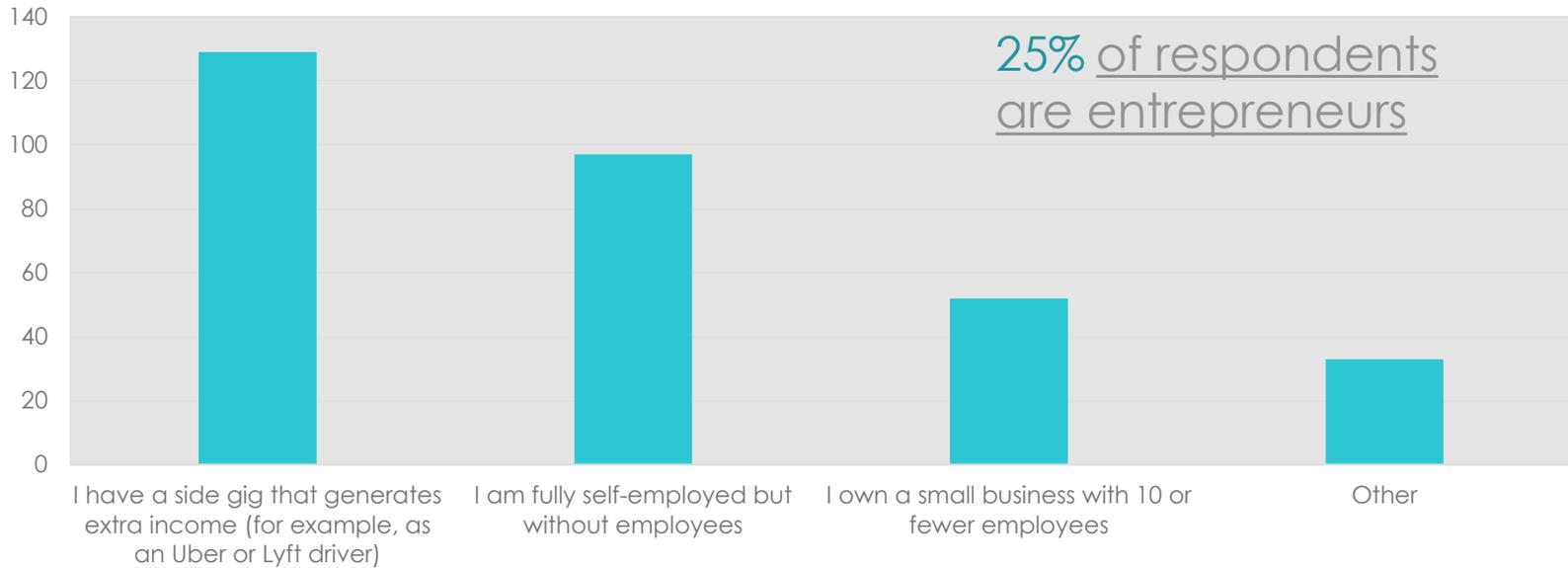


**32%** self-identified as women with a disability\*

*\*The survey defined a disability as "a long-lasting or chronic condition (such as physical, visual, auditory, cognitive, emotional or other) that affects your ability to work."*

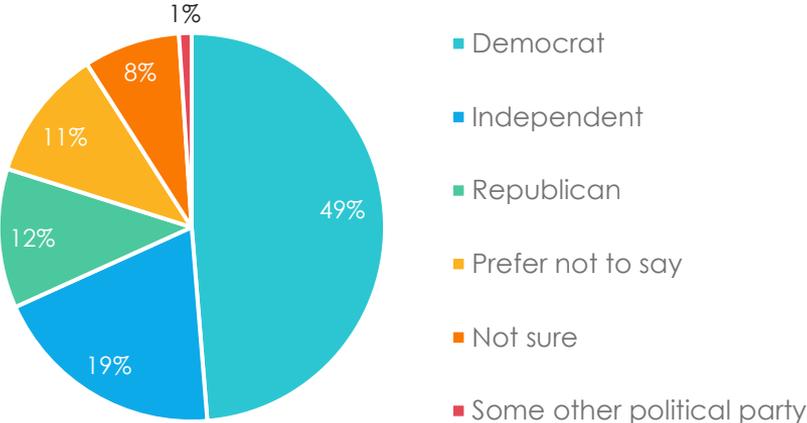
# SELF EMPLOYMENT

Among Women Entrepreneurs...

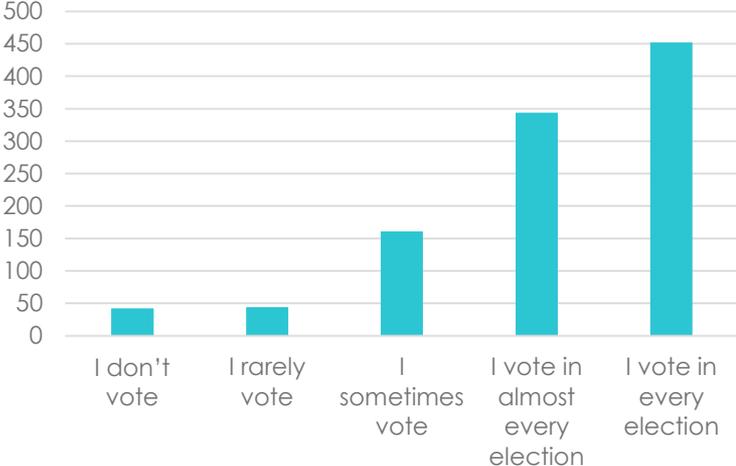


# POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

Political Affiliation



How often do you vote?



# Survey Findings





## Key Finding

4 out of 5  
survey participants said they felt  
economically insecure

# Economic insecurity by identity ...

Race or Ethnicity

**89%**

BLACK WOMEN

**84%**

LATINA / HISPANIC  
WOMEN

**81%**

NATIVE WOMEN

**85%**

AAPI WOMEN

**83%**

WHITE WOMEN

Care Status

**91%**

MOTHERS

**90%**

SINGLE MOTHERS

**83%**

CAREGIVERS  
(Women caring for  
people other than  
their children)

Age

**81%**

YOUNGER WOMEN  
(Between 15-24 years  
old)

**77%**

OLDER WOMEN  
(At least 50 years old)

LGBTQIA

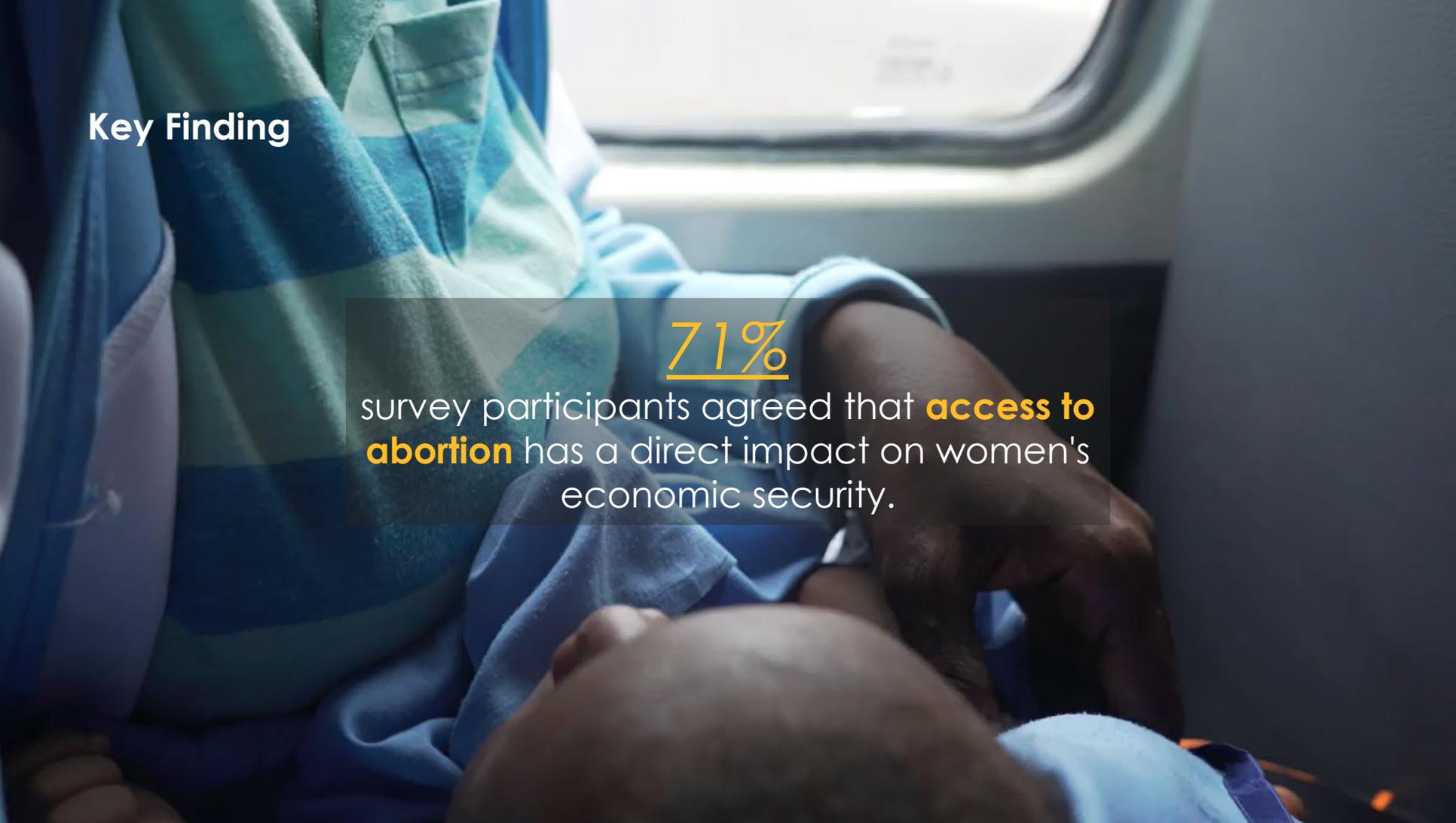
**85%**

LGBTQIA

Women in Disabilities

**90%**

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a blue and green striped shirt, holding a baby. The scene is set in a hospital or medical facility, with a window visible in the background. The lighting is soft and focused on the person and the baby.

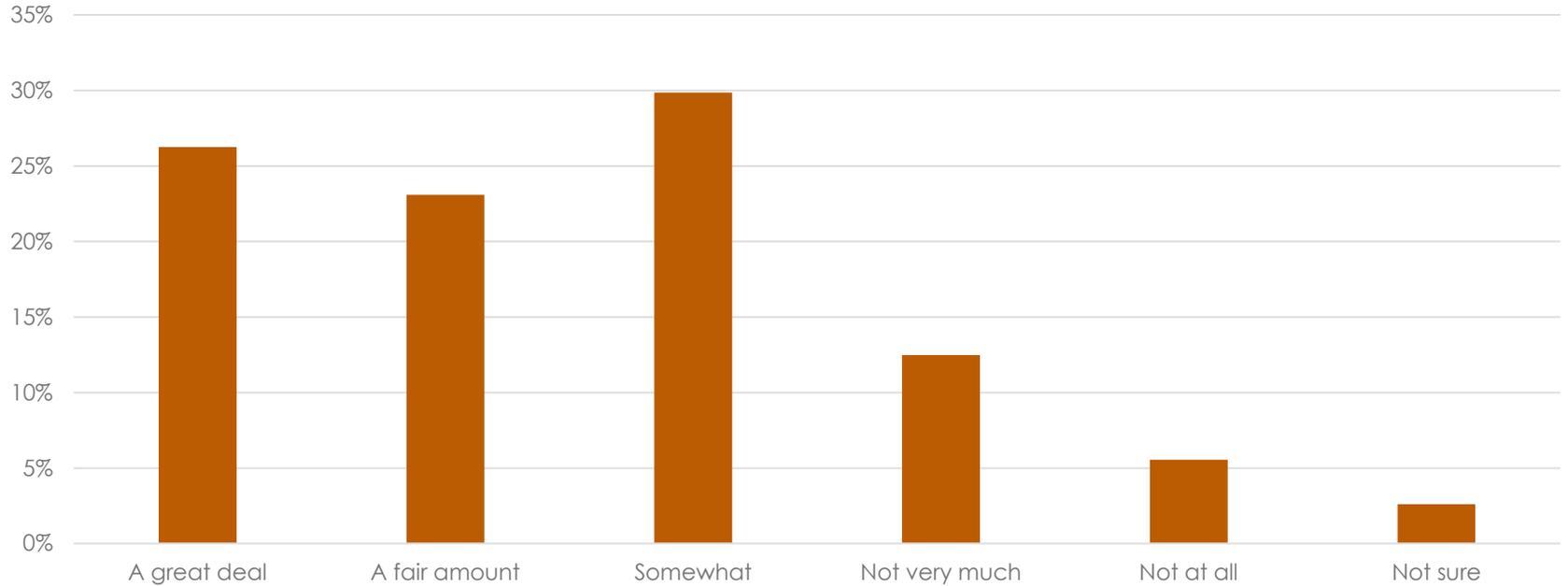
## Key Finding

71%

survey participants agreed that **access to abortion** has a direct impact on women's economic security.

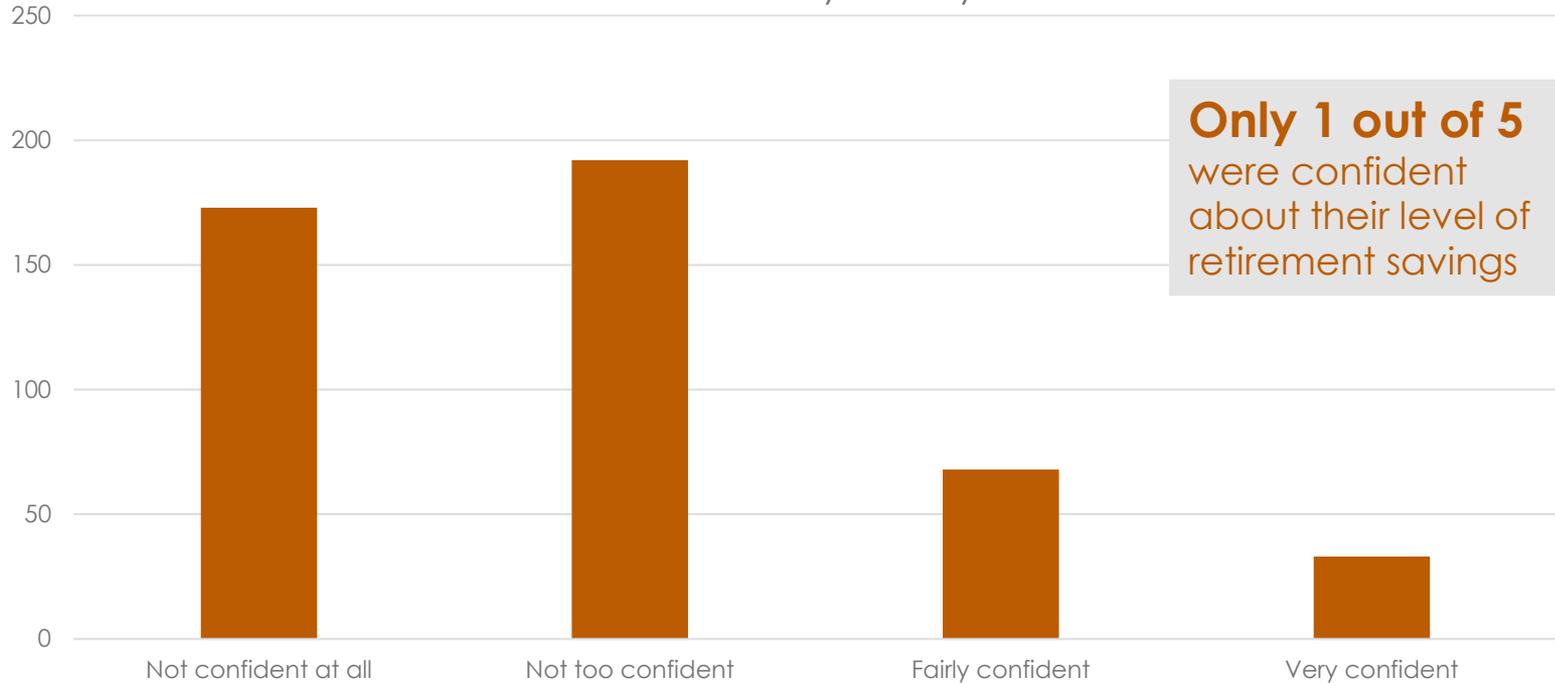
## Key Questions

To what extent do you feel **insecure economically**?



## Key Questions

How confident are you that you have **saved enough money** to live comfortably once you **retire**?



