

■ McLaughlin & Associates  
**National Undergraduate Study**

*Sponsored By:*  
*The William F. Buckley, Jr. Program at Yale*



**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**

**Presented by:**  
**Robert M. Schmidt**

# Methodology

**McLaughlin & Associates conducted a national survey of 800 undergraduate students from October 8<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018. All student participants were under the age of 25 and attend either a four-year private or public college or university on a full-time basis. All interviews were conducted online and respondents were carefully selected and screened from a nationwide representative platform of individuals who elect to participate in online surveys.**

**Data for this survey have been stratified by age, race/ethnicity, gender and geography using the National Center for Education Statistics Report to reflect the actual demographic composition of undergraduate students in the United States.**

**Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. However, a confidence interval of 95% was calculated in order to produce an error estimate of +/- 3.5% for the 800 respondents. This error estimate should be taken into consideration in much the same way that analysis of probability polls takes into account the margin of sampling error. The error estimate increases for cross-tabulations. Totals may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding, refusals and the ability for respondents to give multiple answers to certain questions. All surveys may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to question wording and ordering, sampling error, coverage error and measurement error.**

# Part One – First Amendment & Speech Codes

*Undergraduates continue to overwhelmingly believe the First Amendment is an important amendment that still needs to be followed and respected rather than being outdated, 79% to 17%.*

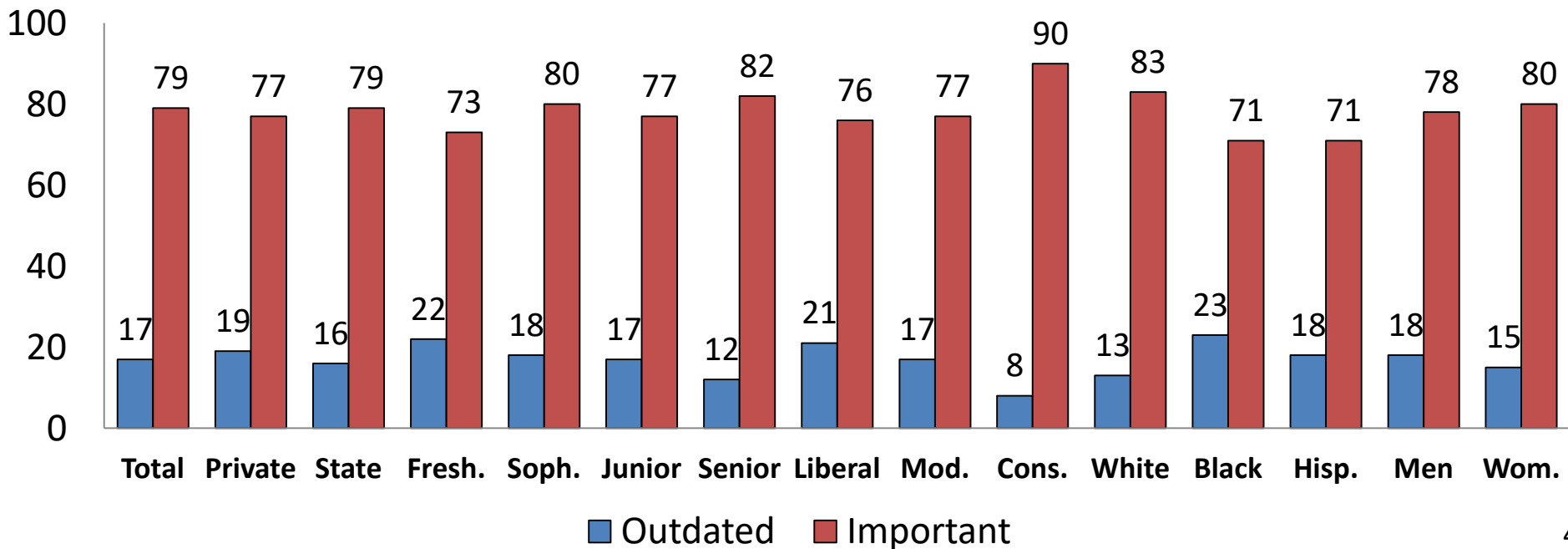
Generally speaking, do you think the First Amendment, which deals with freedom of speech, is...?

An outdated amendment that can no longer be applied in today's society and should be changed

OR

An important amendment that still needs to be followed and respected in today's society

	9/15	9/16	9/17	10/18
<b>Outdated</b>	17%	10%	12%	17%
<b>Important</b>	77%	84%	83%	79%

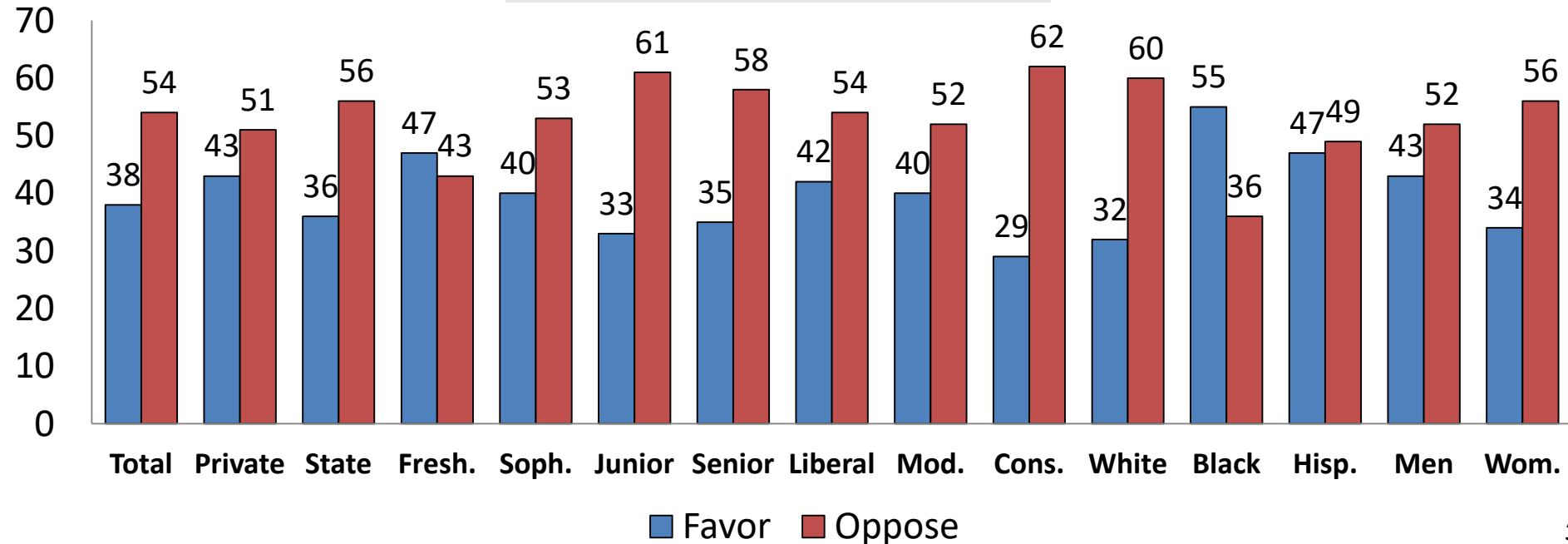


A majority, 54%, opposes speech codes, while 38% of undergraduates favor them, which is similar to last year.

Undergraduates who are self-identified conservatives are most likely to oppose speech codes, at 62%. Freshmen (47%) and Sophomores (40%) are more likely to favor speech codes than Juniors (33%) and Seniors (35%).

## Would you favor or oppose your college or university having speech codes to regulate speech for students and faculty?

	9/15	9/17	10/18
Favor	48%	38%	38%
Oppose	40%	52%	54%



*By a 56% to 38% margin, undergraduates believe that students should be allowed to express their views anywhere on campus, even if they are offensive, rather than in designated free speech areas. This margin has widened slightly since last year.*

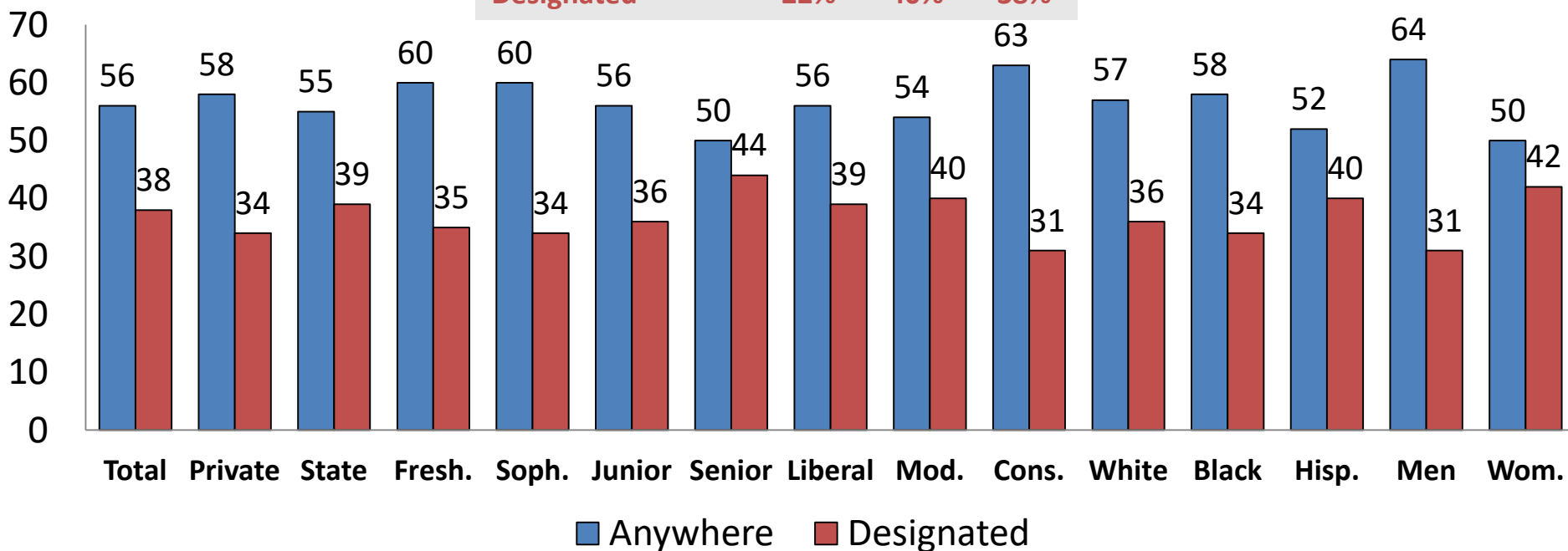
*Conservatives and male students are slightly more likely to believe in the expression of views anywhere on campus, 63% and 64%, respectively.*

Generally speaking, do you think that students like yourself...?

Should be allowed to express their views anywhere on campus, even if they are offensive  
OR

Should only be allowed to express their views in areas that are approved by the college, sometimes known as designated free speech areas

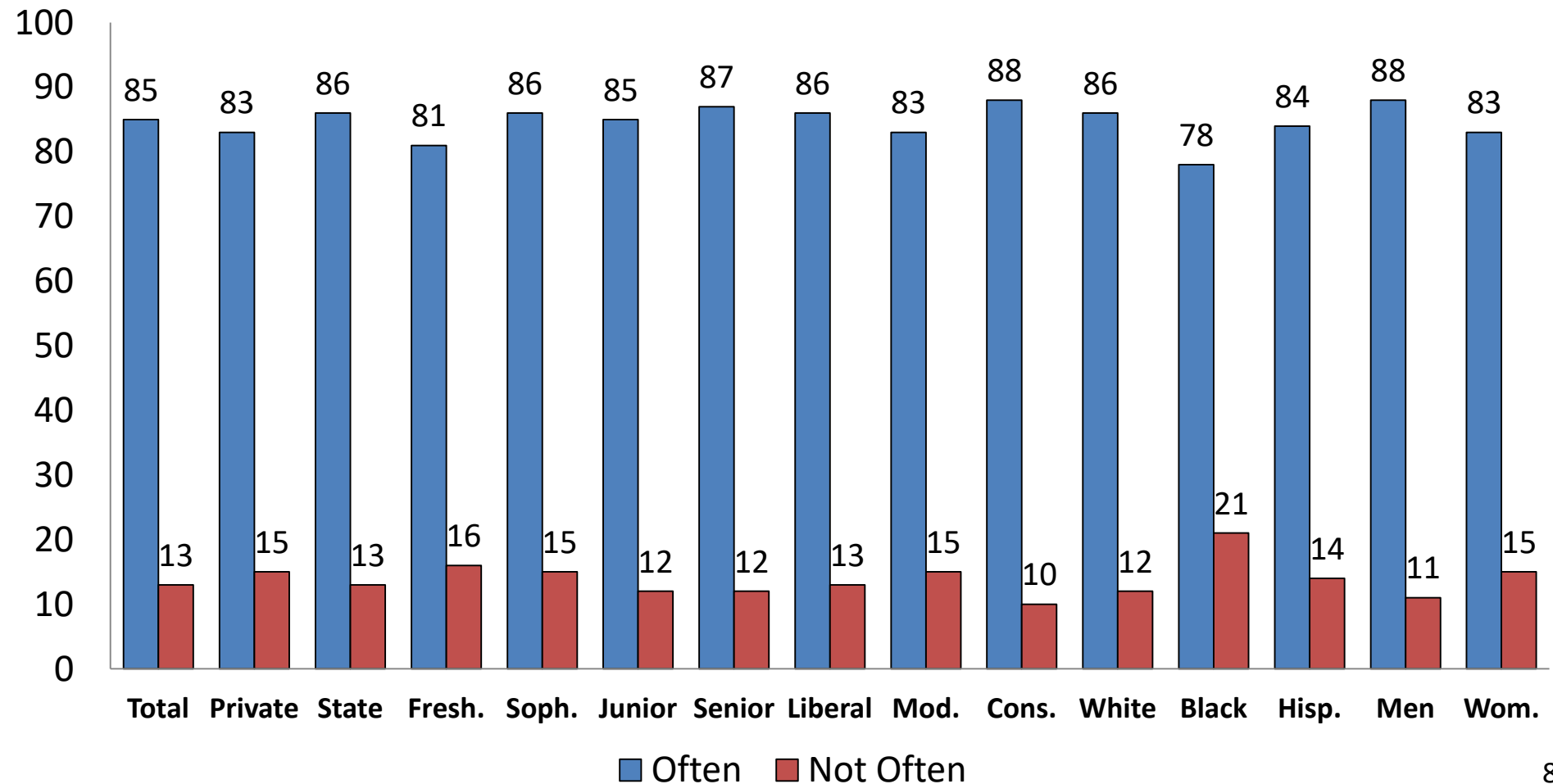
	9/16	9/17	10/18
Anywhere	74%	51%	56%
Designated	22%	40%	38%



# Part Two – Intellectual Diversity & Changing Opinions

*Most students, 85%, say they often hear an opinion or political belief on campus that is different from their own, including 39% who say “frequently” and 46% who say “sometimes.” Just 13% say they do not hear a different opinion often.*

**Generally speaking, how often do you hear an opinion or political belief on campus that is different from your own?**





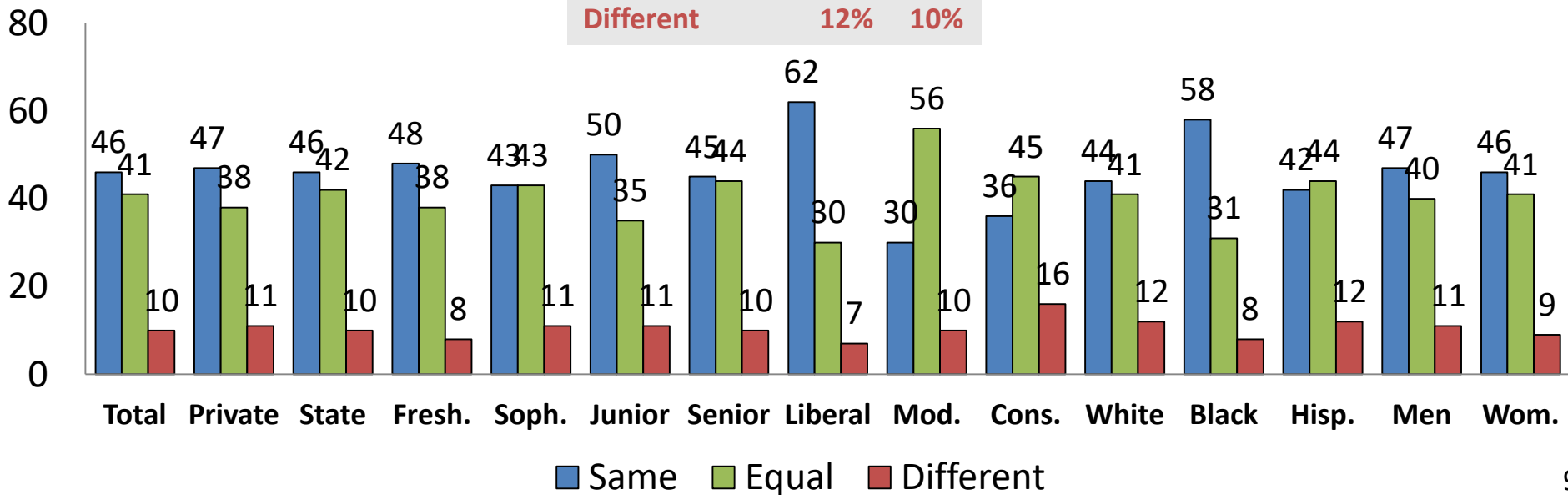
Like last year, a plurality of students, 46%, says they share the same opinions and political beliefs as their friends. Just 10% say they have different opinions than their friends and 41% say they have an equal amount of friends with similar and different opinions.

