



2024 Retirement Confidence Survey: Active Military and Veteran Households

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Speakers



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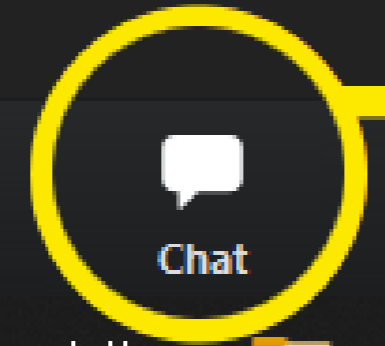
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2024 RCS Overview

34th Annual Retirement Confidence Survey (RCS)

The RCS is the longest-running survey of its kind, measuring worker and retiree confidence about retirement, and is conducted by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Greenwald Research.

The 2024 survey of 2,521 Americans was conducted online January 2 through January 31, 2024. All respondents were age 25 or older. The survey included 1,255 workers and 1,266 retirees – this year included an oversample of 721 completed surveys among military individuals (298 workers and 423 retirees).

Data were weighted by age, sex, military status, household income and race/ethnicity. Unweighted sample sizes are noted on charts to provide information for margin of error estimates. The margin of error would be ± 2.8 percentage points for workers, ± 2.8 retirees, and ± 3.7 for military respondents in a similarly-sized random sample.

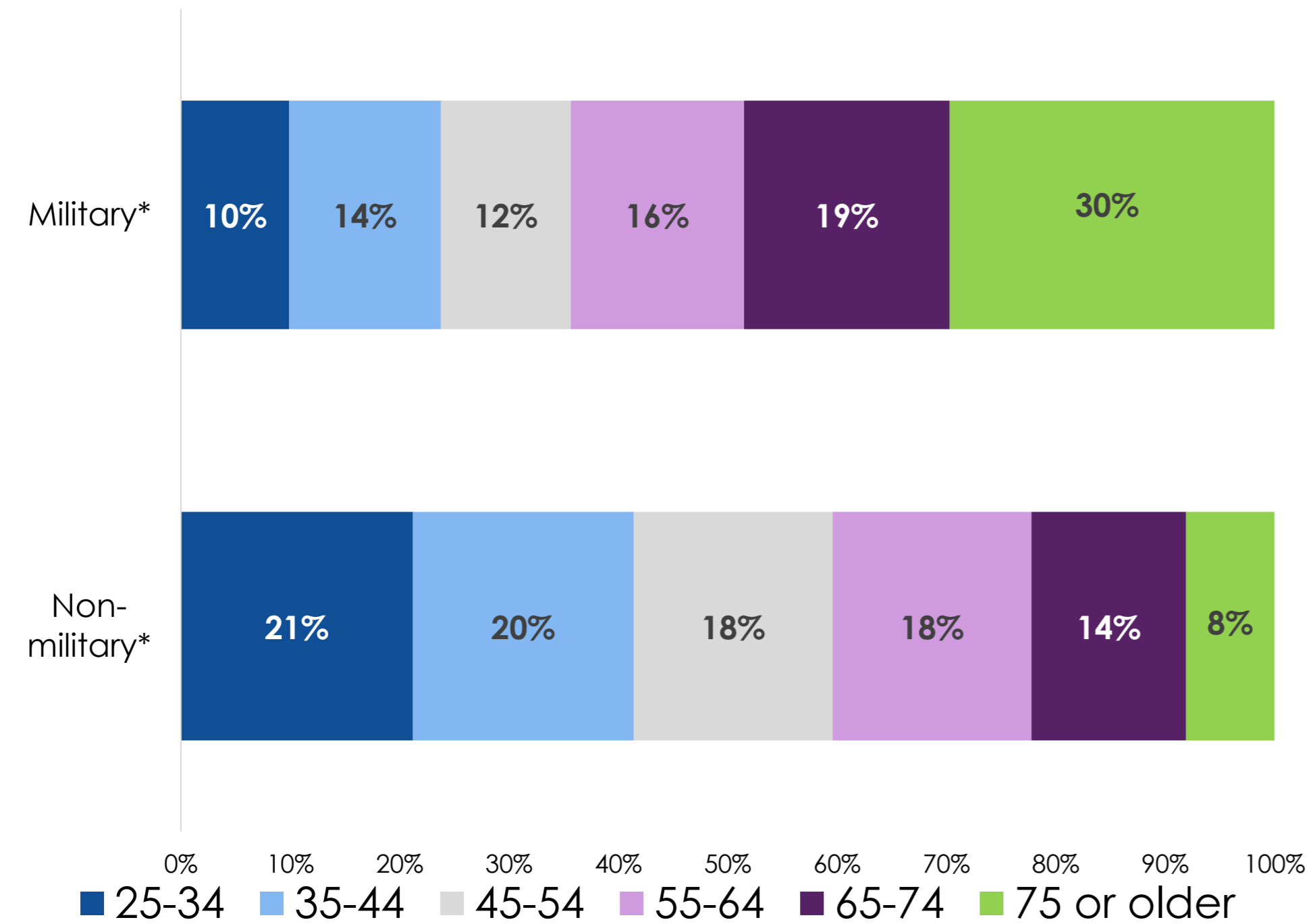
Military Households

A military household in the RCS includes households whose respondents are actively in the military or are veterans.

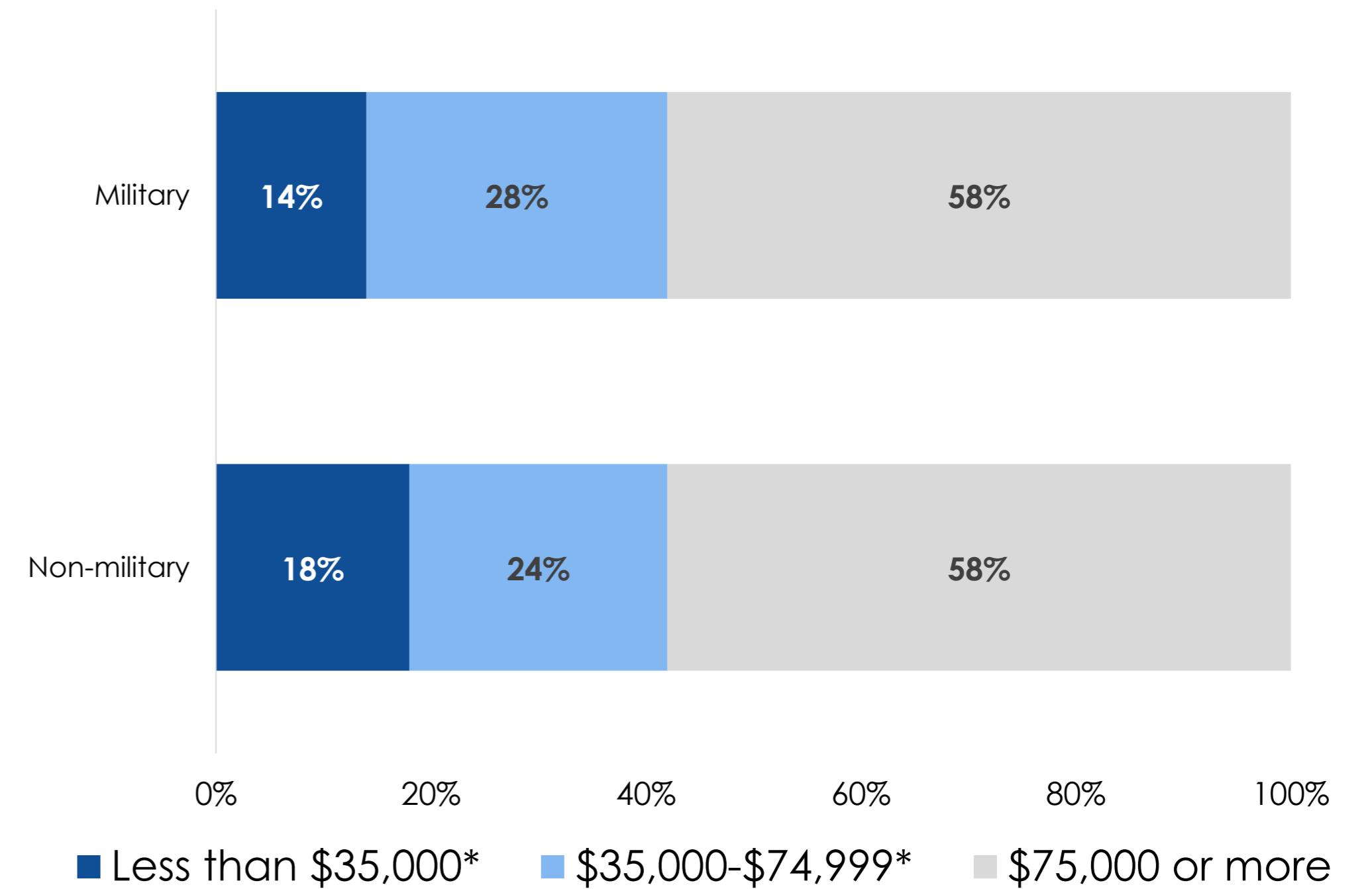
- Active military respondents include individuals who are actively serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and individuals who are currently in the National Guard or Reserve but did not serve in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Veterans consist of individuals who report having served in the U.S. Armed Forces but are no longer in them.
- If the respondent does not meet these criteria but the spouse of a respondent does, the household is also included as a military household.
- The RCS uses these definitions to replicate how the U.S. Census Bureau defines military individuals. The majority of RCS's military households are veterans (62 active and 767 veterans), which properly represents the population.

