



# **Obesity and Food Safety**

**Findings From Public Polling**

**Margie Omero**

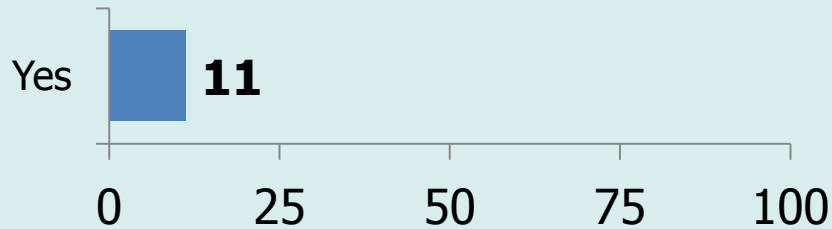
**May 2012**

# Key Points

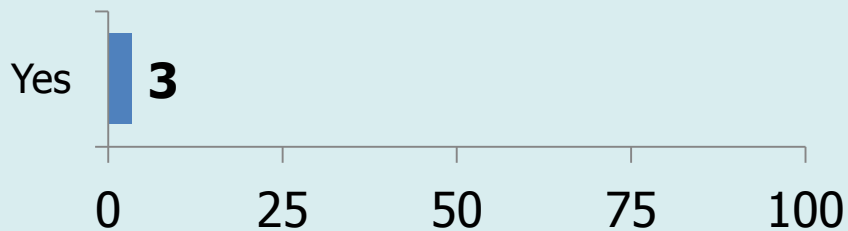
- Food safety is a higher-tier issue than obesity
  - Particularly meat & seafood
  - Although 10% have gotten sick themselves
- Although obesity is definitely considered a problem
  - 95% say obesity is a serious problem
  - There is more support for government intervention & help for kids than increasing ways to exercise
  - There is also support for government intervention for others, not oneself
- Women do disproportionate food shopping & preparation
  - And many are concerned about food costs

# More Than A Third Are Obese But Few Report Becoming Ill From A Food Borne Illness

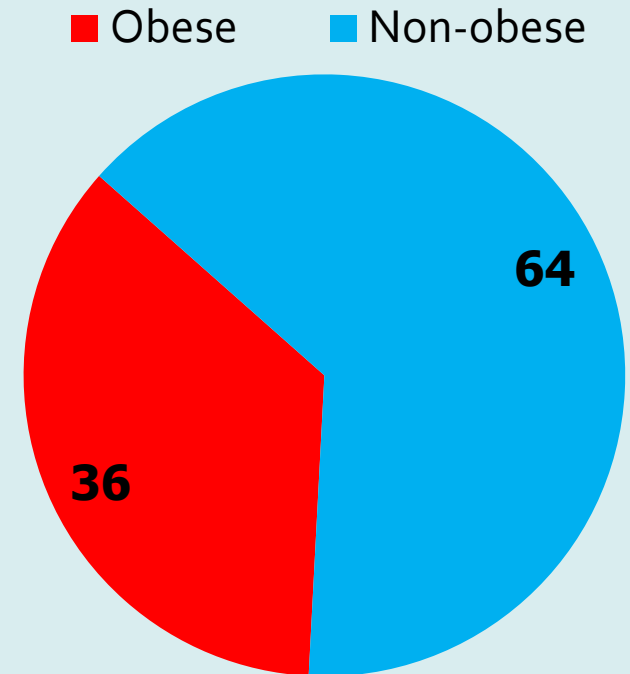
*During the past 3 months, have you become ill from something that you ate?*



*Did you seek medical treatment (after becoming ill from something that you ate)?  
(% of total population)*



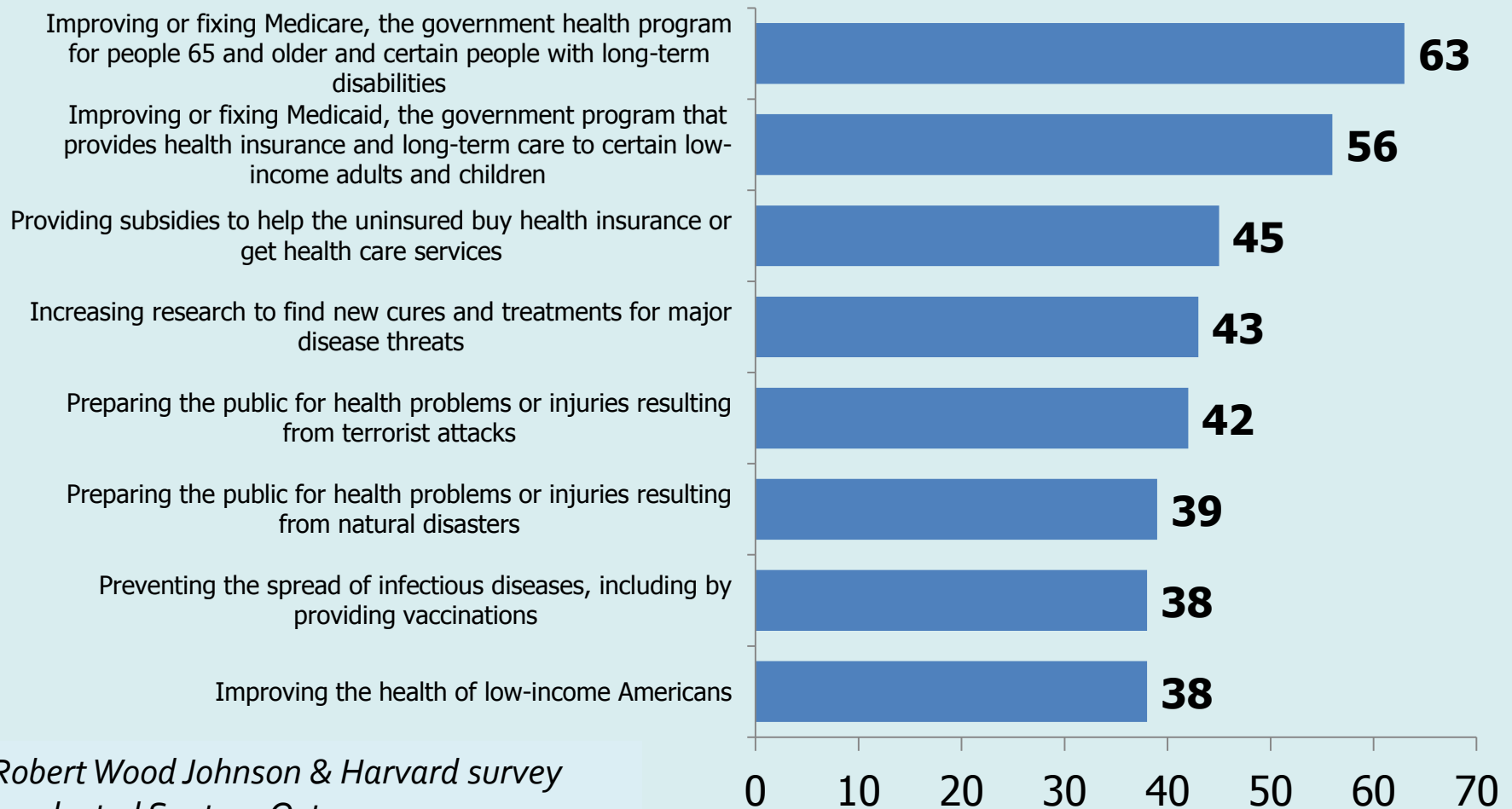
*CDC April 2012 obesity estimates*



*NPR/Reuters survey among 3,017 adults nationwide July 1-13, 2011.  
Obesity estimates from CDC April 2012 report*

