Opinions on Trans Issues and the Role of Personal Connections

Results from KFF-The Washington Post Trans Survey

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Comparison Piece: Cisgender Sample

- 823 cisgender adults (non-trans) interviewed between November 10 and December 1, 2022, online and by telephone from the SSRS Opinion Panel, a probability-based online panel recruited using ABS and RDD methodologies

- The total sample (trans sample weighted to proportional representation) was weighted to match the sample's demographics to the national U.S. adult population:
  - From Census Bureau's 2021 Current Population Survey (CPS) weighting parameters included **sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and education**.
  - From the September 2019 Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement data from the CPS weighting parameters of **civic engagement**.
  - From the National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS) for Pew Research Center parameters of **frequency of internet use**

- The margin of sampling error including the design effect for the non-trans adult sample is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

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Why A Cisgender Comparison?

- To be able to make some comparisons on the experiences of trans adults to their cisgender adult counterparts on issues of discrimination, access to health care, childhood experiences, and views of current trans issues and policies such as:
  - Teaching gender identity/trans identity issues in schools
  - Trans women and girls participation in sports
  - Accessing gender-affirming health care
- **According to the ACLU, as of April 18, 2023, there are currently 467 different bills targeting LGBTQ rights in the U.S. including more than 150 directly limiting the health care access of trans adult and children.**

Overview of Findings

- Majority of the public support laws prohibiting discrimination against trans people including majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans.

- Despite this, majorities of cisgender adults oppose discussing gender identity in elementary schools or providing gender-affirming care for trans children and teens. This is contrary to the views of trans adults.

- Views surrounding trans issues are, not unexpectedly, sharply divided by partisanship and gender identity. Yet, knowing a trans adults also matters among cisgender adults. **Cisgender adults who personally know (close friends/family member) a trans person are more likely to support gender-affirming care, teaching gender identity in schools, allow trans women to participate in sports.**

