



# The State Bar *of California*

## The Law Student Survey (LSS)

### Preliminary Results

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## The California Justice Gap Study has multiple parts

- Survey of 3,885 adult Californians – to understand the gap
  - Incorporates information from Intake Census of direct legal service providers funded by the State Bar
- Law Student Survey – to understand how law school debt impacts career choice and access to justice
  - Follow-up focus groups
- Recruitment and Retention Report on Legal Aid Organizations in California
- Literature review and analysis of cost of law school in California

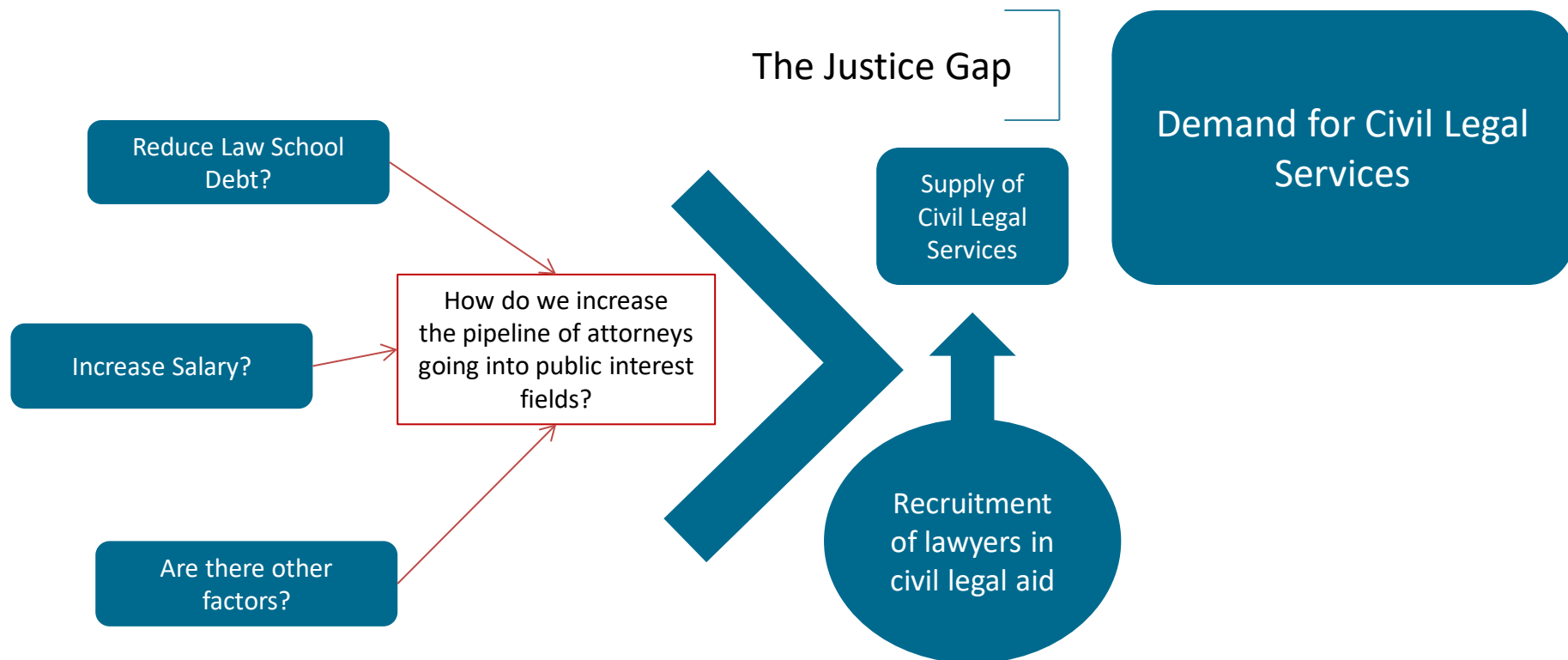


The California Justice Gap Study explores the gap between civil legal needs and the resources available to meet those needs.

## Law Student Survey


## The Justice Gap

Hypotheses:





## Survey Timeline



A horizontal timeline with three diamond-shaped markers. The first marker is on the left, the second is in the center and is enclosed in a blue rectangular box, and the third is on the right. Each marker is followed by a date and a description of the event.