# Improving Medicare & Medicaid Are Most Important Health Priorities

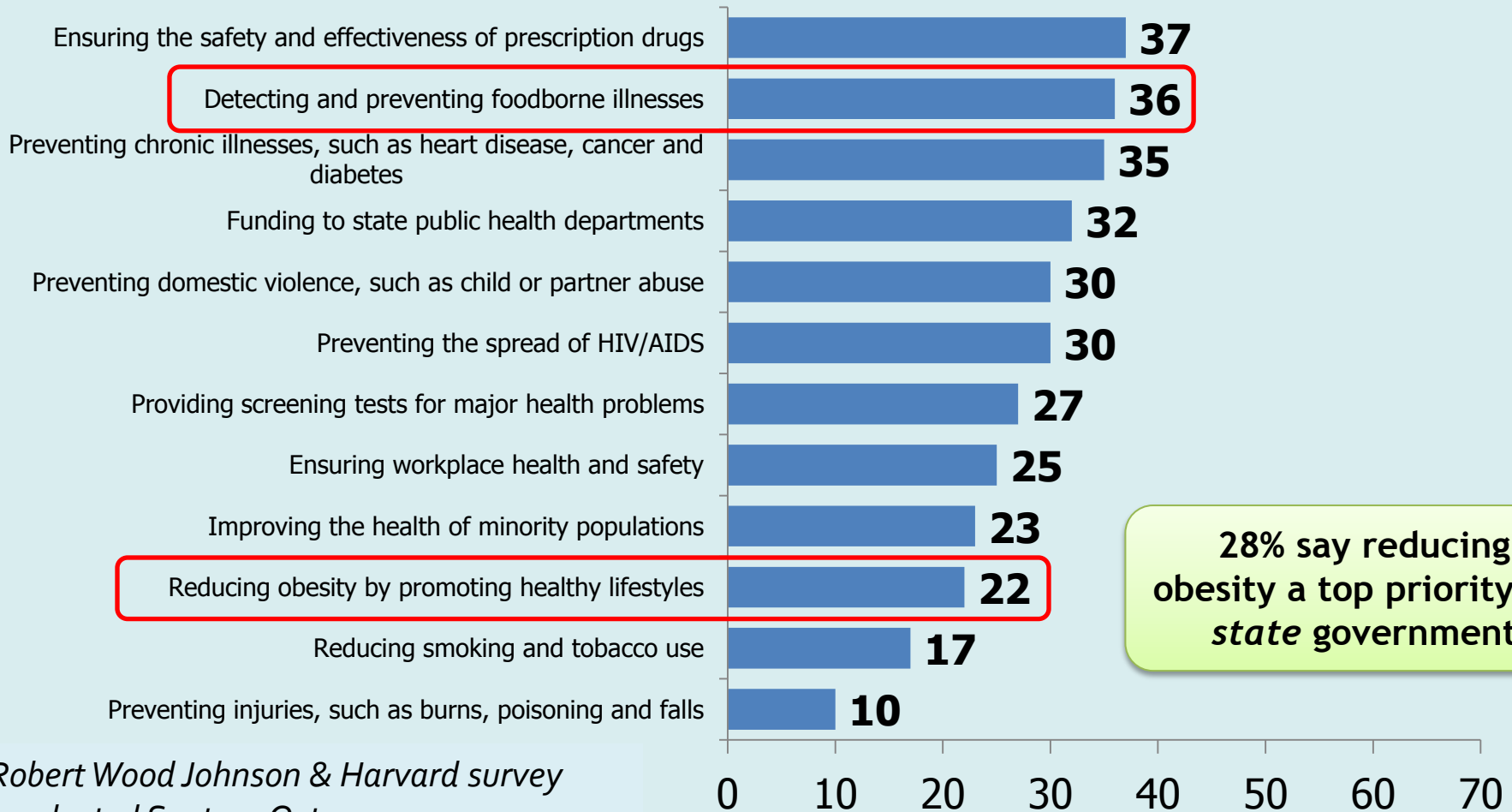
*Do you think that should be one of the top priorities, important but not a top priority, or a priority but not an important one for the Federal Government? (% "top priority")*



*Robert Wood Johnson & Harvard survey conducted Sept 19-Oct 2, 2011 among 1,598 voters nationwide.*

# A Third Say Preventing Food Borne Illness A Top Priority; A Fifth Say Same About Reducing Obesity

*Do you think that should be one of the top priorities, important but not a top priority, or a priority but not an important one for the Federal Government? (% "top priority")*