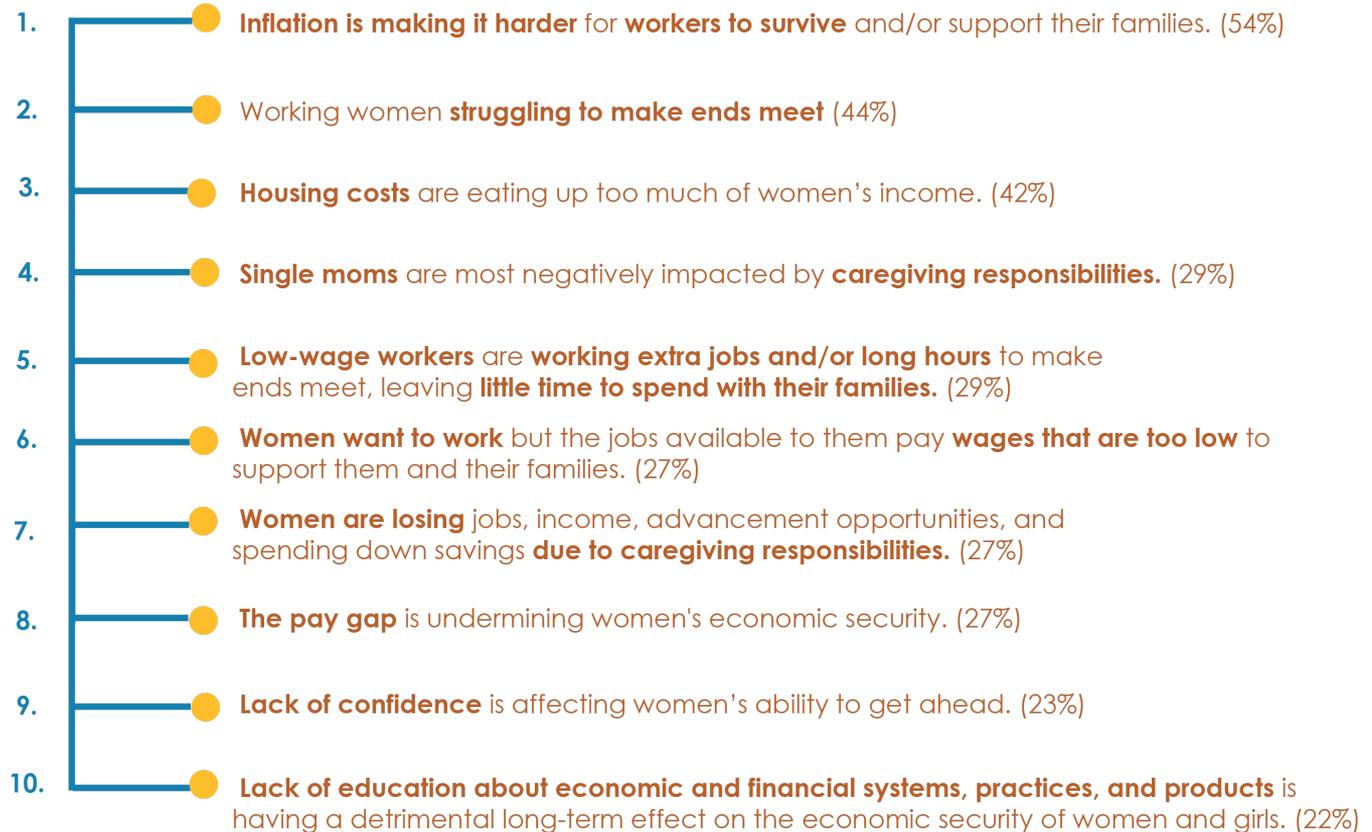
# **Top challenges & solutions:**

All respondents

---

(All survey respondents , n=1224)

## TOP 10 CHALLENGES



(All survey respondents , n=1224)

TOP 10 CHALLENGES

CASH FLOW CRISIS



- **Inflation is making it harder for workers to survive** and/or support their families. (54%)
- Working women **struggling to make ends meet** (44%)
- **Housing costs** are eating up too much of women's income. (42%)
- **Low-wage workers** are **working extra jobs and/or long hours** to make ends meet, leaving **little time to spend with their families**. (29%)
- **Women want to work** but the jobs available to them pay **wages that are too low** to support them and their families. (27%)

CARE= FINANCIAL PENALTY



- **Single moms** are most negatively impacted by **caregiving responsibilities**. (29%)
- **Women are losing jobs, income, advancement opportunities, and spending down savings due to caregiving responsibilities**. (27%)

GENDER & RACIAL DISCRIMINATION



- **The pay gap** is undermining women's economic security. (27%)
- **Lack of confidence** is affecting women's ability to get ahead. (23%)
- **Lack of education about economic and financial systems, practices, and products** is having a detrimental long-term effect on the economic security of women and girls. (22%)

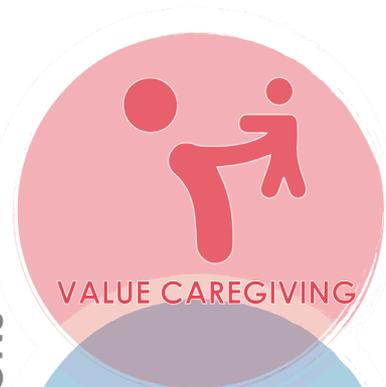
(All survey respondents , n=1224)

## TOP 10 SOLUTIONS

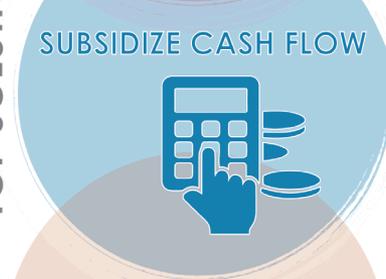


(All survey respondents , n=1224)

TOP SOLUTIONS



- Flexible work schedules - (49%)
- The option to work remotely - (46%)
- Paid family leave - (34%)
- Affordable and accessible childcare- (31%)



- Public and employer support to help workers cover rising housing, energy, health, transportation, food and other **everyday expenses** - (47%)
- Raise the minimum wage - (42%)
- Raise income and asset limits in public benefit programs so more families can access them - (40%)



- Teach women and girls - in schools, community, churches, etc. - about **how to be financially independent** and why it matters - (37%)
- Close the **gender pay gap** - (33%)
- Promoting women into leadership roles at work - (29%)



# **Top challenges & solutions:**

By race and ethnicity

---

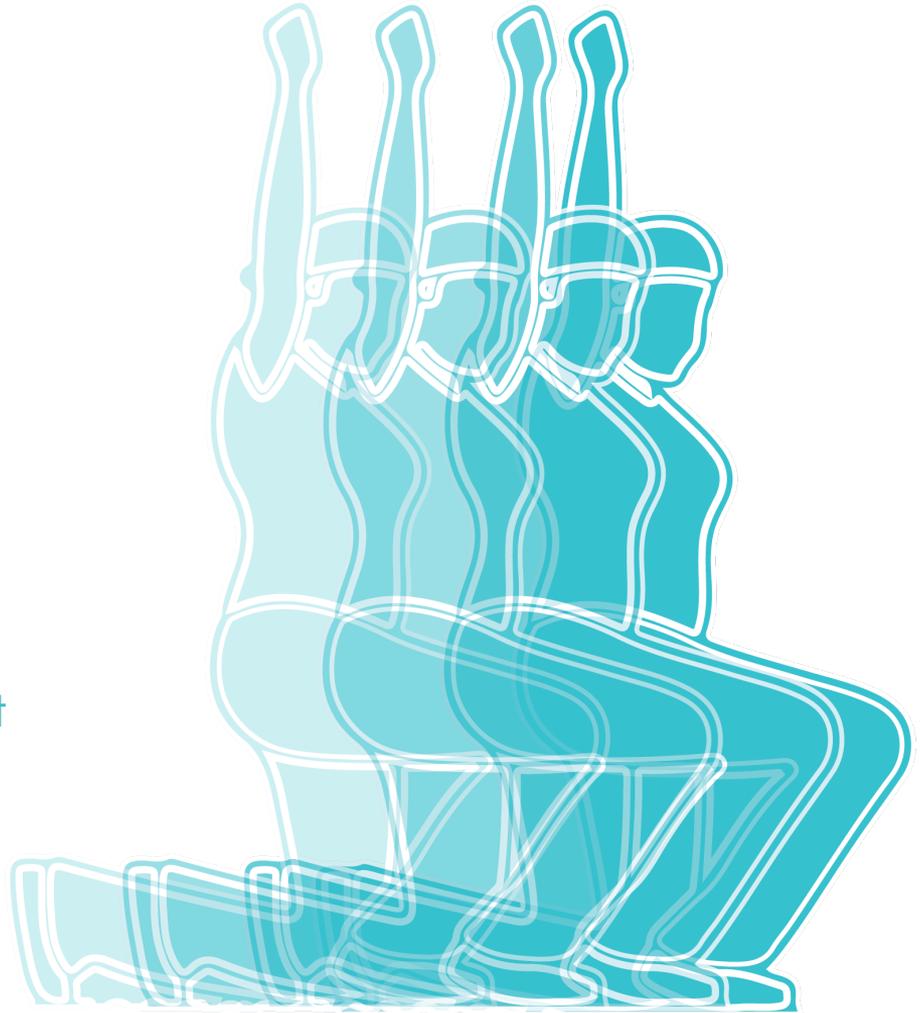
*Across race & ethnicity...*

**...90%-100%** of the top 10 challenges **were the same.**

...the top 3 challenges

1. inflation
2. the struggle to make ends meet
3. housing costs

**were the same.**



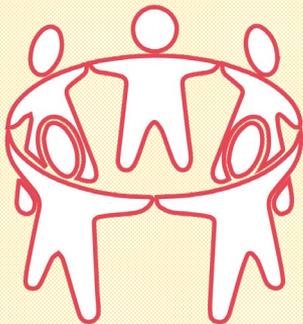


**Black women** lifted up the issues of discrimination and racial bias impeding their advancement in their careers.



**Latina women** specifically expressed the challenge of having to work long hours and multiple jobs due to low wages leaving little time to spend with their families.

## Nuanced challenges by Race & Ethnicity



**Native women** emphasized the lack of awareness of community-based or public resources to help them navigate financial challenges.



**AAPI women** emphasized the challenge of wanting to work, but the available jobs offer wages too low to support their families.

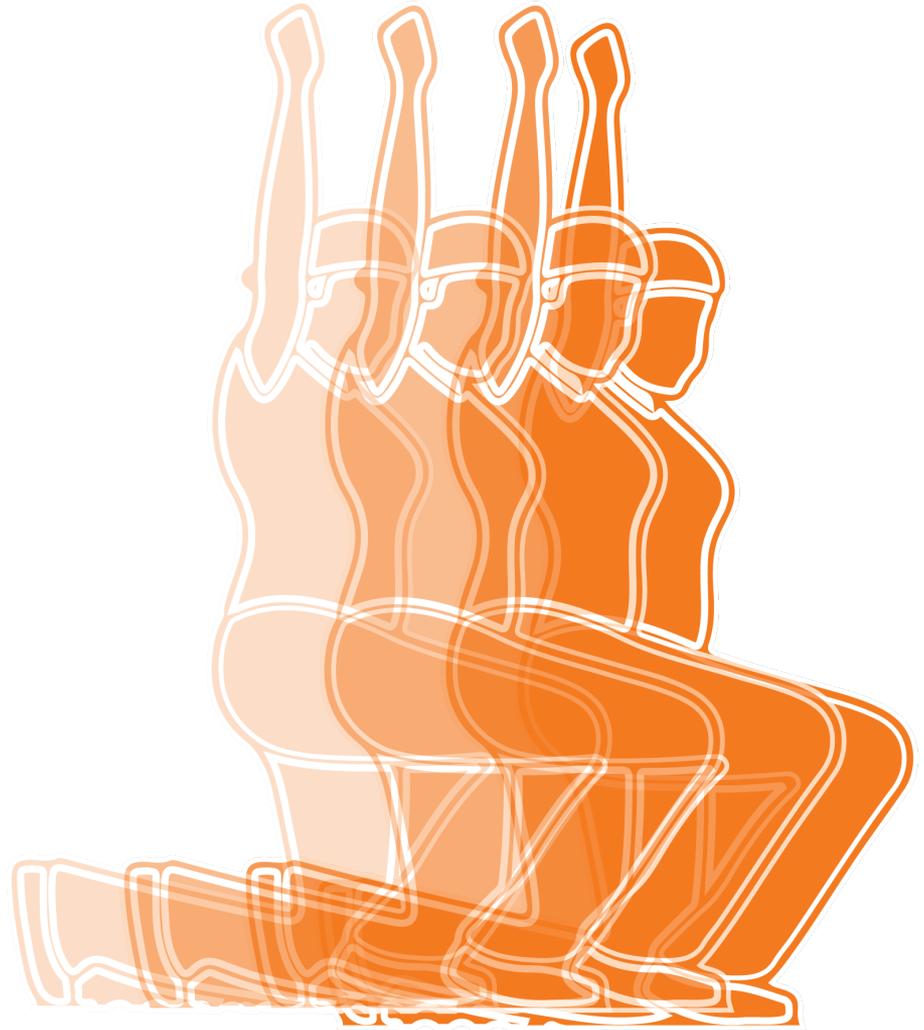


**White women** emphasized the challenge of inflation and low wages making it difficult for workers to survive and/or support their families.

*Across race & ethnicity...*

**...80%-90%** of the top 10 solutions were consistent, and...

**...flexible work schedules and the option to work remotely** were within the top 3 solutions.

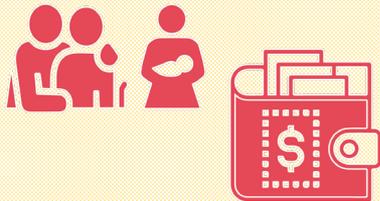




Supporting, mentoring, and promoting women in the workplace were key solutions for **Black women**.



Raising the minimum wage, increasing access to public benefits, and affordable childcare were higher priorities for **Latina or Hispanic women**.



**Native women** prioritized the option to work remotely, paid family leave, and work policies, norms, and culture that support and value workers who are also caregivers.

## Nuanced solutions by Race & Ethnicity



**AAPI women** lifted up the solutions of closing the gender pay gap and teaching women and girls in schools, community, churches, etc. about how to be financially independent and why it matters.

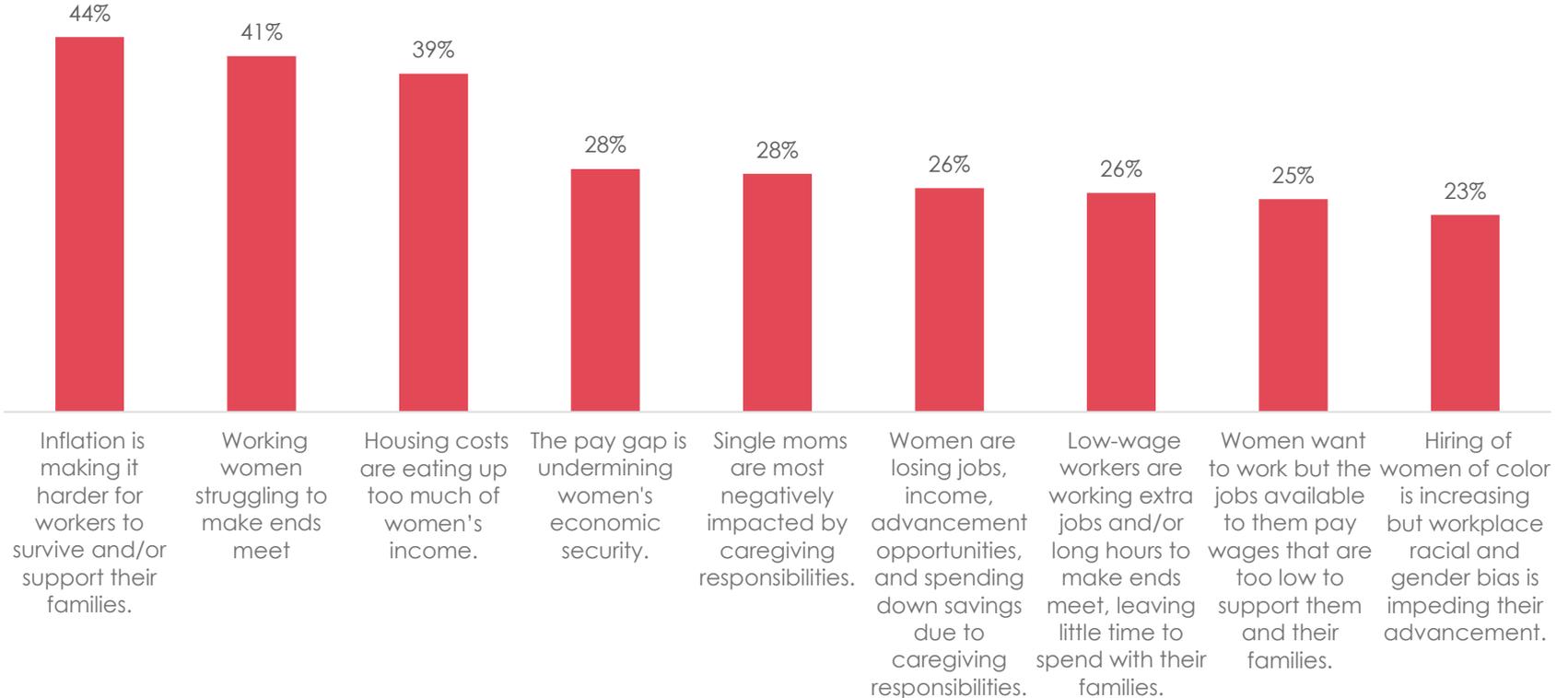


**White women** prioritized increasing access to public benefits and creating high school classes to teach girls about economic and financial systems.

