



CONGRESSIONAL  
MANAGEMENT  
FOUNDATION

# ***How to Manage Changes to Budgets and Benefits in Congressional Offices***

# Methodology

---

- Survey Nov. 18 – Dec. 6, 2013
- House and Senate Chiefs of Staff  
and District/State Directors
- 163 Respondents – 15% Response Rate
- 10 Questions Focused on Budget/Benefits
- Closed and Open-Ended Questions Posed
- Some Questions Compared to 2011 Survey on Job Satisfaction (only identical questions to identical demographic group used)

# Retaining Staff

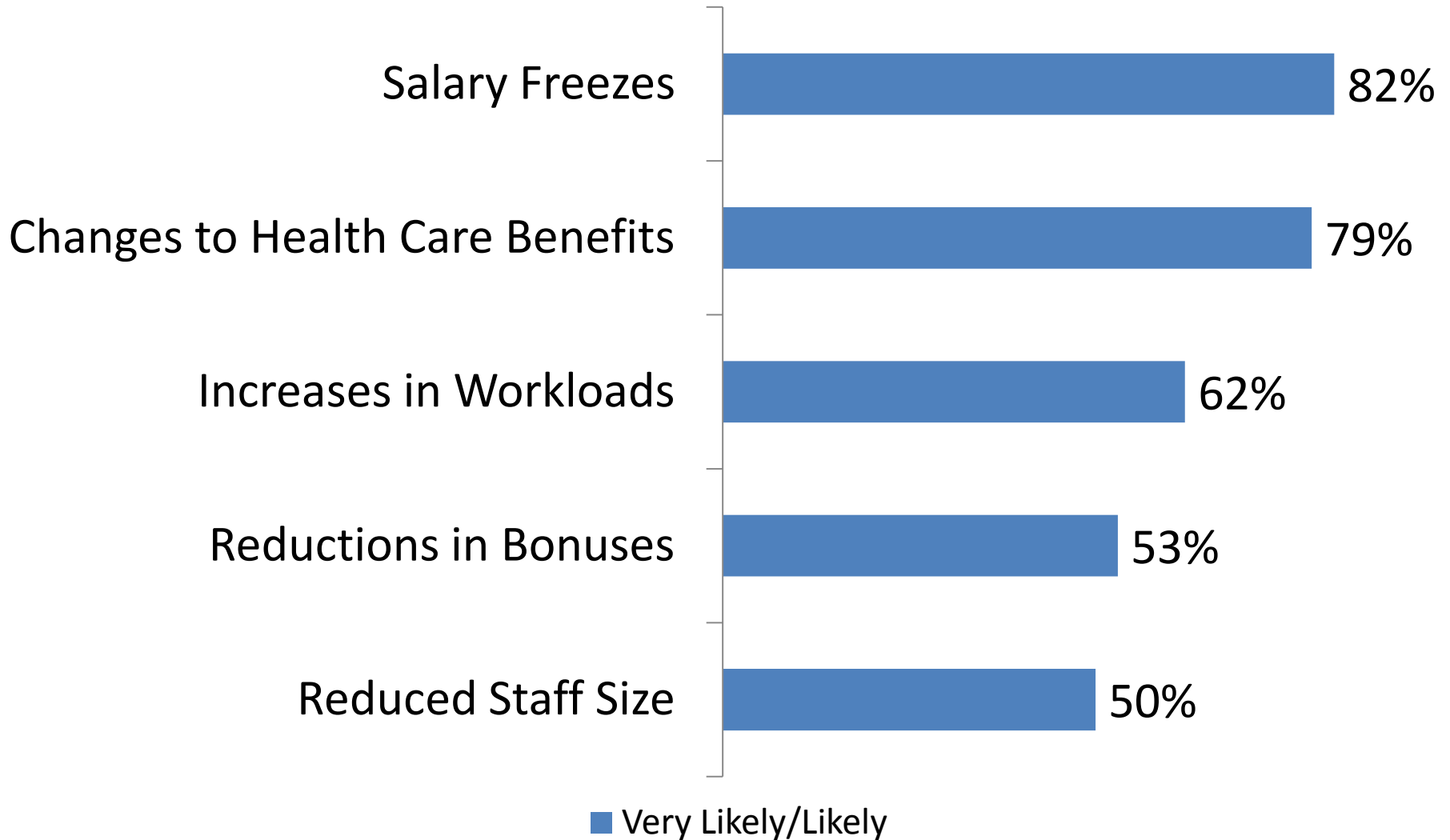
---

## Survey Question

Given the past and potential changes in budgets and benefits, how likely do you think the following could contribute to staffers leaving your office?

