

# PULSE ON AMERICA

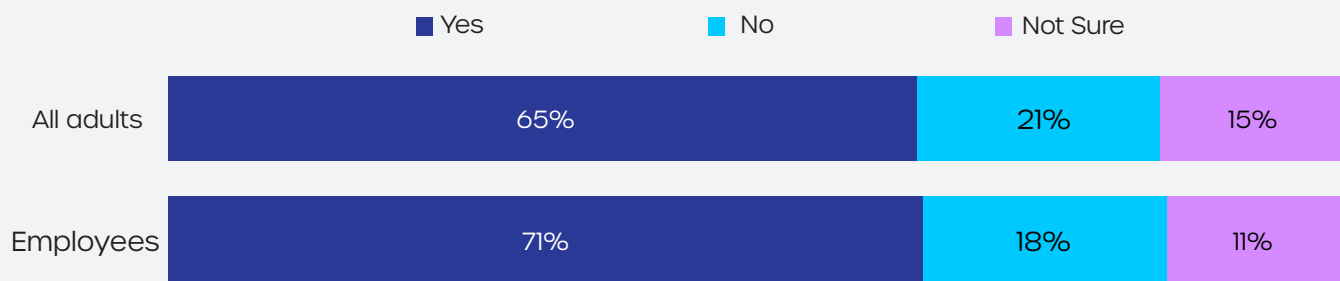
CORPORATE DEI AND ESG INITIATIVES

## Against a backdrop of anti-DEI and ESG activism, American workers continue to support corporate diversity and sustainability initiatives

A new survey from The Weber Shandwick Collective (TWSC) finds continued support from American workers for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives, despite well-documented public activism that has put Fortune 500 DEI and ESG programs under a microscope in recent months.

### Most agree: Businesses should encourage diverse, inclusive and equitable workplaces

#### Should businesses and employers encourage diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) workplaces?

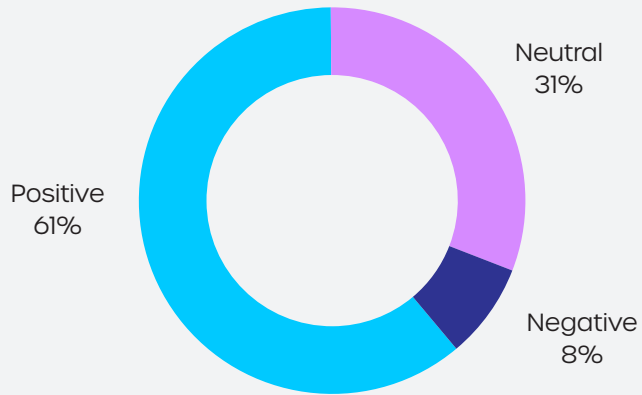


Most employees have a positive opinion of DEI efforts and activities in the workplace and many are neutral – few said they have a negative opinion.

**Is your personal opinion of each of the following in your workplace positive, neutral or negative?**

*Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts and activities (Among U.S. employees)*

