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Illinois Ranks 8th in the Nation of Most Cases of Human Trafficking

Illinois ranks eighth in the nation in the number of cases of human trafficking including many child victims. Yet an overwhelming majority of Illinois citizens are uninformed about this important human rights issue, according to the results of the latest poll from the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The poll provided voters the definition of human trafficking from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) as the act of recruiting, harboring, moving or obtaining a person, by force, fraud or coercion, for the purposes of involuntary servitude, debt bondage or sexual exploitation. This definition was provided to inform voters on the issue and remove potential bias.

The Simon Poll™ was conducted Saturday, March 4th to Saturday, March 11th. The sample included 1,000 randomly selected registered voters and a margin for error for plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Sixty percent of the interviews were with respondents on cell phones.

More than half, 51 percent, of voters surveyed disagree or strongly disagree that sex trafficking affects their area, with 28 percent reporting that it does. One in five voters, 21 percent did not know or refused to answer. Support is strong for legally required human trafficking training for law enforcement. Six in seven voters, 86 percent, reported there should be mandated training on human trafficking in the state of Illinois. This data was replicated across all demographics including region, education, party affiliation, age and employment. One in ten voters, 10 percent, reported training on human trafficking should not be required by law.

“Illinois’ large population centers like Chicago, major airports, interstate highway networks and Midwestern location make the state a prime location for human trafficking,” said Kimberly Palermo, the Celia M. Howard Fellow at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. “Pimps, traffickers and family members exploit runaway and homeless youth to infiltrate the multi-billion criminal enterprise, and we have a duty to protect and prevent this through training and public education efforts.”

In 2016, Gov. Bruce Rauner signed House Bill 2822 into law, which created a task force to address this human rights issue statewide including development of a statewide plan to combat

human trafficking, create methods to protect the rights of victims and explore public awareness approaches to educate the state.

Affected by Region. Voters in Chicago, 32 percent, reported most often that sex trafficking affected their area. This was reflected similarly in the rural regions outside Cook and the collar counties, where 31 percent of voters reported that sex trafficking affected their area. Only 26 percent of voters from the Chicago suburbs reported that sex trafficking affected their area. Those who strongly disagreed or disagreed that sex trafficking affects their area were 47 percent in Chicago, 53 percent in Chicago suburbs, and 49 percent in Downstate areas of Illinois.

Affected by Political Party. Among Republicans, Democrats and Independents, Republicans were most likely to report that they strongly disagree or disagree that sex trafficking affects their area at 54 percent.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline recorded 198 cases, a 35 percent jump over 2015, of human trafficking in Illinois alone. Throughout the nation, Polaris has learned of 8,042 cases just this past year. Polaris Project operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other private donors.

Half of the Democrats, 50 percent, strongly disagree or disagree that sex trafficking affects their area. Independents followed Democrats with 47 percent of Independents who strongly disagree or disagree. Independents were least likely to strongly agree or agree that sex trafficking affect their local area at 24 percent. Republicans at 32 percent and Democrats at 27 percent reported that sex trafficking affects their area.

Respondents were also asked, “Which comes closer to your view: Prostitution or drug related offenses committed by sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted or such offenses should be tried like any other charge.” Overall, 22 percent of voters said that sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted, and 69 percent said they should be tried like any other charge. Nine percent of voters reported they do not know or refused to answer.

“Our polling shows much remains to be done to combat an issue many have called a modern form of slavery,” said Jak Tichenor, interim director the Paul Simon Institute. “But Ms. Palermo’s important work helps build a foundation for bipartisan legislative efforts to make Illinois a national leader in the fight against human trafficking.”

Prosecution by Region. A vast majority of Illinoisans said that sexually exploited adults should be tried for offenses committed. This is reflected in the rural regions outside Cook and the collar counties at 75 percent, Chicago suburbs at 68 percent and Chicago at 62 percent. One in four voters, 25 percent, in Chicago suburbs said sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted. This was reflected similarly in Chicago at 26 percent. Only one in five voters, 15 percent, of voters in Downstate areas of Illinois said sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted for prostitution or drug related offenses.

Prosecution by Political Party. Seven in nine, 78 percent, Republican voters said that sexually exploited adults with prostitution or drug related charges should be tried like any other charge.

Democrats followed with 63 percent and Independents at 62 percent. Only 29 percent of Democrats said that sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted for prostitution or drug related charges. Republicans also reported that sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted at 14 percent and Independents at 24 percent.