# Retaining Staff

---



# Retaining Staff

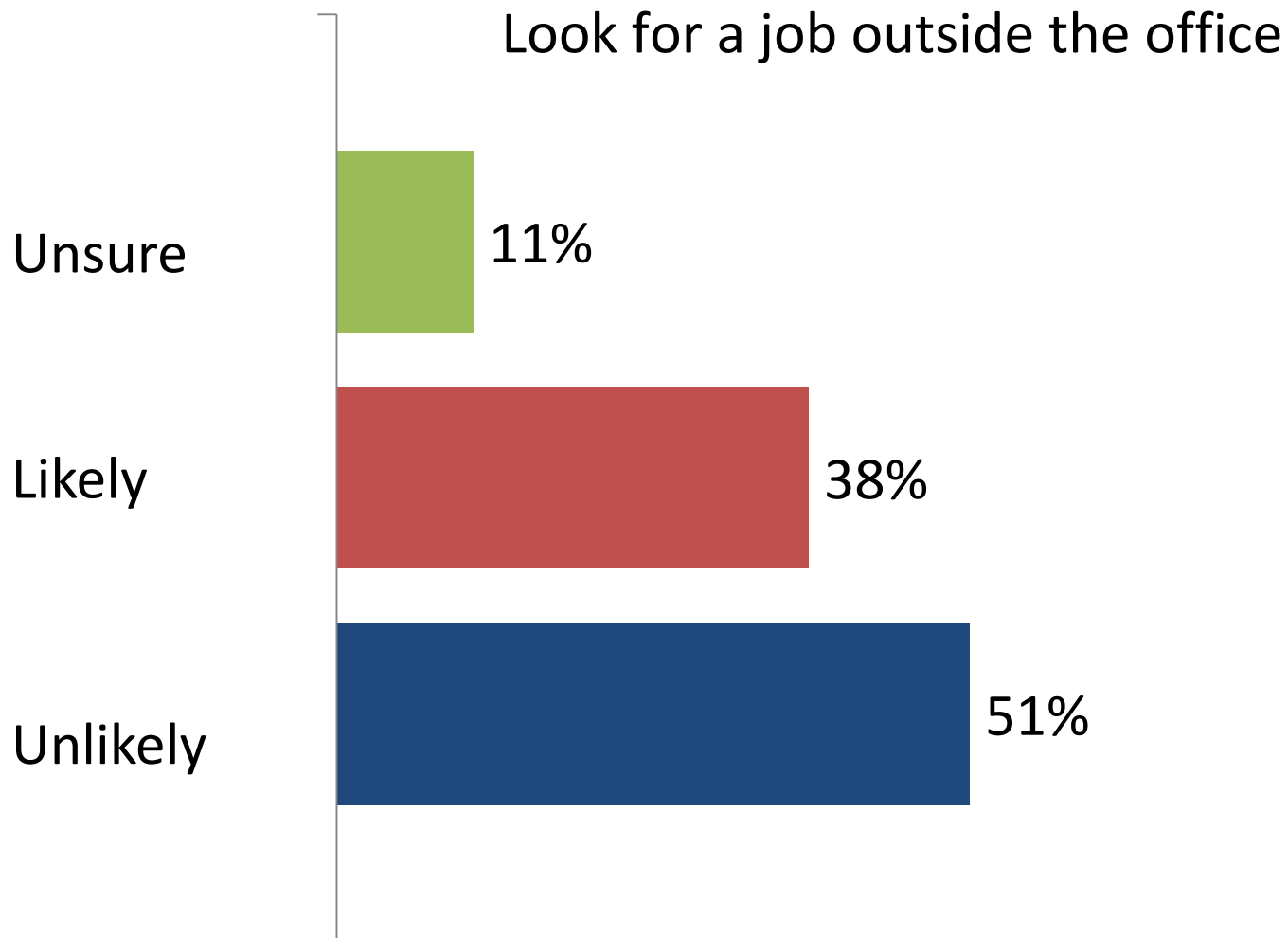
---

## Survey Question

How likely is it that you will, by choice, look for a job outside of your current office in the next 12 months?