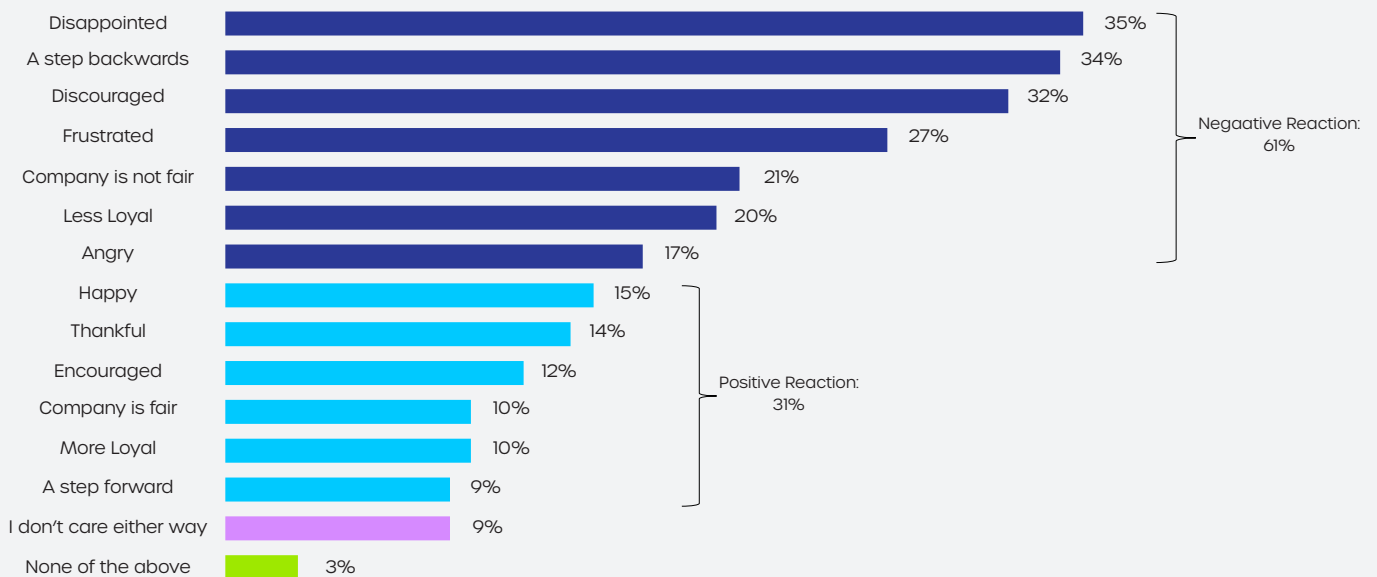
Positive Neutral Negative



Asked how they would feel if their employer cut back on DEI efforts, 61% of employees reacted negatively, saying they would feel “disappointed” and see this as “a step backwards.”

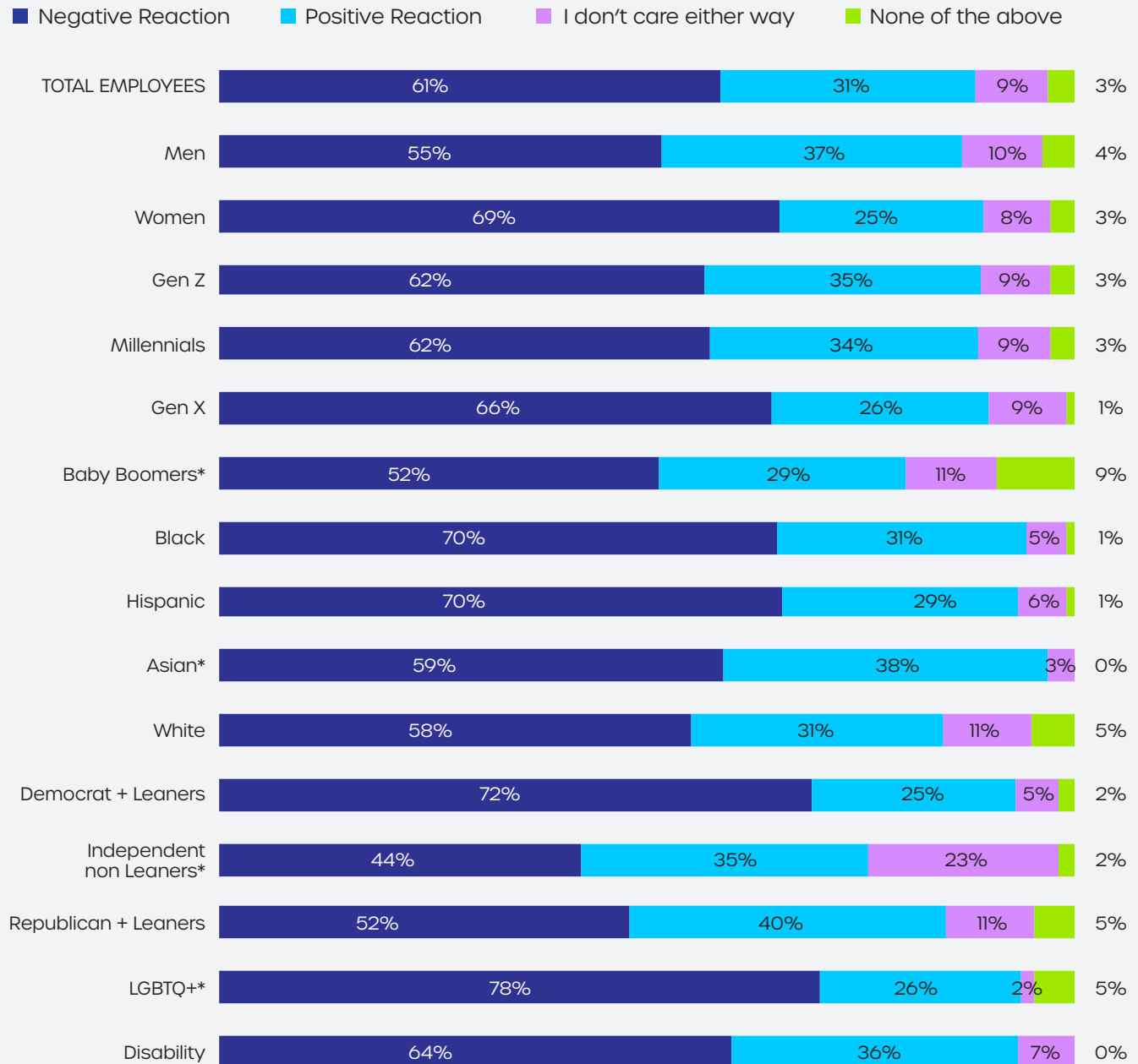
Still, consensus is not universal. On the other hand, 31% of employees said they would have a positive reaction to corporate cutbacks of DEI initiatives, saying they would feel “thankful,” “encouraged,” or that the “company is fair.”