Demographic Breakdowns, by Military Status

Age

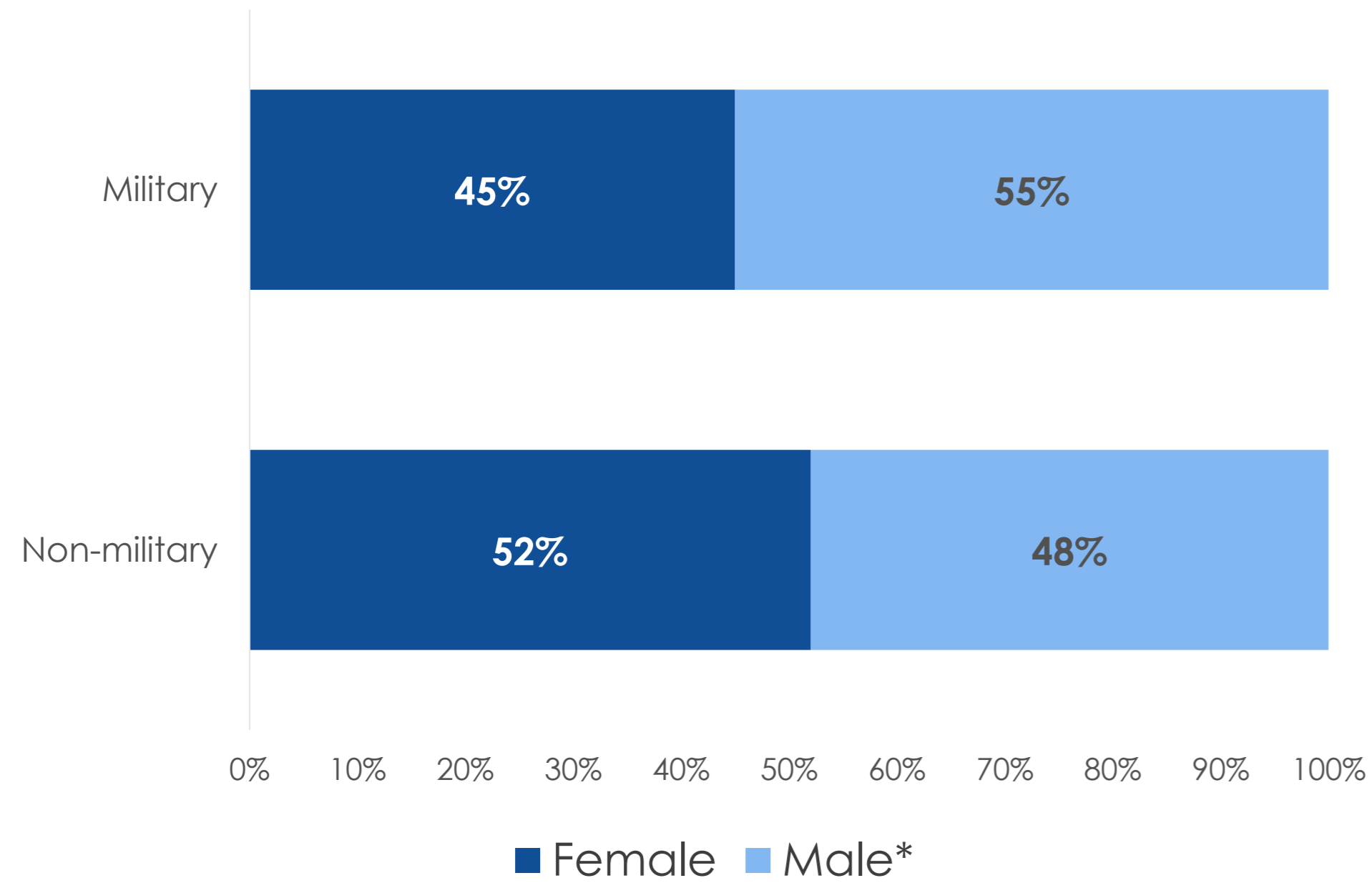


Household Income

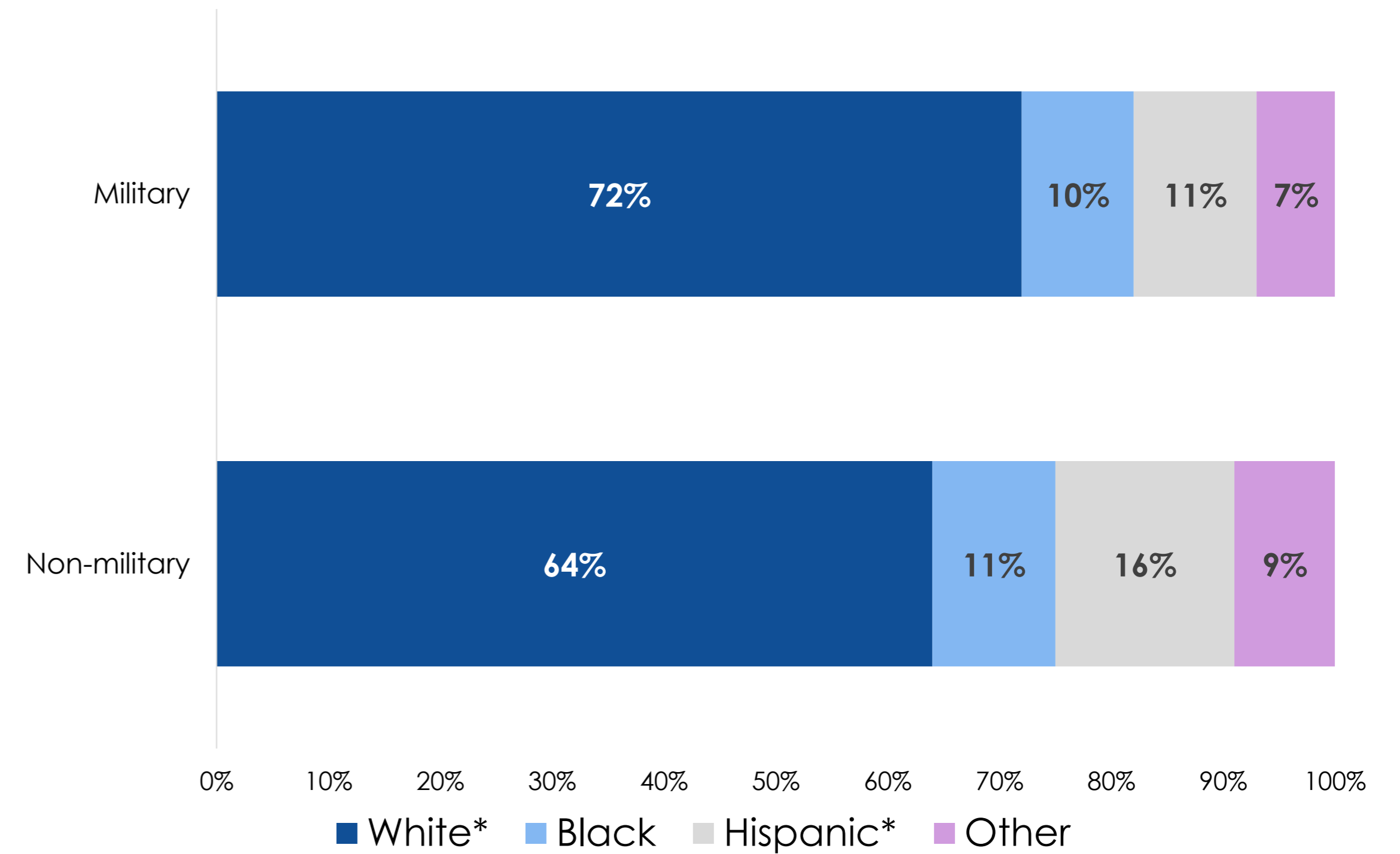


Demographic Breakdowns, by Military Status

Gender

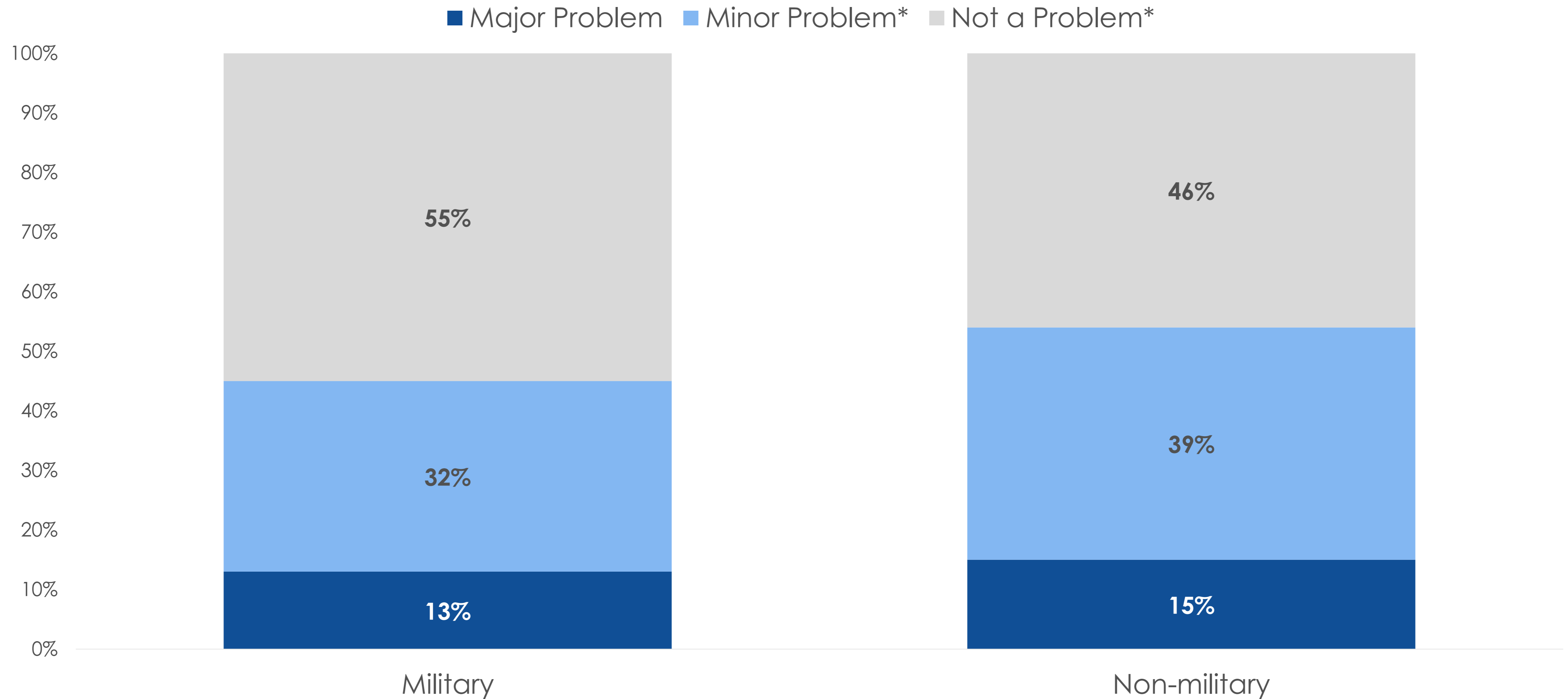


Race/Ethnicity



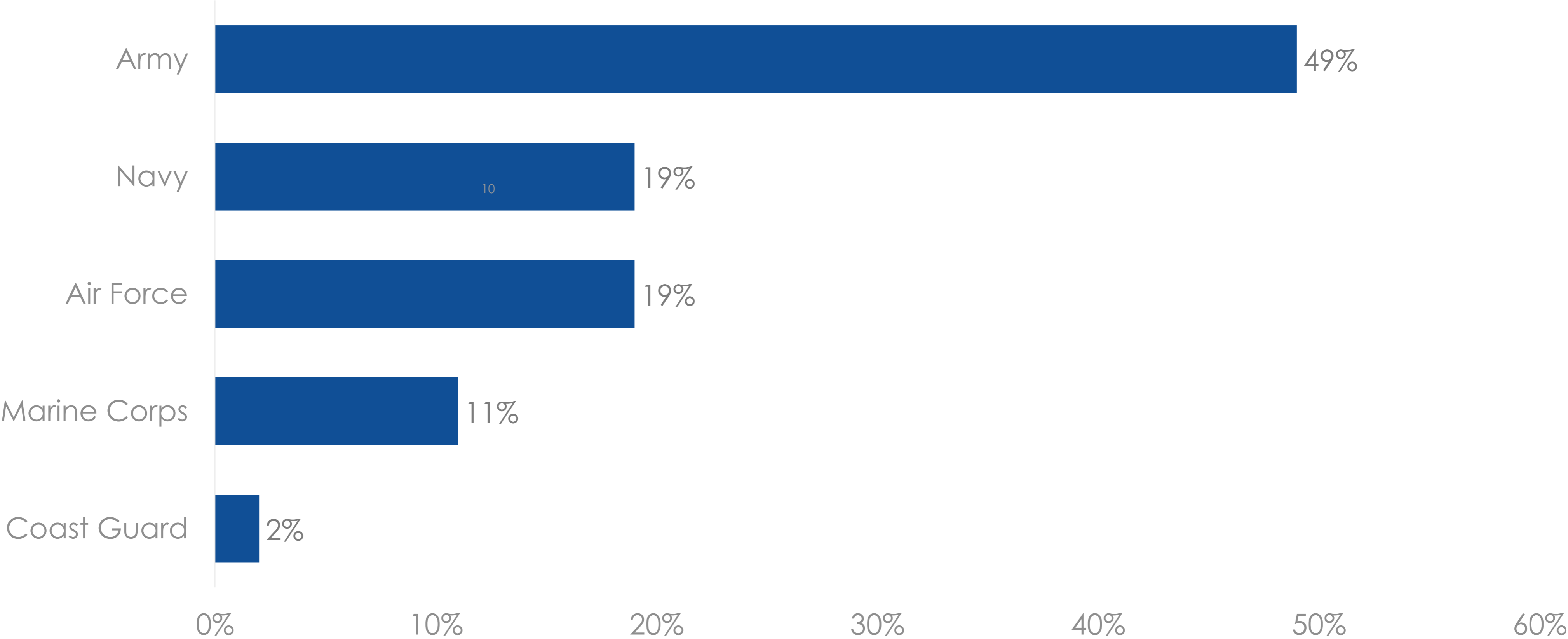
Debt Level a Problem, by Military Status

Thinking about your current financial situation, how would you describe your level of debt?
n=2,521



