



**NIAC**

**2023 Annual  
Member  
Survey**

# 2023 Annual Member Survey

The policies and priorities of the National Iranian American Council have been determined by our volunteers and donors for two decades. This has given the organization its strength and helped guide its people-powered mission and voice from its founding to its present.

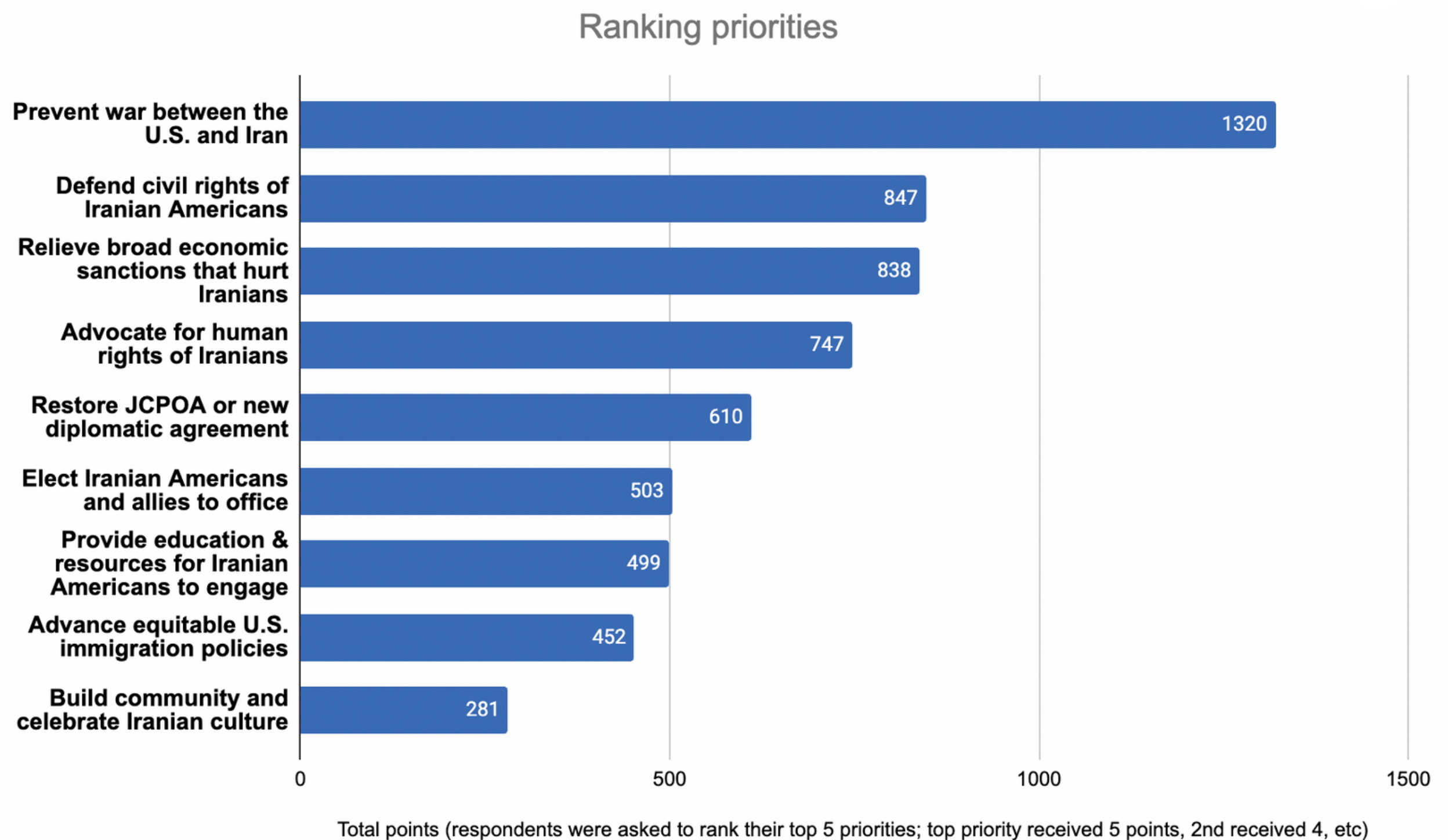
This year's survey comes at a particularly important time. Following the outbreak of nationwide protests in Iran, triggered by the killing of 22 year-old Mahsa Amini by Iran's morality police, many in the Iranian diaspora have been galvanized to lift up the voices of the people of Iran and demand change. Likewise, the stalling of diplomatic negotiations under the Biden administration raised important questions for those opposed to military escalation, which would victimize Iranians even further and risk jeopardizing the organic movement for change in Iran.