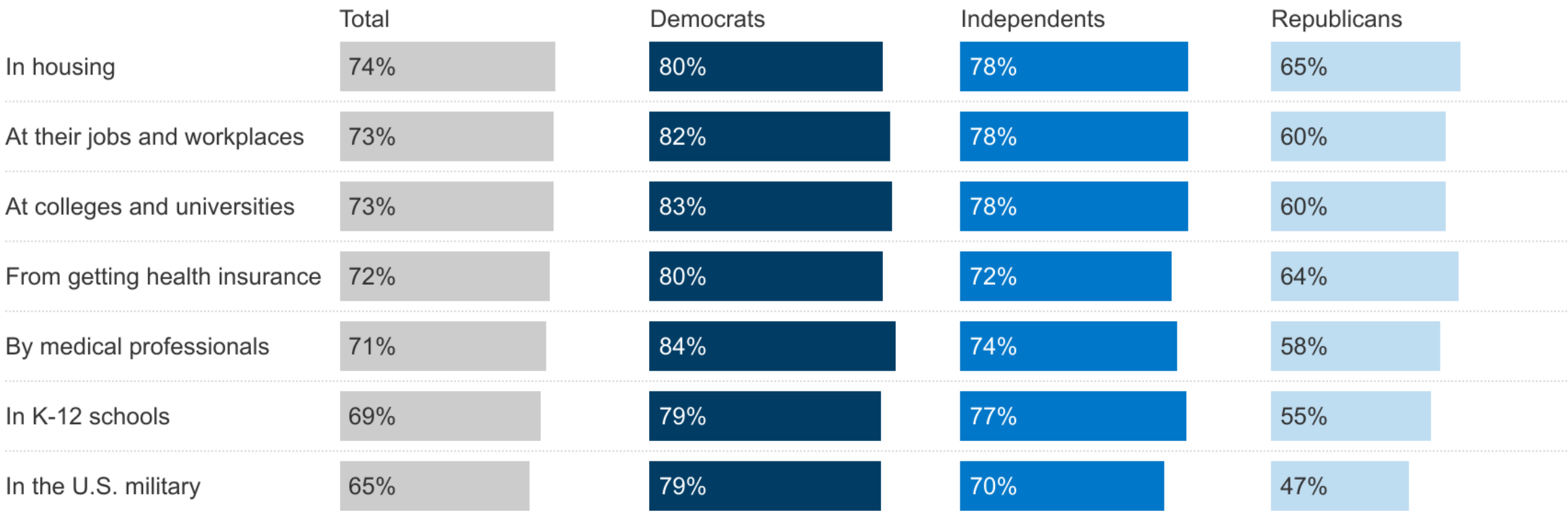
Personal Connection to a Trans Person

- More than four in ten cisgender adults (43%) say they personally know someone who is trans, including one in ten who say they have a close friend who is trans and one in ten who say they have a trans family member.

- Younger adults, Democrats, those living in urban areas are more likely to say they personally know someone who is trans than their counterparts.
  - These groups are already more supportive of pro-trans policies
  - Even among the groups who are more commonly in opposition to pro-trans policies, knowing a trans person is a mediating factor on some issue but not views of gender-affirming health care or teaching gender identity in schools.

Laws Prohibiting Discrimination Against Trans People Are Popular Among Most Adults And Across Party Lines, Republicans Are More Divided On Support

Percent who say they **support** laws **prohibiting discrimination** against trans people...



NOTE: See topline for full question wording.

SOURCE: KFF/Washington Post Trans Survey (Nov. 10-Dec. 1, 2022)

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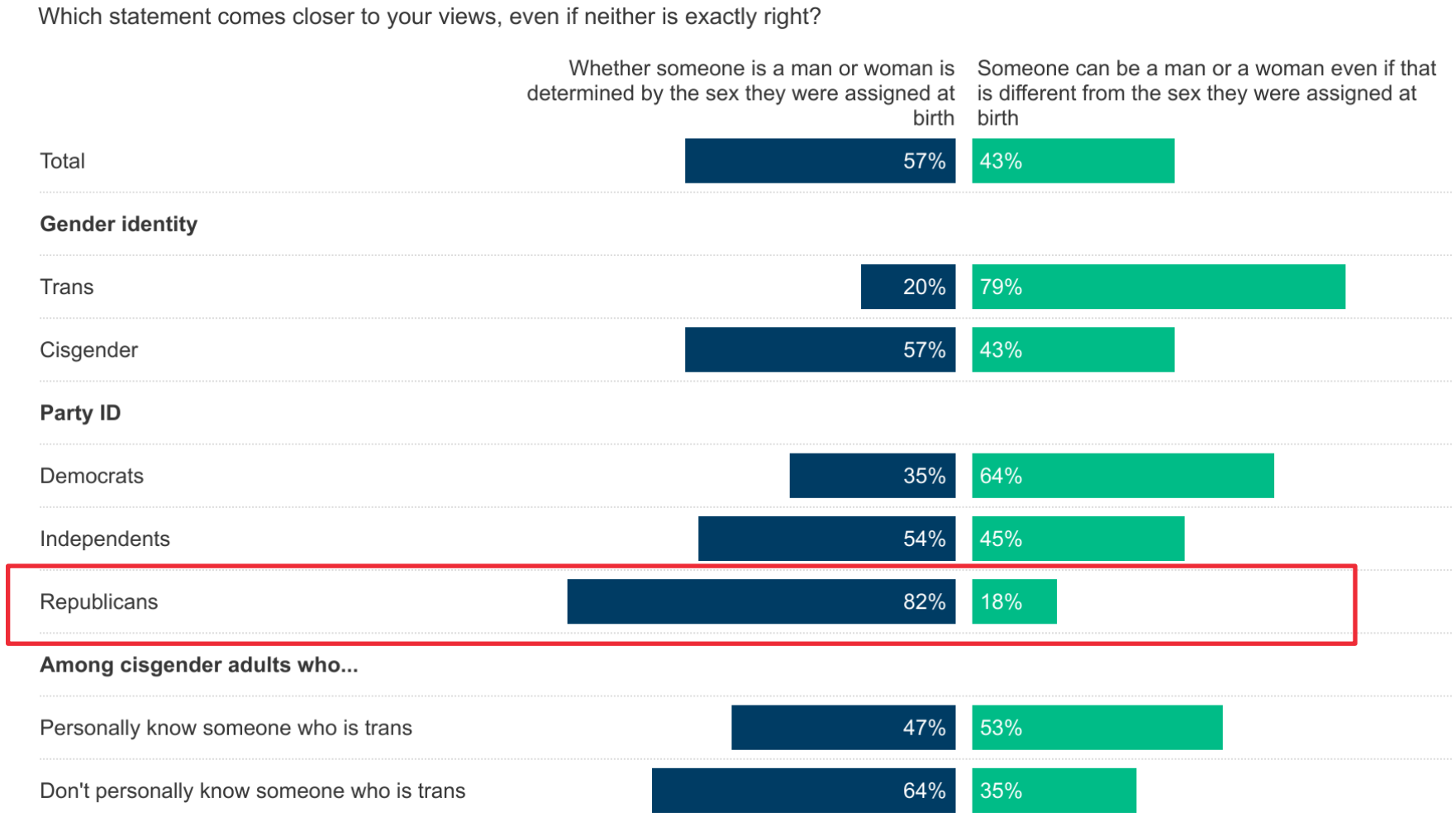
The Public Is Split On What Determines Gender



