East Bay Regional Park District: Parcel Tax Research

(DRAFT)

Poll of Likely November 2024 General Election Voters

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Tulchin Research

April 2024

East Bay Regional Park District

TULCHIN RESEARCH

Better Data. Better Strategy.

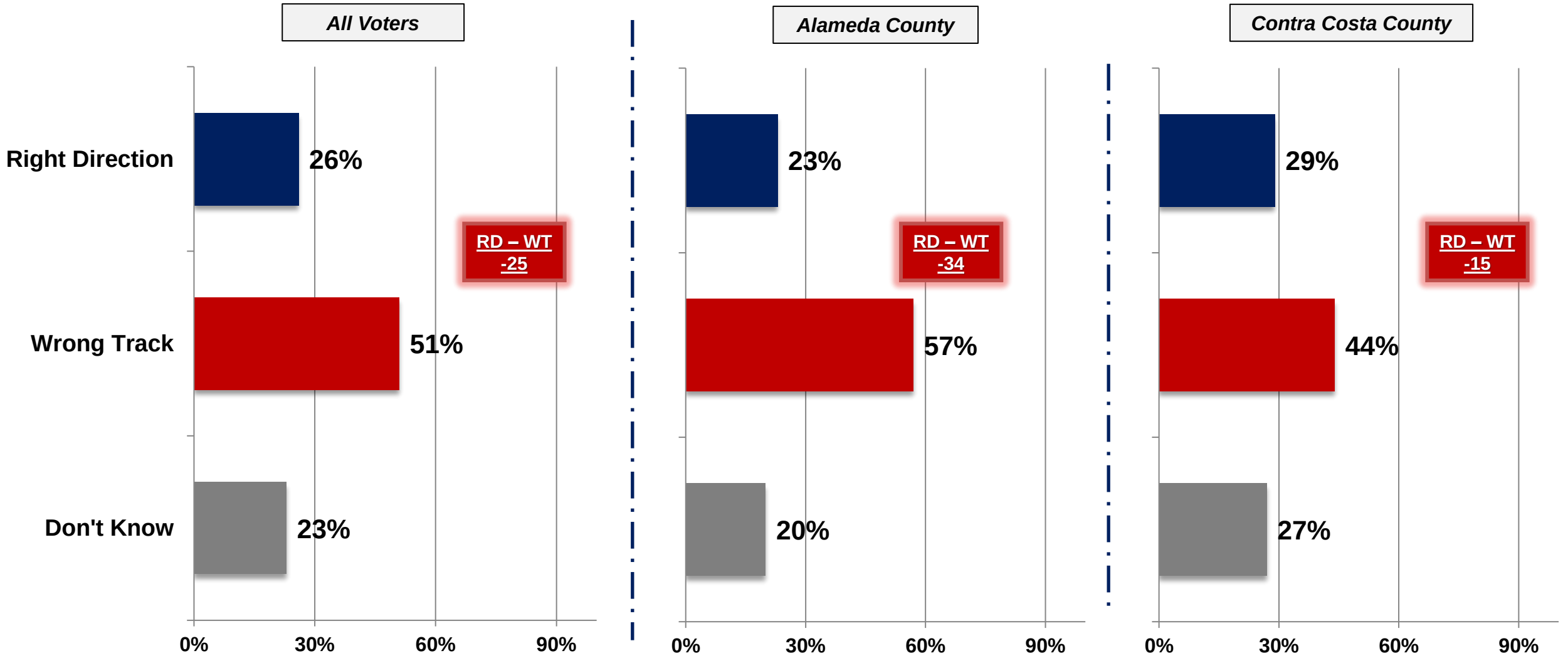
Methodology

- Multi-modal survey in the East Bay Regional Park District (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties).
- Survey conducted among 800 likely November 2024 voters.
  - February 2023 Benchmark Poll: Survey conducted among 500 likely November 2024 voters.
- Fielding conducted April 9-16, 2024.
  - February 2023 Poll: Fielding conducted February 1-6, 2023.
- Live phone interviews conducted by professional callers in English, Spanish and Chinese dialing both landlines and cell phones as well as interviewing a portion of respondents online through e-mails and text messages from the voter file.
- The margin of error is ± 3.46% for the full 800 sample.
  - February 2023 Benchmark Poll: The margin of error is ± 4.38% for the full 500 sample.

General Mood & Sentiments

General Mood of EBRPD Voters By County

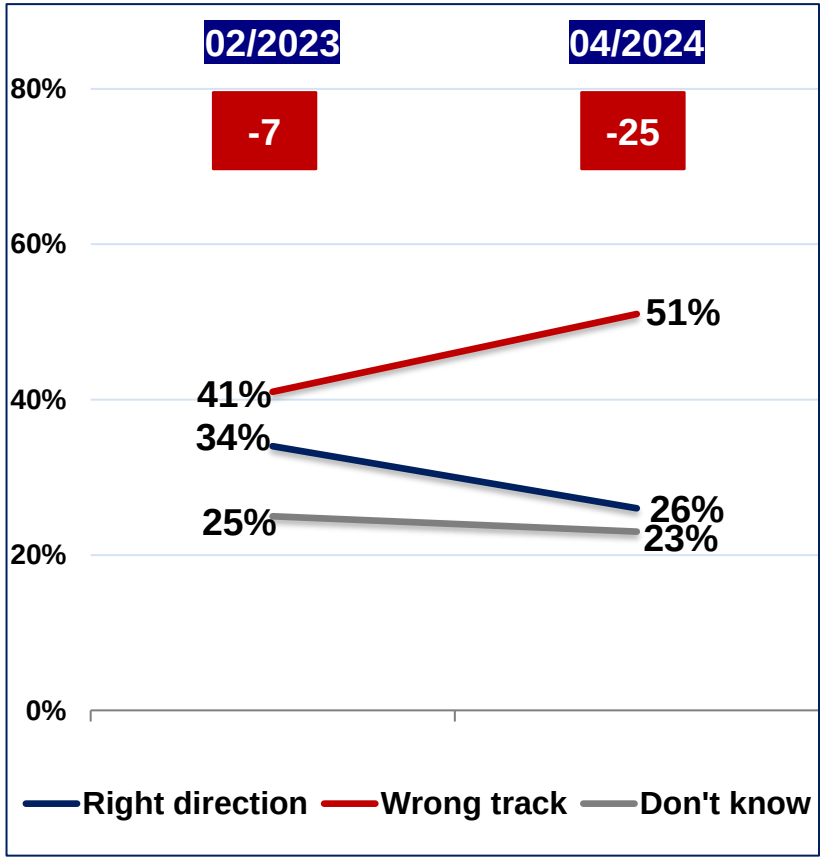
*Do you feel things in **[ALAMEDA/CONTRA COSTA]** County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?*



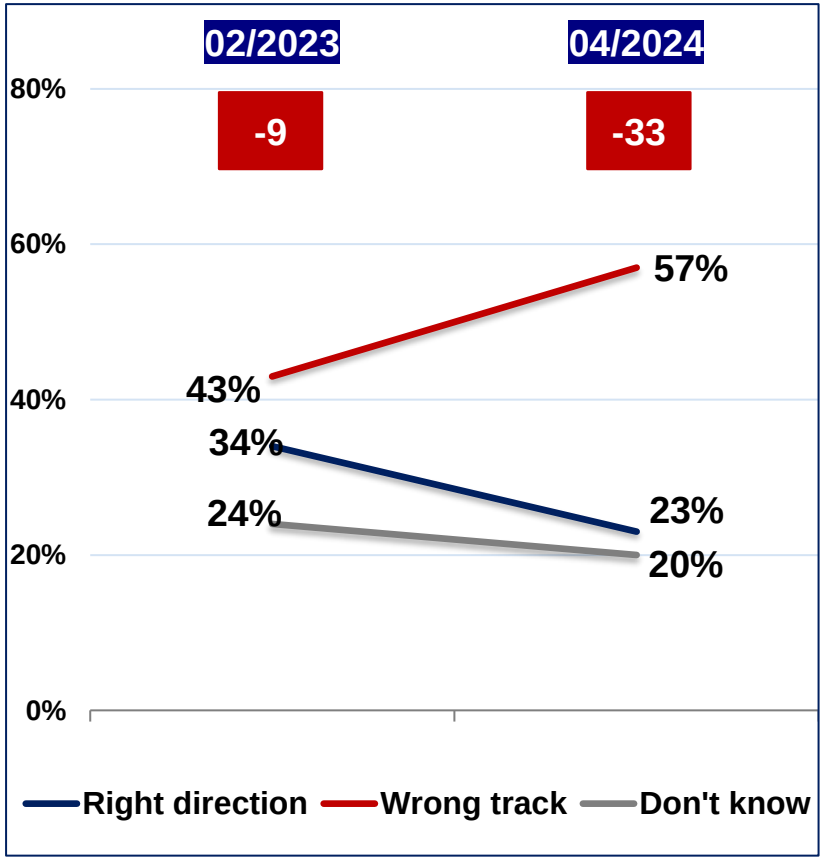
EBRPD Voters Are More Pessimistic Now Than in 2023

*Do you feel things in **[ALAMEDA/CONTRA COSTA]** County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?*