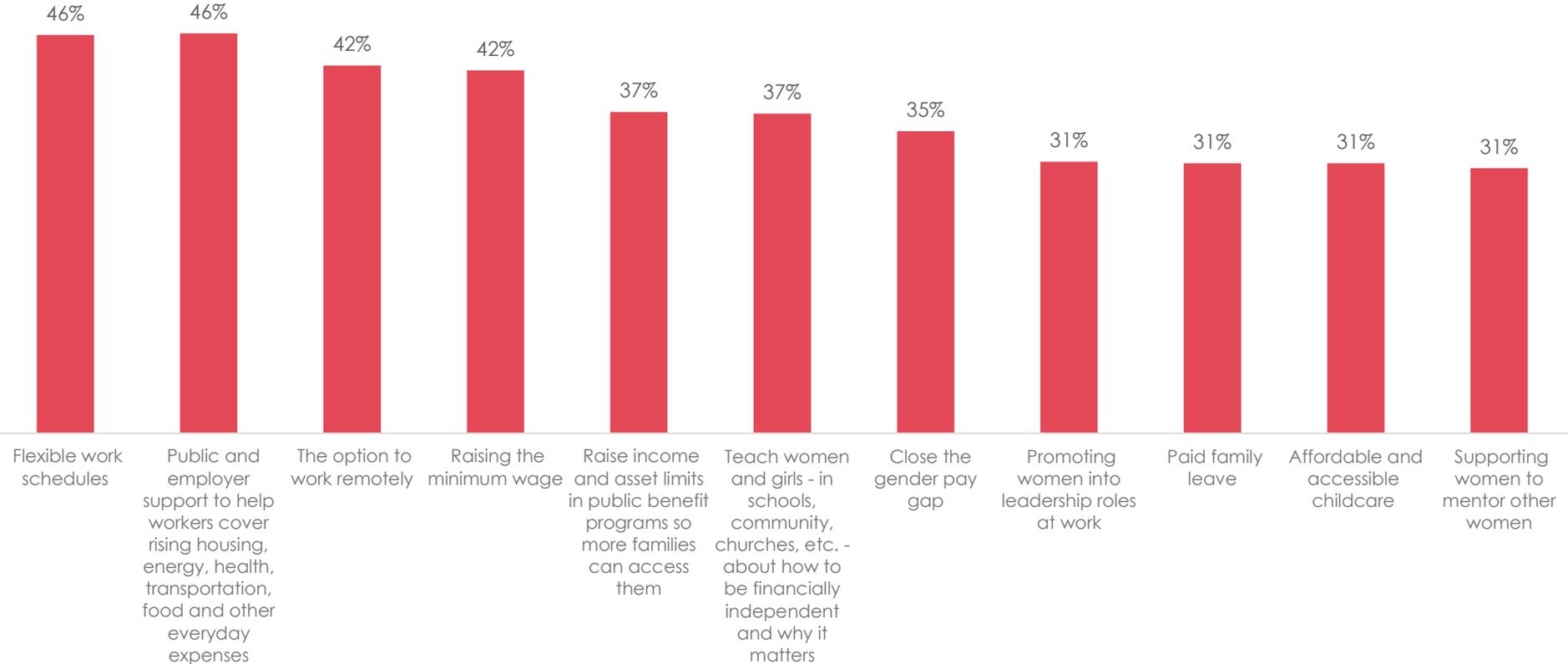
# Top challenges & solutions: Black women

---

# Top challenges for Black women (n=540)



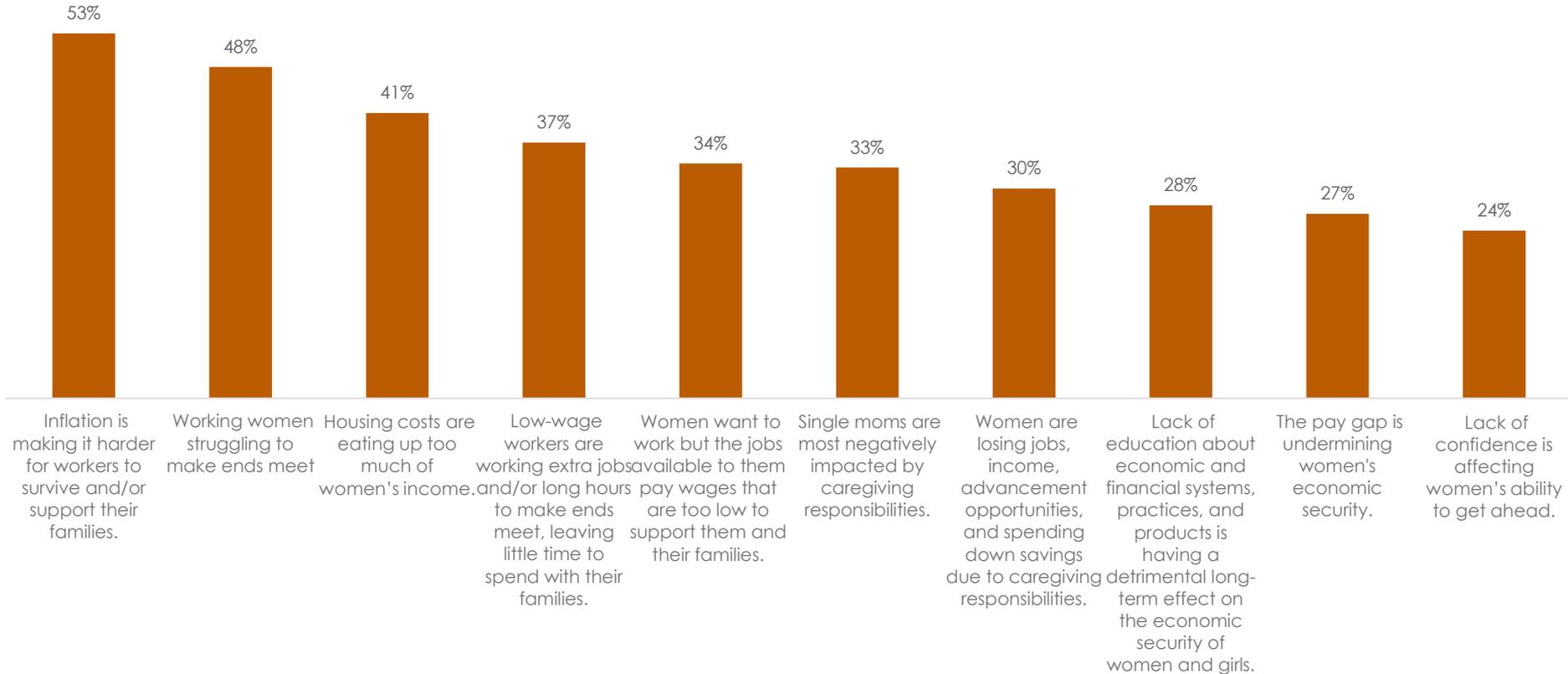
# Top solutions for Black women (n=540)



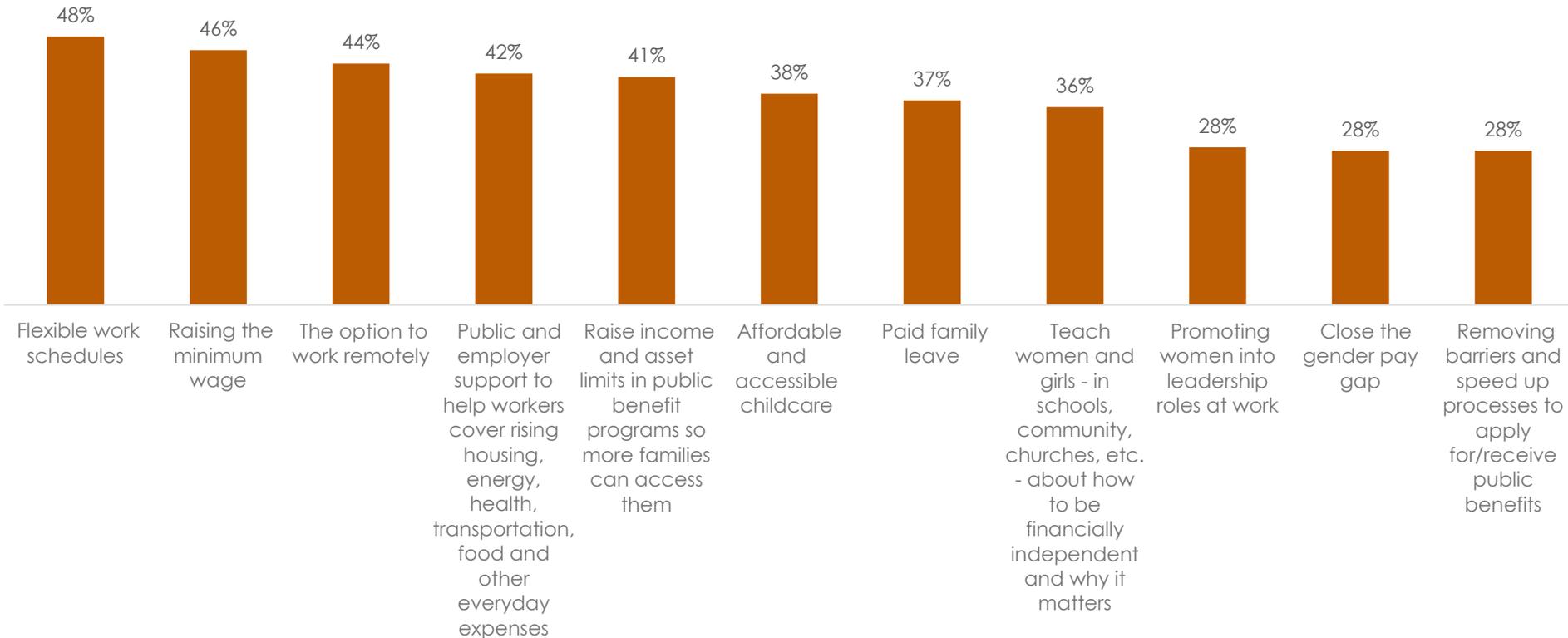
# **Top challenges & solutions:** Latina or Hispanic women

---

# Top challenges for Latina or Hispanic women (n=165)



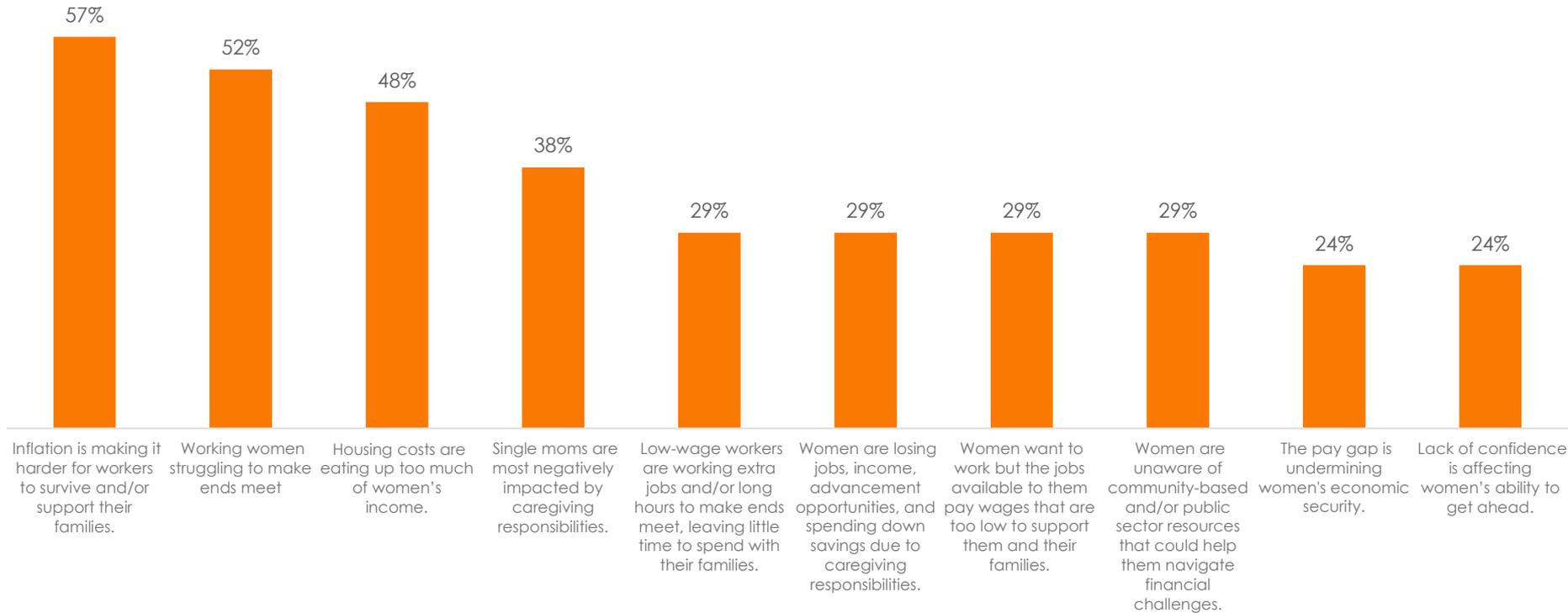
# Top solutions for Latina or Hispanic women (n=165)



# Top challenges & solutions: Native women

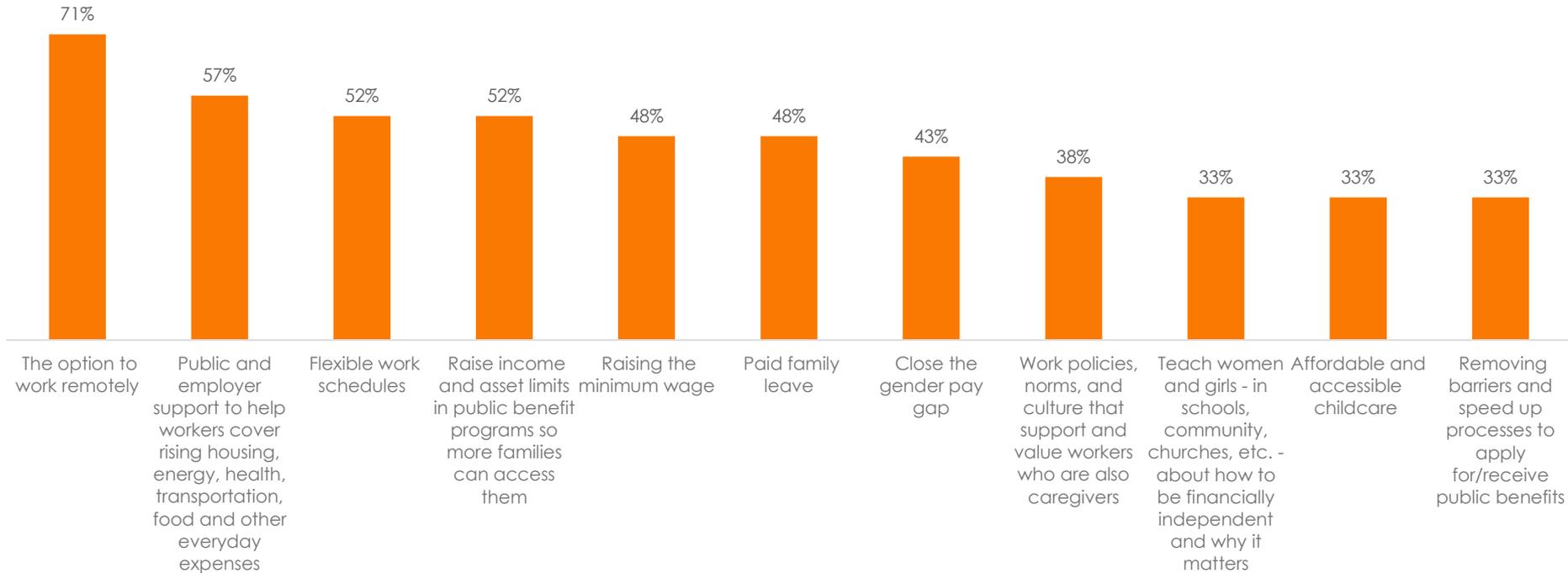
---

# Top challenges for Native\* women (n=21)



\*Native women includes women identifying as American Indian and/or Alaska Native

# Top solutions for Native\* women (n=21)

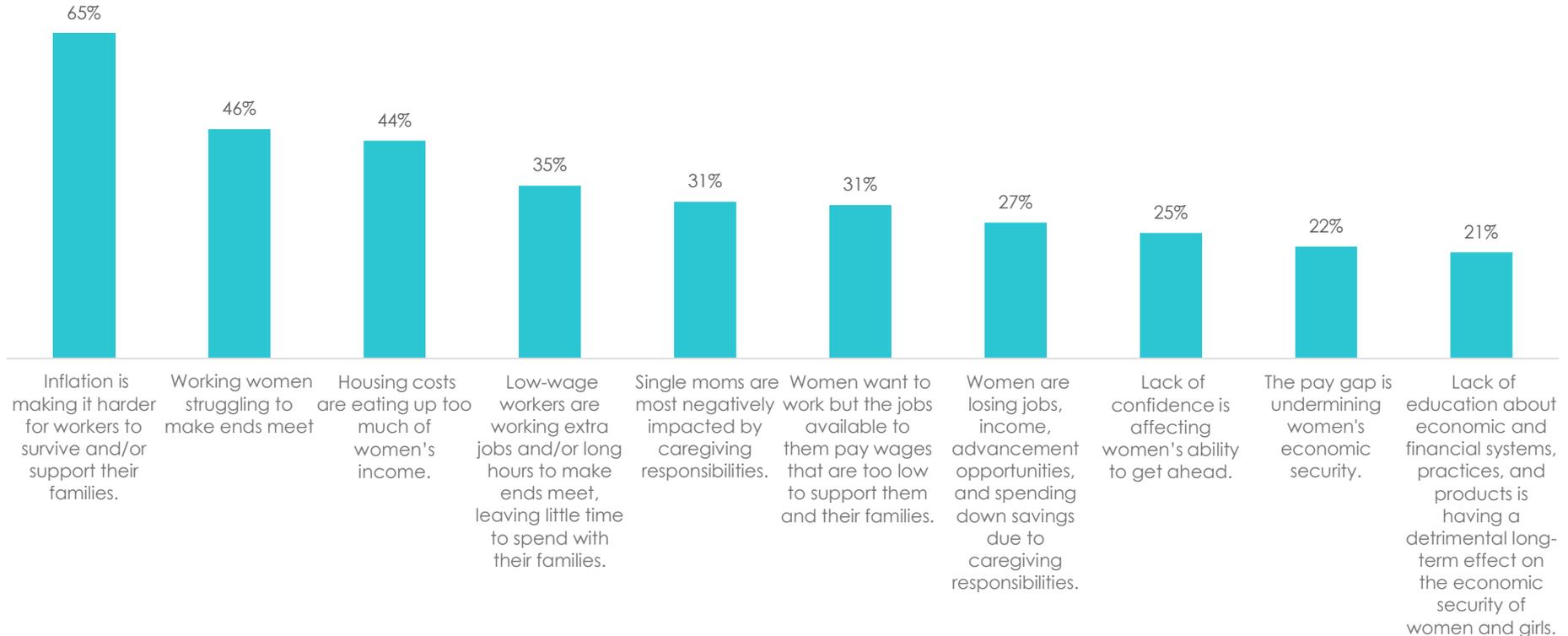


\*Native women includes women identifying as American Indians and/or Alaska Native

# Top challenges & solutions: AAPI women

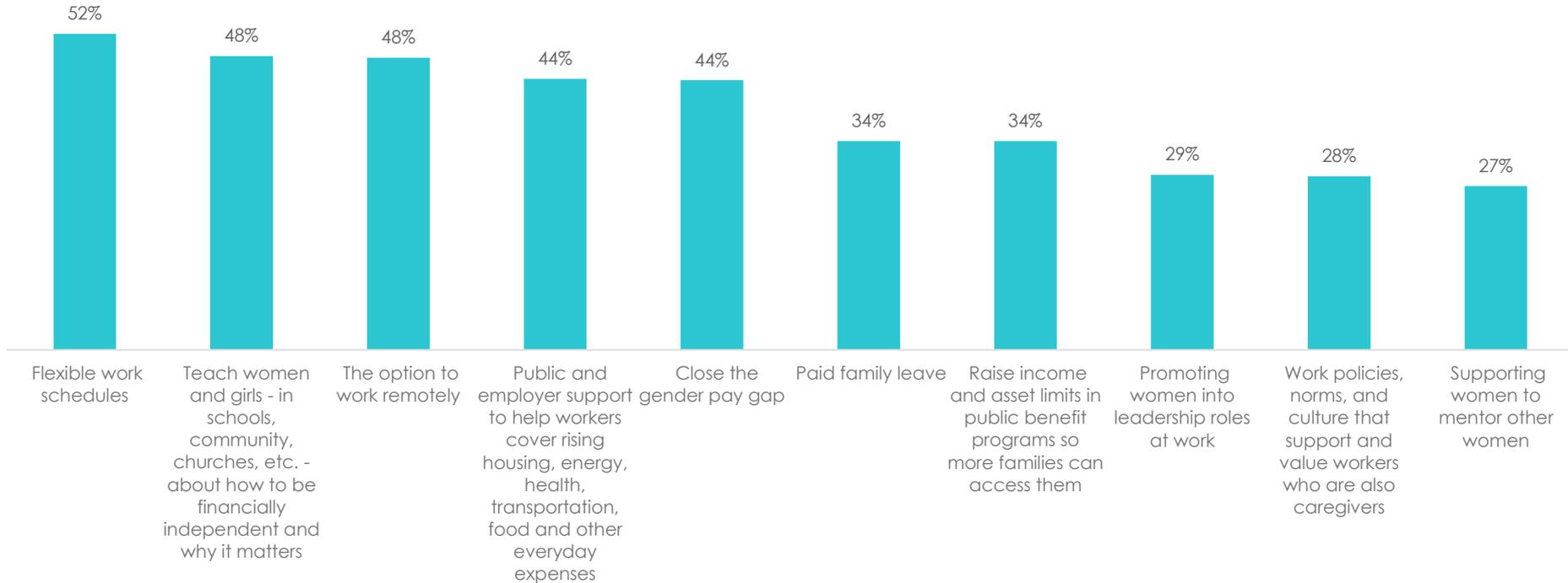
---

# Top challenges for AAPI\* women (n=68)



\*AAPI includes Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and/or Pacific Islander women.

