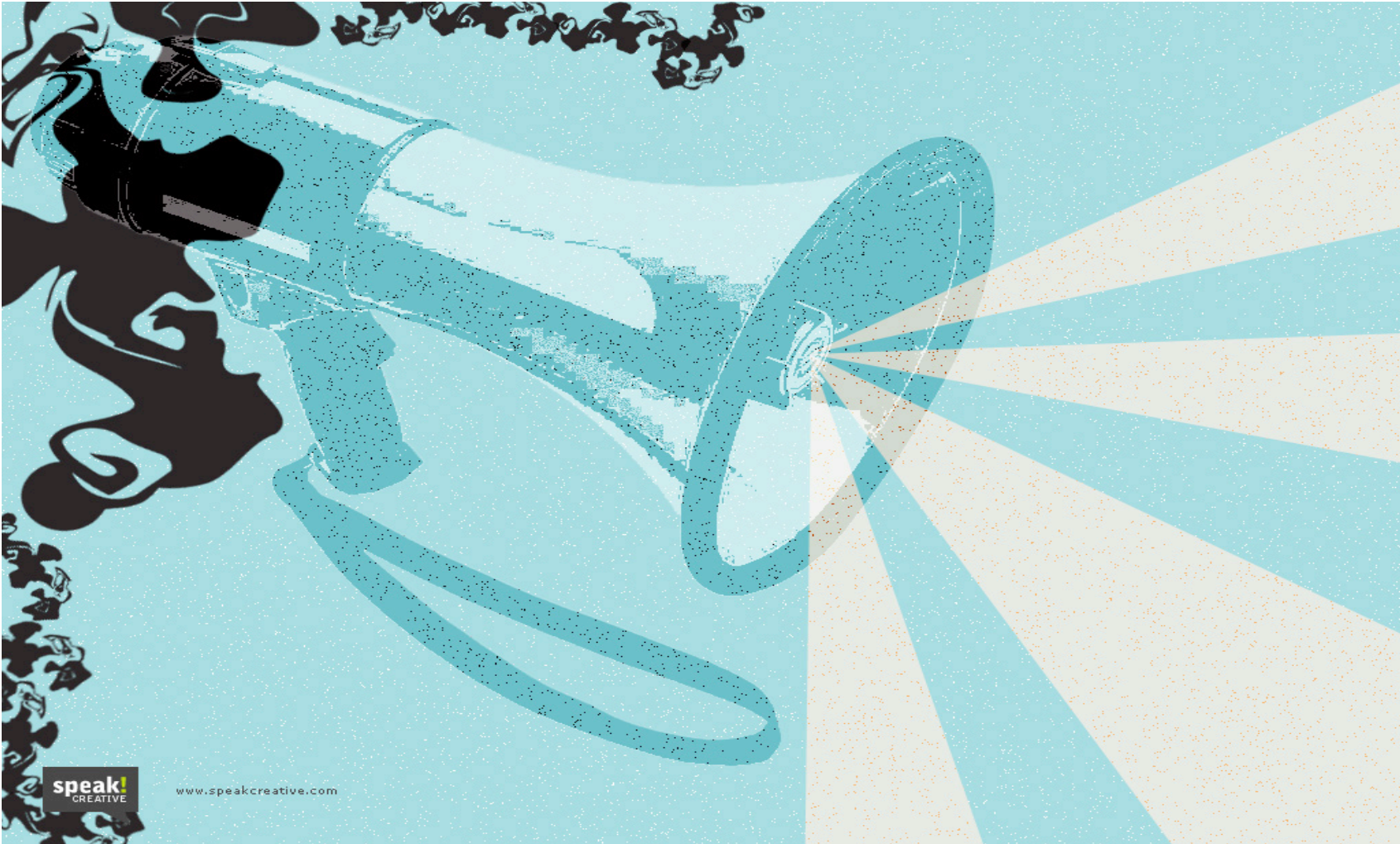
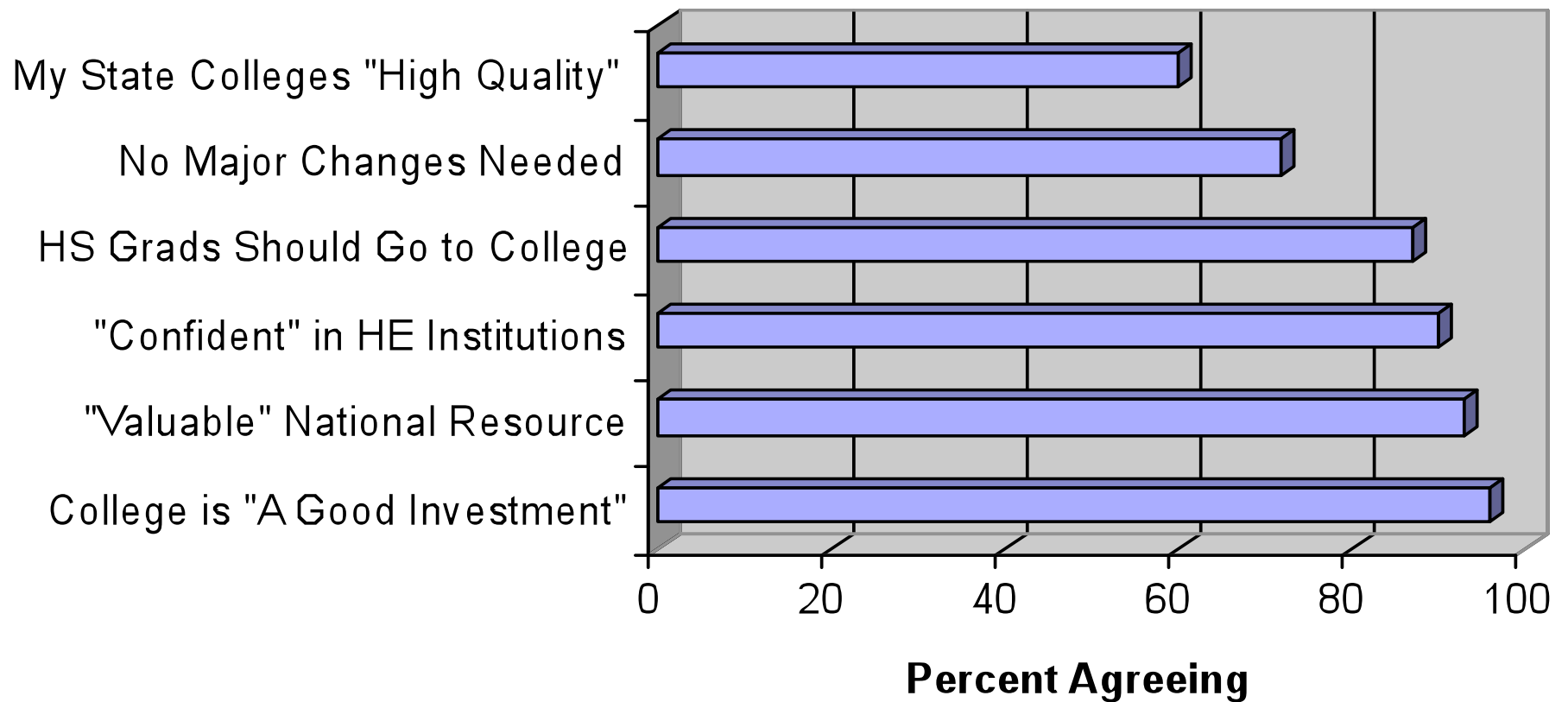


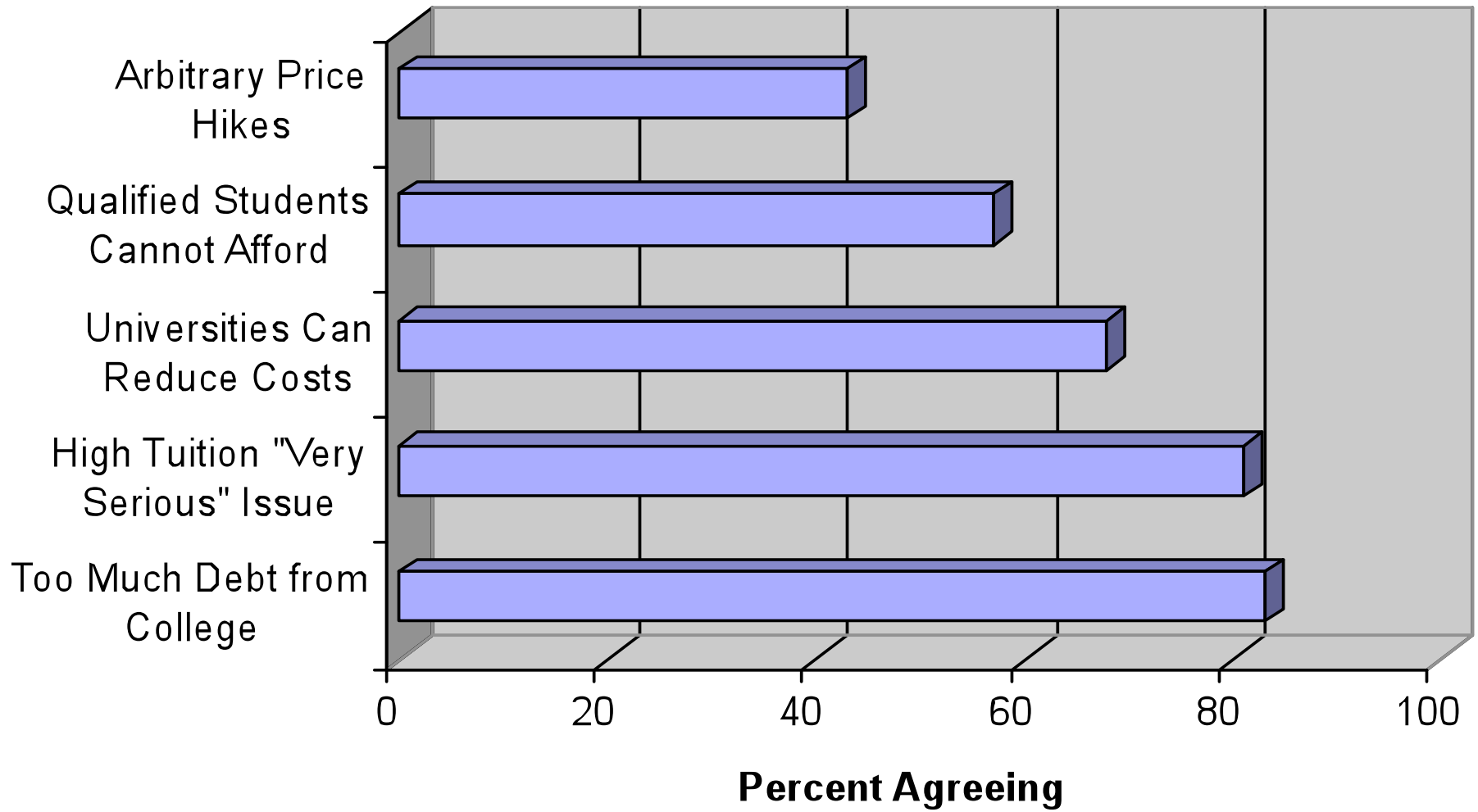
# Public Views of Higher Education 2006



# The Good News



# Economic Discontents

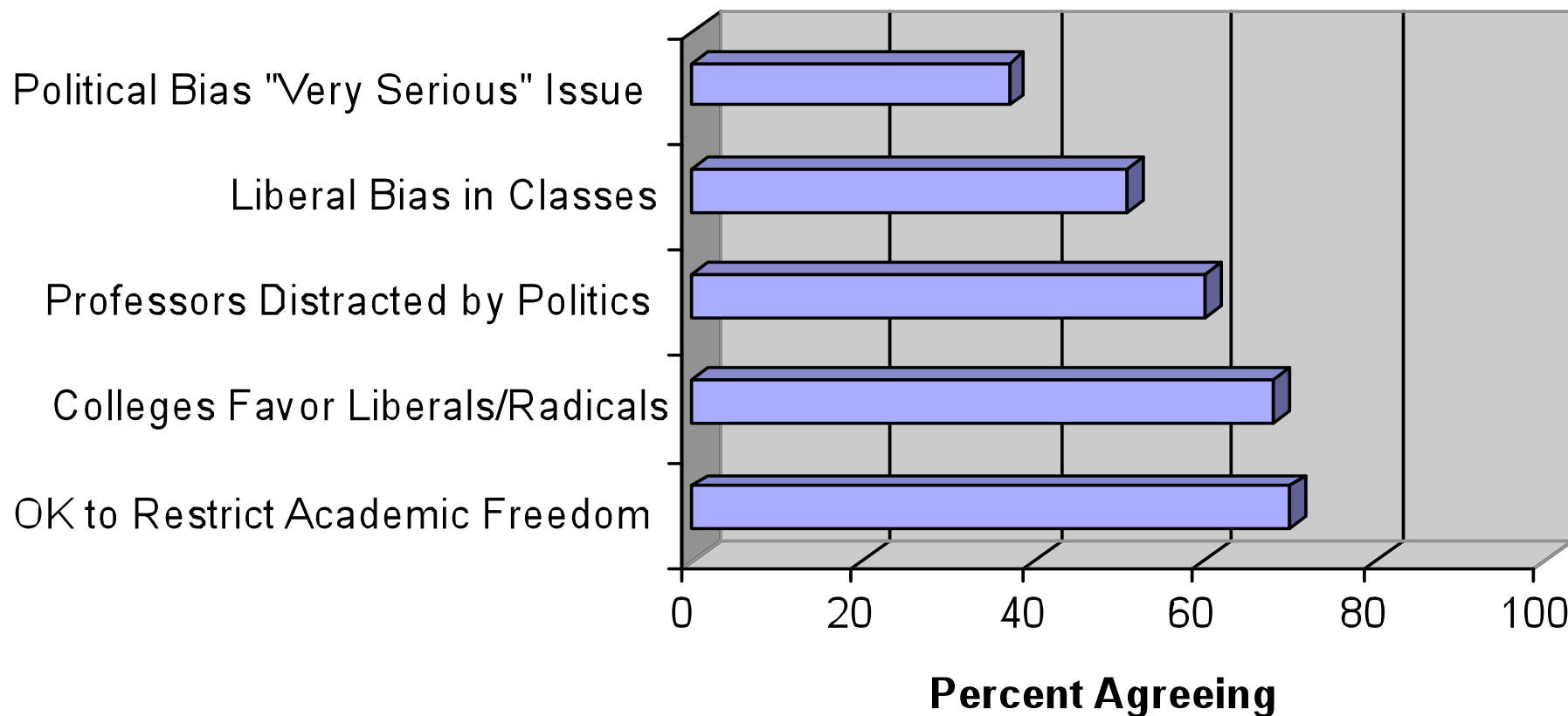


# **Economic Discontents: Concern among Disadvantaged Groups and Democrats**

## **Significantly Greater Concern among:**

- **Families earning \$50,000 or less/year**
- **Racial/ethnic minorities**
- **Democrats**

# Socio-Political Discontent

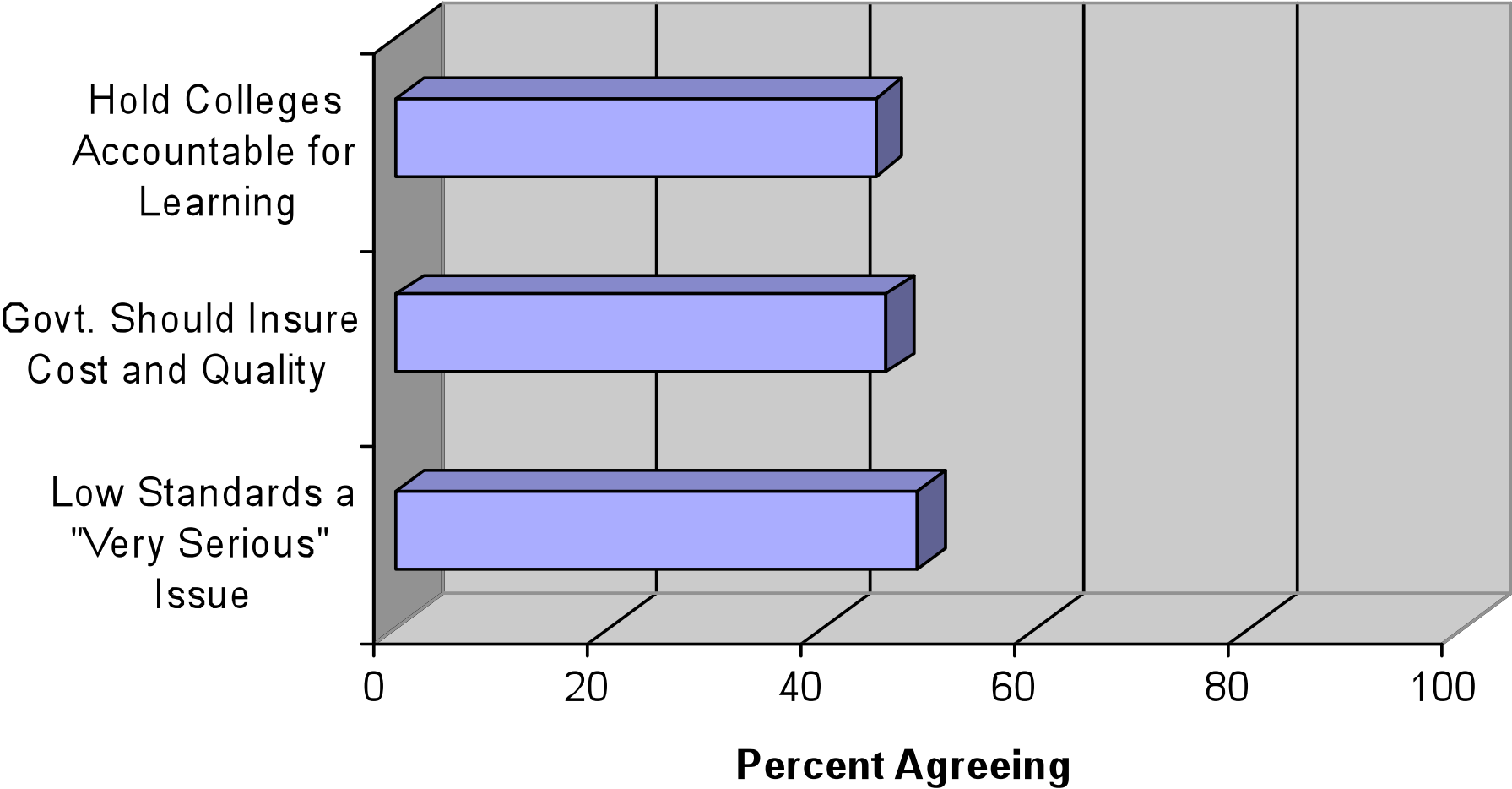


# **Socio-Political Discontents: Concern among Cultural Conservatives**

## **Significantly Greater Concern among:**

- **Political conservatives (regardless of party)**
- **Evangelical Protestants**
- **High school educated people**
- **Older people**

# Educational Quality Discontent



# **Educational Quality Discontent: A Mixed Picture**

## **Favor Both Affordability and Accountability (Total 46%)**

- **Minorities (62%)**
- **Blue-collar workers (55%)**
- **Parents of K-12 students (52%)**

## **More Accountability for Student Learning (Total 45%)**

- \* **High school educated people (57%)**
- \* **Political conservatives (53%)**



# A Causal Argument

***Privatization*** creates vulnerability on issues of affordability and access and alienates lower-income groups.

***Polarization*** creates vulnerability on issues of “bias” and motivates culturally conservative groups.

***Institutional Priorities*** on graduate education and research and limited ***Institutional Resources*** create vulnerability on issues of educational quality and encourage “accountability” movements.

# **Challenges for the University in the Public Arena**

**“The University has been described as a Teflon-coated institution. Some of the Teflon has worn off.”**

- 1) The focus of university leaders on economic benefits has led to doubts about their institutions’ sense of public purpose.**
- 2) To the extent that universities walk away from their access mission, they risk losing part of their middle-class base.**
- 3) A significant minority believes that college professors show political bias.**
- 4) Educational quality may be an emerging issue of importance.**

# **Access-Related Legislation in the New Congress?**

- **Democratic Party's "New Directions for America"  
Point #3: "College Access for All" Program**
- **Cuts interest rates on many student loans in half**
- **Makes permanent the tax deduction for college costs of middle-income families**
- **Increases Pell Grants up to \$5,800 over several years**
- **Price tag: \$100 billion over 5 years**

# Sources

- 1) Educational Testing Service. 2003. Quality, Affordability, and Access: Americans Speak on Higher Education. Princeton: ETS. ([www.ets.org/media/2003/report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/media/2003/report.pdf))
- 3) Gross, Neil and Solon Simmons. 2006. "The Contested Legitimacy of the American Professoriate." Unpublished paper. Harvard University, Department of Sociology.
- 5) Gross, Neil and Solon Simmons. 2006. "America's Views of Political Bias in the Academy and Academic Freedom." Unpublished paper. Harvard University, Department of Sociology.
- 7) Immerwahr, John. 2004. "Public Attitudes on Higher Education: A Trend Analysis, 1993 to 2003." Public Agenda (February).
- 5) Selingo, Jeffrey. 2004. "U.S. Public's Confidence in Colleges Remains High." Chronicle of Higher Education (May 7): A12.