



Updates on the Female Recruiting Market

**SLIDES ONLY
NO SCRIPT PROVIDED**

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DACOWITS

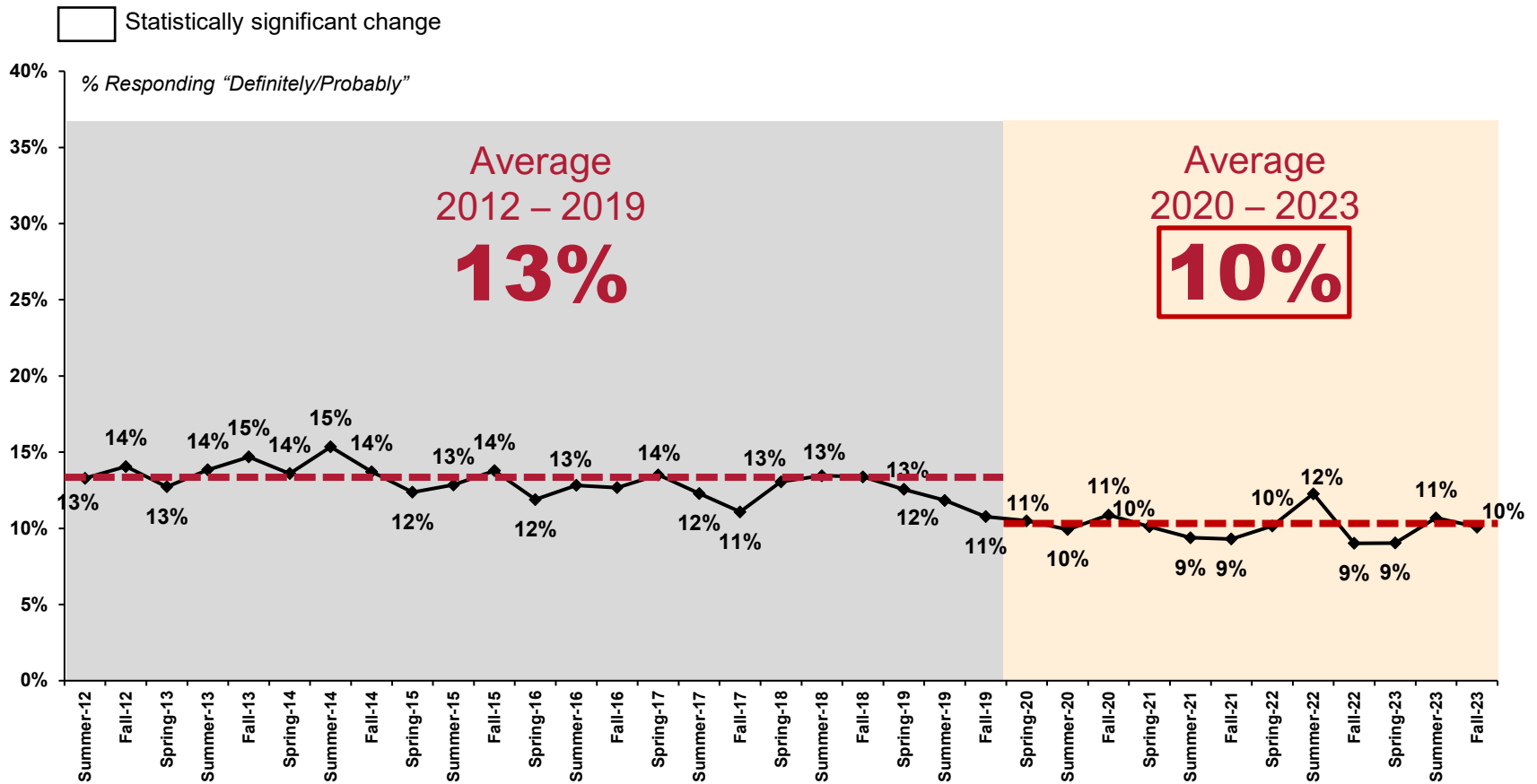
Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

- Female youth propensity is low, and the majority of female youth have never considered the Military as an option. Female youth have lower eligibility compared to male youth.
- Female youth have stronger ambitions toward higher education and greater concerns about the risks and sacrifices of military service than male youth. Perceptions of risk outweigh the perceived benefits.
- Perceptions of self-efficacy, knowledge, and awareness of the Military are low among female youth.
- Influencers are less likely to recommend the Military as an option to female youth. Perceptions of parental support for joining the Military are lower among female youth.

General Military Propensity

Sustained Long Term Challenge for Recruiting

In the next few years, how likely is it that you will be serving in the Military?



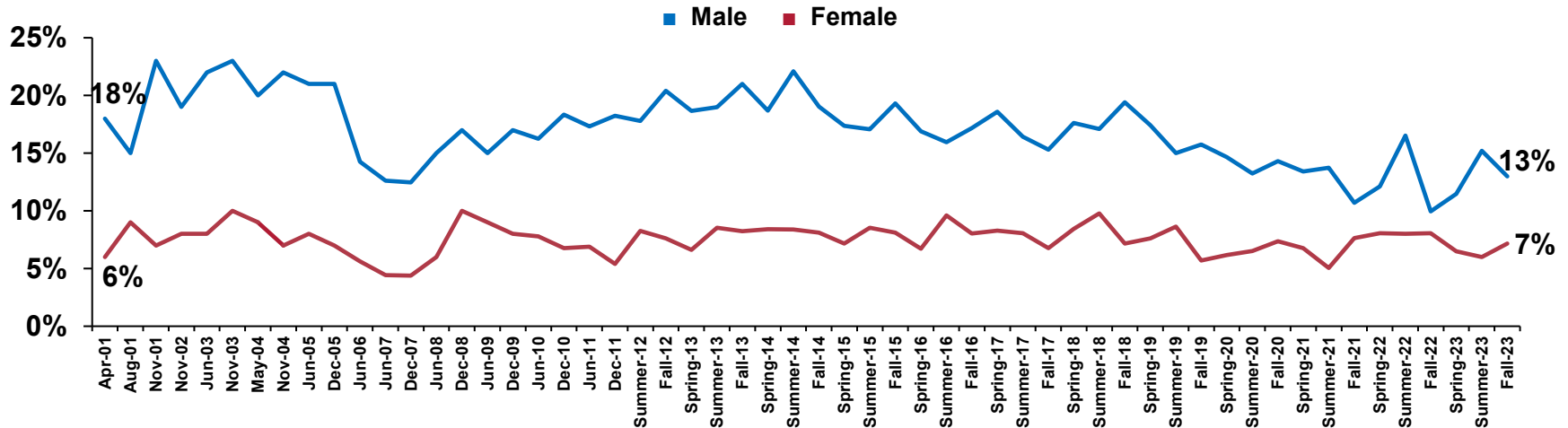
The range of youth propensed for military service has shifted to a new normal.

Note: Youth ages 16–21. Estimates are charted to precise values. Labels are rounded to the nearest whole percent.
Source: DoD Youth Poll

**Why do female youth decide not to
join the Military?**

Military Propensity and Consideration

In the next few years, how likely is it that you will be serving in the Military?
 % Probably/Definitely

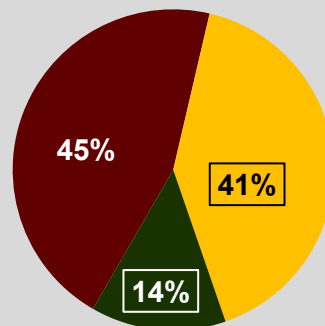


Before taking this survey, how much consideration had you given to the possibility of joining the Military?

