



# STEM CELL RESEARCH AND THE NEW CONGRESS:

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## What Americans Think

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# Methodology

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,031 adults (516 men and 515 women) age 18 and over, living in private households, in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed during the period of December 15-18, 2006.

Completed interviews of the 1,031 adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population.

The margin of error at a 95% confidence level is plus or minus three percentage points for the sample of 1,031 adults. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

# Executive Summary

- More than two out of three Americans (68 percent) – including 69 percent of independents, 52 percent of evangelical Christians and 69 percent of Roman Catholics – would support “the new Congress moving ahead ... (to expand) stem cell research in its first 100 hours”. Well under a third of Americans (29 percent) say they oppose such a move, with only one in five Americans strongly opposed. Nearly half of Republicans (47 percent) and 85 percent of Democrats would support such a step by the new Congress.
- Nearly two out three Americans (65 percent) of Americans want bipartisan action on stem cell reform. The roughly two thirds of Americans -- including 51 percent of Republicans, two thirds of Roman Catholics and 61 percent of evangelical Christians -- said they would be concerned about the “gridlock” in Washington “if the new Congress could not find a way to work together to expand stem cell research and find more funding for it.” Only a third said they would be unconcerned and just 17 percent “not concerned at all.” The concern about partisan gridlock on stem cell reform also extended to 67 percent of independents and 78 percent of Democrats.
- More than three out of five Americans (63 percent) say that “if the new Congress passes a bill that expands stem cell research, and President Bush vetoes that bill,” then Congress should overturn that veto. Only a third of Americans disagree, with fewer than one in five (19 percent) saying “definitely no” to a veto by Congress. The veto would be supported by 51 percent of evangelical Christians, 59 percent of Roman Catholics, 43 percent of Republicans, 59 percent of Independents and 84 percent of Democrats.

# Executive Summary

- Almost three out of four Americans (72 percent) say that “stem cell research is too important for Congress and the White House to ‘play politics’ with it by using it as a ‘wedge’ issue” to appeal to targeted segments of the population. One out of four Americans do not feel this with only 11 percent disagreeing strongly that stem cell research should not become a political football. The desire to keep stem cell research above politics was shared by 64 percent of Republicans, 65 percent of evangelical Christians, 69 percent of Roman Catholics, 71 percent of Independents and 81 percent of Democrats.
- Republicans were most heavily represented (18 percent) among the ranks of Americans who have changed their view from “opposing stem cell research to supporting stem cell research”. This group of switchers also includes 14 percent of evangelical Christians, 11 percent of Roman Catholics, 10 percent of independents and 13 percent of Democrats.
- The number one reason for people switching to supporting stem cell research is being “persuaded by supporters of stem cell research” (35 percent). This reason came in ahead of “an illness suffered by themselves or someone they know who are afflicted with a disease that might benefit from stem cell research” (29 percent) and “you are not comfortable with religious leaders telling scientists how to do their job” (20 percent). However, only 18 percent of evangelical Christians were persuaded to change views by stem cell proponents, whereas many more did so (37 percent) as a result of being exposed to grave illness in their own life or someone near to them. (Note: These findings about the shifts in views of evangelical Christians are based on small subsamples.)

# Executive Summary

- A steadily growing number of Americans support stem cell research, up from 63 percent nearly two years ago in February 2005 and 60 percent in June 2004 (immediately after the death of former President Ronald Reagan). As of today, 66 percent of Americans, when asked the same unaided question about stem cell research as in 2004 and 2005, say that they support “medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos,” with just 29 percent opposed and under one in five Americans (19 percent) strongly opposed. The ranks of supporters now span every major demographic category, including 52 percent of Republicans, 51 percent of evangelical Christians, 59 percent of Roman Catholics, 59 percent of Independents and 81 percent of Democrats.
- When respondents are provided information about stem cell research, the level of support rises to 74 percent and the level of opposition falls to 24 percent. With this question, the level of support includes 54 percent of Republicans, 56 percent of evangelicals, 76 percent of independents, and 90 percent of Democrats.
- Nearly four out of five Americans (79 percent) either personally have suffered from a serious illness that might benefit from stem cell research’s search for cures or know a family member or friend who has been so afflicted.

# DETAILED FINDINGS

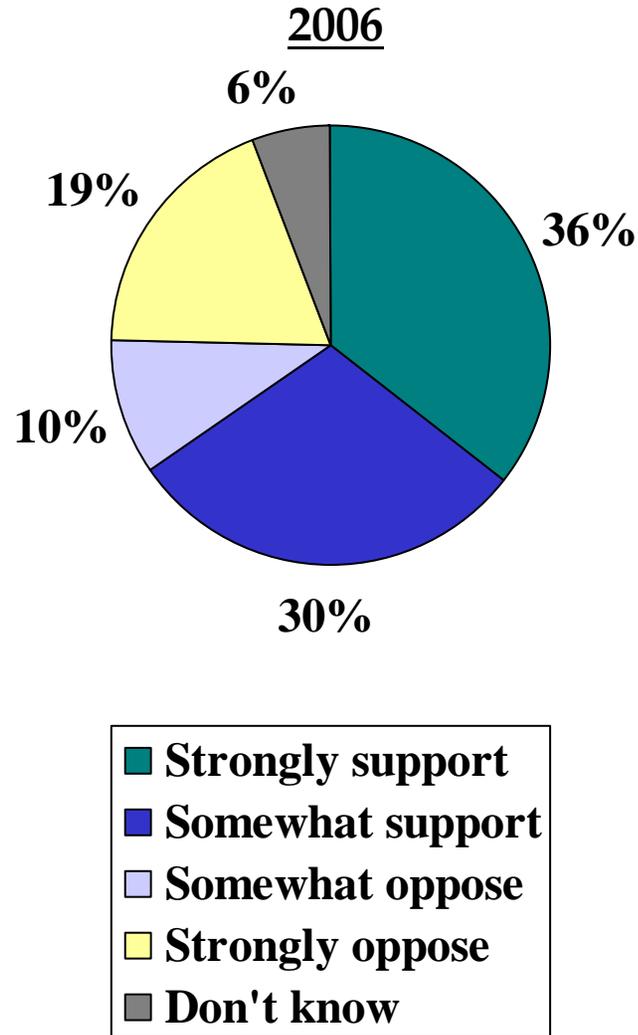
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# Support For Stem Cell Research

- Support for embryonic stem cell research is currently at 66% -- up slightly from two previous askings of the same question. The first was in June 2004 following the death of President Reagan – when 60% said they supported it. In February of 2005 the same question was asked and 63% supported stem cell research. In this latest asking, 36% strongly support the research and 30% somewhat support it.
  - Support is significantly higher among respondents with the highest levels of household income or education (\$75,000 or more: 78%, College graduate: 75%).
  - It is also higher in households with one individual (75%) compared to those with three or more where only 62% support.
  - Support is higher in the West (76%) and Northeast (71%) than the rest of the country (Midwest 63% and South 58%.)
  - Among Democrats, support is the highest (81%) but a majority of Republicans (52%) and Independents (59%) also support it.
- Currently, about one-fourth (29%) oppose stem cell research, a number that is unchanged from the 2005 (28%) and 2004 survey (26%). In the 2006 survey, 10% somewhat oppose stem cell research and 19% strongly oppose it.
  - Opposition is strongest among those aged 18-24 (39%).
  - Those in the South (37%) and the Midwest (33%) is much higher than in the West (19%) or Northeast (20%).
  - Opposition is also significantly stronger in households with three or more members when compared to households with only one person (31% vs. 21%).
  - Respondents with less than a high school education are much more likely to be opposed to stem cell research than any other education level (46%).
  - Opposition to stem cell research is significantly higher among Republicans (42%) and Evangelicals (44%).