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SOURCE: KFF/Washington Post Trans Survey (Nov. 10-Dec. 1, 2022)

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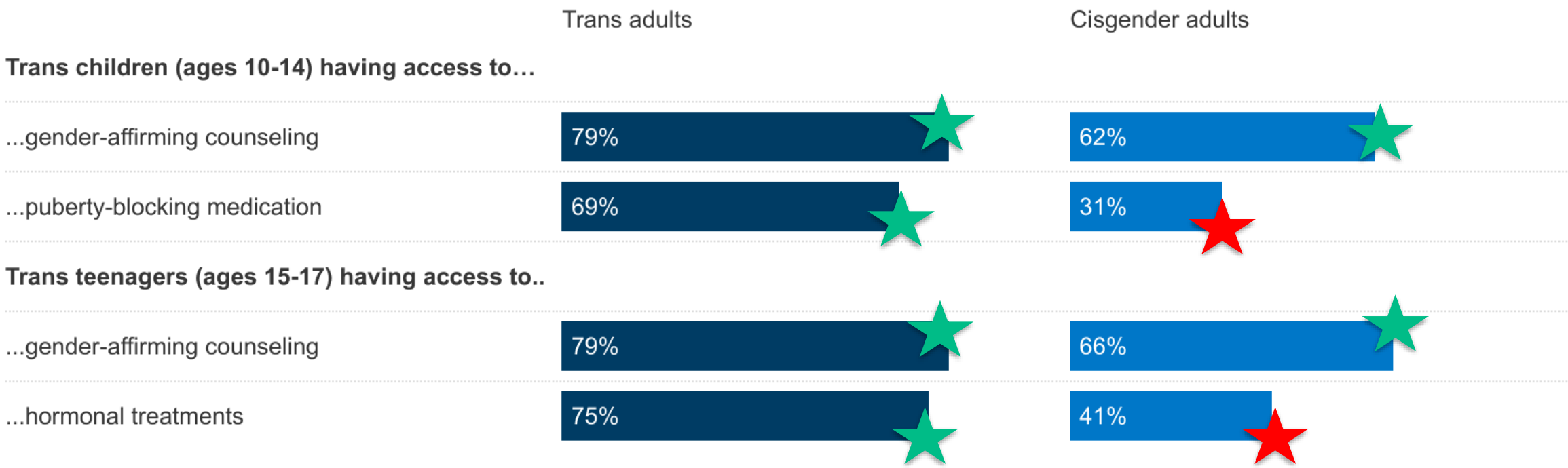
Majorities Support Access To Gender-Affirming Counseling For Trans Youth But Not Access To Puberty Blockers Or Hormonal Treatments

Percent of trans and cisgender adults who say they **support** each of the following under medical supervision:



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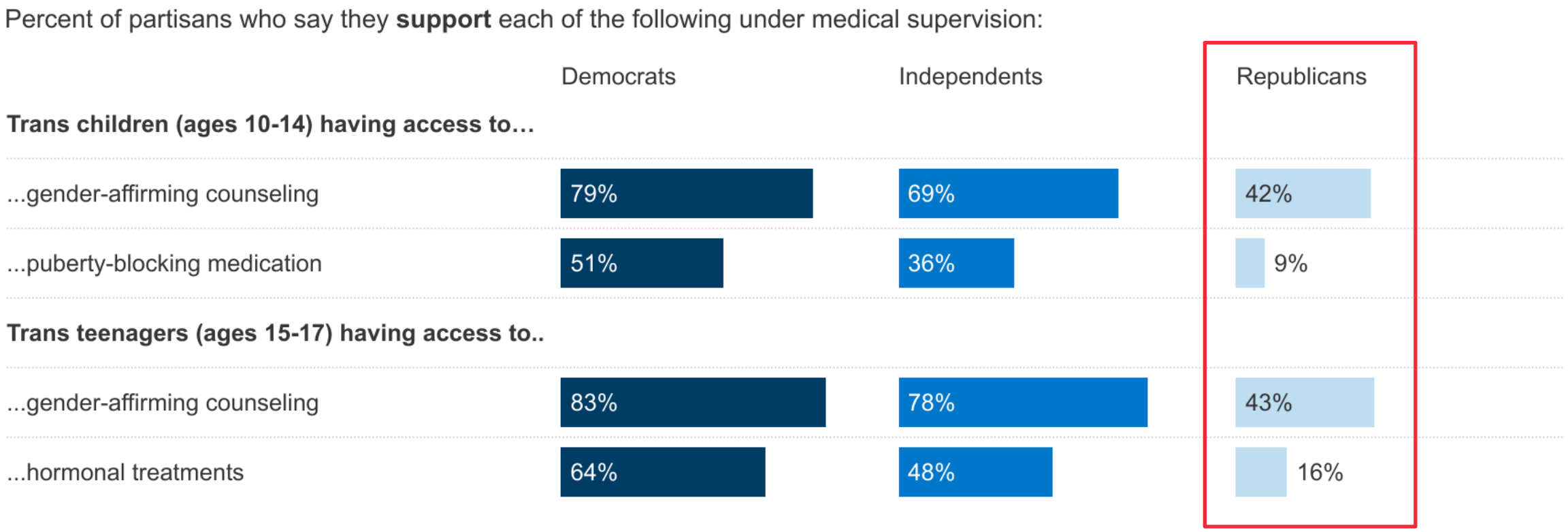
Less Than Half of Republicans Support Access To Puberty Blockers And Hormonal Treatments, Or Gender-Affirming Counseling For Trans Youth



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SOURCE: KFF/Washington Post Trans Survey (Nov. 10-Dec. 1, 2022)

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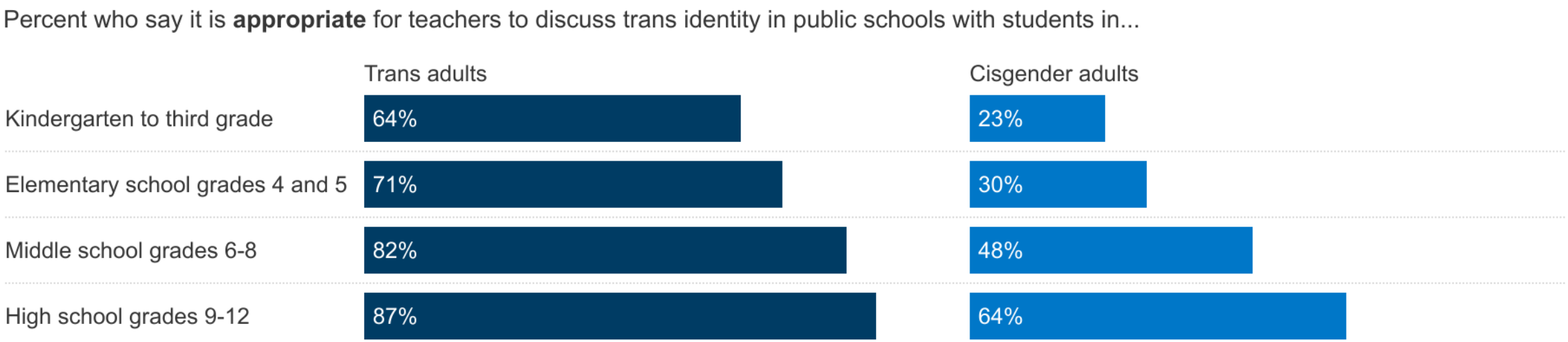
Trans Adults Are Much More Likely Than Cisgender Adults To Say It Is Appropriate To Discuss Trans Identity In Public Schools With Students In Any Grade