# Top solutions for AAPI\* women (n=68)

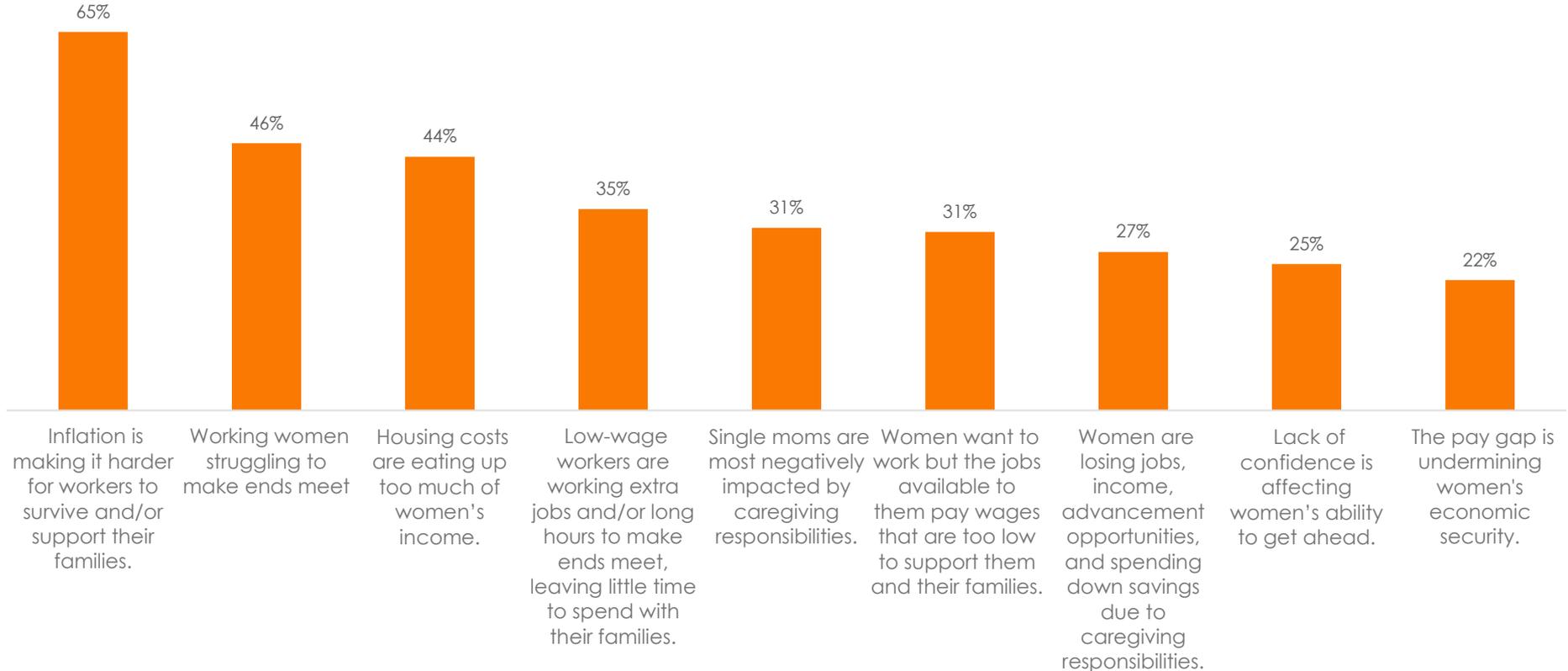


\*AAPI includes Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and/or Pacific Islander women.

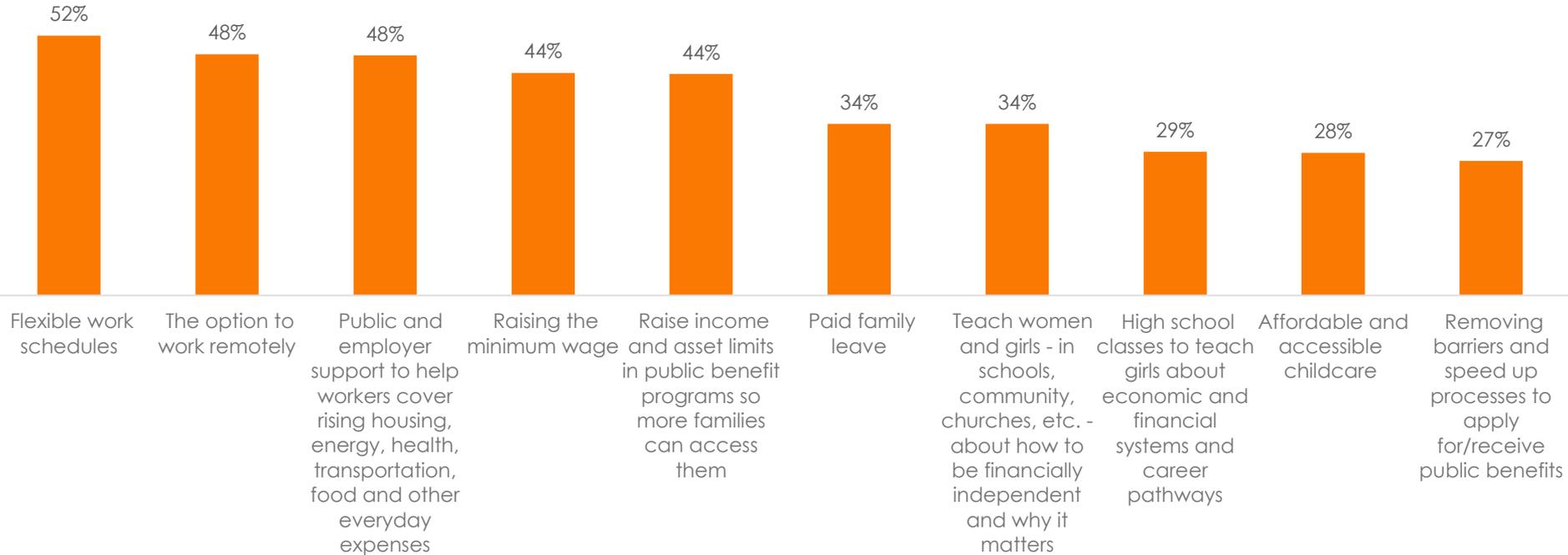
# Top challenges & solutions: White women

---

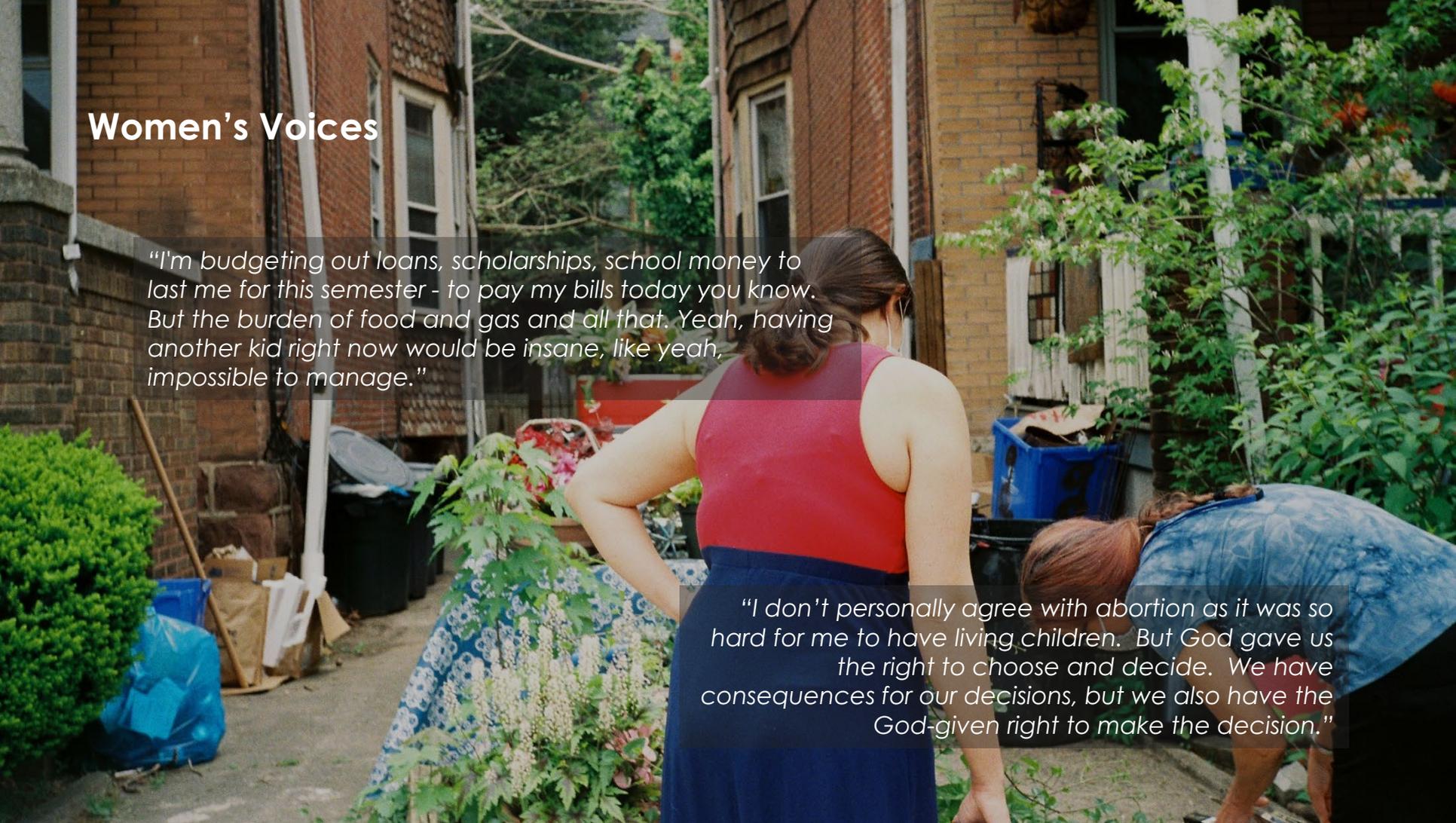
## Top challenges for White women (n=434)



## Top solutions for White women (n=434)



## Women's Voices



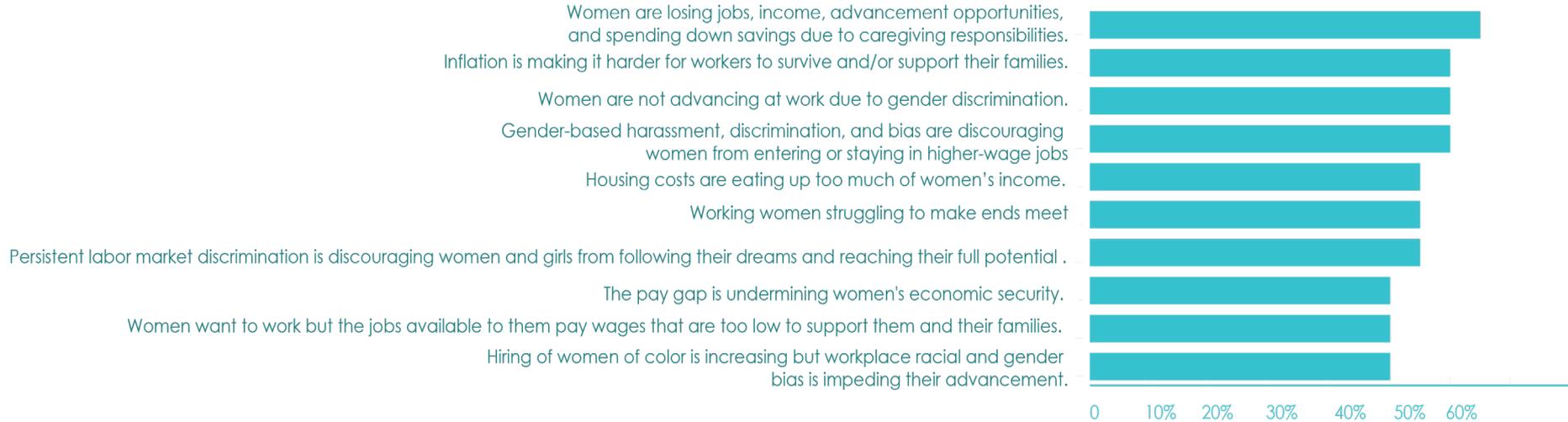
*"I'm budgeting out loans, scholarships, school money to last me for this semester - to pay my bills today you know. But the burden of food and gas and all that. Yeah, having another kid right now would be insane, like yeah, impossible to manage."*

*"I don't personally agree with abortion as it was so hard for me to have living children. But God gave us the right to choose and decide. We have consequences for our decisions, but we also have the God-given right to make the decision."*

# Top challenges & solutions: Survivors

---

# Top challenges for survivors\* (n=19)



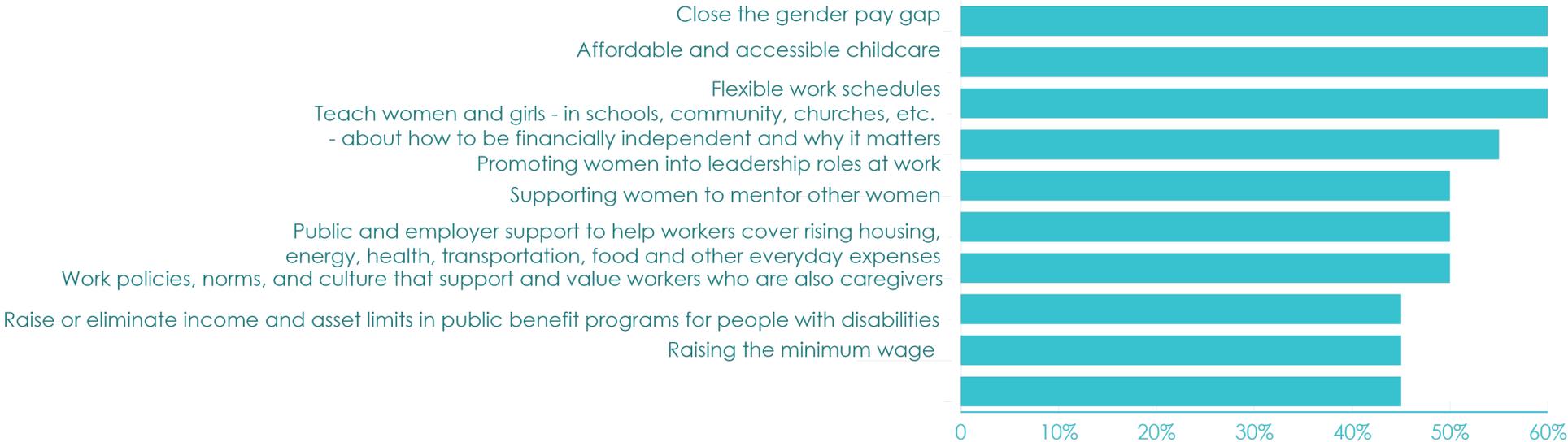
\*In the survey, the term “survivors” includes respondents who indicated they had experienced gender-base abuse at home or in the workplace.

## Key Finding

50%

of the **top challenges** for respondents who are survivors were related to **gender and racial discrimination**.