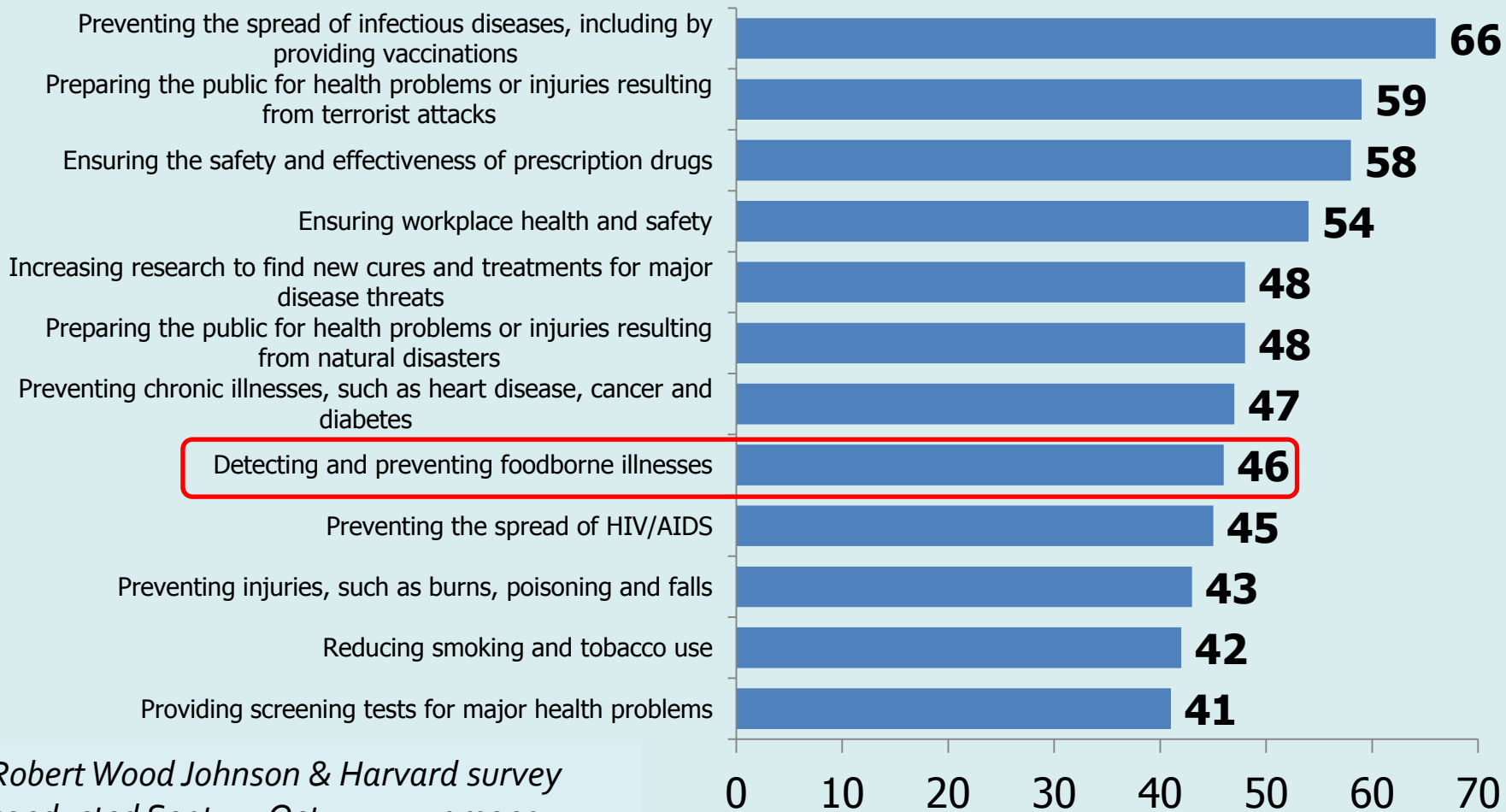


**28% say reducing obesity a top priority for state government**

*Robert Wood Johnson & Harvard survey conducted Sept 19-Oct 2, 2011 among 1,598 voters nationwide.*

# Fewer Than Half Give Government An A Or B On Detecting & Preventing Food Borne Illness

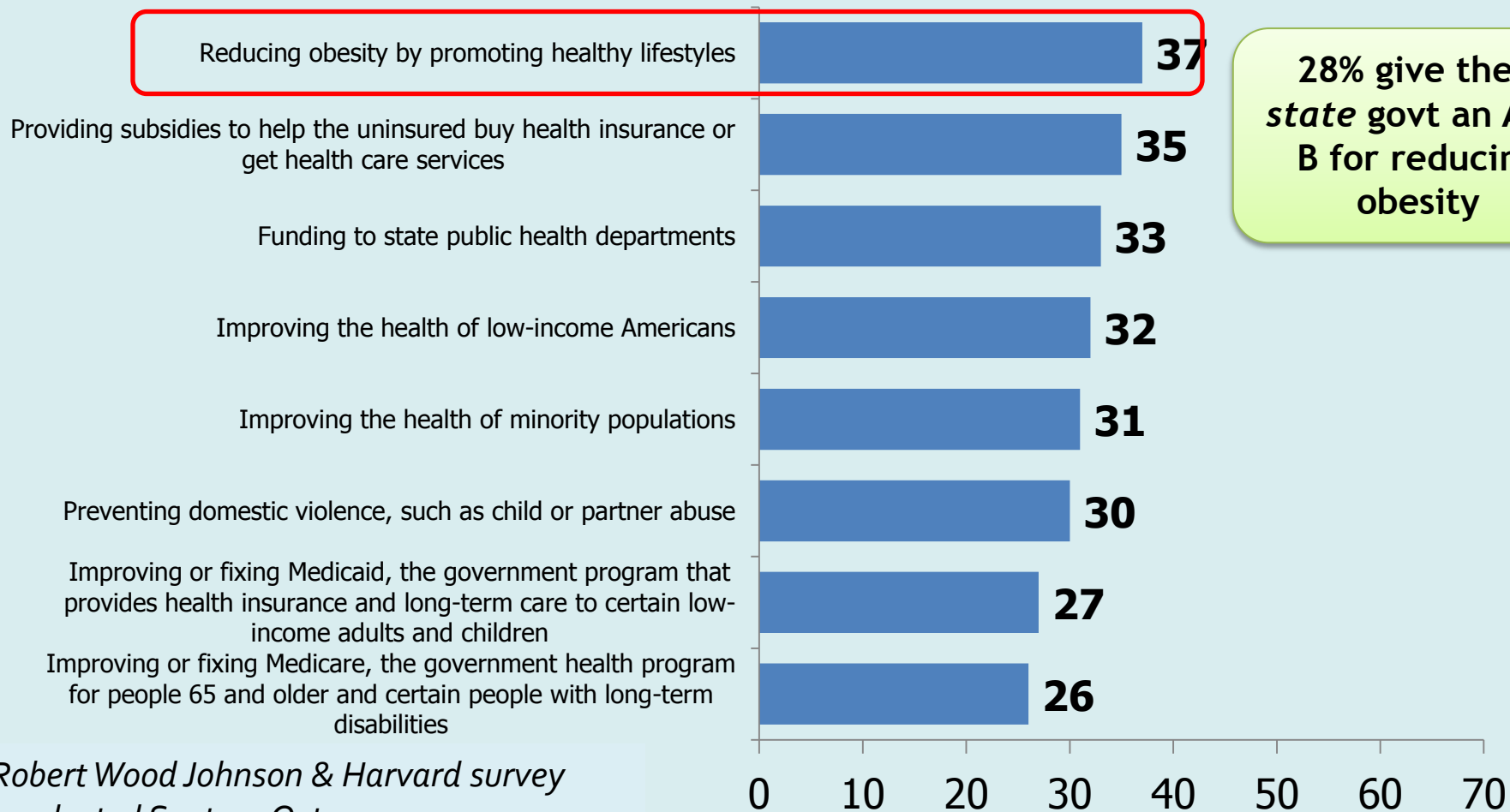
*Using a grading scale like they do in schools - where A is excellent, B is good, C is fair, D is poor and F is failing, how would you grade the performance of the federal government in each of the following areas? (% giving an A or B)*



*Robert Wood Johnson & Harvard survey conducted Sept 19-Oct 2, 2011 among 1,598 voters nationwide.*

# Just 37% Give The Government An A Or B On Reducing Obesity

*Using a grading scale like they do in schools - where A is excellent, B is good, C is fair, D is poor and F is failing, how would you grade the performance of the federal government in each of the following areas? (% giving an A or B)*



*Robert Wood Johnson & Harvard survey conducted Sept 19-Oct 2, 2011 among 1,598 voters nationwide.*

# Tighter Restrictions To Keep Foods Safe Is As A Top Health Priority

## Obesity Is A Slightly Lower Priority

Now I am going to read you a list of proposals related to our country today that some people are suggesting government should focus on. For each, please tell me on a scale of 0 to 10, how big a priority that proposal should be for government to focus on, with 0 meaning it should not be an important priority at all for government to focus on and 10 meaning it should be an extremely important priority for government to focus on. You can use any number between 0 and 10.