# Retaining Staff

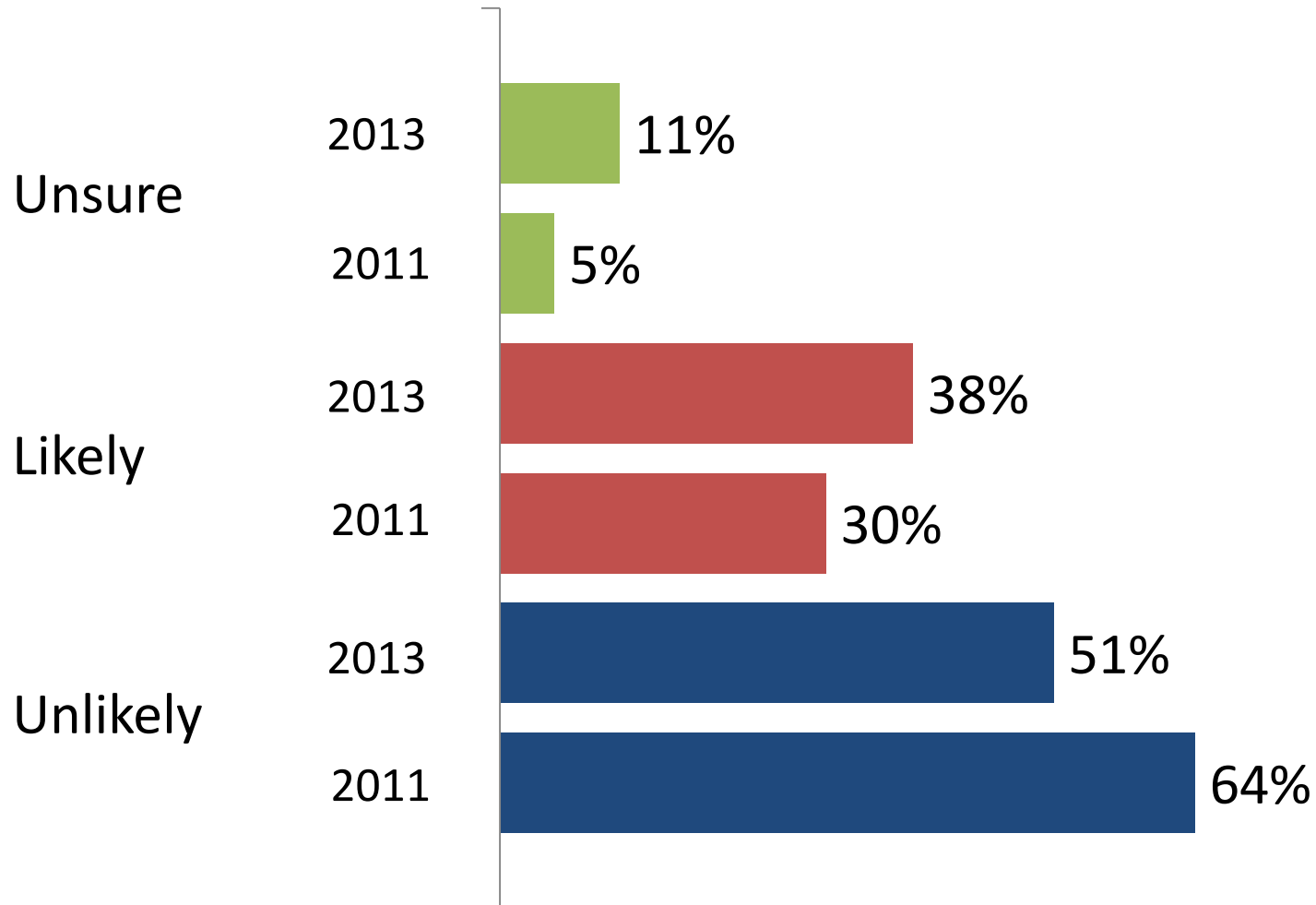
---



# Retaining Staff

---

Look for a job outside the office



# Retaining Staff

---

## Open-Ended Survey Question

In your opinion, what are the most critical management challenges your office faces with the changes to budgets and benefits that have occurred in the past few years?



# Retaining Staff

---

## Open-Ended Question Response

*“This is a horrible situation. We don't have money for staff travel to the District, we don't have money for tele-town halls. Health care is a mess and our District Office employees are not being allowed to keep their local plan. Everyone is unhappy. This is a very hard place in which to work.”*

# Retaining Staff

---

## Open-Ended Question Response

*“This is a business. And we keep punishing ourselves by eliminating the tools necessary to run our businesses properly.”*