Liberal students are much more likely to say their friends share the same opinions of them, at 62%.

Which of the following best describes you?

- I share the same opinions and political beliefs as ALL OF my friends
- I share the same opinions and political beliefs as MOST OF my friends
- I have an EQUAL AMOUNT of friends with the same opinions and political beliefs and different opinions and political beliefs as me
- I have different opinions and political beliefs than MOST OF my friends
- I have different opinions and political beliefs than ALL OF my friends

	9/17	10/18
Same	45%	46%
Equal	38%	41%
Different	12%	10%

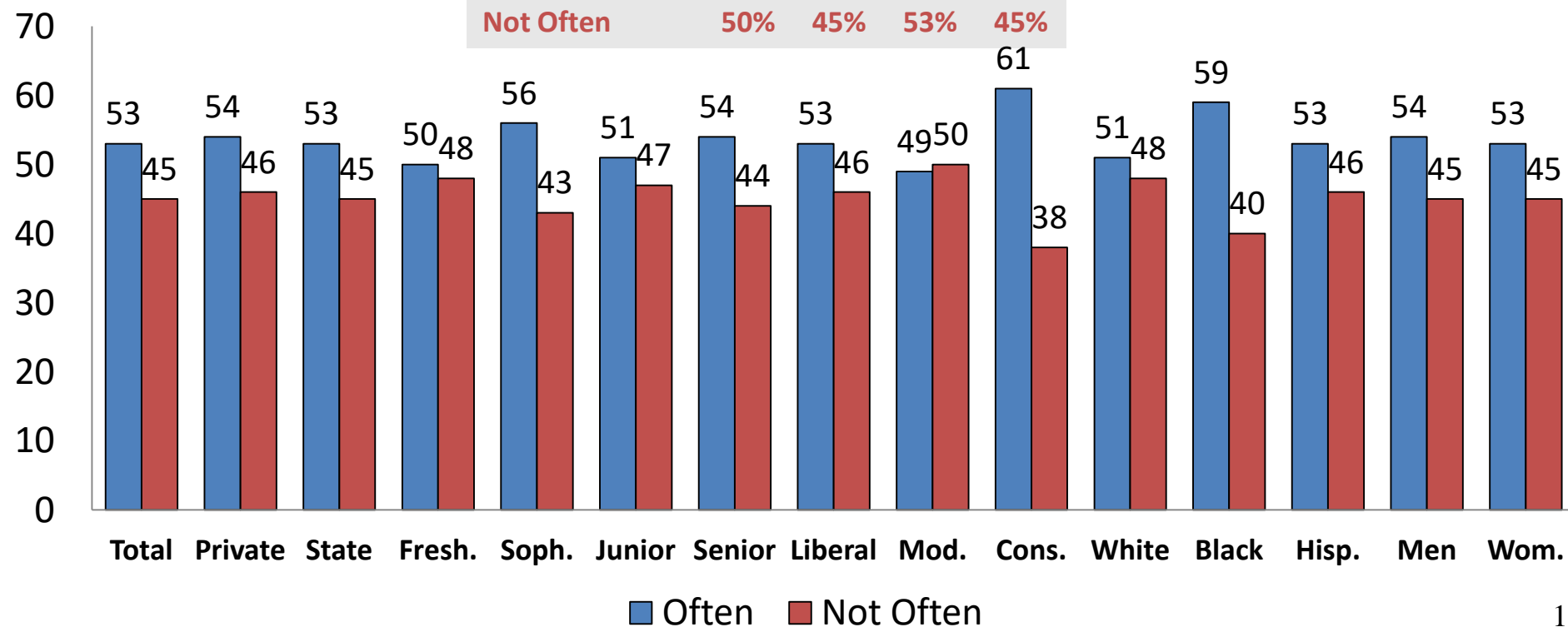


*A majority, 53%, says they often feel intimidated sharing their ideas, opinions or beliefs in class because they were different than those of their professors. This is nine-points higher than last year and identical to 2016.*

*As has been the case historically, conservative students are most likely to say they feel intimidated, at 61%.*

### Have you felt intimidated in sharing your ideas, opinions or beliefs in class because they were different than those of your professors?

	9/15	9/16	9/17	10/18
<b>Often</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Not Often</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>45%</b>

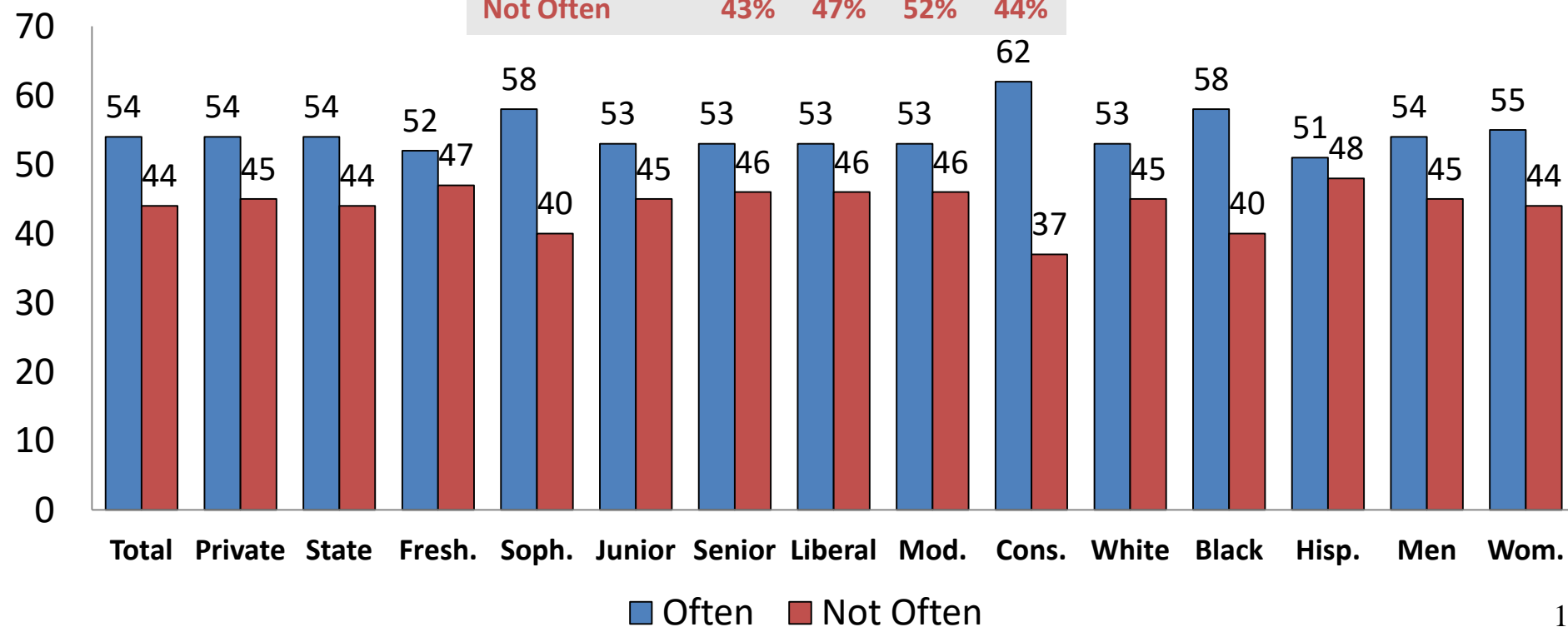


*Another majority, 54%, says they also feel intimidated sharing their ideas, opinions or beliefs in class because they were different than those of their classmates. This is nine-points higher than last year and nearly matches 2015.*

*Conservative students are again most likely to feel intimidated, at 62%.*

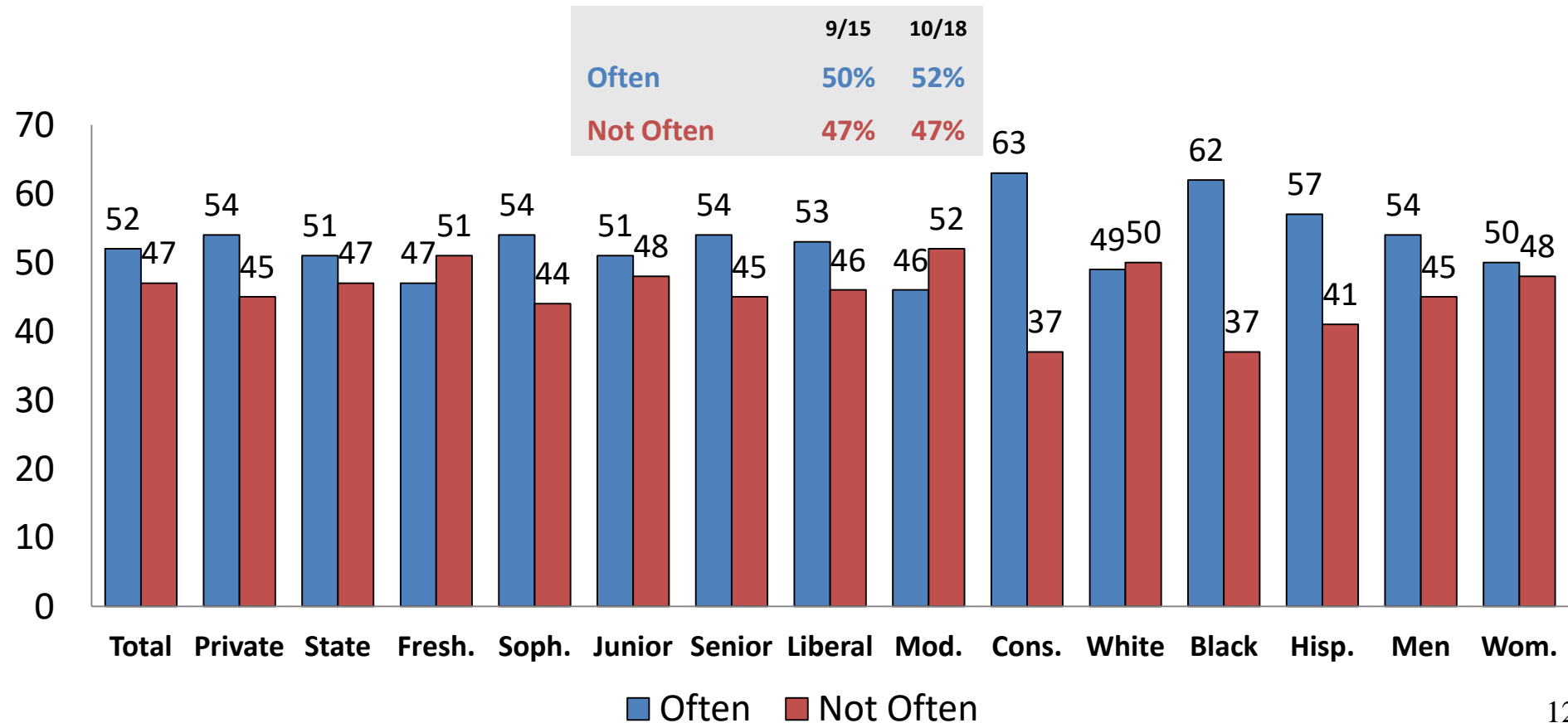
**And have you felt intimidated in sharing your ideas, opinions or beliefs in class because they were different than those of your classmates or peers?**

	9/15	9/16	9/17	10/18
<b>Often</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Not Often</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>44%</b>



*Slightly more than half, 52%, say they have had professors or course instructors that have used class time to express their own beliefs that are unrelated to the course material. This is similar to three years ago.*

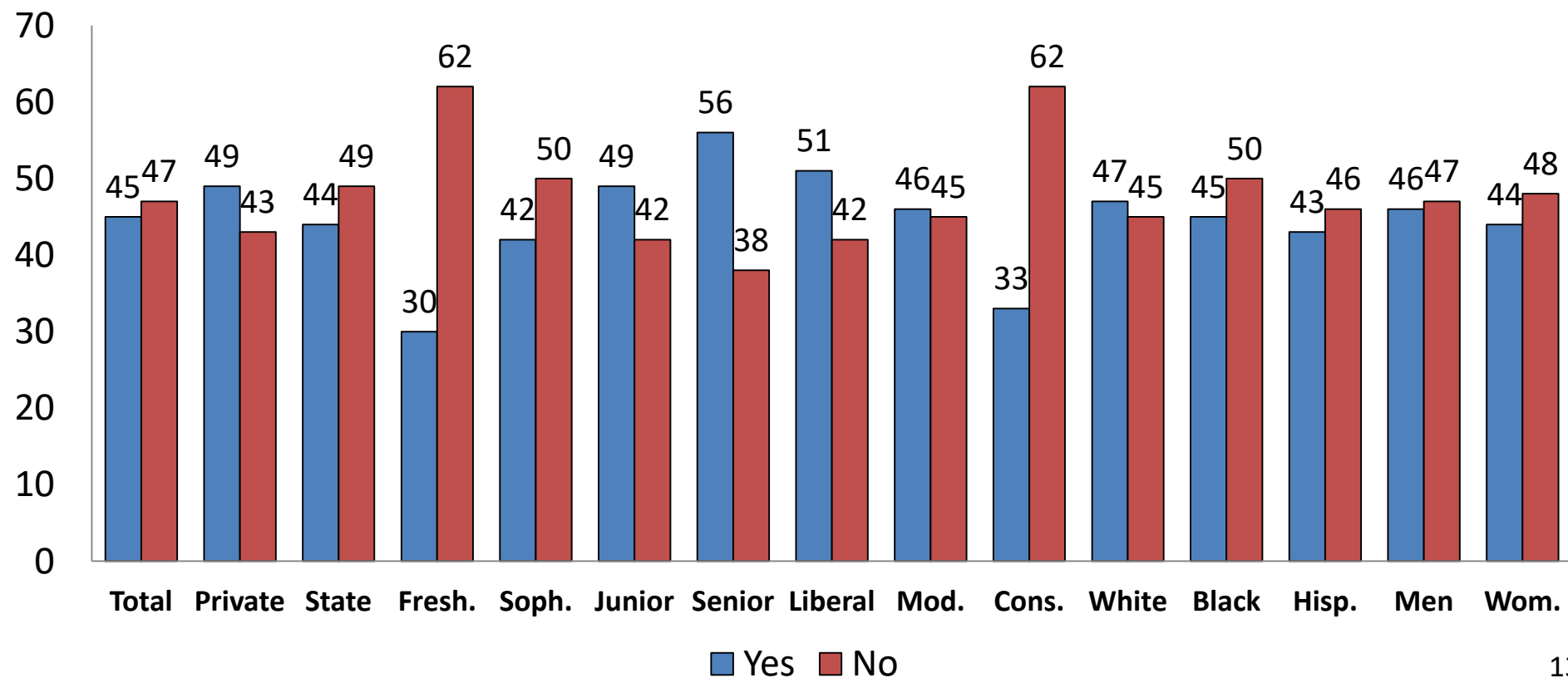
**Have you had any professors or course instructors that have used class time to express their own social or political beliefs that are completely unrelated to the subject of the course?**