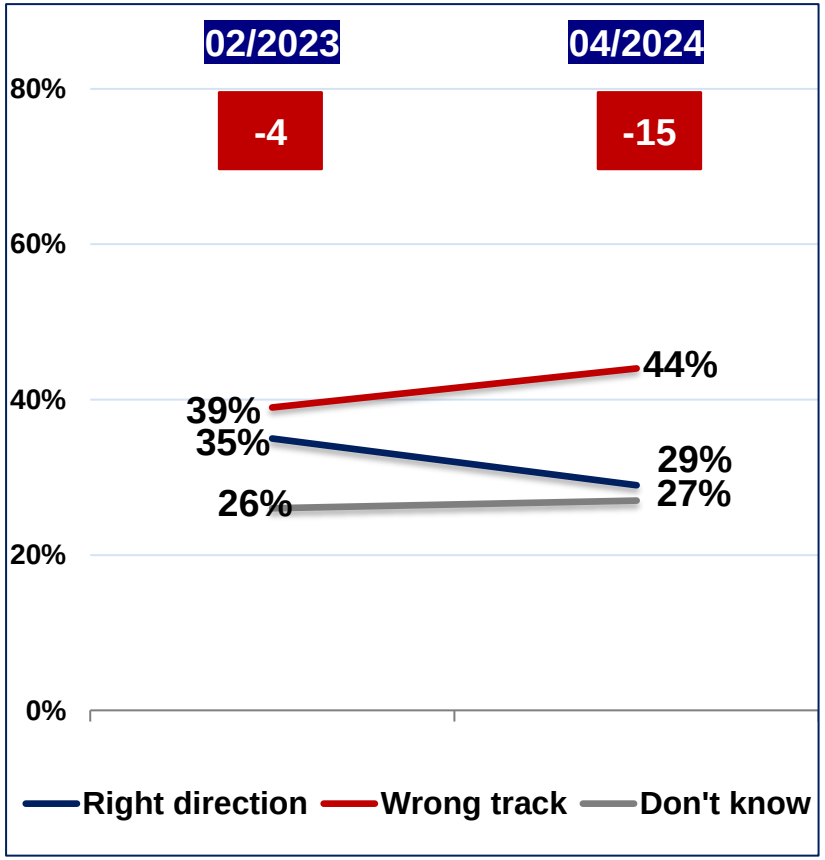
All Voters



Alameda County

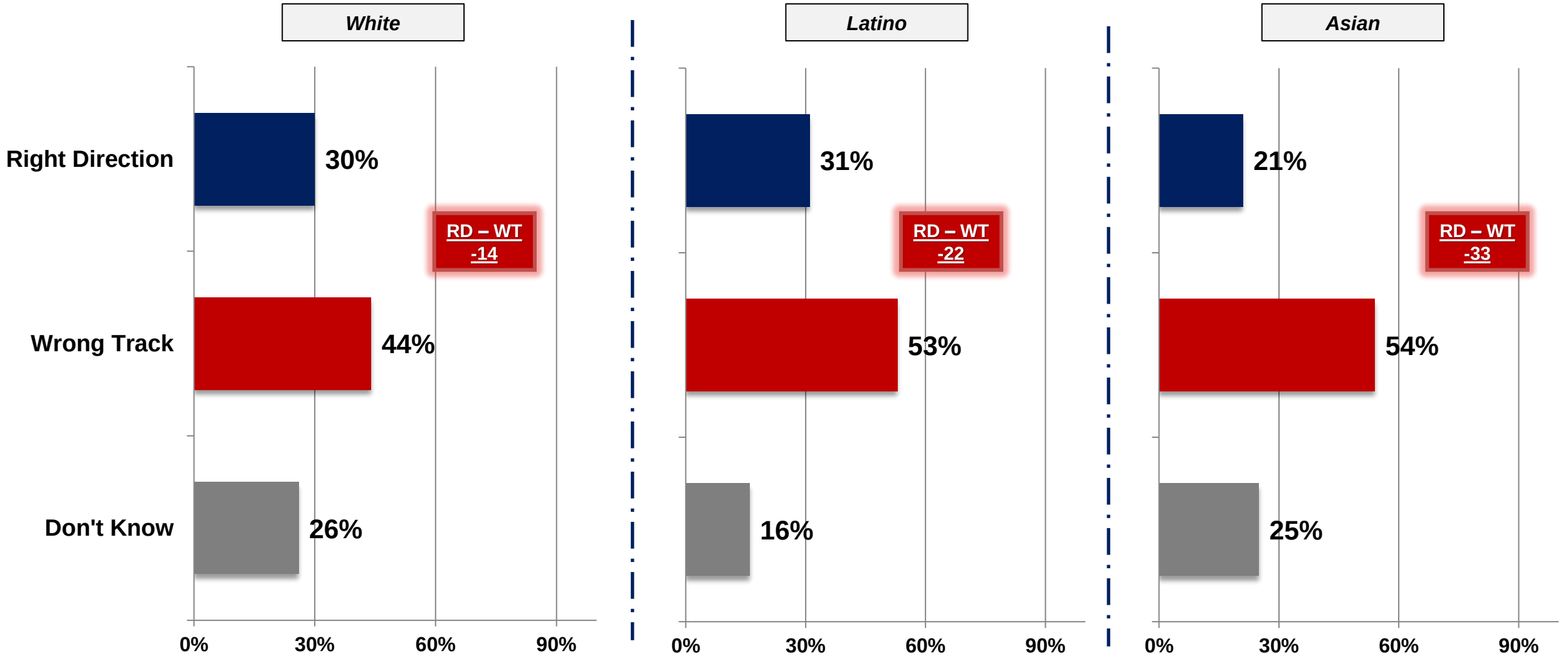


Contra Costa County



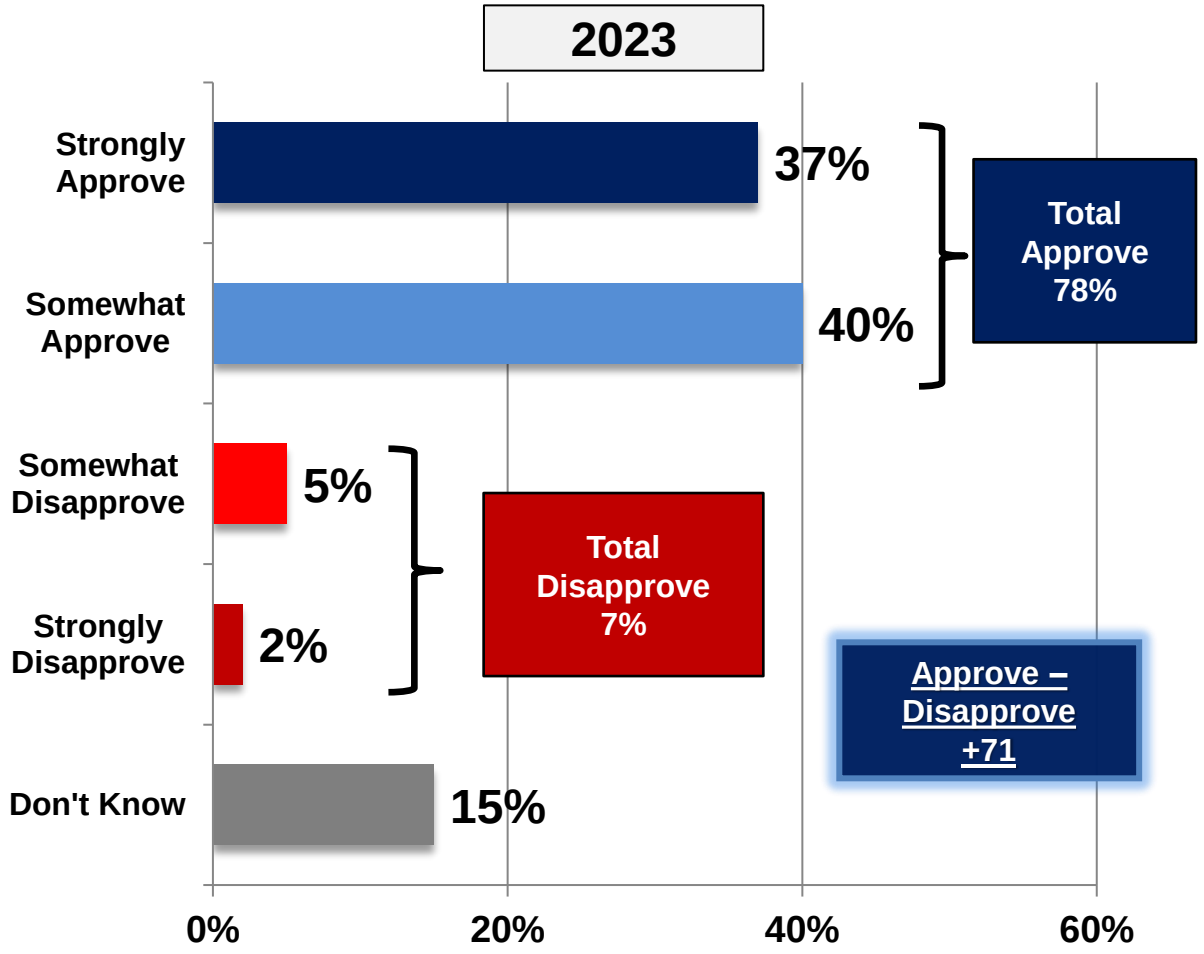
General Mood of EBRPD Voters by Ethnicity

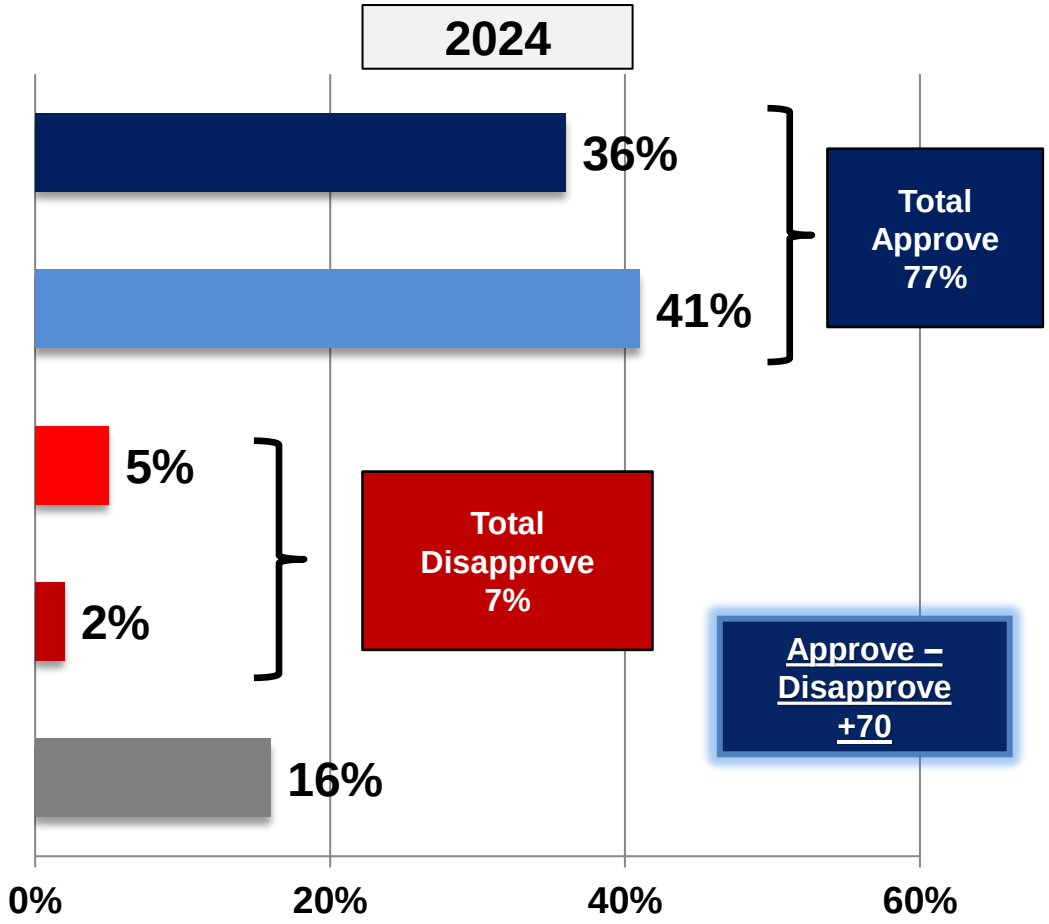
*Do you feel things in **[ALAMEDA/CONTRA COSTA]** County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?*



EBRPD Approval Ratings Remain Positive and Largely Unchanged

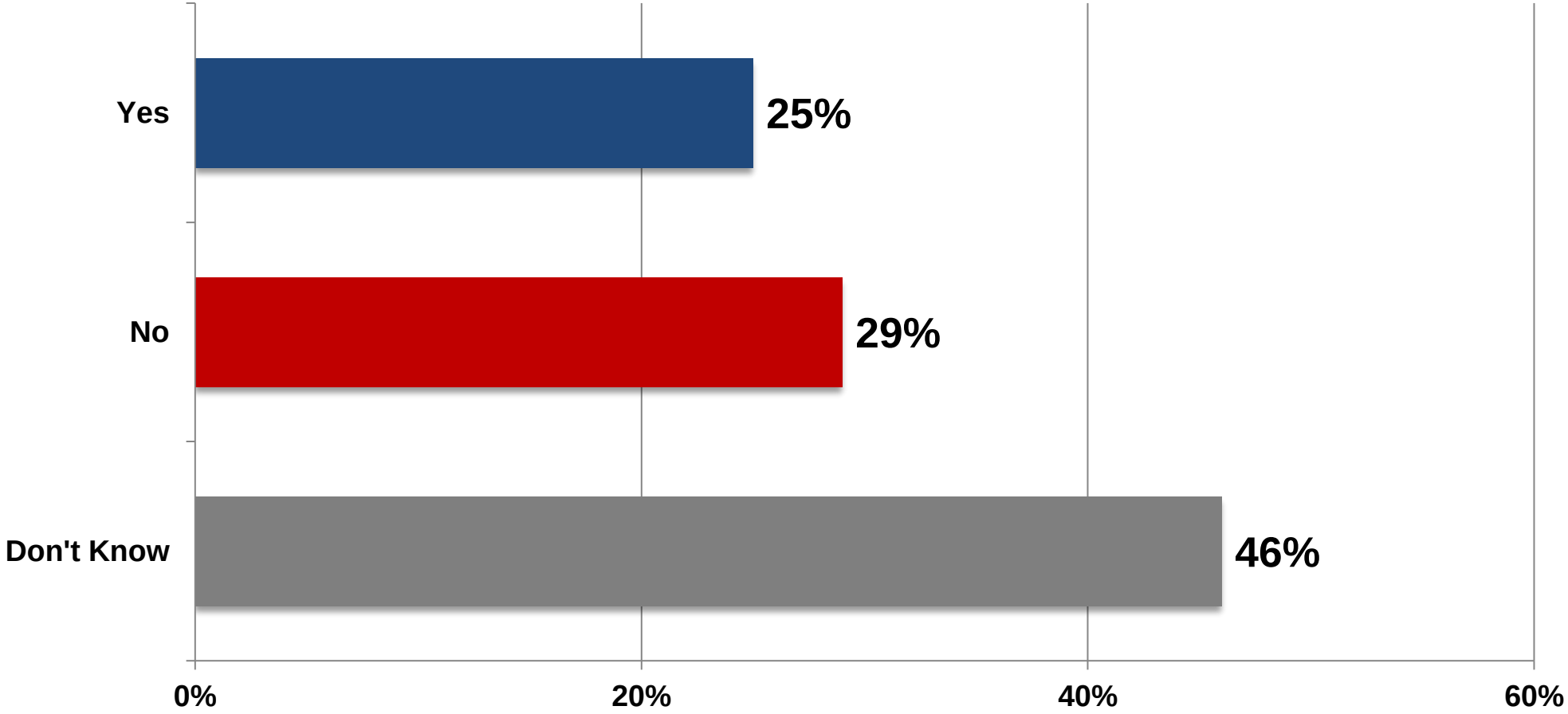
As you may know, the East Bay Regional Park District operates a system of regional parks and trails in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of how East Bay Regional Park District operates and maintains these regional parks and trails?





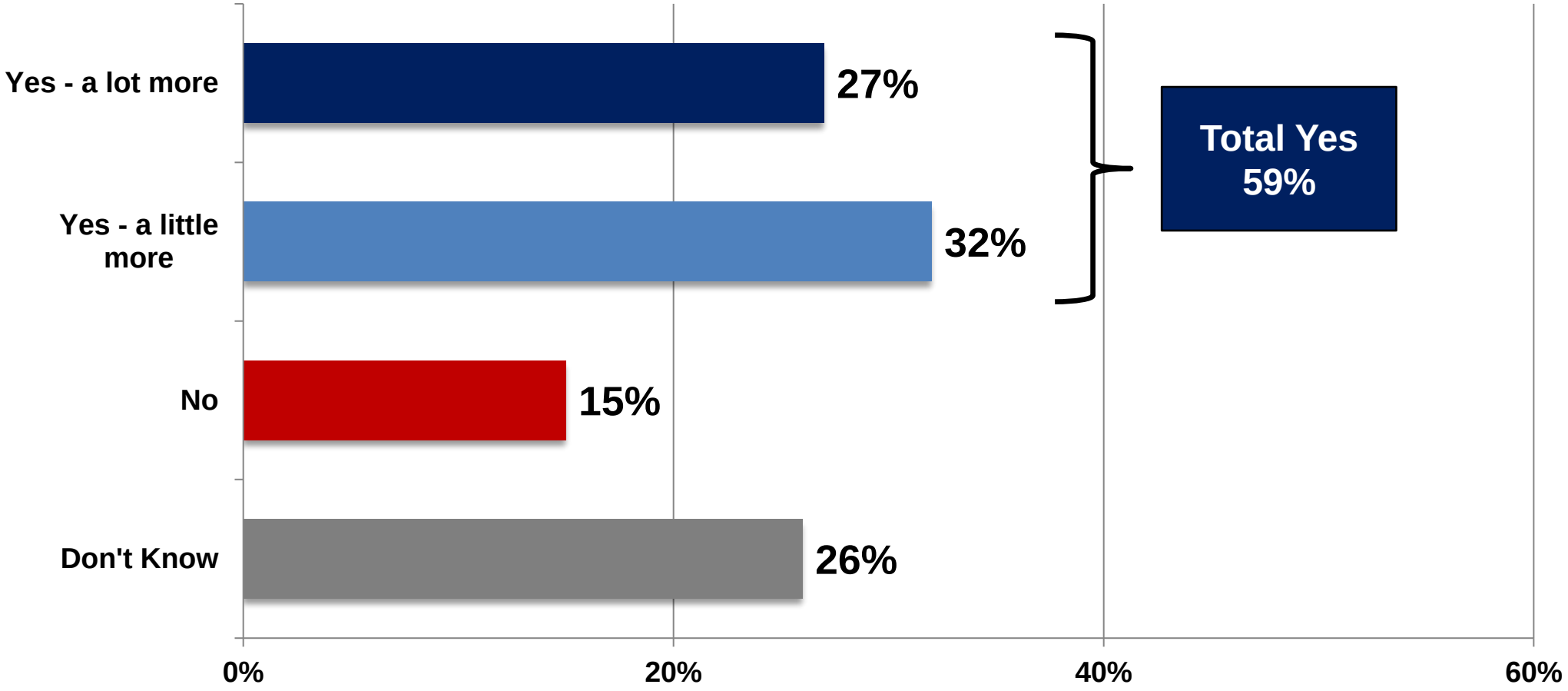
Voters Largely Unaware of EBRPD Funding for Maintenance, Just a Quarter Believe the District has Enough Funding

Do you feel that the East Bay Regional Park District currently has enough funding to maintain the parks, trails and facilities they manage across both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, or not?



A Solid Majority of Voters Believes EBRPD Could Benefit from Additional Funding

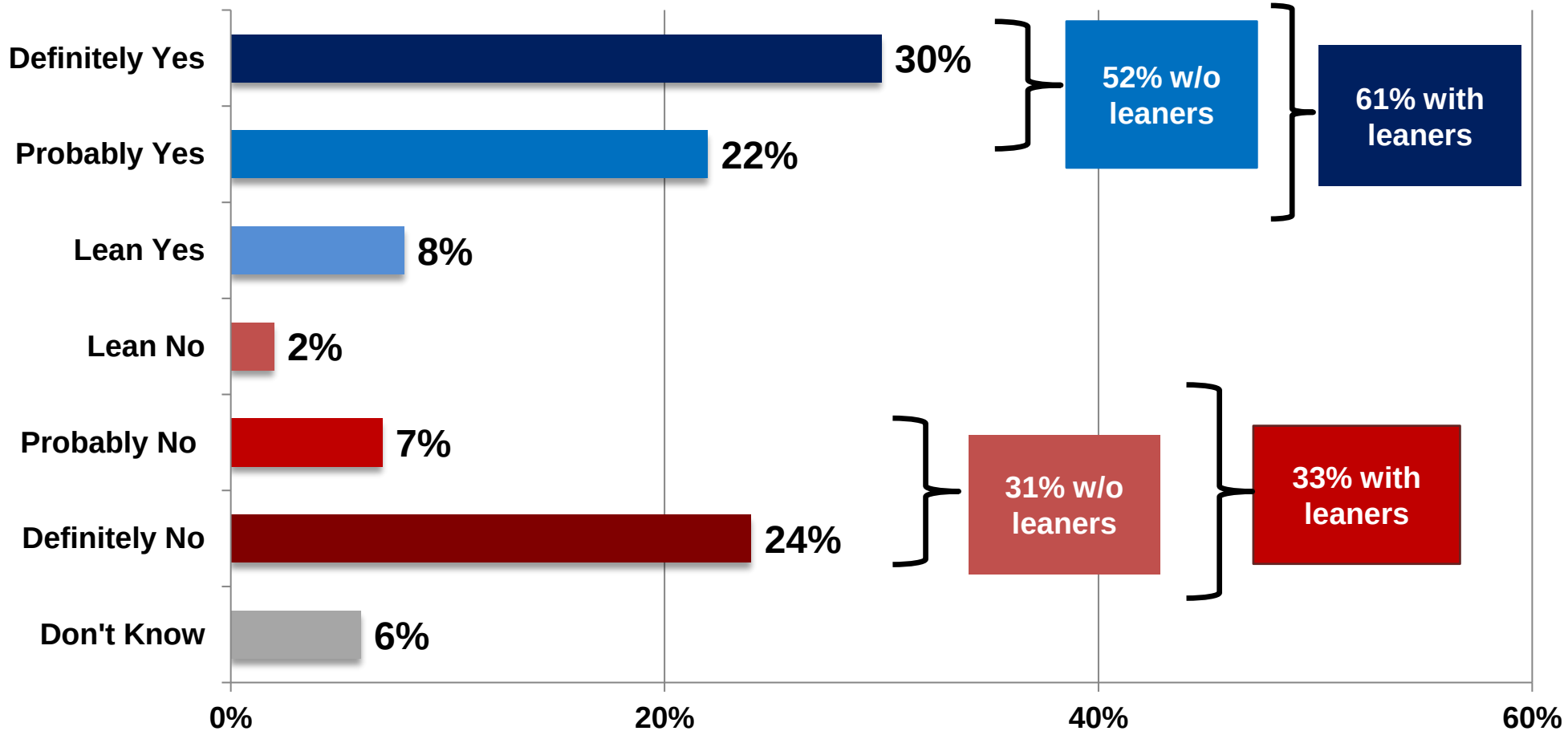
Do you feel that the East Bay Regional Park District could benefit from additional funding to improve operations and maintenance of parks, trails and facilities? ***[IF YES]:*** *Is that a lot more funding or a little bit more funding?*