	Mean score	% 8 – 10 score
Tightening regulations and inspections to keep food safe	7.9	67
Investing in more research to prevent diseases like heart disease and diabetes	7.5	60
Preventing diseases related to childhood obesity like diabetes and heart disease by helping kids eat right and be more physically active	7.2	58
Training doctors and nurses to increase access to high-quality care	7.1	58
Developing vaccines to prevent a worldwide flu pandemic like swine flu	7.0	52
Fixing our health care system to make it more affordable and accessible for people	6.9	58
Reducing overcrowding in emergency rooms and hospitals	6.6	48
Making more places smoke free and providing programs to help people quit	6.3	46

*National survey conducted jointly by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and American Viewpoint among 1,200 registered voters including 240 among cell users April 22nd – May 2nd, 2010*



# Post-2010, Increased Regulation Of Food Safety Was a Top-Tier Issue

## *Gallup December 2010 Issues Referenda*

Suppose that on Election Day you could vote on key issues as well as candidates. Please tell me whether you would vote for or against a law that would do each of the following. First, would you vote for or against a law that would \_\_\_?

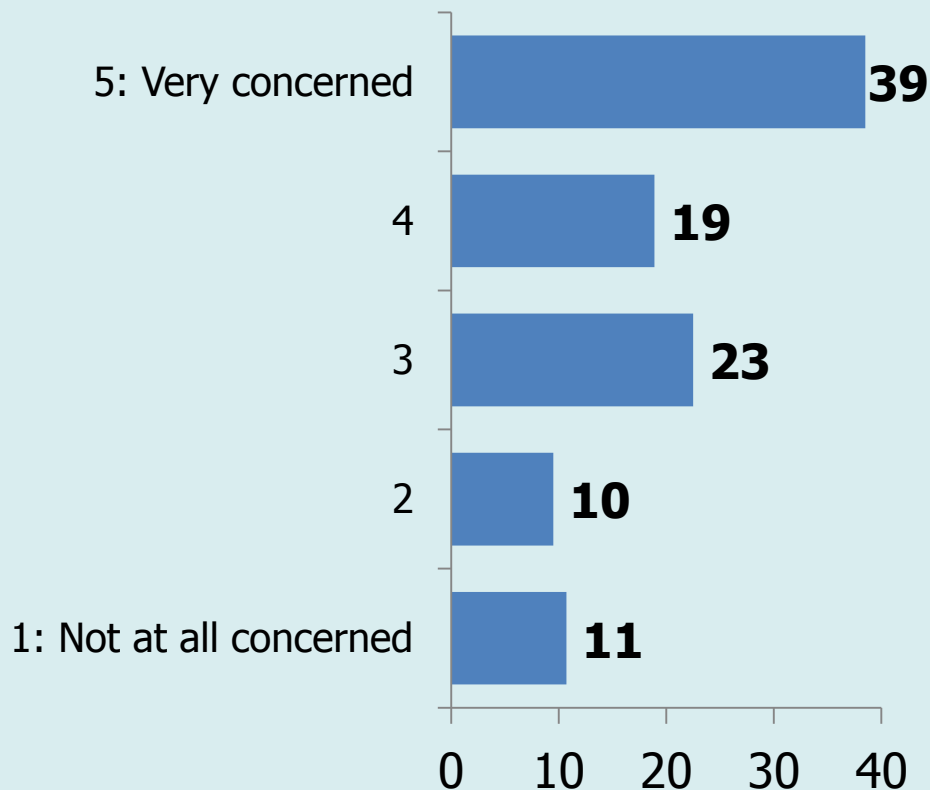
	<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>
	%	%
Increase government regulation of food safety	75	21
Allow gays and lesbians to serve openly in the U.S. military	67	28
Extend the federal income tax cuts passed in 2001 and 2003 for all Americans for two years	66	29
Extend unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed	66	30
Allow illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to gain legal resident status if they join the military or go to college	54	42
Ratify the nuclear arms agreement with Russia, called the START treaty	51	30
Postpone previously scheduled cuts in the amounts Medicare pays doctors to treat Medicare patients	50	42
Ban all earmarks in bills passed by Congress	46	36

Gallup, Dec. 3-6, 2010

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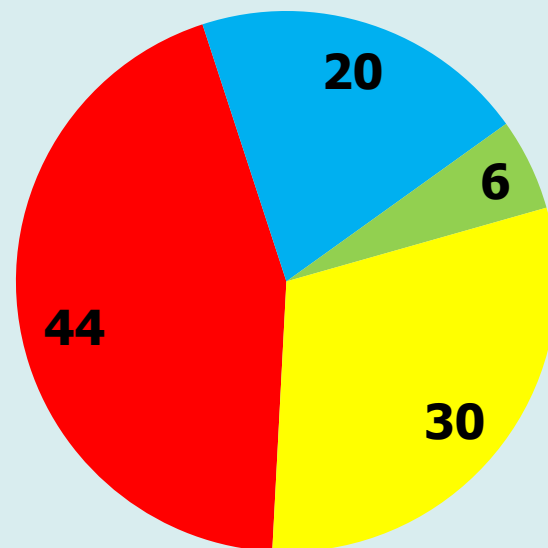
## A Plurality Are Very Concerned About The Safety Of Our Food; More Are Concerned About Meat & Produce Than Seafood Or Dairy

*Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "not at all concerned" and 5 is "very concerned" in general how concerned are you about the safety of our food?*



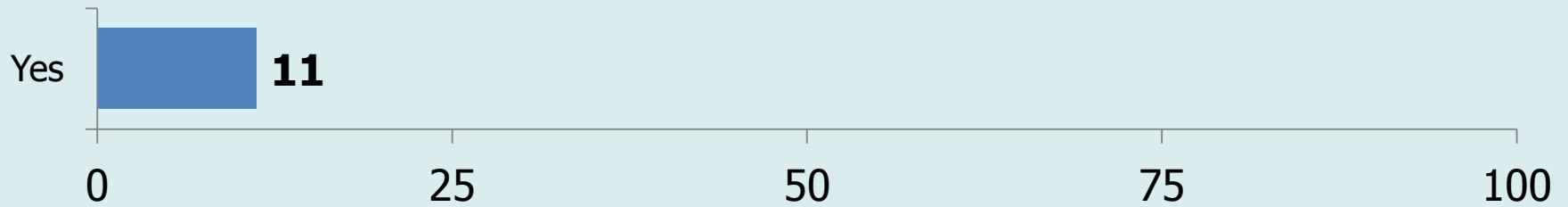
*What type of food do you believe poses the greatest risk for food-borne illness?*