*Students divide when it comes to the change in their own opinions, political beliefs and values since entering college, with 45% saying they have changed and 47% saying they haven't.*

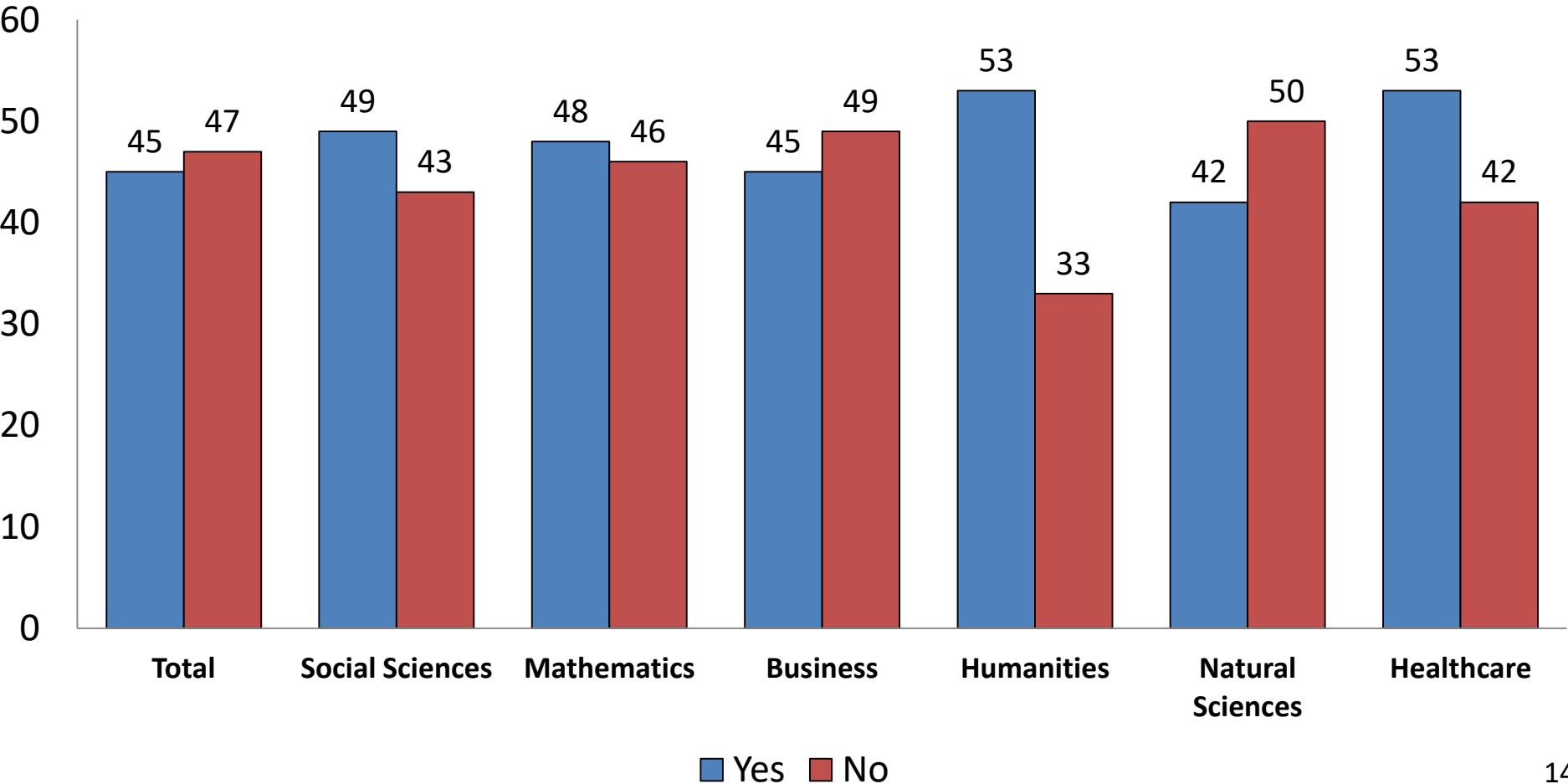
*Age is a driving factor on this, with 62% of freshmen saying they haven't, while 56% of seniors say they have. In addition, conservative students are much less likely to say their views have changed compared to liberals, 33% to 51%, respectively.*

### Generally speaking, have any of your opinions, political beliefs and values changed since you've entered college?



*Furthermore, students who major in Social Sciences, Humanities and Healthcare are more likely to say their opinions have changed, 49%, 53% and 53%, respectively.*

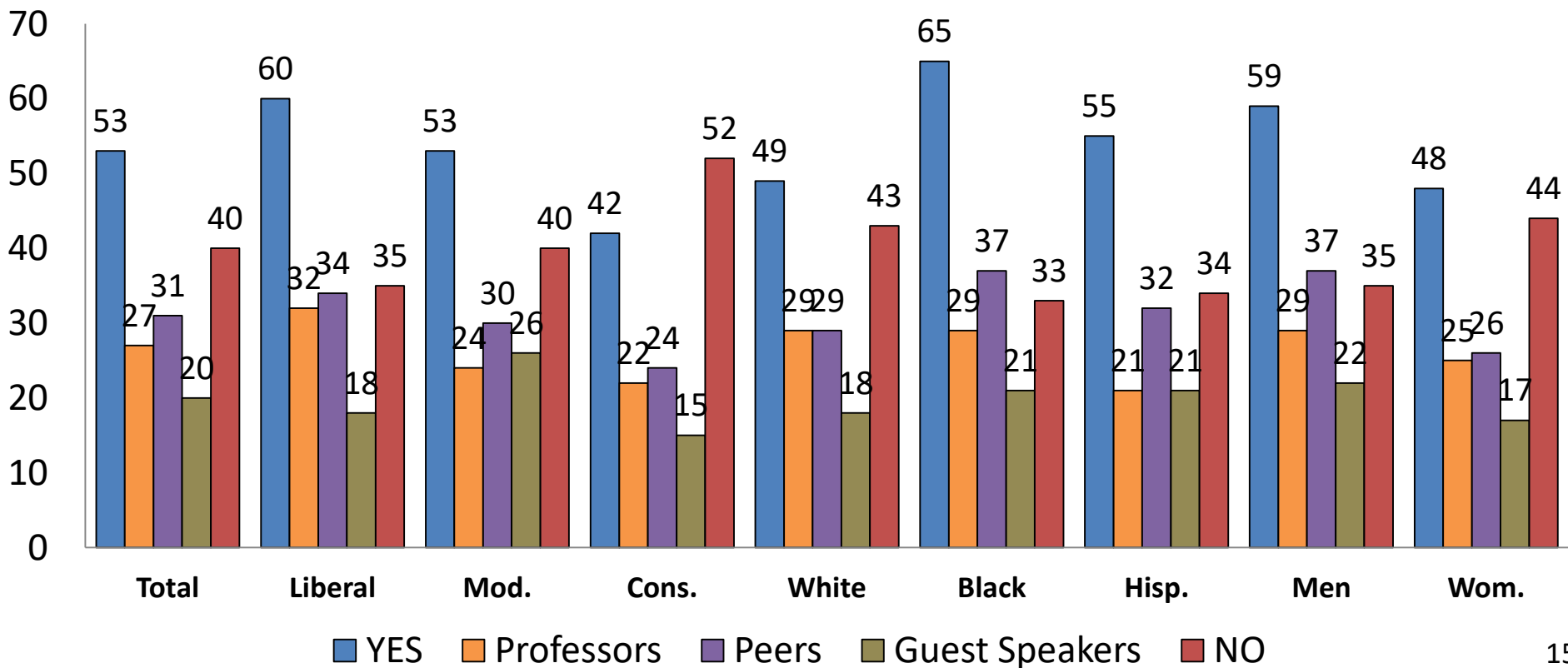
**Generally speaking, have any of your opinions, political beliefs and values changed since you've entered college?**



*Greater than half, 53%, say professors, peers or guest speakers on campus have changed their mind on an issue after they heard their perspective. Specifically, 27% said professors, 31% said peers and 20% said guest speakers.*

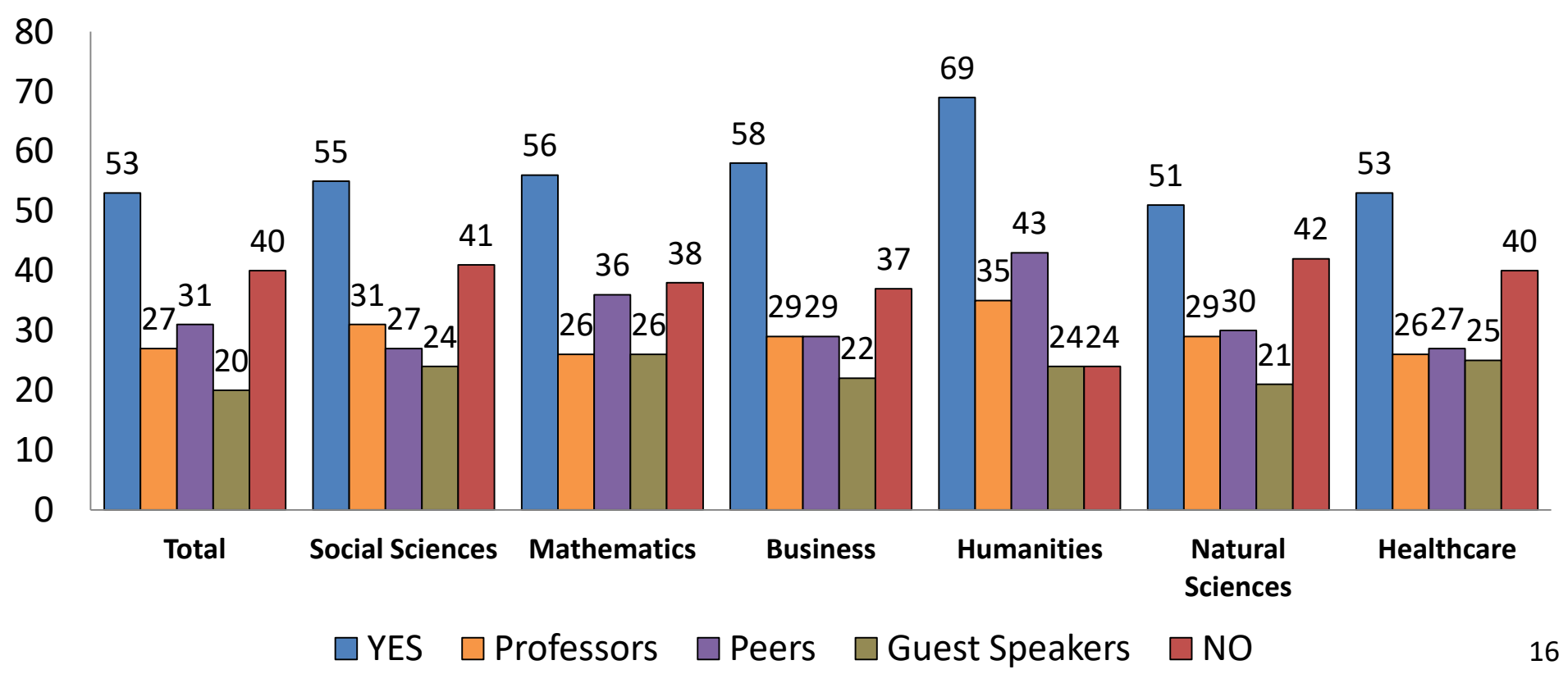
*Liberals were most likely to say their minds have been changed, at 60%, including 32% who say by their professors. Conservatives were least likely to say their minds have been changed, at 42%, with only 22% saying by their professors. Men were also more likely than women to say their minds have been changed, 59% to 48%, respectively.*

### Have any of your professors, peers or guest speakers on campus ever changed your mind on an issue that you felt strongly about AFTER you heard their perspective?