# Support for Stem Cell Research -- Current

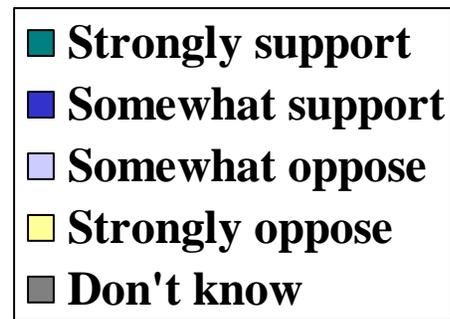
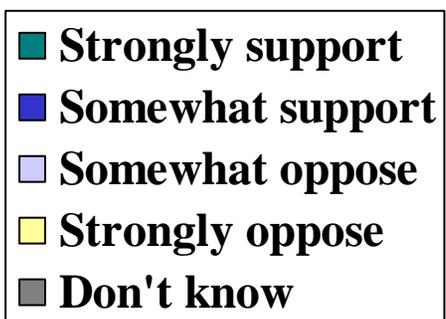
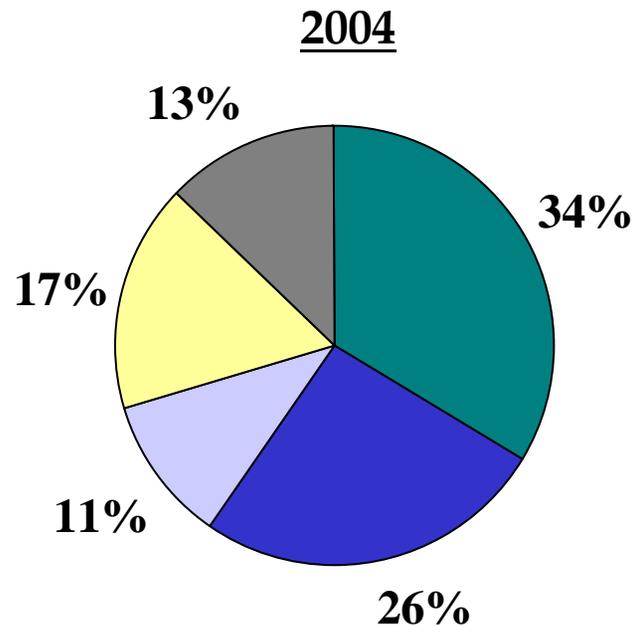
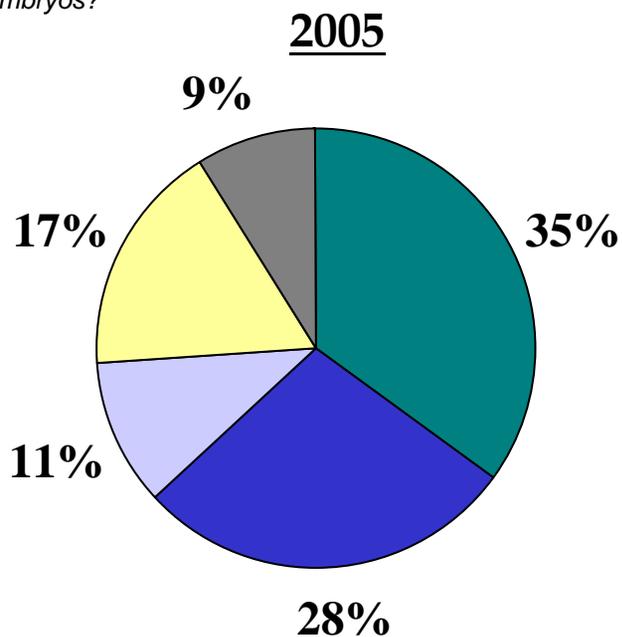
C2: On the whole, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?



Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Support for Stem Cell Research -- Historical

B3: On the whole, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?



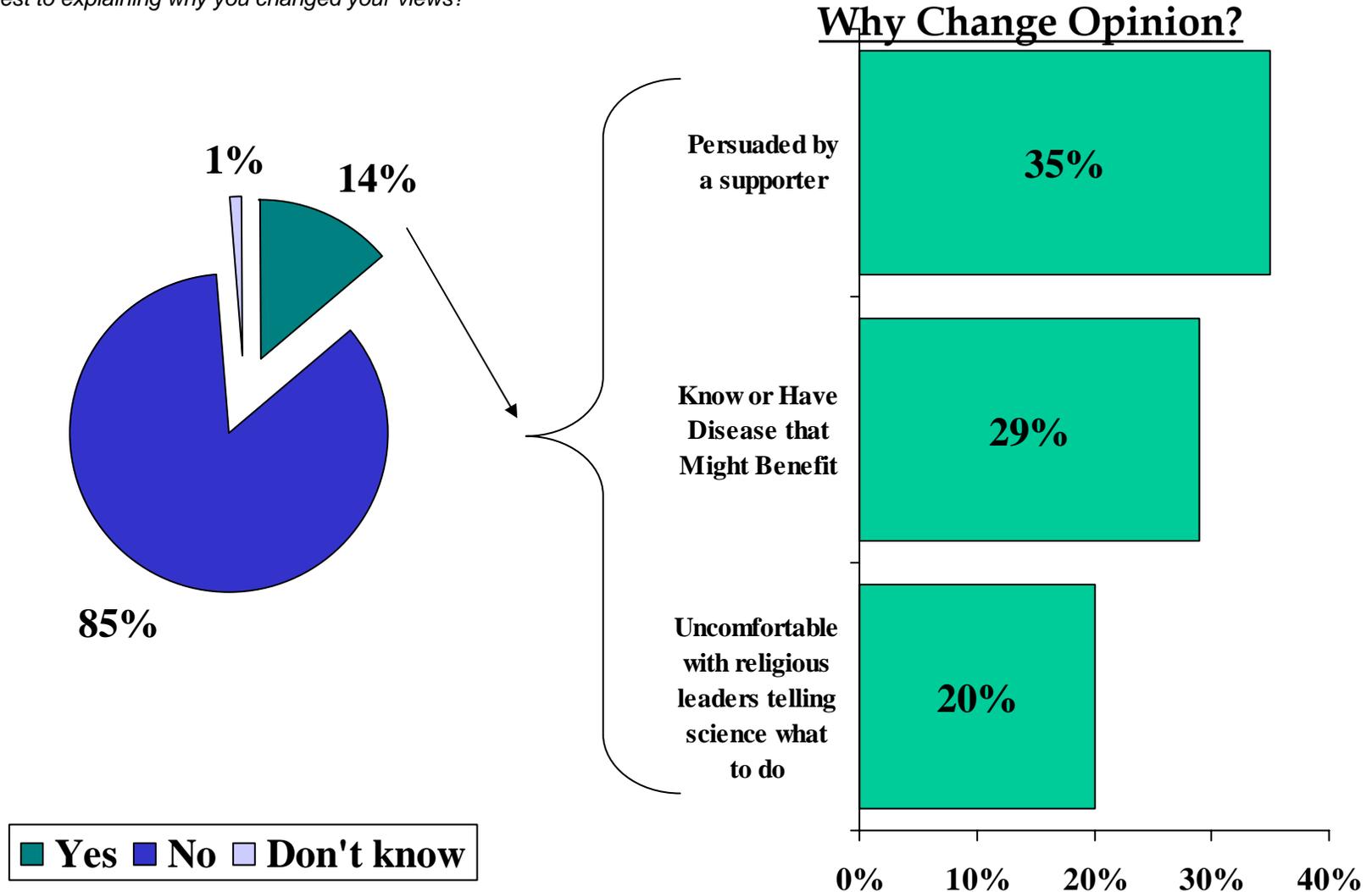
Base = Total Respondents (2005: 1,022, 2004: 1,017). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Changing Opinion On Stem Cell Research