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SOURCE: KFF/Washington Post Trans Survey (Nov. 10-Dec. 1, 2022)

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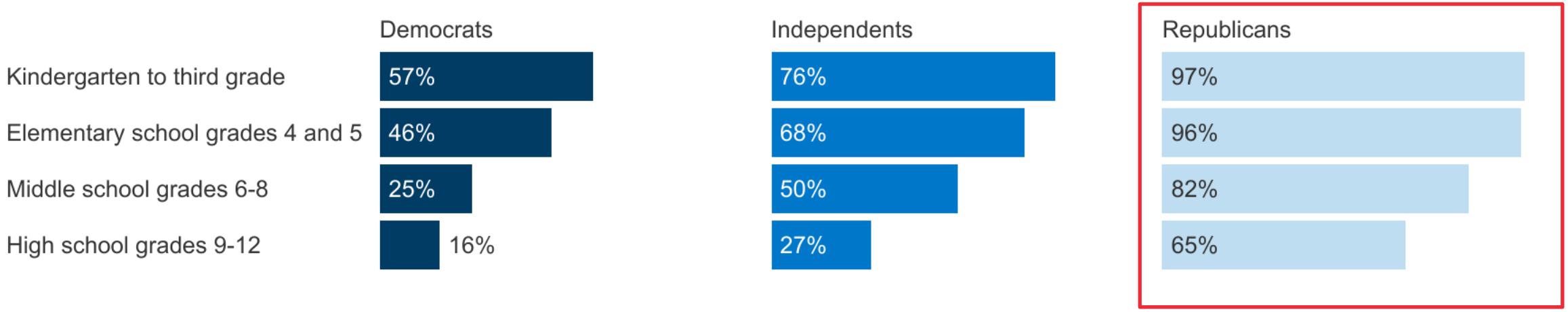
Republicans Are Near Unanimous In Their Opposition To Teachers Discussing Trans Identity With Students In Public Elementary School And Kindergarten, While Democrats Are More Divided

Percent who say it is **inappropriate** for teachers to discuss trans identity in public schools with students in...