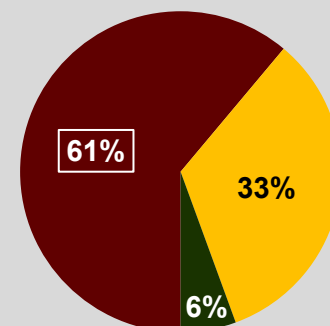
Youth Poll (Fall 2023)

☐ = Significantly higher than other subgroup

Male



Female



Female propensity to serve in the Military remains low, and many female youth have never even thought about military service.

Source: DoD Youth Polls; Youth ages 16–21; Data Presented in this brief are from nationally representative surveys.; Proportions may not add up to 100% due to survey refusals.

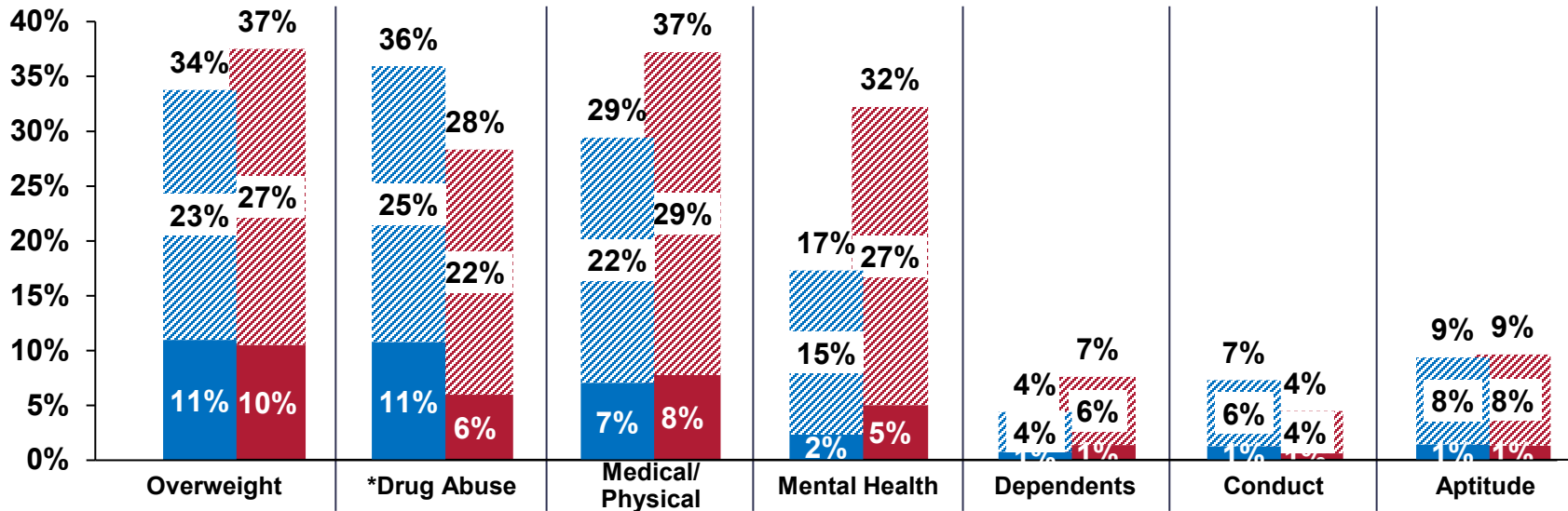
Disqualifiers: Unique and Combined Impact

By Gender

2020 Overall Eligibility

Male Youth: 25%
Female Youth: 21%

Percentage Disqualified for Single Reason Alone and in Combination with Other Reasons (w/o waiver)



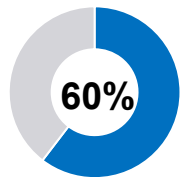
Note: *Drug Abuse: includes a history of drug (including pharmaceutical medications, illegal drugs, and other substances of abuse) and alcohol abuse.

Male youth are more likely to be eligible for military service compared to female youth.

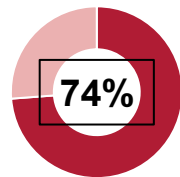
Eligible Youth: Academic Quality and Career Goals

High Academic Quality

(As and Bs in High School)

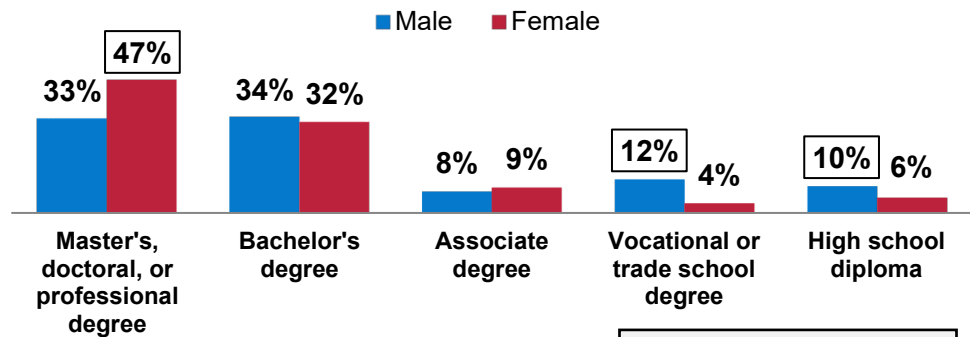


Male



Female

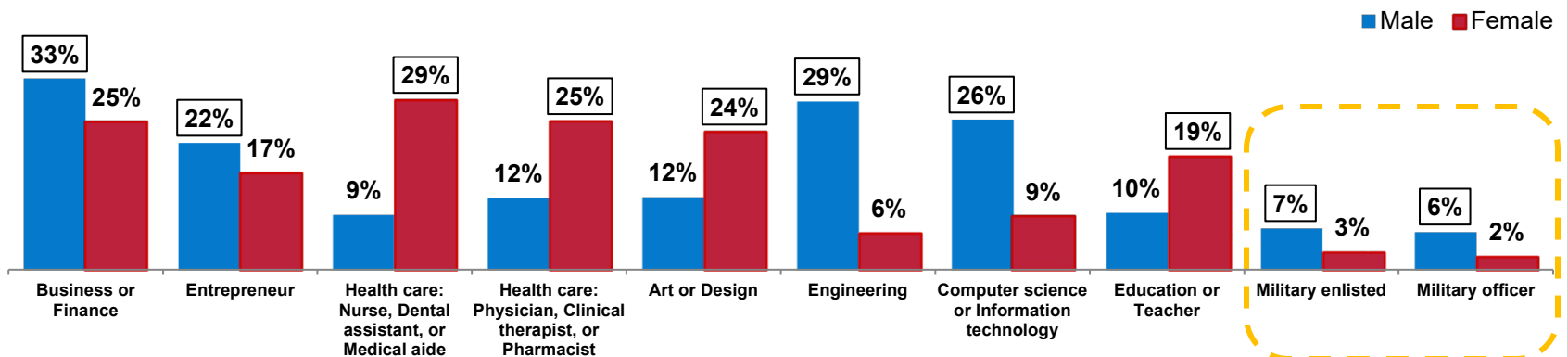
What is the highest level of education you would eventually like to complete?