- Those who support stem cell research were asked if they have changed their view from opposing to supporting it. Fourteen percent say they have changed their opinion. The most common reason given for a change in opinion is “being persuaded by supporters of stem cell research” (35%). Three in 10 say they changed their opinion because they or someone they know is afflicted with a disease that might benefit from stem cell research (29%) and 20% say they are uncomfortable with religious leaders telling scientists how to do their job.
  - Those who are most likely to have changed their opinion are 18-24 year olds (20%), African Americans (24%), Hispanics (27%), and those with some college education (22%). (It should be noted that the actual number of young people, African Americans or Hispanics who have changed their mind about stem cell research is very small.)
  - Although all these sample sizes are very small, those who are most likely to say they changed their opinion because they were persuaded by a supporter include: 18-24 year olds (59%), those in the Northeast (46%), those with less than a high school education (48%), those with a college degree (50%), Democrats (45%), and those who are not Evangelical (46%).

# Changing Opinion On Stem Cell Research

C3/4: Have you changed your view from opposing stem cell research to supporting stem cell research? IF YES: Which of the following reasons comes closest to explaining why you changed your views?



Base = Total Respondents (679 who support stem cell research, 83 who have changed opinion.)

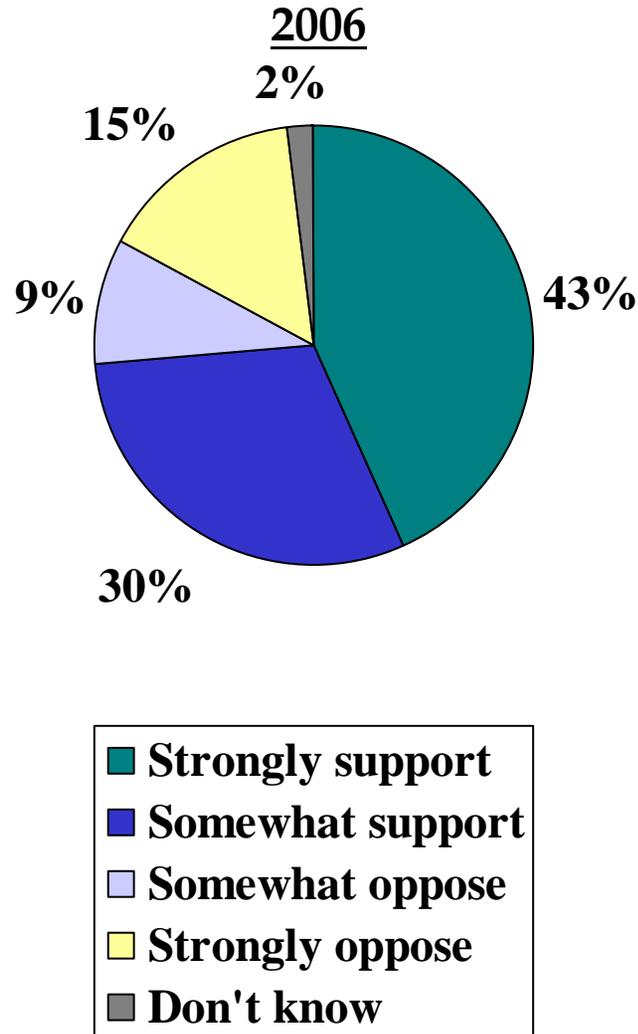
# Support for Stem Cell Research -- Aided

After the unaided question, respondents were read the following description of stem cell research: *“Embryonic stem cells are special cells that can develop into every type of cell in the human body. The stem cells are extracted from frozen embryos in fertility clinics, donated by couples who no longer want or need the embryo. This process destroys the embryo. These stem cells can then reproduce on their own, creating what is called a “line” of stem cells that many researchers can work with. Scientists believe that there is a good chance that stem cells can be developed into cures or treatments for diseases such as cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, juvenile diabetes, and spinal cord injuries.”*

- After hearing this description of stem cell research, support in 2006 increased to 74% and opposition decreased to 24%. This is virtually unchanged from the 2005 findings: support 72% and opposition 25% and the 2004 survey (72% and 23%).
  - Support for stem cell research is strongest among those in the West (82%) and Northeast (79%).
  - Among higher income households (80%), single person households (83%), and those where there are no children present (76%), support is highest. Support is incredibly strong among Democrats (60%).
  - Opposition is still strongest among Republicans (44%) and Evangelicals (42%).

