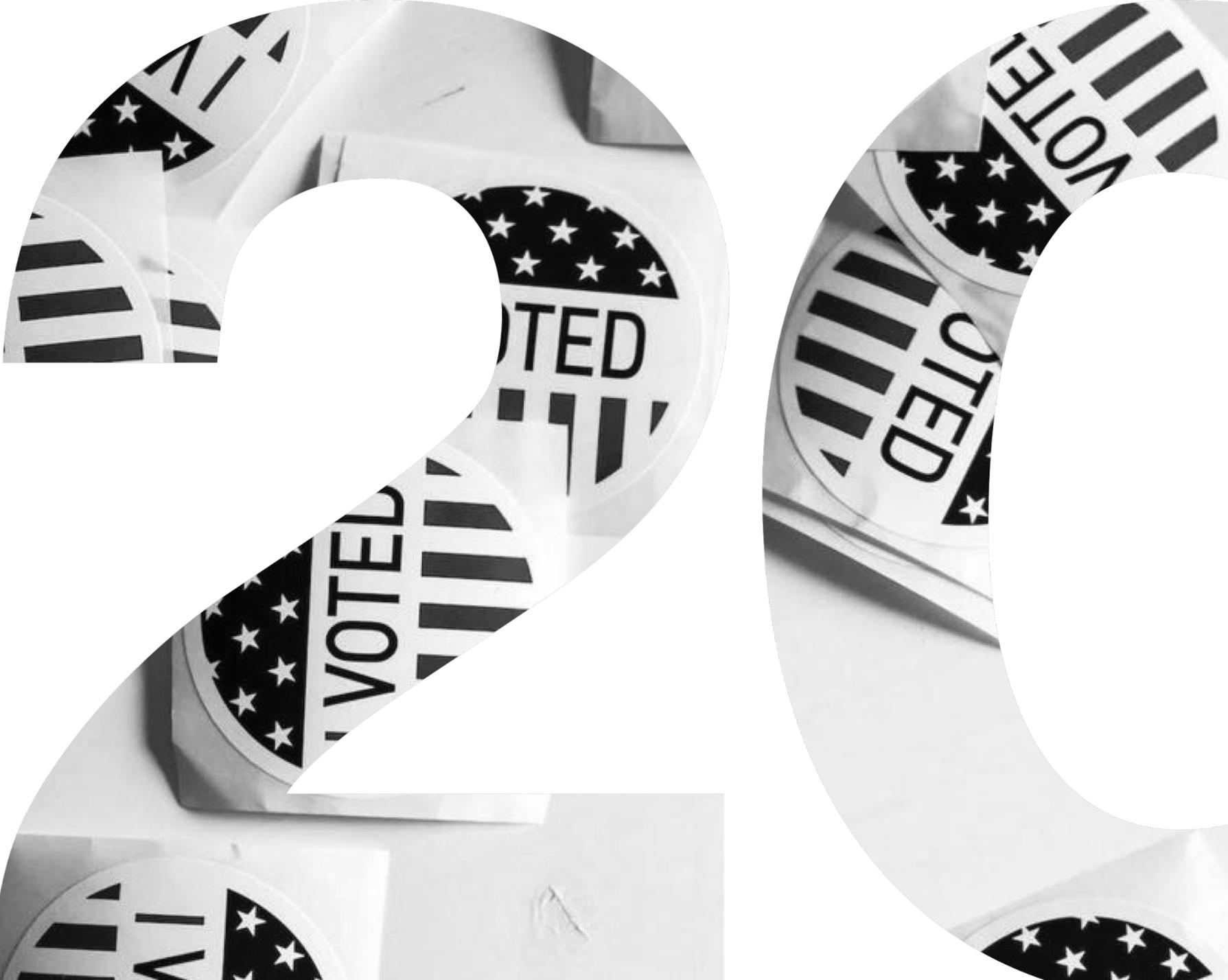


Special Report:
Trust and the U.S. Election

Edelman Trust Barometer **2020**



2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report

TRUST AND THE U.S. ELECTION

METHODOLOGY

U.S. Online Survey

- 1,500 respondents
- All data is nationally representative based on age, region, gender, and ethnicity