**How would you feel if your employer cut back on or eliminated efforts to be a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace? (Among U.S. employees)**



Employees' negative reactions to cutbacks to DEI initiatives are highest among LGBTQ+ (78%), Democrats + Democratic leaners (72%), Black and Hispanic Americans (70% each), women (69%) and people with disabilities (64%). Positive reactions are concentrated among Republicans + Republican leaners (40%), Independents (35%) and men (37%).

**How would you feel if your employer cut back on or eliminated efforts to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace?** (Among U.S. employees)

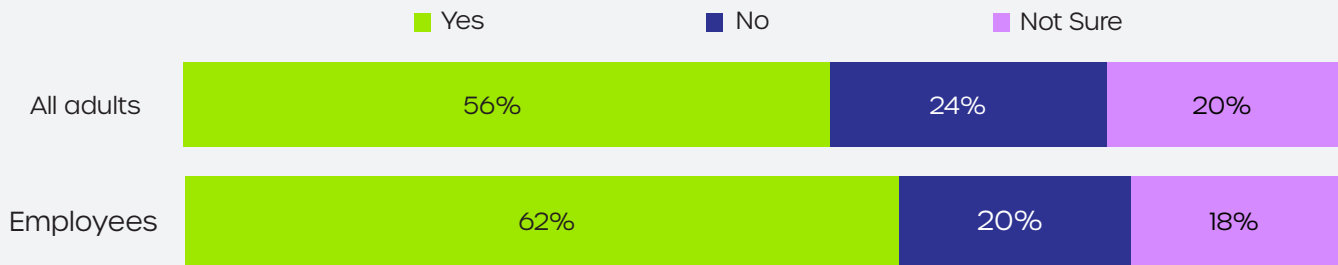


\*Denotes a small sample size (<75)

## Corporate ESG initiatives have continued support in the workplace

A majority of Americans (56%) say companies should have business goals to address ESG issues like sustainability and climate change. This opinion is highest among younger generations (Gen Z: 59%), Black individuals (58%), Democrats + Democratic leaners (62%) and LGBTQ+ individuals (68%).

### Should businesses and employers have business goals to address ESG issues like sustainability and climate change?

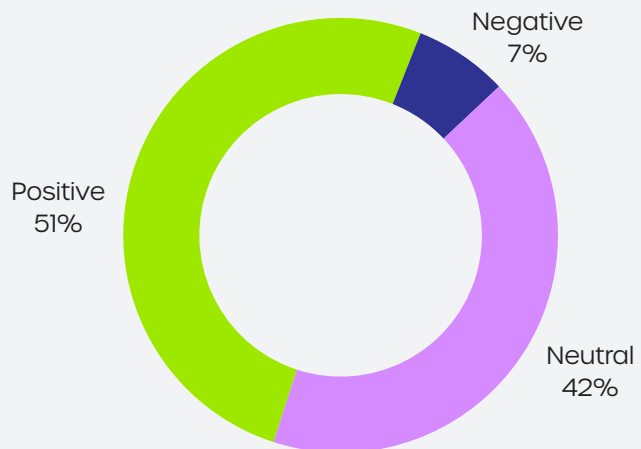


Still, a significant number of employees feel neutral (42%); few feel negative about ESG business goals (7%). Baby Boomers feel the least positive about ESG business goals (54% neutral, 15% negative).