# Support for Stem Cell Research – Aided, Current

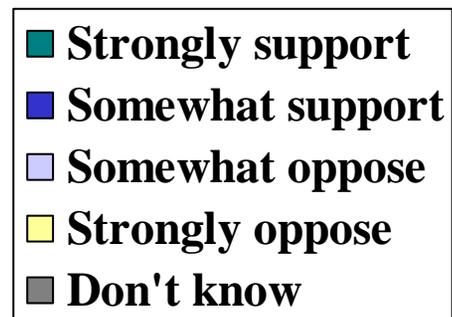
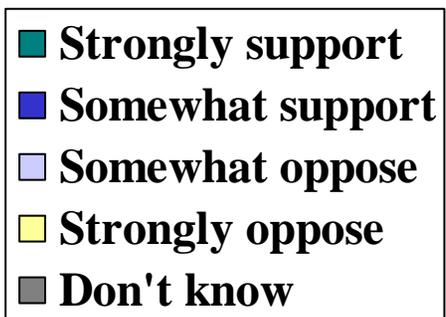
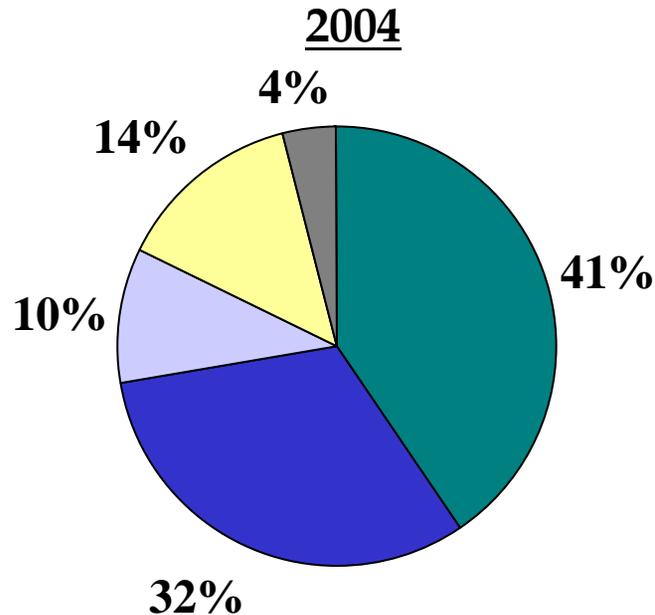
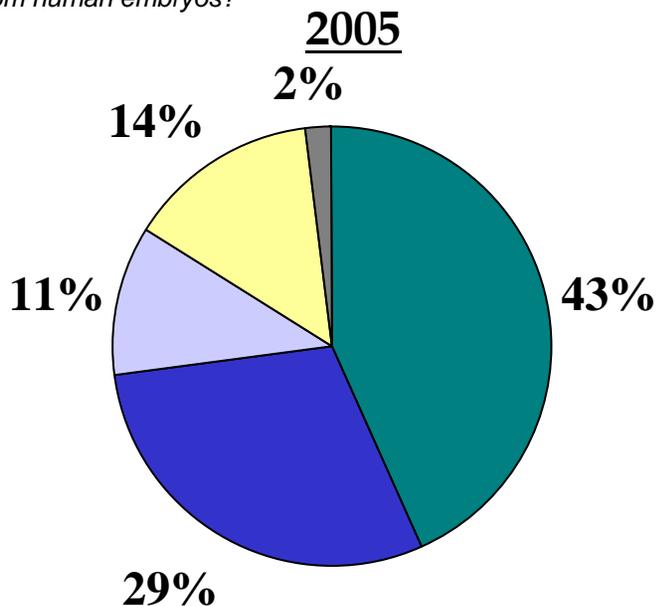
C5: Having heard this description, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?



Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Support for Stem Cell Research – Aided, Historical

B4: Having heard this description, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?



Base = Total Respondents (2005: 1,022, 2004: 1,017). May not add to total due to rounding.

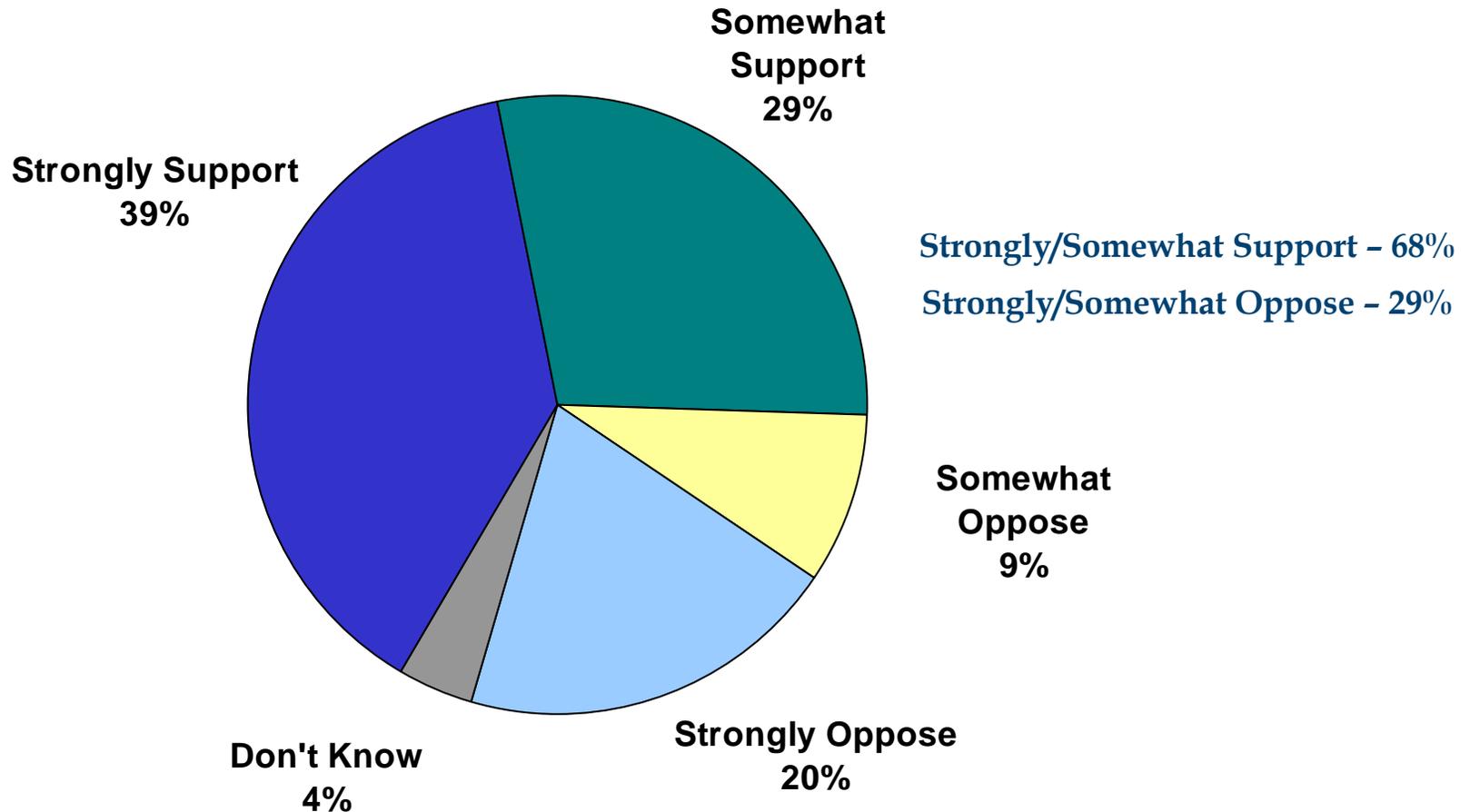
# Support For Legislative Action on Stem Cell Research

Respondents were told that in their first 100 hours, members of the new Congress have vowed to introduce a bill to reverse President Bush's restrictions on stem cell research.