The results of this survey will guide our work in this challenging time for both the people of Iran and our community in the United States. A summary of the results and our takeaways from this important survey follow.

## Survey Results

- Respondents ranked **preventing war (#1)** and **defending civil rights of Iranian Americans (#2)** as their top priorities for NIAC, followed by relieve broad economic sanctions that hurt Iranians (#3), and advocate for human rights of Iranians (#4).
- **70% say they are “very concerned” about threats to civil rights and immigration restrictions of Iranians.** 25% registered that they are “somewhat concerned” while only 4% indicated they are “not concerned.”
- **69% say that NIAC has been focusing the right amount on human rights in Iran.** 20% said we are not focusing enough and 11% said we are focusing too much.
- **68% say NIAC should support a resumption of U.S. diplomacy with Iran** while 17% say NIAC should adopt a more neutral stance. 14% say NIAC should abandon supporting diplomacy.
- **60% say NIAC should support targeted sanctions and oppose broad sanctions,** as has been our longstanding position, and 32% say we should oppose all sanctions. 8% say we should support broad sanctions.

## Ranking priorities of the organization:



***Our respondents ranked preventing war between the U.S. and Iran as their top priority with more than three times more “top priority” votes than any other focus.***

Defending the civil rights of Iranian Americans at home had the second most votes overall, followed closely by relieving broad economic sanctions that hurt ordinary Iranians.

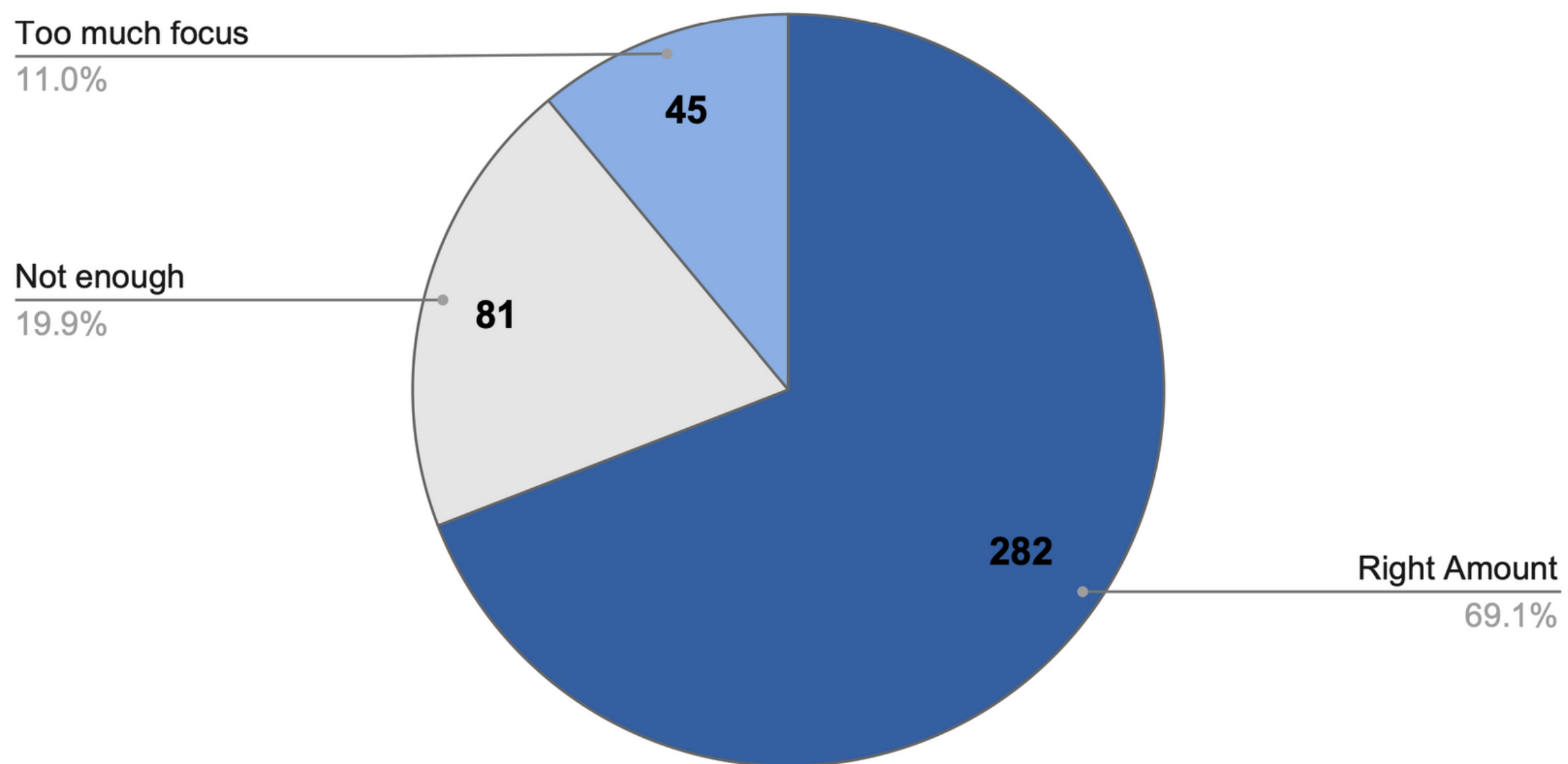
Advocating for the human rights of Iranians had the second most “top priority” votes, but ranked fourth in terms of overall votes.