*By major, students in Humanities are most likely to say their minds have been changed, at 69%. Among them, 35% say their professors have changed their minds and 43% say their peers have changed their minds, both of which are highest when comparing by major.*

**Have any of your professors, peers or guest speakers on campus ever changed your mind on an issue that you felt strongly about AFTER you heard their perspective?**

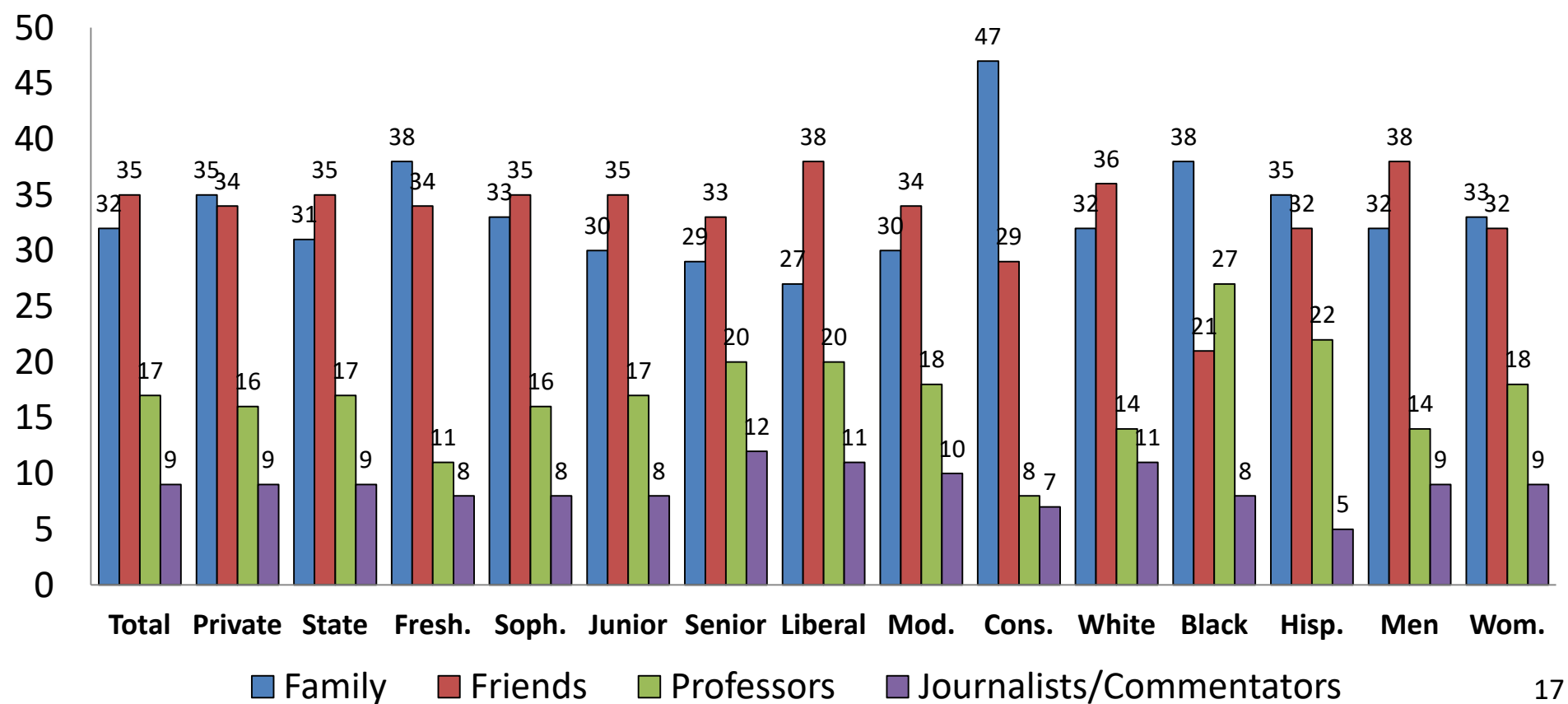




*Students are most likely to say friends and family members have shaped their opinions and beliefs since entering college, 35% and 25%, respectively. Another 17% say professors or educators and just 9% say journalists or commentators.*

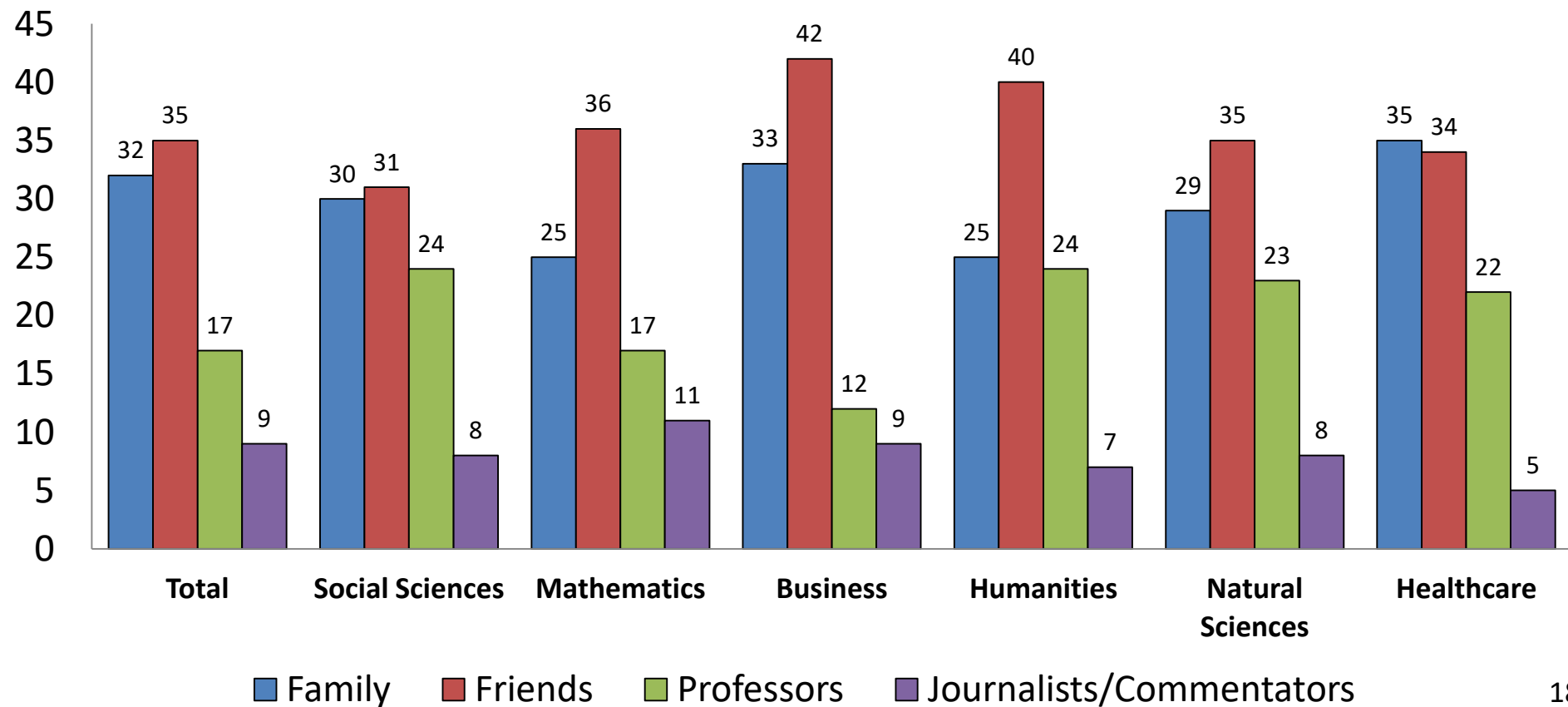
*Among conservative students, nearly half, 47%, say family members.*

**Outside of your own experiences, who has shaped your opinions, political beliefs and values the MOST since you've entered college?**



*Social Science majors (24%), Humanities majors (24%) and Natural Sciences majors (23%) are most likely to say their professors have shaped their opinions, beliefs and values.*

**Outside of your own experiences, who has shaped your opinions, political beliefs and values the MOST since you've entered college?**



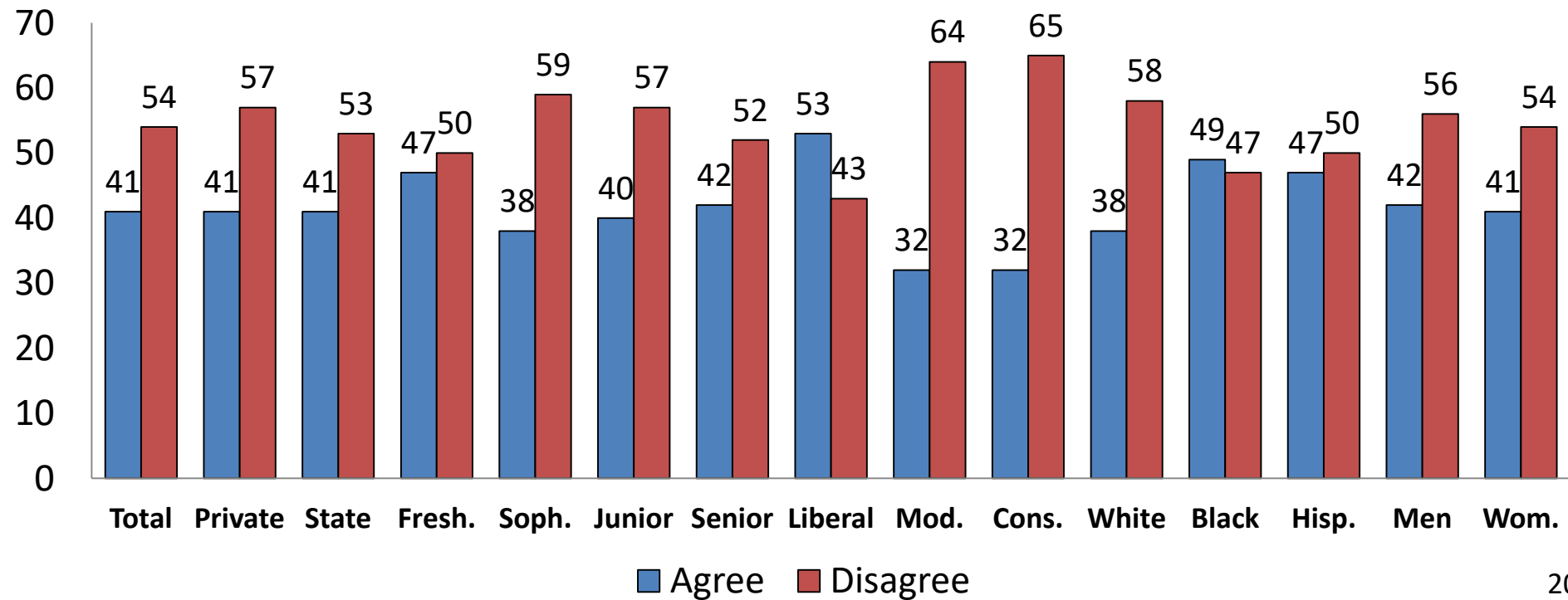
# Part Three – Hate Speech

*Four in ten, 41%, agree that it's sometimes appropriate to shout down and disrupt a speaker on campus, which is similar to last year.*

*The majority of liberal students believe this is sometimes appropriate, at 53%.*

**Agree/Disagree:  
"It is sometimes appropriate to shout down or disrupt a speaker on my campus."**

	9/17	10/18
Agree	38%	41%
Disagree	56%	54%

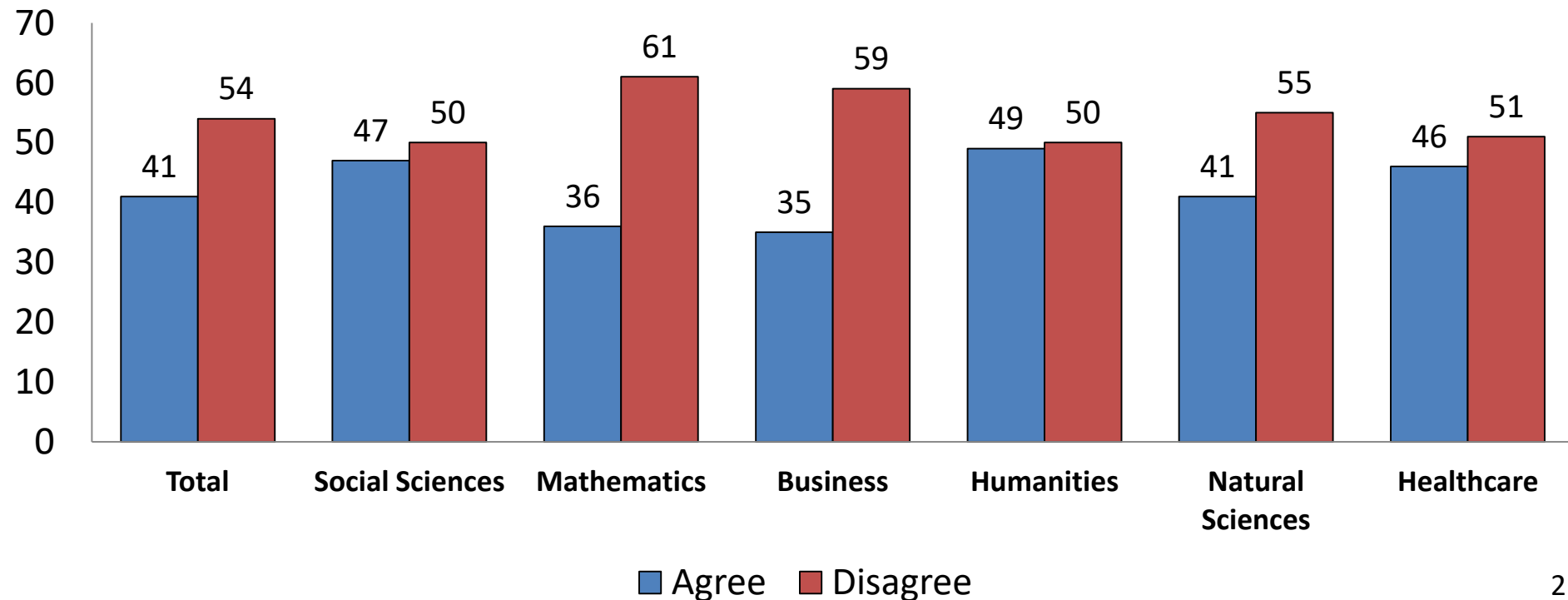


*Social Sciences and Humanities majors are most likely to agree that it is appropriate to shout down or disrupt a speaker on campus, 47% and 49%, respectively.*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**“It is sometimes appropriate to shout down or disrupt a speaker on my campus.”**

	9/17	10/18
Agree	38%	41%
Disagree	56%	54%



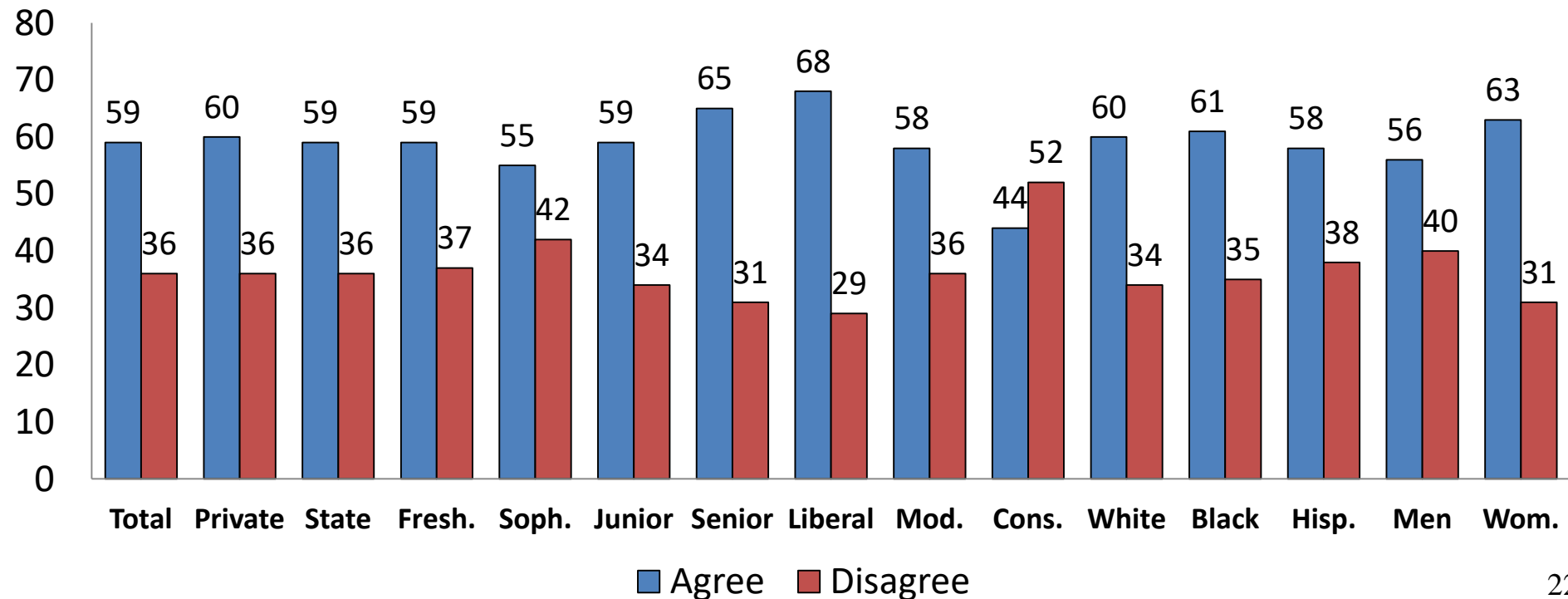
Nearly six in ten, 59%, agree their school should forbid people from speaking on campus who have a history of engaging in hate speech, while 36% disagree. This is similar to last year.