- Support for such legislative action is at 68% with 39% strongly supporting it and 29% somewhat supporting it.
  - Those who support this legislation are demographically quite similar to those who support stem cell research in general.
  - Respondents in higher income households (77%) are significantly more likely to support legislative action than those with lower levels of income. Democrats are very much in support of the legislation (85%) as are Independents (69%). Eighty-seven percent of those who support stem cell research overall support this bi-partisan legislation.
  - Opposition to the bill is strongest among Republicans (48%), and those who oppose stem cell research in general (67%). Those in households with two or more people (30%) are also more likely to oppose the legislation than smaller households. Opposition is strong among those who themselves have less than a high school education (42%).

# Support For Stem Cell Action by New Congress

C6: Leaders of the new Congress have indicated that their first 100 hours will include introduction of a bill that would reverse President Bush's restrictions on stem cell research and expand federal funding for research on stem cells that are developed from embryos in fertility clinics and which otherwise would be discarded. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the new Congress moving ahead in this way with stem cell research in its first 100 hours?



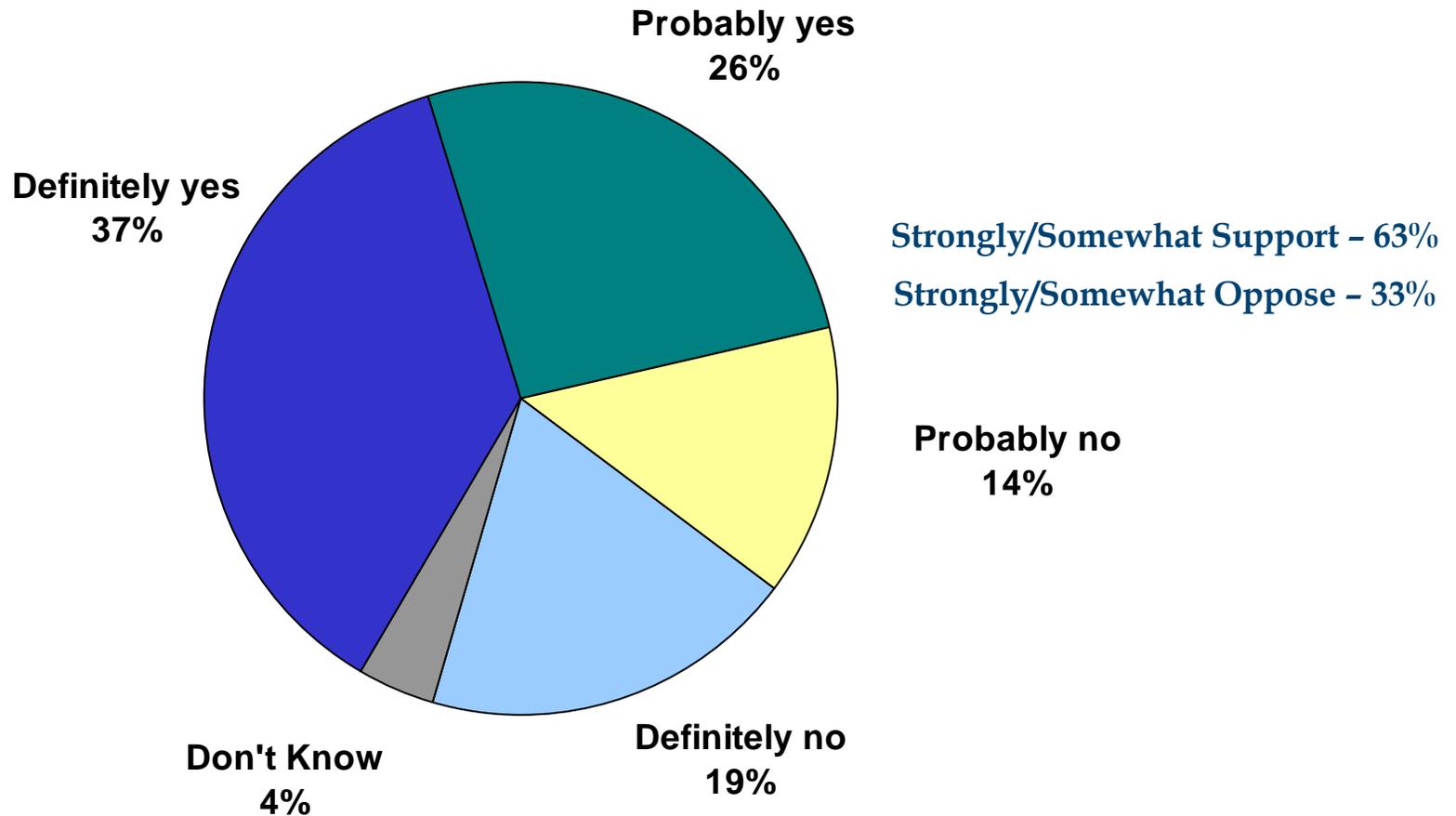
Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Overturing a Presidential Veto

- If in the first 100 hours Congress does pass a bill expanding stem cell research and it is vetoed by the President Bush, there is support for Congress overturning his veto. Sixty-three percent say yes – either definitely yes (37%) or probably yes (26%) that Congress should overturn such a veto.
  - Support for overturning the veto is highest in the Northeast (71%).
  - Respondents in higher income households (70%) are significantly more likely to support overturning a veto. Democrats are very much in support of this (84%). Eighty-one percent of those who support stem cell research overall support overturning a veto should it happen.
  - Opposition to overturning the veto strongest among Republicans (55%), and those who oppose stem cell research in general (66%). Those in households with two or more people (35%) are also more likely to oppose the legislation than smaller households.

# Overturing a Presidential Veto

C6A: If the new Congress passes a bill that expands stem cell research, and President Bush vetoes that bill, would you want Congress to overturn the veto? Would you say...