Restoring the JCPOA or a new nuclear agreement involving the U.S. and Iran ranked fifth.

Additional priorities that were ranked included electing Iranian Americans and allies to public office (6), providing education and resources for Iranian Americans to engage in the U.S. political process (7), advancing equitable U.S. immigration policies (8), and building community and celebrating Iranian culture (9).

## Specific policy questions

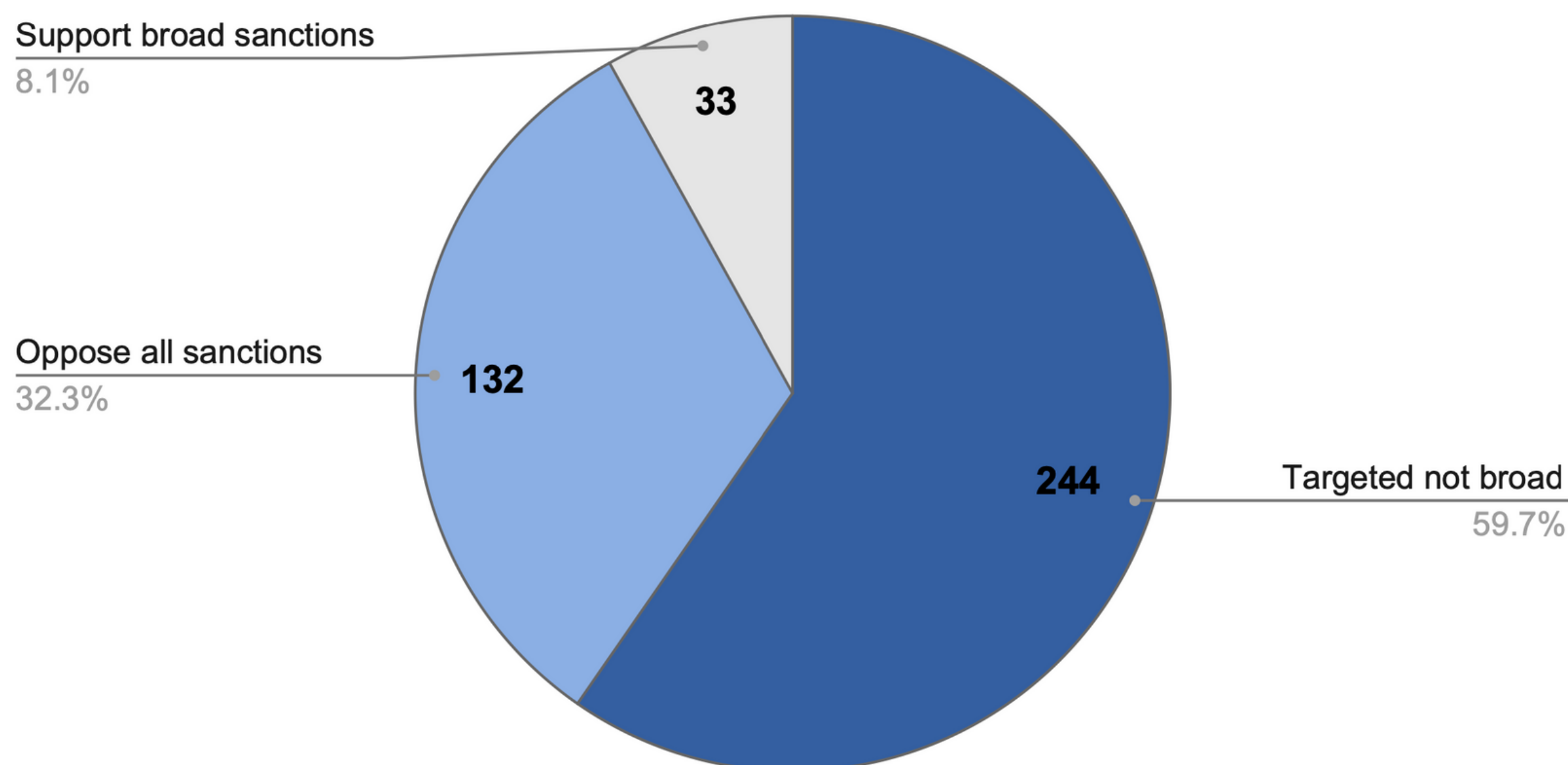
### Do you support NIAC's work to spotlight and advance policies in support of the human rights in Iran?