### Is your personal opinion of each of the following in your workplace positive, neutral or negative?

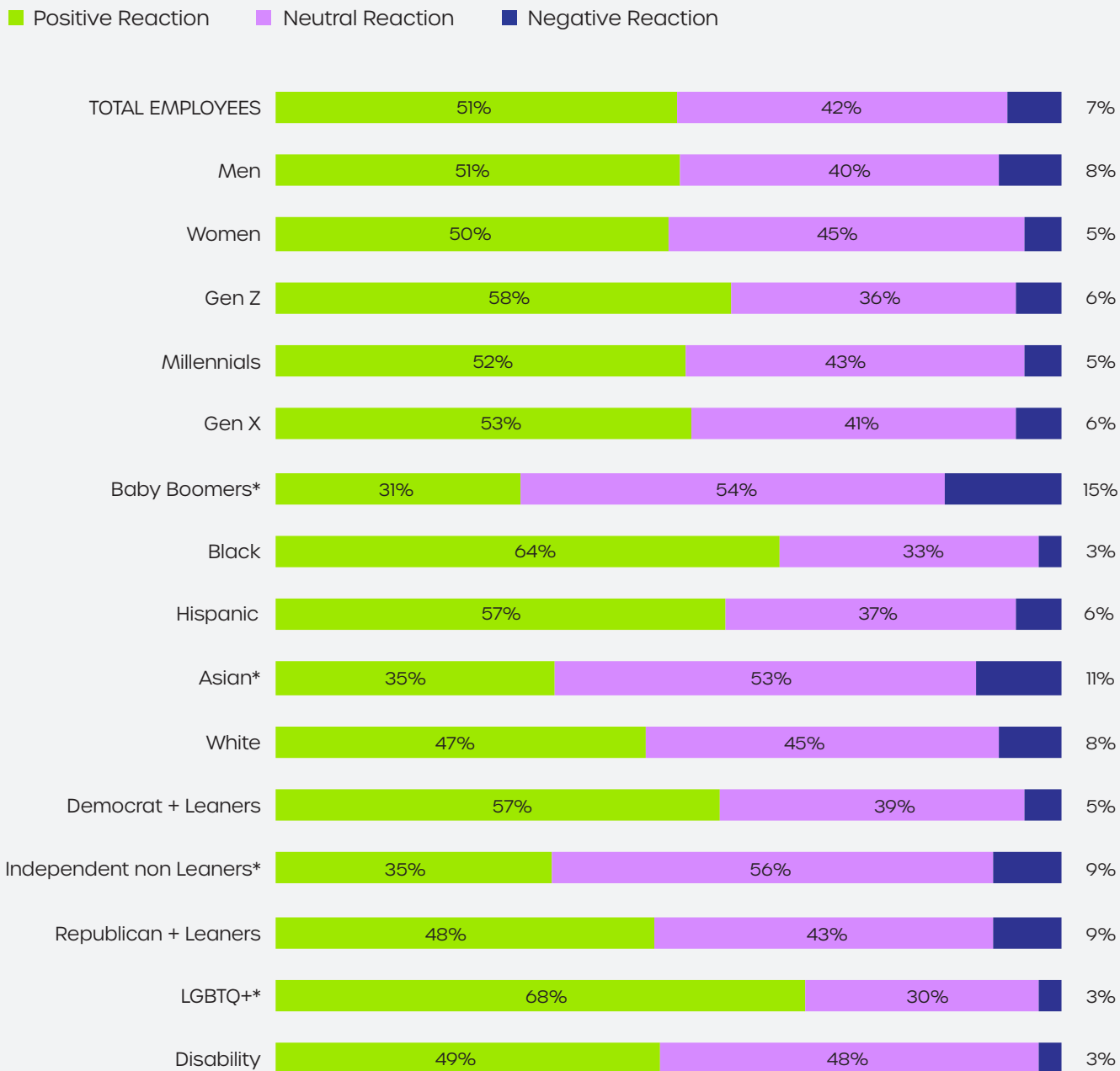
Business goals to address ESG issues like sustainability and climate change  
(Among U.S. employees)

Positive Neutral Negative



## Is your personal opinion of each of the following in your workplace positive, neutral or negative?

Business goals to address ESG issues like sustainability and climate change (Among U.S. employees)



\*Denotes a small sample size (<75)

## | Counsel to leaders

“The data point to a reality we see in our work: Despite the public battles over DEI and ESG, the business case for their underlying fundamentals – including workforce support for these initiatives – continues to be strong. Still, expectations and perceptions diverge, particularly among employees of different ages, backgrounds, political views and identities. To succeed in this environment of increased scrutiny, business leaders and their corporate affairs teams must increasingly tie these commitments back to the business and to long-term strategy.”

### Pam Jenkins

Chief Public Affairs Officer for The Weber Shandwick Collective

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Method: KRC Research, TWSC's research firm, conducted the survey among 1,015 Americans, 18 years of age and over, from September 20 to 22, 2024. The survey, conducted online, is demographically representative of the U.S. adult population. Approximately half the sample (502) are employed. The national survey is the 17th installment since March 2020.

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