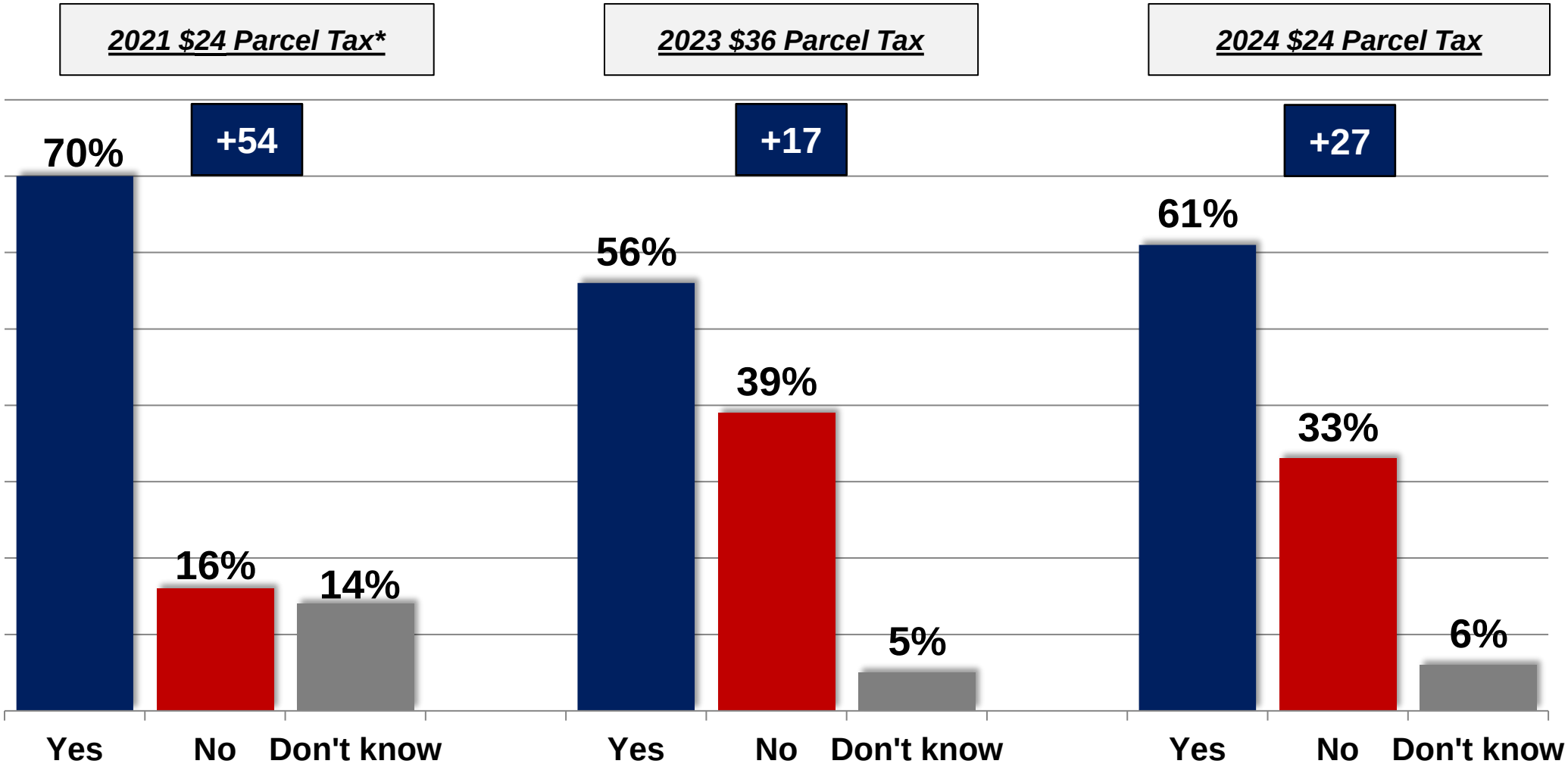
EBRPD Funding Measure Support

Majority Support for a $24 Parcel Tax

To preserve and maintain parks and regional trails for future generations; reduce catastrophic wildfire risk with proactive vegetation management; repair damage from flooding, landslides and erosion and prevent future extreme weather damage; and restore wildlife habitats and improve access to parks and trails; shall East Bay Regional Park District levy a parcel tax of $24 per parcel per year, generating twenty-one million dollars annually and sunsets after 18 years with mandatory annual independent financial audits and citizen oversight?



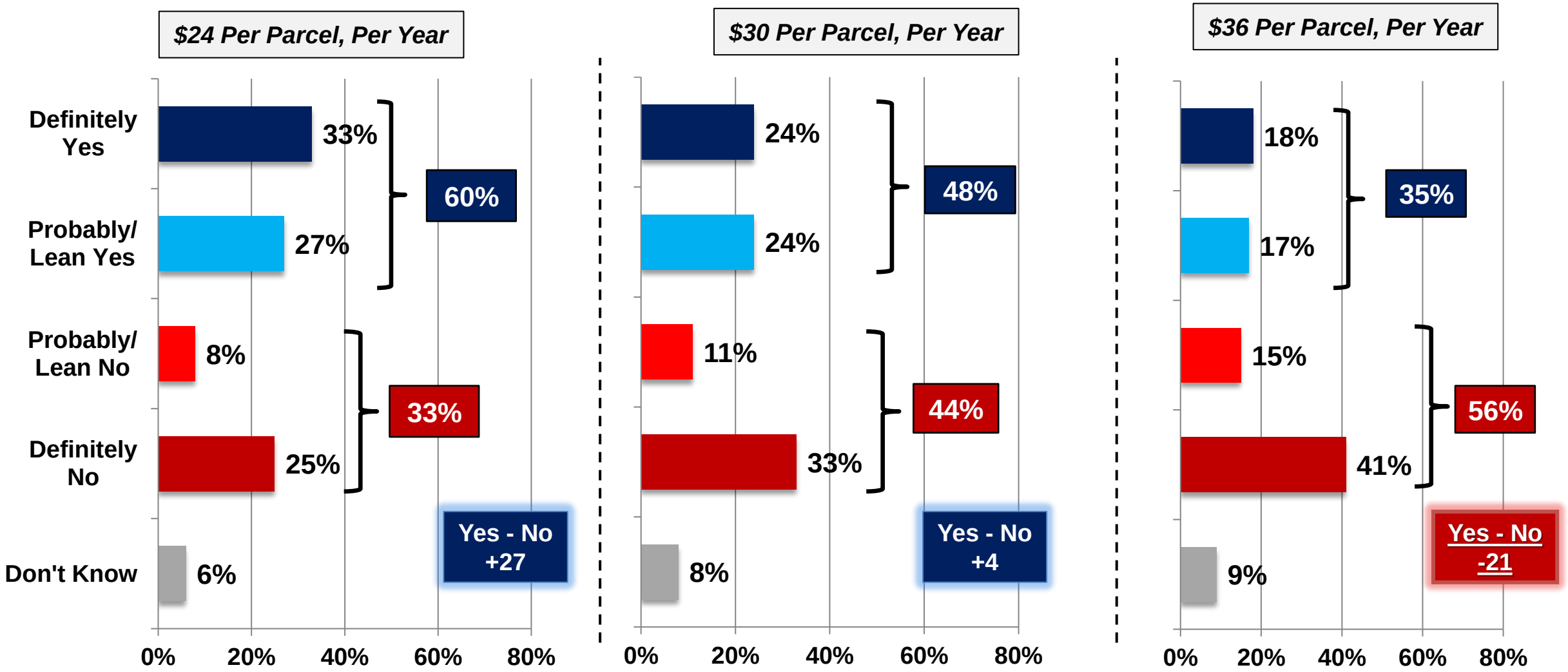
Higher Levels of Support for Parcel Tax Now than in 2023, But Still Below 2/3 Threshold Needed to Pass



*Data from Lake Research Poll conducted 11/21 **Totals include leaners

Voters Are Cost Sensitive; Lower Dollar Amount Preferred

*What if the parcel tax you just heard about was for **(amount)**? Would you vote yes in favor of it, or no to oppose it?*



Reasons to Vote Yes in Support of a Funding Measure

Word Cloud

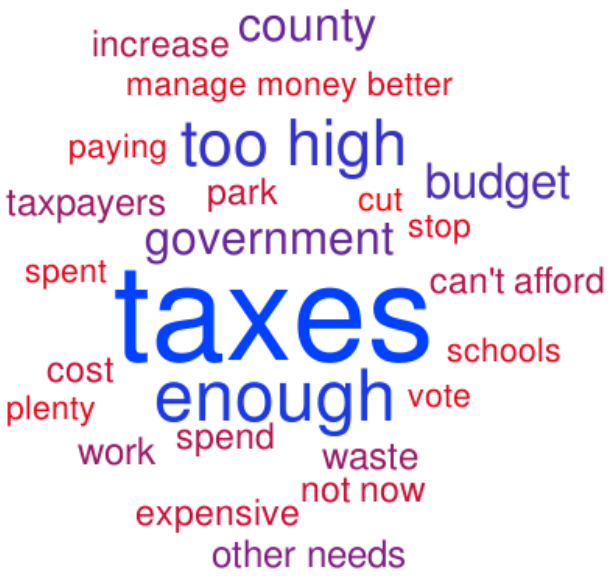
Percentage Response

Preserve East Bay Parks/EBRPD	**23%**
Parks are important	17%
Preserve trails	3%
Preserve East Bay Parks/EBRPD	1%
Preserve facilities	1%
Regular park user	**14%**
I value/like/love/enjoy the parks	9%
Regular park user	5%
Environmental needs/improvement	**11%**
Environmental/ needs/ improvement	6%
Preserve nature/wildlife	5%
More funding needed	**10%**
More funding needed (general)	5%
Parks are underfunded	5%
Maintenance	**8%**
Improve maintenance	8%
Maintenance costs increasing	0%
Small amount/tax	**8%**
Small Amount/Tax ($24)/Reasonable	5%
Affordable	2%
I am willing to pay the tax	1%
Wildfire prevention/mitigation	**5%**
Prevent/mitigate wildfire damage	4%
Keep communities safe from wildfire	1%
Manage brush/vegetation	1%
Good/support tax	**3%**
Good/support tax (general)	3%
The items in the measure/bill	1%