Conservative students are least likely to agree with this, at 44%.

### Agree/Disagree:

“My college or university should forbid people from speaking on campus who have a history of engaging in hate speech.”

	9/15	9/17	10/18
Agree	49%	58%	59%
Disagree	46%	32%	36%



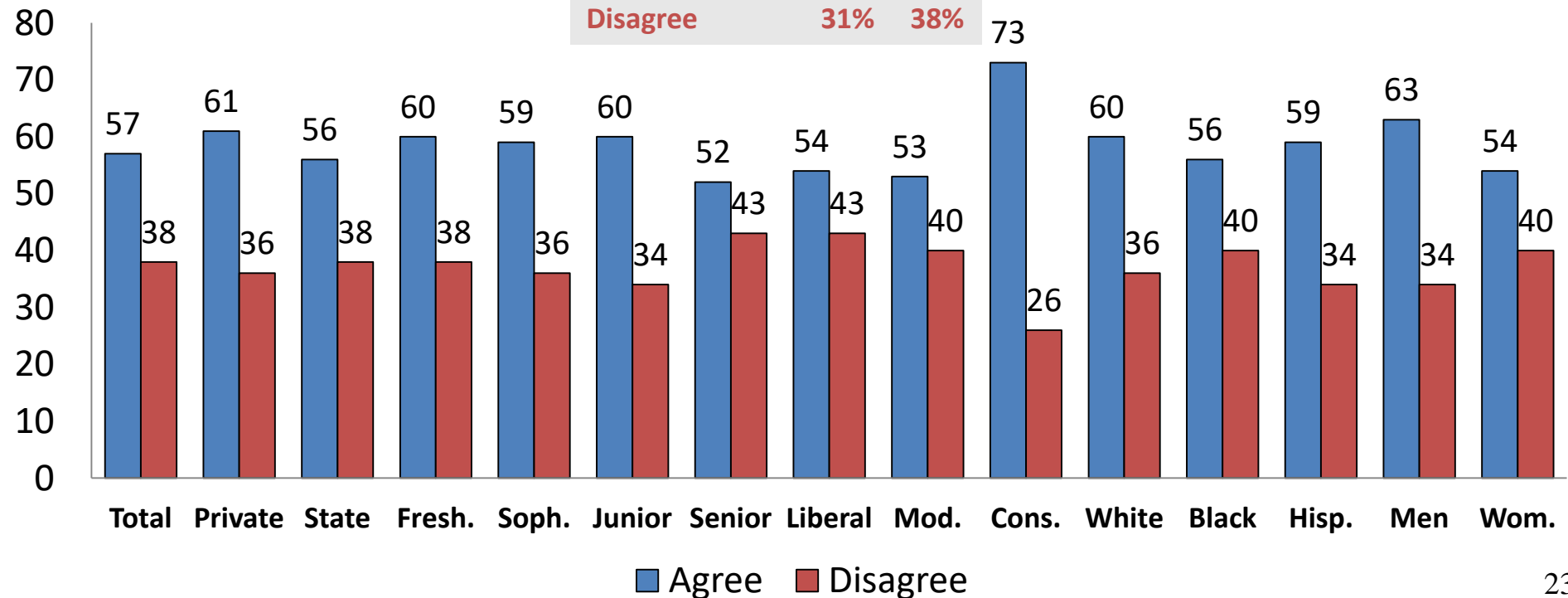
*Even though most agree on a ban on people who have engaged in hate speech, 57% still agree that hate speech is still technically protected under the First Amendment as free speech, while 38% disagree. Interestingly, the disagree number has increased by seven-points from last year.*

*Conservative students are most lopsided in this belief, 73% agree to 26% disagree.*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**“Hate speech, no matter how racist or bigoted it is, is still technically protected under the First Amendment as free speech.”**

	9/17	10/18
Agree	59%	57%
Disagree	31%	38%

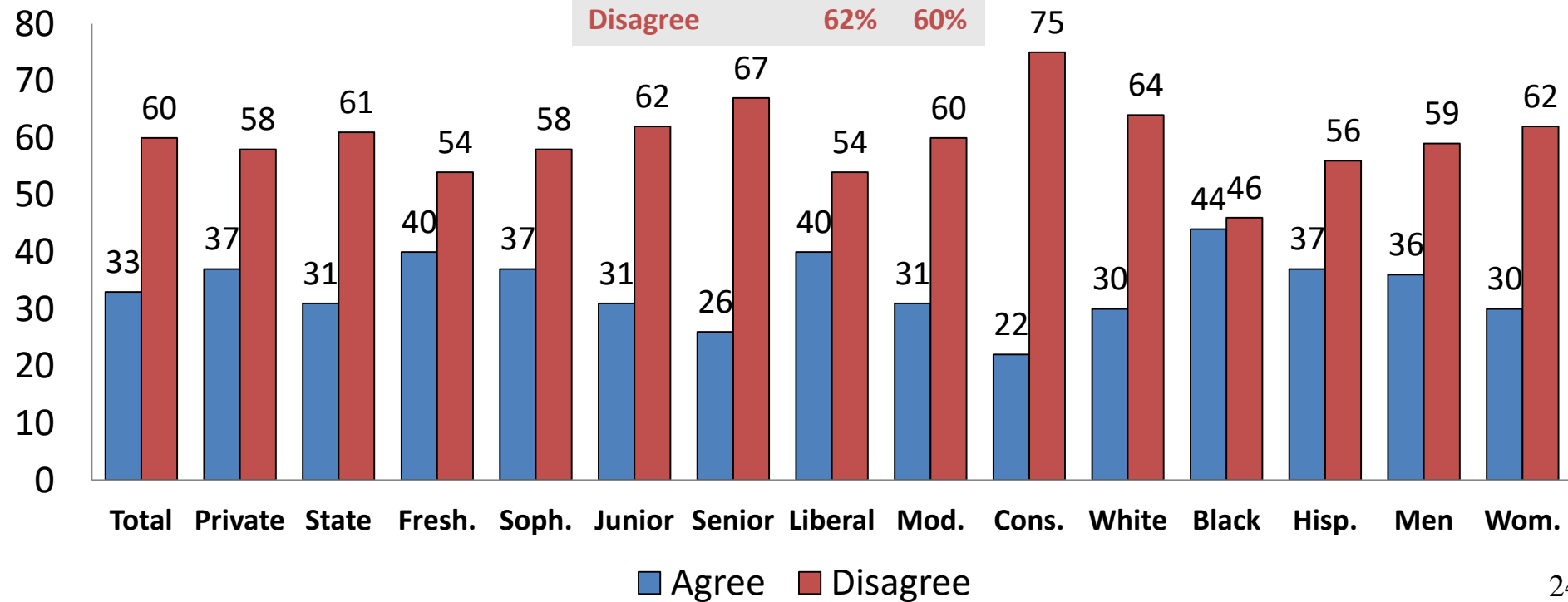


*A third of students, 33%, believe that physical violence can be justified to prevent a person from using hate speech or making racially charged comments.*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**“If someone is using hate speech or making racially charged comments, physical violence can be justified to prevent this person from espousing their hateful views.”**

	9/17	10/18
Agree	30%	33%
Disagree	62%	60%



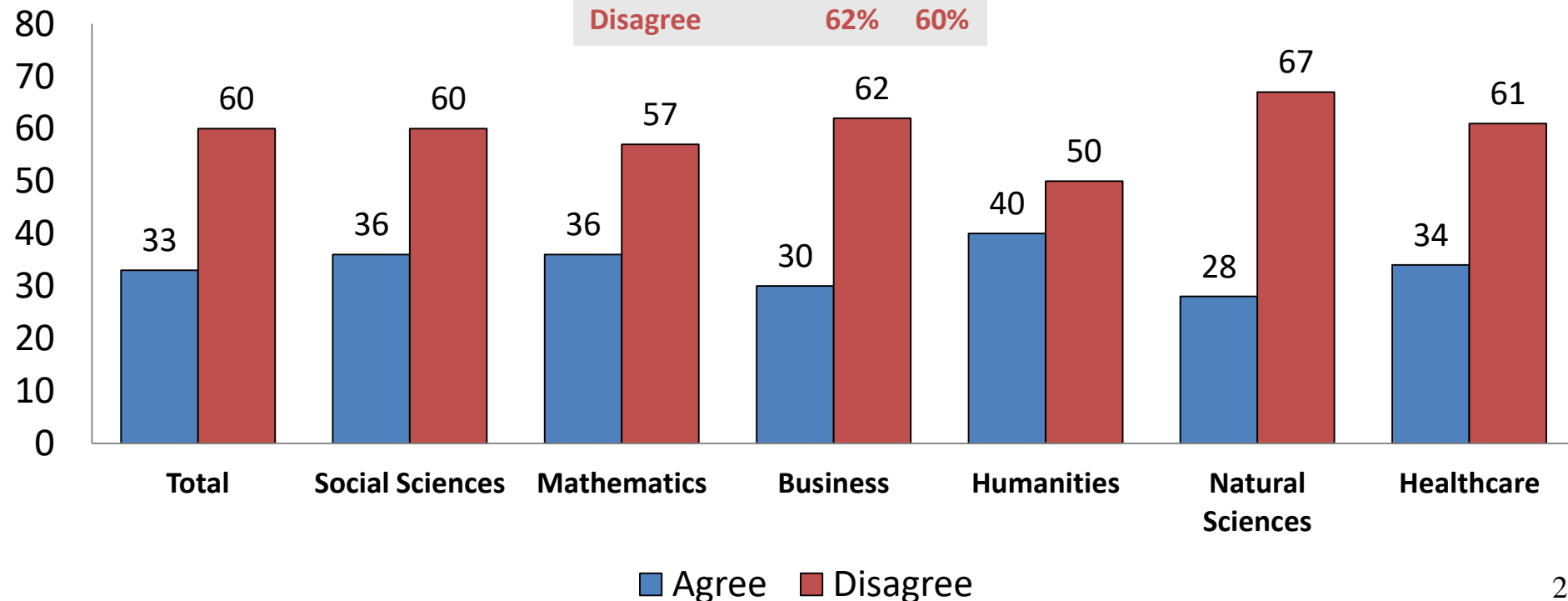


*By major, Humanities students are most likely to agree that physical violence can be justified, at 40%.*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**“If someone is using hate speech or making racially charged comments, physical violence can be justified to prevent this person from espousing their hateful views.”**

	9/17	10/18
Agree	30%	33%
Disagree	62%	60%

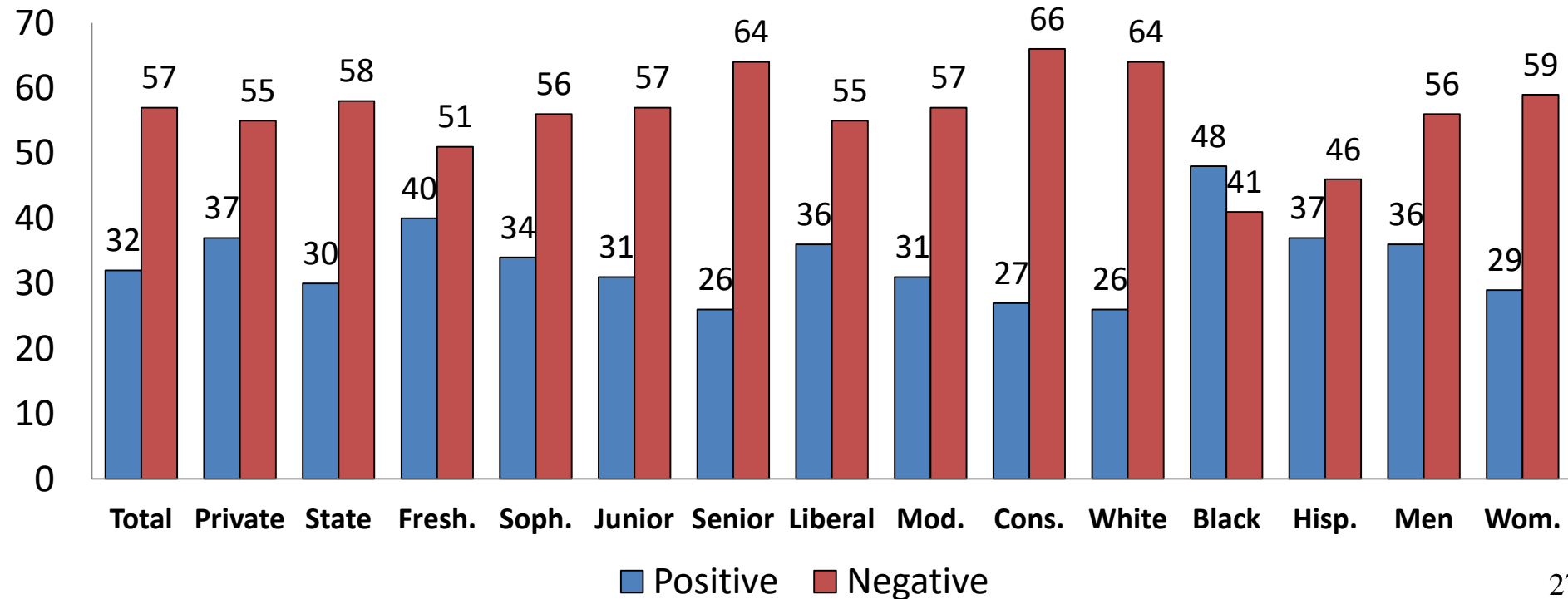


# Part Four – Social Media

*By a nearly two to one margin, students believe that Facebook has had a negative impact on political discourse in America rather than a positive one, 57% to 32%. This is similar to last year.*

**Generally speaking, do you think Facebook has a positive impact or a negative impact on political discourse in America?**

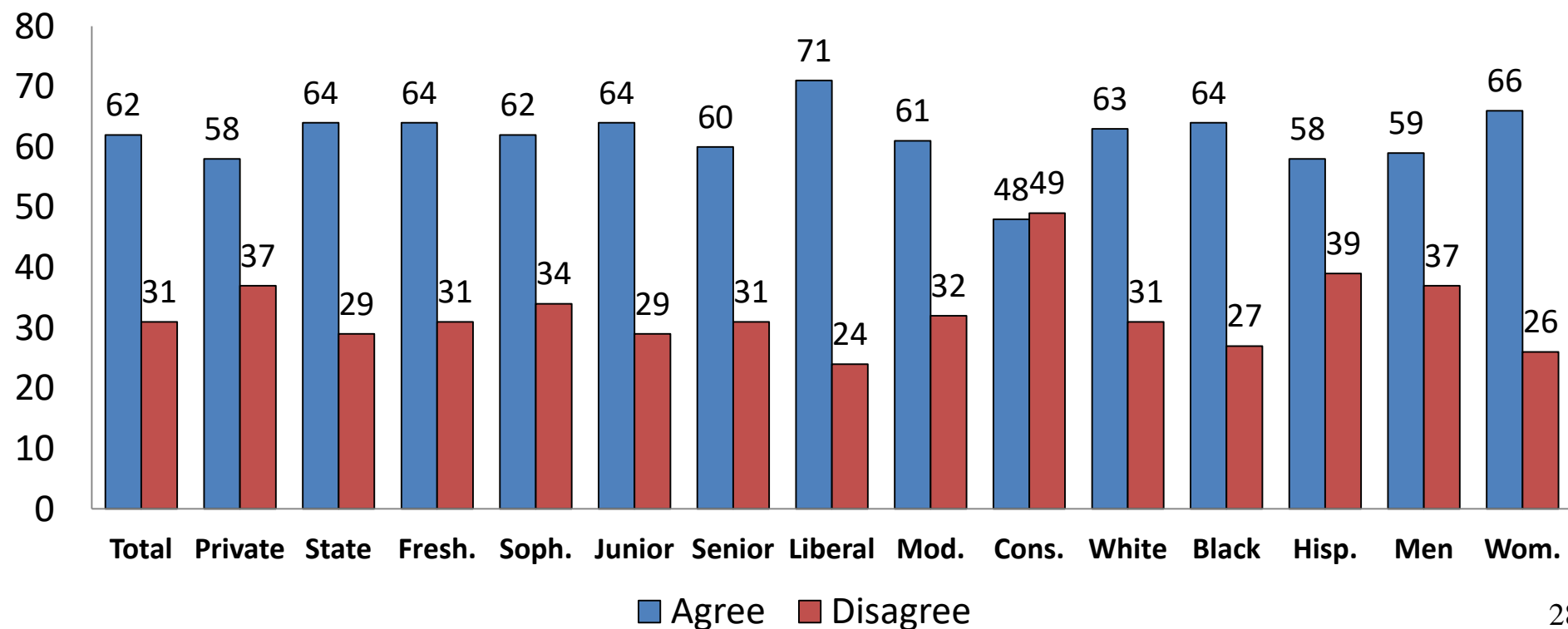
	9/17	10/18
Positive	29%	32%
Negative	57%	57%



*Comparatively, students are just about as likely to favor social media companies censoring hate speech as they are banning speakers on campus who engage in hate speech. Greater than six in ten, 62%, agree that social media companies should censor hate speech by shutting down the accounts of users who engage in hate speech.*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**“Social media companies like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram should censor hate speech by shutting down the accounts of users who engage in hate speech.”**



When it comes to insensitive or offensive comments made by employees in their personal lives, students take the middle ground. The majority, 53%, believes employees should not be punished for things they said years ago, but things said recently are still grounds for termination.