People can receive help or report a tip of suspected human trafficking by calling the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888 or by sending a text to the Polaris Project at "BeFree" (233733).

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The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,000 voters is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the population proportion would be within plus or minus the reported margin of error for each subsample. For subsamples, the margin of error increases as the sample size goes down. The margin of error was not adjusted for design effects.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas using the random digit dialing method. The telephone sample was provided to Customer Research International by Scientific Telephone Samples. Potential interviewees were screened based on whether they were registered voters and quotas based on area code and sex (<60 percent female). The sample obtained 51 percent male and 49 percent female respondents. Interviewers asked to speak to the youngest registered voter at home at the time of the call.

Cell phone interviews accounted for 60 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available.

Field work was conducted from March 4 through March 11. No auto-dial or "robo" polling is included. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund. The data were not weighted in any way. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute's polling web site, simonpoll.org.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative. AAPOR works to encourage objective survey standards for practice and disclosure. Membership in the Transparency Initiative reflects a pledge to practice transparency in reporting survey-based findings.

The Institute's polling data are also archived by four academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The four open source data repositories are: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (<http://ropercenter.cornell.edu/polls/>), The University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org>), the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

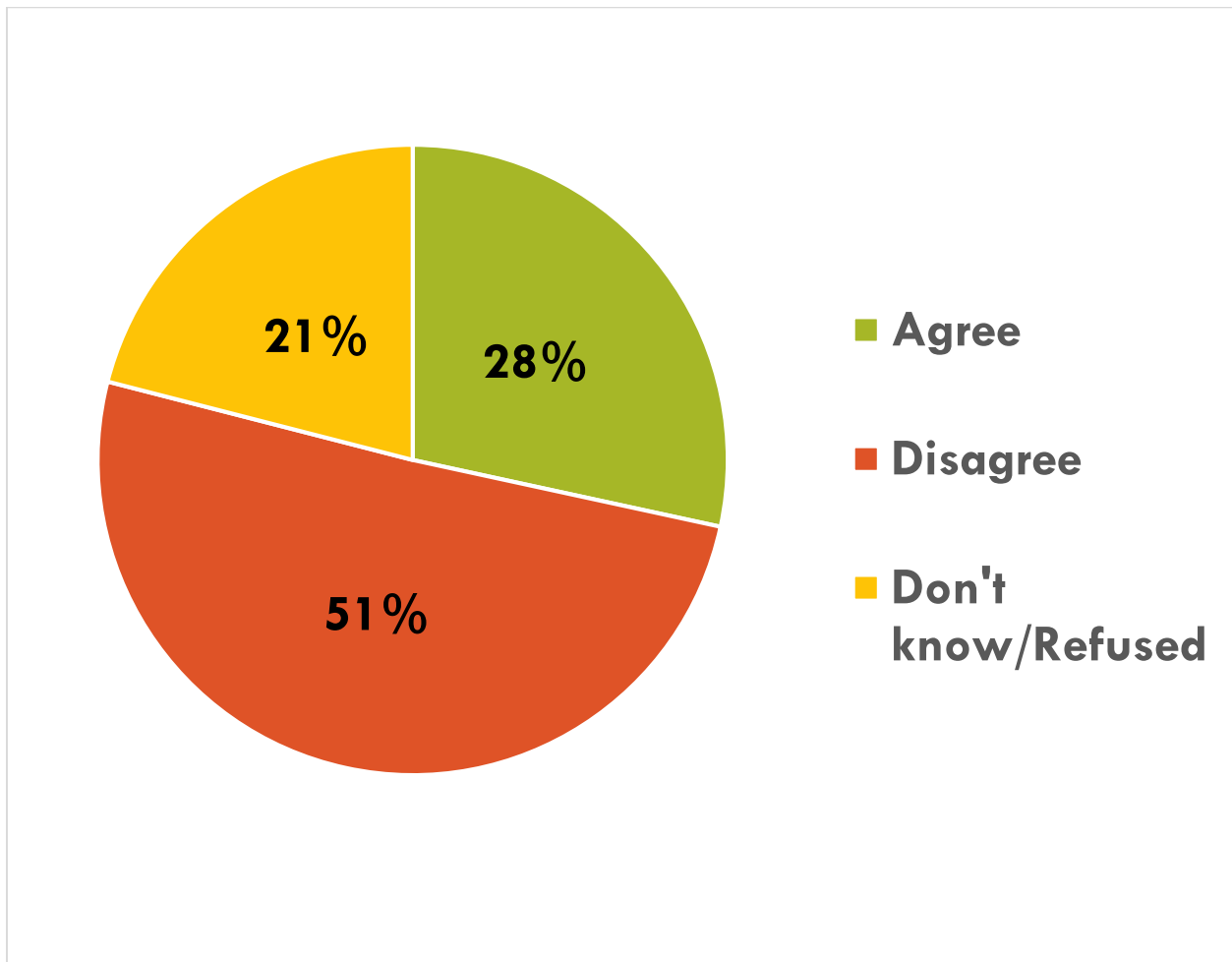
Note: The "Simon Poll" and the "Southern Illinois Poll" are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged- but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU Carbondale.