**July 2019:**  
Soft launch to 150  
law students  
through LAAC  
affiliates

**Sept 2019:**  
Formal launch to  
students registered  
with the State Bar  
of California and  
through law school  
dean distribution

**Dec 2019:**  
Final Report written



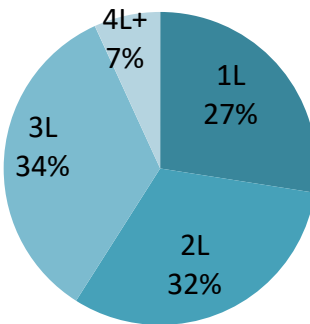
## Survey Population

**N = 2,476**

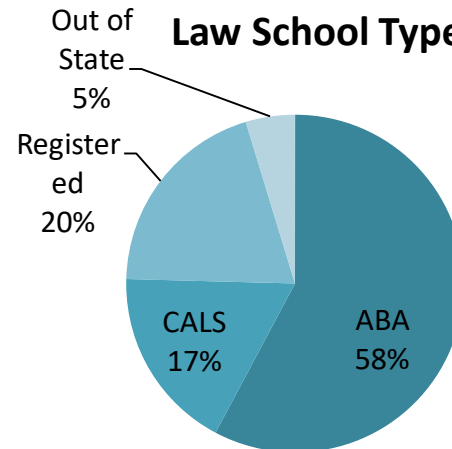
**Direct Distribution = 2,018**

**Dean Distribution = 458**

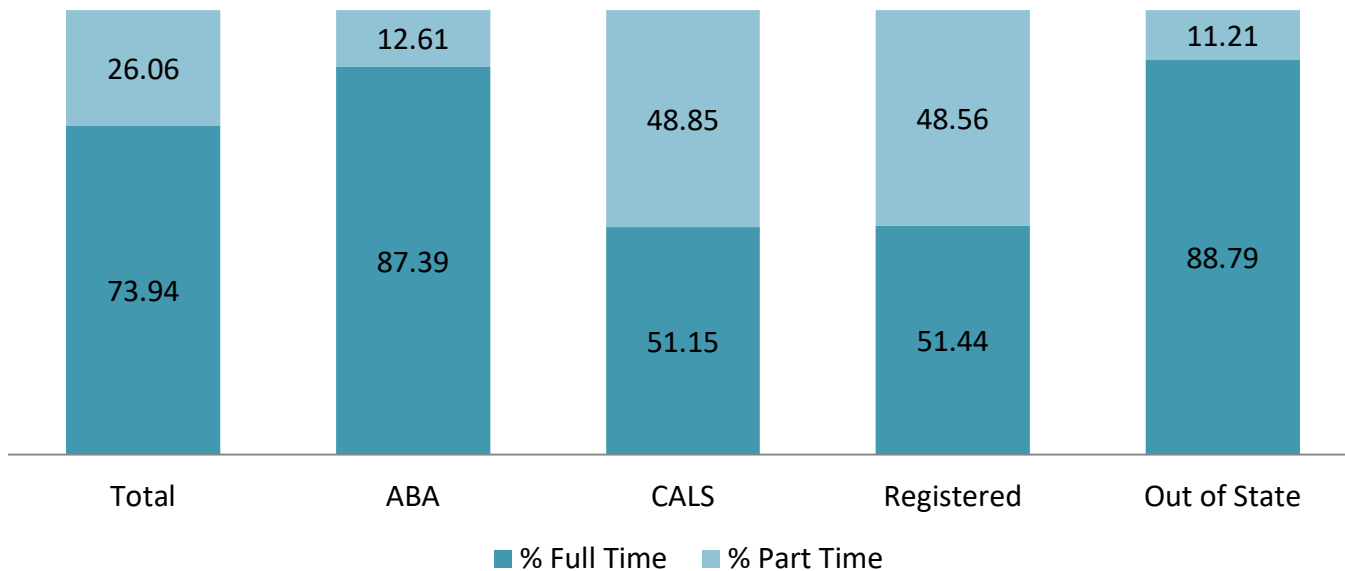
**Law School Year**



**Law School Type**



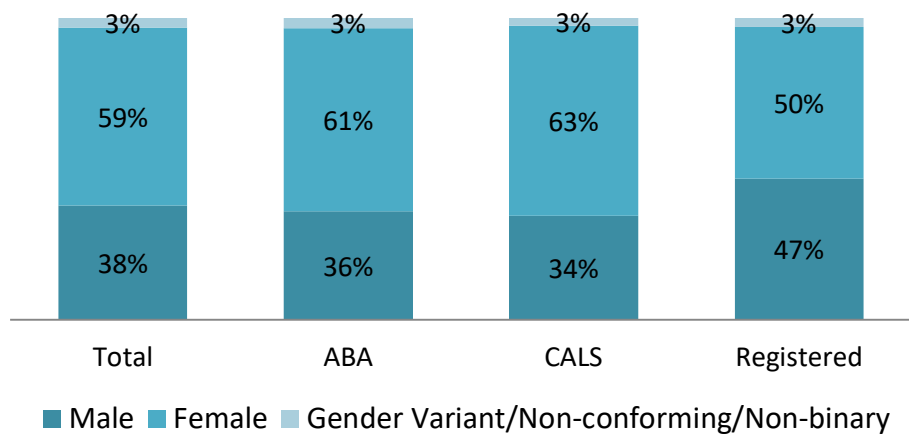
**Full Time vs. Part Time**



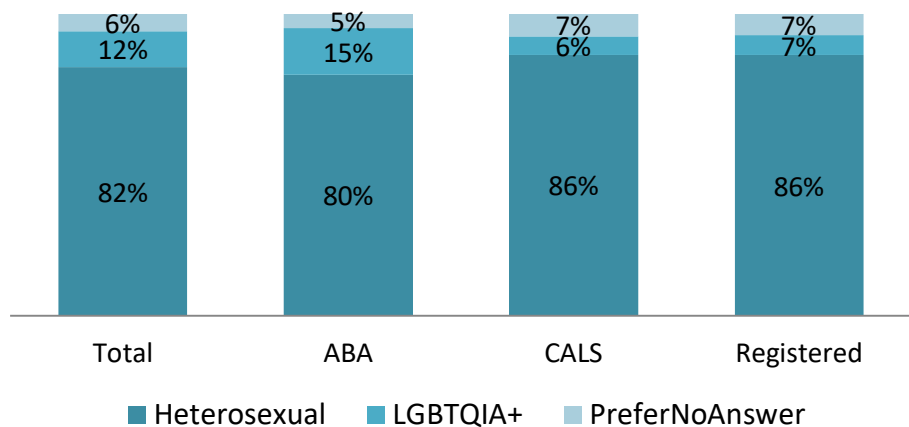