Nearly a third of conservative students, 32%, believe that employees shouldn't be terminated at all for insensitive or offensive comments.

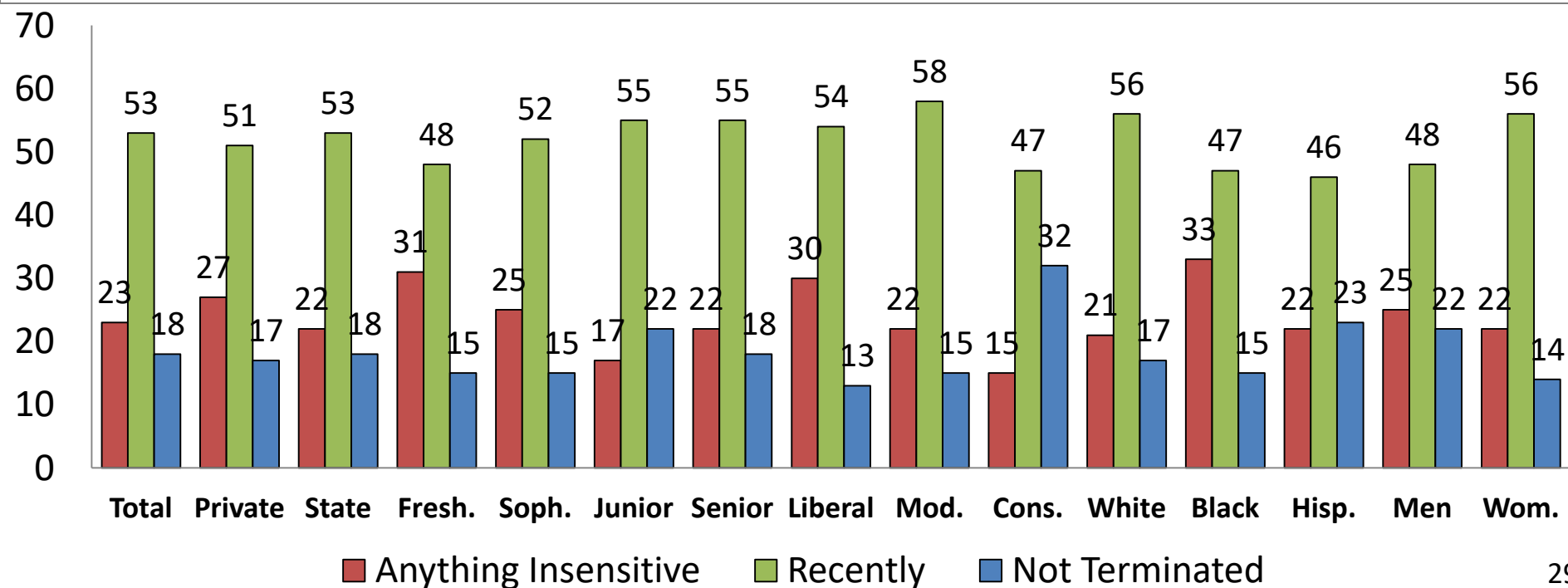
Which of the following comes closer to your own opinion about insensitive or offensive comments made by an employee of a company in their personal lives outside of the workplace?

Any insensitive or offensive comment made, no matter how long ago it was and even if it was not in their professional capacity, is grounds for termination

With the rise in social media, people should not be punished for things they said years ago. However, if an employee said something very recently, it should still be grounds for termination

OR

Employees should not be terminated from their jobs for insensitive or offensive comments made in their personal lives outside of the workplace

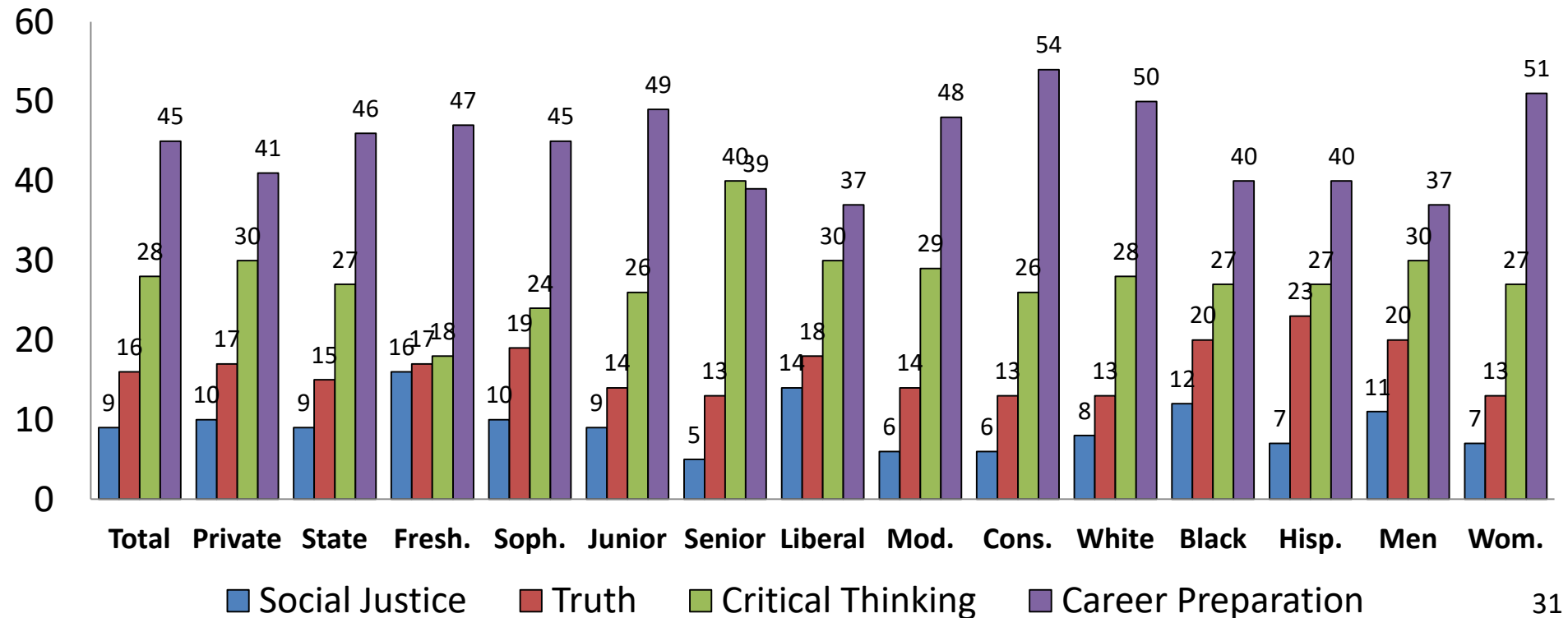


# Part Five – Purpose of Higher Education

*The plurality, 45%, says the primary purpose of higher education is career preparation. Twenty-eight percent (28%) say it's to learn how to think critically and 16% say it's to seek the truth. Just 9% say it is to promote social justice.*

Generally speaking, what do you see as the primary purpose of higher education?

Promoting social justice  
 Seeking the truth  
 Learning to think critically  
 Preparing for your career



*When it comes to non-academic administrators, students by a two to one margin say they have had a positive effect rather than a negative effect, 31% to 15%. The plurality, 37%, says they have had no effect.*

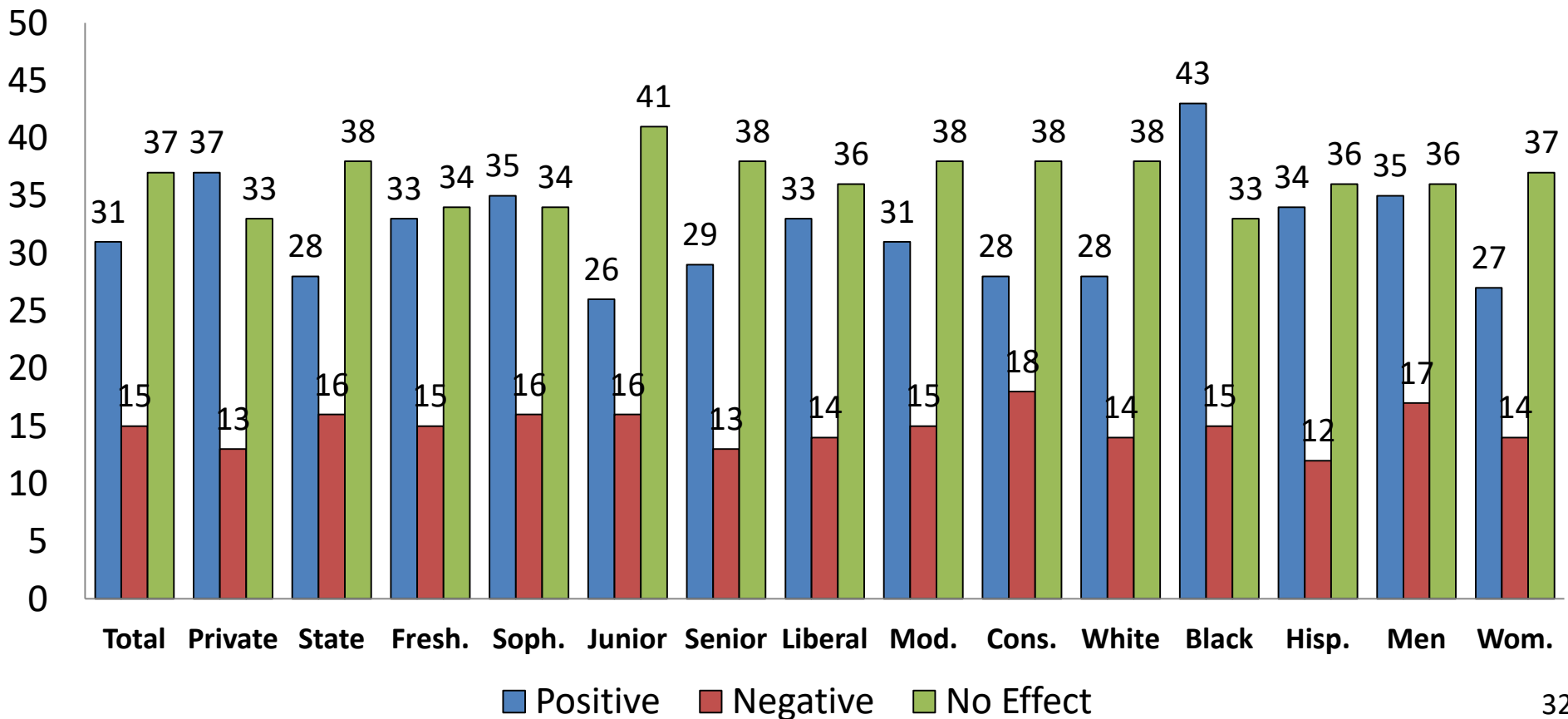
As you may know, there are more non-academic administrators at colleges and universities in recent years. Generally speaking, have these non-academic administrators had...?

A positive effect

A negative effect

OR

No effect at all on your college experience



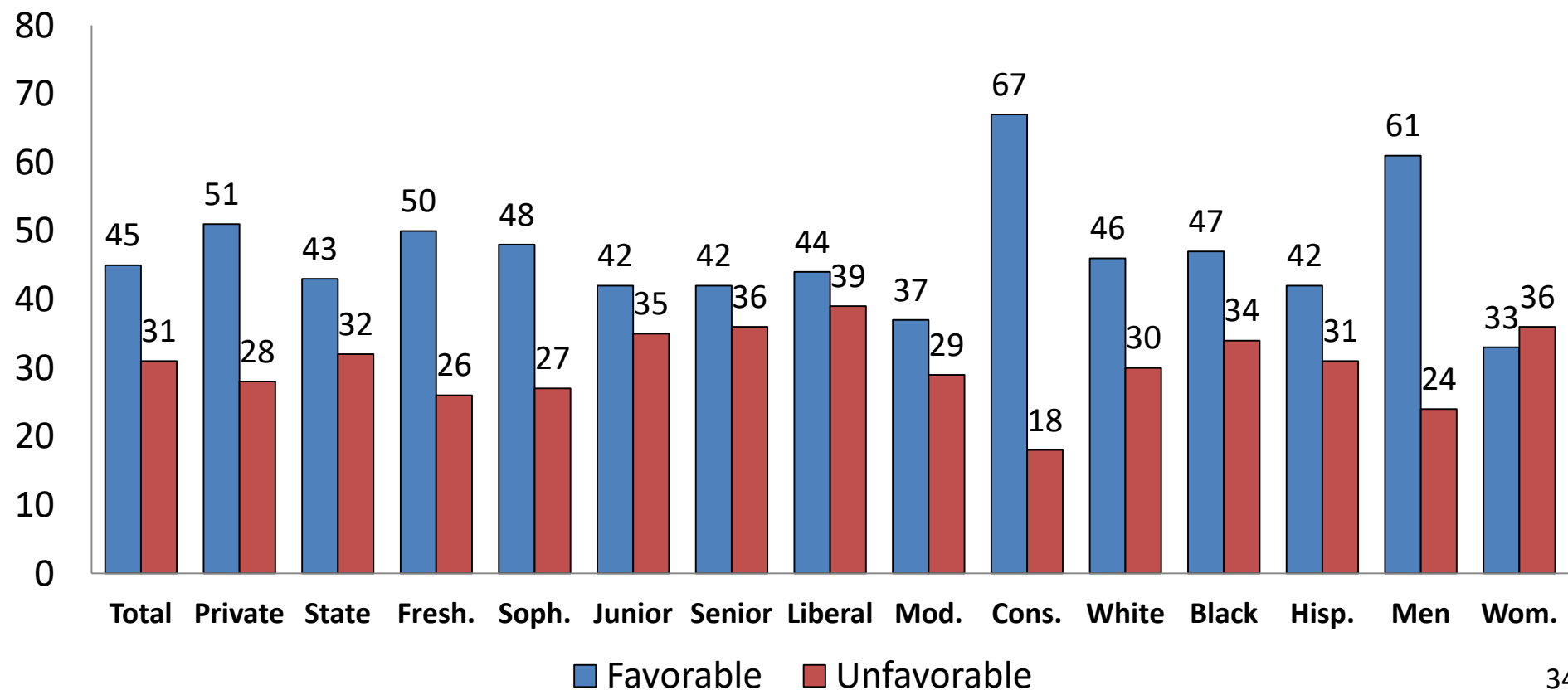


# Part Six – Capitalism and Socialism

*“Capitalism” has a net positive rating of 14-points, 45% Favorable to 31% Unfavorable.*