Distribution of Service Affiliations for the Military Households

With which service [are / were] you affiliated?
n=709



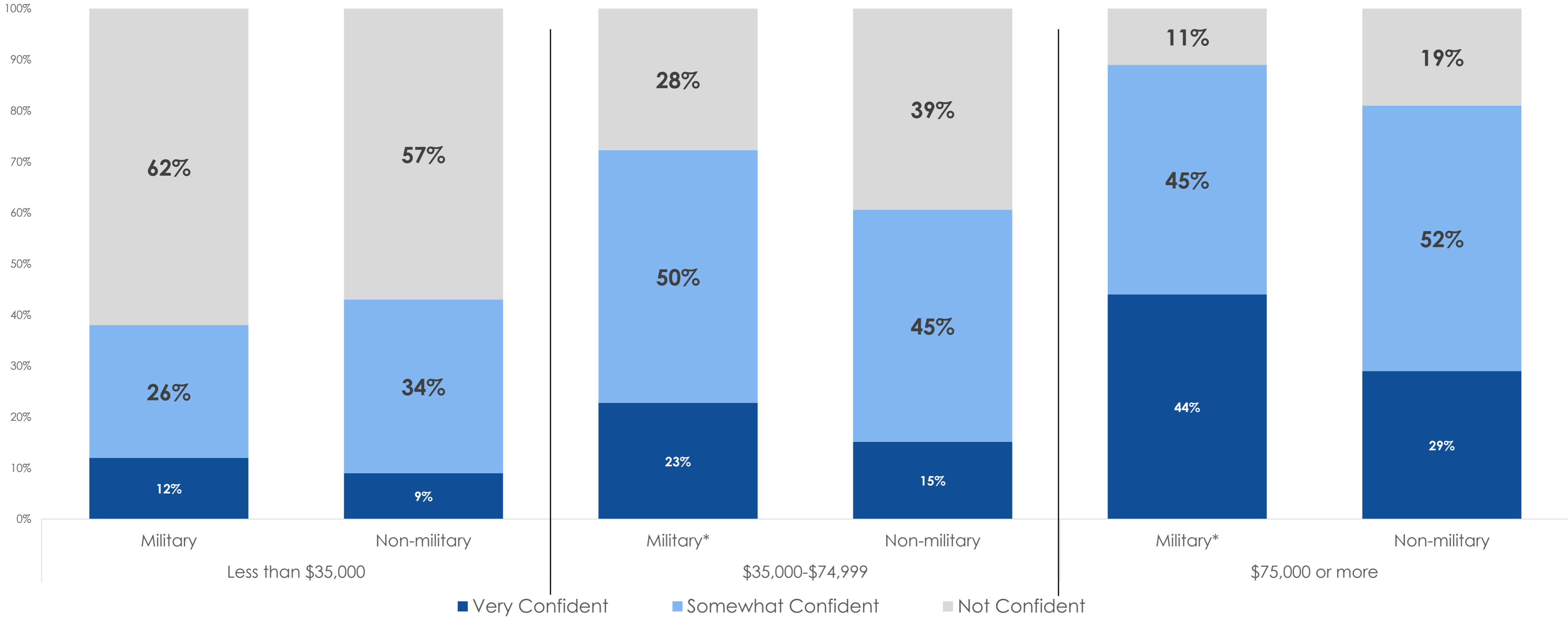
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

Retirement Confidence and Preparations

Confidence in Having Enough Money to Live Comfortably Throughout Retirement, by Military Status and Income

Overall, how confident are you that you (and your spouse) will have enough money to live comfortably throughout your retirement years?