# Retaining Staff

---

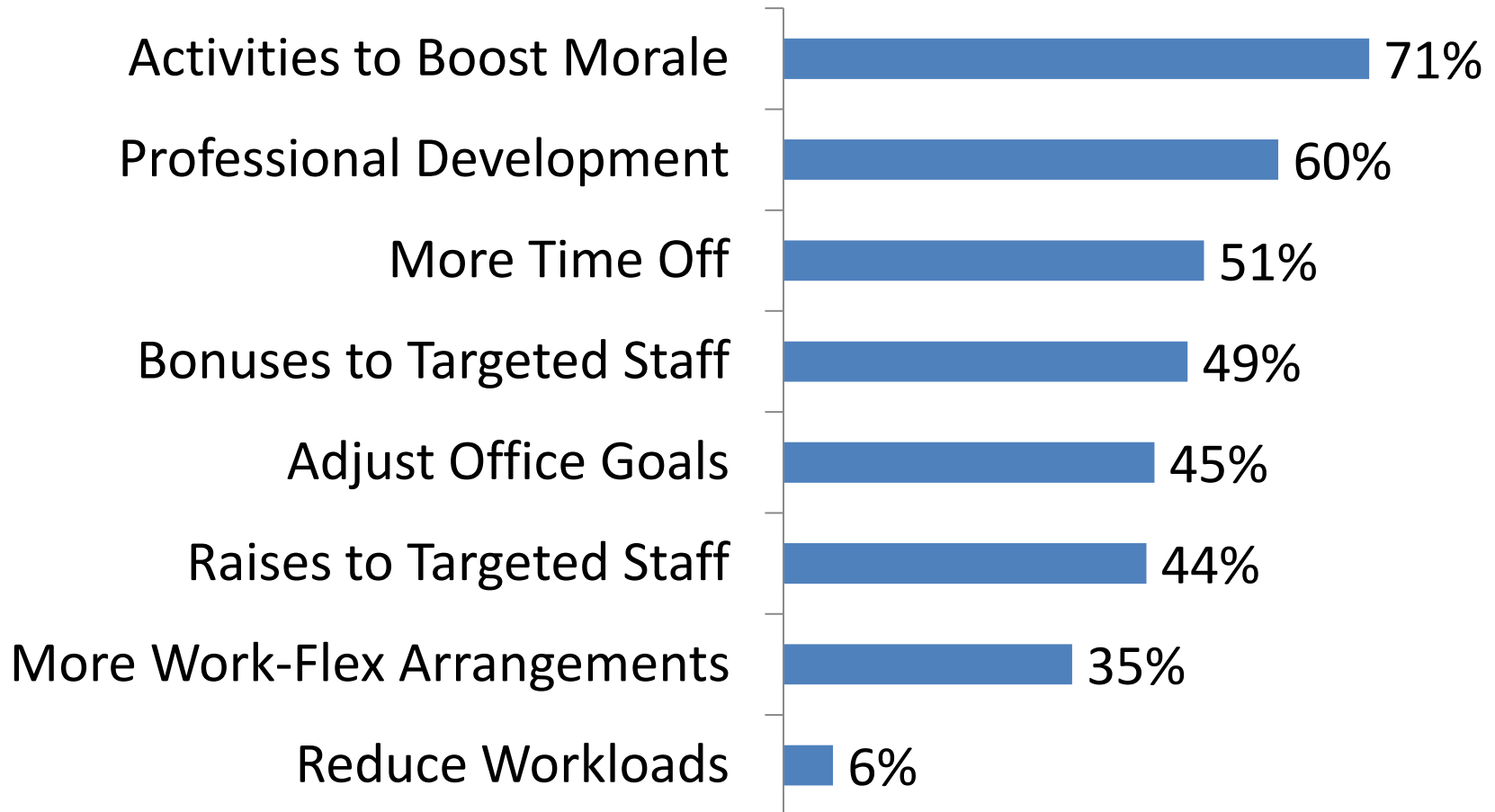
## Survey Question

Given the past and potential changes in budgets and benefits, how likely are you to use the following strategies to retain current staff?

# Retaining Staff

---

## Very Likely/Likely For Staff Retention



# Retaining Staff

---

## Managers' Questions

- Given the significant pressures that will lead your best staff to consider other job opportunities, what are your strategies to retain them?
- Should you decide to provide salary increases or bonuses to targeted staff, how can you explain the rationale for this practice?
- Given fewer resources, what are the tough choices the office will make – what will we NOT do?