***Results Reflect Open End Responses (Yes Voters)**

Reasons to Vote No in Opposition to a Funding Measure

Word Cloud

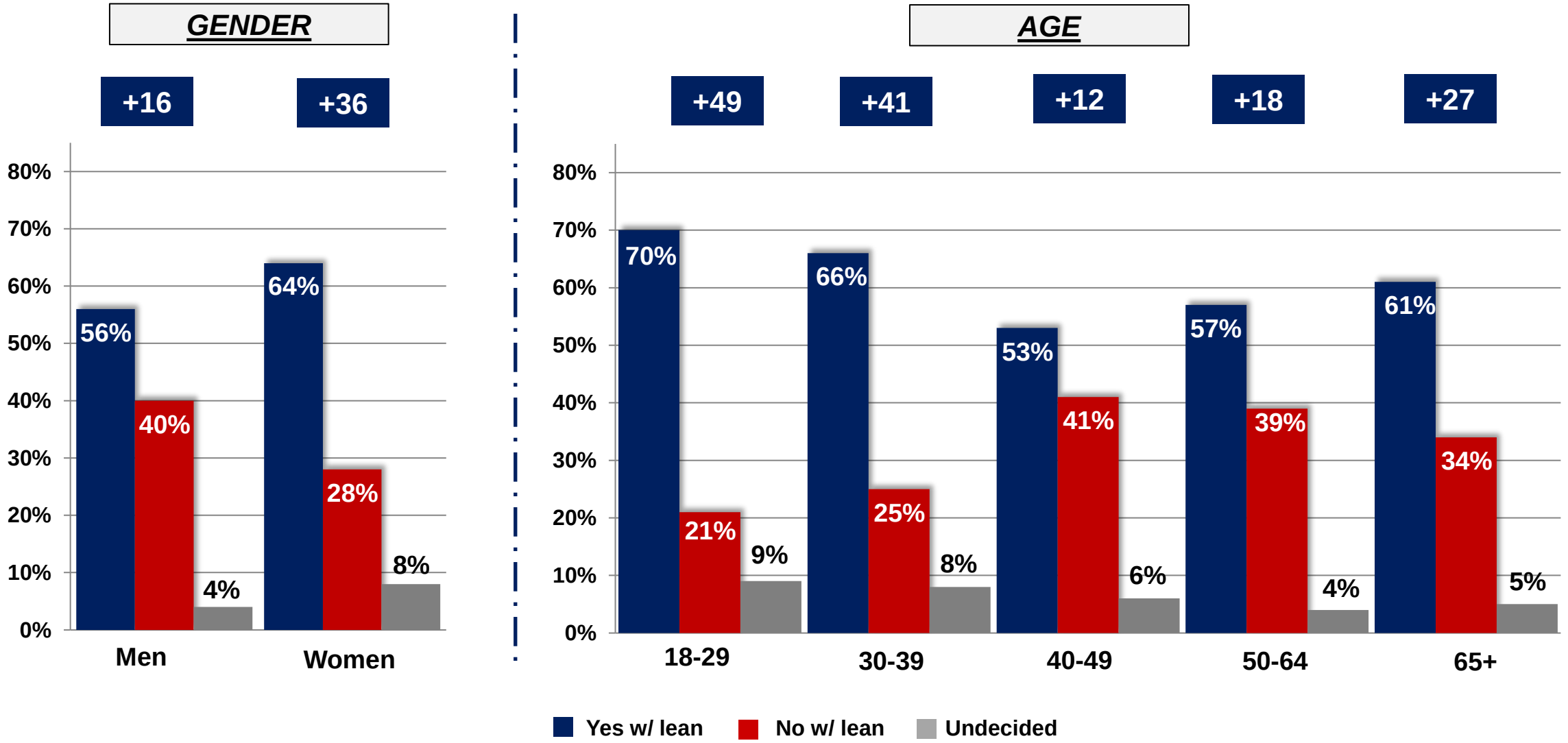


Percentage Response

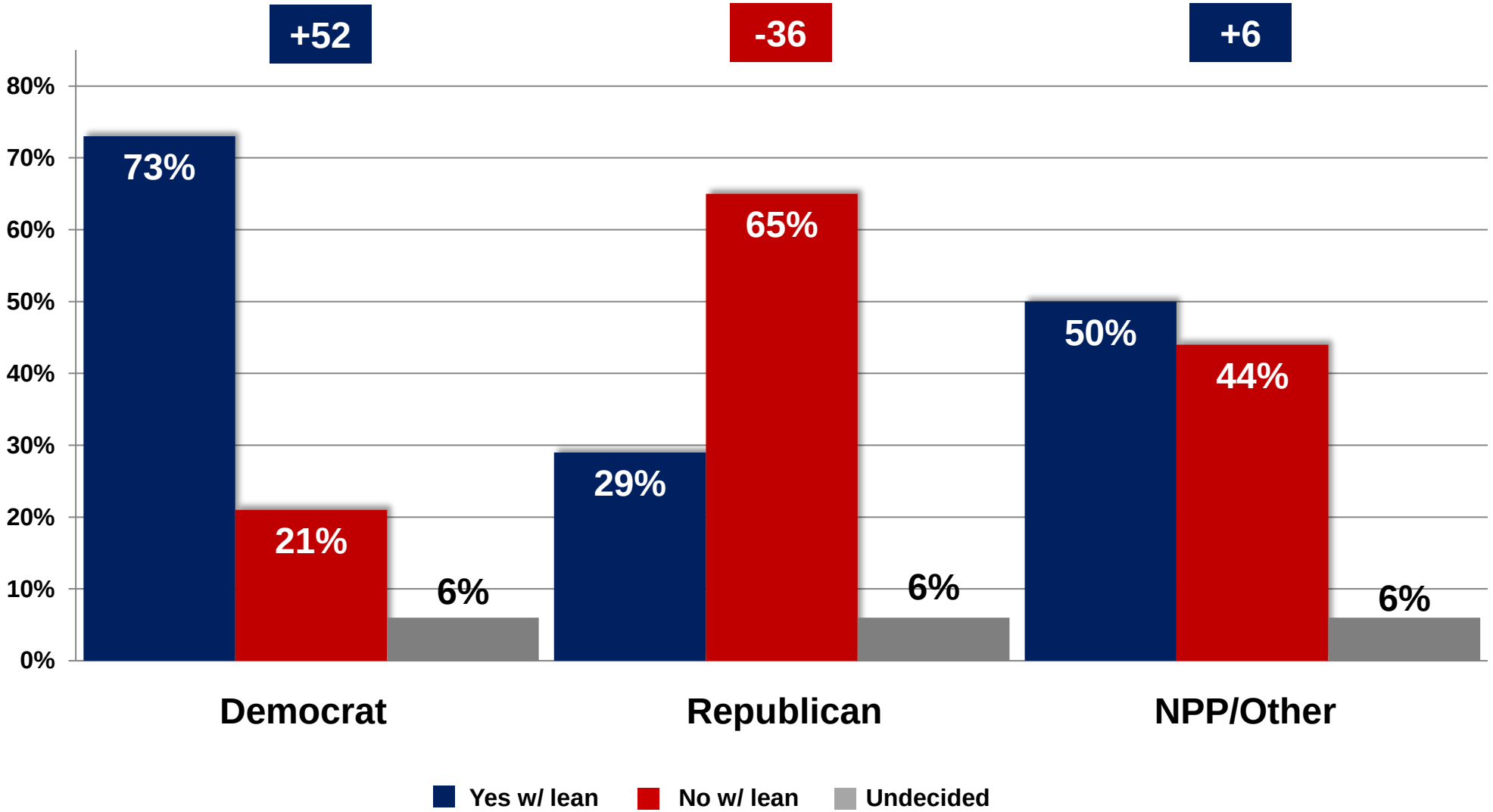
Taxes are too high	**38%**
Taxes too high already	16%
No new taxes	14%
Pay too much in taxes	6%
CA/ state taxes too high	1%
Waste/Manage money better	**24%**
Poor management	5%
Better budgeting/ cut waste	5%
They have enough money/ funding	4%
Use what they have/ live within means	4%
Too much waste (general)	3%
Manage money better	2%
Too much government waste	1%
Inflation/Costs	**8%**
Costs too much/ too high	4%
Can't afford it	4%
Anti-property/parcel taxes	**8%**
Can't afford another parcel tax	5%
Hurts homeowners	3%
Not a priority / Other cost priorities	**4%**
Other priorities (general)	4%
Prioritize schools	0%
Need transparency/ accountability	**3%**
Don't see results/ improvements made	**2%**
Oppose tax/bad idea	**2%**
Oppose taxes	1%
Oppose (general)	1%
Tax the rich/ wealthy	**2%**