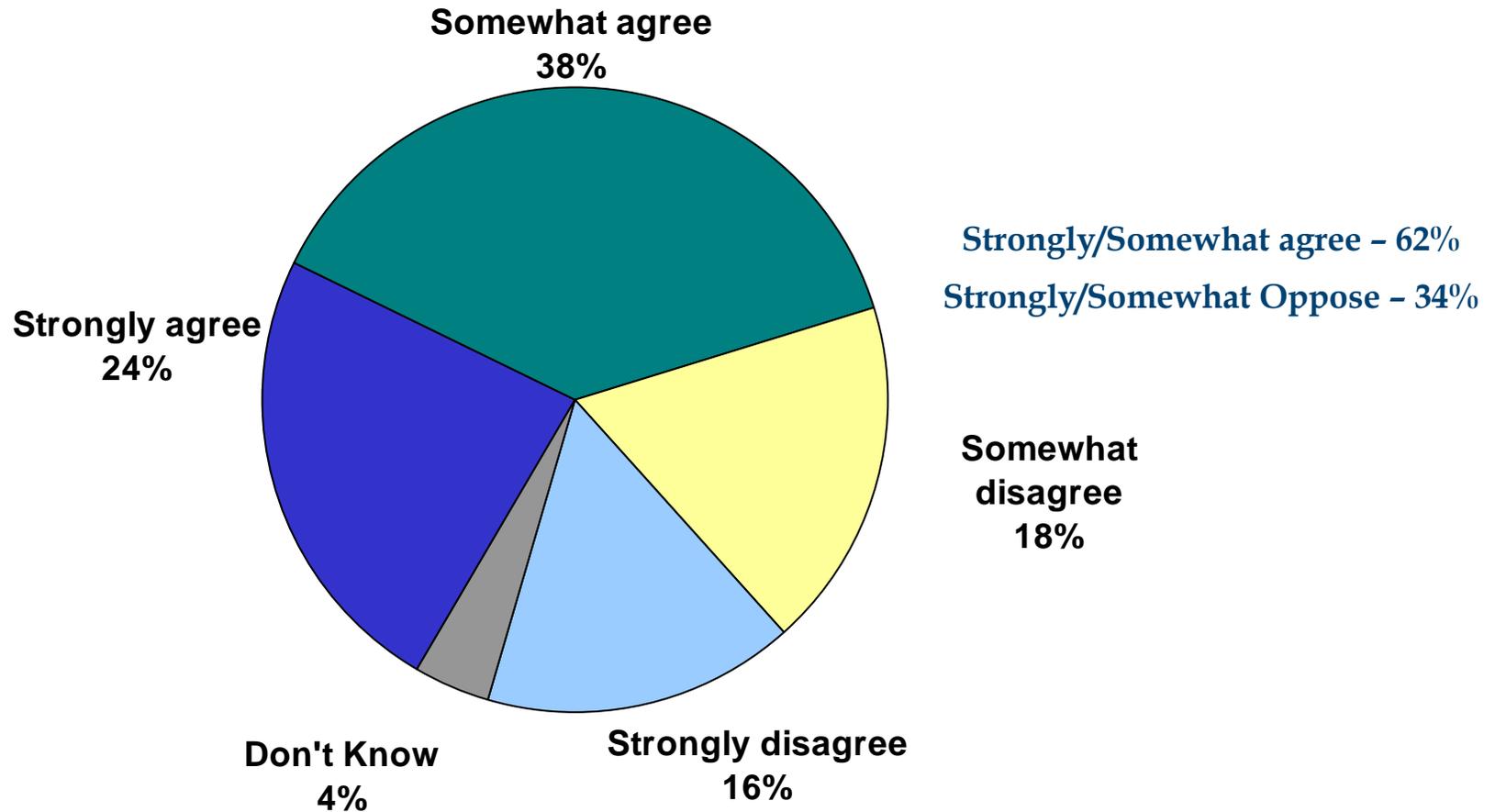
Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Government Gridlock Causes Frustration

- Most Americans agree (62%) that gridlock on major issues such as stem cell research is one of the reasons Americans are frustrated with officials in Washington, D.C. Only 34% disagree.
- Women are more likely to agree with this statement than are men (65% vs. 58%). Those who support stem cell research agree with this more than do those who oppose it (70% vs. 48%). Along partisan lines, Democrats are much more likely to agree (76%) than Republicans (48%).

# Government Gridlock Causes Frustration

C7: Some people say that gridlock on such major issues as stem cell research is one of the reasons why Americans are so frustrated with elected officials in Washington, D.C. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?



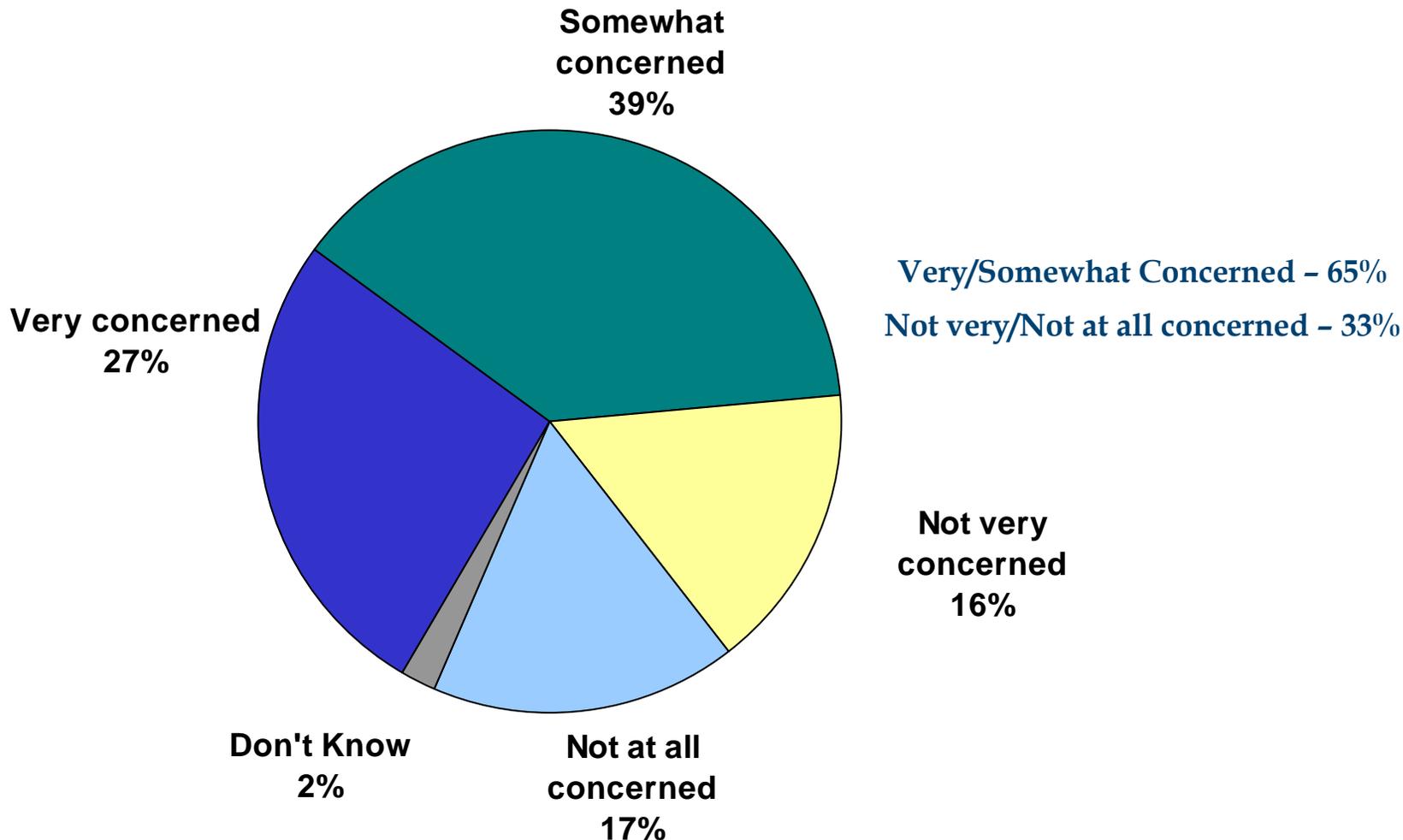
Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Expanded Federal Support for Stem Cell Research and Gridlock