# Survey Demographics

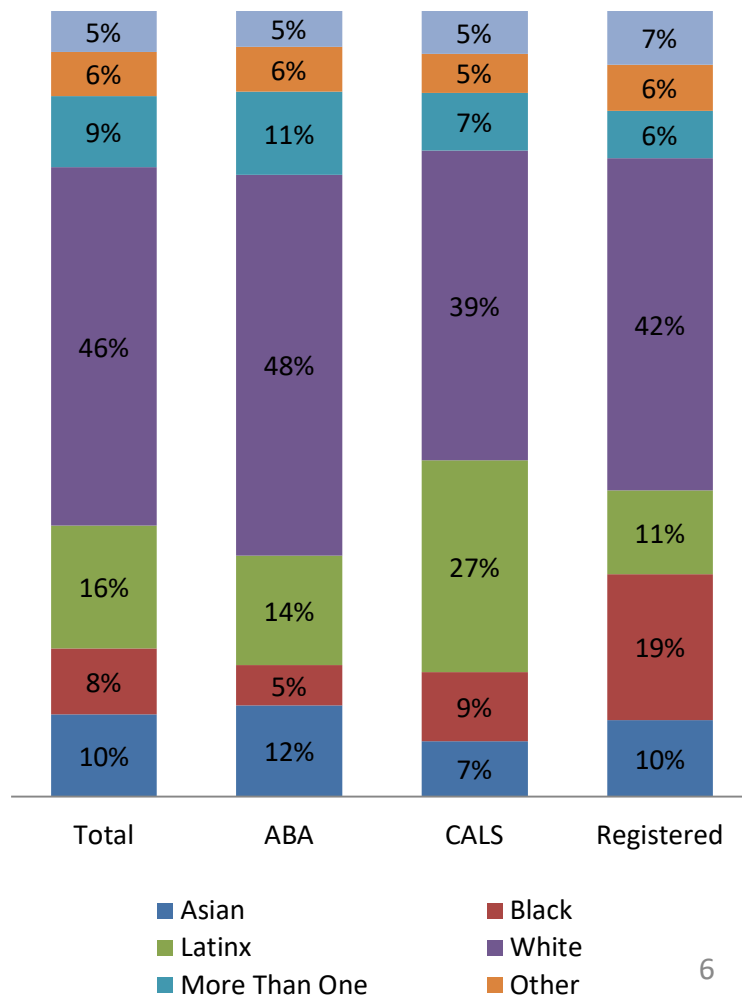
## Gender



## Sexual Orientation

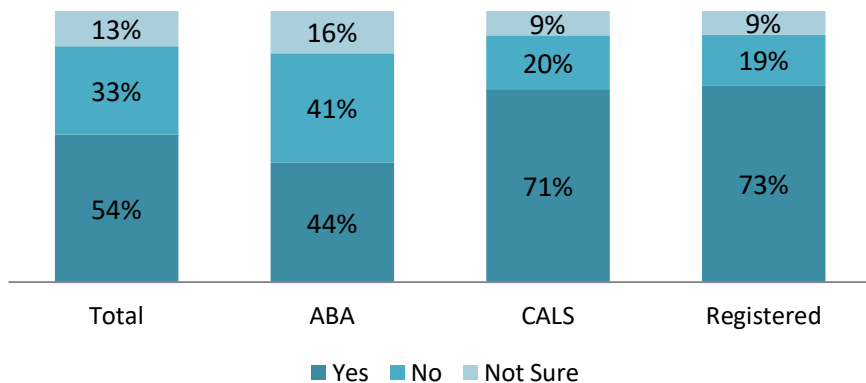


## Race / Ethnicity

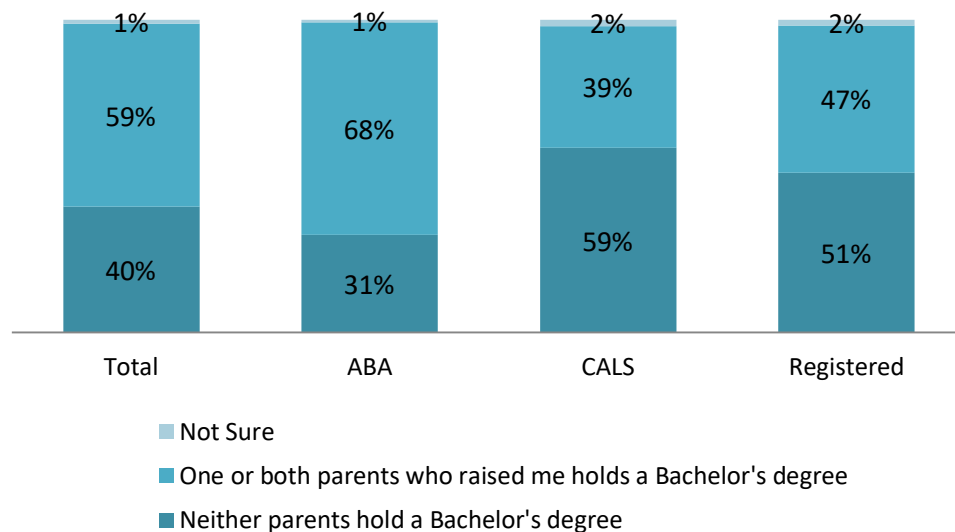




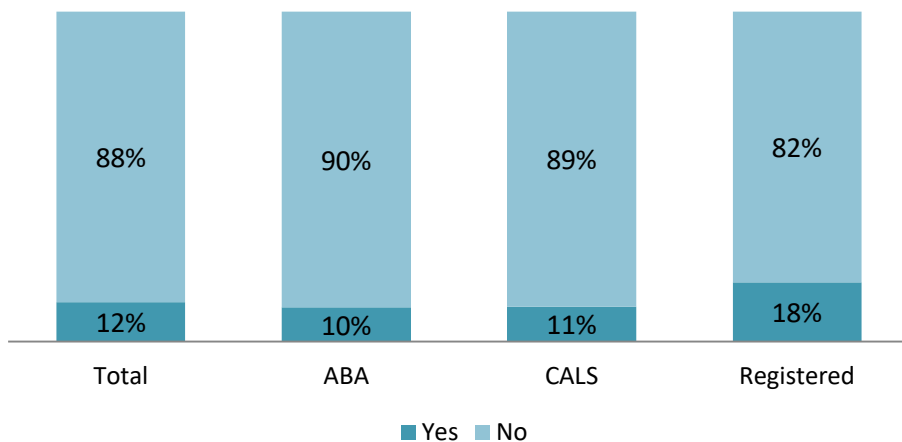
### Do you anticipate having to support other(s) besides yourself when you graduate from law school?