# Retaining Staff

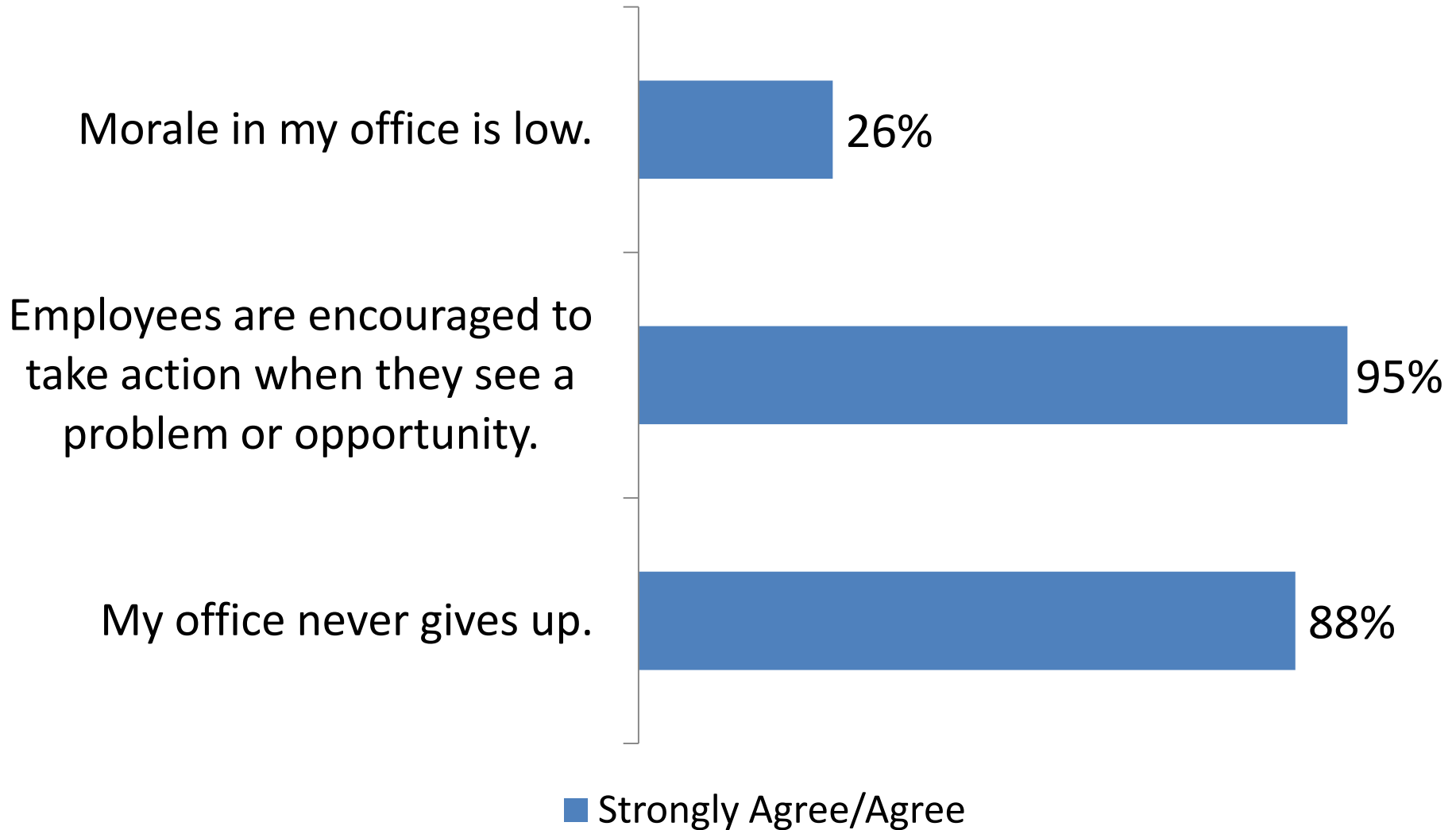
---

## Managers' Options

- Consider restructure of office org chart to live with fewer staff, freeing up funds for salaries and bonuses.
- Consider consolidating district offices, freeing up funds for salaries and bonuses.
- Reduce net output of office by eliminating or reducing non-critical functions.
- Have *honest* conversation with Member/Senator about new limitations to balance the staff workload.
- Increase managers' time interacting with staff on performance-related issues.