■ Meat      ■ Seafood  
■ Dairy products      ■ Fresh produce

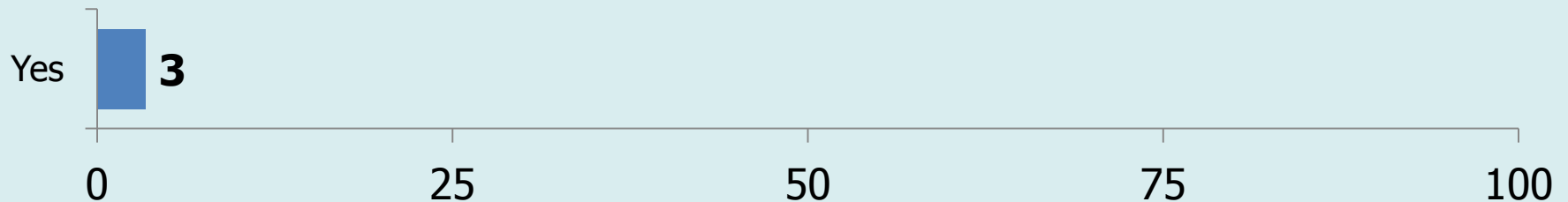


# Few Report Actually Having Been Ill From Something They Ate, And Very Few Had To Seek Medical Attention Because Of It

*During the past 3 months, have you become ill from something that you ate?*

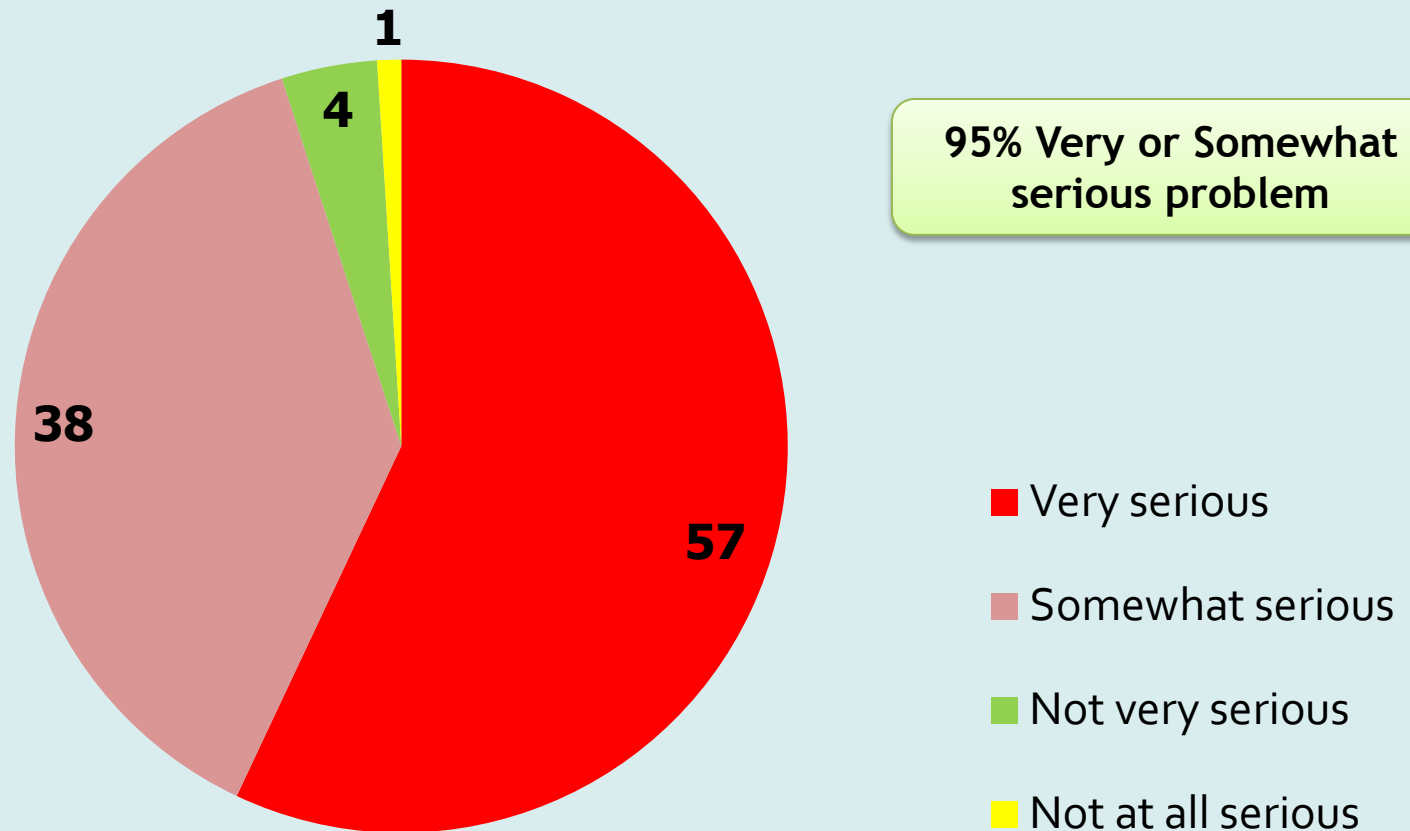


*Did you seek medical treatment (after becoming ill from something that you ate)? (% of total population)*



# Nearly All Voters View Obesity As A Serious Problem

*Please tell me how serious a public health problem you think obesity is, that is, people being seriously overweight in this country-- is it very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious or not at all serious?*

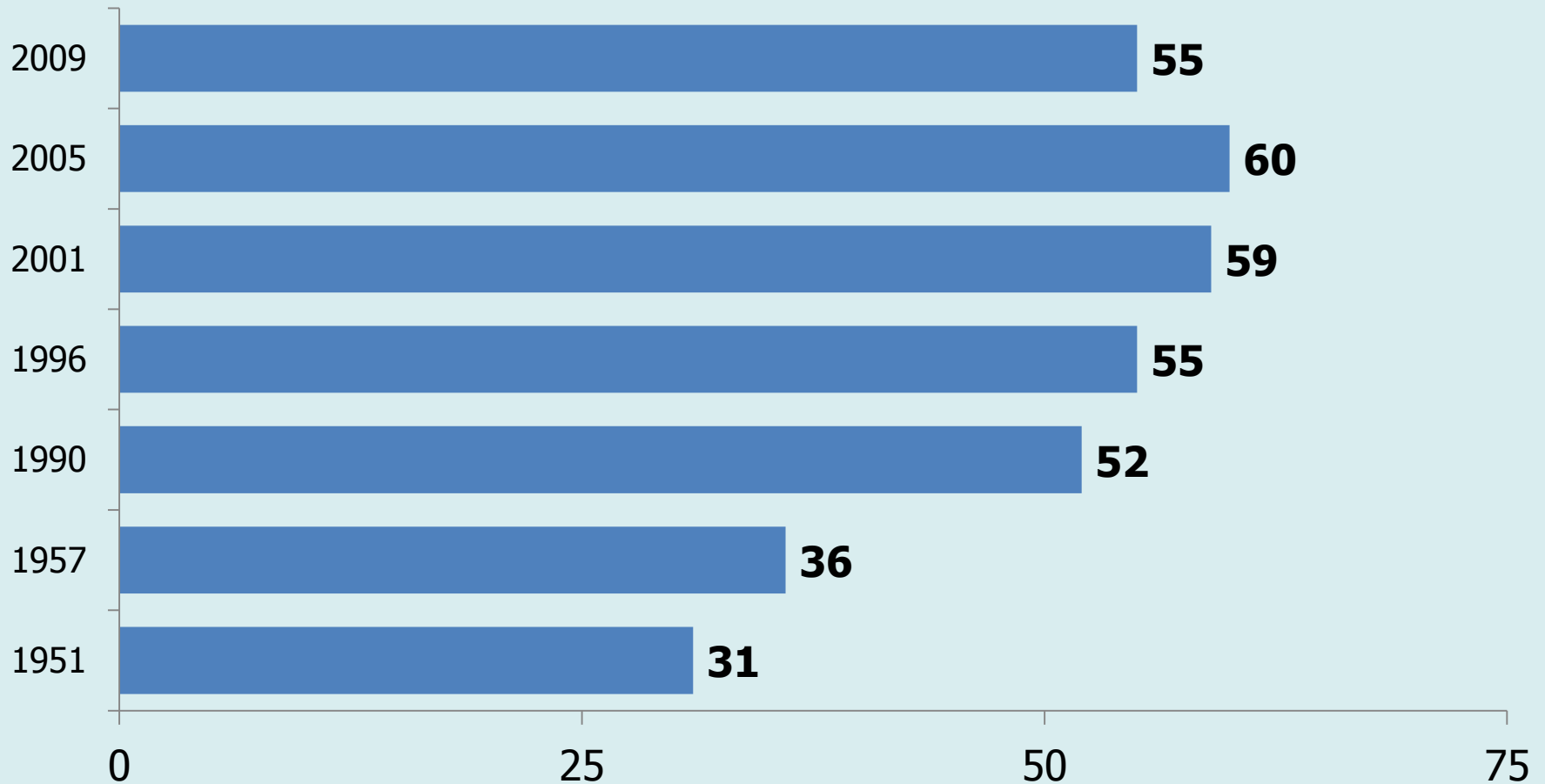


**95% Very or Somewhat serious problem**

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Not very serious
- Not at all serious