# Top solutions for survivors (n=19)



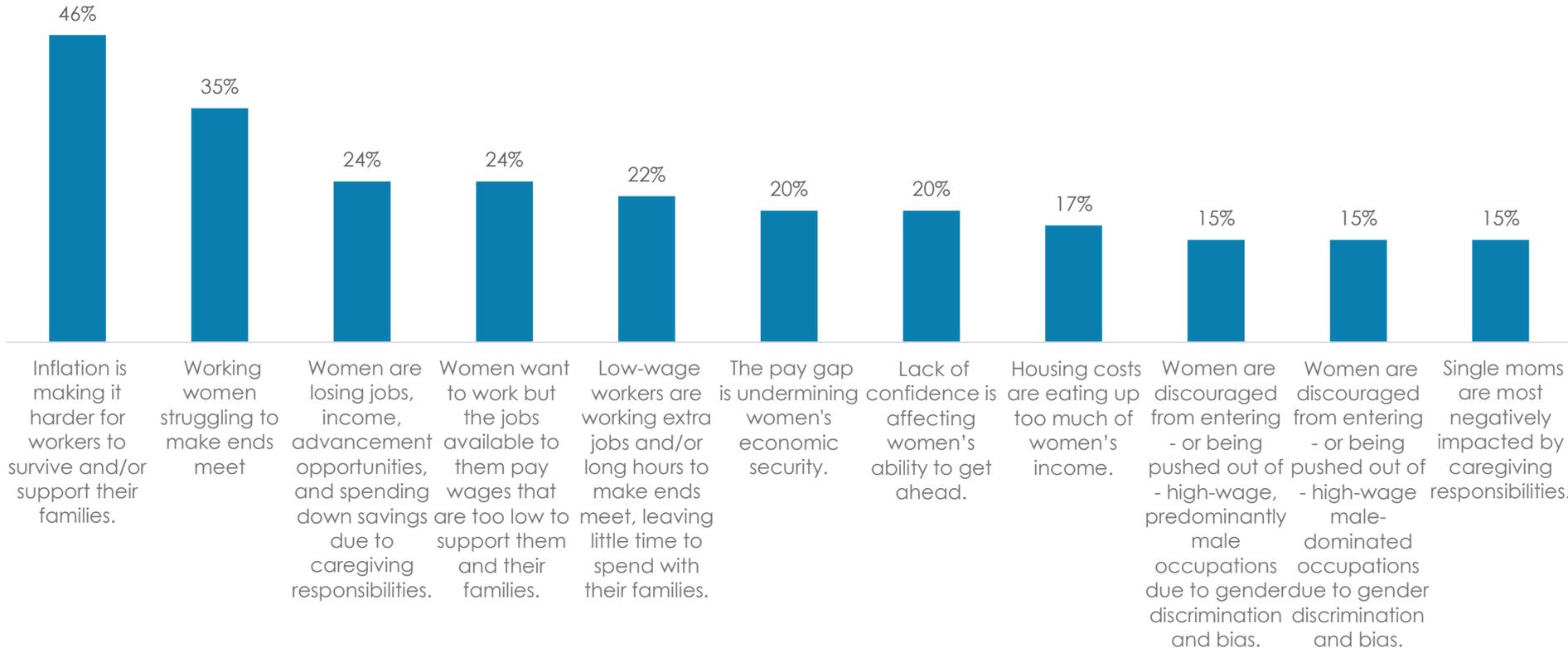
## Women's Voices

*"I think men do tend to get more aggressive. I don't want to get my face punched in and I backed down. I don't like change and I've probably moved 30 times for not feeling safe. Maybe it's just me. I don't know if others are going through it. I'll just leave. I get scared for the upcoming young ladies."*

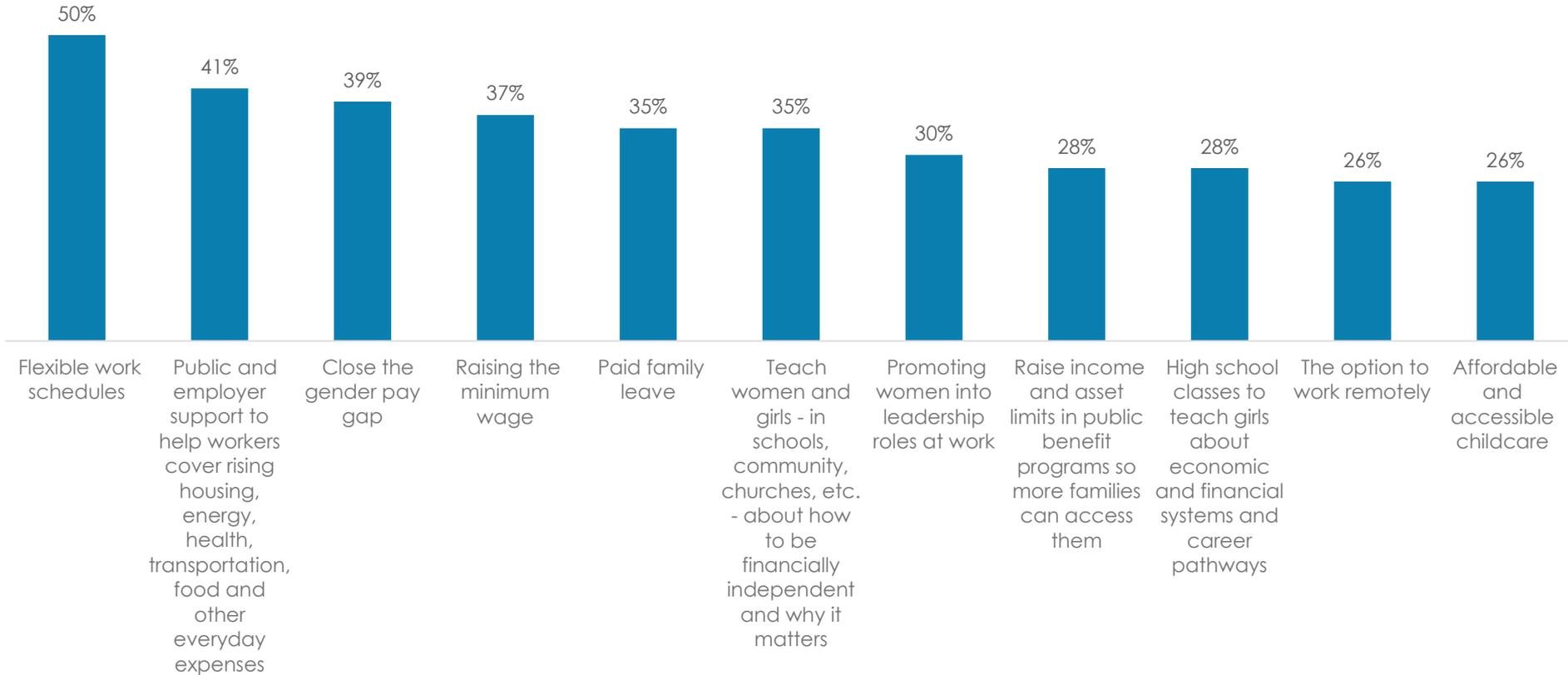
# Top challenges & solutions: Younger Women

---

# Top challenges for younger women (ages 16-25) (n=46)



# Top solutions for younger women (ages 16-25) (n=46)



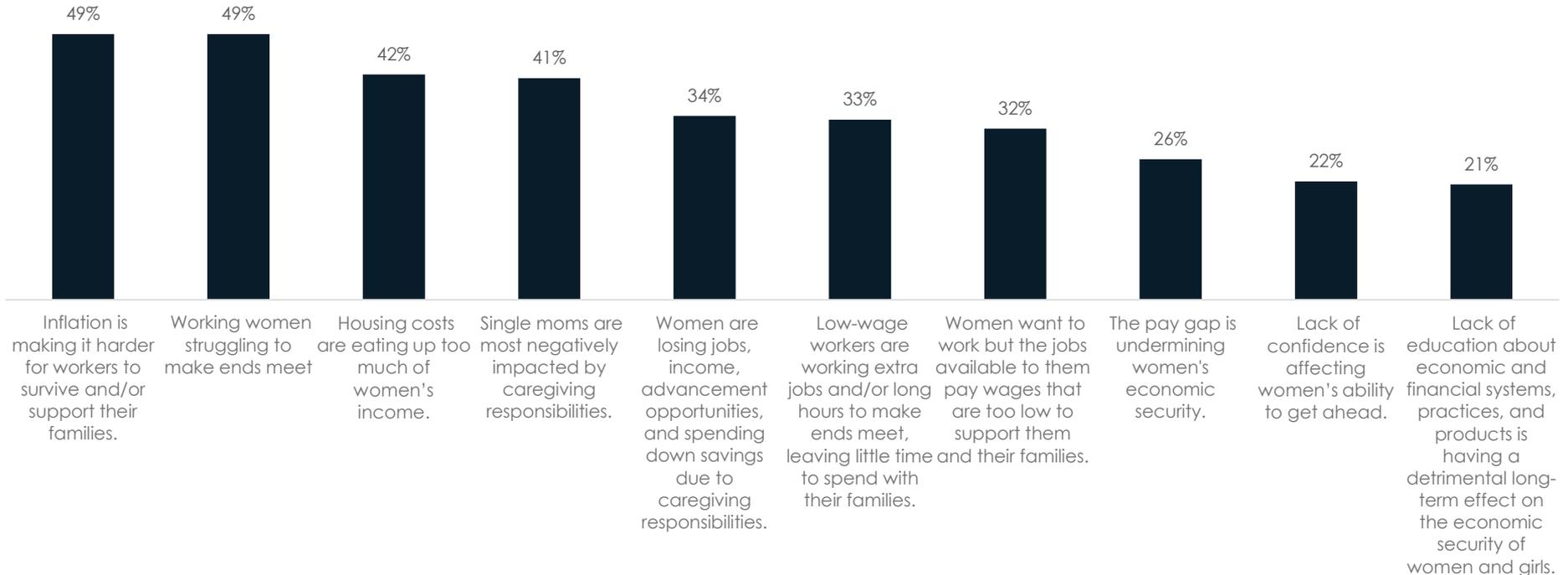
## Young women's voices

*I think [young women need] better education about what you're getting into. Sit down with an advisor. Talk through what it will take over 4 years. What the interest will be. What will be the overall amount of money you'll pay. So, you can explore other options other than college – plumbers, HVAC, mechanics.*

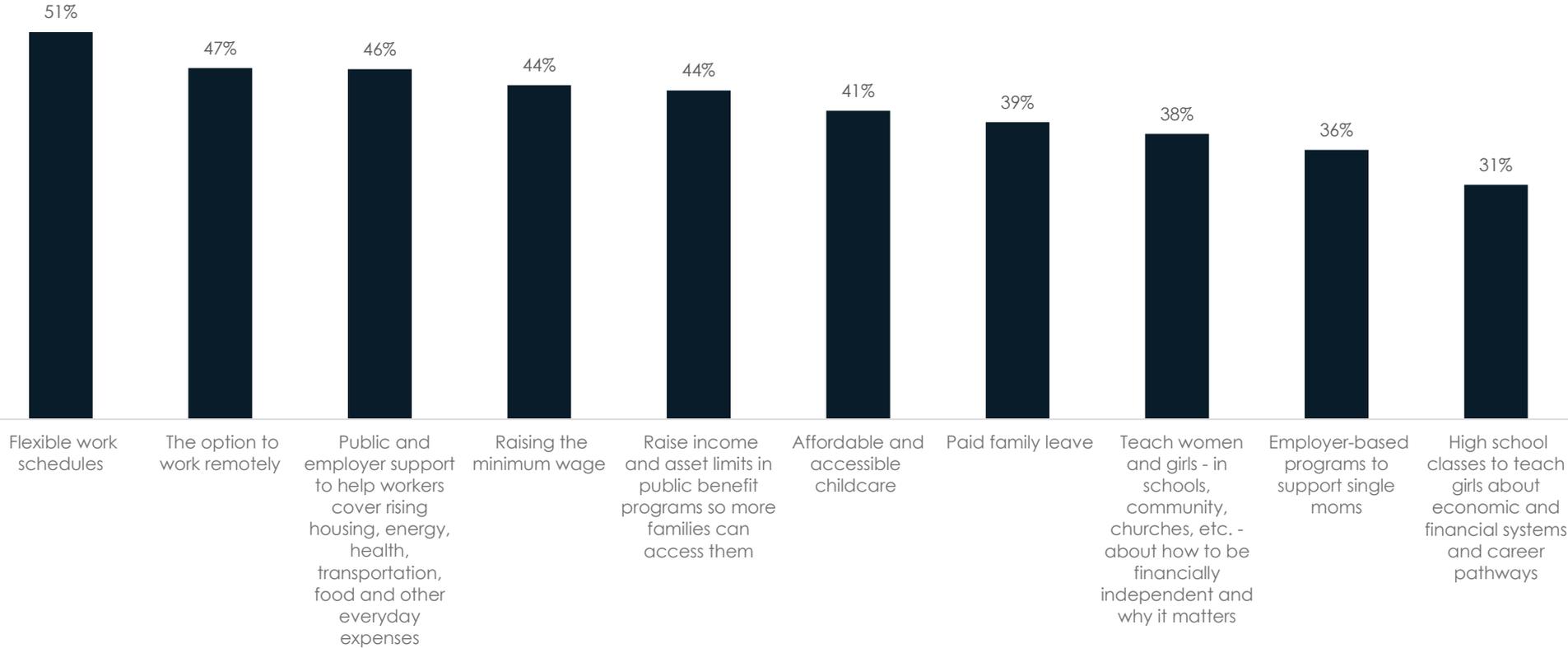
# Top challenges & solutions: Mothers

---

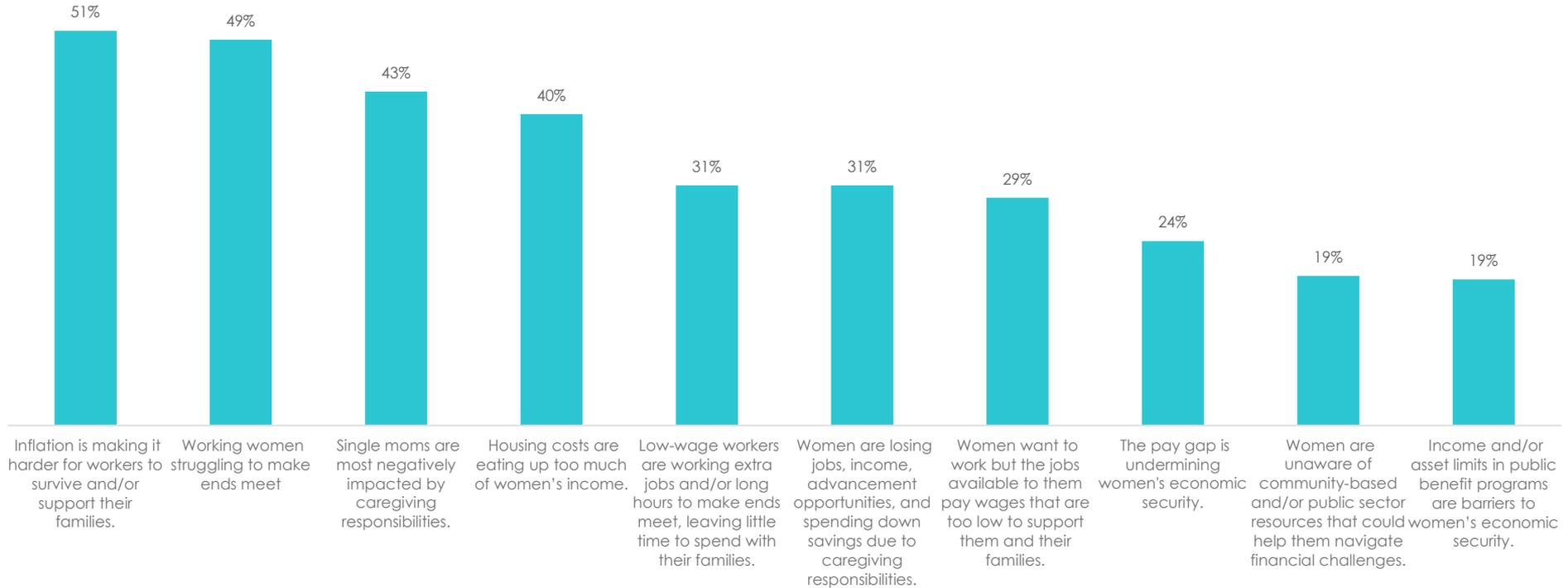
# Top challenges for mothers (n=710)



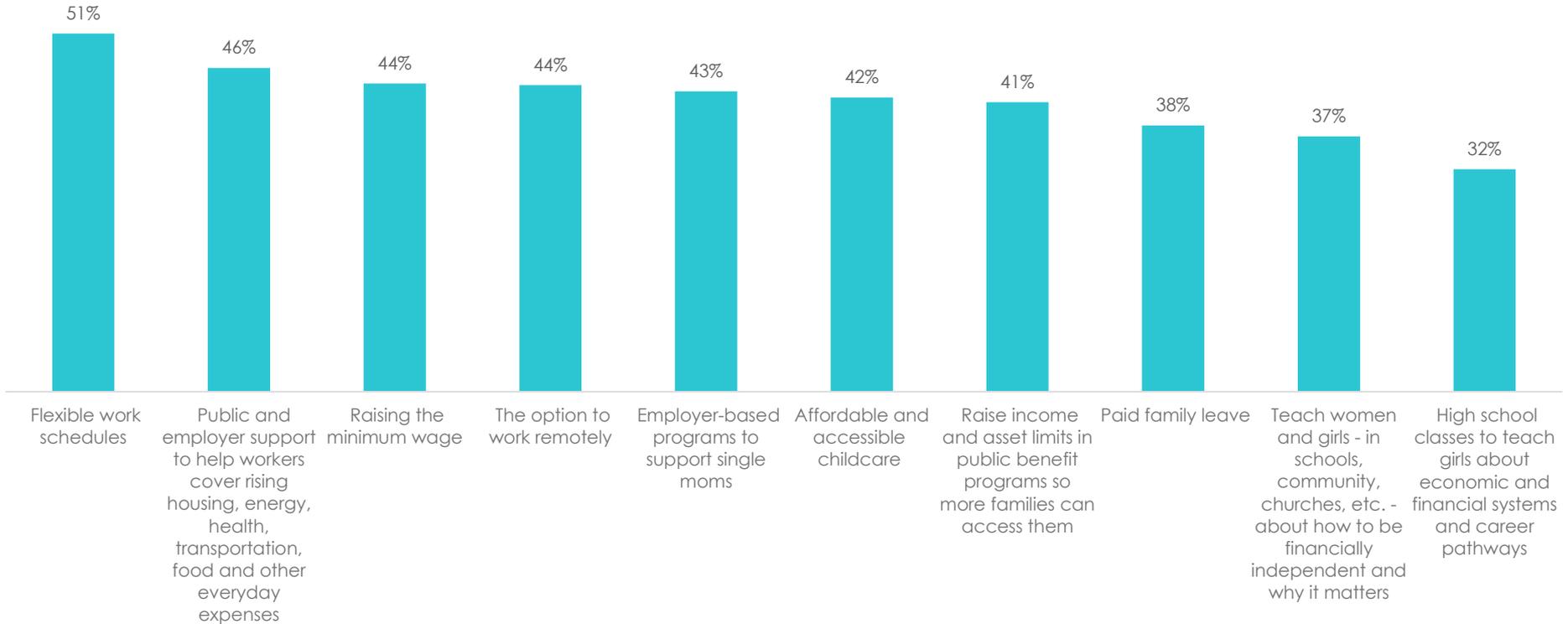
# Top solutions for mothers (n=710)



# Top challenges for single mothers (n=449)



# Top solutions for single mothers (n=449)



A photograph of a grocery store aisle. In the foreground, there are several yellow price tags hanging from a rack. The tags have prices like '1.79' and '1.99'. Behind the tags are bags of groceries, including what looks like instant noodle packets. In the background, there are more shelves, a sign for 'FIRST 60', and people walking through the aisle. The lighting is bright, typical of a grocery store.