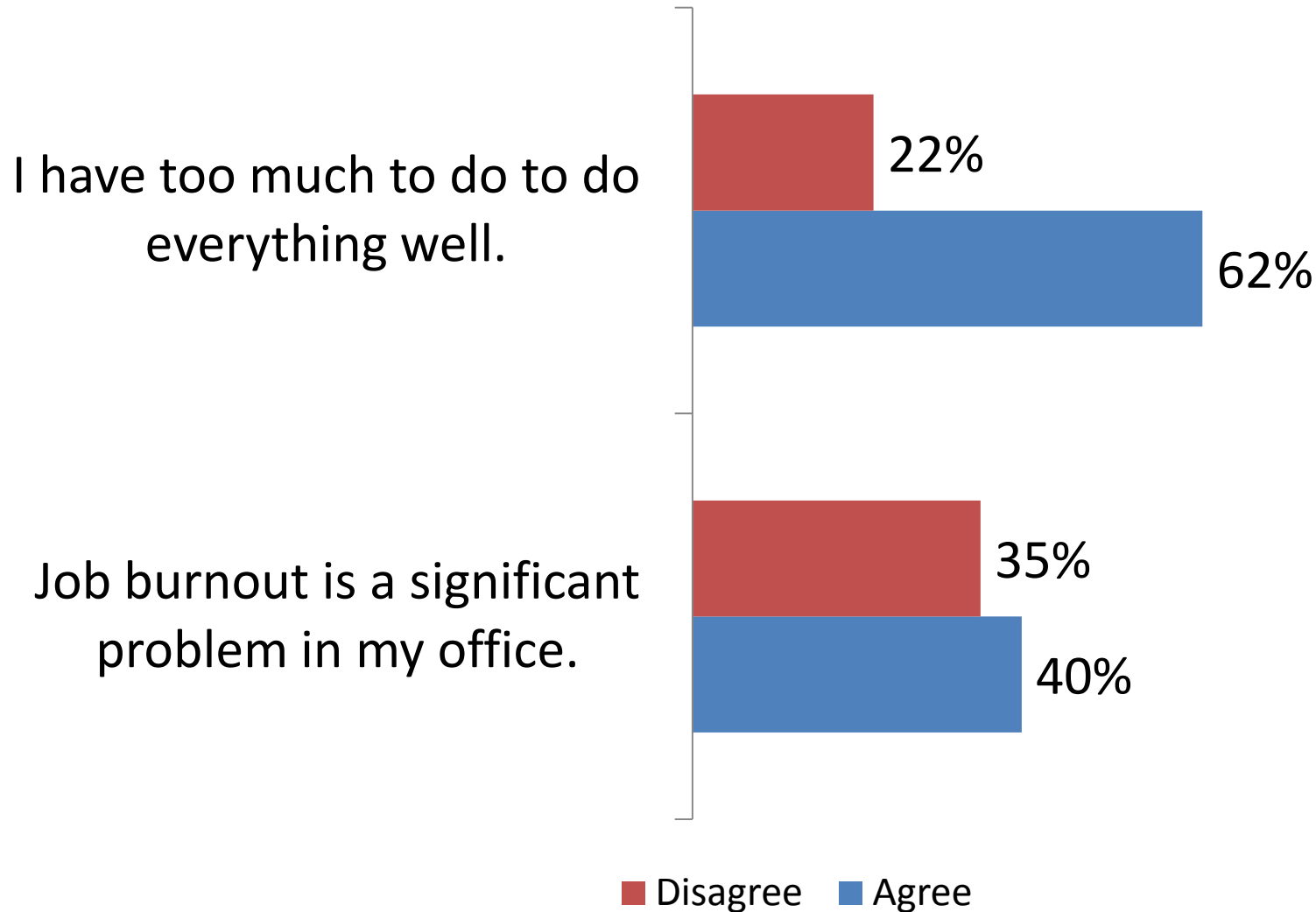
# Addressing Work Environment

---



# Addressing Work Environment

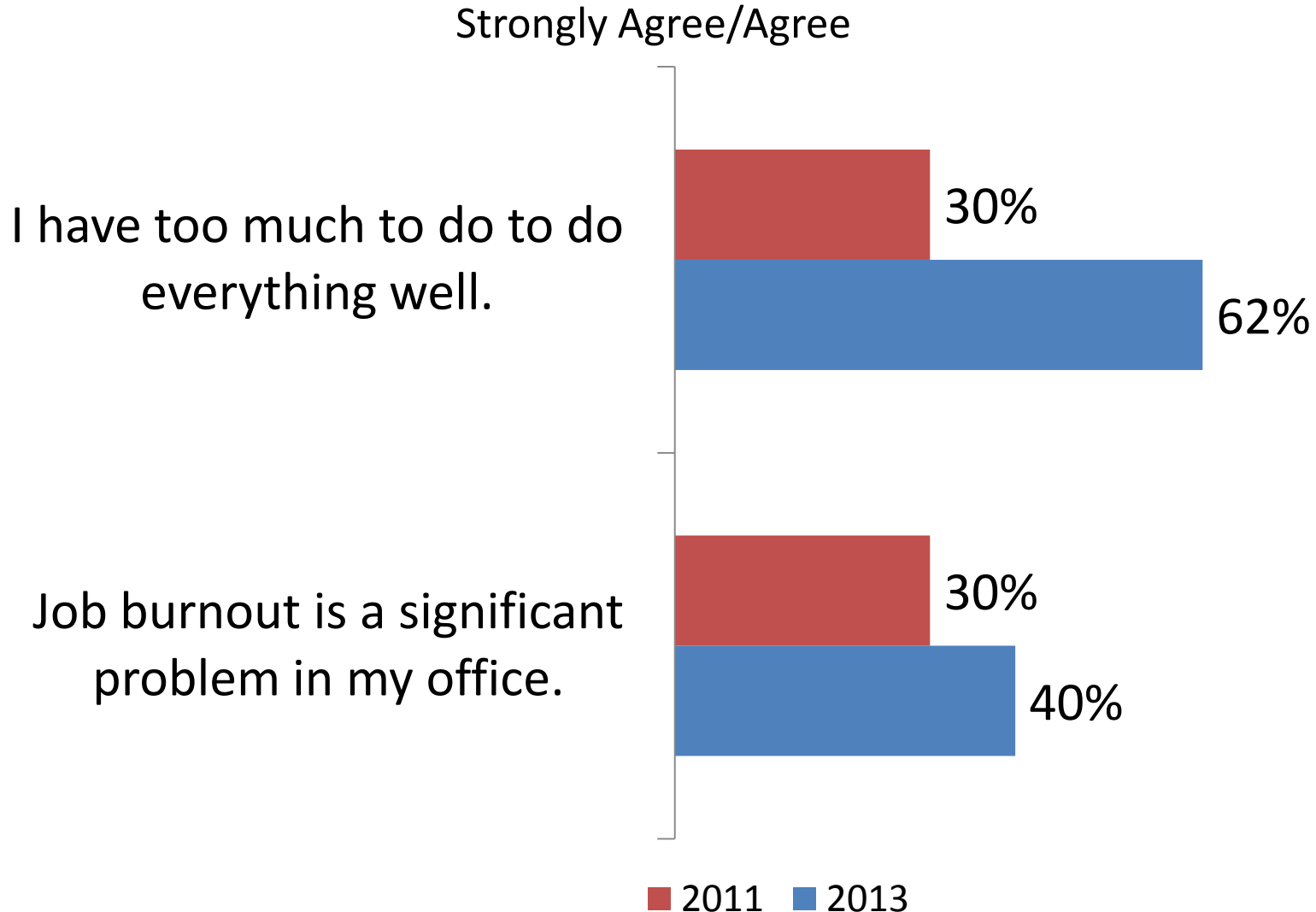
---





# Addressing Work Environment

---



# Addressing Work Environment

---

## Open-Ended Question Response

*“Reductions in D.C. and District staff as a result of budget cuts have shifted the workload to remaining staff. The challenges are ensuring that work has been equitably distributed, that staff morale remains high, and that quality of work is not sacrificed.”*

# Addressing Work Environment

---

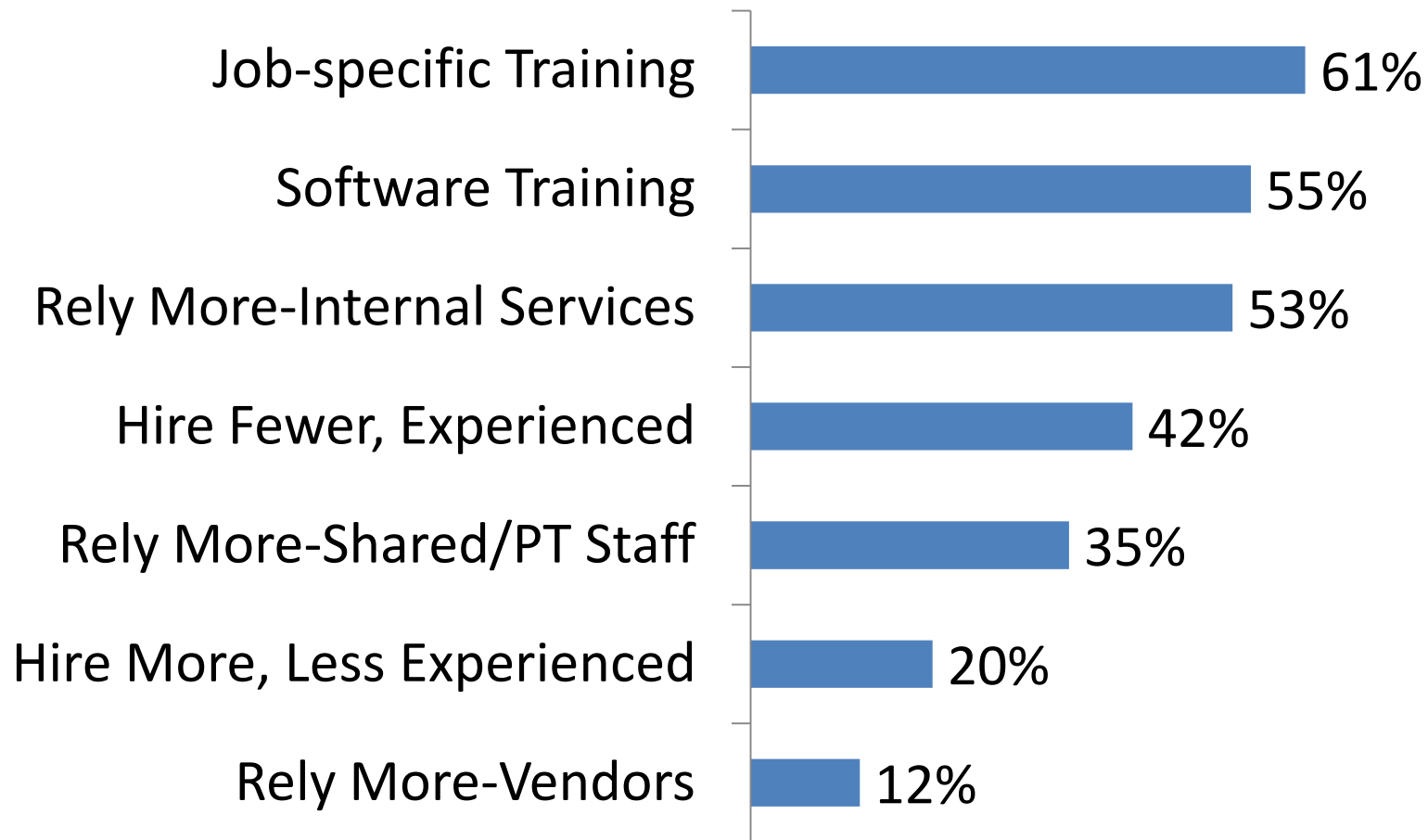
## Survey Question

Given the past and potential changes in budgets and benefits, how likely are you to use the following strategies to maximize your staff's efficiency?

# Addressing Work Environment

---

## Very Likely/Likely Maximizing Staff Efficiency



# Addressing Work Environment

---

## Managers' Questions

- What can you do to increase efficiency or productivity to continue office operations with fewer staff?
- What processes work more efficiently?
- What can you do help staff cope with job burnout?
- What will boost office morale?

# Addressing Work Environment

---

## Managers' Options

- Increased emphasis on strategic planning.
- Focus on internal goals to improve operations.
- Enhanced use of technology for more efficiencies.
- Allow for and *encourage* professional development.
- Spend time on morale/team-building activities.
- Ensure that management, especially the Member, provides more positive feedback to staff.

# Healthcare Benefits Transition

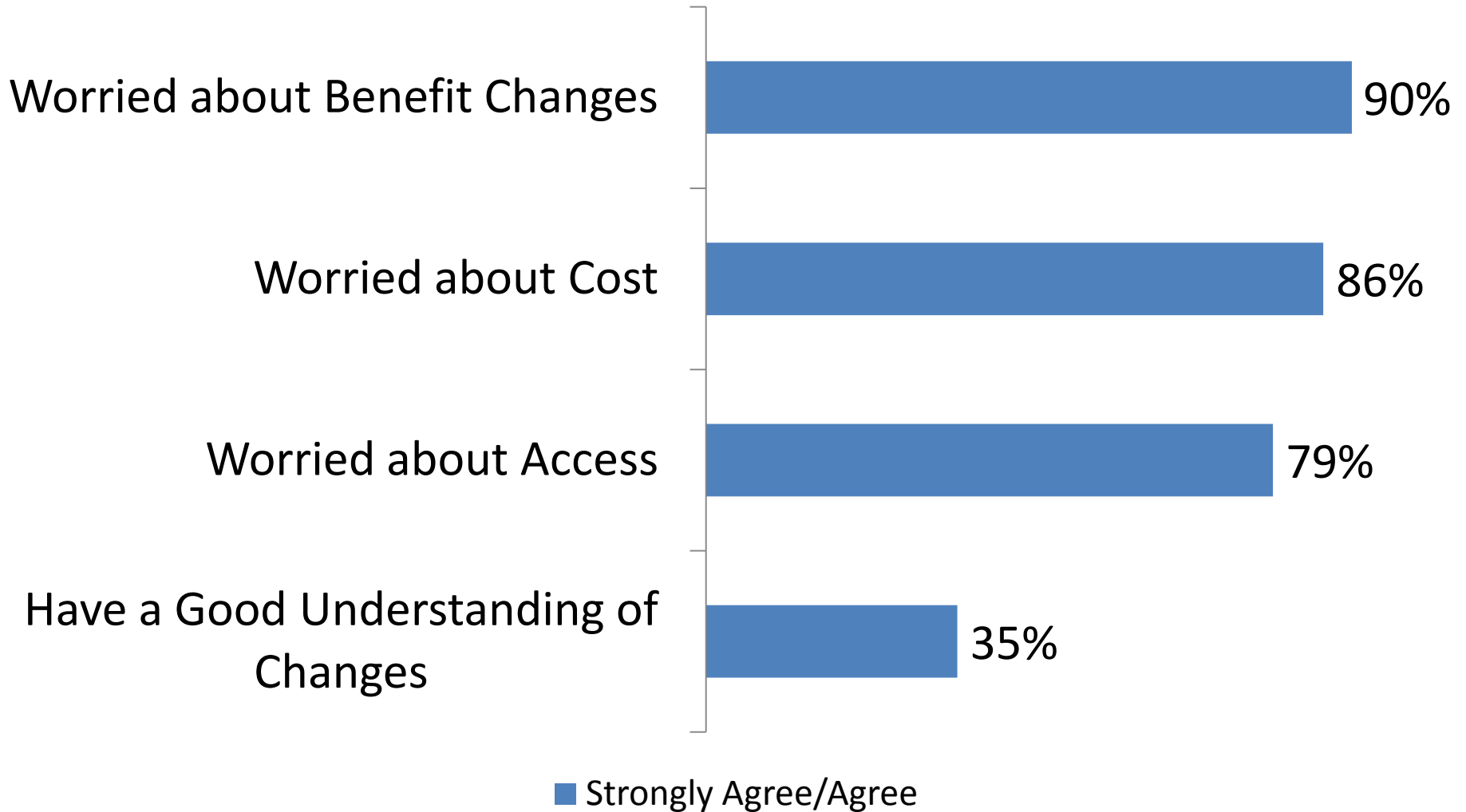
---

## Survey Question

When thinking about your staff's perceptions related to the coming changes to congressional staff health benefits, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

# Healthcare Benefits Transition

---





# Healthcare Benefits Transition

---

## Open-Ended Question Response

*“The elimination of staff's traditional health care has been a complete disaster. If you wanted a legislative branch run by K Street lobbyists and 25 year-old staffers, Mission Accomplished.”*

# Healthcare Benefits Transition

---

## Open-Ended Question Response

*“I found out in September that I have breast cancer. I'm losing my health care coverage in the middle of my radiation treatment. Getting insured through the DC exchange is not helpful — my choices are very limited and costs are high. As a result, I've gone on my husband's plan. My staff don't necessarily have that option.”*

# Healthcare Benefits Transition

---

## Managers' Questions

- What strategies can offices employ to address staff concerns about their new health care coverage and the uncertainties regarding its future costs?

# Healthcare Benefits Transition

---

## Managers' Options

- Continually talk to staff through transition.
- If employee experiences/feels loss of benefits, compensate with other benefits .
- Consider ways to “guarantee” benefits.



CONGRESSIONAL  
MANAGEMENT  
FOUNDATION

202-546-0100  
CMF@CongressFoundation.org  
CongressFoundation.org

# Survey of House and Senate Senior Managers

The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) is examining how changes to congressional office budgets and benefits have affected your office operations and benefits in the last few years. We are conducting this **anonymous survey** to provide guidance to senior managers in DC and state/district offices. This survey is just 10 questions, and will take 5-7 minutes. Please complete the survey by Dec. 6. The results will be included in a webinar training program that CMF will offer to congressional managers in December, and they will help us customize our offerings to congressional managers in 2014.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact CMF at 202-546-0100 or [CMF@CongressFoundation.org](mailto:CMF@CongressFoundation.org).

## 1. Given the past and potential changes in budgets and benefits, how likely are you to use the following strategies to retain current staff?

	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know/ Does Not Apply
Give raises to targeted staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give bonuses to targeted staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide more time off to staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide more professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in activities to boost morale (e.g., group lunches, impromptu "awards," public recognition, time with Member, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer or expand work-flex arrangements (e.g., telework, condensed workweeks, job sharing, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reduce workloads (e.g., extend turnaround time for mail, limit casework outreach)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjust our office goals and priorities to focus on most critical work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify):



**5. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/ Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/ Does Not Apply
Job burnout is a significant problem in my office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My office never gives up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have too much to do to do everything well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Morale in my office is low.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my office, employees are encouraged to take action when they see a problem or opportunity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. How likely is it that you will, by choice, look for a job outside of your current office in the next 12 months?**

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Don't Know/Unsure

**7. In your opinion, what are the most critical management challenges your office faces with the changes to budgets and benefits that have occurred in the past few years?**

**8. Is there anything else you want us to know that can help guide CMF products and services?**

To help us ensure we're getting a balanced response rate, please answer these two demographic questions. Your responses are anonymous.



**9. Which political party does your Member belong?**

- Democratic/Independent
- Republican

**10. Which staff position most accurately describes your title?**

- House Chief of Staff
- Senate Chief of Staff
- House District Director
- Senate State Director
- Other (please specify):