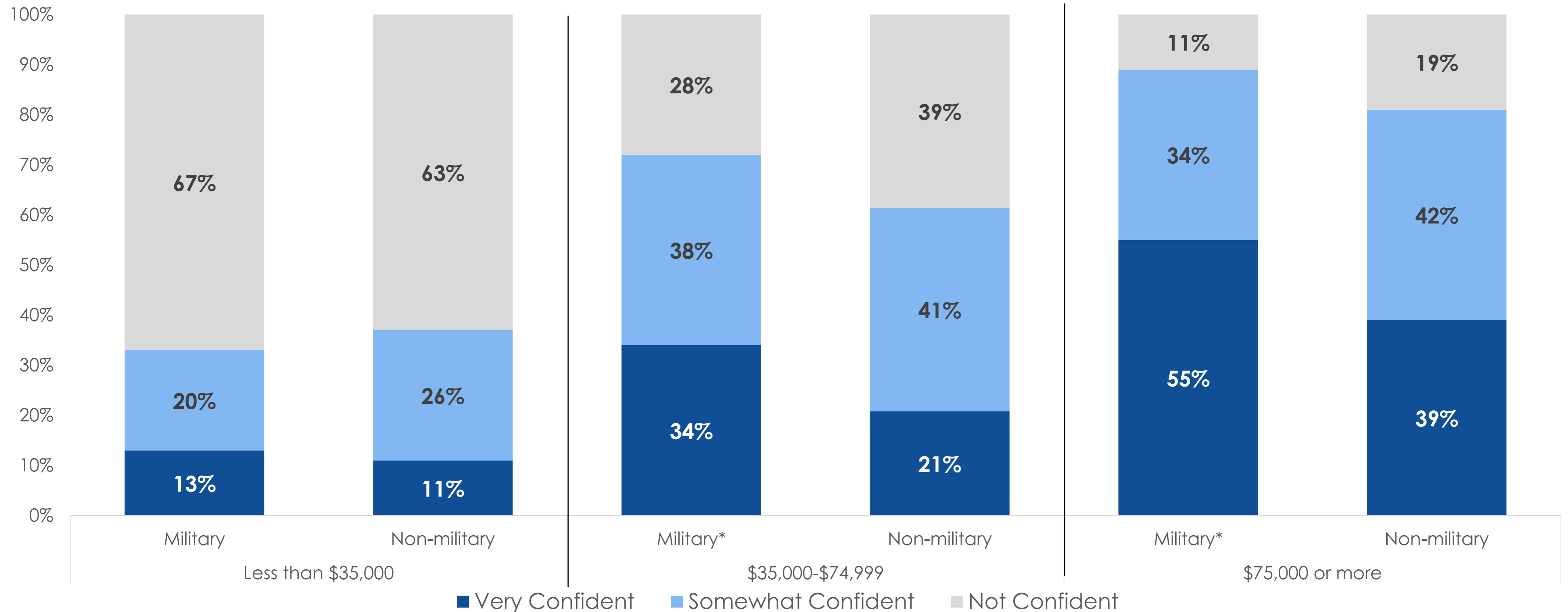
n=2,521



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

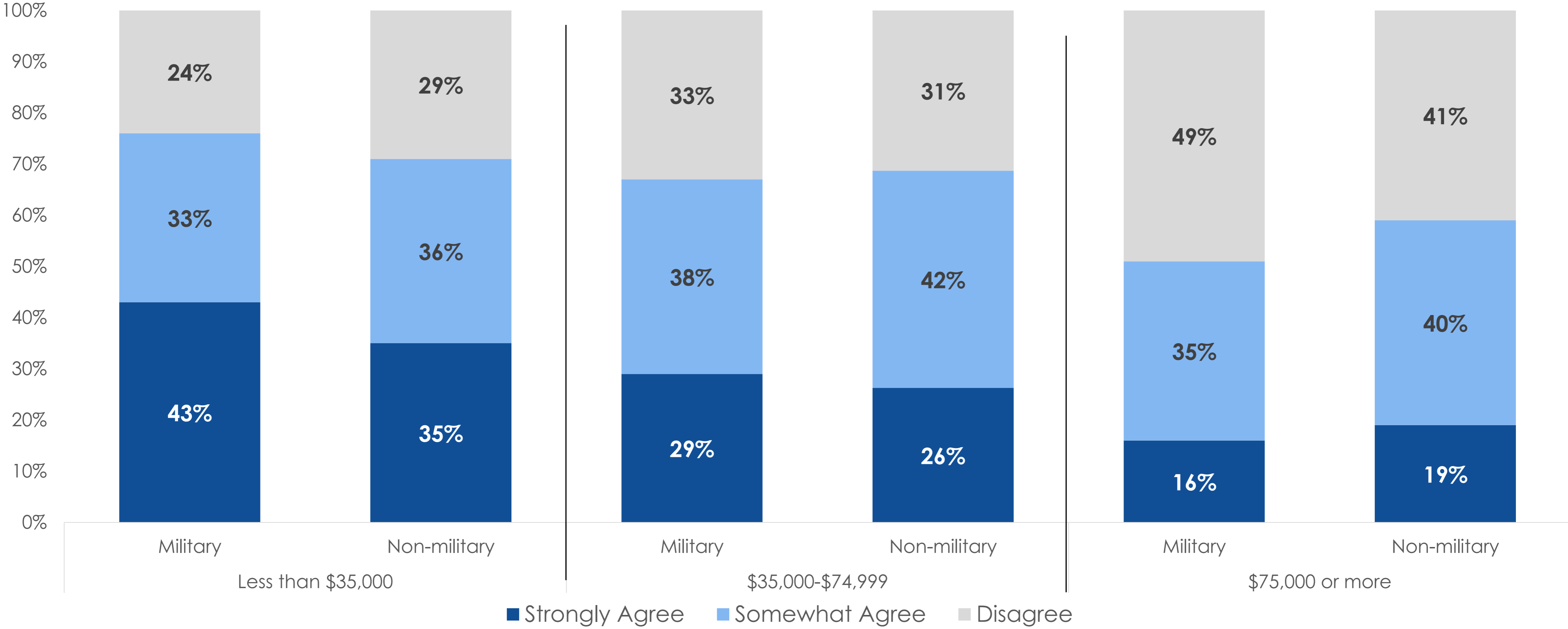
Confidence in Doing a Good Job Preparing Financially for Retirement, by Military Status and Income

How confident are you (and your spouse) about the following aspect related to retirement?
 You (are doing/did) a good job of preparing financially for your retirement
 n=2,521



Percentage of Workers Who Agree That Preparing for Retirement Makes Them Stressed, by Military Status and Income

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
 Preparing for retirement makes you feel stressed
 Workers n=1,255

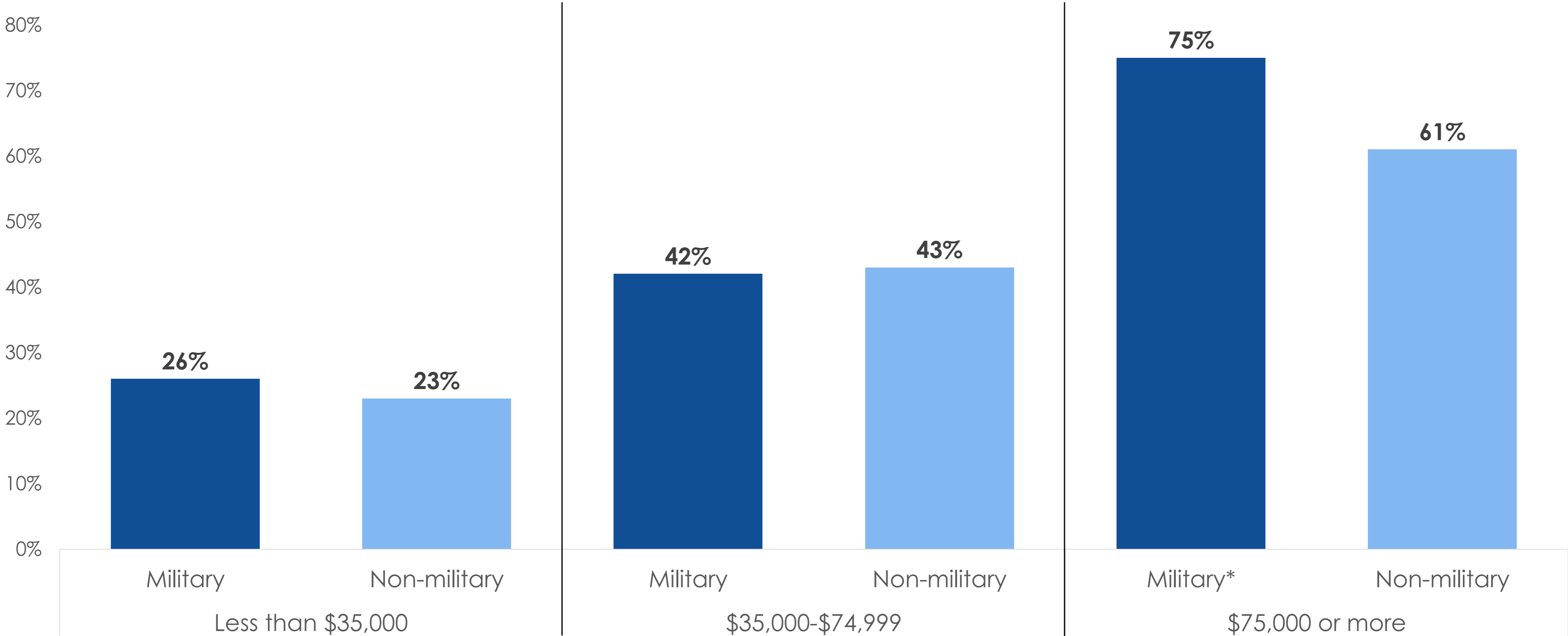


Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

Percentage of Workers and Retirees Who Calculated How Much They Need to Save for Retirement, by Military Status and Income

Have you (or your spouse) tried to figure out how much money you will need to have saved by the time you retire so that you can live comfortably in retirement? / To prepare for retirement, did you (or your spouse) try to figure out how much money you needed to have saved by the time you retired so that you could live comfortably in retirement?

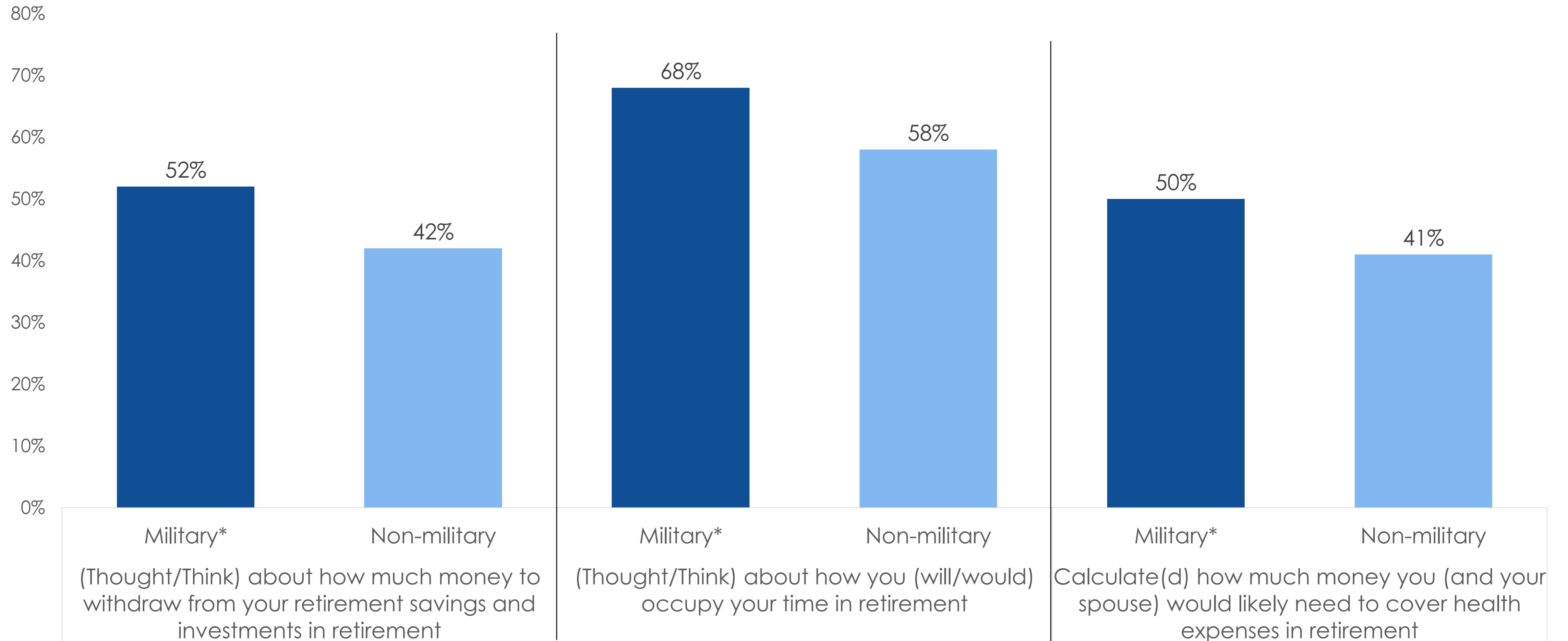
n=2,374, Percentage Yes



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

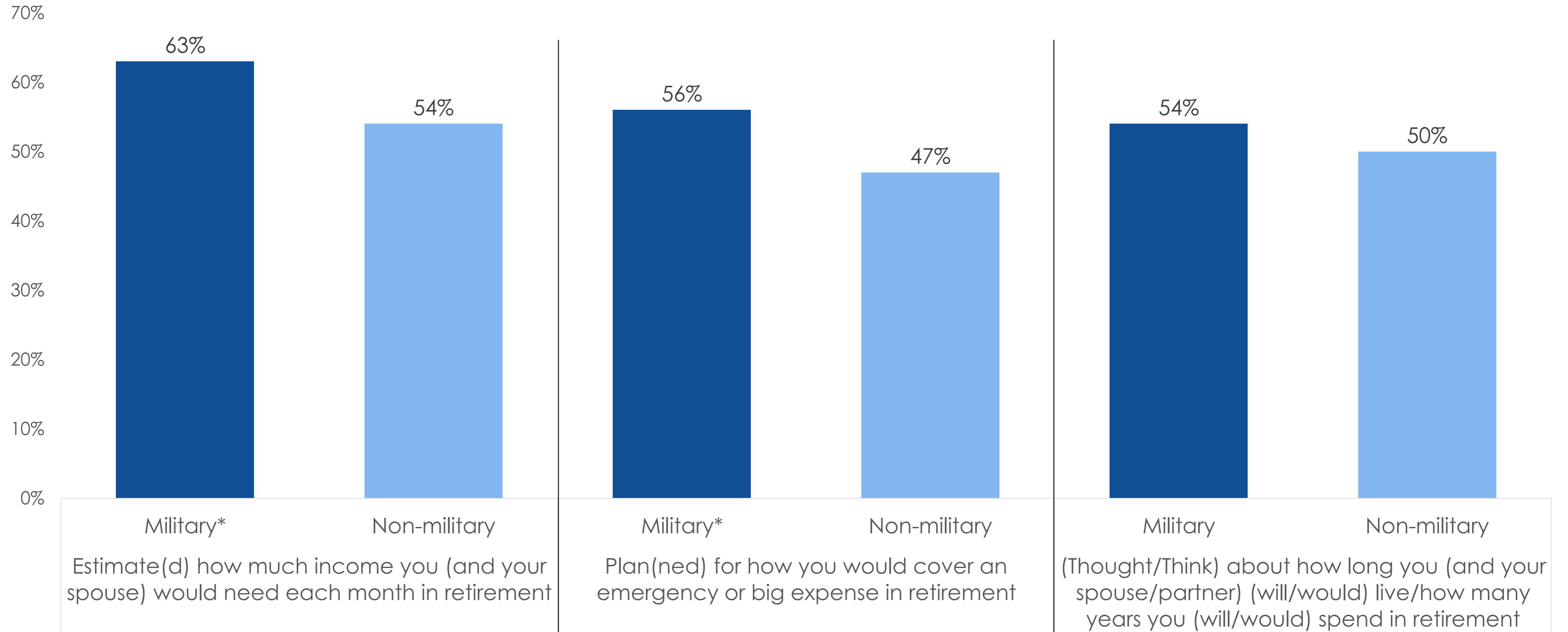
Preparing for Various Aspects of Retirement, by Military Status