☐ = Significantly higher than other subgroup

Which of the following careers are you likely to pursue?

Top Eight Careers Endorsed and Endorsement of Military Jobs

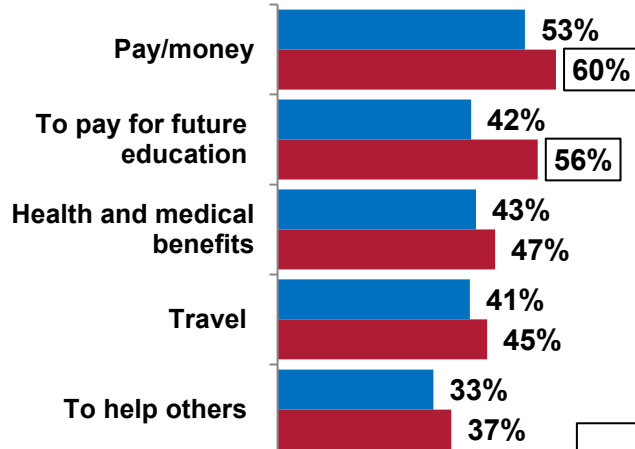


Female youth are higher academic quality and have more ambitions toward higher education beyond a bachelor's degree.

Female Youth: Military Attitudes and Expectations

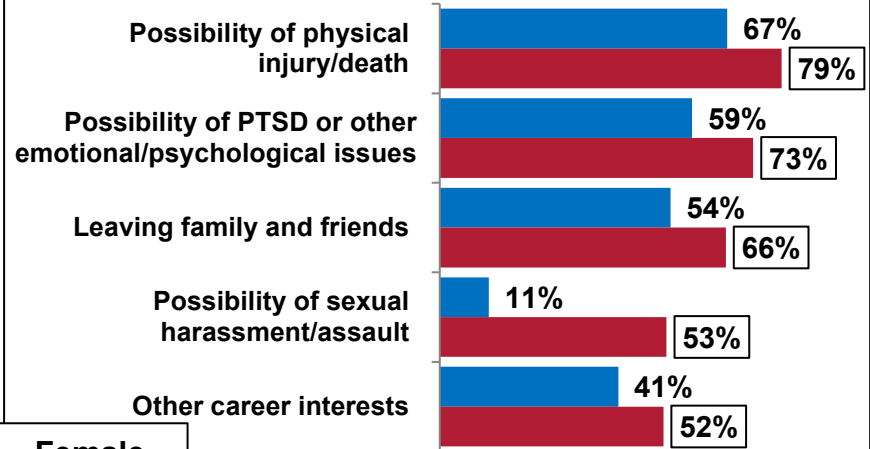
If you were to consider joining the U.S. Military, what would be the main reason(s)?

Youth ages 16–21, Top 5 Choices for Female Youth Displayed



What would be the main reason(s) why you would NOT consider joining the U.S. Military?

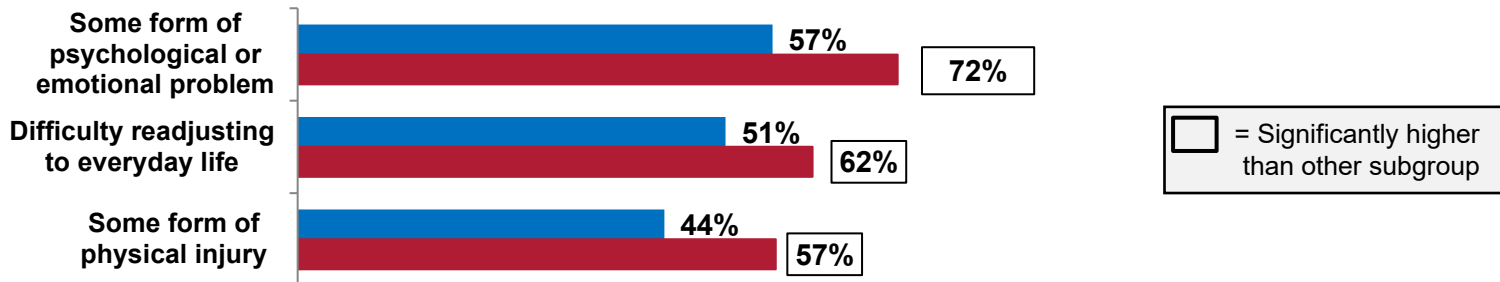
Youth ages 16–21, Top 5 Choices for Female Youth Displayed



■ Male ■ Female

How likely do you think it is that someone getting out of the Military will have...?

DoD Ad Tracking Recruits Study (April–June 2024), Youth ages 16–24, % Responding Likely/Very likely

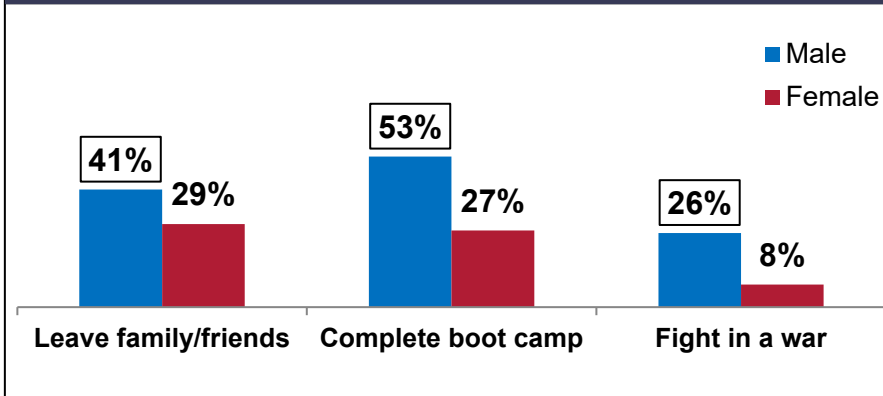


For female youth, the perceived risks and sacrifices, especially perceived risk of harm, outweigh the potential benefits of service.

Self-Efficacy and Relatability

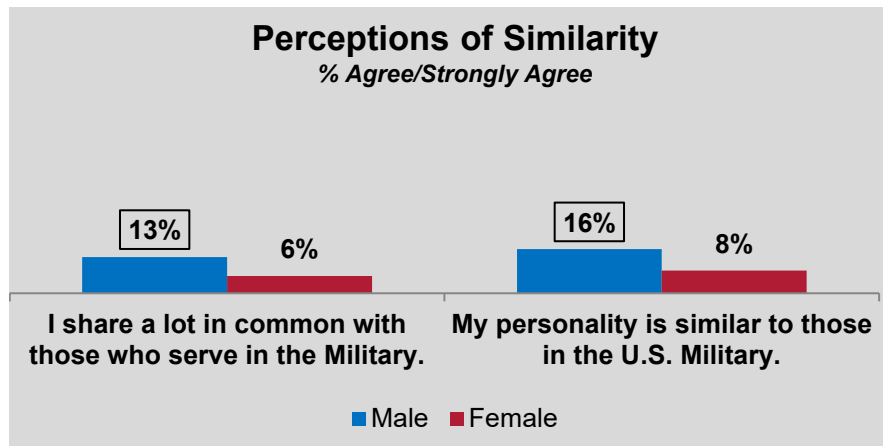
How confident are you that you could...