- There is a high level of concern (65%) that expanded stem cell research and more federal funding for it could be slowed down by gridlock. Only a third are not concerned about this (33%).
  - Concern is highest among women (69%), those age 65 and over (72%), and those who live alone (74%). Those who support stem cell research are very concerned (78%) as are Democrats (78%) and those who have changed their views and now support stem cell research (79%).
  - Concern is lowest among Republicans (47%) and those who oppose stem cell research (56%).

# Expanded Federal Support for Stem Cell Research and Gridlock

C8: Expanded stem cell research and federal funding for it could be slowed down by Congressional and White House gridlock. How concerned would you be if the new Congress could not find a way to work together to expand stem cell research and find more funding for it? Would you say...



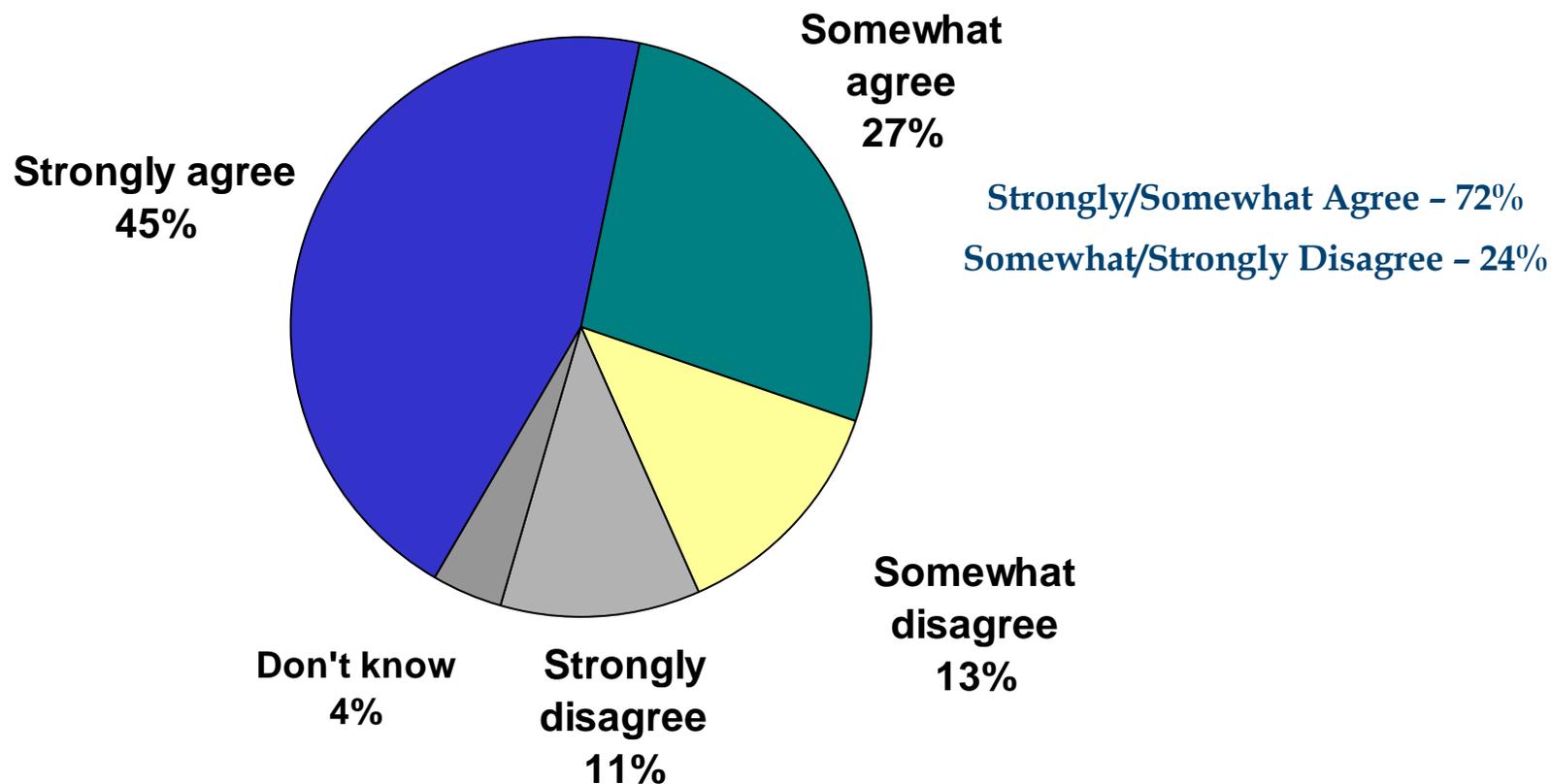
Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# Playing Politics With Stem Cell Research

- Most respondents agree (72%) that stem cell research is too important for Congress and the White House to play politics with. Only one-fourth disagree with this premise.
- Those who agree the most strongly tend to live in higher level income households (82%), have a college degree (79%), are Democrats (81%), support stem cell research (83%) or are not Evangelical (75%).

# Playing Politics With Stem Cell Research

*C9: Some democrats have said that stem cell research can be used as a “wedge issue” to gain electoral advantage against Republicans. Some Republicans have tried to use opposition to stem cell research as a “wedge issue” to appeal to conservative voters for their political gain as well. But others have suggested that the stakes are too high when it comes to stem cell research for it to be used for political reasons by either political party. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that stem cell research is too important for Congress and the White House to play politics with it?*



Base = Total Respondents (1,031). May not add to total due to rounding.