Timing of Fieldwork: October 20 – October 23, 2020

Margin of error

- U.S. total margin of error: +/- 2.53% (N=1,500)
- Ethnicity-specific data margin of error: Non-Hispanic White +/- 3.27% (N=899); all others +/- 4.28% (N=524)

HIGH LEVELS OF CONCERN ABOUT THE 2020 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Percent who are worried

I am worried that the 2020 United States presidential election will not go smoothly

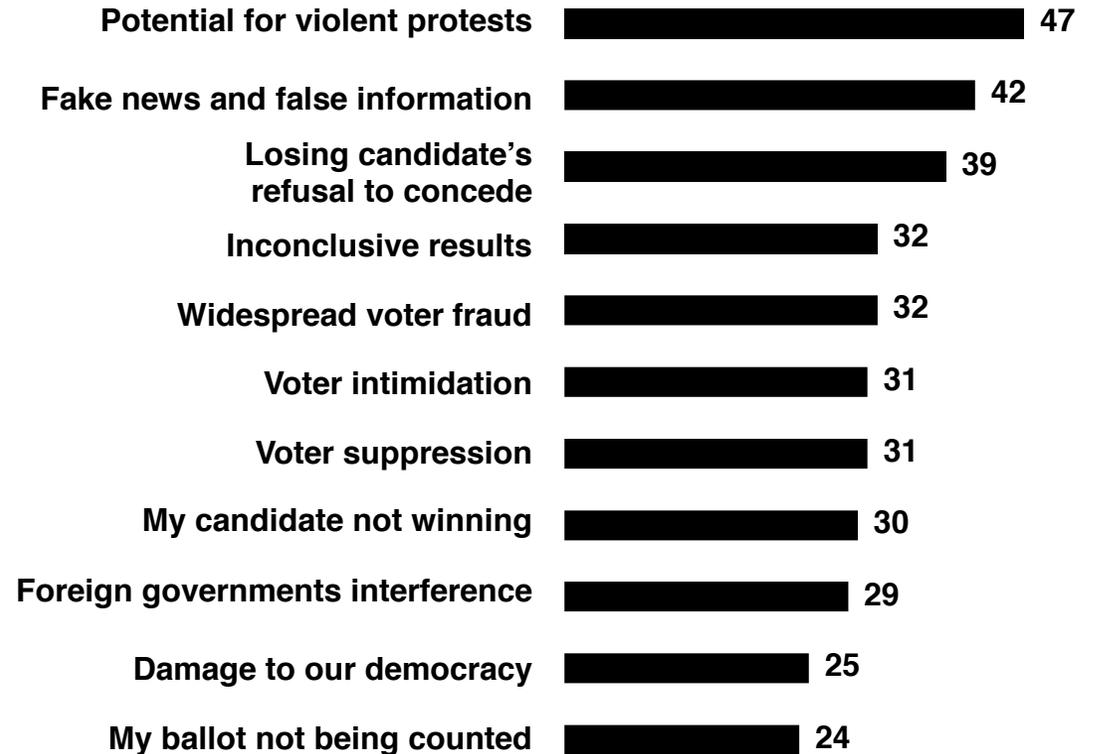
U.S. general population

Extremely worried
Worried

67%



Percent who say each is most concerning about the election



SHARED CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE AND FAIRNESS OF THE PROCESS

Percent who say each is most concerning about the election

Partisan concerns about the fairness of the voting process

	Biden voter concerns	Trump voter concerns
Potential for violent protests	49	49
Fake news and false information	41	45
Losing candidate's refusal to concede	52	25
Inconclusive results	33	32
Widespread voter fraud	22	48
Voter intimidation	39	21
Voter suppression	40	18
My candidate not winning	33	31
Foreign governments interference	40	17
Damage to our democracy	29	21
My ballot not being counted	24	28

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and the U.S. Election. CRISES. What in particular is worrying you the most about the 2020 United States Presidential election? Select all that apply. Question asked of those who are worried that the 2020 United States presidential election will not go smoothly (CONCERN/2-7). U.S. general population, among respondents voting for or intending to vote for Biden or Trump.

IF OUTCOME IS UNCLEAR OR CONTESTED, MY EMPLOYER MUST BE READY TO RESPOND

Percent who say

If the U.S. presidential election outcome is delayed or contested, I want my employer to respond

72%

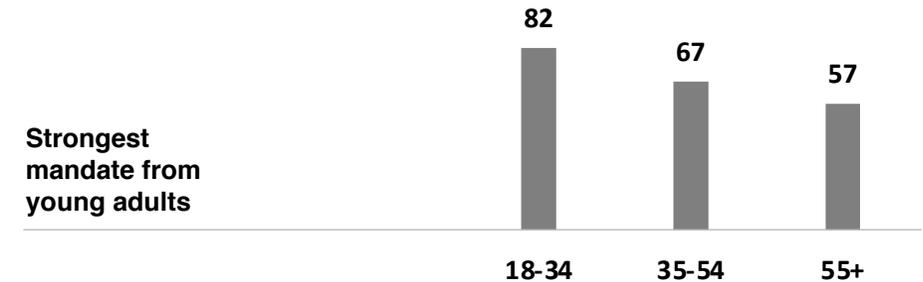
U.S. large company employees

2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and the U.S. Election. EMP_ACT_DELAY. Which of the following would you expect your employer to do if there is a significant delay in declaring a winner in the Presidential election? EMP_ACT_CON. Which of the following would you expect your employer to do if there is a contested outcome to the Presidential election and one of the candidates refuses to accept the results and concede? Questions asked of those who are an employee (Q43/1). Select all that apply. U.S. general population, among employees of large companies (Q27/1-3) who are voting for or intending to vote for Biden or Trump, and by age and region. Data is an average of both question's net of attributes 1-10.

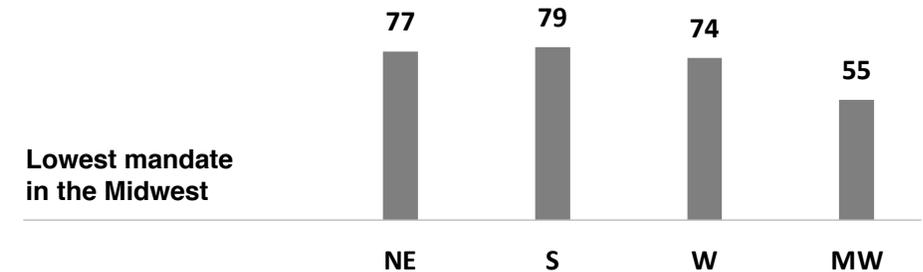
Voting for...



Age

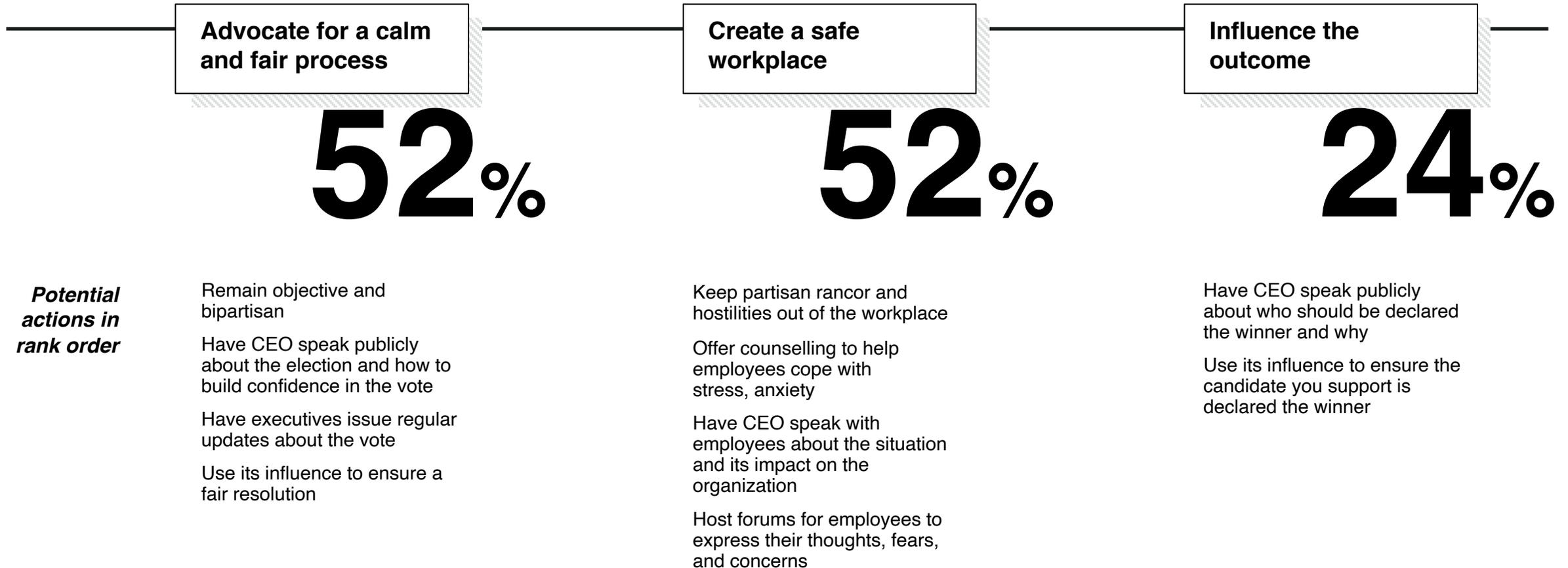


Region



CREATE A CALM, SAFE, NON-PARTISAN WORKPLACE

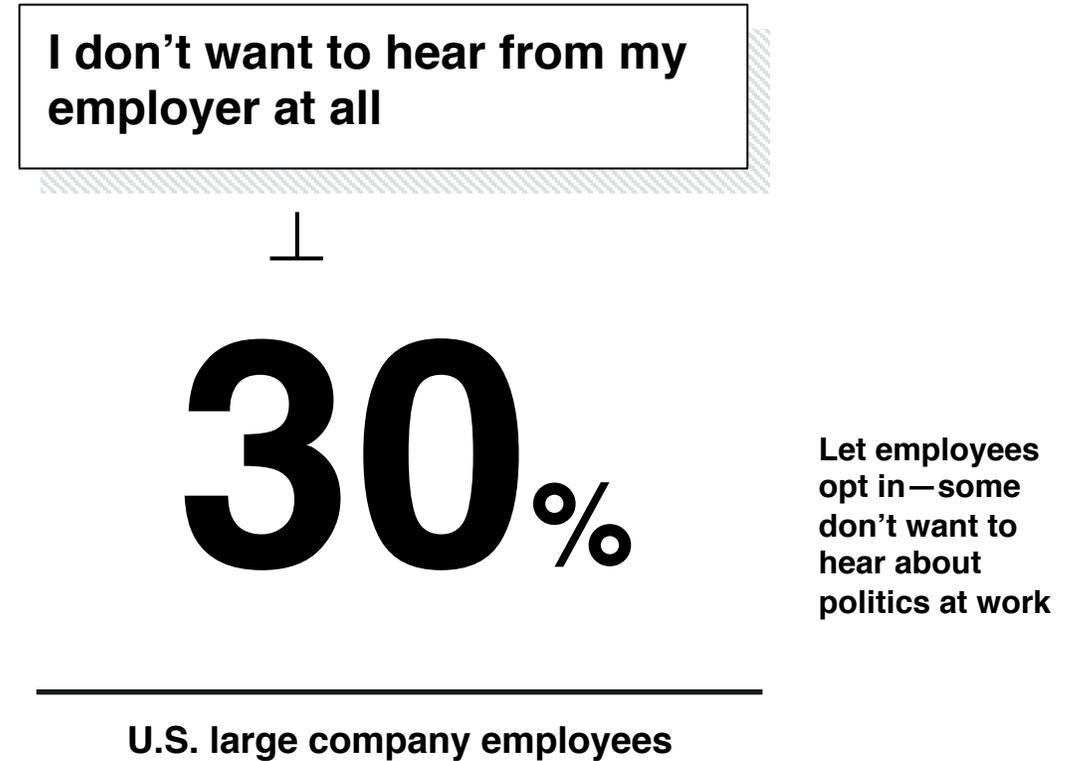
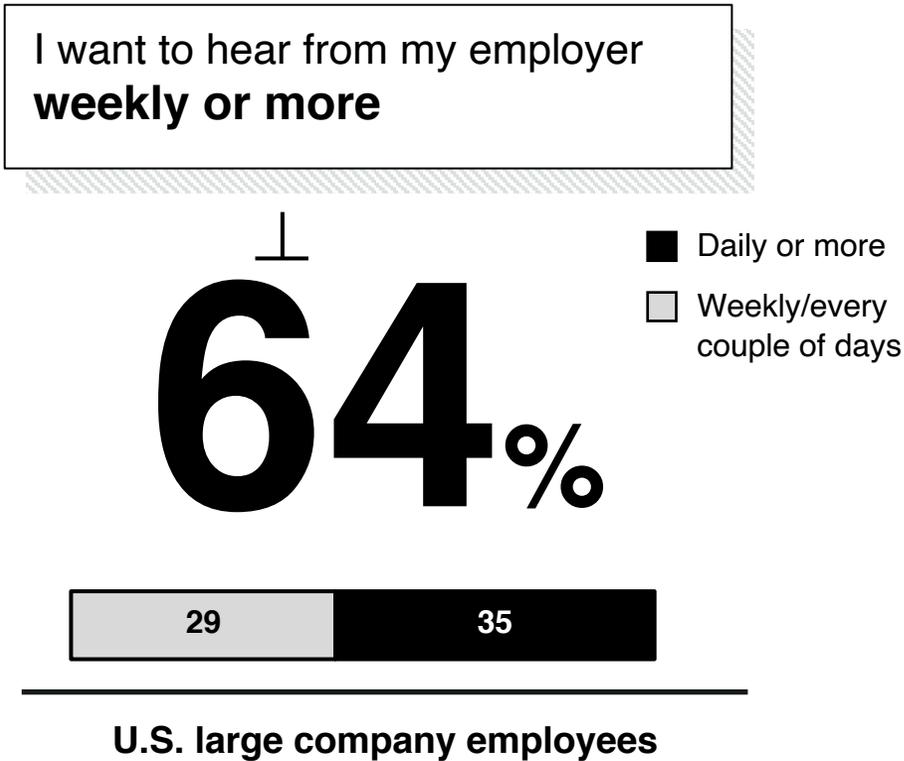
Among large company employees, net percent who expect each type of response from their employer in the case of a delayed outcome or a contested election