## Since 1990, A Majority Has Reported They Would Like To Lose Weight; In The 50's, Far Fewer Said The Same

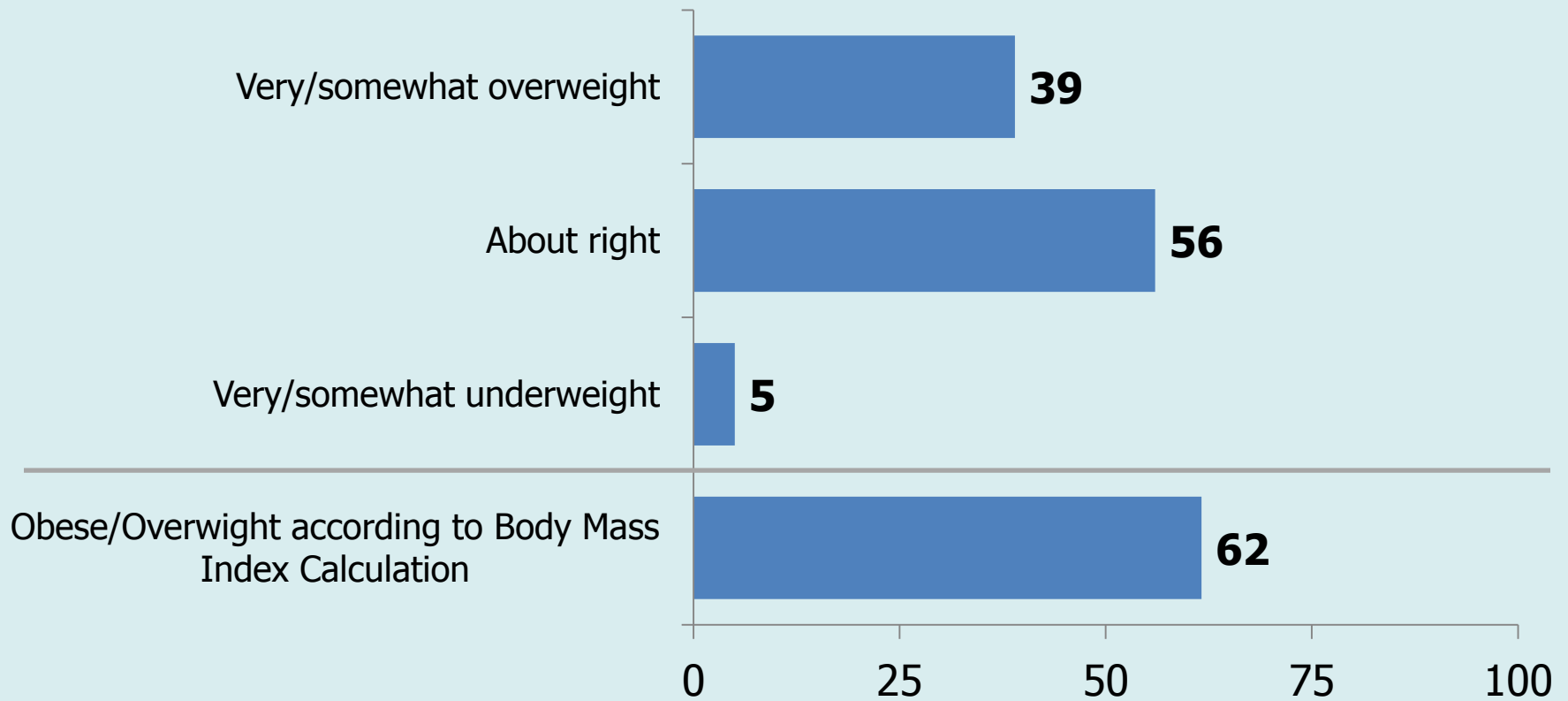
*Would you like to lose weight, stay at your present weight, or put on weight? (% "lose weight")*



*CBS Poll conducted December 17-22, 2009 among 1,048 adults, including some interviewed on their mobile phone*

# Gallup Finds Majority Is Obese Or Overweight Based Body Mass Index Calculations, Yet Fewer Admit A Weight Problem

*How would you describe your own personal weight situation right now – very overweight, somewhat overweight, about right, somewhat underweight or very underweight?*



*Data from Gallup surveys conducted in 2011. Body Mass Index calculated using respondents' reported height and weight.*