**69.1% of our respondents - a significant majority - say that NIAC has been focusing the right amount on human rights in Iran.** Nearly 20% felt that we should focus more on human rights, while 11% thought we were focusing too much on human rights.

This is not an easy balance to strike, particularly when there is an urgent crisis and rapid deterioration as we saw in late 2022. However, as the human rights situation has worsened, NIAC has intensified its important work to spotlight rights abuses on the ground and advocate for concrete steps that support - rather than further harm - the people of Iran. This includes our Human Rights Tracker and advocacy in support of internet freedom, remittances and visa processing, as well as our past support for critical initiatives like the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Iran. While we are a U.S. organization and thus can only directly advocate for what the U.S. government does with respect to human rights, we plan to continue doing everything we can to shine a light on abuses and seek to ensure that U.S. policies support - rather than further harm - the human rights situation on the ground.

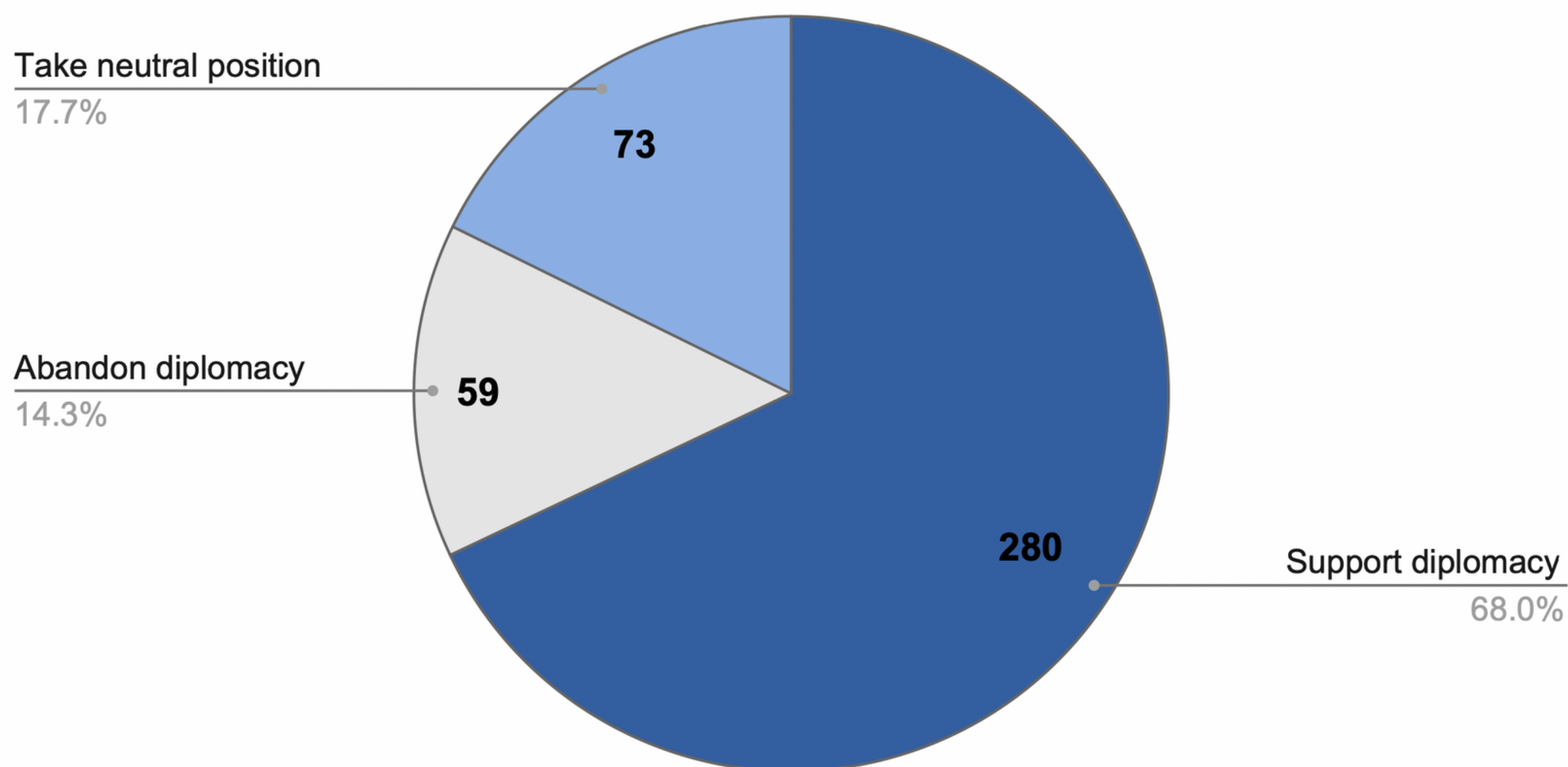
## What is closest to your view on NIAC and its advocacy around sanctions?