To prepare for retirement, (have/did) you (or your spouse)...?
Percentage Yes, n=2,521



Preparing for Various Aspects of Retirement, by Military Status

To prepare for retirement, (have/did) you (or your spouse)...?
Percentage Yes, n=2,521



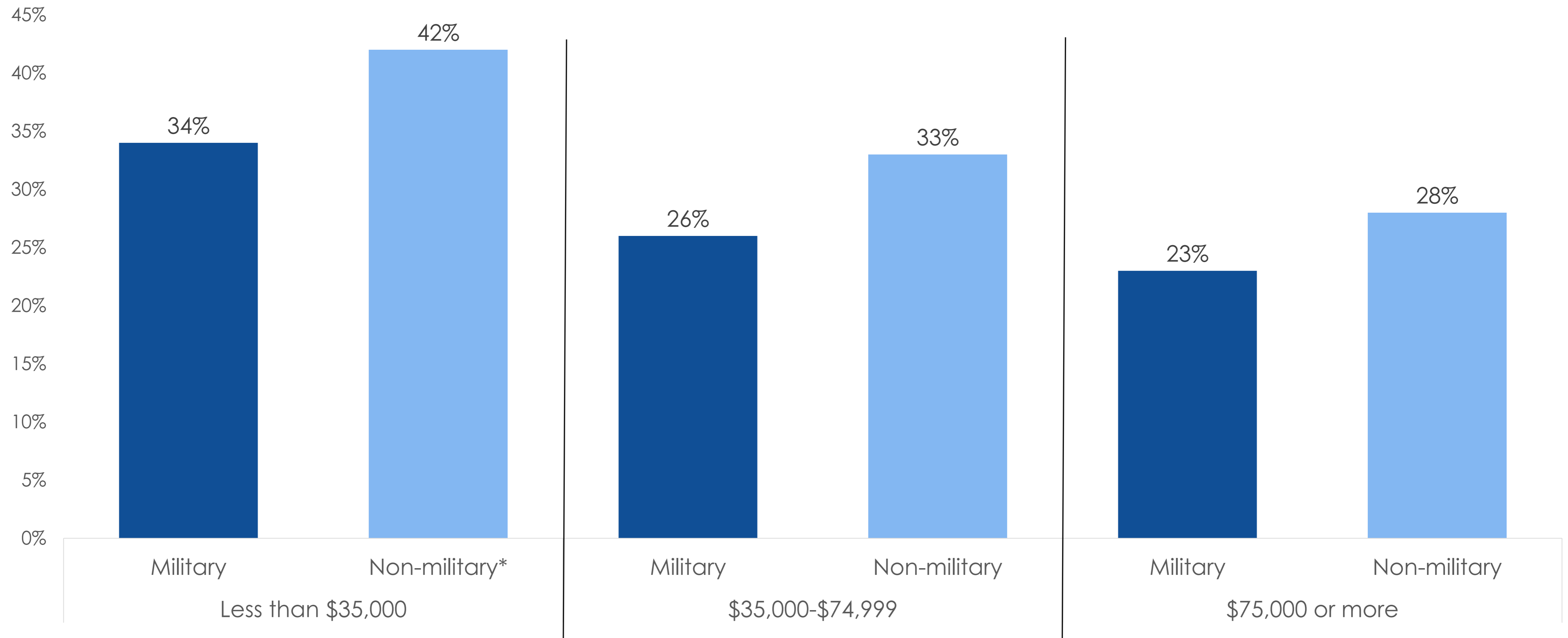
Discussion — Retirement Confidence and Preparations

- Why are lower income military members more likely to feel less confident that they'll have enough money to last through retirement?
- How do military members feel about their ability to cover their basic expenses? (paid more when move)

Sources of Information and Financial Advisors

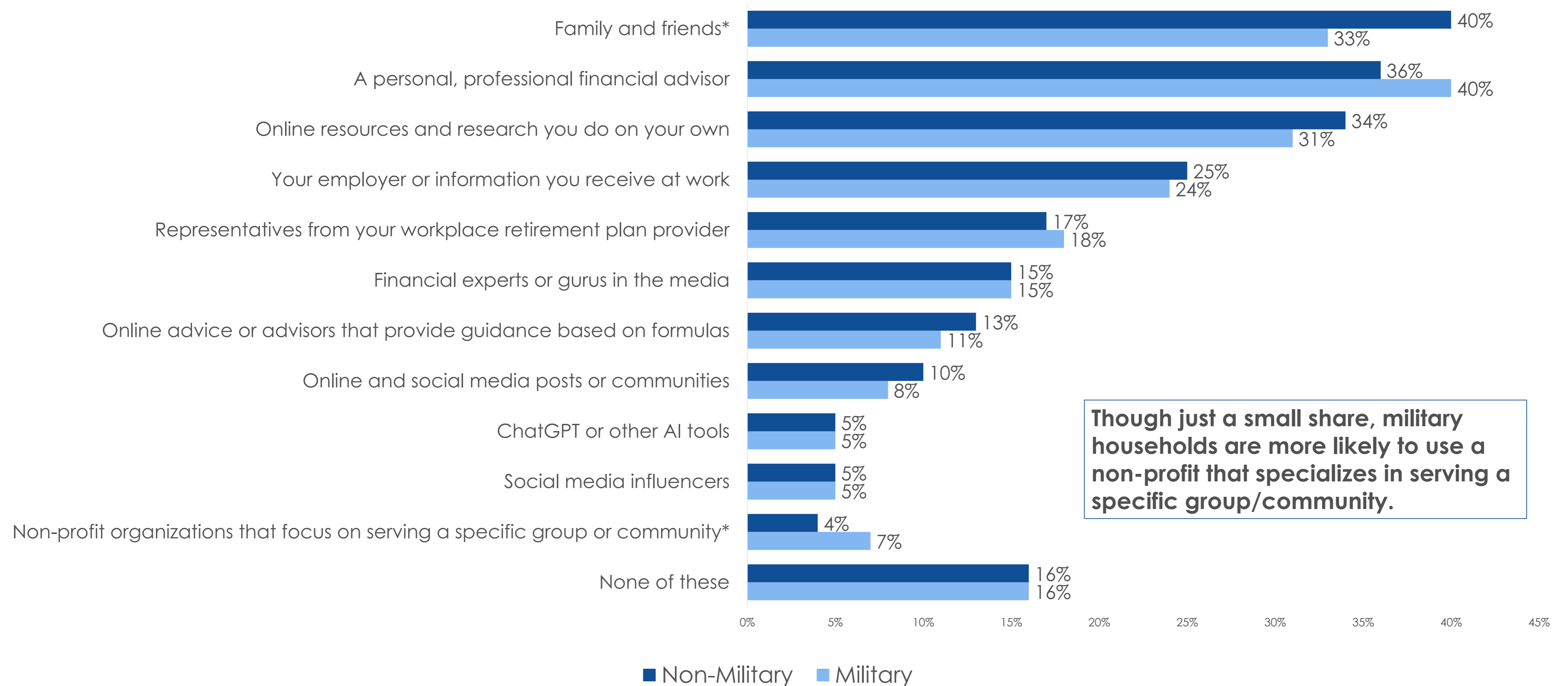
Those in military households are more likely to suggest that they know where to go for financial and retirement planning advice.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?
You do not know who to go to for good financial or retirement planning advice.
n=2,521, Percentage Agree



4 in 10 military cite an advisor, while non-military turns more to family and friends.