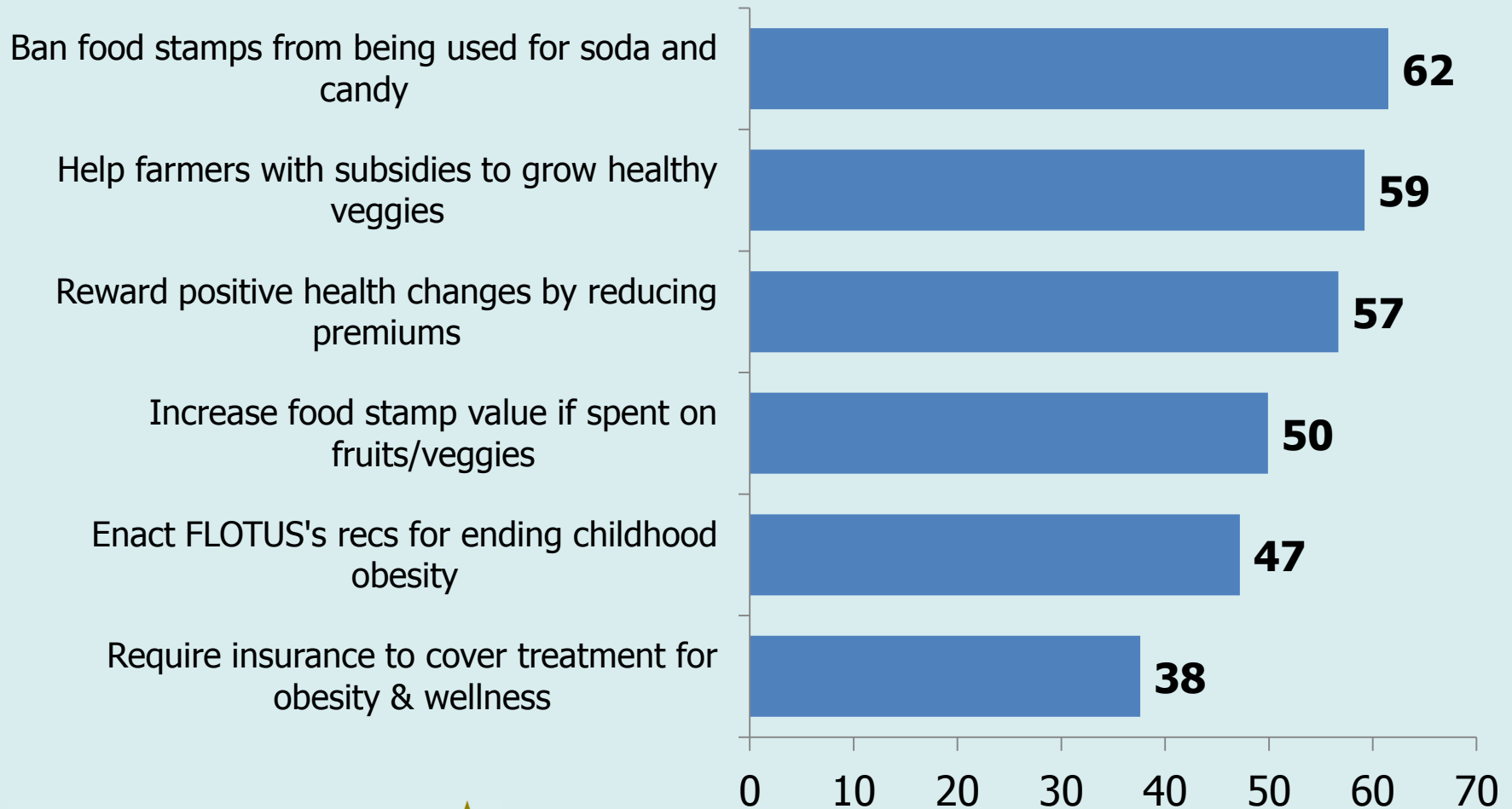
## The Most Popular Obesity Proposals Focus On Schools

Now I am going to read you a set of proposals to help reduce obesity, for each please tell me how much you support that proposal on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means you do not support it at all and 10 means you support it very strongly. You can use any number between 0 and 10.

	% rating 8-10 on a 10 point scale
Increasing physical education and activity in schools, including before and after school programs	71
Establishing higher nutritional standards for school lunches	66
Expanding educational programs to teach individuals about nutrition and healthy lifestyles	61
Providing free or low-cost access to exercise and weight loss programs	59
Reducing the marketing of unhealthy foods and increase the marketing of healthy foods	59
Setting aside more green space in communities for parks and recreational areas	54
Expanding coverage for prevention, diagnosis and effective treatments of obesity	50
Building more sidewalks in neighborhoods and communities to promote walking	43

# Banning Food Stamps From Being Used On Soda & Candy, Subsidies For Farmers Growing Healthy Veggies Are Popular Proposals

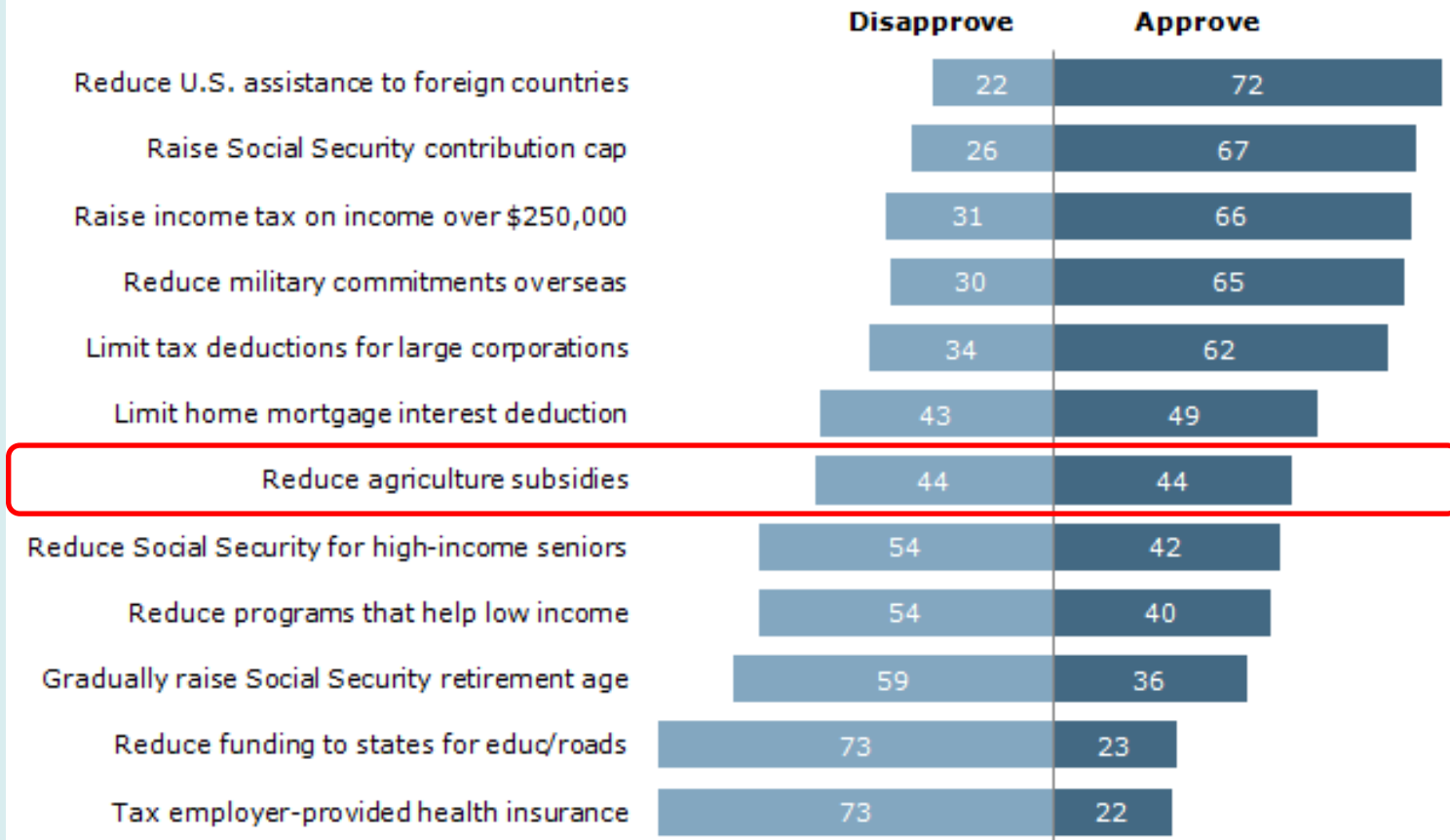
% “strongly favor” the proposal





# Voters Divided On Eliminating Agricultural Subsidies to Reduce Deficit, Favor Higher Taxes On The Wealthiest

## To Cut Deficit, Most Approve of Taxing Higher Incomes, Reducing Military Commitments



PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 25-30, 2011. Q37a-n.