***On sanctions, nearly 60% of our respondents approved of NIAC's long-standing position supporting targeted human rights sanctions on those perpetuating abuses against the people of Iran while opposing broad sanctions that hurt ordinary civilians.*** An additional third of our respondents said that we should oppose all sanctions, both targeted and broad. 8% felt, instead, that NIAC should support all sanctions against Iran, which would be a reversal of our long-standing position.

These results show that there is a strong contingency of our community that continues to recognize the harms of U.S. sanctions policy in exacerbating the economic plight and human rights of ordinary Iranians. Regrettably, broad-based sanctions have been the norm rather than the exception across the more than four decades of the Islamic Republic's existence, and as sanctions have escalated it is plainly evident that the Iranian government has only grown more repressive and brutal. We remain proud of our long-standing work to oppose broad-based sanctions and support their narrowing and removal.

**What best matches your opinion on how NIAC should approach diplomacy and the risks of war with Iran?**

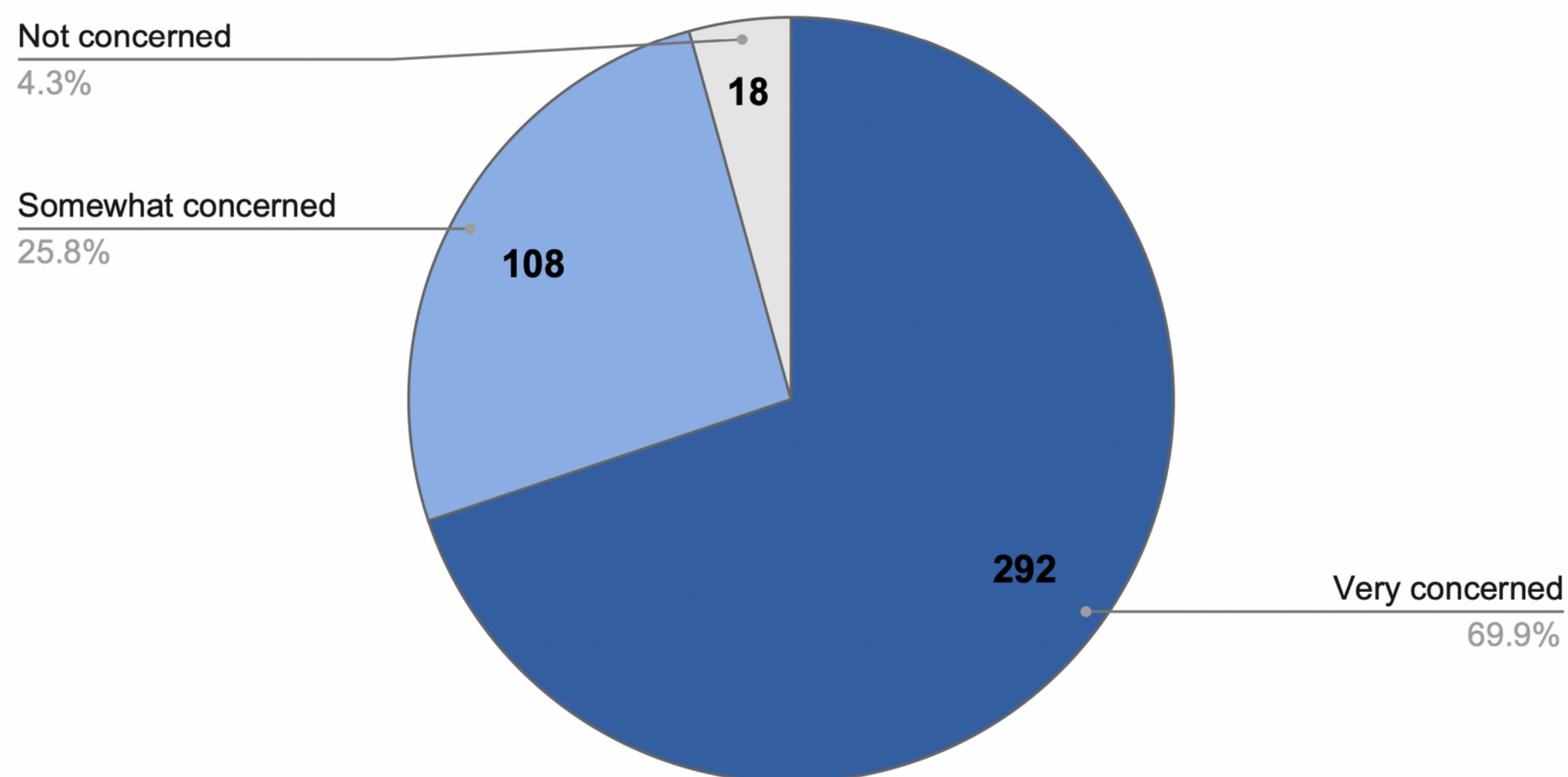


**68% - a firm majority - urged NIAC to support a resumption of negotiations to resolve the nuclear dispute, either via a return to the JCPOA or a new agreement.** 14%, meanwhile, urged that NIAC abandon efforts to support diplomacy with Iran while 18% urged that NIAC adopt a more neutral stance.