Frequency Tables¹

SEX TRAFFICKING AFFECTS LOCAL AREA

Sex trafficking affects my area: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Agree	28.4%
<i>Strongly agree</i>	9.5%
<i>Agree</i>	18.9%
Disagree	50.6%
<i>Disagree</i>	28.7%
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	21.9%
Other/Don't know (not read)	21.0%

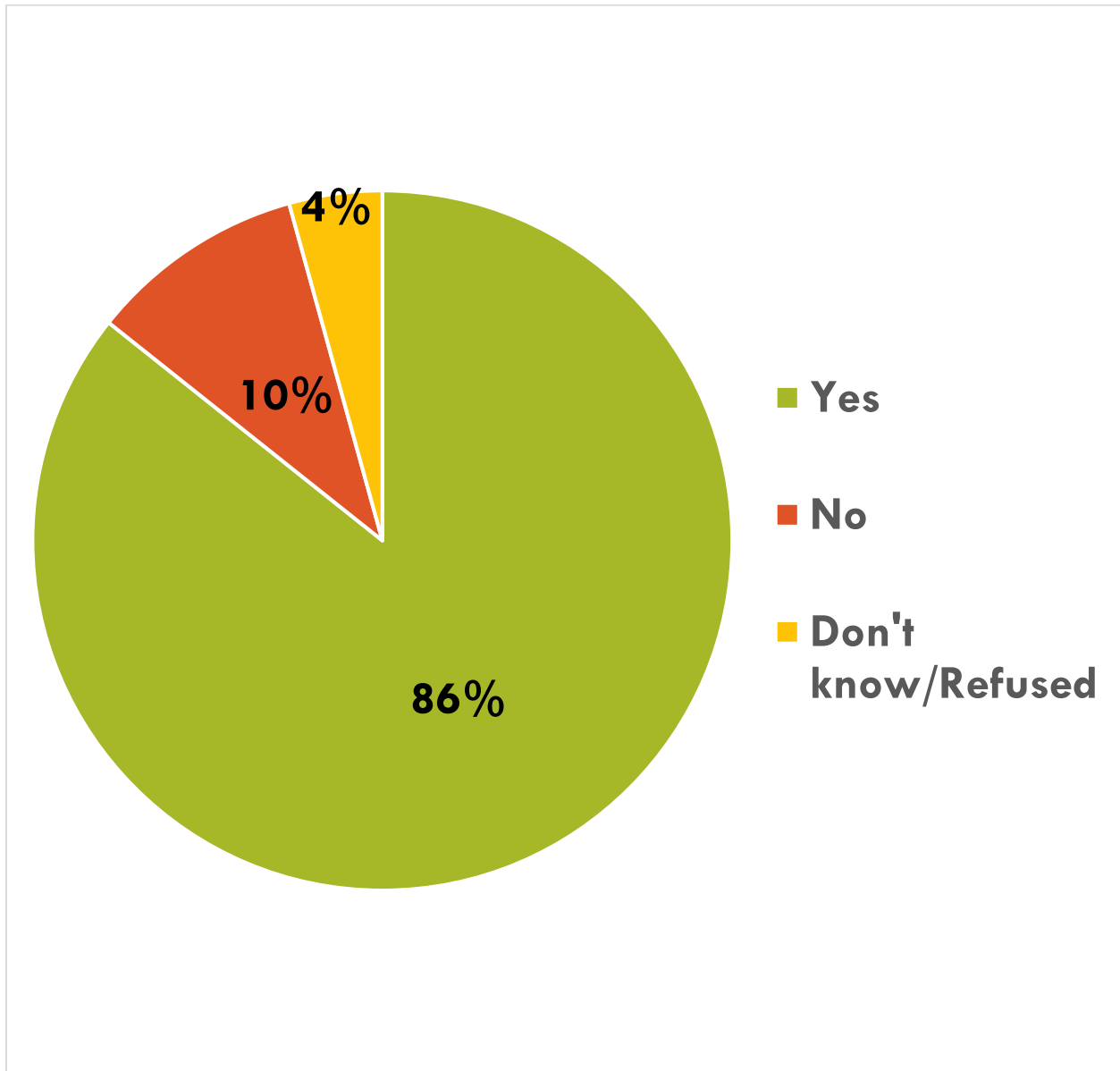


¹ Values are rounded and may not sum to 100%.

TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT ON TRAFFICKING

Do you believe that training for law enforcement on human trafficking should be required by law?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Yes	85.7%
No	10.0%
Don't know/Refused	4.3%

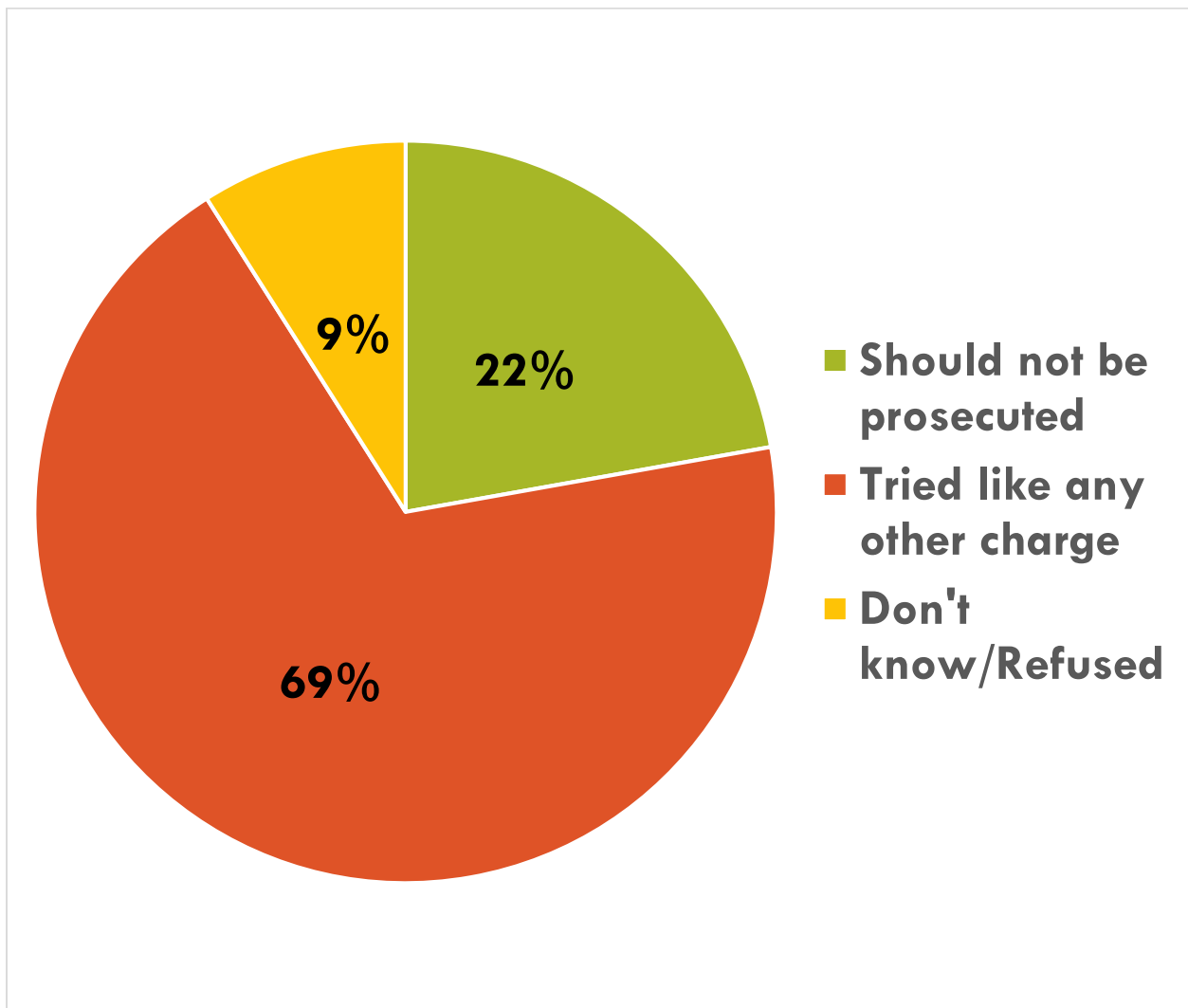


PROSECUTE OFFENSES COMMITTED BY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED ADULTS

Which comes closer to your view:

- *Prostitution or drug related offenses committed by sexually exploited adults should not be prosecuted*
- *Such offenses should be tried like any other charge*

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Should not be prosecuted	22.2%
Should be tried like any other	68.8%
Other/Don't know (not read)	9.0%

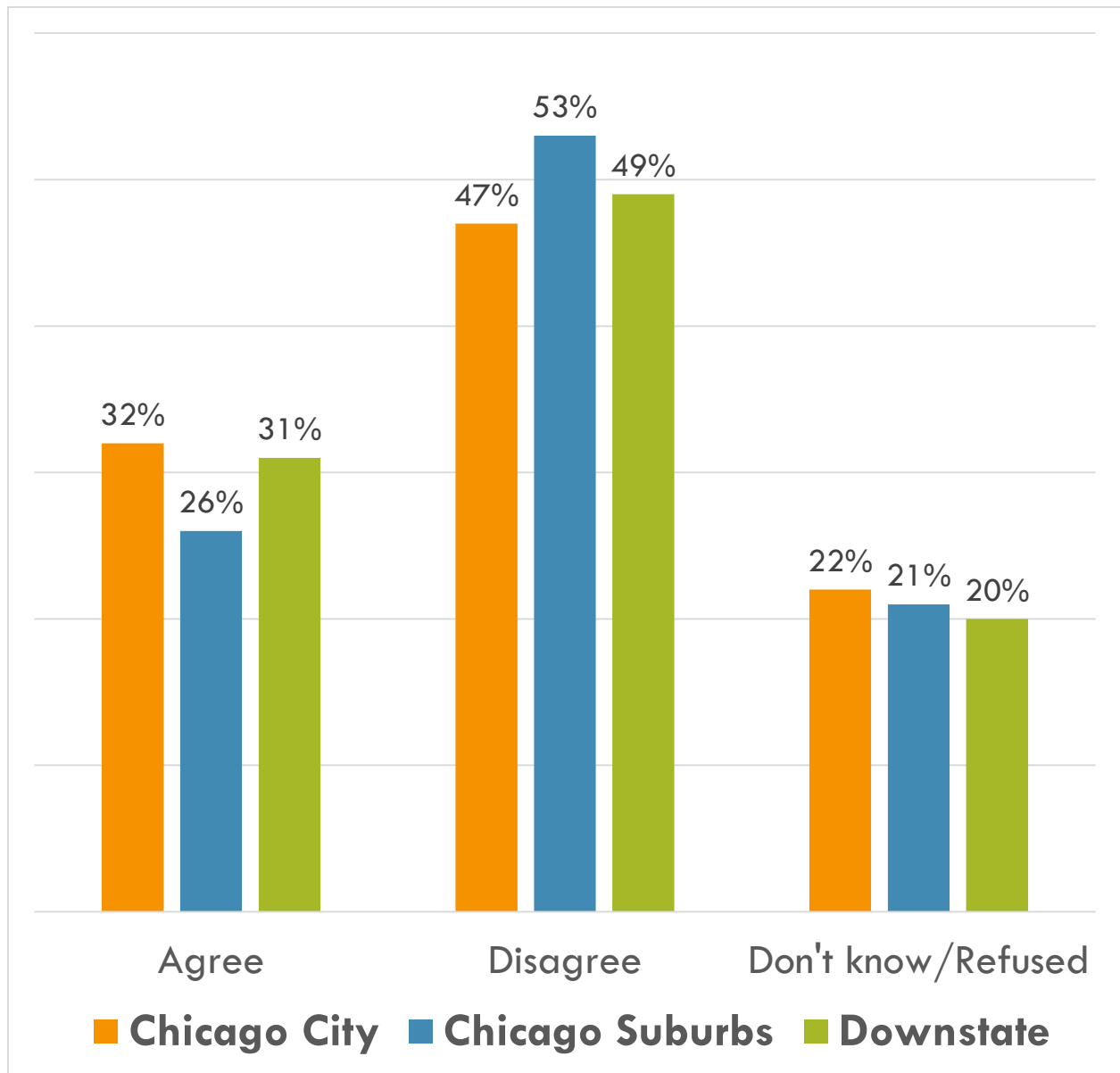


Demographic Crosstabs and Historical Trends

SEX TRAFFICKING AFFECTS LOCAL AREA

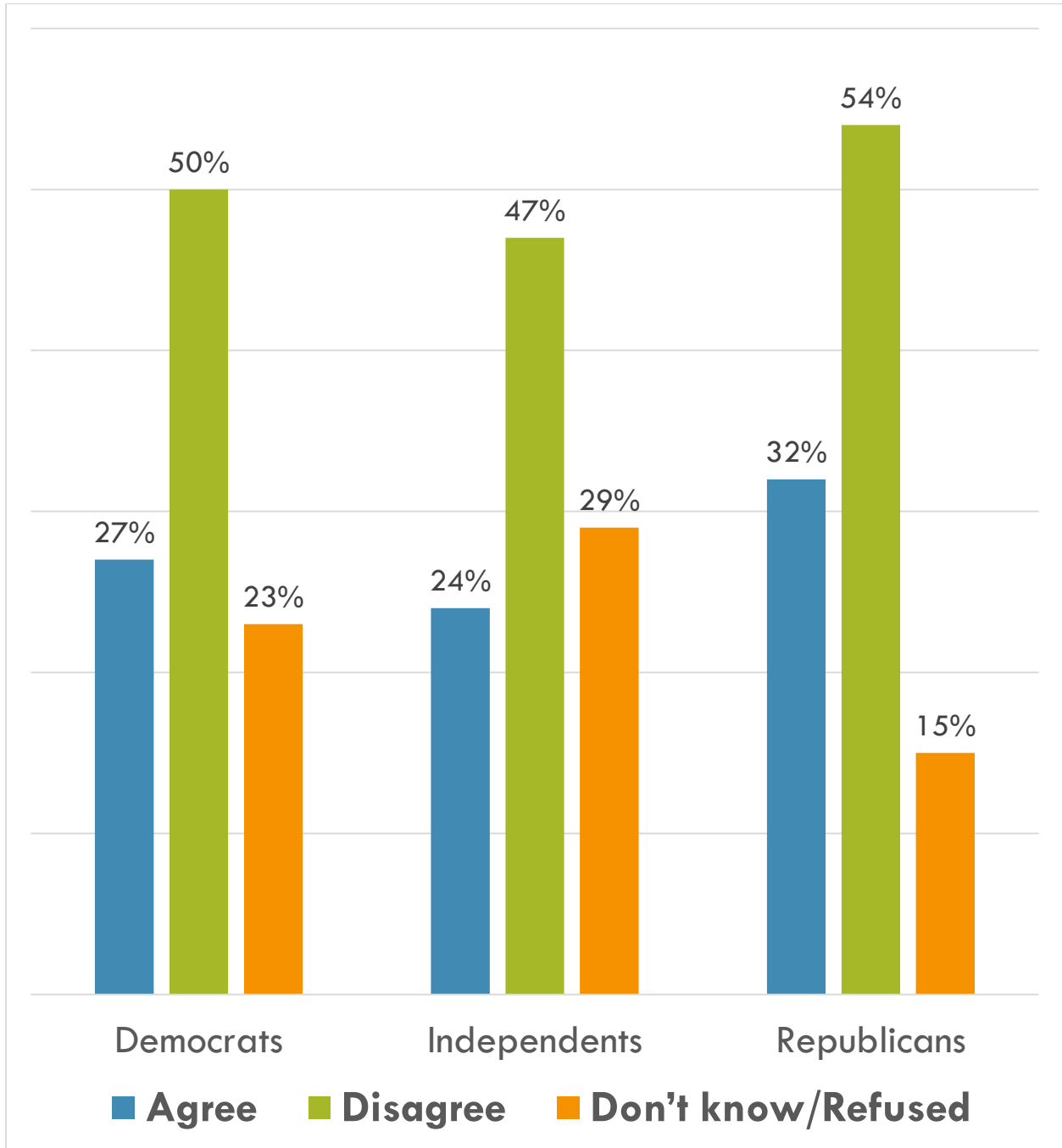
By Area

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Agree	32%	26%	31%
Disagree	47%	53%	49%
Don't know/Refused	22%	21%	20%