## Mothers' Voices

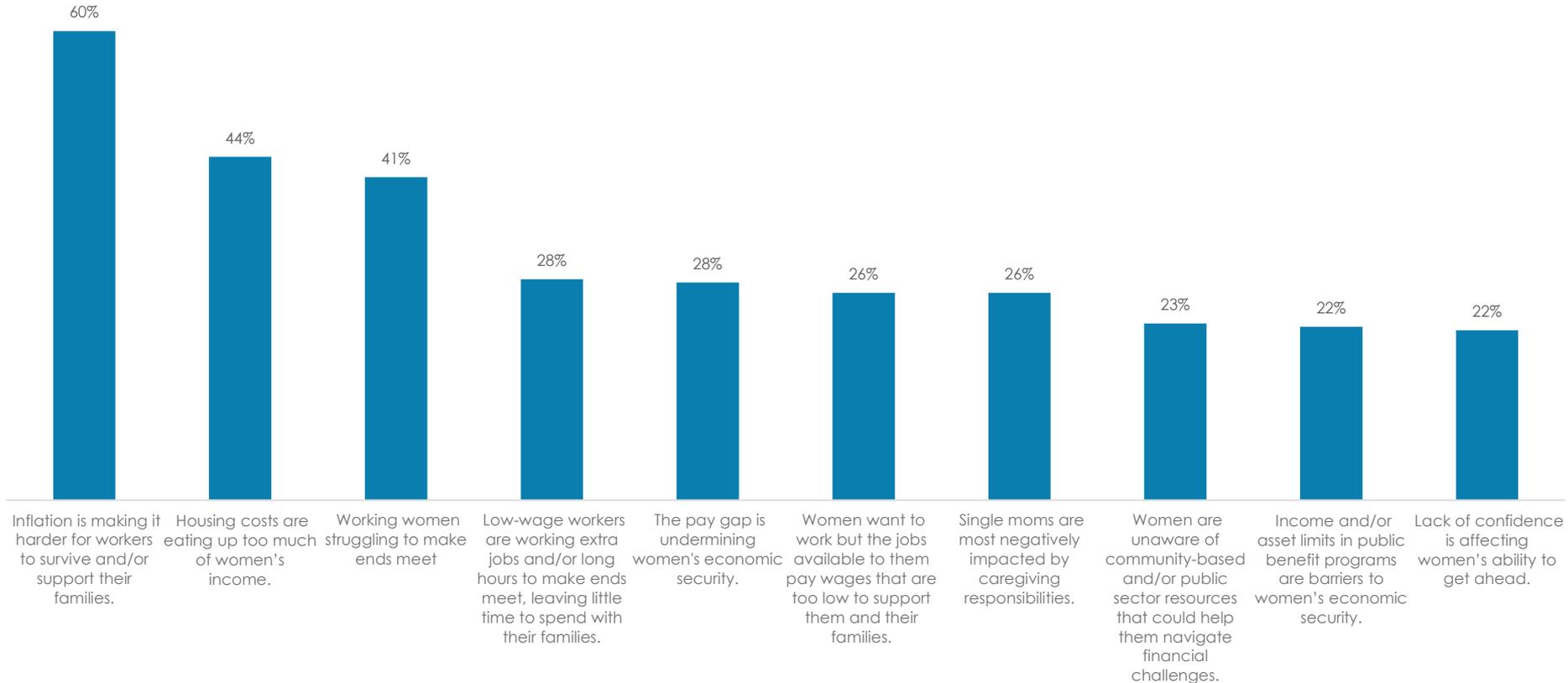
*"I focused on school, but we still were struggling. We didn't qualify for food stamps. I think because their income levels are unbelievable unrealistic, especially with inflation. The only way we've been able to get groceries and make it is because we do qualify for WIC."*

# Top challenges & solutions:

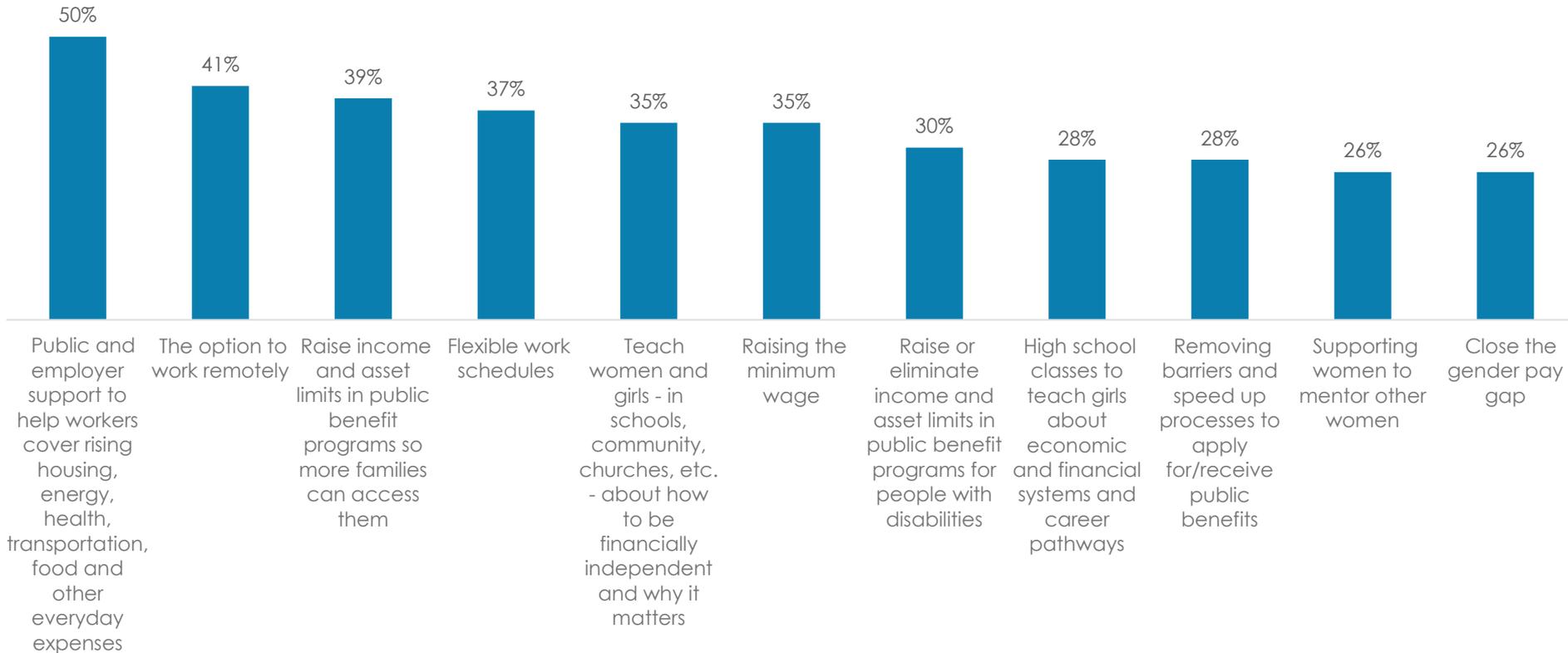
50 +

---

# Top challenges for women of ages 50+ (n=231)



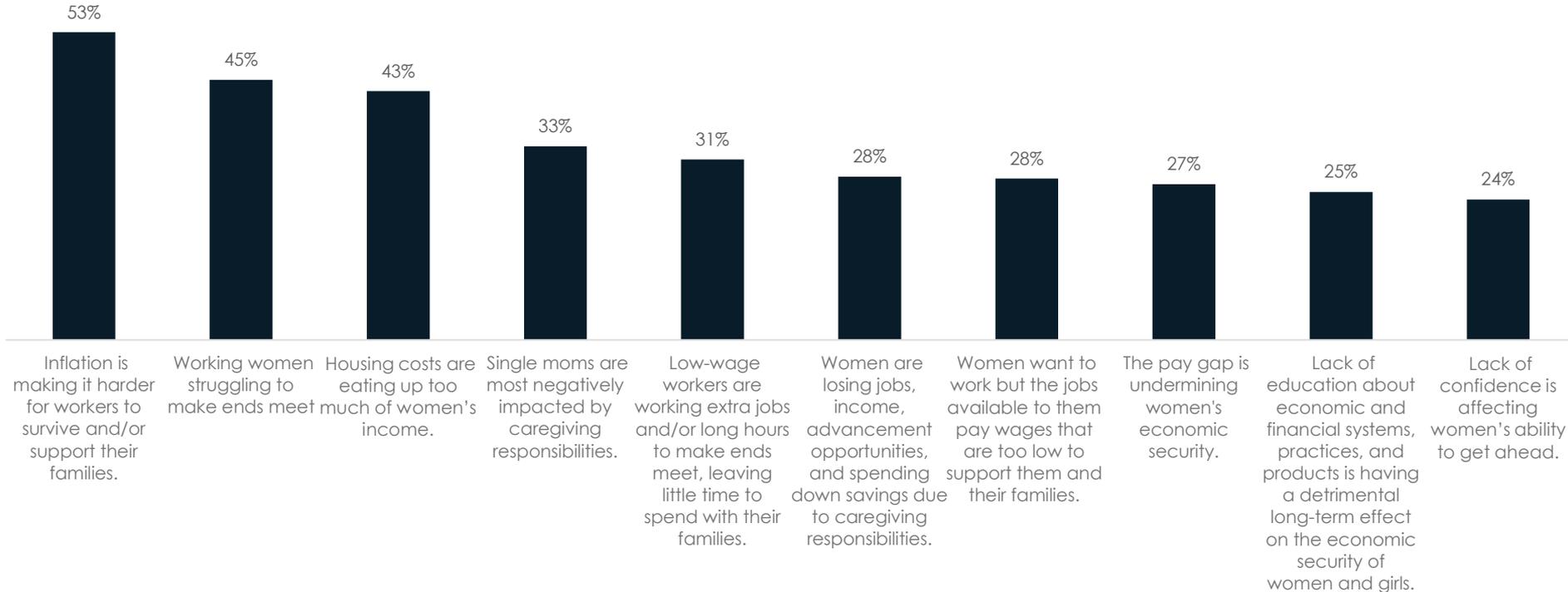
# Top solutions for women of ages 50+ (n=231)



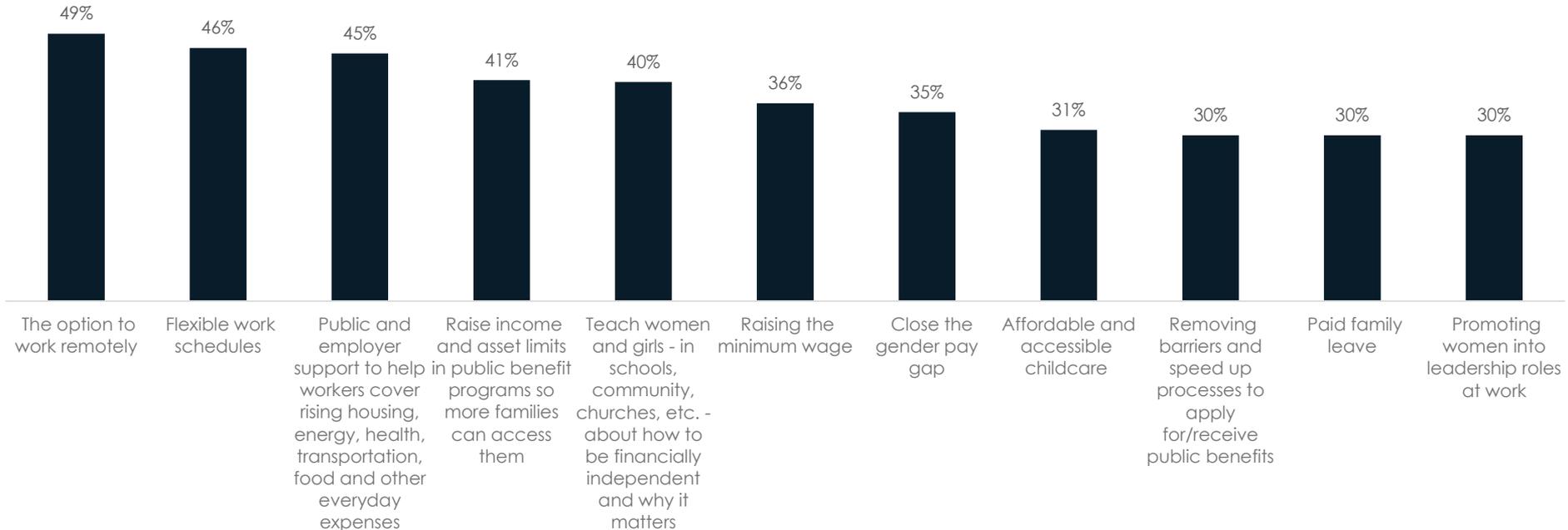
# **Top challenges & solutions:** Entrepreneurs

---

# Top challenges for women entrepreneurs (n=306)



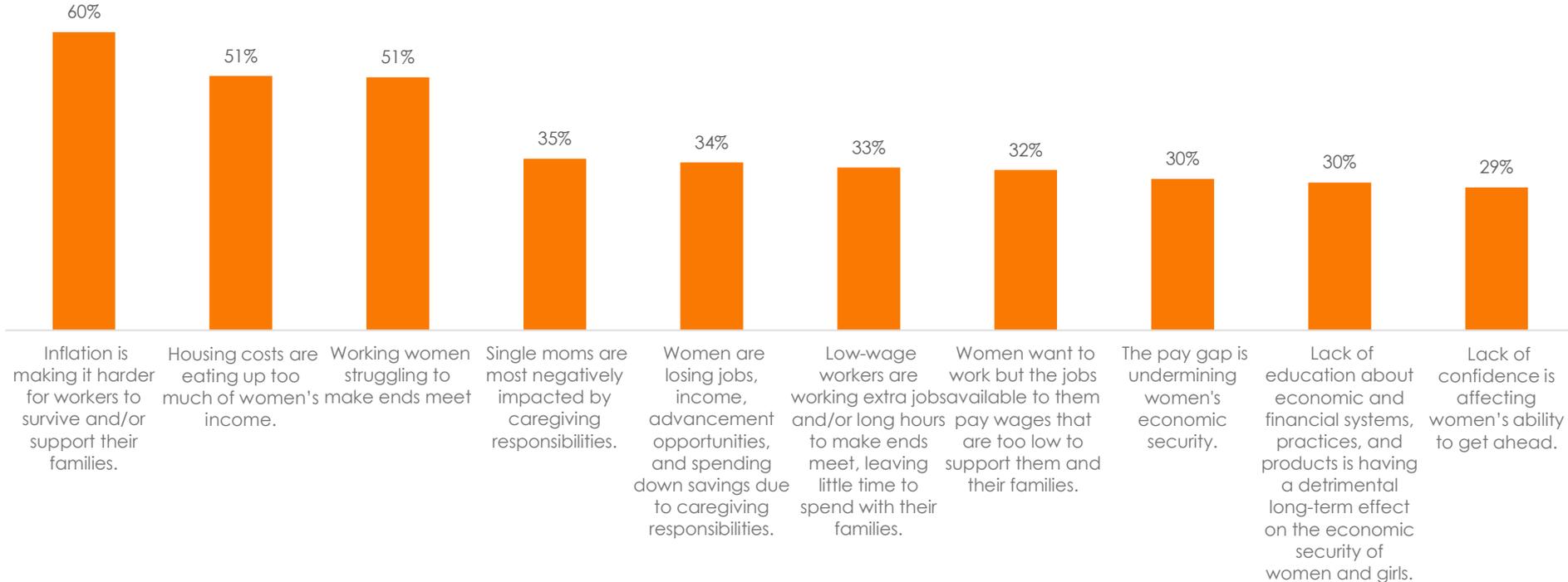
# Top solutions for women entrepreneurs (n=306)



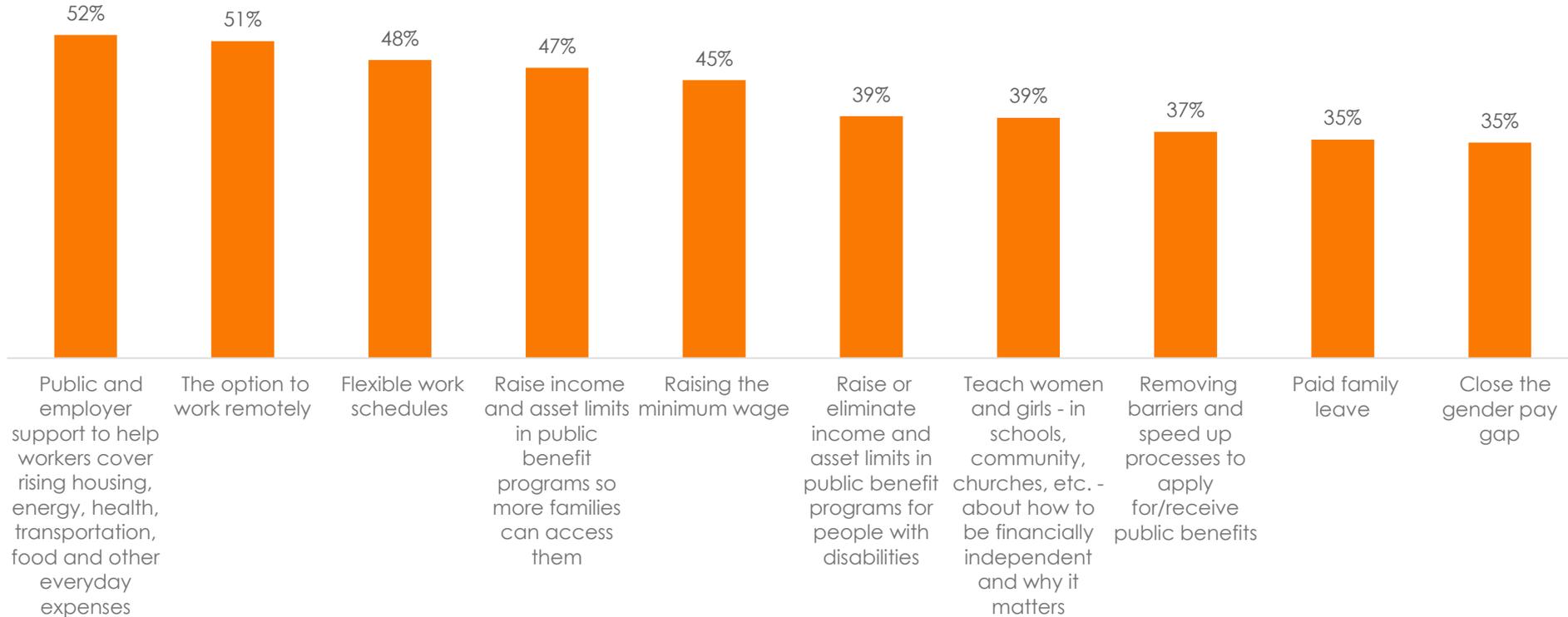
# Top challenges & solutions: Women with a disability(s)

---

# Top challenges for women with a disability (n=397)



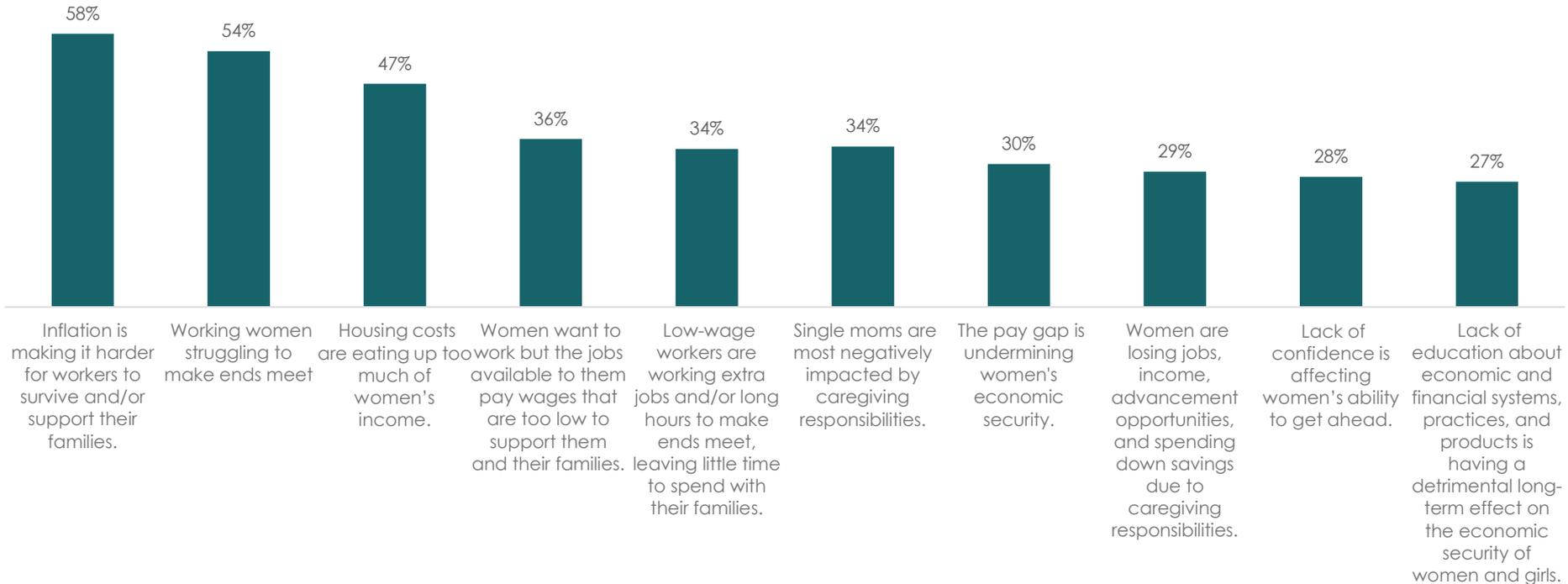
# Top solutions for women with a disability (n=397)



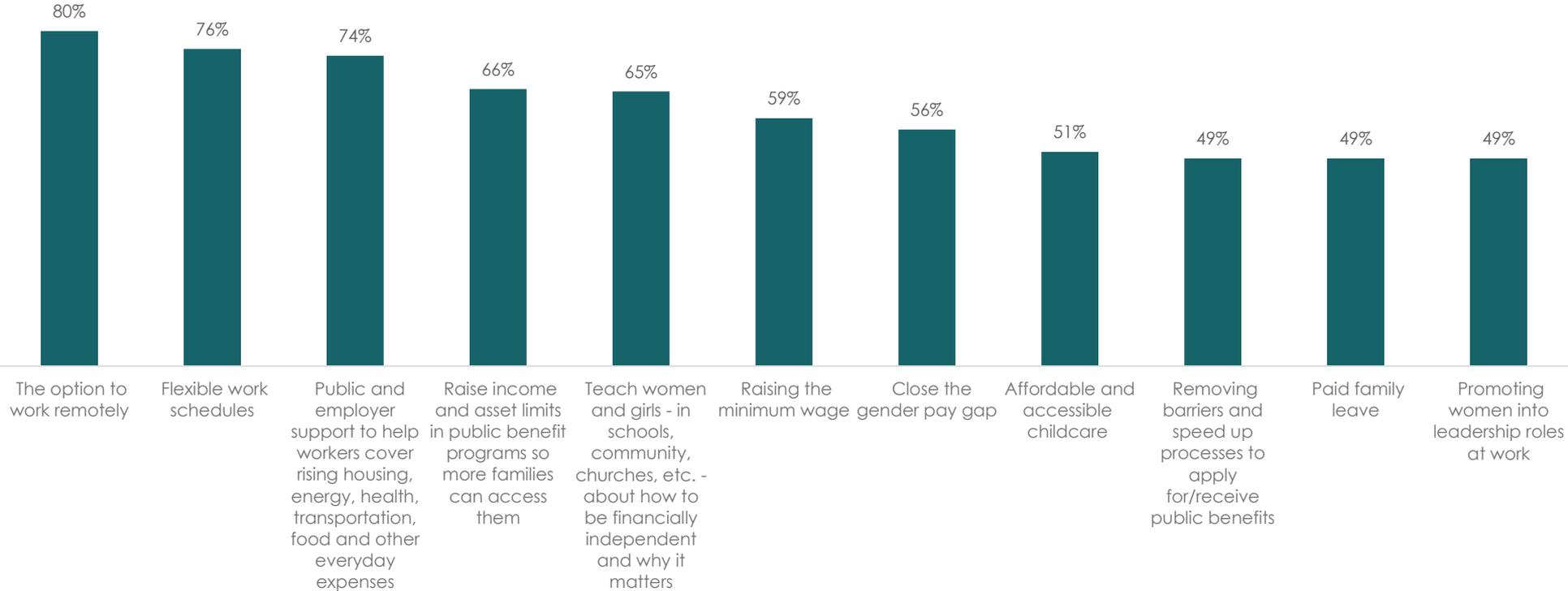
# Top challenges & solutions: LGBTQI+

---

# Top challenges for LGBTQI+ (n=188)



# Top solutions for LGBTQI+ (n=188)

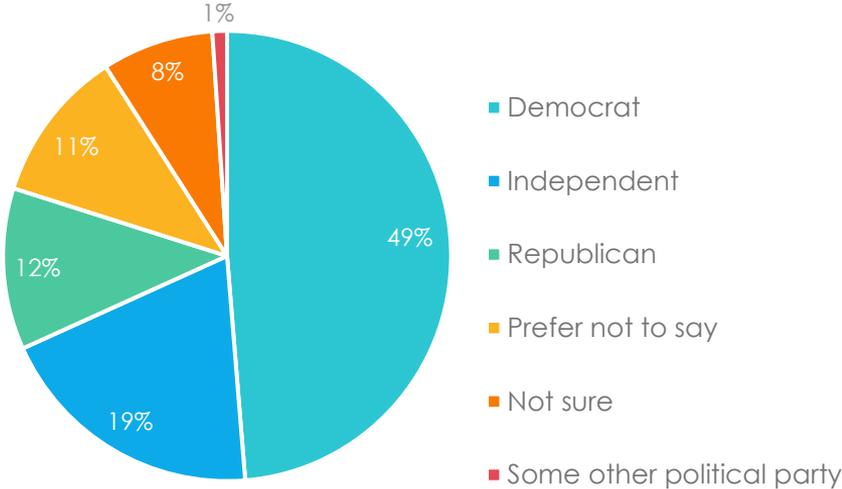


# Survey Findings

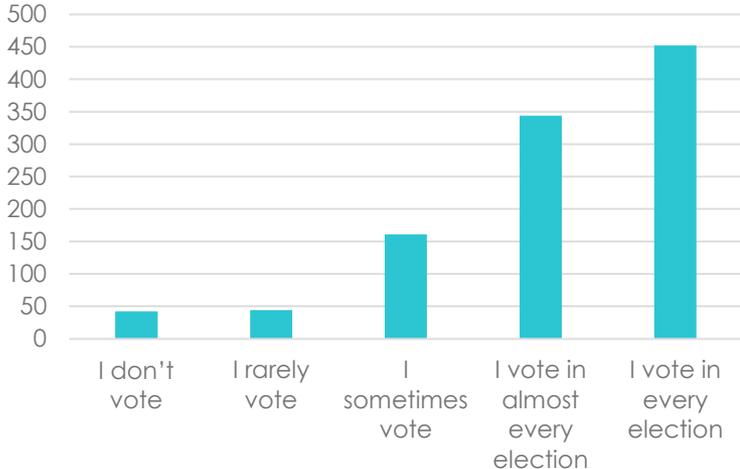
## Political Party Affiliation

---

# POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION



How often do you vote?



# TOP 3 CHALLENGES

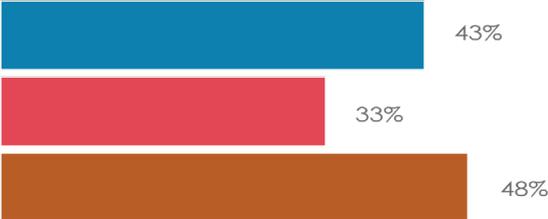
Inflation is making it harder for workers to survive and/or support their families.



Working women struggling to make ends meet

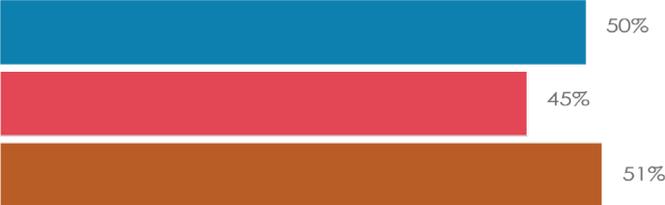


Housing costs are eating up too much of women's income.



# TOP 3 SOLUTIONS

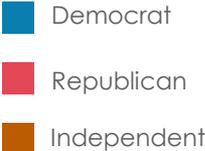
Flexible work schedules



Public and employer support to help workers cover rising housing, energy, health, transportation, food and other everyday expenses



The option to work remotely



# TOP 12 CHALLENGES BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Inflation is making it harder for workers to survive and/or support their families.



Working women struggling to make ends meet



Housing costs are eating up too much of women's income.



Single moms are most negatively impacted by caregiving responsibilities.



Low-wage workers are working extra jobs and/or long hours to make ends meet, leaving little time to spend with their families.



Women want to work but the jobs available to them pay wages that are too low to support them and their families.



Women are losing jobs, income, advancement opportunities, and spending down savings due to caregiving responsibilities.



The pay gap is undermining women's economic security.



Lack of confidence is affecting women's ability to get ahead.



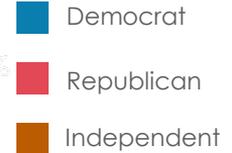
Lack of education about economic and financial systems, practices, and products is having a detrimental long-term effect on the economic security of women and girls.



Women are unaware of community-based and/or public sector resources that could help them navigate financial challenges.



Income and/or asset limits in public benefit programs are barriers to women's economic security.



# TOP 12 SOLUTIONS BY PARTY AFFILIATION

Flexible work schedules



Public and employer support to help workers cover rising housing, energy, health, transportation, food and other everyday expenses



The option to work remotely



Raising the minimum wage



Raise income and asset limits in public benefit programs so more families can access them



Teach women and girls - in schools, community, churches, etc. - about how to be financially independent and why it matters



Paid family leave



Close the gender pay gap



Affordable and accessible childcare



Promoting women into leadership roles at work



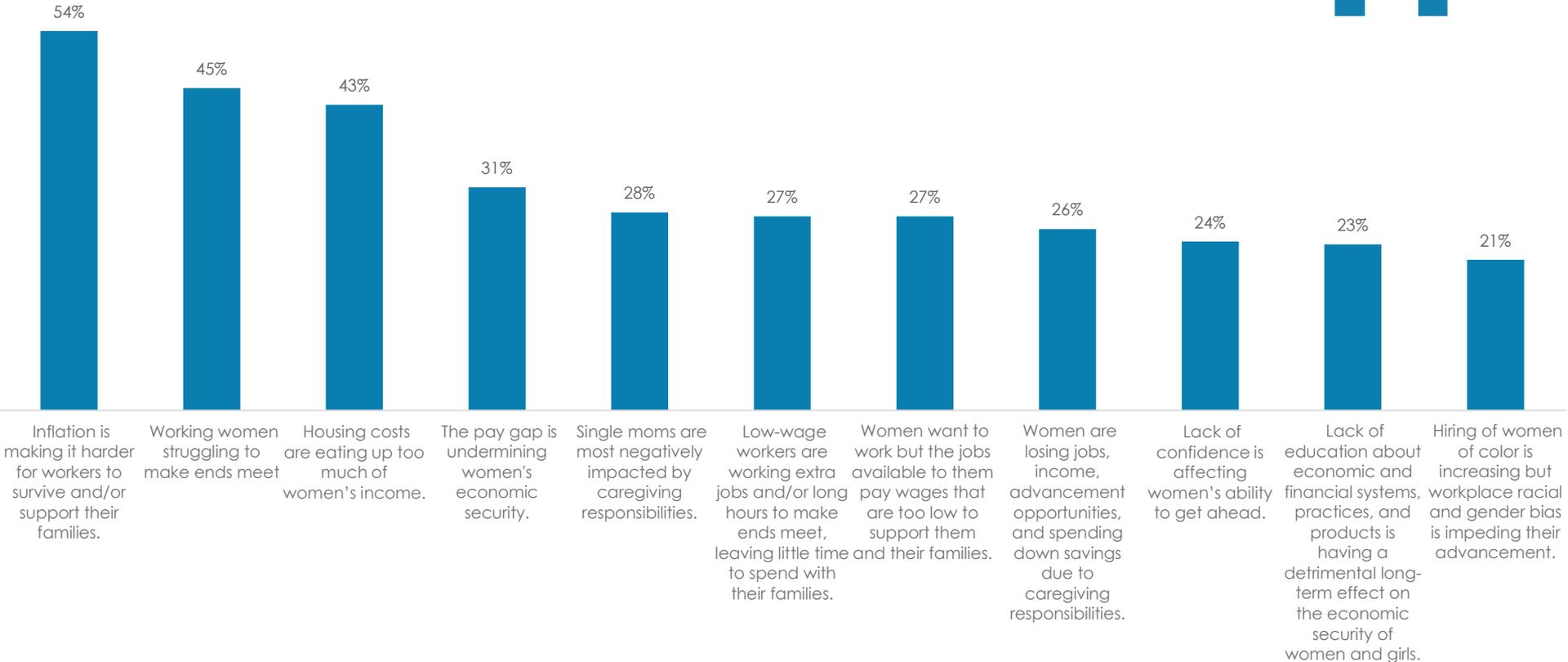
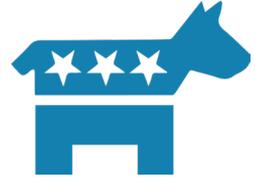
High school classes to teach girls about economic and financial systems and career pathways



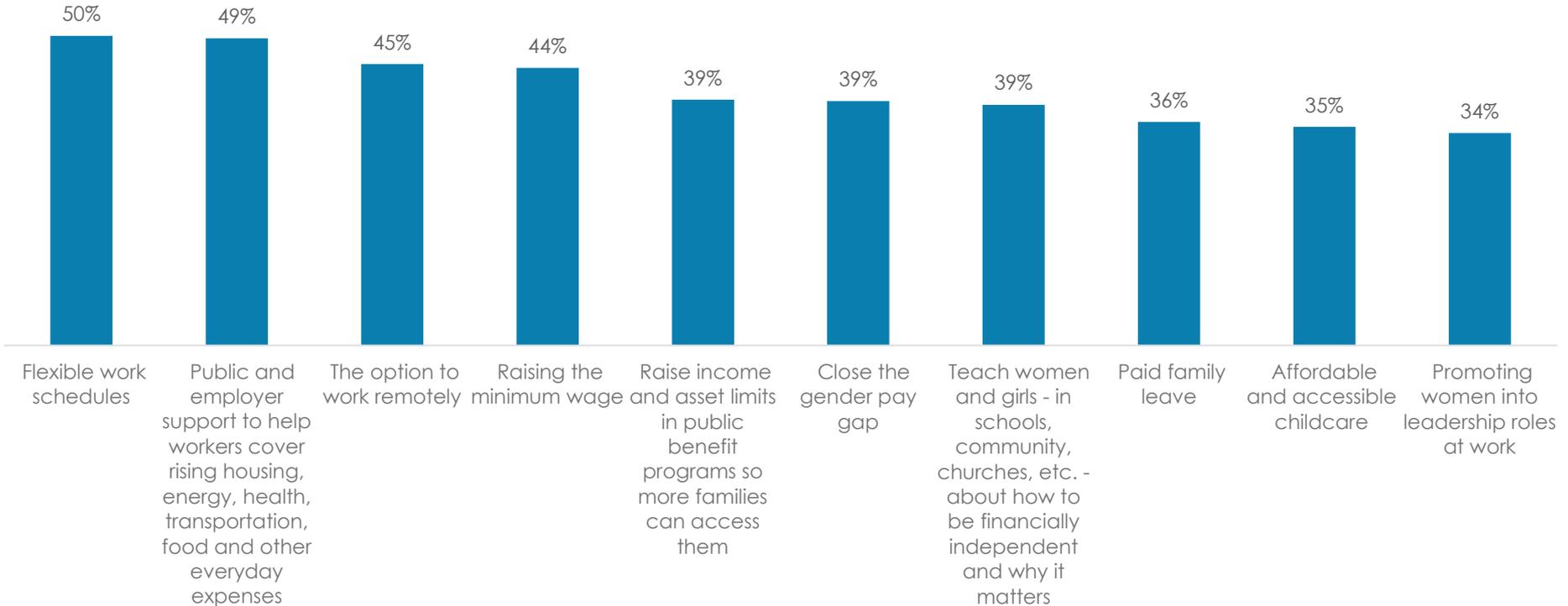
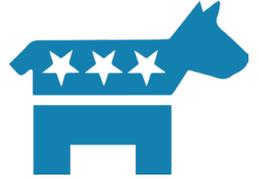
Supporting women to mentor other women