*Conservative students are most favorable towards capitalism, 67% Favorable to 18% Unfavorable. A slight plurality of liberal students are favorable, at 44%, but the unfavorable rating rises to 39%, the highest for any group. Women (33% Favorable to 36% Unfavorable) are more divided than men who are favorable by greater than two to one (61% Favorable to 24% Unfavorable).*

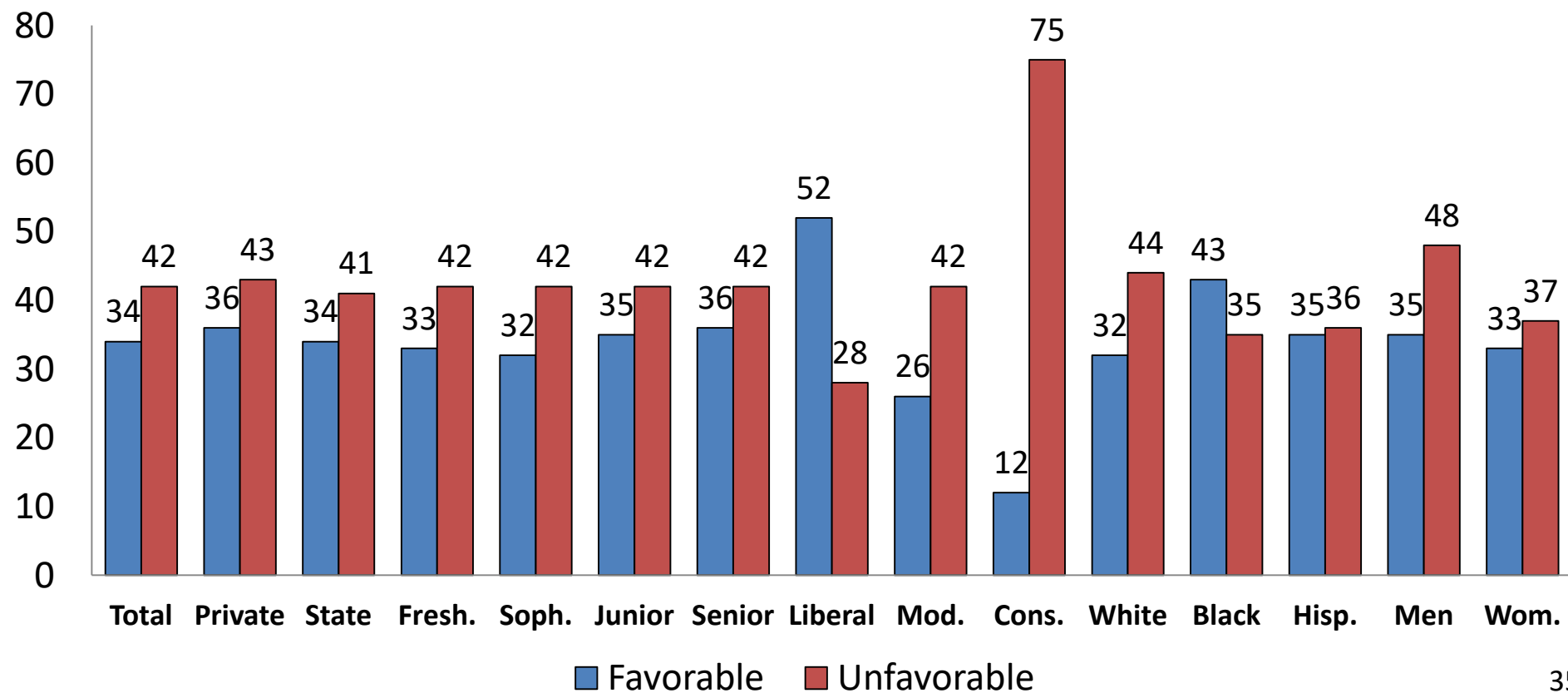
### Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of capitalism?



*“Socialism” has a net negative image rating, 34% Favorable to 42% Unfavorable.*

*Conservative students are by far most unfavorable, at 75%, while the majority of liberal students are favorable, at 52%. Moderates are also negative, at 26% Favorable to 42% Unfavorable. Interestingly, female students have a similar rating of socialism as they do capitalism, 33% Favorable to 37% Unfavorable.*

### Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of socialism?



*Although capitalism is viewed more favorably than socialism, when students were given a choice, half say socialist principles have the potential to be good for America, while 35% say that capitalism has promoted freedom and opportunity and socialism is too radical.*

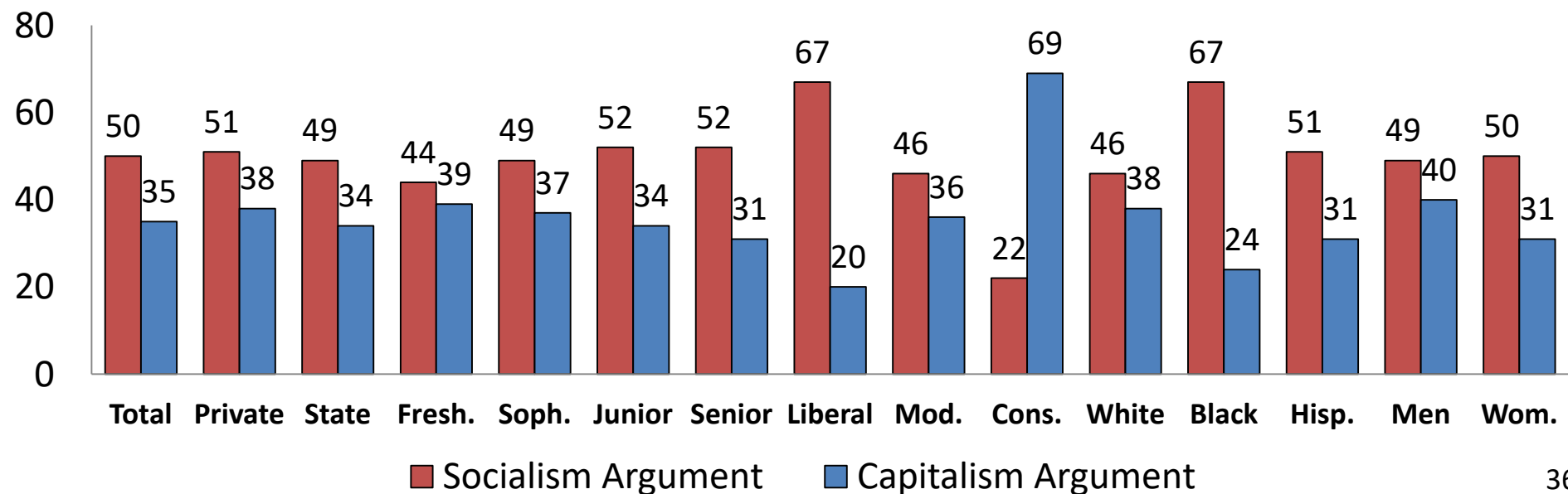
*Liberals and conservatives essentially have inverse opinions. Two-thirds of liberals, 67%, favor the socialism argument while 69% of conservatives favor the “too radical” argument.*

Which of the following comes closer to your own personal opinion?

**Some who say socialist principles have the potential to be good for America because they promote fairness and give more opportunities to the less fortunate and those who struggle in our society. They say capitalism has left too many people behind.**

OR

**Others who say while capitalism isn't perfect, it has promoted freedom and opportunity for millions in America and across the world. They say socialism is too radical and goes against the ideals that our country was founded upon.**



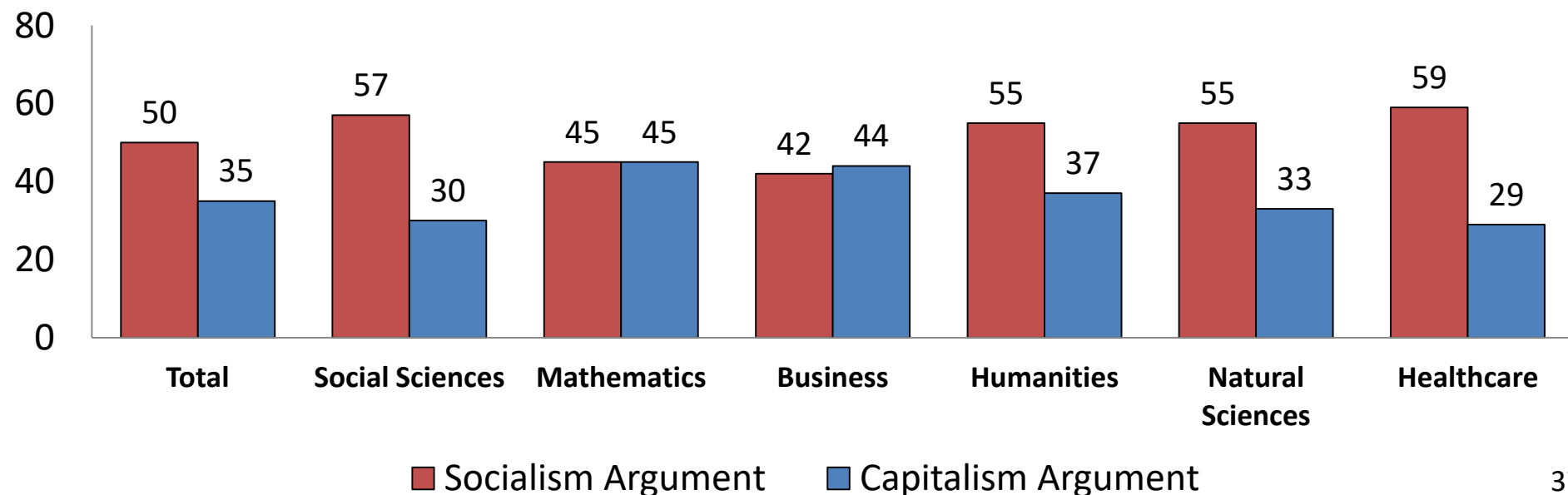
*By major, majorities of students in Healthcare (59%), Social Sciences (57%), Humanities (55%) and Natural Sciences (55%) say socialist principles have the potential to be good. Mathematics students divide evenly at 45%, while 44% of Business students favor the “too radical” argument and 42% favor the socialism argument.*

Which of the following comes closer to your own personal opinion?

Some who say socialist principles have the potential to be good for America because they promote fairness and give more opportunities to the less fortunate and those who struggle in our society. They say capitalism has left too many people behind.

OR

Others who say while capitalism isn't perfect, it has promoted freedom and opportunity for millions in America and across the world. They say socialism is too radical and goes against the ideals that our country was founded upon.



# Part Seven – Miscellaneous

*Students are sharply divided on sexual assault charges, with 46% saying anyone accused should be prevented from holding a position of power, while 47% say it is a serious problem, but there needs to be some evidence or corroboration.*

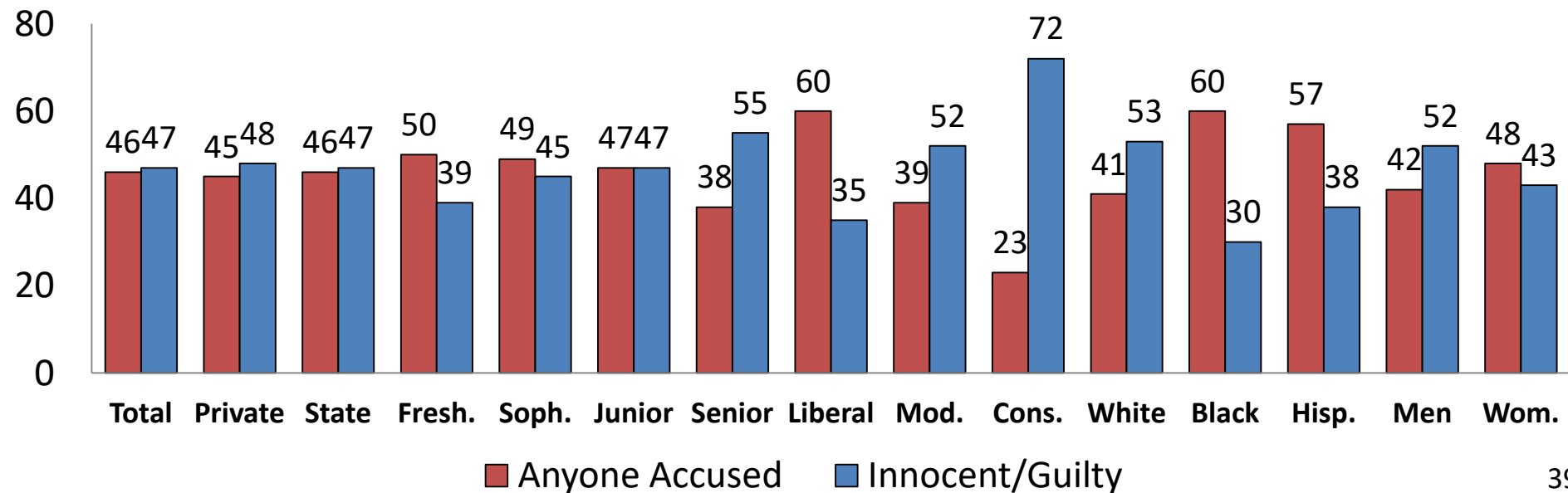
*There is a gender divide, with the majority of men, 52%, favoring the “corroboration” argument while 48% of women favor the “allegation” argument. However, the biggest divides are ideological, with 60% of liberals favoring the “allegation” argument and 72% of conservatives and 52% of moderates favoring the “corroboration” argument.*

Generally speaking, which of the following comes closer to your own personal opinion about sexual assault charges?