% Probably yes/Definitely yes



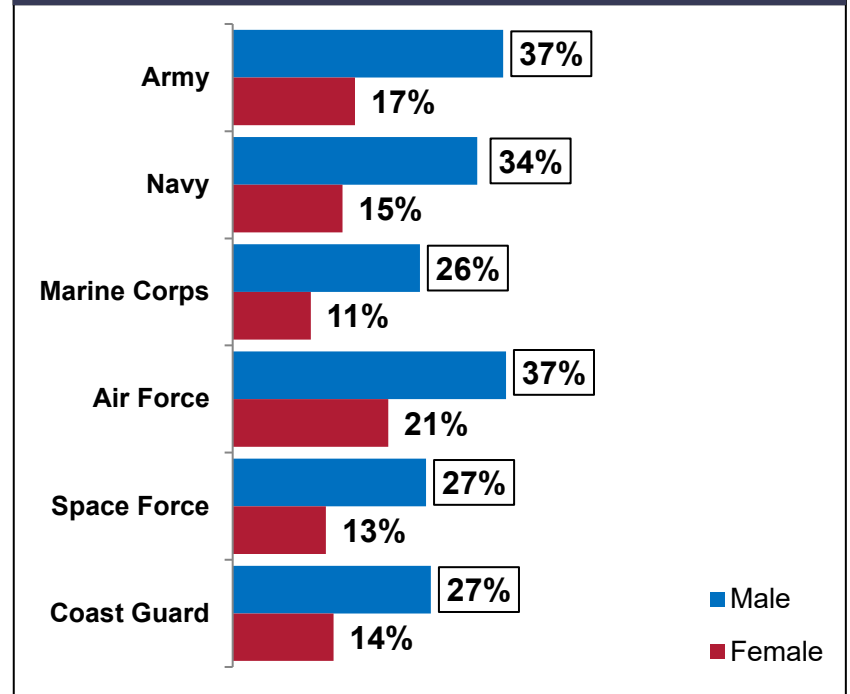
Perceptions of Similarity

% Agree/Strongly Agree



Please indicate how confident you are that you could be successful in each of the following Services:

% Probably yes/Definitely yes



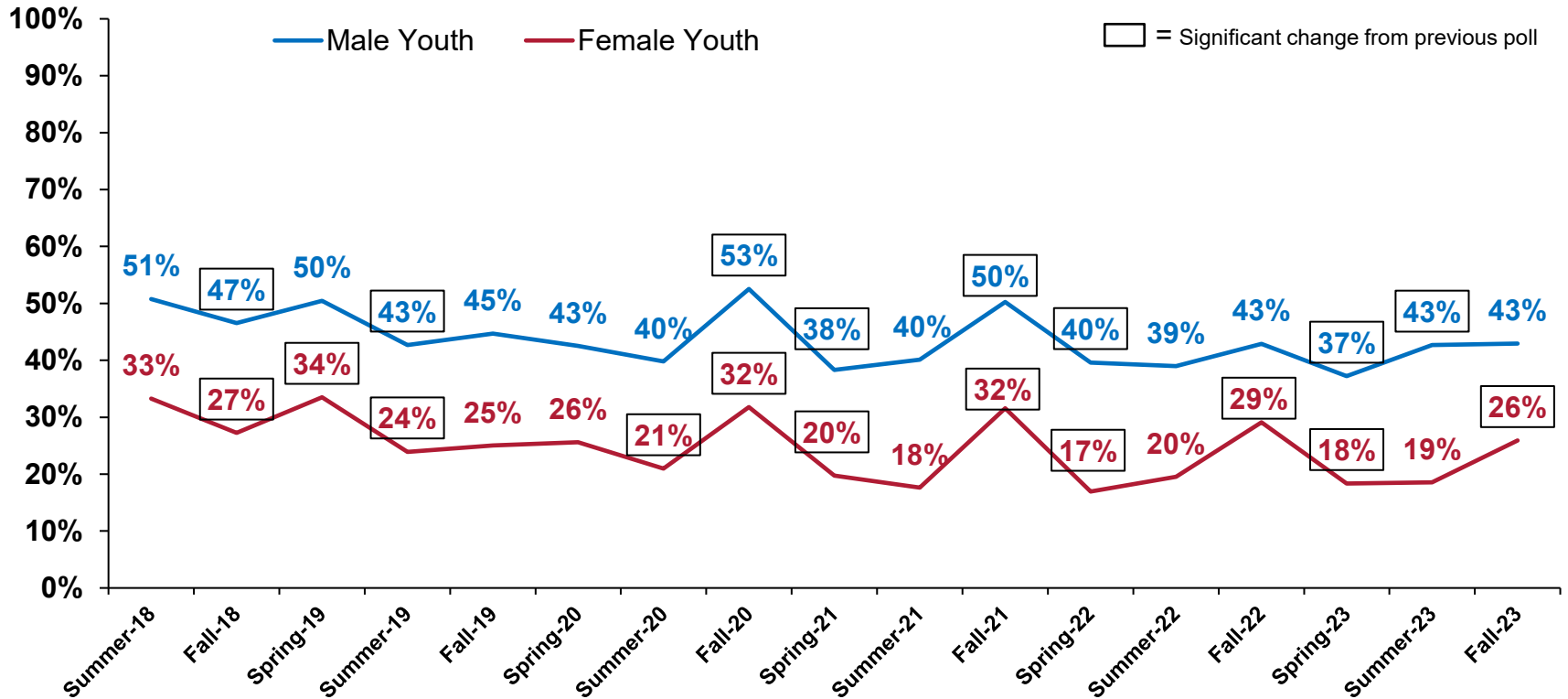
☐ = Significantly higher than other subgroup

Very few female youth identify with Service members, and few believe they could be successful in the Military.

Self-Efficacy Over Time

How confident you are that you could be successful in the Military?

% Probably yes/Definitely yes

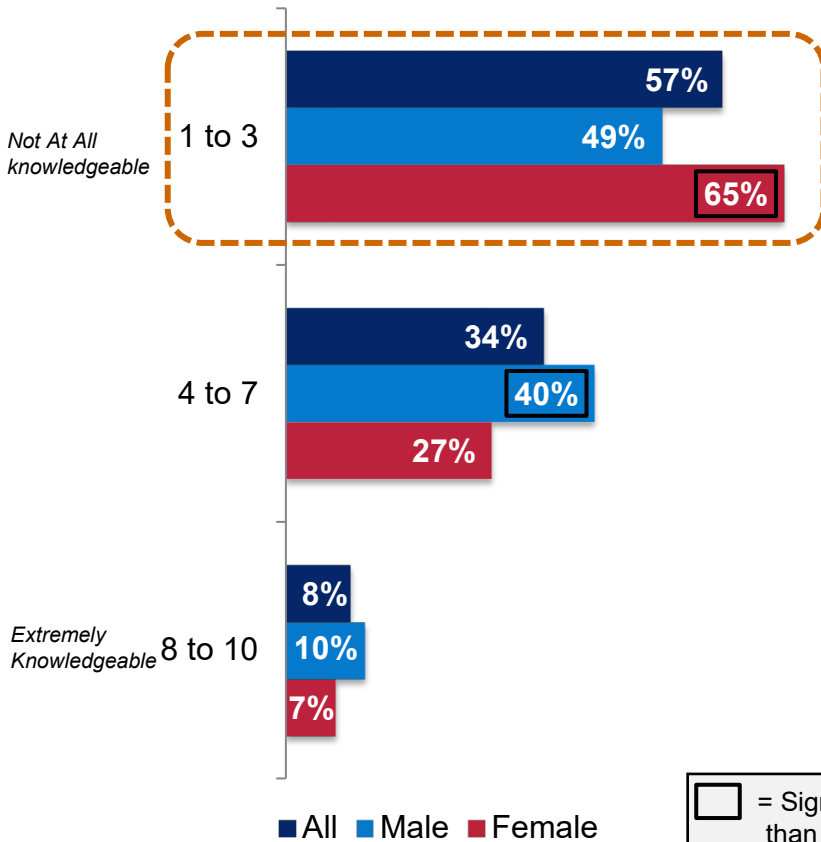


Male youth tend to report higher levels of confidence in their ability to succeed in the Military compared to female youth.