***Results Reflect Open End Responses (No Voters)**

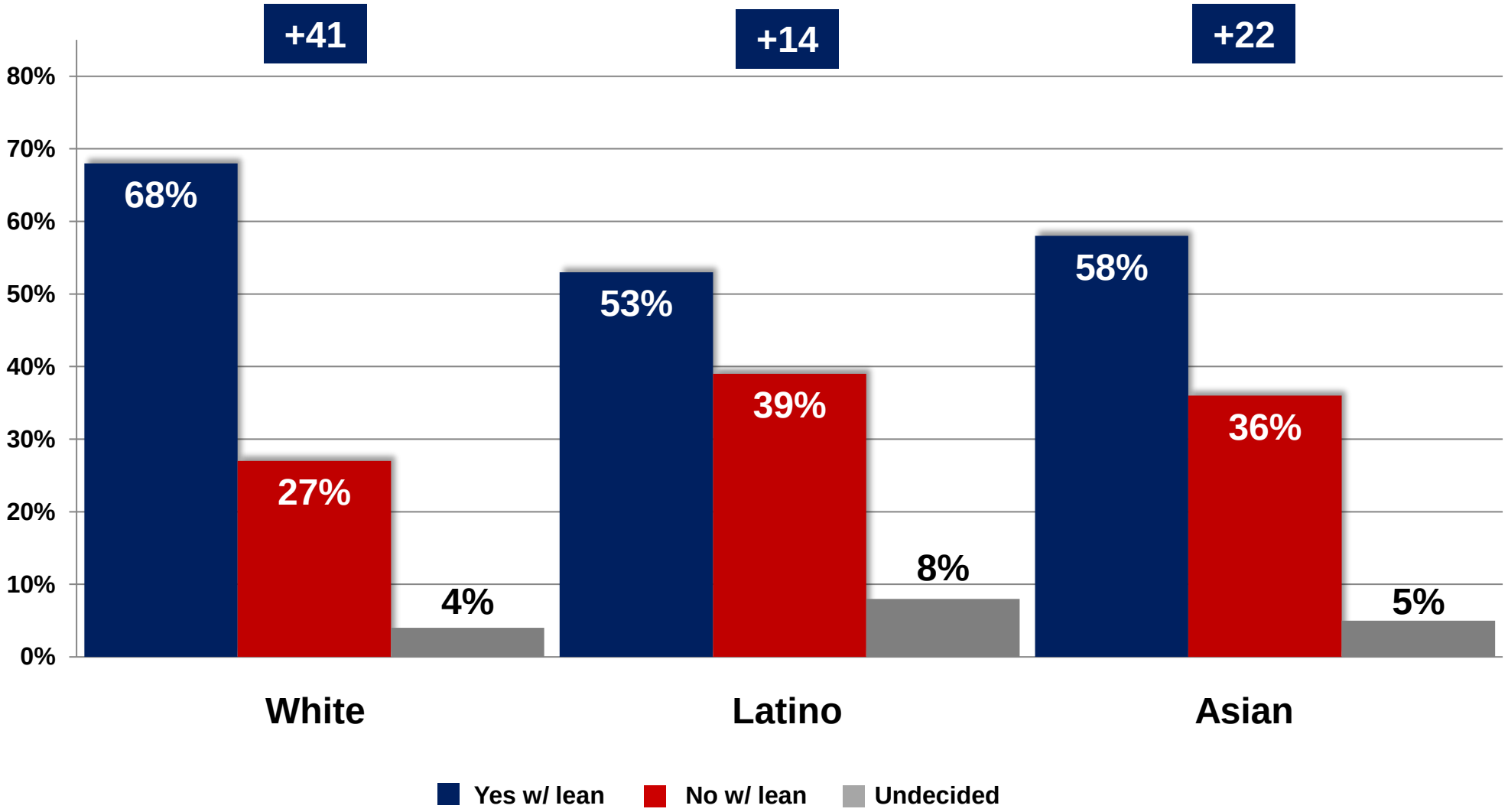
Initial Vote by Gender and Age



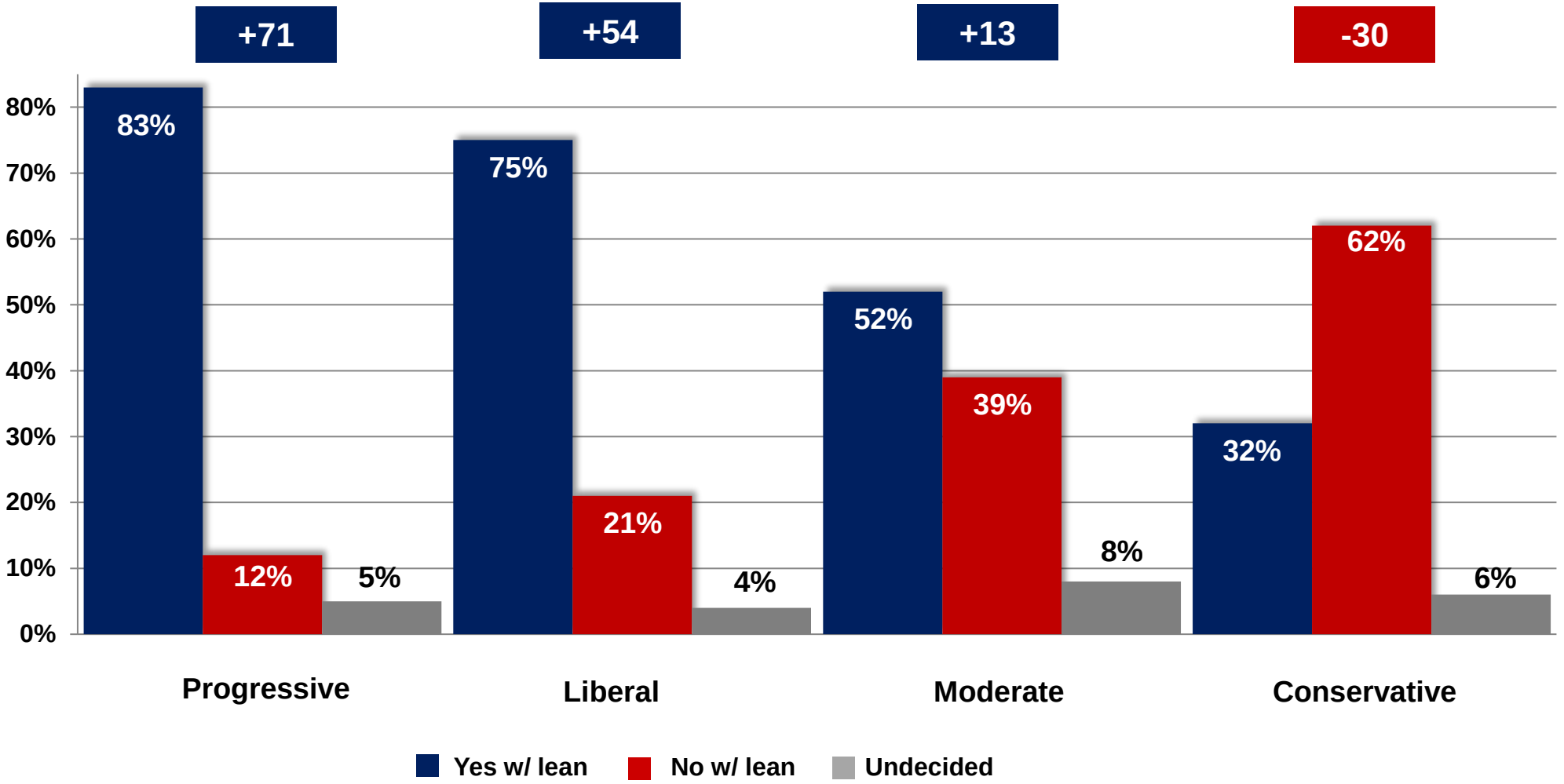
Initial Vote by Party



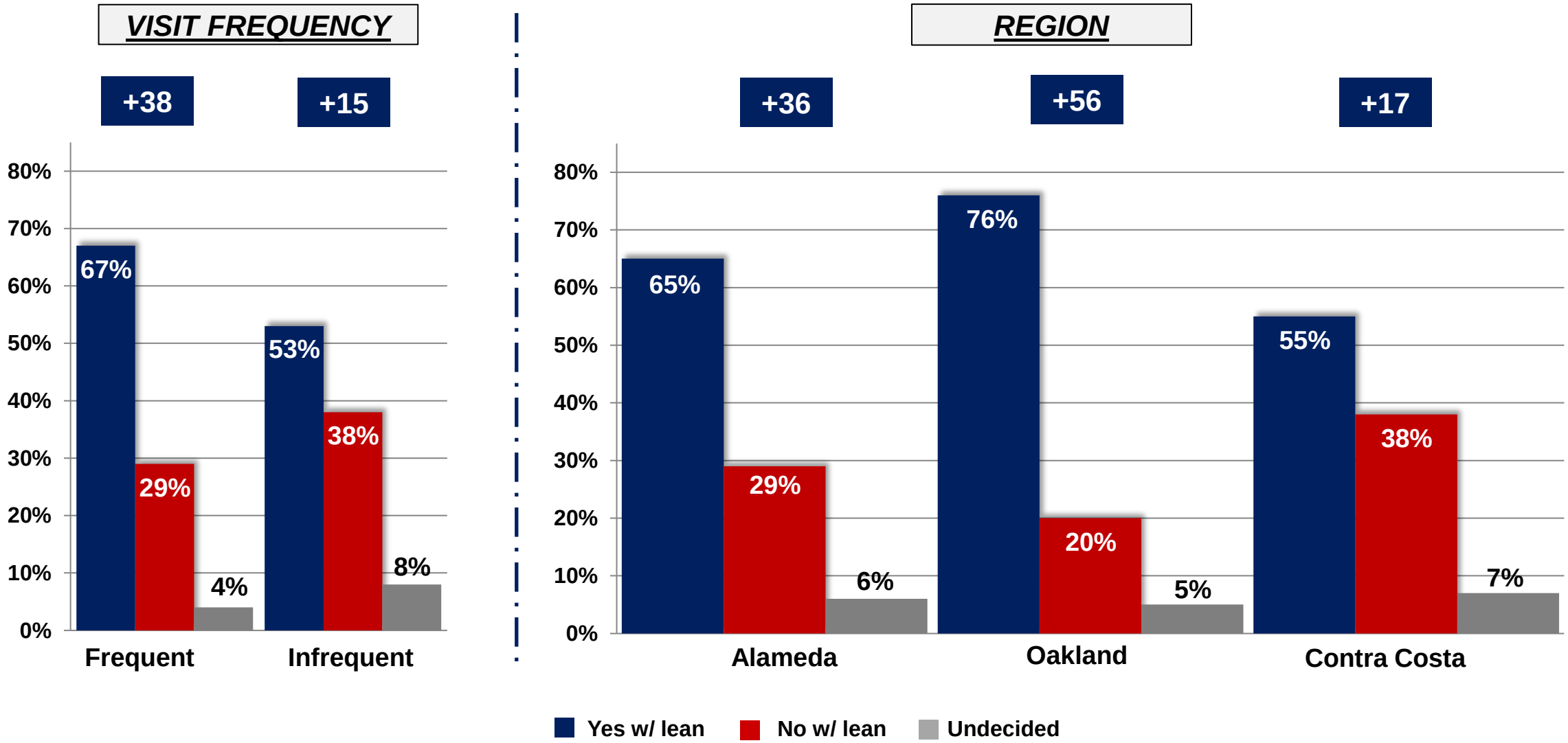
Initial Vote by Ethnicity



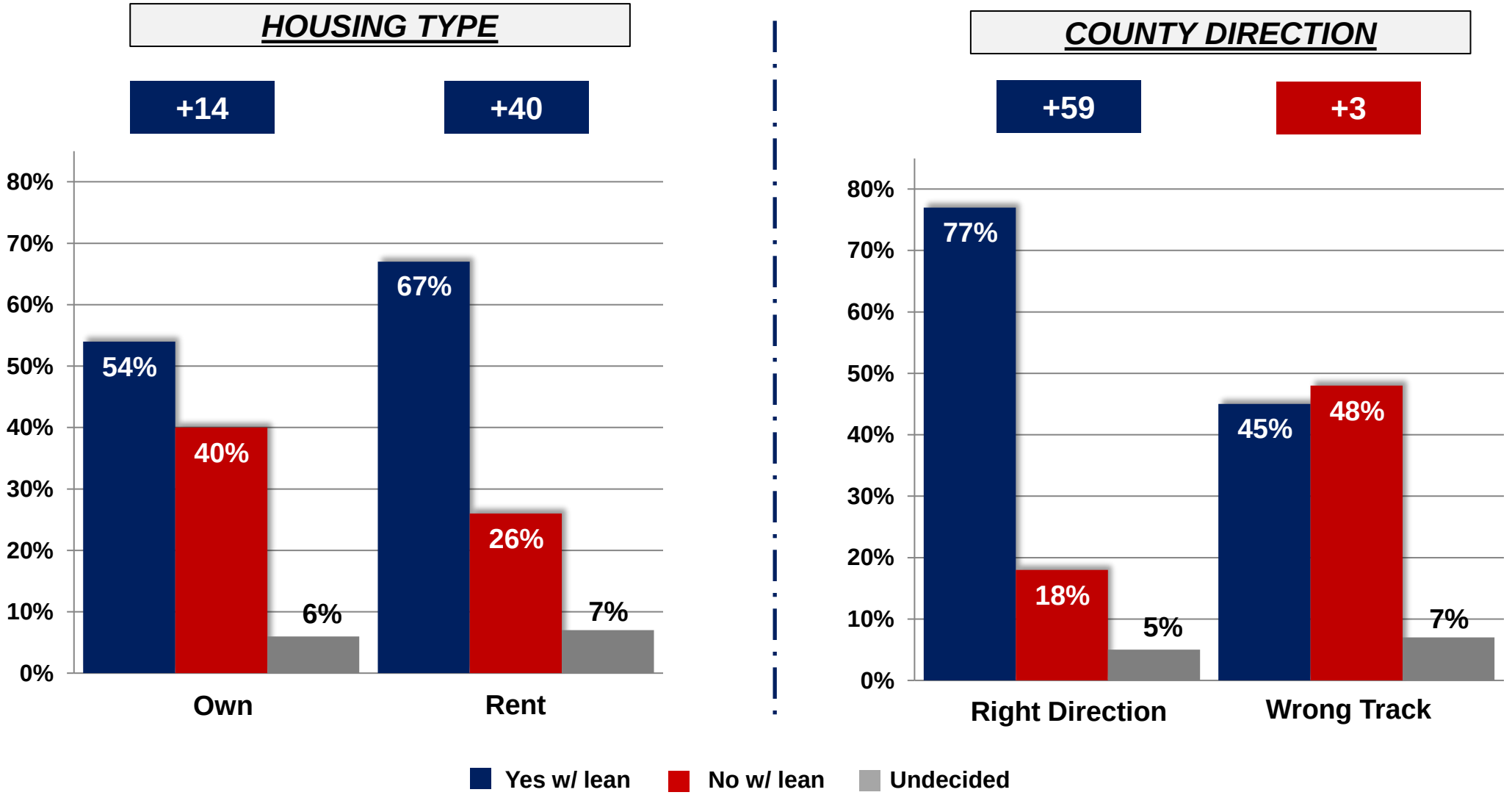
Initial Vote by Ideology



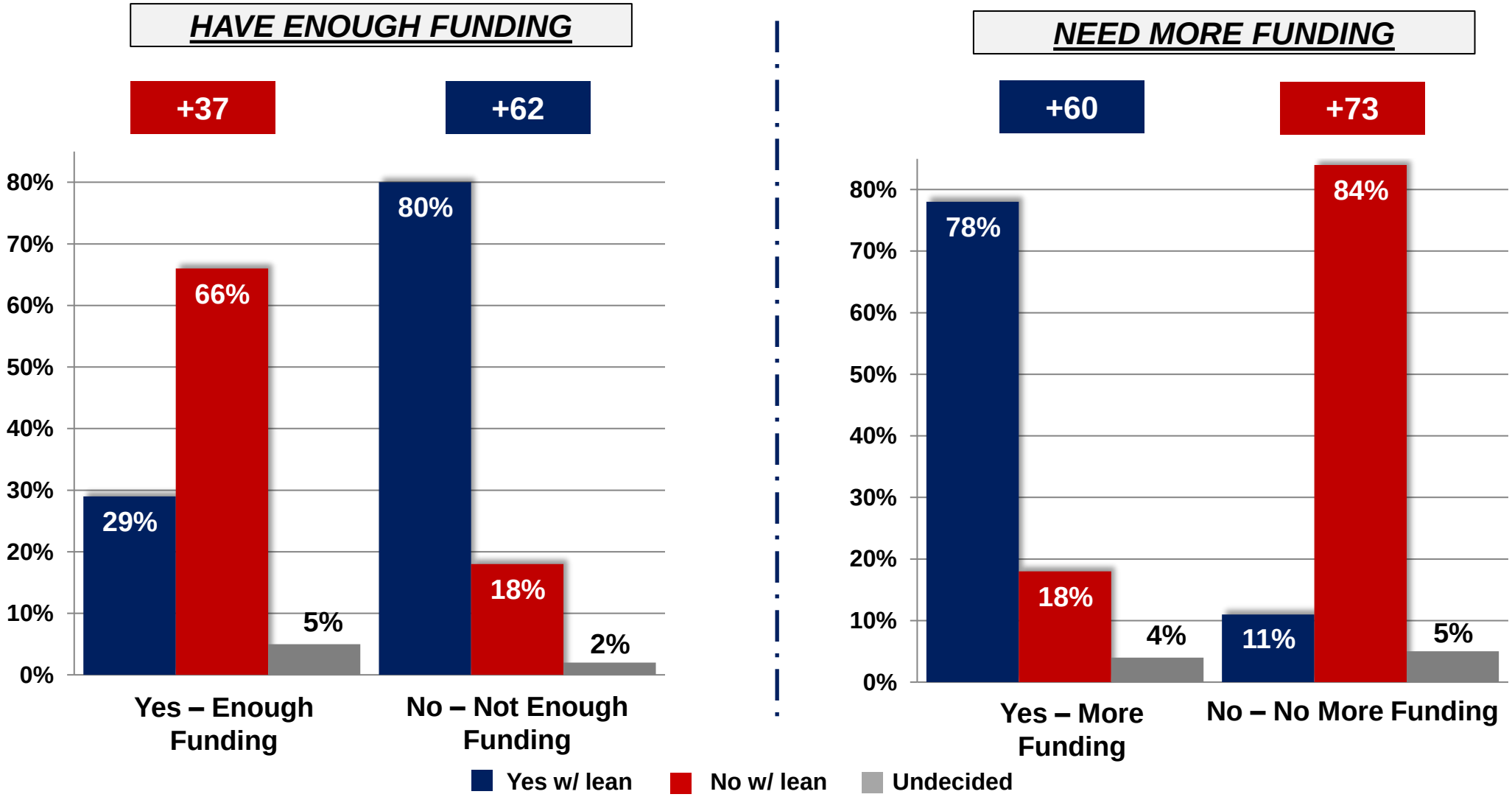
Initial Vote by Park Use Frequency and Region



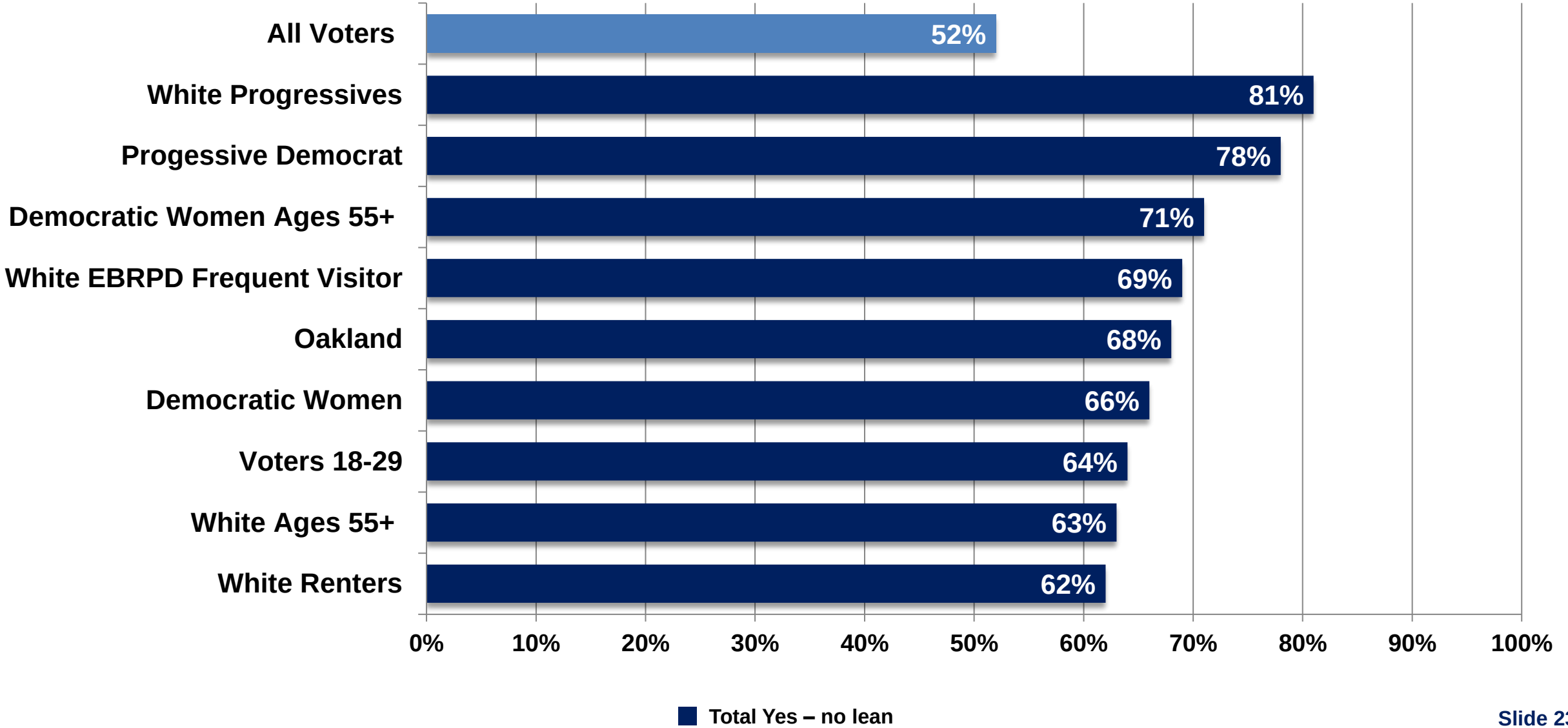
Initial Vote by Homeowner/Renter and County Direction