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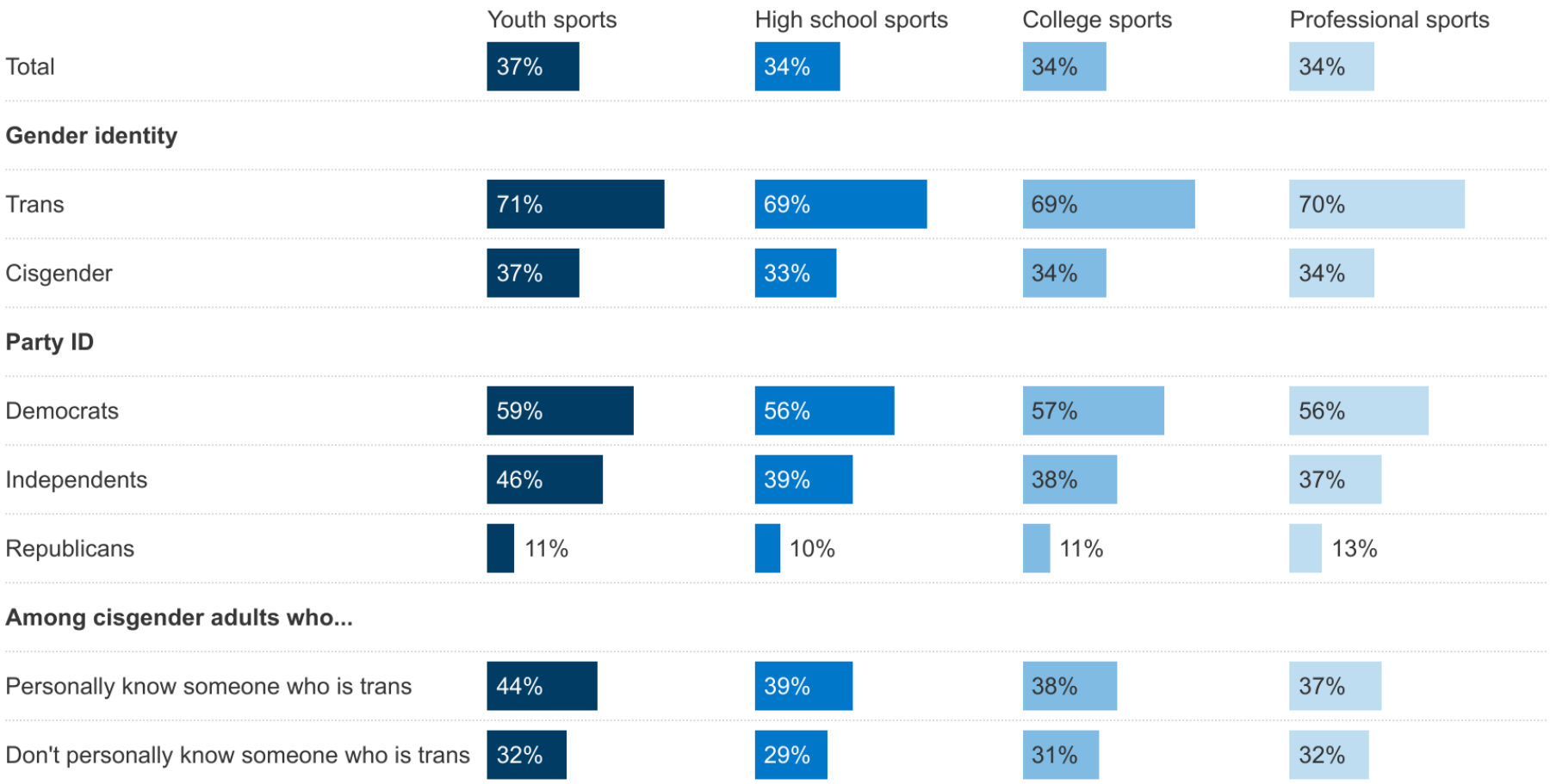
Should Trans Women And Girls Be Allowed To Compete With Other Women And Girls In Sports?

Percent who say that trans women and girls **should be allowed** to compete in sports with other women and girls at each of the following levels



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How Important Is A Personal Connection? Important, But Not Completely Flipping Attitudes

- Among Republicans who say they personally know a trans person *(n*=105):
  - Support for laws opposing discrimination increases **at least 10 percentage points** across all items asked about.
  - They are 10 percentage points more likely than those who do not have a personal connection to say it is **appropriate** for teachers to discuss trans identity in schools, but still less than half say it is appropriate.
  - Support for trans children and trans teens having access to gender-affirming counseling or therapy under medical supervision increases **7 percentage points to 46% support** both (children and teens).
  - No change in support for participation in sports.

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Limitations and Next Steps In Policy Research

- **Limitation**: A survey focused on trans issues may prime opinions on these policies including encouraging Democrats to be more supportive and Republicans to be in opposition?

- **Limitation:** The cisgender identity was the default for the non-trans identity, which may not be as inclusive as we should when describing this group.

- **Next steps:** What role will trans issues play in the 2024 Presidential Election? Will it motivate Republican voters? Will it motivate Democratic voters?

- **Next steps:** As states move forward with legislation, will we see more polarized attitudes?

- **Next steps:** The trans population is largely a younger group, as more people personally know trans people or family members, will attitudes shift?

To read the full report and see The Washington Post coverage:

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