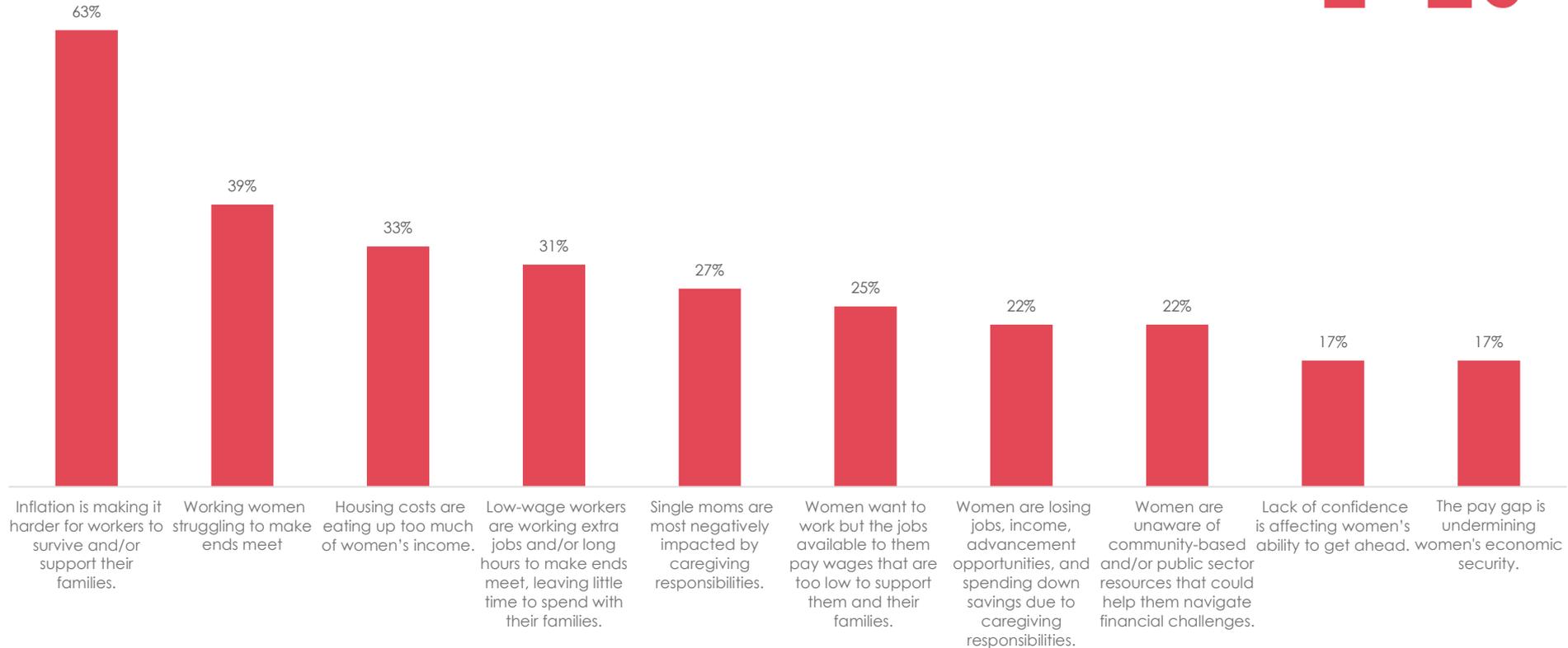
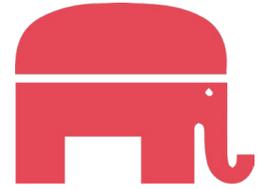
# Top challenges for Democratic Women (n=508)



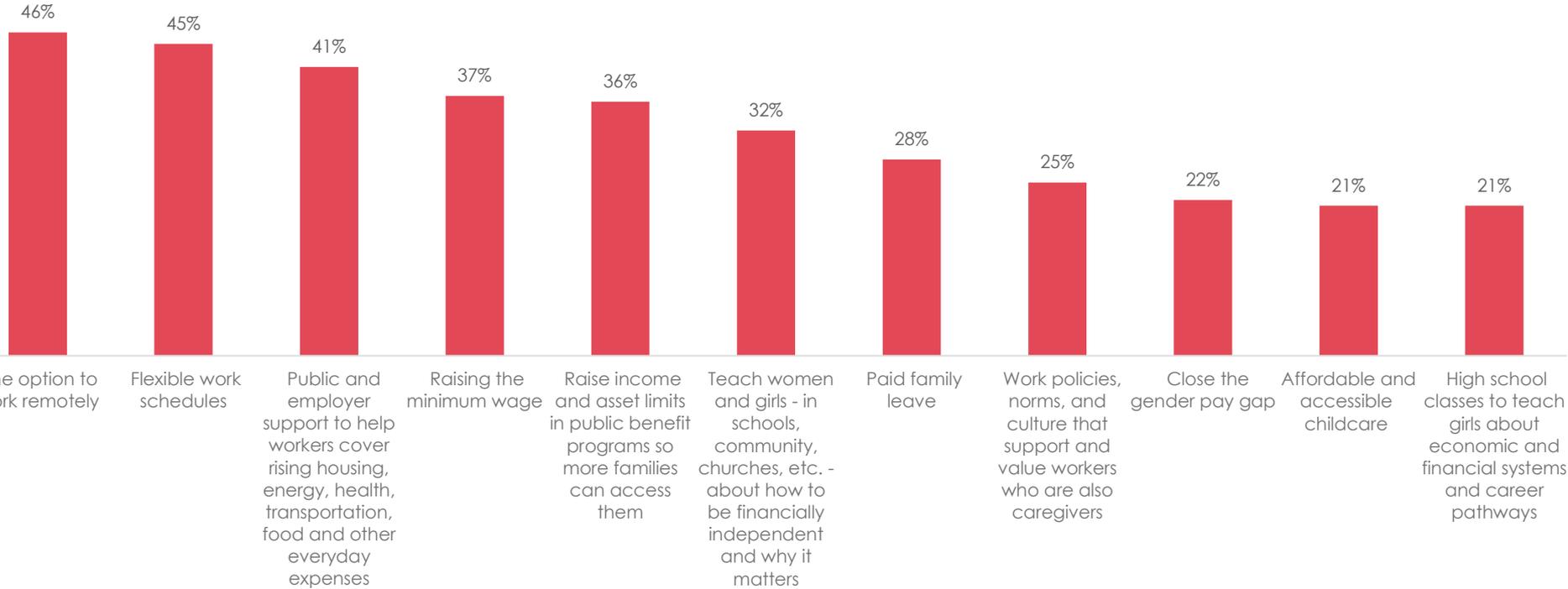
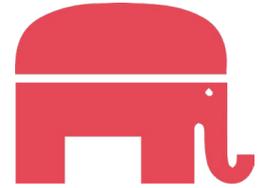
# Top solutions for Democratic Women (n=508)



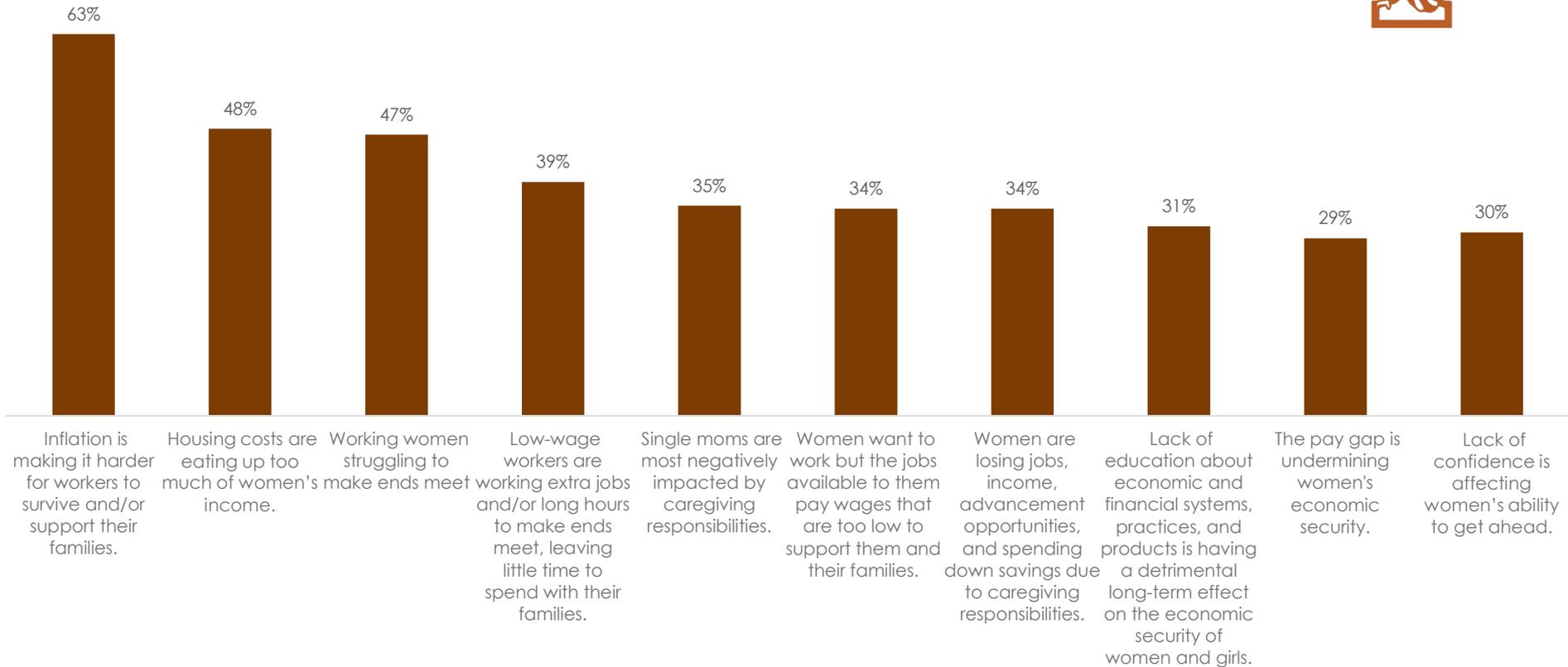
# Top challenges for Republican Women (n=121)



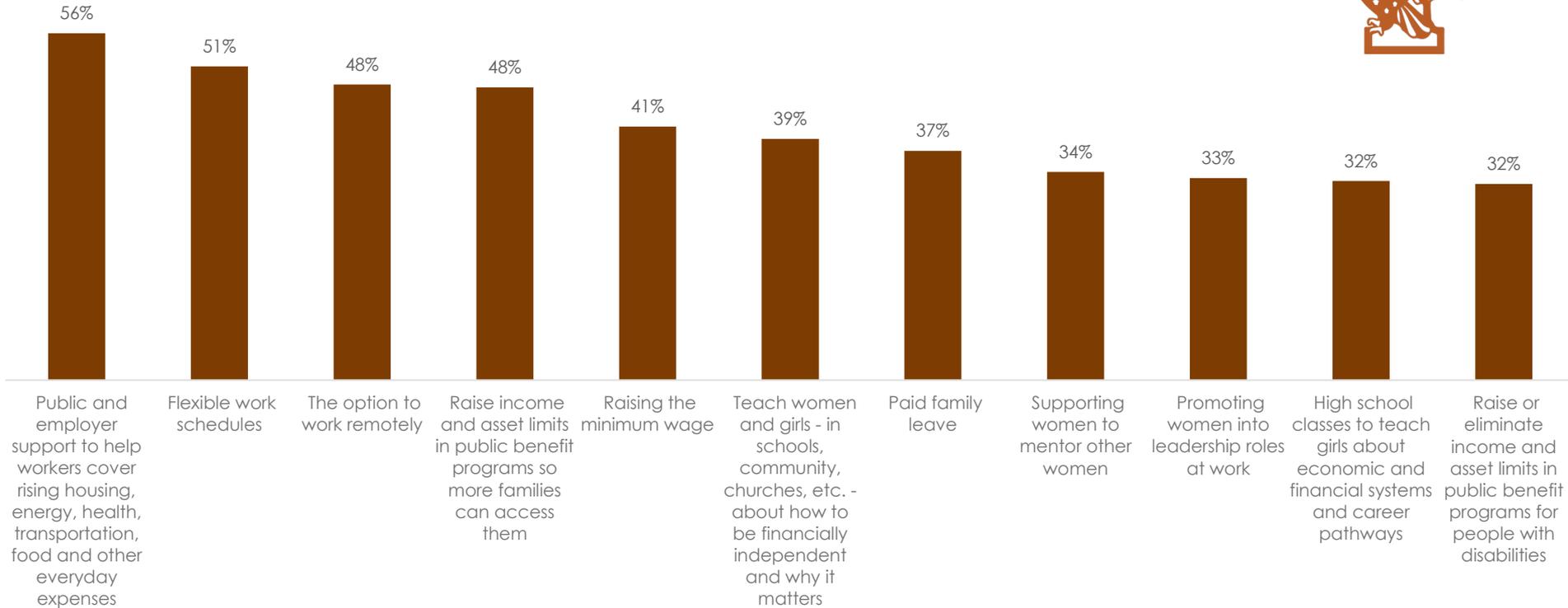
# Top solutions for Republican Women (n=121)



# Top challenges for Independent Women (n=204)



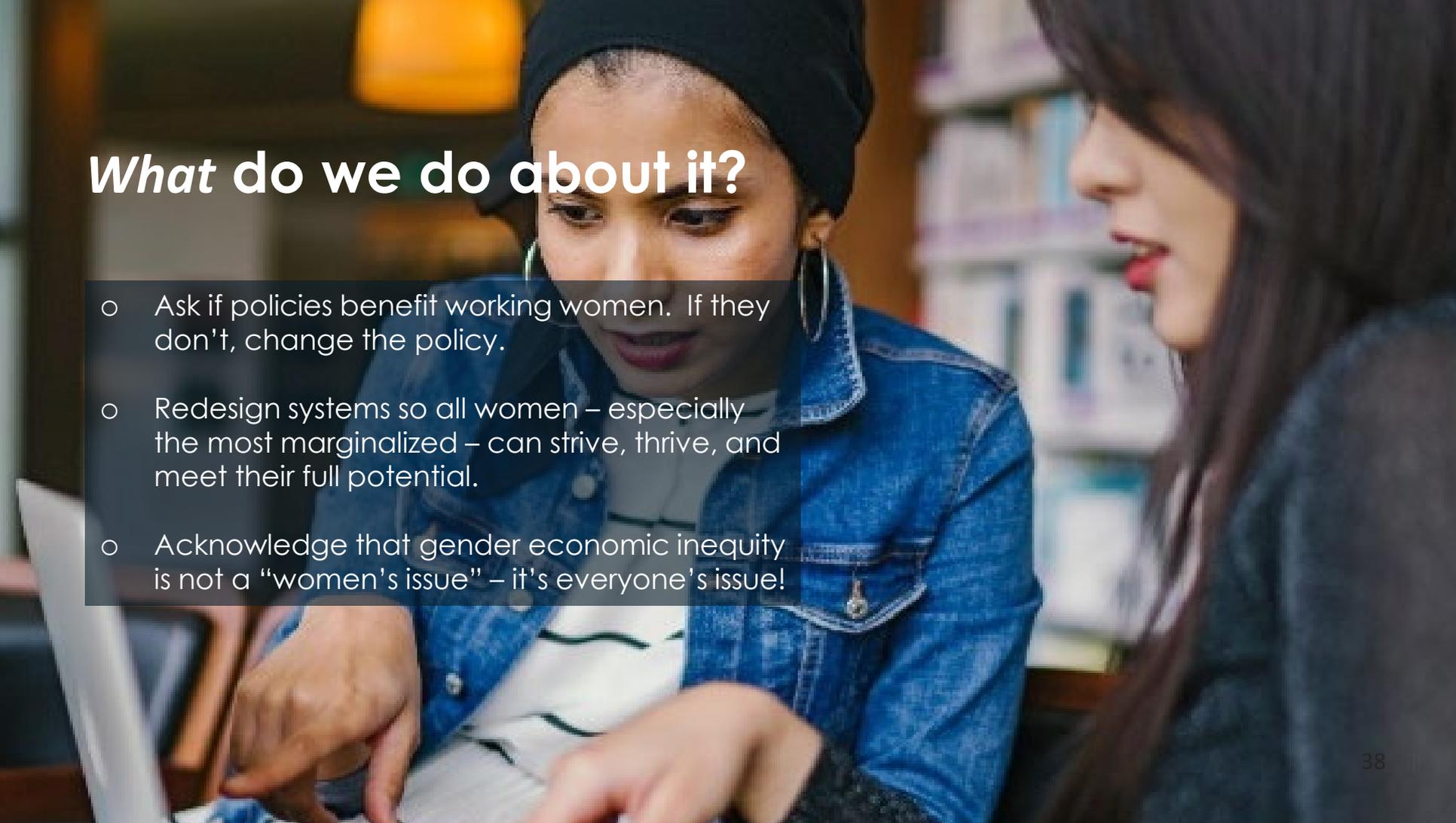
# Top solutions for Independent Women (n=204)



# Why does it matter?

- The economy may be recovering, but women workers are struggling.
- Since women are more likely than ever to be key breadwinners, their families are struggling.
- The lack of support for working caregivers is hurting families, businesses, and our national economy



A photograph of two women wearing hijabs, one in a black one and one in a dark grey one, looking at a laptop screen. They are in a library or study area with bookshelves in the background. The woman on the left is pointing at the screen.

## What do we do about it?

- Ask if policies benefit working women. If they don't, change the policy.
- Redesign systems so all women – especially the most marginalized – can strive, thrive, and meet their full potential.
- Acknowledge that gender economic inequity is not a “women’s issue” – it’s everyone’s issue!

# Where we are now

## 2023:

- Taking findings on the road
- Galvanizing leaders to advance solutions
- Support interviewees to tell their own stories



# WE ADVISORS



- Aimee Allison, She the People
- Dr. Mariko Chang, Author
- Erin Currier, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Melany De La Cruz-Viesca, UCLA Asian American Studies Center
- Noreen Farrell, Equal Rights Advocates
- Christy Finsel, Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition
- Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink
- Naomi Goldberg, Movement Advancement Project
- Surina Khan, Women's Foundation of California
- Dr. Lisa Servon, University of Pennsylvania

# WE FUNDERS



- AARP
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Blue Shield of California Foundation
- S&P Global Foundation
- Chavez Family Foundation
- Friedman Family Foundation
- Individuals: Robert Friedman, Martha Records and Richard Rainaldi

## WE TEAM

- Founder and Project Lead: Heather McCulloch, Entrepreneur-in-Residence
- Senior Research Partner: Céline Apollon
- Aspen FSP Partners: Joanna Smith-Ramani and Ida Rademacher, Co-Executive Directors

Contact Information:  
Heather.McCulloch@AspenInstitute.org  
(415) 378-6703

Original Photography & Design © 2023 by Céline Apollon





## Download findings

aggregated by **gender identity and sexual orientation; income, age, marital, parental and disability status; and economic or physical abuse:**

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publication/women-in-the-economy-survey-findings>

*"We need to **advocate, stand together, write letters**, be informed, network, step in our power and be positive. You can't isolate. Silence is consent, so don't be silent!"*