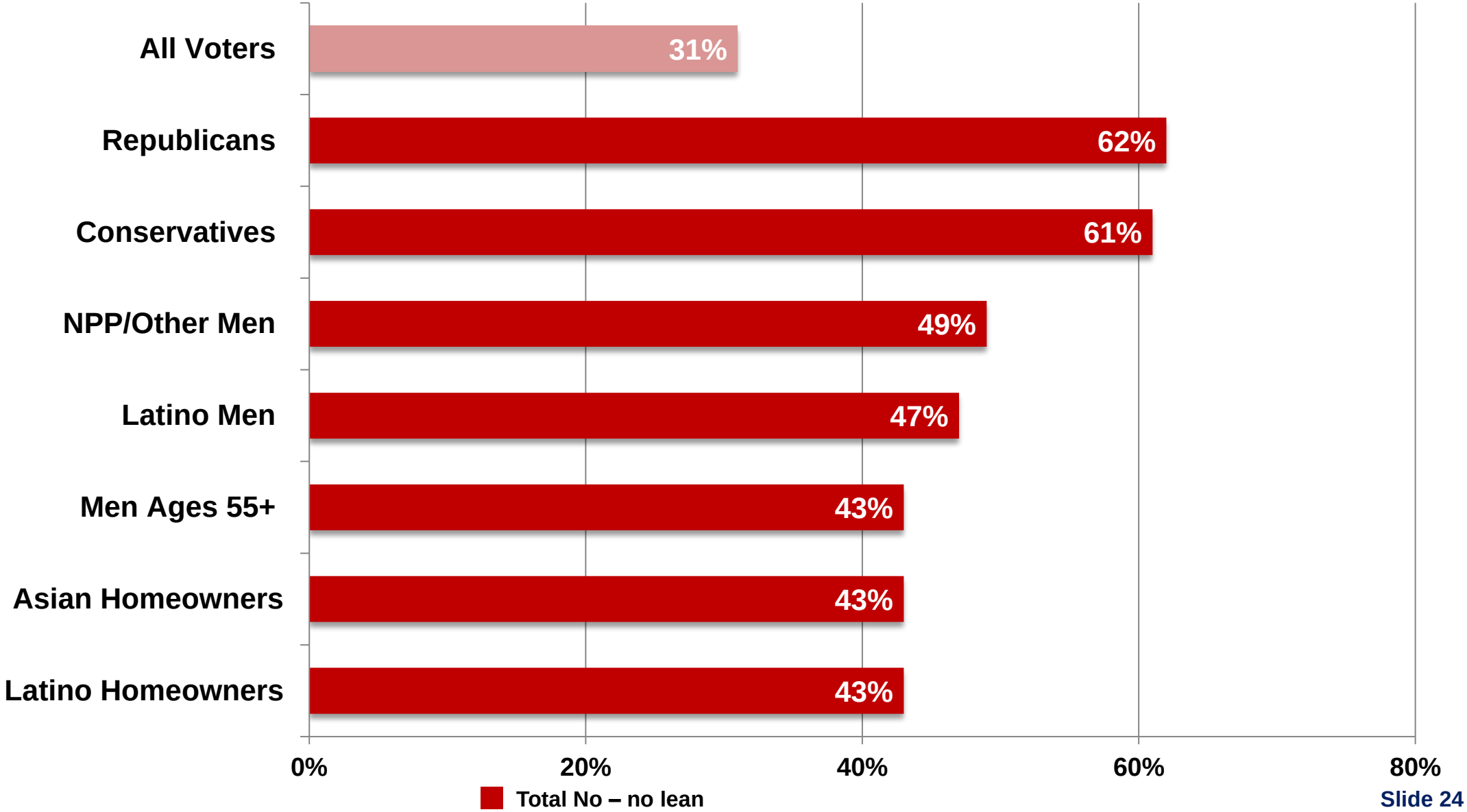
Initial Vote by District Funding Needs



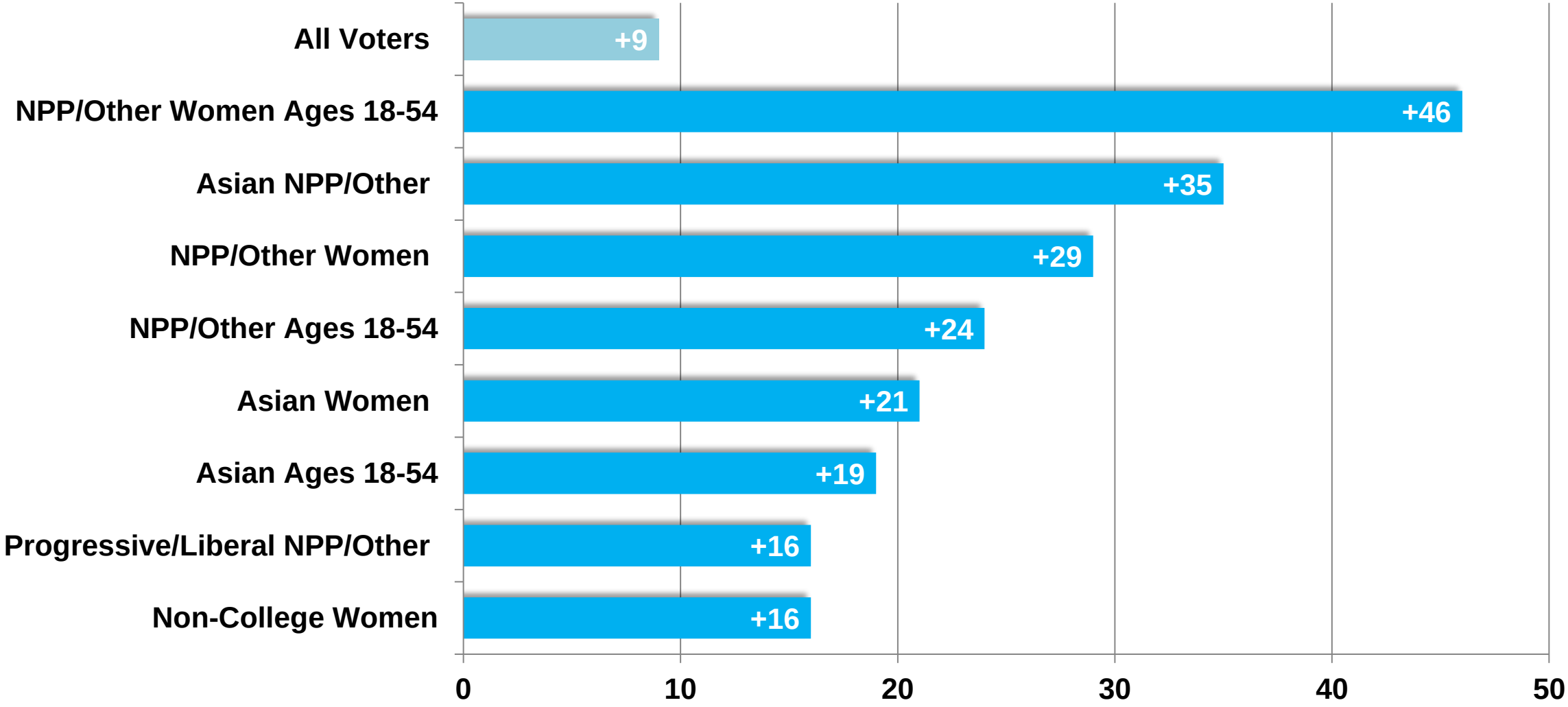
Base Supporters



Base Opponents

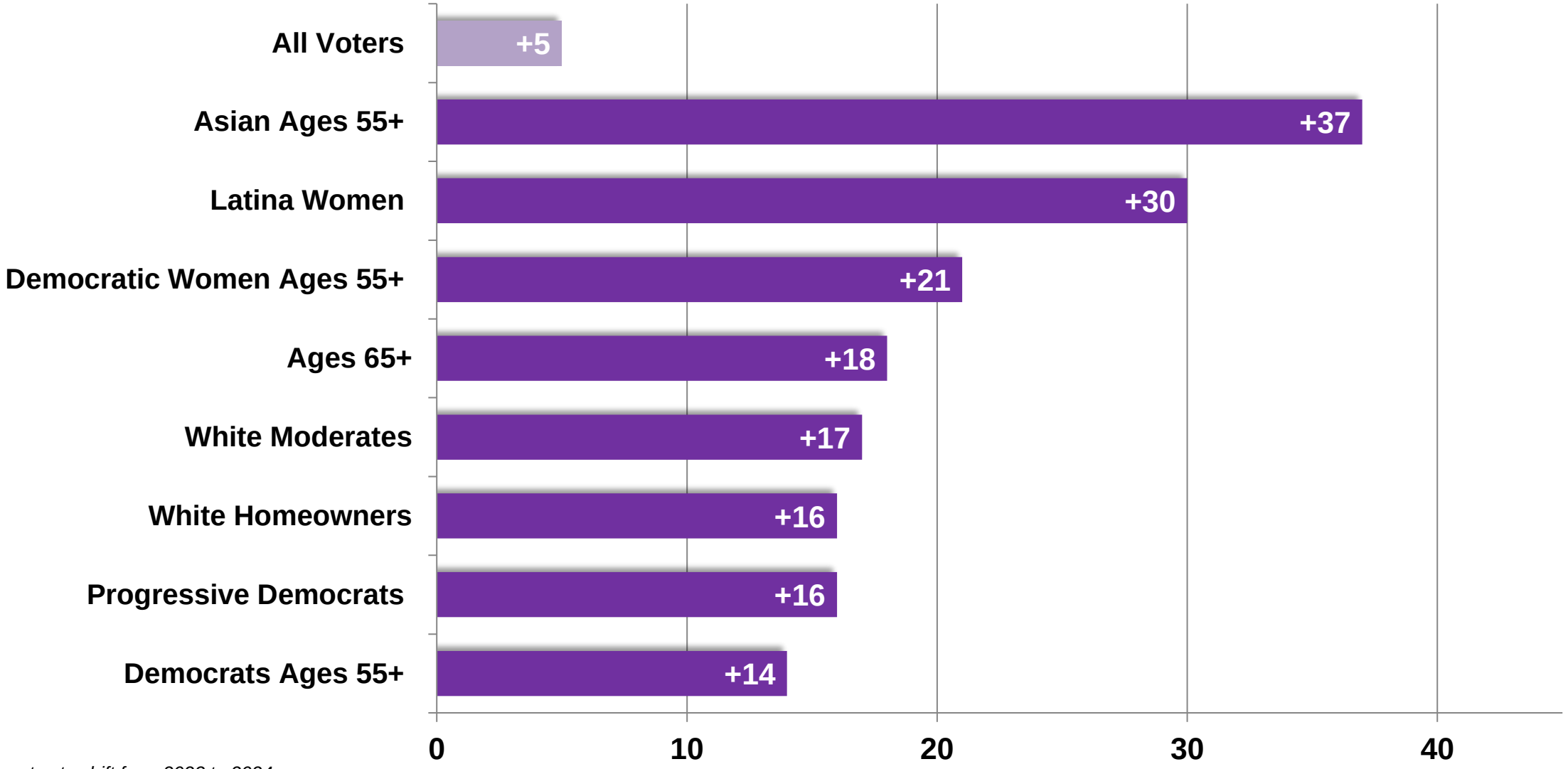


Yes Shifters: Groups That Move Towards Yes After Positive Messages



*Data reflects net vote shift from Initial Vote (Q8) to Re-Vote (Q14)

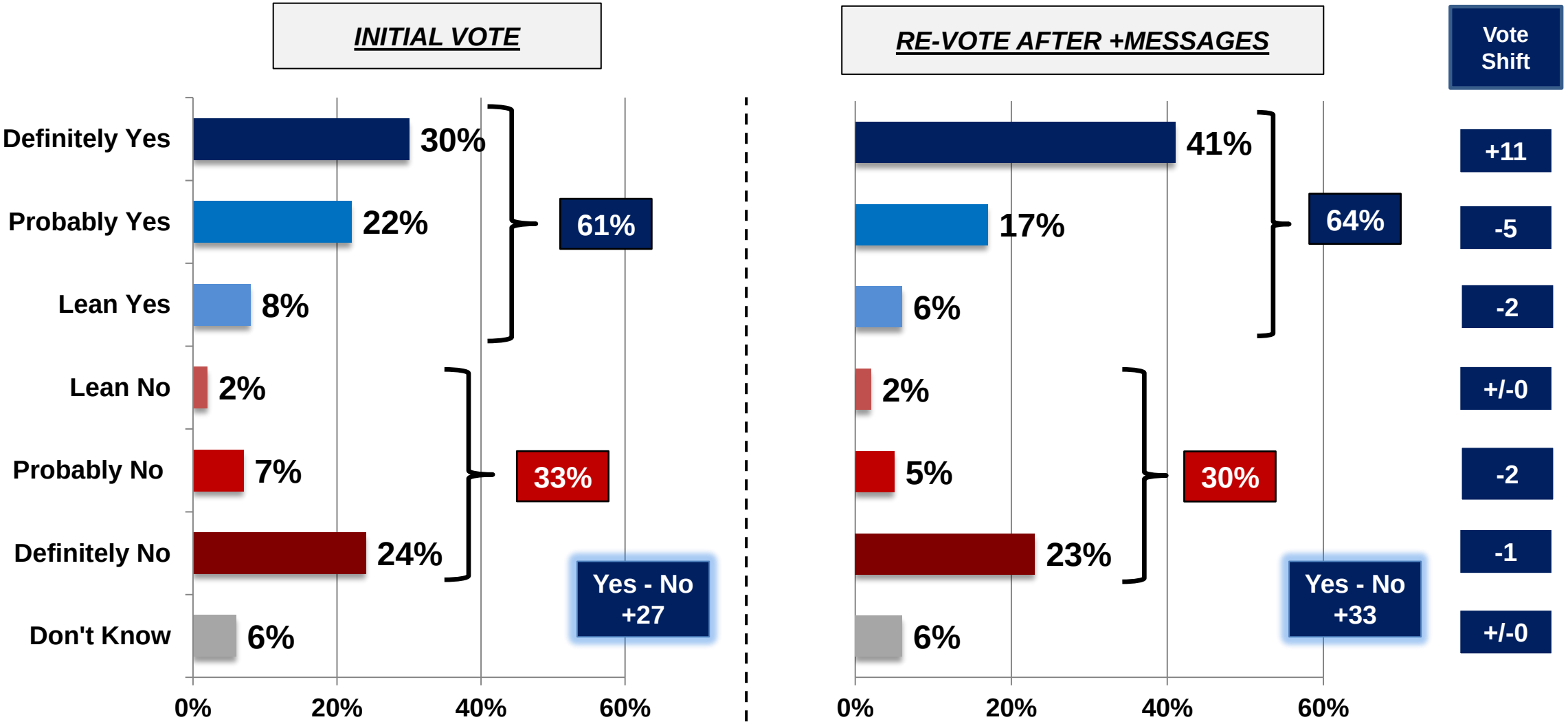
Groups That Moved Towards Yes From 2023 to 2024



*Data reflects net vote shift from 2023 to 2024

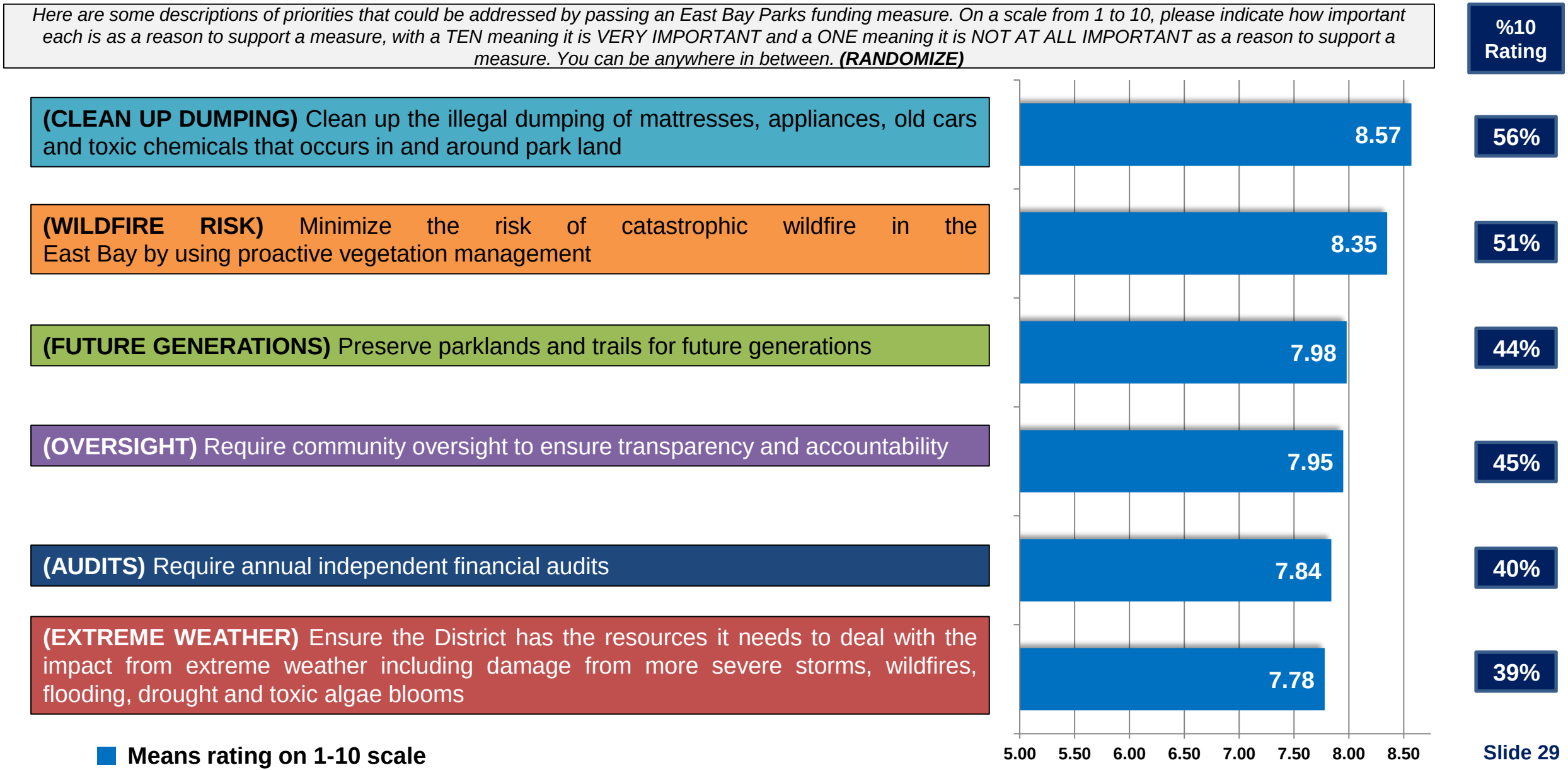
Messaging

Modest Increases in Support After Positive Messaging with Significant Boost to *Definite* Yes