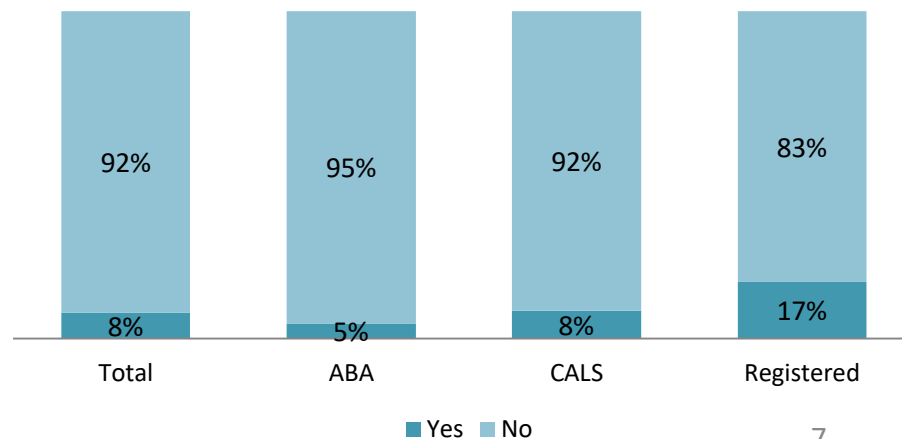
### Parent's Education Level



### Do you self-identify as a person with a disability?

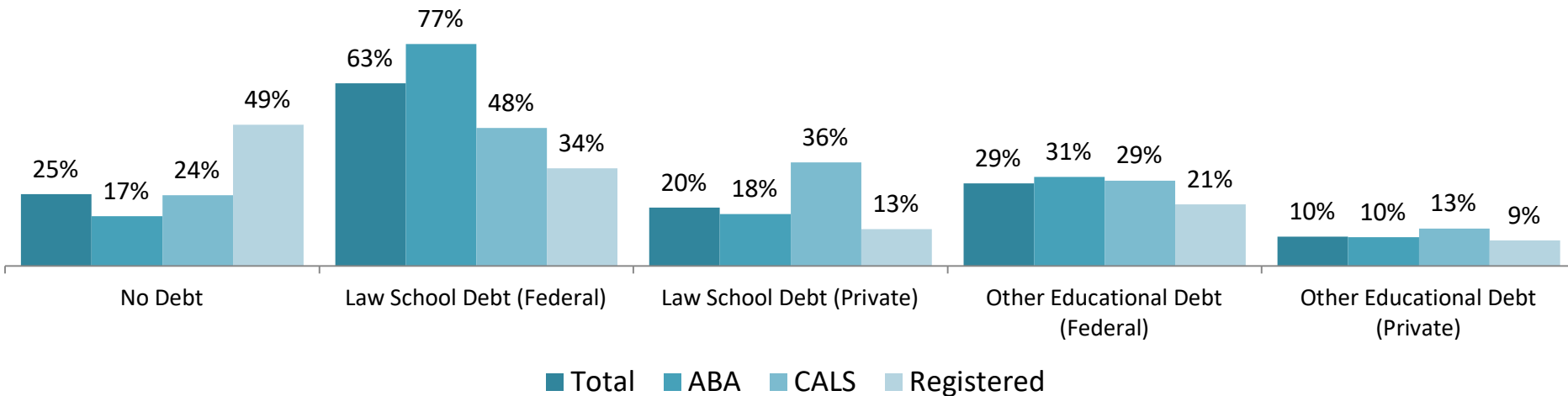


### Have you ever served in the military?



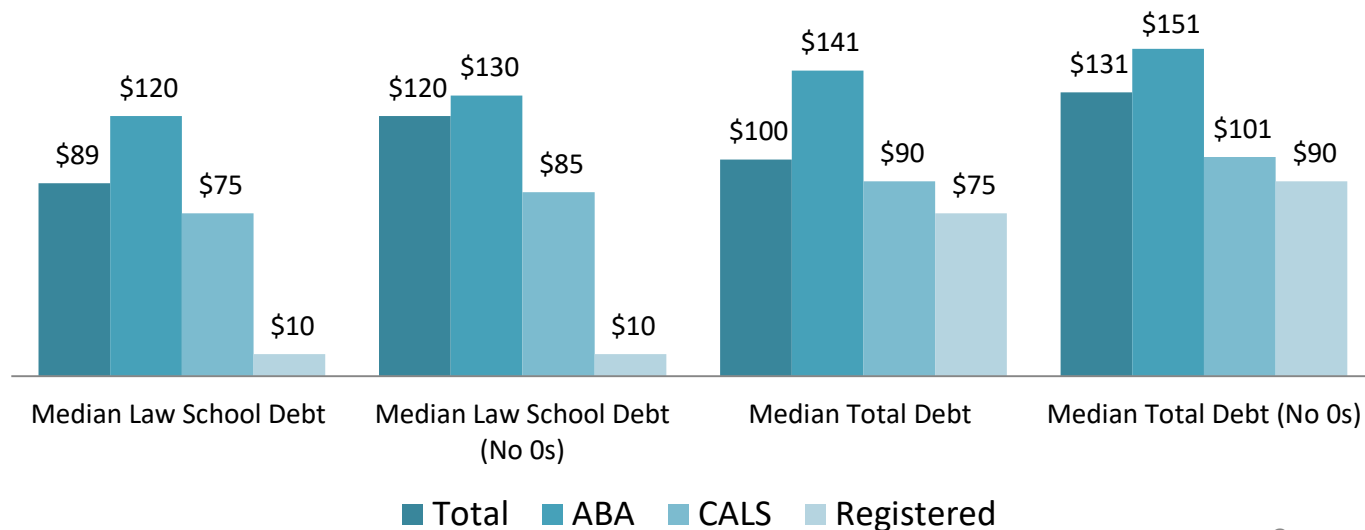


## Debt Type by School Type



All debt figures are in increments of 1,000.

The indication of "No 0s" means that students with no debt were left out of the calculation.







## Debt Characteristics

- **Non-binary and women** report higher median debt levels than male students. (\$98k, \$90k vs. \$77k)
- **Black and Latinx students** report median total educational debt loads over \$20k higher than the median of the total population (\$120k, \$121k vs. \$100k).
- **LGBTQIA+ students** report higher levels of law school debt than the median of the total population (\$101k vs. \$89k).
- **Disabled students** report slightly lower median law school debt than the population median (\$80k vs. \$89k), however these differences disappear when students with no debt are excluded from analysis.
- **Veteran students** report lower median debt loads than the total student population median (\$50k vs. \$89k).



## Public Interest Drift

		Current Area of Interest					
		Private Sector	Government	Public Interest	Other	Not Sure	Total
Area of Interest at the Start of Law School	Private Sector	880	73	25	20	46	1,044
	Government	139	270	15	13	30	467
	Public Interest	152	27	280	12	39	510
	Other	66	22	12	119	18	237
	Not Sure	11	4	8	7	185	215
	Total	1,248	396	340	171	318	2,473

Drift Rate:

**45%**

Of students who started out as interested in public interest decided to change

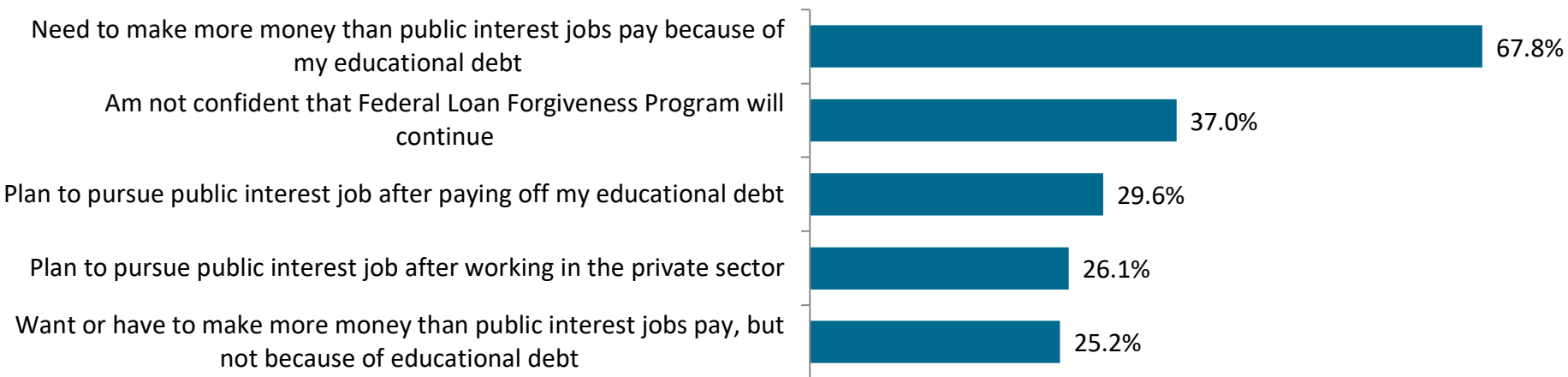
Adjusted Drift Rate:

The population of law students interested in public interest declines by

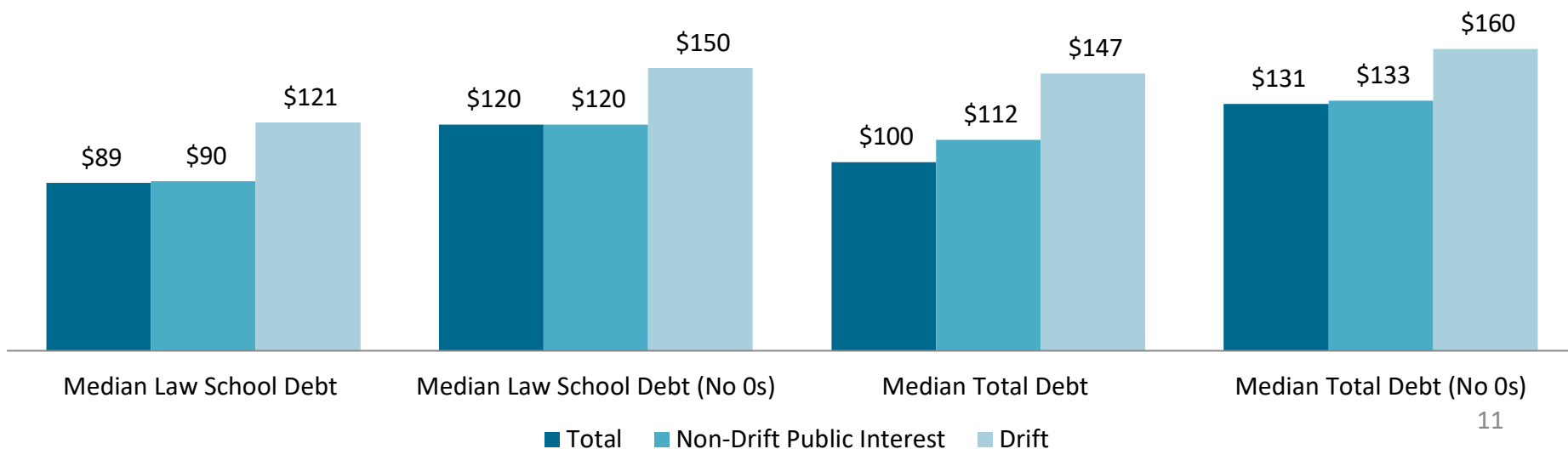
**33%**



### Reasons Cited for Public Interest Drift

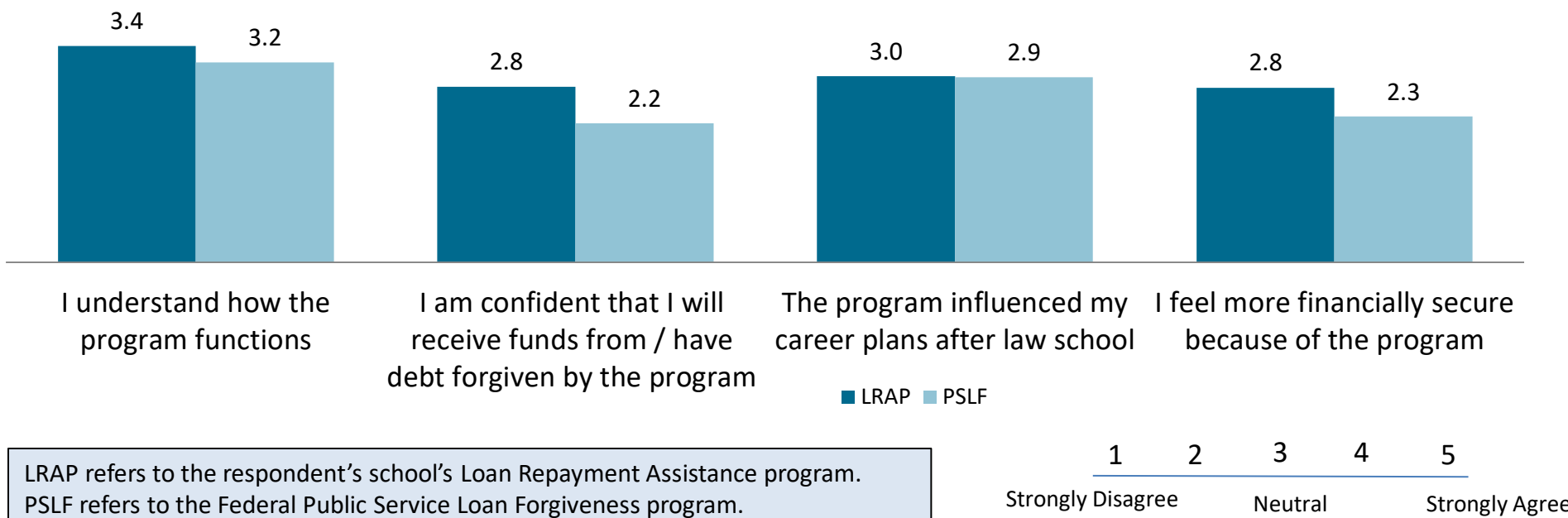


Law school and educational debt is a leading cause of drift.





## Loan Forgiveness/Repayment Program Ratings



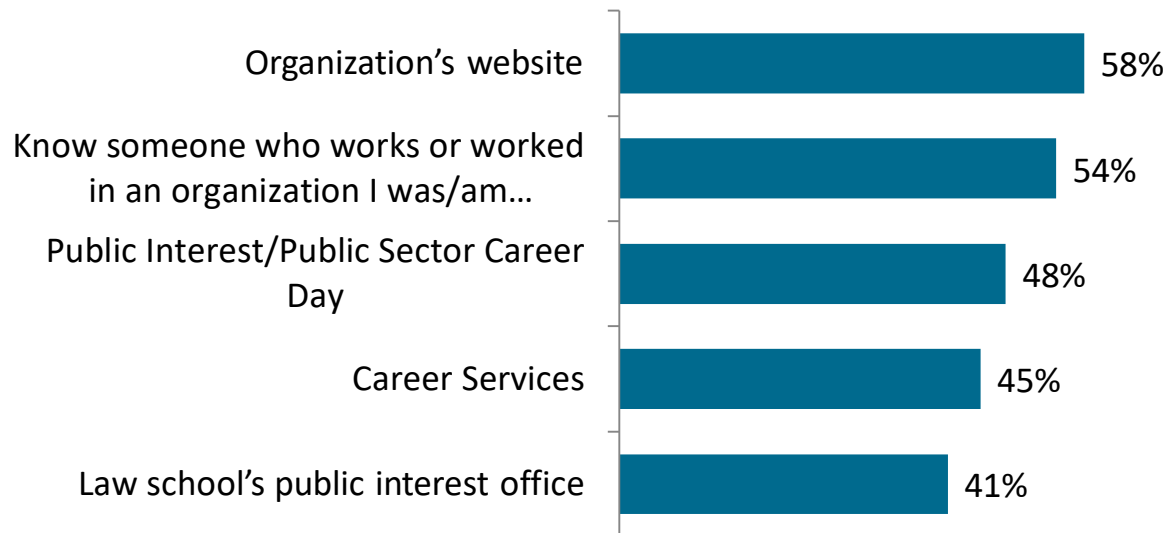
### Most Common Comments:

- “Your salary has to be VERY low to receive loan repayment.”
- “Loan repayment programs often have very specific terms you have to meet, and even then, it is hard to get the money.”
- “You're still going to be struggling financially, and you are unable to get married if your partner makes any amount of money because they take into account a spouse's full income.”
- “Because it is grossly inadequate...”



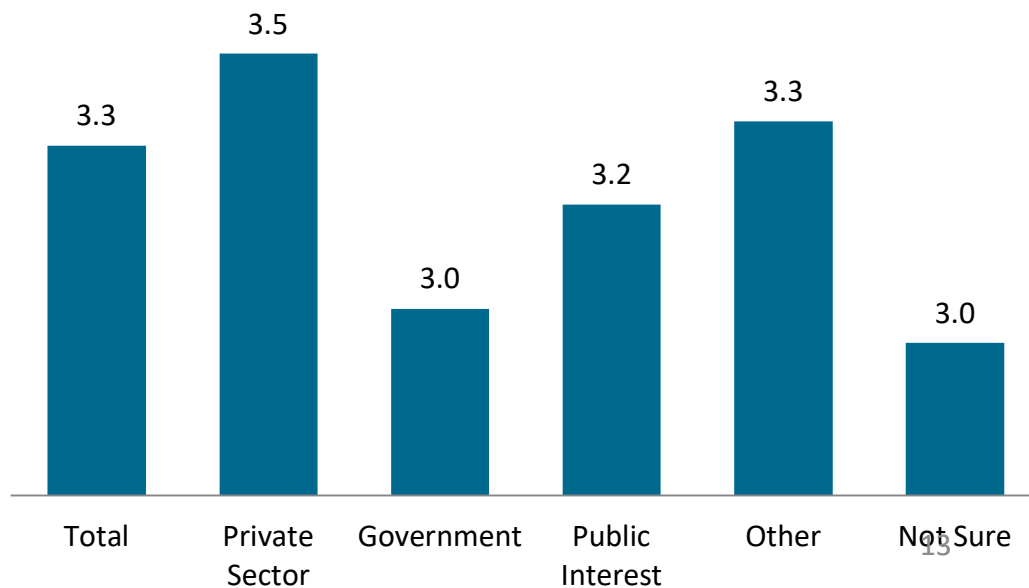
## Public Interest Pipeline

**If you have applied or would like to apply for a post-law school job in public interest law, where did/would you look for jobs? (Select all that apply)**



**How would you rate your law school's provision of information and resources about a [selected career]?**

1      2      3      4      5  
Strongly Disagree      Neutral      Strongly Agree





## Discussion

- Survey Representativeness
- Effective Strategies to Facilitate Legal Aid and Public Interest Careers
- Next Steps
- Questions

Thank you

Follow up communications can be directed to:  
**[JusticeGapStudy@Calbar.ca.gov](mailto:JusticeGapStudy@Calbar.ca.gov)**