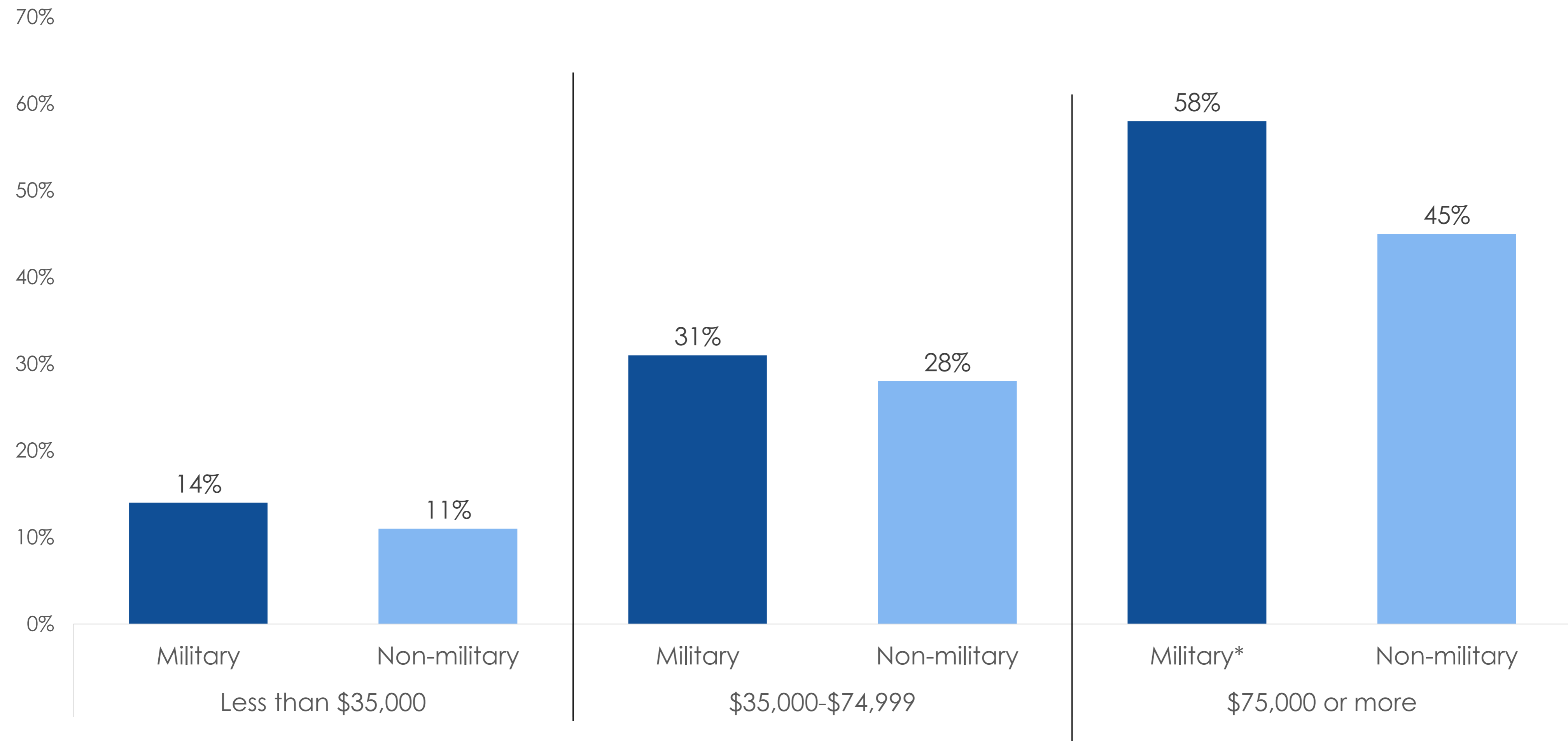
Which of the following people or groups do you use as a source of information for retirement planning?
n=2,521



Though just a small share, military households are more likely to use a non-profit that specializes in serving a specific group/community.

As income increases, military households become more likely than non-military to work with a financial advisor.

Do you currently work with a professional financial advisor or representative?
n=2,521, Percentage Yes



Discussion — Sources of Information and Financial Advisors

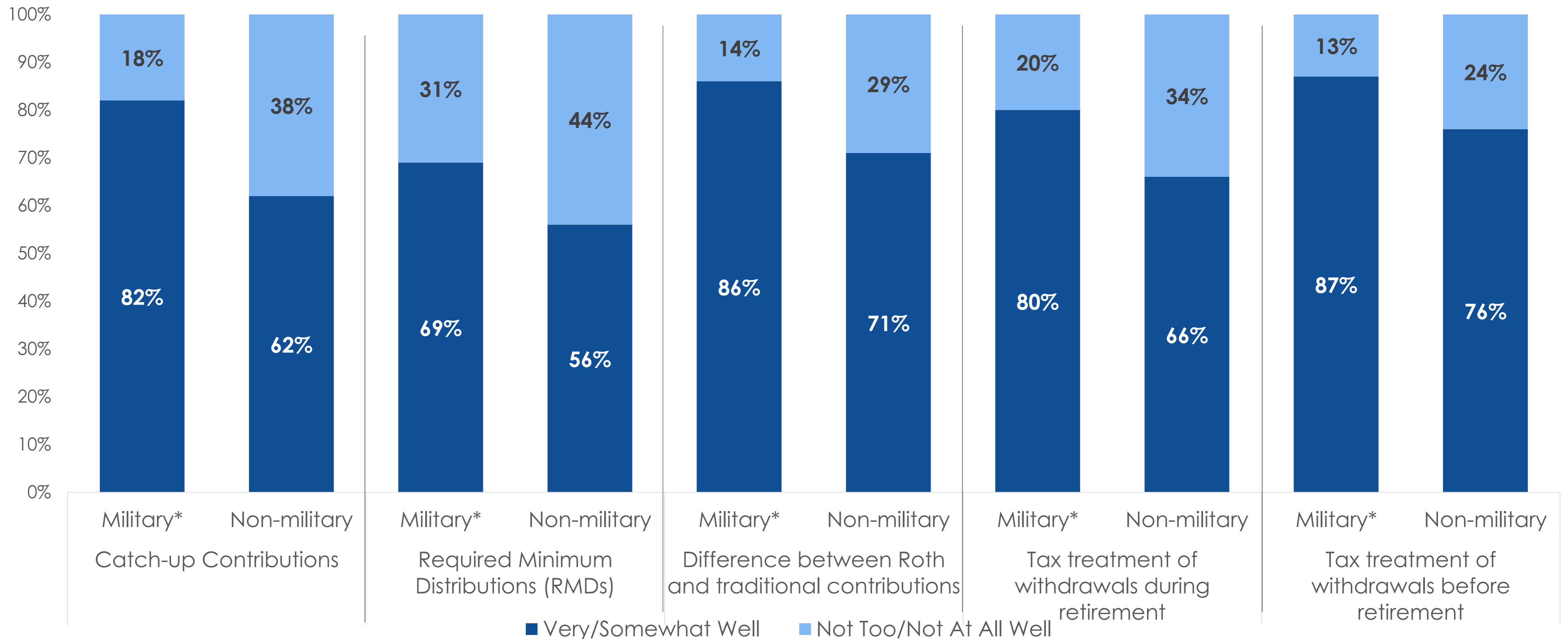
- How do military members gain financial education?
- Where do military members go for financial guidance?

Workplace Plans

How Well Retirement Savings Plan Participants Understand Certain Features and Regulations of Retirement Savings Plans, by Military Status

How well do you understand the following features and regulations related to workplace retirement savings plans?

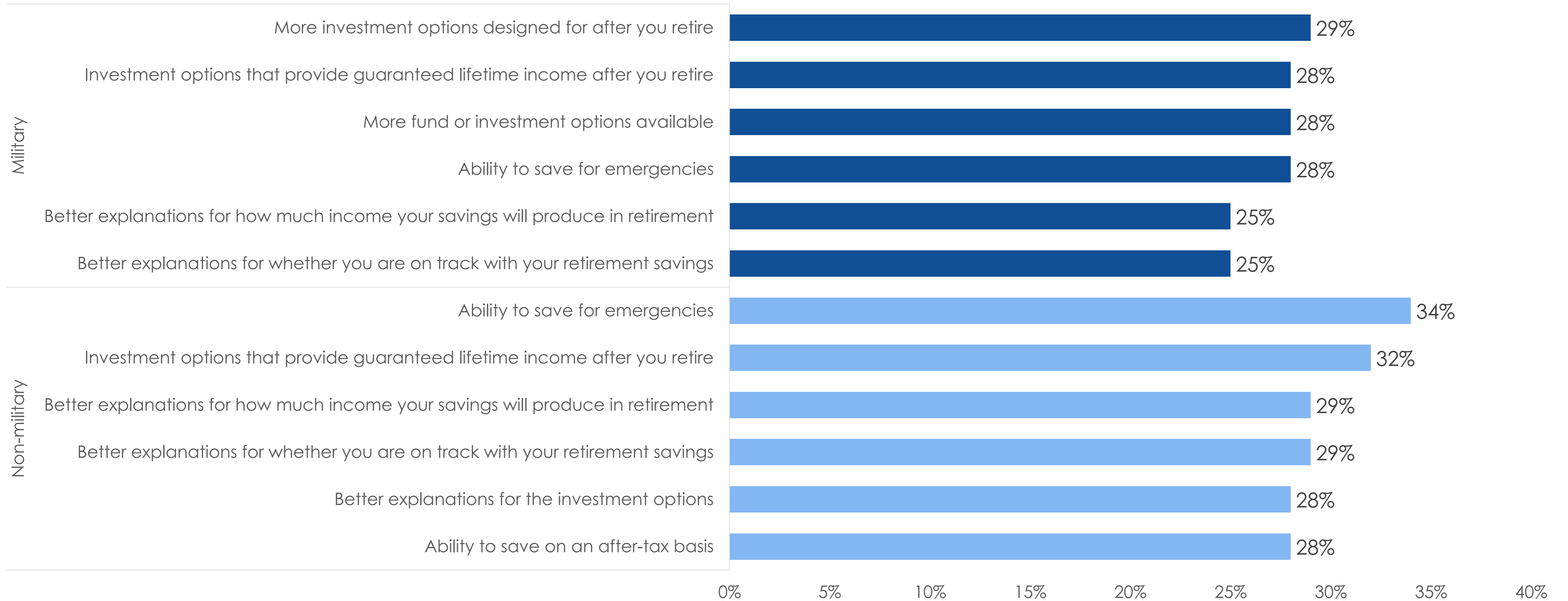
Employer offers a retirement savings plan n=773



Top Six Most Valuable Improvements to Retirement Savings Plans, as Ranked by Those Offered a Plan, by Military Status