# APPENDIX

# RELIABILITY OF SURVEY PERCENTAGES

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

The table below shows the possible sample variation that applies to percentage results reported herein. The chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Size of Sample on Which Survey Results Are Based	Approximate Sampling Tolerances Applicable to Percentages At or Near These Levels				
	<u>10% or 90%</u>	<u>20% or 80%</u>	<u>30% or 70%</u>	<u>40% or 60%</u>	<u>50%</u>
1,000 interviews	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%
500 interviews	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
250 interviews	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%
100 interviews	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%

## Additional Sampling Tolerances for Samples of 1,000 Interviews

<u>9% or 91%</u> 2%	<u>8% or 92%</u> 2%	<u>7% or 93%</u> 2%	<u>6% or 94%</u> 1%	<u>5% or 95%</u> 1%
<u>4% or 96%</u> 1%	<u>3% or 97%</u> 1%	<u>2% or 98%</u> 1%	<u>1% or 99%</u> .2%	

# SAMPLING TOLERANCES WHEN COMPARING TWO SAMPLES

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from independent parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain number of percentage points to be considered statistically significant – that is not due to random chance. The table below is a guide to the sampling tolerances in percentage points applicable to such comparisons, based on a 95% confidence level.

Size of Samples Compared	Differences Required for Significance At or Near These Percentage Levels				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
1,000 and 1,000	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
1,000 and 500	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%
1,000 and 250	4%	6%	6%	7%	7%
1,000 and 100	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%
500 and 500	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%
500 and 250	5%	6%	7%	7%	8%
500 and 100	6%	9%	10%	11%	11%
250 and 250	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%
250 and 100	7%	9%	11%	11%	12%
100 and 100	8%	11%	13%	14%	14%

# Questionnaire

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Topline results of 1,031 telephone interviews with adults conducted December 15- 18, 2006.

- C1 Please tell me whether you, a family member, or a close personal friend has ever suffered from any of the following diseases or conditions. [READ AND ROTATE ITEMS. RECORD AS MANY AS APPLY]  
(Base N= 1,031)

	You	Family Member	Close Personal Friend	Don't Know
Cancer	5%	49	16	38
Heart Disease	5%	36	8	56
Alzheimer's Disease	*	24%	7	70
Parkinson's Disease	1%	8	7	85
Juvenile Diabetes	3%	15	5	78
Spinal cord injuries	2%	6	5	88

Now, please think about an issue that has been in the news, embryonic stem cell research.

- C2 On the whole, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos? [RECORD ONE ANSWER]

2006	2005	2004	
36%	35%	34%	STRONGLY SUPPORT
30	28	26	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT
10	11	11	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
19	17	17	STRONGLY OPPOSE
6	9	13	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

[ASK IF C2 (01-02)]

- C3 Have you changed your view from opposing stem cell research to supporting stem cell research?  
(Base N= 679)

14%	YES
85	NO
1	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

[ASK IF C3 (01)]

C4 Which of the following reasons comes CLOSEST to explaining why you changed your views?  
[READ ENTIRE LIST BEFORE RECORDING ONE ANSWER. ROTATE]  
(Base N= 83)

35%	You were persuaded by supporters of stem cell research
29	You or someone close to you were afflicted with a disease that might benefit from stem cell research for a cure
20	You are not comfortable with religious leaders telling scientists how to do their job
7	OTHER [SPECIFY]
3	NONE OF THESE
6	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

I'm going to read you a brief description of embryonic stem cell research, and then get your reaction. Embryonic stem cells are special cells that can develop into every type of cell in the human body. The stem cells are extracted from frozen embryos in fertility clinics, donated by couples who no longer want or need the embryo. This process destroys the embryo. These stem cells can then reproduce on their own, creating what is called a "line" of stem cells that many researchers can work with. Scientists believe that there is a chance that stem cells can be developed into cures or treatments for diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, juvenile diabetes, and spinal cord injuries.

C5 Having heard this description, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos? [RECORD ONE ANSWER]  
(Base N= 1,031)

<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	
43%	43%	41%	STRONGLY SUPPORT
30	29	32	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT
9	11	10	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
15	14	10	STRONGLY OPPOSE
2	2	4	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

C6 Leaders of the new Congress have indicated that their "first 100 hours" will include introduction of a bill that would reverse President Bush's restrictions on stem cell research and expand federal funding for research on stem cells that are developed from embryos frozen in fertility clinics and which otherwise would be discarded. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the new Congress moving ahead in this way with stem cell research in its first 100 hours? [RECORD ONE ANSWER]

39%	STRONGLY SUPPORT
29	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT
9	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
20	STRONGLY OPPOSE
4	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

C6A If the new Congress passes a bill that expands stem cell research, and President Bush vetoes that bill, would you want Congress to overturn the veto? Would you say . . . [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

37% Definitely yes  
26 Probably yes  
14 Probably no  
19 Definitely no  
4 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

C7 Some people say that gridlock on such major issues as stem cell research is one of the reasons why Americans are so frustrated with elected officials in Washington, D.C. Would you say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this? [RECORD ONE ANSWER]

24% STRONGLY AGREE  
38 SOMEWHAT AGREE  
18 SOMEWHAT DISAGREE  
16 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
4 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

C8 Expanded stem cell research and more federal funding for it could be slowed down by Congressional and White House gridlock. How concerned would you be if the new Congress could not find a way to work together to expand stem cell research and find more funding for it? Would you say . . . [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

27% Very concerned  
39 Somewhat concerned  
16 Not very concerned  
17 Or, not at all concerned  
2 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

C9 Some Democrats have said that stem cell research can be used as a "wedge issue" to gain electoral advantage against Republicans. Some Republicans have tried to use opposition to stem cell research as a "wedge issue" to appeal to conservative voters for their political gain as well. But others have suggested that the stakes are too high when it comes to stem cell research for it to be used for political reasons by either political party. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that stem cell research is too important for Congress and the White House to "play politics" with it? [RECORD ONE ANSWER]

45% STRONGLY AGREE  
27 SOMEWHAT AGREE  
13 SOMEWHAT DISAGREE  
11 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
4 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

On another subject...

C10 From what you know of politics and political parties, which of these best describes what you now consider your own political position? [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER. ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP]

22%	Republican
9	Independent leaning toward Republican
20	Independent
10	Independent leaning toward Democrat
32	Democrat
4	NONE OF THESE
2	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE/REFUSED

C11 What is your religious preference? Are you... [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER.]

26%	Protestant
21	Roman Catholic
20	Another Christian denomination
1	Jewish
15	Some other religion
13	No religion at all
2	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE

[ASK IF C11 (01-03)]

C12 Would you describe yourself as an "evangelical Christian"?  
(Base N=714)

39%	YES
55	NO
6	DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE