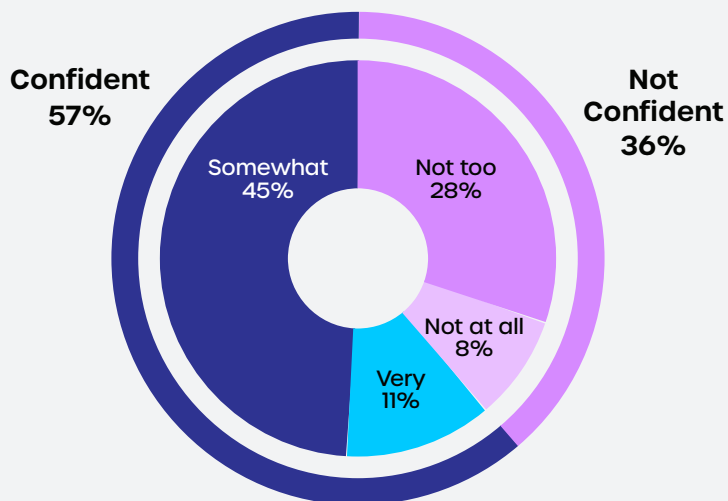


# PULSE ON AMERICA

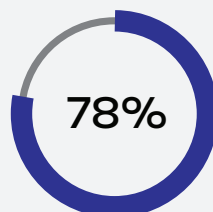
## Public and Employee Opinions on Business and Societal Issues

Large majorities of consumers expect engagement on social issues – even controversial ones – and employees are most satisfied at companies where leaders take strong public stands.

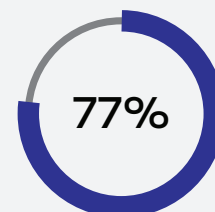
Nearly 6 in 10 are confident that businesses are playing a positive role in addressing societal challenges – 36% are not confident.



Americans are highly concerned about division on political and social issues.

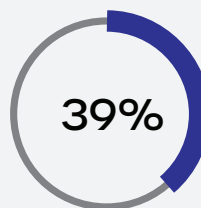


are concerned about division on social issues

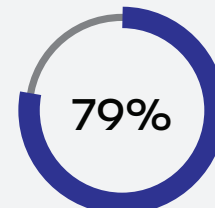


are concerned about division on political issues

Most continue to see the nation's tone as uncivil. Most employees, however, see workplaces as a haven of civility.



of consumers agree that the general tone in our country is civil and respectful— 58% disagree



of employees agree that the general tone in their place of work is civil and respectful— 19% disagree

# Americans' Demands of Corporate Leaders

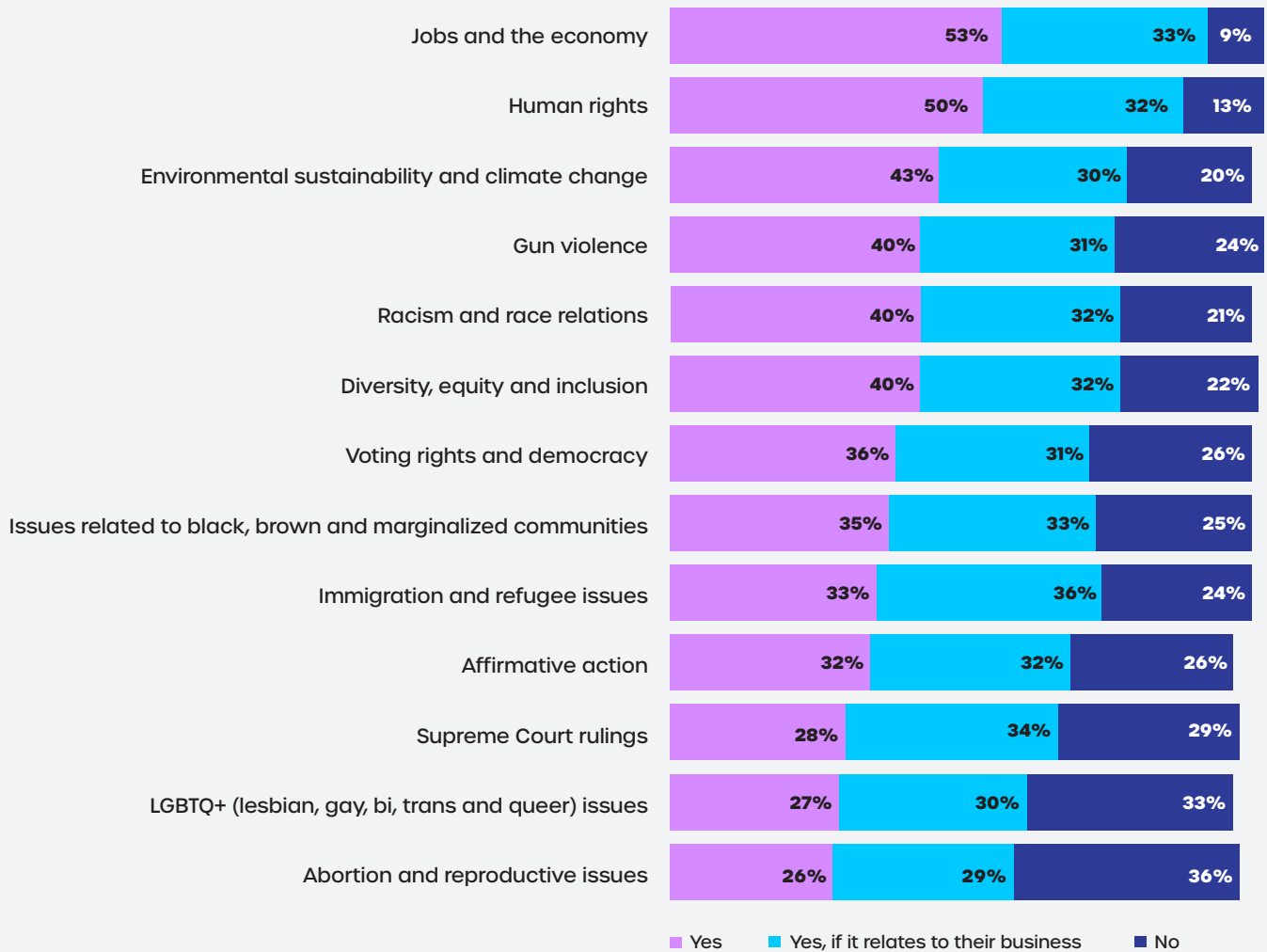
Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, Powell Tate and United Minds surveyed Americans on corporate social engagement, divided attitudes around the term “woke” and recent Supreme Court rulings on affirmative action and LGBTQ+ issues. Major findings include:

- Most consumers expect companies to take public positions on critical social issues: human rights (82 percent), climate change (73 percent), racism (72 percent) and gun violence (70 percent)
- 84 percent of employees are satisfied with their job at companies where leaders speak up about critical events and issues
- 65 percent of employees say companies have a responsibility to speak up even if the issue is sensitive or controversial – up 7 percentage points since December 2022
- 55 percent of consumers said they had taken an action to oppose or support a company based on that company’s positions or actions
- 52 percent see the Supreme Court affirmative action decision as a step toward ending racial bias in education
- 31 percent said their company being described as “woke” made them feel proud; 27 percent said they were fearful their company would be the target of aggression if perceived as woke

Consumers overwhelmingly expect companies to take public positions on critical social issues. They also want companies to continue acting on commitments to employees and communities, including advancing financial and health equity and recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

### Should companies take public positions on the following issues?

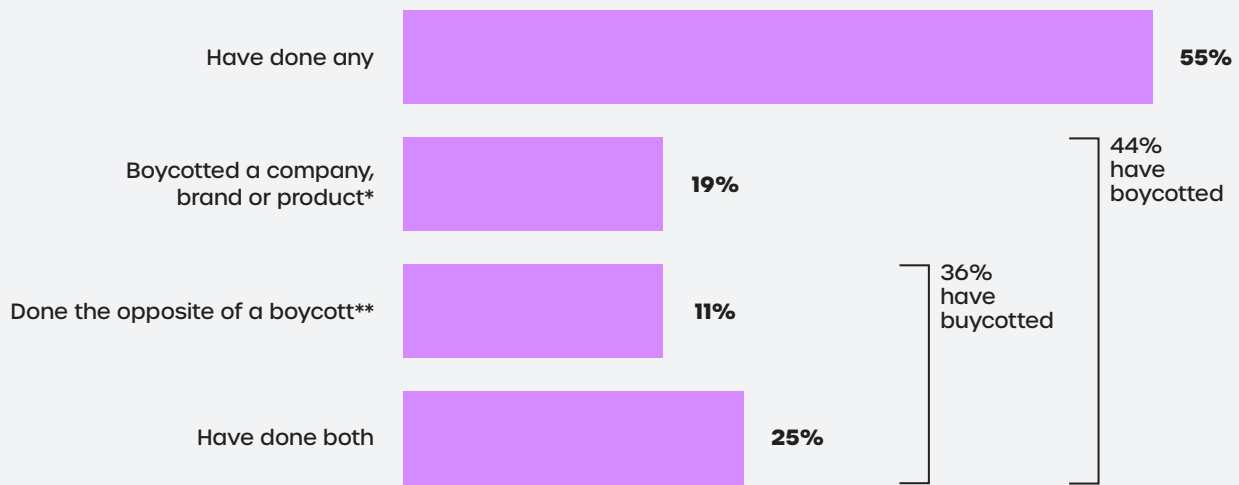
(Among U.S. adults)



When companies do not sufficiently demonstrate their values in the public square, consumers respond sharply: more than half (55%) said they had taken an action to oppose or support a company based on their positions or actions. 44% have boycotted a company to express protest and 36% have “buycotted,” demonstrating support by intentionally buying its products or services.

**Consumers: Have you boycotted and/or supported a company as an expression of protest or support for company positions or actions?**

(Among U.S. adults)

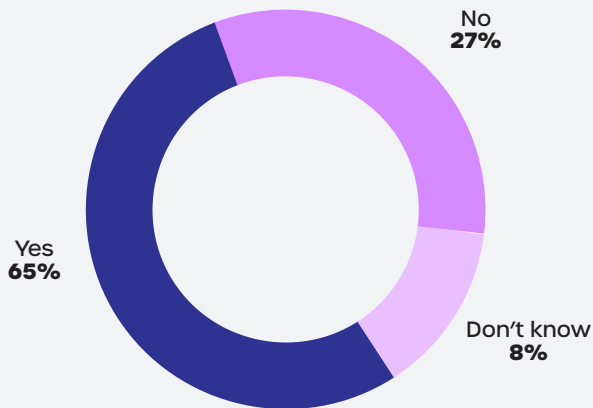


\*voluntarily stopped using, buying or dealing with a product, brand or company as an expression of protest against their actions or positions

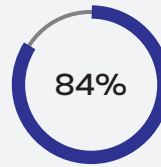
\*\*showed support for a company's actions or positions by intentionally buying its brands, products or services as a way to express your support

Business leaders are increasingly challenged on decisions related to social issues and public policy amid accusations of “woke capitalism” and “anti-ESG” rhetoric. Still, the survey’s findings show that the public – particularly young consumers and employees – want steadfast corporate leadership and advocacy.

**Employees: Do companies have a responsibility to speak up about issues that are important to society, even if the issue is sensitive or controversial?**

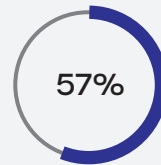


**Job satisfaction is higher in companies where company leadership speaks up about critical events and societal issues.**



of employees at companies where **leaders speak up** about critical events and issues **are satisfied with their job**

**Compared to**



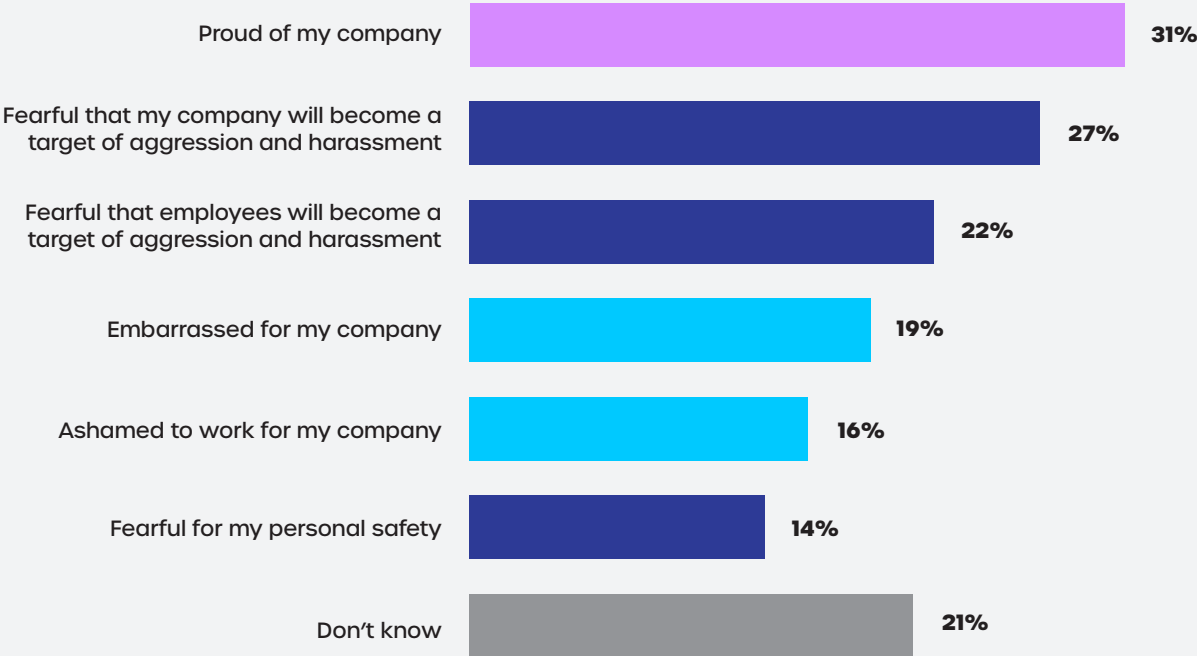
of employees in companies where **leaders do not speak up** about critical events and issues **are satisfied with their job**

Few consumers see the general tone in our country as civil and respectful. But with most employees back in workplaces, a strong majority of employees - 79 percent - report the general tone in their place of work is civil and respectful, and 73 percent are confident their employer is playing a positive role in addressing societal issues.

Over a quarter of employees (27 percent) report having heard their current organization described as “woke.”

### How it makes employees feel

(Among Employees)

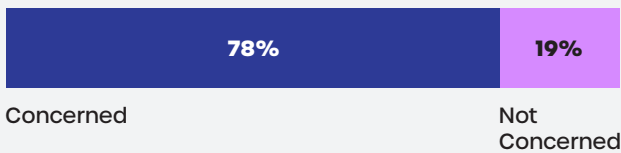


Most respondents said they agree with recent Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action, religious beliefs and redistricting. Indeed, 52 percent see the affirmative action decision as a step toward ending racial bias in education. Democrats and the Black community are divided on that point; about 60 percent of Republicans agreed with it. About 70 percent of employees said that the ruling will have a positive effect or no impact on their workplace.

### How concerned are you about misinformation and discrimination in...

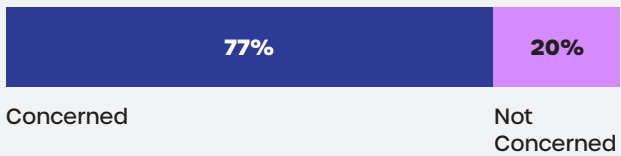
#### Social media

(Among U.S. adults)

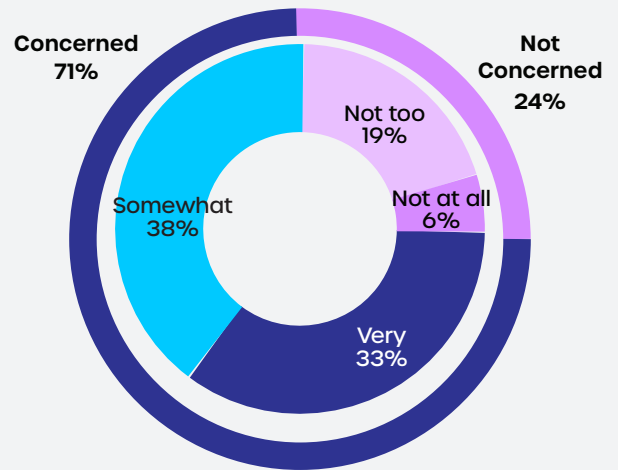


#### Traditional media

(Among U.S. adults)



### How concerned are you about how artificial intelligence (AI) will change society?



Few are confident that the federal government will ensure safe and secure use of AI. But 63 percent of employees say they are confident their own employer will ensure safe and secure use of AI.

## About the Survey

Weber Shandwick, KRC Research, Powell Tate and United Minds have been tracking employee and consumer perceptions to assess opinions on confidence in and expectations for businesses, through the COVID-19 pandemic, social unrest over racial injustice, the “great resignation,” evolving ways of working, and the return to the workplace. The latest national survey, the thirteenth installment since March 2020, was conducted between July 7 to 10, 2023 among a sample of 1,004 adults and 501 employees, drawn from a large national online panel. The survey is demographically representative of the U.S. adult population.



## About Weber Shandwick

Weber Shandwick is the earned-first global communications agency. Led by world-class strategic and creative thinkers and activators, Weber Shandwick has won some of the most prestigious awards in the industry, including being named to Ad Age’s A-List in 2020 and Best Places to Work in 2019. Weber Shandwick was also awarded PR Agency of the Year by Campaign US in 2021, honored as PProvoke’s Global Agency of the Decade in 2020 and ranked #1 on PProvoke’s Global Creative Index in 2021 and 2022. Additionally, the firm was named PRWeek’s Global Agency of the Year in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 and was awarded PRWeek’s Purpose Agency of the Year in 2020 and 2021. Cumulatively, the firm has earned more than 150 Lions at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity. Weber Shandwick also received Honorable Mention (and the only PR agency) on the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Global Marketing Agencies in 2021. Part of the Interpublic Group (NYSE: IPG), Weber Shandwick is the anchor agency within The Weber Shandwick Collective – the strategic communications and consulting network. For more information, visit <https://www.webershandwick.com/>.



## About KRC Research

KRC Research is a global insights-driven communications and marketing research consultancy within The Weber Shandwick Collective (TWSC). A unit of the Interpublic Group of Companies (NYSE: IPG), KRC Research offers the quality and custom service of a small firm with the reach of a global organization. Comprised of highly specialized social science research professionals, KRC has delivered research and insights to corporations, governments, not-for-profit organizations, and the communications firms that represent them for more than three decades. For more information, visit [www.krcresearch.com](http://www.krcresearch.com)



## About Powell Tate

Powell Tate is the globally-recognized, premiere, DC-based public affairs unit of The Weber Shandwick Collective. Built for change, we are nimble, data-driven and led by people who understand fast-changing politics, complex policy debates, emerging cultural trends, the role of third party stakeholders and digital transformation. We know the motivations that spark movements. The issues that matter most - privacy, environment, sustainability, automation, food safety and healthcare. In short: What to embrace. What to avoid. What you didn’t see coming. We solve complex business, policy and social issues. We mitigate risk and build reputation. We shape opinions and build support for issues that matter. For more information visit [www.powelltate.com](http://www.powelltate.com).



## About United Minds

United Minds, part of The Weber Shandwick Collective, is a global management consultancy dedicated to making business more human. Our team of 70+ management consultants, business strategists, communicators and HR professionals know how to harness the power of your people to solve your most critical business challenges as you transform. This includes culture change, employee experience, DEI, change management and leadership impact.