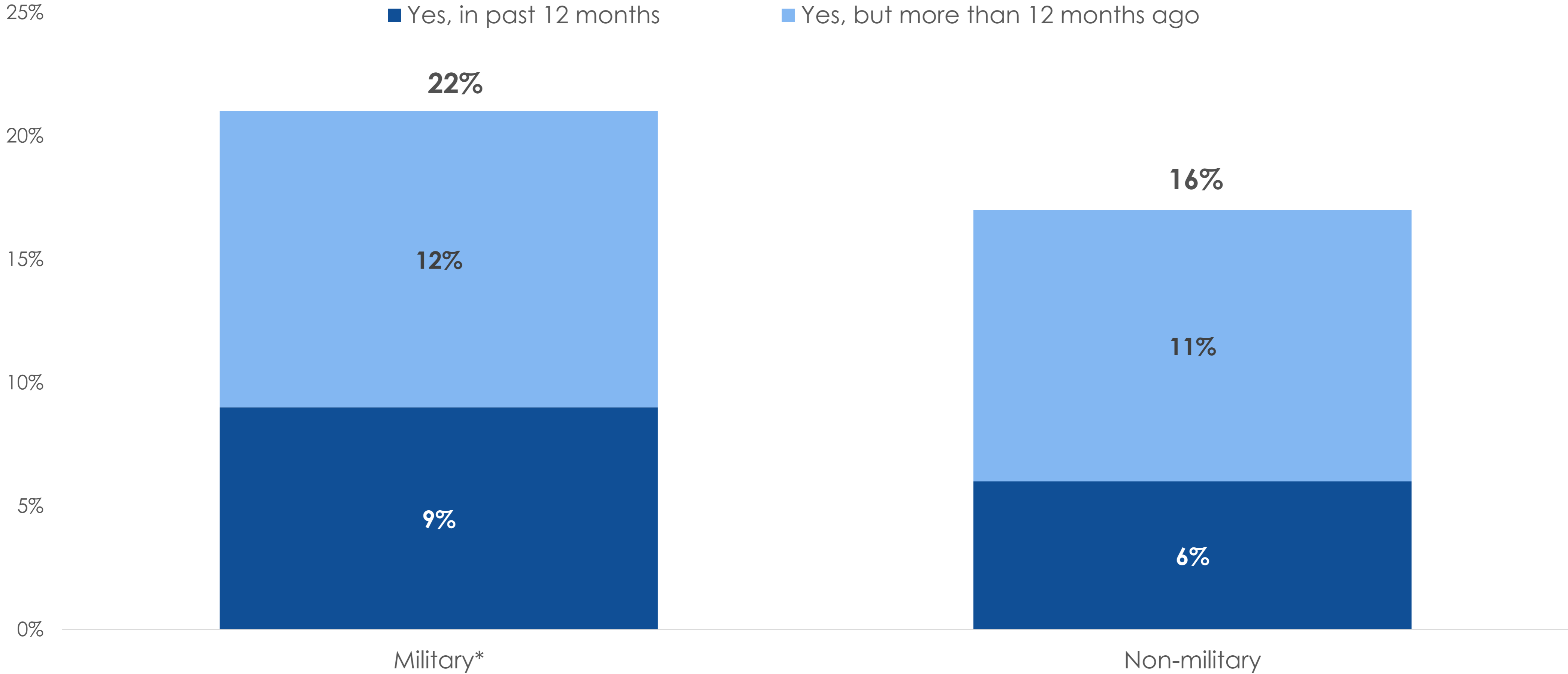
Which of the following, if any, would be the most valuable improvements to your retirement savings plan? (Please select all that apply.)

Employer offers a retirement savings plan n=773



Percentage Who Have Taken a Loan or Withdrawal from Their Retirement Savings Plan, by Military Status

Have you ever taken a loan or withdrawal from your workplace retirement savings plan? Select all that apply.
Saved for retirement n=1,861



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

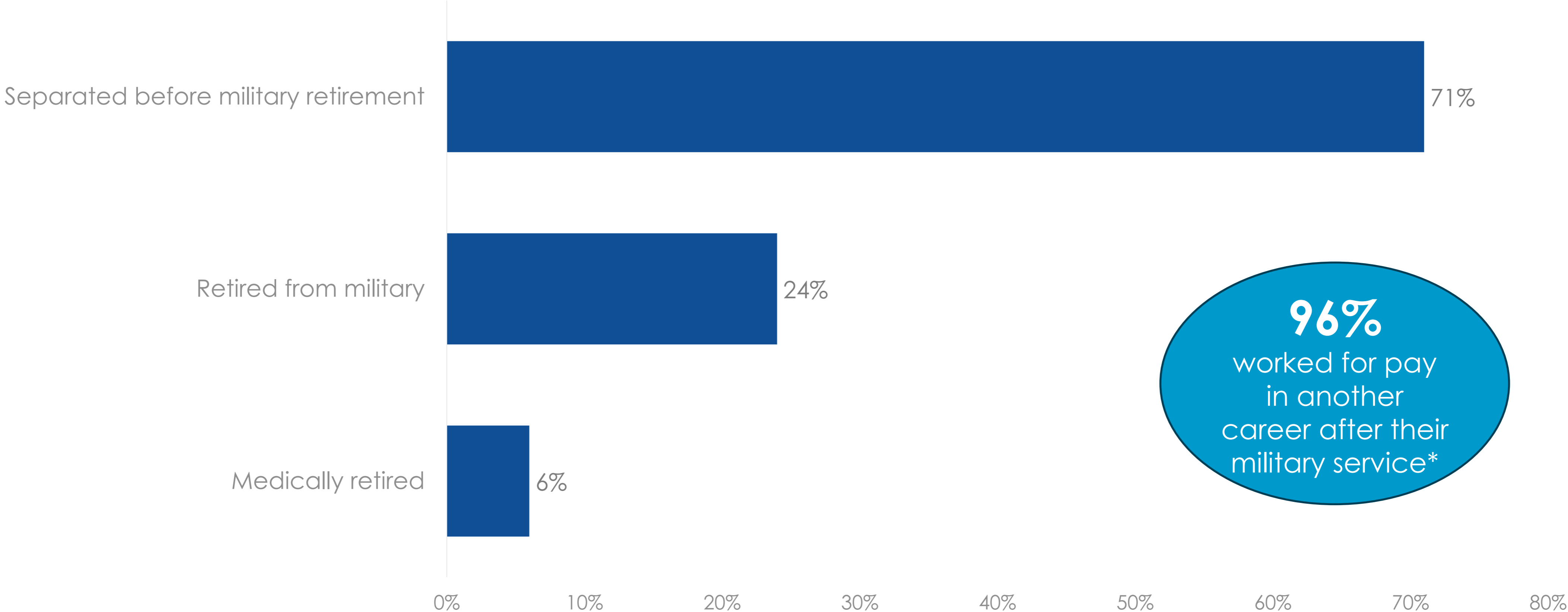
Discussion — Workplace Plans

- What retirement plan does military members have available to them?
- Even with access to Thrift Savings Plan, why might military member be behind on their retirement savings?

Transition to Retirement and Retiree Experiences

Most who serve separate from the military before reaching retirement. Nearly all say they worked in another career after their military service.

How did your military service end?
Veteran households n=665

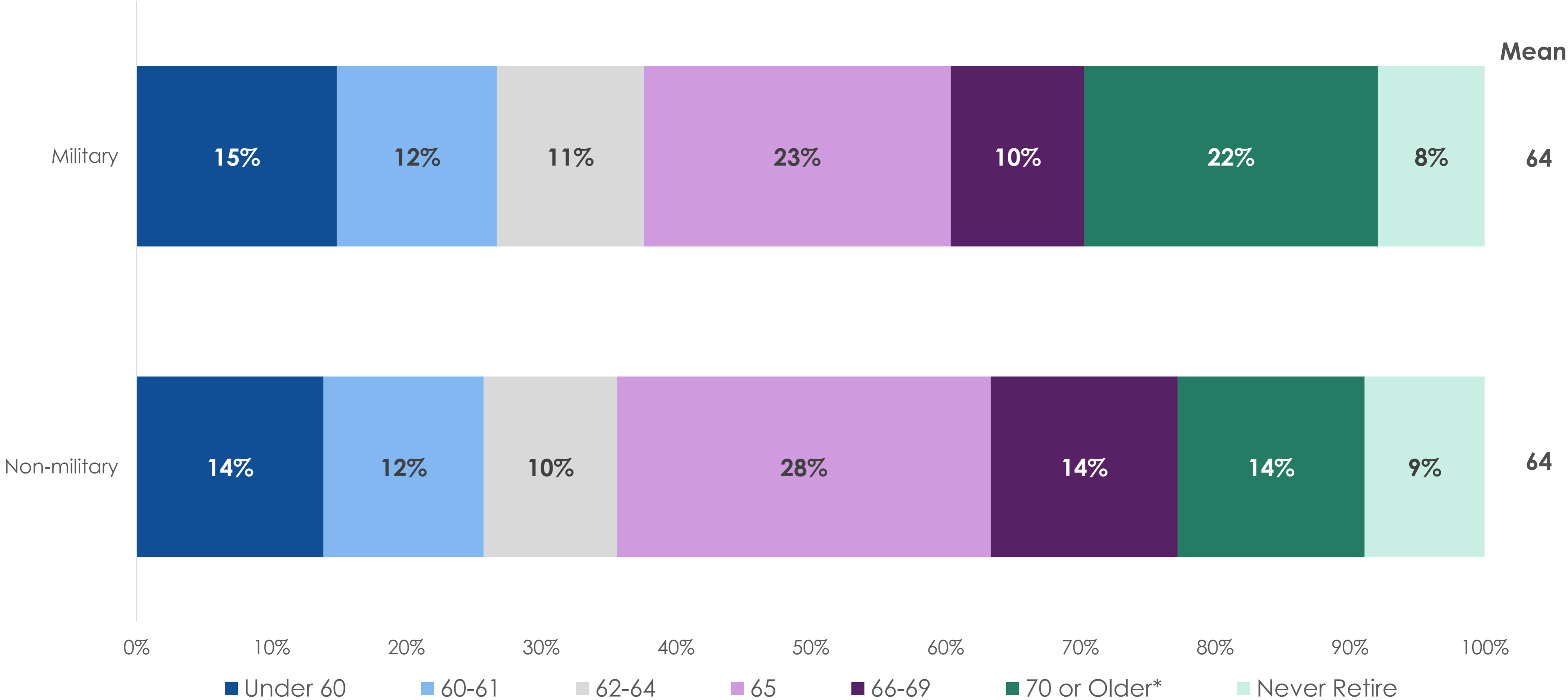


Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

*Military retirees n=423

Military workers are more likely to predict they will retire at age 70 or beyond.