**Some who say ANYONE who is accused of sexual assault should be prevented from holding a position of power, like in government or business. They say this should be the case even if the sexual assault allegation cannot be substantiated or confirmed by another person because many times it is just the victim and the alleged assaulter in the situation.**

OR

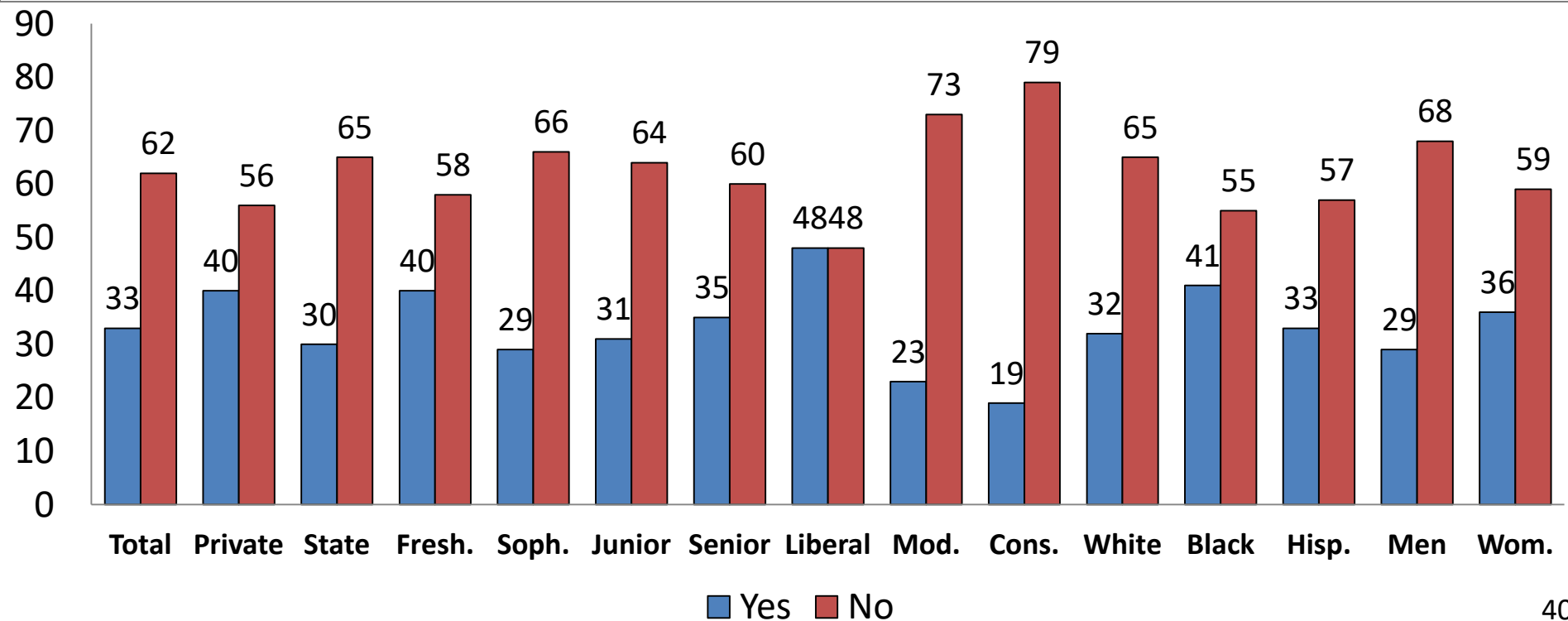
**Others who say while sexual abuse is a serious problem and has gone unreported for far too long, there still needs to be some evidence or corroboration from another person in addition to what the accuser says. They say everyone should still be given the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and anything otherwise is dangerous because it can lead to people filing false claims.**



*One-third of students, 33%, have attended a rally or protest in the last two years that advocated for a particular political cause.*

*Private school students were more likely to say they have attended than students in state schools, 40% to 30%, respectively. By class, freshmen were most likely to say they have been to a rally, at 40%. Almost half, 48%, of liberals have attended a rally compared to 23% of moderates and 19% of conservatives.*

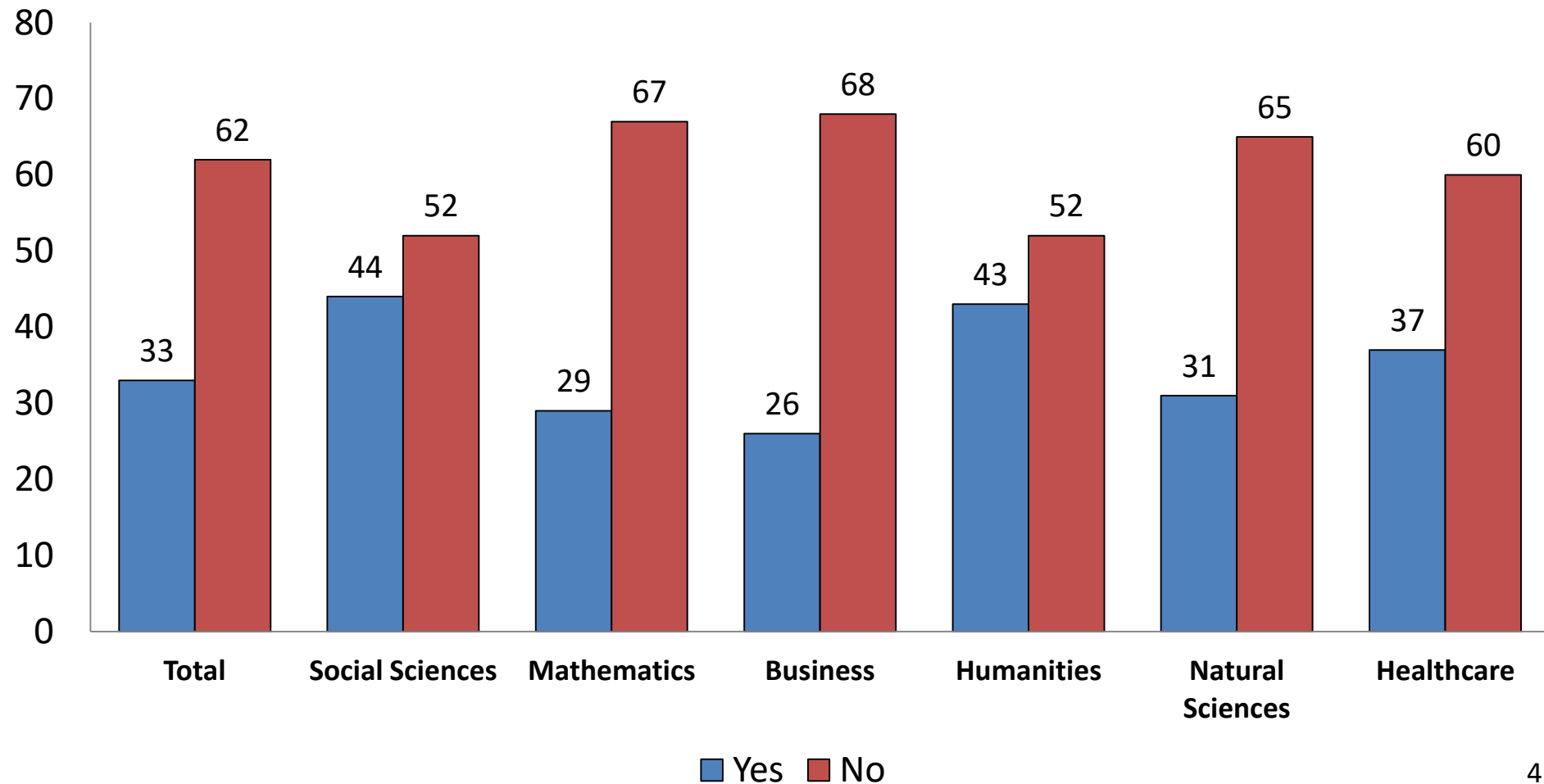
**In the last two years, have you attended a rally or protest that advocated for a particular political cause?**





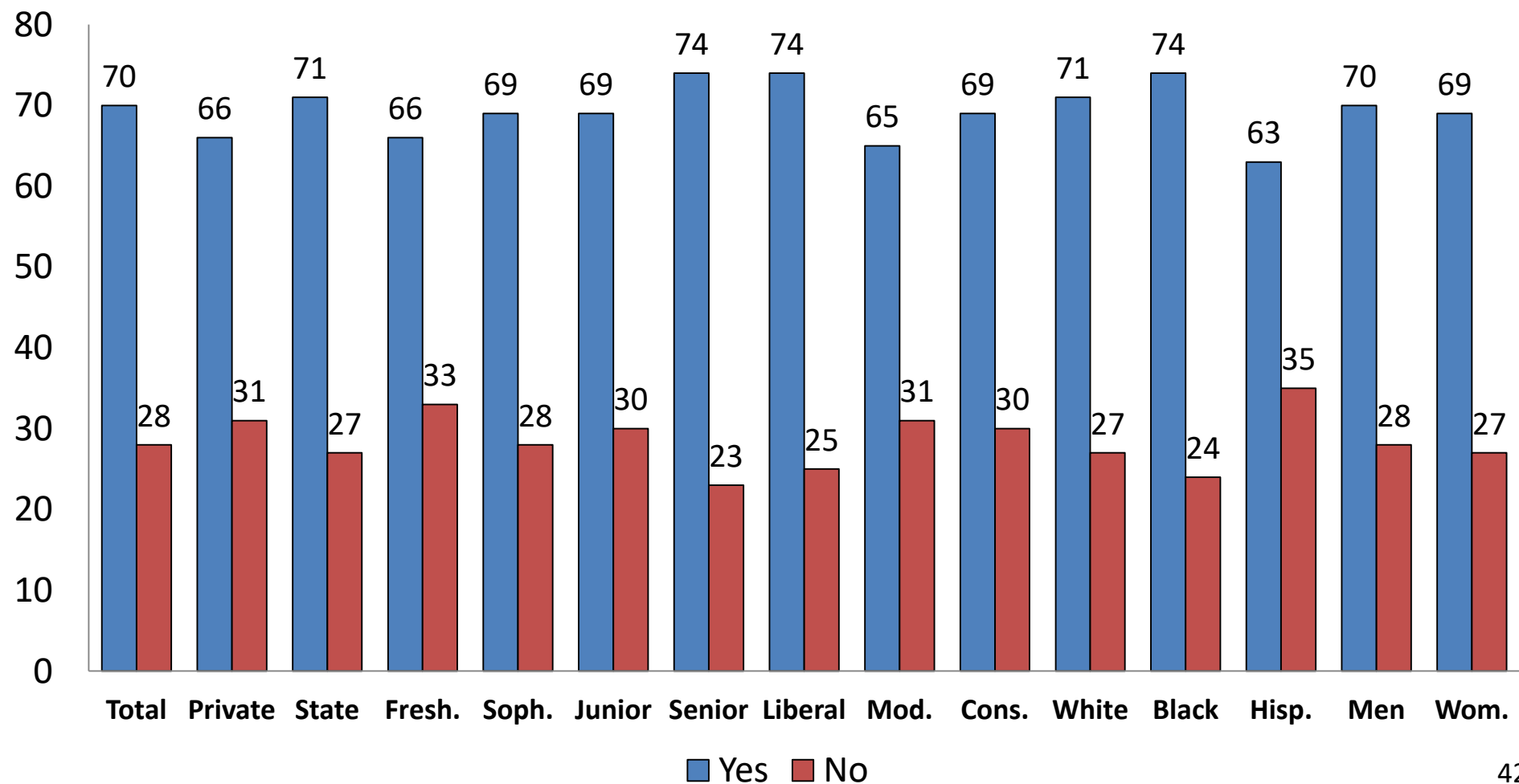
*By major, Social Sciences students and Humanities students were most likely to have attended a rally or protest, 44% and 43%, respectively.*

**In the last two years, have you attended a rally or protest that advocated for a particular political cause?**



*Seven in ten students, 70%, say they have been contacted by a group encouraging them to vote and has helped them register to vote.*

**Have you ever been contacted by a group, either on campus or off campus, encouraging you to vote and helping you register to vote?**



The plurality, 38%, says they have less stress than their parents and their generation. Only 14% say they have more stress and 28% say they have the same amount of stress in their lives.

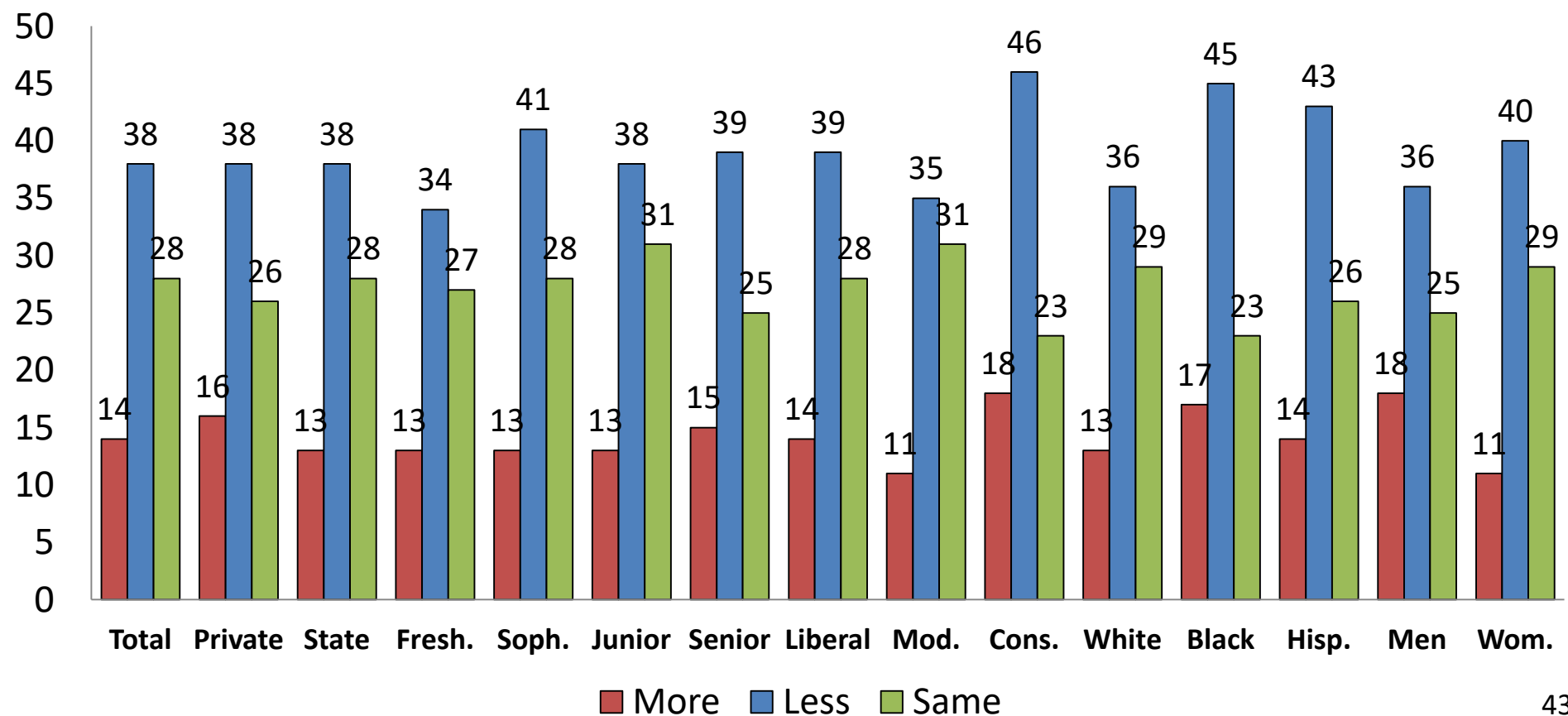
Compared to your parents and their generation, do you believe you and your generation have...?

More stress

Less stress

OR

About the same amount of stress in your lives



# Demographic Summary

Age	Tot.
18	10%
19	18%
20	17%
21	21%
22	14%
23	12%
24	8%
Class	Tot.
Freshman	20%
Sophomore	28%
Junior	24%
Senior	29%

Top Major(s)*	Tot.
Social Sciences	21%
Mathematics	20%
Business	16%
Humanities	15%
Natural Sciences	11%
Healthcare	11%
Party Affiliation	Tot.
Republican	22%
Democrat	39%
Ind./Unaffiliated	28%
Other Party	1%
Not Registered	6%

Ideology	Tot.
Liberal	46%
Moderate	29%
Conservative	21%
Race/Ethnicity*	Tot.
White	64%
Hispanic	14%
Black	14%
Asian	9%
Other	2%
Gender Identity	Tot.
Male	45%
Female	53%
Other	2%

Nat'l Undergrad Study  
October 2018

 McLaughlin & Associates

\*Multiple Responses Accepted