Awareness and Knowledge

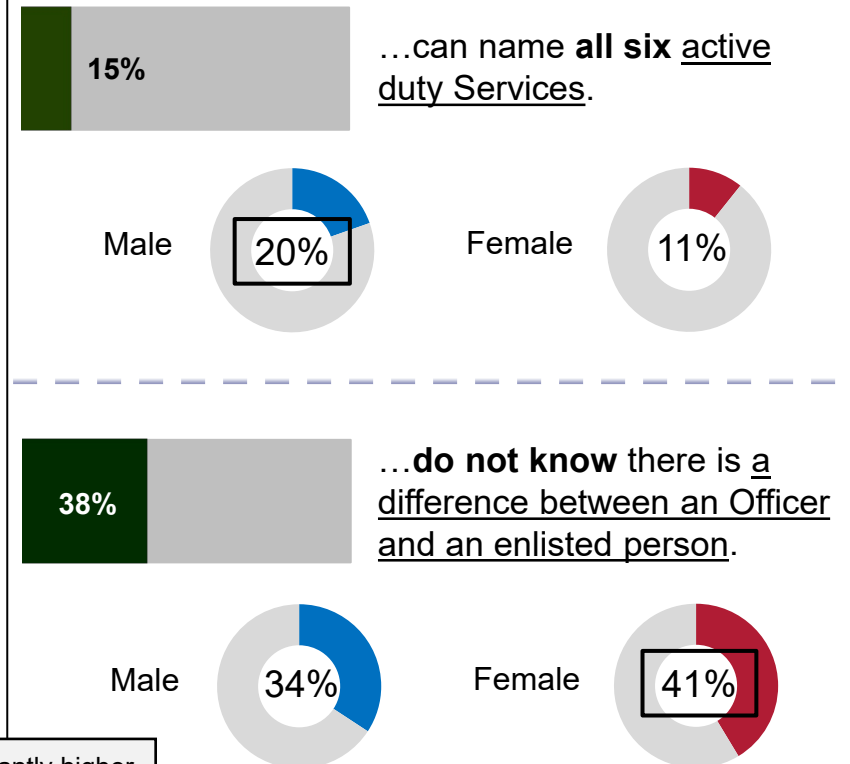
Self-Reported Knowledge of Active Duty Services

Young adults ages 17–35



Awareness

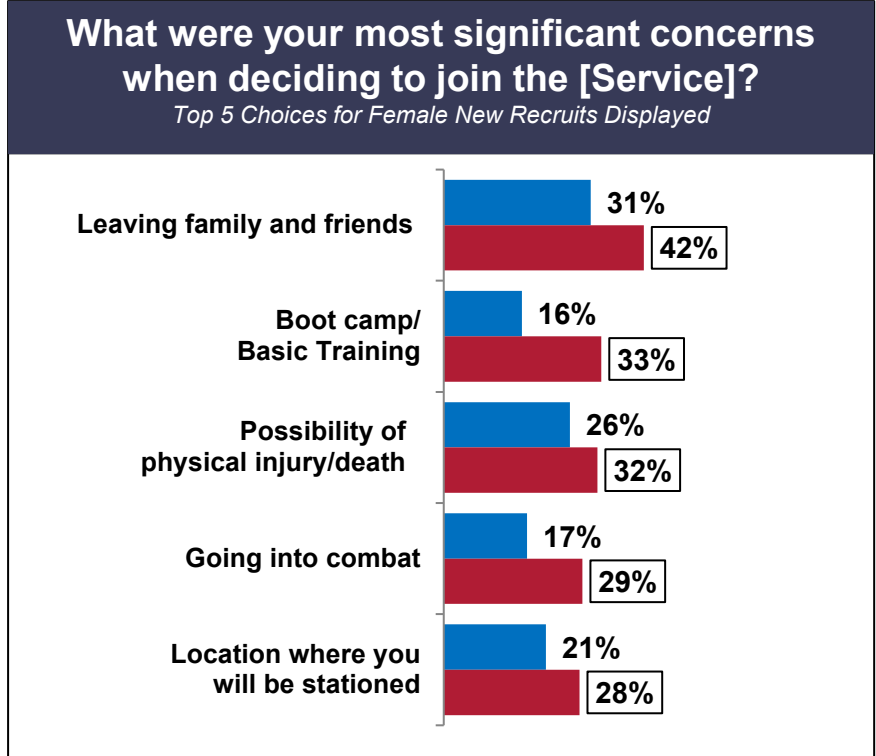
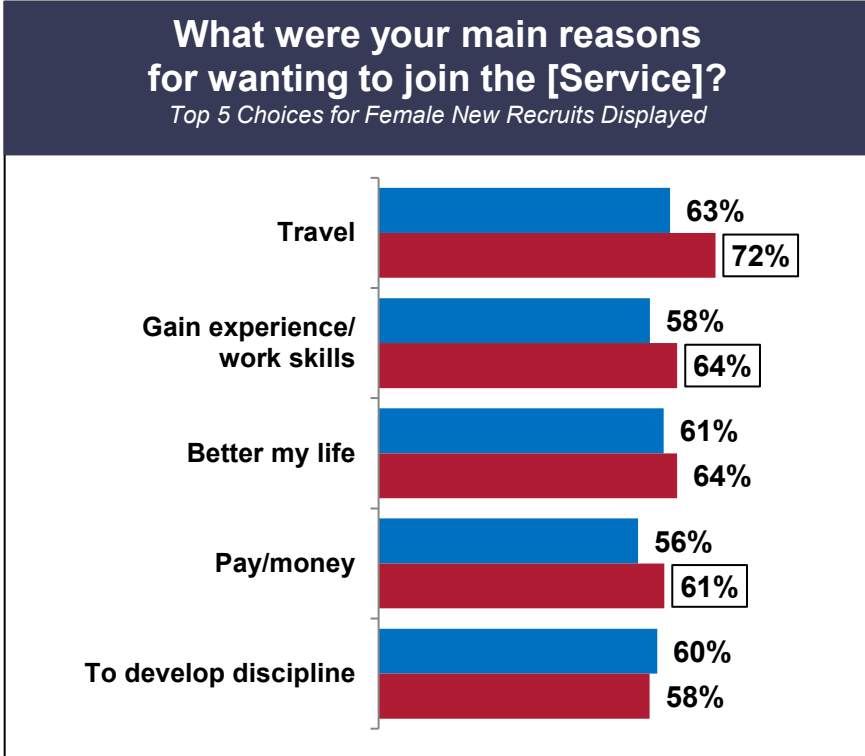
Young adults ages 17–35



Female youth have particularly low knowledge and awareness about the Military.

New Recruits

New Recruits: Reasons and Concerns About Joining



Female new recruits are more likely than male new recruits to cite concerns about joining.

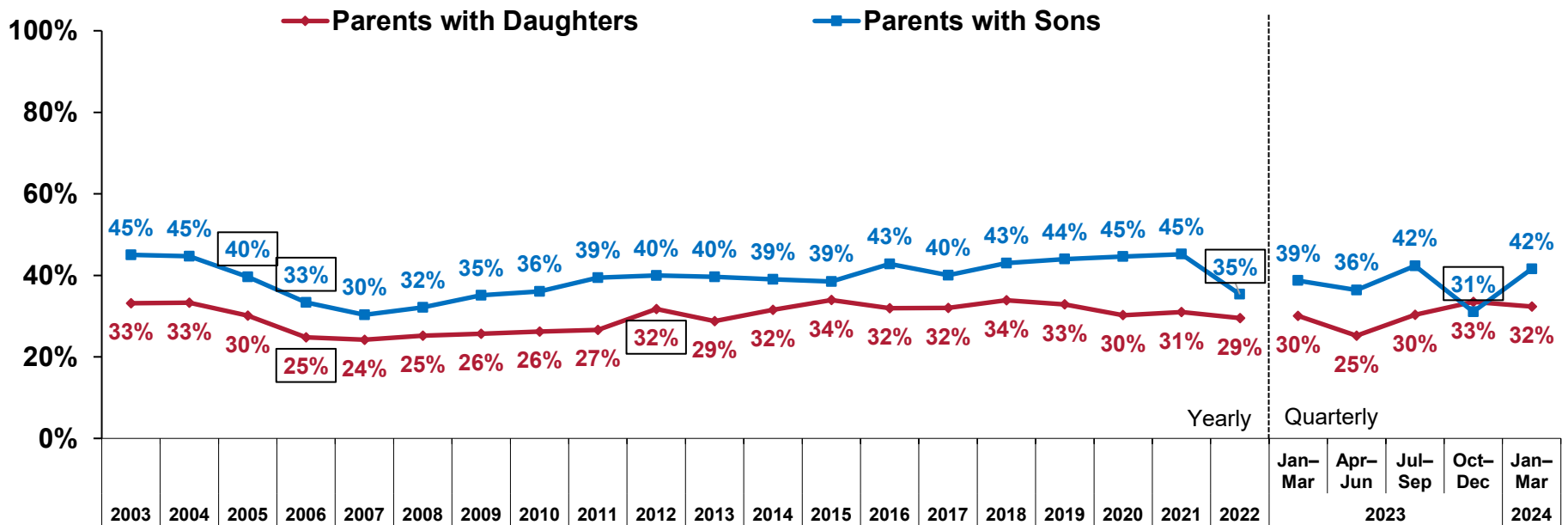
Source: DoD Active Duty New Recruit Study (Oct 2023–Mar 2024); *Note: Due to the large sample size, many small differences between groups are statistically significant at the $p < 0.5$ level. The reader can reasonably assume that large differences between estimates (i.e., +/- 5 or more percentage points) are significant.

Influencers

Influencer Likelihood to Recommend

How likely is it that you would recommend joining a Military Service such as the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Space Force?

% Likely/Very likely



Note: Significance testing was not conducted between the quarterly and yearly data points. Proportions are among parents with *only* either sons or daughters aged 12–21. They may have children of either gender outside that age range.

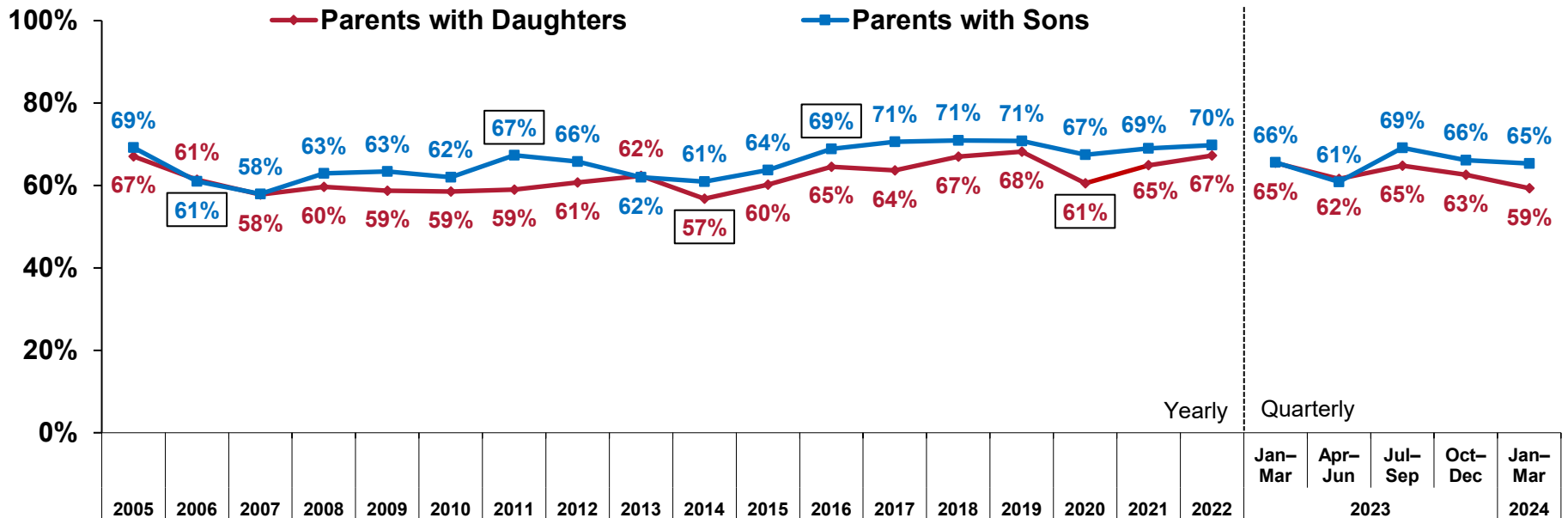
☐ = Significant change from previous time period

Parents with sons are typically more likely to recommend the Military as an option than parents with daughters.

Influencer Likelihood to Support

If my child told me he or she was planning to join the Military, I would support his or her decision.

% Agree/Strongly agree



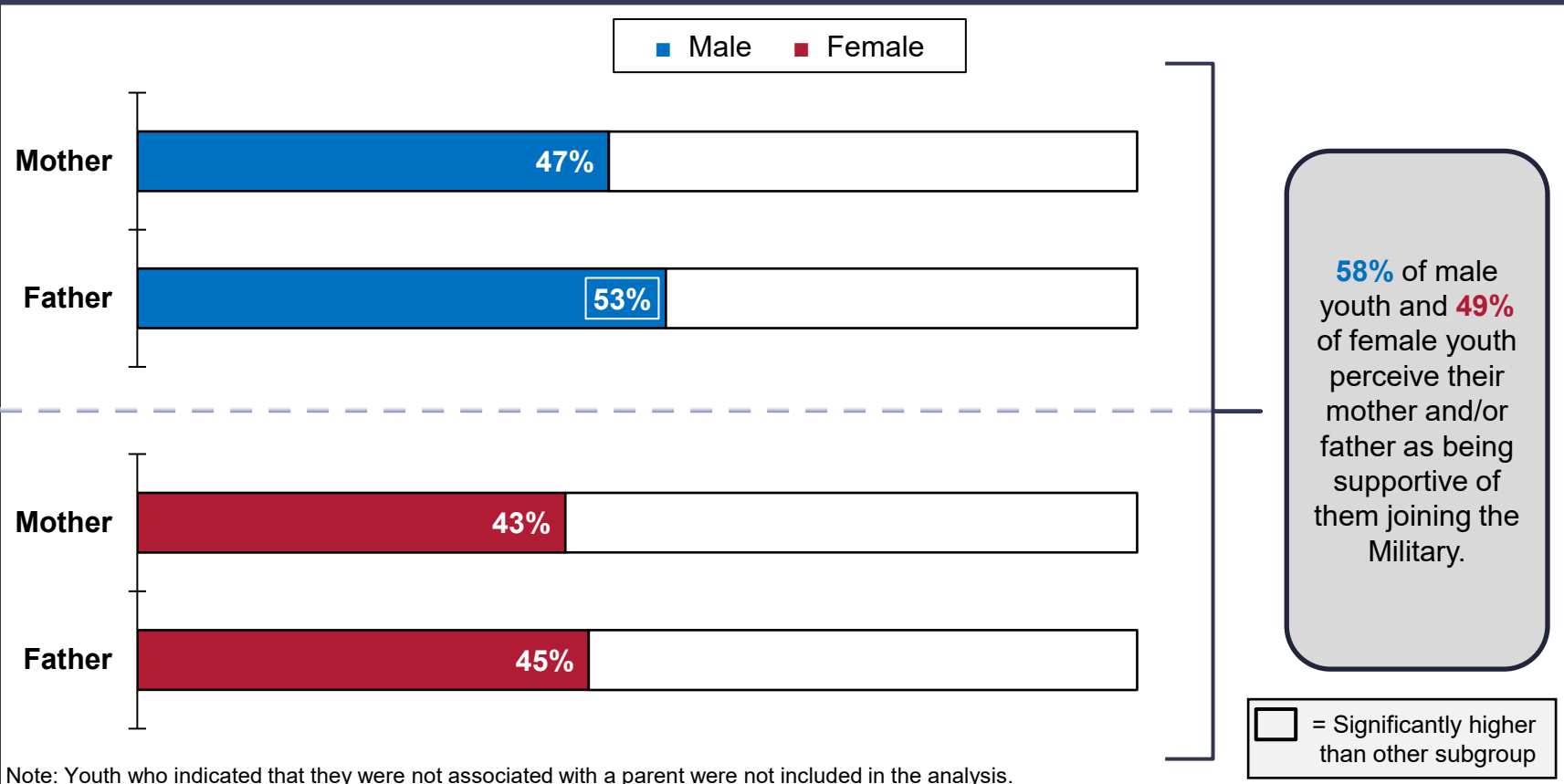
Note: Significance testing was not conducted between the quarterly and yearly data points. Proportions are among parents with *only* either sons or daughters aged 12–21. They may have children of either gender outside that age range.

☐ = Significant change from previous time period

Parents with daughters and parents with sons are both likely to support their child's decision to join the Military.

Perceptions of Support

Perceptions of Parental Support for Joining the Military *% Supportive/Extremely Supportive*



Female youth are less likely to perceive their fathers as being supportive of the decision to join the Military compared to their male peers.

Appendix

Measuring Propensity and Self-Efficacy

■ What is it?

- Propensity is youths' rating of the likelihood that they will be serving in the U.S. Military in the next few years. It is the DoD's official metric to assess youths' intent to serve in the Military.
- Self-efficacy is youths' confidence in their military-related abilities (e.g., complete boot camp, qualify for a good military job).

■ How is it measured?

- Propensity
 - In the next few years, how likely is it that you will be serving in the Military?
 - % Definitely/Probably
- Self-Efficacy
 - Core Tracking Measure: Please indicate how confident you are that you could be successful in the Military (% Probably yes/Definitely yes)
 - Theory of Planned Behavior Measure: Below is a list of activities. Please indicate how confident you are that you could do each one: (% Probably yes/Definitely yes)
 - Qualify for a desirable job within the Military.
 - Get into the military branch of your choice.
 - Succeed in a highly structured environment.
 - Fight in a war.
 - Successfully complete military boot camp.

Eligibility Standards

■ Why?

- The Department establishes standards designed to ensure that individuals under consideration for enlistment, appointment, or induction are able to perform military duties successfully, and to select those who are the most trainable and adaptable to Service life.

■ What is considered?

- Standards considered are: age, aptitude, dependents, education, medical, character/conduct, physical fitness, drug use, and other conditions.

■ Are these standards reviewed on regular basis?

- Societal norms, medical findings, internal and external analyses of performance, and other studies help inform the Department in the establishment of these standards. Each area is reviewed by subject matter experts on a regular basis.

■ What is the “recruitable population”?

- DoD policy establishes a minimum baseline from which eligibility is derived. The Services have the latitude to be more restrictive as well as allow waivers for most standards they choose. These Service policies more aptly define the “recruitable population” and the type of youth that each Service seeks.

Estimating Eligibility: Qualified Military Available (QMA)

■ What is it?

- DoD's official metric estimating the number of youth who are eligible and available for enlisted military service without a waiver.
- The basic ingredient of this metric is the size of the population aged 17–24 reduced by the number who are disqualified for one or more criteria within seven overarching categories: 1) Medical/Physical, 2) Overweight, 3) Mental Health, 4) Drug Abuse,* 5) Conduct, 6) Dependents, 7) Aptitude.

■ When was the metric last examined?

- The 2020 QMA Study revised and updated previous 2013 QMA estimations by using more recent data to estimate the prevalence of disqualifying conditions.

■ What criteria and rationale were used?

- After reviewing the particular guidelines established by DoD Instructions 1304.26, QUALIFICATION STANDARDS FOR ENLISTMENT, APPOINTMENT, AND INDUCTION, 6130.03, MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR APPOINTMENT, ENLISTMENT, OR INDUCTION IN THE MILITARY SERVICES, and 1308.3 PHYSICAL FITNESS AND BODY FAT PROGRAMS PROCEDURES, which govern military entrance eligibility criteria, disqualifying conditions were grouped into seven broad disqualification categories.

*Drug Abuse: includes a history of drug (including pharmaceutical medications, illegal drugs, and other substances of abuse) and alcohol abuse

Estimating Eligibility: Qualified Military Available (QMA)

■ What data sources were used?