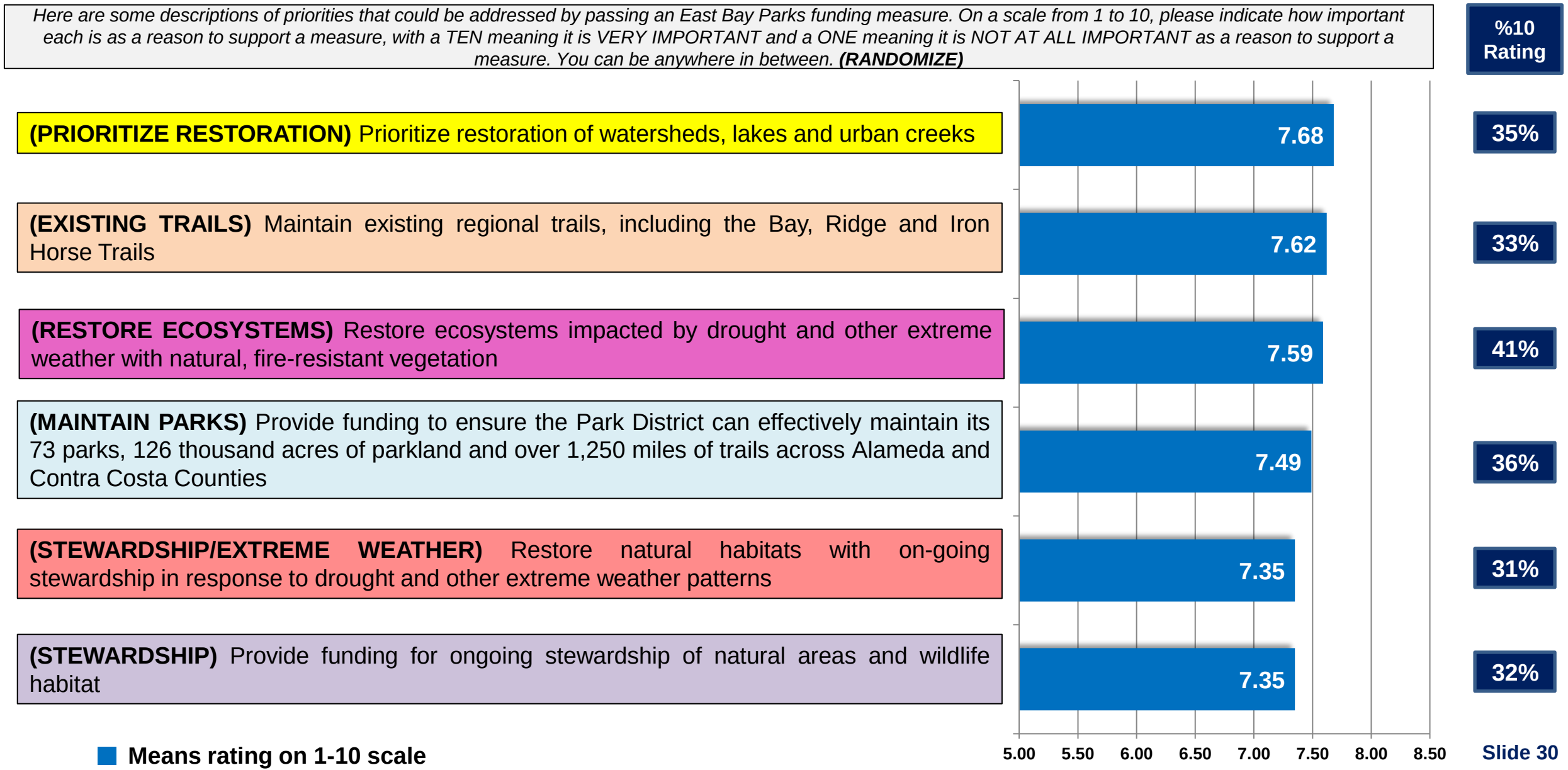
East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 1

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. ***(RANDOMIZE)***



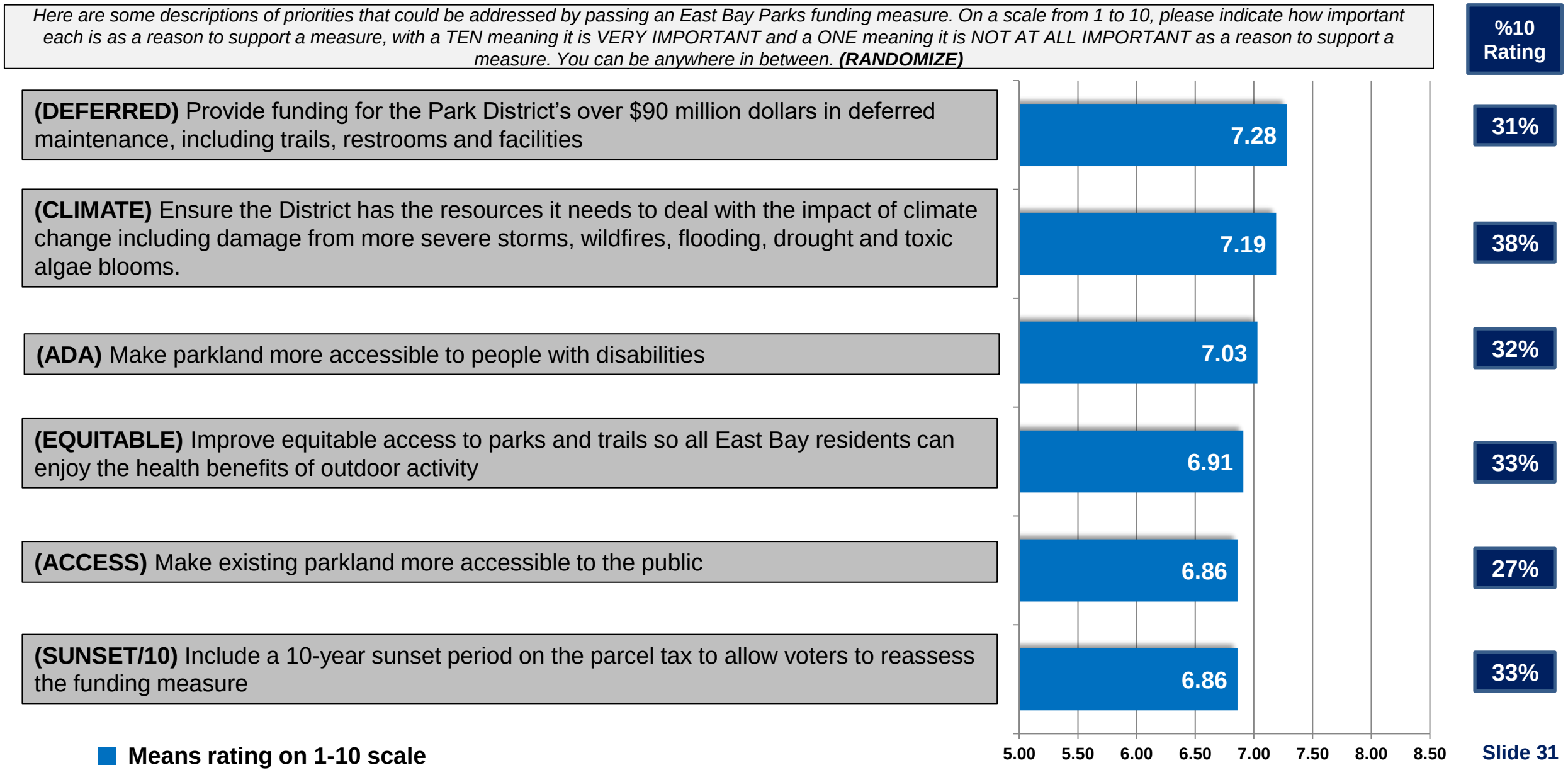
East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 2

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. ***(RANDOMIZE)***



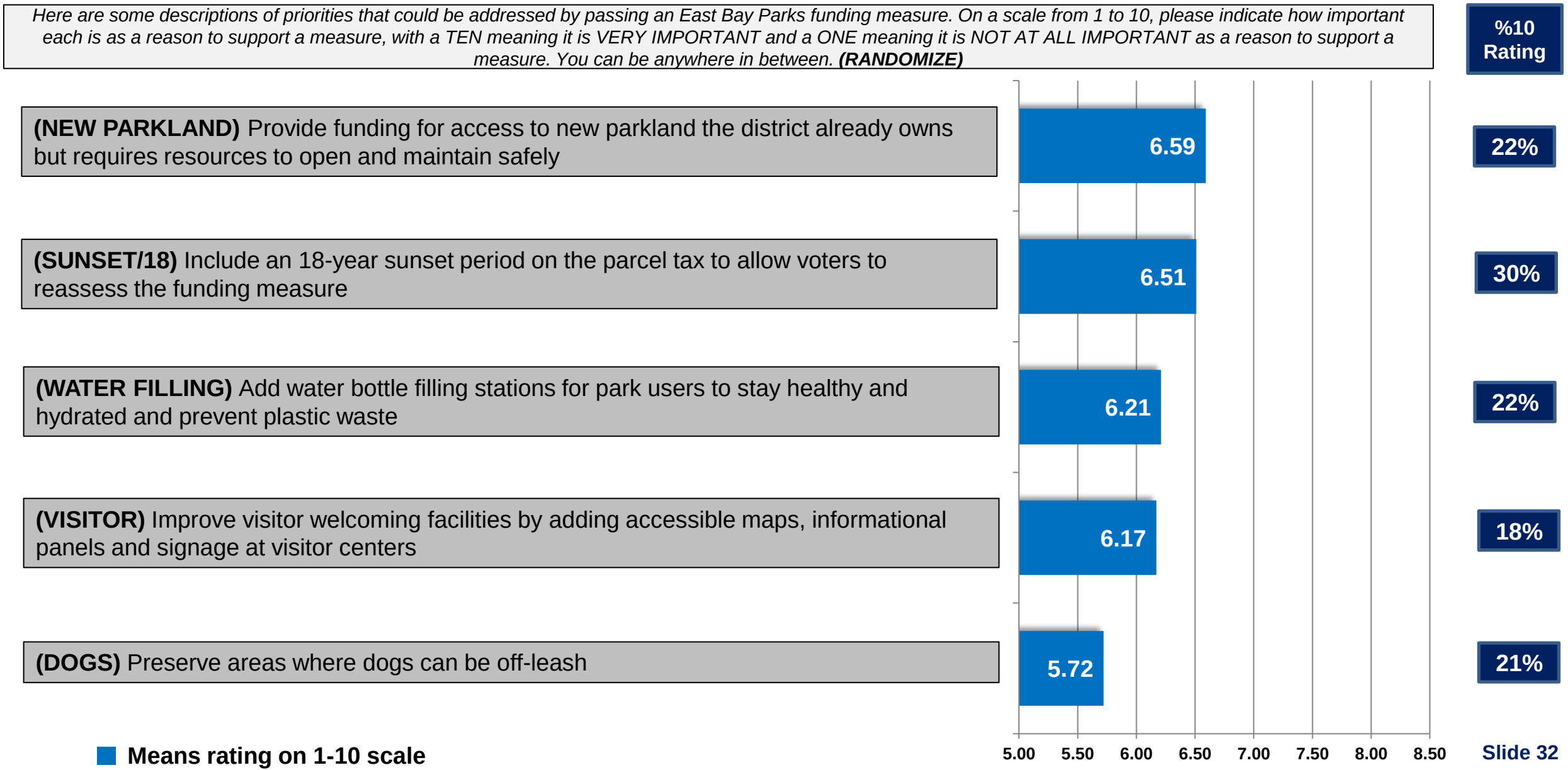
East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 3

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. ***(RANDOMIZE)***



East Bay Regional Park District Funding Priorities: Tier 4

Here are some descriptions of priorities that could be addressed by passing an East Bay Parks funding measure. On a scale from 1 to 10, please indicate how important each is as a reason to support a measure, with a TEN meaning it is VERY IMPORTANT and a ONE meaning it is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT as a reason to support a measure. You can be anywhere in between. ***(RANDOMIZE)***



TOP EBRPD FUNDING PRIORITIES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS

ALL VOTERS	TOTAL YES (W/ LEAN)	DEFINITE YES	SOFT YES (PROB+ LEAN YES)	YES SHIFTER	SWING TARGETS	UND + LEAN
CLEAN UP DUMPING Mean: 8.57 %10: 56%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 9.17 67%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 9.30 74%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 9.03 60%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 9.01 64%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.74 55%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.50 50%
WILDFIRE RISK Mean: 8.35 %10: 51%	WILDFIRE RISK 9.18 63%	WILDFIRE RISK 9.29 72%	WILDFIRE RISK 9.06 55%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.88 58%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.64 49%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.29 43%
FUTURE GENERATIONS Mean: 7.98 %10: 44%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.96 58%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 9.18 68%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.74 49%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.72 54%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.29 43%	OVERSIGHT 8.24 50%
OVERSIGHT Mean: 7.95 %10: 45%	RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS 8.88 55%	RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS 9.09 63%	RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS 8.67 46%	EXTREME WEATHER 8.58 47%	OVERSIGHT 8.13 42%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.03 38%

TOP EBRPD FUNDING PRIORITIES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS					
ALL VOTERS	WHITE	LATINO	ASIAN	ALAMEDA COUNTY	CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
CLEAN UP DUMPING Mean: 8.57 %10: 56%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.64 55%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.49 55%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.70 57%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.55 55%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.59 56%
WILDFIRE RISK Mean: 8.35 %10: 51%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.57 54%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.35 51%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.05 46%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.45 51%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.22 52%
FUTURE GENERATIONS Mean: 7.98 %10: 44%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.11 43%	OVERSIGHT 8.15 50%	AUDITS 8.03 43%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.17 46%	OVERSIGHT 8.02 45%
OVERSIGHT Mean: 7.95 %10: 45%	EXTREME WEATHER 7.93 37%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 7.89 47%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 7.92 44%	AUDITS 7.94 40%	EXTREME WEATHER 7.78 38%

TOP EBRPD FUNDING PRIORITIES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS				
ALL VOTERS	**PROGRESSIVE**	**LIBERAL**	**MODERATE**	**CONSERVATIVE**
CLEAN UP DUMPING Mean: 8.57 %10: 56%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 9.25 69%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.86 58%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.32 49%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 7.93 51%
WILDFIRE RISK Mean: 8.35 %10: 51%	WILDFIRE RISK 9.17 68%	CLEAN UP DUMPING 8.84 59%	WILDFIRE RISK 8.09 45%	AUDITS 7.73 48%
FUTURE GENERATIONS Mean: 7.98 %10: 44%	RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS 9.14 64%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.57 51%	OVERSIGHT 7.99 47%	OVERSIGHT 7.57 53%
OVERSIGHT Mean: 7.95 %10: 45%	FUTURE GENERATIONS 8.84 61%	EXTREME WEATHER 8.28 44%	AUDITS 7.91 44%	WILDFIRE RISK 7.14 37%

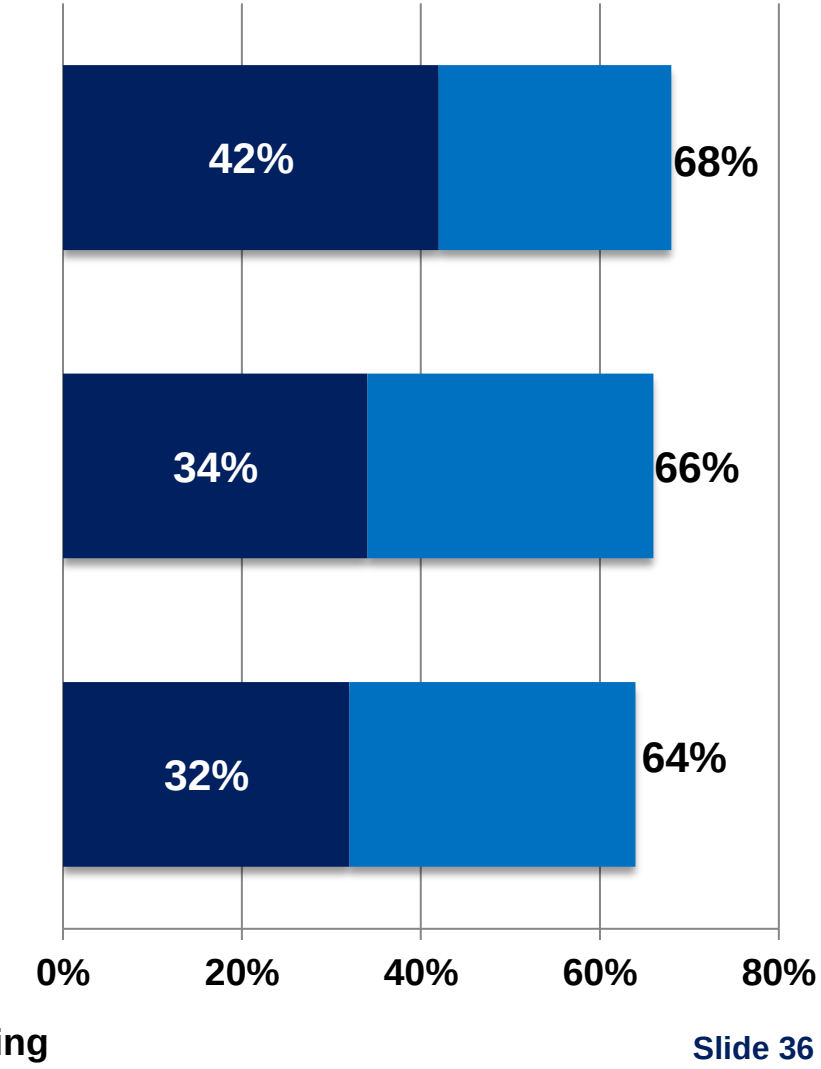
Positive Messages: Tier 1

Here are statements SUPPORTERS have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. ***(RANDOMIZE)***

(FIRE) In the last five years, the state of California experienced the worst wildfires in recorded history. Drought conditions, dry and dying vegetation, and increased tree mortality across the East Bay require additional resources to manage fire-resilient, safe, and healthy forests. We need to increase funding for vegetation management, fire safety equipment and additional firefighters to protect our community from catastrophic wildfire.