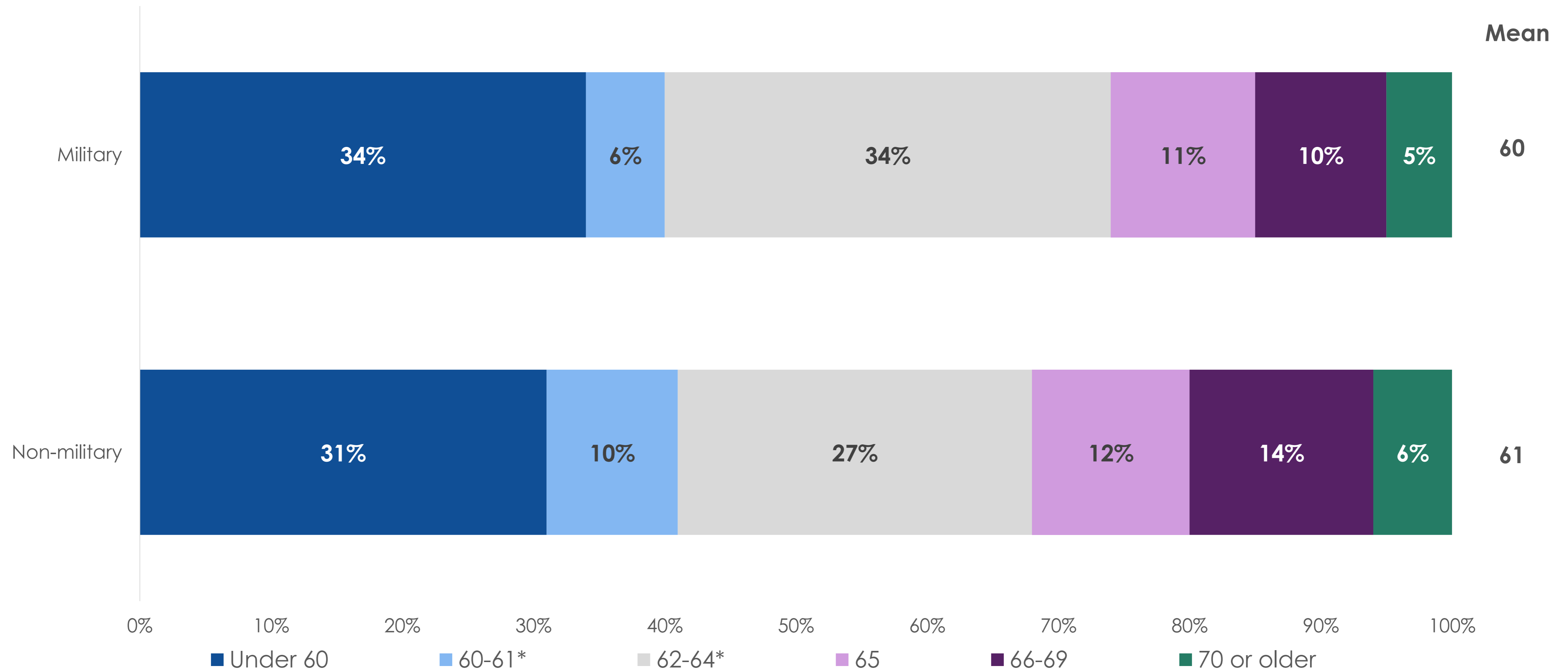
Realistically, at what age do you expect to retire?
Workers who gave an age n=958



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

In fact, about 3 in 4 military respondents who have retired did so before age 65. They are more likely to retire between ages 60-64 than non-military.

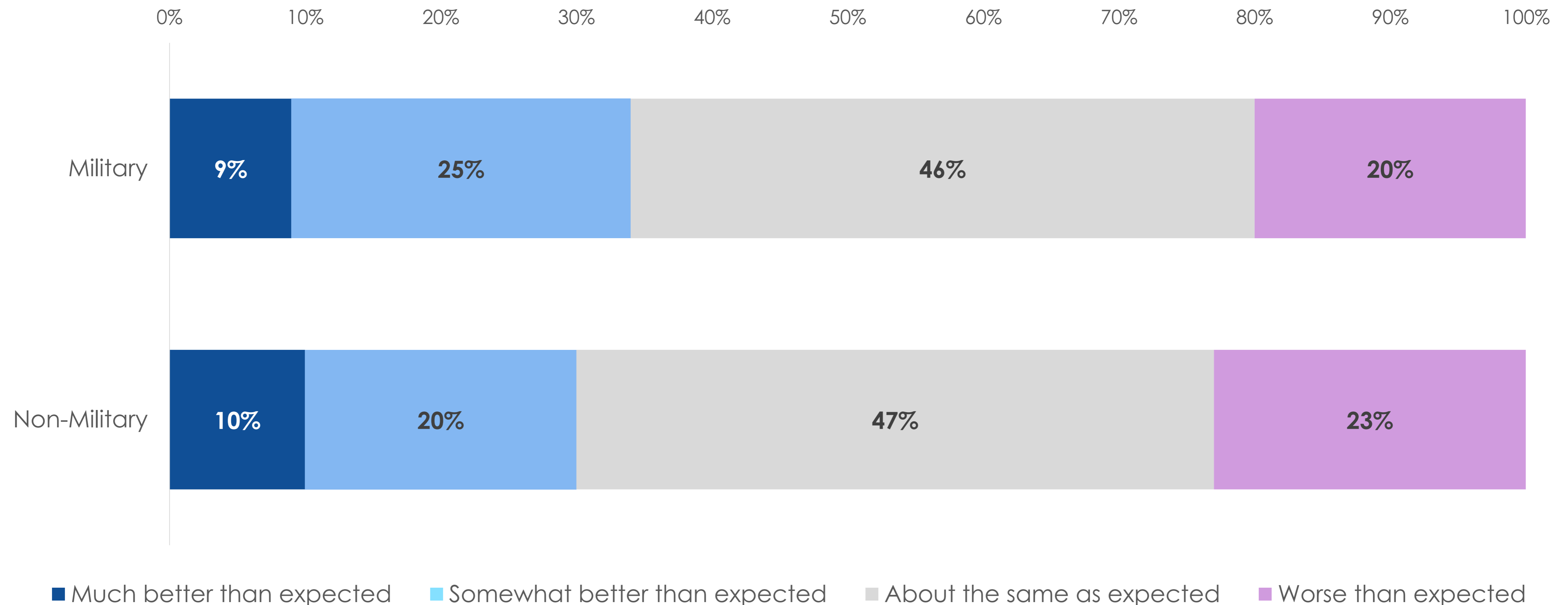
How old were you when you retired?
Retirees who gave an age n=1,157



A third of military respondents who are retired suggest their overall lifestyle is better than expected, and half say it's as expected – comparable to non-military retirees.

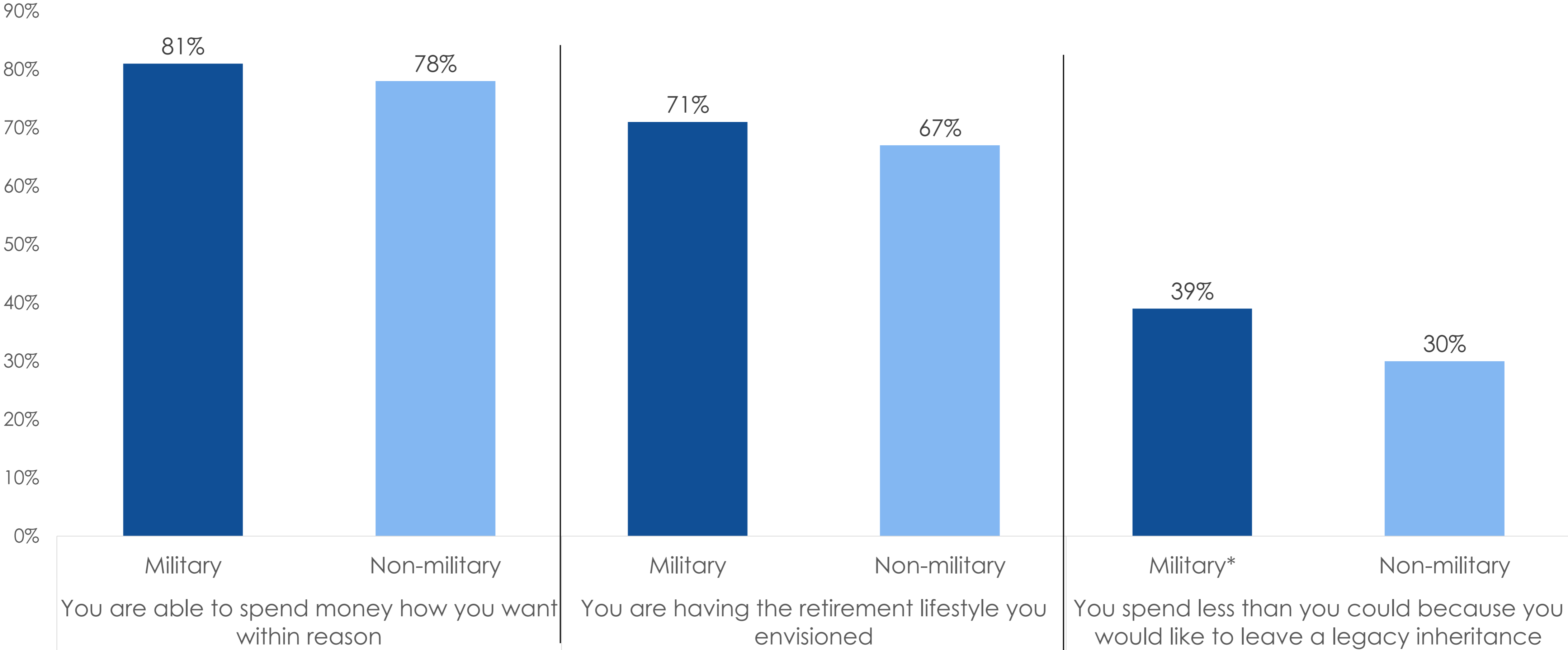
How does your overall lifestyle in retirement now compare to how you expected it to be before you retired?
For example, are you traveling, spending time with family or volunteering as much as you expected?

Retirees n=1,266



Majorities of military and non-military retirees feel they are having the retirement lifestyle they envisioned, spending freely within reason. Military respondents are more likely to hold back for legacy.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Retirees n=1,266, Percentage Agree



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald Research 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey.

Discussion — Transition to Retirement and Retiree Experiences

- What are the retirement impact differences between military retirees and non-retirees?
- How does the transition to civilian life differ between military retirees and those who separated before military retirement?

Conclusions

RCS Conclusions

- Military household respondents are more confident in their ability to live comfortably throughout retirement
 - They are more likely to feel they are doing a good job preparing, and in fact, are more likely to engage in retirement planning activities like calculating retirement savings needs, health expenses in retirement, and how much income they will need.
 - Military household respondents are more likely to know where to go for good financial and retirement planning advice. 4 in 10 work with an advisor, a third turn to family and friends, and 3 in 10 do online research. Though few overall, they are more likely to leverage non-profits focused on serving a specific community (like military/veterans).
 - Military respondents claim a higher understanding of workplace plans, though more take loans/withdrawals. To enhance plans, these respondents prioritize ability to save for emergencies and better explanations and options for generating retirement income.
- The transition to retirement still presents challenges.
 - Most separate from the military before retirement eligibility. Nearly all have worked in a second career.
 - Military respondents are more likely to say they plan to retire at age 70 or later, but in reality, the average retirement age for military household retirees is 60.
 - Military household retirees are living a retirement lifestyle as or better than expected, like non-military respondents, though they are more likely to say they watch their spending because they hope to leave a legacy/inheritance.

What Can We Learn From This?

Access to and participation in a few key benefits/offerings can drive financial security:

- 1) Guidance & education
- 2) Simplicity of saving
- 3) Pension, health benefits, housing assistance

Discussion – Q&A

Upcoming Events

July 31 — EBRI Public Policy Advisory Council Meeting (Members Only)

August 13 — EBRI Financial Wellbeing Research Center Meeting (Members Only)

September 26 — EBRI Financial Wellbeing Symposium

Please visit ebri.org for more information or contact info@ebri.org