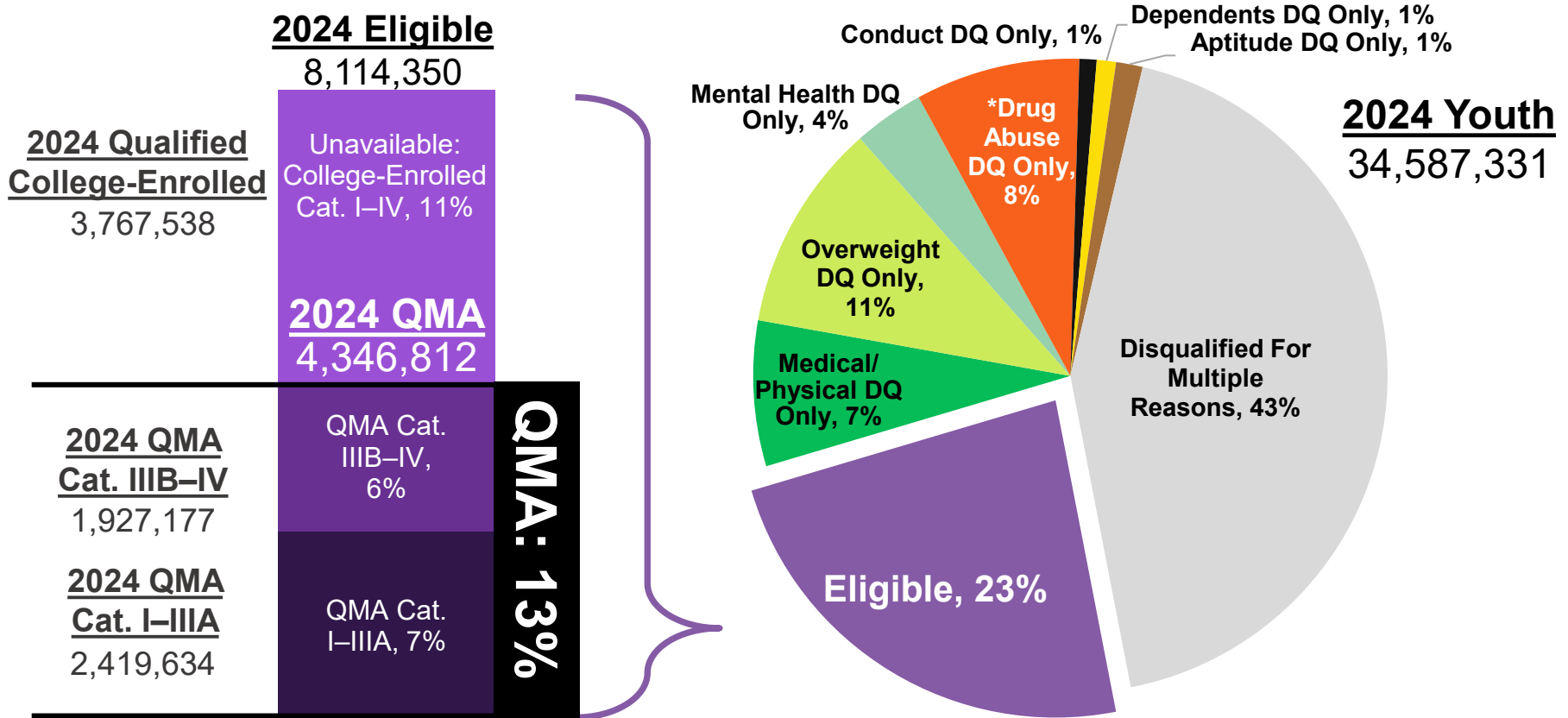
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)
- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)
- DoD Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies Youth Poll surveys (JAMRS – YP)
- Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) Production Applicants Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) Score Database
- 1997 Profile of American Youth (PAY97)
- Woods & Poole Economics' Population Estimates
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates

■ What are the key results?

- 23% of youth would meet all the core eligibility requirements.
- 12% would qualify and be available (i.e., not enrolled in college) for enlisted active duty service.
- 7% would qualify, be available, and score above the 50th percentile on the AFQT.

2024 Eligibility, QMA, and Disqualifier Rates

- Approximately 8.1 million youth were eligible to enlist in the Military without a waiver.
- Most ineligible youth were ineligible primarily due to multiple reasons.
 - Disqualification for multiple reasons increased from 39% to 43% between 2013 and 2024.



Note: Youth ages 17–24. Category percentages may not sum to total due to rounding.

Sources: Official DoD Qualified Military Available (QMA) Study (2020), Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Projections (2024), 2024 Population Estimates

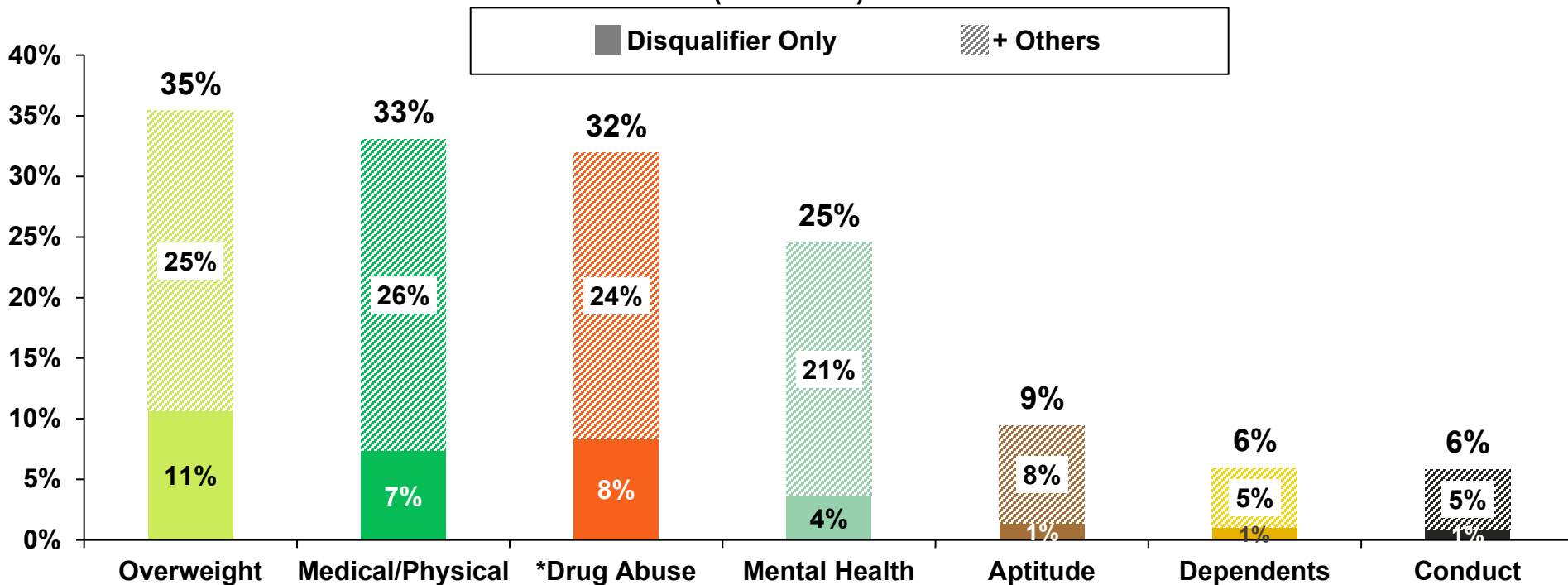


Note: *Drug Abuse: includes a history of drug (including pharmaceutical medications, illegal drugs, and other substances of abuse) and alcohol abuse.

Disqualification Categories: Unique and Combined Impact

- Youth were most frequently ineligible due to multiple reasons. As such, any single disqualifier has a limited impact on overall eligibility.

Percentage Disqualified for Single Reason Alone and in Combination with Other Reasons (w/o waiver)



Note: Youth ages 17–24. Individual category percentages may not sum to total due to rounding.

Source: Official DoD Qualified Military Available (QMA) Study (2020)



Note: *Drug Abuse: includes a history of drug (including pharmaceutical medications, illegal drugs, and other substances of abuse) and alcohol abuse.