Interestingly, these findings also reflect broader polling of the community that indicate a majority of Iranian Americans would support the U.S. striking some form of diplomatic agreement with Iran. Despite a deliberate campaign to smear individuals who prefer engagement and easing pressure on ordinary Iranians, most in the community want to utilize diplomatic measures to resolve challenges with Iran. At the same time, there are indeed many who would prefer a more neutral or radically different position from NIAC regarding diplomacy, which reflects sharp and understandable divisions within the community over how the U.S. should respond to the protest movement.

Whatever the circumstances, NIAC will continue to be guided by its members and supporters.

**How concerned are you by domestic civil rights threats and immigration restrictions targeting individuals of Iranian heritage?**



**Nearly 70% said they are “very concerned” about threats to the civil liberties of Iranians.** 25% registered that they were “somewhat concerned” while only 4% indicated they were “not concerned.”

These results show extensive concern about the rights of Iranian Americans, which NIAC is strongly committed to defending. While we helped to defeat the Muslim ban, there continue to be pressures for similar nativist and discriminatory policies to be imposed on Iranian Americans and other maligned immigrant communities. Most immediately, legislation continues to be introduced in state legislatures that would strip the rights of Iranian nationals - including the right to own property or attend college. Eventually, with the coming presidential elections, there may be serious threats of a resumption of policies like the Muslim Ban and nationalization of the Texas proposal. Even as geopolitical tensions heighten and the human rights crisis worsens, significant organizational work is needed to defend the community’s rights, which NIAC will continue to champion.