(ASSET/FUTURE GENERATIONS) Our East Bay parks are a tremendous asset that contribute to our quality of life. Between Tilden, Briones, Reinhardt Redwood, Lake Chabot, Ardenwood, Crown Beach, Lake Temescal, Black Diamond Mines, Del Valle and the dozens of other regional parks in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. These parks provide important access for open space, recreation, hiking, walking, picnicking, family time and so much more. We should invest in them and help preserve them for future generations.

(MAINTAIN) The East Bay Regional Park District is the largest and most extensive regional park system in the country. It has 73 parks, covers more than 126 thousand acres, and is home to over 1,125 miles of trails. It requires significant resources to maintain in the face of rising use, increasing weather impacts and higher maintenance costs. The district needs funding to keep up with these costs so it can continue to provide the quality parks and trails for our communities.



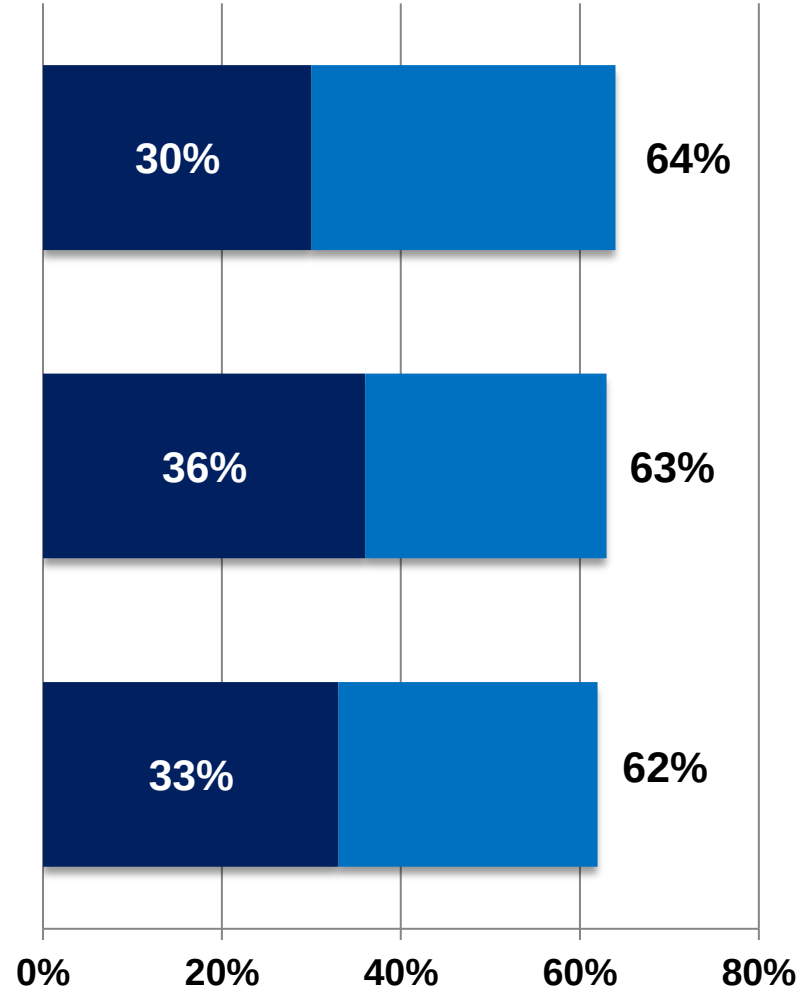
Positive Messages: Tier 2

Here are statements SUPPORTERS have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. ***(RANDOMIZE)***

(EXTREME WEATHER) The East Bay Regional Park District has seen a rapid increase in damage caused by extreme weather. With more frequent and severe storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and toxic algae blooms causing millions of dollars of damage to our parks and trails every year. The Park District needs additional funding to repair the damage and maintain access to our parks and trails.

($2/MONTH) This measure will provide value to our community. For less than a cup of coffee—just $2 a month for homeowners— and a fraction of the cost of a single admission to a national park like Yosemite, the East Bay Regional Park District can better maintain dozens of parks with existing trails. It will reduce wildfire risk, repair damage from storms, protect natural habitat and increase access to public park lands in the East Bay.

(CLIMATE) The East Bay Regional Park District has seen a rapid increase in damage caused by climate change. With more frequent and severe storms, wildfires, flooding, drought and toxic algae blooms causing millions of dollars of damage to our parks and trails every year. The Park District needs additional funding to address this new ongoing challenge, repair damage and maintain access to our parks and trails.



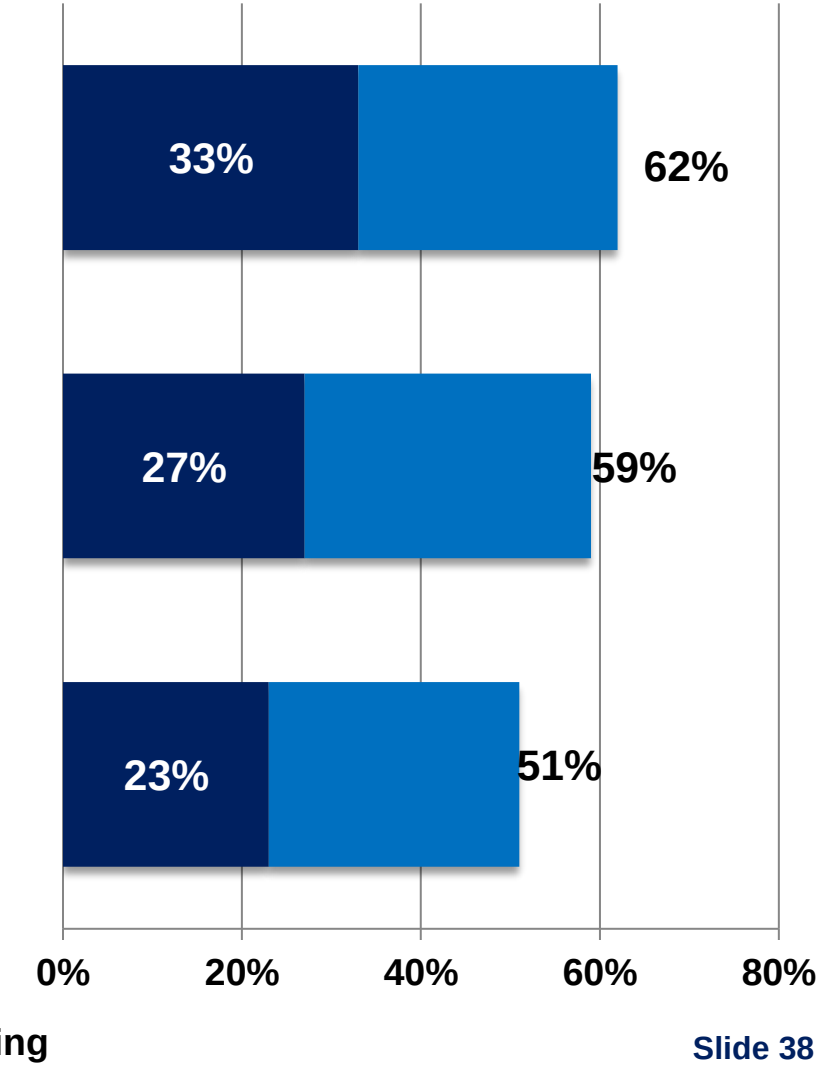
Positive Messages: Tier 3

Here are statements SUPPORTERS have made about the potential measure to increase funding for the East Bay Regional Park District. After each statement, please indicate whether you find the statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to support the measure. ***(RANDOMIZE)***

(90/FUTURE) The East Bay Regional Park District is a valuable community resource, but it is 90 years old and needs more care and investment. It has over 90 million dollars of deferred maintenance for trails and facilities, as many of its original facilities were depression era buildings built nearly 100 years ago. We must invest in these facilities and services, such as restrooms, trails and park maintenance to ensure we can continue to safely access and feel welcomed in our parks.

(NEW PARKS) The East Bay Regional Park District has experienced a significant increase in park use and population growth in recent years, placing increased demand on our regional parks. To accommodate this growth, the Park District could benefit from additional funds to meet increasing demand by allowing the agency to open additional park areas already owned by the Park District, but it requires funding to operate and maintain the sites safely.

(EQUITABLE ACCESS) This measure will support the goals of the Park District's updated Strategic Plan including expanding equitable access to parks and trails for all East Bay community members, not just those who happen to live near a park. Welcoming visitor use facilities, well maintained trails and restrooms, and expanded staff presence will also ensure everyone can safely experience the benefits of nature.



POSITIVE MESSAGES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS

ALL VOTERS	TOTAL YES (W/ LEAN)	DEFINITE YES	SOFT YES (PROB+ LEAN YES)	YES SHIFTER	SWING TARGETS	UND + LEAN
FIRE Total Conv: 68% Very Conv: 42%	**FIRE** Total: 87% Very: 58%	**FIRE** Total: 89% Very: 65%	**FIRE** Total: 85% Very: 51%	**$2/MONTH** Total: 84% Very: 47%	**FIRE** Total: 74% Very: 43%	**$2/MONTH** Total: 69% Very: 22%
ASSET/ FUTURE GEN Total Conv: 66% Very Conv: 34%	**EXTREME WEATHER** Total: 83% Very: 41%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 87% Very: 59%	**EXTREME WEATHER** Total: 79% Very: 38%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 84% Very: 39%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 72% Very: 29%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 68% Very: 21%
MAINTAIN Total Conv: 64% Very Conv: 32%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 82% Very: 47%	**EXTREME WEATHER** Total: 87% Very: 45%	**CLIMATE** Total: 79% Very: 38%	**FIRE** Total: 82% Very: 52%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 71% Very: 29%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 67% Very: 25%

POSITIVE MESSAGES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS

ALL VOTERS	WHITE	LATINO	ASIAN	ALAMEDA COUNTY	CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
FIRE Total Conv: 68% Very Conv: 42%	**FIRE** Total: 72% Very: 43%	**FIRE** Total: 69% Very: 44%	**FIRE** Total: 68% Very: 45%	**FIRE** Total: 72% Very: 45%	**FIRE** Total: 64% Very: 38%
ASSET/ FUTURE GEN Total Conv: 66% Very Conv: 34%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 70% Very: 33%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 66% Very: 40%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 64% Very: 29%	**EXTREME WEATHER** Total: 69% Very: 34%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 64% Very: 30%
MAINTAIN Total Conv: 64% Very Conv: 32%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 69% Very: 37%	**CLIMATE** Total: 64% Very: 32%	**EXTREME WEATHER** Total: 61% Very: 34%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 68% Very: 38%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 63% Very: 30%

POSITIVE MESSAGES BY KEY TARGET GROUPS

ALL VOTERS	PROGRESSIVE	LIBERAL	MODERATE	CONSERVATIVE
FIRE Total Conv: 68% Very Conv: 42%	**FIRE** Total: 87% Very: 59%	**FIRE** Total: 80% Very: 50%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 66% Very: 34%	**FIRE** Total: 49% Very: 29%
ASSET/ FUTURE GEN Total Conv: 66% Very Conv: 34%	**CLIMATE** Total: 84% Very: 58%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 80% Very: 42%	**FIRE** Total: 61% Very: 35%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 49% Very: 22%
MAINTAIN Total Conv: 64% Very Conv: 32%	**NEW PARKS** Total: 84% Very: 42%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 79% Very: 44%	**ASSET/ FUTURE GEN** Total: 60% Very: 29%	**MAINTAIN** Total: 44% Very: %

Executive Summary

- **Voter pessimism has increased since previous research.**

- **Voters continue to hold the EBRPD in high regard. They overwhelmingly approve of the job the District is doing to *"operate a system of regional parks and trails in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties"* (77% approve, 36% strongly approve) compared to just seven percent of voters who disapprove and 16% who are undecided or unsure about the job the district is doing, which is statistically unchanged from a year ago.**

- **A solid majority of voters supports a revenue measure to increase funding for parks and open space in the East Bay, with increased support since last year.**

- **While support has increased for a parcel tax funding measure, it continues to fall short of the needed two-thirds threshold to pass such a measure indicating a public education and communication effort is needed to increase support. Despite a more pessimistic electorate, it is encouraging to see notable increases in support over time for a funding measure.**

Executive Summary (Continued)

- **Focus group research was beneficial to helping improve a measure's standing, including sentiments toward preserving parks for future generations that came directly from qualitative research and we noted upfront in the measure language.**
- **Considering the $24 per year parcel tax specifically in a packaged measure with revised ballot language describing how the measure would preserve parks for future generations, provide wildfire protection, and protect against "extreme weather damage" instead of protecting watershed health and against sea level rise, a larger majority of voters (61% Yes to 33% No, 6% undecided) including leaners say they would vote yes in support of this measure. (This reflects a net +11 increase in support over time.)**
- **Voters remain attracted to a description of a measure that will prioritize wildfire risk management (8.35 mean, 51% 10 rating), but are also attracted to efforts to clean up illegal dumping (8.57 mean, 56% 10 rating) and preserve parkland for future generations (7.98 mean, 44% 10 rating), while also restoring the ecosystem impacted by extreme weather and drought (7.59 mean, 41% 10 rating).**
- **Messaging frames that resonate most with voters include describing how a measure will protect the community from FIRE (68% total convincing, 42% very convincing), protect and preserve parks for FUTURE GENERATIONS (66% total convincing, 34% very convincing), MAINTAIN the parks system (64% total convincing, 32% very convincing), and protect against EXTREME WEATHER (64% total convincing, 30% very convincing).**

Executive Summary (Continued)

- There is no statistical difference between a sunset of 10 or 18 years. Nevertheless, in future research, we should consider testing “until ended by voters” as a proxy sunset description as that has worked well in other jurisdictions.

- Key demographic targets include:
  - Women (Asian, ages 55+, College educated, NPP/Other)
    - Younger women, especially Asian and NPP/Other women under age 55 also shift more towards supporting a measure with more information.
  - Frequent visitors/users of East Bay parks and Oakland voters
  - Younger NPP/Other voters (Shifter Voters)
  - Democrats and White Progressives (Base Voters).

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