By Political Party

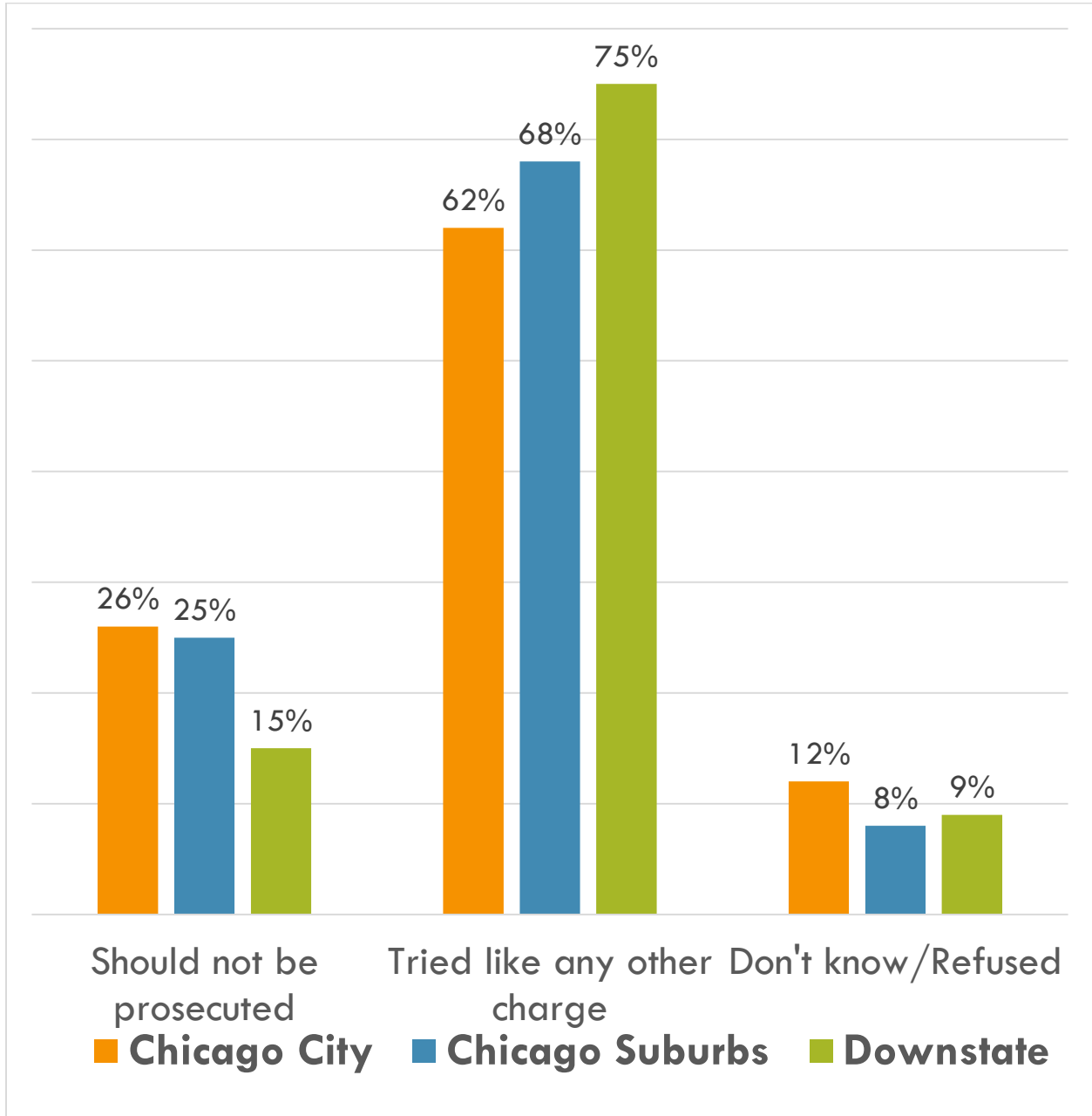
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Agree	27%	24%	32%
Disagree	50%	47%	54%
Don't know/Refused	23%	29%	15%



PROSECUTE OFFENSES COMMITTED BY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED ADULTS

By Area

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Should not be prosecuted	26%	25%	15%
Should be tried like any other	62%	68%	75%
Other/Don't know (not read)	12%	8%	9%



By Political Party

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Should not be prosecuted	29%	24%	14%
Should be tried like any other	63%	62%	78%
Other/Don't know (not read)	8%	15%	8%