2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and the U.S. Election. EMP_ACT_DELAY. Which of the following would you expect your employer to do if there is a significant delay in declaring a winner in the Presidential election? EMP_ACT_CON. Which of the following would you expect your employer to do if there is a contested outcome to the Presidential election and one of the candidates refuses to accept the results and concede? Questions asked of those who are an employee (Q43/1). Select all that apply. U.S. general population, among employees of large companies (Q27/1-3). Data is an average of both questions. "Advocate for a calm and fair process" is a net of attributes 4, 5, 7, and 9; "Create a safe workplace" is a net of attributes 1, 2, 3, and 8; "Influence the outcome" is a net of attributes 6 and 10.

BE A TRUSTED SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE ELECTION AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR EMPLOYEES

If the election does not go smoothly, percent who say they want to be updated by their employer regarding what is happening and what it means for both the organization and the country

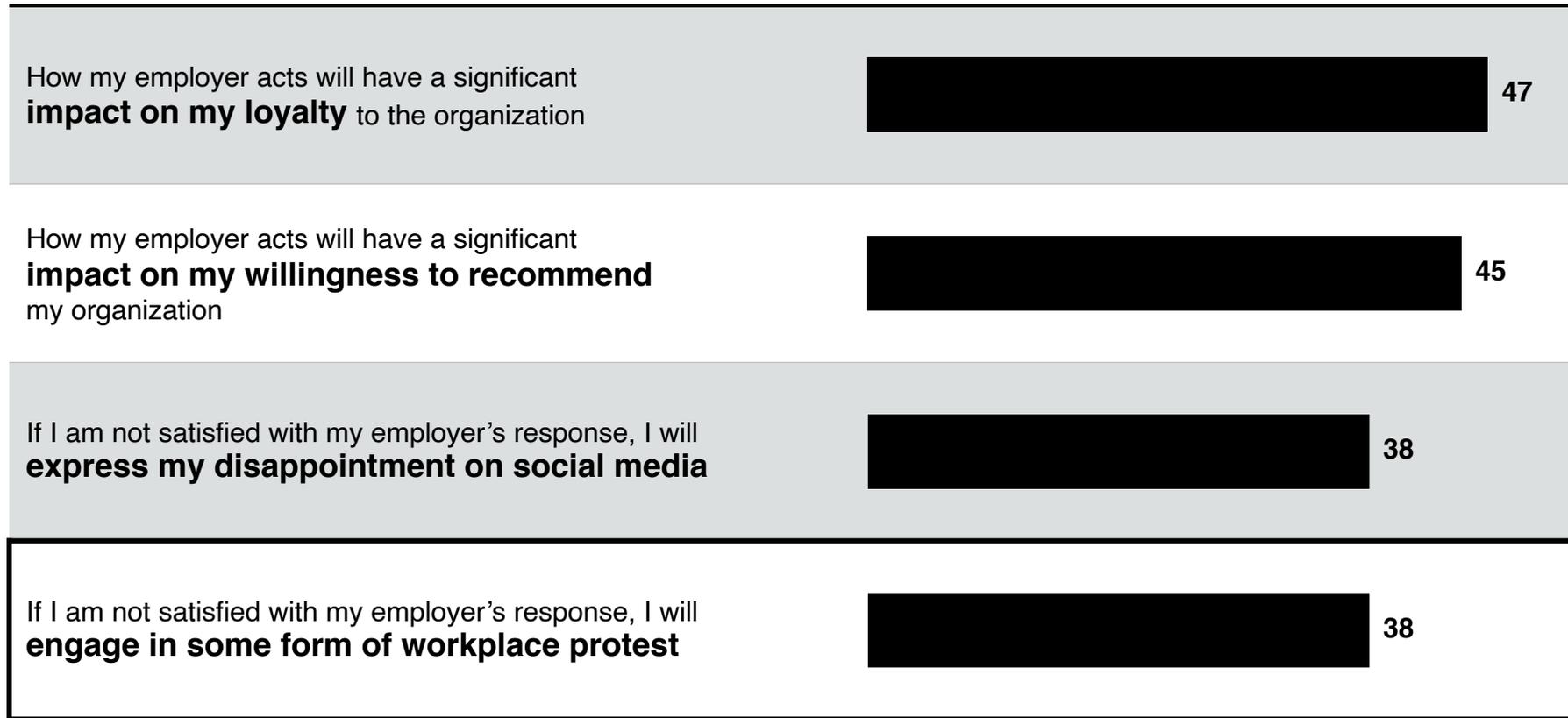


2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and the U.S. Election. EMP_COM_FRQ. If the 2020 Presidential election does NOT go smoothly for some reason, how often would you like to be updated by your employer regarding what is happening and what it means for both the organization and the country? 6-point scale; daily, codes 1-2; weekly/every couple of days, codes 3-4; not at all, code 6. Question asked of those who are an employee (Q43/1). U.S. general population, among employees of large companies (Q27/1-3).

EMPLOYEES WILL REWARD OR PROTEST THEIR EMPLOYERS' RESPONSE TO AN UNCERTAIN ELECTION

Among large company employees, percent who agree

If the election outcome is contested or inconclusive...



Significant potential for employee activism

EMPLOYEES AND CONSUMERS AGREE: LIMITED PERMISSION TO WEIGH IN PUBLICLY

Which do you agree with more?