## Many Public Polls Don't Contribute To The Conversation

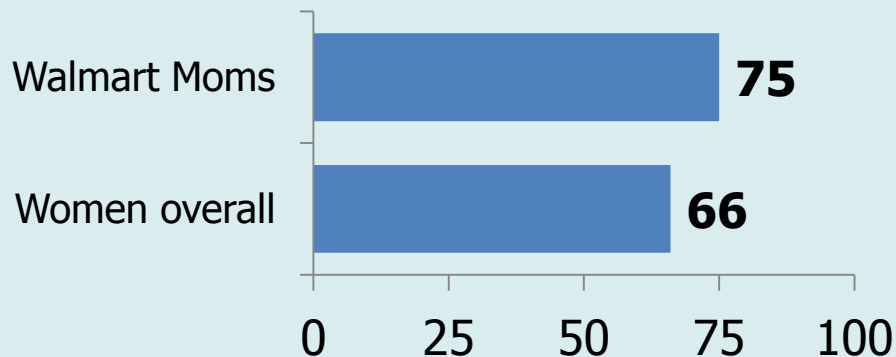
*California and New York City now require calorie-counts to be printed on fast food menus. Which of the following other things would you most like to see happen to reduce obesity -- 1. a fast-food tax, OR 2. a soft drink tax, OR 3. a ban on using food stamps to buy high-fat food, OR 4. putting scales at restaurant entrances, OR 5. a tax credit for liposuction?*



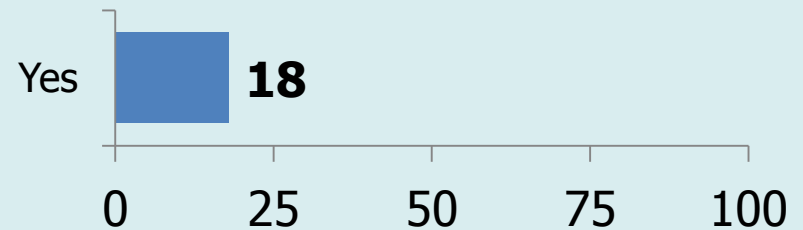
*60 Minutes/Vanity Fair Poll among 1,097 adults nationwide, August 27-31, 2009*

## Cost Is A Problem: 18% Say They Could Not Afford To Eat A Healthy Diet & "Walmart Moms" Even More Concerned About Food Prices Than Women Overall

*Please rate how much each of the following items are economic concerns for you and your household. Use a scale of zero to ten where zero means it is not at all an economic concern and ten means it is a top economic concern for you and your household. Of course you can choose any number between zero and ten. "The price of groceries and other essentials." (% 8-10)*



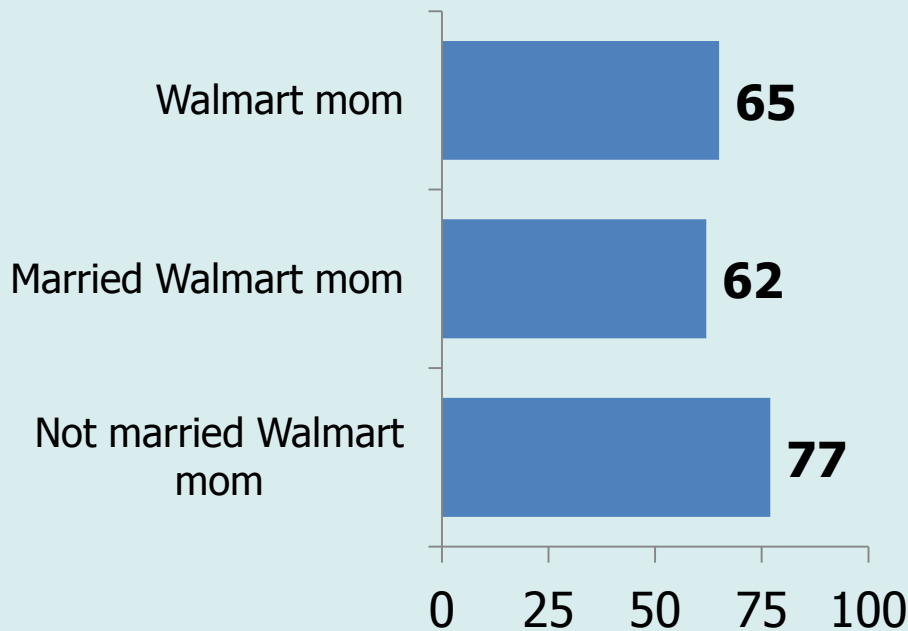
*Have you had that problem during the past 12 months, or not: You could not afford to eat a healthy diet?*



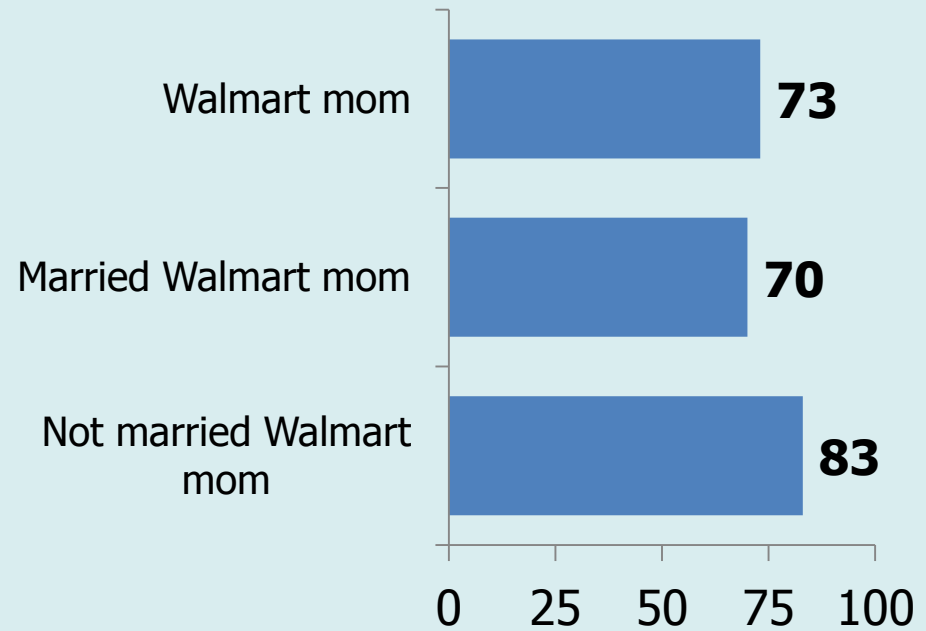
*Walmart Mom survey conducted among 1,250 registered voter women and 380 "Walmart Moms." "Walmart Moms" have children at home under 18 and shop at Walmart at least once a month. Survey conducted online May 20-27, 2010. Data on right from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Sept 19-Oct 2, 2011*

# Not Surprisingly, Huge Majorities Of Walmart Moms Report Doing The Cooking And Grocery Shopping Themselves

*For each of the following, please indicate how the following decisions or activities work in your household. Cooking at home. (% doing this yourself)*



*For each of the following, please indicate how the following decisions or activities work in your household. Shopping for groceries & household items. (% doing this yourself)*



*Walmart Mom survey conducted among 1,250 registered voter women and 380 "Walmart Moms." "Walmart Moms" have children at home under 18 and shop at Walmart at least once a month. Survey conducted online May 20-27, 2010.*