My employer will be at a **greater risk of alienating its employees if it....**

issues a public statement
regarding a contested or inconclusive election

OR

remains silent
in response to a contested or inconclusive election

U.S. large company employees

61%

39%

If the **election outcome is delayed or contested,**

Companies should **stay silent**, do nothing, and **just let the process run its course**

OR

Companies should **publicly weigh in** and **push for a speedy and fair resolution** to the uncertainty and disputed issues

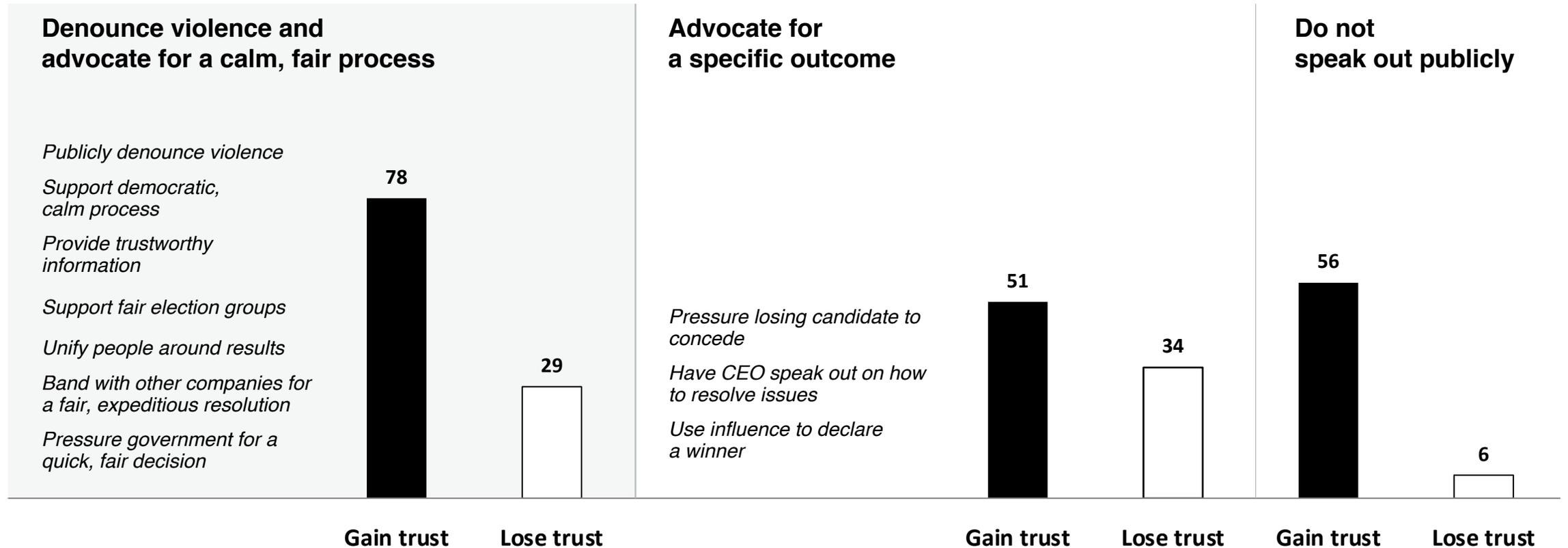
U.S. general population

67%

33%

GREATEST TRUST UPSIDE IN DENOUNCING VIOLENCE AND CALLING FOR FAIR PROCESS

Net percent who say each type of company action in response to an unclear election would result in a trust gain or trust loss, and potential actions in rank order



2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and the U.S. Election. TRUST_EXP. In general, how important would it be to earning or keeping your trust that companies do each of the following if the presidential election does NOT produce an undisputed winner on or shortly after election day? 6-point scale; top 3 box, important to earning or keeping my trust; bottom 1 box, lose trust. U.S. general population. “Denounce violence and advocate for a calm, fair process” is a net of attributes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10; “Advocate for a specific outcome” is a net of attributes 1, 2, and 8.

HOW TO EARN AND PROTECT TRUST DURING AN UNCERTAIN ELECTION

1

Ground your strategy at the intersection of your mission, values and employee expectations.

Done well, this is an opportunity to connect at a deeper level with your employees and make them advocates for the organization.

2

Make the workplace a calm, non-partisan safe place. Provide employees with opt-in information about the election's implications for the organization and the country.

Know that some will want to keep politics out of the workplace entirely.

3

If you make public statements, take efforts to avoid partisan pitfalls – both in what you say and how you say it.

Keep public statements focused on denouncing violence and calls for a fair process, not a certain outcome.